

Research finds family policies benefit childbearing and work, not child development

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A new study from Western University reveals that Quebec's family policies promote childbearing and paid work, but do not strengthen child development as well as corresponding policies from the rest of Canada.

The findings were published in *Canadian Public Policy*, a journal devoted to examining economic and social policy.

According to lead author Rod Beaujot, a sociology professor in Western's Faculty of Social Science, the [uniqueness](#) of Quebec in Canada – and its desire to be in control of its own destiny – is reflected in the development of family policies that are different from policies found in the rest of Canada. This study finds that these different family policies have contributed to increasing [fertility rates](#) in Quebec since 2000.

Paid work, particularly for women with young [children](#), has also benefited from Quebec's family policies. Research shows that married or cohabiting women in Quebec with young children (ages 0-4) have higher levels of employment and work more hours, on average, than similar women in the rest of Canada.

However, gains in [child development](#) have been slower in Quebec than they have been in the rest of Canada in recent years. This suggests that Quebec's more universal family and child care policies might not be as successful in encouraging child development, relative to the rest of Canada.

Beaujot speculates that targeted child care programs, like many outside of Quebec, are better able to concentrate their efforts on disadvantaged children with the highest needs.

The study used data collected primarily from Statistics Canada's 2006 Canadian General Social Survey (GSS) Cycle 20, which focused on the substantive area of "Family Transitions." The researchers also used data from Statistics Canada's Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada 2005 and 2006, and from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY).

Provided by University of Western Ontario

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