

# **What are the benefits and risks related to the feasibility of opening a crèche in Geneva?**

**Bachelor Project submitted for the degree of  
Bachelor of Science HES in International Business Management**

by

**Diana Cristina OLIVEIRA CARNEIRO**

Bachelor Project Advisor:  
**Timothy CONNERTON, Professor**

**Geneva, June 4th 2018  
Haute école de gestion de Genève (HEG-GE)  
International Business Management**



## **Declaration**

This Bachelor Project is submitted as part of the final examination requirements of the Haute école de gestion de Genève, for the Bachelor of Science HES-SO in International Business Management.

The student accepts the terms of the confidentiality agreement if one has been signed. The use of any conclusions or recommendations made in the Bachelor Project, with no prejudice to their value, engages neither the responsibility of the author, nor the adviser to the Bachelor Project, nor the jury members nor the HEG.

“I attest that I have personally authored this work without using any sources other than those cited in the bibliography. Furthermore, I have sent the final version of this document for analysis by the plagiarism detection software stipulated by the school and by my adviser”.

Geneva, May 27<sup>th</sup> 2018

Diana Cristina OLIVEIRA CARNEIRO

# Acknowledgements

First of all, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Timothy Connerton, Professor at the Haute Ecole de Gestion of Geneva, for being such an inspiring project supervisor. His precious insights, priceless availability and demonstrated interest in this Bachelor project, helped me and motivated me to work intensively and enjoy this project since the beginning.

I take this opportunity to thank all the professors and lecturers at the HEG for sharing their knowledge during these years of studies.

I am very thankful to the mothers, crèche owners and directors, Ms. Ruffieux-Rufenacht from the SASAJ and the Human Resources representative of a multinational company for their participation on the field research. Their contribution was crucial for the accomplishment of this project.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to my wonderful partner, family and friends, who unconditionally supported me throughout these intense four years of part-time studies. Thanks to their encouragement, this project is dedicated to them.

# Executive Summary

How is it feasible for a developed country such as Switzerland to have, for several years, an important shortage in the number of available places in crèches, putting at stake the wellbeing and development of its youngest generation? This shortage represents sometimes two years in the waiting list to obtain a place in a crèche. Therefore, this paper attempts to explore what are the barriers preventing an accessible solution for every child to have the best developmental experience in any crèche. From a theoretical perspective, different approaches can be used when teaching children and this will depend on the educational team and on the theorists they will choose to be influenced by. However, the theory shows that it is crucial to have a high-quality childcare experience for every child to develop emotional, cognitive and physical skills and, consequently, have a positive impact on the child's educational and personal development. The analysis of the current situation of the childcare market in Switzerland, serve as the framework for the questions in the research phase.

In the research phase, 15 in-depth qualitative interviews are conducted with 8 mothers, 5 crèche directors or owners, a representative of the public institution giving the authorization and a representative of a multinational company. The goal is to explore the selection criteria and concerns of the parents, the barriers of the crèches, the State restrictions and the position of the multinational company regarding the concept of an onsite crèche. When analyzing the interviews, some elements were prioritized by all stakeholders such as the financial aspects and others seem to be extraordinary elements that came up such as the transparency in the process of obtaining a place.

From a business perspective, the feasibility of developing an onsite crèche can be a favor outcome, while considering the constraints of companies shown in the interview with an HR administrative such as the high financial charges, the divergence from the core business and the distraction it can represent for employees to have their children in the same building. It is important to know that a place in a crèche represents CHF 40'000.- of charges per child.

Finally, based on the interviews results and the theoretical aspects of childcare, a concept of a modulated crèche working as a franchise is proposed to be implemented in any type of company. This crèche will differentiate from the others in terms of high-quality standards and safety measures and responding to the parents' special needs such as flexibility in opening hours, which is the word the most used by parents during the interviews.



# Contents

<b>Declaration .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Contents .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Motivation for this study.....	4
1.2 Origin of childcare .....	4
1.3 Importance of childcare for children's development process .....	5
1.4 Child educational theories.....	9
1.5 Types of childcare in Geneva.....	12
1.6 Childcare industry in Switzerland.....	14
<b>2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 Who will the study focus on?.....	17
2.2 Preparing a qualitative interview .....	17
2.3 Analyzing qualitative interviews .....	19
<b>3. Data analysis.....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1 Parents' point of view.....	21
3.1.1 Decision on the sample and environment .....	21
3.1.2 Decision on the questions .....	21
3.1.3 Difficulties in the process.....	22
3.1.4 Results .....	23
3.2 Crèche owners/directors' point of view .....	35
3.2.1 Decision on the sample and environment .....	35
3.2.2 Decision on the questions .....	36
3.2.3 Difficulties in the process.....	36
3.2.4 Results .....	37
3.3 Authorities point of view.....	50
3.3.1 Importance for the study.....	50
3.3.2 Decision on the methodology and difficulties .....	50
3.3.3 State requirements .....	51
3.3.4 Conditions for financial assistance .....	52
3.4 Company point of view .....	53
3.4.1 Importance for the study.....	53
3.4.2 Methodology and decision on the questions .....	53
3.4.3 Company position towards onsite childcare services.....	54
<b>4. Discussion .....</b>	<b>56</b>
4.1 General findings .....	56
4.2 Comparing hypothesis: public vs. private .....	59
4.3 Importance of « quality » in childcare .....	60

<b>5. Development of an onsite crèche .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>6. Limits of the study.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>7. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Guide for the interviews with parents.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Transcript of the interviews with parents.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Guide for the interviews with crèches .....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Transcript of the interviews with crèches .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Guide for the interview with a representative of the SASAJ .....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Appendix 6: Transcript of the interview with a representative of the SASAJ .....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Guide for the interview with an HR representative of a multinational company in Geneva .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Appendix 8: Transcript of the interview with an HR representative of a multinational company in Geneva .....</b>	<b>126</b>



## List of Tables

Table 1 Organizational approach for the domains of child development and early learning.....	3
Table 2 Elements of socioemotional development.....	4
Table 3 Profiles of the crèches interviewed.....	35
Table 4 Advantages and disadvantages of different types of crèches .....	56
Table 5 Definition and measurement of quality in child care programs.....	58
Table 6 Differentiation points of the modulated crèche .....	66

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Children cared for with preschool age (0-3 years-old) .....	12
Figure 2 Infants (0-3 years old) as per formal childcare hours (in %) .....	13
Figure 3 Empathy mapping .....	16

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Motivation for this study

Passionate about children's development and observing the high demand for places in childcare institutions, the author is interested in studying the market of childcare in the Canton of Geneva and the feasibility of opening a daycare center (crèche). Every child should benefit from being in a formal childcare institution and have the same opportunities in terms of socialization and development, which the current conditions of the market do not allow due to shortages in the places available. The main issue identified for parents is the long process to obtain a place in a crèche, both subsidized and private, which sometimes takes more than two years of being on the waiting list.

The first phase of this project focus on exploring, through in-depth interviews, how the market is from a parental and crèche offer point of view. Representatives of the public institution that authorizes crèches to open and of a multinational company in Geneva will also be interviewed. The specific region of Geneva is chosen for practical reasons, but a childcare center in the Canton of Vaud will also be interviewed. The research phase attempts to identify what are the benefits and risks in opening a crèche, considering the market demand, the parents' desires and the regulations.

In the second phase, the findings from the interviews are analyzed to propose a concept that offers a unique design to be highly differentiated from the rest. This concept must respond to the parents' needs and respect the state requirements to have a positive impact on the educational and personal development of the child.

## 1.2 Origin of childcare

Childcare is "the care for children provided by either the government, an organization or a person, while parents are at work or are absent for another reason" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). Childcare needs appear as the result of the historical changes that occurred worldwide and mainly in Europe such as industrialization, urbanization, evolution and changes in family structures and the increase in women participation in the labor force (Cryer, Tietze 1999, p.176). Childcare solutions allow mothers to have time to work outside the house while an educator is taking care of her children. In other words, childcare can allow parents to better combine their professional and family life and consequently achieve a better work-life balance. Ultimately, this influences the well-

being, contributes to productivity in the workplace and helps people to remain healthy and happy (Federal Statistical Office 2016).

Cryer and Tietze's (1999) article on *Current trend in European early child care and education*, explain the two types of childcare services first used in Europe. One solution is "center-based programs", which is characterized by a full-time occupation rate and attempts to help working-class families in difficulties in order "to satisfy the physical and socialization needs of their children" (Cryer, Tietze 1999, p.176). The second solution is the part-time program that is addressed to the middle class "to enrich and complement children's experiences through planned learning activities" (Cryer, Tietze 1999, p.176). In the neighboring country, France, the first crèche was created in Paris in 1844 by a French lawyer and philanthropist, Firmin Marbeau (Institut Français de l'Education 2018). His motivation was the lack of childcare between the moment the mother gives birth and the asylum room, which is where babies used to go when they were two years old or more. During two years, the mother is not able to work because she has no one to take care of her child. Sometimes, women were obliged to leave their babies alone at home while they went to work. Marbeau's creation was, at that time, highly supported by the media, the public administration and the religious authority. Then, two years later, 13 crèches opened in France and other countries in Europe followed his idea (Institut Français de l'Education, 2018). However, many people were against his project wondering about the well-being of the children in the crèche as it "separated the child from the mother", "the agglomeration of children was dangerous" and "even if the crèche was useful, it was too expensive in terms of price-quality relationship" (Institut Français de l'Education, 2018). To respond to this critic, Marbeau created the *Livre des Crèches* to ensure an adequate functioning of the crèches and the well-being of the children.

### **1.3 Importance of childcare for children's development process**

Child development refers to "the biological and psychological developments in human beings between birth and the end of adolescence" (Collins Dictionary, 2018). Early childhood is worldwide recognized as an important phase in the child development process. In a report from UNICEF this is defined as "the key to a full and productive life for a child and to the progress of a nation" (UNICEF 2001). Therefore, to allow children to be productive and reach their full development, they need to have access to quality childcare, especially in terms of nutrition, health and cognitive development (Van der Gaag -). Van der Gaag is a professor of development economics at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Amsterdam. Sometimes, parents focus too

much on the intellectual perspective and underestimate the rest of abilities children develop in their early development. Van der Gaag's paper divides the child development process into 5 main capabilities that occur between the prenatal period and the age of 6 years old. These capabilities are: motor development, emotional control, social attachment, vocabulary and math/logic. Sometimes, these capabilities are grouped into the 4 main domains of development to simplify the understanding of child development. These four areas are: general learning competencies, cognitive development, socioemotional development and physical development and health. It is important to take into consideration that there is not a right or wrong version of the categorical organization of child development domains as sometimes one skill can be placed into different types of development.

**Table 1: Organizational approach for the domains of child development and early learning**



*Source: adapted from the Institute of Medicine and national research council of the national academies, 2015.*

### **Socioemotional development**

Early childcare development helps a child to socialize and create good relationships with other children as well as adults such as parents and educators. However, at the same time, children also know how to become more independent on the execution of certain

activities and consequently this can lead them to help others (Absar 2018). A childcare center is supposed to teach children how to live in society and adapt a correct behavior through activities done individually or in groups, where children play with peers. In other words, children in their early development process learn how “to share, to respect, to listen and to empathize with other children” (UNICEF 2001).

**Table 2: Elements of socioemotional development**



*Source: adapted from Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2018*

Each dimension in the table above has its own characteristics, which are unique to each child and so differentiates his social and emotional learning. However, this schema can be used for any human being of any age. Self-awareness refers to being aware of one’s emotions, thoughts, strengths and limitations with a sense self-confidence. Then, self-management is the ability to regulate those emotions, feelings and behaviors through self-discipline and motivation. Social awareness is very important in childcare development process as it refers to the capacity of empathizing with others and learn to respect others. Relationship is key as well as it refers to maintaining healthy relationships with different people as, in the case of early education, other children, parents and caregivers. Finally, the last competence is responsible decision-making and this is a skill that children develop already at the daycare center through creative as well as problem-solving activities for example (CASEL 2018).

## **Physical development and health**

One of the main goals of childcare is to ensure the well-being and development of the children while parents are at work. Therefore, the physical development is key for the well-being and health of children and it is also the easiest development domain to be quantify its success. This domain includes the health and the nutrition on top of the physical development. Physical development has a high correlation with cognitive development and as per an article of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, health care is the basis for learning, and, at the same time, education determines health (Zimmerman, Woolf 2014). There are many types of activities that can help in the motor development of children such as muscle activities aiming at improving their coordination, balance and agility (UNICEF 2001).

## **General learning competencies**

These are competencies such as the short-term and working memory, attention control, cognitive flexibility, control of dominant responses, cognitive self-regulation, executive function, curiosity, self-confidence, motivation, etc. In other words, it is children's perseverance in finishing a task independently of other factors such as fatigue or distraction. These skills are sometimes called as "non-cognitive skills" as mentioned by Heckman<sup>1</sup> even if it has been shown that non-cognitive competencies also contribute to later success of children (Heckman 2007).

## **Cognitive development**

As mentioned before, this is one of the most important domains for parents because it can have a positive impact on the adult life. Cognitive development refers to creative activities, discovery, increase of knowledge, problem-solving, organizational, language, and reasoning skills. In early development, children learn their first sentences and the goal is to help them express how they feel and what they think in a correct and comprehensive manner (UNICEF 2001). Then, while in a crèche or kindergarten, children also learn math and logic skills to start being prepared to enter primary school. Those aspects are most of the time introduced through funny activities such as games, stories or songs for example. Finally, it is difficult to quantify the results of a good early childcare development as it "does not produce tangible results" (UNICEF 2001) but research has shown that it has a positive impact socially and economically for children

---

<sup>1</sup> James J. Heckman, PhD is a professor and American economist, winner of a Nobel prize and who launched the Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago.

and their entourage, including the society in general (Van der Gaag). However, for this to be possible, the children need to feel secure and trust their caregiver (Absar 2018). On top of that, the adults' implication and qualifications in the child development process is crucial, especially for their cognitive development.

## **1.4 Child educational theories**

The content of this chapter is based on the paper *Theories into practice: Understanding and rethinking our work with young children* from A. Nolan<sup>2</sup> and B. Raban<sup>3</sup> (2015). In this part, different theories will be explained and the main educational programs for each theory will be given as well. In this context, by *theory* is meant “a group of ideas that explain a certain topic within the domain of children’s learning and development” (Nolan, Raban 2015, p.5). On the other hand, a *perspective* is “the way something is ‘seen’ and in this chapter, it will have something to do with looking or viewing – taking up a particular stance” (Nolan, Raban 2015, p.5). The theories are very important in the child development process and depending on the theory chosen, the child will not develop the same skills as others and so that is a reason why sometimes the educators could adapt theories to be personalized to every child. The theories are also important for the educators as a guidance in how to deal with the children and which type of activities propose. Also, sometimes the theories are based on ancient beliefs for many years in the same infrastructure so the educational team needs to review them and update their educational program to match with the needs of the current society. As Nolan and Raban said in their paper (2015), theories can be very subjective as the same aspect can be included in different theories depending on the person’s individual beliefs. However, this study will focus on the classification from the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (2009), in which theories are categorized into 5 different ways:

- Developmental
- Socio-cultural
- Socio-behavioral
- Critical
- Post-structuralist

---

<sup>2</sup> Andrea Nolan, PhD, is an Early Childhood Education professor in the School of Education at the Deakin University, in Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Bridie Raban, PhD, is a professor of early childhood education, language and literacy development as well as program evaluation at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

### **Developmental theories**

In this very much traditional theory, the educators adapt their activities and respond to the needs of the children depending on each stage of their development. The goal is to propose activities to children that are beneficial for their age and that ensure a continuous development. Developmental theories focus on how the children develop themselves as individuals and not what they learn in terms of knowledge. Critics against this theory is about considering children as weaknesses when comparing them with adults. Another strong argument used against this theory is that it supposes that development is universal and they focus on the individual without considering the context. Maria Montessori is a well-known developmental theorist and her approach is being more and more used by the educators today. Her theory is based on some key principles, such as: independence, observation, following the child, correcting the child, prepared environments and absorbent mind (Daily Montessori 2018). In other words, the children should always be at the center of the pedagogy. The other main theorists supporting developmental theories are: Jean Piaget (stage theory), Rudolf Steiner (seven-year phases), Kohlberg (stages of moral development) and Erikson (stages of personal and social development) (Nolan, Raban 2015).

### **Socio-cultural theories**

Contrary to developmental, socio-cultural theories focus on the children background and consider the context in which community the child is. For example, Vygotsky, who is a theorist believing in culture affecting cognitive development, believes that the social environment is key in children learning process. In other words, the children prioritize what they learn from their parents and from anyone in their circle. Therefore, in this theory, culture and support of the community of a child is crucial in their learning and development process. The main theorists supporting socio-cultural theories are: Vygotsky, Bruner, Bronfenbrenner, Malaguzzi and Rogoff (Nolan, Raban 2015).

### **Socio-behavioral theories**

This theory focus on how children's behavior can be influenced by their experiences and therefore educators proposed activities are crucial and have a direct impact on children's development. In other words, a child behavior can be adapted over time and depending on his environment and this theory goes against socio-cultural, in which the child is conditioned by a "pre-programmed process of development" (Nolan and Raban, 2015). In this theory, learning depends on the physical and social environment but children they can anything they want just by giving adequate reinforcement. Therefore, it is an



educator-directed approach as they decide what activities or tasks should be done and they guide children to do it by motivating them with rewards and reinforcements. Furthermore, this theory has two different approaches: classical behaviorism, supported by Pavlov, and social learning theory, supported by Bandura (Nolan, Raban 2015).

### **Critical theories**

In this theory, “taken-for-granted practices” are challenged by the educators and it focus on “creating a more egalitarian and democratic society” (Nolan, Raban 2015). Another important characteristic of critical theories is the use of ‘why’ questions by the educators as for example, “Why am I teaching this?” and consequently the influence this can have on children by leading them to ask “Why am I learning this?” (Nolan & Raban, 2015). The goal is to be more critical towards the educational practices by not taking traditional practices for granted and to adapt with the evolution of children and their respective needs. There are two main theorists for critical theories, which are Habermas and Freire (Nolan, Raban 2015).

### **Post-structuralist theories**

This theory focus on the belief that there is not an absolute truth and so the educational team and the caregivers should explore different approaches. Post-structuralist theorists believe that there are more than one truth and different ways of learning. For this reason, the educators following this approach will work with different perspectives of teaching enabling an appropriate development for the children. The educational team should be very reactive when they see that the perspective applied is not working well and adapt their pedagogy accordingly. For example, as per the article from Nolan and Raban (2015), gender differences can be perceived very differently depending on the approach used. In post-structuralist mindset, it is important to consider the contrast in female vs. male logic and so they agree that some equity strategies are not efficient as they do not tackle these differences. The main theorists supporting socio-behavioral theories are: Foucault, Bourdieu and Canella (Nolan, Raban 2015).

## **1.5 Types of childcare in Geneva**

### **1. Daycare center (Crèches et espaces de vie infantine EVE)**

The aim of this type of structure is to help parents by taking care of their children on a regular and collective basis. They welcome children as of the end of the maternity leave until the age of going to primary school. Children can be in a daycare center part or full-time and priority is given to parents who are working and do not have another daycare solution. Prices are based on the parents' revenue for public infrastructures and based on a fixed price for private ones.

From an educational perspective, the goal of this type of childcare is to ensure an adequate development for the child in different aspects such as emotional, physical, psychological, etc. To achieve this, daycare centers offer different types of activities (e.g. creative, musical, movements, stories, etc.) as well as a mandatory nap time in the morning and in the afternoon. In the City of Geneva, there are 55 daycare centers (Ville de Genève 2018).

### **2. Kindergartens (Jardins d'enfants)**

Kindergartens welcome children from 18 months up to the age of entering school for half a day, except on Wednesdays. The aim is to help children to live and play together to develop certain skills by offering the same type of activities than a daycare center. In the City of Geneva, there are 17 kindergartens (Ville de Genève 2018).

### **3. Eco-daycare center (Eco-crèche)**

This is a unique daycare service which offers an educational program in the forest by proposing different activities as for example, making fire or having nap time in a trailer made of natural wood. This infrastructure has a limited number of places, which is 12, and welcomes children between the age of 2 years old to when they go to primary school. On Wednesdays, they give the possibility for children up to 6 years to have this experience (Ville de Genève 2018).

### **4. Family crèche (Crèche familiale/Accueil familial de jour)**

This service is complementary to the daycare center and it aims at allowing children to benefit from a collective experience in the daycare center and the "family life" experience at the educator's house. The educator can welcome at home between 2 and 4 children and bring them to the family crèche to benefit

from being with a group of children from different ages. Now, there are 2 family crèches in the city of Geneva (Ville de Genève, 2018).

#### **5. Daytime care host families (Familles d'accueil de jour/Maman du jour)**

Those are nannies who have received an “authorization” from an association confirming that they can exercise as “childcare educators” at their homes. As for the previous type of childcare service, the goal of this service is to allow children to be together while being in a “family life” environment (Ville de Genève 2018).

#### **6. Emergency daycare centers (Crèches de dépannage)**

This type of care service is aimed at parents who have a temporary and urgent need to put their children in a safe place where they can socialize with other children. It can be from several days to months. To benefit from this service, parents need to be in one of the situations below:

- have a health problem;
- receive a temporary employment measure imposed by the unemployment office (e.g. internship, training, etc.);
- sudden return to a professional activity without time to find another solution;
- sudden loss of a child care service;
- face a critical domestic situation;

The service can welcome children after the maternity leave until when they go to school. There are 2 emergency daycare centers in the city of Geneva (Ville de Genève, 2018).

#### **7. Drop-in & play (Halte-jeux)**

This is a service for occasional situations and it is aimed at children from 15 months to the age of entering school. However, there are limits for attendance with a maximum of 3 hours per day and 3 days per week. There is only 1 drop-in & play infrastructure in the city of Geneva (Ville de Genève, 2018).

#### **8. Parent-child zone (Lieux d'accueil parents-enfants)**

This is a place where parents can play with their children on their own and they can also request an assistant, if needed. This is an opportunity for parents to do activities together with their children but it will not help them to combine professional and family life as at least one of the parents needs to be present (Ville de Genève 2018).

## **1.6 Childcare industry in Switzerland**

Switzerland is facing, for several years now, a severe crisis regarding available places in child care institutions. As per a previous survey, the shortage is of approximately 3'000 to 4'000 places for the Canton of Geneva (Tribune de Genève 2017). In fact, women need to register their baby on their third month of pregnancy and even doing this, it is not guaranteed that they will have a place years later (Le Temps 2015). As per the article from Le Temps (2015), Switzerland spends only 0.2% of their Gross Domestic Product (Statistique Vaud 2011) on child care against the 1% recommended by Unicef. For comparison, some Scandinavian countries invest between 1.4% and 2.3% of their GDP in child care (SSP 2009).

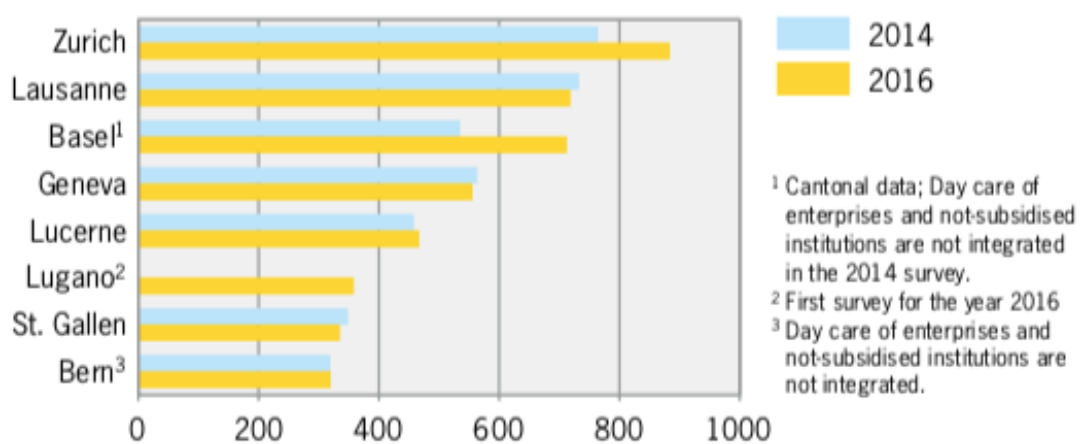
Switzerland used to be known as a country where women stay at home to educate their children but things changed, starting by the mindset of its citizens. In 1994/95, 61% of men would say that a child suffers when his mother has a professional activity, while in 2013, the same survey showed that only 44% of men will share that opinion (Federal Statistical Office 2013). One reason for this change of mindset is the continuous increase of women in the labor force in Switzerland, which last year corresponded to a participation of 46,5% (The World Bank 2017). Despite of the increase, this statistic remains still low as not even half of female population are part of the country's labor force. A report from the Crédit Suisse (2016) titled *Housing, Commuting, Childcare: Where's the least expensive place to live?* affirms that younger generation of women today have at least the same qualifications as men and sometimes, even higher qualifications. The report also says that the fact of not having a childcare solution leads to a significant cost, which prevents the participation of women in the workforce from being higher (Rühl, Schüpbach, Hurst 2016). It is true that the lack of childcare solutions can sometimes force parents to work part-time or stay at home, especially in the case of the women. Federal statistics show that in 2017, 60% of women aged 25-54 were working part-time, especially women having a partner and at least one child younger than 25 years old. The situation is very different for men given that out of 10, only 1-2 work part-time (Office fédéral de la statistique, 2017). The interviews with the parents in this study attempt to understand and verify if this the case for the women interviewed and if verified, understand why they had to work part-time.

The figure 1 shows that, for the city of Geneva, less than 600 children in 1000 between the age of 0 to 3 years old have access to childcare (Federal Statistical Office 2016), putting Geneva very far from the top. Moreover, the graph shows a slight decrease compared to 2014, even if in 2014 the number of children being cared was not satisfying neither.

**Figure 1: Children cared for with preschool age (0-3 years-old)**

### Care of infants

Children cared for with pre-school age (0–3 year-olds), per 1000 children in this age group



Source: FSO

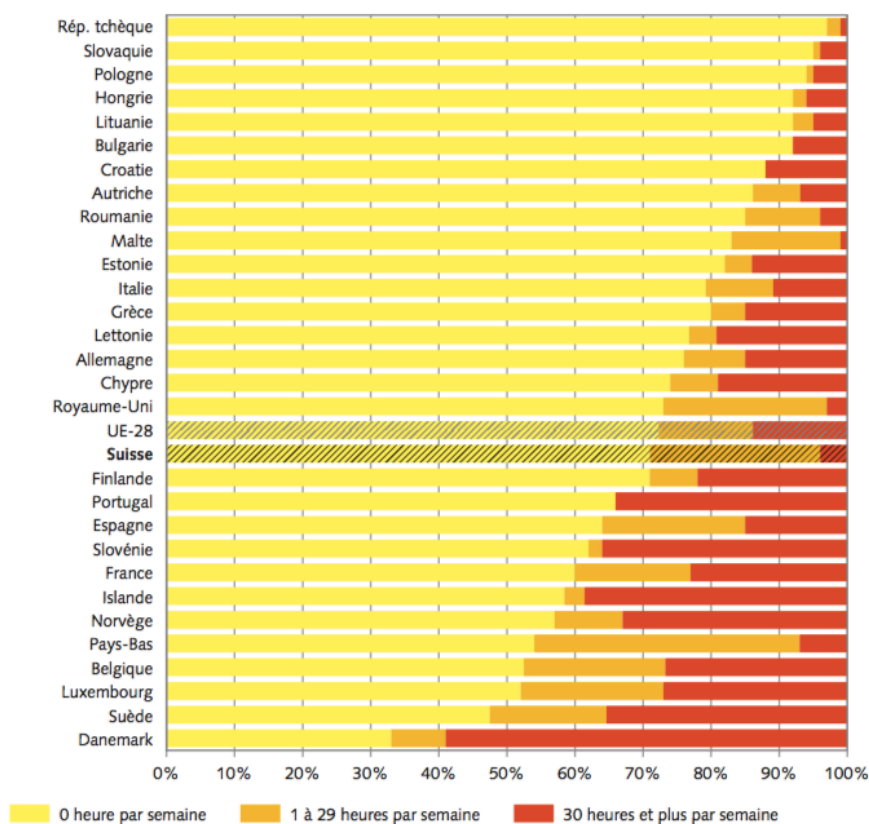
© FSO 2016

Source: Federal Statistical Office, 2016

Figure 2 represents the formal childcare service children aged between 0-3 years old received in 2012, in terms of hours. Compared with other European countries, Switzerland is not in a very good position as more than 70% of children in Switzerland had no formal childcare in 2012 and only less than 5% would have at least 30 hours per week (Office fédéral de la statistique 2012). Formal childcare means that the child is in a regulated childcare institution and complying to the state requirements. For example, in Denmark, the country in the first position, approximately 33% of children have no access to formal childcare and 59% have at least 30 hours of formal childcare per week. The data shows that Switzerland is not responding to the current market demand in terms of childcare places, what can force parents to find informal solutions if they want to reconcile professional and personal life.

**Figure 2: Infants (0-3 years old) as per formal childcare hours (in %)**

**Pourcentage d'enfants de moins de 3 ans selon le nombre d'heures de garde formelle, en 2012**



Source: Eurostat – EU-SILC 2012 (version du 3.6.2014)

© OFS, Neuchâtel 2014

*Source: Federal Statistical Office, 2014*

From the perspective of childcare institutions, there are many opportunities for future crèche owners such as the high market demand, the possible partnerships with public institutions and the collaboration with other childcare institutions or organizations. However, as per an article in the PME Magazine (2013), opening a crèche is still an important investment, which could represent a cost up to one million Swiss Francs for a crèche of 40 to 50 places (Stent-Torriani 2013).

## **2. Methodology**

The project is mainly focused on explanatory research when there is not a link to existing literature. Qualitative research is used by conducting in-depth interviews with different stakeholders, which are parents, crèches owners and directors, the public institution responsible for giving authorizations for new crèches and a multinational company based in Geneva. The results of the qualitative interviews are complemented with secondary data taken from articles, books, national statistics and academic papers to compare theory and psychological studies about childcare with primary data.

The childcare service chosen to be studied is daycare centers (crèches) and this type of service is explained in chapter 1.5. Crèches are the most common and requested type of service as it welcomes children as of 4 months, offers the possibility of having an on-site restaurant and welcomes children on a full-time occupation rate.

### **2.1 Who will the study focus on?**

Four different stakeholders are important in this study: parents, crèche owners/directors, the public institution giving the authorizations for new crèches and multinational companies. The goal is to interview between 5 and 10 parents to have enough data to analyze and explore if there are trends in childcare solutions from a parental perspective. Directors and owners of 5 crèches of different types (e.g. private, public, company crèche), one representative of the SASAJ and a HR manager of a multinational company will be interviewed.

### **2.2 Preparing a qualitative interview**

The qualitative approach is more adequate for this study because the goal is to interpret the experiences of the interviewees and identify what factors make their experience unique. For example, from the interviews with parents, the objective is to interpret how do they adapt to the shortage in the number of places available in crèches and how do they feel emotionally about this situation. Interpretive perspective is the epistemological perspective is used in this study. This perspective aims at describing, understanding and interpreting the information received, focus on multiple realities and is a context-based approach (Merriam 2009, p.11). The goal of using the interpretive perspective is to describe the experiences of parents and, at the same time, understand the point of view of crèches regarding the restrictions they must respect towards the public administration.

The interview questions are linked to one or more of the following categories and can change depending on who is the interviewee:

- cost/benefit relationship (obstacles and opportunities)
- market demand
- offering
- educational program
- infrastructure type (e.g. public, private, within a company)
- work-life balance
- State requirements (authorization)
- finance/pricing

These categories are also mentioned in the interview guides that contain all the questions predefined by the author for each type of interviewee and these that can be found in appendices 1,3,5 and 7. The goal of using categories for questions is to understand if there is a trend and to compare two different points of view towards the same category as for example what is expected from parents in terms of offering vs. what crèches offer.

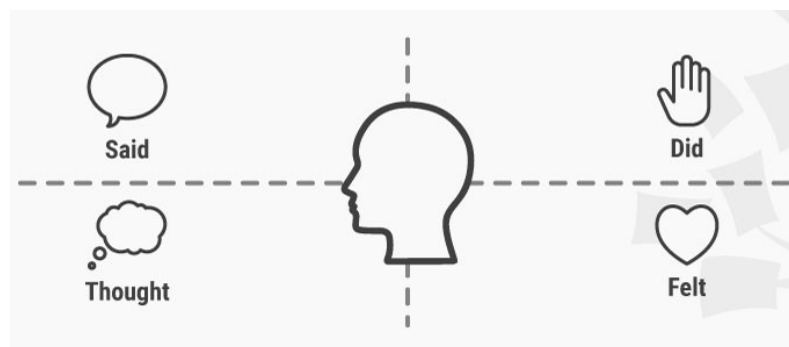
Even if many of the mothers being interviewed know each other, focus group interviews are not considered to avoid losing the authenticity and veracity in their answers. The fact that interviews are anonymous and individual, allows interviewees to express themselves more openly. As the author will conduct in-depth interviews, a minimum or maximum of time will not be given for each interviewee to be able to add or modify certain questions during the interview. Therefore, this means that the interview guide structure is flexible or, also called, semi-structured (Merriam 2009, p.89). Questions are mainly open, allowing interviewees to take the time to describe their experience and share as much details as possible. For this, the author starts with personal questions and sometimes even emotional, especially for the parents' interview. The objective is to make them talk openly about their experience. The author wants to avoid leading as well as yes-or-no questions, which could affect the veracity of the answers. Wording and the order of questions are not fixed to allow the interview to be perceived as a conversation, in which the interviewee can trust the interviewer and be the most detailed in the answers, rather than an interrogation.



## 2.3 Analyzing qualitative interviews

This study focus as much on the outcome as on the process of the interviews, which requires the author to be a careful observer. To help interpreting and analyzing the qualitative interviews, the design concept of an empathy map is used. An empathy map helps to understand deeply the people's needs and synthesize the observations at the same time. In this study, particularly, using the empathy map method helps to provide interpretations of the answers in the analysis phase and to support the findings at the end of the project.

**Figure 3: Empathy Mapping**



*Source: The Interaction Design Foundation, 2018*

An empathy map has 4 different dimensions that can be observed and analyzed, which are: Said, Did, Thought and Felt (Dam, Siang 2018). Those are explained below:

- Said: it corresponds to all the key words and quotes the interviewee mentioned through the entire interview.
- Did: it refers to all the actions and behaviors of the interviewee, making it important to conduct face to face interviews.
- Thought: it corresponds to what the interviewee was thinking when he said something and it refers to the person's goals, needs, wants and motivations.
- Felt: this dimension is related to emotions and things that the observer could interpret from a person's non-verbal language such as gestures or facial expressions.

For the first two quadrants, "Said" and "Did", it is not difficult to comment on what was said or done as this is the main observation. However, the difficulty is in analyzing the two last quadrants as it is where the observer needs to interpret and identify if there would be a latent need as per the data expressed later during the interview. Latent needs are "issues and problems that customers face but have not yet realized" (Financial Times

Lexicon 2018). Latent needs can be observed through discrepancies in the interviewee's answers throughout the interview. For example, it is interesting to observe if there is a change in the interviewee's attitude from the beginning to the end of the interview or if the interviewee gives contradictory answers. Therefore, it is also important to focus on the first and last remarks the interviewee makes for each conversation, whenever this is relevant for the data analysis.

Each interview is recorded with the consent of the interviewee and appendices 2,4,6 and 8 correspond to transcript of the interviews for each type of stakeholder interviewed. The transcripts are highly detailed containing the exact same information communicated by the interviewee, without modification, and sometimes additional comments from the interviewer to support the analysis and facilitate its understanding for the reader. Conserving everything that is being said during the interview attempts also to give the reader the impression that he was present during the interview. One important aspect of the data analysis part is to identify if, after doing a certain number of interviews with the same type of stakeholder (e.g. parents), the outcome reaches a point of saturation or redundancy in the answers. The fact of knowing that answers become redundant, helps the author to decide if it is necessary to keep interviewing the same type of stakeholders or not.

### **3. Data analysis**

#### **3.1 Parents' point of view**

One of the main stakeholders in childcare is the family and more importantly, the parents. In this study, they represent the “demand” for places in childcare institutions and they are a key stakeholder to be interviewed. From the parents' perspective, the research attempts to understand what are the main selection criteria and concerns when choosing a childcare service. The data analysis aims also at understanding how is the process of obtaining a place in a crèche.

##### **3.1.1 Decision on the sample and environment**

Interviewees are parents who have been recently looking for a place in a crèche or any type of childcare solution for their children. There are two complementary attributes to be a potential interviewee – the first is to be a parent of a child between 0 months and 4 years and the second is to have formally applied for a place in a crèche in the Canton of Geneva or Vaud. Before starting the study, the author has, mainly from a close network, some mothers who agreed to be interviewed. The goal is to have as much authenticity as possible in their answers. Therefore, interviews take place individually, even if sometimes interviewees know each other, to avoid biased answers due to focus group set up. To sum up, the interviewees are: 1 family member of the author, 3 colleagues from work or studies, 3 personal friends and 1 person completely unknown through a recommendation from a common friend. At the beginning, the goal was to interview 10 parents but at a certain point in the research, the author realized that the answers achieved a certain point of redundancy and decided to stop the interviews after interviewing 8 mothers. Ideally, interviews take place at the parent's house to have a first observation of the baby's environment at home. However, this depends on the preference of the interviewee as the author does not want them to feel pressured at any time.

##### **3.1.2 Decision on the questions**

The interview starts with few personal questions to put the interviewee at ease before starting the conversation and to set up the context as well. The author introduces the subject as a study to understand the current childcare market in Geneva and only at the end explains that it will serve for the feasibility study of developing a crèche. The personal data requested is about the gender and age of the interviewee's child, the region in which they live, the type of childcare service they use and the activity rate of both parents.

These questions help to understand in which region they are looking for a place as the offer is not the same in all neighborhoods. Then, the goal is also to understand if one of the parents has been “forced” to reduce his/her activity rate at work due to a lack of alternatives in terms of childcare solutions.

As per the interview guide, each question is related to a category. This is done to identify what are the main questions and they vary depending on the coherence it has towards the interviewee profile. All the interviews transcripts for the parents’ interviews can be consulted in appendix 2. The author starts the interview with an emotional question asking the interviewee to explain how was the process of obtaining a place, if they obtained one. This opens the discussion and makes them talk more. Question 9 is also an emotional question to put the author in the shoes of the parents and understand what is important for them and what differentiates a “vital”, “expected” and “great” offering for a crèche to have. Then, some questions are added after the first interviews as the author realizes that some aspects not included in the first interview guide seem to be very important for parents, as for example a facilitated process for siblings or the integration program during the first few days in the crèche. For example, the third question, Q3, has been added after the first meeting with a crèche owner, during which the author realizes that it is not something crèches communicate openly to third parties. Therefore, the goal is to see if they communicate this information at least to parents. Even if it is one of the author’s hypothesis, the concept of an onsite crèche within a company is raised by the first parents being interviewed, who mentioned what they think it would be the benefits for them having that option at their work place. Finally, during the interview process, the author realizes that the question “What other options you had in terms of childcare and what would be the financial impact?” is not very useful because the answer comes very often with the previous question. Therefore, this question has been removed from the interview guide.

### **3.1.3 Difficulties in the process**

The main issue is the difference in terms of schedule between the author and the parents. Some mothers are available during nap time around 2pm but this is not always feasible for the author for school and work schedule reasons. Therefore, some interviews are planned in the evening, when the mothers put their child to sleep. Sometimes it is difficult to meet the parents and for many of them it is easier to do the interview by phone, instead of a face to face interview. This is not an ideal situation for the interviewer for different reasons but since finding the expected number of parents to interview becomes a difficult

task, phone interviews are tolerated. The first reason why phone interviews are not suitable from the beginning, is the difficulty to analyze afterwards the results by using the empathy map as it would lose the dimension “Did” and a little bit of “Felt” given that there is not a direct visual contact with the interviewee. Then, parents tend to summarize their answers and reduce their explanations when the interview is done by phone as at home they always have something else to do. This is verified during the interviews as, for the same questions, the phone interview takes normally 10-15 minutes less than a face-to-face interview. The author notices that when the interview is face-to-face, parents block that time, in general half an hour, to be available and they are much more detailed in their answers as they have the time. One face-to-face interview has been different but still interesting from another perspective as the child, 2<sup>1/2</sup> years old, is present. It is difficult to get the real feelings of the mother because when she starts being more detailed in her answers, she stops talking as her daughter is running everywhere and needs her attention.

### **3.1.4 Results**

The data analysis is divided as per the categories mentioned in the interview guide to compare afterwards the results of the different stakeholders regarding the same topic. The first interviews are very important to identify the key words and the important aspects from the parents’ perspective. Then, on the following interviews, the goal is to continue exploring the parents’ opinion and at the same time verify if the outcomes of the first interviews are validated. The last interviews incorporate additional questions of what was said in the previous interviews to test and confirm what was said by the previous interviewees (Merriam 2009). The overall results of the interviews show that the process of obtaining a place in a crèche is a difficult, long and frustrating moment for the parents and even for the mothers during their pregnancy, when they are supposed to enjoy the best moment of their lives. This is an important aspect when deciding that interviews are becoming redundant and the general outcome is very much similar for each mother independently of the region, education, cultural background or income.

### **Market demand**

The goal of the Q1 is to start the interview with an emotional question to open the conversation and put the interviewee at ease so she can talk more openly and give as much details as possible. However, at the end, it turns out that this question is very important for the analysis because as it is known, the first and the last remarks of a conversation are very important. Parents are very open in their answers explaining the

whole process, first from an administrative point of view and then more on how they feel. Some parents obtained a place for their children when they were 3 years old, knowing that the first request was done when the mother was 3 months pregnant. This has an impact on the parents' working life because they need to find a temporary solution, which sometimes becomes even a permanent solution afterwards. One mother mentioned that she did the request when she was 3 months pregnant and her baby obtained a place when he was 5 months. She was very happy about the "surprise". However, it is important to consider that, still, from the moment she did the request and the moment she obtained a place, 10 months passed and this should not be normal as in the meantime the mother has no news about the process. Mothers<sup>4</sup> interviewed often described the process as "annoying", "stressful", "frustrating" and leading them to be "upset". Parents are supposed to renew the request every 3-6 months depending on the Commune and one mother said that it was frustrating because once she forgot to renew the process, which put her at the bottom of the waiting list. The same mother affirmed that she was feeling favoritism in how crèches attribute places. For example, her husband works for a public institution that has two crèches for its employees but the interviewee said that those places were first reserved for people in higher positions in the hierarchy. More than one interviewee had the same feeling towards public crèches, where the price depends on the revenues of parents – approximately 10% depending on the Commune. They said that parents with a higher income had priority because they would pay higher fees due to their revenue, knowing that they are those able to pay a private crèche. During the process of waiting to have a place, parents are forced to look for other options in terms of childcare services and they also try other options to obtain a place quicker. For example, one mother was told that she would obtain a place if she would go and cry at the crèche management and, one of her friends did it and got a place at a crèche! Another mother, said that she was on the waiting list for a long time and she decided to go and see the crèche Director. The mother said that the fact of the Director meeting her daughter and observing that she is a very calm child, would help her to obtain a place sooner and, it worked! One mother even said that the fact of "the process being discouraging, puts a doubt on parenthood". This statement was confirmed by another mother who said that everything is done to put barriers on couples with kids. These strong statements show that the fact of not having an efficient childcare system, can lead to serious consequences in terms of decision making regarding family structure and size, and ultimately in terms of the child development.

---

<sup>4</sup> The parents interviewed were all female and will be called, when talking in general, "mothers".

One assumption to be verified is that the long waiting process can force parents to reduce their activity rate at work in case they do not find a convenient childcare solution for their children. Therefore, Q11 attempts to understand if this statement is valid or not. From the interviews, the result is obvious: the majority of mothers interviewed did not have to choose between working and being at home nor reducing their activity rate due to childcare reasons. Therefore, this assumption is verified and dismissed as it is not validated by the interviewees.

Crèches in Switzerland are well-known for their long waiting lists, making this an important aspect to study. After interviewing the first two crèches, the author realizes that crèche management is not very open to communicate their waiting list, independently of their type of structure. Therefore, Q3 is intended to ask parents if they know what is their position on the waiting list as it is not possible to gather this information through crèches. One mother said that she was 50<sup>th</sup>, another mother was in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> position, but the majority was never told their position on the waiting list. This shows the lack of transparency and trust between crèches and the parents. As mentioned before, one mother had the impression that she obtained a place quite quickly because the baby was born in March and he went to the crèche in August but still, it took 10 months for someone to confirm to the mother that she obtained a place. The interviews results show that the childcare market is quite chaotic from a parental perspective due to the low number of available places and the lack of transparency during the process. The overall perception is still quite pessimist due to the time parents need to wait for a place and the process of finding another solution, which is convenient in terms of logistics, pricing and offering.

### **Work-life balance**

Q1 together with Q4 are very important to understand the work-life balance of the interviewees and their partners, depending on the childcare solution they found for their children. The results show that given the difficulty of obtaining a place, the parents try any kind of solutions, starting from accepting longer home-crèche-work journeys to moving to other Communes, where they know that the process of obtaining a place is quicker. One mother said that she was not obliged to reduce her activity rate because she was already at 50% for others reasons, which were temporary (professional training). However, even if the interviewee said that at the beginning, it appears that it is not the case according to the empathy mapping logic as, after finishing her professional training, the mother continued working at 50% for no reason. This shows that the mothers, and the parents in general, get used to the difficulty of the process and do not realize, maybe because they are from an internal perspective, that it would have been different if a better childcare system was provided in the country. Moreover, during the interviews, mothers

were very often showing a timid smile and face signs of conformity with what they found as a solution and they did not seem being looking to improve the situation. Most of the mothers interviewed found temporary solutions within the family, while waiting to obtain a place, but they also confess that this is sometimes difficult to manage as the family members are not always available and maybe they are not willing to take care of a child on a regular basis. One mother had to make a special request at work to start one hour later as she had to wait for her mother to arrive at home, after working, to take care of the baby. This proves that there could be a form of bias in the answers to Q11 because, it is true that they did not reduce their activity rate, but they had to adapt their working schedule or find more stressful solutions, which ultimately impacted their work-life balance. The feeling perceived, as per the interviews results, is that the mothers are always in a stressful situation during the temporary solution because if a family member cancels last minute, the parent cannot go to work and this can bring serious consequences to the parents at their workplace. In terms of quality of life, it has also an impact. For example, one interviewee's husband had several medical issues and at that time, their baby was not in the crèche and so he had to take care of his daughter because he simply had no choice. However, this situation affected both the medical treatment of the father as well as the safety of his daughter. Here again, the feeling observed through interviewee's facial expressions and answers, is that parents tend to accept the situation, even if it is far from being ideal, just because they have no other solution. Some parents with a lower income are sometimes forced to put at stake the safety and development skills of their children. For example, for one family interviewed, the father works in the afternoon and at night, while the mother works in the morning. Therefore, the child stays with the father in the morning and with mother in the afternoon. However, if we analyze deeper this situation, the moment the father should sleep is when he is taking care of his daughter and this is very dangerous because the father can, as a normal human being, fall asleep and the child of 2<sup>1/2</sup> years old would be on her own.

Finally, the author observed that from the 8 mothers interviewed, only one "rejected" a place in a crèche. The reason is that the mother was working 50% when she applied for the place in a crèche and at that moment she obtained it, she signed a full-time work contract. Therefore, in terms of financial cost for the parents, it was not beneficial to put the child in the crèche anymore and they opted to put him in the care of a nanny known by the family. This is comprehensible from a parents' perspective but depending on the nanny chosen and the activities she would propose, it could have an important impact on the child social and cognitive development skills.



## **Finance/Pricing**

In terms of pricing, the author decided to avoid asking questions about how much parents pay as this would not be relevant, given that childcare fees can widely vary depending on the type of structure (e.g. public, private, etc.) and on the region. However, it is important to know that for public structures the price is computed as a % of the parents' monthly revenue and for private structures it is most of the time a fixed amount per day independently of the parents' revenue. Another reason to avoid "monetary questions" is because it could have a negative impact on the interview manner of answering by breaking the "conversation spirit" of it and removing the "proximity" established between the interviewer and interviewee. However, one mother mentioned spontaneously the price she will pay as of September, when her daughter will be in the crèche on a full-time basis and that will be approximately CHF 3'500.- for a private crèche in the Canton of Vaud.

Q2 is related to financial aspects but from a different perspective – here the author wants to know what the parents receive as a discount, if any, for siblings in case the first child is already in that crèche. The focus is on what parents receive and not what they pay. This question was also asked to crèche Directors and will be analyzed later in this study in chapter 2.2.4 from the perspective of the offer side.

From the demand side (parents), 5 out of the 8 mothers interviewed have at least two children and therefore were eligible to answer this question. However, only 3 of them have the first child in a crèche and applied for the second child to integrate the crèche.

In this question, parents are more open to answer because the perception they have is that they are not telling something confidential because it is not about what they pay but what the crèche offers publicly and at the same time it is still related to what they pay.

The results show that there is not at all a common standard for what should be given as a discount for parents as of the 2<sup>nd</sup> child. The discount offered for interviewees were 50% in a crèche in Lancy, 40% in a crèche in Vernier and 25% in a crèche in Onex – all the three are private-public crèches. Therefore, it can be observed that depending on the crèche and on the region, the advantage for parents can widely vary and become also an aspect of "favoritism" on top of a lack of harmonization on the Canton of Geneva. However, a common practice everywhere, is that siblings have priority in what concerns the waiting list to obtain a place. Nevertheless, if one of the parents becomes unemployed, they lose completely their priority and they are put at the bottom of the waiting list, especially in public crèches where the price paid corresponds to a percentage of the parents' revenue as one mother reported. In this question, a feeling of anger against "favoritism" was perceived, from the mothers' tone of voice and facial

expressions, together with a lack of comprehension regarding the crèche practices. The mother explained that, if you are unemployed you are supposed to be free to start a job the next day but if you do not have the support of the crèche to take care of your child, then you are again stuck up. Another mother said that the facilitated process for the second child is “not nice for those (families) who are waiting to have a place for their first child”. This shows that even if they benefit from the system of a facilitated process, parents are conscious that the system is not totally appropriate for everyone.

### **Offering**

This is one of the most important categories in this study because it will help the author to identify what are the concerns and aspects parents are the most attentive at. The goal is to understand the factors that differentiate what is expected from what makes a great crèche from a parental perspective. In this category, the focus will be on the answers from Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10 and Q12. However, Q12 will be treated on the next category, infrastructure type.

Q6 is an interpretive question and its purpose is to understand what are the different motivation factors for parents behind the desire for their children to integrate a crèche. An interpretive question, is a question where the researcher can verify if what is being said is understood properly and to get more information (Merriam 2009). In this case, it was understood that if parents accept to wait for such a long period to get a place in a crèche is because they want their children to integrate a crèche and therefore the goal is to get more information on “why”. In other words, this question aims at interpreting what are the benefits parents expect from putting their children in a crèche. The most common answers were from a child development and socialization point of view. One mother said that they develop communication skills much quicker because children are much more expressive when they are with other children of their age. The same interviewee added that at home parents tend to say “no” all the time because they see the danger everywhere. However, by being with peers of the same age in the crèche, they develop quicker many skills such as problem solving for example, said the mother. This is an interesting point because it shows that parents are aware of the differences between growing a child at home and in a crèche and the impact it can have on the child’s development process. The second reason is the social benefit in being with other children of their age that come from different families and backgrounds. One mother said that for her the crèche was “reassuring” because her daughter was the first baby in their circle of friends and she was having difficulties in socializing. For example, she was screaming and afraid of other children as she was used to be with adults mainly.

Mothers interviewed said that they saw an improvement in their children development in terms of socialization, communication and learning new creative things by being in the crèche. Another important reason that came out is the fact that crèches are regulated. Parents feel reassured to have a frame established by a public authority regarding the professional skills of supervisors, the good conditions of premises, the quality of food, etc. One assumption the author wanted to verify was that mothers look for any type of childcare service basically to be able to return to their job. This statement was confirmed by a mother who said that for her the main motivation to put her daughter in the crèche is to have “free time” to start working. Even if this could validate the assumption, it was only 1 mother in 8 interviewed who mentioned this aspect. Another interviewee said that for her it was also for practical reasons because her mother was taking care of her daughter but she needed to find another solution. Nevertheless, the mother said that she was looking for a place in a crèche because she had no other options (outside the family circle). This was contradictory to the author’s statement about “any time of childcare service”. Therefore, the author mentioned the option of looking for another type of childcare service such as for example, a nanny. Here was when the mother showed a clear preference for the crèche in terms of development because they learn to speak quicker and they do many activities. This showed that sometimes it is needed to investigate further because for the mother that was her only choice but still the author wanted to understand why this was considered as the only option in terms of childcare. Even if the question was “why would like your baby to integrate a crèche?”, assuming every parent want their children to go to the crèche, one mother said that not everyone want that. For example, she is looking for another option to remove her daughter from the crèche because she is constantly sick. This statement was also verified with another mother who shared the same point of view.

Q7 is a hypothetical question which is similar to the previous one but this time there is no limitations in terms of feasibility or affordability on what parents would desire to have in a crèche. Hypothetical questions are one of the four major categories of questions (Merriam 2009) and it starts with either “What if” or “Suppose”. Its goal is to allow the interviewee to speculate and give a lot of details on how a certain experience should be for them. During the interview process, the author observed that in Q6 the interviewees remained very realistic and most of the time their answers reflected what already existed in the market. However, the transition from Q6 to Q7 is quite evident both in their answers as well as in their gestures and tone of voice. In Q7, interviewees felt free to dream and imagine anything they could ask a crèche to have, which before they did not “dare” as they kept in their minds the limitations of the current market offer. From the 8 mothers interviewed, 5 of them would like to have an international approach (e.g. bilingual crèche)

in their children's crèche, which is something none of them mentioned in Q6, probably as they do not have that in the crèche in which are their children now. Two mothers mentioned that they would prefer a structure offering flexibility in terms of opening hours, even if this would mean to pay a higher price. In fact, they said that this would help them to be less stressed and not have the impression that if not picked-up at a precise hour, their children would be put in the street. Another interviewee said that she would love a crèche with cameras during the day to see her child at any time from wherever she would be. Questioned if she thinks employees will accept it or not, she said that it is the same situation in shops; there are cameras all the time but what it is important to know that it is for security reasons and not to control the employees. Then, this question was asked to another mother who had that option in a crèche, in another country, to verify if it would be something positive for mothers. This mother said it was "spectacular" because she could see her daughter from her computer anytime and see the activities she was doing. The interviewee added that she felt more reassured because she could see if her daughter was interacting with other children. It was very interesting to see that for a question in which we expect answers more related to the "extra services" a great crèche could offer, one interviewee mentioned something that should be expected by default from a childcare institution, which it is to protect the health of children. The mother said that she wanted a place where her daughter could go and will not be sick, which is unfortunately not the case now. Therefore, this shows that parents' requests and desires depend very much what is the current service they have. For example, this interviewee's daughter is constantly sick since when she entered the crèche and it is not manageable anymore to the point that the mother is looking to remove her daughter from that crèche and find another option. Finally, this question was the first moment in the interview when the author saw parents mentioning some desired aspects that would not directly impact the well-being of their children but would be less stressful for themselves and will help them in terms of work-life balance.

Q8 is intended to understand from all the aspects mentioned before, which are the most important to consider for parent when selecting the crèche. Compared to the previous question, Q8 has again an aspect of closest reality as it considers the current market offer. The purpose of this question is to identify what is crucial for parents, or in other words, what are the factors expected from any crèche. The key words that were the most frequent in the interviewee's answers were the benevolence of supervisors, different and creative activities, the premises and the cleanliness. For some parents, opening hours are also crucial depending on their jobs because most crèches close between 17h30-18h30 and if the parents work in commercial centers they cannot be free before 19h00. The interesting aspect of this argument is that the mother who mentioned it works in an

office and has flexible working hours but still she mentioned this aspect that could affect other mothers. Again, there is this feeling of empathy for other parents who are in a less favorable situation, as it was the case for the facilitated admission process for the 2<sup>nd</sup> child. One mother said that she did not know any crèche in her Commune and therefore her selection was based on proximity. Parents tend to trust very much the State and the control done behind, which leads them to think that all crèches have all the same practices. However, after interviewing different crèches the author understood that even if the crèches belong to the same Commune, they can be very different in their management and in their daily offering. Finally, nutrition and safety aspects have been mentioned in all the three questions because it is something parents are very attentive at, independently of the cost it represents, and they expect every crèche to offer a good nutrition program as well as a safe place for their children.

The following question, Q9, is an emotional question which aims at putting the author in the shoes of the interviewee and understand their concerns when leaving their child in a crèche, especially for the first time. This question is very similar to the previous one but here, the intonation of the interviewer's voice is different; the tone of the voice is softer and there is eye contact. The purpose of this is to give parents the impression that they can openly express what are the real worries inside them and ideally obtain information that was not mentioned until this point. For example, in the previous questions many mothers mentioned that they wanted their children to be in a crèche for socialization purposes but they did not mention that they were afraid of the integration of their children before being fully sociable. However, in Q9, 50% of mothers mentioned that they were worried about the integration process of their children either in terms of language, food or simply feeling alone without the parents. On top of that, 2 out of the 8 mothers interviewed said that they were also afraid of someone doing harm to their children because they are so small that they cannot speak and tell them in case something happens. The goal is then to verify if parents believe that an integration program with them would be useful. Interviewees agreed that it is something that helps in the process and it is something that already existed in Geneva. However, the feeling perceived from the parents is not fully positive as when asked to give more details about the process, one mother said that it was very complicated in terms of logistics for those parents who are working because they needed to take days off. Another mother said that it helps but the current program is not enough to be fully reassured that the baby will be well integrated. The type of activities proposed were also a concern for parents and a reason why they feel more reassured by registering their children in a crèche rather than with a nanny. Parents tend to believe that nannies will put their children in front of a TV screen the whole day and not do activities that would help their development. Sleep is very

important in child development but interestingly, only one mother mentioned this as a concern. She was a little concerned because in the crèche her daughter used to sleep much less than at home but she felt reassured when they told her that in any case the rhythm of each baby is respect and they would not wake up the baby if he/she did not want to. Then, security is an important aspect in childcare and a reason why control and a frame is needed in this industry. However, only one mother mentioned the security of entering the premises, which was quite surprising. The interviewee said that she did not feel reassured because to enter the crèche you have a 4-digit code as for any apartment and it does not change very often, which makes it easy to know it and enter in the building without permission. This was verified with another mother who said that she has the same security system in her daughter's crèche and the code changes only once per year. The interviewee who mentioned this aspect ended her answer with an interesting statement, which shows the frustration of parents. She said "The issue in Geneva (Canton) is that you accept because you are obliged to, you do not have alternatives – you do not go to that crèche because you like their approach, it is because is the one in which you obtained a place". However, the general impression from this question is that if the child is happy to go to the crèche every day, parents are reassured. Interviewees very often smiled at the end of this question and concluded with a positive statement, as for example "I know she is very well integrated (now)" just after saying their initial concern.

### **Educational program**

In the interview guide, there are two questions related to this category. The first is the hypothetical question Q7, which is indirect because it does not mention "educational program" and therefore its purpose is to observe if parents mention spontaneously this aspect in their concept of "ideal crèche". Then, Q10 is a direct question that asks parents for their opinion about this. Q10 is an ideal question, which asks for the opinion of the interviewee and starts with "What you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like?". The purpose of this question is to understand if parents have thought about child development and, in case this is verified and confirmed, what are the aspects they would like the educational program to be made of (Merriam 2009). In terms of well-known educational programs, the only one that appeared very often in their answers was Montessori. Sometimes, mothers did not know on what it consists exactly but they said that it is "kind of a trend" now to talk about Montessori. Two mothers interviewed knew a little bit about it and said that what they like about Montessori educational program, is that the child is at the center and independent to choose the type

of activities he wants to do. Another mother said that she likes Montessori because it strengthens the fact that each child should be self-confident and valued considering that they are all different. On the other hand, most of the interviewees did not precise one type of educational program but they mentioned instead what type of activities and aspects their ideal educational program should have to be the ideal crèche in terms of child development. Creative activities were a common answer as a very important aspect for mothers interviewed, with the purpose of discovering new things that would not be possible at home, developing certain skills and being in contact with the nature. One mother gave as an example, giving a Lego box to a child and leave him build whatever he wants without obliging him to follow strictly the instructions. The same mother said that she would like to have more scientific and intellectual activities for her son, which will help them to challenge things in the future. It is important to consider that the child she is referring to is almost 5 years old and therefore, this would probably not be appropriate for a baby. For this reason, it was very important to ask the introductory questions about the age of their children and if it is her first child or not to understand the context as it will have an impact on their answers. Very often interviewees answered these questions referring to what the crèche, in which their child is, proposes and therefore they did not answer the question by giving their opinion but instead, they based their opinion in what they know is done. For example, one mother said that she appreciates the nutritional program in the crèche where her daughter is because they try to include as much ingredients as possible in the nutrition of children by cooking homemade food. However, parents are the ones that need to introduce the ingredient to the child at home for the first time. Another mother mentioned that she likes that her 17-months son is learning the sign language. However, those two aspects, which are fully appropriate as an answer, would not necessarily come from those two mothers if they would not have experienced it at the crèche already. Finally, sometimes parents do not know any educational program and have no preference on the type of activities and this shows that for some parents the reason why they look for a childcare service is simply to be able to work more.

### **Infrastructure type**

There are four questions from which the author can gather interesting insights and information related to this category: Q7, Q8, Q10 and Q12. However, the last question is the most important because it asks directly for the parents' opinion about an onsite crèche in a company (crèche en entreprise). It is important to differentiate a crèche within the premises of the company from a company crèche (crèche d'entreprise), which means that is an outside crèche which has places reserved for that company employees, either

exclusively or in common with other companies. In this study, the author wants to focus on the first option from a parents' perspective. The second option will be studied from the crèche point of view by interviewing one type of each (exclusively reserved places and in common with other companies or the public). This question was not part of the first interview guide but was added after the first interviews as the author realized that the concept was well appreciated by parents. "Great", "perfect option" and "practical" were the most common words in their answers. However, 2 out of the 8 mothers said that it would be great to have the baby on site but this concept would be feasible only for companies of a certain size. The most common reason for the concept to be fully accepted is that parents feel much more reassured as they know their child is not far away from them and they have the possibility to share a moment with their child at any time and even if something happens they are close to them. One mother said that it is "torturous to leave your child for a long time without seeing him" and therefore with an onsite crèche you have the possibility to "go down, breastfeed your child and go back to work with a peace of mind". She added that with this option, companies benefit as well because employees are happier, less stressed and ultimately it increases the loyalty of the employee as you become a "prisoner of the company". Even if the term employed by the interviewee sounds negative, she was smiling and was referring to it as a positive thing. This statement was verified with another interviewee who said that she has friend who quit her job to find a job near the crèche where they obtained a place. An interesting insight came from an interviewee who said that she takes 45 minutes with public transportation from their workplace to the crèche to pick-up her son and therefore those 45 minutes are lost time. However, having the child onsite means that in less than 5 minutes she is with her son and can enjoy the way home together. In consequence, this has a clear impact on work-life balance for parents in terms of quality time spent with the family. One last reason why the author decided to focus on an onsite crèche and not a company crèche is because the perception received from parents is quite negative about the second option. For example, two mothers mentioned the same institution that has 2 exclusive company crèches and said that it was impossible to obtain a place, one because of favoritism in who is eligible to get a place and the other because she was conscious that the number of employees was way to big compared to the places available in those crèches. Another mother said that company crèches that are not exclusive, but which have a certain number of places reserved, are not well perceived as parents not working for that company have the impression they are being penalized.



### **3.2 Crèche owners/directors' point of view**

The crèches represent the “offer” as parents represent the “demand” in the childcare industry and this makes them a key stakeholder to be interviewed in this study. The goal in interviewing crèche owners/directors is to interpret and understand what are the encouraging factors to open or manage a crèche from a market demand perspective and what are the potential barriers to achieve this. In other words, this interview attempts to explore if there is a high demand for places in crèches and identify what are the State restrictions that prevent new crèches to open and respond to the market needs. Then, the interviews should also help in identifying what are the operational costs of running a crèche and the different pedagogical aspects that need to be considered when creating the best childhood experience and memories for the children.

#### **3.2.1 Decision on the sample and environment**

The aim is to interview crèche owners and/or crèche directors in the canton of Geneva or, exceptionally, in the Canton of Vaud as otherwise the business model could be too different as each canton has its own regulations about childcare. There are two main attributes to be eligible to participate in the interview: having opened a private crèche or managing a public, private or company crèche.

The goal is to interview 5 crèches having different business models and different types structures (e.g. private, public-private, public-private with partnerships with companies and company crèches). From the 5 crèches interviewed, for 3 of them the author obtained the contacts thanks to professors and administrative staff at the HEG and the other two were simply contacted by email. The author wants to interview different types of structures because a 100% private crèche does not function in the same manner as a company or a public crèche and therefore they do not encounter the same barriers (e.g. funds, waiting list, etc.). Therefore, the objective is to understand if there are significant discrepancies in their answers depending on their structure and, in case this is verified and confirmed, what is the most beneficial structure for a crèche owner.

Interviews will ideally take place at the crèches premises for the author to have the opportunity to go on the field and observe directly the infrastructure. Contrary to parents' interviews, phone interviews are not recommended because there will be no other opportunity to see the premises and therefore this will be used only in case this is the only option.

### **3.2.2 Decision on the questions**

The interview starts with a short introduction of the crèche and some characteristics that differentiate it from the others. The idea behind this is to put the interviewee at ease by asking them to talk about their project, the same way parents are asked some personal questions at the beginning. The questions are also linked to at least one category and most of them are the same as in the interviews for the parents, as the objective is to obtain information from both perspectives and identify if their answers are similar or completely different depending on the person interviewed. The analysis of the answers per category will also be helpful to see if there are differences on the interviewee's answers depending on the type of crèche managed. On Q3, the word "license" has been replaced by "authorization" after the first interviews because the author realized that this is the correct word used in the childcare industry. Q5 helps to understand what are the advantages of each type of structure to choose the most appropriate one for the discussion part of this study. The outcome from parents' interviews was that it is very difficult for them to reconcile professional and family life if they do not have a place in a crèche. Q6 in the crèche interview guide aims at knowing what does each crèche offer to reassure parents on this aspect and allow them to go to work with a peace of mind. The category "market demand" is also very important in this interview and, from the parents' interviews, results showed that the demand is significant and the process to obtain a place is long. Therefore, Q9 and Q10 aim at understanding what is the crèche management perception of the market demand and interpreting if this is realistic or not. Finally, the interview ends with an open question aiming at understanding how the crèches interviewed are different and what makes them a great crèche. The objective is to compare afterwards if this corresponds to what parents believe a great crèche is.

### **3.2.3 Difficulties in the process**

The main difficulty is to have access to crèche owners and directors in different regions of the Canton. Most of the interviewees were recommended by the author's network and therefore regions were not selected. The idea was to have a diversity in terms of geographic regions but given this difficulty, the author interviewed one crèche in Le Grand-Saconnex, one in the city of Genève, one in the Canton of Vaud and two crèches in Lancy. It is not perfect to have two crèches out of 5 in the same area but at the end their answers were not always similar, which resulted interesting to analyze. Another main difficulty is to match with the interviewees' busy schedule as crèches owners or directors. As mentioned before, the goal is to meet them in person and physically see the crèche by going on the field. However, the first interviewee was not in Geneva at the time the author started the interviews and therefore the interview was conducted by

phone. This is not ideal because the author cannot see the crèche premises and it is also difficult to analyze the interview by using the empathy map as some aspects cannot be observed. However, the interviewee was very detailed in his answers and was very open and interested in the study, which facilitated the process of obtaining the maximum of relevant information. There is one question in the interview guide that asked directly “what is the current waiting list to obtain a place in the crèche?”, aiming at understanding the market demand from the perspective of the crèches management. Rapidly the author realizes that this question is not very well perceived as interviewees are not communicating openly and avoid the question. For this reason, the author decides to add this question in the parents’ interview to see if it is easier to obtain the information from the parents. Each interview was a one-to-one meeting, except the last one where there were two directors for the same crèche due to the big size of the institution. This environment was a little destabilizing for the author and impacted also the interview flow because sometimes one director had a different opinion compared to the other given their non-verbal communication but then, they were influenced if the other person started answering first and their answers sometimes were significantly shorter compared to individual interviews, for example.

### 3.2.4 Results

As for the interviews with parents, this section will analyze the results of the interviews by category of question. On top of that, the author will analyze the answers of each type of structure individually and at the same time do a comparison of the outcomes to interpret what are the main similarities and differences in their answers. In this study, the following types of structures have been interviewed and will thus be analyzed:

- **Type 1:** Privately owned crèches (one in the Le Grand-Saconnex and one in Canton of Vaud);
- **Type 2:** Public-Private crèches which belong to a private association but benefiting from a financial subvention from the Commune (Lancy);
- **Type 3:** Public-Private crèches which belong to a private association, benefiting from a financial subvention from the Commune and having places reserved for two companies (Lancy);
- **Type 4:** Company crèche (City of Geneva);

### Offering

As for parents, this category is very important in the study to identify what is offered by the crèches present in the market and how they try to differentiate from each other. The following questions are related to this category: Q1, Q6, Q7, Q11 and Q16. The first

question, Q1, is an open question to make the interviewee talk about the crèche and identify what are the aspects they mention in the first place. The results show that they start by mentioning how many children they welcome, the age range of groups, the type of structure and who are the “employers” behind it. Therefore, here below is a summary of the data received during the interview and completed with the information from their websites.

**Table 3: Profiles of the crèches interviewed**

	Structure type	Subvention	Number of children (capacity)	Number of employees	Daily price (100% base)
<b>Crèche 1</b>	Private	No	25	10*	CHF 135.-
<b>Crèche 2</b>	Company crèche	Yes – the company	67 + 63 in the other site	N/A	Based on parents' revenues
<b>Crèche 3</b>	Private (in Canton of Vaud)	No	66	20	CHF 145.-*
<b>Crèche 4</b>	Public-Private	Yes – the Commune	90 (daily) 120 (weekly)	45	Based on parents' revenues
<b>Crèche 5</b>	Public-Private	Yes – the Commune	118 (daily)	56*	Based on parents' revenues

*\*information taken from the crèche website*

When asked to introduce their crèche, interviewees seemed to feel very proud to mention the number of children they welcome, either if it is a huge or small number. For example, the first crèche interviewed welcomes 25 children and the director explained that this is their goal: to have multiple infrastructures but each one with a limited number of children to keep the “family side” of their crèche. On the other hand, the last two crèches to be interviewed were very proud to welcome a huge number of children per day, 90 and 118 respectively, and considered this an added value as they can help more families in reconciling professional and personal life. This was particularly the case of the crèche that has places reserved for employees of two companies. Then, the 3<sup>rd</sup> crèche to be interviewed is a company crèche, counting with two sites. They can be considered as “onsite” because they are next to each building of the company, even if not inside the building. This crèche is subsidized by the company, which is a public institution, for the

benefit of its personnel. However, even if the two sites together welcome daily 130 children, this is not a huge number compared to the number of employees of the institution, which are more than 11'000<sup>5</sup>. From the results of parents' interviews, security seemed to be very important and sometimes a little neglected by the crèches, mainly public ones, for example in terms of access to the premises. Therefore, the author decided to interview a modern and private crèche in the Canton of Vaud about their offering in terms of security. The crèche owner explained that they have two floors but parents or third parties can enter the premises only by the reception, where there is always someone. Otherwise, parents have a personal badge to enter and the management can control who entered at what time. The crèche owner said that the decision was not easy because it was difficult to please everyone as the badge in a format of a credit card was first not very well perceived but the other option would be digital print and for technical reasons this was not feasible. In terms of safety for children, the author could observe during the crèche tour that providing children with a safe place is a priority for that crèche. Both inside the crèche and in the garden, floors are made of a special material to absorb the shock, the plugs and doorknobs are high so that children do not have access to it and the cleaning products are bio without alcohol in case there is an incident and the child touches it.

Finally, the last question of the interview, Q16, is very important as it aims at understanding what are the differentiation points of each crèche and verifying if the aspects mentioned in this question correspond to the important aspects parents look at when selecting a crèche for their children. The first private crèche to be interviewed said that their differentiation is the fact of having a "family size" crèche with a limited number of children of 25. The crèche director explained that for them, it is important to know personally each child, their birthdays, their parents' jobs, etc. This is valuable and reassuring for parents in terms of security because, for example, educators will not easily forget children when doing an activity. On the other hand, for the public-private crèche that places reserved for two companies, their differentiation point is to be able to welcome many children daily and having two groups for each age range, instead of one group.

The other public-private crèche said that what differentiates them is the attention they pay to families in difficulties and how they are interested in the individual needs of each child, even if they welcome daily 90 children. This crèche invests a lot of resources in prevention programs for children in a situation of handicap and for example they teach to young babies the sign language. In general, the main differentiation point for each

---

<sup>5</sup> Data from the company website, 2018. Company name not disclosed for confidentiality reasons.

crèche is their educational program, often mentioned by interviewees as “the color of the institution”, and the pedagogy they chose to influence it. One interviewee said that this is “unique to each crèche” and it was verified by the other directors who said that they do not want to be influenced only by Montessori for example but they prefer to take ideas from different approaches and adapt it to the needs of each child. Another interviewee said that the goal of a crèche is always to welcome children but what differentiates them is how they organize their days as well as the activities they choose.

### **Cost/Benefit relationship**

This category aims at identifying what are the motivational factors and barriers regarding the feasibility of opening or managing a crèche and consequently understanding if the relationship cost/benefit is positive or negative. First, the author asks directly interviewees what were their encouraging factors to be where they are today in order to understand the interviewee’s position and the context. For example, the first person being interviewed is a business man who bought a private crèche upon retirement of the previous director because his wife has been an educator in childcare for several years and she wanted to become a director. The interviewee confirmed that to open one crèche is very difficult as it requires lots of funds and to reduce the financial investment it was more beneficial to buy one already operating and with the children registered since the beginning. Then, the two directors who were interviewed at the same time said two different answers. One said that the motivation behind becoming a director was to see a different type of management. She explained that it is very different to be with the families and children compared to be from the employees’ perspective and therefore, she wanted to see the management from another perspective. The second director added that for her the reason was simply to evolve professionally. In this category, the author sees a clear contrast in the answers depending on the type of structure the director was managing; some were very optimistic and some did not share the same opinion. For example, even before starting the interview, the director of the company crèche was very surprised that a person coming from a business academic background would be interested in childcare institutions because she affirmed that “a crèche is not going in that direction (as a business) but to the opposite because a crèche is not supposed to make profit”.

However, the director of one of the public-private crèches disagrees with this affirmation as, in her situation, her motivation to become a director was because she thinks a crèche “is like a company” because there is team management, project management, business aspects, HR, budget and communication with stakeholders. The only difference is that this “company” is in the social domain. These answers clearly show that directors of

crèches can have different opinions based on their context and especially on the type of structure they manage.

Then, the next question, Q4, is an interpretive question to ensure the author understood correctly, after asking about the process of obtaining the authorization, that State requirements are an important damper in the development of new crèches. However, this question also aims at obtaining more information about the interviewee's opinion to verify if the discouragement coming from State restrictions is indeed realistic or is more likely to be an assumption from the author. In this question, all the interviewees agreed that it is a reality that restrictions reduce opportunities for entrepreneurs but, at the same time, they find it adequate considering that they work for the wellbeing of children. Two different interviewees mentioned, as an important discouragement factor, the financial investment as financial charges are high for both the crèche and parents. The owner of a private crèche added that many private crèches close after 5-6 years because they do not have enough revenues to cover their costs and for this reason the State requests every new crèche to show their financing model for 7 years. The interviewee was contacted by some companies in the region, which wanted to develop an onsite crèche, but when they understood the investment needed and the restrictions, they never contacted again the crèche. Then, another director said that entrepreneurs do not realize how much it costs and how difficult it is to obtain the authorization, especially because you need to have professional experience in the field. She added that, there are some significant fixed costs such as rent and salaries that cannot be reduced, making a crèche not profitable and being a reason why this should be a duty of the Commune to invest on the social. Finally, the director of the company crèche said that there is still a subvention from the Commune, which is quite high, and aims at encouraging the development of new crèches. However, she pursued, this happens because there are many regulations and there are a lot of restrictions to benefit from this subvention, which is temporary and not on the long-term. For example, the owner of the crèche in the Canton of Vaud said that she benefited from a financial aid from the State for the first two years of her crèche.

### **State requirements**

There are two questions in the interview guide exclusively related to this category. The first, Q3, is an open question for the author to understand how is the process of obtaining an authorization to open or manage a crèche and the other one, Q15, is to verify if there is a regular control from the State once the authorization is granted or if it is simply a one-time control. Contrary to the author's assumption, authorizations are issued by the SASAJ to the management and personnel and not to the institution on itself. This

authorization is needed to open a new crèche or to take over from a previous management and it can be withdrawn at any time. One interviewee confirmed that this (withdraw) happens quite often. The crèche owner from the Canton of Vaud said that she waited 3 years to obtain all the authorizations and it happened one week before the opening day. This shows that crèches, as well as parents, are forced to accept the market characteristics and adapt to it. She pursued saying that it is a very strict process because every aspect is controlled and deviation from the standards is not allowed. For example, this crèche owner had to destroy a wall to redo the room because there was 1.5 squared meters missing. An interesting result from the interviews is that professional experience is required to be a director of a crèche but there is not a minimum requirement about the diploma. Regarding the ratio between the number of educators compared to the number of assistants there is also an important contrast between Geneva and Vaud, because in Geneva, crèches need to hire almost twice the number of educators compared to the assistants and therefore this represents an important financial charge for crèche owners. The process is complex given the huge number of regulations and everything is constantly changing and sometimes crèche directors are not able to answer because they do not know. Therefore, they refer directly to the SASAJ website, which will be studied in the next section of this analysis.

Then, in Q15, the author verified that there is a regular control from the authorities either every year or every two years. All interviewees agreed that it is a very large audit controlling the minimum space, furniture, security, diplomas of the educational team, number of children per education, hygiene standards, etc. Interviewees explained that recently the inspector also started controlling the pedagogical program by spending one full-day at least with educators and observing how they organize their days. On top of that, subsidized crèches must submit their annual budget to the Commune for review and approval. However, one interviewee said that this is more a formality because they do not need to justify if they request for example an increase in their actual subvention. The author asked the owner of the private crèche if there is a ranking for best practices in the childcare industry. The interviewee said that there is not a ranking but this would be something interesting to have and that she would appreciate as it exists for many other businesses such as hotels or restaurants. This question was purposely only asked to this crèche owner because her vision is more on a business perspective, which makes it interesting for this study.

### **Infrastructure type**

From the parents' perspective, the author asked an ideal question to understand what would be important for them in selecting an infrastructure type without any restrictions



on their choice. From the crèche perspective, the author was interested in identifying the advantages and disadvantages in the choice of their type of infrastructure to understand which type of crèche, from those interviewed, as the most profitable cost/benefit relationship. For this reason, the Q5 of the interview guide is related to both categories, infrastructure type and cost/benefit relationship. In general, all interviewees defended the type of crèche they are managing and the aspects that emerged the most in this question were autonomy in the management and the financial perspective. For example, the owner of a private crèche mentioned that being a private crèche you have the autonomy to take the decisions, even in terms of pricing because it is a fixed price decided by the crèche and not a percentage in terms of revenue. Then, the director of the company crèche interviewed affirmed that, today 90-95% of the crèches are private benefiting from a subvention because otherwise it would have been difficult to operate and survive. Another crèche director even said that she was persuaded that there are not anymore 100% private crèches in the Canton given the fact that it is not a profitable business. The two public-private crèches said that their infrastructure type is the “correct equilibrium” because being a 100% private crèche makes it very difficult to operate from a financial perspective and being 100% public would lead to a “risk of standardization”. They pursued saying that being a public-private crèche means that they benefit from the financial support of the Commune, while being autonomous in their decisions. For example, in terms of pedagogical choices, it is important when deciding in order to preserve the uniqueness and the “color” of each institution. Another advantage of being subsidized by the Commune is that crèches can establish a good collaboration and benefit from other things such as gardening or places for Communal events. The above aspects were verified with the crèche owner of a recent 100% private crèche that opened 3 years ago. The interviewee said that she wanted to be public-private for the reasons mentioned above but the Commune was not interested. This was problematic for the crèche because since the beginning they wanted to build a huge place to be able to increase the capacity of children welcomed in the future, if the demand for places would increase and therefore they would just need to do a request to welcome more children and the premises would already have been adequate since the beginning. Another advantage of being a private crèche, from an interviewee’s point of view, is that you can accept children from anywhere in the Canton and even from abroad. On the contrary, if you are subsidized by the Commune, you need to stick to the children living in the Commune from which you obtained the funds. Finally, one crèche owner concluded that independently of the infrastructure being public or private, opening a crèche is a complicated project because the public have longer waiting lists and the private must have higher prices to survive.

The second question related to this category, Q12, aims at understanding if crèche directors perceive a trend in the infrastructure preference of parents in terms of financial cost. For this, the author will use a “devil’s advocate” type of question as this could be considered a controversial topic depending on the interviewee and therefore it aims at supporting the question with a statement of someone else in the same position as the interviewee to ensure they give their own opinion and not feeling sensitive about the issue (Merriam 2009). Therefore, the question starts with “someone would say that” and, for this question specifically, the author uses a quote from Ms. Castelli, director of the crèche Scoubidou, who said that “it is difficult for a private crèche to keep their clients on the long-term because as soon as they obtain a place in a public crèche they move away” (PME Magazine 2013). The owner of a private crèche confirmed this statement as it happened in his crèche. However, he said that sometimes it is not advantageous depending on the revenue of parents as when they go in a public crèche, they do not pay a fixed price but a percentage of their revenue. On the other hand, as the director of the company crèche said, in a private crèche you can pay a pension of CHF 3’000.- monthly, which can represent a motivation for parents to change for a public infrastructure. These answers were supported by the director of the public-private crèche who affirmed that she has children who are in her waiting list while they are in a private crèche already. She continued saying that this happens for two reasons: first, for financial purposes and second to be closest to home as private crèches accept children from everywhere, sometimes they live far away from the crèche. On top of that, the interviewee said that there is the same issue between crèches and kindergartens of the same Commune because parents have a place in a kindergarten but as the crèche responds better to their needs, they stay in the waiting list for crèches at the same time. Therefore, the Commune decided to do annual contracts between parents and kindergartens to ensure they do not remove their children in during the year. Surprisingly, the owner of one private crèche said that “it goes on both sides” because some companies create partnerships with public institutions to reserve places for their employees and maybe these employees could afford a place in a private crèche. This is an issue for other parents who are forced to pay a place in a private crèche putting them in difficult situations and obliging them to accept it as they do not have another option.

### **Company crèche**

This question was not part of the initially planned interview guide but, as for parents’ interviews, interviewees mentioned themselves the topic and therefore the author decided to ask for the opinion of the others crèche owners and directors. The first person to mention the company crèche was the director of the company crèche interviewed in

Geneva, who explained that in her opinion, companies should be accountable to develop their own crèche, or at least participate in subventions, and she pursued saying that this would also be “an added value for the company because it will keep the employees loyal”. She described it as a “win-win situation” because companies want experience employees to stay in the long-term and individuals do not want to pay extra taxes for childcare purpose. Then, the owner of the private crèche in Vaud said that she approached two multinational companies in the region but they did not show any interest to discuss. However, the crèche welcomes children of 10-15 employees of these two companies. Later these two companies approached her to open their own crèche, but when they realized all the requirements and the investment needed, they did not come back to her. Until now, the results from parents’ and crèches interviews were quite optimistic towards company crèches but in the last interview with the public-private crèche that has partnerships with companies, an interesting aspect emerged. The interviewee said that in the past their crèche was an onsite crèche for a Swiss bank but it was very difficult to operate with only the children from its employees and therefore they decided to become a public-private crèche with partnerships. The same interviewee said that in her opinion, it is the responsibility of the Commune to develop enough crèches but she confirmed that Communal crèches with partnerships with companies function very well and are more and more common.

### **Work-life balance**

Q6 is very important as it refers to the basic definition of what is childcare, which is taking care of children while parents go to work. In other words, parents should be able to reconcile professional and personal life. Therefore, the author decided to ask crèche owners/directors what do they offer to make this possible for parents. The main answer is related to the opening hours, which from the parents’ interviews was showed to be an important aspect for them. However, there were different hour ranges that came up in this question; for example, a private crèche interviewed opens from 7h30 to 18h00, the company crèche opens from 6h30 to 20h00 and the public-private crèche with places reserved for companies opens from 7h00 to 18h30. This shows that there are not the same time ranges everywhere and all of them “sell” this aspect as an added-value for parents. However, if taken the example of a parent who works in a shop and finishes at 19h00, he can only benefit from the opening hours of one from these three crèches. Therefore, this aspect is quite subjective and depends on the working schedule of parents. The owner of the private crèche said that the constraints to open more time is the funds it requests and the willingness of educators to work on irregular schedules.

One crèche director rapidly said that their added-value in terms of work-life balance is being open 225 days per year but there is another crèche in the same Commune, which does not close at all during summer and therefore this last crèche has the most added-value for parents. Then, one crèche owner mentioned that they help parent reconcile work and family because when their children are sick, they contact the parents to inform them but they keep the children as they have enough room to isolate them until the parents finish at work. She added that in her crèche they are very much “solution oriented” and they work together with parents to create a trustful relationship because, for example, in other crèches if a child is sick the parents need to pick up their child immediately. Two crèches said that their added-value in terms of work-life balance is that they propose flexible subscriptions “souscriptions à la carte”, which are intended to help parents who have irregular working hours or work part-time. On top of that, the public-private crèche (without partnerships with companies) said that if the parents lose their job, they can secure their full-time place for 1 year in case the parent finds a new position, but in the meantime, they reduce the rate to two days, which is the minimum.

### **Educational program**

In this category, the author wants to understand two main points regarding such an important aspect, which is educational program. The first is to verify if there is a requirement from the State on the type of activities a crèche should propose and the second is to understand how an educational program is defined within a crèche and who decides it.

For the first question, Q7, the answer was very clear and simple: all interviewees said that there is not an obligation from the State on the type of activities but it should in any case respect the well-being of children and help their development. However, the director of the company crèche said that sometimes certain activities can be “imposed” by the association committee if, for example, the association wants to follow a precise program and go on a certain direction.

Then, in terms of educational program, the director of the company crèche said that they have an obligation to show it to the SASAJ for approval, and this statement was also verified with another director. All crèche owners and directors agreed that they have a certain freedom on who they chose to influence their educational project. None of the five crèches interviewed have one specific influencer or program but, instead, they adapt it to their different needs to create a personalized and stimulating environment for children. This is what characterizes every crèche and is fundamental for the well-functioning of each institution, said one director. The owner of the private crèche in

Geneva said that their goal is to make children discover new things and be in contact with the nature. For example, he said that they have an agreement with children that they taste everything and then if they do not like it they are not forced to continue eating. One of the public-private crèches interviewed is very much focused on children's handicaps and for example they teach the sign language to all their children from a very young age. Again, this crèche mentioned as well that they do not force children to do something they do not want but they encourage them to do weekly activities that cover each domain of a child's development process. In terms of influencers, the most common in their answers were Montessori, followed by Loczy and Pikler. All the interviewees agreed that they work on the educational program together with the participation of the educational team who is daily "on the field" and observe children's development and preferences. They also agreed that their pedagogy should evolve over time and be continuously adapted to the needs of each child.

### **Market demand**

This category aims at understanding how crèche directors and owners perceive the current market demand for a place in a crèche and how do they deal with it in terms of current waiting list. The goal is also to identify if there are opportunities of collaboration between crèches for the development of new infrastructures. For this, the author decided to ask it using a devil's advocate question, Q9, which refers to the statement of Ms. Lax, the founder of the concept Little Green House about the "market demand being so high that there is not the feeling of pressure from the competition" (PME Magazine, 2013). The idea of using this type of questions is because, if the author would ask directly if there is a collaboration between crèches, their answers would probably be too much short and optimistic to say what the author would like to hear. However, by using the devil's advocate question, they are judging the statement of someone else, who is not in front of them and who, at the end, is their own "competitor" and therefore they are more likely to give details and be more realistic to confront this argument. The first crèche owner being interviewed said that somehow this is true but it is important to consider the different gaps in terms of quality. He could not give more details for confidentiality reasons, but he explained some crèches are not considered as competition because those crèches are quite low in terms of quality standards. Then, the owner of the other private crèche in the Canton of Vaud confirmed the veracity of Ms. Lax's statement and she explained that they do not feel the competition because the offering of each crèche is different, as well as their premises and the educational program. However, they all have the same goal, which is to welcome children. The interviewee said that there is a

collaboration between crèches if for example one has a long waiting list, they contact another crèche to take care of the children while waiting for an available place. Another interviewee said that this system of replacement is more for Communal crèches and she confirmed that there is a collaboration between the management of the four crèches in the Commune of Lancy, where they share their duties, documents and ideas, even if they are all independent in the decision-making process.

The next question on the interview guide, Q10, is very important to understand the current market demand crèches are facing. All the crèches interviewed in the Canton of Geneva said that they all have a waiting list. On the contrary, the private crèche that opened three years ago in the Canton of Vaud said that they do not have yet a waiting list to obtain a place in their crèche but they start having one for the group of babies as it is the group that is more rapidly filled in and for the longest period of time. For those crèches in Geneva, none of the interviewees gave a concrete answer but they all affirmed having one waiting list. The author realized that, after confirming that they have a waiting list, they followed their answer with a positive statement. For example, the owner of a private crèche said openly that they have one waiting list about which he cannot disclose more information and then, he pursued with a positive argument saying that this is because they are not linked to a geographic region as they accept children from everywhere and because they want to keep the “family size” as they welcome 25 children. Then, the director of one of the public-private crèche said that they are “confronted with the reality” and therefore they have a significant waiting list independently of the number of children they welcome, which is 118 daily. The interviewee pursued with a positive argument saying that to compensate this, they propose temporary solutions for children who are in the waiting list, for example, accepting a child for 3 weeks while another child is on vacation. The second public-private crèche confirmed that their Commune is quite well placed in terms of waiting list compared to others but what makes it difficult to manage, is the cartography. She added that for example, they create a new crèche to welcome more children but then if there are two new buildings in the region, they cannot respond to the market needs anymore. The director of the company crèche said that the issue is not the number of crèches in Geneva because there are more than in other cantons, for example in the city of Geneva she mentioned approximately 70 crèches. She pursued saying that in her crèche, the waiting list has been always the same for the last 10 years. Here the positive argument, is the fact of managing to maintain the same waiting list but this does not give an indication if it is a long period of time or not. Finally, not obtaining concrete and quantitative answers to this question from a crèche perspective, the author decided to

ask it to parents directly as crèches would probably be more open to communicate this to parents rather than during an interview.

### **Finance/Pricing**

As mentioned in the analysis of the interviews with parents, the interest of the author in the financial perspective of managing a crèche is more about the discount proposed for siblings and which are the most important charges rather than what are their prices. The reason for that is because for public crèches it is very often a percentage, between 9-12% as one director said and for private crèches it is very often published on their websites, making this information easily accessible without the need of an interview. There are four questions related to this category, Q11, Q12, Q13 and Q14, which are at the end on the interview guide. This was made on purpose to gain the interviewee's trust before start talking about financial aspect even if with some interviewees, especially owners of private crèches, those topics were discussed at the beginning of the interview. The first question is about the facilitated process and discount for siblings, which was previously asked to parents and the goal is to have as many answers as possible because not all the mothers interviewed had a second child and because the answers would not be comparative as it is not the same crèches and consequently this data can be obtained through different sources. As in the parents' answers, all the crèches interviewed offer a facilitated process for siblings by giving them priority in the waiting list. Then, regarding the financial discount offered it ranged from 10% and 20% for the private crèches to 50% for the 2<sup>nd</sup> child and the 3<sup>rd</sup> paying nothing for a public-private crèche. This result shows that crèches have enough freedom to choose the discount they want to offer and that those benefiting from a subvention can offer a significant financial advantage for parents compared to a private crèche. The author is interested in knowing what are the main financial charges and what they represent in terms of portion of the budget. The answer was unanimous: salaries and rent. Salaries is an important cost because, as many interviewees explained, they obtained an authorization for a certain day but they need to recruit people at least one month before to get used to work as a team and to define together the educational program of the crèche. For example, when the private crèche in Vaud opened to the public, they already had 10 educators for one month before the opening and they had only one child register in the crèche. One interviewee said that for her crèche, 70% of the financial charges were salaries. The same happens with the rent because, as a commercial rental contract, you are obliged to pay 6 months in advance as a guarantee. This represent a high investment at the beginning and one interviewee said that even later, the operational costs are still

very high, are there all the time and cannot be reduced. She added that a private crèche needs to fix extremely high prices to make profit as they do not benefit from any subvention. In terms of subvention, one public-private crèche spontaneously explained how it works for her infrastructure: the crèche budget comes from parents' payments for 20% and the other 80% is the subvention from the Commune. The budget of this crèche that welcomes 120 children weekly and counts with 45 employees, is of CHF 3.5 million. Finally, the author was not interested in knowing the daily price of each crèche but it was interesting to understand which factors are considered when deciding the price: is it in function of the financial charges or related to what is done in the market? The owner of a private crèche explained that it is in function of financial charges, which are mainly salaries and rent, as mentioned before, to ensure they can cover the costs at the end of the month. However, for the company crèche it is based on parents' revenues and they cannot influence it.

### **Additional comments**

During the interviews process, it was interesting to discuss with the owner of a private crèche who was never been an educator because the discussion was much more business oriented. However, this was very different when discussing with the director of the company crèche, who was very surprised, and sometimes even seemed offended, that someone from a business management background could be interested in a social subject such as childcare. In general, the two public-private crèches from the same Commune have a similar functioning, even if one has two partnerships with companies and the other not and therefore, most of the time their answers were very similar and complementary.

## **3.3 Authorities point of view**

### **3.3.1 Importance for the study**

The SASAJ plays an important role in this study as it represents the official authorities that give authorizations to new crèches and is the body connecting the demand and the offer in the childcare market. The goal in analyzing their point of view is to understand, from their perspective, the importance and meaning of restrictions when opening a new childcare institution and how is the process to obtain the authorization.

### **3.3.2 Decision on the methodology and difficulties**

Since the SASAJ is an official office, the author decides first to call and send an email to obtain a meeting for the interview in person. However, the process taking more time than



expected due to their workload, the author decides to adapt the initial interview guide and sends only the most important questions by e-mail, to increase the chances of obtaining an answer. Finally, the author had an interesting phone interview with an employee of the SASAJ, Ms. Ruffieux-Rufenacht, who is responsible for the authorizations given to new crèches. After the interview, the author sent the interview transcript to the interviewee for her consent in making her identity public in this paper. Through the interview, the author is interested in knowing the main reasons for denial or withdraw of an authorization, the conditions to obtain a financial assistance even if this is for a company crèche, the aspects controlled during the audits and the existence (or not) of a ranking system for childcare institutions. The rest of the needed data, will be collected through the Confederation and the SASAJ websites as well as the different legislations regarding the childcare industry in Switzerland.

### **3.3.3 State requirements**

As explained by the crèche owners and directors, the authorization is granted personally to the management and not to the crèche on itself. To obtain the authorization to operate, the crèche must respect the regulatory norms regarding (Site Officiel de l'Etat de Genève 2004):

- The safety of their buildings and facilities;
- Child guidance standards favoring their physical and psychological development;
- The qualifications and experience of the educational team and management;
- Children health care, hygiene and nutrition;
- Collaboration with other public services;
- Respect by the management of the collective labor agreement for employees in the childcare industry;

As per the interview with Ms. Ruffieux-Rufenacht, the main reason for the refusal of the authorization is the lack of financial viability on the long-term and this is also a reason why most of their ongoing projects are subsidized by the Commune. The interviewee said that the annual average of authorizations granted is approximately 3-4 and most of the time, these projects are subsidized by the Commune as it is very difficult for a private crèche to operate in this market. Each new request is studied in detail and independently. For example, and as seen in the table 3, the number of available places for the 5 crèches interviewed vary widely and this is because many aspects need to be considered when deciding the maximum capacity of a crèche. As per the official regulation, there should be a minimum net surface of 3 squared meters for each place in the living rooms and of 10 squared meters for the whole premises. Another factor impacting the choice of the

maximum capacity, is the configuration of the groups as educators can choose to have either multiple age groups or per age range groups. However, the size of the group cannot exceed 12 children (for children aged 0-1), 15 children (for children aged 1-2) and 16 children (for children aged 2-4). The State of Geneva puts at the disposal of the public a document with a clear repartition of the spaces and description of what is recommended versus what is mandatory to have, depending on the type of structure and its offering. For example, some spaces such as the living rooms require to have natural light and this is not negotiable (Site Officiel de l'Etat de Genève 2004).

### **3.3.4 Conditions for financial assistance**

On top of granting authorizations and monitoring the childcare institutions, the role of the State is also to identify, in collaboration with the Communes, the needs in terms of childcare places, to inform the parents about the different types of childcare services and to reinforce the offer in terms of available places. As mentioned before by the crèche owners and directors interviewed, a crèche is not a profitable business and Ms. Ruffieux-Rufenacht from the SASAJ confirmed this. The interviewee added that this is the reason why it becomes rare to see private crèches in the market, as most of the time, they cannot support a deficit on the long-term. She pursued saying that the cost of a place in a crèche is about CHF 40'000.- annually per child and so for a private crèche to be able to run, it should fix a monthly price of CHF 3'600-3'800, which from the parents' perspective is not affordable for many of them. Therefore, to encourage the development of new institutions, a law being subject to referendum has been created at the Confederative level, allowing financial aids for the creation of new places to welcome the children and help the parents to reconcile professional and personal life (Le Conseil fédéral 2015). Ms. Ruffieux-Rufenacht explained that the OFAS, the Federal Social Insurance Office, has a budget per Canton from which they can give financial aids but this is not systematic. However, the director of the company crèche interviewed said that there are many restrictions to be eligible for the financial aid. This financial assistance can be given to different types of childcare services but new institutions have priority over existing ones. Indeed, there are many conditions to obtain the financial assistance such as the respect of quality standards, who is the management, etc. One demanding condition is to show the financing on the long-term, which means at least for the first 6 years. This aspect was also verified with the private crèche in the Canton of Vaud, which had to show their financing for 7 consecutive years to obtain a financial aid for the first 2 years. Then, the Confederation also grants financial aids, for a maximum of one third of the total cost, for innovative projects contributing to the creation of more places to welcome children. This is interesting for individual entrepreneurs and Communes who

want to invest in innovative projects and differentiate in terms of quality, for example. However, the criteria required for a project to be considered innovative are not mentioned in this law and the SASAJ representative was not able to answer as the financial aids are granted at the Confederative level.

### **3.4 Company point of view**

#### **3.4.1 Importance for the study**

In this study, different types of crèches are interviewed and analyzed to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each type of infrastructure. The type of structure that is the most required by parents is the onsite crèche and so it is relevant to interview an organization about this concept. The goal is to interview a company of a certain size, which could potentially introduce this concept in their offices and, ideally, a company that provided or provides at the moment this service or any kind of childcare facilitated services for the children of its employees. This interview attempts to identify what are the motivations for a company to create an onsite crèche, in case they have one, and understand how this impacts the performance and work-life balance of employees.

#### **3.4.2 Methodology and decision on the questions**

As one crèche director and one mother interviewed said, a company needs to have a significant number of employees to offer this service and be able to run an onsite crèche with only the children of its employees. Therefore, it is relevant to interview a multinational company based in the canton of Geneva that is very much involved in the well-being and work-life balance of its employees. In this case, what is important is the information the company representative, a Human Resources Manager, will provide and not necessarily the environment. For this reason, and especially because it is a company that the author already visited, a phone interview is accepted. The interviewee authorizes to disclose the results of this interview, while keeping the company and the representative's identity anonymous to protect its partnerships with the different crèches. Regarding the questions, they will be related to some of the categories previously presented, as not all of them are relevant for this interview, as it is the case for the educational program. The interview starts with a close question which will then drive the rest of the interview depending on the answer from the interviewee to this first question. The goal is to understand what are the reasons to provide or not an onsite childcare service, by identifying the advantages and disadvantages of this concept. Given that the interview takes place at the end of the analysis phase, the author takes this opportunity

to enquire the company about two aspects that are part of the concept, which will be presented in the next chapter.

### 3.4.3 Company position towards onsite childcare services

#### A topic internally investigated

By being a company very much committed towards the well-being and work-life balance of its employees, they have decided that childcare services should take active part of their diversity practices. As the interviewee explained, the goal of having an onsite crèche is to allow female employees to return to work in a relaxed way after their maternity leave. Therefore, this topic has been deeply studied in the company couple of years ago. Before deciding between having an onsite crèche or not, a survey was conducted among the employees to have their feedback, explained the interviewee. The feedback received from employees was very mixed, as it is the case for their opinion about the impact on performance. On one hand, some employees said it would be a distraction knowing that their child is that close to them and thus they will be tempted to go see them. On the other hand, some employees found this ideal as they will not be stressed anymore with leaving and picking up hours. After a long reflection, trying to consider all the opinions, the company decides to not pursue with the opening an onsite crèche concept for the following reasons:

- **Very expensive solution:** from a financial perspective, it is extremely expensive for a company to finance on its own a crèche, while providing enough places for all the employees' children;
- **Not the core business:** the interviewee explained that it is difficult for them to manage a crèche and its personnel, knowing that this is not their core business and they do not have the expertise in this field;
- **Near home place rather workplace:** another reason coming from employees is that they prefer a place in a crèche near their home rather than the workplace. This is also the case for one of the mothers interviewed because, as she said, if the parent working for the company where the crèche is, he is travelling for example, the other parents needs to do the journey to his/her partner's company and then go back to work in his/her own company, which sometimes can be a long way.

### **Alternative solution**

After refusing the idea of having an onsite crèche, the company looked for other alternatives that could help parents to come to work in a more relaxed manner and have a better work-life balance. As the interviewee said, having a good childcare solution is important to drive up performance, but this can be achieved through different ways and not only through an onsite crèche. Therefore, the company decided to do different partnerships with multiple crèches, in the form of sponsorships and, in return, having reserved places for its employees' children. From the interviewee's point of view, partnerships have many advantages as they enable its employees to have access to a higher number of places compared to the number of places that could be possible with an onsite crèche. Some of the advantages are the fact that the crèche will be independently managed by professionals in the field, the lower cost compared to having the crèche onsite, together with the possibility of having access to a wider choice of locations. These practical reasons, led the company to adopt this option and now it has partnerships with 5 different crèches, allowing their employees to have priority for 82-85 places.

### **Extra services**

Welcoming expatriate employees on a regular basis, the interviewee said that the company found relevant to do a partnership with "Family Service". This is a company that helps parents regarding different aspects of childcare such as: explaining the different types of childcare solutions in the area, dealing with paper work, searching for a crèche, advising with regards to nannies, etc. The company is also creating an "internal" network for parents willing to share a nanny, as taking one full-time for their children can be too expensive. All the aspects mentioned above show that the company is continuously looking for new and better solutions for the well-being of its employees. Moreover, it is important to emphasize the fact that the company does this with the contribution and participation of their employees to the survey as their opinion is crucial in the company decisions.

## 4. Discussion

After 15 in-depth interviews with 4 different types of stakeholders, the high market demand is proved, which makes the process of obtaining a place frustrating, stressful and long. From the crèche perspective, it is also proved that the State restrictions are highly demanding when developing a crèche. These barriers are mainly financially, given the information received about one place costing approximately CHF 40'000.- annually. This information is given by the representative of the SASAJ, confirmed with the representative of the multinational company and verified with the financial data given by one crèche director. Consequently, this can lead parents to be tempted to avoid putting their child in a crèche and opt for a nanny, which is less expensive. However, as per the first chapter of this study, this decision can have an impact on the social and cognitive development of children. For this reason, one crèche director concluded by saying that, to ensure an adequate childcare system and enough available places, it is the responsibility of the Commune to invest in the social for the well-being of its citizens.

### 4.1 General findings

There are some key words that came very often during the interviews depending on who was the interviewee. For example, from the parents' perspective, the most common were "frustrating", "stress-ed", "flexibility" and "creativity" when discussing about the process and what they expect from a crèche. From the State perspective, the key word was "well-being" as one of their goals. Crèche owners and directors mentioned multiple times the "restrictions" from the State and their goals as a childcare institution. Finally, the company representative was focused on the "well-being of employees" and their families, while sticking to their "core business". Financial related aspects were key for all the 4 types of interviewees. The overall impression is that the market is clearly not perfect in terms of offering and given the high demand, crèches do not see the need for differentiation and instead, they stick to what is required by the State.

#### Security

Children are precious and very valuable for their parents and their care should include the highest levels of security. The results of the interviews show that this aspect seems to have different levels of importance depending on the interviewee. For example, for parents it is clearly a concern, and one mother even challenged the current security system of the crèche of her child. The owner of the private crèche in the Canton of Vaud

said that they thought a lot about which security system to use and they investigated different alternatives until finding the one matching the best their needs. However, security can sometimes be neglected, especially by public crèches as they do not have the “need” to differentiate in terms of offering or to provide extra services as any case they always operate with full-capacity. On the other hand, private crèches need to offer the best practices to attract clients willing and being able to pay their higher fees. This low security systems were observed in the field by the author, who managed to enter in one crèche without being noticed as no one was at the reception, while the entrance door was open. From the parents’ perspective, sometimes dangerous practices can take place at home, putting at stake the well-being and safety of the child. For example, one mother who never obtained a place in a crèche said that, they found a solution at home but this solution means that the father is taking care of the child, when he is supposed to sleep, as he works at night. Therefore, this can have consequences for the safety of the child.

### **Unemployment**

This aspect could be considered as a data analysis outlier in this study as it was only mentioned by one mother and one crèche owner. However, both defined it as a very important aspect to enable parents to reconcile professional and personal life, which is one of the basic objectives of childcare services. When someone loses his job, the unemployment office requires the unemployed person to have a secure childcare solution to be able to look for a job and to start on the next day. However, from a crèche point of view, being unemployed has also negative effects as parents lose the priority in the waiting list for the second baby. This is the case of one of the mothers interviewed. One of crèche directors interviewed said that they are obliged to reduce the occupation rate of the child to 2 days per week, which is the minimum. The director added that, in the meantime, they secure the full-time place for 1 year, in case the parent finds a new position. This is very subjective because the director mentioned it as something positive that is offered to parents as in other crèches they do not secure the place, but the mother explained that when parents need the most to have a full-time place is when they are unemployed.

### **Latent need**

When asked about what a crèche should offer for the well-being of their children, some parents mentioned aspects such as the proximity to home or to the work place and the flexibility in opening hours to avoid being stressed to leave and pick up the child on time. However, when studied deeper, these arguments refer to the latent needs of parents,

which is their own well-being. From the crèche perspective, owners and directors were very much focused on the well-being of children, which implicitly impacts the well-being of parents as well. However, some crèches, mainly private, mentioned what they offer to directly impact the parents' well-being. Again, these were mainly private crèches as the parents are their "clients" and they need to convince them about their offering.

### **Transparency**

Transparency is an underlying assumption of this study given the concerns of parents about the waiting list management, which is quite secret. Parents have the feeling that there is favoritism when attributing places and they are rarely told their place in the waiting list. Therefore, waiting lists should be transparent and publicly accessible by the parents registered to know their position. This can allow them to decide either staying in the waiting list or start looking for another solution, while releasing their place. There should be as well a system ensuring transparency in terms of practices within crèches because many parents think all the institutions are more or less the same as they are framed by the State but this is not the case. Crèches can have very different practices and approaches, as per what showed the results of the interviews. Again, a system that compares crèches while emphasizing their points of differentiation could be a more transparent and appropriate way for parents to choose the most adapted crèche to their needs.

### **Onsite company crèche**

This crèche concept was fully accepted and well-perceived by the parents interviewed, who showed interest, even if some considered it as unfavorable for those parents not working in this type of (big) companies. It was surprising to see that, contrary to the parents' feedback during the interviews, employees in the company interviewed gave a very negative feedback towards the onsite crèche concept. This can be proved by the fact that most of the mothers interviewed are not working for a huge company and therefore they do not see the same needs.

### **Wrong assumptions**

Federal statistics show that in 2017, 60% of women aged from 25-54, most probable age of having children, were working part-time, especially women having a partner and at least one child young than 25 years old. This, together with other elements from the literature review, led the author to build an assumption that the majority of women are forced to work part-time as they need to stay at home taking care of their children due to the lack of childcare solutions. However, after interviewing the 8 mothers, this



assumption has been proved to be wrong. Interviewees said that they are working part-time for either personal choices such as career transition or due to immigration issues but not because they do not have a place in a crèche as in that case, they find another solution. This aspect was not mentioned neither by the State nor by the company, which leads to understand that it is not a remarkable trend. On the contrary, women participation in the workforce continues to increase, as per the statistics shown on the first chapter.

## **4.2 Comparing hypothesis: public vs. private**

As per the table 3, the interviews include 5 different types of crèches, in terms of financing, size, offering, etc. and the results show that, independently of the type of infrastructure, two aspects were important: the autonomy in decision-making process and the financial support. To study which type of crèches is the most beneficial, this chapter classifies them into two categories: public (including semi-public) or private (including company crèches). The classification depends on who is the employer and how if the financing, by asking “Is the Commune or the Canton actively participating in the financing?”. The table below shows the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of crèches studied, as per the interviews results.

**Table 4 Advantages and disadvantages of different types of crèches**

	<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
<b>PUBLIC OR SEMI-PUBLIC → SUBSIDIZED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure financial investment from trustful sources as it is the case of the Commune</li> <li>• Good collaboration with other parties in the Commune such as gardening services and rooms for events</li> <li>• Fees are proportional to the parents' revenues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential risk of standardization of the offering</li> <li>• Significant financial charges</li> <li>• Guided by the association committee, leading to a lower autonomy in management decisions</li> <li>• Longer waiting lists</li> <li>• Annually control by the Commune on the budget forecast</li> </ul>
<b>PRIVATE CRÈCHE OR COMPANY CRÈCHE → NOT SUBSIDIZED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy in management decisions</li> <li>• Accept children from everywhere</li> <li>• Decide the number of maximum capacity</li> <li>• Possibility to go the extra mile without staying in the minimum required</li> <li>• Shorter waiting lists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely high operating fees, most of the time fixed, leading many private crèches to close after few years due to the lack of sufficient revenues</li> <li>• Significant capital injection at the beginning</li> <li>• Higher difficulty in obtaining the authorization to operate</li> <li>• Obligation to fix higher childcare educational fees</li> </ul>

The table shows that both types of crèches have approximately the same number of pros and cons because, as one crèche owner said, in any case, childcare is a very complex business industry. However, when choosing the infrastructure type, the parents favored an onsite company crèche and this concept can help parents as well as companies to benefit from the advantages of the both types mentioned above.

### **4.3 Importance of « quality » in childcare**

Quality childcare is very much present in the theoretical framework of childcare and the assumption behind its definition is that “high-quality early childcare setting is one that supports optimal learning and development” (Marshall 2004). Surprisingly, this aspect was not at all mentioned by the demand side, the parents. This shows that most of the time, especially in Switzerland where it is very difficult to have a place, parents accept any crèche because they believe that the State is controlling and ensuring the same high-quality standards everywhere. However, this was challenged by the owner of one of the private crèches interviewed, who said that there are many discrepancies and gaps in terms of quality of childcare centers in Geneva. Therefore, since not much information was received through interviews about this topic, the author proceeds with secondary data research. The authors of a study entitled *Child Care Cost and Quality*, affirmed that “the quality of childcare varies widely and children’s outcomes differ depending upon the quality of their childcare experiences” (Helburn, Howes 1996, p.64). Indeed, impact of quality childcare on children development has been studied for longtime and three types of quality have been defined (Helburn, Howes 1996)

- **Process quality:** this type corresponds to the basic aspect of understanding how is the children experience in terms of childcare. This refers to who welcome them and on which premises, what are the activities proposed and the materials used.
- **Structural quality:** this type of quality refers to the objective restrictions required and regulated by the government such as the maximum capacity of each group, the required minimal space, the ratio adults-children or even the diplomas of the educational personnel. High quality centers hire well-trained staff and have higher ratios to better satisfy the needs of each child.
- **Adult work environment quality:** for educators to provide high-quality service and care to children, they also need to benefit from a high-quality work environment and feel committed to their mission.

**Table 5 Definition and measurement of quality in child care programs**

Quality in childcare programs			
What to measure and how	Areas of comparison		
	Process quality	Structural quality	Adult work environment quality
Aspects of childcare program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactions between child and caregiver, including caregiver sensitivity, harshness, detachment, and involvement with children</li> <li>• Caregiver's attitudes towards children</li> <li>• Presence of learning activities</li> <li>• Health and safety aspects of the child care environment</li> <li>• Presence of adequate furnishings, equipment and curricular materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group size</li> <li>• Adult-child ratio</li> <li>• Caregiver's previous experience in caring for children</li> <li>• Caregiver's formal education</li> <li>• Caregiver's specialized training in child care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care director's salary and benefits</li> <li>• Annual turnover rates of caregivers and directors</li> <li>• Caregiver's work satisfaction</li> <li>• Caregiver's work commitment</li> <li>• Caregiver's perception of job stress</li> </ul>
Methods to assure quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of children, caregivers, and child care environment</li> <li>• Environment rating systems</li> <li>• Rating scales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Review of personnel records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with child care program directors or teachers</li> <li>• Staff questionnaires</li> <li>• Anonymous surveys</li> </ul>

Source: adapted from (Helburn, Howes 1996, p.65)

In Geneva, structural quality is highly regulated by the State with specific and objective aspects being controlled. However, the other two types of quality are very much left to the freedom of the crèche management to decide, and here is where starts the gaps in terms of quality. For this reason, it would be recommended for the State to put in place an accreditation ranking crèches in terms of quality. This has been asked to the SASAJ representative, who said that this is not in their interest as each institution has its own way of functioning. However, this system will help institutions to go beyond the minimum expected in terms of quality, ensuring a better development and well-being for the children. A ranking system can recognize the best practices by giving them some forms of subventions helping them to continue improving and investing in childcare. For example, this could lead people to understand that a simple 4-digit code to enter in the crèche is not enough and that crèche management should invest more in process quality. Studies by the U.S National Institutes of Health have been done to understand and to

demonstrate the positive correlation between early childcare and better academic and cognitive achievement in the future. The study tracks more than 1,300 children who have been studying since they were one month, starting in 1991 (Reuters 2010). The proof is that a negative caregiver's attitude can have consequences in the child's health as for example, 40% of the children studied had high levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, and those children had caregivers who were "intrusive and over controlling" (Reuters 2010). James Griffin (2010), representative of the NIH Institute that conducted the study, confirmed that "high quality child care appears to provide a small boost to academic performance, perhaps by fostering the early acquisition of school readiness skills" (Reuters 2010). Finally, a high quality childcare environment is very important for the child's progress in the different dimensions of the development process.

One article in the American educational research journal supports this statement by affirming that "high-quality childcare continued to be linked with higher scores on standardized tests of math and reading achievement, and of memory in elementary school" (Vandell 2004).

## 5. Development of an onsite crèche

### Analysis

The literature review showed that women are not anymore staying at home and instead, they are being more participative in the workforce. Moreover, the interviews proved that there is a real market need for more places in childcare and some interviewees believe that it is the responsibility of Communes and companies to invest on childcare for their citizens and employees. From the parents' interviews, results show clearly an interest for an onsite crèche, especially for companies of a certain size. However, in this statement, there already one limitation to have access to this service, which is the minimum size of the company.

From the companies point of view, as per the interview with a representative of a multinational company, they tend to be very conscious about operating in an industry, which is not theirs and where they do not have the expertise to excel.

As mentioned before, State restrictions can be very strict and demanding and thus many crèches, once they filled in the minimum required by the State, they do not try to differentiate from the other players in the market.

Childcare industry is influenced by the offer existing in the market, new legislations, family trends evolution, educational evolution, geographic area as well as many other factors.

### Concept

The concept proposed is a modulated crèche operating as a franchise, where an expert company in the field will be responsible to build an onsite crèche which is based on the population of the company and its needs. The goal of this concept is to reduce the barriers for companies to invest in childcare solutions for their employees and at the same time, allow parents not benefiting from this in their companies, to have access to places in public or private crèches not linked to a certain company. The ultimate objective is to become an expert in the market, which will help reducing the time of obtaining the authorization as controls will go faster due to full compliance with requirements.

### **Product (Service)**

This is a personalized service offered to companies wanting to invest in the well-being and work-life balance of their employees by providing childcare solutions adequate to their needs. Children will be in small groups, with personalized educational programs and where parents could participate in the choice of the educational approach and the

activities suggested. The crèche will be open the whole year, allowing parents to have a secure place for their children throughout the whole year and therefore without needing to stress looking for another temporary solution for holidays closure.

## **Place**

This will respond to the needs of parents, while going beyond, as it will not be designed by big companies only but, instead, it can be adapted to match the needs of small companies. It will answer respond to the need of “proximity” shown during the interviews with parents as it can be in the same building of the company. However, this need of parents can hide a latent need because they do not necessarily need to have the baby in the same office as they are but just having the feeling the child is close and not having to do two journeys in the evening. On top of that, the company representative affirmed that having the kids onsite will be a distraction factor for some employees. To respond to those latent needs, the concept will propose a company crèche next to the office but still considered as “onsite” as there will be a bus taking children from the office, meaning that parents will only do one journey. Then, as one crèche owner said, it is difficult to adapt an existing building to the specific needs of a crèche (e.g. natural light, etc.) and therefore this is also a reason why a company crèche outside the building would be more favorable. The goal is to physically separate professional life from family life, while staying very close at the same time. Regarding the premises, there will be cameras installed so that parents can see their children at any time of the time by accessing through a personal code. This aims at giving parents the possibility “to be” with their children from distance and see the activities they do.

## **Promotion**

Promotion will be done inside companies to inform employees about this possibility and also outside the company for the Communes to be aware of the concept and offering. However, promotion will be done more in the objective of informing people about the offering, rather than obtaining more “clients” and there is not the need in this industry for using that strategy. During one of the interviews, one mother was looking for a crèche and when she found it on Google, she read the comments other people gave and she said that it was a good crèche as per the comments. This shows the level of importance parents give to word-of-mouth recommendations rather than traditional ways of advertising.

## **Price**

These will be crèches financed mainly by the companies and with partnerships with the Commune. The goal is to have a financial support from the Commune for the management of the crèche and, on return, companies will also establish agreements with the Communes as for example, organizing events or recruiting local. Those are activities that the company needs to do in any case and by doing in that precise Commune, can help them to benefit from a subvention. However, childcare fees still need to be paid by parents but they will be paying for a high-quality service responding to their needs. To avoid parents to pay a too high price, the playroom of the crèche will be open to the public, open reservation, for events for example and allowing the crèche to have more funds and use their premises on the weekend.

## **People**

Being the most important asset any company has, and especially in the childcare industry, personnel will be hired by the crèche director and not the company to benefit from the expertise in the field and avoid the company to operate outside its core businesses. Personnel will be people specialized in their field, with ongoing training proposed by the crèche to improve and evolve together with the new trends regarding educational programs. To create trustful connections and relationships between parents and personnel, educators will provide training to parents about the educational programs and theories influencing their approach. The author realized that during the interviews, parents knew little about this and how activities their children do can impact their development in the future.

## **Segmentation**

There are three main segments: small and medium companies, large multinational and international companies and finally individuals, most of the time parents, desiring to book the crèche premises for private events. The first two segments have a direct link with the concept as they will be the main clients. The third one will represent a complementary revenue stream and thus need to be considered as a separate segment but it will not be the focus in this concept.

## **Targeting**

The three main segments mentioned before have different characteristics, which help defining and understanding their needs. For example, SMEs will be more flexible as so far they do not have a solution in place and therefore they are open and willing to improve. However, they do not necessarily have available the resources needed to put in place a

childcare service “in-house”. On the other hand, international companies are highly involved in work-life balance policies, have a higher budget and more capabilities for a quicker implementation. Finally, the third targeted group, the individuals wanting to book the crèche premises, have a different need that is for a specific period of time and therefore their budget and requirements are not very high. For the concept, the main purpose are the first two targeted segments.

## Positioning

The concept will be positioned as having high-quality and secure childcare premises, where parents can leave their children and go to work with a “peace of mind”. The concept will benefit from a first mover advantage of having modulated childcare offerings that will be in-house of different companies but managed by the external crèche. Its value proposition will be reflected on each activity of the crèche and will be transmitted to potential “clients” through word-of-mouth”.

## Differentiation

**Table 6: Differentiation points of the modulated crèche**



The concept will start locally with all the types of companies from small-medium companies to multinationals as the concept can adapt to everyone’s needs. The main differentiating points of the crèche are:

Expertise: this refers to the educators’ expertise in dealing with children and the expertise of the crèche management team who will be responsible for each concept implementation and for transmitting the values and mission of the modulated crèche concept.



Security: as an important concern for parents, the crèche will be recognized by its high-levels of security as for example by using cameras that will be accessible for parents who want to see their children remotely during the day.

High-quality: the crèche will show high levels of the three types of quality, which are process, structural and adult work environment. It is crucial that each type of stakeholder sees the importance of quality in the process and that they associate it with this concept.

Adaptability: this criterion refers to how the crèche responds to the different needs of each customer and this is by adapting to their specificities. For example, the crèche will adapt the number of capacity to welcome children as per the company population.

Flexibility: this is one of the most important selection criteria for parents as per the interviews in this study and therefore it is relevant to include as part of the DNA of the concept. It refers to flexibility in terms of opening hours and picking up preferred facilities such as bringing the child to the parents' workplace so the parents only have one journey to do and be at home earlier.

Collaboration: it is very important as it differs this concept from the typical crèche as it counts with the participation of parents in the decisions taken. For example, parents can suggest new activities or modifications to the educational program. Collaboration refers also to the connection between the companies partnering with this crèche and the Commune; for example, the company will favor "local recruitment" and in return the Commune will finance partly the operational costs.

### **Potential market in Geneva**

Multinationals companies are the most important segment of the modulated company crèche concept as they have the resources to quickly implement it and they are very much involved in childcare services policies, especially for their expatriated employees. In the region, there are approximately 130 multinational companies, Swiss and from abroad, which have their headquarters in Geneva (Why Geneva, 2018). Most of these companies such as Banks or FCMG entities have more than one building in the region and therefore this multiplies the demand for this type of concept and means that the crèche will be impacting different Communes. Assuming 25% of these companies already have their own company crèche or partnership with Communal crèche, there are still 100 multinational companies representing the potential market.

As mentioned in the chapter 1.6, in 2017 there was a shortage of approximately 3'000-4'000. As per the 5 crèches interviewed, the average capacity of children a crèche can welcome daily is 60 children. Therefore, this means that there is a potential need for at least 58 new crèches ( $3'500/60$ ),

## **Educational program**

As mentioned before, the educational program will be decided between the educational team and parents or employees of the company. The goal is to include parents in such an important decision and educate them on the specificities of what is being taught to their children, as during the interview, the author realized that they do not know much about this. As for many crèches interviewed, the author believes that the right decision is not in choosing one educational program or educational theorist but in taking the best of each theory. The activities must include each domain of children development. However, one of the elements that will be taken from Montessori is the fact of putting the child at the center and adapt to him.

The concept will have some principles that are mandatory to be included in their educational program, which are: the contact with the nature, the practice of sports, the development of their autonomy and self-esteem and the feeling of belonging to the crèche community.

## **What a day would look like at the crèche**

The opening and closing hours below are intended to be adapted as per the needs of each client. It is important to note that each activity is supervised by educators before and during being executed.

**07h45** – The crèche bus picks up the children at the company premises and brings them together to the crèche.

**08h00** – Welcome the children in a common space for everyone in the crèche. Children will be able to share a moment with children from other groups of different ages.

**09h00** – Children get prepared to do activities linked to the nature, activities outside. This will help the children knowing the basic things from respecting the nature and the environment to how to survive in the forest.

**09h30** – Children will have a morning snack, which is locally created. The fact of working with local suppliers will help the company obtaining financial support for the Commune.

**12h00** – Meal from a local producer, motivating children to taste new ingredients. After having lunch, children will go brush their teeth as hygiene rules are important to be transmitted to children even if those of a younger age.

**13h00** – Nap time, which is mandatory for crèches and which helps the sleeping routine of children.

**14h00:** Play game and do different types of activities such as intellectual, creative, sport, etc. The activities will finish with a locally produced snack.

**18h00:** Children are taken back by the crèche bus to the meet point at the company.

### **Financial perspective of the concept**

The number of children a company crèche would be able to welcome will depend on the company population and on its needs. However, it is important to know that a limit will be put in place for children under the age of two as this requires a higher ratio of educators per child.

### **Potential revenue streams**

- State financial contributions in return of local recruitment and other activities done by the company;
- Company financial support addressed to their employees, which represent 50% of the full price;
- Childcare fees imposed on parents. Parents will benefit from a 50% financial support from their employer;
- Individuals wishing to privatize the crèche for a short and precise period of time;

### **Cost drivers**

- Initial capital injection to adapt an existing building. For this concept, it will only work with pre-constructed building as the cost is much higher when required to contract the building;
- Furniture/equipment: this represents any type of furniture such as tables, chairs, educative material, cupboards, etc.;
- IT equipment such as computers, telephones, printers;
- Safety equipment such as cleaning products, creams, etc.;
- Food related costs such as meals, delivery, cookers, etc.;
- Games and playground areas (inside and outside);
- Rent of premises, which can represent a very high cost especially in Geneva;
- Salaries of the personnel (director, nurses, educators, assistants, etc), which can represent upon to 70% of the total costs as the interview with crèche directors.

### **Financial impact of uniqueness drivers**

Two main aspects in the offering will enable the crèche to charge higher prices, which are: the flexibility in the opening hours and the proximity or convenience of doing only one journey from work to home. As per the interviews, parents agree to pay a higher price if their crèche offers one of these aspects.

## 6. Limits of the study

For each type of interview, the author wanted to be as much impartial as possible and ask mainly open questions, to put the interviewees at ease and make them talk openly. However, sometimes the final goal of the project was asked by the interviewees as it was the case of the director of the company crèche interviewed, who asked why the author is interested in this subject. After explaining the motivations behind this study, the interviewee changed completely her tone of voice and was very surprised that someone studying business management would be interested in managing or opening a childcare institution. Therefore, her answers always went back to the argument that a crèche is a business at loss, where it is very complicated to make profits, in order to “protect” the author by informing about all the risks and barriers of the industry. Sometimes, interviewees’ answers are too short as they are not willing to answer or give more details. For example, when asked to talk about the process of obtaining the authorization to open a crèche, the directors often answered very quickly “you can have all the information on the SASAJ website”, without talking about their own experience. The goal with this question was to understand how they feel during the whole process of obtaining the authorization, how long was it in their case and what was requested by them from the State. Therefore, the question was not answered appropriately. Also, during the phone interviews, interviewees tended to shorten their answers and sometimes, when they understand what is the purpose of the question, they tend to lack of objectivity by answering what the author wants to hear and so finish the interview before. On top of that, when the interview is face-to-face, if the author sees that by the facial expressions, the interviewee does not understand the question, the author can reformulate the answer to ensure it is correctly understood and that the answer is relevant for the data analysis. Sometimes, the author was surprised with the answers and by showing surprising expressions in front of the interviewee, could have a negative influence on the authenticity of the answer. Bias affecting the authenticity and objectivity of answers could also be impacted by the choice of the interviewees, if for example, they know the goal of the study. Taking the example of the mothers interviewed, 7 out of 8 are part of the personal network of the author and sometimes when organizing the interview, the author was “forced” to talk about the project, disclosing some data that could impact the veracity of the interviewees’ answers. For the interview with the representative of the SASAJ, it was difficult at the beginning to meet a person from the authorizations departments and without no answer to the first e-mail asking for a meeting, the author decided to send the questions by e-mail. The goal was to show that there were only few questions, not very

long and easily answered by anyone in their team. This strategy worked and in less than 24 hours after sending the e-mail, an employee called to organize a phone interview. However, the risk in this plan was that the interviewee knew already the questions and the “ping-pong ball was on his side”. Therefore, to avoid an entire planned speech from the interviewee for the questions sent by email, the author adapted the interview guide and added some new questions. Finally, another important factor that can negatively impact the veracity and authenticity of answers is the fact of informing and requesting the interviewee’s consent to be recorded at the beginning of the interview. Everyone interviewed agreed to be recorded and were told that this is for practical reasons so that the author could listen and write everything afterwards. However, the author noticed that, when the recording object was on the table where the interview was taking place, interviewees focused too much on the physical presence of the object and therefore were much less expressive and less detailed in their answers, even if in any case their identity will remain anonymous. For the interview with parents, the author should have introduced a question in the interview guide aiming at understanding what is the interviewee’s parenting style as this could have been interesting when analyzing the answers. The 4-parenting style concept has been developed by Diana Baumrind, a developmental psychologist, in 1996, and the four types are: authoritarian (or “too hard”), permissive (or “too soft”), authoritative (or “just right”) and uninvolved, which is characterized by a low communication and involvement.

Regarding the room for improvement for future projects, it would be relevant to study from a political perspective, the reasons leading to such a low involvement of public funds participation in education, especially in early education. It would have been pertinent to interview a political party for example and understand the strategies related to the investment in early childcare. Then, a second gap in this project is that the concept should have been studied more in detail and presented to companies to see their perception and receive their feedback. Even if the concept attempts to respond to the needs and requirements of all the stakeholders interviewed, companies would be able to challenge directly a specific concept considering their restrictions.

## 7. Conclusion

The most interesting part of this project has been the research on the field, through the qualitative interviews as it helped to explore the different points of view towards the shortages of places in crèches and to better understand the dynamics of the childcare market in Geneva mainly.

From the theoretical framework seen in the introduction chapter, a childcare service aims at helping parents to reconcile professional and personal life, while taking care of their child's wellbeing. Childcare institutions should attempt to provide a high-quality childcare experience to develop emotional, cognitive and physical skills and, consequently, have a positive impact on the child's educational and personal development.

From a parental perspective, the main selection criteria are the proximity of the crèche to their homes, the security and safety of their children, the nutritional program proposed at the crèche, the activities proposed and the flexibility in terms of opening hours. These aspects were mentioned when the mothers were asked about what should the ideal crèche offer and not when asked about their current situation. Many interviewees said that the reality is very different as the significant shortages in the available places forces them to accept the offering wherever they obtained a place and sometimes this frustrating process can put at stake the willingness of having more children. In fact, the parents sometimes wait for more than two years to have a place in a crèche and very often they do not obtain a full-time place, which means that they still need to find a second solution. From the crèches perspective, the main barrier is the high financial charges such as the salaries of the personnel and the rent. One of the crèche directors interviewed said that the annual budget required to manage a crèche that welcomes daily 90 children, is of CHF 3'500'000. It is the role of the Communes and multinational companies in Geneva to invest in childcare services to allow its citizens and employees to have a better work-life balance, as said one of the crèche directors interviewed. During the interviewee with Ms. Ruffieux-Rufenacht, employee of the SASAJ, she confirmed that it is very difficult for a private crèche to operate and be viable financially on the long-term. Therefore, from the 3-4 new crèches that are given an authorization every year, most of them are public or private but subsidized by the Commune. On top of the high financial charges, the State requirements in terms of structural quality are very high and strict, starting from requiring the crèches to have a minimum number of square meters per child to obliging to have natural light in specific rooms. Based on the data analysis

from the 15 in-depth qualitative interviews with the 4 different types of stakeholders, some aspects seemed to have different levels of importance for parents compared to crèches owners, as it is the case of security. Security is crucial for parents, but when going on the field, the author realizes that the current offering in terms of security to enter in the crèche is not the ideal as the author could enter in a crèche without no one noticing. However, financial aspects both in terms of operational costs and childcare fees, are important to all the four types of stakeholders interviewed. Finally, given that the concept of an onsite company crèche was 100% appreciated and defended by every mother interviewed, the interview with the representative of a multinational company aimed at exploring why this is not a common practice in companies. The results show three main reasons to avoid having a childcare center onsite: significant operational costs and capital injection, diverging from the core business of the company and the children being in the same building represents a potential distraction for the employees, which could ultimately impact their performance.

Therefore, the model of a crèche proposed at the end of this paper is based on the results from the interviews, complemented with theoretical data, and attempts to respond to the high market demand, while respecting the different constraints in the particular industry of childcare. The concept corresponds to a modulated crèche, with a structure between partnership and franchise and providing flexible opening hours to the parents and assuring a transportation service included. The goal is to leave the business in the hand of experts on the field, to provide a structure that can be adapted to the size of the company and the demand in terms of places, to reassure the mothers by offering flexible closing hours and by bringing the babies to the workplace of the parents. From a financial perspective, the concept will work in partnership with the Commune in which is the company, creating collaborations and agreements such as employment creation or promotion of the Commune infrastructures for events.

## Bibliography

ABSAR, Shahria, 2018. 7 important reasons your child should attend an early learning center. Childcare of Southwest Florida [online]. Date of publication: 11/4/2018. [viewed 27.04.2018]. Available from: <http://www.ccswfl.org/blog/7-important-reasons-your-child-should-attend-an-early-learning-center>

BAUMRIND, Diana. 4 parenting styles – characteristics and effects. *Parenting for brain* [online]. [viewed 13.05.2018]. Available from: <https://www.parentingforbrain.com/4-baumrind-parenting-styles/>

BRIVE MAGAZINE. *Le fondateur des crèches en France*. Brive Magazine - Archives [online]. Identification number: 221. [viewed 29.04.2018]. Available from: [http://archives.brive.fr/Docs/BM221\\_avr2010.pdf](http://archives.brive.fr/Docs/BM221_avr2010.pdf)

CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY, 2018. *Cambridge Dictionary* [online]. [viewed 14.05.2018]. Available from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/creche?a=british>

CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY, 2018. *Cambridge Dictionary* [online]. [viewed 14.05.2018]. Available from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/childcare>

CENTER FOR THE ECONOMICS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, 2018. *James J. Heckman Biography* [online]. [viewed 20.05.2018]. Available from: [https://cehd.uchicago.edu/?page\\_id=71](https://cehd.uchicago.edu/?page_id=71)

COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (CASEL), 2018. Core SEL competencies. *Collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning* [online]. [viewed 18.05.2018]. Available from: <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

COLLINS DICTIONARY, 2018. *Collins Dictionary* [online]. [viewed 18.04.2018]. Available from: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/child-development>

CONTI, Julie, 2015. « Tous inégaux face aux crèches ». *Le Temps*. [online]. 30 June 2015. [viewed 20.09.2017]. Available from: <https://www.letemps.ch/suisse/inegaux-face-aux-creches>

CRYER, Debby, TIETZE, Wolfgang, 1999. Current trends in European early child care and education. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* [online]. Date of publication: May 1999. Pp. 175-193. [viewed 12.05.2018]. Available from: [http://www.jstor.org/stable/1048947?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1048947?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

DAILY MONTESSORI, 2018. Montessori theory. *Daily Montessori* [online]. [viewed 20.05.2018]. Available from: <http://www.dailymontessori.com/montessori-theory/>

DAM, Bikke, Siang, Teo, 2018. Empathy Map – Why and How to Use It. *The Interaction Design Foundation* [online]. 2018. [viewed 30.04.2018]. Available from: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/empathy-map-why-and-how-to-use-it>

ELEVATE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT LTD, 2018. Learning the four key elements of child development. *Social work processes* [online]. [viewed 20.05.2018]. Available from: <https://socialworkprocesses.co.uk/learning-four-key-elements-child-development/>



FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE, 2017. Activités professionnelles, tâches domestiques et familiales. *Federal Statistical Office* [online]. [viewed 15.04.2018]. Available

from: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/population/familles/activite-professionnelle-taches-domestiques-familiales.html>

FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE, 2016. Infant day care in selected Swiss cities. *Federal Statistical Office* [online]. Date of publication: 06.12.2016. [viewed 15.04.2018]. Available from: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/catalogues-banques-donnees/graphiques.assetdetail.1480601.html>

FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE, 2015. Premiers résultats de l'enquête sur les familles et les générations 2013. *Federal Statistical Office* [online]. Date of publication: 24.03.2015. [viewed 15.04.2018]. Available from: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases/press-releases.assetdetail.38525.html>

FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE, 2014. Pourcentage d'enfants de moins de 3 ans selon le nombre d'heures de garde formelle, en Europe. *Federal Statistical Office* [online]. Date of publication: 27.11.2014. [viewed 15.04.2018]. Available from: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/population/familles/comparaisons-internationales.assetdetail.188017.html>

FINANCIAL TIMES LEXICON, 2018. *Financial Times Lexicon* [online]. [viewed 30.04.2018]. Available from: <http://lexicon.ft.com/term?term=hidden-needs>

GEROUDET, Séverine, 2013. « Le difficile business des crèches privées ». *PME Magazine*. [online]. 31 July 2013. [viewed 20.09.2017]. Available from: <http://www.littlegreenhouse.ch/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/PME-magazine.pdf>

HECKMAN, James, MASTEROV, Dimitriy, 2007. *The productivity argument for investing in young children* [online]. [viewed 16.05.2018]. Available from: [http://jenni.uchicago.edu/human-inequality/papers/Heckman\\_final\\_all\\_wp\\_2007-03-22c\\_jsb.pdf](http://jenni.uchicago.edu/human-inequality/papers/Heckman_final_all_wp_2007-03-22c_jsb.pdf)

HELBUM, Suzanne, HOWES, Carollee, 1996. *Child Care Cost and Quality* [online]. The Future of Children, Summer/fall 1996, Vol. 6 – No. 2. [viewed 16.05.2018]. Available from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3a6e/a098fdc80a433680b9c418e9bf93680fd766.pdf>

INSTITUT FRANCAIS DE L'EDUCATION, 2018. Crèches. *Institut français de l'éducation* [online]. [viewed 29.04.2018]. Available from: <http://www.inrp.fr/edition-electronique/lodel/dictionnaire-ferdinand-buisson/document.php?id=2488>

KOSSEK, Ellen, NICHOL, Victor, 1992. The Effects of on-site child care on employee attitudes and performance. [viewed 27.05.2018]. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1992.tb00857.x>

LE CONSEIL FEDERAL, 2015. Loi fédérale sur les aides financières à l'accueil extra-familial pour enfant. *Site du Conseil fédéral* [online]. Date of update: 01.02.2015 [viewed 21.05.2018]. Available from: <https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20020609/index.html>

LINGELSER, Florian, 2011. L'évaluation de la demande en accueil de jour des enfants, une synthèse des pratiques dans le domaine ainsi qu'une typologie des méthodes [online]. Lausanne: Statistique Vaud, February 2011. Available from: [http://www.scris.vd.ch/Data\\_Dir/ElementsDir/7116/1/F/Rapport\\_eval\\_demande\\_AJE.pdf](http://www.scris.vd.ch/Data_Dir/ElementsDir/7116/1/F/Rapport_eval_demande_AJE.pdf)

MARSHALL, Nancy, 2004. *The Quality of Early Child Care and Children's Development* [online]. Current Directions in Psychological Science, date of publication: 01.08.2004. [viewed 16.05.2018]. Available from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/aff2/6de9671fefe906f3bb30da2288ee71d950c6.pdf>

MCLEOD, Saul, 2014. Lev Vygotsky. *SimplyPsychology* [online]. [viewed 05.05.2018]. Available from: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>

MERRIAM, Sharan, 2009. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. Second edition. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 978-0-470-28354-7

NOLAN, Andrea, RABAN, Bridie, 2015. Theories into practice: understanding and rethinking our work with young children [online]. Australia: Teaching solutions. ISBN 978-1-925145-04-5. Available from: [http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/shop/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/SUND606\\_sample.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/shop/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/SUND606_sample.pdf)

PEISNER-FEINBERG, Ellen, 2007. *Child care and its impact on young children's development* [online]. Second Edition. USA: Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development. Date of publication: February 2007. Available from: <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/textes-experts/en/857/child-care-and-its-impact-on-young-childrens-development.pdf>

REPUBLIQUE ET CANTON DE GENEVE. « *La crèche est rentable, c'est son absence qui coûte* » [online]. 2003. [viewed 17.10.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ge.ch/egalite/doc/publications/creche-etude.pdf>

RESEARCHGATE, 2018. Andrea Nola. *ResearchGate* [online]. [viewed on 20.05.2018]. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andrea\\_Nolan3](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andrea_Nolan3)

REUTERS, 2010. Study shows consistent benefit of early childcare. *Reuters* [online]. Date of publication: 14.05.2010. [viewed 23.05.2018]. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-daycare-usa/study-shows-consistent-benefit-of-early-daycare-idUSTRE64D0LT20100514>

RÜHL, Thomas, SCÜPBACH, Jan, HURST, SIMON, 2016. *Housing, Commuting, Childcare: where's the least expensive place to live?* [online]. Crédit Suisse, 8.12.2016. [viewed 08.05.2018]. Available from: <https://www.credit-suisse.com/media/assets/private-banking/docs/ch/unternehmen/unternehmen-unternehmer/publikationen/verfuegbare-einkommen-en.pdf>

SITE OFFICIEL DE L'ETAT DE GENEVE, 2004. Loi sur les structures d'accueil de la petite enfance et sur l'accueil familial de jour. *Site Officiel de l'Etat de Genève* [online]. Date of update: 10.01.2004. [viewed 28.04.2018]. Available from: [https://www.ge.ch/legislation/rsg/f/s/rsg\\_J6\\_29.html](https://www.ge.ch/legislation/rsg/f/s/rsg_J6_29.html)

STUDY.COM, 2018. What is child development? Definition, theories and stages [video recording]. *Study.com* [online]. [viewed 20.05.2018]. Available from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-child-development-definition-theories-stages.html>

THE EARLY YEARS OF LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR AUSTRALIA, 2009. *Belonging, being and becoming* [online]. Australia: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-642-77873-4. Available from: <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging-being-and-becoming-the-early-years-learning-framework-for-australia.pdf>

THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE AND NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES, 2015. *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* [online]. Washington, USA: The national academies press. ISBN: 978-0-309-32486-1 (pdf). Available from: <https://www.nap.edu/read/19401/chapter/1#ii>

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, 2018. Bridie Raban. *The University of Melbourne* [online]. [viewed 20.05.2018]. Available from: <https://www.findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person472#tab-publications>

THE WORLD BANK, 2017. Labor force, female (% of the total labor force). *The World Bank* [online]. [viewed 04.05.2018]. Available from: [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?end=2017&locations=CH&name\\_desc=true&start=1990&view=chart](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?end=2017&locations=CH&name_desc=true&start=1990&view=chart)

TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 2017. « Le Canton va participer au financement des crèches ». *Tribune de Genève*. [online]. 16 October 2017. [viewed 15.11.2017]. Available from: <https://www.tdg.ch/geneve/actu-genevoise/canton-participer-financement-creches/story/13165156>

UNICEF, 2001. *Early Childhood Development: The key to a full and productive life*. [online]. [viewed 03.05.2018]. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/dprk/ecd.pdf>  
VANDELL, Deborah, 2004. *Early Child Care and Children's Development in the Primary Grades: Follow-Up Results from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care* [online]. Date of publication: 26.10.2004. Available from: <https://www.imfcanada.org/sites/default/files/early-child-care-child%27s-development-aerj-2005-0.pdf>

VAN DER GAAG, Jacques. *Early child development: an economic perspective* [online]. [viewed 10.05.2018]. Available from: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECD/Resources/investing.pdf>

VILLE DE GENEVE, 2018. Crèches et autres structures d'accueil de la petite enfance. *Ville de Genève Site Officiel* [online]. Date of update: 27.04.2018. [viewed 03.05.2018]. Available from: <http://www.ville-geneve.ch/themes/structures-accueil-enfance-activites-extrascolaires/creches-autres-structures-accueil/>

WHY GENEVE, 2018. *Companies that have chosen Geneva* [online]. [viewed 19.06.2018]. Available from: <http://www.whygeneva.ch/en/companies-chose-geneva>

ZIMMERMAN, Emily, WOOLF, Steven, 2014. *Understanding the relationship between education and health* [online]. Institute of medicine of the national academies, date of publication: 5.06.2014. [viewed 20.04.2018]. Available from: <https://nam.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/BPH-UnderstandingTheRelationship1.pdf>

*This page is intentionally left blank*

## **Appendix 1: Guide for the interviews with parents**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Related category</b>
<b>Q1.</b> How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?	Market demand Work-life balance
<b>Q2.</b> Did the crèche offered a facilitated admission for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> child? Did you benefit from a discount in the price?	Finance/pricing Offering
<b>Q3.</b> Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?	Market demand
<b>Q4.</b> What were the childcare services used in the meantime?	Work-life balance
<b>Q5.</b> What other options you had in terms of childcare services? What would be the financial impact?	Finance/Pricing Work-life balance
<b>Q6.</b> Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?	Offering
<b>Q7.</b> Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?	Offering Educational program Infrastructure type
<b>Q8.</b> In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?	Offering Infrastructure type
<b>Q9.</b> What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?	Offering
<b>Q10.</b> What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?	Educational program Offering Infrastructure type
<b>Q11.</b> Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?	Work-life balance Market demand
<b>Q12.</b> What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?	Infrastructure type Offering

## **Appendix 2: Transcript of the interviews with parents**

### **INTERVIEW #1**

**Interviewee:** A mother of two children

**Region:** Petit-Lancy

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** March 29<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** at the interviewee's workplace

### ***Introduction for the reader:***

The interviewee is an administrative employee working in a business school, mom of two and she is working part-time (50%) because she is doing a career transition. Her children are 17 months and 4<sup>1/2</sup> years old and they both go to the same crèche in the Commune where she lives, Petit-Lancy. Both of her children were born on the second half of the calendar year, which is important in childcare because it extends the duration of childcare until the age of 5, instead of 4 years old.

### **How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

They both go to one of the 4 crèches of Lancy and we were very lucky to have a place there, which we thought would not be possible. However, knowing the demand, we have applied for the 4 crèches. I was open to other regions as well but they do not accept you. I look in Carouge as my husband worked there at that time but they told me that inhabitants have the priority and the workplace is a secondary choice.

My daughter integrated the crèche when she was 3<sup>1/2</sup> years old and I registered her when I was 3 months pregnant. It is not easy because at the beginning you do not know how it works so you need to look for the information. Then, I registered in the Commune of Lancy but the issue is that you need to renew the request every 3 months. However, when she was born I found her too small (it was her first baby) so I wonder if it was good to let her in the crèche. Finally, I did not renew the request, which put me at the bottom of the list. The following year, I did it the correct way but I already had lost a bit of time in the meantime.

It was funny because when they called me last year telling me that there was a place, I thought it was for my second baby, my son, but it was for my daughter with almost 4 years old. I was not expecting that at all.

### **Did the crèche offered a facilitated admission for the 2nd child? Did you benefit from a discount in the price?**

Yes. I received the call for my daughter and the following week they integrated my son as well in the same crèche thanks to the facilitated admission process. This is very good for families but not nice for those who are waiting to have a place for their first child. For the second child, I benefit from a 50% discount as both are in the same crèche.

**Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

For my daughter, I was in the 50<sup>th</sup> place for a long-time. I went many times to the crèche but they told me that they could not do anything else. However, I was told that I could have more chances if I would go “crying” and I have a friend who obtained a place by doing that.

**What were the childcare services used in the meantime?**

My daughter was in the kindergarten because I was working at 50% and therefore I could leave her there for half a day. She liked it but when you are almost 4 years old it is not the best solution because it was only half-day. Instead, at the crèche she learnt how to eat with everyone, for example.

**Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?**

Not due to the place in a crèche because I had two nannies available. However, it is not that easy. I left my previous job, where I was working full-time and travelling a lot, to find an administrative position at 50% allowing me to pursue my studies to make a change in my professional career. Therefore, the reduction in the activity rate was a personal choice and not linked to childcare solutions, fortunately!

**What other options you had in terms of childcare services? What would be the financial impact?**

Well, without a place in a crèche and if I was working full-time, the poor would have been to a nanny's place. However, as I am working part-time, I can be with them on Mondays and the rest of the time it is shared between the crèche (two full-days each one) and the nanny, who is living next to my house. Next year, my daughter will go to primary school and my son will have 3 full-days at the crèche. During my notice period in my previous job, I hired someone at home who was doing the cleaning and taking care of the children – this lasted for few months because it was a temporary solution until I finished my job and because it is expensive (approximately CHF 2'000 per month).

However, having this year two children in a crèche represents also an important charge for the monthly budget (approximately CHF 1'700 monthly for both) and hopefully I keep them at home one day per week.

**Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

Well, after 18 months it is a bit sad for the baby to be all the time with a nanny; it is good for them to go to the crèche because they do many activities. They do many creative and unlikely activities to discover new things.

I wanted them to go to the crèche first from a socialization perspective because my daughter bit – it was a little shame (laughing). Then, to learn the rules of being in society and all what they do regarding children's awakening. It is incredible – they already do gymnastics, creative activities and they even learn the sign language. They started doing it in the smallest group, where my son is and he is only 17 months! They also do many visits outside to the parks, for example.

This crèche is very big and there are many adults for small groups of children – I believe they are approximately 50 employees and they can welcome approximately 110 children.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

I would take something with an international approach and an English-speaking environment. For example, on Mondays my daughter has English classes and I often talk to her in English. I think she still believes that TV is only in English because I only put cartoons in English (laughing).

**In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?**

The benevolence of the supervisors, the activities, the premises, the cleanliness and the child being happy when you leave him/her at the crèche.

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

When she (the daughter) finally had a place, she was not a baby anymore because, my concerns and reason why I was not renewing the request were that she was too young to be with so many people and I did not want her to feel alone at the crèche. I did not her to be a simple number in the crèche – but fortunately it was not the case.

**Would activities with parents help reducing your concerns and feel reassured?**

Yes - and they do an integration program like this. It is a bit difficult from a logistics point of view for those parents working because they do it during the two first weeks. For example, one day we should be there for 30 minutes, then 1 hour and finally half a day. It can also be grand-parents and this make it easier for parents. I believe all crèches do this but I did not have the possibility to compare.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?**

In the crèche where they are now, they follow the Montessori program. They put the child at the center and they only teach them something if they request it. The child should be the initiator of his/her learning. I only knew the name because there is an institute in Geneva.

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

Of course, yes (showing enthusiasm)! For the employees that would be great. I have some friends in Paris who have that and it is fabulous because they pay much less and the child is on site. This is incredible as service but I do not know if it exists in Geneva. However, I would say that it would be for a company of a certain size, not for small companies.

I know some people who do not have a crèche on site but they have priority in certain crèches by being an employee of a certain company. For example, Scoubidou, is a crèche for expatriates and at my previous job in a multinational company, we had a 10% discount and I was very interested because there was this international approach. However, with the discount the price was approximately CHF 2'000 monthly per child.



### ***Additional comments from the interviewer:***

*During the interview, the interviewee looked on the internet for the name of a crèche and when she found it, she said: “Yes, it is this one – and look, they are very well ranked on the Internet”. Being well ranked on the internet is shown as an important aspect to consider from a parental perspective.*

### **INTERVIEW #2**

**Interviewee:** A mother of two children

**Region:** Avanchets, Vernier

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** March 29<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** calm coffee shop in the city center with the presence of the youngest child.

### ***Introduction for the reader:***

The interviewee is a Marketing specialist working in the beauty industry for a multinational company. She is a mom of two children, a 2 years old boy and a little baby girl of two months. She works full-time but now she is in her maternity leave. The boy has a place in a crèche in their Commune of residence, Vernier, and the interviewee is in the waiting list for her second baby.

### **How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

When I was 3 months pregnant, I requested a medical certificate (to prove it) to register the baby – they do not accept your subscription without that paper. You also need to provide your work certificates or pay slips for both parents. I filled in a form with many options of crèches in different neighborhoods of the Commune as well as declared nannies because I did not know if there was a very long waiting list. Since both of us (the parents), we were working full-time, I wanted to have the maximum of chances. Then, I renewed the request every 6 months. My baby was born in March and they called me in June to start in August. I was very surprised and very happy!

I tried in Lancy as well, where I work but I was immediately told that I would not have any priority because this is given to inhabitants before workers.

The process was very stressful because it was our first child and we were both working full-time so we were wonder if we would need to leave the child at the care of a person and we were worried in case we would not have the feeling with that person, etc.

It is a frustrating process since the beginning because when you go for the subscription office, they can be sometimes rude; for example, one official told one friend of mine “you can forget about obtaining a place” and this is not the right thing to say to a pregnant woman.

### **Did the crèche offered a facilitated admission for the 2nd child? Did you benefit from a discount in the price?**

Unfortunately, not. I have a problem with this because normally siblings have priority so I should have a place. The issue is that I was honest and I gave the real pay slips, as I did not want to falsify anything, and given that my partner is currently unemployed, we lost any kind of priority. This is not coherent because the unemployment office obliges

you to have a childcare solution at 100% for all your children (to focus on job search). On top of that, they told me that my son, who is currently 3 days per week in the crèche, cannot be there more than 60% until his father finds a job.

However, for my daughter I selected only the crèche in which my son is and not any other type of solution because the idea is to have them together for their well-being and for us in terms of logistics.

In Vernier, they offer a 40% discount for siblings knowing that they are much more expensive than the city of Geneva – I think approximately 30% more.

**Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

They told me that being an inhabitant of the neighborhood, they will try their best for my daughter to integrate the crèche as soon as possible but without any guarantee given this issue of unemployment. Therefore, now we are at the bottom of the waiting list as if it would be our first child. They told me that the waiting list is approximately one full year.

**What were the childcare services used in the meantime?**

In the meantime, I prayed! (feeling desperate) Well, I tried to find a solution within the family because both of us we have our family close but it was very difficult as most of them also work full-time. Then, some did not propose themselves volunteer (they did not show a willingness to do it), what I can understand because it is a full-time job and you need to like doing it because you are the one educating the child while parents are at work – you need to prepare activities and all these things and it is not easy. A grandmother role is to have fun and not to educate them the whole day.

**Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

You know that in a crèche everything is regulated: they will not put your child 8 hours a day watching TV, people are trained, there are healthy meals adequate to their age and at regular hours. There is a lot of control from the State and thus you know that it is framed – it is like a school. I wanted him to go to the crèche to socialize and have activities with other children instead of staying only in the family circle. At the beginning, when they are babies there is not a huge difference but then it is important to be with children from other ages to learn that they cannot hit, take things from others, etc. Then, language skills are also much more developed at the crèche and I see that now as he says full sentences.

At the crèche, children are in their world – I think it is very sad when children are in adults' world. You can still play with them but you are an adult and his/her parent so it is not the same.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

I would love a crèche with the Montessori approach. Then, an international English-speaking crèche would be great as well! I also like the diversity of his current crèche because I would not like, for example, him to be in a crèche specific to an elite where everyone is rich and where even educators could be a bit outside the reality. I saw that there are some crèches that propose services for parents (e.g. laundry, etc.) such as The Little Green House and I found it very interesting. Nowadays, we expect from a

crèche to adapt to parents' needs in terms of schedule but also technology. For example, I saw that in the USA there are crèches with 24/7 security cameras and parents can see their child anytime (from anywhere). I find that great and I am for it. It is not to supervise the educators, because as a good educator you have nothing to blame, but to see what your baby is learning and doing. Having good educators is something expected by default. When you work in a shop you also have cameras and they are not there to control you but for security purposes.

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

It is not a direct concern for myself as I have an office schedule but for those mothers working in shops, as I was before, it is difficult because they finish at 7pm and most of the crèches close at 6:30pm and they do not have flexibility on this. Once I finished work late and I had no one available that day to pick up my son. I manage to arrive at closing time but he was the only child there and I felt guilty for that. Even if the educator told me that it was completely normal, as a mom you feel guilty.

Then, security is also a concern because in the crèche where my son is, they only have a door code as in a normal residence and it is not secure as anyone could see it and enter in the crèche – we should have better security systems. The issue in Geneva is that you accept certain things because you are obliged to as you do not have other alternatives – you do not go to that crèche because you like their approach, it's because is the one in which you obtained a place.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?**

In the crèche where my son is, they do have an educational program which is focused on the language - they were even on TV. They have special programs with books (approximately 3-4 books per year) that they analyze. They try to go outside everyday but sometimes is not feasible for climate reasons. During summer, they are very much outside, what I think is a good thing for them.

Personally, I love the Montessori approach and I try to apply it at home, especially in his bedroom. I try to make activities with him and, at the same time, letting him to be the most independent as possible (e.g. get dressed, get out of his bed, etc.).

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

That would be perfect! It depends on the type of company but within a multinational company it is sure that it would help the work-life balance because you do only one journey, which is the one you always do. You are with your children during the journey, you can share a moment with them during the day and in the evening, you see your child earlier! I was very frustrated about schedules because I finish my job at 5pm but I only see my son 45 minutes later and this is time I waste not being with him.

For the company is better too because as an employee, you are happier and less stressed; for example, if your child is sick it is easier to find an alternative. It will increase the employee's loyalty because I know people that quit their jobs to find something near the crèche because journeys are too long. Some people even move to another Commune because they know the waiting list in their Commune is too high. This is completely crazy.

### **Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?**

People weight the tradeoff between working vs. staying at home to see if, from a financial standpoint, it is worth it or not. In my case, it was better to continue working full-time. Then, if what you earn you need to spend it in childcare services you will prefer to stay at home which is not good neither for you nor for the baby. I know many mothers who left their job for this reason.

### **Complementary comments from the interviewee:**

In Geneva, nothing is done to facilitate and support you in having children. There are obstacles for everything you want to do: apartments, childcare, health insurances, etc.

### **INTERVIEW #3**

**Interviewee:** A mother of one baby

**Region:** Founex, in the Canton of Vaud

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** April 11<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** phone interview during nap time of her baby

### **Introduction for the reader:**

The interviewee is an experienced Marketing specialist in the beauty industry within a multinational company. She is now unemployed and pursuing her studies online. She is mom for the first time and her baby is 10 months old. Her little baby is at the crèche in the Canton of Vaud 3 days per week and the two other days she stays at home with her.

### **What is the current childcare service you use?**

My daughter is in a crèche 3 days per week and then she stays with me on Tuesdays and Thursdays – for the moment this is fine as I do not have a job and thus I can enjoy being with her, while continuing my studies online. The crèche is great and they do lots of activities but I started looking for a nanny because she is constantly sick. She started in the crèche in January and since then she has always been sick. We were on holidays for two weeks during Easter and she was fine, then she went back to the crèche on a Monday and on the Wednesday, she was sick again. They are flexible because if she has a cold they still accept her in the crèche but it is not nice for other babies because they can get sick as well.

### **How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

It is annoying. It is really annoying. You have associations by region, where you need to register your baby, and they have the list of all crèches and nannies as well as the respective places available. I was looking for a place as of January because my daughter was born in June and it was hard for me to leave her so small at the crèche; the issue is that January is in the middle of the academic year and there were no places available. They proposed me a nanny but when I met her, it did not match at all in terms of feeling. I was desperate, which led me to start looking myself through my network. I called one crèche but they told me they had no places available and that I was not a priority because

I was unemployed. I went in person to crèches because sometimes it is easier when they meet the baby. It worked because one week later they told me they had a vacancy at 50%. Then, regularly I asked them if they had more time available and they gave me an afternoon on top. I had the confirmation that as of September this year my baby will be in the crèche on a full-time basis.

**What other options you had in terms of childcare services? What would be the financial impact?**

The disadvantage of the crèche is the price but I do not know if it is different if my baby would be with a nanny. The crèche where my baby goes is a private crèche and even if they also have few places for the Commune, I took her in private because I really needed a childcare solution and the crèche was the only one. In consequence, it is extremely expensive; I think that when she would be full-time at the crèche, it will cost around CHF 3'500.- per month.

**Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

No, they told me that there was a long waiting list but they never told me in which position I was. I truly think that what worked in my favor was when I went to see her in person (the Director of the crèche) because she could see at which level I was desperate and she saw as well that my daughter was an “easy baby”. However, I know that the list was long and even now when I ask the Director if she has more free days, there is no place available.

I think it is not easy for them as well because as soon as you are in the waiting list, you start looking for other solutions in the meantime and maybe you find one. Therefore, it should not be easy for them to estimate their waiting list because it is not fixed.

My husband tried in his company because they have a partnership with a crèche (outside their facilities) but even there, they told him “to forget about having a place” because the waiting list was too long. You need to register when you are 3 months pregnant to ensure you will have a place and it is not even sure.

**Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

The crèche is reassuring for me because in our group of friends we are the first couple having a baby and consequently, my daughter had difficulties in socializing. She even went to a point where she was afraid of other children and she screamed. For me, the main objective was to make her socialize more. Also, after looking for some stories on the Internet about nannies, which you should not do (laughing), I was more reassured with a crèche because she is my first baby and the crèche is framed; you have authorizations, regular audits, etc. With a nanny, you do not have that “control” and you do not know if she is putting your baby in front of a TV screen the whole day.

I am very happy with the crèche because they do a lot of indoor and outdoor activities, there are many children and she sees many educators, which is good for her to socialize with both children and adults.

The main inconvenience, which I was not expecting, is the fact of being constantly sick because since she started the only time she was fine was when she was taking medication or when we were on vacation.

**Did you discuss with other parents about the fact of your baby being constantly sick?**

Well, I do not know many parents except one mother who used to work in the same company as me and who has her children in the same crèche. However, when I pick my daughter, I see clearly that the other babies are sick; they all have a runny nose and every two days there is a panel saying “alert chickenpox, alert rose rash, etc.”. It is painful for her and for us because we cannot sleep at night. However, it is also normal at their age because they take everything for the floor and then put it in their mouth.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

The ideal would still be the crèche but finding a solution for my baby not being always sick. I do not know if it is manageable but maybe doing a crèche with some rooms for babies who are very sick so that you do not leave him with the others. Maybe the solution is to have more cleaning people but I am not even sure that this would change something because babies touch each other too.

I would say that regarding the crèche where my daughter is now, I am 90% happy with all aspects but only 50% regarding this issue and it makes me looking for another childcare solution.

**In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?**

For me what was important, was first the socialization aspect, reason why I was especially looking for a crèche. Then, activities are also important, reason why I was a bit afraid of putting my daughter in a nanny because I did not know if the nanny would be putting my daughter the whole day in front of a TV screen. For me, it is important that children go outside every day.

The third important point was the “reassuring side” of a crèche because you know that it is framed and regularly audited by the State.

Of course, proximity from home was also important from a logistics point of view but it is not the most crucial aspect when looking for a crèche.

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

Honestly, before putting her in a crèche, I had no concerns because after seeing a nanny who is alone for 3 children, in the crèche they are 6 to look after 10 babies, which is huge. There was one thing, which I was not even thinking about before, that became important and it is her sleep because in the crèche she does much shorter naps compared to when she is at home as there is less noise (at home). For example, at home she sleeps one hour in the morning and two hours and a half in the afternoon and in the crèche, is half an hour in the morning and maximum one hour in the afternoon. However, when I visited the crèche they told me that they respect the rhythm of each baby and if one child is tired they will let him do a nap and thus it was not anymore a real concern for me. Even if I see that she sleeps less in the crèche, I know that she is very well integrated there.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?**

In the crèche where my daughter is, they are not fully Montessori and this is also because she is also too young but they are very much “motricité libre” oriented. For example, they will not force the babies to be in a position if they do not want. Babies are most of the time on the floor - they evolve exactly as they want and they go where they want. The educational team encourages them to move in the way they want; for example, they will not oblige them to sit if they do not know how to sit yet.

Personally, I like Montessori and what I like in this philosophy is that children should be self-confident and chose what they want to do.

Another important thing that I found great in the crèche where she goes now, is that everything they eat is homemade - they are delivered by a bigger crèche. What is great is that, if there are some ingredients that I have not yet introduced at home, they do not introduce it and if they have leftovers, they give it to parents so that in the evening we can introduce the ingredients ourselves at home. Thanks to his, I could also taste what they eat and it is good – you feel that those are real fruits with a good and natural flavor.

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

This is great. Honestly, before being mother I was not aware of the importance of that but now I know. It is good because you know that your baby is not far away from you and you can even see him/her at lunch time. I would appreciate having this because it is practical as well in terms of proximity, especially when you have more than one child.

If I was in a company where there would be a crèche, considering all the aspects I mentioned before (e.g. activities, child freedom to choose, etc.), I would like it!

#### **INTERVIEW #4**

**Interviewee:** a mother of two children

**Region:** Carouge

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** April 12<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** at the place of studies of the interviewee

#### ***Introduction for the reader:***

The interviewee is a full-time student in final year of Bachelor. She is mom of two boys, one is 4<sup>1/2</sup> years old and the second is nine months. She lives in the region of Carouge and she never obtained a place in a crèche for her babies.

**How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

My first son has never got a place in a crèche and I applied during my pregnancy. In fact, I forgot to renew the request and if you forget to renew it each 3 months, they put you at the bottom of the waiting list. Then, when he was one year they told me to renew the process and so I reapplied and renewed the request each 3 months but from that time until now, when he is 4<sup>1/2</sup> years old, I never had a place. Still now I am renewing it even if there is no need for that as he is going to primary school.

For the second, I applied when I was 2 months pregnant and I went every three months to renew but still I have not obtained a place. My husband's employer has two company crèches but they prioritize it for employees in higher positions and those where both wife and husband work in that same institution; the fact that I am studying and not working puts my husband in disadvantage.

To be honest, the process is discouraging and you have the feeling that you are penalized for being pregnant. That's how it feels like. It puts a doubt on parenthood – do you want to do babies anymore or not?

**What were the childcare services used in the meantime?**

For the moment, I have a place in a kindergarten and this is just to help my son to mix with other children. It is 3 hours per day from 8h30 to 11h30, not even half a day. You can choose to do it in the morning or afternoon; I chose morning because it is practical for me. My first son started in the kindergarten at the age of 3. Then, I have a nanny who is keeping both of my children for 10 hours a day as I am full-time student.

**Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

I do not know but I think that it is not a transparent process and there is favoritism of some kind. Many people suspect that they prefer to give a place to parents having a high income because then they get to pay higher fees. However, last year they told me I was in line for a place so if there would be a vacancy it would be for me but until now I am still waiting for that.

**Do you also have a waiting list for the kindergarten?**

Yes - it is the same administration managing the places for both. I got a place in kindergarten because I was so upset that they decided to give me a place. I asked them if there was a way for them to prioritize people because I could not understand how my son could not obtain a place for 3 years.

**Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

You know, when you are rising kids at home and they are only with you as an adult, you always have to say “No” and “No” to lots of things and thus for them to be able to develop skills of problem solution for example they need to do that with a peer of their age. When they are with children of their age, they are much more expressive and they learn language skills and social skills easily within themselves. It is different by being with an adult because adults always say “don't do that” as we only see the danger.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

I would like a crèche that is flexible in terms of opening hours; for example, not having to pick your child up to a certain hour otherwise he would be “on the street”. Even if they are charging a higher price for this, it would make sense for me because it reduces the stress for parents and you have a peace of mind when you know you will find your child safe in one place.



**In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?**

For me, it is important to know if it is a safe place for children and what are the activities proposed. Also, opening hours are vital for me and by this, I mean the flexibility of pick-up time children.

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

Maybe I am over conscious but I was concerned about someone getting to harm him – I guess it is a mom thing. I was worried if he does not speak and someone does something to him, he could not tell me. Now that he speaks, I am fine with that because he would tell him what happened.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?**

In terms of activities, I would like activities very much nature oriented and very creative as well. Nature because they get to learn a lot on their own and creative, for example having a Lego box and being able to create whatever they want and not having a picture to follow.

I also try to do things with my son that have a kind of scientific meaning, having a lesson behind it and bringing questions in his head. This will help them, maybe one day, to create something as they were questioning and they were curious.

**Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?**

I will start working full-time this year and my oldest son will go to primary school this year but I still do not have a place for my second baby. My job will be 100% and it is not flexible so I do not know how I will do if I do not get a place in the meantime. The fact of working part-time is probably not even open for discussion - it is the most likely solution because otherwise it is not viable for the children.

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

Oh, that's a great idea! You know, in a crèche they can start at the age of 4 months and it is torturous to leave your child for a long time without seeing him. So, within the company you can go down and breastfeed your baby, see how they are doing and then go back to your work with a peace of mind. I do not know how to explain that but, yes, I think it would be a very good idea because then you do not need to reduce your activity rate. You think twice before changing job – actually, you will be a “prisoner” of the company just because of the babysitting facilities. I think they should do that and I do not know why they don't.

## **INTERVIEW #5**

**Interviewee:** a mother of three children

**Region:** Onex

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous

**Date:** April 16<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** phone interview in the evening when the mother puts the two biggest children to sleep

### ***Introduction for the reader:***

The interviewee is a mother of three children: a 4<sup>1/2</sup> years old girl (born in the second half of the year), a 3<sup>1/2</sup> years old boy and a baby girl who is 4 months old. She registered for the first time early 2013 and she obtained a place 3 years later, in 2016.

### **How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

As soon as I learnt that I was pregnant around January/February 2013, I registered for a place in the region of Onex. It corresponds to three crèches in total but we did not obtain a place for our oldest child before 2016 and it was only for 3 days per week. For our second child, we only had a place for September 2017. Now, both are 100% in the crèche. For our baby, I announced I was pregnant and as in the group of the little ones, they only stay one year, each year they “renew” the entire group and given that I already had two children there, I had priority. Therefore, I automatically obtained a place.

The process was a bit stressful because at that time I started a new job and my husband had some medical issues. Therefore, we were pressed by the time because our daughter spent most of the time with my husband while he was sick.

### **Did the crèche offered a facilitated admission for the 2nd child? Did you benefit from a discount in the price?**

Yes, they do that as of the second child. They have priority over other children in the admission process, which helped us to have a place for September last year for our 3<sup>rd</sup> baby but still, we had to fight to have that place for our son (the second child). We had many meetings with the “accueil familial du jour” together with the Director of the crèche and we had to insist that we wanted our two children together in the same crèche. **Did you benefit from a discount?** Yes, we had 25% discount as of the second child.

### **Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

It is true (that they are not very transparent in communicating their waiting list). For our son, they told me that they had 2-3 children before me but they did not communicate openly. However, this was quite exceptional (to know their position in the waiting list) because I have friends that were never told their position in the waiting list.

### **What were the childcare services used in the meantime?**

We managed to find a place in the “accueil familial du jour” in Onex with an authorized nanny but it was thanks to our network by posting on Facebook and through friends of friends.

Then, there was the choice of changing and putting them in a crèche. We realized that, when the oldest went to the crèche for 3 days a week, she made a huge progress; she was well stimulated, was doing various activities, was well-integrated and I never heard her saying “mum, I do not want to go to the crèche”. We also saw the change with our second child, who was very happy when he started, especially because joined his big sister. He needs to be stimulated and, still now, we see that he gets bored easily in the crèche – he always needs to be busy with something because he is very active.

**Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

First, for practical reasons because at that time we had no choice than working both of us. It is true that we would prefer having an alternation between me and the crèche but this was not possible. At the beginning, we went for the nanny option because we had no choice and with time we realized that, even if children loved her, it was not “her thing” to bring them to places where there would be other children such as the playing rooms available for parents and nannies. Therefore, even if the nanny took care of another child, there was not enough interactions. They had activities outdoor in the forest for example but it was always the same group and even when they went to the park, the interaction with other children was little. Our choice was mainly made based on this aspect but also because it is more diversified in the crèche. They propose different things from doing puzzles, doing a DIY activity, learning how to recycle to learning how to cook homemade food on their “kitchen corner”. Of course, we can find that also at some nanny’s place but I liked that spirit of connectivity and doing pedagogical activities.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

We would certainly privilege a bilingual structure where there would be creativity! We are lucky because the crèche in which they are is excellent and we do not have anything to blame them for. I do not have a specific type of crèche in my mind but I would take the time to search for crèches that have small groups and valuing every child even if some of them are different from the rest.

**In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?**

What reassured us was the institutional aspect of a crèche. For example, knowing what they drink in the crèche was important because for us we only give them water and now that they are a bit bigger we give, exceptionally, fruit juices but only in the morning. It is important that it is framed in terms of nutrition as well – for example, having a recognized label for their food. I am also interested in the educational methods they use and I prefer Montessori. Then, the number of educators per child, which has a cost and we cannot afford everything.

To sum up, I would say the educational aspects, the whole infrastructure and the nutrition. The differentiation point, which we found in this crèche, are the educators – we are aware that they are not all equal but most of them are passionate about their job and for parents, this does not have a price!

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

I was mainly afraid of my children not adapting and not being well integrated in the crèche. However, we never had an issue related to this.

**Some crèches propose to parents “an integration program” to be in the crèche with their babies for the first days during the adaptation period. Was this your case?**

Yes. The first time, I was there during 15 minutes sitting with the educator and my daughter playing in my presence. The day after, it was 15 minutes that I was not there, then another day 30 minutes and so on until she was eating with them, etc.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?**

As said, the educational program is very important for me and I like Montessori. It is quite on trend now and it is very inspiring. I like the aspects of putting the child at the center and be able to take the best of him because each child has his own interests.

**Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?**

No, that never happened because we managed to combine both work and childcare, mainly because we had no choice. At that time, it was not possible neither for my husband nor for me to reduce our activity rate at work.

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

For a long-time we hesitated because my husband works for a company that built its offices recently and the building counts with a crèche. We made the request and obtained a place but then we decided that it would not be a good idea in our situation because I worked 5 minutes away from home so if my husband would be on vacation or sick we still had to do the journey to his work and it would make me lose time. However, the idea is good. In my office (in the same building), there was a public crèche and now it is private one but the price was too high that we did not go further.

**As employees working in the same building, do have some advantages in that crèche?**

No, we do not have.

## **INTERVIEW #6**

**Interviewee:** a mother of one girl

**Region:** Châtelaine, Vernier

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous

**Date:** April 25<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** a coffee bar in the presence of the child – this was very helpful to see the personality of the little girl, who was very open, sociable and active

### ***Introduction for the reader:***

The interviewee is a fully dedicated mom of a 2<sup>1/2</sup> years old girl. She is not working full-time for personal reasons not linked with childcare. The interviewee takes care of her daughter in the afternoon and the father in the morning.

### **How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

I sent the form through the website and I have never received a reply. Then, when my daughter was 3 months I went with my sister to the Commune to register and I explained my situation of not working because I do not have a working permit. They asked me for certain papers and the pay slips of the father, etc. They told us that they will be sending a response through the mail, which I received, but it was just saying that they do not have an available place and mentioning the dates for the next subscription period. By the way, my sister received exactly the same reply. Personally, I just abandoned it and did not renew my request. We do not like to get angry – when you receive the answer you get upset, then you ask “What will I do now?” but then you try to find another solution as soon as possible and the most convenient, especially financially.

### **Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

No, they never told me – they just sent me the dates for the next subscription period.

### **What were the childcare services used in the meantime?**

The father works at night, so in the morning he takes care of our daughter and I do it in the afternoons when I am back from the few hours I work. However, I still wanted her to go few days to a place to socialize with other children and that's why I requested a place in a kindergarten but it is only few hours per days and it is very expensive because for me it can go sometimes up to CHF 1'500.- monthly. That's how parents do it, they try to see who in the family is available to take care of their children because it is easier and it is beneficial from a financial perspective.

### **Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

Well, mainly because I could work more. However, if she is in a crèche I will pay what I will earn, in any case. The other reason will be because they do activities and excursions which are good for her to socialize and to share with others as she is only child. It is also different if she does an activity only with me or with other kids. She can learn much faster by seeing other kids doing something and that's why I started putting her in a kindergarten even if it is only for few hours.

I know other mothers who wanted their children to be in a crèche to have time for themselves, for example to go to the gym after giving birth.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

I would look for structures having flexible opening hours – this would be helpful to be less stressed during the day.

**In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?**

The security, the flexibility in terms of opening hours and the nutrition – to know if they insist or not with your child to eat.

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

Not everyone wants to put their baby in a crèche – at the beginning, I did not want because they get sick very quick and very often. There are lots of virus and unfortunately not all parents take care of their child the same way you do. For example, I prepared a lot my daughter to not put toys on her mouth but still sometimes she does it and we cannot avoid it.

Then, I would be afraid that someone hurts her even other children because as a mom you always want to protect them. At the same time, I would be concerned about educators not being fully paying attention to the children – for example, if they are looking after another child while someone is hurting my daughter.

Another concern is to see her so small and not having the opportunity to see her during the whole day because she is at the crèche – I think that she was too small to start the “school life”.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, cultural visits, nature)?**

I do not know any educational programs but I would prefer activities in group and excursions for the kids.

**Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?**

I am obliged to work part-time because I do not have where to leave my daughter the full-day and I cannot obtain a place due to the work permit issue. This is my situation at my current job and on the previous one they did not renew my contract when they knew I was pregnant.

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

I think that it is great! I think it is a very good option because in case something happens you are already there near your child. The second good reason is because I think there could be a financial compromise with the company, which could participate in the costs. I do not know how it works but the idea is great!

***Additional comments from the interviewee:***

*It is incredible when you see that for the public school you pay like CHF 100 per year for material and for the crèche, when they are so small, you pay like CHF 3'000 per month!*

## **INTERVIEW #7**

**Interviewee:** a mother of one girl

**Region:** Châtelaine, Vernier

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous

**Date:** April 29<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** interview by phone

### ***Introduction for the reader:***

The interviewee is a mother of a girl who will be 3 years old in July. The mother works full-time. Her daughter goes to a public crèche near their apartment two days per week.

### **How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

I registered on the website of the Commune when I was 3 months pregnant with the certificate from my doctor. I had to choose how many days I wanted and in which crèches I was interested – I chose the ones closest to my apartment. Then, they asked for the revenues. The first year, they told me that they did not have available places but they would call me when it would be the case. In the meantime, I had to renew the request each 3 months by making a call. I also registered in the city of Geneva as I was working in the city center and there I needed to renew the request each 6 months. On top of that, I also registered for the “maman du jour” but they never contacted me.

My daughter obtained a place for two days, even if I would like more, and she entered the crèche when she was one year and three months.

### **What were the childcare services used in the meantime?**

At that time, my mother stayed with her at home but only in the afternoons.

### **Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?**

No, I did not have to reduce the activity rate but to enable my mom to be with her I had to ask my employer if I could start one hour later every day.

### **Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

No, they never told me. I knew that for those babies who were already in the crèche, their siblings would have priority over the others but I did not know what was the waiting list for the first baby of the family integrating the crèche.

### **Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

Firstly, because they develop rapidly certain skills as they do activities which are not possible neither at home nor alone. Then, for practical reasons as well because at that moment my mother worked and I did not have another care solution as for example a nanny. I could manage to find a nanny but still I preferred the crèche for my daughter's development.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

I would choose a crèche teaching other languages on top of French – I would like a bilingual (French-English) crèche for example.

**In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?**

I did not know any crèche here (in the Canton of Geneva) so it was more for convenience and proximity reasons as it would be easier for me to bring her to the crèche every day.

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

I was afraid that she would not adapt or eat for example. I had fear of my daughter crying because she would miss us during the day.

**Some crèches propose to parents “an integration program” to be in the crèche with their babies for the first days during the adaptation period. Was this your case?**

Yes, it was. I went to the crèche 2-3 days but only few hours each day, between 2-3 hours. The first time, I stayed looking at the activities she was doing and the second time I was there during lunch time to see what they eat and how was the process. The last time, I left her alone for 2-3 hours. **Did you notice that the integration program helped her to be more at ease without you in the crèche?** I do not think it is enough time for them to fully adapt and be integrated but it helps in the integration process of being with other children. Today, she is very happy to be at the crèche.

**In terms of security (to enter in the premises), what does the crèche propose?**

There is a gateway with a security protection which is quite high to ensure children cannot open it. On the main door, there is a digital code (as for apartments) where we need to insert a 4-digits code and this code changes once a year.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?**

Personally, I do not know much. In the crèche, they have a program called PAM “Parle Avec Moi” (Speak With Me), where they do 2 by 2 with an educator and the theme can be around a book or a game. They sing and motivate children to express themselves and start speaking – they do it regularly. Each month, they learn a new color and they also do a “parcours de motricité”.

Personally, I think the PAM program and gymnastics are very important and interesting for children to develop themselves physically and intellectually.

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

I find it practical. For example, the crèche of my daughter is also the crèche for the employees of a well-known electricity company. They have a certain number of places reserved for that company.



However, I also find it unfair for those not working in those companies because those places are reserved for them and thus we are indirectly penalized because they have priority and it reduces the number of places available for other people. On top of that, sometimes it is easier for their employees to pay for a private crèche thanks to their high revenues.

### **INTERVIEW #8**

**Interviewee:** a mother of two children

**Region:** Meyrin

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous

**Date:** April 30<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** interviewee's house. This was helpful to analyze the children's bedrooms as well. They both have their own bedroom fully personalized with many toys and themes related to their age. The mother explained that this was mainly because when she worked part-time, her children needed to have things to play and learn while being the whole day at home.

#### ***Introduction for the reader:***

The interviewee is a full-time employee at the Hospital and mother of a 10 years old girl and a 4 years old boy. Before she was working part-time (50%) and the other half of her time she was taking care of her son at home. She lives in the region of Meyrin.

#### **How long was the process of requesting/obtaining a place in a crèche (if a place was obtained)? How was the process (in terms of emotions)?**

I registered my baby and filled in all the documents but not during my pregnancy, it was afterwards. Then, I was in the waiting list until they called me when my son was approximately 3 years old. I waited for approximately one year (because she registered her son when he was almost 2 years old). I think that the later you registered your child the less you wait because there are more available places because they need less attention compared to a baby for example. Also, I obtained a place "quickly" because it was for a new crèche that they will open in the area.

The place I obtained was for minimum 3 days per week but my son could go more days if needed. I chose the minimum because at that time I worked on the evenings (from 18h to 22h) and it was only for him to be with other children and practice French. However, when I obtained the place in the crèche, I also got a full-time job offer and therefore it was not affordable nor beneficial from a financial point of view and then I decided not to put him in the crèche.

#### **What was the financial charge of your son being in the crèche for 3 days per week?**

The cost was between CHF 700-800 per month for 3 days per week because it is approximately 10% of the total gross revenue of parents for a public infrastructure.

#### **Do you know what was the waiting list to have a place in the crèches you were looking for?**

I was never told in which position I was in the waiting list. Even before registering, I went once to a crèche in person and asked but they just told me that the process was long but

without giving more information. I registered for both crèche and kindergarten but for the waiting list I was told that I needed to choose between one or the other.

**What were the childcare services used in the meantime?**

My son goes every day to a nanny, who was recommended from a family member. When the nanny is on vacation, we try, us or someone from the family, to take vacation as well. For the picking up time, is the grand-father who is responsible due to our working schedules.

**Why would you like your baby to integrate a crèche (e.g. benefits in terms of learning, social practice, etc.)?**

First, it was for my son to learn and practice French because at home we speak our language (Portuguese). Then, I also wanted him to be in a crèche to socialize and do activities with other children that we could not do at home.

**Suppose you can afford any type of child care service. What type of structure would you choose for your baby? Why?**

I would prefer a structure that proposes many and diverse activities for children in preparation to school. I would also like a crèche that teaches other languages at young ages; I had that for my daughter (in another country) and I appreciated it. For example, she was learning English not at a high level but small things just to get used to the language.

**In your opinion, what do you think is important to consider when selecting a crèche for your baby?**

Mainly, the security and safety of my children. I mean, if there is always someone taking care of them and not one educator for 20 children - this is very important for me.

**Do you know how is the security system to enter in the crèche where you obtained a place?**

No, I never went there. All my contacts were by phone only because they were in the construction phase. However, where my daughter was when she was a baby – we had to ring the bell at the main entrance and they had a camera and could open the door remotely.

**Speaking about cameras, what do you think about having cameras in the crèche filming your child?**

Again, where my daughter was they had cameras everywhere and I found that spectacular. There is no sound, only the image and to see it from your computer you need credentials to access the page. Every parent can see at any time the room where his child is and the activities the child is doing.

**What have been (or would be) your concerns when leaving your baby in the crèche for the first time?**

My main fear was them not being able to integrate well. For both, there was the language barrier because also for my daughter we were not in Switzerland but we were not in our country neither. I was afraid that they will not be able to communicate and would be

isolate all the time. That's why with the cameras I was much more reassured because I could see her interacting with other children.

**Some crèches propose to parents “an integration program” to be in the crèche with their babies for the first days during the adaptation period. Was this your case?**

Yes, they had that possibility – we were with her for 30 minutes, then we went with her and the following day we stayed for 30 minutes but then we left and she stayed in the crèche with the educational team only.

**What do you think the ideal crèche, in terms of child development, would be like? Have you thought about it (e.g. scientific experiments, trips, cultural visits, nature)?**

Well, I think it depends on their age because cultural visits when they are too young may not be that much appropriate. I would like outdoor activities linked with the nature.

**Did you have to choose between working or staying home to take care of your baby?**

Well, for my daughter it happened because I did not have a place in a crèche and no one to take care of her in the city where I was living (outside Switzerland). For my son, it was different because he was born with a medical issue on his foot so I did not want to put him too small in a crèche, reason why I registered him too late. I did not know to which point, educators would take care of his special needs. Therefore, in Switzerland I worked part-time but for a personal choice and not for childcare reasons.

**What do you think about an onsite company crèche (crèche en entreprise)?**

Oh, I find that great! It is ideal because every woman wants to have children and therefore they know that they have a “secure” place for their babies. Then, you can see your baby anytime during lunch or your break.

**Is there a crèche in your company? Have you done the request?**

Yes - there are two of them, one for each site. We have never made the request because if in the public crèches there is a long waiting list, I do not want to imagine in my company due to the huge number of employees. Just imagine, for a parking place the waiting list is 13 years now!

## **Appendix 3: Guide for the interviews with crèches**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Related category</b>
<b>Q1.</b> Could you please briefly introduce your crèche?	Offering
<b>Q2.</b> What were the encouraging factors and motivation leading you to open/buy/manage a crèche?	Cost/Benefit relationship
<b>Q3.</b> How was the process to obtain the authorization (e.g. long, complex)?	State requirements
<b>Q4.</b> Would you say that State restrictions and requirements to open a childcare infrastructure reduce opportunities for entrepreneurs? Why?	Cost/Benefit relationship
<b>Q5.</b> In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of opening/managing a private vs. a public infrastructure?	Cost/Benefit relationship Infrastructure type
<b>Q6.</b> Today, a huge concern for parents is being able to reconcile professional and personal life. How does your structure help them in dealing with this issue?	Work-life balance Offering
<b>Q7.</b> Is there a right equilibrium, required by the State, between educational and funnier activities?	Offering Educational program
<b>Q8.</b> Do you have a special educational program in place? How was the process of selecting the most appropriate program for child development?	Educational program
<b>Q9.</b> Ms. Lax, founder of the crèche Little Green House, once said that the market demand is so high that she does not feel the pressure from the competition. What would you say about this statement?	Cost/benefit relationship Market demand
<b>Q10.</b> What is the current waiting list to have a place in your crèche?	Market demand
<b>Q11.</b> Do you offer a facilitated admission process as of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> child of the same family? Is there any financial discount for the parents?	Finance/Pricing Offering
<b>Q12.</b> Ms. Castelli, director of the crèche Scoubidou in Geneva, mentioned that it is difficult for a private crèche to keep their “clients” on the long-term because as soon as they obtain a place in a public crèche, they leave. What could you say about this statement?	Infrastructure type Finance/Pricing
<b>Q13.</b> In terms of financial charges, what are the most important aspects to consider in the childcare industry?	Finance/Pricing
<b>Q14.</b> How is the decision process about the pricing strategy? Is it in function of your financial charges or is it simply related to what is down in the market?	Finance/Pricing
<b>Q15.</b> Is there an audit control done by the authorities? What are the aspects monitored?	State requirements
<b>Q16.</b> How is your crèche different from the others? What are your differentiation points?	Offering

## **Appendix 4: Transcript of the interviews with crèches**

### ***INTERVIEW #1 – Type of crèche: Privately owned without subvention***

**Region:** Le Grand-Saconnex (Geneva Canton)

**Interviewee:** Co-administrator

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** March 19<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** by phone

#### ***Introduction for the reader:***

This is a private crèche created in 1960 and bought in 2014 by the person interviewed and his wife. The crèche welcomes a limited number of children, which is 25, to keep the “family size” concept. The crèche welcomes children aged from 1 to 4<sup>1/2</sup> years old and classifies them into three different groups. The daily price for a 100% occupation rate is CHF 135.

#### **What were the encouraging factors and motivation leading you to buy the crèche?**

My wife has been working in childcare for 6 years and she wanted to open her own crèche. It is difficult because it requires a lot of funds (to open one) but at that time the person who managed this crèche retired so we had the opportunity to buy it.

#### **In your opinion, is it easier to buy a crèche rather than opening a new institution?**

Yes, it is. However, funds are still needed when buying a crèche because the financial charges are quite high (in this industry). For us it was easier to buy.

#### **In terms of financial charges, what are the most important aspects to consider in the childcare industry?**

Salaries and premises represent the important part of the financial charges. There are some supervisory standards imposed by the State regarding childcare as, for example, 1 adult to take care of 3 children. The main issue, which is different from opening a shop for example, is that the State requires you to have all the personnel available the day you want to physically open the crèche. This means that, the day you want to open the doors of your crèche, you have for example 25 children coming and you need to have the premises ready, the rent guarantee (for six months normally) and the personnel that should have been recruited already few months ago to get on-boarded. Some employees are recruited 2-3 months before the opening.

#### **How is the decision process about the pricing strategy? Is it in function of your financial charges or is it simply related to what is down in the market?**

Prices are fixed in function of our financial charges, such as rent and salaries. The idea behind this is to ensure we can continue running the crèche and pay the bills at the end of the month.

#### **How was the process to obtain the authorization (e.g. long, complex)?**

The authorization is not linked to the crèche but to the management and the personnel. This means that the management can have all the authorizations required but if an

educator does not have the required diploma, the authorization to run the crèche is not granted or can be withdrawn. It is more seen as an authorization rather than a license.

**Is there an audit control done by the authorities? What are the aspects monitored?**

You are controlled every year by the State, who can grant or withdraw your license, which happens quite often. The audit is very wide. It includes the minimum space required for each child, security conditions, diplomas of the personnel, number of children per educator, etc.

**Would you say that State restrictions and requirements to open a childcare infrastructure reduce opportunities for entrepreneurs? Why?**

Indeed, and it is not my opinion, it is the reality. However, we are not selling packaged food so I fully understand the position of the State and their control regarding childcare conditions. It is completely normal for me.

**In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of opening/managing a private vs. a public infrastructure?**

This is a good question. The public infrastructure is a service of the State or the Commune, meaning that as a director you are not very autonomous on the decisions you could take. The private crèche is according to you. It is a good question. The advantage of a private crèche is that you can decide, especially in the financial side, independently of the control done by the State.

**Is there a right equilibrium, required by the State, between educational and funnier activities?**

You should have intellectual and recreational activities for children but you decide the balance between both. You decide what activities you want to do but they should all be framed by adults with the adequate diploma (educators, assistants, etc.).

**Do you have a special educational program in place? How was the process of selecting the most appropriate program for child development?**

We do not follow an educational program such as Montessori but we have what we call a “contenu pédagogique” because you need to have a course of action in the children’s journey. In our crèche, it is to make them discover many different things to enrich their personal experiences. The pedagogic objectives are to respond to their security, space and psychomotor needs. We favor discovery and nature in our activities and we have a pedagogic expert that comes every two weeks. Then, we give a lot of importance to make children discover food; the “contract” we have with them is that even if they will not like it, at least they try every ingredient. We want to offer them a stimulating environment, which is adapted to their age. It is important to make children discover but not forcing them.

**Today, a huge concern for parents is being able to reconcile professional and personal life. How does your structure help them in dealing with this issue?**

I would say the time range that answers to parents’ professional needs because there are crèches in Geneva open from 9am-3pm and our crèche is open from 7:30am-6pm. Of course, we could still have a wider time range but it would require higher funds to pay the salaries accordingly and employees willing to work on irregular schedules. As any

childcare place, our goal is to discharge parents from their obligation to take care of their children so that they can go to work.

**Do you offer a facilitated admission process as of the 2nd child of the same family? Is there any financial discount for the parents?**

Yes, we offer this possibility and there is a 20% discount for the 2<sup>nd</sup> child. However, there are some crèches that do not do it.

**What is the current waiting list to have a place in your crèche?**

I could not say how many people we have in our waiting list but, yes, we have one waiting list. As a private crèche, we are not linked to a geographic region so we have an easier admission process for people coming from everywhere, which is not the case for public crèches that need to stick to the Commune where their funds come from.

**Ms. Lax, founder of the crèche Little Green House, once said that the market demand is so high that she does not feel the pressure from the competition. What would you say about this statement?**

I agree with this but there are also many gaps in terms of quality. I cannot say more but there are crèches where conditions are clearly different in terms of quality for the well-being of the children.

**Ms. Castelli, director of the crèche Scoubidou in Geneva, mentioned that it is difficult for a private crèche to keep their “clients” on the long-term because as soon as they obtain a place in a public crèche, they leave. What could you say about this statement?**

Indeed, this could happen. Prices in private crèches are high and therefore it is addressed to people with higher revenues. However, we should consider that in a public crèche, the more you earn the more you pay. We had some cases where parents went to a public crèche but there they paid even more than in our crèche. Parents should be careful and compute well the cost it will represent for them.

**How is your crèche different from the others? What are your differentiation points?**

I would say that for us it is the “family size” – we would like to develop other structures but they would also be small structures with a limited number of children. That’s what my wife always says because she knows each children of the crèche, their birthday, where the parents work, etc. I believe that this is something that is very valuable, especially in terms of security.

**To manage a crèche, should we have a diploma of educator?**

You need a diploma of “Educateur d’établissement de santé et soins”. It is a CAS at the Haute Ecole de Travail Social over two years. Ideally, you should also have a professional experience as a childcare educator. It is important to consider that there are more requirements when you want to open a private crèche than a public.

## ***INTERVIEW #2 – Type of crèche: Company crèche for a public institution***

**Region:** City of Geneva

**Interviewee:** Director

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** March 21<sup>st</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** in the premises of the crèche

### ***Introduction for the reader:***

This is a crèche that welcomes exclusively the children of the employees of a public institution and it has two sites near the parents' workplace. It welcomes children as soon as the maternity leave ends to the age of 4<sup>1/2</sup> years old. The daily price is flexible and depends on the parents' revenue. The crèche has a wide time range from 6:30am to 9:15pm.

***Comment of the interviewer:*** At the beginning, the interviewee was very surprised that someone coming from a background of studies in management is interested in the development study of a crèche because, as she said, a crèche does not aim at producing revenues but at "surviving" each month to pay salaries and all the bills. She said that for her, "a crèche is not going in that direction (as a business) but to the opposite because a crèche is not supposed to make profit".

### **Even if it is a private crèche, would you say that it does not make profit?**

If it is a private non-subsidized crèche, it must fix extremely high prices to be able to run from a financial standpoint. I do not know the exact percentage but I think that around 90-95% of the crèches in the Canton are private but subsidized by the respective Communes.

### **How do you differentiate a subsidized crèche?**

It is a crèche without the control of the State but most of the time they have a committee or an association (parents, neighborhood association) that manages the crèche – very often it is a voluntary committee. It can seem strange for someone studying management but there is still this history of association and voluntary work related to childcare. It comes from the ladies of goodwill that took care of children so that their parents could go to work. This type of crèches is subsidized most of the time by the Commune, for example the Commune of Genève City counts with approximately 70 crèches. The Commune can then municipalize the crèche, as it is the case of Meyrin and Vernier, where the workers are officials. The subvention from the Commune is relatively high because a crèche costs a lot of money as there are lots of regulations to be respected (i.e. size, security, material, authorization, etc.). Then, in terms of personnel, in Geneva the rule is 60% of educators and 40% of socio-educational assistants.

### **How was the process to obtain the authorization (e.g. long, complex)?**

The director or head of department is required to fulfill certain requirements in terms of diploma and (professional) experience to obtain the authorization.

### **What would be the encouraging factors and motivation leading someone to open or manage a crèche?**



Since many years, there is an encouragement from the Confederation to enable people to request a subvention when they want to open a crèche. However, there are lots of restrictions to be able to benefit from it and they give you a certain amount of money to open the crèche but not to run it on the long-term. Then, you need to have a financial system to make it viable.

**What is required as a diploma for a director?**

The legal minimum is not too high; I think you should have the diploma as an educator and 3 or 5 years of professional experience but I advise you to look directly on their website (SASAJ website) to avoid misleading you. Nowadays, more directors do the diploma I did, which is a Master HES-SO in Management and Strategy of socio-medical institutions. However, today the legal standards are not too high. For the educators, there is a very good school in Geneva, which is over 4 years.

**In terms of financial charges, what are the most important aspects to consider in the childcare industry?**

Personnel charges because an educator that finishes his/her diploma has a substantial salary and the same occurs for socio-educational assistants who did a CFC and should also have a substantial salary. As for many institutions, I would say that the charges are 90% coming from salaries.

The rent as well, as you probably know how is the land in Geneva. It is an important charge when you must have a specific number of squared meters per child and the toilettes appropriate for their age.

**How is the decision process about the pricing strategy? Is it in function of your financial charges or is it simply related to what is down in the market?**

Almost each crèche in the Commune applies the same criteria for the pensions that parents need to pay, which is proportional to their revenues. Then, I know that there are private crèches that charge CHF 3'000 per month, and when both parents earn CHF 10'000, it seems not an important charge, but still it is not a company that will make huge profits. It is a social institution where normally the price is proportional to the parents' revenues. Operation costs are important and are there all the time, not only at the moment of the creation (of the crèche) where you need few millions depending on the size of the crèche.

**Would you say that State restrictions and requirements to open a childcare infrastructure reduce opportunities for entrepreneurs? Why?**

The main restraint is the financial charges a crèche involves, even for the families as the pension (price paid by parents) can represent an important charge for them. All the politicians talk about this issue before the elections because it is an important concern. Even though we have many crèches in Geneva compared to other Cantons, it is true that we do not have enough. Only in the city of Geneva we have 70 crèches and there are many in other Communes because there is a law obliging the Communes to provide childcare services according to their needs.

**In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of opening/managing a private vs. a public infrastructure?**

Most of the crèches I know are private but with the committee of management which can be an association and that makes it difficult because as you receive a subvention from them they manage and make decisions. It is also the case if it is a private investor that gives you 80% of your funds for example. Nowadays, there are more and more crèches that are 100% from the Commune and where employees are officials of the public administration; but still they benefit most of the time from an important number of subventions.

**How many crèches do you have at the moment?**

Here we are a “company crèche” subsidized by the company for the benefit of its personnel. There are two crèches now, each one near each site of the company. There is also a daycare center onsite but it is available for clients’ children and not for those from employees. In this site, we can welcome 67 and in the other 63 children from all ages since baby until the age of entering school.

**How do you manage to respond to the needs of the institution as there is a huge number of employees? Do you have a waiting list to have a place in one of your crèches?**

We have a waiting list because, of course, we cannot respond to all their needs but we have almost always the same waiting list for the last 10 years. The number is not something we communicate openly.

However, most of the employees also live in the city of Geneva and therefore are eligible with a priority to the crèches in the city as they are workers and inhabitants.

**Today, a huge concern for parents is being able to reconcile professional and personal life. How does your structure help them in dealing with this issue?**

We have a wider time range compared to other crèches – we are open from 6:30am to 8pm in this site. We also have two types of possible subscriptions at the crèche: one is fixed and the other “à la carte” for those parents who have irregular schedules. Therefore, there is this flexibility compared to other crèches.

**Is there a right equilibrium between educational and funnier activities?**

It depends on the implication of the committee or the association, who sometimes would like to adapt their life philosophy and lead the educational program towards a certain direction.

**Do you have a special educational program in place? How was the process of selecting the most appropriate program for child development?**

Every crèche needs to have a “projet pédagogique” for the SASAJ that explains its own approach. However, we also have a certain freedom, if the well-being of children is respected, to be more influenced by Brazelton (Thomas Berry Brazelton – American pediatrician), by Emmi Pikler (Hungarian pediatrician), etc. We have a certain freedom if this is given to us from our employer or the committee and in any case the educational program needs to be approved by the SASAJ. Those educational programs are created with the participation of everyone in the team because everyone will be using it when dealing with children.

Our educational program is mainly influenced by Emmi Pikler. She is a Hungarian pediatrician who did many important works and created a nursery dedicated to children who had lost their parents during the WWII. There is a special manner in dealing with children, to listen to their needs, intensively observe them and then adapt our approach accordingly. There is also an aspect of giving a certain autonomy to the children, make them participating in many activities and favor the autonomous game instead of something imposed by adults. We do not apply 100% of her pedagogy but it inspires us a lot in our approach. We believe it is very respectful towards children's needs.

**Is there an audit control done by the authorities? What are the aspects monitored?**

Yes, the SASAJ not only gives you the authorization to open your crèche but it comes every two years at least for a full-day inspection and in the meantime, they can make other visits and request documents and reports. This audit in the Canton of Geneva is very important. The evaluator controls not only the number of specialized people per child but also the project, the premises, the furniture, everything.

**Ms. Castelli, director of the crèche Scoubidou in Geneva, mentioned that it is difficult for a private crèche to keep their “clients” on the long-term because as soon as they obtain a place in a public crèche, they leave. What could you say about this statement?**

I could not answer because she has a private crèche but as said before if you open a private crèche without any subvention and if you have a pension of CHF 3'000 per month, of course the pension would be different in a subsidized crèche. Thus, it can be a motivation for parents to change to a subsidized crèche.

**How is your crèche different from the others? What are your differentiation points?**

I would say our educational program – this is like the “color” of each institution. Otherwise, the rest such as the respect or the daily rhythm is pretty much the same thing everywhere because children are all the same (in terms of needs). There are many things that are similar so I would say what differentiates (a crèche) is the educational program and the influencer we chose for it.

**What do you think about the concept of a “company crèche”?**

Well, I am for companies to develop this type of infrastructures as it is also an added value for the company because it will keep the employee loyal (to their employer). I believe that employers could participate more to subventions in crèches. Of course, there are companies that open their own crèches but in Lausanne there is also a foundation created by different local companies that participate with a very small part of their revenues but at the end they could open few crèches in the Canton of Vaud. I believe this is the future. If we think of increasing subventions through taxes, people do not want to pay more taxes but on the other hand, companies are always looking for experienced people that will stay in the company for a long-time.

### ***INTERVIEW #3 – Type of crèche: Privately owned without subvention***

**Region:** Canton of Vaud

**Interviewee:** Owner

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** April 17<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** in the premises of the crèche

#### ***Introduction for the reader:***

This crèche has a capacity to welcome 66 children aged from 4 months to 5 years and it is open from 7am to 7pm. The daily price for this crèche is CHF 145.- based on a full-time occupation rate. Before starting the interview, the interviewer had the chance to do a tour of the premises that was highly helpful, especially in this crèche, which is new and everything has been thought to the detail as for example the doorknobs.

#### **Could you please briefly introduce your crèche?**

We can welcome 66 children into three different groups and now we have between 50 and 60 children subscribed per day in our crèche. Three years after the opening of my crèche, I describe it as quite positive because it is a project that, independently of being private or public, is quite complicated because one (the public infrastructure) has a longer waiting list and the other must fix higher prices (the private infrastructure).

In terms of personnel, we have one educator for each 5 babies, then 1 educator for 7 children in the middle group and 1 educator for 10 children in the biggest group.

#### **How was the process to obtain the authorization (e.g. long, complex)?**

It was very long – it took three years before we got all the authorizations! We were lucky because the land we are on already had a base project and the Commune had almost already given the authorization. They were very happy to welcome a second crèche in the region.

#### **Did you have the authorization well in advance of the opening day?**

Not really – for us the construction work finished on December 24<sup>th</sup>, the State came to check everything on the day before and we had the authorization to open on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Then, when we opened, we had to redo a room because it was not compliant in terms of square meters. It is very strict – it is 3.5sq m per child.

#### **In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of opening/managing a private vs. a public infrastructure?**

We wanted to be a half private and half public crèche but the Commune was not interested so we were obliged to do 100% private. With a semi-private crèche, you have the financial support of the Commune and you are still very much free in the management of the infrastructure. However, since we are in a commercial center they were the ones managing the authorizations and when we arrived the work had already started.

#### **In terms of financial investment, did you obtain some subventions?**

We opened the crèche in January 3 years ago and during that first year we had to submit our accounts to the State because they can of course give subventions. However, they still prefer to give it to public infrastructures and very little to private ones. A sad reality

is that many private crèches open and close 5-6 years later because revenues are not enough to cover the costs and that's why they request the financing for the first 7 years, etc. We obtained a financial aid from the State for the first two years.

**How is the recruitment process of educators? Do you need to have all of them for the opening day even if you do not have enough subscriptions?**

When we opened in January, we already had a team of 10 educators and we had only one child enrolled. The law says that to open a crèche you must have the people already recruited because you cannot forecast the number of new subscriptions. We recruited them in December for them to get to know each other and decide the (educational) program together. Now we are approximately 20 employees.

**Today, a huge concern for parents is being able to reconcile professional and personal life. How does your structure help them in dealing with this issue?**

For example, when one of our children is sick we call the parents to inform them but we offer the possibility to keep the children here, depending on his health situation, to avoid parents stressing at work. Many crèches call them directly and ask to come pick their child immediately. We are more flexible because we have different rooms and therefore we can isolate the child until parents come. We also distribute once a year a satisfaction survey to parents to obtain their proposals/requests and we try to implement them because external ideas are always good to consider. We also have breakfasts with parents, during which they have the possibility to be half a day with their children.

If a child has an issue, we always try to help and find a solution by discussing with parents and prevent them from being stressed – for example, we call them at work to inform if the child is better. We try to create a trustful relationship with parents.

**Security is an important concern for parents. What do you offer related to this?**

We did as much as possible to secure our premises. The floor in the rooms and in the garden is made of a special material to absorb the shock, in case a child falls it has a bounce effect. The plugs and doorknobs are high; we have covers for the plugs and all the cleaning products are bio without alcohol. **In terms of access to the crèche?** There is always someone at the reception and if this is not the case, every parent has a badge, which is registered in a system so that we know to whom it belongs and can see at what time they entered in the crèche. Once the crèche is closed, no one can enter even with the badge. At the beginning, we thought about having a code like for an apartment because many parents complained about the badge but for me the code was not enough. There is also the footprint but in winter if you have your hands wet or hand cream on your hands it does not work so finally we decided that the badge, in a credit card format, was the most practical.

**Is there a right equilibrium, required by the State, between educational and funnier activities?**

There is no control from the State on this – the team decides the right balance.

**Do you have a special educational program in place? How was the process of selecting the most appropriate program for child development?**

We do not follow only one educational program such as Montessori or Loczy. We try to take few things from each philosophy because in our opinion not every child will be at

ease with Montessori, for example – we try to make a mix of everything so that each child can find their own environment. The educators are there to entertain and guide them through their development process – for this, they put in place their know-how.

**Ms. Lax, founder of the crèche Little Green House, once said that the market demand is so high that she does not feel the pressure from the competition. What would you say about this statement?**

This is true – we do not feel the competition because the offering is different: we do not have the same premises nor the same educational program. However, we all want the same thing: welcome children to destress parents.

We will not take children from other crèches but we approach each other. For example, in case one has a waiting list too long, they “send” us the child until they have a vacant place. There is this kind of collaboration, especially between public and private infrastructures because the public are the ones with the longest waiting lists.

**What is the current waiting list to have a place in your crèche?**

So far, we did not have a waiting list but now we start having one for the group of the babies (15 places per day) – soon we will be obliged to put babies on the waiting list because it is the group that is rapidly filled in and for the longest period. Sometimes we have 16-17 babies so we had to do a special request to enable us to welcome more children in this group and recruit more educators as well. In terms of space (square meters) it was not an issue but in terms of employees we had to recruit more people.

Until now, we did not have a waiting list also because at the beginning it is very complicated and we need time to be known in the market – even to physically find our premises is complicated. It is the word-of-mouth that helped us to be known.

**Do you offer a facilitated admission process as of the 2nd child of the same family? Is there any financial discount for the parents?**

We have a 10% discount for the second child and they have priority on the waiting list (the day they will have a waiting list).

**Ms. Castelli, director of the crèche Scoubidou in Geneva, mentioned that it is difficult for a private crèche to keep their “clients” on the long-term because as soon as they obtain a place in a public crèche, they leave. What could you say about this statement?**

Indeed, it is true but it goes on both ways. We see this issue because we have parents in our crèche that go to the public as soon as they have a place. What I could observe is that very often the public infrastructures do partnerships with companies, which prevents those who have the right in the Commune to obtain a place. For example, we see companies in our village having partnerships with crèches that are outside the village.

It is difficult for us because we see parents who have difficulties to be in the private but they have no choice and at the same time some parents are in the public, where they could afford the prices of the private.

**What do you think about the concept of a “company crèche”?**

The kids in our crèche are mainly those who live in the region and we have two companies from which we welcome the babies of their 10-15 of their employees. We approached them (for a partnership) but they were not interested to discuss. Then, they

contacted us because they wanted to open their own onsite crèche but when they realized the investment needed and the restrictions in terms of square meters, luminosity, employees, etc., they never came back to us. It is also complicated to open a crèche when you already have the building because it may not be adapted. Finally, we welcome the babies of their employees but unfortunately we do not have a partnership with them.

**What do you do in terms of marketing and promotion? Who is responsible for it?**

It is the Director and myself, who are responsible for the promotion. It is not our strong point to promote the crèche but we are present on social media (Instagram and Facebook), we do the little sugar sachets in tearooms and we advertise on commercial centers. We preferred to do small things at a precise moment just to remember people that we exist rather than leaving huge billboards which stay for months at the same place. For us, word-of-mouth works better than an aggressive communication strategy.

**Is there a ranking system for the best practices in crèches?**

That would be great! I never heard about that but it is funny because I thought about it this morning to make a prize for the best crèche. It is true, because we have rankings for hotels, restaurants but not for crèches.

**Is there a specific diploma required to manage a crèche?**

As a crèche owner, no. However, to be a Director, you need to have a diploma and ideally years of experience on the field, even if it is not required. For example, my Director she has been on the field for 10 years.

**INTERVIEW #4 – Type of crèche: Public-Private crèche**

**Region:** Lancy (Geneva Canton)

**Interviewee:** Director

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** April 30<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** in the premises of the crèche

**Introduction for the reader:**

This is one of the 4 crèches of the Commune of Lancy. It counts with 45 employees and welcomes weekly 120 children from the age of 4 months to 4<sup>1/2</sup> years old.

**Could you please briefly introduce your crèche?**

We welcome 90 children per day in our crèche and it corresponds to 120 children per week because they can come full-time or part-time. We welcome children from the end of the maternity leave to the age of entering school, which is defined by the Canton. We are approximately 45 employees with a mission to welcome children and families. We are an association of private law subsidized by the Commune and without that, we could not operate. We have parents' revenues, which account for approximately 20% of our revenues and the Commune gives us the supplement to cover our charges. We have a budget of approximately CHF 3.5 million per year.

**How is the decision process about the pricing strategy? Is it in function of your financial charges or is it simply related to what is down in the market?**

The price parents pay is computed in function of their revenue – there is a marking scheme. It is between 9 and 12% of their net revenue.

**In terms of financial charges, what are the most important aspects to consider in the childcare industry?**

The most important charges in a budget of a crèche are salaries, which represent approximately 70% of the total budget. The premises are an important charge as well because there are a lot of norms in terms of security to be respected (e.g. materials, evacuation doors, etc.).

**What were the encouraging factors and motivation leading you to open/buy/manage a crèche?**

I studied psychology in 1997 and I started as an assistant in this crèche because I wanted to do an internship and see if it would be something I would like - finally, I liked it and I stayed here. In the meantime, I did some studies about music therapy. I like a lot business as well as team and project management, but in the social domain. Therefore, I decided to take this position after the previous Director retired. It was done naturally. It is interesting to mention that sometimes we associate a crèche with the social because we take care of children and we have a pedagogy but there is all this side of management: HR, team management, project management, budget, contact with stakeholders (Commune and Association), etc. Even myself, I did not realize all of that when I was working within a team. It is like a company. We have a lot of responsibilities because we take care of many babies and, this is something I try to pass on to the teams because we are not working with packaged food. We need to reflect very well on everything we do, what we propose (as activities), how to structure the days, etc. – all the pedagogical aspects are crucial.

**In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of opening/managing a private vs. a public infrastructure?**

It is the correct equilibrium because in my opinion, for a 100% private crèche, it is very difficult to operate in terms of budget as they need to find the 2-3 million somewhere. For us, the advantage is that we have this convention with the Commune from which we benefit every year of the same budget and they adapt to our needs. This means that we need to share the accounts with them but we do not need to justify each year the functioning of the crèche. It is a great collaboration and we have as well other collaborations as for example with the environmental service of the Commune which takes care of our garden and we can, sometimes freely, book Communal rooms for the different events we might have. We are quite close with the service of social affairs, where we can send families if they are in a difficult situation to obtain a financial aid, for instance.

Then, for me, the disadvantage of a 100% public infrastructure would be the risk of standardization. In our case, for example, as an association we have a committee that gives a certain “color” to our crèche and that takes some decisions in terms of pedagogical choices. The fact that we are autonomous gives us the freedom to decide in which programs we want to focus (e.g. handicap, families in precarious situations, etc.). For example, in some Communes as Meyrin and Vernier, they have a specialized



Communal department managing the childcare services. Therefore, employees are officials and they depend very much on the Commune to take decisions.

**How is your Association Committee composed? Are you a decisional member?**

There are always minimum two representatives of the parents, one member representing Lancy and one representative of Caritas. This building belongs to Caritas, we are tenants, and the first association was created by them, making them an historical member of the association. Then, anyone who is interested in childcare and the social domain can be part of the association – for example, we have parents who are part of the association for 30 years because they remained active even after when their children left the crèche. I also attend but I am not a member because I am employed by the committee. Very often, I am the person who brings the topics for discussion in function of what I live daily at the crèche.

**How was the process to obtain the authorization (e.g. long, complex)?**

From a Canton point of view, it has evolved a lot the past years. There is the SASAJ that delivers the authorization for the management – it is directly linked to the Director and sometimes a deputy, which is our case. The goal is that the deputy's name is also mentioned on the authorization and therefore she can replace me when I am not here. To obtain the authorization, the person needs to be working in childcare for at least 5 years and it is, for the moment, the only requirement I think. There is no requirement about the diploma the person should have, which is different in other Cantons. However, the SASAJ evaluates the competences of the person and if she has some diplomas it can facilitate the process.

**Would you say that State restrictions and requirements to open a childcare infrastructure reduce opportunities for entrepreneurs? Why?**

I do not know very well what are exactly the requirements to open a crèche but I know that they are very strict. In Geneva, it is something very difficult because comparing to the Canton of Vaud, we need to have almost twice the number of educators compared to the number of assistants. In the Canton of Vaud is the opposite equilibrium. Therefore, from a financial perspective this represents a higher cost (for crèches in Geneva).

**Today, a huge concern for parents is being able to reconcile professional and personal life. How does your structure help them in dealing with this issue?**

Our crèche does not close at all during summer, which is the case in other crèches. We also propose flexible subscriptions depending on the activity rate of parents. For example, a family working 80%, we will propose a place for 4 days to be fully covered. However, we are also confronted with a reality, which means that we do not have a place for everybody and thus we have a significant waiting list. We also propose aid to specific needs of families; for example, when a child is on vacation we can propose to those parents who did not obtain a full-time place to bring their children more days.

Another thing that I believe we do well in Lancy is that we are also open to unemployed parents, to a certain limit. For example, if the child is already in our crèche and one of the parents loses his/her job, we can secure a place for one year while reducing the occupation rate to two days, which is the minimum. However, we secure the full-time place for one year in case the parent finds a new job.

**Do you offer a facilitated admission process as of the 2nd child of the same family?  
Is there any financial discount for the parents?**

Yes, they have priority if the first child is in our crèche and in general we manage to take siblings quickly. From a financial perspective, the second child pays 50% and, in case there is a third child and all 3 are in the crèche at the same time, the third child does not pay anything.

**Do you have a special educational program in place? How was the process of selecting the most appropriate program for child development?**

One of our missions is offering programs for children with a certain handicap. For example, we teach the sign language to children, even when they are very young. We elaborated a pedagogical project that considers aspects from different approaches – for example our pedagogy is closed to Montessori but more modern. We based ourselves in Loczy for the babies – it is all about favoring the baby's autonomy while fixing an affective security. I was against putting in place a specific method because I think we can take ideas from everywhere and do something personalized.

**Is there a right equilibrium, required by the State, between educational and funnier activities?**

There should be an equilibrium, meaning that every week we need to cover each domain of a child's development process. However, there are not binding activities for children because they are not yet in school but it is more to learn things through games, for example. We will rarely force a child to do a certain activity because they have different preferences, which sometimes depend on the period of the year.

The control is more done from the educators' perspective to ensure they propose a wide variety of activities. For example, I spoke the other day with an educator who loves to do cooking activities – I understand her point but it is also important to propose different types of activities (e.g. motor activities, language related activities, etc.). Activities can be individual, in small or big groups but this is something teams are supposed to organize themselves together with the pedagogical deputy.

**Ms. Lax, founder of the crèche Little Green House, once said that the market demand is so high that she does not feel the pressure from the competition. What would you say about this statement?**

For example, in terms of welcoming children if one crèche has no places available, it is more likely to happen between Communal crèches where there is a replacement service available for multiple crèches. Maybe there is also a collaboration network between private crèches. In our crèche, we operate in an autonomous manner but we regularly meet with the management of the other crèches of Lancy – we put in common our duties, documents and we share ideas. However, we never had the need to collaborate directly because each crèche has everything needed to operate properly. This is maybe more needed for new structures of private crèches that do not have a subvention but in our crèche, we do not have this need now.

**Ms. Castelli, director of the crèche Scoubidou in Geneva, mentioned that it is difficult for a private crèche to keep their “clients” on the long-term because as soon as they obtain a place in a public crèche, they leave. What could you say about this statement?**

Yes – we have parents that are in our waiting list and already have a place in a private crèche. Very often they tell us that this is for financial purposes because it costs much more in a private crèche. Sometimes, they want to have a place here because it is closer to their homes; private crèches accept children living in any region but then it can be far from home. For example, the crèche Scoubidou welcomes children from Lancy and therefore when there is a place here parents prefer to change. I know it represents an issue for private crèches.

We observe the same issue with kindergarten infrastructures – they often tell us that when a place is available in our crèche, parents resign their contract at the kindergarten because the crèche corresponds better to their needs. Then, for the “maman de jour”, they decided to do annual contracts that cannot be resigned by parents (before the term) because they were confronted with this issue and it was difficult for them as they must recruit people to ensure enough places.

**Is there an audit control done by the authorities? What are the aspects monitored?**

There is an inspector who comes every two years and controls the premises, security and hygiene. Recently, they started controlling the pedagogical aspects as well – the inspector spends time within the group to see how we organize our days and which activities are planned.

**How is your crèche different from the others? What are your differentiation points?**

I would say it is the attention we pay to families in difficulties and to the individual needs of each child – for example, we have a psychologist in our crèche, which is quite unusual. In our crèche, we do a lot of prevention programs for children in a situation of handicap and for families in precarious situations. I think it is also this “color” that we can give thanks to the fact of being autonomous in our decisions – it characterizes us and we need to keep enriching our identity to continue improving our educational program. We have a charter in a form of a tree at the entrance with our principles and what characterizes us. This tree means that we have roots such as Caritas and our base orientation and then we have everything else, which is in movement such as new educators who join the team and the activities that change over time.

***INTERVIEW #5 – Type of crèche: Public-Private crèche with a partnership with a Swiss bank and one multinational company***

**Region:** Lancy (Geneva Canton)

**Interviewee:** The two Directors

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization to record and transcript but keeping the interview unanimous.

**Date:** May 1<sup>st</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** in the premises of the crèche

**Introduction for the reader:**

This crèche is one of the 4 crèches of the Commune of Lancy and it counts with two Directors given its huge size. The crèche welcomes children from approximately 150 families.

*Each interviewee is given a different letter (A or B) for the reader to understand better the flow of the discussion.*

**Could you please briefly introduce your crèche?**

**A:** We are an association dependent of the Commune of Lancy with a certain number of places reserved for a Swiss bank and a multinational company. We have a partnership with these two companies. Before, this crèche was a company crèche for the bank with some groups of children but at a certain moment it could not continue being autonomous and therefore the company opened it to the Commune and now it is a crèche of Lancy.

**How many children does your crèche welcome?**

**B:** 118 per day. We work with approximately 150 families.

**What were the encouraging factors and motivation leading you to open/buy/manage a crèche?**

**A:** The willingness to make the profession living otherwise because it is a very different type of management when we are on the side of the families and children compared to when we are in contact with the employees and other institutions. It is another job but, in any case, we contribute to the daycare of children. It includes welcoming new families, training employees and give a management direction that we believe is favorable.

**B:** To evolve professionally in our career, as well. Simply.

**Were you educators before becoming directors of this crèche?**

**A:** Yes – there is an obligation to come from the field, from a professional experience point of view. However, there is not a required diploma to enter in the management position but the SASAJ requires an obligation of ongoing training afterwards (once in the role). This means following regularly training related to this specific domain (childcare).

**How was the process to obtain the authorization (e.g. long, complex)?**

**B:** The process is very complex – I do not know if you saw it, but all the details are on the SASAJ website. The exact steps, we may be mistaken today but the only thing we know is that we need to have it validated by the SASAJ and they have all the norms.

**A:** It is very complicated. There are many norms that need to be considered: the development from a child's perspective, space planning (e.g. fire standards), maximal number of children that can be accommodated and the supervisory standards for employees and children.

**Do you offer a facilitated admission process as of the 2nd child of the same family? Is there any financial discount for the parents?**

**B:** Yes, we do. We can give you the rules of procedure of the crèche for the parents or you can have it on our website.

*After reading the document, indeed they propose a priority to siblings. However, from a financial perspective, the document does not mention the amount of the discount, if any.*

**Would you say that State restrictions and requirements to open a childcare infrastructure reduce opportunities for entrepreneurs? Why?**

**A:** From my point of view, what complicates the situation are all the norms and the cost it implies. I think that people do not realize, before delving into the subject, how much costs a crèche. The premises and furniture is specific and salaries are also very costly. For example, for the babies we talk about 1 educator for 4 babies. This is a fixed cost that we cannot reduce. That's why managing a crèche is not a profitable business.

**B:** Personally, I think it is not a question of State. For me, it is a desire from the Commune that needs to take place – each Commune should decide if they want to develop the social or not.

**Would you say that the Commune of Lancy is well placed compared to others?**

**B:** Yes. For example, there are articles on newspapers where they estimate a certain number of parents that should be happy with the childcare service of their children and we were quite at the top.

**A:** It is a “current” situation because the cartography makes it difficult to define as at a specific moment you open a crèche and you increase the capacity to welcome babies but at the same time you have two new buildings being constructed. Therefore, the capacity is again not suitable and not responding to the market needs - it is a continuous readjustment to each new situation.

**In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of opening/managing a private vs. a public infrastructure?**

**B:** We are not a public crèche. We are an association subsidized by the Commune for approximately two thirds – we are neither public nor private but we are closer to the private. Now, we know that there are only few private crèches that can operate well. As my colleague said, a crèche is at loss. It is the decision of a Commune or company to invest in the social and help its employees. For us, there is no difference – only, who is our employer.

**A:** What can change the situation is: “who is the employer?” because otherwise we are quite autonomous in the crèche management even if the Commune verifies the budget (as they give a subvention). However, regarding what happens at the crèche it is more a collaboration between the 4 crèches of the Commune with the approval of the social department of the Commune.

**Ms. Castelli, director of the crèche Scoubidou in Geneva, mentioned that it is difficult for a private crèche to keep their “clients” on the long-term because as soon as they obtain a place in a public crèche, they leave. What could you say about this statement?**

**A:** In terms of pricing? **Yes.** The pricing structure is regulated by the Commune and there is no variation from one crèche to another. What differentiates it are the factors considered to establish the pricing structure.

**B:** It is not “private or public” crèche - the reflection would be crèche or not crèche as the price is the same.

**Today, a huge concern for parents is being able to reconcile professional and personal life. How does your structure help them in dealing with this issue?**

**B:** We are open from 7h00 to 18h30 non-stop, 5 days per week and 225 days per year.

**Do you have a special educational program in place? How was the process of selecting the most appropriate program for child development?**

**A:** We do not have a specific pedagogy but we analyzed from the field what we found interesting and we put in on paper, together with the educational team. It is a frame that we follow and it is intended to change over time in function of the experience gained and the social status that evolves over time. Those are quite basic regulations that follow the needs of children.

**B:** It is a fundamental tool for the well-functioning of our institution. It is unique to each crèche and it needs to live.

**Is there a right equilibrium, required by the State, between educational and funnier activities?**

**B:** No. We start from the child's need. From there, we see what he needs and that is our priority. The educational team is composed of professionals and they are the ones who need to assess the needs of the children. There is not a strict program that dictates which activity we need to do each day.

**Do educators have the freedom to regularly propose the activities?**

**B:** They are the ones who propose because they are the ones the closest to the children.

**A:** It is not regularly, it is always. If there is a new project, it is the educational team who brings it to the management, we study it together and then we put in place.

**In terms of financial charges, what are the most important aspects to consider in the childcare industry?**

**B:** The rent and the salaries. *The interviewer mentioned that for one crèche interviewed, salaries represented 70% of the financial charges.* For us, it will not be 70% because we are tenants and the rent represents an important charge.

**Is there an audit control done by the authorities? What are the aspects monitored?**

**A:** Yes – there is a control done by the Commune every year. We prepare our annual budget and send it to them for validation. **Other than financially, are there other controls?** **B:** We have an audit done by the SASAJ who comes to see if we respect the norms. **A:** We also have the SCAV (Consumers and Veterinary Affairs Service) that comes regularly to control hygiene norms as well as fire service for the evacuation.

**From a parents' perspective, the ideal solution would be the concept of company crèche. What do you think about this?**

We have a partnership with a bank that previously had its onsite crèche. This was very active at a certain moment but we observed that with the time it was very difficult to operate only with employees' children. For this reason, they made a request to open a place in collaboration with the Commune of Lancy (by having a common subvention). Today, we see that this type of infrastructure is very common and it is how it works in Lancy: crèches being subsidized by the Commune and having a partnership with companies. These companies have a certain number of places that is reserved for their employees, making them a priority in the waiting list. Both the company and the parent pay for that place.

**How is your crèche different from the others? What are your differentiation points?**

**A:** The particularity of our crèche is that it is big compared to others and we have two groups of each age range. Therefore, we need to constantly adapt our pedagogy to ensure that when a child goes from one age range to another, he acquired certain skills before. For example, we know that when a child enters in the oldest age range he knows how to use a toothbrush or a knife. Like that we know how to progress, together.

## **Appendix 5: Guide for the interview with a representative of the SASAJ**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Related category</b>
<b>Q1.</b> How many requests of authorizations for new crèches are you treating now? Those requests come from public or private infrastructures?	Market Demand Infrastructure type
<b>Q2.</b> What are the main reasons for refusal and withdraw of an authorization of functioning?	State requirements Cost/Benefit relationship
<b>Q3.</b> Do you give any financial assistance for the development of new crèches or innovative projects related to childcare?	Finance/Pricing
<b>Q4.</b> Can companies wanting to open an onsite crèche benefit from a financial aid?	Finance/Pricing
<b>Q5.</b> The criteria to obtain the authorization to run an onsite crèche remain the same as for a normal infrastructure?	State requirements Infrastructure type
<b>Q6.</b> Is there a ranking system for the best practices in crèches? If not, why?	Offering
<b>Q7.</b> Is there an audit control done by the authorities? What are the aspects monitored?	State requirements
<b>Q8.</b> Do you also control the security system to access the crèche (e.g. 4-digit code, badge, etc.)?	State requirements Offering
<b>Q9.</b> Do you have access to the waiting list for a place in a crèche?	Market demand



## **Appendix 6: Transcript of the interview with a representative of the SASAJ**

**Interviewee:** Ms. Nadine Ruffieux-Rufenacht, responsible for requests evaluation

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization given from the interviewee to publicly expose the results of the interview

**Date:** May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** by phone

### **How many requests of authorizations for new crèches are you treating now?**

We have many ongoing projects, mainly projects subsidized by the Commune. We have some private projects but those are not in the course of authorization now. For the start of the next academic year (August/September 2018), we will probably have 3-4 new authorized crèches. **Is it the annual average number of new crèches?** Yes, indeed.

### **From those 3-4 new crèches are they public or private infrastructures?**

Those are subsidized by the Commune. The portion of private crèches is very low. **Is it related to the financial investment it requires?** Yes – a place in a crèche costs approximately CHF 40'000.- per year for one child at 100%. Therefore, to run a private crèche considering the rent and the salaries, it would be necessary to fix a price for parents between CHF 3'600-3'800.- monthly for a full-time occupation rate. It is a huge cost making it very difficult for a private crèche to operate, except if they (the management) have the support of a company or a foundation that invests money, a little at loss because it is not a highly profitable business. This is the reason why it is difficult to open a crèche or any childcare service infrastructure in Geneva.

### **What are the main reasons for refusal and withdraw of an authorization of functioning?**

In the case of a refusal, the most common reason is the financial viability of an institution. For us, an institution is not financially viable if the deficit cannot be supported and therefore we will not give the authorization.

Then, it is rare, even very rare, to withdraw an authorization. However, one of the reasons that could justify this, is if the institution does not fulfill the conditions anymore, meaning that the safety and well-being of the children would not be guaranteed.

### **Do you give any financial assistance for the development of new crèches or innovative projects related to childcare?**

The SASAJ does not give any financial aid and, if I am not mistaken, the State neither. Maybe there are foundations that can help innovative projects such as the Fondetec, for example.

At the Confederation level, yes, there can be a financial assistance and the OFAS (Federal Social Insurance Office) is the body responsible for that. However, it is not the State, it is the Confederation. They finance the creation of new places in childcare services. They have a budget per Canton from which they can finance but this is not systematic.

**Would you know what are the criteria for considering a project “innovative”?**

No. This (new requests) is treated case by case.

**Can companies wanting to open an onsite crèche benefit from a financial aid?**

I think they can make a request for a financial support to the OFAS but then I am not sure what are the criteria to be eligible. However, at the State level in the Canton of Geneva, there is not this type of support.

**In terms of criteria to obtain the authorization to run an onsite crèche, do they remain the same as for a normal infrastructure?**

Absolutely.

**Is there a ranking system for the best practices in crèches?**

No, we do not have that. **Is there a reason for not having it?** Not really. It is just because each institution has its own functioning and in terms of quality what concerns us is that the well-being of children is respected and that children are at the heart of the institution. This is what will concern us during our controls and the evaluation of each institution. They (the institutions) are all different and it would be difficult for us to evaluate which is the best one. We estimate that it is not our goal nor our interest to do that.

**Is there an audit control done by the authorities? What are the aspects monitored?**

Yes – there is a control every two years. We control all the aspects of the authorization, to see if they are still respected, all the norms in terms of hygiene and security, the premises and furniture, who welcomes the children, the activities and the educational program of the crèche. On top of that, we also monitor the management of the institution from an administrative perspective (e.g. schedule of employees).

**You just mentioned “security” as an aspect that the SASAJ controls. Do you also control the security system to access the crèche (e.g. 4-digit code, badge, etc.)?**

Yes, we verify that. We will not control how the door opens but we control if it is secure, if children can open it themselves and if not everyone can enter the crèche without permission. There are many methods for security at the entrance door: the code, the badge, etc. We do not require a precise method but the door code is normally enough because theoretically not anyone can enter in an institution and there is also the management who controls it (from their office).

**Do you have access to the waiting list for a place in a crèche?**

Not, we do not have (this information). It is more accessible at the Communal level. I think that each Commune has its own waiting list.

## **Appendix 7: Guide for the interview with an HR representative of a multinational company in Geneva**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Related category</b>
<b>Q1.</b> At the moment, do you have an onsite crèche in your company?	Offering Infrastructure type
<b>Q2.</b> In your opinion, what would be the disadvantages of having an onsite crèche?	Cost/benefit relationship
<b>Q3.</b> In your opinion, would you say that an onsite company crèche has an impact on the performance of your employees?	Work-life balance
<b>Q4.</b> Did you propose another childcare service for your employees (e.g. partnerships)?	Offering Infrastructure type
<b>Q5.</b> At the moment, how many crèches have you established partnerships with? How many places can you reserve for your employees with those crèches?	Market demand
<b>Q6.</b> In your opinion, what are the benefits of having partnerships with existing crèches?	Infrastructure type Cost/benefit relationship
<b>Q7.</b> From a financial perspective, how is the financing of those reserved places?	Finance/pricing
<b>Q8.</b> Do you offer any other type of support or services to improve the work-life balance of your employees, especially in terms of childcare?	Work-life balance Offering
<b>Q9.</b> What would you think about a company crèche that functions as a “franchise” managed by experts on the field but, as the company, you need to finance it?	Infrastructure type
<b>Q10.</b> In Switzerland, we are very much involved in solidarity principles as it is the case for taxes or social insurances. What do you think about taking a very tiny portion of each employee’ salaries (e.g. CHF 10.- per month) for the development of a childcare concept?	Finance/Pricing

## **Appendix 8: Transcript of the interview with an HR representative of a multinational company in Geneva**

**Interviewee:** An employee in the HR Services Solutions team, responsible for childcare related topics.

**Protection of data privacy:** authorization given from the interviewee to publicly expose the results by keeping the company and employee's names anonymous to protect its current partnerships.

**Date:** May 29<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Place of the interview:** by phone

### **At the moment, do you have an onsite crèche in your company?**

No, and it has been a conscious choice not doing it. **For what reasons, did you take this decision?** It is clear that we had that question coming from employees several times. A couple of years ago, we did a survey among our employees and it was clear that not everybody was in favor of having a crèche inside the company because it could be perceived as a distraction for employees. Of course, a large number of employees would be in favor of it so we decided to further investigate the option, multiple times even, and it seems to be not the best choice for a couple of reasons.

### **In your opinion, what would be the disadvantages of having an onsite crèche?**

First, it is very expensive for a company to finance it. Then, of course, that is not our core business as we are not into childcare services and we cannot, suddenly, employ personnel who takes care of children. It is a very different sector with many agreements and educational needs that we simply do not have. Therefore, this makes it a completely different business for which we totally do not have the certainty nor the expertise required. Finally, another reason why not everybody wants to have a crèche in the workplace is because they prefer it near their homes.

From a very pragmatic and practical point of view, we decided that it would be better to leave this (a company crèche) in capable hands of people that know what they are doing instead of us taking responsibility in something that is neither our sector nor our area of expertise.

### **In your opinion, would you say that an onsite company crèche has an impact on the performance of your employees?**

Everything we do in terms of childcare services, is very much in the framework of diversity. For us, everything that we do is to ensure that our female workforce can come back to work in a good and relaxed way because they would have found a solution for the care of their child and that they can reenter the workforce whenever they choose to, instead of not being able to come because they did not find a childcare solution. Therefore, there is a diversity reason on why we invest behind childcare in the way we do, because I think we are quite exceptional on what we set up. I know couple of companies that have an onsite crèche but the majority does not do a lot in that field.

Will performance go up? (rhetoric question) I think that there will be very mixed opinions on that (about an onsite crèche) and we observed that when we did the survey. Some people said "I will find it a distraction, knowing that my child is so close here" or "I would be more tempted to go see him and then my child would not be happy because he would

see me as well". However, we also had employees who said that for them "it would be the ideal solution and it would not put any stress on leaving or picking up the kid in time and I could work at ease". I think having a good childcare solution is an important factor to drive up performance and ensure people are not distracted but, on the contrary, they are reassured that their children are well. However, I do not believe that we can only achieve that by having a company crèche onsite.

**Did you propose another childcare service for your employees (e.g. partnerships)?**

Yes – what we did alternatively was to set up partnerships with more than one crèche. In total, when bringing all together, we have more places than what we could have afforded onsite because for one crèche, which is a big one, I can already have between 50-60 places. The fact of having partnerships dispersed over multiple crèches, enables us to have more places and, this is one of the reasons why we decided not to do a crèche onsite.

**At the moment, how many crèches have you established partnerships with?**

We have partnerships with 5 different crèches. **How many places can you reserve for your employees with those crèches?** In total, we have a potential for 82-85 places.

**In your opinion, what are the benefits of having partnerships with existing crèches?**

Well, we are not managing the crèche. It is daily managed by professionals in their field of expertise. Then, from a cost perspective, it is more favorable as well. On top of that, we have more options for employees of where they can put their children, giving them more flexibility in terms of locations near their homes.

**From a financial perspective, how is the financing of those reserved places?**

In doing a partnership, we sponsor the crèches and in return we obtain priority in allocation for a certain number of places. However, the normal fees of the daycare itself are covered by employees.

**Do you offer any other type of support or services to improve the work-life balance of your employees, especially in terms of childcare?**

For childcare, we do multiple things. For example, within our medical department we have an expert who our employees can consult when they are looking for childcare solutions. She explains the different systems and networks that are in place in Geneva, Vaud and neighboring France. Then, we have a contract with a company called "Familyservice"<sup>6</sup>. They provide support for any type of childcare people are looking for and it can go from providing childcare information, help with crèche research, advice about nannies and kindergarten and help with the paper work. They do it for children at all ages, not only babies. We provide this to people transferring in. In other words, people that do not have a family network here, do not have knowledge on what exists as solution or who do not speak French.

Finally, and this is something new that we are launching, we try to match different families who are looking to share a nanny. For example, people that are not totally in favor of crèches or who feel more comfortable with a nanny taking care of their children at home

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.familienservice.ch/en/home.html>

but for whom, paying a nanny alone is too expensive. The idea is that employees can meet each other to find and share a nanny and therefore this program helps matching them. In case they match, Familyservice will support the finding of a nanny and deal with all the paper work.

**What would you think about a company crèche that functions as a “franchise” managed by experts on the field but, as the company, you need to finance it?**

I think it would be a better solution compared to the onsite crèche. For me, it could be a good solution and it is something we investigated as well, to work with a private daycare provider that would set up something in the neighborhood of the workplace. However, this went away from the project because financially it was very, very expensive. It was also an expensive solution for parents because private daycare centers in Switzerland are extremely expensive (in terms of fees) and it was also an expensive solution for us. If you manage to do it in a way that it becomes a three-party equation, obtaining subsidies from the Commune, I think it is a workable solution. However, to carry it only at the cost of a company, at least in our budget and our equation, it is too expensive.

**In Switzerland, we are very much involved in principles of solidarity as it is the case for taxes or social insurances. What do you think about taking a very tiny portion of each employee’ salaries (e.g. CHF 10.- per month) for the development of a childcare concept?**

(Interviewee takes time to reflect and answer) I think it will not be accepted by everybody if put in place this way. I think that for one crèche place in Switzerland, you need to consider the cost of CHF 40'000.- annually and therefore you already need to ask for a substantial contribution from parents. On top of that, there is the capital injection factor that needs to be considered to build such a facility being in line with all the regulations. However, it is an interesting thought.