



OVERVIEW

Provision of early childhood education and child care in Quebec is under two ministries, the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR) and the Ministère de la Famille (MFA).

Quebec provides full-day kindergarten (maternelle) for all five year olds and some full- and part- day kindergarten (pré-maternelle) for four year olds under MEESR.

MFA is responsible for regulated child care for children aged 0-4. Regulated child care includes child care centres (called “facilities”) as components of centres de la petite enfance (CPEs). CPEs operate as small non-profit networks of several centres and often include regulated home child care services as well. Regulated family child care providers are supervised by Home Child Care Coordinating Offices (Bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial) (many of which are part of CPEs). There are, as well, for-profit centres (garderies). There is no publicly-delivered child care for children aged 0-4.

At one time, Quebec did not regulate part-day child care programs (jardins d'enfants) but non-grandparented nursery schools must now have a license (permis). CPEs and garderies may accommodate the parents if they request part-day or part time services.

Child care centres, regulated home child care and some garderies are primarily publicly funded. Spaces in these programs are termed *reduced contribution spaces* for which parents paid a flat \$7.30/day fee in 2014. This flat fee was replaced by a geared-to-income fee in April 2015; the geared-to-income portion of the fee will be paid through a parental tax contribution. Beginning in spring 2016, in addition to the core fee of \$7.30/day, parents will pay an additional geared-to-income amount at the time of tax filing. This will be indexed annually.

There are two types of garderies: funded (reduced contribution) centres and unfunded centres for which parents receive a rebate through a tax credit that reimburses up to 90% of their child care cost depending on their income.

School-age child care is operated by schools under MEESR. School boards are required to provide school-age care when there is sufficient demand. In 2014 it was available at the flat \$7.30/day fee, which applied when school is in session. In 2015 the fee moved to \$8.00/day.

Quebec does not use fee subsidies attached to eligible parents. Any child aged 0-4 who has secured a space in a reduced contribution program may attend at the provincially-determined fee regardless of parents' employment status.

Quebec has its own program of family-related leave and benefits that is distinct from that of other provinces/territories. Under the Quebec program, there are two options that parents may choose: the Basic Plan and the Special Plan. Under these options, the Quebec maternity/parental leave benefits are paid at an income replacement rate of 70-75%. There is, as well, a paid paternity leave period available only for new fathers.

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 years (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	81,900
1	82,500
2	88,800
3	83,200
4	88,800
5	90,800
6	88,500
7	87,800
8	86,200
9	77,800
10	85,000
11	75,600
12	77,500
Total	1,094,500

Number of children 0-12 years (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	253,200
3-5	262,800
6-12	578,400
Total	1,094,500

Number of children 0-12 years with employed mothers (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	54,400
1	54,500
2	63,600
3	60,500
4	61,300
5	63,100
6	64,800
7	62,800
8	61,000
9	55,800
10	61,900
11	54,800
12	56,500
Total	775,100

Number of children 0-12 years with employed mothers (2014 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	172,500
3-5	184,900
6-12	417,600
Total	775,100

Children 0-14 years identifying with an Aboriginal group (2011)

Age	First Nations	Metis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	Total
0-4	7,595	2,745	1,605	160	130	12,230
5-9	6,675	2,430	1,455	70	160	10,790
10-14	6,370	2,425	1,380	85	275	10,540
Total	20,645	7,600	4,440	320	560	33,565

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2014 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	174,300	77.2
3-5	123,400	82.0
6-15	317,200	86.2

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

In 2006, the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan replaced the benefits previously available to Quebec parents under the federal Employment Insurance plan. The Quebec Parental Insurance Plan stipulates that financial benefits be paid to all eligible workers — salaried or self employed — who take maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, or adoption leave. Parents may choose between two options: the Basic Plan or the Special Plan. In so doing, they decide the duration of their leave as well as their income replacement rate. The choice of plan is determined by the first parent in the family to receive benefits and cannot be modified.

Maternity leave

Natural mother only and cannot be shared between the two parents.

Basic Plan: 18 weeks of benefits at the rate of 70%

Special Plan: 15 weeks of benefits at the rate of 75%

Paternity leave

Father only and cannot be shared between the two parents.

Basic Plan: Five weeks of benefits at the rate of 70%

Special Plan: Three weeks of benefits at the rate of 75%

Parental benefits

The total number of weeks of parental benefits can be taken by either parent or shared by both, based on an agreement between the two. Parents may take these weeks simultaneously or consecutively.

Basic Plan: 32 weeks of benefits, with the first seven weeks at the rate of 70%, and the following 25 weeks at the rate of 55%

Special Plan: 25 weeks of benefits at the rate of 75%

Adoption leave

Basic Plan: 37 weeks of benefits, with the first 12 weeks at the rate of 70%, and the following 25 weeks at the rate of 55%

Special Plan: 28 weeks of benefits at the rate of 75%

Family-related leave

Ten days per year.

KINDERGARTEN

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche
Direction de la formation générale des jeunes
Responsable du programme d'éducation préscolaire et des services de garde en milieu scolaire
Édifice Marie-Guyart, 17e étage
1035, rue De La Chevrotière
Québec, QC, G1R 5A5
Telephone: (418) 644-5240 poste 2517
Website: <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/>

LEGISLATION

Quebec. National Assembly. *Education Act*. R.S.Q., c.I-13.3
Quebec. National Assembly. *An Act to amend the Education Act concerning the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal*. Bill 41 (2001, c. 30).
Quebec. National Assembly. *An Act to amend the Education Act*, Bill 35. (2001, c. 46).
Quebec. National Assembly. *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*. R.S.Q., c. I-14.

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

FIVE YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN (MATERNELLE)
Kindergarten for five year olds is delivered on a full school-day basis in English and French public and private schools. Kindergarten is provided for 23.5 hours/week for 36 weeks or 846 hours a year.

FOUR YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN PART-DAY (PRÉ-MATERNELLE)
This program varies from 9.15 hours/ week for 36 weeks (or 332 hours) to 11.45 hours/week for 36 weeks (or 412 hours). It may be four part-days or five part-days. Some programs include parent participation. Originally, four year old kindergarten was developed for low-income children, although this is no longer the sole clientele of these programs.

FOUR YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN FULL-DAY (PRÉ-MATERNELLE)
In September 2013, the law was modified to allow full time four year old kindergarten for low income children in targeted neighbourhoods. Some programs include parent participation. The goal of this was to provide services for children without other publicly funded early childhood education provision.

PASSE-PARTOUT
Passe-Partout is a program developed for low-income four year olds and their parents, mostly living in rural Quebec. Passe-Partout is designed to provide targeted parents with the tools they need to help them enable their children to develop, grow and succeed at school. Passe-Partout consists of a minimum of 16 sessions a year with the children and eight with the parents.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Five year old kindergarten: Five years old by September 30
Four year old kindergarten: Four years old by September 30

COMPULSORY

Not compulsory. Entitlement is legislated.

HOURS

Five year old kindergarten (maternelle): 23.5 hours/week for 36 weeks or 846 hours a year.
Four year old kindergarten part-day program (pré-maternelle): program varies from 9.15 hours/ week for 36 weeks (or 332 hours) to 11.45 hours/week for 36 weeks (or 412 hours)
Four year old kindergarten full day programme (pré-maternelle): 23.5 hours/week for 36 weeks or 846 hours a year.
Passe-Partout: minimum of 16 sessions with children only and eight with parents.

CLASS SIZE

Class size limits are defined in the collective agreements.
Five year olds: Maximum 20, average 18
Four year olds: Maximum 18, average 15
Multi-age groups: Maximum 15 children per group

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Four year degree: Baccalauréat en Éducation préscolaire et enseignement au primaire.

CURRICULUM

[The Quebec preschool education program](#)

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN

Allocations 2013-2014 :

Kindergarten (five year olds)	\$395, 968,824
Kindergarten (four year olds part-day)	15, 061,915
Kindergarten (four year olds full-day)	5, 559,818
Passe-Partout	14, 382,879
K-12 per pupil spending	\$10,201

REGULATED CHILD CARE

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Ministère de la Famille
Direction de l'accessibilité et de la qualité des services de garde
600, rue Fullum, 6e étage
Montréal (Quebec) G1R 4Z1
Tél: 418-643-1681
Website: <http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca>

LEGISLATION

Ministère de la Famille:
Educational Childcare Act (R.S.Q., chapter S-4.1.1).
Educational Childcare Regulation chapter S-4.1.1, r. 2
Reduced contribution Regulation (R.S.Q., c. [S-4.1.1., r.1])

Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la recherche:
Règlement sur les services de garde en milieu scolaire.
L.R.Q., c.I-13.3., a. 454.1; 1997, c.58, a.51; 1997, c.96, a.132.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Maximum number of children permitted: Six, excluding the caregiver's own children.

Jardins d'enfants (nursery schools)

Nursery schools are programs for a minimum of seven children aged 2-5 years on a regular basis for up to four hours/day. These may be unregulated only if they were operating before October 25th 2005 and are still continuing to operate as of today. Thus, a day care permit is compulsory to operate a nursery school opened after October 25 2005.

Haltes-garderies (stop-over centres)

There are two categories:

- (1) Occasional organized child care services in a health or social institution, in a commercial establishment, at a fair or social exhibition or during a special event for children whose parents are on site and can be reached if needed.
- (2) Temporary child care offered by public bodies or community organizations as part of their mandate to support and assist families, or as part of a specific activity involving parents or children.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Centre de la petite enfance (CPE) (Child care centre)

A CPE provides educational child care primarily for children 0-4 years old. Children may be cared for in a facility (centre)-based program for periods not exceeding 48 consecutive hours. A CPE may have up to five facilities (centres), each of which may have up to 80 children, and no more than two may be housed in one building. CPEs must be non-profit or a cooperative whose board of directors corresponds to section 7 of the *Educational Childcare Act* (at least seven members).

Garderie (day care centre)

An organization that provides child care in a facility of not more than 80 children, where children receive care regularly for periods not exceeding 48 consecutive hours.. No more than two facilities may be housed in one building. Garderies are generally for-profit operations or operated by a non-profit group that does not have a majority of parents on the board of directors (e.g. church-run centres). Most garderies are for-profit.

There are two types of garderies: those funded to provide reduced contribution child care and those that are unfunded “at the gate” (parents pay full fees and may claim a tax credit).

Service de garde en milieu familial (home or family child care services)

Regulated home child care providers are overseen by 162 accredited home Child Care Coordinating Offices (Bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial). Accreditation is granted for a renewable period of three years. Child Care Coordinating Offices (CCCO) are responsible to monitor application of the standards give assistance to providers. Most CCCOs are CPEs; some are free-standing non-profit organizations.

Home child care services are provided in a private residence by an individual for up to six children including the provider’s own children; no more than two children may be under 18 months. Nonetheless, if the provider wishes to receive more than two children under 18 months of age (including her own children and her assistant’s children), she must be assisted by another adult. If the provider is assisted by another adult, nine children are permitted with no more than four children under 18 months, including their own children.

Services de garde en milieu scolaire (school-age child care)

These programs are provided by school boards or private educational institutions for children attending pré-maternelle (pre-kindergarten), maternelle (kindergarten) and elementary grades. They are under the jurisdiction of the MEESR. School boards are obliged to provide school-age child care when there is a demonstrated need.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Quebec has a non-compulsory curriculum framework [Accueillir la petite enfance](#) for all CPEs and garderies. It was introduced in 1997 and updated in 2007.

All CPEs and garderies must apply an educational program with different activities aimed *inter alia* at fostering children’s overall development and at helping children gradually adapt to life in society and to integrate to a group.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Admission to a regular child care program is at the discretion of the CPE, garderie or the home child care provider. However, Quebec’s objectives regarding children with special needs in child care programs strongly favor inclusion.

For a child who has a diagnosed disability or who meets the ministry definition of a “disabled” child, a one-time grant of \$2,200 and an additional \$39.80/day/child (2014/2015) in addition to the regular operating grants is available. In addition to the supplementary allowance allocated to child care establishments receiving children with a disability, an assistance measure has been put in place for the integration of children with significant special needs into child care services.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Quebec regulates child care on-reserve. In 2015, there were 60 facilities and a home Child Care Coordinating Office in Aboriginal communities. All those facilities are non-profit organizations and receive funding from MFA.

The Quebec government has reached agreements with four Aboriginal organizations, thereby delegating some legal authority for child care under the law. There are also five urban Aboriginal child care centres (six facilities) and an urban Aboriginal home Child Care Coordinating Office. These centres are located in Montreal, Quebec, Val d’Or, Trois-Rivières and La Tuque.

SPACE STATISTICS (2014)

Number of regulated child care spaces				
<i>Centre-based (0-5 years, child care centres and garderies)</i>				
Age group	CPEs	Subsidized garderies	Non-funded garderies	Total Centre-based
Less than 12 months (1 year old)	4,901	1,615	1,681	8,197
1 - 2 years old	14,565	6,863	6,108	27,536
2 - 4 year olds	65,762	31,606	19,274	116,642
5 year olds and up	1,389	1,046	1,557	3,992
Total (0-5 years) Regulated by the Ministère de la Famille				
	86,617	41,130	28,620	156,367

Regulated family child care

Enrolled family child care spaces

Less than 12 months (1 year old)	13,140
1 - 2 years old	22,296
2 - 4 year olds	57,883
5 year olds and up	1,018
Total enrolled family child care	94,337

Total spaces regulated by Ministère de la Famille

Reduced contribution spaces (centres 0-4 and family child care)	222,084
Not reduced contribution spaces	28,620
Total	250,704

School-age

Total school-age child care spaces	305,743
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(Voir le ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche pour la mise à jour de cette donnée)

Total number of spaces regulated by the Ministère de la Famille and under the aegis of MELS

556,447

(Voir le ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR) pour la mise à jour de cette donnée)

Children with special needs

in regulated child care 5,816

Children receiving fee subsidies Not applicable

Number of child care programs

Number of CPEs	978
Number of centres that are part of CPEs	1,453
Number of garderies	1,544
With reduced contribution spaces	678
Without reduced contribution spaces	866
Number of school-age centres	Not available
Number of Child Care Coordinating Offices	163
Number of family child care providers	15,514

Sponsorship of regulated centre-based spaces

Centre-based spaces

Non-profit (CPEs)	84,672
Garderies (for-profit and other non-CPE centres)	68,809
Garderies with reduced contribution spaces	41,036
Garderies without reduced contribution spaces	27,773
School-age spaces (school board operated)	305,743

Parent fees

In 2014, Quebec still set a flat fee for children in non-profit child care centres (CPEs), in funded garderies, regulated home child care and school-aged child care in schools; most recently, the fee was \$7.30/day. Spaces with these fees are referred to as "reduced contribution spaces". Child care operated by school boards only offer reduced contribution spaces on the days school is in session.

Note: See Overview section for funding changes in 2015 requiring further parental contributions at tax time.

Unfunded for-profit centres (garderies) are not required to charge a provincially set parent fee; information on their fees is not available. A rebate (tax credit) from the Quebec government is paid to parents using these centres.

In 2014, a national survey of child care fees in Canada's large cities included the following Quebec cities:

City	Median monthly preschooler fee
Gatineau	\$152
Laval	152
Montreal	152
Longueuil	152
Quebec City	152

Note: In Quebec at the time these data were collected, fees were set at \$7/day or \$152/month by the province. Therefore, Gatineau, Laval, Montreal, Longueuil and Quebec City fees were the same.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRES (CPES AND GARDERIES)

Maximum facility size:	80 spaces
Maximum room size:	not specified
Maximum staff/child ratios	
Age	Staff:child ratios
0-17 months	1:5
18 months – 4 years	1:8
4 years – 5 years	1:10
5 years and older	1:20
<i>Note: For a multi-age group, ratio is based on the ratio for the youngest child in the group.</i>	

Centre staff qualification requirements

Centre (facility) staff qualifications: At least two child care staff members out of three (2/3) in the centre must be qualified and present each day with the children while child care is being provided. There is no training requirement for centre directors.

“Qualified” is defined as a child care staff member holding a college diploma in early childhood education or any other equivalent training recognized by the Minister (such as a one-year Attestation d’études collégiales combined with three years experience).

New and expanded CPes and garderies have five years to conform to the required 2/3 ratios of qualified staff. Until that time they must conform to a 1/3 ratio (one in three is required to be qualified).

There are no educational requirements for staff working in school-age child care programs. However, a school board may require the lead staff to have an early childhood education diploma.

Parent involvement

A non-profit child care centre’s board of directors must be made up of at least seven members, 2/3 of whom (minimum of five) are parent-users of the centre. At least one board member must come from the business, institutional, social, education or community sectors and no more than two shall be staff at the centre.

A garderie’s licence holder must set up an advisory committee made up of five parents and consult with the parent committee on all aspects of the care the children receive in the centre, particularly with respect to implementation of the educational program, services provided and how complaints are processed.

The composition of the boards of directors of organizations accredited as Home Child Care Coordinating Offices is determined by the type of organization.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

The MFA issues licences for up to a five-year period. MFA inspectors may visit any licensed operation to monitor its compliance with regulations.

Licence holders of CPes and garderies should receive at least one inspection visit during the period that their licence is valid—generally once every five years. Otherwise there is no specified inspection schedule.

In the six months after the issuance of a new permit, an inspection is conducted for the purpose of information and prevention. The aim of this inspection is to evaluate quality, and to request corrective measures if there are irregularities.

Inspectors are not required to have a degree, diploma, or training in early childhood education.

Quebec does not issue conditional or provisional licences. If a centre is found to be in non-compliance with legislated requirements but there is no immediate danger to the health or well-being of the children, MFA informs the centre’s board of directors or owner in writing that the program is in non-compliance with a specific regulation(s) and requests rectification. A follow-up check is done by an inspector when sufficient time is deemed to have passed. Repeated instances of non-compliance that do not pose an immediate threat may result in administrative penalties, administrative sanctions or penal sanctions.

The operator may appeal the loss of a licence (or the refusal by MFA to renew a licence) or may contest a decision to the Tribunal administratif du Québec. Its decision is binding.

REGULATED HOME CHILD CARE

Model of organization

Agency model

Home child care providers are supervised by des bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial agréés (Accredited Home Child Care Coordinating Offices).

Maximum capacity

Up to six children including the provider's children under nine years; no more than two children may be under 18 months. If the provider is assisted by another adult, they may care for nine children, including both providers' own children, with not more than four children being under 18 months.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Home Child Care Coordinating Offices are required to do three on-site home visits per year. The CCCO is responsible for ensuring that providers meet the regulations.

Home child care provider qualification requirements

Home child care providers must hold a first-aid certificate and complete a training program of at least 45 hours pertaining to child development, health, safety and diet issues, and organization and leadership in a "life environment". Many Home Child Care Coordinating Offices provide training for providers. Providers are also required to take a 6 hour proficiency course a year (cours de perfectionnement).

FUNDING

CHILD CARE SERVICES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Quebec provides funding to all CPEs, to funded garderies and to regulated family child care providers via Home Child Care Coordinating Offices through a formula approach. Non-profit and for-profit facilities are generally treated the same way vis-à-vis operational funding although the Basic Formula for non-profits is higher than for for-profits. Only non-profits are eligible for capital funding.

Parents who use unfunded garderies and unregulated family child care arrangements are eligible for a child care tax credit (reimbursement up to 90%).

TYPES OF FUNDING

Fee subsidies

Quebec does not use a system of parent fee subsidies.

One time funding

Capital funding is available to develop new CPEs.

Recurring/operational funding

The majority of Quebec's child care services are base or operationally funded (except unfunded garderies). A funding formula based on licensed capacity and occupancy rate determines the amount of funds a CPE receives. In 2014, all CPEs were publicly-funded to provide child care at \$7.30/day; since 2015, parents also pay the additional parental contribution at tax time for all age groups.

There are no unfunded non-profit child care centres (CPEs). Garderies, mostly for-profit operations, are also publicly funded to provide \$7.30/day care for 0-4 year olds but the provincial funding formula provides somewhat less funding than CPEs.

There are also a number of other categories of public funding available that CPEs can access such as: minor capital, professional development, staff benefits, etc.

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE

Fee subsidies	N/A
One time funding	
Capital expenditures	\$30,001,500
Recurring funding	
Funding to CPEs and garderies	\$2,222,891,100
Pension plan for employees in child care	80,216,500
Total child care expenditure for children 0-4 years	\$2,333,109,100
Expenditure on school-age child care (by MEESR)	\$152,300,000
Total regulated child care	\$2,485,409,100

Note: These figures do not reflect the additional funds spent to reimburse parents using unfunded garderies (regulated child care) and unregulated child care.

