

Bonjour!



French is one of Canada's two official languages. Learning French is considered important both to enhance opportunities for living and working throughout Canada and the world as well as to foster a greater understanding between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians as well as multiculturalism.

French Immersion is a proven approach to second language learning developed in Canada in response to a desire of English-speaking parents to have their children become fluent in French. Two other French programs are also offered in Alberta schools: Francophone (French first language) and French as a Second Language (basic French for students in the English program in Grades 4-6). French Immersion is offered in Alberta as an alternative program as provided in Section 21 of the School Act.

Students registered in a French Immersion program are expected to reach the same learner outcomes prescribed in the programs of study as those students who choose to study in the English program. In addition, graduates of French immersion programs will have had the opportunity to achieve a high level of proficiency in a second language.

## French Immersion in Lethbridge School Division

### Elementary Programming provided at École Agnes Davidson

Bussing is provided for students living more than 2.4 km away from their home school

#### Kindergarten

- Students have little or no French
- Optional but HIGHLY recommended
- ½ day programming (am/pm, no Fridays)
- Age of Entry – 5 years of age by December 31<sup>st</sup>
- 90-100% of instruction is in French

Grades 1 and 2 (Students may begin French Immersion in Kindergarten or Grade 1)

- Age of Entry – 6 years of age by December 31<sup>st</sup>
- 90-100% of instruction is in French

#### Grades 3 – 5

- All subjects are taught in French
- English Language Arts is introduced as an additional core in grade 3
- 80-90% of instruction is in French

### Middle School Programming provided at Gilbert Paterson Middle School

Bussing is provided for students living more than 2.4 km away from their home school

#### Grades 6, 7, and 8

- Math, Science, Social Studies and French Language Arts are taught in French
- English Language Arts continues
- Other subjects are taught in English
- Grade 8 Voyage Quebec exchange opportunity
- Provincial Achievement Tests are written in the language of instruction
- 60% - 70% of instruction is in French

Lethbridge School Division houses the middle and high school French Immersion Programs in Dual-Track Schools: schools that offer both French Immersion and English programs.

### High School Programming provided at Lethbridge Collegiate Institute

Bussing is provided for students living more than 2.4 km away from their home school

#### Grade 9

- Math, Science, Social Studies, and French Language Arts are taught in French
- English Language Arts continues; other subjects are taught in English
- Provincial Achievement Tests are written in the language of instruction
- Exchange opportunities are available in Grade 9
- 60% of instruction is in French Grade 10, 11, and 12
- Programming name changes from French Immersion to French Bilingual Program
- French Language Arts and Social Studies are only subjects taught in French
- Exchange opportunities are available in Grades 10 and 11
- Diploma exams are written in Social Studies and French Language Arts 30

I can:

- Participate easily in conversations in French;
- Communicate in French for both personal and professional needs;
- Pursue post-secondary education in French;
- Use my French language skills in the world of work.



French immersion programming enables students to:

- read, speak, write and listen in French;
- learn about the French language and culture when they study French as a subject;
- use French to solve problems, understand concepts and create knowledge.

**Parents play a key role in promoting Immersion programs and in supporting their child's achievement.**

### *Is French Immersion the best choice for my child?*

In Lethbridge School Division, there are no entry requirements as long as the students are registered in Kindergarten or Grade 1. Research shows that young children learn languages more easily than older learners. Young children are more tolerant of ambiguity and do not feel as socially awkward when they find themselves in situations they do not understand. With very few exceptions, French Immersion is suitable for any child. Researchers have found that early Immersion students with difficulties – be they learning, cognitive or behavioural - will do as well academically as they would in a regular program, provided they receive the same assistance as they would in the English program. French Immersion may not be appropriate for students with a significant delay or disorder in their first language. Student proficiency in French is strongly correlated to the amount of time-spent learning and using the language; support at home is essential to ongoing success. (See reverse for more details.)

### *Is French Immersion the best choice for me as a parent?*

Your child's ability to succeed in French Immersion depends upon many factors including motivation, support, and environmental factors. The expectations, behaviours, and attitudes children learn at home as well as the encouragement and support of their parents are keys to success. In addition to keeping realistic expectations of their child's needs and abilities, parents need a "common-sense" approach to education, and planning and time-management skills to support learning. Parents of French Immersion students must be open-minded, value French, be patient, have confidence in their child's learning, be open to learning some French themselves, believe in the philosophy of a bilingual country, appreciate the benefits of the program, and communicate with the school as issues arise.

# What if I don't speak French? How can I help my child?

As a parent, your role in your child's life is central. You are responsible for meeting your child's physical, social and emotional needs. You are the child's first teacher, and family influences are lifelong. When children begin French immersion, you and your child's teachers enter into a partnership to support children's learning. For the well-being of your children, you are encouraged to become involved in the French Immersion experience, to the degree that both the teacher and you feel is appropriate. You may have the opportunity to share expertise and skills with the class, help organize activities or school/family functions, assist on field trips and prepare materials at home.

## My child is in Kindergarten, grade 1 or 2 – How can I help?

- Listen to your child and encourage them to talk about everyday activities;
- Ask your child what new words they learned today;
- Read stories aloud at bedtime -> language development skills transfer across languages (what we learn in one language can be used in another);
- Sing songs, recite nursery rhymes and poems with your child, putting the emphasis on similarities and differences in sounds;
- Help your child to print their name;
- Use good speech as a model for your child's language skills;
- Celebrate and encourage your child's early attempts to communicate through writing and reading;
- Expose your child to your own traditions, folklore and stories;
- Include some French in your everyday home life (e.g., watching a French program, attending a cultural event in French or listening to French songs);
- Review the French vocabulary of the week or month with your child;
- Listen to, repeat, recite, sing along with your child as they share their latest French song, rhyme or story;
- Establish a routine at home to support learning (e.g. reading, completing unfinished work, extra practice).

## My child is in grade 3, 4, or 5 – How can I help?

- Listen to your child and encourage them to talk about everyday activities;
- Read stories aloud at bedtime;
- Tell your own stories and share your childhood experiences with your child;
- Expose your child to your own traditions, folklore and stories;
- Include some French in your everyday home life, (e.g., watching a French program, attending a cultural event in French or listening to French songs);
- Review the French vocabulary of the week or month with your child;
- Nurture your child's curiosity;
- Think out loud, model how you filter out extraneous information;
- Help your student set, track, and celebrate goals;
- Have your child read to you in French and explain what they read about;
- Have your child record their own dictée;
- Establish a routine at home to support learning. (e.g. reading, completing unfinished work, extra practice);
- Access French language programs, camps, and cultural events during school breaks.
- Participate in community groups such as:



## My child is in grade 6, 7 or 8 – How can I help?

- Listen to your child and encourage them to talk about everyday activities;
- Learn how to access French audio books through Overdrive;
- Include some French in your everyday home life, (e.g., watching a French program, attending a cultural event in French or listening to French songs);
- Review the French vocabulary of the week or month with your child;
- Help your child identify how they learn best;
- Point out the connection between study habits and progress to develop the understanding that achievement is related to effort;
- Discuss interesting words;
- Caution your child that electronic translation tools may not be entirely accurate;
- Provide access to materials of reference at home such as online resources and a comprehensive French-English Dictionary;
- Maintain the established routine at home to support learning.



## My child is in high school, should I still be helping?

By the time kids get to high school, it's no longer about helping them do their homework but rather helping them develop the skills to do their homework. However, there are still ways to support your child's success in school:

- Listen to your child and encourage them to talk about their learning opportunities;
- Be a reader and a writer, in order to provide a role model for your child;
- Include some French in your everyday home life, (e.g., watching a French program, attending a cultural event in French or listening to French songs);
- Encourage exploration of exchange opportunities;
- Discuss the similarities between French and English.
- Encourage exploration of scholarship, university applications, volunteer employment opportunities;
- Maintain the established routine at home to support learning.
- Participate in French community youth programs through:



## SCHOOL READINESS

There are many ways parents can support their child's readiness for success in school, regardless of which program they attend. Some suggestions are:

- ensure plenty of rest, with early bedtimes;
- ensure that your child eats a variety of nutritious foods from each food group;
- encourage your child to make decisions by offering them choices;
- encourage your child to take responsibility for some tasks;
- provide opportunities for your child to practise buttoning, doing zippers, drawing, cutting, blowing nose and tying shoelaces;
- encourage your child to walk, stretch, hop, jump, run, dance or skip, both indoors and outdoors.

