# ETFO FNMI Brochure

What have you heard? Addressing misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

That happened in the past.

That’s an Aboriginal problem.

Our Home and Native Land.

What am I supposed to do about it?

I don’t have any Indigenous kids in my class.

Just get over it!

Natives get everything for free.

“We don’t need you to feel that you are connected to this history. We need you to feel that you are part of the future and that you’re part of the solution, and therefore we have to talk about what your role is going to be going forward…” Justice Murray Sinclair (May 2015).

# About This Resource

This resource is designed to introduce ETFO members to unlearn any biases that may exist and to address a few common misconceptions that some Canadians have toward people that are First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI). It is our hope that this resource, filled with many hyperlinks (in coloured text), will encourage educators to take steps to learn more about Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the legacy of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous Peoples. This is just one resource. Educators are encouraged to continue their learning journey that will build a foundation to support them in their instructional practices. It is with good intention and respect that this resource aspires to create more culturally inclusive learning environments for students and build a more just society.

Please note: The terminology, including [Aboriginal Peoples and Indigenous Peoples](https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/video/wdim-eng.aspx?wbdisable=false), is used to describe the original inhabitants of North America who are also referred to as First Nations, Métis and Inuit. The words Aboriginal and Native, used in the statements on the cover, are actual terms that many Indigenous educators have heard over time. These have been used verbatim. There are many Canadians who still say these words regardless of the merging of these into a new term that is being used – Indigenous. This may evolve over time. The term Aboriginal will also appear in certain areas of this resource if in a direct quote.

# I Don’t Have Any Indigenous Kids in My Class

You may be very surprised! [Indigenous Peoples](https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-terminology-guidelines-for-usage), like all Canadians, come in different shapes, sizes and colours and may possibly look very much like you. As well, Indigenous parents or students don’t always self-identify. Some individuals may choose not to disclose their Indigenous heritage as they may not associate with terms like Aboriginal, Indigenous or First Nation. [Indigenous terminology and identity](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_identity__terminology/) is a personal or collective preference. Some people can be more inclined to identify with the name of their cultural group, while others choose not to self-identify for personal or political reasons related to [assimilative policies](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-government-policy/), like the [*Indian Act*](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/).

While there are similarities across cultures, worldviews and histories, there is [much diversity](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm) within [First Nations](https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/7-first-nation-facts-you-should-know), [Métis](http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/who-are-the-metis/citizenship) and [Inuit](http://www.inuulitsivik.ca/northern-life-and-inuit-culture/who-are-the-inuits). All students, no matter their cultural or ethnic background, have a unique identity and will express it in whatever way makes sense to them. How, and if, one identifies is a personal choice. For families and students, it is confidential and voluntary.

Approximately 1.7 million people in Canada have self-identified as Indigenous, according to *Statistics Canada*’s [*2016 Census*](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017027-eng.htm), with more than half living in major urban centres. Indigenous Peoples are the [fastest growing demographic population](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm) in Canada and many of these students attend publicly funded schools. You don’t need to be an expert in Indigenous studies to teach the history of this nation and/or its relations with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit. We are all learning about a history that wasn’t appropriately authentic and reflective of Indigenous Peoples’ perspectives and presence. Teach what you’re learning to all your students, regardless of how your student body self-identifies.

Many educators in Canada are already [friends and allies](http://www.guidetoallyship.com/) to a diverse group of people and issues that impacted a marginalized group. There are different approaches to take in becoming an ally to Indigenous Peoples from an Indigenous perspective and a non-Indigenous perspective. This will include unlearning, challenging biases and preconceived notions, acknowledging privilege, knowing what role you have for a specific group, etc.

Here are a few hyperlinks to resources that will help you build a more solid understanding of what it is like to be a friend or ally to Indigenous Peoples:

Burns, M. (2017/06/19). *Talent Egg*. [How to be an informed Aboriginal ally](https://talentegg.ca/incubator/2017/06/19/aboriginal-allies-mind/).

CBC Radio. (2016/08/29). *Unreserved.* [Building an ally: Non-Indigenous people share their stories of bridge building](http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/building-an-ally-non-indigenous-people-share-their-stories-of-bridge-building-1.3735875?utm_source=Women+Warriors+Podcast&utm_campaign=a3a9daa3d8-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_01_26&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_443b3ec03f-a3a9daa3d8-160531541).

Coles, T. (2018/01/25). *HuffPost – Living*. [How to be a better ally in 2018: It’s more than just your privilege](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2018/01/25/how-to-be-a-better-ally_a_23343325/).

Gehl, L. (n.d.). [*Ally Bill of Responsibilities*.](http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/ally_bill_of_responsibilities_poster.pdf)

O’Connell, C. (2017/07/20). *Centre for Courage and Renewal*. [Becoming an Ally to Indigenous People](http://www.couragerenewal.org/becoming-ally).

Raynard, K. (2018/02/05). *The Argus*. [Allyship, Advocacy, and the Legitimate Role of Non-Indigenous Folks](https://theargus.ca/?p=25929).

Incorporating a [culturally responsive pedagogy](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/cbs_responsivepedagogy.pdf) lens will encourage educators to recognize the rich, diverse cultural mix in the classroom, school or community, and will also ensure that the [children’s identities are reflected](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/cbs_studentidentity.pdf) in the learning environment.

There are a [variety of best practices](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher_Resources/Infusing_Aboriginal_Content_and_Perspectives_into_Your_Teaching/Best_Practices_in_Including_Aboriginal_Peoples_in_the_Curriculum.html) that you can use to have more Indigenous content in your instructional practice. Ultimately, doing so contributes to the success of all students, including [Indigenous students](http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/11/93105-ATB4-Synthesis-Report.pdf). Moreover, you’ll be supporting students’ knowledge-building of other cultural groups, social justice and equity issues, while providing them with the tools to address racism.

# ETFO Land Acknowledgement

In the Spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of

Ontario acknowledges that we are gathered today on the customary and traditional

lands of the Indigenous Peoples of this territory. etfo.ca/aboutetfo/governance/pages/fnmistatement.aspx

## Our Home and Native Land

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit of Canada are the original, Indigenous inhabitants of this vast and beautiful country. As the national anthem highlights, Canada is the “home and native land” for all Canadian settlers who live here, whether they have been here for a 100 years or are newly arrived citizens.

[Indigenous worldviews](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/abed101/indigenous-worldviews/) and perspectives are culturally unique to each group but there may also be similar principles and values that each shares. These may include [Indigenous identity](https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/what-is-indigenous-identity), livelihood, [relationship with the land](https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/first-nation-relationship-to-the-land) and natural environment, [land-based experiential learning](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BD0Nm0mr-So), [traditional medicinal practices](http://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2049&context=etd), [spiritual ceremonies](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed/11-indigenous-spiritual-practices), [storytelling](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0t3gEAxmdg), [governance](https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada/lecture/PJK1W/sovereignty-and-governance), [languages](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-eng.cfm), and much more. Learning about the [Indigenous history](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9KJM3pjvKg) in Canada is a good start.

Six Indigenous cultural groups exist within the geographical confines of present-day Canada. There are also [approximately 59 Indigenous inherent languages](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/culture/). These groups, which were in existence before Europeans came to the Americas, lived in societies with complex governments, social structures and trade systems. The struggle to maintain these cultural identities is at the heart of the struggle that Indigenous Peoples have experienced with their relationship with Canada.

No matter where we live in Canada, the land has historic and current connections to Indigenous Peoples.

[What Indigenous group or groups are in your area](https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory)? You may wish to read the [*ETFO Land acknowledgement*](http://www.etfo.ca/AboutETFO/Governance/Pages/fnmistatement.aspx)with your students to acknowledge the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples in the area you work and live in. The [Land Acknowledgement](https://www.todaysparent.com/kids/school-age/land-acknowledgements-are-a-good-first-step-but-theres-a-lot-more-work-to-be-done/) is a respectful approach to recognize specific Indigenous group(s) in your area. Use this as a starting point to learn about the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and their relationship with Canada, and continue to inquire about current and relevant information regarding Indigenous Peoples. Apply your learning into your [instructional practice](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher_Resources/Infusing_Aboriginal_Content_and_Perspectives_into_Your_Teaching/Infusing_Aboriginal_Perspectives.html). It’s okay to tell your students that you are [learning alongside](https://www.edutopia.org/article/power-admitting-what-we-dont-know) them.

## Natives Get Everything for Free

This statement is just one of many common misconceptions and stereotypes that exist in society about Indigenous Peoples. This biased belief and negative portrayal of Indigenous Peoples is shaped by multiple factors, including advertisements and commercials, movies, television shows, news (radio and print), literature, family or friends, and much more. Everyone has been socially conditioned to think one way about certain people and groups of people because of these influences, including the misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples, whether intentional or not. This is problematic as it creates [racist attitudes](https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/about-racism) and divides a beautifully diverse society.

Unfortunately, most adult Canadians did not learn about the realities of how Canada came to be Canada, and the relationship it had (and has) with Indigenous Peoples. This includes the establishment of the [Indigenous and Northern Affairs of Canada](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-affairs-and-northern-development-canada) (INAC) branch, and the oppressive, assimilative practices that were inflicted upon the First Nations, Métis and Inuit. This information was omitted from learning environments and curriculum. The resulting general lack of knowledge and understanding of this historical and current relationship contributes to why some people stereotype or hold [negative perceptions](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2012/06/21/most_canadians_harbour_myths_about_aboriginal_people.html) of Indigenous Peoples. Additionally, people learned about this nation’s history through the lens of a single perspective which did not include Indigenous Peoples. Here are a few things about which you may not have been informed:

The [*1763 Royal Proclamation*](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/royal_proclamation_1763/) was the first legal document outlining the sovereignty of Indigenous nations in Canada and their title to the land. It was also used as a guide in the treaty-making process and has even been termed the [“*Indian Magna Carta*”](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/royal-proclamation-of-1763-canada-s-indian-magna-carta-turns-250-1.1927667). The [*British North America Act*](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/british-north-america-act-1867-document/) (*BNA Act*) of 1867, which would later become the *Canadian Constitution Act* (1982), created the Dominion of Canada. In Section 91(24) of the *BNA Act*, the government assumes legislative responsibility over Indigenous Peoples and the lands. This *Act* also took the first steps toward an assimilation policy that saw children forcibly removed from their families and sent to residential schools. Sir John A. MacDonald authorized this policy; Duncan Campbell Scott, a deputy superintendent of the *Department of Indian Affairs* in the early 20th century, would ensure that it was enforced. Later, the [*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*](https://tvo.org/video/programs/civics-101-animations/the-charter-of-rights-and-freedoms) was created and so was [Section 35(1)](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/constitution_act_1982_section_35/) of the *Constitution Act* acknowledging specific rights to “Aboriginal” Peoples.

The [*Indian Act*](https://youtu.be/OhBrq7Ez-rQ) is another policy developed by the Crown in 1876 to control and govern Indigenous Peoples. The *Act*, still in force today, is considered one of Canada’s most oppressive legal documents for many Indigenous Peoples. It was designed to control and govern Indigenous Peoples as well as control their cultural identities. There is no other comparable policy in Canada imposed on a group of people.

[Treaties](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-treaties/) acknowledge the distinct relationship and exchanges between the Crown and specific Indigenous nations as well as the lands that Europeans wanted for settlement and economic reasons. Considered legal and binding agreements between two nations, the treaties were either written or oral. Earlier peace and friendship agreements include the [Wampum Belt](http://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/wampum.html) and the *1764 Treaty of Niagara*. With the agreements, there were also [differing perspectives](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/treaties-from-1760-1923-two-sides-to-the-story-1.1081839) on what the parties actually agreed upon. The relationship between each nation and the Government of Canada continues to be imbalanced, and Indigenous Peoples are standing up for the protection of their rights and lands.

Understanding history is inclusive, and reflective, of multiple Indigenous perspectives. Making these more enriched connections between the past and present relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples will demonstrate that Indigenous Peoples have never received anything for free. Delve deeper in your learning and understanding about Indigenous Peoples and challenge any misconceptions like this one. CBC Radio’s [ReVision Quest and host Darrell Dennis](https://www.cbc.ca/revisionquest/) challenge the misconception in “Free Stuff” and many other myths and misconceptions that Canadians have about Indigenous Peoples.

Here are a few online resources to help you along the way:

Assembly of First Nations. (2002). [*Top Misconceptions About Aboriginal Peoples Fact Sheet*](http://tricitiesecd.ca/files/4013/3599/2965/FACTSandMisconceptions.pdf).

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (n.d). [*Dispelling Common Myths About Indigenous Peoples 9 Myths & Realities*](https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/Dispelling_Common_Myths_About_Indigenous_Peoples_.pdf).

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (2015). [*Facts About Aboriginal Peoples and Taxes*](https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/4-facts-about-aboriginal-peoples-and-taxes).

As an [anti-racist educator](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/building-an-ally-non-indigenous-people-share-their-stories-of-bridge-building-1.3430628/anti-racist-approach-to-education-essential-to-address-experience-of-indigenous-teachers-and-students-1.3434523) or [ally to Indigenous Peoples](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/montreal-indigenous-ally-toolkit-1.4988074) you can effectively challenge this and other damaging stereotypes. To get assistance to do so, consider accessing [ETFO’s equity workshops for locals](http://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/ProfLearning/pages/equityworkshops.aspx) (after-school), *Busting Myths and Misconceptions About Indigenous Peoples* or *Indigenous Community Engagement*. You may wish to contact your local ETFO office to set up one or both of these workshops for your local members.

That Happened in the Past

Imagine that you don’t know anything about your own identity, your family or the history of your people. Imagine that nobody can tell you about these things. [Imagine](https://vimeo.com/11851507) a community with no children, with no one who can carry the stories forward. Now, imagine if we were all to learn about the [Indian Residential Schools](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-history-of-residential-schools-in-canada-1.702280) and about our shared Canadian history. It’s [important for students to learn](https://www.macleans.ca/society/why-our-kids-need-to-learn-about-residential-schools/) about the legacy. A collective acknowledgement of our history and compassionate recognition for those who have been wronged gives all of us hope that we can create a better future.

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](http://nctr.ca/about-new.php) (TRC) took a comprehensive look at the residential school history in Canada and in 2015 provided an [*Executive Summary* and 94 *Calls to Action*](http://nctr.ca/reports.php). The indoctrination of Indigenous children began almost 400 years ago with French missionaries attempting to introduce boarding schools. Church-operated schools appeared in the early-to mid-1800s. In 1883, Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada’s first prime minister, [authorized legislation](http://wherearethechildren.ca/en/timeline/research/) to create government-funded and-operated residential schools. By the early 1930s, 80 schools were in operation. Almost 200,000 children were forced to attend these schools. A [timeline of residential schools](http://wherearethechildren.ca/en/timeline/) shows that these federally run facilities continued into the 20th century, with the last one closing its doors in 1996.

MacDonald’s policy on residential schools was designed to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into mainstream society by systematically destroying children’s relationships with family and community. The attack on the cultural identity of Indigenous children was described by the TRC as “[cultural genocide](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/five-reasons-the-trc-chose-cultural-genocide/article25311423/),” (TRC Findings, 2015, p. 1). The testimonies of survivors compiled by the TRC reveal many shared experiences of physical, emotional, spiritual and sexual abuses.

Further, the TRC found that thousands of [children never returned home](https://aptnnews.ca/2015/06/02/number-indian-residential-school-student-deaths-may-never-known-trc/), went missing or died while attending residential schools, and often their families were not notified. The [Aboriginal Healing Foundation](http://www.ahf.ca/about-us) also provides information on addressing [misconceptions held about residential schools.](http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/misconceptions.pdf)

As if the residential school system wasn’t enough to assimilate and oppress Indigenous Peoples, the government removed children from their families again in what was later termed the [*Sixties Scoop*](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop/). From the 1960s through to the 1980s, [thousands of children](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/the-sixties-scoop-still-ripples-through-canadian-families/article25115297/) were removed from their families and adopted or put into foster homes of non-Indigenous families. Parents and communities didn’t know where their children were; parental permission was not sought and families were given no opportunity to reclaim their children. Today, many First Nations, Métis and Inuit survivors of this system are filing a [class action lawsuit](https://globalnews.ca/news/3787984/federal-government-to-announce-payout-of-800m-to-indigenous-victims-of-60s-scoop/).

In order for us to be fully present, we must embark on a journey into the past, including looking at [colonialism and the impacts on Indigenous families](http://fnn.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/LWM3_ColonialismImpacts.pdf). We can’t change history but we can acknowledge the impact it had on people’s lives and examine ways that we can shape the future for the children of all Canadians. This is called [reconciliation](http://reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/reconciliation-in-action-a-national-engagement-strategy/).

Just Get Over It

The relationship between Canada and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit included assimilative policies and practices that, as mentioned earlier, have had a huge detrimental impact on the quality of life of Indigenous Peoples. The [social conditions experienced by Indigenous Peoples,](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/native-people-social-conditions/) including racism, poverty, unemployment and poor health, are directly caused by the colonial systemic practices. It’s all too easy for people who have not experienced the same history to tell those who have suffered to “[just get over it](http://spirithorse.ca/just-get/).”

The residential school system and the *Sixties Scoop* targeted the overall well-being of families, communities and the identities of Indigenous Peoples. Survivors and their descendants continue to be profoundly affected by [intergenerational](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health-advisor/the-intergenerational-trauma-of-first-nations-still-runs-deep/article23013789/) trauma. However, the [resilience](http://akneahr.ciet.org/publications/resilience/) of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and North America reflects the strength and unity among the diverse Indigenous groups. Building resilience within Indigenous communities is a healing process that requires individual and collective action. Many Indigenous Peoples are on a journey that is not only about reconnecting with their cultural teachings, knowledge, worldviews and practices, but also about [celebrating cultural identities](https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/i-am-indigenous-2017/).

Indigenous Peoples have resisted systemic and colonial encroachments through [political action and activism](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-political-organization-and-activism) for hundreds of years. The [*Assembly of First Nations*](https://www.afn.ca/about-afn/) (formerly known as the *National Indian Brotherhood*), [*Idle No More*](http://www.idlenomore.ca/), and [*Walking With Our Sisters*](http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/)are just a few of the groups that were created to address human rights, Indigenous rights and environmental issues impacting Indigenous Peoples in Canada. There are also individuals, like the [21 First Nations, Métis and Inuit women](http://spirithorse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/FNMIWomen2016.pdf) highlighted in ETFO’s celebratory poster.

The sharing of worldviews and collective experiences of resilience and strength are also present in multiple creative and political forums. There are [musicians](https://www.cbcmusic.ca/genres/indigenous) (including those [working with youth](http://nwejinan.com/)), [visual artists](https://ago.ca/collection/indigenous), media artists, [authors](https://www.cbc.ca/books/108-indigenous-writers-to-read-as-recommended-by-you-1.4197475), [filmmakers](https://www.nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema/directors/?&nation_slug=all_nations&first_letter=a&film_lang=en), [actors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_First_Nations_actors), ‘[movers and shakers’](https://aptnnews.ca/2016/01/14/16-indigenous-movers-and-shakers-to-watch-in-2016/), [political leaders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_indigenous_Canadian_politicians), and much more. The presence of Indigenous Peoples and the work they do (in all facets of society) is for the collective good of Indigenous Peoples, rights and environment.

In the 1990s, the Canadian government set out to renew its relationship with Indigenous Peoples and established the *Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP). The mandate of this Commission was “to investigate and propose solutions to the challenges affecting the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Métis), the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole” ([Library and Archives Canada](https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/introduction.aspx)).

In 2008, the Government of Canada formally released the Indian Residential Schools [*Statement of Apology*](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prime-minister-stephen-harper-s-statement-of-apology-1.734250), and following this the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was created. Fast forward to 2015, the TRC publicly released its [final report](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890) and [Canada officially adopted](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/canada-adopting-implementing-un-rights-declaration-1.3575272) the [*United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples*](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html)(UNDRIP). In 2016, Ontario issued a statement of [Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples](https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2016/05/ontarios-commitment-to-reconciliation-with-indigenous-peoples.html). The question now is, [where is Canada at with reconciliation](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/beyond-94-truth-and-reconciliation-1.4574765) and its [commitment to the UNDRIP](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/where-does-canada-sit-10-years-after-undrip-1.4288480)? Reconciliation is a slow process and will require ongoing work from the Canadian Government and Canadians.

The relationship between Indigenous Peoples and [*the Crown*](https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/crown-canada.html) existed long before this country became Canada and home to all settlers. The history of Canada is a collective history. Our country’s historical and colonial practices have left their mark on Indigenous Peoples and erasing the past is not an option. There is no way one can *just get over it*. This country is still in the emerging phase of reconciliation. However, in the now, we can do our part to [advance the process of reconciliation](http://reconciliationcanada.ca/get-involved/how-to-get-involved/) in our personal lives and in creating [learning environments that include reconciliation](https://fncaringsociety.com/shannens-dream-school-resources). Understanding the impact of the historical and current relationship between Canada and the First Peoples is a step in the right direction.

# ***That’s an Aboriginal Problem***

The [*Royal Proclamation*](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/royal_proclamation_1763/) (1763), the [*British North America Act*](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/british-north-america-act-1867-document)(1867) and the Canadian[*Constitution Act*](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/constitution_act_1982_section_35/) (1982) recognize and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples of Canada, including [Treaty Rights](https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028574/1529354437231) and [Aboriginal Rights](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_rights/). This history signifies a nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the federal government. There is a rich history that is codified in the written and oral agreements and treaties, like the [*Two Row Wampum*](http://honorthetworow.org/learn-more/history/) or the [*Dish With One Spoon*](http://trc.journalism.ryerson.ca/land-acknowledgement/).

The nation shares a history that includes economic, political and social relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians. These relationships have been cooperative at times but they have also been negatively affected by the structures of colonialism. To honour the spirit and intent of the *Two Row Wampum*, all Canadians should learn about our shared history and work toward a prosperous and just future for all.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created to acknowledge and bear witness to the lived experience of Indigenous Peoples who were removed from their homes and sent to Indian residential schools as children. [*The Survivors Speak*](http://nctr.ca/reports2.php) report captured testimonies that shared the personal experiences and impacts on their overall well-being and cultural identities. Survivors hope that by sharing their stories they could help secure a better life for their children and grandchildren. The realities of this dark period form a permanent record of the shared history between Canada and the First Nation, Métis and Inuit.

As well as hearing testimonies, the TRC was tasked with recommending the next steps for reconciliation. After the TRC completed the six-year process of hearing from survivors and their families, the [*Calls to Action*](http://nctr.ca/reports2.php) was published in 2015. This report outlines 94 recommendations that speak specifically to rectifying the wrongful acts committed against the Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The scope of the recommendations includes all aspects of citizenship: child welfare, education, language and culture, health and justice. The TRC also urged that Canada adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

In the Education section of the *Calls to Action*, the Commission advocates that appropriate and accurate content be taught about Canada’s history with Indigenous Peoples. There are also recommendations to [improve education for teachers](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/06/02/teachers-need-to-be-educated-about-residential-schools-says-tdsb-official.html) regarding [instruction](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher_Resources/Infusing_Aboriginal_Content_and_Perspectives_into_Your_Teaching/Infusing_Aboriginal_Perspectives.html) on residential schools, treaties, and more accurate and appropriate Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum.

Senator Murray Sinclair and Chief Commissioner of the TRC states, “[Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem – it involves all of us](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-tuesday-edition-1.3096950/reconciliation-is-not-an-aboriginal-problem-it-is-a-canadian-problem-it-involves-all-of-us-1.3097253).” As educators and Canadians, you can be a part of reconciliation by doing the work of learning, and teaching your students about Canada’s history that includes Residential Schools. Use this strength to make a better future for all students.

# ***What Can I Do?***

In the final report, [*Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*](http://nctr.ca/reports2.php), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) defines reconciliation as “an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change” (p. 16).

In [moving forward as educators](https://youtu.be/dZjshXqEk8o), it is our responsibility to provide safe and [inclusive learning environments](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf) for all students. Students from marginalized groups tend to face more challenges and this impacts positive engagement in their learning and achieving academic success. [Culturally responsive pedagogy](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_ResponsivePedagogy.pdf) involves understanding ourselves (perspectives, attitudes, values), our institutions, our student body, our community, and looking at ways that we can be more culturally inclusive in our instructional practice and planning. It’s a good way for educators to gain new knowledge and understanding while teaching about the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples, and current realities. Creating a welcoming learning environment that is culturally inclusive of Indigenous presence will also [engage Indigenous learners](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/UserFiles/File/UploadedAmina_/Best_Practices_for_Teaching_Aboriginal_Students.pdf) and [promote student success](https://thelearningexchange.ca/projects/susan-dion-collaborative-inquiry/) for all learners.

So what can you do as an ETFO member to create a culturally welcoming learning environment? Here are a few tips for what you can do:

Whether there are any self-identified Indigenous students in your class or not, continue to be a culturally responsive educator and include First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives and worldviews in your instructional practice;

Continue learning about the [legacy and layers of colonialism](https://youtu.be/Wx9p5yDhr8E)including [different forms of racial and systemic discrimination](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/racial-discrimination-brochure) and how it impacts Indigenous Peoples and the broader community;

Ensure that Indigenous perspectives, histories and worldviews are included in all subjects across the curriculum;

Get to know [the territory you are on](http://fnpim-cippn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/index-eng.html) and the Indigenous Peoples in the community (attend community events, invite traditional knowledge-holders or elders into the classroom); and

Continue to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes by learning the facts and the interconnectedness of our nation’s history.

You are not on this journey alone. Along with [ETFO’s endorsement of the TRC Report](http://www.etfo.ca/BuildingAJustSociety/FNMI/Pages/FNMI.aspx), the Government of [Ontario is also committed to reconciliation](https://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-together-ontarios-commitment-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples).

ETFO is committed to providing supports, tools and resources for ETFO members to become more aware and culturally inclusive in their practice. Check out [ETFO’s FNMI page](http://www.etfo.ca/buildingajustsociety/fnmi/pages/fnmieducation.aspx) on the home site, ETFO’s [Spirit Horse](http://www.spirithorse.ca) webpage, and the list of compiled resources located at the end of this document.

# ***Terminology***

The following terms have been taken verbatim from the [*Library and Archives Canada Terminology Guide: Research on Aboriginal Heritage*](https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/Documents/Terminology%20Guide%20%20Aboriginal%20Heritage.pdf)*.* For more definitions on additional terms that you may come across, check out the *Terminology Guide*.

Aboriginal Peoples: A collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. Section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act*, 1982 recognizes three distinct groups of Aboriginal peoples. “In this Act, ‘aboriginal peoples of Canada’ includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.” These are separate groups, with each having unique and diverse heritage, language, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

First Nation: A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which some people found offensive. Among its uses, the term refers to the Status, non-Status and Treaty Indians of Canada. Some Indian peoples have replaced the word “Band” in the name of their community with the term “First Nation,” respecting their distinct language, culture, heritage and systems of knowledge. Although “First Nation” is widely used, it has no legal definition.

Indian: A term commonly used to describe the hundreds of distinct nations of Aboriginal Peoples throughout North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. It can be traced back to Christopher Columbus in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries during his expeditions to find Asia. Widely used by explorers and missionaries, the term was later adopted by the Government of Canada and incorporated into the *Indian Act*, 1876.

It is often used in the context of historical government departments, documents, policies and laws. Indians are one of three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada—Indian (First Nation), Inuit and Métis—according to Section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act*, 1982.

*Indian Act*, 1876: The Canadian legislation, first passed in 1876, which defines an Indian in relation to the federal government’s fiduciary responsibility as it applies to “Indians” living on-reserve. The *Act* sets out certain federal obligations and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands, Indian monies and other resources, as well as approves or disallows First Nation bylaws. It has been amended several times, most recently in 1985 with Bill C-31 and again in 2011 with Bill C-3 pertaining to identity.

Indigenous Peoples: Ethnic groups defined as “indigenous” according to one of several meanings of the term. Historically, it refers to the original inhabitants of a territory. For this purpose, the term refers to people classified as Indigenous under international law in such documents as the “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Inuk: The singular form of the term “Inuit.”

Inuit: An Inuktitut term, meaning “people” who live in communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador) land claim regions. Inuit call this vast region Inuit Nunangat. Inuit are one of three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada—Indian (First Nation), Inuit and Métis—according to Section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act*, 1982.

Métis: A term defined by the *Métis National Council* as one who self-identifies as Métis, who is distinct from First Nation and Inuit, who is of historic Métis Nation ancestry and accepted by and belonging to a Métis community. The Métis are one of three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada—Indian (First Nation), Inuit and Métis—according to Section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act*, 1982

# ETFO Indigenous Education Workshops and Resources

The following resources and professional learning opportunities were designed by ETFO staff and members. You’ll find culturally relevant approaches and practices to use in your professional practice and personal learning.

[Equity Workshops for ETFO Locals](http://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/ProfLearning/pages/equityworkshops.aspx)

*Busting Myths and Misconceptions About Indigenous Peoples*

*Indigenous Community Engagement*

[ETFO FNMI Education Resources](http://www.etfo.ca/BuildingAJustSociety/FNMI/pages/fnmieducation.aspx)

[Aboriginal Histories and Realities in Canada](http://spirithorse.ca/etfo-resource/) K-8 Resource

[First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Resource: Engaging Learners Through Play](https://shop.etfo.ca/products/fnmi-engaging-resouce)

[ETFO Land Acknowledgement (and printed Poster)](http://www.etfo.ca/AboutETFO/Governance/Pages/fnmistatement.aspx)

[FNMI Growth Chart](http://spirithorse.ca/etfo-fnmi-growth-chart/)

[FNMI Growth Chart Literacy Prompt Sheets](http://spirithorse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/FNMI_Literacy.pdf)

[Spirit Horse](http://spirithorse.ca/) website

[Truth & Reconciliation Webinars](http://spirithorse.ca/etfo-trc/)

[Twenty-one Inspirational FNMI Women](http://spirithorse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/FNMIWomen2016.pdf) in Canada Poster

# Where to Purchase Indigenous Resources**:**

[Gabriel Dumont Institute](https://gdins.org/shop-gdi/)

[GoodMinds.com](http://goodminds.com/)

[Inhabit Media](https://inhabitmedia.com/)

[Kegedonce](https://kegedonce.com/)

[Librairie Hannenorak](http://hannenorak.com/) (French-only resources)

[Native Realities](https://www.nativerealities.com/)

[Ningwakwe Learning Press](https://www.ningwakwe.ca/)

[Pemmican Publications](http://www.pemmicanpublications.ca/)

[Strong Nations](http://www.strongnations.com/)

[Theytus Books](http://www.theytus.com/)

[More Links (Compiled by OISE)](https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/Aboriginalpublishers)

# ETFO FNMI Education

For Indigenous education professional learning opportunities and resources, go to www.etfo.ca/BuildingAJustSociety/FNMI/pages/fnmieducation.aspx.

For more information, please contact Rachel Mishenene, ETFO Executive Assistant in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education at [rmishenene@etfo.org](mailto:rmishenene@etfo.org).

# Hyperlinked Resources

[Aboriginal Peoples Television Network](https://aptn.ca/)

[Assembly of First Nations](https://www.afn.ca/Home/)

[BCTF’s Aboriginal Education Resources](https://bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=13404)

[Bear Paw Education](https://www.bearpaweducation.ca/)

[Beyond Shadows: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success](https://www.ctf-fce.ca/Research-Library/BeyondShadows_EN_Web.pdf)

[Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) Indigenous Education](https://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Pages/Issues/Indigenous-Education.aspx)

[CBC 8th Fire](https://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/blog/8th-fire-wabs-walk-through-history)

[CBC Everything Indigenous](https://watch.cbc.ca/category/everything-indigenous/featured-all/fc9505b4-0cb5-4a16-aadf-863654041afb)

[CBC Music Reclaimed](https://www.cbcmusic.ca/programs/reclaimed)

[CBC News Indigenous](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous)

[CBC Radio UnReserved](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved)

[Chiefs of Ontario](http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/)

[Directory and Map of First Nations in Ontario](https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-first-nations-maps)

[First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Association of Ontario](http://www.fnmieao.com/)

[Haudenosaunee Confederacy](https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/)

[Haudenosaunee Guide for Educators](https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/HaudenosauneeGuide.pdf)

[Healthy Aboriginal Network](https://thehealthyaboriginal.net/)

[ImagineNATIVE](http://www.imaginenative.org/)

[Indigenous Cinema (NFB)](https://www.nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema/?&film_lang=en&sort=year:desc,title&year=1917..2018)

[Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.](http://www.ictinc.ca/)

[Indigenous Music](https://www.indigenousmusic.ca/)  
[Indigenous Tourism Canada](https://indigenoustourism.ca/en/)

[Infusing Aboriginal Perspectives into Your Teaching Practice](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Teacher_Resources/Infusing_Aboriginal_Content_and_Perspectives_into_Your_Teaching/Infusing_Aboriginal_Perspectives.html)

[Inuit Perspectives Through Film (NFB)](https://www.nfb.ca/playlist/unikkausivut-sharing-our-stories/)

[Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)](https://itk.ca)

[Kwayaciiwin Education Resource Centre & Materials](http://www.kwayaciiwin.com/)

[Legacy of Hope Foundation](http://legacyofhope.ca/)

[Métis Education Kit](http://www.metisnation.org/programs/education-training/education/education-kit/)

[Métis Nation of Ontario](http://www.metisnation.org/)

[National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](http://umanitoba.ca/nctr/)

[Ogoki Learning Inc.](http://www.ogokilearning.com/) (Language Apps)

[Ontario Native Women’s Association](http://www.onwa.ca/)

[Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre](http://www.ottawainuitchildrens.com/)

[Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners](https://education.alberta.ca/media/3615876/our-words-our-ways.pdf)

[Project of Heart](http://www.projectofheart.ca/)

[Red Rising Magazine (Facebook)](https://www.facebook.com/redrisingmagazine/)

[ReVision Quest](http://www.cbc.ca/revisionquest/)

[Speak Truth To Power Canada](http://sttpcanada.ctf-fce.ca/) (CTF)

[Statistics Canada - Aboriginal Peoples in Canada](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm)

[Tungasuvvingat Inuit](http://tungasuvvingatinuit.ca/)

[Twitterati – the Indigenous Voices Edition](https://www.opencanada.org/features/twitterati-indigenous-voices/)

[Walking Together: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/) [Curriculum](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/)

# ETFO EQUITY Statement

It is the goal of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario to work with others to create schools, communities and a society free from all forms of individual and systemic discrimination. To further this goal, ETFO defines equity as fairness achieved through proactive measures which result in equality, promote diversity and foster respect and dignity for all.

# Developed by ETFO Staff & Local Members

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