

F.A.Q. Frequently Asked Questions about the Extended French Program

1. What is the vision for students in an Extended French program?

The vision of the Extended French program is that “[s]tudents will communicate and interact with growing confidence in French, one of Canada’s official languages, while developing the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they need to participate fully as citizens in Canada and in the world.” (The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language, p. 6)

2. Is extended French for everyone?

YES! Extended French is open to everyone and is “**aimed at individuals who know little to no French and is accessible to students with diverse interests, needs, home languages, and abilities.** The parent(s)/guardian(s) of those in extended French are in no way expected to know or learn French. Research has shown French Immersion to be a suitable option for students with diverse learning/behavioural difficulties, as well as for students whose home or first language is neither French nor English.” (Canadian Parents for French, www.cpfont.on.ca)

3. How will my child’s English skills be affected?

In most cases, learning another language enhances a child's English ability. Research from Canadian contexts demonstrate that students in these programs perform at least as well in many aspects of English-language achievement, as well as in other school subjects such as math and science, as those who are enrolled in English-only programs.

4. How will my child’s language development be supported in both languages?

In an extended French classroom, students do not just learn about the French language; they learn to use the French language to communicate, both orally and in writing. Research tells us that second language acquisition provides students with greater opportunities to develop literacy skills and the ability to communicate. These skills are transferable from one language to the next. Developing literacy skills in a second language helps to reinforce literacy skills in a first language. And most importantly,

developing literacy skills in a first language helps to promote the ability to communicate in a second language.

In the extended French program, we take a bi-literate approach to learning. This means that we follow a balanced literacy approach in both English and French, and develop the two languages together. Teachers focus on proficiency, what students can do, and then develop with students their next steps in their language learning journey. In the French program, oral language will be developed first and will support the development of reading and writing skills.

5. How can I support my child at home? What if I don't speak French?

You don't have to speak French to help your child in extended French! **In fact, the extended French program is designed for children of non-French speaking parents.** All communications with your child's teacher and school will be in English.

Your involvement and support for your child's education is one of the most important things you can do to make sure your child is successful in school - that's true no matter what program your child is taking. Research tells us that students whose parents have positive attitudes to French tend to do better in French. So even if you don't speak French, you can play an active role in your child's success in extended French!

Promote literacy in your child's first language. Discuss issues at the dinner table with your child. Reading to your child regularly in English or in your first language is one important role you can play. Even though your child is learning to read in French at school, reading at home in English and showing your child the importance of this skill, regardless of language, is what will make the difference in your child's desire to read in both languages.

Here are some other things you can do to help your child be successful in extended French:

- Listen to your child read in both English and French.
- Learn as much as you can about the extended French program.
- Show your child that you are committed to the program.
- Encourage your child and show an interest in what your child is learning.
- Find ways to expose your child to French or to use French outside of school time. Borrow French books from the public library, listen to children's music by French artists, watch some French television programs, and visit French communities.
- Communicate often with your child's teacher to keep informed of your child's progress.

- Encourage your child to bring home French writing, reading, portfolios or audio samples of communication and him/her to explain them to you.
- Encourage the use of online dictionaries and bilingual apps.
- Investigate opportunities for school exchange trips and summer programs.
- Offer experiences that support your child's learning such as visiting French restaurants or visiting a Francophone area.

6. What can I do if my child encounters difficulties in FSL?

If you are concerned that your child is experiencing difficulties, you should let the FSL teacher know so that together you can discuss what can be done to help your child's learning. Most children encounter challenges from time to time, but if your child is worried, frustrated, or expresses a concern about learning French, it could be the sign of an underlying problem that should be resolved as soon as possible. Children progress at different rates and learn in different ways, so teachers plan instruction and assessment taking into consideration the students' interests, learning styles, and previously acquired knowledge and skills.

7. What resources can I access as a parent?

Ministry Language Support:

Supporting Your Child's Success in French Immersion and Extended French – Elementary Schools: A Parent Guide

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

Provides 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.

abc123 – Simple Steps to Your Child's Success

www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123

A ministry website that provides tips in several languages on a variety of ways to support children's learning at home.

Canadian Parents for French:

These websites have valuable information for parents. CPF is an organization founded by parents interested in promoting and advocating for French language opportunities.

www.cpf.ca = national site

www.cpfont.on.ca = Ontario site

Language Sites:

www.bonpatron.com = an online grammar check



www.wordreference.com = an online dictionary

<http://french.about.com/od/vocabulary/a/audiodictionary.htm> = an online audio dictionary

www.frenchassistant.com = online French practice for students

Homework Toolkit Sites:

FSL Homework Toolbox - www.fslhomeworktoolbox.ca

Yes, You Can Help! - <http://education.alberta.ca/parents/resources/youcanhelp.aspx>

FSL Toolbox for Parents - <http://www.dsb1.edu.on.ca/program/pdfs/French-Immersion-Booklet.pdf>

Media Sites:

www.tfo.org = TVO in French

<http://www.radio-canada.ca/jeunesse> = CBC French kid's site

www.tv5.org = French media site

www.tv5.ca = Canadian media site