

# Welcome to Canada



## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CANADA



In Canada, parents and guardians must make sure their children get an education.

### TYPES OF SCHOOLS

Each of Canada's provinces and territories runs its own education system. The schools in these systems are called public schools, and they are free (funded by taxes).

Public schools are available in both English and French in many areas.

There are also private schools, which are usually not funded by governments. There are fees to send children to private schools.

### THE SCHOOL YEAR

The school year starts in late August or early September, and finishes in June, with holiday breaks during the year. Children attend school from Monday to Friday. Schools close on public (statutory) holidays.

Contact your local school or provincial ministry of education to learn how to register your child in school. A list of provincial ministries of education can be found at [www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca).

### HOW TO REGISTER A CHILD FOR SCHOOL

To register, you will need to show documents that prove

- the child's age (such as a birth certificate or passport)
- your guardianship
- where you live (your home address)
- that your child's vaccines are up to date (a record of immunizations)

### SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS

Many schools have settlement workers to help children, youth and parents who are new to Canada. Ask your school about these resources.



## AT-HOME EDUCATION

Some parents choose to teach their children themselves. This is called at-home education or home schooling. If you wish to teach your children yourself, you should contact your provincial or territorial ministry of education or your local settlement service provider for more information.

## LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION – ENGLISH AND FRENCH SCHOOLS

English-language and French-language schools are available in many communities across the country. Some English-language schools also offer immersion programs in French. This means that children are taught in French for most of the school day.

For information about schools in Canada that offer courses in French, visit [www.elf-canada.ca](http://www.elf-canada.ca).



## YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD’S EDUCATION BY

- volunteering at your child’s school
- meeting your child’s teacher(s) at parent–teacher evenings
- becoming a member of the school council (which contributes to managing the school)
- asking the school, or your child’s teacher, for more information on how you can get involved

## OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

**Elementary or primary education:** This is the first 8 grades of school. It usually starts with kindergarten at age 4 or 5.

**High school or secondary education:** This usually runs from grades 9 to 12 in most Canadian provinces and territories, except Quebec, where it starts in grade 7 and ends in grade 11.

**Mixed classes:** In most schools, boys and girls learn together in the same classroom. Some private schools offer schooling for boys or girls only.

**Religion:** Some provinces and territories have separate Catholic public schools. Some communities also have private religious schools.



**Additional school activities:** In Canada, students can participate in additional activities at schools, outside of classes. These are called “extracurricular” activities, and they can include sports, clubs, drama, arts and music programs, and school-organized trips and special events.

For example, many schools recognize Orange Shirt Day on September 30. Participants wear orange shirts to commemorate and raise awareness about the impacts residential schools had on Indigenous children, and how they continue to affect Indigenous communities in Canada to this day.

## MORE INFORMATION



For more information about education, including a video, visit [canada.ca/newcomers-education](http://canada.ca/newcomers-education).



To find newcomer settlement services in your area, visit [canada.ca/find-newcomer-services](http://canada.ca/find-newcomer-services).

