

Deepening Children's Connections to French Language and Acadian Culture

Acadian Heritage

Month is recognized in August, offering an added opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of Acadian and Francophone communities across the province. Meaningful recognition of Acadian heritage supports children's developing sense of identity, belonging, and connection to community within early learning and child care settings.

A learning objective in *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework (NSELCF)*, emphasizes children's engagement with French as one of Canada's two official languages, particularly within official-language minority communities.

Educators promote this learning when they intentionally create rich language environments, model language use, and provide opportunities for children to engage with French through play, relationships, and everyday experiences.

Recognizing Acadian Heritage Month offers a culturally grounded context for supporting language development while promoting respect for linguistic diversity and community belonging.



Invitations and Provocations

Stories, Songs, Acadian Voices: Exposure to French culture and language through Acadian stories, songs, oral storytelling, and cultural traditions supports children's developing awareness of language while strengthening connections to community and culture.

Reflect: What opportunities do children have to hear French in your learning environment, even if you may not speak the language fluently?

Plan: Offer French stories, songs, or audio recordings created by Francophone or Acadian artists. Focus on shared listening rather than translation. Pause to notice repeated sounds, tone, rhythm, and emotion. Offer multiple ways for children to respond, such as through gestures, movement, drawing, or reflection, recognizing that communication can take many forms beyond verbal repetition. To further support meaningful engagement, consider pausing a song partway through and inviting children to paint or draw how the music makes them feel.

Observe: How do children attend to and engage with French language they hear? What do they notice about sound, pacing, or expression? How do they communicate their understanding in non-verbal or emerging ways?

A Tintamarre: In Acadian culture, a [tintamarre](#) (pronounced *tan-tah-MAR*) is a joyful community tradition that brings people together through sound, movement, and celebration. It is one way Acadian communities express pride in their language, culture, identity, and sense of belonging. In Clare, Nova Scotia, the annual Tintamarre takes place during the [Festival acadien de Clare](#) and is a vibrant celebration of Acadian heritage.

Reflect: How do children currently use sound to communicate ideas, emotions, or excitement? How can collective sound-making create opportunities for children to connect, communicate, and express a shared sense of belonging?

Plan: Provide children with safe materials for creating sound (e.g., bells, shakers, recycled containers, drums). Share that people in some communities celebrate together using sound. Invite children to explore starting, stopping, listening, and responding to one another's rhythms indoors or outdoors.

Observe: How do children communicate through sound and movement? How do they listen and respond to others? What facial expressions, gestures, emotions, or actions do children use to show they are engaged in the shared sound-making experience?

French Language Awareness in Everyday Experiences: Supporting French language awareness does not require fluency; it involves making language visible, audible, and valued.

Reflect: Where do children already encounter multiple languages in their lives or communities? How do you communicate curiosity and respect when encountering a language you do not speak? How are the languages spoken by children and families made visible, audible, and valued within your learning environment?

Plan: Use visual supports such as bilingual labels, images, or other printed materials in the environment. Share individual French words or phrases when comfortable, supported by visuals or gestures. Emphasize listening and recognition through modelling. Position yourself as a co-learner alongside children.

Observe: How do children communicate their understanding in different ways, including speech, gestures, drawing, symbols, or play?

Inquiries about this resource can be emailed to the Sector Development and Partnerships team at ECDSERVICES@novascotia.ca.