

THE DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S) GUIDE TO EXTENDED FRENCH

(Questions and Answers)

For more information on Extended French and hints on how you can help your child, please check the board website at www.dpccsb.org click on Language Programs and then choose Extended French.

1. What is Extended French?

A regional program where 50% of the school day curriculum is delivered in French. The Extended French program begins in Grade 5 and continues into Grade 12. The program provides students with more time to work and learn in a second language. This differs from the regular FSL Core French program, which is provided to students for 40 minutes a day in Elementary and 75 minute periods in Secondary. Essentially, children will learn French at the same time as they learn 50% of curriculum content. The aim of the Extended French program is *functional bilingualism*. This means that at the end of their secondary studies, these students will be able to interact in French confidently in authentic, real life situations.

2. What areas of the Grade 5 curriculum are taught in French?

French instruction is provided in areas that present a maximum of opportunity for expression, communication, creativity and problem solving. Those areas are French Language Arts (Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing), Social Studies, Science and the option of either Visual Arts, Drama, Music and/or Physical Education. Thus, half the program is instructed in French. English Language Arts, Math, Religious Education and other subjects are still taught in English. In Secondary high schools, French, History, Geography, and Religion are the subjects offered in French.

3. Will my child learn the same things as students in English classes?

Yes, the Ontario Ministry of Education mandates the use of curriculum documents to direct the teaching and assessment for all subject areas. All teachers are using the same subject documents. In addition to the subject-specific Ontario curriculum, there is an Extended French Curriculum, which is used to instruct and assess French Language Arts (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). You can find these documents at the [Ministry of Education website](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/) (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/>)

4. Won't my child's English suffer?

By grade 5, any hearing or reading difficulties should have surfaced. Children who have difficulty in reading in English may have difficulty in French, but it is usually a difficulty with the actual skill rather than the language. Research shows¹ that many Extended and Immersion French students perform better, after a few years, than some children in the regular program on most aspects of measured English skills. This is attributed to the enhanced creativity and analytical thinking skills built up through the stimulus of schooling in two languages.

5. Shouldn't some sort of screening take place?

The program is open to any and all students who are interested in learning French. All children can learn given the right accommodations and/or modifications with instruction and assessment.

¹ Educational Leadership, Volume 61 No 2, p. 61 October 2003 The Multiple Benefits of Dual Language

- 6. What provision is there for remedial or special education in Extended French?**
Extended French students are entitled to receive all the same services as those offered to students in the English classes. Services for pupils with learning difficulties are provided in English. The development of English skills transfers to French language literacy development. If a child is in need of extra help in French, the classroom teacher will support as best as possible as any other classroom teacher would.
- 7. Who teaches the program?**
The Extended French teacher is bilingual, either because his/her first language is French or because he/she has acquired proficiency in French. These teachers will be classroom teachers who have experience with children in the junior grades. Where numbers warrant, the children will have one teacher for the Extended French program and a second teacher for the English program. Extended French teachers should be viewed as French speakers by the students otherwise, they will not feel the need to communicate in French.
- 8. What if my child has an accident and cannot communicate in French?**
All teachers speak English and, if necessary, will do so in an emergency.
- 9. What type of accent will my child have?**
Standard French vocabulary and structures are taught. Although a variety of accents exists in all languages, teachers all speak Standard or International French. As they progress through several years of Extended French, children are exposed to teachers from various parts of the world who are models of well-spoken French.
- 10. What if other children in the family are not in Extended French, can they go to the Extended French school as well?**
The problem can be with transportation or participation in after school activities. Flex boundary application must be completed, however, there is no guarantee that the Extended French centre has space for all siblings of Extended French students. If the family recognizes that different programs are equally valid for each child then those problems should not be a major concern.
- 11. Will Extended French affect my child's social development?**
Studies have shown that second language programs do not cause undue intellectual, emotional and social stress on children. While children in Extended French might tend to associate more with classmates from their own program outside the classroom, this is typical of all children.
- 12. Does it matter if parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot speak French at home?**
No. Try and be positive at all times about the program, the teacher and the school. Express any questions or concerns you might have to the principal or teacher. Do encourage your child to watch French television, read French books at their level and sign along to French songs. Understand that making mistakes is the first step in developing student confidence and language proficiency. Don't attempt to correct your child or insist on exactitude. If you child is eager to speak French at home, encourage him/her, but do not make it a chore.

Many of the above questions and answers have been adapted from "*What is Immersion?*", a booklet published by Canadian Parents for French, 309 Cooper Street, Suite 400B, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0G5