

Parents' Toolkit (*La mallette des parents*): France

1. Need/challenge addressed

The two main needs addressed in this initiative are Family and Transitions:

- the Toolkit informs parents to help them to support their children's schooling;
- it also helps parents to support their children at three key transition points – entering primary school, entering secondary school and finishing lower secondary school.

2. Level of intervention

The intervention is universal but is particularly beneficial for pupils whose families were not previously fully engaged with the school community.

3. Intensity of the intervention

Periodic – the Toolkit is used at three key transition points, as mentioned above.

4. Target group and age group

The target group is parents, rather than pupils. The Toolkit is targeted at parents of pupils in the first year of primary school (aged 6-7), first year of secondary school (aged 11-12) and final year of lower secondary school (aged 14-15). Participation in activities linked to the Toolkit is voluntary.

5. Conditions and different steps necessary for the implementation of the measure

First of all, teachers or school leaders must be trained before using.

6. Identifying the appropriate type and level of support to suit the needs of the learner

The schools decide how to use the Toolkit

7. Stakeholders involved in the delivery of the measure

The Toolkit is delivered within primary and secondary schools. It offers educational teams a set of tools to help them to organise their discussions with parents.

At the Saint Exupéry primary school in Villeurbanne, this pedagogical material is used to support collective meetings with parents. Parents are invited to attend one class as observers, in order to understand how learning takes place and schools' requirements concerning pupils' attitudes in class. The timing of this visit differs according to the age of the pupils; for first and second year pupils, who need some months to settle in, it is held in January. The session is followed on the same day by a discussion between parents and the teacher. A similar experience, independent of the Toolkit, has been carried out at the primary school 'Les Géraniums', named the 'quinzaine des parents'.

8. Obstacles in introducing the Parents' Toolkit and how they were overcome

Parents may have difficulties in understanding and communicating in French language. In some cities/regions there are mediators or translators available for assistance.

9. Monitoring/assessing the measure

The Paris School of Economics evaluated the Parents' Toolkit in 2011. The evaluation reports positive results in terms of school atmosphere and pupil behaviour. It emphasises the improvement of the quality of the relationship between schools and parents. Finally, it notes that the Parents' Toolkit has had beneficial effects on students and families

10. Results of the measure

Findings of the programme evaluation show that the Parents' Toolkit allows for much stronger involvement of parents in their children's schooling. This has resulted in a significant drop in absenteeism¹, fewer discipline problems and improvements in terms of educational outcomes in courses such as French. These positive effects are noticeable not only in relation to families who are typically receptive to information coming from the college, but also (to families who are less familiar/responsive to traditional school communication methods / policies.

11. Funding/resourcing the measure

This is a relatively low cost scheme costing around 1 000 to 2 000 euros per school²

12. Current status of the measure

Yes the Parents' Toolkit is still running

¹ See also OECD (2012) Equality and Quality in Education: Supporting disadvantaged students and schools.

² OECD Economic Surveys: France. OECD (2013)