

Conditions for Success of Actions to Promote Total Child Development

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Presentation for PHAC, March 30, 2017

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Plan

Why consider conditions for success as opposed to relying on evidence-based programs?

Why insist on the success of our actions?

Conditions for Success of Actions to Promote Total Child Development

What are these conditions?

How can this information help us locally?

Why insist on the success of our actions?

In Quebec, local actors are already adopting these results :

- In 2012, **one in four children** demonstrated developmental vulnerabilities in at least one of the five domains (**approximately 20 000 children**).
- This includes one in three children living in low-income environments (approximately 8 400 children).
- This also includes one in five children living in middle or higher socio-economic environments (approximately 11 100 children).

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The Québec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten revealed that nearly 20 000 children show developmental vulnerabilities in at least one of five domains.

What should we do with these results? There are four possible avenues to explore depending on the challenges and resources available in each locality: 1) do nothing; 2) increase or reinforce what is currently in place; 3) reduce or discontinue what is currently in place; or 4) propose new actions. Avenues 2 through 4 can be combined.

In Quebec, local and regional actors in child development are mobilising to better understand these results, and taking them into consideration in their planning to enhance child development.

No action, taken alone, is capable of reducing the proportion of vulnerable children and promoting total child development.

Why consider conditions for success as opposed to relying on evidence-based programs?

- Financial and human resources
- Ensure coherence with local needs
- Consistent with local actions
- Recognize the expertise of organizations

How can this information help us locally?

- Recent scientific evidence
- Using a different lens: reflecting and informing our practice
- Validate our efforts or readjust as necessary



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1. Promote the cooperation and engagement of stakeholders

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To what extent do current or intended actions provide for stakeholder cooperation and engagement?

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1. Promote the cooperation and engagement of stakeholders

You probably already know that:

- Stakeholder participation at various levels is essential,
- Parents are also key stakeholders.

The scientific literature shows that:

- Stakeholder engagement is a determining factor for success,
- Can make the difference between success and failure!

You probably already know that:

- Stakeholders can participate in choosing, implementing, monitoring and assessing actions.
- Parents are also important stakeholders.

The scientific literature shows that :

- The engagement of stakeholders is a better determining factor than the content of the intervention itself.
- Highly involved people working intensively to overcome obstacles and meet families' needs forcefully, enthusiastically and with dedication can make the difference between success and failure, even when the project is poorly planned or poorly organized.



2. Meet the needs of children and families

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To what extent do current actions fulfil the needs of children and families in your community?

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2. Meet the needs of children and families

You probably already know that:

- Actions should respond to the needs expressed by families,
- Other stakeholders offer a point of view that complements the families' perspectives.

The scientific literature shows that :

- It is not sufficient to simply have a parent representative; facilitate a process of co-construction,
- A needs assessment should be a continuous process.

You probably already know that:

- It is essential that actions first and foremost correspond to the needs expressed by families,
- The needs identified by community stakeholders offer a point of view that complements the families' perspectives.

The scientific literature shows that :

- When possible, a needs assessment of the needs of families should be a continuous process.

3. Strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors

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To what extent do current actions help to strengthen various protective factors and reduce risk factors?

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3. Strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors

You probably already know that:

- Neuroscience, biology, genomics, and social and behavioural sciences are refining our understanding of child development,
- Levels of influence include the personal, family, community and societal levels,
- Success = maximizing protective factors and reducing risk factors .

You probably already know that:

- Advances in neuroscience, biology, genomics, and social and behavioural sciences are refining our understanding of the components of healthy development, of what may disturb it and what can be done to support it.
- The factors that influence child development are individual, social, economic and environmental in nature.
- The most effective actions are those that maximize the beneficial effect of protective factors and reduce the harmful effect of risk factors.

3. Strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors

The scientific literature shows that :

- 65 protective factors documented,
- Factors should be prioritized in consideration with the needs of children and families,
- Factors should be prioritized in consideration with the strengths and challenges specific to each locality.

Fœtus/child	Family	Community	Society
No consumption of alcohol, drugs or tobacco	Favourable and harmonious climate	Favourable residential environment	Complete anti-poverty strategy
Limited screen time	Favourable parental practices	Strong commitment and cooperation	Parental leave

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The scientific literature shows that :

- The factors that should be prioritized must be chosen by considering the needs of children and families as well as the strengths and challenges specific to each locality.
- Several successful interventions focus exclusively on reinforcing protective factors.

4. Maintain a level of quality

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To what extent does each current action maintain a level of quality?

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4. Maintain a level of quality

You probably already know that:

- Higher quality > effects
- All actions, even early ones, are not equally effective

The scientific literature shows that :

- Overall, the quality of actions is based on:
 - theoretical or scientific support
 - characteristics of the personnel
 - measures to monitor implementation and effects

You probably already know that:

- The effects observed depend to a large extent on the quality of the action offered.
- All actions, even early ones, are not equally effective.

The scientific literatures show that :

Overall, the quality of actions is based on:

- theoretical or scientific support,
- characteristics of the personnel (their basic knowledge, their skills, and the quality and stability of their relationship with the families and children),
- measures to monitor implementation and effects.

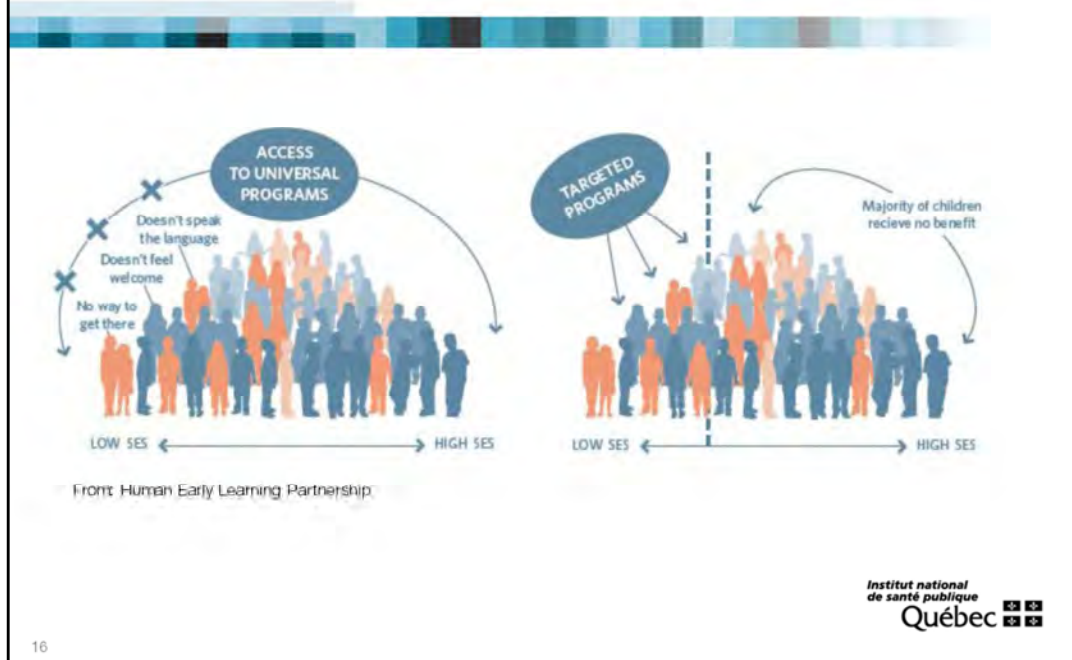
5. Work towards proportionate universality

- To what extent do current actions support working towards proportionate universality?
- To what extent are strategies to remove barriers to accessing resources/ services among certain families offered?

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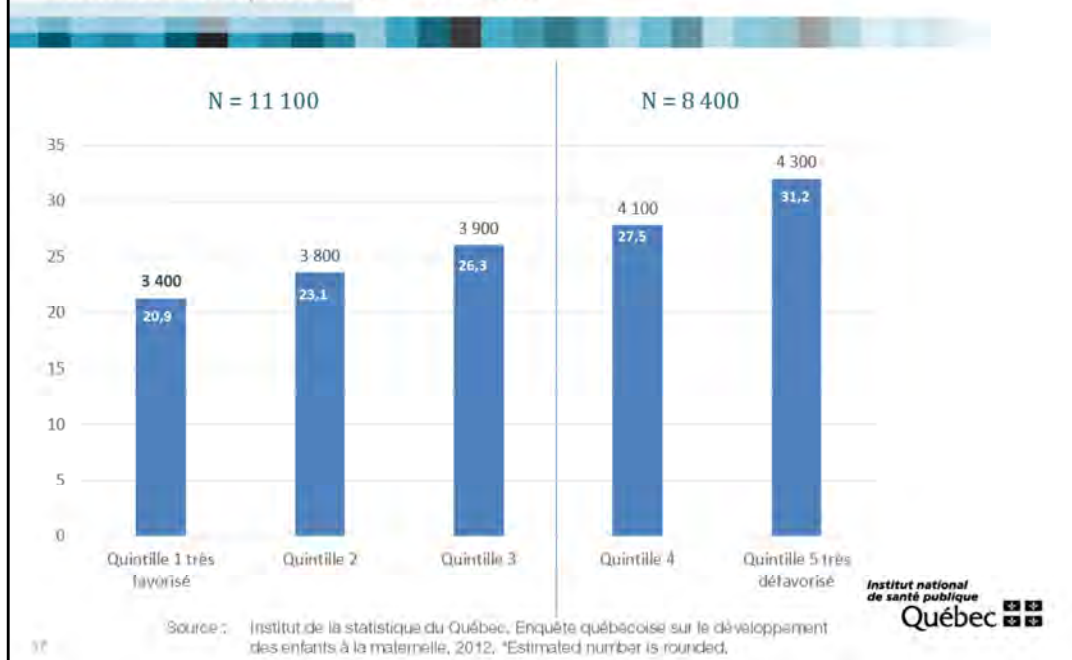
5. Work towards proportionate universality



The scientific literature shows that:

- The universal approach has the potential to offer support to the entire population, promote the development of children at all socioeconomic levels, and normalize the use of interventions. However, universality is costly and may result in a scattering of limited resources. In addition, these actions neglect the particular situations of a significant segment of the population, i.e., families who need increased support and are often hard to reach.
- An approach which reaches only one portion of the population exclusively (targeted) would not only deprive a significant number of middle- and even upper-class families of services, but would result in stigmatizing the targeted groups.

Number* and Proportion of Children Vulnerable in at Least One Area of Development according to the index of maternal deprivation (Quebec)



The scientific literature shows that:

Three findings emerge from the results of the EQDEM:

- There are significant developmental disparities among children entering school. Children with developmental vulnerabilities are found in all social groups.
- While the proportion of vulnerable children is markedly higher in low-income socioeconomic communities.
- A higher number come from middle and upper socioeconomic levels.

5. Work towards proportionate universality



The scientific literature shows that :

Proportionate universality consists of:

1. Offering universal interventions, i.e., interventions geared for all families (to avoid increasing health inequities),
2. But where the modalities or intensity can vary according to needs (to act on the socioeconomic gradient in health and improve the health of all).

5. Work towards proportionate universality

The scientific literature documents:

3 types of barriers:

- To services
- To the family
- To interpersonal aspects



From: Guide de l'optique d'équité et d'inclusion (2015)

The scientific literature documents:

Three categories of barriers to overcome:

- Aspects connected to services : cost, schedule, overly rigid eligibility criteria, inability to respond to the request for help or response in time, lack of coordination among services.
- Aspects connected to family : lack of time, high stress, language, fragmentation of siblings, lack of information about the service offered, low self-esteem, fear of being judged, difficulties identifying and expressing needs, expectations and interests, lack of knowledge, low level of parental literacy, fear of being reported to child protection agencies.
- Aspects connected to interpersonal aspects : social distance, judgmental attitudes or insensitivity of those who offer the program, lack of recognition of cultural challenges, inability to recognize the strengths of the families and engage them as partners.

6. Focus on the child and all levels of influence

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- To what extent do current actions directly target children?
- ...support parents and families?
- ...support the living environment and conditions of families?

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6. Focus on the child and all levels of influence

You probably already know that:

- Using an overall perspective of support is most effective: child, family, living conditions, community and society,
- Problems affecting families at the local level also influence child development.

The literature show that :

- Planning activities capable of directly engaging the whole child is the preferred approach.

You probably already know that:

- The most effective actions are part of an overall perspective of support for the child's development by combining direct interventions with the child and interventions at all levels of influence.
- Problems affecting families at the local level (such as housing conditions, social isolation, weak or fragmented range of services and accessibility to services as well as limited economic opportunities) also influence child development.

The scientific literature shows that :

- Planning activities capable of engaging the whole child is the preferred approach.

7. Be established early and allow continuity up to age 8

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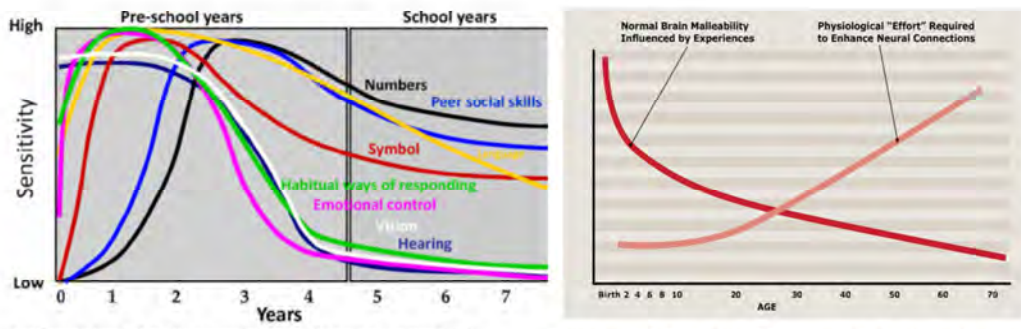
- What actions are available for infants 1 to 5 years old?
- ...during periods of transition (e.g. beginning school)?
- ...children who have begun school (between 5 to 8 years old)?

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7. Be established early and allow continuity up to age 8

You probably already know that:

- Actions offered early in life > success



Graph developed by Council for Early Child Development (ref: Neer, 1997; Early Years Study, 1999; Snowball, 2000.)

Taken from the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University.

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You probably already know that:

The brain develops throughout life, but at a very rapid pace during these early years, starting from conception and continuing through childhood. It evolves in various phases, such that at specific times in life, certain regions of the brain are more sensitive to the environment's beneficial or harmful influences than at other times.

Experiences during these periods of greater sensitivity forge neuronal connections that are more difficult to modify thereafter. This malleability may lead to adaptation or to vulnerability. As a result, brain structures or functions must receive appropriate stimulation during these periods in order to establish a foundation for optimum brain development.

7. Be established early and allow continuity up to age 8

The scientific literature shows that :

- The importance of support during transition periods,
- Extend the intervention until after entering school = ensures gains are maintained.

The scientific literature shows that :

- It is important to extend the intervention until after the child enters school to ensure that gains are maintained.
- Support for children during transition periods is especially important for later success. The transition from childcare to preschool is an important step, from preschool to kindergarten, and from kindergarten to first grade.

8. Permit significant intensity or significant accumulation

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- To what extent do current actions permit significant intensity or significant accumulation?
- To what extent are there current activities for reinforcement of gains (recall over time)?

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8. Permit significant intensity or significant accumulation

You probably already know that:

- Success depend on intensity,
- An accumulation of actions will produce the most substantial effects.

The scientific literature shows that:

- Intensity in time (duration and frequency), intensity of means or modalities used, and reinforcement of gains are all important,
- Ensure an appropriate frequency and regular participation,
- Intensity must be consistent with the challenges that need to be tackled.

You probably already know :

- An action's chances for success and the scope of its effects depend on its intensity. It is the accumulation of actions that will produce the most substantial effects.

The scientific literature shows that:

- The important variables in the equation are: intensity in time (duration and frequency), intensity of means or modalities used (combination of strategies) and the possibility of reinforcement of gains (recall over time).
- In addition to offering an intervention of a certain duration, it is important to ensure an appropriate frequency and regular participation.
- Intensity must be consistent with the challenges that need to be tackled (ex: a conference or 2-hour workshop to change parental practices? = not enough).

9. Be complementary and consistent

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- To what extent are current or intended actions complementary and consistent?



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9. Be complementary and consistent

You probably already know that:

- Organize actions in a way that minimizes the bureaucracy and the stress on families

The scientific literature shows:

- Need to ensure consistency in communicated messages (among activities, actors, organizations, etc.)

You probably already know that:

- When multiple actions are implemented with shared objectives, the challenge is to organize them in a way that minimizes the bureaucracy and the stress on families.

The scientific literature shows that:

- There is a need to ensure consistency in communicated messages.

10. Take into account the characteristics of the children and families targeted

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To what extent do current or intended actions take into account the child's developmental stage or the family's cultural characteristics?

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10. Take into account the characteristics of the children and families targeted

You probably already know that:

- Personalized objectives and interventions adapted to families' needs = success
- Children = maturity and developmental stage
- Family = compatible with the practices, beliefs and needs of various groups

You probably already know that:

- Actions become useful when they are adapted to the interests and realities of each child, each family or each community. Personalized objectives and interventions adapted to the families' needs and resources prove more effective than programs offering a one-size-fits-all approach.
- To take the child's characteristics into account, it is essential to consider the child's maturity and to use techniques and information appropriate for their developmental stage
- Without having to design new actions for each group in the community, it is important that the activities, material, content or format of an intervention be compatible with the practices, beliefs and needs of the various groups targeted.

Tools available

INSPQ Institut national de santé publique Québec

Les conditions de succès des actions favorisant le développement global des enfants

Résumé

INTRODUCTION

ÉTAT DES CONNAISSANCES

Qu'il se référer

COMMENTAIRES

Commentaires, quand utiliser l'outil?

Les 10 conditions de succès des actions

Québec

www.inspq.qc.ca/developpement-des-jeunes-enfants/avis-outils

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In addition to a knowledge synthesis, a summary and an memory aid, an addition tool has been developed to support the collective decision-making process concerning actions to promote total child development. This tool can be used to conduct a self-evaluation based on the ten conditions for success. Based on your self-evaluation, the document offers ideas for actions you might consider while taking into account the values and context specific to your situation.