

ADVERTISING FEATURE

What can you do for children living with two languages?

Roaming Schoolhouse gives parents and children vital help in reinforcing their command of spoken English



IF YOU are a native English speaker moving to France, there are some basic rules you may want to adhere to:

1. If practical, speak only English to your child;
2. Be consistent in your choice of language to your child. You may need to speak different languages in different situations, but you need to set the rules and stick to them;
3. Travel as often as possible to a country where English is spoken;
4. Meet other children and adults who speak English;
5. Provide structured activities with other children through the medium of English;
6. Try to use as many age-appropriate language materials as possible in English.

The first three of these rules place emphasis on you as parents. The latter three is where the Roaming Schoolhouse comes in. The success of the RSH, open only to children living with English and French, is based on three principles:

1. Qualified primary school teachers who bring youth, enthusiasm and new ideas to the classes of no more than 10 students where only English is spoken. Teaching is a profession, not a job and our teachers are passionate about what they do and the children they teach;
2. The programme has been developed over the last five years by the founder Cate O'Connor and is based on the English curriculum. We cover the same subjects as would be covered by students of the same age in the UK and look at all aspects of "Anglo-Saxon" culture;
3. The atmosphere in the classroom closely resembles that of schools in the UK and the US: we emphasise team-work, show and tell and personal development. We prefer that a child enjoys learning and feels satisfaction at a job well done. For the children, this is an extra-curricular activity and, as such, you do not want it to become a chore.



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Children who grow up with two languages have a unique chance to acquire both of them in a way that is not possible for those who meet their second language later in life. These children have a potential access to the riches of two cultures, and may become extraordinarily linguistically and culturally competent adults, with the best of two worlds. These children are especially favoured and privileged. However, the presence of two languages may well give them some trouble at all levels of language learning.

Children find themselves in a position where they are exposed to more than one language through no doing of their own. We adults have made the choices: the children have not chosen any part of the experience they are going through. It is, therefore, up to us to make things as easy as possible for them, while helping them to get the maximum benefit from the situation

Growing up with two languages A Practical Guide by

Una Cunningham-Andersson and Staffan Andersson (Routledge – 1999)

While living in France, it is only natural for French to become your child's dominant language. By spending an hour and a half in a structured school environment every week, your child's English will be reinforced through stories, literature, discussion, music and debate.

Starting at CE1, we provide a literacy programme using weekly spelling exercises. We are also a valuable support for those children applying for bilingual school programmes in and around Paris.

The RSH operates as a mobile school. We currently host classes of 90 minutes per week in Paris (7th, 10th and 18th arrondissements),

Neuilly and Antony. Do not hesitate to contact us to find out where centres are opening up near you.

In the French school holidays, we also host camps in Paris. We cover a wide range of activities – sport, drama, arts and crafts, games, creative writing and language development. All these activities are in English and are for children living with English and French.

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