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Day Care Concerns

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak today on the issue of the availability of day care space and the government's plan to address this issue, as it affects most of the communities we represent.

Last February, I spoke of how it is that the GNWT allows for a non-level playing field by allowing some non-profit day cares to operate out of government-owned facilities, while others are left to fend for themselves at a huge disadvantage. Mr. Speaker, this continues to be allowed to happen. The Minister and his department still don't have any answers on how to correct it so none of them have to close.

In Yellowknife, parents are struggling to find day care space. There are currently over 100 children left with no place to go. Parents, especially those with young infants, are faced with a very daunting task of finding a place for their children. Many are looking at day homes, both licensed and unlicensed, to try to get some help. Space has been an issue for years, Mr. Speaker; a problem that just doesn't seem to go away. I believe, as a government, we have an obligation to the parents and to the children to ensure that there is adequate space and that there is a level playing field.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has mentioned that, in terms of day care funding from the federal government, he has written to the new Minister responsible for Human Resources and Social Development, the Honourable Diane Finley, requesting that the federal government partner with the GNWT on providing more spaces.

Mr. Speaker, given the lack of any real progress on levelling the playing field and increasing spaces, there are questions about why the Minister and his department continue to always come up with excuses as to why things can't happen, and start making some plans to show us some real spaces and protect the ones that we currently have.

Mr. Speaker, we need a plan for day cares and spaces – and we need it now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause