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CPEF MAGAZINE

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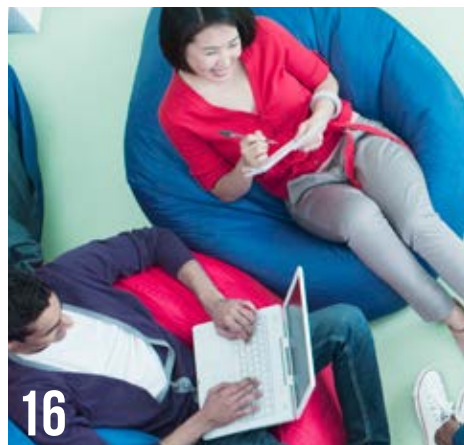
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PARENTS
FOR FRENCH**

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Canadian Parents for French is the national network of volunteers which values French as an integral part of Canada and which is dedicated to the promotion and creation of FSL learning opportunities for young Canadians.



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I am writing this from a hammock while camping on Labour Day and watching my nephews (who are comically aged 1,2,3, and 4) running around and playing in the dirt, and causing havoc in the manner only little boys can. I can't help but watch as my cousins run after their children, trying to organize the mess the boys are causing.

As I watch this it suddenly dawns on me that pretty much everyone I am camping with is, to some extent, bilingual. My sister, three of my cousins, and I all went through immersion programs. Another cousin grew up in a multi-lingual household learning four languages at the same time. While we all use our French to various extents, we are all appreciative of knowing more than one language. However, watching these rascallions, I start to think about how they too will be learning French in a few years. Some of them are even learning now!

In a few days the eldest of the group, Corben, will be entering JK. asked his dad if there were any plans of enrolling Corben in an FI program. His response was "Probably in a few years. I mean, talking with Roman [3-year-old rascallion] on this trip is the first time I've used my French since moving from Ottawa, about what, 10 years ago now, but I still see the value in it."

Roman's father makes a point of talking to him in French, and his mother talks to him in English. While Roman mostly answers in English, he understands both languages very well and can reply in French just as well as he can in English.

In this issue of *CPF Magazine* we look at how toddlers' who grow up in households with two languages at the same time aren't negatively impacted in their ability to learn either language. We also get some tips from parents on how they helped their children keep up with French outside of the classroom, and tips from a university administrator for French immersion grads when entering a university level French program.



While we at CPF often promote the research about the benefits of learning and speaking both languages, it's in our day to day experiences that we see the good in what we are doing.

Or, we are just creating a generation of little people who are plotting to rock their uncle out of a hammock to force him to stop working and play with them in more than one language. ■

Shaunpal Jandu
Editorial Manager

Two languages, one baby

Why speaking to children in two languages doesn't hurt their language development

Many Canadian parents introduce their children to a second language via school immersion programs and social and educational programs, such as daycares, preschools, and home-language weekend schools. However, a number of Canadian children begin their bilingual journey much earlier than toddlerhood or early school age.

By Christopher Fennell, Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Ottawa

According to the 2011 Census, about 6 million Canadians speak more than one language at home, which is almost 20 percent of our population and an increase of over a million people from the previous census. Children raised in such homes will often be directly exposed to two languages from the very beginning of language development. These bilingual babies are the population that captures my interest the most.

Thankfully, my research queries touch on similar questions that I hear from parents who wish to raise their babies bilingually. How does early language development unfold if you have two native languages rather than one? Are there disadvantages (e.g., delays)? What are the best methods that parents can use to ensure early bilingual development? To help answer these

questions, I am happy to share my knowledge of early bilingual development gleaned from my own studies and those of my colleagues around the world. Our research has primarily focussed on two areas of language development: phonology and word learning.

Phonology refers to study of the meaningful sounds present in a language. For example, the sounds /b/ and /p/ are phonological in both English and French because they meaningfully distinguish words in both languages: “bat” versus “pat” and “bain” versus “pain”. Work with monolinguals has shown that infants start off as universal listeners ready to learn any language. Early in the first year, babies can discriminate nearly all phonemes across the world’s languages, including those not

Continued on next page →



table
chien

dog
table

present in the language they are hearing at home. For example, French has a pair of sounds that do not exist in English: the vowels that distinguish words like “jus” versus “joue”. English, however, only has one “u” sound. Nevertheless, monolingual English-learning babies start off by discriminating the non-native French vowels. Over their first year, babies refine their perception to those sounds in their native language. So, the English baby’s ability to discriminate the French vowel contrast will diminish, whereas a French baby will retain this ability. As you can probably predict, a key question for researchers was how does an infant learning French and English figure out sound contrasts, including contrasts that exist in one of their languages but collapse into one sound in their other language?

Initially, researchers from Spain found that bilingual infants appeared to go through a short period of confusing similar sounds in their languages around 8 months, something not seen in monolingual babies. Unpublished research from my lab showed a similar pattern in French-English babies. It was thought that this period of confusion might have been due to the fact that bilinguals have more sounds to refine and sometimes these sounds do not match up across languages, like in the “u” example above. But, more recent research indicates that bilingual babies do not actually have much difficulty figuring out what sounds are im-

portant in their languages. The initial research relied on bilingual babies being surprised by a change in sound as the measure of success. If you play one language sound continuously and then change it to a different sound, we expect a baby to show surprise (e.g., staring longer at the sound source) as an indication that they can tell the sounds apart. But researchers realized that bilingual babies may not be surprised by a change in language sounds, even if they can detect the difference. Why? Because they deal with changing sounds all the time, whether it is similar, but slightly different, words across their languages like “table” and “table” across English and French, or Dad pronouncing an English word differently from Mom because of his French accent. So, the Spanish researchers conducted an ingenious, follow-up study wherein they trained babies to look to a section of a screen if they heard one vowel and the opposite section if they heard another close vowel. As you can see, the surprise reaction is removed from the experiment, as it is simply a matching “game” now. Sure enough, bilingual babies of 8 months succeeded in the task, indicating that they do possess the ability to discriminate close language sounds. Interestingly, more recent research from Singapore and The Netherlands is indicating that bilingual babies may even be more “open” to non-native sound contrasts longer than monolingual infants. Bilingual babies

outperformed monolinguals on discriminating non-native sound contrasts from Mandarin. The researchers argued that this openness to non-native language sounds arises from bilingual babies’ exposure to more language sounds. This variation allows them to deal with more sound types and it may allow them to more rapidly acquire new languages.

The language sounds that I have been discussing are the building blocks for the next major step in infant language development: word learning. It is important to highlight the fact that bilingual and monolingual babies have the same general word learning skills. We know this via two pieces of evidence. First, in the lab, my colleagues and I have demonstrated that bilingual babies learn novel words at the same age and in the same amount of time as monolinguals. Second, in the real world outside the lab, a century of research has shown that bilingual babies produce their first words at the same age as monolinguals. Please share that fact. Many people, unfortunately including medical professionals, misreport that bilingual babies are delayed in word learning. From the earliest research where linguists kept diaries of their bilingual children’s word production to modern research where we use questionnaires to ask many parents to report their bilingual babies’ vocabularies, researchers have shown that babies learning two languages produce words in both languages from the beginning of word

learning, including what we call translation equivalents: two words that have the same meaning across their languages (e.g., dog and chien).

Many of my past studies have examined how babies use their refined language sounds in the service of learning new words, applying phonology to word learning. To test this, I simply teach infants two novel words that only differ by one language sound. For example, I may show a baby a molecule model from a chemistry set and call it a “kem”. They then see a multi-coloured crown made of clay and hear it called “gem” (with a hard “g” sound). After exposure to these two novel word-object combinations for a few minutes, we test the babies by giving them two trials. In one, they get the correct combination (e.g., molecule paired with “kem”) and in the other, they receive an incorrect combination (e.g., molecule paired with “gem”). If they stare longer at the object when it is mislabelled than when it is correctly labelled, this indicates that they can efficiently use language sounds to learn new words. We have shown that monolingual babies stably succeed in the above task at around 17 months of age. In 2007, I published a study where bilingual babies were tested in task for the first time. Unlike monolinguals, they did not succeed until 20 months. Thus, I may have found an apparent bilingual “delay”. However, I recently published a follow-up study to show that this is not the case. My original work used a female English monolingual speaker to present all the

Recent research from American researchers has shown that bilingual babies can incorporate non-native sounds into new words, unlike monolingual babies. Again, this indicates that they are more “open” to new language sounds than monolinguals.

words. This would present no issue for English monolingual babies, but many bilingual babies have a mother who is not monolingual. Monolingual and bilingual adults have different accents; even fluent bilinguals produce sounds slightly different as their languages influence each other. Also, babies can’t deal with accents very well: speech that differs from the accent babies are learning disrupts word recognition and learning up until about 20 months of age. So, it was possible that that accent, and not bilingualism, could explain the “delay”. Using the word-learning task above, I presented 17-month-old French-English bilingual and English monolingual babies with words that were either produced by a French-English bilingual or English monolingual speaker. The results were clear. Bilingual babies succeeded in learning the similar words when the bilingual speaker produced them, but not when hearing words from the monolingual speaker. Monolingual babies showed the opposite pattern. Thus, bilingual babies do not have a problem with learning similar-sounding words, it was a problem with how we tested them. Further, recent research from American researchers has shown that

bilingual babies can incorporate non-native sounds into new words, unlike monolingual babies. Again, this indicates that they are more “open” to new language sounds than monolinguals.

For the final part of this article, I want to return to bilingual babies’ overall vocabularies to illustrate similarities and differences between monolinguals and bilinguals and to address how to best raise a bilingual baby. When researchers compare the overall vocabularies of monolingual and bilingual infants, they find that the two groups are either strikingly similar or strikingly different. It all comes down to how they measure infants’ vocabularies. If we look at the total number of words in an infant’s vocabulary, monolinguals and bilinguals usually appear quite similar, or sometimes there is a bilingual advantage. In this case, we are combining the two languages of the bilingual (e.g., adding all the French words and the English words). If we compare one language of a bilingual baby (e.g., only the French words) to the comparable monolingual group (e.g., French monolinguals), a different picture emerges. In this analysis, bilinguals typically have lower vocabularies than their monolingual



“...out there in the real world outside the lab, a century of research has shown that bilingual babies produce their first words at the same age as monolinguals on average.”

peers. But, the level of discrepancy depends on a key factor: exposure to the two languages. Obviously, a bilingual cannot hear double the amount of speech that a monolingual hears, which is why we see similar total vocabularies. If we compare the percentage of time bilinguals hear each of their languages to the amounts of words they know in each language, the relationship is strong. If a bilingual baby is hearing about 40 percent French and 60 percent English, they will possess more English words than French words. The bigger the discrepancy in exposure, the more imbalanced their initial vocabulary will be. Thus, a key recommendation for parents who would like to raise balanced bilinguals is to balance their exposure to the two languages. Please note that any method to balance exposure is fine. Research has shown no particular advantage to the one-parent, one-language strategy that is sometimes recommended in the community, where one parent speaks one language to the baby and the other parent only speaks the other language. Both parents speaking both languages, or one bilingual parent and one monolingual, are equally good methods if they ensure more balanced exposure in a particular household.

A couple of final points should be made about language exposure in infancy. First, language exposure from real people is important, as exposure from TV or other media has not been shown to help bilingual infants' vocabularies. Indeed, a study from my lab showed that exposure to TV in the background (e.g., news program on during supertime) actually hurt bilingual babies' vocabularies. This is because parents are distracted by the TV, and thus speaking less to their babies. Second, American researchers

recently showed that exposure to native speakers of the bilingual baby's two languages helps them to learn words. This is not to say they cannot learn from second language speakers, but there is an advantage to hearing speech from native speakers.

I hope that I have shown that the journey of bilingualism can begin as early as possible with no adverse effects for the child. Bilingual babies are not confused by two languages; they do not need a base in one language before launching into a second. They reach major milestones at the same time as monolinguals and learn language sounds and words at the same rate. Of course, their exposure to the two languages must continue past infancy to ensure lifetime bilingualism, preferably a balanced exposure. But, there are no major issues regarding introducing two languages during infancy. I would like to end by suggesting a few resources for parents of bilingual babies. An excellent book is "Raising a Bilingual Child" by Barbara Zurer-Pearson, one of the pioneers of bilingual baby research. A great and up-to-date website on raising bilingual children is "Bilingualism Matters" at www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk. Finally, I invite all parents to visit research centres that examine infant bilingualism. Canada, with its strong bilingual identity, has a large number of such centres, including labs in Vancouver (UBC Infant Studies Centre), Montreal (Concordia Infant Research Lab; Concordia Cognitive and Language Development Lab; McGill Infant Speech Perception Lab); and my own lab in Ottawa (University of Ottawa Language Development Lab). We researchers will be happy to answer any questions parents have about infant bilingualism and you will help us discover those answers by participating in our studies! ■

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A Tool To Prepare Children For Preschool: Mini TFO's Interactive Mat

By **Hélène Chaland**, Project Manager, Digital Learning, Groupe Média TFO

Parents know this from having experienced it themselves: the first day of school is a hugely important step for children, and a hugely emotional one for parents. To make this major transition easier for children going from preschool to elementary school, it is important to be as well prepared as possible as a family.

This is especially the case if you have decided to sign your child up for a French as a Second Language program. French may not be your primary language, and

you need simple, reliable support tools to make your child comfortable in his or her new school setting.

Groupe Média TFO and its educational department, *Digital Learning*, have for years produced support resources for parents with the goal of preparing children for preschool. Among these resources, one stands out as an undeniable success: **Mini TFO's activity mat**. This product's teaching intentions are, first and foremost, to create a link between the

classroom and the home, in order to ensure children are enthusiastic about their upcoming first day of school. Obviously, parent-child collaboration is at the heart of this project.

As versions were released, we have worked to improve on proposed activities, for instance by adding elements of augmented reality which can magically transform a mere cardboard page into a digital learning media! By downloading the TFO+ app on your smartphone or your



touchscreen tablet, you can digitize the mat's visual elements and bring up short Mini TFO video clips.

The current edition of the mat is titled *L'épicerie Mini TFO (Mini TFO Groceries)*. It comes with a sheet of stickers and a user guide with activity

suggestions for preschool-aged children (2-6 years) and encourages parents to come up with new ones.

Among the many activities suggested and the themes covered by Mrs. Fruitée, Lexie or Louis — well-known Mini TFO characters — your child can learn about

seasons, professions, nutrition, the five senses, music instruments, arts and crafts, vocabulary, recipes, and many more concepts and information he or she will be discovering further over the first few months of school.

Some parents used the mat with their children and thought it was a good idea to laminate it, in order to give it more durability. Their comments also emphasize that the activity guide suggestions were easy to carry out and that both parents and children were comforted by the time September rolled around.

To get your own copy of the Mini TFO interactive mat, be sure to request it, by email, at: idello@tfo.org.

To download the Parent-Child Activity Guide ([bilingual](#) or [French](#) versions), as well as hundreds of other supporting resources, you need only sign up, for free, on idello.org. ■



Keep a strong voice

Keep a strong French immersion program

By Betty Gormley, Executive Director, Canadian Parents for French ON

Parents in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, the Halton District School Board and the Upper Grand District School Board were shocked last fall by French immersion program reviews and viability study recommendations which included weakening their French immersion (FI) programs, capping enrollment and even phasing out early French immersion and replacing it with a later entry option.

Community parents turned to Canadian Parents for French for help. The Ontario branch implemented an action plan to work collaboratively within our network and the broader community to keep the programs as strong as possible. Here's what happened:

Our national office prepared bibliographies of the research on French immersion program models. The branch consulted researchers across the country to confirm best practices and commissioned a video by Dr. Joseph Dicks, UNB, on the merits of early French immersion, in comparison to the less inclusive later entry models. CPF Ontario branch wrote open letters to the school boards and local chapter volunteers took the lead in advocating directly with school board staff and strengthening presentations to the trustees.

The proposed changes to French immersion programs in these three large Ontario school boards were developed to address the complexities brought on by unprecedented growth in enrolment in French immersion and the boards' overall administrative and budgetary constraints. In sharp contrast, parents on the ground viewed the proposed changes in terms of possible lost opportunities and diminished student outcomes.

Efforts to promote the benefits of bilingualism are taking hold. Based on the 2014-2015 enrolment stats, French immersion has grown on average 5.7 per cent annually over the past 10 consecutive years in the province of Ontario. The 2014-2015 provincial figures recorded with the Ministry of Education show just over 200,000 students enrolled in French immersion and close to 33,000 in Extended French.

Last year the Halton District School Board struck a committee to conduct a viability study, prompted by disproportionately high French immersion enrolment in a few schools jeopardizing the viability of the smaller English programs. Coupled

with a projected French as a Second Language (FSL) teacher shortage, the committee proposed recommendations were present-ed to meet two objectives: a) to ensure the viability of the English program and b) to curb FI enrolment. The options included: keeping the status quo, a 50/50 or partial French immersion program beginning in Grade 1 in dual track (English and FI housed in the same school) settings or FI centre settings, with enrolment capping in both settings; or phasing out early French immersion to be replaced with a Grade 4 entry point in one or both school settings.

Canadian Parents for French ON advocated in favour of a Junior/Senior Kindergarten entry point as the best practice: allowing for the most time on task, with 100 percent French intensity to Grade 3, followed by a gradual tapering of intensity to 50 percent French as the language of instruction. School board staff presented the trustees and the community with two additional options just prior to the final decision date. Trustees finally voted in favour of a Grade 2 entry French immersion program model with 80 percent French intensity for the first two years of the program- a model with more intensity than its current program.

Strong parent presentations in support of inclusivity influenced the final rejection of the Grade 4 entry option and clinched a "no capping" vote for now, although the threat still remains if growth of the French immersion program persists.

In a similar scenario, citing current challenges in recruiting qualified FSL teachers, the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) staff recommended to implementation of a reduction in program intensity and a district-wide percentage cap on FI enrolment. Active volunteer efforts by key trustees and effective parent delegations saved the day and the recommendations were rejected by the majority of trustees. The UGDSB French immersion program will only be capped at individual schools based on class size limits and accommodation capacity but efforts will be made to open new classes in other schools with existing space. A new FSL Advisory Committee with parent representation has also been struck and will contribute to this accommodation process.

It is no surprise that the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)

has the highest percentage of elementary FI enrolment in the province at 44 percent, as it is the hub of the Federal Government, official language policy makers and employment practitioners.

In a bold move that seems unlikely anywhere else in the province, the OCDSB voted to make a 50/50 or partial French immersion program mandatory for all children attending full day JK/SK. In doing so, the school board will garner additional FSL grant funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education of approximately \$1.7 million to augment its overall budget.

The original recommendation by OCDSB staff to reduce the intensity of the French immersion program to 60 percent, by introducing English earlier and teaching math in English, was rejected by the trustees. Instead, the French immersion program will officially begin in Grade 1 with 80 percent French-language instruction intensity, an improvement, according to best practice, over the original proposal.

A strong showing by Canadian Parents for French ON volunteer leaders, supported by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers and the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers as well as an impactful presentation by informed parents, influenced the final outcome. Had the original proposal been accepted, the French proficiency outcome of students in our nation's capital could have been compromised.

French immersion cannot fall victim to its own success. Growth of the program should be embraced as a contribution toward the Ontario Ministry of Education's overarching vision and guiding document "Achieving Excellence".

French immersion is a success story in need of a broad-based strategic plan and action steps to meet the demand of the future the future – one that will ensure the appropriate supply and retention of FSL teachers in Ontario, and across the country and unfettered access to the best FSL programs we are able to deliver.

The dedication and hard work of so many people made a difference here and will have an impact on the French-language learning experience and final proficiency outcomes of the future French immersion students in these three school boards.

Canadian Parents for French members and volunteers are awesome! ■



Helpful coping strategies

for the stressors in second language learning

By Cameron Montgomery, Assistant Professor, University of Ottawa

Introduction

Learning a second language is usually accompanied by emotions that can either be positive or negative. An example of a positive emotion would be motivation and eustress (i.e. a positive form of stress that is related to enjoyment and pushes one towards the accomplishment of a task). Conversely, negative emotions that are common in second language learning are language anxiety (LA), nervousness, and stress (in this case stress that is debilitating). Coping with these negative emotions or stressors may be challenging for second language learners. French as a Second Language has become increasingly popular in Canada. It is important to better understand some of the implications of stressors in French immersion students and explore how they use different coping strategies for these stressors.

Research on Anxiety and Perceived Language Competence

In a previous study on anxiety and perceptions of linguistic competence in English and French, Montgomery and Spalding, (2005) compared results of Anglophone, Francophone, and mixed-heritage university students in education at Saint Jean Campus, University of Alberta. We found that the Anglophone students, who came from different French immersion programs at the elementary and high school levels, were the most anxious when speaking French, and perceived themselves to be the lowest in terms of their competence to speak French. Also, all of the students in this study indicated they were anxious when speaking French or English to a person of authority, when they felt ill prepared for a certain class assignment, and when they had to give a formal presentation.

Implications and Coping Strategies for French immersion

These findings have important implications for second language learning, especially French immersion, at all levels: elementary, high school, and university. In the classroom, students are often asked to present in front of their peers and their teacher which would be a major stressor when considering the results of the above study. It is important for both teachers and parents to help students prepare for their presentations and guide them in a non-threatening way. More specifically, teachers could ask students to practice their presentations in small groups before the actual classroom presentation.

Another functional coping strategy are formative co-evaluations in small groups and self-evaluations before the actual presentation. Students would therefore receive a critique that is non-threatening because the summative evaluation aspect is still absent, and would find ways to improve. Encouraging peers to find at least one constructive criticism and one point that students should improve upon is a concrete formative evaluation tool in helping students build self-confidence and improve their perceptions of their linguistic competence.

Another useful coping strategy for second language learners is full immersion in a natural linguistic milieu. Students in the Montgomery and Spalding (2005) study studied and lived in Edmonton, Alberta which is a majority linguistic English environment. The Francophone students in this study perceived their



competence as being higher than the Anglophone and mixed-heritage students because they had the advantage of either coming from a French speaking country or having parents that communicated with them in French. Encouraging Anglophone students to study abroad would be useful and effective when learning French as a second language because of the socialization that is an inherent process of every day life. Various studies have proven that it is more effective to immerse students in a linguistic environment where one is forced to communicate and adapt compared to learning and studying a language in a classroom environment which may seem more static and artificial. It would, however, be important to prepare students for a full immersion in another environment both linguistically and emotionally. A helpful coping strategy for students would be role playing (for example, buying a bus or train ticket) for situations that they would certainly encounter.

Conclusion

In this article we re-examined a previous study by Montgomery and Spalding (2005) that looked at anxiety and perceptions of French and English competence. We learned that Anglophone university students may be experiencing anxiety and perceive their competence in French to be lower than Francophone and mixed-heritage students. We also highlighted that all of the students felt anxiety in certain specific situations (i.e. doing a presentation or speaking to someone of authority). The implications of this study reach out to all levels of French immersion and remind us of the importance of helping students succeed through preparation and guidance which are two pillars of modern pedagogy. Creating a learning community whereby students evaluate themselves and each other in a nonthreatening environment is another key to successful language learning, growth and development. Finally, encouraging students to fully immerse themselves in a linguistic majority Francophone environment (e.g. France or Quebec) is an effective tool for second language acquisition. ■

Canada: A Great Place to Call Home

Canadian Parents for French is working on a poster to celebrate the 175th milestone anniversary of responsible government in Canada. This poster will illustrate how Louis Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin's work led to Canada gaining independence without revolution, creating a bicultural nation which protected and respected both French and English cultures. The inevitable outcome from this ground work led to women's rights, aboriginal rights, inclusion of minorities, and an openness to immigration.

The full colour poster will illustrate key people and their contributions capturing the full breadth of the effect of responsible government in developing the shared vision and leadership to establish Canada's bilingual status with discussion activities for parents, teachers and youth on the overleaf.



Keep your eyes peeled for this exciting new poster!



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» THEME: Write a 750-word letter, in French, addressed to your future self that you will read in 10 years. Your letter must contain the words: *"passion," "rêve(s)," "bilingue," "français," "se surpasser," "accomplir" and "futur".**

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Flash Mob à ton école!



Last year as part of *Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie (RVF)*, *La Cité collégiale* pitted francophone schools from across the country against each other to create giant flash mobs involving their students. Students, teachers, principals, support staff, and even some parents got together to learn some pre-determined dance steps and showed off their skills by recording their mob talents and having them posted on the RVF website.

This year Canadian Parents for French is supporting RVF in extending the challenge to French immersion schools and classrooms! Look out for the opportunity to show off your schools during the month of March 2017!



Follow the link to see last year's submissions

<http://rvf.ca/contest-flash-ton-ecole-final.php>

***Si on entend les sons, on peut dire les mots. Si on lit les sons, on peut épeler les mots.
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If students hear it, they can say it. If students can say it, they can read it. If students can read it, they can write it."





Tips for Parents from Parents

By Virginia Ouimet, Summer Student, Canadian Parents for French National

You've done it! You've registered your child in a French as a Second Language program! You're in it for the long haul and you are prepared to — to — to what? Goodness, you've made it this far and now all you can do is stare into the unfamiliar black hole before you. Let's say you're not bilingual; how, then, will you help your child to be? Okay, deep breaths, you can get through this. There are so many solutions. For example, imagine how great it would be to have your future self advise you? — Now stop, that's completely irrational. . . . Right?

Actually, the idea isn't so far-fetched, and Canadian Parents for French has the next best thing for you: parents who have already gone through precisely what you're about to, and who are willing to share their expertise. We put out a call to our members and asked them for their tips for parents whose children are starting in FSL programs. Our members didn't disappoint, and had us working hours on end in an effort to narrow the pickings. Here are only a handful of the tips we received!

**Without further ado, let's hear how these
parents made their success stories . . .**

Judy Murray

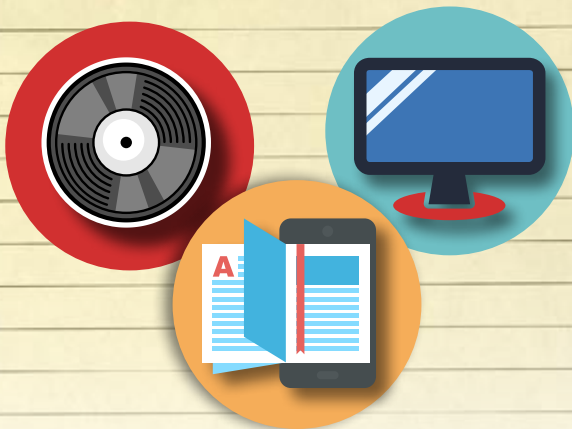
If you have the resources to get your child some consistent one on one time with a French speaking person, do it — there are never enough classroom opportunities to practice conversational French. Start early before you get to the busy, more independent and reluctant teenage years. Subscribe to French language magazines for children and teens. Kids will often read a magazine where they would not read a full length novel. Some titles for older students include Curium, Débrouillards, Geo Ado, J’Aime Lire Max!, Histoire Junior, Okapi, Virgule.



Victoria Wishart

My children liked to watch familiar movies in French or with French sub-titles. Most children’s DVDs have a language option, and watching “Finding Nemo” or “Ice Age” in French was effortless for them since they knew it so well.

Lots of our road trips involved renting books on CD from the library. We often got them in French, and even if the kids dozed off while listening, they were tuning their ears to the sounds of the language.



Kim Currie

I bought my child graphic comic books, like Archie comics, Asterix, TinTin, and Les Schtroumpfs, in French. Pictures really help young learners follow the story’s plot. Having pictures can encourage them to continue reading in French even though it is usually harder for them than reading in English.



Alanda Lantz

Use online supports! There are tons of them, many listed on the CPF website. Lots of Apps for games, dictionaries, etc.

Kathryn Standing

Now that our son has successfully completed 13 years of French immersion, I can offer some tips:

Believe in the system: even when you feel unable to help your child or he or she is frustrated, remember how much learning another language is helping the mental and emotional growth of your child’s brain.

It’s okay if you can’t help your child with his or her homework: they will become more independent, and they are more than capable of doing it on their own.

Trust the teacher: even if you feel that your child is being pushed too hard, there’s a good chance he or she is, but the challenge is beneficial to the child’s growth and confidence

There you have it! After years of grumbling about French, he is now off to university in the fall to study, you guessed it, FRENCH!



Johanna Elliot

My tip would be that if your child is having difficulty with reading, the problem will most likely be in French and their first language. Don't let others convince you to give up on FSL education especially if your child is speaking well. The extra time spent on one language improves reading and comprehension in both languages.

Deb Bowyer

I think my favourite thing we did, as parents, when our kids were in Kindergarten was to setup a private Parent Facebook page. It allowed us to get to know each other's families and to easily setup group play dates, special events like Christmas skating parties, end of school lunch at a local playground, share photos, ask questions, get help, etc.

Because of that, I think that our group of about 27 students, is one of the closest groups of students in French Immersion.

Mary-Jo Mancuso

As a teacher of Core French for the past 18 years and as a parent of 3 kids in Core French programs, I believe one of the most important tips for learning any language is to have a positive attitude towards learning.



Jane Keith

When a misinformed educator suggests your child with ADHD, or any other learning challenge, will do better in the English program, don't believe the myths. Bring out the research that proves otherwise and go after learning supports for your special needs child. And contact CPF for access to the most up to date research, and for support and encouragement from other parents who are going through the exact same challenges as you are. You don't have to do this alone!

Pat Webster

Make learning relevant. If there is a French-language popular singer who you think your son or daughter will like, make sure they are aware of it.

Jacque Arling

My son is in grade 6 French immersion. He has no exposure to French outside of school. So as part of our 'screen time negotiation', I said that if he wants to watch television, he must start with 1 show in French. On the iPad or other devices, you can change the setting to French. When he goes on Netflix, he then has to watch his favourite shows in French. Along with other online resources, this is another way for him to be exposed to French speaking outside of school.



Brenda MacNeil

No Google Translate! A good dictionary is much better, since it will take into account the context of what is being said/needs to be said. That and a Bescherelle!

Ramona Parent-Boyd

Encourage your kids to always have good communication with their teachers rather than the parent always being the one. Gives the kids some responsibility.

Try to vacation in a French speaking area once in a while if possible. Also helps them understand why they are learning French.

Because of that, I think that our group of about 27 students, is one of the closest groups of students in French Immersion.



Paul and Cheryl LeBlanc

Being available as a chaperone for your child’s experiential excursions, such as attending the *Festival du Voyageur* in Winnipeg, hosting a French student from Quebec for [an Experiences Canada] exchange, listening to your child repeat their French speech for the CPF *Concours d’art oratoire* for the hundredth time, enrolling your child in French-language camp; all the aforementioned keep you and your child connected while acquiring French as an alternate language. It takes commitment and perseverance from both you and your child to keep going.



Connie Antonsen

While travelling to France and Quebec, our kids did the speaking for us. This was a great bonus, and it made the language very real to them.



Lorraine Zozula-Noel

I believe the best advice is to immerse the whole family. If your child has an opportunity to go to French camp please take it. Or simply make many play dates with your children’s friends who are also in French immersion.



Dr. Francis Andrew

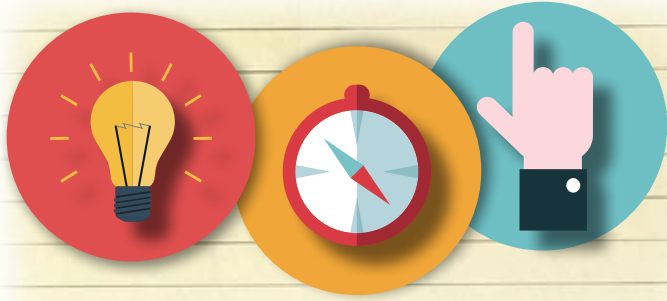
The Explore Program is perhaps the best program your children can attend to practice their French. Do not wait for the year they can apply for it. Build up an expectation so that when that year arrives, they can apply with their friends. A great opportunity for a first time away from home in an exciting and safe environment.

Kathryn Standing

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It’s okay if you can’t help your child with his or her homework: they will become more independent, and they are more than capable of doing it on their own.

After years of grumbling about French, [my son] is now off to university in the fall to study, you guessed it, FRENCH!



Jenn Ball

Get Involved! English-speaking parents are welcome in French immersion schools. Join field trips, volunteer in the school, help with school events and programs, participate in Parent Council meetings. You can be involved and support your child's school journey, and as a parent you are not expected to know French. If you're lucky, some of it will rub off on you over time!



Charlene Dobie

The best tip I can give a parent is to become an active member of your CPF Chapter and if there isn't one in your community then work with like-minded parents to start one. This is where you can collaborate with and learn from other parents who are working towards the same goal, having their children become bilingual.

Alright! Finally we have our binoculars out and can see that beyond the big black hole an entire planet of diverse culture and language awaits discovery. Entering your child in a French as a Second Language program is a start, but the journey has only just begun. At the end of it, your child will reap all the benefits of learning a second language and none of the deficits because, well, there aren't any. Keep looking toward that faraway planet; in time, you'll find it isn't so far after all. **Bonne Chance!**



If you have any tips and tricks which worked for you let us know! Email us at cpf.magazine@cpf.ca as we will add to these tips to post them on the CPF National website.

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Mauril Bélanger

'the most decent man in politics'

It is with great sadness that CPF received the news of the death of the Honourable Mauril Bélanger on August 16, 2016.

Liberal Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier for over 20 years, Bélanger was a low key politician who put his local constituents and community building first.

A longtime supporter of Canadian Parents for French, he was among the first champions of rapprochement, promoting linguistic appreciation between French and English in Canada.

Mauril Bélanger was born on June 15, 1955 in Mattawa, Ontario. His parents were French speakers from a small town in Quebec. He attended the University of Ottawa, graduating as president of the student confederation with a Bachelor of Arts in English in 1980 to improve his second language. He then began his endeavor in the world of politics. He worked for a time under the late MP Jean Luc Pépin who, upon his retirement, implored Bélanger to ensure continued support of CPF.

Bélanger readily picked up the torch, and proudly supported CPF whenever he was called upon. As a proud Franco-Ontarian, he is known as a strong advocate for French language rights, and the champion of Ottawa's Montfort Hospital, that was slated to be shut down in 1997 after the government of Ontario made the decision to close the only French-language teaching hospital in the vicinity. Bélanger created SOS Montfort, fought and won to keep the facility open. He was an ardent defender of linguistic duality and national unity, and



an advocate for Canadian co-operatives. He strived to strengthen human rights and democracy in Canada and abroad, particularly in Africa, and worked tirelessly for social and cultural diversity to ensure a fair, inclusive and equitable society for all Canadians. In 2005, he was awarded an order of La Francophonie, *Commandeur de l'Ordre de la Pléiade*, in recognition of his efforts to inspire international cooperation and friendship. Then, in 2009, Bélanger was acknowledged for developing goodwill and comradeship by the Royal Canadian Legion. Determined to underscore the 50th anniversary of the Canadian flag, in February 2015, Bélanger developed a poster and personally toured schools to speak with students on its importance as a Canadian symbol of democracy.

Despite being diagnosed with Bulbar ALS in November 2015 – a particularly cruel form of the disease that affects about one-third of sufferers and strikes first in the area of the brain that controls the head, face and neck – he continued to serve his riding. In December, Bélanger introduced for the second time a private member's bill to change the English version of the Canadian national anthem's wording to be more inclusive and gender neutral. Unable to speak on his own, he used a computer tablet to speak for him. He was unanimously voted Honorary Speaker of the House of Commons in December 2015. On April 6, 2016, Bélanger was our host on Parliament Hill for the first CPF FSL Awareness Breakfast in celebration of the 50th anniversary of French Immersion. Although unable to attend in person, Bélanger shared his message with guests and CPF members on the positive impact that the teaching of French as a Second Language has had on Canada over the half century.

Mauril was always available to provide us with wise counsel. He recommended not wavering from the course and always being open with people. He led through service, building community with care and tenacity. CPF wishes to honour his vision and his memory. All of us at CPF offer our sincerest condolences to his wife Catherine and extended family. Merci Mauril, your quiet, wise advice will be with us always. ■

CPF's Laurier Project



Over the course of three days in August, 19 students aged 16-23 from across the country gathered in Ottawa to create videos to kick off CPF's Sir Wilfrid Laurier social media campaign #CPFLaurier. The campaign will mark Laurier's 175th birthday! It will kick off October 13 and run until November 20th.

The students had a busy schedule while in Ottawa. Upon arrival they received a tour of the house Laurier lived in while Prime Minister of Canada, participated in a Laurier themed scavenger hunt around Ottawa, learned the basics of movie planning and script writing, made videos, and taught CPF National staff about social media and the best way to run our social media campaign.

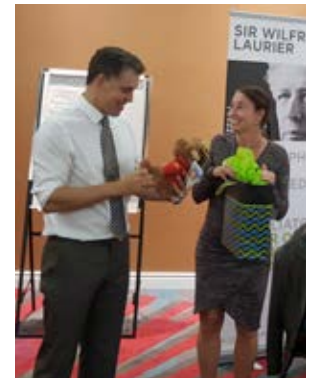
The students also enjoyed two special presentations, the first was by Catherine Carle from Fondation Dialogue, about their Laurier project. The second was by Peter Schiefke, MP for Vaudreuil-Soulanges and Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister on Youth. Mr. Schiefke talked to the students about the important impact Laurier had on Canada, the Prime Minister's Youth Council, and how being bilingual provided himself with the means to achieve two of the biggest opportunities in his life. (One of which was to be in a successful boy band in Quebec. You can see the video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNC4gzJl254.)

By the end of the second day in Ottawa, the students had put together 17 skits, all developed by students from idea to execution, which will be released over the course of the 6 week campaign. The only instruction was that they had to feature Laurier in a modern context. The range of ideas was just as diverse as the group of students. The videos will be used to help increase the social media reach of #CPFLaurier by having the students spread the word on their respective social media outlets.

The purpose of the campaign is to bring awareness to, and celebrate, Laurier's impact on Canada. We focused on four key aspects of Laurier's work: the fact that he was Canada's first francophone Prime Minister, his reputation as an excellent orator, his abilities as a conciliator, and the fact that he was the father of modern Canada.

In addition to the social media campaign, there will be a post-card contest where participants help answer the question "What is Laurier's biggest impact on Canada today?" All the submissions will be entered in a draw for a chance to win one of 10 Via Rail travel vouchers or the grand prize, a new iPad!

Look out for #CPFLaurier and #Laurier175 to help Laurier trend across Canada on November 20th! ■



Courage is a matter of will

Since 2006, the University of Ottawa has offered a French immersion option in 86 undergraduate programs, in which students must complete one third of their courses in French. Students choose courses as varied as their interests: history, nursing, biochemistry, finance, theatre, software engineering. Nearly 5,000 students have entered our French immersion program during these 10 years and we've seen them go through a lot. What is fascinating – to me at least – are the patterns that appear every year, regardless of the students' programs of study or their French abilities. *On y jette un coup d'oeil ensemble?*

By Marc Gobeil, Director of the French immersion Studies, University of Ottawa

Courage

As if going to university isn't hard enough, some brave souls choose to study in TWO languages. Whether they did Core, Extended or immersion, they generally have learned French while surrounded by other English speakers, so it takes guts to pick the more challenging path to their university degree. I think it's important for the parents, teachers and university employees to recognize and applaud that choice; yet perhaps it's even more important for the students themselves to recognize it. Being aware of upcoming challenges and being prepared to face them is better than going forward blindly and being surprised. « *Le courage, c'est une affaire de volonté.* »

The freak out

Ok, so you admit you're courageous and you think you're ready for a university class in French, but that won't stop you from being slammed as if the Millennium Falcon just landed on your head. Nearly every student I have met said their first week of university classes in French was soooo hard!! There are new and complicated words being used, professors with weird accents or who use slang that Madame in Grade 12 would never dare utter! I will always remember that student who came to see us after only 45 minutes of her first class of *Sociologie* and wanted to drop out of French immersion. (Update: She calmed down, persevered and graduated last year.)

Two things to remember here:

Premièrement, when you jump into a cold pool, it's shocking at first but don't you get used to the water after a minute or two? Same principle with university courses in French. You will soon get used to the accents, the speed of conversation and the strange new vocabulary. *Deuxièmement*, even your university courses in English will challenge you with terms like hegemony or agrarian socialists. Once you get "used to the water", you can relax and start to enjoy what you're doing.

Competence vs confidence

Our students' level of French varies from high intermediate (roughly DELF B1) to

very advanced (DALF C1), but there are two factors in constant play with one another: How good they are and how they feel about it. Some students' French is excellent, but they won't dare speak to me, while others struggle to put sentences together, yet are so determined that they will speak in French to everyone. I understand – you're embarrassed about your accent and afraid the Francophone students will learn your secret Anglophone identity; you're still unsure about using *le* instead of *la* and fear that you won't ever be perfectly bilingual. So here's a little secret: You'll never be a perfect bilingual and you'll probably always have an accent – and that's absolutely ok! Just accept it and learn to laugh at yourself a little bit. Now that that's out of the way, can we get on with your bilingual journey?

What we have observed is that students are usually much better than they think. And while it might not seem like your

French skills improve during your first year of university studies in French, they really do. But what is incredibly obvious to anyone around you, yet won't show up on your report card, is the remarkable increase in your confidence. As early as the second semester, our students feel they can study almost anything they want in French, and that in and of itself is well worth celebrating. Over subsequent years, the French skills can really blossom!

Students have spent so much time learning French that it would be a shame to abandon it just as it's about to pay off on the job market. There are FSL opportunities at several colleges and universities across the country and they absolutely should be considered. Contact any one of us to find something that matches your ambitions. *Il nous fera plaisir vous appuyer dans vos démarches.* ■

I could go on for pages and pages (but the editors at CPF warned me about that), so I give the last words to our students. They are the ones living this crazy French immersion experience at the University of Ottawa, so who better to pass along words of wisdom to high school students?



You will think that a classroom full of French kids is scary, and it is – at first. But many of them are happy to welcome you and work with you. So just put yourself out there, and as uncomfortable as it might be in the beginning, you get so used to it that at some point it simply becomes normal.



PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE! It seems obvious, but if you're going to study in French you really need to work on your French skills – especially before you start your first semester. It's surprising how quickly you get rusty. That means don't go all summer without doing any French. Take a trip to a place where they speak French; do the Explore program; change your phone's settings to French; watch movies with the French audio track or with French subtitles; watch stuff on YouTube. Basically, keep working on those French muscles all summer.



Be prepared to put in the extra effort. Yes, studying in French can be more work – reading takes longer, writing essays is harder, oral presentations seem scarier. But the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. You CAN do this, but you do have to commit to it.

“Where are they now?” is growing!

The program started by CPF Branches BC-YK and AB is going East!

Last year two CPF Branches started a project to find out what French as a Second Language graduates are doing now and how French has helped their careers. They created 25 video testimonials of former FSL grads telling their stories.

Visit WhereAreTheyNow.ca

This year CPF’s Atlantic Branches picked up the mantle and started phase 2 of this exciting endeavor to collect stories from their provincial graduates. The video testimonials were underway this summer with production scheduled for completion over the winter. We look forward to these former students sharing their stories with all Canadians!

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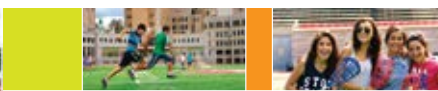
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French as a Second Language Education Across Canada

CPF Magazine is pleased to highlight the incredibly hard work completed by CPF branches across Canada in 2015/2016. These little tidbits of branch activities illustrate the unique initiatives taking place across the country. These initiatives are implemented in addition to regular Canadian Parents for French branch activities.



BRITISH COLUMBIA & YUKON

CPF BC-YK launched two key projects to connect with individuals who have greatly supported, or

greatly benefited from, French as a Second Language education here in our province and territory. These powerful personal stories are being shared amongst our volunteers and current students of FSL programs.



ALBERTA

CPF AB is really focussing and advocating in two major areas: student retention and the necessity for more inclusive

French immersion programs/classrooms. The demand from parents and direction from the Ministry of Education are forcing schools and their districts to address and meet this need. Alberta is also realizing that high registrations in elementary and the low number of graduates from high school means that work still needs to be done to address retention.



SASKATCHEWAN

With enrolments in the French immersion program increasing yearly, CPF SK's priority continues to be the development

and provision of programming for all age groups from kindergarten to Grade 12, as well as for parents. The branch actively participated in two advisory committees focusing on the development of French post-secondary opportunities in Saskatchewan.



MANITOBA

The FSL Initiative Incentive Fund supported events that motivated families to enjoy French socio-cultural activities. It enabled activities throughout the province; all were *en français* and family oriented! They included dessert cafés, excursions, craft workshops, karaoke evenings and more! Evaluations attested that parents and children truly value such

grass-roots experiences.



ONTARIO

This year, Canadian Parents for French members in Ontario rallied for "best practices" in FSL education. Faced with

recommendations to cap program enrollment and/or weaken the French immersion delivery model, parents made presentations to school board trustees and were successful at influencing the outcomes of three large school board French immersion program reviews. In all three scenarios the final outcome was an improvement over what was first proposed by senior school board staff.



NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia continues its outreach to youth as visionaries for change. Bursaries were offered to students to create

French events in their schools. CPF NS had a booth and presented a workshop at the Canadian Students Leadership conference in Halifax with over 1000 students attending from across the country.



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

This past year CPF PEI in partnership with UPEI Faculty of Education presented a *Culture and second language acquisition 2015: Perspective for the future* symposium.

More than 70 people attended including teachers, administrators, researchers, Francophone organizations and the community. The Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, was the keynote speaker.



NEW BRUNSWICK

Over the past year, the CPF NB provided complimentary memberships to all of the province's anglophone schools. As a complement to

the CPF membership offer, we also purchased a subscription to TFO's (*Télévision française de l'Ontario*) online French teaching resources, developed for all French as a Second Language programs from kindergarten to Grade 12, and provided them free of charge to all of the partnering schools.



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

The Branch created the Heather Huxter Memorial Story Writing Contest, inviting students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 to write a short story in French. Heather Huxter was a young student with an amazing love of French when she accidentally passed away. Last year, close to 200 children submitted an entry. Next year will mark the 15th anniversary of this event.

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

In the 2015-16 school year, CPF NWT and the Yellowknife Education District 1 (YK1) were successful in supporting Sir John Franklin High School and the YK1 District to encourage the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to give students credits towards graduation requirements for Career and Technology Studies courses offered in French. CPF NWT also provided some of the funding to make those classes possible. This was an exciting first in this endeavour.

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For more information please see the CPF Branches Key Contacts on page 32 of this issue.



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E: liaison@collegeboreal.ca

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W: www.french-future.org

E: saranda@francais-avenir.org

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Regina, SK S4S 0A2

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E: cite@uregina.ca

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T: 519.473.1460

W: www.oxfordlearning.com

E: rcurtis@oxfordlearning.com

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T: 514.434.2400 qc.cpf.ca

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info@cpf.bc.ca bc-yk.cpf.ca

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2 CONTACT INFORMATION—

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Your membership provides you with the opportunity to receive occasional updates from CPF as well as the *CPF Magazine* twice a year. Please confirm your consent to receive electronic communication from CPF by checking here.



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Ottawa, ON K1P 5V5

Phone: 613-235-1481
Fax: 613-230-5940
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Visit www.cpf.ca to sign up online, update your member profile and more.

We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada

Look for the Spring 2017 issue of CPF Magazine and the Summer Camps Listings



Spring and Summer Opportunities

This next issue will highlight the benefits of enrolling children in FSL programs.

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