

Early Readers

- recognize most high-frequency words and many simple words
- use pictures to confirm meaning
- figure out most simple words using meaning, syntax, and phonics
- use known spelling patterns to figure out words
- become more skilled at monitoring, cross-checking and self correcting their reading
- gain control of reading strategies
- use their own experiences and background knowledge to predict meaning
- retell a story or recount things they have learned
- occasionally use story language in their writing

Transitional Readers

- recognize an increasing number of words, many of which are difficult or context related
- more consistently integrate meaning, syntax, and phonics
- use a variety of strategies to figure out unfamiliar words
- generally read independent-level text with fluency, expression, and proper phrasing
- begin to handle longer, more complex texts with short chapters and more interesting characters
- grow more aware of story and text structures

Fluent Readers

- identify most words automatically
- consistently monitor, cross-check, and self-correct their reading
- read chapter books with good understanding
- offer their own interpretation of text, based on personal and prior experiences
- read for a variety of purposes
- read a variety of literary genres independently

Developing Reading Skills

Each child is unique and develops at his or her own individual rate across a range of dimensions. Consequently, every child from grades primary to 3 will be at a different stage of development with respect to reading. Many children entering grade primary are reading at the emergent level. By the end of grade three, many will exhibit characteristics of the transitional reading level and be on their way to becoming fluent readers. Your child will progress through the developmental stages depending on the experiences he or she receives along the way.

Learning to read is a complex endeavour. Children exhibit different characteristics as they develop their reading skills. A child in French immersion may exhibit characteristics of the early stage when reading in French and exhibit characteristics of the transitional stage when reading in English. This is very normal as French is not the child's first language. As children acquire more competency in French, they will continue to progress through the developmental stages and become fluent readers in French and in English.

Building French and English Literacy Skills

Developing literacy skills is not language specific. Many studies have shown that learning a second language enhances the development of first-language skills. Initiatives that centre on increasing reading in French will therefore increase reading success in English.

What Parents and Guardians of French Immersion Students Can Do to Support Young Readers

Read in French or in English to your child every day.

- Occasionally point to the words as you read.
- Invite your child to read with you.
- Before, during, and after reading, ask questions such as, What do you predict will happen next? What do the pictures tell us? Why did the character do this/feel this way? How was the problem solved? Remember when ... we ... you ...
- Tell your child the parts of the story that you like, what is funny to you, what makes you sad, what surprises you. Invite your child to do the same.
- If your child becomes restless while you are reading, it's OK to stop! Try another book at another time.

Listen to your child read in French or in English.

- If your child gets stuck on a word, suggest reading the rest of the sentence and coming back to that word. Give prompts: What does it start with? What would make sense? What would sound right? Can the pictures help?
- Making mistakes is a normal part of learning to read. However, correcting every mistake may shift your child's focus from what he or she is reading to how he or she sounds.
- If things aren't making sense for your child, the book may be too difficult or may not capture his or her interest.

Foster a positive attitude toward reading.

- Listen to the stories your child tells.
- Help your child retell stories from books rather than translate stories into English.
- Encourage your child to draw a picture to help him or her tell a story.

Show your child there are all kinds of texts and that each has a different purpose.

- Browse through cookbooks together and choose a recipe you both like.
- Make a grocery list together.
- Look up phone numbers together.
- Browse through catalogues, magazines, and newspapers together.
- Bring your child to the library.

Notice and talk about print around you.

- Read traffic, street, and business signs.
- Read place mats, menus, pamphlets, and posters.
- Read cereal boxes, toy packages, and game instructions in French or in English.

Play word games with your child.

- Say and read nursery rhymes and poems together.
- Play "I spy" in French or in English: "I Spy ... something that rhymes with "lune"; something that starts with "fr ..."

Most importantly, be a good role model and read in front of your child. Show your child that reading is a useful and enjoyable activity!

Jeunes Lecteurs Actifs and Literacy Skills—The Connection

This initiative in French immersion comprises ...

L'heure de lecture active/Active Reading Hour

- a minimum of 60 minutes designated for reading instruction, reading, and related activities in French
- time for assessment of a child's understanding of the reading process, knowledge of language, attitudes, and successful reading strategies

Learning Resources

- an array of French learning resources consisting of appropriate texts for literacy instruction

Professional Resources

- professional resources that focus on effective instructional practices to support young readers

Early Reading Assessment Resource: Primary–3, French Immersion

- *Trousse d'appréciation de rendement en lecture : Immersion française, Maternelle à la troisième année*, a resource to assist teachers in assessing and documenting students' reading achievement in French

Professional Development

- professional development focussing on effective practices for reading instruction and for assessment of reading development

For further information, contact the Nova Scotia Department of Education,
French Second Language Programs Division, (902) 424-6646.

