



English Parents' Committee Association



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PARENT RESOURCES



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

Capping off a great school year - Have a great summer!

Dear Parents,

As the school year comes to a close, and I reflect back on the past months, I can certainly say that it's been a year of both highs and lows. EPCA has worked on important topics like road safety, mental health, support for special needs students, tools for parents to help guide them through many aspects of the educational system, and the list goes on.

But our community has also felt the consequences of the new laws put into place by the Quebec government that impact education and English-language rights in this province. EPCA has provided support to parents at the same time as we ourselves have been scrambling to figure out what it all means for our children. However, you can rest assured that EPCA has worked diligently with its government partners, as well as community organizations to help advocate and represent the needs of our community and especially the most vulnerable among us.

As we pause and head towards the summer, I want to wish all students good luck and congratulations for all the hard work you have done this year. For the families, I hope that you enjoy your summer. EPCA's newsletter will be back in August with a special issue all about parent governance to help you start the year off equipped with all the necessary tools and information.

Take care!



Parents' Role when Children Transition out of High School



Your child's graduation from high school marks a big milestone in your family's journey. After more than a decade of homework projects and exams, of packing lunches and bandaging knees, of sports practices and games... After more than a decade of smiles and tears, your child is transitioning into a new life. On the verge of adulthood, your child no longer needs you in the many ways they once did. But they need you just as much as before, maybe more. Though kids may have been exposed to the real world through social media or through some friends or experiences, their

their experience in the adult world has been limited by their day to day life at high school. After graduation they are becoming part of the adult world. What was at arm's length is now opening up for them. They will now be exposed to many more choices, many more people, and many more consequences. Your child will have many questions about this new world and how to navigate it. It is very important that they can come to you with any questions or concerns, because they will need to go somewhere for answers.

With the newfound freedom of high school graduation comes many new life opportunities and choices. Many of the decisions your child will be facing will have much bigger consequences than decisions of the past. Your child may have decided to further their education by attending CEGEP or a Trade School or even by going straight into university. They may have decided to enter the work force or travel. Whatever decisions they have made or are in the process of making, they need you and the grounding stability that parents bring. It's important to let your kids know you are available for them whenever they need you, to listen and not to judge (as hard as that may be). And when they need you, you need to be available for them, or they will go elsewhere for guidance and answers. This not a time to step back from your child's life; rather it is a time to recognize they are no longer the little kids of the past but the adult of tomorrow, faced with adult choices, influences, and consequences.

There are many books and websites that address communicating with your child, and there are many common themes throughout. The information offered will no doubt help you as your child becomes an adult and has different needs than they did when they were younger. Being available for your kids when they need you and really hearing what they have to say is a core principle of all of the resources. If they want to talk, let them talk. You have helped your child become the person they are today, now it is your responsibility to help them become the best version of themselves for tomorrow.



Working on your Child's Individualized Education Plan over the Summer

Here are some ideas for your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals over the summer.

IEPs for some children include extended school year services. Many children, however, do not have this in theirs. If your child's IEP does not include summer provisions and they will not be attending a summer learning program, you may be concerned about their ability to maintain their skills during the school break. But you can help your child achieve their goals during the summer - here's how it's done.

Determine goals that are appropriate for the summer season

Begin by going over your child's IEP. It is the primary resource to consult when attempting to devise a summer plan. However, working on every goal from home is not always possible. Your child's IEP may state, for example, that "Bella will improve her reading accuracy and fluency to reach a fourth-grade level." To complete this task, she will use a research-based reading program. In this case, the goal is linked to a specific reading program used by the school. You most likely have not been trained to use that program. Instead, there may be broader goals you can pursue, such as decoding words or learning how to use fractions. While this isn't the exact goal, it will provide progress on skills related to the goal.

Children may have objectives that go beyond academics. They may be working on developing social-emotional skills or achieving functional goals. A goal might be something like, "Bella will practice identifying and managing her emotions, specifically anxiety and stress, on a daily basis." That is something you can do at home.

It is recommended that you break down your goals into smaller, more manageable skills that you can focus on improving.

Examining your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can serve as a helpful reminder of the larger goals. Goals are typically set for a year and are not accomplished all at once. During the summer, it may be beneficial to focus on specific actions that will help you achieve your goals.

Consider each goal as being at the top of a ladder. To get there, children must climb several rungs. Each rung represents a skill that they must master before moving on to the next level. To write a sentence with two different definitions of a word, first identify the distinct definitions. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) may divide objectives into smaller, pre-existing skills or steps in some cases. Please review the progress report if your child's plan does not appear to be working. Consider requesting assistance from your teacher in identifying the specific skills that comprise each goal.



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Working on your Child's Individualized Education Plan over the Summer cont.

Create a summer program plan

As you prepare for the summer season, make certain that you and your child receive the necessary assistance. Here are some pointers to keep in mind.

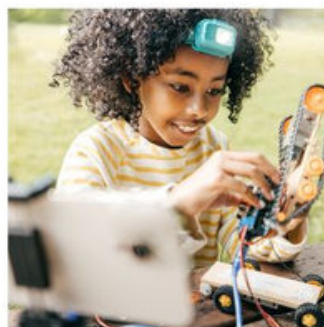
Make an appointment with your child's teacher and administrator: It is ideal to meet with the IEP team a few weeks before the end of the school year. Assessments can help you gauge your child's current level of skills and identify the most important abilities to focus on over the summer. You can also request recommendations for summer activities, reading materials, and homework assignments that can be completed at home.

Share your summer program objectives: It is recommended to meet with the director of the camp or summer school your child will be attending before the program begins. Please share the objectives you are currently pursuing. You should inquire about the chances for your child to practice those skills. There is a better chance that your child will retain their skills if more people help to reinforce the learning process.

Please keep things in perspective: Attempting to manage a large number of tasks can have a negative impact on productivity. Make a list of the most important goals you want to achieve this summer. For example, you could decide to read three books from a summer reading list and practice fractions for 20 minutes every day.

Investigate novel methods for improving your abilities:

You can help your child's learning in a variety of ways. Consider taking a field trip to a local science museum. While cooking together, you can practice fractions. By ordering and paying at a restaurant, your child can improve their social skills and money management.



Key Takeaways

- **Breaking goals down into smaller skills makes them easier to work on.**
- **Ask the IEP team to suggest activities that support your child's goals.**
- **Find fun ways to work on skills, like going to museums or cooking together.**



Fun and Educational Summer Activities



Like most parents, you are probably excited that the school year has finally come to an end. But that doesn't mean that learning should end too. EPCA is happy to share some ideas for activities that you can do with your family this summer that are full of fun, but also continue the learning theme. And the best part is that they are local and contribute to learning more about the history of Quebec, which brings a wealth of value to the experience that you likely never imagined.

These activities offer a blend of fun and educational experiences for the whole family to enjoy during the summer in Quebec.

- [Quebec City](#)
- [Montmorency Falls](#)
- [Quebec Aquarium](#)
- [Plains of Abraham](#)
- [The Montreal Science Centre](#)
- [Montreal Biodome](#)
- [Vieux Porte Montreal](#)
- [The Museum of Civilization Quebec City](#)
- [Parc Omega](#)

These are just a few of the exciting things you may want to do. Not to be dismissed are other budget friendly learning activities that you can do locally such as the Parc Des Iles de Boucherville, hiking through Mont St. Bruno, visiting the first Aboriginal Museums like the Musee des Abenakis or interpretation sites, and more. You can also look at [Montreal Families](#) for ideas of great things to do. We hope that you get the chance to explore some of these places we have shared. Hope you have a fun, educational, and memorable summer!

Spending More Time with your Teenager Protects their Mental Health

Written by Cindy Hovington, Ph.D. Cindy Hovington is a mom of 3 and has a doctorate degree in Neuroscience from McGill University. She is the Founder of [Curious Neuron](#), an online science-based resource focused on emotional learning and mental health in kids of all ages. Curious Neuron has a community of over 129,000 parents on Instagram ([@curious_neuron](#)) and recently launched their [YouTube channel](#). She is the host of the [Curious Neuron Podcast](#), a top parenting podcast in Canada, the US and the UK. She is also the co-founder of [Wondergrade](#), an app that helps children ages 3-8 develop healthy emotional coping skills. You can try the app free for 2 weeks [here](#) or visit [wondergrade.com](#). [Dr. Hovington](#) is a regular parenting expert on [CJAD800](#) and has been highlighted in [Montreal Times](#), [Today's Parent](#), and [the Bump](#). She has worked with companies such as Pampers, Airbnb and Pok Pok.

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN YOUTH:

Contrary to what parents believe, our pre-teens and teenagers actually want and NEED to spend time with us. According to a study led by [Dr. Sophia Frangou](#), there are aspects of a child's life that can increase the risk of suicide or protect them from it.

In the US, suicide is the second leading cause of death for children ages 10-14 (Source: [MedlinePlus](#)). I spoke with a 15-year-old teenager (I will call her Stacey to protect her identity) about this and she said "Many of my friends speak about struggling with anxiety, sadness or loneliness. Adults around us tell us about the increasing rates of mental health issues, but no one is telling us what to do about it or how to work through it". This really marked me both as a mom of 3 and someone having studied mental health. This is why I am starting this new series on Curious Neuron that will include the voice of teenagers. If we, as a society want to help teens, we MUST include them in the conversation.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR

A large study called [The Adolescent Brain and Cognitive Development \(ABCD\)](#) looked at the parent-child relationship and lifestyles of 7994 children in grades 3 and 4 (mean age 9 years old). The researchers were interested in looking at both risk and protective factors for suicidal behaviours.

This study found that 8% of youth ages 9-10 had thoughts of suicide and that a high number of their caregivers had not caught on to these signs.



Children in the groups with suicidal thoughts or behaviours reported more hours of screen time on weekends compared to the group of children without any suicidal thoughts or behaviours. On the other hand, protective factors appeared to be greater parental supervision and positive school engagement.

"Many friends I have actually don't eat dinner with their family and express that they wish they did" mentioned 15-year-old Stacey.

Spending More Time with your Teenager Protects their Mental Health cont.

“Many friends I have actually don’t eat dinner with their family and express that they wish they did” mentioned 15-year-old Stacey. “These research findings make sense to me. I enjoy dinner with my family and watching movies with them. It is a time to disconnect and just be with them. As teens, we don’t want dinner time or family time to become about school. We need to disconnect” she adds.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN OUR TEENS' MENTAL HEALTH:

As parents of teens, we also need to be mindful of the time a child is spending on social media. A recent study showed that when teens reduced their social media use from 3 hours per day to 1 hour pre day (for a duration of 3 weeks) there were significant improvements in their self-esteem and mental health.



I asked Stacey how she felt about these findings given that many teens, including herself are using social media. She looked down at her phone and “This thing causes us lots of problems, but at the end of the day, we are still kids and need rules in our homes” says 15-year-old Stacey. She continued to talk about friends in her environment that are struggling to have a relationship with their parents and feel alone and “stuck in this hole they feel they will never get out of”. “Social media just makes it worse for us and as much as a teen might be mad that a parent is setting a strict rule in the home, we will thank them when we are older”.

WHAT DO TEENS NEED FROM PARENTS?

“We don’t want to come home to parents that shame us or judge us, life is already hard as a teenager and we are still learning,” says Stacey. Sometimes adults take the fun away from sports, school or hobbies we have because of the pressure they add on us to be “great”. What if I am not great at math class but I enjoy it? What if I like playing soccer but don’t want to be a pro player? Do I need to feel bad for missing the goal?”

She goes on to say “My teenage friends sometimes question, “Will it always be like this?”. They feel stuck in a world with lots of problems and feel alone. I try to help them move past hard times like divorce but it is too much for me and I am a kid myself, I don’t know how to help them. We need parents that help us calm down and that doesn’t add pressure on us. We need them to acknowledge that it isn’t easy. I also have friends whose parents are more like friends to them rather than parents. There aren’t any rules in their homes and they are

Spending More Time with your Teenager Protects their Mental Health cont.

pretty much free to do anything they want. You would think a teen loves this but some of my friends actually want their parents to act more like parents by setting boundaries and being emotionally connected to them. These friends have all the material things they need but not the emotional connection they are looking for from their parents.

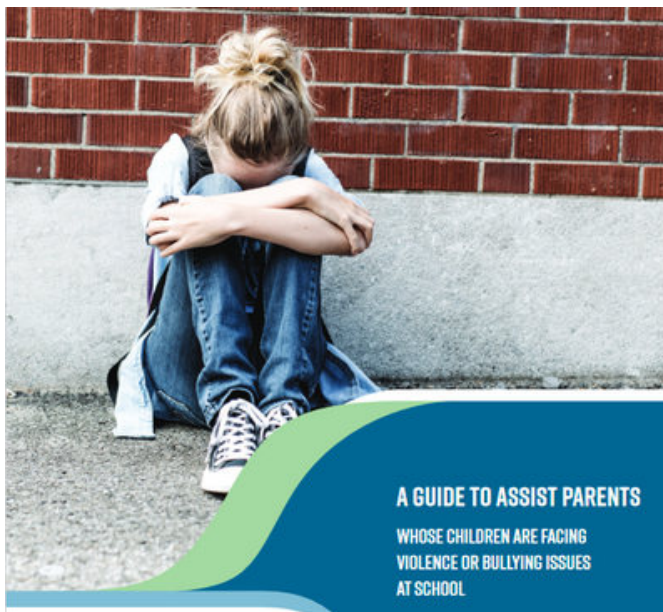
IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO WORK ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD.

My conversation with 15-year-old Stacey really strengthens the fact that we need to start having more conversations with teens about their mental health and their emotional needs. We can read all the research in the world and use funds to create all the problems we think teens need, but in the end, they to be heard and they need to be part of the conversation because they ARE the conversation.



Mental Health Matters

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



ENGLISH ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES

Explainer: What Quebec parents and students need to know about English eligibility certificates: At this [LINK](#) are details on how to apply for a certificate and who is eligible to attend English schools in Quebec.

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.