



EARLY CHILDHOOD

FOSTERING THE VITALITY OF FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

OCTOBER 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OBJECTIVES

This report presents an overview of early childhood in Francophone communities¹ in order to identify key issues and opportunities. It also contains recommendations addressed to the Government of Canada, given the federal government's commitment under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* and the resulting obligations of federal institutions.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

1.2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This report is based on a review of related studies, data and documents from a variety of sources, such as early childhood experts, early childhood community organizations, Employment and Social Development Canada, the Department of Finance Canada, Canadian Heritage, Statistics Canada, the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

1.2.2. CONSULTATIONS

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages consulted key partners working in the field of early childhood, including the Commission nationale des parents francophones (CNPF) and the Groupe intersectoriel national en petite enfance (GRINPE).

A meeting was held in Toronto on February 10, 2016, in which the following organizations participated: the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française; CNPF and the Francophone parents' federations or associations of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador; the Canadian Teachers' Federation; the Fédération canadienne des directions d'école francophone; the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française; the Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de common law; the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada; the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones; the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie; Pluri-elles (Coalition Bambin); the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité; the Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences; and the Société Santé en français.

The testimony gathered was used to supplement the analysis and corroborate the issues identified.

1.3. SCOPE

In this report, "early childhood" is used to designate the preschool-age period, the age group of which may vary: for example, 0 to 4 years old or 0 to 6 years old.² It is a very broad concept that includes the parents' experience, the prenatal stage and the preschool period. Initiatives that support early childhood development may include various programs and services, capacity building, research and partnerships between various interested parties (governments, community groups, parents, etc.).³

Because the issues surrounding early childhood development are very different in English-speaking minority communities, they are not addressed in this report. Although anglicization is as important in many English-speaking rural communities in Quebec as francization is among Francophones outside of Quebec,⁴ organizations representing Quebec's English-speaking communities say that early childhood services are not a major issue for all of these communities, because the majority of them are not afraid of losing their language. The Office of the Commissioner is nonetheless continuing its discussions on early childhood development needs and concerns with representatives of Quebec's English-speaking communities.

It should be noted that a number of Francophone communities, particularly in New Brunswick and Ontario,⁵ have access to bilingual or immersion services to make up for the lack of early childhood services in French. These services are often considered problematic for Francophones because they tend to be offered in English-dominant settings. This can result in bilingual services being perceived as a form of assimilation for French-speaking children, and community groups agree that these services are not an ideal solution. Because of the differences between the issues surrounding services in French and those surrounding bilingual or immersion services, the latter are not included in this report.

2. LEGAL BASIS AND INTERVENTIONS BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

2.1. SECTION 23 OF THE *CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS*

In recent years, a number of cases before Canadian courts have sought to recognize the importance of minority community preschool programs,⁶ since they are part of a child's educational path and identity building.

Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the minority for the children of rights holders, meaning Canadian citizens "whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province."⁷ Subsection 23(2) also guarantees this right to "citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction"⁸ in the language of the minority in the province or territory. Preschool programs are not explicitly mentioned in this provision.

The court cases involving preschool programs have primarily raised three issues relating to the interpretation of section 23: the constitutional status of preschool programs, how to calculate preschool spaces in order to make a comparison with majority-language schools, and the possibility of awarding remedies regarding preschool programs.

To date, there has been no consensus in the court decisions.⁹ However, there has been discussion suggesting that applying section 23 to early childhood would be consistent with the intent of the constituent.¹⁰ Regardless of whether they are recognized under section 23, preschool programs are considered by experts in the field to be important components to meet the objectives under section 23.¹¹ Early childhood is a significant source of children who have the right to instruction in the language of the minority, and it is important to maintain this source as a means to support the demographic, linguistic, cultural, institutional, social and community vitality of Francophone communities.

2.2. PART VII OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* sets out the federal government's commitment to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada, to support and assist their development and to foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society. To meet this commitment, every federal institution has a duty to ensure that positive measures are taken to advance the equal status of both official languages in Canadian society and to promote the development and vitality of official language minority communities.

Part VII does not define what a positive measure is, nor does it specify the sectors to be targeted. As Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser pointed out in his 2010–2011 annual report, "it essentially means a measure that has a real and constructive impact on the vitality of official language [minority] communities and on the advancement towards the equality of English and French in Canadian society."¹² In the first two five-year official languages plans, federal institutions involved in early childhood development allocated investments to support this sector in Francophone communities.

In addition, under subsection 43(1)(d) of the Act, the Minister of Canadian Heritage must:

take such measures as that Minister considers appropriate to advance the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society, and . . . encourage and assist provincial governments to support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities generally and, in particular, to offer provincial and municipal services in both English and French and to provide opportunities for members of English or French linguistic minority communities to be educated in their own language.

2.3. INTERVENTIONS BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Between 2006 and 2016, Commissioner Fraser studied a variety of issues related to education, including high school and post-secondary education, as well as access to second-language instruction and to education in the language of the minority. Located at the beginning of the continuum, early childhood development is an area for positive, preventive and proactive intervention to revitalize the French language and Francophone communities.

The Office of the Commissioner's interventions are part of an effort to encourage federal institutions to take positive measures within the meaning of Part VII of the Act to support early childhood development in Francophone communities. In 2014–2015, the Office of the Commissioner established a dialogue with key partners in the field of early childhood and began to gather information and to identify and better understand the current gaps. These interventions included meetings and discussions with representatives of several communities and federal institutions. The interventions are particularly timely, given the development of the next multi-year official languages plan, the interest in early childhood development expressed by certain parliamentarians, and other upcoming public policy changes that may have an impact on this sector and on the communities.

3. PORTRAIT

3.1. EARLY CHILDHOOD IN CANADA

Early childhood is a crucial period for the cognitive, social and emotional development of children.¹³ The early years of a child's life are also a critical period for language acquisition.¹⁴ A growing body of research recognizes that early childhood education and care bring a wide range of benefits, including better well-being for the child, better learning outcomes, reduced poverty, increased intergenerational social mobility, more female labour market participation and better social and economic development for the society at large.¹⁵

However, these benefits depend on the quality of the services offered. Expanding access to services without ensuring quality will not deliver positive outcomes for children or long-term productivity benefits for society. Furthermore, research has shown that poor-quality services can have long-lasting detrimental effects on child development.¹⁶

Service quality and accessibility are all the more important because most Canadian parents work and have growing needs for services for their children. In a 2008 report on early childhood education and care services, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) pointed out that "today's rising generation in the countries of the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] is the first in which a majority are spending a large part of their early childhoods not in their own homes with their own families but in some form of child care."¹⁷ In 2014, nearly two million families with two parents and at least one child under 16 (69%) were dual-earner families, which was up from one million (36%) in 1976. In nearly three quarters of these families, both parents worked full time.¹⁸

Parents' transition to the labour market and children's transition to structured care "can be a step forward or a step back, depending on how seriously countries take all aspects of child development in establishing child services. [translation]"¹⁹ However, OECD and UNICEF ranked Canada last among Western nations in terms of support for family policy and early childhood development.²⁰ According to OECD, child and family outcomes in Canada could be improved if affordable and quality-assured child care services were more widely available during the early years and throughout compulsory school.²¹

3.2. EARLY CHILDHOOD IN FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES

In minority communities, early childhood is particularly important, on both an individual and a community level. For young children, this is a key time in terms of learning the French language, building identity and developing a sense of belonging to the community. It is also a critical period for community vitality and development.

Canada's fertility rate has declined significantly since the 1960s.²² This phenomenon is even more pronounced among French-speaking Canadians, who transitioned from over-fertility to under-fertility.²³ In addition, immigration has become the primary driver of Canadian population growth; however, it has not benefited Francophone communities to the same extent, because immigrants settling outside of Quebec are more likely to adopt English as their first official language.²⁴

In Francophone communities, this demographic loss is magnified by various factors, including language transmission from French-speaking parents to their children. The data indicates that English is the official language spoken most often at home by over half of children in Francophone communities, except in New Brunswick.²⁵

The critical role of early childhood in fostering French language transmission, community development and attendance of French-language schools has been raised in various key documents developed by the communities since the early 2000s, including CNPF's *Partir en français* plan (2003), the Table nationale en développement de la petite enfance's (now GRINPE) *Cadre national de collaboration en développement de la petite enfance francophone en contexte minoritaire au Canada* (2005), the Forum des Leaders' *Plan stratégique communautaire* (2008) and the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones's *Plan stratégique sur l'éducation de langue française 2012-2017*.²⁶

In its 2011 report, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages summarized the importance of early childhood development for French-language school recruitment as follows: "Child care centres and early childhood and family centres are veritable nurseries that feed Francophone minority schools."²⁷ Many experts have also observed positive outcomes in terms of learning, communication, comprehension and vocabulary in young children when they start school if they have been exposed to French between the ages of 0 and 5.²⁸

3.3. STATISTICAL PORTRAIT AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The following statistical portrait presents an overview of the characteristics of young children in Francophone communities.

Despite a certain increase in absolute numbers, the proportion of Francophones has been declining for nearly half a century in Canada, outside of Quebec. Between 1951 and 2006, for example, the proportion of the population whose mother tongue²⁹ is French decreased from 7.3% to 4.1% (see Appendix, Table 1). The increase in the number of Canadians outside of Quebec whose mother tongue is French is primarily in populations aged 35 and over. The under-30 population has seen its numbers decrease significantly from 1971 to 2006. The number of children aged 0 to 4 whose mother tongue is French has decreased by nearly half, from close to 70,000 in 1971 to just under 35,000 in 2006.³⁰

Between 1986 and 2006, the estimated number of children aged 5 to 17 who were eligible for French-language education under section 23 of the Charter decreased continuously by over one quarter (see Appendix, Table 2). This is primarily due to the low birth rate, low levels of Francophone immigration and linguistic assimilation. In some communities, it is also the result of the population's migration to other communities, regions, provinces or territories. All of these factors are major trends.³¹

In 2006, of a total of 63,855 rights-holder children of preschool age (0 to 4 years), 38,725 (61%) were part of exogamous Francophone families (in which only one parent is French-speaking) and 19,145 (30%) were part of endogamous Francophone families (in which both parents are French-speaking). Just over half (32,955) spoke French as their mother tongue (see Appendix, Table 3). Moreover, among all the children, 29,150 spoke French most often at home, and 7,595 spoke French regularly, for a total of 36,745 who spoke French at least regularly at home. A greater number of children (37,525) had knowledge of French.

According to the most recent Census data, there were 1,435,005 children under the age of 5 in Canada outside Quebec in 2011. The first official language spoken (FOLS)³² for 34,525 (2.4%) of them was French, and the FOLS for 5,530 (0.4%) of them was both English and French (see Appendix, Table 4). In contrast, the FOLS for over one million (92.1%) of them was English, and the FOLS for 73,790 (5.1%) of them was neither English nor French. French was the mother tongue of 33,145 (2.3%) children under the age of 5; 7,730 spoke both English and French as their mother tongue; 850 spoke both French and a non-official language as their mother tongue; and 935 spoke English, French and a non-official language as their mother tongue (see Appendix, Table 5). French was the only language spoken most often at home for 31,440 (2.2%) children under the age of 5; for 5,275 children, it

was English and French; for 670 children, it was French and a non-official language; and for 940 children, it was English, French and a non-official language (see Appendix, Table 6).

In summary, demographic trends show a decrease in the proportion of Canadians who speak French, in the number of young Francophones and in the number of children eligible for French-language schooling.

3.4. TYPES OF SERVICES

In Francophone communities, there are several models for early childhood service centres, and the terminology and types of services available vary from one province or territory to another. For example, there are early childhood and family centres (CPEFs), early childhood centres, family and child support centres, and multiservice family and child resource centres. Starting at the early childhood stage, these centres welcome and assist French-speaking families by providing family services such as reading and play groups.³³ In Manitoba, for example, CPEFs provide a full range of integrated services and resources for French-speaking parents and children (from 0 to 6) in 12 schools within the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine. A satellite CPEF service is also provided in two schools.³⁴

Early childhood services can range from prenatal services to various educational, cultural and social services. These services may include “perinatal and preventive health services (professional speech-language pathology, nursing care, occupational therapy, etc.), centre-based, school-based or home-based child care, various family services (French-language support, literacy, cultural activities, etc.), pre-kindergarten and kindergarten school liaison, and resources for parents (toy library, play group, support group, etc.) [translation]”³⁵ Even though some CPEFs also offer child care services, their primary mandate is to “provide a range of health promotion, early intervention, specialized support, prevention and support services to parents [translation]”³⁶ in French.

In Canada, there are two broad categories of child care services: licensed and unlicensed. Licensed centres are regulated provincially and inspected regularly by the province to ensure compliance with provincial standards. Unlicensed child care providers, which are often home-based, are not regulated, although some home-based child care providers are also licensed and therefore regulated and monitored.³⁷ In minority communities, public or private child care services, as opposed to home-based care, seem to offer “greater stability in terms of educational offer and structure [translation]”³⁸ and help foster a sense of identity and belonging because they are part of a community network of institutions and people.³⁹

3.5. ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Historically, the federal government’s responsibility with regard to families (including early childhood services) has been limited to transferring funds to provincial and territorial governments, which have constitutional jurisdiction in this area. Funding transfer agreements may be made in areas such as health, family support, post-secondary education and social programs. In 2000, the federal, provincial and territorial First Ministers signed an agreement “to improve and expand early childhood development supports for young children (prenatal to age six) and for their parents.”⁴⁰ Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is responsible for the early childhood development initiative, in partnership with the Department of Finance Canada and the provincial and territorial governments.⁴¹ Since 2004–2005, the Canada Social Transfer has been the primary federal-provincial-territorial transfer mechanism for early childhood development and early learning and child care.⁴²

The federal government can also support early childhood through specific transfers (e.g., Canada Child Benefit and Employment Insurance maternity and parental benefits) or tax expenditure (e.g., the Child Tax Credit, the Child Care Expense Deduction and the Investment Tax Credit for Child Care Spaces).

Through the Social Development Partnerships Program, ESDC “supports the social infrastructure of Canadian society through investment in not-for-profit organizations to help improve life outcomes for people with disabilities, children and families, and other vulnerable populations.”⁴³ The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) manages child health programs and provides a variety of resources for parents and future parents. PHAC’s Community Action Program for Children supports a wide range of initiatives, including “child [0–6 years] health and development activities, parenting skills programs, nutritional support and collective kitchens, physical activity programs, outreach and home visits.”⁴⁴ The federal government is also responsible for programs for First Nations and Inuit, newcomers and military families. Federal government programs and spending in early childhood education and care are therefore the responsibility of a variety of federal institutions, including ESDC; the Department of Finance Canada; Health Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada; National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces; PHAC and Service Canada.⁴⁵

In 2003, as part of the 2003-2008 *Action Plan for Official Languages*, coordinated by Canadian Heritage, the federal government announced investments in early childhood development in Francophone communities. Specifically, funds were allocated to two national research and analysis initiatives: a child care pilot project (\$10.8 million) and support for non-governmental organizations (\$3.8 million).

These two initiatives, which were the responsibility of ESDC (then called Human Resources and Skills Development Canada), were renewed in the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*, with budgets of \$13.5 million and \$4 million, respectively. They were intended to promote awareness of the importance of early childhood development, as well as to strengthen and improve access to programs and services available in official language minority communities.

Despite the success of these two initiatives, the *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities* does not provide for any specific funding for early childhood development. However, it does include a new initiative under the Social Development Partnerships Program: the Social Partnership Initiative in Official Language Minority Communities. This initiative targets a broader clientele than early childhood, including youth, seniors and vulnerable populations. It also encourages communities "to find new revenue sources to develop community-based activities that address the social and economic issues that affect them."⁴⁶

4. ISSUES

4.1. LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION AND EXOGAMY

A language can be transmitted to a child in several ways over time. It can be done by parents, by contemporaries (siblings or peers) or even by grandparents, and can take place both within and outside of the family environment.⁴⁷ Because parents make a number of choices about the language spoken in the first few months after the child's birth, or even before,⁴⁸ the transmission of French as a mother tongue starting in early childhood is of particular importance for the development and continued vitality of Francophone communities.

In 2006, in Francophone communities, French was the official language spoken most often at home by parents of very young children in 44% of cases. Excluding New Brunswick and Ontario, this percentage was between 22% and 35% (see Appendix, Table 7). When the minority language is not widely spoken at home, child care, kindergarten and school may be the only socialization opportunities where the minority language is dominant.⁴⁹

Between 1991 and 2011, the proportion of children aged 17 and under living in an exogamous family outside Quebec increased from just under 57% to nearly 67%.⁵⁰ During this period, the transmission rate of French as a mother tongue among all families in Canada outside Quebec with at least one French-speaking parent stayed steady, at close to 50%. Among endogamous Francophone families, the transmission rate also stayed steady, at over 91%. Among exogamous families, the rate varied, depending on the family structure, but was higher when the mother was Francophone. It also grew steadily and significantly, regardless of the family structure. The transmission rate in exogamous families with a French-speaking mother increased from 23% to nearly 39% between 1991 and 2011. During the same period, it grew from 10% to 19% among exogamous families with a French-speaking father (see Appendix, Table 8). The increase in transmission of French among exogamous families may be attributable to the knowledge of French among an increasing number of non-Francophone spouses or to an increase in the status of the French language.⁵¹

While it is often associated with a low transmission rate, exogamy does not in and of itself prevent the transmission of the French language.⁵² Language transmission may depend on various factors, including the family structure (see Appendix, Tables 3 and 8) and the language dynamic within the family. It is possible for a child in an exogamous family to acquire the same French skills as a child in an

endogamous family “when the French-speaking parent ensures that the French language is an important part of the child’s life, when the parents want their child to achieve a high level of skill in both languages, and when the child has a feeling of belonging to both communities. [translation]”⁵³

For many, the very notion of exogamy has evolved as a result of the growing diversity of Francophone communities. “Traditionally, we would see an exogamous couple with one English-speaking spouse and one French-speaking spouse. However, exogamy in 2016 also includes couples with one French-speaking spouse and one spouse whose mother tongue is neither English nor French and who may identify as an Anglophone or a Francophone. [translation]”⁵⁴ The members of a working group that was created as part of a recent initiative by the Department of Canadian Heritage⁵⁵ on French language transmission to young Francophones in minority communities found the same thing:

In many cases, French is not the family’s first—or only—language. In the case of newcomers, for example, French may be the FOLS, but not a mother tongue. In an exogamous situation, the acquisition of French is not necessarily exclusive; it can occur at the same time as the acquisition of English or of another language. We also have to think of transmission as a long process that begins during pregnancy and continues throughout childhood and adolescence. [translation]⁵⁶

The working group considered several factors that contribute to increased transmission of French to young Francophones in minority communities. These factors fall under three broad categories—parents, children and youth, and the broader context of community institutions and society—and include parents’ perceptions of early childhood services in French, their access to early childhood services in French and the resources available to support their children in French.⁵⁷ Because of the issues related to language transmission and exogamy, Francophone community representatives would particularly like to have the capacity to give parents—including those from exogamous families—the resources, guidance and support they need.⁵⁸

4.2. TWO LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND A WIDE RANGE OF INSTITUTIONS

Programs and services for young children have been developed with various systems of governance, funding streams and training for staff. As a result, families face a highly fragmented early childhood landscape of unconnected options, diverse eligibility criteria and payment requirements.⁵⁹ All provincial and territorial governments provide early childhood services, but the models vary widely from one province or territory to the next, or even within the same province, depending on the service and the provider.

During an appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, CNPF stressed the importance of adopting an integrated service model: “We don’t just want child care services; we want more than that. We would like our health services, literacy services for parents and maternity services, for example, to be attached to a Francophone community that would be near the school.”⁶⁰ Models like the ones used by CPEFs are preferred by a number of community organizations because they allow for a multisector approach to programming, service delivery, and resource allocation. This is thought to have a wide variety of benefits, including better coordination of services, easy access to a wide variety of French-language services, approaches tailored to the needs and circumstances of each community, and a solid sense of the family being a part of the community.⁶¹

The Office of the Commissioner’s consultation conducted on February 10, 2016, revealed that despite efforts to introduce an integrated model, fragmentation among two levels of government and a wide range of institutions remains a significant issue for early childhood development in Francophone communities. This fragmentation leads to disparities in service delivery, isolation of child care centres and CPEFs, a lack of accessibility and resources, and the absence of national standards. Community representatives also decried the absence of a provincial or territorial service structure or grouping of services.

Provinces establish their own guidelines for spending and programs. The organizations consulted agreed that in order to address this issue, there needs to be a national cross-sector policy on early childhood development in Francophone communities, and that the policy should be based on federal-provincial-territorial cooperation. This would require a common approach to early childhood development with consistent goals, and clearly-defined roles and responsibilities for governments and communities.⁶²

4.3. LACK OF FUNDING

During the study conducted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages on the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013*, several witnesses from Francophone communities emphasized that French-language early childhood services suffer from a systemic shortage of resources. This means that, in many communities, “child care centres, early childhood centres and existing family and childhood centres cannot meet the rising demand for early childhood services in French.”⁶³

During the formal consultation conducted by the Office of the Commissioner on February 10, 2016, the lack of funding emerged as the most pressing issue in terms of early childhood services. The organizations that were consulted stressed that this issue is not specific to Francophone communities—it affects the entire early childhood sector. However, the impact on Francophone communities is much more pronounced. The lack of resources puts service providers in an unstable situation and reduces communities' ability to support parents, service providers and volunteers. The organizations also said that in the absence of sufficient public funding, services depend on limited private funding that often comes from the parents.

Under the 2003–2008 Action Plan and the 2008–2013 Roadmap, the envelopes earmarked for early childhood initiatives were \$14.6 million and \$17.5 million, respectively. However, these were not renewed in the 2013–2018 Roadmap. Therefore, given the broader clientele targeted by the Social Partnership Initiative in Official Language Minority Communities, coupled with the substantial reduction in the budget envelope compared with what was allocated in the previous five-year plans, communities have received little federal funding specifically for early childhood development since 2013. In addition, the Initiative's requirement to find external funding sources is a problem for many organizations. As a result, the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada* has requested federal government support to conduct an impact study in order to assess the viability of this funding strategy for Francophone communities.⁶⁴

Three additional issues arise from the lack of funding: a shortage of staff and training, insufficient infrastructure and a lack of awareness among parents and service providers.

4.3.1. SHORTAGE OF STAFF AND TRAINING

One of the key challenges is finding French-speaking staff trained in early childhood education, especially in rural areas. According to the most recent CNPF analytical portrait, “although there have been significant improvements in terms of human resources in child care services, many communities continue to struggle with hiring French-speaking educators with sufficient training and avoiding high employee turnover. [translation]”⁶⁵ In a 2005 study by the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, the Canadian Teachers' Federation reported that some service providers were choosing “Anglophone staff . . . because training was preferred over language competency, so that Anglophones were placed in childcare centres supposedly for Francophones.”⁶⁶

It is also difficult to retain educators in minority communities because sometimes they can be better paid in equivalent positions in majority communities. It is even more difficult in disadvantaged areas and in small child care centres, where salaries are often lower than in larger centres. In some provinces, educators are recruited by the English-language school system, which offers them better support tools and working conditions. Some provinces have set up grant programs to try to supplement educators' earnings. In 2014, the Government of New Brunswick announced a wage top-up program for early childhood educators with recognized training.⁶⁷ During the same year, the Government of Manitoba also announced that it was “establishing a wage enhancement grant to support long-term early childhood educators for their commitment to the field and to Manitoba children.”⁶⁸ These programs are not specific to Francophones and therefore do not address the pay gap between some English-language and French-language child care centres.

Furthermore, there is a lack of training for educators in minority-language educational institutions. This kind of training exists in British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Ontario, but is often given by only one provincial institution. During the Office of the Commissioner's February 2016 consultation, participants explained that early childhood services are often provided by just one person and that parents are not always willing to have their child care centre close temporarily so that the provider can take a training course. As a result, when training is available in French, educators' access is sometimes limited to programs offered outside of business hours. Participants also mentioned that important areas in early childhood services, such as administration and management, are often neglected.

4.3.2. INSUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Some provinces do not have enough infrastructure and facilities for minority-language child care centres: the demand for child care spaces exceeds the capacity of the available infrastructure.⁶⁹ For instance, there is only one French-language child care centre in each of the territories and in Newfoundland and Labrador. In other regions, there are very few French-language child care centres. In 2012, CNPF's analyses⁷⁰ anticipated an increase in child care centre attendance in all provinces and territories, and an increase in the number of services in the provinces. However, the waiting lists that many provinces and territories keep suggest that the number of spaces available is far from sufficient to meet demand.⁷¹

The most affordable child care facilities in many communities are those located in schools. However, these are often rare and will be increasingly unable to meet the needs of the communities in the years to come, because of the growing demand for child care services and because many schools are not able to provide facilities.⁷² In addition, child care centres located in schools are not guaranteed to be able to remain in these spaces in the long term. Some organizations that participated in the Office of the Commissioner's February 2016 consultation reported that schools running low on space for their students sometimes ask the child care centre to relocate. The centre then has to find another site, which is often more expensive.

According to the 2006 Census, 44% of children with one French-speaking parent were enrolled in French-language pre-kindergarten, while 55% were enrolled in English-language pre-kindergarten (see Appendix, Table 9). The proportions were nearly inverse for kindergarten enrolment. This data gives rise to various hypotheses, including a lack of access to French-language pre-kindergarten or issues related to availability or quality. In the Statistics Canada Survey of the Vitality of Official-Language Minorities, the parents of children attending a majority-language school were asked whether they would have preferred their child to be registered instead in a French-language school. More than a third of parents said that they would have preferred their child to be registered in a minority-language school but did not do so because of availability, proximity or quality of the programs.⁷³ In the territories and in the provinces outside Quebec, among French-speaking parents whose child was enrolled in an English-language child care centre at the time of the Survey, nearly two thirds said that they would have preferred to enroll their child in a French-language child care centre.⁷⁴ For all parents with a child registered in preschool programs or activities in the language of the majority, the proportion rises to three quarters for those who would have preferred to register their child in activities in the language of the minority.⁷⁵

During the consultation conducted by the Office of the Commissioner on February 10, 2016, participants said that the lack of long-term funding puts service providers in an unstable situation and reduces accessibility to services, which results in waiting lists. Parents tend to get discouraged and send their children to English-language or bilingual child care centres. Representatives of CNPF and GRINPE said that it is important to have a system designed for Francophones and managed by Francophones in order to reduce assimilation.

4.3.3. LACK OF AWARENESS AMONG PARENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Many community representatives stressed the need to promote and raise awareness of the importance of early childhood for the future of Francophone communities.

During an appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages in 2014, Ghislaine Pilon, then Acting Executive Director of CNPF, discussed this issue by pointing out the difficulties communities are having reaching parents and parents-to-be as well as the importance of equipping them:

The first three years determine the lifelong learning path and the ability to learn another language. The choice of the language spoken at home, in the community, and at school is made in the first months after birth, and even before. Well-informed parents who fully understand their rights and the impact of their decisions on the child in terms of language, identity, culture and sense of belonging will make wise choices.⁷⁶

Some community representatives would therefore like not only to increase efforts to promote the importance of early childhood development, but also to initiate efforts earlier on in order to raise awareness among French-speaking high school students regarding the choices they have to make in the future.

Ms. Pilon also stated that "parents are the first cultural communicators for their children. It is important to be able to guide Francophone parents, as well as parents who speak English or another language, so that they can contribute together to the building of their children's identity. Just as professionals need resources for their work, parents also need to be supported and guided."⁷⁷ Often, parents are not fully aware of the consequences of sending their children to child care in English and, later, to school in English, consequences that include limited opportunities for socialization in French and even the loss of rights-holder status when their children grow up and become parents. It is therefore important to ensure that the parents receive enough information about the resources and services available to support families and facilitate the linguistic, cultural and identity development of their children.⁷⁸ These efforts would also help increase the visibility of French-language early childhood services where they are available.⁷⁹

Community representatives also pointed out the need to make front-line service providers aware of their own contribution to the development of children's language and identity. "Thought must be given to training professionals in education faculties about the issues surrounding teaching in a minority setting and training teachers so that they are able to transmit the cultural message that is to be conveyed to students."⁸⁰ In addition to programs offered in post-secondary institutions, some community representatives said that it would be useful to provide educators, teachers and parents with tools related to French language transmission and identity building.⁸¹ It is also important for parents and service providers to have access to research and evidence so that they can make informed decisions.⁸²

There is currently little funding available to Francophone communities for ongoing activities to increase awareness among parents and service providers of the importance of early childhood development and of their role in it.⁸³ Many community representatives and experts in the field, including Rodrigue Landry, an Associate Researcher at the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities,⁸⁴ are calling for a national initiative to do this. During the Office of the Commissioner's February 2016 consultation and during appearances before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages in 2012, community representatives stated that the needs in terms of raising awareness are all the more important given the increasing diversity of their clientele, including exogamous families and immigrants.⁸⁵ To avoid taking a unidirectional approach, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada also emphasized the need to create dialogue with English-speaking or immigrant parents in exogamous families.⁸⁶

5. OPPORTUNITIES

A number of initiatives recently announced by the federal government provide key opportunities to address the issues presented in this report. In both the 2015 Speech from the Throne and the 2016 federal budget, the federal government announced that it would invest in social infrastructure, which could also benefit official language minority communities. The government has already pronounced its commitment to acting in a spirit of interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration, and to working together with parliamentarians, Canadians, civil society and various other partners.⁸⁷ There are also a number of mechanisms for cooperating with provincial and territorial governments, which could help to foster greater dialogue on early childhood development in Francophone communities.

5.1. THE NEXT OFFICIAL LANGUAGES PLAN

Historically, the 2003–2008 Action Plan and the 2008–2013 Roadmap were important initiatives to channel federal government support to early childhood development in Francophone communities. The 2013–2018 Roadmap will soon come to an end; however, the federal government has announced its intention not only to develop a new multi-year official languages plan to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities, but also to consult official language minority communities in doing so. These consultations should make it possible to clearly identify the needs of Francophone communities. The next action plan will also be a valuable opportunity to plan for investments to meet the specific early childhood development needs of Francophone communities.

5.2. NATIONAL EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FRAMEWORK

In his mandate letter to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Prime Minister asked the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos to "work with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to launch consultations with provinces and territories and Indigenous Peoples on a national early learning and child care framework as a first step towards delivering affordable, high-quality, flexible and fully inclusive child care."⁸⁸ In the 2016 federal budget, the Government of Canada announced an investment of "\$500 million in 2017–18 to support the establishment of a National Framework on Early Learning and Child Care."⁸⁹

The consultations and the development of the framework in cooperation with a wide variety of private- and public-sector partners will be ideal opportunities to identify approaches that would address the issues specific to Francophone communities.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: FUTURE COURSES OF ACTION FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

On the 40th anniversary of the *Official Languages Act* in 2009, Commissioner Fraser set out his vision for different areas of activity in official language minority communities. For education, this vision was: “Not only do English- and French-speaking children and students in minority communities have the opportunity to learn in their language, starting in early childhood, in institutions governed by their communities, but the instruction they receive is also of a quality equal to that in majority communities’ institutions.”⁹⁰

Federal institutions have an opportunity to support Francophone communities in the area of early childhood development through the Government of Canada’s commitment under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

Recommendation 1

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development consult Francophone minority communities and provincial and territorial governments in order to ensure that the next official languages plan contains adequate, stable and sustained investment in early childhood development in these communities.

Recommendation 2

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development ensure that Francophone minority communities are consulted as part of the development of the national framework on early learning and child care and that a Francophone component is included in the framework.

Recommendation 3

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, in cooperation with Francophone minority communities and appropriate federal institutions such as the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Public Health Agency of Canada, set up a national awareness initiative on early childhood development for parents and service providers in these communities.

Recommendation 4

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development report by March 31, 2018, on the measures taken to implement the above recommendations.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1: POPULATION BY MOTHER TONGUE IN CANADA, QUEBEC AND CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, 1951 TO 2006

CANADA	Total	French		English		Non-official languages	
Census year	Number of people (N)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
1951	14,009,429	4,068,850	29.0	8,280,809	59.1	1,659,770	11.8
1961	18,238,247	5,123,151	28.1	10,660,534	58.5	2,454,562	13.5
1971	21,568,310	5,792,710	26.9	12,967,445	60.1	2,808,155	13.0
1981	24,083,505	6,177,795	25.7	14,784,810	61.4	3,120,900	13.0
1991	26,994,040	6,562,065	24.3	16,311,210	60.4	4,120,770	15.3
1996	28,528,130	6,711,644	23.5	17,072,432	59.8	4,744,059	16.6
2001	29,639,035	6,782,294	22.9	17,521,897	59.1	5,334,849	18.0
2006	31,241,030	6,892,230	22.1	18,055,685	57.8	6,293,110	20.1

QUEBEC	Total	French		English		Non-official languages	
Census year	Number of people (N)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
1951	4,055,681	3,347,030	82.5	558,256	13.8	150,395	3.7
1961	5,259,211	4,269,689	81.2	697,402	13.3	292,120	5.6
1971	6,027,765	4,866,410	80.7	788,830	13.1	372,525	6.2
1981	6,369,055	5,254,195	82.5	693,600	10.9	421,265	6.6
1991	6,810,305	5,585,650	82.0	626,200	9.2	598,455	8.8
1996	7,045,085	5,741,438	81.5	621,858	8.8	681,790	9.7
2001	7,125,575	5,802,022	81.4	591,378	8.3	732,175	10.3
2006	7,435,900	5,916,840	79.6	607,165	8.2	911,895	12.3

CANADA MINUS QUEBEC	Total	French		English		Non-official languages	
		Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
1951	9,953,748	721,820	7.3	7,722,553	77.6	1,509,375	15.2
1961	12,979,036	853,462	6.6	9,963,132	76.8	2,162,442	16.7
1971	15,540,545	926,295	6.0	12,178,610	78.4	2,435,640	15.7
1981	17,714,450	923,605	5.2	14,091,215	79.5	2,699,635	15.2
1991	20,183,735	976,415	4.8	15,685,005	77.7	3,522,315	17.5
1996	21,483,045	970,207	4.5	16,450,574	76.6	4,062,269	18.9
2001	22,513,460	980,272	4.4	16,930,519	75.2	4,602,674	20.4
2006	23,805,125	975,390	4.1	17,448,525	73.3	5,381,210	22.6

Source: Réjean Lachapelle and Jean-François Lepage, "Table A.1, Population according to mother tongue, Canada, provinces, territories and Canada minus Quebec, 1951 to 2006," *New Canadian Perspectives – Languages in Canada: 2006 Census*, Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada, 2010, pp. 182–185. On-line version (http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/pc-ch/CH3-2-8-2010-eng.pdf) accessed September 1, 2016.

TABLE 2: ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGED 5 TO 17 ELIGIBLE FOR FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, 1986 TO 2006

CENSUS YEAR	Number of children
1986	285,205
1991	264,200
1996	250,930
2001	237,825
2006	211,755

Source: Rodrigue Landry, *Petite enfance et autonomie culturelle : Là où le nombre le justifie... V*, Moncton, Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, 2010, pp. 19 and 29. On-line version (www.icrml.ca/fr/recherches-et-publications/publications-de-l-icrml/item/8433-petite-enfance-et-autonomie-culturelle-la-ou-le-nombre-le-justifie-v) accessed September 1, 2016 (in French only).

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (0–4 YEARS OLD) OF FRANCOPHONE RIGHTS HOLDERS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION BY LINGUISTIC AND FAMILY STRUCTURE VARIABLES, IN CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, 2006 CENSUS

FAMILY STRUCTURE	Number of children of rights holders	French mother tongue	French spoken most often at home	French spoken regularly at home	French spoken at least regularly at home	Knowledge of French
Total	63,855	32,955	29,150	7,595	36,745	37,525
Endogamous Francophone	19,145	17,735	17,360	550	17,910	18,075
Exogamous (Francophone mother)	20,425	8,000	5,855	3,685	9,540	10,040
Exogamous (Francophone father)	18,300	3,255	2,400	2,770	5,170	5,270
Single mother	5,295	3,535	3,110	520	3,630	3,710
Single father	690	430	425	70	495	430

Source: Rodrigue Landry, “Enfants d’ayants droit francophones et leur répartition selon diverses variables langagières, l’âge et la structure familiale (Canada moins le Québec),” *Petite enfance et autonomie culturelle: Là où le nombre le justifie... V*, Moncton, Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, 2010, p. 28. On-line version (www.icrml.ca/fr/recherches-et-publications/publications-de-l-icrml/item/8433-petite-enfance-et-autonomie-culturelle-la-ou-le-nombre-le-justifie-v) accessed September 1, 2016 (in French only).

TABLE 4: FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN AMONG THE TOTAL POPULATION AND PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (0–4 YEARS OLD) IN CANADA, QUEBEC AND CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, 2011 CENSUS

TOTAL POPULATION	Canada		Quebec		Canada minus Quebec	
	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
Total	33,121,175	100.0	7,815,955	100.0	25,305,220	100.0
English	24,662,895	74.5	935,635	12.0	23,727,260	93.8
French	7,507,885	22.7	6,561,510	84.0	946,375	3.7
English and French	367,635	1.1	245,230	3.1	122,405	0.5
Neither English nor French	582,755	1.8	73,580	0.9	509,175	2.0

PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (0–4 YEARS OLD)	Canada		Quebec		Canada minus Quebec	
	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
Total	1,875,660	100.0	440,655	100.0	1,435,005	100.0
English	1,366,175	72.8	45,015	10.2	1,321,160	92.1
French	398,200	21.2	363,675	82.5	34,525	2.4
English and French	14,765	0.8	9,235	2.1	5,530	0.4
Neither English nor French	96,510	5.1	22,720	5.2	73,790	5.1

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-314-XCB2011044.

TABLE 5: MOTHER TONGUE AMONG THE TOTAL POPULATION AND PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (0–4 YEARS OLD) IN CANADA, QUEBEC AND CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, 2011 CENSUS

TOTAL POPULATION	Canada		Quebec		Canada minus Quebec	
	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
Total	33,121,175	100.0	7,815,955	100.0	25,305,220	100.0
English	18,858,980	56.9	599,225	7.7	18,259,755	72.2
French	7,054,970	21.3	6,102,210	78.1	952,760	3.8
Non-official language	6,567,685	19.8	961,695	12.3	5,605,990	22.2
English and French	144,685	0.4	64,800	0.8	79,885	0.3
English and a non-official language	396,330	1.2	23,430	0.3	372,900	1.5
French and a non-official language	74,430	0.2	51,635	0.7	22,795	0.1
English, French and a non-official language	24,095	0.1	12,950	0.2	11,145	0.0

PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (0–4 YEARS OLD)	Canada		Quebec		Canada minus Quebec	
	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
Total	1,875,660	100.0	440,655	100.0	1,435,005	100.0
English	1,169,325	62.3	33,770	7.7	1,135,555	79.1
French	370,120	19.7	336,975	76.5	33,145	2.3
Non-official language	275,800	14.7	52,410	11.9	223,390	15.6
English and French	14,915	0.8	7,185	1.6	7,730	0.5
English and a non-official language	35,245	1.9	1,830	0.4	33,415	2.3
French and a non-official language	7,755	0.4	6,905	1.6	850	0.1
English, French and a non-official language	2,505	0.1	1,570	0.4	935	0.1

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-314-XCB2011043.

TABLE 6: LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OFTEN AT HOME AMONG THE TOTAL POPULATION AND PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (0–4 YEARS OLD) IN CANADA, QUEBEC AND CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, 2011 CENSUS

TOTAL POPULATION	Canada		Quebec		Canada minus Quebec	
	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
Total	33,121,175	100.0	7,815,955	100.0	25,305,220	100.0
English	21,457,075	64.8	767,415	9.8	20,689,660	81.8
French	6,827,860	20.6	6,249,085	80.0	578,775	2.3
Non-official language	3,673,865	11.1	554,405	7.1	3,119,460	12.3
English and French	131,210	0.4	71,555	0.9	59,655	0.2
English and a non-official language	875,135	2.6	43,765	0.6	831,370	3.3
French and a non-official language	109,700	0.3	100,110	1.3	9,590	0.0
English, French and a non-official language	46,330	0.1	29,625	0.4	16,705	0.1

PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (0–4 YEARS OLD)	Canada		Quebec		Canada minus Quebec	
	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)	Number of people (N)	Percentage (%)
Total	1,875,660	100.0	440,655	100.0	1,435,005	100.0
English	1,201,415	64.1	37,640	8.5	1,163,775	81.1
French	371,710	19.8	340,270	77.2	31,440	2.2
Non-official language	230,205	12.3	43,790	9.9	186,415	13.0
English and French	10,780	0.6	5,505	1.2	5,275	0.4
English and a non-official language	48,850	2.6	2,365	0.5	46,485	3.2
French and a non-official language	10,055	0.5	9,385	2.1	670	0.0
English, French and a non-official language	2,640	0.1	1,700	0.4	940	0.1

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-314-XCB2011042.

TABLE 7: OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OFTEN IN THE HOMES OF CHILDREN TOO YOUNG TO TALK IN FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES, IN CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, SURVEY ON THE VITALITY OF OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE MINORITIES, 2007

PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES (MINUS QUEBEC)	English (%)	French (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador/ Prince Edward Island	67	33
Nova Scotia	71	29
New Brunswick	18	82
Ontario	53	47
Manitoba	65	35
Saskatchewan/Alberta	77	23
British Columbia/Territories	78	22
Total	56	44

Source: Réal Allard, “Les enfants des CLOSM du Canada et les langues officielles du pays,” *La vie dans une langue officielle minoritaire au Canada*, Rodrigue Landry (ed.), Québec City, Presses de l’Université Laval, 2014, p. 29 (in French only).

TABLE 8: TRANSMISSION RATE OF FRENCH BY FAMILY STRUCTURE AND CENSUS YEAR IN CANADA MINUS QUEBEC

FAMILY STRUCTURE	1991 (%)	1996 (%)	2001 (%)	2006 (%)	2011 (%)
Total	49.5	49.0	48.3	47.8	49.7
Exogamous (Francophone mother)	23.0	27.2	29.6	34.1	38.6
Exogamous (Francophone father)	10.1	12.3	12.9	15.0	19.3
Endogamous	91.2	91.8	91.6	91.9	91.0

Source: Mireille Vézina and René Houle, “French language transmission in exogamous and endogamous Francophone families in Canada,” *Cahiers québécois de démographie*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2014, p. 415. On-line version (www.erudit.org/revue/cqd/2014/v43/n2/1027984ar.html?vue=integral) accessed September 1, 2016 (French article with English abstract).

TABLE 9: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WITH ONE FRENCH-SPEAKING PARENT BY LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL (PRE-KINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN) IN CANADA MINUS QUEBEC, 2006

LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL	Pre-Kindergarten		Kindergarten	
	Number (N)	Percentage (%)	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
French	4,700	44	11,480	59
English	5,960	55	7,800	40
Total	10,800	100	19,540	100

Source: Statistics Canada, *Minorities Speak Up: Results of the Survey of the Vitality of Official-Language Minorities*, Table 5.3, 2007, p. 53. On-line version (www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-548-x/2007001/4185569-eng.htm#a4) accessed September 1, 2016.

ENDNOTES

1. In this report, the term “Francophone communities” is used to designate Francophone minority communities.
2. House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, *After the Roadmap: Toward Better Programs and Service Delivery*, Ottawa, November 2012, p. 54. On-line version (www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=e&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1&DocId=5831366&File=195#60) accessed September 1, 2016.
3. House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, *After the Roadmap: Toward Better Programs and Service Delivery*, Ottawa, November 2012, pp. 54–55. On-line version (www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=e&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1&DocId=5831366&File=195#60) accessed September 1, 2016.
4. House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, *After the Roadmap: Toward Better Programs and Service Delivery*, Ottawa, November 2012, p. 5. On-line version (www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=e&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1&DocId=5831366&File=33#6) accessed September 1, 2016.
5. Mariève Forest and Joyce Portilla, *3^{ème} portrait analytique des services en développement de la petite enfance dans les communautés francophones et acadiennes en contexte minoritaire au Canada*, prepared for the Commission nationale des parents francophones, May 2012, p. 14. On-line version (http://cnpf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/3eme_portrait_analytique-Final-1.pdf) accessed September 1, 2016 (in French only).
6. Preschool refers strictly to child care and pre-kindergarten programs for students who are not yet of school age. The courts have limited themselves to studying this concept, not the broader concept of early childhood.
7. *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Part 1 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (UK), 1982, c 11. On-line version (<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html#s-23>) accessed September 1, 2016.
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9. For example, in *Association des Parents ayants droit de Yellowknife et al. v Attorney General of the Northwest Territories et al.*, the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories concluded that “daycare is an important link in the chain of the school’s promotion and long-term survival. This contributes to the achievement of the fundamental objectives of section 23” (*Association des Parents ayants droit de Yellowknife et al. v Attorney General of the Northwest Territories et al.*, 2012 NWTSC 43, para 786. On-line version [www.canlii.org/en/nt/ntsc/doc/2012/2012nwtsc43/2012nwtsc43.html] accessed September 1, 2016.). However, this decision was reversed in appeal (*Northwest Territories [Attorney General] v Association des parents ayants droit de Yellowknife*, 2015 NWTCA 2. On-line version [www.canlii.org/en/nt/ntca/doc/2015/2015nwtca2/2015nwtca2.html] accessed September 1, 2016.).
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