

JULIE GREEN—MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
Junior Kindergarten and Early Childhood Development Funding
Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment—March 5, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions relate to page 41, starting with early childhood development and learning. I notice that there is an \$800,000 decrease from the revised estimates for the current fiscal year compared to the next fiscal year. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us why funding in this area has gone down. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Members may be aware, we received funding from Canada for the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. It is a multi-year funding agreement from the Government of Canada. The year-over-year difference, the \$80,000 decrease is just really reflective of the action plan we have developed with Canada, the activities we want to fund, and what year those activities will be undertaken. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to Ms. Gareau for that response, and also for catching the extra number there. Could she please provide more detail about the difference between the projects in the two years? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Directing this to Ms. Haener, I take it. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding flow is also reflective of the fact that we signed the agreement very late in its first year. Because of that, we were able to shift some resources from that first year to the second year, because of how late we signed. What the spread of the dollars is also reflective of is the recognition that some of the funding is being used to support things like increased inspections. There are resources associated with that where we would have to spool up at the start with human resources for that kind of thing.

I am just looking at the briefing notes here to provide a bit more information. There is also a reflection of junior kindergarten that is also captured within this funding area. The expenditures there would differ from year to year, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What is the impact on children themselves of this change in funding? It sounds like it is primarily administrative. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The impact on children actually should be better services with the implementation of junior kindergarten, which made accessible early childhood development programming to all communities in the Northwest Territories, where that wasn't an option before. The licenced childcare

centres actually got increases last year to provide extra money for infants and children who were needing support. Ideally, the impact for children should be better services. That, of course, will take an evaluation period. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought this was the federal money. I didn't realize it was the JK money. I appreciate the Minister clarifying that this is, in fact, the pot of money for junior kindergarten. From which level of government does it come? I thought it came from the territorial government. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding that comes for junior kindergarten is from both the GNWT and the federal government agreements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.