

What is a portfolio?

The portfolio is a personal record of experience and/or skills acquired at a specific point in time. It is one of five evaluation options specified in the homeschooling regulation which took effect on July 1st, 2018 and was again amended in 2019.

Note: You may also use the portfolio in the process of evaluation by a holder of a teaching licence or a school board, as negotiated by you and the other party.

What should a portfolio contain?

According to AQED, the portfolio must demonstrate the activities completed in accordance with the competencies targeted in your learning project and your reports. It could include "traces" such as: excerpts from written records, explanatory texts written by the parent or child, photos, screen shots, certificates or attestations from private courses, copies of tickets and/or library cards, etc.

Content suggestions for the portfolio

Samples

Portfolios may include samples of writing from different time periods to demonstrate progress in a particular competency, such as: self-correction, spelling, fine motor skills, literary style, etc.

Examples of samples: scans of writings on paper or in a workbook; workbook pages; screenshots of reading software at different times of the year; pictures of the child writing words with manipulatives (e.g. chalk, paint, alphabet noodles, Lego); screenshots of digital texts including: emails, conversations written online on a website or forum, cell phone text messages, etc.

Lists

The portfolio may include a list of books, vocabulary words, recipes made, levels reached in certain games or applications, etc. This list does not have to be complete (just a summary).

Summary

Portfolios may include summaries written by the parent to briefly report on an activity or competency developed or being developed.

Examples of a written summary:

- My son developed his oral communication skills during four Lego workshops he gave in our support group this year. He is now more comfortable speaking and more precise in his explanations.
- My daughter earned her purple belt in karate thanks to her diligence in attending her classes and to her perseverance.

How to store learning traces?

There are a variety of ways to store traces of your children's learning. Don't limit stored traces to what seems "academic" or to those where you can clearly see learning. You can sort through them later and discover, for example, that some learning activities are like "puzzle pieces" that the child accumulates and that can be assimilated later to form a whole that makes sense to the child. Or you may discover, in retrospect, learnings that you didn't see at the time. Here are some suggestions for "trace" preservation systems:

A plastic bin, binder or table binder

In which you put show tickets, museum admissions, karate or piano class registration forms, drawings and written notes (a copy of an email, notes on paper, a printout of a screenshot from a Google search, a page from an activity book), crafts, etc.

A folder of digital photos

Into which you transfer photos from your phone or camera. From time to time (you don't have to do it all the time), take pictures of your kids having fun on the computer, tablet or cell phone, during group activities, spontaneous games or everyday activities (cooking, walking in the woods, watching a documentary, counting apples, sorting clothes, calculating taxes, weighing bulk food at the grocery store, doing a Lego build, reading a comic book, etc.).

An agenda or notebook in which you take notes

This can be done sporadically, it doesn't have to be done every day. For example, write down the topics of some of your conversations with your children, questions they have asked you, a new event in their development or a new experience (riding a bike without support, climbing a tree, answering in French to someone they met at the park, understanding a mathematical concept, information or explanations on a subject they know well that your child expresses orally

to you or to a friend, questions that led to a new interest, etc.), meetings and activities for which you did not take photos, etc.

How to organize the portfolio?

The easiest way is to organize the portfolio by learning areas required by the regulation. That being said, you don't have to limit yourself if you want to be creative or if this way of doing things doesn't inspire you! Here are a few examples of how you can classify learning areas:

By theme

You may want to highlight themes (your child's favorite topics or activities) throughout the year and list the activities under each theme.

For example: Insects, Minecraft and drawing

- Insects: a documentary viewed (English), two books read together or by the child about insects (French, science, social studies), a drawing of a grasshopper (art), a Lego construction (science, math, art), observations in nature (personal development, science).
- Minecraft: Communicate with other players via instant messaging on an online server (French and/or English), find your way around using coordinates (mathematics, social studies), build a Roman village (mathematics, history, science).
- Drawing: Sketches from a drawing exercise in a book (art), drawing of a butterfly with the names of the different parts of the body (art, French, biology), creation and drawing of a fictitious insect (literacy, art), visit to the exhibition "Notebook of a Botanist" (English, art, history, geography, science).

By project

For example, your child starts a YouTube channel, prepares a project for Small Business Day, and organizes a reading circle. List the activities completed for these projects and categorize them under each project (similar to themes).

By skill or personality trait

You may want to categorize your children's learning by skill or personality trait, depending on how your child has progressed over the year.

For example, during the year, your child developed their reasoning, reading and math skills.

- Reasoning Skills: Any activity that involves problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, planning and organizing work, using memory, finding information, etc.
- Reading Skills: Any reading (notes, recipes, game rules, novels, newspapers, magazines, posters, emails, instant conversation, list of ingredients, etc.) in which the child has located information, interpreted the general meaning of the information, evaluated the different materials read and compiled information from different sources, etc.
- Math Skills: Daily activities where the child has made estimates, counted money, organized their schedule, planned their spending, counted their savings, analyzed data, etc.

By subject or notion

You can organize your children's learning by the subjects or skills listed in the regulation (French, English, mathematics, science and technology, and the social sciences), or according to your own list of subjects or skills (food, gardening, poetry, drama, graphic design, coding, baking, auto mechanics, origami, sewing, etc.).

By month, season or chronology

You could organize the activities by month or season. In the form of a calendar, timeline or season wheel.

Which medium to choose?

You can make a digital or physical portfolio.

Digital

Portfolios may be done with Seesaw or other paid online service, a digital file on your computer (Word or PDF document, etc.), a blog, Facebook page, private Instagram account, etc. Make sure the option you choose is secure, as it involves confidential information about your children!

You can build an online portfolio for free via this site: www.eduportfolio.org

Physical

Portfolios may be assembled in a binder or photo album. It could be a scrapbooking type assembly put together by the child (in whole or in part). This portfolio does not have to be given to your DEM resource person: you can make a copy (scan or photos of the relevant pages to be assembled into a digital file) or a bound photocopy, or take a video of it by flipping through the pages.

Take note: The portfolio can be a **beautiful keepsake and even a valuable learning tool** for you and your children. Don't hold back on form or content just to please the DEM. You may want to **make a portfolio for yourself first**, and choose only certain elements that will make up the portfolio to give to your resource person. Remember that the submission of this portfolio is a minimal legal requirement: you do not have to present EVERYTHING you do for a year.

How do you transfer free learning into the portfolio?

The learning that our children do is rarely reduced to a single concept, subject or skill. The school system breaks learning down into small pieces and classifies it into artificial "categories" in order to facilitate the organization of the school. But "French" or "mathematics", for example, are not fundamentally "school subjects". They are categories of skills, notions that are part of our daily lives!

These skills are rarely used separately in "real life". We suggest that you set aside this academic filter when observing your children's activities. Instead of looking for all the "French" activities in what your children are doing, you could instead list all the concepts and skills used and experienced in each of their everyday activities.

For example, a snowshoeing trip in a provincial park can tap into skills such as reading (park signs and regulations, activity brochures), map finding (park trail map), natural science (wildlife observation), etc.

Another example: making a cookie recipe can tap into skills in reading (recipe), math (following steps, weighing, measuring, multiplying, counting), science (chemical reaction), second language (if the recipe is in French, for example), entrepreneurship (selling cookies to finance a purchase), social studies (traditional recipe from a foreign country, discussion of where certain foods like chocolate come from), etc.

Use the "idea storm" exercise to help you find matches!

A [list of suggested words, phrases, skills, concepts, progressions, etc.](#) is available on AQED's website in the Members' Area.

Please note: **The Direction de l'enseignement à la maison (DEM) now has their own interpretation** of what a portfolio should look like. The DEM has sent families a letter summarizing the type of portfolio they would like to see. It specifies the content, the number of traces and several other more or less relevant information depending on your type of

educational project. **It is the responsibility of each parent to choose the type of information they wish to provide.** AQED believes that the demands of the DEM for the production of administrative documents often exceed the regulatory obligations or contradict the spirit of the Education Act.

We encourage you to send the minimum required and to stick to the spirit of your educational project as much as possible.