

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CHILDREN



EDUCATIONAL
SERVICES STRATEGY
FOR CHILDREN
FROM BIRTH
TO AGE 8

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Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur**

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A WORD FROM THE PREMIER



— Philippe Couillard

In Québec, there are 800 000 children under the age of 8 and they make up a tenth of our population. We cherish them; they are our pride and our future. Our young people are our province's most precious asset. We therefore owe it to them to do everything we can to help them to achieve their full potential and fulfill their dreams. We must give each and every one of them equitable opportunities to get to where they eventually want to be.

From the time our children are born, we must provide them with the support and guidance they need to develop to their fullest, with all the tools they require to successfully navigate their educational path and, ultimately, become citizens who will contribute to building our society. This is why, last spring, our government adopted the Policy on Educational Success: A Love of Learning, A Chance to Succeed.

With the Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children, we are taking the next step forward by establishing the conditions required for all boys and girls in Québec to start developing their potential from the moment they are born, because that is when they start on their educational path. This strategy includes measures to support parents, community workers, educational childcare services and school teams. Families will have greater access to quality educational services and parents will be better equipped to assist their children in navigating their first transitions. It also means that when children start school, fewer of them will present vulnerability factors, and their competencies in reading, writing and mathematics will be better.

Together, we can make sure that all our young people grow up in a Québec that is confident, prosperous and more equitable, and capable of giving them a solid start on the road to success.

A WORD FROM THE MINISTERS



— Sébastien Proulx

The first eight years of a child's life are filled with stimulation, discovery and learning, from the newborn's first contact with the world to the young student's thirst for new knowledge, from those unsteady first steps to the regular practice of sports, from learning to speak to learning to read, from learning the alphabet to writing sentences, from an infant's initial contact with family to a child's first friendships . . .

Learning such rich and diverse things makes childhood a brief but defining time in one's life. Quality interventions at opportune moments help to correct learning delays or gaps before they lead to personal, social or academic problems.

During the consultations on educational success the government held in the fall of 2016, a number of stakeholders emphasized the importance—or necessity—of taking action as early as possible in a child's education. This was by far the strongest consensus that emerged from these consultations and the reason why the first challenge presented in the *Policy on Educational Success*, published June 21, 2017, involves early, rapid and ongoing intervention.

With the Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children, we mean to consolidate the different educational interventions for these children and facilitate the many transitions they will experience, including the transition to school. But first and foremost, we want to give every boy and girl a fair chance to reach their full potential, to set off on the right foot and to have all the tools for success.

We are proud to jointly present this strategy. Continuity and coherence in educational services for children up to the age of 8 will be provided through the collaboration of partners in educational childcare services and in the school system. Furthermore, our partners in the health and social services network, community organizations, cultural communities, municipalities and businesses will continue to make an invaluable contribution to the quality of services provided to children and their families.

Because every child deserves to succeed . . . we must act quickly, we must act now, we must act together!



— Luc Fortin

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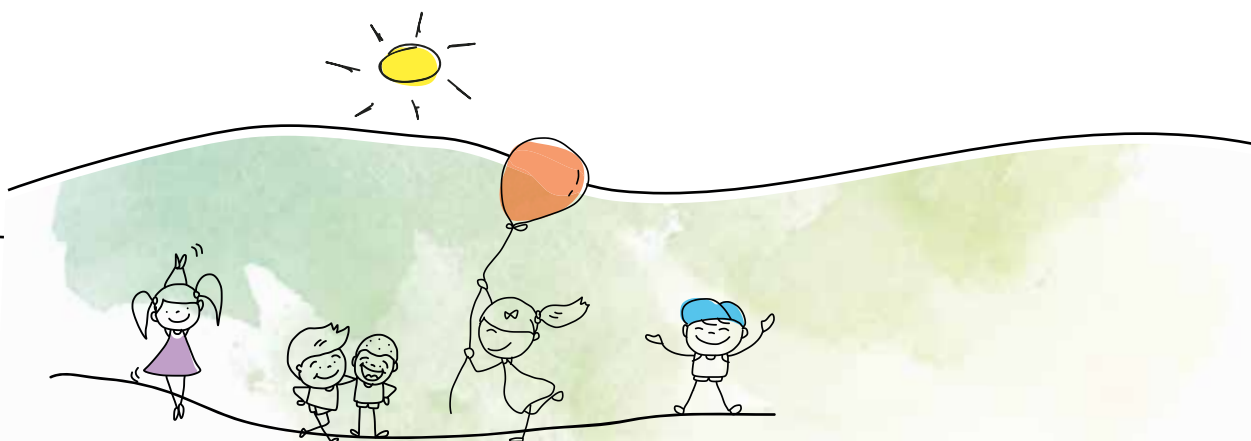
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"It is easier to build strong children
than to repair broken men."

Frederick Douglass

INTRODUCTION



Their names are Emma, William, Samira, Hubert, Justine. They are what their parents cherish most, their grandparents' pride and joy. They are Québec's future.

We have a collective duty toward them, an obligation to do whatever we can to help them to achieve their full potential and fulfill their dreams. We must give each and every one of them equitable opportunities to get to where they eventually want to be. This means that they must be able to start their educational path on the right foot. That is why we have developed the Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children.

The It's All About the Children strategy satisfies a basic need. Scientific research has shown that it is essential that we act as early as possible in children's educational path, and this is a major concern for everyone who works with children. Adopting an educational approach adapted to children's needs and proposing stimulating activities starting as early as possible in every area of development will enable them to lay the foundation for future learning, which will help prevent the development of difficulties in the long term.

Rooted in the values, principles and orientations of the Policy on Educational Success: A Love of Learning,

A Chance to Succeed, the It's All About the Children strategy establishes the necessary conditions to ensure that all children in Québec achieve their full potential and, from the very outset, are given the tools they need for success and personal fulfillment.

"Applying the principle of equal opportunity requires that we adopt preventive approaches and strategies so that all children can develop their full potential and integrate into the school environment under the best possible conditions. Any delay in a child's development when he or she starts school is likely to have an adverse effect on his or her love of learning and desire to succeed."

(Policy on Educational Success, 34)

THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO AGE 8

A KEY ELEMENT OF THE POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

In the early 1960s, the Parent Commission and the creation of the Ministère de l'Éducation launched the Québec school system as we know it today: a quality education system that is accessible to all children throughout the province starting at age 5. A few decades later, Québec adopted another powerful lever of child development and support for families: the Family Policy. Recognized as one of the most generous in North America and globally, the policy promotes optimum child development, equal opportunities for all Quebecers and gender equality. It contains three major components:

- financial assistance for families
- work-family-school balance
- family- and child-friendly environments

The Family Policy fostered the growth of an accessible and diversified network of educational childcare centres, which now serves almost two thirds of all children up to 5 years of age, providing them with a social and educational environment conducive to their overall development.

The Policy on Educational Success: A Love of Learning, A Chance to Succeed bridges the gap between these two key initiatives by proposing a vision of educational success that starts in early childhood and continues into adulthood. The Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children delivers on this commitment and proposes an integrated approach aimed at families and the various educational settings frequented by young children. It establishes the conditions necessary to ensure that children:

- receive the support they need as early as possible from parents who are better equipped and more involved, and from accessible, quality educational settings that are capable of fostering their well-being and meeting their needs in a timely manner
- transition smoothly from preschool to elementary school and start their educational path on the right foot
- complete Elementary Cycle One with the tools they need to achieve their full potential, confident and well on their way to success

“Québec’s educational settings are based on strong values aimed at ensuring equal educational opportunities for all. These values have enabled the education system to quickly expand and have helped usher Québec society into the modern age.”

(Policy on Educational Success, 29)

The participation of several stakeholders in the implementation of the It's All About the Children strategy is a key ingredient in carrying out coherent interventions with children from birth to age 8. The continuity of interventions and the preparation of smooth transitions during this period rely on the participation of parents and other family members, as well as on the collaboration and mobilization of a number of stakeholders: educational childcare services; schools; the health and social services network; community, cultural and other organizations; the business community and municipalities.

The strategy is intended for young children because the period from birth to age 8, which ends after Elementary 2, is a crucial time in their socialization and overall development. At the end of Elementary Cycle One, in addition to having developed their social skills, children must have acquired the basics in reading, writing and mathematics, the foundation for the subsequent learning necessary for their educational success. Any delay in the development of reading skills at the beginning of elementary school can have a negative impact in both the short and long term.



Contribution of the Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8 to the Policy on Educational Success

Children who are currently starting their educational path in an educational childcare centre or school could complete their studies around 2030, the target year for many of the objectives of the Policy on Educational Success. This may seem a long way off, but action intended to enable children to achieve their full potential must be taken now. That is why this strategy comes on the heels of the policy: in order to encourage our future young adults to reach their full potential, we need to come together and act early and rapidly.

Because it is based on the policy's orientations, the Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children shares the same values and principles. For example, its objectives are based on the values of universality, accessibility and equity. Its measures will be implemented in a manner that takes sustainable development, subsidiarity and gender equality into account. When implementing the measures, the principle of gender equality involves taking into account the differences between boys and girls in every sphere of development. Similarly, the different realities of mothers and fathers must be considered when developing support measures for parents.

In order to provide equal opportunities for all children, the strategy proposes several measures and concrete actions that will enable us, by 2025, to **increase to 80% the proportion of children starting school who do not present a vulnerability factor related to their development**. It has been shown that presenting a vulnerability factor in any one of the five areas of development (physical health and well-being, social skills, emotional maturity, communication skills and general knowledge, and cognitive and language development) can make it more difficult for children to succeed in school. The Québec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten, conducted in 2012, revealed that

about one in four children presented a vulnerability factor in at least one of five areas of development. The proportion is one in three for children born outside Canada. The above-mentioned target of 80% is also set out in the government health policy La Politique gouvernementale de prévention en santé. Indeed, some of the measures in the health policy have been further developed in this strategy.

The It's All About the Children strategy aims to enable all children to start their education with all the tools they need to achieve their full potential, both socially and in terms of the development of competencies essential to their educational success. Thus, it is a winning condition for **ensuring a success rate of at least 90% on the composition component of the Elementary 4 language of instruction examination in the public system, by 2030,¹ and for reducing to 10% the proportion of students starting public secondary school at age 13 or later by 2030**.

Lastly, this strategy is the first step in a series of actions that will be implemented in the coming years to foster the achievement of the policy's targets relating to graduation, qualification and equity:

- By 2030, have 85% of students under the age of 20 obtain a first diploma (SSD or DVS), and 90% obtain a first diploma or qualification.
- By 2030, reduce the gap in success rates between various groups of students by 50%.



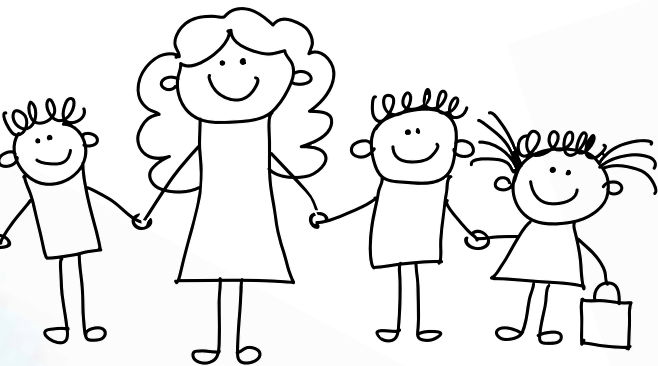
¹ The Ministère will determine how to measure achievement of this objective in English school boards at a later date.

THE EDUCATIONAL PATH OF CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO AGE 8

Parents are their children's first and primary educators, and the State must support them in this role. The parental insurance plan offers new parents the opportunity to stay home with their child in the first few months of life. Children begin learning at home with their parents and other family members, discovering the world around them and building self-confidence. They also need their family's support and guidance in the many transitions involved in their educational path in order to achieve their full potential.

As they develop, children will find other places outside the home to socialize, explore, play and learn.

In this strategy, the term "educational setting" includes educational childcare centres, community drop-in daycare centres, preschool, Elementary 1 and 2, and school daycare services.





CHILDREN FROM A FEW MONTHS TO 5 YEARS OLD

Starting in their first year of life and up to the age of 5, many children attend an educational childcare centre, which plays a key role in their overall development. In March 2016, 60.4% (268 142) of children in this age group attended such a centre. Attendance increases with the age of the children, going from 28.1% for children under one to 71.9% for four-year-olds.²

By offering children a quality environment and adapted materials, guiding them in their discoveries, sparking their interest in reading, writing and numbers, giving them time to play, fostering their creativity and paying them special attention, educators in educational childcare centres provide them with the tools they need to overcome their vulnerability factors and foster their educational success.



² Ministère de la Famille, Direction de l'accessibilité et de la qualité des services de garde, preliminary data from the 2015-2016 annual childcare services activity report, and Institut de la statistique du Québec, estimate of the Québec population under the age of 5 on July 1, 2016, extrapolated to April 1, 2016, by the Ministère de la Famille.

Meeting Early Childhood Needs: **Québec's Educational Program** **for Childcare Services**

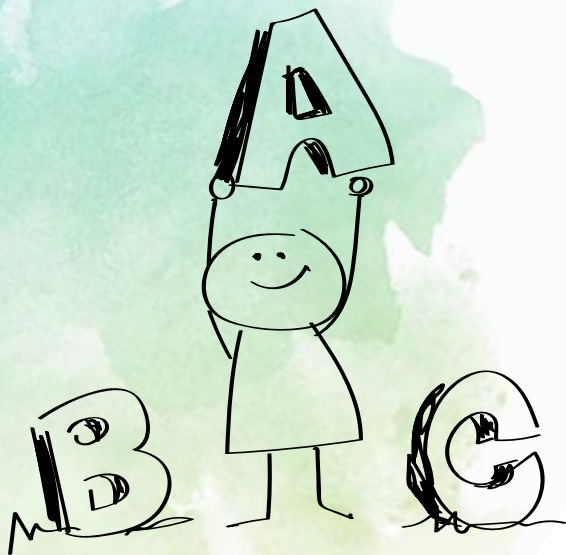
Educational childcare services must implement an education program which they submit to the Ministère when they apply for a licence or its renewal. *Meeting Early Childhood Needs* is an orientation document for early childhood education consistent with the preschool education program. Developed in collaboration with early childcare services, it provides key theoretical and practical information about the most promising educational practices aimed at supporting the harmonious development of young children. In particular, it is designed to:

- ensure children receive high quality services
- serve as a reference tool for individuals working in an educational childcare service setting
- foster consistency between childcare settings and promote the continuity of all interventions involving young children and their families

Québec's education program for childcare services was first published in 1997 and, after the publication of the first edition of the Québec Survey on the Quality of Educational Daycare in 2003, was updated in 2007 under the title *Meeting Early Childhood Needs* with a view to serving as a source of inspiration for educational childcare services in the development of their education program. The basic principles of this program are as follows:

- Each child is unique.
- Children are the primary agents of their development.
- Child development is a comprehensive, integrated process.
- Children learn through play.
- Cooperation between childcare personnel or home childcare providers and parents is essential for the harmonious development of the child.

Meeting Early Childhood Needs is also a training and support tool for pedagogical support staff and childhood education teachers, and provides a common foundation for initial and continuing training activities.





CHILDREN AGES 4 AND 5

Often described as a bridge to school, the Passe-Partout program³ is intended for four- and five-year-olds and their parents during the school year preceding the child's entry into kindergarten. It is aimed mainly at families living in disadvantaged areas, and its dual objective is to support parents in their role as educators and to make sure that children successfully transition to the school system. Forty-five school boards throughout Québec provide services for 11 566 families under the program.

As a complement to educational childcare services, school boards offer full-time and half-time kindergarten starting at age 4. At this stage, preschool education helps children develop confidence in their abilities and a love of learning, and continue developing skills in all of the targeted areas: emotional, social, language, cognitive, physical and motor skills. Children can learn the attitudes, behaviours, strategies and approaches needed to feel valued, proud and equipped to continue their educational and personal development. For four-year-olds, overall development and learning are acquired through play activities that satisfy their needs and allow educators and teachers to adjust their practices based on their observations.

In 2016-2017, 2 245 children attended full-time kindergarten for four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas, and 4 199 attended part-time kindergarten for four-year-olds.

For the vast majority of five-year-olds, kindergarten helps them develop a love of school and fosters their overall development; it encourages them to realize their full potential and lay the social and cognitive foundation for future learning. Learning is based on play and on the children's experiences. The program helps children begin developing intellectual, methodological, personal, social and communication skills, and addresses topics of general interest to children,⁴ for example, the stars, sleep and colours.

³ Also called: Service d'animation Passe-Partout, programme Passe-Partout, Animation Passe-Partout, or simply, Passe-Partout
⁴ Québec Education Program – Chapter 4: Preschool Education



CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 8

At age 6,⁵ children start elementary school, their first taste of formal education. Unlike preschool education development programs, each subject program specifies the learning that students must acquire and be able to use throughout elementary school in order to effectively develop the different competencies. While focusing on the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge and strategies, the program for Elementary 1 and 2 places great importance on the development of reading and writing skills. By the end of Elementary 2, students are expected to be able to read and construct meaning from age-appropriate texts, and to write personally meaningful texts for a familiar audience.

Many children are enrolled in school daycare services throughout preschool and elementary school. School daycare services take the children at different times during the day: in the morning before school starts, at lunchtime and after school in the afternoon, as well as on pedagogical days. An integral part of children's school life and the school's educational project, school daycare services provide a unique living environment and play a role in children's educational development. Educators see the children on a daily basis and offer activities, support and supervision, adding to the children's appreciation of school life. Many parents are in contact with the daycare services on a daily basis.

⁵ Some children may start Elementary 1 at age 5.

Other practitioners working with children from birth to age 8

Some children and their families can also require special assistance from health and social services practitioners who work directly and regularly with children from birth to age 8 or with their families. These specialists include speech therapists, remedial teachers, psychologists, occupational therapists, psychoeducators and many others. Agreements can be reached between educational settings and the health and social services network to facilitate access to specialized resources for children who need them. The healthcare system also organizes services for families to help foster children's educational development, such as the Integrated Perinatal and Early Childhood Services program, which provides parents with guidance and helps prevent and identify eventual difficulties in children.

Community stakeholders such as family community organizations (OCFs), community organizations that provide educational support, Native friendship centres, cultural organizations, the business community and municipalities are key partners that offer services that contribute to children's overall development. They help break the isolation experienced by parents and children, provide a form of recognition and, in some cases, help strengthen parenting skills, all of which are important means of facilitating the transition to school and supporting educational success.



Children's overall development and preparation for school: Some elements for comparison

In Québec, the period for compulsory school attendance begins on the first day of Elementary 1 which, for most children, is age 6.⁶ The school system has instituted kindergarten for the year before compulsory school attendance. Nearly all eligible children attend kindergarten (99.4% in 2011-2012).

Furthermore, Québec provides for different types of services designed to reach as many four-year-olds as possible in order to foster their overall development.

Thus, in Québec, four-year-olds can attend full-time kindergarten or an educational childcare service. Full-time kindergarten is provided free of charge to certain four-year-olds living in disadvantaged areas, while universally accessible educational childcare services are available, with a few exceptions, for a contribution from the parents, which varies according to their income and according to whether the childcare service is subsidized. In both settings, the education programs cover all spheres of child development while helping children to adapt to and integrate group life. While both programs have the same objectives, some of the implementation measures differ, for example the training required for personnel, the ratio of children to adults, support for parents, child transportation, the hours of attendance and the complementary service offer. In addition to these full-time services, four-year-olds and their parents have access to services such as part-time kindergarten, the Passe-Partout program and community drop-in daycare centres.

Outside Québec, approaches to children's overall development and preparation for school can vary. For example, in Ontario, France and Sweden, schools offer preschool education to all children at least two years before compulsory attendance begins. Other Canadian provinces, such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, provide different options for four-year-olds, including full-time or part-time kindergarten for certain children, according to criteria such as handicaps or socio-economic factors.

In general, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, most governments tend to consolidate the offer of educational services for preschool children and to focus on quality. Given the benefits of implementing quality educational services for younger children, governments now intervene earlier, before children reach the age for compulsory school attendance. Québec is one of the few places to offer a network of diversified childcare services accessible to very young children.

⁶ The *Education Act* sets the period for compulsory school attendance from the first day of the school calendar in the school year following that in which the child attains the age of 6. Thus, most children are already 6 years old when they begin Elementary 1.



OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

The It's All About the Children strategy proposes several structuring measures with five specific educational objectives for the first eight years of children's lives:

1. Foster equal opportunity for all children.
2. Make sure that children up to age 8 transition smoothly from one educational setting to the next.
3. Support quality educational and pedagogical practices.
4. Enable all children to acquire essential reading, writing and mathematics skills by the end of Elementary 2.
5. Support parents and foster the mobilization and cooperation of stakeholders.

The Ministère de la Famille and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur are responsible for implementing the measures set out in this strategy. However, several ministries and organizations will be called upon to contribute with a view to developing differentiated gender-based approaches or, if applicable, adapting actions to the specific needs of certain children.

First Nations and Inuit children

All the objectives of the It's All About the Children strategy take into account the reality of Indigenous people. However, the government would like to invite the First Nations and the Inuit to propose, for each objective, measures to meet the needs of their children. The Provincial Round Table on the Educational Success of Indigenous Students will be given a mandate to propose actions for the Ministère de la Famille and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur to take to foster the development and educational success of Indigenous children. To this end, the Round Table will welcome representatives from early childhood education organizations in Indigenous communities.

The measures proposed by the Round Table will be incorporated into the Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit.



OBJECTIVE 1

**FOSTER EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
FOR ALL CHILDREN**

The first objective is in line with the key values of the Policy on Educational Success—universality, accessibility and equity—and follows its orientations to act early and rapidly, take action at all levels of governance to ensure equal opportunity, recognize diversity and value everyone’s contribution, and offer a welcoming, safe and caring living environment that fosters discussion, communication and enriching personal and social relationships.



“The government, the school system and educational childcare services must be vigilant in making sure that public policies, administrative and regulatory frameworks, and action plans and measures for children and students ensure equal access to quality education services. In the 21st century, no child or student in Québec should be alienated from the Québec school system for economic or any other reasons.”

(Policy on Educational Success, 49)

From birth, all children are entitled to benefit from the best conditions for their development and to learn at their own pace. However, these conditions can be more difficult to achieve for some children and their families. To support children's overall development, the proposed measures must take each child's characteristics and needs into account.

For all children, equal opportunity means fewer obstacles to access to educational settings and services. Although a large number of children attend educational childcare centres, access to this type of setting remains difficult for some families. About one third of three- and four-year-olds, many of whom live in disadvantaged areas, do not attend an educational childcare centre or full- or part-time kindergarten for four-year-olds. Also, some children need special help or support to foster their overall development or to acquire the competencies

essential for educational success. Early identification and rapid intervention can greatly help to reduce the negative impact on child development. Although educational childcare services are responsible for some of these interventions, the health and social services network is responsible for others, and well-established collaborative mechanisms must be used to ensure access to these services.

Equal opportunity also means reducing, or even eliminating, certain risk factors related to children's characteristics, socio-economic environment or migratory experiences. Students at greater risk and their families will benefit greatly from timely interventions or special programs aimed at preventing difficulties in the long term. The involvement of parents and of all the stakeholders concerned is key to ensuring the sustainability of these benefits.

TAKING ACTION

TO ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN

The Québec Economic Plan and the Policy on Educational Success have established the conditions for fostering equal opportunity for all children. The government has already taken action to:

- provide additional resources designed to support kindergarten and Elementary 1 teachers in their interventions, especially with students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties
- increase the amount allocated to childcare centres or daycares serving children from disadvantaged areas so that they can recruit staff or offer additional goods and services adapted to the children's particular needs
- allow centres to serve more children with handicaps and benefit from the allowance for integrating disabled children into childcare centres
- improve the exceptional assistance measure for the integration of disabled children with major needs into educational childcare services



Key action

IN ORDER TO FOSTER EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN . . .

. . . THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO INCREASE RESOURCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO AGE 8 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

In addition to the measures announced in the Québec Economic Plan introduced in March 2017 and the Policy on Educational Success, the It's All About the Children strategy will allow for further resources in educational childcare services and schools while facilitating access to specialized health and social services personnel. This key action will involve the following measures:

- Support schools, teachers, students and their parents by providing 500 additional professional resources: speech therapists, occupational therapists, remedial teachers, preschool education consultants, sex therapists, spiritual care and guidance and community involvement facilitators, and other professionals as needed.
- Provide financial support for various organizations, allowing them to reach out to parents of children who do not use educational services, especially those in disadvantaged areas and those from immigrant backgrounds, and refer them to appropriate educational services.
- Better identify cases of children under 5 who are at risk or who have developmental difficulties, and reach an agreement with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux to set up official mechanisms for collaboration aimed at ensuring continuity and fluidity between the educational childcare services network and the social services network.
- Screen preschoolers for vision problems.

FURTHER ACTIONS

IN ADDITION TO THIS KEY ACTION, THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO . . .

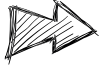
Increase the level of attendance in educational settings for all children:

- Continue to open new full-time kindergarten classes for four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas (measure under the Government Action Plan to Foster Economic Inclusion and Social Participation).
 - The annual consultation process between the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur and the Ministère de la Famille to ensure the complementarity of educational services will be maintained.
- Analyze the admission criteria for new full-time kindergarten classes for four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas.
- Set up a pilot project in four full-time kindergarten classes for four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas, mostly made up of children from multiethnic and multilingual backgrounds, in order to teach them French and to help them with school and social integration.
- Provide funding for educational classroom and school daycare materials for children in full-time kindergarten for four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas. These materials might include board games, objects for use in symbolic play, building sets, floor mats, accessories for reading corners, etc.
- Continue to improve the exceptional assistance measure for the integration of disabled children with major needs into educational childcare services.
- For some parents, eliminate the cost of educational and cultural activities organized by childcare centres and subsidized daycares

In disadvantaged areas, implement breakfast programs in educational settings that serve children up to age 8:

- Provide financial support for elementary schools in disadvantaged areas so that they can offer their students a nutritional breakfast every day, specifically through a partnership with the Breakfast Club of Canada (measure under the Government Action Plan to Foster Economic Inclusion and Social Participation).
- Implement pilot projects to provide breakfast for children in educational childcare centres in disadvantaged areas.

OUTCOMES OF OBJECTIVE 1 OF THE STRATEGY



BIRTH TO AGE 4:

Rapid intervention to address issues affecting children's development, and increased access to quality educational services



AGES 4 AND 5:

Children whose vulnerabilities will have been rapidly addressed and reduced, thereby fostering their overall development

Appropriate intervention tailored to children's diverse needs as a result of improved identification procedures



AGES 6 TO 8:

Intervention addressing children's basic needs (e.g. access to breakfast, vision tests)

Children who possess the tools they need for success from the very beginning of their educational path, regardless of their environment, background or personal characteristics

UNESCO'S GOALS TO ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN

Target 4.2 of the Framework for Action for the implementation of UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4 has to do with ensuring equal opportunity for all children:

“By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.”

To achieve this target, UNESCO includes the following goals:

- stimulation within the home, community and school environments
- attention to cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and physical development

These goals will lay the foundation for lifelong learning. According to UNESCO, all children should have access to quality early childhood education, governments must encourage the provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality preschool education to be delivered by well-trained educators, and children's development and learning must be monitored from an early stage.

UNESCO proposes strategies for achieving these goals, including:

1. Implement policies that guarantee the provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality preschool education, making sure that children from disadvantaged areas have access to early childhood care and education (ECCE) services.
2. Implement multisector ECCE policies involving ministries responsible for nutrition, health, social protection and education.
3. Design and implement inclusive, accessible and integrated programs, services and infrastructure of quality for early childhood, covering the needs of all children, especially children with disabilities, and provide families with support.

According to UNESCO, equal access to education allows all individuals to develop the competencies needed to live in society, now and in the future.



OBJECTIVE 2

**MAKE SURE THAT CHILDREN UP TO
AGE 8 TRANSITION SMOOTHLY FROM
ONE EDUCATIONAL SETTING TO THE NEXT**

This objective is intended to address several concerns expressed at the public consultations on educational success with respect to the many changes children experience in their first eight years of life. It is based on the importance of transitions in early childhood as demonstrated in the scientific literature. It corresponds to the orientation in the Policy on Educational Success aimed at acting continuously and in a concerted manner.

“Ongoing intervention means focusing on the individual and taking him or her into account in a service continuum that goes beyond the missions and limits of the various organizations involved. It also means ensuring the consistency and effectiveness of all interventions aimed at providing support for the individual on his or her educational path and monitoring the progression of his or her learning. The continuity of services is essential in preparing and facilitating transitions”

(Policy on Educational Success, 40)



Transitions from home to an educational childcare centre and from there to preschool education and Elementary 1 are extremely important in ensuring the continuity of the educational experience throughout childhood and into the first year of school.

While the child has probably at this point been separated from his or her parents for short periods of time, the transition to an educational childcare centre is often the child's first experience of separation on a regular basis outside the home. This transition is facilitated by the ability of the educator or home childcare provider to establish a significant emotional bond with each child, as well as a collaborative partnership with parents. Educational childcare services also offer activities to welcome and integrate the children.

Furthermore, any adjustment difficulties that come up during transitions could hinder children's overall development and educational path. The exchange of information between parents and practitioners in different educational and healthcare settings about children's experiences and their reactions to change is extremely helpful in ensuring their successful integration. Support for parents, who are also in a period of adjustment, can help them become familiar with their child's new educational setting.

Transitions between educational settings are important for everyone. They are crucial for at-risk children and children with special needs, because they foster the continuity of services between educational childcare centres, health and social services institutions, and schools. These transitions also pose a special challenge for students from immigrant backgrounds.

One of the key transitions in a child's educational path is the first day of school. Of course, the child must be prepared to start school, but the school must also be prepared to welcome the child. A successful transition will make it possible to identify the child's abilities and establish harmonious social bonds between the child, the parents, the other children and the school staff. It involves an integrative approach made up of several key moments, ideally over the course of several months, making it possible to plan opportunities for the adults who know the child to share their knowledge and expertise. Each of these steps implies a period of adaptation and learning for the children, their parents and the practitioners. In addition to adapting to the different settings, children benefit from continuity in the services they receive, fostering satisfactory progression in the proposed educational and pedagogical activities.

TAKING ACTION

TO ENSURE SMOOTH TRANSITIONS BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The Québec Economic Plan and the Policy on Educational Success have established conditions for fostering smooth transitions. The government has already taken steps to facilitate children's transition to school by improving opportunities for parents, educational childcare services and schools to share information.



Key action

IN ORDER TO ENSURE SMOOTH TRANSITIONS BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS FOR CHILDREN UP TO AGE 8 . . .

. . . THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO CREATE A FILE ON CHILDREN'S AND STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

- In early childhood, a standardized file given to parents will be used to gather information related to the child's development, improve the identification of difficulties and foster the transmission of information during the child's transitions, if parents so desire, including the transition to school.
- When the child starts school, a unified electronic file will follow the student throughout his or her educational path.

FURTHER ACTIONS

**IN ADDITION TO THIS KEY ACTION,
THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO . . .**

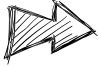
Develop and promote various tools and services for parents and staff in educational settings to foster children's smooth transition to school.

- For example, the *Guide for Supporting a Successful School Transition* will now include best practices regarding orientation activities for children starting preschool.

Provide financial support for educational childcare services in order to facilitate children's transition to school, such as for visits to schools, activities with older students, and information-sharing between parents, educational childcare services and schools.

Through a call for projects, allocate financial assistance to MSSS-MEES regional concertation committees to implement initiatives aimed at providing better support for children's development.

OUTCOMES OF OBJECTIVE 2 OF THE STRATEGY



BIRTH TO AGE 4:

Children whose parents have developed a relationship of trust with educational services

Children whose needs have been identified and who have received support from the time of their very first transition



AGES 4 AND 5:

Children who have established positive social relationships with personnel at their educational childcare centre or future school through participation in a variety of activities, and have developed greater confidence in their ability to transition to school

Children who have been supported from the time they entered school by informed parents and welcoming schools



AGES 6 TO 8:

Children whose needs are addressed appropriately and who are more likely to succeed in school due to extra resources in the classroom

Children who benefit from continuity of services between educational childcare centres and schools to ensure greater educational success

IN DENMARK, NEW INITIATIVES TO FOSTER SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

In May 2017, the Danish government proposed five initiatives to improve transitions from early childhood care and education (ECCE) facilities to school. To ensure a smoother transition, ECCE facilities must:

- carry out targeted activities with children in their final year of attendance
- establish a means of sharing information between ECCE facilities and schools
- always follow an education program—as do school daycare services—especially just before the children start school
- foster greater involvement on the part of parents' committees in the transition from ECCE facilities to school
- bolster the ECCE curriculum with a clearer description and general learning objectives

In Denmark, 98% of children age 3 to 5 attend some form of ECCE facility before starting school.



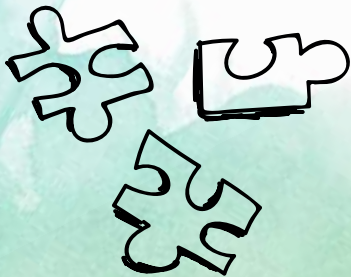
OBJECTIVE 3

SUPPORT QUALITY EDUCATIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

This objective aims to support the quality of educational settings. It has been shown that high-quality education is a key condition for the optimal development of children at all levels, as relevant interactions between staff and children and well-structured activities are determining factors. This objective corresponds to the orientations of the policy aimed at improving the initial and continuing training of staff and ensuring the development and adoption of best educational and pedagogical practices, as well as access to quality educational and pedagogical resources.

“Whether all children and students achieve their full potential depends largely on the quality of the educational and pedagogical practices of those who are in closest contact with them. The latter have a decisive influence on children’s and students’ perceptions of their own competencies, expectations, appreciation of learning and teaching, and commitment to their educational paths.”

(Policy on Educational Success, 52)



The quality of educational and pedagogical practices relies first and foremost on the knowledge, competencies and commitment of staff members who work with children at every step of their development. Initial and continuing training adapted to the different stages in the child's educational path and related to knowledge derived from research is the cornerstone of quality interactions between staff and children in both educational childcare centres and schools. Effective support for staff members, in particular in the use of new materials, the implementation of programs and the adjustment of practices, also fosters quality education and teaching.

The Québec Survey on the Quality of Educational Daycare, conducted in 2003 and 2014, showed that the quality of education varies from one educational childcare centre to the next. All of these centres must implement an education program involving activities that foster children's overall emotional, social, moral, cognitive, language,

physical and motor development, enabling them to gradually adapt to group life and to integrate harmoniously. Many educational childcare centres base their education programs on the Meeting Early Childhood Needs program. However, the application and implementation of the program's various components vary from one centre to the next.

The physical environment and materials available at each centre also play a determining role in the quality of educational services, since the educational and pedagogical activities and the children's well-being depend on them to a certain extent. Access to educational and recreational materials, as well as to documentary resources, stimulates children's interest in play and reading while fostering skill development. Children play and learn freely when they are provided with interesting recreational or educational materials appropriate to their skill level, which fosters their overall development.

TAKING ACTION



TO ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL SERVICES

The Québec Economic Plan and the Policy on Educational Success have established conditions to foster smooth transitions. The government has already taken action to:

- increase funding for educational childcare services, permitting them to acquire educational materials and pedagogical tools, and to organize outings and educational activities
- support the development of in-centre training sessions for educators
- carry out projects aimed at improving the quality of education in home childcare services by providing home childcare coordinating offices with financial support



Key action

IN ORDER TO ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL SERVICES . . .

. . . THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO REVISE THE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN UP TO AGE 8 AND TO CREATE FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

- The Meeting Early Childhood Needs educational program will be revised, and the compulsory elements for implementation will be identified.
- A measure to evaluate and improve the quality of education in childcare services will be implemented, and support measures will be offered as part of an ongoing improvement process.
- Continuity between the kindergarten programs for four- and five-year-olds and the Elementary Cycle One programs will be improved, in particular through the creation of a new preschool education cycle that includes both levels of kindergarten, for four-year-olds and five-year-olds.

FURTHER ACTIONS

IN ADDITION TO THIS KEY ACTION, THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO . . .

Ensure that staff working with children up to age 8 receive appropriate, quality training:

- Develop and implement training based on the Meeting Early Childhood Needs program and on the standardized child development file.
- Develop two new reference frameworks for educational childcare services: one on social and emotional development, and the other on cognitive and language development.
- Support educators, in particular by creating practical tools enabling them to improve their practices with children with special needs and children from immigrant backgrounds.
- Provide school staff with support and guidance in the implementation of the new preschool education cycle.
- Create a working committee on preschool education as part of the initiative on the valorization of the teaching profession and the professional autonomy of teachers announced in the Policy on Educational Success.
- Conduct a survey of employers of graduates with a diploma of college studies in Early Childhood Education and, if applicable, study the possibility of revising the program.

Ensure the quality of education services in educational settings for children up to age 8:

- Increase specific allocations to coordinating offices so that they can carry out projects aimed at improving the quality of educational home childcare services.
- Create a financial assistance program for the provincial childcare services associations so that they can carry out projects aimed at improving service quality and educational success.
- Finance projects to set up or renovate play areas outside childcare centres.
- Assist school boards in supporting the implementation of the preschool program for four-year-olds by financing the acquisition of educational materials for full-time kindergarten classes for four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas, as well as materials adapted to four-year-olds in school daycare centres (measure under the Government Action Plan to Foster Economic Inclusion and Social Participation).

Support research on the determining factors of educational success related to the overall development of children up to age 8 and encourage the dissemination of findings.

Provide support for children from immigrant backgrounds in learning French and help them integrate into preschool and Elementary Cycle One.

OUTCOMES OF OBJECTIVE 3 OF THE STRATEGY



BIRTH TO AGE 4:

Quality educational settings that ensure better overall child development



AGES 4 AND 5:

Children who receive all the help they need for their social, emotional, cognitive, language and overall development



AGES 6 TO 8:

Children who are well prepared to start school

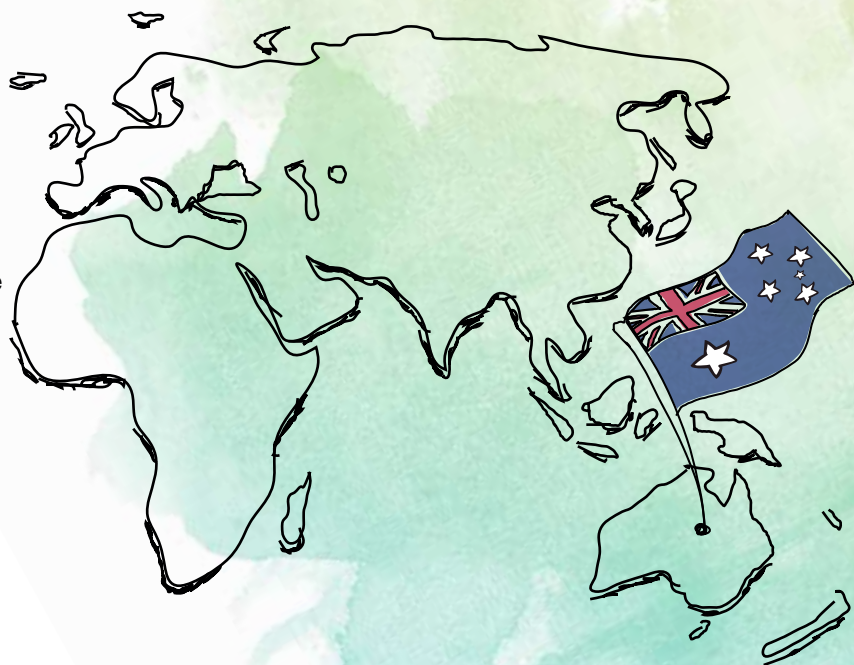
IN AUSTRALIA, A NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOCUSED ON QUALITY SERVICES

In 2009, Australia adopted a national early childhood development strategy, Investing in the Early Years, whose objective is to ensure that, by 2020, all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and the nation. This strategy is intended for children from before birth to eight years of age, and focuses on the entire early childhood period and every area of development.

It identifies various priorities, in particular the importance of providing support for vulnerable children, the involvement of the entire community in early childhood development and support for practitioners who work with young children and families. A number of actions are aimed more specifically at reducing inequality among children from socio-economically disadvantaged areas and Indigenous communities.

The strategy has led to the following initiatives:

- *National Partnership on Early Childhood Education*: aimed at ensuring universal access to quality educational services offered by trained staff
- *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*: aimed at standardizing and improving the quality of early childhood reception and educational services



OBJECTIVE 4

**ENABLE ALL CHILDREN TO ACQUIRE
ESSENTIAL READING, WRITING AND
MATHEMATICS SKILLS BY THE END
OF ELEMENTARY 2**

The fourth objective aims to develop a learning process that starts in early childhood with an educational approach combined with stimulation and awareness activities, and that continues in school with formal learning. This objective is based on the understanding that educational activities in early childhood contribute to subsequent learning and educational success. It corresponds to the policy's orientation aimed at developing literacy and numeracy skills starting in early childhood and continuing throughout life.



“Language development and emergent reading, writing and math skills must begin early in life, mainly through play. These are essential prerequisites for a successful transition to school and further learning. A cumulative deficit in these skills will make it more difficult to learn and can prevent a person from recognizing and developing his or her full potential.”

(Policy on Educational Success, 42)



The first eight years of life are critical for every area of a child's overall development. It is also during this period that children acquire the most important learning for their educational success: reading, most importantly, as well as writing and mathematics. If they have not acquired the expected learning by the end of Elementary Cycle One, they will encounter more difficulties in their educational path. The ability to read at this age is a cross-curricular competency related to future educational success: children learn to read so that, later on, they can read to learn.

Children learn gradually, first through awareness and stimulation activities at home, in public libraries or in community organizations that also offer this type of activity, and later on in educational childcare facilities. The educational approach and emergent literacy activities in these settings lay the foundation

for subsequent academic learning. Children who participate in emergent reading activities at home, at the library, in an educational childcare centre or at school become better readers, are more interested in reading and get better results in math.

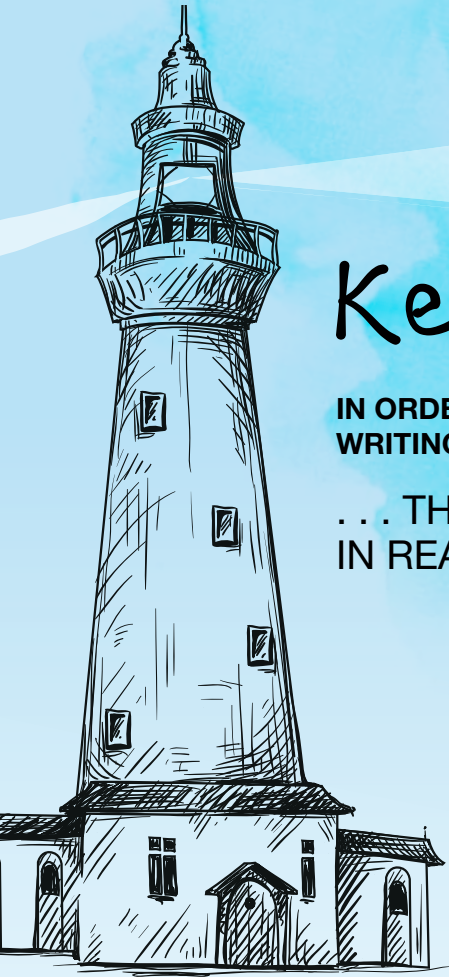
Key reading, writing and mathematics competencies are acquired not only in educational settings. They are dependent on the child's desire to read and learn, which is also developed at home with family. Children are more likely to enjoy reading if they have access to stimulating materials and educational activities adapted to their level of development in a variety of settings and through a variety of means of communication. For many children from immigrant backgrounds, developing these key reading, writing and mathematics skills is especially challenging because they are not using their first language.

TAKING ACTION

TO ENABLE ALL CHILDREN TO ACQUIRE ESSENTIAL READING, WRITING AND MATHEMATICS SKILLS

The Québec Economic Plan and the Policy on Educational Success have established conditions to enable children to acquire the essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The government has already taken action to:

- support adult education centres in carrying out emergent literacy activities for families while enhancing parents' literacy skills
- support the actions of the regional coordinating authorities in the areas of student retention and success by implementing literacy projects, among other things
- provide teachers with support, thereby ensuring consistency between preschool and elementary school, in particular by making sure that children learn the letters of the alphabet by the end of preschool



Key action

IN ORDER TO ENABLE ALL CHILDREN TO ACQUIRE ESSENTIAL READING, WRITING AND MATHEMATICS SKILLS BY THE END OF ELEMENTARY 2 . . .

. . . THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO SPARK AN INTEREST IN READING AMONG ALL CHILDREN

- Public libraries will offer a family literacy program for parents of children up to age 5, and school libraries will offer parents of children in preschool and Elementary Cycle One an emergent literacy program designed to spark their children's interest in reading.
- Under the *Un livre, un laissez-passer pour ma réussite!* measure (a book, a passport to success) the government will support the purchase of books to help children in preschool and Elementary Cycle One learn to read.
- A provincial platform will also be created to distribute resources for enhancing the reading skills of parents of children aged 5 to 8.
- The government will also support the publication of a magazine for children aged 3 to 5 and another for children aged 6 to 8, giving preference to Québec authors and illustrators of children's literature.

FURTHER ACTIONS

**IN ADDITION TO THIS KEY ACTION,
THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO . . .**

Improve emergent literacy, writing and mathematics activities in early childhood:

- Develop guides for staff in educational childcare services, kindergarten for four-year-olds, the Passe-Partout program, school daycare services, organizations that provide support for schools and immigrant families, and organizations that offer community drop-in daycare services.
- Implement a financial support program for new provincial, regional and local projects aimed at offering emergent reading, writing and mathematics activities.

OUTCOMES OF OBJECTIVE 4 OF THE STRATEGY



BIRTH TO AGE 4:

Children who have access to emergent reading, writing and mathematics activities



AGES 4 AND 5:

Children who are interested in reading, writing and mathematics because they have participated in related activities with their families



AGES 6 TO 8:

Students who benefit from solid support from their parents when they start school

Students who have solid reading skills by the end of Elementary 2 and are able to invest these skills in learning throughout their educational path

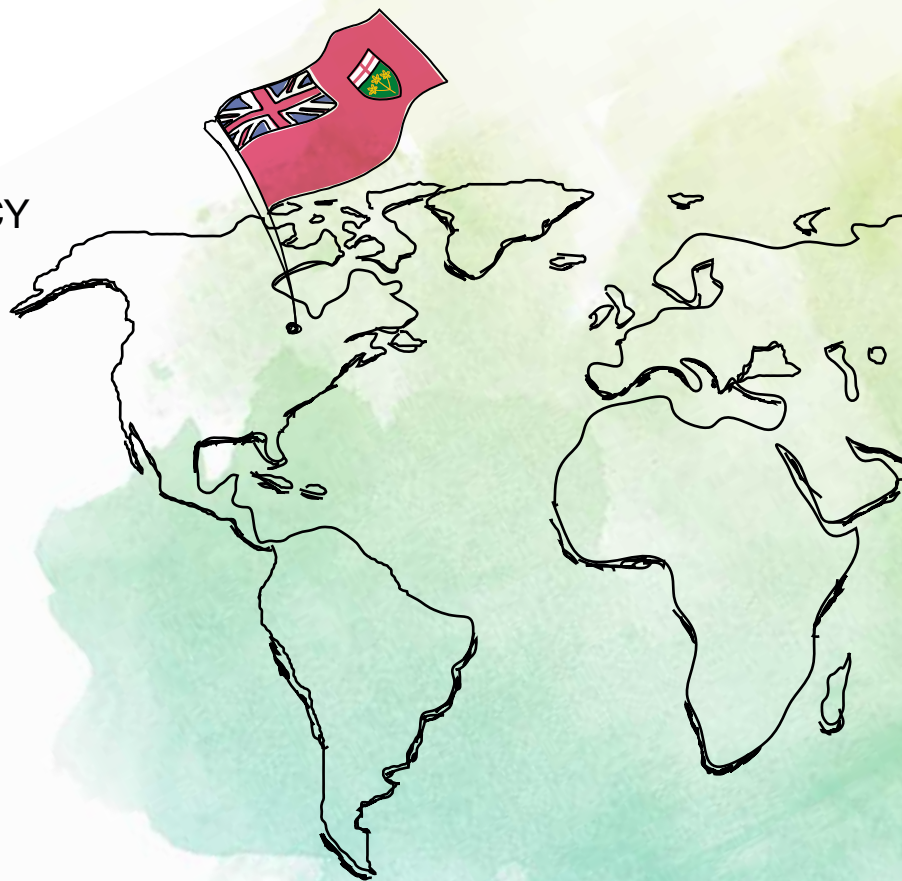
ONTARIO'S INITIATIVES TO FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

In September 2016, the policies announced in Ontario's Kindergarten Program were implemented in schools. This two-year program is intended for four- and five-year-olds attending publicly funded schools in Ontario. The goal is to lay a solid foundation for future learning.

The program places considerable emphasis on literacy and numeracy, which are addressed in every activity. Learning through play is considered the best tool for helping students develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

The literacy component of the program aims to help students develop the ability to understand verbal and non-verbal communication. It also teaches them to take a critical look at what they see, hear and read. The numeracy component helps students master the following seven processes: problem-solving, reasoning and proving, reflecting, selecting tools and strategies, connecting, representing, and communicating.

In both literacy and numeracy, teachers are called upon to become involved in professional learning communities that promote reflection and continuing education. The aim of these communities is to promote the effective teaching of mathematics and literacy. Early childhood educators work in tandem with kindergarten teachers in the classroom.



OBJECTIVE 5

**SUPPORT PARENTS AND FOSTER
THE MOBILIZATION AND COOPERATION
OF STAKEHOLDERS**

The fifth objective of the It's All About the Children strategy corresponds to the orientations of the policy aimed at promoting parental involvement and supporting the relationship between the family and the educational setting; promoting education, schools, the value of school staff and the role of educational childcare services; and strengthening ties between educational settings and community stakeholders.

"The quality of communication and the relationship between the family and the educational setting have a significant impact on parental involvement. Relationships between parents, other family members and the educational setting should be based on the understanding and acknowledgement that parents and other family members play an important role in children's education."

(Policy on Educational Success, 65)



Parents are their children's first and primary educators. During the first few years of life, parents help children acquire a better understanding of their environment, learn about sounds and words, develop self-confidence and develop their curiosity. For example, parents show an interest in their children's activities, read to them, help them put words to their emotions and encourage them to engage in free play. Later, they accompany their children along the educational path, for example, by helping them with their homework, reading together, conveying a positive image of educational success, having discussions with the school team and encouraging their children to persevere and stay in school.

Despite being stimulating and fulfilling, the parent's role can also lead to insecurity and uncertainty. As they care for their children, parents must adapt to a series of procedures, while taking into account the many people who spend time with their children. From time to time and to varying degrees, parents may need the support of professionals or practitioners.

Some parents may have their own difficulties with literacy and numeracy, and others may have had negative experiences in school, which can make it difficult to support their children in their educational path. A child's entry into an educational setting is a pivotal moment for any family, but for immigrant parents, parents who do not speak French or English, and parents who have a child with a handicap or special needs, this can be an additional challenge in terms of integration and adaptation.

Parents, other family members, the community and the government share responsibility for children's well-being. In this respect, recognition of the contribution of various stakeholders to educational success and the mobilization of community organizations and socio-economic partners help assemble all of the conditions needed to offer students and their parents the best support possible and to meet their needs while taking their individual characteristics into account. Close collaboration between the schools and the health and social services network can prove to be an invaluable resource in reaching this goal.

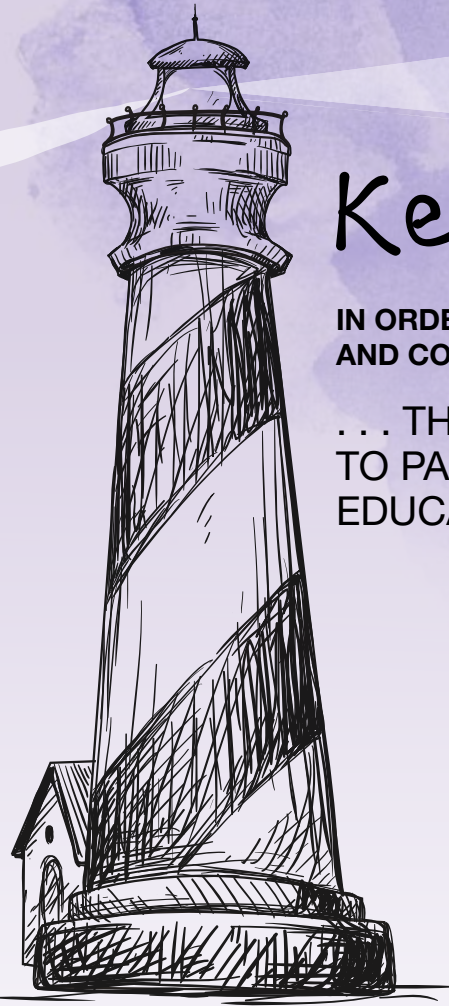
Since 2009, thanks to a partnership between the Québec government and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, an amount of \$40 million a year has been devoted to advancing the development of children up to age 5 living in poverty. This has enabled a myriad of regional and local partners to work together to implement proven actions intended to support the development of young children as well as their parents. Consistency among all these stakeholders is crucial to achieving continuity in the provision of quality services and a common vision with regard to the overall development of very young children and their educational paths. In its 2017-2022 strategic plan, the Ministère de la Famille is committed to supporting the mobilization of regional and local key stakeholders working together to promote the overall development of children up to 5 years old and their parents by identifying the proven actions that should be permanently entrenched beyond the end of the partnership in 2020.

TAKING ACTION

TO SUPPORT PARENTS AND FOSTER THE MOBILIZATION AND COOPERATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

The Québec Economic Plan and the Policy on Educational Success have established conditions for supporting parents and fostering the mobilization and cooperation of stakeholders. The government has already taken action to:

- increase funding for family community organizations (OCFs) and community drop-in daycare centres so that they are better able to support parents who need help assuming their role in contributing to their children's overall development and educational success
- encourage the organization of orientation activities to introduce parents with children in kindergarten or Elementary 1 to the realities of school



Key action

IN ORDER TO SUPPORT PARENTS AND FOSTER THE MOBILIZATION AND COOPERATION OF STAKEHOLDERS . . .

. . . THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO PARENTS AT EVERY LEVEL OF THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL PATH

- Interactive Web maps making it possible to locate family services and an information document on services offered to families in the various regions will be developed. The government will make sure that these tools are accessible to all parents, including people from immigrant backgrounds and people with poor literacy skills.
- Transition agents will help Passe-Partout workers support parents, and measures will be implemented to reduce certain obstacles and promote the participation of parents, especially those from immigrant backgrounds.
- A financial support program will be put in place to increase and facilitate parental involvement (e.g. carpooling to attend workshops, accompaniment and translation during certain activities).
- Awareness programs for parents of children aged 3 to 5 will be implemented to emphasize the importance of vision tests before starting kindergarten.

FURTHER ACTIONS
IN ADDITION TO THIS KEY ACTION,
THE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES TO . . .

Foster the mobilization and cooperation of stakeholders who work with children up to age 8:

- Increase funding for family community organizations (OCFs) and community drop-in daycare centres so that they are better able to support parents who need extra help assuming their role in contributing to their children's overall development and educational success.
- Create a mechanism for province-wide joint action in order to ensure the consistency of educational actions for children up to age 8.

OUTCOMES OF OBJECTIVE 5 OF THE STRATEGY



BIRTH TO AGE 4:

Children who receive solid support for their overall development by well-equipped parents

Children who benefit from services based on their families' needs



AGES 4 AND 5:

Children who receive support from parents who are aware of school realities

Families who collaborate and are involved in educational childcare centres and schools in order to ensure their children's educational success.



AGES 6 TO 8:

Children who are well supported and engaged in their educational path

A variety of stakeholders who are mobilized around students' educational success

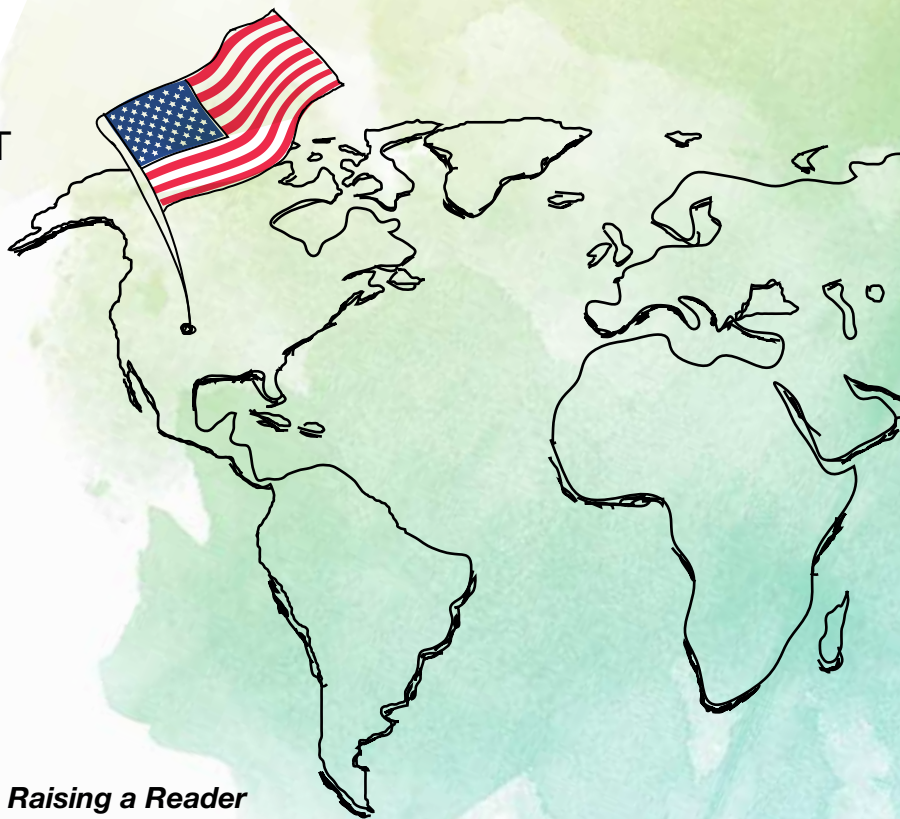
IN COLORADO, THE COMMUNITY MOBILIZES TO ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY SKILLS AMONG CHILDREN

In 2012, after its Grade 3 students received poor results in reading, the Colorado legislature adopted the *READ Act (Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act)*, which focuses on early literacy development, particularly in children with reading deficiencies. The Act led to the creation of the *Colorado READS* program, a joint effort between the government of Colorado and various community stakeholders (counties, schools, businesses) to enable children under 8 years old to develop the required reading skills by the end of Grade 3.

The *READ Act* has had a positive impact on students in Colorado. In general, after one year, the number of students identified as having reading difficulties dropped by 5 000 state-wide.

Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy

In 2008, Colorado libraries created the *Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL)* platform. This platform aims to provide parents, educators and teachers with information and the means to help children develop their literacy skills through videos and training. Reading events are also organized. Lastly, the CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards reward authors who foster the development of emergent literacy skills.



Raising a Reader

Raising a Reader works with CLEL. In addition to offering parents training in shared reading, it encourages children to bring home a wide range of award-winning books every week.

Prescribing books

Reach Out and Read trains healthcare professionals to prescribe books. Doctors receive books, training and support to help them make parents aware of the importance of reading aloud for their child's development. At medical examinations of children aged 6 months to 5 years, the doctor gives parents a new book appropriate to the child's level of development and discusses the importance of reading together. The family also gets a prescription for books.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The 2017-2022 Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children stems from the Policy on Educational Success and makes a major contribution to the delivery of the policy's orientations. Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy is therefore part of the monitoring and evaluation of the policy. An interministerial committee oversees the implementation of the Policy on Educational Success and its various deliverables, such as the Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children, as it is a government strategy. Every five years, the interministerial committee will report to the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports and the Minister of Families on the progress of the implementation of the policy and its related strategies and action plans. The report will be partly based on the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy by the Ministère de la Famille and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur.

Monitoring and evaluation activities for the It's All About the Children strategy will begin with the joint production of a preliminary monitoring and evaluation framework by the Ministère de la Famille and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. The framework will present the strategy's intervention logic and list the output and outcome indicators to be used for monitoring the strategy and its principal measures. The output indicators will help monitor the implementation of the strategy's actions, while the outcome indicators will help document the results of these actions for Quebecers. As mentioned above, the proportion of children starting school who do not present a vulnerability factor and the proportion of students with the essential reading, writing and mathematics skills at the end of Elementary Cycle One will be the main indicators for the strategy as a whole. For this purpose, a procedure for monitoring, on a sample basis, the results of Elementary 2 students in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics will be instituted. In addition to the intervention logic and the monitoring of indicators, the preliminary

monitoring and evaluation framework will outline the strategy's evaluation. It will target measures that can be evaluated in depth, as well as the timetable for the work to be carried out. The evaluation of the strategy's principal measures could make it possible to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the various interventions.

The Ministère de la Famille and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur will report on the progress of the It's All About the Children strategy in their respective annual management reports. The other ministries and organizations participating in the implementation of the government strategy may also account for their actions using their own accountability tools or via the interministerial committee.

CONCLUSION

It has been shown that taking action as early as possible in a child's educational path is a determining factor for educational success. In this respect, the Educational Services Strategy for Children From Birth to Age 8: It's All About the Children, which allows for complementary and concerted action, is one of the main levers for the implementation of the policy's principles and orientations. The actions it proposes for the next five years are in line with the policy's three broad areas of intervention as they apply to children, students, educational childcare services, schools, parents and the community. In particular, the strategy is based on the values of universality, accessibility and equity, and emphasizes the diversity of children and students, the need to offer adapted services and the importance of developing early literacy and numeracy skills.

It has been said that Québec is crazy about its children. It is. For their future and ours, for their fulfillment and that of Québec, they must be and will remain at the heart of our concerns. That is why this strategy is an appeal to all Quebecers. It mobilizes and calls upon parents, the educational childcare services network, the school system, the health and social services network, community organizations, cultural and municipal partners, the business community and the government to join forces to achieve a single goal: to give all children a fair chance to reach their destination, regardless of where they start out or the path they choose to take because every child has the right to succeed.

... to reach their destination, regardless of
where they start out or the path they choose to take ...





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