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Ministère de la Famille

Legal deposit – Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2021

ISBN (PDF): 978-2-550-90287-4

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## List of abbreviations

**AIEH**

Allowance for the integration of a disabled child

**BC**

Home childcare coordinating office

**CCO**

Advisory committee on the offer of educational childcare services

**CPE**

Childcare centre

**CSSSPNQL**

First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

**ECA**

*Educational Childcare Act*

**GNS**

Non-subsidized private daycare

**GS**

Subsidized private daycare

**HGC**

Drop-in daycare

**MES**

Exceptional integration support measure in childcare services for disabled children with significant needs

**MRC**

Regional county municipality

**PNR**

Person not recognized, providing childcare services in a private residence

**RSG**

Home childcare provider

**SGEE**

Educational childcare services

# Introduction

Since the creation, in 1997, of the network of educational childcare services (SGEE), much has been done to develop a quality offer of childcare services that is the envy of other Canadian provinces and other countries.

This childcare services offer has made a positive contribution to enabling mothers to enter the job market, helping Québec parents to balance family-work-studies, and fostering the development of children receiving childcare services.

However, a large number of families today are still waiting for a space that adequately meets their needs.

In addition, while the SGEE network was created first and foremost to reach out to the most disadvantaged children, these children currently have less access than more privileged children. From this point of view, the objective has not been met.

Admittedly, changes must be made to better meet the needs of families and ensure equal opportunities for all children.

To respond to these findings, the Minister of Families launched, on April 28, 2021, a public consultation on the future of the SGEE network involving its partners, representatives from the municipal sector, representatives from Indigenous communities, parents, various people working with young children, and anyone else wishing to participate.

The purpose of this report is to present the main results of the consultation process in order to provide direction and inspiration on making the SGEE network more accessible and more effective.

## **Purpose of the consultation**

The purpose was to identify ways to make the SGEE network more effective and more accessible, in order to:

- Ensure equal opportunity by facilitating access to quality services that foster the development of children's full potential and ensure their health and security;
- Enable parents, especially women, to equitably realize their professional and personal aspirations.

Throughout the process, the reflections and discussions were guided by a [consultation document](#) suggesting four main axes:

- Axis 1: Improving access to the network to enable all children to develop to their full potential;
- Axis 2: Meeting parents' expectations by offering them SGEE spaces in line with their needs;
- Axis 3: Promoting home childcare to meet parents' needs.

- Axis 4: Reaching the most vulnerable children to offer them services adapted to their needs.

### **The consultation process**

The process took place entirely online as a result of the public health situation due to the pandemic, and was broken down into the following stages:

- A Québec-wide consultation, to which organizations, often partners of the Ministère, and experts from various milieus were invited, on June 16 and 17, 2021.
- Submissions were filed by various organizations invited to do so in anticipation of their participation in the Québec-wide consultation, as well as other individuals and organizations sensitive to issues relating to access to the SGEE network and its effectiveness.
- Half-day regional consultations for regional representatives of organizations, associations and groups sensitive to issues relating to the SGEE network, held from May 25 to June 2, 2021:
  - Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine (May 25)
  - Laval, Montréal, Montérégie (May 26)
  - Laurentides, Lanaudière, Outaouais (May 27)
  - Cœur-du-Québec: Centre-du-Québec, Estrie, Mauricie (May 28)
  - Chaudière-Appalaches and Capitale-Nationale (May 31)
  - Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec (June 1)
  - Côte-Nord and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean (June 2)
- A half-day consultation for municipal elected officials, held on June 4, 2021.
- A day-long special consultation with Indigenous communities, on June 10, 2021.
- An online consultation, in which 20,245 members of the public, including parents of children 0 to 5 years old and staff members working in early childhood education took part, held from April 28 to May 26, 2021.

The following sections present a summary of the main elements that emerged from each of these stages in the consultation, pointing out areas of convergence and divergence, where relevant. The Ministère has therefore not made a fact-based evaluation of the most frequently expressed positions, limiting itself simply to reporting them.

Furthermore, since participation in these stages of the consultation was voluntary, the results represent the opinion of the persons expressing them and cannot be generalized to the entire population.

Finally, the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM), mandated to organize the regional consultations and the consultation with municipal elected officials, has also produced a [report](#), which offers a more detailed reading of the many positions expressed. This report can be found on the [Ministère de la Famille website](#).

## Québec-wide consultation

The Québec-wide consultation, held on June 16 and 17, 2021 in the form of hearings, gave the individuals and organizations invited an opportunity to present their recommendations and discuss them with the Minister of Families. The participants represented the provincial SGEE associations, trade unions and the main partners from the community sector, the municipal sector and the business world (see Appendix I). Researchers and experts interested in issues related to early childhood and educational childcare services were also invited.

Participants were asked in advance to file a submission.

### Number of participants:

In total, 26 organizations, researchers and experts took part in this consultation, and 25 of them filed a submission or a [document](#) to support their presentation.

The points that came up most frequently during this consultation were as follows.

<p><b>Axis 1</b>  <b>Improving access to the network to enable all children to develop to their full potential</b></p>	<p><u>Developing the network</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize a service offer at CPEs and in home childcare. A small number of participants emphasized the importance of maintaining a diversified service offer and parents' freedom of choice.</li> <li>• Work more closely with the municipalities and other local stakeholders to come to a better understanding of parents' needs and take local particularities into account.</li> <li>• Simplify the process of granting spaces.</li> <li>• Allow projects to be submitted on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Increase the maximum number of spaces per facility, as well as the maximum number of permits for CPEs or subsidized daycares per person (or related parties), insofar as this does not compromise the safety or well-being of the children and educators or the quality of services.</li> <li>• Update the role, operating method and composition of CCOs.</li> </ul> <p><u>Funding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinvest massively in the SGEE network, in particular by using the funding announced by the federal government.</li> <li>• Adapt the funding granted for the development of subsidized SGEE projects based on the different regional realities, particularly the real estate market.</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Attracting and retaining workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve working conditions for educators, in particular by raising salaries and giving pedagogical days.</li> <li>• Enhance and promote the profession of childcare educator.</li> <li>• Ensure that educators are qualified in order to guarantee a high level of quality in services provided by the SGEE network. In this regard, promote and encourage obtaining a diploma of college studies in early childhood education or a recognized equivalent, as well as continuous training.</li> </ul> <p><u>Equal access for all</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give each child the right to have access to a subsidized space at a quality educational childcare establishment.</li> <li>• Convert all non-subsidized spaces into subsidized ones in order to offer every Québec family a reduced-contribution space.</li> <li>• Until then, adjust the tax credit for childcare expenses to make non-subsidized spaces affordable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 2</b>  <b>Meeting parents' expectations by offering them spaces in SGEE in line with their needs</b></p>	<p><u>Admission process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the way the single window access to childcare services and the registration process work, particularly by offering more information on educational childcare providers.</li> <li>• Facilitate access to and use of the single window access to childcare services, particularly for families in disadvantaged milieus and immigrant families.</li> <li>• Supervise the admission process while giving educational childcare providers a certain degree of autonomy.</li> <li>• Prioritize the admission criteria for siblings, children of educational childcare staff and children from low-income families. A smaller proportion of participants wanted to prioritize the admission of children living near educational childcare establishments and children with special needs.</li> <li>• Opinion was divided over the relevance of continuing to have the single window access to childcare services managed by a third party, or repatriating it to the Ministère.</li> </ul>

	<p><u>Offering non-standard hours childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer childcare services for non-standard hours primarily through CPEs and home childcare providers.</li> <li>• Encourage the SGEE network to offer more non-standard hours childcare by reducing certain requirements and offering financial incentives.</li> <li>• To complement the services offered by educational childcare providers, participants were of the opinion that HGC (drop-in daycares) should also be allowed to offer non-standard hours childcare for occasional needs or on a part-time basis for respite care or in an emergency. Adequate funding is also required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 3</b> <b>Promoting home childcare to meet parents' needs</b></p>	<p><u>Attracting and retaining workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and enhance the role of home childcare providers, especially by emphasizing their role in education.</li> <li>• Raise, or at least maintain, the qualification requirements in addition to offering continuous training.</li> <li>• Provide financial support to home childcare providers for qualification or continuous training.</li> <li>• Give more support to home childcare providers by providing them with tools and support services, working with them in their role and facilitating replacement when needed.</li> </ul> <p><u>Developing home childcare services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the role of the BC (coordinating offices) so that they give home childcare providers more services and support, including in the area of professional development.</li> <li>• Ease administrative constraints related to the legal and regulatory framework.</li> <li>• Allow the home childcare providers who want to do so to offer their services outside of their private residence or share a space with others provided, for instance, by a municipality, school service centre or community organization.</li> <li>• Integrate all home childcare into a recognized network of spaces, under the supervision of a coordinating office, to ensure the quality of educational services, although the umbrella association for PNR (non-recognized persons) is of the opinion that their childcare services should be subject to minimal supervision.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Axis 4</b>  <b>Reaching the most vulnerable children to offer them services adapted to their needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and formalize collaboration between the SGEE and establishments in the health and social services network.</li> <li>• Improve initial and continuous training for educators to better cover the concepts of special needs and accepting children from disadvantaged families.</li> <li>• Improve SGEE funding to allow the hiring of specialized resources and educator assistants.</li> </ul> <p><u>Vulnerable children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give priority access to subsidized spaces for SGEE according to the principle of proportional universality, i.e. universal access, but based on a scale and intensity proportionate to the degree of deprivation.</li> <li>• Extend the parental contribution exemption to all low-income families.</li> <li>• Promote the introduction of mechanisms for cooperation between the local, regional and provincial levels, specifically for SGEE, drop-in daycares, community organizations, community centres for social pediatrics and various government departments in order to focus on vulnerable families, direct them to appropriate childcare services and facilitate referrals, when required.</li> <li>• Review the terms surrounding management of spaces reserved for vulnerable children under the memorandum of understanding between establishments in the health and social services network and subsidized childcare facilities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Children with special needs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote an inclusive approach that encourages special needs children to participate in society.</li> <li>• Improve the allowance for the integration of a disabled child (AIEH) and the exceptional integration support measure in childcare services for disabled children with significant needs (MES) and take the necessary steps to ensure that these subsidies meet first and foremost the needs of the child for whom they have been granted. Review the process for allocating these subsidies.</li> <li>• Provide additional support to educators working with special needs children in the form of training, pedagogical support and educator assistants.</li> </ul>

## Other proposals

- Encourage the development of workplace-based CPE facilities in order to promote work-family balance for employees.
- Assign greater importance to an area's level of deprivation, as well as how an applicant proposes to meet the needs of disadvantaged families when evaluating projects following a call for projects.
- Review the composition of the board of directors of CPEs and coordinating offices in order to formally include one or more representatives of the educator staff.
- Create access to the single window platform and a personalized management tool so that organizations can support families in managing their child's file, from registration to obtaining a space at an educational childcare establishment.

# Analysis of submissions

In addition to the call for submissions as part of the Québec-wide consultation and the consultation with Indigenous communities, other submissions were filed by individuals or organizations interested or involved in the future of educational childcare services.

To complement sections 2 and 6, this section therefore reports on the content of the 46 other submissions filed and analyzed.

Appendix II contains a list of the individuals and organizations that filed a submission.

## Number of submissions (apart from the Québec-wide and Indigenous consultations): 46

- SGEE network: 17
  - BC: 1
  - CPE: 5
  - RSG: 6
  - GNS: 5
- Municipality or MRC: 4
- Economic development organizations: 2
- Professional associations: 3
- Organizations for the collective defence of women’s rights: 4
- Organizations for the collective defence of persons with special needs: 4
- Umbrella organizations for regional players: 2
- Other: 10

The points that came up most frequently during this consultation were as follows.

<p><b>Axis 1</b>  <b>Improving access to the network to enable all children to develop to their full potential</b></p>	<p><u>Developing the network</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a deeper local understanding of parents’ real needs and take local particularities into greater consideration.</li> <li>• Simplify the process of allocating spaces and allow projects to be submitted on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Reform the CCOs (advisory committees on the offer of educational childcare services) and get the MRCs and municipalities more involved in developing the network.</li> </ul> <p><u>Attracting and retaining workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise salaries and improve working conditions for educator staff.</li> <li>• Value and encourage initial and continuous training.</li> <li>• Enhance and promote the profession of childcare educator.</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Equitable access for all</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert all non-subsidized spaces into subsidized ones in order to offer every Québec family a reduced-contribution space.</li> <li>• Reinvest heavily in the subsidized SGEE network and promote the network’s quality.</li> <li>• Review of funding model for subsidized educational childcare services to support, in particular, the development of smaller facilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 2</b>  <b>Meeting parents’ expectations by offering them spaces in SGEE in line with their needs</b></p>	<p><u>Admission process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more information on educational childcare services on the single window platform so that parents can make an informed choice.</li> <li>• Facilitate access to the single window platform, especially for families in disadvantaged areas.</li> <li>• Provide more supervision of the admission process while maintaining a certain level of autonomy for educational childcare providers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Offering non-standard hours childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the availability of educational childcare services with non-standard hours by easing the rules and offering financial incentives.</li> <li>• Provide more support for drop-in daycares and redefine their role as a complement to educational childcare services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 3</b>  <b>Promoting home childcare to meet parents’ needs</b></p>	<p><u>Attracting and retaining workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the subsidy for home childcare providers and improve their working conditions.</li> <li>• Provide greater support for home childcare providers through training, accompaniment and shared tools and services.</li> <li>• Review the role of the coordinating offices so that they play a greater role in providing support.</li> </ul> <p><u>Developing home childcare services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow home childcare providers who wish to do so to offer their services outside their private residence or share a space with others made available by, for example, a municipality, school service centre or community organization.</li> <li>• Ease the regulatory and administrative burden.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the integration of non-recognized persons into the SGEE network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 4</b>  <b>Reaching the most vulnerable children to offer them services adapted to their needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve initial and continuous training for educators to better cover the concept of special needs and interacting with disadvantaged families.</li> <li>• Improve SGEE funding to allow the hiring of specialized resources to support vulnerable or special needs children who are not disabled.</li> </ul> <p><u>Vulnerable children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further formalize and develop cooperation between the SGEE, establishments in the health and social services network and community organizations.</li> <li>• Extend the parental contribution exemption to all low-income families.</li> </ul> <p><u>Children with special needs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the allowance for the integration of a disabled child (AIEH) and the exceptional integration support measure in childcare services for disabled children with significant needs (MES) and take the necessary steps to ensure that these subsidies first and foremost meet the needs of the child for whom they have been granted.</li> <li>• Provide additional support to educators working with special needs children in the form of training, pedagogical support and educator assistants.</li> </ul>

### Other proposals

- Promote and facilitate use of technical resources with the expertise to carry out construction projects.
- Set up regional equipment banks to facilitate reuse of specialized materials used by special needs children once they have left educational childcare services.
- Facilitate access to professional services in the public network for children in educational childcare services.
- Ensure that cultural particularities are taken into greater consideration in educational childcare services in Indigenous communities.
- Offer childcare spaces in elementary schools in villages with a small school population to encourage the occupancy and sustainability of premises.
- Take into account the fluctuating need for spaces during certain seasons in regions where seasonal work is frequent.

# Regional consultations

The regional consultations took place over seven days, from May 25 through June 2, 2021. The participants for the most part represented organizations, associations or umbrella organizations (MRC, SGEE network, school system and health and social services network, community organizations offering drop-in daycare activities, early childhood workers and players in economic and regional development).

Participants were first invited to form groups and discuss what they considered to be the priority issues vis-à-vis the four axes presented in the consultation document as well as the potential suggested solutions, and then share in the plenary session the most urgent or promising solutions for the future of educational childcare services.

**Number of participants: 350**

- Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine (May 25): 31
- Laval, Montréal and Montérégie (May 26): 97
- Laurentides, Lanaudière and Outaouais (May 27): 39
- Centre-du-Québec, Estrie and Mauricie (May 28) 46
- Chaudière-Appalaches and Capitale-Nationale (May 31): 63
- Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec (June 1): 24
- Côte-Nord and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean (June 2): 50

The points that came up most frequently during this consultation were as follows.

<p><b>Axis 1</b>  <b>Improving access to the network to enable all children to develop to their full potential</b></p>	<p><u>Developing the network</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan the development of the SGEE network over an expanded time horizon of several years and make the Ministère’s objectives for the development of spaces by territory clear and predictable.</li> <li>• Work more closely with local stakeholders in order to develop a deeper local understanding of parents’ and territories’ real needs and take local particularities into greater consideration.</li> <li>• Review the composition of the CCOs, how they work and the information provided to them, although opinion was divided on the way forward with them.</li> <li>• Simplify the process for allocating spaces, and allow projects to be submitted on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Convert all non-subsidized spaces into subsidized ones in order to offer every Québec family a reduced-contribution space.</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Attracting and retaining workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and promote the profession of educator and make it attractive, in particular by raising salaries and improving working conditions.</li> <li>• Ensure a high level of quality in the services provided in the SGEE network by using recognized criteria such as having qualified educator staff. For many participants, it was therefore crucial to start by valuing and encouraging initial training, or its equivalent, as well as continuous training.</li> <li>• For others, it remained important to be able to hire unqualified educator staff because of the shortage of workers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Easing of measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the regulations concerning the composition of children’s’ groups to allow, in particular, more flexibility for intake of infants.</li> <li>• Increase the maximum number of spaces per facility while maintaining the maximum number of facilities per licence, in order not to compromise the safety and well-being of the children and educator staff or the quality of services.</li> <li>• Allow more flexibility in spaces occupied by reducing the minimum rate of occupancy used to calculate the subsidy granted to an establishment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 2</b>  <b>Meeting parents’ expectations by offering them spaces in SGEE in line with their needs</b></p>	<p><u>Admission process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and improve the single window platform <i>La Place 0-5</i>, particularly by simplifying the admission process and providing more information about educational childcare establishments so that parents can make an informed choice.</li> <li>• Facilitate access to the single window platform, especially for immigrant families and families from disadvantaged areas.</li> <li>• Make it mandatory for home childcare providers to be registered on the single window platform.</li> <li>• Have access to the real picture of supply and demand for educational childcare spaces, by territory.</li> <li>• Increase supervision of admission policies and promote inclusive criteria for all educational childcare establishments, while maintaining prioritization criteria for siblings and the children of employees.</li> </ul>

	<p><u>Non-standard hours childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain participants felt that the offer of non-standard hours childcare needed to be increased by making use of home childcare providers and drop-in daycares, whereas, for others, the real need for childcare with non-standard hours was questionable, since parents preferred to use their family network or other means to meet their needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 3</b> <b>Promoting home childcare to meet parents' needs</b></p>	<p><u>Attracting and retaining workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the subsidy for home childcare providers and give financial incentives to facilitate attracting and retaining workers.</li> <li>• Launch a large-scale awareness campaign to make home childcare more widely known and appreciated.</li> <li>• Provide greater support for home childcare providers through training, accompaniment and shared tools and services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Developing the offer of home childcare services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow home childcare providers who want to do so to offer their services outside of their private residence or share with others a space provided by a municipality, school services centre or community organization.</li> <li>• Review the role of the coordinating offices so that they play a greater role in providing support.</li> <li>• Standardize the practices of the coordinating offices in responding to needs for equity and predictability.</li> <li>• Ease the regulatory and administrative burden.</li> <li>• Integrate all home childcare into a recognized network of spaces, under the supervision of coordinating offices, to ensure the quality of educational services, or at least increase supervision of non-recognized persons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 4</b> <b>Reaching the most vulnerable children to offer them services adapted to their needs</b></p>	<p><u>Providing support to vulnerable children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properly train educator staff so that they are better equipped to work with children from disadvantaged families or in precarious situations (refugees, asylum seekers, etc.).</li> <li>• Review the concept of vulnerability by applying the parental contribution exemption, currently provided for parents receiving last-resort financial assistance, to all low-income families.</li> </ul>

- Review the terms surrounding management of spaces reserved for vulnerable children under the memorandum of understanding between establishments in the health and social services network and subsidized childcare facilities.
- Plan calls for projects aimed at creating subsidized spaces for children from disadvantaged families.

#### Providing support for children with special needs

- Ensure stability of educator staff and specialized resources in the SGEE, despite fluctuations in attendance and changes in subsidies from one year to the next.
- Review the amount of financial assistance offered for disabled children so that the amount allowed corresponds to actual needs.
- Provide support to educational childcare services when a child is waiting for an assessment of his or her needs by a professional.
- Simplify and increase the flexibility of the administrative processes related to subsidies and reduce the response time, especially for the MES.
- Broaden eligibility for the MES to all children with special needs.

#### Formalizing concerted action

- Facilitate concerted action among partners in a territory (health and social services establishments, Direction de la protection de la jeunesse, community organizations for families, and educational childcare establishments).
- Fund the hiring of system navigators or follow-up workers in communities.

### **Other proposals**

- Make preapproved models for the construction of CPEs available to facilitate the development of spaces so that developers do not have to prepare one.
- Grant the Minister expropriation powers so that SGEE project developers can have access to land when scarce or not affordable, similar to the powers granted to the Minister of Education.
- Optimize partnerships between educational childcare establishments and schools in the same territory in order to share resources: teaching staff, substitute teachers, food, playgrounds, educational materials, etc.

- Work closely with the municipalities and MRCs in the region to educate and support employers that wish to establish themselves there and make educational childcare services available to their employees by, for instance, including such services in the business plan that they file.

Lastly, as reported by the INM, an analysis of the comments gathered during regional consultations reveals shared findings across regions as well as common solutions for setting up a more efficient and accessible SGEE network. However, a comparative analysis between the regions shows that certain concerns were addressed more by certain regional groups and that targeted regional or local solutions were proposed. These can be found in the INM [report](#).

## Consultation of the municipal sector

A consultation of the municipal sector, held on June 4, 2021, brought together elected officials at the municipal, borough and regional county municipality (MRC) level, as well as the organizations representing them across the province.

Unlike the regional consultations, participants were first invited to form groups and discuss the obstacles preventing them from better contributing to the creation of spaces in educational childcare establishments, the levers available to municipalities and MRCs to accelerate the creation of spaces and the conditions to be implemented to activate these levers, which were then to be presented at the plenary meeting.

**Number of participants:** 43 people took part in this consultation, representing:

- 33 municipalities and 2 MRCs, spread over 12 of the 17 administrative regions in Québec;
- the Fédération québécoise des municipalités, the Union des municipalités du Québec and Espace MUNI.

Here are the main findings:

First of all, for several of the participants who spoke, the main obstacles to the development of spaces arise from the legislative and regulatory requirements relating to the offer of educational childcare services, and from the administrative processing of files by the Ministère. Consequently:

- the levers would be more in the hands of the Ministère than at the disposal of the municipalities;
- the municipalities would like to collaborate in identifying solutions for the future of educational childcare services, but the bulk of these would be under the responsibility of the Québec government;
- the government should prioritize the creation of spaces and enhancing the profession of educator.

Regarding the levers within the reach of the municipalities and MRCs to accelerate the creation of spaces, the main points found are to:

- Promote the involvement of local stakeholders, such as issue tables working with children and their families, educational childcare providers, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, municipalities and educational institutions, to support the opening of quality educational childcare establishments.
- Help, proactively with the Ministère, to better identify the short- and medium-term needs of the territories and their populations in order to ensure that coherent action is taken with regard to the occupancy and vitality of the territories.

- Become involved in the CCOs and share their knowledge of the territories that they represent.
- Help attract and retain the population, including workers, by developing new neighbourhoods, incorporating living spaces, building infrastructure and providing services to families.
- Facilitate the opening of educational childcare establishments by collaborating with them concerning zoning, loans or gifts of land or premises.
- Quickly make available to educational childcare providers premises in which to temporarily provide the spaces already granted, until a permanent facility is built or expanded.
- Pool the efforts of various municipalities to prompt home childcare providers to offer services on their territory and to offer financial start-up assistance for home childcare.
- Use municipal facilities to promote the regrouping of home childcare providers outside their homes.

Regarding the conditions to activate various levers, the following points were made:

- Promote coordination by allowing, for instance, the integration of municipalities and MRCs into regional administrative conferences, whose current mandate is to foster a concerted approach between the government departments and agencies or enterprises and coherence of action at the regional level, particularly in matters relating to the occupancy and vitality of territories, in order to address the development of the SGEE network.
- Proactively involve regional stakeholders (municipalities, MRCs, etc.) in identifying the needs of territories in order to adequately orient future calls for projects and to contribute to the development and sustainability of spaces in the SGEE network.
- Review the role of home childcare coordinating offices so that they can help more effectively to identify needs and distribute spaces on their territories.
- Invest in the development of educational childcare services, in particular to adjust the financial parameters allowing new facilities to be built, to facilitate the expansion of existing facilities and to offer financial incentive measures to future home childcare providers regarding how to set up their home.
- Streamline and ease ministerial requirements and processes for the development of educational childcare services, as for example, regarding the architectural standards for facilities, a home childcare provider's place of work, the offer of temporary spaces or the use of temporary premises.
- Create pilot projects to find short-term solutions to the problems concerning SGEE spaces in municipalities.

Finally, during the plenary meeting, it was requested to prioritize the following:

- 1) Respect for municipal jurisdiction;
- 2) Development of spaces;
- 3) Enhancement of the profession of childcare educator;
- 4) Proactive involvement of regional stakeholders in identifying the needs of territories;
- 5) Flexibility in carrying out projects.

# Consultation with Indigenous communities

A consultation with Indigenous communities, held on June 10, 2021, brought together signatory representatives of agreements with the Québec government concerning educational childcare services in their communities, managers of Indigenous childcare services and Indigenous civil society representatives. The aim of this consultation was to identify the issues specific to the Indigenous nations and to determine possible solutions based on the needs and realities of the communities and organizations present.

During the consultation, only three of the four axes presented in the consultation document were discussed with the participants, as Axis 3 on promoting home childcare to meet parents' needs did not apply to Indigenous realities.

Participants had been previously invited to file a submission with the Minister for this consultation, which was done by four organizations.

**Number of participants:** Nineteen organizations (SGEE and Indigenous political representatives) (see Appendix III)

The points most frequently raised are as follows:

<p><b>Axis 1</b>  <b>Improving access to the network to enable all children to develop to their full potential</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take into consideration the culture and realities of the various Indigenous communities in implementing the applicable legal and normative framework for educational childcare services.</li> <li>• Formalize consultation procedures before decision-making so that Indigenous territory needs would be better taken into account, particularly at the time of amending the <i>Educational Childcare Act</i> (ECA).</li> <li>• Bring the Ministère and the communities closer together by including CPEs, for example, on the National Aboriginal and Inuit Education Success Table.</li> <li>• Abolish the parental contribution.</li> <li>• Communicate in English with the communities that use English.</li> <li>• Provide translation services (First Nations' languages) to respond to cultural diversity and promote the educational quality of First Nations CPEs.</li> <li>• Adjust the requirements for the composition of the boards of directors of the SGEEs located in an Indigenous community in order to allow the participation of the Band Council and a smaller number of parents.</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Developing the network</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quickly grant a number of spaces reflecting the high birth rate in certain communities.</li> <li>• Allow projects to be submitted on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Hand over management of the allocation of new spaces to parties to an agreement based on criteria that they will define themselves. There is no consensus on this proposal.</li> <li>• Work more closely with Indigenous communities in order to develop a deeper understanding of parents’ needs and to take local and cultural particularities into greater consideration.</li> <li>• Allow the number of spaces under a licence to be increased, even temporarily, to meet emergency or one-time needs and permit the use of temporary premises.</li> <li>• Simplify the call for projects process for the construction or expansion of facilities.</li> <li>• Take into consideration constraints and costs due to the remoteness of communities and adjust the financing accordingly.</li> </ul> <p><u>Attracting and retaining workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt training to the realities of Indigenous communities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ developing an attestation of collegial studies presenting content related to Indigenous cultures and traditions;</li> <li>○ making training accessible to current and future educator staff that do not want to leave the community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Streamline the qualification process by recognizing prior learning and skills.</li> <li>• Be flexible in managing educator, educator/educator assistant or educator assistant ratios.</li> <li>• Adjust educator salaries so that they are competitive in terms of isolation allowances assigned to other employment groups on Indigenous territory.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 2</b>  <b>Meeting parents’ expectations by offering them</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the extended family in the relationship with the parents.</li> <li>• Adjust the educational program to include particularities associated with Indigenous realities and provide adapted educational materials.</li> </ul>

<p><b>spaces in the SGEE in line with their needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapt the regulatory framework so as to take into account Indigenous culture and traditional activities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Non-standard hours childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapt CPE opening hours to community life.</li> <li>Avoid financially penalizing educational childcare establishments that have adapted their timetable to take into account cultural weeks, certain additional holidays and the practice of community activities requiring travel on the territory.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Axis 4 Reaching the most vulnerable children to offer them services adapted to their needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase SGEE financing in order to allow the hiring of specialized resources and support (educator assistants).</li> </ul> <p><u>Vulnerable children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize First Nations organizations (band councils, health centres and First Nations child and family service agencies) as bodies having the authority to enter into memoranda of understanding with the CPEs in order to reserve spaces for children considered to be vulnerable because of their personal or family situation (agreement-based reserved spaces), in substitution for non-Indigenous health and social services establishments.</li> <li>Reserve a number of agreement-based reserved spaces proportional to the placement rate of children, depending on the community.</li> </ul> <p><u>Children with special needs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a holistic approach to provide specialized services for children and their families.</li> <li>Provide services and resources to facilitate rapid diagnosis.</li> <li>Review the subsidies granted annually for children with disabilities to avoid resorting to Jordan’s Principle.</li> </ul>

**Other proposals**

- Set up resources allowing parents to have access to professionals in the presence of Indigenous interpreters or liaison officers, if needed.
- Visit Indigenous communities to make it easier to understand their realities.
- Take into account Indigenous realities and traditions during inspections or use Indigenous inspectors.
- Promote the creation of an association of Indigenous childcare centres (CPEs) on the same basis as the Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance, and ensure the

participation of a member from each of the First Nations (or agreement signatory) in the issue tables.

- Take into consideration the realities of border communities and allow them to access services.
- Allow the exchange of services and sharing of labour with organizations in the community to address workforce issues.

## Online consultation

As part of this consultation, the Ministère invited people, including the parents of children aged 0 to 5 years and early childhood staff, to share their opinions by answering a short online questionnaire about the SGEE network's issues and priorities. The detailed results of this consultation are presented in the [Rapport sur la consultation en ligne auprès des citoyennes et des citoyens](#) (Report on online public consultation).

To be clear, this online consultation is not a population survey allowing the results to be generalized to the population as a whole. Neither is it a sampling type of survey. Nevertheless, the results from the online consultation show general trends in childcare issues and priorities based on the response from the public.

### Respondents' profile

There were 20,245 respondents who participated in the online consultation and can be broken down as follows:

- The vast majority of people who completed the questionnaire were women (91.5%);
- Respondents were mainly between 25 and 44 years of age (82.9%);
- Approximately 70% of respondents live with children between the ages of 0 and 5 (71.3%);
- Nearly a third of the respondents work or study in the area of early childhood (32.5%), and of this number 17.9% are educators in a childcare facility;
- About 60% of respondents said that they live in Greater Montréal or the Québec City Area (61.3%), while approximately 40% live elsewhere in Québec (38.7%).

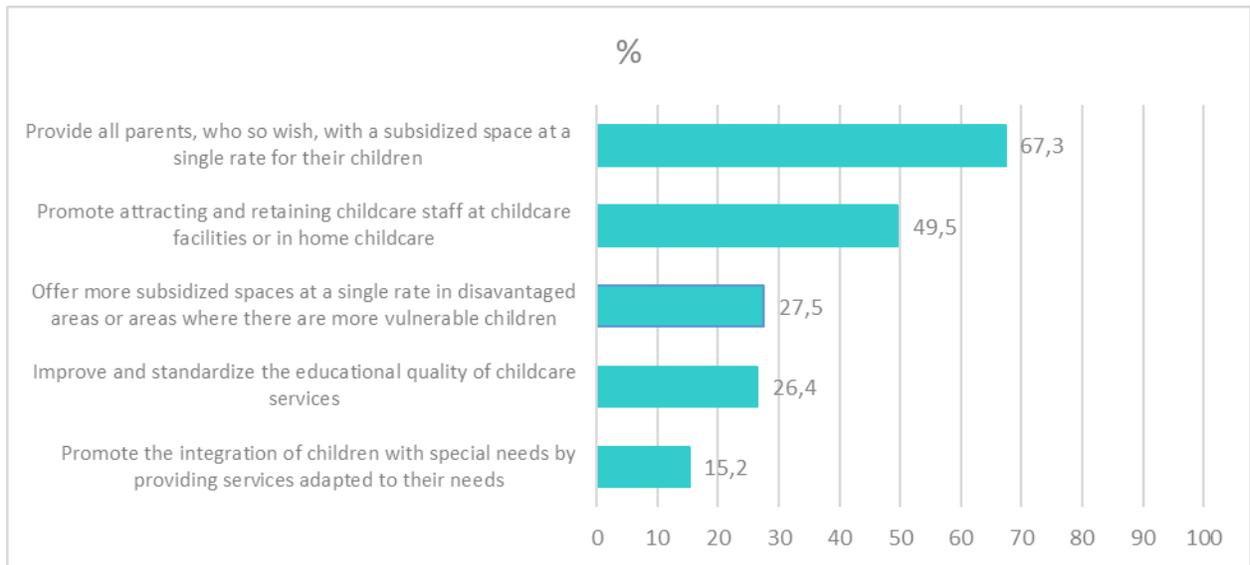
### For a more accessible network of educational childcare services

This section deals with SGEE accessibility and, more specifically, the results obtained concerning the measures that should be prioritized by the government, the offer of non-standard hours childcare service and the childcare services admission criteria to be considered.

More than 90% of respondents think that educational childcare services promote the harmonious development of children between the ages of 0 to 5 (93.0%). As a result, a large majority of the people who answered the questionnaire consider it important to offer all children in Québec a subsidized space at a single rate in an educational childcare establishment (94.3%).

It should be noted that among the measures that should be prioritized by the government, the one mentioned most frequently is providing all parents with a subsidized space at a single rate for their children.

**Figure 1: Measures that should be prioritized by the government**



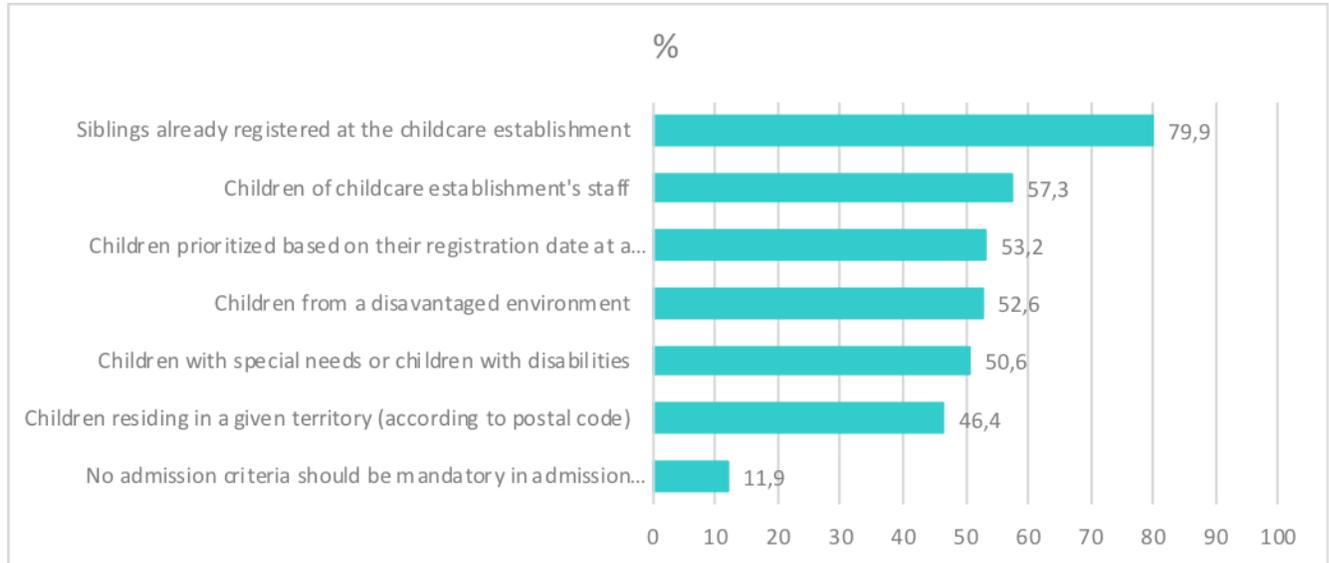
An analysis of the comments provided by the respondents at the end of the questionnaire shows salary issues, working conditions and the recognition of the profession of educator, in order to allow the creation of childcare spaces in the SGEE network.<sup>1</sup> Since these aspects were the most frequently mentioned by respondents, they are the second measure selected by respondents to be prioritized by the government, namely to promote attracting and retaining childcare staff at a childcare facility or in home childcare.

Providing non-standard hours childcare is important for the majority of respondents (83.7%). Close to two thirds of the respondents want these services to be offered in an educational childcare facility or in a home childcare setting (64.9%). In comparison, community drop-in daycare centres was mentioned by 46.7% of the respondents, while 20.8% of respondents referred to home childcare not recognized by the Ministère.

<sup>1</sup> This concerns an analysis of the open question: “Do you have any other comments about how to improve access to educational childcare services in Québec?” (Q23).

As for the admission process, 88.1% of respondents want to see certain criteria established for managing the admission of children for childcare services.

**Figure 2: Criteria to be considered in managing admission for educational childcare services**



Although 45.9% of respondents agree that the Ministère should intervene by imposing certain criteria for managing the admission for childcare services, about a third of the respondents nonetheless remain undecided about this issue (31.7%).

**More home childcare spaces recognized by the Ministère**

The offer of home childcare services is still essential to adequately meet the needs of families. For example, home childcare provides proportionally more spaces for infants<sup>2</sup> than childcare facilities.

As a result, respondents consider that it is important to create home childcare spaces 81.5% of the time. However, this percentage drops to 30.3% in the case of allowing an offer of non-recognized home childcare spaces.

An analysis of the reasons given by respondents who think it is important to provide non-recognized home childcare spaces shows that the current situation concerning available spaces has affected the answers. In fact, the lack of spaces in recognized or subsidized educational childcare establishments is by far the answer most often provided.<sup>3</sup> Other reasons include the importance for parents to be able to choose the childcare setting that best suits their child, and the fact that there is good non-recognized home childcare. A number of respondents also mentioned that this was the only option available for some parents to be able to return to work.

<sup>2</sup> Children under 18 months of age.

<sup>3</sup> This concerns an analysis of the open question: "If you answered "very important" or "fairly important" in Question 9, please explain why a supply of spaces should be allowed at the homes of non-recognized persons providing home childcare services." (Q10).

### Access for vulnerable families

One of the objectives of creating the single-rate SGEE network was, among other things, to ensure equal opportunity for all Québec children, and especially for children affected by poverty. Therefore, two out of three people who answered the questionnaire are of the opinion that the educational childcare system promotes equal opportunity for all children (65.6%).

Virtually all respondents consider that it is important to provide better access to subsidized spaces at a single rate for children living in a disadvantaged environment or in a vulnerable position (95.7%). However, about half of the respondents would like to see a criterion for disadvantaged children among the criteria to manage the admission of children for childcare services (52.6%).

However, among the respondents having stated that it is very important to provide better access to childcare services for disadvantaged children, 60.1% mention that this criterion should be included in admission policies. This percentage drops to 27.7% for people who think it is fairly important to provide improved access to disadvantaged children or those in a vulnerable position.

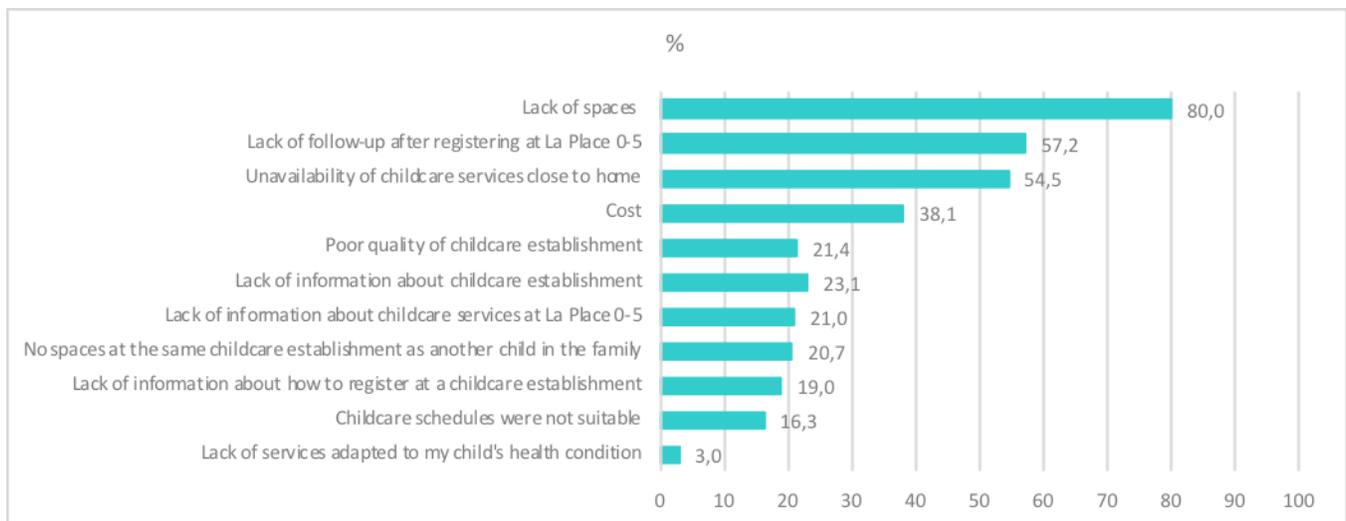
### Parents having difficulty in finding a childcare provider

A number of parents of children 0-5 years of age have a hard time in finding childcare services adapted to their needs.

Among parents who had to find a childcare provider, a little more than 3 out of 4 parents (78.0%) found that it was fairly difficult or very difficult to find one. A large majority of the parents of young children who had to answer the questionnaire had actually registered their children at *La Place 0-5* single-window access to childcare services (93.9%).

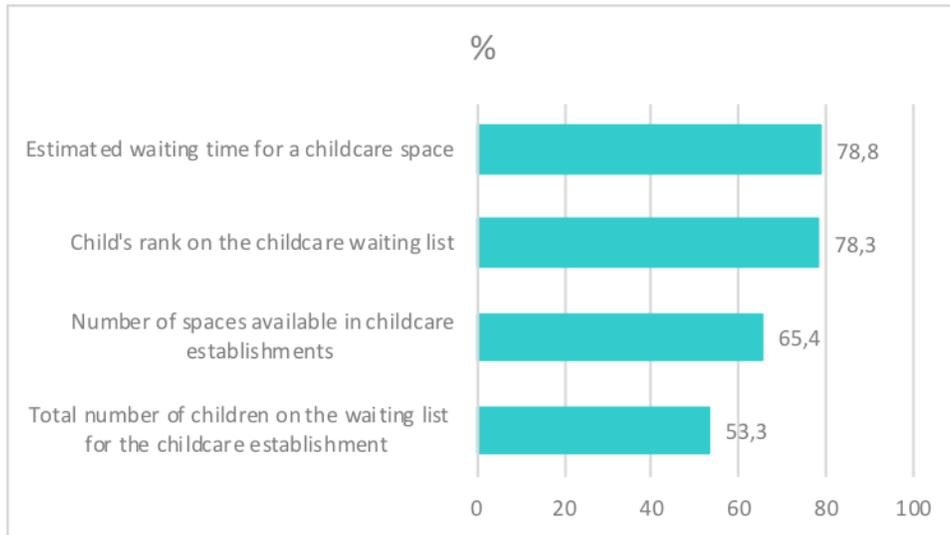
The problems most frequently encountered by parents who have looked for a childcare provider for their child included the lack of spaces (80.0%), the lack of follow-up after registering at *La Place 0-5* single-window access to childcare services (57.2%) and the unavailability of childcare services close to their home (54.5%).

**Figure 3: Difficulties encountered by parents of children 0-5 years of age having searched for childcare services for their children**



As for *La Place 0-5* single-window access to childcare services, apart from the information already available (name and particulars of the childcare provider, children’s age group, schedule, number of spaces, rate, admission policy), a number of respondents pointed out that they wanted more information to be available so as to allow parents to choose a childcare establishment.

**Figure 4: Information to be provided to parents to allow them to choose a childcare establishment**



## Conclusion

This report is transparent about the possible solutions that came up most often during the consultation process, and are intended to inspire the directions to be taken in order to make the SGEE network more accessible and more efficient.

Consequently, the Québec-wide consultation, regional consultations, consultation of the municipal sector, consultation with Indigenous communities and online consultation have highlighted certain important elements, namely to:

- Prioritize the development of CPEs and the offer of services by home childcare providers.
- Recognize and enhance the profession of educator, for educators at childcare facilities as well as in home childcare.
- Develop a deeper understanding of parents' real needs and take local particularities into greater consideration.
- Simplify the process for allocating spaces.
- Allow projects to be submitted on an ongoing basis.
- Grant each child the right to have access to a subsidized space at a quality educational childcare establishment.
- Convert all non-subsidized spaces into subsidized spaces in order to offer spaces with a reduced contribution to all families in Québec.
- Improve the performance of the single-window platform and the registration process, particularly by providing more information about educational childcare establishments and the criteria of their admission policies in order to allow parents to make an informed choice.
- Facilitate access to the single window access to childcare services, especially for families in disadvantaged areas.
- Further support home childcare providers by offering them support services and tools as well as by accompanying them in their role.
- Ease administrative constraints that apply to home childcare.
- Integrate all home childcare into a network of recognized spaces, under the supervision of coordinating offices in order to ensure the quality of educational services.
- Promote and formalize the collaboration between educational childcare services and establishments in the health and social services network.

The next step is to file a document with a government action plan to complete the SGEE network. This document will include a bill introducing the required amendments.

## Appendix I – Participants in the Québec-wide consultation

Participants in the Québec-wide consultation
Association des cadres des CPE (ACCPE)
Association des enseignantes et des enseignants en Techniques d'éducation à l'enfance (AEETEE)
Association des garderies non subventionnées en installation (AGNSI)
Association des garderies privées du Québec (AGPQ)
Association des haltes-garderies communautaires du Québec (AHGCS)
Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance (AQCPE)
Association québécoise des milieux familiaux éducatifs privés (AQMFEPP)
Coalition des garderies non subventionnées (CGNS)
Coopérative Enfance Famille (La Place 0-5)
Conseil québécois des services éducatifs à la petite enfance (CQSEPE)
Direction régionale de santé publique de Montréal
Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB)
Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ)
Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec et Centrale des syndicats du Québec (FIEPQ-CSQ)
Fondation Dr Julien
Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux de la CSN (FSSS-CSN)
Fédération québécoise des municipalités (FQM)
Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires du Québec (FQOCF)
Mouvement <i>Valorisons ma profession</i>
Observatoire des tout-petits
Rassemblement des garderies privées du Québec (RGPQ)
Québec Intellectual Disability Society
Syndicat québécois des employées et des employés de service-298 affiliated with the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (SQEES-FTQ)
Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ)
Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) Ms. Nathalie Bigras, Équipe Qualité des contextes éducatifs
Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) Mr. Pierre Fortin, Economist

## Appendix II – List of individuals and organizations that filed a submission

Organizations and individuals having filed a submission with the Ministère de la Famille as part of the Consultation on educational childcare services
Académie préscolaire Royale Montréal
Alliance des intervenantes en milieu familial (ADIM – Bas-Saint-Laurent – Gaspésie – Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Alliance des intervenantes en milieu familial de l’Estrie (ADIM – Estrie)
Association des groupes de ressources techniques du Québec (AGRTQ)
Association du Québec pour enfants avec problèmes auditifs (AQEPA)
Coordinating offices in the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region
Collectif petite enfance
Communauté maritime des Îles-de-la-Madeleine
Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec (COPHAN)
Confédération des organismes familiaux du Québec (COFAQ)
Conseil du statut de la femme
Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité (CQCM)
CPA Auditor, Mr. Philippe Célestin
CPE Alouette
CPE Feu Vert
CPE L’Univers des petits Memphrémagog
Développement économique Bellechasse (DEB)
Éclore Côte-Nord
Espace MUNI
FamillePointQuébec
Fédération des agricultrices du Québec (AQ)
Fédération des associations de familles monoparentales et recomposées du Québec (FAFMRQ)
Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon (FLAC)
Garderie de la petite famille inc.
Garderie L’Avenir du Québec

Garderie Les Enfants du Mont-Riant
J'me fais une place en garderie (JMFPG)
Laboratoire de recherche GRAND-IR
L'Agir
Le Groupe des 9, directions de CPE
Le Vol du Colibri, coopérative de solidarité
Ma place au travail
MRC de Minganie
Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ)
Regroupement des CPE de la Côte-Nord (RCPECN)
Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie
Réseau Groupes Femmes Chaudière-Appalaches (RGFCA)
Ms. Alex-Sandra Tremblay, Home Childcare Provider
Ms. Édith Patry, Home Childcare Provider
Ms. Émilie Couture, Home Childcare Provider
Ms. Nancy Bouchard, Home Childcare Provider
Ms. Renée Henley, Home Childcare Provider
Ms. Sonia Rioux, Home Childcare Provider
Syndicat des intervenantes en petite enfance de Montréal (SIPEM-CSQ)
Table de concertation du mouvement des femmes de la Mauricie (TCMFM)
Table pour l'intégration en services de garde des enfants ayant une déficience (TISGM)

## Appendix III – Participants in the consultation with Indigenous communities

Indigenous organizations present during the consultation
<p><b>Innu (Montagnais)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPE Auetissatsh</li> <li>• CPE Nussum</li> <li>• CPE Auassis</li> </ul>
<p><b>Huron-Wendat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPE Orak</li> </ul>
<p><b>Atikamekw</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPE Kokom Tcitcatci</li> <li>• CPE Six Saisons</li> <li>• CPE Sakihitokiwam</li> </ul> <p>* A collective of three Atikamekws CPEs filed a submission.</p>
<p><b>Cree</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Kelly Pepabano, Director of Child and Family Services of the Cree Nation Government</li> </ul>
<p><b>Algonquin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kebaowek Child Care Centre</li> <li>• Amosesag Childcare Centre</li> </ul>
<p><b>Micmac</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPE Mawo’ltijig Mijjuaji’g</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mohawk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step by Step Child and Family Center</li> </ul> <p>* The Kahnawake community filed a submission.</p>
<p><b>Urban communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPE Mikueniss</li> <li>• CPE Premier Pas</li> </ul>
Political representatives present during the consultation
Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL)
First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) * Filed a submission.
Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw
Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach
Mohawk Council of Kahnawake
Other organization having filed a submission
Regroupement des centres d’amitié autochtones du Québec

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