

Questions and Answers

Q. Will my child learn the same things as children in English classes?

A. Yes, the curriculum must follow the guidelines set by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Q. Given that my child will only begin English Language Arts in grade three, how will this impact the development of her/his English language development?

A. The results of the NS provincial grade 6 Language Arts assessment indicate that the majority of French Immersion students, like their English counterparts, meet and in some cases exceed the English Language Arts outcomes.

Q. What about achievement in Math and other subjects?

A. A decade of testing indicates that the performance of French Immersion students in other subjects is equal to the performance of students who are not in French Immersion.

Q. How can I help my child with homework when I cannot speak French?

A. It is not necessary for parents to be able to speak the language. Collaboration between the home and the school is the best means of resolving difficulties that may arise in learning French. Immersion teachers are accustomed to working with parents on language related issues.

Some Dos and Don'ts for Parents

- **Do** read stories to your child in English.
- **Do** encourage your child to participate in French cultural activities.
- **Do** speak positively about the program, the teacher (s) and the school. Express any questions or concerns you may have to the teacher or principal, not to your child.
- **Do not** formally teach your child to read English. Your child will automatically transfer reading skills to English once they have been mastered in French.
- **Do not** ask your child to translate. She/He will not understand this concept in the very early grades.
- **Do not** tell your four/five year old that she/he is going to “immersion” in September-they are going to school!



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Strait Regional School Board Programs and Student Services



Early French Immersion

- Goals
- Questions and Answers
- Do's and Don'ts
- Background

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Goals

- To enable students to become functionally bilingual, that is:
 - ✓ to be able and willing to participate easily in conversation in French and in English.
 - ✓ to be able to take further education as appropriate to their ability and interest with French as the language of instruction.
 - ✓ to be able to more fully participate in Canada as a bilingual country.
- To enable students to achieve equivalent levels of learning in the content of all subjects, whether they are instructed in French or English.
- To provide all students with the opportunity to gain an understanding and an appreciation of common attitudes and values of the French speaking community.

Background

French Immersion in Canada has had some 30 years of growth and success. Nearly 300,000 students are enrolled across Canada, over 8,000 in Nova Scotia and over 900 in the Strait Region. Early French Immersion in Canada had its beginnings in the mid 1960's, in Nova Scotia in 1977 and in the Strait Region in 1979.

Canada continues to be regarded in the global community as a leader and pioneer in developing various models of French Immersion. French Immersion programs have enabled young Canadians to acquire the linguistic tools to communicate effectively in our country's two official languages, French and English.



Early French Immersion

In Nova Scotia, Anglophone school boards may offer an Early French Immersion program that starts in grade primary and ends in grade twelve. The provincial Department of Education has outlined in its "Policy on French Second Language Programs" what might be expected in such a program.

The recommended percentage of instruction in the French language is:

Primary to Grade 2 = 90% -100%
Grade 3 to Grade 6 = 80% - 85%
Grade 7 to Grade 9 = 60% - 75%
Grade 10 to Grade 12 = A minimum
of nine credits taught in French

The percent of instruction in French varies in Grades Primary to grade 6 due to the availability of specialists, e.g., music, physical education and other specialists who do not speak French. Formal English is introduced in Grade 3.



In order to obtain the French Immersion Certificate, students in senior high school must:

- successfully complete the French Language Arts courses in Grades 10, 11 and 12;
- each year successfully complete a minimum of two courses where the language of instruction is French;
- successfully complete a total of nine courses where the language of instruction is French.