

CSQ

MAGAZINE

PAY EQUITY

A FIGHT TO FINISH

Staff shortage:
harmful effects
on students
.....

Educational childcare:
The gulf between
public and private
.....



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A SIMPLE QUESTION OF STRATEGY

Are you hearing them like I do, these empty phrases, tossed around to create a diversion and change the focal point when the spotlight gets uncomfortable?

"Unions must place themselves on the side of the population!"; "Unions must call on their members to get vaccinated!"; "Unions must come back to the negotiation table!"; "Unions aren't negotiating in the interest of their members!"; and so on!

If those phrases sound like old worn-out slogans to our ears, they still are practical and efficient for putting the donkey cap on others. In the present case, the union organizations.

The events of this fall events have given us a few examples on which to reflect.

First example: the Treasury Board president, Sonia LeBel, unilaterally decreed new salary conditions for daycare centres' educators while strikes and negotiations were ongoing. If the negotiations weren't moving forward, it was the unions' fault. Meanwhile, thanks to the shortage, improving the educators' salaries was urgent, but only for theirs.

Another example: the one-month deferral of the deadline for mandatory vaccination of healthcare personnel, for which they were quick to lay part of the blame on the union organizations.

Some even went as far as to say that we were responsible for the "victory" of the antivaxx and thus, that the union organizations are going against the general interest of the population.

Is it frustrating to hear the same hodgepodge of simplistic comments about the unions? Of course! And believe me, I'm the first to want to talk back!

But like the saying says, it's better to think twice before you speak... Getting angry, fighting back or getting offended, as legitimate as it might be, is also putting yourself in reaction mode. Most of the time, it's also putting yourself in a situation where you don't control the message. Especially when the answer comes with nuances, like it was the case with mandatory vaccination.

In short, being in reaction isn't a strategy. It's playing the game of the government, that wants at all cost to confine the unions in an adversarial role. With me or against me, but sharing the solution is not an option!

So how to do unionism differently with a government who does old politics?

I'm a unionist and I'm proud of it. And I can't recognize myself in the archetype of the "radical" that is sometimes associated with those who get involved in the union movement. Being in contact with you daily, I also know that you and I are not bullies!

Our credibility and leadership as union organizations come down to our capacity to promote our ideas, which are precisely in the common interest, to the solutions and propositions we put forward. It also comes down to our mobilization capacity. We have ideas and solutions. And very good ones at that! We just need to get on with putting them forward more, to talk more and better about them.

This is what needs to guide our reflection for the next public sector's national negotiation, which, let's not forget, will happen in less than a year.

The imposition of new conditions on the educators while the CPE personnel's negotiation was ongoing was a response to the strikes and a government's strategy to halt mobilization. It's a lesson we must remember.

To do unionism differently, we need to think outside the box and act outside the beaten path. To be continually in reaction is a trap. We need to get out of it and instead place our pieces differently. It's a simple question of strategy.

It will require a lot of work, introspection and, most of all, a review of our habits and practices. But as for everything else, we'll make it together.



Éric Gingras | CSQ PRESIDENT

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good reasons to celebrate!



Congratulations to all the winners of the exclusive!

To celebrate the 100,000th home or auto insurance policy in force under the **Les protections RésAut CSQ**, a grand prize of \$2,000 will be awarded to **Ms. Chantal Bégin**, member of the **Syndicat du personnel de soutien de la Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries** and proud holder of this policy!

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A LAW, SOME GAINS, BUT A LACK OF WILL

Fights were waged and results obtained, but a big step is still left to take to get real pay equity. Why is this issue so long to resolve for the public sector?

Audrey Parenteau | EDITOR IN CHIEF

The Pay Equity Act (PEA) mandates the employers, which is the Treasury Board for the public sector's workers, to carry out work to ensure the maintenance of **pay equity** within their organization.

That work aims to identify whether changes or events have created differences in compensation between **predominantly female job** classes and **predominantly male job** classes.

Until 2009, the Act stipulated that the employers had to continuously maintain pay equity and to make the necessary adjustments, but did not specify the assessment procedure. To better structure the process, the **legislator** decided to transform the continuous maintenance obligation into periodical pay equity audits every five years.

COMPLAINTS MADE

The Treasury Board carried out pay equity audit work in 2010 and in 2015 for employees of the public sector. The 2020 audit, for its part, was postponed, notably because of the pandemic.

The CSQ questioned the Treasury Board on the approach taken to carry out the 2010 and 2015 audits. It analyzed the data, verified the results and shared that information and its concerns with its federations about various job categories.

Together with the federations, local unions made **pay equity complaints** to the Pay Equity Commission, then in charge of overseeing the application of the PEA.¹

UNTREATED CASES

The Centrale and its affected federations participated in the conciliation process for the 2010 pay equity complaints, which started in 2013. It was only in June 2021 that agreements were finally signed by some federations.

“Despite these positive settlements, the work isn’t done, claims CSQ president, Éric Gingras. Thousands of other complaints are still being processed for some job classes.”

All of the 2015 pay equity complaints are currently at the investigation service of the Commission des normes, de l’équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). No conciliation has been realized to this day with the Treasury Board. The CNESST first needs to complete the processing of the 2010 complaints, before starting the investigations of the 2015 audit complaints.

ACTIONS TO UNDERTAKE

“Pay equity was always a priority issue for the Centrale, explains Éric Gingras. We were in action before the adoption of the Pay Equity Act and we still are.”

According to him, it is unacceptable that the Treasury Board still has not resolved all the pay equity complaints. “There’s a lack of will from the Treasury Board to apply the law and proceed with the required salary adjustments, he deplores. At the CSQ, we will continue to press the government so that the Pay Equity Act, still discriminatory, is the object of a substantial reform to make sure all the amounts due are paid.”

GLOSSARY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND

PAY EQUITY: right of workers occupying a typically female job to receive a salary equal to that of someone occupying a typically male job of equal value in terms of qualifications, responsibilities, effort and working conditions. It is different from pay equality which refers to an equal salary for an equal job.

PREDOMINANTLY FEMALE/MALE JOB: job traditionally or mainly occupied by women or men.

LEGISLATOR: name given to the institution that creates laws, which is the National Assembly of Québec.

PAY EQUITY COMPLAINT: complaint filed by a union to denounce a situation where the employer (Treasury Board) did not carry out the pay equity work or did not carry it out correctly.

The Centrale intends to continue the battle on several fronts. It demands, among other things, the right to a fair and equitable value determination as part of the pay equity audit, transparency in the information used to carry out the work, as well as the unions’ participation in the value determination.

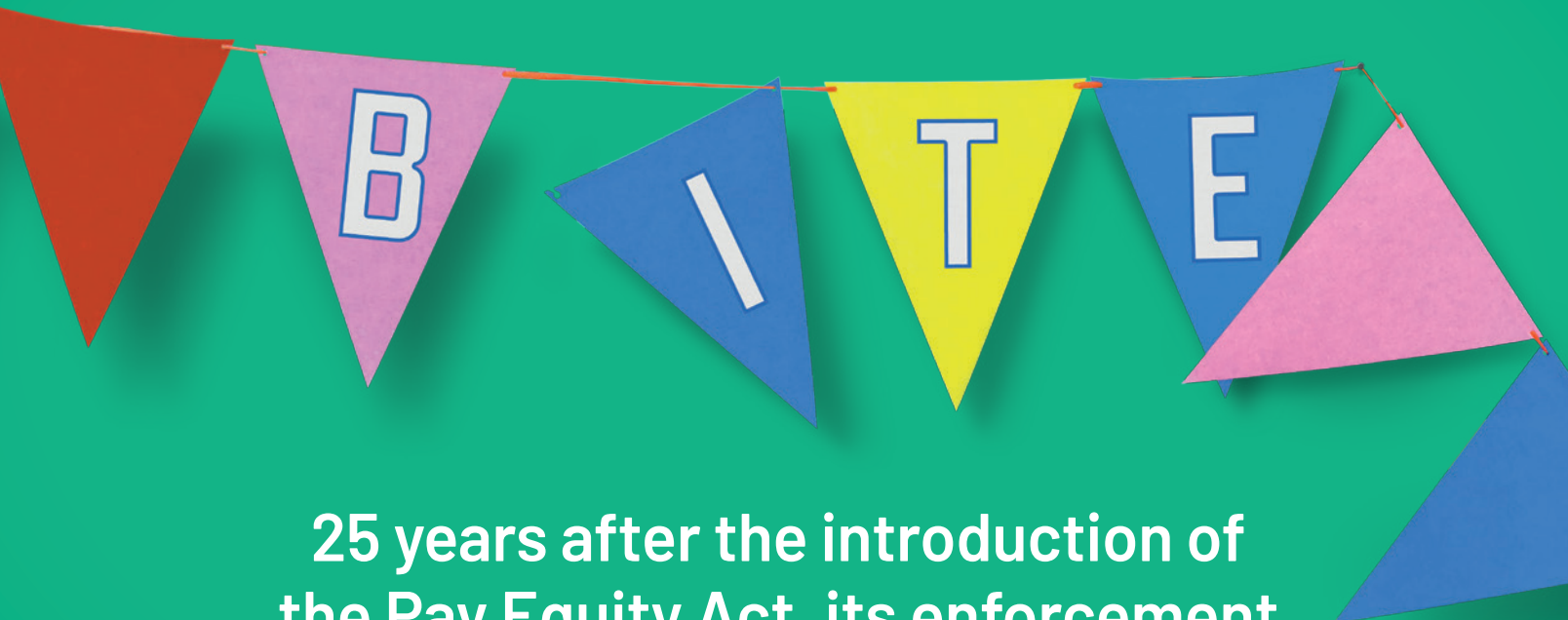
“We can’t back down on such a strategic question, because equality between women and men isn’t negotiable,” concludes Éric Gingras.

¹ The Commission des normes, de l’équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) now applies the Pay Equity Act.

THE PAY EQUITY ACT

— 25 YEARS OLD —

BUT STILL LACKING



25 years after the introduction of
the Pay Equity Act, its enforcement
is still lacking bite!

equite.lacsq.org/english



Centrale des syndicats
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STAFF SHORTAGE

HARMFUL EFFECTS ON STUDENTS



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More than two months after the start of the school year, the staff shortage, notably in the school network, remains critical. And the students pay the price.

Rebecca Salesse | FPSS-CSQ ADVISOR

Thousands of students are affected by the education support personnel shortage, which denies them the services they should have access to fully thrive. In childcare services provided at school, for example, there are ratios to ensure children's safety, but also to foster their development – contributing to which is the educators' key task. Yet, "it's impossible for them to do it correctly, by spending the necessary time with each student, when the ratios double," deplores the president of the Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS-CSQ), Éric Pronovost.

He adds that the situation is also difficult for students with disabilities who are not all receiving adequate support, notably when the person assigned to them has no training in the area. Not to mention all the special needs students who cannot have access to the support of a special education technician, due to a

lack of staff. "Not only is the child penalized, but all of the other students in their class too!" claims Éric Pronovost.

PREDICTABLE IMPACTS

The FPSS-CSQ has been denouncing for months the important consequences of the staff shortage in the school network. Just before the start of the school year, Éric Pronovost expressed regret at having never seen such a lack of workers, going as far as to say the number of still vacant positions was alarming a week before classes were to start.

Situations that were unimaginable until now became a reality. For the first time, full-time positions, traditionally very coveted, didn't find any taker.

AN AVOIDABLE SHORTAGE

For the FPSS-CSQ president, the situation could have been avoided: "We've been talking about a staff shortage since 2013. We warned the governments that succeeded one another, we offered realistic solutions, but none took action. We now end up in this situation."

Offering the school support workers full-time, permanent positions and higher salaries is part of the solution, but "a recognition of their job to the extent of their contribution is also necessary," concludes Éric Pronovost.

REDESIGN OF THE ERC PROGRAM

A NECESSARY DIALOGUE



The implementation of a new program, such as the one that will replace Ethics and Religious Culture, is a huge undertaking for teaching staff. So why didn't the government consult with teachers?

Sylvie Lemieux | FSE-CSQ ADVISOR

Isabelle Tremblay-Chevalier | FSE-CSQ ADVISOR

The Minister of Education, Jean-François Roberge, announced on October 21, 2021 the main components of the new Culture and Citizenship in Québec program, which will replace the Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) program in fall 2023.* And the minister did so in the absence of teachers, but in the company of a few public personalities on hand to show support for the new program.

Not one education professional was in attendance at the time of the announcement to endorse the new program, which will be built on three components (culture, citizenship in Québec and dialogue and critical thinking) and for which the government plans to earmark \$3 million for the training of teaching staff. Yet in a sense, this is fortunate news, according to the President of the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ), Josée Scalabrini, because teachers usually have to scramble to make sure training is provided.

AN EXPECTED, FORESEEABLE OVERHAUL

ERC is an unpopular subject, a subject with societal, if not political aims. Teaching time allotted for the subject is often slashed to the minimum. Abolition of the program was one of the election campaign promises of the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ). It comes as no surprise that the government announced in 2019 that it would hold consultations on the matter.

However, the Ministère de l'Éducation's decision to launch, in winter 2020, moreover for the first time, a province-wide public consultation, rather than seek advice from program experts, including teachers, was "highly questionable, to say the least, if not dubious," says Josée Scalabrini.

Yet the teachers concerned seem to be on the same wavelength as the government. Data gathered from these teachers during a consultation led by the FSE-CSQ indicate that close to 85% are in favour of the assessment process, a matter of reviewing problematic areas, but also of maintaining components of content that are still relevant.

Eight themes were advanced without any assessment of the ERC program and with no consideration of the teachers' opinions or expertise. Although the teachers are in favour of the overhaul, nevertheless they would have preferred to be associated with a process they had hoped would be more thorough.



Josée Scalabrini

Photo Pascal Rathé

MISHMASH PROGRAM CONTENT?

The government declared that the new Culture and Citizenship in Québec program will deal with issues affecting culture in Québec, as well as the evolution and the works of this culture. It will also cover aspects of civic life, such as self-respect and respect for others, equality, environmental issues and freedom of expression in the digital era. The objective is to encourage young people to engage in critical thinking about societal issues. The ambitious menu will also include sexuality education and issues relating to Indigenous peoples.

"We have to make sure that the program doesn't turn into a mishmash response to society's ills and that the subject-time allocation is sufficient to cover all the program content," states Josée Scalabrini. "If this program is as important as we have been told it is, prescribing the minimum time to be allocated to it is essential."

The drafting of the program must not be subject to any political bias. "Only when we are apprised of the program content, which is to be unveiled in spring 2022, will we be able to assess whether the government has exploited it for political purposes," she adds.

FROM WORDS TO ACTION

At the FSE-CSQ, people say they hoped for greater consistency between discourse and practice on the part of the government, which claims it wants to value teachers. "This government should make sure to have all the ingredients it requires to successfully implement the new program, based on dialogue. This begins with respecting teachers, involving them in the process and listening to what they have to say about next steps," Josée Scalabrini concludes.

* The Culture and Citizenship in Québec program will be implemented on a volunteer basis in September 2022, then officially implemented in fall 2023.

YOUNG PEOPLE MORE INVOLVED THAN EVER

After a year of being disconnected from everything they love about life at secondary school, this fall, students are excited about making up for lost time. Mireille Hajjar, spiritual care and guidance and community involvement animator, ought to know.

Florence Tison | CSQ ADVISOR

This fall, Québec's secondary school students are feeling great about being back at school. At École secondaire Henri-Bourassa, in Montréal, students are keen to make up for time lost during the pandemic, as demonstrated by their eagerness to take up positions in clubs and committees. Registrations have doubled with the Amnesty International group, and they have tripled with the Philosophy Club and the LGBTQ+ Committee.

"The committees are opportunities for young people not only to get involved but also to get the other students on board," explains Mireille Hajjar. "This is directly linked to the school atmosphere and students' sense of belonging to the school, which evaporated during the pandemic."

The students' enthusiasm has also spread to community projects. This year, 200 students registered for a visit to Moisson Montréal: twice as many as last year. "It's a first for me!" says Mireille Hajjar, clearly delighted. "They sign up for everything, they want to do everything. They jump on any opportunity because they long for a social life. And a social life starts at school, through sports and extra-curricular activities."

This kind of involvement enables young people to find meaning again, to explore a commitment to citizenship and to contribute to society. It's as beneficial for students as it is for their community.

BEING THERE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The role of spiritual care and guidance and community involvement animators is a response to secondary school students' huge need for belonging and self esteem. When the pandemic hit,



Mireille Hajjar

students could no longer take part in extra-curricular activities or practise their sport, losing out on the social life they found at school.

To help young people during the crisis, Mireille Hajjar produced capsules about well-being with the school's psychologists and psycho-educators. The goal is to help them manage their stress and encourage physical exercise. The animator also suggested a few ideas enabling students to decorate the classroom based on their tastes, a way of finding new perspectives.

AND THE OUTCOME?

In Mireille Hajjar's view, the students' enthusiasm for community involvement will survive the pandemic. "The crisis affected many young people who did not experience their year in the way they should have. They were deprived of the things they loved. Now, they are taking up those opportunities once again. It's the nature of youth to get involved!"

THE SCREEN THAT DISCONNECTS

The pandemic forced the use of distance teaching. Before making this a common practice, boundaries should be set on how to do it.

Matthieu Pelard | CSQ ADVISOR

Distance teaching has become a practice without any real reflection happening on how to do it and its future impacts, be it on students or on personnel. The health crisis was a real-life laboratory to document many distance teaching mechanisms: online, synchronous (real time) or asynchronous (on-demand), co-modal (the student chooses between distance or in-person mode) and hybrid (sometimes remotely, sometimes in person and sometimes simultaneously). What to learn from those experiences?

REAL CONSEQUENCES

The Fédération du personnel de l'enseignement privé (FPEP-CSQ) conducted a qualitative study to initiate a reflection on the quality of the students' learning in a distance learning context, document the transformation of the work for the union members and list the effects on the working conditions.

Ten findings were generated, including: technology did not motivate the students as much as studies pretend, the erosion of the teacher-student relationship is alarming, and the work is getting heavier and more complex, to the point that it generates a serious feeling of inadequacy.

"These results prompted us to call out the Education minister, Jean-François Roberge, on the reality experienced in our environments and to take note of the

consequences this type of teaching has had on the personnel and students," states FPEP-CSQ president, Stéphane Lapointe.

STUDENTS LEARN BETTER IN CLASS

Following the summit on educational success, the Education minister publicly recognized that students learn better in class. The experiences lived remotely are not all bad, but it is clear they cannot reproduce ideal learning and knowledge transmission conditions.

Therefore, before some institutions make the mistake of normalizing an approach that should be exceptional, it is urgent to act to identify the conditions for applying distance teaching. "This path shouldn't be followed for any one reason, says Marie-Josée Dallaire, first vice-president of the FPEP-CSQ. As paradoxical as it might

seem, online teaching has the effect of disconnecting the teaching personnel and the students and of breaking a precious link that promotes learning."

FOR A CONCERTED AND RESPECTFUL DIGITAL SHIFT

As long as the Education Ministry doesn't speak out on clear markers to regulate the reliance on distance teaching, the FPEP-CSQ will continue to document the conditions where this type of education can enrich or undermine the pedagogical relationship between personnel and students.

Until a set of conditions are established to foster an increased engagement from the students, avoid an increasing burden of the teaching personnel, and bring a significant contribution to educational success, relying on distance teaching must remain exceptional.



COMING FULL CIRCLE BEFORE RETIRING

As she prepares for retirement, Odette Rochefort is delighted to be back at school. She is back in the classroom, at last, helping her students and enjoying this one-of-a-kind relationship for her final year.

Florence Tison | CSQ ADVISOR



Odette Rochefort

"The pandemic called for a complete reorganization!" exclaims Odette Rochefort. During the pandemic, this future retiree, a Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) laboratory work technician for over 25 years, missed the close relationship she usually has with her students. "I've always been one to work in direct contact with people, and there I was, working from home. Helping them out on Zoom was quite the challenge!" she explains.

At UQO, Odette Rochefort oversees the digital workshops at École multidisciplinaire de l'image. Each semester, she supports art, graphic design, comic strip design and museology students.

She is always close by to give them advice on various graphics, layout, binding and publishing software. She developed several very clear fact sheets to help her students get a handle on the laboratory's software. "My goal is to see them become self-sufficient," she explains.

Her advice is greatly appreciated: when she walked into the laboratory earlier this fall, her first group—thrilled to see her—gave her an ovation. "That was a very emotional moment," admits the technician who considers her students as members of a very large family. She keeps in touch with many of them, though some

have left the UQO decades ago. To this day, some still call her to ask for advice and guidance.

Being back in the classroom will give her the opportunity to take full advantage of her final year with those she deeply appreciates, coming full circle before enjoying her well-deserved retirement.

LENDING HER TALENT TO HER UNION

A former graphic designer, Odette Rochefort put her talent to good use by creating the current logo of her union, the Syndicat du personnel de soutien de l'UQO. But she's done so much more for the labour movement!

This laboratory work technician was not only Vice President but also a Negotiating Committee member for the collective agreement of her union for eight years. She is a current member, for the third time, of the negotiations-related Mobilization Committee... and she created all the demonstrations' visuals!



WHAT MOTIVATES YOUNG PEOPLE?

At the top of the list of the main goals of CSQ members aged 18-35 are self-realization and the desire to serve society, but not at any cost!

Catherine Huart | CSQ ADVISOR

Matthieu Pelard | CSQ ADVISOR

For about one out of two young CSQ members (45.1%), self-realization is one of the main work motivations, according to a survey conducted during winter 2020 among 2,500 Centrale's youth aged 15 to 35 years old.

The study results also show that about a quarter of the respondents answered "serving society" (23.9%) and "monetary compensation" (25.3%) as work motivations.

THE "SPECIFICITY" OF THE CENTRALE'S YOUTH

These results are in opposition with those obtained in 2020 within a survey on the new forms of engagement at work, published by the Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations (CIRANO).¹ Young respondents in that study instead placed money (39%) on top of their motivations list, followed by self-realization (34%).

Despite the inherent limits of this type of comparison, one still can see a clear difference between the motivations of young people in general versus those of the CSQ members in the three main goals (self-realization, money and serving society).

To take up the terminology of the researchers, some of the expressive goals (serving society, self-realization) are clearly more popular than instrumental goals (money) in the Centrale's members.

It's not surprising that the balance between professional, personal and family life is at the top of the CSQ's youth priorities. 80% of the people surveyed identify that balance as being very important to their fulfillment.

This survey on the motivations associated with work helps to better understand the profile of the Centrale's young members. After this dusting off of some popular beliefs, the next step in will be to identify actions to promote the empowerment of a strong union succession, in line with the flagship values of the CSQ and of young people aged 18-35.

	National survey on CSQ youth (2020) aged 35 and under	CIRANO survey (2020) with 18- to 34 year-olds
Self-realization	45,1 %	34,0 %
Money	25,3 %	39,0 %
Serving society	23,9 %	10,0 %
Sociability	3,1 %	7,0 %
Recognition and prestige	2,5 %	10,0 %

¹ VULTUR Mircea, Daniel Mercure and Charles Fleury (2020). "Nouvelles forces d'engagement dans le travail : y a-t-il une « spécificité jeune ? » [New hiring forces at work: is there a "youth specificity?"]", Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations (CIRANO), [Online] Cahiers scientifiques 2020s-04, p. 22. [cirano.qc.ca/fr/sommaires/2020s-04].



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EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE

THE GULF BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

The educational childcare network currently has 14,200 unsubsidized private daycare centres. For many observers, these centres exacerbate inequalities among children. Here's why.

Audrey Parenteau | EDITOR IN CHIEF

“Children living in disadvantaged socioeconomic areas, children of newly arrived Quebecers and children with special needs most often attend private daycare centres, particularly in Montréal. Children who attend these daycares are more likely to have significant developmental delays or behavioural issues that will persist when they get to school. These little ones lag behind other children when they move on from daycare,” says Éva (name changed).

Seated in a café in downtown Montréal where we arranged to meet, Éva asks me to withhold her real name and her job title, so that relating her experience would not harm her professional reputation or place her employer in a difficult situation. However, she describes her work to me, which requires her to make regular visits to all types of childcare facilities, including childcare centres (CPEs), home childcare settings, and both subsidized and unsubsidized private daycare centres.

In private childcare settings, what she has observed all too often breaks her heart. “On site, I remain professional, but when I get into my car, sometimes I burst into tears. I have to stop myself from going back and gathering children in my arms and giving them a huge hug,” she says. “I feel badly for the parents who entrust their children, the most precious things in their lives, to others, and who have no idea of what their children experience every day.”

CHILDREN STIFLED

Éva tells me about “the shushers,” as she calls them, whom she encounters far too often in private settings. “Shushers” are educators, qualified and unqualified alike, who don’t allow children to express themselves and whose best answer when children ask questions is “shush.”





Valérie Grenon

Photo Pascal Ratthé

The children are not entitled to ask for anything, to say that they are missing their parent or that they would prefer to go play outside instead of doing crafts as assigned. They are told to “shush” and to keep quiet. “This makes me so angry!” she exclaims. “Why do they work with children if they don’t want to support them with their development?”

Éva has met educators who prefer not to show children affection, to prevent them from becoming too attached or too clingy. “They think they have to let children cry themselves to sleep. Had they been trained, these women would know that children need emotional security in order to thrive. They should reread their educational program or just go ahead and change professions,” the young woman adds.

She described how the premises are often too small for the number of children occupying them. The noise is unbearable to the point of causing headaches... or feeling like smashing everything in sight. “Imagine how the children feel!”

POORLY ADAPTED CHILDCARE CENTRES

There is a shortage of toys in private settings. Éva remembers a place where there were four small toy boxes for about twenty children. First come first served. The latecomers had no toys to play with, to explore or to choose from.

“The children were forced to remain seated for hours, singing and doing crafts; the staff would take children by the hand to force them to trace letters and numbers. I even saw an educator humiliate a child by forcing him to sing solo in front of his group just because he didn’t feel like singing along with the others,” says Éva.

She added that daycare facilities take great pride in telling parents that their child knows how to sing in several languages thanks to the music, English or Spanish lessons that the establishment offers. “I even visited a place where the children were able to recite La Fontaine’s *Fables*... at 4 years old!”

PERFECT FACILITIES, NO. BETTER THAN OTHERS, YES.

Éva acknowledges that there are good private daycare centres and that you shouldn’t put them all in the same basket. However, she says that the situations she has described to me are not isolated cases. “I have seen many private daycare facilities like those, in Montréal. They represent the majority.”

The settings that radiate warmth, where children are free to play, explore, choose and thrive, and where trained, motivated and passionate educators observe the children and provide them with stimulation, are mainly found in CPEs, according to the young woman.

MORE SUBSIDIZED SPACES

The educational childcare network currently has 283,000 spaces. The Québec government recently announced, as part of its *Grand chantier pour les familles* action plan

designed to meet the needs of families, that it was adding 37,000 more subsidized spaces by 2025.

To deliver on this project and to improve access to the educational childcare network, in October, the Minister of Families, Mathieu Lacombe, tabled Bill 1, *An Act to amend the Educational Childcare Act*. The legislation makes profound changes to the rules affecting childcare services, in particular by allowing CPEs and private daycares to offer up to 100 spaces (instead of a maximum of 80) and up to 500 spaces in cases where an establishment operates several facilities. The number of spaces per CPE or private daycare centre will no longer be limited.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

The creation of thousands more subsidized spaces announced by the government will require the hiring of 17,800 additional educators, including 14,000 qualified educators. Yet the childcare network is already facing a labour shortage.

The President of the Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (FIEPQ-CSQ), Valérie Grenon, has stated that in order to attract new educators, it is urgent to improve the working conditions of CPE employees who are currently in negotiations to renew their collective agreement. "The educators are tired, they are at the end of their rope, and their work continues to be under-valued," says Éva, indignant.

"Creating 37,000 spaces is a good thing, but by not dealing with the issues related to educational childcare personnel, the government is running the risk of creating empty shells. As long as educational childcare training continues to be one of the college technical programs offering the lowest of incomes, collectively, we will be falling behind," Valérie Grenon says.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN

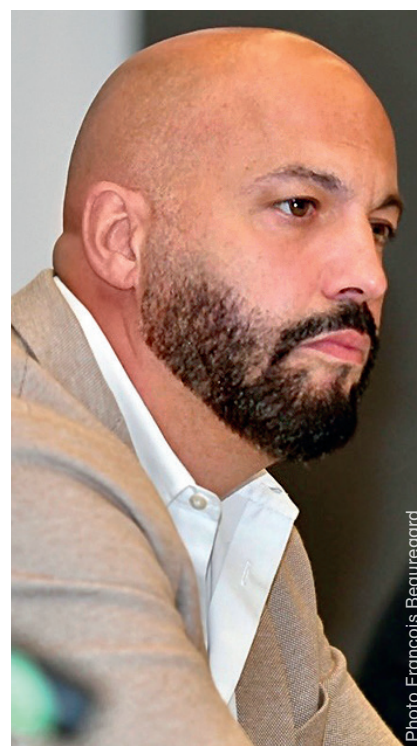
When she thinks about the private daycares that she regularly visits, Éva deplores the fact that facilities providing poor service are seldom reprimanded, if at all. Educational childcare facilities that should have been closed down long ago are still operating years later, even when complaints are formulated about them.

The young woman does not understand how the government can allow inequalities to continue to widen between children who attend different kinds of establishments: "How is it that the government allows this to continue today? Why do we as a society accept it? Action needs to be taken now. All families should have access to a place of quality and trust for their children."

According to a recent study conducted by the Ministère de la Famille, 94.3% of those surveyed believe it is important to provide all parents in Québec with a subsidized childcare space based on a universal fee. This finding directly supports the CSQ demand for securing a universal, and accessible public early childhood network.

"A public network of affordable educational childcare is an essential public service. Every child should benefit from sound learning provided by passionate, trained and highly qualified educators," says CSQ President Éric Gingras.

He concludes by adding that "investing in an educational childcare network and making it accessible to all Québec families means taking responsibility as a society!"



Éric Gingras

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