

WELCOME TO QUÉBEC AND ITS FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In Québec, 80% of the population is French-speaking, and French is the official language. Your children must therefore attend school in French until the end of their secondary studies.

School attendance is free and compulsory for all children between 6 and 16 years of age who are residing in the province.¹ The school year begins in late August or early September and normally ends in late June. Children attend school for at least 180 days each year.

Québec's Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ) is responsible for the education system, and delegates the task of managing schools and organizing preschool, elementary and secondary educational services to the school service centres (centres de services scolaires).

1. The information presented in the leaflet is general in nature. Some directives regarding access to free educational services vary depending on the immigration status.

LEVELS OF EDUCATION

Preschool education

L'éducation préscolaire

(under 6 years of age)

Preschool education, also known as kindergarten (*maternelle*), is available on a full-time basis (4 hours 15 minutes per day, from Monday to Friday) for children who have reached 4 and 5 years of age by September 30 of the current school year. Kindergarten is offered to 4-year-olds in some schools and to 5-year-olds in all schools.

Attending kindergarten provides children who do not speak French with an opportunity to begin learning the language, and also helps prepare them for elementary school. **The Preschool Cycle Program aims to foster the global development of all children by taking preventive action to meet their needs.** Play is at the heart of learning.

Elementary education

Le primaire

(6 to 12 years of age)

Elementary education is dispensed for five hours per day, from Monday to Friday, to children who are 6 years of age or older on September 30 of the current school year. Children attend elementary school for six years.

Secondary education

Le secondaire

(12 to 18 years of age)

Secondary education is dispensed for five hours per day, from Monday to Friday, to students who are generally between 12 and 18 years of age. Children attend secondary school for five years. The subjects taught during the first two years are virtually identical for all students. Beginning in the third year, however, different paths are available, depending on the students' individual interests and aptitudes.



ENROLLING FOR SCHOOL

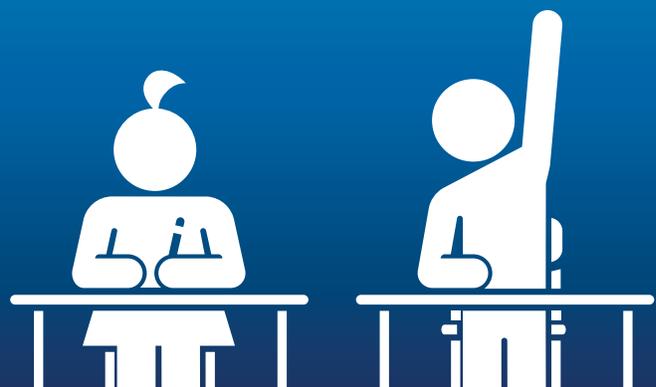
To enrol your child in school, you must first contact the school service centre responsible for the schools in the neighbourhood or town where you live. The SSC will tell you what to do and will provide information on the reception process and the names of the people you must contact in order to enrol your child, so that they can start school. To find the name of your local school service centre, you can go to the website of the [Ministère de l'Éducation](#), and click on Find a School (*Trouver une école*), under the Quick Access (*Accès rapide*) section. The search function is available in French only. You may also contact the general information services of the Ministère de l'Éducation using the following toll-free number: 1-866-747-6626.

When enrolling your child in school, you will be asked to provide a number of documents, including the originals or certified copies of the following:

- Two proofs of your residential address (e.g. electricity invoice, telephone invoice, letter from the government, lease).
- If you are living with a family member or another person and do not have a proof of address, the person with whom you are living must complete a form and provide two documents showing their residential address.
- Your child's birth certificate (translated into French or English).
- Up-to-date immigration documents, if available.

The following documents, if you have them, will be helpful:

- a valid passport
- a document showing your child's level of education, e.g. a school report card (bulletin scolaire)
- your child's health record
- specific assessments carried out by a psychologist or speech therapist, for example.



SERVICES TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN AND INTEGRATE AT SCHOOL

When your child first arrives at the school or at the administrative office of the school service centre, their knowledge of French will be assessed. Your child's math skills may also be tested, and they may be interviewed. You may be asked to provide information that will help the school principal understand your child's prior schooling and identify any services needed.

Among other things, the tests will help determine whether or not your child needs **welcoming services and French-language instructional services** in order to attend school in French and successfully complete the subjects they will be studying. Your child may receive these services in a regular class or in a special welcoming class for new arrivals, until

they are able to cope normally with instruction given in French in all subject areas.

Complementary educational services are also available in schools to provide support where necessary, and to help students in their academic progress. These services may be given by remedial teachers (often called resource teachers), speech therapists, psychoeducators or psychologists, for example.

Other services are also available, such as school transportation (certain conditions apply), daycare services or lunchtime supervision (preschool and elementary), and catering or cafeteria meals. However, these additional services are not free. Your child's school will tell you which of these services it offers.

SERVICES FOR YOU TOO

Adult general education (*La formation générale des adultes*) offers a set of programs designed to meet the needs and expectations of people aged 16 or over on June 30 of the current year. This training is offered by school service centres.

Francization services are also offered at adult education centres. They will help you to develop basic written and spoken French

language skills. They will make it easier for you to integrate into Québec society, and will prepare you for further education or to enter the labour market.

Lastly, all the school service centres offer reception, referral, counselling and support services. They will help you to devise a training plan that meets your personal and professional goals.