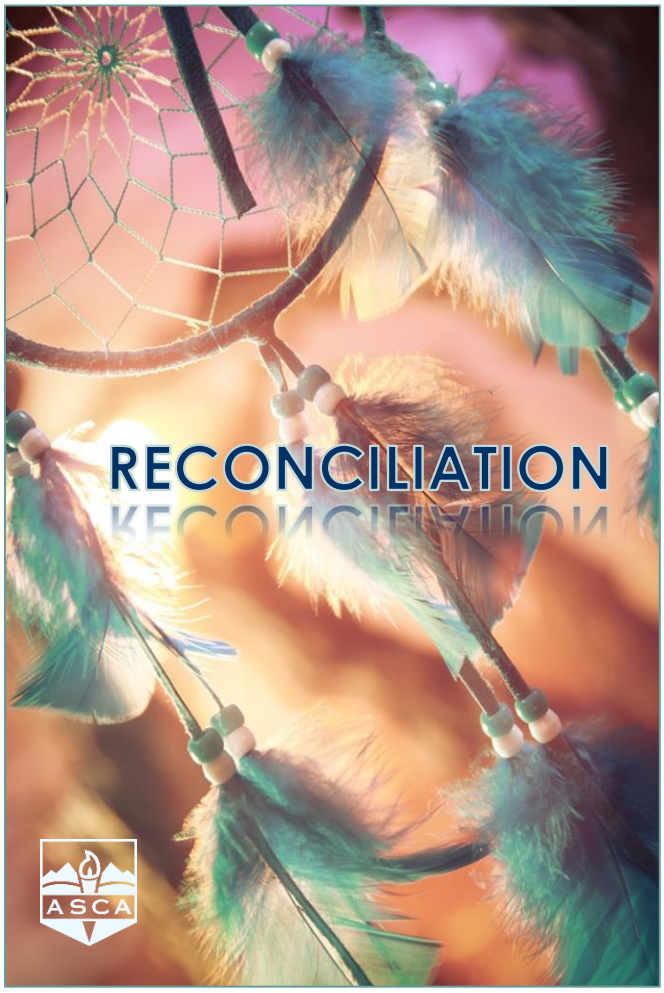
Alberta
School Councils' Association
Promoting parent engagement in public education

ADVANCING RECONCILIATION Resource for School Councils



The Alberta School Councils' Association is very proud to partner with many organizations to bring about awareness of the positive relationships being developed and actions being taken for reconciliation**,** such as including Indigenous history in our curriculum.

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) put forward 94 recommended "Calls to Action" that have been accepted by all levels of government across Canada.

Several of these are directly related to education, and as such are being diligently addressed by Alberta Education, and every school district in Alberta.

Through Alberta's *Joint Commitment to Action*, our province is leading the way in taking and being part of a movement in shifting cultural understanding and attitudes.

To encourage the path forward, Alberta School Councils' Association is developing resources for school councils to utilize in advancing reconciliation in their school communities.

Gaining knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit beliefs, traditions and practices results in an increased awareness and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories and perspectives and supports the process of reconciliation.

This resource is intended to build foundational knowledge with understandings of concepts, terms and information that can support a shift in thinking and attitudes to advance reconciliation.

Key areas for awareness and understanding First Nations, Métis and Inuit include:

- Terminology, the cultural diversity of Canada's constitutionally recognized Aboriginal peoples (linguistic, geographic, political)
- Perspectives, experiences and histories
- Treaties, territories and treaty relationships
- Forced assimilation and the legacy of residential schools
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations for education

The resources included in this document were developed by Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC) as a result of grants from Alberta Education to support implementation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit **Education for Reconciliation** in Alberta**.**

- **Explanation of Terms** (*Stepping Stones* is a publication of the Alberta Teachers' Association *Walking Together Project*)
- **Treaty Map of Alberta**
- **Alberta Treaties 6, 7, 8**
- **History of First Nation Peoples in Alberta**
- **History and Legacy of Residential Schools**
- **Overview of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**
- **Advancing Reconciliation: Relationships**

Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) Advancing Reconciliation

ASCA has incorporated "three simple steps" into our everyday practices – including territory acknowledgment in email messages, meetings, events, and at every workshop delivered – including virtual.

In April 2017, the Alberta School Councils Conference presented a Blanket Exercise for over 200 participants, and offered information sessions relevant to the TRC and education for reconciliation.

Regular participation in provincial committees, ASCA embraces learning and sharing First Nations, Métis and Inuit information. The ASCA website has an area dedicated to Indigenous awareness and resources, promoted with social media, and featured in our eNews distribution. ASCA Board of Directors and staff have participated in Indigenous Awareness Training and are committed to advancing reconciliation.

Three Simple Actions

There are some fairly simple things that each of us can do in our schools and our classrooms to inspire students to seek truth and live reconciliation.

1. Verbally Acknowledge Traditional Territory

Work with students to seek out the best way to acknowledge the traditional territory where they live and upon which their school stands. Start every morning by making a statement of acknowledgement in the classroom and have students take turns doing the acknowledgement.

Better yet, have students request that the daily school announcements begin with an acknowledgement of the people of the territory. School assemblies, gatherings and staff meetings should all begin with this verbal acknowledgement.

2. Fly the Flag

Every school has at least one flagpole in front of its buildings. For the most part, the flags that are honoured are those of Canada and the province. Every school in Alberta is located on Treaty 6, Treaty 7 or Treaty 8 territory.

As a start, fly the flag of the respective treaty area. From there, your school may decide that it should also fly the flag of the Métis Nation, a local First Nation or a neighbouring Inuit community if you are in the Canadian North.

3. Visually Acknowledge Truth, Territory and People

At the entry to a Canadian school, it should be clearly indicated that the members of that school community acknowledge the wrongs in our history perpetrated through education, and that they recognize the people of the territory.

This could be done by displaying ***Canada's statement of apology*** to former students of Indian residential schools, along with a visual representation of the Aboriginal people upon whose traditional territory we live.

These "little things" open the door to what may lie ahead. They are things we experience every day as we spend our time together in schools. They begin conversations, and from there the journey to reconciliation will grow.

*With gratitude to **Charlene Bearhead***
Charlene Bearhead, former education lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, is a mother, grandmother, experienced educator and innovator with 30 years of regional, national and international experience. She works to support the Alberta Joint Commitment to Action: Education for Reconciliation. Charlene sees reconciliation education as the key to respectful relationships in Canada.

Land Acknowledgements

The following acknowledgements of being on Treaty Lands are appropriate for a public gathering in specific areas:

Treaty 6

"I'd like to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux (So-toe), Blackfoot, Métis, Dene (De-nay) and Nakota Sioux (Sue). We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries."

Treaty 7

"I'd like to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Nations, including Siksika (Sick-sick-ah), Piikani (Pee-can-ee), and Kainai (Kigh-a-nigh), the Tsuut'ina (Soot- ina **a bit of a stop after the t), Nation and Stoney Nakoda First Nations. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries."

Treaty 8

"I want to acknowledge that we are meeting on Treaty 8 territory and we honour and acknowledge all of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who have lived, traveled and gathered on these lands for thousands of years."

Note *– it is acceptable practice to ask a host, or local Elder/Knowledge Keeper, for wording specific to a particular area within the Treaty land.*

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action for EDUCATION

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action.

Education

6. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.

9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.

10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.

ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.

iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.

iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.

v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.

vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.

vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.

11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.

12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Many Indigenous people prefer terms based on their specific community and traditional names for identification.

Aboriginal Peoples of Canada

- The first peoples in Canada and their descendants
- Includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit
- Each group is distinct and has its own history, culture, protocols, traditions and languages.
- Usually used as a term in government policy
- In November 2015, the Canadian government renamed Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development.

Bill C-31 Indian

- A person who gained or regained Indian status because of the *Act to Amend the Indian Act*, 1985
- Prior to Bill C-31, status Indian women lost their status, band membership and all associated rights when they married non-status men.

Ceremonialist

- A highly respected member of a First Nations or Métis community
- Recognized and identified by members of the community as being knowledgeable about spirituality and spiritual practices

  (*Guiding Voices* www.learnalberta.ca/content/fnmigv/index.html)

Elder

- A highly respected member of a First Nations, Métis or Inuit community
- Recognized and identified by members of the community as carrying important wisdom, oral traditions and knowledge of their culture
- An elder shares his/her understandings through teachings, ceremonies, stories and/or songs.
- Individual elders hold different gifts or talents.
- The role of an elder and the appropriate protocols for approaching an elder vary from community to community.
- An elder does not have to be a senior citizen; the carrying of knowledge and the recognition by the community are the key factors in determining who is an elder. (*Guiding Voices* www.learnalberta.ca/content/fnmigv/index.html)

Eskimo

- *Eskimo* is derived from the Cree word *Askipowak* meaning raw meat eaters. This term, however, is offensive to Inuit in Canada because it is viewed as derogatory and discriminatory.
- *Eskimo* is the commonly used acceptable term for Indigenous people of Alaska and is defined in American policy and legislation.

First Nations

- *First Nations* refers to status and non-status Indian peoples in Canada.
- Not a legal term; the Canadian constitution and legislation still use the term *Indian*
- Term used by the Assembly of First Nations (www.afn.ca/en/about-afn/description-of-the-afn)
- Refers to the over 617 distinct Indigenous groups in Canada
- Each Indigenous group has its own distinct culture, language, traditions and protocols.
- First Nation is also used to replace *band* when referring to communities.

FNMI

- An acronym for First Nations, Métis and Inuit used in many Alberta educational publications
- This acronym should not be used to refer to First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit peoples as it is considered offensive by many and often misunderstood.

Indigenous Peoples

- Term used globally to refer to the original inhabitants of any region
- Includes the three groups of Indigenous people in Canada: First Nations, Métis and Inuit

Inuit

- "The people" in Inuktitut language
- Inuit is plural and the singular form is Inuk.
- The Indigenous people in Northern Canada who live in Nunavut, the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador. Specifically, Inuit originated in the central and eastern Arctic and Inuvialuit originated in the western Arctic.

Knowledge Keeper

- A member of a First Nations, Métis or Inuit community
- Recognized and identified by elders of the community as being knowledgeable about cultural practices, products or world views (*Guiding Voices* www.learnalberta.ca/content/fnmigv/index.html)

Métis

- The Métis are one of three distinct Indigenous peoples in Canada recognized under the 1982 Canadian constitution and have a culture, language and traditions distinct from First Nations and Inuit.
- The historical term used to describe children born to First Nations women and European men; it has become the accepted term to describe all children born of First Nations women and European men.
- The Supreme Court of Canada identified three broad factors in determining who is Métis: self-identification, ancestral connection to the historic Métis community and community acceptance (http://albertametis.com/metis-rights/who-is-metis/).

Non-status Indian

- A First Nations person who is not registered or who has lost their status under the *Indian Act*

Status/Registered Indian

- A First Nations person who meets the requirements and is registered with the Canadian government under the *Indian Act*

Treaty Indian

- A status Indian whose ancestors signed a treaty (legal document between nations) with the Crown

NEXT STEPS

Educators always want to be respectful in their conversations and working relationships with people of a different culture. This includes using the culturally appropriate terminology when working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The terms defined in this fact sheet are general guidelines, and best practice is to confirm with the individual beforehand how they wish to be addressed. For example, one should not assume that an individual can be introduced as First Nation as they may prefer to be introduced using their band name.

WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE

TREATY 4

TREATY 6

TREATY 7

TREATY 8

TREATY 10

∞ Métis Settlements

MNA Regional Zones Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Association

Cities and Towns

MNA REGION 6

MNA REGION 5

MNA REGION 4

MNA REGION 1

MNA REGION 2

MNA REGION 3

Smith's Landing First Nation

Dene Tha' First Nation

Mikisew Cree Nation

Lake Athabasca

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

Beaver First Nation

Little Red River Cree Nation

Tallcree First Nation

∞ PADDLE PRAIRIE

Fort McKay First Nation

Lubicon Lake Nation (No Reserve)

Loon River First Nation

Peerless/ Trout Lake First Nation

Fort McMurray

Woodland Cree First Nation

Fort McMurray First Nation

Whitefish Lake First Nation (Atikameg)

Bigstone Cree Nation

∞ GIFT LAKE

Kapawe'no First Nation

Chipewyan Prairie First Nation

Duncan's First Nation

∞ PEAVINE

Sucker Creek First Nation

Lesser Slave Lake

Sawridge First Nation

Horse Lake First Nation

Grande Prairie

∞ EAST PRAIRIE

Swan River First Nation

Heart Lake First Nation

Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation

Driftpile First Nation

∞ BUFFALO LAKE

Beaver Lake Cree Nation

Cold Lake First Nation

∞ KIKINO

Whitefish Lake First Nation (Goodfish)

Kehewin First Nation

∞ ELIZABETH

Alexander First Nation

Michel First Nation

Saddle Lake First Nation

Frog Lake First Nation

Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation

Paul First Nation

Edmonton

Papaschase First Nation (Edmonton)

∞ FISHING LAKE

Enoch Cree Nation

Ermineskin Cree Nation

Louis Bull Tribe

Samson Cree Nation

Jasper

Montana Cree Nation

Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation

O'Chiese First Nation

Stoney Nation Big Horn (Wesley)*

Sunchild First Nation

Red Deer

Stoney Nation Chiniki (Morley)

Banff

Calgary

Siksika Nation

Tsuu T'ina Nation

Stoney Nation Bearspaw (Eden Valley)

Medicine Hat

Piikani Nation

Kainai Nation

Lethbridge

LANGUAGE GROUPING OF FIRST NATIONS IN ALBERTA

- Cree
- Dene
- Cree/Saulteaux
- Stoney/Nakoda/Sioux
- Blackfoot

*Although the Big Horn (Wesley) First Nation land is in Treaty 6 territory, it is a signatory of Treaty 7 and part of the Stoney Nation.

Note: This map shows the approximate area of treaty land as there is no consensus between rights holders and stakeholders about exact treaty boundaries.

Adapted from Alberta Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs

Walking Together EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION

The Alberta Teachers' Association

WHAT IS A TREATY?

A treaty is a binding agreement between sovereign states that outlines each party's rights, benefits and obligations.

Across Canada, there are 11 numbered treaties between the Crown and First Nations, with Treaties 6, 7 and 8 encompassing most of Alberta.

The two signatory groups had differing reasons for entering into these agreements.

The British Crown, and later the Canadian government, wanted land for agriculture, settlement and resource development, so Crown representatives signed treaties in order to transfer land title from the indigenous people to the British Crown, provisions for which had been set out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

For indigenous people, treaties were built on an assumption of respectful, co-operative and bilateral relationship, and their provisions were expected to last "as long as the sun shines, the grass grows." The First Nations in the territory now known as Alberta were concerned about the spread of disease, such as smallpox, and the dramatic disappearance of the bison, a main food source. They believed that signing the treaties would ensure the survival of their people.

All treaties included the surrendering of large parcels of land to the Crown, with small parcels set aside for reserve. In many cases, the treaties were very disadvantageous to First Nations people, who often didn't understand the implications of what they were signing. Much reserve land was lost to dishonest deals with government agents. Band councils that were struggling economically were often tricked into selling off some of their land or signed deals that resulted in the loss of mineral and natural resources on their land.

With the signing of treaties, many aspects of First Nations life, such as the nomadic following of buffalo herds, were changed forever. First Nations lost the power to determine their own future and to have an equal role in building the province.

Today, First Nations people view the treaties as a sacred covenant that applies to all the land in the treaty area, not just reserve land. "We are all treaty people" means we all have rights and obligations with respect to the treaty areas.

TREATY 6
1876

Treaty 6 was signed at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt in Saskatchewan by representatives of the Crown and leaders of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dene, Assiniboine and Ojibwa people. The treaty boundaries extend across central portions of present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan.

TREATY 7
1877

Treaty 7 was an agreement between Queen Victoria and several — mainly Blackfoot — First Nations in southern Alberta. The treaty was signed at Blackfoot Crossing on the Siksika Nation.

TREATY 8
1899

Treaty 8 was signed between Queen Victoria and various First Nations, including the Woodland Cree, Dunne-za (or Beaver) and Denesuline (Chipewyan) in northern Alberta and those in northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Saskatchewan and southern Northwest Territories.

Many First Nations were missed during the count for Treaty 8, which led to several land claims. Approximately 14 land claims have been settled and one is still ongoing — the Lubicon Lake Nation.

TREATY 4
1874

Treaty 4 covers the southern part of present day Saskatchewan with small portions in western Manitoba and southern Alberta. It was signed at Fort Qu'Appellle, Saskatchewan on September 15, 1874. No First Nations from present day Alberta signed Treaty 4.

TREATY 10
1906

Treaty 10 covers the present day areas of northern part of Manitoba, northeastern Saskatchewan and a small portion of east central Alberta. The fist signing of Treaty 10 was at Ile-a-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan on August 28, 1906. No First Nations from present day Alberta signed Treaty 10.

MÉTIS

The advent of the fur trade in west central North America during the 18th century was accompanied by a growing number of offspring of First Nations women and European fur traders. As members of this population established distinct communities separate from those of First Nations and Europeans and married among themselves, a new aboriginal people emerged — the Métis people — with their own unique culture, traditions, language (Michif), way of life, collective consciousness and nationhood.

— Source: Métis Nation of Canada

The Canadian Constitution Act 1982 recognizes the Métis as one of three distinct aboriginal groups in Canada.

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Walking Together EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION

The Alberta Teachers' Association is committed to supporting teachers in treaty education through the Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation Professional Learning Project. For more information about Treaty 6, Treaty 7, Treaty 8, Métis or Inuit people, or the services and resources available through Walking Together, please visit www.teachers.ab.ca > For Members > Professional Development > Walking Together.

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Conversation Guide

Alberta Treaties 6, 7, 8

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of "truth' that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the indigenous community. Consult the *Advancing Reconciliation* Conversation Guide.

References

Numbered Treaties
https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1360948213124/1360948312708

The Role of the Indian Agent
http://www3.brandonu.ca/cjns/17.2/cjnsv17no2_pg227-258.pdf

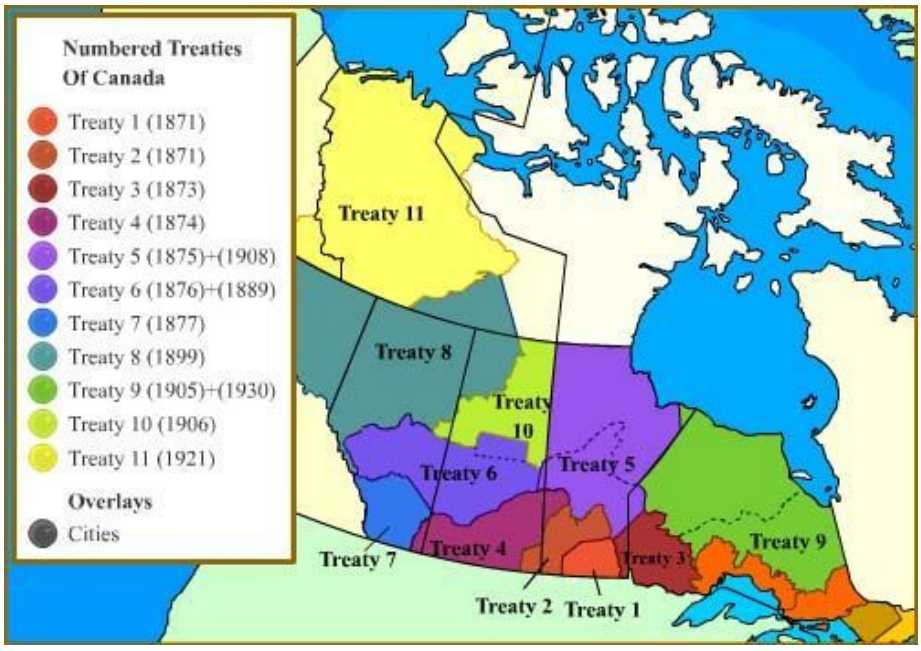
Essential Terminology
https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Terminology%20%20%28PD-WT-16a%29.pdf

Numbered Treaties

In Canada, treaties are legal documents made between the First Nation peoples and the Crown. Prior to Confederation, treaties were signed by the British Crown and the First Nation people. Early contact treaties primarily concerned issues of peace and friendship.

In 1876, the *Indian Act* was passed, giving the Department of Indian Affairs the authority to create policy in regard to "Indian matters," including managing land, setting up elected band councils as governing bodies on reserves and helping to "civilize" the people.

There are eleven "Numbered Treaties" that were signed between 1871 and 1921. The government thought the treaties would help to assimilate First Nation peoples into white, colonial society and culture. To First Nation peoples, treaties were oral agreements that discussed sharing the land. These oral agreements were later written by the government, omitting certain oral promises. Oral tradition and the spoken word held more importance to First Nation peoples than what was written on paper. First Nation groups of Alberta and government representatives understood the process of treaty negotiation and signing from very different perspectives.



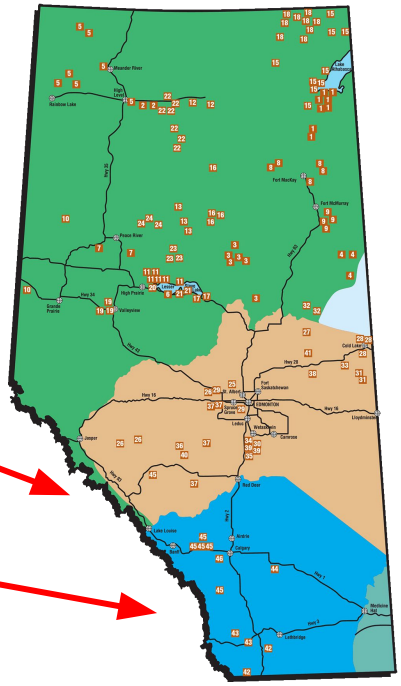
Acknowledgement:
This guide was developed by the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium to support implementation.

Numbered Treaties in Alberta

Treaty 8 was signed in 1899.

Treaty 6 was signed in 1876.

Treaty 7 was signed in 1877.

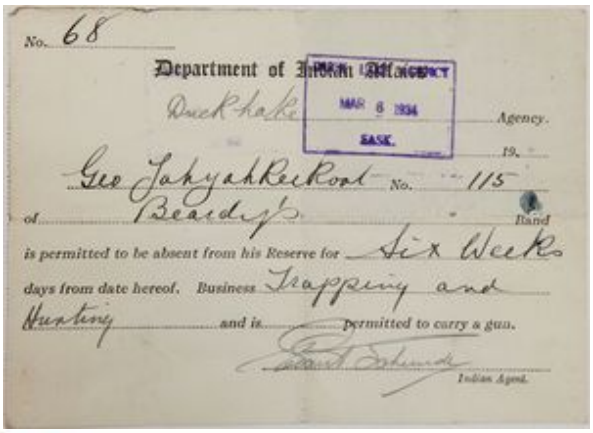


The Role of the Indian Agent

Much reserve land was lost to dishonest deals by the Indian agents. These agents were assigned to Indian reserves and bands and attempted to act as a liaison between the Government and First Nation communities. Indian Agents played a large role in the governing of reserves and communities after the making of treaties.

Indian Agents were hired by the Department of Indian Affairs, which was created in the 1880s. Indian Agencies controlled a number of different bands and reserves within a geographical boundary. For example, one agency might oversee three different reserves. The Blood reserve was considered so large that it was seen to need its own agency within the community. The Indian Agents were individuals who ran an Agency, which could have several employees including farming instructors, clerks, ration issuers and interpreters.

When the position of Indian Agent was first established in the 1870s, their role was to ensure social control and social transformation of First Nations groups. Indian Agents had the power to recommend a Chief be removed from council; to enforce (or disallow) attendance at residential schools; to enforce leaving and entering the reserve, which included moving; to allow cultural and spiritual practices; to define who was in need of rations; or to act as a justice of the peace in dealing with legal matters.



No. 68

Department of Indian Affairs

Duck Lake Agency.

MAR 8 1934 SASK.

Geo Jahyah Reed Road No. 115

of Beardy's Band

is permitted to be absent from his Reserve for Six Weeks

days from date hereof. Business Trapping and Hunting and is permitted to carry a gun.

Indian Agent.

The pass system was implemented in 1885. First Nation peoples living on a reserve had to carry a pass, approved by the Indian Agent, that stated their reason for being off the reserve and how long they would be gone.

Permit from Indian Agency in Duck Lake Saskatchewan allowing a First Nations man to leave the reserve for hunting purposes. Dated 1934.

Acknowledgement:
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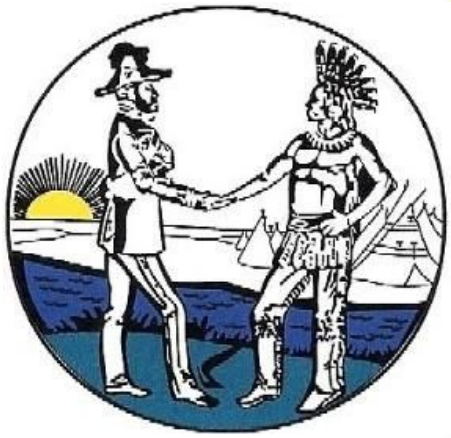
Treaty 6



- Signed at Fort Carlton in 1876 and at Fort Pitt a few months later. Additional signings occurred in 1877-1882, 1889, 1950-1956. Adhesions were signed in 1877, 1944, 1950. Adhesions were often imbalanced in favor of the Europeans.
- 50 Nations signed this treaty, including Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota and Dene Peoples.
- At the original signing, approximately 2000 First Nation people came to witness the event.
- It was agreed that a medicine chest, or "health care," would be maintained by the Indian Agent for use by the band. This medicine chest was often a wooden box containing limited medical supplies. Assistance would be provided in times of famine and pestilence, such as small-pox, measles and influenza.
- Once bands had been surveyed, the treaty signatories would receive a supplement of $1000 per year to assist in the cultivation of the land for the first three years. The promise of free education was written in the treaties.

Signed by,
Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris, James McKay, Indian Commissioner, WJ Christie and head chiefs of the Carlton Indians: MIS-TO-WA-SIS (X his mark); AU-TUK-UKKOOP (X his mark); and chiefs: (all signed with X) PEE-YAHN-KAH-NICHK-OO-SIT; AH-YAH-TUS-KUM-IK-IM-AM; KEE-TOOWA-HAW; CHA-KAS-TA-PAY-SIN; JOHN SMITH; JAMES SMITH; CHIP-EE-WAY-AN and councillors. (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).

Above: Mayor of Edmonton Don Iveson and the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations

Left: Treaty 6 medals presented to Michel Calliou (Callihoo) in Calgary in 1878 upon signing an adhesion to Treaty 6.
Courtesy of the Musée Héritage Museum

Acknowledgement:
This guide was developed by the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium to support implementation.

Treaty 7

Prior to this signing, smallpox epidemics were killing communities, the buffalo was starting to diminish mainly due to the mass slaughter of buffalo on the prairies by non-Indigenous groups to make room for the railroad and settlement.

- Treaty 7 was signed in 1877 in southern Alberta at Soyoohpawahko, or Bowfoot Crossing.
- Five Alberta First Nations signed the treaty, including the Kanai (Blood), Siksika (Blackfoot), Piikani (Peigan), Nakoda (Stoney) and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee).
- There were 4000 First Nations people present to witness the negotiations and signing.
- This treaty did not include the medicine chest clause, the famine clause and assistance with cultivation clause. Treaty 7 signatories wished to concentrate their agricultural efforts on ranching. With this in mind, the treaty commissioners agreed to reduce the amount of the agricultural implements and seed stock in exchange for an increased number of cattle, with an exception for some bands who wanted to focus on farming.
- In another significant difference from Treaty 6, Treaty 7 states that the Crown would pay for teachers' salaries instead of the maintenance of school buildings. Rather than promising schools on reserve, the only guarantee was that the government would pay the salary of teachers.

Signed by,
DAVID LAIRD, Lieutenant-Governor of North West Territories and Special Indian Commissioner JAMES F MACLEOD, Lieutenant Colonel, NWMP and Special Indian Commissioner CHAPO-MEXICO, or CROWFOOT, Head Chief of the South Blackfeet MATOSE-APIW, or OLD SUN, Head Chief of the North Blackfeet STAMISCOTOCAR, or Bull Head, Head Chief of the Sarcees MEKASTO, or RED CROW, Head Chief of the South Bloods SOOTENAH or RAINY CHIEF, Head Chief of the North Bloods SAKOYE-AOTAN or HEAVY SHIELD, Head Chief of the Middle Blackfeet ZOATZE-TAPITAPIW, or SETTING ON AN EAGLE TAIL, Head Chief of the North Peigan MAS-GWA-AH-SID or BEAR'S PAW CHE-ME-KA, or JOHN KI-CHI-PWOT or JACOB (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).

Treaty 7 is seen as unique as there was only 5 Nations that signed. In Treaty 8 there was 24 nations, and 50 nations in Treaty 6.

Blood Tribe
Population: 13,000
Language: Blackfoot

Tsuu T'ina Nation
Population: 2,500
Language: Dene Suline

Piikani
Population: 4,000
Language: Blackfoot

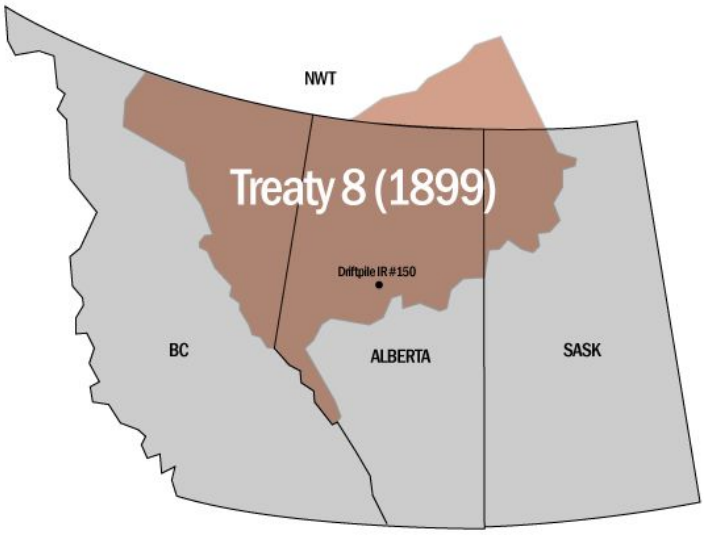
Siksika Nation
Population: 7,500
Language: Blackfoot

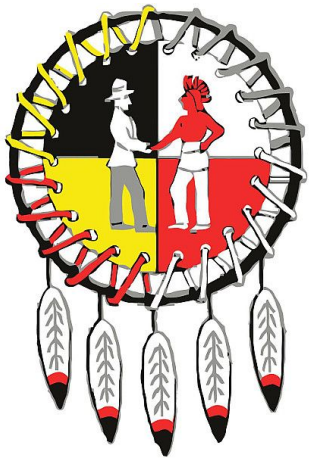
Stoney Tribe
Chiniki, Wesley, Bearspaw
Combined Population: 5,500
Language: Nakoda

Acknowledgement:
This guide was developed by the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium to support implementation.

Treaty 8

- Signed at Lesser Slave Lake in 1899
- 24 Alberta First Nations signed the treaty.
- Adhesions were signed in 1900, 1905, 1911, 1913.
- Over 840,000 square kilometers of land was set aside; this is the largest land area covered by a numbered treaty.
- In 2000, the Tsek'ehne of McLeod Lake were officially brought into Treaty 8.





Prompted by the discovery of valuable resources in Canada's north, particularly the Klondike gold rush, this treaty involved First Nations who had a social organization that was different than those of any other Indigenous peoples the government had previously encountered. The terms and implementation of Treaty 8 differ because of their more northern location. Some of these clauses hold long-lasting consequences for governance and the peoples of that area.

Treaty 8 had some marked differences from other treaties. The primary addition in Treaty 8 were provisions for individuals who chose to live outside the band. These individuals would receive 160 acres, known as "lands in severalty." This was a response to populations that were not as concentrated in the North. Farm stock, implements and a suit of clothing for chiefs every third year was a unique clause in Treaty 8.

Signed by,
David Laird, Treaty Commissioner; J.A.J. McKenna, Treaty Commissioner; and J.H. Ross, Treaty Commissioner. The chief was: KEE-NOO-SHAY-OO and his mark (X); the Headman were (and they all marked their signatures with an "X"): MOOSTOOS; FELIX GIROUX; WEE-CHEE-WAY-SIS; CHARLES NEE-SUE-TA-SIS CAPTAIN (headman for Sturgeon Lake) (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).

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Myths and Facts about Treaties

MYTH: "Europeans just came and took the land."
FACT: British law in Canada *required* treaties to be negotiated before any settlement in the west could occur. Many First Nation groups entered into treaties because they saw it as the only way their people would survive. First Nation groups may have wanted to sign treaties for many reasons; however, many communities signed out of desperation. The disappearance of the buffalo had created mass starvation. Smallpox and European diseases were killing the masses and they needed health care. First Nations did not have "formal education" and saw treaties as a means to survive in a white world.

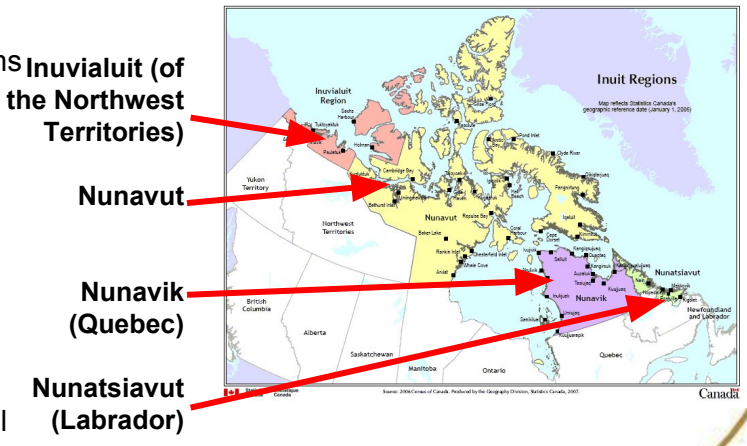
MYTH: "All treaties are the same."
FACT: The general form and scope of the agreements are similar, but the individual circumstances of the treaties resulted in unique clauses. Each treaty is a reflection of the parties' goals and hard-fought desires. All Alberta treaties are comprised of all the usual terms, such as giving 640 acres per family of five for reserve land.

MYTH: "Indigenous People get free money."
FACT: It was agreed upon in each treaty of Alberta that all treaty members (those who signed a treaty) would receive $5 every year. This is called a treaty annuity. In order to honour obligations set out in the treaties, individuals who are "treaty" still get $5 per year. Despite inflation, this amount has not changed since 1899.

MYTH: "The Métis and Inuit were included in the treaties."
FACT: The Métis and Inuit were not included in the signing of the numbered treaties. The Métis did not sign treaties with the Crown. As a result, Métis did not have reserves or lands reserved for them. Métis people were offered "scrip," which was designed to extinguish Métis title. Scrip was a certificate that could be exchanged for land (land scrip) or for money to buy land (money scrip). For more information see *Conversation Guide: Métis in Alberta (Part 2).*

The Inuit did not sign treaties. Based on the wording of Section 91 (24) of the *British North America Act of 1867*, which stipulated federal responsibility for "Indians" and no other Aboriginal group, the Inuit were considered "regular citizens." Therefore, Inuit people fell outside the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs. Canadian Inuit are represented by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), which translates to "Inuit are united in Canada." ITK was established in 1971 to help bring the Inuit of Canada together in asserting their rights to sovereignty and governance over traditional Inuit lands.

Although there are no "treaties" signed with Inuit, they have signed five modern land claims with the Government of Canada as early as 1975 (*James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*). Each Inuit region in Canada has organizations responsible for land claims implementation.The four Inuit regions in Canada are collectively known as *Inuit Nunangat*. This Canadian Inuit term refers to land, water and ice. Inuit consider the land, water and ice to be the homeland and integral to their culture and way of life.



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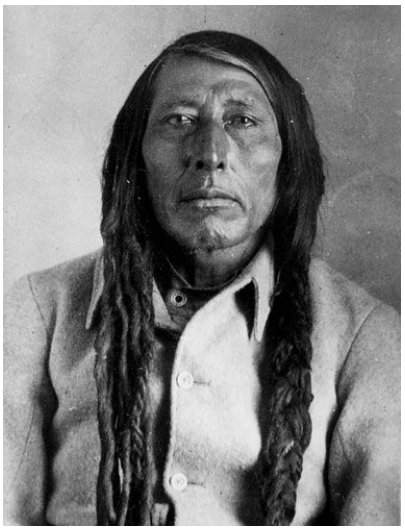
MYTH: "All Indigenous people are 'treaty' people."
FACT: There were many groups that were not considered "treaty Indians." If you belonged to any of these groups (described below) you were considered a non-status Indian, which meant that you would not have a recognized land base and would have to spend years fighting for the rights to your original land that was once home to your ancestors.

Not everyone wanted to sign a treaty. Some were left out entirely in treaty negotiations and signing and some were not consulted and were forced away from their homeland. Some First Nations bands were not present at the original negotiations and signed at later dates in adhesions to treaty 6, 7 or 8.



Pîhtokahanapiwiyin (c.1842-4 July 1886), better known Poundmaker, later a Chief, peacemaker and advocate for Indigenous rights

- In Treaty 8, Conroy reported that the Fort St. John Indians were reluctant to adhere to the treaty. He noted that "the Indians at this place are very independent and cannot be persuaded to take treaty...they did not want to take treaty...and had no trouble in making their own living." This group was admitted into treaty adhesions years later.
- In 1907, the Canadian Government signed an Order In Council that set aside land to establish the now popular Jasper National Park. The Mountain Métis were forced to leave in 1909 and 1910. The authorities seized guns and families had to flee and settle far from home. Their descendants now reside in Edson, Hinton and Grande Cache. The families included Lewis Swift, the four Moberlys-Ewan, Adolphus, William and John, as well as Isadore Findlay and Adam Joachim.
- Poundmaker, who was a brave and not a chief at that time, spoke up and said, "The Government mentions how much land is to be given us. He says 640 acres, one mile square for each band. He will give us, he says." In a loud voice, he shouted, "This is our land, it isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It is ours and we will take what we want."

MYTH: "The Chiefs and signatories understood what they were signing, as did the Government Agents."
FACT: Treaty negotiation required translators. Weak translation and omissions caused confusion and misunderstanding about the promises and their meanings for the First Nation people. Oral promises made during negotiations were often not included in the final written treaties. It was also important to the signing Chiefs that the sacred pipe be involved. In the presence of the pipe, only the truth must be used and any commitment made in its presence must be kept. In that sense, the only means used by the Indians to finalize an agreement or to ensure a final commitment was with use of the pipe. It is undocumented whether the Government Agents truly understood or respected the presence of the pipe in this agreement. First Nations had never been exposed to written agreements, nor did they understand the written English language. They were instructed to sign the letter "X" as a way of showing that they "agreed" to the treaty.

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Conversation Guide

History of First Nation Peoples in Alberta

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of "truth' that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the indigenous community. Consult the *Advancing Reconciliation* Conversation Guide.

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A Long History

First Nations history in Alberta dates back at least 11,000 years and approximately 500 generations.The Milk River that runs through Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park in Alberta contains the largest concentration of First Nation *petroglyphs* (rock carvings) and *pictographs* (rock paintings) on the great plains of North America. Evidence like the rock carvings and a 10,000 year old spearhead found in Athabasca prove a lengthy and well-established way of life for the First Nations in Alberta.

First Nation Life Before the Arrival of Europeans

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, the land provided the First Nations with everything they required for their mental, physical, spiritual and emotional well being. Everything in nature was seen as living; therefore, First Nation peoples respected and took care of the land around them. The land took care of the First Nations by continually growing herbs and plants for healing and providing the wildlife they needed to survive. First Nations people had established independent and organized societies across the continent prior to contact with Europeans. Many, although not all, pre-contact First Nations thrived on a matrilineal system that placed women in leadership roles and were involved in much of the decision making. Oral storytelling is how First Nations' knowledge and history was preserved and shared from generation to generation.

Pre-Contact Alberta

First Nations in Alberta prior to European contact included the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikuni (Peigan) and Gros Ventre (now in Montana). Other groups, including the Kootenay and the Crow, made expeditions into the land to hunt buffalo and go to war. The Tsuu T'ina, a branch of the Beaver, occupied central and northern parts of the land, while the north was occupied by the Slavey.

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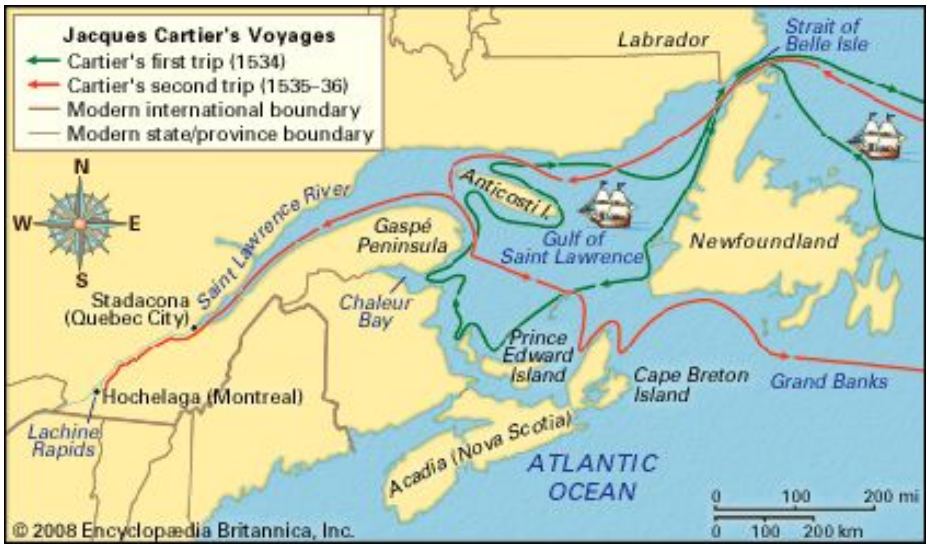
Early Contact with First Nations

Some speculate that men from England reached Newfoundland as early as the 1480s, predating Columbus's voyage of 1492. The only hard evidence points to John Cabot's English expedition of 1497 as the first known voyage to mainland North America in the new era of overseas discovery. A French explorer named Jacques Cartier arrived in 1534. He made three voyages to Canada in eight years. On his first voyage, he entered and explored the Gulf of St Lawrence. On his second, he followed the St Lawrence to the Iroquoian townships of Stadacona (Québec) and Hochelaga (Montréal). The Iroquois in this area explained that the river stretched three months' travel to the west. For the first time, Europeans had some idea of the vastness of the land. Although Cartier did not find the "great quantity of gold, and other precious things" mentioned in his instructions, he did locate the gulf's abundant fisheries and the mainland's furs, tempting Europe's commercial interests.



Over the next three centuries the French, British and other European settlers would continue to prosper from the fisheries and the fur trade in the east. Through many wars and battles that involved land and the establishment of colonies, settlers and explorers gradually started to move further west.

Westward Expansion

Canada West grew rapidly because of steady immigration from England, Scotland, Ireland and the United States. Many newcomers cleared the forests, cut lumber and worked the rich soil. Increasing demands for land forced people to look further to the west for settlement.

With the fur trade in decline, the British government and leaders in British North America became interested in the agricultural potential of the prairies. In 1867, the Dominion of Canada was created. In 1870, Canada purchased Rupert's Land and the North West Company from the Hudson's Bay Company, labelling the entire western and Arctic region the North-West Territories. In 1874, Canada began asserting its presence in what would become Alberta, sending the North West Mounted Police across the prairies to present-day Lethbridge to establish Fort Macleod. In 1875, the Mounties built forts in present-day Calgary and Edmonton. The Canadian Pacific Railway reached Calgary in 1883.

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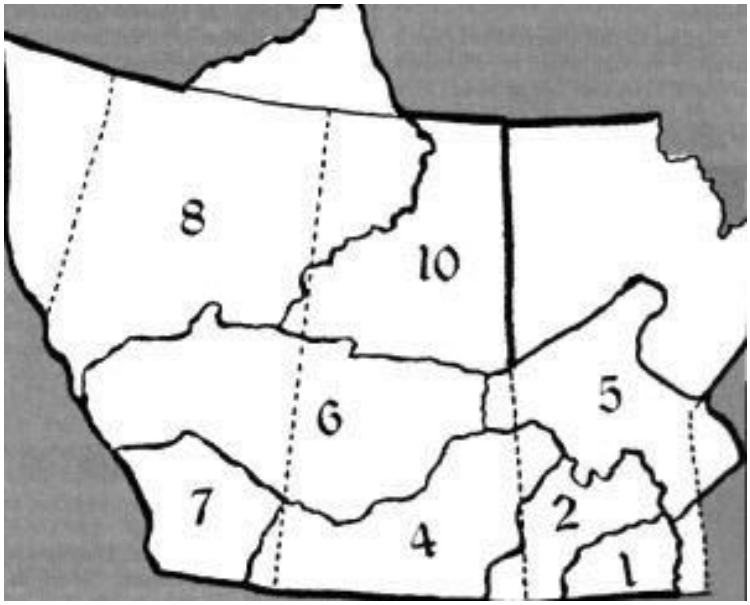
Numbered Treaties

The Numbered Treaties were a series of 11 treaties made from 1871 to 1921 between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples. The government thought the treaties would help to assimilate Indigenous peoples into white, colonial society and culture. The First Nations viewed the treaties as a way to negotiate the sharing of their traditional territories.

Treaty-making was so important that opening and closing ceremonies were part of the process and people travelled long distances to arrive at the negotiation locations to witness the event. In exchange for their traditional territory, government negotiators made various promises to Indigenous peoples, including special rights to lands, the distribution of cash payments, hunting and fishing tools and farming supplies. These terms of agreement vary by treaty and are controversial and contested. Treaties still have ongoing legal and socioeconomic impacts on Indigenous communities. Alberta Treaties 6, 7 and 8 were signed between 1876-1899. For more information, see the *Alberta Treaties 6, 7, 8 Conversation Guide.*



(Left): Numbered treaties in the prairies.

Confederation and First Nation People in Alberta

Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier met with other government officials and drew up a bill to unify the districts of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Assiniboia, and Athabasca. After further considerations, it was decided that the proposed province would be too big to unify.

This area was then split into Alberta and Saskatchewan and Canada adopted the *Alberta Act* on September 1, 1905. The creation of Alberta did not greatly changed the lifestyle for the First Nations in the new province. First Nations were still the responsibility of the federal government. The *Constitution of 1867* made the federal government responsible for “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians.” The *Indian Act* of 1876 also made “Indians” wards of the federal government. The original inhabitants of Alberta were not asked to participate in politics and were left out of much of the political negotiations dealing with land or laws. First Nations people were finally allowed to vote in provincial elections in 1969.

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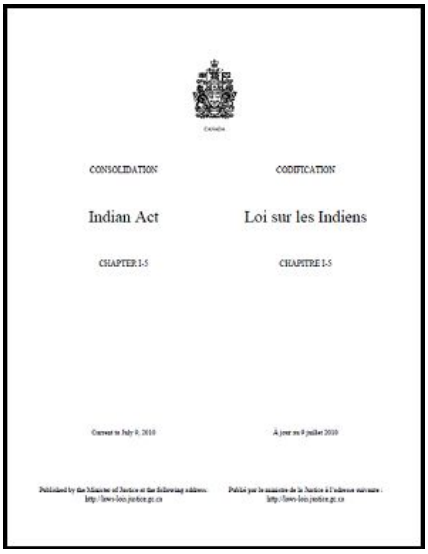
Assimilation Policies

The signing of the treaties and the implementation of the *Indian Act* were not the first attempts to assimilate First Nation people into white society. The government started to impose harsh restrictions on First Nations people long before the 1800s. Each policy and written law that was created was essential to assimilating First Nations into society. Language, land use, educational practice, traditional ceremonies and spiritual practices were all directly affected by the policies throughout the years. Following are some examples.

1847 Report on Native Education proposes that the separation of children from their parents would be the best way to achieve assimilation. In this report, Egerton Ryerson, Superintendent for Education recommended that First Nations education should focus on religious instruction and agricultural training.

1857- The *Gradual Civilization Act* is part of a the government's efforts to use policy to assimilate Indigenous peoples to the economic and social customs of European settler society.

1876: The *Indian Act* gives the Department of Indian Affairs authority to create policy in regard to "Indian matters" by determining status, managing land, setting up elected band councils as governing bodies on reserves and helping to "civilize" the people. Indian Agents were appointed to assert policy on reserves, including the implementation of the pass system in 1885. First Nation peoples living on a reserve had to carry a pass, approved by the agent, that stated their reason for being off the reserve and how long they would be gone.



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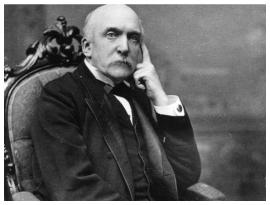
Indian Act | Loi sur les Indiens

CHAPTER I-5 | CHAPITRE I-5



1879: The Davin Report Sir John A Macdonald sends Nicholas Flood Davin to meet with U.S officials to discuss their strategy on the education for First Nations children. He made recommendations regarding how the American "boarding school" model could be implemented in Canada to assimilate First Nations children. This was the birth of most Residential schools in Canada.

1892-1996: Residential Schools operate as late as 1996. Residential schools eventually became compulsory and attendance was strictly enforced. In the early years, children were involuntarily taken from their families and did not return until the summer months. Children as young as five were sent and were not free from the system until they were in their teenage years. Children were forced to abandon their languages, their ceremonies, their family life and their traditional way of living. Life at residential schools was difficult, with most children later disclosing horrific encounters at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's seven national events across Canada. Alberta had the most residential schools in Canada.

1969: The "White Paper" is proposed by Prime Minister P. Trudeau to dismantle the *Indian Act*, ending the special legal relationship between Aboriginal People and Canada and moving responsibility for Aboriginal issues to the provinces. This was met with strong opposition from First Nations across the provinces, who thought the federal government was absolving itself of historical promises and responsibilities. In response, Trudeau withdrew the White Paper in 1970 and angrily stated: "We'll keep them in the ghetto as long as they want."

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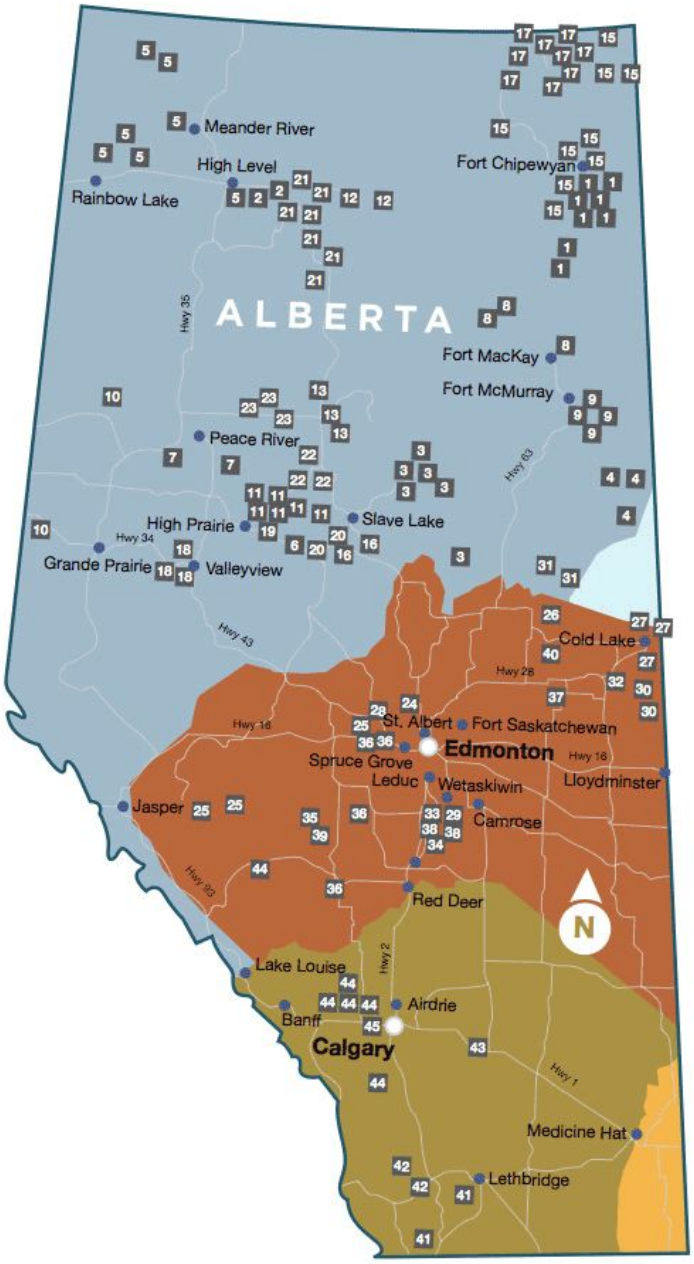
Contemporary Indigenous Alberta

Today, there are 46 First Nations within Alberta. The most commonly spoken First Nations languages are Kainai (Blackfoot); Cree; Chipewyan; Dene; Sarcee; and Stoney (Nakoda Sioux).

There are three treaty areas (6,7 and 8) in Alberta, with Treaty 4 covering a small portion of southeastern Alberta and Treaty 10 covering a small portion of east-central Alberta. For more information, see the *Alberta Treaties 6, 7, 8 Conversation Guide.*

There are eight formal Métis settlements in Alberta. For more detailed information, see the *Métis in Alberta Part 1 and Part 2 Conversation Guides.*

First Nation Communities in Alberta



First Nations in Alberta

1. Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
2. Beaver First Nation
3. Bigstone Cree Nation
4. Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
5. Dene Tha' First Nation
6. Driftpile First Nation
7. Duncan's First Nation
8. Fort McKay First Nation
9. Fort McMurray First Nation
10. Horse Lake First Nation
11. Kapawe'no First Nation
12. Little Red River Cree Nation
13. Loon River First Nation
14. Lubicon Lake Indian Nation (no reserve)
15. Mikisew Cree First Nation
16. Sawridge Band
17. Smith's Landing First Nation
18. Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation
19. Sucker Creek First Nation
20. Swan River First Nation
21. Tallcree First Nation
22. Whitefish Lake First Nation (Atikameg)
23. Woodland Cree First Nation
24. Alexander First Nation
25. Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation
26. Beaver Lake Cree Nation
27. Cold Lake First Nations
28. Enoch Cree Nation
29. Ermineskin Cree Nation
30. Frog Lake First Nation
31. Heart Lake First Nation
32. Kehewin Cree Nation
33. Louis Bull Tribe
34. Montana First Nation
35. O'Chiese First Nation
36. Paul First Nation
37. Saddle Lake First Nation
38. Samson Cree Nation
39. Sunchild First Nation
40. Whitefish Lake First Nation #128 (Goodfish Lake)
41. Blood Tribe
42. Piikani Nation
43. Siksika Nation
44. Stoney Tribe
    - Bearspaw (Eden Valley)
    - Chiniki (Morley)
    - Wesley (Big Horn)
45. Tsuu T'ina Nation

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Conversation Guide

History and Legacy of Residential Schools

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Getting to the Truth

There are many misconceptions about residential schools. Before reviewing the timeline of events related to residential schools, it is important to understand that residential schools were not just about "educating the Indian." Residential schools were more about eliminating a rich and vibrant culture and forcefully assimilating the Indigenous culture into a white, European culture. Earlier historical information about residential schools has often overlooked the fact that residential schools were the result of government created policies aimed at "getting rid of the Indian problem". It is by reviewing and understanding the various components of assimilation and their related policies that we truly get a sense of the atrocity of residential schools in Canada.

Civilizing the Savage

As the British began setting up new colonies across Canada, new perspectives were emerging throughout the British Empire about the role the British would play in relation to Indigenous peoples. This new perspective brought about Eurocentric beliefs and placed the Indigenous people in an inferior position to the rest of settler society. There was always a strong desire to bring "civilization" to the Indigenous people. The British believed it was their duty to bring Christianity and agriculture to First Nations. Indian agents accordingly began encouraging First Nations to abandon their traditional lifestyles and to adopt more agricultural and sedentary ways of life. As we now know, these policies were intended to assimilate First Nations into the larger British and Christian agrarian society. Starting in the 1820s, colonial administrators undertook many initiatives aimed at "civilizing" First Nations.

What is Assimilation?

The process of assimilation was to absorb Aboriginal people into white society. The ultimate intent of assimilation was the destruction of Aboriginal society and culture. The British believed the only way to deconstruct Indigenous identity and assimilate the Indigenous people was through enfranchisement, the *Indian Act* and education.

What is Enfranchisement?

The *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857, sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples (then referred to as "Indians") by encouraging enfranchisement. Under the *Act*, a debt-free, "educated Indian," who was of "good moral character," could apply for a land grant from the federal government.

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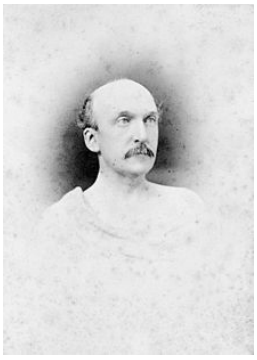
If an Indigenous person became enfranchised, they were expected to relinquish their treaty rights and Indian status. These were then replaced by land parcelled out for homesteading and voting privileges. Voluntary enfranchisement meant that Indigenous individuals consented to the abandonment of Indigenous identity and communal society in order to merge with the "free" non-Aboriginal majority. There were, in fact, relatively few enfranchisements over the years and this policy was seen as unpopular and a failure.

The *Indian Act*

The *Indian Act* of 1876 gave the federal government complete control over the lives of First Nation people. The *Indian Act* was based on the premise that it was the Crown's responsibility to care for and protect the interests of First Nations. It would carry out this responsibility by acting as a "guardian," until such time as First Nations could fully integrate into Canadian society. The *Act* gave greater authority to the federal Department of Indian Affairs. The Department could now intervene in a wide variety of internal band issues and make sweeping policy decisions, such as determining who was an Indian. The *Indian Act* was a consolidation of previous policies; its intention was to continue the assimilation process. The *Act* violated human rights and created social and cultural disruptions for generations. Under the *Act*, the Department also managed Indian lands, resources and moneys; control access to intoxicants; and promote "civilization." The legislation became increasingly restrictive, imposing ever-greater controls on the lives of First Nations. The *Indian Act* does not pertain to the Métis or Inuit.

The *Act* is still in effect today and has been amended several times, most significantly in 1951 and 1985, with changes focusing on the removal of particularly discriminatory sections. The *Indian Act* is one of the most frequently amended pieces of legislation in Canadian history. It was amended nearly every year between 1876 and 1927.

In the 1880s, the government imposed a new system of band councils and governance, with the final authority resting with the Indian agent. The *Act* forced the abandonment of traditional ways of life, introducing bans on spiritual and religious ceremonies, such as the potlatch and sundance.



The Davin Report (1879 Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half Breeds)

Following the organization of the Department of Indian Affairs and *Indian Act* in 1876, the attention of the federal government became focused on the education of Indigenous children. Sir John A. MacDonald, then Prime Minister, commissioned a study of the Industrial Boarding schools in the United States. MacDonald hired Nicholas Flood Davin to look further into the American schools and prepare a report. Davin was impressed with the schools and recommended the funding of four schools in the west: the first at Prince Albert to be operated by the Episcopalian Church; one at Old Bow Fort to be operated by the Methodists; another at Qu'Appelle to be operated by the Roman Catholics; and the last at Riding Mountain to be run by the Presbyterian Church. Davin also recommended that parents who cooperated and sent their children would receive extra rations and that students who showed "special aptitudes or exceptional general quickness" should be offered special advantages. Davin reported that in the United States, Indian Education was used as a vehicle to force assimilation. Davin was impressed with this model and found such "boarding schools," as they were called, to be effective in "deconstructing young Indians."

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Education

The implementation of the *Indian Act* led to the establishment of church-operated residential and industrial schools. Church groups and federal government authorities started to take control of First Nations' education as early as the 1880's. Indian Affairs saw residential schools as a primary vehicle for "civilization" and "assimilation." Through the schools, First Nations children were to be educated just like other Canadian children. However, they did not receive the same education and were forced to abandon their traditional languages, dress, spirituality and lifestyle. To accomplish these goals, a vast network of 132 residential schools was established across Canada by the Catholic, United, Anglican and Presbyterian churches,in partnership with the federal government. More than 150,000 Aboriginal children attended residential schools between 1857 and 1996.

A Timeline of Events

1831 Mohawk Indian Residential School opens in Brantford, Ontario; it will become the longest-operating residential school, closing in 1969.

1847 Egerton Ryerson's study of Indian education recommends religious-based, government-funded industrial schools.

1892 Federal government and churches enter into a formal partnership in the operation of Indian schools. Before long, the government began to hear many serious and legitimate complaints from parents and native leaders: under-qualified teachers, emphasis on religious zeal, allegations of physical and sexual abuse. The ongoing outbreaks of tuberculosis at the schools took a toll on students' lives. Children were malnourished and physically weakened, making them susceptible to more disease.

1907 The government responds to growing complaints by sending Indian Affairs' Chief Medical Inspector P.H. Bryce to assess conditions. In his official report, Bryce called the tuberculosis epidemic a "'national crime' … [and] the consequence of inadequate government funding, poorly constructed schools, sanitary and ventilation problems, inadequate diet, clothing and medical care." He calculated mortality rates among school age children ranging from 35 percent to 60 percent. Parts of his incriminating report were suppressed by Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, who then terminated the position of Medical Inspector. Instead, Scott termed disease in the schools a "final solution to the Indian Problem."

1920 Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott makes residential school attendance compulsory.

1944 Senior Indian Affairs officials argue for a policy shift from residential to day schools.

1969 Partnership between government and churches ends; government takes over residential school system and begins to transfer control to Indian bands.

1970 Blue Quills is the first residential school to be transferred to band control.

1996 The last residential school – Gordon Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan – closes.

2006 Government signs the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement with legal representatives for Survivors, AFN, Inuit representatives and church entities.

2008 Truth and Reconciliation Commission is launched.

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The Métis Experience in Residential Schools

Children from Métis homes were not always admitted to residential school in the same ways that First Nations were. Special policies were created by the department of Indian Affairs on how to admit Métis or “Halfbreed” children, if they would be allowed to be admitted at all. The Department would categorize the “Halfbreed Children” according to three “classes” of “Halfbreeds” and would instruct residential school administrators to admit only those that were of a certain class. Métis children remember being the “outsiders” to the residential schools. In some cases told they were too “white” for the “Indian Schools” or in other cases told they were too “Indian” for the provincial school system. Métis education was not covered by treaty or a federal department so Métis attendance often came at a cost to Métis communities, the schools or the churches.

“In them days there was no bus, no nothing, we had to walk through the bush three or four miles to go to school and when we did get there… you won’t get in, in the morning, if you’re too early. We had to have our lunch outside… we sat outside and our lunch was frozen. We were outsiders; they called us ‘externs’, whatever that meant.” *-Forgotten: The Métis Residential School Experience*

The Inuit Residential School Experience

While residential schools existed in Canada since 1831, it was not until the 1950s that a significant number of these church-run and federally or provincially funded schools were operating in the Canadian North. This was because before 1939 Inuit were not considered "Indians" and therefore did not fall under federal jurisdiction. On April 5, 1939, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled that Inuit were Indians according to the *British North America Act of 1867*, and therefore subject to the *Indian Act*. This made Inuit health, welfare and education a responsibility of the federal government, although Canada was reluctant to take on this role.

In Labrador, many young Inuit attended residential schools in communities far from their homes, and shared many of the devastating experiences all across the Canadian Arctic that were common to students of the Indian Residential School System. In the Northwest Territories, prior to 1955, less than 15 percent of school-aged Inuit children were enrolled in residential schools.

By 1964, the number of school-aged Inuit children attending residential school had increased to over 75 percent. Some children started school as young as four or five, others were teenagers; some attended for a short time while others spent their entire youth in the Residential School System. Many students only saw their parents once a year. Some were unable to return home for years at a time, because of the difficulty and expense of northern travel by plane or boat, and the great distances they had to travel just to go to school – sometimes in other provinces and territories. In fact, even today, 90 percent of Canadian Inuit communities are only accessible by air.

As Survivor Peter Irniq recounts, "We weren’t able to communicate with our parents for the entire nine months that we were in Chesterfield Inlet. Inuit were forbidden to speak their own language or practice any aspect of their culture in the schools, dormitories, hostels and other residences. Furthermore, Inuit children were made to feel ashamed of their traditional way of life, and many acquired disdain for their parents, their culture, their centuries-old practices and beliefs and even for the food their parents provided.

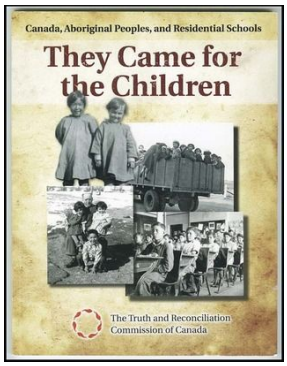
-We Were So Far Away

Acknowledgement:
This guide was developed by the Alberta Regional Professional Learning Consortium to support implementation.

Survivor Stories

On Transportation to School

"The size of the group increased as we went from reserve to reserve. It was not uncommon to have up to 40 children ranging in age from 5 to 16 piled in the back of the truck." -George Peequaquat



All survivor stories are from They Came for the Children *unless noted otherwise.*

On Arrival

Students were stripped of their clothing (never to be seen again) and roughly bathed.

On First Impressions

"The school seemed enormous with marbled floors and ceilings, and hallways about two hundred feet long. It smelled strongly of disinfectant, and our voices echoed when we spoke. The whole place looked cold and sterile; even the walls were covered with pictures of stern-looking people in suits and stiff collars." -Raphael Ironstand

On Education

"When we couldn't get our additions and subtractions right, I remember her using the whip on our knuckles. I remember my knuckles being black and blue and sore." -Pauline Arnouse

In 1912, a federal Indian agent wrote that teachers tended "to devote too much time to imparting religious instruction to the children as compared with the imparting of secular knowledge."

Keeping good teachers was an ongoing problem. Public school teachers in the West earned $500-$650 per year compared to residential school teachers who earned $300 per year.

On Clothes

Children were given a new wardrobe – often used and ill-fitting. Even though her Grandmother had made her warm winter clothing, Lillian Elias was not allowed to wear it at school.

On Hair

"I remember my head being shaved and all my long hair falling on the floor." -Alphonse Janvier *They Came for the Children: pg. 22.*

Charlie Bigknife recalls being told, after his hair had been sheared off "Now you are no longer an Indian."

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On Identity

Children were assigned numbers that corresponded to their clothes, their bed and their locker. “The nuns used to call ‘39’, or ‘3 where are you?’ Or ‘25, come here right now!”

“I was number one hundred and sixteen. I was trying to find myself; I was lost. I felt like I had been placed in a black garbage bag that was sealed. Everything was black, completely black to my eyes and I wondered if I was the only one to feel that way.”

Ermineskin (Hobbema) Indian Residential School. Source: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

On Names

Christian identity required the imposition of new names. Pemutewithinew became James Hope, Masak became Alice, Ochankugahe (Path Maker) became Daniel Kennedy.

On Siblings

Boys and girls were strictly segregated. Raphael Ironstand did not see his sister for the rest of the year. “I still remember her looking apprehensively over her shoulder as she was led away.”

“I remember seeing my brother in the back of the class. I went to talk to him and he was really nervous. He said, ‘Don’t come over and talk to me.’ I asked, ‘why’ and he said ‘you’re not supposed to.’ I told him ‘why you are my brother’ and right away I was taken to the front of the class and I was given the ruler on the palm of my hands.

On Religion

“All we ever got was religion, religion, religion. I can still fall on my knees at seventy-two years of age and not hurt myself because of the training and conditioning I got.” -Solomon Pooyak

Religion was the fourth “R” and was of greater importance than reading, writing or arithmetic.

On Hunger

“Hunger is both the first thing and the last thing I remember about that school…” -George Manuel

“I always felt hungry. We didn’t get big helpings of food. There wasn’t much variety.” -Mable James

“At dinnertime, we’d have some kind of mush, a stew of some sort, a pudding and a slice of bread, no butter. At suppertime, we’d have the same kind of mush and some vegetables.” -Maggie Shaw

“I missed the roast moose, the dried beaver meat, the fish fresh from a frying pan, the warm bread and bannock and berries.” -Mary John

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On Work

For most of their history, residential schools depended on students labour to survive. Until the 1950s, the schools ran on what was called the “half-day system,” Under this system, the older students spent half a day in class, while the other half was supposed to be spent in vocational training. In reality, this training often simply amounted to free labour for the school. The girls prepared the meals, did the cleaning and made and repaired much of the students clothing. The boys farmed, raised animals, did repairs, ran tailor shops and made and repaired shoes. In many cases the students were not learning, but performing the same laborious tasks again and again.

On Discipline

In 1896, an Indian agent said the behaviour of a teacher at the Red Deer school “would not be tolerated in a white school for a single day in any part of Canada.” The agent was so alarmed by the teacher’s behaviour that he kept a boy out of school for fear he would be abused.

Bedwetting was treated cruelly. Abraham Ruben had terrible nightmares on his first night at Residential School. In the morning, he found he had wet his bed. When a nun discovered what he had done, Ruben said she slapped him in the face, and called him “a dirty pig.”

Runaways were subject to punishment and humiliations. One principal tied the hands of a group of runaway boys together and made them run behind his buggy back to the school. In other cases, runaways were shackled to their beds at night.

St. Mary’s Indian Residential School
http://archives.algomau.ca/main/book/export/html/24019

On Sexual Abuse

WIthin a week of arrival at residential school, Greg Murdock was raped by a group of older boys. When he reported the assault to the school's staff, the boys beat him and subjected him to another assault. He simply stopped reporting further abuse.

The sexual and physical abuse of students by staff and other students represents the most extreme failing of the residential school system. In an underfunded, under-supervised system, there was little to protect children from predators. The victims often were treated as liars or troublemakers. Students were taught to be quiet.

On Language

The ban on Indigenous languages created tremendous confusion and tensions among the students. Many of the students did not speak English when they entered the schools and could not possibly understand what was expected of them. For others, speaking the native tongue was a form of resistance – a way to hide from the school staff their true emotions and thoughts. But the schools usually responded to the use of native languages forcefully. *Stolen Lives Pg. 1*

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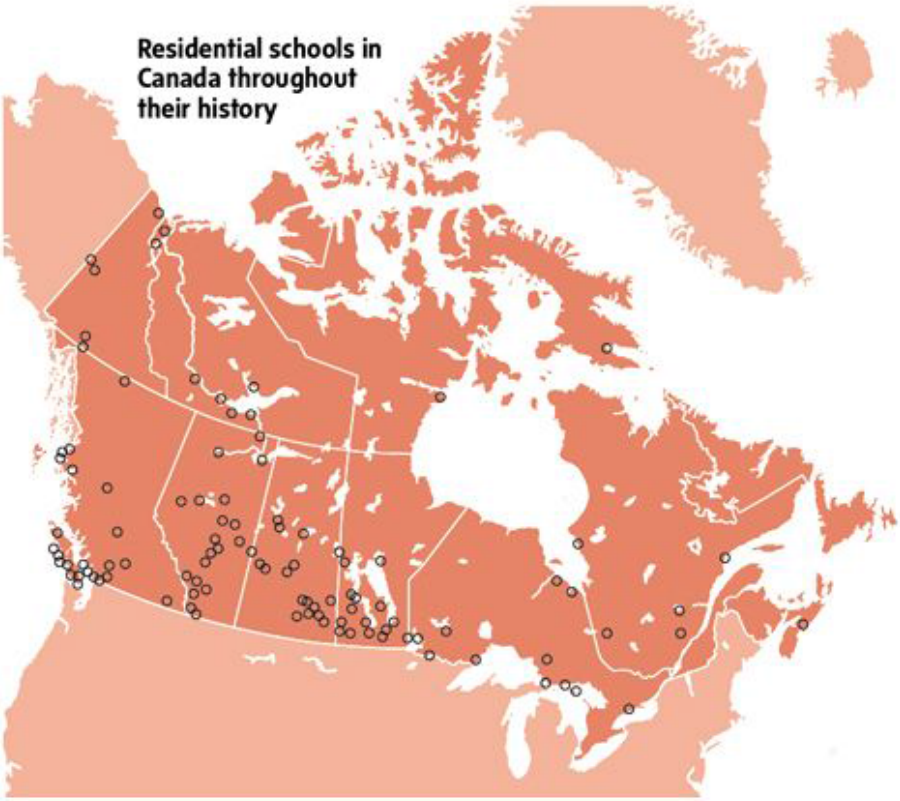
Residential School Locations



SOURCE: ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

This map represents the original 130 Indian Residential Schools included in the 2007 *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement* (seven institutions were added through Article 12 by Canada and the two schools which were added by the courts, bringing the total number of recognized schools to 139). Alberta had more residential schools than any other province. Each school in Alberta was different depending on the location and the religious affiliation. Sixteen were Roman Catholic, 3 were the United Church, and 7 were Anglican.

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Conversation Guide

Overview of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of "truth" that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the indigenous community. Consult the *Advancing Reconciliation* Conversation Guide.

References

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

What is Reconciliation?
https://vimeo.com/25389165

How to be an Ally to Indigenous People
http://ipsociety.ca/how-to-be-an-ally-to-indigenous-people/

FAQ on Being an Indigenous Ally
http://redrisingmagazine.ca/faq-on-being-an-indigenous-ally/

Truth and Reconciliation Timeline

Sept, 2007 Canada's largest class action settlement, the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, is signed between the federal government, church organizations and survivors of the schools.

June 1, 2008 As a requirement of the Agreement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is launched to inform Canadians about the residential school system and abuses.

June 11, 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other party leaders deliver a formal apology in the House of Commons to survivors.

June 2010 The TRC holds the first of its seven national events. The events invited survivors to share their stories about the schools and their legacy. The events included:

- Statement Gathering
- Traditional Ceremonies
- Survivor Gatherings
- Education Day
- Witnessing Survivor Statements
- Cultural Performances
- Films

Each TRC National Event was dedicated to one of the Seven Sacred Teachings – love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth.

The seventh and final national event was held in Edmonton on March 27-30th 2014.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

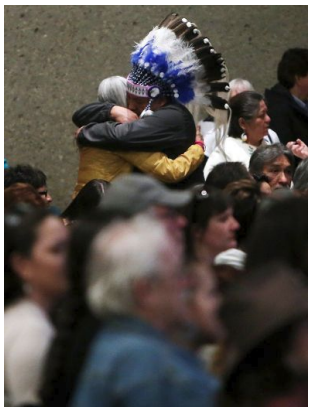

Photo Source: The Edmonton Examiner 2014

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Feb. 24, 2012 The Commission issues its interim report under the heading “Lack of Cooperation,” based on the federal government's hesitation in disclosing documents.

Jan. 30, 2013 Justice Stephen Goudge rules that Canada must disclose its records to the Commission in a useful archival format.

June 21, 2013 The University of Manitoba agrees to host the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. As the permanent home for all statements, documents and other materials gathered by the TRC, the NCTR ensures that:

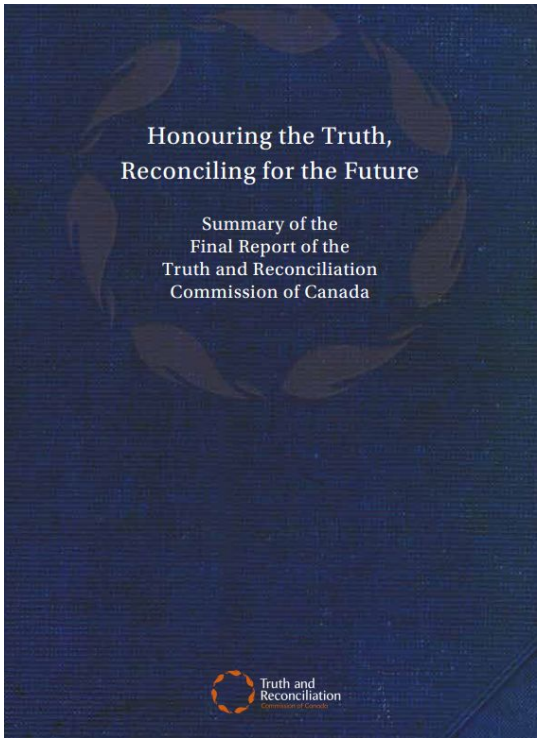
- Former students and their families have access to their own history
- Educators can share the Indian Residential School history with future generations of students
- Researchers can more deeply explore the Residential School experience
- The public can access historical records and other materials to help foster reconciliation and healing
- The history and legacy of the residential school system are never forgotten.

National Centre *for* Truth *and* Reconciliation

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Jan. 14, 2014 Ontario Superior Court of Justice rules that Canada and the OPP must disclose investigative records related to St. Anne’s residential school, where staff received criminal convictions for abusing students.

June 2015 The TRC releases its final report. A comprehensive historical record on the policies and operations of the residential schools. The TRC is dissolved, passing all its records to the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.



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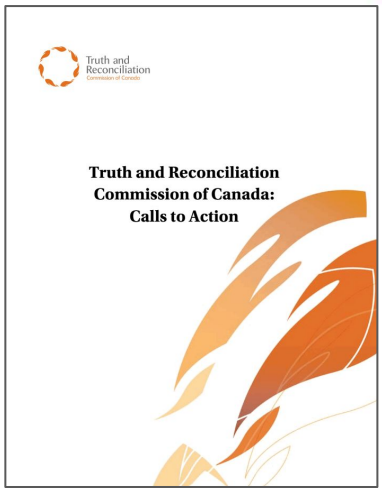
June 2015 From the Final Report, the Calls to Action are created.

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes 94 calls to action. Calls to action 7, 11, 16, 62, 63, 64 and 65 are directly related to education.

This essential document urges all levels of government – federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal – to work together to change policies and programs in a concerted effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and move forward with reconciliation.



Become an Ally

"Becoming an ally to Indigenous people often has uncomfortable moments where we are confronted by the racism of the world around us, and our own outdated beliefs from our upbringing. In a world of entrenched belief systems evolved from our histories, there is often not a lot of support from communities from all backgrounds. It takes initiative and courage, and these actions are essential for leading with integrity as we step into the future.

Allies need to take on the task of social transformation, and share the responsibility of ensuring we move into a future built on integrity, good relationships, and trust."
Source: *How To Be An Ally to Indigenous People*

Some *Do's* and *Don'ts* for being an Indigenous ally follow:

Do's

- Check in with those you know who are also allies, asking questions like "is this helpful?"
- Make sure you talk about your engagement as an ally in ways that are not self-glorifying. Acknowledge the Indigenous leaders around you who allowed that work to happen.
- Expect challenges, as colonialism casts a heavy shadow that frames all of our interactions. It will take time for trust to be developed and it can take time for you to be recognized as an ally. Eventually because of your repeated listening, showing up and being supportive you'll not only make great activist connections but also great friends.
- Still take care of yourself – a burnt out frustrated person may not be an ally anyone wants. Have realistic expectations and make realistic promises for what you can do. Find ways to help that are a fit for you and feel free to recruit others.

Don'ts

- Make it an Indigenous person's job to direct all your behaviours.
- Be an ally only when it's convenient.
- Take up all the speaking time or speak on behalf of Indigenous people,
- Get comfortable. You WILL be continuously challenged by the experiences of Indigenous peoples. Acknowledge that racist language might be heard in privileged circles.."

Source: *FAQ on being an Indigenous Ally*

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Conversation Guide

Advancing Reconciliation: Relationships

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of "truth' that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the indigenous community.

References

Elder Protocol and Guidelines
https://cloudfront.ualberta.ca/-/media/ualberta/office-of-the-provost-and-vice-president/indigenous-files/elderprotocol.pdf

Reconciliation Process

Truth is an imperative piece in the reconciliation process. The intent of studying each conversation guide is to learn the "truths" necessary to engage in meaningful conversations with the Indigenous community.

To the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reconciliation is about **"establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples."**

Part of the reconciliation process involves reaching out to communities, Elders and knowledge keepers close to local schools and creating space for those important relationships. These relationships can begin with a request that a community member come to a meeting or event at the school. However, it is important to note the word "maintaining" in the definition above. Mutually respectful relationships can involve going out to the community and planning a visit in a setting close to members of the Indigenous community, such as their homes or coffee shops.

This guide provides some tools that are necessary to build relationships in a culturally respectful manner. It also shares additional topics that have not been covered in other conversation guides.

Ways of Knowing

There are many components of Indigenous culture and history that are difficult to summarize with words. Part of this difficulty is embedded in the sacredness of many nations' protocols and experiences as well as the distinct and unique identity of Indigenous cultures in Alberta. These conversations are often best had with community members, an Elder, a traditionalist or a knowledge keeper.

This guide provides topics that address some of these challenges and can lead to interesting conversations that are more difficult to provide with paper or in a formal professional learning session.

It is important to understand who can be contacted and the steps that are involved. What is the proper protocol for inviting an Elder to an event? What should be considered before starting these conversations?

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Making Connections

1. Contact the school's Indigenous Education Coordinator or Indigenous Liaison Worker first, as these individuals have the best connections to community. Some districts have established their own Elder Committee.
2. If the school does not have someone assigned to this role, contact the closest Indigenous community. Call the band office (phone numbers are listed on the website) and ask if they have someone who works specifically in community relations. Some communities have their own Elder Coordinator who creates programming and activities in the community. This person can be an effective contact. A request for support can also be made to the Band Office.
3. Alternatively contact a Band School in the closest community with the request.
4. Other options for connecting with Elders and community are a local Friendship Centre, Native Counselling Services of Alberta or Métis Nation offices. Most educational partners and stakeholders, as well as Indigenous educators, are willing to provide support with requests.

Inviting Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Community Members

Examples of appropriate events or activities to invite Elders, knowledge keepers and community members include:

- Starting an event with a prayer or ending the event in a prayer.
- Leading a ceremony such as a smudge, a pipe ceremony or a sweat lodge.
- Assisting or leading a workshop such as storytelling, drum-making, cultural awareness, etc.
- Gifting sashes or feathers to students at graduation or special events.
- Sitting in during/after a Blanket Exercise and participating in the sharing circle.
- Sharing survivor stories. Many of Elders today are residential school survivors. Some believe that a part of their own healing is to share, while others are not comfortable sharing. For those who express their experiences in story, it is always advisable to have emotional support for the Elder. An Elder attendant, family member or friend should come with the Elder to provide this emotional support.
- Acting as an Elder in Residence. An invitation can be extended to an Elder for events such as Orange Shirt Day, National Aboriginal Day or Reconciliation Week. It is a positive experience to be with an Elder, as their presence can be comforting. If they are invited to *just be a presence* for students and staff, ensure they are aware of this intention. Use an invitation such as, "We invite you to come and enjoy our special day. It would be such an honour to have you come and witness the kids take part in the festivities. We are celebrating _____ and it would be wonderful to have your company during this special event."

Who is an Elder?

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation describes an Elder as "someone who is considered exceptionally wise in the ways of their culture. They are recognized for their wisdom, their stability, their humour and their ability to know what is appropriate in a particular situation. The community looks to them for guidance and sound judgement. They are caring and are known to share the fruits of their labours and experience with others in the community." (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2005, p. 4) (*Elder Protocol and Guidelines, University of Alberta, 2012).-See Reference 1 for "Essential Qualities of an Elder"*

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Communicating with Other Community Members

If the individual you are speaking with is not considered an Elder and is a Knowledge Keeper or a member of the Indigenous community (on-reserve member, off-reserve member, Indigenous educational consultant, Indigenous author or guest speaker) then instructions will be provided accordingly at the end of each explanation.

Inviting an Elder

Most Elders accept tobacco when they are asked to share their knowledge. However, this is not true for everyone. Elders have diverse teachings or may not have the unique skills that fit a request. It is very important to be specific when making a request. If the Elder accepts the tobacco (protocol), s/he is accepting the request and will do her/his best to help. If they cannot respond to a request, they will say so and will not accept the tobacco.(*Elder Protocol and Guidelines, University of Alberta, 2012).*

It is always best if the request can be made in person. However, if distance or time does not permit an in-person request, the Elder can be called on the phone. Be very specific and indicate that protocol will be given on the day of the meeting/event. Ask if they prefer tobacco or tea. Some Elders, more prominently in the North, prefer to be given tea. Find out about dietary concerns or special requests if they are attending an event. ***The same protocol should be followed with a Knowledge Keeper or community member. If they are being asked to share their gift of knowledge or wisdom, then tobacco can be presented.***

What kind of tobacco should you buy?

Loose tobacco or pouch tobacco can be purchased at most gas stations. Any brand can be selected. Organic leaf tobacco can also be purchased from online retailers. *See For More Information.*

A larger pouch wrapped in fabric can be offered when a community member is coming to the school for an event. It can also be given to a ceremonialist when a ceremony such as a sweatlodge is attended.

Smaller bundles can be made for more informal meetings like meeting at a coffee shop or asking an Elder a question in an impromptu setting. These bundles can also be given at Elder's gatherings and meetings.

Unplanned opportunities to speak with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper can occur at meetings or events. If no tobacco has been prepared, a single cigarette is acceptable as a way of showing gratitude.

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Gifting

If the Elder agrees to be involved in an event and accepts the tobacco, it is customary to provide a gift of appreciation afterwards to show thanks. This gift can be monetary and is also known as an honorarium. For internal auditing purposes, it is acceptable to ask Elders for their Social Insurance Numbers and address and to sign a receipt as acknowledgement of receipt of a gift of appreciation.

Historically, Elders were given food, clothing and other necessities in exchange for their help, and therefore, monetary gifts are now acceptable (*Elder Protocol and Guidelines, University of Alberta, 2012).* Along with a monetary honorarium, Elders appreciate blankets, tea and jams, art made by students, flowers or gift cards for food and coffee. ***The same protocol should be followed with a Knowledge Keeper or community member. If they are asked to share their gift of knowledge or set aside time, they may be presented with an honorarium and a gift.*** *If the individual works for an organization and is an educational professional, then a monetary honorarium is not necessary; a gift is acceptable.*

Travel

A financial reimbursement of expenses or incurred costs in connection with the Elder's involvement (i.e., travel, food, accommodations) should be offered to the Elder under a separate travel claim (*Elder Protocol and Guidelines, University of Alberta, 2012).*

The Elder should be asked if s/he would like assistance filling out the forms. ***The same protocol should be followed with a Knowledge Keeper or community member. If they are asked to share their gift of knowledge and have to travel, they should be reimbursed for travel expenses.*** *If the individual works for an organization and is an educational professional, then a reimbursement is not necessary because their organization may provide expenses.*

Hosting a Community Member

When hosting a community member, ensure that a student or staff is assigned to host the guest and can accompany the guest from room to room. This person can be responsible for giving a tour, showing the guest where restrooms are, ensuring that they have a comfortable seat, bringing coffee, tea or water and a plate of food. It is important to ask if they would like assistance or if they prefer to do things themselves.

Provide a comfortable environment. If an Elder needs assistance walking, plan accordingly. It is preferable to have the event in a space that does not have many stairs or requires extended walking to the event.

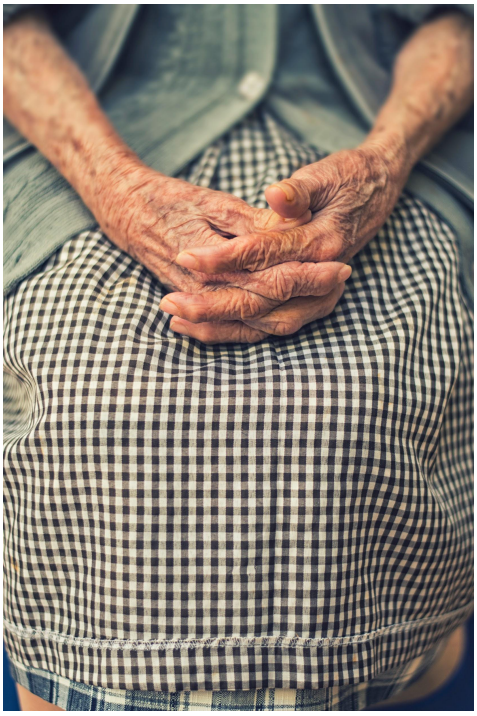

Photo by Christian Newman

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Elders Helper/Apprentice

Sometimes Elders come with their own helper or apprentice (known as *oskapew* in Cree) (*ah-skahp-pee-oh*). An oskapew is different from an attendant because an oskapew assists the Elder in the preparation of a ceremony (for example, a pipe ceremony). If the Elder has their own oskapew, this person should be fairly compensated. An attendant is an individual who looks after an Elder and whose duties may include arranging transportation to and from a venue, greeting and introducing the Elder, and offering comforts that elderly people may require, such as a restroom, quiet resting place, food and drink (*Elder Protocol and Guidelines, University of Alberta, 2012).* The oskapew and Elder attendants should be acknowledged at a meeting or event.

Meals

Offering food and beverage is a way of showing respect in many cultures, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. Elders should be asked if they have any dietary needs or preferences. Coffee and tea should be ready and can be brought to them. If it is a full day event, ensure there are plenty of snacks and provide lunch.

Meeting an Elder or Community Member at Homes or Coffee Shops

An Elder or community member can be met in their homes or another setting, such as a coffee shop. These types of meetings can help develop a relationship and enhance professional learning.

1. Bring tobacco to offer as you meet and express gratitude for the Elder's or community member's willingness to meet. The Elder or community member will be sharing their stories and teachings. They are providing a gift (knowledge, time, wisdom and friendship).
2. Buy the coffee or tea if you are at a restaurant. Accept tea or coffee if the Elder or community member makes some.
3. A gift is not necessary, but it is always appreciated.

Conversations with the Indigenous Community

The conversation should be the focus of the meeting. If a conversation is shared with colleagues, and answers are recorded in writing, the community member should be informed. A recorder can facilitate attentive listening to the conversation.

Develop a comfort level with awkward silences and be patient for responses, as it can take time to come up with the best response. A good rule to follow in these situations is more listening and less talking. *Some teachings are passed down through ceremony and stories. Some people will be able to share their experiences and others will not feel that they have the right to do so.*

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Conversation Starters with Elders

The following sample questions can assist with starting a conversation with an Elder. Variations of these questions may also be asked and answers may lead into other topics. Community conversations are most effective when they are natural. The sample questions are intended to be conversation starters and not interview questions.

Reciprocity

To most Indigenous people, reciprocity is heavily taught and practiced. It is important to be generous and give back to your community and others who provide support. Youth are always taught to respect their elders and give to anyone in need. Reciprocity is not about giving tangible items; it is giving time and love and sharing gifts. This is also shown by giving back to the Earth. When something is taken from the Earth, tobacco is offered first as a way of showing respect for the gifts Mother Earth has to share.

Sample Question: How was reciprocity (generosity) taught to you? What do you want children to know about reciprocity?

Oral tradition/Language

Engaging children in story is one way that Indigenous communities have taught their people. Indigenous languages are not traditionally written and read. Aside from observation, speaking the language were the only way to transfer knowledge from generation to generation. Fluent speakers describe conversations in their language as carrying different emotions and meanings. For example, stories in Cree are much more humorous to fluent speakers than hearing the same story in English.

Sample Question: Are you fluent in your language? Why is it important that Indigenous youth learn their language?

Symbolism

Various cultures use different symbols to enhance their understanding of the world around them. For example, the peace sign is a symbol of peace and the heart is a symbol of love. The yin and yang symbol or “shady side” and “sunny side” makes connections between contrasting components and leads to interconnectedness. For Indigenous cultures, the circle is a symbol that represents many components of traditional life. It is a symbol of balance, connectedness and infinity. The Four Directions are also an integral teaching that connects back to the circle.

Sample Question: Is there a specific symbol that you were taught about while growing up? Were symbols like the Medicine Wheel or the Four Directions important to your family?

Ceremony

Ceremony can be explained as an event or practice that is sacred to Indigenous people. Examples include sweatlodge ceremonies, smudging ceremonies and pipe ceremonies. These are very sacred ways of connecting back to culture, the Earth or the Creator. Sometimes, even talking about ceremony is very private and so sacred that it cannot be shared.

Sample Question: I am trying to understand the importance of ceremony in Indigenous culture. Are there parts of ceremony that you are able to share with me? Was ceremony important to your family?

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Stewardship, Sustainability, and Connection to Land

Environmental education was never "education" to Indigenous communities centuries ago – it was a way of life. The land is a relative, has many gifts and offerings and is considered sacred to Indigenous communities globally. The land, the water, the plants, and the animals are "all our relations" and should be sustained. Indigenous communities continue to express their love of the land and the protection of Mother Earth through peaceful protests that promote coexistence with surroundings. This is known today as environmental stewardship.

Sample Question: What are your teachings around land, water, plants and animals? Do you have a close connection to the land? Can you share a story?

Spirituality

Spirituality, in a global sense, can be expressed as having a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, which may even include a search for the meaning of life. For Indigenous people, spirituality is separate from Western religion. Spirituality is the connection to the Creator, who can be identified as many entities (God, the Universe, Buddha). When Indigenous people pray out loud at an event, you might hear them say "pray to your Creator." Spirituality in Indigenous communities also means practicing in ceremonies that connect an individual to the Creator, including smudging, going into a sweatlodge, being involved in a pipe ceremony or offering tobacco to Mother Earth.

Sample Question: Is there a higher power or connection to the spirit world that you relate most to, for example the Creator? What are ways that people in your community connect to spirit?

Children

Children were seen as being at the centre of the circle of life. Children, in Indigenous cultures, did not belong to parents; each child is a unique gift from the Creator to be cherished, protected and nurtured into respected beings *(Bringing Tradition Home.BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2010).* The innocence and sacredness of the child was broken through the generations of residential school attendance. Intergenerational trauma exists today; however, so does the traditional practice of child rearing in many communities. "It takes a village to raise a child" is still a prominent idea among many families and communities.

Sample Question: How has the role of the child changed over time? What kinds of values are children taught in your family?

Patriarchy vs Matriarchy (roles of men and women)

Depending on the governance model practiced in pre-contact communities, the roles of men and women were established and determined in the early stages of life. Women were always held in high regard and provided leadership to the community. In some First Nations cultures, women did not drum. Today, you may see more women use the hand drum and even form their own groups. It wasn't until colonization that Indigenous men and women were forced to change their ways and adopt a paternalistic way of life.

Sample Question: What is your understanding about the role of men and women in traditional societies? Are Indigenous communities reclaiming their traditional roles? What are children today being taught about their role in the community?

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Well Being and Medicine

Indigenous people have been living off the gifts of the land since time immemorial. These gifts include tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass; all natural and holistic forms of medicine. To Indigenous people, medicine is not just to heal one's physical self, medicine is used to heal the whole body (emotional self, spiritual self, mental self, physical self). All of these components of self are connected and affect the others. For example, if you have a headache (physical), it may be because you have not getting enough sleep (mental). The ailment is a side-effect of neglecting to take care of all the components that make up the whole self. Many people today increasingly turn to holistic forms of healing rather than western medicine. Medicine also comes in many forms. For example, the jingle-dress dance is a dance about healing. Jingle-dress dancers are called upon to dance for the sick as it is thought to bring health to people who are grieving, injured or ill.

Sample Question: Are traditional forms of medicine still practiced today in your community? Is there a story you can share about your experience with traditional plants or medicine?

Culture

Indigenous culture continues to thrive despite many attempts to suppress or even erase it through colonialism, eurocentric policies and residential schools. Culture is expressed in many forms and encompasses many elements such as dance, music, medicine, ceremony, stories and language. Indigenous culture varies in Alberta from treaty area to treaty area. Each language group has their own unique way of passing down their culture and stories about the land and the people. The Cree in the far north speak a dialect of Cree that is slightly different from Central Alberta. The songs and ceremonies vary from the North to the South. An appreciation of the fact that there is **not one** Indigenous worldview, and that Indigenous groups are distinct, is crucial to understanding the original people of this land.

Sample Question: What components of your culture (dance, music, medicine, ceremony, stories and language) have your tried hardest to maintain in your life? How can schools help to foster these important gifts in a child's education?

Identity

Since colonialism, Indigenous people have been given many labels. In the attempt to assimilate, these labels have segregated Indigenous people from the rest of Canadian society. Government labels and names have constantly changed and created confusion. Examples of past labels or names include Indian, First Nations, Aboriginal, non-Status, Treaty, halfbreed and Eskimo. These labels and names are prevalent in textbooks and daily conversations, but may not be the names that Indigenous people call themselves. Asking this question is a part of the relationship building process that forms a deeper understanding about individuals but also helps to fully appreciate that Indigenous people have an identity of their own, not one that is owned.

*Sample Question***:** The government has given Indigenous people many labels, including Aboriginal, Treaty, Status Indian, etc. What do you call yourself and is there a term that you prefer?

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