

## Recruitment 101: Building Your Base

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People usually join Canadian Parents for French (CPF) for one of three reasons:

1. They want to support French Second Language (FSL) education
2. They want a particular benefit for themselves or their children
3. They are invited by someone they know

The recruitment methods in this guide are built around those motivations.

### CONVINCE WITH CONVERSATION

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#### *How to Use This Approach*

##### **a) Find Allies**

Approach people who care about FSL education. You can find them at Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings, parent information sessions, advocacy events, school functions, CPF meetings, or simply picking up their kids from school.

##### **b) Ask Them to Join CPF**

Maybe you've been told that to recruit, you need to be a great sales person. Spreading the word about CPF is actually **easier** than making sales. While sales people need to create a demand for their product, parents already want to help their kids, and CPF helps them do it!

Instead of crafting a perfect sales pitch, try having a conversation:

##### Listen

Ask what they think works well about FSL education, what they want improved, and what they'd like to see happen at their child's school.

##### Share

Share why **you** joined CPF and why you still believe it's worthwhile.

Comment on how their ideas connect to CPF's mandate.

##### Explain

Let them know that CPF chapters across Canada are teaching parents how to help kids succeed in French, doing advocacy work, building community, and putting on great FSL events. Explain that the head office provides support, but your chapter is made of local parents who make decisions about how to spend your own budget. Mention one of your chapter's recent events or successes.

##### Invite

You might say: "If you can participate, we'd love to have you."

Offer a membership brochure (the CPF - BC & Yukon Branch can provide these). If possible, take the form and membership fee and mail it in yourself.

If they decline, try saying: “If you can't participate but you can contribute the \$25 annual membership fee, that's helpful, too. Our local budget comes from those fees. Membership also comes with benefits, like the ability to register for BC Family French Camp.”

### ***What This Approach is Good For***

This is a great way to connect with people who are committed to CPF's mandate. These people are the most likely to join, come to meetings, and contribute their time.

### ***What This Approach is Not Good For***

Quick results! This approach takes time, practice, and patience. You won't get mass publicity the way you might with a large event, and not everyone who you speak with will want to sign up.

### ***Bridging the Gap***

Know that these conversations are never wasted. If you take the time to engage with people, they'll get a good sense of what CPF does and be well-equipped to spread the message.

Whether or not they sign up, thank them for their time, ask them to spread the word, and encourage them to visit [www.cpf.bc.ca](http://www.cpf.bc.ca) to learn more. Invite them to find out about future meetings or events by contacting you, someone else from your chapter, or the Branch.

## **WALK THE TALK: SHOW THE VALUE OF CPF**

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### ***How to Use This Approach***

#### **a) Hold Educational and Entertaining Events**

It's usually more effective to act small, and act often, than to put all your energy into a major project. Here are some ideas to get you started:

#### **Information Events**

- Reach out to kindergarten parents and share your knowledge. An event called, “*What I Wish I Knew: Veteran French Immersion Parents Tell It Like It Is,*” can be a big draw. You might also ask a teacher to attend.
- Throw a *Stepping Up: The Transition to High School* event. Invite grade 7 students and their parents to chat with grade 12 students and high school teachers about how to succeed in secondary school.

#### **Socio Cultural Events**

- The Branch may provide extra funding for these. Musical performances, winter carnivals, film festivals, summer camps, graduation ceremonies – the possibilities are endless! Contact the Branch for suggestions.

## **b) Promote Members-Only Benefits**

While there are universal member benefits (see [www.cpf.bc.ca](http://www.cpf.bc.ca)), your chapter can also design its own. Here are some ideas:

- **Scholarships:** Create a scholarship that only the children of members can receive. Establish clear, unbiased, structured criteria.
- **Prizes:** In early September, ask the Branch about Membership Drive prizes. There are often extra incentives for new members who join in the fall.
- **Special events:** Require membership for particular events or services. Remember: your event must be very appealing or cost-effective to generate new memberships.

### ***What This Approach is Good For***

This is a great way to get your name out there. It gives people concrete evidence that your chapter is doing valuable work.

It also lets you combine recruitment with things you already wanted to do! Even if no one buys a membership, your chapter made a contribution to FSL education that wouldn't have happened without you.

### ***What This Approach is Not Good For***

Unless you make special efforts to recruit, events are usually ineffective ways to generate new memberships or encourage people to volunteer. Even people who are genuinely interested and grateful will rarely take initiative and contact you after an event.

### ***Bridging the Gap***

Make a group announcement, but also ask people to sign up **individually**. If the format of your event allows it, consider taking these steps:

Have a friendly CPF member greet parents at the door and ask if they are members.

Invite parents to leave their contact information to stay informed of future events. Contact them later to ask for their feedback and to invite them to your next CPF meeting.

Set up a CPF table with membership forms and a CPF member. At the end of the event, have a speaker thank CPF for its efforts and point out the table. Try to place the table in a place that parents need to pass on their way out.

## **LET YOUR NETWORK DO THE WORK**

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### ***How to Use This Approach***

If your chapter already has members, it already has recruiters. People who join CPF are usually connected to a myriad of other potential members and useful contacts: their friends, their children's teachers, their children's prior teachers, the parents of their children's friends, French tutors, PAC

presidents...

Ask them to bring one extra person to the next meeting. Bring one extra person yourself.

Ask them if they know any well-placed contacts who can help spread the word about CPF. If they do, ask them to take initiative and get in touch with one of those people before the next meeting. Take the same initiative yourself.

If your group has dormant members, contact them and to ask if they can tell a friend about your next meeting. Some chapters hesitate to do this because they don't want to seem pushy, but usually if someone was interested enough to join your chapter in the first place, they won't mind telling others about it.

### ***What This Approach is Good For***

This approach is a far more reliable way to increase your meeting turnout and active membership than sending out written communication to strangers. It can get impressive results with relatively little effort.

Ironically, this is such a simple method that several chapters don't bother to do it.

### ***What This Approach is Not Good For***

Your network is limited by your existing connections. There are only so many people you can ask before you need to move on to strangers.

This approach can also limit your chapter's exposure to different demographics and ideas. For example, if most of your members are parents of young children, their connections may reflect that bias.

### ***Bridging the Gap***

Instead of asking every one of your members to ask every one of their acquaintances to join CPF, keep this commitment **small**: every person simply brings one new face to the next meeting, and asks one of their contacts to spread the word. This will help prevent burnout or resentment – and potentially double your numbers!