

Tips & Tricks for Supporting Your Child in French



Why French Matters

Core French, Extended French and French Immersion help students become strong bilingual communicators with lifelong language skills and you can support that at home, even if you *don't speak French yourself!* Check out this [parent guide](#) to get started.

1. Talk With Your Child Often!

Conversation builds language:

- Chat about your day, interests, or plans in *any* language.
- If your child speaks French at school, ask them to tell you about it.
- Listening and speaking skills help with reading and writing too.

Tip: Even simple conversations help strengthen verbal skills.

2. Read Together in English *and* French

Reading builds vocabulary:

- Enjoy books at home in *English* and in *French* (e.g., [Storybooks Canada](#) - Please note that the stories in this resource are available in English, French, and Cree (one of many Indigenous languages). We acknowledge that Ottawa is located on unceded, unsurrendered Algonquin territory, and our team will continue to seek French storybooks that also include Algonquin translations.)
- If you don't know the French words, let your child explain them to reinforce their understanding.
- Find books at the [Ottawa Public Library](#) and French local bookstores (e.g., [La librairie du soleil](#), [Le coin du livre](#))
- Listen to audiobooks in French from the [Ottawa Public Library](#) or [Sora](#) in the Student Portal.

Tip: Try alternating reading pages in both languages!

3. Make Learning Part of Daily Life

Turn everyday moments into learning:

- Grocery lists, signs, recipes. Look for French words together.
- Play language games (memory, cards, labels around the house).
- Watch French media with your child (e.g., [TFO](#) - MiniTFO or FlipTFO)
- Listen to French music (e.g., Apple Music, Spotify, YouTube, French radio stations);

Tip: Learning doesn't have to be "school-like" - it can be fun!

4. Support Thinking & Study Skills

Help your child become a *learner*:

- Teach them to organize their work, break large tasks into steps, and check their own work.
- Encourage planning and goal-setting for projects and homework.
- Encourage limited use of translation tools - relying on them for entire texts can slow the development of your child's internal French vocabulary and slow their progress.

Tip: Use planners, calendars, or checklists together.

5. Use Online & Community Resources

Extend learning outside the classroom:

- Find French videos, songs, and kid-friendly websites.
- Look for French community events or library programs. ([Alliance Francaise extracurricular programs](#))
- Consider joining [Canadian Parents for French](#) for free and enrolling your child in one of their programs.

Tip: Even French cartoons or YouTube kids' channels reinforce listening skills!

6. Stay Connected With the School

Communication is key:

- Ask your child's teacher how they're progressing.
- Attend school events and ask about resources or strategies to help at home.

Tip: School newsletters and calendars are great for staying in the loop.

7. Don't Stress If You Don't Speak French

You don't need to be fluent! Support comes from:

- ✓ Encouraging effort
 - ✓ Showing interest in what they're learning
 - ✓ Creating opportunities to use language in real life
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8. Supporting your child when doing homework.

Homework is about learning skills - not just answers!

You don't need to know French to help your child succeed with homework.

How parents can help:

- Create a routine: Set a regular time and quiet space for homework.
 - Ask guiding questions:
 - "What is your assignment asking you to do?"
 - "How will you start?"
 - "Can you explain this to me?"
 - Encourage effort, not perfection: Mistakes are part of learning a new language.
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Quick Reminders

Celebrate small wins - learning a language takes time.

Make it fun - curiosity encourages confidence!

Language skills grow both at school *and* at home.