



Guidelines for parental involvement in VET and apprenticeships

Key principles and methodology

Starting points:

- In VET and apprenticeships there is a need to differentiate approaches according to the age of learners (minors or adults);
- Parents play a fundamental role in guiding decisions and supporting learning of all students, regardless their age, so the guidelines apply to all parents regardless the age of the student;
- Parents are solely responsible¹ for educating their children in the format of their choice, to become lifelong learners and active citizens, helping them in the harmonious development physically, morally and intellectually, this responsibility is often voluntarily extended after the 18th birthday of children while parents are still providing for their children in all aspects of their lives while they are doing their full-time training – thus parents of minors have a legal basis for being engaged in the training process;
- Parents need information and support in their parenting for the best interest of their children;
- Education and training systems should be providing equitable learning environments for all children/young people and their parents, a free and informed choice for parents of the education of their children. This choice should never be restricted by the financial capacity of the family.
- Challenges of the 21st century in the field of employability on an individual level necessitate an aptitude for learning, the ability to embrace change and entrepreneurial/intrapreneurial skills
- Teachers and parents alike need information, training and incentives to embrace new approaches to education including the importance of their own lifelong learning.

Parental involvement in VET and apprenticeships needs to be

- **asset based** (and not deficit-based) - building on the strengths of what parents are doing well
- **structured** in order to reach all parents to support full engagement and peer-to-peer impact
- **positive** to instil confidence of parents in themselves and their ability to trust in their child
- **responsive**, tailored to the needs and realities (circumstances, social and cultural norms, and environment) of parents and caregivers
- **sensitive** by recognising the full scope of responsibility of parents and their constraints with regards to time and access to materials and information
- **holistic** by taking lifelong and life-wide learning approach, focusing on a breadth of skills and competences to support learning across domains and throughout life.

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 3, 5 & 18

Key principles of collaboration between parents and VET/apprenticeship providers²:

1. School/workplace staff and parents participate in supporting the learning of the student
 - a. Learning objectives are to be defined together (within curricula)
 - b. Teaching methodology needs to be introduced to the parents beforehand
 - c. There needs to be a clarification of what is necessary for future success and what is taught for tests
 - d. There should be a preliminary agreement on timing and amount of homework, breaks are observed as well as reasonable family requests
 - e. Teachers should help parents to find ways of encouraging school-related learning other than overseeing homework
2. School/workplace staff and parents value the knowledge that each brings to the partnership.
 - a. The relationship should be built on mutual curiosity
 - b. The school/workplace should create a non-frightening environment for communication for all
 - c. The school/workplace needs to understand parents' ,backstory'
 - d. Collaboration should start by building trust
 - e. The school/workplace should openly acknowledge the educational work of parents
 - f. There is a need to explore reasons for mistrust and animosity
3. School/workplace staff and parents engage in dialogue around and with the learning of the student
 - a. The principle of 'Nothing about them without them' should be rigorously implanted for both students and parents
 - b. Parties should adjust timing, communication channels, culture and language
 - c. Rules should be set at the beginning, together
 - d. Professionals should be ready to leave their comfort zone
 - e. Priorities and emphasis should be set together
 - f. Collaboration of school/workplace staff (other than teachers/instructors) is essential for success
4. School/workplace staff and parents act in partnership to support the learning of the student and each other
 - a. There is a need to assess the level of engagement of each parent - no one size fits all solution for any class
 - b. Build partnership according to engagement level
 - c. Create opportunities to empower parents and professional educators
 - d. Create opportunities for mutual learning
 - e. The school/workplace should openly seek help from parents in teaching – go beyond the fundraising and formal participation tradition
5. School/workplace staff and parents respect the legitimate authority of each other's roles and contributions to supporting learning
 - a. The school/workplace should openly acknowledge the parents' primary role as educators and their sole responsibility for bringing up their children
 - b. No position, as teacher or parent will create respect l'art pour l'art, so you need to make your case
 - c. All partners should make an effort to highlight contribution to learning
 - d. It may seem to be a lot of effort, but at the end of the day it will make your life easier

² based on Janet Goodall, 2017