



English Parents' Committee Association



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Katherine Korakakis is the President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA). In addition to this vital role in the Quebec educational sector, Katherine has spent most of her life working alongside start-ups in various verticals. For 10 years, she was responsible for the development of entrepreneurial initiatives and projects under the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, a Youth Secretariat program of the government of Quebec. Katherine is Head of Entrepreneurship at ProMontreal Entrepreneurs (PME), an early stage VC fund that has been around for 22 yrs, and is currently the vice-president of PME MTL Centre-Ouest and on the investment committees of PME MTL Centre and PME MTL Centre-Ouest. Katherine has also authored and co-authored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education and has served on the Boards of numerous corporations.

President's message

Report Cards & Parent Teacher Interviews

Dear Parents,

The first report cards for this school year have been distributed and it is now time for Parent Teacher Interviews.

EPCA has developed a number of tools to help you with your first in-person meeting with your children's teachers in over two years! While this may be an intimidating time for both you and your child, it is a great opportunity to learn more about what they are doing every day at school and should be seen as a key moment to get involved in their educational journey.



In other exciting news, EPCA will hold its Annual General Assembly on December 3rd. This is the start of our new year and the time when we elect the new Executive, approve important documents, and set the stage for our activities for the next 12 months. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Directors from the various Parents' Committees across Quebec who worked so hard this past year to give our parent community many needed resources and a voice. Though there have been many challenges, we have made great strides in many areas and I'm looking forward to continuing the hard work next year.

I encourage you to sign up for our newsletter on our website (epcaquebec.org) and to follow EPCA on Facebook for the most recent news, events, and other important information. According to research, students whose families are involved in school perform better.

Happy Parent Teacher interviews!

REPORT CARDS

From Anxiety to Opportunity

An Report Card time can evoke a multitude of feelings in your child. While some children can find this event exciting and motivating, it can prove to be quite stressful for others. Whether report card time resonates well with your child or not, there are a number of strategies for your consideration to help you to support them and make of report card time a positive, constructive experience.

Remember:

- Academic performance is not a reflection of your parenting skills, or their value as a student.
- Focus on the effort they are putting in, study strategies they are using and their progress relative to last term.
- Take a step back to look at their work from a bigger perspective, including the broader results they have achieved.

Set the Stage

- Pick a comfortable place to discuss where you can be relaxed and ensure no distractions.
- Try to ensure that the mood is positive or at least neutral.
- Instead of commenting on their grades, focus on their experience. How do they feel about their efforts and their commitment to schoolwork?
- Get them to talk about their strengths, the progress they have made and their study strategies. Show an interest in the things that your child finds rewarding and have them expand their thoughts.
- Invite them to talk about their study strategies and how they relate to academic achievements.



Connecting the strategies they used, the efforts they made and their progress will help your child feel more confident.

Reassure

If your child is not happy with their report card, they will need your reassurance.

- Encourage your child to explain their results themselves. Going one step further, ask them to identify things that they can do something about to improve their result such as the amount of effort they are putting in.
- Remind them that we can all improve by trying harder and learning good work strategies. No one is born good or bad at math or music.

Encouraging dialogue with your child and discovering how they see themselves gives them a chance to do their own self-assessment. They may even wish to identify actions for the next step.

This is an excellent opportunity for your child to develop autonomy and competence. The key is to be positive, constructive and open. Express your support and remind them that you are there to help them to find solutions if they need them. Tell them that you believe in them and their ability to make improvements on their own.

Report card day is also a wonderful time to discuss your child's studies and school in general.

Find out what your child's desires, goals and feelings are about school. They should feel comfortable expressing their feeling and thoughts, expression which helps them to learn about themselves and think positively about their future.



Take it one step further

So the report card conversation is over, and further strategies have been identified. As a parent, what else can you do?

Prod to see how they do things. Help them set up their study times. Encourage them to set up a study time and review it each week. Did they follow the routine that they set up for themselves? Was it effective? Do any changes need to be made?

Another way to get involved and help your child is to discuss their work efforts and habits with their teacher. Praise your child for their hard work and accomplishments.

Report Card time can be viewed as an opportunity for your child to build their self-awareness. Rather than give them a reward, help to connect their strengths with progress and celebrate their successes through witnessing how much their efforts have improved their skills.

Parent Teacher Meetings

Tips for Successful Meetings with your Child's Teacher

Before the Meeting

If you do some work ahead of time, the meeting with your child's teacher will go better and be more useful.

Talk to your child

To get ready for the meeting: Talk to your child about it. Ask your child what subjects he or she is best at and what subjects he or she doesn't like as much. Ask your child if there is anything in particular he or she would like you to talk to the teacher about. Make sure your child knows that you and the teacher are getting together to help him so he won't worry about the meeting.

Make a list of your notes

Make a list of things you want to talk to the teacher about and things you think the teacher should know, including your worries about the school, your child's home life, any big changes in your family, habits, hobbies, part-time jobs, religious holidays, or anything that is bothering your child. Make sure to ask your partner or other adults who help you care for your child what they think.

Prepare a list of questions

Having a good conversation with your child's teacher will be easier if you come up with a list of questions ahead of time. Set the questions in order of importance in case you run out of time at the meeting.

During the Meeting

Be on time

Start the meeting off right by showing up on time. Keep in mind that other parents may also have meetings that day and if you're late, you may miss yours altogether. You should also plan to end the meeting at the scheduled time so that other parents can start theirs on time.

Be yourself

Unwind and just be yourself. Remember that both you and your child's teacher want the best for your child and you are in this together.

Stay calm

Keep your cool during the meeting. The best way to work with your child's teacher is to talk to them in a respectful way. If people get angry or upset during the meeting, it will be hard to communicate effectively.



Tips for Successful Meetings with your Child's Teacher **cont.**

Ask for help if you don't understand something

Pay close attention to what the teacher has to say. Don't be afraid to ask for more information if you don't understand something the teacher says, like an educational term or an explanation of a school rule.

Start the meeting by asking the most important questions first

Ask the most important questions first because you may run out of time, especially if other parents are waiting to talk to the teacher after you. You can always meet with the teacher again to talk about anything you didn't get to during the meeting.

Discuss differences of opinion with respect

If you don't agree with the teacher, explain why you don't in a polite way. If you don't tell the teacher that you don't agree, the teacher might think you do and move on to the next topic. If you and the teacher talk about your differences, you might both find a better way to help your child.

Make a plan of what to do

Ask your child's teacher for specific ideas on how you can help your child at home with homework, reading, organization, routines, behavioral issues, etc. Make sure you understand what the teacher is telling you and, if you don't, ask for more information. The action plan will be made up of this list of ideas. Set up a way to keep track of your child's progress and the best way to communicate with his or her teacher, such as through phone calls, emails, notes, or meetings. At the end of the meeting, go over the action plan with the teacher to make sure you both have the same goals.

Thank the teacher for giving you a chance to talk

Thank the teacher for giving your child their time and support, as well as for anything she has done to help your child.

After the meeting has ended

Speak with your child about the meeting.

Focus on the good things and be honest about the problems that were brought up. If you and the teacher made a plan, tell your child what it is. Make sure your child knows that this plan was made by you and the teacher to help him and be sure to set expectations with your child about fulfilling the action plan.

Start implementing the plan of action

Start working on the plan. Check your child's behaviour and schoolwork often to make sure that it's working. Ask your child how he feels about school and his work.

Communicate with the teacher

Keep in touch with your child's teachers. This will help you and the child's teachers work better together, which is an important part of the child's school success. When a child sees that his or her parents and teachers are working together, the child will know that his or her education is a top priority at school and at home.

PARENTS

teachers

Parent Teacher Meetings

Questions to ask at Parent-Teacher Meetings

Knowing you have to attend parent-teacher meetings may make you apprehensive, intimidated, or upset. You may be unsure of what to anticipate or what is expected of you. Making a list of questions ahead of time can allow you to have a constructive conversation with your child's teachers. The list of questions should be made in order of importance in case you run out of time at the meeting.

Here are some examples of questions that will help you learn more about how your child is doing in school:

- What should my child be able to do this year?
- How will we he or she be evaluated on this?
- What subjects does my child do best and worst in?
- What do these strengths and weaknesses look like?
- How are my child's skills compared to his peers?
- Does my child seem to be having fun at school?
- Have you noticed anything out of the ordinary?
- Does my child turn in their homework on time?
- How good is my child at taking tests?
- Does my child seem to have any test-related anxiety?
- Does my child take part in class activities and discussions?
- What kinds of tests and evaluations will my child have to take this year?
- Has my child missed any classes besides the ones for which they were excused?
- Do you think my child is living up to what he or she could be?
- What can I do at home to help my kid do better in school?



If your child gets special services like gifted programs, special education, English classes, speech or occupational therapy, or help for a learning disability, you can ask how often these services happen and how your child is doing with them.

If you don't understand something, ask someone to explain it to you.

Pay close attention to what the teacher has to say. Don't be afraid to ask for more information if you don't understand something the teacher says, like an educational term or an explanation of a school rule. It's important for you to understand what your child's teacher is telling you.

Again, start the meeting by asking the most important questions because you may run out of time, especially if other parents are waiting to talk to the teacher after you. You can always meet with the teacher again to talk about anything you didn't get the chance to ask during this meeting.

Quick tips to remember for your Child's Health and Well-Being

Part of academic success is ensuring a well-balanced lifestyle and this is true for our children as well.

We have all heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Often, we shrug our shoulders, but it is. Giving your child a healthy breakfast will help them to focus and concentrate on their schoolwork more effectively. So, while we are always busy getting ready to start the day, it is important to add breakfast to the list of to-dos as well. And it is a nice opportunity to have a quick moment with your child to set a goal for the day.

Sleep, ah the friend we could all use more of! The best way you can support your child's healthy lifestyle is by ensuring they get plenty of sleep. Screen time is a big concern for children these days and it is important to remember to set limits, such as no screen time for an hour before bed. This will help children fall asleep more easily. Instead, reading with your child is a fantastic way to put them to sleep.

Physical activity is also incredibly important. Parents today are extremely busy. We go from school to extracurricular activities, or tutoring and homework, to grocery shopping and rushing home to get dinner prepared at a decent time. It seems utterly impossible and unfathomable to make more time for physical activities, but it does not need to be that complicated. How about an evening stroll after supper around the block? Or a gentle at-home, kid-friendly 20-minute yoga session. YouTube can offer numerous free Yoga for Kids videos that even us parents can enjoy doing and may even be relaxing for us, killing two birds with one activity!

All these quick tips can help your child have better academic performance, because not only are you taking healthy actions, but they support their well-being from mindfulness to educational success. It is all connected.

We hope these quick tips help you and your family be the best version of themselves as they can be.



‘Me’ to ‘We’ – Strategies for Building Teamwork in the Classroom Post-Lockdown

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/how-teach-your-child-teamwork>

From working alone to team engagement. The pandemic wrought havoc on our social skills, challenging many of us as adults to emerge from behind our computer screens. For many children, this transition has been even more daunting with almost two years of indirect socialization through screens. Now back in the classroom, how to foster teamwork, constructive collaboration, empathy, and engagement?

1. Sign Kids Up for Organized Activities. Placing your children in an extracurricular activity that involves collaboration with a group is a great way to teach them the value of teamwork—especially if the children come from a single-child household. The key is to sign your young ones up for an activity that caters to their interests.

2. Embrace Group Socialization and Bonding. There are various games and activities that build teamwork in a group environment, but the trick is keeping the activities both fun and subtle 😊. Let the phrase “teamwork activity” slip, and you’ll likely hear groans from older kids who probably don’t want to play an organized game.

3. Fill Screen Time with Positive Examples. Kids will often find their heroes and mentors in the TV shows they watch, so it’s important to fill their allotted screen time with programs that teach important character strengths. Common Sense Media’s teamwork-promoting TV guide shares an excellent round-up of shows where teamwork is “intrinsic to the story, being repeated several times in the actions of a lead character, and ‘wins’ over character flaws such as thinking only of oneself.”

Some favorites from the guide include:

- Preschoolers (2–4): Wonder Pets, Jake and the Neverland Pirates, and Paw Patrol
- Little Kids (5–7): Phineas and Ferb and H2O: Mermaid Adventures
- Big Kids (8–9): Descendants and The Amazing Race
- Tweens (10–12): Xena: Warrior Princess
- Teens (13+): Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Scrubs, and Heroes

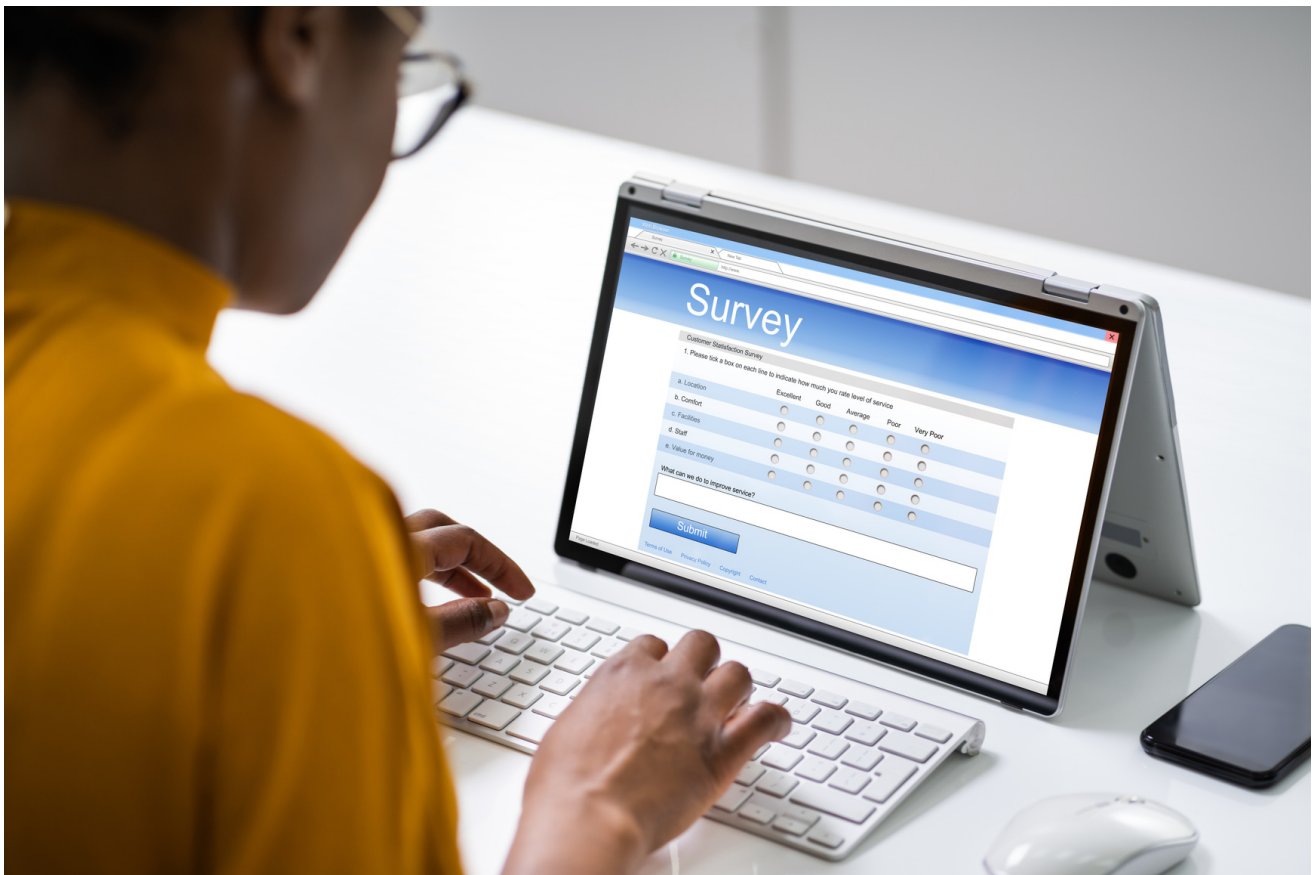
4. Teach Kids to Encourage Others. Teaching children to look outside of their individual bubbles and notice the needs of others builds teamwork. Encourage your kids to cheer for their fellow teammates at sports events, praise their classmates’ academic accomplishments, and ask their friends about important life events.

5. Promote Unity at Home. Parents know the best teaching experiences will happen under their own roofs, so the household needs a positive emphasis on teamwork. Teach and demonstrate to your kids that a successful household thrives because of everyone’s cooperation. Give your young ones household chores, ask them to help their siblings or grandparents, and praise the moments when your kids make efforts to cooperate with others.

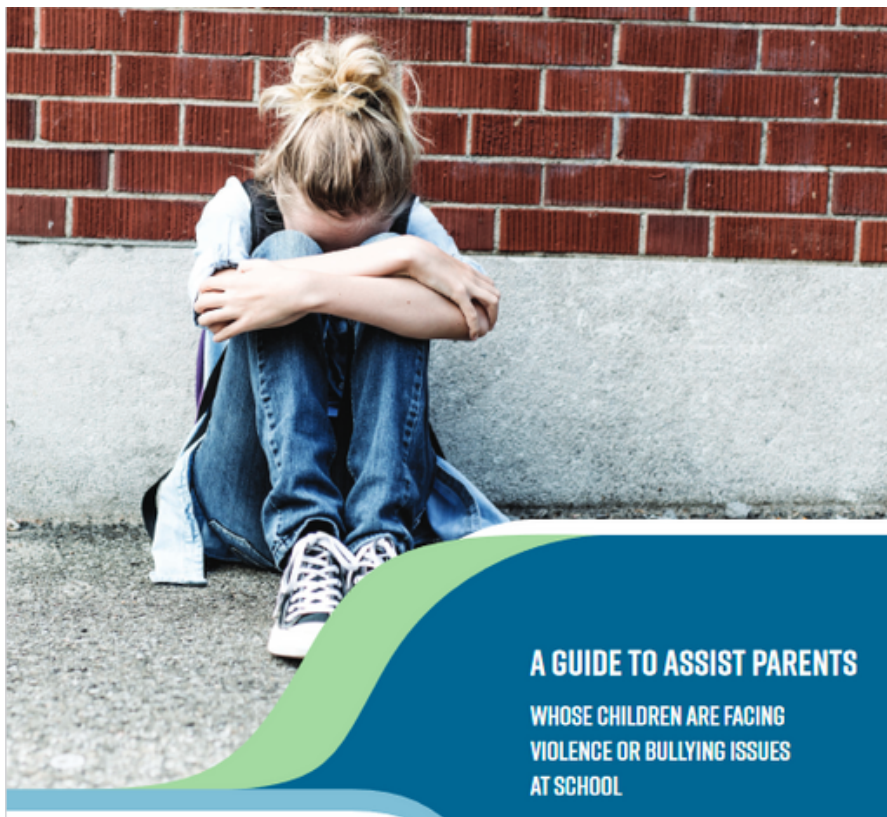
Survey

For Parent Governance to function, it is fundamental for us, as representatives, to understand parents' concerns, priorities and opinions on the range of topics impacting their children. It is for this reason that we regularly invite you, our parents, to respond to periodic EPCA surveys. Please take the time – usually five minutes or less – to answer our survey questions so that we can work more effectively in the interest of our English educational community in Québec.

EPCA has prepared a new survey for parents – please click [here](#) to fill it out.



Parent Resources



The Quebec Federation of Parents' Committees, with support from various partners – including EPCA's President Katherine Korakakis, has put together a guide to assist parents whose children are facing violence or bullying issues at school – click [here](#).

Tutoring



Homework Help



Supporting the journey to bilingualism, the Canadian Parents for French has many resources on their [website](#) to foster French second language learning.

EPCA MISSION STATEMENT

The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) is a coalition of parents' committees of Quebec's English-language public school boards, representing more than 100,00 students in the youth sector.

EPCA advocates for a strong and sustainable English-language public education system to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for our children, while respecting the culture and language of anglophone Quebecers.

To do so, EPCA seeks to engage and motivate parents across Quebec to contribute to strong, representative and effective parent governance, to foster positive relationships with stakeholders across the educational spectrum, and to provide guidance and support to all member organizations.

What would you like to see in
our upcoming editions?

[TELL US HERE](#)

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EPCA STRATEGIC PILLARS

INFORM

Using all communications tools at our disposal, offer up-to-date information on public education initiatives, parent governance interests, best practices and issues management to ensure a healthy, well-engaged anglophone parent community.

CONSULT

Ensure strong, high-quality and consistent feedback mechanisms with members and partners across the English-language public school network through both electronic and in-person methods.

SUPPORT

Provide training and professional development at all levels of parent governance, optimize the sharing of best practices and provide multiple support services for parent committees, governing boards and parent delegates in need.

ADVOCATE

Push for appropriate policy change and improvement through enhanced partnerships with like-minded organizations, Government working groups/tasks forces, and related organizations, through well-considered political positions on behalf of English- Language parents committees across Quebec, taking into account regional difference and the urban/rural divide.