

# We have an **ASD** diagnosis:

NOW WHAT?





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## Foreword

*What follows is a foreword by Denise McKee, Executive Director for the NWT Disabilities Council, from a presentation that she gave for the Equity Panel at C.A.S.D.A.'s 2020 Annual Leadership Summit. It has been edited for print by Autism Yukon. The authors felt that the sentiments expressed here are important and should precede any publication that describes services available to those living in the Northwest Territories. It is our hope that the next publication of this booklet will be able to describe additional services that are local, person-centered and empowering to NWT residents.*

Good Day,

In 2020 I was asked to speak as part of an Equity Panel at C.A.S.D.A.'s Annual Leadership Summit. Due to the current pandemic caused by COVID 19, this event was held virtually, and I presented the following prepared statement. It can also be viewed online at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdQjPh0Cd6Q>

First, I want to thank you for your patience as I read this. In this short time allotted I want to be sure to maximize my time.

My name is Denise McKee and I am speaking from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. I want to acknowledge that I am coming to you from the traditional lands of Chief Drygeese and of the Yellowknives Dene First Nations. I also recognize all First Nations, Inuit and Metis people who live within and have formed the Northwest Territories.

Prior to beginning, I wish to cite that the information and statistics contained in this presentation are from the Major Research Paper entitled "Northwest Territories Residential Southern Placement Program: Commodification, Dislocation, and Colonization through 'Care'" (July, 2020) by Alannis McKee (MA) of the Critical Disability Studies Program at York University, under the guidance of Dr. Rachel da Silveira Gorman (supervisor) and Dr. Sean Hillier (advisor). Subsequently, an article was published from this M.R.P. in the *International Journal of Indigenous Health*:

[https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijih/article/view/33909/26832?fbclid=IwAR3l5ftvg6TkhIGgSSqkAMOEzyc5s3LBKi-oLVDoFwsu1u94JV74C\\_Tt7iBo](https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijih/article/view/33909/26832?fbclid=IwAR3l5ftvg6TkhIGgSSqkAMOEzyc5s3LBKi-oLVDoFwsu1u94JV74C_Tt7iBo)

I find myself in a difficult position as I come before you today. I am consistently asked, as many have been before me, to bring a voice to the table from the North. I am cognizant of, and consistently examining, my own positioning of privilege within this very complex structure and amongst the many voices of the North. I am a white settler, with a disability, that relocated from Ontario to the Northwest Territories 13 years ago. I have 4 children who have spent more than half their lives in the Northwest Territories. With their permission I can disclose that three have a disability and that my oldest son is autistic with concurrent disorders. We first lived in the small fly-in community of Aklavik, NT with a population of approximately 500 people, almost all of which are Indigenous Peoples. We eventually relocated to Yellowknife, NT, where we live and where I have assumed the position of Executive Director for the NWT Disabilities Council for the past decade. I come to the table informed by my lived experience, my years in the field of disability, the cited research and most importantly as an ally, whose positioning at this table affords me the opportunity to help elevate the voices of those that have entrusted me with their stories and truths. I do not claim to know their perspective, speak for them or to coopt their experiences. As the mother of an autistic son with multiple concurrent disorders, I am cognizant that he would fall within the cohort to which I am speaking today. I am also aware that though his experiences in the North have been harsh, and our family is often in crisis, they do not represent the full scope of impact when considering intersectional factors.

In determining whether to speak at all today, I have spent nights rewriting page after page and trying to capture the North and its uniqueness in the few minutes afforded. I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible. Having made this determination, I then needed to decide: would not speaking be an even louder statement? After all, we all sat last year and listened to first person recounts from Indigenous Peoples living on reserves in Northwestern Ontario, and although everyone in the room was moved, it did not seem they were moved to action. My goal here was not to continue the inaction by allowing those that position themselves as a national voice for autism to present themselves with the rhetoric of “consulting” and “offering participation” for the purpose of optics when truthfully it is merely a symbolic gesture to feign inclusion of the North.

So, I will take these few minutes to first paint the landscape. The Northwest Territories has approximately 45,000 territorial residents spread across 1.3 million square kilometers and divided into 33 communities. Approximately 50% of these 33 communities are remote and inaccessible by all-season road, and most have a population of less than 1,000 people. Approximately 50% of the population identifies as Indigenous and there are 11 official languages. This immense geographical area, small population, and limited infrastructure and resources in small communities leads to the uniqueness and difficulties of supports and services in the Northwest Territories. As one moves from the west coast to the east above the 60th parallel, the services and supports diminish and unemployment and serious social issues become more prevalent. These issues are unaddressed and widespread. Wide geographic dispersal, low population size, lack of connection to populated areas, the high cost of living and limited infrastructure development within communities frames health care delivery in the Northwest Territories.

Although I could spend days on the impact of economics, geography, access to universal health care and a multitude of other confluent factors which uniquely present in the territory and which impact service delivery in the Northwest Territories compared to its southern and western counterparts, I do not have time in this short presentation. Instead, I wish to take this time to bring light to the undercurrent of health service delivery in the Northwest Territories by addressing Residential Southern Placements.

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services delivers services through a centralized model. Within this framework, long term care and health services are delivered through regional centres to which residents from surrounding smaller communities must travel in order to access services. That said, the range of services offered within the territory, even in the territorial capital, remain extremely limited.

In response to this, the Northwest Territories has established and become heavily reliant on contracted health and social care from southern provinces in Western Canada, particularly Alberta. In this system, territorial residents are sent on medical travel from the Northwest Territories to health and social care facilities in provinces to the south where their health needs can be met.

Residents with lifelong or long-term care needs that cannot be met in the Northwest Territories are those who become subject to Residential Southern Placements. When I speak of needs that cannot be met, I speak of health needs that would never cause displacement or even at times significant inconvenience in the south, and that are consistently met elsewhere.

You may be asking, why then, do we still send our people south for care and treatment?

Dislocation is central to the functioning of the Residential Southern Placement Program. In this program, Indigenous Peoples with cognitive disabilities find themselves subjected to displacement from their families, communities, and land for extended periods of time. As indicated from Freedom of Information Requests, these placements, for most adults, last from years to a lifetime. Individuals are disconnected from their families and culture. This is tantamount to medical colonialism.

Although Indigenous people are not explicitly identified in these policies, they make up the vast majority of individuals in the program; therefore it can be implied that the program specifically targets Indigenous people. Although, as I have mentioned, Indigenous peoples represent 50% of the population of the NT, over 90% of the people in Residential Placements are Indigenous and the vast majority present with a cognitive disability. The intersectionality of these two factors point toward overarching eugenic and colonial imperatives aimed at erasing Indigeneity and disability in Canada through the delivery of health care policy from the Northwest Territories.

Colonialism embedded into health care policy is just one example of how colonialism continues to advance Indigenous erasure through the reproduction and perpetuation of dislocation from land, the disruption of natural connectedness of Indigenous Peoples through the forced separation of families and communities, and the disruption of knowledge transmission that impedes the acquisition of traditional languages and cultural expression.

The dislocation and eradication of Indigenous peoples and disability through health care policy is just one example of the systemic racism that flows through other institutional structures such as education, public housing, income security, etc.

This is why the voices of the North cannot be coopted by organizations for the purpose of policy development, financial benefit or political positioning. The North will never have the numbers to compete with southern urban centres, which is why it requires its own space and voices. In fact, the more isolated and less populated the community, the greater the need. Many of these small communities face issues such as lack of access to health services and affordable housing, unemployment, food security, and education at rates that are staggeringly disproportionate to anywhere else in Canada. The North's uniqueness must be authentically represented. The wisdom of its Indigenous Peoples must be respected. Indigenous communities must receive the autonomy to direct their supports. Northern representation can no longer be rolled into southern policy under the guise of inclusion. There must be a linear connection and independent oversight from the federal government to Indigenous governments on the policies developed, the impact of those policies on communities and the gatekeeping of funding by territorial governments.

There must be a Northern Strategy in any National Strategy, informed and directed by the voices of the North. This space must be given and held in order to create meaningful and insightful change. Without this, any organization does not truly represent a national voice and must understand that even if it presents itself as an organization that exists to elevate an oppressed group, it can also act as an oppressor.

These are difficult conversations, but to truly become a national organization that represents all the voices of our country, representation cannot solely be based on numbers. Organizations must consider Canada's historical and colonial practices. I look forward to participating in any and all initiatives that move to improve and create real change for the North. Otherwise, I reserve this participation until such time that an equal seat at the table is created.

Thank you / Masi Cho.

Denise McKee  
Executive Director for the NWT Disabilities Council

Some of the content in this booklet was originally gathered for the publication *Navigating Autism Across the Lifespan*, created by the NWT Autism Society in partnership with the NWT Disabilities Council. We thank the authors Denise McKee and Alannis McKee for giving us permission to freely quote from this valuable resource.

## **General Statement**

*If you are reading this document, it's likely that someone that you care for has received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This diagnosis is the beginning of an important journey.*

*Many people compare an autism diagnosis to the process of peeling an onion, one layer at a time. First, there's the skin: understanding what autism is and how it affects your loved one. Then there's the next layer: considering the biggest, most pressing challenges and questions first. After a while, once a new normal is reached, there are other layers to explore; some are challenges, and some are unexpected talents and abilities.*

*Others liken the process to the stages of grieving, with varying degrees of shock, denial, anger, sadness, re-entry, and acceptance, not necessarily in any particular order. It can look different for everyone.*

*One parent has described it as planning for a holiday to Italy. Many dreams and preparations have gone into the vacation. It has been paid for, and you are looking forward to Venice, art galleries, wine tastings, Italian food, and operas. However, at the airport, somehow, the airline makes a change, and, to your surprise, you have landed in Holland instead. At first, you are shocked and upset, even angry. You've always dreamed of your holiday in Italy and what it would be like. A smiling travel agent informs you that the itinerary can't be changed, and, here you are.*

*After a while, you start to look around in Holland. You walk in tulip fields and see windmills. You notice how fresh the air feels. You like the modern furniture and the bright colours. You appreciate how everything is on time and in good working order. You buy some cozy wooden clogs. You marvel at the architectural ingenuity. Everyone is friendly and accepting. You even find an Italian restaurant in Amsterdam, and there are canals in Amsterdam as well!*

*You come to realize that Holland is not necessarily what you dreamed of. You might still always dream of Italy, and that's okay. But you really, really like Holland too. You certainly have learned a lot and made some great relationships.*

*However you and your loved ones experience this journey, there are three important things to remember:*

- 1. There is no "perfect" approach. Do your best; love your child, and everything will eventually fall into place. Remember, a child with autism is still a child first, and as with all children, unconditional love and a secure environment work best!*
- 2. No two children with autism are the same. The spectrum is large, and the idea of "high" and "low" on the spectrum is a bit misleading. The spectrum is not necessarily linear. There are many different symptoms that some have, and some don't have. Some respond well to some therapies, and some respond better to others. In some ways it's a "trial and error" approach that works best. Be kind to yourself and to your loved one, and take one day at a time. Every day is a new day.*
- 3. It is important to avoid an ableist mentality. What does this mean?*

*"What Is Ableism? 'We define ableist language as any language that, when used, has the effect of marginalizing disabled people,' explains Kristen Bottema-Beutel, PhD, an associate professor at Lynch School of Education and Human Development at Boston College.*

*Bottema-Beutel, who was the lead author of the Autism and Adulthood article, says examples are referring to autistic people as a "burden" or having a "disease," and points out that the context in which words are used is important in determining whether language is ableist."*

*We do not want to speak of children with ASD as if they are broken or defective and need to be "fixed." The world needs neurodiversity, and all children—all humans—have both strengths and weaknesses. We want to maximize strengths and to support individuals to work on areas that need some help. To read more, the link where you will find the quote, above, is <https://www.verywellmind.com/avoiding-ableist-language-in-autism-research-5083781>*

## Services for Children and Families with Children with ASD

The purpose of this document is to highlight the important services that are available to your child within the Northwest Territories. Please keep in mind, however, that parents are always their children's best experts. It is essential for family to be involved in directing interventions for a child with ASD. This is because over the years, many different people may provide for your child, but family remains consistent. As a parent or caregiver you provide consistency to your child.

It is also important to note that because of the NWT's size and location there may not be the same variety of therapies that are available in a larger population. After speaking to the local service providers, you will find out which services available are most suitable for your child.

Sometimes, a decision needs to be made, and families don't have the time or energy to read an entire booklet before making a choice. Occasionally, a problem is unique to a family. In situations such as this, you can receive good information that is quick and accurate by calling the NWT Disabilities Council at (867) 873-8230 or 1 (800) 491-8885.

We also recommend you visit Autism Speaks Canada's website to access over 40 different free tool kits. These tool kits cover everything from the 100-day tool kit for children recently diagnosed to an employment tool kit for adults with ASD. These can be found at <https://www.autismspeaks.ca/science-services-resources/resources/tool-kits/>

## Overview

### Services for Children, Birth to 5 Years of Age

It is possible for your child to receive an ASD diagnosis as early as age 2. Early diagnosis and intervention are important for better outcomes later in life.

Below are the places/websites that you will want to visit to find help for your preschool child with ASD (or during the diagnostic process).

1. **NWT Disabilities Council (see page 9).** The Council can provide you with a variety of supports starting with information, referral and support. They also offer many other programs and services that can assist you and your child.
2. **Autism Society NWT (see page 10).** The Society offers a guidebook and toolkit that can support you and your child.
3. **Government of the Northwest Territories –** The Government offers a wide-range of programs and services that you will want to explore further. Many of these services are described starting on page 10.

### Services for Children and Youth, 5-19 Years of Age

The NT government has an inclusive schooling policy ensuring that all NWT students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 have access to and are supported in receiving quality education. This policy also ensures that they will be provided these services in their own home communities in age-appropriate learning environments.

#### *Transitioning into Kindergarten*

A positive working relationship with your young child's school is important to ensure a successful transition and to help your child reach their full potential. Here are some suggested tips to making this transition with your child:

- Ask to meet with the Principal of the school or the school board's student services coordinator (in March of the year your child is starting school).
- Bring to the meeting **copies of all assessments** completed with your child.
- Write down **key strengths** that your child has.

- Write down areas where your child may need special attention or assistance (e.g. wandering behaviour; safety –personal, road, stranger; toileting; potentially harmful behaviours – compulsions, aggression, self-injurious behaviour etc.)
- Consider supports for your child that you would like to discuss with the school such as:
  - 1:1 assistance
  - adaptive technology (e.g. communication boards, PEC boards, iPads, etc.)
  - modified curriculum
  - social skills training
  - counselling
  - sensory room access etc.
- From this meeting a Student Support Plan (SSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. An SSP assists a student in working towards the regular target curricular outcomes for their age, while an IEP is a specialized plan that addresses the child's particular areas of need. If you would like additional information about transitioning to kindergarten please contact the NWT Disabilities Council and request access to their "Soar Higher" resource kit. They can be contacted at (867) 873-8230 or 1 (800) 491-8885.

### ***Grades 1 to 8***

It is important to remain active in your child's education throughout their time in school.

#### **Some tips to maintain this connection are:**

- Have regular open and honest contact with your child's teacher(s) and other support staff. You can discuss what goals your child has met, and any current challenges and strategies to address these. By being in regular contact you can be aware at all times what strategies and supports are being used to assist your child. The school can also assist you in learning these strategies so that you can use them at home.
- Connect with the Student Services Coordinator at the school at least every 3 months.

## **You have the right to:**

- Ask the school to keep qualitative and quantitative information about how your child is doing in school and in meeting their goals (e.g. how many times your child actively participates in class).
- Access your child's file at the school. Give the school at least 48-hours notice of this request. The content of this file will help in reviewing and refining goals and developing new intervention strategies.
- Note: Sometimes children with ASD reach a goal quickly and then at other times seem to lose progress. If you are in regular contact with the school you can help ensure that your child does not lose skills.

The progress that your child makes will be much more impactful if you and the school work together. If the same strategies are used in the school and at home then:

- The skill will be more generalized. In other words, your child can use the skill in different situations with different people.
- The skill will also be more generalized because it is reinforced differently at home than at school.
- Since skills are being worked on consistently at home and at the school it can provide more structure for your child and reduce anxiety because they know what is going to happen and know the expectations.

## ***Transitioning to Secondary School (Grade 8 -12)***

The transition to secondary school will be similar to the transition to kindergarten. There will of course be a few differences:

- The process will be more guided by the Student Services Coordinator or the School Guidance Counsellor that has been involved with your child. Just like when your child started kindergarten this is your chance to discuss key strengths, areas of challenge, areas requiring special attention and what special supports your child will receive.
- Discussions will focus more on life goals during your child's high school years and after they graduate. These will vary but could include skills for post-secondary education, life skills, independent living skills, vocational training, etc.

- One of three pathways is generally explored:
  - Regular curriculum with adaptations/accommodations
  - Modified curriculum with adaptations/accommodations
  - Individualized education program

### **You have the right to:**

- Initiate contact with the new Principal or Student Services Coordinator at the secondary school to set up a transition meeting.
- Explore and discuss new key programs and services that may benefit your child while they are in high school. These will be on top of those they already accessed in elementary school and could include:
  - *Life Skills* – learning skills necessary for day-to-day living (e.g. personal hygiene, social skills, cooking and planning, get around town, etc.)
  - *Vocational Training* – this generally happens in the later years of high school and may include work experience; trades and career & technology study classes; and School to Work Program (offered through Inclusion NWT).
  - *Clubs/Student Groups* – High Schools across the NWT offer groups and clubs that your child may be interested in. These can assist your child in developing social skills and forming new friendships.

### ***Transitioning into Adulthood***

The transition into adulthood will be just as important to navigate as the transition into kindergarten and high school. You and your child will need to consider and plan for many different aspects of life. These future plans may include:

- *Post-Secondary Education* – programs such as learning supports for persons with disabilities, student financial assistance and transitional vocation programs should all be considered. These are further discussed in the programs and services listings below.

- *Employment* – if your young adult wants to find employment there are several programs that can assist them in getting ready to work, in finding a job and that can support them while they work. These are also discussed further in the programs and services listings below.
- *Living Supports* – depending on the individual needs of your young adults there are programs that can assist them in living independently or with varying levels of support. These can include home care, supported living services, and long-term care and are further discussed in the programs and services listings below.

## Service Providers

### General Support

Some services for children with ASD in the NWT are free of charge, and some are not. The following paragraphs provide some information about the various government departments, non-profit organizations and private practitioners who provide services for children with autism in the NWT.

### NWT Disabilities Council

Suite 116, 5102 50th Avenue, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 3S8

Phone: (867) 873-8230 or toll free: 1 (800) 491-8885

***About:*** The Council supports any person living with a disability in any community in the Northwest Territories.

#### **Information, Referral and Support Coordinator:**

- Providing information about disabilities and related services currently available in the NWT.
- Linking clients with existing services.
- Assisting clients to apply for disability related programs such as CPP Disability, Private Long-Term Disability, Income Support and Learning Supports for Persons with Disabilities.
- Attending meeting or appeals related to disability issues as a neutral third party or advocate if required.
- Writing letters of support.
- Researching programs that may qualify for and providing a referral if required.

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [info@nwtdc.net](mailto:info@nwtdc.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtdc.net/information-referral-and-support>

Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities

Phone: (867) 875-4448

Email: [hrcpd@northwestel.net](mailto:hrcpd@northwestel.net)

## **Autism Society NWT**

5204 54th St., Yellowknife, NT, X1A 1W8

Phone: (867) 446-0985

Email: [president@nwtautismsociety.org](mailto:president@nwtautismsociety.org)

Website: <https://www.nwtautismsociety.org/>

***About:*** Autism Society NWT is committed to giving caregivers the tools they need to better support individuals with ASD in their communities.

***Navigating Autism Across the Lifespan – Guidebook:*** This toolkit gives caregivers an opportunity to reflect on the individual being supported and adapt resources provided to best suit his or her needs. Resources in this toolkit include: background information on ASD and wandering and creating an Emergency Prevention Plan.

***Autism Wandering Emergency and Prevention Plan - Caregiver Toolkit:*** This resource is intended for parents, caregivers and other vested partners interested in learning more about what supports are available to people with ASD across the lifespan in the Northwest Territories. It is the mission of the Autism Society NWT that all individuals with ASD are able to reach their full potential and have universal access to the services they require.

## **Government of the Northwest Territories**

P.O. Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

Switchboard: (867) 767-9000

***Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP):*** “Supported Child Inclusion and Participation, or SCIP, funding will promote access to, and participation in, high quality early childhood programming for children who are vulnerable, at-risk and/or those with specific developmental needs.

Through a yearly proposal-based system, SCIP will help provide children with the necessary supports to be successful in community-based programming, and to participate in motivating and developmentally appropriate activities while providing children with a sense of purpose and engagement. SCIP funding is available for licensed centre-based childcare, indigenous Governments and organizations, non-profit organizations, and unlicensed, community based early childhood programs.”

Phone: (867) 767-9354

Website: <https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/en/services/financial-support/licensed-child-care-support>

***Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities Inventory:*** The inventory provides a list of programs and services available for persons with disabilities and their caregivers through GNWT Departments, agencies, and those delivered through our partners. The inventory is a tool that can be used to help persons with disabilities and their caregivers maximize their use of the supports available in the NWT.

Website: [www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.hss.gov.nt.ca/files/resources/gnwt-disabilities-inventory.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.hss.gov.nt.ca/files/resources/gnwt-disabilities-inventory.pdf)

***Health and Social Services System Navigator:*** The Navigator helps you with your questions and concerns as you access services provided by the Health and Social Services system. The Navigator can help with:

- Resolving concerns
- Providing information on all health and social services in the NWT
- Connecting you with your health and social services provider
- Helping you find commonly used forms

Phone: 1 (855) 846-9601

Email: [HSS\\_Navigator@gov.nt.ca](mailto:HSS_Navigator@gov.nt.ca)

***Single Window Service Centers:*** These are located in 22 NWT communities and are a “one-stop shop” for Government of Northwest Territories services. Government Service Officers can help you complete forms and applications, access programs and services, and get referrals. Regular home visits are made to Elders, some Officers are Commissioners for Oaths or Notary Public Designations, and some can provide service in an Aboriginal Language.

Contact: Single Window Service in your community (see website below or Appendix C for specific contact information in your community).

Website: <https://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/en/priorities/access-government-programs-and-services-through-single-window-service-centres>

***NWT Human Rights Commission:*** “The NWT Human Rights Commission provides education and information, and deals with complaints about discrimination in employment, tenancy, and public services. Discrimination means being treated negatively or being denied an opportunity because of your race, colour ancestry, place of origin, age, marital or family status, disability, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social conditions.” ([www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.hss.gov.nt.ca/files/resources/gnwt-disabilities-inventory.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.hss.gov.nt.ca/files/resources/gnwt-disabilities-inventory.pdf))

Phone: (867) 669-5575 or 1 (888) 669-5575

Location: Main Floor, 5003 49th St., Yellowknife, NT

Website: <https://nwthumanrights.ca/>

## **Inclusion NWT**

Abe Miller Building, 4912 53rd Street, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 1V2

***About:*** Inclusion NWT supports people with intellectual and other disabilities and their families across their lifetime, and helps them live meaningful lives and be active in all aspects of community life.

***Family Project:*** Offers services to meet the needs of individuals and families supporting a family member with a disability. This includes providing resource material and hosting parent information sessions through the family network group. Inclusion NWT also provides individual family assistance and advocacy when families have challenges or need help with some aspect of life.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [inclusion@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:inclusion@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/services/>

***Literacy Outreach Centre:*** The Literacy Outreach Centre provides daily morning literacy classes and afternoon literacy outreach for families, seniors, and adults. Services are available to those with and without a disability.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/services/>

***FASD Library:*** Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a term that describes a broad range of physical and intellectual disabilities, including brain injury. Materials from the FASD Library are available for loan, free of charge, throughout the NWT.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [fasd@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:fasd@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/services/>

***Living and Learning with FASD Project:*** The Living and Learning with FASD Project provides support for families with children who are affected by FASD, and to youth and women at risk of drinking alcohol during pregnancy. This includes family support, workshops and presentations.

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/services/>

***Respite Services:*** Respite services provide safe, individualized and flexible short-break relief for families supporting people with disabilities in Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah as well as offering individuals with disabilities opportunities for activities in their community. Trained respite workers are assigned to an individual and family and will provide support both within the home and out in the community. The service is available to those with any disability and to both children and adults who are living in the family home.

Phone: (867) 873-3560

Email: [inclusion@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:inclusion@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/services/>

## **YWCA NWT**

4904 54th Ave., Yellowknife, NT, X1A 1H7

Box 1679, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P3 (Mailing address)

Phone: (867) 920-2777

Email: [giving@ywcanwt.ca](mailto:giving@ywcanwt.ca)

Website: <https://www.ywcanwt.ca/family-centre>

***Mission:*** To create a safe Northern society for women and families to reach their full potential.

***Family Centre – Parent Support:*** The YWCA Family Centre offers parents support to address the challenges of parenting in an isolated community and parenting children with unique social, emotional, and physical needs.

***Family Centre – Toy Lending Library:*** This amazing FREE resource allows families to borrow toys, books and games for free! Keep the borrowed items for 2 weeks and they will send you a reminder email when you need to return them.

***Family Centre – Drop-in:*** YWCA NWT Family Centre is for children up to age 5. They focus on mental and physical wellness for every family. The program is intended to serve families and parents in need of a space to engage with their children through play and learning. They go on fun community outings and provide two snacks daily.

For all these programs please see contact information above.

## Education Supports

### Government of the Northwest Territories

***Inclusive Schooling:*** “The Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016) applies to all JK-12 schools in the NWT. Inclusive schooling ensures that all students have access to quality education and are supported to learn in age-appropriate common learning environments in their home community.

Inclusive schooling supports and promotes learning for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsible, accepting, respectful, and supportive. By providing sufficient levels, inclusive schooling ensures progress toward appropriate personal, social, emotional, and academic goals. Inclusive Schooling is characterized by collaboration. It encourages active involvement of parents, students (where appropriate), health professionals, and communities to meet the individual needs of students.

**Contact your child’s teacher, program support teacher, administration staff or school board for more information.”**

GNWT (June 2020). *GNWT Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities Inventory* (2nd Ed).

Inclusive Schooling/Student Support Coordinator  
Department of Education, Culture, and Employment  
Phone: (867) 767-9353 Ext. 71262

Website: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/k-12-education-and-curriculum/inclusive-schooling-and-student-support>

## Recreation and Camp Programming

### NWT Disabilities Council

**Experience Summer Program:** The Experience Summer program provides the opportunity for children, 4-12 years of age who have a disability/disabilities, to attend a summer recreation program. The program strives to provide two weeks, through the summer, of full day camp attendance for each child. Children participating will be offered support by qualified and trained support workers. Ratios of one support worker to one child, or one support worker to two children will be provided depending on the specific needs of each child. This allows children to actively participate in a summer day camp, of their choice, with their peers. The Program creates lasting friendships and memories.

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [rsp@nwtcd.net](mailto:rsp@nwtcd.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcd.net/experience-summer>

## Recreation and Community Programs

### Inclusion NWT

**Play and Learn:** The group is for families who have a child 0 -17 years old affected by FASD. It is intended to strengthen families and support parents to care for their children at home in their own communities, where children grow and thrive.

Phone: (867) 766-4295

Email: [fasd@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:fasd@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/services/>

**YaY Fusion!:** YaY Fusion! is a free social group for youth aged 13 to 18, with and without development disabilities. The youth meet monthly to engage in and have fun in 'in house' and community outing activities. The aim is for youth to make friends and build connections in a safe and inclusive environment.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [inclusion3@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:inclusion3@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/services/>

## Special Olympics NWT

Box 1691, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P3

Phone: (867) 446-2873

***About:*** Special Olympics is dedicated to providing sports training and competition for people with an intellectual disability.

***Active Start and FUNdamentals:*** This program is a family centred activity program designed to help children aged 3-11 with an intellectual disability develop basic motor skills and sport skills through fun and positive movement experiences. The program promotes opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, enhance skills and create friendships.

Phone: (867) 446-2873

Email: [lynn@sonwt.ca](mailto:lynn@sonwt.ca)

Website: <https://www.specialolympics.ca/northwest-territories>

***Stay Healthy at Home:*** Special Olympics NWT is currently providing 10-15 minute home workouts. You can find the workouts at top of their webpage by clicking the "Staying Healthy at Home" (drop down options) or the home page. For the Active start and FUNdamentals program, fun workouts will be posted every Friday.

Phone: (867) 446-2873

Email: [lynn@sonwt.ca](mailto:lynn@sonwt.ca)

Website: <https://www.specialolympics.ca/northwest-territories>

## Services for Older Youth and/or Adults with ASD

### NWT Disabilities Council

***Learning Supports for Persons with Disabilities:*** This fund helps NWT residents with disabilities achieve their learning goals. Individuals or organizations may apply for funding. Proposals must show that the funding requested will help to overcome barriers to learning. Applicants:

- Must have a disability
- Be involved in a learning activity
- Show their commitment to achieving stated education, employment or personal goals
- Be 18 years of age or older and out of High School
- Be an NWT resident and unable to receive funding for training elsewhere

Supports can include:

- Assessment and counselling
- Assistive devices, aids and technology
- Books, tools and equipment
- Assisted learning
- Tutoring
- Tuition
- Transportation
- Living Expenses

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [info@nwtcd.net](mailto:info@nwtcd.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcd.net/learning-supports>

***Inclusive Garden:*** They offer plots to members of the community, with priority going to persons living with a disability. Plots and soil are provided free of cost, patrons are required to organize their own transportation to the garden and supply their own seeds, although a small selection of assorted seeds will be provided on planting day.

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [director@nwtcd.net](mailto:director@nwtcd.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcd.net/inclusive-garden>

## **Inclusion NWT**

***The School to Work Program:*** The School to Work Program offers a 24-week-long school-to-work transition initiative in partnership with local high schools which provides employment experience for students with disabilities in grades 11 and 12. Job coaches help with work placements and, for grade 12 students, all work is paid at no less than minimum wage.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [inclusion@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:inclusion@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

***Skills Training & Community Inclusion:*** ST&CI provides employment and life, social and literacy skills and community activities for adults with an intellectual/developmental disability.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [STCImanager@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:STCImanager@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

***Employment Services:*** Provides employment services for any individual who self-identifies with any disability. Services range from basics like building a resume through to on-site job coaching support and everything in between.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

***EmployABILITY & Employment Support:*** EmployABILITY strives to connect employers with workers who happen to have a disability. A full range of employment services is provided to individuals with any self-identified disability. Services include assessment, assistance with accessing training and education, resume writing, job search skills, interviewing skills, career development assistance and job coaching.

Phone: (867) 873-3560

Email: [employability@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:employability@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

**YES! (Youth Empowerment Services):** YES! supports young people with disabilities who have finished high school and/or post-secondary training who may be under-engaged in employment and volunteer work. The goal is to get young people (generally up to age 35) out of the house and more engaged in the community and labour market.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [STCImanager@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:STCImanager@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

**Ready, Willing and Able:** Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) is a national partnership of Inclusion Canada (formerly the Canadian Association for Community Living), the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA) and their member organizations. Funded by the Government of Canada and active in 20 communities across the country, RWA is designed to increase the labour force participation of people with an intellectual disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [employability@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:employability@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

**The Odd Job Squad:** The Odd Job Squad seeks to assist under-employed individuals who self-identify with a disability to derive a small income from one-time or short-term work while they search for permanent employment. Staff look to connect with employers and households that may offer casual or temporary employment at or above \$15/hour.

Phone: (867) 445-6967

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

**Young Adults Group:** The Young Adults Group is a free social group for people aged from 19 to 30 with or without developmental disabilities.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [inclusion3@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:inclusion3@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

**FASD Peer Support Project:** The FASD Peer Support Project provides support for older youth and adults who are affected by FASD. This is offered through weekly group meetings or one on one meetings.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [fasd@inclusionnwt.ca](mailto:fasd@inclusionnwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

**Supported Living Services:** The Supported Living Service provides daily living and community involvement support for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities and brain-injury who choose to live in their own home.

Phone: (867) 920-2644

Email: [sil@inclusivenwt.ca](mailto:sil@inclusivenwt.ca)

Website: <https://inclusionnwt.ca/get-service/>

## **Government of the Northwest Territories**

**Income Assistance:** For those who are 19 years of older and have a need greater than their income. This program can assist with costs related to food, shelter, utilities and enhanced needs, including a clothing allowance for persons with disabilities. This program also encourages and supports greater self-reliance.

Phone: (867) 767-9355 (Head Office) or contact your local ECE Service Centre

Website: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/income-security-programs/income-assistance>

**Office of the Public Guardian:** "The Office of the Public Guardian helps people become legal guardians of individuals 18 years of age and older, who are unable to make decisions about their personal or health care. People who need help with their decisions may have a long-term condition or brain damage. Usually a family member will become a legal guardian." ([www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.hss.gov.nt.ca/files/resources/gnwt-disabilities-inventory.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/www.hss.gov.nt.ca/files/resources/gnwt-disabilities-inventory.pdf))

Location: 10th Floor Precambrian Bldg., 4920 52nd St., Yellowknife, NT

Phone: (867) 767-9155 ext. 49460

Website: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/office-public-guardian>

***Home and Community Care (Home Care):*** “Home Care Services provide individuals with nursing care and support for personal care as well as daily living activities when they are no longer able to perform these activities on their own. These services can help people to stay in their own homes rather than having to go to either a hospital or a long-term care facility when they required this type of assistance because of age, disability, injury, or illness.”

Contact: Your local Health and Social Services Authority Home Care Program or Community Health Centre.

Phone: (867) 767-9030

Website: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/continuing-care-services/home-and-community-care>

***Long term Care:*** Provides 24-hour care in a “home-like” facility for those who are unable to live independently and require 24-hour support. There are 9 facilities in the NWT. Please visit the website below to learn about services in your area.

Phone: (867) 767-9030

Website: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/continuing-care-services/long-term-care>

***Workplace Development Agreement:*** The agreement is between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories. Employment and training supports are available to eligible residents. This includes individuals with disabilities.

Phone: (867) 767-9351

Website: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/career-and-employment-services/agreements>

## **Additional Supports for Rural Communities**

### **NWT Disabilities Council**

**Community Outreach:** The Community Outreach Program focuses on traveling to communities and developing relationships with people across the NWT. Community Outreach also aids in projects or awareness events throughout the NWT.

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [info@nwtcdc.net](mailto:info@nwtcdc.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcdc.net/information-referral-and-support>

**Respite Program:** Provides social respite service to families outside of Yellowknife who have children with special needs (Aklavik, Deline, Fort Smith, Paulatuk). The goal of a respite service is to provide safe, individualized, and flexible respite support to families and primary caregivers. It offers young people with disabilities more opportunities for inclusion in their community while respecting cultural values.

Phone: 1 (888) 873-8231 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [info@nwtcdc.net](mailto:info@nwtcdc.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcdc.net/community-respite>

## **Therapy and Intervention Services**

### **NWT Disabilities Council**

**ECIP Program:** The Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP) provides early intervention services for children between birth and school entry who have disabilities and/or developmental delays. The Early Childhood Intervention Coordinator and Workers partner with parents/caregivers and other professionals to provide optimum 1:1 support for each child enrolled in this program based on individual needs. Entry into the ECIP is granted based on three criteria – level of need, age, and order or referral/request of the service. No formal diagnosis is required although medical support of a disability/delay is required. These services are provided until a child begins kindergarten.

Interventionists will most often work with children in a preschool or daycare centre, but can also work with the child in their home or at the NWT Disability Council office. Emphasis is placed on building functional behaviours and school-readiness. ECIP is family-centered and works as part of an interdisciplinary team, including parents, teachers, OT's, SLP's and other vested partners.

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [csm@nwtcd.net](mailto:csm@nwtcd.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcd.net/early-childhood-intervention>

***Snoezelen Room:*** Snoezelen or controlled multisensory environment (MSE) is a therapy for people with autism and other developmental disabilities. It consists of placing the person in a soothing and stimulating environment, called the "Snoezelen room". These rooms are specially designed to deliver stimuli to various senses, using lighting effects, color, sounds, music, scents, etc.

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [csm@nwtcd.net](mailto:csm@nwtcd.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcd.net/early-childhood-intervention>

## **Government of the Northwest Territories**

***Early Childhood Program – Early Childhood Development:*** The Early Childhood Program supports early learning and child care programs for children 0-11 years of age under the Child Day Care Act. Early learning and child care programs are delivered in a variety of settings in the NWT, including child day care centres and family day homes. These can be in the form of full and part time early childhood education programs, preschools, nursery schools and after school/out-of-school programs. These programs provide play-based exploratory environments that support children's development and where required, enable parents to access employment or training opportunities.

Location: Education, Culture and Employment, Early Childhood and School Services, P.O. Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

Phone: (867) 767-9354

Website: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/early-childhood-development/early-childhood-program>

**NWT Community Counselling Program:** The program provides access to mental health services in all NWT regions. This service is free. Counsellors are available in person in 19 communities and via phone, fly-in in-person counselling and through telehealth. To find a counsellor in your area please visit: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/contact/community-counsellor>

## **Rehabilitation Services offered through the GNWT**

**Speech Language Pathology:** Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) is a rehabilitation services that provides speech and language therapy to people with communication disorders. Speech Language Pathologists provide a full range of SLP services, including the identification, evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and management of speech delay, language development and communication disorders.

Location: Stanton Medical Centre, 419 Byrne Road, Yellowknife, NT

Phone: (867) 767-9299

Email: [sth\\_rehab@gov.nt.ca](mailto:sth_rehab@gov.nt.ca)

Website: <https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/rehabilitation-services/speech-language-pathology>

**Occupational Therapy:** Occupational Therapists are therapists that help to solve problems that are interfering with an individual's ability to do daily activities or occupations that are important to them. These problems may be the result of an injury, disease, developmental delays, congenital disabilities, or environment.

Location: Centre Square Tower, 2nd Floor, 5022 – 49th Street, P.O. Box 10, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2N1

Phone: (867) 669-4340

Email: [sth\\_rehab@gov.nt.ca](mailto:sth_rehab@gov.nt.ca)

Website: <https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/rehabilitation-services/occupational-therapy>

**Occupational Therapy (Pediatrics):**

Location: Stanton Medical Centre, 419 Byrne Rd., Yellowknife, NT

Phone: (867) 767-9299

Email: [sth\\_rehab@gov.nt.ca](mailto:sth_rehab@gov.nt.ca)

Website: <https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/rehabilitation-services/occupational-therapy>

**Audiology:** An audiologist assesses hearing loss, balance and other related disorders. They also make recommendations for treatment.

Location: Stanton Medical Centre, 419 Byrne Road, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N1 or Inuvik Regional Hospital, 285 MacKenzie Rd., Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0

Phone: (867) 669-3130 (Stanton) or 1 (867) 777-8000 (Inuvik)

Email: [sth\\_rehab@gov.nt.ca](mailto:sth_rehab@gov.nt.ca)

Website: <https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/rehabilitation-services/audiology>

## **Transportation Services**

### **NWT Disabilities Council**

**Yellowknife Accessible Transit System (YATS):** Provides accessible door to accessible door bus service for people who are unable to ride the regular city bus as a result of a disability. The cost is \$3.00 per ride. If a rider requires an attendant, there is no charge for the attendant.

Phone: 1 (800) 491-8885 or (867) 873-8230

Email: [info@nwtcdc.net](mailto:info@nwtcdc.net)

Website: <https://www.nwtcdc.net/yats-accessible-transit-system>

## **National Resources**

Below there are a list of national resources for ASD.

### ***Autism and/or Intellectual Disability Knowledge Exchange Network (AIDE) Canada***

- Many online resources and information for anyone wanting to know more about ASD

Website: [autismcanada.org](http://autismcanada.org)

### ***Autism Community Training***

- Autism Community Training provides information and training to enable parents, professionals and para-professionals to support children and adults with ASD.

Website: [www.actcommunity.ca/about-us](http://www.actcommunity.ca/about-us)

### ***Autism Junction***

- An online tool to search for services for people with ASD.

Website: [www.autismjunction.ca/](http://www.autismjunction.ca/)

### ***Autism Speaks Canada***

- A site that provides information on ASD science, services and resources in Canada.

Website: [www.autismspeaks.ca/](http://www.autismspeaks.ca/)

### ***Canadian-American Research Consortium***

- ASD-CARC is a group of researchers from institutions and laboratories across Canada and the United States, working with other researchers globally on topics surrounding ASD.

Website: [www.autismresearch.ca/](http://www.autismresearch.ca/)

### ***Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA)***

- Implementing a comprehensive National ASD Strategy that addresses critical gaps in funding and policies

Website: [www.casda.ca/](http://www.casda.ca/)

### ***Geneva Centre for Autism***

- This centre is based in Toronto. On their website there are online training modules and certificate training for people working with individuals with ASD as well as a funding information, current research, and much more.

Website: [www.autism.net/index.php](http://www.autism.net/index.php)

### ***National Autism Center***

- An American center that provides resources for families, educators and practitioners.

Website: [www.nationalautismcenter.org/](http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/)

### ***National Autism Surveillance System***

- The National Autism Surveillance System (NASS) reports on the prevalence of ASD in Canada. Their first report was released in April 2018.

Website: [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/surveillance-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/surveillance-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd.html)

## Funding Assistance

### Federal Government Funding and Financial Aid

This is not an exhaustive list. It is possible to receive benefits through other avenues as well. Check the Government of Canada's Benefit finder to see if you or your family qualify for any other benefits or services.

Website: [www.canadabenefits.gc.ca/f.1.2c.6.3z.1rdq.5.2st.3.4ns@.jsp?lang=en](http://www.canadabenefits.gc.ca/f.1.2c.6.3z.1rdq.5.2st.3.4ns@.jsp?lang=en)

### ***Child Disability Benefit***

This benefit is a tax-free benefit up to \$2730 per year for families who care for a child who is under 18 with a severe and prolonged impairment. The Canada Revenue Agency will determine if your child is eligible for the Child Disability Benefit from Form T2201, Disability Credit Certificate. This is the same form that is used to determine eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit. For more information, check the Government of Canada's website.

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/child-disability-benefit.html>

### ***Deductions or Credits on Income Tax***

There are various tax deductions that can be claimed for people with disabilities or people caring for those with disabilities. They are outlined and explained in detail on the Government of Canada's website. For Line 215 of your tax return use form T929 to calculate the amount for deduction.

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/tax-return/completing-a-tax-return/deductions-credits-expenses/line-21500-disability-supports-deduction.html>

## ***Disability Tax Credit***

This tax credit is intended to help people with disabilities or caregivers of those with disabilities to reduce the amount of income tax that they may have to pay. To benefit from this tax credit you must have Form T2201, Disability Credit Certificate filled out and approved by the Canada Revenue Agency. Part B of this form must be completed by a medical practitioner.

To find out the maximum disability credit, check the Government of Canada's website as this number changes annually.

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/disability-tax-credit.html>

## ***Canada Caregiver Credit***

If you are caring for a spouse, common-law partner, or dependent with a physical or mental impairment you may be able to receive this credit. Support means that you need to regularly and consistently provide this person with some or all of the basic life necessities – e.g. food, shelter and clothing.

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/tax-return/completing-a-tax-return/deductions-credits-expenses/canada-caregiver-amount.html>

## ***Canada Workers Benefit***

This benefit is a refundable tax credit that provides tax relief for eligible low-income individuals and families. There is a disability supplement for those who have an approved Disability Tax Credit Certificate.

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-workers-benefit.html>

## ***Jordan's Principle***

Jordan's Principle aims to ensure all First Nations children are able to access health, social and educational services. Under Jordan's Principle private diagnosis and treatment may be covered for First Nations children. Services covered under Jordan's Principle include but are not limited to respite care, speech therapy, schooling supports, medical equipment and mental health services.

### ***Contact within Canada***

For more information, including how to access Jordan's Principle or submit a request visit

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396042341/1568396159824>

Phone: 1 (855) 572-4453 (available 24 hours a day 7 days a week)

### ***Contact within the NWT***

Phone: 1 (866) 848-5846

Email: [sac.principedejordanrn-nrjordansprinciple.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.principedejordanrn-nrjordansprinciple.isc@canada.ca)

It is recommended that you prepare the following prior to making contact:

- your child's name and birthday
- proof your child is eligible (First Nations or Inuit)
- a description of their needs
- what product or service they need
- what you think the cost will be
- how often the support is going to be needed

## ***Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program***

This program provides coverage to registered First Nations and Inuit for medically necessary items and services that are not covered by other plans and programs including: dental care, eye and vision care, medical supplies and equipment, drugs and pharmacy products, mental health counselling and medical transportation. To find out more about how to receive coverage use the contact information below.

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada.html>

Phone: 1 (888) 332-9222

Location: 2720 Riverside Dr., Ottawa, ON, K1A 0K9

## ***Post-Secondary Student Financial Assistance - Federal***

Students with Permanent Disabilities can apply for financial assistance for a study grant and/or a grant for services and equipment. The study grant assists with costs such as tuition, books, travel and accommodation. The services and equipment grant helps with costs related to tutoring, interpreting, a reader, transportation, attendant care, special equipment and a one-time medical assessment.

Website: Access the Student Financial Assistance Handbook at <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/student-financial-assistance/program-information>

Phone: 1 (867) 767-9355 or 1 (800) 661-0793

Email: [nwtsfa@gov.nt.ca](mailto:nwtsfa@gov.nt.ca)

## ***Private Insurance***

If you choose to get treatment or support through a private service provider, your extended health insurance may cover some of the cost. Contact your provider directly to ask about coverage.

Some people choose to get insurance to help with these expenses. There are many health insurance providers. Three of the more common ones are listed below.

### ***Canada Life (formerly known as Great-West Life)***

Phone: 1 (800) 957-9777, Website: [www.canadalife.com](http://www.canadalife.com)

### ***Manulife***

Phone: 1 (888) 790-4387, Website: [www.manulife.ca](http://www.manulife.ca)

### ***Sun Life***

Phone: 1 (877) 786-5433, Website: [www.sunlife.ca](http://www.sunlife.ca)

## ***NWT Health Care Insurance Plan***

If you are a permanent NWT resident, you probably already have a health care card. However, if you are new to the territory you may have to apply for a health care card. You are eligible for NWT health care coverage if you:

- Are lawfully entitled to be or remain in Canada; and
- Make your home in and are ordinarily present in the NWT (present in the NWT at least 153 days each calendar year).

To apply for NWT health care coverage visit

<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/applying-health-care>

Phone: 1 (867) 777-7400 or 1 (800) 661-0830

Email: [healthcarecard@gov.nt.ca](mailto:healthcarecard@gov.nt.ca)

## ***NWT Medical Treatment Travel***

“Medical Travel is a service provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories to eligible persons in the NWT who must travel in order to access necessary and appropriate insured health services. To be eligible for this benefit, travel must originate in the NWT and service must not be available within the resident’s home community. Furthermore, the medical referral from the resident’s home community must be to the nearest insured centre that offers the required treatment.... Regardless of what type of benefit program patients access, all medical travel originates from clinical decisions within the NWT health system.”

<https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/medical-travel>

All arrangements can either be made by Medical Travel or clients can choose to make their own arrangements for later reimbursement. This only extends to individuals who do not have similar coverage through an employer-sponsored or 3rd party insurance program.

Please refer to website below for contact in your community:

<https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/medical-travel>

## ***Extended Health Benefits for Specified Disease Conditions Program***

Provides non-Aboriginal and Métis residents of the NWT with specified disease conditions with some benefits not covered by hospital and medical care insurance. Autism Spectrum Disorder is not a condition covered by this program but it may be worth exploring if your child has other health conditions.

Phone: 1 (800) 661-0830 or (867) 777-7400

Email: [healthcarecard@gov.nt.ca](mailto:healthcarecard@gov.nt.ca)

Website: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/applying-extended-health-benefits-specified-disease-conditions-program>

## Appendix A:

### NWT Indigenous Government Contact Information

If you or the person you are caring for with ASD is a citizen of an NWT First Nation, there may be other supports or services available. Contact your First Nation for more information.

#### **Akaiicho Dene First Nations**

Mail: P.O. Box 1768, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P3

Phone: (867) 394-3313

#### **Akaiicho Territory Government**

Mail: General Delivery, Fort Resolution, NT, X0E 0M0

Phone: (867) 394-3313

#### **Decho First Nations**

Mail: P.O. Box 89, Fort Simpson, NT, X0E 0N0

Phone: (867) 695-2355

#### **Gwich'in Tribal Council**

Mail: P.O. Box 1509, Inuvik, NT, X0E 0T0

Phone: (867) 777-7900

#### **Inuvialuit Regional Corporation**

Mail: Bag Service 21, Inuvik, NT, X0E 0T0

Phone: (867) 777-7000

#### **Northern Territory Métis Nation**

Mail: P.O. Box 720, Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0

Phone: (867) 872-2770

#### **Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated**

Mail: P.O. Box 155, Déljñę, NT, X1A 0G0

Phone: (867) 589-4719

#### **Tłjcho Government**

Mail: P.O. Box 412, Behchokò, NT, X0E 0Y0

Phone: (867) 392-6381 ext. 1302

## **Community Governments**

### **Acho Dene Koe First Nation**

Mail: General Delivery, Fort Liard, NT, X0G A0A

Phone: (867) 770-4571 Ext. 265

### **Déljñę Got'ineę Government**

Mail: P.O. Box 156, Déljñę, NT, X1A 0G0

Phone: (867) 589-8100

### **Kát'odeeche First Nation**

Mail: P.O. Box 3060, Hay River, NT, X0E 1G4

Phone: (867) 874-6701

### **Salt River First Nation**

Mail: P.O. Box 960, Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0

Phone: (867) 872-2986

## Appendix B:

### Community Nursing Services Contact Information

#### **Aklavik**

Phone: (867) 978-2516

Fax: 867-978-2160

Address: 2 Airport Road, P.O. Box 114, Aklavik, NT X0E 0A0

#### **Behchokò**

Phone: (867) 392-6075

Fax: 867-392-6612

Address: Bag #5, Behchokò, NT X0E 0Y0

#### **Colville Lake**

Phone: (867) 709-2409

Fax: 867-709-2504

Address: General Delivery, Colville Lake, NT X0E 1L0

#### **Déliné**

Phone: (867) 589-5555

Fax: 867-589-5570

Address: General Delivery, Déliné, NT X0E 0G0

#### **Fort Good Hope**

Phone: (867) 598-3333

Fax: 867-598-2605

Address: P.O. Box 9, Fort Good Hope, NT X0E 0H0

#### **Fort Liard**

Phone: (867) 770-4301

Fax: 867-770-3235

Address: General Delivery, Fort Liard, NT X0G 0A0

#### **Fort McPherson**

Phone: (867) 952-2586

Fax: 867-952-2620

Address: P.O. Box 56, Fort McPherson, NT X0E 0J0

#### **Fort Providence**

Phone: (867) 699-4311

Fax: 867-699-3811

Address: P.O. Box 260, Fort Providence, NT X0E 0L0

**Fort Resolution**

Phone: (867) 394-4511

Fax: 867-394-3117

Address: P.O. Box 1997, Fort Resolution, NT X0E 0M0

**Fort Simpson**

Phone: (867) 695-7000

Fax: 867-695-7017

Address: P.O. Box 246, Fort Simpson, NT X0E 0N0

**Fort Smith**

Medical Clinic

Phone: (867) 872-6205

Fax: 867-872-6260

Address: P.O. Box 1080, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0

Health Centre (Public Health)

Phone: (867) 872-6203

Fax: 867-872-6251

Address: 41 Breyne Street, P.O. Box 1080, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0

**Gamètì**

Phone: (867) 997-3141

Fax: 867-997-3045

Address: General Delivery, Gamètì, NT X0E 1R0

**Hay River**

Regional Health Centre

Phone: (867) 874-8000

Fax: 867-874-8016

Address: 37911 MacKenzie Highway, Hay River, NT X0E 0R6

Medical Clinic

Phone: (867) 874-8100

Fax: 867-874-8099

Address: 37911 MacKenzie Highway, Hay River, NT X0E 0R6

**Inuvik**

Inuvik Regional Hospital

Phone: (867) 777-8000

Fax: 867-777-8054

Address: Bag Service #2, 285 MacKenzie Rd, Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0

**Public Health**

Phone: (867) 777-7246

Fax: 867-777-8054

Address: 106 Veterans Way (1st Floor)

**Jean Marie River**

Phone: (867) 809-2900

Fax: 867-809-2902

Address: General Delivery, Jean Marie River, NT X0E 0N0

**Łutselk'e**

Phone: (867) 370-3115

Fax: 867-370-3022

Address: P.O. Box 56, Łutselk'e, NT X0E 1A0

**Nahanni Butte**

Phone: (867) 602-2203

Fax: 867-602-2021

Address: General Delivery, Nahanni Butte, NT X0E 0N0

**Norman Wells**

Phone: (867) 587-3333

Fax: 867-587-2934

Address: 26 Woodland Avenue, P.O. Box 340, Norman Wells, NT, X0E 0V0

**Paulatuk**

Phone: (867) 580-3231

Fax: 867-580-3300

Address: General Delivery, Paulatuk, NT X0E 1N0

**Sachs Harbour**

Phone: (867) 690-4181

Fax: 867-690-3802

Address: General Delivery, Sachs Harbour, NT X0E 0Z0

**Sambaa K'e**

Phone: (867) 206-2838

Fax: 867-206-2024

Address: General Delivery, Sambaa K'e, NT X0E 1Z0

**Tsiigehtchic**

Phone: (867) 953-3361

Fax: 867-953-3408

Address: General Delivery, Tsiigehtchic, NT X0E 0B0

**Tuktoyaktuk**

Phone: (867) 977-2321

Fax: 867-977-2535

Address: Bag 1000, Tuktoyaktuk, NT X0E 1C0

**Tulita**

Phone: (867) 588-3333

Fax: 867-588-3000

Address: P.O. Box 145, Tulita, NT X0E 0K0

**Ulukhaktok**

Phone: (867) 396-3111

Fax: 867-396-3221

Address: P.O. Box 160, Ulukhaktok, NT X0E 0S0

**Wekweètì**

Phone: (867) 713-2904

Fax: 867-713-2903

Address: General Delivery, Wekweètì, NT X0E 1W0

**Whatì**

Phone: (867) 573-3261

Fax: 867-573-3701

Address: General Delivery, Whatì, NT X0E 1P0

**Wrigley**

Phone: (867) 587-3441

Fax: 867-581-3200

Address: General Delivery, Wrigley, NT X0E 1E0

**Yellowknife**

Stanton Ambulatory Care Centre (previously called Stanton Medical Clinic)

Phone: (867) 669-4122

Fax: 867-920-4139

Address: 1st Floor, 550 Byrne Rd, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N1

Audiology Clinic

Phone: (867) 669-3130

Fax: 867-669-4128

Address: 550 Byrne Rd, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N1

Eye Clinic

Phone: (867) 873-3577

Fax: 867-920-7992

Address: 4916 47 St, Yellowknife, NT X1A 1L8

Frame Lake Community Health Clinic

Phone: (867) 767-9125

Fax: 867-920-2210

Address: 312 Old Airport Rd, Yellowknife, NT X1A 3T3

Public Health

Phone: (867) 767-9120

Fax: 867-873-0158

Address: 4702 Franklin Ave, Yellowknife, NT X1A 1N2

Stanton Medical Centre

Phone: (867) 669-3100

Fax: 867-920-4271

Address: 419 Byrne Rd, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N1

Stanton Territorial Hospital

Phone: (867) 669-4111

Fax: 867-669-4128

Address: 550 Byrne Rd, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N1

Yellowknife Primary Care Centre

Phone: (867) 920-7777

Fax: 867-920-7711

Address: 4915 48 St, Yellowknife, NT X1A 1N2

## Appendix C:

### Government Service Officers

Aklavik	(867) 978-2285
Behchokq	(867) 392-6046
Colville Lake	(867) 709-2047
Délįnę	(867) 589-4910
Fort Providence	(867) 699-3149
Fort Good Hope	(867) 598-2179
Fort Liard	(867) 770-2277
Fort McPherson	(867) 952-2060
Fort Resolution	(867) 394-3017
Gamètí	(867) 997-3106
Hay River Reserve	(867) 874-6306
Jean Marie River	(867) 809-2077
Kátł'odeeche	(867) 874-6306
Łutselk'e	(867) 370-3386
Nahanni Butte	(867) 602-2046
Paulatuk	(867) 580-3068
Sachs Harbour	(867) 690-3812
Tsiigehtchic	(867) 953-3726
Tuktoyaktuk	(867) 977-2097
Tulita	(867) 588-3002
Ulukhaktok	(867) 396-3084
Wekweètì	(867) 713-2600
Whatì	(867) 573-3256

## Appendix D:

### NWT Services and Resources

#### **NWT Disabilities Council**

Suite 116, 5102 50th Avenue, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 3S8

Phone: (867) 873-8230 or toll free: 1 (800) 491-8885

[info@nwtcdc.net](mailto:info@nwtcdc.net)

<https://www.nwtcdc.net/>

#### **Autism Society NWT**

5204 54th St., Yellowknife, NT, X1A 1W8

Phone: (867) 446-0985

[president@nwtautismsociety.org](mailto:president@nwtautismsociety.org)

<https://www.nwtautismsociety.org/>

#### **Government of the Northwest Territories**

P.O. Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

Switchboard: (867) 767-9000

<https://www.gov.nt.ca/>

#### **Inclusion NWT**

Abe Miller Building, 4912 53rd Street, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 1V2

<https://inclusionnwt.ca/>

#### **Special Olympics NWT**

Box 1691, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P3

Phone: (867) 446-2873

<https://www.specialolympics.ca/northwest-territories>

#### **YWCA NWT**

4904 54th Ave., Yellowknife, NT, X1A 1H7

Box 1679, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P3 (Mailing address)

Phone: (867) 920-2777

[giving@ywcanwt.ca](mailto:giving@ywcanwt.ca)

<https://www.ywcanwt.ca/family-centre>

## Appendix E:

### Professionals on the Therapy and Diagnostic Team

Different professionals play different roles in both the diagnosis and therapy process for people with ASD. The following section outlines who the professionals are, what they do and what you should ask them.

**Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA):** A behaviour analyst observes and assesses behaviour and identifies its causes. A treatment plan is written, and evidence-based therapy is provided. Behaviour is often tracked with graphs and charts, and parents are given suggestions about how to modify the child's environment in order to promote positive behaviour change.

For more information about behaviour analysts, visit: [www.bacb.com/](http://www.bacb.com/)

**Community Nurse:** If you live in a smaller community within the NWT you may not have frequent access to a general practitioner. In this case you may visit the closest nursing station. They will be able to direct you to the services you should access. You should bring all your concerns to them, and it is recommended that you even write them down so you remember.

Depending on your child's age and the community, you or your child may be able to access services within your community, or you may have to travel to Yellowknife or even outside of the NWT.

**Developmental Therapist:** looks at children's play, behaviour, social and emotional development. They provide support to families regarding parenting issues and child development.

**Diagnostic Coordinator:** In a diagnostic process within or outside of the NWT you or your child may be assigned a diagnostic coordinator. While this person may not actually perform diagnostic assessments they are a point of a contact for families and an organizational coordinator of the different components of the assessment. They will be able to answer any questions you may have about the diagnostic process and potentially be able to link your child to services as a part of their therapy.

**General Practitioner:** A general practitioner is also commonly called a family doctor. General practitioners are usually the first point of contact for patients when there is a concern. If you are not sure where to go with your health concerns they are a good place to start. Even while they may not be able to provide you with a diagnosis or support needed, they are able to provide you with a referral or support in accessing services that will. It is important to bring all of your concerns to them, and it is recommended that you even write them down so you do not forget.

**Occupational Therapist (also commonly called an OT):** provides care and therapy to help to solve problems that interfere with everyday life. They help to promote skills for independent living. They also provide supports surrounding sensory integration (anything to do with the senses and balance perception). Occupational Therapists also help children with fine motor skills delays. Any concerns about behaviours that affect everyday life of you or your child should be brought to your OT (ex. teaching a child to tolerate teeth brushing or to brush their teeth independently).

For more information on what to expect visit:  
[www.autismontario.com/node/484](http://www.autismontario.com/node/484)

**Pediatrician:** A pediatrician is a doctor that specializes in childhood health and wellness. For your child to see a pediatrician in the NWT you will need a referral from a general practitioner. It is recommended that you bring all concerns to the pediatrician. They may be able to help you directly or refer you to another specialist or a team that will be able to address the concerns with your child.

**Psychiatrist:** A psychiatrist is a medical doctor that specializes in psychological diagnoses. They are able to provide assessments and therapy but also prescribe medications. It is important to bring any concerning behaviours, mental development or emotion to your psychiatrist.

**Psychologist:** A psychologist studies the human mind, emotions and behaviour. If you or your child is seeing a psychologist for either an assessment or therapy it is important to inform them of any behaviours that you are concerned about. In terms of a diagnosis they will perform cognitive assessments and play based assessments.

**Physiotherapist:** A physiotherapist (also called a PT) specializes in physical movements. They can help to address a person's behaviours or illnesses that may affect their ability to perform functional activities in their daily lives. They may be a part of a diagnosis team or you or your child's therapy. Be sure to tell them if you have any concerns with your child's movement.

**Social Worker:** A social worker may be helpful throughout the lifespan of an individual with ASD. They can help by providing a variety of services not limited to: information regarding diagnosis and treatment, explaining the diagnosis and treatment processes to family members and working with a person with ASD on relationships, social skills and transitions.

For more information on what to expect visit:  
[www.autismontario.com/node/497](http://www.autismontario.com/node/497)

**Speech Language Pathologist:** A speech language pathologist (SLP) specializes in evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders. ASD can affect speech, language development, and social communication. They also can help with eating and swallowing issues.

An SLP may be a crucial player in diagnosis and therapy. In a diagnosis the SLP may evaluate language delay and social language use. Any language-related or communication related concerns should be brought to your SLP.

For more information on what to expect visit:  
[www.autismontario.com/node/496](http://www.autismontario.com/node/496)

## Appendix F:

### Glossary of Important Terms

**Echolalia:** Echolalia is the repetition of words, phrases, intonation, or sounds of the speech of others. Children with ASD often display echolalia in the process of learning to talk. *Immediate echolalia* is the exact repetition of someone else's speech, immediately or soon after the child hears it. *Delayed echolalia* may occur several minutes, hours, days, or even weeks or years after the original speech was heard. Echolalia is sometimes referred to as "movie talk" because the child can remember and repeat chunks of speech like repeating a movie script. Echolalia was once thought to be non-functional, but is now understood to often serve a communicative or regulatory purpose for the child.

**Executive functioning:** Executive functioning is a broad term that refers to the cognitive processes that help us regulate, control and manage our thoughts and actions. It includes planning, working memory, attention, problem solving, verbal reasoning, inhibition, cognitive flexibility, initiation of actions and monitoring of actions.

**Language delay:** A language delay occurs when a child's language is developing slower than other children of the same age, but it is following the typical pattern of development. For example, a child may be 4 years of age, but understanding and/or using language typical of a child who may be only 2.5 years of age. A child may have a receptive language (understanding of language) delay or an expressive language (use of language) delay. Language development can be affected by the complex interaction of genetic and environmental influences.

**Nonverbal communication:** Nonverbal behaviors are those things people do to convey or exchange information or express emotions without the use of words. These include eye gaze (looking at the face of others to check and see what they are looking at and to signal interest in interacting), facial expressions (movements of the face used to express emotion and to communicate with others nonverbally), body postures (movements and positioning of the body in relation to others), and gestures (hand and head movements to signal, such as a give, reach, wave, point, or head shake). In the first year of life, children learn to coordinate nonverbal behaviors to regulate social interaction so that they can use their eyes, face, body, and hands together to interact. At the same time, children learn to read or understand the nonverbal behaviors of others.

For example, they learn to follow gaze and look where someone else is looking, understand if others show with their face or tone of their voice that they are happy, sad, or angry, or look at what someone is pointing at. Before learning to talk, children can take turns with nonverbal behaviors in back-and-forth interactions.

**Rigidity/Repetitive Behaviours and Interests:** Repetitive behaviors and restricted interests are common in children with ASD. Children with ASD may appear to have odd or unusual behaviors such as a very strong interest in a particular kind of object (e.g., lint, people's hair) or parts of objects, or certain activities. They may have repetitive and unusual movements with their body or with objects, or repetitive thoughts about specific, unusual topics.

**Screening vs. diagnosis:** The Field Epidemiology Manual describes the difference between diagnostic and screening tests as: Screening tests are offered to asymptomatic people who may or may not have early disease or disease precursors and test results are used to guide whether or not a diagnostic test should be offered. Diagnostic tests are offered to people who have a specific indication of possible illness (a history, symptom, sign or positive screening test result) to determine whether or not they have the disease in question.

**Self-stimulation (stimming):** Self-stimulating behaviors or "stimming" are stereotyped or repetitive movements or posturing of the body. They include mannerisms of the hands (such as handflapping, finger twisting or flicking, rubbing, or wringing hands), body (such as rocking, swaying, or pacing), and odd posturing (such as posturing of the fingers, hands, or arms). Sometimes they involve objects such as tossing string in the air or twisting pieces of lint. These mannerisms may appear not to have any meaning or function, although they may have significance for the child, such as providing sensory stimulation (also referred to as self-stimulating behavior), communicating to avoid demands, or request a desired object or attention, or soothing when wary or anxious. These repetitive mannerisms are common in children with ASD.

**Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD):** SPD is a condition where the brain and nervous system have trouble processing or integrating stimulus. SPD is a condition in which sensory input either from the environment or one's body is poorly detected or interpreted and/or to which atypical responses are observed.

For a child with SPD, processing the feelings of hot or cold, tired, hungry, lights and sound can be challenging or overwhelming. SPD can show up as an either an over or lesser response to stimulation.

- **Hypersensitivity:** Over reactivity to sensory input is abnormal sensitivity or hyperresponsiveness. This is the state of feeling overwhelmed by what most people would consider common or ordinary stimuli of sound, sight, taste, touch, or smell. Many children with ASD are over reactive to ordinary sensory input and may exhibit sensory defensiveness - a strong negative response to their overload, such as screaming at the sound of a telephone.
- **Hyposensitivity:** Under reactivity to sensory input is one aspect of abnormal insensitivity to sensory input, or hypo-responsiveness, in which a child does not respond to sensory stimulation. A child who appears as if deaf, but whose hearing has tested as normal, is under reactive. A child who is under reactive to sensory input may have a high tolerance to pain, may be clumsy, sensation-seeking, and may act aggressively.

**Social Communication:** Social interaction is the use of nonverbal or verbal behavior to engage in interaction with people. This can involve eye gaze, speech, gestures, and facial expressions used to initiate and respond to interactions with others.

**This document is updated yearly.**

**If you have any suggestions for edits or would like to suggest new information, please email [yukonhub@aidecanada.ca](mailto:yukonhub@aidecanada.ca).**

*This material is designed for information purposes only.*

*It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction and/or therapy.*

*If you have specific questions, please contact your doctor or appropriate health care professional.*

*This document was produced through the collaboration between AIDE Canada (Autism and/or Intellectual Disability Knowledge Exchange Network), Autism Yukon, and the NWT Disabilities Council.*

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*Copy Edit and Design: Lois Bochert, Miaclaire Woodland*

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[specialolympics.ca/northwest-territories](https://specialolympics.ca/northwest-territories)

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