



French as a Second Language Programs

“The importance of studying French in the Canadian context cannot be overemphasized. French is not only one of Canada’s two official languages, but is also widely used throughout the world with respect to business, culture, and international diplomacy. The ability to communicate in French gives students many advantages, both in Canada and internationally, and helps them gain a better understanding and appreciation of French-speaking societies.”

Ministry of Education (Ontario)

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board’s French as a Second Language (FSL) programs differ in intensity but share a common purpose: to develop students’ communication skills in the French language. All programs are child-centred and focus on the concurrent development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Knowledge and skills are taught in an authentic, meaningful context that emphasizes proficiency in all subject areas. The programs promote an appreciation of French culture in Canada and in other regions of the world.

Elementary Level

At the elementary level, the OCDSB offers four types of FSL programs:

- Core French
- Early French Immersion (EFI)
- Middle French Immersion (MFI)
- Late French Immersion (LFI)*

The principal aim of the Core French Program is to develop basic communication skills in French and gain an appreciation of French culture in Canada and in other parts of the world. The program allows more time to concentrate on English language skills while developing a basic level of proficiency in the French language. The program is mandatory for all elementary students not enrolled in French Immersion.

French Immersion, an optional program, is a type of bilingual education in which students receive instruction in French for a significant portion of the school day. It is designed specifically for students whose mother tongue is not French. It enables them to become functionally bilingual through a maximum exposure to French. In all French Immersion programs students study the same curriculum content as their peers in the Regular English Program.

The OCDSB provides two delivery models for French Immersion gifted students at the elementary level: congregated French Immersion classes at designated sites (gifted centres) and regular classroom with program differentiation. Students who have been identified as gifted through an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) may participate in these programs.

FSL programs are available to students residing in all areas of the District. Transportation will be provided in accordance with Board policy.

* Note: As per the December 18, 2007 Board decision the LFI Program will be phased out with the last cohort beginning the program in the 2010–2011 school year. The LFI Program begins in grade 7 after a student has had several years of mainly English

language instruction that includes a daily period of Core French. In the LFI Program, students generally receive up to two-thirds of their instruction in French and up to one-third in English. There may be small variations in the amount of instruction per language from school to school depending upon particular timetables and staff expertise.

Secondary Level

At the secondary level, the OCDSB offers three types of FSL programs:

- Core French
- Extended French
- French Immersion

The aim of the Core French Program is to provide students with fundamental communication skills in French and an understanding of the nature of the language and its culture. Core French offers students the chance to develop a usable command of the French language that can be expanded through further study or through contact with French-speaking people. At the secondary level Core French is a single credit course (110 hours) and is offered at all levels from grade 9 to 12. In keeping with Ministry requirements, French is compulsory in grade 9. Core French is offered at both the academic and applied levels.

The aim of the Extended French Program is to develop students’ French-language knowledge and skills and to provide them with an understanding and appreciation of francophone culture in Canada and around the world. By the end of the four-year program students will be able to converse freely on familiar topics and will be able to read with the occasional help of a dictionary, books, magazines, and newspapers in French. They will also be able to function in a French-speaking community. Schools grant a certificate in Extended French if the student has successfully completed the sequence of four courses in Extended French and a minimum of three courses in other subjects taught in French.

The aim of the French Immersion Program is to develop and refine students’ ability to communicate in French as well as to expand their knowledge of the language through the study of francophone literature. By the end of the four-year program students will participate easily in conversations and discussions. They will also be able to take courses at the college or university level in which French is the language of instruction and will be able to accept employment in which French is the working language. Schools offering French Immersion will accommodate students opting for Extended French certificates. The Extended French certificate will be granted to students by meeting the credit requirements for the Extended French Program. Schools grant a certificate in French Immersion if the student has successfully completed the sequence of four courses in French Immersion and a minimum of six courses in other subjects taught in French.

At the secondary level French Immersion Gifted Congregated programs are offered at certain designated gifted centres. Students who have been identified as gifted through an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) may participate in these programs. The admission criteria for entry into a secondary gifted program are available through the school.

FSL Program	Core French	Early French Immersion (EFI)	Middle French Immersion (MFI)
<p>Description of program</p>	<p>In the Core French Program students develop basic oral comprehension and communication skills. The program is mandatory for all elementary students not enrolled in French Immersion.</p> <p>In junior and senior kindergarten students receive 100 minutes of French language instruction weekly. From grades 1 to 8 students are taught Core French for a total of 200 minutes per week.</p> <p><i>Note: Core French instruction serves as an important base for students entering one of the French Immersion programs (Early French Immersion or Middle French Immersion).</i></p>	<p>In the Early French Immersion (EFI) Program students are provided with the opportunity to become functionally bilingual through an early entry with maximum exposure to French.</p> <p>In the EFI Program senior kindergarten and grade 1 students receive 100 per cent of their program in French. In grades 2 and 3 students receive 80 per cent of their program in French. In grades 4 to 6 students receive 60 per cent of their program in French. In grades 7 and 8 students receive 50 per cent of their program in French.</p> <p><i>Note: The OCDSB Elementary Time Allocation Model outlines the language of instruction and number of minutes of instruction per week in each subject area.</i></p>	<p>In the Middle French Immersion (MFI) Program students are provided with the opportunity to obtain a solid foundation in English language skills in the primary grades before starting intensive study of a second language.</p> <p>The MFI Program begins in grade 4 after a student has had several years of mainly English language instruction that includes 200 minutes per week of Core French. In grades 4 to 6 students receive 66 per cent of their instruction in French. Generally all subjects, with the exception of English Language Arts and Mathematics, are taught in French. In grades 7 and 8 students receive 50 per cent of their program in French.</p> <p><i>Note: The OCDSB Elementary Time Allocation Model outlines the language of instruction and number of minutes of instruction per week in each subject area.</i></p>
<p>Eligibility for program</p>	<p>All students entering junior and/or senior kindergarten are provided with Core French instruction. The mandated Core French Program continues through to grade 9 for any student not enrolled in a French Immersion Program. Core French is available as an optional course for students in grades 10 to 12.</p>	<p>All students entering senior kindergarten are eligible for enrolment in the EFI Program.</p>	<p>Students entering grade 4 are eligible for enrolment in the MFI Program.</p>
<p>Expected outcomes for students in the program</p>	<p>A student who successfully completes the Core French Program is expected to have a basic level of proficiency in the French language.</p> <p><i>Note: The Core French Program is mandatory for all elementary students not enrolled in French Immersion.</i></p>	<p>A student who successfully completes the EFI Program is expected to be able to communicate with ease and feel comfortable in either language community and also accept employment, training, or further education in either language. The EFI Program produces the highest level of French proficiency, particularly in oral competency.</p> <p><i>Note: This level of achievement is attainable by a student who is enrolled in one of the Immersion programs at the elementary level and who later enrolls in a secondary level program which meets the requirements to obtain the OCDSB Extended French or French Immersion Certificate.</i></p>	<p>A student who successfully completes the MFI Program is expected to be able to communicate with ease and feel comfortable in either language community and also accept employment, training, or further education in either language.</p> <p><i>Note: This level of achievement is attainable by a student who is enrolled in one of the immersion programs at the elementary level and who later enrolls in a secondary level program which meets the requirements to obtain the Extended French or French Immersion Certificate.</i></p>
<p>Frequently Asked Questions</p>			
<p>What are the reasons given by parents for choosing this program?</p>	<p>Parents' choice of the Core French Program is frequently based on a desire to give their children a chance to develop the oral communication skills they need to understand and interact with others, to express themselves, and to communicate their own ideas.</p> <p><i>Note: At the primary level Core French curriculum expectations have been developed in order to prepare students for the provincial expectations in French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4-8, Ministry of Education curriculum.</i></p> <p><i>The Ontario Ministry of Education requires students in English-language schools to study French from grades 4 to 9 and to accumulate a minimum of 710 hours of French instruction by the end of grade 9.</i></p>	<p>Parents' choice of EFI is frequently based on a desire to give their children an opportunity to become functionally bilingual through an early entry with maximum exposure to French. Young children usually have less reticence in imitating a French role model, thus take more risks in expressing themselves in French, and get more practice. Many parents look to the EFI Program as a perceived means of improving job opportunities for their children at a later date.</p>	<p>Although there is often an element of self-selection by the student, parental choice of MFI is frequently based on a desire to give their children a chance to obtain a solid grounding in English language skills in the primary grades before starting intensive study of a second language. Many parents look to the MFI Program as a perceived means of improving job opportunities for their children at a later date.</p>

FSL Program	Core French	Early French Immersion (EFI)	Middle French Immersion (MFI)
What effect does the Immersion Program have on children's basic English language skills?		Many years of testing and research show that French Immersion has no negative effect on the development of English language skills as measured by standardized tests. There is an initial lag in English in EFI because of the delay in the introduction of English Language Arts but this disappears within the first year that English Language Arts is introduced. Some studies have even shown the enhancement of some English language and study skills of EFI students.	Many years of testing and research show that French Immersion has no negative effect on the development of English language skills as measured by standardized tests. Some studies have even shown the enhancement of some English language skills of MFI students.
What effect does the Immersion Program have on children's academic achievement in other subject areas?		Generally EFI students have not demonstrated any lags relative to the performance of Regular English/Core French Program students. On various system-wide tests the overall tendency has been for immersion students to perform as well as, or better than, comparable students in the Regular English/Core French Program.	Generally MFI students have not demonstrated any lags relative to the performance of Regular English/Core French Program students. On various system-wide tests the overall tendency has been for immersion students to perform as well as, or better than, comparable students in the Regular English/Core French Program.
How does this Immersion Program rate in terms of French language proficiency outcomes?		Studies of comparison between grade 8 students from the EFI and MFI programs found that, on the overall measure of French proficiency, EFI students on average scored higher than MFI students.	Studies of comparison between grade 8 students from the EFI and MFI programs found that, on the overall measure of French proficiency, EFI students on average scored higher than MFI students.
Does participation in a Core French or Immersion Program affect general intellectual or cognitive growth?	A number of studies suggest that bilingualism, or the process of becoming bilingual, can positively influence aspects of cognitive and linguistic growth.	A number of studies suggest that bilingualism, or the process of becoming bilingual, can positively influence aspects of cognitive and linguistic growth.	A number of studies suggest that bilingualism, or the process of becoming bilingual, can positively influence aspects of cognitive and linguistic growth.
Is the curriculum in the Immersion Program the same as in the Regular English/Core French Program?		The learning expectations and curriculum content for EFI are the same as the learning expectations and curriculum content of the Regular English/Core French Program.	The learning expectations and curriculum content for MFI are the same as the learning expectations and curriculum content of the Regular English/Core French Program.
What options are available for the students in secondary school?	Students are required to complete one compulsory credit in French offered at the grade 9 level. Interested students may continue to study Core French from grades 10 to 12.	When EFI students reach high school they may enter a French Immersion Program, an Extended French Program, or a Regular English/Core French Program.	When MFI students reach high school they may enter the French Immersion Program, the Extended French Program, or the Regular English/Core French Program. <i>Note: The principal has the right to permit students to enrol in a course for which they may not have the entrance requirements if they have achieved the necessary proficiency in French.</i>
What factors should I consider in determining which program is right for my child?	Studies show that students perform better in school if their parents/guardians are involved in their education. Parents/guardians should consider their child's curiosity and enthusiasm towards learning a second language. Parents/guardians can encourage their children to learn French by reinforcing the value of French and other cultures. Parents/guardians can offer their children the opportunity to hear and speak French in authentic situations (e.g., take a trip to Quebec, watch French television programs, read French books, listen to French music, eat at a French restaurant, etc.)	Parents/guardians should consider their child's curiosity and openness towards learning a second language as well as their child's ability to handle a temporary setback in communication skills. Parents/guardians should also consider their readiness to be supportive if their child experiences some difficulties in the beginning. Parents/guardians can also offer their children the opportunity to hear and speak French in authentic situations (e.g., take a trip to Quebec, watch French television programs, read French books, listen to French music, eat at a French restaurant, etc.) Parents/guardians are not expected to be fluent in French.	As parents/guardians have had the opportunity to evaluate their child's overall achievement and adjustment to school in the primary grades, they should consider their child's interest and feelings about entering the program, the learning skills which they have already acquired and can apply to the learning of a second language, as well as their child's ability to handle a temporary setback in communication skills. Parents/guardians should also consider their readiness to be supportive if their child experiences some difficulties in the beginning. Parents/guardians can also offer their children the opportunity to hear and speak French in authentic situations (e.g., take a trip to Quebec, watch French television programs, read French books, listen to French music, eat at a French restaurant, etc.). Parents/guardians are not expected to be fluent in French.

FSL Program	Core French	Early French Immersion (EFI)	Middle French Immersion (MFI)
How do I register my child in this program?	Parents/guardians wishing to register their child in the Regular English/Core French Program should contact the school in their local area to complete the registration process. To determine the school which serves your area, please use the School Locator tool on our website at www.ocdsb.ca or call the Planning Office at 613-596-8780. Kindergarten registration occurs in early February each year. Transportation is provided in accordance with the Transportation Policy for elementary schools.	Parents/guardians wishing to register their child in the EFI Program should contact the EFI school for their area to complete the registration process. To determine the EFI school which serves your area, please use the School Locator tool on our website at www.ocdsb.ca or call the Planning Office at 613-596-8780. Kindergarten registration occurs in early February each year. Transportation for these classes is provided in accordance with the Transportation Policy for elementary schools.	Parents/guardians wishing to register their child in the MFI Program should contact the MFI school for their area to complete the registration process. To determine the MFI school which serves your area, please use the School Locator tool on our website at www.ocdsb.ca or call the Planning Office at 613-596-8780. MFI registration occurs in early spring each year. Transportation for these classes is provided in accordance with the Transportation Policy for elementary schools.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

Are FSL programs beneficial for my child?

Yes. Regardless of the FSL Program chosen exposure to the French language provides children with many academic and social benefits, including a deeper understanding of French and French-speaking cultures, a greater number of career options, a lifelong ability to communicate in French, and a facility for learning other languages.

If I choose a French Immersion Program for my child, will it be a detriment to my child if I don't speak French myself?

No, not at all. French Immersion programs were specifically designed for children whose parents/guardians have little or no facility in French. Nevertheless, parents/guardians can still encourage their children to learn French by reinforcing the value of French and other cultures. Parents/guardians can offer their children the opportunity to hear and speak French in authentic situations (e.g., take a trip to Quebec, watch French television programs, read French books, listen to French music, eat at a French restaurant, etc.).

Will my child receive English language instruction in a French Immersion Program?

Yes. With the exception of senior kindergarten and grade 1 in the EFI Program, where 100 per cent of the instruction is in French, students in both EFI and MFI will receive English language instruction for English Language Arts. By grade 4 students in both programs will also receive English language instruction for Mathematics through to grade 8.

Is it true that French Immersion is only for 'gifted' children?

No. Any student enrolled in the school district is eligible for a French Immersion Program. Children with a variety of learning needs and abilities are enrolled in French Immersion programs.

Can a student who is currently an English language learner enrol in a French Immersion program?

Yes. Research indicates that learning a second, or even a third, language at an early age is possible and has a positive impact on intellectual growth. Cognitive development is enriched and enhanced, as immersion students develop learning skills that they may apply to their first language, other academic subject areas, and life experiences.

Will a French Immersion Program mask, or even worsen, any learning difficulties my child might have?

No. Academic ability is not related to performance in French language skills. A child's learning difficulties in reading, writing, or other subject areas will surface regardless of the language of instruction. These difficulties should not normally be a barrier to bilingual education. French Immersion teachers are very aware of children who may be experiencing learning problems and will work with your child to provide the learning support services required.

Research studies have shown that students who learn another language develop a number of very useful academic and cognitive skills, which they transfer to learning English and other languages as well as to other subjects. Through second-language learning, students' problem-solving, reasoning and creative-thinking skills improve; they also tend to be more tolerant and respectful of other cultures. In addition to these academic and social benefits, the ability to communicate in another language provides students with a distinct advantage in a number of careers. Students also derive generic job skills from learning another language — flexibility, communication, the ability to understand complex issues, the capacity for dealing with uncertainty — all skills that are greatly valued in the workplace.

The Secondary Curriculum Policy Document, Core, Extended, and Immersion French, Grades 9 and 10, September, 1998
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