



Equitable Access to Health and Well-being for English-speaking Children, Youth, and Families

2024-2025 Year-end Report



Fondation Lucie
et André Chagnon

This initiative is funded by the

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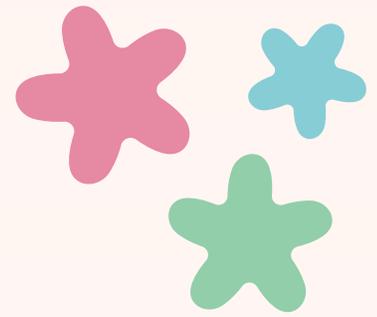
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Acknowledgements

The evaluators and the CHSSN staff would like to express gratitude to the staff at the participating partner organizations at the regional and local levels. They graciously cooperate in completing the reporting and evaluation requirements of the Bright Beginnings Program and the Youth Mental Health Initiatives. Their efforts have important impacts in the field for children, youth, families and systems and their spirit of collaboration is what makes this initiative strong.



Executive Summary



Overview of the Initiative

Initiative: “Equitable Access to Health and Wellness for English-speaking Children, Youth, and Families” (Accès équitable à la santé et au bien-être pour les enfants, les jeunes et les familles d'expression anglaise)

Timeline covered by the report: January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025

Lead organization: The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) is a network of 68 community resources, associations, foundations and other stakeholders dedicated to the development, through partnership, of health and social services for English-speaking communities in Québec. It was founded in 2000 by a group of community leaders who recognized the importance of mobilizing English-speaking communities to ensure access to health and social services in English.

Purpose: to improve the well-being and health of English-speaking children, youth and families across Quebec

The initiative is implemented through two main programs: the Youth Mental Health Initiative (YMHI) and the Bright Beginnings Program (BB).

Actions:

- Engagement of hundreds of community, regional and provincial-level partners
- Activities to engage, build solidarity and strengthen skills and capacity of community and regional organizations working with English-speaking children, youth and families
- Direct support for community projects that mobilize partners, engage youth, improve access to services, and develop new resources and programs
- Build relationships with key stakeholders and decision-makers in the field of children, youth and families
- Development of systems-change tools including stake holder mapping, conceptual frameworks and public policy recommendations

Financial support is provided by the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation and Secrétariat à la jeunesse of the Government of Québec (YMHI) and the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Healthy Early Years (HEY) program (BB).

Results 2024-2025

Youth Mental Health Initiative



A. CHSSN's capacity building with local organizations

- 29 community organizations across 17 regions of Quebec built capacity in youth
- engagement, partnership building, and responding to youth mental health needs
CHSSN hosted programming to support community organizations' networking, peer exchange and skill building, including:
 - Four Online Community of Practice sessions
 - Six training sessions and three information sessions to build specific skills and knowledge related to youth mental health and youth engagement
 - Mental Health Forum (“#RESILIENCE”) - in-person forum with more than 90 participants
 - Private Facebook group with active participation (161 comments, 453 reactions, 218 messages tagged according to the topics discussed)
 - One-to-one support and coaching for local organizations
- 80% of the YMHI organizations took part in the training activities and in-person events. Organizations were very satisfied with the training offered, would like to continue these skill building activities in future years of YMHI, and provided suggestions for future training topics.
- Strong interest for more training opportunities. Suggestions to CHSSN for future topics for workshops included: culturally adapted approaches, partnership development, strategic communication, engaging youth in rural, remote, and isolated areas, trauma-informed care.
- Resources shared with community organizations were appreciated. Suggestions for additional resources and tools CHSSN could develop in the future: More regional/local data on youth mental health; Research specific to territorial and demographic realities; Tools for mapping and assessing partnerships; Toolkits and guidelines for program implementation; Data visualization tools for reporting impact.

B. Local youth and partnership engagement initiatives

- The 28 local organizations and 1 provincial organization that were part of YMHI created tailored youth activities and resources, consulted youth on gaps in the mental health system for English-speaking Quebec youth, and built relationships and collaborations with local institutions such as schools and CIUSSS. These activities resulted in:
 - 35 people aged 35 and under served as directors on participating organization's boards
 - Increased youth engagement
 - youth got involved in many of the participating communities in leadership roles, in event planning or as mental health ambassadors and peer educators)

- Over 10,000 young people aged 15-29 took part in the 1206 mental-health related activities offered during 2024-25
- Increased access to youth mental health resources in English
- translation of tools, plain-language resources, and social media outreach aimed to break down young people’s fear or confusion around mental health information and services
- topics included anxiety, sleep hygiene, ADHD and neurodivergence, peer relationships, mental health in the workplace, and complex conditions such as Borderline Personality Disorder and Gender Dysphoria
- Increased inter-organizational collaboration
 - 148 mental health professionals collaborated in the activities throughout the year
 - Participating organizations collaborated with 748 other organizations, mainly locally, to advance their YMHI projects
 - Participating organizations built the capacity of professionals who regularly work with youth
 - training and awareness activities offered locally for school staff, mental health professionals, and other service providers

C. CHSSN’s systems-level activities for youth mental health

- Development of ‘Pathway to Mental Health Care for English Speakers: An Inclusive Framework for Communities’
 - The framework highlights the organizational, community and systemic levers that can be mobilized to address specific needs of English-speaking communities in Quebec when accessing mental health services
- Systems mapping: to better understand the key stakeholders in youth mental health in Québec



Bright Beginnings

The CHSSN and its network of regional organizations continued having great success developing collaborations and mobilizing partners to make changes that increased access for English-speaking children, youth and families. However, while most partners were highly motivated and committed, both CHSSN and the regional organizations continued to experience resistance from some stakeholders.

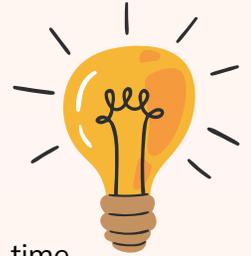
Key results from the regional organizations supported by the Bright Beginnings Program include:

- The number of partners (out of 272) that made changes to increase access for English-speaking children and families was 134, compared to 98 the previous year.
- The number of collaborations with Maisons de famille increased to 18.
- The most frequent type of change made by partners was providing their program bilingually or in English.
- The largest increase in the type of changes made by partners compared to the previous year, was agreeing to co-animating or jointly offering a program.
- A considerable number of presentations were made, motivated by the release of EQDEM 2022 results and CHSSN's new Early Childhood Communications Toolkit.

Highlights of CHSSN's provincial collaborations and systems-level activities for youth and families include:

- Supported projects with 23 regional organizations and 12 provincial partners.
- CHSSN was invited by the Ministère de la Famille to become a member of the new Table des partenaires Famille.
- CHSSN's provincial partners continued to be strong allies and provided opportunities to influence stakeholders and decision-makers.
- CHSSN drew important learnings from implementing its new Early Childhood Communications Strategy.





Learnings

- Integrating practices of youth engagement is a gradual process that takes time, repeated training and guidance. To be successful, a commitment to youth engagement needs to be embedded at the organizational strategy and policy levels, as well as in organizational culture.
- Designing capacity building activities that fit different levels of experience among diverse organizations is challenging but can be done well through consultation with participants, needs assessment and ongoing adaptation.
- Mental health service organizations are strained by service demands, resource scarcity and acute eco-systemic problems; therefore improving access for English-speaking youth is often a low priority.
- Some mental health sector “regroupements” and associations are open to hearing about the needs of English-speaking youth but do not fully understand how English-speakers are at increased vulnerability because of language, culture and multiple intersectionalities.
- Public agencies have been resistant to translating documents, even essentials such as suicide prevention training resources, citing language law restrictions.
- Resistance to taking steps to reduce language barriers is strongly connected to the current political language climate in Quebec, as well as people’s personal beliefs about the protection of the French language.

Future Directions

Over the next year, CHSSN will continue to strengthen the existing activities of both YMHI and BB, as well as the following developments:

- Implement improvements to CHSSN’s Resource Map App
- YMHI will continue to strengthen relationship building with provincial-level stakeholders and develop its mapping of youth mental health ecosystem.
- BB’s Early Childhood Communications Strategy will shift its focus to developing more allies and mobilizing existing ones to become public champions about the importance of including the needs of English-speaking families in public policy.



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Introduction

This is a progress and evaluation report on the initiative “Equitable Access to Health and Wellness for English-speaking Children, Youth, and Families” (Accès équitable à la santé et au bien-être pour les enfants, les jeunes et les familles d'expression anglaise). The report provides an update on the activity and results from January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 (15 months) of the initiative.

Overview of the initiative

Purpose

This initiative aims to improve the well-being and health of English-speaking children, youth and families across Quebec. CHSSN uses a mobilization model that builds on decades of relationship building with health and social services organizations in Quebec. The initiative applies a multi-level strategy to bring about change in the complex child-family-youth ecosystem, with collaborative action at the community, regional and provincial levels.

The initiative has two main objectives:

1. To strengthen CHSSN's provincial-level and systems-change work to address inequalities in access to services related to language barriers for English-speaking children, youth and families.
2. To build the capacity of partner organizations in networking, representation and promotion at the regional and local levels, to advance access to health and social services, resources, and programs for English-speaking children, youth and families (including CHSSN's 23 community networks and other organizations).

Actions

The strategies applied during the initiative include:

- Activities to engage, build solidarity and strengthen skills and capacity of community and regional organizations working with English-speaking children, youth and families
- Direct support for community projects that mobilize partners, engage youth, improve access to services, and develop new resources and programs
- Build relationships with key stakeholders and decision-makers in the field of children, youth and families
- Development of systems-change tools including stakeholder mapping, conceptual frameworks and public policy recommendations





The initiative is implemented through two main programs:

Youth Mental Health Initiative (YMHI)

YMHI promotes the mental health of English-speaking youth by improving their access to resources and services and involving them in the design and implementation of activities that promote their agency and reduce stigma in their peers and community. YMHI is implemented by CHSSN in partnership with 25 to 29 community organizations each year across Québec (the partners sometimes change from year to year). The local partners develop and implement projects to educate and collaborate with stakeholders in the education and health systems, engage youth, develop, translate and adapt mental health resources, and provide youth activities in their regions. CHSSN's role is to build the capacity of local partners as well as undertake provincial level and systems change activities.

The Bright Beginnings Program

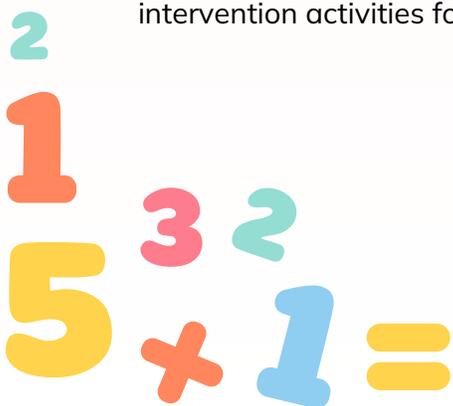
Bright Beginnings aims to ensure English-speaking children, youth and their families have improved access to programs and services, which will lead to improved well-being. Bright Beginnings promotes change in the child, youth and family ecosystem by engaging stakeholders. Through the program, CHSSN and its network of regional organizations engage stakeholders by developing and implementing collaborations to provide new and adapted services to better reach and support English-speaking children and families.

Financial Support

The Youth Mental Health Initiative and Bright Beginnings programs are made possible with funding support from the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon.

The Youth Mental Health Initiative Program is also funded by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse of the Government of Québec.

CHSSN's other initiatives under its Early Childhood, Youth and Families Program are supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Early Years (HEY) funding program. The HEY Program compliments the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon funding support to the Bright Beginnings Program by supporting direct prevention and early intervention activities for children 0-6 years old and their parents.



Complementary Evaluation Study

A recent third-party evaluation study¹ commissioned by CHSSN concluded that its partners increased health and social services (HSS) access for the English-speaking community because of the improvements made by partners. The purpose of the study was to assess how effectively the CHSSN network of organizations (NPIs) mobilize health and social services partners to meet the needs of English-speaking communities. The survey was sent to 344 partners across Quebec, with 134 completing it (39%).

“96% of HSS partners agree that NPIs offer them knowledge, skills, support, and tools necessary to meet the needs of English-speaking communities”

(Impact Report, slide #9)

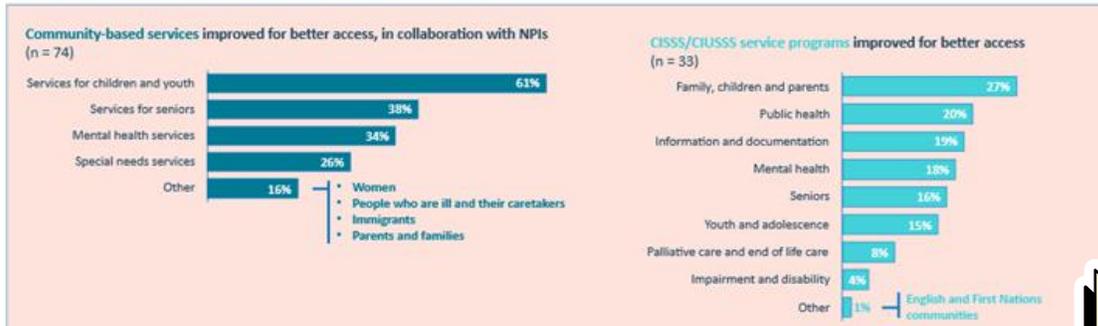
In addition to strongly demonstrating that CHSSN’s partner mobilization strategy for improving access to services for English-speaking communities is successful, the study revealed the extent to which the regional organizations have engaged children, youth and mental health partners. The study revealed that the type of services improved were highest for children and youth, and mental health services. Of the CISSS partners, 27% responded that children and youth services were improved for better access, and 18% responded that mental health services were improved. It was even higher for community-based services; 61% responded that services for children and youth were improved, and 34% responded that mental health services were improved. These findings certainly reflect the partnership building efforts and outcomes of the Bright Beginnings and Youth Mental Health Initiative programs. A slide from the evaluation report is shown below (with permission from the author and CHSSN). The 19-page report is available from CHSSN upon request.



¹ Impact Report: Findings of the NPIs’ Health and Social Services Partners Survey, July 2025, CHSSN, conducted by Vanessa Anastasopoulos, PhD, CE [PowerPoint Presentation].



To which types of HSS programs and services did partners make improvements?



Impact Report: HSS Partners Survey Findings



Results 2024-2025

Youth Mental Health Initiative

CHSSN's capacity building with local organizations

CHSSN's Youth Mental Health Initiative (YMHI) has focused on strengthening the capacity of community organizations to improve access to mental health literacy, promotion, and prevention for English-speaking Quebecers aged 15 to 29.

In 2024-25, 29 community organizations were active partners in YMHI across all 17 regions of Quebec. In addition to providing funding for them to undertake activities in their respective regions, CHSSN hosted programming to support community organizations' networking and capacity building. Programming included:

- Online Community of Practice sessions
- Six training sessions and three information sessions to build specific skills and knowledge related to youth mental health and youth engagement
- Mental Health Forum (“#RESILIENCE”) - in-person forum
- Private Facebook group

CHSSN also provided tailored support and coaching. The 29 organizations reported strong appreciation for CHSSN's responsiveness to their needs, timely communication, encouragement for their local initiatives, and the tangible resources on youth engagement and mental health CHSSN provided during YMHI.

The **Community of Practice** (CoP), Mental Health Forum and training activities had a high rate of uptake by the 29 organizations. Participation rates in the online CoP were consistent (72%) for all four sessions. Participants appreciated the opportunity to build their skills, hear other communities' action strategies and network for potential new collaborations. Many organizations reported that they valued the Communities of Practice calls and networking opportunities, and some wanted to see them expanded. Suggestions included more regional or thematic gatherings, cross-project site visits, and structured opportunities to share lessons learned between organizations.

"Continue offering Community of Practice calls — they're invaluable for exchanging ideas and feeling connected to others doing similar work."

- Community organization



The six training sessions and three information sessions included a mental health first aid course and training on youth suicide prevention. The training activities and in-person events attracted strong participation, with 80% of the YMHI organizations taking part. Organizations were very satisfied with the training offered, would like to continue these skill building activities in future years of YMHI, and provided suggestions for future training topics.

The two-day Mental Health Forum (“#RESILIENCE”) for community organizations working in the field of mental health was held in Montreal in February 2025. More than 90 participants took part in enriching discussions and knowledge exchanges, during which key themes of resilience, shared strategies, and gaps in services at the national, provincial, and local levels were explored.

The private Facebook group was active this year, with most of the organizations involved on this platform (161 comments, 453 reactions), sharing important resources related to youth engagement and mental health (218 messages tagged according to the topics discussed).

Potential future areas for capacity building

There was strong interest among organizations for more training opportunities for their staff and their respective partner organizations. Suggestions of future topics for workshops included:

- culturally adapted approaches
- partnership development
- strategic communication
- collective impact
- youth engagement
- engaging youth in rural, remote, and isolated areas
- cultural responsiveness, accessibility, accommodations such as child care, food, and transportation
- compassion fatigue and navigating systems without complacency
- mental health first aid
- trauma-informed care workshops



Some requested that CHSSN curate and share **ready-to-use toolkits, activity plans, or regionally relevant materials**. The emphasis was on practical tools that could be implemented in local contexts.

Suggestions for additional tools offered during YMHI included:

- * Continue sharing best practices
- * More regional/local data on youth mental health
- * Research specific to territorial and demographic realities
- * Tools for mapping and assessing partnerships
- * Toolkits and guidelines for program implementation
- * Data visualization tools for reporting impact
- * Resource directories for youth mental health services

Some community organizations suggested CHSSN help **broker partnerships** with schools, clinics, or local service providers. One requested CHSSN's support in setting up a Table de concertation in their region.

Several organizations wanted to see **greater visibility for YMHI** and its partners. They thought that this could both reduce stigma around youth mental health and highlight the important role of community organizations. Some organizations suggested that CHSSN could help equip organizations with communication strategies they could adapt for their own outreach. Suggestions included:

- * Success stories and examples of effective partnerships; highlight supportive organizations across regions
- * Province-wide campaigns
- * Public awareness initiatives
- * Media engagement
- * More means to share updates on local initiatives throughout the year

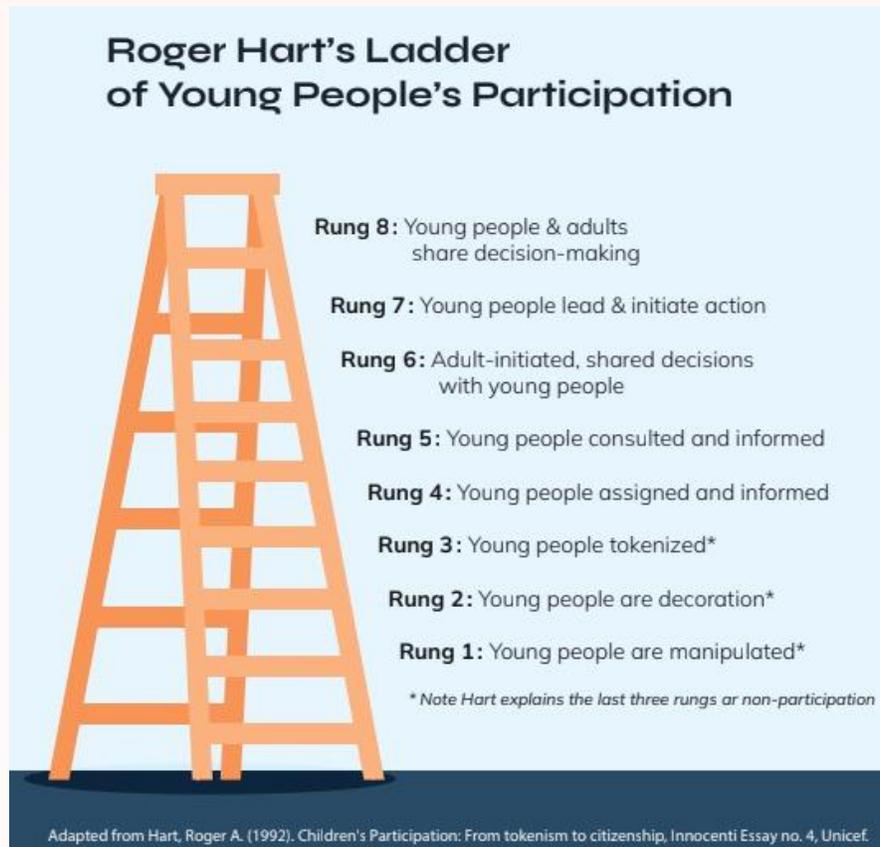
A number of organizations would like more assistance in **measuring impact, data collection and analysis in the future**. This included interest in CHSSN sharing aggregate provincial data with them to use for advocacy purposes. Some noted that this would help demonstrate the value of their work to other funders and stakeholders.

Local youth and partnership engagement initiatives

The 28 local organizations and 1 provincial organization that were part of YMHI this year created youth activities and resources, consulted youth on gaps in the mental health system for English-speaking Quebec youth, and built relationships and collaborations with local institutions such as schools and CIUSSS. Each community took an approach tailored to their community's needs and the organization's strengths.

Increased youth engagement

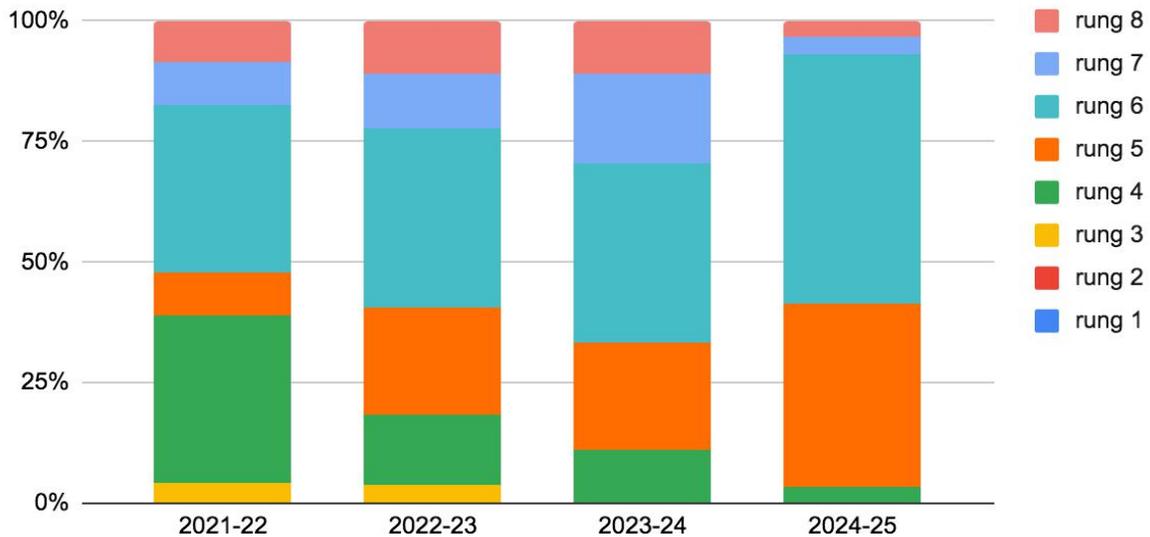
A key measure of increased capacity of the participating organizations is the change in their level of youth engagement. Since the beginning of YMHI, CHSSN has used Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation² as a reflection and assessment tool, with organizations identifying at which rung on the ladder they are each year.



Over the last year there was a **decrease in the proportion of participating organizations who self-assessed at the less participatory levels (4 and below)** and an **increase in the proportion at levels 5 and higher** - trends that have continued since the beginning of YMHI. However, there was also a decrease compared to last year in the proportion of organizations that self-assessed at rungs 7 and 8. This is likely due to changes in the organizations that were a part of YMHI; some youth-led organizations ceased to be part of YMHI while some new organizations joined that might have less experience with youth engagement. Overall, the trend indicates that being part of YMHI is increasing the participatory and youth-involved nature of the organizations and their mental health initiatives.

² See, for example: Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. (2016). Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation. Retrieved from <https://ymhac.rnao.ca/section-one/1.4/page3>

Assessment on Hart's Ladder of Youth Engagement



Proportion of community organizations at each rung, by year

Over 10,000 young people aged 15-29 took part in the 1206 mental-health related activities and events organized by the community partner organizations during 2024-25. **Many of the activities were led by and for youth**, with the most common types of youth-led activities being digital campaigns, workshops, mental health related consultations and media projects. In addition, **youth got involved in many of the participating communities in leadership roles** in event planning or as mental health ambassadors and peer educators.

By and for Youth MH Activities	Number of Communities/ Organizations
Social media or digital campaigns led by youth	10
Peer-led workshops on mental health, trauma, self-care	9
Leadership roles in event planning or delivery	9
Youth as mental health ambassadors or peer educators	8
Youth-created media (videos, art, podcasts, blogs)	7
Youth-led consultations to identify gaps and needs	7
Youth-led forums, summits, or mental health fairs	6
Youth co-designing outreach tools/materials (flyers, guides)	6
Youth presentations to peers and/or community partners	6
Drama, art, and music therapy co-led or co-developed by youth	5

Another aspect YMHI encourages and tracks is the **involvement of young people on the organizations' boards of directors**. In 2024-25, 35 people aged 35 and under served as directors on participating organization's boards. Organizations reflected on their progress recruiting and maintaining active participation of young people on their boards. The main factors that facilitate youth representation on boards of directors included:

- Training tailored to young people: Several groups have organized trainings or recommended that their young people take the 'Youth on Boards' training course offered by Y4Y Québec.
- Recruitment campaigns specifically focused on young people to encourage them to sit on their boards of directors.
- Presenting the benefits of youth participation as members to inform boards of directors and encourage improvements in nomination and selection of board directors.

The organizations report that the presence of young people on boards of directors contributes to more informed and inclusive decision-making.

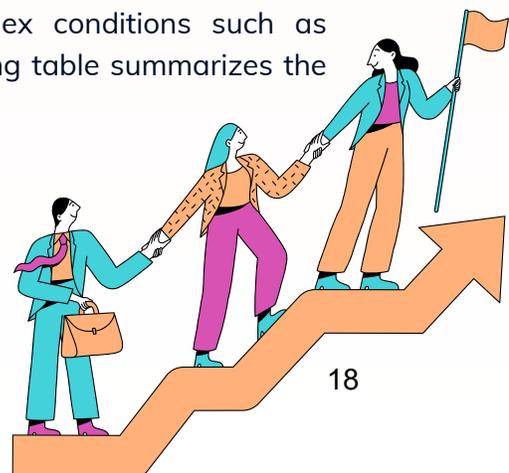
"[Youth] perspectives on the board led to the adoption of language more appropriate for young people in internal policies and promotional materials."

- Community organization

Increased access to resources

Community organizations had the **collaboration of 148 mental health professionals** in the activities they coordinated throughout the year, demonstrating YMHI's connections with local service providers and enhancing the credibility of awareness efforts. This collaboration also made it easier for youth to access services and destigmatize mental health support.

Many of the local organizations emphasized the **creation, adaptation and translation of resources to give English-speaking youth greater access to services and information on mental health**. Translation of tools, plain-language resources, and social media outreach aimed to break down young people's fear or confusion around mental health information and services. Topics of resources included anxiety, sleep hygiene, ADHD and neurodivergence, peer relationships, mental health in the workplace, and complex conditions such as Borderline Personality Disorder and Gender Dysphoria. The following table summarizes the types of materials developed over the last year.



Type of Material / Tool	Number of Organizations	How They Support Youth Mental Health
Online mental health resource hubs or web sections	10	Provide centralized, accessible mental health info tailored for youth
Flyers, posters, printed materials	12	Promote awareness and services in youth-friendly formats
Social media campaigns / digital content	11	Disseminate timely, youth-focused mental health messages
Workshops and event-based resources	10	Create touchpoints for engagement and learning through events
Translated materials (e.g., guides, resources)	9	Break language barriers and increase cultural accessibility
School and community partnership materials	8	Foster collaboration and extend support reach through partners
Youth-created content (blogs, videos, art)	7	Empower youth voice and peer leadership in mental health
Self-paced training courses (online)	6	Build capacity for peers, adults, and youth to support mental wellness
Interactive resources (e.g., Lending Libraries, games, Kahoots)	6	Encourage participation and reduce stigma in fun, engaging ways
Mental health toolkits and activity guides	5	Offer structured approaches to mental health topics and responses

Reduced stigma among youth

Many of the youth-led activities and resources were intended to **reduce stigma regarding youth mental health** and foster more comfort and open communication between youth and the people around them. Youth ambassadors and peer-led activities helped normalize mental health discussions by creating safe environments for open sharing. Creative expression and art programming allowed youth to express mental health experiences and questions. Promoting mental wellness during community events and in media made mental health more visible and accepted.



Organizations reported several indicators that their activities had a positive impact on reducing stigma among youth. Although youth were not directly surveyed about stigma reduction in 2024-25, as in 2023-24, community organizations received feedback and observed youth demonstrating increased openness, participation, and positive changes in knowledge, behavior and attitudes.

Education and engagement of service providers

Many YMHI organizations sought to improve mental-health supports for English-speaking youth through **building the capacity of professionals who regularly work with youth**, especially in rural Quebec communities. Several organizations reported offering training or awareness activities for school staff, mental health professionals, and other service providers to improve their ability to support youth mental health. Often French-speaking professionals are unaware of the structural and cultural barriers experienced by English-speaking youth in health and educational systems. In addition, community organizations have found that many professionals do not know about the culturally- and language-specific services available to which they could refer English-speaking youth. Raising awareness of both gaps and existing, responsive services has been an important activity for many local YMHI initiatives, although evaluation data was not collected from service providers about how these activities affected them.

Increased inter-organizational collaboration

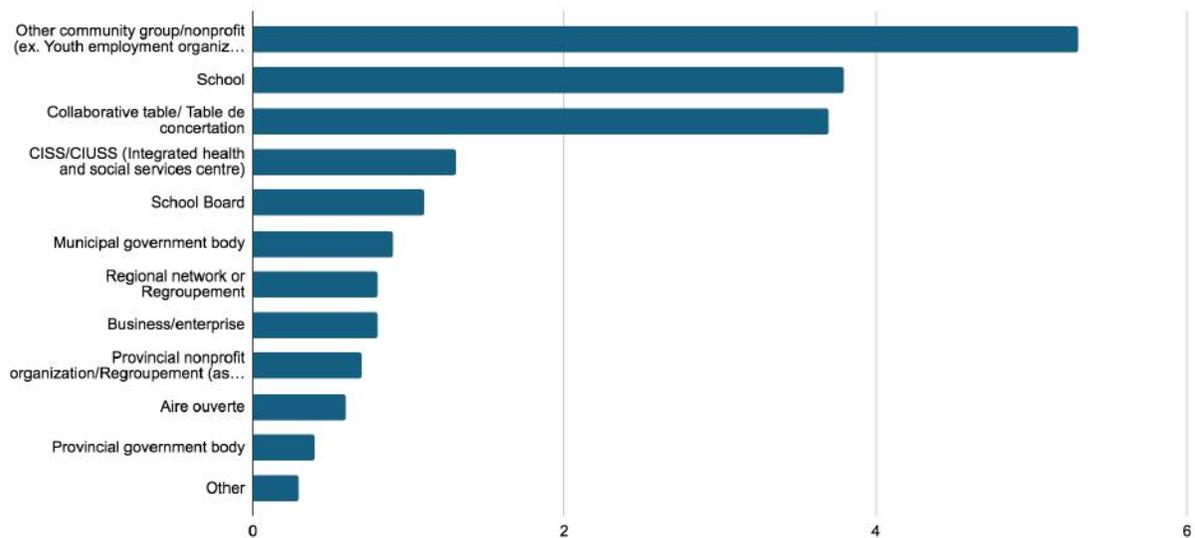
A key way in which YMHI is working to improve systemic support for youth regarding mental health is increasing collaboration between organizations across sectors. The 29 community organizations in YMHI are engaged in collaboration with a total of 748 other organizations, mainly locally. The 28 local-level organizations in YMHI (excluding the one provincial organization, because their high level of partnership skews the averages) engaged in **an average of collaborations with 19.5 different public, private and nonprofit organizations** for their YMHI activities.

Local-level organizations participating in YMHI were most likely to partner with:

- A. Other community group/nonprofit (ex. Youth employment organization), with an average of 5.3 such partnerships per YMHI organization.
- B. Schools (3.8 average # of partnerships).
- C. Table de concertation (3.7 average # of partnerships).
- D. CISSS/CIUSSS (1.3 average # of partnerships).
- E. School board (1.1 average # of partnerships)



Average number of partnerships



When asked what their collaborations achieved, the community organizations reported the following top 5 outcomes:

1. Reach youth
2. Reach more diverse youth than they could reach on their own
3. Meaningfully engage youth in programs/activities/governance
4. Exchange knowledge and skills between organizations
5. Complement/fill gaps in services.

The main challenges they faced regarding partnerships or engaging other organizations effectively in their YMHI initiatives were:

- Limited time and staff capacity (both internally and externally).
- High staff turnover that disrupts established relationships.
- Bureaucratic processes and administrative demands (emails, coordination, wait times) can slow down collaboration.
- Lack of English services or bilingual staff which limits participation of potential partner organizations.
- Physical distance from partners (especially in rural or remote areas).and lack of in-person interaction
- Some partners were not familiar with or understanding of English-speaking (ES) youth realities.
- Certain agencies or schools can become saturated with existing partnerships and requests for their participation, limiting new collaboration potential.

Community organizations' key learnings regarding partner engagement during YMHI included:

- Trust is the foundation of effective partnerships, which is built through long-term engagement
- Set time aside in project budgets for relationship-building
- Regular check-ins and follow-ups are vital
- Clearly communicating goals, roles, and expectations helps alignment
- Being transparent, reliable, and consistent strengthens relationships
- Show the mutual benefits of working together
- Recognize each partner's priorities, limitations, and resources
- Consider factors like rural settings, language, and service eligibility
- Use existing relationships to make new connections
- Attend community events, roundtables, or partner days to network
- Recognize and value the strengths each organization brings

“Our partnership with the CISSS has continued to strengthen, with an increased willingness to collaborate in enhancing accessibility to health and social services for the English-speaking community. Within the YMHI, this has been reflected in joint initiatives such as hosting kiosks together in English high schools and providing feedback on translated tools designed for public use. As the years progress, our collaboration with CISSS continues to grow, reinforcing our shared commitment to improving services for the English-speaking community.”

- Community organization

“For the territory that we cover and the accessibility, we see that there is still work in the promotion of the needs of the English-speaking community on the Côte-Nord. We still have some partnerships to build in our 5 different MRCs as well as awareness to raise on the realities of youth living in remote areas on the North Shore.”

- Community organization



CHSSN's systems-level activities for youth mental health

- A. Over the last year, CHSSN has undertaken the participatory development of a conceptual, strategic and action framework entitled: **'Pathway to Mental Health Care for English Speakers: An Inclusive Framework for Communities'**. English-speaking communities in Quebec face unique challenges in accessing mental health services, particularly due to linguistic, cultural and geographical barriers. The framework highlights the organizational, community and systemic levers that can be mobilized to address these specific needs. The framework aims to support the efforts of organizations and partnerships committed to improving access to mental health care for English speakers in Quebec, including children, youth and families. By identifying the key factors that facilitate this goal, the framework will provide a common basis for understanding and action for stakeholders. The framework is still in development, with waves of input from community partners and system actors in mental health. In future years, we will be able to evaluate how the framework is used.
- B. CHSSN has begun a **systems mapping** to better understand the organizations at various levels and connect youth mental health actors in Québec in order to foster collaboration and reduce service gaps, while boosting awareness, partnerships and coordinated action. The goal is to create a dynamic, participatory ecosystem map that will serve as a practical tool to strengthen collaboration and strategic partnerships - especially for organizations serving marginalized groups.
- C. CHSSN has undertaken a series of **relationship-building activities with system actors** in youth mental health from government agencies, research institutions, and provincial-level nonprofit organizations. Often these are with French-language organizations to ensure they understand and include the needs of English-speaking youth in Quebec. For example, CHSSN has been invited and active as a member of the provincial **Comité consultatif national Aire ouverte**, the [provincial public health service for youth aged 12-25](#). In addition, CHSSN is building a strong relationship with the [Réseau communautaire en santé mentale](#) (COSME). Over the last year, COSME has met several times with CHSSN to discuss collaboration opportunities, invited CHSSN to make a presentation at their AGM, spoke on a panel at CHSSN's Mental Health Forum, and took part in the YMHI Advisory Committee.



Bright Beginnings

The Bright Beginnings Program promotes change in the child, youth and family ecosystem by engaging stakeholders. It is a complex program that uses a strategy of intervening on multiple levels: regional organizations work at the local and regional levels, while CHSSN works at the provincial and government levels, often with partners also working at multiple levels of the ecosystem. Their combined efforts to influence change at different scales create a synergy that reinforces each other's actions and results, which in turn leads to generating more outcomes at multiple levels.

The development of the Bright Beginnings Program was informed by an ecosystemic approach and the ground-breaking work of Avenir d'enfants. However, unlike Avenir d'enfants, which fostered strengthening concerted action through tables such as regional Tables de concertation, the Bright Beginnings Program focuses on developing partnerships and collaborative projects, although participation in Tables de concertation is often part of relationship building efforts.

During the year, the CHSSN and its network of regional organizations continued having great success developing collaborations and mobilizing partners and stakeholders to make changes that increased access to services for English-speaking children, youth and families.

However, while most partners were highly motivated and committed, both CHSSN and the regional organizations continued to experience resistance from some stakeholders. Details of these and other outcomes will be presented in two sections: Results of Regional Organizations and CHSSN's Role and Provincial Level Results. Table 1 below shows a snapshot comparing results from 2019-2024.

“Our CISSS has developed a reflex to include the English-speaking community in their plans.”

from 4Korners



Table 1: Overview of Bright Beginnings Program (BB) Results 2019-2025						
Number of:	2019 (Aug-Dec)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024-25
regional orgs. funded by BB	18	19	21	23	23	23
regional orgs. BB partners	-----	74	152	195	270	272
CHSSN BB provincial partners	1	9	9	11	11	12
regional orgs' collaborative projects	-----	# not tracked	# not tracked	# not tracked	172	209
regional orgs. whose partners made changes	-----	# not tracked	# not tracked	# not tracked	98	134

Results of Regional Organizations Supported by the Bright Beginnings Program

The Bright Beginnings Program supports projects with CHSSN's network of regional organizations (i.e. NPIs) to create early childhood, youth and family initiatives with partners in order to increase access to services for the English-speaking community. The regional organizations' projects are supported specifically³ to:

- Improve networking and representation between the English-speaking community organizations and French-speaking service providers
- Develop collaborations and partnerships between the English community organizations and French-speaking service providers
- Outreach to English-speaking children, youth and families
- Develop knowledge on the reality and needs of English-speaking children, youth and families in their region.

In 2024-25, the Bright Beginnings Program continued to support projects with 23 regional organizations, from 15 of the 17 Quebec regions (excludes the regions of Nord-du-Quebec and Terres-Cries-de-la-Baie-James). However, the regional organization in Centre-sud-de-Montréal was changed from previous years (BGC Dawson replaced Collective Community Services). A map and list of regional organizations (NPIs) are included in Appendix A.

³ CHSSN Bright Beginnings Application Guide 2024-2029, p. 3.



The following section provides an overview of partners, an analysis of the types of changes made by partners and examples of some of those changes, as well as results from regional organizations' representation work, which intensified following the release of the 2022 EQDEM results and CHSSN's new Early Childhood Communication Strategy.

Regional Organizations' Collaborative Partners

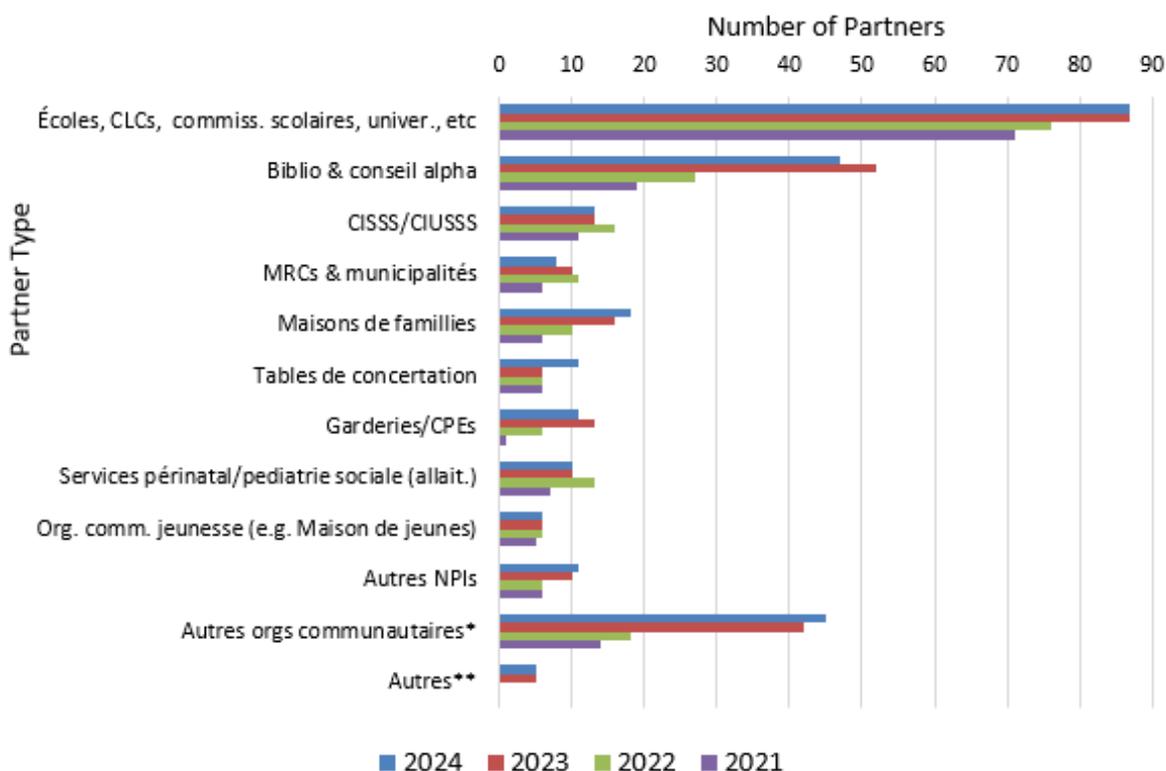
The number and types of partners that the regional organizations collaborated with in 2024-25 were similar to previous years. There were some new partners, and some collaborations were concluded. Details are provided below in Table 2: Regional Organizations' Partners.

Highlights for 2024-25 include:

- **Maisons de famille (MdF):** The number of Maisons de famille collaborating with the regional organizations continued to increase and reached 18. A few regional organizations even collaborated with more than one Maison de familles in their region. Many existing partnerships were reinforced as familiarity and mutual understanding strengthened over time.
- **Regroupement pour la valorisation de la paternité (RVP)** invited 3 regional organizations (Coasters, JHCP, MEPEC) to join its prenatal program development committee to ensure the inclusion of the realities of English-speaking men transitioning to fatherhood. The 3 regional organizations in turn developed collaborations with prenatal groups in their regions to better integrate expectant dads. MEPEC assisted its new partner in providing prenatal courses to English-speaking families. RVP also collaborated with Agape in developing a training workshop to assist interveners working with families of neuro divergent children.
- **Schools:** Regional organizations again worked with a few more French schools this year. This allowed them to reach English-speaking immigrant families. Regional organizations also reported improved collaboration with schools, which are notoriously challenging given teachers' restrictive availability. By focusing on communication channels, as well as maintaining more continuous communication, many regional organizations have experienced better follow-through and stronger commitment.



Table 2: Regional Organizations Partners for 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024-25



*"Autres orgs communautaires" : Accroche-Cœur, autisme, la diversité/ éducation sexuelle, immigrants, action bénévole, etc.

**Autres : musée, théâtre, église, Parc national, Centre ressource-familles militaires

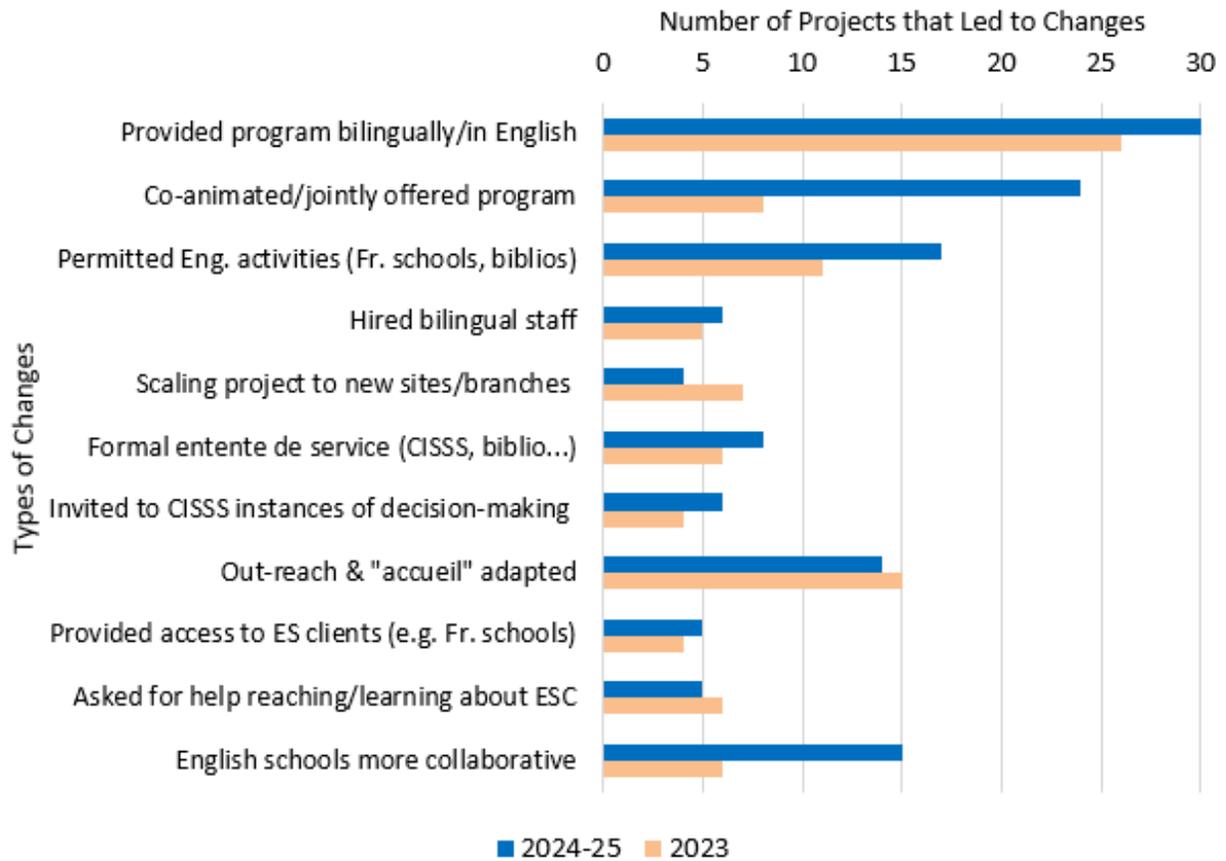
Changes Made by Partners in 2024:

Outcomes of Regional Organizations' Collaborations

As in the previous year, the majority of collaborative projects led to partners making changes that created improved access for English-speaking children and families. The types of changes made by partners, and their frequency, are presented below in Table 3: Types of Changes Made by Partners. In addition to the analysis of changes made by partners, the outcomes of regional organizations' collaborations are further illustrated with some examples.



Table 3: Types of Changes Made by Partners of Regional Organizations



It should be noted that implementing most of these changes represents considerable effort on the part of partners. While most partners weren't reluctant to translate resources, particularly when the regional organization offered to help, other types of changes involved significant commitment. For example, deciding to add a bilingual requirement when hiring often represents an important shift in an organization's culture. Allowing English activities can also represent a similar shift and may even involve risk in the community perception of them.

"They have their community service workers actively practicing their English with the new families."

-From ECO-02 Report



Key outcomes include:

- The most frequent change made by partners was agreeing to provide their program bilingually or in English; it was also the most frequent last year.
- The largest increase in the type of changes made was partners agreeing to co-animating or jointly offering a program with regional organizations.
- There was also a large increase in the number of partners that permitted English activities. While some of these partners were CISSSs and French schools, many also were municipal libraries. Perhaps the increased openness was due to clarification concerning the implementation of Law 96 since regional organizations previously reported much reluctance and confusion about the law, particularly from municipal libraries.
- The number of partners that entered into formal agreements (*entente de service*) with partners also increased. As in previous years, most of these were agreements to deliver services in English on behalf of a CISSS. However, an increased number of the agreements were with libraries to formalize obligations and responsibilities of the respective parties.

“The Maison de la famille is putting in noticeable effort to reach out to and include the English-speaking families in the area.”

-From CASA report



Examples of Changes Made by Partners: Outcomes of Regional Organizations' Collaborations



Agreed to provide programs bilingually or in English

ARC's (Montérégie-Centre) partner, La Mère À Boire, has developed its capacity to provide its weekly Parents and Babies and Les Papas programs bilingually by recruiting volunteers to interpret for English-speaking families and newcomers at in-person activities. These adaptations have resulted in tripling participation in both programs.

Les Papas is a program for fathers in partnership with RVP. A partnership has also been developed with the CISSS for prenatal classes. La Mère À Boire has also started offering some activities in Spanish.



Co-animated or jointly offered program

La Maison de la famille Bonaventure initially contacted **CASA** for help reaching more English-speaking families. This developed into a collaboration to co-animate the weekly RATATAM program. La Maison de la famille started including an English-language story as part of the story-time portion of the sessions. CASA said, "The Maison de la famille is putting in noticeable effort to reach out to and include the English-speaking families in the area."



Permitted English activities in French school, bibliothèque, etc.

4Korners (Laurentides) was allowed to participate in Welcome Events at the start of the school year at some French schools in different MRCs. This allowed them to connect with parents who are English-speaking and shared information about 4Korners and its programming.

The Bibliothèque municipale de Rouyn-Noranda held an activity in English for the first time. After trying for years, Neighbours was finally able to develop a collaboration for story time sessions in English and a bilingual activity for Early Childhood Week.



La Maison de Famille Embellie was finally able to hire a new staff member who is bilingual to co-animate parent-child activities in Grosse-Ile with **CAMI**.

Hired bilingual staff



Scaling project to new sites or branches

The collaboration between **Connexions** and Réseau Biblio de l'Outaouais was expanded to include all 46 libraries, covering the entire region of Outaouais. Biblio de l'Outaouais distributes and manages Connexions' Let's Play & Talk language development kits. The expansion made it possible for English-speaking families who live outside of Gatineau as well as families living in the rural and remote locations of the Outaouais to access the kits.



Formal entente de service (CISSS, biblio, etc.)

Contracts between **NSCA** and Bibliothèque Louis-Ange-Santerre and Louis-Ange-Santerre public libraries in Sept-Îles were developed for NSCA's Travelling Literacy Bags. The libraries have included the literacy bags in their inventory, and they also manage the logistics of lending the bags to families.



Invited to CISSS tables of decision-making

CIUSSS Ouest-de-l'Île- invited **ACDPN** to collaborate in its Jeunes En Difficulté program, a school support and advocacy project to increase access to community and first-line services for children and families in the English-speaking Black community. The program has facilitated collaboration and referrals from the Lester B. Pearson School Board, increased its visibility and become a resource recognized as supporting English-speaking Black families.



Out-reach & "accueil"
adapted

J'apprends Avec Mon Enfant (JAME), a group focused on family literacy, offers limited services to English-speaking families, made adjustments to improve access to its parents workshop for BGC Dawson's (Centre-Sud-de-Montréal) pre-k and kindergarten families. BGC Dawson refers English-speaking families and helps parents with contacting and accessing JAME's services.



Provided access to
English-speaking
clients, such as in
French schools

The CISSS de l'Outaouais invited **Connexions** to its Welcome Café for Immigrant Families to do outreach with English-speaking families. As a result, Connexions was able to reach immigrant families whose children attend French schools.



Asked for help
reaching/learning
about the English-
speaking
community

École du Milieu, a special school for students who have dropped out, asked **MCDC** (Chaudière-Appalaches) for help developing a program for English-speaking youth; the program had only been offered in French. They are collaborating on a needs assessment, mobilizing key partners and an outreach strategy. MCDC also helped to find an English-speaking volunteer to lead conversational English classes with their current students.



English schools were
more collaborative

Principals and teachers at the Rawdon and Joliette elementary schools were very enthusiastic about **ECOL's** literacy program for students whose second or third language is English. Held during the school day, teachers selected students that needed more literacy support.



Collaboration Challenges of Regional Organizations

- **Obstacles caused by language laws, regulations and biases** continued to be cited by some partners for their reluctance to become involved or further engaged. For example, two regional organizations emphasized significant resistance from regional tables to acknowledging the English-speaking community in their areas. Both regional organizations believe the resistance is due to a combination of English-speaking families in those areas being immigrants and the regulations prohibiting the provision of services in any language other than French, particularly to “new arrivals”.
- **Partners’ staffing challenges:** Several regional organizations reported that collaborations were cancelled or postponed because partners had problems recruiting or retaining staff; sometimes it was due to the departure of the one bilingual staff member. A few regional organizations reported that a change at the partner’s management level resulted in the collaboration being cancelled.
- **The Unpredictable:** And finally, one regional organization, Neighbours in Rouyn-Noranda, explained how weather and poor road conditions prevented it from holding workshops as frequently as planned in Val d’Or, at a school 100 km away whose students are mostly Indigenous.

Representation: Regional Organizations’ Actions to Influence Decision Makers

Regional organizations’ efforts during the year were distinctively different from previous years. With the release of EQDEM 2022 results, regional organizations leveraged the new data, took advantage of CHSSN’s new Communications Tool Kit, and created opportunities to mobilize partners and stakeholders. Regional organizations presented at partner and table meetings, events and conferences, some of which included important stakeholders and decision-makers. Five of them organized their own large full-day events.

Presentations during la Grande Semaine des Tout-Petits (GSTP)

Regional organizations started using CHSSN’s new Early Childhood Partner Mobilization Tool Kit immediately following its release in November 2024, in time for la Grande semaine des tout-petits (GSTP). Many (8 regional organizations reported) presented at events during GSTP.

- ✓ **4Korners** presented the new EQDEM statistics on English-speaking children to French partners at the Table de concertation régionale des tout-petits’s GSTP event, Rassemblement des tout-petits.
- ✓ **Jeffery Hale Community Partners** presented to the Concertation régionale grandissons tous ensembles in Quebec City, at its day-long GSTP event, La Grande journée des tout-petits. This Table of mostly French-speaking stakeholders had limited awareness of the realities of the English-speaking children and families.



✓ **Neighbours** presented at a GSTP event they co-hosted with the local library.

Most of the regional organizations continued doing presentations and using the communication tools throughout the year. For a full list of presentations given by regional organizations see Appendix B. Some of the presentations were given at large events and included important decision-makers, for example:

- **Agape** and **4Korners** presented to over 120 participants at a professional improvement session in March 2025, for the “personnel de soutien” (CISSSs, daycare, preschool, primary) of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, which covers a large territory of 15 MRCs and includes the regions of Laval, Lanaudière, and the Laurentides. In addition to highlighting the English-speaking children EQDEM results, 4Korners’ showcased the work of Agape and ECOL, also located in the territory, as well as its own initiatives, and emphasized the importance of intersectoral collaboration.

Representations on Tables de concertation

Participating in Tables de concertation is an important part of regional organizations’ efforts to sensitize partners and mobilize them to make changes as well as influence decisions and actions that can increase access for English-speaking children and families in the local and regional ecosystem. Collectively, regional organizations participated in over 70 different Tables in 2024-25. The types of Tables range from Tables de concertation régionale petite-enfance, jeunesse-enfance famille and persévérance scolaire, to Tables de concertation des saines habitudes de vie and comités de développement local.

Although participating in Tables de concertation is extremely time consuming, and sometimes frustrating, in addition to creating collective change at a regional level, it also leads to developing new relationships and partnerships, and reinforcing change in current and potential partners.

Some outcomes of the year include:

- As a result of **Agape’s** participation on the Table intersectorielles régionales en saines habitudes de vie, the 2024 theme of Laval’s Unie Pour Ses Familles Event was the English-speaking community of Laval and how to best reach and serve it.
- **REISA** (Montréal l’Est de l’Île) played a key role in assisting Gerald McShane English Elementary address some acute problems by mobilizing the Table de Quartier de Montréal Nord. The Table and several members developed collaborations with the school to address security issues in the school’s area and provided programming such as intercultural exchanges with a neighboring French school and a nutritional breakfast program. The school has become a member of the Table.

- In a different borough it serves, **REISA** continued to be the only member representing the English-speaking community at the Table Petite Enfance Rivière-des-Prairies.
- The Table Jeunesse Brome-Missisquoi (0-17) prioritized a request for help from Heroes English Elementary, to address a rise in social-behavioral problems at the school, by forming a committee focused on the inclusion of English-speaking youth & families. Many Table members joined the committee to learn more about how they can improve their services, offer support and collaborate.

Other Types of Representations

Similar to previous years, regional organizations also continued participating in countless committees, sub-committees and working groups of Tables de concertation as well as governance boards. Many of these were tables of decision-making and influenced resource allocation, service delivery and the presence of regional organizations facilitated access to programs for English-speaking families.

Schools and Boards of Directors

- ECOL became a member of Pinewood Elementary School governing board (Lanaudière)
- JHCP continued as a member of the Early Childhood Committee of the Central Quebec School Board
- MCDC continued as a member of New Liverpool Elementary School governing board as the community representative (Chaudière-Appalaches region)
- Neighbors' Bright Beginnings coordinator continued as a member of Noranda School governing board as a community representative (Abitibi-Témiscamingue)
- Agape became a member of the board of directors of Comité de développement local de Chomedey.

CISSS Committees

- Agape: Comité Santé et bien-être des hommes (CISSS) and Comité PIILE (Prog d'interventions intégrées lavallois pour enfants -CISSS)
- Coasters: CISSS-CN DI-TSA Consultative Committee
- MCDC: EQDEM results committee (led by CIUSSS)

Early School Transitions Committees

- CAMI, CASA, CASE (led by LEARN)
- Connexions (led by Commission Jeunesse for the MRC des Collines)

Other Special Committees

- Townshippers: Committee on the inclusion of English-speaking youth & families, created by the Table Jeunesse Brome-Missisquoi
- RVP's Comité périnatalité: Coasters, JHCP, MEPEC



Increasing Community Capacity: CHSSN's Role and Provincial Level Results

The role of CHSSN in advancing the goal of the Bright Beginnings Program -- improved access to programs and services for English-speaking children, youth and families -- is to manage the funding program for the supported regional organizations and strengthen their capacity, and equally important, to promote change in the child and family ecosystem by engaging stakeholders. CHSSN encourages and assists stakeholders to increase their capacity to offer services to English-speaking families by:

- increasing stakeholder awareness and knowledge of the realities of the English-speaking families;
- building relationships with key stakeholders and decision-makers, such as provincial organizations, government and public tables;
- developing projects and initiatives in partnership with provincial organizations.

CHSSN activities and results for the year are summarized in four sections:

1) Building relationships with government; 2) Collaborating with provincial organizations; 3) Developing an Early Childhood Communications Strategy; 4) Strengthening the capacity of the regional organizations funded through the Bright Beginnings Program.

Building Relationships with Government Stakeholders

By far the most important development in government relations during the year was an invitation from the **Ministère de la Famille** to become a member of its new table, Table des partenaires Famille. The invitation from a ministry level signifies that the government is more aware of and, to some extent, acknowledges the specific realities faced by the English-speaking community. The invitation also demonstrates that the CHSSN is successfully influencing government stakeholders and, as the sole representative of the English-speaking community, its credibility with government has been further validated. The Table des partenaires Famille already met twice before the end of March 2025.

Another positive sign of progress in government relationships was the Ministère de la Famille disseminating the ISQ study on English-speaking parents⁴, commissioned by CHSSN. The Ministère de la Famille included a short article about the study on the first page of its January 2025 newsletter. The article can be found in Appendix C: Ministère de la Famille Bulletin de veille, Janvier 2025.



*Anne-Marie Cech and
Ministre de la Famille,
Madame Suzanne Roy,
at RQCRP 25th Anniversary
event*

⁴ Amélie Lavoie et David Summerhays, La parentalité au Québec en 2022 : une analyse comparative selon le groupe linguistique (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2024).

In another development, CHSSN was consulted by the Quebec English-speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN) for its policy brief, Challenges in Early Learning and Child Care for Quebec’s English-Speaking Community⁵. The brief aims to inform and influence government policy on the challenges facing English-speaking families in accessing childcare services. CHSSN’s work with children and families was also mentioned in the brief.

Other developments with government and provincial stakeholder relations surfaced during the implementation of CHSSN’s new Early Childhood Communications Strategy. These, as well as the learnings, are discussed in a separate section.

The diagram in Figure 1 below represents the most important outcomes of CHSSN’s relationship building efforts with the Quebec Government since 2020.

Quebec Ministères	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ministère de l’Éducation	First School Transition Forum collaboration	Presented at Ctr of Excellence meeting	Joined First School Transition Proj. Committee	Collaboration maintained	Collaboration maintained
Ministère de la Famille	Min. Lacombe attends CHSSN GSTP event	Min. Lacombe mentioned ESC at a press conference	ESC integrated into internal work-plan	Invited to presentation event; 1st time	Invited to join Table des partenaires famille
MSSS	----	----	----	Invited to a consultation for 1st time	FQOCF helped CHSSN on perinatal dossier

Figure 1: Progression of Bright Beginnings Quebec Government Relations



⁵ Shannon Bell, QUESCREN Research Brief No. 13, June 2024 (Concordia University, 2024).

Collaborating with Provincial Organizations

CHSSN's provincial partners and collaborators continued being strong allies and providing opportunities to influence stakeholders as well as creating projects to increase awareness, knowledge and community capacity to offer services to English-speaking children and families.

- Following a Collectif petite enfance meeting, where the new **MSSS** perinatal plan was discussed, the **Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille (FQOCF)** offered to take CHSSN's message to upcoming meetings with government. Even though CHSSN was consulted by the MSSS the previous year, there was nothing reflecting the English-speaking community in the MSSS new perinatal plan when it was officially released. The FQOCF director general's offer to extend himself by helping advance English-speaking community issues at the government level is a strong testament to the allies the CHSSN has built over the last few years.
- During the year, CHSSN added a new partner, **Réseau pour un Québec famille**, who will be another important ally with the Ministère de la Famille since it is well regarded by the Ministère. An immediate and concrete action taken by the Réseau was translating and printing its Semaine de la Famille campaign tools into English. This new relationship will also allow CHSSN to reach potential new provincial partners who aren't members of the other tables.



Marie-Claude Dufour, Anne-Marie Cech and Marie-Noëlle Angers, at partner RQCRP's 25th Anniversary

- CHSSN collaborated with the **Association pour la santé public du Québec (ASPQ)** for the first time. ASPQ also approached the CHSSN after a Collectif meeting and asked if it could help reach the English-speaking community for a new campaign ASPQ was launching on women's rights and pregnancy⁶. CHSSN had no previous contract with APSQ and anticipates future collaborations with them.

Highlights of the collaborative work with the 12 provincial partners (two are new - Réseau pour un Québec famille and Fondation OLO) are listed in Table 4 below. The four provincial collaborative projects funded by the Bright Beginning Program are listed at the bottom, as are other projects and initiatives.

⁶ The Pregnancy Rights website, Association pour la santé public du Québec _ <https://rightsandpregnancy.ca/my-rights/>

Table 4: Results of CHSSN Collaborations with Provincial Partners 2024-25

Provincial Partners	Developments
Collectif petite enfance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to create opportunities to build relationships with others who have influence, such as Association pour la santé public du Québec CHSSN continued as a committee member of GSTP.
Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille (FQOCF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships at the provincial level facilitated new collaborations between regional organizations and individual Maisons de famille, e.g. Townshippers Over 75% of the regional orgs. (18) now have partnerships with individual Maisons de famille Offered to take CHSSN's message on the MSSS new perinatal plan to meetings with government representatives.
Observatoire des tout-petits (OTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked CHSSN to be English-speaking spokesperson for its September 2024 campaign on screen time Contributed reflections on CHSSN's Early Childhood Communications Strategy.
Réseau des Centres de ressources périnatales du Québec - RCRPQ	<p>Asked CHSSN to partner on a funding request to Secrétariat à la condition féminine, to include training for English-speaking intervenants. No news on funding.</p>
Réseau pour un Québec Famille	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semaine de la Famille material was translated Member-group, Confédération des Organismes Familiaux, invited CHSSN to participate in Périnatalité : Journée nationale de concertation.
Leading English Education and Resource Network (LEARN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-facilitated CoP on partnerships and connecting with schools. Participants from the LEARN network also joined the CoP session Opened its professional development series to regional organizations, e.g. Workshop



	Series on Family Engagement.
Association Québécoise des Centres de la Petite-Enfance (AQCPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted CHSSN on their questionnaire for English-speaking CPEs • Provided an info. session on daycare education work-study program.
Naître et Grandir	Tools in English continued to be made available to parents and promoted on its website.
Provincial Collaborative Projects Funded by Bright Beginnings	
Fondation OLO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DG publicly expressed appreciation for the collaboration with CHSSN at both a Collectif meeting and its AGM • CHSSN provided financial support to translate its new cookbook, "Manger en famille" • Prioritized translating more resources and its website is now fully bilingual.
Regroupement pour la valorisation de la paternité (RVP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited 3 regional organizations to join prenatal program development committee • Outcomes included prenatal classes in three regions integrating a Dads volet • Regional org. MEPEC assisted a new partner in providing a prenatal course that integrates Dads and is given in English • CHSSN continued participating in co-parenting committee • Invited CHSSN to collaborate on a research project on reality of ES immigrant men by researchers at Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue⁷
Fondation Marie-Vincent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHSSN continued as a member of its Larntern committee (intervenants of 0-5 training program) • Printed 1000 copies of new book in English for parents to accompany their children, with financial support from CHSSN • Joined CoP on Autism as a guest resource person and presented its new training and tools for children with special needs.



⁷ Yannick Sanschagrin et Said Bergheul, Rapport de recherche : Portrait des pères immigrants d'expression anglaise au Québec (Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 2025). [Portrait-of-english-speaking-immigrant-fathers](#)

<p>Les Partenaires Table (French and English community stakeholders concerned with youth in government care)</p>	<p>Laurent Commission Follow-Up: Collaboration with the Centre for Research on Children and Families at McGill University on a research project concerning English-speaking youth-in-care.</p>
<p>Other Projects</p>	
<p>Quebec English-speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN) - affiliated with Concordia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHSSN was consulted and mentioned in the policy brief, Challenges in Early Learning and Child Care for Quebec’s English-Speaking Community • CHSSN was invited to join QUESCREN’s Program Committee for Inter-Level Educational Table Forum.
<p>Association pour la santé public du Québec (ASPQ)</p>	<p>CHSSN was asked to help reach the English-speaking community for a campaign on women’s rights and pregnancy. CHSSN’s</p>
<p>Community Language Development Program and the Centre Mosaïque de Québec (a private speech-language clinic)</p>	<p>collaboration was transferred from the provincial to regional level; 5 regional orgs. developed their own collaborative projects with Centre Mosaïque or other regional speech-language services.</p>
<p>À Coeur d’homme Living without Violence Program provides structured support for men who commit acts of violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHSSN’s collaborative project completed in 2023 • As series of self-directed training videos for men, produced in English completed in 2024 • Several regional orgs. continued collaborative projects with regional À Coeur d’homme groups.





Developing an Early Childhood Communications Strategy

While the work during the year focused on the initial implementation steps of the Early Childhood Communications Strategy, such as developing communication tools and holding first meetings with partners to present the new data, selected outcomes from the 2025–2026 program year are included to highlight early results and learnings from these preliminary efforts.

The process of working with an external consultant to develop the strategy helped define clear objectives and strategies for effectively engaging stakeholders and maximizing the impact of a communication strategy.

The main objectives of the Communication Strategy are:

1. To raise awareness among provincial, regional, and local organizations, as well as government actors, about the realities of English-speaking children and families in Quebec.
2. To mobilize stakeholders to take action to reduce language barriers and improve access to services for English-speaking children and their families.

Communications Tools

The communications tools developed during the year were grounded in evidence-based research drawn from three key sources commissioned by CHSSN the previous year⁸. The Early Childhood Partner Mobilization Tool Kit, accessible through the [CHSSN Early Childhood Resource Hub](#), includes:

- Customizable PowerPoint, 10 infographics for social media, social media editorial calendar, prepared posts for the la Grande semaine des tout-petits (GSTP), and prepared text for newsletters; there are French and English versions of each tool. An example of the tools is included in Appendix D: Example of Tool Kit Infographic.
- The series of infographics on the socio-demographic profiles of 17 regions, created the previous year and based on the 2021 census data, is also available.
- Video Project (in development): A five-minute video showcasing a collaboration between a regional organization (ECO-02) and a Maison de la famille (Chicoutimi). The goal of the video is to illustrate the benefits of partnering with English-speaking organizations; its target audience are Francophone family organizations. The video will be released during the 2025 edition of GSTP.



⁸ Paquette et Groleau, La vulnérabilité chez les enfants de maternelle 5 ans anglophones au Québec (ISQ, 2024). Lavoie et Summerhays, La parentalité au Québec en 2022 : une analyse comparative selon le groupe linguistique (ISQ, 2024). Pocock, Socio-demographic profile of children aged 0 to 5 and their parents, Quebec, 2021 (CHSSN, 2024).



Implementing the Strategy

The Early Childhood Communication initiative, and the release of its tools, was officially launched during the GSTP in November 2024. CHSSN and its regional organizations used the GSTP annual campaign period to raise awareness about the realities of English-speaking children and their families. The communication tools supported a social media campaign (on Instagram and Facebook) and presentations to key stakeholders.

Early Outcomes

The implementation of the strategy has fostered dialogue with key provincial stakeholders. CHSSN met with four provincial partners individually (OTP, AQCPE, Collectif Petite enfance, Réseau pour un Québec Famille) and using the communication tools, presented the data from the new studies. These discussions have helped clarify what CHSSN's expectations are and emphasize shared objectives, most notably, the need to improve access to services for English-speaking families and how partners can support their members in better reaching English-speaking families.

Concrete outcomes from engaging provincial stakeholders include (2025-26 results):

- An invitation to present the data at the Ministère de la Famille's Table des partenaires Famille
- An Invitation to an AQCPE event as an exhibitor and participant
- An invitation to join the Réseau pour un Québec famille Sub-Committee on the topic of access to services.

Regional Organizations' Implementation

The regional organizations clearly took action following the release of the new tools and used them to increase their representation efforts in 2024-25. A short survey was sent to the 23 regional organizations to determine if they used the Early Childhood Partner Mobilization Tool Kit during the GSTP in November 2024. The 16 that organized GSTP events responded that either some of the tools were useful or the tools were great. For example, NSCA, Neighbours and REISA shared the infographics on social media. REISA also posted the material on its website, and Neighbours in its newsletter.

"This data will be useful working with partners, especially the 'call-to-action' aspect. Our parents really want this data. Parents really want to know the realities of ESC."

-Comments from training on the tools





As mentioned earlier in the report, 8 regional organizations also used the tools for presentations during GSTP events. For example:

- ✓ **4Korners** presented to French partners at the Regional Early Childhood Table's GSTP event, Rassemblement des tout-petits.
- ✓ **Jeffery Hale Community Partners** presented to the Concertation régionale grandissons tous ensembles in Quebec City, at its day-long GSTP event, La Grande journée des tout-petits.
- ✓ **Neighbours** presented at a GSTP event they co-hosted with the local library.

Also mentioned earlier in this report, regional organizations gave many more presentations throughout the rest of the year, including at large events with important decision-makers. See Appendix B for the full list of presentations given by regional organizations.

Learnings from Presenting to Provincial Stakeholders

Presenting the data on English-speaking children and families has given the CHSSN and the regional organizations the opportunity to create visibility and increase awareness about the extent English-speaking children are vulnerable. It has helped to show the consequences of these vulnerabilities on children and the impact on their development as well as the overall well-being of families. However, the political language climate in Quebec, in particular language laws and people's personal beliefs about the protection of the French language, are significant barriers to making change. For instance, CHSSN's suggestion to make information available in English for families was received with caution by government representatives and some provincial organizations. Frank and open discussions with some stakeholders have brought to light an undercurrent that prevents some of them from taking steps to reduce language barriers and improve access to services for English-speaking families.

CHSSN's experience implementing the communication strategy revealed that for some stakeholders' awareness and knowledge isn't enough to adapt and make changes when it touches strongly held mindsets involving language issues. Nevertheless, CHSSN's Bright Beginnings Program has had positive experiences and successes. Its outcomes over the years demonstrate that over one hundred provincial and regional partners, as well as regional Tables, have become allies and some even strong champions for the English-speaking community. The Bright Beginnings experience has shown that once partners have been sensitized through the data many do decide to adapt their practices.

These partners have been willing to change, and some even become public, because they are motivated by the well-being of children, above and beyond anything else.



This realization has prompted making some changes to the communication strategy. The focus will shift to developing more allies and mobilizing existing ones to become public champions about the importance of including the needs of English-speaking families in public policy.

Strengthening the Capacity of the Regional Organizations

As the backbone/intermediary organization for the Bright Beginnings Program, CHSSN manages the program and accompanies the funded regional organizations in their efforts to develop partnerships, create change and achieve results. An important part of this work is strengthening the capacity of the regional organizations through learning, training and networking activities. The capacity building activities held in 2024-25 (15 months) are described below in Table 5: CHSSN’s 2024-25 Learning & Capacity Building Activities. Several Community of Practice (CoP) sessions provided networking opportunities, such as with LEARN and Fondation Marie-Vincent.

The following types of capacity building activities were held in 2024-25:

- ✓ Early Childhood Resource Hub created
- ✓ 1 in-person, full-day event
- ✓ 2 trainings
- ✓ 2 info sessions
- ✓ 5 online Community of Practice (CoP) sessions
- ✓ 2 different workshops on reporting
- ✓ Closed Facebook page curated



An **Advisory Committee**, made up of coordinators from approximately six regional organizations, met twice during the 2024-25 period (June 2024 and January 2025) to consult on training and CoP themes and format.

“CoPs were the most beneficial thing I had all year, given the isolation of my region.”

-Shared during June Advisory Committee

- Learning from those with lots of experience.
- Knowing that others have similar challenges
- Sharing and bouncing ideas off each other.

-Comments from CoP on Strategies for Reaching Parents

CHSSN's learnings from capacity building activities with regional organizations

At the end of each activity, participants were asked to provide feedback, most often through an online poll. Comments, such as those shown in the boxes, helped shape the capacity building activities.

- Feedback received following learning activities emphasized the challenge of designing activities that are relevant to different levels of knowledge and experience. While most reported obtaining new knowledge, for the more experienced coordinators, it was limited. Due to coordinator turnover, and the ongoing need to address topics such as partnership development, finding a balance remains a challenge.
- Feedback that CoP sessions were held too often was also received. In consultation with the Advisory Committee, it was decided to limit CoP sessions to three and two training sessions a year. Sessions to prepare for GSPT and Semaine de la Paternité will be considered working sessions instead of CoPs.



Table 5: CHSSN’s 2024-25 Learning & Capacity Building Activities

In-Person
Autism Symposium, February 15, 2024 The event was funded by Public Health Agency of Canada
Trainings
Using CHSSN’s New Early Childhood Communications Tools, November 6, 2024 Included presentation and discussion of EQDEM findings on English-speaking children
Communications to better reach parents and partners (especially schools), December 11, 2024 Co-facilitated and guest presenter Katherine Dimas, from LEARN Quebec
Information Sessions
Presentation of CHSSN’s new Early Childhood Communications Tools and highlights of EQDEM to Executive Directors of regional organizations, November 4, 2024
Info session about the Quebec government’s daycare work-study education program Provided by Association Québécoise des Centres de la Petite-Enfance, February 19, 2025
Community-of-Practice (CoP) Sessions Online
Strategies for increasing program participation and reaching parents, April 24, 2024
Semaine Québécoise de la Paternité, May 21, 2024 RVP co-facilitates this CoP on engaging and involving dads
Preparing for La Grande semaine des tout-petits, September 16, 2024 Result: 16 regional groups held events and shared CHSSN’s new infographics based on EQDEM
Sharing tools for reaching participants and for program planning, January 21, 2025
Autism: sharing program experiences and resources for supporting children & families, Feb. 5, 2025 Fond. Marie-Vincent and Fédération québécoise de l’autisme participated and contributed
Coaching Workshops on reporting
Coaching on writing year-end report: repeated 4 times (January 16, 18, 23, 24, 2024)
Coaching Session on mid-term report, September 12, 2024

Learnings

The key learnings that emerged from the YMHI and BB programs during the year concern capacity building, ecosystems and systems-level change.



Capacity building

- YMHI: Integrating practices and principles of youth engagement (participatory and youth-involvement) is a gradual process that takes time, repeated training and guidance. To be successful, a commitment to youth engagement needs to be embedded at the organizational strategy and policy levels, as well as shared across all staff and not just the coordinators dedicated to YMHI. In essence, it usually requires a shift in organizational culture.
 - YMHI capacity building activities of retreats, community of practice has helped to encourage the integration of youth engagement practices, while reinforcing the efforts of coordinators with knowledge sharing and mutual support.
- BB: Designing learning activities that fit different levels of experience among a large group of people and diverse organizations needs ongoing attention, particularly to keep it relevant for more experienced staff, particularly given the nature of the skills required for partnership development, and coordinator turnover.
 - Constant consultation with coordinators, evaluation, and soliciting feedback have helped shape and adapt the BB learning activities.



Systems-level Change

YMHI

- Mental health service organizations are strained by service demands and resource scarcity and are preoccupied with acute eco-systemic problems. Improving access for English-speaking youth is a low priority.
- Some mental health sector regroupements and associations are open to hearing about the needs of English-speaking youth but do not fully understand how English-speakers are at increased vulnerability because of language, culture and multiple intersectionalities such as race and immigration.
 - However YMHI is gaining visibility in the sector, for example, CHSSN's important participation on the Aire Ouverte provincial committee which is a key way to influence public health services for 12-15 year-olds.
- Although nonprofit organization partners have been willing to provide public documents in English, public agencies have been extremely resistant to translating documents, such as suicide prevention training resources.

Public agencies have not given CHSSN permission to translate or distribute suicide prevention training resources itself citing Quebec's language law restrictions.

- The relationship with Santé Quebec is gradually getting stronger. It has been a slower process than anticipated because of staff changes at the ministry level.

Bright Beginnings

- Resistance to taking steps to reduce language barriers is strongly connected to the current political language climate in Quebec, as well as people's personal beliefs about the protection of the French language.



→ However, BB has successfully sensitized partners, who in turn adapted and made changes. Some of these partners have become strong allies and even vocal companions. Those partners and allies will be leveraged to help promote change.

Future Directions

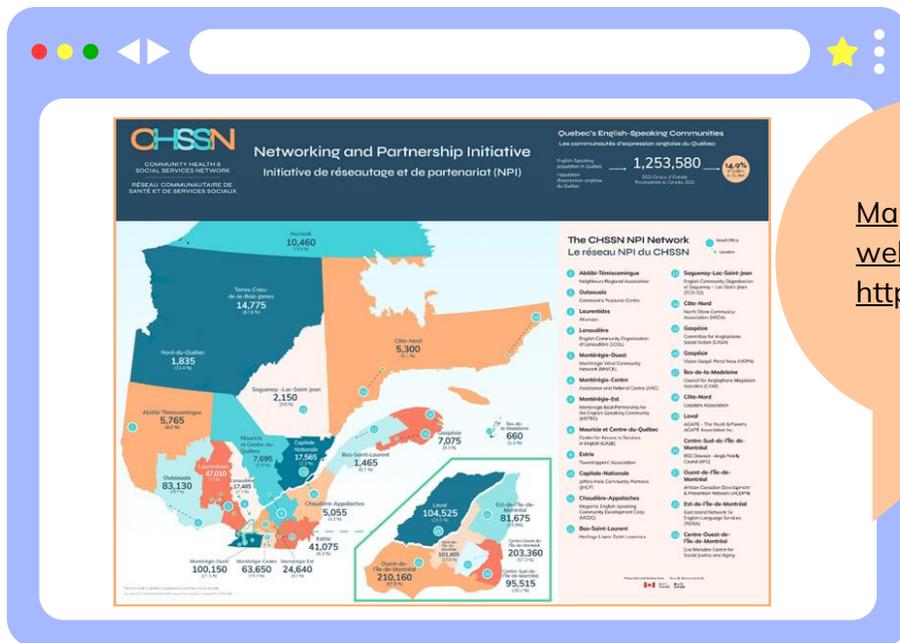
Over the next year, CHSSN will continue to strengthen the existing activities of both YMHI and BB, as well as the following developments:

- Implement improvements to CHSSN's Resource Map App (<https://map.chssn.org/>)
- Continued collaboration and stronger integration between CHSSN's two mental health initiatives (YMHI and the Partenariat d'assistance aux organismes en santé mentale, which supports community-based service providers to extend the reach of their mental health services in order to serve an increased English-speaking clientele).
- YMHI will continue to strengthen relationship building with provincial-level stakeholders in youth mental health and develop its mapping of youth mental health stakeholders and ecosystem.
- BB's Early Childhood Communications Strategy will shift its focus to developing more allies and mobilizing existing ones to become public champions about the importance of including the needs of English-speaking families in public policy.



Appendix A
Table A1: List of NPIs Supported by the Bright Beginnings Program in 2024

	Organization Name	Acronym	Region
1	4 Korner's Family Resource Center	4 Korner's	Laurentides
2	African Canadian Development and Prevention Network	ACDPN	Montréal
3	The Youth and Parents AGAPE Association Inc.	Agape	Laval
4	South Shore Assistance & Referral Centre	ARC	Montérégie-Centre
5	BGC Dawson	BGC	Centre-Sud-de-Montréal
6	Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders	CAMI	Magdalen Islands
7	Committee for Anglophone Social Action	CASA	Gaspésie
8	Centre for Access to Services in English	CASE	Mauricie-Centre-Qc
9	Coasters Association	Coasters	Côte-Nord
10	Connexions Resource Centre	Connexions	Outaouais
11	English Community Org. of Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean	ECO-02	Saguenay/Lac-Saint-Jean
12	English Community Organization of Lanaudière	ECOL	Lanaudière
13	Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence	HLSL	Bas-Saint-Laurent
14	Jeffery Hale Community Partners	JHCP	Ville de Quebec
15	Megantic Community Development Corp	MCDC	Chaudière-Appalaches
16	Montérégie East Partnership for English-Speaking Comm.	MEPEC	Montérégie East
17	Montérégie West Community Network	MWCN	Montérégie West
18	Eva Marsden Centre/WIN	EMC/WIN	Montréal
19	Neighbours Regional Association of Rouyn-Noranda	Neighbours	Abitibi-Témiscamingue
20	North Shore Community Association	NSCA	Côte-Nord
21	East Island Network for English Language Services	REISA	Montréal l'Est de l'Île
22	Townshippers' Association	Townshippers	Estrie
23	Vision Gaspé Percé Now	Vision	Gaspésie



Map location on CHSSN website
<https://chssn.org/maps/>

Appendix B

List of Presentations given by Regional Organizations

- **Agape** and **4Korners** presented to over 120 participants at a professional improvement session in March 2025, for the “personnel de soutien” (CISSSs, daycare, preschool, primary) of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, which covers a large territory of 15 MRCs and includes the regions of Laval, Lanaudière, and the Laurentides. In addition to highlighting the English-speaking children EQDEM results, 4Korners showcased the work of Agape and ECOL, also located in the territory, as well as its own, and emphasized importance of intersectoral collaboration.
- **CASA** presented the EQDEM data at the Regional Government Forum (March 2025) that brought together 29 government officials and community leaders to explore demographic trends and identify next steps.
- **Neighbours** presented the CHSSN Early Childhood Powerpoint tool during a regional partners meeting, which included Action Reussite, the library, CISSS healthcare professionals and youth table.
- The CISSS invited **MCDC** (Chaudière-Appalaches) to its EQDEM results committee to help develop a day-long event for schools, community organizations and other stakeholders, to share the results of the study. MCDC did a presentation at the event.
- **Eva Marsden Centre/WIN** (Montreal) presented the CHSSN Sociodemographic Information on English-speaking Youth and Families at its partners network meeting.
- **4Korner** presented the EQDEM data during a planning session of the Comité Clinique Semer l’avenir (Tables de concertation des Laurentides). Although English-speaking families were acknowledged in the subsequent action plan, they weren’t fully integrated into all the strategies.

Presentations given before the release of CHSSN’s communications tools:

- **ACDPN** presented at the CAPWHN (Canadian Association of Perinatal & Women’s Health Nurses) conference on barriers faced by English-speaking Black mothers and shared its cultural competence tools with providers.
- As a result of presenting to health and social services representatives from the CISSS and other organizations in spring 2024, **ARC** was invited by many to consult on how to adapt to better serve English speaking clients. ARC also received several referrals for English-speaking families.
- **CASE** presented at a 2024 networking event held with 70 representatives including CIUSSS health professionals and Services d’accueil des nouveaux arrivants (SANA).
- **Connexions** presented its Portrait of English-Speaking 0-5 Year Olds in Outaouais at its event, Nurturing the Future of Our English-Speaking Little Ones, to 30 representatives from CISSS, school board, Centraide, daycares and community sectors.

Appendix C

Ministère de la Famille Bulletin de veille, Janvier 2025

Accueil - Ministère de la Famille

Ministère

Bulletin de veille

Janvier 2025

Janvier 2025

BULLETIN DE VEILLE

Préparé par la *Direction de la veille et des connaissances stratégiques*.

La veille a pour but d'alimenter la réflexion stratégique en rendant disponibles des informations pertinentes, utiles, rigoureuses et fiables sur des thèmes stratégiques pour le ministère de la Famille. Elle permet d'identifier les nouvelles tendances, pratiques émergentes et enjeux susceptibles d'influencer la prise de décision et de repérer les signes permettant d'anticiper les changements importants. Les conclusions des publications présentées dans ce bulletin ne reflètent pas nécessairement les points de vue ou les positions du Ministère.

Pour toute question, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec l'équipe de la veille.

Famille

[Qc – La parentalité au Québec en 2022 : une analyse comparative selon le groupe linguistique](#)

Ce fascicule préparé par l'Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) s'intéresse au vécu des quelque 175 000 parents d'enfants mineurs dont la première langue officielle parlée est l'anglais, au Québec. **Les données présentées sont tirées de l'Enquête québécoise sur la parentalité réalisée en 2022 par l'ISQ et permettent de comparer la situation des parents anglophones à celle des parents d'expression française.** On dresse d'abord leur profil sociodémographique et économique, qui se distingue de celui des parents francophones notamment par le fait que plusieurs parents d'expression anglaise sont nés à l'étranger et qu'ils tendent à être davantage scolarisés que les parents francophones. Ils sont aussi moins présents en emploi, travaillent plus fréquemment selon des horaires atypiques et bénéficient de revenus généralement plus faibles. Ces caractéristiques peuvent teinter plusieurs aspects de leur parentalité. Sur ce plan, on observe que les parents anglophones sont plus nombreux à vivre un niveau élevé de conflit travail-famille et de stress parental, et à ne pas bénéficier du soutien dont ils auraient besoin pour accomplir leur rôle de parent.

<https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ministere/ministere/bulletin-veille/Pages/bulletin-2025-01.aspx>

Appendix D

Example of Tool Kit Infographic





CHSSN

COMMUNITY HEALTH &
SOCIAL SERVICES NETWORK

RÉSEAU COMMUNAUTAIRE DE
SANTÉ ET DE SERVICES SOCIAUX

