

Models of Integrated ECE Service Delivery: Avenir d'enfants

*Learning to Care Conference: Lessons on
the Transition to Integrated Early Childhood
Program Delivery, Toronto*

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Presentation Objectives

- Present the context that gave rise to Avenir d'enfants (AE) and the conditions that support its action
- Show how AE's action model helps integrate actions in the area of early childhood
- Share observations on the dynamics that are at play



Quebec's Context Creates Favourable Conditions

- Family-friendly taxation
- Parental leave
- Reduced-contribution daycare service
- Universal access to kindergarten at age 5
- Perinatal policy
- 10 billion dollars for families

“This assistance puts Quebec at the head of the pack, when compared to the assistance given to families in various OECD countries.”

La politique familiale du Québec: où en sommes-nous? Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés—Quebec's ministry of families and seniors (2009)



Despite this support, it is often difficult to...

- Reach a large number of families living in poverty
- Coordinate the workers in the different organizations that serve children and their parents
- Transform knowledge into practice
- Develop action plans that lead to a collective transformation of the situations (collective impact)
- Build an evaluation culture into the practices.



Consequently, we need to...

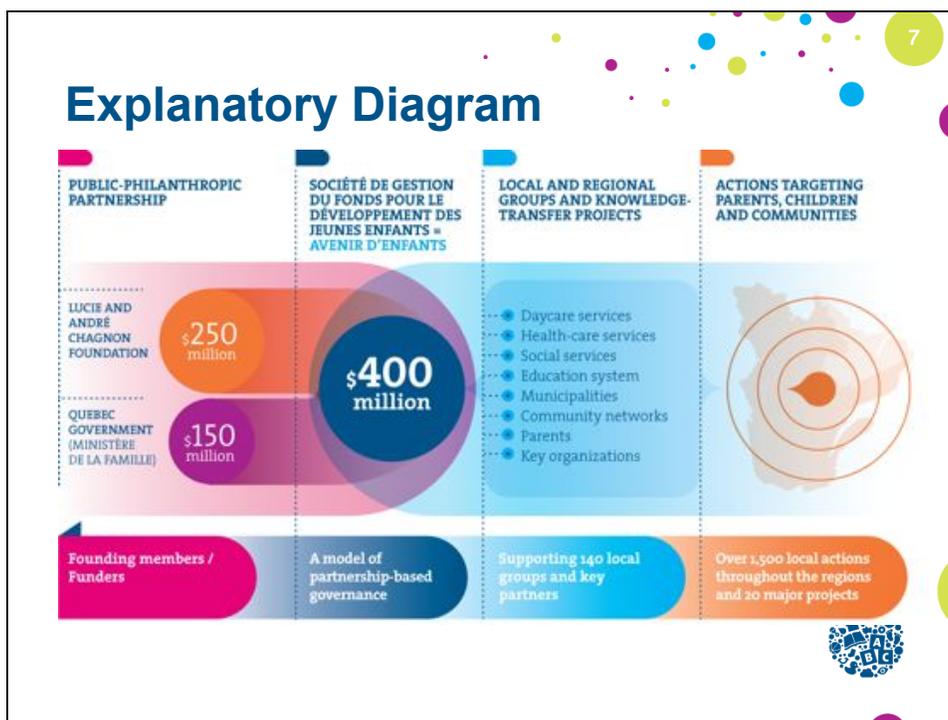
- Implement a continuum of actions that support child development from conception to school age
- Stimulate participation, not just service consumption, and call on the skills of the parents
- Encourage intensity, continuity and follow-up and take action in every environment frequented by young children
- Personalize the interventions and adapt them to the different contexts and environments
- Follow up on each step to see what lessons have been learned and make the appropriate adjustments
- Support the leadership of those who can make a difference in their organization.



How Avenir d'enfants Came Into Being

- Creation of an early childhood development fund (*Fonds pour le développement des jeunes enfants*) pursuant to an law enacted in September 2009.
- \$400 million invested over 10 years (2009–2019) jointly by the Quebec Government and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation (LACF).
- Quebec's family minister (*ministre de la Famille*) was given responsibility for the fund.
- The LACF and the Quebec Government, working in partnership, created the *Société de gestion du Fonds*, an NPO that was later renamed Avenir d'enfants.





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MISSION

Supporting the mobilization of local communities to foster the overall development of children aged 5 and under, and living in poverty, to help ensure that every child has a good start in life.

VISION

For every child to be school-ready and able to achieve educational success.




Our Strategies

Main Strategy

- Guide and financially support local groups of partners that work in the area of early childhood

Supporting Strategy

- Transfer and acquire knowledge that supports the stakeholders' skills development and ability to act

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Expected Impacts

On children

- Greater overall development of children in Quebec aged 5 and under, especially those living in poverty

On parents

- Parents supported in their role of offering nurturing educational practices that steer their children in the right direction
- Increased parent participation in the actions of the local group and parental empowerment

On communities

- Development of the local partner groups' ability to act
- Taking charge of actions, of changes in practices and of the importance of early childhood in the community
- Quality preventive intervention practices

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Cross-Sector Mobilization

- The AE initiative involves the cross-sector mobilization of people who work with young children at the local and regional levels.
- **Its aim is to ensure that the action systems that impact on early childhood, such as daycare, health care, social and educational services, municipalities, the community network and the people in the child's life mobilize and interact more effectively.**
- It seeks to involve parents as partners in their child's development and the development of their communities—*Voix des parents* project.



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Observations in the Field

- A more common vision and greater coordination of actions.
- If children living in poverty do not go to daycare, they are difficult to reach: transportation problems, isolation of parents, fear of institutions.
- Local groups have a tendency to multiply their actions rather than to make them more targeted or to intensify them.
- The ability to come up with action strategies that are not solely sectoral, but also populational is developing gradually, but is not spontaneous.



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Greater Action Integration

- After 3 years, in order to support increased action integration, we are implementing an **ecosystemic approach geared toward factors that protect** children, parents and communities.
- A pilot project with 9 communities has raised real interest in adopting this approach.
- This approach will be implemented in every region of Quebec by 2015.



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THANK YOU!

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