



Spain

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



Organisation Mondiale pour L'Éducation Préscolaire
World Organization for Early Childhood Education
Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar

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It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this new publication by OMEP Spain, an initiative created with the aim of sharing knowledge, experiences and reflection on early childhood education and care. At our organisation, we firmly believe that education during the earliest years of life provides the foundation for children's personal, social and emotional development, as well as for the future of our societies.

For more than seven decades, the World Organization for Early Childhood Education has worked around the world to defend children's rights, with particular emphasis on the right to high-quality education and care from birth to the age of eight. Throughout this time, OMEP has brought together professionals, researchers, educators, families and institutions committed to a shared purpose: improving children's lives through education that is respectful, evidence-based and deeply human.

This publication is intended to serve as a space for dialogue and reflection for all those who share this vision. Within its pages, readers will find the history of our organisation, the principles that guide our work, the strategic priorities that shape our activities, and the initiatives we carry out at both national and international levels.

Our aim is to help disseminate up-to-date pedagogical knowledge, encourage the exchange of good practices, and strengthen the network of professionals and families committed to early childhood.

We live in a constantly changing society, where new educational challenges continue to emerge and require reflection, research and collaboration. At OMEP Spain, we are committed to promoting dialogue between academia and educational practice, supporting the continuing professional development of educators, and raising public awareness of the crucial importance of the early years.

I therefore invite you to explore these pages with the conviction that investing in childhood means building a fairer, more humane and more sustainable future. We hope that this publication will help further strengthen our collective commitment to early childhood education and inspire new initiatives in support of children.

With warm regards,

Amalia Bayón Álvarez
President of OMEP Spain



HISTORY OF OMEP WORLDWIDE BACKGROUND

The **World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)** is the world's oldest and largest international organization dedicated to the education and care of children from birth to eight years of age.

In 1946, Lady Allen of Hurtwood (United Kingdom) and Alva Myrdal (Sweden), together with others from France, Denmark and Norway, developed a plan for the creation of a world organization that would promote the well-being, rights and education of young children.

The UNESCO Assembly in Paris welcomed the plan enthusiastically, and the founding members invited representatives from 19 countries across the five continents to a World Conference on Early Childhood Education in Prague in 1948. It was at this Conference that OMEP was founded, and Alva Myrdal was elected as its first World President. This new organization was recognized then, as it is today, as the leading mechanism for bringing together people from around the world, with no criterion other than the objective of sharing information and initiating actions for the benefit of young children worldwide.

For more than 70 years, OMEP has been working worldwide to make human rights a reality in early childhood. Its members act under the firm conviction that education is the essential tool for achieving this. For this reason, the organization devotes all its efforts to increasing access to education and care from birth to eight years of age,

as well as to enriching and sharing pedagogical knowledge in order to dramatically improve the quality of education provided to young children.

OMEP has a global presence and consultative status, with representation in more than 70 countries. It carries out its work and operates its committees across five major geographical regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America and the Caribbean.

Its unquestionable international relevance has earned it important consultative status with **UNESCO, UNICEF, ECOSOC, and the Council of Europe**, enabling it to collaborate actively within the United Nations system and to have a real impact on local and regional policies concerning the rights and care of young children.



3 OMEP IN SPAIN

The Spanish branch of OMEP was **founded in 1967** with the firm purpose of defending the most crucial stage of human development.

At a time when our country lacked organizations dedicated to Early Childhood Education, the birth and consolidation of OMEP Spain was made possible thanks to the vocation of a heroic generation of women who, with determination and hard work, broke the social boundaries of their time to place the child at the center of the educational system.

The soul of our institution was forged thanks to key figures such as **Mrs. Aurora Medina de la Fuente**, who was the **founder of OMEP in Spain**.

Aurora Medina was Chief Inspector, educator, and an internationally recognized specialist. She was the driving force behind preschool education during the difficult post-war years. A steadfast advocate for teacher training, she organized numerous courses and seminars. Her extensive literary and pedagogical work served as an indispensable guide for generations of teachers taking their first steps in Spanish nursery schools.

Alongside her, the figure of **Josefina Unturbe Jiménez** also emerged, who served as **President of OMEP** from 1985 to 2000.

She was a researcher at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and a close collaborator of Aurora Medina in the expansion of OMEP Spain. The mother of eight children and founder of Colegio Virgen de Europa, she was an educator with a deeply innovative spirit.

She broke with the clichés of her time by embracing Piaget's principles of active learning at an early stage, advocating for the natural coeducation of boys and girls, and anticipating the theory of multiple intelligences by giving crucial importance to music, visual arts, and physical education. Through OMEP, she promoted research, defended closeness and affection in the teaching model, and introduced innovative methods for pre-reading and pre-writing.

Both devoted their lives to educational work, receiving the highest distinctions awarded by the Spanish State (such as the Gold Medal for Merit at Work and the Civil Order of Alfonso X the Wise). The innovative spirit, the defense of a school adapted to diversity, the integration of the family into school life, and the commitment to the rights of the youngest children that they championed continue to be the driving force and inspiration of OMEP Spain today.

Finally, following in their footsteps and teachings, Amalia Bayón stands out, who, as the current President of OMEP Spain, continues to extend its work throughout the world.

Amalia Bayón has been President of OMEP Spain since 2000, after serving as Secretary of the organization for ten years. She is a certified primary school teacher and early childhood teacher through the national competitive examination system, with more than thirty years of experience in public schools. She is a specialist in mathematical logic and has participated in the development of curricula, the supervision of teaching materials, and the design of teacher training programs in collaboration with universities and the Ministry of Education.

She has represented Spain at more than twenty-five OMEP World Congresses and Assemblies, organizing courses, colloquia, and seminars, and promoting partnerships with academic institutions and international organizations.



4 MAIN OBJECTIVES

OMEP WORLDWIDE

At the international level, OMEP not only observes but also leads and promotes major initiatives in support of children:

PROMOTING GLOBAL POLICIES

OMEP actively promotes the recognition of the right to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) within the international human rights system, advancing the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and working decisively toward the “Decade for ECCE.”

PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Under the premise that “There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development,” OMEP places Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Human Rights and Peace Education at the core of its global work.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The organization promotes educational campaigns and programmes implemented around the world, including initiatives such as “Wash from the Start,” “Color Your Rights,” and the promotion of play and resilience through Toy Library networks.

The aims and objectives of OMEP are to **defend and promote the rights of the child, with particular emphasis on the right to education and care throughout the world.** To this end, OMEP will support any initiative that may promote access to quality early childhood education and care.

The means of action of World OMEP are as follows:

- Collect and disseminate information and facilitate understanding of the needs of early childhood throughout the world.
- Promote study and research related to early childhood education and care.
- Encourage the education of families in matters related to early childhood education and care.
- Promote the training of early childhood education and care personnel.
- Organize international and regional conferences.
- Facilitate direct links and personal contact among all members through various means.
- Work jointly with other related world organizations.
- Promote the establishment of National Committees.

OMEP IN SPAIN

At the national level, the mission of OMEP Spain is centered on the comprehensive promotion of the education and care of children from birth to 8 years of age.

This work is designed and carried out with full respect for the developmental stage of each child, their inalienable rights, and their individual needs.

To accomplish this ambitious mission, the Spanish Committee focuses its work primarily on research and early childhood education. Our main objective is to collect and disseminate up-to-date pedagogical and scientific information in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the real needs of early childhood in today's society.



At the same time, we work tirelessly to achieve optimal conditions that guarantee the well-being, health, and holistic development of children within the environments that are most influential in their growth: their families, educational institutions, and communities.

As specialists in Early Childhood Education, OMEP Spain understands that this mission cannot rest solely on teachers, but must be addressed through a broad, collaborative, and multidisciplinary approach. For this reason, our organization brings together the joint efforts of teachers, students, health professionals, psychologists, scientists, educational associations, schools, and, fundamentally, parents themselves.

Through this broad network of professionals and families, the mission of OMEP Spain pursues very specific goals:

GUARANTEEING ACCESS AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

We firmly support any action, policy, or initiative that succeeds in improving equitable access to care and to the highest-quality education for all children from birth to 8 years of age.

PROMOTING FAMILY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

We actively promote family education to ensure that parenting practices at home are in close harmony and alignment with the care and pedagogy that children receive in early childhood institutions.

RESPONDING TO CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

We disseminate practical knowledge to address the everyday realities and challenges that affect children's well-being.

This includes, among other things, raising awareness of the urgent need to prioritize real play over excessive screen exposure, providing strategies to help children learn to calm themselves and self-regulate, and highlighting the latest advances in supporting neurodevelopmental disorders such as ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder).

Ultimately, **our goal is to make a real difference in the daily practice of classrooms and homes, working actively for the rights and future of early childhood**, both within and beyond our borders.

MAIN STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF OMEP SPAIN **5**

Focused on research and the updating of early childhood education, at OMEP Spain we carry out our work through four main strategic areas:

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

We promote study and research related to early childhood care and education.

Our objective is to work closely with universities and educational institutions specializing in children from birth to 6 years of age and in the early years of Primary Education. In this way, we seek to support the transfer of knowledge and the genuine improvement of classroom practice, addressing and highlighting the significant gap that currently exists in this regard between the academic world and practical reality.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to promoting the continuous training of professionals working in early childhood.

To this end, we organize courses, seminars, webinars, workshops, and conferences on education for children from birth to 8 years of age. These initiatives enable current and future early childhood and primary education professionals to grow, stay up to date, and acquire new tools.



BEST PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

We facilitate direct connections and contact through the OMEP Networking Network.

We develop programmes for the exchange of professional best practices and organizational models in early childhood education at both the national and international levels, making it possible to share educational innovation and the most respectful methodologies for the age groups in which OMEP is the world's leading reference.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND AGREEMENTS

We promote the establishment of strong working relationships with other organizations that share our values.

Our line of action seeks to develop agreements with public and private governmental educational institutions that support the achievement of OMEP Spain's objectives and expand the impact of promoting and defending children's rights.



**OUR ORGANIZATION:
OPERATIONAL
STRUCTURE**

6

MEP is built upon the joint efforts of teachers, inspectors, students, health professionals, psychologists, scientists, parents, and associations, all working for early childhood.

Its strategy and operations are structured through the following executive and advisory committees.





Working for the **right** to **education** and the **holistic development** of **children**



OMEP WORLDWIDE
omepworld.org



OMEP SPAIN
omep-spain.org



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