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# Working towards a strong interaction between parents and school.

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**PIM (PARTNERS IN MULTILINGUALISM)**

**FOYER VZW**

**HILDE DE SMEDT**



# Figures - language barometer (2018)

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62% of its inhabitants were born in another country or have a migration background. More than 100 languages are spoken in Brussels.

The eight best known languages are French, English, Dutch, Arabic, Spanish, Italian, German and Portuguese.

Turkish and Berber disappeared from the top 10, Romanian, Bulgarian and Polish rose in the rankings.

French remains by far the most widely spoken language in Brussels. 87% of survey participants indicated that they speak French well to excellently.

English has settled into the second position of best known language in Brussels.

90% of Brussels residents say they perceive the city's multilingualism as positive.



# Target group PIM

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## **Multilingual families** with focus on:

- Migration background
- Socially more vulnerable families

## **Younsters** with focus on:

- Reflection on identity
- School career

## **Professionals** with focus on:

- Training
- Collaboration



# Our tenets

Languages are communicating vessels

Understanding the link between language and identity

The well-being of all family members is central

Building the bridge from home language to Dutch together







**Rich en complex  
contexts**

More languages within families

In addition to Dutch and French, English is  
now on the rise





**Wide range of  
minority  
languages**

Specific features: attrition – anxiety – mixed language use

Monolingual Mindset causes pressure

Link minority languages and lower SES





## Cultural diversity

Not all cultures are equally focused on verbal communication with young children

Wider intergenerational gaps and more diversity between individual families

It is only discussed in a limited way





# Ideas that create distance

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## PARENTS

- Home language stays at home
- School is only interested in Dutch
- I cannot contribute much
- Children learn languages by themselves

## SCHOOL

- Parents can contribute little
- Strengthening parents is not the school's job
- Individual parent contact is sufficient



# Factors that perpetuate distance

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- Lack of info among parents and teachers
- No time/space for meeting
- Contact focus around difficulties



# Group sessions to bridge distance

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FOCUS ON **collaboration** and emphasize the equality of the **partnership**, starting from:

- a common interest in the home language
- a shared commitment to the school language
- the belief that we can support each other (also in difficult moments).

AND...

*The proof of the pudding is in the eating*



# Group sessions to bridge distance

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## ORGANIZATION

- Choose a specific theme in consultation
- School invites parents
- PIM guides the session
- Teachers are present

## CONTENT

- Multilingual parenting: home and school language
- Language, attitudes and emotion
- Multilingual reading aloud
- Strengthening the home language
- Milestones and difficulties in language development



# Visual tools

- language barriers are more easily overcome
- strong reminder

Ex 1. building the school language on the home language

Ex 2. Feelings about the school language



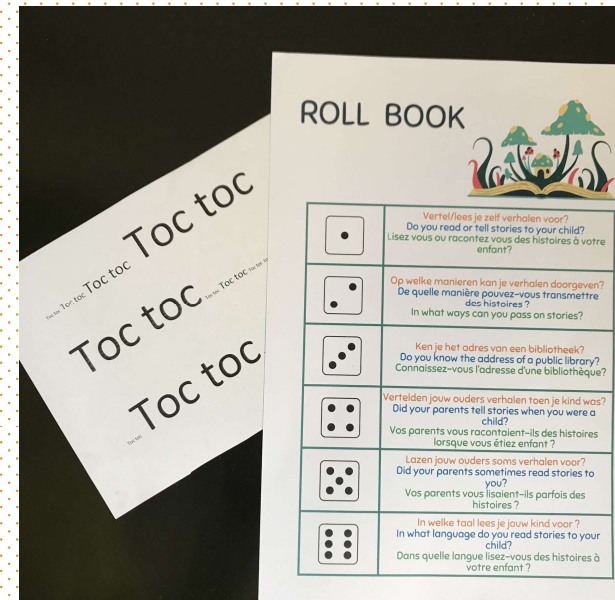


# Interactive formats

- parents get to know each other
- parent/teacher connection strengthened

Ex 1. LIBA LINGUA – starting together

Ex 2. oral stories and books: experience exchange and practice together





# Value individual ideas

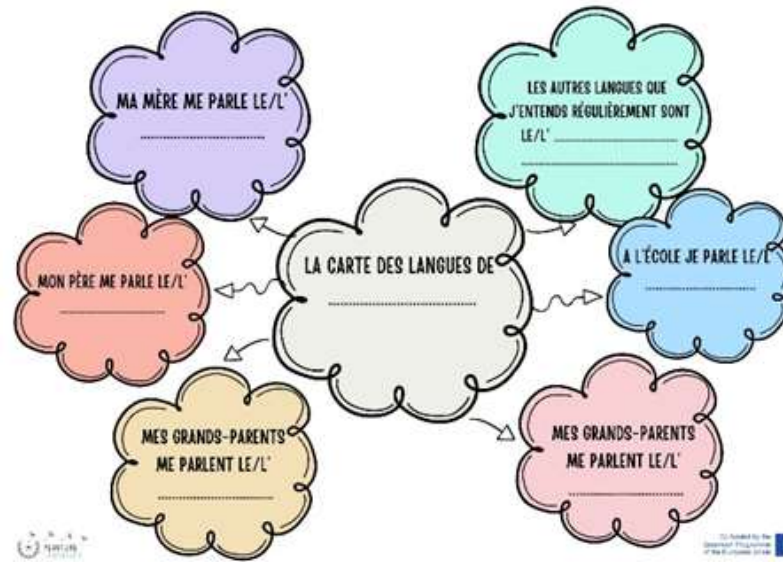
- everyone gets to speak
- there is time to form your own idea
- Ex 1. How multilingual are you – being proud
- Ex 2. Language portret - Your personal attachment to languages





# Reminders to take home

- A reminder to yourself
- telling others about what you have learned
- Ex 1. Your language choices and your network
- Ex 2. Enhance language stimulation into your daily life



2024

JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

Family icon, Globe icon, Globe with speech bubble icon, Bus icon, Person at computer icon, QR code

Logos: 21st Century Learning, Fayer's, dim







# Liba Lingua





# Reflections

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## **Parents:**

The strongest learning effect

Greater understanding of own abilities

New ideas and insights

## **Teachers:**

New insights

Getting to know the family context better

## **Contact:**

Between parents (Liba Lingua)

Parents - teacher (reading aloud)



# Reflections

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## **Work Points**

Reaching more parents (communication)

More incentive to further cooperation

Continue to strengthen content



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