



Tamarack Institute Virtual Gathering:
The End of Poverty
May 5-6, 2021

**Public policies: Allies in
improving the living
conditions
of young children**

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**OBSERVATOIRE
des tout-petits**

Our mission

The mission of the Early Childhood Observatory, a project of the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, is to communicate the current state of knowledge in order to promote informed decision-making on the subject of early childhood in Québec. Our goal is to ensure that every young child living in the province has access to conditions that will enable them to develop their full potential, regardless of where they were born or where they are growing up.

Priority target groups

- Citizens
- Key influencers
- Media
- Decision-makers



WHAT IS QUÉBEC DOING TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES?

Overview of Québec Public Policies in 2021



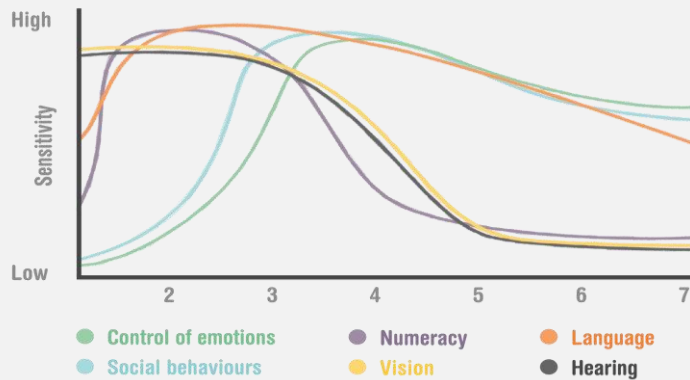
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- First Québec report on the **current situation** of the province's main municipal, provincial and federal policies aimed at improving the living conditions of young children and fostering their development.
- This Portrait presents a compilation of key information on the **effectiveness** of these policies, as well as **examples of initiatives** from Québec and around the world that could serve as sources of inspiration to improve our policies.
- Prepared in collaboration with over **60 researchers, workers and actors in the field of early childhood**

Why should we be interested in public policies on early childhood?

1

Early childhood is a critical period in child development



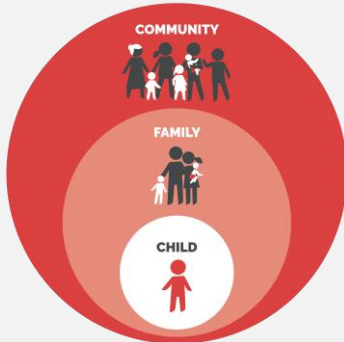
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Children's living conditions have a decisive influence on their development



3

Public policies benefiting children also have a positive impact on their parents and their living conditions



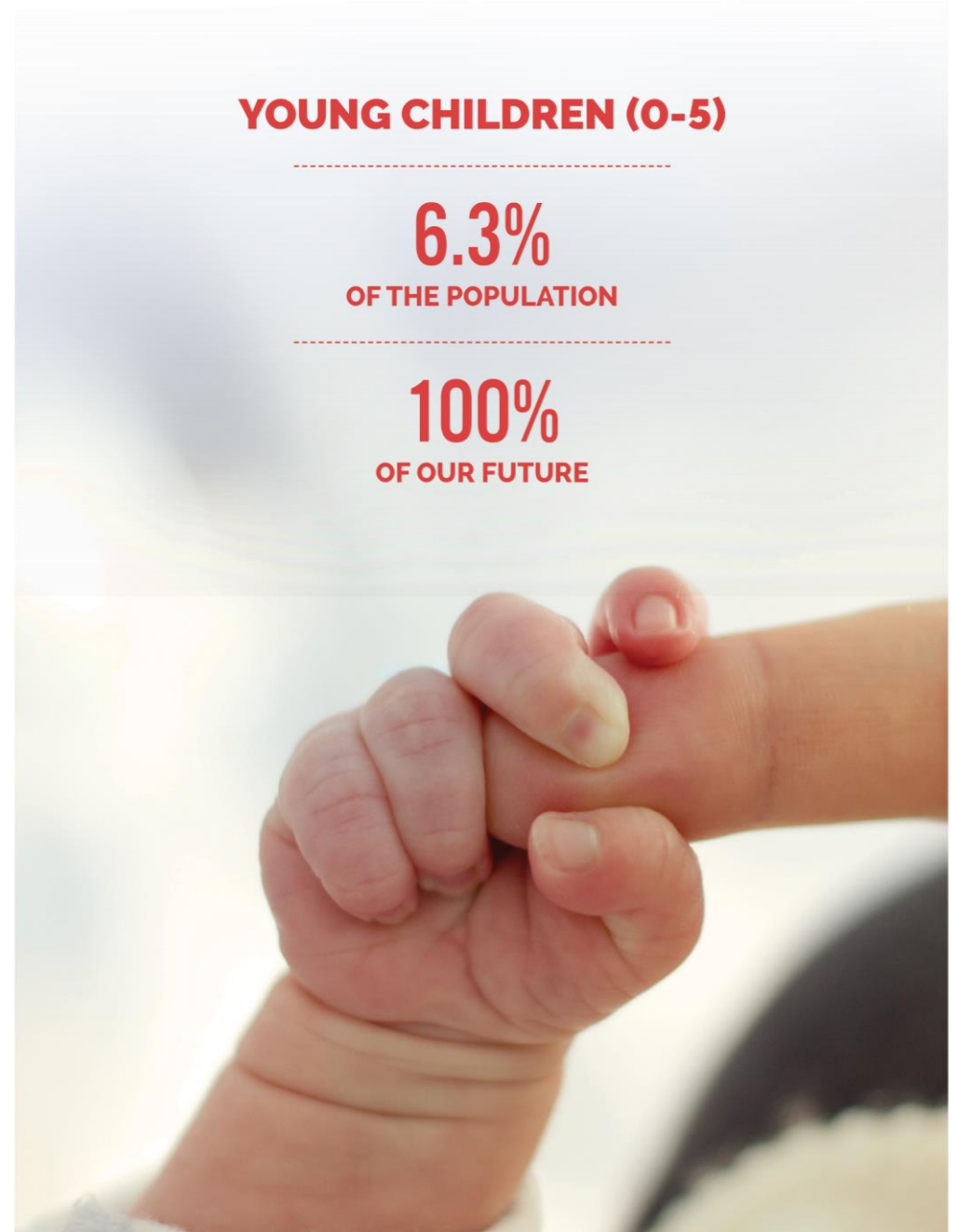
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By offering young children better living conditions and taking action on risk factors, we can increase the high school graduation rate.



The repercussions of these gains will have an impact on future generations through intergenerational transmission.

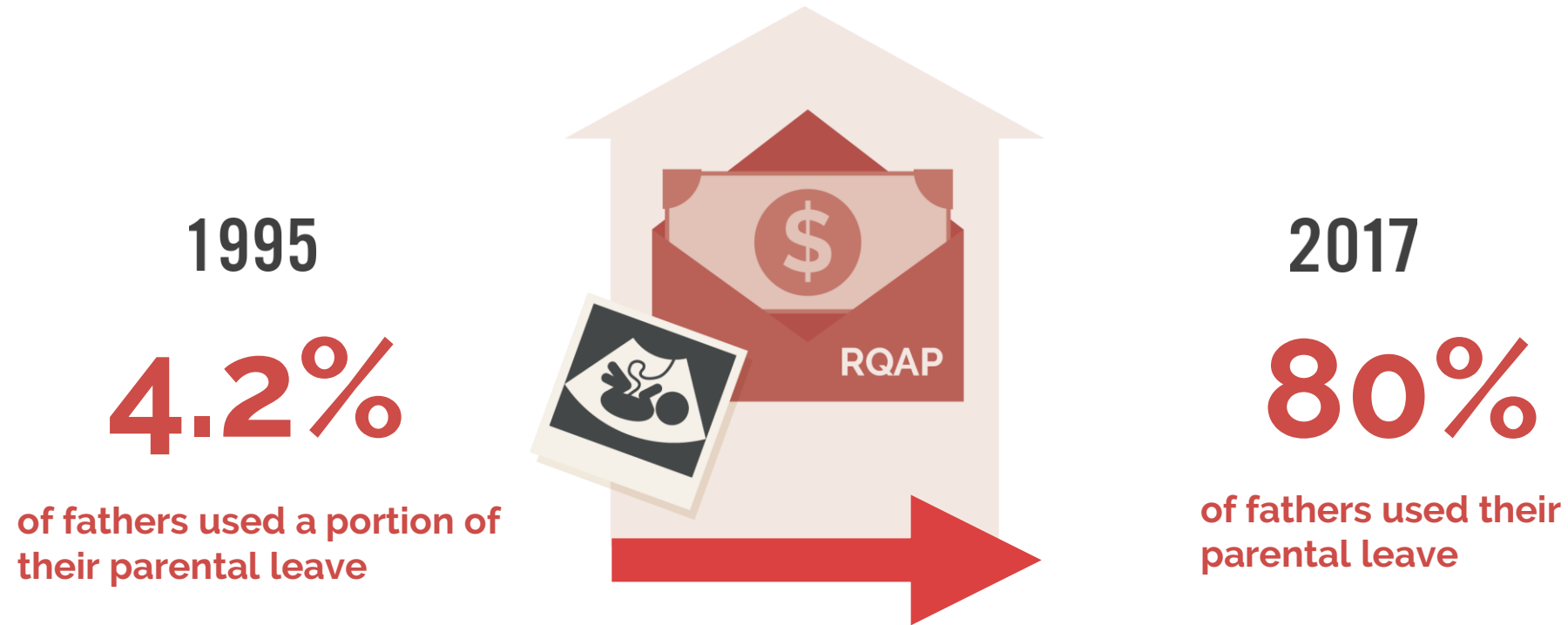
Research has shown that societies that invest in early childhood and family enjoy the highest health levels and lowest health inequality measures in the world.



GAINS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES



The example of the Québec Parental Insurance Plan (*Régime québécois d'assurance parentale*)



The example of educational childcare services

In the mid-1990s, just

20% of children between 0 and 4 had access to a subsidized space in an educational childcare facility.



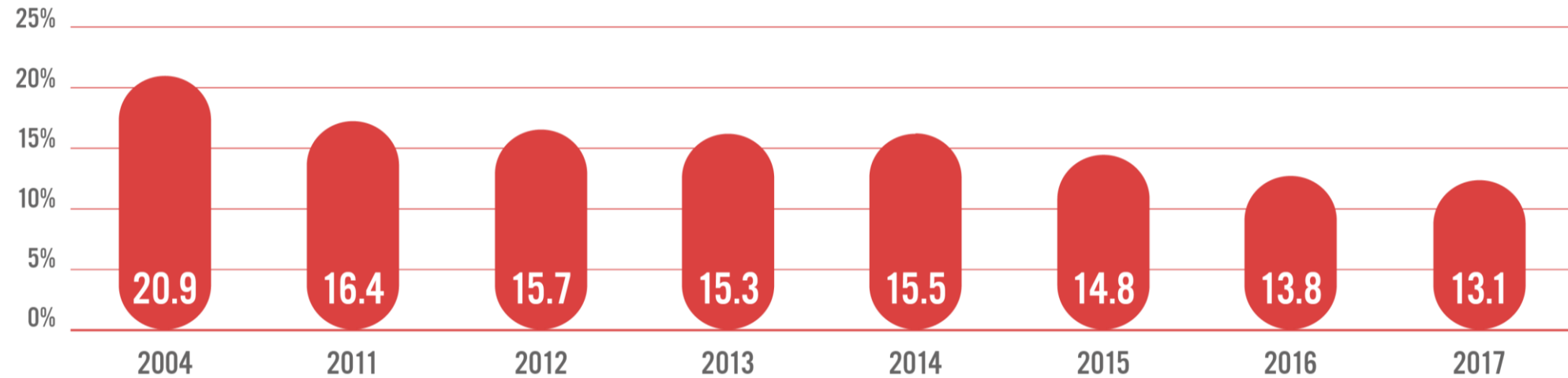
By 2019, that figure had risen to

60,5%

This had repercussions on the professional activity rate of mothers between 25 and 54:



Proportion of children between 0 and 5 living in low-income families in Québec – 2004-2017*



* Based on the Low-income cutoff after tax

Source: Statistique Canada, Fichier des familles T1 (FFT1). Adapté par l'Institut de la statistique du Québec.

**INEQUALITIES PERSIST,
CHALLENGES REMAIN**



Inequalities persist



- Approximately **one out of ten Québec households** with at least one child 5 years or under experienced **food insecurity** in 2017-2018.

- In 2016, among families with at least one child between 0 and 5 years of age, **13,6%** were living in **housing they could not afford**.



- In 2019, **46,000 children** were still waiting for a space in the educational childcare network.

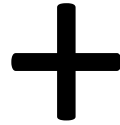
Vulnerable young children

Very young children...

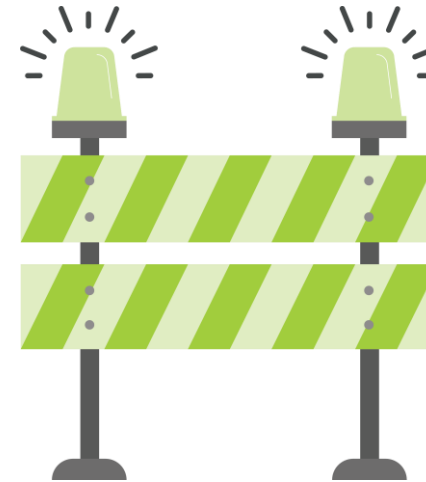
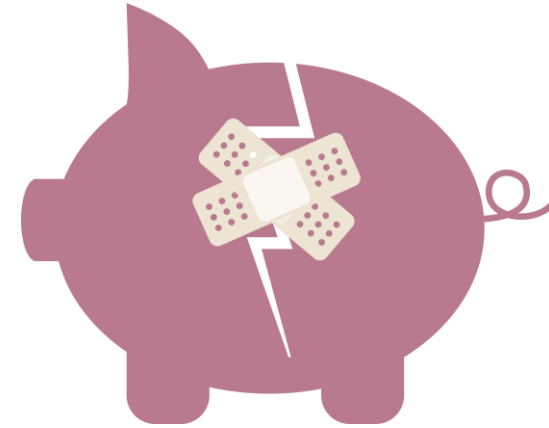
- who are living in poverty
- whose parents are immigrants
- who are members of an Indigenous community
- Who have special needs

are...

The most affected by inequalities



Confronted with the largest number of barriers to access to services



THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICIES





According to the Research Chair in Taxation and Public Finance at Université de Sherbrooke, the **social assistance program is effective** in that it provides families with **financial support in the absence of any other source of income.**

Although it improves the income of targeted families, there is no doubt that this policy alone **is not sufficient** to cover families' basic needs.

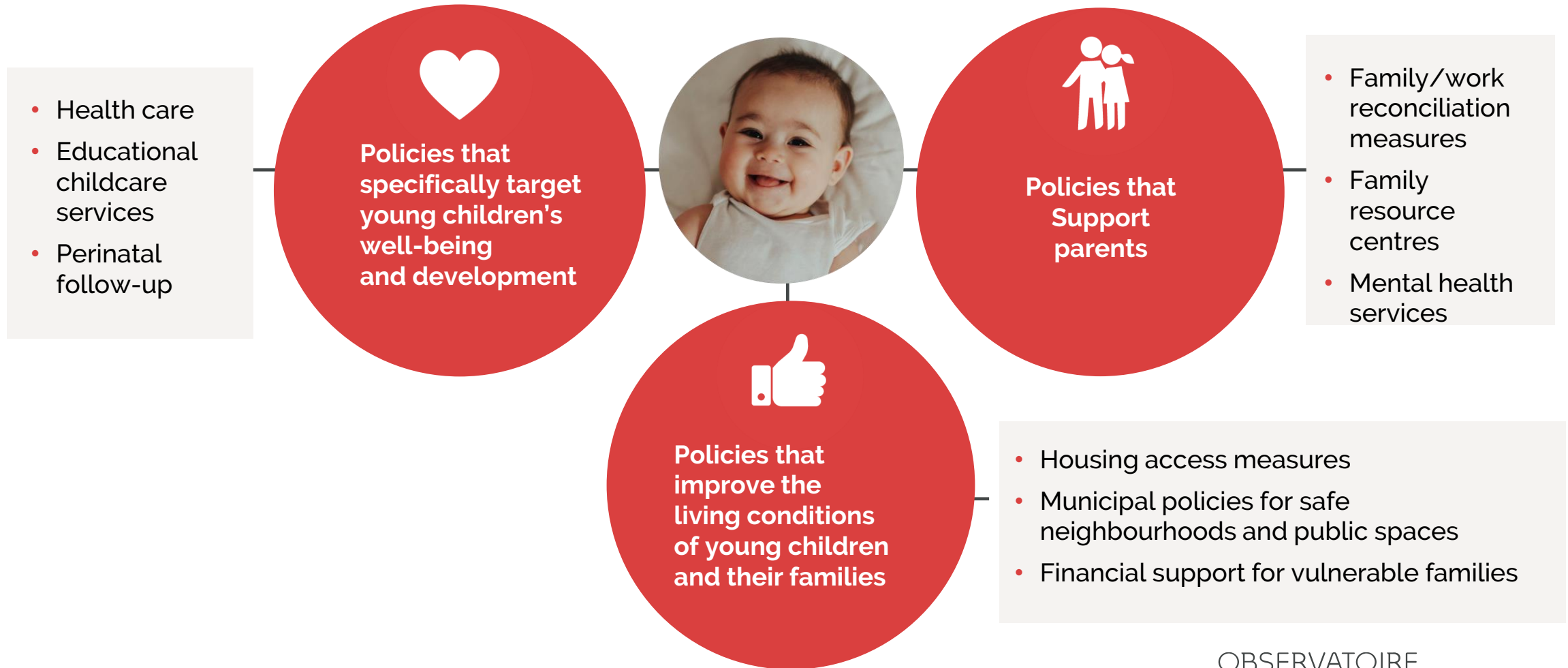
To be more pertinent and effective, therefore, policies that offer financial support to families need to operate in tandem with policies aimed at **improving food security** and

ensuring access to suitable, affordable housing.

Financial support policies must also be backed up by **measures promoting family-work balance** (or family-work-studies in certain cases).



Offering every child the conditions that will allow them to develop their full potential



Recovering from the pandemic

Many families have been weakened by the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic.

Vulnerable families have been hardest hit—by loss of employment, food insecurity and unravelling social support.

According to the experts, the effects of the pandemic will continue to have consequences well after everyone has been vaccinated.

Now more than ever, we need to not only maintain our policies but improve and adapt them to our new realities.



In the field of early childhood education services, we have 25 years of experience in Québec on which to rely on.

