

# Back to School Guide

## What's new for the 2009-2010 school year? More Parenting and Family Literacy Centres opening in schools this fall

Parenting and Family Literacy Centres are open to children from babies to six year olds. The centres bring parents and children together to support children's early learning and development, and to help with the transition to school. The centres are free to attend and no pre-registration is required.

In fall 2009, 21 new Parenting and Family Literacy Centres will open, bringing the total number of centres to 144.

Find out more about Parenting and Family Literacy Centres at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/pflc.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/pflc.html)

## New rules for admission to French-language schools

School boards are updating their admission policies to French-language schools to better reflect Ontario's changing Francophone population. French-language school boards are becoming more welcoming and more streamlined for French-speaking newcomers, newcomers who speak neither French nor English and children whose grandparents' first language is French.

Boards will have revised admission policies in place by January 15, 2010.

Learn more about French language education in Ontario at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/)

## General Tips

**Starting the school year:** Figure out the ground rules for after-school activities, chores, homework, television and Internet use. Younger children will find it easier if you start their regular school-year bedtime about a week before the beginning of school.

**Homework:** Set up a well-lit, quiet place with a good work surface for your child to do homework; encourage a regular homework time and discourage distractions.

**Learning at home:** Keep your children engaged in learning. For example, read to your child every day; just 20 minutes a day can make a huge difference.

Encourage your older children to read for pleasure at home, especially on topics they find interesting. This could mean

they read about hobbies, like sports or crafts, or read books that relate to their favourite TV shows, movies or games.

Any kind of reading can help your children develop their reading skills, so encourage them to read books in languages other than English. If your children know how to read in their first language, they will find it easier to learn English.

## Learn more about Ontario schools

The Ministry website has the latest about what is happening in Ontario education. You can find videos, news, and more.

Look for "Popular Topics" on our home page and you'll find all kinds of information, including a school year calendar, a class size tracker, plus information about the curriculum, safe and healthy schools, special education and more.

[www.ontario.ca/education](http://www.ontario.ca/education)

## Resources for parents

### Parents of elementary school students

Find tips on helping your child with reading, writing and math, as well as tips on homework, talking to teachers and more. Available in 14 languages at [www.ontario.ca/abc123](http://www.ontario.ca/abc123)

### Parents of secondary school students

Ontario schools are offering expanded programs to help meet students' individual learning styles and interests, which will better prepare them for graduation and beyond. Find out more about the Student Success program at [www.ontario.ca/studentsuccess](http://www.ontario.ca/studentsuccess)

### Parents who are new to Ontario

Find out more about how the Ontario education system works, with information on the roles and responsibilities of the minister, school boards, trustees and schools.

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/whosresp.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/whosresp.html)

"The Newcomers' Guide to Elementary School" and "The Newcomers' Guide to Secondary School" help parents understand the Ontario education system. The guides offer helpful information on registration, attendance boundaries, learning English as a second language, the Ontario curriculum and more. The guides are available in 19 languages.

[www.settlement.org/site/ED/elementary.asp](http://www.settlement.org/site/ED/elementary.asp)  
[www.settlement.org/site/ED/secondary.asp](http://www.settlement.org/site/ED/secondary.asp)