



CONFÉRENCE MINISTÉRIELLE | MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
SUR LA FRANCOPHONIE | ON THE CANADIAN
CANADIENNE | FRANCOPHONIE

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18th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE
Winnipeg, Manitoba – September 4 and 5, 2013

EARLY CHILDHOOD AT THE HEART OF THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE

Winnipeg, September 4, 2013 – The provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie met in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for the 18th Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie.

The ministers' discussions focused on the importance of early childhood development as a crucial stage of human development more specifically within the context of the Canadian Francophonie. Speakers Michel Boivin, full professor and researcher at Université Laval, and Mariette Chartier, professor and researcher at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, delivered the opening address which focused on the theme "Early Childhood Development: Essential to the Vitality of the French Language and French-Speaking Cultures". Following this presentation, the ministers shared the best practices developed by their respective governments regarding early childhood programs and services in French. In particular, they will discuss actions that could foster the exchange, among governments and key stakeholders, of best practices in the French-language early childhood sector.

"The presence of the French culture and environment is a key factor in the development of a child's social skills and identity within the community, said Greg Selinger, Manitoba Premier and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs. We are aware of the importance of taking steps with our children from the time they are born to ensure they develop their identity and learn and retain the French language. The many services and programs already offered in French by governments across Canada and the policies and directions in place help our children to identify with our Canadian Francophonie."

The ministers also noted the progress made with respect to the delivery of services in French. They praised Prince Edward Island for renewing the *French Language Services Act* and New Brunswick for adopting *An Act Respecting Official Languages*. In addition, they recognized initiatives by all governments, which have implemented measures in terms of their priorities to meet the needs of their Francophone population (see attached Information Sheet).

As part of this work, the ministers took the opportunity to discuss the progress made in many areas they have addressed in recent years. Therefore, they wish to encourage ongoing dialogue and exchange of expertise among the key government, community and private-sector stakeholders on French-language economic development within their respective provinces and territories. They also expressed their willingness to continue their discussions on Francophone immigration.

Lastly, the ministers discussed the Conference's future priorities and mandated their officials to propose possible action areas for its next Strategic Plan. These will be presented to the ministers at the next Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, to be held on June 26 and 27, 2014, in Prince Edward Island.

The Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, created in 1994, is the only intergovernmental forum that brings together the ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie. The Conference works for an open, dynamic, and diverse Francophonie that contributes to, and participates fully in, the growth of Canadian society. For more information, consult the website of the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie at www.cmfc-mccf.ca

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INFORMATION SHEET

Provincial and Territorial Government's Initiatives for the Canadian Francophonie

	Initiatives
Alberta	The Government of Alberta recently recognized the <i>Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta</i> and provides this group with funding to support francophone school councils.
British Columbia	Enhanced support for francophone families with the French version of Baby's Best Chance .
Manitoba	The Bilingual Service Centres (BSCs) Act received Royal Assent in June 2012, designed to guarantee a permanent role for the BSCs.
New Brunswick	June 2013: Important amendments to the New Brunswick Official Languages Act were unanimously adopted, following a public consultation process started in 2012.
Newfoundland and Labrador	Funding to two Francophone community organizations to help them carry out various projects aimed at researching members' needs related to health and wellness and offering improved recreational, social and wellness activities to seniors.
Nova Scotia	Bilingual kiosks in hospitals allowing parents to register the birth of their newborn and apply for related services.
Northwest Territories	In October 2012, the Government of the Northwest Territories released its Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services .
Nunavut	The coming into force on April 1 st 2013 of Nunavut's <i>Official Languages Act</i> , granting official status to French, English and the Inuit Language.
Ontario	Adoption of a Regulation on the provision of French language services by third parties on behalf of government agencies.
Prince Edward Island	In 2013, the Government of Prince Edward Island adopted its new French Language Services Act .
Saskatchewan	The Portail culturel fransaskois supported the creation and promotion of Fransaskois visual and performing art during 2012, "Year of the Fransaskois".
Yukon	Pilot projects in Active Offer, interpretation services and designated bilingual positions in the health and social services, including the Whitehorse General Hospital.
Québec	As part of its two financial support programs in Canadian Francophonie and twelve agreements of cooperation concluded with all the provincial and territorial governments in Canada, the SAIC supports approximately 300 projects with up to 2.3 M\$ a year in all society's sectors of interest.