



# English Parents' Committee Association



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PARENT RESOURCES

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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

## New Year means back to class... with some changes.

Dear parents,

I hope you and your loved ones had a restful and enjoyable holiday season. I am relieved that 2024 commences with the return of our children to school and the conclusion of the strike. The Minister and the Ministry consulted EPCA regarding a back-to-school strategy, and we specified:

- That the weight of the ministry exams needed to be lowered;
- That LEARN Quebec must be included in the partners that the Ministry is awarding extra funding to in order to meet the needs of our community;
- That effective and transparent communication between parents and the school team is crucial for identifying and addressing vulnerabilities the student may have and that it may not be possible to immediately identify these vulnerabilities; therefore, until the end of the school year, it will be crucial to modify the resources provided to each student in accordance with their changing requirements.

Some important notes for parents: The ministerial examinations, originally planned to take place at the end of the holiday season, have now been rescheduled to occur between late January and early February. Please visit this link for complete dates. As well, the deadline for the second report card of the year has been moved to March 28 instead of March 15, 2024. Finally, the weighting of these ministerial end-of-year examinations has reverted to the percentages established during the pandemic: 10% for final results at the conclusion of elementary and secondary 1-3, and 20% for secondary 4-5.

I'd like to also note that the Minister of Education's directive banning cell phones in the classroom came into force on December 31, 2023, with exceptions provided for pedagogical, health, or special needs reasons. EPCA, however, does not believe that the Directive goes far enough, that the measures are punitive in nature, and the underlying behaviours and addiction are not addressed. We will continue to advocate for more to be done on this issue, especially with respect to combating cellphone addiction in youth.

In closing, I'm happy to present this issue of the newsletter which will deal with homework and strategies parents can use with their children. Take care and enjoy the month ahead!





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## President's message

### New EPCA Survey - Impact of Social Crises on Families

The English Parents' Committee Association of Quebec (EPCA) and the Fédération des comités de parents du Québec (FCPQ) join forces to find out how families are doing. In collaboration with Dr. Méli<sup>s</sup>sa Généreux, a public health physician and professor at the Université de Sherbrooke's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, and Dr. Clara Morin, a public health resident, EPCA and the FCPQ have launched a large-scale survey aimed at providing a portrait of the well-being of children and their parents in the midst of social crises.



The survey is aimed at all parents of primary and secondary school children. They are invited to complete a ten-minute questionnaire on the secure Limesurvey © platform, in French or English. **Deadline to submit a response is January 30, 2024.** The results of the survey will be widely circulated thereafter.

Click below to find out more or to complete the survey:

<https://udes.limesurvey.net/944921?lang=en>

# Rushing through Homework - How to Help Kids Slow Down

There are a variety of reasons why students with learning and thinking disabilities may speed through their assignments. Children who have executive functioning difficulties or ADHD may be more prone to rushing through schoolwork. However, there are certain things you can do to help your youngster slow down.

## 1. Set aside a specific amount of time for homework.

Every day, set aside a certain amount of time for homework. Having a defined time for homework can assist your child in becoming accustomed to the concept of homework. Example: Knowing that they have 30 minutes to complete their homework removes the incentive for them to rush through work so they may go play. The general rule for elementary school homework is 10 minutes per grade level per night. So, if your child is in third grade, he or she should devote around 30 minutes each day to homework. If children finish assigned work early, they can read, write in their journal, or play online educational activities.

## 2. Make use of a visual timer.

Visual timers are a powerful tool for helping children manage their time more effectively. They provide a clear and easy-to-understand representation of time, which can be particularly helpful for children with learning difficulties. Visual timers can also help reduce anxiety and stress by providing a clear sense of structure and predictability. Make timed sections for your child's schoolwork - set the timer to go off at the end of each part of your child's homework assignment, and then reset it. Encourage your child to keep working until the timer turns off. It also reminds them that they have a limited amount of time, which may aid with concentration, build resiliency, and work towards good time management for test taking in the future.

## 3. Assist your child in developing the proper work mindset.

If children are exhausted or upset by the events of the day, they may rush through their homework in order to finish it. Consider putting off homework for a bit if your child appears tired or restless. Allow your child to run around outside or play quietly for a predetermined amount of time to de-stress. That way, when it comes time to do homework, your child will have more energy to give it their all. Inform your child's doctor if he or she takes ADHD medication and tends to crash straight after school. You and your doctor can consider if the medication needs to be adjusted.



# Rushing through Homework - How to Help Kids Slow Down

cont.



#### 4. Intervene if your child requires a break.

If you notice your youngster rushing, don't wait until they're finished before intervening. In the moment, try to slow them down. During homework time, check in with questions like, "Are you doing your best work?" or "Will the teacher be able to read that?" It is easier for both of you if you have your child repair errors before they finish, rather than having them redo work afterward. It can also help your child form excellent habits for the future.

#### 5. Encourage children to double-check their work.

Remind your youngster to double-check their work for errors and sloppiness before they consider it finished. You and your child can even make a checklist – for example: Is your child following the instructions? Are the words accurately spelled? Did your child utilize capital letters when necessary? Is your kid able to read their own writing? Getting children into the habit of checking their work helps them set high standards for themselves. And this can help students feel proud of what they're about to submit.



# Rushing through Homework - How to Help Kids Slow Down

cont.

## 6. Assist children in breaking down projects.

Help your child figure out how to schedule enough time to complete difficult projects over a longer period of time. Make a study schedule that divides the project into manageable daily assignments. This demonstrates to children that they can complete the job on time if they work on it gradually and steadily. It also sets up a schedule to ensure that the project will be completed successfully without having to stress about it at the last minute.

## 7. Provide children with the assistance they require

Some students leave homework questions blank or rush through them because they are irritated with the assignment. They may have learning difficulties that interfere with their reading, writing, or math abilities. If you believe this is the situation with your child, you should consult with their teacher. Share your observations and inquire about what the teacher has noticed. You can decide what the next step should be as a team. You could ask for an evaluation, or your child may require specific training in a skill area or to assist them in succeeding. The sooner they get the assistance they require, the sooner they can concentrate on learning and ultimately be successful academically.



## 8. Remind children of their own strengths.

Children who have not had a lot of success in school may be hesitant to finish their homework correctly. As a result, they may rush through it, believing it isn't worth the effort. Remind your youngster of their abilities. Discuss a time when your child worked hard and succeeded at something, no matter how big or tiny. This could help your child's self-esteem and bring them back to the task at hand, wanting to complete it as well as they can.

# Homework FAQs

In general, ensuring that children work on, and finish, homework can be challenging in any home. This challenge can be exacerbated when kids have difficulty in completing the individual homework tasks. Homework difficulties can leave parents and caregivers perplexed. For example, parents may ask how much assistance they can provide children without detracting from the learning experience? Other questions may include why is there so much homework or what part does a parent / caregiver play in the homework process?



Here are some answers to frequently asked homework questions.

## What is the purpose of homework?

When you see your child suffering with schoolwork, it's normal to ask if such assignments are truly required. This is a common point of contention between parents and teachers. According to ASDC, teachers should not assign homework simply for the sake of assigning it. The assignments should accomplish one of three things:

- Help students practice and review the work that has been covered in class;
- See whether students understand the lesson; and/or
- Help students learn how to find and use more information on a subject.

## How much homework is too much homework?

There are rules about how much time children should spend on homework. The ASDC suggests following the "10-minute rule." According to this rule, kids should spend around 10 minutes per grade level on homework every night. For children in grades K-2, homework is more effective when it does not exceed 10-20 minutes each school day; older children in grades 3-6 can handle 30-60 minutes a day. However, it is not always that simple for some children. Homework can take longer when children struggle with reading, writing, math, focus, or organization.

# Homework FAQs

cont.

## What can you do to assist with homework?

There are numerous approaches you can take to assist with your child's homework tasks.

- Let them know that you think homework is important. Talk about it together, including what needs to be completed, where can you find the information or support material, and what to do if your child needs help.
- Set up a quiet, comfortable study area with good lighting and the school supplies that your children need.
- Allow your child to study in the way they learn best. For example, some children work best when they're lying on the floor with background music playing.
- Check over your child's homework when it's completed.

Your job here is not to remedy mistakes, but to identify potential problems. Perhaps you've noticed that your child hasn't followed the instructions or perhaps your child did not complete a few problems. Discuss these concerns with your child and allow them to lead the way to correct the issues.

## How can teachers assist students with their homework?

Maintain contact with your child's instructor regarding homework. When you stay in touch with your child's teachers, they can ease your worries and offer their own homework tips and ideas on how you can help your children learn. Meet each of your child's teachers and ask what kind of homework will be given.

## What can I do if my child is struggling?

If your child is having difficulty with an assignment, you can notify the teacher by email. You can also use the services of AlloProf, whose mission is to help with homework. But be cautious - when you step in and take over the homework, you might assume your child enjoys it or feels a sense of relief that you are doing things for them. However, teaching your child to do it alone will teach them valuable skills, not to mention the virtue of endurance, and when you simply take over you may be telling them that you don't have trust or faith that they can accomplish the task on their own.





# Using Agendas Helps Kids Stay Organized

Today's students are being pulled in many different directions - from homework, sports, family obligations, and extracurricular activities to their social relationships, our children are being asked to juggle a lot of responsibilities. Keeping track of all this is challenging to say the least. Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams are vital tools our kids use in conjunction with their teachers to keep their schoolwork organized, and they could not work without these technological tools today. But when we add in all the other obligations, the calendar on their phone (which, in fact, they are no longer allowed to bring into class) or the calendar on the fridge become cluttered and confusing. Things get forgotten and priorities are difficult to recognize and respect.

Up until recently **agendas** were required school supplies, and for good reason. For some schools, this is still the case... but for others, agendas are no longer required on school supply lists or given out by schools. Regardless, agendas are a fundamental tool to enable your child to organize all their school and extracurricular obligations.



For your child, being able to see how due dates of assignments are aligned, and especially when they conflict, gives them the opportunity to plan how they will tackle their work along with their many other obligations. The agenda's weekly view and the monthly view complement each other to give the student the opportunity to plan for the schoolwork that is required to be done alongside all the other engagements they have. Using these different views, it is easy to visualize bottlenecks and to be proactive in completing work on time and without the unnecessary stress of last-minute cramming.

If your child does not already use an agenda, and you are not familiar with them yourself, please consider how having all their responsibilities chronicled and organized by date can help them prioritize their tasks. A properly used agenda will relieve a lot of the stress caused by planning for homework, assignments, and your child's other obligations. Getting your child an agenda and helping them use it is an easy way to help them manage their demanding schedules and reduce unnecessary stress due to a lack of planning and organization. It can also instill good time management now that will help them as they transition into higher education and work life in the future!

# alloprof



## New Year, New Homework Resolutions with Alloprof

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



With a whirlwind of after-school activities and commitments, the ability to integrate homework into an already jam-packed schedule has become a daunting challenge. And, it's not just about finding the right time, it's also about how to make the homework experience work for everyone in your family.

Alloprof was established to support children and their families, especially at homework time. We have gathered together a mix of resources in our "[Solving Homework Time](#)" theme to help families at this often precarious time of the day. From creating [effective homework routines](#), to dealing with a [child who often forgets their homework at school](#), [Alloprof Parents](#) has something for every situation.

Here are a few example of our best homework tools:

**Routines.** Before and after school routines are important. Not only do they provide structure, but they lead to the development of autonomy.

- After school routines: [Elementary](#) and [High School](#)
- Homework routine: [Elementary](#) and [High School](#)

**Homework checklists and charts.** These visual tools are a great way to get children organized.

- [Homework challenge: weekly chart](#)
- [Homework checklist](#)
- [Mood Thermometer](#)

**Learning to prioritize.** With assignment and test dates that often overlap, extra-curricular activities, and maybe even a part-time job, older children need help learning how to organize their responsibilities.

- Tool: [My List of Priorities](#)

And don't forget that Alloprof's [Motivational Timer](#) will add some fun to any homework routine!



# alloprof



## Post-Secondary Decisions

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



The beginning of a new year is also a time when Secondary V students have a big decision to make: Which educational path to pursue in Quebec. With so many options, it can be difficult to choose.

Vocational training has frequently been perceived as a route for students deemed incompatible with traditional schooling. Contrary to this misconception, many vocational training programs serve as gateways to various other academic pathways. Moreover, these programs provide swift entry into the job market, boasting high placement rates and favorable working conditions.

CEGEP is another great option with 2 types of programs available: technical programs and pre-university programs. Technical programs take three years to complete and give students the qualifications needed to enter the job market right away. If your child's plans change, no worries! They can also pursue a university degree upon completion of most technical programs.

If your child wants to pursue an undergraduate degree at university, then the pre-university program in CEGEP is the right choice. A pre-university program usually takes two years to complete. Alloprof has a great article for students, including a handy checklist, to help them with the CEGEP application process.





# Parent Resources - Brainworx



JANUARY  
TO MAY  
GRADES 1-6



# BRAINWORX!

START2FINISH

[brainworx.start2finishonline.org/student/signup](https://brainworx.start2finishonline.org/student/signup)

After School -  
Registration is  
**FREE**



  
**LIVE ONLINE**  
2x per week  
40 minute sessions



win  
prizes  
make  
friends

Enjoy physical  
activity,  
literacy, &  
mentoring

Anna Giesbrecht,  
Virtual Programs Coordinator

647-241-6410  
[anna.giesbrecht@start2finishonline.org](mailto:anna.giesbrecht@start2finishonline.org)



**FOCUS ON FITNESS,  
LITERACY, AND  
LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

**PUT SKILLS INTO  
PRACTICE**



# JUNIOR COACH

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**For students in grades 7 & 8**

**One hour a week online with live Coaches**

**Leadership placement opportunity**

**Mondays, 4:30pm**

**January - May**

**RECEIVE  
MENTORSHIP**

**LEARN FROM GUEST  
SPEAKERS**

**MEET OTHER  
STUDENTS ACROSS  
THE REGION**



## REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

*Limited Space*

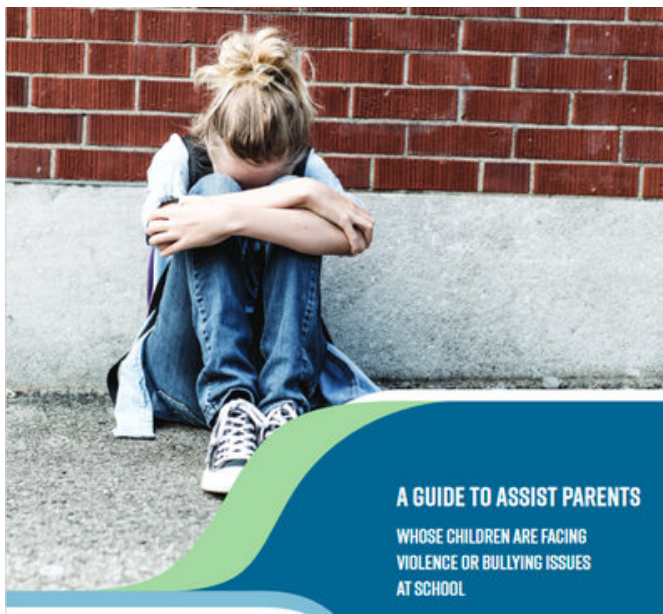
<https://brainworx.start2finishonline.org/student/signup>

**Anna Giesbrecht,  
Virtual Programs Coordinator**

647-241-6410  
[anna.giesbrecht@start2finishonline.org](mailto:anna.giesbrecht@start2finishonline.org)



# 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](#)

5253, Blvd. Decarie, Suite 309, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 3C3  
(514) 778-3722 - [epcaquebec.org](http://epcaquebec.org) - [president@epcaquebec.org](mailto:president@epcaquebec.org)

# 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.