

Early French Immersion Program Information Session



Halifax

Regional Centre for Education



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Goals

- To provide information about the Early French Immersion Program
- To discuss the benefits of learning French as a Second Language
- To answer possible questions



What is Early French Immersion?

Early French Immersion is a program designed for students whose first language is not French. This includes children whose first language may not be English such as newcomers.

Instructional strategies and materials are designed with this in mind.

Early French Immersion begins in primary and continues to grade 12.



Early French Immersion Schools

HRCE has 23 elementary schools offering Early French Immersion.

A top-down view of various school supplies scattered on a white surface. Visible items include a pair of pink-handled scissors, a yellow ruler, a red pencil sharpener, a black pencil sharpener, a red pencil, a blue pen, a blue pencil, a yellow pencil, a green pencil, and a blue pencil. There are also some blue and pink sticky notes.

French Immersion in Nova Scotia

The Early French Immersion Program began in 1977.

The Late Immersion Program (Grade 7-12) began in 1985.



Percentage of Instruction in French

Primary - Grade 2

90%-100%

(varies due to Music and Physical Education)

Grades 3-6

80%- 85%

(formal English instruction is introduced)

Grades 7-9

approximately **70%**

Grades 10-12

minimum of **50%**

(9 of 18 credits)



French Immersion P-12

A French Immersion Certificate is awarded at High School graduation upon completion of program requirements.



Curriculum

Early French Immersion students follow the *same* curriculum and initiatives as other same grade level students in Nova Scotia with the expectation of meeting the same outcomes.



French Immersion P-12

Graduates of the French Immersion Program will be able to :

- communicate effectively in oral and written French and English
- achieve expected learning outcomes of courses taught in French and in English
- pursue university or college education in French.



How do young children learn French?

*Children learn French in the same stages that they learn English. **At first**, they mostly listen, speaking little. Their initial attempts at speaking usually take the form of single words or broken phrases.*



How do young children learn French?

By approximately mid-year, the child understands most of what the teacher says in French as a part of classroom activities. Children are usually speaking most of their French in group learning situations at this stage. They may often reply to the teachers and speak among themselves in English, with the infusion of some French.



How do young children learn French?

*Early in the school year, French is used almost exclusively by the teacher; however, most children are still at the comprehension level. As the **end of June** draws closer, they are able to speak more French themselves, but most are not able to converse exclusively in the second language.*



Language Acquisition in the French Immersion Program

Students acquire French language skills through:

- teacher modeling and instruction
- authentic opportunities to communicate and interact
- linking oral language, reading and writing



Benefits of Early French Immersion

- The student's knowledge of their first language is transferred to and interacts with the knowledge they are acquiring in the additional language
- Language concepts and skills learned and developed in French support concepts and skills learned in English
- Bilingualism can enhance some aspects of academic and cognitive growth (improved literacy, mental flexibility, creativity, divergent thinking, higher order thinking, expanded view of the world)
- Increase their competitiveness in an increasingly global job market



English Instruction

- Formal English Instruction begins in Grade 3.
- English reading abilities may not develop at the same rate as P-3 students in the English Program, however, research shows that over time, immersion students do as well, if not better, than their English counterparts. (Bournot-Trites et Tellowitz, 2002)
- Research shows that second-language learning does not negatively affect the first language, that students rapidly catch up once English is introduced and, that many students surpass their peers by Grades 5 or 6, and that skills in French can and do transfer to English.

(Renée Bourgoïn, doctoral candidate at the Second Language Research Institute of Canada, University of New Brunswick, Nouveau Brunswick.)



Learning Through Play

As children enter school they need to continue to learn through the medium of play.

An early elementary experience that is infused with play helps students learn in the way that is best suited to their stages of development.

Children need time to explore, to create, to manipulate, and to design their own play. They also benefit from support, guidance, and gentle nudges to move beyond their comfort zone.

In immersion, interactions are supported by the classroom teacher modeling how to communicate in French.



Supports for Students

Students benefit when there is a close working relationship with:

- French Immersion classroom teachers
- School administration
- Resource teachers
- Parent(s)/guardian(s)


All students should have equal access to student services



Supports for Students

As is the case for all students:

- Students in grades one and two will be eligible for Early Literacy Support in French.
- The Program Planning Team (PPT) explores supports and makes decisions about the student's program.
- Students in Immersion can be placed on Adaptations and Individual Program Plans (IPP) .



When Considering the Early French Immersion Program

Ask yourself:

- *How well developed are my child's home language skills?*
- *How might my child respond if understanding the teacher is challenging at the onset?*
- *How might pre-existing learning, perceptual or auditory challenges play a role in my child's experience?*



Constructive Support

As with any program, it is beneficial to your child's education when you are positive and supportive.

Some possibilities include:

- Reading with your child
- Inviting your child to read with you
- Watching French television with your child
- Taking advantage of French cultural events
- Encouraging your child to share what they are learning



Constructive Support

In Immersion, it's important to keep in mind that while children are learning in French they may not feel comfortable speaking in French outside of their learning environment. Requiring your children to show others or translate is not an authentic or constructive experience for them.



February Registration

A child must have reached his/her 5th birthday **on or before December 31.**

At the time of registration, Parents/guardians must present:

- the child's birth certificate
- proof of residency such as a current utility bill, lease agreement, etc.
- the completed registration form (including your child's Nova Scotia Health Card)



Useful Links

Halifax Regional Centre for Education:

<https://www.hrce.ca/about-hrce/school-administration/registration/french-programs/early>

Canadian Parents for French:

www.cpf.ca