

Quebec day care: Access for all?

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ABSTRACT**Quebec day care: Access for all?**

Vivian Halperin

Consequent to Quebec's 1997 reform is affordable day care. It would seem that day care easily afforded would support parental accessibility. However high parent demand combined with an insufficient supply of affordable day care spaces has had the opposite effect since access is uncertain even when parents plan-ahead for access. This exploratory work places particular emphasis upon the problem of differential access since today socio-economically-vulnerable families in Quebec are least likely to acquire access to day care.

Through interviews with day care directors, parents, and CLSC workers, and the examination of government documentation and secondary sources I explore the capacity of the day care system to support family access to day care, and the role that community plays in enabling access for economically challenged families. I also reveal how the uncertainty of access impacts families generally, but particularly those who are economically challenged and without alternative child care options. Despite these obstacles to access, my research discovers how the reform's affordable day care has reshaped parent demand for day care.

Table of Contents

Introduction...p.1

Chapter 1-Day care in context...p.8

PART ONE

A history of day care in Quebec...p.8

PART TWO

Section I-Child care options and the reform...p.16

Section II-Differential access...p.16

Section III-Provincial grants and subsidies...p.19

Grants...p.19

The Reduced contribution's short history...p.19

Reductions and exemptions from day care fees/part-time access...p.21

Reductions and exemptions from fees/full time access...p.22

Informal Protocol...p.22

Formal Protocol...p.23

Section IV-Insufficient spaces producing differential access...p.24

Chapter 2-Sources and Methods...p.29

Interviews with directors...p.30

Interviews with parents...35

Interviews with CLSC workers...p.39

Document review...p.51

Chapter 3 -Understanding parents demand for day care...p.43

Parent anxiety while searching for a space in day care...p.44

Strength of need regarding day care access...p.45

Strength of want and the learning experience of day care...p.46

Parents wanting choice...p.50

Chapter 4-The mechanics of access...p.55

Section I-General access...p.55

Obstacles to access...p.55

How turnover works-spaces per day care, priorities, child group sizes...p.60

Section II-Access and/CLSC referrals...p. 68

Chapter 5-Successful and less successful parents...p. 74

More privileged neighborhoods...p.74

Day care situated in less privileged neighborhoods-access for most...p.77

The overall impact of CLSC referrals...p.79

Day care supporting access for low-income families...p.82

Low-income parents' knowledge and subsequent success...p.83

Pre-reform access in less privileged neighborhoods...p.83

Conclusion...p.87*The game of chance/lessons to be learned...p.87**Not an even game of chance...p.89***Policy recommendations ...p.96***Addressing the problem of insufficient spaces...p.96**Addressing the problem of differential access...p. 99***Further Recommendations ...p.100***Recommendations for further research ...p.100**Recommendations for better documentation...p.104***Table 1**-Day care organized by descending number of turnover...p.43**Appendix A**

Child care services transformed: Post reform versus pre-reform...p.107

Appendix B

List of acronyms...p.110

Appendix C

Description of twelve neighborhoods ...p.111

Bibliography...p.115

Introduction

My research examines how families with pre-school age children manage to acquire access to Quebec's day care system and whether or not this system enables access for all parents seeking access. I shall also examine the extent to which Quebec's day care regulations encourages accessibility to day care through its recognition of difference associated with parents whose more vulnerable situations involve poorly paid, and/or part-time employment, staying at home, student status, and single parenthood. The problem of day care access is a recent phenomenon and therefore very little research has been conducted on this topic. Although my research is exploratory and therefore limited in scope, this work can be seen as starting point that hopefully provides incentive for further research conducted on a larger scale.

My understanding of the relevance of day care inclusion derives in part from my personal experiences of day care practice. As an educator working in Quebec day cares only in rare instances have I worked with children whose parents were amongst the working poor and only once have I knowingly worked with a child whose family was on social assistance. As an educator working toward a self-aware professional practice, I consciously strive to model behaviors and attitudes promoting classroom inclusion and have strongly reinforced child behaviors producing inclusion and acceptance of difference. Likewise with respect to day care and its policies it is my view that it must function as a guarantee whereby all families with young children who want access to day care can acquire it.

In principle, the government also subscribes to such a goal. The “Act respecting childcare centres and childcare services”, (1993, 2002, 2004,) states “Every child is entitled to receive good, continuous, personal childcare until the end of primary school.” However despite the provincial government’s expression of intention it is possible that day care’s efforts on behalf of children are lost to a substantial segment of the child population under five years of age. Thus I seek to explore the ways in which Quebec day care and correspondingly its regulations perhaps achieves only partial recognition of different family types thereby hindering their access to day care.

Consequent to the 1997 reform is affordable day care. It would seem that affordable day care would facilitate parental accessibility. However high parent demand combined with an insufficient supply of affordable reduced rate spaces has had a different effect since access is uncertain even when parents plan-ahead for access. It is my view that the strength of parental demand, described on many occasions by various media, needs listening to. For example all parents should have the choice to expose their child to the learning experience of day care, and working parents -particularly those without alternative child care options- should not be faced with child care that is unaffordable, unreliable or fails to support their child’s well being. Nash (2000) cites the economist Scott who pointed out that if people can be deprived by being excluded from public life, they can also be privileged in relation to public life thereby coining a conception of poverty that overrides economic status. Thus day care easily accessed represents privilege with respect to public life, which shall be weighed consequent to exploring the extent to which the provincial government’s day care system actively enables access for all parents seeking access.

For children exposed to quality day care, day care optimizes child play as well as interpersonal relationships amongst children and children and caregivers, (Friendly and Lero, 2002) and is known to improve children's behavior, learning and health in later life¹. (McCain and Mustard, 1999) Bertrand et al. tells us that from conception to 6 years of age children's brains are being developed producing a foundation for learning, behavior and health that last a lifetime (1999). This portrayal of early development is also supported by Cleaves (1998)².

My thesis explores the issue of differential access to day care in Quebec with an emphasis placed upon socio-economically vulnerable families. It relies largely upon interviews conducted with day care directors who have a broad knowledge of pre-reform and post reform parent access to daycare; parents as well as CLSC workers have provided additional information regarding access for socio-economically vulnerable families. Finally government documentation and secondary studies provide a third source of information for my work.

In chapter 1 *day care in context*, I explain the problem of differential access today as it relates to the 1997 reform's creation of affordable day care producing high parent demand and the need to plan-ahead for day care access. This contrasts with pre-reform access

¹ Lefebvre and Merrigan (2002) define quality as a "*process*" involving the appropriateness of the interactions between providers and the child, and appropriateness of the curriculum, materials and activities to which the child is exposed.

² Not all researchers agree that day care is necessarily beneficial for young children. For example Lefebvre and Merrigan (2002) report that non-parental child care has little or no influence on developmental outcomes. The authors however recognize the limits of their research, which focused upon types of non-parental child care, and not quality day care. Day care types included home based care, center-based care, day care services (See appendix A) as well as parental care.

typified by high fees and lower parent demand (“Règles budgétaires pour l’année 2003-2004”, 2004). Despite the provincial government’s efforts to increase the number of “reduced rate spaces” (see page 19) the demand for spaces continues to outnumber their supply. (Tougas, 2002)

One possible reason for differential access today is that vulnerable situations associated with low-income possibly interferes with the long-term planning required to find a space in day care³. (Jackson and Scott, 2002 and Wiegers’, 2002) I further refer to a relationship between “The regulations respecting the reduced contribution” (2004) stipulating part-time free access for low-income families receiving social assistance who are neither working or studying, which counter day care contexts today, thereby excluding such parents from access. Using Baril et. al., (2000) I further identify which low-income parents are most likely impacted by these particular stipulations existing day care’s regulations. In order to assess the problem of differential access I examine the provincial government’s system of grants, day care types eligible or not eligible for grants, and how this has functioned to reduce fees for various categories of parents prior to and after the reform.

Chapter 2, *Sources and methods* explains my method of acquiring information about differential access that largely depends upon interviews with directors, CLSC workers, and parents. Also included is information acquired from primary and secondary sources explaining the day care system, such as child care services and provincial funding

³ Definition of low-income is annual net income of \$25,000 or less (Baril et.al., 2000)

currently versus prior to the 1997 reform, explaining and clarifying information acquired from interviews.

Regarding my interviews I explain how information acquired from directors, CLSC workers and parents tell different stories which combine to provide a broad spectrum of information that is rich in detail and portrays as well neighborhood context, and its impact upon differential access. I further discuss how samples were acquired, as well as the limits or strengths of information acquired by my samples.

Chapter 3, *Understanding parents demand for day care*, explores the contours of parent demand for day care from the point of view of parents, and as well from the point of view of directors who receive all requests. The chapter identifies a variety of situations such as low-income parents who are working full time, single parents, immigrants and students, all of whom lack alternative child care in the form of extended family. In day care contexts today where parent demand exceeds the supply of reduced rate spaces, lack of choice often results in parents and children having to endure negative day care experiences. Also identified are parents whose initial demand for day care is based upon their strong desire to expose their child to the learning experience of day care and their resistance to alternative child care. Regarding parents wanting day care and parents needing day care, in Canadian society where everyone is “supposed to be equal” I emphasize that every child has the right to access the learning experience of day care.

In Chapter 4, *The mechanics of access* I use data collected from directors and parents to demonstrate obstacles to access and how access works despite obstacles. I examine the length of day care waiting lists currently and whether or not short waiting lists indicate shorter waiting times for parent access, and conversely whether long waiting lists necessarily indicate longer waiting times for access. I further contrast current waiting lists to pre-reform waiting lists. In order to understand how new parents manage to acquire access each September, I examine the potential impact of a variety of factors such as the number of spaces per day care, number of priorities each year (see page 49), and child group sizes impacting the number of spaces available for new children. The issue of differential access is more specifically addressed by examining CLSC outreach regarding their supportive role for low-income families in relation with day care access. I further discuss the reasons for CPE resistance versus cooperation.

In the last analytical chapter, (chapter 5) I use data acquired from directors, CLSC workers, and parents to describe a profile of parents most likely to acquire access to day care. I examine how their economic status, employment status, or referrals has impacted their ability to acquire access, currently and prior to the reform. I conclude this section by further describing parents who are most unlikely to acquire day care access today.

Finally the conclusion will provide a summary of the big picture of Quebec's affordable day care system by highlighting the provincial government's measures supporting inclusion, and whether or not such measures have been successful. I shall also discuss why day care easily accessed is critical to the well being of families with children of pre-

school age. Questions and proposals evolving from my research will be explored as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1

Day care in Context

PART ONE

A history of day care in Quebec

Earlier History

The literature documenting the history of Quebec day care begins with the development of urbanization and industrialization in the 19th century. As Desjardins (2002) states, in pre-industrial society day care was non-existent. Children participated in adult activities such as agricultural production, harvesting, and caring for animals, and extended family was available when the need for child care arose. However with the development of industrialization children were considered the sole responsibility of parents, and mothers, as the primary caretakers of their children, were responsible for their moral development.

Quebec's initial day care establishments were created amidst 19th century industrialization commonly associated with harsh working conditions and menial wages. In this context women and children were required to work in order to meet their family's primary needs. However many children were also left alone, unattended by adults. In 1859 the "salle d'asile" (or shelter room) was opened by a charitable religious order in order to care for these children (Desjardins, 2002, Lalonde-Graton, 2002, Goelman, 1992). Initially 33 children attended. Five months later 122 children were enrolled and just one-month afterward approximately 300 children were attending (Lalonde-Graton). Funding for the salle d'asile was provided by the provincial government. However its provision of 25 cents per day per child was insufficient to meet costs. Funds were raised

through bazaars, children's spectacles, and by approaching the wealthy for donations (Desjardins, 2002). In addition to providing safety through shelter for young children, its founder, father Rousselot also envisioned that children's early education should contribute to child intelligence and positive life attitudes potentially impacting future conduct as well (Lalonde-Graton, 2002).

Historically, the key social ingredient for the creation of Quebec day care were mothers who for any number of reasons were unavailable to care for their children, due to employment, illness, extreme family poverty and sometimes, the breakdown of the family. However society's dominant values toward maternal employment also impacted either presence or absence of day care in Quebec. Lalonde-Graton (2002) and Lamb et al., (2002) tell us that Victorian values propounded by the church conflicted with day care that served families in which mothers worked. The predominance of such values certainly contributed to the disappearance of the *salles d'asile* that initially was work undertaken by the religious orders. Women's paid employment contradicted women's traditional role and was seen as anti Christian, unnatural, immoral, and a threat to the family. Lalonde-Graton further depicts the *crèches* of the 1920's created as a response to the high numbers of homeless children abandoned by their parents and questions whether this dire situation was aggravated by the disappearance of the *salles d'asile*. This illustrates how social values popular at certain moments in history can override pressing societal need. Since a very high proportion of children served by the *crèches* were ill, those charged with the responsibility of caring for them faced the challenge of preventing their demise. Although the literature doesn't mention whether the *crèches* had a philosophy of education, this

understandably is unlikely since enormous human effort was aimed at meeting the health needs of these children⁴.

It is true that society's unwillingness to respond to the pressing needs of Quebec's most vulnerable families is the exception, not the rule where day care is concerned and one example of this is the crèches of the 1920's. Despite this Quebec's history, influenced by a Catholic clergy with traditionalist family values is also about tension and resistance to the idea and practice of day care. By the 1930's the depression that resulted in poverty on a large scale compelled the provincial government to intervene in social affairs by instituting the commission of social affairs who listened to the concerns of private citizens. The commission reported that many children of working mothers were left in the care of young neighboring girls and recommended the creation of day care. However their use was limited to situations of extreme necessity since society discouraged maternal employment, and as well maternal employment was uncommon (Desjardins, 2002). Similarly with the advent of the Second World War the attitudes of clergy toward maternal employment was again challenged. Severe labor shortages required women to work in non-traditional forms of paid employment as mechanics and electricians in order to meet the urgent demands of the war industry. The federal government passed the Dominion Provincial War Time Agreement allowing for the provincial and federal governments to share day care funding. However due to strong resistance from the clergy

⁴ By 1923 the religious orders recognized that their crèches could not support the massive numbers of homeless children in need. They therefore created an adoption society for the protection of children. Between 1938 and 1946, 2,690 children were adopted under the auspices of this society.

Quebec opened as few as six day cares. In the aftermath of the war, women who had been employed by the war industry returned to unpaid domestic work, and Quebec's few day care created for war purposes disappeared (Goelman, 1992).

The history of Quebec day care documents at least one instance when one day care existed largely for the educational benefits of young children, combined with meeting the needs of working mothers, including economically challenged mothers⁵. In 1919 certain influential citizens, as well as the Franciscan missionary sisters organized the Saint-Enfant-Jésus day care. The Italian Maria Montessori, famous for her pedagogy, influenced its curriculum which focused upon children's sensorial and practical life activities. This day care served parents from diverse economic backgrounds. Included were mothers overburdened by home responsibilities, poor working mothers who required exemptions from fees, and mothers who wanted their children exposed to the learning experience of day care (Desjardins, 2002).

Recent history

The 1960's, marked by an increase in women's participation in the labor market was also a turning point regarding society's attitudes about day care. In 1921 only 20% of women aged 25 to 34 were participants in the labor market. This rose to 29% by 1961, and then the percentage the jumped to 59% by 1978 (White, 1980). In 1966, the provincial and federal governments agreed to share the cost of day care, and this resulted in the creation

⁵ I have not been able to locate other examples of day care of this kind documented in the literature.

of seventy new day care establishments in the province of Quebec (Conseil de la Famille, 1993).

Although the numbers of subsidized day care in Quebec was still modest, perhaps the greatest contribution of the 60's era was its expression of new ideas about women's employment and need for child care. In 1967 the federal government set up the Bird commission that gave voice to ideas about women's right to equal opportunity. As stated by Desjardins (2002) traditional family roles where children were the sole responsibility of parents were replaced by the idea that society must share responsibility for its children. They put forth the following recommendations for different types of day care that included day care located at parents place of work, home day care, and centers that opened and closed in correspondence with parents' working hours. They further recommended that the federal government in conjunction with the provinces establish rules for day care. Although the Bird commission's ideas were controversial to the times, the debate about equality of the sexes, the right of mothers to engage in paid employment and the need for day care was for the first time put forth for public debate (Desjardins). Armed with the hindsight of history, the ideas and recommendations of the Bird report have proved to withstand time. Today 73% of mothers aged 35 to 26 years of age, and 81% of mothers 30 to 34 years of age, with children under six years old, participate in the labor force (Institut de la statistique Québec, 2005). From today's perspective, women's employment has evolved from an expressed vision of "right" into a reality of the times, underscoring the need for child care. In addition the Bird commissions' recommendations comprise -to a large extent- the provincial government's expressed values, as well the

fundamental system of day care services as we know it today. (See Appendix A for day care services)

In “What We Can learn from the Quebec Experience” Tougas (2000) illustrates the principles upon which the 1997 reform that created affordable day care is founded. Just as the Bird commission voiced the idea that society must share in its responsibility for children, Tougas describes society’s shared love of family and children in stating “...at the heart of (the reform are) the most important values of our society: the meaning of family and love of children (p.92).” However Tougas adds to the original Bird Commissions’ idea by indicating that “love” is the driving force of this shared responsibility. Interestingly as well, historically the conservative-traditional and modern view underscore the significance of family but their ideas about its preservation is very different. For conservative’s, day care serving mothers engaged in paid employment represents the dissolution of family since mothers are no longer at home to care for their children. In contrast the more modern view upheld by the Bird commission and later by Tougas sees the supportive role of day care as reinforcing the strength of family.

The old saying that ‘history repeats itself’ holds true for the Quebec debate about day care. However the more recent version of this debate between liberals and conservatives was less divisive then in earlier times. Tougas (2000) tells us that in 1997 the conservative reaction was less vehement since parents who wished to stay at home and not opt for subsidized child care had the option of the refundable tax credit. However values associated with conservatism have also changed and may explain a less intense

conservative reaction. For example conservatism can be associated with traditional family values opposing maternal employment. Antithetical to this is conservatism that supports social policy promoting employment thereby discouraging social dependency.

Very likely the members of the Bird commission -the voices of fairly recent history - would be satisfied to know that today subsidized day care as an employability incentive measure, supports maternal employment. Thus while the members of that commission fought for women's right to work for a wage -and therefore were supportive of women who wanted to work- Tougas' position underscores the merits of this employability incentive measure from an employers', rather than a worker's perspective. For example employers know that lack of child care services results in absenteeism. In addition, the stress experienced by employees who lack reliable child care detracts from their productivity (Tougas, 2000). What Tougas avoids mentioning is that perhaps this employability incentive measure with its conservative appeal (that discourages social dependency) may create social pressure through expectation from social services that parents on social assistance engage in the labor market. Thus the Janus-face of affordable day care that supports maternal employment is day care advancing the conservative ideal of discouraging social dependency through women's employment.

Quebec's earlier history of day care was created initially as a response to protecting society's vulnerable children and secondly (as with the Saint-Enfant-Jésus) with the purpose of educating them. This is also echoed in Tougas' depiction of the reform's commitment to the principles of child protection and education. Regarding those at risk,

Tougas' vision of possibilities includes the idea of day care working in conjunction with other community organizations. This process should involve discussions and a "sharing of information" about "a child and his or her family" in order to decide upon interventions that will support a child's development (p.99). Regarding all children, just as the salles d'asile's founder recognized the value of education that supports children's future well being, Tougas views day care's educational components as a means of ensuring that children "...will benefit from a level playing field as they start off in life. (P.102)" Nor has Quebec forgotten the lesson of its earliest day cares, created for the purpose of physical protection since today day care must be a "safe environment" which now further includes "caring supervision" guiding children's development (p.102).

Today day care's value of accessibility distinguishes it from its predecessors. With the exception of the Saint-Enfant-Jésus day care -unique for its more comprehensive vision regarding the role of day care- and its intention to serve children from diverse social classes, Quebec's history was largely intended as a measure of last resort for children destitute by conditions of extreme poverty. Today Tougas describes values of inclusion in stating that "all children should have access" to subsidized day care. This includes children from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and special needs children. In order to ensure this Tougas maintains that services should be available in "sufficient number"(p105). However in her concluding remarks she ascertains that "it is too early to tell" whether the provincial government's day care system will be able to meet the values it aspires to (p.105).

PART TWO

I-Child care options and the reform

Prior to the reform day care fees of about \$18.00 meant that day care was unaffordable for most parents. Today the provincial government subsidizes parent's fees, and affordable child care at the cost of 7\$ a day exists for all children from birth to five years of age. The following child care types provide full time access and are provincially subsidized: child care centers, day care, and home child care (see appendix A)⁶. Certainly for working parents full time access to affordable child care services is an attractive child care option. However even affordable child care services due to its popularity is costly with respect to the time it takes to acquire access, and the patience required of parents for whom successful access is never guaranteed.

II- Differential access

Prior to the reform parent fees contributed for 50% of day care revenues. Tougas (2002) reported that post-reform parent fees accounted for only 20% of day care revenues and correspondingly parents paid 5\$ a day for these "reduced rate spaces" rendering day care services affordable and therefore very much in demand⁷. In January of 2004 the new provincial government increased day care fees to seven dollars a day for daycare (*Règles budgétaires pour l'année 2003-2004*, 2003). Nonetheless day care continues to be affordable for the majority of parents. Furthermore day care continues to be affordable to

⁶ Throughout this thesis I refer generally to the terms day care and child care services without reference to the day care types mentioned above, unless specified.

⁷ The new provincial government has not declared whether parent fees still account for only 20% of day care revenues. However day care spaces at seven dollars a day remains affordable. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that parents continue to contribute a much smaller percentage of day care revenues than government.

low-income parents who are entitled to additional subsidies or exemptions of fees. Quebec's affordable day care is available to children from birth to five years of age. Certainly post re-form day care emphasizing affordability and inclusion for all should have had a positive impact regarding access for families with low socio-economic status (SES).

The SES of children attending day care currently and prior to the reform indicates that affordable day care cannot necessarily be equated with day care that is inclusive. The situation in 2001, that is after the reform, reveals that 46.1% of parents earning less than \$20,000, 56.7% earning between \$20,000 and \$39,000, 68.9% earning between \$40,000 and \$59,999, 79.5% earning between \$60,000 and \$79,999, and 82% earning above \$80,000 annually attend regularly. ("Rapport d'enquête sur les besoins des familles en matière de service de garde éducatifs", 2001) This data acquired from a sample of 9,000 families illustrates a positive relationship between high SES levels of parents and day care access currently. Pence et al (1997) state that for the pre-reform year of 1988 the greatest percentage of children attending day care came from high-income families. Parent access to day care was also "common" for families whose income did not exceed \$35,000. Unfortunately this data does not specifically indicate regular day care access or reveal the percentage of parents whose SES was low-income. However it does reveal common parent access for income levels comparable to or inclusive of low-income.

Very likely easier access to a day care program uncluttered by popular demand was possible during day care's *pre-reform* days by an economic minority comprised of low-

income families subsidized or exempted from fees, or high income parents who easily afforded yesterday's higher fees. Low-income families in Quebec represent an economic minority. For example it is reported that for the year 2000 within Quebec only 15% of families with children less than 6 years of age had a net income between \$10,000 and \$25,000 and were therefore considered poor (Baril et. al. 2000).

The story of differential distribution of day care access post-reform and pre-reform appears to be one of striking contrast. Baril et al., (2000) state the obvious by reporting that *prior to the reform* the cost of child care services did not deter high income families from daycare access. Tougas (2002) points out that *prior* to the reform, a large percentage of middle income families could not afford daycare. Baril et al. seem to describe a middle class majority in commenting that *presently* Quebec's subsidized child care actually intends to support "educated professional women (with) a strong attachment to the labor market" (p.3). It is relevant to note that for the post-reform year of 2000, 63% of parents with children less than five years of age were not considered poor since their income was above \$25,000 (Baril et al). Therefore in contrast to Quebec's pre-reform days when day care was largely accessed by low-income or high-income families, day care is now affordable to an economic majority since it is largely accessed by parents whose SES does not fall into the range of low-income or high-income.

III-Provincial grants and subsidies

Grants

Currently as well as prior to the reform provincial grants have subsidized the cost of day care for different categories of parents. Day cares receive provincial grants that in turn subsidizes the cost of day care fees for various categories of parents. (Tougas, 2002) Prior to the reform the majority of parents paid an average of \$18.00 a day for day care and were not subsidized for fees. In contrast for the post-reform year of 2003 CPE's received \$37.54 and day care received \$28.64 for parent's daily fees. The parental contribution, commonly referred to as the "reduced contribution", was \$5 a day for day care. (Ministre de l'Emploi de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille, "Consultation 2003", 2003).

For the pre-reform years 1995-1996 the "Rapport annuel" (1996) for day care tells us that provincial grants for exoneration and financial aid, and underprivileged parents totaled \$111,497,251. In contrast for the post reform year of 1997-1998 exoneration and financial aid to parents totaled \$82,057,423,17.

The Reduced contribution's short history

In September 1997 the provincial government introduced its reduced contribution at 5\$ a day for children who were four years old by September 30th (Gazette Officielle du Québec, August 27th, vol. 129, No. 35). By September 1998, the reduced contribution was extended to children who were at least three on September 30th, (Regulation respecting reduced contributions, 1 September 1998), and by September of 1999, the reduced contribution was extended to all children of pre-school age (Regulation

respecting reduced contributions, 1 September 1999). In January of 2004 the reduced contribution increased to 7\$ a day. (“Règles Budgétaires pour l’année 2003-2004”, 2004).

Not all day care within the province of Quebec have been entitled to provincial grants currently, as well as prior to the reform. For example, despite the variation of day care types that have existed pre-reform and post reform, all can be broadly split into two categories, consisting of for-profit and non-profit day care. Unfortunately I have not been able to acquire official literature defining these day care types. However their descriptive titles certainly function as a kind of definition.

It seems unlikely that prior to the reform for-profit day care were eligible for provincial grants for low-income families. Evidence of for-profit day care’s pre-reform exclusion from grants can be found in the “Loi sur les services de garde à l’enfance” from 1993. For example it is stated that the minister will issue grants and further defines the child care categories that the law refers to including for example, home day care, day care, stop-over centers, and non-profit centers. In contrast post reform versions of this act do not distinguish between for profit and non-profit day care, yet also state that the minister is responsible for issuing grants (Act respecting child care centres and child care services, 1997, 2002, 2004).

Post reform, for profit day care has been largely though not entirely included as eligible for provincial grants. Out of the 12 day care in my sample, three were for profit, and received government grants for the reduced contribution, and well as further grants for

low-income families. One director of a for profit day care I interviewed explained that entitlement of grants is dependent upon the kind of permit held by a particular day care which either allows or does not allow for grants⁸. Correspondingly the “Regulation respecting reduced contributions”, which is inclusive of regulations stipulating exemption from the contribution, simply states that such regulations apply to a child who is occupying a place entitling the child care provider to a grant (Regulations respecting reduced contributions, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004).

Reductions and exemptions from day care fees/part-time access

Prior to the reform and currently all families on social assistance have been eligible for part-time free day care access. (“Regulation respecting reduced contributions, 2004”, “Règlement sur l’exonération et l’aide financière pour un enfant en service de garde”, 1995) However as already mentioned day care are generally unwilling to accept clients on a part-time basis and this is understandable. For example, directors explain that part-time access is administratively complicated since the provincial government demands that their day care be filled with the maximum amount of spaces allowed, yet not contain more than the number of children permitted on its premises⁹. This leads to problems when parents with part-time access suddenly want to switch their days. It also means having to coordinate different days for different clients. From the perspective of educators children attending part-time are less responsive to the routine of day care, and

⁸ All child care services in the province of Quebec must obtain a permit by applying in writing to the minister in charge of day care. Permits define services (for example child care center, day care center, nursery, stop over center etc... and subsequently the number of spaces it is entitled to (“regulations respecting childcare centres, 1998,1999,2000,2005 and “Regulation respecting day care”) and makes its services legal.

have more difficulty forming friendships with other children. Out of the twelve day care in my sample, only two accepted part-time clients who paid part-time fees. These directors were motivated to offer part-time services since they believed that parents had a right to part-time access.

Although part-time access has never been popular, prior to the reform when some day care were struggling to attract clients, they were also much more willing to accept clients on a part-time basis.

Reductions and exemptions from fees/full time access

Since the reform the provincial government has granted exemptions and reductions of fees for full time day care access to all low-income families on social assistance where parents are participating in a work study program or going back to school. This may also include recent immigrants who are recipients of social assistance taking language courses⁹ (Regulation respecting exemption and financial assistance for a child in day care, 2004). Prior to the reform however low-income parents who were working or studying were entitled to an exemption or reduction of fees for full time day care access only at home day care (Règlement sur l'exonération et l'aide financière pour un enfant en service de garde, 1995). (See Appendix A for child care definition)

⁹ The "Regulation respecting the reduced contribution", (2004) states that a permit holder is required to keep parent attendance cards for three years after a child has left day care.

¹⁰ Parents receiving unemployment insurance benefits are also eligible for exemptions and reductions of day care fees.

Informal protocol

The informal protocol consists of a verbal agreement between the CLSC and day care that allows low-income vulnerable families' free full time day care access and in some instances may facilitate priority for access.

The "Règlement sur l'exonération et l'aide financière pour un enfant en service de garde" (1995) is evidence that referrals and therefore the informal protocol took place prior to the reform. For example it is stated that low-income families eligible exemptions or reductions of day care fees were required to obtain a written recommendation from a representative of a local community establishment stating the nature of the psychosocial problem affecting the child. Moreover without day care access, the child would be removed from the family environment. In addition the family must be "eligible for the maximum amount of financial assistance..." available (section 38). However this does not mean that parents who receive referrals must also be receiving social assistance. Very likely then eligibility refers to parents' economic status. For example two of the low-income working parents I interviewed had received referrals. Post-reform versions of this law are almost identical.

Formal protocol

The formal protocol is comprised of an agreement involving signatures between the CLSC and child care centers and underscores a commitment by the day care to reserve 5% of day care spaces (per day care) for families deemed vulnerable. (Protocole CLSC-CPE, guide d'implémentation, entente-cadre et protocole-type, Mars, 2002). Reserving

spaces involves the actual granting of priority through CLSC referrals that, as with the informal protocol, must comply with the “regulations regarding the reduced contribution”. This formal protocol, implemented in 2002 by the provincial government is quite recent. Formal protocol referrals only commenced in September 2004 shortly after the time of my interviews with directors and represent the provincial government’s first supportive efforts recognizing the need to facilitate day care access for low-income vulnerable families in a context of limited spaces and high parent demand for day care.

IV-Insufficient spaces producing differential access

A critical factor that in my view has substantially impacted the socio-economic distribution of parental access to day care is Quebec’s day care reform implemented in 1997 creating affordable day care. Since 1997 the numbers of available day care spaces have steadily increased. Before 1997 the child care system for children aged 0 to 5 consisted of 78,000 spaces. In 1998 the 78,000 reduced rate spaces were “insufficient to meet... demand” (Tougas, 2002, p. 9). Tougas supports her claim in stating that the Quebec statistics bureau reported that 52.6 % of Quebec’s children did not use child care. However Tougas does not report on studies conducted regarding parents who wanted access to reduced rate spaces, yet were unable to obtain such spaces. To date I have been unable to find studies revealing such information.

In fact, reduced rate spaces have increased from 78,000 spaces in 1998 to 114,017 spaces in 2002 (Tougas, 2002) and 168,046 for 2003-2004 (Ministre de l’Emploi de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille, “Consultation 2003”, 2003). For the year 2003, the Institut de la

statistique Québec (2005) reports that in 2003, 368,920 children under five years of age resided in Quebec. The current provincial government in its continued effort to serve Quebec's youngest children has promised 200,000 spaces by March 2006 (Ministre de l'Emploi de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille, "Consultation 2003", 2003). Thus it may be that be with the progression of time and provincial promises kept, the gap between the number of reduced rate spaces and the children under five residing in Quebec begins to reduce. Unfortunately however the number of reduced rate spaces available currently (179,112) are not sufficient to meet the population that day care serves.

In consideration of the insufficient supply of reduced rate spaces it is possible that parents stressed by the condition of low-income may be particularly challenged by the unpredictability of successfully acquiring access to day care. For example poorly paid menial employment is unstable leaving parents without advance knowledge of their need for day care access. Moreover low-wage labor requiring low levels of skill, and little flexibility related to time spent with family detracts from parental capacity to spend time with children (Jackson and Scott, 2002). Yet when employed, the time constraints related to poorly paid employment likely create an acute need for day care easily accessed. It is also documented that the condition of low-income leaves individuals prone to the experience of depression and illness (Wiegers, 2002). Thus for low-income working parents faced with labor contexts that are unpredictable (detracting from their advance knowledge of need for day care), and working conditions that are rigid, searching for a space in day care where access is also unpredictable likely reduces the likelihood of acquiring access and creates additional stress.

Parents on social assistance who are neither working or studying represent another category of low-income parent unlikely to acquire day care access. Of this group single mothers representing 42% of female-headed families in Quebec head the majority of single parent households and women with young children are most likely to substitute work in the labor market for unpaid domestic work and rely upon social assistance (Baril et al.,1999). For example for the years 2000 and 2002 it is reported that 85% of single and two parent families whose children attend daycare, child care and home care are working full time, part-time or are studying (Ministre de la famille et de l'enfance, 2002) ¹¹.

It is most likely that differential access linked to stay at home parents on social assistance is a consequence of differential demand for day care. For example, parents on social assistance who are neither working or studying, due to being at home to care for their children may not explore the option of subsidized day care access.

Stay at home parents may be a silent minority unvoiced in their demand for subsidized day care. Pierce (2004) states that between 5 to 17 months of age children rapidly acquire motor, verbal, cognitive, emotional and social skills. As babies become "active toddlers" parents must develop new strategies for "comforting, supervising, and disciplining them". Typical to the experience of motherhood is dealing with difficult child behaviors. Moreover as babies become active toddlers mothers typically respond with "reactive

¹¹ The "Situation des centres de la la petite enfance et des garderies au Québec en 2001" is a report published by the minister of families and children regarding activities for day care, child care centers, and

coercivness” which is however strongly linked to depressed mothers including those living in family settings “prone to conflicts” (p. 6) While Pierce non-specifically recommends “strategies...curbing coercive” maternal behaviors and promoting “family harmony”, day care as an option for stay at home parents without advance knowledge of their need for day care, is unlikely consequent to day care contexts today (p.6). However stay at home parents with material resources, unlike those challenged by their economic situation -such as parents on social assistance- can afford non-subsidized child care options on a part-time basis. Thus subsidized day care as a conservative measure aimed at discouraging social dependency is insidious since every child’s entitlement to the learning experience of day care is a right denied to a segment of society is that silent and therefore anonymous.

The reasons why parents on social assistance who are neither working or studying are largely absent from day care also relates to provincial regulations stipulating that free access can be acquired, but part-time (Regulation respecting the reduced contribution, 2004). This conflicts with day care contexts where parent demand for day care exceeds the supply of reduced rate spaces. For example since the reform certainly day care can somewhat pick and choose its clientele. Tougas (2002) briefly mentions that each child center is “independent, with its own charter and regulations”(p.5). Possibly part-time child attendance doubles day care labor while cutting day care’s monetary compensation in half since low-income families cannot decide to pay for full time child attendance, and then choose to send their child to day care on a part-time basis. Two part-time children

home day care for the entire region of Quebec. The sample used comprises 95% of all child care services in

represent the economic value of one child attending daycare full time. Correspondingly the *Ministre de la famille et l'enfance*, (*Rapport d'enquête sur les besoins des familles en matière de services de garde éducatifs*", 2002) reports that 76.8% of children with day care access attend full time illustrating that part time day care access is uncommon.

In sum, in 1997 the provincial government's catch phrase "five-dollars-a-day" for daycare caught the public's imagination by highlighting daycare's affordability and subsequently its inclusive capacity (Stroick and Jenson, 1999, p.113). Ironically affordable day care has precociously challenged provincial intention. According to the literature low-income families have least access to recreational activity (Bertrand et. al., 1999; Ross, 1999). Certainly with respect to the data indicating access for low-income families in Quebec since the reform, the pattern of under-privilege continues as it pertains to Quebec's affordable day care.

the region of Quebec.

Chapter 2

Sources and Methods

In order to explore pre-reform and post differential access and its consequences I conducted interviews with day care directors, parents with day care access, and CLSC workers. Each of these groups was selected in order to explore the problem of differential access from different perspectives. I interviewed day care directors whose broad range of knowledge regarding parent access to day care would provide insight into how difference regarding neighborhood context has impacted pre-reform versus post reform access. My interviews with CLSC workers can be considered as an extension of director interviews, in the sense of extended information regarding how community institutions interact and their different roles impacting access for certain parents in low-income and not low-income neighborhood contexts. By interviewing parents it was my intention to explore personal experience related to how day care access was acquired, why parents wanted day care access, and in what way these factors were or were not influenced by parents' SES.

In addition to the nineteen interviews conducted with day care directors, CLSC workers, and parents, this thesis relies on available governmental documentation –statistics and regulations briefly described in the last section.

In order to conduct my research I was granted a research ethics certificate that requires the interviewer conduct research ethically. Ethical treatment includes informing participants about the research subject, what will be required of them during interviews,

and allowing participants to discontinue the interview at any time during the interview. Confidentiality is also ensured meaning that although the interviewer knows the identity of participants the interviewer shall not disclose it to others.

Interviews with directors

Why I interviewed directors

With the aid of day care directors I acquired information about family access to day care in Quebec. The daycare director corresponds to the “gatekeeper” utilized in qualitative research since she is invested with “informal or formal authority to control (family) access” to the “site” of daycare. As a consequence of the director’s position of “informal or formal authority” regarding parent access to day care the director imparted “the meaning of social action (that)...depends...(up) on the context in which it appears” (Neuman, p. 331). This includes for example, pre-reform versus post-reform day care “context(s)” impacting “the meaning of social action(s)”, regarding parent demand for day care, the kinds of parents who demand day care the most, why they demand day care, how they access day care, and the kinds of families accessing day care. More specifically for example, regarding pre-reform versus post reform parent demand for day care, the day care director is a witness to multiple details. This includes how many times parents call per week, per month, or per year requesting access, the urgent or relaxed sounds of parent voices on the telephone as they request access, and their individual reasons for wanting access. Initially therefore I wanted to interview directors because I reasoned that they were positioned to acquire a broad range of knowledge regarding parent access to day care.

Criteria for selecting day care

For the purpose of interviews I selected day care in which either one director, or two directors combined had knowledge of pre-reform and post reform contexts impacting parent access to day care. My selection, -for the purpose of understanding differential parent access, was also necessarily limited to for profit or non-profit day care that offered reduced rate spaces and did not orient their services to clients associated with a particular labor industry. Nursery and stop-over-centers were not included in my sample since they do not offer full time regular child attendance relevant to working or studying parents who need affordable full-time regular child care or low-income stay at home parents who may express a need for regular access to child care services. Nor do these day care types require full-time client access thereby excluding from access stay at home parents on social assistance eligible exemptions or reductions of fees for part-time access. I also chose not to include in my sample home day care services since parent-child access is influenced by factors that are different from the day care types mentioned above. For example, despite the fact that home day care is supervised by child care centers and therefore an extension of non-profit child care services new business operations are frequently generated but for only a short duration.

How I acquired interviews with directors

Initially I used the Yellow Pages and called day care in the region of Montreal. Once I had acquired several directors who had agreed to be interviewed, mostly at day care situated in areas that are not low-income I decided to use the provincial government's web that lists

day care by CLSC territory in order to selectively call day care situated in low-income areas. The day care directors interviewed were unknown to me prior to the interviews.

When speaking to directors of day care over the phone, I described my research and requested an interview. If the director agreed I then asked questions aimed at ensuring that each day care conformed to the criteria required for my sample. I also ensured directors who agreed to an interview that their anonymity was guaranteed. At the directors' convenience we set a time for meeting for the purpose of an interview.

My sample of directors

I interviewed 14 English-speaking directors, in 13 day care located in Montreal. In one day care I interviewed the current director, as well as an educator who had been the director prior to the 1997 reform. In one other day care I interviewed the director, as well as the assistant director who took on the professional role of director in the second installation. Four of these day care are situated in low-income areas.

It is probable that my sample of day care directors is distinct within the region of Montreal. For example the majority of directors I interviewed had knowledge of pre-reform and post reform parent access to day care. Typically their knowledge of pre-reform parent access to day care preceded the 1997 reform by several years. Therefore the majority of these directors knew their profession well and their day care were well established allowing them the luxury of time for an interview. In addition their willingness to participate in a lengthy interview indicates professional integrity since they

were genuinely concerned about the issue of differential access. It is my impression while most directors expressed concern about vulnerable children; directors with the capacity to problem solve challenging issues were less judgmental about client needs and therefore more capable of supporting access and offering quality services.

The interview

Interviews with directors lasted about one hour and a half. In some instances however directors were very communicative and eager participants in the interviewing process and interviews lasted two or two and half-hours. I tape-recorded each interview thereby ensuring that the information obtained during interviews could be reviewed and transcribed accurately.

Most of my interviews were conducted in English. Some of my interviews were conducted with directors who had difficulty expressing themselves in English, and therefore both the interviewer and the person being interviewed compensated by using a combination of both languages. However I was not able to detect any differences regarding content of information, or directors attitudes based upon whether or not their day care was primarily English or French

Reliability of data

Sometimes when I conducted callback interviews in order to clarify information inconsistency of information was discovered. For example I do not have precise numbers regarding referred families, families on social assistance or families receiving Parent Wage

Assistance (PWA) benefits who have access to day care in low-income communities¹².

However the big picture regarding family access to day care in low-income areas versus areas that are not low-income is more reliable. For example the categories of low-income families described above are almost entirely absent from day care situated in areas that are not low-income. During my interviews as well callbacks some directors also hesitated when asked how many families receive priority for access each September. For this reason in chapter 3, “the mechanics of access” when analyzing rate of turnover when taking into consideration number of priorities per day care I made certain to choose day care where directors responded with confidence and certainty regarding the numbers of priorities they had each September.

Although most directors reflected for some time when asked questions relating to pre-reform parent access to day care, the majority whose day care is situated in areas that are not low-income clearly recollected differences between pre-reform versus post reform access. This includes for example, remembering that parents with access were either very low-income and receiving subsidies or high income and therefore able to afford day care fees. However directors situated in low-income areas struggled to remember how many parents were referred or how many were on social assistance attending part-time. They did however recall that prior to the reform almost all of their clients were subsidized, and much fewer of their clients were referred.

¹² At the time of my interviews the PWA functioned as an additional subsidy for reduced rate spaces intended for low-income working parents. Two parent families were eligible if their total gross annual income was

Data collected from one director has been largely excluded from my research. At the time of our interview she had only recently acquired her position as director in this day care. During my callback interview I discovered substantial inconsistencies in the data I collected from her.

Interviews with parents

Why I interviewed parents

I interviewed parents because I wanted to know about their experiences searching for a space in day care and why they wanted or needed day care access and whether this information corresponded to the data collected from directors. I also wanted to know whether low-income parents facing the challenge of fewer material resources were more stressed by their experiences searching for a space in day care than parents who were not low-income.

Criteria for selecting my sample of parents

I wanted to know about parents' experiences searching for a space in day care and whether or not low-income parents experienced more stress in their search than parents who were not low-income. Therefore I interviewed low-income parents and parents who were not low-income whose children attended day care comparable to day care types where directors were interviewed.

\$15,000 or less and single parent families were eligible if their total gross annual income was \$21,820 or less. Recently the Work Premium has replaced the PWA program.

I interviewed parents who resided in the City of Montreal. Very likely parents' need for day care in a large city such as Montreal is more acute than in smaller regions in Quebec such as small towns. For example, larger cities attract immigrants from other countries, as well as from other areas in Canada who seek employment, or who pursue university level education. Such individuals are often without extended family and therefore have a much greater need for affordable child care services

How I acquired interviews with parents

Initially it was my intention to acquire a sample of twelve parents, six who were low-income and six of whom were not low-income. I wrote a letter describing my research and asked the directors I interviewed to circulate my letter to clients. However I only received two responses from parents, both of whom were not low-income. Since parents were unresponsive to my letter I decided to aim for a much smaller sample size of five parents¹³. Now I was searching for three low-income parents to participate in my research. I called directors whose broad knowledge of their clients included information about their economic status, and requested that they approach parents who they knew were low-income with my letter. However of course many of the directors I interviewed did not have access to low-income clients in their day care. Others pointed out that the low-income parents they knew would be unwilling to participate in an interview. In one instance a director situated in a very low-income community said that most of her low-income clients did not speak either French or English. Finally one director of a for-profit center situated in

¹³ This number is small but it will soon become obvious that despite its more limited use in contrast with directors, parents' experiences were unique and therefore would contribute meaningfully to my research.

an area that was not low-income confidently committed herself to the task of finding three low-income parents willing to participate in my research. I am very grateful to this director.

My sample of parents

I interviewed five parents, three who were low-income and two who were not low-income. One low-income parent was a single parent as well.

Neuman refers to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz who coined the phrase “thick description” meaning “a rich detailed description of specifics (p.347). Despite the small size of my sample of five parents I was surprised at the richness of the data I acquired regarding parent SES and the unexpected reasons why parents wanted day care.

Regarding the relationship between parental employment and parent demand for day care, the results reveal the unexpected. I expected for example that the educated middle class parents I interviewed who worked full time would have realized their expectations regarding day care access and planned-ahead in order to acquire access. Unexpectedly as well, for the full time working parents in my sample wanting day care access was not immediately obvious but involved a process of awareness as well as chance events exposing them to information about the benefits of day care for their child. Conversely I would have expected that the stay at home mom that I interviewed, would have been more casual about her demand for day care since she was available to provide child care for her own child. Particularly rich is her voice crystallizing the idea of every child’s right to learning at day care.

Certain results however were more predictable. More predictably the situation of low-income also created a more practical need for child care. Also searching for a place in day care was a long and frustrating process for some parents.

Qualifying my sample

I did not interview parents with older pre-school age children who have had their names on waiting lists but have not yet managed to find a space in day care. Information acquired from such a sample would have allowed me to know whether these parents used different and less efficient strategies for access than parents who had acquired access. I also would have liked to know how not having day care access has impacted their lives, and whether parents with low-income were more challenged by their lack of access. However I chose not to interview this category of parent since they would have been difficult to locate. For example unlike parents with access who were easy to locate through day care, these parents are less visible. Secondly however even when parents were easily located, they were not enthusiastic about participating in my research.

The interview

I interviewed parents at their residence or at my residence. Interviews lasted for approximately 40 minutes. I tape recorded interviews thereby ensuring that the information obtained could be reviewed and transcribed. One parent however refused to allow me to use my tape recorder. Therefore using pen and paper it was necessary to take notes. Four out of five interviews took place in parents' homes.

Reliability of data

Parent interviews reveal personal experiences related to searching for a space in day care and their reasons for wanting day care access and therefore comprises kind of data that is not dependent upon reliability in the usual sense. However my sample of parents is very small and perhaps the merit of the data collected can best be understood through Neuman who distinguishes between Clifford Geertz's "thick description" that is a "rich thick description of specifics" and data used for the purpose of "standardization" (p. 347). As revealed by the data, middle class working parents taking time to recognize day care need descriptively provides specificity to the more standardized recipe illustrated by directors whose day care are largely accessed by working parents who call day care from the moment they know they are pregnant. Thus the more standardized data derived from directors compliments data illustrating the personal experiences of parents.

Interviews with CLSC workers

Why I interviewed CLSC workers

My incentive for interviewing CLSC workers was consequent to my interviews with directors and acquiring information about CLSC support for vulnerable low-income families regarding day care access. I hoped that my interviews might provide information regarding why low-income families were almost absent from day care situated in areas that are not low-income yet acquired access to day care situated in low-income areas and whether this was a consequence of CLSC's approaching their protocol related work differently.

My interviews with CLSC workers took place after I had conducted director interviews and had acquired knowledge of differential access. Correspondingly with respect to the CLSC's capacity to support access for families in need of day care I anticipated correctly that the success or failure of such efforts to be strongly associated with the level of economic status typical to resident residing in neighborhoods within its territory.

Criteria for selecting CLSC workers, and my sample

Using the web site listing day care by CLSC territory I called two CLSC's and requested to speak to a professional with knowledge of the formal and informal day care protocols. I selected two CLSC workers who indicated to me that they were actively involved in work related to both protocols, one situated in a low-income territory and the other situated in a territory that was not low-income.

The interview

Interviews took place at the CLSC and lasted between one to one and a half-hours. I tape-recorded my interviews in order to review and transcribe the data I collected.

Reliability of data

The data reliably illustrates that CLSC's situated in two different territories used different approaches regarding their support for low-income families and day care access. It is highly probable therefore that within the region of Montreal CLSC methods of intervention are unique to its territory and therefore variable.

Institutionally the CLSC offers a variety of medical and psycho-social services to the residents of its territory. Due to the limited scope of my research my capacity to comprehensively understand the institutional forces impacting the CLSC's ability to support vulnerable families and day care access is limited. For example during one of my call back interviews I was informed that CLSC's who don't have medical doctors are less likely to attract a high volume of regular clients who trust CLSC staff and are familiar with CLSC services. Moreover it is also possible that medical practitioners identify health problems associated with economic and social challenges faced by some clients. This of course also impacts the CLSC's capacity to support vulnerable families and young children regarding day care access. There may be many other unknown factors impacting CLSC work on the protocol.

Document review

Statistics indicating day care attendance

Provincial statistics reporting on daycare attendance (Rapport d'enquête sur les besoins des familles en matière de services de garde éducatifs, 2002) and (Situation des centres de la Petite Enfance et des garderies, 2002), demonstrate that low-income families in the province of Quebec have less access to daycare than moderate or high-income families.

Day care regulations, day care Acts, and day care policy

I have briefly outlined how provincial grants, fees, and exemptions and reductions of fees function currently and prior to reform by using the following primary and secondary

sources. “Regulations respecting reduced contributions”, (1998,1999,2002,2004), “Règlement sur l’exonération et l’aide financière pour un enfant en service de garde” (1995), and “Regulation respecting exemption and financial assistance for a child in day care” (2004), Gazette Officielle du Québec, (1997), August 27th, vol. 129, No. 35, and day care Acts, “An Act respecting childcare centres and childcare services”, (1997, 2002, 2004) and “Loi sur les Services de garde à l’enfance” (1993) and day care policy as well as budget rules, Tougas, Jocelyne, “Reforming Quebec’s early childhood care and education: The first five years”, (2002), “Protocole CLSC-CPE, guide d’implémentation, entente-cadre et protocole-type”, (Mars, 2002), “Budget rules”, (2003-2004). Using pre-reform and post-reform versions of day care Acts I have also provided a brief summary of day care services currently and prior to the reform.

In sum I have interviewed directors in order to acquire a broad range of data regarding differential access. I have interviewed CLSC workers in order to add density to the broad spectrum of data collected from directors describing the problem of differential access as it pertains to low-income vulnerable families. My parent interviews provide detail illustrating both the expected and the unexpected regarding parents searching for day care and parent demand for day care.

Chapter 3

Understanding parent demand for day care

According to all directors, parents most urgently expressing need for access are full time working parents especially low-income parents who cannot afford to hire a baby sitter, and who don't have extended family willing or able to assist with child care. Parents without alternative child care options tend to be immigrants, single parents, and students. However in areas that are not low-income, directors reported that full time working dual couples and university students were most likely to urgently demand access. In lower income areas directors report that moms in unstable relationships that are often very young, and students pursuing secondary level education express most urgent need for access.

All of the directors I interviewed reported difficult experiences with parents who are frustrated and angry over their efforts to gain access to a place in day care. Some parents directed their anger at directors and threatened to call the police. Sometimes directors have received angry letters and complaints from parents asking why no space was available in their day care. Parents have also bribed some directors with money or presents. However most directors also report that such extreme parent reactions were most likely to occur immediately after the 1997 reform when parents had higher expectations of their immediate access to day care.

Parent anxiety while searching for a space in day care

The supportive role that many directors perform when parents call their day care seeking access likely reveals the emotional states of parents challenged by the uncertainty of successfully acquiring day care access. One director states she “talks to them, reassures them, is an outlet for them. You’re not forgotten, you’re still on our list, we’re doing the best we can.” Yet another director tells me, that she offers “tremendous emotional support” and that the “waiting list is her bible...she is creating connections with the people who call all the time, and she’s part of their support system. When parents call they know her.” She even writes down their names, where they live, just because she wants to be familiar with them. She says she wants to give parents the “personal touch”, indicating to me the spontaneous taking on of an expansive supportive role, beyond the norm. Yet another director urges parents to “keep in touch” and “be patient” and further explains the feelings of parents by commenting that “If child is not settled (it’s) devastating.... Parents are caring (and) child comes first”. While the term “settled” perhaps refers to a working parent’s need to know that a space at day care is available, it also suggests to me a need to know that their child is emotionally settled into their day at day care. Whilst many parents are “devastated” or “impatient” and seek reassurance from day care directors, directors’ responsiveness likewise indicate an emotional intensity of empathy. This is meaningful when one considers the extra labor that such empathy requires.

Strength of need regarding day care access

Director 4, whose day care is situated in a low-income area, explains that for some parents immediate access is urgently required. At first she tells me that everyone knows by now that a space in day care cannot be acquired immediately. Then she comments that “desperate” phone calls arrive at the last minute. I am baffled and want to know why she even receives such phone calls. She explains that some parents experience a sudden “change in personal situations”. For example, they may be uncomfortable with their current day care situation, or the relative that a parent depended upon for child care has suddenly become ill. Sometimes an employer unexpectedly demands that a parent begin work at an earlier date than expected.

Despite the small size of my sample of five parents, their diverse descriptions of the reasons why they sought out day care access reveals intensity of their desire for access. For example, Parent 4 further reveals how “changes in personal situations” amongst low-income working parents produces critical need for child care. This single mom initially tried leaving her child with relatives in the building, but they also had a child and both children did not get along. Consequently she had to leave her child with her child’s father and his parents at the other end of the city because she could not acquire access to day care close to where she lived. This low-income working mom could not afford a baby sitter, nor did she have access to a vehicle. Until day care was found close by, mom only saw her child on the weekend. In this instance mom’s participation in the labor market combined with limited child care alternatives interfered with capacity to be with her child and resulted in her urgent need for day care access.

A change in personal situation is also portrayed by Parent 3, a low income parent who originally intended to be a stay at home mom, confides that shortly after the birth of her third child she experienced post partum depression. She explains that her child had to “get away so she could reconnect with herself.... And then she has more to give to her child”. Her child did not understand why “mummy is always crying and screaming”. Day care access is she says, “survival for all of us”. Once her child was enrolled full time in day care, Parent 3 made the decision to work full time.

Strength of want and the learning experience of day care

It is true that a parent’s urgent need for daycare is frequently associated with parental participation in the labor market and subsequently a need to find child care options that promotes their child’s well being. Sometimes however a parent’s strong desire for day care does not begin with their employment situations and subsequently their practical need for child care. As one director states, “what’s ‘in’ now is educators and social development, not old lady down the street”. Yet another director points out that since the reform in 1997, “Through the media and the education efforts of day care there has been more recognition for the profession of educator and the value of play and learning”.

Parent 5, a low-income stay at home dual parent, and a recent immigrant who takes care of her family says that the child’s grandparents spoil her. It is important she says for her child to learn a routine. For example, she does not want her child getting up late in the morning or throwing her food on the floor when she eats. As a recent immigrant she is eager for her child to learn English which will give her a head start for elementary school.

More immediately she adds, she doesn't want her child giving that "dumb look" of incomprehension when people speak to her in English. However for this mom her child's integration into a new culture also means that her child should learn independence, as well as a sense of equality amongst the masculine sex.

Integration into Canadian culture, and the learning of a routine explains a mother's motivation for searching for a space in day care. However this mom's intense drive to realize goals for her child is also expressed in her feeling of anger that, "it's just so difficult to get into day care!" as well as the injustice that not every child will benefit from the learning experience of day care due to lack of spaces. Yet in her angry statement what I really hear her say is that her child narrowly missed the opportunity of learning at day care. Her little girl, not quite three has missed a lot of daycare due to having the flu. Yet her short exposure of one month to day care life has improved her behavior toward her younger sibling, and she has even begun to speak and understand English. Her mother says her child is more content. She eats well and sleeps well. Then mom struggles to justify her child's need for day care when mom is after all, at home. "If I was doing my job, would I neglect my job? But I was pregnant, and have two children and two old people...I have my work here. A husband to look after. I am so much committed to my family. But if I want my child to learn something..." I hear an urgency in mom's voice and words that at once acknowledges a working parents need for day care yet strongly underscores the right of all children to the learning experience of daycare. As mom states, "...in Canada, everyone is supposed to be equal, but with so few spaces available the

right to day care that everyone should have doesn't happen." This right amongst equal citizens is every child's right to the learning experience of day care.

However even working parents can experience a need for day care for reasons other than the fact that they are working. Two employed moms in dual relationships who are not low-income explain that initially after the birth of their child, they felt unwilling to give up their child to others. Both parents had watched other young parents with children who had and had not attended day care. They observed that children who attended day care are "better behaved", and less "spoiled". Parent 2, a dual parent who is not low-income met a couple near their street, and their child attended the day care she had attended when she was a child. She felt "intrigued", and contacted the day care immediately. She says that she "wanted to see the day care because that's where she (mom) went." Mom remembered the woman who founded the day care, who was an "incredible educator" and a "pioneer of the day care movement". This was a "marked experience, she had a terrific teacher, and this was a very liberating, thoughtful and creative place". This is what she wanted for her son. Moreover, her child's eventual access to this day care "felt like history repeating itself". Both parents experience a personal revelation, an awareness of a kind of learning they want for their young children. However for Parent 2 this personal revelation is particularly meaningful since it tells of her own profound early childhood experience that is now within reach for her child as well.

The parents in my sample who initially wanted day care access for reasons associated with the learning experience of day care, conveyed their strong feelings of satisfaction

regarding their child's day care experiences. This included the benefits of children learning to play with other children their own age so that they became more outgoing and friendly. One mom stated that "from a child's perspective, a child needs to be with other children, a child needs to socialize. As children play together they learn to share." One mom said, "sharing (is) very important" since it is a stage of early development. At day care they "went through all the stages of early development. Maybe at five or six (years of age without day care my child) would not know how to share. He's been in an environment sensitive to these stages". Day care also promoted child self-expression and emotional self-awareness. For example one mom reported that at day care specialists visited and used pictures in order to help children express feelings. Her children subsequently became "much more empathetic". Another mom states that daycare recognizes and supports individual child strengths. When the "child is curious...daycare "goes with child (and builds) self-confidence". Mom adds, she "doesn't know if it would have been the same if not for day care".

Although the parents I interviewed reveal that their employment is not necessarily associated with their initial intentions to seek out day care access, they do reveal that day care impacts employment, and that employment does intensify the need for daycare. Parent 4, a stay at home mom and a recent immigrant explains that when both her children are eventually enrolled in day care, she hopes to take French lessons in order to prepare her for her future participation in the labor market. Parent 5 who experienced post partum depression decided to return to work once her child acquired access to day care. Parent 1 states that she would have liked to work part-time and take care of her

child part-time, but part-time access to day care was not available. For this reason she works full time. One mom points out that day care is a “godsend....if I had not gotten into day care I would have had to turn down a lot of work”. Therefore day care access potentially impacts future aspirations for employment, whether or not mom currently is employed, and whether her employment is full-time or part-time.

Parents wanting choice

Parent 1, an employed dual parent who is not low-income has been searching for a space in day care for her second child because her first child has acquired access to a day care where child groups only begin at age three. She knows that she may have to send her child to home day care where access is more attainable. She doesn't like the idea of “...one caretaker with so many kids...one person...and hoping she's having a good day...I'd like to ask home day care worker, ‘why did you choose to do this’”. I reply “well, you could”. “Okay” says mom, “but I have to be excited that I have a spot and I'm not given a choice. I have to hope that she's wonderful, that she's a good person, and if she's not, what do I do? Go to work and cry every morning¹⁴.” Although Parent 1 does not fall into the categories of low-income single parent, or student, her anxiety about

¹⁴ Different opinions exist regarding the value of home day care. For example, sometimes parents are reluctant to leave their children in the care of “semi-professionals” with fewer qualifications than day care educators. Depending upon how many children are in the care of this semi-professional home child care provider, she may also be alone supervising children which also creates anxiety for parents. In addition since the home day care provider is also a mother working with her child and other children in her home, personal family concerns may become central in this child care setting. Thus the concerns of private life take over the needs of the children in her care who are not her own children. Yet others passionately defend the merits of home child care arguing it is less institutionalized than day care or child care centers and young children can adjust to day care life at their own pace. Potentially this more relaxed environment benefits early child development. For example if children are tired they can nap, if they are hungry they can eat. Certainly some home child care providers provide an outstanding service, but unfortunately home day care is prone to more variability regarding quality of services.

acquiring access is evident and functions to highlight the intensity of stress that parents with few material resources must experience when facing the challenge of searching for a space in day care.

Parent 1, born and raised in Montreal is not lacking a support network of extended family in case the need arises. Like other parents I interviewed she was unwilling to leave her children with grandparents on a regular basis. She explains that her mother, though still young should not have to stay home to care for her (mom's) child, without pay. She quips, "Should I pay her seven dollars a day?" Although grandmother has said that she is willing if there is no choice. Besides, she lives too far away, -although her husband could drive her if need be. Mom further ponders and then adds; "...although she's not as patient as she used to be..." Mom feels that her parents should not be burdened with the responsibility of child care. As one director I interviewed who was also a grandmother pointed out, grandparents today sometimes need to work as well. Arguably even when grandparents don't need to work they may have their own leisure activities planned, and may not be willing to regularly perform the role of child care.

This unwillingness to expect grandparents to perform the role of child care is perhaps best explained by directors who report that prior to the reform day care was not an elevated need. Day care cost more so what a child learned was less important than the cost of day care. Moreover stay at home parents didn't necessarily feel that they needed day care. Whilst today, Parent 1 reveals her unwillingness to bring mom in from Montreal's suburbs, prior to the reform parents with lower to lower middle class income

would “bring mother in (all the way) from Italy”. Perhaps today, within the context of affordable day care the expectation of regular child care support from grandparents (who may also participate in the labor market, or may be enjoying their retirement) has perhaps begun to deteriorate as a normative expectation. Therefore parents may feel a deep sense of discomfort about asking their parents to perform this role. This change in normative expectations of extended family has possibly intensified parent demand for day care.

While for some parents grandparents as a child care choice is problematic, and directors report that many parents simply don’t have extended family for the purpose of child care, choice regarding kind of day care remains limited in a context of high demand. To recall, Parent 1 expressed her lack of choice through her anxiety about placing her child in home day care even, (to repeat) with grandparents available for child care if need be. Similarly Parent 5, a stay at home mom with a strong desire to expose her child to the learning experience of day care tells me that initially she had enrolled her child in a day care that turned out to be unacceptable to her. Everyday when she went to pick up her child, her child was crying and the educators were unresponsive to her child’s needs. The toys and the children’s rooms were dirty, and there were few activities. Mom says that she felt like a bad mom. And yet, Parent 5, also had another child care choice. As a stay at home mom she might have chosen not to leave her child at a day care until one that was acceptable to her was available. Yet her decision perhaps reflects an active rather than passive response to lack of choice and therefore choices’ significance for her. She was going to at least try this day care in the hope of realizing her learning goals for her child. “For some time” she says, “I thought my child would never have access to daycare.”

According to directors, parents should have the right to choice regarding child care. This includes the right to choose which day care you want. Of course while Parent 5 would have eventually used her option as a stay at home mom to take her child out of an unacceptable day care, one director points out that parents “take the place they have, even if the day care is not high quality”. She further explains that “lack of quality is unacceptable because this (negatively) impacts child development”. She advises parents to take their child “out of bad day care, but they don’t because they have to work”. Again while parents with alternative child care choices are deeply distressed by their limited choice regarding child care, one merely needs to take a small leap of imagination to imagine the distress of a parent without choice.

Directors reveal other kinds of choices that parent ideally should enjoy. To recall, Parent 1 would have liked to stay home part-time and work part-time, but could not find part-time access to day care. One director explains that, “at day care the opportunity for socialization...being with other children the same size... is unique. But also parents are missing their child’s first step.” Thus part-time access potentially allows parents time with their child but at the same time exposes children to the “unique” opportunities available at day care.

I have demonstrated that parents searching for a space in day care potentially experience great anxiety within a day care context of limited spaces and that some directors to their credit are quite supportive of parents despite the extra work that this involves! Such

anxiety is experienced most acutely by low-income parents without alternative child care options and with limited choice or no choice regarding which day care their child acquires access to, but is also experienced by parents who are not low-income with alternative child care choices. Parents' strong desire for daycare -also experienced by parents with alternative child care options - are produced by their wish to expose children to the unique learning opportunities available at day care, and moreover as Canadian citizens who are equal, this is every child's right. This contrasts with pre-reform parent demand for day care, which was largely influenced by whether or not parents could afford daycare. I have also argued that possibly the urgency of parent demand currently has intensified since the expectation that extended family perform the role of child care is no longer normative.

Chapter 4

The mechanics of access

I-General access

Obstacles to access

For the vast majority of parents calling day care and placing their name on the waiting list is a first and necessary step if they are to access day care. Directors report that the length of their waiting lists can range from 60 to 1200 names and in most cases time for access ranges between two and four years. Only two directors with short waiting lists report that parents may wait as little as one year for access. However short waiting lists reflect the fact that some director's "manage" their lists. For example, one director (with only a small number of spaces in her day care) points out that since there are only three or four places available in her day care in September she discourages parents from putting their name on the list. She also does a "needs assessment" in order to gage "her needs as well as a child's needs" by informing parents about child discipline and the day care's policy of not accepting children who are ill. She further asks parents to explore the philosophy of her day care. When parental expectations fail to meet day care expectations parents are excluded from her day care list. Yet another director begins a new list every year and holds a meeting for the new group of parents on her list. From the perspective of parents, a new list every year becomes a fresh chance to acquire access to this particular day care and meeting the day care director and staff is an opportunity to become informed about their child's day care education. From the perspective of the director whose intention is to

enable parent access to those most responsive to their child's education, parents who demonstrate unresponsiveness are certainly excluded from her parent list. This reflects the strong likelihood that in a situation where parent demand for day care exceeds the supply of spaces directors genuinely want to ensure that parents who eventually acquire access to their day care are involved in positive ways with their child's day care education. At the same time it also reveals a small part of the story about parents seeking access to day care. In some instances parents are lucky just to get onto day care lists.

Prior to the reform directors report differences in waiting list size or simply did not remember the size of their waiting list. For those who did remember waiting list sizes ranged from no waiting list at all, waiting lists that were "healthy" and waiting lists that were only half the size of current lists. However short waiting lists...were simply that, - short, and meant that parents could acquire access to day care quickly. Of course no waiting lists meant that parents could access day care immediately but this situation tended to exist in for-profit day care without provincial grants, meaning that low-income working parents and parents receiving social assistance were not entitled to a reduction or exemption from daily fees. However no director reported a waiting time longer than one year.

Currently directors recommend that: parents "call everywhere" and call the minute an expectant mother is pregnant or sometimes, not to call the minute mom is pregnant because then the list becomes too long and contains names of children who might not exist. Directors don't want to call back parents telling them a space is available when

mom never gave birth. This said one director becomes somewhat embarrassing. One mom I interviewed describes her telephone conversation with a director who "...wanted to know her child's birthday and when she discovered that mom was still pregnant said, "Gee you're calling early." Mom responded, "...but I was told that if I didn't call early I wouldn't get in!" It seems that as parents make their calls to many directors, they face a degree of contradiction. Moreover while some day care may understandably discourage parents calling before their child is born from a parents' perspective the urge to start calling from the time that mom knows she's pregnant in order to secure a day care space is also understandable.

While short waiting lists may indicate lack of access to even a list, long waiting lists do not necessarily indicate greatest length of time for acquiring access. As already mentioned parents will put their name on multiple day care lists. Therefore long lists don't reflect the true number of parents who still want access to a particular day care. On occasion when directors finally call parents to inform them that a space is available, the parent cannot even remember calling the day care and has already managed to resolve their child care needs.

For the purpose of understanding the relationship between the length of waiting lists and amount of time for access I examined the longest day care lists in my sample in order to be certain that these lists had not been 'managed' by directors. One day care had a waiting list of 1200 and average waiting time was two and a half to three and a half years. Three day cares had a waiting list of about 1000 and the time range for access was two to

four years. The shortest list of this group was 524, and the waiting time was about three years. If one considers that day care serves children from birth to five years of age, two years is a reasonable waiting time provided that a parent begin calling from the moment they know they are pregnant, while four years indicates the impossibility of access. Therefore it seems that length of list does not necessarily impact length of time for access.

Of course parents may feel encouraged to know that long waiting lists do not necessarily indicate unreasonably long waiting periods for access. Unfortunately however one must not confuse length of time for access as a guarantee that all parents who place their name on a waiting list will eventually acquire access. One director with a waiting list of 525 parents and an average waiting time of three years points out that ninety-nine percent of parents on her list will never acquire access. Yet another director with a waiting list of 60 parents reports that it only takes one to two years to acquire access but comments that chances are that those on her list won't get in. Therefore the amount of waiting time for acquiring access to day care may only apply to the limited amount of parents who successfully acquire access.

While acquiring access is challenging it's also to a large extent unpredictable. According to directors even when parents are lucky enough to receive a phone call from directors telling them that a space in day care is available their child must be a particular age by September. For example if the child is to be placed in a group of three year olds, then that child must be three by September. This is stipulated by the "Regulations respecting

childcare centres” as well as the “Regulations respecting daycare centres”. As one day care director states access is a “crap shoot”. She explains, “ If I lose a three year old, ...another child (of the right age) may have been on my list for months, or from birth...(access is about) being at right place at right time”. In this instance the child on the list eligible for access, is not necessarily the next child on the list. Therefore the significance of list length must be understood relative to a child’s age as well. It is also important to know that this particular director shortens her list, which is only sixty parents long. Logically if the list contained one thousand parents, no child could acquire access within just a few months even if that list contained the names of a number of parents no longer seeking day care access.

Long waiting lists combined with the length of time it takes to acquire access to a space in day care results in parents feeling quite possessive about their day care space. Directors’ report that the only time parents let go of a space is when a family leaves the city. Today parents know that if they leave a day care simply because they have moved to another part of the city, they simply will not acquire access to another day care within a reasonable period of time, -or at all. Consequently many parents who change residences must face the time consuming inconvenience of traveling longer distances in order to bring their child to day care. Furthermore this in turn lowers the turnover rate of new children acquiring access to day care. It also sharply contrasts with pre-reform days when many directors claim that parents would change day care often, if for example they moved from one part of the city to another, or if they found another more affordable day care in their neighborhood.

How turnover works-spaces per day care, priorities, child group sizes

Despite the inefficient mechanics of access new children manage to enter day care each September. Using my sample of day care I explored impact of turnover upon the following factors; number of spaces per day care, number of priorities each September per day care, and child group sizes. Turnover, meaning new families acquiring access each September, (according to my definition) does not include children who have priority for access, meaning a) children who are automatically in, or b) children placed ahead of the regular list. Children granted priority always include siblings of children already in day care, and may also include those referred by the CLSC, special needs children, alumni, or staff children. Regarding number of spaces per day care, each CPE installation must not contain more than 80 children at one time. (Regulation respecting childcare centres, 2004) Although none of the day care I visited contained more than 80 children, the “Regulation respecting day care centres” (2004) does not indicate a maximum number of children allowed for day care.

All of the directors I interviewed report a certain number of priorities granted to families each September. Children with priority include for example staff children and siblings of children already in day care. Sibling priority is unique amongst others since all directors I interviewed reported that sibling access is guaranteed. This way parents don’t have to search second day care for subsequent children, or travel to different parts of the city in order to drop their child off at day care and pick them up again in the evening. Amongst all of the day care in my sample, siblings generally comprised that largest number of priorities. However one day care whose child age groups only begin at three years of age

reported very few siblings, and therefore very few priorities. Other kinds of priorities such as staff children or alumni (the children of parents who once attended a particular day care) and CLSC referrals may or may not be granted amongst the day care in my sample. Even when such priorities are granted, access is not guaranteed but is more likely to happen.

I shall explore how number of spaces per day care, priorities per day care, and child group sizes impact turnover. Viewing child group sizes is the first step toward computing turnover (the math is quite simple). For example, Table 1 shows that day care 3 (D3) has 60 spaces and 2 priorities. Only 9 children leave in August leaving few new day care spaces available for September.

Using data from all day care, I have observed the following regarding *number of spaces per day care* and turnover. As indicated in table 1 two out of the four day care with highest turnover, (D8 and D11) have high number of spaces as well, 78 and 80. In contrast out the six day care with lowest turnover, the highest number of spaces is D5 and with 72 spaces and D7 with 75 spaces. The remaining four day care with low turnover (D9, D12, D3, D1) have 60 or less spaces. Therefore number of spaces per day care may impact upon turnover.

I have observed the following regarding *number of priorities* per day care and turnover. Three day care (D4, D6, and D8) with highest turnover also have a low number of priorities ranging between 1 and 6. Regarding day care with lowest turnover (D12, D5

and D7) all have a high number of priorities as well, ranging between 12 and 21. However (D3) also with low turnover has in addition, a low number of priorities of just 2. Since in most instances few priorities resulted in high turnover and many priorities resulted in low turnover it is possible that priorities per day care is one factor impacting turnover.

As I shall demonstrate day care is unique regarding the combinations of factors impacting turnover. For example I wanted to know whether day care with *high number of spaces* and *high number of priorities* also had a reasonable turnover. Table 1 shows three day care (D5, D7, and D 11) with higher number of spaces and higher numbers of priorities per day care. Day care spaces range from 72 to 78 and priorities ranged from 15 to 20. Out of these, two (D5, and D7) have low turnover, but one day care (D11) had a high turnover of fifteen. Therefore high number of spaces per day care does not necessarily cushion the impact of high number of priorities.

My exploration of the data has led me to realize more than one factor influences turnover for each day care. For example, a careful examination of the day care situation reveals that a large number of spaces per day care does not necessarily cushion the impact of high number of priorities. On the other hand, the distribution of spaces amongst various age groups may impact turnover as exemplified by two day care with comparable number of spaces and priorities but variation regarding turnover. For example Table 1 shows (D11) with 30 spaces once the oldest group has left for primary school and 15 priorities, has 15 spaces left for new families each September, which is half of its overall day care

spaces. In contrast (D7) has 20 spaces left for new children only 4 spaces left for new families each September which comprises a negligible number of total day care spaces. High turnover for (D11) is impacted by a small number of child groups that are large creating large entry and exit groups. In comparison (D7) has small entry and exit groups, and numerous small groups. Therefore how child groups are organized appears in this instance to impact turnover.

Until now my discussion of turnover has been inclusive of all child ages for day care. However it is important to observe in table 1 that in some instances large child groups only begin at older ages. Therefore parents with older children are more likely to acquire access to these day care then parents with very young children.

Table 1- Day care organized by descending number of turnover

D 6

No. of spaces	60
Child Group size & age	(10) 0-2 years (6) 1.5 -2 years (8) years (16) 3 years (18-20) 4-5 years
Priorities	5-6
Turnover	20 + 4 <i>part-time places</i> = 24

D 8

No. of spaces 80

Child group size & age (10) 0-17 mnths (16) 1.5-2 years (16) 2-3 years
(18) 3-4 years (20) 4-5 years

No. of priorities 3

Turnover 17

D 4

No. of spaces 36

Child group size & age (16) 3 years (20) 4 years

No. of priorities 1

Turnover 19

D 11

No. of spaces 78

Child group size & age (24) 2 years(24) 3 years(30) 4 years

No. of priorities 15

Turnover 15

D 10

No. of spaces 80

Child group size & age (16) 1.5 years (20) 2 years (24) 3 years
(20) 4 years

No. of priorities 9

Turnover 11

D 3

No. of spaces 60

Child group size & age (4) 6-7 months (4) 1 year (5) 18 months
(6) 2 years (6) 2.5 years (7) 3-3.5 years
(9) 4 years (9) 4.5 years (8) 3.5 years

No. of priorities 2

Turnover 7

D 1

No. of spaces 60

Child group size & age (13) 1.5 years (15) 2-3 years
(16) 3-4 years (16) 4-5 years

No. of priorities 10

Turnover 5

D 7

No. of spaces 75

Child group size & age (10) 1 year (6) 1.5 years (7) 2 years
 (8) 2.5 years (8) 3-3.5 years (16) 3.5-4 years
 (20) 4-5 years

No. of priorities 16

Turnover 4-6

D 9

No. of spaces 66

Child group size & age (8) 1.5 years (12) 2-3 years (16) 3 years
 (30) 4-5 years

No. of priorities 8

Turnover 5-6

D 5

No. of spaces 72

Child group size & age (16) 18 mnths-2 years (16) 2.5-3 years
 (20) 3-5.3 years (20) 4.5 years

No. of priorities 16

Turnover 4

D 12

No. of spaces	56
Child group size & age	(16) 1.5 years (16) 2 years (24) 3 years
No. of priorities	21
Turnover	3

Another factor worth mentioning is that part-time access, meaning that children attend part-time and pay part-time fees supports a more efficient use of spaces. For example two children take up just one space. Therefore as long as parents' schedules can be combined and are predictable, this use of space is workable.

In sum, today's short waiting lists create a situation where parents may not even acquire access to day care lists whereas prior to the reform short waiting lists meant that parents could access day care immediately or within a relatively short period of time. Currently long waiting lists often result in most parents never acquiring access to certain day cares since even predictable waiting times don't guarantee access. This is in contrast with pre-reform days when length of waiting lists was variable and long waiting lists meant that another day care's short waiting list was just a few phone calls within reach. However currently parents who call many day care from the moment their child is conceived will likely hit upon a few where efficient organization of child groups by age, or large number of day care spaces with few priorities enables access by producing reasonable turnover. It

seems likely therefore that such parents will eventually acquire day care access within a reasonable period of time.

II Access and /CLSC referrals

I interviewed only two CLSC workers, but their contrasting descriptions of services linking the CLSC to CPE's reveal that within the region of Montreal, the capacity of the CLSC to assume a supportive role regarding day care access for low-income vulnerable families is variable.

My findings reveal difference with respect to whether or not each CLSC successfully reached the majority of vulnerable families in need of day care within their territory. For example CLSC #2 that provides services for surrounding low-income areas reports that their territory contains 1500 children of pre-school age, and 600 CPE places have been filled. However two CPE's were employment related installations and therefore most clients with access did not reside within this CLSC's territory. This means that approximately 35% of the children in her CLSC territory have a place in day care. Despite the fact that the majority of children in her territory did not have a place in day care, she nonetheless expressed her good feelings about their CLSC's outreach in her comment that, "Compared to other territories her CLSC is reaching a large proportion of the population". Correspondingly out of nine CPE's in her territory, all participate in the informal protocol, and eight have begun work on the formal protocol.¹⁵ In contrast CLSC

¹⁵ Two CPE's were not participating in the formal protocol because they served employees from a specific labor industry. However they did take referrals whenever they could. For example accepting referrals was more likely during the summer months when many of their clients were away on vacation.

#1, servicing fewer low-income areas reports that with respect to overall CLSC services for families with young children she is less confident about outreach and states that “we hope that we get most people, but a lot will never walk through the door”. This indicates that for this CLSC referrals for day care are certainly not numerous and fail to meet a large segment of the population in need. For example, out of fourteen CPE’s in this CLSC territory, only five participate in informal agreements.

The two CLSC workers I interviewed reveal CPE responsiveness toward protocol agreements and convey consensus and collaboration, versus resistance. CPE resistance is largely associated with the fact that these children are “labeled” as being difficult and the belief that CLSC “will dump...child on day care without (support) services”. This concern was also expressed by a few of the directors I interviewed. CPE’s also worry that these children require a lot of extra work, and that the subsidies are therefore not sufficient. CPE’s also express distrust of the provincial government who they feel may not subsidize unfilled spaces that have been reserved for vulnerable families and dislike the fact that it takes one year to receive their subsidies. In contrast CLSC #2’s community worker reports that even though CPE’s did express concern over the method of provincial funding, “everyone was happy....(since they) recognized that it is more difficult for vulnerable families to acquire access to CPE’s.” Moreover, with respect to concerns about provincial funding, a meeting was held and individuals chosen for the task of acquiring information about how funding works.

This collaboration versus resistance phenomenon may be explained by the history of relationships existing between the CLSC's and the day cares existing within its territory. For example, CLSC #2, situated in a low-income territory describes their pre-reform role as collaborators in the very birth of the day cares in their territory as they helped search for land and buildings for new day cares. This contrasts rather sharply with CLSC #1 that is not situated in a low-income territory and has had no history of collaboration with CPE's. It may be possible therefore that in territories where low-income vulnerable families are a visible majority the CLSC's institutional efforts have focused upon meeting the needs of the majority. However in territories where low-income families are less visible, CLSC services are less focused on meeting their needs.

Sometimes, a history shared between the CLSC and the CPE's in their territory results in shared concerns as well. The community worker at CLSC #2, -situated amongst low-income neighborhoods- explains that prior to the reform they would refer families to drop in centers, which struggled to survive financially, and were therefore grateful for the referrals. Children attended part-time for only two or three dollars a day, and this gave moms at home a break, and gave children contact with other children their own age. However in 1997 most of the stop over centers became CPE's. Families lost their place in day care since even five dollars a day was more costly, and unaffordable in contrast with the sporadic two or three dollars previously required of them. In addition while these stay at home parents only required part-time access, most CPE's only accepted full time access. This CLSC community worker further explains that the lives of these low-income families were less structured, and their children were sick more frequently making it

difficult for them to adapt to the structured routines of day care. For example this includes having to arrive at day care by nine AM, and attending day care consistently over an extended time. Therefore both the CPE's and the CLSC shared concerns by recognizing that access to day care was increasingly difficult for these families and were therefore motivated to participate in the protocol.

However the difference between CPE resistance versus cooperation may also be associated with the different approaches of support CLSC's offer CPE's with referred children which can be described as pro-action versus non-intrusion. For example, the social worker at CLSC #2 says that support for CPE's occurs only when requested. She explains that this non-intrusive approach is based upon the belief that although problems often occur, CPE professionals are able to resolve them on their own. Typically out of respect for the child and family the phone calls that CLSC social workers do receive when problems arise are anonymous. In contrast CLSC #2 has a policy of regularly phoning CPE's with referred children in order to identify problems and quickly find strategies for dealing with them. Moreover CLSC #2 reports the use of various kinds of professionals with specialized expertise from the CLSC, or from other community centers that work alongside educators in order to identify and problem solve difficulties in the classroom. However CLSC #1 reports that when problems arise in the classroom, a social worker may visit CPE premises in order to support an educator or director who is "burned out" but never visits classrooms where problems are occurring. In my view that, CLSC #1 views their services and CPE services as separate domains of professional

expertise. In contrast CLSC #2 pro-actively collaborates with CPE's and other community organizations in order to achieve the integration of referred children.

Both CLSC workers, as well as most directors I interviewed indicated that practicing formal and informal protocols depended upon the willingness of CPE's. However some directors -despite their willingness to grant vulnerable families priority- reported that they had never been approached by the CLSC for this purpose. For example, one director was excited about beginning work on the formal protocol and had never in the past been approached regarding the informal protocol agreement. This suggests that the formal protocol may function to create new collaborations between the CLSC and CPE's that enable day care access for vulnerable families. However two other directors had not been approached by the CLSC in their area regarding their participation in either the formal or informal protocol. This indicates the likelihood that there are regions in Montreal where the CLSC simply may not engage in protocol related activities with the CPE's in their territory making day care access for vulnerable families unlikely.

In sum both CLSC's reveal variability regarding their levels of involvement in both formal and informal protocol agreements with the CPE's in their territories and corresponding their capacity to assume a supportive role regarding low-income families and day care access. This strongly suggests that within the region of Montreal the capacity of the CLSC's to assume a supportive role regarding access for vulnerable families is likewise variable.

The two CLSC in my sample are antithetical regarding their capacities to acquire CPE protocol agreements. To recall one CLSC has acquired the collaboration of all of the CPE's in its territory, while the other has acquired no formal agreements, and only very few informal agreements. This suggests that at least in these two CLSC territories -and likely in many territories- CPE resistance or collaboration is largely a by product of: their history of collaboration with CLSC's creating shared concerns for vulnerable families, and as well levels of support that CLSC's offer CPE's with referred children. This also reveals the potential institutional power of CLSC's to impact CPE attitudes toward the protocol. It is also possible that in territories where low-income vulnerable families are not a visible minority, the power of the CLSC to impact CPE attitudes toward the protocol is weakened by its inexperience in meeting the needs of a non visible minority within its territory.

Chapter 5

Successful and less successful parents

Day care is filled with children whose parents managed to successfully acquire a place at day care. This chapter addresses the question, “who are these successful parents?” As shown in chapter 3 for the majority of parents calling day care ahead of time is key to successfully acquiring access. Therefore using data from directors, parents, and CLSC workers I shall discuss which parents are most likely to be aware of the need to call day care ahead of time, and why they likely have this knowledge. I shall also examine how CLSC referrals function in less privileged areas versus more privileged communities in order to further explore the possible reasons why disparity exists regarding access for low-income families in both community types.

More privileged neighborhoods

In neighborhoods that are more privileged all directors reported middle to high-middle income statuses amongst parents who were employed or studying at graduate levels. In three day care parents who were graduate students also tended to be recent immigrants without alternative child care in the form of extended family. Certainly working parents whose income levels range from middle-low to middle-high incomes are likely engaged in employment that is predictable, allowing them to plan ahead for their child care needs. Moreover parents with stable and predictable kinds of employment, or graduate students are likely to read newspapers and are informed about current events. In addition through their professional or student activities they are more likely to have acquaintances that inform them about day care access currently. Therefore in neighborhoods that are more

privileged parents with access are largely homogenous regarding their income status and educational status.

Quite strikingly the results of my data indicate that low-income families are almost entirely absent from day care situated in more privileged neighborhoods. Directors' knowledge of the income status of their clients can be categorized according to provincial grants a day care receives for clients with referrals or parents on social assistance¹⁶. Since such parents were typically absent from day care in more privileged neighborhoods I asked directors to tell me whether they observed other signs of poverty amongst clients. Clients who could not afford to pay 7 dollars a day for day care is a clear indicator of low-income. Directors occasionally identified one client who could not afford fees. Regarding the (PWA) most directors failed to recommend it and therefore did not know whether parents with access were receiving it¹⁷. Parents who "don't have much" (a much less accurate indication of income status) regarding nice clothing, or a new car for example were typically not present, or comprised one or two clients. Directors generally knew parents who were students studying at a postgraduate level, and perhaps faced a degree of financial challenge yet were not (according to directors) economically vulnerable.

¹⁶ Not all referrals are from the CLSC but may also be derived from social assistance, unemployment insurance, or Youth protection.

¹⁷ Unlike other kinds of subsidies for parents, funds from the PWA were sent directly to parents who paid day care themselves. For this reason directors were not directly involved in the PWA, and therefore were less likely to be informed as well.

When directors in more privileged neighborhoods were asked to explain the absence of low-income families in their day care typically they struggled to explain this phenomenon. One director took her time to ponder then finally expressed her “sense” that parents who are “doing well... get in because they have information (about day care access) at the beginning...(they, work, have friends, and will know early how system works”. Similarly this director had difficulty explaining the absence of immigrants since “some have been here for a while (but) still don’t know about waiting lists. Maybe they don’t know they will need day care. (the child will go to primary) school, but (parents) don’t think of day care”. Another director with almost no CLSC contact described the plight of very recent immigrants in commenting that, “they are the ones that have no clue about waiting lists...they haven’t been in Canada that long...it’s heart breaking...(they) will never catch up the time that they lost.” It seems many low-income parents residing in more privileged neighborhoods are not informed about day care access today.

Directors of the five day cares in more privileged neighborhoods¹⁸ report that prior to the reform low-income parents acquired access even when they were required to pay a

¹⁸ With respect to pre-reform parent access for day care in more privileged communities, I shall describe my sample in order to clarify what is known, as well as eventually underscore certain questions that remain unanswered. Eight day care directors interviewed were not situated in less privileged communities. Three of these directors did not report subsidized clients prior to the reform; one was a for-profit center, whose license did not entitle her to provincial subsidies. Another was situated in a commercial area where a) no other day care existed nearby that was not specialized toward a specific employment type, and b) parent demand was comprised of professionals with high SES levels. The third day care was situated in one of Montreal’s wealthiest communities and specifically aimed its services toward the economically privileged, and granted alumni priority access. However five directors did report higher numbers of subsidized parents prior to the reform than currently. Thus in my sample only one day care chose to direct its service toward the very wealthy. Moreover, two day care described specific circumstances and institutional choices precluding higher numbers of pre-reform access for low-income parents requiring subsidies. Thus, regarding day care situated in more privileged communities it is at least likely that the five in my sample who report higher numbers of low-income parents prior to the reform than currently are more representative of typical pre-reform parent access than those who report almost no subsidized parent access.

certain day care fees. For example directors describe higher numbers of low-income dual and single parents receiving subsidies as well as higher numbers of high-income dual parents who could easily afford the high cost of non subsidized day care. Directors also report that these low-income parents did not have CLSC referrals, and furthermore still were required to pay a small daily fee for day care services. Two of these five directors allowed for part-time access, and reported that access for low-income parents was as high as fifty percent. Presumably therefore subsidized parents could afford fees but only on a part-time basis. However part-time access does may not entirely explain this even mix of income statuses, since three directors report only several subsidized clients yet two of these directors accepted part-time access as well. In sum, the question remains as to why some day cares in more privileged neighborhoods had high numbers of subsidized clients whereas others had higher numbers then after the reform, but still only several per year. Therefore even when low-income parents were required to pay fees, a certain number acquired access in a day care context where planning well in advance was not critical for access.

Day care situated in less privileged neighborhoods- access for most

Not surprisingly today, day care situated in less privileged neighborhoods is largely accessed by low-income parents distinguishable for their diversity. For example, directors report a substantial presence of single parents that typically comprised approximately one third of their clients. Despite the fact common law relationships are common amongst parents of all income statuses, directors situated in less privileged neighborhoods

typically expressed the following: Some had difficulty defining the couple status of clients since mom's boyfriend often over the role of dad. From the perspective of directors dual parents often comprised of newly formed seemingly less stable relationships¹⁹. However while the directors of the two for-profit day care (situated in less privileged neighborhoods) in my sample report a majority of employed clients with middle-middle to middle-low incomes, the two directors of CPE's (also situated in less privileged neighborhoods) reported most parents' incomes as ranging from middle-middle to very low. The work categories of parents with access to CPE's were likewise variable. For example some parents enjoyed adequate wages and working conditions whereas others were engaged in low wage labor coupled with rigid working conditions. In each day care several working parents were also receiving benefits from the PWA program. CPE directors also reported diversity with respect to clients with three categories of referrals allowing parents free full time access to day care. This includes recipients of social assistance or unemployment insurance benefits who were on work-study programs, parents whose children were developmentally compromised and parents deemed unfit to parent. Despite the diversity of low-income parents with access to CPE's in less privileged neighborhoods, most parents with access are working or studying. Therefore directors reported a negligible number of parents on social assistance eligible for part-time access and exemption of fees²⁰. In this way, parent access to day care in less privileged areas is comparable to parent access to day care in more privileged areas since parents' engagement in some level of schooling or participation in the labor market

¹⁹ It is possible that directors were describing their impressions of referred vulnerable clients.

²⁰ Only one director in a low-income community reported three clients on social assistance attending part-time and paying part-time.

results in their planning ahead for their child care needs. This can in part be explained by the fact that unlike parents with access in more privileged neighborhoods, working or studying parents in less privileged neighborhoods commonly receive referrals.

The overall impact of CLSC referrals

By examining the institutional weaknesses of the CLSC situated amongst more privileged areas one can perhaps begin to understand why fewer low-income parents acquire referrals in these areas and conversely why more low-income parents in less privileged areas acquire referrals. For example, the CLSC social worker I interviewed from the territory that was more privileged revealed her sense of hopelessness about day care access for vulnerable families. She explained that once families acquired referrals, they were nonetheless unlikely to acquire access to a day care in that territory. Thus, in consideration CPE unwillingness to receive families with referrals, referrals are a weak mechanism for promoting day care access. No wonder this CLSC social worker feels helpless! Furthermore according to this social worker although many parents in her territory know about referrals and frequently request them, they are not considered eligible indicating that possibly many parents know about day care contexts today, but cannot afford 7\$ a day for day care and therefore are excluded from access. This in turn challenges the widely held notion of day care's affordability for all.

However parents knowing about referrals contradicts information received from parents situated in more privileged neighborhood with referrals that I interviewed. To recall for example, one mom despite her distraught circumstances had managed to create her own

parent community via the Internet and was consequently informed about the short route to day care access in her neighborhood. I wanted to know whether she knew in advance that consequent to personal crisis she could acquire access more quickly with a CLSC referral. For example, would the CLSC advocate more strongly on her behalf? She did not know for sure, but felt it was worth a try, and this worked well for her. In contrast another low-income working parent from the same neighborhood with access to the same day care eventually received a referral as well. She however had been searching for a day care space for two years prior to seeking out the CLSC for the purpose of day care access. Thus while both parents experienced unpredictable changes in their lives, the parent who was informed acquired access quickly yet neither parent was initially informed by the CLSC. Of course information acquired from my sample certainly is not representative of the majority of low-income parents residing in neighborhoods that are not low-income. However it does allow one to consider the possibility that for low-income parents residing in these territories referrals may not be common knowledge. Moreover information about day care access currently may be a by-product of referrals, which means that consequent to fewer families receiving referrals is fewer families being informed in advance about day care lists today.

CLSC referrals (which at the time of my interviews were a consequence of the informal protocol) provide a flexible institutional mechanism enabling CLSC professionals to match the needs of vulnerable families with the diverse institutional strengths of day care. Consequently how referrals function as a tool of access is variable and in my view specific to individual day care contexts.

Typically only CPE's receive families with referrals. However one director of a for-profit day care situated in a more privileged neighborhood initiated her informal protocol with the CLSC in her area. In this day care referrals function as a mechanism granting *priority* access to free full time day care for vulnerable families. Consequently once referrals were obtained, the parents I interviewed acquired access within two months of calling this particular day care.

It is possible that in more privileged neighborhoods referrals are more likely to result in priority for access. For example if CLSC's in these areas grant fewer referrals perhaps eligibility is reserved for more extreme cases of family vulnerability. In addition the few directors in these neighbourhoods who accept referrals may be more motivated to give priority. For example one can imagine that parents with referrals call day care situated in more privileged areas infrequently. When they do, it is probable that personal circumstances of urgency and vulnerability are not normative to clients accessing day care in these areas, which adds incentive for directors to grant priority. Thus if it is true that CLSC's in more privileged territories reserve referrals for families whose needs are particularly acute, then arguably referrals as a function of access may work efficiently for the few families who receive them. However CLSC's situated in less privileged territories are probably less likely to use referrals as a method of acquiring priority access for vulnerable families since a substantial percentage of clients on day care lists, (as well as those with access) also have referrals.

Day care supporting access for low-income families

According to my findings the institutional support of day care can enable access for very low-income working parents. Of course it is true that stable employment coupled with good working conditions suggests preparation through education, and life planning that fits in with parental awareness of the challenge of day care access today, and consequently the capacity to plan ahead for child care. However one CPE director situated in a less privileged neighborhood explains how low wage labor and poor working conditions creates need to plan for child care as well. Substantial numbers of her clients work in manufacturing industries. If a parent was late for work or missed one day of work, they could easily lose their job. Moreover when parents employed in these industries were searching for their place in day care, and came to visit hers', typically a central parent concern was whether the opening and closing hours of day care corresponded to parent work hours. More specifically, they needed to know whether the day care opened early enough each day giving them time to bring their child to day care before work. Of course they also needed to know whether they had enough time to pick their child up from day care, once their long workday had ended, yet before day care closed. More vexing in my view however is the fact that when these parents' children became sick at day care directors and educators did not have easy access to these parents. Only with a work-supervisor's permission could a parent receive a call from day care, and if day care called too frequently, a parent's job might be jeopardized. In order to meet the needs of this parent group, this particular director opened unusually early in the morning, and then closed her day care later than usual in the evening. She was also sensitive to when she should call parents at work, and when it was best not to call. Since

these parents often worked during times of the year when most parents would be on holiday, she made sure that her day care remained open. In this instance, this CPE, situated in one of Montreal's most underprivileged neighborhoods was highly responsive to the multiple child care needs of working parents, thereby making possible their access to day care.

Low-income parents' knowledge and subsequent success

Sometimes low-income parents' long-time familiarity with neighborhood can be the means by which awareness of need for day care, and knowledge of need to plan for day care, results in access. This CPE, with only 36 spaces, was accessed by several stay at home welfare parents with prior knowledge of long day care waiting lists, who received CLSC referrals after access was acquired. These recipients of social assistance were long time residents of their neighborhood, and were well acquainted with each other as well the mechanics of the assistance they and their parents and grandparents had relied upon. Therefore low educational attainment, and unemployment which typically counter parent capacity to, a) know ahead of time that alternative child care is a need, and therefore b) to plan in advance for child care, in this instance is outweighed by knowledge acquired through the every day experiences of life.

Pre-reform access in less privileged neighborhoods

Prior to the reform, the category of parent acquiring access in less privileged neighborhoods was according to directors comparable to current day access. For example, access was largely a consequence of parent's with need to work or study that

included CLSC referrals, -which however were less numerous, or functioned as a support system for families in crisis. Status related to income and employment, and the variability of parent relationships similarly reflected parent challenges more typically present in low-income neighborhoods. Directors did however mention that a very small percentage of their clients were professionals with a higher SES who were able to afford day care fees. However perhaps because of the similarity between pre-reform and post-reform clients, directors interviewed had difficulty identifying differences regarding categories of clients prior to the reform versus currently. For example, the three out of four directors whose day care licenses allowed for subsidies, spontaneously reacted to my question, “who had most access prior to the reform?” with the same answer, -that their clientele was the same then as now.

However directors identified some differences which underscored fewer advantages for low-income families prior to the reform then currently indicating the likelihood that even reduced day care fees would have resulted in fewer families acquiring access. Directors report that the majority of their clients were low-income and therefore entitled to some level of subsidy for fees, -usually a minimum fee of several dollars a day - for either very low-income working parents, or parents with CLSC referrals. The process of acquiring subsidies for working parents however was complicated since parents were required to fill out many forms, and demonstrate proof of their income which contrasts with current day standards where all parents are automatically entitled to a maximum payment of seven dollars a day. It is therefore likely that fewer very low-income working families or

referred families accessed day care full time and when they did they frequently left, since paying fees was more problematic then finding a space in day care.

Unfortunately directors had difficulty remembering what percentage of their clients were employed and what percentage of their clients received CLSC referrals. In my view it is difficult to understand how very low-income working parents could afford day care fees and therefore it is possible to speculate that some parents may have lied about their income. Ironically however two directors commented that prior to the reform CLSC referrals focused upon financial obstacles to access whereas currently day care is affordable for all, and “this has opened the door to other relevant concerns regarding the importance of socialization and preparing children for primary school”. Therefore from a pre-reform perspective, seven dollars a day, in contrast with regular fees was much more affordable. From a current perspective however such fees only seem to recreate barriers to access since seven dollars a day for a low-income family is unaffordable.

Thus despite the vague memories of directors one can at least speculate that very low-income families on welfare, many of whom according to directors did not have CLSC referrals, probably only acquired free part-time access, particularly if they had more than one pre-school age child. Although free part-time access for low-income families on welfare was available to parents prior to the reform one director expressed her feeling of “outrage” over the fact that parents on social assistance were exempted from fees only if they attended part-time. Now of course, many of these parents would be eligible for referrals and subsequently free access full time. In sum while it is difficult to know the

categories of parents with most access prior to the reform it seems very likely that fewer very low-income parents had full time access prior to the reform than currently and more parents on social assistance had part time access.

I have illustrated that low-income families residing in less privileged areas are most likely to acquire day care access because their neighborhood is more likely to support their access. This includes support from organizations such as the CLSC as well as CPE's. It also includes a more personal experience of community in the form of friends, family and acquaintances whose experience of being low-income is shared. I have also illustrated that low-income families residing in less privileged neighborhoods are less likely to be surrounded by institutions supporting their access and subsequently referrals. Overall, with respect to institutional or personal support systems, more privileged neighborhoods are not contexts of community in the way that less privileged areas are. Consequently parents in these areas may not be informed about day care today, and even when informed are unable to afford \$7 a day for day care.

Potentially however failure to acquire access overrides economic status since new parents unwilling to part with their first child and without advance knowledge of their need for day care, or day care contexts today, are also unlikely to acquire day care access.

Conclusion

Affordable day care created by the 1997 reform has reshaped parent demand for day care. For working parents it is the allure of affordable reliable day care. For yet others it is the allure of an educators' expertise and other children for their child to play with, special activities exposing their child to ideas, and experiences...affordable for most and seemingly within reach. The high level of parent demand that followed the reform was unanticipated and surpassed by far the number of reduced rate spaces available to parents. Consequently, day care's system of access demands that families know ahead of time their need for day care, yet parents must contend with the uncertainty of finding their space. After phoning many day care... and the time it takes to wait, parents who finally hit upon a spot cannot know in advance the quality of child care services now available to them. Day care access in the end relies upon chance and represents privilege that fails to be actualized with respect to public life.

The game of chance/Lessons to be learned

Since most parents names are on numerous day care lists, it is difficult to know how many parents with children under six are actually demanding day care and how this compares with either the current number of reduced rate spaces -179,112- or the 200,000 spaces promised for 2006. Information acquired from directors regarding the factors impacting turnover such as number of spaces per day care, number of priorities and child group sizes, indicates that in some instances turnover may be more reasonable. Therefore

calling as many day care as possible ahead of time increases parents' chances of successfully acquiring access.

The action that directors prescribe for access, calling many day care ahead of time, presupposes predictability with respect to family life and family need for day care. Unpredictability may take all sorts of forms. For example, some middle class parents I interviewed expressed their initial unwillingness to part from their first child, and possibly this may be true of many first time parents. In addition, it was *after* the birth of this first child that parents observed other children (of friends or relatives) and recognized a relationship between positive child behaviors and day care attendance. For another mom, depression after the birth of her third child caused her to recognize need for day care. Unpredictable life events also relate more specifically to situations of low-income. One director from a less privileged area described last minute phone calls from "desperate" parents who had just found a job, or their last child care arrangements were no longer available or desirable and were in urgent need of immediate access. Therefore access that presupposes predictability is likely to contradict family needs, particularly when such needs can be a consequence family life after a child's birth.

The fact that acquiring access to day care for most parents in Quebec remains a game of chance translates into a deep sense of frustration for parents. Parents' frustration over the unpredictability of access included those wanting to expose their child to the learning experience of day care. Their strong resistance to alternative child cares options -such as grandparents or baby-sitters- not equipped with an educators special knowledge of early

development was considered child care that was second best, -and not good enough for their child. This gives us a strong sense that the 1997 reform's creation of day care easily afforded by an economic majority, and covered widely by the media has reshaped parent demand. Today parents have a sense of entitlement to day care access for the purpose of education.

Calling many day care ahead of time in order to hit the jackpot by finding a space has other consequences impacting the lives of parents and children. This random search may or may not hit upon day care that is quality and meet parent and child needs. Lack of choice regarding day care has become a significant adverse effect of the post-reform system, which has even more negative consequences for low-income families without alternative child care options.

Not an even game of chance

Initially I explained how the need to plan-ahead for day care has had greatest negative impact upon low-income parents. My research has yielded results pertinent to the following of these explanations and includes: the unpredictability of low-wage labor, reducing parental capacity to know in advance their need for day care. Low-income associated with lower levels of education may mean that parents are less well read and less likely to acquire adequate knowledge of current day care contexts.

The data collected from directors and parents supports my initial explanation of differential access, but also reveals further complexities. One director (situated in a more

privileged area) alluded to low socio-economic status in describing recent immigrants, including those who have resided in Montreal for some time, and unemployed parents without social contacts as being without a clue regarding how the day care system works and as a result failed to acquire access.

An unanticipated finding is that for low-income parents the characteristics of the neighborhood in which they reside may explain the difference between knowing and not knowing about day care contexts today. Most likely, community institutions such as the CLSC are geared toward serving visible majority needs of their territory, which in less privileged territories includes low-income families with young children. CLSC's in less privileged territories whose CPE's cooperate in protocol agreements are perhaps more willing to grant referrals and therefore inform families with young children about day care today. Conversely the opposite is true of CLSC's in more privileged territories where low-income families are not a visible majority. In addition, capacity to reap the benefits of institutional support (such as the CLSC) may be more common amongst low-income families who have been raised in their low-income neighborhoods since parents, grandparents, and neighbors, have also benefited from community based services.

Up to this point my discussion pertaining to low-income parents' capacity to acquire day care access has distinguished between low-income parents residing in low-income areas, that as supportive community contexts facilitate day care access, and low-income parents residing in more privileged areas less supportive with respect to day care access. However my findings further reveal that low-income parents, in the absence of

supportive community contexts certainly can be informed about the need to call ahead for day care. The CLSC worker serving more privileged neighborhoods revealed that low-income parents request referrals but are not considered eligible. This may be due to the fact that CLSC's amongst these neighborhoods prefer to reserve referrals for more extreme situations of family vulnerability. It may also be that psychosocial and health issues challenge fewer families residing in more privileged neighborhoods. Or a combination of both reasons may explain fewer referrals. Regardless of the reason, the idea that low-income parents necessarily require community support in order to be informed about need to plan-ahead is not entirely true. Rather they require community support exempting them from fees unaffordable to them, and in more privileged neighborhoods they are less likely to acquire such support.

Initially, another explanation of differential access related to the problem of planning ahead, was that low-income stay at home parents are unvoiced in their demand for day care. As stay at home parents, they don't recognize their need prior to their child's birth, and may not be calling day cares once their infant grows into a toddler since they may realize that it is too late for access. Nor can they afford the price of unsubsidized day care. To recall, my research has not explored the situation of stay at home parents and their probable unvoiced demand for day care, since they are difficult to locate. They can be anywhere yet cannot be found in any one place such as community centers or schools ... they are therefore invisible, and since their phone calls are not received by any day care types, they are also silent. To recall, also, my data illustrates that parents, irrespective of income sometimes recognize child care needs after their child's birth. It is

probable that stay at home parents face the same experience but unlike their counterparts with material resources, cannot opt for a costly second child care option.

I have also argued that rigid working conditions associated with low-wage labor impose constraints on time spent with family and create additional stress for parents engaged in the stressful process of searching for a space in day care. As indicated by one director situated in one of Montreal's poorest neighborhoods, poor working clients anxiously organized their child care needs in advance, and were very concerned as to whether day care was open on holidays, and whether opening and closing hours conformed to their own working hours. Nor could day care casually call work supervisors when a child was sick, since a parent may easily lose their job. This director's quiet voice stating just the facts -perhaps unintentionally- represented the voices of parents bound by low-wage labor and challenged daily by rigid working conditions and the provision of their family's primary needs, including child care that was both affordable and reliable. In this instance the strength of parental attachment to the labor market contradicts the idea of low-income parents without advance knowledge of employment detracting from their capacity to plan-ahead for day care.

The working poor, besides having to find day care that meets particular needs, also need to be informed about their eligibility for additional subsidies. For example a low-income working parent requesting a referral but not considered eligible could at the time of my interviews apply for the PWA program. On the positive side, day care doesn't have to wait a year to receive grants for this category of low-income parent, since parents receive

provincial subsidies and are then responsible for paying day care fees. Unfortunately in more privileged areas day care's support for low-income working parents is weak. Since directors have no professional involvement with the PWA almost all directors in more privileged communities were either unaware of this program, or when aware did not know its name.

Finally, families receiving social assistance who are neither working or studying yet eligible for free part-time day care represents a weak provincial measure since understandably most directors are unwilling to accept part-time access. Director's with their labor already heavily increased by long parent waiting lists, are unwilling to increase their labor even more by organizing different days for access for different parents. Since parents working part-time don't always work the same days or different parents don't work complementary days, the administrative labor required to meet the needs of parents employed part-time would be unreasonably demanding. Additionally, due to the lack of available reduced rate spaces many directors feel pressure to ensure that their spaces are filled. Therefore families on social assistance who are not considered eligible for referrals simply won't access day care on a part-time basis. Nor will they acquire full time access since they won't be able to afford fees.

It is important to recognize that all categories of low-income families residing in Quebec with children under six are eligible reductions for fees beyond the reduced rate. However today, due to the Quebec day care context, certain factors compound for low-income families aggravating the problem of access typically experienced by the economic

majority. To exemplify, their knowledge of day care contexts is sometimes dependent upon community. Their capacity to pay fees (particularly for stay at home parents) is dependent upon whether or not they fit into the CLSC category of vulnerable that may also depend upon community context. In addition stay at home parents may assume they don't require day care, and personal knowledge of need may be recognized too late. The PWA –rarely recommended by directors in more privileged areas represents a second kind of required knowledge pertinent to an economic minority and therefore not publicized widely in newspapers or broadcast in news items associated with day care. For poor working families the problem of access is further compounded by their need for day care contexts sensitized to their employment situations. Thus the consequence residing in a less privileged neighborhood for many low-income residents may be privilege with respect to public life since being connected with an institutional and social network of community supporting access to day care is more likely. However this leaves us to wonder whether stay at home parents, as non-participants in student life or the labor force have an equal chance at receiving CLSC referrals, or whether their situations must be quite extreme for them to be placed in the category of “vulnerable”. In order to ensure that low-income families have an even probability at winning this game of chance regarding day care access a conscientious effort is required at the provincial and community level supporting the particular needs of low-income parents with young children, -particularly those residing in more privileged neighborhoods.

In sum, the provincial government's intention of inclusion as expressed in current and past day care acts fails to be realized. Firstly the time it takes for the majority of parents

to acquire access has three consequences a) parents who fail to plan ahead are unlikely to acquire day care access b) successfully acquiring access is unpredictable and c) once access is acquired dissatisfied parents cannot decide to change day care. Secondly the provincial governments' formal and informal protocols demonstrate an attempt to encourage day care access for vulnerable families. I must emphasize that this is a positive step enabling inclusion to day care for the underprivileged. Unfortunately however parents who are not perceived as vulnerable by CLSC are unlikely to acquire day care access.

Policy recommendations

Addressing the problem of insufficient spaces

It is very unlikely that there is a quick fix to the problem of insufficient spaces. Certainly the directors I interviewed would have been unwilling to enlarge their day care, or open a second installation since this would mean additional labor, as well as a loss regarding their personal connections with children and parents. Since Quebec's affordable day care is quite recent, and reduced rate spaces require a substantial provincial investment, meeting parent demand by increasing the number of spaces requires time, including the time it takes to receive provincial funding in order to build new installations.

Unfortunately however the insufficient supply of reduced rate spaces has a human cost. Most critically when working parents acquire access to day care that is poor in quality and have no alternative child care options they face the unhappy options leaving their job or exposing their child to repeatedly negative experiences at day care. For this reason I shall offer some possible solutions to the problem of insufficient spaces, which admittedly have drawbacks.

For profit day care/Increasing the number of reduced rate spaces

Today many for profit day care also receive grants for reduced rate spaces. For July of 2003, 24,828 reduced rate spaces were available for day care and 64,121 spaces available at child care centers (Ministre de l'Emploi de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille,

“Consultation 2003”, 2003). I propose that the provincial government substantially increase the number of reduced rate spaces available for for-profit day care. Although the literature is generally critical of day care that is “unregulated”, (Lefebvre and Merrigan, 2002) in Quebec for profit day care consequent to their grants are not entirely unregulated either²¹. Moreover in a day care context where regulated (non profit) day care as well as the media has enlightened parents about day care education, parents are more sensitized to their child’s day care needs and therefore more demanding of quality.

For profit day care has the capacity to build its own premises acquired from personal capital more quickly than non profit day care that depends upon provincial grants for this purpose thereby potentially alleviating the problem of insufficient spaces. When parents have choice, day care will be required to compete, and poor quality day care may not survive due to lack of parent demand.

Part-time access/half days

In order to alleviate the problem of insufficient spaces the provincial government might encourage part-time access on a half-day basis for the following types of parents; part-time workers who want to spend more time with their children, recipients of social assistance not eligible for exemptions and subsidies for full time day care, and students. For example one part-time space is an efficient use of space since it is the equivalent to

²¹ Regulated child care services receive provincial grants but are also expected to conform to provincial measures ensuring that services meet a certain level of quality. For example for for-profit day care that is less regulated one out of three educators are educated according to standards recognized by the provincial government. Child care centers that are regulated are obliged to hire two out of three educators whose education meets provincial requirements. (Ministre de l’Emploi de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille, “Consultation 2003”, 2003).

two children using one full time space. In addition the work of an educator is labor intensive. Many educators are also mothers of young children, and might enjoy part-time employment allowing them to spend more time with their children. It is quite possible that this labor-intensive industry detracts from parental capacity to spend time with children.

Understandably most directors resisted the idea of part-time clients which created extra administrative labor for staff. However if installations were intended specifically for part-time access for half days staff labor would be reduced. For example children attending for half a day eliminates lunch-time and nap-time which typically add labor and expense to child care arrangements. Many day care supply lunch and this too is costly. Naptime means having to supply cots, (which are expensive) and having to supervise children unwilling to sleep. These are difficult moments for day care staff, and generally require extra support from directors. Challenging child behaviors would also be reduced. It is also my view that for children part-time attendance is less stressful and therefore extremely beneficial to a young child's learning at day care.

It is true that this recommendation has limited possibilities since many part-time working parents work full days. However just as day care today has perhaps imposed full time employment upon parents who would other wise prefer to spend more time with their young children, half-day access popularized may also provide new options for parents who want to combine professional life with life at home. In consideration of the reforms' impact upon parents' awareness of the value of early childhood education part-time day

care on a half-day basis might begin to ease the problem of insufficient spaces and also allow parents more choice regarding day care.

A more efficient use of spaces

Can reduced rate spaces be used more efficiently? For example according to the data I collected regarding the relationship between child group sizes and number of spaces per day care it would seem that child group sizes may impact turnover. A systematic policy of increased number of spaces for older children might have a positive impact upon accessing day care for parents who used alternative solutions when the child was younger. More research needs to be done regarding how child group size impacts turnover.

Addressing the problem of differential access

To a large extent the problem of differential access is neighborhood based and caused by lack of information. Since the time of my interviews the Parent Wage Assistant program has been replaced by the Wage Premium Program. Since most directors from more privileged areas were only vaguely aware of extra subsidies for low-wage working parents, they need to be informed in order to recommend it when parents have difficulty paying reduced rates fees. In addition the provincial government should provide all day care with flyers advertising this program. Flyers might also be left in other community institutions such as the CLSC, and health clinics throughout Montreal.

Weak CLSC support for low-income families and day care access in more privileged neighborhoods needs to be addressed. The provincial government's formal protocol indicates that the provincial government recognizes the need to grant priority for access to low-income vulnerable families, and this is admirable. However both the formal and informal protocol's power is dependent upon positive working relationships between CLSC's and the CPE's in its territory.

Individual formal protocol agreements between CLSC and CPE's reserve 5% of spaces per day care for vulnerable families. Correspondingly at a provincial level the government should aim to reserve a certain overall percentage of reduced rate spaces for vulnerable families. In order to encourage CPE's in all CLSC territories to participate in the protocol, the provincial government should require that CLSC's unsuccessful in acquiring CPE consensus begin collaborating with those who are. For example many CPE's in more privileged neighborhoods rejected the protocol due to lack of CLSC support regarding referred children with challenging behaviors. The CLSC's with CPE consensus reported interventions where parents, educators, and directors worked in close collaboration. CLSC's throughout the region of Montreal need to be informed about such interventions, how they work, and why they work. They need to work together.

Further Recommendations

Recommendations for further research

It is critical that day care not be the unconscious contributor of a child's negative experiences, consequent to parents' lack of choice. Therefore the provincial government

must explore the extent to which working parents with access to subsidized day care are dissatisfied with their child's experience of day care. In addition how many parents have chosen not to participate in the labor market due to their dissatisfaction with subsidized day care and their lack of alternative child care choices? More specifically how are the every day lives of such families impacted by a child's negative experiences at day care when parents lack alternative child care choices? The "Rapport d'enquête sur les besoins des familles en matière de services de garde éducatifs" (2001) asks its sample of 9,000 parents who have had non subsidized day care access as well as those who have not whether they would like to acquire access to subsidized day care. However whether parents with prior or current access to subsidized day care experienced dissatisfaction and were unable to acquire access to another subsidized place within a reasonable period of time is not explored.

Alleviating the problem of insufficient spaces requires increasing the number of spaces. But how many more spaces are actually required? Although long day care waiting lists, low turnover, and the length of time it takes to acquire access indicate strongly that the number of reduced rate spaces is smaller than the number of parents demanding day care, data collected from directors indicates that parents' names are on numerous waiting lists. Thus waiting lists do not represent the true number of parents wanting day care, and the question arises as to what the true number of parent demand for day care is.

Further research should also explore whether low-income stay at home parents who cannot afford to send their child to a non-subsidized day care service on a part-time basis

have considered the advantages of access to subsidized day care since the birth of their child. The Rapport d'enquête indicates that for certain parents, their reason for not resorting to day care relates to the fact that they stay at home. It is also indicated that most of these parents had an annual income of \$20,000 or less. However, whether currently they feel they could benefit from option of subsidized day care is unknown. In consideration of their economic status this information would be valuable.

Finally, is parent demand associated with parents' desire to expose children to the learning environment of day care catching up with a more traditional demand for day care? The Rapport Enquête indicates that only 7.3% of children attending day care, attend for reasons other than parents are working or studying. However out of this small percentage the most commonly stated reason for wanting day care was children's development and socialization.

Just as parents' reasons for wanting day care require further exploration, directors reasons for picking and choosing their clientele also require exploration. During interviews some directors openly, -or covertly communicated to me that to a larger or smaller extent they did pick and choose their clientele -despite the fact that my research topic and interview questions were not directly aimed at uncovering this information. In non-profit centers with a parent board of directors, the directors' power to pick and choose clientele corresponds to her personal influence over her board of directors. In some instances directors described a clearly stated policy of priorities. Some directors stated outright that they adhere strictly by the list, -first come first served. Yet others claimed that they

adhered by the list but if given the choice, would choose certain parents over others. However in for-profit centers (without a parent board of directors) directors have no restrictions regarding their decisions, and during interviews they disclosed to me which clients received priority, as well as the reasons for their decisions. Thus, since the reforms' creation of reduced rate spaces, the insufficient supply of such spaces has placed some directors as well as parent board of directors, in a position of power.

Certainly the values associated with choices regarding who has access are always controversial, but in some instances are made when directors greatest concerns are for those whose financial and family situations render them vulnerable and in need of day care access. As one director of a for-profit center pointed out, the provincial government has not set up any guidelines for day care directors regarding kinds of families who should receive priority for access. Qualitative research exploring directors' practices excluding certain parents from access might uncover information about more acceptable as well as unacceptable director practices. Armed with this information the provincial government could set strict guidelines ensuring that vulnerable families are not intentionally excluded from access, and that in certain situations such families are legally entitled to priority for access. However as one director pointed out this would entail a more intensive deployment of inspectors ensuring that such guidelines are respected.

Yet another problem to be considered is that for profit day care do not work in conjunction with the CLSC and therefore have no way of assessing a particular family's need for day care prior to access. Therefore why not allow for-profit day care eligible for

grants for subsidized spaces the right to participate in both the formal and informal protocols as well?

As one director pointed out, if we want to have children we must have services supporting our children. Institut de la Statistique du Québec, ELDEQ,2002) describes the birth rate for Quebec as “steeper then in most Western societies”(p.3). Further research is recommended exploring whether the uncertainty of acquiring access to quality day care, that is also affordable deters parents from having more children.

Recommendations for better documentation

The data I collected from 12 directors and 2 CLSC workers suggests that low-income families rarely access day care in more privileged communities. Typically the literature focuses upon the provincial government’s efforts at supporting day care access for low-income families residing in underprivileged regions through extra funding. (Rapport annuel de gestion 2001-2002, Consultation 2003, 2003 Tougas, 2002). The “Rapport annuel de gestion” states outright that the minister in charge of day care has no information about the number of children from poor families with day care access and further states that it is reasonable to assume that their numbers are high in disadvantaged regions. While the provincial government’s focus upon the high numbers of low-income families for the purpose of day care access is admirable, low-income families in more privileged regions require more attention from both researchers and the provincial government as well. This should include for example research aimed at knowing the numbers of low-income pre-school age children residing in underprivileged and more

privileged regions, and how many in each of these regions have acquired day care access, as well as reasons associated with their access or lack of access.

An efficient way for the provincial government to collect data related to the SES of parents with day care access is through its, “Situation des centres de la petite enfance et des garderies au Québec” (2002, 2003) that is information collected from all holders of day care permits throughout the region of Québec who are required by law to submit their annual report of “activities” to the provincial government (An act respecting childcare centres and childcare services, article 13.4, 2004). Currently this document indicates day care per CLSC region including the kinds of services supporting it (for example, hospitals, the CLSC, youth protection, etc.) however no information is available documenting the SES of parents with day care access. Directors interviewed also confirmed that day care has no information about the SES of parents, which is confidential. However an indirect way of gaining some knowledge of parents’ SES might involve the provincial government collecting data from directors about parent’s educational status which would reveal whether parents’ with little or no educational background are acquiring access. Potentially director’s annual reports could be used as a powerful source of information allowing the provincial government to comprehensively meet the needs of underprivileged and “vulnerable” families for the purpose of day care access throughout the province of Québec.

Finally, In order to encourage and support research topics related to Québec’s day care system, as well as its policies, the provincial government should take measures ensuring

that basic information related to policy and regulations, as well as the system itself is easily accessed.

Appendix A

Child care services transformed: post reform versus pre-reform

Currently, with the exception of home child care and stop over center, all of the day care services listed below provide “educational” child care from birth to five years of age. The term educational is not defined.

Prior to the reform Day care services were described in terms of quality promoting child health security and well being. (Act respecting day care child services, 1993)

Child care services

With the exception of child care centers, all of the day care services listed also existed prior to the reform.

Childcare center or centre de la petite enfance (CPE)

Concurrent with the provincial government’s creation of child care centers in 1997 (which are non-profit), was their entitlement to provincial grants and subsequently affordable day care through the reduced contribution.

Some child care centers serve employees from specific labor industries. For example, they may be situated in hospitals and therefore parents with access are hospital staff.

The provincial government defines child care centers as a facility where seven or more children are received for no more than 48 hours at a time. These centers also oversee home child care. (“An Act respecting childcare centres and childcare services”, 2004).

Some times one child care centre will comprise of two “installations” meaning two separate premises. By law each installation is permitted to contain the maximum amount reduced rate spaces.

Home childcare (pre-reform home day care)

Refers to child care in a private residence by a “natural person” for periods not exceeding 24 hours. Typically this person is also a parent who owns their private residence. Home child care includes up to six children and includes the person’s children who must be under 9 years of age. Not more than two children may be under the age of 18 months. If the person is assisted by another adult, nine children can be cared for in which case not more than four children may be under 18 months of age. (“An Act respecting childcare centres and childcare services”, 2004).

Daycare center

7 or more children are received on a regular basis for periods not exceeding 24 hours. (“An Act respecting childcare centres and childcare services”, 2004).

Nursery school

Is distinguishable from the forms of daycare mentioned above since it can receive seven or more children from 2 to 5 years of age on a regular basis, yet not exceeding 4 hours a day (“An Act respecting childcare centres and childcare services, 2004).

Stop over center

Provides child care for seven or more children on a “casual basis.... Not exceeding 24 consecutive hours (“An Act respecting childcare centres and childcare services, 2004).

Despite the law stating that children must not be present more than 24 hours, this type of “casual” service is used irregularly for short time-periods, while for example parents run daily errands.

According to the CLSC community worker I interviewed prior to the reform stop over centers, charged very low fees and required no financial commitment over regular time periods, and were frequently used by low-income parents who wanted their child exposed to the play environment of day care. This community worker further explained that in 1997, most of these stop over centers were transformed into child care centers.

Appendix B

List of acronyms

CLSC-Centre locale de service communautaire

CPE-Centre de Petit Enfance (child care center)

PWA-Parent wage assistance Program

Appendix C

Description of twelve neighbourhoods

D1 CPE + home day care.

Daycare is situated amongst middle class and upper middle class homes. Director struggled to find time for interview. Even during call back, she found it hard to find time. Daycare was quiet, clean and well organized.

D2 CPE

Daycare is situated in commercial area but within in a Montreal neighborhood that is considered one of Montreal wealthiest. Director was very new to this daycare. During call back I discovered that a great deal of her original information was incorrect. Therefore I felt the need to exclude much (though not all) of her data from my research. Also her prior day care was employment related, so this pre-reform data could not be included either. Our interview took place in a large comfortable office, which seemed far from child classrooms.

D3 CPE

Daycare is situated in commercial area, which is known for its high immigrant population. The Director explained why in her view her client population is no longer low-income. Since the reform more installations and home day care have come into existence. Therefore her clients are from very immediate area, where rent is higher. Now

her immigrant population is highly educated (PHD's) and less challenged economically. Previously immigrant population was less skilled and struggling more financially.

D4 CPE + home day care/ Low-income area.

Situated amongst lower middle class homes. This neighborhood is commonly associated with families on social assistance. The director described her neighborhood as changing from French Canadian lower class to ethnically diverse. She described this area as 'reasonably disadvantaged'.

D5 CPE (director says moving into overseeing home day care)

Day care is situated amongst upper middle class homes and duplexes. Although low-income families certainly exist in this area, their existence on this street and as clients of day care is not in evidence. Day care is an old Victorian style home and is very beautiful and home-like. This is an establishment with a history and a philosophy regarding child care. The office space where interview took place was spacious and business like. Despite the invisibility of low-income families and children (inside and immediately outside her daycare), this directors' awareness of the need for change was expressed in very positive terms through her eagerness to participate in protocol. This was work that she was looking forward to.

D6 CPE + home day care

Two installations situated at different ends of a commercial area, and distant from suburban neighborhoods. Clientele is comprised largely of well-paid professionals

working in area. I interviewed one director, who was director of one installation, and an assistant director who functioned as director of second installation. According to both directors low-income families were almost non-existent in this area which as the directors explained was not actually a neighborhood setting.

D7 CPE + home day care

Situated in suburban area. Immediate area surrounded by upper middle class homes and duplexes. However neighborhood is also known for its immigrant population and high numbers of low-income families. Director explains that in the past ten years lots of older couples have left area and have been replaced by younger couples with children. Only two French day care in area. Therefore there are not enough day care for number of children in area.

D8 For profit day care/low-income community

I interviewed the current director as well as an educator who had been director prior to reform. Immediate surroundings consisted of lower middle class homes. Current director is young and new in business. Since they were on the verge of expanding day care the directors spent large amounts of time on the telephone. It was difficult to find time for the interview and there was no availability for call back. Daycare professionals were almost crushed by lack of time.

D9 CPE + home day care Situated on the outskirts of Montreal. Immediate surroundings - picturesque setting with narrow winding road and opulent homes. However within five

minutes walking distance there is a commercial area with numerous dilapidated apartment buildings. The income status of residents in this neighborhood is very mixed.

D10 For profit day care/low income area

Day care is situated in a shopping center. Typically this neighbourhood has lower income dwellings, lower middle class dwellings, and middle-middle class dwellings.

D11 For profit day care

Situated in commercial area that is surrounded by about three privileged neighborhoods. However director's largest concern is for those who are vulnerable or under privileged. Politically pro-active, and knows the economic and social needs of each client. No hesitation, no need for thought when questions asked regarding demography of day care.

D12 CPE + home day care/low income area

As I made my way to this day care I observed homes with towels in windows -used as curtains. Lots of bars and little restaurant joints selling fast food. Housing in immediate area was for very low-income families. Day care directors', work as she describes it is substantial and focuses upon special educational support for disadvantaged children and parents, as well as connecting with food banks and charities in order to support families struggling to meet primary needs.

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