

20 years after the Family Policy - The AQCPE and INM announce creation of an Early Childhood Education Commission ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance (AQCPE) and the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) today announced the launch of an Early Childhood Education Commission.

"Québec's Family Policy will turn 20 in 2017. We believe a survey of early childhood education in Quebec must be made," said Louis Sénécal, AQCPE President and CEO. "The Commission will serve as a platform for nonpartisan debate. The question of early childhood education has already been the subject of much discussion. It is now time to forge a collective vision of its future."

AQCPE Board Chair Hélène Gosselin said, "By establishing this commission, the AQCPE is assuming its recognized role as a national leader and key player in early childhood issues."

Equal Opportunity: Central to the Goals of Québec's Family Policy

The Québec Government published its family policy, *Les enfants au cœur de nos choix*, in 1997 at the time of a Summit on the Economy and Employment. The policy is designed to promote economic development by helping women return to the workplace and by supporting the equal opportunity by all children to high-quality educational daycare services.

Lucien Bouchard, Québec Premier from 1996 to 2001, was present today at the launch of the Early Childhood Education Commission. "Some 20 years ago, driven by a desire to let our children live in a fairer society, we formulated and adopted a policy that can provide young children with quality education. Two decades later, it is time to track our progress and see how well this initiative in support of children and equal opportunity has taken root."

Sébastien Proulx, Minister of the Family and Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports, was also present at this morning's event. "I applaud this initiative by the Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance. The overall development of our children is a collective responsibility of individuals and organizations. We must continue the work we have started with the support of all our partners in building a society that offers each member a real chance of meeting their full potential."

Independent, Non-Partisan, Broad-Based Citizen's Commission

To ensure the Commission's neutrality, AQCPE asked l'Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM)—an NPO supporting citizen participation in democratic governance—to oversee Commission operations and provide it with office space.

"Through this process, we shall seek the widest possible range of views on subjects under consideration, along with participation by the public, specialists and groups of all backgrounds," said INM Director Michel Venne. "We will assist commission members in applying best practices and public participation ethics throughout the consultation process."

Commission Chair André Lebon will also ensure the project's independence. He will be assisted by two commission members—Ms. Martine Desjardins and Me. Pierre Landry—in fulfilling his functions and in producing a report that includes a survey of the situation and recommendations on early childhood education in Québec. "Our role is to listen, encourage broad public participation, consider what is said and draw up proposals that will serve as a foundation for discussion on our approach to early childhood education over the next 20 years."

All Commission documents and its tour schedule may be found at: www.commissionpetiteenfance.com. ^[3]The Commission will officially begin consultation activities this October 12.

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