

THE
QUÉBEC
EDUCATION
PROGRAM

Elementary Cycle One

INFORMATION
FOR
PARENTS

Québec  
 

Ministère
de l'Éducation

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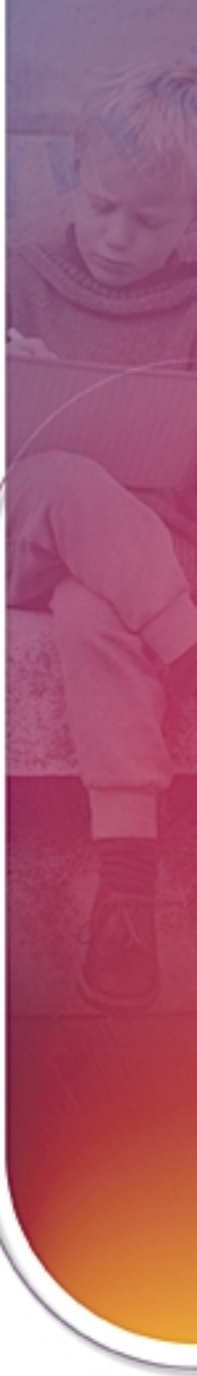
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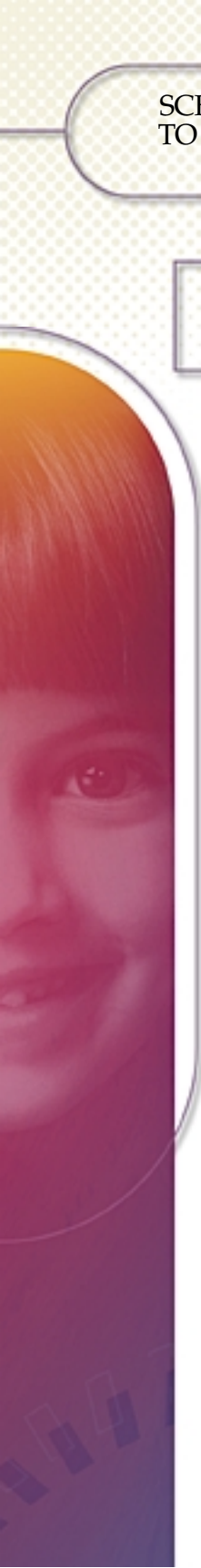
September 2000

Gouvernement du Québec
Ministère de l'Éducation — 2000-00-0793
ISBN 2-550-36658-1
Legal Deposit— Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 2000

SCHOOLS EVOLVING TO BETTER EDUCATE YOUR CHILD

Your child has just started school in Cycle One, which consists of the first and second grades of elementary school. This marks another turning point in his or her development. You will no doubt continue to support your child as you did when he or she was very young and you helped him or her learn important things like how to walk, talk and express his or her emotional needs. When your child started kindergarten, the school became your ally by helping him or her develop self-confidence and the ability to relate to others. As your child embarks upon this new phase of schooling and continues to discover the world of knowledge, he or she must know that you will be there to applaud every success and offer support in moments of doubt or hesitation. Since your child will begin to "learn how to learn" during the first cycle of elementary school, it is important that everything be done to ensure that this process of learning how to learn meshes with the development of his or her personality.





SCHOOLS EVOLVING TO BETTER EDUCATE YOUR CHILD

As you probably know, the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ) is phasing in a curriculum reform, beginning with a new program for kindergarten and the first and second years of elementary school, which was introduced in all schools in September 2000.

By describing the main features of the Québec Education Program and providing many examples of the types of things your child will be learning during the first cycle of elementary school (i.e. grades one and two), this brochure will give you a better understanding of the process of change that will gradually occur in his or her school.

Remember that your school is there to help you understand what is happening.

CONTINUITY WITHIN THE PROGRAM

Just like previous generations of Québec children, your child will learn to read, write and count. The subjects that have traditionally been taught in Cycle One of elementary school will continue to be taught:

- English Language Arts
- French as a Second Language
- Mathematics
- Moral Education or Moral and Religious Instruction
- Arts Education (Music, Visual Arts, Drama, Dance)
- Physical Education and Health

However, more hours will now be devoted to English Language Arts and Mathematics.

A COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAM

The way the subjects in the program are taught is designed to enable your child to master them, and also to acquire, and then develop, certain competencies:

- intellectual competencies
- personal and social competencies
- competencies related to working methods
- communication-related competencies

The competencies addressed in the program will be useful to your child throughout his or her life.

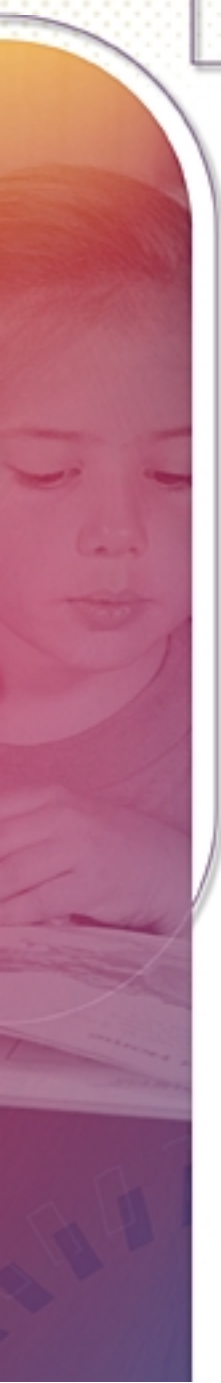
Your child will learn not only by memorizing, but also by working on concrete activities or projects that draw on or develop his or her abilities. Thus, in addition to drawing "a" and "o" in an exercise book or counting imaginary apples and pears, your child may learn to read or add by participating in a group project.

For example:

- Together with other students, your child may do a research project on a favourite subject, such as dinosaurs or astronauts. In this way, he or she will learn to work in a group, to share tasks while respecting the role of each person and to acquire knowledge.
- Your child will learn to express his or her point of view in certain classroom situations, such as a presentation by a police officer on the rules of bicycle safety, for example. Activities on this theme will enable children not only to learn the rules and apply them, but also to increase their vocabulary, use good judgment and communicate with others.



A PROGRAM BASED ON EVERYDAY LIFE



The program is designed to help your child establish links between classroom learning and everyday life. During individual or group activities or projects under the supervision of their teacher, the children will have an opportunity to become familiar with ideas and practices that are specifically related to today's world. The links between classroom learning and the world outside the school are explored in **areas of lifelong learning**.

The Québec Education Program features eight areas of lifelong learning, in which your child will learn to:

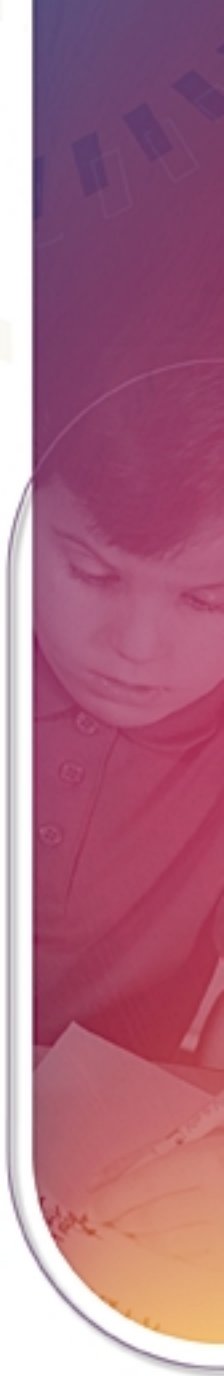
- develop a world-view that will give more meaning to his or her life
- live harmoniously in society
- develop his or her critical judgment, especially as regards the media
- cultivate a healthy lifestyle
- establish good relations with others
- develop a sense of responsibility for the environment
- recognize the importance of being an informed consumer
- understand himself or herself, take part in society and make appropriate choices for the future.

A PROGRAM ORGANIZED IN TWO-YEAR CYCLES

The Québec Education Program is organized in two-year cycles to enable children to progress at their own speed.

Is your child having problems in English Language Arts? The school will take the time to help your child overcome his or her difficulties, and, by stressing your child's competencies in other subjects or areas, it will foster his or her desire to learn. Along similar lines, a child who is particularly good at mathematics can be given special challenges in keeping with his or her capacities, which will enable the child to make further progress.

Thus, a child in grade one will have two years to complete the learning for the cycle. This type of organization allows for greater continuity in the child's progress through school.



A PROGRAM THAT LETS YOU FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT

The way in which students are evaluated will change, too. Various tools will gradually be introduced to enable you to follow your child's progress: report card, classroom newspaper, logbook, portfolio.

The information provided at various points during the year will enable the teacher to draw a "portrait" of your child that tells far more than the child's marks alone. This will help you to help your child, with respect both to the subjects in the curriculum and to aspects of his or her behaviour.

Examples:

- Your child's performance is excellent in all the subjects, but he or she behaves aggressively towards others. Clearly, the child has to make an effort to change this behaviour, because it can have a negative impact on both personal development and progress in school.

- Your child has difficulty with mathematics, but shows a talent for leadership. In this case, the teacher should seek to apply and develop this gift in specific projects, while offering the student support in mathematics.

The feedback you receive about your child will enable you to follow the progress of his or her learning closely without losing sight of the development of his or her personality. In short, the students' report cards will say as much about their overall development as about their marks.



A PROGRAM THAT RELIES ON TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM

The Québec Education Program relies on the professional expertise of teachers to help your child succeed and go on to Cycle Two of elementary school. You can count on the support of competent staff who will provide the best possible conditions to ensure your child's smooth progress.

Don't forget that your child has two years to master the learning in Elementary Cycle One. The important thing is to respect the child's own pace and to offer constant support. The more the child likes school and learns to acquire and develop competencies that bolster self-confidence, the easier he or she will find it to make the efforts required to succeed.

A PIVOTAL ROLE FOR PARENTS

As parents, you have a pivotal role to play in this collective undertaking. To ensure that your child recognizes the importance of education and the relevance of his or her learning, you have to offer guidance and make sure that conditions at home contribute in every way possible to your child's educational success.

This means:

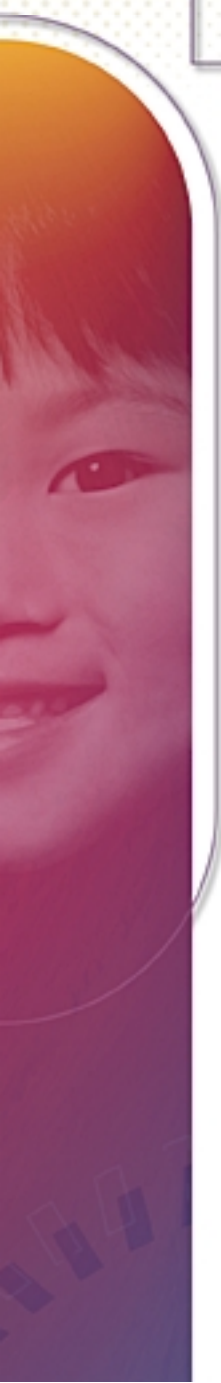
- providing an appropriate work area and tools
- setting aside time for study
- making sure that homework is done
- being supportive when the child encounters difficulties
- encouraging, motivating, stimulating

Above all, it is important to cooperate with the teachers, so that your child's educational experience enhances his or her intellectual curiosity, interest in school and openness to the world and to other people.

If we can achieve that, then we can all say, "Mission accomplished!"



SCHOOLS THAT FOSTER YOUR CHILD'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT



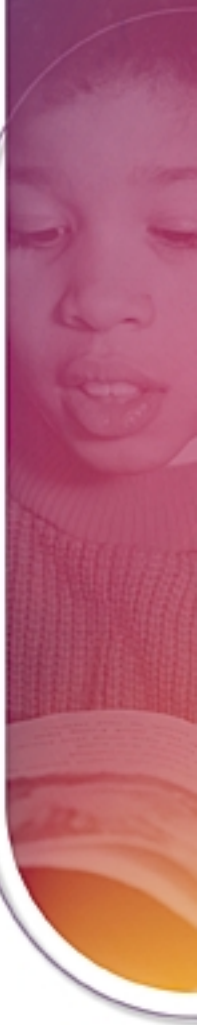
The following information will not only give you a better understanding of what your child's school will be offering to its students, but will also help you determine appropriate ways of promoting his or her academic progress and overall development. Your support is all the more important because what your child will learn in school can be reinforced by what he or she learns outside school. Your child will improve his or her reading and writing skills if, for instance, you encourage him or her to write a short message in a greeting card when celebrating each family member's birthday. Similarly, your child will develop a greater interest in visual arts if his or her artistic talents are appreciated within the family.

The school activities planned during the first cycle of elementary school will provide your child with the knowledge and skills required to move on to the next level, with a better understanding of the world in which he or she lives and with the ability to meet the demands of everyday life, both now and in the future.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The new English Language Arts Program for elementary school is the work of dedicated master teachers who are very aware of the concern of parents that their children be well prepared for the demands of life in our rapidly changing society. The focus of English Language Arts is on creating readers and writers for life, as well as individuals who exercise critical judgment in their use of media and technology, who work cooperatively with others and who are confident about expressing their ideas, values and knowledge. By the end of Cycle One, your child will:

- be reading a variety of written texts, such as illustrated story books, poetry and excerpts from children's magazines
- be writing, with an emphasis on writing about those subjects and experiences that are important in his or her life and that fulfill his or her need to communicate with friends and family
- be comfortable expressing his or her views, ideas and needs to others



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- be confident about taking risks as a learner and eager to express his or her creativity
- be learning about some of the basic characteristics of the media and be using computers, as well as the Internet, for different purposes
- be aware of some of the features of texts, such as simple punctuation, organizational devices and the use of combinations of images and words to communicate messages
- be a cooperative and collaborative participant in activities with peers

FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

By the end of the first cycle, your child will be able to understand simple instructions in French as well as very short films featuring familiar situations. With the help of an adult, he or she will also be able to read signs and picture books and to explore French-language Internet sites.

In addition, your child will be able to describe in words and sentences what he or she has heard, seen or read. He or she will also be able to write greeting cards and invitations in French as well as stories consisting of a few short sentences accompanied by drawings or collages.

Even if your child has still not mastered all the vocabulary required to express his or her school-related needs, he or she will be able to understand what is expected of him or her and to respond through gestures or actions, if necessary.

Lastly, he or she will be able to speak French in familiar situations.

FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

In studying French, your child will realize that learning a second language makes it possible to discover another culture. By reading children's literature, he or she will have the opportunity to explore certain aspects of French culture originating here and elsewhere. Your child will also develop an open mind by discovering the French-speaking world through cultural exploration geared to his or her age and level of development or through the pursuit of scientific, sporting or other personal interests.

MATHEMATICS

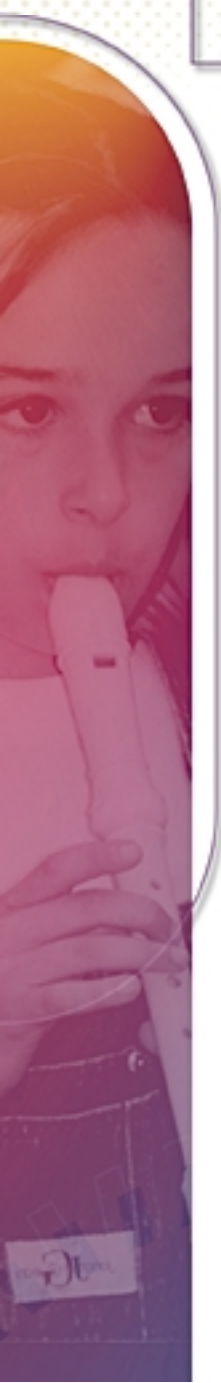
By the end of the first cycle, your child will know how to count to 1 000 and will be performing simple operations like addition and subtraction. For example, he or she will be able to count the number of bus stops between home and school, divide a stack of drawing paper into equal piles or estimate the time remaining before he or she must go to bed. He or she will be able to use his or her mathematical knowledge to solve problems related to everyday situations at home or at school.

Depending on the situation, your child will also be able to do simple mental or written additions and subtractions. He or she will also have started learning to use a calculator or computer to perform mathematical operations and will have developed his or her ability to reason using mathematical logic and methods.

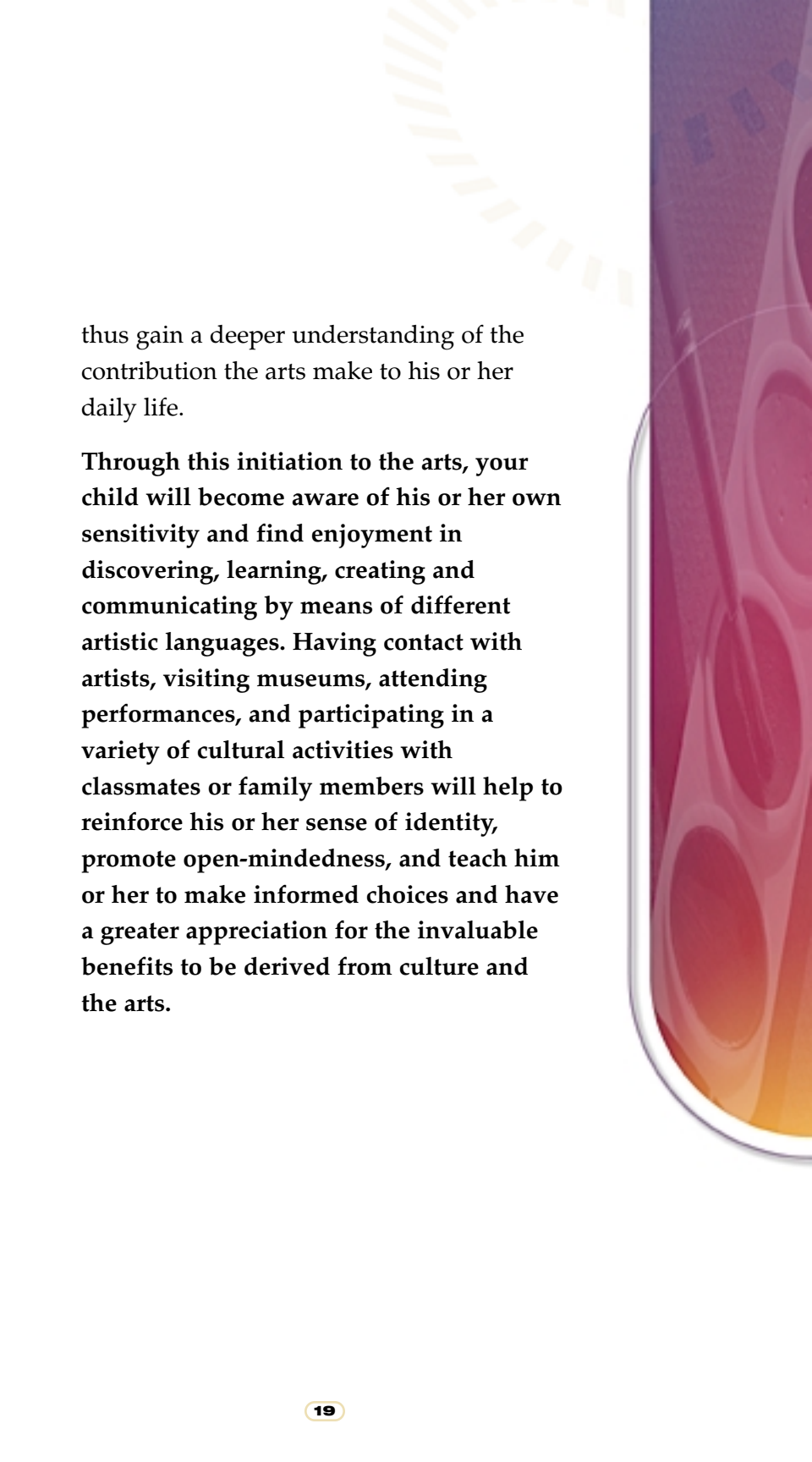
Your child will also be able to use mathematical terms and symbols such as *plus*, *minus* and *centimetres* and will learn to recognize and name geometric figures such as prisms, cylinders and cones.

In studying mathematics, your child will develop his or her powers of observation and will be able to recognize everyday situations in which mathematics will prove useful. He or she will also be able to describe certain aspects of the history of mathematics (e.g. why numbers were created).

ARTS EDUCATION

A vertical photograph of a young girl with dark hair, wearing a purple shirt, playing a white recorder. The photo is partially obscured by a large, stylized letter 'A' and a decorative graphic element.

Arts Education comprises four subjects: Drama, Visual Arts, Dance and Music. Students in the first cycle of elementary school must take two of these subjects. Whichever of these subjects your child's school offers, he or she will have acquired competencies in the general area of the arts and will be familiar with the language, principles and tools specific to two artistic subjects by the end of Cycle One. For example, he or she will learn to create personal images and to invent and interpret dramatic scenes, short dances or short pieces of music. This will allow him or her to give concrete expression to his or her ideas, imaginary world, impressions and emotions in a variety of artistic productions. He or she will be able to describe his or her artistic experiences, recounting his or her discoveries, what he or she has learned and how he or she learned it. Your child will have opportunities to exercise his or her critical thinking and sense of the aesthetic by listening to or viewing works from different areas of the arts. These competencies will help him or her to see how the arts and other subject areas are interconnected and



thus gain a deeper understanding of the contribution the arts make to his or her daily life.

Through this initiation to the arts, your child will become aware of his or her own sensitivity and find enjoyment in discovering, learning, creating and communicating by means of different artistic languages. Having contact with artists, visiting museums, attending performances, and participating in a variety of cultural activities with classmates or family members will help to reinforce his or her sense of identity, promote open-mindedness, and teach him or her to make informed choices and have a greater appreciation for the invaluable benefits to be derived from culture and the arts.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

By the end of the first cycle, your child will have learned different ways of achieving balance and coordination and handling various objects (e.g. balls, hoops). As a result, he or she will better understand his or her body and what it is capable of doing. With this knowledge, your child will be able to confidently and safely engage in physical activities.

Your child will also know how to interact with his or her classmates while engaging in physical activities involving a group and will be able to show good sportsmanship in the process (e.g. following rules, respecting classmates and referees, demonstrating self-control, gracefully accepting defeat).



Your child will be familiar with concepts pertaining to health, personal habits and well-being and with the role they play in developing a healthy, active lifestyle. He or she will be aware of his or her own habits as well as factors that influence personal health and well-being. For example, he or she will discover the importance of good posture or a good night's sleep and will be able to try different ways of improving his or her lifestyle.

In learning about physical education and health, your child will be equipped to become more independent, which will encourage him or her to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle.

MORAL EDUCATION

NOTE :
Parents choose one of the following options for their child:
Moral Education, Catholic Moral and Religious Instruction or Protestant Moral and Religious Education.

If your child takes Moral Education in Cycle One, he or she will have an opportunity to reflect on numerous situations presenting age-appropriate moral problems that involve his or her relationships with others and with nature. Examples might include a schoolyard fight, the mistreatment of a pet or the trampling of a neighbour's flowerbed.

Your child will learn to examine his or her own experience and that of children from other cultures and historical periods to try to find answers to such fundamental questions as: How well do we relate to those around us? How are human beings and other living things interdependent? What values and reference points can help us make the right decisions?

Your child will learn to engage in dialogue with others and to develop an aptitude for expressing his or her point of view and agreement or disagreement with other people's ideas about moral issues.



In projects undertaken with classmates, your child will experience certain values, including collaboration, sharing and concern for others.

Moral Education will enable your child to know himself or herself better and to gain a greater understanding of his or her ties with other human beings and with nature. He or she will become increasingly capable of making decisions that take into account his or her own interests and those of others, and will therefore learn to think before taking action. Your child will learn to justify his or her choices by basing them on values and other reference points that are meaningful to him or her.



CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AND MORAL INSTRUCTION

NOTE :
Parents choose
one of the
following options
for their child:
**Moral Education,
Catholic Moral
and
Religious
Instruction
or
Protestant Moral
and
Religious
Education.**

If your child takes Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction in Cycle One, he or she will be able to tell certain Bible stories in his or her own words (the creation, the story of Moses, the birth of Jesus), to find meaning in them and to make connections with today's world.

He or she will also be able to think about situations in his or her daily life (quarrelling with other children, sharing toys, attitudes to students who are different) in order to make enlightened decisions based on Christian values such as respect for others and forgiveness.

He or she will be able to appreciate cultural and religious diversity and to live in harmony with people whose backgrounds and beliefs are different from his or her own.

He or she will have had an opportunity to take the time for quiet contemplation in order to explore his or her inner life and become open to God. In this context, your child will also have begun to learn about the role of prayer in the Christian tradition.

PROTESTANT MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

If your child takes Protestant Moral and Religious Education in Cycle One, he or she will be able to explore Old and New Testament scriptures and to retell, in simplified form and using images, Bible stories based primarily on the themes of family and friends.

He or she will have begun to discover his or her own values and moral or religious principles and to act in accordance with them.

He or she will have discovered concrete examples of religious diversity and learned to relate them to his or her own faith and to talk about them with openness and respect.

**Catholic Religious and Moral
Instruction and Protestant Moral
and Religious Education
will teach students
to examine the heritage of the
Judeo-Christian tradition in search
of answers to their questions
about existence and the world
in which they are growing up.**

GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

NOTE :
In Elementary
Cycle One,
your child learns
certain concepts
in **geography,**
history and
citizenship
education,
as well as
in **science and**
technology,
through activities
offered
by the school.

By the end of the first cycle, your child will have learned to situate himself or herself in time. He or she will be able to read a calendar, to refer to events in terms of *yesterday, later, tomorrow* or *next week* and to describe things that have happened to him or her or to the people close to him or her.

He or she will also have learned to situate himself or herself in space. For example, he or she will be able to find his or her way around the school, his or her street or the neighbourhood, using landmarks. He or she will enjoy exploring other regions or countries in a variety of ways.

Your child will be familiar with the concept of living in society. In other words, he or she will be able to identify different social groups (e.g. adults, senior citizens, individuals with handicaps) and will understand that they are interdependent. He or she will also have become somewhat familiar with the cultural events of ethnic groups and will have compared living conditions here and elsewhere.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

During Cycle One, your child will have developed a sense of curiosity, a concern for detail, and the ability to observe and ask questions. This will help him or her to understand certain natural phenomena, such as the seasons or the fact that deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall. He or she will also have begun to discover how certain objects around him or her are constructed.

Your child will have learned to recognize certain applications of science and technology, and have developed an interest in them, identifying the people around him or her who work in these areas. He or she will also be able to give an opinion on the effects of science and technology on his or her daily life.

THE PROGRAM OF PROGRAMS

All the information presented up to now relates to both the traditional school subjects, such as English Language Arts and Mathematics, and to a new section of the Québec Education Program called the Program of Programs.

The Program of Programs outlines a set of basic principles that will guide members of the school staff in helping your child develop skills that will be useful in many different areas: the intellectual process, work methods, the ability to collaborate with others and to communicate efficiently and effectively. These are the competencies that students must have in order to function in today's world and in the world of tomorrow.

Different elements of the Program of Programs have been designed to link academic learning with everyday reality. This feature will strengthen students' motivation to learn and accustom them to using what they learn in order to meet the practical and theoretical challenges they encounter in their lives.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following publications on the reform of the education system are available for parents whose children will be in Elementary Cycle One this year:

- *The Education Reform: What It's All About – Offering Our Children the Very Best*
- *The Education Reform: Questions and Answers for Parents and the General Public*
- *The Québec Education Program: Preschool Education – Information for Parents*
- *The Québec Education Program: Elementary Cycle One – Information for Parents*

For more information about the reform of the education system, visit the MEQ Web site (www.meq.gouv.qc.ca) or contact your school, school board or MEQ regional office.

