

# Welcome *to* French Immersion



*Engage, support and inspire all learners to achieve and succeed*

# What is Early French Immersion?

The French Immersion program is an optional, alternative second language program for English-speaking children that offers students the opportunity to learn French through other subject areas and to enhance their skills in an intensive program. Children receive all of their instruction in French from a teacher who speaks, reads and writes in French with a high level of competency. While Kindergarten and Grade 1 students receive no formal instruction in English, there is a gradual increase in English instruction between Grades 2 and 8. By Grade 7, 50% of the students' instruction is in English. At the secondary level, students may complete up to 10 courses in immersion by the end of Grade 12. At all grade levels, students study the same curriculum as students in a regular English program and are expected to achieve the same standards in all subjects (including English Language Arts).

## *The aim of the French Immersion program is to:*

- Provide a quality educational program that meets the expectations of the Ontario Curriculum, both elementary and secondary
- Develop and refine students' ability to communicate (understand, speak, read and write) with confidence in the French language
- Help students understand and appreciate Canada's Francophone heritage and the French culture and language throughout the world
- Expand students' knowledge of the language through the study of Francophone literature and research

## *Who may enrol?*

The Early French Immersion program is available to children entering junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten and grade 1 in the Grand Erie District School Board. Students in grade 1 may enter the program during the first 30 days of school in the grade 1 year. Students transferring to Grand Erie with French background may be assessed to determine their ability to enter Grand Erie's programs. Decisions for special admissions are made by the program team in consultation with the principal.



## *Learning skills*

- Does my child handle new situations appropriately?
- Is my child curious about and willing to explore the world around him/her?
- Does my child stick to and complete challenging tasks?
- Is my child able to remember information for short and longer periods of time?
- Does my child like to try new things?
- Is my child confident?
- Has my child adapted well to the transition from home to school? (for students who have previously attended preschool, daycare, JK or SK)

## **The Assessment Process in the Grand Erie Early French Immersion Program**

Children develop knowledge and skills in the various areas of learning at different rates and in a variety of ways. Teachers acknowledge this developmental continuum by gathering ongoing assessment information throughout the Kindergarten years.

In the Kindergarten years of the Early French Immersion program, students are assessed using the following tools:

### *School Entry: Parent-Teacher Conference Form:*



This form is used to collect significant information from the parent/guardian that will help the teacher get to know and understand the child. The parent/guardian and the teacher complete/review the School Entry Parent-Teacher Conference Form, discussing any questions or concerns. This information is gathered in English.

## *Self-Portrait and Name*

The analysis of the Self Portrait and Name task indicates to the teacher the child's stage of graphomotor development (those fine motor skills associated with handwriting and drawing).

## *Concepts About Print*

Concepts About Print assesses the child's awareness that print carries a message; there are conventions of print such as directionality (left to right, top to bottom); there are differences between letters and words; there are distinctions between upper and lower case letters; punctuation has a purpose; and that books have some common characteristics.

Although the teacher conducts this assessment using a French book, the questions are asked in English and responses are recorded in English.



## *Letter/Sound/Word*

In this assessment, the teacher notes the child's ability to recognize upper and lower case letter names and sounds in French, as well as the ability to identify French words that are associated with each letter sound.

## *Phonemic Awareness*

Phonemic Awareness allows teachers to assess children's ability to segment individual sounds and syllables in French words, identify rhyming French words, blend and manipulate sounds in French words. Phonemic awareness is a key indicator in determining a child's ability to succeed in language acquisition.

## *GB + Assessment*

The GB + assessment is a diagnostic reading tool that provides the teacher with insight into a child's ability to read in French with accuracy and comprehension. This assessment is only used when the teacher is confident that the child has demonstrated adequate reading readiness skills.

## *Supports for Struggling Students*

Each child's progress in the French Immersion program is closely monitored by his/her teacher. When children are not meeting developmentally appropriate benchmarks, the parents/guardians will be contacted. Additional assessments may be requested including any of:

- Letter/Sound/Word and/or Phonemic Awareness assessments in English by the school's Learning Resource Teacher
- Referral to the in-school team
- Referral to Program Support Staff (support normally available in English only)
- Identification, Placement and Review Committee Meeting

At each stage of assessment, parents/guardians will be contacted and appropriate intervention strategies will be implemented to assist the child.



# Frequently Asked Questions

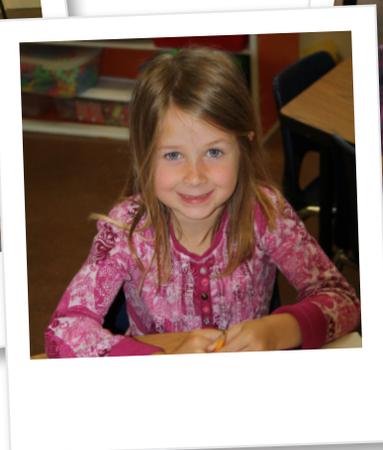
## 1. *How does the school communicate information to parents/guardians about a child's progress?*

Teachers will communicate student progress to parents in English through report cards, interview, informal written notes, student planners, phone calls, etc.

## 2. *How can parents assist their child?*

While it is not necessary that parents be able to speak French, they can play an important role in ensuring their child's success by:

- showing an interest in the program and in their child's progress.
- encouraging and supporting their child's efforts.
- reading stories to their child in English and listening to them read aloud in French and in English.
- participating whenever possible in the total life of the school.
- providing additional opportunities for exposure to French language and culture beyond the classroom.
- contacting the child's teacher when he/she experiences difficulty with homework.



### 3. *What are the parents' responsibilities?*

Parents who enroll their child in the program should remember that they are making a long-term commitment. Parents are cautioned not to exert pressure on the child to 'perform in French' at home. Children accept that their classroom experience is in French, and that the rest of their life at home with their family or with their friends is in English or, possibly, another language.

### 4. *Is transportation provided?*

French Immersion students who are eligible for transportation under Board policy will be transported to the French Immersion sites.



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