

# École Arbour Vista

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## Newsletter for May 2021

### From the Principal's Desk

Mental Health and Education Week is here, running from May 3<sup>rd</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup>. This year, the UGDSB is Celebrating Learning, Wellness and Community. Be sure to follow #UGMEWeek for the latest updates. Parents are also reminded of the UGDSB Child, Youth and Family website <https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/mhugparents>. This website contains information on student well-being, parent well-being, community resources and websites and an events page consisting of upcoming webinars and parent focused events. Parents are encouraged to access this website as it is a great repository of information!

K. Runciman  
Principal

### Math Website for Families

The elementary curriculum department invites families to come and explore a new math website for Parents and Guardians called, [Games and Activities that Support Mathematical Thinking at Home](#). The site is full of parent/guardian resources and activities you may use at home to strengthen foundational numeracy skills with your children. The purpose of this site is to share hands on and interactive math games you can play in a home setting while also exploring how we can nurture a love of mathematics with our children. The site includes low prep activities meaning games require little to no materials and are suitable for children grades K-8. The games highlighted here are hands on and not digital. As technology continues to develop and provide wonderful learning opportunities, these games allow for a break from the screen and promote face-to-face interaction. There is also a form linked to the site inviting families to share their own math games as well. We hope this site is helpful to families looking to explore math together.

### Talking About Mental Health: May, 2021

#### Let's talk about AUTONOMY

Autonomy, our theme for May, is our ability to make decisions and have a say in the direction of our lives. Autonomy helps with the development of independence and trust and is an important part of our individual growth and development. As a parent nurturing autonomy, we aim to create a cooperative bond between ourselves and our children, while also paying attention to secure and reasonable boundaries and expectations. Autonomy goes beyond teaching independence and is about supporting our children in a way that allows them a sense of comfort with themselves.

Why is autonomy important?

- Helps to create a sense of mastery – over body, mind and environment
- Supports independent and critical thinking
- Encourages intrinsic motivations
- Inspires confidence
- Allows for individuality and uniqueness to emerge

So what can you do? (adapted from Dr. Shenfield, What is Autonomy Supportive Parenting and How to Practice It, 2019, article)

- Involve your child/ren in household decision making – age appropriately of course!
- Give your child the opportunity to have input in their daily routine when possible
- Help your child to express their own emotions and opinions within safe boundaries
- Keep loving them! Let them know through your actions and words that you love them.
- Respect their preferences and choices when possible. And when they can't be met you can still acknowledge that you heard their preference/choice.
- Really listen to your child and help them label and express their feelings.

### Social Justice

You can use this month's focus to look at what your child/family are interested in in terms of the broader community. What is important to each of you? Where do they see that they could make a difference? Be creative and have fun while making a difference.

*I think there's great potential for autonomy, but we have to remember that we live in a world where people may have free will but have not invented their circumstances.* Thomas Frank



Thanks to Edge Mutual for their support of the Umbrella Project at UGDSB

### Parenting Tip of the Month

When children identify role models they look up to, they are often action heroes, including cartoon heroes, who have powers that are superhuman. Children need assistance to recognize true role models living amongst them; individuals a child can and should emulate as they mature. Good role models have clear values, willingly look to assist others with any need, are passionate about what they do and accept each person for who they are. Help your children identify role models in their lives and to discover the positive qualities these people possess and watch them thrive as they become inspired to develop similar qualities.

### How Do Educators Teach Oral Communication In A Second Language To A Diverse Group of Students That Are At Different Stages In Their Oral Language Development?

"To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well." — John Marshall

In education we strive to teach our students how to become effective communicators so that they are successful in their future endeavours whether in English, French or any other language. Oral communication skills in French including listening, speaking, and interacting, are not unlike oral communication skills in your first language, however, oral communication in French does require attention to a different sound system, new vocabulary and at times an understanding of contexts or cultures that may differ from those of your first language.

Teachers know that the acquisition of oral language typically follows a developmental sequence. They understand that students need to hear the language repeatedly before they will begin to speak it. When students enter immersion or core programs they typically do not have an oral foundation in French. This foundation is created through an emphasis on listening and speaking in authentic contexts to build vocabulary and learn various forms of the language so that students can understand and convey meaning. Hearing and using high frequency words and expressions, learning vocabulary in context, building phonemic awareness, creating environments rich in talk, as well as engaging students in listening activities are all strategies used by teachers to support students in becoming confident oral communicators.

Teachers also support students by modelling effective oral communication, guiding students through oral communication activities, and providing many opportunities for students to practice oral language. As students enter immersion and core French programs they are beginners in the language and diverse in the skills they bring to school. Teachers provide high structure and meet students at their developmental stage to best support and move students forward in their language learning.

### **How can parents support student oral communication at home when they don't speak French?**

One way to do this is to speak with and listen to your child in their first language. In the Ontario Ministry of Education document “Supporting your Child’s Success in French Immersion and Extended French - A Parent Guide” it states “Helping your child develop a broad vocabulary in English, or the language you speak at home, has added benefits. It helps develop thinking skills, teaches your child to communicate with precision and provides more opportunities to make connections with French.”

Research also shows that oral communication skills are transferable across languages. For example, understanding how to vary volume, pace and vocabulary to suit a purpose and an audience is a skill that is transferable to French.

Another way to support and motivate your child is to help them see that French exists outside of the classroom. Watching French television, listening to French radio, borrowing French DVDs and materials from the library and travelling to French speaking regions are all ways to experience French outside of the educational context.

### **What happens when students are not moving forward in their oral language development or parents have concerns about student progress?**

Discussing your concerns as soon as they arise by speaking with your child’s teacher and then examining appropriate courses of action and supports as a team are important first steps.

It is important to remember that a student who struggles to communicate orally in French can achieve a level of proficiency **and that supports should be explored before considering more drastic measures.** French as a second language programs are for all students. Promoting this belief helps to create a supportive environment where students feel more confident and can be successful.

### **Further Reading:**

1. Capacity Building Series. “Teaching and learning in the Core French Classroom”. The Ontario Ministry of Education.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS\\_Core\\_French.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_Core_French.pdf)

2. Capacity Building Series. “Let’s Talk about Listening”. The Ontario Ministry of Education.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Talk\\_about\\_listening.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Talk_about_listening.pdf)

3. What Works? Research into Practice. “Supporting Early Language and Literacy. Dr. Janette Pelletier OISE, University of Toronto. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW\\_Early\\_Language.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Early_Language.pdf)

## **Monthly Environmental Activities to help celebrate our planet**



**May 22<sup>nd</sup> is International Biodiversity Day!**

*It is vital to teach our children to respect and take care of the environment.*

### **Celebrate Biological Diversity Day on May 22<sup>nd</sup>!**

The United Nations has proclaimed May 22<sup>nd</sup> The International Day for Biological Diversity to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.

Biodiversity simply means: ‘A wide range of life’” Some of the things we do are harmful, so we need to learn more about how to protect all the different types of life on our planet.

#### **Ideas for your family to celebrate Biodiversity Day!**

- Visit farmers markets in your local area to try new types of produce. Whether you incorporate heirloom tomatoes into your cooking, or try one of the rainbow of colors of carrots, biodiversity can bring a great new experience to your table.
- View photos of endangered species on the Internet with your child and discuss the reasons why these animals are threatened and why they should be protected.
- Join a community group and help to remove invasive plants from your local environment.
- Get out into the world and enjoy all the different types of life your local area offers. Even your street or a local park can have an amazing variety of life you’ve never noticed, from insects, birds, chipmunks, to trees and flowers.
- Consider planting a pollinator garden in your yard (or in a flowerpot) to help save the bees and butterflies from declining.

Adapted from: <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/international-day-for-biological-diversity/>

*Celebrate the diversity of our natural world every day!*