

Supporting Your Child's Success in **French Immersion and Extended French**

Kindergarten to Grade 8

A PARENT GUIDE

support every child
reach every student

 Ontario



Ontario

Supporting Your Child's Success in French Immersion and Extended French, Kindergarten to Grade 8 is a new addition to the Ontario Ministry of Education's parent guides. Other guides include *Reading and Writing with Your Child, Kindergarten to Grade 6* and *Doing Mathematics with Your Child, Kindergarten to Grade 6*.

Produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc/23/eng/tips/>



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Trust the universal human capacity for language learning.

Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013
*A Framework for French as a Second Language
in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*

What's in this guide?

This guide draws from the best knowledge and research available about language learning. It contains practical suggestions for simple, everyday things that you can do at home to enhance your child's learning in both French Immersion and Extended French.

What if I do not speak French?

The earlier children are exposed to language and literacy activities – in *any* language – the greater are their chances for future literacy and academic success (Canadian Council on Learning, 2006).¹

Even before they start school, children acquire thinking and communication skills that enable them to learn additional languages and to succeed in school. They learn those skills by hearing and speaking the language of their home – whether it is English or Portuguese, Farsi, Urdu or Chinese.

You don't need special skills to help your child learn French. Spending time with your child – talking about what he or she is thinking about and doing in his or her everyday life – will make a difference.

Please note: In this guide, the word *parents* refers to parents, guardians, caregivers and other family members who help children build language and literacy skills.

1. Canadian Council on Learning. (2006). *Lessons in learning: How parents foster early literacy*, p. 36. Retrieved from <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/LessonsInLearning/Feb-01-06-How-parents-foste.pdf>

Are language skills transferable?

Yes, yes, yes!

The goal of French Immersion and Extended French programs is to develop proficiency not just in French but in English as well – both of Canada’s official languages. This goal is based on solid research. Studies show that your child’s developing abilities in French will support his or her continuing growth in English (Cummins, 1998).²

Phonetic skills, higher-order thinking skills, familiarity with types of text and text formats, and comprehension strategies – these abilities transfer across languages. This fact explains why children who are literate in a first language are likely to have an advantage in learning a second. It also explains why your child’s developing proficiency in French will not detract from his or her growth in the mastery of English.

Because many literacy skills developed in one language transfer to another, you can play a big role in supporting your child’s success in French. Listed below are some of those transferable literacy skills.

- **Communicating effectively** – regardless of the language being used, communication requires us to organize our thinking. We must consider our audience and choose language that explains our thinking with precision.
- **Thinking imaginatively and analytically** – we use language, any language, to wonder about and imagine solutions to everyday problems, and to weigh possibilities and alternative outcomes of our actions.
- **Accessing, managing, evaluating and creating information** – languages serve as tools that allow us to receive information, build knowledge and communicate understanding. When we learn to do this in one language, we can apply it to any language we speak.

2. Cummins, J. (1998). *Immersion education for the millennium: What we have learned from 30 years of research on second language immersion*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

- **Understanding ourselves as learners and how we think** – when we come to know how we think and what helps us learn, we grow in our ability to apply this knowledge to new learning. Knowing ourselves as learners and recognizing our unique strengths and learning styles are skills that we apply in every language we use.

You can do five key things at home in your household language that will help your child to practise the skills described above and to flourish in French-language programs.

How can I help my child learn French?

1 Help your child become a great communicator.

Listening and speaking skills are the starting point for reading and writing skills. While all four skills are interconnected, and the Ontario curriculum strikes a balance between them, it is listening and speaking – the oral communication skills – that are considered most important for second-language acquisition (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).³

Effective oral communication involves the interplay of many factors, such as word choice, tone of voice, volume and body language. When you draw your child's attention to these elements of communication and model them, you provide a strong foundation for the development of effective communication skills in French, English or any other language.

Helping your child develop a broad vocabulary in English or the language of your home also helps develop his or her thinking skills, teaches your child to communicate with precision and provides more opportunities to make connections with French.

3. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). *The Ontario curriculum: French as a second language: Core, Grades 4–8; Extended, Grades 4–8; Immersion, Grades 1–8*, p. 9, Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl18-2013curr.pdf>

2 Help your child become an imaginative and analytic thinker.

Thinking lies at the heart of all effective communication. Much of the focus in literacy skills instruction at school is on helping students learn to think critically and analytically, and to understand how their thinking supports their learning. All children, including those in French Immersion and Extended French, benefit from opportunities to deepen and consolidate these skills by using them in their own language outside school.

Imaginative and analytic thinking skills are crucial for today's high standards for literacy. Nurturing your child's natural curiosity is important in supporting the development of those skills. Let your child observe you pondering solutions to problems. Encourage your child to question what he or she sees and hears, and what he or she reads and views. Involve your child in considering alternative ways of thinking about everyday situations. You can also help your child become an analytic thinker by encouraging him or her to pay attention to detail and by discussing cause and effect (*What happened when ...? Why do you think ...?*).

Another example of the transferability of skills between languages relates to fundamental mathematical concepts. When children recognize shapes and patterns, see that numbers represent quantities and measurements (time, distance, temperature, length, weight and so on), and learn to make sense of these by making comparisons, they can use and build on this knowledge in any language.

Mathematical literacy is an important skill today and will continue to be so. Children need to check and question the accuracy of mathematical information they read or produce, to solve problems involving numbers, shapes and patterns, and to organize information in a meaningful way.

Mathematics may be taught in English or French as part of the French Immersion or Extended French program, but the concepts developed are independent of the language being used to communicate them. Children can think about mathematics and deepen their understanding of it through experiences in any language.

When children become accustomed to thinking imaginatively and analytically, they will bring these habits of mind to discussions in French or English at school.

3 Help your child become a critical consumer of information.

Every day, in every language, people need to access, use, evaluate and create information. The abundance of readily available information today means that children need to be able to filter out what is irrelevant and to decide what information they need. They will also need to learn how to check for accuracy and reliability. Regardless of the language your child is working in, you can help by encouraging him or her to consider multiple sources and by asking such questions as, “*Who is providing this information and why? Do you agree with it?*” Your conversation will use the inquiry practices that are being promoted in French Immersion and Extended French classrooms.

By encouraging your child to read and research in both English and French, you can help ensure the growth of vocabulary and language structures that can lead to effective communication skills in both languages. If your child’s assignment is to write or discuss a topic in French, encourage him or her to do the research in French, rather than collecting information in English and translating. The benefits include greater exposure to new vocabulary related to the topic and to French-language structures in meaningful contexts.

4 Help your child learn how to learn.

You can help your child understand how to be an effective learner at home and at school, in English and in French. Children can use many learning strategies, and it is helpful for them to understand that different people learn in different ways and under different conditions.

Children need to try many learning strategies to find which ones work best for them. Some strategies might include making lists, repeating, restating in other words, underlining or highlighting. Your child might discover that remembering new French vocabulary is easier when the words are in a rhyme or a rap or if the words are associated with an action or a picture.

Share with your child the strategies you have used to become an efficient learner. For example, talk about such skills as planning how long it might take to do an assignment or breaking tasks down into smaller chunks. Help your child recognize the conditions that create the best environment for learning. You might talk about how you remove distractions and organize your workspace.

Your child will sometimes have assignments in English, French or both. Help your child develop the habit of checking before leaving school for the resources and materials in the language of the assignment. Point out that a lot of the vocabulary needed to complete an assignment will actually be in the description and resource materials for the assignment.

When your child is writing an assignment in French, reinforce the idea that second-language learners use dictionaries, a thesaurus, verb conjugation tables and grammar reference tools. Encourage your child to get the ideas down first and then go back to revise vocabulary, check for spelling and grammar and look at the flow of argument.

Help your child to set and achieve goals related to learning both languages and to self-monitor his or her progress. One way to do this is to encourage your child to keep a list of all the books read in French and English.

Learning a second language requires focused concentration, and your child may be tired at the end of the school day. He or she may benefit from time to recharge before starting homework. As well, studies have found that physical activity may improve achievement at school. You might suggest that your child go for a walk or take an exercise break before starting homework.

Finally, draw attention to the connection between study habits and progress so that your child realizes that achievement is related to effort. Be sure to praise both your child's efforts and his or her achievements ("*I am really impressed with the time and thought you put in to this.*"). By doing this, you will help your child learn to persevere and feel good about completing his or her school work.

5 Help your child become a lifelong language learner.

Languages have many similarities (which is why skills transfer so well), but they also have many differences. Encourage your child to pay attention to and think about similarities and differences. Pointing out, for example, that an apostrophe replaces a letter in a contraction, as in the English word *don't* and the French word *c'est*, will help your child think about similarities in the languages. Reading in both languages will help your child recognize the correct spelling of words that are similar in English and French, such as the English words *done* and *port* and the French words *donne* and *porte*.

As your child progresses, ask about the similarities and differences between English and French. For example, when you notice a French word that is similar to an English word, such as *possible*, *capable* or *fatigué*, ask your child if it means the same in both languages. When you notice patterns in French, mention them so that your child's awareness of these patterns is raised and reinforced. For example, you might notice that adverbs in French often have the suffix *-ment*. Discuss how this pattern, in French, is like the suffix *-ly* on adverbs in English (e.g., *rapidement* and quickly, *lentement* and slowly, *poliment* and politely). Draw your child's attention to interesting words and those that are the same or similar in both languages (*oblique*, *milieu*, *in lieu of*). Note words that are very similar in one language, such as *compliment* and *complement*, and *effect* and *affect*, and point out that it is important in any language to pay attention to subtle differences. These exercises will extend your child's English and French vocabulary.

Although nouns are either masculine or feminine in many languages, English does not make this distinction. Your child may need some help becoming accustomed to the gender of French nouns. Encourage your child to pay attention to the *le* or *la*, and *un* or *une* when learning new nouns to find the gender. When your child is handing in written work, encourage him or her to double check the gender of each noun and any accompanying adjectives.

Finally, you may want to caution your child that electronic translation tools may not be entirely accurate because of the complexities of language. In fact, word-for-word translation is rarely effective.

What is the most important thing I can do?

Talk, talk, talk!

So much of learning builds on what a child already knows and can do, and learning in French Immersion or Extended French is no exception. Your child will benefit from the rich language learned at home and the literacy and language lessons taught in French at school.

Having strong oral language skills provides the foundation for further literacy skills development. As we have said throughout this guide, reading and writing skills are built on listening and speaking skills.

- Read aloud to your child in the language of your home – or the language of your choice – and talk about what you are reading.
- Provide time and encouragement for reading in French and in English to help your child develop a broad vocabulary in both languages.
- If you don't know any French, have your child read to you in French and tell you what it means.
- Talk with your child about his or her interests, and help find books or websites about them in English and French – and discuss them!
- Encourage your child to express opinions about the world and explain why he or she holds them.

When children have strong and articulate oral language skills, they are better able to engage in clear, precise thinking and communication. As well, having a rich vocabulary significantly improves reading comprehension.

- Expand your child’s vocabulary while at the same time heightening your child’s awareness of all the senses by providing experiences and using words such as *bitter*, *sour*, *malleable*, *iridescent*, *clanging*.
- Use precise, interesting and varied words when you talk to your child, no matter how young – for example, a “good” meal could be *delicious* or *scrumptious*, and the “big spoon” can be a *ladle*. Your discussions at home, around the table, over a book or after watching a movie will help your child understand that words like *kind*, *generous*, *thoughtful* and *considerate* are ways to describe a person’s character much more precisely than “good.”

Children are now required to “read the world” in far more complex ways than in previous generations and to navigate what literacy experts call “multiliteracies.” Children require not only strong oral language skills to interpret and respond to their text-saturated world, but critical thinking skills as well.

The text formats in this wordle are only some of the ways we encounter language daily. Whether we are creators or consumers of these texts, we apply a range of language and thinking skills to create or understand them, regardless of the language they are in.



- Regardless of the age of your child, or the text type you choose, talk about it. One interesting question can be the start of a great conversation. For example:
 - How would you feel if what happened to a character in this text happened to you? Why do you think that?
 - If another character told the story, would it be a different story? Why do you think that?
 - Would a black-and-white photograph evoke a different emotional reaction?

- Would you hear a different song if the musicians changed the tempo or added strong percussion?
- Who do you think created this advertisement? How convincing is it? Do you think there are advertisements for this product in French? How would they be the same or different?
- When your child is reading in French, a discussion starter could be, “*Tell me about what you are reading in French*” (rather than “*Can you translate this sentence for me?*”). You can encourage your child to think about the setting and characters through such questions as these:
 - Do you think that this story takes place in a French community or in another country?
 - What clues does the author provide?
 - How might the story or characters be different if it were set in our community?
- Talk to your child about language conventions – this doesn’t have to be a dry topic! For example, acceptable language for social media may not be right when the situation requires more formal language. This discussion will heighten your child’s understanding of the importance of using appropriate ways to express messages in English and French, and for different purposes and audiences.
- Explore technology together to discover and use different text features (subtitles, words in bold, hyperlinks), to hear pronunciations or to check the meaning of words in English, French or other languages. If your child does not have access to technology at home, consider using it in places such as the public library.

Lifelong learning in French and English

By enriching your child's language development, you can have a tremendous impact on his or her future success. We hope that the ideas in this guide lead to many interesting and enjoyable discussions with your child.

When learning is valued and fun, children want to continue to learn, in English and in French. Congratulations on supporting your child in French Immersion and Extended French on the exciting journey to becoming an accomplished learner in these two languages – and perhaps others!

Some online resources

BBC: Primary Languages—French

This site provides numerous activities to help your child learn French.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primarylanguages/french/>

Bon patron

This commercial site is a grammar checker that suggests corrections and provides explanations.

<http://bonpatron.com>

French as a Second Language Homework Toolbox

This comprehensive site includes videos, audio files and printable tip sheets to support parents of students in French Immersion or Extended French.

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

Canadian Parents for French

Canadian Parents for French is a national network of volunteers dedicated to the promotion and creation of French as a second language learning opportunities for young Canadians.

<http://cpf.ca>

Canadian Parents for French (Ontario)

Canadian Parents for French Ontario has produced a series of tip sheets for parents on how to support their children in French Immersion, Extended or Core French programs. In addition, an online step-by-step guide on organizing a parent workshop has been developed to help school councils provide a way for parents to connect with the school and with community partners to support their children's French program.

<http://on.cpf.ca>

Ministry of Education Resources

abc 123

This website for parents features simple things to do at home to support your child's education. It includes tips and tools, a video podcast and helpful links.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/eng/>

A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12

This framework was released in February 2013 as an overarching strategy that serves as a call to action and a guide to strengthen French as a second language programming through the cohesive efforts of educators, students, parents and communities.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/frameworkFLS.pdf>

Doing Mathematics with Your Child

This parent guide features lots of fun everyday math activities organized by curriculum strand, Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grades 4 to 6.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/parentguidenum2012.pdf>

Reading and Writing with Your Child

This parent guide features activities for each of the reading and writing milestones and links to fun things to do at TVOKids.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/parentGuideLit2012.pdf>

The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core, Grades 4–8; Extended, Grades 4–8; Immersion, Grades 1–8 (2013, Revised)

This document replaces *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4–8, 1998* and *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Extended French, Grades 4–8; French Immersion, Grades 1–8, 2001*.

Beginning in September 2014, all elementary French as a second language (FSL) programs will be based on the expectations outlined in this document.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl18-2013curr.pdf>

TFO RESOURCES

For children and their world who want a stimulating experience, Groupe Media TFO is a premium destination for award-winning educational and innovative content in French. Groupe Media TFO is breaking ground in digital learning. TFO's educational videos, games, web sites and apps are designed to support learning in Ontario.

TFO.ORG/MINI

Mini TFO offers a mobile-first seamless multi-screen experience for young learners aged from 2 to 6 years old to explore original, entertaining, educational games and videos in French. Through their favorite characters and hosts from Mini TFO program Caillou, Mouk, Josée, Louis and Lexie, and many more, children discover how even situations from their daily lives can be full of rich emotions and extraordinary challenges.

- App biblio mini : a new virtual library with additional activities
To support literacy and numeracy
- Bookaboo tfo.org/bookaboo
- Caillou tfo.org/caillou
- Carmen à la champagne tfo.org/carmen

TFO.ORG/FLIP

Flip TFO is the destination for kids 7 to 12 years old looking for the best TFO's educational games, programs and videos. Through challenges and fun children are learning French and curriculum related contents.

- Miam! - tfo.org/miam
- Là est la question - tfo.org/laestlaquestion
- Au défi! - tfo.org/audefi
- Café des mathadores - tfo.org/mathadores

EDULULU.ORG

EduLulu is a public service that evaluates educational applications for tablets. Earmarked for parents and educators, EduLulu is the first Canadian public service offering independent evaluations of iOS (App Store) and Android (Google Play) educational content available in the Canadian market.



Fun Ways to Support Learning with TVOKids and TVOParents

Supporting the Learning of French Language

Supporting Language Development: Reading, Writing and Oral Communication

Supporting Learning about the Natural World and Inquiry

Supporting Mathematical Literacy

Kindergarten-Grade 1:

Magie Gi

French vocabulary game and activity sheets
www.tvokids.com/games/magiegi

Quel Temps Fait-Il?

French vocabulary associated with the weather
www.tvokids.com/games/queltempfaitil

Sticks Goes to the Doctor (in French)

E-book all about going to the doctor
www.tvokids.com/activities/sticksgoesdoctor0

Kindergarten:

The Big Backyard Book Club

Encouraging early literacy
www.tvokids.com/ugc/giselesbigbackyardbookclub

Gisèle and the Letter Tree E-book

Reading and letter recognition
www.tvokids.com/games/lettertree

Grades 1-4:

Lady Vocab

Videos encouraging new vocabulary acquisition
www.tvokids.com/shows/ladyvocabshow

The Amazing Spelling Fleas

Reading comprehension, spelling, grammar
www.tvokids.com/games/amazingspellingfleas

Kindergarten:

Get Growing

Observing the natural environment while gardening
www.tvokids.com/shows/getgrowing

Explore the Night

Game to discover the night sky using different tools
www.tvokids.com/games/explorenight

Grades 4-6:

Explore More

Videos focused on the many wonders of the human body
www.tvokids.com/shows/exploremore

Homework Zone

Science focused videos, games and activity pages
homeworkzone.tvokids.com/hwz/science

Kindergarten:

Lotta Numbers

Videos covering many math concepts
www.tvokids.com/shows/lottanumbers

Sandy Math Shapes

Geometry and spatial sense game
www.tvokids.com/games/sandymathshapes

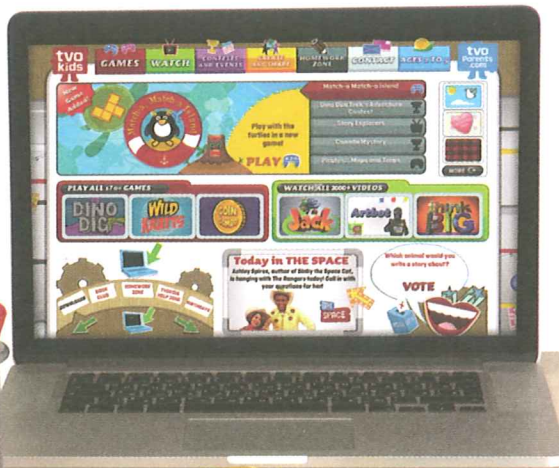
Grades 3-6:

Math Master

A fun way to help kids practice operational sense
www.tvokids.com/games/mathmaster0

Homework Zone

Math focused videos, games and activity pages
homeworkzone.tvokids.com/hwz/math



Visit the Homework Zone at homeworkzone.tvokids.com for free videos, games and activities to help your child with literacy development, math and science.



Notes

