



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

New GBs, IEPs, and Working Together for our Kids.

Dear Parents,

The new academic year has officially begun, and Governing Boards (GBs) should have been formed at each school by now. Congratulations to all of the newly elected or re-elected parent members.

The GB is an important component of Parent Governance and the educational ecosystem because it is the entity responsible for making decisions at a school. Are you aware of the numerous opportunities and responsibilities that come with having a GB? The more we understand our roles and responsibilities, the more effective and engaged we can be as volunteers. And the more you understand how to hold your school and the GB accountable for educational decisions that affect your child, the better! You can access our parents' governance manual by clicking [here](#).

Another significant event that is currently taking place is the creation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for your children. These are incredibly important documents that enable educational success for many of our children. EPCA has written a few blog posts to help you make the most of your child's IEP meeting, including how to prepare for conversations about your child's IEP. You can find them [here](#).

EPCA understands that there are many critical issues ongoing for English language education in the province of Quebec. Our Directors - current and incoming - will continue to work with parents, schools, and Government representatives on behalf of English-speaking students across the province of Quebec to best position all children for success. If you have any suggestions or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us.

Have a wonderful start to fall!



Requirements to Graduate High School in Quebec

The requirements for obtaining a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) in general education in the youth sector (J5 certification system) can be seen below. These standards have been in force since 1 May 2010.

The pass mark for each course is 60%. A Secondary School Diploma is awarded to a student who has obtained at least 54 credits in Secondary IV and V, at least 20 of which are in Secondary V.

In addition, the student must pass the following courses:

- Secondary V language of instruction
- Secondary IV Mathematics
- Secondary V second language
- Secondary IV Science and Technology or Applied Science and Technology
- Secondary IV History of Québec and Canada
- Secondary IV Arts Education
- Secondary V Ethics and Religious Culture or Physical Education and Health

Final results in Secondary IV and V

At the end of the marking period for Secondary IV and V ministerial examinations, the Ministère de l'Éducation mails each student an achievement record. The student's online academic record also shows the results.

Even if there aren't any ministerial exams for a subject, the final grades for all subjects for which a student must earn credits to get a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) are included in the achievement record.

The final grades on the achievement record might be different from the grades on the report card given by the school. The final grade is based on the score on the ministerial exam and the grade given by the teacher after moderation (the "school mark"). But if the score on the ministerial exam is higher than the score on the school exam, the ministerial exam score is kept as the final score for the competency.

More info on the Minister Of Education Website:

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/students/report-cards-transcripts-diplomas/achievement-record/>



Moderation of Marks

Moderation

The moderation of marks is done by comparing how well a group of students did in school with how well they did on the ministerial exam. This comparison is done for every group of students in every school, and the final grade is based on it.

All students' school marks are always given with a bit of moderation. It involves changing the school grades up or down, and a student who got a passing grade on the ministerial exam can't fail because of it.

The point of moderation is to make sure that the grades given are valid and comparable from one school in Québec to the next. This process is meant to make judging how well students learn in class more fair and even.

In other words, because the level of difficulty of the local exams that students take varies from school to school, two different school groups can get the same score on the local exams but very different scores on the ministerial exam. Since all students take the ministerial exam, it is the only test that can be used to compare the two groups in a fair way.

Calculation

A statistical method is used to figure out how the marks should be spread out. The way school grades are given out to each group of students is based on how they did on the ministerial exam. The average and standard deviation are used to figure out how far apart the grades are from the average. Students' school marks can go up, stay the same, or go down, but they always stay in the same place in the group before the marks are aligned.

Conversion

Conversion is the process of slightly raising the scores on a ministerial exam, so that the success rate is the same from year to year. Conversion is always applied as an increase.

This conversion is only done when the number of people who pass a ministerial exam is much lower than it was in years past. Based on how the results were broken down, the Minister decides how the conversion will be used and what its parameters will be.

Source: <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/contenus-communs/parents-and-guardians/evaluation-of-learning-and-ministerial-examinations/final-results-in-secondary-iv-and-v/moderation-and-conversion/>

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Educational Benefits for English Students!

Mission: Alloprof helps students in Quebec to transform academic challenges into successes, thanks to its free, professional, and stimulating services.



As a mother of three teenage boys, I am constantly on the lookout for tools that can empower my children to succeed and boost their self-esteem. With 23 years of teaching experience, I've also explored innovative approaches and resources to guide my students on their learning paths. Now, at Alloprof, I have an exciting role: Reaching out to the English community to share how Alloprof can assist students in their academic journey. We recognize that parents also play a crucial role, so we're here to support you too!

What is Alloprof?

Alloprof is a charitable organization dedicated to helping students grasp academic concepts and supporting those facing difficulties. Through our web platform, we offer concept sheets, videos, games, practice exercises, as well as direct assistance services by professional teachers. We also provide resources for parents and teachers in their quest to support children across Quebec.

For Parents

Managing various tasks such as homework, school materials, setting up routines, and preparing for tests can pose significant challenges for numerous families. In my personal experience, I frequently encounter



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Educational Benefits for English Students!

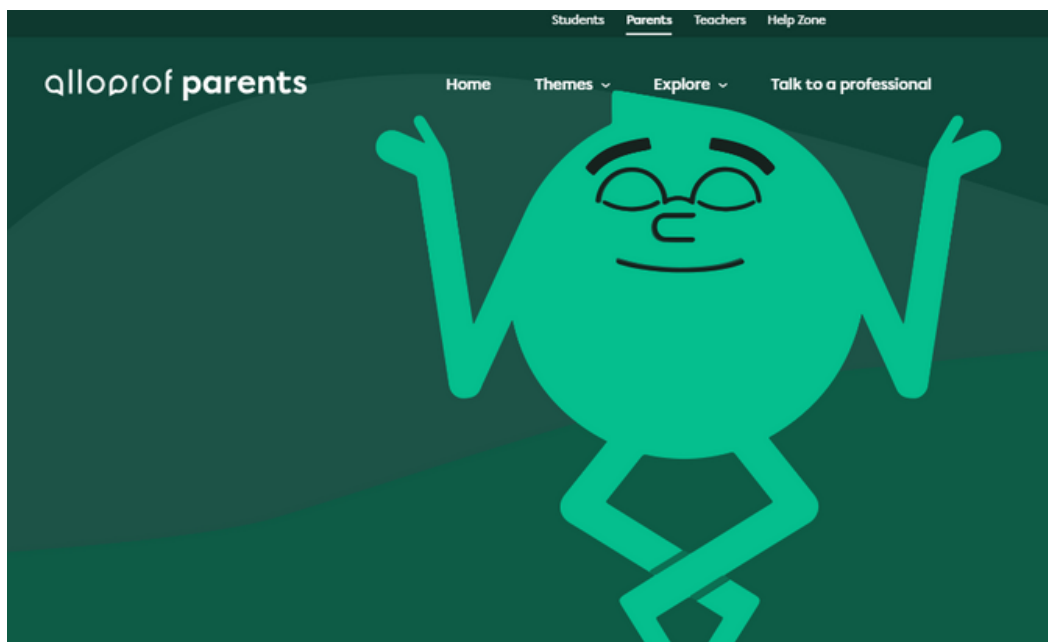
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situations like, "Mom! I left my math homework at school!" or "I can't figure out this assignment, I give up!" Balancing the post-school routine alongside your own parental obligations can swiftly turn into a daunting endeavor.

Alloprof wants to lend you a helping hand when it comes to schoolwork, academic perseverance, as well as cultivating a happy and healthy family. Visit [Alloprof Parents](#) where you have access to hundreds of articles, blog posts, and tips and tricks to support the academic and social-emotional development of your children. One great first tool to try is Alloprof's [Motivational Timer](#). This timer allows you and your child to decide on how much time to spend on each subject, and they earn fun rewards for completing each task. You can also subscribe to our [newsletter](#) to get the latest updates when new resources are available!

We are also eager to meet up with parents to showcase our tools and resources. Interested in having a virtual parent workshop via your school or school board? Contact [Lisa Lorenzetti](#).

[Alloprof](#): Waiting to help you!



How can parents support their child's mental health through emotional learning

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.

Supporting your child's mental health can be an overwhelming task. What contributes to my child's mental health? Should my child express their emotions externally? What are signs my child is struggling with their mental health? How does our own mental health impact our child?

Supporting your child's mental health will be broken down into a 3 part article to outline what contributes to your child's mental health and how you can support them.

Part 1: How are emotion regulation skills linked to your child's mental health?

Part 2: What can parents do to protect their child's mental health?

Part 3: 3 tips you can implement to support your child's social-emotional learning and mental health

Our conversation around mental health needs to start from birth. Understanding your child's nervous system and how their early environment helped shape their nervous system can help us understand the current state of coping with emotions.

Part 1: How are emotion regulation skills linked to your child's mental health?

When an infant cries, their brain is stressed and dysregulated. It is looking for someone external to help them calm down and feel safe and soothed. The book written by Dr. Dan Siegal called *The Power of Showing Up* describes this in great detail.

Small stressors are normal in any child's life. Moments when a parent can't attend to them right away or falling down and getting hurt. Stress hormones, called cortisol, can increase but as soon as the child is soothed again, everything returns to baseline, aka becomes regulated. What can become an issue is constant dysregulation. In a home with physical or emotional violence for instance, a child's system is under constant stress of not feeling safe (even if they are not being abused).

This type of early environment can lead to an adult brain that is in constant "fight or flight" mode aka dysregulated. Research has
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Supporting Mental Health through Emotional Learning

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shown that this increases the risk of anxiety and depression. There are physical health consequences as well such as higher blood pressure or increased chances of heart disease.

The good news is that this can be reversed by creating strong connections with people and communities as well as teaching a child how to have healthy coping mechanisms for their emotions. These are called emotion regulation skills.

What are emotion regulation skills?

Emotion regulation skills are how we cope with emotional situations both internally and externally. There are many ways to respond to emotionally stimulating situations. Some ways of responding use adaptive emotion regulation skills (healthy ways of responding such as communicating feelings or trying to change how strongly the situation impacts you) or maladaptive ways (such as internalizing emotions and not talking about them or losing control and yelling). Let's say, your children were to yell at you. You can either yell back and storm out of the room fuming or, you can take a slow breath and ask them to speak to you calmly.

Our childhood shapes our emotion regulation skills based on 3 important factors in our environment:

1. How our parents model their own emotions
2. The parenting style we are raised under (nurturing or strict)
3. How our parents or the caregivers in our home regulate their own emotions when arguing

Similar to our nervous system, if we have not learned any emotion regulation skills during childhood, we can learn them as adults. However, if we have been implementing maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, there is a higher chance that we are also struggling with anxiety or depression as adults. Thus, this would need to be addressed as well.

How are my child's emotions linked to their behavior: A few tips to get you started

It is important for us to make this link because way too often in my years of working with parents and children have I seen kids being labeled as "pests or bad" when in fact, they are emotionally dysregulated for various reasons.

If you are struggling with your child's behavior, start by asking yourself a few questions:

- Is my child dysregulated when they act out?
- Is it possible my child is dysregulated because of their childhood (did a parent struggle with mental illness, was there any abuse or neglect in the child's life or any dysfunction such as substance abuse or divorce?)



Supporting Mental Health through Emotional Learning

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- When my child acts out, is it as a result of them expressing an emotion such as disappointment, anger, frustration, sadness, or worry?
- When my child expresses their emotions (any emotion) do they feel seen and soothed by myself and any primary caregiver? Or are their emotions being dismissed?
- Can my child name more than 7 emotions and describe what it feels like to experience this emotion (part of emotional learning)?
- Does my child have coping tools for their emotions? (if not, stay tuned for part 3!)
- How do I deal with my own emotions in front of my child (do I pretend I am fine when I am not, am I yelling a lot or am I expressing emotions and showing them how I cope with them in healthy adaptive ways)?



Part 2: What can parents do to protect their child's mental health?

As parents, we all want to protect our children's health including their mental health. As we discovered in part 1 of this series on emotional learning, our childhood shapes how we cope with our emotions. This is called emotion regulation and is the ability to manage our emotions both internally and externally and has been shown to greatly influence our mental health.

It is important to notice any changes in your child's behavior, mood and habits. If, for instance, your child always sleeps well and suddenly struggles with sleep, it is important to see if this might be linked to anything emotional. It doesn't automatically mean they are struggling with their mental health. It simply means that something might be causing this.

Any changes in what brings them joy or their level of motivation can also be a sign of some emotional struggles. If they used to enjoy seeing their friends, or if they used to enjoy playing soccer and no longer want to go, you might want to see if there are some anxieties attached to this. Always approach it from a place of curiosity and compassion!

There are lots of scientific studies that point to 3 important factors that can help protect our child's mental health (and ours!).

Supporting Mental Health through Emotional Learning

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Below are 3 ways you can protect your child's mental health:

Gratitude

In as little as 1 week, taking 2-3 min to express gratitude can influence your mental health. Start by trying it yourself. At the end of each day answer this question..."What am I grateful for? When I first started doing this I often didn't have anything to write. Or I would write "I am grateful for my kids". Forcing myself to answer this question every day led to me being more aware of little things that happened during my day. A loving hug from one of my 3 kids. Getting extra cuddles with my kids at night. Little moments that I was taking for granted began to stand out and bring me moments of joy throughout my day. I talk about this in detail in a Curious Neuron Podcast Episode [here](#).

This is why practicing gratitude can help our children reframe their day and moments that help "fill their cup". This is why it can influence our mental health. Rather than trying to find a bigger picture that will bring us happiness, we see the small things that are right in front of us.

Self-compassion

It is often easier to feel compassionate for others than it is for ourselves. However, many studies have suggested that self-compassion greatly influences our mental health. When our child says "Why am I the only one that sucks at math!?!?", we can remind them that many people struggle with math. Struggling with something means we need to work at it. These are all skills and any skill can be worked on and improved.

The main point of self-compassion is realizing that we are not alone. I interviewed a researcher that stated "the number one thing we can do to improve our mental health is work on self-compassion". You can listen to this Curious Neuron Podcast episode [here](#). We often fall in vicious cycles of self-blame and negative self-talk (even as parents!). Modeling self-compassion can help our kids learn how to maintain a more positive inner voice and to see themselves as a small part of this big world. We are never alone in our experiences and struggles!

Create Connectedness

About 67% of adults have experienced an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). These are experiences such as neglect, abuse or household dysfunction (a parent with mental illness, substance abuse, incarceration, divorce etc). Having only one ACE increases our chances of both mental illness and physical illness in adulthood. This might be alarming to many parents, however, what we have learned through research is there are ways to heal or repair the damage caused by an ACE.

Dr. Bruce Perry talk about this so eloquently in his book "What happened to you". I chatted with Dr. Perry



Supporting Mental Health through Emotional Learning

cont.

in a recent podcast episode [here](#) where we chatted about the power of community and connectedness. Even if someone has experienced trauma or an ACE, having a sense of community and connecting with others can contribute to their healing. If your child has experienced trauma or an ACE and you can't access a healthcare professional, part of their healing journey can include being part of a team or organization. If you want to protect their mental health, belonging to a team or organization is also a powerful tool.

In the last part of this emotional learning series, we will discuss 3 important emotion regulation skills your child can apply to learn how to cope with their emotions and avoid internalizing them.

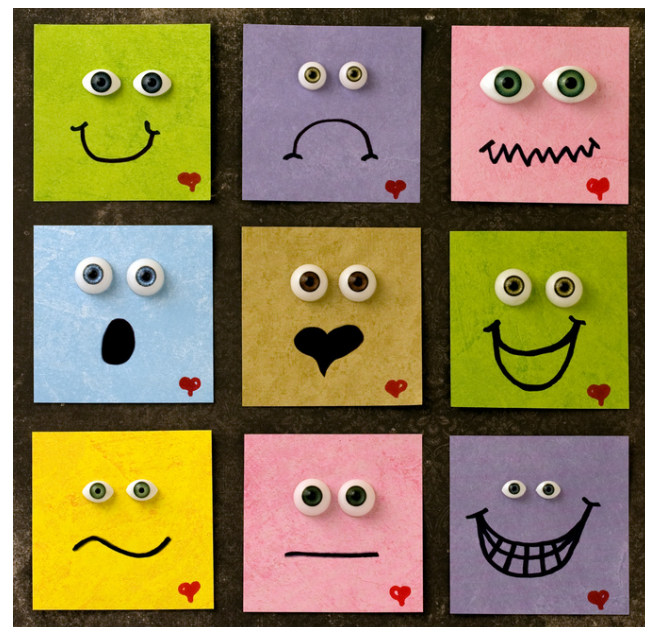
Part 3: 3 tips you can implement to support your child's social-emotional learning and mental health

With several pediatric organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declaring that we are in a children's mental health crisis, we need to find ways to educate kids about healthy ways to cope with emotions. The main takeaway from this 3 part series on mental health is that there are many skills we can teach our kids that contribute to their mental health. In Part 1, we learned about the importance of our own mental health as parents as well as assessing behavior changes since this can be linked to their emotional well-being or mental health. Part 2 of this series highlighted the importance of practicing gratitude, self-compassion and connectedness (which have all been tied to protecting our mental health!). In the final part of this series, let's break down 3 important strategies you can teach your child to help them move past uncomfortable emotions.

A little reminder that emotion regulation is an important skill that needs to be developed over time. Emotions help us to respond to a perceived or real environmental stimulus. Even though we don't have a perfect definition of what an emotion is, we can define them as a biological state that results from feelings, behaviors, and thoughts.

We feel a variety of emotions (as we talked about in this [Instagram post](#)) and knowing them is one of the first steps toward good emotion regulation. Dr. Marc Brackett's work at [Yale](#) and his book called [Permission to Feel](#) are great starting points to help us identify 64 emotions we can experience at various levels of intensity.

Emotion regulation (ER) is when a person understands their different emotions and can influence when and how they experience and express them. An individual that is not capable of managing their emotional response to everyday events is more susceptible to psychopathology.



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Supporting Mental Health through Emotional Learning cont.

To help with emotion regulation, different strategies have been used. Over the years they have been divided as:

- **Adaptive** and/or protective (when they successfully reduce negative state and restore emotional balance);
- **Maladaptive** and/or risk factors (if they only provide short-term relief and fail to reduce negative affect).

Adaptive ER strategies lead to **good psychological well-being** whereas **maladaptive** ER strategies have a **strong association with a wide range of psychopathology** (depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and eating disorder symptoms).

A review in 2009 found that three emotion regulation strategies have been associated with protection against psychopathology (adaptive):

- **Reappraisal** (when you try to look at the positive side of a stressful situation. Self-compassion and gratitude play a large role here as well);
- **Problem-solving** (conscious attempts to change a stressful situation or contain its consequences – you don't modify the emotion, but modify or eliminate the stressor);
- **Acceptance** (component of mindfulness, the ability to be present and accept thoughts, feelings, and sensations as they are to promote good outcomes).

Three strategies have been associated with risk factors for psychopathology (maladaptive):

- **Suppression** (suppression of emotional expression – could work in short term, but over time is less effective in regulating emotions);
- **Avoidance** (the opposite of acceptance);
- **Rumination** (the habit of obsessing over negative events that happened in the past – source: Verywell Mind)

Now that we have the science, here are 3 takeaways that will support your child's mental health:

1. It starts with your child's environment. How are you and anyone in your child's home modeling healthy emotion regulation?
2. Create habits that support their emotional well-being such as mindfulness, gratitude, a community and self-compassion.
3. Teach them adaptive coping strategies. We often don't have control over our environment and what causes us distress, however, we have control over how we respond to distress. The more we can learn to control our response, the happier we feel.

All 3 of these points lead to an emotional well child and adult with a lower risk of mental illness. It isn't easy work but we can all create small goals to support our child's mental health. I hope this series was helpful! Feel free to reach out through www.curiousneuron.com if you have any questions!

Parent Resources

As we continue to dig into the new school year, EPCA is pleased to present some fun and engaging activities to think about for the upcoming months.

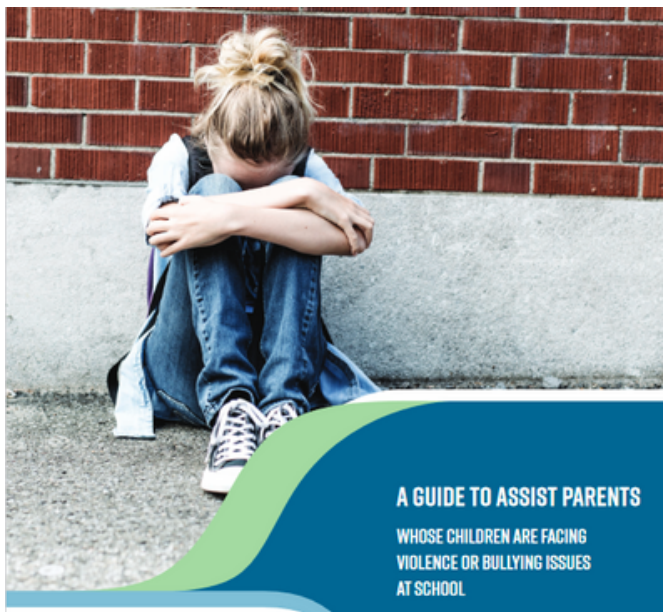
While everyone may still be concentrating on the excitement of the return to school - with the new year bringing new classes, new experiences, and new friends - it is important to think about other activities for outside of the school day that can also positively contribute to learning and fun. These activities are great in that they can also be inclusive for everyone.

- **Sports and Athletics:** Participation in organized sports such as soccer, basketball, baseball, gymnastics, or swimming is a great way for children to stay active, learn teamwork, and develop physical skills. Many schools and community centers offer sports programs or you can do physical activities on your own in your community or local green spaces.
- **Arts and Crafts:** Creative activities like drawing, painting, pottery, and crafts allow children to express themselves and develop their artistic abilities. Art classes and workshops are commonly available throughout the community.
- **Music and Dance:** Music lessons and dance classes provide opportunities for children to exercise their talents and explore their love for music and movement.
- **Volunteering:** There are many opportunities to develop skills such as volunteering at places like the local library, hospitals, and other locations. Make sure that you are choosing age-appropriate activities, and don't be afraid to seek suggestions from local school and community groups.
- **Maison de Jeunes:** The Maison de Jeunes or MDJ is a youth center that is available for youth ages 12-17. There are over 226 member houses / locations spread across Quebec. The MDJ offers a wide range of activities for your child to have fun, relax, open up to the world, learn, express themselves, and make friends. Oftentimes these activities include movie nights or community services like collecting donations for food banks or for holiday gift baskets, etc. It's a great way to get involved in your community with as little or as much time that you can give, while having fun, learning, and growing.

These are just some ideas to think about to contribute to the growth, learning, and having fun for your child. [Montreal Families](#) - or local community groups - also provides a plethora of activities that you can do on the weekends across the province of Quebec.



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.