



Living as a Family



Staying in touch

Little daily things can help you stay connected to your loved ones and make the distance seem smaller.

Leaning on family, despite the distance

When you are still getting your bearings in Québec, staying in contact with your loved ones can provide stability and comfort.

Simple gestures can help you stay connected with your loved ones, such as:

- Schedule a regular time to talk each week
- Exchange voice messages
- Make video calls.

"My parents are paying for most of my studies. Sometimes, I feel guilty. I feel like they idealize my life here and don't realize the challenges I face. I don't want to worry them or disappoint them. I found out that many international students experience the same thing. It felt good to learn I'm not alone and to share my experience with others."

Malika, international student from Senegal



Coping with difficult feelings

Being far from your family can bring feelings of guilt, longing, or powerlessness. This is common and normal.

Little gestures can help you overcome these feelings, such as:

- Being available for moral and emotional support for your loved ones
- Offering to organize an event from a distance
- Talking to other people in similar situations
- Feeling useful and volunteering or getting involved in a community organization
- Focusing on your family's future and your plans
- Strengthening your relationship with family members in Québec.

"My cousins are still in Syria, in an unstable situation. I worry about them a lot. I feel like there's nothing my mom, sister and I can do."

Mariam, teenage refugee from Syria



Getting settled as a family

Getting settled in a new society can disrupt family roles and habits

Upon arrival, each member of the family may have their own path to adjusting, which can lead to changes.

At first, they may be unsettling, raise doubts or concerns and even cause tension. However, with time, they can also strengthen family bonds.

To support your family, it can be useful to know each generation's unique hopes and challenges.

Grandparents	
Hopes	Challenges
• Passing down their language and culture to younger family members • Spending time with their family • Feeling useful	• Maintaining their independence • Learning French or understanding Québec French • Building a social circle
Parents	
Hopes	Challenges
• Giving their family a good quality of life • Being there for their family members	• Navigating the process of settling in • Helping their children navigate a society they are still discovering themselves • Finding a job that matches their skills
Enfants	
Hopes	Challenges
• Doing well in school • Making friends • Staying close to their parents and grandparents	• Communicating in a new language • Meeting expectations that may be different (for example, parent/school) • Feeling like they belong to multiple communities

Thriving as a parent

Striking a balance between your values and local practices can help you feel accomplished as a parent.



Did you know?

In Québec, parents have rights and obligations under the Civil Code of Québec.

Every child (aged 0–18) has the right to protection, security and attention from their parents. Parents must make decisions in the child's best interest and respect their rights.

The Director of Youth Protection (DYP) is a government agency that can intervene when the security or development of a child is in danger.

To find out more, see the toolkit website: <https://infobienetre.ca/en/living-as-a-family/#thriving-as-a-parent>

Navigating a new context

All parents want what is best for their child: love, security and a promising future. However, in Québec, some ways of raising and taking care of children may be new to you. These may include :

- How children are disciplined
- How much independence children have
- How some situations are handled.

Newness may surprise you or raise questions. Adjusting to new norms can take time.

Participating in Espace Parents workshops

It is important to feel supported through this transition.

Some community organizations offering support to immigrants and refugees hold workshops for newcomer parents.

"Attending Espace Parents workshops was a very positive experience for me and my partner! We got to share experiences and tips with other parents. We developed a strong sense of solidarity! I learned what resources are available to support us and help us understand how school works in Québec. I feel much more confident in my role as a parent now."

Carlos, economic immigrant from Colombia



The Espace Parents program offers:

- A warm welcome and activities tailored to your situation
- Discussions with a counsellor and other newcomer parents
- Help learning about local practices while respecting your values
- 9 workshops of 2 hours each on parenting in an migration context.

To find out about the organizations offering these workshops, see the Espace Parents website:

<https://www.espace-parents.ca/organismes-offrant-les-activites-espace-parents/> [in French]

