



English Parents' Committee Association



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Katherine Korakakis is the President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA) and Head of Entrepreneurship at ProMontreal Entrepreneurs (PME), an early-stage VC fund. She has spent over a decade fostering entrepreneurial initiatives in Quebec, particularly through the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Katherine also serves as Vice-President of PME MTL Centre-Ouest, participates on key investment committees, and has co-authored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education, contributing her expertise to various corporate boards.

President's message

Preventing Violence & Bullying plus 5 Years since COVID.

Dear parents,

The first-ever Violence and Bullying Prevention in Schools Week, is taking place this week, March 17 to 21. The week consists of themed days, including one dedicated to parents. My hope is that this initiative will serve as a unifying moment for the entire school community—students, teachers, administrators, and families—coming together to promote respect, kindness, and civility.

Issues of civility and violence extend beyond school walls; they are societal concerns that require collective action. Every individual, organization, and authority has a role to play in modelling positive behaviour and fostering safe environments. As parents, we are crucial partners and EPCA is committed to being active in this conversation, reinforcing that parents are key allies in promoting respect, cooperation, and constructive dialogue in our schools.

The importance of preventing violence and bullying has been underscored by the National Student Ombudsman (NSO) in its first annual report. This long-awaited document validates the need for an independent resource for parents and students to address concerns about the quality of services in schools. It also highlights ongoing challenges that demand our attention. EPCA will be hosting a workshop on bullying on March 31 to provide parents with the tools they need to navigate these challenges and advocate effectively for their children. I encourage you to register and participate.

Additionally, I am excited to share the results of the second edition of the national survey on the well-being of Quebec families. Thanks to your incredible participation, 11,000 parents contributed to this year's survey, far surpassing expectations. This would not have been possible without the invaluable collaboration of our partners, including Dr. Méli^ssa G^én^ér^eux, the FCPQ, the Association pour la sant^é publique du Qu^ébec, and the R^éseau qu^éb^écois pour la r^éussite ^éducative. I invite you to mark your calendars for April 22, 2025, when Dr. G^én^ér^eux will present the full findings.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge that this month represents the five-year anniversary of the start of the pandemic and massive changes in our educational system and our children's learning. We take time in this newsletter to reflect on this and provide some thoughts on what we have learned and where we go from here.

I hope you are enjoying the start of the warmer weather,

Katherine Korakakis
President, English Parents' Committee Association

Retrospective: Five Years After the Pandemic – What Parents Have Learned and Where We Go from Here

Five years ago, life changed in ways we never imagined. Schools shut their doors, kitchen tables became classrooms, and parents had to juggle work, homeschooling, and the constant uncertainty of what came next. Now, with time and perspective, we can finally ask: What did we learn? What actually changed for the better? And where do we, as parents and advocates, go from here?



Parents: The Unexpected Educators

Let's be real—when the pandemic first hit, many of us had no idea what we were doing. Between managing Zoom classrooms, troubleshooting tech issues, and figuring out how to teach long division (again!), it was chaos. But you know what? We adapted. We became active participants in our children's learning in ways that weren't the norm before. And that shift—parents becoming real partners in education—shouldn't be forgotten now that schools are back in session.

At EPCA, we saw just how powerful parents' voices could be when they pushed for access to resources, mental health support, and better communication from schools. We learned that when parents speak up, change happens. The question now is: How do we keep that momentum going?

Tech in Schools: A Blessing and a Challenge

The pandemic forced the education system to catch up on technology—fast. Schools scrambled to distribute devices, teachers learned to navigate digital classrooms, and students got a crash course in independent learning. Today, technology is woven into education more than ever. That's a win, right? Well, yes and no.



While tech has made learning more accessible in some ways, it also exposed major gaps. Not every family had reliable internet. Not every child thrived in a digital classroom. And let's not forget the very real concern of screen fatigue and social disconnection.

So, what's the path forward? Parents must continue advocating for equal access to resources so that no child is left behind, whether learning in-person or online.

Retrospective: Five Years After the Pandemic

cont.

The Mental Health Aftermath

If there's one thing the pandemic made crystal clear, it's this: Our kids' mental health matters just as much as their grades. The stress of isolation, uncertainty, and sudden routine changes took a toll. Anxiety and depression rates in children skyrocketed, and even now, five years later, we're still seeing the impact.

The return to "normal" wasn't easy for every child. Some struggled to reintegrate socially; others found it hard to regain their academic footing. Schools have started prioritizing mental health more, but there's still work to do. More counselors, more resources, more understanding—these aren't luxuries. They're necessities. EPCA has been a strong advocate for integrating mental health education into schools in a way that mirrors how Quebec approaches sexuality education—age-appropriate, structured, and consistent across all levels. Mental health should not be an afterthought or a reactive measure; it must be part of a proactive curriculum that equips students with the tools to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions.



The Forgotten Struggle: Special Needs Students

While all students faced challenges during the pandemic, special needs students were among the hardest hit. The sudden shift to online learning left many without the essential support systems they relied on—specialized educators, therapy sessions, and structured learning environments. Parents were left scrambling to fill these gaps, often without the necessary training or resources.

Even now, many special needs students continue to struggle with disrupted learning progress and inconsistent access to individualized support. EPCA has consistently pushed for greater investment in special education services, ensuring that these students receive not just basic accommodations, but meaningful, tailored support that allows them to thrive. Inclusion is not just about placement in a classroom—it's about ensuring that every child has access to the tools and support they need to succeed.

One silver lining? The incredible dedication of teachers. These educators went above and beyond—finding creative ways to engage students remotely, providing emotional support, and ensuring that learning didn't completely stall. Their adaptability and commitment made a world of difference for students who needed consistency the most.

Retrospective: Five Years After the Pandemic

cont.

Parental Involvement: The Game Changer

If the pandemic taught us one big lesson, it's this: When parents get involved, schools get better. Whether it was showing up (virtually) to governing board meetings, demanding transparency on education policies, or just staying informed on what our kids were learning, parental engagement saw a huge boost.

And now? We can't let that slip away. Schools and school boards need to continue welcoming parental input. We have a seat at the table—let's use it. Because when parents, teachers, and policymakers work together, everyone wins.

Looking Ahead: What's Next?

So, five years later, where do we stand? Schools are open, life feels (mostly) normal again, but the effects of the pandemic are still with us. Learning gaps remain, mental health struggles persist, and the role of technology in education continues to evolve.

But here's the good news: We're more informed, more engaged, and more aware than ever before. The last five years weren't just about surviving—they were about learning, adapting, and pushing for better. And as parents, that's exactly what we'll keep doing.

The future of education isn't just in the hands of policymakers or school boards. It's in ours.

Let's keep the conversation going. Let's keep advocating. Let's keep showing up. Because our kids—and their futures—are worth it.



How COVID Ushered in a New Era of Digital Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the education landscape, accelerating the shift toward digital learning. As schools and universities closed their doors, educators and students were forced to adapt to online platforms. This sudden transition led to the rapid adoption of digital tools, many of which have transformed how teaching and learning happen. Virtual classrooms, online assessments, and digital collaboration became the norm, providing new opportunities for engagement and interaction.

One significant positive outcome is the increased accessibility of resources for both teachers and students. Educators now have access to a vast array of teaching tools—from interactive apps to multimedia content—that can enhance lessons and cater to various learning styles. For students, digital learning platforms offer greater flexibility, enabling them to learn at their own pace, access resources anytime, and revisit lessons when needed.

Moreover, digital learning fosters a more personalized approach to education, allowing teachers to tailor lessons to meet the individual needs of students. This is particularly beneficial for students with diverse learning needs or those who may require extra time to grasp certain concepts. The use of analytics also allows educators to track progress in real time, offering insights that help improve learning outcomes.

While challenges like the digital divide remain, governments have recognized the importance of ensuring equitable access to technology. Canada and Quebec, for example, have made significant efforts to close the gap. Uniting with a phased approach, using joint investments that are northwards of \$920 million, have contributed to providing over 166,000 households with high-speed internet. While these efforts have a great impact on thousands of homes, there is still more work to be done. It should be mentioned that the government of Canada plans to allocate \$3.2B to UBF (Universal Broadband Fund) to help reach the goal of providing 98% of Canadians with access to high-speed internet, helping close the digital divide gap, nationally and provincial, by 2026.

Source: [How the Widespread Availability of the Internet Has Influenced Academic Achievement in Schools — Learning Buddies Network](#)



Work-Oriented Training Pathway (WOTP)

With the dropout rate in Quebec schools at a historical high, it is important that families are made aware of the options available to them outside of the regular course of study. The Work-Oriented Training Path (WOTP) is one of three educational pathways offered in Secondary Cycle Two; the other two being the General Education Path and the Applied General Education Path. The WOTP consists of two distinct learning programs: Prework Training and Training for a Semiskilled Trade.

The WOTP offers new and challenging ways for students to learn and grow, focusing on their own academic, personal, and career goals, all based upon their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The smaller class size and personal focus offers students the learning environment and support they need to enjoy learning and succeed at their own pace. Work placements, which are a required part of the program, teach marketable skills and encourage independence and responsibility.

WOTP is different from other Cycle Two programs. It is practical in nature and strongly focused on an immediate preparation for the job market. It is intended for students who, for any kind of reasons, are having difficulties in school. The WOTP program gives students who fit the profile an opportunity to succeed in different contexts through adapted instruction.

For more information, please visit the following links:

- <https://educators.learnquebec.ca/subjects/secondary/wotp/prework/>
- <https://educators.learnquebec.ca/subjects/secondary/wotp/semiskilled/>
- <https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/training-semiskilled-trade/information-documents#c269489>
- <https://web-sites.lbpsb.qc.ca/Portals/Guidance/2018%20LSPBS%20WOTP%20Pathway.pdf>
- <https://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/schools/secondary/programs/wotp>
- <https://westernquebec.ca/services/complementary/wotp/>
- https://www.swlauriersb.qc.ca/schools/llhs/_pages/events/1213/Work%20Oriented%20Training%20Path%20Brochure.pdf
- <https://www.essb.qc.ca/>
- <https://www.crhs.rsb.qc.ca/wotp-prework>
- <https://hsb.nfsb.qc.ca/pathways/>
- <https://www.cqsb.qc.ca/en/web/asjstpats/programs>



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Prioritizing Student Mental Health in Schools

Mental health education in schools isn't just a "nice-to-have" anymore—it's a necessity. With more and more students struggling with anxiety, stress, and depression, it's time that mental well-being is treated with the same level of importance as physical health or academic achievement.

Schools have long taught students about nutrition, exercise, and even sex education in age-appropriate ways. So why isn't mental health literacy embedded into the curriculum in the same way? Kids and teens need the tools to recognize their emotions, manage stress, and seek help when they need it. And they should learn these skills before they're in crisis.



Creating a Culture Where Mental Health Isn't an Afterthought

The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) has been vocal about the need for structured mental health education in schools. Normalizing these conversations can go a long way in reducing stigma, making it easier for students to ask for help.

This isn't just about responding to mental health issues when they arise—it's about prevention. Giving students the skills to handle stress and emotions early on can help them navigate school and life more effectively.



Meeting the Needs of Neurodivergent Students

For students who are neurodivergent—those with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and other learning differences—mental health support has to be tailored. Many of these students experience higher levels of anxiety, sensory overload, or social challenges that make school life even more stressful.

Supporting student mental health isn't just about avoiding crises—it's about giving every child the tools to thrive in the present and in the future.

Helping Navigating Global Events: How to Talk to Kids of All Ages

In today's fast-paced world, global events unfold in real time, and kids are more exposed to the news than ever—whether through overheard conversations, social media, or discussions with friends. It's natural for them to have questions, worries, or even misconceptions. As a parent or caregiver, your role is to guide them through these conversations with sensitivity and clarity. Here are some general tips on how to approach it, based on their age and developmental stage. Be sure to check out the links at the end for further resources.

Before You Start

Before diving into a discussion, take a moment to process your own thoughts and emotions. Kids pick up on our feelings, so if you're anxious or upset, they will be too. Once you feel ready, ask them what they've seen or heard. Let them share in their own words before jumping in with explanations. Your first job is to listen. Then, use their response to guide your approach.

Talking to Kids Ages 6–12

Young children are naturally curious but can also become easily overwhelmed by too much information. Keep things simple and reassuring.

- Break it up. Instead of one long, serious talk, have shorter, more manageable conversations over time. Kids this age process information in bits and pieces.
- Use clear and calm language. Avoid graphic details or scary what-ifs. Instead, frame things with a focus on safety and solutions. For example: “There was a big storm, but people are helping those who need it.”
- Encourage questions. Even if they don't bring it up again, they might still be thinking about it. Check in with a simple “Have you been wondering about that thing we talked about?” If they ask a question and you don't know the answer, say so—then look it up together.
- Reassure them and offer ways to help. Kids feel safer when they see action. If they're worried, find small ways to help, like writing a kind note, donating supplies, or saying a prayer (if that aligns with your family's values).

Remember to be mindful of adult conversations. Even when they seem distracted, kids are always listening. Try to keep adult discussions calm and age-appropriate when little ears are around.

Talking to Teens Ages 13–17

Teenagers are exposed to global events more frequently—often through unfiltered social media, which can amplify misinformation and fear. Your role is to help them think critically and process their emotions.



Helping Navigating Global Events: How to Talk to Kids of All Ages cont.

- Be open and honest. Teens can handle more complexity, but they still need reassurance. Instead of sugarcoating, acknowledge the challenges while reinforcing that they are safe and supported.
- Encourage them to talk. Instead of launching into a lecture, ask: “What have you heard about this? How does it make you feel?” Let them express themselves without immediately trying to fix their worries.
- Teach media literacy. Help them fact-check sources and think critically about what they see online. Misinformation spreads fast, and teens need tools to recognize it.
- Discuss ways to take action. Feeling powerless can be overwhelming. Encourage constructive responses—volunteering, advocating, or simply staying informed can help them feel like they’re making a difference.

Be a steady presence. Even if they don’t seem interested in talking right away, knowing you’re there for them makes a difference. Keep the door open for future conversations.



Final Thoughts

It might feel uncomfortable to discuss serious global events with kids, but the reality is—they’re going to hear about them one way or another. When you take the lead in these conversations, you can provide context, comfort, and clarity. The goal isn’t to shield them from the world, but to help them navigate it with confidence.

By meeting them at their level and providing a safe space for discussion, you’re giving them the tools they need to understand, process, and even contribute positively to the world around them.

Additional Resources

[Helping children and teens cope with stressful public events](#) – Canadian Paediatric Society

[Current Events](#) – Kids Help Phone

[Talking to Children about Current Global Events](#) – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

[Stress and anxiety in your child or teenager](#) – Gouvernement du Québec

alloprof



Building Math Confidence: Helping Your Child Feel Capable and Empowered

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



From calculating change at a store to following a recipe or planning a trip, math is a part of everyday life. But for some kids, numbers can feel overwhelming. The good news? With a positive approach, regular practice, and the right support, math anxiety can turn into confidence! No matter where your child is on their math journey, [Alloprof](#) is here to help every step of the way.



Understanding Math Anxiety Some students feel stress or frustration when faced with math, which can hold them back from realizing their full potential. The good news? Confidence in math isn't something you're born with—it's something you build! Understanding and tackling math anxiety can make a world of difference. Learn more about how to support a child with math anxiety and help them gain confidence step by step.

Making Math Part of Everyday Life One of the best ways to boost your child's math confidence is to show them how math connects to real life. Whether it's estimating grocery costs, measuring ingredients while cooking, or figuring out travel times, everyday situations help reinforce key skills naturally. These simple ways to do math every day make learning feel fun and practical!

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Building Math Confidence

cont.

Turn Math Into a Game Math doesn't have to be all worksheets and drills—learning through play can be an incredibly effective way to build skills and confidence! Card games, board games, and online activities make practicing engaging. Try [Speedy Rabbit](#) for a fast-paced way to improve mental math—now with multiplayer mode, so the whole family can join in on the fun, or explore [fun activities for practicing math](#) together!

Practice Makes Progress Just like learning an instrument or a sport, improving in math takes time and practice. The key is to make practice engaging and encouraging. Whether your child is working on their basic math skills or tackling algebra, [our math games and activities](#) can help reinforce skills in a way that feels fun rather than frustrating.

Breaking Down Big Challenges Math concepts build on each other, so when a child struggles with one idea, it can impact their confidence moving forward. Encouraging them to tackle challenges step by step—rather than all at once—can make a big difference. Our [math tables learning strategies](#) and [building activities for practicing high school math](#) offer great ways to support your child at different levels.

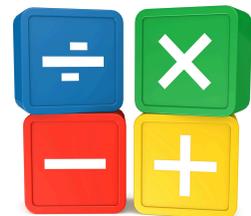
Shifting Their Mindset: From “I Can’t” to “I’m Learning” Many students doubt their math skills, thinking they just aren't “a math person.” But the truth is, math ability isn't something you're born with—it's something you build! With effort, practice, and the right support, every child can improve. Encourage your child to reframe negative thoughts into positive ones:

Instead of: “I'll never get this.”

Try: “I don't understand it yet, but I can keep trying.”

Instead of: “I'm bad at math.”

Try: “With practice, I can get better.”



By adopting a growth mindset, students gain confidence and become more willing to tackle challenges. Check out how [learning math is about more than just numbers](#)—a shift in perspective can make all the difference!

We've Got This—Together! Building math confidence takes time, but with encouragement, practice, and the right resources, every student can improve and feel capable. Alloprof offers a variety of tools to support your child on their learning journey—[explore our math resources for parents](#) [1] [2] to find helpful strategies, games, and expert advice.

Parent Resources

EPCA WORKSHOPS - March-May 2025

Bullying

March 31, 2025

[EPCA & Ometz Presents: Bullying Parenting Workshop | Jlive](#)

Body Image and Self-Esteem

April 2, 2025

[EPCA & Ometz Presents: Body and Self-Esteem Parenting Workshop | Jlive](#)

Digital Literacy

April 28, 2025

[EPCA & Ometz Presents: Digital Literacy Parenting Workshop | Jlive](#)

Alcohol, Vaping, and Drug Awareness

April 30, 2025

[EPCA & Ometz Presents: Alcohol, Vaping, and Drug Awareness Parenting Workshop | Jlive](#)

Managing Challenging Behaviors

May 5, 2025

[EPCA & Ometz Presents: Managing Challenging Behaviors Parenting Workshop | Jlive](#)

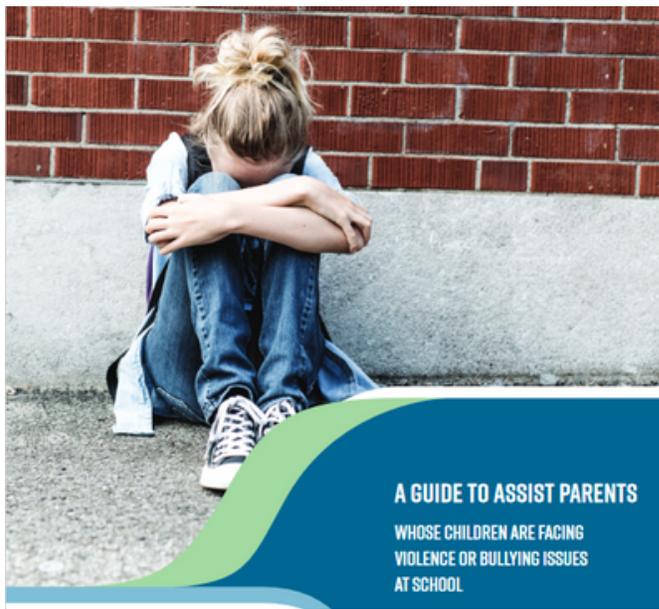
Consent and Boundaries

May 21, 2025

[EPCA & Ometz Presents: Consent and Boundaries Parenting Workshop | Jlive](#)



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.