

Tips for Supporting Your French Immersion Child at Home

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Use the language of your home – read, write, speak, listen to media. This will raise children's awareness of other languages and will ultimately support their French learning at school

TALK: show children the value of communicating orally, use a variety of language forms (discussion, questions, play games with words in the language of your home), talk in a variety of situations (not just parent/child management)

READ: let your children see you reading and enjoying it, keep reading materials around the house in English and in your home language (and French if possible), read with your children in the language of the home (find dual language books; good website: youarespecial.com)

WRITE: share with your children the value of writing for communication (letters, notes, lists, greeting cards, emails, texts).

Let your child teach you French – we learn best by teaching, so let your child show you what they're learning, ask questions, be a willing and enthusiastic student

- ➔ You can look for words that are familiar in French texts (called *cognates*), seek to figure out meaning from contextual clues, look for proper nouns to help you understand the context, watch for patterns
- ➔ Encourage your child to understand meaning without translating

Strategies for supporting reading:

1. Start with predicting what the story might be about by looking at the cover, and by doing a "picture walk" (just "read" the pictures)
2. Finger following: use a popsicle stick to help follow along word-for-word for younger children
3. Isolate sentences as you read if there are particular difficulties with focus
4. Read the book several times – once for the story, once to stop and ask questions
5. Seeking meaning: guess/infer, question, visualize (use all senses to connect to the story), synthesize (draw conclusions)
6. Make a personal dictionary – group words into categories that might help the child with recognition or to support writing
7. Make word webs to organize thoughts or to re-tell the story
8. Promote multi-modality – encourage your child to represent the story as a piece of art, or to act it out

If your FRENCH IMMERSION CHILD is showing signs of struggle:

1. Connect with the teacher – provide specific observations
2. Ask your child what the teacher does that helps them to understand, and promote these strategies – figure out HOW your child takes in new information
3. Ask the teacher to provide you with tools to assist you as you help your child
4. For reading: get support from the teacher to help your child colour-code word groups to understand how the parts of the language fit together (i.e. all nouns highlighted in blue, verbs in green)
5. Withdrawing from French Immersion is usually NOT the answer – get support in the subject area (math, science, reading – even if the support is in English)

Useful resources

1. ALBERTA EDUCATION:

“Yes, You Can Help! Information and Inspiration for Parents of French Immersion Students”:

<http://www.education.alberta.ca/parents/educationsys/frenchlanguage/immersion.aspx>

<http://www.education.alberta.ca/parents.aspx>

2. TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

A Treasure Chest for Families New to French Immersion (Durham Edition) :

http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Community/Community%20Advisory%20committees/FSLAC/main/Treasure%20Chest%20Booklet%20FINAL_Audio.pdf (Simple advice, basic vocabulary and expressions, further resources)

3. CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH:

ab.cpf.ca (there’s a link to the national site there, as well as other resources)

- 4. Jim Cummins, Fred Genesee:** these are researchers who have written on the benefits of bilingualism, dealing with students with struggles) – Google them to find some of their publications and resources

- 5. Useful books:** your child’s teacher will likely have these resources, but they can be found via Google : *Le Bescherelle* (French verb reference book)

- 6. Dictionary for looking up words via their sounds:**

Le grand Eurêka! Mon dictionnaire orthographique pour écrire tout seul