



Country Report Poland

Is parental involvement in the making of school laws and/or regulations a current topic?

For all schools the most important document is their statute, which describes the principles of the co-operation between school and parents. The statute is based on other legislation such as the Law of Education. It orders every school to create its School Board or Parents' Board. The School Board consists of teachers, parents and pupils and it has advisory, legislative and executive competence.

The Parents' Board consists of representatives from all the classes.

According to the Polish Constitution parents have the following rights:

- right to choose the school for their child
- right to choose the place and teaching method for their child
- right to bring up their child according to their convictions and outlook.

Legislation perceives parents (as well as teachers and pupils) as the co-hosts of every school. Parents can also found or co-organize new schools. (*Constitution of the Polish Republic, Law of Education, Legal Acts*)

Which parents deserve particular attention?

Polish school laws and regulations usually focus on parental involvement in general. Special treatment is required by parents who have

- **socio-economic problems** – material help, scholarships for students, free meals and additional support in extreme situations

- **health problems** – handicapped parents: deaf, blind and physically disabled (offering them translators and special conditions for counselling)
- **children with special educational needs** – consulting various specialists, essential support, workshops for teachers, information about support from other institutions, e.g. Psycho – Pedagogical Centre

Are there any measures that support particular students (migrants, ethnic minorities) at school level?

Polish schools have still no experience of the immigrant problem. Therefore there is no relevant legislation concerning cooperation with these parents.

On the basis of interviews with headteachers of schools and kindergartens from Poznań we can state that there are in fact pupils of nationalities other than Polish. However, they are a minority, therefore no separate regulations have been introduced. The integrating process of these parents is up to the class tutor.

There is a school in Poznań for children who are non-Polish. It is a private school for pupils of 22 nationalities. These are mainly children whose parents currently stay here having some business contracts and high socio-economic status. This school also has no particular regulations concerning involving parents in school life. However, it has been observed recently that there is a growing interest among female parents in co-operating with this school for the benefit of their children.

Tabelle 1: Herkunft der Ausländer in Polen, Zensus 2002⁵

Südosteuropa / ehem. UdSSR	21.670	44,0%
EU-25 / EWR	11.821	24,0%
Asien	4.042	8,2%
Amerika	1.498	3,0%
Afrika	502	1,0%
Unbekannt	6.286	12,8%
Staatenlos	546	1,1%
Nicht spezifiziert	2.856	5,8%
Gesamt	49.221	100,0%

Quelle: Polnisches Statistisches Zentralamt (*Główny Urząd Statystyczny*), zitiert in Kępińska (2004)

Nach: Alscher, Stefan. Country Profile Poland – see Focus Migration ed. Hamburg Institute of International Economics
 ↪ www.focus-migration.de/Polen_Update_02_200.2810.0.html

Basic structure of the Polish school system

Pre-school education

A child aged 3 to 5 may receive pre-school education, which is not compulsory, but all six yearold children attend either kindergartens (*przedszkola*) or pre-school classes attached to primary schools (*oddziały przedszkolne*). The Ministry of National Education and Sport introduced an obligatory 0/zero/ grade in the school year 2004/2005 and therefore the age for starting compulsory schooling has been lowered from 7 to 6 from 2008.

Compulsory education

Full-time compulsory education in Poland lasts 10 years and covers education in the "0 grade", in the 6-year primary schools (*szkoły podstawowe*) and in the 3-year lower secondary schools (*gimnazja*). The "0 grade" is a year of preparation for primary education and is obligatory for all six-year-old children.

At the level of primary school, full-time compulsory education starts during the calendar year in which the child reaches 7 years of age. Full-time compulsory education normally continues until the pupil is 16 years of age (i.e. the age of the completion of the gymnasium), but in no case beyond the age of 18 years.

Post-compulsory education

The upper secondary education covers the age group 16 to 18 or 19/20. In the reformed post-gymnasium education the post-gymnasium schools have been operational since the school year 2002/03.

Statistics on parental involvement and school achievement

At present, there are no nationwide statistics on parental involvement in Poland. There are no statistics on the involvement of parents with a migrant background.

Projects and measures encouraging parental involvement

On a national level

Background

- Through implementing system solutions, updating and adapting to the requirements of educational documents (the Law of Education was modified in 2007), the Parents' Board has now a duty to co-operate in creating and evaluating school documents, such as the Educational School Program.

- A conference "The Role of Parents in the Polish System of Education" was organised where the bill creating the *Committee of the State Parents' Forum* was passed.
- This happened due to concerns about the development of Polish education and the involvement of parents in the process of children's education. There were also other meetings held: Szczecin Forum of Parents' Boards and Andrychów Forum
- of Parents' Boards. Their participants pointed to the spheres of school life which they wanted to influence, e.g. choosing teaching programmes, promoting good teachers, strengthening the position of pupils' councils and also parents' councils and school boards. The aim is to create conditions conducive to effective teacher-parent co-operation and that would make schools more friendly, welcoming places and fulfil the expectations of all the stakeholders.

Target groups

The main projects on organizing better co-operation between school and parents are created to involve all the parents. Projects operate locally. Parents are often their originators. They start associations and organizations whose aim is to develop school – home co-operation.

In Poland there are still no compulsory agreements between schools and parents. Such documents may exist only in private schools (which constitute only 2% of all the schools).

Initiators

Projects planned and organized on the subject of school-parent partnership and co-operation are usually initiated by:

- Associations and Foundations created by parents.
- Teacher Training Centers – central, local, public and private.
- Ministry of National Education (MEN).

The most active association involved in parent-school co-operation is the Social Education Company (www.sto.org.pl) and the Parents for School Foundation that was created in 2007 (⇒ www.fundacjarodziceszkole.org.pl).

Parental involvement and intercultural learning as an issue in teacher education and in-service training

Teachers use Teacher Training Centers (e.g. ⇒ www.odn.poznan.pl) when they participate in courses on co-operation with parents. They also take part in conferences and training organized by other institutions.

Initial Teacher Training programs have no specific elements for teacher trainees related to different aspects of co-operation with parents.

Exemplary projects, measures or initiatives which encourage parental involvement

Program "School for Parents and Teachers" *Szkoła dla rodziców i wychowawców*

Background

The program "School For Parents and Teachers" was written by Joanna Sakowska. It has been implemented in Poland for the past few years and has already got some positive feedback from the participants. During the meetings parents and teachers learn how to communicate with children effectively and how to build a proper relationship with them.

Learning how to communicate with a child, reflecting on your own behaviour as a parent and exchanging experience are just small steps to achieve the goal which is to create bonds based on respect for each other.

Aims

During the workshop the participants will:

- realize that their behaviour and talk can have an impact on their children's behaviour, and that an effective upbringing, to a large extent, depends on the parent/teacher;
- learn and acquire important skills in establishing a proper relationship with children.

Implementation methods

- cooperation between parents and children – learning responsibility;
- family life and a child's emotional development;
- solving conflicts and problems.

Programme "School with class – Parents nearer school"

Szkoła z klasą – Rodzice bliżej szkoły
⇒ www.szkolazklasa.gazeta.pl

Background

Integrating school with family has become the basis of the present school's functioning. Common activities and meetings are the source of happy and positive experiences for children and parents. Children enjoy working with their parents. They need their presence and closeness. These common meetings become an excellent opportunity to talk to teachers and observe children in the place where they spend the larger part of the day. Parents participating in the school life get to know its problems and needs, which can allow them to help and co-operate more willingly.

Aims

- learning about parents' involvement in school life;
- recognizing whether this co-operation forms a crucial element in the upbringing process;
- collecting ideas/projects being run at schools.

Implementation

Work connected with the implementation of the program "Parents nearer school" should be searching for new forms of agreement and co-operation on the partnership basis. Such activity evokes positive emotions in students and provides them with a sense of safety. Parental involvement results in students' greater participation in the life of their school and a better attitude to school duties. Those schools which take part in the project introduce specific school undertakings inviting parents to participate in e.g. picnics, feasts, fairs and trips.

Project "DAD, Are You For It?"

TATO, co Ty na to?

Background

It is most often mothers that co-operate with the school. Fathers are responsible for the material aspects of life therefore they come to school very rarely. School in Chludowo introduced a project "DAD, Are You For It?" ("Tato, co Ty na to?") and invited fathers to co-operate.

Aims

- fathers share their skills and hobbies with their children;
- acquire new abilities;
- improve relations between the generations;
- parental involvement influences children.

Implementation

Children and their fathers meet four times a year during common activities (e.g. baking gingerbread for Christmas, preparing Easter decorations, playing chess). This results in them acquiring new skills and enhancing co-operation with school. This project is innovative. Earlier there had not been any undertakings to involve fathers in school life.

Parents as teachers' partners in the school development process

⇒ www.frd.org.pl/rodzice/index.html

Background

Many parents have no control over the quality of educational programs, and they have no knowledge or skills to develop effective home-school collaboration or to help design developmental activities for children. One of the most neglected areas is children's transition to school. To change that, we have decided to use the Project Approach, an approach that is attractive to adults as well as children. It involves designing programs to facilitate children's transition to school. Used properly, the Project Approach is a natural way to bring together parents, teachers and children by encouraging partnership, joint problem-solving and decision-making.

Aims

- we expect that the training program designed as a result of the project will complement programs aimed at improving early education in disadvantaged areas;
- the program is to build collaboration between parents and teachers;
- its aim is to design a training program for parents and teachers on the transition-facilitating use of the Project Approach.

Implementation

The result of the program is the framework for a common training module with a scenario adapted to the needs of learners, educational materials, leaflets and booklets for parents. These are published in order to summarize the effects and disseminate good practice.

Useful links

- ⇒ www.vulcan.edu.pl
- ⇒ www.sto.org.pl
- ⇒ www.odn.poznan.pl
- ⇒ www.fundacjarodziceszkole.org.pl
- ⇒ www.szkolazklasa.gazeta.pl
- ⇒ www.frd.org.pl

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