

Centres de la petite enfance (CPEs)

A Lever for Social Justice, Education, and Empowering Families

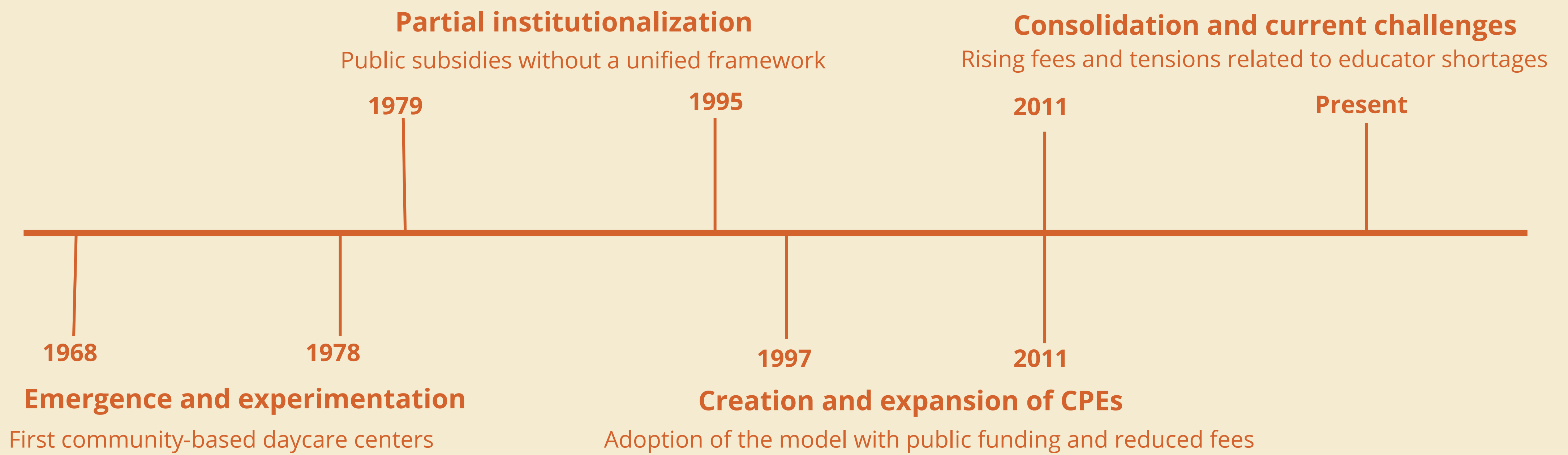


An inspiring model that structures social change

Early Childhood Centers (Centres de la petite enfance - CPEs) are a major social innovation that has transformed the model of educational childcare services in Quebec. Created in 1997 following the recommendations of the Chantier de l'économie sociale at the 1996 Socioeconomic Summit, CPEs arose from strong social mobilization, notably led by the women's movement. The 1995 Bread and Roses March highlighted childcare services as essential in combating poverty and supporting women's autonomy.

Initially priced at just \$5 per day, CPEs dramatically increased available spots, enhancing access and reducing inequalities. Today, they remain a reference model in social economy and democratic governance, recognized for their profound impact on collective services. Their success has even influenced recent federal early childhood care policies.

The Evolution of CPEs



An innovation based in three core pillars

Democratic and Participatory Governance

Each CPE operate as a nonprofit, managed by a board of directors primarily consisting of parents, ensuring collective and transparent service management.

Universal and Equitable Access

The CPE model has transformed Quebec's social policies by providing quality childcare services for all families, regardless of income.

A Lasting Impact on Social and Economic Structures

By supporting women's workforce participation, CPEs have significantly reduced poverty, created jobs in the social economy, and elevated the status of early childhood educators.

CPEs in Numbers (2024)

164 200
childcare spaces

97 %
occupancy rate

An Inspiring and Structuring Model

CPEs exemplify success in the social economy, proving that a cooperative and democratic approach can sustainably structure essential public services. By fostering equity, citizen participation, and social development, they serve as a reference model in the field of social innovation.

References

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