



School Daycare Services

Information
Document

SCHOOL DAYCARE SERVICES

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Direction de la formation générale des jeunes
Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide information on various aspects of school daycare services and more specifically on the legal and organizational aspects covered by the *Education Act* (R.S.Q., c. I-13.3) and the *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school* (O.C. 1316-98, October 14, 1998), which has been in force since November 18, 1998. This document provides an overview of school daycare services, the objectives of these services and the planning of educational activities. It also includes information regarding the organizational framework of school daycare services, their financing, and the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of authority.

This document is intended primarily for daycare coordinators in school boards, school principals, members of governing boards, school daycare personnel and daycare parents' committees. It may also be used as a reference tool by those who wish to set up a school daycare or who are interested in the operation of school daycare services in Québec.

2. DEFINITION OF SCHOOL DAYCARE SERVICES

The *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school* defines these services as follows:

Childcare services provided at school shall ensure care to children at the preschool and elementary level of a school board, outside the period where educational services are provided to them. (s. 1)

School daycare services complement the educational services provided by the school and are primarily focused on recreational activities. In order to provide a complementary service at the school and ensure continuity in its educational mission, planning for school daycare services is an integral part of the school's educational project.

Childcare services shall be offered every day of the school year devoted to educational services, but outside the periods devoted to those services (*Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school*, s. 3)

Since the school calendar covers a minimum of 180 days a year, daycare services must be provided during at least these 180 days.

School daycare services do not provide care during class hours, but rather during one or more of the following periods outside teaching hours: in the morning before school, if applicable; during the lunch break; and in the afternoon after school. These services may also be offered on pedagogical days and holidays, during spring break and at any other time that a need is expressed, provided that the services remain self-financing.

3. OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL DAYCARE SERVICES

School daycare services are designed to meet the following objectives:

- to ensure the safety and general well-being of the children served
- to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the school's educational project
- to set up activities and recreational projects that contribute to the children's overall development
- to encourage the development of social skills such as respect, cooperation and openness to others
- to offer homework support after school by providing students with an appropriate place in which to work and the time and materials they require

School daycare services constitute a complementary living environment. Thanks to a continuing relationship with the students, often over a considerable number of years, the daycare staff are able to establish a special bond with the students and their parents.

4. ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY SCHOOL DAYCARE SERVICES

4.1 Planning

The planning of a school daycare's activities takes into account the values promoted by the school's educational project. It also ensures the attainment of the objectives specific to the school daycare.

There are generally two stages to the planning process. In the first stage the school daycare's objectives are set out. The second stage is devoted to describing the activities that will allow these objectives to be met. The activities may be cultural, artistic, play-oriented, physical, etc. Short- and long-term special projects are taken into account, as well as the external resources required to implement projects and homework support measures.

4.2 Types of activities

School daycare services include six types of activities: routine activities, free activities, short-term workshop activities, long-term workshop activities, special activities and homework periods. When providing these activities, staff members should be flexible and attentive to students' needs and wishes.

- *Routine activities* take place every day. They are more specifically associated with the child's arrival, hygiene, lunch, snacks and departure.

- *Free activities* consist in individual and group play, indoors or outdoors. Free activities allow students to choose from among a variety of pastimes according to their changing interests, and include the use of a range of materials.
- *Short-term workshop activities* are planned ahead of time and are more clearly aimed at attaining educational objectives. They may include handicrafts, music, cooperative and parlour games, science experiments, cooking or baking, or computer games. They are sometimes offered at lunch time, when time permits, and after class, at the end of the day.
- *Long-term workshop activities*, like short-term ones, are planned ahead of time and target educational objectives. They involve projects requiring more time. Long-term activities might include a school newspaper, drama and improvisational theatre, choir, nature projects or projects organized jointly by the daycare and teaching staff.
- *Special activities* are held at different times of the school year. These include educational and recreational outings on pedagogical days, projects to celebrate festive occasions, such as Christmas and Saint Valentine's Day, and special activities involving parents.

- *Homework periods*, provided for under the *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school* (s. 2), give students the opportunity to do their homework and to obtain help, usually from educators. A set period of time—about 30 minutes—is generally allotted to homework, which is done in a quiet atmosphere that promotes concentration. Homework may be done individually, in pairs or in small groups. The daily homework period is usually preceded by recreational activities. It does not replace the time to be devoted to remedial work in the case of students with difficulties, and in no way relieves parents of their responsibility to make sure that their child has done his or her homework.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL DAYCARE

The school board and the governing board of the school concerned shall reach an agreement upon the manner of providing childcare services. (*Education Act*, s. 256)

5.1 Clientele

Generally speaking, daycare services have two types of clientele: a regular clientele and an occasional clientele. This distinction is necessary because of administrative requirements, since operating allowances are determined according to the number of students enrolled on a regular basis.

At the preschool and elementary levels, the regular clientele is made up of children who, at the request of their parents or of those who are acting on their behalf, are in school daycare for no less than two hours and thirty minutes per day for at least three days a week.

The occasional clientele is made up of children who are in school daycare for shorter periods or less often than the minimum length of time applicable to the regular clientele.

As provided for in section 6 of the *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school*, “the number of children per childcare staff member in a childcare service

provided at school shall not exceed 20 children present.” This ratio may be lowered by school principals, depending on the children’s ages or the special needs that some of them may have. Finally, the occasional clientele often creates variations in the student-educator ratio without, however, exceeding the maximum permitted.

The daycare services of a school generally serve students attending that same school. They may, however, also serve students from another school or students with handicaps who, under an agreement, are attending a private special school.

5.2 Schedule

As much as possible, the schedule should be organized in such a way as to fully satisfy the needs of parents so that they do not have to seek supplementary daycare services. Usually, school daycare services are available from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. In certain areas, a flexible schedule is desirable in order to take into account specific needs.

In disadvantaged areas, for example, where schools offer kindergarten for four-year-olds, daycare services may be provided mornings and afternoons. School daycare may also be available all day long, particularly on pedagogical days, during spring break and in the event of a storm.

5.3 Rules of operation

In compliance with the *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school* (s. 4), parents using these services must receive a document in which the rules of operation of the school daycare are clearly outlined. This document should specifically contain information on the following matters:

- registration and attendance
- hours of operation
- terms and conditions of payment
- reception and departure
- orientations and values to be promoted
- rules of social behaviour
- meals and snacks
- health and safety measures
- homework period

6. FINANCING OF SCHOOL DAYCARE

School daycare is provided on a not-for-profit basis and must be self-financing. To this end, there are two sources of funding: government allowances, as determined by the annual budgetary rules, and the financial contribution of parents who use the daycare.

6.1 Types of allowances

There are several types of allowances: a start-up allowance, a basic capital expenditure allowance, an operating allowance for regular school days, an operating allowance for pedagogical days, and a training allowance. In certain situations and areas, supplementary allowances are available for snacks, for students with handicaps and for four-year-olds.

- The *start-up allowance* provides financial assistance for school boards that wish to set up a daycare in a school. To be eligible for the allowance, at least 15 students must be registered on a regular basis. The start-up allowance may be paid to a school board that has not already received a grant to enable it to add a daycare unit. This allowance is given as a one-time payment.

- The *basic capital expenditure allowance* gives school boards the means to finance capital expenditures related to daycare services. These expenditures may, for example, cover the cost of purchasing furniture and nonperishable materials.
- The *operating allowance for regular school days* is calculated according to the number of students enrolled on a regular basis in the daycare.
- The *operating allowance for pedagogical days* is calculated according to the number of students enrolled on a regular basis and present in the daycare on each of the pedagogical days.
- The *personnel training allowance*, likewise, is calculated according to the number of students enrolled on a regular basis.
- The *supplementary allowance to cover the cost of snacks* is made available to schools in disadvantaged areas. It is calculated according to the number of children enrolled on a regular basis.
- The *supplementary allowance for students with handicaps* varies according to the frequency of attendance (regular or occasional) by each child with a handicap and according to the code associated with the child's handicap.

- The *allowance for four-year-olds* is available in disadvantaged areas where educational services are made available to four-year-olds. The daycare receives an allowance for each four-year-old attending school daycare for the half-day during which he or she is not in class.

6.2 Parents' financial contribution

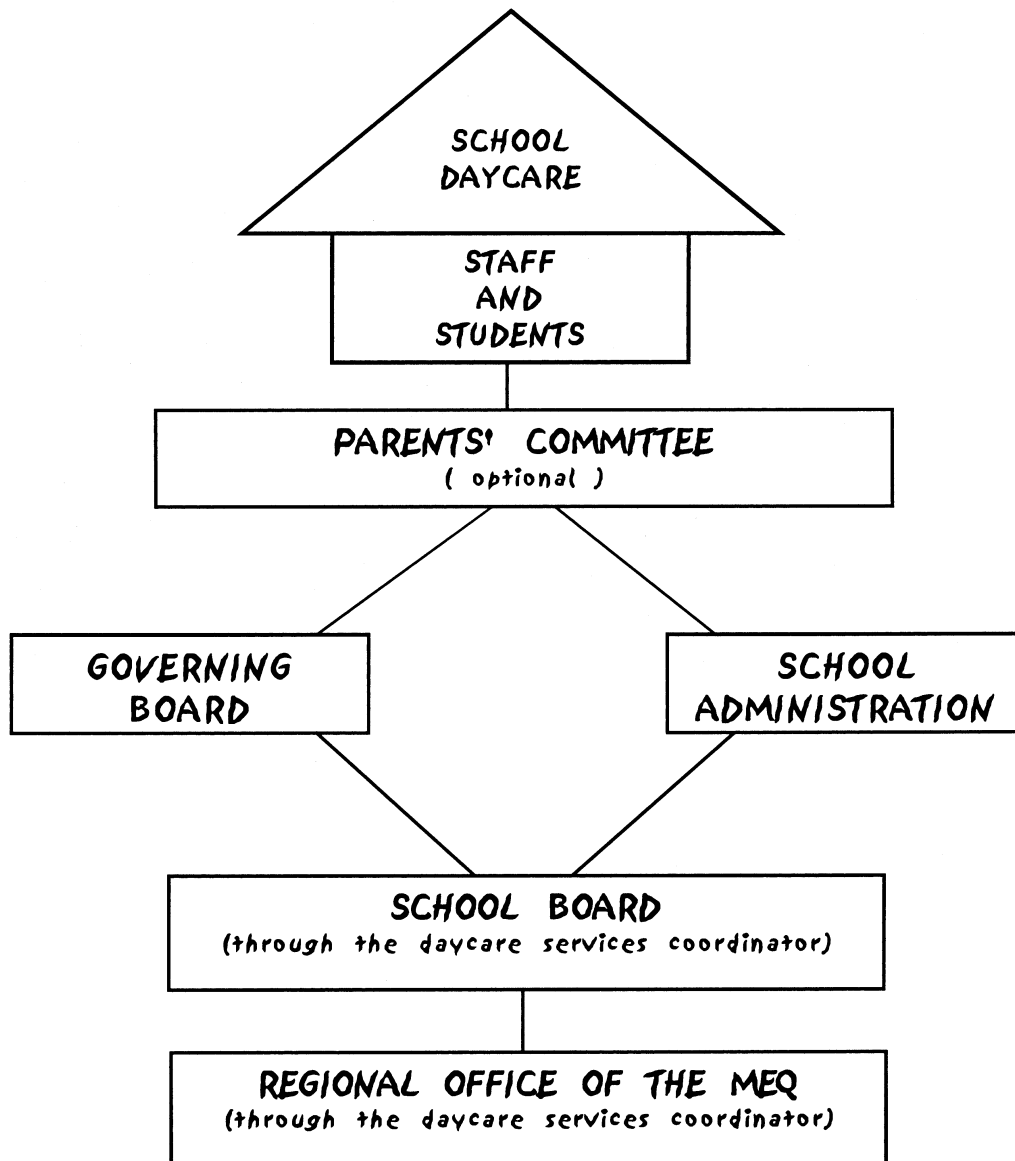
As determined by the budgetary rules for school boards, the financial contribution of parents for daycare services for a child who attends school daycare on a regular basis **must not** exceed \$5 per day. On school days, this contribution generally covers a maximum of five hours of daycare, including the homework period. On pedagogical days, the contribution covers a maximum of 10 hours of daycare.

Parents may be required to make a reasonable additional contribution for extra hours, based on actual supplementary costs incurred. This would be the case should the child attend daycare for a period exceeding five hours on a normal school day or 10 hours on a pedagogical day.

The maximum contribution of \$5 does not cover the cost of providing food. Where applicable, additional fees may be levied for meals and school snacks. Special activities, such as educational and recreational outings on pedagogical days, may also require an additional contribution. However, in all cases, the additional contribution will be reasonable, taking into account the actual costs of the activities.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Several levels of authority, committees and individuals are involved in ensuring the proper operation of school daycare services. The main concern of all these individuals is the welfare and personal development of the child.



7.1 Regional office of the Ministère de l'Éducation

With respect to school daycare services, the regional office is responsible for analyzing proposals from school boards for the establishment or renewal of daycare services and for determining the allowances to which they are entitled. The regional office ensures that the school boards have the information they need to organize a daycare and disseminates all relevant information in the region.

The regional office must ensure that daycare services are made available in compliance with the *Education Act* and the *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school*, and that they conform to the budgetary rules in force. To this end, the regional office may set up a monitoring system, using a sampling approach or monitoring all daycares in its territory.

7.2 The school board

The school board, acting through the daycare services coordinator, monitors the organization and maintenance of school daycare services. The school board offers support to principals with respect to the quality and enhancement of daycare services and follows up on requests from governing boards and daycare parents' committees.

It is the responsibility of the school board to establish the rules and criteria for hiring personnel, taking into account the qualifications required and the stipulations of the recall list and the collective agreements. It will hire personnel as required to ensure compliance at all times with the maximum ratio of one adult for every 20 children.

7.3 The governing board

The governing board has a number of roles within the school. With respect to daycare services, it is responsible for:

- requesting that the school board provide the students at the school with daycare services on the school premises or, if the school does not have suitable premises, on other premises (*Education Act*, s. 256)
- approving the use of the premises placed at the disposal of the school for its daycare services, and ensuring that that there is sufficient space provided therein for the number of children (*Education Act*, s. 93)
- setting up, if deemed appropriate, a daycare parents' committee (*Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school*, s. 18)
- receiving representations and recommendations from the daycare parents' committee
- responding to parents' requests
- approving the rules of conduct and the safety measures proposed by the school principal (*Education Act*, s. 76)

- advising the school board concerning any matter likely to improve the organization of the services it provides (*Education Act*, s. 78 (3))
- informing the community of the services provided by the school (*Education Act*, s. 83)

7.4 The school

Principals have the primary responsibility for the daycare services offered at their schools. It is they who ensure the quality of the services provided; see to it that activities are carried out according to plan; coordinate, overall, the daycare's human, material and financial resources; and see that the daycare and its staff are integrated into school life.

Principals have additional responsibilities, expressly set out in the *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school*, concerning the safety of children during outings off the premises (s. 11), the maintenance of the premises, equipment, furnishings and playthings in good condition (s. 12), access to a first-aid kit (s. 13) and the keeping of an attendance card for each child (s. 15, para. 1).

7.5 The school daycare

The school daycare staff consists of a coordinator and a number of educators.

In conformity with the objectives outlined in Chapter 2 above, the roles and responsibilities of daycare educators are as follows:

- to ensure at all times the well-being and safety of the children in their care
- to take part in the planning and preparation of activities, projects and educational and recreational outings
- to ensure that the daycare day runs smoothly and efficiently (reception, roll call, activities, meals, schoolwork, etc.)
- to ensure that materials and facilities are clean and well-maintained
- to provide educational intervention
- to lead activities
- to communicate with parents
- to take part in daycare meetings
- to take part in the individualized education plans of students with handicaps or behavioural difficulties

Apart from the above-mentioned roles and responsibilities, the daycare coordinator carries out tasks as determined by the school principal. These include:

- taking part in the development and evaluation of the daycare's activities

- drafting rules of operation for the daycare
- informing daycare parents of the rules in force
- registering students and making any necessary updates to attendance cards
- keeping attendance cards and updating them daily, giving written or verbal communication of the cards or facilitating access thereof to a parent who requests it
(Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school, s. 15)
- ensuring compliance with the policies and regulations in force at the school
- ensuring communication between parents and the school administration, and between the daycare and the various other internal services and external bodies
- passing on to the appropriate authorities any requests, complaints or suggestions received
- preparing and conducting information meetings for parents and meetings of daycare parents' committees, where applicable
- assisting the school principal with the financial management of the daycare
- collecting the parents' financial contribution
- taking part in the assessment of human resources needs
- coordinating the work of the daycare staff
- preparing and conducting daycare meetings
- taking part in the physical and material organization of the daycare
- purchasing material and equipment according to established procedures

7.6 The daycare parents' committee

Section 18 of the *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school* specifies that the governing board may form a daycare parents' committee. It is not, however, obliged to do so. Where a parents' committee does exist, this committee has an advisory role and provides a forum for consultation and validation. Depending on their focus, the suggestions and recommendations made by the daycare parents' committee are transmitted to the governing board, the school administration or the school board. The committee can be seen as a liaison for all parents who make use of the school daycare services.

The mandate of the daycare parents' committee may focus on the quality of daycare services, the rules of operation, specific situations or special projects, changes that need to be made or any other aspect of the daycare. The committee may also contribute to the development of innovative projects. Meetings of the committee are conducted by the daycare coordinator.

7.7 Parents

Parents using school daycare services must comply with the daycare's rules of operation, pay the requisite daycare fees, ensure that they have all necessary information and cooperate in building a good relationship with the daycare staff.

7.8 Students

School daycare services are child-centred. In order that the whole range of daycare activities may be carried out as smoothly as possible, students must accept certain responsibilities. This means that they should have a cooperative and positive attitude toward suggested activities and take an interest in participating in such activities. The students enter into a kind of partnership with the daycare staff and their peers, with a view to sustaining a rewarding, healthy and pleasant living environment.

APPENDIX I
EXTRACTS FROM THE *EDUCATION ACT*¹ WITH
RESPECT TO SCHOOL DAYCARE SERVICES

CHAPTER III
SCHOOLS

DIVISION II
GOVERNING BOARD

Section 42 A governing board shall be established for each school.

The governing board, which shall have not more than 20 members, shall include the following persons:

...

- (4) in the case of a school where childcare is organized for children at the preschool and elementary school level, a member of the staff assigned to childcare, elected by his or her peers;

...

Section 50 During the month of September each year, the members of the support staff who provide services at the school and the members of the school staff who provide childcare for children at the preschool and elementary school level, if any, shall hold meetings to elect their representatives to the governing board according to the procedure set out in the collective agreement of the support staff or, failing that, according to the procedure determined by the principal after consulting with the persons concerned.

¹R.S.Q., c. I-13.3.

- Section 75 The governing board is responsible for approving the student supervision policy proposed by the principal.
- The policy shall include measures relating to the use of non-teaching and non-scheduled time for instructional or educational purposes, the organization of extracurricular activities and the development of approaches to foster academic success.
- Section 76 The governing board is responsible for approving the rules of conduct and the safety measures proposed by the principal.
- The rules and measures may include disciplinary sanctions other than expulsion from school or corporal punishment; the rules and measures shall be transmitted to all students at the school and their parents.
- Section 78 The governing board shall advise the school board concerning:
- ...
- (3) any matter likely to improve the organization of the services provided by the school board.
- Section 83 The governing board shall inform the community served by the school of the services provided by the school and report on the level of quality of such services.
- Section 93 The governing board is responsible for approving the use of the premises or immovables placed at the disposal of the school, proposed by the principal, subject to the obligations imposed by law for the use of the school premises for election purposes and to agreements for the use of school premises entered into by the school board before the issue of the deed of establishment of the school.
- Any agreement entered into by the governing board for the use of the premises or immovables placed at the disposal of the school requires prior authorization from the school board if the term of the agreement exceeds one year.
- The governing board is responsible for approving the organization by the school board, on the school premises, of cultural, social, sports, scientific or community services.

Section 95 The governing board is responsible for adopting the school's annual budget proposed by the principal, and shall submit the budget to the school board for approval.

CHAPTER V
SCHOOL BOARDS

DIVISION VI
FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Section 256 At the request of the governing board of a school, a school board must provide childcare for preschool and elementary school students, in the manner agreed with the governing board, on the school premises or, if the school does not have suitable premises, on other premises.

CHAPTER VII
THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

DIVISION I
REGULATIONS

Section 454.1 The Government may, by regulation, prescribe standards for the provision of childcare at school.

The regulation may also deal with the nature and objectives of and the general organizational framework for childcare provided at school.

APPENDIX II

REGULATION RESPECTING CHILDCARE SERVICES PROVIDED AT SCHOOL

Education Act
(R.S.Q., c. I-13.3, s. 454.1;
1997, c. 58, s. 51; 1997, c. 96, s. 132)

CHAPTER I

NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF CHILDCARE SERVICES

1. Childcare services provided at school shall ensure care to children at the preschool and elementary level of a school board, outside the periods where educational services are provided to them.
2. The following are the objectives pursued by childcare services provided at school:
 - (1) looking after the children's well-being and pursuing, within the scope of the school's educational project, the global development of children through activities taking into account their interests and needs, complementing the school's educational services;
 - (2) providing support to children's families, particularly by offering to those who wish, an adequate place and, where possible, the necessary support to allow them to do their homework after class;
 - (3) providing health and safety to children in keeping with the rules of conduct and safety measures approved by the governing board of the school, in accordance with section 76 of the Education Act (R.S.Q., c. I-13.3) enacted by section 13 of Chapter 96 of the Statutes of 1997.

CHAPTER II
GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

DIVISION I

ACCESS

3. Childcare services shall be offered every day of the school year devoted to educational services, but outside the periods devoted to those services, in the manner, such as the schedule, agreed upon with the school board and the governing board in accordance with section 256 of the Education Act replaced by section 91 of Chapter 96 of the Statutes of 1997.

That school board and the governing board may also agree to offer services outside the days of the school year devoted to educational services, particularly during pedagogical days and spring break.

4. During registration of a child in the childcare service of a school, the principal shall ensure that the child's parent receives a document in which the rules of operation of the service are clearly established, particularly those related to the days and hours the service is open and to the costs and terms of payment.

DIVISION II

STAFF

5. Childcare staff members must hold a document, dating back not more than 3 years, attesting that the person has successfully completed:
- (1) a general first aid course lasting at least 8 hours; or
 - (2) a refresher course lasting at least 6 hours intended to update the knowledge acquired in the course mentioned in paragraph 1.

DIVISION III

HYGIENE, SALUBRITY AND SAFETY

6. The number of children per childcare staff member in a childcare service provided at school shall not exceed 20 children present.
7. Where only one childcare staff member is present in a childcare service, the principal shall ensure that someone is available to replace that member if he is obliged to leave due to an emergency.
8. If an illness or a serious accident occurs, a childcare staff member shall immediately call for medical assistance, in particular, by contacting a physician or by going to the nearest medical emergency service.

As soon as possible, the person shall notify the parent of the child or any other person the parent has designated in the registration card.

9. The childcare provider shall lock medication, toxic and household cleaning products in a storage intended specifically for that purpose, out of reach of children and away from food.

10. The childcare provider shall post near the telephone a list of the following telephone numbers:

- (1) a physician;
- (2) the nearest hospital;
- (3) the local community service centre (CLSC) in the territory of which the centre is located;
- (4) the Centre anti-poison du Québec;
- (5) the ambulance service; and
- (6) the Info-Santé service;

He must also keep close to the telephone

- (1) a list of the telephone numbers of the regular staff members and their replacements, if any; and
- (2) a list of the telephone numbers of the parent of each child and those, according to registration cards, of other persons to contact in case of emergency.

11. During outings outside the premises of the childcare service, the principal shall take particular measures to ensure the safety of children, in compliance with the rules of conduct and safety measures approved by the governing board, in accordance with section 76 of the Education Act.

12. The principal shall ensure that the premises, equipment, furnishings and playthings used by the childcare service are in good condition.

13. The principal shall ensure that childcare staff members have a first-aid kit that is kept out of reach of children.

14. Childcare staff members shall ensure that each child leaves the centre with his parent or any other person authorized to do so, unless the parent has agreed, in writing, that the child returns home by himself.

DIVISION IV

REGISTRATION AND ATTENDANCE CARDS

15. The principal shall ensure that a registration card of each child attending childcare service is kept and put at the disposal of childcare staff members at all times.

A childcare provider shall keep and update daily an attendance card for each child he receives.

A childcare provider shall give written or verbal communication of those cards, or facilitate the access thereof, to a parent who requests it.

16. The registration card shall contain the following information:

- (1) the name, address and telephone number of the child;
- (2) the name, address and telephone number of the parent, and that of a person authorized to pick up the child and those of another person to contact in case of emergency;
- (3) the name of the child's teacher and his grade;
- (4) the date of admission of the child and the periods of attendance planned per week; and
- (5) data respecting the health and feeding of the child that may require special care and, where applicable, the name, address and telephone number of the physician and of the establishment where the child generally receives care.

17. The attendance card of each child shall contain the following information:

- (1) the name of each child;
- (2) his periods of attendance planned per week; and

- (2) his dates and hours of attendance.

DIVISION V

CHILDCARE PARENTS' COMMITTEE

18. The governing board may form a childcare parents' committee made up of the childcare provider and of 3 to 5 parents elected by and among the parents of children attending that service.

The committee may make any representation or recommendation to the principal, governing board or school board on all aspects of the life of children in childcare, in particular the governing board's obligation to inform the community served by the school of the services it offers and to give an account of their quality.

DIVISION VI

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL

19. Childcare staff members hired before the date of coming into force of this Regulation shall comply with the provisions of section 5 within 12 months following that date.

20. This Regulation comes into force on the fifteenth day following the date of its publication in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*.

APPENDIX III

USEFUL REFERENCES

- The *Education Act*

- The *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school*

- The budgetary rules for school boards for the school year in progress

- Tarrant, Sue, and Alison Jones. *Before 9 and After 3: A Handbook for Outside School Hours Care*. Castle Hill, Australia: Pademelon Press, 1996.

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