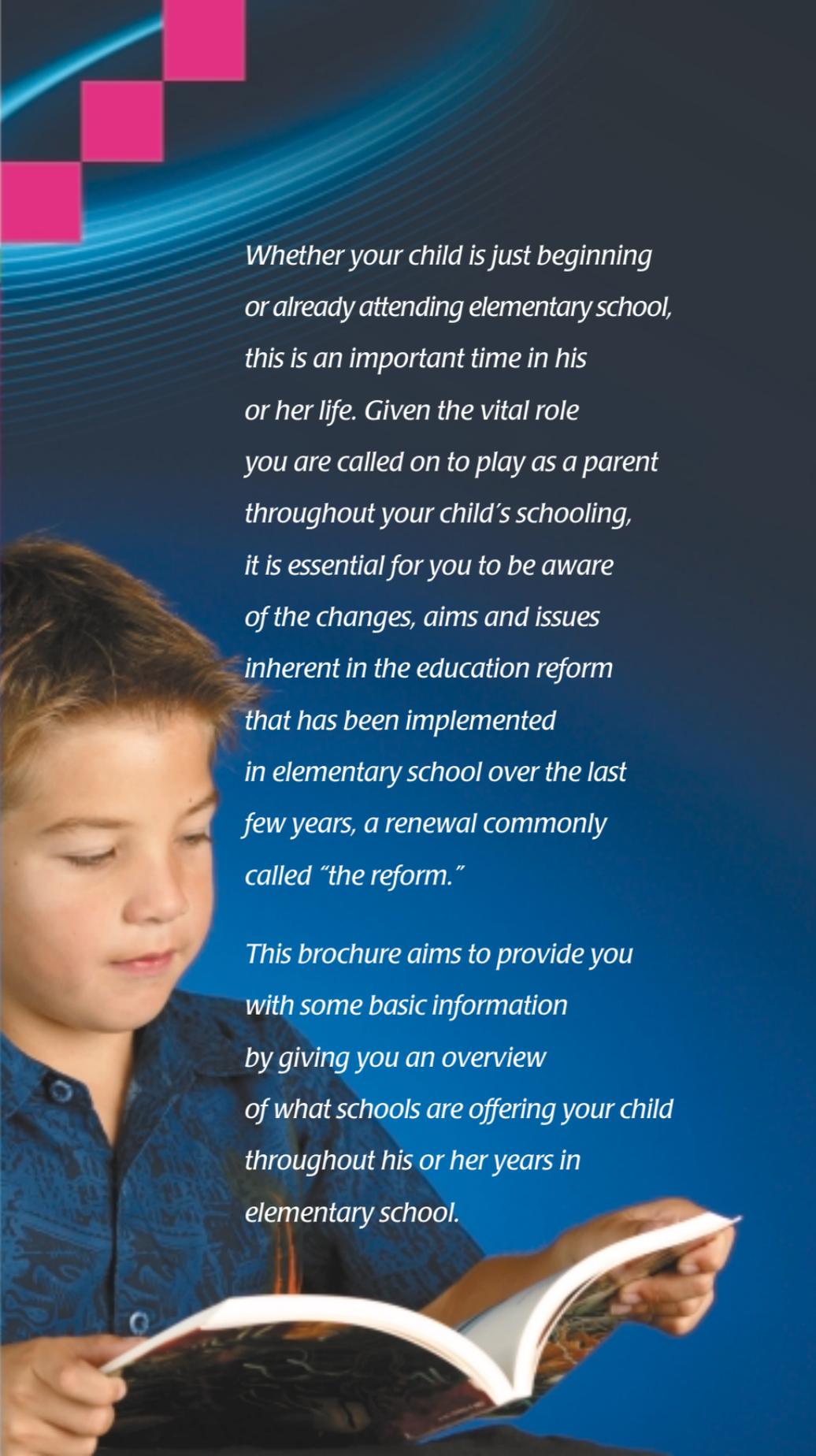


# YOUR CHILD IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



Québec  

A young boy with brown hair, wearing a blue patterned shirt, is shown from the chest up, looking down at an open book he is holding. The background is a dark blue gradient with a grid of pink squares in the top left corner and a glowing blue light effect. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*Whether your child is just beginning or already attending elementary school, this is an important time in his or her life. Given the vital role you are called on to play as a parent throughout your child's schooling, it is essential for you to be aware of the changes, aims and issues inherent in the education reform that has been implemented in elementary school over the last few years, a renewal commonly called "the reform."*

*This brochure aims to provide you with some basic information by giving you an overview of what schools are offering your child throughout his or her years in elementary school.*

## AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR TODAY'S CHILDREN

Whether your child is just beginning or already attending elementary school, this is an important time in his or her life. As parents, you are called on to play a vital role in accompanying your child throughout his or her schooling.

The preschool, elementary and secondary education programs in Québec have undergone important changes since 1997, enabling schools to respond effectively to today's educational needs.

To ensure the success of all the students it welcomes, the school takes into account their aptitudes, needs and focuses of interest. School success means much more than obtaining a diploma. Young people must learn to build on what the school has to offer them in order to fully assume their role as citizens and autonomous persons, capable of adapting to a continually changing world.

In this context, schools have adopted a mission with three major focuses. Thus, in today's knowledge-based society, schools have a mission to provide **instruction**. They must also **socialize** your child, that is, foster his or her social, emotional and interpersonal development. Finally, schools must provide **qualifications** by enabling your child to acquire the means necessary to take his or her place in the community and, later, in the job market.

## CONTINUITY IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION



Elementary school is now divided into three two-year cycles. Why two years? To allow your child time to consolidate what he or she has learned. This time allows children and their teacher to recognize their strengths as well as what they need to improve. Moreover, everyone involved with your child works together as a team to gain a better overall picture of his or her progress. If a child is experiencing greater difficulty, appropriate support services are available which can be specified in an individualized education plan adapted to his or her particular needs and abilities.

Throughout the three cycles of elementary school, your child will continue his or her learning in the subject areas of Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Sciences, Arts Education and Personal Development (see Table 1 for the list of subjects taught in elementary school). Through such instruction, the school aims to develop children's autonomy and to better prepare them for the transition to secondary school.



## COMPETENCIES BASED ON KNOWLEDGE



The Québec Education Program (QEP) is the basic tool used by people working in schools, especially teachers. It outlines the instruction essential for young people's education and specifies what your child will learn.

The essential aim of the QEP is to develop competencies, which means that, in addition to acquiring important knowledge in each subject, your child must be able to apply that knowledge. Your child will therefore be called on to explore his or her knowledge more deeply and to take an active part in tasks such as carrying out projects, participating in workshops, solving problems and developing strategies.

Your child will develop competencies in each subject. For example, in English language arts, this will include reading and listening to literary, popular and information-based texts, and in physical education and health it will include learning to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle.

In addition to these subject-specific competencies, your child will develop cross-curricular competencies. These are more general competencies that cut across all the subjects in the curriculum and that can be transferred to several areas of everyday life.

The cross-curricular competencies are grouped into four categories:

- **Intellectual competencies:** to use information, to solve problems, to exercise critical judgment, to use creativity
- **Methodological competencies:** to adopt effective work methods, to use information and communication technologies
- **Personal and social competencies:** to construct his/her identity, to cooperate with others
- **Communication-related competency:** to communicate appropriately

## SCHOOLS THAT TAKE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERNS INTO ACCOUNT

Success and motivation are closely linked. If schools are to be stimulating and give their students the desire to attend and learn, they must take young people's concerns into account. Motivation often comes from the connections that children make between school and their personal lives.

The issues confronted by young people today are therefore a part of the Québec Education Program. They are grouped into five broad areas of learning, as follows:

**Health and Well-Being:** Ensuring that young people become autonomous in adopting good living habits related to health, safety and sexuality.

**Personal and Career Planning:** Enabling young people to undertake and complete projects that develop their potential and help them integrate into society.

**Media Literacy:** Encouraging young people to use their critical, ethical and esthetic judgment with regard to the media and to produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights.

**Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities:** Encouraging young people to develop an active relationship with their environment while maintaining a critical attitude towards consumer goods and the exploitation of the environment.

**Citizenship and Community Life:** Ensuring that young people take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop a spirit of openness to the world and respect for diversity.

These broad areas of learning are not taught in separate courses. They are explored as an integral part of all the regular subjects and in activities that your child carries out at school. Certainly, the educational aims associated with these broad areas of learning will be more meaningful if they are followed up at home. They can serve as an important link between school and family for your child.

## SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN EACH CYCLE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

	CYCLE ONE (Elementary 1 and 2)	CYCLE TWO (Elementary 3 and 4)	CYCLE THREE (Elementary 5 and 6)
English Language Arts	X	X	X
Français, langue seconde (programme de base ou immersion)	X	X	X
Mathematics	X	X	X
Science and Technology	<sup>1</sup>	X	X
Geography, History and Citizenship Education	<sup>1</sup>	X	X
Arts Education	Two mandatory subjects chosen from the following: Drama, Visual Arts, Dance and Music, with one constant from Elementary 1 to 6.		
Physical Education and Health	X	X	X
Moral Education Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction Protestant Moral and Religious Education	Parents choose one of these three subjects for their child for each year of elementary school.		

<sup>1</sup> In Cycle One, children are introduced to the rudiments of these subjects.

## PROVIDING SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE FOR YOUR CHILD

Your commitment as a parent is one of the determining factors in your child's success. If your child feels that you are interested in what he or she is doing at school, then he or she will be more motivated and encouraged to persevere and to succeed. On a day-to-day basis, supporting your child can be done through small gestures such as being present, asking questions, making yourself available, supporting your child in his or her schoolwork, helping your child find solutions, and guiding your child when he or she is having difficulty.

Providing support and guidance to your child also means taking into consideration his or her particular characteristics and, whenever possible, placing your child in stimulating situations that will enable him or her to learn and progress. One example would be to explain current news events to your child, using words that he or she will understand.

## EVALUATION: FOLLOWING YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

To help you follow your child's progress and provide the support that he or she needs, schools have various ways to assess your child's progress and inform you of the results. For this reason, it will periodically communicate with you in a variety of ways, including the report card, issued several times during a cycle, and the end-of-cycle progress report, completed at the end of each cycle of elementary school. Other forms of communication include your child's portfolio and the teacher's written comments about your child's work.

For each subject, the Québec Education Program sets benchmarks for competency development, clearly stating what is expected of students at the end of each cycle. Your child's teacher can inform you of these expectations and how they are evaluated. You can also talk to the teacher about how you can help your child progress in his or her learning.

It is important to understand that the purpose of evaluation is not only to recognize whether your child has met the program expectations, but to monitor your child's progress as a way of helping your child learn. In other words, evaluation is a means to an end, not an end in itself. In this respect, evaluation is one of the many tools used to support students' learning progress.

Evaluation therefore plays a double role: to support your child's learning throughout the cycle, and to recognize your child's competencies at the end of the cycle.

Teachers use a variety of tools for evaluation, some official and some unofficial, which take into account the diversity of learning in a fair and equitable manner. These include examinations, schoolwork and projects. Children also participate in the evaluation process so that, gradually, they learn to recognize their own strengths and what they need to improve.



## A TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS

The school principal and his or her team implement measures to support your child. On the frontline of this team is the teacher, whom your child sees every day. There are also specialists who teach your child certain subjects, such as French or physical education and health. Then there is the staff who provide library, secretarial and daycare services, and professionals who support students' academic, social and personal development, such as psychologists, special education teachers, guidance counsellors, and group leaders from the spiritual care and guidance and community involvement service. These are all committed people who, through their training, experience and know-how, are able to guide your child and make each day at school a rich experience with a variety of challenges.

Should your child encounter difficulties, you will be invited to work with the school team and school board to help him or her. Professional resources such as a remedial teacher or psychologist can be called in to help understand the problem and propose solutions. If needed, an individualized education plan can be developed to help your child overcome his or her difficulties.

The school also works with various partners, such as community organizations and the health and social services network, to accomplish its mission and foster your child's success.

As parents, you too can play an active role in the school's organization by participating in the activities of the school and the governing board. The educational project and success plan of your child's school are excellent tools to inform you about the school's objectives and the measures it is taking to help students succeed.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about elementary education, please visit the Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport at <[www.mels.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca)>.

If you have any questions about this brochure, you may contact one of the regional offices of the Ministère, your school board or the school that your child attends.

**Éducation,  
Loisir et Sport**

**Québec**

