

# The quality of ECEC in light of children's rights

On May 14, 2025, the Francophone Commission of OMEP organized a webinar dedicated to the following question: "**How can we ensure quality education from early childhood in light of children's rights?**" This event brought together representatives from the national OMEP committees of Burkina Faso, France, Morocco, and Canada, with the aim of fostering dialogue between international principles and national realities concerning early childhood education and protection.



This webinar is part of the ongoing momentum around international commitments, reaffirmed in particular at the **Second World Conference on ECEC in Tashkent** in 2022, and reflects the need for a better understanding of the **concrete conditions for implementing inclusion**.

The World President of OMEP, **Mercedes Mayol Lassalle**, opened the meeting by recalling that inclusion from early childhood has been a cornerstone of OMEP's commitments since its founding. She emphasized the importance of **dialogue between universal principles**—notably those upheld by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNESCO conferences—and the **specific realities of each country**. She also praised the work of the national committees which, on the ground, translate values into concrete actions, and reaffirmed OMEP's role as a space for advocacy, research, and cooperation.



## BBurkina Faso – A Rights-Based Approach to Early Childhood

**Lucien Hien**, Vice-President of OMEP Burkina Faso, presented the efforts undertaken by his country to promote quality early childhood education, grounded in a child rights-based approach.

as part of the commitments made under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. He outlined a series of **structural reforms**, such as **curriculum reform**, the **digitalization** of educational resources, enhanced initial teacher training, and the adoption of **national strategies** for inclusion.



On the practical side, efforts have been made to integrate gender and disability issues into training, to develop parental education, and to establish a quality assurance system. Despite notable progress, **challenges remain**—particularly the **low preschool enrollment rate (6.9%)** and the lack of free access in the current legislation. Nevertheless, the Presidential Initiative for Quality Education offers a sign of hope, by placing early childhood at the heart of national political priorities.

## France – From Universal Principles to Local Action

**Gilles Pétreault**, President of OMEP France, proposed an analytical framework to identify quality criteria for achieving **genuine inclusion** in preschool education.



He emphasized that inclusion, initially focused on children with disabilities, has expanded to a **broader understanding of diversity**.

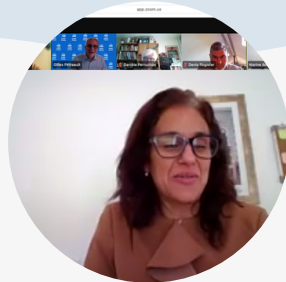
Among the criteria mentioned were **equal access to facilities**, **pedagogical accommodations** for children with special needs, the ability of **educators** to **integrate diversity** into their practices, as well as the role of **families** and local leadership.

He emphasized that fostering inclusion depends on collective engagement and tailored solutions created together with local actors. This approach also involves continuous self-assessment and open dialogue among professionals, institutions, and educational communities to adapt practices closely to the children's needs.

## Morocco – An Integrated and Ambitious Model

**Nisrine Ibnabdeljalil**, General Director of the Moroccan Preschool Foundation, presented the Moroccan model for the expansion of preschool education, based on **quality and accessibility**.

Preschool education in Morocco has made **significant progress** in recent years, with the preschool enrollment rate rising from 49.8% in 2017-2018 to 83% in 2024-2025.



This progress is based on a public service delegation model: **the Ministry of National Education, Preschool, and Sportssets** policies and **provides funding**, while the **Moroccan Preschool Foundation (FMP)** **implements the program, recruits, and trains educators**. It serves 383,000 children and employs nearly 24,000 educators, of whom 90% are women. They receive 950 hours of initial training as well as regular continuous **professional development**. A project bank enhances quality around four key areas: **health, pedagogy, environment, and innovation**. Finally, partnerships with **regional authorities** allow for the adaptation of actions to local needs.

## Canada – Inclusion and Co-education in Childcare Settings

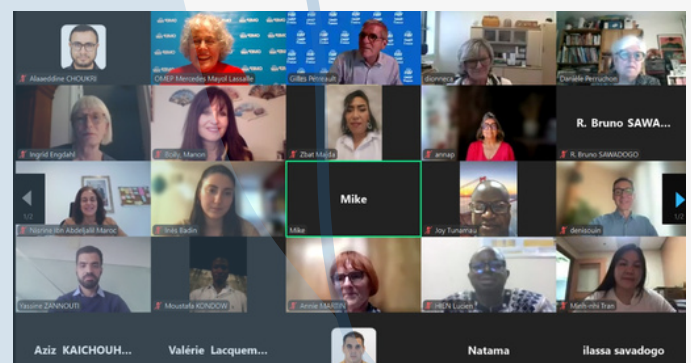
**Carmen Dionne**, professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and holder of the UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Early Intervention, presented the results of a **research partnership** conducted in Quebec on **inclusive practices in childcare settings**.



She emphasized that inclusion is not the child's responsibility, but that of **the environment welcoming them**.

According to the data, the quality of inclusive services is **at least equivalent** to, if not higher than, that of standard settings. **Individualized pedagogical strategies, professional support, family involvement, and teamwork** are essential levers. The intervention model is based on multi-level, flexible, and evolving support, allowing resources to be **adapted to the specific realities of each child**. Inclusion is thus understood as a continuous, collective, and co-constructed dynamic, supported by solid training and a professional culture that embraces diversity.

The interventions demonstrated that inclusion is not based solely on principles, but also on **political choices, human and financial investments, and a shared commitment to act closely in line with children and their needs**. From the universality of rights to the reality of practices, the experiences of Burkina Faso, France, Morocco, and Canada show that it is possible to build inclusive educational environments—provided that collective means are mobilized to do so.



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