



French Immersion Handbook for Parents



**Durham District School Board
Programs Department**

Special thanks goes to:

Luigia Ayotte - Superintendent of Education,
Programs/Staff Development

Jacqui Steer - Staff Development Officer

Maria DiMauro - Program Facilitator, FLS and
International Languages

We invite you to access this document on our website at www.durham.edu.on.ca.
From the home page, go to Programs and then select French Immersion.

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Foreword

French Immersion students often come from homes where English is the predominant language spoken.

Parents can actively participate in their child's learning by:

- being strong supporters of the program;
- talking about the program in a positive way;
- demonstrating an interest in class and school events;
- communicating frequently with the teachers;
- providing a stimulating language rich environment in the language of the home.

Even the most involved Immersion parent has at times felt helpless trying to understand a homework assignment or finding information in French at the local library. This handbook is a compilation of resources and information for French Immersion parents.



Introduction

French Immersion programs are designed to provide non-francophone children with a high degree of proficiency in the French language.

While any exposure to a second language is beneficial, French Immersion broadens and deepens that exposure. In Immersion programs, French is not only a subject, but a language of instruction and a means of communication.

In Immersion programs, much of the regular school curriculum is taught in French. Immersion goes beyond learning about French, to learning through French.

Immersion students retain their own language and culture while gaining an appreciation and use of another.

French Immersion programs have flourished across Canada since first introduced in the late 1960's. The benefits and opportunities of learning more than one language are recognized as never before. Research confirms that knowledge of a second language strengthens first language skills and that the ability to speak two or more languages generally enhances problem-solving and reasoning skills, the capacity for creative thinking, and the ability to respect and understand other cultures. Second language learning strengthens students' ability to communicate and participate effectively in the workplace and the global community. It also increases their ability to understand themselves and other people, and helps them to appreciate the power of words and the many different uses of language. (*The Ontario Curriculum - Grades 9 and 10, French As a Second Language - Core, Extended and Immersion French, 1999.*)

The purpose of the French Immersion program is to provide children with the opportunity of achieving a meaningful level of functional bilingualism. To expect all students to attain the fluency of native speakers is, however, not a realistic aim even for an Immersion program. **What the children will achieve is a high level of functional bilingualism, enabling them to function with ease in both English and French.**



Questions and Answers about French Immersion

The following are some common questions and concerns that parents often ask when their child is in the French Immersion program.

1. What is French Immersion?

It is the most effective method known for learning a second language. It provides more time to work in second language learning situations. and more time results in more learning. Essentially, children will learn the language as a vehicle of expression in other curriculum areas rather than learning about language in isolation. Our aim is functional bilingualism. This means that at the end of their secondary studies, the students can take further education in a French setting and receive training and employment in French, after some period of adjustment.

2. Do parents of children in French Immersion programs have to be able to speak French?

The program is designed for children who do not normally speak French at home. It is not expected that parents will be able to speak French. Communication between the school and home will be conducted in English. (e.g. newsletters, memos, record cards)

3. How do I know if my child is suitable for the French Immersion program?

Children who are enrolled in the French Immersion program demonstrate a wide variety of characteristics such as:

Language:

- enjoys language;
- listens effectively (e.g. can retell or explain a story or event in proper sequence);
- plays with language (e.g. enjoys rhyming and opposite games);
- enjoys new words (e.g. repeats and uses new vocabulary appropriately).

Learning Skills:

- focuses on a story, conversation and activity for at least five to ten minutes;
- handles new situations using positive coping strategies;
- is able to communicate his/her difficulties when necessary;
- demonstrates curiosity and a willingness to explore, experiment and make new connections;
- demonstrates a positive attitude toward challenging tasks.

These are only some of the characteristics of French Immersion students and every child is unique!

4. Will my child learn the same things as students in English classes?

The curriculum must follow the guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education. Teaching and learning resources in French cover the same basic program as in English, although perhaps in a different sequence. Students work toward the same academic goals regardless of the language of instruction. (www.gov.edu.on.ca)

5. Will my child be behind in English if he or she takes French Immersion?

Evaluations of Immersion programs across Canada have indicated that although there are certain lags in English language skills for the first few years of the program, the children in Immersion very quickly catch up and keep pace with children in the regular program, once English is introduced. It is important that you read stories in English at home and expose your child to English songs, nursery rhymes and books that will enrich his/her first language experience.

6. What if my child experiences difficulties in French Immersion?

Any concerns should be discussed with the classroom teacher in order to determine the nature and extent of the difficulty. Ongoing communication between the school and the home will ensure the best possible programming for the child.

7. How can I help my child?

From the early stages of the program, parents can be of great assistance by being supportive of the program. You can read regularly to your child in English or simply talk frequently to your child about new experiences. Reading for pleasure should be encouraged in both French and English. In this way, your child's English vocabulary will be enriched and his/her self-confidence will grow. At a later stage, certain portions of the program are conducted in English, and parents can be of direct assistance here.

Most often, if a child is experiencing difficulty in a particular subject area, the confusion may lie with the concept, not the language. Discuss and explain the concept in English. Parents can also provide valuable assistance in the preparation of speeches and projects, especially in the areas of research, planning and presentation of materials.

Supporting your child in the French Immersion Program

Parents have a vital role in their child's learning. Today, more than ever before, parents have access to information through books, pamphlets, speakers, workshops, the media and the Internet on how to effectively support their child's education.

In order to support your child in French Immersion, it is important to read regularly in English or simply talk frequently (in English) about new experiences. Reading for pleasure should be encouraged in both French and English. In this way, your child's English vocabulary will be enriched and his/her self-confidence will grow.

The following are suggestions for parents with children in the French Immersion program:

- be positive about the program and the teacher;
- show interest in your child's daily activities;
- check newsletters for special events;
- check backpack or agenda for homework;
- communicate your concerns, questions or suggestions with teachers;
- listen to your child read in French and English;
- do not attempt to correct your child if you are uncertain of the correct expression or pronunciation;
- read daily to your child in English;
- provide access to French books, subscriptions, tapes, games, software, videos, televisions and radio;
- purchase a French/English dictionary for home;
- volunteer to help out at the school.



Helpful Hints when it's all in French!

Homework

Homework has three main purposes:

- to finish work not completed in school;
- to provide practice and extension of concepts presented in class;
- to allow for student preparation in upcoming class lessons.

French Immersion students should expect to have roughly the same amount of homework as their counterparts in the English program. Teachers are sensitive to the content of the homework which is sent home. Teachers outline the expectations of homework assignments in order for the students to successfully complete them. Questions or concerns regarding homework expectations should be discussed with the classroom teacher.

Practical Tips for Providing a Successful Study Environment for your Child

1. Schedule time for homework or studying.
2. Provide a quiet secluded place with:
 - good overhead lighting;
 - a firm chair and table or desk;
 - no distractions;
 - no radio or TV!

Hints:

Your child should know that homework starts at school and by LISTENING to the teacher's instructions, he/she will know:

- **WHAT** to do;
- **WHEN** the assignment is due;
- **WHERE** to get information;
- **HOW** to write the project.

Your child can:

- review notes and relevant textbook sections;
- correct mistakes;
- make a study outline.

Tips for Reading

The most important foundation for reading is established before your child goes to school. There is nothing more important than you can do for your child than to establish a love of books and an appreciation of the written word.

Expose your child to English and French reading material as often as possible. Use a variety of genres (i.e. newspapers, comic books, fiction, and non-fiction). Discuss content with your child and encourage verbal feedback. Model reading to show that books can be a form of entertainment as well as a source of information.

Studies have shown that reading strategies and skills may be transferred from one language to another.

Libraries and Book Clubs are an excellent source for obtaining quality reading material. Parents can assist their child in learning how to locate information and resources which will support his/her learning.

There are several differences between French and English pronunciation that might be most obvious as you read along with your child:

- **consonants** are essentially the same;
- there are significant differences between the **sounds of the vowels**;
- **h** is always silent in French;
- an **s** at the end of a word, to indicate the plural, often is silent;
- **qu** sounds like **k** (not kw as quiet);
- **th** is pronounced **t**;
- **ch** is pronounced like the English **sh**;
- **I** is pronounced like the long English **e** (see);
- **ou** in French always sounds like **troop** (not out);
- **oi** sounds like **wa** (wash)
- **au** and **eau** have the **long o** sound (go);
- **ez** has the **long a** sound (say);
- accents change the sounds of vowels;
- **è** sounds like the **short English e** (peck);
- **é** sounds like the **long a sound** (say);
- **ê** sounds like the **short English e** (peck);
- **ç** sounds like the **s sound** (sand);
- stress falls on the last sounded syllable (tapi sounds like tap-ee);
- when a word begins with a vowel (or silent h), it is usually joined with the last consonant of the preceding word - it will sound as though your child is reading one word instead of two. (l'homme)

Adapted from "Yes, You Can Help".

Suggested Language Resources

* Please note that these resources are readily available at many bookstores.

Examples of Primary French Dictionaries (Primary)

1. Larousse Maxi Débutants - Larousse
2. Mon Premier Larousse - Le Dictionnaire des 4-7 ans - Larousse, 1998
3. Les Visuel Junior - Larousse, Visual Dictionary

Examples of Junior French Dictionaries (Grades 4-8)

1. Dictionnaire Larousse Super Major 9/12 ans - Larousse
2. Un Vrai Dictionnaire - Trecarre/Bordas
3. Le Robert Junior Illustré - Edition nord - américaine - Robert

Examples of Senior French Dictionaries (Secondary)

1. Le Robert Scolaire - Robert
see also Le Robert Micro Poche (Pocket Robert) and Le Robert Pour Tous
2. Larousse - Dictionnaire Français - Larousse
see also Le Larousse de Poche 2000 (Pocket Larousse)
3. Collins French Dictionary and Grammar - Collins

French/English Dictionaries

French Immersion students require a good French/English dictionary. The following is a recommended list:

1. Le Robert & Collins MINI - français/anglais - Robert & Collins
2. Le Robert & Collins PRATIQUE - français/anglais - Robert & Collins
3. Harrap's Petit Dictionnaire Anglais-Français/Francais-An glais - Harrap's
4. Larousse - Dictionnaire compact français-anglais/English-French - Larousse

Dictionaries for Home Use:

1. Le Petit Robert - Dictionnaire de la langue française - French/French, Robert
2. Le Robert & Collins SENIOR - English/French, Robert & Collins
3. Le Petit Larousse Illustré 2000 - French/French, Larousse
4. Larousse - Grand dictionnaire French/English
Larousse - Dictionnaire général French English
5. Le Visuel (visual dictionary organized by themes) - Larousse
6. Dictionnaires des synonymes et des antonymes

Suggested Language Resources

References for Grammar and Conjugations

Most French Immersion teachers recommend the Bescherelle reference books for grades 4 and up.

1. Collection Bescherelle - Complete guide to conjugating 12 000 French Verbs
2. Grammaire pour tous
3. Le Petit Bescherelle (grammar)
4. L'art de conjugues
5. L'orthographe pour tous
6. Side by Side - French & English Grammar - Passport Books ISBN 0-8442-1224-5



Music Resources

MUSICIAN	AGE	DESCRIPTION
Charlotte Diamond	3-10	Seasonal and thematic songs available on cassette through Tralco.
Étienne	10-14	Rock and roll style music which includes themes and grammar structures studied in the classroom. Music available through Tralco.
Jacquot	5-10	A variety of cassettes which explore thematic vocabulary through music available through Tralco.
Sara Jordan	7-12	A series of songs focusing on grammar structures presented in a rap or rock and roll style. Available through Tralco.
Gregg LeRock	10-15	A series of songs presented in a rock and roll style. Available through Tralco.
Matt Maxwell	8-12	Contemporary music available through Tralco.
Suzanne Pinel	3-10	Themes include: seasonal songs, popular children's songs, and song and dance. A series of cassettes are available through Centre Franco-Ontarien de ressources pédagogiques.



Exchange Programs

The following organizations offer a variety of programs in different French speaking countries. They differ in length, age, and format.

PROGRAMS	AGE	DESCRIPTION
Canadian Educational Exchange Foundation (CEEF) 250 Bayview Drive Barrie, ON, L4N 4Y8 Tel: 1-800-899-8367 Fax: (705) 739-7764 Web Site: www.ceef.ca E-mail: info@ceef.ca	14-17	Individual exchange programs for ages 14-17 which include a three month reciprocal exchange and a summer reciprocal exchange.
International Student Exchange - Ontario (ISE) Suite 486, 65 Cedar Pointe Drive Barrie, ON, L4N 9R3 Tel: (705) 722-9440 Fax: (705) 722-9441 Web Site: www.iseontario.on.ca E-mail: ise.ontario@home.com	12-18	A non-profit organization offering Ontario students reciprocal exchange programs in Quebec and Europe.
AFS Interculture Canada 1231 St. Catherine St. W., Suite 505 Montreal, QC, H3G 1P5 Tel: 1-800-361-7428 or (514) 288-3282 Fax: 1-800-361-1879 or (514) 843-9119 Web Site: www.afs.org/partners/canhome.htm	15-18	Academic year, semester, and summer programs in different countries. Opportunities for families to host exchange students.
Canadian Crossroads International 31 Madison Ave. Toronto, ON, M5R 2S2 Tel: (416) 967-0801 Fax: (416) 967-9078	15-18	Work in developing countries.

PROGRAMS	AGE	DESCRIPTION
<p>NACEL #208-8925-82 Ave. Edmonton, AB, T6C 0Z2 Tel: 1-800-661-6223 Fax: 1-800-837-4988 Web Site: www.nacel.ca</p>	13-18	International exchanges including <i>au pair</i> program, homestay in France, and hosting opportunities.
<p>Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC) 201-57 Auriga Drive Nepean, ON, K2E 8B2 Tel: (613) 988-3760 1-800-387-3832 ext. 250 Fax: (613) 998-7094 Web Site: www.exchanges.sevec.ca www.canadaexchanges.org</p>	12-16	Educational visits for groups of students.
<p>Student Work Abroad Program Travel CUTS - SWAP France 187 College St. Toronto, ON, M5T 1P7 Tel: (416) 979-2406 Fax: (416) 979-8167 Web Site: www.travelcuts.com/english/html/swap E-mail: info@travelcuts.com</p>	18 and up	Full-time post-secondary students and high school grads with a working knowledge of French can earn money abroad while practising and improving their French.
<p>Summer Student Job Exchange Program 800 Place d'Youville, 4ièmetage Québec, QC, G1R 3P4 Tel: 1-800-463-2355 or (416) 643-6965 Fax: (418) 643-7901 Web Site: www.placement-etudiant.micst.gouv.qc.ca E-mail: peq@micst.gouv.gc.ca</p>	15-18	Work in a government office matching their post-secondary field of study.

Sources of Information

Alberta Education

They have published a very helpful book for parents entitled Yes, You Can Help!

Available for \$9.95

Tel: (780) 427-5775

Web Site: www.lrdc.edc.gov.ab.ca

Alliance Française of Toronto

Tel: (416) 922-2014

Special events and conversational French

Bayard Press Canada

2924, boul. Taschereau, #201

Greenfield Park, QC

J4V 3P1

Web Site: www.bayardpresse.com

Canadian Parents for French - Canada

An association of parents dedicated to the promotion and support of French as a second language instruction.

It provides valuable resources and information and organizes events such as summer camps, conferences and book fairs. Among the useful resources published by CPF are the reference books: So you want your child to learn French!, More French, s'il vous plaît! and The State of French as a Second Language.

Web Site: www.cpf.ca

Durham's CPF group: www.cpfdurham.ca

Canadian Parents for French - Ontario (CPF)

176 Gloucester Street, Suite 310

Ottawa, ON

K2P 0A6

Tel: 1-800-667-0594 (416) 422-3554

Fax: (416) 422-4669

Web Site: www.cpfont.on.ca



Centre Franco-Ontarien de Ressources Pédagogiques

Librairie du Centre
290, rue Dupuis
Vanier, ON
K1L 1A2
Tel: (613) 747-1553
Fax: (613) 747-0866
Wide selection of books, videos and software
Web Site: www.cforp.on.ca

Community Colleges

Conversational French courses

Beaux Books

14845-6 Yonge St, Suite 216
Aurora, ON
L4G 6H8
(905) 773-7698
www.beauxbks@aci.on.ca

Librairie Champlain

A French Bookstore
468 Queen Street East
Toronto, ON
M5A 1T7
Tel: (416) 364-4345
Wide selection of books, videos and software
707 Simcoe St,
Oshawa, ON
Tel: (905) 434-7676
www.cofrd.org

La Librairie Française

C.P. 299, 5617 8th Line
Hillsburgh, ON
N0B 1Z0
Tel: (519) 833-0328 1-800-420-3003
Fax: (519) 833-2242

Le Club Harmonie

542 Slingerland Court
Newmarket, ON
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Tel: (416) 219-5405
Fax: (905) 830-4480



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Suite 101
Hamilton, ON
L9C 6X6
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Web Site: www.tralco.com

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Plays in French



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