English Parents' Committee Association



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PARENT RESOURCES



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 coauthored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education, contributing her
expertise to various corporate boards.

President's message

School Funding & Learning Disabilities Awareness

Dear parents,

At the start of the school year, I stood with our education partners to advocate for more stability and transparency in school funding. However, over the last few weeks, stories shared by parents across Quebec have made it clear that the situation is becoming more urgent. Our children's success and well-being depend on a system that truly meets their needs and right now, many families are left in the dark.

Parents who volunteer on school committees continue to express frustration. Their questions about budget priorities, service availability, and decision-making processes are frequently left unanswered. Meanwhile, school boards are experiencing delays in finalizing their budgets, which have been pushed back until the end of October.

Sonia LeBel, our new Minister of Education, has the opportunity to make a significant impact by ensuring that every child has access to essential educational and complementary services. Removing the directive that limits staff working hours, which is widely acknowledged as a barrier to providing adequate support, would be an important first step. As always, EPCA will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of families and students to ensure that words become actions.



EPCA is your partner for English Education in Quebec. We are excited to announce a new season of programs and activities for parents throughout the province. I encourage you to participate in the training sessions and workshops that we will organize. They are all intended to improve parental engagement, parent resources, and school governance. If you have a specific topic, you'd like us to cover, please contact us.



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President's message

School Funding & Learning Disabilities Awareness cont.

Finally, October marks Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. It's time to remind ourselves that not all learning differences are obvious. One of every five people has a different way of learning and thinking. Whether it's ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, or language and written expression disorders, raising awareness helps to reduce stigma and better support every child's ability to thrive. Let us use this opportunity to further our understanding and advocate for inclusive classrooms that meet every learner where they are.

EPCA remains committed to its mission of empowering parents and protecting their rights in the public school system. Together, we can continue to improve schools for all students.

I wish you a meaningful and inspiring autumn.

Katherine Korakakis President, English Parents' Committee Association



October is Learning Disability Awareness Month

Disabilities are not always visible—but they are always real.

Every October, we recognize Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, a time to celebrate how each child learns and thinks in their own unique way.

Did you know that 1 in 5 children learn and think differently? That means that in every classroom, there are students whose brains process information in less obvious but equally powerful ways. These differences are not indicative of laziness or a lack of ability; rather, they are part of the human brain's incredible diversity.

And here's something we can't express enough:

Just because you don't see a disability does not mean it doesn't exist.

Common Learning and Thinking Differences

Many learning disabilities are invisible, but they have an impact on how children understand, communicate, and express their knowledge. Listed below are some of the most common:

ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder): Children with ADHD may struggle to concentrate, sit still, or remain organized. It's not about willpower; their brains are hardwired to crave more movement and stimulation. With the right strategies, they can direct their energy toward creativity, curiosity, and leadership.

Dyslexia: This impairs reading and language processing. Despite being bright and capable, a dyslexic child may struggle to decode words or read fluently. With assistance and tools such as multisensory reading programs, these students can succeed.

Dyscalculia: Also known as "math learning disability," dyscalculia makes it difficult to understand numbers, patterns, and math concepts. A child may be quick with words but struggle with basic calculations. Visual aids and hands-on learning can make a significant impact.

Language Disorders: These factors influence how children understand and use spoken language. A child may find it difficult to follow instructions, express ideas clearly, or find the right words. Early speech and language support can help them develop strong communication abilities.

Written Expression Disorder: This makes writing difficult, not just handwriting, but also organizing thoughts and ideas on paper. With patience, technology tools, and structured writing support, children can learn to express themselves confidently.



October is Learning Disability Awareness Month

cont.

Why Awareness Matters

Children with learning disabilities frequently work twice as hard to achieve the same outcomes as their peers. When others do not understand their difficulties, these children may feel frustrated, self-conscious, or stigmatized.

Parents and educators have a critical role in changing this. Awareness allows us to see beyond grades or behaviour and recognize effort, resilience, and potential.

How Parents Can Support Their Children

- Observe and act early, if your child is struggling in one area despite your best efforts, seek assessments and support.
- Focus on strengths: Children who learn differently frequently excel in creativity, empathy, problem-solving, and innovation.
- Normalize differences, remind your child that each brain is unique.
- Collaborate with teachers, work together to identify strategies that will help your child succeed.
- Model understanding by speaking openly and positively about learning differences.

Resources for Parents in Québec

If you want to learn more or find support, these Canadian and Québec-based organizations offer information, guidance, and community programs:

- Institut des troubles d'apprentissage (ITA) Québec's main organization supporting children and adults with learning disabilities. Offers bilingual resources, training, and advocacy. https://www.institutta.com/
- Montreal Centre for Learning Disabilities (MCLD) Provides English-language workshops, webinars, and parent support on ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning differences. https://ldmontreal.ca/
- Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) National organization offering clear explanations, advocacy tools, and research to help families navigate the education system. https://www.ldac-acta.ca/
- Dyslexia Canada National non-profit offering awareness resources and advocacy for evidence-based reading instruction in Canadian schools. https://www.dyslexiacanada.org



Adopting the School's Budget

Each year, your school's governing board (GB) adopts the school budget. This responsibility is more than just a formality. Under Article 95 of the Education Act, this is one of the board's most important powers.

This year, provincial funding rules changed mid-summer, which restrict how schools spend money. The result? Programs may be underfunded, and services like tutoring, special education, and extracurricular activities could be reduced.

As a parent on the GB, you're not there to rubber-stamp decisions. You have the legal right to ask questions, request changes, delay adoption, or reject the budget if it compromises student needs. Doing so will not shut down the school; operations will continue under a provisional budget until a revised version is adopted.

Rejecting or modifying a budget sends a clear message: our children's education is not negotiable. Remember that governing boards exist to protect the education of the students—not balance government books.

For practical steps, sample resolutions, and tips on how to prepare for budget season, read the <u>full blog post</u>.





Digital Device Selection for Kids

In Québec and beyond, technology is woven into education, communication, and future careers. Instead of fearing it, parents can focus on how their children use devices—turning passive consumption into active learning. Used wisely, technology builds neural pathways for coordination, planning, creativity, and fine motor skills.

Children can learn a lot through guided digital activities. Even simple projects—like using RFID tags to trigger smart lights, learning touch-typing, recording a song or a story, experimenting with photography composition and lighting, or exploring digital art and painting—turn screen time into skill-building. Curious kids can even help find exoplanets or join the search for extraterrestrial life with scientists through Zooniverse or SETI.

Device Recommendations

Preschool / Early Primary (Ages 2-6)

Use a shared family device, primarily a tablet. The top priorities are durability, a "walled-garden" ecosystem, and ironclad parental controls.

- Device Models: The Amazon Fire HD Kids Edition (e.g., Fire HD 8 Kids or 10 Kids) is a top choice. It's not a powerful tablet, but its value is in the ecosystem: it includes a 2-year "worry-free" replacement guarantee, a thick foam case, and the Amazon Kids+ platform, which is a simple, controlled environment that's easy for parents to manage.
- Alternative: A standard Apple iPad (e.g., 10th or 11th Gen) in a rugged case (like an OtterBox) is a more powerful, longer-lasting alternative. Its App Store has higher-quality creative apps, but parents must be more hands-on with setting up Screen Time and Guided Access to lock the child into a single app.

<u>Upper Primary / Early Secondary (Ages 7–12)</u>

This is the ideal stage for a first personal device, such as a versatile 2-in-1 (convertible) laptop or a tablet with a keyboard. The device must transition from consumption to light productivity. Things to think about: versatility (can it be a laptop and a tablet?), stylus support for schoolwork, and an operating system that is secure and easy to manage. Examples:

- 2-in-1 Laptops: A Chromebook 2-in-1 is often the best fit. Models like the Lenovo Chromebook Duet series are affordable and portable (tablet-first), while the Acer Chromebook Spin series is known for being more durable (laptop-first). ChromeOS is secure, boots instantly, and is designed for Google's education apps. Look for 8GB of RAM if possible, as 4GB can feel slow with many tabs open.
- Tablets: If you go the tablet route, accessories are key. An Apple iPad (11th Gen) with an Apple Pencil (1st Gen or USB-C) is excellent for drawing and notes. Alternatively, a Samsung Galaxy Tab S-Lite model (like the S9 FE) often includes the excellent S Pen in the box, making it a great value. A Bluetooth keyboard case can help with learning touch-typing and developing good posture at the desk.

Digital Device Selection for Kids

cont.

<u>Teens (Ages 13–18)</u>

Devices are now a central academic and social tool. The priority shifts from parental control to reliability, performance, and all-day battery life. Kids will need an academic workhorse. It must be light enough to carry daily, powerful enough for 4+ years of schoolwork, and have a battery that can realistically last from the first bell to homework, (8+ hours of real-world use).

- Device Models (Mac): The Apple MacBook Air (M2 or M3) is a popular choice. Its combination of elite battery life, silent fanless design, premium build, and strong performance is unmatched for most students.
- Device Models (Windows): Look for premium "ultrabooks" known for battery life. This includes the Dell XPS 13 (a classic), the Lenovo Yoga or Slim series, or the newer HP OmniBook X or Asus Zenbook 14. Laptops with the latest Intel Core Ultra or Qualcomm Snapdragon X chips offer outstanding battery life that now rivals Apple's.

Specs to look for in a laptop or desktop:

- RAM: 16GB is the new standard. 8GB is the bare minimum and will feel slow in 2-3 years, especially with heavy multitasking, video/photo editing, or STEM software.
- Storage: 512GB SSD. 256GB will fill up fast with large projects, video files, and system updates.
- Keyboard/Trackpad: Must be high-quality for writing thousands of words.

Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR) offer immersive learning opportunities, but moderation is crucial. Extended headset use can cause eye strain, motion sickness, and posture problems. For teens, VR can enhance creativity and learning when used sparingly.

Canadian Paediatric Note: The Society warns that too much screen time can harm young children's development—linking excessive use to delayed language skills, poor sleep, attention problems, and lower self-esteem. The organization recommends no screen time (other than video chats) before age two, and about one hour or less per day for ages two to five. Screens before bedtime also reduce melatonin, making it harder for kids to fall asleep, while poor posture and eye strain are growing concerns.



Progress Reports

What are Progress Reports?

Teachers assess the previous year's competencies as well as begin the current year's curriculum. The progress report gives a snapshot of these early assessments and provides feedback about how your child is doing so far in each subject. Teachers share strengths as well as recommendations to help your child develop any lagging skills.

For example, English Language Arts has 3 competencies that are evaluated. See below for key features of each.

Competency 1: To read and listen to literary, popular and information-based texts

Key Features of the Competency

To construct meaning by applying appropriate reading strategies

To self-evaluate her/his reading development To use a response process when reading and listening to literary, popular, and information-based texts

TO READ AND LISTEN
TO LITERARY, POPULAR
AND INFORMATIONBASED TEXTS

To construct her/his own view of the world through reading and listening to literary, popular and information-based texts

To construct a profile of self as reader

Competency 2: To write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts

Key Features of the Competency

To integrate her/his knowledge of texts into own writing

To self-evaluate her/his writing development To follow a process when writing

TO WRITE
SELF-EXPRESSIVE,
NARRATIVE AND
INFORMATION-BASED
TEXTS

To construct profile of self as writer

To use writing as a system for communicating and constructing meaning

Competency 3: To represent her/his literacy in different media

Key Features of the Competency

To apply appropriate strategies for constructing meaning

To self-evaluate her/his development as a viewer and producer of media texts

To follow a process to respond to media texts

TO REPRESENT
HER/HIS LITERACY IN
DIFFERENT MEDIA

To construct her/his own view of the world through the media

To follow a production process in order to communicate for specific purposes to a specified audience

Now What?

Prepare for Parent Teacher Interviews

- Read your child's progress report
- Write down all your questions and concerns

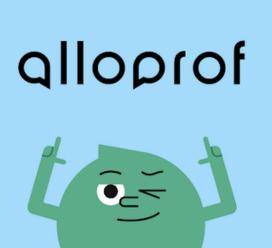
At the Meeting

- Listen to the teacher review your child's progress reports
- Ask your questions
- Share your concerns
- Be respectful, but also be firm if you don't feel heard
- Ask for a follow-up meeting if your allotted time runs out and you still have more questions



After the Meeting

- Talk to your child
- Focus on the positive things that were shared by the teacher
- Create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time Oriented) goals with your child to support their learning (especially if they are experiencing any difficulties in a specific subject)
- Hire a qualified tutor for your child if they are struggling- now is the time to act to ensure that your child develops essential skills that are needed to succeed in school



Alloprof: Tackling Tough Subjects Together: Tips and Tools for Math and History Success

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



As the school year picks up speed, many families notice that some subjects, especially math and history, can bring extra challenges. Whether it's solving equations or sorting through dates and events, these subjects often require patience, practice, and a bit of creativity. The good news? With the right support, even tough topics can turn into moments of confidence and discovery.

At Alloprof, we're here to make sure students and parents have the tools they need to succeed, together.

Math:

Building Confidence Step by Step

For many students, math anxiety comes from feeling lost somewhere along the way. Alloprof helps rebuild confidence by breaking big ideas into small, achievable steps:

- <u>Concept sheets and videos</u> for clear explanations of key operations
- <u>Interactive exercises</u> for personalized practice and instant feedback (or check out our arithmetic game, <u>Speedy Rabbit!</u>)
- <u>Crash Courses</u> and <u>Memory Aids</u> for quick, effective review before exams



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Tips and Tools for Math and History Success

cont.

At home, confidence can grow in fun, everyday ways. Try playing <u>Math Bingo</u>, explore <u>ways to do math every day</u>, or read <u>Learning Math Is More Than Numbers</u> for simple, positive strategies. If your child struggles with worry or self-doubt, this article on <u>understanding math anxiety</u> offers reassuring tips for parents.

History:

Connecting the Past to the Present

History can feel overwhelming when it's all about memorizing names and dates. Alloprof helps students discover the story behind events through:

- Review guides organized by time period
- Historical periods to connect events chronologically
- Document analysis to help students think like historians
- Intellectual operations explained with simple examples

At home, families can make learning hands-on with <u>archaeology activities</u> or <u>creative history projects</u>. For older students, try using <u>timelines</u> to organize study notes and make connections between eras.

Learning Is a Team Effort

Whatever the subject, students can always turn to <u>Ask a Teacher</u>, where real teachers offer free homework help online, Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Whether it's solving a tricky equation or reviewing for a history quiz, help is just a few clicks away.

When parents and children tackle tough subjects together, with patience, positivity, and the right tools, learning becomes a shared success.

Explore more free bilingual resources at alloprof.qc.ca, or subscribe to the <u>Alloprof Parents</u> newsletter for tips and encouragement all year long.

Interested in offering a parent workshop through your school or school board? Contact Kassandra Berardelli at

kberardelli@alloprof.qc.ca.

English Parents'





Parent Resources



- HOMEWORK SUPPORT
- SOCIAL SKILLS
- ACTIVE PLAY
- PLUS: A HEALTHY DINNER

A NEWLY REVAMPED PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 2-6

Located at the Sylvan Adams YM-YWHA



REGISTER TODAY!

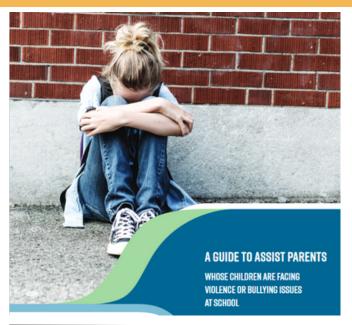
ymywha.com/leap-ahead







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 <u>here</u>.

Tutoring



Homework Help

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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.

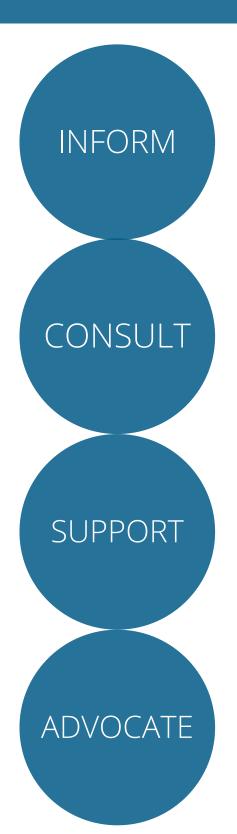
What would you like to see in our upcoming editions?

TELL US HERE

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EPCA STRATEGIC PILLARS



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.

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.

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.

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.







