

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED IN FRENCH IMMERSION? *COMMENT PUIS-JE AIDER?*

Parents and guardians have a vital role in their child's learning. Today, more than ever before, parents have access to information on how to effectively support their child's education through books, pamphlets, speakers, workshops, the media and the Internet. The following are suggestions for parents and guardians with children in the French Immersion program.

- Be positive. Just a little work and encouragement on your part can make a significant difference to your child's attitude towards and achievement in French.
- Provide some out-of school language and cultural experiences.
- Help your child make connections in language (for example: banane - banana).
Point out how they are similar and how they are different.
- Point out French in your community, for example, signs, labels, brochures, neighbours, street names.
- Support your child's learning by providing the necessary tools: English/French dictionary, a dictionary of synonyms (like a thesaurus).

Bring French into Your Home

- Including some French in your everyday home life early on will show your child how much you value learning a second language. Parents can learn French too - it can be fun and enriching for the whole family! Activities need not be expensive or elaborate. Just use your imagination and you will be able to add to the list below in no time.
- Use labels from can and food packages to make a collage or collect them in a scrapbook. They won't realize they are learning vocabulary, spelling, and sorting.
- Play I Spy (*Mon petit œil voit quelque chose qui...*) in French. Prepare for the game by printing on cards the French names for objects in a particular room of the house. Don't know the name of an object? Let your child know it's OK not to know something. Make a point of finding out the word you didn't know from an older sibling, a teacher, a visual dictionary or an English/French dictionary or Word Reference website.
- Have your child label as many objects in your house as possible. In making the labels don't forget to include the article "le" or "la" so that your child can learn if the noun is masculine or feminine.

- On a long car ride play "Guess the sentence" Your child will say a word, sentence or phrase in French while the parents try to guess what is said. You will soon discover you can figure out the meaning even if you don't know every word.
- Introduce older students to board and computer games in French. Scrabble, Monopoly, and Clue are some of the many board games available.
- Music can be a marvelous motivator. Play a French tape or CD. Listening to songs and singing along develop both aural and oral skills. Repetition gives children the opportunity to pronounce sounds that do not exist in the English language. Music also provides a window into French culture.
- Family sing-a-longs can be great fun while driving or sitting by the fireplace or campfire.
- Check out local French television and radio listings.
- Many videos are available including the ever popular Disney collection.
- Check out a French library book.
- Subscribe to a French newspaper or magazine.
- Hire a French-speaking baby sitter.
- Check your local directory for Francophone clubs including sports clubs. They often have planned activities and entertainers which may be of interest to your child.
- Travel to a French speaking destination.
- French summer camp is a wonderful way to have fun in the sun while practicing language skills.

How to help your child with reading in French?

The more fluent a student is in his/her own language, the easier it is to learn another. Read aloud to your child every day. Read books in your own language if English is your second language. Do not worry if you do not speak French; you can instill a love of literature in your child regardless of the language in which you read. By fostering enthusiasm, and motivating your child to seek out books independently, you are laying the ground work for positive attitudes that are essential to lifelong learning in French or in English. It is important that your child's first language be as rich as possible; you have the ability to provide that enrichment at home. Besides reading to your child often, let them see you reading and using books frequently. You can help your child's reading development by:

- reading books with repetitive words and phrases.
- finding stories and poems about everyday experiences which are easily related to their own lives and can be easily discussed.
- reading materials that are just plain fun, like riddles, silly rhymes etc.

- encouraging active participation in reading by asking for their opinion, talking about the pictures, predicting what may happen next, are the events in the story true or factual (fiction or non-fiction), have the student retell the story to another person, draw a picture of their favorite part of the story.
- finding stories on audio tape. Have an older sibling tape a story which can be listened to over and over again.
- playing word games. For example, find rhyming words.
- don't stop reading to or with your child once they can read. It's a great way to spend some time together!
- if you have concerns about your child's reading development discuss your concerns with their teacher.

A quick "MINI LESSON" on pronunciation

Trying to help your child in their reading or pronunciation of French words? Here is a quick lesson:

- while there are significant differences between the sounds of the vowels in the two languages, the consonants are essentially the same
- **h** is always silent in French
- an **s** at the end of a word to indicate the plural is silent
- **qu** sounds like k (not like kw as in quick)
- **th** is pronounced t
- **ch** is pronounced like the English sh
- **i** is pronounced like the long English e (bee)
- **y** sounds like yes even at the end of a word
- **ou** in French always sounds like group (not out)
- **oy** and **oi** sound like the **wa** in water
- **au** and **eau** have the long **o** sound (so)
- **ez** has the long a sound (way)
- accents change the sounds of vowels; **e** sounds much like the short English e (deck) while **é** sounds has the long a sound (hay)
- stress falls on the last sounded syllable (ami sounds like am-ee)
- when a word begins with a vowel (or a silent h), it is usually joined with the last consonant of the preceding word- it will sound as though your child is reading one word instead of two.

Above all, enjoy yourselves and have FUN together!