COFACE

Back-to-school WEBINAR – 14th September 2020
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About Gezinsbond (Belgium, Flanders)

Independent Flemish family organization
members: more than 200,000 families
  13,000 volunteers in local communities
  180 professional staff
We work for all families
Values: non-discrimination, inclusion, solidarity
Our activities

• We **lobby** for the interests of families at different levels (local, Flemish government European, Belgian federal government, European Union). Our goal is to create a child- and family friendly society.

• We organise **activities** at the local level to bring families together.

• We **support** families with several services (babysitter service, educational magazines, saving card, …)
Inclusive education Flanders:
- M-decree (M = reasonable measures in regular education)
- Support networks: teachers/experts on special education support teachers in regular schools
- Right to inclusive education? Depends on the strength/capacity of schools
- Problems: lack of expertise, lack of support, lack of shared vision
Inclusive education: clash between believers and non-believers?

Gezinsbond: focus on what works according to parents

Search for 'small' measures with great effect

300 parents share 'levers' for inclusion (2019)
Communication is the key word:
at any time, with everyone, about everything

- start, course and evaluation of the process
- (care) teachers, management, parents, support teams, external care workers, and pupils/students
- about measures, approach, well-being, learning process, atmosphere,…
- open, transparent communication (vulnerable, trust needed)
Inclusive education = learning process!(trial and error)

No standard list of measures, flexible
Each student is unique
Needs of pupils change over time
Approach must be supported by everyone
What works gives energy, what doesn't work consumes energy
Classmates as 'buddies': a secret weapon?

- Involvement of classmates avoids exclusion and misunderstanding
- Student decides if/how classmates are informed/engaged
- Spontaneous, voluntary buddy system
- Open classroom atmosphere, anti-bullying policy
- Sometimes measures make sense for every child! Design for all!
‘ondersteuners’ (support teams from special needs education)

- encourage communication between school and parents
- recognition of parents as partner
- tips and tricks at home
- experience/training regarding special needs
- parents need continuity in support (trust, expand knowledge)
- care as much as possible on the classroom floor
Parents: no leading role in care pathway!

- many parents are key figures in the care process (search for diagnosis or extracurricular assistance, home support, coordination at school, transfer measures to next year...)
- knowledge, time, money: unequal educational opportunities
- parents are parents: experts on their child's wellbeing, not teachers
- care during school hours and within school walls ⇔ ‘shadow education’
Want to know more?

You can find the study, articles and videos with parents on https://www.goedgezind.be/algemeen-gezinsnieuws/gezinspolitiek/hefbomen-voor-inclusie/