

French Immersion Program

St. Clair Catholic District School Board currently offers a successful French Immersion program in several of our schools for students from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12. We believe students enrolled in this program not only acquire strong language skills in Canada's two official languages, but also receive a rich academic foundation formed in an affirming Catholic faith community.

Research has shown that children who begin to study a second language at an early age develop strong skills in both languages and perform as well or better than students enrolled in English programs.

The French Immersion Full Day Kindergarten program has the same general goals as an English Kindergarten program: the balanced development of multiple dimensions (spiritual, cultural, intellectual, emotional, physical, social and aesthetic) with the **added goal of introducing children to the French language in a natural way**. This introduction to French is an important step in the process of developing language comprehension sufficient for the immersion student to learn to read in French and learn subject content.

French Immersion Kindergarten programs will:

- use French words supported by the use of pictures and objects
- use French books, videos, music and games
- have French speaking teachers, speaking in French in increasing amounts supported by the use of gestures, mime, intonation, pictures and objects to convey meaning
- support students by encouraging the use of French through activities, songs, and play
- emphasize listening skills to stimulate language acquisition
- incorporate French culture through authentic activities



Frequently Asked Questions about the French Immersion Program

Why learn a second language?

Second language learning provides the opportunity to:

- communicate in French and English
- develop creative and critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- develop a broader view of the world and tolerance for cultural differences
- enhance understanding and use of the first language
- enhance listening skills
- enhance memory skills
- increase post-secondary educational and employment opportunities



Will my child receive an education comparable to that of students in the English stream? Yes

- The curriculum is the same as outlined by the Ministry documents
- The major difference is that the language of instruction is French and the instructional resources are in French

Does being in the French Immersion program affect my child's English? No

- Learning a second language improves and enhances first language skills. Evidence of this is seen in the EQAO test results - by Grade 6, immersion students are on par with their English speaking counterparts in the provincial testing.
- Children may experience an initial lag in English reading and writing, but normally “catch up” to their classmates in the English program by about Grade 4.



Two languages...

A world of opportunities

What can I expect with respect to my child's French language development in Junior and Senior Kindergarten?

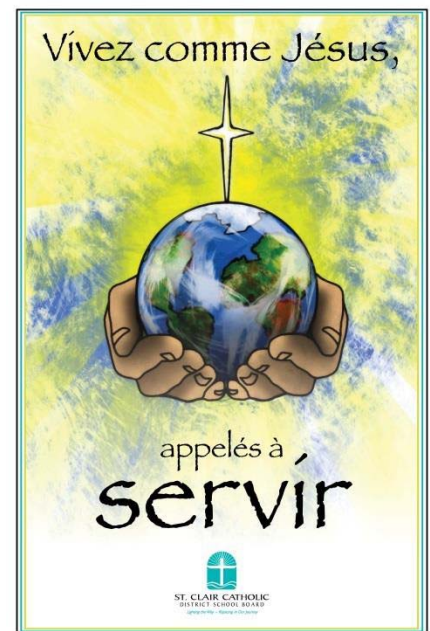


Children enrolled in an immersion program learn French in much the same way as they learned their first language. They listen and imitate the teacher before they start to talk on their own. Children start speaking by using individual words, putting a few words together and learning a few set phrases. Later into the program, children start conversing using complete sentences in French. As in their first language, children will not understand every word they hear at first but gradually

begin to understand key words and phrases. Listening skills are emphasized throughout all activities in order to stimulate language acquisition. As the children progress and their knowledge of French expands, additional language structures and vocabulary are introduced.

When is reading and writing in English introduced?

Students in the French immersion program will receive a short block of English language instruction from Kindergarten through grade 2. This instructional time will focus on oral language phonological awareness, and reading comprehension skills. English reading and writing content increases in grade 3.



Preparing Your Child for French Immersion



- The French Immersion program is designed for English speaking families
- The children are not expected to have any knowledge of the French language
- Parents should prepare their child as any parent would, French or English