



National Collaborating Centres  
for Public Health

Centres de collaboration nationale  
en santé publique



National Collaborating Centre  
for Determinants of Health

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des déterminants de la santé

*Knowledge for a change*

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# Integrated Perinatal and Early Childhood Services for Families Living in Vulnerable Situations

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Mont. Ste-Anne, Quebec





# Introduction

1. Public health in Quebec
2. Background
3. The bases of the program
4. The clientele targeted
5. The goals and objectives of integrated services
6. The components of integrated services



# Public health in Quebec

1. Health and social services (7.5 million inhabitants, 18 regions, 95 CSSS's)
2. Public health integrated on 3 levels (N.R.L.)
3. Public Health Act (4 functions)
4. Programme national de santé publique 2003-12 (PNSP, PAR and PAL) [www.msss.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca)
5. 7 objectives, 6 areas (84 activities), 5 strategies
6. Individual development, vulnerable groups, community development, intersectorality, preventive clinical practices



# Public health in Quebec

## 7. Examples from the PNSP

- › Reduction of inequalities (Act + strategy + action plan)
- › 2007 Report of the DNSP (national public health director):  
The impact of being disadvantaged on the health of 0-18 year olds
- › Healthy schools, healthy cities
- › Government action plan - HV and weight problems (48\$M including 38\$M for community mobilization)
- › And...IPECS (Integrated Perinatal and Early Childhood Services)



# Background

Between 1970 and 1990

- › The first Quebec perinatal policy in 1973 raises the alarm: there is concern for the number of low birthweight babies and the difficulty of reaching pregnant women in disadvantaged environments.
- › The Priorités nationales de santé publique (national public health priorities) launched in 1997 recommends establishing the Born Equal, Growing up Healthy program (*Naître Égaux - Grandir en santé (NEGS)*). CLSCs already supplied nutritional supplements (OLO) and some provided NEGS services (the objective is for all CLSCs to provide these services by 2002).



## Background (continued)

- › The results of an evaluation, soon after the year 2000, showed some positive effects of the NEGS program on the women followed: they benefited from more social support, were less depressed, had less postnatal anemia, had improved their eating habits, and those born in Canada were breastfeeding more.



## Background (continued)

- › On the other hand, NEGS had no more effect on low birthweight or its two associated factors, namely, intrauterine growth retardation (IUGR) and prematurity, than the nutritional supplements offered by existing services (OLO).



# The bases of the program

Integrated services are based on the need:

- ✓ to intervene early
- ✓ for intensive, ongoing intervention
- ✓ to intervene from pregnancy to the start of school
- ✓ to work with the individual and the community



# The clientele targeted

- › Pregnant women and mothers
  - Under 20 years old
  - Over 20 years old living in extreme poverty

... fathers and their children between 0 and 5 years old.



# Goals

- › Maximize the potential for health and wellbeing
- › Make the birth of these children part of a successful life project for parents
- › Strengthen the empowerment of people and communities



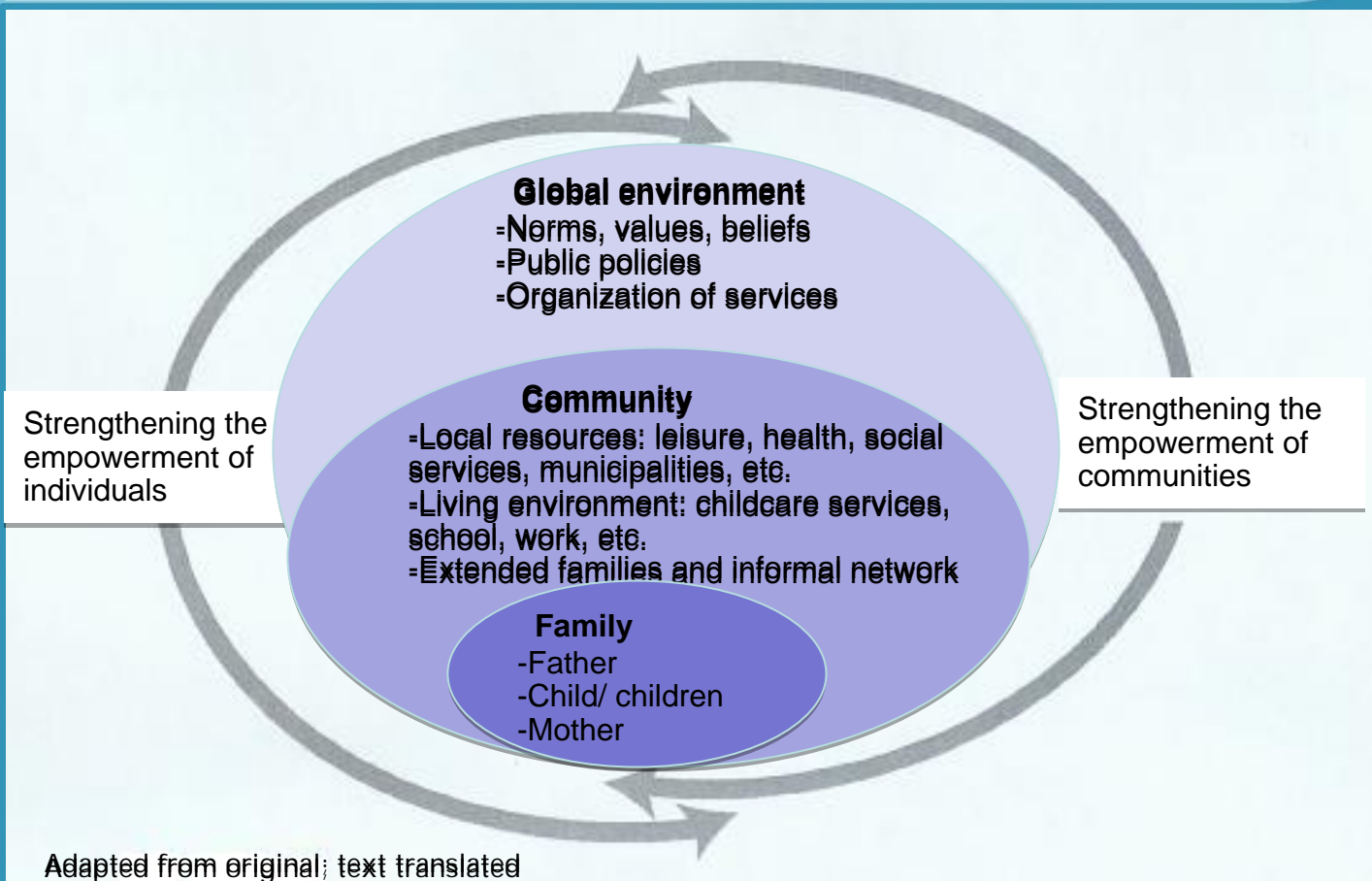
# Goals

- › Help reduce mortality and morbidity
- › Encourage the optimal development of children
- › Help improve the living conditions of families living in vulnerable situations



# The ecological model

(Bronfenbrenner (1986, 1979))





# The components

- › 1. Coaching families
- › 2. Supporting the creation of favourable environments



# 1. Coaching families

- › 1.1 Home visits
- › 1.2 Group interventions
- › 1.3. Coaching within the community



## 1.1 Home visits

- › A family home visitor
- › A relationship of trust



## Home visits (continued)

- › Intervention that is both global and specific
- › Related to the here and now
- › Draws on the family's strengths



# The role of the family home visitor

- › Support the family (global and specific intervention)
- › Work with an interdisciplinary team
- › Be the link between the family, the interdisciplinary team and the community



# Intensity and continuity

## *Prenatal period*

- › As early as possible
- › From the 12th week of pregnancy until the start of school
- › Home visits every 2 weeks



# Intensity and continuity

## *Postnatal period*

0 - 6 weeks

Every week

Between 7  
weeks and  
12 months

Every 2 weeks

Between 13  
and 60 months

Every month. Other group interventions should be added, including direct interventions with children, with parents, or joint activities.



## 1.2. Coaching within the community

- › Familiarize clients with community resources
- › Encourage better use of these resources
- › Coach individuals and families



## 1.3 Group interventions

- › A complement to home visits
- › Breaks the isolation and encourages the social integration of families
- › Encourages the global development of children



## 1.3 Group interventions (continued)

- In collaboration with the community or with educational childcare services



## 2. Support for favourable environments

*A process for implementing intersectoral projects aimed at:*

- › Improving the living conditions of families living in vulnerable situations
- › Doing so at the local, regional and national levels



# Intersectoral action

*The preferred means of:*

- ▶ Acting on social determinants
- ▶ Mobilizing large numbers of actors
- ▶ Encouraging the emergence of and supporting innovative projects



# The actors involved

- › Families
- › Community leaders
- › The network of SSS (health and social services) establishments
- › Community organizations
- › Early childhood education centres
- › Municipalities
- › Local employment centres



## 5 steps

- › Mobilization of partners
- › Basic consensus
- › Pooling of projects and analysis of environment
- › Action plan
- › Implementation and evaluation



# Examples of local action

- › Community kitchens
- › Community gardens
- › Parks and playgrounds
- › Taxibus transportation
- › Housing cooperatives
- › Microcredit for freezers
- › Group purchases...



# Challenges (5 areas for work)

- › Funding
- › Retention
- › Adaptation (childcare services and vulnerable groups)
- › Evaluation
- › Immigration
- › Poverty reduction