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L'ÉGARD DES JEUNES ET DES
POPULATIONS VULNÉRABLES



CHAIRE-RÉSEAU DE RECHERCHE
SUR LA JEUNESSE DU QUÉBEC

PRESS RELEASE

Extending youth protection past age 18: a cost-benefit analysis

Montreal, November 9, 2020 - The LCQF partnership, led by the Canada Research Chair in Evaluating Public Actions Related to Young People and Vulnerable Populations (CREVAJ) at the École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP), has released an analysis of the economic costs and benefits of implementing a comprehensive and systematic program of support for the transition to adulthood for young people in the Québec youth protection system after they reach age 18.

Québec is currently one of the only jurisdictions in Canada that has not implemented such a support system for youth who age out of care. Our results published today confirm those of international studies that all reach the same conclusion: Investing in post-care support measures would be an economically advantageous choice for the government.

Based on projections of the effects observed in California, where, since 2012, young people may choose to remain in the youth protection system until age 21, our analysis shows that such a program in Quebec would generate **costs estimated at \$146 million, while the very conservative estimate of the expected benefits is between \$154 and \$254 million for an annual cohort of 2,000 young people in out-of-home care.**

Evaluations of this type of program implemented in California and France, together with the Quebec data obtained by the LCQF, also show that extending services after age 18 increases the probability that a young person will obtain a high school or vocational diploma and later enter the labour market. Other benefits, particularly in terms of reducing the psychological distress and episodes of homelessness experienced by nearly 20% of young people leaving placement, are also expected.

"We told the Laurent Commission that the transition to adulthood is often a very difficult time for 18-year-olds. We talked about the feeling of abandonment, lack of psychosocial and financial support, lack of incentives to stay in school, etc. We hope we were heard. We hope there will be recommendations on this and ways to help youth after they leave care." Jessy Gagné, member of the LCQF Youth Committee.

Nicolas Junior, also a member of the LCQF Youth Committee, says he has always been "opposed to leaving at age 18. In a youth centre, life for young people is very restrictive, everything is organized and you have a lot of rules and consequences if you don't follow them, but life after leaving is not like that. (...) For me, age 18 is too early. It's too early for young people who leave a youth centre. Young people need more support so that they don't end up homeless when they leave. I think they need to stay in care at least until they turn 21, even until they turn 25."

Martin Goyette, professor at ENAP and director of the LCQF partnership says that "given that many youth in care lack family support and have important needs in early adulthood, services that improve the social integration of these youths must be viewed as a right and not a privilege."

For interview and information:

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See report complete:

- [Étendre la protection de la jeunesse après 18 ans: une analyse coût-bénéfice](#)
- [Extending youth protection past age 18: a cost-benefit analysis](#)

To read other reports:

[The Covid-19 pandemic and needs of youth who leave care](#)

[Costs of undereducation of youth in care](#)

About Youth Leaving Care in Québec and France: A longitudinal study

LCQRF examines the living conditions and transition from out-of-home care of young people ages 17 to 21. This large-scale research is the first representative study of its kind in Canada. The research team has also innovated by including a committee of youth formerly in care, who collaborate in a multifaceted manner at all stages of the research process. The study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada as part of a partnership program. For more information, visit www.edjep.ca

About the CREVAJ

The Canada Research Chair in Evaluating Public Actions Related to Young People and Vulnerable Populations (CREVAJ) aims to acquire new knowledge of evaluation methods of public actions, and to improve knowledge related to putting public action into practice, along with the effects of public action. The work done by the Chair is intended to better guide interventions and support mechanisms for vulnerable people, particularly in the youth sector, a sector that sheds exemplary light on the recent transformations of the state both in terms of renewal of public action and of its limitations and risks. For more information www.crevaj.ca

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