Dear members,

As you read these lines the fall activity has taken place. I would like to thank Elizabeth Jacob our keynote speaker, who had us travelling between New Zealand, Australia, Bolivia and Guatemala, Honduras and Timor-Leste. It was her observations of children in different childcare and preschool contexts that illustrated the importance of cultural dimensions in education.

Annual Assembly 2018

Last October 4th our annual General Assembly and elections took place in Chicoutimi. It is with great pride that I accepted to continue the presidency of OMEP-Canada. I am grateful for the confidence manifested in me.

I present to you the composition of the 2019-2020 board of administrators:

- Vice-president: Madeleine Baillargeon
- Treasurer: Paulette Gauthier
- Secretary: Christine Pérusset

Board officers:
- Nancy Green
- Elizabeth Jacob
- Marie Jolicoeur
- Jean-Yves Lévesque

Regional representatives:
- Quebec : Ginette Beauséjour
- Ontario : Hélène Pouliot-Cleare
- Prairies : Position to be filled
- Atlantic provinces: Position to be filled
- Pacific: Position to be filled

Permanent committees :
- Membership : Lise Francoeur
- Newsletter : Denise Doyon et Julie Rousseau
- Financing : Position to be filled

I would like to thank you all for your commitment to our organization and I look forward to implementing our Action Plan.
Action Plan 2019

- **Sustainable Development:** Many actions are in the cards for OMEP including continuing reflection on the theme of sustainable development in early childhood education.

- **60 years of OMEP-Canada:** In the wake of the celebrations for 70 years of OMEP, the Canadian committee is celebrating 60 years since its founding. We are in the process of updating our document entitled *Visit in the Universe of OMEP-Canada 1958-2008.*

- **World Conference 2019:** For a number of years a Symposium has been proposed at the World conference in order to showcase Canadian researchers, all while allowing them to present in French. A similar offer could be made at the conference in Panama next July.

- **The Newsletter:** The publication of the newsletter as an informative tool allows us to keep our members informed. The Quebec preschool education association (AÉPQ) allows us to share our news with their members by allocating a page of their magazine *La Revue Préscolaire* to us.

- **Recruitment:** Increasing visibility and the membership are among the objectives that we are pursuing.

- **Assembly and World Conference:** Our project to organize the Assembly and World Conference in 2020 has been pushed back to 2021. Details will be shared in due time.

**Prague : Assembly and World Conference**

![Image of hands forming a globe]

I would like to thank Marie Jolicoeur who represented OMEP-Canada at the World Assembly, allowing me to sit at the World Executive Committee.

Prague, site of the OMEP archives, is where the 70th anniversary celebrations of the founding of OMEP took place. This was especially significant as shown by this photo taken during the opening ceremony at the University of Karolinum which was founded in 1348. Imagine being in the same premises as 70 years ago.

**Publications**

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary, three books on the history of OMEP were published: a story book, a book of photos and a book on terminology. You can find these publications on the OMEP website.

**Regional meeting of North America and the Caribbean**

During this meeting, the members from Canada and the United States exchanged their views with regards to an issue that occupied the news at the end of June: the young children from immigrant and refugee families that have been separated from their parents. By common agreement and in light of the urgency of the situation, the members proposed that immediate action be taken in order to defend the rights of these children. This is found in the Action Plan that replaces the 2018 Declaration.

**2018 Declaration**

Rather than emitting a Declaration as has been done for many years, it was proposed to develop an Action Plan entitled *From Declarations to Actions* that would be put into place by all the Nation Committees. We proposed actions to be taken at the local, national, regional and world levels. It was unanimously approved by the members of the World Assembly.

To conclude, the Assembly unanimously approved the call to the world community for the respect of the rights of children, and in particular, the rights of refugee children. The document can be found on the OMEP – Canada web page.
Alva Myrdal

The testimony of Kaj Fölster, daughter of Alva Myrdal, founding president of OMEP and 1982 NOBEL Peace prize winner, had us reliving the first meetings and moments of reflection of the founding members. UNESCO, entrusted with education by the UN, encouraged the creation of this organization concerned with early childhood care and education.

Panama 2019

The OMEP Panama committee introduced the 71st World Assembly and International Conference 2019 which will take place in Panama City from the July 22nd to 26th. The theme will be “Identity and Cultures in Early Childhood Education”.

Renewing your membership

You will soon receive a renewal notice for your membership to our organization. Whether you are a new member or have been loyal to our organization for many years, I would like to express my appreciation for your support to OMEP – Canada.

While most young children are doing well, the headlines constantly remind us that there are still far too many children here and elsewhere who do not have access to a quality of life that is appropriate for their optimal development. Defending the right of young children to education is also the mission of OMEP.

I would like to invite you to spread the word about our organization. If each of us takes on inviting at least one person or group to become members, OMEP-
Canada could double its membership in 2019. More members, more projects to undertake, support and achieve.

One of our members is honoured

Last October 5th in Chicoutimi, Denise Doyon, member and editor of this Newsletter, received the Monique Vaillancourt-Antippa award at the AÉPQ [Quebec Preschool Education Association] conference. She was honoured for her accomplishments as an exceptional pedagogue who contributed to improvements in education for the well-being of young children.

Bravo Denise!

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Mr. Paul Gérin-Lajoie, our guest of honour of the Nurturing Peace Together with Children conference of 2008, has died this past June 25, 2018. To summarise, on May 13, 1964, he was appointed as the Minister of Education of Quebec, a brand new ministry at the time. A brave man, Gérin-Lajoie was the driving force behind the project for educational reform of the society, after which, Quebec did not falter in its intention to give itself the intellectual resources necessary to reach the modern world.

Later in his political career, Gérin-Lajoie picked another considerable challenge as the president of the Canadian International Development Agency. By the time he left this position in 1977, he had completely changed this organisation.

Gérin-Lajoie dedicated the rest of his life to the Paul Gérin-Lajoie Foundation, an organisation that made its founder proud. Gérin-Lajoie did not stop to relentlessly remind the intolerable reality of so many children, to criticise the slow action taking of international institutions, to strongly denounce the lack of vision of the industrialised countries’ governors, and the lack of information of civilians, who do not apply enough pressure on politicians for increased international aid oriented towards children’s education.

At the age of 87 years, he published a manifesto in which he declared himself to be worried about the fate of children worldwide. After thirty years of action and observation at the Paul Gérin-Lajoie Foundation, and other thirty years of political responsibility in education and international cooperation, he declared that he not only had the right to be revolted, but it was his duty to be revolted. He said that, this manifesto, its questions and proposals for the future as much as the hope it weaves, this is the main legacy he wished to leave.” Extracts from this manifesto were read in French, English and Spanish at the closure of the conference of 2008.

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Child’s Right to Play Charter

This past August 15, I participated to the launch of a large advertising campaign about the child’s right to play initiated by the Regroupement des CPE of Montérégie.

Like the scientific literature, this organisation believes that play is fundamental for a young child. It is urgent to consider it publicly as the learning strategy of the young child, moreover, as some texts suggest to believe that early schooling may be the guarantee for an educational success.

At this event, the group has unveiled the first French version of the charter for the child’s right to play inspired by the International Play Association (IPA). I invite you to familiarise yourself with the charter and take a position in its favour, to respect the fundamental needs of the young child, the right to play in its purest form, meaning the imaginative, non-structured play initiated by the child.

OMEP-Canada adopted the charter for the child’s right to play at its General Assembly held on October 4, 2018 at

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News...

...from Quebec

Tribute to Paul Gérin-Lajoie

Christiane Bourdages Simpson
President, OMEP-Canada
Vice-president for North America and the Caribbean Region
christianebsimpson@gmail.com

From left to right: Pascale Thériault, Denise Doyon and Maryse Rondeau.
In June, I had the honour and privilege to do a brief presentation at the 70th International OMEP Conference in Prague. My topic was Developing Lifelong Skills through Play. This subject is particularly interesting to me as a great number of recent researches indicate that the quality of early education has not only a great influence on the child’s future but also on the future of society as a whole.

A quote from O. Fred Donaldson often mentioned in his videos Original Play found on YouTube served as an introduction. Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.

A graph found in https://edi.offordcentre.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/0... was then used to show how children’s brains have critical periods of development by 2 to 3 years of age (for example, habitual ways of responding and emotional control). This is not to say that the brain does not continue to develop, just that some skills have peak periods of plasticity and receptivity to environmental influences.

Research also stipulates that the quality of the environment has a lifelong influence on the health, education and well-being of children and that programs that focus on play make a difference. Through play, children learn to think, to interact and to create.

Having set the stage and reinforced the importance of the role early childhood professionals play, a summary of my research was given in five essential elements in order to offer a quality early childhood program. These should be integrated in daily programming and interactions with children.

1. **Social competence**
   Early childhood practitioners:
   - develop a warm relationship of care and trust with each child.
   - interact, model and role play with children to help them develop positive social skills such as connecting with people and making friends, regulating their behavior and emotions and delaying gratification.

2. **Curiosity**
   Early childhood practitioners:
   - invite children to observe, to notice, to share their observations and asking questions.
   - resist the urge to give answers.
   - extend their learning by asking open ended questions such as: What do you think? What could you do differently? or I wonder...
   - invite children to reflect, to make associations, to connect their play to their learning. What does this make you think of? How do you know that? What did you do?

3. **Creativity**
   Early childhood practitioners:
   - challenge children to see that there is more than one way to do or see things, more than one answer.
   - provide children with opportunities to experience the thrill, the confidence, and the motivation of setting goals that are challenging, achievable.
   - give them enough time and support to meet them. If they fail, encourage them to try again until they succeed.
   - develop a positive “Can Do Attitude”.

4. **Critical thinking**
   Early childhood practitioners:
   - provide long periods for children to play freely, to develop ideas, to think. I’ll give you some time to think about it. Let me know what you think.
   - model reflection, problem solving and learning by thinking out loud.

5. **Communication**
   Early childhood practitioners:
   - connect with them in a meaningful and sincere way.
   - listen and respond with genuine interest and respect. Use the “serve and return method”.
   - ask and consider their ideas to plan and organize the environment.
   - take advantage of conflicts that arise and treat them as learning opportunities to become aware of feelings, theirs and others, to develop skills such as negotiation and conflict resolution.

The following questions were given to conclude the talk:
to tackle challenges of an unpredictable world?

What can I do to help children become lifelong learners to make the most of the exciting and unprecedented opportunities that it will offer?

Hélène Pouliot-Cleare
Ontario Representative
Consultant in Education
pouliotcleareh@gmail.com
www.chezmadamehelene.com

...from Nancy Green

For the first time in my 30 something years of teaching French immersion kindergarten I am on a one year leave of absence. This unplanned year off was prompted by a short term job posting that my husband accepted in the State of North Carolina. While I miss the daily excitement of the classroom I am enjoying exploring and getting to know the city of Raleigh.

One Monday I met a Statistics professor and his friend a Double Bass player from the NC Symphony on the Golf course. Tuesday I found myself meeting the professor’s wife who runs a preschool and was quickly committed to read to her Hispanic preschoolers weekly at a library near my home. On the Friday we had free tickets to the Symphony and can highly recommend both the concert hall and the Symphony.

These children are between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, are new to preschool and are just beginning to understand English. Kathy, who runs the preschool, drives a mini bus equipped with car seats to collect each child at their home as they would be unlikely to attend otherwise. The children enjoy a play based program with outings for dance and for reading at the library. It is hoped that by the time they reach kindergarten they will be comfortable in an English environment and ready for the school system.

I am enjoying finding some of my favourite books that I have used through the years to capture my kindergarten students attention in the hopes that my new little friends like them too. Aboie George by Jules Feiffer was a big hit and I am hoping to find La Grosse Patate by Aubrey Davis next.

I have had the time to do a lot of reading and my public library has compiled an adult reading list of books on immigration. When I learned of the OMEP 2018 Action Plan in reaction to the migrant children’s plight I decided to look at the subject through children’s literature. I would like to share some of the titles with you.

The author Anne Sibley O’Brien has written Someone New (ISBN 978-1-58089-831-7) and I’m New Here (ISBN 978-1-58089-612-2), both of which I would love to read to a kindergarten class.

Events

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I will continue to explore this theme as I spend more time at the library and get to know my preschool friends each week.

Nancy Green
Board officer

Events

November 14-17, 2018, Washington, DC, USA
NAEYC Annual Conference
naeyc.org

November 18-24, 2018, Quebec, Que., Canada
3rd Edition of the Grande semaine des tout-petits
grande semaine.com

November 20-21, 2018, Quebec, Que., Canada
Grand rassemblement de la semaine des tout-petits
grande semaine.com

November 20, 2018
Universal Children’s Day
un.org

January 3-6, 2019, Belize City, Belize, Central America
10th Annual Belizean International Symposium on Education
What ‘IMPACT have you made on your Campus, Church, Community or Country… the past TEN years?
http://sites.google.com/site/belizesymposium

April 8-11, 2019, Macao, China
World Forum on Early Care and Education
worldforumfoundation.org

April 24-27, 2019, Madrid, Spain
XXX ACISE (FLUC) International Colloquium.
The initial training of infant and primary education future teachers. Encounters and mis-encounters.

April 25-26, 2019, Montréal, Que., Canada
Colloque international en éducation
Enjeux actuels et futurs de la profession enseignante colloque2019.critpe.ca

May 11-12, 2019, Vancouver, B. C., Canada
SPARK: The Early Years Conference
https://blogs.ubc.ca/sparkece/welcome/

From our bookshelf

aepq.ca

Canadianteachermagazine.com

editions-eres.com

leavenetwork.org


Childcare Resource and Research Unit 09/05/2018

OECD Economic Surveys: Canada 2018

“Quality Canada ECE required to narrow Canada’s gender...”


Lee, F., Programs and Operations Manager, iACT (2018). “Cultivating a Culture of Peace and Empathy in Young Children While Empowering Refugee Communities”. ACEI’s Childhood Explorer childhoodexplorer.com


https://corpus.ulaval.ca/jspui/handle/20.500.11794/31246


Star Editorial Board (2018). Ontario shouldn’t open the door to “big box” childcare. Toronto Star, 2 September 2018 Childcare Resource and Research Unit 09/05/2018 www.childcarecanada.org


An OMEP publication:

Two teachers tell their experience with the children trying to explain OMEP’s logo:

www.childcarecanada.org

ACEI’s Childhood Explorer childhoodexplorer.com


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www.childcarecanada.org
OMEP-Canada’s Newsletter is published in March, June and November. We expect your news by the middle of January for the next issue. Please send them preferably by e-mail to: Denise_Doyon@uqac.ca and in c.c. to omep-canada@videotron.ca

Thank you to Madeleine Baillargeon for her great collaboration to the preparation of this issue. Thanks to Nancy Green and Gabriella Vitos for English translations. Thanks to Karine Cloutier-Côté for the page-setting.

Denise Doyon
Chair of the Newsletter Committee

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OMEP-Canada: www.omep-canada.org

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