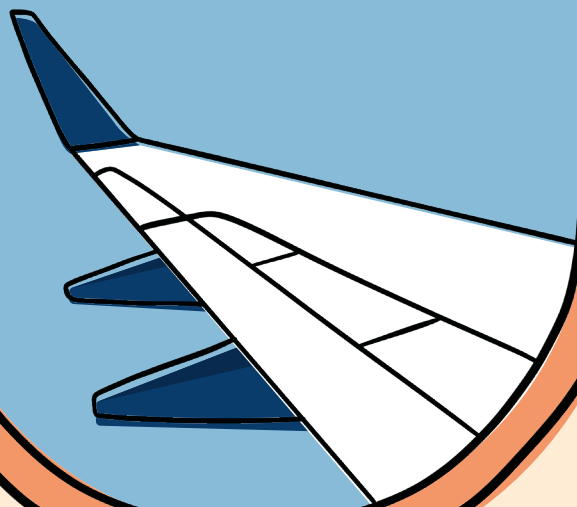


EXCHANGE SUPPORT GUIDE

FOR PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES



Part A - Welcoming Your Exchange Partner

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Conseil Jeunesse office is located on the unceded, traditional and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

Unceded means that these lands were never surrendered, relinquished, or handed over in any way, and as such, we are currently situated on occupied territories. The places where we gather, work, and play remain sovereign Indigenous lands.

We therefore reaffirm our commitment to reconciliation, as it is our moral responsibility—as settlers, visitors, or residents on these lands—to ensure that our meetings and actions align with Indigenous values and priorities as we walk together on the path of reconciliation.

LE CONSEIL JEUNESSE FRANCOPHONE DE LA COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE

The Conseil jeunesse francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CJFCB) is a non-profit organization created to promote, develop, and represent the interests of French-speaking youth in British Columbia. The members of the CJFCB are youth aged 14 to 25 who live in British Columbia and gather around the same goal: to speak, have fun and get involved in French.

In 2018, the CJFCB received the mandate from the British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care to administer the BC–Québec Exchange Program. For information on the program, please see: <https://cjfcbb.com/programmation/exchange>

WELCOMING YOUR EXCHANGE PARTNER

Traveling to Québec can be seen as the most exciting part of the exchange. After all, you will discover a new school and community, make new friends who speak French, and experience life with a completely new family!

However, **hosting your partner is an important part of the exchange**. And being a great host requires attention, care, time, and flexibility. You have a key role in the success of your partner's experience in British Columbia.

This guide includes some advice and tips for a successful hosting experience! Make sure that you read and discuss it with your parents or guardians before your partner arrives, and keep it as a guide during the exchange.

A Guide Informed by Research	4
Introduce Your Partner to Your Circle of Friends	6
Show Up for Your Partner, Even When It's Hard	7
Remember That Your Partner Is Learning English	9
Be Conscious That Your Partner May Feel Homesick	11
Support Your Partner and Stand Up for Them in Unjust, Discriminatory or Racist Situations	12
BC and Québec Contexts—Compare & Contrast	16
For Host Parents	18

A GUIDE INFORMED BY RESEARCH

Hi!

My name is Carl. I teach in the Language and Literacy Education Department at the University of British Columbia.

This guide is informed by a study that I conducted with participants of the Canadian Interprovincial Linguistic Student Exchange in the years just before the exchange was stopped by COVID-19. Thirty-eight students participated in this study and the strategies shared in this guide are based on their experiences.

To illustrate the participants' experiences, I used quotations from eight of them.



The quotes that are included in this guide are taken either from journals that the participants completed during their exchange or interviews I had with them. The participants gave their consent to take part in the study and agreed that any data they reported could be published. Names used are pseudonyms.

ABIGAIL

Gender: F
Age: 16
Province: BC
Exchange province: Québec
Hometown: Non-urban
Exchange town: Non-urban



JAMES

Gender: M
Age: 16
Province: BC
Exchange province: Québec
Hometown: Non-urban
Exchange town: Non-urban



MARILOU

Gender: F
Age: 15
Province: Québec
Exchange province: BC
Hometown: Non-urban
Exchange town: Urban



SARA

Gender: F
Age: 16
Province: Québec
Exchange province: BC
Hometown: Non-urban
Exchange town: Non-urban



FÉLIX

Gender: M
Age: 15
Province: Québec
Exchange province: BC
Hometown: Non-urban
Exchange town: Urban



LAURIE

Gender: F
Age: 15
Province: Québec
Exchange province: Saskatchewan
Hometown: Non-urban
Exchange town: Non-urban



ROSALIE

Gender: F
Age: 16
Province: Québec
Exchange province: Alberta
Hometown: Non-urban
Exchange town: Non-urban



TAYLOR

Gender: F
Age: 15
Province: BC
Exchange province: Québec
Hometown: Urban
Exchange town: Non-urban



INTRODUCE YOUR PARTNER TO YOUR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Your partner does not have to become your best friend, but it is important you give them opportunities for them to meet new people.

In the case of Marilou, it was easy to join her partner's circle of friends:



Elle m'a présenté toutes ses amis. Pis tous ses amis étaient vraiment gentils.¹

Also include your partner in your digital circle of friends; add them to your group chats on WhatsApp, Instagram or other apps. Being included in his volleyball team chat, James felt more included and could develop his French language skills:

I actually started using some of the text lingo with my friends in Québec. And they found that quite funny. It was sort of like 'Look at the BC boy using Québec lingo'.



Sports and extracurricular activities can be great opportunities for bonding, like for Sara, who'd never played rugby before:



L'équipe avec laquelle je me suis entraînée était super fine. Elles m'ont inclus tout de suite, elles étaient patientes envers moi quand tsé j'étais un petit peu plus mêlée. Mon premier tournoi de rugby, c'était à Kamloops. Et puis... J'étais vraiment une des leurs. On s'entendait bien. Le team bonding était impressionnant. Puis, c'est ça, j'ai vraiment aimé ça. Ça m'a marqué beaucoup.²

Sara ended up enjoying rugby so much that, upon her return to Québec, she continued playing and joined a rugby team!

Don't hesitate to invite your partner to try new activities and experiences; they may make new friends and discover new passions!

¹ She introduced me to all her friends. And all her friends were really nice.

² The team I trained with was super kind. They included me right away, they were patient with me when I was a little confused. My first rugby tournament, it was in Kamloops. And then... I was really one of them. We got along well. The team bonding was impressive. Then, that's it, I really liked it. It had a big impact on me.

SHOW UP FOR YOUR PARTNER, EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD

Easy experiences, such as those described before by Marilou, James and Sara, are not the experiences lived by all.

Although unfortunate, it can happen that some of your friends do not appreciate your partner or have conflicts with them. When you decide to take your friends' side, it may lead to very difficult situations and sentiments of exclusion for your partner. It was the case for Taylor, who felt left out by her partner:

It felt as if she kind of left me out. Like at school, she would like, I don't know, she would ask me like one question like 'What class do you have next?' and I would respond and she would go back to talk to her friends.

She invites friends over and instead of us all being together, she hangs out with them and I'm not included. We go to the gym three times a week and she started doing a workout plan with one of her friends but didn't ask me to join (though I don't mind as much as I like to work out and push myself alone, but I wish she'd at least asked).



Abigail experienced something similar:

At first, when I first got there, at this school, they—her and her friends made some efforts to involve me and bring me into their circle of friends, they tried to include me, that kind of thing. But before they could really bring me in and accept me, they kinda—they stopped making the efforts. So, about a month in, I was pretty much left to fend for myself.

Sometimes, she and her friends would leave me completely alone at lunch. They would just all get up and leave and not tell me where they were going.

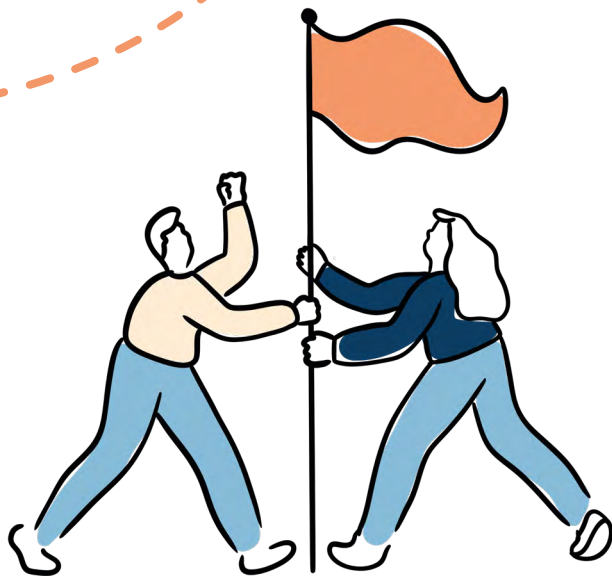
My twin was actually often invited to parties with them and, hm... I was never invited to go to them, go to these parties or anything. I was always just left out. And she would go to them without me. So, that's when I started talking to the mom about it. Yeah, that was my worst experience, all this exclusion and isolation.



As you can see, such situations can be very difficult on your partner. When I asked Taylor's partner about the situation, she said that she was busy with her life and said that: "J'aime moins ça avoir du monde dans mes affaires."³ However, it should be remembered that the exchange program is not only a trip away; being a good host and making room in your life for your partner is also part of the contract.

Remember that your exchange partner depends on you more than your friends do.

Your exchange partner has to navigate in a new environment with a new language, while not having their regular support network. You're their bridge to understanding how things work, both in and outside the classroom. That doesn't mean you have to ignore your other friendships, but it does mean showing up for your partner—being inclusive, checking in, and standing by them when things get awkward or tough. In a new environment, having even one reliable ally can make all the difference. Be that person.



REMEMBER THAT YOUR PARTNER IS LEARNING ENGLISH

Being in an environment where your second language is constantly spoken can be stressful and tiring, even for people with high proficiency.

Language proficiency is not fixed; it might vary according to various situations. For example, your partner may understand well when you speak to them but might have more difficulty understanding in class or in a situation where many people talk. Similarly, it can be easier for them to listen than to speak, or vice versa.

In my study, most participants reported difficulties adjusting to the language, to varying degrees. For example, Carter was discouraged that a waiter would switch to English when she spoke French, Andrew sometimes nodded without understanding, and Rosalie was disappointed when she was told she had a strong accent; all had problems related to language at some point.

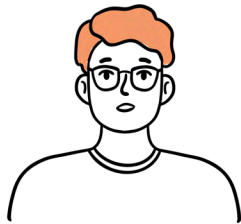
As the host, you have to be aware of your role as a language broker for your partner. Marilou mentioned the French language as a barrier when communicating with her partner in Québec. But the success of communication does not only depend on your partner; it is a shared responsibility by all people taking part in the discussion. **Therefore, be patient with your partner, repeat what you say with different words, and slow down as needed.**

³ I don't like having people in my things.

It can also be intimidating to speak in front of a small group. Try not to pressure your partner to do so; chances are that they'll become more comfortable doing so as time goes by.

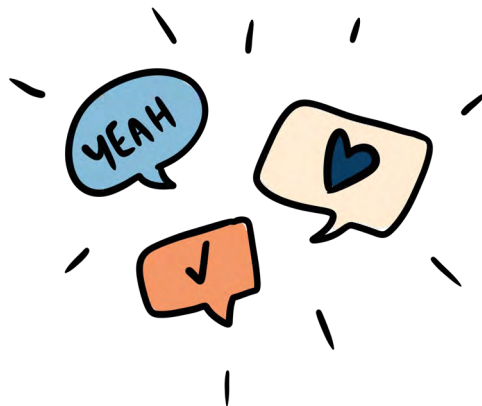
It may also happen that your partner is mocked because of their accent, as was the case with Félix:

*J'étais dans mon cours de Math
et je parlais avec mes amis
et un de mes amis
a ri de mon accent.⁴*



Although this event may seem anecdotal and people may see it as a joke, it may have an important impact on your partner's confidence and well-being.

Do not make jokes about language difficulties or accent, encourage your friends to not do so, and most of all support your partner.



⁴ I was in my math class talking with my friends, and one of them laughed at my accent.

BE CONSCIOUS THAT YOUR PARTNER MAY FEEL HOMESICK

Even the most extroverted person may feel and behave differently when put in an unfamiliar situation.

Your partner's attitude and behaviour may be affected because they miss their family and friends. These feelings may be intensified by a sort of culture shock.

Laurie mentioned:

*Je m'attendais pas à ce que
ce soit autant différent, tsé,
on reste au Canada.⁵*



Apart from the language, participants noted differences in eating habits, the place of religion, family dynamics, school organization, celebrations of statutory holidays and teenagers' behaviour. Even when small, adjusting to these differences can require cognitive and emotional energy, and can be such that one misses the familiar ways things are done at home.

Try to help your partner adjust to these differences and ease their adjustments to them. For example, during my first home observation, while they were preparing dinner, Marilou's host mother told me that the first week, she cooked Western dishes to help Marilou feel at home in the context of her Asian host family. Later, Marilou was introduced to Chinese, Japanese, and Indian food, and started using chopsticks for the first time!

It is also normal that your partner wants to stay in touch with their family and friends in Québec. They can do so as long as it is not negatively impacting your relationships, your family life, and their overall exchange experience and progress.



⁵ I didn't expect it to be so different, y'know, we stay in Canada.

SUPPORT YOUR PARTNER AND STAND UP FOR THEM IN UNJUST, DISCRIMINATORY OR RACIST SITUATIONS

Not all is always perfect during the exchange, it may even happen that your partner is a victim of racism, homophobia or xenophobia, all situations that have happened in my study.

Taylor, “the only visible minority in the four towns that made up [her partner’s] school,” experienced racial microaggressions. Microaggressions are “derogatory slights or insults directed at a target person or persons who are members of an oppressed group”;⁶ these can be implicit or explicit, conscious or not, and intentional or not.

Taylor first experienced a microaggression with her partner’s uncle:

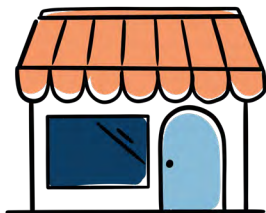


I tried to make conversation with him and his daughter when we were on a chairlift going up the mountain, and he answered but in a dismissing way.

Later that night after dinner when we were all saying goodbyes, everyone was hugging but once this uncle got to me, I told him it was nice to meet him, and he gave me a ‘mhm’ and walked away. Of course, I was taken aback but quickly forgot after his wife swept me into a hug.

Taylor was also ignored by customers at the store where her partner worked:

Some customers would greet my twin, not make eye contact with me and would ignore that I was there, even after I said ‘bonne soirée’ and smiled. There was no acknowledgement with them.



Abigail, who self-identified as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, made some friends also part of it. She commented on some people’s uneasiness to discuss sexual orientation:



When someone mentions the LGBTQ+ community, a hush falls over the crowd. I have spoken to my peers about this situation, and they agree that it tends to make the adult population very uncomfortable, but even a great deal of the youngsters don’t know how to speak on the topic. I made a couple LGBTQ+ friends, and they found it excruciatingly hard to come out.

Rosalie reported Québec bashing during her stay in Alberta. Québec bashing is generally associated with the denigration of Québécois, especially francophones and sovereignists, by Canadians.⁷ Rosalie recounted this incident:

J’m fais fait faire les ongles pis là, le monsieur, c’était vers la fin, y r’marque : ‘Eille t’as un p’tit accent.’ J’suis comme : ‘Ben oui je viens du Québec t’sais, faque j’parle français.’ Y fait : ‘Ah t’es une asshole!’ Pis là y part à rire, pis là ma twin est avec, pis là y’en mettait qu’on était des frogs pis toutte.’⁸



⁶ Torino et al., 2019, p. 3

⁷ Bernard Barbeau, 2014, p. 122

⁸ I’m having my nails done and then, the man, it was towards the end, he says: ‘Hey! You have a little accent.’ I’m like: ‘Well, yes, I come from Québec you know, I speak French.’ He goes: ‘Ah, you’re an asshole!’ And then he’s laughing, and then my twin is laughing too, and there it was, we were frogs and everything.

She also suggested that this sentiment was somehow reinforced at school:

Dans leur cours de Social Studies, ben ils voient là—ils ont parlé de la séparation, du PQ, pis toutte. Pis là t'sais, ma twin a fait un texte là-dessus comme quoi tout le monde veut se séparer, pis que le Québec, on profite du Canada. Pis là, ils leur montrent plein de preuves là, qu'eux autres ont du pétrole, pis que nous autres, on a rien. Faque là, t'sais, ils renforcent qu'ils nous aiment pas.⁹



While victims of microaggressions may try to minimize their impact, these aggressions can have a significant negative effect on a person's well-being, as well as their ability to interact with others and form friendships.

⁹ In their Social Studies class, well they see the—they talked about the separation, about the Parti Québécois, and all. You know, my twin wrote a text on this, that everyone wants to separate, that Québec, we take advantage of Canada. Then, they show them a lot of evidence there, that they have oil and that we have nothing. You know, they reinforce that they don't like us.

If you witness such attitudes or aggressions towards your partner:

1

STAY SAFE

Keeping yourself and your partner physically and emotionally safe is the most important thing to do. Withdraw from and avoid the situations. Tell your partner that what happened is not okay.

2

REPORT IT

By speaking up, you're protecting yourself, your partner and maybe even others. Talk to your parents, sponsor teacher or other safe adult when you are aware of such situations. You can also contact the BC-Québec Exchange Program Coordinator at exchangequebec@cjfcb.com.

3

GET SUPPORT

Talk to people you feel you can open up to and don't be afraid to ask for help. Invite your partner to talk to someone. They can contact the free French help line *Jeunesse j'écoute* via text at [686868](tel:686868) or by phone at [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868).

4

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Remember that bullying is not your fault or your partner's fault, it's not OK and it's important to be kind to yourself.

This advice come from the Kids Help Phone website¹⁰ (available in French under the name *Jeunesse j'écoute*¹¹). Consult their websites for more information.

¹⁰ <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/what-do-if-youre-experiencing-bullying>

¹¹ <https://jeunessejecoute.ca/information/que-faire-si-je-suis-victime-dintimidation>

BC AND QUÉBEC CONTEXTS

COMPARE & CONTRAST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Use this map to identify the traditional Indigenous land on which your town and your exchange partner's town are located: <https://native-land.ca>

"BC has the greatest diversity of Indigenous cultures in Canada. Of the 12 unique Indigenous language families in Canada, 7 are located exclusively in BC, which equals more than 50% of the First Nations languages in Canada."¹²

Learn more here:

<https://www.welcomebc.ca/choose-b-c/explore-british-columbia/indigenous-peoples-in-b-c>

"There are 11 different Indigenous nations in Quebec, each with their own distinct identity: a history, language and culture all of their own. The 10 First Nations and the Inuit Nation represent just over 1% of Québec's population."¹³

Learn more here:

<https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/portrait-quebec/premieres-nations-inuits/profil-des-nations/a-propos-nations>

POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHY

Both provinces contain many vast natural areas and lakes.

- The third largest province in size and the largest in population.
- The capital city is Victoria.
- The climate in BC can be drastically different across regions!

- The largest province in size and second largest in population.
- The capital city is Québec.
- It can be very hot in the summer... and very cold in the winter!

SCHOOL SYSTEM AND USE OF CELL PHONES

- The school system has 12 grades after Kindergarten.
- Elementary school goes from Kindergarten to Grade 7, and secondary from Grade 8 to 12.
- Some school districts have Middle Schools.
- After Grade 12, students can go directly to university.
- Students usually have 8 courses a year. It can either be a 2-day schedule with 4 courses a day throughout the year (linear system), or the same 4 courses every day for half a year (semester system).
- Cell phones and similar devices are not allowed in classrooms during instructional time. Each teacher may have a different management system for cell phones in their classroom.

- The school system has 11 grades after Kindergarten.
- Elementary school goes from Kindergarten to 6^e année (Grade 6), and secondary from Secondaire 1 to 5.
- After Secondaire 5, students go to a college called cégep, before they can go to university.
- The school schedule is usually based on a 9-day schedule, with 4 or 5 periods a day.
- As of the fall of 2025, students will be required to address their teachers using "vous". Also, cell phones and similar devices will not be allowed on school property, not in class nor during breaks. You'll have to entertain yourselves in a different way!

THE PLACE OF RELIGION

Even though BC is a province with a low level of religious affiliation,¹⁴ many participants were surprised that their host family was religious and practicing.

In Québec, the social landscape is marked by Catholicism, as seen in the many churches and towns named after saints. However, many (though not all!) Québécois are not practicing.¹⁵

¹² <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1623334709728/1623335671425>

¹³ <https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/portrait-quebec/premieres-nations-inuits/profil-des-nations/a-propos-nations>

^{14&15} <https://publications.gc.ca/Collection/Statcan/96F0030X/96F0030XIE2001015.pdf>

FOR HOST PARENTS

Thank you for opening your home to your child's exchange partner.

Consider them as a member of your family, but remember that they are coming from and are used to a different environment; they may take some time to adjust.

Take time to discuss your expectations regarding house rules and responsibilities, and ask how it is in their own home.

In case of conflict between your child and their partner, take time to listen to both sides and to be supportive. It can be beneficial for your young guest to reach out to their support network back home. You may want to contact their parents to give some context as needed.

If you have younger kids, they may feel jealous. You may want to take the time to talk to them to explain the situation, and reassure them throughout the exchange. Organize activities or games with the whole family so they learn to know your guest.

Please take time to read the present guide with your child and discuss any concerns they may have.

REFERENCES

- Bernard Barbeau, G. (2014). *Le dossier Maclean's et le Québec bashing: Analyse sociodiscursive d'une affaire médiatique controversée* [Doctoral dissertation, Université Laval]. CorpusUL.
- Ruest, C. (2022). *Exploring adolescents' development of intercultural competence through the Canadian Interprovincial Student Exchange* [Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia]. UBC Open Collections.
- Torino, G. C., Rivera, D. P., Capodilupo, C. M., Nadal, K. L., & Sue, D. W. (2019). *Microaggression theory: Influence and implications*. John Wiley & Sons.



CARL RUEST

<https://lled.educ.ubc.ca/carl-ruest/>

KATIE PINTER

BC-QUÉBEC EXCHANGE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

echangequebec@cjfcb.com



CONSEIL JEUNESSE
FRANCOPHONE
DE LA COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE



Ministry of
Education and
Child Care



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Education
Department of Language & Literacy Education