

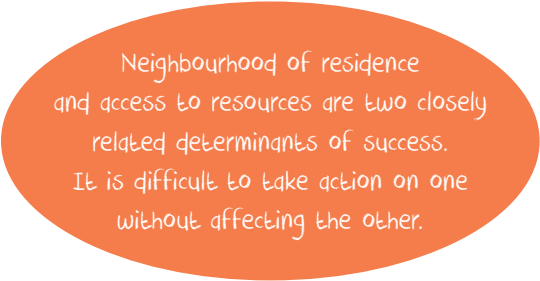
community resources

Schools are surrounded by various community resources to assist youth and families, such as social services, childcare centres, youth centres (*Centres jeunesse*), youth employment centres (*Carrefours jeunesse-emploi*), healthcare services, libraries, sports facilities, and community workers. It may be difficult for youth and families to access such services because of, for example, geographical location, availability of services, or how resources are distributed on the territory. Coordination between services and defining their respective roles in preventing dropout are also major issues.

What the research says

Social cohesion in a community relies on the presence of resources such as services for housing, education, health care, daycare, day camps, and for extracurricular, cultural, and sporting activities. These all help to support children, youth and families.

However, families living below the poverty line face the challenge of meeting their basic needs every day.¹ Since dropouts most often come from underprivileged neighbourhoods, the resources in these areas must seek to compensate for the social and material disadvantages brought about by poverty and low social cohesion. These resources must serve to find ways to break the cycle of poverty.



Neighbourhood of residence and access to resources are two closely related determinants of success. It is difficult to take action on one without affecting the other.

Moreover, as Coleman et al. have pointed out, youth from disadvantaged environments do not feel they have the capacity to succeed or have control over what would allow them to succeed.² They also state, however, that the negative effects of a poor socioeconomic environment tend to decline toward the end of schooling.

In a similar vein, a survey conducted by the Quebec Ministry of Education shows that a significant proportion of students with adaptive and learning difficulties come from disadvantaged environments.³ This fact is even more significant considering that young people with learning disabilities are at increased risk of dropping out.

For more information

Les milieux à risque d'abandon scolaire. Quand pauvreté, conditions de vie et décrochage scolaire vont de pair

www.crepas.qc.ca/userfiles/ancien_site/editeur10/DOC_9_16.pdf

Un regard territorial pour soutenir l'action des instances régionales

http://visaj.ca/documents/Savoir_Juin08.pdf

[1] CREPAS (2001), *Les milieux à risque d'abandon scolaire. Quand pauvreté, conditions de vie et décrochage scolaire vont de pair*. Downloaded at: http://www.crepas.qc.ca/userfiles/ancien_site/editeur10/DOC_9_16.pdf.

[2] J. S. Coleman, E.Q. Campbell, C. J. Hobson, J. McPartland, A. M. Mood, F. D. Weinfeld and R. L. York (1966), *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Washington: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 737 p.

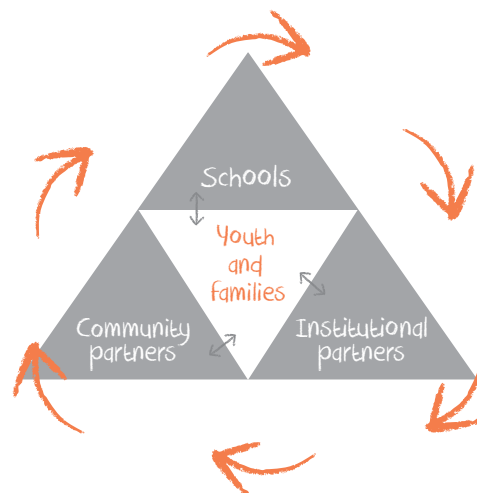
[3] Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (1997), *La situation des jeunes non diplômés de l'école secondaire. Sondage sur l'insertion sociale et l'intégration professionnelle des jeunes en difficulté d'adaptation et d'apprentissage et des autres jeunes non diplômés de l'école secondaire*, Direction de la recherche, Direction de l'adaptation scolaire et des services complémentaires, 175 p.

Taking effective action

According to Perron, schools in underprivileged areas face the three-faceted challenge of providing adequate schooling, supporting students' academic goals, and dealing with the negligence, abuse and lack of resources endured by some students, especially younger children.¹ Not to mention that students with difficulties or who are at-risk require intensive and ongoing intervention. It would therefore seem beneficial to build a safety net for at-risk youth by mobilizing the community around school perseverance factors related to poverty and the lack of resources in these neighbourhoods.

This is the goal of the Ontario program Wraparound, which aims to provide services and support for youth and their families by drawing on community resources to create a support network around them.² Depending on the identified needs, a team made up of family members and representatives from community organizations and institutional services is formed to support the youth and the family by creating an intervention plan that adapts as needs change. The approach is centred around the strengths of youth and their families.

In Quebec, a network of regional consulting authorities (RCAs) has spread throughout the province over the past 10 years and acts in a similar spirit of partnership. RCAs have helped mobilize regional decision-makers in various sectors to pool resources and work with local stakeholders to reduce the inequalities that make young people more likely to drop out.



Avenues for effective action related to community resources

Ensure that regional and local strategic plans are established throughout Quebec to provide better access to services and better service continuity from “birth to high school”:

- by mobilizing communities around the issues of reducing social inequality and of educational success at the national, regional, and local levels (decision-makers, institutions and community organizations, local stakeholders, etc.);
- by analysing the needs of local youth and their families with respect to school perseverance, academic success, and conditions of vulnerability;
- by implementing regional and local joint-action plans based on effective actions and the pooling of resources and expertise;
- by monitoring this implementation and by evaluating the actions' effects on the conditions of youth vulnerability and, ultimately, their success at school.

Provide resources to guide parents from disadvantaged communities in supervising their children's education, in working with schools (reading, emergent literacy, homework help, development of social skills, sense of effort, school/work balance, etc.).

Raise awareness among local employers of the importance of education for youth in the area.

Put in place services to help develop the educational and career goals of youth and their parents, especially for those in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (value of education, orientation, high expectations, etc.).

Make sure that vulnerable youth develop in a healthy and safe environment, free from violence and negligence (family support services, follow up with the school, etc.).

[1] M. Perron (1997), *Sociodémographie de la santé à micro-échelle : un modèle de différenciation spatiale au Saguenay-La c-Saint-Jean*, Doctoral thesis in health geography, Montpellier III, Université Paul Valéry, 470 p.

[2] <http://www.pathwayschildrencyouth.org/index.cfm?CategoryID=1&SubCategoryID=10>