



# Organic Day Care: Eating and Growing Up

Promoting  
responsible eating  
within institutions





**Equiterre's Mission:** Promote environmentally and socially responsible choices through 4 areas:

- Sustainable transportation
- Energy efficiency/climate change
- Fair trade and responsible consumption
- Ecological agriculture
  - Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) (1995)
  - Campaign *Moi, je mange bio!* (2001-03)
  - Linking farms with institutions and other organizations
    - *Garderie Bio* (Organic Day Care) (2002)
    - Collective kitchens (2005-07)
    - *Alimentation institutionnelle responsable* (AIR) (responsible food in institutions) (2006-09)

Photo: Vincenzo D'Alto





# Overview of Organic Day Care project

**Goal:** To improve the relationship between children, parents and caregivers of daycares and their food

## Objectives:

- Facilitate the daycare's ability to supply itself with organic food by directly linking it with local, organic farms
- Increase awareness of the children, parents and caregivers of daycares about existing links between food, agriculture, health of children and the protection of the environment





# Organic Day Care pilot project (2002-04)

## Food:

- Five daycares were linked with four farms from the CSA network (2003)
- Two of the five daycares were in low-income areas

## Education:

- Children/caregivers (some parents) went for farm visits
- Education kit prepared for use in daycares
- Awareness built through workshops, information kiosks, articles, information posters and pamphlets

## Research:

- Literature review





# Accomplishments of the pilot project: 2003

## Food:

- 0% and 4% increase in costs
- Large demand for the project at daycares
- One of the five daycares became a CSA delivery point for families and caregivers
- Diversification of food supply at one daycare (dry, bulk foods)

## Education:

- ↑ adult awareness of organic food/agriculture
- ↑ consumption of organic food at home





## Diseminating the Organic Day Care model: 2004

- Created a guide to explain why and how to become an organic daycare
  - Distributed to 900 daycares in Quebec, organic farms and others involved in organic agriculture
- Toured five daycare associations in 5 regions
  - Presented the project
  - Distributed the educational kit to each region
  - Distributed the guide
- Press relations





## Results 2004 to 2006

- 2004: 19 daycares in 9 regions in Quebec are eating organic
- 2005: 35 daycares and 2 family-setting daycares
- 2006: 44 daycares and family-setting spanning 9 regions in Quebec, over 3,000 children
- Several daycares function as delivery points for summer or winter CSA baskets
- Several daycares are supplied with:
  - Local, organic meats
  - Winter vegetables
  - Other organic foods such as cereals, etc.





# Current challenges and opportunities

## Challenges:

- Adaptation and flexibility of farms and of daycares
- Connecting with parents
- Sustain the project in the long term (promotion, building awareness and fostering support)
- Tendency to cut funding to daycares
- Coordinate what the farm produces with what the daycares need

## Opportunities:

- Good reception to children health issue
- Food affordability because of the direct link with the farm





# Research opportunities

- Impact of organics on social, cultural and health issues:
  - Document the impact of the **relationship between food and children**, including their habits and attitudes toward food
  - Document and compare the levels of contaminants in children who eat organics and those who don't
  - Follow these children after they start school
- Impact of organics on the financial side:
  - Pursue an analysis of the costs involved in integrating local, organic foods
  - Document participating daycares budgetary choices and solutions
  - Conduct a study of the revenues and expenses of participating farms





# Research opportunities

- Organizational:
  - Coordinate what farms have to offer
  - Estimate more precisely what Quebec institutions need
  - Match supply with demand for a given territory
  - Study and diffuse similar programs elsewhere in the world
  - Explore models of collaboration between several ministries to implement state programs to facilitate projects

