

EARLY CHILDHOOD — WEEK —

November 15–21, 2021
grandesemaine.com

KEY INFORMATION

- Date:** Monday, November 15, to Sunday, November 21, 2021 (6th year in a row)
Goal: Make early childhood development a priority in Quebec
Who: More than 20 partners and allies committed to this Quebec-wide social movement
Website: grandesemaine.com
Social media:
- Facebook: @Collectifpetiteenfance
 - Twitter: @CollectifPE
 - LinkedIn: @Collectif petite enfance
 - #earlychildhoodweek #allinfoallkids #CollectifPetiteEnfance #MakeEarlyChildhoodAPriority

CALL TO ACTION

Let's work together to build a Quebec that provides every child, from before birth onward, with the means to realize their full potential.

THEME — PREVENTION

Together, we can make a difference for young children right from the start.

KEY MESSAGES — GENERAL

- 1. Early Childhood Week aims to give a voice to the 534,000 children aged 5 and under in Quebec and make early childhood development a true priority for our society.**
- It is an opportunity for everyone to stop for a moment and focus on early childhood development in Quebec in order to collectively reflect on what we can do to make sure every child gets the best possible start in life. Today's toddlers are tomorrow's adults: let's give each and every one of them an equal chance at realizing their full potential and becoming well-rounded, engaged members of society.
 - Over 20 partners and allies have come together to bring more attention to early childhood development and to impress upon policy-makers and the public at large the key role today's young children will play in the future of our society. Many activities are scheduled across Quebec throughout the week.
 - For more details, go to grandesemaine.com.

2. **By taking action as early as possible, beginning at pregnancy, we can give each baby an equal chance and create the perfect conditions for every child to succeed.**
 - Children’s experiences from 0 to 5 have a decisive impact on their development. Any actions undertaken during this period will help establish the solid foundations that will guide them in adulthood. Parents play a critical role in this, but they are not alone.
 - The environment children are raised in has a fundamental impact on their health, their development, their academic performance and the course of their whole life.

3. **Too many children are missing out on the opportunity to achieve their full potential.**
 - Although most young children are doing just fine and living in environments conducive to their development, some face formidable barriers to fulfilling their potential. One in four — or one in three in low-income— exhibits vulnerability in at least one sphere of development by the time they start kindergarten. This may undermine their academic progress and impact their whole life.
 - Various measures can be taken to nurture children’s development. These include:
 - Support for expecting and new parents to give every baby the best possible start
 - High-quality, accessible educational daycare
 - Collective measures to create a better family-work balance
 - Accessible, family-friendly healthcare and social services
 - Safe, suitable and affordable housing to grow up in
 - Safe public spaces for play and learning

4. **Indigenous children need to be immersed in their culture and language, and given the opportunity to flourish as individuals and members of their families, communities and Nations. Respect for the ties that connect Inuit, Métis and First Nations children to their political and cultural communities is vital, not only in helping them fulfill their potential but also in fostering their overall well-being.**

5. **Individual public policies on their own are not enough. It is the sum of multiple cohesive policies based on a current, integrated vision that takes the child development continuum into account that has the best chance of ensuring equal opportunities for all young children living in Quebec.**

KEY MESSAGES — COVID-19

1. **The COVID-19 pandemic has not spared young children and their families. It has had major repercussions on the entire ecosystem surrounding them.**
 - The upheaval resulting from COVID-19 will have long-term effects on children.
 - The consequences of the pandemic are worse for children who were already vulnerable.
 - Not only has children’s social interaction been limited, but the situation has had a decisive impact on several determinants of their well-being, including family income, access to affordable housing, parental practices and general levels of household stress.
 - Lockdown restrictions and the cancellation of school and family activities have made the transition to kindergarten a difficult one.

2. It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. But the pandemic has separated children from this very village, and the resulting impact on their well-being is all too real.
3. To foster early childhood development amid the pandemic, especially in circumstances of increased vulnerability, it is crucial to maintain a focus on key protection factors.

KEY MESSAGES — PREVENTION

1. Prevention means eliminating or reducing risk factors that contribute to the likelihood of a problem developing, while strengthening individual and collective capacities to cope with stress and adversity.
2. Preventing abuse involves putting in place the individual, family, community, economic and social conditions conducive to healthy parent-child relationships so that, in the years from birth to kindergarten, as many children as possible can grow up in a family environment free of coercive control, violence, abuse or neglect.
3. To create caring communities for our babies, toddlers and preschoolers, we must take concrete action as a society, pooling together the capacities and convictions of various early childhood development stakeholders. It is through these collective efforts that we will be able to address their needs and rights.
4. To help ensure young children have access to the best possible living conditions and uphold our collective responsibility to protect the youngest members of our society, we need to break down the silos that separate us. The greater the difficulties faced by children and their families, the greater the barriers they must overcome. Dialogue and collaboration are more crucial than ever in these situations.
5. Five main types of preventive strategies:
 - I. Enhance economic support for families
 - II. Change social norms to promote parental support and foster positive parent practices
 - III. Provide children with quality health care and education early in life
 - IV. Strengthen parental skills to promote children's development
 - V. Reduce harm and prevent future risk in situations of abuse

For messages and content tailored to ECW's different target audiences – provincial and municipal policy-makers as well as business leaders – please consult the documents published by Early Childhood Week's partners, available in the Communications Tools section of the website.

EARLY CHILDHOOD STATISTICS BY REGION

We invite you to use the following information in your communications materials (press releases, speeches, op-eds, etc.):

Number of children 5 and under in Quebec: 534,939 or 6.4% of the provincial population

- Bas-Saint-Laurent: 5.5% of the population, 11,095
- Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean: 5.9% of the population, 16,446
- Capitale-Nationale: 6.2% of the population, 45,418

- Mauricie: 5.5% of the population, 14,656
- Estrie: 6.1% of the population, 19,840
- Montreal: 6.7% of the population, 134,098
- Outaouais: 6.7% of the population, 26,022
- Abitibi-Témiscamingue: 6.8% of the population, 10,044
- Côte-Nord: 6.2% of the population, 5,926
- Nord-du-Québec: 10.7% of the population, 4,815
- Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine: 4.7% of the population, 4,291
- Chaudière-Appalaches: 6.5% of the population, 27,549
- Laval: 6.5% of the population, 27,719
- Lanaudière: 6.7% of the population, 33,631
- Laurentides: 6.2% of the population, 37,460
- Montérégie: 6.5% of the population, 100,426
- Centre-du-Québec: 6.4% of the population, 15,503

Reference: https://tout-petits.org/media/1801/portrait2017_complet_web_en.pdf