“Pour le bien des enfants?” (“For the good of the children?”): Critical News Media Analysis of Deficit Discourses in the Expansion of Quebec’s Kindergarten Program in 1960-1962 and 2018

Tifanie Valade

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Education

Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

Abstract

This research project explored historic and current interventionist and deficit-based discourses in news media related to the universalization of kindergarten education in Quebec. Public debates surrounding the universalization of kindergarten for 5-year-olds in the early 1960s, during the Quiet Revolution, a period of rapid modernization and change, were compared to public debates during the 2018 provincial election where the universalization of kindergarten for 4-year-olds was proposed. A series of 196 news articles were analyzed via a critical, intersectional feminist poststructuralist lens, using critical thematic analysis. Themes developed from news media data from the 1960s included topics related to psychological intervention and the normalizing function of kindergarten, views of potentially deficient mothers and their replacement by kindergarten teachers, as well as fears of juvenile delinquency tied to understandings of modernity. From the election period in 2018, themes related to early schooling as a panacea for vulnerability were discussed, as well as shifting discourses tied to motherhood/parenting, the spectre of the "bad mother", and anxieties surrounding Québécois identity and nationhood. Finally, deficit discourses tied to neoliberal influences and human capital theory in early years education were addressed. Similarities and differences between the two time periods were noted, as well as shifts in the inclusion or exclusion of specific voices in public discourse.

Keywords:
Kindergarten, education, children, Quebec, maternelle, preschool, préscolaire

Acknowledgments

This project would not have come to fruition without the ongoing support of many kind people. When I enrolled at the University of Ottawa, no one could have predicted that the world would be shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. My very first class took place in the Spring of 2020. As we all scrambled to adapt to remote learning, I met my supervisor, my instructors, and my fellow students through screens and headsets. We shared the struggles of living through unprecedented events, and both the faculty members who were teaching graduate courses, and the students from my cohort, were generous with their time and their efforts to connect with one another and to embrace learning together.

The years following the pandemic included personal challenges that tested my resolve to complete this degree. Through it all, however, my supervisor, Marie-Hélène, was steadfast in her encouragement and never wavered in her support. Pour ça, Marie-Hélène, je suis très reconnaissante. J'apprécie votre gentillesse et votre dévouement envers vos étudiant(e)s, ainsi que toutes les opportunités que vous nous avez offertes. Nos discussions sur de nombreux sujets politiques, de recherche, et sur la vie en général ont toujours été un vrai plaisir. Vous m'avez inspirée à assumer ma capacité de travailler en français, et vous avez éveillé en moi une passion pour l'histoire des femmes. Merci sincèrement.

To my committee members, Joanne and Ruth, thank you for following along with the many permutations of this project, and for reading the text and offering your generous feedback and reactions. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with you both.

Thank you to the faculty members who I had the good fortune to learn from during my coursework, and to those I had the opportunity to work with as a teaching assistant. Your examples helped to shape who I am today as a researcher and an instructor. And to my friends and fellow students – Maryam, Coral, Marie-Hélène, Amanda, and so many more that I met virtually and in person, thank you for your solidarity and your support as we navigated this learning journey together. You are all brilliant individuals that I'm lucky to know.

And finally, to my family who have had what seems like unlimited patience while I worked my way through this project, and then sequestered myself to write, thank you. Hope and Liam, I am inspired by you every day. You are thoughtful, insightful, kind human beings and watching you grow into adults has been my greatest privilege. Ray, I know patience doesn't come naturally, so thank you for walking this road beside me and never once asking if I was done yet.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

ACJE: Association canadienne des jardinières d'enfants

AÉPQ: Association d'éducation préscolaire du Québec

CAQ: Coalition Avenir Quebec

CDA: Critical discourse analysis

CECM: Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal

CPE: Centres de la petite enfance

CSDM: Commission scolaire de Montréal

CSE: Conseil supérieur de l'éducation

CTA: Critical thematic analysis

DAP: Developmentally Appropriate Practice

DHA: Discourse-historical approach

ECEC: Early childhood education and care

EDI: Early Development Instrument

EDP: École des parents du Québec

HCT: Human Capital Theory

NAEYC: American National Association for the Education of Young Children

PFEQ: Programme de formation de l'école Québécoise

PQ: Parti Québécois

QPCP: Quebec Preschool Cycle Program

QSCDK: Quebec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten

RECE: Reconceptualist early childhood education

RTA: Reflexive thematic analysis

TCRI: Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes

Chapter 1: Introduction and Conceptual Framework

> "Under the vast amounts of facts and figures, the question of what education in general and early childhood education in particular is *for*, the question of the *dreams* and the *utopias*, seems to have vanished. As equally has the question of who is entitled to define what education is for, what the horizon may be."
>
> – Vandenbroeck (2021, p. 12)

Setting the Scene

In the fall of 2018, Quebec's four main political parties presented their differing visions for the future of early years education in the province during a hotly contested provincial election. Their target audience were parents of 4-year-olds, as they proposed and debated different childcare and educational arrangements for this age group. Press coverage of the election campaign, as well as of the leaders' debates, demonstrated conflicting visions and contradictory discourses surrounding early childhood education and care (ECEC). These included disagreements on where public funds should be spent, and what type of education and care is most appropriate for 4-year-olds. François Legault, leader of the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) made the expansion of full-time kindergarten for 4-year-olds a center point of his campaign, even going as far as to suggest that he would give up his seat in the National Assembly should he fail to create 5000 new prekindergarten classes in his first mandate (La Presse Canadienne, 2023). The rhetoric espoused by the CAQ in favor of the creation of a universal prekindergarten program was one of educational success and social equity, which they proposed could be achieved by offering early interventions for "vulnerable" or "at-risk" children. Legault argued that it was "pour le bien des enfants" ("for the good of the children")[1] (Messier, 2019), particularly those with "learning difficulties" or "problems" (Lau, 2019). Although deficit-based approaches as an equity-seeking educational measure are problematic, in that they pathologize particular groups of children and their families (Lehrer, 2012; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995), this message must nevertheless have resonated with a sufficient number of voters, as the CAQ won the election with a majority of seats.

[1] Note that throughout this text quotations from French documents and newspaper articles have all been translated into English by myself, Tifanie Valade. These translations are understood to be approximate and are included for the benefit of non-francophone readers.

Nearly 60 years prior to 2018, in the spring of 1960, another hotly contested Quebec provincial election hinged, in part, on proposed educational reforms, including in the area of preschool education. The historic 1960 contest between the Union Nationale and the Quebec Liberal Party would usher in the period known as The Quiet Revolution, which included sweeping social and economic reforms, and the acceleration of the modernization of Quebec society (Linteau et al., 1991). Jean Lesage's "équipe du tonnerre" ran a campaign with the slogan "C'est l'temps qu'ça change" ("It's time for things to change"). They proposed to tackle Quebec's elevated school attrition rate by offering free public education from kindergarten to grade 11, free textbooks, and subsidies for students suffering from financial hardship (Ministère de la Jeunesse, 1961). As kindergarten had previously been offered mainly as a private, for-profit service for well-off families, the proposed reforms ignited a public debate that would last several years regarding the use, benefits, and even the potential social problems posed by state-run preschool education. There was a strong emphasis on "normal" vs "abnormal" students, as well as concerns surrounding the role of mothers and the family (Lehrer & Bastien, 2015). In addition, questions were raised regarding the need for state intervention to ward off future juvenile delinquency, particularly for children of the working classes ("Toujours le foyer fautif : les délinquants, des enfants mal aimés," 1960). With an emphasis on learning and behavioural deficits, school readiness, and the potential future economic and social impacts of "abnormal", or "problem" citizens, the parallel interventionist discourses at work in the debates during both the early 1960s and the 2018 election raised, and continue to raise, larger questions about preschool educational policy, citizenship, and social justice in the province of Quebec.

According to Lehrer (2012), a focus on school readiness in ECEC in Quebec and elsewhere is frequently tied to deficit discourses. Deficit-based models define certain populations as 'at risk', which Swadener and Lubeck (1995) suggest is a rhetoric that "uses a medical *language of pathology* to label persons based on their race, first language, class, family structure, geographic location, and gender as 'at risk for failure'" (p. 2, emphasis in original). Such policies frequently involve notions of lack, deficiency, incompetence, and dis/ability related to Western, Eurocentric "cultural systems of reasoning" (Bloch & Kim, 2015, p. 14). According to Bloch and Kim (2015), North American educational systems often prioritize Eurocentric ways of knowing that center ideas such as objectivity, empiricism, developmentalism, normality/abnormality, and inclusion/exclusion. Such discourses have been criticized in the development of programs aimed

at disadvantaged children in the U.S. such as early kindergarten and Head Start (Countryman & Elish-Piper, 1998), and in the implementation of standardized educational policies such as No Child Left Behind (Stipek, 2006). The U.S. is not the only country that has experienced critiques of these policies, however, as questions regarding their use have also been raised inAustralia and the United Kingdom, particularly with regards to racialized, immigrant and Indigenous populations (Colegrove & Adair, 2014; Cushing, 2023; Hogarth, 2018). In addition, these deficit models have been problematically exported from the global North to the global South via early childhood interventions by international development organizations (Scheidecker et al., 2023).

Understandings of "quality" care in ECEC which involve a cost/benefit analysis regarding the potential productivity of future adult citizens (Dahlberg et al., 2013; Lehrer, Richardson, et al., 2023) also complicate notions of children as deficient and in need of intervention to prevent future problems. However it is not just children but families, and indeed, entire neighbourhoods, that can become pathologized under deficit-based approaches (Heydon & Iannacci, 2008). Parents are often penalized for their children's purported deficits through a neoliberal individualization of social issues such as poverty (Vandenbroeck et al., 2010). This individualization supports Heydon's (2008) argument that despite governments' framing of deficit discourses as offering support for vulnerable populations, they are in fact a method of obscuring systemic social issues and preventing interventions that may put the larger dominant society's privilege at risk. This appears to be the case in Quebec, where kindergarten and prekindergarten programs are purported to ward off future "troubles" for societal institutions, including behavioural and academic problems, delinquency, and potential future economic dependence on the state (Deniger, 2012).

Since the 1980s, a shift toward right of center governments in North America has resulted in a neoliberal, individualist, free-market approach to education which has created increased privatization, competition, and stratification in the Quebec education system. Tardif (2015) suggests that neoliberalism has resulted in contradictory public discourses, such as those related to competition, success, and return on investment, that work against the notion of the education system as a democratizing apparatus. He goes on to argue that a neoliberal approach has served to partially negate the egalitarian ideals that underpinned the Parent Report (Commission royale d'enquête sur l'enseignement dans la province de Québec, 1964) and subsequent educational reforms. In addition, he proposes that Quebec teacher education programs often fail to address

the social causes of educational inequities. According to Deniger (2012), the bureaucratization and individualization of educational interventions under neoliberalism have served to obscure the social causes for poor educational attainment in the province, including Quebec's elevated high-school dropout rate.

The state's reliance on early educational programs as a catch-all solution often precludes discussion of the larger social issues and inequities that lie at the heart of the potential future "troubles" the programs are intended to prevent. Ahmed (2015) suggests that feminist researchers ought to turn this type of signification of "trouble" on its head by "re-thinking of trouble as pedagogy, trouble as how we are taught the mechanisms of power" (pp. 179-180). Taking inspiration from Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), Ahmed argues that:

> … power is often naturalised through the *containment of trouble* … the categories that are assumed as untroubled (we might say, uncontestable because they are not contested) are the categories we must trouble. Trouble when it leaks from its containers *throws everything into question.* (p. 182, emphasis in original)

Although ECEC is often constructed as a neutral, "trouble-free" space where children learn through play, Butler et al. (2019) propose that it is in fact an ideologically-laden venue for the reproduction of dominant ideals and social hierarchies related to gender, race, class, language, immigration status, Indigeneity, and dis/ability, among others.

Utilizing a decolonial, intersectional lens, Butler et al. (2019) examined "White-privilege racism, neoliberal capitalism, and patriarchal gender normativity … and how such discriminatory cultural influences can be either reinforced or challenged through pedagogical practice and care work" (p. 3). Recent research in ECEC in Canada and elsewhere (see examples below) supports the notion that early years education can, in fact, be a venue for exclusion, and in some cases even violence, directed at children and families who do not conform to normative expectations. Prioletta (2020) and Abawi et al. (2021) suggest that a reliance on developmental approaches, child-centered pedagogy, and nebulous concepts of diversity in ECEC, have supported educators' beliefs in classrooms as egalitarian, colour and gender-blind spaces, precluding educator intervention in problematic practices and normalizing oppressive power imbalances. In line with this reasoning, Parazelli et al. (2022) argue that Quebec's "predictive early prevention"[2]

[2] "Prévention précoce predictive" or predictive early prevention, is the prevention of future undesirable behaviours or maladaptations via interventions based on expert knowledge of neuroscience, psychological developmental and behaviour. It requires the control of risk and protection factors in the present to impact the future. Its basis is found

model, meant to root out developmental "troubles", is in fact a tool of state surveillance and control based in a normalized biomedical rationalism that requires more rigorous critique of its underlying assumptions.

This research project seeks, then, to explore these historic and current interventionist and deficit-based discourses in the Quebec context via a critical, intersectional feminist poststructuralist lens. This will be accomplished by shining a spotlight on public debates concerning kindergarten and ECEC at important historical and political moments. More specifically, this project involves a critical thematic analysis of news media accounts of the 2018 election, as well as the period from 1960-62, to deconstruct the various discourses at work in the public imagination related to ECEC. The questions posed by this research project are: What discourses are at work in the targeted timeframes, and what is their historical context? How do they relate to early years educational policy, as well as notions of citizenship, childhood, families and motherhood? How have these discourses changed or remained the same over time? What are the implications of these discourses for equity and social justice in early years education, and for an understanding of young children as full, participatory citizens in Quebec society?

In order to answer the questions noted above, this project is divided into six chapters. The first is this introduction which includes an explanation of the theoretical framing, and an overview of reconceptualist ECEC literature in Canada and Quebec. The second chapter involves an explanation of critical thematic analysis as a methodological approach, and gives an overview of the study design, including the data selection, coding, and theme development process. The third chapter offers a history of the evolution of kindergarten education in Quebec, while chapter four examines the themes developed from the newspaper articles analyzed from the early 1960s. Chapter five includes the news analysis from 2018. Chapter six concludes by reflecting on the findings of the study and suggesting avenues for future research.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy

This study is framed using critical theoretical and feminist poststructuralist lenses. According to Levinson (2011), "critical social theories are those conceptual accounts of the

---

in positivist, empiricist concepts of human development, tied to "evidence-based" data and the desire to technocratically control human problems. This approach is also based on the notion that psychosocial problems are neurological or psychological in nature rather than the result of sociopolitical inequalities. [Definition adapted/translated by Tifanie Valade from Parazelli (2020), p. 237-239].

social world that attempt to understand and explain the causes of structural domination and inequality in order to facilitate human emancipation and equity" (p. 2). For critical theorists, there are no universal truths, as knowledge is socially constructed and tied to power via the interests of its producers who use a variety of methods to legitimate particular forms of knowledge as "common sense" (Ryan & Grieshaber, 2004). Critical educational research is viewed as neither neutral nor objective, but rather a historically situated, value-laden enterprise that has political and social consequences (Kincheloe et al., 2018). Although it was originally associated with the Frankfurt School of social philosophy and Marxist thought, whose proponents sought to understand "the complex set of mediations that interconnect consciousness and society, culture and economy, state, and citizen" (Kellner, 1990, p. 15), today critical theory is the basis for a wide range of theoretical approaches. These include feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, cultural studies, and critical disability studies, among others. Researchers in these fields share a common goal of uncovering taken for granted social and institutional practices that reproduce different forms of oppression.

Critical theorists propose that individuals and groups are both constrained by the limits imposed on them by the social world and simultaneously help shape the same social world via their actions and decisions. Strunk and Betties (2019) argue that this dialectic of oppression vs. empowerment, or structure vs. agency, results in contradictions within social systems and institutions which offer the potential to "move systems towards equity and liberation" (p. 74). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that some critical research views itself as emancipatory from the outset and seeks explicitly to create resistance through the raising of critical consciousness and/or enacting forms of social change (Kincheloe et al., 2018). Critical approaches, particularly those tied to feminist theorizing, also call for an accounting of the positionality of the researcher within the research process, and reflexivity with regards to the role the research process might play in reproducing or challenging power dynamics (Pillow & Mayo, 2012). For critical feminist researchers, the research process is thought to represent a constitutive or 'world-making' act (Baxter, 2007).

In educational contexts, critical theory is also tied to critical pedagogy, which is associated with ideals of democratic schooling and the hope that education can function as an emancipatory enterprise for oppressed groups. Often based in the work of Paulo Freire (1974), critical pedagogy tackles questions of power, culture and oppression in educational contexts by

encouraging classroom practices that empower students through a process of conscientization (Darder et al., 2009). This process includes an analysis of power inequities both within and outside of schooling, deconstruction of taken for granted forms of knowledge, and the recovery of suppressed or ignored histories. As Giroux (2009) notes:

> It becomes possible for students who have been traditionally voiceless in schools to learn the skills, knowledge, and modes of inquiry that will allow them to critically examine the role society has played in their own self-formation. More specifically, they will have the tools to examine how this society has functioned to shape and thwart their aspirations and goals or prevented them from even imagining a life outside the one they presently lead. (p. 47)

Critical pedagogy is often overlooked in ECEC. This may be due to a paternalistic understanding of childhood as a separate stage of life where the domination of young children by adults is deemed necessary to children's protection and proper development (Delage, 2020). However, critical pedagogy remains relevant to the analysis of discourses surrounding early years education because, as Vandenbroeck (2021) argues, it "show[s] that other stories are possible" (p. 6) when viewing education as an equity and social-justice centered undertaking.

Equity and Social Justice

Equity in educational settings is defined as taking into consideration the legal, social, political and economic equality of all individuals and groups. (Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006). Achieving equity often requires recognizing past marginalizations and oppressions that impact the present, and enacting measures to compensate for these effects. Social justice, which is tied to equity, is concerned with the elimination of oppressions tied to power imbalances by "eradicating injustices, making the invisible visible, creating inclusive and caring spaces, valuing people's diverse backgrounds and abilities, fostering acceptance, and appreciating the richness of our pluralistic society" (Peters, 2020, p. 87). In North America, questions of equity in education have often been tied to what Connell (1993) terms distributive justice, or equal access to formal schooling and certification. This is illustrated via public debates related to questions of "who gets how much" of an educational good or service, such as debates that have occurred over time in Quebec surrounding access to prekindergarten, daycare, and other forms of ECEC (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021). However, Connell (1993) argues that in order to achieve true equity, questions not just of distribution but also of the content and structure of education must be addressed. As I

shall demonstrate, notions of equity and social justice are particularly pertinent to discussions of kindergarten in Quebec, as throughout its history it has frequently been touted as a compensatory form of education that might eradicate inequalities (Brunelle, 2024; Lehrer & Bastien, 2015).

Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism, a branch of critical theorizing, involves a decentering of enlightenment/modernist understandings of individuals as unified, rational beings who perceive the truth of reality, in favour of the notion of individuals constituted through language and other representational systems(Gavey, 1989). Following Derrida's (1982) notion of "différance", poststructuralist theorists look at what is absent or deferred, most often using deconstruction, or "an interpretive practice used to study the usually-not-noticed aspects of language, images, practices … that is intended to support new understandings of how meaning is always enabled and constrained by one's ability to perceive (or not perceive) such aspects" (Davis, 2004, p. 125). In order to examine social phenomena, poststructuralists therefore look to notions of "discourse" to understand how subjectivity and reality are produced, as well as how power circulates between individuals, groups, and institutions (Weedon, 1997). Although discourse can refer to language in use, within poststructuralist theory it designates what Gee (2011) terms big "D" Discourse, or a set of understandings that result in the enactment of socially recognizable identities that shape how we make sense of the world, and that constitute social reality. Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) further define discursive practices as:

> A set of tacit rules that regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessings of authority and who must listen, whose social constructions are valid and whose are erroneous and unimportant. In an educational context, for example, legitimated discourses of power insidiously tell educators what books may be read by students, what instructional methods may be utilized, and what belief systems and views of success may be taught. (p. 291)

According to Weedon (1997), "individuals are both the *site* and *subjects* of discursive struggle for their identity" (p. 93, emphasis in original) and though they are not without agency, that agency is constrained by the hegemonic discourses available to them in a specific context. Hegemonic discourses are those that gain the most traction, or that "at the moment, have the greatest influence on the collective imagination" (Davis, 2004, p. 127) and involve the tacit consent of those who are governed by them, even though they may not be in their best interest.

This description of particular discourses as hegemonic is derived from Gramsci's definition of hegemony. Gramsci stated that populations are now controlled by dominant groups via consent rather than by force, by convincing individuals that the policies being put in place benefit them, even though they in fact serve the interests of powerful actors or groups (discussed in Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006). Resistance is still possible, however, through critical, reflexive analysis of one's own subjectification, and the insertion of new ways of thinking into the processes by which we are subjugated and governed (B. Davies et al., 2006).

Gannon and Davies (2012) suggest that by shifting from an understanding of language as a descriptor of a pre-existing world, to discourse as constitutive of reality, poststructuralist research is advantageous because it "makes visible the historical, cultural, social, and discursive patterns through which current oppressive or dominant realities are held in place" (p. 11). They go on to note that this allows for a close analysis of the ways in which power operates. Power is central to poststructuralist theorizing, as subjectification involves negotiations of power relations related to how individuals are multiply positioned within a variety of discourses. Poststructuralists take up Foucault's (1980) argument that power operates through surveillance and normalization, or what he terms "disciplinary power" where individuals are not only controlled via outside surveillance, but via their own self-surveillance. As Youdell (2011) notes "disciplinary power simultaneously is produced by and has as one of its effects the management of populations at the micro-level of daily life" (p. 36).

In developmentalist approaches to ECEC, disciplinary power is particularly apparent as surveillance and reporting on the part of educators form part of the structure of most educational programs. The QPCP, for example, includes five "competencies" and ten "focuses of development" including a list of observable behaviours teachers are intended to employ to "better identify the children's progress along the developmental continuum" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2021, p. 14). This classroom observation and reporting is further complicated by standardized evaluations such as the Early Development Instrument (EDI) which act as disciplinary "technologies" by measuring children's school readiness and identifying "vulnerable" children in need of targeted interventions (Parazelli et al., 2022). The version of the EDI utilized in Quebec to analyze the development of children in Kindergarten includes teacher-reported assessments of physical well-being, language and cognitive skills, social and emotional development, as well as information regarding the child's educational background and parental

involvement (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2017). Critics of the EDI suggest that it functions as a type of Foucauldian "panopticon for young children" (Peers, 2011, p. 145), designed to help predict and control future outcomes. The EDI was of particular concern during the 2018 election, as it appears that the CAQ's argument for the universalization of kindergarten for 4-year-olds was based on the results of the Quebec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK) which is derived from the EDI. One way of analyzing the workings of disciplinary power and understanding the experiences of groups that might be marginalized through the circulation of hegemonic discourses, is through the lens of feminist or intersectional poststructuralism.

Feminist/Intersectional Poststructuralism

Feminist poststructuralism is particularly concerned with the operation of power as it applies to gender and sexuality. Derived from feminist theory that privileges women's experiences and voices, it includes an explicitly political dimension geared toward gender equality (Kohli & Burbules, 2012). Although there is no singular feminist theory or epistemology (academics and activists speak instead of a plurality of "feminisms" (Showden, 2009)), many contemporary feminist epistemologies focus on the importance of identity, subjectivity, and social location. I propose, for the purpose of this project, that a feminist poststructuralist lens can be applied to additional processes of subjectification including those tied to racialization, culture, socioeconomic status, ability, age/concepts of childhood, citizenship status, and first language, through an intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1994).

Although the concept of intersectionality has now been utilized in different ways in a variety of academic disciplines, it was developed by authors such as Crenshaw (1994) and Collins (1998) who described the particularities of intersecting oppressions which categorized Black women's lives in the United States under both racism and patriarchy. They lamented how an analysis of this intersection was often absent from both feminist and antiracist theorizing. Feminist poststructuralism, translated into intersectional poststructuralism, is particularly suited to exploring multiply positioned individuals due to its emphasis on subjectification. If subjectivity includes an individual's conscious and unconscious thoughts, emotions, and sense of self, as well as how they relate to the world around them (Weedon, 1997), then subjectification is the process of forming one's subjectivity by being positioned, or positioning oneself within a variety of discourses. This is not a linear, rational, process but rather a fluid, contradictory,

irrational and constantly shifting set of identifications (Robinson & Jones-Diaz, 2006). Intersectional approaches facilitate the analysis of this process of reinvention and negotiation of power hierarchies in specific contexts.

Media/Cultural Critique

One way of examining subjectification is through cultural studies and critical media analysis, which are also branches of critical theory. If culture "exists outside of us, but is core to our being" as it "provides the symbolic logic by which we understand how things are and how things come to be" (Hickey, 2012, p. 168), then examining cultural production from a critical perspective is an integral part of understanding how educational policies get "sold" to the public and enacted. My background as a researcher in feminist media and cultural studies (Valade, 2019) has instilled in me the importance of analyzing cultural artifacts and texts, including media representations. This type of analysis examines how particular narratives and symbols are operationalized, resulting in real material effects for specific groups (Hall, 1997). As Bell (1998) argues:

> The media are important social institutions. They are crucial presenters of culture, politics and social life, shaping as well as reflecting how these are formed and expressed. Media 'discourse' is important both for what it reveals about a society and because it also itself contributes to the character of society. (p. 64)

News media in particular, due to their specialized structure and linguistic forms, such as recognizable topical "scripts", and narrative schemas, are particularly indicative of social attitudes and ideological currents in topics of public interest (Van Dijk, 1988). As Johnson (1997) notes, the importance of news media lies in the "subjective and cultural forms which it realizes and makes available" (p. 97).

In the case of kindergarten in Quebec, notions such as childhood, education, care, citizenship, parenthood, disability, delinquency, deficits, and social benefits were circulated through mainstream news reports and editorials with regards to the various parties' policies during the provincial elections in 2018 and during the early 1960s. These discourses, as "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1980), engaged the public imaginary and potentially normalized particular approaches to early years education, as well as raising questions about the pathologization of specific groups, and about equity in schooling. Without examining news media representations, an incomplete picture of ECEC in Quebec is painted, focused uniquely on policy and

pedagogical approaches, that ignores the larger cultural context in which these discourses play out, and the power relations at work. In addition, the processes of subjectification of children and families via these public discourses are of importance to critical research. Cultural studies therefore informs my research approach and choice of research subject, including the decision to include news media accounts.

Reconceptualist Perspectives in ECEC

Despite the predominance of normative, developmentalist approaches in early years curricula and practice, there is also a history of critique within the field. Beginning in the mid-1980s, a small group of academics located in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.K. began questioning the dominance of positivist, largely quantitative approaches to research in ECEC. They termed this approach "reconceptualist early childhood education" (RECE), or postfoundationalist critique. Early RECE writings examined ECEC's reliance on Euro-Western empiricist views of science, and an adherence to developmental psychology that guided early years classroom pedagogy as well as teacher education (Bloch, 2014). Empiricist approaches were critiqued for producing scientific "truths" against which all children's development is measured, and which result in inequitable outcomes for children who fall outside the norms of this universalist paradigm. RECE scholars have sought to question inequities by challenging "the construction of truths that have placed particular groups of people, forms of knowledge, and ways of being in the margins" (Curry & Cannella, 2013, p. x). In an effort to create a more diverse, equitable, and socially just world through early years education, RECE scholars have embraced intersectional critical perspectives that work to understand social power relations and challenge normalizing discourses related not only to children and childhood but also to class, gender, race, sexuality, ability, and other factors (A. Butler et al., 2019). Some of the foundational assumptions and practices that have been placed under scrutiny include Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), dominant views of mothering/gender/care work, adult/child hierarchies that privilege age and maturity, and measurable linear "progression" models of human development (Curry & Cannella, 2013).

Of these, DAP has perhaps been the focus of the heaviest critique, as it's a set of widely used American curriculum standards published by the American National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that center around a normative assessment model which ignores issues of power brought about by diverse cultural and social contexts. Normative

approaches such as DAP reinforce deficit discourses that force children to conform to the dominant culture to be deemed successful (Iannacci & Whitty, 2009). In addition, drawing on Viruru and Cannella (2001), Iannacci and Whitty (2009) suggest that developmentalist approaches such as DAP are both a reflection of colonial power relations, and a colonization of young children's minds and bodies. They argue that by "challenging the grand narratives or dominant discourses that have shaped ECE, new stories can be shared that inform a refashioned vision for the future" (2009, p. 22). Other discourses that have been heavily critiqued include those related to "quality" of education (Dahlberg et al., 2013; Moss, 2014) as noted above, and neoliberal policy paradigms that have renewed calls for "evidence-based" practice involving empiricist testing and research. In recent years, RECE scholars have turned to Indigenous knowledges, the decolonization of research, posthumanism, and global perspectives (Nsamenang, 2010; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2010; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo, 2014; Ritchie & Rau, 2008; K. Smith et al., 2017). Although it remains somewhat marginal within the field, RECE poses important and legitimate challenges to dominant paradigms. As Bloch notes "most [RECE] critique … [goes] against mainstream policy, pedagogy, research, and teacher education" (2014, p. 23) making it an important challenge to dominant paradigms.

Although in recent years theories surrounding the education of young children have progressed from the notion of children as intellectual blank slates, ready to receive knowledge, to one of active co-creators of knowledge (Dahlberg et al., 2013), much early education still remains tied to a linear developmental model. Developmentalism views children as immature or incomplete adults, who are still in the process of reaching their full humanity and require adult guidance and assistance to do so. While donning the mantle of child-centered education and individualization, developmentalist discourse in fact involves social control and regulation which denies children's agency as already fully human beings (Delage, 2020) and their potentiality as political subjects and active citizens (Cannella, 2008; MacNaughton et al., 2008). Despite continued critiques of these universalizing discourses by feminist and reconceptualist educators (Abawi et al., 2021; A. W. J. Davies et al., 2024; Moss, 2014; Osgood & Robinson, 2017), they remain prevalent in North American preschool educational policy and practice, particularly in an era where the correction of deficiencies to maximize school readiness is thought to be essential to ensuring future economically productive citizens (Lehrer, 2012; Lehrer, Richardson, et al., 2023; Roberts-Holmes & Moss, 2021).

Critical Approaches in Canada

Though proponents of reconceptualist perspectives in Canada face an uphill battle against the pervasiveness of developmentalism (A. W. J. Davies et al., 2024), critical research has experienced a renaissance in recent years. Researchers have focused on the examination of race and racism in Canadian ECEC curricula and pedagogies (Abawi, 2021; Berman et al., 2017; Escayg, 2021; MacNevin & Berman, 2017; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2006), and concepts of diversity (Kannen & Acker, 2008). These have included examinations of how deficit discourses actively harm immigrant and refugee children and families by curtailing their agency (Bernhard, 2012; Menon, 2021). Decolonial perspectives have also come to the fore (A. Butler et al., 2019; Diaz-Diaz, 2022), with critiques of the Eurocentrism of curriculum and classroom organization as exclusionary and reflective of settler-colonial perspectives. Decolonial practitioners (Nxumalo, 2019; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor, 2015; Simon, 2021) have also forefronted embodied pedagogies, place-based learning and Indigenous knowledges as a method of highlighting Indigenous worldviews and contrasting them with developmentalism's colonialist foundations. Gender and gender identity (DiMarco & Ruthes Coelho, 2020; Hodgins, 2019; Malins, 2017; Timmons & Airton, 2020), sexuality/heteronormativity (Janmohamed, 2010), and femmephobia (A. Davies & Hoskin, 2021; Prioletta & Davies, 2024) have also been taken up by researchers as important areas where inequities are often overlooked in early years education policies and practice.

Teacher education has also been an active area of inquiry, with a focus on queer theory, political activism, and the effects of the ongoing universalization of professional standards (Janmohamed, 2013; Langford, 2007; B. Richardson et al., 2020). Davies et al. (2024) have recently explored how the majority of postsecondary education programs for early childhood educators in Canada enact a form of "epistemic injustice" by privileging developmentalism as the only acceptable way of conceptualizing children and childhood, and excluding alternatives. In addition, critiques of child centered pedagogy have been employed by reconceptualists to investigate how both children and educators are constituted as particular types of rational, individualized subjects, thereby obfuscating inequities tied to their sociocultural positionings (Langford, 2010). And although childhood remains an understudied area of Canadian history, the work of authors such as Richardson (1989), Varga (1997, 2007) and Gleason (1999) have added an important critical historical perspective to Canadian reconceptualist theorizing. Their research

has examined how particular conceptions of children, childhood, and "normalcy" in early years care and education developed in the Canadian context, and the implications of these developments in terms of ongoing social inequities. Whitty (2009) and Ashton (2009) have explored the participatory, "messy" process of authoring a reconceptualist-inspired early years curriculum in New Brunswick in 2008, the product of which is still in use by the province of New Brunswick today. In Alberta a similar re-examination of curriculum has occurred through a process of dialogue and honouring young children as co-creators and agentic citizens (Makovichuk et al., 2017).

Critical Approaches in Quebec

In the Quebec context, much of the academic literature surrounding early years education remains rooted in a developmentalist or psychological perspective. A brief search of Google Scholar for Quebec-based research, in both English and French, related to ECEC results in a plethora of developmental studies which examine language skills, classroom interactions, spatial reasoning, school readiness, literacy, learning difficulties, play, numeracy skills, executive functioning, social-emotional competencies, school-family relations and quality of care, among other topics. Though these studies may consider external factors such as family environments, or socioeconomic status, they remain tied to taken-for-granted "truths" based on universalist, psychologically-underpinned understandings of child development. Parazelli et al. (2022) suggest that behaviourist and ecosystemic theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) in particular have been favoured in Quebec since the 1990s, when a social epidemiology framework or empirical "medical model" was adopted in the analysis of the wellbeing and development of young children. This model promotes the notion that psychosocial problems are individual in nature, rather than the result of sociopolitical inequalities. Some researchers, however, have begun to employ hybrid approaches where universal measurement tools are employed in a more contextualized fashion to better understand young children's educational experiences (Lemay et al., 2017).

Although a holistic, "global development of all children" and "equal opportunity to develop" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2021, pp. 3–4) approach is promulgated in Quebec's kindergarten program, it too individualizes children's and families' perceived developmental shortcomings, which precludes a larger examination of socioeconomic issues that underpin inequitable educational outcomes. An in-depth, reconceptualist analysis has yet to be applied the

program, despite critiques of some on its tenets. One such critique from Levesque et al. (2022), as part of the "Debout pour l'école" citizens' collective has argued that preschool education currently misses the mark by focusing too intensely on early intervention and preliteracy. In the preface to the recently released tome *L'éducation préscolaire au Québec : fondements théoriques et pédagogiques* (2021), Maryse Rondeau, president of the Association d'éducation préscolaire du Québec (AÉPQ), also takes issue with the predictive early prevention approach applied in the preschool cycle program. She notes that it is likely to lead to an overidentification of children with "difficulties" based on standardized norms that don't account for children's diverse backgrounds. In the same publication, in an overview of the history of preschool education in Quebec, Lehrer and Fournier (2021) note that there has long existed a tension between the universalist and compensatory approaches in the province, and that this tension continues to be evident in current changes in public policy.

A significant portion of the literature on early years education in Quebec focuses on quality of care, and the evaluation of child-care centres. Quebec's standards of quality are based on the NAEYC accreditation standards for childcare centres developed in the 1980s. These are tied to DAP, and encompass evaluation criteria that are:

> Based on scientific knowledge and evidence related to conditions that foster the physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development of young children. The criteria relate to interactions between staff and children as well as staff and parents, activity programs, staff skills, staff:child ratios, health and safety conditions, food, physical environment, and management of the service. (Japel, 2012, p. 289)

According to Curry and Cannella (2013), NAEYC standards are problematic in that they embrace "the Enlightenment modernist project … [and] the belief in the powers of science to uncover a predetermined "normal" that ultimately discredits those constituted as abnormal" (p. xiv)[3]. Despite this fact, their application via standardized measurement instruments has been

[3] The NAEYC has recently released an updated fourth edition of its DAP position statement (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2020), as well updates to its position statements on equity in ECEC (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2019a) and on professional competencies for educators (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2019b). While not eschewing developmentalism, the changes reflect some reconceptualist critiques of DAP, such as those related to the privileging of "white ideologies, beliefs and practices" (Wright et al., 2024, p. 535). In addition, there is a new focus on the cultural, environmental and economic contexts that impact marginalized children's educational experiences. For an overview of recent changes to DAP, see Wright et al. (2024) "Looking back to move forward: Reflecting on developmentally appropriate practice to advance equity in early childhood education", *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 32:3, 530-546.

concretized in Quebec through their repeated use over time (Japel, 2012; Lalonde-Graton, 2002). Changes have occurred, however in Quebec with regards to measurement of quality, with more recent approaches questioning universal standards and moving towards more contextualized examinations of children's meaning-making processes that account for cultural diversity (Lemay et al., 2017). In terms of kindergarten education, the Québec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK), which uses the Early Development Instrument (EDI), is frequently employed and has a major impact on educational policy, despite limited critical examination of its theoretical and methodological foundations (Einboden et al., 2013; Parazelli et al., 2022).

A few studies that embrace reconceptualist perspectives have been conducted in Quebec in the area of gender discourses in daycare curricula (Trudel, 2017), gender biases in ECEC pedagogical practices (Prioletta, 2020; Valade, 2024). There have also been critiques of Quebec's inclusive education policy for kindergartens, with April and Lanaris (2018), who conducted a study of the implementation of the pilot program of full-day kindergarten for 4-year olds, arguing that the everyday reality of preschool classrooms does not yet match Quebec's goals of an inclusive and equitable education system due to a continued reliance on a deficit discourse model. Critical feminist historians such as Baillargeon (1996, 2009b) have also added an important perspective – particularly with regards to the uneven, gendered power relations between parents – mainly mothers, schools, and the state. Deniger (2012), meanwhile, has examined Quebec's historic educational interventions targeted towards disadvantaged neighbourhoods, many of which were focused on early years education. He concluded that there have been two prominent discourses at work - the first being a deficit discourse, and the second being a "war on poverty" approach where educational intervention is viewed as a panacea for larger socioeconomic issues. Lehrer and Bastien (2015) have, in turn, examined discourses of school readiness in Quebec from a critical sociohistorical perspective, including the role the expansion of kindergarten has played in the classification of particular groups of children as abnormal or deficient.

Lehrer has perhaps been one of the most prominent voices in promulgating critical perspectives in Quebec. She has frequently examined questions of school readiness and transitions to school (Lehrer, 2012, 2017, 2018b; Lehrer & Bastien, 2015), questioning deficit-based approaches and arguing for the importance of the inclusion of parents' and educators' perspectives. In addition, she has addressed the metanarrative of pedagogicalisation (Lehrer,

Bigras, et al., 2023) which constructs "good" vs. "bad" parents with regards to parental attitudes towards, and implication in, their children's schooling. This pedagogicalisation is particularly problematic in the case of families from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Lehrer has also undertaken an exploration of Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy (Lehrer, 2020) with regards to ECEC. Lehrer discusses care work as a radical act, and emphasizes the importance of valuing parental knowledge, as well as children's agency in their own liberation. In addition, Lehrer raises the issue of the mythologization of particular narratives regarding disadvantaged families due to the government's use of evidence-based data in non-reflexive ways. Finally, Parazelli et. al (2022) have also engaged in a critique of Quebec's reliance on a biomedical "evidence-based practice" model to develop "incontestable" solutions to social problems. Echoing reconceptualist perspectives, including critiques of the undemocratic nature of a reliance on purportedly "incontestable" evidence, the authors point out the problems with the unspoken ideologies and values that underpin interventionist approaches such as predictive early prevention.

Closing the Gap

If authors who embrace fully reconceptualist perspectives seem like exceptions in Quebec, it's because much of the purportedly "critical" literature found in the province, in comparison to the rest of Canada or elsewhere, often seems mired in more technical debates about the best way to implement preschool education within existing hegemonic frameworks. It is critical therefore only in the sense that it provides limited dissent to the prevailing way of operating, without questioning the foundations of current early years educational philosophy. Discussions are frequently framed within a liberal humanist epistemology that emphasizes reason, empirical observation, and individual autonomy, while rarely calling into question the basis of this epistemology. In addition, questions of power relations, particularly those tied to childism, racism, sexism, homophobia/transphobia, ableism, and colonialist discourses are often only hinted at, and rarely addressed head-on. This demonstrates an enactment of what Butler et al. (2019), drawing on Bonilla-Silva's (2022) work, term "abstract liberalism". This is an approach that appears progressive, yet in which economic and political liberalism continue to be "enacted discursively through explicit and implicit language emphasizing equality and fairness while obfuscating historical and current oppressions" (A. Butler et al., 2019, p. 5).

There are still numerous authors such as those noted above, however, who continue to apply a genuinely critical theoretical lens despite sometimes being at odds with colleagues in their field. In conducting this study, I hope to continue their work and to help fill an ongoing gap in the academic literature with regards to critical, reconceptualist approaches in the analysis of early years education in Quebec. This research project will provide an intersectional, poststructuralist exploration of interventionist discourses that have circulated at specific historical moments, and which continue to impact educational policy today. By engaging with media/cultural critique via critical thematic analysis, these discourses that have so far remained largely in the background of preschool education in Quebec can be brought to the fore and hopefully spur larger public debates about equity and social justice in ECEC. How this research project was designed using a critical qualitative methodology in order to explore public debates surrounding kindergarten education will be explored in the next chapter. This will include an analysis of the design of the research project and the process of putting the design into practice.

Chapter 2: Methodology, Study Design and Research Process

> "The bricolage can be described as the process of getting down to the nuts and bolts of multidisciplinary research … Bricoleurs move beyond the blinders of particular disciplines and peer through a conceptual window to a new world of research and knowledge production."
>
> – Kincheloe et al. (2018, p. 244)

Social justice inspired research based in critical theory and intersectional poststructuralism benefits from the deployment of critical qualitative methods to facilitate its deconstructive and emancipatory aims. This chapter will therefore present how such a critical qualitative method, critical thematic analysis, or CTA, functioned as a type of methodological "bricolage" (Kincheloe et al., 2018) between discourse analysis and thematic analysis, and how it was applied to a text-based research project. This will be followed by an overview of my study design and research process, from data selection and coding to initial theme development. Qualitative research, is, as Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest, a messy, complex and unpredictable journey, and this project was no exception. Descriptions of the research process include some of the challenges encountered, and the unexpected detours taken during data collection and analysis. Finally, this chapter will offer a short discussion of the limits of this study, as well as criteria for validity when engaging in CTA research, and some of the ethical considerations related to this project.

Methodology

Critical Thematic Analysis – A Methodological Bricolage

Critical research requires an examination of power relations and the processes of subjectification by making implicit assumptions, beliefs, and norms explicit, so that they can be analyzed and critiqued. For critical textual analyses such as the ones included in this study, this involved looking at how macro forces (larger political and economic structures and ideologies) intersected with micro experiences (people's everyday lives) via discourse. Discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49) or how reality is given meaning through language. Meanings are tied to cultural codes, values, and power relations, and discourses form taken for granted language/knowledge constructions that determine who can speak and who is silenced (Cannella, 2008). Lawless and Chen (2019)

propose that critical thematic analysis (CTA) is an effective method to employ for analyzing discourses, because it allows researchers to search for patterns within a text while keeping larger macro structures in view. CTA is a methodological bricolage – or what Kincheloe et al. (2018) suggest is a necessary move towards complexity and eclecticism in critical qualitative research by actively constructing research methods appropriate to the research question(s) "from the tools at hand" (p. 245). CTA was constituted out of several existing methodological traditions, namely critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) and reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022), and retains qualities from each of these approaches.

The first of these existing approaches, CDA, falls firmly within the critical theoretical landscape as it is a "critical perspective on unequal social arrangements sustained through language use, with the goals of social transformation and emancipation" (Lazar, 2007, p. 1). As opposed to traditional news content analysis, which asks "what is said?", or relies on quantitative analysis of the number of times a topic is raised, CDA focuses on the latent meanings of a text and asks whose voices are absent, as well as what the consequences of particular representations might be (Hall, 2021). This approach allows for an investigation into how power and ideology operate to sustain hierarchical and oppressive social orders through language and visual representations. Via a close analysis of texts, images, and their contexts, it is also possible to unearth potential forms of resistance to hegemonic discourses (Weedon, 1997). CDA is therefore not only a research methodology, but a form of social action itself, as the critique of unequal power relations in a given text, and the highlighting of alternative or subversive discourses, becomes a way of "speaking back" to power and contributing to social change (Lazar, 2018). As Lawless and Chen (2019) note, however, CDA relies on an analysis of the "form and function of the text", which "for a non-linguistic scholar … lacks utility for understanding phenomenological experiences" (p. 94). This suggests that for scholars not versed in semantics or linguistics, traditional CDA may prove both challenging to implement, and appear to lack a certain methodological depth when applied to the materiality of lived experience.

RTA, for its part, is, according to Braun and Clarke (2022), "a method for developing, analysing and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset" (p. 4), with the understanding that these patterns, or themes, capture ideas that are psychologically or socially meaningful. It is reflexive in that it calls on the researcher to reflect critically both on their own standpoint, as well

as on the practices they employ and the results they generate. RTA adopts an interpretative framework and utilizes researcher subjectivity as a resource, rather than viewing it as an obstacle. As Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007) suggest, the researcher becomes the instrument for analysis by making judgements about coding, categorizing, decontextualizing and recontextualizing data. RTA involves a 6-step process: data familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme development/review, theme refinement, and finally the production of a written research report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As with CDA, data analysis is a "progressive but recursive process" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 36) where the researcher moves back and forth repeatedly between micro and macro views of the data, in order to understand the "story" that the data is telling through the identified themes.

Moving from more traditional RTA to CTA requires incorporating CDA's critical analysis of social hierarchies and power imbalances into coding, theme generation, and analysis. Lawless and Chen (2019) suggest that a more conscientious and thorough engagement with macro structures is required for CTA than for traditional RTA, particularly an engagement with how macro forces constrain discourses in everyday interactions. Braun and Clarke (2022) refer to this as a "hermeneutics of suspicion … an analytic orientation that seeks to unpack and interrogate the truths and claims presented in the data" (p. 160). In drawing from CDA, CTA allows for an investigation of the process of subjectification through language, including the construction of personal and group identities. In media analysis, this also includes examining the potential consequences of public discourses and representation for the individuals or groups concerned. CTA therefore engages with CDA's goal of examining how knowledge and meaning are negotiated through everyday language in use (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007), while allowing the use of RTAs broader, theme-based analytical approach.

In order to engage in this methodological "bricolage", and to apply CTA correctly, Lawless and Chen (2019) argue that researchers must understand Foucault's (1972) "archaeology of knowledge" which links discourses to larger social constructions and ideologies. This requires breaking down taken for granted concepts and knowledge that support hegemonic ideologies by looking for latent meanings, silences, and constraints. They offer the following important guiding questions for practitioners of CTA (Lawless & Chen, 2019, p. 97):

- How are everyday discourses enabled and constrained by social systems, dominant ideologies, and power relations?

- How do macro- and micro-level discourses, practices, and systems intersect and reproduce dominations and oppressions?
- How can individual subjects become aware of dominant ideologies and work toward challenging them and promoting social justices?

CTA was used as a method in this project, backed by the theoretical framework noted in chapter one, including critical theory and intersectional feminist poststructuralism. This allowed for an identification of the discourses and processes of subjectification at work in the news reports and an analysis of their potential impacts on the public via theme-based topic headings.

The process of "doing" CTA involves six steps which are based on the ones noted above for RTA. The first is familiarization with, or immersion in, the data. This is a type of brainstorming of ideas facilitated by the researcher's repeated examination of the data during the immersion process. The second step is coding, which is a form of decontextualization of the data from its original context (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007) and naming portions of text using simple terms or short phrases (Saldaña, 2015). In this study, the process was a combination of both inductive coding (guided by the data) and deductive coding (guided by the research questions), which allowed unexpected themes to emerge while also keeping the research questions in mind. The third step is theme development – which Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007) term recontextualization, or searching for patterns and relationships within and between the codes. Themes are, according to Braun and Clarke (2022), not just topic summaries, but rather a selection of shared meanings united by a central organizing concept. Codes make up the multiple facets that create these shared meanings. The process is often iterative, moving back and forth between the data, the codes, and the themes, as new patterns become apparent. Step four is theme review, and step five is theme refinement. In approaching CTA from a feminist poststructuralist standpoint, as discussed in chapter one, theme review and refinement become an interpretive, reflexive process. As Steinberg (2012) suggests:

> Research can no longer be seen as a cold, rational process. Feminist research injects feelings, empathy, and the body into the act of inquiry, blurring the distinction between knower and known, viewer and viewed – looking at truth as a *process* of construction in which knowers and viewers play an active role, and embedding passion into the bricolage. (p. 190, emphasis in original)

Researcher Positionality

If research from a feminist standpoint is an active, reflexive process of construction that brings the personal into the political (Harding, 2004), it is important to recognize one's own positionality, and how personal experiences and values impact the research process and product (Steinberg, 2012). As a White, cisgender, middle-class, Canadian-born, anglophone, Quebec-based researcher, I have privileges accorded to me by virtue of my identity and social positioning, and these can create blind spots that shape my personal understanding and experience of the world. Haggis and Schech (2000) note the danger of White Western feminists who "mean well" in conducting critical research, and yet carry with them the history of colonial/imperialist notions of "the other" which can result in enacting White saviourism. They note that simply acknowledging White privilege "does not necessarily destabilize it or render it any less privileged" (p. 396). As Baxter (2007) suggests, researchers need to attend to the fact that research texts are constructed through a "fictionalising" process that involves "a series of authorial choices and textual strategies" (p. 6) on the part of the researcher. Working reflexively, then, meant continuously reflecting on my own subjectivity, as well as the power differentials and personal values I embody that impact the research and writing process.

Although I have a background in feminist research that has allowed me to become well-versed in issues related gender and sexuality, my positionality can entail blind spots related to questions of race, citizenship/immigration status, and ability, among other factors. In the framing and analysis of this study I have made intentional choices to apply a critical intersectional lens to attempt to highlight areas that may otherwise go unnoticed by a researcher with my background. The use of CTA was helpful in this regard due to its recursive design where reflexivity is woven into the research and analysis process. There was also perhaps a question that could be raised regarding the appropriateness of an anglophone analyzing mainly French news media, and tackling questions regarding Québécois language and identity as they relate to educational discourses. I would argue, however, that my positionality in this case may actually be an asset. As an individual of mixed Quebec franco-anglo parentage, raised as an anglophone and educated in Quebec in the English school system, I have often felt like an outsider in my own province, one who did not quite fit within the dominant culture. When travelling in the rest of Canada, however, I came to realize that I was also viewed as an outsider, often seen as "too Québécois"

to fit within English-Canadian culture. Over the past few years, I have taken an interest in this dichotomy and read a large amount of literature that examines how Quebec culture and nationhood is viewed from both inside and outside the province. I therefore view myself as occupying a somewhat unique position in terms of understanding how language and culture play out and seeking to examine these issues from both sides. In terms of ECEC, I came to this topic via my experiences as a parent of two children, and my previous ethnographic research that took place in ECEC settings. During that research (Valade, 2019), I had the opportunity to observe the daily happenings in two different ECEC classrooms and those observations raised numerous questions for me about equity and social justice in early years education and care in Quebec.

Study Design

This study focused on a textual analysis of news media accounts of the creation or expansion of kindergarten programs in Quebec in 1960-1962 and in 2018. The rationale behind this study design was to examine the potential deficit and interventionist discourses at work in public discussions of preschool education. While the narrative and representational character of news media speaks to "its potential as a site of ideological negotiation and its impact as mediated "reality"" (Fürsich, 2009, p. 238), it can help valorize particular types of knowledges that reproduce oppressive power relations within society (Hall, 2021). News media therefore represent particular "discursive moments" (Fürsich, 2009) or temporarily fixed sites of ideological struggle that simultaneously reflect and constitute social reality.

News Media Analysis

News media analysis has long been understood as a valid method of exploring public discourse (Van Dijk, 1988). According to cultural studies researcher Stuart Hall (2021), newspapers and online news function as a "structure of meanings" (p. 148) that use specific styles, visual cues, and forms of rhetoric to impose patterns of meaning and appeal, or cultural "scripts", about specific topics including education. As Hall (2021) notes, even the familiar organization of newspapers and online news into sections such as "sports" or "entertainment" is designed to "awaken in the reader contexts of awareness [and] appropriate referential associations" (p. 149). In addition, news reports utilize genre-specific grammatical and syntactical structures that affect their content, and journalists often hierarchize aspects of an event or issue that affects how readers recall the information (Van Dijk, 1988). The production of mainstream news media in Canada, increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few large

corporations who often curtail editorial freedom, also results in the most popular news media outlets largely functioning in the interests of dominant groups (Hackett & Gruneau, 2000; Jiwani, 2006). Analysis of mainstream reporting thereby offers important insights into the circulation and reproduction of hegemonic discourses.

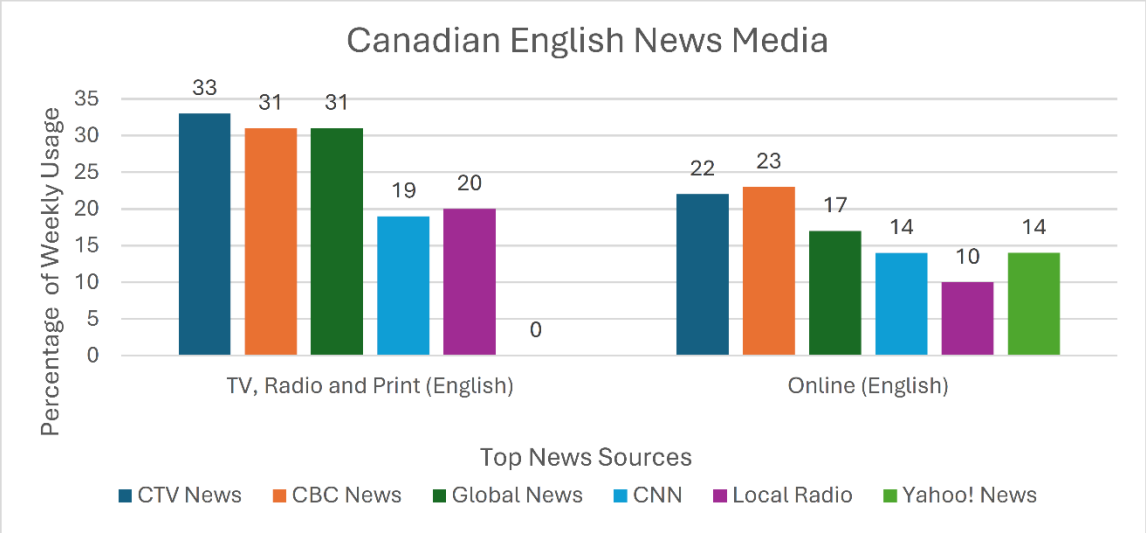
Yanow (2000) suggests that readers of the same newspapers or online news sources form a type of interpretive community of "policy-relevant publics" (p. 29) that are made up of smaller, more specific, "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These communities of practice, which may be formal or informal groups such as parents, policymakers, teachers, school board officials, religious leaders, etc. often share common interests regarding a policy issue. Their views form "local knowledges" that offer important objects for analysis. The voices of these communities of practice are included in a variety of ways in news media via coverage of local events, interviews, letters to the editor, editorials, and even through photographs and cartoons. News media analysis offers an opportunity to explore these local knowledges as they were expressed at the time of publication, and to thereby capture historical public discourses at the specific times that changes in educational policy were unfolding – in this case the early 1960s and 2018.

News Media Data Selection

The news media portion of this project was originally focused uniquely on print and online news coverage of the 2018 Quebec provincial election. This period was chosen because the expansion of kindergarten for 4-year-olds was an important electoral promise made by the CAQ in 2018, referred to in the francophone press as a "promesse phare" (Ménard, 2018), and remains an important topic for the CAQ government who are still in power at the time of writing (The Canadian Press, 2023). It became one of the central topics of the campaign and was featured prominently in news reports along with competing proposals from other political parties with regards to their priorities for early years education. Preliminary data collection was conducted in May 2023 from mainstream text-based print and online news sources including news reports, editorials and opinion pieces published in major news outlets during the election period of August 23rd to Oct. 1st, 2018. Video reports were excluded unless accompanied by a written article, as undertaking transcription of a large volume of videos would not have been feasible for this size of study. Media sources were selected among the top Canadian print and online news sources according to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (Newman et

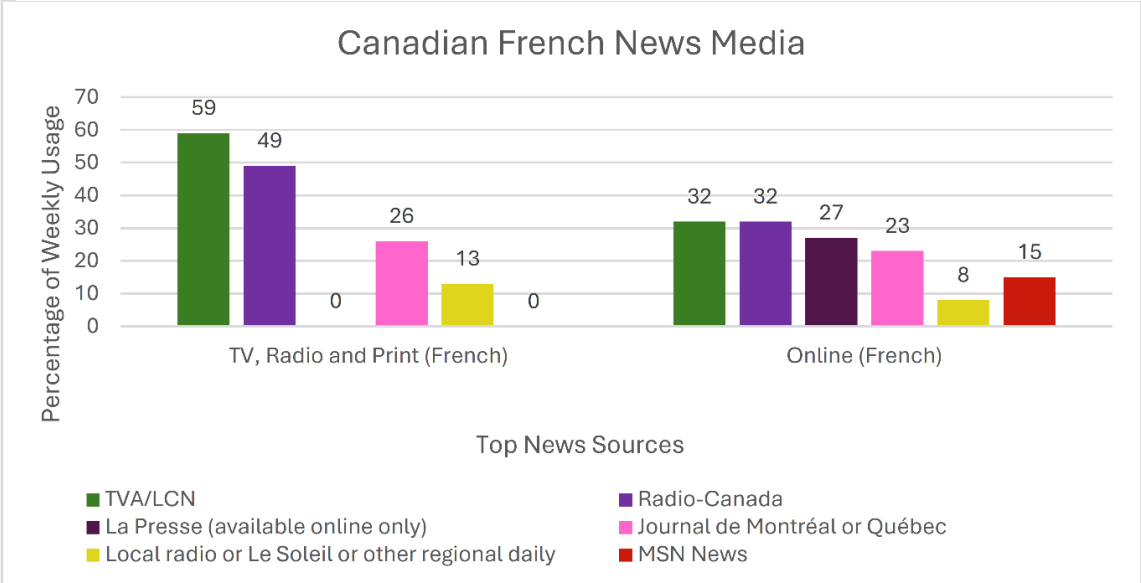
al., 2022) (see Figures 1 and 2). Articles were sourced using databases such as ProQuest, Eureka.cc, and Factiva, as well as searches in Google News. Search terms in English included: kindergarten, Quebec, pre-kindergarten, prekindergarten, 4-year, daycare, while search terms in

Figure 1 – Weekly Reach of Canadian English News Media Sources



Note. Adapted from: *Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Eddy, K., & Kleis Nielsen, R. (2022). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.*

Figure 2 – Weekly Reach of Canadian French News Media Sources



Note. Adapted from: *Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Eddy, K., & Kleis Nielsen, R. (2022). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.*

French included: maternelle, Québec, 4 ans, prématernelle, garderie. Articles that did not mention Quebec, and duplicate articles that appeared in more than one news source were excluded.

My initial search yielded 200+ results. To establish a dataset that was more feasible for the scope of the project, I further narrowed the sources to the top three most popular news media in each language – namely CTV News, CBC News and Global News in English and TVA Nouvelles, Radio-Canada and *La Presse* in French. This resulted in a total of 117 articles, 24 in English and 93 in French (see Figure 3). As the project went on, and I began to research the history of the development of kindergarten in Quebec, it became apparent that 2018 was not the only period in which important debates over the establishment of kindergarten classes took place. There were uncanny parallels between the discourses surrounding the initial establishment of public kindergarten for 5-year-olds in the early 1960s, and the proposed universalization of public kindergarten for 4-year-olds in 2018. This led me to conduct an exploratory search of news articles from the early 1960s. Although the period of the provincial election in 1960 might have offered a direct comparison to the election in 2018, there were too few articles available that matched my search terms. While education played a major role in the 1960 election, more specific debates surrounding the establishment of public kindergarten stretched over a longer period of time before and after the election. I therefore extended the time frame to include the years 1960-62 in which two provincial elections took place. This resulted in the retrieval of 76 articles from *La Presse*. I did not examine news coverage of the period of 2013 when the first 4-year-old kindergartens were launched in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, nor 2019 when the universalized 4-year-old kindergartens were officially implemented, however some of the literature drawn from in the study speaks to these time periods as well, particularly in chapters three and five.

La Presse was chosen as it was accessible via the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) online, and it was by far the newspaper with the highest readership in Quebec during the early 1960s, hitting a record high circulation of 271,127 in 1960. This would mark the peak of its popularity in the province prior to being challenged by competitors such as *Le Journal de Montreal* (Jacob, 2003). *La Presse* was also piloting a regional edition during this period, offering coverage of local news in areas outside of Montreal, some of which discussed the creation of kindergarten classes in smaller communities. I was unable to add articles from the

Figure 3 - Number of Articles Included in the Dataset, by Publication Name and Source Database

Articles from 2018		
Database	**Media Outlet Name**	**Number of Articles**
Eureka.cc	La Presse (web, La Presse+) (FR)	47
	ICI Radio-Canada (web, Téléjournal, Radiojournal) (FR)	40
	CBC News (EN)	11
Google or site-specific search	TVA Nouvelles (web) (FR)	6
	Global News Montreal (EN)	7
	CTV News Montreal (EN)	6
TOTAL		**117**
Articles from 1960-1962		
BAnQ	La Presse (FR)	76
TOTAL		**76**

comparable English newspaper from this time period, the Montreal Star, as the archives were not accessible in a public database. However, as a centrist newspaper targeting a growing middle class, majority francophone population, *La Presse*'s archives offered an excellent snapshot of some of the rapid social changes impacting Quebec during this period, including in the area of education.

Concerns regarding the establishment of kindergarten classes that appeared in news reports in my initial searches in both eras included the function of early years education, the content of the kindergarten curriculum, appropriate teacher training and a lack of physical space in schools for the addition of kindergarten classes. This was accompanied by debates over the role of parents, mainly mothers, in education, and discussions about how to accommodate children with learning/behavioural difficulties, as well as concerns over the cost of kindergarten education – both for families and for the public purse. The parallels between the two periods offered an opportunity to deepen my analysis by examining historical continuity and change in public discourses, as well as the potential consequences of discoursal shifts over time. As Canadian history education specialist Peter Seixas (2017) argues, "change over time is shaped by a complex interplay of humans acting within and against the larger social organizations in which

they find themselves" (p. 600). According to Seixas, comparative analysis should therefore take into account both human agency, and constraints imposed by social structures and institutions.

Although this is not a historical investigation in the disciplinary sense, in adding this comparative set of articles I also borrowed the following methodological tenet from the discourse-historical approach (DHA) in discourse analysis, which is a branch of CDA. Proponents of DHA offer this guideline (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009):

> The historical context is taken into account in interpreting texts and discourses. The historical orientation permits the reconstruction of how recontextualization functions as an important process linking texts and discourses intertextually and interdiscursively over time. (p. 95)

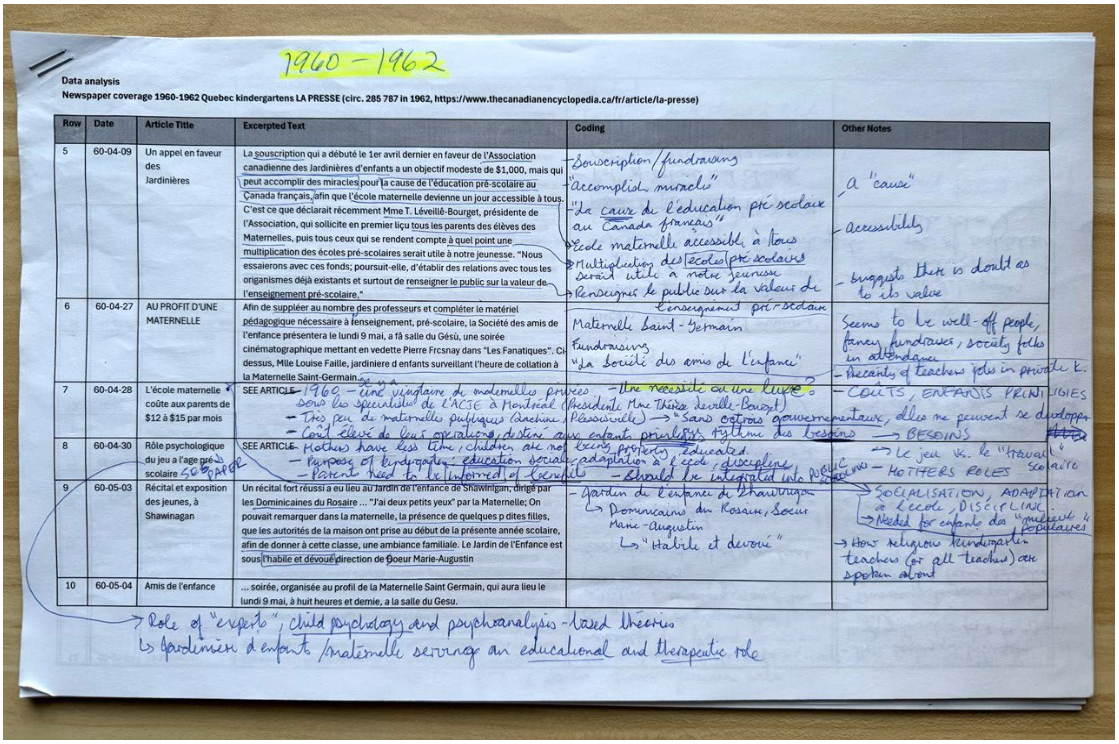
The inclusion of this second set of articles therefore allowed for a more specific investigation into how deficit discourses and interventionist approaches may have remained the same or shifted over time, following the historical thinking concept of continuity and change (Seixas, 2017). This analysis was made possible by including these two sets of texts produced during crucial historical periods when public opinion regarding kindergarten education was being shaped via public debates and was also shaping public policy.

Data Analysis Procedures

Coding of News Articles

To familiarize myself with the news media data, I read through each set of news articles twice, and then created an excel spread sheet with the title of each article, organized by date of publication. If the article contained only one paragraph relevant to the topic of kindergarten education, I copied this excerpt into the excel document, while leaving two large blank columns to the right for coding. For articles that were longer, a note was made in the excel document to refer to the text in the original article. These longer articles were then printed out individually and organized by date. The excel document was printed on large sheets in order to be able to code by hand. Coding involved a process of moving back and forth from the printed excel document containing the shorter article excerpts, to the full printouts of the longer articles to read and make notes. Codes, as well as thoughts and questions, were added into the blank columns on the excel printouts (see Figure 4). As Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest, "coding is a process of meaning making" (p. 55), based on the reflexivity of the researcher, and there is no right or wrong answer to be "found" within the data. Codes are, rather "heuristic devices we use to foster

Figure 4 - Example of Coding Document



Data analysis

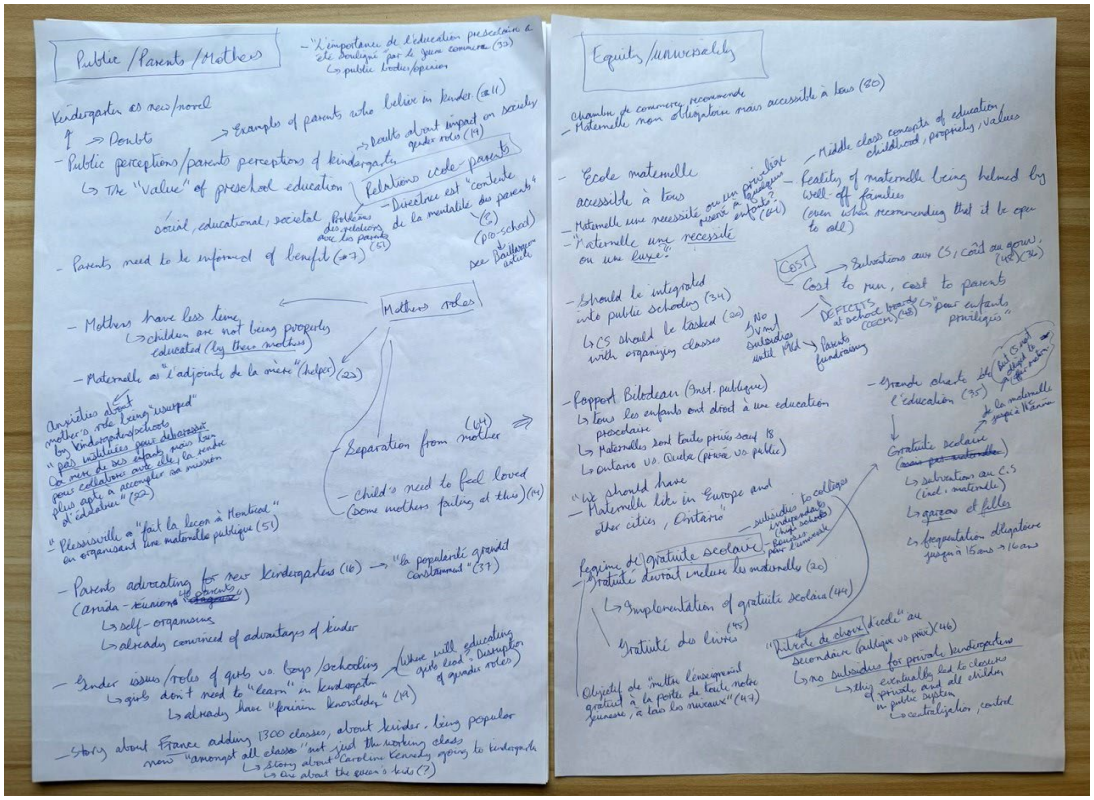
Newspaper coverage 1960-1962 Quebec kindergartens LA PRESSE (circ. 285 787 in 1962, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/fr/article/la-presse)

Row	Date	Article Title	Excerpted Text	Coding	Other Notes
5	60-04-09	Un appel en faveur des Jardinières	La souscription qui a débuté le 1er avril dernier en faveur de l'Association canadienne des Jardinières d'enfants a un objectif modeste de $1,000, mais qui peut accomplir des miracles pour la cause de l'éducation pré-scolaire au Canada français, afin que l'école maternelle devienne un jour accessible à tous. C'est ce que déclarait récemment Mme T. Léveillé-Bourget, présidente de l'Association, qui sollicite en premier liçu tous les parents des élèves des Maternelles, puis tous ceux qui se rendent compte à quel point une multiplication des écoles pré-scolaires serait utile à notre jeunesse. "Nous essaierons avec ces fonds; poursuit-elle, d'établir des relations avec tous les origanismes déjà existants et surtout de renseigner le public sur la valeur de l'enseignement pré-scolaire."		
6	60-04-27	AU PROFIT D'UNE MATERNELLE	Afin de suppléer au nombre des professeurs et compléter le matériel pédagogique nécessaire à l'enseignement, pré-scolaire, la Société des amis de l'enfance présentera le lundi 9 mai, a fâ salle du Gésù, une soirée cinématographique mettant en vedette Pierre Frcsnay dans "Les Fanatiques". Ci-dessus, Mlle Louise Faille, jardiniere d enfants surveillant l'heure de collation à la Maternelle Saint-Germain.		
7	60-04-28	L'école maternelle coûte aux parents de $12 à $15 par mois	SEE ARTICLE		
8	60-04-30	Rôle psychologique du jeu a l'age pré-scolaire	SEE ARTICLE		
9	60-05-03	Récital et exposition des jeunes, à Shawinagan	Un récital fort réussi a eu lieu au Jardin de l'enfance de Shawinigan, dirigé par les Dominicaines du Rosaire ... "J'ai deux petits yeux" par la Maternelle; On pouvait remarquer dans la maternelle, la présence de quelques p dites filles, que les autorités de la maison ont prise au début de la présente année scolaire, afin de donner à cette classe, une ambiance familiale. Le Jardin de l'Enfance est sous l'habile et dévoué direction de Soeur Marie-Augustin		
10	60-05-04	Amis de l'enfance	... soirée, organisée au profil de la Maternelle Saint Germain, qui aura lieu le lundi 9 mai, à huit heures et demie, a la salle du Gesu.		

our engagement, to enrich understanding, and push ourselves into interrogating the dataset and our meaning-making with it" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 59). In CTA, coding is not prescriptive, therefore there is no one approach that will work for every analysis. My approach was mainly deductive (researcher/research question driven) because I was guided by my research questions and my critical theoretical/feminist intersectional standpoint, however, it was also inductive (data driven) because I remained open to unexpected topics and themes related to ECEC that might move me away from my initial research question.

The first round of coding I conducted was semantic, which is to say it explored the more surface-level, explicitly expressed meanings in the articles. This was achieved by underlining or highlighting specific passages or terms and transcribing or paraphrasing these notions in the first empty column in the printed excel table. Saldaña (2016) would likely term this a mix of in vivo coding, that utilizes direct quotes, and descriptive coding, that summarizes ideas. In the second round of coding, I looked for more latent or implicit meanings in the texts and added further notes and questions related to the codes. These more in-depth ideas or questions were often added into the second blank column in the excel table (see Figure 4). Once all the articles from both time periods had been coded twice, I shifted into brainstorming potential themes. This involved gathering codes and notes that appeared to be connected onto a single sheet of paper,

Figure 5 – Initial Brainstorming of Categories/Topic Summaries for News Media Data



and eventually adding a heading that was a through-line among all of the items listed (see Figure 5). These potential themes included, from the 1960s articles: childhood/the purpose of preschool education, the public/parents/mothers, equity/universality, teachers/experts/women, schools/pedagogy. The potential themes from the 2018 articles included: vulnerable children, daycare vs. prekindergarten, political strategies, cost, and values/responsibility.

These potential themes were, however, more of what Saldaña (2016) terms a category heading, or what Braun and Clarke (2022) term a topic summary, rather than a theme. A theme requires a shared meaning or idea that has a distinct central organizing concept across contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2022), or it can be a description of a more subtle, tacit process at work than what is explicitly evident under a category heading (Saldaña, 2016). These broader categories also did not directly address my research question, although some of their codes did. Subsequent theme generation therefore involved a greater back and forth between my existing knowledge of the critical/reconceptualist literature in the area of ECEC, the news articles, my coding document, the category sheets, my research question, and the macro social, institutional, and

political discourses at work. The final themes that resulted from this recursive, reflexive process are explored in chapters four and five.

Study Design Limits, Validity and Ethical Considerations

This study was designed to capture snapshots of specific, delimited, historical moments in the development of kindergarten in Quebec. News media selection and analysis involved a "pairing down" of available data via my search parameters to make the size of the study feasible. This necessarily excluded points of view or discourses which may have been pertinent to my research question, particularly from smaller regional or independent media. However, I view this study as an analysis of a few particularly rich "discursive moments" (Fürsich, 2009), rather than a generalizable "truth" applicable to the entire history of kindergarten education in Quebec. There are many more rich discursive moments within Quebec ECEC history that are ripe for analysis, and I firmly hope that other scholars will take these up in order to supplement or challenge my analysis. I will, however, as we shall see in the later chapters, make links between the themes developed from the discursive moments I have chosen by drawing from existing academic literature.

A further potential limit of this study design is that CTA relies on the subjectivity and knowledge of the researcher to perform "situated and contextual interpretations of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 205). This means that the data may be interpreted differently by another researcher using the same method. This lack of "reproducibility" is not a failing, however, as critical feminist research is understood to be grounded in a specific standpoint that intentionally informs the research process. It is, however, a caveat, in that the themes discussed here form only part of the story that could be told from this data. As Shields (2012) notes, the premise of critical research is not to describe the world as it is, but to seek to change it by examining foundational assumptions that are normally taken for granted. The process can, however, seem "unscientific", particularly if viewed through a positivist or post-positivist lens. Although critical qualitative research cannot be validated using positivist criteria, Yardley (2017) offers four criteria for demonstrating validity. These are: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance. Sensitivity to context involves taking into account sociocultural and linguistic (and in this case, historical and political) contexts, while commitment and rigor refer to a thorough engagement with the data and careful attention to the analysis process – such as the six steps outlined in CTA. Transparency and coherence involve

documenting the research and analysis process, as has been done here, in order to demystify theme development, as well as providing evidence from the data to support theme generation which will be included in the upcoming chapters. Finally, impact and importance refer to the "usefulness" of the research output. In the case of critical research, the impact and importance are innately tied to the social justice goals of creating awareness of oppression(s) and working towards an education system that is anti-oppressive.

By focusing on textual analysis, this study does not involve ethical considerations related to human research, and therefore did not necessitate approval by the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board. As a feminist researcher who embraces critical approaches, however, I do believe ethics lies at the heart of this project. A desire for social justice, and for a truly democratic, equitable, educational system that views young children as full humans "at promise" (Swadener & Lubeck, 1995) rather than as potentially "deficient" forms of human capital (Lehrer, Richardson, et al., 2023), leads me to reflect on the ethical considerations of conducting this research. These reflections include what positive or negative effects it might produce, who it might impact, and how it may be disseminated. I have also wondered whether I chose the right research approach. To answer the first set of questions - although I do not fully control the effects of the study, my efforts will be put toward ensuring it is disseminated in open, publicly available forums, to as many educational stakeholders as possible. My hope is that this project will contribute in some small way to shifting discussions surrounding how we define "children" and "childhood", and how we consequently plan and execute education for young children. As to whether I've taken the correct approach – I believe methodological bricolage such as CTA is an effective, and innovative way to approach textual analysis. My one regret, however, is that this study does not include the voices of children themselves, who are analyzed and assessed in Quebec's early learning environments in a myriad of ways, except often, by being given active, participatory roles and equal voices. But perhaps this work can serve as a precursor to future, increasingly participatory and emancipatory projects involving the young children whose education is under discussion here. With that in mind, let us proceed to the next chapter that explores the history of kindergarten in Quebec. This history will bring context to the themes I developed from news media representations of the expansion of universal public kindergarten in the early 1960s and 2018.

Chapter 3: A History of Kindergarten Education in Quebec

> "Le «Kindergarten» […] sera un centre de regénération (sic) sociale, parce qu'il s'applique surtout à guérir le mal dans sa racine et à protéger la richesse de la nation dans sa source."
>
> - Le curé G. Daly (1914)

> "Part of our historical consciousness is to recognize that the past is a part of our everyday discourse, structuring what can be said and the possibilities and challenges of our times."
>
> - Popkewitz (1987, p. 1)

Before proceeding to the results of the news media analysis, it is important to understand the context of early years education in Quebec by examining the evolution of kindergarten in the province. This history directly informs the public debates surrounding the development of public kindergarten for 5-year-olds in the early 1960s, and the subsequent introduction of kindergarten for 4-year-olds in the 1970s and efforts towards the universalization of the program in 2018-2019. Over time, kindergarten education has been provided by different actors in the province including religious communities, community and charitable organizations, municipalities, individuals and private and public schools. Its organization has often involved shifting views on childhood, mothering, families, care work, teaching, and the state's role in the care and education of children. From the beginning of the 20th century until today, preschool education has also been influenced by the growth of the social and psychological sciences, tied to political discourses about the rational, autonomous, liberal democratic citizen. This has resulted in early interventions and reforms aimed at the governance of families and children for the purposes of "social betterment", and the development of future productive citizens (Bloch & Popkewitz, 2008). As such, kindergarten has been viewed by the state and by the public as a potential panacea to a multitude of social ills. These range from poverty, to neglectful (or, conversely, over-) mothering, child abuse, poor physical or mental health, deficient socialization, juvenile delinquency, inadequate cultural and linguistic integration, and poor educational attainment.

This chapter offers an in-depth contextualization that will support the analysis of news media reports that will be conducted in chapters four and five. It does so by including a summary of the main historical, social and political events that occurred in Quebec related to kindergarten

education from the 1850s until the late 2010s. Relying mainly on secondary sources, it offers a historiography that includes the work of a variety of both traditional, and critical or feminist historians, who have examined early years education in Quebec. Their interpretations illuminate the province's early years educational history within the broader historical context. Primary sources from my news media data set, as well as from Quebec curriculum and policy documents, are occasionally referenced in order to provide illustrative examples, however a more comprehensive analysis of these items will be reserved for chapters four and five. As this historiography shall demonstrate, the evolution of kindergarten education in Quebec and related theories regarding early intervention have not always been linear, with changes in understandings about the purpose of teaching/learning, the structure of preschool education, and its anticipated outcome, evolving based on the shifting political and social concerns in a given historical period.

Early Learning as a Charitable Endeavour: Les Salles D'asile

Early provision of childcare for young children in Quebec began with industrialization in the mid 19th century, as the number of workers in cities grew and women in working-class families took up factory work to supplement their husbands' meager salaries. Care was provided in "salles d'asile", based on the French model, as well as orphanages and nurseries run by a variety of religious orders that served children living in poverty. The first "salle d'asile" which was opened in Montreal in 1859 by the Grey Nuns for children aged 3 to 7, focused on "preserving the innocence of young children, developing their intelligence, training their hearts for virtue and fostering their physical strength" (Lalonde-Graton, 2002, p. 6). Others salles d'asile followed soon after, and between 1863-1902, 700 to 1800 children per year were placed in the care of the Grey Nuns (Lalonde-Graton, 2002), in addition to those cared for by the Sisters of Providence at the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul salle d'asile (Dumont, 1983). An article in the Journal de l'Instruction Publique at the time, praised the creation of this new type of institution, suggesting that "its influence would quickly be felt in the entirety of elementary education" (qtd. in Lalonde-Graton, 2002, p. 7), and yet serious concern was also expressed that mothers might abuse the service to shirk their responsibility to care for their own children. The centres were supported mainly through fundraising efforts by the nuns, charitable donations, funding from other religious orders, and minimal government subsidies. Although described in written records as a "joyful and animated" learning environment, Dumont (1983) noted that strict discipline was

employed and children were taught letters, numbers, geography, educational songs, and religious instruction largely by rote memorization. In later years, a Froebelian approach[4] was adopted involving the addition of crafting activities and play with building materials.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the salles d'asiles began to disappear. Lalonde-Graton (2002) suggests this was due to lack of funding, changes in the city landscape, and the fact that women working outside the home were increasingly viewed by the Catholic church as a threat to family and social values. She notes, however, that their disappearance did not stop women, particularly poor women, from working, it simply led to an increase in the number of orphaned and abandoned children cared for by members of religious orders in other types of institutions such as orphanages and hospitals. This was particularly true for poor or working mothers who did not have extended family in the city, or access to other informal childcare arrangements. Shifts were also occurring in the schooling system, with the first public kindergartens opening in Montreal in the protestant anglophone system in 1892. However the first private francophone kindergarten would only open in Quebec City in 1931 (Boily et al., 1994). In the Catholic francophone public schools, interest for the creation of kindergarten classes was first expressed as early as 1910, resulting in modifications to the Loi sur l'instruction publique in 1911, allowing school boards to create kindergartens. The Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal (CECM) proceeded to build two kindergartens, one anglophone and one francophone, in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Montreal, however their organization was entrusted to a religious order rather than to the school commission (D. Baillargeon, 2009b). Baillargeon (2009b) suggests that this arrangement demonstrates that the provision of kindergarten at that time was still viewed as a mostly charitable endeavour.

Child Psychology and The Mental Hygiene Movement

By 1915, a program for kindergarten education was elaborated by the Comité catholique du Conseil de l'instruction publique, with a stated purpose of preparing both girls and boys aged 3-6 years old for primary school, supplementing maternal education and care, and seeing to young children's moral, physical and spiritual well-being (M. Baillargeon, 1989). The program

[4] Friedrich Froebel was a German educational reformer who pioneered the first kindergarten programs in Germany in the mid-1800s. He relied on a spiritual religious philosophy regarding the relationship between nature, God and children, and promoted guided, play-based educational activities using manipulatives, crafts, songs and games. His theories were widely exported to North America and played a role in the beginning of the kindergarten movement in the U.S. and Canada (Shirakawa & Saracho, 2021).

contained what would have been considered a modern curriculum, differentiating kindergarten pedagogy from that of primary school, and including directives for child-centered classroom organisation and teaching materials (see the Annex in Morin, 2002). A lack of funding, however, meant that it was not really implemented in public catholic schools until 1950, and then only in a few Montreal-area schools (Brunelle, 2024). In the interim, some Catholic public elementary schools offered a half-day "preparatory" class for 6-year-olds to better prepare children to enter grade one at age seven (Lehrer & Bastien, 2015). Lehrer and Bastien (2015) argue that the function of these classes was largely compensatory, aimed at students who were believed to lack school readiness due to poor parental involvement, and also served a bridging function between home and school. They were viewed as a key to future school success (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021), a theme that reoccurs throughout the history of kindergarten in Quebec. The name of these classes would change to "classe enfantine" or "childish class" in 1936, and then shortly thereafter the classe enfantine became grade one as school entry age was lowered to 6 years old (Lehrer & Bastien, 2015).

At the end of the First World War, the mental hygiene movement that had originated in the United States found its way to Canada, which had profound effects on public education. Richardson (1989) suggests that mental hygienists "combined nineteenth century child saving with the idea that the scientific promotion of well-being in childhood could prevent adult dysfunctions" (p. 2), largely through the "proper" socialization of children. It came on the heels of large-scale physical hygiene and cleanliness campaigns designed to reduce high infant mortality amongst impoverished families in Quebec, carried out largely by bourgeois women in charitable organizations as well as religious organizations (Dumont et al., 1987). Tied to large American philanthropic organizations that heavily funded research in child studies, the mental hygiene movement led to what Cohen (1983) terms the "medicalization" of education. Proponents of mental hygiene believed that social ills such as mental illness, delinquency, dependency, and violence were due to "maladjustments" or "faulty personality development" that could all be traced back to childhood, despite a lack of evidence supporting these assertions (Cohen, 1983). Intervention in early childhood was viewed as the solution to most social problems, and teachers were enlisted to "make the school a therapeutic milieu and an institution for personality development" (Cohen, 1983, p. 131). The movement was successfully promoted

over the next few decades via a slew of publications, conferences and professional education initiatives.

Early intervention during this period was often directed at parents, particularly mothers, with social workers and teachers tasked with educating mothers about child development, health, and social welfare. These interventions built on health and physical hygiene approaches that had begun in the preceding decades due to concern about infant mortality and were largely overseen by charitable organizations staffed by women but directed by men. As Dumont et al. (1987) note:

> In the past, women had looked after, brought up and fed their children the way their mothers had taught them; now doctors, educators and priests explained that such things were scientific. Teaching programs and clinics, such as the Gouttes de lait, were founded. Women could continue to be mothers and educators but had to apply male knowledge to do so. (p. 266)

Mothers who transgressed established social and religious mores, such as women who gave birth out of wedlock, were often pathologized. Brunet (2007) notes that the professionalization of social work in Quebec during this period challenged the traditional nature of French-Canadian institutions, with a clash between religious doctrine and the "new" scientization of the individual through psychology and psychoanalysis. As a result, unwed mothers were largely pathologized as "troubled" and unfit due to mental deficiency or moral delinquency, even if some social workers were beginning to question the basis of these pathologizations (Brunet, 2007). Children born to poor or unwed mothers, as well as orphans, also suffered under this new psychosocial regime, with the most well-known being the "Enfants de Duplessis". From the 1930s to the 1960s, 20,000 "illegitimate" children were institutionalized in psychiatric facilities in the province and deprived of an education, while suffering from inadequate care, as well as physical, psychological and sexual abuse (S. Boucher et al., 2009).

In the 1930s, the founder of Montreal's first private kindergarten and an early promoter of preschool education, Claudine Vallerand, created the École des parents du Québec (EDP) to educate parents in "modern" teaching techniques and to promote psychological expertise in early years education. In line with the mental hygienists, Vallerand believed that by meeting all of a child's needs, kindergarten education constituted the basis of proper "personality formation", and laid the groundwork for a stable individual who would contribute to a "healthy and well-balanced nation" (D. Baillargeon, 2009b, p. 52). Mothers' expertise alone was considered

inadequate, and specially trained kindergarten educators were considered a necessity for proper child development. With the rise in popularity of psychologically-based early years teaching, the first training program for preschool education teachers was initiated in 1938 at the normal school of the Institut pédagogique de Montréal (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021). Quebec also introduced its first legislation offering assistance to mothers in need in 1937, although Dumont et al. (1987) note that a limited, sexist conception of the roles of women in society constrained its application.

Kindergarten For All - from the 1930s to the 1960s

During the 1930s, school attendance in general was poor among francophone Quebecers, due to a school system segregated along religious and linguistic lines, high rates of poverty, inequitable school funding, and few opportunities to pursue higher education. Since school attendance was not compulsory, it was also impacted by gendered family roles as girls between the ages of 10 and 14 often stayed home to help look after the family (Dumont et al., 1987). Although primary school completion rates rose during the 1930s, they still remained under 50%, and in the immediate post-war period only 46% of Catholic students reached grade 7, with a mere 2% reaching grade 12 (Linteau et al., 1991). The protestant anglophone sector fared better, with higher school funding due to a wealthier property tax base, and less strict control by religious authorities over the schooling system. In 1943, compulsory school attendance was legislated by the Godbout government for children aged 6-14, and fees for public primary schools were abolished. Schools still often suffered, however, from a lack of teachers due to an overwhelmingly female workforce that faced low salaries, poor working conditions, and pressure to leave the profession once they married (Linteau et al., 1991). Despite these factors, the abbé Léandre Lacombe succeeding in raising funds to open 16 kindergarten classes in the orphanages of the Société d'adoption de Montréal in 1943, directed by Thérèse Léveillé-Bourget. Mme Bourget, finding developmental delays among numerous of the children in these public institutions, would become an advocate for universalized public kindergarten (M. Baillargeon, 1989).

Quebec's first public francophone kindergartens opened in 1950 in the city of Lachine, followed several years afterwards by classes in the city of Lasalle and the town of Plessisville (Boily et al., 1994). Due to a lack of funding offered to the school commissions for the provision of kindergarten, the few public schools offering kindergarten classes initially charged $5 per month, while the more numerous private kindergartens often charged $12-$15 per month,

making them accessible only to families with higher incomes (Desjardins, 1962; Legaré, 1960). By 1962, 256 kindergartens were operating in the province, only 25% of which were run by public school commissions (Morin, 2002). The popularity of private centres is evidenced by the numerous articles highlighting private "jardins d'enfants" and classified ads advertising spaces to families that I came across in my searches in *La Presse* between 1960-62. Many of these private kindergartens were in individual's homes, started largely by middle or upper-class women who hired instructors known as "jardinières d'enfants", and designed educational activities inspired by pedagogies imported from the United States or Europe. The educational credentials of instructors varied, however, as there were no regulations governing certification at the time.

Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, kindergarten-for-all modelled after middle-class, private kindergartens was publicly promoted by organisations such as La Société des amis de l'enfance which supported the private Maternelle St-Germain in Outremont ("L'école maternelle adjointe de la mere," 1960), and by the Association canadienne des jardinières d'enfants (ACJE), which would eventually become the Association d'éducation préscolaire du Québec (AÉPQ) (Brunelle, 2024). At the same time, a report by Charles Bilodeau of the département d'Instruction publique alarmed the Quebec government by detailing how a large number of 5-year olds were being sent to public schools and placed in grade one which was normally reserved for 6-year-olds (Boily et al., 1994). The overpopulation of younger children in grade one classes was a symptom of the lack of educational services available to the rapidly increasing preschool population due to both the baby boom, and to an increase in immigration between the mid-1940s and 1960 (Linteau et al., 1991). Between 1944 and 1958 alone, overall school attendance in the province grew by 58% to over one million students (Harvey, 2014). By the end of the Duplessis era, with construction of new schools underway, schooling remained largely under the auspices of the church, however, the state was playing an increasing role in managing infrastructure and in school transportation. According to Harvey (2014), however, government officials were reluctant to publicly recognize the state's growing role in education, as they were ideologically committed to an education guided by the traditional patriarchal family and the Catholic church.

This period also saw the opening of the first Indian residential schools in Quebec, with both Anglican and Catholic schools opening in Fort George in the James Bay area in 1934 and 1936. Four more schools would open in various areas of the province from 1952-1961. While

there is little information specifically about these Quebec schools' youngest residents, Shewell (2004) argues that residential schools were designed to remove Indigenous residents from their traditional lands, either by forcing them to relocate to cities, or to become sedentary, in order to facilitate resource extraction by the Canadian state. The schools were also designed to assimilate Indigenous individuals into Euro-Canadian culture and to Christianize them, based on notions of "lack" or "deficiency" and Euro-Western ideals of "cultural advancement". Indigenous peoples were viewed as child-like and "uncivilised", and incapable of hard labour and economic productivity (Bousquet, 2012). Traditional, permissive Indigenous childrearing practices were believed to engender deficiencies and were viewed as antithetical to Euro-Canadian values. Residential schools were one method the state utilized to rectify these perceived deficits, along with the removal of Indigenous children from their families, particularly during the "sixties scoop"[5]:

The government's assimilationist stance was also tied to the burgeoning health and social sciences and shifting welfare policy of the 1930s-1960s, likely influenced by the mental hygiene movement. Numerous anthropological and psychological studies were conducted on Indigenous children's "social adaptations" and "maladjustments" under the guise of preventing future dependence on the state. As Shewell (2004) notes, "the 'demotion' of Indians to scientific objects made it possible to justify denying their claims to cultural and social integrity" (p. 215). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report in 2015 (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), and other reports from survivors revealed the abuses and trauma that were endemic in residential schools, and today the schools are largely considered to have been instruments of cultural genocide (Bousquet, 2012). The destructive legacy of the schools is still felt today, including in the area of education, where Bousquet (2012) argues that despite shifting mentalities, Indigenous educational and child-rearing approaches are often still the subject of ethnocentric judgements and cultural imperialism. It is significant to note, then, that in my news media research only a single, brief, mention of Indigenous children was made with regards to kindergarten education. While this may be because Indigenous education falls under

[5] The "sixties scoop" is recognized as the period from 1950-1985 when over 24,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were removed or "scooped up" from their families and placed with non-Indigenous foster and adoptive families, often without being provided any information regarding their Indigenous heritage. The removals were perpetrated largely based on institutionalized racism within the child welfare system, by using "child-saving" rhetoric (Spencer & Sinclair, 2025). Problematic practices in Indigenous child welfare continue today across Canada and it has been termed a "humanitarian crisis" (Barrera, 2017).

federal jurisdiction, it is still striking when the data covers two historical periods and three provincial elections. While today there have been specific, culturally sensitive guidelines developed regarding ECEC for young Indigenous children in Quebec (A. Charron et al., 2021), this absence of Indigenous educational issues in public discourse speaks to a continued lack of public concern for Indigenous children's experiences by the settler majority in the province.

"C'est l'temps qu'ça change" - The Modernization of Quebec's Education System

Although the postwar period brought economic prosperity to Quebec, the province was still divided along linguistic and cultural lines. A minority of Quebecers of British decent held dominant economic and social positions, while francophones faced continued discrimination in employment and educational opportunities, and an overall lower standard of living (Linteau et al., 1991). In 1960, the Liberal Party headed by Jean Lesage came to power with the slogan "C'est l'temps qu'ça change, et ça va changer" (It's time things changed, and they will change!) A series of sweeping social reforms were introduced that ushered a period of rapid modernization known as the Quiet Revolution. A year later, the Lesage government, under the leadership of Paul-Gérin Lajoie, Ministère de la Jeunesse, introduced eight bills that made up the *Grande Charte de l'éducation*, a series of measures aimed at offering free education to all Quebec students from kindergarten to the end of high school via subsidies to the school boards. It also included the extension of mandatory schooling to age 15, and eventually to age 16. This was significant at a time when only 13% of Quebec francophones graduated from high school, and only 4% graduated from university ("Qui s'instruit s'enrichit," 2009). The new measures were intended to make education equitable and accessible to all, including kindergarten-aged children.

The new plan for equal access to education was promoted with the slogan "qui s'instruit, s'enrichit" ("He who gets educated, enriches himself"). As Lesage would later describe it in a fiery public speech: "an educational system that corresponds to our needs, made accessible to all, poor or rich, urban or rural, is indispensable to our economic progress and to the gradual increase in our standard of living" ("Qui s'instruit s'enrichit," 2009). As part of the *Grande Charte,* new financial subsidies were offered to develop public kindergarten classes to serve the exploding population of young children, although their establishment at this time was not yet mandated and still at the discretion of the school boards. Quebec was statistically far behind Ontario, with only 2% of their 120,000 potential kindergarten students in public school, while 65% of Ontario's 5-

year-olds were registered in kindergarten (Morin, 2002, pp. 34–35). Fears of lagging behind the progress of anglophones ("Les jeunes Anglais mieux équilibrés ?," 1961), and of Ontarians in establishing early learning institutions, is evidenced in news reports in the 1960s ("Il faut ouvrir les maternelles à tous les enfants...," 1960) and reappears during the provincial election in 2018 (Lecavalier, 2018). News media reports also revealed that francophone parents began to heavily pressure school commissions and local town councils in the early 1960s to establish public kindergartens in their towns, as they worried their children were missing out on the benefits kindergarten afforded ("École maternelle projetée à Arvida," 1960; "Réunion orageuse à St-Hyacinthe," 1962).

At the same time the *Grande Charte* was being implemented, the Comité catholique du Conseil de l'instruction publique formed a subcommittee to focus specifically on kindergartens and tasked it with writing a guide on how to organise preschool classrooms. This would replace the committee's existing program which had remained the same since 1915. Problems with inadequate training of teachers to staff the new public kindergartens would also lead the same subcommittee to be tasked with reforming teacher education (Morin, 2002). According to Lehrer (2018a), the CECM's regulations surrounding kindergarten in 1959 stated that the program should not include premature academic instruction, but rather introduce the child to school routines, inculcate good habits, order, cleanliness, piousness, goodness and honesty, with a focus on socialization. Morin (2002) suggests that the structural measures aimed at improving kindergarten at this time were significant as they reflected evolving professional, and consequently, public, opinions with regards to the importance of preschool education. Kindergarten had begun to be viewed as a right for citizens rather than a privilege, and a necessary public service that should not be reserved solely for the middle and upper classes, but one that should be made accessible to all.

In 1961, the Lesage government created the royal commission on education, better known as the Parent Commission, after its president, Monseigneur Alphonse-Marie Parent, a Catholic priest and educator (Commission royale d'enquête sur l'enseignement dans la province de Québec, 1964). Numerous articles within my dataset included reporting on the consultations held by the commission, and the briefs presented by a variety of social actors. The impact of the Parent Report, released in 1963 and 1964, is still felt in Quebec today, particularly as it led to the creation of the first Ministry of Education and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (CSE), an

independent consultative body made up of educational actors (Brunelle, 2024)[6]. The effects of the report were also felt in preschool education as it specifically recommended the establishment of universal public kindergarten for 5-year-olds, followed by kindergarten for 4-year-olds. In addition, it recommended creating specialized separate kindergarten classes for "children who, for one reason or another, cannot be accepted into regular kindergarten classes: children who are retarded, physically handicapped, etc."[7] (Commission royale d'enquête sur l'enseignement dans la province de Québec, 1964, p. 85). The Parent commission hearings relied heavily on the opinions of specialists in child development and stated that the objectives of preschool education should be to "contribute to the health of the child, to aid the child to enrich his thinking, develop basic intellectual qualities, openness to the world, sociability, aesthetic expression, and moral habits" (Corbo, 2002, p. 158).

While half-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds would only be officially mandated as part of public education starting in 1964, statistics from the 1960s show that its implementation was already underway as registration would go from 10.2% in 1961 to 92.3% in 1970 (Morin, 2002). Reports in *La Presse* testify to the challenge posed by this rapid expansion, particularly with regards to a lack of physical space in schools for new classrooms and the hiring of qualified teaching staff ("Construction d'une maternelle : Dorval," 1962; "Manque de locaux scolaires déploré à Drummondville," 1961). Articles from *La Presse* in the early 1960s also testified to the classification of children entering kindergarten as normal or deficient, determined via psychological, medical, and pedagogical evaluations conducted in conjunction with local public health authorities. One news report from 1961 detailed how children in Quebec City were separated into classes for regular or gifted students based on their IQ scores, and plans were underway to create auxiliary classes for students considered "deficient but teachable" (N. Girard, 1961). Lehrer and Bastien (2015) note that the process of "screening for health and

[6] With the adoption of Bill 23 in December 2023, the CAQ government has continued to centralize powers related to the education system in the hands of the provincial government, despite objections from opposing political parties, unions, and school administrators. As part of this reform, the CSE will soon to cease to function as it has since the 1960s and will be transformed into the Conseil de l'enseignement supérieur tasked with analyzing post-secondary education only (Labbé, 2023). In its place the government will create the Institut national d'excellence en éducation (INEE) that will examine "scientific, evidence-based educational practices" from around the world, with a goal of increasing school success rates. The creation of the INEE is contested (Lécuyer, 2025), and with a strict focus on pedagogical practices it is unlikely to critically examine larger social issues affecting education as the CSE has done throughout its existence.

[7] Note that these terms are today considered pejorative, however this is a direct translation of the terminology employed at the time.

adaptation problems" (p. 22) was integrated into the expansion of public kindergartens at the CECM in Montreal, and remark that the kindergarten program was specifically designated as being for "normal" children.

Renewal and Shifting Priorities - the 1970s

The process of the expansion of public kindergarten for 5-year olds continued, and by the early 1970s 95% of children in Quebec were attending half-day kindergarten either in the morning or the afternoon (Boily et al., 1994). According to Boily et al. (1994), the Quebec government then turned its attention to the 5% of children not enrolled in kindergarten, and found that they hailed mainly from economically disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods, as well as isolated rural communities. This led to a focus on compensatory education, including through a quinquennial action plan titled "Opération renouveau" ("Operation Renewal") undertaken at the CECM, that argued that the school failure of children from disadvantaged areas could be attributed to deficiencies in the child and in their environment (Hamel, 1995). Emphasis shifted, according to Lehrer and Bastien (2015), from targeting individual children, to targeting entire neighbourhoods, noting that "both children from poor families, as well as immigrant families, were pathologized, based primarily on research from the US" (p. 27). In 1973, half-day kindergarten for 4-year-olds was proposed by the education ministry as a solution for disadvantaged urban areas, while home kindergartens were to be offered in rural locations (Boily et al., 1994). This period also saw the introduction of the first full-day kindergartens for 5-year-olds in "at risk" populations, such as the "maternelle d'accueil" (welcoming kindergarten) intended for children of immigrants who had been in Quebec for five years or more without mastering French. Maternelle d'accueil focused on "the acquisition of the rudiments of the language and the cultural and social codes" (Morin, 2002, p. 55). The Passe-Partout program was also introduced in some rural areas during this period. It offered parental education and activities for 4-year-olds, with a focus on kindergarten readiness, and was accompanied by a Quebec-produced children's educational television show of the same name that aired throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021). The Passe-Partout program remains in effect in some parts of the province today, with the television show briefly being revived from 2019-2024.

The education of new immigrants became a hotly debated political topic in the 1970s, due to the fact that most recent immigrants attended English schools and therefore became integrated into the anglophone community. Fears developed that due to rising immigration, and

lower birth rates among francophone Quebecers, the province's population would become anglicized (Linteau et al., 1991). Nationalist sentiment, concerns over the perennity of the French language, as well as questions of Quebec identity and autonomy animated debates that culminated in the enactment of Bill 101, or the Charter of the French Language, in 1977. Through the Charter, the Parti Québécois government established French as the official language of the province, obliged all newcomers to attend French schools, and ensured the prominence of the French language in the areas of education, work and commercial signage (Gagnon, 1996). Minor exceptions to the education regulations were included for anglophones whose parents had attended school in English, or siblings of children attending English schools. Although disputes over language regulations continue to this day, with recent legislation such as Bill 96[8], Bill 101 radically changed the educational landscape, including the provision of preschool education, as the majority of newcomers were now to be integrated into the francophone school system. This would require rapid adaptation by the francophone system to the needs of an increasing number of young allophones, many of whom arrived with limited economic resources. At the same time however, the francophone school system, particularly in Montreal, was dealing with a significant drop in the overall number of students due to a low birthrate, and an exodus of families towards the suburbs (Gagnon, 1996). An already elevated rate of attrition of anglophones leaving Quebec for other provinces also increased during this period (Maheu, 1983).

The youngest allophones were not found within the school system, however, but in other areas of ECEC. The Charter of the French Language, although it applied to kindergartens, did not apply to daycares, preschools, and other types of child-care arrangements. Perhaps to make up for this fact, the Ministère de l'Immigration began to subsidize a small amount of francophone daycares, while the Ministère des Affaires sociales subsidized a handful of daycares in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (M. Baillargeon, 1989). It was not until 1979, however, that a provincial law governing daycares was enacted, and even then, most daycares were still privately funded or community-run, although school boards were now permitted to offer expanded daycare services (Gagnon, 1996). Madeleine Baillargeon (1989) suggests that unlike

[8] Bill 96, passed in 2022, was a modification to the Charter of the French Language that strengthened regulations concerning the use of French in individuals' interactions with the state. It touched on government services such as healthcare, Cegep education, and immigration. It also tightened rules concerning the use of French in the workplace and the bilingual status accorded to some municipalities (Bill 96: An Act Respecting French, the Official and Common Language of Québec, 2022, p. 96). Objections to Bill 96 were levied by anglophone rights groups, groups representing new immigrants and Indigenous communities (Schwartz, 2023).

kindergarten, which began as the purview of higher-income families, daycares mainly served families with modest incomes, including new immigrants. Unlike the rapid expansion of kindergarten, it would take a more than two decades-long struggle to establish a network of public daycares, due to resistance to women's increasing entry into the workforce and the fact that daycare was considered "assistance to families in need", rather than a necessary public service (D. Baillargeon, 2012).

A major shift in educational policy regarding children with "differences" or "difficulties" began in 1976 following a report by the Comité provincial de l'enfance inadaptée, or COPEX (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1976). Research conducted at the time called into question the notion that disadvantaged students had any particular deficiencies, and argued that preschool compensatory education did not have any beneficial effect (Deniger, 2012). In its 1976-77 report, the CSE argued for a change in approach that would respect children's individuality and their humanity, as opposed to focusing on their differences, and recommended the integration of children with learning and adaptation difficulties into the regular education system (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1978). In the same report, the CSE emphasized the importance of early assessment of young children to identify problems, and early intervention, including the necessity for early learning services specifically targeted towards children with difficulties. Deniger (2012) notes that this shift to accept children's adaptational differences was accompanied by a recognition of the social basis of many educational difficulties, and schools began to view themselves as active partners in a "war on poverty". Public schools were mandated to adapt to, and work with, their local communities, and to "serve as an instrument of social promotion rather than social selection" (Deniger, 2012, p. 69). While the first provincial educational adaptation policy to integrate students with disabilities was enacted in 1979 (Tardif, 2015), the deployment of anti-poverty measures adapted to local communities, including addition of new pre-kindergartens, met with only mitigated success. This was largely due to bureaucratic constraints on local initiatives and uneven allocation of funding (Deniger, 2012).

Children "At Risk" and Interculturalism - the 1980s and 1990s

Amidst a reorganization of the public education system in 1981, the Ministry of Education created the first provincial preschool curriculum for kindergartens that involved six areas of focus including linguistic, intellectual, physical, social, affective, and moral development (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1981). These developmental areas would stay fairly

consistent over time, and they remain present in the most current 2021 program, with the exception of moral development, which was quietly dropped from 1997 onwards. The 1981 curriculum was accompanied by corresponding guides on subjects such as classroom organization, participation of parents, language acquisition, and the development of children from low socioeconomic status environments (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021; Morin, 2002). A few years later, a guide on the transition from kindergarten to grade one was also published, indicating early concerns by the Ministry over "school readiness", and offering tips on progressive integration (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1985). By 1987, 90,489 children in the province were attending public kindergarten for 5-year-olds, while 6,225 children were enrolled in 4-year-old classes (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1987). Only 2,820 children were enrolled in private kindergartens, which had diminished in popularity with the expansion of public offerings. At the beginning of the 1990s, the CECM, which was offering an increasing number of half-day 4-year-old kindergarten classes for disadvantaged students in Montreal, also began offering full-day kindergarten targeted at 5-year olds from disadvantaged areas, with funding from the Ministry of Education (Gagnon, 1996).

The 1980s and 1990s brought difficult economic times to the province, including concerns about an increase in government deficits, and budget cuts that resulted in large labour disputes in the public sector. Deniger (2012) argues that this period saw a disengagement of the state, a return to a focus on academic success, and the domination of individualist ideologies. Tardif (2015) concurs, suggesting a shift toward right of center governments in North America during this period resulted in a neoliberal, individualist approach to education that created increased privatization, competition, and stratification in the Quebec education system (Tardif, 2015). Tardif (2015) suggests that neoliberalism resulted in contradictory public discourses, such as those related to competition, success, and return on investment, that work against the notion of the education system as a democratizing apparatus, and that this has served to partially negate the egalitarian ideals that underpinned the Parent Report. Neoliberalism is a rejection of Keynesian welfare-state economics and an adoption of radical free-market economics that includes extensive deregulation, where "all dimensions of human life are cast in terms of market rationality" (Brown, 2003, para. 8). This increase in stratification and privatization has resulted in educational segregation based on income and academic performance, or what is termed today "l'école à trois vitesses" (the "three-speed" schooling system). In this segregated system, higher-

income and higher-performing students avail themselves of the offerings at private schools, or specialized programs in public schools, while students from low-socioeconomic status areas and students with disabilities end up in under-resourced regular public programs (Plourde, 2022). Although this segregation is less apparent in preschool education, the end-result is a reproduction of social inequalities, particularly for children labeled as "vulnerable", or "at risk".

Swadener (2008) suggests that "at risk" became to go-to language for framing concerns regarding young children in North America during the 1990s, a change from the "cultural deprivation or deficiency" mindset of the 1960s and 1970s, and the "disadvantaged" labelling utilized in the 1980s[9]. "At risk" was generally applied to children and families who were socially excluded, or at future risk of failure in different aspects of participation in society including education and employment (Swadener, 2008). A shift in anxieties was also occurring in Western countries during the 1980s, largely tied to changes in family structure and social mores, that saw concern about neglect and abuse of children inside the home change to fears regarding extra-familial abuse in a variety of institutions and community settings (Parton, 2006). There was also concern about what was perceived as rising antisocial and criminal behaviour among children and youth. Social services and state interventions for children moved from a narrower focus on children at risk of immediate harm, to the promotion of "the welfare of the child" that encompassed not only risk assessment, but also an emphasis on health, development, and education. Parton (2006) argues that this shift involved the negation of the patriarchal family as the central protector of children, and an increased role for the state in the governance of childhood that would reconfigure the organization of social services and youth protection with a focus on preventative strategies. As Parton (2006) notes: "The boundaries between the 'abused' child, the child 'in need', the 'vulnerable' child and the child 'at risk' increasingly overlap and are blurred in our attempts to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child" (p. 169).

In line with this shift, a group of researchers in Quebec were tasked with investigating the causes of abuse and neglect of children in the province, as well as "maladaptations", with the goal of designing interventions to prevent impediments to "optimal development". The resulting historic report, *Un Québec fou de ses enfants* (Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 1991), took up this language of risks and vulnerabilities, noting an increase in the number of "children with vulnerabilities" and stating that "an accumulation of risk factors increases the

[9] Note that in French, the term disadvantaged "défavorisé" is still employed in education in Quebec today.

probability that a child will one day have major difficulties" (Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 1991, p. 40). The report would have a lasting impact on the ECEC sector in Quebec, and is still today considered a touchstone in the evolution of Quebec's family policies ("Nos réussites et nos échecs, 30 ans après Un Québec fou de ses enfants," 2022). Recommendations for major interventions in *Un Québec fou de ses enfants* included reducing poverty, offering support to young parents, and increasing relationships with caring adults. Specific suggestions were offered for "investing in prevention" to save on future economic costs, a precursor to the human capital and preventive state discourses explored below. The report highlighted problems faced by single parent families, particularly the economic precarity of single mothers with preschool-aged children. The increasing number of mothers of young children in the workforce was also noted – a figure that had doubled between 1976 and 1990 (Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 1991, p. 26).

For preschool-aged children, behaviours such as impulsiveness and aggression, as well as low self-esteem were identified as putting them at risk for becoming juvenile delinquents, dropping out of school, or becoming suicidal (Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 1991). Other risk factors such as parental stress, domestic violence, family structure and schooling, were also examined. Parazelli (2022) notes that while this report marked a shift towards an ecosystemic behaviourist approach to early predictive prevention that takes into account the interaction of personal and environmental/social factors, it appeared at a time when significant cuts were being made to public services and welfare programs for families living in poverty. It was ironic, therefore, that while the report called for a society-wide response to the problems faced by children and youth, there was a simultaneous retrenchment of social assistance and a focus on individual responsibility and local interventions. The report also highlighted the specific issues faced by new immigrant and First Nations and Inuit families that put their children at "higher risk", without offering any analysis of the role the state might play in these disparities via institutionalized racism (Thésée & Carr, 2016) and a legacy of settler-colonial violence (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

As Quebec adapted to a growing, increasingly diverse population, the 1980s and 1990s saw the beginning of the province's interculturalist approach to education. The Ministère de l'éducation published *L'École québécoise et les communautés culturelles* (Chancy & Ministère de l'Éducation, 1985) that invited Quebecers to enrich their own culture via openness to the

diversity of other cultures. A report by the CSE (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1986) spoke to ongoing social changes such as shifts in family composition and gender equality, the diversification of religious beliefs and moral values, as well as changes in communication technologies and global consumerism that were impacting Quebec as it moved towards a more plural society. In response to these changes, a policy of interculturalism, Quebec's answer to multiculturalism, was instituted. Interculturalism is defined as a moral contract between immigrants and the host society that recognizes an exchange between cultures, while promulgating assimilation via "dissolution" of newcomers' cultures into a common, dominant, francophone Québécois culture (Thésée & Carr, 2016). This policy emphasized the mastery of French as a common language, tolerance/acceptance of differences, equality of opportunity, and citizenship education, while stopping short of embracing a critical anti-racist approach to education (Potvin & Carr, 2008).

The official policy concerning interculturalism in education, *Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle* was published in 1998 (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1998) and remains in effect today, impacting expectations concerning the integration of newcomers, particularly in kindergarten classrooms. Conflicts arise between interculturalism's emphasis on integration into the francophone majority, and adoption of Quebec values and culture, and the requirement that schools must provide a non-judgmental, inclusive, adaptable environment, that takes into account the child's cultural knowledge and experience (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2021). Deniger (2012) argues that despite government promises, the requirement for schools to adapt to learners, including to their cultural and linguistic diversity, has been poorly operationalized in Quebec. The Conseil supérieur d'éducation (CSE) concurs (2017), noting that a lack of resources often means that inclusivity is only achieved via exceptional measures undertaken by individual educators. There is also, according to Potvin (2016), a lack of political will to examine systemic racism in Quebec, despite a persistent gap between interculturalism's goals, and discrimination and exclusions that continue to impact racialized communities, even in subsequent generations after their initial arrival in Quebec (Thésée & Carr, 2016). She notes that this reluctance to tackle systemic racism is tied in part to the majority/minority status of Quebec francophones and the precariousness of Quebec's national identity within a larger anglophone population, as well as within the context of globalization (Potvin, 2016).

New Family Policy and Expansion of Kindergarten for 4-Years-Olds – The Late 1990s to the 2010s

Following the États généraux sur l'éducation and the Sommet sur l'économie et l'emploi in 1996, as well as a report by the CSE the same year that recommended a more coherent approach to the education of young children (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1996), a major shift occurred in early years education in Quebec. Premier Lucien Bouchard and Pauline Marois, as the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance of the Parti Québécois government, introduced a new family policy in 1997 designed to encourage women's participation in the workforce by improving family-work life balance, and increasing financial supports to families. It also sought to ameliorate future educational outcomes and to alleviate poverty. This new initiative included subsidized $5/day childcare spaces, subsidized primary school daycares, changes to the family allowance scheme, and a new provincial parental leave plan. It also involved the shifting of half-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds into a full-day program, and the development of a network of non-profit Centres de la petite enfance (CPE) (educational childcare centres) (White & Prentice, 2016). The kindergarten curriculum was also updated in 1997, and a moratorium placed on kindergarten for 4-year olds in order to promote the new daycare system (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021). While the daycare program was designed to be universal, overwhelming demand for subsidized spaces in childcare centres and changes in government funding and support for the expansion of the daycare program over time, would mean that demand consistently outstripped supply, which remains the case today (La Presse Canadienne, 2024). As a consequence, children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods would eventually be found to be underrepresented in the educational childcare system, and over-represented in lower quality forms of child care such as home-based daycares (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 2012).

The early 2000s saw more important reforms to the Quebec education system with the launch of the updated Programme de formation de l'école Québécoise (PFEQ), that integrated preschool education directly into the overall educational program. The Education Minister of the period, François Legault, who would go on to become Premier in 2018, spearheaded the updated PFEQ under the slogan "instruire, socialiser et qualifier" (to provide instruction, to socialize, and to provide qualifications) with a goal of "success for all" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2001). The purpose of preschool education was revised with a mandate to: encourage young children to like school and reach their full potential, foster overall development, and prepare children for future

schooling. In 2009, the first experimental full-day four-year-old kindergarten class was initiated at the CSDM (formerly the CECM), with a goal of giving a cohesive, better quality, full day educational experience to children who previously spent a half day in kindergarten and a half day under the care of the school daycare services. Located in a school in an impoverished area of Montreal, it was intended to have a preventative focus, and to increase students' readiness to enter kindergarten for 5-year-olds the following year (Brunelle, 2024). This was followed two years later by the establishment of six full-day 4-year-old classes in Montreal-area schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Around the same time, a report by the CSE on early years education (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 2012) recognized issues with the coordination, access, and quality of state-run education and daycare services for 4-year-olds in the province. Based on an examination of systems in Ontario, France, and Sweden, as well as academic research, it formulated a new definition of "quality" care and argued that CPEs were "the model that corresponds best to this ideal of quality" (p. 77). The CSE recommended the expansion of the CPE system, particularly in disadvantaged areas, and that the service be offered free of charge to parents of 4-year-olds.

While the CSE recommended the expansion of CPEs under the auspices of "foster[ing] equality of chances and the success of all" (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 2012, p. 2), actors within the school system were pushing for the expansion of the experimental full-day kindergartens for 4-year-olds at the CSDM. According to Brunelle (2024), as Minister of Education under the Parti Québécois in 2013 Marie Malavoy was shocked by unnamed statistical reports that suggested 35% of children in Quebec were starting school with deficiencies that would lead to future school failure. Despite objections from proponents of CPEs, she pushed for the creation of full-day 4-year-old kindergarten classes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods across the province. A pilot project of sixty full-day classes went ahead, and the program was accompanied by a curriculum document specific to 4-year-old kindergartens in disadvantaged areas (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir at du Sport, 2013). The subsequent Liberal government would continue to open full-day 4-year-old classes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and by 2017 the wording "in disadvantaged areas" would disappear from the curriculum document title, which Lehrer and Fournier (2021) argue suggested the government was already considering universalizing the program.

The "ideal of quality" that the CSE focused on in their 2012 report was tied to earlier research reports that suggested that the quality of childcare and early years education in Quebec varied greatly based on the type of establishment (CPE, private daycare, home daycare, etc.), with centre-based CPEs offering the highest level of quality (Japel, 2012). It was also tied to neoliberal understandings of "quality" in ECEC that related to questions of return on investment. In other words, investments in the education of young children were specifically intended to bring economic benefits and the capacities of citizens that were valued were therefore those necessary for economic success. This approach was demonstrated in two Quebec educational policies published during this time period – *Tous ensemble pour la réussite scolaire : L'école, j'y tiens* ("All Together for School Success: I Care About School!") (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2009), and the *Politique de la réussite educative : le plaisir d'apprendre, la chance de réussir* ("Policy for School Success: The Pleasure of Learning, The Chance to Succeed ") (Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, 2017). The former was focused on "school perseverance" in order to improve high school graduation rates and "make school success a fundamental value" (p. 3) of Quebec society. Early screening of young children and the increased provision of ECEC in disadvantaged areas were noted as essential to preventing future school dropouts, with the understanding that non-completion of high school was a major problem due to the impact on future economic productivity. In the *Politique de la réussite educative*, a need for innovation and performance was emphasized in the context of globalization, and the necessity of the development a "flexible and competent workforce" of "responsible citizens" (p. 12).

Conclusion

By 2018 there were 394 kindergarten for 4-year-olds classes being offered in Quebec, a mix of both half-day and full-day, along with approximately 5,000 full-day kindergartens for 5-year-olds (Lajoie, 2025). When the provincial election was called in the fall of 2018, each party presented its specific vision for early years' education, and there was little consensus on what form of ECEC would ensure "le bien des enfants" going forward, including the CAQ's proposal to universalize prekindergarten. The themes that emerged from those debates, although alluded to here, will be more fully developed in the next chapter. I will examine how both in the period of the early 1960s, and during the 2018 election, opinions on the purpose, delivery, and proposed effects of kindergarten education have been contested, generating discourses regarding the costs,

benefits and necessity of early years education and care. In addition, I will look at shifting understandings of women's and teachers' roles during the 1960s, including concerns around the modernization of Quebec society, and the spectre of the "bad mother" that is raised directly in the 1960s, and more indirectly in 2018. Finally, I will look at how questions of different groups of children's vulnerabilities, and the processes of early intervention designed to remediate them, have permeated debates surrounding kindergarten, including why understandings of the power relations that institutionalize inequities are often left out.

This historiography has provided a necessary background to this upcoming examination, by offering an overview of the evolution of kindergarten education in Quebec. From an early religious charity endeavour, designed to "rescue" the children of the working classes, to a bourgeois educational experiment that embraced the burgeoning field of child psychology and mental hygiene, to the democratizing ideals of the *Grande Charte* and Parent Commission, kindergarten has represented different concepts of child welfare and education over time. Concepts of childhood and children have also changed, with a move towards the scientization of children and families. As society has modernized and become more diverse, the educational and social challenges have shifted, and public policy has begun to address the cultural and linguistic integration of newcomers. This has raised questions about the potentially normalizing and exclusionary ways that interventionist discourses have intersected with integrationist cultural perspectives. The development of Quebec's lauded network of subsidized educational childcare centres, and its generous family support policies have also sparked debates regarding the best methods of meeting young children and families needs for childcare and early years education. Finally, the rise of neoliberal discourses in education have led to an economization of childhood, and entrenched notions such as success, value, and productivity into the design and provision of kindergarten education. Although presented here chronologically, traces of each of the discourses noted above can be found not only in the past, but also in the present, as they continue to inform public understandings of kindergarten education in Quebec. The next two chapters will offer an opportunity to explore the effects of this historical continuity and change in a more comprehensive fashion, revealing the messy, non-linear way in which history has impacted both public news media discourse and educational policy development.

Chapter 4: News Media Analysis – 1960-62

> "We can ask, what images have been presented to us as if they are 'timeless, natural, unquestionable'? What images do we actually have? What other images might there be? And which images do we want to have?"
>
> - Roberts-Holmes & Moss (2021, p. 158)

News media are an ever-present feature of modern life. So much so, that it often feels like news is impossible to escape, as headlines are broadcast in print, on television, on the radio, in podcasts, on the internet, and then rehashed on platforms such as YouTube, Tiktok and Instagram. As a consequence, topics present in the news, such as those related to education, often work their way into the far corners of our constantly digitally connected lives. Hall (2021) argues that in periods of social change, news media performs an important role as a social educator and mediator, by interpreting the processes of change that are at work in society. The news emphasizes the immediate and urgent nature of current events, and journalists bring to bear particular frames of reference in order to make events intelligible to their readers. When change is happening quickly, the press must "work harder" to represent complex social forces, sometimes by drawing on myths and stereotypes (Hall, 2021). In the 1960s, the world may not have been digitally connected the way it is today, however television and radio were popular, and newspapers also reached a large number of Quebecers. The record high circulation of La Presse in the early 1960s speaks to this fact, with circulation numbers that would suggest it reached almost one in ten adults (Jacob, 2003). At the same time, information relevant to child-rearing, parenting, and children's education was also distributed to the population via advice columns, radio programs, child-care manuals, medical advice, television programs, religious services, and community organizations (Arnup, 2002). These varied sources of information both influenced, and were influenced by, the discourses appearing in the news, not unlike the intertextual digital landscape we experience today, albeit in a more analog form (Cliche, 2014).

La Presse articles from the 1960s included in this study were retrieved from scanned editions of the printed versions of the newspaper, therefore the full context of their original publication was consistently present, even if it became abstracted once I collated portions of the text into the external excel document for coding. What is important to note is that many of the articles appeared in the "women's pages", with titles such as "Le monde féminin" (The feminine world"), or in special pullout sections, identifying them as "soft" rather than "hard" news, often

targeted specifically towards women (see Figure 7). They were often surrounded by items such as recipes, and ads for items such as household appliances, sewing patterns, fur coats, jewelry, bedding, and even supplements to treat housewives suffering from "gloominess and depression". The texts that were laid out next to the articles I examined sometimes featured issues relating to women's equality, but more often featured reporting on women's philanthropic organizations such as the Junior League or religious charities, or involved updates on wealthy and elite women in Quebec society and around the world. The women featured were overwhelmingly white and

Figure 6 – Sample Excerpt from "Le monde féminin" in La Presse

22 LA PRESSE, MONTREAL, MERCREDI 27 AVRIL 1960

Le monde féminin

Le chômage et l'opinion sur l'emploi de l'épouse

(Communication de l'Institut canadien de l'Opinion publique. Tous droits réservés).

Les difficultés que pose le chômage nuisent au mouvement en faveur de l'égalité des femmes devant l'emploi. La réponse de l'opinion à la question de l'égalité des chances d'emploi pour l'épouse retombe à peu près au niveau de 1950, ce qui marque une baisse sérieuse de la proportion de voix favorables. Celle-ci a atteint le sommet pendant la prospérité de 1956, alors que 32% des citoyens consultés acceptaient l'égalité. Aujourd'hui 23% seulement sont d'accord. 70% se déclarent pour la préférence d'emploi aux hommes.

La tableau ci-dessous indique l'évolution de l'opinion selon le changement des circonstances sur un problème qui a fait écrire de nombreuses lettres à certains journaux :

"Croyez-vous que les épouses doivent jouir de l'égalité avec les hommes devant l'emploi, ou que les patrons doivent accorder la préférence aux hommes ?"

	1950	1956	Aujourd'hui
Egalité des femmes	19%	32%	23%
Préférence aux hommes ...	67%	59%	70%
Réponses nuancées	11%	7%	5%
Sans réponse	3%	2%	2%
	100%	100%	100%

Qu'en pensent les femmes ?

Qu'en pensent les femmes ? Défendent-elles ou non la concurrence de leur sexe aux emplois ? En 1956, certaines la défendaient; aujourd'hui, le nombre a fort baissé. Le tableau qui suit indique qu'aujourd'hui il y a plus d'hommes que de femmes favorables à l'égalité de l'épouse devant l'emploi. En 1956, c'était l'inverse :

	Hommes	Femmes
Egalité des femmes ...	25%	20%
Préférence aux hommes	67%	72%
Réponses nuancées ...	6%	5%
Sans réponse	2%	3%
	100%	100%

Les quelques citoyens qui nuancent leurs réponses demandent, en général, que le patron varie sa décision selon l'emploi et la situation générale de l'embauche. Ils pensent aussi que si la situation de famille nécessite que l'épouse cherche un emploi au dehors, il faut le lui accorder.

Lors des sondages antérieurs, l'Institut canadien de l'Opinion publique avait constaté que la proportion des partisans de l'égalité des femmes devant l'emploi augmentait. Ces sondages ont révélé aussi que la majorité des citoyens consultés estiment qu'à travail égal la femme a droit à salaire égal.

Vieux pompier

Vancouver. (PC) — M. Gabriel Thomas, qui vient de mourir à l'âge de 90 ans, était le dernier survivant de la première brigade de pompiers volontaires de Vancouver. Il était né aux Etats-Unis, mais vint habiter la ville étant encore enfant.

Au Musée des Beaux-Arts

Les Floralies donnent lieu à un concours

La Fête des fleurs organisée annuellement par le Comité féminin du Musée des Beaux-Arts aura lieu les 1er et 2 juin. Comme précédemment, elle fera l'objet d'un concours à plusieurs catégories.

Tous les concurrents amateurs pourront juger quels brins de myosotis ou de muguet conviendraient à une demi-tasse ancienne le porcelaine fine ou quelles violettes sauvages pourraient se nicher dans un cocotier minuscule (catégorie 1); quel arrangement monochromatique se détacherait bien sur un morceau de soie rare ou de papier peint (catégorie 2); ce que sera la décoration florale de l'an 2060 (catégorie 3); et l'art de faire un chapeau de fleurs fraîches en pensant aux guirlandes de marguerites et de boutons d'or que nous tressions enfants (catégorie 4).

Il y a ainsi seize catégories différentes en tous points ; celle des arrangements de masses de fleurs pour commodes ou consoles ; celle des fleurs bleu, blanc, rouge, dans un vase blanc ; celle des fleurs de la même espèce ; celle de l'improvisation faite sur les lieux, dans un temps record, avec des fleurs et un vase identiques pour chaque concurrente, etc.

Inscription

Le concours est ouvert à toutes celles qui voudront y participer. Pour connaître les règles du coacours, elles devront écrire au Comité féminin de la Fête des Fleurs, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, 1379 ouest rue Sherbrooke, Montréal 25, et demander une formule d'inscription. L'échelle des points sera dressée selon la combinaison des fleurs, leur harmonie avec le contenant, l'originalité et le sens de proportion de l'ensemble. Les prix se reconnaîtront à la couleur des rubans : bleu (1er prix), rouge (2ème prix), jaune (troisième prix) et vert (quatrième prix). Un coupon numéroté, attaché à chaque programme et tiré au sort, donnera au visiteur la chance de gagner le tableau d'un peintre connu et coté.

Peter Townsend ne se prononce pas

Londres, (Reuters) — L'ancien prétendant de la princesse Margaret, le capitaine de groupe Peter Townsend, a fait savoir, hier soir, que lui et son épouse Marie-Luce n'assisteront pas au mariage de Margaret et d'Antony Armstrong Jones.

Il a refusé de dire si lui et sa femme avaient été invités à la cérémonie nuptiale du 6 mai. "C'est une chose sur laquelle je ne puis vraiment pas me prononcer", a-t-il dit. "Nous sommes venus à Londres pour quelques jours, nous avons deux ou trois petites choses à régler avant de retourner chez nous à Paris demain" a-t-il précisé.

AU PROFIT D'UNE MATERNELLE — Afin de suppléer au nombre des professeurs et compléter le matériel pédagogique nécessaire à l'enseignement pré-scolaire, la Société des amis de l'enfance présentera le lundi 9 mai, à la salle du Gésù, une soirée cinématographique mettant en vedette Pierre Fresnay dans "Les Fanatiques". Ci-dessus, Mlle Louise Faille, jardinière d'enfants surveillant l'heure de collation à la Maternelle Saint-Germain.

A la Junior League

Le dévouement social ne se fait pas à la sauvette

"Contrairement à ses débuts, qui datent de 1912, alors que les occasions de se dépenser au service de la communauté étaient assez restreintes, la Junior League trouve aujourd'hui des possibilités illimitées d'exercer le volontariat", déclarait, hier, Mme F. H. Peters, présidente de la ligue d'hui des possibilités illimitées annuelle à l'hôtel Ritz-Carlton, à l'issue du dîner.

Le rapport présenté par Mme Peters donne une vaste idée de l'activité déployée par la Junior League au cours de l'année. Le comité d'admission insiste sur deux facteurs en acceptant de nouveaux membres, marquant par là les besoins nouveaux du bénévolat social : une formation personnelle constante et le service philantropique continu. A cette fin, le comité d'éducation, au sein même de l'organisme, tient des assemblées destinées à l'information culturelle des membres tout en éclairant les nouvelles dirigeantes sur leurs responsabilités prospectives, les préparant que la ligue doive discontinuer son apport cette année," dit Mme Peters, "nous espérons que le volontariat de nos membres continuera de s'exercer.

En collaboration avec la Croix-Rouge, la ligue a patronné la semaine de l'hémophilie, au cours de laquelle 1,000 pintes de sang ont été recueillies et contribué un montant de $5,000 à la Société canadienne d'hémophilie qui, au cours de l'année 60-61, se verra accorder un autre montant de $2,500 au moins déjà voté par l'exécutif. Un montant a été affecté au programme de dépistage de maladies sanguines spécifiques au Montreal Children's Hospital ainsi qu'au Dr Denstedt, spécialiste en recherches à l'Université McGill. Plusieurs cours ont été donnés à des membres qui ont dirigé 1,800 écoliers en visite au Musée Redpath, du McGill. Les membres ont en outre travaillé au catalogue de la célèbre collection de photographies Notman. Et un montant de $2,500, à être réparti sur deux ans, servira à l'exécution professionnelle d'un diorama sur la flore marine au musée mentionné.

Parmi les autres activités de la Ligue, mentionnons sa colonie de vacances de St-Sauveur où 300 enfants ont pu bénéficier de trois semaines de séjour. Le club Fossile a assumé les frais de vacances de 30 petits campeurs. La colonie couvre 100 acres de terre et deux lacs. L'initiative, cette année du "Store Day", organisée en collaboration avec un magasin

Un menu par jour

JUS DE FRUITS FRAIS
RAGOUT DE PATTES DE PORC

Note: From *La Presse*, April 27th, 1960, p. 22.

francophone, and the overall tone was one of the importance of creating or maintaining an upper middle-class household via consumerism and proper management of the domestic sphere, a common gendered discourse of post-war society (Staton et al., 2004). The articles also celebrated women's implication in Quebec society, albeit generally through traditional feminine endeavours such as motherhood, charity work, and religious orders. There were also hints at changes, however, as women began to be interviewed as experts in the social sciences, such as in psychology and education. This context speaks to La Presse's appeal to a rapidly growing middle-class, and to tensions over women's shifting roles, which I shall elaborate on in this chapter.

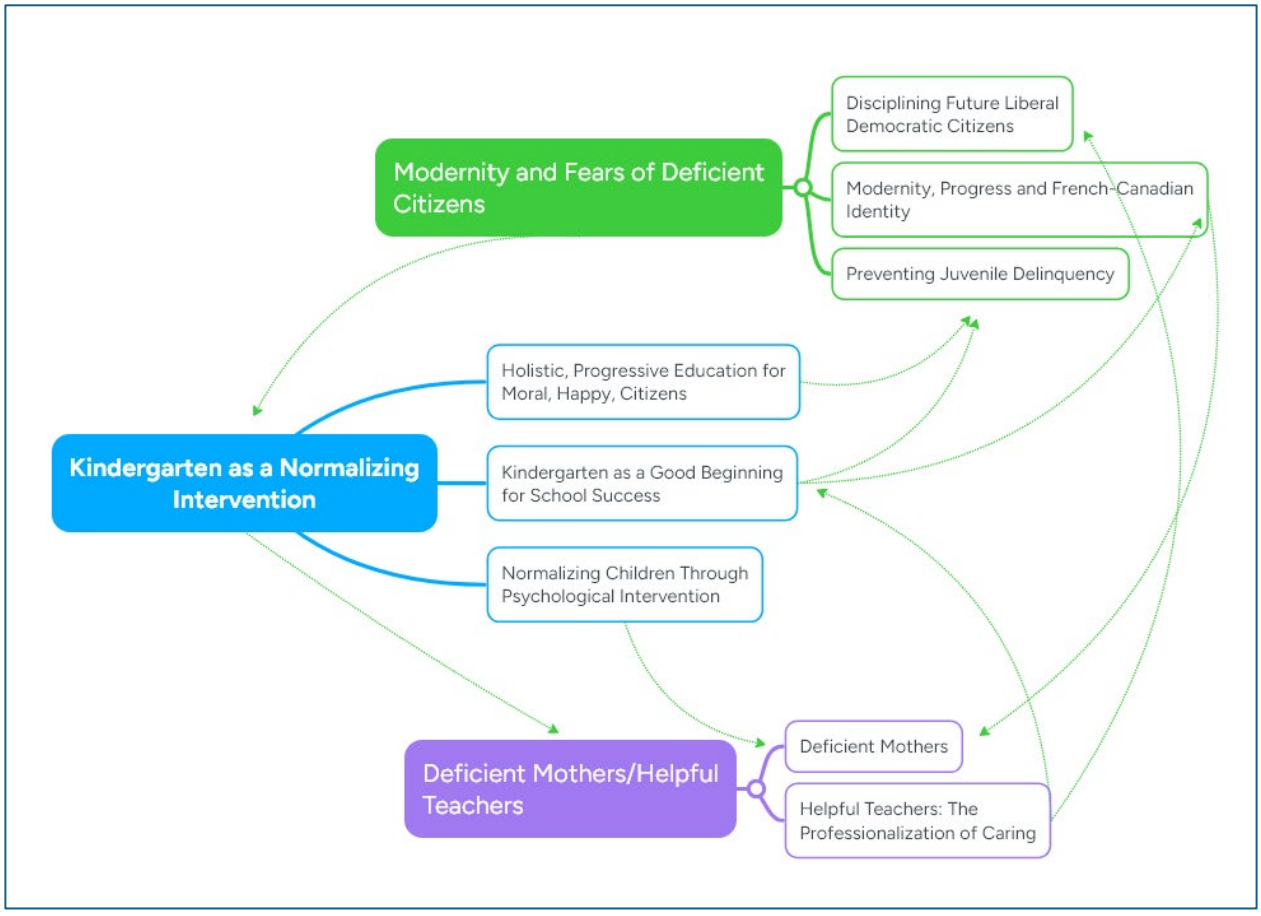
Introduction and Overview of Themes

In order to introduce the themes I developed from the news media dataset, I would like to return for a moment to my research questions which are: What are the deficit or interventionist discourses that are at work in the targeted timeframes, and what is their historical context? How do they relate to early years educational policy, as well as notions of citizenship, childhood, families and motherhood? How have these discourses changed or remained the same over time? What are the implications for equity and social justice in early years education, and for an understanding of young children as full, participatory citizens in Quebec society? These questions guided my reflections, and even if my findings did not always accord directly with them when the data took me in different directions, they still undergirded my analysis. As a result of "following the data", the questions may not all be answered fully here, however I believe the analysis is still robust. As I conducted my analysis, I moved back and forth from the relevant historical and academic literature to the data, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2022) and this greatly informed the theme development This chapter will focus on the themes developed from the 1960s news reports, and the next chapter will elaborate on the themes from the 2018 election. The analysis of the themes will be supported by both illustrative and analytic examples from the news reports.

In the articles from 1960-62, kindergarten education as a whole was largely framed through an interventionist discourse, and this interventionist language was intricately tied to the adoption of early educational approaches based in developmental child psychology, and their application to the formation of a "evolved, educated, stable, and generous" (D. Boucher, 1962, p. 16) liberal democratic citizenry. The subtexts underlying the public discussions of kindergarten

were often tied to a society wrestling with shifts in class and gender relations, as the Catholic Church began to lose its grip on the population, particularly women (Dumont et al., 1987). Mothers, in particular, were caught in an uneasy space between traditional understandings of their role as the primary educators of children and the reproducers of the French-Canadian "race" (D. Baillargeon, 2009a), and concerns about the impact of their increasing involvement in public life via work outside the home. At the same time, French-Canadians were striving to redefine themselves via educational and social reforms, often involving comparisons to their anglophone counterparts in Quebec or the rest of Canada. This context meant that while I initially sought to explore deficit discourses specifically related to young children, during my analysis I found that there were in fact a variety of what could be termed "deficit discourses" present. These were publicly declared anxieties surrounding issues such as inadequate motherhood, deficient education/wealth (related to class), and deficient citizenry in the form of purported inadequacies

Figure 7 – Map of Themes and Subthemes from the 1960s News Articles



tied to French-Canadian identity. The three themes for this section are: “Pourquoi la maternelle?”: Kindergarten as a Normalizing Intervention, “La rendre plus apte à accomplir sa mission”: Deficient Mothers/Helpful Teachers – Professionalizing Caring, and “Rester dans la bonne voie”: Modernity and Fears of Deficient Citizens. The themes are not organized in a hierarchical fashion, but as I shall demonstrate, they are interrelated, and therefore form a kind of web, where they are connected to the central theme and to each other (see Figure 8). Subthemes under each of these themes will engage more in-depth with the deficit discourses noted above.

“It’s in people’s minds right now – opinion is changing”: Analysis of News Reports from 1960-1962

During my research for this project, I stumbled across a video clip in Radio-Canada’s online archives from the 1963 news program *Droit de cité*, titled “Pourquoi la maternelle?” (“Why Kindergarten?”). The clip began with lively music playing over grainy black and white images of the exterior of a Quebec Catholic school, then shifted to footage of the inside of a busy, noisy kindergarten classroom full of lively children participating in a variety of hands-on educational activities. The voiceover of an unnamed “jardinière” narrated in French: “It's in people's minds right now, opinion is changing. People know why they send their children to kindergarten. It's mainly to prepare them for life in society, to get them out of their family environment a little bit, and then to prepare them for grade one and all their classes” (Radio-Canada, 2019). By “people”, the educator is referring to francophone Quebecers, particularly mothers, and in the same clip the journalist went on to interview several mothers, asking their opinions on this “new” form of public education. The mothers’ responses detailed how beneficial they believed kindergarten to be, particularly for the socialization and schooling of their children, and for “cutting the umbilical cord” to make separation from their children easier on them (Radio-Canada, 2019). The journalist followed these clips with an interview with Thérèse Bourget, president of the Association canadienne des jardinières d’enfants (ACJE), discussing the shift from private to public kindergartens in the province. Bourget argued that private, for-profit kindergartens were not “real” kindergartens because “real” kindergarten teachers did not have a profit motive and “simply live”, they “vegetate” (“elles végètente”) and that they must be properly certified by one of the three higher education programs in the province. “Vegetate” was a strange choice of words, but the implication was that a “real” kindergarten educator’s lifestyle, like that of a mother, required full dedication to the care of her students rather than the running

of a business. Bourget concluded, when asked whether she was favour of public kindergartens, that "we pioneers [of preschool education] have long wanted this to happen, because we deplored the fact that working-class children were unable to attend kindergarten because of the prohibitive cost" (Radio-Canada, 2019).

I include this description of the television news clip because it nicely encompasses the themes that appeared in the La Presse articles from 1960-62. "Why Kindergarten?", borrowed from the news clip, is an appropriate heading for the central theme, which was the question of the purpose of kindergarten as espoused in the newspaper articles. I propose that through news reports, kindergarten was promulgated as an intervention that would measure, classify, and normalize children, who were viewed as potentially deficient future citizens, according to the latest theories of child psychology experts. It was proposed that kindergarten would help not only with the children's psychological well-being, but that it would also see to their physical, social, academic, and moral/spiritual fitness according to the latest knowledge of child-rearing and early years education. Kindergarten was touted as an educational innovation that would both assure school readiness, and create happy, fulfilled, psychologically stable, individuals "bring[ing] the child as close as possible to the ideal child" (J.L., 1961). It was often women who ran private kindergartens, such as the pioneering "jardinières" who formed the ACJE, who were responsible for promoting its benefits and lobbying for public provision of early years education. In doing so, they promoted child-centered pedagogy as a modern, progressive method of education that would inculcate middle-class values, assist "overly busy" mothers in their role as educators, prevent juvenile delinquency, and ensure the future of the Quebec nation.

"Pourquoi la maternelle?" Kindergarten as a Normalizing Intervention

Looking Back to Move Forward. In order to speak to the central theme of this time period, I'd like to return briefly to the decades preceding the 1960s touched on in chapter three, including the influence of child psychology, as well as the hygiene movements, and theories of progressive education. Bloch & Popkewitz (2008) argue that the child psychology movement was intertwined with the politics of liberalism at the beginning of the 20th century, which called for scientifically-guided state governance and intervention practices that reinforced self-discipline, individualism, rationality, and autonomy. In early years education, these intervention practices were attached to naturalistic "ages and stages" theories of child development that were popularized by psychologists such as Gesell, Piaget, and others. As Walkerdine (1984) notes:

> The concern for a solution to the problems of the social order in a science of the individual … provided the possibility for a science and a pedagogy based on a model of naturally occurring development which could be observed, normalized and regulated … They permitted the idea that degeneracy could be nipped in the bud, by regulating the development of children in order to ensure their fitness as adults. (p. 170)

The emerging discipline of child psychology was, however, overwhelmingly based on observations of white, middle-class children, often from UK or North American laboratory nursery schools and child guidance clinics (Arnup, 2002). It therefore created culturally limited, classist, and largely gendered views on what constituted normality and abnormality (Bloch & Popkewitz, 2008). Walkerdine (1984) argues that concerns with "degeneracy", tied to eugenicist notions of the fitness of the "imperial race" permeated psychological developmental discourse. Gleason (1999) notes that the science of child psychology was often utilized to create racist and classist exclusions by labelling working-class, immigrant, and Indigenous children and families as "abnormal" and "poorly adjusted" (p. 7). Valverde (1992) concurs, adding that racial and class privilege were often woven together in fears about the reproduction of degeneracy among the lower classes.

The mental hygiene movement, which sought to root out mental deficiencies, psychiatric disorders and "maladjustments" in children in order to promote the development of mentally fit adults, was also central to establishing a psychology of normal development in children (T. R. Richardson, 1989). Through philanthropic organizations, the movement promoted investments in research in the field of child psychology in Canada, including the establishment of a short-lived child study centre at McGill University in Montreal in the 1920s, as well as the creation of the longer-lasting Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto. Mental hygiene also became a national Canadian educational objective via a resolution passed by the National Education Association in 1937 (Gleason, 1999). The establishment of child guidance clinics, where children were brought to be diagnosed and "treated" in the 1930s, led to a psychologizing of parenting practices, with a focus on norms tied to idealized white, middle-class motherhood, as assessed by male "expert" psychologists and researchers (Gleason, 1999).

One such child guidance clinic, originally named the Habit Clinic for Children, was established in Montreal in 1923. It was described as serving "children who have normal intelligence, but who show something wrong in their interests, or attitude, or behaviour, or

personality, or who are being constantly subjected to environmental influences that prevent the wholesome and healthy development of character and personality" (Mundie, 1924, p. 509). The clinic's interventions involved physical, social, psychological and psychiatric assessments, including assessments of home life, in particular mothers' behaviour and personality. As a result, mothers were often blamed for children's purported abnormalities (Gleason, 1999). In the interwar period, Quebec established a mental hygiene division of the Conseil d'hygiène de la province de Québec, and courses in mental hygiene were offered at the Institut pédagogique Notre-Dame (Cliche, 2014).

In the context of Quebec, where the birth rate was higher than in other provinces, the medicalized physical hygiene movement would also have long lasting impacts on attitudes towards motherhood and towards child-rearing and early education. The physical hygiene movement was promoted from the turn of the century through the 1940s due to Quebec's shockingly high rate of infant mortality, particularly among francophone Catholics (D. Baillargeon, 2009a). This "national hemorrhage" (D. Baillargeon, 2009a, p. 48), as it was referred to at the time, would lead to the medicalization of maternity and a shift from traditional birthing methods, often led by midwives, to an emphasis on following the advice of male medical and child-rearing experts. This advice, however, was largely based in the patriarchal, upper-class interests of the medical profession that perceived doctors as the highest authority, and often blamed poor women for their infants' deaths (D. Baillargeon, 2009a). The loss of a child was consequently often viewed as an affective and moral failing on the part of the mother rather than the result of systemic poverty or disease (Comacchio, 2014). Strict monitoring by medical professionals, as well as education of mothers in the hygiene of pregnancy and infant care, without thought to the alleviation of poverty, were viewed as the solutions to high infant mortality. The expansion of medicalization therefore carried important classist, and often racist, connotations related to understandings of being a "good" or "bad" mother (Arnup, 2002). This approach also served to introduce a scientization of motherhood, or a substitution of traditional practices with medicalized ones inspired by industrial capitalism that sought efficiency, standardization and productivity (Cliche, 2014). As Baillargeon (2009) notes:

> The new scientific approaches to infant care proposed by physicians did indeed require an equally scientific approach to motherhood that women were invited to adopt immediately

> unless they wanted to produce socially maladjusted individuals, or for they themselves to appear behind the times. (p. 89)

Starting in the 1940s, women in Quebec began to have fewer children, despite efforts by the Catholic church to "rechristianize" families and return women to traditional familial roles, including having large families (A. Lévesque, 1995). Baillargeon (2009a) describes this shift as intentional, based not only on increased access to information on contraception, but also on a desire to have a more personalized relationship with each child, and to provide them with a better education and chance in life. Cliche (2014) argues that the establishment of the *École des parents* by Claudine Vallerand, who embraced developmental psychology, and the influence of the progressive education movement, were evidenced in numerous Quebec publications directed at parents from the 1940s onwards. Progressive education was based on respect for the child, freedom of activity, and the provision of an environment conducive to learning through self-discovery. Despite warnings by the Catholic church of the potential negative consequences of offering too much freedom to children, parenting practices started to shift from harsher approaches to more child-centered ones (D. Baillargeon, 2003). Child-centered approaches, like progressive education, accounted for the child's developmental stage, their emotions, and highlighted the importance of an environment based on love and security (Cliche, 2014).

There was little consensus in educational circles, however, regarding this new approach to interacting with children, and during the 1940s, public debates erupted in Quebec between educators who promoted corporal punishment, and public figures such as Vallerand who decried the education system's reliance on outdated methods of physical discipline (D. Baillargeon, 2003). She went so far as to suggest, in line with mental hygienists' focus on "normal" personality development, that "traditional pedagogy [will] warp the child and kill his personality" and that this harsh discipline was one of the causes of what she termed the "lack of initiative, the feeling of inferiority, the lack of personality characteristic of French-Canadians" (qtd. in Cliche, 2014, p. 166). Dr. Marcotte, a child psychiatrist and proponent of mental hygiene who worked for the City of Montreal Health Service, would also propose a link between corporal punishment and what he described as a French Canadian inferiority complex (Cliche, 2014). As I shall demonstrate, this discourse of inferiority and lack of initiative, tied to the history of the oppression of francophones in Quebec, would repeat itself in both subtle and overt ways in discussions of kindergarten both in the 1960s and in 2018.

In the 1950s, *L'École des parents* would take on a larger role in dispensing parenting advice through radio programs and a write-in column in *Le Devoir*[10], in addition to advocating for kindergarten education (D. Baillargeon, 2003). While fathers were critiqued for being domineering, mothers were still often considered primarily at fault for children's shortcomings – including accusations of too many "high-strung" mothers resulting in fearful and sullen children (Cliche, 2014). Much as it had been at the turn of the century, early schooling was viewed as a solution to deficiencies of parenting among the working and impoverished classes (the "classes populaires"), however, it was also promoted as a necessary step for all children in the development of a psychologically "stable", modern, liberal democratic citizenry (D. Baillargeon, 2009b). Somewhat paradoxically, the EDP also promoted the family, mainly mothers, as the primary educators of children, a position also espoused by the church, however the EDP believed that parents should direct their children's education free from the controlling influence of the clergy. At the same time, the EDP encouraged parents, via their role as educators, to "influence public authorities to take action on behalf of families" (D. Baillargeon, 2003, p. 245), including by advocating for public kindergartens. The EDP may therefore have played an important role in the rapid increase in demand for kindergarten classes in the early 1960s. Through its various methods of publicizing psychological approaches to parenting and education, the EDP also helped legitimize child psychology as a method of intervention. Embracing psychological expertise was not only viewed as a means to achieve behavioural and emotional normalcy in children, but also spoke to public concerns over "threats" to social cohesion, including communism and the rapid modernization and mechanization of society (Gleason, 1999). Psychological discourses were therefore an important part of constructing the "normal" or "ideal" kindergarten child. This is demonstrated in the excerpts below from the *La Presse* articles.

Normalizing Children Through Psychological Intervention. The psychological discourses evidenced in the *La Presse* news articles from the 1960s emphasized the importance of "personality development", and spoke to the belief that children were emotionally immature, unstable, fragile beings in need of assistance ("Chez les jardinières d'enfants : Vue d'ensemble

[10] *Le Devoir*, founded in 1910, is an independent Quebec newspaper that is influential in Quebec politics and is understood to be "the newspaper of record" among francophone political elites and intellectuals. *La Presse* is considered to cover a wider range of news, however, and is more widely read by the public (J. Charron & Bastien, 2012).

de tout le problème de la formation," 1961) and "guidance starting from the cradle" ("Toujours le foyer fautif : les délinquants, des enfants mal aimés," 1960, p. 18). The articles also spoke to the growing popularity of psychoanalytic theories, with Dr. Laurent Houde, a psychiatrist from Sainte-Justine hospital, discussing the inability of young children to control their instinctual impulses. Drawing on Freud's psychoanalytic theories, he described the important role of fantasy, desire, and the Oedipus complex in the process of psycho-affective maturation. Kindergarten, and play as a form of pedagogy, were promoted not only as an educational endeavour, but as a therapeutic intervention in "a number of minor [psychological] difficulties that children commonly face" ("Rôle psychologique du jeu à l'âge pré-scolaire," 1960, p. 8). The importance of passing through specific stages of development was highlighted, as well as the role of kindergarten in "correcting" a variety of "deficiencies" (Desjardins, 1962) to prepare children to "confront life" (J.L., 1961). Young children's psychological needs, including the need to express themselves through play, were viewed as an important separate consideration from those of older students, requiring the adaptation of pedagogy and of physical classrooms to young learners.

In addition to applying modern child psychology to intervene in young children's development, children's intellectual abilities were also a major focus of the *La Presse* articles. At the time, psychological, medical, and IQ testing were being proposed by some local health authorities to classify children as normal, deficient or gifted prior to their entrance into public schools (N. Girard, 1961). One representative from the CECM suggested that children should enter kindergarten based on their "mental and social age" rather than their chronological age ("L'expansion physique de l'école ne doit pas nous faire oublier les besoins pédagogiques," 1961). Public authorities also determined which children were educable/ineducable or trainable/untrainable, labels which were generally applied to children with a variety of intellectual and physical disabilities or psychological "maladjustments". While it is mentioned that special classes were being created for the "deficient but educable" (N. Girard, 1961, p. 22) it appears that children with more severe disabilities were still being left to the private and/or charitable sectors during this period (Brosseau, 1961). There was a definitive normalisation function tied to the notion of "intellectual quotient" (N. Girard, 1961), a lack or presence of "mental abilities", and fears of "underachieving children" ("L'expansion physique de l'école ne doit pas nous faire oublier les besoins pédagogiques," 1961).

The emphasis on developmental psychology and intellectual abilities in the articles harkened back to the mental hygiene movement and a concern with "feeblemindedness" and "degeneracy", particularly among poorer classes of citizens (Burman, 2008). Individual psychology, as it did in Western Europe and North America at the beginning of the twentieth century, "reflected and translated the social preoccupation with population quality and mental abilities into policy recommendations, prescriptions on infant and child management, and education" (Burman, 2008, p. 20). The child (and, as I shall demonstrate below, also the mother) became the objects of the psychological gaze which was imbued with legitimacy through its association with the medical sciences, enabling social classification and regulation of the population. As Burman (2008) notes, "it is the normalisation of development that makes abnormality possible" (p. 20-21). Walkerdine (1984) concurs, noting that larger concerns with social conformity were implicated in the promotion of child psychology, which intertwined "to produce a discursive and political nexus. The rational, the savage, the animal, the human, the degenerate, the normal, all become features of the modern scientific normalization and regulation of children" (p. 173). This pathologization of specific aspects of children's development, and the proposal of kindergarten classes as a method of addressing purported deficiencies, highlights the fact that "what counts as abnormality is set by a norm of adaptation to the conventions of a socio-economic order" (Rose, 1985, pp. 230–231).

A Good Beginning for School Success. Promoting kindergarten as a means to ensure future academic school success was also an important part of the *La Presse* news reports. Specialists such as the jardinières and some psychologists insisted that kindergarten provided a good "beginning" or "base", making children "more receptive, better able to cope with the school curriculum" (Desjardins, 1962). This is similar to what would today be termed the discourse of school "readiness", which, according to Bloch and Kim (2015) "remains[s] tied to certain constructions of groups as 'lacking' in relation to others more likely to succeed in school and life" (p. 4). To deprive children of attendance at kindergarten was seen as sabotaging their future possibilities for success, and even their access to post-secondary education (J. F., 1961). This shift in discourse regarding early education is remarkable for a province where compulsory schooling had only been legislated two decades prior. A representative from the Shawinigan school commission even noted: "the child we've come to call a bad student, often has at its origin a bad preschool education or the absence of such an education" ("Une classe maternelle à

Shawinigan l'an prochain," 1960, p. 26). There was disagreement, however, about whether kindergarten should focus on academics or on the development of basic social, intellectual, and physical skills. Concerns were raised about the potential impact of children losing interest in school by being pushed into formal schoolwork too quickly, which, according to Mlle Boucher, a jardinière from Shawinigan, might be "the start of a life on the margins of society" (J.L., 1961, p. 28). The same article, using an attention-grabbing headline, referred to formal schooling before age six as a potential "criminal practice" (J.L., 1961) (see Figure 9). While a child-centered, less academic approach based in developmental psychology appeared to be winning out in the public discourse ("Rôle psychologique du jeu à l'âge pré-scolaire," 1960), other facets of early schooling were also promoted, including socialisation.

The socialisation function of kindergarten was heavily emphasized in news reports as it was viewed as vital to reducing young children's self-centeredness and integrating children into society. Perhaps self-centeredness was simply viewed as a feature of children's immaturity, or alternately, as Baillargeon (2003) suggests, this specific concern may have been tied to fears of a societal shift towards "materialism and decadence" (p. 245). Frequent concerns were raised over children's future ability to adapt to the social milieu of formal schooling in grade one, and the potential long term impacts of deficiencies in this area (Pratte, 1960). The importance of the school environment itself and teachers in the socialization process were therefore emphasized. In addition, some article authors were concerned about young children's ability to adapt to life

Figure 8 – Headline from La Presse

Mlle L. Boucher, jardinière :

Envoyer à l'école un enfant de moins de six ans est "criminel"

SHAWINIGAN. (J.L.) — La décision des commissaires des écoles catholique de Shawinigan d'accepter les enfants, en septembre prochain, qui auront moins de six ans, dans les écoles régies par la Commission scolaire, risque de causer un tort immense aux enfants.

Mlle Laurence Boucher, jardinière diplômée, qui dirige une maternelle à Shawinigan-Sud, a tenu samedi une conférence de presse au cours de laquelle

tient l'esprit d'assimilation de l'enfant et son niveau de développement. Pendant qu'on s'intéresse aux études du niveau universitaire, on ne se préoccupe pas du départ, de la base de toutes les études. En somme on s'interroge sur la manière de construire le 7e étage de l'édifice et on néglige les fondations, commentait Mlle

Les jeunes Anglais mieux équilibrés ?

Note: From J.L., *La Presse*, June 19th, 1961, p. 28.

outside the home, or to the "outside world" (Pratte, 1960), "life in society" ("Chez les jardinières d'enfants : Vue d'ensemble de tout le problème de la formation," 1961) alternately characterized as "adult society" or "social and human life" (Fortin, 1960). This not only points to a shift from Quebec's traditional values with the family at the epicentre of socialization, but it marks young children as being viewed as separate from "social and human life" until they're inducted into it via the institutionalized socialization process offered by early schooling.

Holistic, Progressive Education for Moral, Happy, Citizens. Kindergarten was often described in news reports as an alternative, progressive form of education, promoting not just personality development and socialization, but also moral, spiritual, and physical fitness (Desjardins, 1962; "L'école maternelle adjointe de la mere," 1960). As Burman (2008) notes, "It has been clear that an underlying project of developmental psychology has been to produce moral citizens appropriate to the maintenance of bourgeois democracy" (p. 285). And yet, the morality that underlies much of developmental psychology, is, according to Burman, often obfuscated by the use of purportedly objective standardized testing and statistical norms. In the case of Quebec, however, morality was deliberately publicized as an important aspect of the adoption of developmental psychological norms in child-raising and in early years education. Baillargeon (2003) argues that proponents of the social sciences believed that "psychology could promote the acquisition of a truly Christian moral sense" (p. 256), and bring individuals closer to God, particularly when "deployed in conjunction with a Catholic mentality" (p. 256). This was a departure from traditional Catholic inculcation of morality, which often involved blind obedience and harsh methods of discipline directed towards children (Cliche, 2014).

The shift away from more austere forms of discipline also spoke to the growing popularity of progressive education. In the development of public kindergarten education, the "normal", adequately developed child was also a morally and spiritually fulfilled child, who took pleasure in play and learning. As Mlle Boucher noted: "Kindergartens can bring the child as close as possible to the ideal child. In kindergarten we don't create intellectuals or bookworms, we attempt to make the children happy, by giving them the best physical and spiritual balance" (J.L., 1961, p. 28). A reporter from Chicoutimi described the setup of a kindergarten classroom as "an invitation towards childhood joy" (Fortin, 1960, p. 25), while another suggested kindergarten was a necessity for the development of children's "physical, intellectual, and moral faculties" (Desjardins, 1962, p. 12). A feature article on the benefits of kindergarten education

included photos of smiling, laughing children from the private Maternelle Dalpé, participating in what they described as “fun” or “funny” lessons, resulting in “happy”, “radiant faces” (p. 12). A separate article about impoverished young girls being boarded at the Villa Saint-François convent in Montreal, where they were attending a kindergarten run by the order, also described the children as “happy to be there” where they “might not be rich” but still had ”happy faces” (Bourbonnais, 1962, p. 22). An understanding of kindergarten as a morally enriching, joyful, progressive mode of education therefore appears to have been important to its public promotion.

“`La rendre plus apte à accomplir sa mission”: Deficient Mothers/Helpful Teachers

The moral fitness of children was often tied to understandings of their carers’ ability to impart proper Catholic values, a task largely attributed to mothers throughout Quebec’s history (Lalou, 1993), and one that would eventually also be tied to the duties and identities of teachers of young children (A. W. J. Davies et al., 2024). Maternity was of great importance to francophone Catholics’ collective identity, as mothers were not just responsible for their own children, but were also viewed as “mothers of the nation” essential to the survival of French-Canadians as a minority population, a fact that was emphasized in educational materials during the 1960s (Clapperton-Richard, 2020; A. Lévesque, 1995). Reproducer of the French-Canadian race, culture, faith and traditions, the quasi-mythical Québécoise mother existed in the collective imagination at that time as a rural housewife in a patriarchal family, surrounded by a large number of children (Dumont et al., 1987). She was considered the “soul” of the family, its spiritual and emotional centre, submissive to her husband, yet holding affective authority over her children and taking on the day to day management of the household (G. Rocher, 1962). This image, however, as Lévesque (1989) argues, “belongs more to hagiography than to a universal reality” (p. 17). Although long promoted by politicians and the church, it was often at odds with women’s experiences based on their social class, geographic location, race, sexuality, and other factors. In the decades leading up to the 1960s, women’s lives had undergone significant political and social changes that served to threaten this mythical traditional image. These changes included the fallout from the Dorion commission[11], the introduction of family allowance, the

[11] The Dorion commission was the first commission to examine the status of women in Quebec in 1929. The commission heard briefs from several women’s organizations recommending changs to marital and property rights. The findings of the commission led to very limited changes, however, as the commissioners endorsed a traditional, patriarchal view of women’s roles. This lack of substantial change would spur further feminist mobilizations in the following years and decades, with changes accelerating after WWII (Dumont et al., 1987).

attainment of the vote for women at the provincial level, the retrenchment of corporatism, women's involvement in labour unions and the women's movement, and an increase in work opportunities outside the home (Dumont et al., 1982). Many of the gains of the women's movement during this period were tied to maternal feminism, as Dumont et al. (1987) note: "Women won the right to vote not because they were equal to men, but because their role as mothers made them important enough to be given a voice in public affairs" (p. 265). The same could be said of women who entered political life, who were expected to be not just "superwomen" but "supermothers" whose political clout often rested on their ability to attend properly to their husbands and children while pursuing their political careers (D. Baillargeon, 2012).

Women's roles were changing rapidly, and the proportion of married women working outside the home in Quebec increased from 3.3% in 1941 (Dumont et al., 1987) to 14.4% in 1961 (Lemieux, 1965). Mothers formed only a small proportion of these statistics, however. While Quebec had more working women overall than the rest of Canada, it had fewer married women in the workforce (Lemieux, 1965), lending credence to the notion that religious and social mores continued to exert pressure on married women to leave the workforce when they had children, and that outside work for mothers was largely considered inappropriate (Dumont et al., 1987). Rocher (1962), writing on the topic of working women in Quebec in the early 1960s, noted that uncertainty surrounding the role of mothers in Quebec was palpable, and that a "rupture" between the myth of traditional motherhood and a more modern conception of mothers was underway. This rupture included shifts in the public imaginary and in the ethical norms by which mothers were judged. These "difficult revisions" (p. 131) to social categories and norms were, according to Rocher (1962), symbols of a society undergoing a rapid and destabilizing evolution from a traditional organization to a more modern one.

Deficient Mothers. The uncertainty pointed to by Rocher (1962) is echoed in the *La Presse* articles concerning the establishment of public kindergartens. Mothers were in part viewed as over-mothering – as being too attached to their children who needed to "learn to live in society, free from maternal influence" (Desjardins, 1962, p. 12). For some children, then, it was believed that kindergarten could help ease the transition towards life outside the home and lessen the "shock" of going to school. Conversely, mothers were also accused of being too busy to properly care for their children, as one reporter noted:

> The present conditions of family and social life leave less time for the modern mother than for her grandmother. The latter, depending on her environment, is preoccupied with work or external obligations. The little ones, left to their own devices, are idle, and their development suffers as a result. (Legaré, 1960, p. 12)

This not-so-subtle comparison of the mythical Quebecoise mother of the past (the grandmother), with the mother of the 1960s (the modern mother), ties children's poor psychological development to women's employment and other interests outside the home. This is perhaps unsurprising, as Burman (2008) notes:

> It is the adequacy of mothering that developmental psychology is called upon to regulate and legislate upon, and the continuity with which this issue crops up across a range of topics in developmental psychology is a manifestation of the widespread and routine subjection of women to the developmental psychological gaze. (p. 4)

The vast amounts of advice literature directed towards mothers in the post-war period also warned against entering the paid labour force, and intensified mothers' responsibilities towards their children, as they were expected to meet their every psychological and physical need (Arnup, 2002). According to the experts from *L'École des parents*, if a child was maladjusted or undisciplined it was due to the mother who did not put her child's needs above her own, or due to the mother's lack of education in modern psychological parenting approaches (D. Baillargeon, 2003).

By 1960, kindergarten was expressly promoted as a way of "helping" mothers in their educational role. As Monseigneur Irénée Lussier, the rector of the Université de Montréal, stated during a speech at the inauguration of new premises for the Maternelle Saint-Germain in 1960, "kindergartens are not set up to free mothers from their children, but rather to collaborate with them, making them better able to fulfill their mission as educators" ("la rendre plus apte à accomplir sa mission") ("L'école maternelle adjointe de la mere," 1960, p. 29). Others were opposed to the establishment of public kindergartens, however, on the grounds that they would do just that – free mothers from their children. Monsieur E-L. Maltais, president of the Giffard school commission, presented a brief to the Parent Commission that argued:

> Kindergarten will have unfortunate consequences on schooling by encouraging mothers to leave home for work. These schools should remain under private initiative, but be regulated by the Department [of Public Instruction]. This will be useful for mothers who

> have a car and who have free time. ("Seules Des Mesures Draconiennes Nous Sauveront de l'extinction : L'Ecole Des Beaux-Arts de Québec," 1962, p. 31)

Mr. Maltais also proposed that kindergartens could be run out of mothers' homes, essentially endorsing the existing private regime of mostly middle and upper-class kindergartens that were often located in individuals' homes. His reference to "mothers who have a car and free time" is also revelatory of the discourse of kindergarten as a bourgeois institution, designed to serve the needs of mothers who could chose to send their children as a method of ensuring their optimal development, rather than those who had need of childcare for their family's economic survival.

While the Parent Report, when it was published in 1964, would recognize preschool education as having largely been the prerogative of wealthier classes up until that point, it argued that there was a pressing need to expand kindergarten "into environments where children don't benefit from a family climate that awakens the spirit and cultivates taste" (Corbo, 2002, p. 160). Low socioeconomic status neighbourhoods were mentioned as particularly important targets, as were children "disadvantaged by their family background" that could benefit from the "climate of order, joy and discovery" in kindergarten (Corbo, 2002, pp. 160–161). Although this proposed universalization was often viewed as a democratization under the slogan of "l'éducation pour tous" ("education for all"), the "disadvantaged" argument suggests that the state needed to intervene to make up for the shortcomings of deficient mothers largely based on class. This framing echoes the views of *L'École des parents* that saw itself as bringing together society's elite to break the cycle of what it termed "incompetent parents, mediocre children; mediocre children, incompetent parents" (D. Baillargeon, 2003, p. 243). There is no indication that the Parent Commission investigated the root causes of poverty in disadvantaged neighbourhoods – instead the imposition of bourgeois educational values and cultural tastes on an assumedly "uncultured" population were offered as a common-sense solution to poor educational outcomes. This attitude is evidenced in several *La Presse* articles from the early 1960s, particularly in profiles of the private maternelle Saint-Germain in Outremont which served as a "model" kindergarten and was supported by elite members of society. One report highlighted a professional classical musician instructing Saint-Germain students (Bourbonnais, 1961), while another highlighted the importance of fine arts as part of preschool education (Légaré, 1960). These articles framed kindergarten as an aspirational, "bold", "avant-garde" middle-to-upper-class educational experience to be replicated by public schools, presumably for the enculturation

of the lower classes. While there was a push, mainly by the ACJE, to "educate the public about the value of preschool education" ("L'école maternelle adjointe de la mere," 1960, p. 29), parents appeared to already be aware of its appeal. They were increasingly demanding that their school commissions or towns open public kindergartens, with both mothers and fathers showing up to council meetings, and sometimes even disrupting the proceedings ("Réunion orageuse à St-Hyacinthe," 1962).

Helpful Teachers: The Professionalization of Caring. If mothers were thought to require assistance in their roles as carers and educators, then kindergarten teachers, or jardinières, were framed as professionals tasked with helping mothers in this area, to improve families "through the instrument of the child" (Rose, 1985, p. 144, see also Baillargeon, 2009b). With 98% of kindergarten teachers being women, and many newly graduated teachers entering elementary schools in 1962, the educational workforce during this period was overwhelmingly

Figure 9 – Photo Profiling Members of the ACJE

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES JARDINIERES D'ENFANTS — Une trentaine de dirigeantes d'écoles maternelles de Montréal étaient de passage à Québec, en fin de semaine, pour rencontrer leurs consoeurs qui exercent la même profession à Québec. Ci-dessus, quelques invités d'honneur au dîner-causerie qui réunissait les membres de l'Association et un grand nombre de parents, samedi midi, au restaurant Carillon. De gauche à droite, M. Maurice Barbeau, directeur de l'Ecole de pédagogie et d'orientation de Laval; Mlle Marcelle Turcotte, directrice de la section d'enseignement préscolaire à cette même faculté; M. Claude Lavallée, psychologue de Montréal, conférencier; Mme Thérèse-L. Bourget, présidente de l'ACJE; Mgr Louis-Albert Vachon, recteur de l'université Laval et président d'honneur du dîner; soeur Ste-Hélène de Sion, directrice de l'école de formation de jardinières d'enfants à l'Institut pédagogique de Montréal.

Note: *La Presse*, March 27th, 1961, p. 25.

young and female ("Attention : femmes au travail! Plus d'un quart de l'effectif ouvrier au Canada est féminin," 1962). There was also an overlap of women from religious orders and lay women working in education during this period in Quebec, including in the training of new jardinières. A photo from *La Presse* shows Mme Turcotte, director of preschool education at the École de pédagogie et d'orientation de Laval, and Soeur Sainte-Hélène, instructor of jardinières from the Institut pédagogique de Montréal (see Figure 10). While photos such as this one that accompanied *La Presse* articles demarcated nuns from lay women visually by their religious attire, the attributes of kindergarten teachers, whether nuns or lay women, were often described similarly in the text of the articles. Jardinières, who were noted as serving an educational and therapeutic role, were described as requiring a "well-balanced personality" ("Devant la Commission Parent : L'Association des Jardinières d'enfants réclame une meilleure réglementation des écoles maternelles," 1962, p. 15). They had to be "qualified and devoted" (Desjardins, 1962, p. 12), or "skillful and devoted" , as well as "calm and dynamic" (Brosseau, 1961, p. 15), "discrete, understanding, present and attentive" ("Les tout-petits et le cinéma," 1961, p. 10), and to demonstrate patience, sensitivity, care and nurturing in order to "nourish the intelligence and the hearts of our little ones" (D. Boucher, 1962, p. 16).

It is unsurprising that religious and lay women were described similarly, as joining a religious order was long viewed in Quebec as an ideological form of motherhood, in which a woman's "natural" maternal functions could bring her close to saintliness through work such as teaching, or caring for the sick or impoverished (A. Lévesque, 1989) Mothers and women from religious orders, as symbolic mothers, were both mythical archetypes that drew from essentialized versions of femininity, and remained closely tied to idealized Quebecois womanhood in the national imagination, despite their problematization by feminists (Clapperton-Richard, 2020) The gendered descriptions of kindergarten teachers drew from both of these archetypes, emphasizing the traditionally feminine, motherly qualities expected of women working with young children. The creation of a "family atmosphere" in kindergarten classes was also often mentioned in news reports (Desjardins, 1962), further situating kindergarten as an extension of women's roles in the home. It appears that women teachers were expected to take up the caring mantle of the mythical Québécoise mother, supported by their psychological, pedagogical, or religious training, in order to prepare the citizens of tomorrow. In doing so, they could make up for the expertise, time and attention that modern mothers were thought to lack.

Walkerdine (1990) argues that with the shift to progressive education based in individualized child psychology, women teachers were implicated in a feminized normalizing process, particularly as it concerns potentially deficient future citizens. They were tasked with inculcating "good habits" via a progressive pedagogy where "love was to facilitate the development of the child in a proper supportive environment" (p. 22). Educators were to offer "quasi-maternal nurturance" (p. 23) while intensively surveilling and monitoring each child's development. This included a particular emphasis on the normalization of children of the lower classes. Walkerdine (1990) terms this approach an "impossible fiction", however, where, like the mythical Québécoise mother, the teacher must subsume her needs to the development of the ideal autonomous child/citizen. She asks:

> At what cost the fantasy of liberation? I suggest the cost is borne by the teacher, like the mother. She is passive to the child's active, she works to his play. She is the servant of the omnipotent child, whose needs she must meet at all times … The price of autonomy is woman. (p. 24)

Davies et al. (2024) concur, noting that the influence of developmental psychology impacted the Canadian early years education sector from the 1930s onwards. Developmental psychology positioned educators of young children as mother-substitutes, reflecting "hegemonic ideals of the white, middle-class, married, ever-devoted Christian mother" (p. 1017). They argue that even in the present, developmentalism's gendered tenets still often go unexamined in ECEC spaces, "leaving maternalistic ideals unproblematized" (A. W. J. Davies et al., 2024, p. 1017).

While kindergarten educators may have been framed via a maternalistic lens, not all teachers were considered equal. The push to move from private to public kindergartens was largely headed by middle-class, educated jardinières such as the "pionnières" of kindergarten education who made up the ACJE. Despite the fact that many of them ran private kindergartens, they demonstrated suspicion of other women who ran private establishments without the same qualifications or education they had acquired in developmental psychology. In addition, they argued for increased regulation of private kindergartens, including via government oversight and mandatory teacher certification ("Devant la Commission Parent : L'Association des Jardinières d'enfants réclame une meilleure réglementation des écoles maternelles," 1962). Making a profit from educating young children was considered distasteful, despite the long history of private educational institutions for older children in Quebec ("L'école maternelle adjointe de la mere,"

1960). Private kindergartens were accused of “amateurism” and “incompetence”, as well as of creating unfair competition for “institutions truly worthy of parents' trust” (G. O., 1961, p. 12). The professionalization of kindergarten teaching was frequently emphasized, with one report noting that in public kindergartens a teaching license was required in addition to a year-long specialisation course from the Institut pédagogique. As one author argued: “It's easy to see that kindergartens can't be run by just anyone. Adequate preparation is required, since the purpose of kindergarten is not to play aimlessly. Kindergarten teachers are not nannies” (Pratte, 1960, p. 18). Interestingly, this devaluation of child-care workers (in this case nannies), in favour of professional kindergarten teachers is a theme that would repeat itself in the public debate in 2018, as politicians argued over the qualifications of personnel in CPEs vs those in schools, in relation to the proposed universalization of kindergarten for 4-year-olds.

“Rester dans la bonne voie”: Delinquency, Modernity and Fears of Deficient Citizens

Questions of deficiencies in motherly attention were not only tied to gendered discourses of care, but also often to public anxieties over the future of the French-Canadian population. These anxieties were complex, tied to the rapid changes associated not only with the modernization of Quebec society that was occurring as part of the Quiet Revolution, but also to concerns about French-Canadian identity and social progress as a linguistic and cultural minority within Canada. Despite being the demographic majority within their own province, Quebec’s francophone population remained economically controlled by a wealthy English minority. The impact of the Second World War also led to fears of authoritarianism and communism, and concerns over the potential for violence inherent in human beings, particularly youth who might have repressed fears, anxieties and hostilities (Urwin & Sharland, 1992). It is perhaps unsurprising that in this context there was an emphasis on the potential dangers of juvenile delinquency caused by inadequate care and education of young children. In addition, worries related to Quebec’s progress in education compared to other jurisdictions were expressed. The role of school discipline in the development of autonomous, law-abiding, liberal democratic citizens was also at play in public discussions, with fears of deficient future citizens underlying concerns with adherence to school discipline. Discourses including fears of deficient future citizens would reoccur in 2018, albeit in a different capacity, tied less to refutations of authoritarianism and more to notions of economic productivity.

Juvenile Delinquency. If much of the push for public kindergarten was focused on the "classes populaires" (Legaré, 1960), then this was in part because of the exploding numbers of young people due to the post-war baby boom. The public was greatly concerned with the potential of this large cohort of future adults to become "good" or "bad" citizens. As Lessard and Tardiff (1996) note, the Quiet Revolution may have been a period of rapid change, but Quebec had the models of other societies who had gone before it to draw from. It is therefore likely that Quebec was influenced by Europe and the United States in terms of modernization of social attitudes toward, and state administration of, potentially problematic youth. Hendrick (2003) notes that in the UK, the development of "childhood" as a period of innocence and ignorance was tied to mid-19th century critiques of child labour practices, innovations in the legislation of juvenile justice, and the introduction of compulsory schooling. Both juvenile justice and compulsory schooling were intended to "prevent the 'dangerous classes' from continually reproducing their malevolent characteristics" (p. 43) by reforming their habits, starting with the very young. This ideological linking of education and delinquency resulted, according to Rose (1985), in the emergence of "new objects around which a new psycho-social strategy would form – the maladjusted schoolchild and the delinquent juvenile" (p. 164). In Quebec, attempts to deal with juvenile delinquency over time included the establishment of charitable crèches and orphanages, the creation of industrial and reform schools, and eventually the advent of religious and state-run social services and youth protection services (D'Amours, 1986).

Concerns over juvenile delinquency, largely tied to class, were represented in the *La Presse* articles. In one instance, a representative of the Jeune Commerce association from Victoriaville expressed apprehensions about the lack of access to kindergarten for less-wealthy citizens, and asked "Can we truly say what children are learning by hanging around in the streets and in so-called playgrounds without any supervision?" (J. F., 1961, p. 28) While in a letter to the editor in which a woman from Montreal recommended reducing the age for mandatory schooling to 5 years old, she argued that: "The result [of reducing the age of school entry]… would be to take the little kids out of the dirty and dangerous alleys where they mope around and stunt their youthful intelligence" (Séguin, 1962, p. 4). Another letter to the editor, lobbying for improvements to the level of instruction in schools, criticized the "juvenile delinquency and the deplorable morals of the majority of our children" (Logique [Anonymous], 1962, p. 4). Mlle Boucher, a jardinière from Shawinigan, conversely suggested forcing children into school too

early might cause delinquency, referring to “problem children” and “delinquent childhoods” (J.L., 1961, p. 28). In an interview with a psychologist from New York, Mme Frank Flynn, it was noted that by adolescence it was “a little late to remedy the delinquency that can be discovered in kindergarten” (“Toujours le foyer fautif : les délinquants, des enfants mal aimés,” 1960, p. 18). Mrs. Flynn also argued that a lack of love and attention from parents and teachers was largely to blame for delinquency, and that “if children felt loved by their parents they would more certainly stay on the right path” (“ils resteraient plus sûrement dans la bonne voie”). She added “to cure the problem, you have to prevent it in the first place. I think that eventually, all teachers will be trained with this in mind” (“Toujours le foyer fautif : les délinquants, des enfants mal aimés,” 1960, p. 18).

These examples demonstrate not only a fear of the children of the lower classes (children “in” or “from” the streets), but also the relationship that Rose (1985) speaks to between maladjusted, or neglected young children, and their eventual assumed descent into delinquency. It also hints at perceptions of deficient motherhood, as discussed earlier. Burman (2008) argues that children and youth were both viewed as in need of protection, and as potential disruptors to the adult organization of society:

> While the model of the vulnerable ignorant child positioned them as requiring protection, children were also portrayed as a source of disruption requiring control and discipline … Childhood has generally been treated as a social problem whereby the dominant focus of social policy and practice has been on the perceived capacities of young people to threaten public order. (p. 89)

Early schooling was therefore viewed as a preventative approach to lessen perceived threats to the public order. As Reed (1990) notes, however, in reality anxieties regarding delinquency and the “underclasses”, were often largely based on a moralizing fiction. They were, and often remain, a projection of purported behavioural or other deficiencies that can occur in any group onto impoverished individuals that permit moral judgements against them. These moral judgements then serve to further reterritorialize particular groups and ways of being that may put the dominant society’s privilege at risk. Valencia agrees, arguing that the “underclass model” is tied to deficit thinking, or a “culture of poverty” rhetoric that equates behaviour deemed problematic with lack of morality rather than with systemic economic marginalization, racial/gender discrimination and other barriers to full social participation.

Modernity, Progress and French-Canadian Identity. While fears of juvenile delinquency may have been tied to early years education and care, anxieties about modernity were more often than not associated with aspirations for French-Canadian progress and success. Hendrick (2003) argues that in child welfare and education from the mid to the end of the 19th century, there was a gradual shift over time from an emphasis on child rescue and reform to a focus on children's rights and needs, and their roles as "citizens of tomorrow" (p. 48). While this shift may have occurred later and more intensely in Quebec (Lessard & Tardif, 1996), the public debates over kindergarten education indicate that educational reform was tied to notions of national progress. Kindergarten was mentioned by one reporter as "a necessity for our era that's evolving at an atomic rhythm" (Desjardins, 1962, p. 12), while the influence of modern technologies, including animated films, on young learners were evoked in the form of a presentation to the members of the ACJE ("Les tout-petits et le cinéma," 1961). Meanwhile, an article about changes in the education system titled "Rien à démolir, mais progrès [sic] à réaliser" (Dugas, 1961b) spoke of transformation, amelioration, optimism and aspirations for continued positive changes. The shift to free public schooling, part of Lesage's electoral platform in 1960, with education becoming available to all ("l'éducation à la portée de tous") was also frequently mentioned as a form of important and necessary social progress (Lacroix, 1961). Education, including access to kindergarten, was being reframed from an individual good to a collective lever for national progress, one particularly important to a population perceived to be playing "catch-up" to other jurisdictions in modernizing its education system.

Comparisons were often made between Quebec's education system and other jurisdictions, which highlighted insecurities regarding the ability of the French-Canadian population to increase the rate of change in the province in order to "catch up". One author noted, with regards to kindergarten education:

> Do we know that these types of school are widespread throughout Europe, and it has been this way since the 17th century? Why then this slow progress in a country that loudly champions civilization and intellectual emancipation? (Desjardins, 1962, p. 12)

Quebec francophones were not only comparing themselves to Europeans, but also to anglophones within Quebec, with one controversial article proposing that young anglophones might be "better mentally balanced" due to higher rates of attendance at public kindergartens ("Les jeunes Anglais mieux équilibrés ?," 1961). Frequent comparisons to Ontario were also

made, in part due to the results of a report on preschool education written by Charles Bilodeau, director of research at the *Département de l'Instruction publique*. The report was described as containing "troubling facts" ("Il faut ouvrir les maternelles à tous les enfants...," 1960, p. 3), including statistics on the much higher number of free, accessible public kindergartens in Ontario compared to Quebec, and Ontario's more stringent requirements for kindergarten teacher certification. Bilodeau noted that "a kindergarten run by an incompetent person can sometimes cause serious harm to students" ("Il faut ouvrir les maternelles à tous les enfants...," 1960, p. 3). The ACJE concurred, arguing for stricter regulation of private kindergartens, in addition to the provision of more public ones, and pointed out that the francophone minority in Ontario actually had more students enrolled in public kindergartens than the francophone majority did in Quebec ("Devant la Commission Parent : L'Association des Jardinières d'enfants réclame une meilleure réglementation des écoles maternelles," 1962).

These comparisons, some of which recurred in 2018, speak to the unease French-Canadians experienced with regards to their positioning as a minority in Canada and a historically oppressed majority within their own province. Baillargeon (2009a) notes that since confederation, French-Canadian elites were particularly concerned about anglophone dominance and French-Canadian subordination. If, as Wilfred Laurier had proclaimed, the 20th century was to be "the century of Canada", then for residents of Quebec:

> It had begun with a number of alarming realizations by French-Canadian nationalists: francophones were politically marginalized in the federal deputation and economically subordinate even within the territory where they were in the majority; they were frustrated of [sic] their constitutional rights in the other provinces, and their identity and culture were threatened by industrialization and the urban lifestyle. (D. Baillargeon, 2009a, pp. 46–47)

While the Quiet Revolution marked a shift towards a more assertive, empowered, localized nationalism under the slogan "Maîtres chez nous" ("Masters of our own house"), as Quebec secularized education and expanded state control in different sectors, anxieties regarding the status and identity of French-Canadians were palpable. These anxieties would soon lead to an explosion of political and cultural debates regarding French-Canadian identity and social positioning, which sought to "dismantle the economic, political, legal and cultural subjugation of French Canadians" (Giroux, 2023, p. 3). A drive for self-determination would eventually lead to

the formation of the Mouvement Souveraineté-Association (MSA) in 1967, the precursor to the Parti-Québécois, which called for Quebec's independence from Canada. The declarations made by the MSA would mark a rhetorical and ideological shift from the naming of francophones in Quebec as French-Canadians to "le peuple Québécois", which Charland (1987) argues was a rhetorical move that constituted a new type of embodied political subject.

In 1962, however, anxieties concerning identity and nationalism were still simmering below the surface in *La Presse*, as a letter to the editor that argued for improvements to education demonstrated. It asked for an educational system that would:

> Allow[] our children to become worthy citizens and to be able to compete successfully in life, so that they can become something other than the servants and labourers of the English and the Jews, as is currently the case. (Logique (Anonymous), 1962)

Notwithstanding the Anti-Semitic nature of the above reference to Quebec's Jewish community, this quote suggests that French-Canadians were, up until this time, "unworthy" and economically "unsuccessful" citizens, due to their marginalization by English economic dominance within the province. This characterization calls back to the Durham Report (1839) and its frequently critiqued characterization of French-Canadians as uneducated and inferior, a "people with no history and no literature" (p. 95) doomed to remain "labourers in the employ of English capitalists" (p. 94). It also points to the psychological discourse of inferiority related to French-Canadian identity, referenced earlier, that was of concern to those promoting progressive forms of education during the 1960s.

Disciplining Future Liberal Democratic Citizens. If Quebecers were both interested in, and concerned by, national progress, then the "citizens of tomorrow" that they sought to encourage were to be autonomous, rational, liberal democratic ones. The establishment of public consultations on education, and the move towards the creation of the Ministry of Education were viewed as a form of democratisation of Quebec society that would shift responsibility to the state and make education accessible to all (Daignault & Clift, 1962). Free and accessible education would in theory enable the working and impoverished classes to improve their economic prospects and build a new francophone middle class and elite that could lead society. Progressive education formed one part of this shift - children were to learn to be self-disciplined through participation in cooperative and participatory activities, which were thought to aid in developing democratic ideals and practices (Cliche, 1999). Democratisation was, somewhat strangely, also

to be achieved through an embracing of school rules and discipline from a young age. LeBrun (2014) argues that hygiene and civic education course manuals from the 1940s to the mid-1960s in Quebec's Catholic schools were intentionally structured to inculcate an appreciation of hierarchical organisations and to engender in students an appreciation for rules and order. This was intended to promote future citizens who would be voluntarily obedient to the laws of the state. She notes that though it seems paradoxical, submission to authority and adherence to class distinctions were considered crucial to engendering the orderly exercise of the freedom and autonomy accorded to liberal democratic citizens. Discipline imparted by teachers was therefore promoted as a method of promoting the eventual development of self-disciplined, law-abiding citizens and preventing social disruptions (LeBrun, 2014).

Figure 10 - Playing "Intelligently" at the Private Maternelle Boucher

A LA MATERNELLE, on joue intelligemment, on se prépare pour l'école. On voit ici Mlle Laurence Boucher, de la Maternelle Boucher, de Shawinigan, avec quelques-uns de ses élèves.

Note: *La Presse*, May 17th, 1960, p. 18.

With regards to kindergarten education, there was an emphasis in the *La Presse* articles on kindergarten's role in helping young children integrate into existing school structures, and in particular, in engendering adherence to school discipline. One author noted that kindergarten not only helped with adaptation to school, but that "the flexible but genuine discipline required by the female teachers is crucial to character-building" (Legaré, 1960, p. 12). Another argued that in

kindergarten children were taught to "play intelligently" rather than just playing idly (see Figure 11), invoking the image of a disciplined workforce, while also noting that kindergarten offered "an initiation into school discipline" (Pratte, 1960, p. 18). A different author suggested that in the context of school readiness, children who attended kindergarten before formal schooling would already have been "conditioned to a certain discipline", and would be able to focus their attention more effectively (Desjardins, 1962, p. 12). If these reports might appear at odds with the progressive, child-centered kindergarten pedagogy espoused by the ACJE and the EDP, Burman suggests that:

> While self-control and self direction are central to the child centred pedagogy, it becomes apparent that obedience is a covert outcome of it, since children are considered to be more willing to obey rules if these appear to arise out of their own deliberations and choices. … Notwithstanding the cultural value placed on freedom, it becomes clear that the child centred pedagogy is just as coercive as traditional approaches but in more subtle ways. (p. 269)

To promote the development of liberal democratic citizens therefore meant inculcating students into the discipline and hierarchies of formal schooling, even if in kindergarten this occurred through what was perceived as a gentler, child-friendly, modern form of pedagogy.

Conclusion

The early 1960s was a time of rapid change in Quebec, one that was influenced by the events that occurred in the decades preceding this period. The physical and mental hygiene movements, as well as the public interventions of the members of the *École des parents* would culminate in an intense interest in young children's needs and their normality according to benchmarks espoused by medical and psychological experts. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that as the popularity of child psychology grew, kindergarten became defined as a progressive, modern method of intervention to prevent the development of psychologically and socially "maladjusted" children. This push for early years education as a method of correcting purported deficiencies was in fact tied to concerns with degeneracy and the "fitness" of the French-Canadian population in a rapidly modernizing society. Anxieties related to potential future juvenile delinquency also spoke to fears of social unrest that remained high after the Second World War. Concerns with the fitness of the French-Canadian population echoed imperialist anxieties regarding the reproduction and education of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant "race"

elsewhere in Canada, that were present in public discourse from the turn of the century on (Gleason, 1999; Valverde, 1992). In Quebec, the oppression of the francophone majority by a minority of anglophone elites turned this concern mostly inward, however, highlighting anxieties specific to French Canadian identity and positioning within Canada, and raising questions regarding the shifting roles of mothers as reproducers of French-Canadian culture and values.

There was no consensus on the specific educational role of kindergarten, with some viewing it as a form of early academic schooling, and others insisting that the focus of preschool education should be on socialization, as well as moral, spiritual, and physical fitness, and adaptation of children to the world outside the home. Debates over the purpose of kindergarten also invoked differing visions of motherhood, with some suggesting kindergarten should act as a "mother's helper", and others arguing that its introduction on a large scale would certainly lead to social ruin because it would encourage mothers to work outside the home. Utilizing a maternalist discourse, kindergarten teachers were proposed as professionalized, mother-substitutes who could apply the latest therapeutic and pedagogical interventions to ensure the wellbeing and proper development of young children. They could also help inculcate children into middle-class cultural values, as a way of "improving" deficiencies in culture, and to make up for maternal insufficiencies, particularly among the working classes. From a middle-class perspective, like that of the members of the ACJE, kindergarten was heralded as a progressive, positive development in education that could bring Quebec into modernity and equalize French-Canadian standing vis à vis other groups that offered public early-years schooling. This ascension into modernity included an adoption of liberal democratic ideals, including through the early conditioning of young children to school rules and discipline to promote future obedience to the state.

If the 1960s news reports proved to contain a wealth of discourses that touched on deficits and deficiencies, then the 2018 news reports proved equally as interesting, albeit with a focus that shifted from kindergarten as a novel, progressive form of intervention for all children, to kindergarten for 4-year-olds as a method of predictive preventative intervention specifically for children with perceived "vulnerabilities". One of the significant, and perhaps expected differences in public discussion was related to the shift in women's roles in Quebec society in the decades since 1960, and the concomitant shift in discourses surrounding motherhood, parenting, and early years teaching. While the myth of the Québécoise "mother of the nation" may have

receded, it was replaced instead by the underlying theme of the "surveillance state" and concerns over the specialized interventions required for the long-term educational and economic success of specific groups of children. This was complicated by the spectre of the disadvantaged "bad parent/mother" who did not send her children to state-subsidized daycare or prekindergarten, thereby denying her child the opportunity to be "optimized" by the state. Economics also played a much larger role in 2018, although again there were similarities to the early 1960s, as questions of future productive citizens were tied to understandings of Québécois identity and nationalism. The next chapter will explore how these historical continuities and changes played out in public discussions during the 2018 provincial election.

Chapter 5: News Media Analysis – 2018 Provincial Election

> "Childhood is the most intensely governed sector of personal existence. In different ways, at different times, and by many different routes varying from one section of society to another, the health, welfare, and rearing of children have been linked in thought and practice to the destiny of the nation and the responsibilities of the state."
>
> - Rose (1989, p. 121)

Introduction and Overview of Themes

In a news clip from August 26th, 2018, three days after the start of the Quebec provincial election campaign, and a day after the CAQ announced 4-year-old kindergarten as part of their election platform, Philippe Couillard and Sebastien Proulx from the Liberal party dismissed the CAQ's proposal as unrealistic, mocking Legault for being "unserious" (Lecavalier & Agence QMI, 2018). The accompanying article from TVA Nouvelles also quoted Jean-François Lisée, leader of the PQ, who described the universalization of prekindergarten as "completely useless and unrealistic" (Lecavalier, 2018, para. 7). In a press mêlée on the campaign trail the same day, François Legault reacted by attacking his political rivals, stating: "They say – 'Oh come on, there's no way we can do that in five years.' Hey! When are Mr. Couillard and Mr. Lisée finally going to have some ambition – ambition for our children?" (Lecavalier & Agence QMI, 2018). Legault was also quoted at length stating:

> It's short-sighted of Mr. Lisée and Mr. Couillard to say that the most we can offer is daycare. I'm stunned! … They don't seem to want to do it at all — neither the Liberals nor the PQ. As if our children weren't important! … I just can't believe the reaction … about 4-year-old pre-K, [they] aren't taking this seriously … I just can't believe it – we *are* going to build those classrooms for all those 4-year-olds. Why wouldn't we be able to? Come on! (Lecavalier, 2018, paras. 2, 4)

Meanwhile, on the same day, Manon Massée, co-spokesperson for Quebec Solidaire, announced a "projet de société", ("a vision for society or nation-building project") that involved "la gratuité scolaire" ("free education") "from CPE to PhD", echoing Jean Lesage's 1960 project of the *Grande Charte de l'éducation*. These differing visions and often contentious disagreements set the tone for the debates over early years education that occurred throughout the 39-day campaign.

During the election, each party put forward their own proposals aimed at families of young children, arguing that their vision best met the needs of children in the 4-year-old age group. The governing Liberal party pledged to remove fees for existing prekindergarten and daycare classes for 4-year-olds, to add a "resource person" to prekindergarten through grade one classes, as well as adding 2000 daycare spaces, and offering $300 per year to lower income families (Schué, 2018a). Quebec Solidaire, a leftist party who were popular mainly in urban areas and had little prospect of governing, proposed free education from daycare to university, as noted above (Laframboise, 2018b). Meanwhile, the Parti Québécois suggested a return to a universal fixed price for state-subsidized daycare, and the creation of 26,800 new daycare spaces (Lajoie, 2018). The CAQ, for their part, proposed a return of Quebec's controversial "baby bonus" that was introduced in the 1980s in order to boost fertility, and then later abolished. The policy consisted of one-time payments to parents that had more than one child, which Legault sought to renew via increases in tax credits (Couillard, the Liberal leader, termed it "a proposal from another century, when the church urged women to have larger families" (Banarjee, 2018, para. 20)). The CAQ's "promesse phare" for families, however, which they, like Quebec Solidaire, framed as a "projet de société" (POLTEXT, 2018), was the universalization of kindergarten for 4-year-olds. As Legault stated: "Pour éviter le décrochage, pour aider les enfants en difficulté, il faut intervenir tôt et c'est pour ça qu'un gouvernement de la CAQ va offrir la prématernelle 4 ans à tous les enfants" (Coalition Avenir Québec, 2018).

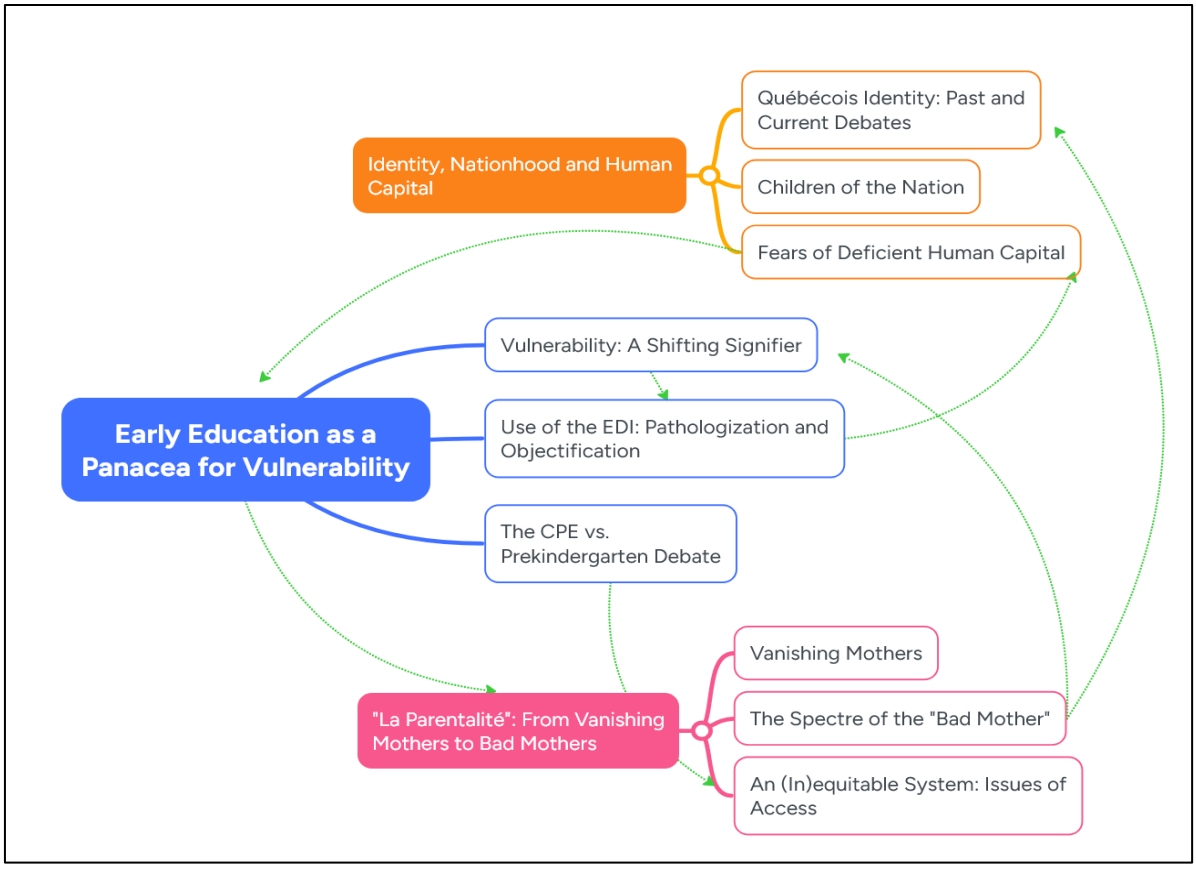
In order to sell their proposal to the public, the CAQ created what could be described as a type of moral panic regarding predictive early prevention. This was accomplished by consistently highlighting the need to intervene rapidly due to a rising number of "at risk" children who were not being provided with the specialized services they required. They also highlighted the "major" consequences of a lack of intervention, which as we shall see included dropping out of school and a lack of self-esteem. The sense of urgency the CAQ created was bolstered by what they stated were alarming results from a survey showing an increasing number of "vulnerable" children in kindergarten with deficiencies in their development that left them unprepared to move from kindergarten to grade one. Vulnerability was a shifting signifier, however, which was used to represent a variety of disparate developmental "failings", or deficits. These deficit discourses appeared to come from the Quebec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK), and they echoed the idea of maladjusted children from the 1960s,

however they contained fewer overt moral judgements tied to class and gender. The QSCDK is based on the Canadian Early Development Instrument (EDI), which is a population level assessment conducted by teachers that purports to promote equity but may in fact reproduce inequities. Reliance on the EDI may result in the pathologization of children from non-dominant cultural or linguistic groups or those who are disadvantaged economically. Questions of equity were consistently overlooked during the election campaign, including in a recurring debate over CPEs versus prekindergarten that ignored the history of kindergarten for 4-year-olds as an equity-driven measure for children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In comparison to the 1960s, when both mothers and kindergarten educators were at the forefront of the debates, both mothers and teachers' voices, and recognition of their caring labour were largely omitted in 2018. This speaks to shifting priorities in terms of whose voices count in debates over education. A shift in language, from "mothers" to "parents" also helped to obfuscate ongoing gendered inequities in child-rearing and domestic labour that impacts the need for different forms of early years care and education. In 2018, this included the omission of the often-difficult realities faced by racialized, new immigrant, and economically disadvantaged mothers. Though their realities were obfuscated, they were subtly framed as the new "bad" or "deficient" mothers. This marked a shift from the 1960s' almost exclusive focus on class, a reflection of the diversification of Quebec society in the intervening years and complications brought by an intercultural approach to diversity and to the integration of newcomers. While the myth of the Québécoise "mother of the nation" may have receded since the 1960s, it was replaced in the 2018 election discourse by the preventive state, who took the place of the mythical mother as both the reproducer of the nation and the overseer of a well-adapted population. While almost 60 years had passed between 1960 and 2018, and numerous political events tied to questions of Quebec's national autonomy had transpired in the interim (for an overview, see Behiels & Hayday, 2011, see also chapter three in this text), the anxieties that were present in the 1960s with regards to French-Canadian identity and progress did not seem to have entirely dissipated. As the heated rhetoric from the exchanges of August 26th, noted above, indicated, the CAQ leader often attempted to shame the other parties with rhetoric invoking "our" children, or the "children of the nation". Legault's verbal jabs at other political leaders called up anxieties related to Québécois ambition and the nation's willingness to enact major changes to educational policy reminiscent of those that took place during the Quiet Revolution.

Alarmist concerns were raised by all political parties throughout the campaign over the significant financial costs and affordability of different approaches to early education and care, both for the state, and for parents. This electoral cost/benefit analysis reflected an increasing economization of education in public discourse, and an understanding of children less as agentic beings, and more as market actors who were valued as human capital. The themes in this chapter, that encompass the topics summarized above, are therefore titled: "Pourquoi la maternelle 4 ans?" Early Schooling as a Panacea for Vulnerability, with two related themes of "La parentalité": From Vanishing Mothers to Bad Mothers, and "Avoir assez d'ambition pour nos enfants": Québécois Identity, Children of the Nation and Fears of Deficient Human Capital. There are both overlaps, as well as differences from the themes in chapter four, and this is a testament to the messy, non-linear way that history informs the present. With these similarities and differences, the themes and subthemes I will explore here demonstrate important aspects of historical consciousness, such as cause and consequence, and continuity and change (Seixas, 2017).

Figure 11: Map of Themes and Subthemes from the 2018 News Articles



"Pourquoi la maternelle 4 ans?" Early Schooling as a Panacea for Vulnerability

In conducting my thematic analysis for this chapter, I posed the same question that I asked in chapter four, "Why kindergarten?" in the context of the 2018 election, and the answer that emerged contained similarities to the interventionist discourses present in the 1960s. Although no longer a novel form of education, kindergarten, this time in the form of kindergarten for 4-year-olds, was again positioned as a potential form of early intervention and remediation. While there was less emphasis on psychological stability than in the 1960s, concerns were raised over an increasing number of "vulnerable" children or children "in difficulty", and the purportedly related high rate of high school dropouts in Quebec (Croteau, 2018b). The definition of vulnerability proved to be difficult to nail down, however, as it shifted throughout the election campaign. The statistics and verbiage regarding "vulnerabilities in development" and "children with difficulties" the CAQ drew from appeared to be taken from the Quebec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK) (Simard et al., 2013)[12]. The results of the QSCDK, which was designed based on the Canadian Early Development Instrument (EDI), served as justification by the CAQ for the supposed urgency attached to the universalization of 4-year-old kindergarten. Though the survey's results underpinned much of the debate, its scientific merit and potentially normalizing properties were rarely questioned. The CAQ faced pushback to their proposal of universalizing prekindergarten, however, from members of the opposing political parties, as well as from academics who advocated for the expansion of the existing state-run CPE educational daycare system. This CPE vs. kindergarten debate also briefly brought up the notion that kindergarten for 4-year-olds was initially designed as an equity measure for disadvantaged children, a fact that went largely ignored throughout the 2018 campaign.

Vulnerability – a Shifting Signifier. Throughout the election campaign, the CAQ did not release a single platform document, but rather progressively published aspects of their platform on their website. As a result, it's difficult to assess when the notion of vulnerability was first mentioned, but it appears to have been highlighted on September 3rd, 2018, with the addition of the website section "Maternelle 4 ans : un projet de société pour le Québec" (POLTEXT,

[12] The QSCDK has been conducted at five-year intervals by the *Institut de la statistique du Québec*, beginning in 2012, then in 2017 and 2022. The reports are published the following year, however, therefore the 2017 survey report was published in late October 2018, after the provincial election had concluded. The assumption is therefore made that data referred to during the election was from the 2012 survey published in 2013.

2018). With this addition, the CAQ declared its official objectives in proposing universal kindergarten for 4-year olds were to: "detect learning difficulties, to intervene early with vulnerable children, and to introduce all children to literacy through play" (POLTEXT, 2018, Section La maternelle 4 ans universelle). Later, the term vulnerability was also used to critique the outgoing Liberal government's cuts to education services directed at "the most vulnerable students" (POLTEXT, 2018, Section Rétablir le droit à une éducation de qualité), although who those students were was not defined. The idea of vulnerability was also used in the CAQ's in vague descriptions of help for "vulnerable" seniors with dementia, and regarding cuts in funding by the Liberals to the (presumably economically) "most vulnerable" Quebecers (POLTEXT, 2018).

In news reports, with regards specifically to kindergarten for 4-year-olds, the definition of vulnerability often shifted. It was employed, mainly by the CAQ, to promote a type of moral panic surrounding increasing numbers of children who required "correction of certain problems" ("Les meilleurs échanges du «Face-à-Face Québec 2018»," 2018) but what, precisely, those problems were varied according to who was being interviewed. Based on statements attributed to Legault and his political allies, "vulnerability", or "difficulties" sometimes referred to language deficits, or to learning difficulties (Lecavalier, 2018; Prévost, 2018). Other times it spoke to "weaknesses in development or language" (Fimbry, 2018, para. 33), or "language, behavior, or attention difficulties, or an autism spectrum disorder" (Fimbry, 2018, para. 36). In another case, children's "troubles" were described as neuro-developmental, defined as "delays in the development of motor skills, language, socialization, or attention abilities" (Croteau, 2018a, paras. 1, 2). One article which referred to screening for "developmental troubles" or "disorders", noted:

> The CAQ leader proposed a series of measures to identify and treat every child showing delays in motor skills, language, socialization, or attention abilities. According to a 2012 study, a quarter of children starting kindergarten are affected by one or more of these issues. And the consequences are significant: a more difficult educational journey, higher dropout rates, and loss of self-esteem. (Croteau, 2018b, p. 5)

The study referenced by this journalist was, as noted above, most likely the QSCDK (Simard et al., 2013), and the shifting definitions may be due, in part, to the multiple "developmental domains" covered by the survey. These domains, which are assessed via observation by teachers,

include: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge.

The notion of vulnerability in children's development, or "developmental vulnerability" comes from the EDI, the questionnaire upon which the QSCDK is based. According to Einboden et al. (2013) "developmental vulnerability is determined by comparison with an arbitrary cut-off score created using the lowest 10 per cent of scores for each of the EDI scales on the first wave of data collection" (p. 558) and children who are found to fall below the cutoff are determined to be "vulnerable". It is "an artefact of a tool designed to measure children's ability to meet the task demands of school" (p. 558). The QSCDK (Simard et al., 2013) also discussed students "at risk" (p. 62), a label applied by school boards to individual students who have been evaluated as having "vulnerability factors" (p. 62) that could influence their learning or behaviour, and put them at risk for school failure or inadequate socialization. The results of the 2012 survey (Simard et al., 2013) stated that one child in four in Quebec was vulnerable in at least one domain of development. Half of these children were vulnerable in only one domain, while one quarter of the identified children were vulnerable in two domains, and the remaining quarter in three or more domains. Risk factors that could potentially result in higher rates of vulnerability were identified as: living in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area, having a first language other than French, being born outside of Canada, identifying as male, not having attended preschool or daycare, and being viewed by the teacher as being at risk of experiencing social or learning difficulties (Simard et al., 2013).

With vulnerability as a shifting signifier, the universalization of prekindergarten was proposed as a panacea for a multitude of potential deficiencies, similarly to how kindergarten for 5-year-olds was framed in the 1960s. These potential "problems" were particularly egregious in specific populations, as defined by the risk factors listed above in the QSCDK. Not all of these populations were given equal public attention during the election campaign, however. Just as in the 1960s, when the notion of the underclasses seemed to ignite the collective imaginations of both the journalists and the readers of *La Presse*, in 2018 the makeup of Quebec's "vulnerable" groups was defined largely by press coverage and public discourse. One focus of news coverage was on the "undereducation" of boys (Dion-Viens, 2018; Fimbry, 2018). This appeared to be related to the findings of the QSCDK that boys were more likely to be vulnerable in more than one domain, and to Quebec's high rate high school drop outs, who are majoritarily boys (Dion-

Viens, 2018). Combatting the "major" problem of "le décrochage", or dropping out of school, was often cited as part of the reason for the need for universal 4-year old kindergarten (Sirois, 2018). One report noted "from the moment they start school, boys are at higher risk of developing language and behavior problems" (Dion-Viens, 2018, n.p.), and that early intervention was required to prevent them from falling behind. The discourse of boys' school failure has long been intertwined with the modern "crisis of masculinity" that has its roots in the backlash against feminism, and argues that the feminisation of education is at the root of boys' school failure (Dupuis-Déri, 2018). In reality race and class, according to Dupuis-Deri (2018), often play a bigger role than gender in educational outcomes. This accords with research by authors who have looked at the educational experiences of racialized or minoritized youth in Quebec (Magnan et al., 2019; Thésée & Carr, 2016), as well as with analyses of the often poor results of government policies intended to help disadvantaged students (Deniger, 2012).

The other populations that appeared to be "vulnerable" according to media reports, were children whose first language was not French, children who were not read to by their parents, and children from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas whose parents did not send them to daycare or prekindergarten (Fimbry, 2018). Although not specifically named in public discourse, these descriptions corresponded to parents who could mostly be classified as being outside Quebec's dominant economic, racial and linguistic groups. This subtle characterization could be understood as referring to racialized individuals, low-income families, new immigrant families or those who fit into more than one of these categories. These "othered" parents were often also likely to be mothers since they were more likely to choose to stay at home, or to be forced to stay at home due to structural, linguistic, or other barriers preventing their entry into the workforce, a fact that will be further explored below. The notion of vulnerability, generally used to signal deficiencies, was not always viewed as negative in public discourse, however. It was also sometimes framed as a useful term for public debate, one tied to hope for change, as this author noted in *La Presse*: "There is something encouraging about seeing all the parties seriously debating educational services for young children — and especially the most vulnerable. Even the most cynical would acknowledge that" (Sirois, 2018, p. 2).

Vulnerability and the EDI: Pathologization and Objectification. If the concept of vulnerability in some cases offered a constructive opportunity to debate the merits of competing propositions for early years learning, its problematic aspects should not, nonetheless, be ignored.

Another look at where the term appears to have been drawn from, the QSCDK, and specifically the basis for that survey, the EDI, is helpful in this analysis. The EDI has been widely used across Canada, and purports to show that "children's readiness to learn is associated with the socioeconomic status, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the families and communities in which they live", including demonstrating "a higher level of 'vulnerability' in children from non-dominant cultural backgrounds" (Li et al., 2007, p. 223). This includes students from Indigenous communities and new immigrants. Although the Quebec survey excluded Indigenous students attending schools on their reserve, the consistency of findings of "vulnerability" among populations that do not belong to the dominant class and culture should raise important questions with regards to the survey's objectivity and appropriateness (Li et al., 2007). One major issue is that the survey is completed by teachers, many of whom may not share the economic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds of their students. This potential bias was noted in an offhand way in a Montreal-specific study on kindergarten maturity that also employed the EDI. The authors suggested that not only should the results be viewed as "predictive not causal" (p. 21), and that understanding the nature of specific populations' "vulnerabilities" would require further research, but they also stated that: "It is relevant, when discussing the limitations of the tool, to ask whether, given the mosaic of cultures present in Quebec, it might be more difficult for teachers to assess children from immigrant backgrounds" (Boucheron et al., 2012, p. 21). This disclaimer, however, did not stop the study results from being widely used in policy decisions in the ECEC sector. Li et al. (2007) note that first language, bilingualism, and knowledge of the socially constructed, localized culture of schooling that children may or may not have when starting school severely impacts scores.

Classification of students as vulnerable based on the EDI, combined with how vulnerability was utilized during the election to promote intervention, may in fact have resulted in a pathologizing process (Shields et al., 2005), one that risked marginalizing children who didn't meet dominant norms. Pathologizing processes use deficit-oriented thinking to frame individuals' behaviours and lived experiences as symptomatic of internal flaws or flaws in their environment (Shields et al., 2005). If testing children potentially pathologizes their differences, it also frames them as scientific objects of analysis (Lehrer, 2020) and state surveillance (Parazelli, 2020) rather than positioning them as agentic, capable, multi-faceted human beings, or what Iorio and Yelland (2021) term "citizens of the now" (p. 16). Use of the EDI could therefore be

termed a form of governmentality, associated with the emergence of the "preventive state". According to Parton (2006):

> The preventive state aims to intervene at a much earlier stage rather than simply being concerned with investigating and responding to crises once they have emerged. It aims to pre-empt problems before they occur and involves increasing restraints on the liberty of certain individuals … A key element is the use of various systems of surveillance whereby the storage, analysis and sharing of information takes on a particular significance. (p. 6)

The EDI functions as such a system of surveillance, and as the public debates form 2018 show, serves as the justification for predictive early prevention targeted towards particular populations.

The EDI purports not only to measure school readiness, but to act as a "surrogate measure of brain and biological development" (Einboden et al., 2013, p. 555). In so doing, it has become a state-funded technoscience that interprets biology via social observation (Einboden et al., 2013). However, because "behaviours considered relevant to measure are determined culturally" (Einboden et al., 2013, p. 555), the survey is in fact a political and value laden process, but one that is largely sheltered from critique under the mantle of medico-scientific objectivity. Those who do critique the survey, suggest that the use of instruments such as the EDI are less about the stated goals of streamlining data and mobilizing resources to improve educational outcomes, and instead about the surveillance and control of vulnerable populations in order to mitigate risk (Peers, 2011). These social and economic risks, though determined at a population level, in fact become localized, as Einboden (2013) notes: "through the practices of measurement and interpretation, the EDI redefines sites of scrutiny away from global economic processes of disadvantage, towards more modifiable ones located at the site of individuals, families and communities" (p. 557). There is a continuity here from the mental hygiene-inspired focus of decades past on normalizing abnormal children, to identifying high vs. low-risk individuals and mitigating risks through intensive surveillance and early intervention into children's intimate life contexts.

The focus by the CAQ during the 2018 election on the universalization of 4-year-old kindergarten for the purpose of "systematic screening" (dépistage systématique) of children for "intercepting" learning and other difficulties (Croteau, 2018a; Lajoie, 2018) speaks to the importance of this framework of identifying and mitigating risk. The direct association made by

the CAQ between kindergarten for 4-year-olds and rates of high school completion clearly identified the risk as one of school failure (in addition to the association with economic productivity, addressed in the last section below). Even if the EDI is not utilized in prekindergarten, the results of the QSCDK were the justification for this proposed increase in surveillance and intervention, which was the primary role assigned to universal prekindergarten by the CAQ. One can imagine that this logic of objectification of children could be applied to 4-year-olds or even younger children with another instrument similar to the EDI, bringing on calls for even earlier schooling as early intervention for children in difficulty. Similar programs already exist in other jurisdictions, such as kindergarten for 3-year-olds in France. While this is speculative, there was concern expressed during the 2018 election by ECEC researchers that the proposed expansion of prekindergarten was in fact part of a larger strategy of "push-down" schooling that was detrimental to young children. Bigras and Paulin (2018) commented, regarding the CAQ's plan: "This leader and his party are heading in the wrong direction" (p. 1). There has been a long-standing public debate in Quebec over what types of educational interventions are most appropriate to help young children overcome difficulties, provide the best quality care, and ensure future school success. This debate largely concerns the role that CPEs versus kindergarten play and has long been a source of contention between child development experts and politicians in charge of educational policy. The 2018 election period was no exception.

Kindergarten for 4-Year-Olds: A Miracle Solution? Equity Issues and the CPEs vs Prekindergarten Debate. In the early 1960s, public discussions of kindergarten centered on whether children were best served by early schooling or by staying at home with their mothers. The themes discussed in chapter four highlighted the numerous attempts by journalists and groups such as the ACJE to convince the public that attending public kindergarten was in fact more beneficial for children than remaining at home. In 2018, however, when Quebec's system of publicly funded educational daycares had been in place for several decades, the debate largely centered on whether school-based prekindergarten or CPEs were better suited to meet the needs 4-year-olds, including in the realm of intervention for "difficulties" or "deficits". Legault noted he was "convinced that kindergarten for 4-year-olds is more effective for a child with learning difficulties than a CPE" (Fimbry, 2018, para. 12), and suggested that this was because of the presence of teachers who have completed a Bachelor of Education and access to different

professionals (i.e. speech therapists, psycho-educators, etc.). Égide Royer, a professor from the Université de Laval, echoed this opinion, stating that CPEs were "insufficient to promote school success" (Fimbry, 2018, para. 33). Legault also put forward the notion that the training and education of teachers was "not the same" as that of educators in CPEs (Fimbry, 2018, para. 12), implying that teachers were more qualified to work with 4-year-olds. This assertion was made despite there being few teachers in the province who were actually specialized in preschool education (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021).

Teachers employed in prekindergartens hold a Bachelor of Education from a program that, in most Quebec universities, includes little training in early years education, while educators in CPEs generally have a 3-year Cegep certification specifically in Early Childhood Education (Lehrer & Fournier, 2021). The public devaluation of daycare educators and their problematically low wages have long been a bone of contention in Quebec, both for feminists and labour unions representing the ECEC sector (Adkin & Abu-Laban, 2008). Legault's dismissal of educators as unqualified was symptomatic of this classist discourse. In addition, the CAQ did not seem to seriously consider the suggestion by some academics to pair an early childhood educator with a teacher in prekindergarten classrooms to benefit from their expertise, following the Ontarian model (Fimbry, 2018). This dismissive discourse recalled the early 1960s dismissal by ACJE members of jardinières and private kindergarten owners who did not meet their proposed qualification standards for kindergarten teachers. Legault also brushed aside repeatedly voiced concerns by opposing parties and school board officials ("Des CPE préoccupés par la maternelle 4 ans pour tous," 2018; Prévost, 2018) about a lack of teaching staff and classroom space in schools, particularly in Montreal, that would make the expansion of prekindergartens difficult ("Debates convincing voters to reconsider support," 2018; Lecavalier, 2018). This fact would come back to haunt the CAQ, as lack of teachers and physical space would, in fact, slow the implementation of universal prekindergarten ("Maternelle 4 ans," 2023).

While there isn't space to fully explore the CPE vs. prekindergarten debate in this text, there is an important point to note from the 2018 election that relates to equity. During the election, pushback to the idea of the universalization of prekindergarten was strong from supporters of CPEs, often citing research that suggested CPEs were better adapted to 4-year-olds (Bigras & Paulin, 2018; Dubé, 2018; Fimbry, 2018), and asking why Quebec's expertise in the area of quality educational childcare was being ignored ("Le jour 30 de la campagne électorale

en Mauricie/Centre-du-Québec," 2018). One author lamented the simplistic notion that the CAQ appeared to be promoting that kindergarten for 4-year-olds would fix most of the problems in Quebec's education system, noting that it "cannot be a miracle solution" (Latraverse, 2018, para. 22). However, few individuals raised the point that kindergarten for 4-year-olds was initially designed as an equity-based project targeting families living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods who did not have access to spaces in CPEs (April et al., 2018). Lysée, leader of the PQ, mentioned the fact that kindergarten for 4-year-olds was first introduced by his party for families with low incomes, only to go on to suggest that the program was designed for parents who "preferred to send their children to school rather than to daycare" (Schué, 2018c, para. 21). This re-writing of history under the discourse of parental choice, speaks to the ubiquitousness of neoliberal, market-focused consumer "choice" narratives, which I shall explore further in the last theme in this chapter.

The notion of priority access for low-income families was raised in an article profiling a child from the Outaouais region who was denied enrolment in a local prekindergarten because his neighbourhood "was not classified as sufficiently disadvantaged" ("Le manque d'accès à la maternelle à quatre ans dénoncé en Outaouais," 2018, para. 2). The unnamed journalist intentionally attempted to engender sympathy for "le petit Thomas" ("little Thomas"), noting how sad the situation was, and that the child's heart was broken at the refusal, as was his mother's. The author quoted the child's mother as stating: "It's unfair for such a young child who doesn't necessarily understand why he can't go when others can" ("Le manque d'accès à la maternelle à quatre ans dénoncé en Outaouais," 2018, para. 3). No explanation was offered as to why enrolment was limited to disadvantaged neighbourhoods, however, and the notion of equity was turned on its head by the suggestion that the exclusion of this particular child was both unfair, and inexplicable. Peters (2020) suggests that achieving equity requires "eradicating injustices, making the invisible visible" (p. 87), however, this article appeared intentionally written to engender sympathy for this single child, without "making visible" the inequities many children face that originally initiated the establishment of prekindergarten. As children were very rarely centered in any news articles, this framing also raised questions about the silencing of the voices and desires of the disadvantaged children and families that lack access to quality early years education.

Only two articles out of the 122 that I analyzed from the 2018 election addressed equity-seeking measures directly, and only one clearly explained why they existed. In an interview with Radio-Canada, researcher Christa Japel described how kindergarten for 4-year-olds was originally designed to help disadvantaged students: "If we give everyone the same thing, all children in kindergarten, we maintain the gap between more privileged children and those who are less privileged if we don't give something special and enriched to these [disadvantaged] children" ("Des CPE préoccupés par la maternelle 4 ans pour tous," 2018, para. 6). Meanwhile, Nathalie Bigras and Patrick Paulin, in an article co-signed by several other academics, noted that prekindergarten was specifically intended to offer free educational services to disadvantaged children who had never had the chance to attend daycare. They described it as: "a targeted equity objective geared towards the most vulnerable children that has been progressively erased in the last few years in favour of an approach focused on early schooling for all" (Bigras & Paulin, 2018, p. 1). The question of who these "vulnerable children" were, however, and how a targeted measure was intended to operate, were largely omitted. The overall result of the lack of in-depth discussion of equity throughout the election campaign was therefore an obfuscation of the deep-rooted material and other disparities that shape some children's lives, in favour of a discourse that simply centered "all children" as if they all stood on equal footing. In addition, while it was sometimes mentioned that 4-year-old kindergarten was instituted in targeted neighbourhoods because children from disadvantaged families were underrepresented in CPEs (Sirois, 2018), the question of why they were underrepresented win CPEs as never addressed. The answer is important, as I shall demonstrate below, because it speaks to how the state failed, and continues to fail, particular groups of children in the implementation of CPEs, and has since shifted the blame for that failure on to parents.

"La parentalité": From Vanishing Mothers to Bad Mothers

From Motherhood to Parenthood. In the 1960s, a mother's place was largely viewed as being in the home, as the primary caregiver and educator of children, to be "assisted" in her educational endeavours by qualified kindergarten teachers ("L'école maternelle adjointe de la mere," 1960). Concerns over adequate versus deficient motherhood were omnipresent in public debates surrounding kindergarten at that time. In 2018, however, mothers, and to some extent teachers, were virtually erased from the public discourse concerning early years education. This is evidenced in the language used in the news articles which overwhelmingly focused on parents

and families rather than mothers, with only two exceptions. In one article highlighting the fact that parents aged 18-39 would carry demographic weight as a voting block in the election, Martin Paquet, a professor from Université Laval noted that "Anything related to daycare or meals is of particular interest to young mothers, because these promises directly impact their lives" (Schué, 2018b, para. 13). Paquet went on to state: "When a woman has children in school and continues to work, proposals like these speak to her interests. She may quickly feel sympathy for a candidate and convince her partner to vote for them" (Schué, 2018b, para. 15). Mothers were also mentioned with regards to parental choice by Lisée, when he (inaccurately) stated that the PQ created prekindergarten for "mothers who make the decision not to send their child to daycare, but rather to school" (Prévost, 2018, para. 13). Paquet's statements recognized the fact that child-rearing and domestic labour were still a gendered endeavour, and, interestingly, also suggested that mothers' opinions on politics may carry enough weight within the family to sway their partners' votes.

The vast majority of the 2018 articles, however, referred to parents, or simply to families. For example, a 762-word article published by Radio-Canada (Schué, 2018a) the day after the start of the election campaign, giving an overview of all of the parties' proposed policies for families, used the terms "parents" and "families" a total of 12 times, without ever mentioning mothers or fathers. This use of neutral language is not necessarily negative, as it "opens up the space of parenting, where biological parents, stepparents, foster parents, gay or lesbian parents, and adoptive parents can all have a place" (Parent et al., 2008, p. ix). Gender-neutral terminology is certainly more inclusive of men, non-cisgender individuals, and non-heterosexual couples, and it is representative of shifts towards more egalitarian family policies. Barrère-Maurisson (2007) describes this evolution of family policies over time by outlining three distinct historical shifts in language in the French context. The first was the use of "familialisme" (familialism/familism) during the period from World War II to the late 1960s where the patriarchal, heterosexual, hierarchical family reigned, followed by the 1970s to the 1980s which focused on egalitarianism, women's rights and "feminisme" (feminist) policies, and then, finally, the rise of "parentalisme" (parentalism) in the 1990s with an emphasis on relations between parents and children. A similar shift in academic and public policy language occurred in Quebec, and is particularly noticeable from the 2000s to today, with less focus on mothers and motherhood and more on "la parentalité", or parenting/parenthood (Lacharité et al., 2015). According to Lacharité et al.

(2015) the notion of “la parentalité” shifts the emphasis, presumably from motherhood, to parental experiences, practices, and responsibilities “in relation to, and under the scrutiny of, the institutional framework established around children in a given society” (p. 6).

The downside of this shift is the obfuscation of the gendered nature of parenting and domestic responsibilities. Neutral language presumes an already achieved equality between women and men in terms of child-rearing and household labour. Though 76% of mothers of young children are now in the workforce in Quebec, this aspirational parental equality has proved illusory as women still spend more time caring for young children from birth to age five, and take on more domestic responsibilities than their partners (Seery, 2014). Mothers also take more paid parental leave and more unpaid time off from employment than fathers for child-care related issues, and suffer higher levels of stress over work-life balance, as well as higher rates of depression (Observatoire des tout-petits, 2019). Younger Quebec feminists have decried the continued invisibility of women’s work in the domestic sphere, and the burnout experienced by mothers who are attempting to meet multiple gendered social and cultural ideals in their careers, in child-rearing, in homemaking, and even in their physical appearance. Concerns about inequities in mental and emotional labour that fall majoritarily on women have also been brought to the fore (Robert & Toupin, 2018). In addition, young feminists have raised questions concerning the viability of women’s full equality based solely on increased participation in the workforce, and highlighted the slow rate of evolution of men’s roles in caregiving (Seery, 2014). The above-mentioned Radio-Canada article by Schué (2018a) that described the various parties’ family policies, included discussions of work-life balance, daycare spaces, parental leave benefits, care of sick children, childcare fees, and even preparation of school lunches, without so much as a nod to the fact that many of these issues impact women to a greater extent than men. It is not just gender that impacts parenting, however - intersecting identities such as race and class are also important factors that were largely ignored in news media reports.

With one third of children in Quebec having at least one parent who was born outside Canada, and 20% of children born to couples where both parents are from outside of the country (Simard et al., 2013), a high number of families confront issues related to immigration, ethnocultural diversity and integration. According to the Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI), linguistic, cultural and economic barriers complicate recent immigrants’ access to social, educational and childcare services,

resulting in more frequent isolation of mothers at home with young children, and their exclusion from full participation in Quebec society (Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI), 2019). The specific challenges they face were omitted, however, from the public debates in 2018, and their voices were never included in the news articles discussing CPEs or kindergarten for 4-year-olds. This was despite the fact that immigration remained a hot topic during the election, with the CAQ proposing a controversial French language and "Quebec values" test for newcomers, accompanied by the threat of eventual expulsion for immigrants who did not pass the test (Laframboise, 2018a). The fact that mothers' voices and concerns, and in particular new immigrant mothers' voices, were not present in the discourse on early years education demonstrates that there is a type of paternalism and a reinforcing of dominant identities at work in the news coverage. This is not unique to Quebec, however. Although research in this area is lacking, a review of coverage of elections in English Canadian newspapers from 2000-2008 demonstrated that voices of parents and child care activists were largely sidelined in discussions of child care policy in favour of politicians (Rauhala et al., 2012).

In 2018 politicians were certainly at the forefront, speaking about parents, but not with them, and obfuscating the gendered inequities that constitute the reality of mothering in Quebec, particular for those who face intersecting structural inequities. News reports were dominated by the opinions and proposals of mostly male politicians and their allies, such as professor Egide Royer, as well as Lionel Carmant, a pediatric neurologist who ran for the CAQ. This gender bias was partially due to the fact that the majority of the party leaders in 2018 were men, with the exception of the co-spokesperson of Quebec Solidaire, Manon Massé. The women's voices that were included in the educational debates tended to be those of academics, school board representatives, daycare administrators, and rarely, parents, teachers or early childhood educators. Interestingly, women's organizations such as the Fédération des femmes du Québec, and organizations representing preschool education such as the AÉPQ (formerly the ACJE), were also absent from the coverage, although some other organizations like the Regroupement des centres de la petite enfance de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches were quoted in news reports ("Des CPE préoccupés par la maternelle 4 ans pour tous," 2018). This differed significantly from the early 1960s when women kindergarten teachers, particularly the members of the ACJE, were extensively featured, and their opinions and expertise helped to shape the public debates

regarding kindergarten (Desjardins, 1962; “L’école maternelle adjointe de la mere,” 1960). In 2018, however, teachers, like mothers, were largely erased from public discourse. They were often referred to in an economized and dehumanizing fashion as “resources” to be added to schools, along with teaching assistants and specialists such as psychoeducators. One article, describing the Liberals’ education platform noted “there would be close to 14,000 extra resources added by 2022” (Schué, 2018c), as if teachers were the equivalent of inanimate objects such as books that could be inventoried. The novel psychological and other interventions that teachers had been lauded for in the 1960s were now attributed mainly to the state, largely via Legault’s promotion of early screening and predictive early prevention.

The Spectre of the “Bad Mother”. In the early 1960s news reports defined “deficient’ mothers as those who either over-mothered and potentially smothered their children, leading to psychological complexes, or under-mothered by failing to put their child’s developmental needs before their own, and risked raising delinquent children. Deficient mothers were also characterized as those from disadvantaged backgrounds who lacked the culture and affluence of the middle and upper classes (see discussion in chapter four). In 2018, there were fewer allusions to mothers’ potential deficiencies, partially due to the shift to the neutral language of “parents” noted above. The spectre of the “bad mother” remained just below the surface of the discussions, however. In an article highlighting the debate over the advantages of CPEs versus prekindergarten, Egide Royer stated:

> In disadvantaged areas, many children do not attend early childhood centers (CPEs), for various reasons. When a parent is not working and stays at home, they do not see the point of having their child looked after. On the other hand, they are more likely to be convinced to send their child to school — to four-year-old kindergarten. Especially since it’s free. (Fimbry, 2018, para. 38)

The author of this article also noted, speaking of Royer: “He admits that for children who are developing normally, in a family environment that values reading, attending a CPE or four-year-old kindergarten is equivalent” (Fimbry, 2018, para. 34). There was also mention of families in which a good level of stimulation is provided for young children, and this was equated with future success in schooling. The idea that children who do not speak French and come from disadvantaged neighbourhoods require early intervention was also raised. The spectre of the “bad

mother", then, was implied to be one who did not send her child to a CPE, and "did not see the point" of early years education.

There are similarities here with the psychological discourse from the 1960s, as well as the judgements made at that time regarding adequate/inadequate mothering based on class differences. I would argue, however, that underlying the statements above there is also an intersectional gendered, racialized, and classed discourse that applies to new immigrant families, racialized families living in poverty, and to other families who might be viewed as existing outside of the dominant white, francophone, middle-class Québécois culture. This is hinted at in Royer's arguments, as well as by references to children whose first language isn't French having more difficulties (Fimbry, 2018). It is also subtly alluded to in Legault's many references to children with "problems", or "difficulties" who can be understood as children (and their parents) who pose a problem to, or for, society. Immigrants have long been framed as posing just such a problem in Quebec, one that purports to be tied to their adaptation and integration into the dominant culture and adoption of "Quebec values" (Potvin, 2016). Potvin (2016) notes that since the 1990s a more conservative nationalism has taken hold and immigrants and members of ethnic minorities have often found themselves scapegoated during constitutional crises and questions related to Quebec's sovereignty. Debates over the "trouble" caused by new immigrants have also focused on state secularism and "reasonable accommodation" of religious differences (Potvin, 2016). As Benhadjoudja (2022) argues, women, and Muslim women in particular, have often been the targets of harsh critiques during these debates:

> The politics of secularism in Quebec most often adopts the language of national "values" to present Quebec as a "feminist," "open," and egalitarian nation. An opposition between the nation—which has the "right values," the right "civilization"—and uncivilized Muslim women has been a constant element throughout these debates. (p. 187)

Narain (2024) agrees, in a critique of Bill 21 aptly titled "How Does it Feel to be a Problem?", noting that public discourses frequently "define racialized immigrant women as illegitimate citizens" (Narain, 2024, p. 26) and as threats to national identity. She adds that the focus of the state becomes the regulation of minorities, and that structural racism and systemic discrimination therefore go unproblematized.

The spectre of the "bad mother" that appeared in 2018 can be understood then as pointing not only to class differences, but to "othered" mothers who, although they face structural

disadvantages and discrimination, were being subtly blamed for the fact that they "chose" not to send their child to a CPE. This choice, according to the discourse from 2018, would endanger the child's future chances of school success and could be remedied by ready access to "free" prekindergarten (Fimbry, 2018). This blaming of mothers for their poor "choices" is of course ironic when the chances of gaining access to CPE spaces was, and remains, inequitable, with higher income families being overrepresented in CPE attendance (Laurin et al., 2015). The "bad mothers" were also those that did not value early education, and those that did not read to their children, presumably in French (Fimbry, 2018). The notion of not valuing education, while it may be related to class prejudice, is also one that could be read as infused with racial prejudice against "uncivilized" others, particularly immigrant women considered to engage in "illiberal practices" who need to be "saved from themselves" (Narain, 2024, p. 27). The notion that immigrant families do not value education is, of course, a stereotype as many newcomers value education highly and also have a positive view of the Quebec education system (Benoit et al., 2009). The idea of not reading to children in French also speaks to the anxieties of the dominant population with the integration of newcomers, particularly with regards to the adoption of the French language. The irony here again is that the obstacles that many newcomers to Quebec face in accessing affordable childcare prevent mothers in particular from attending francization classes and slows their learning of French (Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI), 2019).

An (In)equitable System? Issues of Access. The TCRI report (2019) stated that lack of access to quality, affordable childcare was in fact the most frequently reported problem facing new immigrant families with young children. Barriers reported included the aforementioned lack of spaces in CPEs, as well as a lack of subsidized daycare spaces more generally, linguistic challenges, difficulties accessing the online-only government registration portal, lack of flexibility in childcare service provision, lack of understanding of immigrant families' realities, and the high cost of private childcare. Cost, however, appeared to be the most significant factor that often forced mothers to stay home and impacted the "speed and quality of the family's integration" into Quebec society (Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI), 2019, p. 33). If cost of care greatly impacts new immigrant families, it is also a factor affecting access to childcare across the province, particularly for families living in disadvantaged areas and in the regions. One opinion piece written during the

2018 campaign noted that many Quebec families denied spaces in CPEs were forced to resort to private daycares at a higher cost, something that is often out of reach to those on limited incomes. As the author noted: “The reality is that a universal and equal childcare service for everyone has never existed in Quebec. That reality is the true injustice. Even today” (Tremblay, 2018, p. 6). A journalist from La Presse agreed, arguing that “only 27% of 4-year-olds have access to the [CPE] network. It’s too few. Quality [care] is reserved for a minority [of children]” (Sirois, 2018, p. 2).

Several articles from the 2018 election spoke to parents’ frustrations with long waiting lists and lack of CPE and subsidized daycare spaces in their areas (Bérubé, 2018; “Le jour 30 de la campagne électorale en Mauricie/Centre-du-Québec,” 2018). Still today in Quebec, approximately 30,000 children remain on waitlists for daycares in the province (Bernier, 2025b). Kindergarten for 4-year-olds, at its inception, was a stop-gap measure aimed at disadvantaged children in order to alleviate the inequities created by these waitlists. It was intended to make up for the potential deficiencies that might have been exacerbated by not having had access to quality educational childcare before entering school. As Bigras and Paulin (2018) stated, “we had to at least give them this final chance” (para. 2). Although the notion that children from disadvantaged areas are underrepresented in state-subsidized, quality care is often mentioned in research related to ECEC in Quebec (Laurin et al., 2015), the reasons given for this underrepresentation are frequently vague, and they were not investigated in news coverage of the election campaign. Suggestions from research include maternal overprotection, mothers’ unemployment status or non-return to work, cultural or socio-emotional factors (Giguère & Desrosiers, 2010), parents’ irregular work schedules (Japel et al., 2005), and lack of eligibility for government subsidies (Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI), 2019). What is almost never suggested, however, is the structure and administration of the system itself, particularly with regards to CPEs.

Anecdotally, as a young parent looking for childcare in the mid-2000s, I was frustrated to find that I was ineligible for several high-quality CPEs that had been newly built in my area of Montreal. These beautiful, likely expensive to construct centres, were established next to large local pharmaceutical and aerospace companies, and the majority of their spaces reserved for children of company employees. It was not lost on me that the employees of these corporations likely had much higher salaries than I did at the time, and yet they had priority access to state-

subsidized daycare spaces. After placing my name on several CPE waiting lists, I did finally receive a call offering my daughter a space in a different centre, more than *four years* later when she was nearly ready to start school. Needless to say, in the end she never attended a CPE, as we had been forced to find other, more expensive forms of childcare in the interim. This experience, while anecdotal, is still a common occurrence in Quebec where parents are faced with a lack of spaces and long wait-lists when registering for CPEs (Bernier, 2025a) and often end up opting for private centres or alternate arrangements (Tremblay, 2018). The questions this experience raised for me at the time about why the system was structured in this inequitable fashion, however, remain valid today, particularly as upcoming changes in the regulations governing the enrolment of children in CPEs have raised new concerns about the role large corporations play in the system (Gerbet, 2025).

While research speaks to changes in policies and funding of public vs. private daycares over time (Mathieu, 2019), an in-depth study of where CPEs have been established, to serve which populations, and the political, social, or economic decisions behind those choices is lacking. Instead, the media has focused on a handful of CPEs that have selection criteria that encourage registrations from specific ethnocultural communities (Vailles, 2024). What the somewhat sensationalized coverage (it called the findings "shocking") did not clarify is that these criteria generally match ethnic or religious groups located in the neighbourhood served by the CPE, and are often populations that are otherwise underserved, or might experience barriers to accessing daycare spaces due to discrimination or other factors. While the upcoming implementation of a centralized waiting list in Quebec, the "guichet unique" (Chouinard, 2023), may help alleviate some inequities in access, a more thorough investigation of the decision-making processes undergirding creation and expansion of CPEs, allocation of subsidized spaces, and selection criteria for children, is still warranted. Such an investigation might help to more definitely answer the question of why middle and higher income families are overrepresented in CPEs, and lower income and new immigrant families are underrepresented (Laurin et al., 2015). It might also alleviate the blaming of parents in public discourse, particularly mothers already facing multiple forms of marginalization, for not embracing early years education and instead shift the focus to examine the potential inequities in the design and administration of the system itself.

"Avoir assez d'ambition pour nos enfants": Québécois Identity, Children of the Nation and Fears of Deficient Human Capital

Québécois Identity, Where Past and Future Meet. In the early 1960s, the unease that French-Canadians experienced with regards to their positioning as a minority in Canada, and a historically oppressed majority within their own province, was evidenced in discussions of French-Canadian identity as it related to educational and social progress. In the intervening years, French-Canadians, now Québécois, shifted from identifying as a dominated and oppressed minority, to asserting control of the province as a majority people in charge of their own governance, education, culture and state institutions (Potvin, 2016). In line with this assertion of autonomy, Legault viewed his party's proposal to universalize prekindergarten as an important "projet de société" (project/vision for society), stating: "For me, this is the most important announcement … I would be in politics just to put this measure in place" (Croteau, 2018b, p. 5). During one leaders' debate, Legault was even asked which electoral promise he would step down over in the event that he couldn't keep it, and he answered without hesitation that it would be kindergarten for 4-year-olds (although he did not, in fact, step down when the number of promised classes was later not delivered) (Sirois, 2019). The CAQ proposal of universal prekindergarten was referred to as "ambitious and well intentioned" (Sirois, 2018, p. 2), and Legault often used the idea of ambition and capability to accuse his political opponents of lacking vision and courage. The introduction to this chapter included examples of this rhetoric, including when Legault asked: "When are Mr. Couillard and Mr. Lisée finally going to have some ambition – ambition for our children?" and accused them of believing that Quebec's children were unimportant (Lecavalier, 2018).

This concern with ambition and "showing initiative" ("How Quebec's Political Parties Are Courting Families with Education Promises," 2018) harkens back to the anxieties expressed in the 1960s regarding stereotypes of French-Canadians as uneducated, inferior and lacking ambition and work ethic. It is somewhat surprising that these anxieties remain just below the surface so many decades after the Quiet Revolution, and that Legault was able to weaponize them in public discourse to score political points. As Giroux (2023) notes: "The Quiet Revolution was supposed to bring about access to the dignity associated with the position of colonizer … It was supposed to provide a taste of the dignity of the master and heal the wound of subalternity (as well as the servitude that induced that condition)" (p. 20). Even though

Quebecers are now "Masters of their own house", a type of internalised francophobia[13] appears to remain at work. This was operationalized by Legault by pointing out personal deficiencies tied to negative stereotypes about francophones (lack of ambition) and then associating these deficiencies to a lack of support for the CAQ's nation-building project in the form of prekindergarten. Critiques of a belief in Quebec's ability to undertake largescale projects in order to progress as a society, also calls back to the news media discourses at play at the time of the implementation of the Grande Charte. The Grande Charte was noted as being an "ambitious" legislative program that was necessary to meet the "needs and destinies of our people" (Dugas, 1961a, p. 53). Jean Lesage, as premier in the early 1960s, noted that projects such as the Grande Charte were tied to the Quebec population's growing pride in their identity, and their ability to "live like a mature people in a world of sovereign nations" ("Au colloque de Mount Allison : les Québécois se sont engagés dans la voie de la fierté," 1961, p. 2). By attacking his opponents in this fashion, including using expressions of incredulity: "J'en reviens pas … Pourquoi on serait pas capable, voyons donc!" ("I just can't believe it … Why wouldn't we be able to? Come on!" (Lecavalier, 2018, para. 3)), Legault effectively utilized this history, and anxieties related to Québécois identity. to attempt to shut down legitimate critiques of his proposed policy.

Another anxiety that repeated itself from the 1960s, was concern about whether Quebec was keeping up with other jurisdictions in terms of early years education. Just as it played a role in promoting Quebec's public push to implement kindergarten in the early 1960s, a comparison between Quebec and Ontario was at play in 2018. One of the reasons for this comparison was the fact that Ontario had introduced a universal full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten program in 2010, which included classes staffed by teams of elementary school teachers and early childhood educators (Cleveland, 2021). Ontario's program, according to Legault, was proof that attendance at prekindergarten could increase high school graduation rates ("Élections Québec 2018 : entrevue avec le chef de la Coalition avenir Québec François Legault," 2018), however, Lisée pointed out that no children who benefitted from Ontario's program had in fact graduated yet, as it hadn't been in place long enough ("Élections Québec 2018 : entrevue avec le chef du Parti québécois Jean-François Lisée," 2018). While in the 1960s, comparisons to Ontario centered on Quebec's need to "catch up" in terms of developing a modern public education

[13] Francophobia is described by Rocher and Carpentier (2022) as a form of disparagement of Quebec francophones via imagery and hyperbole that characterize them negatively as a group based on particular aspects of their society or culture.

system, in 2018 Legault referred to Ontario as an inspiration in terms of how quickly universalization could be achieved, noting that the program had been implemented in only five years (Lecavalier, 2018). Legault also invoked the notion of Quebec as lagging behind Ontario, a strategy that drew from some of the same rhetorical strategies noted above, namely Quebec's pride in being a progressive, advanced nation, and stereotypes of francophone inferiority ("Trois idées fortes pour l'avenir," 2018). This characterization of Quebec as needing to catch up to Ontario was rejected in at least one case, however, where a media pundit noted "Quebec, it goes without saying, is not Ontario" (Sirois, 2018, p. 2), and then proceeded to point out the benefits of Quebec's existing network of CPEs.

Children of the Nation. Concerns with ambition and a vision for the future were also tied to nationalism, as children were framed as belonging to the nation as a whole, with the repeated use by all parties of the term "nos enfants" ("our children"). This language may not seem novel to people inside Quebec, but a quick comparison of news articles from the Ontario provincial election in 2018 shows that politicians in that province did not state "our children" but rather "parents and children" or "Ontario's families" (Chianello, 2018; "Ontario Liberal Budget to Include Free Daycare for Preschool Children," 2018). This language also differs from the 1960s news reports, which employed the terms "les enfants" ("the children") or "ses enfants" ("her children", referring to a mother). This is a testament to the shift in nationalist sentiment over time, and the normalization of language related to Quebec's collective national identity. In 2018, a "collective vision" or "collective responsibility" (Schué, 2018b) for the education of children was directly referenced more than once, while children were also referred to as a "richesse collective" ("collective wealth/treasure") that "forms the basis of society" (Lalonde-Graton, 2018, p. 8). Couillard also made the link between children and the nation explicit early in the campaign when presenting the Liberals' educational policy, noting : "Appuyer les familles, c'est appuyer le Québec" ("Supporting families is supporting Quebec") (Schué, 2018b, para. 4).

There was a certain paternalism present in this framing, however, where the state appeared to occupy part of the role formerly played by the mythical "mother of the nation", discussed in chapter four. In reference to kindergarten for 4-year-olds, Legault noted: "That's how we're going to take care of children with learning difficulties. It's our duty to provide services to all 4-year-old children" (J. Girard, 2018, para. 18). The "we/our" here represented both the Quebec nation and the state, charged with the duty of care attributed to mothers and

kindergarten teachers in the 1960s. In another article, Legault was quoted as stating: “It's as if the PQ and the Liberal Party don't understand that we have a duty to provide the best services to our children” (Marceau, 2018a, para. 12), positioning the CAQ as the party that would best enact this caretaking role. In an opinion piece for TVA Nouvelles, one commentator suggested: “the quality of education should not be a lottery. It is a responsibility of the state, a duty toward future generations. The future of our society depends on it" (Latraverse, 2018, para. 20). The interventionist state, rather than mothers, was therefore being put forward as essential to the care and maintenance of the Québécois nation, and to the preparation of the citizens of tomorrow. Just as they were in the 1960s in Quebec, and even earlier in other areas of the world, “children were being reconstructed as material investments in national progress” (Hendrick, 2003, p. 49). While the notion of children as an investment in the future is not new, an emphasis on the financial cost of that investment was an overwhelming feature of the 2018 election coverage, creating a kind of cost/benefit analysis related to the “future of the nation”. This marked a departure from the 1960s, where although cost was discussed, it did not dominate the coverage.

Fears of Deficient Human Capital. Although it may be the last theme examined in this analysis, cost was in fact the most frequently discussed topic in the articles that touched on early years education in 2018. The dizzying number of budget figures listed in the articles described the cost of the various parties’ proposed ECEC policies, the educational expenditures of the governing Liberal party, and the costs of daycare, school supplies, and other expenses paid by parents. Financial language was omnipresent, with early years education and care repeatedly being termed an “investment” (“CAQ Unveils Investments in Education and Health, Promises Not to Increase Taxes,” 2018; Laframboise, 2018b), and concerns being raised over affordability, budgets, deficits, and costs to taxpayers (“Early Kindergarten Would Free up 50,000 Daycare Spaces: Legault,” 2018; “Le cadre financier de la CAQ critiqué,” 2018; Lecavalier, 2018). A substantial proportion of the articles focused uniquely on the financial costs of the various parties proposals rather than on their substance. This is perhaps unsurprising, as Tardif (2015) notes that since the 1980s market logic has gradually become the dominant ideological framework for the political governance of education in Quebec. A shift toward right of center governments in the past few decades in North America and the adoption of neoliberal economic policies has resulted in an individualist, free-market approach to education (Tardif, 2015). Parents are now viewed as consumers who should be offered a choice of educational options. This was evident in the news

coverage as one Liberal candidate noted, with regards to kindergarten for 4-year-olds: “The goal is to increase the number of spaces in Quebec, allowing parents to choose freely” (“Le manque d’accès à la maternelle à quatre ans dénoncé en Outaouais,” 2018, para. 9). It was also present in Lisée’s referrals to the creation of prekindergarten for parents who “choose” to send their children to school instead of to daycare (Prévost, 2018).

An economization of early years education, and a narrow view of children as potential future economically productive citizens was demonstrated in comments made by economist Éric Girard, a CAQ candidate and ex-vice-president of the National Bank. He noted: “Education and the economy go hand in hand … An educated society is a wealthier and more productive one, enabling us to combat inequality, which is why there is a strong focus on education” (Marceau, 2018a, paras. 12–13). Questioned by a reporter about whether Girard meant that education was important because of its relation to productivity, Legault attempted to evade the question, stating: “If we truly believe in equal opportunity and education for all, then education must ensure that every child can reach their full potential. This requires early intervention, including 4-year-old kindergarten, and providing our children with the very best, above all for their future” (Marceau, 2018b, para. 15). This exchange was interesting on several levels. Notably, it echoed the “qui s’instruit, s’enrichit” (“He who gets educated, enriches himself”) slogan of the 1960 Quebec election, focusing on fears of a lack of future wealth, with the newer addition of the notion of “productivity”. Here productivity was proposed as the means of combatting inequality, which in the context of early years education, fits within the individualist discourse of human capital theory. Legault’s deflection of the issue of productivity was also not accidental, as he likely realised that economizing young children could be turned against him by his opponents as uncaring or dehumanizing. Instead, he shifted to a phrase that he would use multiple times throughout the campaign: “ensure that every child can reach their full potential”. This phrase, in a neoliberal capitalist framework, could be understood however to mean children’s “full economic potential”, particularly in the context of the CAQ’s emphasis on school success and the stated goal of lowering high school dropout rates.

Human Capital Theory (HCT) is a form of neoliberal rationality that explains the above view of individuals as future productive citizens. It is an economization, and some would argue, a dehumanization, of early life that attempts to maximize future productivity, and reduce any future potential tax burden on the state by investing in early years education (Roberts-Holmes &

Moss, 2021). It is also, as Roberts-Holmes and Moss (2021) note, "closely associated with methodological individualism, the doctrine that the roots of all social phenomena can be found in the individual's behaviour" (p. 21) which obfuscates structural injustices. Under HCT, everything including early years education, becomes a marketable commodity where notions of care, humanity, relationality and potentiality are subsumed under a market logic that reduces children to producers of economic value. As Moss (2023) notes, this approach also de-democratizes and depoliticizes preschool education:

> The essence of democratic politics, are replaced by technical questions … decided by economic and other technical experts, then left to management to ensure performance, without any semblance of democratic input or of meaningful choices. Societies, thus, become increasingly depoliticised, with contestation about ends (what do we value? what matters? what do we want?) replaced by technical assessments of means (what works? what return on this investment?), active citizens re-cast as calculating consumers. (p. 4)

This begs the question of what is left out when HCT discourses are emphasized, and what other concepts of children, childhood, and preschool education might be imaginable in the Quebec context, if the focus on economics and productivity were decentered.

Conclusion

The themes at work during the 2018 provincial election, in many ways more subtle than those that I was able to develop from the 1960s news reports, touched on numerous aspects of deficit discourses related to discussions of early childhood education and care in Quebec. From the moral panic created by the CAQ surrounding the notion of developmental vulnerabilities, to the problematic use of the EDI as an instrument of surveillance and pathologization, questions arose regarding in whose interest, and for whose benefit, the CAQ sought to prevent "complicated educational journeys" (Croteau, 2018b, p. 5) for specific populations. Equity issues in the ongoing CPE versus prekindergarten debate were also explored, bringing to the fore discourses tied to the inequitable distribution of educational and child-care resources, and the ways in which the truth regarding access to the subsidized system is often masked. Gender was also at play in this analysis, in an exploration of how shifts in language and policy priorities have left mothers feeling gaslit in their continued experience of the inequitable burden of domestic responsibilities. Their voices, as well as the voices of women facing multiple forms of marginalization, have receded from public debates over ECEC, allowing for control of the

narrative by mostly male politicians. Particular mothers were once again viewed as deficient in public discourse, this time along complex intersectional racial-linguistic-class-citizenship lines, leading to questions about how racialized, new immigrant, and socioeconomically disadvantaged mothers are disenfranchised in news media reports, and in early years care provision. Finally, Québécois identity was once again explored, as stereotypes of Québécois "deficiencies" were weaponized as a political strategy, while rhetoric that tied children to the Quebec nation facilitated arguments about the need for strong state intervention in order to ensure future productive citizens.

What was striking in this chapter were the numerous historical continuities, and the not-so-subtle ways that some of the themes from the 1960s found their way into the 2018 public discourse. Whether it was questions of "vulnerable" children, deficient motherhood, Québécois identity and nationhood, or the role of the state in the shaping of citizens, there were certainly points at which even I was surprised by the similarities to the past. There were, of course, numerous differences as well. The naturalization of out-of-home education and care for children as a state responsibility, the conflicts and exclusions brought about by the growing diversity of Quebec society, and the shift towards neoliberal logics of human capital are all likely aspects that our mothers and grandmothers would not have foreseen. Also important to note are the omission, in more recent debates, of some of the more humanistic topics that were considered pertinent to the introduction of kindergarten in the 1960s, including morality, spirituality, and even children's happiness. These omissions, combined with the move towards a preventive state model, and the lack of inclusion of parents, teachers and children's voices in public discourse are problematic, and raise questions about what types of future citizens Quebec truly envisions. The concluding chapter will briefly explore these questions, and reflect on the future, as it looks at some of the potential implications of the findings of this study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Afterthoughts

> "The current challenges in education cannot be compared to those of the past, yet it remains the foundation of social cohesion and the future of the nation. In Quebec, we must quickly find the path toward a school system capable of providing each of our children with an emancipatory education that enables everyone to actively participate in civic life."
>
> - Rocher (2025, p. 5)

> "Not being willing to wait is not being willing to bear what you are told will lessen in time. Any revolution in which some are asked to wait their turn will end up in exactly the same place. We must not wait. We must demand justice and equality now."
>
> - Ahmed (2017, p. 208)

Evolution of the Project

This research project involved a journey across several decades of Quebec's history, one that resulted in a fascinating in-depth look at the public discourses that have both shaped, and been shaped by, attitudes towards kindergarten education in different time periods. When this project began, my goal was to examine interventionist and deficit-based discourses in news media related to the universalization of kindergarten, via a critical, intersectional feminist poststructuralist lens. This lens was to be aimed at topics related to children and schooling, as this had been the area where deficit discourses had been most frequently theorized, and the one I was most familiar with (Swadener & Lubeck, 1995; Valencia, 1997). I found, however, that news media coverage of educational issues involved a wider view of society, and this shifted the scope of my inquiry outside of its original frame. One of the aspects that surprised me the most was in fact the salience of gender and cultural politics to kindergarten education. The role deficit discourses have played in the notion of Quebecois identity and nationhood, and the importance of motherhood and the tenacious myth of the Quebecois "mother of the nation" were a revelation. As someone who was not previously a scholar of history, and initially relied on my limited knowledge of Quebec history retained from my experience in the province's public education system, I think my surprise speaks somewhat to the marginalization of women's history in public education (Brunet, 2020; Dumont, 2013). It also may be revealing of the ways in which Quebecois identity and the struggle for emancipation and nationhood are transmitted differently within anglophone educational institutions, despite a shared common provincial history curriculum.

Another important discovery facilitated by this project was the notion that deficit and interventionist discourses affect a variety of individuals and groups. As this study has shown, deficit discourses impact the lives of mothers and other primary caregivers, teachers, families living in difficult socio-economic conditions, groups "othered" by the state due to their cultural or linguistic backgrounds, as well as individuals thought to pose a future social or economic "risk" to the nation. This widened view of the salience and impact of deficit discourses opens up interesting possibilities for future research in this area. In addition, I believe it reinforces the importance of examining education from a variety of perspectives and data sources. News media, in this case, provided a rich tapestry of textual data from which to draw, and allowed me to assemble numerous themes that painted a revealing picture of the public discussions surrounding Quebec's early years educational landscape. The interdisciplinary research approach applied in this case, which ended up involving a significant historical literature review, critical thematic analysis, and an intermixing of historical, feminist and educational perspectives, was, I believe, more successful than a more singular disciplinary approach would have been on its own. Although certainly more time and labour-intensive than a disciplinary-specific method of inquiry, I believe that the results were worth the added effort. I hope that future scholars will be inspired by this interdisciplinary approach and will continue to adapt it by imagining even more innovative methods of analyzing historical and current discourses related to education.

Beyond Critique

If this project was innovative, it was, at the same time, not without its limits. One constraint was that I had originally envisioned this study to include other areas of inquiry, including analysis of Quebec's updated kindergarten curriculum, and an examination of university courses aimed specifically at future kindergarten teachers. The scope of the project ended up being too large, however, particularly for a Master's level thesis, and the trade-off was a better, more in-depth examination of the news media data, rather than a broader, more surface-level inquiry into all three domains. As the first law of thermodynamics (the law of conservation of energy) teaches us, however, nothing is ever truly lost, only changed, and perhaps I, or other researchers, will explore some of these shelved research ideas at a future date. As such, this project was limited in that it could only draw from the news media data selected, and did not integrate an exhaustive investigation of how the identified discourses were operationalized in other areas of educational life (i.e. inside classrooms, in policy development, etc.) As we know,

what is discussed publicly during electoral campaigns, or during periods of rapid change in society, does not always play out as it was originally proposed, and many of these discourses may have changed and shifted as they affected different areas of educational policy and practice.

Another constraint of this project is related to the choice of critical thematic analysis (CTA). In CTA, and in thematic analysis more broadly, the analytic story that is told is, in part, reliant on the researcher's background and the lens they choose to apply. Although Braun and Clarke (2022) view this as a strength - they describe thematic analysis as an interpretive process enhanced by the researcher's subjectivity, it could also be viewed as a weakness, particularly by those who do not subscribe to the tenets of critical theory or feminist inquiry. Although I have tried to mitigate this potential limit by providing an adequate amount of supporting excerpts from the news media data, and the relevant academic literature, I will be the first to admit that a different researcher examining the same data may very well have told a different story based on their own subjectivity, and a different choice of academic texts. This, to me, is not necessarily a failing, however, as I believe one set of data can in fact, tell a variety of stories, and I would be happy to share the news media articles featured here with any researcher willing to undertake a new assessment. The more the merrier, as they say, at least from the point of view of research that encourages multiple voices and perspectives.

One complaint often levelled against critical inquiry is that it is simply negative critique that does not highlight positive aspects of a particular topic, and that it does not propose concrete solutions or open up a space of hope for change. Some researchers have even claimed that critical theory has paved the way for the "post-truth" political era in which we find ourselves by embracing postmodern and poststructural tenets that destabilize norms and universal "truths" (Jahn, 2021). In the feedback I received from my committee during the writing of this thesis, I could see that at times my analysis did in fact paint a somewhat bleak picture of ECEC. However, I do not believe that this lessens the value of critical intersectional feminist inquiry, nor that it should result in hopelessness or pessimism with regards to our ability to work towards more just and equitable early years education. There are currently researchers and practitioners working in Quebec and elsewhere on progressive initiatives that "speak back" to some of the more problematic discourses described in this project.

One example of these counternarratives is the work of the "Debout pour l'école" ("Stand up for school") collective made up of independent educational actors from a variety of domains

in Quebec, that publicly questions the normalizing functions of preschool education and the predictive early preventative model (J.-Y. Lévesque et al., 2022). Lehrer et al.'s (2024), work inspired by institutional ethnography (D. E. Smith, 2005), is another example as it examines the tensions between institutional discourses and the everyday experiences of disadvantaged children in a 4-year old kindergarten, a private subsidized daycare, and a CPE, bringing the experiences of children to the fore. Another is the work of authors such as Roberts-Holmes and Moss (2021), or Lehrer et al. (2023), that take aim at the influence of neoliberalism and human capital theory in early years education. Lehrer (2020) also theorizes about applying Freire's (1970) emancipatory educational philosophy to early years education, in order to liberate disadvantaged children from deficit discourses. Practical initiatives are also underway, such as the FormÉpresco professional education platform created by a group of researchers from Quebec's public universities that builds resources to tackle discrimination based on gender identity, race, first language, and Indigeneity in early years education. Charron et al. (2021) also speak to a variety of projects that have been tested in kindergarten and prekindergarten classrooms to encourage the valorisation of diverse cultures and languages.

What Kind of (Current and Future) Citizens?

This project found that the main themes in news media in both the early 1960s and in 2018 were discourses that attempted to answer the question "Why kindergarten?" or what purpose universal public kindergarten in fact serves. While the answers to this question differed depending on the timeframe, I believe that at its core this question relates, fundamentally to anxieties surrounding what kind of citizens we currently believe young children to be, and what kind of future citizens we hope for them to become within a democratic society. This is similar to the question posed by Westheimer (2015) when he asks "what kind of citizen our educational programs imagine" (p. 4) and "what political and ideological interests are embedded in varied conceptions of citizenship?" (p. 97). Based on findings from this study, I propose that addressing anxieties about children as citizens in order to imagine a more equitable and just future, hinges on two main axes tied to deficit discourses. The first relates to conceptions of childhood as lacking vs. adulthood, and children as in need of adult/state intervention. The second involves the collective imaginary that situates Quebec as a formerly oppressed, potentially deficient nation that has successfully advanced into modernity by embracing secular egalitarian values, which allows for the obfuscation of important ongoing inequities.

The first of these axes speaks to the normalizing function attributed to kindergarten, whether this is the psychologically-focused, academic and social readiness discourse of the 1960s, or the developmental vulnerability/remediation focus of the 2018 election. These discourses only make sense if we understand children as separate from adults, and childhood itself as a type of abnormality to be governed and conditioned to eventually meet the norms set by and for adulthood (Alanen, 1994). This is not to say that children are not actors in their own right, but that they are still *perceived* to be, at least in public conceptions of preschool education, problems in need of addressing. This perception, in 2018 in particular, was driven by increasingly alarmist rhetoric when it came to children from non-dominant ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups, as well as children with learning challenges and disabilities (see chapter five). This suggests that though there has been progress in terms of understandings of children's agency and rights (Krappmann, 2006), critical and reconceptualist influences in ECEC have not succeeded in destabilizing the now naturalized paternalism inherent in the adult/child dichotomy. As Delage (2020) notes:

> Talking about children's domination fits uneasily with political rhetoric that claims to prioritize children's higher needs as a national concern and priority. The subordinated status of children is seen at best as natural, at worst as unproblematic, reaffirming the childism that is present in contemporary society. (p. 17)

It is perhaps unsurprising, then that the 2018 public debates regarding early years education centered not on the subordination of children, but on the choice of prekindergarten vs. CPEs, on return on investment in early years education, and on comparisons with kindergarten provision in neighbouring provinces. More in-depth questions of how childhood is conceptualized, and what kind of citizens we understand children to be, or more importantly, what kind of citizens they understand themselves to be, were largely ignored. In public debates, children's voices were excluded, and therefore effectively overridden by the voices of a few selectively chosen experts, as well as by the interests of politicians and the state. This speaks to children being viewed as "unreliable narrators" within this adult/child dichotomy, which Adami (2025) suggests is a form of epistemic injustice against children. While in the early 1960s there was some debate as to the role played by kindergarten in the "shaping" of children as citizens, by 2018 the fundamental purpose of early years education was rarely put into question. As one news columnist noted in 2018, short term solutions dominated the election debates, a fact that left her

questioning: “Where is the debate on the fundamental problems at the heart of our education system?” (Latraverse, 2018, para. 6). Despite claims by the various political parties that their early years education proposals constituted a “projet de société” or a long-term project/vision for society, the substance of their proposals rested largely on how early years care and education is delivered and who pays for it. As Bardy (1994) notes, while:

> Legislation governing childhood has been updated, and many reforms have taken place … they have mainly reinforced the social order and the division of labour that emerged a few decades ago without questioning the rationale of earlier social choices. The modern concerns of childhood and parenthood seem to persist within the same frame of reference at the societal level. (p. 305)

Perhaps it is time for a rethinking of the adult vs. child political and social ordering (what Bardy terms the “100 year project of childhood”) in order to bring children into the conversation about their own futures. If our wish for early schooling is for it to be emancipatory, then we must ask whose “normality” we are enforcing, and recognize children as “whole human beings embedded in intergenerational cultural and political dynamics, not merely objects of parenting or objects of socialization” (Delage, 2020, p. 27).

The second axis that is of vital importance is the anxiety related to Quebec’s public collective imaginary that situates Quebec as a formerly oppressed nation struggling to overcome fears of a potentially deficient populace (see chapters four and five). The nation’s successful refutation of its formerly oppressed state by its advance into modernity and autonomy since the 1960s, and its adoption of secular egalitarian values, have not entirely erased fear of deficiency, as noted in the 2018 election coverage. They have, however, acted as a smokescreen that conceals important ongoing inequities. This was evidenced in the 2018 debates over ECEC that largely ignored mothers, which, as discussed in chapter five, obfuscated ongoing gendered inequities regarding domestic responsibilities and care of young children. The same can be said in the realm of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, immigration status, and other intersectional forms of oppression suffered by mothers who do not belong to the dominant culture. As Giroux (2023) notes, in order to truly address these anxieties, we must:

> Acknowledge our shared condition of belonging to collectivities that are embedded, whether by will or by force, within the logics and relations of domination stemming from settler colonialism. At the same time, we must keep in mind that this shared colonial

> condition rests on the continuous construction and maintenance of differentiating and hierarchizing categories of population, categories we reproduce on an everyday basis: settlers, women, slaves, First Nations, francophones, anglophones, workers, immigrants, the racialized, queer folks, refugees, etc. (p. 5)

This is in addition to the hierarchized category of adults vs. children noted above that we also reproduce on a daily basis. Pires (2019) argues that in its bid to prove itself as a modern, capable nation, Quebec has created its own regimes of exclusion, noting that: "The Quebec state claims to be a model of interculturalism for other immigrant societies but it does not have the courage to examine its own failures" (p. 14). Giroux (2023) suggests that Quebec, having liberated itself from a certain form of subalternity suffered prior to the 1960s, is in fact reproducing colonial relations by "the rerouting of oppressions toward other subaltern populations and minorities" (p. 23). Naming this reality, and refusing to hide behind the notion that Quebec is an already-egalitarian society, is crucial to addressing the ramifications of these inequities, in education and elsewhere.

To some, this analysis may seem harsh, or even radical. However, we should keep in mind that what was proposed in 1960 – for children to leave the care of their mothers and enter public kindergarten at age five, was also considered radical at the time. This "radical" proposition was quickly adopted, however, by a majority of the population and within a decade most children were attending public kindergartens. I believe that reimagining our understanding of the dynamics of the political constitution of childhood, and consequently, of early years education, in a more equitable, emancipatory fashion requires, once again, a new and different approach. We need to begin asking the question "Why kindergarten" from a more fundamental perspective – one that will lead us away from the tailspin of the psychologizing and pathologizing of young citizens, and simultaneously move us past the neoliberal emphasis on children's potential future productivity. It must also be an approach that will also allow us to name, and to work to eliminate, intersecting oppressions at work in Quebec society that negatively impact children and families. Davies and Gannon (2012) drawing on Foucault, argue that:

> Radical transformation can only emerge from radical critique. The project for any critical theory … is to make it possible to think differently, and thus to open the possibility for acting differently: this does not mean to make different choices among the

> already known, already imagined, but to think against the grain of the already known and to open up lines of action not embedded in current thought. (p. 8)

There are already calls by civil society groups in Quebec for important changes in education. *Debout pour l'école* (2025), has been arguing for a more inclusive, equitable and ecologically responsible education system, noting: "It is clear that Quebec's school system has strayed from its ideals to the point where a serious re-evaluation of what it has become is warranted: increasingly instrumentalized, dehumanizing, and unequal" (p. 6). The collective has called for a re-democratization of the system by the active participation of parents, children, school staff, and community members in decision-making. In addition, they believe it is time to engage in new nationwide public consultations on education, in order to engender a new "quiet revolution" in education (Debout pour l'école, 2025). *École ensemble*, another civil society group, is also requesting changes in the form of the abolishment of subsidies to private schools and a strengthening of the public schooling system. They would like to see an end to the segregation of students and "l'école à trois vitesses" caused by selective enrolment in private schools and specialized programs in public schools (*École ensemble, un mouvement pour l'égalité des chances en éducation*, n.d.). As the 2025-26 school year begins in Quebec against the backdrop of severe budget cuts in education enacted by the CAQ, and a public outcry against them (Rowe, 2025), other groups such as *Uni.es pour l'école* are now also being formed and engaging in public protests, demanding massive reinvestments in education (Poulin, 2025).

What this means for kindergarten, and early years education more broadly in Quebec, is unclear, but it appears that change is afoot. What is clear, is that preschool education has continued to evolve over time in Quebec, and public discussions have both helped to construct, and to reflect, this evolution. This has been true since the days of the existence of the salles d'asiles, during the physical and mental hygiene movements, and also in the period impacted by the discourses espoused by the *École des parents*. As I've demonstrated in this study, public opinion was also implicated in the establishment of private, and eventually, public kindergartens and prekindergartens. During this time, Quebec society has shifted from viewing early years education as the strict domain of mothers and the family, guided by the Catholic church, through to today's public political discourses that largely focus on the necessity of state intervention, including predictive early prevention, to ensure future economic and social stability. The actors that promote these various understandings of early years education have also shifted over time,

with politicians today taking a more prominent role, and parents and children largely being marginalized in public debates, particularly those that exist outside the dominant culture. During the 2018 election, the CAQ made numerous promises concerning 4-year-old kindergarten, some of which have proved to be difficult to keep, however, public debates concerning the role kindergarten plays in shaping future citizens have continued. It remains to be seen which new or old discourses will come to the fore next with regards to the education of young Quebecers, and whether this evolution of opinion regarding early years education will in fact support a system that is designed “pour le bien des enfants”.

References

Abawi, Z. (2021). Privileging power: Early childhood educators, teachers, and racial socialization in full-day kindergarten. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, *46*(1), 1–12.

Abawi, Z., Eizadirad, A., & Berman, R. (Eds.). (2021). *Equity as praxis in early childhood education and care*. Canadian Scholars.

Adami, R. (2025). *Childism, intersectionality and the rights of the child: The myth of a happy childhood*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Adkin, L., & Abu-Laban, Y. (2008). The challenge of care: Early childhood education and care in Canada and Quebec. *Studies in Political Economy*, *81*, 49–76.

Ahmed, S. (2015). Being in trouble in the company of Judith Butler. *Lambda Nordica*, *2–3*, 179–192.

Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Duke University Press.

Alanen, L. (1994). Gender and generation: Feminism and the "child question." In J. Qvortrup, M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, & H. Wintersberger (Eds.), *Childhood matters: Social theory, practice and politics* (pp. 27–42). Avebury.

April, J., & Lanaris, C. (2018). Pour une maternelle inclusive. *Revue Prescolaire*, *56*(4).

April, J., Lanaris, C., & Bigras, N. (2018). *Conditions d'implantation de la maternelle quatre ans à temps plein en milieu défavorisé*. Université du Québec en Outaouais.

Arnup, K. (2002). Education for motherhood: Creating modern mothers and model citizens. In D. Chunn, R. Adamoski, & R. Menzies (Eds.), *Contesting Canadian citizenship: Historical readings* (pp. 247–271). University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442602496

Ashton, E. (2009). Folding ethical-textual tensions: Explorations in curriculum writing. In L. Iannacci & P. Whitty (Eds.), *Early childhood curricula: Reconceptualist perspectives* (pp. 63–86). Detselig Enterprises.

Attention: Femmes au travail! Plus d'un quart de l'effectif ouvrier au Canada est féminin. (1962, August 23). *La Presse*, 18.

Au colloque de Mount Allison: Les Québécois se sont engagés dans la voie de la fierté. (1961, August 18). *La Presse*, 2.

Baillargeon, D. (1996). Les politiques familiales au Québec. Une perspective historique. *Lien Social et Politiques*, *36*, 21–32. https://doi.org/10.7202/005052ar

Baillargeon, D. (2003). “We admire modern parents”: The École des Parents du Québec and the Post-war Quebec Family, 1940–1959. In N. Christie & M. Gauvreau (Eds.), *Cultures of Citizenship in Post-War Canada, 1940-1955* (pp. 239–276). McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Baillargeon, D. (2009a). *Babies for the nation: The medicalization of motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970* (W. D. Wilson, Trans.). Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Baillargeon, D. (2009b). Éduquer les enfants, discipliner les parents: Les rapports famille-école à Montréal, 1910–1960. *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d’histoire de l’éducation*, *21*(2), 46–64.

Baillargeon, D. (2012). *Brève histoire des femmes au Québec*. Boréal.

Baillargeon, M. (1989). Il était deux fois: L’évolution de l’éducation préscolaire au Québec. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, *21*(1), 50–58. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03174574

Banarjee, S. (2018, August 27). Liberal candidate ruffles feathers after comparing CAQ leader to U.S. President Donald Trump. *Global News*. https://globalnews.ca/news/4412143/liberal-candidate-ruffles-feathers-after-comparing-caq-leader-to-u-s-president-donald-trump/

Bardy, M. (1994). The manuscript of the 100-years project: Towards a revision. In J. Qvortrup, M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, & H. Wintersberger (Eds.), *Childhood matters: Social theory, practice and politics* (pp. 299–317). Avebury.

Barrera, J. (2017, November 2). Indigenous child welfare rates creating “humanitarian crisis” in Canada, says federal minister. *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/crisis-philpott-child-welfare-1.4385136

Barrère-Maurisson, M.-A. (2007). *Familialisme, féminisme et “parentalisme”: Trois âges de la régulation sociale* [Documents de Travail du Centre d’Economie de la Sorbonne]. Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Baxter, J. (2007). *Positioning gender in discourse: A feminist methodology* (Paperback ed). Palgrave Macmillan.

Behiels, M. D., & Hayday, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Contemporary Quebec: Selected readings and commentaries*. McGill-Queenś University Press.

Bell, A. (1998). The discourse structure of news stories. In A. Bell & P. Garrett (Eds.), *Approaches to media discourse*. Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Benhadjoudja, L. (2022). Racial secularism as settler colonial sovereignty in Quebec. *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, *7*(2). https://doi.org/10.13169/islastudj.7.2.0182

Benoit, M., Rousseau, C., Ngirumpatse, P., & Lacroix, L. (2009). Relations parents immigrants-écoles dans l'espace montréalais: Au-delà des tensions, la rencontre des rêves. *Revue Des Sciences de l'éducation*, *34*(2), 313–332. https://doi.org/10.7202/019683ar

Berman, R., Daniel, B.-J., Butler, A., MacNevin, M., & Royer, N. (2017). Nothing, or almost nothing, to report: Early childhood educators and discursive constructions of colorblindness. *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies*, *6*(1), 52–65.

Bernhard, J. (2012). *Stand together or fall apart: Professionals working with immigrant families*. Fernwood Publishing.

Bernier, J. (2025a, May 15). Crise dans les garderies: «J'ai dû aller dans des banques alimentaires parce que je ne pouvais pas travailler». *Le journal de Quebec*. https://www.journaldequebec.com/2025/05/17/places-subventionnees-promises-en-garderie-la-liste-dattente-est-toujours-pleine

Bernier, J. (2025b, May 15). Voici le nombre d'enfants en attente d'une place en garderie région par région. *Le journal de Quebec*. https://www.journaldequebec.com/2025/05/15/voici-le-nombre-denfants-en-attente-dune-place-en-garderie-region-par-region

Bérubé, J. (2018, September 30). Bilan de la campagne électorale en Gaspésie et aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine. *ICI Radio-Canada - Bas-Saint-Laurent*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1127128/bilan-campagne-electorale-gaspesie-iles-de-la-madeleine-election-quebec-2018

Bigras, N., & Paulin, P. (2018, September 19). Une mauvaise affaire pour tous. *La Presse+*, 1.

Bill 96: An Act Respecting French, the Official and Common Language of Québec, National Assembly of Quebec 42nd Legislature, 2nd Session (2022).

Bloch, M. (2014). Interrogating reconceptualizing early care and education (RECE)—20 years along. In M. Bloch, B. B. Swadener, & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing early childhood care and education: Critical questions, new imaginaries and social activism—A reader* (pp. 19–31). Peter Lang.

Bloch, M., & Kim, K. (2015). A cultural history of "readiness" in early childhood care and education: Are there still culturally relevant, ethical, and imaginative spaces for learning open for young children and their families? In J. Marie & W. Parnell (Eds.), *Rethinking*

readiness in early childhood education: Implications for policy and practice (pp. 1–18). Palgrave Macmillan.

Bloch, M., & Popkewitz, T. S. (2008). Constructing the parent, teacher, child: Discourses of development. In L. D. Soto (Ed.), *The politics of early childhood education* (pp. 7–32). PeterLang.

Boily, C., Gauthier, C., & Tardif, M. (1994). Les classes maternelles au Québec: Origine et transformations. *Vie Pédagogique*, *87*, 10–14.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2022). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America* (Sixth edition). Rowman & Littlefield.

Boucher, D. (1962, December 20). Un livre pour les jeunes. *La Presse*, 16.

Boucher, S., Paré, N., Perry, J. C., Sigal, J. J., & Ouimet, M.-C. (2009). Répercussions d'une enfance vécue en institution: Le cas des Enfants de Duplessis. *Santé Mentale Au Québec*, *33*(2), 271–291. https://doi.org/10.7202/019678ar

Boucheron, L., Durand, D., Fournier, M., & Lavoie, S. (2012). *Enquête sur la maturité scolaire des enfants montréalais: Qu'en est-il des enfants issus de l'immigration*. Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal.

Bourbonnais, M. (1961, October 20). La flute et son p'tit frère... Le piccolo aux sons aigus. *La Presse*, 12.

Bourbonnais, M. (1962, December 4). Les communautés sont riches? *La Presse*, 22.

Bousquet, M.-P. (2012). Êtres libres ou sauvages à civiliser ? L'éducation des jeunes Amérindiens dans les pensionnats indiens au Québec, des années 1950 à 1970. *Revue d'histoire de l'enfance « irrégulière »*, *14*, 162–192. https://doi.org/10.4000/rhei.3415

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *13*(2), 201–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, *22*(6), 723–742. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.22.6.723

Brosseau, C. (1961, December 8). Chez les enfants retardés. *La Presse*, 15.

Brown, W. (2003). Neo-liberalism and the end of liberal democracy. *Theory & Event*, *7*(1). https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.2003.0020

Brunelle, Y. (2024). *Cap sur les maternelles 4 ans*. Les Éditions XYZ.

Brunet, M.-H. (2007). *Travail social et maternité hors mariage au Québec, 1950-1970: Entre doctrine catholique et progressisme* [M.A., Université de Montréal]. https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/xmlui/handle/1866/17913

Brunet, M.-H. (2020). *L'Histoire, nom féminin qui se conjugue généralement au masculin—L'agentivité historique des femmes et la classe d'histoire / TRACES, revue de la SPHQ*. https://www.academia.edu/31882671/L_Histoire_nom_f%C3%A9minin_qui_se_conjugue_g%C3%A9n%C3%A9ralement_au_masculin_-_L_agentivit%C3%A9_historique_des_femmes_et_la_classe_d_histoire_TRACES_revue_de_la_SPHQ

Burman, E. (2008). *Deconstructing developmental psychology* (2nd ed). Routledge.

Butler, A., Teasley, C., & Sánchez-Blanco, C. (2019). A decolonial, intersectional approach to disrupting Whiteness, neoliberalism, and patriarchy in Western early childhood education and care. In P. P. Trifonas (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research in Cultural Studies and Education* (pp. 1–18). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01426-1_10-1

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Cannella, G. S. (2008). *Deconstructing early childhood education: Social justice and revolution*. Peter Lang.

CAQ unveils investments in education and health, promises not to increase taxes. (2018, September 8). *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/caq-financial-plan-1.4815882

Chancy, M., & Ministère de l'Éducation. (1985). *Rapport du Comité sur l'école québécoise et les communautés culturelles*.

Charland, M. (1987). Constitutive rhetoric: The case of the peuple Québécois. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *73*(2), 133–150.

Charron, A., Lehrer, J., Boudreau, M., & Jacob, E. (Eds.). (2021). *L'éducation préscolaire au Québec: Fondements théoriques et pédagogiques*. Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Charron, J., & Bastien, F. (2012). Les parlementaires québécois et Le Devoir dans le monde des médias. *Communication*, *29*(2). https://doi.org/10.4000/communication.2784

Chez les jardinières d'enfants: Vue d'ensemble de tout le problème de la formation. (1961, October 4). *La Presse*, 65.

Chianello, J. (2018, May 30). Cheaper child care core to Liberal, PC, NDP platforms. *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ontario-election-child-care-promises-1.4682640

Chiasson, P., & The Canadian Press. (2018). *François Legault [Photograph]* [Graphic]. Global News. https://globalnews.ca/news/4412955/quebec-political-parties-parents-families-school-year/

Chouinard, T. (2023, September 20). Un « vrai » guichet unique dans un an. *La Presse*. https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/education/2023-09-20/places-en-garderie/un-vrai-guichet-unique-dans-un-an.php

Clapperton-Richard, A. (2020). *Reconnue, altérisée, occultée: L'agentivité des figures historiques dans les manuels québécois d'histoire nationale, 1954-1980* [Master's thesis]. Université du Québec à Montréal.

Cleveland, G. (2021). *Ontario's kindergarten program: A success story*. Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Cliche, M.-A. (1999). "Qui bene amat bene castigat": Le débat pédagogique sur les punitions corporelles dans les revues pédagogiques du Québec, 1857-1964. *Historical Studies in Education*, *10*, 147–169.

Cliche, M.-A. (2014). *Abuse or punishment? Violence toward children in Quebec families, 1850-1969* (W. D. Wilson, Trans.). Wilfrid Laurier Press. https://doi.org/10.51644/9781771120647

Coalition Avenir Québec. (2018, August 25). *Instauration de la maternelle quatre ans et places en garderie*. https://coalitionavenirquebec.org/fr/blog/2018/08/25/instauration-de-la-

maternelle-quatre-ans-et-places-en-garderie-la-caq-propose-de-liberer-50-000-places-en-garderie/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Cohen, S. (1983). The mental hygiene movement, the development of personality and the school: The medicalization of American education. *History of Education Quarterly*, *23*(2), 123–149.

Colegrove, K. S.-S., & Adair, J. K. (2014). Countering deficit thinking: Agency, capabilities and the early learning experiences of children of Latina/o immigrants. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *15*(2), 122–135. https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2014.15.2.122

Collins, P. H. (1998). It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. *Hypatia*, *13*(3), 62–82.

Comacchio, C. (2014). *Nations are built of babies: Saving Ontario's mothers and children, 1900-1940*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Commission royale d'enquête sur l'enseignement dans la province de Québec. (1964). *Rapport Parent, t. 2: Les structures pédagogiques du système scolaire. Les structures et les niveaux d'enseignement*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Connell, R. W. (1993). *Schools and social justice*. Temple University Press.

Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (1978). *L'état et les besoins de l'éducation: Rapport 1976-1977*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (1986). *L'éducation aujourd'hui: Une société en changement, des besoins en émergence. Rapport 1985-1986 sur l'état et les besoins de l'éducation*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (1987). *L'éducation préscolaire: Un temps pour apprendre.* Gouvernement du Québec.

Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (1996). *Pour un développement intégré des services éducatifs a la petite enfance: De la vision a l'action*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (2012). *Mieux accueillir et éduquer les enfants d'âge préscolaire, une triple question d'accès, de qualité et de continuité des services: Avis à la Ministre de l'éducation, du loisir et du sport*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (2017). *Pour une école riche de tous ses élèves: S'adapter à la diversité des élèves, de la maternelle à la 5e année du secondaire*.

Construction d'une maternelle: Dorval. (1962, August 2). *La Presse*, 23.

Corbo, C. (2002). *L'éducation pour tous: Une anthologie du Rapport Parent*. les Presses de l'université de Montréal.

Countryman, G., & Elish-Piper, L. (1998). Tracing the development of deficit perspectives in family programs. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, *4*(1), 39–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/10796129808413945

Crenshaw, K. W. (1994). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In M. A. Fineman (Ed.), *The public nature of private violence* (0 ed., pp. 93–118). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203060902

Croteau, M. (2018a, September 12). La CAQ veut mieux dépister les troubles du développement des enfants. *La Presse*. https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/elections-quebec-2018/201809/12/01-5196246-la-caq-veut-mieux-depister-les-troubles-du-developpement-des-enfants.php

Croteau, M. (2018b, September 13). La CAQ veut améliorer le dépistage. *La Presse+*, 5.

Curry, D. L., & Cannella, G. S. (2013). Reconceptualist her/histories in early childhood studies: Challenges, power relations, and critical activism. In V. Pacini-Ketchabaw & L. W. Prochner (Eds.), *Re-situating Canadian early childhood education* (pp. ix–xxvi). Peter Lang.

Cushing, I. (2023). Word rich or word poor? Deficit discourses, raciolinguistic ideologies and the resurgence of the 'word gap' in England's education policy. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *20*(4), 305–331. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2022.2102014

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. R. (2013). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Languages of evaluation* (Third edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Daignault, R., & Clift, D. (1962, January 29). La démocratie au Québec: La voix du peuple et l'instruction. *La Presse*, 1.

D'Amours, O. (1986). Survol historique de la protection de l'enfance au Québec, de 1608 à 1977. *Service Social*, *35*(3), 386–415. https://doi.org/10.7202/706321ar

Darder, A., Baltodano, M., & Torres, R. D. (2009). Critical pedagogy: An Introduction. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (2nd edition, pp. 1–20). Routledge.

Davies, A., & Hoskin, R. A. (2021). Using femme theory to foster a feminine-inclusive early childhood education and care practice. In Z. Abawi, A. Eizadirad, & R. Berman (Eds.),

Equity as praxis in early childhood education and care (pp. 107–124). Canadian Scholars. https://go.openathens.net/redirector/umoncton.ca?url=https%3A%2F%2Febookcentral.proquest.com%2Flib%2Fumoncton-ebooks%2Fdetail.action%3FdocID%3D6628749

Davies, A. W. J., Richardson, B., & Abawi, Z. (2024). Re-imagining the image of the educator in post-secondary early childhood education: Calling for epistemic justice. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *32*(4), 1013–1031. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2024.2355100

Davies, B., Browne, J., Gannon, S., Hopkins, L., McCann, H., & Wihlborg, M. (2006). Constituting the feminist subject in poststructuralist discourse. *Feminism & Psychology*, *16*(1), 87–103. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959-353506060825

Davis, B. (2004). *Inventions of teaching: A genealogy*. L. Erlbaum Associates.

Debates convincing voters to reconsider support. (2018, September 18). *CTV News*. https://www.ctvnews.ca/montreal/article/debates-convincing-voters-to-reconsider-support/

Debout pour l'école. (2025). *Pour une nouvelle « révolution tranquille » en éducation: Projet de livre blanc citoyen sur l'éducation*.

Delage, A. (2020). *Children as full human beings: A radical rethinking of social and political transformation beyond domination, oppression, and capitalist exploitation* [Doctoral Dissertation]. York University.

Deniger, M.-A. (2012). Les politiques québécoises d'intervention en milieux scolaires défavorisés: Regard historique et bilan critique. *Revue française de pédagogie*, *178*, 67–84. https://doi.org/10.4000/rfp.3555

Derrida, J. (1982). *Margins of philosophy* (A. Bass, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.

Des CPE préoccupés par la maternelle 4 ans pour tous. (2018, September 20). *ICI Radio-Canada Québec*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1125072/cpe-maternelle-4-ans-inquietude

Desjardins, N. (1962, June 16). L'école maternelle: Une nécessité... Ou un privilège réservé à quelques enfants? *La Presse*, 12–13.

Devant la Commission Parent: L'Association des Jardinières d'enfants réclame une meilleure réglementation des écoles maternelles. (1962, July 16). *La Presse*, 15.

Diaz-Diaz, C. (2022). (In)visible encounters with indigeneity: A way towards decolonizing pedagogies in early childhood education. *Children's Geographies*, *20*(5), 563–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2021.1934402

DiMarco, S., & Ruthes Coelho, C. (2020). Exploring gender and identity in Ontario's early years curriculum documents. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, *18*(1), 49–50. https://doi.org/10.25071/1916-4467.40560

Dion-Viens, D. (2018, September 1). 10 solutions pour contrer le décrochage scolaire chez les garçons. *TVA Nouvelles*. https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2018/09/01/10-solutions-pour-contrer-le-decrochage-scolaire-chez-les-garcons

Dubé, B. (2018). Un dernier débat électoral en Gaspésie sous le signe du respect. *ICI Radio-Canada Gaspésie-Îles-de-La-Madeleine*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1126729/politique-election-debat-candidats-gaspe

Dugas, G. (1961a, May 25). Le ministre de la jeunesse présente: La Grande Charte de l'éducation au Québec. *La Presse*, 53.

Dugas, G. (1961b, June 24). École élémentaire et secondaire: Rien à demolir, mais progrès à réaliser. *La Presse*, 50.

Dumont, M. (1983). Des garderies au 19e siècle: Les salles d'asile des soeurs Grises à Montréal. In N. Fahmy-Eid & M. Dumont (Eds.), *Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d'école: Femmes, famille et éducation dans l'histoire du Québec* (pp. 261–285). Boréal Express.

Dumont, M. (2013). *Pas d'histoire, les femmes! Réflexions d'une historienne indignée*. Les Éditions du remue-ménage.

Dumont, M., Jean, M., Lavigne, M., & Stoddart, J. (1982). *Le collectif Clio: L'histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles*. Quinze.

Dumont, M., The Clio Collective, Jean, M., Lavigne, M., & Stoddart, J. (Eds.). (1987). *Quebec women: A history* (R. Gannon & R. Gill, Trans.). Women's Press.

Dupuis-Déri, F. (2018). *La crise de la masculinité: Autopsie d'un mythe tenace*. Éditions du remue-ménage.

Early kindergarten would free up 50,000 daycare spaces: Legault. (2018, August 25). *CTV News*.

École ensemble, un mouvement pour l'égalité des chances en éducation. (n.d.). École ensemble. Retrieved August 27, 2025, from https://www.ecoleensemble.com/notre_mouvement

École maternelle projetée à Arvida. (1960, September 12). *La Presse*, 26.

Einboden, R., Rudge, T., & Varcoe, C. (2013). Producing children in the 21st century: A critical discourse analysis of the science and techniques of monitoring early child development. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, *17*(6), 549–566. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459312472081

Élections Québec 2018: Entrevue avec le chef de la Coalition avenir Québec François Legault. (2018, September 18). *ICI Radio-Canada - Le Téléjournal*.

Élections Québec 2018: Entrevue avec le chef du Parti québécois Jean-François Lisée. (2018, September 24). *ICI Radio-Canada - Le Téléjournal*.

Escayg, K.-A. (2021). Reflect, enact, and transform: A preliminary anti-racism guide for early childhood educators. In Z. Abawi, A. Eizadirad, & R. Berman (Eds.), *Equity as praxis in early childhood education and care* (pp. 165–179). Canadian Scholars.

Fairclough, N. (2012). Critical discourse analysis. In J. P. Gee & M. Handford (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 9–20). Routledge.

Fimbry, M. (2018, September 3). Il faut miser sur les CPE plutôt que sur la maternelle, selon une étude. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1121009/cpe-maternelle-etude-quatre-ans-elections

Fortin, A. (1960, September 16). Au petit chaperon rouge: Les bambins de Chicoutimi vont à l'école maternelle. *La Presse*, 25.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Tavistock Publications Limited.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (C. Gordon, Ed.; C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, & K. Soper, Trans.; 1st American ed). Pantheon Books.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). Continuum.

Freire, P. (1974). *La pédagogie des opprimés*. Maspero.

Fürsich, E. (2009). In defense of textual analysis: Restoring a challenged method for journalism and media studies. *Journalism Studies*, *10*(2), 238–252. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700802374050

G. O. (1961, May 20). Dans la réforme de l'enseignement: La voix du professorat doit se faire entendre. *La Presse*, 12.

Gagnon, R. (1996). *Histoire de la Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal: Le développement d'un réseau d'écoles publiques en milieu urbain*. Boréal.

Gannon, S., & Davies, B. (2012). Postmodern, post-structural, and critical theories. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed, pp. 65–91). SAGE.

Gavey, N. (1989). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis: Contributions to feminist psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *13*, 459–475.

Gee, J. P. (2011). Discourse analysis: What makes it critical? In R. Rogers (Ed.), *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education* (2nd Editio, pp. 23–45). Routledge.

Gerbet, T. (2025, May 27). Des employeurs accusent Québec de mettre en péril leurs garderies. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2167604/projet-loi-ministre-menace-garderies-cpe-employeurs

Giguère, C., & Desrosiers, H. (2010). *Les milieux de garde de la naissance à 8 ans: Utilisation et effets sur le développement des enfants*. Institut de la statistique du Québec.

Girard, J. (2018, September 20). À campagne agitée, débat musclé. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1125157/debat-chefs-face-a-face-tva-lcn-couillard-lisee-legault-masse

Girard, N. (1961, January 27). Création d'un service de sélection des élèves suivant le quotient intellectuel. *La Presse*, 22.

Giroux, D. (2023). *The eye of the master* (J. Henderson, Trans.). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Giroux, H. (2009). Critical theory and educational practice. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (2nd edition, pp. 27–51). Routledge.

Gleason, M. (1999). *Normalizing the ideal: Psychology, schooling, and the family in postwar Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

Hackett, R. A., & Gruneau, R. S. (with Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives). (2000). *The missing news: Filters and blind spots in Canada's press*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Garamond Press.

Haggis, J., & Schech, S. (2000). Meaning well and global good manners: Reflections on white western feminist cross-cultural praxis. *Australian Feminist Studies*, *15*(33), 387–399. https://doi.org/10.1080/713611987

Hall, S. (1997). The work of representation. In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 13–73). Open University Press.

Hall, S. (2021). Introduction to Paper Voices. In C. Brunsdon (Ed.), *Writings on media: History of the present* (pp. 141–154). Duke University Press.

Hamel, M. (1995). Les services d'éducation et d'intervention pour la petite enfance. In N. Royer (Ed.), *Education et intervention au préscolaire* (pp. 4–28). G. Morin.

Harding, S. (2004). Introduction: Standpoint theory as a site of political, philosophic and scientific debate. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 1–16). Routledge.

Harvey, F. (2014). Le gouvernement Duplessis, l'éducation et la culture, 1944-1959. *Les Cahiers Des Dix*, *68*, 169–247. https://doi.org/10.7202/1029294ar

Hendrick, H. (2003). Constructions and reconstructions of British childhood: An interpretative survey, 1800 to the present. In A. James & A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd ed, pp. 33–60). Taylor and Francis.

Heydon, R. (2008). Discourses of risk. In R. Heydon & L. Iannacci, *Early childhood curricula and the de-pathologizing of childhood* (pp. 18–31). University of Toronto Press.

Heydon, R., & Iannacci, L. (2008). *Early childhood curricula and the de-pathologizing of childhood*. University of Toronto Press.

Hickey, A. (2012). The critical aesthetic: Living a critical ethnography of the everyday. In S. R. Steinberg & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Critical qualitative research reader* (pp. 166–181). Peter Lang.

Hodgins, B. D. (2019). *Gender and care with young children: A feminist material approach to early childhood education*. Routledge.

Hogarth, M. (2018). Talkin' bout a revolution: The call for transformation and reform in Indigenous education. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *45*(5), 663–674. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-018-0277-8

How Quebec's political parties are courting families with education promises. (2018, August 26). *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/education-promises-election-quebec-1.4799567

Iannacci, L., & Whitty, P. (2009). Introduction to reconceptualist perspectives. In L. Iannacci & P. Whitty (Eds.), *Early childhood curricula: Reconceptualist perspectives* (pp. 7–26). Detselig Enterprises.

Il faut ouvrir les maternelles à tous les enfants... (1960, October 8). *La Presse*, 3.

Institut de la statistique du Québec. (2017). *Enquête québécoise sur le développement des enfants à la maternelle 2017*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Iorio, J. M., & Yelland, N. (2021). *Defying deficit: Childen as acapable citizens of the now*. University of Melbourne, Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

J. F. (1961, March 16). Projet d'école maternelle à I'étude a Victoriaville. *La Presse*, 28.

Jacob, L. (2003). *Histoire de la presse quotidienne au Québec de 1945 à 1995* [Master's thesis, Université de Montréal]. Papyrus : Institutional Repository.

Jahn, B. (2021). Critical theory in crisis? A reconsideration. *European Journal of International Relations*, *27*(4), 1274–1299. https://doi.org/10.1177/13540661211049491

Janmohamed, Z. (2010). Queering early childhood studies: Challenging the discourse of Developmentally Appropriate Practice. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *56*(3), Article 3.

Janmohamed, Z. (2013). When queer enters early childhood teacher training: What's so inappropriate about that? In V. Pacini-Ketchabaw & L. W. Prochner (Eds.), *Re-situating Canadian early childhood education* (pp. 90–105). Peter Lang.

Japel, C. (2012). The Quebec childcare system: Lessons from research. In N. Howe & L. W. Prochner (Eds.), *Recent perspectives on early childhood education and care in Canada* (pp. 285–307). University of Toronto Press.

Japel, C., Tremblay, R., & Côté, S. (2005). Quality Counts! Assessing the Quality of Daycare Services Based on the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development. *Choices*, *II*(5).

Jiwani, Y. (2006). *Discourses of denial: Mediations on race, gender and violence*. UBC Press.

J.L. (1961, June 19). Mlle L. Boucher, jardinière: Envoyer à l'école un enfant de mois de six ans est "criminel." *La Presse*, 28–29.

Johnson, R. (1997). What is cultural studies anyway? In J. Storey (Ed.), *What is cultural studies? A reader* (3. impr, pp. 75–114). Arnold.

Kannen, V., & Acker, S. (2008). Identity ‘issues’ and pedagogical silences: Exploring teaching dilemmas in the northern Ontario kindergarten classroom. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *16*(1), 25–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681360701877750

Kellner, D. (1990). Critical theory and the crisis of social theory. *Sociological Perspectives*, *33*(1), 11–33.

Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2011). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In K. Hayes, S. Steinberg, & K. Tobin (Eds.), *Key works in Critical Pedagogy*. Sense Publishers.

Kincheloe, J. L., McLaren, P., Steinberg, S. R., & Monzo, L. D. (2018). Critical pedagogy and qualitative research: Advancing the bricolage. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (Fifth edition, pp. 235–260). SAGE.

Kohli, W., & Burbules, N. C. (2012). *Feminisms and educational research*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Krappmann, L. (2006). The rights of the child as a challenge to human rights education. *Journal of Social Science Education*, *5*(1), 60–71.

La Presse Canadienne. (2023, February 22). François Legault se justifie sur le report de la cible pour les maternelles 4 ans. *Radio-Canada*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1958325/maternelle-quatre-ans-legault-drainville-ecole-primaire

La Presse Canadienne. (2024, March 29). Quebec is far from meeting its promise of 37,000 daycare spots, PQ says. *The Montreal Gazette*. https://www.montrealgazette.com/news/provincial-news/article129892.html

Labbé, J. (2023, December 7). Éducation: Le projet de loi 23 est adopté par l’Assemblée nationale. *Radio-Canada*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2033143/adoption-pl23-efficacite-education-quebec

Lacharité, C., Pierce, T., Calille, S., Baker, M., & Pronovost, M. (2015). *Penser la parentalité au Québec*. Centre d’études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l’enfant et la famille, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

Lacroix, L. (1961, August 3). Gratuité scolaire: M. Gérin-Lajoie fournit des explications précises. *La Presse*, 21.

Laframboise, K. (2018a, September 13). Immigration, health take centre stage at Quebec leaders' debate. *Global News*. https://globalnews.ca/news/4445552/quebecers-get-ready-for-leaders-first-debate-tonight/

Laframboise, K. (2018b, September 27). Quebec political parties seek to woo parents, families as school year begins. *Global News*.

Lajoie, G. (2018, September 30). Les principales promesses de la campagne électorale. *TVA Nouvelles*. https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2018/09/29/les-principales-promesses-de-la-campagne-electorale

Lajoie, G. (2025, April 17). Déploiement des maternelles 4 ans: Le nombre de classes diminuera drastiquement dans certaines régions. *Le journal de Quebec*. https://www.journaldequebec.com/2025/04/17/deploiement-des-maternelles-4-ans-le-nombre-de-classes-diminuera-drastiquement-dans-certaines-regions

Lalonde-Graton, M. (2002). *Des salles d'asile aux centres de la petite enfance: La petite histoire des services de garde au Québec*. Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Lalonde-Graton, M. (2018, August 26). L'éducation à la petite enfance, une priorité pour l'électeur. *La Presse+*, 8.

Lalou, R. (1993). Quand l'école des femmes était une école des mères. Influence de l'instruction sur la fécondité des Québécoises (1850-1940). *Cahiers Québécois de Démographie*, *22*(2), 229–262. https://doi.org/10.7202/010147ar

Lambton (Earl of Durham), J. G. (1839). *Report on the affairs of British North America*. Her Majesty's High Commissioner.

Langford, R. (2007). Who is a good early childhood educator? A critical study of differences within a universal professional identity in early childhood education preparation programs. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, *28*(4), 333–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/10901020701686609

Langford, R. (2010). Critiquing child-centred pedagogy to bring children and early childhood educators into the centre of a democratic pedagogy. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *11*(1), 113–127. https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2010.11.1.113

Latraverse, E. (2018, August 30). La qualité de l'éducation est-elle devenue un tabou? *TVA Nouvelles*. https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2018/08/30/la-qualite-de-leducation-est-elle-devenue-un-tabou

Lau, R. (2019, February 14). *Quebec government pushes on with plan to enroll 4-year-olds in preschool*. Global News. https://globalnews.ca/news/4960838/quebec-government-pushes-on-with-plan-to-enroll-4-year-olds-in-preschool/

Laurin, I., Guay, D., Fournier, M., Bigras, N., & Solis, A. (2015). Attendance in Educational Preschool Services: A Protective Factor in the Development of Children from Low-Income Families? *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, *106*(S7), eS14–eS20. https://doi.org/10.17269/CJPH.106.4825

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.

Lawless, B., & Chen, Y.-W. (2019). Developing a method of critical thematic analysis for qualitative communication inquiry. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *30*(1), 92–106. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2018.1439423

Lazar, M. M. (2007). Politicizing gender in discourse: Feminist critical discourse analysis as political perspective and praxis. In M. M. Lazar (Ed.), *Feminist critical discourse analysis: Gender, power and ideology in discourse* (Paperback ed, pp. 1–28). Palgrave Macmillan.

Lazar, M. M. (2018). Feminist critical discourse analysis. In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 372–387). Routledge.

Le cadre financier de la CAQ critiqué. (2018, September 8). *ICI Radio-Canada - Le Téléjournal*.

Le jour 30 de la campagne électorale en Mauricie/Centre-du-Québec. (2018, September 21). *ICI Radio-Canada Mauricie-Centre*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1125301/immigrants-art-centre-ville-trois-rivieres-transport-collectif-jour-ville-verte-trois-rivieres

Le manque d'accès à la maternelle à quatre ans dénoncé en Outaouais. (2018, August 30). *ICI Radio-Canada Ottawa-Gatineau*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1121038/acces-maternelle-4-ans--campagne-electorale-outaouais

LeBrun, A. (2014). *Modèles citoyens proposés à la jeunesse dans les programmes et les manuels d'hygiène, de bienséances et de civisme du secondaire catholique public au Québec (1943—1967)* [Master's thesis]. Université de Sherbrooke.

Lecavalier, C. (2018, August 26). Lisée et Couillard «manquent d'ambition», dit Legault. *TVA Nouvelles*. https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2018/08/26/maternelles-4-ans-de-francois-legault--cest-irrealisable-dit-proulx

Lecavalier, C., & Agence QMI. (2018, August 26). Lisée et Couillard «manquent d'ambition», dit Legault [Video]. *TVA Nouvelles*. https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2018/08/26/maternelles-4-ans-de-francois-legault--cest-irrealisable-dit-proulx

L'école maternelle adjointe de la mere. (1960, November 8). *La Presse*, 29.

Lécuyer, J.-P. (2025, February 24). Innover en éducation: Créer un institut ne réglera pas tout. *Les Affaires*. https://www.lesaffaires.com/opinions/innover-en-education-creer-un-institut-ne-reglera-pas-tout/

Legaré, C. (1960, April 28). Pour les grosses riches: L'école maternelle coûte aux parents de $12 à $15 par mois. *La Presse*, 12.

Légaré, C. (1960, May 6). La formation artistique dès l'âge pré-scolaire: Mme Robert Élie préconise... *La Presse*, 12.

Lehrer, J. (2012). A critical investigation of policy, research, and programs that aim to support children's transition to kindergarten in Quebec. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, *37*(2), 19–28. https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs.v37i2.15198

Lehrer, J. (2017). Preparing to start school: Parent and early childhood educator narratives. In S. Dockett, W. Griebel, & B. Perry (Eds.), *Families and transition to school* (pp. 195–210). Springer.

Lehrer, J. (2018a). La maternelle 4 ans pour mieux « préparer » les enfants des milieux dits « défavorisés »: Une histoire qui se répète. *Revue Préscolaire*, *56*(4), 31–33.

Lehrer, J. (2018b). Written communication with families during the transition from childcare to school: How documents construct and position children, professionals, and parents. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, *26*(2), 285–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2018.1442044

Lehrer, J. (2020). Contesting the evidence: Alternate approaches to supporting children's development through critical consciousness. In M. Vandenbroeck (Ed.), *Revisiting Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Issues and Challenges in Early Childhood Education* (pp. 94–111). Routledge. http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6268968

Lehrer, J., & Bastien, R. (2015). Ready for school? Lessons from a sociohistorical investigation into mechanisms of preparation and classification of children for primary school from 1911 to 1979. In J. M. Iorio & W. Parnell (Eds.), *Rethinking Readiness in Early Childhood Education: Implications for Policy and Practice* (pp. 19–32). Palgrave Macmillan.

Lehrer, J., Bigras, N., & Laurin, I. (2023). Mothers, educators, and teachers contesting and transforming the metanarrative of pedagogicalisation in childcare and preschool. In J. Lehrer, F. Hadley, K. Van Laere, & E. Rouse (Eds.), *Relationships with families in early childhood education and care: Beyond instrumentalization in international contexts of diversity and social inequality* (pp. 29–37). Routledge.

Lehrer, J., & Fournier, A.-C. (2021). L'histoire des contextes éducatifs de la petite enfance et de l'éducation préscolaire. In A. Charron, J. Lehrer, M. Boudreau, & E. Jacob (Eds.), *L'éducation préscolaire au Québec: Fondements théoriques et pédagogiques* (pp. 11–33). Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Lehrer, J., Proulx, N., Rémy, E., Robert-Mazaye, C., & Boucher, S.-A. (2024). Quelle éducation pour les enfants de 4 ans au Québec? Une enquête en centre de la petite enfance, garderie privée subventionnée et maternelle 4 ans. In F. Pirard, M. Zogmal, & P. Garnier (Eds.), *Pratiques et politiques en petite enfance: Perspectives internationales* (1st, New ed ed.). Peter Lang. https://doi.org/10.3726/b21319

Lehrer, J., Richardson, B., Vandenbroeck, M., & Mitchell, L. (2023). Resisting children as human capital. In M. Vandenbroeck, J. Lehrer, & L. Mitchell (Eds.), *The decommodification of early childhood education and care: Resisting neoliberalism* (pp. 28–80). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Lemay, L., Lehrer, J., & Naud, M. (2017). Le CLASS pour mesurer la qualité des interactions en contextes culturels variés. *Les Dossiers Des Sciences de l'éducation*, *37*, 15–34. https://doi.org/10.4000/dse.1663

Lemieux, D. (1965). Le travail de la femme mariée en dehors du foyer. *Les Cahiers de Droit*, *7*(2), 337–342.

Les jeunes Anglais mieux équilibrés ? (1961, June 19). *La Presse*, 28.

Les meilleurs échanges du «Face-à-Face Québec 2018». (2018, September 20). *TVA Nouvelles*. https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2018/09/20/suivez-le-face-a-face-quebec-2018-en-direct

Les tout-petits et le cinéma. (1961, January 31). *La Presse*, 10.

Lessard, C., & Tardif, M. (1996). *La profession enseignante au Québec (1945-1990): Histoire, structures, système*. Presses de l'Univ. de Montréal.

Lévesque, A. (1989). *La norme et les déviantes: Des femmes au Québec pendant l'entre-deux-guerres*. Editions du Remue-ménage.

Lévesque, A. (1995). *La norme et les déviantes: Des femmes au Québec pendant l'entre-deux-guerres*. Éditions du remue-ménage.

Lévesque, J.-Y., Borri-Anadon, C., Charron, A., & Rondeau, M. (2022). L'éducation préscolaire pour normaliser l'enfant ou pour le soutenir dans son développement et la construction de son humanité? In Collectif Debout pour l'école! (Ed.), *Une autre école est possible et nécessaire* (pp. 201–217). Del Busso éditeur.

Levinson, B. A. (2011). *Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and education*. Paradigm Publishers.

L'expansion physique de l'école ne doit pas nous faire oublier les besoins pédagogiques. (1961, March 10). *La Presse*, 5.

Li, J., D'Angiulli, A., & Kendall, G. E. (2007). The Early Development Index and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Early Years*, *27*(3), 221–235. https://doi.org/10.1080/09575140701594384

Linteau, P.-A., Durocher, R., Robert, J.-C., & Ricard, F. (1991). *Quebec since 1930* (R. Chodos & E. Garmaise, Trans.). James Lorimer & Company.

Logique (Anonymous). (1962, May 14). Pour une meilleure instruction (letter to the editor). *La Presse*, 4.

MacNaughton, G., Hughes, P., & Smith, K. (Eds.). (2008). *Young children as active citizens: Principles, policies and pedagogies*. Cambridge Scholars Pub.

MacNevin, M., & Berman, R. (2017). The Black baby doll doesn't fit: The disconnect between early childhood diversity policy, early childhood educator practice, and children's play. *Early Child Development and Care*, *187*(5–6), 827–839. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1223065

Magnan, M.-O., Pilote, A., Collins, T., & Kamanzi, P. C. (2019). Discours de jeunes issus de groupes minoritaires sur les inégalités scolaires au Québec. *Diversité Urbaine*, *19*, 93–114. https://doi.org/10.7202/1065122ar

Maheu, R. (1983). L'émigration des anglophones québécois. *Cahiers Québécois de Démographie*, *12*(2), 271–280. https://doi.org/10.7202/600510ar

Makovichuk, L., Lirette, P., Hewes, J., & Aamot, B. (2017). Playing, learning and meaning making: Early childhood curriculum unfolding. *Early Childhood Education*, *44*(2), 3–10.

Malins, P. M. (2017). *Making meaning of gender and sexual identities in early childhood: A critical discourse analysis of Canadian early childhood curricula* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Western Ontario.

Manque de locaux scolaires déploré à Drummondville. (1961, March 16). *La Presse*, 28.

Marceau, J. (2018a, August 26). La CAQ réitère sa promesse de redonner aux familles 700 M$ de taxes scolaires « injustes ». *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1120121/taxes-scolaires-francois-legault-

Marceau, J. (2018b, August 30). Quand François Legault parle économie, les Québécois écoutent-ils? *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1120831/francois-legault-economie-caq-coalition-avenir-quebec-discours-enjeu

Maternelle 4 ans: La cible de 2600 classes au Québec reportée à 2029. (2023, February 21). *Radio-Canada*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1958096/maternelle-4-ans-cible-promesse-classes-reportee-drainville

Mathieu, S. (2019). La transformation de l'offre de services de garde au Québec: Une brèche dans la collectivisation du travail de reproduction sociale? *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie*, *56*(2), 204–223. https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12243

Ménard, M.-A. (2018, September 17). Débat en anglais: Legault ciblé au sujet de l'immigration. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*.

Menon, N. (2021). Troubling dominant discourses and stories that shape our understanding of the child refugee. In Z. Abawi, A. Eizadirad, & R. Berman (Eds.), *Equity as praxis in early childhood education and care* (pp. 43–64). Canadian Scholars.

Messier, F. (2019, February 14). La maternelle pour tous les enfants de 4 ans dès 2023, à un coût plus élevé. *Radio-Canada*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1152874/depot-projet-loi-maternelles-4-ans-roberge-commissions-scolaires

Ministère de la Jeunesse. (1961, July 12). Avis aux parents: Première étape de la gratuité scolaire [Advertisement]. *La Presse*, 26.

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. (1991). *Un Québec fou de ses enfants: Rapport du groupe de travail pour les jeunes*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation. (1976). *L'éducation de l'enfance en difficulté d'adaptation et d'apprentissage au Québec: Rapport du Comité provincial de l'enfance inadaptée (COPEX)*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation. (1981). *Programme d'éducation préscolaire*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation. (1985). *Guide pédagogique préscolaire. L'enfant de la maternelle au moment du passage à l'école primaire: Propositions d'éléments pédagogiques*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation. (1998). *Une école d'avenir: Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle* (p. 49). Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation. (2001). *Quebec education program: Preschool education, elementary education*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation. (2021). *Quebec education program: Preschool education. Preschool cycle program.* http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/education/jeunes/pfeq/Programme-cycle-prescolaire-AN.pdf

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir at du Sport. (2013). *Projet de programme d'éducation préscolaire: Maternelle 4 ans à temps plein en milieu défavorisé*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. (2009). *Tous ensemble pour la réussite scolaire. L'école, j'y tiens!* Gouvernement du Québec.

Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. (2017). *Politique de la réussite éducative: Le plaisir d'apprendre, la chance de réussir*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Morin, J. (2002). *La maternelle: Histoire, fondements, pratiques*. G. Morin.

Moss, P. (2014). *Transformative change and real utopias in early childhood education: A story of democracy, experimentation and potentiality*. Routledge.

Moss, P. (2023). Introduction: From the politically impossible to the politically inevitable. In M. Vandenbroeck, J. Lehrer, & L. Mitchell (Eds.), *The decommodification of early childhood education and care: Resisting neoliberalism* (pp. 1–14). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Narain, V. (2024). How does it feel to be a problem? Inclusion and exclusion and Quebec's Bill 21. *Constitutional Forum Constitutionnel*, *32*(4), 21–30.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2019a). *Position statement: Advancing equity in early childhood education* (p. 24). https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/advancingequitypositionstatement.pdf

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2019b). *Professional standards and competencies for early childhood educators* (p. 72). https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/standards_and_competencies_ps.pdf

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2020). *Position statement: Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (p. 44). https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/dap-statement_0.pdf

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Eddy, K., & Kleis Nielsen, R. (2022). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Nos réussites et nos échecs, 30 ans après Un Québec fou de ses enfants. (2022, January 20). [Broadcast]. In *Le 15-18*. Radio-Canada Ohdio. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/premiere/emissions/le-15-18/segments/entrevue/387743/enfance-camil-bouchard-rapport-quebec-fou-enfants-30-ans

Nsamenang, A. B. (2010). Childhoods within Africa's triple heritage. In *Childhood: A handbook* (pp. 9–26). Peter Lang.

Nxumalo, F. (2019). *Decolonizing place in early childhood education*. Routledge.

Observatoire des tout-petits. (2019). *What kind of environments are Québec's youngest children growing up in? 2019 portrait*. Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation.

Ontario Liberal budget to include free daycare for preschool children. (2018, March 27). *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-liberals-daycare-election-budget-1.4594803

Osgood, J., & Robinson, K. H. (2017). Celebrating pioneering and contemporary feminist approaches to studying gender in early childhood. In K. Smith, K. Alexander, & S. Campbell (Eds.), *Feminism(s) in early childhood* (Vol. 4, pp. 35–47). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3057-4

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (Ed.). (2010). *Flows, rhythms, and intensities of early childhood education curriculum*. Peter Lang.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Nxumalo, F. (2014). Posthumanist imaginaries for decolonizing early childhood praxis. In M. N. Bloch, B. B. Swadener, & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing early childhood care & education: A reader* (pp. 131–142). Peter Lang.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Taylor, A. (Eds.). (2015). *Unsettling the colonial places and spaces of early childhood education*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., White, J., & Armstrong de Almeida, A.-E. (2006). Racialization in early childhood: A critical analysis of discourses in policies. *International Journal of Educational Policy*, *7*, 95–113.

Parazelli, M. (2020). Du développement de l'enfant à son « développement optimal ». Regard critique sur les enjeux politiques des programmes de prévention précoce au Québec. In P. Suesser, M.-C. Colombo, M. Bonnefoy, & C. Garrigues (Eds.), *Le dialogue des disciplines autour du jeune enfant: Parentalité, développement, apprentissage*. Syndicat national des médecins de protection maternelle et infantile, Toulouse. Éditions ères.

Parazelli, M., Auclair, D., & Brault, M.-C. (2022). Pourquoi le programme québécois « Agir tôt » est-il controversé ? *Enfances, Familles, Générations*, *38*. https://doi.org/10.7202/1086961ar

Parent, C., Drapeau, S., Brousseau, M., & Pouliot, E. (Eds.). (2008). *Visages multiples de la parentalité*. Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Parton, N. (2006). *Safeguarding childhood: Early intervention and surveillance in a late modern society*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Peers, C. (2011). The Australian Early Development Index: Reshaping family—child relationships in early childhood education. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *12*(2), 134–147. https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2011.12.2.134

Peters, L. (2020). Activism in their own right: Children's participation in social justice movements. In S. A. Kessler & B. B. Swadener (Eds.), *Educating for social justice in early childhood* (First published, pp. 87–99). Routledge.

Pillow, W. S., & Mayo, C. (2012). Feminist ethnography: Histories, challenges, and possibilities. In S. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed, pp. 187–205). SAGE.

Pires, R. (2019). *Ne sommes-nous pas Québécoises?* Les Éditions du remue-ménage.

Plourde, A. (2022). *Où en est l'école à trois vitesses au Québec ?* (24; Fiche Socioéconomique IRIS). L'Institut de recherches et d'informations socioéconomiques (IRIS).

POLTEXT. (2018). *Plateforme de la Coalition Avenir Québec, 2018*. Département de science politique, Université de Laval. https://www.poltext.org/

Potvin, M. (2016). Interethnic relations and racism in Quebec. In S. Gervais, C. J. Kirkey, & J. Rudy (Eds.), *Quebec questions: Quebec studies for the twenty-first century* (Second edition, pp. 267–286). Oxford University Press.

Potvin, M., & Carr, P. R. (2008). La « valeur ajoutée » de l'éducation antiraciste: Conceptualisation et mise en oeuvre au Québec et en Ontario. *Éducation et Francophonie*, *36*(1), 197–216. https://doi.org/10.7202/018097ar

Poulin, P.-O. (2025, August 26). La rentrée ne calme pas les demandes de Uni.es pour l'école. *Le Quotidien*. https://www.lequotidien.com/actualites/2025/08/25/la-rentree-ne-calme-pas-les-demandes-de-unies-pour-lecole-WKHX525YZNDRFITURH5RZZUGBQ/

Pratte, G. (1960, May 17). Selon Mlle Boucher: La Commission scolaire devrait se charger de former des Maternelles. *La Presse*, 18.

Prévost, H. (2018, August 25). La CAQ promet la prématernelle 4 ans pour tous et 50 000 places en garderie. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1120068/elections-francois-legault-caq-places-garderie-prematernelle-4-ans

Prioletta, J. (2020). Patriarchy in the preschool classroom: Examining the effects of developmental ideologies on teachers' perspectives and practices around play and gender.

Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, *21*(3), 242–252. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949119831461

Prioletta, J., & Davies, A. (2024). "Because boys don't do ballet": Boys, femmephobia, and the potentials of a femininity-affirmative pedagogy in kindergarten. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, 57–71. https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs21458

Qui s'instruit s'enrichit. (2009, September 10). [Broadcast]. In *La Révolution tranquille, 50 ans après*. Radio-Canada Ohdio. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/premiere/grandes-series/239/larevolutiontranquille50ansapres/366147/episode-4

Radio-Canada. (2019, February 22). *Archives: Pourquoi la maternelle*. Radio-Canada Info. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1154035/classe-maternelle-ecole-primaire-archives

Rauhala, A., Albanese, P., Ferns, C., Law, D., Haniff, A., & Macdonald, L. (2012). Who says what: Election coverage and sourcing of child care in four Canadian dailies. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *21*(1), 95–105. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-011-9481-0

Reed, A. Jr. (1990). The underclass as myth and symbol: The poverty of discourse about poverty. *Radical America*, *24*(1), 21–40.

Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2009). The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed, pp. 87–121). SAGE.

Réunion orageuse à St-Hyacinthe. (1962, May 10). *La Presse*, 54.

Richardson, B., Hewes, J., & Lysack, M. (2020). The educator is political: Exploring the role of postsecondary early childhood education programs as places of political inquiry and practice in the contemporary Canadian ECEC context. In *Critical issues in early childhood teacher education: Volume 2–international perspectives* (pp. 41–56). Information Age Publishing.

Richardson, T. R. (1989). *The century of the child: The mental hygiene movement and social policy in the United States and Canada*. State University of New York Press.

Ritchie, J., & Rau, C. (2008). *Te Puawaitanga: Partnerships with tamariki and whānau in bicultural early childhood care and education* (p. 133). Teaching and Learning Research Initiative.

Robert, C., & Toupin, L. (Eds.). (2018). *Travail invisible: Portraits d'une lutte féministe inachevée*. Remue-ménage.

Roberts-Holmes, G., & Moss, P. (2021). *Neoliberalism and early childhood education: Markets, imaginaries and governance* (First Edition). Routledge.

Robinson, K. H., & Jones-Diaz, C. (2006). *Diversity and difference in early childhood education: Issues for theory and practice*. Open Univ. Press.

Rocher, F., & Carpentier, D. (2022). On differentiated reading of rights: Systemic francophobia invites itself to the debate. *Review of Constitutional Studies*, *26*(2), 39–72.

Rocher, G. (1962). Images de la femme dans la société: Les modèles et le statut de la femme canadienne-française. *Revue Internationale Des Sciences Sociales*, *xiv*(1), 125–131.

Rôle psychologique du jeu à l'âge pré-scolaire. (1960, April 30). *La Presse*, 8.

Rose, N. S. (1985). *The psychological complex: Psychology, politics, and society in England, 1869-1939*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Rose, N. S. (1989). *Governing the soul: The shaping of the private self*. Routledge.

Rowe, D. J. (2025, August 26). Quebec schools opening with less support staff for special needs students after budget cuts. *CTV News*. https://www.ctvnews.ca/montreal/article/quebec-schools-opening-with-less-support-staff-for-special-needs-students-after-budget-cuts/

Ryan, S., & Grieshaber, S. (2004). It's more than child development: Critical theories, research, and teaching young children. *Young Children*, *59*(6), 44–52.

Saldaña, J. (2015). Coding and analysis strategies. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3E [Third edition]). SAGE.

Scheidecker, G., Chaudhary, N., Keller, H., Mezzenzana, F., & Lancy, D. F. (2023). "Poor brain development" in the global South? Challenging the science of early childhood interventions. *Ethos*, *51*(1), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12379

Schué, R. (2018a, August 24). Couillard promet jusqu'à 300 $ supplémentaires par enfant. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*.

Schué, R. (2018b, August 24). Les familles, cible privilégiée des chefs en ce début de campagne électorale. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1119825/familles-parents-couillard-legault-masse-lisee-promesses-enfants-cpe

Schué, R. (2018c, August 27). Plus de ressources dans les classes pour les débuts à l'école, promet Couillard. *ICI Radio-Canada Nouvelles*. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1120234/plq-couillard-cours-anglais-gratuite-garderies-enfants

Schwartz, S. (2023, November 20). Quebec's language policies are undermining 'economy and equality,' protesters say. *The Montreal Gazette*. https://www.montrealgazette.com/news/article84124.html

Seery, A. (2014). Famille et travail: Constats et propositions des jeunes féministes au Québec. *Enfances, Familles, Générations*, *21*, 216–236.

Séguin, T. (1962, October 8). Avancer l'âge scolaire (letter to the editor). *La Presse*, 4.

Seixas, P. (2017). A model of historical thinking. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *49*(6), 593–605. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2015.1101363

Seules des mesures draconiennes nous sauveront de l'extinction: L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Québec. (1962, February 2). *La Presse*, 31.

Shewell, H. (2004). *"Enough to keep them alive": Indian welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*. University of Toronto Press.

Shields, C. M. (2012). Critical advocacy research: An approach whose time has come. In S. R. Steinberg & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Critical qualitative research reader* (pp. 2–13). Lang.

Shields, C. M., Bishop, R., & Mazawi, A. E. (2005). *Pathologizing practices: The impact of deficit thinking on education*. Peter Lang.

Shirakawa, Y., & Saracho, O. N. (2021). Froebel's kindergarten and its movement in Germany and the United States. *Early Child Development and Care*, *191*(7–8), 1164–1174. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2020.1865338

Showden, C. (2009). What's Political about the new feminisms? *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, *30*(2), 166–198.

Simard, M., Tremblay, M.-E., Lavoie, A., & Audet, N. (2013). *Enquête québécoise sur le développement des enfants à la maternelle (EQDEM) 2012*. Institut de la statistique du Québec.

Simon, M.-R. (2021). Making space for Indigenous knowledge in an urban child-care centre. In Z. Abawi, A. Eizadirad, & R. Berman (Eds.), *Equity as praxis in early childhood education and care* (pp. 125–146). Canadian Scholars.

Sirois, A. (2018, September 20). Réinventer, c'est bien ; consolider, c'est mieux. *La Presse+*, 2.

Sirois, A. (2019, May 7). Maternelles 4 ans: Legault n'a pas à démissionner pour ça. *La Presse*. https://www.lapresse.ca/debats/editoriaux/2019-05-07/maternelles-4-ans-legault-n-a-pas-a-demissionner-pour-ca

Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. AltaMira.

Smith, K., Alexander, K., & Campbell, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Feminism(s) in early childhood* (Vol. 4). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3057-4

Spencer, D., & Sinclair, R. (2025). Looping effects, settler colonialism, and the indigenous child removal system. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *48*(1), 185–205. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2323050

Starks, H., & Brown Trinidad, S. (2007). Choose your method: A comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, *17*(10), 1372–1380. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307307031

Staton, P., Fine-Meyer, R., & Gibson, S. (2004). *Unfolding power: Documents in 20th century Canadian women's history*. Green Dragon Press.

Steinberg, S. R. (2012). Critical cultural studies research: Bricolage in action. In S. R. Steinberg & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Critical qualitative research reader* (pp. 182–197). Lang.

Stipek, D. (2006). No Child Left Behind comes to preschool. *The Elementary School Journal*, *106*(5), 455–466. https://doi.org/10.1086/505440

Strunk, K. K., & Betties, J. S. (2019). Using critical theory in educational research. In K. K. Strunk & L. A. Locke (Eds.), *Research methods for social justice and equity in education*. Springer International.

Swadener, B. B. (2008). "At risk" or "at promise"? From deficit constructions of the "other childhood" to possibilities for authentic alliances with children and families. In L. D. Soto (Ed.), *The politics of early childhood education* (pp. 117–134). Peter Lang.

Swadener, B. B., & Lubeck, S. (Eds.). (1995). *Children and families "at promise": Deconstructing the discourse of risk*. State University of New York Press.

Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI). (2019). *Les familles immigrantes et leurs tout-petits au Québec: Défis et pistes d'action. Perspective des organismes communautaires au service des nouveaux arrivants*.

Tardif, M. (2015). La profession enseignante et ses luttes contre les inégalités: Un héritage historique en voie de disparition ? In A. Robichaud, M. Tardif, & A. Morales Perlaza

(Eds.), *Sciences sociales et théories critiques dans la formation des enseignants* (pp. 85–115). Presses de l'Université Laval.

The Canadian Press. (2023, February 22). Quebec Premier Legault won't meet election promise to offer pre-kindergarten. *CTV News*. https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/quebec-premier-legault-won-t-meet-election-promise-to-offer-pre-kindergarten-1.6284727

Thésée, G., & Carr, P. R. (2016). Les mots pour le dire: Acculturation ou racialisation? Les théories antiracistes critiques (TARC) dans l'étude de l'expérience scolaire de jeunes Noirs du Canada en contextes francophones. *Comparative and International Education / Éducation Comparée et Internationale*, *45*(1), 1–17.

Timmons, K., & Airton, L. (2020). Welcoming gender diversity in the early years: Interpreting professional guiding documents for gender-expansive practice. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 146394912097852. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949120978526

Toujours le foyer fautif: Les délinquants, des enfants mal aimés. (1960, July 6). *La Presse*, 18.

Tremblay, G. (2018, August 23). La vraie injustice. *La Presse+*, 6.

Trois idées fortes pour l'avenir. (2018, September 5). *La Presse+*, 1, 4.

Trudel, J. (2017). Les rapports sociaux de sexe dès la petite enfance: Une analyse de genre du Programme éducatif des services de garde du Québec, Accueillir la petite enfance. *Recherches féministes*, *31*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.7202/1050656ar

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*.

Une classe maternelle à Shawinigan l'an prochain. (1960, October 27). *La Presse*, 26.

Urwin, C., & Sharland, E. (1992). From bodies to minds in childcare literature: Advice to parents in inter-war Britain. In R. Cooter (Ed.), *In the name of the child* (pp. 174–199). Routledge.

Vailles, F. (2024, November 12). Des enfants favorisés sur la base de critères ethniques. *La Presse*. https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/chroniques/trente-six-cpe-selectionnent-selon-l-ethnie-ou-la-religion/2024-11-12/garderies-subventionnees-et-cpe/des-enfants-favorises-sur-la-base-de-criteres-ethniques.php

Valade, T. (2019). *Power at play: Gender discourses in media-based pretend play in the early childhood education classroom* [Master's thesis]. Concordia University.

Valade, T. (2024). Postfeminism at play: Pretend play with Disney princess transmedia in the early childhood education classroom. *McGill Journal of Education / Revue Des Sciences de l'éducation de McGill*, *58*(3), 57–80.

Valencia, R. (Ed.). (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. RoutledgeFalmer.

Valverde, M. (1992). "When the mother of the race is free": Race, reproduction, and sexuality in first-wave feminism. In F. Iacovetta & M. Valverde (Eds.), *Gender conflicts: New essays in women's history* (pp. 3–26). University of Toronto Press.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *News analysis: Case studies of international and national news in the press*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Vandenbroeck, M. (2021). Introduction. In M. Vandenbroeck (Ed.), *Revisiting Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Issues and challenges in early childhood education* (pp. 2–8). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Vandenbroeck, M., Coussée, F., & Bradt, L. (2010). The social and political construction of early childhood education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *58*(2), 139–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071001003752237

Varga, D. (1997). *Constructing the child a history of Canadian day care*. J. Lorimer.

Varga, D. (2007). A history of early childhood teacher education. In N. Howe (Ed.), *Early childhood care and education in canada: Past, present, and future* (pp. 65–95). UBC Press.

Viruru, R., & Cannella, G. S. (2001). Postcolonial ethnography, young children, and voice. In S. Grieshaber & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Embracing identities in early childhood education: Diversity and possibilities* (pp. 158–172). Teachers College Press.

Walkerdine, V. (1984). Developmental psychology and the child-centred pedagogy: The insertion of Piaget into early education. In J. Henriques, W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Venn, & V. Walkerdine (Eds.), *Changing the Subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity* (pp. 153–202). Methuen & Co. Ltd.

Walkerdine, V. (1990). *Schoolgirl fictions*. Verso.

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice & poststructuralist theory* (2nd Edition). Blackwell Pub.

Westheimer, J. (2015). *What kind of citizen? Educating our children for the common good*. Teachers College Press.

White, L. A., & Prentice, S. (2016). Early childhood education and care reform in Canadian provinces: Understanding the role of experts and evidence in policy change. *Canadian Public Administration / Administration Publique Du Canada*, *59*(1), 26–44.

Whitty, P. (2009). Towards designing a postfoundational curriculum document. In L. Iannacci & P. Whitty (Eds.), *Early childhood curricula: Reconceptualist perspectives* (pp. 35–62). Detselig Enterprises.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed). SAGE.

Wright, B. L., Friedman, S., & Bredekamp, S. (2024). Looking back to move forward: Reflecting on developmentally appropriate practice to advance equity in early childhood education. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, *32*(3), 530–546. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2024.2343060

Yanow, D. (2000). *Conducting interpretive policy analysis*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412983747

Yardley, L. (2017). Demonstrating the validity of qualitative research. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *12*(3), 295–296. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262624

Youdell, D. (2011). *School trouble: Identity, power and politics in education*. Routledge.