



# Getting the best out of the toolkit

A user guide to the commissioning toolkit

# Commissioning Toolkit of Parenting Programmes

## User Guide

1. What is the Commissioning Toolkit?	3
2. How do I access the Commissioning Toolkit and find programmes?	3
3. Why has the DfE developed the Commissioning Toolkit?	3
4. What makes a good quality evidence based parenting programme?	4
5. How are programmes evaluated?	4
6. Inclusion on the Commissioning Toolkit; a two stage process	6
7. How comprehensive is it?	6
8. How do programme developers submit a programme for inclusion in the Commissioning Toolkit?	6
9. What happens during the evaluation process?	7
10. How often are quality ratings reviewed?	7
11. Is inclusion in the Commissioning Toolkit an endorsement of a programme?	7
12. How do I find out more about a particular programme?	7
13. Further information and resources	8

## 1. What is the Commissioning Toolkit?

The Commissioning Toolkit is a searchable, online database of parenting programmes available in England. It is aimed at commissioners and provides detailed information about the quality and content of programmes with a proven track record of improving outcomes for parents and children. This information should help commissioners understand the extent to which a specific programme can reliably bring about positive changes for children and parents.

## 2. How do I access the Commissioning Toolkit and find programmes?

There is a direct link to the Commissioning Toolkit at [www.commissioningtoolkit.org](http://www.commissioningtoolkit.org). It can also be accessed at the CWDC website <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/working-with-parents-and-families/commissioning-toolkit>

In order to view all the Commissioning Toolkit content, users must first register for an account – this is free and only takes a few minutes. To find a programme you can:

- View all programmes; this displays all the entries in the database in alphabetical order by title.
- Search for programmes in a specific category by checking boxes in the category list.
- Enter a relevant word, phrase or programme title in the search box.

## 3. Why has the Department for Education (DfE) developed the Commissioning Toolkit?

Work with stakeholders and, in particular, commissioners of parenting programmes identified a demand for clear and objective advice. Not only do parents have the right to expect high quality interventions that have been demonstrated to work, but commissioners must be able to justify why they are spending money on one programme and not another.

Not all parenting programmes are effective. While some are of good quality and strong evidence to positive outcomes, others are poor and have no positive outcomes and, in some cases, may be harmful. On behalf of the DfE, King's College has developed an evaluation tool to provide commissioners with clear and objective information to inform their commissioning decisions. This information includes detailed descriptions of the content of parenting programmes, as well as quality ratings provided by the Parenting Programme Evaluation Tool (PPET) team at Kings College.

## 4. What makes a good quality evidence based parenting programme?

The highest quality parenting programmes contain several key elements:

### 1. They are specifically designed and delivered as parenting programmes.

Parenting programmes must include specific activities to improve the parent child relationship and manage their children's behaviour. This definition does not apply to other, more general interventions (e.g. life coaching, couples counselling or individual therapy), which may have a minor element of parenting or the child parent relationship in them, nor does it apply to resources for parents, such as self-help books, self-administered programmes or videos.

### 2. They clearly specify their target population and recruitment processes.

Good programmes include explicit processes to ensure that appropriate families (determined by their child's age or their level of need) can be recruited into the programme and that their needs are being addressed throughout its duration.

### 3. They are underpinned by evidence-based theories that are accurately reflected in the programme's materials and activities.

What parents learn and how information is delivered to them should be based on explicit and sound theoretical frameworks that have evidence for being effective when working with the targeted population.

### 4. They have a well-developed package of training and implementation support.

The programme developers have created a comprehensive training programme to ensure that the programme can be faithfully replicated in new and independent settings. The training implementation package should include recommendations for ongoing supervision, minimum practitioner qualifications, processes for ensuring fidelity and processes for assessing agency readiness.

### 5. They have strong evaluation evidence suggesting they are beneficial for parents and children.

In other words, programmes have objective evidence of improving outcomes for their target population. In order to demonstrate this, developers need to demonstrate that they have collected and analysed data to show that participation in the programme results in positive, substantial and long-lasting improvement for parents and their children.

## 5. How are programmes evaluated?

After an intensive review of the international literature, King's College has developed a measure using objective criteria for evaluating the quality of parenting programmes. This is the Parenting Programme Evaluation Tool (PPET).

The evaluation tool allows King's College to evaluate programmes against best practice standards demonstrated by well-known international programmes that have proven positive outcomes.

The evaluation tool provides a rating for each of the following four elements using a scale of quality ratings ranging from 4 to 0, with 4 meaning the programme meets all criteria within each element and a 0 meaning that no criteria were met.

The four elements that programme are evaluated against are:

**Element I: The specificity of the target population and recruitment processes.**

This element looks at how specific the target population is and how the programme content is matched to their needs. It asks:

- Who is the programme designed for?
- How do families access it?
- What levels of need are addressed?
- What processes are available for referring families in and out of the programme?

**Element II: The quality of the programme's content, format and activities.**

This element considers the quality of the programme content and the process in place to make sure it is delivered well. It asks:

- What is the underpinning theory and is it evidence based?
- How is the theory linked to specific and measurable short and long-term outcomes?
- Does the programme's content accurately reflect its theoretical basis?
- How is the programme delivered?

**Element III: The quality of the programme's training and implementation support.**

This looks at the quality of implementation and what processes are in place to make sure that the programme is delivered consistently and correctly. It asks:

- How are practitioners trained and supervised to deliver the programme?
- What mechanisms exist for ensuring the quality and fidelity of the programme delivery?
- What systems are available to help agencies install the programme into their organisation?

**Element IV: Evidence that the programme works.**

This element looks at what processes are in place to gather evidence to make sure that the programme is delivering what it claims to do. It asks:

- What is the likely effect of the programme/approach?
- What evidence exists to suggest that the programme will bring about positive changes for parents and their children?
- How was this evidence gathered? Were robust evaluation methods used with the appropriate sample?

## **6. Inclusion on the Commissioning Toolkit**

Programmes wishing to be included on the Toolkit must now provide evidence of their effectiveness via at least one evaluation that meets the following minimum requirements:

- Observed a significant positive change in one child outcome or a parent/child outcome.
- Observed this change with a scientifically validated measure administered once before and once after the parenting programme.
- Conducted this study with at least 20 families representative of the target population.
- Observed no negative effects.

If the programme meets the Toolkit's minimum evaluation requirements, the evaluation team will evaluate the programme against the PPET criteria. Once the rating process is complete, the evaluation team will post its ratings on the Toolkit.

## **7. How comprehensive is it?**

The evaluation team has looked at over 150 parenting programmes. Some of these have objective evidence of improving outcomes for children and others do not. Others do not meet our definition of a parenting programme. In order to make the Toolkit easy to use, the full description and PPET scores are only provided for programmes with evidence of effectiveness for children. Programmes that do not meet our definition of a parenting programme or do not have evidence of improving outcomes for children are listed but categorised as 'in need of further development'.

## **8. How do programme developers submit a programme for inclusion on the Commissioning Toolkit?**

Programmes meeting the minimum evaluation requirements can apply for submission on the Toolkit by requesting a submission packet from [toolkit@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:toolkit@kcl.ac.uk). This packet includes a questionnaire requesting information about the four PPET elements, as well as programme costs. Once this questionnaire is completed and returned, the evaluation team will verify whether the programme's evaluation evidence meets the minimum requirements for inclusion on the Toolkit.

Programme's meeting the minimum requirements will then be asked to provide their programme materials so that the programme can undergo a full evaluation. It is important that the materials submitted provide sufficient detail so that the evaluators obtain a clear understanding of the programme's theory, activities, referral and assessment activities, training programme and evaluation evidence.

Programmes that cannot provide sufficient materials for evaluation, including the programme's manual and training materials cannot be evaluated.

## **9. What happens during the evaluation process?**

Two evaluators independently consider the materials provided through the submission process to assess and rate the programme. The two evaluators' ratings are deliberated by an evaluation panel that reaches a consensus about the ratings. In submitting a programme to the Commissioning Toolkit for evaluation, the developer accepts that the ratings are final. Programme developers are provided with the final ratings and feedback and these ratings are published on the Commissioning Toolkit.

## **10. How often are the quality ratings reviewed?**

Once programmes have been rated, the evaluation team will aim to review each programme 12 months after the ratings are published on the Commissioning Toolkit. At the time of the annual review, developers will be asked to resubmit their materials so that any new developments (e.g. a new evaluation or updated training manual) can be evaluated and that the rating accurately reflects any revisions in the PPET criteria.

## **11. Is inclusion in the Commissioning Toolkit an endorsement of a programme?**

No. Inclusion of a programme on the Commissioning Toolkit is not an endorsement, recommendation, validation or accreditation/seal of approval. The ratings only serve as a guide to commissioners and developers about the quality of each programme.

Developers need to be aware that they are being evaluated against the best developed and most effective parenting programmes so that the highest scores reflect absolute best practice in the field. When submitting their programmes, developers must ensure that they have provided specific and detailed evidence for each of the four elements so that an accurate rating can be made.

Commissioning decisions should be determined on the basis of whether the programme is appropriate for parents living within their community (i.e. is the programme developmentally appropriate and well matched to the parents' level of need?), as well as the skills and expertise of the local parenting workforce.

## **12. How do I find out more about a particular programme?**

Contact details for developers are included on the Commissioning Toolkit so commissioners can obtain further information directly from them. Many of the programmes listed have their own websites, some of which provide examples of programme materials for parents and training opportunities for practitioners.

Here are some questions that a commissioner may wish to ask a developer:

- What training and support is available in my geographical area?
- Where is the programme currently being used?
- Does the developer have new information not yet presented on the Commissioning Toolkit (e.g. a new training manual or evaluations currently underway)?
- How might the programme meet my specific needs?
- What is the developer's capacity (and timescales) for delivery?

Parenting UK has a selection of parenting programme materials available for view at its Parenting Practitioner Reference Library in London, which will continue to be expanded. Contact Parenting UK for details [www.parentinguk.org](http://www.parentinguk.org)

### **13. Further information and resources**

For further information on the Commissioning Toolkit:

Visit: <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/working-with-parents-andfamilies/commissioning-toolkit>

Write to: [toolkit@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:toolkit@kcl.ac.uk).

Feedback on the Commissioning Toolkit can be emailed to [parentsandfamilies@cwdcouncil.org.uk](mailto:parentsandfamilies@cwdcouncil.org.uk)



**The Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) supports local areas to drive sector-led improvements so the millions of people and volunteers working with children and young people across England are able to do the best job they possibly can.**

**We want England’s children, young people and families’ workforce to be respected and valued for the positive difference it makes to children, young people and their families.**

**We work in partnership with lots of different organisations and support workers and employers who want the lives of all children and young people to be healthy, happy and fulfilling.**

**[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)**

**For more information please call 0113 244 6311  
or visit [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)**

**Or write to CWDC, 2nd Floor, City Exchange  
11 Albion Street, Leeds LS1 5ES  
email [info@cwdcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@cwdcouncil.org.uk)  
or fax us on 0113 390 7744**

**Contact us to receive this information in a different language  
or format, such as large print or audio tape.**

**© This publication is the copyright of the Children’s Workforce Development Council 2010.**

**SP68/0310**