

FRANCO-MANITOBAN CHILDCARE:

Childcare as Economic, Social and Language Development in St-Pierre-Jolys



CHILD CARE COALITION OF MANITOBA
www.childcaremanitoba.ca

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Executive Summary

Childcare provides a rich milieu for children's development while simultaneously supporting their parents. Childcare enables parents to work or study, and may be a valuable remedy to the region's local labour shortage.

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba studied the economic and social impact of childcare in the francophone village of St-Pierre-Jolys over 2006. The research was supported by a local Advisory Council of leading stakeholders. In addition to economic and statistical data, we include the voices of St-Pierre-Jolys residents who attended one of four community consultations.

This study finds that childcare generates multiple benefits for children, families and the local economy. Childcare provides a rich milieu for children's development while simultaneously supporting their parents. Childcare enables parents to work or study, and may be a valuable remedy to the region's local labour shortage.

In Manitoba's francophonie, childcare services play an additional role. Francophone childcare contributes to linguistic and cultural vitality in the next generation, enriching all Manitobans. French childcare enables children to have a strong language foundation for primary and secondary schooling. Childcare services are also important resources for children and parents in exogamous families (mixed Francophone and non-Francophone parents). Childcare services provide a hub for cross-cultural inter-generational linkages. French language childcare services, however, are strikingly under-developed in Manitoba, underserving Franco-Manitoban families.

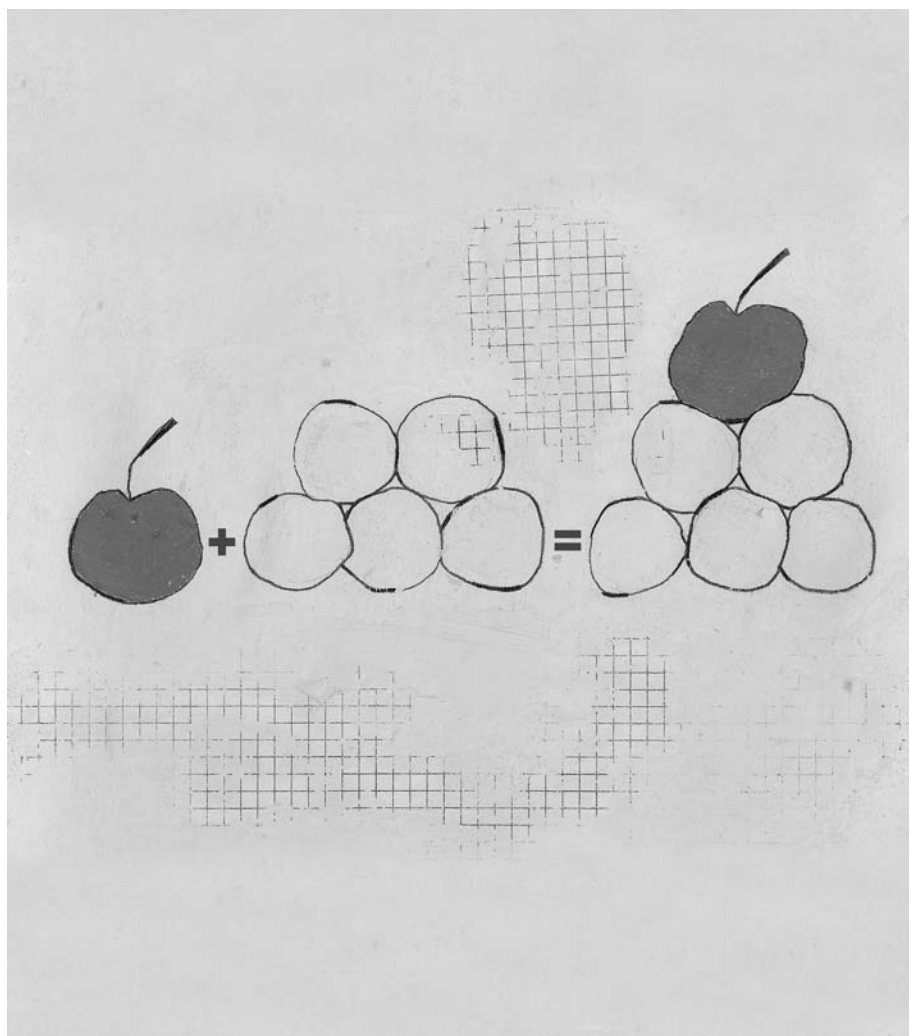
The village of St-Pierre-Jolys has 76 licensed full and part-time childcare spaces in centres, nurseries and a family childcare home, though only 46 spaces operate year-round. There is a licensed childcare space for 42 per cent of St-Pierre-Jolys' 180 children aged 0–12 years. Parents report fees are high, and fee subsidies are restrictive. There is a severe shortage of trained early childhood educators: two of the village's three centres are operating without the minimum number of trained staff. Difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified childcare staff are the direct result of low wages and benefits, compounded by insufficient francophone training options. The shortage of trained staff is creating a crisis in St-Pierre-Jolys facilities.

The childcare sector in St-Pierre-Jolys had a total revenue of \$455,310 in 2005-06. As childcare revenue "ripples" through the local economy, it brings additional benefits estimated at \$264,080. The total direct and indirect effect of the childcare industry in St-Pierre-Jolys is \$719,389 in 2005/06. The childcare field creates 16 full and part-time jobs in the village, and spending by the sector supports another 6 full time equivalent jobs. Every \$1 spent on childcare returns \$1.58 in the short-term, even before longer-term returns are assessed.

St-Pierre-Jolys needs more childcare services, childcare must become more affordable and accessible to families, the quality of care must rise, and the ECE labour force must be better supported and resourced. Improvements to local and provincial policy and services can best be fully realized when Canada establishes a national childcare program. Such improvements will require policy innovation, political will at all levels, and increased public funding.

Based on the evidence, it seems clear that greater investment in St-Pierre-Jolys' childcare system will bring concrete local benefits to children, families and the regional economy and will enhance the quality of life in this vibrant village.

Project Background



The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba set out to document the economic and social impact of childcare in St-Pierre-Jolys.

Most people are aware that childcare supports parents, particularly mothers, and is a key element in women's equality and work-family balance. But there is much more. Childcare services are part of modern family life. Over half of all children, according to Statistics Canada, are cared for by someone other than their parents [1]. However, few children have access to regulated care—the care that is considered developmental early childhood care and learning.

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba set out to document the economic and social impact of childcare in St-Pierre-Jolys, Thompson and Parkland. These studies build on the Coalition's 2004 *Time for Action: An Economic and Social Analysis of Childcare in Winnipeg*. Such studies are new in Canada, where childcare economic impact studies have not been done before; unlike in the USA, where dozens have been completed [2, 3].

In preparing this report on St-Pierre-Jolys, we consulted with expert stakeholders. Our Advisory Council members included elected officials and leaders in child-centred groups, business, education, economic development,

Over half of all children are cared for by someone other than their parents. However, few children have access to regulated care—the care that is considered developmental early childhood care and learning.

women's and health groups, in both Francophone and non-Francophone organizations. We are proud to announce the members:

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Susan Prentice, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Sociology, University of Manitoba), was the project's Principal Investigator. Molly McCracken, Master of Public Administration (MPA), worked on the latter phase of the project, including data analysis and literature reviews; Nikki Isaac, MA (Sociology), coordinated the first phase of data gathering and early analysis. Thelma Randall, BHEC, provided financial management.

Over the fall of 2006, we organized two francophone and two bilingual community consultations in St-Pierre-Jolys to provide residents with opportunities to share their views. The voices of participants in these meetings are integrated into this report (*see Note 5.*)

This project was funded by Women's Program, Status of Women Canada. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official policy of Status of Women Canada.

1. Why Does St-Pierre-Jolys Need Childcare?

In 2006, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) issued a much-anticipated major review of early childhood education and care services in 20 countries. The report, *Starting Strong II*, explains that “early access to early childhood education and care provides young children, particularly from low-income and second-language groups, with a good start in life” [4]. Equitable access to quality early childhood education and care, says the OECD, can strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for all children and support the broad educational and social needs of families [5].

Europeans know that childcare lays the foundation for children’s care, learning, and social development while also supporting their parents. Canada needs to follow this lead, and ensure that children and families have access to high quality services. Politicians seem ready for the challenge. At the federal and provincial levels, governments are increasingly interested in early learning and care.

Childcare supports families, providing children with a rich milieu for development and growth and enabling parents (particularly mothers) to work or study. In Manitoba’s francophonie, childcare services do all this while also enhancing Francophone communities. Francophone childcare contributes to linguistic and cultural vitality in the next generation, enriching all Manitobans.

CHILDCARE IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN

Developmental scientists know that the experiences of early childhood have a profound impact on health, well being, and coping skills across the entire life course. We now have a mountain of research—from Canada and around the world—proving conclusively that quality childcare is good for children.

The medical experts at the Canadian Population Health Initiative sum it up: “Quality centre-based, early childhood education and care can improve children’s academic skills and long-term developmental outcomes” [6].

FRENCH-LANGUAGE CHILDCARE IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN

Childcare can be offered *en français*, where the language of instruction and admission are French; in bilingual programs (where both English and French are the language of curriculum and administration); and as immersion (where pedagogy is primarily French, but administration may be French or English) [7]. Each type of program offers value. Français childcare completely supports Francophone and exogamous children and families; bilingual and immersion programs can support exogamous families and assist children and their parents to acquire French fluency.

Français childcare can be a resource for francisation—preparing children for francophone education. As the Fédération provinciale des comités de parents du Manitoba (FPCP) explains, “Nous reconnaissons tous que le préscolaire est le lieu idéal pour recruter et préparer les enfants à l’école française. Le choix du programme que les parents feront au niveau préscolaire est critique pour l’avenir de notre communauté francophone” [8]. Francophone early childhood education helps to establish a strong linguistic foundation for these children’s success [9].

Childcare services provide a hub for cross-cultural inter-generational linkages, supporting families in all language groups.

“Early access to early childhood education and care provides young children, particularly from low-income and second-language groups, with a good start in life.”

“Equitable access to quality early childhood education and care can strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for all children and support the broad educational and social needs of families.”

The South Eastman/Santé Sud-Est Regional Health Authority reports that more than two-thirds of area women with preschool children are working—and they represent the fastest growing segment of the region’s labour force.

CHILDCARE SUPPORTS FAMILIES

All parents need some support—whether they are at-home full-time, looking for work, at school or in training, self-employed, or in the labour force as part- or full-time workers. Good childcare arrangements make it possible for parents to be employed or to attend school, and to lead lives with less stress and role overload. Families with working parents often find balancing work and home very challenging [10]. Families living in poverty are under additional stress, and the physical and mental health of adults and children can be at risk [11]. Family-friendly and child-centred programs can ease the strain and support all parents and children.

The South Eastman/Santé Sud-Est Regional Health Authority reports that more than two-thirds of area women with preschool children are working—and they represent the fastest growing segment of the region’s labour force. “Changing families have increasing needs for formal, organized programs and resources,” note the RHA, “including parenting programs, child care, preschools, and family resource centres” [12].

CHILDCARE SUPPORTS WOMEN

Childcare promotes equal opportunity, helping to reconcile work and family responsibilities in a manner more equitable to women. It can also contribute to a more equal distribution of family and child-rearing tasks between mothers and fathers.

When affordable childcare is available, women experience less work force interruptions, and accumulate longer and more continuous labour market experience. This, in turn, influences the types of jobs they can obtain, and their level of earnings and pension benefits [13]. Childcare is key to reducing labour market inequality between men and women.

CHILDCARE IS GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY

Economic researchers now conclude “investing in high-quality early childhood programs reaps considerable savings and numerous personal and social benefits” [14]. There are both short-term and longer-term returns. The Vancouver Board of Trade calls the childcare payback “spectacular” [15].

Research shows that quality early childhood education programs more than pay for themselves over the long-term. University of Toronto economists have calculated that for every \$1 invested in childcare, \$2 will be returned through benefits to children and parents [16]. American studies, using different methodology and assumptions, have found that the return on childcare spending can be as high as \$17 for every one dollar invested [17].

Childcare generates returns in the short-term, as well. In Quebec, researchers have discovered that 40 percent of the annual operating expense of the province’s generous childcare system is recouped through increased taxes [18]. In St-Pierre-Jolys, we also find that immediate economic returns are generated by childcare spending. Every \$1 invested in childcare returns \$1.58 to the village and local economy, even before accounting for longer-term benefits accruing to children and families.

CHILDCARE SUPPORTS THE LABOUR FORCE

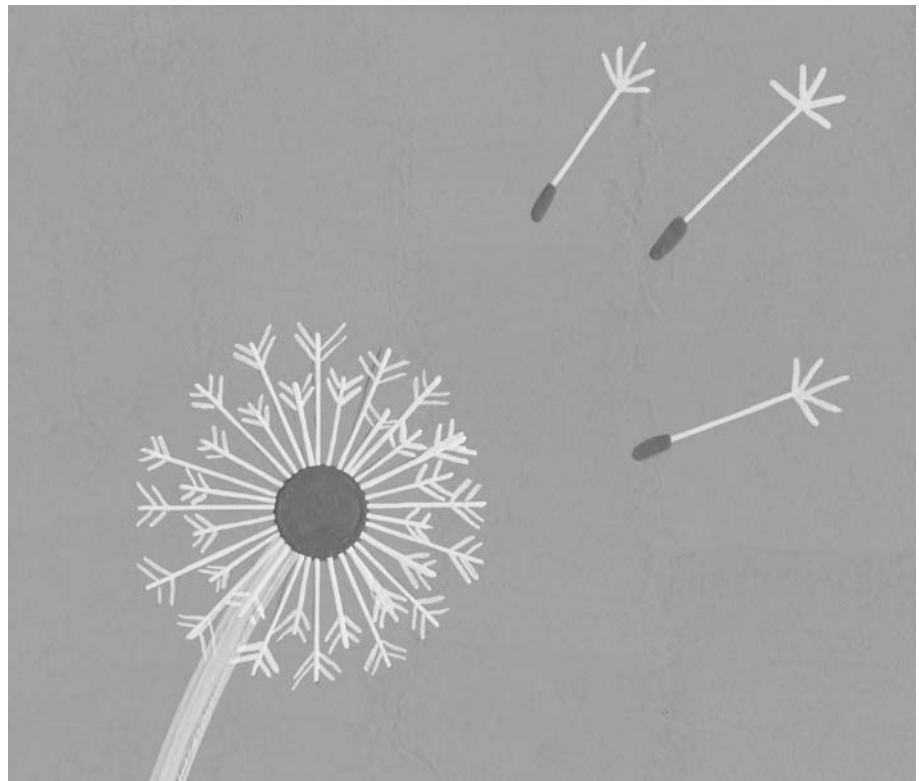
A recent study conducted by Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade indicates that Southeast Manitoba is suffering from a labour shortage of 400 - 500 jobs [19]. Access to childcare is one of the main ways to encourage parents, especially women, to enter and stay in the labour force. Childcare services can make it easier for mothers to work, boosting the local labour force.

CHILDCARE COMBATS POVERTY

Health researchers have pointed out that there are serious consequences to children's poverty: "Children who start school already behind their peers are likely to fall behind, and it may become more difficult to engage them in the educational process. This makes it imperative to provide effective early childhood education programs (starting in the first few years of life) to enhance the experiences of children at risk" [20]. Although the incidence of low-income in St-Pierre-Jolys and the surrounding RHA is lower than the provincial average, poverty is still a local concern.

Access to childcare is one of the main ways to encourage parents, especially women, to enter and stay in the labour force.

2. Profile of St-Pierre-Jolys



St-Pierre-Jolys is a beautiful village, located near the eastern border of the famous Red River Valley. **SEE MAP 1.** St-Pierre-Jolys, with a population of 893 people, is one of about forty francophone villages in Manitoba—part of a francophone history stretching back over 260 years. St-Pierre-Jolys is one of the sixteen members of the Association des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (AMBM).

The roots of the village began in 1877, with the arrival of Father Ritchot of Saint-Norbert, on the heels of the tumult of the Red River Resistance. The town was well established by 1885, as more Francophone and Métis people joined the settlement. The village was officially incorporated in 1947.

Today St-Pierre-Jolys serves as both the business centre and bilingual centre of the Red River Valley Region. The primary economic activities are agriculture, agriculture support services and livestock, complemented by services, recreation and some tourism. The town offers many amenities, including a new full service health centre, golf course and new residential subdivisions. Some residents commute to work in Winnipeg on a daily basis.

While rural exodus is all-too-common across rural Manitoba, a different phenomenon appears to be underway St-Pierre-Jolys. Since 1981, the population of St-Pierre-Jolys has remained relatively stable. Today there are just 20 fewer people than in 1981. In 1981, the village had 210 children under age 12; twenty years later, there were 180 children in this age category. The 2006 census is anticipated to show signs of moderate population growth, evidenced in a new housing division and increased school populations.

Most of Manitoba's bilingual communities are witnessing population

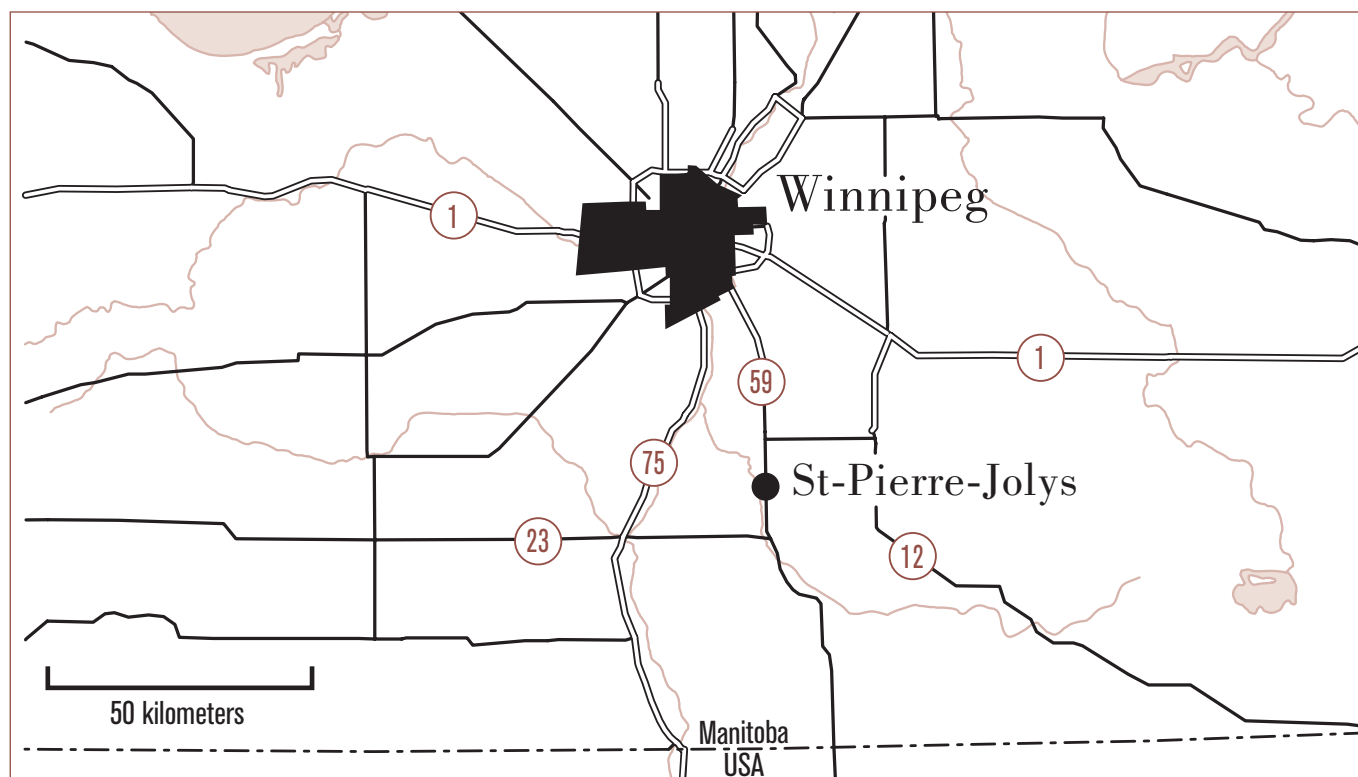
maintenance or growth; in the few where populations are shrinking, it is at a slower rate than in other rural areas. The key may lie in the collective community economic initiative efforts being undertaken. Louis Tétrault, of the Association des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba, contends that the economic development activity “foster[s] an attitude of confidence in the rural communities concerning their resources and possibilities, having the direct effect of halting the phenomenon of exodus and even leading to an increase in population” [21].

Many families with young children are ‘exogamous’—comprised of a Francophone and a non-Francophone parent. The 2001 census found that French was the first language of over half (56 percent) of St-Pierre-Jolys’ residents. About one-third of residents reported English as their first language. Another 3.5 percent reported both French and English as their *langue maternelle*, while 7 percent report another language [22].

The Red River Valley School Division operates one French immersion elementary school (with 138 students) and one dual-track secondary French immersion and English program school (125 students) in St-Pierre-Jolys. The Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) operates an elementary and secondary Francophone school of 211 students [23]. The DSFM is the school division responsible for overseeing French primary and secondary education in Manitoba [24]. The DSFM takes the position that Francophone education begins in early childhood, and is protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

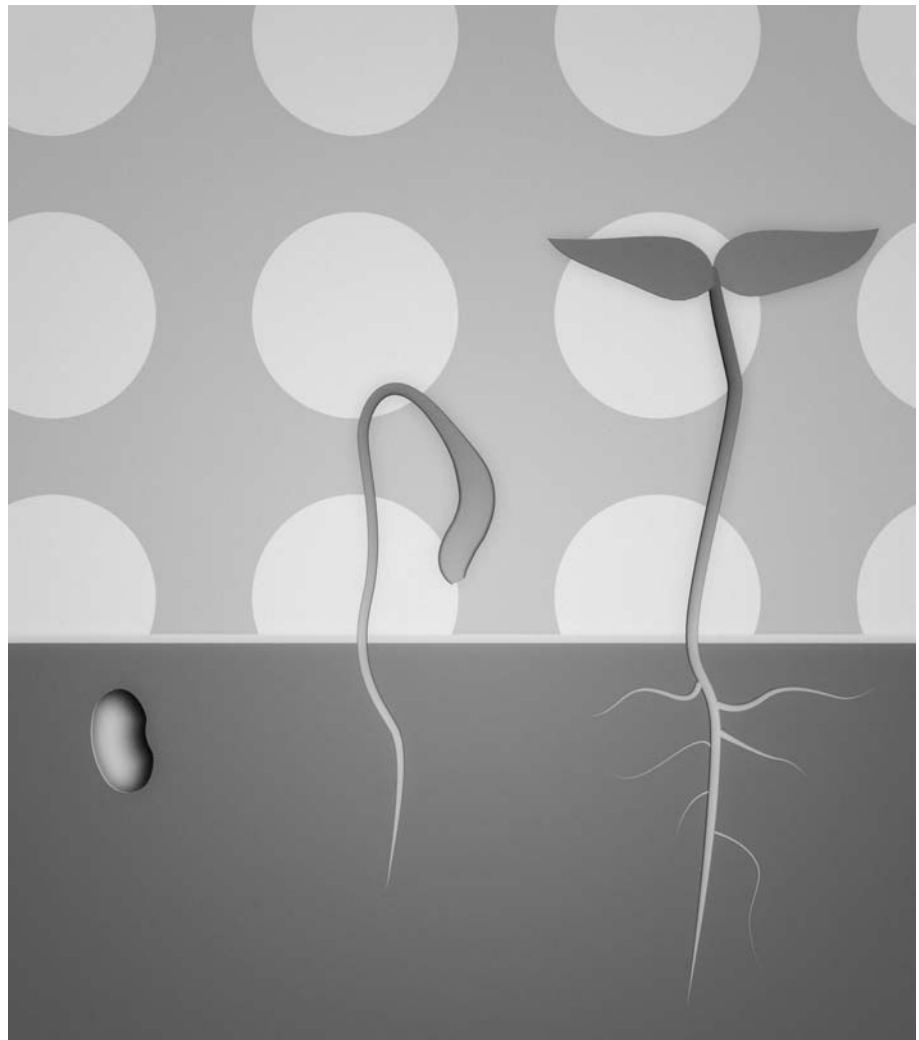
Economic development activity fosters an attitude of confidence, having the direct effect of halting the phenomenon of exodus and even leading to an increase in population.

MAP 1: Village of St-Pierre-Jolys



3. Manitoba's Francophonie and Childcare

Franco-Manitoban families are under-served by the provincial childcare system, and have been for several decades.



Today, about 4.5 per cent of Manitobans report their *langue maternelle* is French. About 50,000 Franco-Manitobans call our officially bilingual province home. Yet, Franco-Manitoban families are under-served by the provincial childcare system, and have been for several decades.

The 1992 *Report of the Working Group on Francophone Day Care* [7] concluded that there was a severe lack of Francophone childcare in Manitoba, and that concerted action was needed. They recommended proactive planning and development of a long-term service delivery plan, sensitivity to the economics of rural and small town childcare, redressing the shortage of trained French-speaking ECEs and establishing more *français* childcare facilities in *français* schools. Few of these recommendations have been fully met.

The working group outlined three different types of French childcare service:

- *Français*: instruction and admission are French only
- Bilingual: instruction and admission in French and English
- Immersion: language of instruction is primarily French and language of admission is French or English.

French language childcare is tremendously important to Francophone communities. At one of our community consultations, a parent explained, “*you need to know your language and history to know your future.*” Moreover, in a community like St-Pierre-Jolys with both Francophone and exogamous families, childcare services can bridge language gaps, helping children and families integrate.

French language instruction is one key to a strong Francophone community in Manitoba. Research shows preschool choices have long-term implications:

It is important to interest parents very early in the Francophone system, since the birth of a child, particularly the first, marks a moment of long-term determining choices with regard to family life. For those in minority communities, it represents the window of opportunity for providing active support and services in French [25].

Franco-Manitobans have their own school division, the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM). The DSFM reaches a limited number of French children: in Manitoba, just 30 percent of Francophone children are enrolled in DSFM schools. Considering that 70 percent of Francophone children are in exogamous families and 85 percent speak English at home, the educational system is aware it must respond to the language needs of Francophone children for the survival of linguistic and cultural heritage [9].

The DSFM mandate embraces a broad vision of education, under the motto ‘*Apprendre et grandir ensemble.*’ As they explain, “La DSFM est un des piliers fondamentaux contribuant à l’agrandissement de l’espace francophone au Manitoba” [24]. In consequence, the DSFM strongly supports Francophone early childhood education in the broadest sense. In 1999, the DSFM began a pilot project to extend French kindergarten (normally a half-day program) to a full-day, notwithstanding the provincial funding system premised on a half day rate [9]. This project proved so successful that it was extended to other kindergarten programs in the division. The DSFM is further committed to providing leadership to community initiatives to establish francophone childcare services [24].

The DSFM makes a concerted effort to support staff working in childcare. No-cost on-going professional development training is offered annually through the DSFM in collaboration with the Fédération provinciale des comités de parents du Manitoba (FPCP), both partners of the Coalition francophone de la petite enfance. The DSFM will provide funding for a substitute staff, cover travel costs, and offers a small honorarium, as well as meals and lodging for those travelling more than 200 kilometres from out of town. Additionally, the francophone school division has partnered with the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface to offer an introductory 40 hour childcare course, at its local high schools (including École communautaire Réal-Berard in St-Pierre-Jolys). The course is made available to high school students and adult learners in the community for dual recognition as both a secondary school and a post secondary credit.

Francophone education is particularly important in villages like St-Pierre-Jolys that have a high and rising number of exogamous families. At our community consultation, one knowledgeable participant explained that in 2006, 48 percent of children live in exogamous households, up from 32 percent just a

French language instruction is one key to a strong Francophone community in Manitoba.

few years earlier.

Childcare services in St-Pierre-Jolys must meet the needs of both French and English families. Both Francophone and Anglophone parents concur. As participants told us, “A child has a right to speak their language.” Another explained, “We want both languages to thrive.”

Despite the best intentions of the 1992 working group on francophone day care, many of its recommendations for action remain unimplemented. The provincial Five Year Plan (established in 2002) entirely neglected to address francophone needs [26]. The “Moving Forward” action plan developed in anticipation of bilateral federal funds contains the general declaration:

The Manitoba government believes support and intervention in the early years are essential to the preservation of francophone cultural and linguistic heritage and the continued success of francophone schools. Manitoba will continue to address the needs of francophone communities in the province by expanding and enhancing early learning and child care programs and services available in French [27].

Only one specific action is named to support francophone childcare, however, in the detailed action plan. As 3,000 more spaces begin receiving operating funds in the coming years, 120 spaces in French-language programs will be included [28]. This planned growth was predicated on the new funds flowing through the provincial-federal agreement signed in 2005. In 2006, the agreement was cancelled by Prime Minister Harper and the fate of Manitoba’s provincial expansion plan is now uncertain [29].

4. Childcare Services in St-Pierre-Jolys

Licensed childcare to St-Pierre-Jolys' 180 children aged 0–12 is provided by two childcare centres, one part-time nursery and one family childcare home (See Note 1). The provincial *Community Child Day Care Standards Act* and *Child Day Care Regulations* regulate all licensed facilities.

St-Pierre-Jolys' licensed childcare system has a capacity of 76 licensed spaces. In 2006, the three centres had a licensed capacity of 68 infant, nursery, preschool and school age childcare spaces (See Table 1). One family home had a capacity of eight licensed spaces. Of the village's total spaces in homes and centres, 61 are full-time, and 15 are part-time (nursery). Forty-six of the total spaces run year-round, thirty operate mainly during the school year. Two programs close down for the summer, and their parents and children are without service for the season.

LACK OF PUBLIC MANDATE AND RELIANCE ON COMMUNITY

All of St-Pierre-Jolys' childcare centres are community-based, operated by non-profit organizations. There is no publicly-operated childcare, and no entitlement of parents or children to service. The role of the provincial government is limited to licensing and funding facilities, and excludes planning, starting-up or delivering services. No role exists for local government. International evidence shows that reliance on the community to maintain childcare produces uneven results [4]. In Winnipeg, for example, childcare services are mal-distributed: poorer and inner-city neighbourhoods fare worst, and more affluent neighbourhoods fare better, a reflection of differential social and material capital [30].

In St-Pierre-Jolys, by contrast, community capacity is stronger and has created good access to childcare programs. One reason for this may lie in the unique character of the St-Pierre-Jolys community. As Jean Beaumont,

TABLE 1: Childcare in St-Pierre-Jolys

	Infant	Nursery	Preschool	School-age	Total Spaces
Garderie Jolys Coop Inc. (year-round)	12		26		38
Les Petits du Bois Jolys Inc. (Sept-May only)		15			15
Les Petits du Bois Jolys Inc. Services de garde avant et apres l'école (Sept-June only)				15	15
Total Centres	12	15	26	15	68
One family home (year-round)					8
Total Spaces					76

At over 40 percent, access in St-Pierre-Jolys is much higher than in Winnipeg (about 17 percent) and is three times better than the Manitoba average of 14.3 percent.

Executive Director of the AMBM explains, there is an on-going willingness among bilingual communities to work together to create a better quality of life, which has “resulted in a very positive snowball effect on the local economy” [21]. Childcare seem to be one of the beneficiaries.

ACCESS TO CHILDCARE

According to 2001 census data, St-Pierre-Jolys has 180 children aged ages 0–12 (*See Note 3*). For these children, there are 76 licensed full and part-time spaces. This means 42 per cent of St-Pierre-Jolys’ children have access to a regulated early childhood space, assuming only Village children use the facilities. At over 40 percent, access in St-Pierre-Jolys is much higher than in Winnipeg (about 17 percent) and is three times better than the Manitoba average of 14.3 percent [31]. The small village of St-Pierre-Jolys nearly rivals Montreal, which can provide childcare to 45 percent of its youngsters, although at a many times greater scale [32].

Despite the relatively high levels of access in the village, parents told us that there are not enough licensed childcare spaces. “*Before and after care has only 15 spaces and it’s full,*” said one participant, who might also have added that the school-age program closes during the summer. Parents told us they require more care for all age groups: infant, preschool and school age. Access to childcare space was the number one issue for parents. At our consultation, participants declared that “*Nous avons épuiser des services que nous avons déjà, il faut passer à la prochaine étape.*”

All of the childcare offered in St-Pierre-Jolys meets the needs of francophone and exogamous families. At the same time, the local language minority of English-speaking families also wants responsive services. “*The English and French in this town are sometimes divided,*” one parent told us, “*and childcare helps kids integrate.*”

MALDISTRIBUTION BY AGE GROUP

Children of different age groups have differential access to care in St-Pierre-Jolys. Infant and preschool care services are close to representative. The worst-served age group is children aged 6–12 years. There is no year-round school-age childcare service. The summer season is when working parents of school-age children need full-time and higher-cost care, which the Village entirely lacks in centre-based facilities. There are also no year-round nursery spaces.

LACK OF SUMMER SERVICE

During the summer, a full 30 of St-Pierre-Jolys’ 76 spaces—or 40 percent—are suspended. All of these children lose the developmental benefits of childcare for several months. Further, the summer poses a particular challenge to employed parents who must make alternate care arrangements. The fees parent pay for alternative summer care are not captured in the economic analysis presented in Section 6 (**TABLES 4 AND 5**). This spending occurs outside the licensed and regulated childcare sector.

SLOW GROWTH IN CHILDCARE SERVICE

In 1990, St-Pierre-Jolys had 47 licensed centre spaces: 20 for preschoolers, 10

part-day nursery spaces, 12 infant spaces and 5 school age spaces [7]. **SEE TABLE 2.** Sixteen years later, our report finds the village has just 21 more centre-based spaces. This very slow rate of growth gives little reason to be optimistic that the simple passage of time will guarantee improved access.

HOW MANY CHILDREN AND PARENTS USE CHILDCARE?

A capacity of 76 licensed spaces can enrol more than 76 children because some children ‘share’ a licensed space. Our best calculations show that between full-time and part-time users, a total of 93 children participated in regulated childcare in St-Pierre-Jolys in 2006. Sixty-one spaces are used by an estimated 48 households with working parents; the part-time spaces are used by an estimated 18 other households (See Note 6).

STAFFING CRISIS

Without trained staff, services can’t expand. We were told “*The centre has a waiting list of children but we can’t let them in because there’s not enough ECEs or CCAs in the workplace.*”

In late Spring 2006, four nursery spaces were unfilled in St-Pierre-Jolys. In February 2007, one facility reported it was choosing not to enrol children to full capacity to accommodate staffing shortages. This dire situation is unsustainable, and jeopardizes current services.

CHILDCARE IS EXPENSIVE

Parent fees vary by age of child, length of day, and type of care. In Manitoba’s centres and homes with trained staff, the daily fee for infants is \$28.00; preschool care costs \$18.80 and school age care is least expensive. Home-based regulated care with untrained providers may be slightly less expensive. Fees for school-age care vary depending on whether care is before and after-school or includes lunchtime, and whether it is provided on a school day or a non-school day. The cost of providing care to younger children is higher because quality and safety regulations require a higher staff to child ratio. **TABLE 3** itemizes daily and annual childcare fees. Any facility which opts to receive operating grants is required to use this fee schedule. Since most facilities elect to receive public funds, there are near-uniform parent fees across the province. Manitoba is unique outside Quebec for this flat fee structure.

In 2006, St-Pierre-Jolys parent fees totalled approximately \$211,560, excluding additional summer alternative care costs (See Note 3). Most of this was paid directly by parents; the remainder was paid on behalf of very low-income parents by the provincial childcare fee subsidy system. Parents were not happy with the high cost of childcare and wanted more investment in the sector: “*We need a national day care program!*”

INADEQUATE SUBSIDY SYSTEM

Many children are shut out of childcare by high fees. The subsidy system, designed to meet the needs of low-income parents, is grossly inadequate. As **TABLE 4** shows, parents must be at or below the low-income cut-off (known as the poverty line) to qualify for a fee subsidy: the before-tax poverty line in 2005 for a family of 2 in a rural area was \$17,807, and \$26,579 for a family of four,

FIGURE 1: Centre Services By Children’s Age Group

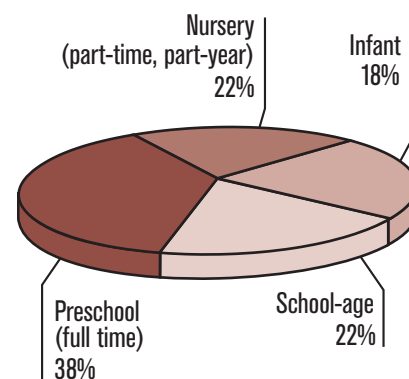


TABLE 2: Slow Growth in St-Pierre-Jolys Childcare Services: 1990 and 2007

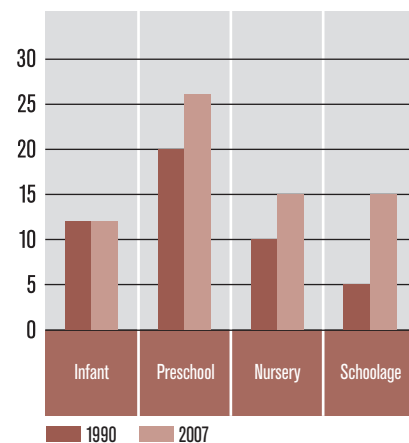


TABLE 3: Manitoba Childcare Centre Fees by Age of Child (2006)

	Daily Cost	Annual Cost
Infant Spaces	\$28.00	\$7,280
Preschooler	\$18.80	\$4,888
School age, (cost for school days varies by before-, after-school and lunchtime slots.)	\$8.00–\$9.60 (school days) \$18.80 (out-of-school days)	\$2,836–\$3,140

TABLE 4: Eligibility for Childcare Fee Subsidy (2006 Net Income)

	Turning point	Break-even point	Rural Low-Income Cut-off (2005 pre tax)
1 parent, 1 child	\$13,787	\$24,577	\$17,807
2 parents, 2 children	\$18,895	\$40,475	\$26,579

The turning point is the income level up to which the maximum subsidy is available. Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases. In Manitoba, a maximum subsidy does not cover the full cost of care, and parents must pay \$2.40/day per child to make up the difference.

according to Statistics Canada [33].

The income level at which parents become eligible for a fee subsidy was last set in 1991. It has not been adjusted since, not even to account for increases in the cost of living. If the 1991 eligibility levels had simply kept pace with inflation, many more parents would be receiving a subsidy today. Adjusted to 2007 dollars, single parents should be eligible for a maximum subsidy at incomes up to \$18,406 (turning point), with subsidy ceasing at \$32,811 (break-even point). Two parent families with two children should be eligible for a maximum subsidy at incomes up to \$25,225 (turning point), with subsidy ceasing at \$54,035 (break-even point). These adjusted incomes are a full 33.5 percent higher than the rates the provincial government currently uses to determine which families are eligible for some subsidy.

In St-Pierre-Jolys, about one-third of children receive some subsidy, evidence of greater than average use of childcare services by poor families (the poverty rate is 11 percent in the RHA, see Note 4). Given the well-documented relationship between low income and lower educational attainment, the high proportion of subsidized children underscores the importance of early childhood education in St-Pierre-Jolys [20].

In 2002, at the inauguration of Manitoba’s Five Year Plan for Child Care, the provincial government announced it would “reduce” the \$2.40/day per child fee surcharge [26]. To date, even a full subsidy does not cover the full cost of care. The Plan ended April 2007, but the surcharge—levied against very poor families—was in effect as of late March 2007.

LACK OF TRAINED STAFF DIMINISHES QUALITY OF PROGRAM

Research tells us that staff training is one of the key predictors of quality [34]. Today, St-Pierre-Jolys has fewer trained early childhood educators than it needs—a finding also made by the 1992 francophone working group. Two of the village’s three centres operate with an exemption to their license because of non-compliance with staff training requirements. Low numbers of trained staff brings downward pressure on the quality of the programming provided to children.

Licensed childcare services in Manitoba aim to include all children. In St-Pierre-Jolys as in the rest of Manitoba, the inclusion of children with special needs is uneven, due to lack of staff or specially trained staff, and/or transportation or other required supports. An estimated 10 percent of children have special needs (for example health problems or disabilities, delays or disorders in physical, social, intellectual, communicative, emotional, or behavioural development) that require some level of additional support to assure their full participation in childcare programs [35]. In St-Pierre-Jolys, however, under 1 percent of total childcare revenue comes from provincial Disability Grants designed to support inclusion of children with special needs (SEE TABLE 4).

5. Early Childhood Educator Labour Force

St-Pierre-Jolys childcare centres employ 8 full time and 7 part time childcare workers; family childcare employs one provider. Thus, there is a total of 16 full and part-time childcare workers, all of whom are women (See Note 1). As of Spring 2006, over two-thirds of the village's childcare staff were Child Care Assistants (CCAs) with no training. Of the others, four were ECE II and two were ECE III. By February 2007, both ECE III staff had left the field—thus the complement of trained staff is significantly lower today than it was last year.

Most of the funds spent by a childcare program go to wages and benefits: a full 86.7 percent in St-Pierre-Jolys (See Note 3 and TABLE 6). We calculate that the 16 full and part-time childcare staff in St-Pierre-Jolys earned an estimated \$374,493 in wages and benefits in 2005-06 (See Notes 1 and 3). Staff employed in facilities that close for the summer lose wages over these two to three months, lowering their annual earnings.

Manitoba has three training classifications for staff. Child Care Assistants (CCA) have no formal childcare training, but must have first aid and CPR. Beginning April 2007, CCAs must also be enrolled in or have completed a basic 40 hour introduction to childcare course. An Early Childhood Educator (ECE) II holds a diploma in Early Childhood Education or has been assessed to have these skills. An ECE III augments ECE II qualifications through additional post-diploma early childhood education, a relevant University degree, or equivalent qualifications. Family home care providers are not required to have specialized early childhood education training beyond the forty-hour introduction. In Manitoba in 2005/06, the average CCA earned between \$19,762–\$27,489. Those with ECE II qualifications earned an average of \$28,636–\$36,260. ECE III staff, many of whom are directors and supervisors, earned between \$30,829–\$44,064 [38].

The Community Child Care Standards Act sets out minimum standards for quality and safety, including staff to child ratios, group size, and other criteria. One of its regulations is that directors of centres must hold ECE III qualifications (directors of nursery and school-age programs must hold ECE II), and that two-thirds of centre staff (and half in nurseries) should have ECE II or III qualifications. Facilities that cannot meet these training levels must apply for and receive an exemption to their provincial license. Exemptions are provided if facilities can propose a staffing plan that meets provincial approval.

All of Manitoba confronts a shortage of trained ECE staff. In 2005–06, 30 per cent of Manitoba centres were unable to meet the training requirements due to shortages [36]. In St-Pierre-Jolys, 2 of the 3 centres—or 66 percent—have a temporary exemption to their license because they do not have the required complement of trained staff. Low wages and benefits are the main culprit behind the province-wide staffing crisis. Parent fees are already too high for many parents to afford, and so the solution to low wages cannot rest with increased parent costs. Raising staff wages and increasing the quality of programming will instead require enhanced public funding.

Recruiting trained staff is one of the major challenges of the childcare sector in St-Pierre-Jolys. “We advertise for staff but get no applicants,” explained one facility. Programs told us they post positions for early childhood educators across Canada, but receive no applications. We can anticipate that trained francophone ECE staff can readily find employment in Quebec, where wages are considerably

In St-Pierre-Jolys, 2 of the 3 centres—or 66 percent—have a temporary exemption to their license because they do not have the required complement of trained staff. Low wages and benefits are the main culprit behind the province-wide staffing crisis.

Provincial regulations set out a staff to child ratio in centre-based childcare as follows:

Infant	1:4
Preschool	1:8
School Age	1:15

Nursery centres providing less than 4 hours of care per day are permitted to have a 1:10 ratio.

better [37]. Parents and staff want more investment from the provincial and federal governments to improve wages, and want more to be done to assist students interested in early childhood education.

Local stakeholders firmly believe that ECE education must be offered locally, in French. They point out that there is a low rate of return among rural students who move to Winnipeg to undertake their education. Moreover, in the absence of local training, few staff currently working in the field are likely to upgrade their qualifications.

There are no early childhood education training opportunities available in St-Pierre-Jolys. ECE education is available in English at the Steinbach campus of Red River Community College. For French-language ECE instruction, people must travel to Winnipeg to Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB). To date, due to limited resources, the Collège has only offered ECE II training. No Manitoba post-secondary education institution currently provides a French-language degree program nor post-diploma courses leading to ECE III qualifications. Recently, the College has received authorization and funding to create a *Diplôme avancé en leadership pour la jeune enfance*, which will be delivered in large part by internet-based distance education. The first ECE III alumnae from this new program are anticipated between 2010 and 2012.

Scarce training opportunities and low levels of qualified staff are obviously linked, and the problems this creates are long-standing. Back in 1992, the working group on francophone childcare found that “shortages of adequately trained French speaking child care professionals continue to exist” and this “impedes the development and the quality of day care services for the Francophone population” [7]. Staffing and training discrepancies between the francophone and the non-francophone Manitoba childcare community have a disparate and negative effect on the province’s French and exogamous families.

The acute staff shortage has important consequences in the childcare sector in St-Pierre-Jolys. One participant explains: “*The shortage of staff means we can’t keep up with emergent curriculum because it is hard to implement with untrained staff, so the quality of the programming suffers.*” Even if centres were to receive operational funding to open new and badly-needed spaces, they cannot find recruit and retain trained staff. Current levels of service may not be sustained: one program is currently operating below capacity to accommodate low staffing levels.

The provincial government has recognized the links between a shortage of trained staff and low wages. New initiatives are underway to increase enrollment in training programs, and to recruit former staff back into the field. There also have been small funding increases in recent years to permit wages to rise. These projects were lauded in our public consultations: participants noted the provincial “Growing Minds, Growing Opportunities” program has piqued the curiosity of high school students and increased recognition of early childhood education as a viable career.

6. The Economics of Childcare

We don't usually consider childcare as an industry. But we can look at childcare through an economic lens. Childcare is both an industry in its own right and an infrastructure that enables other sectors of the economy to function [39].

In this section, we present an analysis of childcare spending in St-Pierre-Jolys, using input-output multipliers [2]. Non-economists are familiar with this as the 'ripple effect' of spending. As money 'ripples' through the economy, each \$1 generates other effects. In this report, we focus only on the sector's immediate effects, and not the longer-term returns. Canada does not yet have reliable calculations for the economic effects of childcare on children's outcomes. As a result, the economic projections of this report are only a sub-set of the total economic impact of childcare—they represent only short-term, immediate returns.

As a sector, childcare's 2005/06 revenues in St-Pierre-Jolys were an estimated \$455,310 (See Note 3). This revenue is the sum of parent fees and all other income, as shown in **TABLE 5**. Parent fees (including fee subsidies paid on behalf of low-income parents) make up 47 percent of total sector revenues, totalling \$211,560. Operating grants to centres and homes from the Province of Manitoba contributed \$235,792 to facilities, in addition to disability grants to support the inclusion of children with special needs. Fundraising, interest on investments, donations and 'other' revenues may provide small extra funds to some programs. One program has slowly built a reserve in anticipation of new facility construction.

In economic terms, the standard measure of the impact of an industry sector on the regional economy is input-output analysis. Input-output models are based on the assumption that an industry's spending in a regional economy creates economic growth. In St-Pierre-Jolys, childcare homes and centres generate over \$455,000 of revenue (**SEE TABLE 5**).

As explained earlier, since a full 40 percent of St-Pierre-Jolys childcare spaces are suspended over the summer, the economic data do not capture the sizeable costs of summer-season care by parents. Thus, the 'real' spending on childcare in St-Pierre is higher than presented here, with further ripple effects.

In childcare, labour is the biggest single cost. St-Pierre-Joly's childcare centres spend an average of 86.7 percent of their total expenditures on salaries and benefits (**TABLE 6**). Administrative and office costs consume about 7.7 percent, leaving just 5.5 percent for the program (toys, books, snacks, craft supplies, etc.) Program quality would rise if additional funds were available to this budget line.

The St-Pierre-Jolys childcare worker labour force (in centres and homes) earns \$374,493 in wages and benefits (See Notes 1 and 3). When taxes are taken into consideration, these earnings generate an estimated \$247,165 in take-home pay to be spent in the local economy, supporting employment and growth in other sectors.

Input-output analysis also includes multiplier effects, or ways to measure the impact of sector spending. Indirect effects measure how the ways money spent by childcare centres and homes stimulates economic activity. Childcare centres need supplies and food and pay rent, which in turn generates activities in other sectors.

In St-Pierre-Jolys, for every \$1 spent on childcare, \$1.58 of economic activity

TABLE 5: Revenue by Source for St-Pierre-Jolys Childcare Sector (2005/06)

Centres and Homes	Revenue
Parent Fees (excluding some summer costs)	\$211,560
Disability Grant	\$3,189
Fundraising	\$2,051
Donations	\$174
Interest	\$2,319
Other	\$225
Operating Grant	\$235,792
Total	\$455,310

TABLE 6: Expenditures by St-Pierre-Jolys Childcare Centres (2005/06)

	Expenditures	%
Salaries	\$284,630	79.5%
Benefits	\$25,855	7.2%
Program	\$19,817	5.5%
Office and Building	\$12,133	3.4%
Administration	\$15,577	4.4%
Total (excludes a reserve for anticipated construction)	\$358,012	

Note: No data on expenditures by family homes is available

In St-Pierre-Jolys, for every \$1 spent on childcare, \$1.58 of economic activity is generated.

is generated. In St-Pierre-Jolys, childcare generates an extra \$264,080 of economic effects on top of \$455,310 of revenue. The total direct and indirect effects of the childcare industry are \$719,389.

The employment multiplier is the estimate of the jobs created or supported by a sector through industry spending in other sectors. In the case of childcare, an extra 0.49 jobs are created or supported for every childcare FTE. St-Pierre-Jolys' childcare centres and family home employ 16 part and full-time staff. These childcare workers create or sustain 6 more jobs, when the employment multiplier is taken into account.

PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT

Parents who use full-time childcare are available for other activity, including employment, education, or community involvement. In St-Pierre-Jolys, the 61 full-time spaces support an estimated 48 households. An additional 18 households are estimated to use childcare part-time. Assuming the mothers and fathers in full-time care earn average full-year wages, their annual income is a cumulative \$3,619,589 (See Notes 1 and 6).

One of the most dramatic changes to the Canadian labour force in recent decades has been the increase in the numbers of women working for pay. Although it is yet to fully be recognized in public policy and economic development planning, the 'new normal' is for most households to have two working parents, as shown in **TABLE 7**.

TABLE 7 presents the labour force participation rates in the RHA of South Eastman/Santé Sud-Est for mothers and fathers of children in three age groups, and compares these to the provincial averages.

Women with children of all ages are less likely to be in the labour force than are men, though the size of the participation gap varies by age of child. Women are more likely to take up paid work when their children are no longer very young. Gender differentials in workforce participation shrink as children grow up. Once children reach school age, the likelihood of both their parents being in the labour force increases—84.7 percent of mothers and 94.7 percent of fathers of children over age six are in the RHA's paid labour force. The

FIGURE 2: Childcare Spending in St-Pierre-Jolys Centres

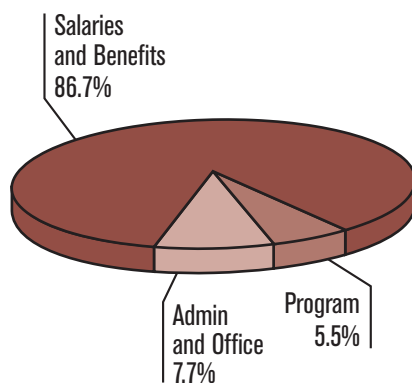
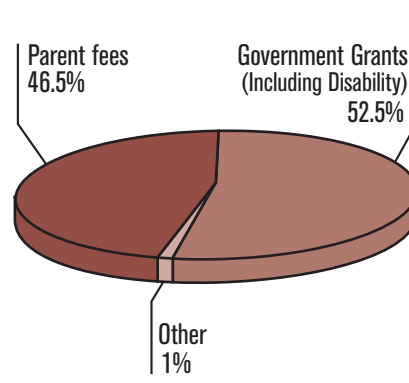


FIGURE 3: Revenue for St-Pierre-Jolys Childcare Sector



employment of women with school-age children is slightly higher than the provincial average. Fathers' employment rates are above the provincial average for all ages of children.

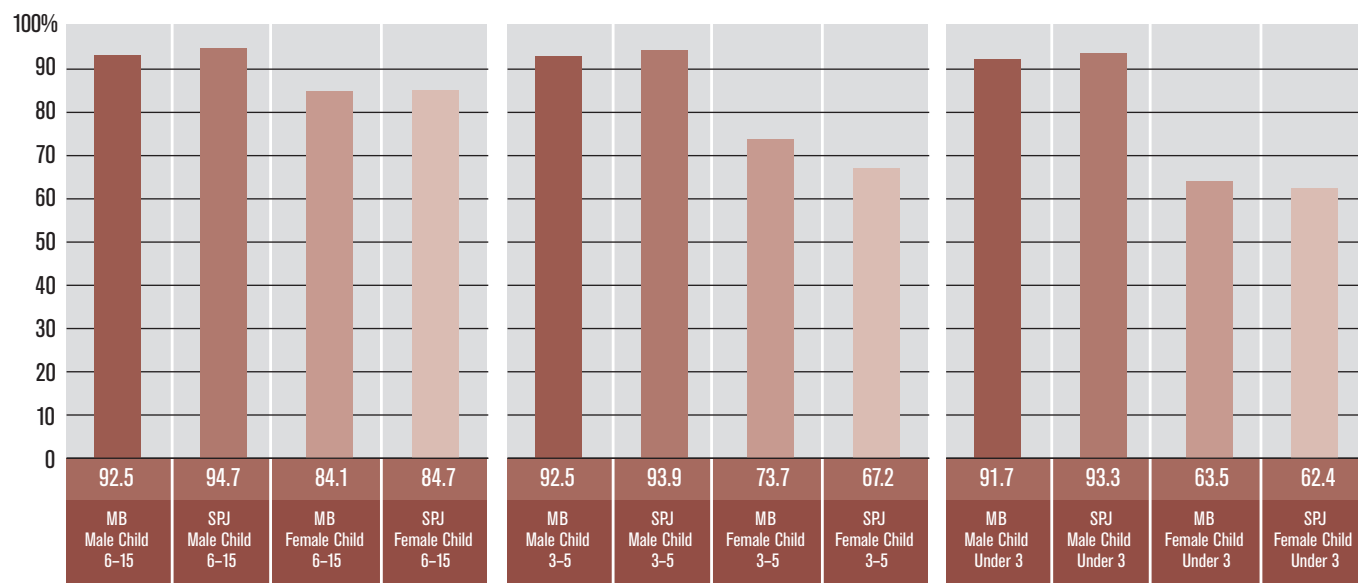
Women and men working in the South Eastman/Santé Sud-Est RHA have different experiences: men's earnings are *below* the provincial average, whereas women's are *higher* than the provincial average. The Census 2001 reports men's average full-time, full-year earnings were \$34,345 whereas women's were \$35,885 [22]. This female wage advantage is remarkable. Elsewhere in the province and in most of Canada, women earn lower average wages than men do.

The data on maternal and paternal labour force participation (**TABLE 7**) counts only those who are currently working for pay or actively looking for work. It does not measure those who have left the labour market by choice, because of discouragement, or because they cannot find childcare or are unable to reconcile work-family obligations.

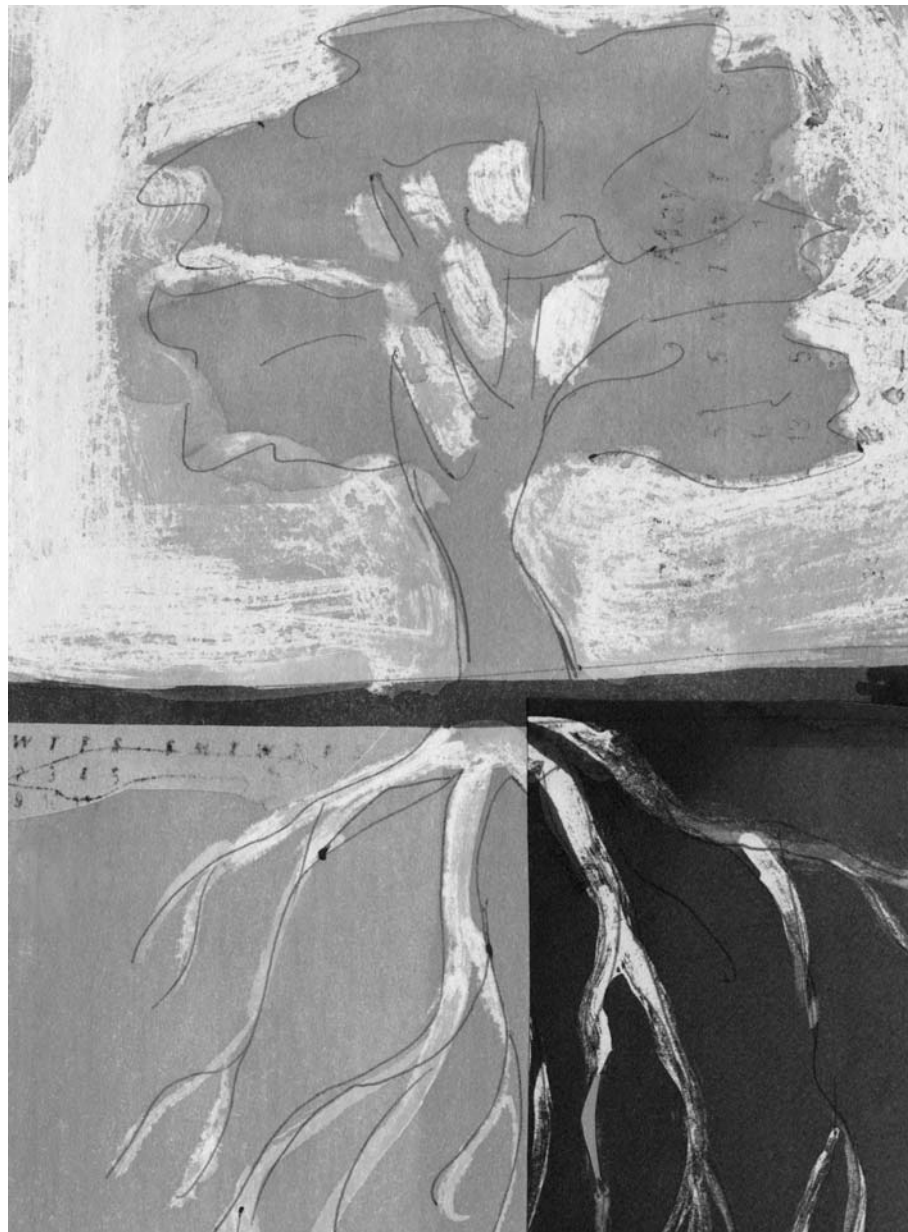
Dropping out of the labour force has consequences beyond short-term forgone wages. The longer people are out the labour market, the more dated their skills become, their employability decreases, and contributions to pensions or RRSPs cease. Even short-term exits can have long-term negative consequences on lifetime earnings resulting in lower income in retirement. Many women discover this sad reality the hard way, through poverty in their senior years, or upon widowhood or marriage dissolution.

Women's equality and financial security is too often compromised by the 'choices' women make about paid and unpaid work. Supportive services, like childcare, can make it easier for women—like men—to earn a living while also caring for their families and their communities.

TABLE 7 South Eastman / Santé Sud-Est RHA Labour Force Participation Rates For Mothers and Fathers by Age of Child (2001)



7. Recommendations



From this overview of childcare in St-Pierre-Jolys, it is possible to draw out general recommendations. The following broad observations flow from the analysis in this report:

MORE CHILDCARE SERVICES ARE NEEDED

The village's 76 licensed spaces can serve about 42 percent of St-Pierre-Jolys' youngsters, yet parents tell us more spaces are needed, including year-round. Expanding services will require capital funds as well as on-going operating funds, in facilities renovated or built to developmentally appropriate standards. Services must be flexible and include extended hours and seasonal needs, and include all age groups, staffed by trained early childhood educators.

CHILDCARE SERVICES MUST BECOME MORE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO FAMILIES

Parent fees are too high for many families to afford. The fee subsidy system is badly out-of-date. Eligibility income levels, last set in 1991, must be revised to respond to the realities of families in 2007. The surcharge of \$2.40/day per child should be eliminated for subsidized families.

THE QUALITY OF CHILDCARE SERVICES MUST INCREASE

Childcare services must be high quality, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive of all children (including children with special needs). High quality programs require appropriately trained staff, including those with specializations (for example, in children with special needs and infants), who are well resourced and supported. Programming in childcare services must be culturally appropriate and welcoming for all cultural and language groups. Raising quality will require additional public funding so programming costs can improve. Service must be provided through flexible and extended hours, and the additional cost of serving small towns and villages must be built into operating formulae.

THE ECE LABOUR FORCE MUST BE BETTER SUPPORTED AND RESOURCED

Staff training is one of the strongest predictors of program quality. Skilled and trained staff will be recruited and retained when wages and benefits are improved, and when career ladders are built. Too few of St-Pierre-Jolys' childcare staff have ECE II or III qualifications, and upgrading for existing staff and opportunities for new entrants are not available locally in French. We repeat the recommendation made in 1992, that there is a continued need for access to French language post-secondary diploma training, as well as a degree program.

ST-PIERRE-JOLYS, LIKE THE REST OF CANADA, NEEDS A NATIONAL CHILDCARE PROGRAM

Because of very architecture of childcare, improving access, quality, affordability and staffing are intimately inter-linked. In a market-based regime, universal services cannot be delivered as child and family entitlements. In St-Pierre-Jolys, as in all of Manitoba and the rest of Canada, families need a national childcare program. Only a sustained program, resourced centrally and with national accountability, can ensure that provinces have the mandate and funds to build high quality, developmental and universally accessible childcare services.

These improvements will require policy innovation, political will at all levels, and increased public funding. Based on the evidence, it seems clear that greater investment in St-Pierre-Jolys' childcare system will bring concrete local benefits to children, families and the regional economy and will enhance quality of life in the vibrant village.

Methodological Notes

NOTE 1: We use ‘childcare’ to refer to those regulated early learning and care services for children aged 12 weeks (rounded to 0)–12 years, including nurseries, child day care centres and day care homes, which are licensed by the province of Manitoba. Most children who require non-parental care receive service from the informal childcare sector; unregulated childcare is excluded from the analysis herein, as are any ECD service not licensed as childcare. Data on childcare services in St-Pierre-Jolys is drawn from the provincial Child Care Office and from our direct communication with facilities. Data on the St-Pierre-Jolys childcare labour force was gathered in a telephone survey with facilities conducted in May 2006 and updated Feb 2007. While family home providers are legally self-employed, we consider them ECE staff for purposes of this report. Enrolments, waiting lists, the number of children with special needs staffing, and the ratio of subsidized children may fluctuate over a year. We discuss a snapshot current as of May 2006. Of the total of 76 spaces, we consider 61 spaces (infant, preschool, school-age and family home) to be ‘full-time’ because they permit a parent to have Mon-Fri, 9–5 employment, even if for just part of the year; by contrast, the 15 nursery spaces are not designed to accommodate parental employment.

NOTE 2: We used Statistics Canada’s census area for St-Pierre-Jolys. The village is located in the provincial Regional Health Authority of South Eastman/Santé Sud-Est. Where available, we use St-Pierre-Jolys specific data. Where village-level data is not available, we present data for the larger RHA. Total population and child population for St-Pierre-Jolys were calculated from 2001 Census data. Demographic calculations were made for child populations and the pool of families using childcare. We used the most recent published Statistics Canada Census data (2001).

NOTE 3: Budget and financial data is for the 2005/2006 fiscal year, and all calculations for centre-based facilities are actuals; family home data is proxied from provincial averages provided by the Child Care Office. To attribute wages and benefits to family home care, we assumed the proportion was the same as centre expenditures (87 per

cent), and considered them staff for the purpose of this report. Special input-output data was generated for this project by the Input-Output Analysis Division of Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada recommended and used primary education as the model, since Canada does not have IO data specific to childcare. We used conservative assumptions. The indirect multiplier, also known as the GDP multiplier of 1.58 is the most cautious estimate of spending in the local economy, because taxes and imports are subtracted. The employment multiplier of 1.49 estimates the number of jobs supported by the childcare sector. These figures are as accurate as possible, given the under-developed state of the provincial and regional data. Much of our method draws from the work of Mildred Warner (Cornell University) and colleagues, to whom we are indebted.

NOTE 4: Source for South Eastman labour force participation rates and poverty rate: Statistics Canada. 2001. J4013 Revised: Persons in Private Households by Age (6), Sex (3), Aboriginal Identity/Registered Indian Status (5), Labour Force Activity (8), Income Status (4) and Selected Characteristics (22) for Canada, Manitoba, Health Regions and Selected Groupings (15), 2001 Census (20% Sample-based data) Census Custom Tabulation. (Accessed January 2007). This custom tabulation was originally prepared for the Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence. For this report, all computations were prepared by the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba and the responsibility for the use and interpretation of these data is entirely that of this report’s author.

NOTE 5: We held four community consultations in St-Pierre-Jolys over September and October 2006. Two of the consultations were Francophone and two were bilingual. Francophone facilitators and early childhood educators Sylvie Gauthier and Juliette Chabot led the participatory meetings, which were conducted under a research ethics approval certificate (Protocol #P2006:015) issued by the University of Manitoba’s Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. All participant quotes presented in this report are from these meetings.

NOTE 6 All figures for parent earnings are calculated based on 2001 Census data on household characteristics and earnings. No specific data is available on childcare-using households in Manitoba. Therefore, we built a model (first developed in our 2004 report) to estimate parental earnings associated with full-time daycare spaces. In St-Pierre-Jolys, the average household with children has 1.76 children, which is adjusted for female employment rates on the basis of child age groupings, since not all of these children have employed mothers. For the full-time spaces, we assume that childcare is required when mothers are employed (note: according to Statistics Canada, there are no lone-parent males in the community in 2001, and so this assumption is reasonable). Statistics Canada Census data finds that among households with children under age 17, 86 per cent is coupled and 14 per cent is lone-parents. By this assumption, there are 41 married or common-law households, 7 single parent female and 0 single parent male households represented by the 61 full-time spaces in St-Pierre-Jolys. To calculate earnings, we use average full-time (gross) earnings for men and women (source: Census 2001 full-time, full-year earnings adjusted for inflation to 2006 dollars using the Bank of Canada's inflation adjuster,

at \$41,490 for women and \$39,709 for men). We do not discount for subsidized parents, since average earnings include low as well as high earners. For calculation purposes of the 48 childcare-using households related to the full-time spaces, we assume that all parents are employed. While some parents may use childcare while they study or are engaged in other non-remunerated activity, we attribute average earnings to them. We do not include licensed nursery spaces (part-time spaces) in the calculations of parent earnings because nursery service is only offered a few hours per day, and it is not sufficient to enable parents to earn income. To find the result of the 18 households using part-time childcare, we assumed that the distribution of family size and type in part-time using childcare-using families is representative of all St-Pierre-Jolys family sizes and types. Source: Earnings data, labour force indicators (employment/unemployment rates), age characteristics of the population and family/household characteristics are retrieved from the Statistics Canada—2001 Census Community Profiles. Available online: www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/CP01/Index.cfm?Lang=E

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