

# The real issues in the Th  berge reform <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Association qu  b  coise des centres de petites enfance

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below. Contact the AQCPE at [info@aqcpe.com](mailto:info@aqcpe.com) <sup>[2]</sup> for further materials about this issue.

Fact sheet in pdf <sup>[3]</sup>

Text of the fact sheet:

The essential issues of Minister Th  berge's proposal during the introduction of the Bill dealt with the provision of improved services to parents: atypical childcare, waiting lists, etc. Unfortunately, this was just for show. There is almost nothing to this effect in the Bill. In fact, simple regulatory changes, new administrative standards and subsequent budgets would have sufficed to deal with this matter. So why this reform and what does it include?

## WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY AT ISSUE IN BILL 124

### 1. A fundamental change in direction:

Going from an educational service to children and support for their parents to the simple notion of educational childcare service in which children are cared for while their parents are at work.

In 1997, the change of the name from "gard  ries populaires" to "childcare centers" was not a cosmetic operation to be more stylish. This change revealed a choice and a clear desire to primarily focus on the child's overall needs and not only on the parent's childcare needs.

### 2. A structural transformation of the network, facilitating its privatization:

Going from a combined network, of which the majority of places are in childcare centers (not for-profit social economy organizations):

- CPE & facility and home childcare: 84% of places
- For-profit private day care centers: 16% of places

To a triple network:

- CPE: 40% of places
- For-profit private day care centers: 16% of places
- Home childcare coordination offices: 44% of places

These offices may be managed by any type of business, assigned by the Minister

### 3. Bureaucratization of practices, based on governmental centralization and standardization instead of on partnership:

While the standards governing the childcare center network resulted from a partnership between the State and players from the field, guaranteeing legitimacy and relevance, the State changed the order and retained the powers to determine and dictate the standards and practices.

Hence, CPEs find themselves stripped of their capacity to adapt to the particular needs of their community and to break new ground.

Through this reform, a double movement is being carried out, attacking the very essence of CPEs' educational and community initiative:

- First, by throwing the door wide open to commercializing home childcare services
- Next, by the State taking control of CPE management, a quasi-takeover usurping the real decision-making and strategic direction powers related to a CPE from parents and the community, enabling the Minister to impose the internal governing regulation and giving the Minister the power to determine human resource, material and financial management.

In this double movement, it is the concept of social economy enterprise that explodes, on one hand through privatization, and on the other through the Ministry's control.

## DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES...

The principles of accessibility, universality and quality demolished:

- The spectrum of fee hikes is still present. The Minister has already confirmed the possibility of different, more expensive fee structures for atypical childcare and for childcare for school children.

- The decline in services for children with special needs is to be anticipated with this return to a babysitting concept rather than a childcare service centre.

- Access to same-quality services, throughout the territory, regardless of the community (rural/urban, wealthy/poor) is in peril, whereas studies prove that CPEs had met this equity challenge brilliantly.

- Home childcare management megastructures are associated with a \$50 million cutback: loss of services for home childcare providers and the disappearance of unique expertise in educational support (500 educational consultant jobs, the equivalent of a large factory employing mainly women...)

Home childcare providers and parents thrown out of the decision-making arena:

- In this operation to dismember the CPE network, home childcare providers and parents from this community are thrown out of the decision-making and control arenas. Home childcare providers will soon be nothing more than a business' sub-contractors (and only one per territory, a home childcare provider may no longer "choose" its CPE), itself being a mere agent of the Minister's affairs. Particularly noteworthy, in the CPEs, the Ministère's extended powers over internal governance and the management of human, financial and material resources significantly reduce parents' actual decision-making space.

A time of discontinued peace:

- This dismemberment of CPEs sounds the death-knells of cohesion and cooperation constructed between the childcare services provided in the home and in facilities. It also heralds a loss of motivation among network stakeholders, victims of a relentless smear campaign by the Minister.

Extremely subjective powers for the Minister:

- The Minister would hold enormous and very subjective powers to name the recipients of the status of Home Childcare Coordination Office. The dangers of favouritism and relationships would be high seeing as the terms and specific criteria involved in certifying the coordinating offices would only be seen (perhaps) in the regulations.

No study justifies this reform:

- This reform is not based on any serious study proving its relevance. Only on anecdotes, localized problems that the Minister had all the power to settle. Incredible nonetheless, while all studies establish the superior nature of CPEs and the current model of coaching and supervision in the home childcare environment, the Minister is disregarding all these conclusions and is leading us in the opposite direction!

Is the network perfect?

- Certainly not, but it is pretty good! Following eight years of high-speed development, the time has come to consolidate. As a matter of fact, the AQCPÉ has consolidation and restructuring proposals. Proposals that, in contrast to the Bill that was filed, complies with the fundamentals of the vision at the heart of CPEs:

1. Educational mission for early childhood
2. Offering diversified, quality and integrated services
3. Parents are the main contractors in their children's education through the democratic control of CPEs
4. Organization capable of innovation and attuned to the needs of the community
5. Guaranteed accessibility to and universality of services

Over the course of the following days and weeks, we will be at work to counter the adoption of this Bill and to convince the government to opt for another course of action, guaranteeing quality services for the children and families of Québec.

**Related link: Educational child care act [Bill 124]** <sup>[4]</sup>

**Region:** Canada <sup>[5]</sup>

Quebec <sup>[6]</sup>

**Tags:** funding <sup>[7]</sup>

federalism <sup>[8]</sup>

privatization <sup>[9]</sup>

legislation and regulation <sup>[10]</sup>

parent involvement <sup>[11]</sup>

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