

A celebration of Red Deer Public Schools' French Immersion Programs

The French Immersion Program

French Immersion is the program of studies in which French is the language of instruction for a significant part of the school day. All subjects are taught in French (except the formal study of English.) French Immersion is designed for students whose first language is not French. The objective is full mastery of the English language, functional fluency in French, as well as an understanding and appreciation of the French culture.

You don't have to speak French!

The French Immersion program is designed for children whose parents do not usually speak French. Parent-teacher conferences are held in English and report cards are always written in English. Most immersion parents have either a limited knowledge of French or no working knowledge of the language. Parents can help at home by: reading to their child in English, visiting the public library, going on family outings, communicating openly with the child and the school, and providing the encouragement and support that all students need. In Canada, we enjoy easy access to print and electronic media in French. Your support and involvement in your child's education is essential.

Why learn French?

There are many important reasons for learning French. Not only does French enable students to communicate directly in one of Canada's official languages, it also increases appreciation and understanding of another culture. This is an essential skill in a global society where there are educational and career opportunities around the World.

Understanding two languages helps children develop general knowledge. It enhances their ability to read and write in both English and French. It increases their thinking abilities and problem solving skills, thus creating more flexible thinkers.

French opens the door to travel and work opportunities in all parts of Canada, and in any of the 30 countries around the world where French is spoken.

French is a stepping stone to learning other languages, particularly Spanish, Italian and Portuguese.

Success of French Immersion

After 40 years of growth and development, French Immersion is one of the most studied educational programs. French Immersion is known all over the world as the "Great Canadian Invention" that worked.

Each year, thousands of students graduate with excellent language skills in both languages. Many of these graduates have also said that they would enroll their own children in French Immersion...**French Immersion Works!**

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Kindergarten... A Great Start

In a typical French Immersion kindergarten class, acting is a big part of a teacher's job. Gestures, mime, pictures and props are used to help children understand. Songs, poems, storytelling and choral speaking, as well as daily routines, are used to help students become familiar with French words and phrases.



It's a natural process...

In this gentle immersion approach, the learning of a second language is similar to how children learn their first language. At first, children associate the teacher's words and gestures with objects, actions and feelings. As children watch and listen, they gradually begin to chant along, join in the choral speaking and imitate the teacher by repeating French vocabulary. Before long, children move from single words and simple phrases to sentences. During this time, the French Immersion kindergarten teacher encourages the children's earliest attempts to speak French and praises them for their efforts. With this positive reinforcement, children are inspired to continue taking risks in speaking a second language. In the same light, if a child makes a mistake, the teacher doesn't focus on the error, but instead uses repetition and role modelling to help the child learn the correct way.

Confidence and skills blossom...

After Christmas, "Show and Tell" is introduced as part of the French Immersion kindergarten routine. "Show and Tell" activities give students a motivating opportunity to put into practice the French phrases they have learned in a non-threatening environment. Kids feel empowered to demonstrate what they know and once they have done it, they feel very proud of their accomplishments. Parents and French Immersion teachers are equally proud to see their students' skills and confidence blossom.



Grade One . . . Beginning Early Immersion

The success of the program is due largely to the fact that students are not just studying the language, but are using it in meaningful ways. The time spent learning about number patterns in mathematics, about plants in science or about the family in Social Studies is also time spent learning new vocabulary and new sentence structures in French.

The teacher focuses on routines and on encouraging the students to use French vocabulary in the classroom setting. French Immersion teachers use a variety of techniques to encourage students to express themselves in their second language. You will often hear a French Immersion teacher ask questions which invite a student to expand a statement or express an idea in more detail. The teacher is constantly on the alert for opportunities where language development can occur effectively.

Hearing the language is the first step

The first step in teaching a second language is to attune the student's ear. Like an infant, the student needs to hear the language before speaking it. The grade one teacher uses body language and visual clues to assist in the process. Students become very good listeners and detectives as they discover together what the teacher is communicating. It is not uncommon in a grade one French Immersion classroom to hear several students explaining to the others what the teacher is saying. In this way, it is possible for the teacher to speak French at all times. The teacher will only speak English if a student's health or safety is at risk.

The Immersion teacher uses themes to help students develop new French vocabulary. Books, videos, computer software and guest presentations are all techniques that help capture students' attention while immersing them in the language and culture.

When students enter grade one, they speak very little French. However, by January, the students have made significant progress. They are able to express themselves in French with the use of the occasional English word. By April, they are encouraged to communicate mainly in French with the teacher and their peers.



Learning the curriculum... in French

French Immersion grade one students complete the Alberta Education mandated grade one curriculum, in French. Progress is rapid once basic language skills have been developed. By the end of grade one, the French Immersion process is fully under way!

What Our Kids Say...

It was pretty good, not scary, just surprised about how many new words I was learning.

~Bree Andras, Gr 2

The thing I like the most about French Immersion is playing French games and talking in French.

~Edan Chu, Gr 4

It actually wasn't that hard when I started French Immersion kindergarten cause everybody was at the same grade as me. Every day we all got a little better at French. Nobody was behind. It's good for them in the future because it won't be hard for them if they go to a place where people speak French. They can also have more jobs.

~Marina Brese, Gr 3

I can communicate with my friends and classmates in a different language.

~Kendra Blanchard, Gr 5

I thought it would be awesome—un petit peu nerveux, mais après c'était bon.

~Eric Wettstein, Gr 2

What I like most about French Immersion is that it is always fun to learn and master something new.

~Taylor Macleod, Gr 5

Middle School

École Intermédiaire Central Middle School is the school which is responsible for Immersion at the grades 6, 7, and 8 levels. It is a dual track school, with both English and French programs available. The Immersion program has two streams. The first is Early Immersion for students who have been in the program since elementary school. The second is Late French Immersion for students who are beginning in grade 6. This allows late entry for students who are deciding to meet the challenge after elementary school. The two streams are partially merged in grade nine at Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School. Central Middle School students have the opportunity to travel to Quebec in grade 8.

Late Immersion

"A student considering Late French Immersion needs to be a capable and motivated learner, willing to put in an effort to learn a second language," said Barrie Wilson, former Principal of Ecole Central Middle School. "We spend the first three months of grade 6 developing a good language base, organizational and study skills in order to give the students a good foundation for their studies in French," added Wilson. The program has grown steadily since its inception.

When I started Late French Immersion in grade 6, I was very nervous and I wasn't sure I would be able to learn; but, we would do songs and other stuff that would help us remember how to say things. It took us some time. In the end I've come a long way with French and I think it's all worth it!

~Bryan Schaerer, Gr 8

What Our Graduates Say...

I not only gained the confidence and skills that I needed to learn a second language, I also gained a sense of community and developed strong relationships within the classroom. This community allowed me to feel comfortable among my peers and to build lasting friendships.

~Kate Goertzen (University Student)

I really enjoyed the French trips where you can use what you've learnt first-hand.

~Lucas Aimoe (RCMP)

What Our Kids Say...

I love late French Immersion. You have to **think all** of the time!

~Paul Demers, Gr 12

Even though it wasn't my idea to take French Immersion, I have really come to like it. It's a lot of fun.

~Emran Ibrahim, Gr 7

Late French Immersion is an extraordinary experience. The teachers are helpful, caring, professional and fun. I would recommend this program.

~Daniel Berday, Gr 8



I remained in French Immersion as I realized how much I truly enjoy the language.

~Keziah Barnes-Armstrong, Gr 12

Learning a second language for 12 years is worth it because of the endless opportunities it opens. I have been able to travel and communicate with people from all over the world...French Immersion has provided me with a different worldview that I can see being an essential part of my future.

~Rebecca Stuber, Gr 12

We are always together, which allows for the creation of very close friends, and creates a comfortable environment. Because I studied in French my whole life, I have been able to work at very interesting jobs, such as the House of Commons Page Program as a Student Mentor for the University of Ottawa, and as a Tour Guide at Parliament. Immersion prepared me for my Spanish studies in Chile.

~Jiliane Golczyk (University Student)

High School

Students complete their French Immersion program and receive their bilingual diploma at Ecole Secondaire Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School.

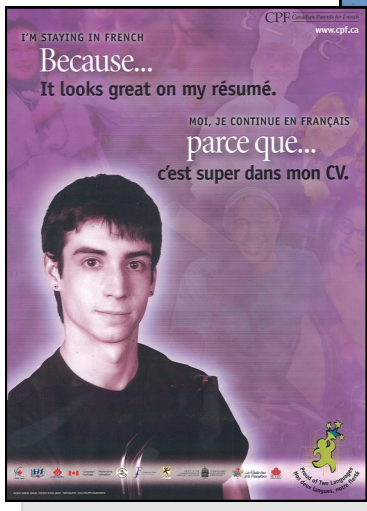
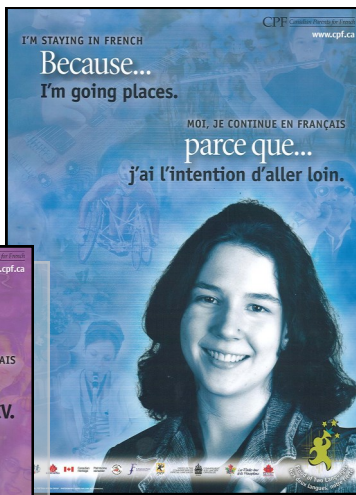
Students who have completed the program are eligible for a bilingual certificate. In addition, Lindsay Thurber is one of the few schools that allows students to combine French Immersion with some International Baccalaureate IB courses.

Diplôme d'études en langue française—DEL F

The DELF is recognized in 165 countries and is offered by 965 accredited centres throughout the world, including 19 in Canada. As an official certification of second-language proficiency, the DELF tests the ability of students to use French in real-life situations. This framework has now become accepted as a way of benchmarking language ability all over the world.



<http://www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/index.php>



Lindsay Thurber has offered an exchange programme to MULHOUSE, FRANCE for over 20 years!



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP 1993-2013
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Courses Offered

French Language Arts 9, 10, 20-1, 30-1
Études Sociales 9, 10-1, 20-1, 30-1, 30-2
Sciences 9, 10
Physique 20, 30
Chimie 20, 30
Biologie 20, 30
Mathématiques 9, 10C, 20-1, 30-1
Éducation Physique 9, 10
Carrière et vie 20

International Certificate

Students who fulfill the components in each of the 4 modules of the Red Deer Public Schools' International Certificate program, will also receive an International Certificate recognizing their achievements.

http://internationalservices.rdpd.ab.ca/docs/library/International%20certificate%20brochure%20final%20draft_1.pdf

Bilingual Certificate

Students who graduate with 60 credits or more in Immersion courses will receive a Bilingual Certificate of Excellence.

Students who graduate with 46 credits in Immersion courses will receive a Bilingual Certificate of Merit.

Program Features

Dual-track French Immersion Programs

Red Deer Public Schools offer French Immersion in dual-track schools, which means French Immersion and English students are housed in the same building.

"This approach promotes tolerance and understanding among our students. It provides opportunities for interaction between the English and French programs to the benefit of all our students," said Director of International Education, Rob Porkka. This approach has been very successful. Students are able to continue their language studies and enjoy all the options and opportunities that a large established high school has to offer. Students may continue in French Immersion and in specialized programs such as International Baccalaureate (IB.) and Music.

Formal English instruction starts Grade 3

In order to give students a solid grounding in their second language, Red Deer Public's French Immersion schools focus on French instruction in Kindergarten through Grade 2. Formal English instruction is introduced at the beginning of grade 3. Students do well in English as they use their French language skills as a springboard to English language learning!

Why learn a second language?

When making educational choices for their young children, parents are recognizing the importance of knowing a second language in today's ever shrinking world. Consider the many advantages!

Canadian Parents for French (CPF)

Putting your child in French Immersion is a big step, especially if you don't speak French. CPF exists to provide support for parents. CPF can be contacted at:

info@cpfalta.ab.ca www.cpfalta.ab.ca



School councils

All parents are welcome to be actively involved in their School Council.



What Our Parents Say...

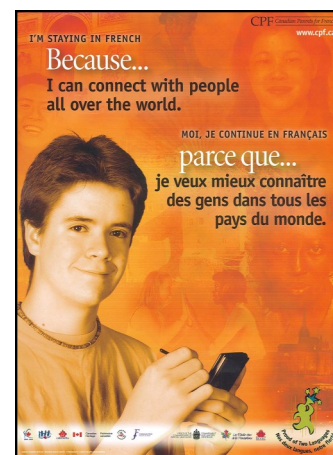


We chose to enroll our boys in French Immersion to take advantage of their great early learning potential and to offer them an opportunity to a more diverse education than we, ourselves had as children.

~House family

Although formal English was not taught in the first few years, their English language proficiency was improved by the fact that they were learning grammar in both languages. Siblings learn to help each other a lot with their homework.

~Colin and Silvana Holmes



This process develops cerebral capacity in other academic disciplines, it broadens perspective, inspires curiosity, and equips children to face their increasingly complex, global environment with greater confidence and sense of accomplishment. Our high school children have thanked us repeatedly for enrolling them in French immersion.

~Vesna Higham

It offers an appreciation for a broader world view through language.

Advice we would give...

Not to panic if you can't help them with their homework. They can translate it into English for you and in fact become very independent in their study and homework.

~Ed & Lynnette Grose

The biggest piece of advice I would give would be: not to let the fear that you don't know French to influence your decision

~Mrs. Scholer

Frequently Asked Questions—FAQ's

Who can register in the French Immersion program? The French Immersion program is open to all children. It is designed for children whose first language is not French.

Is the French Immersion program viewed as being a successful program? Yes. The French Immersion model is the most researched model of a second language acquisition in the world. Canada's model is used in the United States and abroad. The program has operated in Red Deer Public Schools for over 35 years.

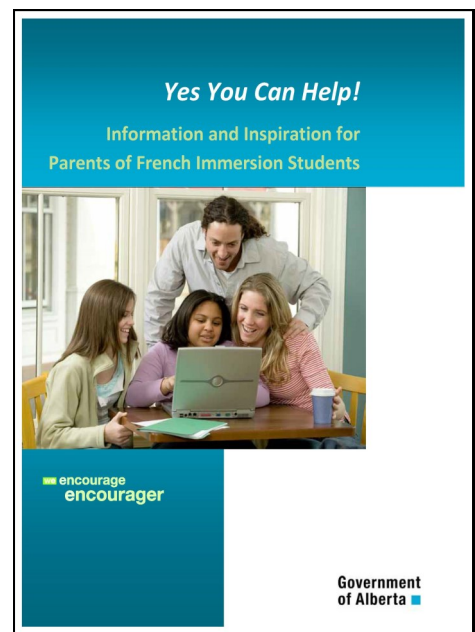
What effect does learning a second language have on the cognitive development of the child? Research indicates that children who learn more than one language gain in cognitive development. Through learning a second language, children come to see the world from a second perspective, demonstrating divergent thought process development.

Why continue Immersion at the High School? High school gives students the opportunity to use, perfect, and improve both written and oral French. Brain research shows that the more students are exposed to a second language at a young age, the more likely they will retain the skill in later life. Like any skill, you must use it or lose it!

Will students in French Immersion lose their English? Absolutely not. Beyond their classroom, French Immersion students are surrounded by English - at home, and through the media. Students in French Immersion simply acquire a second language in addition to their mother tongue. In Red Deer Public Schools, formal English Language Arts is not introduced until grade three. Students' English and content subject skills are at par with or above their counterparts in English language programs by the beginning of Middle school.

More Questions?

A great resource book is available called [YES YOU CAN HELP!](#)
[A Guide for French Immersion Parents](#)



<http://education.alberta.ca/media/6573982/yesyoucanhelp.pdf>

Our French Immersion Schools



École Barrie Wilson School
Kindergarten to Grade 5

290 Timothy Drive
Red Deer, AB T4P 0L1
Phone 403-348-0050
www.barriewilson.rdpsd.ab.ca



École Mountview School
Kindergarten to Grade 5

4331 - 34 Street
Red Deer, AB T4N 0N9
Phone 346-5765
Fax 346-5022
www.mountview.rdpsd.ab.ca



École Oriole Park School
Kindergarten to Grade 5

5 Oldbury Street
Red Deer, AB T4N 5A8
Phone 347-3731
Fax 340-3378
www.oriolepark.rdpsd.ab.ca



École Central Middle School
Grades 6 to 8

5121 - 48th Avenue
Red Deer, AB
T4N 3T7
Phone 346-4397
Fax 342-3783
www.central.rdpsd.ab.ca



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We're keeping our options open.

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parce que...
ça nous offre toutes sortes de possibilités.

CPF Canadian Parents for French
www.cpf.ca

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



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ÉCOLE SECONDAIRE
COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL

École Secondaire Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School
Grades 9 to 12

4204 - 58 Street
Red Deer, AB T4N 2L6
Phone 347-1171
Fax 340-1676
www.lindsaythurber.rdpsd.ab.ca



Red Deer Public Schools
4747-53 Street, Red Deer, Alberta, Canada T4N 2E6
email: Internationalservices@rdpsd.ab.ca
<http://www.rdpsd.ab.ca/French-Immersion.php>

