



Pour continuer  
à grandir

**Commission  
sur l'éducation  
à la petite  
enfance**

**Report by the  
Early Childhood Education Commission**  
February 2017





# Recommendations

The Commission has formulated five policy statements, each accompanied by specific recommendations that are part and parcel of them, since they are aimed at meeting the goals of other recommendations.

## **1. The government should clearly state that child daycare services are above all educational services.**

The government should confirm and support the fact the early childhood is a crucial period in child development. Early childhood educational services are, accordingly, the first step in the child's educational path and must be formally integrated into the educational continuum from early childhood to university.

We recommend:

1.1 Putting one minister and ministry in charge of all educational services offered to children from birth to 16 years of age.

1.2 At the same time, reaffirming that the educational strategy for children from birth to age 5 remains one that nurtures overall child development, stimulation, awareness and socialization through play activities that promote success in school, rather than early schooling.

---

## **2. Early childhood (birth to age 4) educational services should be free, just like school.**

Since early childhood educational services are the first step on the child's educational path and should be formally integrated into the preschool and school educational continuum, we believe they should be covered by the same broad principles of universal and free access that apply to schooling.

We recommend:

2.1. Ensuring free early childhood educational services for all children from birth to the age of 4, as quickly as possible.

## **3. The quality of early childhood educational services must be improved.**

Early childhood educational services will only have a positive impact if they are of high quality, starting with communities that are home to large numbers of vulnerable children. This is a matter of fairness

and equal opportunity. We believe quality will be higher if training requirements are upgraded and if quality assessments, backed by educational support, are made on an ongoing basis.

We recommend:

3.1. That all early childhood educational service providers have, for basic training, a diploma of collegial studies in early childhood education techniques.

3.2. That all new family childcare providers hold a DCS before receiving family daycare provider accreditation.

3.3. That the diploma of collegial studies in early childhood education techniques offers a specialization for family childcare providers, suited to their multiple tasks and responsibilities for children of different ages.

3.4 That family childcare providers be evaluated in regards to the 22 professional skillsets of the early childhood education techniques, and that they receive support and training to acquire any skills they have not mastered through a program involving reflective thinking and active support.

3.5. That bachelor degrees in preschool education and in elementary education offer more courses aimed at preschool work, to provide better preparation for teachers in kindergartens for 4- and 5-year olds.

3.6. That childcare providers are required to participate in professional development programs, built around best practices, which help them proactively acquire new knowledge and thereby ensure the information is retained and put into practice.

3.7 That quality be assessed every two years for all early childhood educational services through a system that permits comparison across all such services in Quebec (including kindergarten for 4 year olds) and, if possible, with other provinces and countries. Such an evaluation should focus on the quality of interactions between childcare providers and children, quality of interactions between childcare providers and parents, structure and layout of the facilities, variety and organization of activities provided for children and child development.

3.8 That this process provide an assessment of early childhood educational services, identify targets for continuous improvement of service quality and include direct support and accompanying measures where indicated.

3.9 That educational services be required to meet minimum quality standards through this evaluation process or lose their permit or accreditation.

3.10 That the ability to provide for the child's overall development be an absolute prerequisite for maintaining a permit or accreditation, in the same manner as ensuring their health, safety and welfare.

3.11 That the "on-demand" character of educational support to family childcare providers by office coordinators be reviewed and made mandatory.

3.12 That tax credits for children attending unregulated daycare centres be eliminated.

---

#### **4. Early childhood educational services must reach and include children from disadvantaged communities and vulnerable situations.**

The educational services must support the development of all children, including those with special needs. We believe that early childhood educational services regulated by the *Educational Childcare Act* serve as the principal foundation for educational success among children from birth to age 5. We therefore believe that supplementary measures (community-based family organization, integrated services and early childhood program and full-time kindergarten for four-year olds in disadvantaged neighbourhoods) must be aligned with early childhood educational services. The early childhood educational system is composed of this set of resources.

We recommend:

4.1 Deploying recruitment/outreach programs on a priority basis to ensure greater attendance of educational services by children under 5.

4.2 To require that children who attend full-day kindergarten for 4-year-olds from disadvantaged areas did not attend an early childhood education

service before entering kindergarten for 4-year-olds.

4.3 Reviewing the financing of community-based family organization to provide them with more funding in line with their success in meeting their mission to support parents in obtaining educational daycare services.

---

#### **5. Cohesion and complementarity must be enhanced among all stakeholders involved in early childhood services.**

Support for the optimal development of children from birth to age 5 depends on a network of resources that must work together in making the child's needs the focus of their concerns. Shortcomings must be overcome to ensure better continuity between services offered by the healthcare and early childhood educational sectors and the schools.

We recommend:

5.1. That a standardized child development resource be developed by early childhood educational services and parents, in conjunction with the healthcare and social services system.

5.2 That this resource must be used by healthcare and social services professionals and by childcare providers to ensure the transmission of information and the provision of services required by children from birth to age 5 and to facilitate their passage to kindergarten.

5.3. That the integrated services and early childhood program (SIPPE) for young mothers from disadvantaged communities be enhanced and treated as an inseparable part of a comprehensive educational strategy for vulnerable children, starting from pregnancy.

5.4. That the number of spaces be increased under memorandums of understanding between early childhood educational service providers and the healthcare system and that such agreements require access by healthcare professionals to ensure the necessary support and assistance for the children they cover.

# To Keep Growing

## Report by the Early Childhood Education Commission

In 1997, the Québec government published its Family Policy, *Les enfants au cœur de nos choix*. Twenty years later, the Early Childhood Education Commission was established to evaluate early childhood educational services and their impact on young children.

### The Commission and Its Work

The Commission has combined different forms of participation in evaluating early childhood educational services and determining any adjustments needed. Commission members visited 14 cities to foster social dialogue focusing on quality, access, universality and governance of educational services for young children.

### Highlights of the Consultation Process

The very large majority of testimonials the Commission received emphasized the absolute need to offer a high quality of service to support optimal child development and equal opportunity in Quebec. Studies show that the quality of such services remains lackluster in Quebec. In addition to the issue of funding, unequal childcare provider training requirements and a virtually total lack of suitable means for assessing these services are crucial gaps that must be bridged to boost the quality of early childhood educational services.

Access seems to have been improved thanks to rapid growth in spaces at unsubsidized daycare centres. Questions remain, however, about the quality of these new spots. Furthermore, vulnerable families face many barriers to obtain such services. One failure of the Family Policy is its lack of success in reaching more vulnerable families, as desired. Yet it is precisely the children of these families who have the most to gain from attending educational services, starting at an early age.

The practice of charging different fees for subsidized places and giving tax credits for unsubsidized spots is often questioned because of the impact this strategy could have on the services parents decide to use. The Commission's consultation process underscored the adverse influence that such initiatives could have by encouraging parents to replace subsidized services that are generally of better quality, with their unsubsidized counterparts, for financial reasons.

The accounts of citizens and experts that the Commission received underscore the need for better cooperation among educational daycare services, the healthcare and social services sector, schools and community groups in ensuring better support for child development and in particular, the child's overall development. By the same token, the government's early childhood initiatives must be better coordinated because piecemeal actions by different ministries undermine the integrated effort needed.



To consult the full report  
[commissionpetiteenfance.com](http://commissionpetiteenfance.com)

Questions? Comments?  
[commissionpetiteenfance@inm.qc.ca](mailto:commissionpetiteenfance@inm.qc.ca)