

2001 EDITION

Baby Is on *the way*



Steps to Take Before and After
the Birth of a Child

A Name You Can Trust



Communication-Québec wishes to thank
Human Resources Development Canada
for its financial contribution to the
Baby is on the way
Guide to Government programs and services.

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Copywriting
 Célyne Tessier

Advertising Sales and Graphic Production

Oxygène

Tel.: (418) 687-5870
 650, rue Graham-Bell, bureau 216
 Sainte-Foy (Québec) G1N 4H5

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www.comm-qc.gouv.qc.ca

These guides may also be obtained free of charge
 at any of the 25 Communication-Québec offices (see page 41)

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Note: In this publication, the masculine form is used to designate either sex.
 The information provided herein by Communication-Québec does not have force of law.
 The information contained in this guide was verified in November 2000. Certain programs may change during the year.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre *Bébé arrive*. Vous pouvez obtenir un exemplaire gratuitement à l'un des 25 bureaux de Communication-Québec. Voir page 41.

Foreword

The arrival of a baby has always been a particularly important event, one that concerns not only the parents and their immediate circle, but society as a whole.

One or both parents must therefore see to certain essential formalities in the weeks both preceding and following the birth of the child.

To make it easier for them, Communication-Québec has prepared this short guide entitled *Baby Is on the Way*. After discussing pre-natal courses, it gives information about the benefits and leave to which the mother is entitled **during her pregnancy**. This is followed by the main steps to take **after the birth**.

If you would like more information on the programs and services offered by the departments and organizations of the Government of Québec, feel free to call the Communication-Québec regional office nearest you. Certain programs may also change during the year. For the latest updates, please contact Communication-Québec. At the back of the guide, you will find a list of the addresses and telephone numbers of all the Communication-Québec offices.

If, after reading the guide, you require additional information about Government of Canada programs, please call 1-800-622-6232.

Lastly, we would like to thank all departments and agencies that assisted in the updating of this booklet.

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How to select baby shoes for my child?

Have your child fitted by professionals

A well-fitting boot:

- Prevents redness and injuries
- Eases movement
- Increases stability

Ask for
The **manual**
on children's shoes.
(free)



Sainte-Foy
2990, chemin Sainte-Foy
Tel.: (418) 652-0100
Toll free: 1 800 363-6172

Gatineau
430, boulevard de l'Hôpital
Tel.: (819) 243-7433
Toll free: 1 888 310-7433

During Pregnancy

Pre-Natal Meetings

Most CLSCs offer perinatal services; a pregnant mother can contact her CLSC to find out about them.

Pre-Natal Courses

Pre-natal courses are an integral part of perinatal services. Their objective is to help parents enjoy the pregnancy period more fully, to prepare for childbirth and for the child's arrival. The courses are offered throughout Québec.

To find out where to register, contact the centre local de services communautaires (CLSC) in your region.

Nutrition

Sound nutrition during pregnancy is vital for the health of a child to be born. CLSCs offer information as well as literature on this topic. There are also assistance programs that deal specifically with the nutrition of pregnant women, the most popular being the OLO program, for the French œuf, lait, orange. This program lends assistance to pregnant women who are in need by supplying them with an egg, a litre of milk and an orange or orange juice for the last 20 weeks of pregnancy so that their babies may be born healthy and of good birthweight. They are also provided with a regular follow-up and an array of services that meets the needs of a mother-to-be.

For more information on this program or any other nutritional assistance program, you must contact the CLSC in your area.

The address is in the white pages of the telephone book, under CLSC.

I've got questions



I've got answers

Questions on Québec government programs and services?

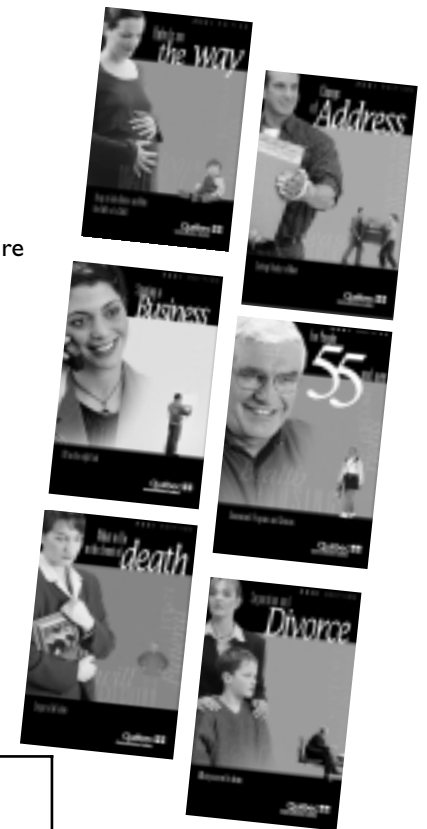
Communication-Québec offers fast, clear **answers** and useful referrals!

Questions on major life events that require you to contact a variety of departments and organizations?

Get the **answers** in our Communication-Québec guides.

If you would like to order a guide or have a question, call the Communication-Québec office nearest you (see the list at the end of this guide). You can also consult our guides at our Website:

www.comm-qc.gouv.qc.ca



Contact us!

Your Link to the Government

Québec 
Communication-Québec

For a Safe Maternity Program

A worker who is pregnant or is breast-feeding has special protection in accordance with the *Act respecting occupational health and safety*. If her work is physically dangerous to her because she is pregnant, to her unborn child or to the child she is nursing, she is entitled to be reassigned immediately to other duties that are not dangerous and that she can accomplish.

If no other assignment is possible, she may temporarily stop working and receive compensation from the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST). This is not a maternity leave but rather a prevention-type program whose first and foremost objective is to allow the worker to stay at work in a safe environment.

The means for action the employer has at his disposal to meet this objective are the following:

- elimination of danger at source;
- variation of the worker's duty;
- work station modification;
- assignment to another duty or to another job.

To assert her right, the worker must ask her physician to fill out the form entitled *Preventive Withdrawal and Reassignment Certificate for a Pregnant or Breast-feeding Worker*. The worker's physician must consult the physician in charge at the establishment where the worker is employed; if there is no physician, the head of the public health department, in the area where the establishment is located, shall designate one. The certificate is not valid if there is no consultation about these dangers. The worker has no expenses to incur in order to obtain this certificate.

A worker must proceed in the same way, if she wishes to assert this right for breast-feeding. Even if she has a reassignment or preventive withdrawal because of pregnancy, she must submit a new certificate for breast-feeding. In this case, however, only dangers that put the breast-fed child's health at risk can be taken into consideration.

For more information, contact one of the regional offices of the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST).

The address is in the blue pages of the telephone book in the *Government of Québec* section under the *Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail*, or under the *Keyword Heading* in the new blue pages.

Leave Granted under the Act respecting labour standards

Maternity Leave

Generally speaking, Québec employees are entitled to the maternity leave provided for under the *Act respecting labour standards*.

Leave period:

- maternity leave may last no more than 18 consecutive weeks without pay;
- maternity leave may only start at the beginning of the 16th week before the anticipated date of delivery.

Provisions in the regulation respecting maternity leave specifically cover certain **special** events, such as when:

- the delivery takes place after the anticipated date;
- there is a danger of miscarriage or any danger to the health of the mother or the unborn child;
- a miscarriage or a stillbirth occurs;
- the mother's state of health makes it impossible for her to return to work at the end of her maternity leave.

The length of the maternity leave is stipulated in the medical certificate.

Three weeks before her departure, or less if her state of health forces her to leave sooner, the worker must provide her employer with a written notice indicating the date on which her maternity leave will begin and the anticipated date of her return to work.

The notice must always be accompanied by a medical certificate attesting to the pregnancy and the anticipated date of delivery. A written report signed by a midwife may take the place of the medical certificate.

At the end of the maternity leave, the employer must reinstate the employee in her usual position and give her the salary and benefits to which she would have been entitled had she remained at work.

Leave for Medical Examinations Related to Pregnancy

An employee may be absent from work, without pay, for medical examinations related to her pregnancy. She must, however, notify her employer as soon as possible of the time she will be away.

Spousal Leave upon the Birth or the Adoption of a Child

An employee may be absent from work for five days upon the birth of his child or the adoption of a child. The first two days of absence are paid if the employee has accumulated 60 days of continuous service.

This leave may be taken one day at a time if the employee so wishes, but it may be taken no later than 15 days after the child's arrival at the residence of the father or the mother.

An employee who adopts his spouse's child has only two days of leave, without pay.

Parental Leave

The mother and the father of a newborn and any person who adopts a child who is not yet of school age are entitled to parental leave without pay for no more than 52 consecutive weeks. In addition to this parental leave, the mother may be entitled to maternity leave, lasting a maximum of 18 weeks. An employee who adopts his spouse's child is not entitled to parental leave.

At the end of parental leave not exceeding 12 weeks, the employer must allow the employee to return to her usual position at the same salary and with the same benefits to which she would have been entitled had she remained at work.

If the leave lasts more than 12 weeks, the employee's usual position is no longer guaranteed by law. The employer is only obliged to assign the employee to a comparable position in the same establishment, to give the employee at least the salary to which he would have been entitled if he had remained at work and any equivalent retirement and insurance plan. These provisions do not give an employee an advantage that he would not have had if he had remained at work.

Parental leave may not begin before the day of birth or before the day on which the child is entrusted to (adopted by) the employee, and the leave ends no later than 70 weeks later.

Parental leave may be taken after at least a three weeks notice, indicating the date on which the leave will begin and the date of the employee's return to work, is given to the employer.

Note: Unionized employees should also check the clauses in their collective agreement dealing with these types of leaves.

For more information about these types of leave, contact the:

Commission des normes du travail (CNT)

- Montréal Area: (514) 873-7061
- Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-265-1414
- Teletype machine: see page 40

Special Employment Insurance Benefits

Changes have been made to the Employment Insurance Act with regard to the duration of parental leave and the number of hours required to be eligible for benefits. These changes came into effect on December 31, 2000, and apply to babies born or adopted after this date.

There are three types of benefits:

- maternity benefits;
- parental benefits;
- sickness benefits.

A beneficiary may receive more than one of these benefits but for a maximum of 50 weeks during the same benefit period.

For most beneficiaries, the benefit rate is 55% of their average insurable earnings. Beneficiaries who are part of a low income family (less than \$25,921) with one or more children and who receive the Canadian Child Tax Benefit will receive a supplement based on their child tax benefit. Their benefit rate may be increased up to a maximum of 80% of their average insurable earnings. However, the received amount may not exceed the weekly maximum of \$413.

Maternity Benefits

Maternity benefits are paid only to the natural mother. She may receive these benefits from the eighth week before the anticipated date of delivery and for a maximum of 15 weeks. As a rule, maternity benefits may not be received after the 17-week period following the birth of the child or the anticipated date of delivery.

These benefits are granted only under certain conditions, mainly:

- the beneficiary must stop working or stop payment of her ordinary employment insurance benefits because of pregnancy;
- the beneficiary must have accumulated 600 insurable working hours in the year prior to filing her application.

Parental Benefits

In addition to maternity benefits, parental benefits may be paid for a maximum of 35 weeks. They may be paid to either the mother or the father, or shared by them, for the period of their choice during the first year after the birth of the child or the arrival of the child at home in the case of an adoption.

Parental benefits must be taken during the year following the arrival of the child at home, and the periods do not need to be consecutive. Adoptive parents may also be entitled to 35 weeks of parental benefits. However, they are not entitled to maternity benefits.

In order to receive the maximum of 35 weeks of parental benefits, the beneficiary should be sure not to wait more than 15 weeks after the birth of the child or the time the child arrives in the beneficiary's home (for adoptive parents) before filing an application.

These benefits are granted only under certain conditions, namely:

- the beneficiary must stop working or stop payment of her ordinary employment insurance benefits to take care of her newborn child or adopted child;
- the beneficiary must have accumulated 600 insurable working hours in the year prior to filing an application;
- the beneficiary must submit an adoption certificate or proof of the birth of the child.

Sickness Benefits

To receive sickness benefits, the applicant must submit a medical proof. Sickness benefits may be paid for a maximum of 15 weeks at any time during the benefit period. However, the beneficiary may not receive special benefits for more than 50 weeks; these benefits are maternity benefits, parental benefits and sickness benefits. To receive sickness benefits, as well as maternity or parental benefits, the beneficiary must have accumulated 600 insurable working hours in the year prior to filing an application.

To receive more information about these three types of special employment insurance benefits or the application forms, contact the Human Resource Centre of Canada.

The address is in the blue pages of the telephone book in the *Government of Canada* section, under the heading *Human Resources Development Canada, Human Resource Centre of Canada* or under the *Keyword Heading* in the new blue pages.

Québec Maternity Benefit Program

The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale pays a single benefit of \$360 to supplement the income of a woman who:

- must be absent from work because of maternity;
- is eligible for employment insurance maternity benefits;
- has resided permanently in Québec for at least 12 months on the date her maternity leave begins;
- has a gross family income less than \$55,000;
- applies for the benefit no later than one year after the date of her eligibility for employment insurance maternity benefits.

The form entitled *Maternity Benefit Application* may be obtained from a Human Resource Centre of Canada or from Communication-Québec.

For more information, contact:

Direction du budget et des opérations financières
Ministère de la Solidarité sociale
 425, rue Saint-Amable, 2^e étage
 Québec (Québec) G1R 4Z1
 Québec City Area: (418) 646-4099
 Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-463-4022
 Fax: (418) 646-6436

Mailing address:
 C.P. 15 900 Terminus postal
 Québec (Québec) G1K 8A7

Employment Assistance: A Special Pregnancy Benefit

If an expectant mother is an employment assistance recipient, the Ministère de la Solidarité sociale may grant her an additional \$55 a month as a special pregnancy benefit.

This assistance, which is paid each month of pregnancy until delivery, will enable the expectant mother to buy the foods that will ensure a proper diet during this period.

To obtain this benefit, the expectant mother must provide her local employment centre officer with the following document:

- a certificate signed by a physician or midwife confirming her pregnancy.

For more information, the employment assistance recipient should contact her local employment centre.

The address is given in the blue pages of the telephone book in the *Government of Québec* section, under the heading *Solidarité sociale, Centre local d'emploi*, or under the Keyword Heading in the new blue pages.

Upon the Birth of the Child

Rights and Obligations

Filiation

To have the rights and obligations of the child vis-à-vis the parents—when he is an adult—legally confirmed, it is necessary that filiation be firmly established, that is, that the child's father and mother be clearly identified.

Parents usually establish filiation by filling out and signing the document entitled *Declaration of Birth*, on which their names and that of their child are entered.

If the father is married to the mother, only one parent needs to sign the declaration, for the law assumes that the husband is the father of the child (presumption of paternity).

If the father and mother are not married, both parents must sign and date the declaration of birth. If the father does not sign, paternal filiation will not be entered in the child's record of civil status. Unless he has signed a power of attorney beforehand, a father who is absent during the period prescribed for registration of civil status will have to apply to the Court to have his paternity recognized.

New: Bill 34, adopted by the Assemblée nationale in October 1999, but not yet given assent, makes provision for the Directeur de l'État Civil to enter paternal filiation if the father makes a request to this effect and if the mother consents. Note also that this entry shall be made only if there is no objection by a third party following publication in accordance with the rules laid down by government regulation.

Obligations of Parents

Whether they are married or not, whether they are living together or not, the mother and father have the rights and duties of custody, supervision and upbringing of their child, and they must feed and maintain him.

All Children Are Equal

Whether or not the parents are married, whether the child is related to his parents by blood or by adoption, whether he was conceived normally or by a medically assisted procreation technique, the law recognizes no difference. Under the law all children are born equal and are the legal heirs of their parents.

Choosing a Name

The father and mother may choose for the child one or more given surnames and the single or composite family name consisting of no more than two parts from their family names.

It is recommended that the child have no more than four given names and that the given name to be used be placed first. In the case of a composite given name, the two parts must be joined by a hyphen. It is very important that the given names attributed when the child is baptised correspond to those entered in the Québec civil status register, with no changes or additions.

The given name of one of the parents may never be used as the family name of the child. It may, however, be one of his given names. In the same way, the family name of the mother or the father that is not used for the child's family name may be used as his given name.

In regard to the child's family name, the parents can choose from among the following options:

- When both parents have single family names, such as Gardiner for the mother and Patton for the father, the child may be given:
 - the mother's family name, Gardiner;
 - the father's family name, Patton;
 - or a composite name made up of the two family names linked by a hyphen, Gardiner-Patton or Patton-Gardiner.
- When both parents have composite family names, such as Talbot-Gardiner for the mother and Smith-Patton for the father, they may, if they wish, give their child a single name composed of one of the parts of their names:
 - Talbot only;
 - Gardiner only;
 - Smith only;
 - or Patton only.

However, if the parents wish to give their child a composite name, a choice must be made, since the family name of the child cannot have more than two parts.

- the mother's family name, Talbot-Gardiner;
- the father's family name, Smith-Patton;
- or a name made up of part of the mother's family name and part of the father's family name. Eight combinations are possible: Talbot-Smith, Talbot-Patton, Gardiner-Smith, Gardiner-Patton, Smith-Talbot, Patton-Talbot, Smith-Gardiner or Patton-Gardiner.

A child whose maternal filiation or paternal filiation alone has been established bears the family name, in whole or in part, of the mother or the father, depending on the case.

Additional Information

When the name given to the child is composed of two parts joined by a hyphen, this is the name that will become, along with his given name, his legal name. It will then have to be used as registered, with no change in the order of the parts. The parents may not choose the initial of the family name of one parent accompanied by the name of the other parent. However, they may include the initial in the child's given names.

Since the baby's name must appear on the declaration of birth, the parents must make their choice as soon as possible.

When the document entitled Declaration of Birth, duly completed and signed by the parents, is received by the Directeur de l'État Civil, it is as if it were a contract. However, no correction may be made to the basic information appearing on the declaration after 30 days following the date of birth of the child. If, after this deadline, they want to change the family name or the given names, the parents will have to go through the name change procedure and pay the related costs.

The full name of our child will be:

Family name:

Given name: _____, _____, _____, _____.
usual second third fourth

Registration

All parents must declare the birth of their child to the Directeur de l'État Civil, even if the birth is followed by baptism or any other religious ceremony. They must fill out the document entitled *Declaration of Birth*, and this form and the attestation of birth must be sent to the Directeur de l'État Civil in the 30 days following the birth.

Attestation of Birth

The birth attendant fills out and signs the attestation of birth. The attestation indicates the date, time and place of birth, the sex of the child, the name and address of the mother, but not those of the father or the child. The birth attendant gives the parents one copy of the attestation and sends another to the Directeur de l'État Civil.

Declaration of Birth: The Child's Act of Birth

The father or the mother must declare the birth of their child by means of the document entitled *Declaration of Birth*, which is provided by the hospital. It is important to insist that the declaration be prepared in the desired language (English or French) since the language of the document determines the language in which the certificate of birth is issued.

The declarant or declarants must fill out and sign the declaration of birth in the presence of a witness, who must sign the document.

After receipt and registration by the Directeur de l'État Civil, this document becomes the child's act of birth, filed in the Québec civil status register. This is why the parents must fill out the declaration of birth carefully (in capital letters), being sure not to cross anything out or make changes that may be confusing. If changes must be made to the declaration, the declarants should always enter their initials beside each correction. **This legal document may not and must not be altered with liquid paper.**

It is very important that the spelling of the child's name and given names be correct and to review the whole declaration before giving the necessary signature(s) in order to ensure that the information is entirely accurate and in accordance with the parents' wishes. A spelling mistake may not only cause delays in registration but also serious identification problems for the child throughout his life or, in some cases, very costly legal steps.

When and Where to Declare the Birth

It is recommended that the declaration of birth be filled out at the hospital as soon as the staff of the institution gives you the document along with a copy of the attestation. You can then give the declaration and a copy of the attestation to the staff of the hospital, who is responsible for sending it, with a copy of the attestation (green sheet) filled out by the birth attendant, to the office of the Directeur de l'État Civil. The parents keep only a copy of the declaration of birth (green sheet).

If it is impossible to see to these formalities at the hospital, be sure to send your declaration, along with the copy of the attestation of birth, to the Directeur de l'État Civil, who should receive them within 30 days following the birth of the child. Be sure to leave several days for mailing and send in the documents as soon as possible.

Upon receipt of the documents, the Directeur de l'État Civil draws up the act of birth on the basis of the attestation and the declaration, comparing these two documents to be sure of the identity of the newborn child. If the document is incomplete, the information is divergent or the documents are incomprehensible, he must question the declarants or the birth attendant before he draws up the act.

Once the act of birth is drawn up, it is entered in the Québec register of civil status under a single registration number. Subsequently, the parents receive a notice confirming the registration of the act of birth in the register. Concurrently, the Directeur de l'État Civil forwards, under full confidentiality, to the Régie de l'assurance-maladie du Québec, the information needed for the newborn to be eligible for the health insurance program.

Late Registration of the Child or Failure to Register Him in the Civil Status Register

Delay in registering a birth in the register of civil status or failure to do so may result in problems for the child. The act of birth establishes his identity, his sex, his filiation, in short, his legal existence. Without this act it will be difficult, if not impossible, for him to obtain certain documents (health insurance card, social insurance card, passport, etc.) or to prove his entitlement to government programs and social benefits.

The Directeur de l'État Civil conducts an investigation into the delay and \$50 must be paid when the birth is declared after the 30-day deadline. If the birth is declared after more than a year, the fee is \$100.

Obtaining Proof of Birth

Many organizations ask for proof of birth, for example, a birth certificate. You may obtain one by filling the form entitled *Request for Certificate* that you can get from the Directeur de l'État Civil, caisses populaires Desjardins, presbyteries, CLSCs, courthouses, funeral homes and Communication-Québec.

It is essential to apply for a full-sized birth certificate for a child since it shows the names of the father and of the mother. The document costs \$15. Note that there is no expiry date for a birth certificate, but that a more recent document may be required at any time.

You can apply for these documents by sending in the completed form entitled *Request for Certificate* by mail or by fax, or by going to the service counter. You can also apply for the certificate in question and make a secure payment on the Directeur de l'État Civil Website.

QUÉBEC CITY

Directeur de l'État Civil

205, rue Montmagny
 Québec (Québec) G1N 2Z9
 Québec City Area: (418) 643-3900
 Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-567-3900
 Fax: (418) 646-3255
 Email: etatciv@dec.gouv.qc.ca

MONTRÉAL

Directeur de l'État Civil

2050, rue de Bleury, 6^e étage
 Montréal (Québec) H3A 2J5
 (Place-des-Arts métro station)
 Montréal Area: (514) 864-3900
 Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-567-3900
 Fax: (514) 864-4563
 Email: etatciv@dec.gouv.qc.ca

OFFICE HOURS

Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
 without interruption (counter and telephone).
 Website: www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca

Screening for Hereditary Metabolic Diseases

Your Baby's Urine Is Very Precious

Before a mother leaves the hospital with her baby, a blood sample is taken from the baby's heel in order to carry out screening for genetic diseases.

In addition, a kit containing a yellow information form and blotting paper is given to the mother so that she can take a sample of her baby's urine when he is 21 days old.

It is important to:

- complete the information form and put it in the return envelope with the blotting paper;
- write the baby's approximate weight and the type of feeding: this information will help in interpreting the results;
- collect urine using the absorbent pads in the kit given to the mother (it is important not to use commercial-type baby wipes to wipe the baby's bottom before taking the sample, as they can affect results);
- soak well the blotting paper with urine (it must be wet on both sides or the analyses cannot be carried out and the sample will have to be taken again);
- carefully follow the instructions for taking the sample.

The urine screening program is voluntary. All parents who send in their baby's urine sample enable their child to be screened early and to be given medical treatment, if necessary, as quickly as possible.

Which Hereditary Metabolic Diseases Can Be Detected?

The metabolic diseases that can be detected are caused by proteins and their derivatives (amino and organic acids) that are poorly absorbed or improperly used by the body. Metabolic diseases are of two types:

- those that cause severe clinical problems and require immediate therapeutic intervention;
- those that require follow-up and genetic counselling.

If a Urine Sample Is Not Taken on the 21st Day

As the saying goes “Better late than never!” It is important for the parents to take a urine sample as soon as they realize they have forgotten.

Who Pays for These Analyses?

The Réseau de médecine génétique du Québec, which is affiliated with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, pays the costs of these analyses.

If you lose the kit or dirty the blotting paper, or if you would like more information, contact the following service:

Programme provincial de dépistage urinaire
Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke
 Hôpital Fleurimont
 Local 1403—Département de pédiatrie
 3001, 12^e Avenue Nord
 Fleurimont (Québec) J1H 5N4
 Phone: (819) 564-5253
 Fax: (819) 564-5217

Benefit and Allowances

Québec families are entitled to the Canadian government Child Tax Benefit and to the Québec family allowance for their children under 18 years of age.

To be entitled to the benefit and the allowance, both the eligible individual and his spouse must file income tax returns every year, even if they have no income to declare.

These amounts are not seizable or taxable.

Canadian Child Tax Benefit

The Canadian government's Child Tax Benefit varies according to the family income, the number and age of the children, the family situation and the deduction for day care expenses.

The benefit is paid every month. It is revised according to any change in the family situation, such as the birth or death of a child, a change in beneficiary, separation or divorce.

Eligibility for this benefit is reviewed every year in July according to the data provided on the income tax return for the previous year.

For more information, call the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (formerly Revenue Canada) at any of the numbers listed at the end of this section.

Family Allowance

The Régie des rentes du Québec administers and pays a family allowance. In order to offer added support to modest income families, the amount of the allowance is calculated according to the family income of the previous year, the number of children under 18, and the type of family (single-parent or two-parent).

Family income is established according to the Québec income tax return of the previous year. It is an essential component of the calculation of the allowance. Each parent or spouse in a two-parent family must file his own income tax return. However, spouses who opt for the simplified tax system may use the same form to file their tax return.

The family allowance may be paid each month by direct deposit into a personal account, at a bank or a caisse, on the first of every month, or on the previous working day if the first is a legal holiday, a Saturday or a Sunday. The family allowance may also be paid by cheque; payments are then made once every three months (February, May, August and November). The allowance may, however, be paid by monthly cheque upon application to the Régie des rentes. Note that under a certain family income threshold, the allowance is automatically paid by monthly cheque if the family is not registered for direct deposit.

Allowance for a Disabled Child

The allowance for handicapped children is for children who have a seriously limiting disability with regards to their day-to-day activities for a foreseeable period of at least one year. This financial assistance is paid separately from the family allowance. It does not take into consideration the income of the parents, but only the child's disability. The allowance for handicapped children is paid until the child reaches the age of 18 or until his condition improves and the Régie des rentes du Québec no longer deems him disabled. The amount is \$119.22 a month.

To receive the allowance for handicapped children, you must complete the form provided for this purpose and return it to the Régie des rentes du Québec. It includes a report that must be filled out by a physician or another health professional.

Death of a Child

No federal child tax benefit is paid if the child dies during his month of birth. However, it is possible to receive a family allowance payment and, if appropriate, the payment of the allowance for handicapped children. In this case, since no Canadian Child Tax Benefit is paid, you must apply to the Régie des rentes du Québec to receive the family allowance and, where applicable, the allowance for a disabled child. The Régie des rentes will require birth and death certificates.

Who Receives the Benefit and the Allowance?

The benefit and the family allowance are paid to the person who takes the main responsibility for the child's care and education and usually lives with him. The Canadian Child Tax Benefit is usually paid to the mother, if she lives with the child, the father or the father's spouse if the father consents. The family allowance is paid in the following order of priority: the mother, and the father's spouse if the child lives with them.

Procedure

To apply for the Canadian Child Tax Benefit and the Québec family allowance, one step suffices: fill out the *Application for Canadian Child Tax Benefit* form and send it as soon as possible to the address indicated on the envelope.

The form is usually among the information documents given to the mother during her stay in hospital. It can also be obtained from the tax services office of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (formerly Revenue Canada), or by calling the Agency's Canadian Child Tax Benefit Information Service at one of the following numbers:

- Montréal Area: **(514) 283-8577**
- Elsewhere in Québec: **1-800-387-1193**
- Teletype machine: **see page 40**
- Service for the blind and sight-impaired: **1-800-267-1267**

To apply for the allowance for a disabled child, you must fill out the Régie des rentes du Québec's form *Application for an Allowance for Handicapped Children*. This form is available at the Régie des rentes du Québec, Communication-Québec, at the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, CLSCs and children's hospitals.

The Régie has a 24-hour telephone information service. It may be used to order an application form for an allowance for a disabled child. It is also possible to speak to an information clerk during office hours:

- Québec City Area: **(418) 643-3381**
- Montréal Area: **(514) 864-3873**
- Elsewhere in Québec: **1-800-667-9625**
- Teletype machine: **see page 40**

Assistance Granted to Parents of Triplets or Quadruplets

The ministre de la Santé et des Services sociaux grants financial assistance to families where the mother has given birth to triplets or quadruplets. This non-recurrent sum offers parents a chance to cope with the sudden and important increase in expenses.

The Minister issues, in the mother's name, a sum of \$4000 for live triplets or \$6000 for live quadruplets, when the children are discharged from the hospital.

The hospital centre is in charge of notifying the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux of the event, as well as the relevant information, in the days following the births. The parents have no particular steps to take and it is approximately two months later that they receive their financial assistance. In the event of problems, the parents must check with the hospital to be informed if their application was duly sent to the Ministère. In all cases, the hospital centre must forward the application to the following address:

Direction générale du Budget, des investissements
et des technologies de l'information
Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
1005, chemin Sainte-Foy, 7^e étage
Québec (Québec) G1S 4N4

Breast-Feeding Assistance

Women who are employment assistance recipients (social assistance) and who give birth to a child may, under certain conditions, receive a special breast-feeding benefit or support for the purchase of formula for their baby.

Special Breast-Feeding Benefit

The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale provides a special breast-feeding benefit of \$55 a month for the mother who breast-feeds her child, until the child reaches the age of one. The mother must breast-feed her baby throughout the period.

To be entitled to the benefit, the mother must provide the local employment centre officer in charge of her file with a declaration signed by the mother confirming that she is breast-feeding her baby and indicating the breast-feeding period.

Support for the Purchase of Infant Formula

A mother who does not breast-feed her baby and who wants to give him formula may obtain financial support for the purchase of these preparations.

For the first nine months, the mother may obtain regular, soya-based or lactose-free formula without providing a medical certificate. However, this support can be extended over a period of twelve months if the child has an intolerance to cow's milk or lactose, or has other specific problems and if the preparations are prescribed by a physician.

Note that it is not possible to receive the breast-feeding benefit and support for the purchase of formula at the same time, and that infant formula may be purchased exclusively in drugstores.

As soon as the baby is born, the mother must get in touch with the officer in charge of her file. The baby's birth certificate must be sent in as promptly as possible to benefit from this support as early as possible.

For additional information, you must contact the local employment centre.

The address is in the blue pages of the telephone book in the *Government of Québec* section under *Solidarité sociale*, *Centre local d'emploi*, or under the Keyword Heading in the new blue pages.

Health Insurance and Prescription Drug Insurance

Health Insurance Card

The child must be registered with the Régie de l'assurance-maladie du Québec (RAMQ). When the birth occurs in Québec, it is sufficient to register the newborn in the register of civil status to initiate the registration process at the Régie. After checking the child's eligibility, he will receive his first health insurance card. The parents have no other form to complete.

It is the father's or the mother's responsibility to fill out, as carefully as possible, and sign the Declaration of Birth provided by the hospital where the child is born. The hospital staff will send the duly completed document to the registration service of the Directeur de l'État Civil within 30 days. Subsequently, the Directeur de l'État Civil will notify the parents of the registration of their child in the civil status register. He will then send the Régie the pertinent information confidentially. After checking the eligibility of the child, RAMQ will issue the health insurance card.

Until the child is one year old, the parents may, for administrative purposes, use their own health insurance card while waiting to receive the child's card.

For a birth outside Québec, just contact the Régie to register the newborn child:

Québec City Area: (418) 646-4636
 Montréal Area: (514) 864-3411
 Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-561-9749
 Teletype machine: see page 40

Prescription Drug Insurance

Once eligibility for health insurance is confirmed, the parents must ensure their newborn is covered by a prescription drug insurance plan.

Parents registered with a group plan comprising basic coverage for drugs must include their newborn in their plan.

However, if the father and the mother are covered by the Régie's prescription drug insurance plan, the newborn will automatically be registered with this plan.

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 Trois-Rivières / Victoriaville / Drummondville
 Rimouski / Rivière-du-Loup
 Saint-Georges de Beauce / Chicoutimi



Head office and warehouse in Quebec city
 (418) 623-0531
 www.clement.qc.ca

Child Safety

Car Seats for Newborn Children

For his first trip in a car, it is mandatory to fasten the child in a seat for this purpose: the newborn car seat. This seat, which has been specially designed for a newborn, custom fits the child's body and keeps him in a semi-lying position, while supporting his lower back.

It is not always necessary to buy a car seat. A number of CLSCs and community organizations rent them.

Instructions for installation:

- Always install the newborn car seat on the rear seat with the child's back facing traffic; the child must be looking toward the rear of the vehicle, so that his neck and rib cage have a better chance against shocks.
- Place the baby in his newborn car seat, preferably alongside another passenger, at the centre of the back seat. If you are alone with your baby and the vehicle is not air-bag equipped on the passenger side, you may put the newborn car seat next to you, on the front seat.
- Ensure that the seat has been set properly in a horizontal position, so that the child's back and head are well supported.
- With the safety belt, install the car seat on the seat of the automobile by pulling the safety belt through the notches of the car seat. If long enough, the shoulder belt can be pulled behind the seat. If not, pull it through the notches or let it hang down against the back of the automobile seat.
- Place the belts on the newborn's shoulders and ensure the buckle is well fastened.
- Make the belts loose enough to fit no more than two fingers between them and the child's body.
- Push up the little fastener that connects the two belts until it is at the height of the child's armpits, to protect him from being ejected from his seat in case of impact.

For more information, contact the CLSC in your neighbourhood, the CAA-Québec or the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec at one of the following numbers:

- Québec City Area: (418) 643-7620
- Montréal Area: (514) 873-7620
- Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-361-7620
- Teletype machine: see page 40

Safe Kids Canada

For the prevention of child injuries, you must contact Safe Kids Canada, an organization which promotes the safety of children. You may get in touch with it at the following number:

- Throughout Québec: 1-888-723-3847

Product Safety Bureau

The Product Safety Bureau of Health Canada enforces the Hazardous Products *Act and intervenes concerning consumer goods safety*, including the equipment, material and furniture used by and for children.

For further information, as well as various publications on the safety of cribs, playpens, toys and any other equipment for children, you must contact:

Product Safety Bureau Health Canada

1001, rue Saint-Laurent Ouest
Longueuil (Québec)
J4K 1C7
Montréal Area: (450) 646-1353
Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-561-3350

Centre anti-poison du Québec

The Centre anti-poison du Québec is an organization whose activities are linked solely to requests for information concerning a serious intoxication. In case of poisoning, phone the Centre anti-poison immediately.

- Poisoning with a product: find the container and especially the label of the involved product.
- Poisoning with a plant or a mushroom: if possible, have a specimen with you before phoning.

The Centre will suggest a treatment or will forward the request to the hospital nearest you and inform the institution of your arrival.

Centre anti-poison du Québec

1050, chemin Sainte-Foy
Aile "L", 1^{er} étage
Québec (Québec) G1S 4L8
Québec City Area: (418) 656-8090
Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-463-5060

Educational Services and Day Care Services

The New Provisions of the Family Policy

At the heart of the new family policy are two provisions which have been in effect since 1997 and are aimed at responding adequately to the new needs of families. They are also directed toward reconciling work and family. They are:

- the introduction of educational services and day care services;
- the improvement of the family allowance for low-income families (see section entitled *Benefit and Allowances*).

Moreover, the Québec government is continuing its work to introduce a parental insurance plan for the families of Québec, a plan which is reliant on negotiations with the federal government.

Educational Services and Day Care Services

Educational services and day care services have been introduced to foster the development of children and equal chances for every one of them:

- children under 5 are eligible for educational day care services at \$5 a day;
- children under 5 from disadvantaged families have access to free educational day care services;
- on the Island of Montréal, children from disadvantaged families have access, beginning at 4 years of age, to kindergarten, coupled with a day care service in designated schools;
- kindergarten for children aged 5 is now full-time;
- children in kindergarten and elementary school can take advantage of school day care services at \$5 a day.

Early Childhood Centres and Other Day Care Services

Since its introduction, in 1997, the network of early childhood centres has been in continuing development. These centres offer day care or home day care services. The services are mainly provided for children from birth to kindergarten age. However, a centre may also take in children of kindergarten or elementary age when they cannot be taken in by a school day care service.

The early childhood centres have an educational program to ensure the overall development of the child. It is the same in the case of day care centres that have a permit from the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance.

Moreover, the Ministère has introduced a plan for the development of the network of early childhood centres and other day care services, which holds provision for the creation of 200,000 places in day care services in Québec by the end of year 2005-2006.

Making an Informed Choice

Before choosing a day care service, you must identify your needs and those of your child. What are your preferences? Would you rather have a family environment or a collective organization? Your educational values will also have an impact on your choice of day care services. Furthermore, it is important to meet with the staff and to visit the premises.

You should know that people and organizations that wish to offer day care services to seven children or more in one facility must hold an early childhood centre or day care centre permit. Similarly, people who provide day care services in a private residence for more than six children for remuneration must be recognized as responsible for a home day care service by an early childhood centre and be assisted by another adult.

Therefore, in home day care, such a person cannot, if alone, take in more than six children, including her own or those who usually live with her, if they are aged under 9; of this number, only two children can be under 18 months. If this person has the assistance of an adult, she can take in a maximum of nine children, including her own and those of the person assisting, if they are aged under 9; of this number, a maximum of four children can be under 18 months.

Reduced Contribution Day Care Services

Five-dollars-a-day places are available in early childhood centres for children who are under the age of 5 on September 30. Agreements that have been passed with certain for-profit day care centres allow them to also offer \$5-a-day places. The people in charge of these services can inform you as to whether they have taken part in these agreements.

For each child who has access to a \$5 place, low-income families who are eligible for the *PWA* program (see page 36) may take advantage of a \$3-a-day financial assistance for day care services.

In addition, a certain number of places are available to offer free educational services 23 hours and 30 minutes a week to children under 5 whose parents are employment assistance program recipients.

It's a good idea to check that the day care service you select is eligible for the reduced contribution program.

For more information, contact the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance.

Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance
600, rue Fullum
Montréal (Québec) H2K 4S7
Montréal Area: (514) 873-2323
Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-363-0310
Fax: (514) 873-4250
E-mail: famille@mfe.gouv.qc.ca

Passport

Travelling with a Child

A passport is required to travel outside Canada with a child. There are two ways a child may travel:

- preferably under his own passport. In this case, you must fill out *Passport Application Form B for Children under 16*;

OR

- by having the name of the child added to the passport of one of his parents. This is done free of charge. Form B-1, *Addition of a Child's Name to an Existing Passport* must be completed or the parent must ask that the child's name be entered in his passport when he applies for it. The child's name can be entered in the passport of only one parent, which means that the child can only travel with this parent.

One of the parents must fill out these forms and both parents must sign them. In the case of separation or divorce, only the parent who is the child's legal guardian may request a passport for the latter.

One, or rather two words of advice: do not wait until the day before departure to submit the application, and read carefully all the general information that comes with the application forms.

Procedure

Form B can be obtained from one of the five regional passport offices (in Montréal, Laval, Saint-Laurent, Sainte-Foy and Jonquière) and the offices of Canada Post.

Form B-1 is available at the federal passport office (Hull) and at any of the five regional passport offices.

For more information, call the Passport Office:

- Throughout Québec: 1-800-567-6868

Parental Wage Assistance (PWA) Program

When the employment income of parents is modest, *PWA*, the Parental Wage Assistance Program, may be a solution.

Under this program, financial assistance is provided by the Ministère de la Solidarité sociale to supplement employment income. In addition, the *PWA* program offers families an allowance of \$3 a day for day care expenses for every child enrolled in a reduced rate (\$5 a day) day care program.

The amount of financial assistance that the family receives depends on:

- the type of family (single-parent or two-parent);
- the number of months of work;
- the property that the family possesses;
- income earned as an employee or self-employed worker;
- other sources of income;
- the number of children in the family.

This assistance may be paid in the form of a monthly instalment for each eligible month of work. At the end of the year, each beneficiary receives a statement of the received amounts (statement 12), which must be included with his Québec income tax return.

The *PWA* benefit is not taxable.

For information on the *PWA* program, contact the *PWA* office in your region.

The address of the *PWA* office in each Québec region is given in the blue pages of the telephone book in the *Government of Québec* section, under the heading *Solidarité sociale* or under the Keyword Heading in the new blue pages.

Shelter Allowance Program

Low-income families (workers, employment assistance [social assistance] recipients or students with at least one dependent child) who must devote a disproportionate amount of their income to housing may, under certain conditions, be entitled to a shelter allowance. Financial assistance can reach up to \$80 a month.

The shelter allowance takes the following factors into account:

- the number of persons in the household;
- total household income, as declared on the beneficiary's (and spouse's, where applicable) Québec income tax form in the year prior to application;
- the monthly housing cost.

For more information or to obtain an application form, call the Ministère du Revenu du Québec office nearest you.

The telephone numbers are listed in the blue pages of the telephone book in the *Government of Québec* section, under the heading *Revenu, allocation-logement*, or under the Keyword Heading in the new blue pages. You may also obtain information by calling the following number:


- Anywhere in Québec: 1-888-511-2558


Resource Material

We strongly recommend that you read the following brochures and leaflets, available from each organization in question. Many are also available from Communication-Québec.

- *Financial Assistance for the Families of Québec*, Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (brochure).
- *Shelter Allowance: We Can Help You Pay Your Rent*, Société d'habitation du Québec (leaflet).
- *PWA/Are You a Low-Wage Earner With Children?*, Ministère de la Solidarité sociale (brochure).
- *Bébé s'en vient? Bébé est arrivé*, Ministère de la Solidarité sociale (leaflet).
- *Centres de la petite enfance et autres services de garde, 1997-1998 directory*, Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (brochure).
- *Choisir un service de garde*, Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (brochure).
- *Future Parents*, Registrar of Civil Status (leaflet).
- *Filiation*, Ministère de la Justice du Québec (leaflet).
- *The Family Allowance*, Régie des rentes du Québec (brochure).
- *The Allowance for Handicapped Children*, Régie des rentes du Québec (leaflet).
- *Birth*, Registrar of Civil Status (leaflet).
- *Le programme éducatif des Centres de la petite enfance*, Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (leaflet).
- *The Québec Health Insurance Plan*, Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (leaflet).
- *Les centres de la petite enfance*, Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (leaflet).
- *Labour Standards in Québec*, Commission des normes du travail du Québec (tabloid).
- *Les nouvelles dispositions de la politique familiale du Québec*, Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (leaflet).
- *Shelter Allowance Program*, Société d'habitation du Québec and Ministère du Revenu du Québec (leaflet).
- *Safe Working Conditions for a Safe Maternity Experience*, Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (leaflet).
- *A Child Seat Improperly Installed Means Danger!*, Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (leaflet).
- *Your Canada Child Tax Benefit (T4114E rev.00)*, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (leaflet).

Services for the Deaf, Hard-of-hearing or Mute Who Have a Teletype Machine

 Here is a list of teletype machine numbers for the exclusive use of the deaf, mute or hard-of-hearing:

-  **Commission des normes du travail**
Throughout Québec: (514) 864-3920 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
-  **Communication-Québec**
Montréal Area: (514) 873-4626
Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-361-9596
-  **Régie des rentes du Québec**
Throughout Québec: 1-800-603-3540
-  **Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec**
Québec City Area: (418) 682-3939
Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-361-3939
-  **Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (formerly Revenue Canada)**
Throughout Québec: 1-800-665-0354
-  **Ministère du Revenu du Québec**
Montréal Area: (514) 873-4455
Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-361-3795
-  **Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec**
Montréal Area: (514) 954-7763
Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-565-7763

Main Website of the Québec Government

For Québec government information on the Internet, enter the address of the government's main Website, which is the gateway to all its other sites:

<http://www.gouv.qc.ca>

Communication-Québec Offices

Use the following number if you are making a long-distance call:

1 800 363-1363 (toll-free)

Baie-Comeau

625, boul. Lafèche, Bureau RC 701
Baie-Comeau (Québec) G5C 1C5
(418) 295-4000

Drummondville

270, rue Lindsay, Rez-de-chaussée 16
Drummondville (Québec) J2B 1G3
(819) 475-8777

Gaspé

96, montée Sandy-Beach, 1^{er} étage, bureau 1.02a
Gaspé (Québec) G4X 2W4
(418) 360-8000

Granby

77, rue Principale, Bureau RC 22
Granby (Québec) J2G 9B3
(450) 776-7100

Hull

170, rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, Bureau RC 120
Hull (Québec) J8X 4C2
(819) 772-3232

Îles-de-la-Madeleine

224A, route Principale
Case postale 340
Cap-aux-Meules (Québec) G0B 1B0
(418) 986-3222

Joliette

Édifce Louis-Cyr
450, rue Saint-Louis, Bureau RC 20
Joliette (Québec) J6E 2Y8
(450) 752-6800

Jonquière

3950, boul. Harvey
Jonquière (Québec) G7X 8L6
(418) 695-7850

Laval

1796, boul. des Laurentides, Vimont
Laval (Québec) H7M 2P6
(514) 873-2111

Longueuil

118, rue Guilbault, Bureau RC 101
Longueuil (Québec) J4H 2T2
(514) 873-2111

Montréal

Place Dupuis
800, boul. de Maisonneuve Est, RC 2
Montréal (Québec) H2L 4L8
(514) 873-2111

Québec

Édifice «Les Façades de la Gare»
400, boul. Jean-Lesage, Bureau 105
Québec (Québec) G1K 8W1
(418) 643-1344

Rimouski

337, rue Moreault
Rimouski (Québec) G5L 1P4
(418) 727-3939

Rouyn-Noranda

255, avenue Principale, Bureau RC 01
Rouyn-Noranda (Québec) J9X 7G9
(819) 763-3241

Saint-Antoine

Galeries des Laurentides
500, boul. des Laurentides, Bureau 1503-C
Saint-Antoine (Québec) J7Z 4M2
(450) 569-3019

Saint-Félicien

1209, boul. Sacré-Cœur
Case postale 7
Saint-Félicien (Québec) G8K 2P8
(418) 679-0433

Saint-Georges

11287, 1^{re} Avenue Est
Saint-Georges (Québec) G5Y 2C2
(418) 226-3000

Saint-Hyacinthe

600, avenue Sainte-Anne
Saint-Hyacinthe (Québec) J2S 5G5
(450) 778-6500

Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu

109, rue Saint-Charles
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (Québec) J3B 2C2
(450) 346-6879

Salaberry-de-Valleyfield

83, rue Champlain
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield (Québec) J6T 1W4
(450) 370-3000

Sept-Îles

456, avenue Arnaud, Bureau RC 01
Sept-Îles (Québec) G4R 3B1
(418) 964-8000

Sherbrooke

200, rue Belvédère Nord, Bureau RC 02
Sherbrooke (Québec) J1H 4A9
(819) 820-3000

Thetford Mines

183, rue Pie XI
Thetford Mines (Québec) G6G 3N3
(418) 338-0181

Trois-Rivières

100, rue Laviolette, Bureau RC 26
Trois-Rivières (Québec) G9A 5S9
(819) 371-6121

Val-d'Or

1212, 8^e Rue
Val-d'Or (Québec) J9P 3N7
(819) 354-4444

**Teletype Machine**

The deaf, hard-of-hearing or mute can reach Communication-Québec using a teletype machine. The following numbers are reserved only for this use:

Montréal region: (514) 873-4626

Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-9596

Website

You can access communication-Québec's Website at the following address:

<http://www.comm-qc.gouv.qc.ca>



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