

Strategies for “coaching” your child: part 3

This is the third in a series of articles about helping your French immersion child contributed by Joanne Boissonneault, MA, French immersion and special education specialist and consultant. Parts one and two can be found in the “For parents” section at www.cpfalta.ab.ca.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said,
“Happiness isn’t a goal; it’s a by-product.”

It’s hard for any student to get motivated—and started—to learn, to study and to get into good sound work habits. However, let’s not forget that “failure is the path of least persistence.” To persist and work hard ensures greater successes in life.

Parents of students in any program play a major role in their children’s education. As a parent and a guide, coach your child, be an advocate for your child, and, most of all, be a role model and partner in your child’s education. Acknowledge every small improvement and readily give praise every inch of the way as your child improves. Remember to use the strategies that work best, or best fit, for you and your child.

Remember also that the ability to speak Canada’s two official languages will give your child enhanced confidence and self-esteem. French is an advantage, not an impediment!

Memorization and Study Techniques

Research has shown that we remember 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we say, 80% of what we use and do and 95% of what we teach others.

Play **memory games** with your child, such as add-a-word or add-an-idea games. For example:

He says: I took a trip to the moon.

You say: I took a trip to the moon and wore my space suit.

He says: I took a trip to the moon and wore my space suit and watched my camera float in the air....

or

You say: apple

She says: apple, pear

You say: apple, pear, orange

She says: apple, pear, orange, grapes....

Have your child **repeat directives** to ensure that he has understood the information presented to him.

Coach your child to use **acrostics** and **acronyms**. In an acrostic, the first (or last or middle) letter of each word, when placed in order, spells an existing word, such as:

Huron
Ontario
Michigan
Erie
Superior



are the *Great Lakes* of North America.

In an acronym, the first letters form a brand new word (e.g., radio detecting and ranging = radar).

Your child can create an acrostic or acronym for memory items like the colours in the spectrum, the planets in the solar system, the provinces (in order from one coast to the other), the three types of triangles (scalene, isosceles, equilateral).

Coach your child to use the **SS-RD-WRT** method:

See it
Say it
Repeat it
Draw it
Write it
Repeat it
Tell someone
Do it over again!

Encourage your child to use **verbal rehearsal strategies**, reading out loud and repeating aloud until mastery is achieved.

Coach your child to **think aloud**. She needs to hear herself as she reads and writes; for instance: say it, then write.

Coach your child to use the **RIDER** visual imagery technique:

Read: read the first sentence.

Imagine: try to make a picture in your head.

Describe: describe your image. Continue reading if you cannot make one, modifying and adding to the image as you read on.

Evaluate: evaluate the image for completeness. If the image is comprehensive, continue.

Repeat.

Encourage your child to practice the **SQ3R**:

Survey: title, headings, introduction/summary, diagrams

Question: review questions, your own questions

Read

Recite: answer questions at end of chapter, answer own questions

Review: reread headings and underline (or make notes), reread introduction/summary

Have your child use a highlighter pen to **underline the key words** in passages for emphasis.

Most of all, material should be **reviewed** within a few hours of learning and then reviewed daily until mastery is ensured.

Mathematics

Frequently review math concepts with your child. For example: $4+3 = 7$ or $5 \times 5 = 25$.

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Have your child **read the problem aloud** then have her paraphrase the problem by having her state the important information in the problem.

Coach your child to **visualize the information** in the problem and draw a representation of the problem.

Spelling and *la dictée*

Encourage your child to **use the dictionary** at any grade level.

In presenting spelling words for study, words can be divided into three groups: “**sound words**” that are spelled the way they sound, “**think words**” that contain an unpredictable element, and “**see words**” that require memorization of the irregular element.

Coach your child to use a **visualization technique**: Have her look at a spelling word, print it, then close her eyes and visualize it. With her eyes still closed, have her spell it out loud. Repeat until she spells it correctly. Then have her practice until she can spell it out loud backwards.

Reading

Coach your child to use the **TELLS** fact or fiction technique:

- T** = study the story title
- E** = examine and skim pages to discover what the story is about
- L** = look for important words
- L** = look for hard words
- S** = think about the setting and/or use visual imagery strategies

Learning French

As parent and coach, you are always seeking opportunities to help your child to succeed to the best of his abilities. For an immersion parent, that includes finding ways for him to enjoy French beyond the classroom. Doing so will reinforce what he has learned and motivate him to continue learning the language. Just as important, it will expose him to a much broader range of topics and social situations than he can experience in an academic setting.

A wealth of opportunities is available, from simply watching hockey or baseball games on the French television channel to participating in an international exchange. Look for ideas in the CPF national and provincial newsletters and visit the “For students” section at www.cpfalta.ab.ca.

