

Supporting Your Child's Success in French Immersion

École St. Thomas d'Aquin



French Immersion Programming at a Glance

Question:	Answer:
Will French be taught as a subject to my child?	Yes.
Will French be the language of instruction for all of my child's subjects?	French is the language of instruction for all elementary subjects except Religion and Music.
How much instruction will be provided to my child in French?	Students at École St. Thomas d'Aquin receive 1400 minutes of instruction in French each week. This equates to roughly 23 hours per week.

What if I don't speak French?

The earlier children are exposed to language and literacy through activities like reading and writing, the more likely they are to do well at school. This is the case no matter what language they are exposed to in their early years.

Even before they start school, children acquire thinking and communication skills that enable them to learn other 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.

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

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 - Canada's two official languages. This goal is based on solid research. Studies show that if your child develops abilities in French, this will help your child continue to improve in English.

There are many skills and abilities that transfer between different languages. These can include phonetic skills, comprehension strategies, higher-order thinking skills and familiarity with text formats, such as books, manuals, recipes and websites. This explains why children who are literate in one language are likely to have an advantage in learning a second. It also explains why your child's developing proficiency in French will not limit his or her growth in mastering English.

Parents can play a big role in supporting their child's success in French. Below are some of the literacy skills that can be transferred from one language to another.

- **Communicating effectively** - regardless of the language being used, communication makes us organize our thinking. We need to think about our audience and choose language that explains our thinking with precision.
- **Thinking imaginatively and analytically** - we use language to wonder about and imagine solutions to everyday problems, and to weigh a range of possibilities and outcomes to 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.
- **Understanding how we learn and 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. When we recognize our unique strengths and ways of learning, we can apply this in every language we use.

The “wordle” below shows some of the different ways that we encounter text every day. 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.



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!
