

1. GOVERNANCE

Table 1.1 Québec: Governance Structure for Early Childhood Education

Lead Ministry/Department	Ministère de la famille et des aînés (MFA) Ministère de l'éducation, du loisir et du sport (MELS)
Related Ministry/Department	
Policy Framework	Strategic Plan 2012–2017 ¹
Legislation	<i>Educational Childcare Act</i> (L.R.Q., chapter S-4.1.1) ² <i>Education Act</i> (R.S.Q., chapter I-13.3) ³
Related Legislation	<i>L.R.Q., chapitre M-17.2, Loi sur le ministère de la famille, des aînés et de la condition féminine</i> , 2006, c. 25, a. 1 <i>Loi resserrant l'encadrement des services de garde éducatifs à l'enfance</i> (Projet de loi no 126, 2010, chapitre 39) <i>An Act Respecting the Representation of Certain Home Childcare Providers and the Negotiation Process for their Group Agreements</i> (R.S.Q., chapter R-24.0.1) Reduced Contribution Regulation, <i>Educational Childcare Act</i> (R.S.Q., S-4.1.1, s. 106) Educational Childcare Regulation, <i>Educational Childcare Act</i> (R.S.Q. c. S-4.1.1, s. 106) <i>An Act to Facilitate the Establishment of a Pension Plan for Employees Working in Childcare Services</i> (R.S.Q., chapter E-12.011) M-17.2, r. 1, <i>Décret concernant les modalités de signature de certains actes, documents ou écrits du Ministère de la famille, des aînés et de la condition féminine</i>
Common ECE Supervisory Unit	
Local Authority	Kindergarten and after-school care: 69 school boards; 60 French, 9 English Child care programs: 165 regional coordinating offices of the Ministère de la famille et des aînés
Public Advisory	Regional advisory committees

Background

In 1997, the government of Québec introduced its comprehensive family policy. This began the direct subsidization of child care centres and family child care homes and a reduced parent fee of \$5/day for prekindergarten aged children. At the same time, kindergarten for 5 year olds became a full school day program and school boards were required to provide before- and after- school care for children to age 12 during the school year. School-aged care was offered at the same \$5/day rate. In 2004, the daily parent fee was raised to \$7/day per child. The 2014–15 budget indexes the parental contribution, which will rise to \$7.30/day as of October 1, 2014.⁴

Department Organization

The Ministère de la famille et des aînés (MFA) is responsible for regulated child care, program supports and monitoring services, as well as the licensing and monitoring of group and family child care facilities for children aged 0–4 years.

The Ministère de l'Éducation, du loisir et du sport (MELS) is responsible for kindergarten (maternelle) and prekindergarten (pré-maternelle) and after-school child care.

Policy Framework

Québec family policy has three components: financial support for families with young children, child care and parental leave. The goal is to provide educational child care programs to all children whose parents want them to participate. The majority of preschool children now attend group or family care programs. Families are entitled to before- and after-school programs operated by the publicly-funded school systems from kindergarten to age 12 years. Children whose parents are on social assistance are eligible for 20 hours of child care per week at no cost. The ministry's Strategic Plan 2012–2017 outlines a strategy for universal access by 2017, a goal the current government reiterates in the 2014–15 budget.

Service Design⁵

- **Maternelle (Kindergarten):** All children who turn 5 years of age by September 30 are eligible for kindergarten. The program operates the full school day/year and is voluntary. Children speaking neither French nor English have access to special services. Québec offers kindergarten to newcomers as part of its French program, but it can also be provided in English at the parents' request under certain conditions relating to the Charter.

- **Pré-Maternelle (Prekindergarten/Junior kindergarten):** Half-day prekindergarten is available in some disadvantaged communities, mainly in the Montréal area, for 4-year-old children. In 2013, approximately 1,200 children began full-day classes in selected disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- **Programme Passe-partout:** This transition-to-school program is offered in selected school districts for children who turn 4 years old by September 30 and their parents.
- **School-age child care:** School child care services are available for children before and after school and during lunch hours during the school year. School boards must provide care if there is sufficient demand.
- **Centres de la petite enfance (CPEs):** These non-profit child care centres offer care to children from infancy to kindergarten and are overseen by parent/community boards.
- **Services de garde en milieu familial:** Family child care is offered in a private residence for up to six children including the provider's own children. If another adult assists the provider, nine children are permitted. Family child care providers are coordinated by 165 bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial (family child care coordinating offices) under agreement with the MFA. The bureaux de coordination monitor child care homes and provide assistance. Family child care coordinating offices are often CPEs or free-standing non-profit organizations. Providers are required to have 45 hours pre-service training with a focus on child development and the provincial curriculum and 6 hours of refresher training every year. Assistants must have child development training of at least 12 hours.⁶
- **Garderies:** These privately operated, for-profit, child care centres are regulated and serve children from infancy to kindergarten. Some private centres receive public subsidies at the same rate as CPEs if they meet the provincial wage rate. Others charge market rates for care.
- **Jardins d'enfants:** These unregulated nursery schools opened prior to October 25, 2005 and operate for a maximum of 4 hours per day.
- **Haltes-garderies:** These unregulated programs opened prior to October 25, 2005 and offer 24-hour care.

Community Involvement/Oversight

Les conseils régionaux de développement set priorities by region and develop five-year plans based on population and labour force statistics, funding and relative regional equity. Committees include representatives from school boards, health and family agencies and association representatives, among others.

Avenir d'enfants is a jointly supported initiative of the Québec government and the Fondation Lucie and Andre Chagnon that offers guidance and financial support to community-development projects that ameliorate child poverty, with an emphasis on children younger than 5 years old. As part of its mandate, it supports early childhood service planning, quality and capacity.⁷

Several organizations receive financial support from the ministry and represent the interests of centres, educators and parents. The ministry also provides funds to municipalities to undertake family support projects.

Local Service Delivery

School boards are responsible for both kindergarten and school-age child care programs for children in kindergarten to age 12.

Regional coordinating offices of the Ministère de la famille et des aînés (MFA) issue, renew, suspend or revoke the permits of home child care providers and child care centre licences and monitor that provincial laws relating to child care are followed.

2. FUNDING

Table 2.1 Québec: Provincial Allocation for Regulated Child Care (2014–15)⁸

Child care fee subsidies ^a	\$587,422,900
Operating funds (includes wage and training grants)	\$2,396,123,900
Agreement with the Government of the Cree Nation ^b	\$17,964,300
MELS Funding to School Daycare Program	\$244,000,000
Total regulated child care^c	\$3,245,511,100

^aChild care refundable income tax credit (2013 estimates) plus administration fee (2014 estimates) ^bThe MFA transfers funding to the Government of the Cree Nation to assist with the development, oversight and management of child care services. ^cQuebec's 10-year plan for child care expansion includes \$807.9 million in capital.¹⁰

Overall Funding

Table 2.2 Québec: Funding Early Childhood Education/Child Care¹¹

Maternelle (Kindergarten)	\$783,055,000
Pre-maternelle (Kindergarten)	\$94,247,000
Private maternelle and pré-maternelle ^a	\$31,510,000
Total Maternelle/Pré-Maternelle	\$908,812,000
Licensed child care	\$3,245,511,100
Other ECE Spending	
Family support initiatives	\$19,399,000
Stopover centres	\$3,850,000
Total ECE spending	\$4,177,572,100
Total budget estimate 2014–2015	\$97,400,000,000
ECE as a percentage of provincial budget	4.3%

^aPrivate schools are funded at 60% of public school levels.

Family support initiatives fund community agencies, municipalities and regional county governments to provide or initiate early years services. Stopover centres are community agencies providing unregulated extended hour child care. The ministry also provides \$30.4 million for the administration of the child care refundable income tax credit.

3. ACCESS

Table 3.1 Québec: Child population 0–5 years (2013)

Child population 0–5 years	535,583
0–1 years	177,282
2–4 years	269,604
5 years	88,697
Total population of Québec	8,155,334
Children 0–5 years as percentage of total population	6.6%

2013 Statistics Canada data. Estimates of population, by age group, Canada, provinces and territories, annual 2013 CANSIM Table 051-0001.

Table 3.2 Québec: Workforce Participation of Mothers by Age of Youngest Child (2013)

	Number mothers in workforce (000s)	Percentage mothers in workforce
0–1 years	126.9	76.9%
2–4 years	137.9	82.7%
5 years	33	82.6%
Total mothers in workforce with child 0–5 years	297.8	
Average workforce participation of mothers with youngest child 0–5 years		80.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab1.ivt

Table 3.3 Québec: ECE School Programs (2013–14)

Maternelle (Kindergarten)	
5-year-old kindergarten ^a	86,109
Pré-Maternelle (Pre-kindergarten)	
4-year-old kindergarten	19,425

^aIncludes private school enrollment

Table 3.4 Québec: Licenced Child Care programs (March 2014)¹³

	CPEs	Subsidized garderies	Non-subsidized garderies	Total centre-based	Family child care	Total enrolment
Infants 0–24 months	20,233	8,621	6,319	35,180	34,040	71,040 ^a
2 years–kindergarten	67,388	32,908	16,512	116,993	58,480	180,153 ^a
Total	87,621	41,529	22,831	151,981	92,554	251,193
Total school-age						207,000

^aBased on latest published data to March 2012 plus additional spaces announced in Budget 2013; The 2014–15 budget commits another 6,300 child care spaces in 2014–2015, then 4,000 spaces every year thereafter until the network is complete.

Table 3.5 Québec: Percentage of Children Attending ECE Programs by Age Group

Child Ages	Number of children ^a	Child care / preschool ^b	Kindergarten enrolment ^c	Other ECE programs	% children attending ECE programming	Total enrolment
0–1 years	177,282	71,040			40%	71,040 ^a
2–4 years	269,604	180,153	19,425		74%	180,153 ^a
5 years	88,697		86,109		97%	251,193

^a2013 Statistics Canada data. Estimates of population, by age group, Canada, provinces and territories, annual 2013 CANSIM Table 051-0001; ^bwww.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/services-de-garde/portrait/profil-utilisateurs/Pages/index.aspx; ^cPrekindergarten included

Affordability

Early childhood education services for children from birth to 4 years: centres de la petite enfance (CPEs), home child care services and some garderies receive about 86 percent of program funding from government and parents pay the reduced \$7/day fee (about 14 percent of actual costs). The 2014–15 budget introduces the indexation of the parental contribution to \$7.30/day as of October 1, 2014.¹⁵

Families with children attending private child care centres charging market fees are eligible for a refundable tax credit. Announced in the 2009–2010 budget, the net cost per day of a non-subsidized space in a private child care centre (approximately \$25) becomes comparable to the net cost of a reduced-contribution space (\$7) in subsidized daycare for those with family incomes up to about \$125,000.¹⁶

Inclusion

Special needs support in child care: Québec policy strongly encourages the inclusion of children with exceptional needs. Enrolment is at the discretion of the service provider.¹⁷ Services receive a supplementary allowance to facilitate inclusion, while parents pay the standard reduced fee. The maximum number of children receiving the supplementary allowance in facilities is nine or a maximum of 20 percent of available spaces.

In home child care, the maximum number of children receiving the supplementary allowance is one per home child care provider. An exception may be made when the provider receives more than one child with a disability from the same family. The intention is to maintain an appropriate environment for the child with a disability to integrate and develop his/her abilities.¹⁸

Special needs support in kindergarten and prekindergarten: Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students, a New Direction for Success: Policy on Special Education¹⁹ is the policy on special education that guides practice. MELS has an extensive policy collection regarding the accommodation of children with exceptional needs.²⁰

4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Table 4.1 Québec: Curriculum Frameworks

Program	Framework Document
Maternelle	Québec Education Program, Chapter 4, Preschool Education. ²¹
Pré-Maternelle (Pre-kindergarten)	Draft Preschool Education Program - Full-Day Kindergarten for 4-Year-Olds From Disadvantaged Areas - Version of July 9, 2013 ²²
Passe-partout ²³	Programme passe-partout ²⁴ , is a 16-session preparation for kindergarten program that children attend on their own and with their parents.
School Transitions	Guide for Developing a Successful School Transition (2010) ²⁵ . The guide provides child care services and the education community with information on what constitutes a successful transition from early years' services to school. ²⁶
Child Care	Meeting Early Childhood Needs (2007) ²⁷ . Required for all child care establishments in Québec serving infants to 4 year olds.
Cultural integration	Guide pour l'élaboration d'une politique d'intégration des enfants de nouveaux arrivants et de gestion de la diversité dans les services de garde éducatifs. ^{28,29} Policy guide for diversity and the integration of new arrivals in child care programs.
School-based programming	School Day Services Information Document (2002). For schools providing school-aged child care services.

Work Environment

Kindergarten class sizes: The maximum class size is 18 for groups of 5 year olds and 15 to 18 for groups of 4 year olds. For combined age groups, the maximum class size is 15.

Child care program size: Child care centres may have a maximum of 80 children. A building may not have more than two facilities.

Table 4.2 Québec: Group Size and Staff Child Ratio in Licensed Child Care Centres³⁰

Age of child	Staff: Child Ratio	Class Size
Birth –18 months	1:5	
18 months–4 years	1:8	24
4 years–less than 5 years by September 30	1:10	
5 years and up after September 30	1:20	

Educators

Table 4.3 Québec: Educator Qualifications

Kindergarten Teachers ³¹	Early Childhood Educators ³²
Teachers are required to have a four-year Bachelor of Education with specialization in preschool and primary education, plus 750 hours of practice teaching.	Staff members in child care centres are required to have a college diploma in early childhood education or equivalent training recognized by the ministry.

Professional Standards

Table 4.4 Québec: Professional Recognition and Development

	Qualified Teachers	Qualified ECEs ³³
Professional Requirement	Certification is required and is the responsibility of the Ministère de l'éducation, du loisir et du sport (MELS).	A diploma of college studies in early childhood education or any other equivalent training recognized by the minister is required. By law, 2/3 of child care staff should have a diploma. If the number of childcare staff members is less than 3, at least 1 of the members must be qualified.
Professional Development Required	As required by school boards.	No ongoing professional development is required.

Table 4.5 Québec: Density of Qualified Staff in Child Care Centres

Two-thirds of staff in centres must be ECE qualified.

Table 4.6 Québec: Teacher and ECE Average Annual Salaries

Teachers ^a	Early Childhood Educators ^b	ECE Salary as a % of teacher salary
\$74,244	\$48,027	65%

a 2013/2014 school year.³⁴ b Annual salary for a qualified ECE at the top of the wage grid April 1, 2014.

Guide administratif concernant la classification et la rémunération du personnel salarié des services de garde et des bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial outlines roles, responsibilities and remuneration of recognized positions within publicly-subsidized child care centres, family daycare homes and family care coordinating bureaus. The province-wide salary scale for qualified early childhood educators ranges from \$17.42 to \$23.09/hour, while unqualified staff start at \$15.39/hour. Assistants' salaries start at \$13.69/hour and top off at \$16.20/hour.³⁵

5. ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

New regulations enhancing health, safety and accountability were introduced for all child care services under the oversight of the Ministère de la famille in April 2014.³⁶

In June 2014, the MFA established a Childcare Establishment Locator. The locator indicates child care services in operation and under development that the MFA has authorized and that are expected to open within the next 18 months. The locator is updated every week.³⁷

In May 2011, a logo was provided to all licensed child care programs to help families distinguish between legal and illegal programs.³⁸

Progress reports: Rapport annuel de gestion 2012–2013 du ministère de la famille³⁹ and Situation des centres de la petite enfance, des garderies et de la garde en milieu familial au Québec en 2012 are publicly available government reports updating the status of early years services and their use.

Population monitoring: Québec's longitudinal study of children is funded by the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux, the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, the Ministère de la famille et des aînés (MFA) and the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ). Analyses of the data focus on understanding the factors that contribute to academic success in primary school, while taking into account children's life experiences.⁴⁰

The Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux (MSSS), in collaboration with the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ), the Ministère de l'éducation, du loisir et du sport (MELS), the Ministère de la famille (MFA), the organization Avenir d'enfants and the Institut de la statistique du Québec joined around a Joint Intervention Initiative for Early Childhood Development 2011–2014.⁴¹ The initiative includes the collection of developmental indicators through the 2012 Québec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK).⁴²

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