



Métis Languages
LOUIS RIEL INSTITUTE
Knowledge • Culture • Heritage



Family Language Planning

Edition 1, 2023

What is a Family Language Plan?

A family language plan is an opportunity for interested learners and/or current speakers to bring their traditional language(s) into the home.

All Métis languages are currently considered endangered languages because we have few remaining speakers. That is to say, if you don't have any remaining speakers in your family and do not currently use a Métis language in the home, you are absolutely not alone and not the only family facing this challenge. Many community members are interested in learning the language and reintroducing it into their daily lives though they aren't too sure where to begin.

A family language plan can help set realistic goals to return the language into homes in a way that best suits the family. It typically includes working together to discuss what type of language use you would like to see, whether that be daily conversation or perhaps more specific, as well as activities and timelines to support the learning process. It will also help in establishing who will be teaching (potentially while also learning) and who will be focusing primarily on learning.

Why is a Family Language Plan Important?

Since many of our traditional languages are endangered, the Louis Riel Institute (LRI) is actively working to revitalize Métis languages. Part of this is ensuring that the community has accessible resources to aid them in their learning journeys.

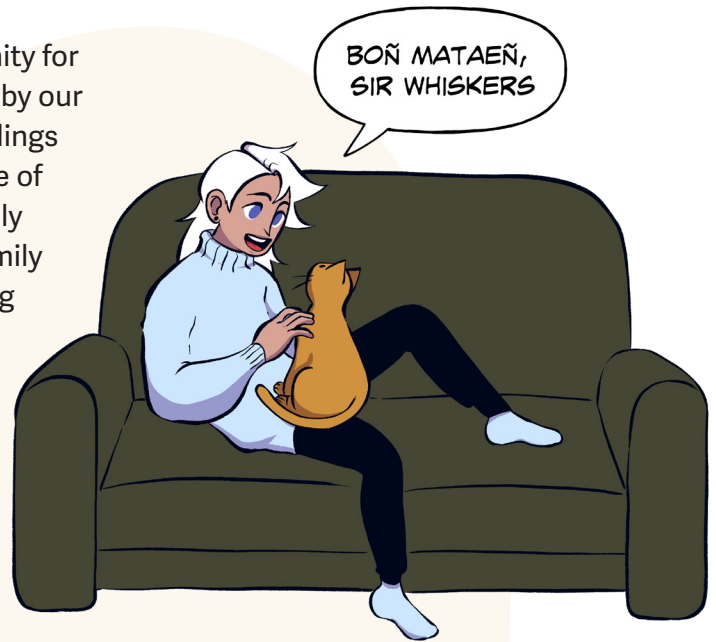
Having a set plan in particular can help to focus on specific learning interests, rather than be overwhelmed by how much there is to learn. After all, it is an exciting time to (re)connect to Métis identity, of which language is an integral part!



Centering the plan in the family also provides opportunity for lots of interaction since we are most often surrounded by our household. Though it can be daunting and bring up feelings of shame, anger, and hurt to recognize the current state of Métis languages in our homes and community, we highly encourage all those interested to develop their own family language plan since we are all on the path to revitalizing our languages together.

Further, we recognize that many types of family structures exist aside from the nuclear family and encourage folks to do what they can within their own capacity that suits their own family.

All attempts at learning language are better than no attempts!



Where Should My Family Start?

Learning any language can be a daunting task, and reconnecting to our traditional languages is no exception. It can feel overwhelming to pick what to learn first, but a great starting point is to ask yourselves what you presently do know.

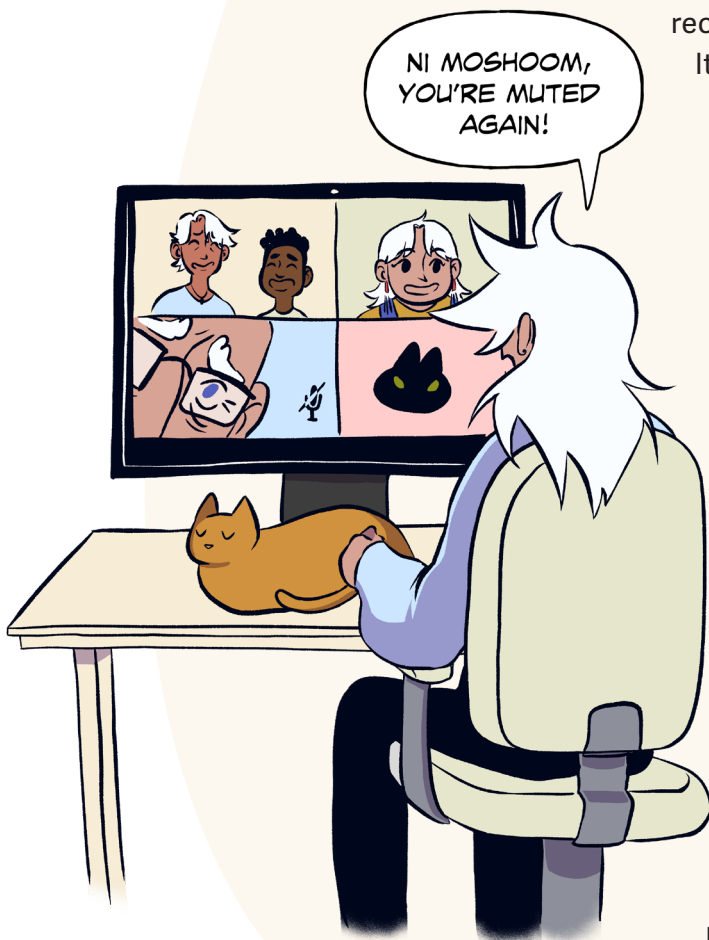
If you're familiar with some words or phrases, it is important to use these in the language you're trying to learn, also known as the *target language*.

For instance, to avoid using English in the home, many folks will label items in the home once they have learned it in the target language. This not only allows for a visual reminder of what the intended meaning is, but also encourages language use in the home.

Small activities like these can be a wonderful starting point for families to begin practicing and returning language into their home. These can be further expanded upon in the Family Planning Template within this document.

For folks who may have limited knowledge of our traditional languages, LRI has compiled a list of resources that can help you in your planning efforts and to begin partaking in language learning. It can be found at the end of this work and also online here. We ask that you email

metislanguages@lrilearn.ca for all additional inquiries. **Marsii!**



Family Language Planning Template

Retrieved and adapted from "Language for Life: Nourishing Indigenous Languages in the Home"
by Dunlop et al. (2019) for First Peoples Cultural Council

Family Language Planning Goals

Goals for the teaching family member(s) – e.g. parents, caregivers, roommates, grandparents:

Who: _____

Goals for learning focused family member(s) – e.g. partners, children, roommates, siblings:

Who: _____

Goals for everyone in the family together:



Activities

Activities we would like to learn in the home:

- We would like to learn how to be able to introduce ourselves...
- We would like to learn how read a story together...
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Places and spaces where we will focus learning in the home:

- We will focus learning at the kitchen table...
- We will focus learning in the living room...
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



When we will use the language in the home

1	Activity: <i>introductions</i>	Where: <i>kitchen table</i>	When: <i>Tues + Thurs evenings</i>	How often: <i>twice a week</i>
2	Activity: <i>reading a story together</i>	Where: <i>living room</i>	When: <i>before bed</i>	How often: <i>every other night</i>
3	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:
4	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:
5	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:
6	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:
7	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:
8	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:
9	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:
10	Activity:	Where:	When:	How often:



Resources that will help us achieve our goals

Resources:

- *Prairies to Woodlands Indigenous Languages Revitalization Circle Online Michif Course*
- *LRI's storybooks*
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What challenges may arise and how will we solve them?

Challenge	Solution
<i>We might not have access to all the words we need for certain activities...</i>	<i>Reach out to community through LRI, Facebook, etc. to ask to fill in the gaps! We will do our best in the meantime to practice using the language we do have access to.</i>



Further Reading:

Bruce, J., Chartrand, A., Coutu, L., Mikolayenko, D., Millar, P. (2016).

Michif French as spoken by most Michif people of St. Laurent.

McNally Robinson Booksellers.

www.mcnallyrobinson.com/9781772800487/et-al-bruce/michif-french

Dunlop, B., Gessner, S., & Parker, A. (2019).

Language for life: Nourishing Indigenous languages in the home.

First Peoples' Cultural Council.

fpcc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FPCC-LanguageforLife-190318-WEB.pdf

First Peoples' Cultural Council. (2023). Language revitalization planning toolkit.

language-toolkit.fpcc.ca

Prairies to Woodlands. (2021). Online Southern Michif course.

michif.org/online-course

Prairies to Woodlands. (2023). Michif talking dictionary: Li liivr di moo aañ Michif.

dictionary.michif.org/home



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