

EARLY CHILDHOOD — WEEK —

November 20–26, 2023
grandesemaine.com

KEY INFORMATION

- Date:** Monday, November 20, to Sunday, November 26, 2023 (8th year)
- Goal:** Make early childhood development a priority in Quebec
- Who:** 24 partners and allies, representing thousands of early childhood development advocates who are determined to make this vision a reality
- Website:** grandesemaine.com
- Social media:**
- Facebook: @Collectifpetiteenfance
 - Twitter: @CollectifPE
 - LinkedIn: @Collectif petite enfance
 - #earlychildhoodweek #allinforallkids #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 — CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

We all have a role to play in protecting the rights of young children.

Because children are more vulnerable than adults.

Because children cannot vote or exercise any political or economic influence.

Because the healthy development of the next generation is vital to the future of our society.

It is our collective duty to ensure that the rights of all young children are upheld.

By understanding their needs and looking out for their best interests, we can rise together to champion these rights and make our world a better place.

Rising together to champion young children's rights!

KEY MESSAGES — CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

1. **All children — regardless of their gender, parents, origin, culture, birthplace, living situation, language, religion, or mental or physical health — deserve to be treated fairly and equitably. It is our collective duty to ensure that the rights of all young children are upheld.**
2. **The events of the past few years have exacerbated numerous societal issues that have a direct impact on young children. These include inflation, environmental concerns, the dwindling availability of services and the lack of affordable housing and the growing poverty gap for families. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we make early childhood development a true social priority. We all have a role to play in protecting the rights of young children.**

3. Babies, toddlers and preschoolers are entitled to:

- Receive a quality education
- Receive the best possible health care
- Be fed and clothed and have a safe place to live
- Have their rights protected by the government

And they also have a right to:

- Be raised by a loving family, with the support of a caring community
- Use their own language, religion and culture with other members of their community
- Be protected from discrimination in all its forms.

KEY MESSAGES RELATED TO THE QUEBEC SURVEY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN KINDERGARTEN

Forthcoming in October

KEY MESSAGES — GENERAL

- 1. Early Childhood Week aims to give a voice to the over 509,000 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.
 - The event brings together 24 partners and allies, representing thousands of early childhood development advocates who have joined forces to bring more attention to the needs of our youngest citizens and to impress upon policy-makers and the public at large the key role today's children will play in the future of our society. Many activities are scheduled across Quebec throughout the week to shine the spotlight on these issues.
 - Making early childhood development a social priority can happen only if cohesive action is taken to ensure all children have an equal opportunity to thrive. This takes a series of recognized measures, some of which directly target children and others that are designed to support parents in their role as their children's first teachers or to improve family living conditions.
 - 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 conditions needed 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. It is something that needs to extend to the entire ecosystem surrounding young children (non-immediate family members, neighbours, daycare educators, healthcare professionals, etc.).
 - 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

communities — exhibits vulnerability in at least one sphere of development by the time they start kindergarten. This may undermine their school performance and impact their whole life.

- Various measures can be taken to nurture children’s development. These include:
 - Support for expectant 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
 - Support for organizations that work in a preventive capacity with families from before birth through early childhood.

4. The following top the list of priorities aimed at making sure efforts to improve children’s well-being are invested wisely:

- **Ensure an adequate standard of living: Provide access to affordable housing, healthy food in sufficient supply and a balance between family, work and studies, achieved through financial support proportionate to families’ needs.**
- **Work together: Break down silos by building bridges between the various stakeholders and aligning our advocacy efforts with those of policy-makers.**
- **Take action as early as possible: Safeguard the health, well-being and development of all children, and ensure the best possible conditions and access to support are available to all parents, from pregnancy onward.**
- **Focus on services at the community level: Support locally delivered services and existing community networks so that they can work in an upstream capacity and serve as a catalyst for prevention.**

5. 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.

6. 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.

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 aged 5 and under in Quebec: 509,188 or 5.9% of the provincial population
For the sake of simplicity, we can round this off to 509,000

- Bas-Saint-Laurent: 5.0% of the population, close to 10,000
- Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean: 5.4% of the population, close to 15,400
- Capitale-Nationale: 5.6% of the population, more than 43,100
- Mauricie: 5.2% of the population, more than 14,700
- Estrie: 5.5% of the population, close to 28,200
- Montreal: 5.8% of the population, close to 117,900

- Outaouais: 6.1% of the population, close to 24,900
- Abitibi-Témiscamingue: 6.3% of the population, more than 9,400
- Côte-Nord: 5.8% of the population, close to 5,300
- Nord-du-Québec: 10.8% of the population, close to 5,100
- Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine: 4.6% of the population, close to 4,300
- Chaudière-Appalaches: 5.9% of the population, more than 26,300
- Laval: 5.7% of the population, more than 25,300
- Lanaudière: 6.3% of the population, more than 34,400
- Laurentides: 6.0% of the population, close to 39,300
- Montérégie: 6.1% of the population, more than 90,400
- Centre-du-Québec: 5.9% of the population, close to 15,400

Source: Provisional figures for 2022, ISQ (Institut de la statistique du Québec)

Note: The percentages for each of the regions are based on total regional population, not the population of the province as a whole.