



Letter to Managers

Dear colleagues,

We would like to bring your attention to matters that are crucial to the future of private daycare centres and to the long-term survival of your own centre. We ask for a few minutes of your time as we are currently facing major issues.

For over 30 years, the Association des garderies privées du Québec (AGPQ) has fought passionately for private daycare centres. It continues to do so with the same uncompromised determination it has shown since its creation. For example, in 1997, the government was about to nationalize daycare services, a decision that would have led to the disappearance of private daycare centres. These centres could not offer \$5 spots and were even forbidden to issue tax receipts to parents. However, with the support of owners, educators and parents, the AGPQ managed the impossible and saved our daycare network.

Since then, the fight for private daycare centres has moved on to new levels. In 2001, our funding was significantly increased thanks to the AGPQ's efforts. Without this increase, our network's survival would have been in serious jeopardy. And here we are in 2011, facing resource shortages that hinder our ability to deliver quality services and offer our staff wages comparable to those of the CPE. The funding increase we were awarded last year barely covers half of our staff's wage increases and does not account for the rising costs of other expenses such as food, energy, taxes and rent. Based on the information that was recently made public by the ministère de la Famille et des Aînés (MFA) as part of its consideration of the estimates, the upcoming year shows no sign of improvement.

Our objective is not to open a debate on the management of associations, but to provide certain clarifications. We are questioning the motives behind a decision made by the ministère de la Famille et des Aînés regarding the accreditation of another association, the Rassemblement des garderies privées du Québec (RGPQ). Was the government's objective to divide our message and our voice? We do not believe this new arrival is a coincidence, especially at a moment when, like many others, we are asking for Tony Tomassi's resignation.

Many of you have recently received an English email from one of the RGPQ's founding members and former Board member of the AGPQ. This email, which sought to recruit new members, proves that the organization is lenient towards governmental authorities. Indeed, its author writes that the "RGPQ meets them [the MFA] on a regular basis, very nice people."

How can these people be referred to as "nice"? The funding they have provided us over the last year has proven entirely inadequate and next year's promises to be similar, if not worse.

How can one declare that the MFA is “nice” when a public CPE offering 80 spots receives close to \$200,000 more than a private daycare of the same size?

How can we accept that the MFA gives an extra \$6.90 for each baby sent to a CPE instead of a private daycare and \$3.30 for each child aged 18 and above, for costs related to care and education alone (wages, food, and educational and recreational material)? If our funding is reduced year after year, where will we be in three or four years?

The AGPQ refuses to be a social club. Our relationship with the government is cordial and based on mutual respect. They have a mandate and ours is to defend your interests, deliver quality services and ensure the survival of our centres. When faced with a choice between defending your interests and maintaining amicable relations with the government, we will always opt for the former. We refuse to be complacent and will always fight for a fair outcome. Our funding cuts strangely coincide with the creation of ANOTHER ASSOCIATION.

We can all expect an eventful spring and we are launching a campaign to raise awareness and encourage you to fight for your rights. As managers, educators, children and parents, we refuse to be treated as second-rate citizens. In the past we have moved mountains by standing united and determined. Whether you are a member of the AGPQ or not (you are all welcome), funding cuts affect us all, large and small daycares alike, in Montreal or in remote areas. Of course, we are always open to recruiting new members, but this fight goes beyond that. You will find attached a letter that should be distributed to your educators. Flyers to be handed out to parents will also be sent shortly.

Let's show solidarity!

All the best,



Jean-François Belleau

Executive Director, for the Board of Directors of the Association des garderies privées du Québec