NT’s First Minister for Children and Families

Today marks the start of a new era for family support in the Northern Territory.

Marion Scrymgour was today sworn in as the Territory’s first Minister for Children and Families.

“The Territory Government is committed to supporting Territory families, and I’m proud to be sworn in as the first Minister for Children and Families” Ms Scrymgour said.

“We are bringing together a range of services - child protection, out of home care including foster care, family violence and youth support, and focussing on early learning,” she said.

“The new departmental structure will also allow the smoother management of the new family responsibility agreements, which hold parents responsible for the actions of their children.”

From today, the Department of Health and Community Services becomes the Department of Health and Families. Dr Chris Burns remains Minister for Health and Ms Scrymgour becomes the Minister for Children and Families.

Ms Scrymgour also said that from today, 1 July 2008, the new division of Early Childhood Services would operate out of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET).

The division brings together DEET’s Early Years Team and the Children’s Services Unit from the former Department of Health and Community Services.

Early Childhood Services will be responsible for integrated early childhood services, child care licensing, new children’s services regulations, community engagement about early childhood and parenting, preschools, mobile preschools, play groups and the early years of school.

“Providing early learning opportunities is crucial in starting our kids down the right educational path,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“One of the key commitments under the Territory Government’s Closing the Gap and Transforming Indigenous Education packages is a focus on early education.

“Getting Indigenous kids into the education system early, and attending regularly, is vital in getting longer term outcomes in numeracy and literacy.”

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