



Press Release

English-speaking fathers in Quebec exposed to greater vulnerability

QUEBEC CITY, JUNE 11, 2019 – A recent study shines a light on the vulnerabilities that dads in the English-speaking community are exposed to, even amid a culture that seems to value fathers' involvement with their children. The study also reveals a more nuanced portrait of the realities of the anglophone community.

Such are the findings of the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN), which worked with Regroupement pour la Valorisation de la Paternité (RVP) to analyze the results of 400 respondents from the English-speaking community who participated in the study *La paternité au Québec : un état des lieux* (Fatherhood in Quebec: Taking Stock). The study, conducted last December by Substance Stratégie at the request of RVP, looked at 2,000 fathers in Quebec and explored a variety of aspects related to the experience of fatherhood. Dr. Carl Lacharité from UQTR supervised the research in collaboration with Dr. Diane Dubeau from UQO.

Particular vulnerabilities

The first and most striking finding from this analysis is that three in four anglophone fathers (74%) feel that the public services offered to children and their parents (for example CLSCs, hospitals, medical clinics, schools, childcare, etc.) do not sufficiently accommodate the particular realities of anglophone fathers. While it is not possible to establish a causal relationship, adapting services to the needs of the anglophone community seems all the more pressing as the survey shows that English-speaking fathers experience particular vulnerabilities in a number of areas compared to their French-speaking peers.

The study shows that anglophone dads experience more stress, have more difficulty adjusting to their role as fathers, have more doubts about their parenting skills, and feel less comfortable in their role as a dad. They are more likely to turn to community organizations for support and they are considerably more interested in information and services about their parental responsibilities.

“This study is very important to us because it helps us better define the phenomena we’ve been observing but until now have had very little data to support,” says Jennifer Johnson, executive director of Quebec City–based CHSSN, an organization dedicated to supporting the efforts of Quebec English-speaking communities to correct inequalities in health and to promote the vitality of these communities. It receives funding from Canadian Heritage as part of a program created to support language minorities.

A culture that values dads' involvement

One of the most positive points identified in the study is that English-speaking communities have a culture that seems to more naturally value fathers' involvement and participation. Compared to their French-speaking counterparts, anglophone dads feel like fatherhood is more valued by society, get more satisfaction out of activities with their children (with or without the mother), are more frequently in touch with other dads, and often had a better relationship with their own dads during childhood and adolescence.

More traditional roles

Perhaps one of the reasons the culture values fathers' involvement is due to a more traditional view of parental roles. A higher proportion of English-speaking dads live in so-called "intact" families, where the mother, father, and children live together. Anglophone dads attach less importance to working as a team with their partners to share child-related duties, have more frequent disagreements with their partners, and say they are criticized by their partners more often than their francophone peers. Nonetheless, they say they are more satisfied with the quality of their partnership with the other parent.

A more nuanced portrait of the English-speaking community

The portrait of the English-speaking community that emerges from the study breaks away from the usual stereotypes. Francophones often imagine the anglophone community as a monolithic block concentrated on the West Island of Montreal. Yet nearly half (46%) of the anglophone fathers surveyed live off-island and one-quarter (25%) outside greater Montreal. Note that these are fathers for whom English is the language spoken at home, not their native language. In fact, less than half are native English speakers (47%), while about one in three (30%) are native French speakers and one in four (23%) native speakers of another language.

"This portrait underscores the importance of better understanding anglophone realities not just in Montreal, which has the highest concentrations, but in every region of Quebec, to minimize inequalities in access to services," says Jennifer Johnson.

RVP director Raymond Villeneuve believes that this partnership with the CHSSN will have a positive impact on fathers in both the French- and English-speaking communities. "RVP's expertise in adapting services to fathers' realities will help ensure the CHSSN has all the tools it needs to support anglophone communities. At the same time, the culture of paternal involvement we see among anglophone dads provides a really positive model that can encourage francophone fathers to show more pride in being a dad and experience fatherhood to the fullest," he says.

KEY DATA FROM THE SURVEY

	English-speaking dads	French-speaking dads

	(n=400)	(n=1,600)
Exposure to particular vulnerabilities		
Fatherhood is a source of a stress	3.2 in 5	3.0 in 5
Raising children well and teaching them the right things is a challenge	25%	18%
Getting used to fatherhood is somewhat or very hard	34%	22%
Time it takes to get used to fatherhood: several months or longer	30%	18%
Learning how to be a dad is somewhat or very hard	25%	18%
Doesn't think he has all the skills to be a good dad	13%	9%
Hard to know if he's doing the right thing with his kids	52%	42%
His child-rearing is not up to his own personal standards	14%	10%
Doesn't feel entirely comfortable in his role as a father	16%	8%
Early childhood is difficult (0–3 months, 3 months–1 year, 1–2 years)	23% to 38% (dep. on period)	17% to 34% (dep. on period)
Always or sometimes has help from other family members	58%	22%
Uses the services of community organizations	30%	20%
Interest in information or services (12 items)	2.9 to 3.5 in 5	2.7 to 3.2 in 5
Interested in reading more about parenthood if the info is designed for dads	66%	57%
Culture that values dads' involvement		
Playing and doing activities as a family is very satisfying	34%	27%
Playing and doing activities with the children without their mother is very satisfying	21%	14%
Parenting model is their father	58%	51%
Parenting model is their mother	45%	38%
Parenting model is teachers	10%	4%
Very good or somewhat good relationship with their father during childhood	38%	31%
Very good or somewhat good relationship with their father during adolescence	26%	21%
Father's involvement is valued as much in society as mother's	60%	36%
Would like to talk more often with other dads	54%	46%
Often/sometimes does father-child activities with other dads	59%	44%
Would like to do more father-child activities with other dads	71%	58%
More traditional roles		
Intact (or nuclear) family	76%	71%
Working as a team with the other parent is not very or not at all important	12%	5%
Agrees sometimes/rarely with the other parent	27%	23%
The other parent often/sometimes criticizes them	32%	24%
More nuanced realities		

Native language: English	47%
Native language: French	30%
Native language: Other	23%
Off-island	46%
Outside greater Montreal	25%

To read the full report on the survey (2,000 dads – in French)

https://www.rvpaternite.org/nouvelles_20190218_sondage2019/

To read the full report on the survey of English-speaking fathers (400 anglophone dads – in English)

https://www.semainedelapaternite.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/RVP_rapport-400-Anglos.pdf

About the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)

The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) was created to support English-speaking communities in the province of Quebec in their efforts to redress health status inequalities and promote thriving communities. Begun through the efforts of four founding organizations, the CHSSN now has more than 60 projects and partnerships in the areas of primary health care, community development, and population health. The network’s aim is to contribute to the vitality of English-speaking communities of Quebec by building strategic relationships and partnerships within the health and social services system to improve access to services.

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For more information or interviews:

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