

## Editorial 'Children aged two to three in France: towards a coherent link between childcare and schooling'

“Given the shortage of places in France for children from birth to three years of age”, the provision of suitable care arrangements for two- to three-year-olds is now a strategic priority. Between early childhood care and entry into pre-school, this age group lies at the intersection of two distinct institutional frameworks: the Public Early Childhood Service (SPPE), which falls under the Ministry of Health and Families, and pre-school education for under-threes, which falls under the Ministry of Education. It is important to ensure consistent, high-quality and equitable care for two- to three-year-olds.

Pre-school education for children under three in the very young children’s class (TPS), primarily in priority areas, aims to prevent educational and social inequalities through a gradual introduction to learning, particularly language and social skills, and meets specific requirements: a dedicated educational programme, trained and committed teachers, suitable facilities, respect for the needs and rhythms of very young children, and close cooperation with families. The TPS provides an appropriate form of early pre-school education.

At the same time, the SPPE assigns local authorities the role of organising early years provision. Since 2025, they have been responsible for providing information to families, planning provision and coordinating services across the region. The SPPE covers all children, and for those aged 2 to 3, local authorities and central government officials must consider the nature of the provision to be developed.

The strategy to be implemented is based on qualitative convergence rather than on an extension of existing schemes within their own logic. Several avenues should be pursued:

- The explicit inclusion of the issue of 2- to 3-year-olds in the SPPE’s regional assessments to objectively assess needs and identify contexts where TPS is relevant. Local agreements between local authorities and education authorities could formalise this coordination.
- Support based on the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Care. Structured around the relationship with the child, the relationship with parents and organisational quality, it offers a common foundation of principles: emotional security, gradual adaptation, staff stability, and cooperation with families. Designed for childcare settings, it should inform TPS practices and foster a shared language between early years professionals and teachers.
- An investment in training and the qualitative evaluation of provision. Teachers of children under three must receive specific training in early childhood development and partnership-based working. Evaluation must take into account the quality of care conditions and the continuity of children’s pathways.

Thus, the provision for children aged two to three must be based on coordinated governance of public policies, with the complementary nature of the SPPE and the National Education system ensuring that every child is provided with a safe, stimulating and equitable environment.

**Catherine Pascual**

Inspector responsible for the ‘nursery school

## OMEP France

- The OMEP France Board of Directors, which approved the co-opting of **Marie-Claude THOMAS** onto the board.
- From 2 to 4 February 2026, OMEP France hosted delegations from the OMEP committees of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, as part of a study tour focusing on the pedagogical organisation of pre-school education and the training of its teachers.



- OMEP France took part in the 18th International NGO Forum in official partnership with UNESCO for Green Education.



## OMEP Europe

- The “1001 OMEP Days” project, launched by **Cate Caroll**, Vice-President of OMEP, to promote children’s rights every day since 1 January 2026 via social media.

## OMEP Worldwide

- OMEP took part in the expert meeting on early childhood education and development in West and Central Africa, held at UNESCO in Dakar (Senegal) from 20 to 22 January 2026.



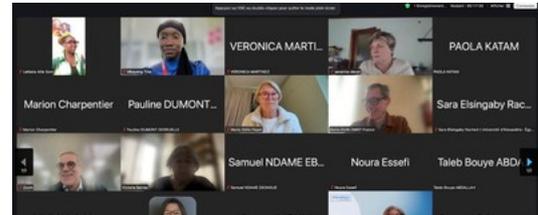
- The first Executive Board meeting of the term was held in February in Seoul.

- OMEP is part of the institutional steering group proposing the adoption of a new Optional Protocol to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.



## Francophone Commission

- On 26 January 2026, OMEP Morocco co-organised with UNESCO the first in a series of webinars on the challenges and opportunities of digital technology and artificial intelligence in early childhood, which brought together over 120 participants.



## Upcoming events

- **26 March 2026: OMEP France General Assembly.**
- **31 March 2026:** webinar co-organised by UNESCO and the OMEP DRC Committee on the topic of staff training
- **28 April 2026:** webinar co-organised by UNESCO and the OMEP Canada Committee on the theme “**Children of displaced, refugee or marginalised populations: rights, public policies and educational specificities**”
- **19 June 2026:** webinar co-organised by UNESCO and OMEP France on the theme “**Arts and cultural representations**”.
- **1–3 July:** OMEP at the AGEEM Congress (Poitiers)
- **13–17 July 2026: OMEP World Conference in Poznan** on the theme “**When a child speaks... Korczak’s inspirations for education and children’s rights.**”

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