

Webinar

“Ethical Dilemmas in Research with Children and Youth”

25 September 2025, 3:30–5:30pm (CET)

[Registration](#)

Organised by CREAN and the Family Upbringings and Social Intervention with Families research team, CREF (UR 1589), Paris Nanterre University

This workshop aims to explore the specific ethical questions that arise in research with children in the Social Sciences. It is intended for a diverse audience (students, researchers, practitioners) interested in the realization of children's rights within the context of scientific research.

The first part of the workshop will introduce and discuss key concepts (dignity, the best interests of the child, participation, epistemic justice, etc.) and open a dialogue on their concrete application in social science and humanities research. In the second part, participants will be invited to share their own experiences and identify the ethical dilemmas they have encountered.

The final part of the webinar will examine the notions of utility, intentionality, and the effects of research with children and young people. How can we ensure that research does not reproduce forms of domination or silence children's voices during or through the research process? In what ways can the academic ecosystem generate, perpetuate, but also address or mitigate some of the dilemmas that arise in research with children?

The workshop will draw on theoretical contributions as well as real and fictional case studies. It encourages critical reflection and exchange, and may also inspire future collaborative and transdisciplinary work.

Program

- 15 min: Welcome by CREAN and introduction by the organisers
- 15 min: Introductory exchange: participants share ethical issues they have encountered when working with children; facilitator notes key ideas on an online board
- 15 min: Feedback from facilitators on collected ideas
- 40 min: Case study in groups: discussion of a dilemma and possible solutions
- 30 min: Group presentations and discussion: sharing responses, highlighting similarities and differences

Examples of Ethical Dilemmas

- **Consent:** A 12-year-old child refuses to participate in research despite parental consent (or vice versa: one or both parents refuse, but the child wishes to participate). How can respect for the child be reconciled with parental authority?
- **Informed consent / age-appropriate assent:** What type of information should be provided depending on the child's age (e.g. pictograms, games)? How can we ensure the child understands without overwhelming them?
- **Particular vulnerabilities:** Research involving children with disabilities, refugee children, or unaccompanied minors. How can the approach (language, cultural mediation) be adapted to be inclusive while ensuring protection?
- **Compensation and incentives:** Offering gifts, money, or other rewards (e.g. vouchers) to children participating in research. How common is this practice? From what age? Could it be coercive? What do principles of justice and prohibitions on child labour imply for monetary compensation in research?
- **Institutional pressures:** Obligations to deliver quick results (e.g. from funders or for theses) may create a temptation to cut corners (such as excluding vulnerable participants or ignoring a child's refusal). How can conflicts of interest be resisted while upholding ethical standards?

International References and Guidelines

- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**
- **International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC)** – childethics.com (UNICEF/Child Ethics, 2016)
- **CIOMS – International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans** (WHO, 2016), section on vulnerable populations (including minors)
- **CNIL (France)** – Guidance on minors' consent and recommendations on children's privacy: cnil.fr
- **Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). *Ethical Research Involving Children***. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti
- **CRC Committee General Comments**, e.g. GC No. 12 on the right of the child to be heard (participation)

Bibliographical References

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