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Parent-Child GUIDE

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Social Media and Children

By Claudette Bouman

Dear Parents,

I was handed an article from the German broadcaster Tagesschau headlined “Australia wants social media only from 16.” The article goes on to say: “Australia’s government wants to legally protect young people from using social media too early. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok should only be accessible to people aged 16 and over. Prime Minister and labour party leader Anthony Albanese “want(s) parents to be able to say, ‘Sorry, mate, but that’s against the law.’” The proposed legislation is to be introduced into the Australian parliament later this year. After that, it could take about a year for the new regulation to come into force.

Headlines on the same Tagesschau online page make the following claims: social media use among young people is becoming more problematic; young people are online for almost 72 hours a week; there’s no minimum legal age in Germany; youth have higher self-esteem without social media; young adults are increasingly unhappy; and hate on the internet scares many people away.

Is any of this surprising?

Closer to home, the December 2024 issue of Maclean’s Magazine features an article titled “Hold the Phone” detailing the formidable headwinds teachers and adminis-

trators face in the implementation of a much-hyped smart phone ban in Canadian schools. Frankly, it’s not working where students are allowed to hold onto their phones. Most teachers think that effective bans happen only phones are pried from their eager hands with support from administration. The best that can be said is that most educators and parents agree that children under 13 should not be using smartphones in the classroom.

Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are available to children with the internet 24/7 unless controlled by parents and or schools. Also Chat GPT is accessible via these phones.

I recently learned a little about Chat GPT. It’s a chatbot that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to understand and generate human-like text. It answers questions, writes stories and poems, translates between languages, solves math equations, and debugs and fixes code. What challenges are left for students to accomplish? No wonder teachers want to limit accessibility to ChatGPT during exercises, quizzes, tests, and exams where students’ knowledge and skill are being tested.

It’s even more important to remove distracting gadgetry from elementary-age children who are learning to read, write, and develop math skills. Kids want phones because the adults

in their world are often glued to them. It is necessary for adults (parents and teachers) to model right behaviour with smartphones at a time when children are mastering basic skills. The use of social media by older teens and young adults is a much wider social issue that can’t be fixed by schools alone as the Australian Labour Party’s stance establishes.


Powerful monied interests are at work here as is discussed in a related article, “How TikTok makes billions.” Problem areas include youth protection, the spread of fake news, advertising for fake branded goods, fraudulent content, and possible espionage by the Chinese state through the evaluation of user profiles.

Young minds and not so young minds are highly vulnerable. We need to protect them against a small vocal minority who cry fowl whenever teachers and school administrators show a bit of backbone.

Claudette Bouman retired after 30 years of teaching in Barbados, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia,


mostly at senior high school. Her last thirteen years were spent at Cole Harbour District High School with a wonderful group of colleagues. There she taught chiefly English and Theory of Knowledge in the International Baccalaureate Program (IB). She enjoys writing and is in the process of writing a Memoir title: “Saarland Dream.” It’s about a year she took off from teaching (2013-2014) to live in Germany with her husband and daughter. She has two adult children and live in Dartmouth with her husband.






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To All Our Constituents & Friends Season's Greetings & Best Wishes for the New Year

A Message from Darrell Samson,
the Member of Parliament for Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook





I would like to extend my best to everyone and their families and wish you all a wonderful holiday season with your loved ones.

*Happy Hanukkah! Merry Christmas!
Joyeux Noël! Happy Kwanzaa!*



DARRELL SAMSON
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Darrell.Samson@parl.gc.ca
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*I would like to wish everyone and their families a safe, healthy and happy season.
Joyeux Noël!*


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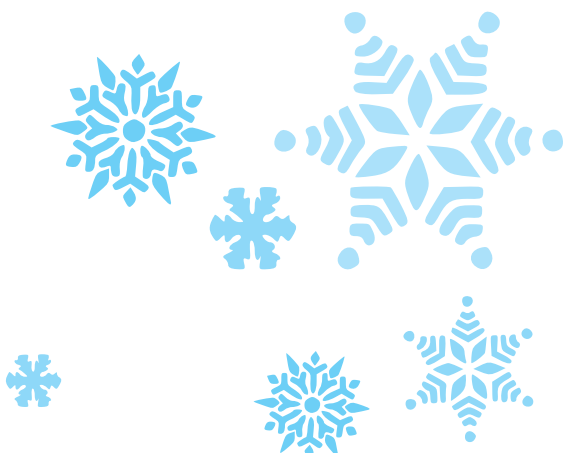
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To All Our Constituents & Friends Season's Greetings & Best Wishes for the New Year

Halifax West MP Report

By: Hon. Lena Metlege Diab,
Member of Parliament

To my constituents and all Nova Scotians, best wishes for a Merry Christmas, happy holiday season, and a bright and prosperous 2025! I hope the coming weeks bring peace, joy, and optimism for you and your loved ones.

BUILDING UP OUR COMMUNITY

Halifax West is a diverse and rapidly growing community, and it deserves proper investment to maintain the quality-of-life we enjoy here. As your MP, I've been incredibly proud to deliver investments that support the lives of people in our community and improve the neighbourhoods we call home.

That support includes the \$1.7 million in Canada Community Revitalization Fund money that I've secured for local infrastructure projects. With this investment, Halifax West residents are benefiting from better audio and lighting at the Bella Rose Arts Centre; an improved basketball court in Fairview; a newly renovated and accessible Fairview Resource Centre; building upgrades at our local Legions; improvements to the BLT trail; extensive renovations at the Fairview Salvation Army; A/V equipment at the Cedar Events Centre; and an elevator and accessible washroom at the Saint Mary's Cathedral Basilica Foundation. This funding also helped advance the Rec and Arts Centre project being pursued in Upper Hammonds Plains.

One thing is clear to me: We need to continue with these investments in order to grow responsibly. That's what your family and your neighbours deserve.

CREATING JOBS, SUPPORTING YOUTH

Creating opportunities for young people is the reason I got into politics more than a decade ago. It's also why I've been thrilled with the success of the Canada Summer Jobs program.

Each year, Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) provides wage subsidies to non-profits, faith groups,



LENA METLEGE DIAB • MP, HALIFAX WEST | DÉPUTÉE, HALIFAX-OUEST

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small businesses, universities, and municipalities—helping them offer job placements for our youth. The return we get from the program is enormous: CSJ funding helps young Canadians enter the job market and succeed, allows families to find summer supervision for the kids, and provides support to our businesses and community organizations.

Since 2021, I've been proud to secure over \$2.8 million in CSJ funding for youth and employers in Halifax West—creating well over 800 jobs. From Maskwa and the Mount to our soccer clubs and day camps, that support is making a huge difference.

As your MP, I'll continue advocating for investment in our riding and the people who call it home.



We wish you a warm
and bright holiday season!

DARREN FISHER

MP for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour



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Winter Fun at Ross Farm Museum

By Rhea Hamlin, Ross Farm Museum

In November, we launched the first round of our winter weekday workshops, aiming to promote history, craftsmanship, and community spirit. Our offerings range from woodworking workshops for children to spoon-making, mastering intricate barrel-making techniques, and exploring the world of bushcraft. Each workshop promises a hands-on experience that educates and inspires participants.

Our workshop series will continue into the new year until March 2025. Keep an eye on our website for details about workshops for children. Upcoming sessions may include open-heart cooking, spinning, candle making, flax processing, blacksmithing, and working with farm animals.

Our March Break programming offers a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time with your family. Enjoy the beautiful outdoors by taking a horse-drawn wagon or sleigh ride, go sledding

or snowshoeing, or simply enjoy a winter walk along our scenic Nature Trail. Please note that winter activities are dependent on adequate snow conditions.

Join us during our March Break events and engage with our interpreters as you explore the various buildings on site. Each day features fun activities, opportunities to learn new things, sample delicious treats, and a chance to meet different animals. With a unique theme every day, you are sure to create lasting memories!

Join us at Ross Farm Museum for a weekend visit, during March Break, or for a workshop or two!

For more information, please visit our website (<https://rossfarm.novascotia.ca>), give us a call at (902)689-2210, or check out our social media sites. We look forward to seeing you!



Explore the rich history of rural life in the 1800s and early 1900s at Ross Farm Museum. Here, you can visit authentic heritage buildings and experience traditional farming practices. Engage in hands-on activities and immerse yourself in the vibrant stories of the past, making it a perfect outing for all ages!

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Unsure if Stagecoach is the right fit for your child or yourself? Stagecoach offers two-week trial classes, giving you the perfect opportunity to experience our programs and meet our teaching team. Discover the magic of the performing arts firsthand.

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For more information, visit Stagecoach Halifax www.stagecoachschools.ca/halifax or call 902-266-2601.

Stagecoach: Inspiring Education Through Performing Arts

As the days get shorter and the air turns chilly, the holiday season brings a cozy and exciting environment for everyone! While families gather and winter traditions come alive, it's also the perfect time for kids to jump into something new—an awesome world of creativity and fun in the performing arts at Stagecoach!

Unsure of a special holiday gift? Gift your child the opportunity to discover their Creative Courage for Life!

Stagecoach, a renowned performing arts school, invites you and your child to embark on a transformative journey this Winter. With locations in Halifax, Dartmouth, Truro, and Bedford, Stagecoach provides a vibrant space where young stars can discover their talents, build confidence, and ignite their passion for

learning through singing, dancing and acting classes.

At Stagecoach, we offer age-specific programs, ensuring each child receives the right guidance and challenge.

Early Stages (Ages 4-6): Young stars explore singing, dancing, and acting in a fun, imaginative environment.

Main Stages (Ages 6-14): A comprehensive performing arts experience, from honing talents to building confidence.

Further Stages (Ages 14+): Advanced training in acting, dancing, singing, and life skills.

We even have Adult Classes: It's Never Too Late! Our Adult program will be putting on the production of RENT! at the end of our Spring term. This is one you won't want to miss!

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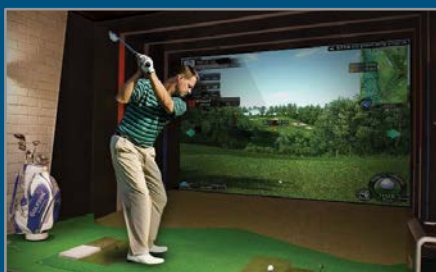
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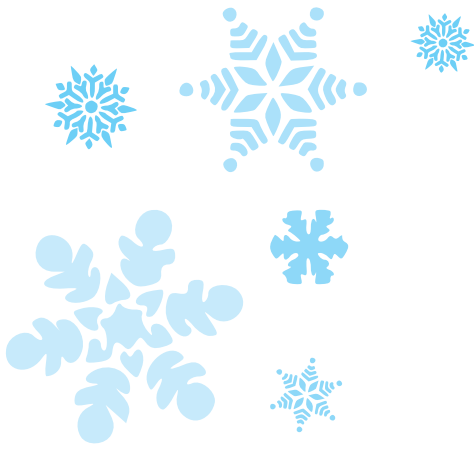
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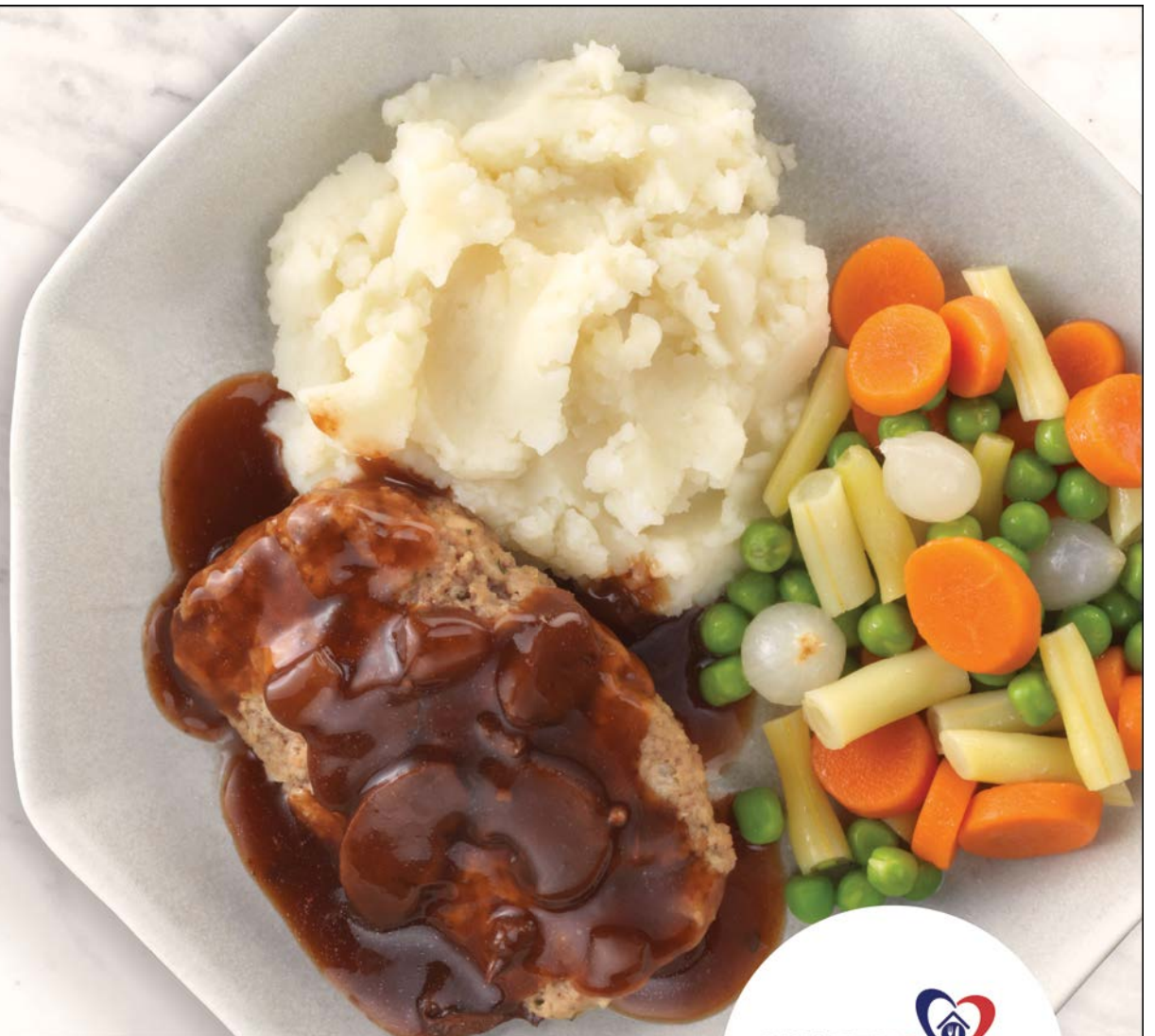
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Health & Wellness

Are Braces in your Future?

By Dr. Sarah Davidson DDS, MSc (Ortho) FRCD (C),
Halifax Orthodontic Specialist Group



Every parent wonders this from time to time; the only real way of knowing? Book an early screening exam by a certified Orthodontist. The Canadian and American Orthodontic Associations, recommend age 7-8 as the ideal time for this early exam but even if your child is older they will benefit from the check up.

Although the adult teeth may be just starting to erupt, this check-up provides valuable information to your orthodontist and dentist about your child's growth patterns and jaw relationship. It also provides you, as the parent, a better understanding of the development of your child's bite. If a potential problem is identified, your Orthodontist will recommend monitoring your child at a regular interval (often yearly) until a time that treatment is indicated. Usually orthodontic treatment is recommended around age 11-12 when the main growth spurt happens and many of the permanent teeth are present, but in some cases early treatment is necessary. Early, interceptive treatment may prevent a problem from becoming more serious (possibly requiring surgery) or may achieve results that would otherwise be unattainable if treatment is delayed.

So do you know what to look for? A developing

smile can be a bit intimidating from a parent's perspective but here are some "bad bites" (or malocclusions) to watch for.

- An underbite (bottom teeth bite over top teeth)
- Crossbite (s) (top teeth bite inside bottom teeth on one or both sides)
- A deep bite (top teeth completely cover bottom teeth)
- An open bite (teeth don't come together in front)
- Protrusion ("buck teeth"),
- Excessive spacing or crowding
- Any of the following: Early or late loss of baby teeth; difficulty chewing or biting; mouth breathing; a thumb or finger sucking habit; jaws that shift or make sounds; grinding or clenching of teeth; biting the cheek or the roof of the mouth; speech difficulties or facial imbalance.

Don't be alarmed if you see one or more of these

features in your child's bite. Many changes occur as a child grows and some problems are temporary. However, calling your local Orthodontist for a screening exam is a good idea.

Now that you've looked closely at your child's teeth, what about your own? You would be surprised to learn how much you can improve the longevity of teeth by correcting the bite.

Dr. Sarah Davidson is a Board-Certified Orthodontic Specialist with The Brace Space Orthodontists. She is a co-owner of The Brace Space in Bedford (Larry Uteck), Dartmouth, Halifax and Sackville, offering conventional braces and Invisalign for children, teens and adults. For more information, contact 902 455-7222.

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High-Value Education Is a Great Investment

Submitted by Oxford Learning

When the economy struggles, discretionary spending shifts. Families are taking the time to rethink their spending, being more careful about what they buy, and reexamining what truly matters. Discretionary spending is often the first to go: the dinners out, an extra car, the additional streaming services. However, when it comes to prioritizing spending, education is rarely considered expendable. In fact, investing in education becomes more valuable as a tool to protect the next generation.

work with your child's report to identify the key areas of focus, and build a specific program to meet your child's exact needs.

Even as early as the elementary level, children are developing core skills such as reading, math, and comprehension which are the foundation of the academic skills and learning habits that they will continue to build on for the rest of their lives. In fact, studies show that the earlier young children develop strong reading and writing skills, the greater success they see in the higher grades.

By ensuring children receive a quality education, we equip them with the necessary tools for a brighter future, allowing them to reach their potential and secure their footing to be successful in any economic climate.

In high school, mastering skills such as organization, time management and study skills leads to greater chances of improved grades. Better grades are the single best way to open doors to a promising academic future.

Whether it is aiming for a top-tier university for the future or developing an aggressive approach to making the most of your child's current educational situation, the sooner that children secure the basic academic skills, the better their chance becomes of having a smoother transition into higher education.

Personalized tutoring is a great way to secure your child's future goals: with a few classes underway, Oxford Learning students start building stronger learning skills that they can apply on their own in school. Whether your child is in elementary or high school, the results of better learning will become evident well before the next report card.

Is Your Child's Education Providing Long-Term Value?

It's never too early to begin to invest in a stable academic future. When it comes to our children's futures, choosing to invest resources in education is always worth the venture, especially when the outcome is the best possible educational future for your next generation. It's the safest investment of all.

With interim report cards coming home in December, it's natural to consider your child's educational progress in terms of their future goals. Grades are a keystone indicator of progress. When your child needs additional support, placing value in a tutoring program is a wise investment for long-term gains.

Contact us today at bedford@oxfordlearning.com 902-405-4116 or halifax@oxfordlearning.com 902-423-4484.

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NEW BOOK LAUNCH: Failing Forward in Saarland

By Claudette E. Bouman

F*ailing Forward in Saarland* is the memoir of a transplanted Canadian with Caribbean roots, venturing with her husband and their daughter into Saarland, Germany. The memoir describes the year the family spent in this small forested land tucked away in the western corner of Germany on the border to France. Her teenage daughter made the daily commute to attend a lycée in France and her husband spent most days doing research in labs and forests. What was the mother and wife left to do in the Saarland with next to no knowledge of the German language let alone the Frankish accent? As a career teacher, the author's life had never before been reduced to awaiting the daily home-coming of a daughter and husband. During her year in Saarland, she did much more than that. This book is an entertaining and informative account by an experienced Black teacher of what it means to transplant a family into a foreign country and how to enjoy a welcoming culture.

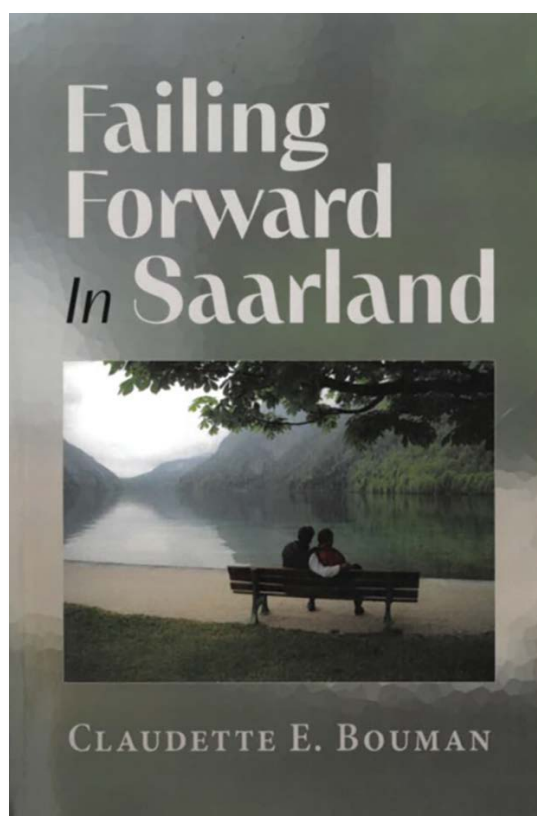
Most significantly, this memoir is a meaningful addition to the literary corpus focusing on strangers in a strange land. Even though the author is

intimately familiar with the notion — she has lived most of her adult life in Canada, far from her Barbados birthplace — she immediately faces the challenges of adjusting to the customs of a new land and, especially, learning to communicate in German. And her story is anything but ordinary — it's a moving, often amusing, and sometimes humbling account of the author's adventures and learning experiences in a largely unknown country without the benefit of fluency in the local language. As the title indicates, the author comes to view these challenges — and even failures — as

positive “life lessons in adaptability, strength, and resilience” — failing forward.

Failing Forward in Saarland is available directly from the author. Please email her at: claudette.bouman@gmail.com.

The book is also available at the following locations: Atlantic News, 5560 Morris St, Halifax, NS; Bookmark, 5686 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax, NS; and Dartmouth Heritage Museum, 26 Newcastle St, Dartmouth, NS.



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Education Education Education Education Education

Decisions, Decisions: Choosing the Right French Program for a Brighter Future!

Submitted by Canadian Parents for French, Nova Scotia

When is too early to start thinking about schooling decisions for your little ones? The answer may surprise you.

While your child is learning to talk, read, and interact with the world, they're at the perfect age to begin a second language! During these early years, establishing learning goals for your children can be incredibly beneficial for them in the long term. However, determining which French as a Second Language (FSL) program is the right fit for you may feel daunting.

Understanding your options and making an informed decision on your child's educational plans will set your family up for success.

Consider the Benefits!

Bilingualism offers many benefits to learners at any stage of life, but particularly during the early childhood years. So many skills are attributed to learning a second language, everything from increased attention span, to creative problem solving, and organisational skills.

According to the **Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages**, in the long term, bilinguals in Canada have access to more job opportunities, face fewer communication barriers when travelling abroad, and benefit from familiarity with another culture.

Outlining Your Goals and Selecting a Program to Match

Reflecting on your child's educational goals early is crucial to achieving the desired outcomes and aligning your child's school programming accordingly.

What are you hoping to accomplish? Perhaps you're looking for your child to gain fluency in a second language. Or, cultural exposure to Canada's official second language may be the end goal. Maybe the idea of basic comprehension is an ideal outcome for your family.

No matter your learning goals for your child, there are programs designed to support them on their journey, each one providing unique benefits to its learners. The best way to feel empowered in your decision is to understand the FSL programs available to you.

The HRCE offers Core French, Intensive French, French Immersion, and Integrated French programs. For descriptions of these programs, go to www.hrce.ca/students/general-information/french-programs

Making an Informed Decision

Choosing the right FSL program for your child will come down to your unique family and your child's learning goals. Canadian Parents for French is here to support you and your child's journey in becoming bilingual. www.cpf.ca



**Open the Door to Opportunities!
Enjoy the Benefits of Bilingualism!**

**Early French Immersion
registration opens
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To learn more about the French Immersion program, contact CPF Nova Scotia

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Parent-Child Guide

The Parent-Child Guide Newspaper is proud and grateful to be celebrating our

SPECIAL 30th YEAR ANNIVERSARY EDITION, on April 16, 2025!

DON'T MISS OUT ON OUR SPECIAL ISSUE!

FEATURING 30th YEAR CONGRATULATIONS PAGES FOR ADVERTISERS TO SUPPORT THIS SPECIAL EDITION, along with HRM's LARGEST Summer Camp Guide including Fun Places To Go, Health & Wellness, Education, and More!

Printing on April 16, running to June 25, 2025

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Christmas...the word alone evokes joy within me!

Friends, family, get-togethers, giving and receiving...all so wonderful and magical.

Visions of sugarplums literally dance in my head.

Not that food and sweets rule my world but, I definitely embrace holidays like Christmas to indulge in sweet treats.

At our previous home we had a beautiful fireplace that we would adorn to a point of "over the top" and that was our Christmas decor.

It was more simple than having a tree and it gave us a sense of celebration.

Five years ago we moved into a lovely apartment...Christmas rolled around and suddenly I realized NO FIREPLACE!!!

What to do?

We bought one of those skinny Christmas trees - you know the type that at its widest is only 18" (46 cm).

In hindsight we were stingy with our choice.

How do you decorate a skinny tree to access -there's just not enough space!!

However, I didn't want to toss the tree so this year, instead of putting it in the centre of the window, it is off set with tall decorations - a reindeer and snowman that are half the height of the tree beside it...all looks great!

Fills our hearts with joy and smiles.

Mother Theresa says "love starts with a smile". It seems this time of year definitely brings out the smiles in us.

When you pass someone on the street look their way, give a little smile and acknowledgment...it makes you feel good!

If they don't respond I assure you it will fill them with a bit of warmth and maybe they will pass it on and possibly continue to pass those smiles the rest of the year...wouldn't that be wonderful!

Wishing you all a blessed and joyful Christmas filled with smiles.

And please, make my day...bring on the sugarplums!



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Merry Christmas & All the Best in 2025 to Everyone!



The holiday season is here again. We are grateful and appreciative to all our advertisers whose continuous support has made our local HRM publication possible for ALMOST 30 YEARS . Thank you very much!

We wish everybody to have a happy holiday season with family & friends, and hope that 2025 will be a great year for everyone.

I would also like to thank our writers whose professional and interesting articles keeps the newspaper informative and helpful for our readers throughout the HRM area. And I want to thank all our wonderful readers for their kind words and interest in our newspaper for over the past 29 years.

We are excited about our upcoming 30th Anniversary and, stay tuned for our Special 30th Anniversary

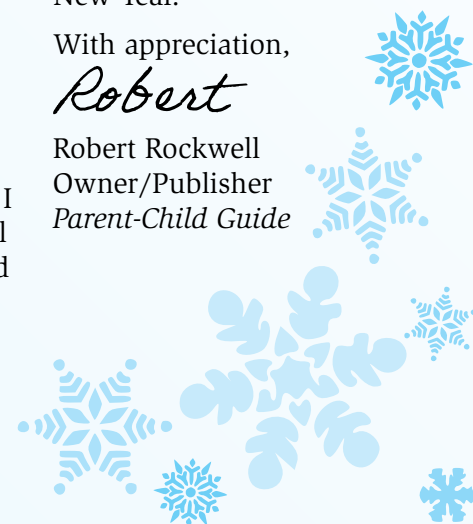
Edition, printing April 16, 2025. We look forward to publishing for many years to come, providing helpful and informative information to our readers of all ages in the HRM area.

On behalf of everyone at the Parent-Child Guide Newspaper, we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year.

With appreciation,

Robert

Robert Rockwell
Owner/Publisher
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