

Public Schools and How to Register Your Child for School

Nova Scotia is committed to ensuring all children receive a high-quality education.

Students in pre-primary or primary to grade 12 can attend school one of three ways:

- They can attend a public school, which is free.
- They can attend a private school, which costs money.
- They can be [home-schooled](#).

The information in this guide will tell you more about how public schools work, and how to register your child for school.

General information

The [Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development](#) (EECD) is responsible for the education students get while in pre-primary or primary up to grade 12 in public school.

EECD works with several other partners and organizations to develop:

- the early learning curriculum framework (infants to early elementary)
- public school curriculum (primary to grade 12)
- education policies, programs, and services
- resources and other materials that help a child learn and succeed

The partners and organizations EECD works with include:

- Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) on matters about English-language public school programs, including French-second-language programs
- Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) on matters about French-first-language public school programs
- Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services, which provides services to families of young children between birth and school-entry age who need extra help with their development
- licensed child care centres
- other community partners

Languages used in public schools

Public schools in Nova Scotia are organized into English-first-language schools, with programming delivered by RCEs, and French-first language schools delivered by CSAP.

At RCE schools

- students learn in English
- students learn Core French in grades 4 to 9
- French-second-language programs, such as French Immersion, are available at some schools
- the school will communicate with the family in English

At CSAP schools

- students learn in French
- students learn English starting in grade 4
- the school will communicate with the family in French

CSAP has schools across the province. The [CSAP website](#) has information on programming and eligibility requirements.

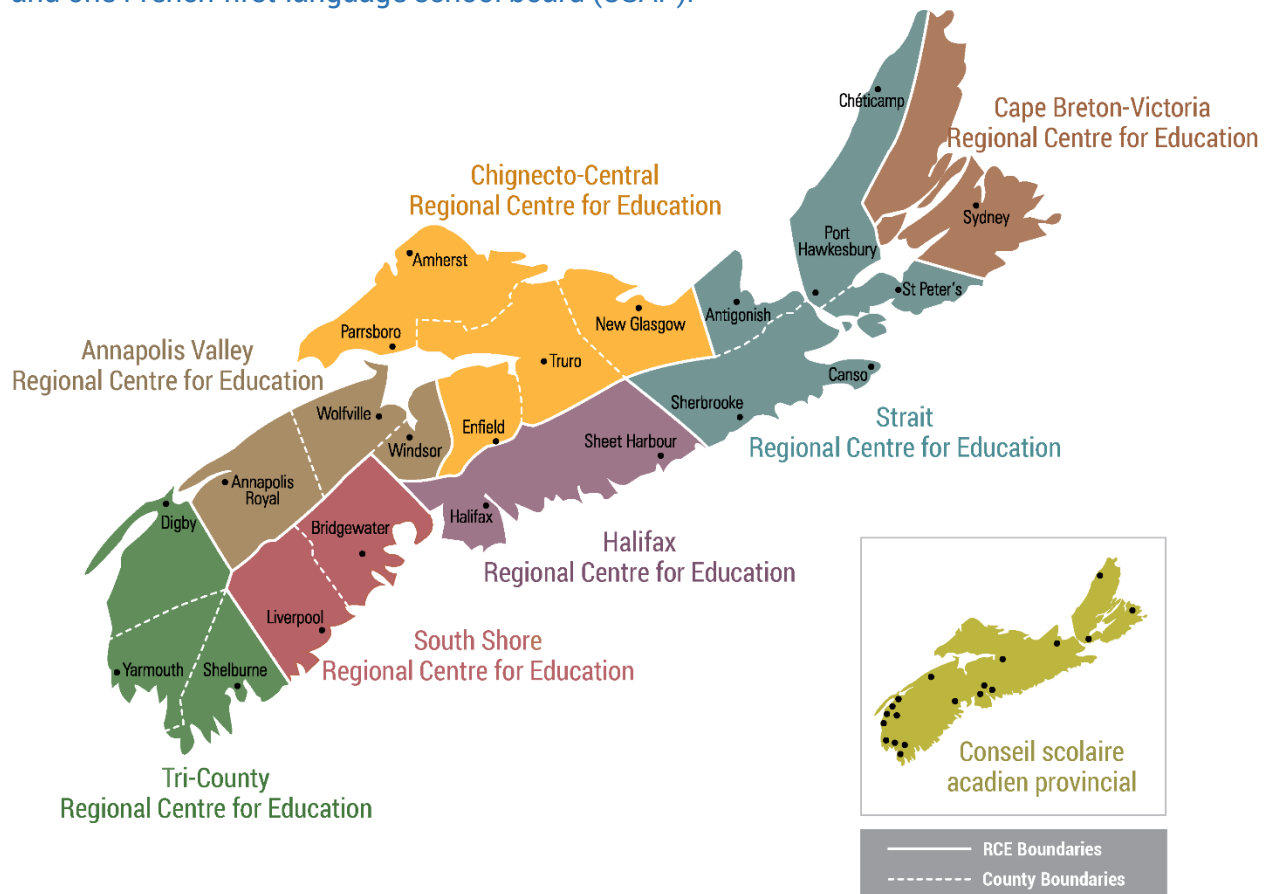
Your neighbourhood, your school

The school your child goes to depends on where you live. In some cases, you can register your child to attend a school outside of your neighbourhood. Contact your local RCE or CSAP for more information.

Nova Scotia has 7 RCEs and 1 CSAP. Check the map below to find yours. The inset map shows where you will find CSAP schools, which are located across the province.

Nova Scotia's Public School System

Nova Scotia has seven English-language Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) and one French-first-language school board (CSAP).



School programming

Pre-primary

- Pre-primary is a free, voluntary, early learning program.
- Every child in Nova Scotia who is four years old by December 31 in the year before school entry can go to pre-primary.
- Pre-primary is inclusive. Children of all abilities can attend.
- Early childhood educators (ECEs) will guide your child's play in a way that helps your child develop.
- Pre-primary helps prepare children for public school. Your child does not have to go to pre-primary to be allowed to go to primary. It is your choice to send your child to pre-primary or not.

Primary to grade 12

- Your child must be at least five years old by December 31 to begin primary.
- Children between the ages of 5 and 16 must attend school. The school can be public, private, or at home.

- All Nova Scotian public schools are inclusive and are committed to ensuring a culturally and linguistically responsive environment, supporting the well-being and achievement of every student.
- Nova Scotia schools are configured as below, however, there may be slight variations:
 - elementary schools (pre-primary to grade 6)
 - junior high schools (grades 7 to 9)
 - high schools (grades 10 to 12)
- Some schools may combine students from different grades into one class.

School registration

When and where to register your child for school

- You must register your child before they start school.
- You can register your child by contacting your local school in person, by phone, or by email. Your local school may also have a registration form on their website. You can fill that out and the school will contact you to complete the process. You can ask about which French-second-language programs are available upon registration at your community school.
- If your child has a disability, medical need, or requires additional help, you should let the school know when you register.
- For further assistance with registration, contact the RCE/CSAP, YMCA School Settlement or YREACH, or Immigration Francophone.

Documents you will need to provide

You will need several documents in order to register your child. You should have these in an electronic form, such as image, pdf, or Word document.

- proof of your child's age, such as a birth certificate or passport
- proof of your address, which can be provided with a copy of a bank statement, telephone, electric bill, or apartment lease with your name and address (Note: A driver's licence is not a valid document for providing proof of address.)
- provide one of the following as proof of your child's immigration status: confirmation of permanent residence, permanent residence card or Canadian passport, work permit, study permit, temporary resident permit, or Refugee Protection Claimant Document
- if possible, records of your child's previous education, past transcripts, or report cards translated into English or French (Note: the grade your child attended before coming to Nova Scotia may not be the grade they attend in Nova Scotia.)

Other information to provide

- Give the school your home and work phone numbers as well as the name and phone numbers for a friend, family member, or neighbour. The school will use this information to reach you if there is an emergency. Keep this information up to date with your school. If a phone number changes, tell the school.
- Make note of the phone number of your child's school and the names of your child's teacher, principal, and vice-principal in case you need to contact the school.
- Check the school's website to see if they have a handbook. This will give you any policies and procedures that you should know.
- Tell the school if your child has any allergies, medical conditions, or medication they need to take during the school day. The school needs to know this so they can respond to an emergency that involves your child.

Your child's current language skills

- Your school may ask your child to take a language assessment to determine how well they listen, speak, read, and write in English or French. If necessary, they will receive English as an Additional Language (EAL) support at a RCE school or French as an Additional Language (FAL) support at a CSAP school.
- EAL/FAL teachers assist students and teachers in schools. Ask your school how they provide EAL or FAL support.

Contact information

For more information, contact your Regional Centre for Education (RCE) or Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP).

- [Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education](#) (AVRCE)
- [Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education](#) (CBVRCE)
- [Chignecto-Central Regional Centre for Education](#) (CCRCE)
- [Conseil scolaire acadien provincial](#) (CSAP)
- [Halifax Regional Centre for Education](#) (HRCE)
- [South Shore Regional Centre for Education](#) (SSRCE)
- [Strait Regional Centre for Education](#) (SRCE)
- [Tri-County Regional Centre for Education](#) (TCRCE)
- [SchoolsPlus](#) brings a range of services and supports, and is available in every school in Nova Scotia

For support in your community, contact:

- [YMCA School Settlement](#) – available in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)
- [YREACH](#) – available province-wide (outside of HRM)
- [Immigration Francophone](#) – available through your School Settlement Worker