

For Immediate Release

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2011 Census Finds Positive Gains in Number of Bilingual Canadians

OTTAWA—On Wednesday, Statistics Canada released the findings of its much-anticipated 2011 Census. Since its release there has been an outpouring of information regarding Canada's linguistic landscape. Some of the most prominent trends are those regarding the decrease of French and English speakers across the country. However, Canadian Parents for French sees some very positive numbers regarding bilingualism and linguistic duality across the country.

A major takeaway which is directly related to the efforts of CPF is that bilingualism is increasing faster among young Canadians than the general public. This trend mirrors our own research in CPF's [*Annual FSL Enrolment in Canada 2006-2011*](#) report which shows an increased proportion of students in immersion programs since 2006.

While there has been a minor increase in the proportion of French-English bilingual speakers across the country from 2006 to 2011 (17.4% and 17.5% respectively), the actual number of people who can conduct a conversation in both official languages is up by 350,000. While this is only a small increase, it is a very positive finding, especially when compared to the number of unilingual English and French speakers which is currently in decline in Canada.

It is important to also note that the percent of households who speak both English and French at home has increased from 3.8 % in 2006 to 5.4 % in 2011. This shows that despite a low increase of official-language bilingualism across the country, a growing number of people are encouraging and practicing bilingualism at home.

Finally, one of the largest conclusions from the 2011 Census is the number of Allophones in Canada. According to the census almost 70% of the population who speak a non-official language at home also speak either French or English. In the 2010 issue of CPF's [*The State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada*](#), the focus was on Allophone engagement in FSL programs. The report stated that 40% of Allophone parents enrolled their children into French Immersion programs. Given the numbers from the Census it could be inferred that there are over 100,000 FSL students from Allophone families.

Echoing the importance of Allophone engagement in FSL programs, Robert Rethon, Executive Director of CPF National, stated that "with the increasing presence of Allophone communities in Canada through immigration, it is important that all parties work together to ensure that Allophone youth be able to learn both official languages as part of their settlement and integration process."

There is a slew of information on Canada's linguistic landscape in the 2011 Census, and while there are some positive notes regarding official bilingualism in Canada we cannot sit idly by and hope that these trends continue. We should take an active role in encouraging bilingualism and FSL enrolment.

For more information please contact your local CPF Chapter or Branch and see how you can contribute to Canada's official bilingualism.

Read the Census report here: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/121024/dq121024a-eng.htm>

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Canadian Parents for French is the national network of volunteers which values French as an integral part of Canada and which is dedicated to the promotion and creation of French-second-language learning opportunities for young Canadians. There are currently 26,000 members across Canada.

Information/Renseignements:

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