



***EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PROGRAMS IN QUEBEC:
HOW CAN WE RAISE THE BAR?***

***CHRISTA JAPEL
Université du Québec à Montréal***

***ATKINSON CENTRE
OISE-UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Toronto, May 3rd 2010***

UNICEF-Innocenti report in 2008:
Canada ranked second to last – met only one of the ten important benchmarks for ECEC

Canada lags behind many of its counterparts in the OECD with regard to early childhood development programs

Benchmark		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Number of benchmarks achieved										
	Parental leave of 1 year at 50% of salary										
	A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children										
	Subsidized and regulated child care services for 25% of children under 3										
	Subsidized and accredited early education services for 80% of 4 year-olds										
	80% of all child care staff trained										
	50% of staff in accredited early education services tertiary educated with relevant qualification										
	Minimum staff-to-children ratio of 1:15 in pre-school education										
	1.0% of GDP spent on early childhood services										
	Child poverty rate less than 10%										
	Near-universal outreach of essential child health services										
Sweden	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iceland	9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Denmark	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Finland	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
France	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Norway	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Belgium (Flanders)	6		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hungary	6		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Zealand	6		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slovenia	6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Austria	5		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netherlands	5		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
United Kingdom*	5		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Germany	4		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Italy	4		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Japan	4		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Portugal	4		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Republic of Korea	4		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mexico	3		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spain	3		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Switzerland	3		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
United States	3		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Australia	2		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Canada	1										
Ireland	1										
Total benchmarks met	126	6	19	13	15	17	20	12	6	10	8

*Data for the United Kingdom refer to England only.

Early Childhood Education and Care in Québec

1997 – Implementation of a new family policy

- **development of early childhood education and child care services to provide universally accessible programs to foster child development, and to gradually introduce skills that children need to succeed at school**
- **Services for children age 0 to 5**
- **Before- and after-school programs for school-age children**
- **Low parental contribution (\$7/day)**

Before 1997...

1970:

- half-day pre-kindergarten classes for 4-year-olds in low-income neighbourhoods in Montreal - *Opération Renouveau* – inspired by *Head Start* (targeted intervention)
- Half-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds

1990:

- Full-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds (universal intervention)

1997:

Implementation of preschool curriculum ‘Jouer c’est magique’ (HighScope curriculum) – play-based learning

At present....

Parental contribution: \$7 a day

**Parental contribution: none
Except school-age child care
\$7 a day**

Child-care settings:

Early Childhood Centres
For-profit centres
Reg. home-based care
Unreg. home-based care

Schools

4- and -5 year-olds

- Almost universal kindergarten attendance at age 5

- Where are the 4-year-olds?

About 80 percent of 4-year-olds are in some kind of preschool setting

- Early Childhood Centres (ECE) – 30%
- For-profit centres – 13%
- Home-based care – 18%
- Pre-k (public and private) – 20%

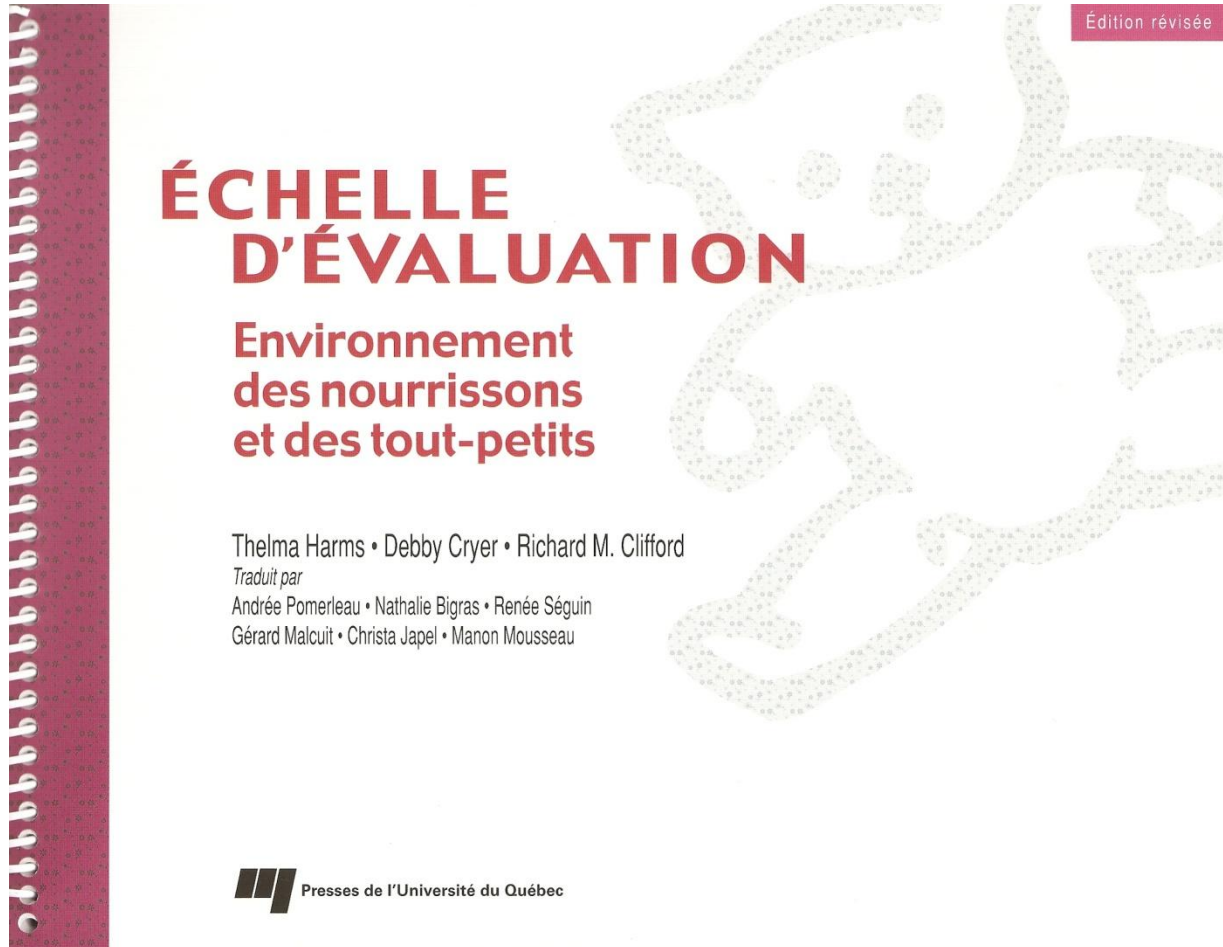
*What do we know about the quality
of these preschool settings?*

Three surveys

- **You Bet I Care! (2000)**
 - 234 centre-based groups – 48 in Québec
 - 231 family child care settings – 42 in Québec
- **Québec Longitudinal Study of Child Development (2000 - 2003)**
 - 728 centre-based CPEs
 - 337 home-based CPEs
 - 296 for-profit daycares
 - 179 unregulated home-based settings
- **Grandir en qualité (2004)**
 - 356 centre-based CPEs
 - 200 home-based CPEs
 - 349 for-profit daycares

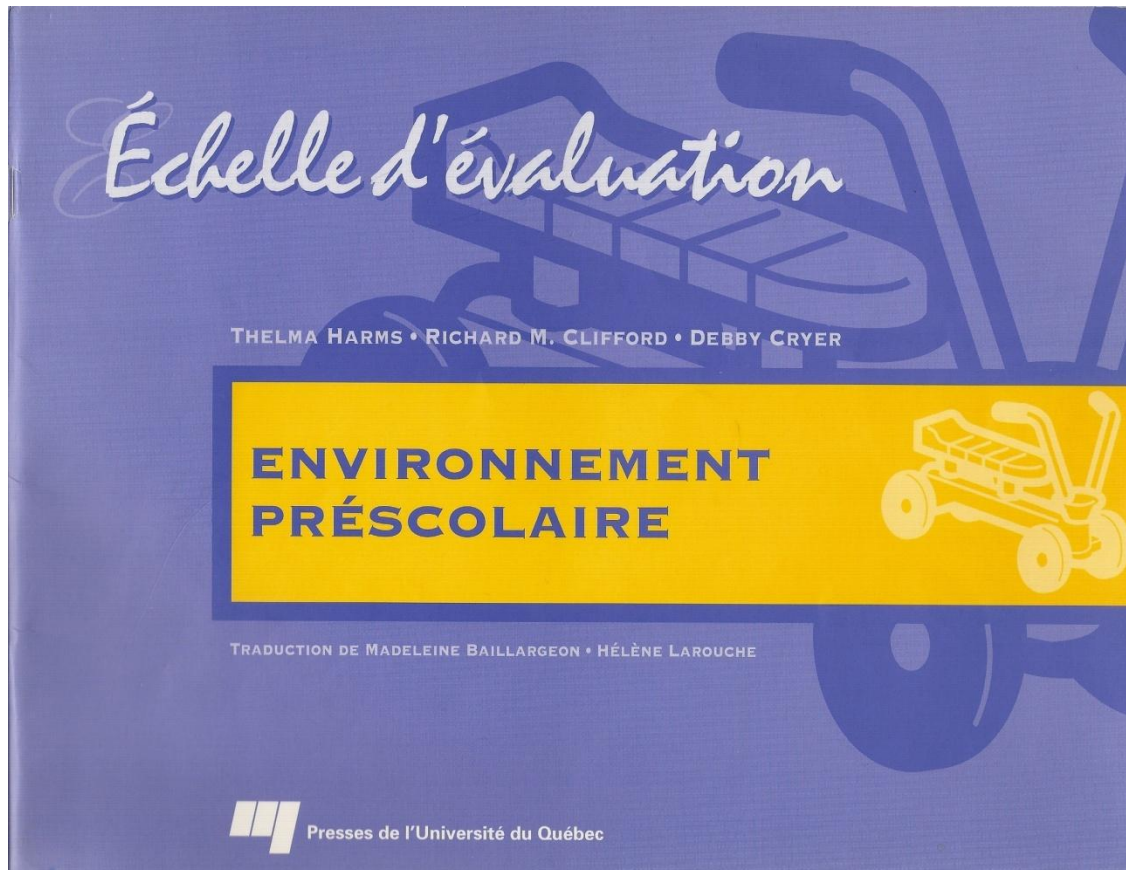
ITERS-R

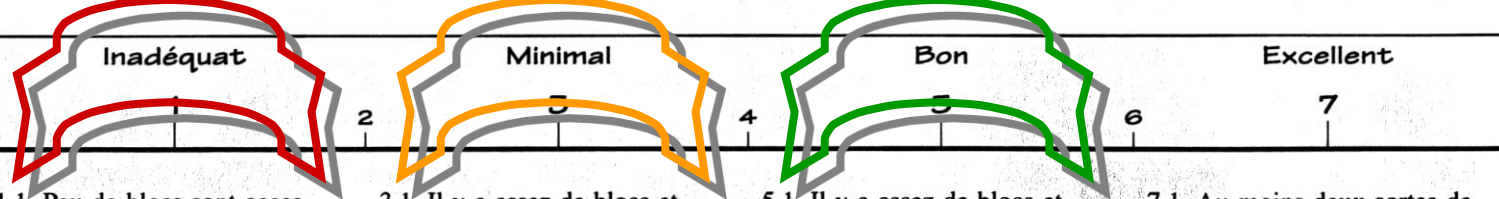
- 467 descriptors
- 39 items
- 7 subscales
- for children 0 to 2 1/2 years



ECERS-R

- 470 descriptors
- 43 items
- 7 subscales
- for children 2 ½ to 5 years





22. Blocs



1.1 Peu de blocs sont accessibles aux enfants.

- 3.1 Il y a assez de blocs et d'accessoires[†] accessibles pour qu'au moins deux enfants puissent faire des constructions différentes en même temps.
- 3.2 Il y a un certain espace dégagé au sol pour jouer avec les blocs.
- 3.3 Les blocs et les accessoires sont accessibles quotidiennement.

- 5.1 Il y a assez de blocs et d'accessoires accessibles pour que trois enfants ou plus puissent faire des constructions en même temps.
- 5.2 Les blocs et accessoires sont organisés par type.
- 5.3 Un coin spécial pour les blocs est aménagé en dehors de la circulation, avec un espace adéquat de construction et de rangement (ex. : tapis à poils ras ou autre surface plane).
- 5.4 Le coin de blocs est accessible pour jouer durant une partie importante de la journée.

- 7.1 Au moins deux sortes de blocs et un assortiment d'accessoires sont accessibles quotidiennement (ex. : gros et petits blocs ; matériel maison et commercial).
- 7.2 Les blocs et les accessoires sont rangés sur des étagères ouvertes et étiquetées (ex. : étiquetées avec une photo ou un dessin de la forme des blocs).
- 7.3 Un certain jeu de construction est disponible à l'extérieur.

Scoring

Continuous or by category:

1 - 2.9 = inadequate quality: safety and health risks and no educational component

3 - 4.9 = minimal quality: basic safety and health measures are respected –but educational component is minimal – custodial care

5 - 7 = good to excellent quality: safety and health measures are respected – developmentally appropriate educational component that fosters children's global development

Quality scores

YBIC and QLSCD – ITERS, ECERS-R, FDCRS (score 1 -7)

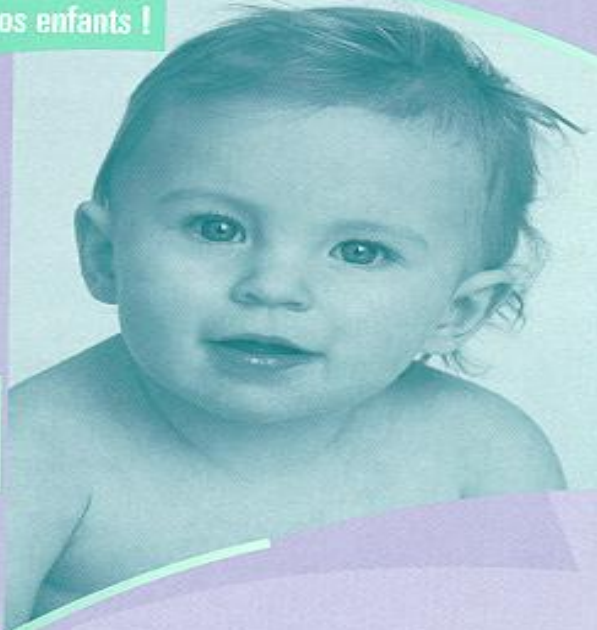
Grandir en qualité – different instrument (score 1- 4)

Survey	Total score
YBIC – ITERS (N=16)	3.6
YBIC – ECERS-R (N=32)	4.7
QLSCD – ECERS-R CPE (N=728)	4.6
QLSCD – ECERS-R For-profit (N=296)	3.7
YBIC – FDCRS (N=42)	4.5
QLSCD – FDCRS Home-based CPE (N=337)	4.4
QLSCD – FDCRS Unregulated home-based (N=179)	3.6
Grandir en qualité CPE (0 to 18 months) (N=128)	3.05
Grandir en qualité CPE (18 monts- 5 years) (N=228)	2.93
Grandir en qualité For-profit daycares (0 to 18 months) (N=124)	2.62
Grandir en qualité For-profit daycares (18 monts- 5 years) (N=225)	2.58
Grandir en qualité Home-based CPE (N=200)	2.75

En
2002...
J'aurai 5 ans !

Étude longitudinale sur le développement
des enfants du Québec

Voici une belle
occasion de nous
parler de vos enfants !



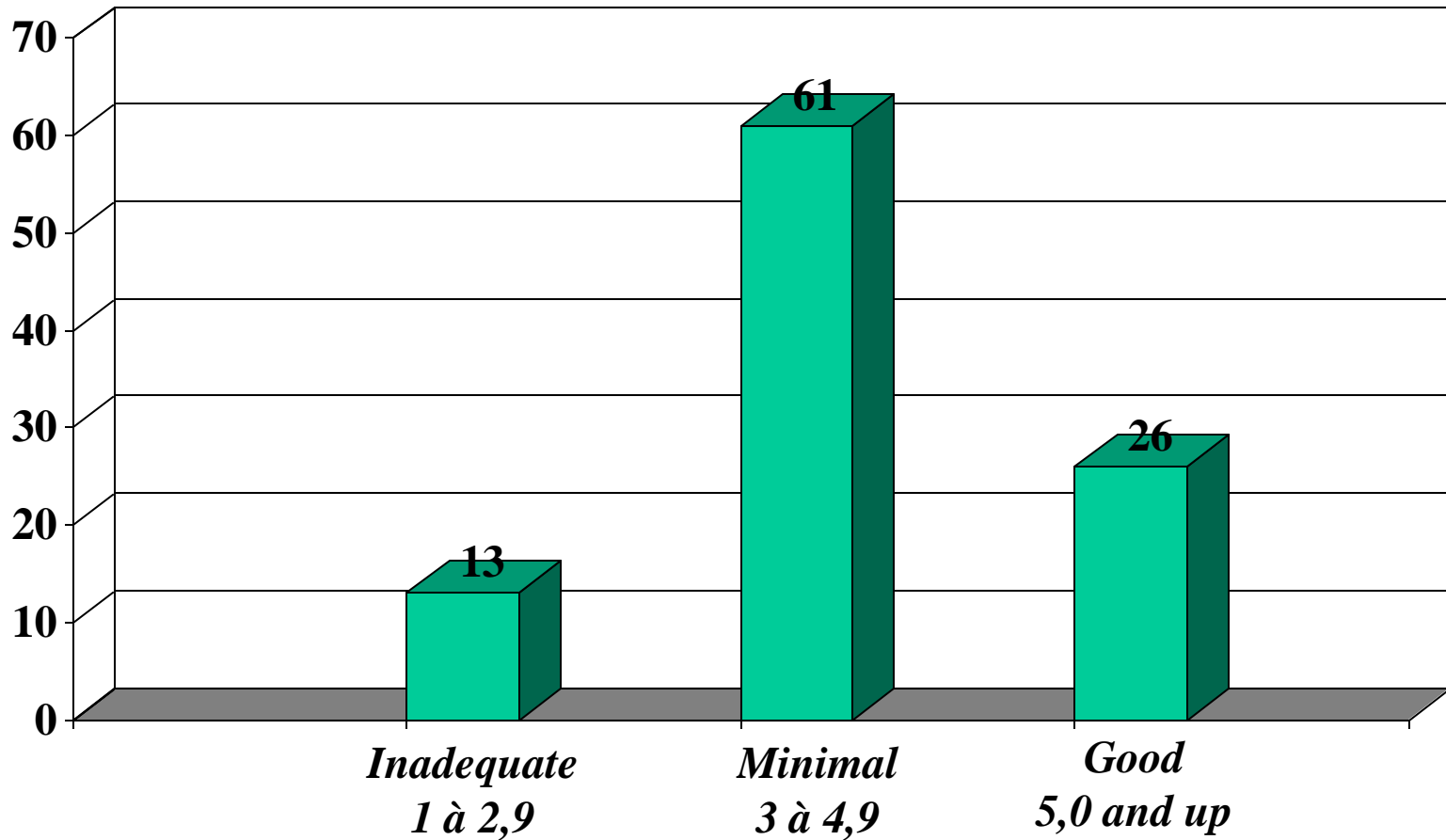
Québec

ÉLDEQ

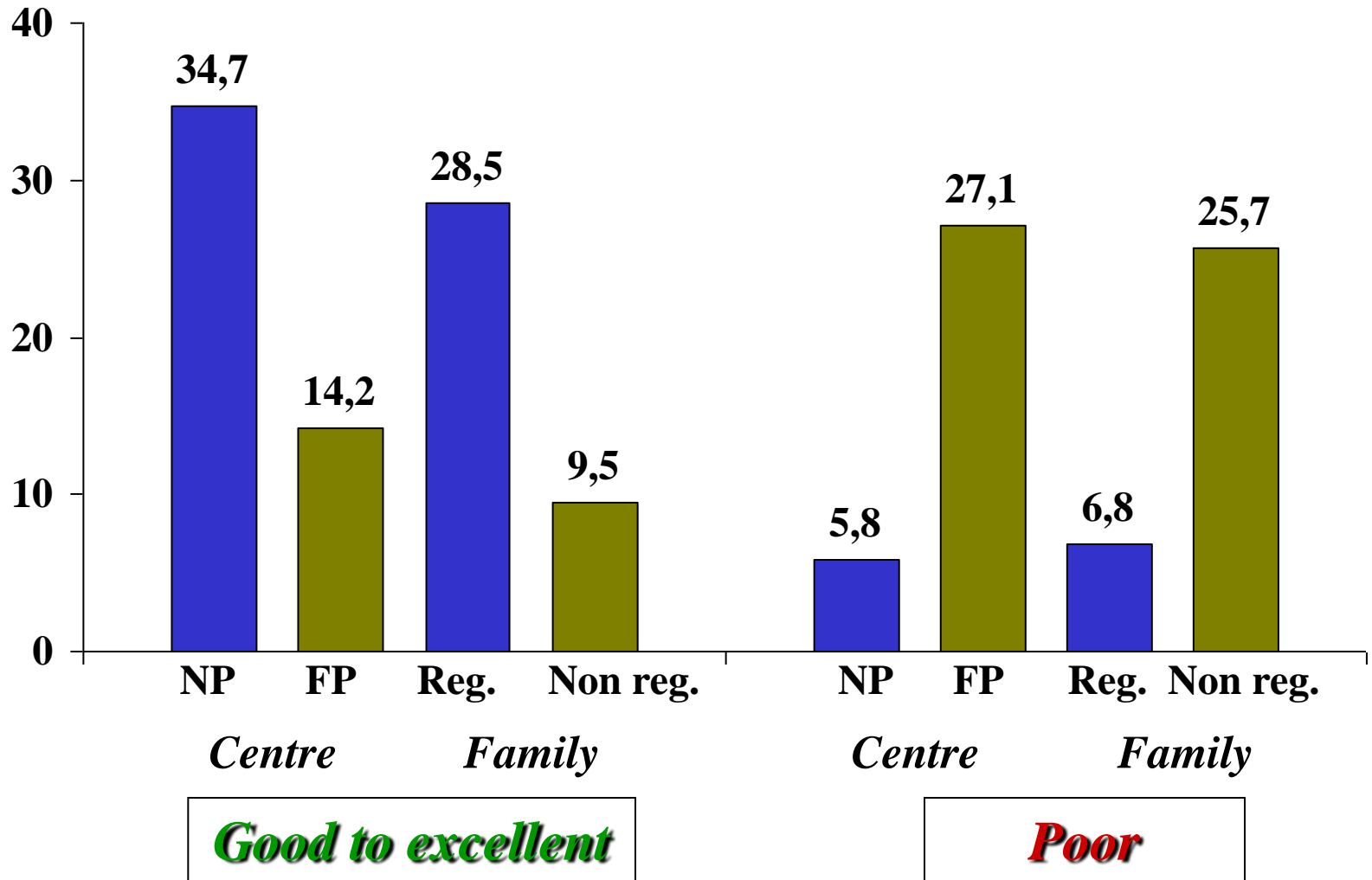
*Longitudinal Study of Child Development
in Québec*

- 2 223 children born in 1997/98
- representative provincial sample
- annual evaluations since 1998
- first evaluation at age 5 months
- daycare visits started at age 2 ½
- presently in grade 6

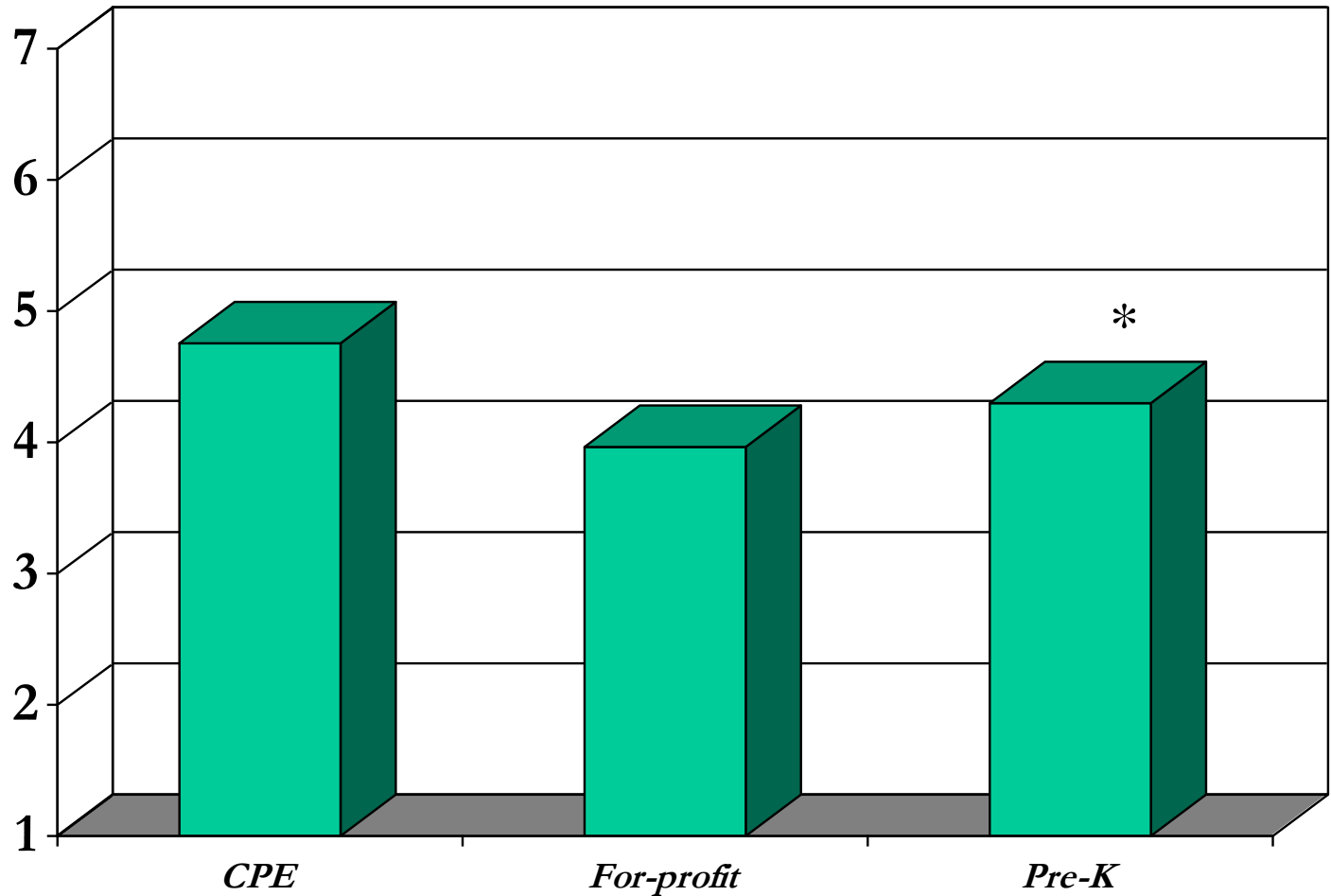
*Quality of child care settings evaluated
from 2000 to 2003
(N = 1574)*



Quality of child care services (N = 1538)
Total score ECERS and FDCRS

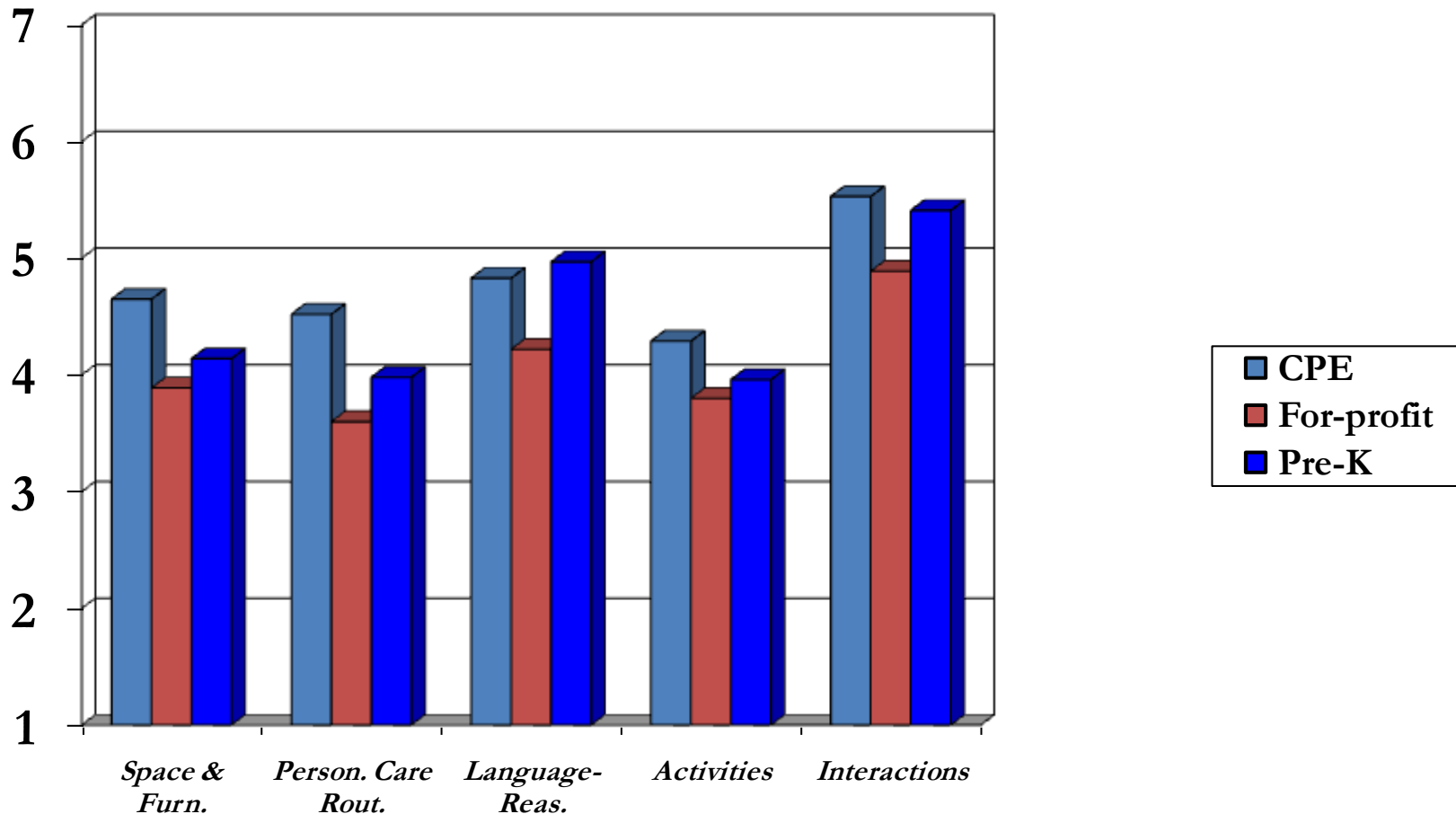


Quality of settings attended by 4-year-olds in Québec (ECERS-R)



Sources : ÉLDEQ 2003

Quality of settings attended by 4-year-olds in Québec (ECERS-R)



Source : ÉLDEQ 2003

How does Québec monitor quality in early childhood education programs?

Child Care Sector (Ministère de la famille et des aînés)

- Since 2005 – Ongoing Quality Improvement Plan – signed by CPEs and for-profit daycares but no funding allocated to improve quality
- 14 inspectors (structure, health & hygiene)

Kindergarten for 4- and 5-year-olds (Ministère de l'éducation du Québec)

- No monitoring of quality

Various initiatives to enhance quality in the child care sector

- ODYSSÉE – Repertoire of best practices funded by AQCPE and Chagnon Foundation
- BRIO – training sessions for educators on educational program '*Accueillir la petite enfance*' – funded by AQCPE, Chagnon Foundation and Développement économique, innovation et exportation Québec
- GRANDIR ENSEMBLE - aims to develop the skills of home childcare providers – funded by Chagnon Foundation and MFA
- NO DIRECT MONITORING OF QUALITY

*How can we enhance
child care quality?*

*Results from a standard-based
pilot project*

Necessary condition to ensure QUAD



High quality educator-child interaction

Structural characteristics that provide a safe and enriched environment

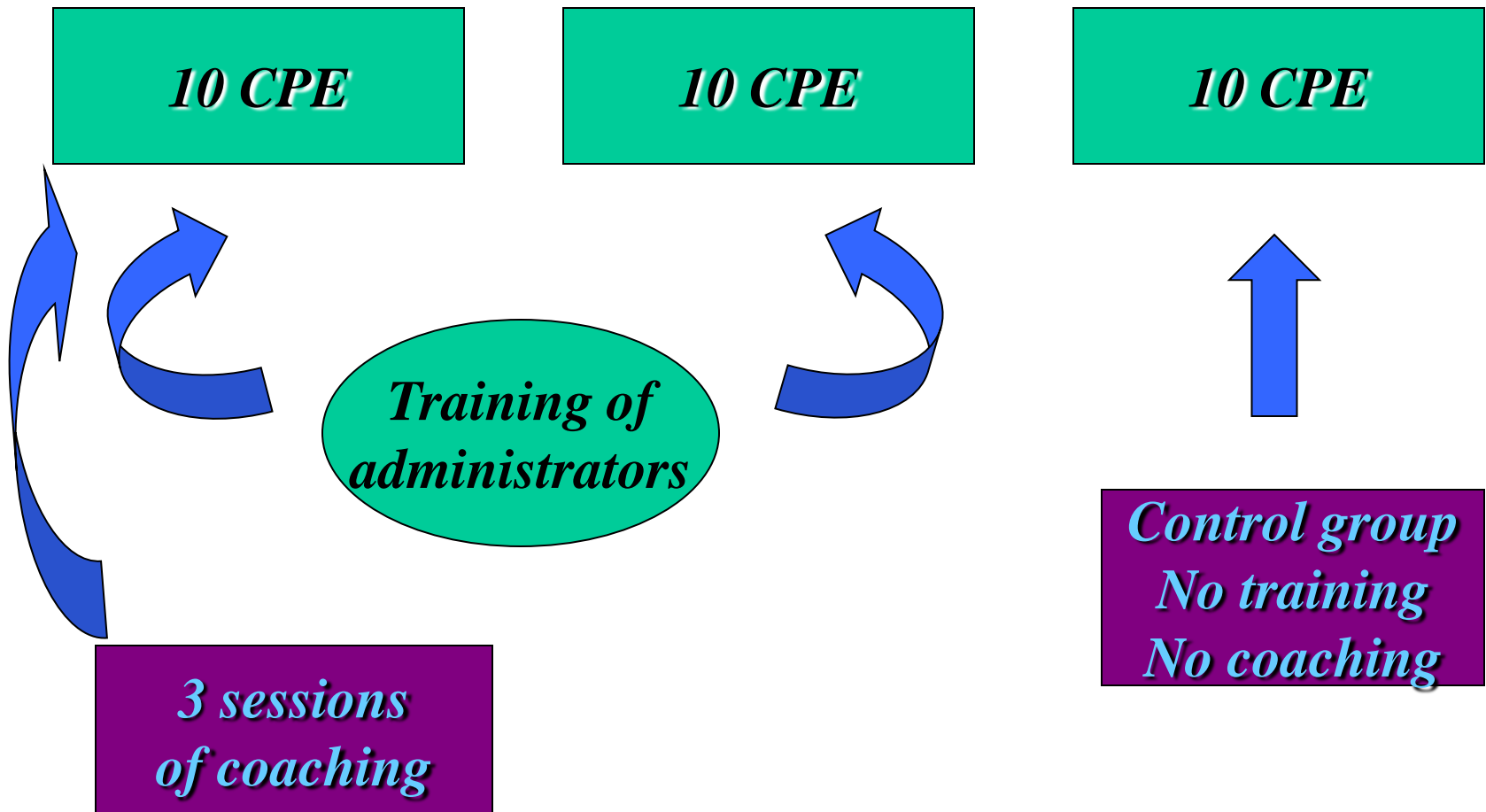
Rules and regulations that ensure quality

Social policies that recognize the importance of quality child care

Methodology

- *Evaluation of 30 early childhood centres (CPE) located in the Eastern Townships of Québec*
- *ECERS-R (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998)*
- *The CPEs receive the results of the evaluation*
- *Coaching based on the results of ECERS –R (10 centres)*
- *Second evaluation after 3 months to verify short-term impact of intervention*
- *Evaluation of all 30 CPEs about one year after initial evaluation*

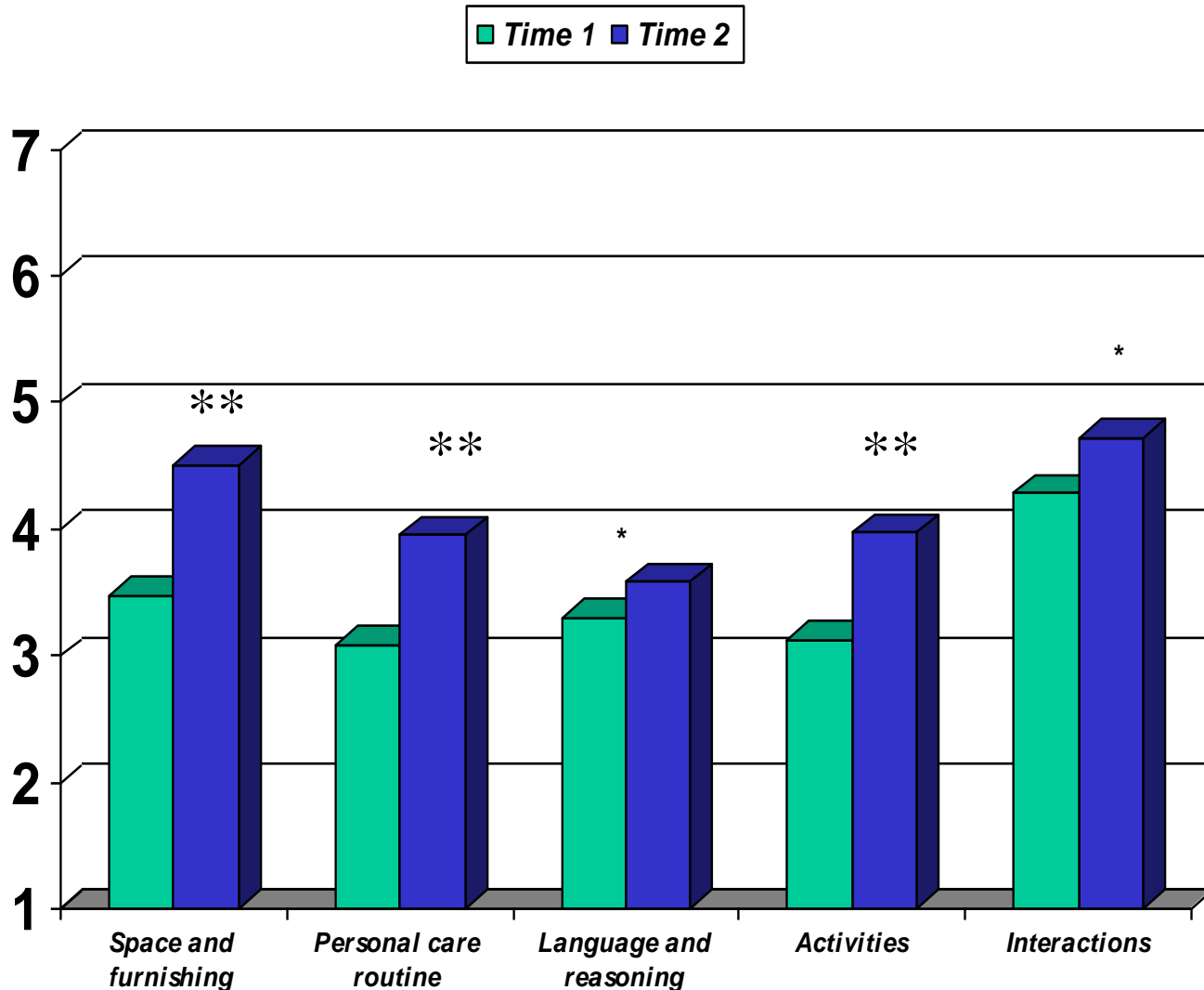
More precisely...



A group of children are seated around a table in a classroom, engaged in a meal. The children are dressed in casual clothing, and the table is set with plates of food and blue water bottles. The background shows a typical classroom environment with a patterned rug and a wooden cabinet. The text "Short-term and long-term results" is overlaid in a large, blue, outlined font across the center of the image.

Short-term and long-term results

Short-term results for the 10 CPEs (intervention group)



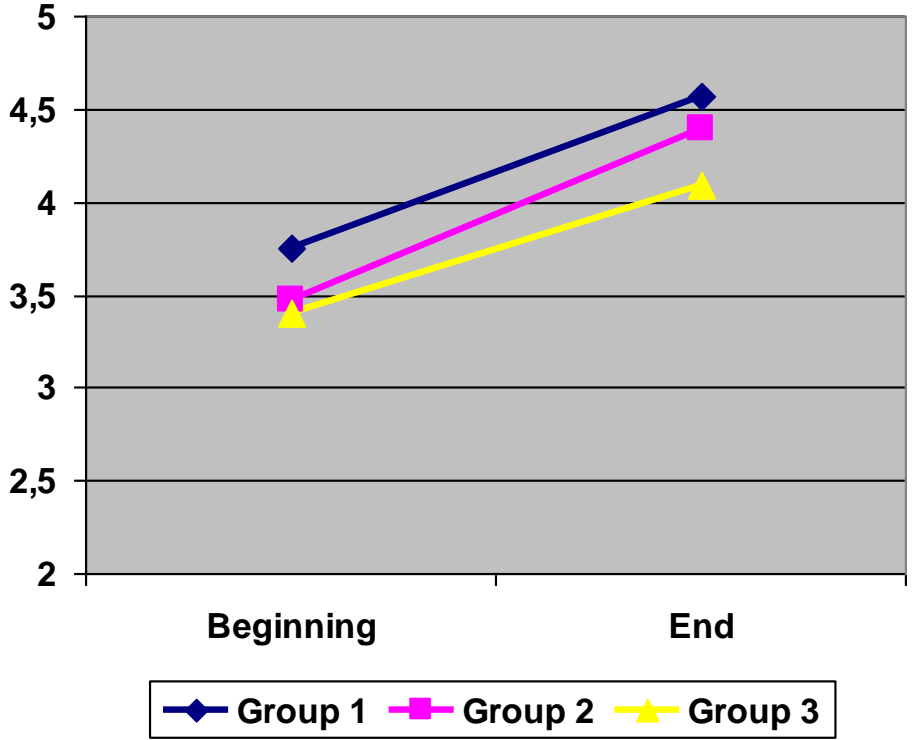
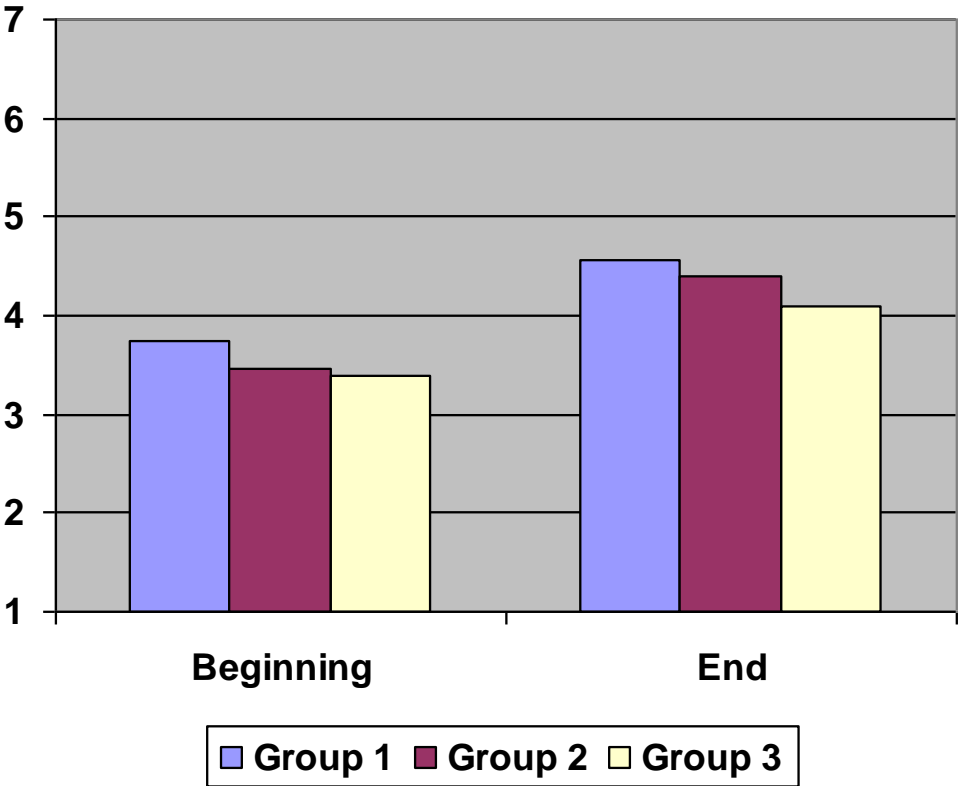
**p < .000; *p < .10

Average quality score (ECERS-R)

	Time 1 Before intervention	Time 2 3 months after intervention	Time 3 One year after intervention
Group 1 Training of administrators plus 3 sessions of <i>coaching</i>	3.75	4.28 ^b	4.57*
Group 2 Training of administrators	3.47		4.39*
Group 3 No training, no coaching	3.40		4.09*

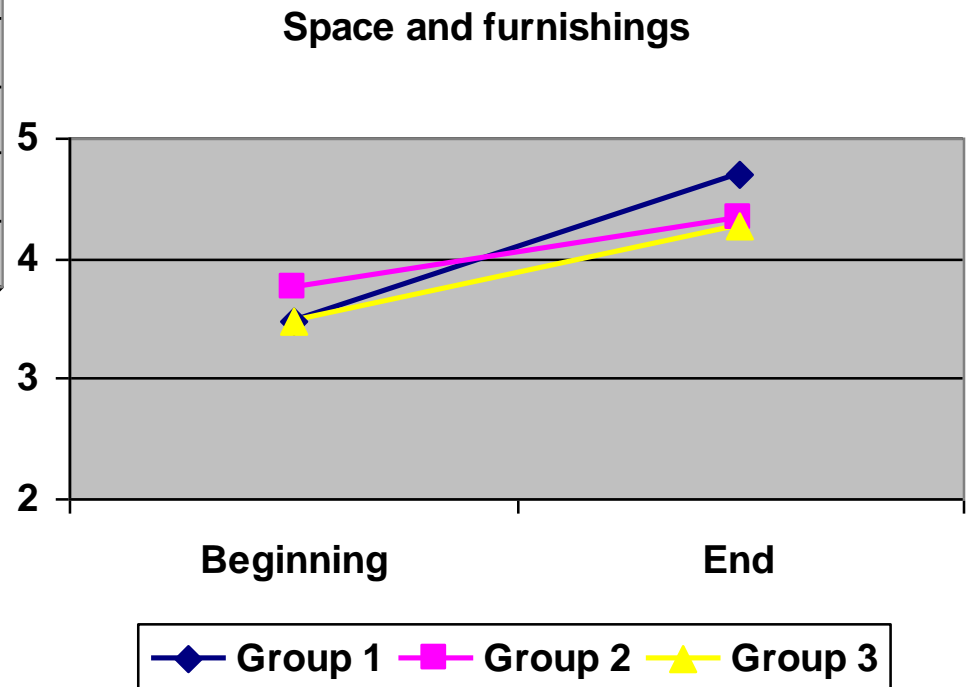
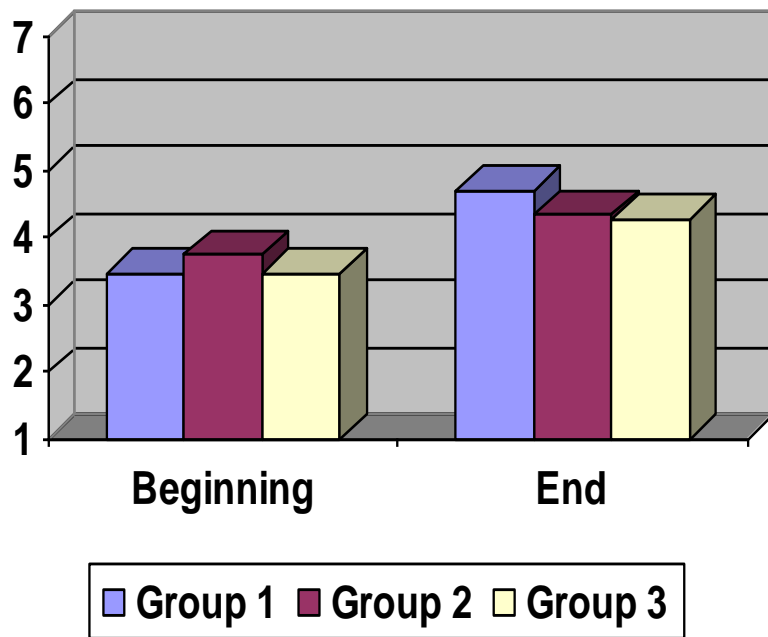
* $p < .001$; ^b = .10

Average quality score (ECERS-R) at the beginning and the end of the project

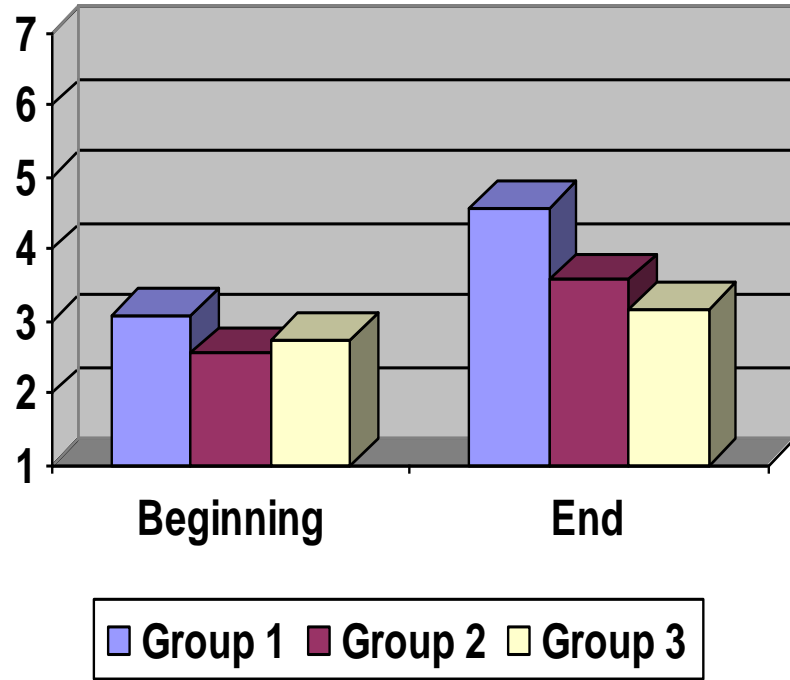


Results on different subscales

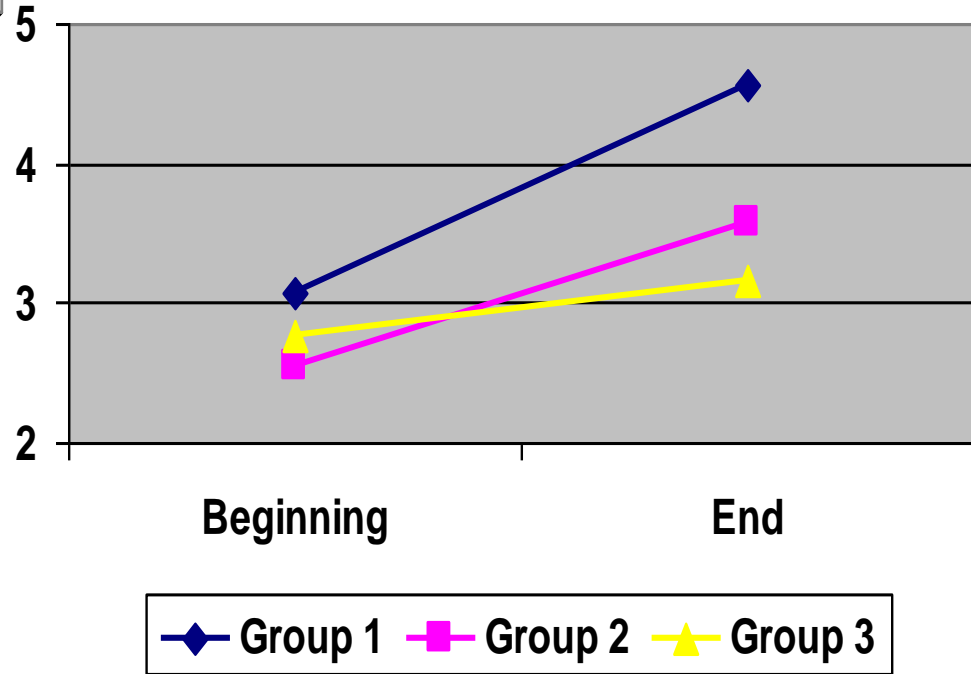
Space and furnishings



Personal care routines



Personal care routines



Conclusions

- **The majority of daycare settings in Québec is of minimal quality. However, we observe important variations in quality according to non profit/for profit and regulated/non regulated status.**
- **At-risk children are less likely to receive nonparental care during the preschool years – and if they do, they are more likely to be in settings of lower quality.**
- **Children’s degree of school readiness is associated with the number of years spent in daycare during the preschool years.**
- **We observe particular benefits of being in daycare for at-risk children : full-time attendance associated with better cognitive performance; early attendance associated with lower levels of physical aggression.**
- **The quality of daycare settings can be improved through in-service training.**
- **Results of a pilot project show that standard-based training of educators yields promising results with respect to increased quality of children’s educational and social environment.**

The project continues....



Regroupement des Centres de la petite enfance des Cantons de l'Est

Phase 2 – *Un coaching pour la qualité*
– includes all CPEs and all age groups

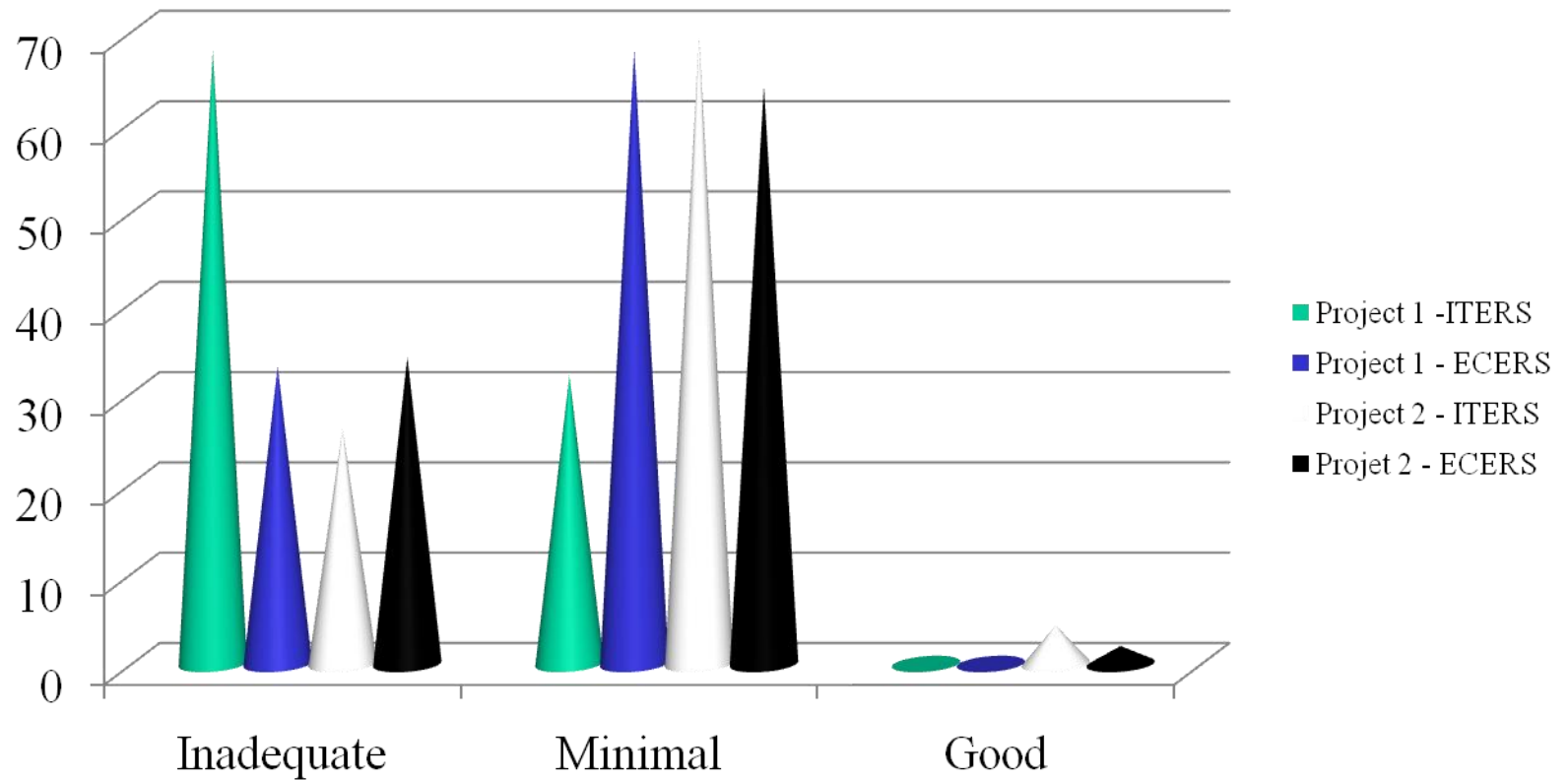
Phase 3 – offer services to home care providers



Regroupement des Centres de la petite enfance des régions de Québec et Chaudière -Appalaches

Since 2007 quality coaching project

Has child care quality in Québec improved over the past five years?



The challenges

- Training of observers
- Inter-rater reliability
- Supervision of observers
- Reluctant participants
- Significant staff turnover
- Lack of knowledge and leadership among administrators
- How can we finance an ongoing quality improvement project?

What is essential to efficiently monitor and improve quality in early childhood education programs?

- Leadership on every level
- Qualified educators and teachers
- Measures that meet validity and reliability standards
- Assessments by well-trained third-party observers
- Monitoring on an ongoing basis
- On-site assessments and training
- Financial commitment to integrate a process of monitoring and training into all preschool programs

MERCI BEAUCOUP

