



# Early French Immersion Program

## Information Session 2025



**Halifax**

Regional Centre for Education



# 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







# Early French Immersion Schools

HRCE has 26 elementary schools offering Early French Immersion.



# 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.

High school students must complete 50% of their courses in French to receive this certificate.





# Curriculum

Early French Immersion students follow the *same* curriculum as their peers in the English program for subjects other than language. However, some of the language outcomes are specific to learning French.



# French Immersion P-12

Graduates of the French Immersion Program:

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







# Growth over the course of the year

## Mid Year to End of Year

- Speak in sentences of 10 words or more
- Have short conversations in French around known subjects (likes, sports, animals, etc.)
- Tell a short story
- Be able to tap into a larger bank of vocabulary words





# 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 their first language.
- 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).

(Arnett & Bourgoin, 2017; Genesee, 2007)



# 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)
- If English is the home language, research shows that second-language learning does not negatively affect it. 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.

(Genesee, 2007)



## If English is not the home language

Learning a 2nd language, such as French, can have an influence on learning additional languages. (Arnett and Bourgojn, 2018)



# 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 in Immersion

- Early Literacy Support in French
- French Reading Recovery (in some schools)
- Resource
- Teaching Support Team (TST) provides support and guidance to teachers
- Student Planning Team (SPT) explores supports and makes decisions about the student's program.
- Adaptations and Individual Program Plans (IPP)





# February Registration

A child must have reached his/her 5<sup>th</sup> 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 water bill, power bill, internet bill, home fuel bill, a tax receipt, property assessment or a mortgage contract);
- 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](#)

[Department of Education and Early Childhood Development How Bilingual Am I](#)

[The Neurolinguistic Approach \(Intensive French Canada website\)](#)



# Works Cited

Arnett, K., & Bourgoin, R. (2017). *Access for Success: Making Inclusion Work for Language Learners*. Pearson Education Canada.

Bournot-Trites, M., & Tellowitz, U. (2002, January). *Report of Current Research on the Effects of Second Language Learning on First Language Literacy Skills*. Atlantic Provinces Educational Foundation.

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Genesee, F. (2007, August). French Immersion and At-Risk Students: A Review of Research Evidence. *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La revue canadienne des langues vivantes*, 63(5), 654-687. 10.1353/cml.2008.0004