

Expert report

Christa Japel
Martha Friendly

Inequalities in Access to Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada

The Equal Access Study

The German Youth Institute (Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V., DJI) is one of Germany's largest social science institutes focusing on research and development around the topics of children, youth and families, as well as the political and practical areas related to them.

The German Youth Institute is based in Munich with a branch office in Halle/Saale. Founded in 1963, its supporting organisation is a non-profit association whose members stem from the political and academic spheres, as well as from other associations and institutions dedicated to the support of children, youth and families. Its institutional budget is primarily funded by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), and, to a lesser degree, by the German federal states (Länder). Additional financial contributions are made by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF) as part of the Ministry's project funding, and by various foundations, the European Commission and institutions for the promotion of research.

The International Center Early Childhood Education and Care (ICEC) was established at the Department of Children and Childcare at the German Youth Institute in 2012. Conceived as a Joint Research Center, the ICEC bundles empirical research with scientific policy consultation and professional practice. The ICEC supports the international transfer of knowledge, political concepts and experience, thereby enabling Germany to draw on insights from other countries. In this connection, the ICEC is also actively involved in international panels and networks in the field of early childhood education and care (ECEC). The Equal Access Study is a comparative research project carried out by the ICEC from 2017 to 2020. The focus of the study is the accessibility of ECEC services in Canada, Germany and Sweden, with an emphasis on persistent access barriers at the local level of service provision.

The ICEC is funded by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Publications within the Equal Access Study:

Volume 1 – Research Concept & Study Design

Volume 2 – Inequalities in Access to Early Childhood Education and Care in Germany

Volume 3 – Inequalities in Access to Early Childhood Education and Care in Sweden

Volume 4 – Inequalities in Access to Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada

Impressum

© 2018 Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V.

Abteilung Kinder und Kinderbetreuung

Nockherstraße 2

81541 München

Telefon +49 89 62306-0

Fax +49 89 62306-162

E-Mail icec@dji.de

www.dji.de

Grafik Brandungen GmbH, Leipzig

Druck Himmer GmbH Druckerei & Verlag, Augsburg

Datum der Veröffentlichung Dezember 2018

ISBN 978-3-86379-291-6

Table of Contents

1	Early childhood education and care in Canada as a whole	6
1.1	The evolution of early childhood education and care across Canada	6
1.2	Demographic characteristics relevant to ECEC	7
1.3	Governance and structural issues: Canada is a federation and a liberal democratic welfare regime	10
1.4	Federal/provincial/territorial/local government roles in social programmes	11
1.5	Other relevant social welfare policies and programmes	13
1.6	How early childhood education and care is organised in Canada	15
1.7	Federal role in child care: Policy development and funding	16
2	ECEC policy and services in Ontario	27
2.1	An early leader	27
2.2	Governance of ECEC in Ontario	30
3	ECEC policy and services in Quebec	35
3.1	Overview: Family policy and ECEC services in Quebec	35
3.2	Services for preschool-age children in Quebec	37
3.3	Child Care Services in Quebec – From 1997 to 2017 (Family Ministry)	38
3.4	School-based preschool services (Education Ministry)	42
3.5	Inequalities in access to ECEC services in Quebec	45
3.6	Summary for Quebec	56
4	Discussion and conclusions	58
5	References	63
6	Appendix A	71
7	Appendix B	73
8	Appendix C	74

Introduction

Over the last five years, a new focus on linking early childhood education and care (ECEC) to inequality has emerged among ECEC researchers and policy analysts, particularly in Europe. This has generally been shaped by two main kinds of questions. The first kind of question is about whether ECEC is indeed “the greatest of all equalizers” between advantaged and disadvantaged children, as is often claimed (for example, Bokova 2010; Heckman 2011). Or should this link be conceptualised in a more nuanced, rights-based way, notwithstanding the importance of high-quality ECEC for strengthening equality of opportunity for children, families and women, as argued by Morabito, Vandembroeck and Roose (2013). Connected to these questions are concerns such as Penn’s about how the oversimplification of ideas about ECEC as an equaliser may obscure fundamental issues such as income inequality and poverty (2017).

A second question – linked to the first – is somewhat more straightforward. It is concerned with equal (or unequal) access to high-quality ECEC. That is, if access is unequal, as the available data suggests it often is, who is left out, and why? (See, for example, Thévenon et al. 2016). Just as important are questions about what features of ECEC policy and provision are likely to make access – particularly access to high-quality ECEC programmes – more or less equal. That is, if equitable access to ECEC services is a goal, what kinds of structures and actions are most likely to achieve it? (Van Lancker 2017; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2016a).

This paper on ECEC in Canada – part of a comparative project by the International Centre Early Childhood Education and Care (ICEC) at the German Youth Institute (DJI) – seeks to address questions about inequality in access to early childhood education and care through the prism of Canada. Canada is, in a sense, a curious choice as a prism to examine this question, as it is often called a family policy “laggard” (Mahon 2009). In addition to the regionalised nature of its ECEC policy and provision, Canada stands out as a wealthy country in which only a minority of young children have access to ECEC until the year prior to formal schooling which begins at age six. An OECD report examining family policy provision in 28 countries identified Canada as an outlier even in its cluster defined as “Anglo-Saxon countries: support for poor families, single parents, and households with preschool children” (Thévenon 2011, p.69) with low child care coverage, very low public spending for child care¹ (thus high parent costs as a percentage of income, especially for single-parent families) (Thévenon 2011, Figure 3 and Table A2).

Overall, the Canadian situation is one of restricted access to ECEC for all families whatever their income, circumstances or residential area. This can be attributed to a combination of: inadequate supply of child care places (covering only 24 percent of

¹ When looking at public child care spending in Canada as a whole, it is important to bear in mind that Quebec’s public spending accounts for about 60 percent of total public child care spending in Canada as a whole.

zero to five year-olds and uneven distribution); parental fees for child care that are unaffordable for many or most families (more than CAN\$1,000 a month for an infant or toddler in most regions); kindergarten provision that doesn't begin until age five for most children; and child care quality shown to be mediocre at best (Friendly et al. 2015). In addition to the general scarcity, however, there are many reported inequalities: by region/province, community type (urban-rural), for Indigenous children, for children whose parents work non-standard hours, for newcomers to Canada (immigrants and refugees), for children with disabilities and for children living in low-income families.

This paper has three main sections. The first describes the context and provides an overview of ECEC and related family policy issues for Canada as a whole. It describes how the national political, cultural and ideological context affects all regions in Canada and that – notwithstanding variations in ECEC by province/territory – ECEC in Canada's provinces/territories is more similar than different. The second and third sections of the paper focus on Ontario and Quebec in more detail, as these two largest provinces population-wise serve to cast some of the challenges and strategies associated with inequality of access to ECEC in a keener perspective. The two provinces are noteworthy not only for their share of population but also for their approach to ECEC: Ontario was at one time Canada's ECEC "early leader", while Quebec stands out because its current child care provision and other key family policies, especially maternity and parental leave, deliver a considerably higher level of access and options for families than are available in the rest of Canada.

Readers will note that the Quebec section is more detailed than the Ontario section. There are two reasons for this: first, Quebec stands out as the province most dissimilar to the others in terms of ECEC and other social provision for families, while Ontario fits in more smoothly with the other provinces as described in this first section. Thus, the Ontario section concentrates mostly on Ontario's most defining ECEC features. The Quebec section is also more detailed simply because far more relevant data for this project is available on Quebec than on Ontario or on Canada as a whole.

Indeed, one aspect of Canada's generally indifferent approach to ECEC is the absence of the reliable data needed to answer even the most basic questions. Although some research and data are available, much of this is developed through private initiatives by academic researchers or civil society organisations with no national data strategy or research agenda. Provinces/territories can and do provide some administrative data, but there is very little up-to-date, cross-Canada data (or even provincial/territorial data) to address some of the key questions of interest to this comparative study such as "who are the families using regulated child care?", "which families are in which type of programmes?" or even "what is the quality of regulated child care programmes?". With no significant role for the federal government as a data collector and transferor of knowledge, Quebec is the only province with more than the barest data provision, research and analysis. It is worth noting that, as part of the current federal government's re-engagement in the issue of early childhood education and care, there are plans for the development and funding of a national data strategy.

1.

Early childhood education and care in Canada as a whole

1.1 The evolution of early childhood education and care across Canada

Organised child care began to develop as early as the 1800s in Canada. By the early 1900s, a small number of “care” services for young children of working mothers had been set up in major cities – usually under a religious or charitable aegis. Child care was not, however, considered a public issue until Canada’s entry into World War II triggered the demand for female workers. But even the adoption by the federal government of the *Dominion-Provincial Wartime Agreement* in 1942, which released funds to provinces to create child care centres so mothers could work in “essential war-time industries”, failed to create any impetus for a national, systemic approach to child care. When the child care agreement was cancelled at the end of the war, many of the war-time day nurseries – primarily in Ontario, with six centres in Quebec – were closed. Although some privately funded and initiated day nurseries and day care centres continued to spring up across Canada throughout the 1950s and 1960s, child care did not reappear as a national public issue until 25 years later.

In 1970, an influential *Royal Commission on the Status of Women* called for a national child care programme, the first official recognition of the importance of child care for women’s equality. However, none of the successive attempts to follow through on this recommendation was successful. Today, Canadian child care largely remains a private family responsibility without a Canada-wide approach and with scanty public funding.

Although the first private kindergartens also began to appear before the 1870s, Canadian kindergarten is still a separate programme from child care even today. Originally catering for a middle- and upper-class clientele, the first private kindergartens came to include “free kindergartens” run by missionary and charitable groups. These were used as a tool for social reform and – later on – as a way of assimilating immigrant children (Prochner 2009). When the post-World War II immigration boom brought many European migrants to Canada, public kindergartens

were expanded to help their children assimilate, especially in the big cities. Kindergarten became established as a public school-delivered programme in almost every province/territory, eventually becoming an entitlement in most jurisdictions. By the mid-1980s, most Canadian five-year-olds (and many four-year-olds in Ontario) were enrolled in mostly half-day kindergarten² programmes provided as the first year of public education.

Child care – today broadly conceptualised as early childhood education and care or ECEC (sometimes early learning and child care or ELCC) – has now been discussed and debated as a national policy issue in Canada for almost 50 years, but there is still no national approach aiming to ensure families will be able to find and afford services to meet their own and their children’s needs. The available data, research and analysis show that ECEC policy, provision and funding are inadequate in one way or another in every region of Canada, while access and quality are still varied depending on region and circumstance.

1.2 Demographic characteristics relevant to ECEC

Canada is a northern country in which more than two-thirds of the population live in a corridor within 100 kilometres of the U.S. border with a low population density in much of the rest of the vast territory. According to 2016 census data, Canada’s total population has reached 36 million. Ontario and Quebec are Canada’s most populous provinces, with populations of 13.5 million in Ontario and just over 8 million in Quebec. Thus, these two provinces accounted for 61.5 percent of Canada’s total population in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017a).

Canada’s original Indigenous people are defined by Statistics Canada as First Nations (a term used to describe an Indigenous American “Indian” community officially recognised as an administrative unit by the federal government), Métis (descendants of Indigenous people and European settlers) and Inuit (the original inhabitants of parts of the far north). In 2011, Indigenous people made up about 4 percent of the total population. Although First Nations people may live on ‘reserves’ in remote areas, more than half of all Indigenous Canadians live in large population centres (Statistics Canada 2011). The view that Indigenous Canadians have been and continue to be among the most disadvantaged people in Canada is

² Two provinces, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, did not establish public kindergarten as part of public education systems until 1991 and 2010 respectively.

well documented and widely accepted (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Indigenous people have identified early childhood education and care as a key issue from the perspective of language acquisition and reinforcement of cultural identity (Indigenous National Early Learning and Care Framework Document, in preparation³).

Several current Canadian demographic trends are pertinent to ECEC:

- birth rates below replacement levels;
- high levels of immigration (including refugees) with a high proportion from non-European countries;
- relatively high employment rates of mothers with young children;
- significant rates of child poverty;
- significant and growing inequality.

Today most Canadian preschool-age children have a mother who is employed. The labour force participation rate of mothers of young children has been increasing steadily since the 1970s. In 2014, the employment rate of mothers with children aged zero to two was 70 percent, 77 percent for those with three to five year-olds and 82 percent for mothers with six to 15 year-olds (Friendly et al. 2015). Although mothers' labour force participation rates in Canada are much higher than they were 20 or 30 years ago, an analysis by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) compares the higher employment rates of mothers in Quebec with those in the rest of Canada, attributing this "productivity advantage gap" to Quebec's more accessible publicly funded child care programme (Pettersson et al. 2017).

Statistics Canada points out that a century ago Canada was a 'high fertility' country but that it has had a fertility rate below replacement level for more than 40 years (2017a). Data from the 2016 census shows a fertility rate of 1.61 children per woman, only a slight increase from the all-time low of 1.51 ten years earlier while the reported fertility rate for Indigenous women was somewhat higher at 2.2 children per woman (Moyser 2016).

Canada is a very diverse country in ethnic and racial terms that continues to encourage and welcome high numbers of immigrants and refugees. Indeed, two-thirds of population growth between 2012 and 2016 can be attributed to in-migration (Statistics Canada 2017a). Newcomers are not a new phenomenon in Canada. Migrants have been arriving regularly since European colonisation began in the 1500s but today migrants to Canada predominantly come from non-European countries. National policy and practice have for some time articulated respect for diversity and include a rights-based framework for multiculturalism and anti-racism (Friendly/

³ author's personal communication.

Prabhu 2010). Nevertheless, for many people of colour and for Indigenous Canadians, these policies are too often more rhetoric than reality.

According to the cross-Canada anti-poverty organisation Campaign 2000, Canada's child poverty rate was 17.4 percent in 2016 (higher for children under the age of six [18.8 percent] and up to 43.9 percent in Nunavut, a northern territory). The 2017 data showed that families led by single female parents, as well as those who are racialised, immigrants, Indigenous and affected by disabilities, have considerably higher poverty rates, with 37.9 percent of First Nations children living in poverty (Campaign 2000 2016). Data from the 2016 census showed a slight decrease in the child poverty rate⁴ overall to 17 percent for Canada as a whole, with provincial child poverty rates ranging from 12.8 to 22.2 percent. The data also shows that children account for almost one-quarter of Canada's low-income population (1.2 million children). Furthermore, the younger the child, the more likely s/he lives in a low-income family (Statistics Canada 2017b).

Although the census data showed a modest reduction in child poverty in 2016, child poverty levels continue to exceed the UNICEF benchmark of 10 percent (UNICEF 2008). Most of the provinces/territories have developed "poverty reduction strategies" in the past decade (Tweddle et al. 2015) and the federal government is now developing a national poverty reduction strategy. The federal government restructured the Canada Child Benefit after it came to power in 2015 and in November, 2017, it indexed this to inflation. Provincial/territorial differences in child poverty rates are substantial, perhaps reflecting the provinces'/territories' different approaches to employment standards, availability of good jobs and social and family policy including child care.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has observed that income inequality has been rising rapidly in Canada since the 1990s "largely due to widening disparities in labor earnings between high and low-paid workers but also to less redistribution. Taxes and benefits reduce inequality less in Canada than in most OECD countries" (OECD 2011, p. 1). The issue of income inequality has not gone unnoticed in Canada, with a variety of progressive think-tanks, scholars, experts and government representatives weighing in on the causes and consequences (Broadbent Institute 2017; Green et al. 2015 and others) but it remains an issue of concern for both government and civil society.

4 While more than one definition of poverty is used in Canada, in these analyses, Statistics Canada defines low income as after-tax household income that is less than half of the median household income, CAN\$44,266 for a four-person household.

1.3 Governance and structural issues: Canada is a federation and a liberal democratic welfare regime

Two main political features are instrumental in determining how Canada approaches social policy. A first defining political characteristic, with a significant impact on child care, is that Canada is a liberal democratic welfare regime as defined in Danish sociologist Gösta Esping-Anderson's typology applied to modern welfare states (1990). In this typology, liberal democracies (compared with social democratic and "conservative" regimes) tend to adopt a narrow notion of state intervention together with high reliance on the family and the market. A key element of liberal democratic policy logic, described as the "primacy of the market and the privacy of the family", is that social service provision is relatively low and characterised by a residual approach (Sainsbury 1999). Some scholars have, however, analysed ideological differences among Canada's regions that have yielded a variety of approaches to ECEC, albeit most of them in a relatively narrow band that can generally be characterised as "liberal" (McGrane 2010). A recent analysis of attitudes and values more generally suggests that regional differences are exaggerated, with values crossing regions (Montpetit et al. 2017).

Federalism is the second key feature that shapes Canada's approach to ECEC. Canada was formed as – and remains – a federation with two official levels of government: the central federal government and a sub-national level made up of ten provinces and three territories, together with an unofficial municipal (local) level⁵. Canada's status as a federation has considerable explanatory power when it comes to the state of ECEC provision.

Among countries like, for example, Germany, Austria, Australia and Switzerland organised as federations, Canada is considered to be quite decentralised (Montpetit et al. 2017). Canada's approach to federalism plays a central role in how roles and responsibilities for ECEC are defined, although Canadian federalism has evolved and shifted over the years in response to political, economic and social forces, with the federal government taking a more hands-on role at some times, more hands-off at others.

The federal government's hands-off neoliberal decade between 2006 and 2015 has been described as an era of "no-lateralism" for ECEC during which there was not

⁵ Technically, Canadian municipalities are local governance structures created by the provinces pursuant to the Constitution Act of 1867. They have no further official status constitutionally and are sometimes referred to as "creatures of the provinces" (City Solicitor, Toronto 2001).

even a dialogue about child care between the federal government and the provinces (White/Friendly 2012). Michael Atkinson, a scholar of Canadian federalism, describes this as “open rather than collaborative federalism” which did not lend itself to the “direct bargaining between Ottawa and the provinces needed to provide a partnership between the federal government and the provinces to craft a policy that will have results for our children” (2015).

One main force that has been influential in shaping federal/provincial relations in Canada is the concept of Quebec as a “distinct society” and the implications of this for Quebec’s place in the Canadian federation. This was particularly marked beginning in the 1960s “Quiet Revolution” through the 1990s – a period that included two Quebec-wide referenda on separation, the second of which resulted in only a bare majority for “no”.

Debate about the place of Quebec in the federation has for some years intersected with debate about the balance between all provinces and the federal government vis-à-vis social policy and other key policy issues. This ongoing tension about the respective roles of the central government and the provinces/territories continues to play a key role today, although work such as that of Montpetit et al. (2017) suggests that these tensions may be more political than value-driven.

1.4 Federal/provincial/territorial/ local government roles in social programmes

Constitutionally, Canadian provinces and territories bear the main responsibility for child care. The division of powers between federal and provincial governments was established in the *Constitution Act of 1867* which identified some federal powers (for example, public debt, the criminal code, regulation of trade and commerce, taxation, defence) and some provincial powers (hospitals, justice, marriage, corporate affairs). Unidentified issues such as child care are considered to be provincial. Education – especially education below post-secondary – is an entirely provincial responsibility in Canada with no federal funding and no national department of education – the only federation without one.

Canada’s main national programmes were primarily developed during the post-World War II period, with the federal government adopting a lead role. The 1990s up to the present day (especially the decade of Conservative federal government

between 2006 and 2015) was a period of devolution of roles and responsibilities for social programmes from the federal to the provincial level.

Despite the barrier presented by Canadian federalism to the kind of social safety net developed more easily in unitary states, national programmes have been developed in a number of key areas in Canada. Most notable is a national health programme shaped by the overarching five principles in the federal Canada Health Act (1987) but designed and delivered by provinces/territories as thirteen relatively similar but separate health programmes. Most recently, the Government of Canada announced that it will re-establish a significant federal presence in housing with a new multi-year, multi-pronged national housing strategy, featuring federal participation including funding. It is the most recent example of a Canadian initiative in an area of provincial jurisdiction in which the federal government has taken a policy and funding lead.

Moreover, a number of social programmes based on income transfers to individual Canadians such as unemployment insurance and pensions are defined and delivered by the federal government. For 30 years (1966 to 1996), the Canada Assistance Plan set requirements for provincially-delivered social welfare programmes including child care and transferred money to the provinces to support them. Other national social programmes based on income transfers to individuals such as the Canada Child Benefit, pensions and other income security programmes for the elderly are all national social programmes established and funded by the federal government.

Despite the understanding that child care falls within provincial jurisdiction, federal governments under various political parties have made a number of attempts to advance child care over the last 40 years (1984, 1987, 1993, 2003, 2004). However, a comprehensive national plan or policy has not become reality. Child care and other early childhood education programmes such as kindergarten are under the aegis of provinces/territories, with the federal government playing a more direct role only with regard to ECEC for “special populations”⁶.

Each province/territory has developed its own approach to ECEC, in ways that are, for the most part, fundamentally similar. Thus, a statement made by a 1988 Senate committee studying child care still rings true: “Provincial child care programs resemble each other . . . in what they lack” (Senate of Canada 1988, p. 1). Although all provincial governments in Canada today recognise that more needs to be done to support children’s development and families’ needs for care, none has developed a comprehensive plan for universally accessible, affordable, high quality ECEC.

⁶ The federal government takes a more direct role in ECEC for populations for whom the Government of Canada assumes responsibility – military families, Indigenous Canadians, especially those on reserve, and newcomers to Canada.

1.5 Other relevant social welfare policies and programmes

This section describes the situation for Canada as a whole regarding several key social programmes that intersect with this paper's focus on inequality of access to early childhood education and care.

Maternity and parental leave

Maternity and parental leave is perhaps the social programme most closely aligned with ECEC. It has implications for the labour market, for gender issues, for families, and for families' child care needs. As Janta has noted, "Although it's not child care per se, maternity, paternity/parental leaves also constitute potential ways for parents to organise care for children" (Janta 2014, p.2). Prominent ECEC researcher Peter Moss writes about the importance of alignment between the two, suggesting that countries with more fully integrated child care such as Sweden are also more likely to have more comprehensive approaches to parental leave than those with "split systems"⁷ (Moss 2012).

Perhaps the most salient aspect of maternity and parental leave policy in Canada is that it in fact results in two discrete realities for families – those in Quebec and those in the rest of Canada. Although both these regimes treat parental leave as a contributory social insurance programme linked to employment policy, since 2006, when Quebec separated its provision of maternity/parental leave from Canada, the two have diverged so much that they need to be considered separately. Examination of Canada's approach to maternity and parental leave shows many gaps including low levels of income replacement, lack of earmarked paternity leave and stiff eligibility requirements that exclude many new parents, especially those who are more vulnerable. Canadian maternity and parental leave policy has implications for inequality from gender and class perspectives and is weakly aligned with child care policy (Friendly/Friendly, in press). This section addresses maternity and parental leave provision in Canada outside Quebec. Quebec's programme, the *Quebec Parental Insurance Plan* (QPIP), is described in the Quebec section.

Outside Quebec, the benefit or payment that enables parents to take maternity and parental leave is paid through Canada's Employment Insurance (EI) programme while provisions determining the duration and details of job-protected leave are under each province's/territory's employment legislation. Employment Insurance

⁷ This term "split system" in ECEC refers to a split between under threes and over threes, usually with less well-developed provision for the younger age group.

pays a birth mother a maternity leave benefit for 15 weeks and either a parent or an adoptive parent a parental leave benefit for 35 weeks. It does not provide any earmarked father-only benefit. Canada's leave benefit amounts to 55 percent of wages up to CAN\$51,300 (2016, indexed annually), paying a maximum of CAN\$543/week (2016, indexed annually). All provinces/territories adjusted their job-protected leave periods after the last federal increase to 50 weeks of benefits in 2001. Thus, all eligible parents are entitled to take 50 weeks' paid leave at a benefit level that is considerably below international standards such as the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 67 percent of wages. As McKay, Mathieu and Doucet's research has identified, the low benefit level is one element that discourages Canadian lower income parents from taking leave, compared to Quebec's higher participation (2016).

In addition to the low benefit level, eligibility is also a key issue for employed parents. The rules require "600 hours continuous employment in the previous year". This makes many precariously employed workers (a substantial and usually low-income population in Canada), part-timers, students and trainees ineligible although they may be required to pay in to the EI fund. In addition, self-employed workers (another substantial and growing category of workers who lack normal job protection) are poorly provided for under EI parental leave benefits, as paying into the fund is optional for this group and receiving the benefit requires registration a year in advance.

Under EI rules, low-income families (up to net income of CAN\$25,921/year) are eligible for a family supplement up to a maximum of 80 percent of average insurable earnings. This threshold for the "family supplement" has not changed since 1997, although average family income has risen.

In 2017, the federal government fulfilled an election commitment to make parental leave "more flexible" for families (outside Quebec) by extending the benefit period to an optional 18 months, spreading out the existing EI benefit for that period, thus substantially reducing each payment. The optional 18-month benefit became available to parents in December 2017, although in practice, access to it requires that each province/territory must modify its employment standards legislation.

The Canada Child Benefit

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB), introduced in July 2016 to replace several earlier programmes (the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the Universal Child Care Benefit) has been identified as a programme intended to address social inequality and poverty. The new child benefit made the programme more generous for lower and middle-income households and less generous for more affluent families up to CAN\$200,000 a year, when it ceases. The federal government has estimated that families will receive CAN\$23 billion annually under the CCB.

Families receive the CCB by cheque once a month. It is calculated on the basis of family (net) income and the number of children under 18, with younger children receiving more support. Families earning under CAN\$30,000 can receive CAN\$6,400 per year for each child under the age of six and CAN\$5,400 for each child aged six to 17. In November 2017, the federal government announced that it will be indexed to inflation.

The federal government reports that almost 90 percent of families received the CCB in 2017. The groups known to be less likely to receive the CCB include Indigenous families, especially those living on reserve, women with children living in shelters, families who do not file tax returns on time and some immigrant families (those with a “sponsored” spouse).

1.6 How early childhood education and care is organised in Canada

Relying on the market

Consistent with its status as a liberal democratic welfare regime, Canada for the most part takes a consumerist approach to child care, mainly relying on a market model. The role of government is mostly limited to regulation of available services, providing some funding (which is predominantly demand-side funding rather than operational supply-side funding) and some degree of policy development. In this model, the initiation, development and maintenance of child care services is largely a private responsibility, falling to parents, voluntary organisations and entrepreneurs rather than being a publicly delivered or even a publicly managed system in which service development is planned and initiated with a level of government taking the lead role. This is the case in all provinces/territories, including Quebec.

Outside Quebec and to a lesser extent two smaller provinces, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island, child care is not publicly funded as such; the bulk of the funding used to operate child care services comes from parental fees or the individual parent fee subsidies that can replace the fees for eligible lower income employed parent (see Ferns/Friendly 2014, Table 5, for portions of provincial/territorial child care budgets allocated to operational funding and individual parent fee subsidies).

With the exception of a small number of services in Ontario operated by municipal governments and school-age programmes in Quebec operated by schools, almost all child care services are privately owned – either private non-profit or private for-

profit. About 30 percent of child care centre places in Canada are operated on a for-profit basis, with the proportion of for-profit provision in different provinces ranging from 0 to almost 70 percent (Friendly et al. 2015). To date, large corporate chains have not secured monopoly status in Canada as they have in some other countries but child care chains have become much more prominent in recent years (Flanagan et al. 2013) and several well-funded corporate-type operations are in rapid expansion mode.

Considerable research and policy analyses address the effects and pitfalls of treating child care as a commodity in a market (for example, Lloyd/Penn 2012). Data in the Quebec section of this report, as well as other research from multiple jurisdictions, shows that providing child care as a profit-making venture is a predictor of poorer quality (Childcare Resource and Research Unit 2011).

Ten characteristics of Canada's child care marketised ECEC provision are:

- Inequitable access
- Hit-and-miss service development
- Consumer-model financing
- Limited public management
- Limited planning
- Programming aimed at the market
- Minimum staffing level
- Limited integration of care and education
- Relying on privatised services/arrangements
- Quality taking a backseat to budgets/profit (Ferns/Beach 2015).

The fact that child care is based on a market approach is probably *the* key overarching characteristic that shapes and defines Canada's current child care approach and situation.

1.7 Federal role in child care: Policy development and funding

Following the introduction of the federal *Canada Assistance Plan* (CAP) in 1966, child care services began to develop across Canada with the assistance of its shared-cost 50-50 federal-provincial funding. CAP's targeting to needy families very much shaped provincial child care programmes as residual welfare services aimed at families in social or financial need. Its child care guidelines required provinces to

use parent fee subsidy systems based on needs testing or (somewhat less intrusive) income testing. When the federal government ended CAP in 1996, there were no longer any federal criteria⁸ for child care services nor was federal funding earmarked or identifiable in the new block transfer payment fund, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST)⁹, that incorporated federal health and social spending. It is worth noting that today, twenty years after the termination of CAP, all the provinces/territories, save Quebec, continue to use the individual parent fee subsidy systems developed under the CAP guidelines as a main policy element.

The first significant federal funding earmarked for child care was made available in 2004–2005, when the federal government set out to develop a “national” child care programme based on a set of four proposed “QUAD” principles: Quality, Universality, Accessibility, and Developmental(-ness) and made agreements with each province/territory to begin implementation. But before the programme got off the ground, a new socially conservative and ideologically neo-liberal government won the January 2006 election and immediately cancelled the agreements and with them, the embryonic ECEC programme (White/Friendly 2012). It was not until almost a decade later (2015) that a new federal government was elected with a commitment to re-engage in child care policy-making and funding.

In the 2015 federal election, the Liberal Party won a majority government. They undertook to “work [with provinces/territories/Indigenous communities] on a new National Early Learning and Child Care Framework to deliver affordable, high-quality, flexible, and fully-inclusive child care for Canadian families”, following this by releasing a *Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care* in June 2017. The Framework relies on collaboration between the federal government and provinces/territories to achieve five principles – high quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusiveness – and specifies that provincial/territorial use of the federal funds will be limited to “families more in need”, defined as “lower-income families, Indigenous families, lone-parent families, families in underserved communities, those working non-standard hours and/or families with children with varying abilities”. Federal funds of CAN\$540 million in 2018–2019, rising to CAN\$870 million annually, eleven years later, were allocated in the 2017 federal budget. The government notes that “Portions of this funding will go towards closing data gaps that help us better understand what child care looks like in Canada, strengthening culturally appropriate early learning and child care for Indigenous children, and early learning and child care innovation” (Duclos 2017¹⁰). In order for the federal funds to begin to flow to provinces/territories, bilateral agreements must be reached with all 13 sub-national provinces/territories. The federal govern-

8 CAP required services to be regulated and public or non-profit if the province was to go down the less intrusive income testing “preventative social services” route.

9 In 2004, the CHST was divided into two block funds, the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) and the Canada Social Transfer (CST), but the same caveats still apply.

10 Author’s personal communication with Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada

ment has also committed to developing a separate ELCC Framework for Indigenous Early Learning and Care, in consultation with Indigenous communities and leaders. This Framework is not yet complete.

The federal government maintains direct responsibility for ECEC programmes for several special populations in Canada. They include military families and newcomers to Canada in federal language classes. The federal government also takes responsibility for ECEC programmes for Indigenous Canadians on and off-reserve. These programmes, which are spread among multiple departments and have overlapping purposes, may or may not also involve provinces/territories in administration, regulation and funding:

- First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (Employment and Social Development Canada)
- Child/Day Care Programme – Alberta (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada)
- Child/Day-Care Programme – Ontario (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada)
- First Nations Child and Family Service Head Start – New Brunswick (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada)
- Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (Public Health Agency of Canada)
- Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve (Health Canada)
- First Nations Elementary Education – Kindergarten (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada)

Assessments of these services and consultations conducted by Indigenous groups have generally come to conclusions similar to those of the Assembly of First Nations:

“Facility-based child care programs in First Nations across Canada would not exist to any appreciable degree without the past investment levels of the First Nations Indian/Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI). However, while the FNICCI is a necessary foundation for these programs, there is considerable evidence that it is not sufficient to create the level of access, support and impact that could be achieved. Frankly, these programs have survived in spite of predictable environmental challenges and funding limitations” (Assembly of First Nations 2017, p. 3).

A report from the Inuit Tapirat Katami noted that:

“These funds represent the vast majority of child care budgets in most regions. The renewal of these funding agreements is vital to the continuation of licensed child care programs across Inuit Nunangat. However, as this report has illustrated, many Inuit communities presently struggle to provide affordable, licensed child care, and lack of child care poses a barrier to parents who want to join the labour force, access training, or participate in the traditional economy” (Inuit Tapirat Katami 2015, p. 22).

Finally, as the draft report on the hundreds of community consultations leading up to the Indigenous Framework notes:

“The sessions expressed unanimous recognition of the importance of ELCC for Indigenous children and families ... echoing the work of the 2014 Truth and Reconciliation Commission which points to the critical importance of revitalizing Indigenous languages and cultures and calls on all levels of government to develop culturally appropriate early childhood development programs for Indigenous families” (Indigenous National Framework on Early Learning and Care, in preparation ¹¹).

Thus, federal child care funding today includes:

- a) General funds for social programmes (not including health care or education) through the Canada Social Transfer (CST), which flows from the federal government to each province and territory. These funds, calculated on a per capita population basis, are to be used as determined by each province/territory for all social programmes including child care. Child care funds are not earmarked in the CST nor reported on by provinces/territories so there is no federal child care spending figure for the CST;
- b) The federal Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED), an individual payment to employed parents for receipted child care expenses (for any variety of child care) through a deduction from taxable income based on the lower-earning parent's wages. In 2017, the deductible amount is CAN\$ 8,000 for each child up to age six and CAN\$ 5,000 for each child between the ages of seven and 16;
- c) Federal funding paid through a number of federal departments for multiple ECEC programmes for special populations;
- d) New earmarked federal funds under the Multi-lateral Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care, which had not yet begun to flow to provincial/territorial child care programmes at the end of 2017.

Provincial/territorial child care programmes: Service structure, governance and coverage

While there are a great many specific variations, structurally, ECEC is quite similar across provinces/territories.

- Regulated child care in Canada includes centres, part-time centre-based programmes (nursery schools or preschools) and regulated child care in private homes (family child care or “home child care”) under the same legislation;
- Regulated child care is not an entitlement and is fee-based in all jurisdictions;

11 author's personal communication

- All jurisdictions also provide universal no-fee kindergarten – mostly for five-year-olds, either part-day or full-school-day, under education legislation;
- Each jurisdiction has its own child care legislation and regulations;
- All provinces/territories rely entirely or almost entirely on for-profit and non-profit services. Eight provinces/territories have now moved responsibility for child care services to the education ministry or department¹²;
- None has a mandated or substantial role for local/municipal governments save Ontario;
- None provides a “universal” child care programme in the sense that there are sufficient services available to include all children at a fee that parents can afford.

Limited accessibility

One of the reasons that access to child care is limited across Canada, as well as being unequal, is simply that the supply of regulated places is limited and unevenly distributed. Overall, in Canada as a whole, in 2014, there were 543,160 places in centres¹³ for 2,256,600 zero to five year-olds full- and part-day (breakdown by full- and part-day is not available in all provinces/territories) – or places to cover 24.1 percent of the zero to five child population. There were also 145,314 children in regulated family day care, of unknown ages between zero and 12 years (age breakdown is not available in most jurisdictions) (Friendly et al. 2015).

Coverage rates are quite uneven between provinces/territories, between areas within a province/territory and between age groups. For example, there is significantly less centre-based child care for infants (zero to two years) than for older preschoolers everywhere in Canada. When centre-based child care places¹⁴ for infants are considered province by province, the coverage (for about zero to two years) ranges from 1 to 23 percent, with most provinces covering 10–15 percent of infants with employed mothers. When coverage for an infant is considered as a percent of all children, the coverage rates are even lower, ranging from a low of 0.6 to a high of 14 percent (calculated from data in Friendly et al. 2015).

Quality: Process quality and structural predictors

Based on policy statements such as the *Multi-lateral National Framework* agreed to by the federal government and provinces/territories, the importance of quality for children appears to be well-recognised in Canada. However, there have been few

¹² Otherwise, child care comes under ministries of social/community/family services

¹³ Note that generally, figures on enrolment or occupancy are not available from the provinces. These figures represent licensed capacity.

¹⁴ It should be noted that all the provinces/territories also provide regulated home (family) child care available for zero to 12-year-olds; much of this is assumed to be used by younger preschool-age children but age breakdowns are not available.

sustained and significant attempts to ensure or even assess quality in child care services. There has been only one cross-Canada analysis of process quality. Almost two decades ago, the federally-funded *You Bet I Care!* (Goelman et al. 2000) examined process quality in centres and home child care together with programme and workforce characteristics. The study found that “fewer than half of the preschool rooms (44.3 percent) and slightly more than a quarter of the infant/toddler rooms (28.7 percent) were providing activities and materials that support and encourage children’s development. Instead, the majority of the centres in Canada are providing care that is of minimal to mediocre quality” (Goelman et al. 2000, p. ix).

Based on their analysis of variables associated with higher or lower quality, the researchers concluded that the following were all associated with differences in quality scores:

- “higher staff wages;
- teaching staff with higher levels of ECCE-specific education;
- better benefits;
- higher staff levels of satisfaction with their relationships with colleagues and the centre as a work environment;
- the centre being used as a student-teacher practicum site;
- the centre receiving subsidized rent and/or utilities (a factor that allows it to pay higher wages);
- the centre having favourable staff: child ratios; and
- the centre being non-profit” (Goelman, et al. 2000, p. x).

These centre characteristics (and others) are all found to be quality indicators in the research literature more generally (see Friendly et al. 2006, for a broader discussion of structural and programme level indicators of quality).

There has not been another Canada-wide quality study, or a substantial provincial analysis of quality, or a quality improvement strategy outside Quebec since then. None of the provinces/territories engages in regular quality assessment, with the exception of monitoring to assess whether licensing standards are being met. As compliance with these standards is not assumed to mean that services are of a high quality, there is little concrete information about the quality of child care in any part of Canada outside Quebec (quality in Quebec child care is addressed in detail in the third section of this paper). As discussed in the second section of this paper on Ontario, the City of Toronto has carried out a substantial project to develop, validate and use a quality assessment measure on a regular basis. Several other Ontario municipal-level entities have also employed quality assessment tools as do some individual child care programmes.

When considering child care quality from the perspective of known structural predictors of quality such as: staff qualifications in the early childhood field, staff

wages and working conditions, ratios and groups sizes, pedagogy, auspice and availability of funding (OECD 2006), it is generally assumed that today Canadian child care is likely to be of a not very high quality across the board, although there are certainly some exemplary programmes.

How child care services are financed: Parental fees/fee subsidies and operational funding

Outside Quebec (and to a lesser extent Manitoba and Prince Edward Island¹⁵), child care services are not funded per se. All jurisdictions provide some funds that more or less support services operationally, depending on the jurisdiction. These may be in the form of wage grants to raise staff wages or operational funding generally. Whatever the format, in most instances, the funds are usually too limited to reduce the cost for parents sufficiently to make them “affordable”. This means that child care is primarily a fee-paying programme, with parental fees (or the parent fee subsidies that may replace them) forming the bulk of a centre’s budget with most parents expected to bear all or most of the actual costs.

A 2016 economic study for the City of Toronto found regulated child care to be affordable for only 25 percent of Toronto families (Cleveland et al. 2016). An annual survey of parental fees based on data collected in Canada’s 20 largest cities showed that, in 2016, fees ranged from a high of CAN\$1,649 a month for an infant in Toronto down to CAN\$164 for all age groups in Montreal (Macdonald/Friendly 2016). Macdonald and Friendly’s survey of parental fees found that the parental fees were lowest in the three provinces that set a province-wide cap on fees and provide much more substantial and coherent operational funding to services¹⁶, Quebec, Manitoba (CAN\$651) and Prince Edward Island (CAN\$738). The study conclusion noted that

“... child care fees are easily predicted based on whether the fees are set by the province or left to the market. All three provinces with set fees (PEI, Quebec and Manitoba) also fund services directly (operational funding), though the proportion of the full operational funding varies amongst them. These show the lowest fees in every age category” (Macdonald/Friendly 2016, p. 24).

In all provinces except Quebec, eligible lower income parents may receive assistance to pay for child care through provincial/territorial fee subsidy schemes, which are a very significant element of Canada’s child care funding. According to an analysis of provincial/territorial funding and policy, the proportion of all public spending for regulated child care spent on parent fee subsidies ranged from 21 to 64 percent,

¹⁵ These two smaller provinces use a mix of operational “unit” funding and fee subsidies, with capped parental fees.

¹⁶ Manitoba and PEI use a mix of operational funding (“unit funding”) and fee subsidies/parental fees.

with most provinces/territories spending 40–45 percent of their total child care budgets in this way (Ferns/Friendly 2014).

Fee subsidies are designed to pay some of the eligible parent's entire fee, not to fund the child care programme as a whole. They are usually restricted to parents who are employed or in education or training. However, not being able to afford the fee does not mean the family is eligible for a fee subsidy. Modest and middle income families (who are often unable to afford the fee, as Cleveland's 2016 Toronto study and Macdonald and Friendly's national fee surveys show) are normally not eligible for a fee subsidy, depending on the province/territory. Within the overall eligibility criteria, family income and composition determine the amount of the parent fee to be covered.

One aspect of Canada's funding for ECEC is that, while the bulk of funding in most provinces is targeted at low-income families "in need", the fee subsidy systems fail to enable even the low-income families, for whom they are intended, to afford child care. Access to fee subsidies is restricted by provinces/territories (or in Ontario, by municipalities) in multiple ways. These include: capping the number of subsidies (or the overall subsidy budget) or the income eligibility levels may be extremely stringent. For example, in one of the smaller provinces, a full subsidy is available only up to CAN\$19,800 gross family income/year. This full subsidy (for the lowest income) is very unlikely not to cover the full fee.

While most provinces guarantee a fee subsidy to all eligible families, the design of most of the subsidy programmes does not ensure that it covers the full fee. As fees in most provinces fluctuate with the market rather than being fixed, and tend to rise year over year, parents must cover the out-of-pocket difference. Generally, the amounts provinces/territories pay into child care programmes in lieu of a parent fee have not been increased on a regular basis to keep up with inflation. A 2016 analysis showed out-of-pocket costs by province for a sample low-income family earning CAN\$30,823 (note that the official poverty line used by Statistics Canada was CAN\$44,266 for a four-person household). In some areas, the median out-of-pocket fees for a two-adult, two-child family at the study's sample income level were almost CAN\$500/month on top of the fee subsidy paid by the provincial government for each preschool-age child. Table 1 shows the out-of-pocket fees this sample subsidised family would be expected to pay per month per child in the different provinces.

Tab. 1: Monthly out-of-pocket child care fees per preschool-age child for a subsidised family on the poverty line by province)

Province	Out-of-pocket fees per child per month (CAN\$)
Newfoundland and Labrador	119
Prince Edward Island	144
Nova Scotia	391
New Brunswick	193
Quebec	164*
Ontario	90**
Manitoba	279
Saskatchewan	372–497
Alberta	292–478
British Columbia	153–353

Data source: Macdonald/Friendly 2016.

Note: *In Quebec, there is no fee subsidy system but low-income parents pay the basic rate of CAN\$7.55 per day (2016).

Note: **In Ontario, the subsidy calculation is per family, not per child (based on family income and the total cost of child care).

A 2016 OECD report identified Canadian child care fees as being amongst the highest among 35 OECD countries. “Across the OECD, the average two-income family spends about 15 per cent of its net income on childcare. In Canada, the ratio is as high as 22.2 percent of net income” (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2016b). As parental fees are inordinately high and the fee subsidy programmes intended to make child care affordable for low-income families are ineffective, limited affordability is a key contributory factor to inequality of access.

Staffing issues in provincial/territorial child care programmes: Training and compensation

Almost all jurisdictions now require some of the staff working in child care centres to have undergone some tertiary/post-secondary education (most of which is offered in post-secondary programmes of one, two or three years) specific to working with young children. A few provinces/territories (Quebec, for example), do not require any specific educational qualifications for the director of a child care centre. A 2013 survey (the most recent cross-Canada data on child care staff) found that 90 percent of child care staff surveyed had completed some form of post-secondary education directly related to ECE, usually a one or two year college credential. Most staff outside Quebec are not unionised. The same survey found 21.5 percent of programme staff surveyed worked in unionised centres. Median hourly wages for programme staff for Canada overall in 2012 were CAN\$16.50 (2012), ranging from a low of CAN\$12.84 in one province to a high of CAN\$19.13 in another

(Flanagan et al. 2013). An Ontario survey in 2015 found that two-thirds of qualified early childhood educators were earning less than CAN\$20 an hour (Ontario Ministry of Education 2015).

Workforce issues such as high turnover, burnout, low wages and poor working conditions are a significant concern for the child care sector across Canada. An analysis by Halfon and Langford identified the “three contributing factors that act as barriers to change for the gendered child care workforce: 1) the child care market model; 2) the devaluation of caring work and; 3) increasing professional expectations without sufficient workforce advocacy” (2015, p. 131).

Provincial/territorial kindergarten programmes

In Canada, kindergarten refers to ECEC programmes delivered as part of each province’s/territory’s public education system as a (usually non-compulsory) year prior to elementary school. All provinces/territories provide public kindergarten for all five-year-olds. Kindergarten for four-year-olds (sometimes called “pre-kindergarten” or “junior kindergarten”) is available for all children only in Ontario, although there is some kindergarten provision for some four-year-olds (usually targeted at “vulnerable” children or communities) in other regions. Kindergarten is treated as an entitlement with no parental fees. Until recently, most kindergarten was part-day (2.5 hours) but by 2017, nine provinces/territories provided full school-day kindergarten (the length of an elementary school day, between 4.5 and 5.5 hours/day). Thus, kindergarten programmes do not cover a full work-day schedule even for parents working standard hours. In addition, they usually do not operate during the summer or at other holiday times.

In addition to kindergarten programmes, all provinces/territories provide fee-based child care after kindergarten hours for four- and five-year-olds in addition to child care for elementary school-aged children, usually aged six to ten or twelve years. Although these out-of-school-hours child care programmes are usually under the same ministry as kindergarten (as they are in eight jurisdictions), the pedagogical approach, staffing and training requirements and expectations are rarely consistent between the two parts of the child’s day (see Table 2, Friendly et al. 2015).

Participation in kindergarten is compulsory in only three jurisdictions but almost all age-eligible children attend public kindergarten even if it is not required. All provinces/territories require kindergarten teachers to have a regular teaching certificate (requiring a four-year university degree) but only Prince Edward Island requires training in early childhood education. In Ontario, two teaching personnel staff each kindergarten classroom, a certificated teacher and a registered early childhood educator.

Local government role in ECEC: Municipalities and school boards

Canadian municipalities are subordinate to the provinces which may delegate powers including taxing powers to them. Outside Ontario, local governments in Canada have no mandated role in child care. A few municipalities in other provinces have voluntarily adopted a role in child care, either supporting or delivering services or have, like Vancouver, a wider policy and planning role (Muttart Foundation 2016). Local school authorities are also subordinate to provincial governments. They usually bear primary responsibility for the operation of elementary schools including kindergarten and may also host child care programmes as landlords.

Integration between child care and the education system

Generally, there is little policy or programme connection between kindergarten and other public school programmes and regulated child care services on either the policy or service delivery level (Muttart Foundation 2012). This reveals an important disconnect as many child care centres are located in schools, especially in Ontario, where school boards are required to ensure that school-age child care is provided if there is a demand and Quebec, where school-aged child care is operated in and by schools. In most provinces, child care services located in schools are operated by community-based organisations or entrepreneurs, not by school authorities.

ECEC policy and services in Ontario

This section provides an overview of ECEC in Ontario beginning with a brief account of how it has evolved, followed by a description of the current situation of early childhood education and care services.

2.1 An early leader

It was Ontario's approach to Canada's first federally funded child care during World War II that most set the province apart in ECEC. Although the federal government offered 50-50 shared-cost funds in 1942 to set up and deliver child care, only Ontario and Quebec opened centres¹⁷; most of the 30-odd Ontario centres were in Toronto. The Ontario government's approach to the war-time child care centre was quite visionary for the time. The provincial government designed its child care programme based not only on mothers' work schedule needs but also on the new ideas about child development that were then being explored by the new child study movement in Canada at the University of Toronto's Institute of Child Study (ICS). The provincial government recruited experts and educators trained at ICS in the new field of child development to design the provincial programme and staff the centres.

At the end of the war, when the federal government withdrew from the *Dominion-Provincial War-time Agreement*, all six of Quebec's war-time nurseries closed but public protests helped keep some of Ontario's open (Prentice 1996). To replace the withdrawn federal funds, the Ontario government introduced 50-50 municipal-provincial funding, paving the way for Ontario's unique municipal role in child care. In 1946, with the participation of the early childhood experts who had shaped the war-time programme, Ontario developed Canada's first child care-specific legislation, *The Day Nurseries Act*, which specified licensing and regular monitoring, as well as funding 50 percent of the net operating costs of municipally-operated child care (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) 1984).

¹⁷ Some of the other provinces were not interested and in others, the work women were doing (such as running family farms), was not deemed to be essential war work.

It is worth noting that when the federal government next offered child care funding to the provinces through the Canada Assistance Plan twenty years later, the CAP's focus was on providing assistance to needy Canadians in contrast to the war-time aims of recruiting female workers and Ontario's child development rationale.

Nevertheless, the availability of federal dollars spurred development of centre-based child care in Ontario. The CAP requirements, however, meant that public funding was focused on low-income ("needy") families through the individual parent fee subsidy schemes imposed by the federal guidelines. Indeed, until 2007¹⁸, Ontario parents seeking a fee subsidy underwent demeaning "needs testing" with a social worker in a process that included presenting rent receipts, bank account slips and did not permit savings.

Ontario's publicly-operated municipal centres that opened in the 1960s and 1970s were primarily targeted at low-income families. In 1982, 57 percent of children in the municipal centres (which at the time comprised 12 percent of all places in centres) had their fees subsidised, as did 70 percent of children in centres operated by "Indian Bands"¹⁹. In comparison, only 20 percent of children enrolled in all centres were subsidised (MCSS 1984).

At the same time, part-day kindergarten for four-year-olds ("Junior Kindergarten") was initiated in Toronto so the children of post-war immigrants could assimilate and learn English. These became fairly widespread, with 48,000 children enrolled in 1981 (MCSS 1984). One result of this was that more advantaged families – including many outside Toronto – also wanted kindergarten for their four-year-old children. It is interesting to note the distinction drawn even at that time between the purpose of kindergarten, which was "to prepare young children for formal schooling" while day care services were "to provide children with ancillary care and informal education", as set out in a statement by the then Ontario minister (MCSS 1984).

Throughout the changes in government from the 1980s almost to the present day, Ontario's child care situation did not change fundamentally despite the increase in the proportion of employed mothers with young children, which rose exponentially from fewer than 50 percent in the mid-1980s to 70 percent (with a zero to two year-old) and 77 percent (with a three to five year-old) in 2014. The first regulation requiring early childhood training for child care staff was introduced in 1983 and is unchanged today. Regulated family ("home") child care (FCC) was introduced in Ontario in the 1980s and also remains relatively unchanged. The first operational funding – directed to increasing staff wages – was introduced in 1987 but Ontario's

18 Although needs testing was replaced by a less intrusive province-wide income test in 2007, Ontario still requires parents seeking a fee subsidy to meet with a municipal case worker to determine eligibility.

19 "Indian Bands" is a term applied by the Government of Canada to groups of Indigenous Canadians living on a reserve.

fundamental reliance on parental fees for operating services with individual fee subsidies covering fees for eligible parents remains in place.

Municipally-delivered child care, as a proportion of all child care, has diminished over the years from 21 percent in 1980 (National Health and Welfare 1980) to less than 2 percent of total places in 2014, while for-profit child care chains and, most recently, corporate child care have come to play a bigger role (Friendly et al. 2015). Despite a service planning role by municipalities – mandated by the provincial government in the 1990s – child care remains a marketised commodity rather than a planned service. With few exceptions, privately operated and maintained services in Ontario develop when and where an individual, a group or an entrepreneur takes the initiative to develop them.

Beginning in 2007, the Ontario government became interested in the idea of integrated child care and early childhood education (“full-day early learning”) to be delivered by school boards for all four- and five-year-olds together with integrated, accessible services for zero to three year-olds including child care under the aegis of municipalities. A full report, which followed extensive public consultation, set out how to proceed (Pascal 2009). However, instead of the “seamless”, year-round, integrated and accessible child care and early childhood education discussed in the report, the main outcome was full-school day kindergarten for all four- and five-year-olds. By 2014, full school-day kindergarten for all was in place across Ontario. While Ontario was not the first Canadian province to offer full-school day kindergarten, it is the only province that continues to provide it for all four-year-olds (3.8 years in early September at the beginning of the school year).

One unintended effect of the introduction of full-day kindergarten was the impact on child care services. As the “seamless” ECEC programme with integrated after-school and out-of-school provision for 3.8 years to compulsory school-age and accessible services for the under-threes fell by the wayside, the withdrawal of the less-costly-to-serve older preschoolers from full-day regulated child care destabilised the weakly funded child care centres, which then needed to increase infant and toddler fees in order to balance their books. This triggered a crisis in child care, with ever-higher parental fees, severe fee subsidy shortages, a shortage of trained early childhood educators (many of whom went to work in better-salaried kindergarten classrooms) and centre closures and downsizings.

Most recently, the provincial government has made a new commitment to what it calls a “transformation” of Ontario’s child care. It states that

Ontario is committed to building a system with enough affordable child care spaces for all families who want them.... Within the next five years, we expect to double the current capacity of licensed child care for children aged 0–4 in the province. Our intention is that expansion will focus on the public and not-for-

profit sectors. This carefully planned approach steadily increases the number of children accessing high-quality child care while delivering transformative change (Ontario Ministry of Education 2017).

The provincial government has proposed a five-year action plan that includes expansion of services, a strategy for making child care affordable, a strategy for improving the child care workforce situation and commitments to enhancing quality and including children with disabilities (Ontario Ministry of Education 2017).

2.2 Governance of ECEC in Ontario

Since 2010, Ontario's child care and other programmes for young children such as family resource programmes have been under the Ministry of Education, together with kindergarten. The provincial government lays down child care policy, legislation, and regulation and licenses, and monitors child care services.

Regulated child care in Ontario is provided part-day ("nursery schools") in centres and full-day ("child care centres") and in private homes by family "home" care givers who are monitored by regulated (licensed) child care agencies according to provincial regulations. A mix of non-profit, for-profit, and publicly-delivered services provide child care including home, or family²⁰ child care, with non-profit services²¹ in the majority. Historically, many centres were one-centre operations but an increasing number of both for-profits and non-profits are now operated as part of larger entities with multiple centres (Flanagan et al. 2013). However, Ontario (and Canada as a whole) have not become dominated by "big-box" corporate child care operations as have some other countries such as Australia, the US, the UK and the Netherlands.

Ontario has many child care centres in public schools for both school-age and pre-school age children with the school board acting as landlord and the operator (usually non-profit) retaining fiscal responsibility. There are few work-place or employer-supported services and very few centres that cater for parents working non-standard hours (Friendly et al. 2015).

A regulated child care centre receives a license to operate from the Ontario government and is inspected/monitored/relicensed once a year, more often if the centre is found not to be in compliance with the legislated requirements. In the

20 Ontario permits family child care agencies to operate as for-profit businesses. Most are non-profits and about half of the municipal entities (CMSMs and DSSABs) operate family child care agencies as well.

21 Non-profit child care in Ontario is operated by parent groups, voluntary agencies, multi-service organisations such as the YMCA.

case of regulated family child care, caregivers in their own homes are overseen by agencies that are licensed and monitored by the provincial government, with the agency responsible for visiting each care provider at least once every three months. Ontario sets no training or educational requirements for regulated family child care providers.

Ontario is the only province/territory with a significant, and mandated, municipal-level role in child care. Forty-seven local government entities²² (called Consolidated Municipal Service Managers – CMSMs and District Social Service Administration Boards – DSSABs) are designated “service system managers” whose roles include a share of funding, coordination, administration of funds including those transferred from the federal government to the province and other provincial funds, planning and optional public delivery of child care services. Fee subsidies are administered by municipal-level governments but eligibility requirements and the income test are set by the province. Subsidies are rationed, with many approved parents unable to secure a fee subsidy, and municipalities maintain waiting lists of subsidy-eligible parents. Public entities that may operate Ontario child care services include municipal-level “service system managers”, local school boards and Indigenous on-reserve First Nations.

Financing child care in Ontario

The Ontario government transfers most funds for child care to municipal governments which administer them and make their own financial contribution set at 20 percent²³ of the annual child care budget. Until recently, the spending amounts for the different categories (fee subsidies, wage enhancement, children with disabilities, capital) were fixed by the provincial government. This decision making has now been downloaded to municipalities. As part of this process, the amounts of funding transferred to the 47 municipal entities was recently regularised through a process that included increasing some municipalities’ child care budgets and reducing others, one result of which was that some municipalities closed their “expensive” publicly-operated centres.

In 2016, the Ontario government made substantial new funding commitments for the next five-year period. This, together with some funds that will flow from the federal government to the province under the new Multi-lateral Framework on Early Learning and Care, means new expansion as well as addressing affordability, quality and availability issues, as stated in Ontario’s five-year action plan.

22 These may correspond to a municipal or regional government (such as Toronto) or may be a provincially-designed amalgam of urban and rural or remote communities.

23 Some municipal entities contribute more than 20 percent.

Coverage

In 2014, there were sufficient regulated centre-based child care places in Ontario to cover 23 percent of children aged zero to five, 868,000 children aged zero to five years and an additional 1,011,000 children aged six to 12 years of whom 530,000 and 671,000 respectively had employed mothers. Coverage has steadily but slowly increased over the years. Coverage is much lower for infants, rural communities and other “harder to serve” populations. In addition, 16,000 children aged zero to 12 were in regulated family child care, most of which is subsidised (an age breakdown in home child care is not available) (Friendly et al. 2015).

Tab. 2: Percentage of coverage in child care centres for zero to five year-olds, ONTARIO. Selected years 1992–2014

Year	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
%	12.4	na	12.4	14.0	14.9	16.9	19.6	19.7	20.8	23.0

Tab. 3: Number of children, number of children with employed mothers, number of centre places for zero to five year-olds, ONTARIO 2014

Number of children	Number of children with employed mothers	Number of full- and part-day child care places in centres
868,000	530,000	199,323

Note: Since 2014, almost all children begin full-day kindergarten at 3.8 years. This means that the age groups for calculating coverage will change in the 2016 data, which is yet available.

Unregulated child care

As a place in regulated child care is available for less than one-quarter of Ontario’s zero to five year-olds, and many parents can neither afford regulated child care nor secure a subsidy, it is assumed that many children whose mothers are employed are cared for in unregulated (unlicensed or informal) child care of some kind. However, specific data about unregulated child care use is not collected. Unregulated child care may be in a caregiver’s home or in the child’s home (a “nanny” or “sitter”) or a child may be cared for by a relative. In Ontario, as in other provinces/territories, the government plays no role vis-à-vis caregivers employed in their own homes by parents. Ontario, however, like all the provinces/territories, sets a maximum limit on the number of children who can be in unregulated child care; some set further limits on children by age. In Ontario, a maximum of five children aged zero to 12, with no more than two children under the age of two may be cared for at one time, including the caregiver’s own children under the age of six. Ontario may intervene

to inspect unregulated child care arrangements only if a complaint is lodged, in which case local public health authorities may also inspect the physical premises.

Issues of inequality of access to high quality child care

As we identified earlier in this paper, data challenges in most of Canada prevent solid analysis of any number of key issues. At the present time, outside Quebec, there is no reliable data about characteristics of families and their use of different kinds of child care (regulated or unregulated, centre- or home-based, for-profit or non-profit). This means that generally there are at best pointers or speculation about reasonably recent child care use by income, Indigenous status, disability, time of residence in Canada. Consequently, addressing questions about whether Canadians considered to be vulnerable are more or less likely to use quality child care than more advantaged Canadians remains a challenge. For the purposes of this paper, data from the City of Toronto will be used as a proxy for this discussion.

The City of Toronto, it should be noted, is somewhat outside the Canadian norm of child care activity, as it not only develops a provincially required service plan on a five-year cycle, but engages in research, has data capacity, has a well-developed community engagement process, and has developed its own quality observational process which is used as a tool in some funding decisions. Toronto is Canada's largest city. As such, it has almost 69,000 regulated child care places for children aged zero to 12 years. In October 2017, it reported funding almost 29,000 parent fee subsidies – enough to cover 29 percent of low-income children. Currently, the Toronto subsidy waiting list regularly shows more than 15,000 children who have already been “approved” for a fee subsidy (Toronto Children's Services 2017). As well as administering this diverse child care system, the City of Toronto operates 54 child care centres (2,700 places) and a home child care agency. Of the 53,000 subsidisable²⁴ places, 43,000 were non-profit, 7,000 for-profit²⁵ and 7,000 were operated by the municipality.

About 80 percent of the regulated places in Toronto are “subsidisable” in that they have an agreement with the City to provide subsidised child care. Some of the 20 percent of non-subsidisable centres did not meet the quality benchmarks imposed by the City's quality assessment measure, the Early Learning Assessment for Quality Improvement (ELAQI) instrument.

The ELAQI instrument, developed for the City of Toronto, is intended to capture aspects of structural and process quality. It has infant, toddler and preschooler versions

24 In Ontario's fee subsidy system, children are subsidised, not places. Thus, a given “place” may be filled by a subsidised or an unsubsidised child, provided the centre or home child care agency has a contractual agreement with the municipality.

25 Some years ago, the City of Toronto began restricting new fee subsidy agreements to non-profit centres. It also commissioned an analysis of quality differences between for-profit and non-profit centres in Toronto (Cleveland, 2008).

and is used on a regular basis by trained observers to assess programme elements like: structure of the day, activities and experiences planned, learning, physical environment, meeting physical needs, health and safety and staff/child interactions. A four-point scale was initially developed but after a process of validity and reliability testing, the City moved to a five-point scale which is now used (Perlman et al. 2014). The centres that are part of the City quality improvement work with City staff to address areas of concern based on annual ELAQI observations. The initial visit to the centre is unannounced, and the centre's ratings are posted on the Toronto Children's Services website.

Toronto does not have current user/demographic data for the unsubsidised population that makes up approximately 60 percent of its child care users and there is no data by Indigenous status²⁶, newcomer status or by quality ratings. Income data, however, shows that children in the lowest income subsidised families (CAN\$20,000 a year) were more likely to be in home child care than in centre-based care (10 percent in homes, 90 percent in centres). As family incomes rose to CAN\$60,000+, the percentage of children in centre-based care rose too, with 96.5 percent using a centre and only 3.5 percent in a regulated home. In addition, the lowest income families were more likely to be in for-profit child care: 18.7 percent of children in subsidised families earning less than CAN\$20,000 a year were in for-profit centres, while 12 percent of children in families earning CAN\$60,000+ were in for-profit centres, as Tables 4 and 5 show.

Tab. 4: Income categories showing percent of children in each type of care (for families in receipt of subsidy)

Income	Centre	Home child care
less than \$20,000	90.0 %	10.0 %
\$20,000 to 39,999	90.4 %	9.4 %
\$40,000 to 59,999	94.1 %	5.9 %
\$60,000 plus	96.5 %	3.5 %

Tab. 5: Income categories showing percent of children in each auspice of child care (for families in receipt of subsidies)

Income	commercial	non profit	public
less than \$20,000	18.7 %	69.9 %	11.4 %
\$20,000 to 39,999	19.4 %	72.3 %	8.3 %
\$40,000 to 59,999	16.1 %	75.0 %	8.9 %
\$60,000 plus	12.0 %	78.2 %	9.8 %

²⁶ Toronto Children's Services has begun collecting these data but they were not yet available.

ECEC policy and services in Quebec

Quebec like the rest of Canada is a liberal democratic welfare regime. However, it has distinguished itself from the rest of Canada through its more progressive approach to public policy. In this section of the paper, we will describe major aspects that set Quebec apart and present available data on ECEC and inequality in access to it by vulnerable populations such as children from low-income, immigrant and Indigenous families.

3.1 Overview: Family policy and ECEC services in Quebec

In this section, we will provide a brief overview of family policy in Quebec as well as a description of the different early childhood education and care services developed in this province over the past decades.

Quebec differs considerably from the rest of Canada, not only because of its linguistic characteristics, but also with respect to its judicial system. While the other nine provinces and three territories that, alongside Quebec, make up the federal state of Canada, subscribe to the legal tradition of Common Law – imported as law of the British colonies – Quebec follows Civil Law, a legal system leading back to the French roots of the province. Those two legal systems originally differed significantly on concepts such as marriage and women’s rights with Quebec being even more disadvantaged by the stronghold of the patriarchal Catholic church. It is worth noting that women in Quebec had to wait until 1944 to get the right to vote, a right that was granted to women elsewhere in Canada much earlier.

Beginning in the 1960s, a period known as the *Révolution tranquille* (Quiet Revolution), the state established control over matters of education, health and welfare which had previously been mostly under religious authority. Major social changes such as increasing rates of divorce, cohabitation and maternal employment accompanied by a decreasing birth rate profoundly changed the traditional family model and led to major changes in Civil Law (Beaujot et al. 2012). Henceforth, women were granted legal equality regarding the administration and division of property and authority over matters such as place of residence and family-related moral

and material decisions. Until the 1960s, the *Loi des mères nécessiteuses* (Law for needy mothers) – a law adopted in 1937 that provided financial support for widows with young children, abandoned wives and women with an estranged husband or one with a permanent disability – was the only policy adopted by the provincial government that directly touched on the family (Baillargeon 1996).

Equally, in the 1960s, when women began to enter the labour market more permanently, no local government policy existed with respect to maternity leave or child care services. The first support for maternity leave came from the federal government in 1971. Quebec subsequently introduced its own maternity benefits in 1979. The 1960s also saw the creation of Quebec's own family allowance plan to supplement the Canadian Family Allowance which began in 1945 as the nation's first universal welfare programme. Highlights regarding changes in Quebec's family policy during the 1970s comprise improvements in family allowance and maternity leave and benefits, the emergence of communal non-profit day care centres and the introduction of federal and provincial tax deductions for child care expenses.

The 1980s were marked by a number of initiatives. In the midst of a difficult economic climate, social actors began to exert pressure to develop an explicit family policy. Numerous consultations and data collections took place to ascertain the needs of families and to determine the best strategies to implement the family policy (Kamerman/Moss 2009). In 1987, the Quebec government adopted a family policy statement for the first time. Furthermore, a *Secrétariat de la famille* (Family Secretariat) and a *Conseil de la famille* (Family Council) were created. The Family Secretariat was responsible for ensuring the development of the policy whereas the Family Council's role was to act as an advisory body to its minister.

From 1989 to 1995 the Family Secretariat presented three action plans endorsed by a large number of public, private and community sector bodies. The first action plan, instituted by the Liberals at the end of the 1980s, introduced one very popular measure for families, namely a universal child benefit. Clearly pronatalist to counter the low birth rate in Quebec, this benefit was paid at the birth of the child and its amount increased significantly with every additional birth. The government's role at this point was clearly seen as one of supporting families who were mainly responsible for a child's welfare. These 1992 and 1994 actions plans took into account problems engendered by poverty and the challenges faced by mothers with young children upon re-entry into the workforce.

At the end of the 1990s, Quebec's family policy underwent a major transformation. In 1997, the *Parti Québécois*, which then led a majority government in the province, implemented a new family policy whose underlying three main objectives were: a) to facilitate a work-family balance, b) to provide children, no matter what the financial status of their parents, with a preschool environment that fosters their social, emotional and cognitive development and prepares them for entry into the school

system, and c) to ensure equity through universal support for families and increased support for low-income families.

These objectives would be met through the following measures:

- Accelerated development of a publicly-funded network of high-quality child care settings for all children aged four and under with a flat-rate parental fee of CAN\$5-a-day;
- Access to full-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds from September 1997;
- Adoption of a more generous parental leave plan that includes paternal leave and self-employed workers;
- Creation of a unified child allowance that comprises all previous measures and aims to cover all the basic needs of children in low-income families (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance 1997).

This family policy was an important departure from previous measures, as more public funds were invested in child care while a smaller proportion of the budget was directed towards financial and fiscal aid for families. Pauline Marois, the minister who introduced the publicly-funded day care programme, held the view that providing affordable child care would support women's participation in the labour market, reduce child poverty and improve equality of opportunity for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background (Marois 2008). It is worth noting that the present advances in Quebec regarding child care, parental leave and work-family balance have been strongly influenced by the long-standing lobbying of women's committees and groups and two consultative governmental bodies – the *Conseil du statut de la femme* (Status of Women Council) and the *Conseil de la famille et de l'enfance* (Council of the Family and Children) (Kamerman/Moss 2009).

3.2 Services for preschool-age children in Quebec

Governance of ECEC services provided to children aged zero to five is shared by two ministries. While child care services come under the jurisdiction of the *Ministère de la famille* (Family Ministry), the *Ministère de l'Éducation* (Education Ministry) is responsible for regulating and providing school-based services such as pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds and kindergarten for five-year-olds (junior and senior kindergarten). Therefore, there is a certain overlap of two ministries and a shared governance of preschool services offered in Quebec. As all children attend senior kindergartens in public or (publicly-funded) private schools, this overlap is

most significant for four-year-olds. While the curricula of the two ministries have a developmental orientation and are, therefore, very similar, major divergences are evident regarding regulations such as ratios and staff training.

3.3 Child Care Services in Quebec – From 1997 to 2017 (Family Ministry)

In 1997, Quebec began committing significant resources to the consolidation and development of a universal and affordable child care network. In July 1997, the new Ministry of the Family and Children (*Ministère de la Famille et des Enfants*) assumed the responsibilities of the former Family Secretariat and the Child Care Services Office²⁷ (*Office des services de garde à l'enfance*). The network built up from existing services, namely non-profit day care centres, regulated home-based child care and for-profit day care centres. The for-profit day care centres were allowed to retain their legal status and sign agreements with the government to offer what is termed “reduced-contribution” or publicly-funded child care. The government reached agreements of this kind with most of the for-profit services in operation in June 1997. But the main thrust of the new child care policy was the creation of non-profit early childhood centres (*Centres de la petite enfance*, CPE) created from the non-profit centres and home child care agencies (see Appendix A for definitions of various types of child care in the current system).

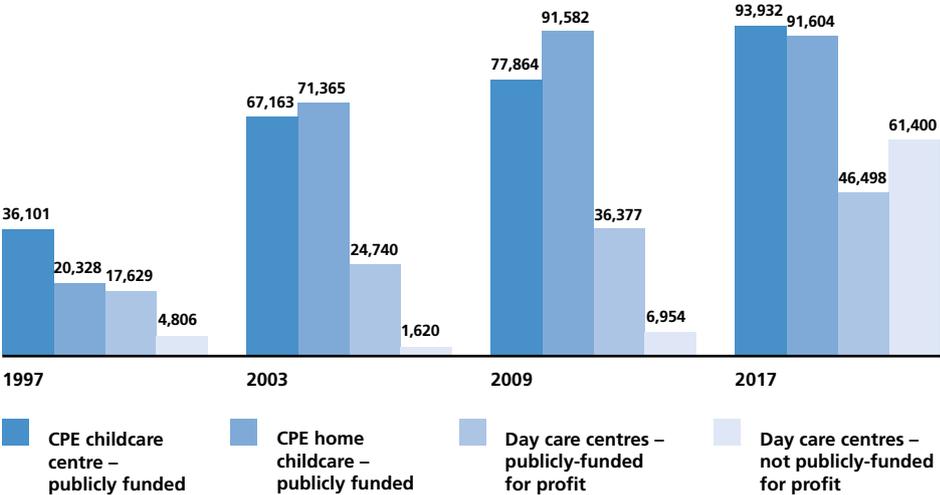
The government’s initial objective was to quickly develop the network to offer low-cost publicly-funded child care to all children by 2000. However, given the budgetary constraints, the implementation was more gradual, with the number of children benefiting increasing considerably in subsequent years. Appendix A provides an overview of the publicly-funded and not publicly-funded child care services²⁸ available to young children in Quebec since 1997. These services fall into two broad categories: centre-based services (CPEs and for-profit day care centres), and home-based services.

As shown in Figure 1, the network of CPEs grew rapidly between 1997 and 2003, particularly in the home child care sector. This period saw very little growth in the for-profit sector, however, because of a moratorium on new for-profit centres, which was lifted in 2002.

27 L'Office des services de garde à l'enfance was created in 1980. It was responsible for regulating, issuing permits and administering the subsidies of the growing child care sector.

28 Educational Childcare Regulation – Educational Child Care Act. For more information see: <http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cr/S-4.1.1.%20r.%202>

Fig. 1: Development of the ECEC system in Quebec (1997 to 2017) – Number of regulated places in publicly-funded and for-profit services



(See Appendix B for a detailed chart of the growth of the ECEC system).

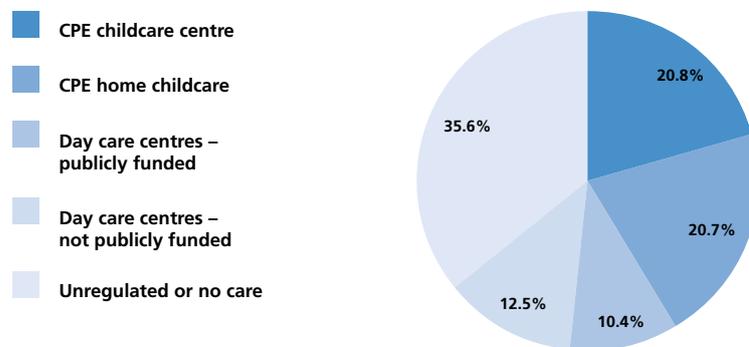
Beginning in 2003, however, there was significant growth in the for-profit sector. As Figure 1 illustrates, places in publicly-funded for-profit centres almost doubled from 2003 to 2017. What was more troubling and indicative of the growing privatisation of child care in Quebec, was the increase in “non-publicly-funded” for-profit centres which have grown exponentially since a refundable tax credit was introduced to finance them. This demand-side fiscal measure rendered the parent fee in a for-profit non-publicly-funded centre comparable to the cost of a place in a publicly-funded setting. This encouraged parents, who could not secure a place in a CPE as supply was too limited, to enrol their children in for-profit services that have been shown to be of lower quality in Quebec and in other research (see Appendix C).

Other noteworthy changes to Quebec’s child care network include increases in parental fees. In 2003, the initial fee of CAN\$5 a day went up to CAN\$7 a day. In 2014, this fee was raised to CAN\$7.30 a day. A major change, however, occurred in 2015 when a sliding scale based on family income was introduced. The basic parental contribution is currently CAN\$7.75 a day and extends to a maximum daily rate of CAN\$21.20. Although in Quebec parents pay the lowest child care fees in Canada, this basic contribution still raises the question of affordability and accessibility for low-income families who have to pay the basic fee.

A further question is about universality, one of the objectives of the family policy. Despite the fact that Quebec has the highest percentage of regulated child care places in Canada (Friendly et al. 2015), only about two-thirds of children aged zero to four had access to a regulated place in 2016 (see Figure 2). Given that approxi-

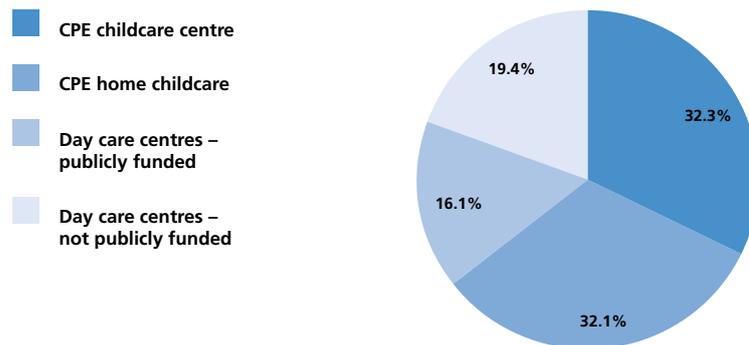
mately 80 percent of mothers with pre-school age children are in the workforce²⁹ (Fortin 2017; Friendly et al. 2015), this leaves a significant proportion of families with no care or having to resort to unregulated care arrangements. Furthermore, as Figure 3 shows, about two-thirds of children aged zero to four who attend regulated care are in settings that have been found to be of overall lower quality than the centre-based CPEs (see Appendix C; Institut de la statistique du Québec 2004, 2015; Japel et al. 2005).

Fig. 2: Percentage of all children aged 0 to 4 by different types of ECEC setting (2016)



Source: Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés and Institut de la statistique du Québec (author's calculation)

Fig. 3: Percentage of places occupied by children by type of ECEC setting (2017)

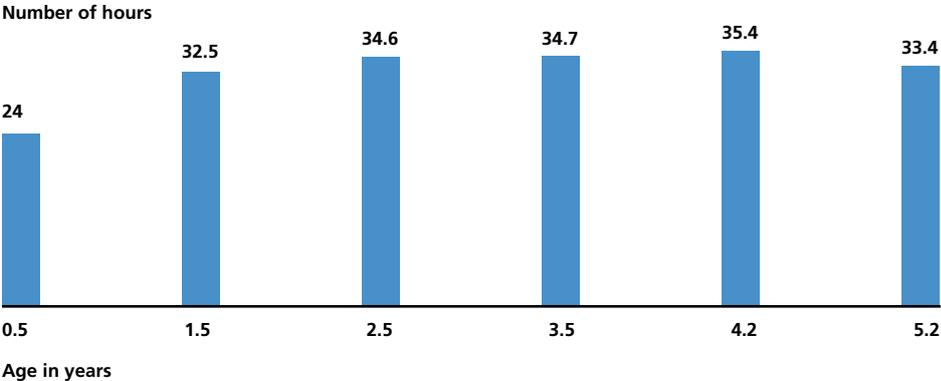


Source: Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés (author's calculation)

²⁹ Labour force participation of mothers with young children in Quebec has surpassed the other Canadian provinces since the introduction of the regulated fixed-fee child care network.

All publicly-funded child care services are obliged to offer ten hours of continuous care to parents. According to government figures, children spend an estimated average of 7.5 hours a day in child care (Ministère de la Famille 2014). Figure 4 shows the average hours per week children spend in their main care setting as reported by parents participating in the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development (QLSCD). These averages may be slightly higher as many parents report using additional care arrangements to accommodate other responsibilities related to work or education.

Fig. 4: Average number of hours per week in child care by children attending an ECEC setting (QLSCD 1998–2003)

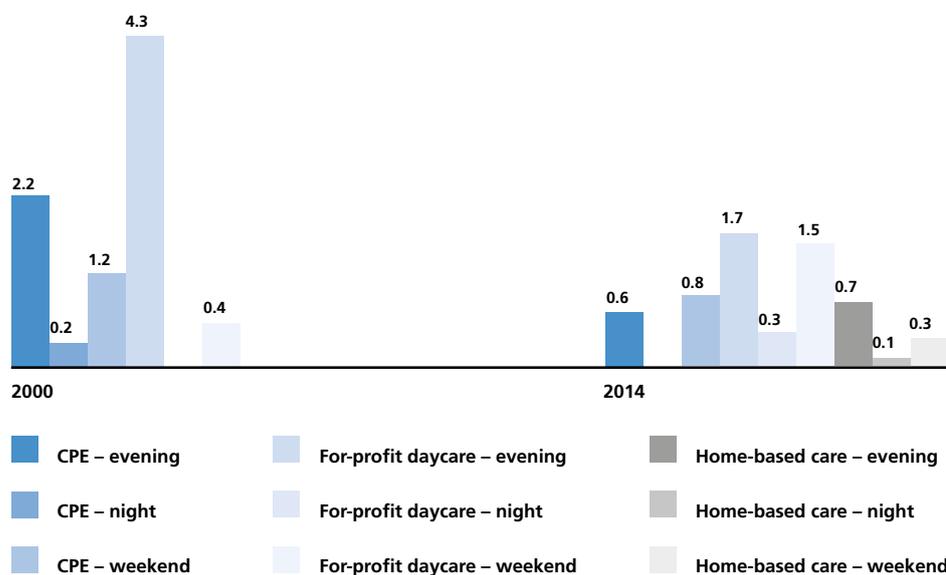


While the opening hours of publicly-funded child care services meet the needs of most parents working regular hours, those working non-standard hours are less well served. In fact, the proportion of parents with preschool-age children working non-standard hours has increased significantly over the past decades. According to the latest available data, in 2009 about a third of mothers and fathers of preschool-age children were working non-standard hours and/or had an atypical work status³⁰ (Institut de la statistique 2011). As standard child care operating times do not meet the needs of these parents, organising child care, therefore, continues to be a major challenge (Gingras 2012).

Quebec launched a pilot project in 2000 in response to the child care needs of parents who work evenings, nights or week-ends. A number child care centres with non-standard hours were set up and were funded in addition to the regular base funding formula. However, this additional funding was withdrawn a year later (Hal-fon/Friendly 2015). Figure 5 shows the percentage of CPEs and day care centres who offered these non-standard services to parents in 2000 and 2014 (Ministère de la Famille 2016). It is worth noting that home-based child care settings only started to offer these services in 2003.

³⁰ Atypical work status includes parents working at home, self-employed or doing freelance work, and those with unpredictable working hours or working different jobs.

Fig. 5: Percentage of child care services by type that offer services to parents working non-standard hours



As Figure 5 shows, the percentage of child care settings that offer child care to parents working evenings, nights or weekends decreased significantly from 2000 to 2014. The overall low percentages of services that offer care during non-standard hours mostly do so in the evening and on weekends (Ministère de la Famille 2016).

3.4 School-based preschool services (Education Ministry)

The *Rapport Parent*³¹ (Parent Report) – another seminal product of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s in Quebec – was the result of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Quebec (*Commission royale d’enquête sur l’enseignement dans la province de Québec*). This report played a crucial role in the democratisation of the educational system in Quebec. It strongly encouraged the government to reform all levels of education and stipulated the right of every child to receive a good and free education. One of its recommendations was the setting up of a network of public part-time kindergartens for children aged five (Rocher 2004). This universal programme was implemented in the 1970s.

31 Named after the president of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Quebec, Bishop Alphonse-Marie Parent

At the same time, when public policy acknowledged the need to develop strategies to counter the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on children's school performance and social adaptation (Brooks-Gunn 1997), a targeted programme inspired by the Head Start programme of the United States was implemented in urban settings on a part-time basis for children aged four. These two programmes, known as Renewal Operation (*Opération Renouveau*) (Lapointe et al. 2005), have undergone significant changes since their inception.

Senior kindergarten for children age five

Initially a part-time universal programme in the 1980s, senior kindergarten became a full-day programme for children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Montreal, the largest city in Quebec with a high concentration of poverty and immigration (Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal 1991). With the family policy of 1997, senior kindergarten became a full-time programme for all children. Low-cost school child care under the governance of the Education Ministry was also part of the policy and available in most elementary schools for both junior and senior kindergarten. These services, whose opening hours are determined by the school board and the school council, offer care before and after school to accommodate parental schedules.

Junior kindergarten for children aged four

In 1997, the then governing party (*Parti Québécois*) put a moratorium on the creation of new junior kindergartens in favour of the investment in a child care system for children aged zero to four. However, to support parents in balancing their work and family responsibilities, the existing half-day junior kindergartens could complement the school day with a supplementary half-day service provided by early childhood educators.

Major changes occurred in 2012 when it became clear that the existing junior kindergartens no longer reached their initially targeted population. Social mobility and gentrification had changed the characteristics of numerous neighbourhoods in Montreal which could no longer be considered as disadvantaged according to the social and material Deprivation Index (Gamache et al. 2015) used by the Education Ministry to identify neighbourhoods with a high concentration of vulnerable families. In view of this fact, the education minister of the *Parti Québécois* – briefly in power from 2012 to 2014 – succeeded in convincing the government to gradually develop new full-day junior kindergarten programmes³² in disadvantaged neigh-

32 Both full-day and most half-day junior kindergartens cover an entire school day. The major difference is that in full-day junior kindergarten, a certified teacher is with the children for 282 minutes a day, whereas in the half-day programme, the children only spend about 141 minutes a day with the teacher. For the rest of the school day children are in the care of staff with varying degrees of training in ECEC.

bourhoods. This would improve access to preschool education for disadvantaged populations less likely to attend child care and in need of compensatory measures to improve their school readiness.

Another service that has been implemented since the 1970s is the programme *Passe-Partout*³³. While junior kindergarten was mostly developed in urban settings and provided services for children, this programme offers support to parents in more rural and semi-urban disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Its objective is to foster parenting skills that improve children's educational outcomes with special emphasis on collaboration between the school and the family (Castonguay 2003).

Who is enrolled in these school-based preschool programmes?

Mandatory elementary education starts with grade 1 and children are eligible if they have attained the age of six before 1 October of the school year. Enrolment in school-based preschool services is, therefore, optional. However, the universal full-day kindergarten programme – which was implemented in 1997 as part of the family policy – is attended by almost all children in Quebec. Statistics from the Education Ministry (2017) and the Quebec Statistics Institute (*Institut de la statistique du Québec*) (2017) show that 93 percent of all children aged five attended senior kindergarten in public schools and about 6 percent in private schools³⁴ during the 2015-2016 school year³⁵. As it is part of public education, and therefore free of charge, or in the case of private schools with fees equivalent to child care costs, parents opt out from remaining in the child care sector.

Both part-time junior kindergarten and the *Passe-Partout* animation services initially targeted programmes for children in underprivileged neighbourhoods. They have been attended by close to one-fifth of children aged four³⁶ since 1998. The full-day junior kindergarten programme was gradually implemented in 2013. By the school year 2016–2017, this new programme was offered in 188 classrooms across the province and provided services to about 2,300 children. For all programmes available to four-year-olds in school settings, they reached about one-fifth of that population during the 2016–2017 school year³⁷.

33 Named after a popular children's television programme similar to Sesame Street

34 Quebec has a long tradition of private schools. The latter are subsidised by the Education Ministry. According to the above-mentioned sources, about 5 percent of children attend private preschool. This percentage increases to 7 percent for primary schools and about one child in 5 (21 percent) attends a private high school.

35 Calculations by the author.

36 Calculation by the author from statistics from the Education Ministry and the Quebec Statistics Institute.

37 Calculation by the author from statistics from the Education Ministry and the Quebec Statistics Institute.

3.5 Inequalities in access to ECEC services in Quebec

This section presents the available data on inequality in access to ECEC services with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups such as children growing up in low-income families, those whose parents are recent immigrants and children of Indigenous origin.

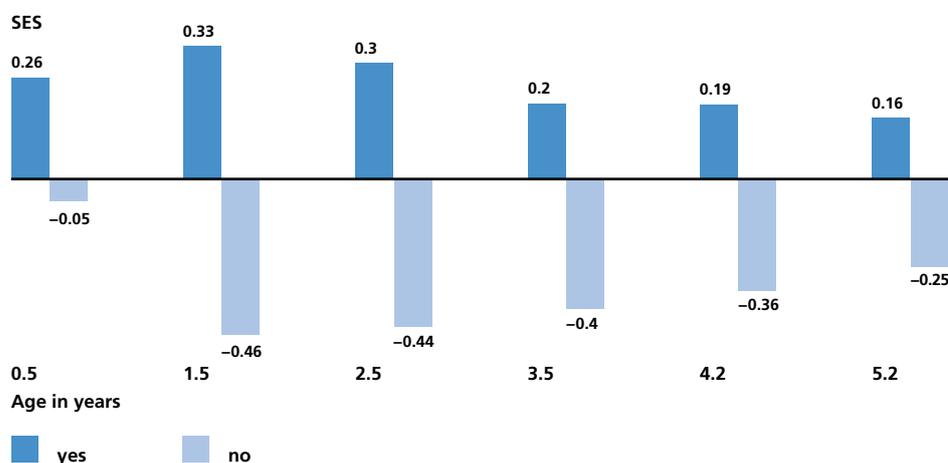
Use of ECEC services and socioeconomic indicators

The only study in Canada that has collected extensive longitudinal data on both family characteristics and child care use and quality is the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development (QLSCD)³⁸. The QLSCD data that was collected during home visits and child care observations have allowed researchers to paint a picture of the socioeconomic characteristics of families that do and do not use child care services. This information is extremely important given that Quebec's new family policy, that was implemented at the beginning of the QLSCD, sought to enhance equality of opportunity by creating a network of high-quality child care services accessible to all children, irrespective of the socioeconomic status of their parents.

Figure 6 clearly shows that parents whose children attended an ECEC service at the beginning of the QLSCD were in general more socioeconomically privileged than parents whose children did not attend. The gap is narrower for young children but this is probably because many mothers had not yet returned to work after maternity leave. Although it diminishes gradually over time, the gap is nonetheless quite striking from the time the children reach the age of 17 months. Given that children's cognitive, social and emotional development is strongly associated with the socioeconomic status of their parents (Willms 2002; Shonkoff/Phillips 2000), these results suggest that a large number of parents of potentially vulnerable children do not use child care services before their children reach school age (Japel et al. 2005).

38 For more information see: http://www.jesuisjeserai.stat.gouv.qc.ca/default_an.htm

Fig. 6: Mean socioeconomic status of parents and regular use of child care (QLSCD 2000–2003)³⁹



Note: Zero represents the mean socioeconomic status of the population in the study. Minimum and maximum values in this sample are -3.01 and +2.84 respectively.

More detailed analyses of the QLSCD data confirmed that children exposed to a number of risk factors such as low family income, low maternal education, and single parenthood entered child care later and consequently had spent significantly less time in ECEC services by the age of five (Giguère/Desrosiers 2010; Japel 2008). Two more recent large-scale telephone surveys conducted, respectively, province-wide and in the Montreal region to ascertain parental preferences and usage patterns regarding child care corroborated the previous QLSCD findings: socioeconomically disadvantaged families in Quebec were still less likely to use ECEC services and their children generally started using these services at a later age (Guay et al. 2015; Laurin et al. 2015; Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) 2011a). Further analyses of the ISQ study revealed that close to a third of children in neighbourhoods with a high degree of material and social deprivation (Gamache et al. 2015) did not regularly attend ECEC services before age five (ISQ 2011b).

Use of ECEC services – inequality in access to high-quality ECEC services

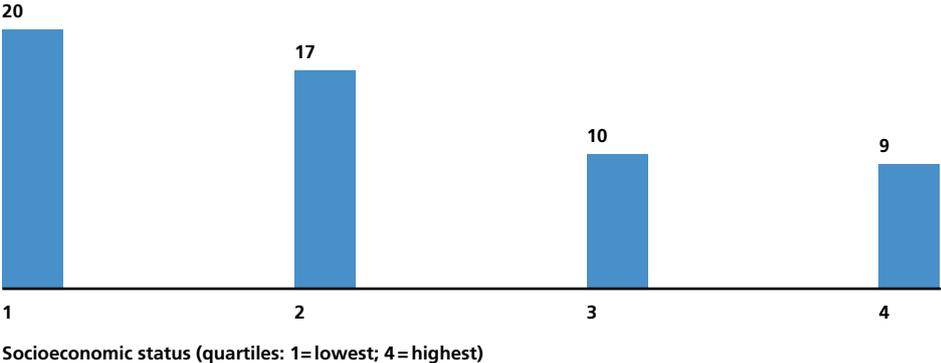
Low-income/socioeconomic status families

Four studies have examined the quality of ECEC services in Quebec over the last 20 years. Although different instruments were used in the assessment, the results indicate that child care quality in Quebec is overall average (see Appendix C for details). While the other two studies (Grandir en qualité 2003, 2013; You Bet I Care 2000) did not extend their data collection to the socioeconomic characteristics of

³⁹ Socioeconomic status (SES) is a widely used measure in North-American research. It is an index based on parental education, income and occupational prestige.

the child care users, the QLSCD offers an opportunity to examine inequality in access to high-quality ECEC services. As figure 7 shows, the gap between children in families with varied socioeconomic status is striking for those child care services rated as inadequate using the revised version of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R; Harms et al. 1998) for centre-based services and the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS; Harms/Clifford 1993)⁴⁰ for home-based services. One-in-five child care settings attended by children in the lowest SES quartile are rated as inadequate; this figure is just under one-in-ten for children whose families are in the highest SES quartile. These results show that children in families with lower socioeconomic status are more likely than children in affluent families to be in a setting of inadequate quality (Japel et al. 2005).

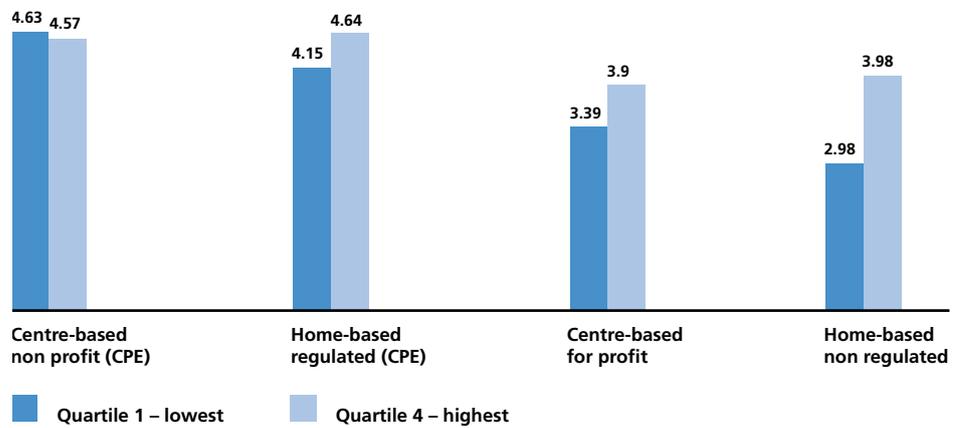
Fig. 7: Percentage of children in settings of poor quality according to family SES (QLSCD 2000–2003)



The data presented in Figure 7 cover all types of child care setting, both centre-based and home-based. Figure 8 presents a breakdown of the different types of ECEC services attended by the QLSCD children and the average quality of these services according to the children’s socioeconomic background. As Figure 8 shows, the quality of centre-based CPEs does not vary significantly whether the children come from affluent or low-income families. However, there are significant variations for the other types of child care service. The home-based CPEs, for-profit day care centres and unregulated home-based settings used by families in the lowest SES quartile are of lower quality than the child care settings of the same type used by families in the highest SES quartile (Japel et al. 2005).

⁴⁰ Translated and validated French versions of the ECERS-R and the FDCRS were used in the QLSCD.

Fig. 8: Variations in ECEC quality according to the family's socioeconomic status and the type of service (QLSCD 1998–2003)



Note: Centre-based services were evaluated using the ECERS-R (Harms et al. 1998); home-based services were evaluated using the Family Day Care Rating Scale (Harms/Clifford 1993)

This gap in mean quality scores of home-based care and for-profit centres is directly associated with regulatory factors such as staff training and for-profit status (Cleveland et al. 2008). To be recognised as a home child care provider, for example, only a minimum of early childhood education is required⁴¹. Although for-profit centres are required to have two child care staff members out of three that are qualified, a large proportion of these settings have not met that requirement⁴² (Ministère de la Famille 2016).

The socioeconomic characteristics of the neighbourhood may also be associated with quality (Japel et al. 2005; ISQ 2004). Home child care services, for example, are directly linked to the characteristics and resources of a population and its neighbourhood. In the case of for-profit centres, disparities in quality may be attributed to different levels of parental involvement, investment and expectations (Japel et al. 2005).

Given these quality results by type of ECEC service, vulnerable children should be attending CPEs which overall provide better services than the other care settings. However, children from low-income families are generally underrepresented in CPEs (Laurin et al. 2015; Japel et al. 2005).

41 The individual has to have completed a first aid course and 45 hours of training prior to being recognised. However, there are no requirements as to basic education such as having obtained a high-school leaving diploma.

42 Educators hired in for-profit centres are more likely to have no specific training or to have completed a fast-track programme which is one of the many qualifications recognised by the ministry. However, they are not equal in terms of the prerequisites and the knowledge acquired about ECEC.

What do we know about quality in school-based ECEC settings? Let's remember that there is an overlap of services for children aged four, with most attending services governed by the Family Ministry. Junior kindergarten under the governance of the Education Ministry remains a targeted programme which aims to foster the cognitive and behavioural development of children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in order to better prepare them for school. The quality of this environment is, therefore, of considerable importance. Contrary to the child care sector, there has not been any research on quality in senior kindergarten. A recent long-overdue study examined the educational quality of junior kindergartens. Using the ECERS-R (Harms et al. 1998), the results showed that overall quality was very low and thus did not ensure access to high-quality services for vulnerable children (Japel et al. 2017).

Immigrants

Just like the rest of Canada, Quebec relies heavily on immigration to counter its low birth rate and ensure economic development. After a short rise in Quebec from 2006 to 2010⁴³, the total fertility rate has been steadily decreasing to 1.59 children per woman (Institut de la statistique 2017a). In 2015, 30 percent of babies born in Quebec had at least one parent who was born outside Canada. This noteworthy statistic is indicative of the growing immigrant population in Quebec. However, there are significant variations across the province. Montreal is by far the region with the highest proportion of immigrants: almost two-thirds of babies born in this region have at least one parent who is an immigrant. Given that Montreal is the main region where immigrants arrive and often settle down, these statistics are not surprising (Institut de la statistique 2017b, 2015).

Immigration presents a number of challenges related to integration into a new society. For example, low income is prevalent among recent immigrants as their diplomas or professional training are not always recognised by the host country. This results in high unemployment rates or forces many to accept low-paid jobs for which they are overqualified (Posca 2016). In fact, more than a third of immigrants who have been in Quebec for less than five years live in relative poverty (Picot & Hou 2014).

Given the growing immigrant population and their overall higher total fertility rate, the larger region of Montreal, which is home to about 80 percent of the immigrants, also has a large number of preschool-age children. In fact, from 2005 to 2014 close to 40,000 children aged zero to four were admitted into Quebec. In 2011–2012, a quarter of children attending junior and senior kindergarten were first or second generation immigrants (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du

43 This increase to about 1.75 children per woman has been associated with the beginning of a more generous parental leave programme and the expansion of the child care network.

Sport 2014). In 2015, about 8 percent⁴⁴ of all immigrants were children aged zero to four (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion 2017).

Two studies conducted in 2006 and 2012 examined, respectively, the school readiness of children attending senior kindergarten in Montreal and across the province of Quebec. Their results revealed a high prevalence of children in underprivileged neighbourhoods who lacked the necessary behavioural and cognitive prerequisites to be well-prepared for school. Both studies agreed that factors such as having a mother tongue other than French or English and/or being born outside Canada were significantly associated with a higher proportion of children being vulnerable⁴⁵ in at least one of the domains measured⁴⁶. This makes them more susceptible to encountering difficulties once they start school. These reports also revealed that vulnerable children were less likely to have attended ECEC services prior to kindergarten (Institut de la statistique 2012; Direction de santé publique 2008).

In view of all these factors and the high correlation between immigrant status and poverty, it is not surprising that children of immigrants are less represented in ECEC services. In fact, their profile is similar to children from low-income families in that they are less likely to be enrolled in child care before entering kindergarten. If they do attend ECEC services, they tend to start at a later age than their non-immigrant peers (Guay et al. 2015; Laurin et al. 2015; ISQ 2011a; Giguère/Desrosiers 2010).

However, the category 'immigrant' is very heterogeneous. Given the diversity of this group with respect to their motive for immigrating⁴⁷, cultural origin, education and values, inequality of access to ECEC may vary. In his review of research, Bradley (2011) points out that child care choices of immigrant families are strongly associated with their values and level of acculturation. Furthermore, immigrant families make less use of non-parental care than natives and prefer informal care provided by family, friends or neighbours, especially in a context of poverty or language minority status.

Recent data from a study of children attending pre-kindergarten in and around Montreal confirms that immigrant children are less likely than their native peers to attend child care services before age four. Immigrant parents are, however, less reluctant to register their children for junior kindergarten. Although not compulsory, school-based services are most likely seen as providing an educational advantage

44 This corresponds to close to 3,800 children.

45 A child is considered vulnerable if his/her score in one of the domains is equal or inferior to the score corresponding to the 10th percentile of the distribution of all children in kindergarten.

46 Both studies used the Early Development Instrument (EDI; Janus/Offord 2007) which is a questionnaire filled out by the kindergarten teacher. The EDI measures 5 dimensions of school readiness: Physical Health and Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language and Cognitive Development, and Communication and General Knowledge.

47 According to the law, immigrants are regrouped into 3 categories: economic immigrants, family reunification and refugees.

for their child, and they are free of charge. Unfortunately, however, the level of quality of these preschool services is generally very low (Japel et al. 2017).

Recent migrant/refugee populations

Since 2011, over five million people have fled from the civil war in Syria⁴⁸ which is the biggest humanitarian crisis of our time. In view of this tragedy, in September 2015, the Quebec government announced exceptional measures to welcome 7,300 Syrian refugees and to support the efforts of Quebecer international cooperation organisations on the ground. In November 2015, the new federal government revealed its plan to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees. Both levels of government collaborated in the implementation of this vast welcome operation.

By June 2017, close to 10,000 refugees had arrived in Quebec. Over 70 percent of them were privately sponsored refugees, while the rest were government-assisted refugees⁴⁹. Most of these refugees came to Quebec through its Collective Sponsorship Programme⁵⁰. By January 2017, the rest of Canada had accepted more than 40,000 Syrian refugees: more than half (55 percent) were government-assisted refugees, and the remaining were privately sponsored or sponsored privately in partnership with the government⁵¹. Considering the many sponsorship applications received during the course of the year 2016, the federal Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness announced it will temporarily suspend acceptance of all new collective sponsorship applications from January 2017.

Quebec has welcomed by far the largest proportion of privately funded refugees from Syria and Montreal is one of their top urban destinations. Almost four out of ten of all the refugees are younger than 17, and roughly seven out of ten have a basic education of 12 years or less⁵². These statistics forecast a need for multi-level interventions to integrate a relatively young and undereducated population.

In 2016, the provincial Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness (MIDI) reviewed and evaluated the government's welcome measures. The numerous partners of this outstanding humanitarian action were consulted such as sponsor organisations, ministries and governmental organisations and their network, welcoming and integration organisations, school boards and educational institutions, humanitarian and philanthropic organisations and destination cities. To improve the complex and multi-level integration of Syrian refugees, the MIDI identified the main areas for improvement such as the reception and settlement of the refugees,

48 The UN Refugee Agency – for more information see: <http://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>

49 For more information see: http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/fr/divers/Statistiques_Refugies_Syriens.pdf

50 Quebec's collective sponsorship programme, distinct from the federal programme, complements the government's efforts to support refugees through its government-assisted refugee programme. The collective sponsorship programme allows groups of Quebec residents or non-profit organisations to sponsor refugees, facilitate their integration and provide for their needs for a period of up to three years.

51 For more information see: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>

52 <http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/01c85d28-2a81-4295-9c06-4af792a7c209> (calculations by the author)

their use of social services, adapted language classes, and employment and training programmes (MIDI, 2017).

It was not possible to obtain the exact number of children potentially in need of or enrolled in ECEC services. The Education Ministry provided statistics on preschool attendance of children born in Syria. Since 2011, around 450 children were registered in junior or senior kindergarten, about half of them during the 2016-2017 school year⁵³. Obtaining information about child care use turned out to be even more complicated. As child care places in CPEs are hard to come by and the waiting lists are still long, the government recommended that Syrian children should be directed towards the home-based care sector or community services which are more likely to be able to accommodate the newcomers⁵⁴. Unfortunately, these services have been shown to be of low quality.

Children of Aboriginal/Indigenous⁵⁵ origin

Quebec is the home of eleven distinct Aboriginal peoples: ten First Nations and the Inuit communities. The National Household Survey of 2011 revealed that close to 2 percent of the total population of Quebec identified themselves as Aboriginal. Furthermore, this survey also showed that population growth was much higher among Aboriginal people: between 2006 and 2011, the Aboriginal population increased 20 percent, compared with 5 percent for the non-Aboriginal population⁵⁶. In 2015, the Aboriginal population in Quebec amounted to 104,633 persons with more than 70 percent of them living on reserve, the highest proportion among the Canadian provinces (Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones 2015).

While Canada ranks as one of the seven most industrialised and wealthiest countries in the world and Canadians enjoy one of the highest international health and living standards, the First Nations of Canada rank among the poorest nations. In fact, according to the World Health Organisation, children born into Indigenous families often live in remote areas where governments do not invest in basic social services. Consequently, Indigenous youth and children have limited or no access to health care, quality education, justice and participation (WHO 2007). In fact, Aboriginal communities in Quebec have a high prevalence of poverty as well as the associated social, physical and mental health problems (FNQLHSSC; First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission 2013). Indigenous populations are also very young as the fertility rates remain significantly higher

53 Education Ministry – personal communication

54 AQCPÉ – personal communication – August 2017; La Presse : Garderie: Québec évalue le nombre de places pour les réfugiés, published 10 January 2016. Le ministère de la Famille et l'aide gouvernementale aux réfugiés syriens. Présentation aux associations et partenaires. 12 January 2016,

55 Both terms are used in the consulted literature.

56 Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011. The term 'Aboriginal identity' refers to whether the person reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or being a Registered or Treaty Indian, (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada) and/or being a member of a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, section 35(2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/2011001/tbl/tbl02-eng.cfm>

for Aboriginal women compared to non-Aboriginal women⁵⁷. In Quebec, more than a third of the First Nations population is under the age of 18. Children aged zero to five account for about 9 percent of the population which represents close to 10,000 children (FNQLHSSC 2013).

As high-quality ECEC services can attenuate the impact of growing up in a socially and materially impoverished environment, what kinds of measures are available to Aboriginal children and their families? There are essentially three types of ECEC services in Aboriginal communities in Quebec: the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative and the First Nations Head Start Program both funded by the federal government⁵⁸, and the Early Childhood Centres (CPE) funded by the provincial government⁵⁹. Aboriginal communities can decide what kind of services best respond to their needs, with some communities offering all three services at the same or different locations and some only one or two or none that are regulated. According to a recent survey, about half of children aged zero to five living in a First Nations community attend a child care service. As extended family and grandparents play an important role in children's lives among First Nations, they are the preferred child care option of numerous parents. However, a significant proportion of parents report that services are either unavailable or unsatisfactory, or that they are on a waiting list (FNQLHSSC 2014).

What do we know about the educational quality of the ECEC services available in Aboriginal communities? There is no available data collection on the quality of the different ECEC services provided in these communities. However, the level of training of the educators can serve as a pointer. According to recent data provided by the FNQLHSS⁶⁰, there is a major shortage of qualified educators: close to half of the personnel in the provincially funded CPEs does not have any training in ECEC⁶¹. No data is available on the level of training of staff providing services in the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative and the First Nations Head Start Program.

57 Statistics Canada <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14313-eng.htm>

58 The Indian Act of 1876 gives the federal government control over most aspects of Indigenous life including land, band administration, resources, education and health. The present government aims at gradually phasing out this Act.

59 All three ECEC initiatives are administered by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

60 Personal communication – 8 September 2017

61 About 7 percent have completed a three-year post-secondary programme in ECEC, and about 50 percent have a fast track First Nations Attestation of training in ECEC.

Welfare and other social policies addressing inequality in access to ECEC

According to the most recent report card of *Campaign 2000* (2016), Quebec's child poverty rate is one of the lowest in Canada. Lower poverty rates in Quebec can be attributed to a collective mobilisation to combat poverty. In 2002, the *Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion* was unanimously adopted by the National Assembly. It is the only law of its kind in North America. Article 1 of this Act⁶² stipulates that "The object of this Act is to guide the Government and Québec society as a whole towards a process of planning and implementing actions to combat poverty, prevent its causes, reduce its effects on individuals and families, counter social exclusion and strive towards a poverty-free Québec". The first multisectoral Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion brought together a multitude of measures implemented from 2004 to 2010 with an investment of CAN\$4.5 billion (Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale [MESS] 2010a).

The second Action Plan, deployed from 2010 to 2015, built on existing initiatives and was assigned a budget close to CAN\$7 billion. In this plan, the government also recognised its international human rights obligations. "The government recognizes that in an inclusive society such as ours, everyone has the right to live with dignity and with a sufficient standard of living according to international standards, and it intends to do everything in its power to attain this goal" (MESS 2010b, p. 9). Consultations on the development of a third action plan are under way.

The results from the main indicators of the first Action Plan point to significant progress. Since 2003, the low-income rate using the Market Basket Measure (MBM)⁶³ had decreased for several types of family units such as families with young children and, particularly, single mothers. For the same period, there was a slight decrease in the number of Social Assistance Programme recipients. Furthermore, between 2003 and 2010, the disposable income of minimum-wage earners and social assistance recipients increased, and more so for households with children. For all households these increases were markedly higher if the parent was part of the workforce. Employment programmes also played an important role given the economic crisis and world-wide recession of 2009. This daunting economic context put Quebec's social security system to the test. However, additional strategies put in place in 2009 softened the impact of the recession (MESS 2010b).

⁶² Act to combat poverty and social exclusion – for more information see: <http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/L-7>

⁶³ The Market Basket Measure (MBM) is the yardstick recommended by the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion for monitoring poverty in terms of coverage of basic needs. The MBM corresponds to the value of commodities and services that enable individuals to have the following: food that meets Health Canada standards; clothing and footwear; rental housing; transportation; and other goods and services for personal care; household needs; furniture; basic telephone service; recreation and school supplies.

The results of the second Action Plan are mixed. The Quebec Provincial Poverty Profile for 2015 published by *Canada Without Poverty* (CWP)⁶⁴ revealed that much of the previous progress had slowed down as a consequence of the government's recent austerity measures. Although the government increased the minimum wage to CAN\$ 10.55 (CAN\$ 11.25 in 2017) as well as benefits for single social assistance beneficiaries, cuts in a number of measures such as the income support programme and the return to work supplement resulted in an increase of households relying on social assistance. In fact, since 2009 the poverty rate has climbed steadily. According to the different measures used to determine low income (MBM or LIM⁶⁵) about 10 to 14 percent of the population are now unable to afford the basic necessities. Results from the 2015 census confirm that 14.3 percent of children live in poverty in the province of Quebec and that this percentage is slightly higher in the Montreal region (Statistics Canada 2017c).

Access to ECEC and social assistance

Since the beginning of the development of Quebec's child care sector, children of families receiving social assistance may attend a child care service free of charge on a part-time basis up to a maximum of 23.5 hours a week. However, for administrative reasons, many services prefer attendance on a full-time basis and do not, therefore, give priority to these children (Tougas 2002). This highlights the need for measures to improve accessibility such as setting aside places for the most vulnerable children.

The two Action Plans adopted measures facilitating access to ECEC services for the most underprivileged children. Before the implementation of the first Action Plan in 2002, the Family Ministry signed a framework agreement with the Health and Social Services Ministry, its establishments and the Quebec Association of Child Care Centres (AQCP) to promote reciprocal accessibility and continuity of services provided by health and social service centres and non-profit child care centres (CPEs). This intersectoral agreement allows CPEs to reserve 5 percent of their places for children who are being monitored by a CLSC (health and social service centre) due to personal or family difficulties, including poverty. For these families, the parental contribution can be waived and children have free access to full-time child care.

By 2008, nearly half of the CPEs were party to such an agreement, although some two-thirds reported that they could not accept all the children recommended by the

64 Canada Without Poverty is a non-profit organisation that tracks poverty rates across Canada – for more information see: http://www.cwp-csp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Province-Poverty-Profiles_QC-2.pdf

65 Used for international comparison, and increasingly being adopted by the Canadian anti-poverty community, the LIM is a purely relative measure of low income, set at 50 percent of adjusted median household income.

CLSCs because they lacked a sufficient number of places (Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés 2008). Currently, no information is available on the exact number of CPEs that signed this agreement. Furthermore, there appears to be a moratorium on further signings⁶⁶ which limits the access of vulnerable children to the type of child care that is generally of better quality than the other services.

Parents' need for and use of child care is embedded in a larger framework of social policies. The availability of affordable child care, for example, is closely associated with the growing number of mothers of young children in Quebec who have entered or returned to the labour market (Fortin 2017; Haeck et al. 2016). Maternal employment is also associated with other benefits such as the possibility to participate in the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP). This plan, which is part of the family policy measures proposed in 1997, came into force in 2006, when Quebec opted out of the federal government's employment insurance plan for parental leave to develop its own more comprehensive programme. The QPIP is more generous, flexible and accessible than any other plan offered in other Canadian provinces. For example, when calculating benefits, the maximum insurable earnings are higher (CAN\$71,500 in 2016), the minimum insurable earnings are lower (CAN\$2,000, regardless of the number of hours worked), and parents can choose between two options which differ in terms of duration of leave and the percentage of income replaced. The latter is significantly higher than in the rest of Canada. Furthermore, the plan offers benefits for self-employed workers and fathers. This relatively new measure, along with the more generous child assistance programme and the development of low parental fee child care places, was associated with a mini baby-boom in Quebec after 2006⁶⁷.

3.6 Summary for Quebec

Quebec has a unique status in the Canadian federation thanks to its progressive social and educational policies. It is the only province that has invested substantial amounts of public funds over the last 20 years in the creation of a universal child care system that offers parents affordable child care. Nonetheless, its child care system cannot be considered a universal programme as only close to two-thirds of children aged zero to four have access to regulated care. In view of the increased labour force participation of mothers with young children, this means an important number of families have to rely on unregulated care.

⁶⁶ AQCPE – personal communication, August 2017

⁶⁷ For more information see: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/quebec-celebrating-mini-baby-boom-in-2006-1.233120>

A closer look at what types of services were developed since 1997 reveals a doubling of places in the non-profit CPEs during the first decade. However, in the same period the number of places in the home-based sector increased more than four-fold. The following decade is marked by a slower development of places in the CPEs and the home-based services but reveals an important expansion of the for-profit day care centres, and particularly of the not publicly-funded day care centres. In fact, in 2017, more than a third of children aged zero to four attended these for-profit services.

Existing data reveals that inequality in access to ECEC is still a reality. Vulnerable populations such as children from low-income or immigrant families are under-represented in the child care sector. If they attend a child care service, they are also more likely to be in settings that are of low quality, such as home-based care or for-profit day care centres. It is worth noting that studies that examined the educational quality of Quebec's child care system showed that overall quality is mediocre. However, the non-profit centres (CPEs) generally provide better services than the for-profit sector. Furthermore, while children of different socioeconomic backgrounds who are attending a CPE are privy to services of similar quality, there is a significant socioeconomic gradient when examining quality in for-profit and regulated and unregulated home-based care. Finally, school-based junior kindergarten – a targeted measure to improve school readiness among at-risk children – has also been shown to lack the level of quality that fosters these children's cognitive and social development.

The situation of the two other vulnerable populations discussed in this report, namely the children of recent Syrian refugees and of Indigenous origin, is also critical regarding access to ECEC and the quality of the services provided for them. In the case of the Syrian children, they would greatly benefit from attending a CPE. However, as there are still long waiting lists for a place in a CPE, the government has recommended that they should be directed toward the home-based sector. The latter has been shown to be of low quality and is, therefore, less likely to provide them with an educational environment that fosters their integration.

Indigenous children in Quebec are equally disadvantaged in terms of access to and quality of ECEC services. Although different ECEC services have been developed in their communities, only half of preschool-age children have access to them. Parents who do not use ECEC report that services are unavailable or unsatisfactory, or that they are on a waiting list, which highlights the need to develop sufficient places to meet the demand. There is no data on the quality in these Indigenous ECEC settings. However, staff training is closely associated with the quality of the educational environment. As there appears to be an important shortage of qualified educators, the ECEC services provided to Indigenous children may be wanting in quality.

4.

Discussion and conclusions

This paper has considered how Canadian early childhood education and care is delivered, with a focus on questions of inequality. As Canada is not a unitary state but a relatively decentralised federation, there is often the idea that social policy topics like ECEC must be addressed province by province, region by region. Yet as we have seen, ECEC and associated policy issues like maternity/parental leave have more common than different features across Canada, with the exception of Quebec which stands apart from the others. Yet for families in Quebec, too, child care services may be too costly, not available enough and too often, are of less than stellar quality.

Over the past 20 years, Quebec has invested a significant amount of public funds that are very impressive when compared to child care spending in the rest of Canada but somewhat less so when compared to some of Europe's higher-spending countries. The declared objective of the Quebec government was to develop a child care system whose main objectives were to support parents in their work-family balance and to provide all children, independent of their parents' socioeconomic or employment status, with a high-quality educational environment that prepares them well for the challenges they face once they enter the school system. Twenty years later, Quebec has the highest proportion of children in regulated care settings and results show that the availability of child care with low parental fees has had a substantial impact on the labour force participation of mothers (IMF 2017; Haeck et al. 2016; Fortin 2015). When the rest of Canada is compared to Quebec, it clearly lags way behind, with very low public spending, parental fees that are out of the reach of many or most families and – in almost all of Canada – much lower coverage than in Quebec for children in regulated child care.

It is important to bear in mind that both Quebec and the rest of Canada primarily rely on a marketised model of child care provision with the important exception that Quebec operationally funds a substantial portion of its services, thus bringing parental fees down to a much more affordable level than in most of the rest of Canada (Macdonald/Friendly 2016). Nevertheless, Quebec child care, like child care in the rest of Canada, is not planned or publicly-managed. Thus, where and when it is initiated, who will be served and what the nature of the programme is, is still determined by voluntary groups and entrepreneurs. This together with Quebec's relatively weak legislated requirements provides fertile terrain for poor quality and inequality of access to high quality services.

Thus, despite Quebec's positive achievements, there remain a number of challenges and critical developments. The child care sector has undergone rapid privatisation

since 2009 when the government introduced a refundable child care tax credit for the express purpose of stimulating the development of “unfunded” for-profit child care. This was a major departure from the original initiative to fund services operationally, as substantial sums are now reimbursed to families who have enough cash flow to pay more market-determined fees “at the gate”. What this highlights is that Quebec’s child care network cannot be considered a public or universal system in which all children have access (or the right) to a place. It, therefore, remains a market model where parental demand largely drives the further development of the system.

In the rest of Canada, too, child care is a commodity in a child care market in which voluntary groups or entrepreneurs determine where centres are located and who they are for, and then take the responsibility for maintaining them. The system differs from that in Quebec, however, as parental fees or the individual parent fee subsidies that may replace the fees carry most of the budgetary responsibility for child care services, with limited operational funding in most provinces.

As we have noted, child care has been considered by some as a great ‘equaliser’ to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty and exclusion (Morabito et al. 2013). This potential of child care to address inequality has motivated many governments, including Quebec’s (and perhaps, in the future, the federal government and other provincial governments in Canada) to invest more in child care services. However, as Van Lancker (2017) points out, child care use and child care inequality are inversely related. If there is a shortage of places, as in Quebec and the rest of Canada, the creation of additional places will first and foremost benefit higher income families who are usually better equipped to navigate the system and obtain a place when needed, particularly if the location of child care services is market-driven rather than planned with the needs of families in mind. An efficient strategy to reduce inequality in child care use would require adequate public expenditure to ensure a major expansion of high quality funded (affordable) places available for all children across the socioeconomic spectrum.

What are the barriers to ECEC access in Quebec and the rest of Canada? First and foremost, the demand for child care places still exceeds supply everywhere and is unevenly distributed. The data available in Quebec, but not elsewhere, tells us that one troubling aspect is that children from low-income families are under-represented in the non-profit centres (CPEs) which are the most sought-after and best quality places in the present system. The data from the City of Toronto on its lower income subsidised population shows the same, particularly for infants, for whom centre places are extremely scarce. Unlike public schools, which usually limit enrolment to children living in a defined catchment area, child care services in Canada are not obliged to give priority to children living in the neighbourhood. Parents with higher socioeconomic status and more education are, therefore, more likely to secure a place in CPEs or other better child care as they rely on their human

capital to secure better services for their young children, while poorer and less educated parents lack information on efficient strategies to gain access to these settings (Vandenbroeck et al. 2008). Further, access to regulated child care services remains a particular challenge for parents working non-standard hours. As the percentage of parents in this situation seems to far exceed the number of available regulated child care places, a significant number of them are left to come up with a patchwork of care.

If availability continues to be a problem, so does affordability. Quebec has the lowest child care fees in Canada by far. Nonetheless, the present fee structure with a basic parental contribution of CAN\$7.75 (approximately €5.25) a day does not seem to be enough to counter inequality in ECEC affordability. Some families, especially those on low salaries or receiving social assistance, lack the means to pay this amount for care. In fact, child care costs amount to around 10 percent of the weekly salary of a person working full time on a minimum wage⁶⁸, an income that is below the poverty line. This calls into question the validity of a system based on a basic amount, since it puts the poorest in society at a clear disadvantage. The provision of free child care for the neediest, such as the working poor, would be a strategy that could reduce inequality in ECEC access and affordability.

At the same time, child care fees in the rest of Canada are far higher than Quebec's. Their provincial fee subsidy systems do not ensure that the "needy" families for whom they are ostensibly designed can access a subsidy when it is needed as in Ontario or in other provinces. Furthermore, even if they have access to the subsidy, it is inconceivable that a low-income single mother will be asked to pay an additional CAN\$500 a month per child.

The quality of child care in Quebec – where ongoing research is available – and in the rest of Canada – where research is lacking – continues to be problematic. In Quebec, only one-third of children have access to CPEs, while two-thirds of children in regulated child care are in relatively poor quality settings. The overall mediocre quality of the system can be attributed, in part, to the types of services the government has chosen to prioritise for development home-based child care and for-profit day care centres. In addition, regulations governing the system only ensure minimal quality, even if there is compliance. Quebec's child-adult ratio is one of the highest in Canada, but staff qualification requirements are weak everywhere in Canada. While post-secondary professional two- or three-year programmes in ECEC appear to deliver the most thorough training, none of the provinces including Quebec require all staff to have undergone this scale of training. Some provinces only require a one-year certificate for some staff. Furthermore, in Quebec

68 Calculation by the author. Minimum wage in Quebec is presently CAN\$11.25 an hour. Weekly before tax earnings of full-time employment (35 hours) amount to CAN\$393.75. Full-time child care attendance at the basic rate of CAN\$7.55 amounts to CAN\$37.75 a week.

and elsewhere, numerous post-secondary degrees, more or less related to ECEC, are treated as equivalent. Little or no training in ECEC is required for home child care providers; only 45 hours of prior training is required in Quebec, while Ontario requires none. Many would argue that the weakness of staff training is a direct product of the rapid expansion of the child care sector over the past twenty years which urgently needed to produce ‘qualified’ staff to meet the growing demand. Others point to the low wages – sometimes the lowest legal minimum wage – as the market response to the low public funding which, in turn, results in unaffordable parental fees.

As noted, in most of Canada including Quebec, there are no mechanisms in place to assess and improve process quality on a regular basis, with the exception of local quality projects like those in Toronto or other notable local or service-related projects. All provinces rely on infrequent inspections of compliance with legislated requirements that are acknowledged not to represent “high quality“. Indeed, even these inspections are infrequent, most notably in Quebec, where they take place every five years.

To conclude, there is evidence that Quebec’s ECEC policies have had some impact on mothers’ employment, poverty and inequality. This does not seem to be the case in the rest of Canada where ECEC policies are far less developed. Nonetheless, although Quebec has the lowest child poverty rate among the Canadian provinces, still close to one-in-six children grows up in a family that does not have sufficient income to afford the basic necessities. This figure is close to one-in-five for Canada as a whole. Child care services are known to be an important policy lever to combat poverty and inequality. Yet, as in many developed economies, the use of child care services in Quebec – especially high quality child care services – has been shown to be socially stratified, and is believed to be so across Canada. Families with higher income or education are overrepresented in the child care sector – and particularly in its services of better quality - while many low-income and immigrant families face multiple barriers that exclude them from using these services that could be beneficial for their children’s development and integration, and allow parents/mothers to undergo training, obtain an education and find a job.

The available data clearly shows that Quebec’s action plan, the aim of which was to *‘counter social exclusion and strive towards a poverty-free Québec’* has not had the anticipated impact. This emphasises the need to re-evaluate present policies and strategies. To create better conditions for families and to ensure that children at the start of their lives have, as far as possible, equal chances for success in life, a major investment of public funds is needed together with a well-designed policy based on evidence about what works best to ensure access, affordability and high quality for all. Thus, equality in ECEC access will be possible only through a high quality, operationally and adequately-funded child care system that is accessible to all parents and children and has sufficient resources to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in

society, while also striving to achieve and maintain the highest quality standards. A system of this kind will help to ensure equality of opportunity and take us one step closer to eliminating poverty, as well as ensuring that it is not handed down from one generation to the next.

References

- Assembly of First Nations (2017). First Nations working group on human resources development. National meeting on Indigenous early learning and care framework. Summary.
- Atkinson, M. (2015). Farewell to open federalism. Policy Options. Montreal. <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/september-2015/election-2015/farewell-to-open-federalism/> (11.04.2018)
- Baillargeon, D. (1996). Les politiques familiales au Québec. Une perspective historique. In: Lien social et politiques. 36. Vol., p. 21–32
- Beaujot, R./Ravenera, Z./Du, C.J. (2012). Family policies in Quebec and the rest of Canada: Implications for fertility, child care, women's paid work and child development indicators. Ontario.
- Bokova, I. (2010). The ECEC global challenge: Setting the stage. Speech to the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education. Speech. Moscow.
- Bradley, R. (2011). Immigration and Acculturation, Child Care and Schooling. Tempe, Arizona
- Broadbent Institute (2017): Equality project. Ottawa. http://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/income_inequality
- Brooks-Gunn, J. (1997): Strategies for altering the outcomes of poor children and their families. In: Duncan, G. J./Brooks-Gunn, J. (Eds.): Consequences of growing up poor. New York, p. 87–117
- Campaign 2000 (2016): 2016 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada. Toronto.
- Castonguay, C. (2003): Passe-Partout: Un soutien à la compétence parentale. Cadre d'organisation destiné aux gestionnaires, aux intervenantes et aux intervenants. Québec.
- Childcare Resource and Research Unit (2011): What does research say about quality in non-profit and for-profit child care? Toronto.
- Cleveland, G. (2008): If it don't make dollars, does that mean that it don't make sense? Commercial, nonprofit and municipal child care in the city of Toronto. Toronto.
- Cleveland, G./Krashinsky, M./Colley, S./Avery-Nunez, C. (2016): City of Toronto licensed child care demand and affordability study. Toronto.
- Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal (1991): Les enfants de milieux défavorisés et ceux des communautés culturelles. Mémoire au ministre de l'Éducation sur la situation des écoles des commissions scolaires de l'île de Montréal. Montréal

- Direction de santé publique. (2008): Enquête sur la maturité scolaire des enfants montréalais. Rapport régional 2008. Montréal, Esping-Anderson, G. (1990): Three worlds of welfare capitalism. Princeton, N.J
- Ferns, C./Beach, J. (2015): From child care market to child care system. In: Our schools, ourselves. Special Issue. Ottawa
- Ferns, C./Friendly, M. (2014): The state of early childhood education and care in Canada 2012. Toronto
- Flanagan, K./ Beach, J, Varmuza, P. (2013): You Bet We Still Care! A Survey of Centre-Based Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada: Highlights Report. Ottawa, Ontario
- First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (2013): Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey – 2008. <http://cssspnql.com/en/areas-of-intervention/research-sector/population-surveys/regional-health-survey> (11.04.2018)
- First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (2014): First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey. <http://cssspnql.com/en/areas-of-intervention/research-sector/population-surveys/first-nations-regional-early-childhood-education-and-employment-survey> (11.04.2018)
- Fortin, P. (2015): Quebec's Childcare Win-Win. Presented at the Conference The Millenials' Challenge.
- Fortin, P. (2017): What have been the effects of Quebec's universal child care system on women's economic security? Brief submitted to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) of the House of Commons. Ottawa
- Friendly, M./Doherty, G./Beach, J. (2006): What do we know about quality in early learning and child care, and what do we think? A literature review. Toronto
- Friendly, M./Friendly, A.R. (In preparation): Review of maternity and parental leave policies and programs. (Working title). Toronto
- Friendly, M./Grady, B./Macdonald, L./Forer, B. (2015): Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2014. Toronto
- Friendly, M./Prabhu, N. (2010): Can early childhood education and care help keep Canada's promise of respect for diversity? Toronto
- Gamache, P./Hamel, D./Pampalon, R. (2015): L'indice de défavorisation matérielle et sociale: en bref. Québec
- Giguère, C./Desrosiers, H. (2010): Child care from birth to eight years of age. Its use and influence on child development, in Québec Longitudinal Study of Child Development (QLSCD 1998–2010) – From Birth to 8 Years of Age, 5. Vol., Issue 1.
- Gingras, L. (2012): Le travail atypique et la garde d'enfants. Québec.

- Goelman, H./Doherty, G./Lero, D.S./LaGrange, A./Tougas, J. (2000): You Bet I Care! Report 2. Caring and Learning Environments. Quality in Regulated Child Care Centres across Canada. Guelph
- Green, D./Riddell W.C./St-Hilaire F. (Eds.) (2015): Income inequality. The Canadian story. Montreal
- Guay, D./Laurin, I./Bigras, N./Toussaint, P./Fournier, M. (2015): Portrait du parcours préscolaire des enfants montréalais. Résultats de l'Enquête montréalaise sur l'expérience préscolaire des enfants de maternelle (EMEP, 2012). Montréal
- Haeck, C./Lefebvre, P./Merrigan, P. (2016): La politique des services de garde à contribution réduite (SGCR). Retombées probantes, faiblesses et pistes d'amélioration. Mémoire présenté à la Commission sur l'éducation à la petite enfance. Montréal
- Halfon, S./Friendly, M. (2015): Work around the clock. A snapshot of non-standard hours child care in Canada. Toronto.
- Halfon, S./Langford, R. (2015): Developing and supporting a high quality child care workforce in Canada. In: Shaker, E. (Ed.): Our Schools, Ourselves. Summer 2015. Special Issue: Moving Beyond Baby Steps: Building a Child Care Plan for Today's Families, p. 131–144 Ottawa
- Harms, T./Clifford, R.M. (1993): Un univers à découvrir. Grille d'évaluation des services de garde en milieu familial. Québec
- Harms, T./Clifford, R.M./Cryer, D. (1998): Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Rev. ed.). New York
- Heckman, J.J. (2011): The Economics of Inequality: The Value of Early Childhood Education. In: American Educator, 35. Vol., Issue 1, p. 31–35
- Institut de la statistique du Québec (2004): Enquête québécoise sur la qualité des services de garde éducatifs – Grandir en qualité 2003. Québec.
- Institut de la statistique du Québec (2011a): Enquête sur l'utilisation, les besoins et les préférences des familles en matière de services de garde. Québec.
- Institut de la statistique du Québec (2011b): Utilisation et préférences des familles quant à la garde régulière de leurs jeunes enfants selon l'indice de défavorisation. Québec
- Institut de la statistique du Québec. (2012): Enquête québécoise sur le développement des enfants à la maternelle 2012. Québec
- Institut de la statistique du Québec (2015): Enquête québécoise sur la qualité des services de garde éducatif – Grandir en qualité 2014. Québec. <http://www.grandirenqualite.gouv.qc.ca/resultat-2014.htm> (11.04.2018)

- Institut de la statistique du Québec (2017a): Population of Québec by age and sex, 2001 to 2016. Québec. http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/population-demographie/structure/index_an.html (11.04.2018)
- Institut de la statistique du Québec (2017b): Evolution des naissances selon le lieu de naissance des parents, Québec, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010-2017 <http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/population-demographie/naissance-fecondite/425.htm> (20.4.2018)
- Inuit Tapirat Katami (2015): Assessing the Impact of the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) across Inuit Nunangat.
- Janus, M./Offord, D. R. (2007): Development and psychometric properties of the Early Development Instrument (EDI). A measure of children's school readiness. In: Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement. 39. Vol., Issue 1, p. 1
- Janta, B. (2014): Caring for children in Europe: How childcare, parental leave and flexible working arrangements interact in Europe. Brussels
- Japel, C. (2008): Factors of Risk, Vulnerability and School Readiness among Preschoolers: Evidence from Quebec. Montreal.
- Japel, C./Tremblay, R. E./Côté, S. (2005): Quality Counts! Assessing the Quality of Daycare Services Based on the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development. Montreal
- Japel, C./Capuano, F./Bigras, M./Brodeur, M./Giroux, J./Gosselin, C./Lapointe, P./Lefebvre, P./Anik, S. (2017): Les maternelles 4 ans : la qualité de l'environnement éducatif et son apport à la préparation à l'école chez les enfants en milieux défavorisés. Montréal
- Kammerman, S. B./Moss, P. (2009): The politics of parental leave policies. Bristol
- Lapointe, P./Tremblay, R. E./Hébert, M. (2005): Évaluation d'un programme national de maternelle en milieux défavorisés. In: Canadian Journal of Education, 28. Vol., Issue 4, p. 615–637
- Laurin, I./Guay, D./Bigras, N./Fournier, M. (2015): Quel est l'effet de la fréquentation d'un service éducatif sur le développement de l'enfant à la maternelle selon le statut socioéconomique? Résultats de l'Enquête montréalaise sur l'expérience préscolaire des enfants de maternelle (EMEP, 2012). Montréal
- Lloyd, E./Penn, H. (Eds.) (2012): Childcare Markets. Can They Deliver an Equitable Service? Bristol
- Macdonald, D./Friendly, M. (2016): A growing concern. 2016 fees in Canada's large cities. Ottawa
- Mahon, R. (2009): Canada's early childhood education and care policy. Still a laggard? In: International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy. 3. Vol., Issue 1, p. 27–42

- Marois, P. (2008): Le plan Marois. Des actions pour un Québec gagnant. Plateforme électorale du Parti Québécois. Québec
- McGrane, D. (2010): Diverging paths? A classification of the childcare regimes of Canadian provinces. Presented to the Annual Meeting of Prairie Political Science Association. Winnipeg, MB
- McKay, L./Mathieu, S./Doucet, A. (2016): Parental-leave rich and parental-leave poor. Inequality in Canadian labour market based leave policies. In: *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 58. Vol., Issue 4, p. 543–562
- Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. (2014): Taux de décrochage annuel 2012–2013. Québec
- Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) (2010a): Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion. Fifth-Year Progress Report. Québec
- Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) (2010b): Quebec's Combat Against Poverty – Government Action Plan for Solidarity and Social Inclusion 2010–2015. Québec. www.mess.gouv.qc.ca
- Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (MIDI) (2017): Synthèse du bilan gouvernemental sur l'accueil des personnes réfugiées syriennes.
- Ministère de la Famille (2014): Gazelle et Potiron. Cadre de référence pour créer des environnements favorables à la saine alimentation, au jeu actif et au développement moteur en services de garde éducatif à l'enfance. Québec.
- Ministère de la Famille (2016): Situation des centres de la petite enfance, des garderies et de la garde en milieu familial au Québec en 2014. Québec.
- Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (1997): Nouvelles dispositions de la politique familiale. Québec
- Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés (2008): Rapport de l'évaluation de l'entente-cadre et des protocoles CLSC-CPE. Québec
- Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (2016): Statistiques de l'éducation. Édition 2015. Québec. www.education.gouv.qc.ca
- Montpetit, E./Lachapelle, E./Kiss, S. (2017): Does Canadian federalism amplify policy disagreements? Values, regions and policy preferences. In: IRPP Study, Montreal, 65 Vol.
- Morabito, Ch./Vandenbroeck, M./Roose, R. (2013): 'The greatest of equalizers': A critical review of international organizations' views on early childhood care and education. In: *Journal of Social Policy*, 42. Vol., Issue 3, p. 451–67
- Moss, P. (2012): Caring and learning together: Exploring the relationship between parental leave and early childhood education and care. In: *European Journal of Education*, 47. Vol., Issue 4, p. 482–493

- Moyser, M. (2016): Women and paid work. Ottawa. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694-eng.htm> (11.04.2018)
- Muttart Foundation (2012): Toward a provincial framework for early learning and care. Integrating child care and early education. Edmonton
- Muttart Foundation (2016): Engaging Alberta municipal level governments in support of early learning and care. Edmonton.
- National Health and Welfare (1980): Status of day care in Canada. Ottawa
- Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) (1984): Child care services in Ontario. A background paper. Toronto
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2015): 2015 Licensed Child Care Operators Survey. Ontario. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ChildCareSurveyReport.html> (11.04.2018)
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2017): Renewed early years and child care framework. Towards Universally Accessible Child Care. Ontario's Five-Year Action Plan. Ontario.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2006): Starting Strong II: Early childhood education and care. Paris
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2011): Divided we stand. Why inequality keeps rising. Paris.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2016a): Education at a Glance. OECD Indicators. Paris
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2016b): Society at a Glance 2016: OECD Social Indicators. Paris
- Pascal, C. (2009): With our best future in mind: Implementing early learning in Ontario. A report to the Premier of Ontario from the Special Advisor. Ontario
- Penn, H. (2017): Anything to divert attention from poverty. In: Vandenbroeck, M./De Vos, J./Fias, W./Olsson, L./Penn, H./Wastell, D./White, S. (Eds.): Constructions of neuroscience in early childhood education. London, p. 54–66
- Perlman, M./Falenchuk, O./Brunsek, A. (2014): Measuring child care quality for quality improvement purposes. Toronto.
- Petersson, B./Mariscal, R./Ishi, K. (2017): Women are key for future growth. Evidence from Canada. International Monetary Fund Working Paper. New York.

Picot, G./Hou, F. (2014): Immigration, low income and income inequality in Canada. What's new in the 2000s? Ottawa

Posca, J. (2016): Portrait du revenu et de l'emploi des personnes immigrantes. Montréal

Prentice, S. (1996): Theorizing political difference in Toronto's postwar child care movement. Occasional Paper 8. Toronto

Prochner, L. (2009): A history of early childhood education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Vancouver

QLSCD (1998–2003): The Québec Longitudinal Study of Child Development. http://www.jesuisjeserai.stat.gouv.qc.ca/a_propos/etude_phase1_an.html (24.04.2018)

Rocher, G. (2004): Un bilan du Rapport Parent vers la démocratisation. In: Bulletin d'Histoire politique, 12. Vol., Issue 2, p. 117–128

Sainsbury, D. (Ed.). (1999): Gender and welfare state regimes. Oxford

Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (2015): Aboriginal population in Québec 2015. Québec http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/nations/population_en.htm (20.04.2018)

Senate of Canada (1988): Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Proceedings of the Subcommittee on Child Care. Ottawa

Shonkoff, J. P./Phillips, D. A. (2000): From neurons to neighborhoods. Washington, DC

Statistics Canada (2017a): Families, households and marital status: Key results from the 2016 Census.

Statistics Canada (2011): Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit. Ottawa. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm#a2> (19.04.2018)

Statistics Canada (2017b): Household income in Canada. Key results from the 2016 census. Ottawa.

Statistics Canada (2017c): Census in Brief. Children living in low-income households. Ottawa. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016012/98-200-x2016012-eng.cfm> (20.4.2018)

Thévenon, O. (2011): Family policies in OECD countries: A comparative analysis. In: Population and Development Review, 37. Vol., Issue 1, p.57–87

Thévenon, O./Adema, W./Clarke, C. (2016): Who uses childcare? Background brief on inequalities in the use of formal early childhood education and care (ECEC) among very young children. Paris

Tweddle, A./Battle, K./Torjman, S. (2015): The Canada Social Report – so far. Ottawa.

- Toronto Children's Services (2017): Children's Services. Budget Notes. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/budget-finances/city-budget/program-agency-budgets/childrens-services/> (19.04.2018)
- Tougas, J. (2002): Reforming Quebec's early childhood care and education: The first five years. Toronto
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015): Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future. Summary of the final report.
- UNICEF (2008): The child care transition. A league table of early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries. Florence.
- Van Lancker, W. (2017): Reducing inequality in childcare services across European countries. What (if any) is the role of social spending? In: *Social Policy & Administration*, 52. Vol., Issue 1, p. 271–292
- Vandenbroeck, M./De Visscher, S./Van Nuffel, K./Ferla, J. (2008): Mothers' search for infant child care. The dynamic relationship between availability and desirability in a continental European welfare state. In: *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23. Vol., Issue 2, p. 245–58
- White, L./Friendly, M. (2012): 'No-lateralism'. Paradoxes in Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in the Canadian Federation. Bakvis, H./Skogstad, G. (Eds.): *Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness and Legitimacy*, 3rd Edition, Oxford. p. 183–202
- Willms, J. D. (2002): Socioeconomic Gradients for Childhood Vulnerability. In: Willms, J. D. (Eds.): *Vulnerable Children*. Vancouver, p. 71–102
- World Health Organisation (2007). Health of Indigenous People, Fact sheet No. 326. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs326/en/> (20.4.2018)

Appendix A

Definitions of various types of child care in the current system

CPEs – Centres de la petite enfance (Child Care Centres)

A Child Care Centre (CPE) is a non-profit legal person or a cooperative whose board of directors comprises at least two-thirds of the parents who are clients or future clients of the child care centre. It offers places at a reduced contribution. A CPE is authorised to provide child care to a maximum of 80 children in a facility.

Home child care services

A home child care service is defined as follows: A natural person who is a self-employed worker recognised by a coordinating office in the manner determined by regulation and who contracts with parents to provide child care in a private residence in return for payment for up to six children of whom not more than two are under the age of 18 months, including the person's own children under nine years of age and any other children under nine who ordinarily live with the person, and are present while the child care is provided or, if the person is assisted by another adult, for up to nine children of whom not more than four are under the age of 18 months, including their own children under nine years of age and any other children under nine who ordinarily live with them and are present while the child care is provided. In the vast majority of cases these are publicly-funded places.

Day care centres

A day care centre is generally a for-profit business that provides day care services in a facility that can accept a maximum of 80 children. The day care centre permit holder must set up in the permit holder's facility a parent committee composed of five parents elected by and from among the clients of the centre, other than the permit holder, the members of the board of directors, the members of the staff, and persons related to them. Many day care centres have arranged a subsidy with the MFA to provide low-cost places. Certain day care centres, even if regulated, are not publicly-funded and set their own daily fees.

Day care services not regulated by law

In Quebec, there are also day carers who do not need to be legally recognised because they provide day care for 6 or fewer children. Organisations or persons who provide a service of this kind are not, therefore, regulated by law and are not required to obtain a permit from by the MFA or to be recognised as home day care providers by a coordinating office.

Home day care

Anyone can accept a maximum of 6 children in her residence without having to be recognised by a coordinating office of home child carers.

In a community organisation

A public or community organisation can provide temporary day care only in the context of its mission or during a special intervention with parents or children.

Nursery school

If in operation as of 25 October 2005, a nursery school can provide day care for children aged two to five for periods of up to a maximum of four hours a day.

School day care

School day care services are provided to children aged five to 12 at a cost of CAN\$7 a day. School day care services are administered by school boards and individual schools. They are generally provided in the school itself:

- before classes begin in the morning
- during lunch
- after classes.

Source: © Gouvernement du Québec 2010. <http://www4.gouv.qc.ca/EN/Portail/Citoyens/Evenements/DevenirParent/Pages/types-services-garde.aspx>. These definitions are, in part, adapted from sections of the Educational Childcare Act (Giguère/Desrosiers 2010)

Appendix B

Development of the ECEC system in Quebec (1997 to 2017) – Number of regulated places in publicly-funded and for-profit services

Year	CPE Child care centres	CPE Home child care	Day care centres	Number of publicly- funded places	Day care centres	Number of children aged 0 to 4
	Publicly funded	Publicly funded	Publicly funded for profit		Not publicly fun- ded for profit	
1996	36,708	19,479	–	76,029	19,842	459,166
1997	36,101	20,328	17,629	74,058	4,806	443,613
1998	36,977	21,761	17,979	76,715	5,587	428,297
1999	39,436	32,816	23,861	96,113	585	412,161
2000	45,739	44,882	23,270	113,545	1,208	397,971
2001	51,570	55,979	24,578	132,127	705	382,727
2002	58,525	62,193	24,629	145,624	976	373,191
2003	67,163	71,365	24,740	163,434	1,620	366,619
2004	69,672	83,970	27,530	177,848	1,907	371,028
2005	72,057	87,192	30,131	189,380	2,457	372,683
2006	75,660	88,545	33,034	196,618	3,487	379,658
2007	76,213	88,645	34,027	198,606	4,538	389,661
2008	77,405	91,253	35,230	201,166	4,751	400,605
2009	77,864	91,582	36,377	205,823	6,954	416,043
2010	79,547	91,607	38,865	210,019	11,173	431,340
2011	82,671	91,607	40,526	214,804	17,824	442,513
2012	84,672	91,626	41,036	217,334	27,773	448,164
2013	85,831	91,663	41,590	219,084	39,282	446,850
2014	86,770	91,664	43,549	221,983	46,641	446,814
2015	89,833	91,664	46,970	227,467	51,843	444,840
2016	92,398	91,604	46,057	230,059	55,256	443,527
2017	93,932	91,604	46,498	232,034	61,400	–

Sources: Family Ministry, Quebec Statistics Institute, Haeck et al. 2016

8.

Appendix C

Survey	Total score
You Bet I Care (YBIC) ¹ – ITERS ^a (0 to 2½ years) (N=16)	3.6
You Bet I Care (YBIC) ¹ – ECERS-R ^b (2½ to 5 years) (N=32)	4.7
QLSCD ² – ECERS-R ^b CPE (N=728)	4.6
QLSCD ² – ECERS-R ^b For-profit (N=296)	3.7
You Bet I Care (YBIC) ³ – FDCRS ^c (home based) (N=42)	4.5
QLSCD ² – FDCRS ^c Home-based CPE (N=337)	4.4
QLSCD ² – FDCRS ^c Unregulated home-based (N=179)	3.6
Grandir en qualité CPE ⁴ (0 to 18 months) (N=128) – 2003	3.05
Grandir en qualité CPE ⁵ (0 to 18 months) (N=138) – 2013	3.19
Grandir en qualité CPE ⁴ (18 months to 5 years) (N=228) – 2003	2.93
Grandir en qualité CPE ⁵ (18 months to 5 years) (N=183) – 2013	2.95
Grandir en qualité For-profit day care centres ⁴ (0 to 18 months) (N=124) – 2003	2.62
Grandir en qualité For-profit day care centres ⁴ (18 months to 5 years) (N=225) – 2003	2.58
Grandir en qualité Home-based ⁴ CPE (N=200) – 2003	2.75
Grandir en qualité For-profit day care centres – not publicly funded ⁵ (0 to 18 months) – (N=103) – 2013	2.59
Grandir en qualité For-profit day care centres – not publicly funded ⁵ (18 months to 5 years) – (N=136) – 2013	2.61

¹Goelman et al., 2000; ²Japel et al., 2005; ³Doherty et al., 2000; ⁴ISQ, 2004; ⁵ISQ, 2015

^aInfant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (Harms/Clifford 1993); ^bEarly Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (Harms et al. 1998); ^cFamily Day Care Rating Scale (Harms/Clifford 1980)

Note: The YBIC and QLSCD studies used instruments that have scores with a range of 1 to 7; the Grandir en qualité studies used an instrument developed by the Family Ministry which has a range of 1 to 4.

Gefördert vom:



Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
und Jugend

Deutsches Jugendinstitut e. V.

Nockherstraße 2
D-81541 München

Postfach 90 03 52
D-81503 München

Telefon +49 89 62306-0

Fax +49 89 62306-162

www.dji.de