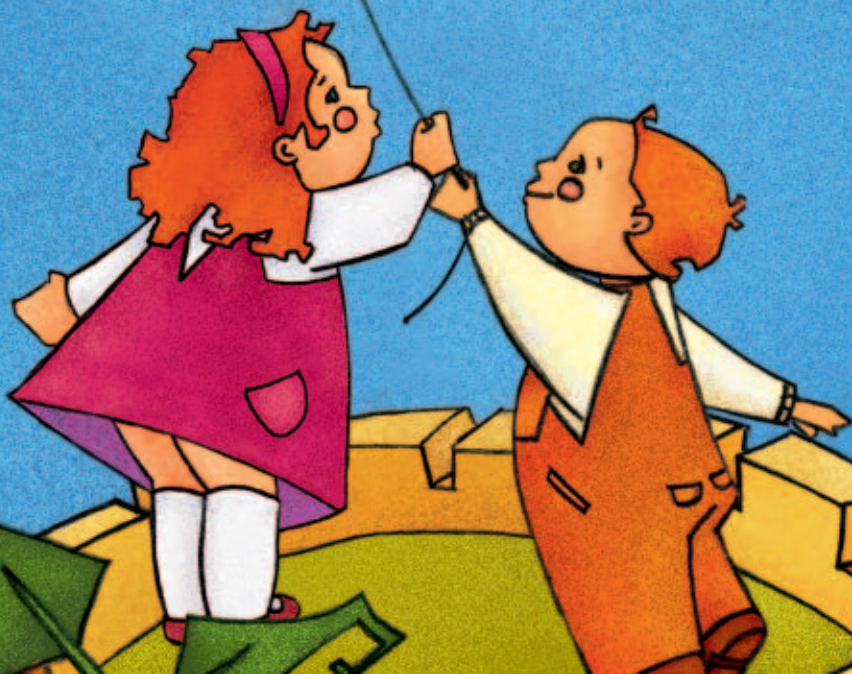




Educational Quality in
PRIVATE DAYCARES

HIGHLIGHTS



WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE *GRANDIR EN QUALITÉ 2003* SURVEY?

For the first time in Québec, we have a detailed and representative portrait of the quality of daycare experienced on a daily basis by children 0 to 5 years of age in government-regulated daycares (i.e. *Centres de la petite enfance* — CPEs, home daycares and private daycares). This is being provided by the *Enquête québécoise sur la qualité des services de garde éducatifs* (Québec Survey on the Quality of Educational Daycare), also known as *Grandir en qualité 2003*. It is helping identify and better define measures likely to maintain and improve the quality of educational daycare in light of the strengths and weaknesses observed.

The results of this survey are timely given the context of the rapid development of early childhood daycares in combination with the implementation of the educational program by the *ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille* (MESSF) (Ministry of Employment, Social Solidarity and the Family). It fulfills both the need for information expressed by the daycare network and the recommendation of the Auditor-General to evaluate the quality of daycare provided to children and families.

Many studies in the field of early childhood have shown that the quality of daycare plays a key role in child development in the first few years of life. This reinforces the utility and pertinence of the results of the *Grandir en qualité* survey.

The survey was conducted by the *Institut de la statistique du Québec* (ISQ) (Québec Institute of Statistics) in partnership with educational daycare associations, university researchers and the MESSF (who funded it). A detailed report on the survey was published in June 2004.

The results are also being published in three summary reports, highlighting the main findings of the survey in Childcare Centre daycares (*installations de CPE*), home daycares (coordinated by CPEs) and private daycares. This summary report is primarily addressed to people who work in private daycares, be they owners, administrators, pedagogical consultants, program coordinators or educators. It can also provide useful information for parents who have children in these daycares.

This document was written and published by the Institut de la statistique du Québec (Translated by James Lawler).

FOURNIER, Claire and Carl DROUIN (2004). Educational Quality in Private Daycares (installations de CPE) — Highlights, Summary Report n°. 3, *Enquête québécoise sur la qualité des services de garde éducatifs*, Québec, Institut de la statistique du Québec, 16 pages.

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Ce fascicule est aussi disponible en version française.

This summary report presents the main results of the survey on the quality of education experienced on a daily basis by children in private daycares regulated by the Québec government. It is divided into two parts — the first on daycare provided for infants under 18 months of age and the second on that provided for children 18 months to 5 years of age (preschoolers). Some avenues for action are presented in the conclusion.

The means by which educational quality was measured in this survey are presented in the box on [page 5](#). Awareness of these will help in understanding the results presented in this summary report. Certain aspects of the methodology of the survey are also presented on [page 15](#).

QUALITY OF DAYCARE FOR INFANTS (0 TO 18 MONTHS OLD)

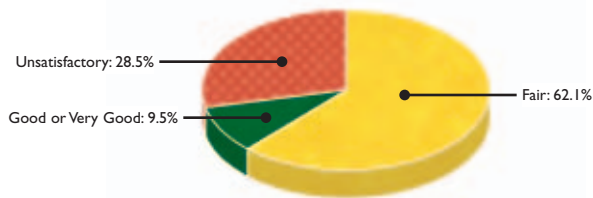
OVERALL QUALITY OF INFANT DAYCARE — FAIR

On average, the infants in private daycares were receiving daycare judged to be of *Fair* quality overall based on the fundamental principles of the educational program. Indeed, the survey revealed a total mean score of 2.62 on a scale of 1.00 to 4.00. The score takes into account all the items of the measurement tool used to observe quality in the infant sections of these daycares.

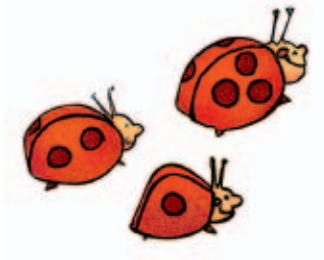
In this survey, achieving a level of quality judged to be *Fair* means that the daycare provided to the children fulfilled in general the principles of the government-recommended educational program while not meriting a score of *Good* or *Very Good*.

Since this result is an average, it is important to examine the distribution of infants by categories of overall quality. As indicated in Figure 1, the majority of infants in private daycares (62%) were receiving daycare judged to be of *Fair* educational quality in general. However, 29% of infants were receiving daycare judged to be of *Unsatisfactory* quality, and 10% were receiving daycare judged to be of *Good* or *Very Good* quality.

FIGURE 1 — OVERALL QUALITY OF INFANT DAYCARE IN PRIVATE DAYCARES, QUÉBEC, 2003



Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Grandir en qualité 2003*.



EDUCATIONAL QUALITY — POOR TO FAIR BY ASPECT

To gain a more concrete understanding of what the overall results mean, it is useful to analyze the data according to the four aspects of quality investigated in the survey. This can reveal the strong points and weak points of the infant sections of private daycares.

On average, educational quality for infants was judged to be *Fair* in three of the four aspects of quality — structure and variation of activities (2.66), interaction between educators and children (2.76), and interaction between educators and parents (2.96) (Table 1). That being said, if we compare the aspects of quality to each other, interaction between educators and parents had the highest score — very close to the threshold of 3.00 — which in the survey indicates the achievement of *Good* quality.

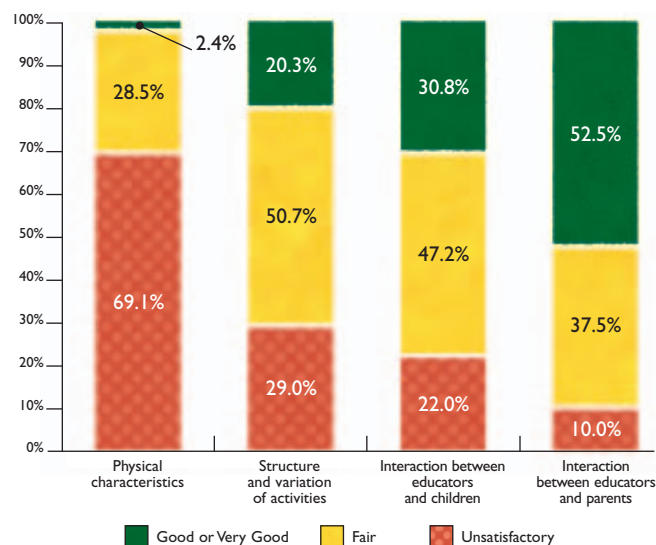
TABLE 1 — QUALITY OF INFANT DAYCARE IN PRIVATE DAYCARES BY ASPECT, QUÉBEC, 2003

	Mean Scores (from 1.00 to 4.00)	Educational Quality
Physical characteristics	2.33	Low
Structure and variation of activities	2.66	Fair
Interaction between educators and children	2.76	Fair
Interaction between educators and parents	2.96	Fair

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Grandir en qualité 2003*.

The relatively positive portrait of educators' interaction with the parents results from the fact that slightly more than half of infants (53%) were in private daycares that received a score for this aspect of *Good or Very Good* (Figure 2). A much lower proportion (10%) were in ones that were deemed *Unsatisfactory*. Slightly more than half of the infants (51%) were in private daycares that scored a quality rating of *Fair* for the aspect of structure and variation of activities, and slightly less than half (47%) were in ones that scored *Fair* for the aspect of interaction with the children.

FIGURE 2 — DISTRIBUTION OF INFANTS IN PRIVATE DAYCARES BY LEVEL AND ASPECT OF QUALITY, QUÉBEC, 2003



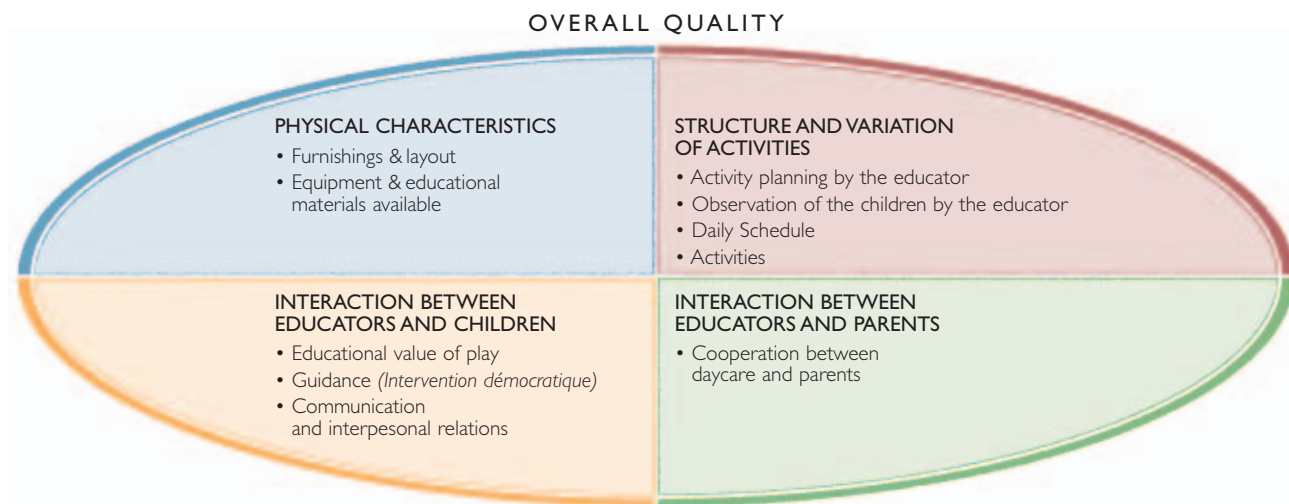
Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Grandir en qualité 2003*.

The aspect of physical characteristics of the private daycares (infant section) received a score of *Low* in terms of educational quality (2.33) (Table 1). Among other factors, this results from the fact that, with regards to physical characteristics, over two thirds of infants (69%) were in private daycares judged to be *Unsatisfactory* in terms of following the principles of the educational program and the practices that derive from them (Figure 2).

MEASURING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY IN PRIVATE DAYCARES

The survey measured quality based on the approach outlined in the government's educational program recommended for educational daycares in Québec. Specialists in the field created two observation scales adapted to the specific characteristics of infants and preschoolers. Using these scales and scoring guides, approximately 120 items related to educational daycares were evaluated, producing data on overall quality, and four major aspects and sub-aspects of quality.

THE FOUR ASPECTS OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, GRANDIR EN QUALITÉ 2003 SURVEY



The mean scores of quality, namely the measurements of quality calculated for all groups in the same age category, were derived from an index of six categories of quality (from *Poor* to *Very Good*). The three lowest indicate *Unsatisfactory* in terms of the underlying principles of the educational program (mean scores under 2.50). Above 2.50, considered minimal in terms of these principles, are *Fair* (2.50 to 2.99), and *Good* or *Very Good*, the highest ratings of educational quality (3.00 to 4.00). The colours red, yellow and green provide a means of distinguishing these three main groups of the index used to present the results of the survey.

GUIDE TO INTERPRETING THE MEAN SCORES OF QUALITY IN THE GRANDIR EN QUALITÉ 2003 SURVEY

MEAN SCORE	EDUCATIONAL QUALITY	FOLLOWS THE PRINCIPLES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
3.50 to 4.00	Very Good	SATISFACTORY
3.00 to 3.49	Good	
2.50 to 2.99	Fair	
2.00 to 2.49	Low	UNSATISFACTORY
1.50 to 1.99	Poor	
1.00 to 1.49	Very Poor	

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Grandir en qualité 2003*.

STRENGTHS TO HIGHLIGHT...

Detailed observations of daycare for infants under 18 months helped identify some of the strong points of private daycares in Québec providing service to children in this age category. These positive features were defined by the achievement of a *Good* or *Very Good* score on average. They mark the strengths upon which these daycares can consolidate their achievements and maintain or improve educational quality in their infant sections. Here are some examples:

■ Strengths in physical characteristics

- *In the infant areas of private daycares, the physical environment was very welcoming (mean score of 3.87).*
- *On average, educators were working in daycares with physical characteristics that strongly fulfilled their needs (3.53).*
- *During lunchtime, the physical space or setup fostered a calm atmosphere (3.60).*

■ Activities that fostered quality

- *Whether at the time of drop-off in the morning (3.56) or at pick-up towards the end of the day (3.69), the children were offered choices; for example, they could choose an activity, a toy from a range of those available, or choose a playmate.*
- *Private daycare staff showed great professionalism when two groups of children were brought together or integrated (3.60) or three or more groups were brought together (3.63). Concretely, these indicated, for example, the level of mutual support among daycare workers, their ability to appropriately and consistently interact with the children, and their respect for the rules of confidentiality when communicating with each other or the parents.*
- *The activities provided for the infants were in general age-appropriate (3.33). In addition, good conditions for the development of free play were observed (3.38). For example, the time for free play was sufficient to allow infants to concentrate and develop their play and/or infants had direct access to materials.*

■ Educators demonstrated good skills in relating to the infants

- *Educators used appropriate language to talk to the infants (3.53) and effectively decoded what the infants were trying to communicate (3.45).*
- *In general, educators had positive personal qualities that fostered the establishment of solid relationships with the infants, such as enthusiasm, patience, attention, warmth and availability (3.51).*

■ Strengths in aspects of guidance (*intervention démocratique*)

- *Skills in giving instructions adapted to the developmental level of the infants (3.57) and consistency and impartiality in applying these (3.42) were shown by the educators.*
- *The educators showed very good skills in positioning themselves so as to be able to keep an eye on all the infants in the group for whom they were responsible (3.47).*

■ Good results in interaction between educators and parents

- *On average, educators in the infant section of private daycares were able to establish constructive interpersonal relations with parents, in particular at the end of the day when the parents come to pick up their children (3.32).*
- *To foster cooperation between the daycare and parents, the educators used various means of communicating at pick-up time to inform them about their child (3.29), such as posting a list of the day's activities on the bulletin board, or putting a letter or a copy of the child's chart in his/her locker or cubby area.*

...BUT ALSO WEAKNESSES TO ADDRESS

In addition to the positive points highlighted above, the data from the survey also shed light on many aspects of quality in the infant section of private daycares that were judged to be *Unsatisfactory* with regards to the principles of the educational program. Of particular concern were the materials and equipment available for the infants, and planning on the part of the educator. Weaknesses were observed in the recognition of the value of play in the learning process and in guidance. Deficiencies in health and safety were also observed. Here are a few examples of these problems, which can serve as suggested areas that need work in order to improve the quality of daycare being provided for infants.

■ Physical characteristics requiring improvement

- *In spite of some positive points in the physical characteristics of the infant areas mentioned above, certain aspects in this regard call for improvement. In particular, the physical environment did not allow the infants to have direct access to the educational materials (1.57) and did not satisfactorily respond to their interests and needs (1.99), especially in terms of motor development (1.47).*
- *Furniture and equipment were not judged to be sufficiently mobile and multi-use (1.61).*
- *The yard or playground was considered on average inadequate (1.97) either because there was little variety in the equipment and areas provided (e.g. sandbox areas, lawn areas, “secret” sections and child-sized furniture), because of hazards (e.g. possible exits from the yard enclosure, the presence of dangerous objects), or the play area was too small.*

■ Weaknesses in equipment and educational materials

- *Overall, the educational materials did not adequately fulfill the needs of the infants (1.79) because they were either unsafe, not in good condition, or lacking in quantity or variety.*
- *There were not enough materials available to the infants to stimulate all aspects of their development (1.71). Social and emotional development was particularly affected by this (1.71). To achieve good quality in this regard, the infants should have access to a sufficient quantity and variety of materials. For example dolls, makeup and costumes, cushions and stuffed animals are all things that foster social and emotional development.*

- *Equipment and materials for infant play in the yard or at the park were inadequate in terms of stimulating sensory-motor (1.63) or other aspects of child development (1.07). This was also observed during winter conditions with snow on the ground.*
- *In addition, educational materials rarely reflected the cultural and family diversity found in society — e.g., music from around the world, dolls of both sexes (1.19).*

■ Weak activity planning on the part of educators

- *Activity planning for infant groups on the part of educators was on average inadequate (1.64). To achieve a high level of quality in this aspect, it is recommended that the educator herself write a daily or weekly activity programme and make it available to her colleagues and the parents.*
- *A lack of flexibility in delivering the programme was also noted; for example, adapting to unexpected events or the specific interests of the infants at the moment (1.86).*

...BUT ALSO WEAKNESSES TO ADDRESS (CNTD.)

- The educators did not make sufficient use of available human and material resources for activity planning such as the educational program, professional association newsletter, communication with colleagues or parents, etc. (1.82). In addition, educators did not consider enough the needs and interests of the infants (1.67) to guide them in their choice of activities.
 - Nearly half of the infants (45%) were with educators who reported not doing any activity planning, whether informal or written, which can explain in part the low score for this aspect. However, it is recognized that planning can facilitate the achievement of good educational quality, because among other benefits, it addresses the specific needs and interests of the children attending the daycare.
- **Deficiencies in play-based learning**
- As mentioned earlier, even though the proper conditions to engage in free play were observed, it was found that educators did not effectively contribute to the development of children through their play (1.80). A Good or Very Good rating for this aspect can be achieved if the educator actively supports and enhances children's play by encouraging creativity, getting involved in role play or offering play materials.
 - In addition, educators rarely organized the space and materials to facilitate the infants' play (1.81) and did not provide enough opportunities for the children to become aware of their achievements (2.01).
- **Some weaknesses in guidance (*intervention démocratique*)**
- On average, educators provided few opportunities for the infants to engage in problem-solving and develop autonomy (1.78). Similarly, they used few strategies to help the children resolve interpersonal conflicts (2.19), for example, by showing they were attentive and were available to resolve the situation, by taking the time needed for the children involved to explain what happened and express their feelings, and by ensuring that the solution chosen was acceptable to all involved.
 - When an infant behaved in a disruptive manner, the educators did not support the child enough to help modify his/her behaviour (2.10).
- **Deficiencies in health and safety**
- Weaknesses were observed in certain aspects of hygiene. For example, educators did not wash their hands frequently enough (1.40). In addition, hygiene was often lacking in terms of changing diapers (1.96). Recommended practices in this regard include changing diapers as soon as the need arises, disinfecting the changing table after each diaper change, and disposing of soiled wipes or washcloths in the appropriate place, out of reach of the infants.
 - On average, health and safety practices were Unsatisfactory in terms of the physical environment of the infant section of private daycares (1.91). This poor score resulted from the fact that the majority of infants (59%) were in daycares with at least one characteristic that could affect their health and safety, such as storage cabinets on wheels with no braking mechanism, unrolled electrical wires accessible to the children, unprotected electrical outlets, or not respecting the norms regarding the educator/children ratio at certain times of the day.

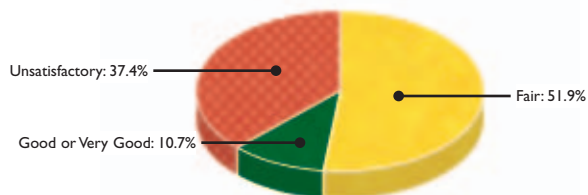
QUALITY OF DAYCARE FOR CHILDREN OF PRESCHOOL AGE (18 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS OLD)

OVERALL QUALITY OF PRESCHOOL DAYCARE — FAIR

On average, the overall quality of educational daycare for children of preschool age in private daycares was evaluated as *Fair*, since the total mean score was 2.58 in terms of following the principles of the educational program. The reader is reminded that the box on [page 5](#) provides a brief outline of the meaning of the scores and the terminology used to interpret them.

As was done in the section on infant daycare, it is useful to examine the distribution of preschoolers according to categories of overall quality observed in private daycares. Figure 3 shows that slightly more than half of children in the preschool age category (52%) were receiving daycare judged to be of *Fair* educational quality. However, it should be noted that over a third (37%) were receiving daycare judged to be of *Unsatisfactory* quality. Only 11% were in daycares judged to be providing *Good* or *Very Good* quality educational daycare.

FIGURE 3 — OVERALL QUALITY OF PRESCHOOL DAYCARE IN PRIVATE DAYCARES, QUÉBEC, 2003



Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Grandir en qualité* 2003.



EDUCATIONAL QUALITY FAIR FOR THREE OF THE FOUR ASPECTS

Similar to the results for infants, the quality of educational daycare for children of preschool age in private daycares across Québec was judged to be *Fair* for three of the four aspects measured — educators' interactions with the parents (2.83), structure and variation of activities (2.69), and educators' interaction with the children (2.54) (Table 2). In the aforementioned third aspect, educators' interaction with the children, the score was just above the threshold of 2.50 which indicates minimum fulfillment of the principles of the educational program.

TABLE 2 — QUALITY OF PRESCHOOL DAYCARE IN PRIVATE DAYCARES BY ASPECT, QUÉBEC, 2003

	Mean Scores (from 1.00 to 4.00)	Educational Quality
Physical characteristics	2.47	Low
Structure and variation of activities	2.69	Fair
Interaction between educators and children	2.54	Fair
Interaction between educators and parents	2.83	Fair

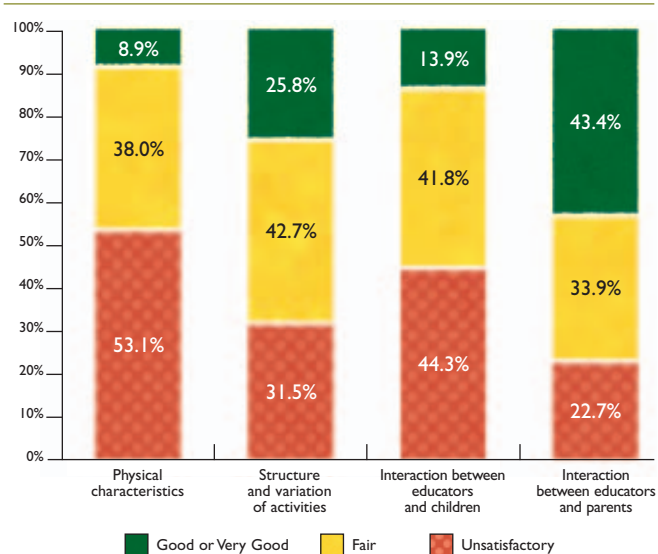
Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Grandir en qualité* 2003.

In contrast, educational quality was assessed as *Low*, therefore *Unsatisfactory*, for the physical characteristics of the daycares (2.47), though this estimate was just below the threshold (2.50) for attaining a score of *Fair*.

Beyond the results based on the calculation of means, Figure 4 shows that the proportion of preschoolers in private daycares receiving a *Good or Very Good* score varied from one aspect of quality to another. First, it is interesting to note that approximately 43% of children were in daycares rated *Good or Very Good* in terms of educators' interaction with the parents, clearly reflecting the high mean score for this aspect. The quality of structure and variation of activities was judged *Good or Very Good* for approximately a quarter (26%) of preschoolers, but a relatively high proportion, namely 32%, were in daycares judged to be *Unsatisfactory* in this aspect.

In contrast, a relatively small proportion (14%) of preschoolers were in private daycares rated *Good or Very Good* for interaction between educators and children, while a rather large proportion (44%) were in daycares judged to be *Unsatisfactory* in this aspect. Only 9% were in daycares with *Good or Very Good* physical characteristics, whereas more than half (53%) were in daycares judged *Unsatisfactory* in terms of fulfilling the principles of the educational program in this regard.

FIGURE 4 — DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN OF PRESCHOOL AGE IN PRIVATE DAYCARES BY LEVEL AND ASPECT OF QUALITY, QUÉBEC, 2003



Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Grandir en qualité* 2003.

STRENGTHS...

Beyond the general results, we can identify the main strengths of preschool daycare in private daycares in a more detailed and concrete fashion by analyzing the data by item. These strengths represent positive aspects upon which the daycares can build and consolidate their achievements. They also reveal various dimensions and sub-dimensions of quality, as illustrated by the following examples:

■ Physical characteristics — positive points

- *The survey showed, that on average, the physical layout of private daycares was flexible enough to allow various types of groupings, notably because large spaces were available (3.77).*
- *In addition, the cloakroom or cubby area set-up facilitated the transition of care from the families to daycare personnel at drop-off time (3.50).*
- *Positive results were shown in various aspects with regards to meals. The healthy nature of snacks (3.38) and lunches (3.21) was in general confirmed by the survey data. Ratings were based on characteristics such as adequate portions, variety of foods, size of the bites or mouthfuls, and certain healthy practices related to food consumption. Another strength observed in the preschool component of private daycares was that the physical characteristics or setup of the space in which lunch was served fostered a calm atmosphere (3.61).*

■ Activities that foster quality

- *The children were given the possibility to make significant choices at their arrival in the morning (3.25) and towards the end of the day (3.40).*
- *The activities offered to preschoolers by the educators were in general appropriate (3.15), and clean-up time was organized in such a manner as to be stimulating for the children (3.21).*
- *Staff members showed professionalism with the children or with colleagues during times when two groups were brought together or integrated (3.46) or larger groups were brought together (three or more) (3.23).*

■ Educators had good skills in relating to the children

- *At drop-off time in the morning, the educators scored well in terms of helping the children easily handle the transition between family and daycare (3.25).*
- *Educators knew how to express their needs, expectations, feelings and limits to the children (3,26).*
- *Towards the end of the day during pick-up time, the educators maintained a good atmosphere in the groups (3.20) and were attentive to all the children (3.15).*

■ Strengths in guidance (*intervention démocratique*)

- *The educators gave instructions adapted to the level of the children, namely concise, clear, concrete and positive (3.75). In addition, they showed consistency and impartiality in implementing them (3.20).*
- *In general, educators positioned themselves to be able to keep an eye on the whole group of children for whom they were responsible (3.40).*

■ Interaction with the parents — positive aspects

- *Ongoing communication between educators and parents fostered the continuity of relations between the daycares and the families (3.22) - informal conversations, written communications, one-on-one meetings, etc.*
- *Again, with the goal of maintaining a good relationship with the parents, various means of communication were available to the parents at pick-up time to provide or receive information about their child (3.31).*

WEAKNESSES OBSERVED

The survey also revealed certain weaknesses in the preschool component of private daycares in Québec. Without presenting all of them, here are a few examples which can help identify target areas for improving educational quality.

■ Too few materials, too little equipment to foster child development

- Equipment and educational materials available to preschoolers in private daycares were insufficient in terms of fostering all aspects of child development (1.65), particularly psychomotor (2.02) (e.g. balls, blocks of various sizes, hoops, shovels, pails), cognitive (2.22) (puzzles, dominos, objects to sort, etc.) and language development (2.21) (posters, books, real or toy telephones, alphabet toys, puppets, etc.). Moreover, there was also a lack of materials that stimulate children's senses (1.99).
- For outdoor play in the yard or at the park, again there was a lack of equipment and materials with regards to fostering psychomotor (1.84) or other aspects of child development (1.15). This problem was also observed during winter with snow on the ground.

- Furthermore, the materials used rarely reflected family and cultural diversity (1.21). Yet, educational quality can be enhanced by providing opportunities for children to listen to music from around the world, play with dolls of both sexes, and look at books that present a diversity of family types and cultures.

■ Deficiency in activity planning

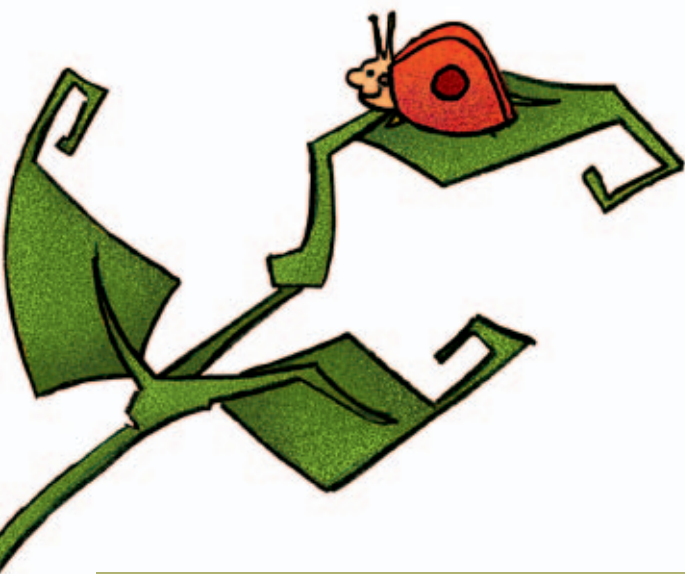
- In general, the survey revealed that educators did not make enough use of pertinent sources of inspiration to guide their planning of activities (2.29).

■ Weaknesses in play-based learning

- On average, educators did not adequately support children's play choices (1.59), either when the children planned and conducted their own play activity or chose to participate in an activity from a list of those offered by the educator (1.59).
- Educators rarely organized periods of reflection or review whereby children could be made aware of their achievements (1.33).

■ Weaknesses in guidance (*intervention démocratique*)

- Educators did not provide enough opportunities for preschoolers to resolve problems themselves or act with autonomy (1.68). In addition, they did not share decision-making enough with the children (1.84). To attain a higher rating in this, children can be asked about the activities being planned or be included in collective decision-making.



- In general, the educators were not very successful at creating an atmosphere that fostered cooperation among the children (1.75). This can be achieved by emphasizing helping each other and sharing, by organizing cooperative play or games, or by providing appropriate educational materials.
- When a child behaved in a disruptive manner, the educators did not intervene in an appropriate manner, such as taking action to stop it (2.22). Furthermore, they did provide sufficient help to the child to modify his/her behaviour (2.04).

■ Weaknesses in health and safety

- Private daycare facilities for preschoolers did not always fully conform to government regulations or recommended practices in terms of health and safety (1.55). This poor score resulted from the fact that a large majority of children (76%) were in daycares with characteristics that could affect their health and safety, or that did not respect the norms regarding the child/educator ratio at certain times of the day.
- On average, the frequency of hand washing on the part of educators was judged to be inadequate in situations where transmission of disease or contamination could occur, such as after changing diapers or wiping a child's nose, and before and after meals (1.86). In addition, in groups where there was at least one child in diapers, the rules of hygiene related to changing diapers were not fully respected (1.82).



MORE EFFORT NEEDED IN FOLLOWING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN PRIVATE DAYCARES

On average, the overall quality of daycare provided by private daycares in Québec for infants under 18 months of age and preschoolers 18 months to 5 years of age was judged to be *Fair*. As indicated by the *Grandir en qualité 2003* data, this means that private daycares fulfilled the principles of the educational program recommended by the *MESSF* in satisfactory fashion, but did not merit a score of *Good* in terms of educational quality. The overall rating results from the many strengths identified, but also from the numerous weaknesses observed, which suggest the need to put effort into improving the quality of daycare being provided.

The survey demonstrated that the infant and preschool components of private daycares have many strengths and weaknesses in common. This calls for the development and implementation of comprehensive action strategies for both age categories — adding more equipment and educational materials that foster child development in all its aspects, implementing measures to improve activity planning, a more rigorous adherence to health and safety norms. There were also weaknesses specific to each age category. Therefore, more targeted measures can be considered — for example, encouraging educators to have periods during which preschoolers could reflect on and review their activities and achievements.

The results of the survey indicate that private daycares can make much better use of the educational program in order to attain a *Very Good* level of educational quality. This challenge can be met through the involvement of not only educators, managers and daycare owners, but also daycare associations, government ministries and agencies, and educational institutions. To this end, the survey report can serve as a practical reference tool. It presents a detailed portrait of educational quality, and underlines characteristics of daycares likely to enhance it.



METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

TARGET POPULATION

All children in early childhood educational daycares regulated by the government of Québec, except those which began operating after October 15, 2001, and certain others for minor reasons. Given these exclusions, the target population was representative of approximately 89% of all children attending government-regulated daycares at the time of the survey, namely slightly more than 145,000 children.

SAMPLE SIZE AND RESPONSE RATE

The sample comprised 905 groups of children in approximately 650 daycares selected at random from the list of educational daycares comprising the following five types:

1. *Infant daycare in Childcare Centres daycares (installations de CPE) for children under 18 months of age (128 groups)*
2. *Preschool daycare in Childcare Centres daycares (installations de CPE) for children 18 months to 5 years of age (228 groups)*
3. *Home daycares coordinated by a CPE (200 groups)*
4. *Private daycares for children under 18 months of age (124 groups)*
5. *Private daycares for children 18 months to 5 years of age (225 groups).*

In all, 87.8% of the randomly-selected groups of children participated in the survey.

PRECISION OF THE RESULTS

As indicated above, the *Grandir en qualité 2003* survey has produced data representative of children's experience of educational daycare in Québec. However, since all children in all daycares did not participate in the survey, the results are to be considered estimates — in other words, they have a certain margin of error. For more details on their precision, the reader is invited to consult the survey report.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS

Developed by specialists in the field of early childhood and adapted to the age groups and types of daycare, three observation scales of educational quality were used in the survey. The measurement of educational quality in these scales was based on numerous aspects of the daycare environment and the principles of the educational program recommended by the *MESSF* and the practices that derive from them.

Trained and accredited observers spent an entire day with the groups of children in the randomly-selected daycares.

Telephone or self-administered questionnaires were given to the directors, educators and home daycare providers as a further method of data collection.

DATA COLLECTION PERIOD

End of March to beginning of June 2003.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE *GRANDIR EN QUALITÉ 2003* SURVEY

- The **three summary reports** on the highlights of the survey can be downloaded from the survey website at www.grandirenqualite.gouv.qc.ca. The website also presents further information on how the survey was conducted and **tables** of mean scores for every item of quality assessed.
- The complete **survey report** is also available free of charge on the ISQ website at www.stat.gouv.qc.ca. The printed version can be purchased from *Publications du Québec*. It can also be ordered from the *Centre d'information et de documentation* of the ISQ by calling toll-free 1-877-677-2087.
- The **observation scales** and scoring guides used to evaluate the educational quality of the daycares are available on the website of the MESSF at www.messf.gouv.qc.ca under "Publications."