

CORE FRENCH: AN OVERVIEW FOR PARENTS



I DON'T KNOW FRENCH MYSELF. CAN I STILL HELP MY CHILD?

Don't worry; there is no expectation that parents will be able to understand or speak French. However, there are many things you can do to ensure your child's second-language experience is both positive and lasting.

Encouragement is the key. Be supportive and enthusiastic. Research shows that students whose parents have positive attitudes to French do better in core French programs. Turn the tables – let your child teach you French! This will build his or her confidence and self-esteem.

You can also help your child by exposing him or her to French language and culture outside the school. Any activity that allows use of the language builds skill, vocabulary and confidence.

- Get to know your child's teacher, and participate in parent-teacher interviews.
- Borrow, rent or buy French-language books and videos (almost all community libraries will either have some, or can order them.)
- Watch French-language television with your child.
- Tune into French-language radio when your child is at home.
- Encourage extracurricular and community activities that bring your child in contact with the French language and culture.
- Read to your child in English to foster a love of language.

JOIN CPF

Canadian Parents for French is a non-profit, member-driven association working with, and for, French-second-language students and their families in communities across Canada.

CPF PROVIDES:

- games, activities, contests and summer camps for children;
- information and resources, discounts and special offers for parents; and
- advocacy support for French-second-language education.

By joining CPF, you will be taking a more active part in the education and personal growth of your child while contributing to the vitality of Canada's linguistic duality.

This brochure has been prepared as an overview of core French programs in Canada. Additional information is available from your local Chapter or provincial or territorial Branch of Canadian Parents for French.



CORE FRENCH

An Overview for Parents



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CPF *Canadian Parents for French*

WHAT IS "CORE FRENCH"?

Core French—also known as basic French, or French as a second language—is taught as one subject within a school's curriculum.

Provinces/territories, school boards and individual schools all have a hand in shaping core French programs. Therefore, the particular grade at which core French is

introduced varies, as does the amount of classroom time and intensity of instruction.

Two and a half million elementary and secondary students are studying in core French programs. They are an impressive testament to the value of learning more than one language—here in Canada, and in an ever more interconnected world.



WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF CORE FRENCH INSTRUCTION?

The goals for a high school graduate of core French include language knowledge, basic communications skills and an appreciation of French culture in Canada and beyond.

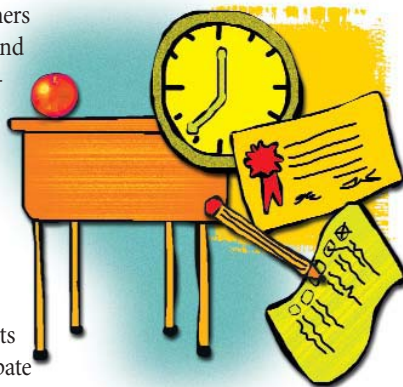
Core French programs would be unrecognizable to parents who remember the rote learning and drills of their own French classes. Language skills are now taught through themes based on the child's own interests and experiences. Learning activities focus as much on listening and speaking as on reading and writing.

Today's core French programs encourage students to use their linguistic and cultural knowledge to communicate in real-life situations.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS LOOK FOR IN A CORE FRENCH PROGRAM?

The ideal core French program should:

- Start as early as possible in the elementary grades and continue through to the end of secondary school.
- Deliver a minimum of 30 to 40 minutes of daily instruction by grade three or four.
- Be taught by teachers fluent in French, and trained in second-language education.
- Use French as the predominant language in the classroom.
- Encourage students to actively participate in tasks and projects.
- Provide access to books, audio-visual materials and computer programs in the French language.



WHAT CAN MY CHILD EXPECT TO LEARN FROM CORE FRENCH?

Core French should prepare students for basic communication, balancing grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Children should acquire a core knowledge of the language.

Like any other subject, the learning of a second language depends a great deal on the amount of instruction time, as well as the interest, effort and ability of the individual student.

After participating in a quality core French program through high school, a student should be able to:

- Understand key ideas of written materials on familiar subjects.
- Follow oral instructions.
- Take part in simple conversations on everyday topics.
- Write short messages and letters.
- Appreciate the cultures of French-speaking people.

Graduates should have a good foundation from which to pursue fluency through post-secondary courses or by living for a time in a French-speaking environment.

WHAT IS "EXTENDED" OR "ENRICHED" CORE FRENCH?

Extended or enriched core French is geared for students who already have a basic skill level and are interested in improving their oral fluency and expression in written French.

There are many variants of extended core French. It may involve teaching an additional subject such as history or geography in French, or a more intensive version of the regular core French course.

IF MY CHILD SHOWS A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE IN FRENCH, CAN I SWITCH HIM OR HER FROM CORE FRENCH INTO AN IMMERSION PROGRAM?

Some school boards offer options that permit core French students to enroll in French immersion. For instance, Middle French Immersion (MFI) programs generally start no later than grade four or five. Similarly, Late French Immersion (LFI) programs normally begin by grade six or seven.

Contact your local school board to see if MFI or LFI programs are offered in your community. Or, visit the Member's Corner of the CPF website for a listing of immersion and extended core programs offered in every province and territory.

CPF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

CPF allows one or two adults per family as voting members.

- NEW MEMBERSHIP
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