

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's the difference between Extended French and French Immersion?

Both programs are designed to help children become bilingual by teaching the curriculum in both English and French.

The French Immersion program is designed to provide students with a minimum of 3,800 hours of instruction in French by the end of Grade 8.

Students participating in the Extended French Program will receive a minimum of 1,260 hours of instruction in French by the end of Grade 8.

Ontario's French as a Second Language Programs at a Glance

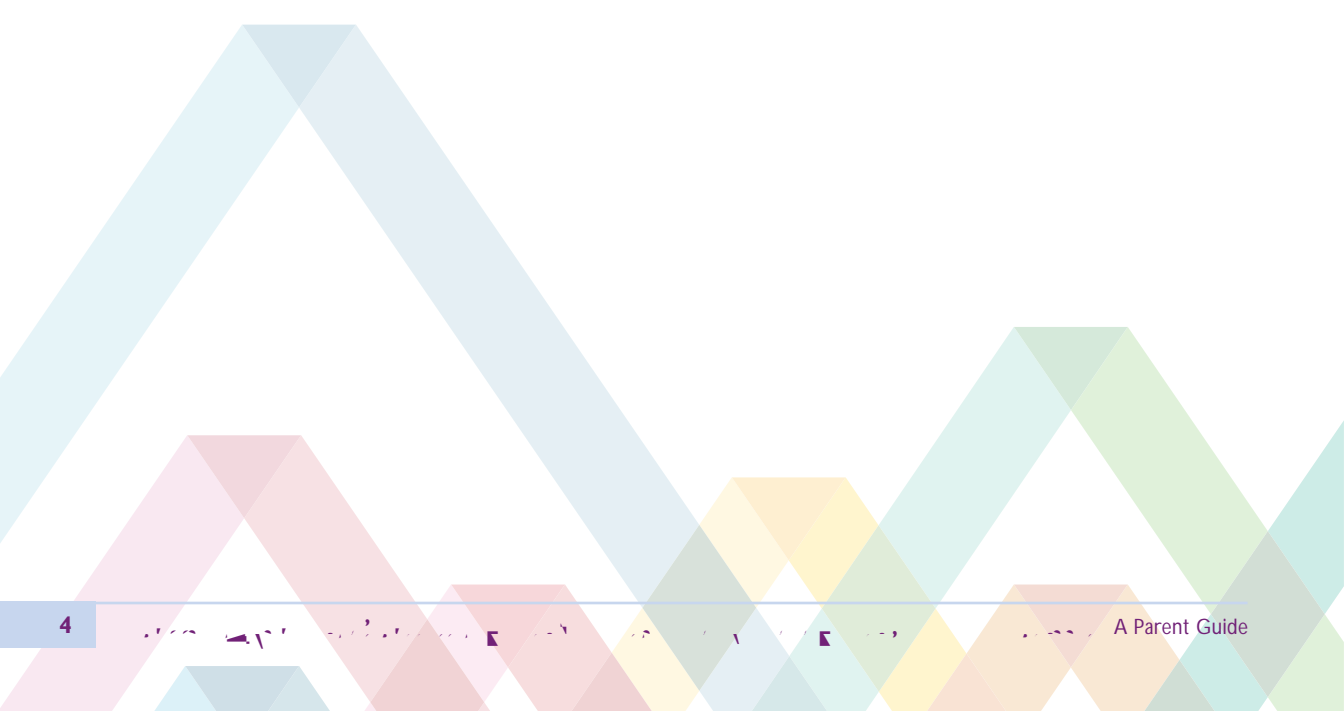
Elementary School

Program features	Extended French Program	French Immersion Program
Will French be taught as a subject to my child?	Yes.	Yes.
Will French be the language of instruction for all my child's subjects?	French is the language of instruction in at least one other subject.	French is the language of instruction in at least two or more other subjects.
How much instruction will be provided to my child in French?	At least 25 per cent of all instruction is provided in French.	At least half of all instruction is provided in French.

Secondary School

Program features	Extended French Program	French Immersion Program
Grade 9 and 10 courses	Academic courses are offered.	Academic <i>and applied</i> courses are offered.
Grade 11 and 12 courses	University preparation courses are offered.	University preparation <i>and open courses</i> are offered.
What credits can my child accumulate in French?	6 credits of which four are French as a Second language courses and three are other subjects in which French is the language of instruction.	6 credits in French of which four are French as a Second language courses and six are other subjects in which French is the language of instruction.
What French-language skills will my child have by the end of a four-year program?	He or she will be able to converse freely on familiar topics; will be able to read – with	

What if I don't speak French?



Can students learn skills in one language and transfer them to another?

Yes,



2 Help your child become an imaginative and analytic thinker.

Thinking is the key to 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 strengthen these skills by using them in their own language outside school.

Imaginative and analytic thinking skills are crucial to help students meet 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 thinking about solutions to problems. Encourage your child to question what he or she sees and hears, and reads and views. Get your child involved in considering different 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 ...?*).

A variety of subjects, including mathematics and social studies, may be taught in English or French as part of the French Immersion or Extended French program, but the concepts are separate from the language being used to communicate them. Children can think about mathematics and deepen their understanding of it by thinking and working in any language.

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

3 Help your child become a thoughtful consumer of information.

Every day, in every language, people need to access, use, evaluate and create information. Because there is so much information available, children need to be able to filter out what they don't need and decide what information they do need. They will also need to learn how to check that the information is accurate and can be trusted.

Whatever 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?"* Learning by asking questions is one of the first skills students acquire in Ontario's publicly-funded classrooms, including those that offer French Immersion and Extended French. So asking these questions will reinforce how your child is learning at school.

By encouraging your child to read and research in both English and French, you can help your child build the vocabulary and language structures that can lead to effective communication skills in both languages. In help by e-fullo consi?

4 Help your child learn how to learn.

You can help your child understand how to learn effectively at home and at school, in English and in French. Children can learn in many different ways. It is helpful for them to understand that people learn differently and under different conditions.

Children need to try many different learning strategies to find which ones work best for them. This includes using organizers, repeating, restating in other words, underlining or highlighting key points. 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 what 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, like noise, and organize your workspace.

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

When your child is writing an assignment in French, remind your child of the typical items he or she will need. This will include a dictionary, a thesaurus, word webs and other 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 the argument.

Help your child to set and achieve goals related to learning in both languages and to keep track of his or her progress. One way to do this is to encourage your child to keep a list of a variety of materials read in French and English.

Finally, point out 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 into this."*). By doing this, you will help your child learn to keep trying and feel good about completing his or her school work.

5 Help your child become a lifelong language learner.

Languages have many similarities 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

Draw your child's attention to interesting words and those that are the same



What's 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 your child to develop better literacy skills. As we have said throughout this guide, reading and writing skills are built on listening and speaking skills. Here are some ideas to help build these skills.

- Read aloud to your child in the language you speak at home – or any other language – and talk about what you are reading.
- Provide encouragement and set aside time 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 the reasons behind them.

When children have strong and articulate oral language skills, they are better able to think and communicate clearly. As well, having a rich vocabulary significantly improves reading comprehension.

- 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.



- 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?”*). Encourage your child to think about the setting and characters through questions like 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 a different community?

Talk to your child about the right kind of language to use in different situations. For example, casual language is more acceptable in social media or a phone call,

Lifelong learning in French and English

By enriching your child's language development, you can have a huge 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 or Extended French. This puts your child on the exciting journey to becoming an accomplished learner in these two languages – and perhaps others!

Help your child learn with online resources

123

- This website provides tips and tools for parents of elementary students K–6.

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

French Immersion or Extended French

- 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 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

