



FRENCH

AS A SECOND LANGUAGE



Supporting Students in
French as a Second Language
Parent/Guardian's Guide





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INTRODUCTION

All children can be successful in FSL programs in the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board.

This guide is based on the foundational belief stated in *Learning for All*: “All students learn best when instruction, resources, and the learning environment are well suited to their particular strengths, interests, needs, and stage of readiness.” (*Learning for All, Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for all students, Kindergarten to Grade 12*, Queen’s Printer of Ontario, 2013, p.8)

Myth: A student with a language learning difficulty cannot learn French.

It is also important that “...decisions about program participation, including participation in FSL programs, should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the strengths, needs, and interests of the individual student.” (*Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs*, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 3)

Fact: “Learning another language helps children become more aware of their own. This awareness can lead to improvements in literacy across the curriculum.”
www.languageswithoutlimits.co.uk/why.html

Regardless of the program (Core, Extended or Immersion), there is a place for ALL students to learn in FSL classrooms.

Students with special education needs who receive appropriate supports in FSL programs gain access to the numerous advantages available to all Canadians who have the confidence and ability to communicate in both official languages. These advantages include greater employment options and earning potential, enhanced problem-solving skills, greater creativity, and increased cognitive flexibility and ability to formulate concepts. (*Yes You Can Help! Information and Inspiration for Parents of French Immersion Students*, Government of Alberta, 2011, p. 13)

Parents/guardians who do not speak French may wonder how to support their children: a growth mindset towards learning French can be the most important factor in their child’s success. With this positive outlook in mind, this document suggests three steps for parents/guardians:

- Be Involved
- Encourage Self-Advocacy
- Monitor Your Child’s Progress

BEING INVOLVED

One way to support your child is to get involved with French learning beyond the classroom:

- watch media with your child in French (TFO, Netflix, Youtube, Radio Canada, TV5, TVA, Télé-Québec);
- listen to French music on the radio or the Internet;
- explore the local area for French community resources (public library, Mass in French, French theatre, French newspapers, magazines, touristic pamphlets, francophone organizations);
- read with your child in any language;
- communicate positive messages about French to your child;
- use online resources/apps to support your child's French development (See page 13 for a list of resources).

If you have a concern about your child's learning in FSL, it is important to openly communicate with him or her about his or her experiences in the classroom.

What should I talk to him/her about?

What do you like about school?

What activities do you enjoy in French class?

In what ways can your French teacher help you with your learning?

How would you describe your behaviour during French class?

It is essential that you share this information with the French teacher, through a parent/teacher meeting, as you share the common goal of creating opportunities for success for your child. The teacher can provide additional information about your child's strengths, areas of need, and strategies to try.

Myth: Children with special education needs will feel better and achieve greater academic success if they do not participate in French.

Fact: "Students with special education needs who stay in FSL programs experience social benefits which can be linked to being included with one's peers. These benefits include increased motivation, self-esteem and confidence."
(Arnett, 2013)



In preparation for the meeting, parents/guardians may wish to consider...

Questions:

- Write down any specific questions you would like to discuss with the school team.

Consider Bringing Your Child to the Meeting:

- Depending on the age of your child and the goals of the meeting, including him or her could be essential.

Priorities:

- Consider what your goals for your child might be and share them with the teacher and the principal.
- Valuing a bilingual education will set a positive tone to the meeting.

At the meeting:

Be open: Make the teacher aware of any circumstances at home or at school that may be affecting your child's performance at school.

Be honest: Express your concerns about your child's struggles.

Be specific: Provide speaking points.

Ask about strategies for home and school: Leave this meeting with clear and realistic next steps on what strategies the teacher will implement and what you can try at home.

Determine next steps: Establish a follow-up plan for ongoing communication.

After the meeting:

Growth mindset: Attitude towards your child's ability to succeed in learning a second language affects your child's success.

Have confidence: The school team wants your child to achieve success.

Follow through: Take time to try the strategies suggested.

Communicate: Keep communication open with the French teacher, and share any changes you may notice.

Be patient: New strategies take time to take effect.

Myth: French Immersion is only for academically advanced students.

Fact: According to the Ministry of Education, FSL programs in Ontario are welcoming and inclusive of all students. French Immersion programming can respond to a wide range of student needs and abilities.

Ultimately, it is up to the parents/guardians to consider all pertinent information regarding which program is best suited to his or her child. *(Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs, p. 3)*

ENCOURAGING ADVOCACY

An Individual Education Plan informs educators of a student's strengths and needs throughout his or her learning career. As such, it needs to be a reflection of the child's current learning profile.

If a parent/guardian finds that the content in the IEP is not well suited to his or her child's needs, then it is important to discuss this with the school team to review the goals.

Parents/guardians and students can be advocates for success in the FSL classroom.

All children have the right to ask for accommodations to support their learning.

Some of these supports can include but are not limited to: a variety of learning choices, preferential seating, and use of technology to access and demonstrate learning and additional time for assignments/tests.

It is important to discuss possible accommodations when planning the child's IEP with the school team.

Myth: A child with special education needs would perform better without French programming.

Fact: Research does not support better performance in an English only environment. Learning a second language will support the development of the first language, regardless of what the first language is. Working in multiple languages actually helps language development. (Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Languages Programs, pp. 10-15)

There are four strands in all FSL programs and a multitude of ways to show success!



Listening



Speaking



Reading



Writing



Students are encouraged to reflect on their own strengths and areas of growth in all subject areas. Thinking about their thinking (metacognition) helps students take ownership for their progress.

Taking ownership can be done in a variety of ways and with various supports.

These may include:



Supporting Independence:

Your child can speak to the teacher about his or her day-to-day needs as well as about which learning strategies work.



Maintaining communication:

Your child can share with his or her FSL teacher any additional successful strategies that are working at home.



Supporting the French program:

Your child can become familiar with the various resources available in class. Or, when permissible, your child may wish to use his/her own personal technological devices to assist his/her learning.



Checking for Accommodations and Modifications:

Ensure that FSL is included on your child's IEP. He or she should be aware of the accommodations/modifications and learning expectations outlined in his/her IEP.



Communicating Successful Strategies:

As your child develops successful strategies, he/she will be able to determine the level of support required to complete tasks and will be able to communicate his/her needs to educators.

MONITORING YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

It is important that parents/guardians continue to monitor their child's progress in cooperation with the French teacher.

Maintain communication:

Throughout the school year and from one year to the next.

Share:

Share any new or additional successful strategies used at home.

Celebrate success:

Talk to your child about his or her positive learning experiences in French class.

Support the school's FSL programming:

Continue to demonstrate the value of learning a second language.

If a child continues to have difficulties in FSL, and if the parents/guardians and the French teacher both feel that additional support is necessary, it is important to engage the school team.

If a child is still struggling despite his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP), it does not mean the child should be removed from French. It means that a review of the IEP is necessary, and can be done with the school team.

Myth: Students with learning challenges will be more successful in an English program than in a French Immersion program.

Fact: The claim that struggling students are at a greater risk by remaining in French Immersion programs has never been substantiated by research. (Dr. Fred Genesee, 2012)

FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AT ALCDSB

At the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, we offer Core French programming from Grades 1 to 12.

The following sites offer French Immersion and Extended French programs.

Elementary Immersion Sites

École catholique Cathédrale

(French Immersion only)
301 Johnson Street, Kingston, ON
613-546-7555
flhpecth@alcdsb.on.ca

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School

97 Park Crescent, Amherstview, ON
613-389-1122
flhpolmc@alcdsb.on.ca

St. Mary Catholic School

85 Campbell Street, Trenton, ON
613-392-3538
flhpstmt@alcdsb.on.ca

St. Michael Catholic School

273 Church Street, Belleville, ON
613-968-5765
flhpmich@alcdsb.on.ca



Secondary Extended French Sites

Nicholson Catholic College

301 Church Street, Belleville, ON
613-967-0404
flhpnicc@alcdsb.on.ca

St. Paul Catholic Secondary School

(Grades 7 to 12)
15 Tripp Blvd, Trenton, ON
613-394-4843
flhppass@alcdsb.on.ca

Secondary Extended/Immersion Site

Regiopolis-Notre Dame Catholic High School

130 Russell Street, Kingston, ON
613-545-1902
flhpregi@alcdsb.on.ca



CONCLUSION

All students who participate in FSL programs benefit from the advantages and skill development associated with second language acquisition. "In a rapidly changing society in which the importance of languages is becoming increasingly evident... learning French will be widely recognized as a valuable component of every child's education." *A Framework for FSL in Ontario Schools, 2013, p. 38.*

As parents/guardians you are still the best support for your child's learning. As such, you can work with your child's educators in order to provide a successful learning environment where he or she will become a life-long learner of French.

"FSL programs are for all students."

A Framework For French As A Second Language In Ontario Schools 2013, p. 10.

RESOURCES

Canadian Parents for French - Ontario Branch: on.cpf.ca

(A network of volunteers dedicated to the promotion and creation of French-second-language learning opportunities for young Canadians.)

french-future.org

(This organization promotes Canada's official bilingualism and the immediate and lifelong benefits of learning and communicating in French to students from grades 7 to 12 across Canada.)

www.frenchstreet.ca

(A unique collection of French resources designed to support teachers, students and Parents.)

<http://frenchappsforkids.blogspot.ca/>

(Applications suggested by Ontario FSL educator, Sylvia Duckworth.)

<http://www.fslhomeworktoolbox.ca/>

(This site supports FSL students who require an accessible user friendly reference tool to help with homework in French.)

http://www.unb.ca/fredericton/second-language/_resources/pdf/elp/schoolbasedlanguageportfolio.pdf

(A portfolio for students to track learning and to set goals.)

Supporting Your Child's Success in French Immersion and Extended French, Kindergarten to Grade 8.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/parentGuideFrench.pdf>

Yes, You Can Help Information and Inspiration for Parents of French Immersion Students.

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/563591/yesyoucanhelp.pdf>

GLOSSARY

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

- A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs.
- A record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his or her learning expectations, given the student's identified learning strengths and needs;
- A working document that identifies learning expectations that may be modified from the expectations for the age-appropriate grade level in a particular subject or course, as outlined in the Ministry of Education's curriculum policy documents;
- A working document that may identify alternative expectations, in program areas not represented in the Ontario curriculum;
- A record of the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed and evaluated for the purpose of reporting student achievement of modified and/or alternative expectations;
- An accountability tool for the student, the student's parents, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping the student meet the stated goals and learning expectations as the student progresses through the Ontario curriculum. (*Ontario, 2004, p. 6*)

Accommodations:

The term *accommodations* is used to refer to the special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. Accommodations do not alter the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade. (*Ontario, 2004, p. 25*)

Modifications:

Modifications are changes made in the age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. These changes may involve developing expectations that reflect knowledge and skills required in the curriculum for a different grade level and/or increasing or decreasing the number and/or complexity of the regular grade level curriculum expectations. (*Ontario, 2004, p. 25*)

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DID YOU KNOW?

There are an estimated

274 MILLION

French speakers worldwide.



French is the only language other than English that is taught in every single country in the world.

French is set to be the world's most commonly spoken language by the year

2050

750 MILLION PEOPLE!

Roughly **HALF** the words in modern English are borrowed from French.

French is the official language of the UN, the International Red Cross, NATO and the Olympic Committee.



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