

The Letter

Editorial: "The care of young children in France, between institutional separation and contrasting representations of childhood"

In France, the arrangements for welcoming young children have been the subject of constant debate, involving historically rooted objectives, situated at the intersection of family, employment and educational policies.



This mode of governance has thus schematically posed on the one hand the extra-familial reception of toddlers as an institutional response to the paid work of women, crossed over time by new societal expectations with regard to cognitive development and the fight against inequalities, and on the other hand, the reception of older children in nursery school as an institutional educational response to their vagrancy, crossed over time by missions of development, learning and instruction of the child.

This compartmentalized development of institutional missions has been based on differentiated representations of what a child is, as if the latter were not the same person depending on the type of care attended. The reception arrangements for 2-year-old children are interesting in this respect: depending on whether they are welcomed in a nursery or at school, the 2-year-old child is not the object of the same professional attention and intentions. In the same vein, it is striking to note that the same child will be welcomed without any other criteria than their person at nursery school, while they will be subject to acceptance criteria linked to the family and social context in which they live, in order to be welcomed in a nursery or with a childminder.

Several figures of the child thus seem to juxtapose, intersect, or ignore one another. A stage in the life cycle, a decisive phase for development, a period responsible for "making" a being in the making, or a being in the process of learning, the representation of childhood is crucial for the design of the systems dedicated to it.

However, while public policies for early childhood care and education are widely debated, the definition, place, and status of the child within these policies are less studied.

Thus, while preschool is the subject of recurring controversies over what constitutes a "school," and while quality is central to debates about daycare centers, the differentiated representations of childhood between "toddlers" and "young schoolchildren" that are at stake are somewhat overlooked.

It is in this context that the scientific commission of OMEP France, because it relies on a decompartmentalized approach to ECCE, aims to contribute to a better definition of quality ECCE, focusing primarily on a definition of the child shared by the families and institutions that support them.

Danielle Boyer

Member of the Board of Directors
and Coordinator of the Scientific Commission of
OMEP France



OMEP France

- January: Participation in the survey on the draft guiding principles of the right to ECCE.
- February: The collection for Mayotte was finalized and the donations transferred to the association "Le village d'Éva"; find their website by [clicking here](#).
- March 4, 5, and 6: Visit of an OMEP Japan delegation to Paris.
- March 6: OMEP France was present at the CNF-UNESCO conference on women's rights: Click [here](#) to find out more!
- March: Appointment of Alice Delserieys, from the OMEP-France scientific commission, as co-editor of the OMEP-Mondiale journal, the International Journal of Early Childhood. (IJEC)
- March 31: OMEP-France General Assembly: adoption of the activity report, financial statement and draft budget, election of three new directors: Séverine GREUSARD, Denis OUIN and Anouk PERNOT. Find our entire team [here](#).



March 19: Webinar in French organized by OMEP and UNESCO on civil society participation in ECCE.



"Color Your Rights" Contest

French-speaking Commission of OMEP World

- January 22: First webinar of the OMEP Francophone Commission on Education for Sustainable Development in ECCE. Organized by OMEP-Canada with presentations from OMEP-France, OMEP-Morocco, and OMEP-DRC. 125 people participated. Summary and video will soon be available on our website.
- **February 19 - Project Progress Meeting: Resource Sheets by Participating Countries, OMEP and UNESCO Webinars**



Upcoming Events

- **May 14 - OMEP-Francophone - Webinar on the quality of ECCE, led by OMEP-France**
- June 11 - OMEP-France - An activity guide to be published for International Day of Play
- July 2-4 - OMEP-France at the AGEEM congress in Colmar: guide, stand and international round table on ESD Find the application [here](#)
- July 14-18: OMEP World Assembly and Conference in Bologna
 - **Organization of two symposiums in French on children's rights (with several OMEP committees (Argentina, Canada, France, Morocco, and the DRC))**
 - **Supporting children's right to play to engage them in their development**
 - **Supporting children's right to express themselves: what conditions must be met within the framework of ECCE?**
- Information on the OMEP Assembly and Conference in Bologna: Click [here](#).

OMEP Europe

- Meetings on January 23 and February 20
- Organization of a symposium on the ECE Academy application in Bologna (participation of OMEP-France)
- Norway will submit an application for an Erasmus+ project on water and ESD

OMEP Mondiale

UNESCO

- January 24: International Day of Artificial Intelligence Education. Find the article: "AI and ECCE: Preserving Humanity and Promoting Equity in an Automated World" on the OMEP Monde blog by following [this link](#).
- February 21: International Mother Language Day. Our post is on LinkedIn.



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Plus d'informations sur notre site : www.omepfrance.fr