

The Timeline

A tool for mapping various perspectives on a child's situation at home and at school

Authors

Anne Steenbakkers

Mirjam Heemskerk-van der Sprong

Marion van de Sande



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TIMELINE

A tool for mapping various perspectives on a child's situation at home and at school.

Why use this tool?

Effective collaboration between families and professionals in education and youth care is essential for supporting the development of children. Collaboration that centers on the child's best interests benefits from the diverse perspectives of various stakeholders around a child. The Timeline helps to bring these perspectives together and discuss them, supporting better collaboration.

The Timeline tool offers a visual representation of what is happening in a child's life, both at home and at school. It is particularly useful when multiple professionals from youth care, education and parental support are involved. The Timeline tracks all events in chronological order from a child's development, the support provided, to the quality of collaboration among those involved. By visually mapping the perspectives of parents and professionals, the tool facilitates open discussions. It also helps to reflect on past events and to plan what is needed to support the child's ongoing development and education.

This tool was developed based on the research project [Around the Child](#). You can read more about this research (in Dutch) [here](#).

How to use the Timeline tool?

The Timeline can be used in different ways. We suggest two methods:

- Each participant fills out the timeline individually before the meeting, then the individual timelines are merged into one during the consultation.
- The timeline is completed together during the consultation.

When using the Timeline, both parents/guardians and professionals from education, youth care or parental support should always be involved. Depending on the situation, other individuals may participate, and in some cases, (older) children may also join the discussion themselves.

Filling in the Timeline

The tool includes a "print-cut-and-paste" version of the timeline (p. 4). The timeline should be printed as

often as needed (either once when jointly filled in during the consultation or once for each person individually filling in the timeline). The accompanying cards (p. 5) should also be printed—one for each person if completed individually or three if filled in together. Both documents should be printed in the same format, ideally on A3 or larger. The appointment card should be printed on A4 paper.

Instructions for completing the timeline and cards:

- **Who is filling in the timeline:** At the top left corner of each card, fill in who is completing it (P for parents/guardians, or M and F if each parent fills in separately; S for school; Y for youth care worker; and assign letters for any other involved parties). Fill in as many or as few cards as you need.
- **Life events:** Fill in a card for each significant life event, noting the date or time period (e.g., Autumn 2024). Important events could include a child's birth, deaths, relocations, etc. Arrange the

cards on the timeline in chronological order.

- **Family/home situation:** Describe the family situation (e.g., family composition, living arrangements, parenting abilities) and any relevant changes.
- **School/daycare:** Indicate the schools and/or day-care centers the child has attended. Place this information above the corresponding age of the child.
- **Grade:** Record the child's grade level at each stage.
- **Child's age:** Circle the child's current age and enter their birth date.
- **Child development:** Complete a card for each school year, detailing key aspects of the child's development. Note what has been going well and what hasn't, then arrange these cards in order on the timeline.
- **Help received:** Fill in a card for each form of assistance provided, both at school and at home. Indicate the dates/periods of help, describe the goals, and rate the help by circling a smiley face (good, neutral, or bad). Place these cards in chronological order on the timeline.
- **Collaboration:** Complete a card for both positive and negative aspects of collaboration. Note whom you collaborated with and what was helpful or unhelpful about the collaboration. Place the cards on the timeline.

An example of a completed timeline is provided on the following page.

The Consultation

During the consultation, use the timeline as a "conversation starter" by placing it on the table. First, set a shared goal, such as "informing each other

about the child's situation," "determining the necessary support," or "agreeing on how to collaborate." The following five steps can guide the discussion, though they can be adapted to fit the specific situation:

1. Review

- Is the timeline complete?
- Is the timeline accurate?

2. Identify key points

- What do you think is most important on the timeline?
- Are there differing perspectives on the child's development or the family's situation?
- Are there significant changes visible on the timeline?
- Does any new information change your view of the situation?

3: Evaluate the help provided

- What support was most helpful to the child/family?
- What support was less helpful?
- What support is still needed?

4: Reflect on collaboration





















- What aspects of the collaboration were supportive?
- What aspects of the collaboration need improvement?
- How can effective collaboration be maintained moving forward?

5: Plan for follow-up

- What actions will the participants take to help the child/family, and by when? Use the appointment card to plan follow-up actions.
- When is the next consultation?
- Where will the timeline and any agreed-upon actions be documented?

Life events	0 Life event Date: 30-3-2018 Birth brother		0 Life event Date: 12-6-2020 Birth twin sisters		0 Life event Date: Covid pandemic, home-education, mother is overloaded		0 Life event Date: 2024 Living with grandma						
Family situation	Child is eldest of 4		House has only 2 bedrooms		Mother is the only parent; father is abroad								
School/daycare	Playgroup				Primary School The Elephant								
Grade					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Nu</i> 8	
Child age Day of birth: 03-10-2012	0 year	1 year	2 year	3 year	4 year	5 year	6 year	7 year	8 year	9 year	10 year	11 year	12 year
Child development	0 Child development Grade: Playgroup busy, mobile, crying a lot		5 Child development Grade: 1/2 tantrums, breaking things, difficult to calm down		5 Child development Grade: 4 Lots of fights, social contacts difficult, no friends, learning difficulties		0 Child development Grade: 5 learning delay, quarrels at home, friends nearby		5 Child development Grade: 7 Quieter at grandma's place, learning delays				
Help provided to child/family	0 Help child/family Date: 2016 Parental support by youth team		5 Help child/family Date: 2019 Observation Special Education Needs (SEN)		7 Help child/family Date: 2020 Social skills training (SST)		0 Help child/family Date: 2021 Parental support of mother bij youth team		5 Help child/family Date: 2024 IQ-test: IQ=87				
Collaboration parents/guardians, school, youth care	0 Collaboration parents/guardians, school, youth care No information on learning delays. Parental support professional was very busy		0 Collaboration parents/guardians, school, youth care School was very well-informed, good information on SST		5 Collaboration parents/guardians, school, youth care Good collaboration around SEN								

Life events													
Family situation													
School/daycare													
Grade													
Child age Day of birth:	0 year	1 year	2 year	3 year	4 year	5 year	6 year	7 year	8 year	9 year	10 year	11 year	12 year
Child development													
Help provided to child/family													
Collaboration parents/ guardians, school, youth care													

<input type="radio"/> Life event Date:	<input type="radio"/> Life event Date:	<input type="radio"/> Life event Date:	<input type="radio"/> Life event Date:	<input type="radio"/> Life event Date:	<input type="radio"/> Life event Date:
<input type="radio"/> Child development Grade:	<input type="radio"/> Child development Grade:	<input type="radio"/> Child development Grade:	<input type="radio"/> Child development Grade:	<input type="radio"/> Child development Grade:	<input type="radio"/> Child development Grade:
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<input type="radio"/> Help child/family Date: 	<input type="radio"/> Help child/family Date: 	<input type="radio"/> Help child/family Date: 	<input type="radio"/> Help child/family Date: 	<input type="radio"/> Help child/family Date: 	<input type="radio"/> Help child/family Date: 
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<input type="radio"/> Collaboration parents/ guardians, school, youth care 	<input type="radio"/> Collaboration parents/ guardians, school, youth care 	<input type="radio"/> Collaboration parents/ guardians, school, youth care 	<input type="radio"/> Collaboration parents/ guardians, school, youth care 	<input type="radio"/> Collaboration parents/ guardians, school, youth care 	<input type="radio"/> Collaboration parents/ guardians, school, youth care 



TIMELINE TOOL | agreements

Name child

Date consultation

Agreements made

What?	Who?	Deadline?