

What a difference a decade makes: Counting the benefits of investment in early childhood development in Quebec ^[1]

Author: Japel, Christa

Source: Paediatrics & Child Health. The Journal of the Canadian Paediatric Society

Format: Article

Publication Date: 1 Dec 2009

AVAILABILITY

Article in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the article:

Child care services in Quebec have undergone a major transformation since 1997, when the government adopted its new family policy. One of the linchpins of this innovative policy was the setting up of a network of fixed-fee services for all children aged five years and younger, irrespective of family income. The network was intended to address the issue of work-family balance and to provide children, no matter what the financial status of their parents, with a preschool environment that fosters their social, emotional and cognitive development, and prepares them for entry into the school system.

....

More than 10 years later, what benefits can we detect from this investment in early childhood education and care? First, we observe a sharp rise in the number of children in regulated child care. There is also evidence that this attendance is having beneficial effects on the behaviour and cognitive development of the children. These benefits are particularly evident among vulnerable children. Second, available and affordable child care accompanied by a generous parental leave program may have had an impact on Quebec's demographic profile: compared with the other provinces, Quebec has had the largest increase in its birth rate of the past five years. Furthermore, families have greatly benefited from Quebec's child care model: the increased availability of spaces has facilitated mothers' attendance at an educational institution or return to work.

....

Despite the many advantages of these services for children, families and society, the Quebec experience teaches us other lessons, and they aren't so rosy. Two recent large-scale studies have found that child care quality is minimal overall. Although there is evidence that child care attendance is beneficial for some children, the effect on developmental outcomes, albeit statistically significant, is relatively small. This suggests that Quebec's child care network has not attained the general level of quality needed to have a larger impact on the social, emotional and cognitive development of all children. Furthermore, quality levels vary significantly according to the type of child care setting: nonprofit early childhood centres (CPEs) generally offer better quality services than for-profit daycares.

.....

Region: Canada ^[3]

Quebec ^[4]

Tags: affordability ^[5]

quality ^[6]

child development ^[7]

outcomes ^[8]

maternity and parental leave ^[9]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/02/what-difference-decade-makes-counting-benefits-investment>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/02/what-difference-decade-makes-counting-benefits-investment> ^[2]

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2807807/> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7855> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-development> [8]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/outcomes> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/maternity-and-parental-leave>