



DECLARATION

Early Childhood Summit Montreal • May 5, 2017

FOR RECOGNITION OF ALL CHILDREN’S RIGHT TO QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, FROM BIRTH ONWARD

1. **In view** of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Quebec’s Family Policy, *Les enfants au coeur de nos choix*;
2. **In view** of the Quebec Government’s pledge, at the time of the policy’s adoption, to promote child development and equal opportunity;
3. **In view** of the fact that universal access to a high quality of educational services from birth onward promotes equal opportunity;
4. **In view** of the importance of investing as early as possible in the development of young children, to ensure they achieve their full potential;
5. **In view** of the fact that parents are their children’s first teachers and what they teach falls within this educational continuum;
6. **In view** of section 1 of the *Educational Childcare Act*;
7. **In view** of the fact that intensive, continuous quality education from birth onward has a positive impact on the welfare and development of at-risk children and reduces inequality;
8. **In view** of the fact that all children have a fairly similar pattern of development, but each child is unique and develops at his or her pace;
9. **In view** of the expertise in early childhood that has emerged through research and practice in Quebec over the past 20 years;
10. **In view** of the fact that education contributes significantly to national socioeconomic growth ;
11. **In view** of the fact that Quebec is a signatory of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*;
12. **In view** of OECD studies recognizing that quality must come first with early childhood education;
13. **In view** of the fact that education is a fundamental human right and is essential for the exercise of all other human rights, according to UNESCO;

We believe that:

The Educational Continuum

14. Early childhood is part of the educational continuum that begins at birth;
15. Early childhood educational services are a key link in this chain and should be recognized as such;
16. Such services make important contributions to success in school and life;
17. The educational approach for children from birth to 5 should focus on the child’s overall development, stimulation, awareness and socialization through play, to promote success in school, rather than early education;

Quality

18. The quality of early childhood educational services should be ensured, to promote child development and equal opportunity;
19. All early childhood educational services should be subject to quality standards, pertaining, for example, to staff training requirements and the children’s educational program;
20. All early childhood teaching staff should have access to continuing education, educational support and specialized support;
21. A mandatory evaluation of the quality of all early childhood services should be performed regularly;
22. Such evaluations should be conducted in the same manner for all such services and result in improvements;
23. All parents who enrol their children in an early childhood educational service should be confident that it meets high quality standards, for a greater contribution to their child’s overall development;
24. The Quebec government should set aside sufficient funding and that such funding should serve to maintain and improve the quality standards;

Access

25. Educational services should support the development of all children, including those at risk and with special needs;
26. High-quality educational services should be provided to Aboriginal communities, pursuant to the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;
27. To promote equal opportunities, barriers to receiving educational services, such as those limiting access by children from at-risk communities and those with atypical attendance schedules and special needs, should be lowered;

We promise to:

28. Promote the principles set out in this Declaration;
29. Mobilize broad-based support for this Declaration;
30. Participate in discussions aimed at putting these principles into practice

I, the undersigned, _____, NAME

Have signed the Declaration on behalf of _____

ORGANIZATION

SIGN INSIDE BOX