

Foundation Years Information and Research (FYIR)

On the 13th December 2021 we were delighted to welcome to a Zoom meeting Aurélia Rabe and Marion Charpentier from Ensemble pour l'Éducation de la Petite Enfance, Paris
<https://eduensemble.org/en/>

Edited transcripts of their speeches are below.

Aurélia Rabe

The Early Child Development (ECD) European campaign: First Years, First Priority

Thank you very much for this time slot. I am happy to see you again. I will be presenting the European campaign in which we've been involved in France and Marion will be presenting the Family Friendly Company Label that we have developed and launched for companies to integrate more parenting in private companies....[

The banner is divided into three main horizontal sections. The top section is blue and contains the 'ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION' logo on the left and the text 'first years first priority' in a mix of red and blue fonts. The middle section is green and features a photograph of a woman kissing a baby on the cheek. To the left of the photo is the text 'priorité à la petite enfance' and 'AGISSONS ENSEMBLE AUJOURD'HUI POUR UNE SOCIÉTÉ PLUS JUSTE DEMAIN'. To the right of the photo is the main title 'ECD European campaign « First Years, First Priority »' and the tagline '« Embracing and empowering a change of outlook for ALL children and families »'. Below the photo are several logos, including Eurochild, ecdp, and SOFA. The bottom right corner of the green section says 'Dec 2021'. The entire banner is framed by a thin black border.

This is to provide you with an update on a European campaign about early child development (ECD). It's called *First Years, First Priority*.

The key thing is that it is currently deployed in nine countries in Europe: Ireland, Finland, France, Spain, Portugal but also countries in Eastern Europe, like Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Hungary.

Generally speaking, the idea is to change the outlook for very young children and their families; to focus not only on early childhood, those from 0 to 6, but to really focus in on children below 3 years old, because whether we have a 'split' system, which is the case here in France, or not, we give less attention to those under three years old than the older ones.

To give you a bit of background, the campaign is actually European-wide and we have the same vision: the mission is to ensure equitable inclusion of all children from the very early

years and to provide quality support for parents and families, especially in the most vulnerable situations. When we talk about vulnerable situations, it's of course about poverty, but it's also about disability and about migrant populations.

So that's the overall mission of the campaign, but the stakes are not the same in all the nine countries. In France, as Nathalie said in her presentation to you a while ago, with the support of great contributions from Nick [Peacey], Rob [Hale], Pasco [Fearon] and Gabriella [Conti], we completed the [French National Commission] report on the first 1000 days of life. Following that, the Government has taken measures about the first 1000 days of life.



The slide features a blue header with the logo 'ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION' on the left and a photo of a child with glasses on the right. The main content is on a green background. A central box titled 'MISSION' contains text about equitable inclusion and resilience. To the right is a circular diagram with 'ECD' at the center and six surrounding segments: Child poverty, National and local health and nutrition, Child's safety and security, Early learning including ECECs, Financing and policy response, and Cross-sectoral coordination for ECD. Below the mission box is a 'VISION' section with a silhouette of a person looking through a telescope and a list of three strategic goals. A small number '2' is in the bottom right corner.

MISSION

To ensure **equitable** inclusion of ALL children **from the earliest years** and to develop resilience by supporting all families and the wider community to get **quality support** needed in a **healthy, safe and nurturing environment**, in particular those facing extreme adversity

VISION

- ❑ *Influencing French public policies and funding, in an universalism proportionate approach to invest more in ECD so that ALL children, particularly those living with adversity, have access to quality ECEC services*
- ❑ *Advocating and embedding a permanent, preventive, integrated, multidimensional and Whole Childhood Development (WCD) approach to ECD as a critical motor for sustainable economic development and social cohesion*
- ❑ *Providing a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated ECD framework that addresses ALL needs of children and families and to ultimately infuse wellbeing of children, families and the whole society*

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Obviously the same has not happened in all countries. In France, our idea was to further embed those changes in public policies and mostly to focus on the most vulnerable families. That's been an important resolve of this campaign. Our push is to include all children, to leave no children behind and to have this universal proportionate approach: to address all needs but have some specific targeted interventions for some individuals.

Our second theme is to have a more preventive approach to ECD (because in France we have more of a curative [medical] approach), a more preventive, integrated and holistic approach to the early years. And last but not least, to provide a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated ECD framework.



You can see here a graph that shows the six domains that the campaign is focusing on, depending on countries' priorities.

- 1) child poverty
- 2) maternal and child health
- 3) parenting and family support
- 4) children's safety and security
- 5) early learning
- 6) cross-sectoral co-ordination of policies and services.

In France obviously we have these different policies, child protection, maternal-child health. But what is really needed here is cross-sectoral coordination for ECD, because we are still working in silos. At national level, we have some inter-ministerial strategies, but in the field at regional or departmental level there is little coordination. There are still strong silos [in place] between the institution responsible for child protection, the Département, -and those who have responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), the early learning aspects.

The overall frame of this campaign is to have an integrated ECD framework as the campaign has been set up within the framework of what has been called the European Child Guarantee which was adopted by the EU Commission back in May this year.

So now that has been adopted, all the member states will have until March next year [2022] to deliver what we call a national plan, a vision up to 2030, a long-term plan which will include all the domains That gives very important momentum to France: it will be the French presidency of the EU from January to July and also there will be the French Presidential election. That gives important momentum to push us forward. Recently,

President Macron made a speech about the vision of this French presidency and how there is still a need to push for action on the early years and why that is important.

ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ...aligned with the overarching European ECD Campaign key components

Public policies (existing and/or under way)

- Policy formulation that plans to integrate and strengthen the WCD approaches at children, family or school levels?
- Policy formulation that incorporate a preventive approach?
- Coordination and integration of current policies and those underway?
- Policy formulation that aims at collecting data and evaluating impact of ECD investment in France?

Public investment

- Available funding for quality access to services for all which integrate the WCD approach (specific focus on the 0-3 years)?
- Available funding to support vulnerable families?
- Available funding for cross-sectoral and preventive approach?

Vulnerable groups

Using universal proportionalism approach, to what extent vulnerable children and their families are being supported:

- Families living in extreme poverty (scarce resources, homeless, emergency settings, etc), using a "reach-out approach"?
- Monoparental families, isolated families?
- Other vulnerabilities: disabilities, migrants and refugees, Roma children/gens du voyage?

The ecosystem around the child and family

How to improve the nurturing care around the child through service provision?

- Services for children (collective and individual daycare settings, libraries, toy libraries, Aide Sociale à l'Enfance)?
- Family support services (PMI, LAEP, paediatricians, CAMSP, etc)?
- Local living environment (firms employing families etc)?

Children 0-6

Emphasis on the first 1000 days of children's life

Universalisme proportionné

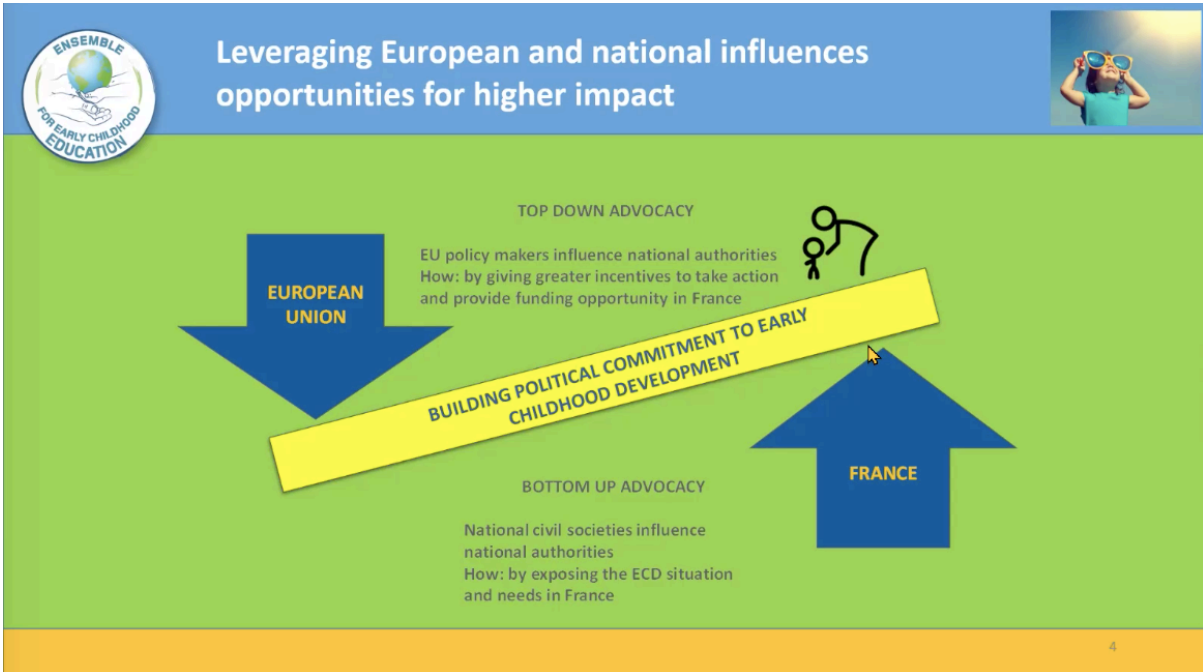
- Besoins importants
- Besoins modérés
- Besoins faibles

RESPONDING TO ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NEEDS

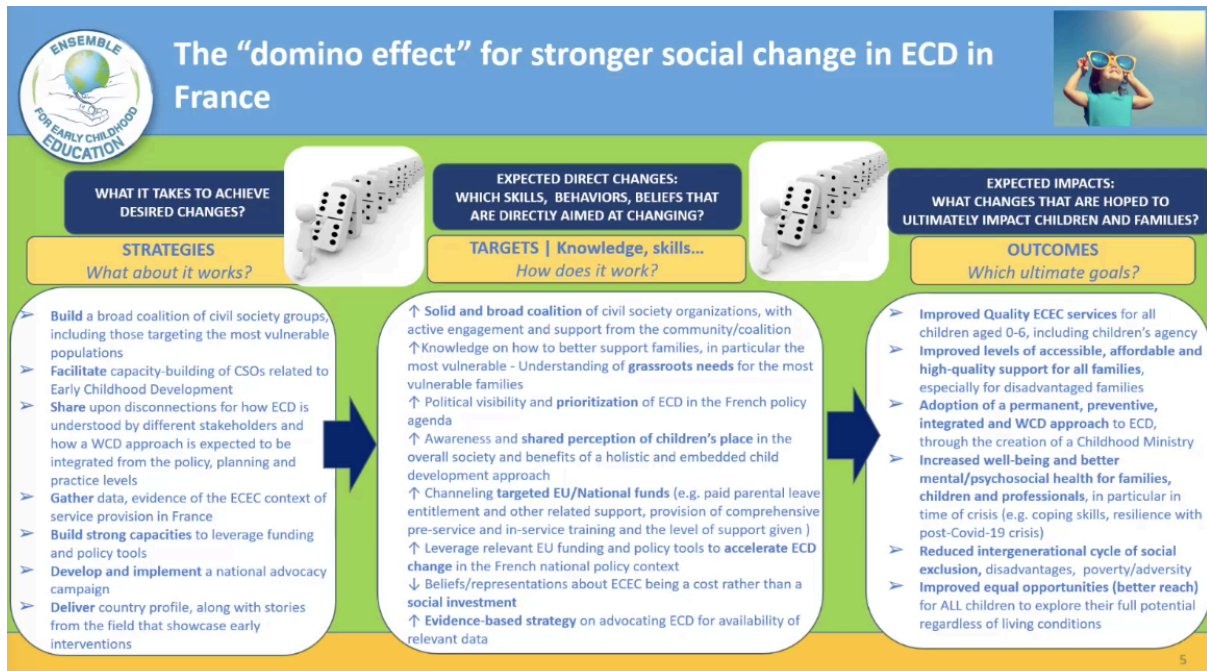
Source: Harmon Early Learning Partnership, Université de Colombie Britannique, 2011

This shows you the different frames within which this campaign, whether at European level or at local level, will be aligned. It addresses the question 'How can we best influence public policies at European level and also at national level?' and encourages [use of] public investment. That's one important aspect – there are national funds, but there are also the European funds that will become available through the European Child Guarantee. There are also separate funds available to address the specific needs of migrants, for example.

So [all] those are available to support the system around the child and the family and to bring, as I mentioned earlier, a coherence between child policies and family policies, things which in France are still in silos. Obviously in France we shall also be focussing on the first 1000 days of life.



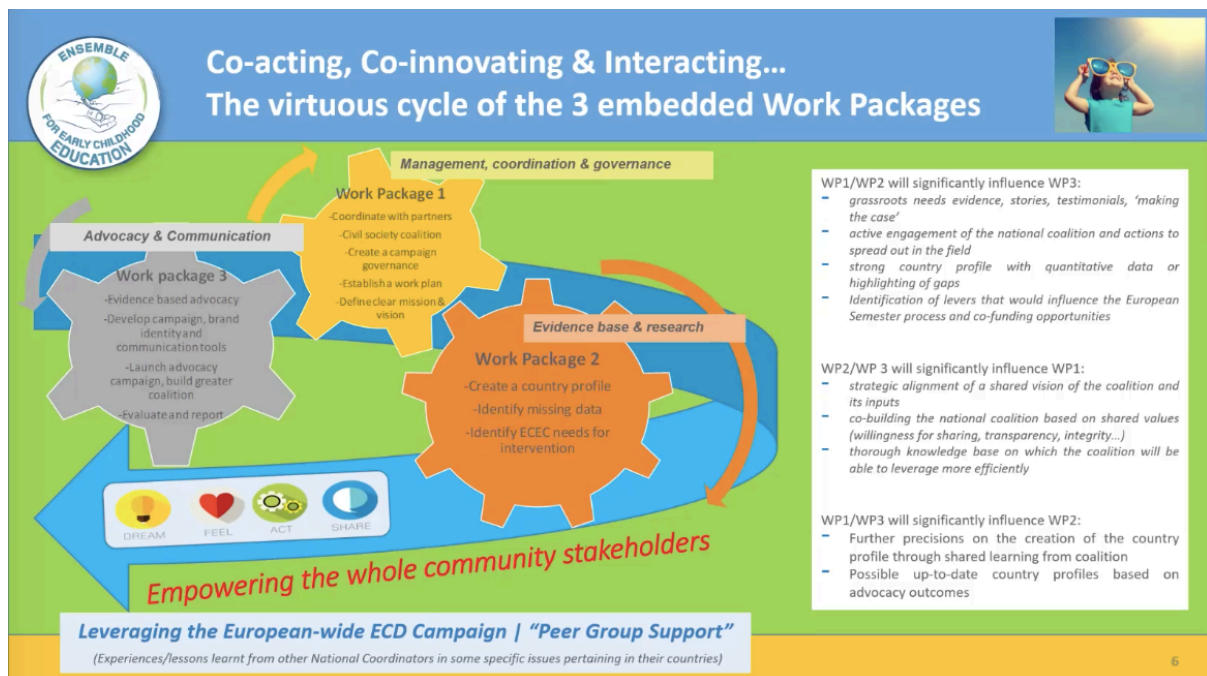
Effective leverage achieves pressure not only through top-down advocacy, but also through that from the bottom-up to bring greater visibility to the early years. This is a similar expectation of all the other eight countries involved in the campaign.



This slide illustrates what we can call a domino effect: what are the different strategies in this campaign, how does it work and what should be the ultimate impact and how should it impact?

This is mostly about civil society which is a strong power and needs to be, I would say, enhanced from a power perspective to influence not only European, but also national policies. That's been a strong thread of the work we've done this year, being the

coordinator of the campaign in France on how can we bring together civil society actors and have them being ambassadors of the early years, no matter where their expertise lies? And how can we facilitate the capacity-building of all these groups to be ambassadors of early childhood development? So that it's not only a specific expertise of xxxxx or other actors, but also a subject that should lie within the whole society - and why not integrated? Marion will be talking to you later about private companies. They are the kind of unusual advocates that might in the future be part of the National Coalition that we have set up and they can further be advocates of the early years in France.



And here just to show you, because that's been a particular feature of the co-working, interacting between us, not only at European level but also at national level (mostly at national level in France) is to set up - you can see here how we have set it up within Work Package 1- the National Coalition of Early Childhood, to bring together different expertise. For example, we have involved the French Red Cross and other organisations, to really work together on how we further advocate, based on each other's on-the-ground experiences, not only on early learning, not only on maternal health, not only about child protection but on how we can work together. And we know we need to work together, and not in silos anymore.

Then, we have worked within Work Package 2, which is at state level obviously, about advocacy, to create a country profile on key figures and key facts in each of the six domains shown earlier.

Then a cross-country analysis has been done. Key findings include [the fact that] young children under three years old are not visible in the data, the statistics. We [have data on] child poverty, but it's child poverty considered from 0 – 18 years old. Less details: what about children under six, or even children under three years old? In France we have found one in five children living in poverty, but the figures are too rough. In France there has been huge investment to have a data-driven strategies, because usually we implement policies

but we don't know the effects of these policies. What are the figures and the [policies'] impact on the figures?



And last but not least, [we must] create advocacy documents not only for the general public, but mostly also science based and evidence-based [guidance] for policymakers at all levels, not only at national level but at all levels including municipality level. So that's been one of the targets.



Here you see the three pillars of the campaign that I mentioned, and you can see here [on the left] within the National Coalition all the different actors who have been involved. We

have 13 associations, but also federations across the whole national territory. We have home visiting – I would say- experts in this, so they are very close to families; we have CNAPE which is about child protection; we have a children’s rights approach; we have organisations mostly looking on the ground at what we call ‘social hotels’, for families who have lost any accommodation and have been assigned to emergency hotels, social hotels, emergency accommodation; we have STOPVeO which is about violence, adverse childhood experiences and we have Momartre which is about cultural aspects from the very early years.

This has been really a great achievement for France, to gather all the different expertise. They don’t [necessarily] have specific early childhood roles, but they do believe in [the vital importance] of early childhood, and that’s what we really do together and [work on] how can we act together?

In France [the middle pillar] we have also set up this country profile. As I mentioned, [there are] very few fact-based data, so it’s a real improvement to have that profile.

Recently, in October, we launched, together with the National Coalition, this advocacy document [on the right], a kind of umbrella document that we all agreed on, about the key strategies on which we will be working from now on in the field. One example is [known as] the *First 1000 Days Lighthouses* that we are going to set up to give a one stop resource for parents, or future parents, about child development. [It also includes] specific advocacy of policies that the National Coalition would like to take on. For example, to have some specific advocacy documents for municipalities’ elected officials so that they know what they can do at municipal level, because in France it’s all about the state. The plan is to bring from the ground up, from the needs of beneficiaries in the municipality, ideas on what can be done. Thank you.

Marion Charpentier

Family Friendly Company Label Project

Eduensemble in partnership with the Ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé



I am happy to present to you the first steps taken to promote the label.

We had a one year **test?** Trial? and then we chose the first companies in November 2020.

The slide is titled 'Parenting support benefits children, parents and the whole society'. On the left, there is a 4x4 grid of 16 small, square portraits of diverse people of various ages and ethnicities. To the right of the grid, there are three bullet points, each with a colored square icon: a green square for the first point, an orange square for the second, and a blue square for the third. The first point states: 'The first 1000 days represent a crucial period in a child's development. It is also the time when inequalities are growing.' The second point states: 'Parenthood in the company represents a strategic issue for any company (Professional Equality, QWL, Commitment and well-being of employees, performance).' The third point states: 'The earlier you invest in a child's life, the greater the economic benefits (James Heckman)'. At the bottom right of the slide, there are two circular logos: one for 'Les 1000 premiers jours' and one for the French Ministry of Health.

This slide is about how parenting benefits children, parents and society: children because, as we know the first thousand days represents a crucial period in child development and it's also the time when inequalities are growing, parents because parenthood in a company is a strategic issue for any company in relation to professional equality, the quality of working life and well-being of employees and their performance.

As we all know the earlier you invest in a child's life, the greater the economic benefits (the study of James Heckman).

The slide is titled 'The missions'. It contains the following text: 'This label is based on the report of the Thousand days commission, which highlights the importance of investing in early childhood (the 1000 first days). It is an initiative of EPEPE in partnership with the French Ministry of Health.' Below this, it says: 'The labelling process is an invitation to companies to innovate in order to better take into account knowledge on child development and to meet the new needs of employee-parents, through concrete measures.' Then, it lists 'The label aims to :'. Below the text, there is an illustration of three people standing around a table, with one person pointing at a screen. At the bottom right, there are two circular logos: one for 'Les 1000 premiers jours' and one for the French Ministry of Health.

The 'missions' of the label are based on the report of the Thousand Days [National] Commission which highlighted the importance of investing in early childhood. The label is an initiative of our organisation, working in partnership with the French Ministry of Health. The labelling process is an invitation to companies to indicate innovate to better take into

account knowledge of child development from recent research and studies and to meet the new needs of employee parents.

The label aims to:

- educate managers and employees about the challenges of parenthood in the company
- consolidate good practice in favour of reconciling lives in companies
- optimise the impact of family policy
- identify the levers of transformation to meet new societal challenges.

The labelling process

An employer audit (qualitative) around six 'levers'

- Family policy
 - Managerial culture/Work organisation
 - Leave policy
 - Services for employees
 - Specific support
-
- An Employee Survey which takes about 10 minutes to fill in.

A reference person leads the labelling process

Why this label?

'It takes a village to educate a child.'

And companies in this world and ecosystem have a crucial role to play in building the world tomorrow. In particular this means better taking into account children and their parents needs in order to provide the most appropriate responses. Health and economic crisis reinforce the awareness and need to act early, for the well-being of parents their families and our society in general.

There are many benefits for companies to invest in supporting parenthood

- Promote professional equality between men and women
- Promote the quality of life at work. Enhance its employer brand
- Retain tomorrow's talent
- Enrich its CSR (corporate social responsibility) commitment.
- Contribute to having a positive impact on the world
- Boost economic performance
- Contribute to the common good

DANONE

UTOPIES®

Doctolib

Our partners



We gave the first labels to these three companies:

Danone Utopies Doctolib

Below you can see our partners

This label has been developed with an expert committee that brings together other ‘levers’, such as Great Place to Work. They are working on well-being at work. There are also organisations working with families and children, so we can better understand parents’ needs at their workplaces. And we also have international ‘levers’ who are working directly on those topics. So we have international partners working on these topics; we have Concilivi in Canada and we also have Family Friendly Workplaces in Australia.

This label has been built with the philosophy of valuing every step taken by a company. It includes not only long term measures, such as longer parental leave than the legal framework], but also recognises ‘simple’ measures such as strong communication, so we can include every company with the measures that are [available in] each company. At the end of the process we can share a labelling report with the company. We have details of the six levers [from the audit], so the companies can identify the levers of transformation and see how they can better take into account their employee and parent needs.