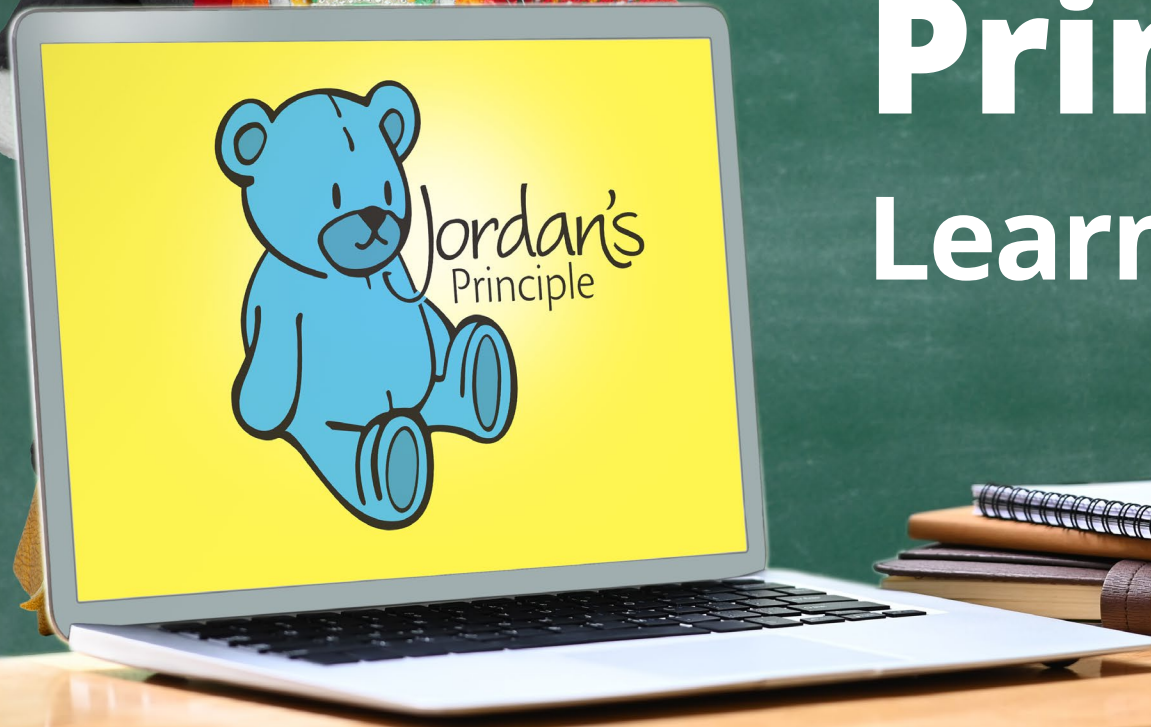


The First Nations Child & Family  
Caring Society's  
Spirit Bear Virtual School

# Jordan's Principle Learning Guide



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with editing by Melisa Brittain



# Acknowledgements

This work was created on the unsundered, unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg Nations. Since time immemorial, Algonquin peoples have cared for this land.

We honour Jordan River Anderson, founder of Jordan’s Principle, his family, and the community of Norway House Cree Nation.

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# Preface

## How This Work Started

Founded in 1999, the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society (Caring Society) is a national non-profit organization providing reconciliation-based public education, research, and support to promote the safety and well-being of First Nations children, young people, families, and Nations. Ongoing discrimination against First Nations communities has resulted in concurrent inequities in various public services that hamper the ability of First Nations children and youth to receive the access to services they need, when they need them.

The Caring Society believes that First Nations children and youth are entitled to culturally based and equitable services immediately, as they request them. Guided by the Caring Society's *Bearrister, Spirit Bear*,<sup>1</sup> we also believe that all children and young people have a right to be meaningfully engaged in matters about them, including reconciliation. The Caring Society has created reconciliation-based initiatives, resources, and public education and engagement campaigns for all people living in Canada to address systemic discrimination in Canadian law, policy, conduct, and education affecting First Nations children, youth, and families. These opportunities call upon everyone to stand alongside First Nations children, youth, and families to end discrimination and to always do the right thing.

Over the years, many educators and students have engaged in the Caring Society's **events**<sup>2</sup> and **campaigns**.<sup>3</sup> Due to this significant participation, the Caring Society wanted to understand the experiences of educators and their elementary learners in reconciliation and social justice-based campaigns. To study this, the Caring Society partnered with educational researchers from the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. In the fall and winter of 2019, the research team interviewed teachers from unsundered and unceded Algonquin territory in Ottawa, Ontario, and Kitigan Zibi, Quebec, to hear about their perceptions of the classroom impacts of student engagement in three of the Caring Society's campaigns: **I Am a Witness**,<sup>4</sup> **Jordan's Principle**,<sup>5</sup> and **Shannen's Dream**.<sup>6</sup> There were many significant findings from the research, including teachers' desires for enhanced learning guides for each campaign.

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1 <https://fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBear>

2 <https://fncaringsociety.com/events>

3 <https://fncaringsociety.com/what-you-can-do/ways-make-difference>

4 <https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness>

5 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

6 <https://fncaringsociety.com/shannens-dream>

*Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum*,<sup>7</sup> the accompanying learning guides, and the broader vision of the Spirit Bear Virtual School (discussed below), aim to meet educational needs identified by educators in the research. The research and development of these enhanced learning materials is funded, in part, by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The learning guides for each campaign provide teachers with a pedagogical framework and contextual guidance that can be adapted to reflect distinct First Nations cultures, contexts, and realities. *Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum* supports teachers in facilitating reconciliation-based education about past, current, and ongoing discrimination and injustices that impact First Nations children, youth, and families to this day.



## Who Is Spirit Bear?

**Spirit Bear**<sup>8</sup> is a *Bearrister*. He was gifted to the Caring Society by Carrier Sekani Family Services in 2007 and immediately took up the role of attending all the legal proceedings in a landmark human rights case at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal), whereby the Caring Society and Assembly of First Nations alleged that the Canadian Government's inequitable provision of child welfare and other public services to First Nations children and youth was discriminatory. Spirit Bear is considered sacred, as he represents First Nations children, youth, and all other young people who stood with them for justice. He is also protected by a trademark held by the Caring Society.

The Tribunal substantiated the human rights complaint in a **landmark ruling in 2016**,<sup>9</sup> finding that Canada discriminated against First Nations children, youth, and their families. Spirit Bear's role at the Tribunal was to remind all adults that the case was about children. Over the years, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and non-Indigenous children and young people who attended the hearings gave Spirit Bear an identity, and he came to represent all First Nations children, as well as all other children and youth who stand with them to achieve justice and to end discrimination.

Spirit Bear is featured in several children's books and a series of stop motion animation films. We appreciate all he does to support children, youth, and adults in their work toward reconciliation.

<sup>7</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-beary-caring-curriculum>

<sup>8</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBear>

<sup>9</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/2016-chrt-2-2016-tcdp-2>



## About the Spirit Bear Virtual School

At the [Spirit Bear Virtual School](https://fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBearVirtualSchool),<sup>10</sup> teachers have access to [Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum](https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-beary-caring-curriculum)<sup>11</sup> and learning guides for the Caring Society's campaigns. Recordings of webinars, workshops, and inspirational videos from other educators, community members and Caring Society staff members, are also available.

In addition, all the Caring Society's resources are available to educators. These include the [Spirit Bear Books and their learning guides](#),<sup>12</sup> as well as information and resources about the [Spirit Bear films](#)<sup>13</sup> and resources for all of the Caring Society's campaigns and events.

We look forward to seeing you at school.



## Important Considerations Regarding Language and Context

Throughout these documents, we honour the distinct and diverse cultures, languages, histories, contributions, and realities among and between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Nations and Peoples in what is now known as Canada. The term “Indigenous” is derived from Latin and was not created by First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples themselves (Peters & Mika, 2017). “Indigenous” is often used to refer to *all* First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in Canada, and should not be used in situations where only one group or one Nation is spoken about. For example, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal case described in Spirit Bear’s books only affects First Nations children and youth, so using the term “Indigenous” when discussing that case and the children and youth affected by it is not appropriate.

<sup>10</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBearVirtualSchool>

<sup>11</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-beary-caring-curriculum>

<sup>12</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>

<sup>13</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/films>

We are as specific as possible when speaking about an individual or smaller group (i.e., we use the name of a specific First Nation or Tribal Council or Métis Settlement). You will also note that we use the plural form of “Nations” and “Peoples” to honour diversity, and we avoid the possessive tense to describe relationships between non-Indigenous peoples/governments and institutions and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. For example, we use Métis Peoples in Canada versus “Canada’s Métis Peoples.”

**Did you know that the term “Aboriginal” is used in the *Canadian Constitution Act* of 1982 and is associated with legal rights and titles? The three groups who are considered Aboriginal are First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Please do not use the term “Aboriginal” unless you are discussing specific rights and titles of First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples.**

Because First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples are culturally and legally distinct peoples, each of these groups requires different reconciliation-based approaches. Different approaches are needed due to policies and laws that were created by the Government of Canada affecting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples differently. For example, the *Indian Act*, which created reserves, band councils, and status cards, only affects First Nations. Here is how the *Indian Act* is described in the book *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*:<sup>14</sup>

When Canada became a country in 1867, the government passed a law called the *Indian Act*. It pushed First Nations peoples off their lands and onto smaller places called reserves. The *Indian Act* is still around today, and First Nations are still working hard to get their territories back! (p. 23)

It is also important to avoid “pan-Indigenous” understandings of culture and language. Respecting differences between and among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples is sometimes called the “distinctions based approach.” For example, powwows are an expression of culture for some First Nations, but not all. This diversity is to be embraced, and educators are encouraged to work with community-authorized First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledge holders in their area to learn about local cultures, practices, and protocols.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>

The Caring Society's campaigns specifically concern First Nations children, youth, families, and communities. [Jordan's Principle](#),<sup>15</sup> [Shannen's Dream](#),<sup>16</sup> and the case at the [Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on Jordan's Principle and child welfare](#)<sup>17</sup> address systemic discrimination that specifically affects First Nations children, youth, families, and communities. Further, it is the Caring Society's mission to specifically support First Nations children, youth, and families. Although the Caring Society's campaigns directly address discrimination experienced by First Nations children, youth, and families, the Caring Society encourages everyone to work respectfully with Inuit and Métis peoples on reconciliation initiatives they have developed as well.

## The Indian Residential School System

The Indian Residential School System (IRSS) was established by the Canadian government and operated by Christian churches beginning in the 1870s to assimilate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children under the guise of education. Their primary purpose was to take First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children from their home communities; they were removed from their families, using police if necessary, and placed in the schools. They were not able to practice their cultures, speak their languages, or wear the clothing they brought with them.<sup>18</sup> The schools were neither safe nor sanitary places for the children, and they were abused and/or neglected. Children did not feel that they mattered, and many of them died at the schools. The last residential school closed in 1996 in Saskatchewan.

Throughout the history of residential schools, people from all walks of life, including people within the government itself, raised the alarm about the inhumane treatment of the children. For example whistleblower [Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce](#),<sup>19</sup> who was a physician specializing in public health and Medical Inspector to the Government of Canada's Department of the Interior and Indian Affairs, tried to share what was going on at these schools with members of parliament, church officials, and the Canadian public. In 1907, he released a report detailing the unsanitary conditions at the residential schools and the harms that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were experiencing. In 1922, after he was ousted from his role by the Canadian Government, he adapted his report and published it as a book titled *The Story of a National Crime*,<sup>20</sup> so that all Canadians would know the truth. The Caring Society appreciates his dedication to doing the right thing more than 100 years ago and encourages everyone to do the right thing today.

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15 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

16 <https://fncaringsociety.com/shannens-dream>

17 <https://www.fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness>

18 Phyllis Webstad, who is a survivor, authored *The Orange Shirt Story*, which is an important book to read with children so that they can learn more about residential schools and what survivors experienced.

19 <https://fncaringsociety.com/people-history>

20 <https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Crime.pdf>



## The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action

*Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it.*

*—Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair*

IRSS Survivors courageously brought multiple legal challenges against Canada and the churches that operated the residential schools to get justice for the harms they and others experienced as a result of the IRSS. The Indian Residential School Settlement arose from that litigation and gave rise to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

The TRC's mandate is spelled out in schedule "N" of the Indian Residential School Settlement as:

- 1 Acknowledge Residential School experiences, impacts and consequences;
- 2 Provide a holistic, culturally appropriate and safe space for former students, their families and communities as they come forward to the Commission;
- 3 Witness, support, promote and facilitate truth and reconciliation at both the national and community levels;
- 4 Promote awareness and public education of Canadians about the IRS system and impacts;
- 5 Identify sources and create as complete an historical record as possible of the IRS system and legacy. The record shall be preserved and made accessible to the public for future study and use;
- 6 Produce and submit to the Parties of the Agreement a report including recommendations to the Government of Canada concerning the IRS system and experience including: the history, purpose, operation and supervision of the IRS system, the effect and consequences of the IRS (including systemic harms, intergenerational consequences and the impact on human dignity) and the ongoing legacy of the residential schools;
- 7 Support commemoration of former Indian Residential School students and their families in accordance with the Commemoration Policy Directive (Schedule "X" of the Agreement).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Schedule N, *Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement*, [https://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/SCHEDULE\\_N.pdf](https://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/SCHEDULE_N.pdf)

Starting in 2007, Murray Sinclair, Wilton Littlechild, and Marie Wilson were appointed as the three Commissioners for the TRC, and they oversaw the testimony of approximately 7,000 witnesses and hosted seven gatherings to receive testimonies and evidence. They also oversaw the review of residential school records.

In 2015, the TRC released its **multi-volume final report**<sup>22</sup> and held its closing ceremony at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Ontario. The TRC report included **94 Calls to Action**<sup>23</sup> for governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals to implement in order to honour the IRSS Survivors and the children who died at the schools and their families, and to address the ongoing impacts of residential schools and the systemic racism that gave rise thereto.

The Spirit Bear Virtual School and accompanying resources directly respond to the TRC's Calls to Action. All 94 Calls to Action must be implemented to honour the Survivors, their families, and the sacred lives of children and youth who did not come home.



### Calls to Action

- #62 We call on all governments in Canada to work with residential school Survivors and other Aboriginal people to give teachers the tools they need so that every student in Canada can learn about Aboriginal people and cultures, including residential schools. Teachers should also learn to use Aboriginal teaching styles.
- #63 We call on the leaders in charge of education in Canada to always work on improving education about Aboriginal people and cultures.

*Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action*<sup>24</sup> is a response to Calls to Action in education #62 and #63.<sup>25</sup>

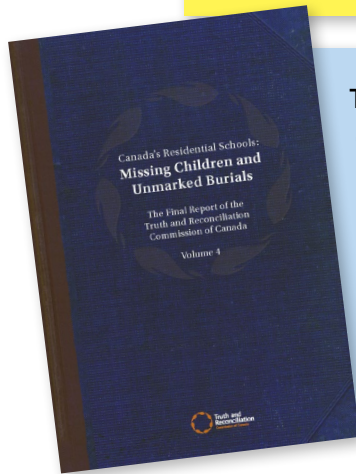
22 <https://nctr.ca/records/reports>

23 [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

24 <https://fncaringociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action>

25 To see all the Calls to Action in education, see calls 6–24 and 62–65 in *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, 2015 at <https://nctr.ca/records/reports>

While individual IRSS Survivor experiences vary, the TRC concluded that the IRSS amounted to “cultural genocide.” Many people argue that residential schools meet the definition of “genocide” as set out in the **United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**.<sup>26</sup> During his official visit to apologize for the Catholic Church’s role in residential schools in 2021, Pope Francis characterized the residential schools as “genocide.”



The TRC Final Report included the volume *Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials* about the children who never made it home from residential school. In May 2021, we learned that the unmarked graves of 215 children were found at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. Since then, unmarked graves and the remains of many more children have been found on the grounds of former residential schools across Canada. Survivors and their families have long spoken about the children who died at residential schools.

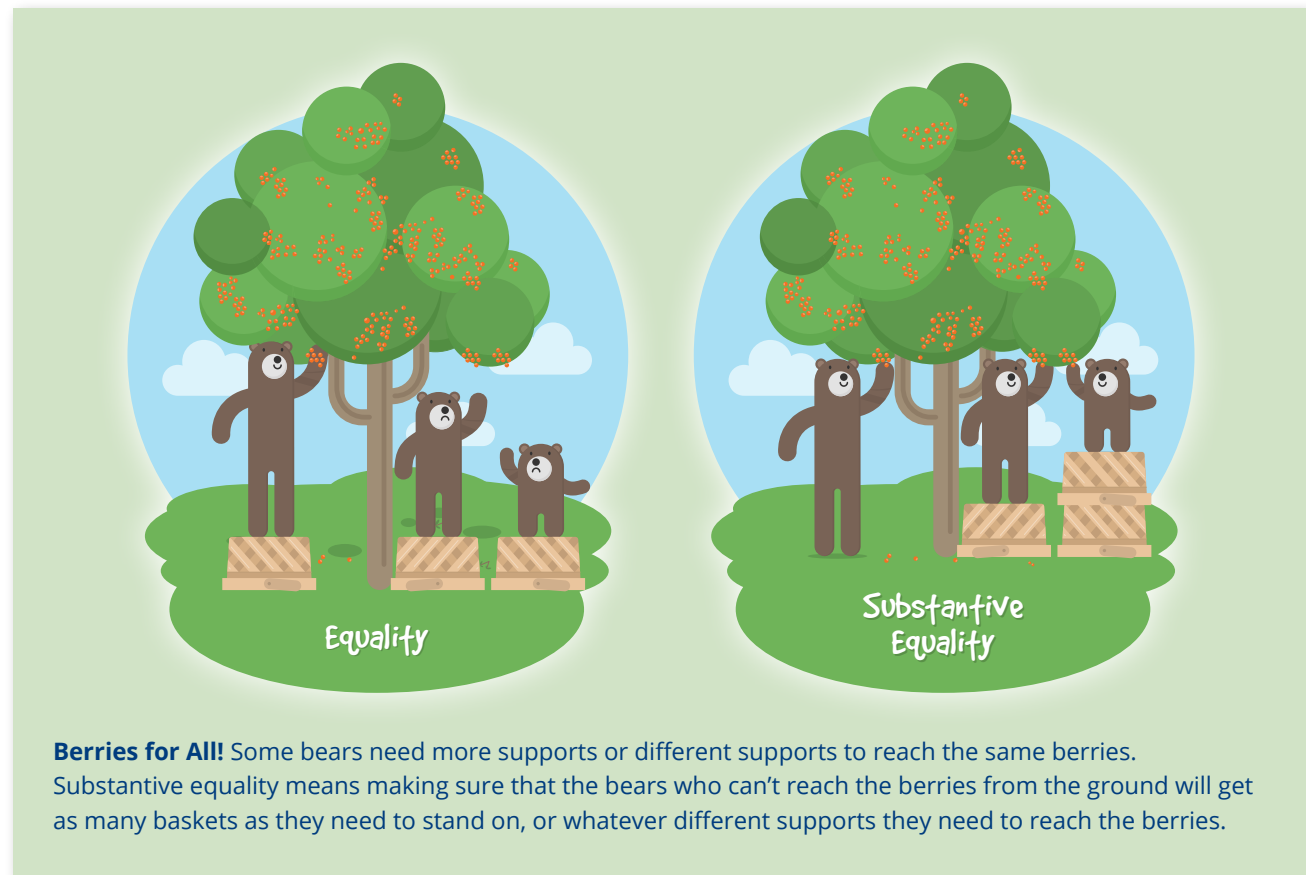
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26 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-prevention-and-punishment-crime-genocide>

# Did You Know?

## Did you know that substantive equality is different than equality?

Equality is when everyone is treated the same, despite where they are starting from. Substantive equality recognizes that not all people start from the same place with the same opportunities or privileges. Substantive equality ensures that everyone has the opportunity to succeed by providing some people with extra supports and/or different supports to make up for the disadvantage(s) they experience.



## Did you know that human rights set out minimum standards of how all people, including children, should be treated?

Human rights are written down in what are called Conventions. Conventions are also known as Treaties and Declarations. (Note: Conventions and treaties are binding in international law, while declarations are not).

There are seven main human rights treaties at the United Nations.<sup>27</sup> One of them sets out children’s rights in what is known as the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**,<sup>28</sup> or CRC for short. As of 2022, 196 countries around the world recognized the UNCR, including Canada. The CRC (Article 30) was the first international law to specifically recognize the importance of Indigenous children and youth growing up with members of their group so they can practice their culture and speak their language free from discrimination.

You can find a **child-friendly version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Caring Society’s website.**<sup>29</sup>

While the UNCR focuses on children, children and youth are also covered by the other six core human rights treaties, and Indigenous children’s rights are also included in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, more on this below).

## Did you know that human rights in Canada are protected by the *Canadian Human Rights Act*?

The *Canadian Human Rights Act*<sup>30</sup> of 1977 protects people in Canada from **discrimination and harassment**<sup>31</sup> that is based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital or family status, disability, genetic characteristics, and a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended.



27 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/core-international-human-rights-instruments-and-their-monitoring-bodies>

28 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

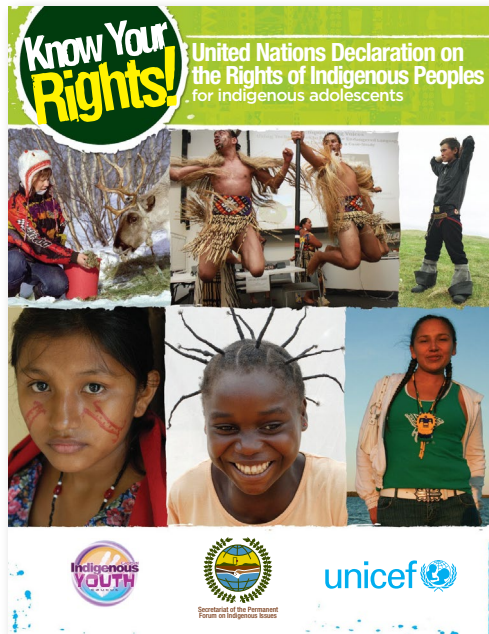
29 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/child-friendly-convention-rights-child>

30 <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/>

31 <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/about-human-rights/what-discrimination>



The *Canadian Human Rights Act* created both the **Canadian Human Rights Commission**<sup>32</sup> (Commission) and the **Canadian Human Rights Tribunal**<sup>33</sup> (Tribunal). Both organizations operate independently of each other and of the government. The Commission, among other responsibilities, deals with complaints of discrimination by federally regulated employers or service providers and sends them to the Tribunal for a hearing if more inquiry is needed. The Tribunal holds hearings and decides on cases that the Commission sends to it and also makes orders to solve discrimination, like a court would.



The youth-friendly version of UNDRIP was written for young people aged 13 to 19.<sup>35</sup>

### Did you know that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes Indigenous Peoples’ rights to self-determination, free, prior and informed consent, and more?

The adoption of the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**<sup>34</sup> in 2007 was the result of many years of work. There are approximately 370 million Indigenous peoples in some 90 countries around the world, including Canada. UNDRIP is an important declaration of their rights to self-determination, language, culture, lands, territories, resources, and spirituality. UNDRIP consists of 46 articles that describe specific rights and actions that governments must take to protect these rights. Canada did not adopt UNDRIP until June, 2021. UNDRIP should be read in concert with the other UN Human Rights Treaties/Declarations.

### Did you know that the *Indian Act* only applies to First Nations Peoples?

Passed in 1876, the *Indian Act* is the oldest law in Canada. The *Indian Act* created “Indian Reserves.” These are tracts of land held in trust for “Indian” bands by the Crown; band members have the right to live on their reserve, but the land is not owned by the band. The *Indian Act* was also used to force children and youth to attend residential schools and is still in force today. It is the main legislation defining the government’s interactions with over 600 First Nations bands, their band members, and their reserve lands.

32 <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en>

33 <https://www.chrt-tcdp.gc.ca/index-en.html>

34 <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

35 <https://fncaringociety.com/publications/know-your-rights-united-nations-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-indigenous>

## Did you know that the federal government is responsible for funding public services on reserves, while the provinces and territories fund them for everyone else?

The *Indian Act* governs the way that public services are funded on reserves, and the federal government is responsible for funding public services for people living on reserves and in the Yukon. The provinces and territories fund public services for everyone else. This means there are two systems of public services operating at the same time.

These different funding systems sometimes give rise to what are known as jurisdictional disputes. For example, in a case where a First Nations child needs a service or support, a provincial or territorial government and the federal government might disagree about which one of them is responsible for paying for the service or support. This is what happened in the case of Jordan River Anderson, and why the legal rule named after Jordan – Jordan’s Principle – requires that the government of first contact must pay for the service or support, and solve their dispute with the other government later.

## Did you know that Jordan’s Principle ensures First Nations children and youth on and off reserve get the help they need when they need it?

Jordan’s Principle<sup>36</sup> is a legal rule that the federal government must follow. It applies to all First Nations children and youth on and off reserve and in the Yukon and Northwest Territory who are recognized by their Nation, regardless of *Indian Act* status. The full implementation of Jordan’s Principle is the third TRC Call to Action.

As an educator, you can help make sure Jordan’s Principle is available to all First Nations children and youth who need it.<sup>37</sup>

### Accessing Jordan’s Principle for a child you know

Call the Jordan’s Principle Call Centre, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:  
1-855-JP-CHILD  
(1-855-572-4453)



<sup>36</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396042341/1568396159824>

# Spirit Bear's Virtual School Glossary: A Living Document

[Spirit Bear's Virtual School Glossary](#)<sup>38</sup> aims to support teachers and anyone who finds this resource valuable in making sense of reconciliation, justice, fairness, substantive equality, and ending discrimination against First Nations children, youth, and families. It is helpful to think of this list of words as starting points to your work toward reconciliation and to remember that the meanings of words change over time, and that words may hold different meanings for different people. In recognition of this, the Glossary is updated sporadically. The [link to the Glossary](#) is also available on the Spirit Bear Virtual School website.



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38 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-virtual-school-glossary>

## About this Learning Guide

This learning guide is part of a series of educational resources developed by the Caring Society and educational researchers at the University of Ottawa. It was written for teachers of elementary students, with many learning activities adaptable to other grade levels and to community groups outside of schools.

Educators using *Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum*<sup>39</sup> and this learning guide are encouraged to connect with other teachers in their school or school board communities who are doing work in truth and reconciliation. Educators are also advised to work in collaboration with their school district's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis consultants, leads, and/or itinerant educators.

Educators and other facilitators are also encouraged to look through the **Resources for Educators and Facilitators** section at the end of this learning guide before jumping into the lessons. There are many resources in this section that provide necessary context, historical and contemporary background information, and important understandings and knowledge. Resources include suggestions for reading, information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), the *Indian Act*, and the case before the Tribunal. Educators are also encouraged to learn more about the **Caring Society's Events**<sup>40</sup> throughout the year, as well as the **Reconciliation Ambearristers Program**,<sup>41</sup> to support the lessons in this learning guide.

Photo of Jordan River Anderson from *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*. © National Film Board of Canada



## Honouring Jordan River Anderson

*Jordan could not talk, yet people around the world heard his message. Jordan could not breathe on his own and yet he has given the breath of life to other children. Jordan could not walk but he has taken steps that governments are now just learning to follow.*

—Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director, First Nations Child & Family Caring Society

**Jordan River Anderson**<sup>42</sup> was born in 1999 and was a member of the Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. He was born with complex medical needs and had to spend the first two years of his life in

39 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-beary-caring-curriculum>

40 <https://fncaringsociety.com/events>

41 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/reconciliation-ambearristers>

42 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle/honouring-jordan-river-anderson>

the hospital. When Jordan was two years old, doctors said he could live in a family home. It should have been a happy time, but the federal and provincial governments could not agree on who would pay for his at home care because Jordan was First Nations. The reason this argument took place is because while the provincial governments pay for medical care for all other people, the federal government pays for First Nations children. Jordan spent over two more years in the hospital while governments argued before he tragically died at the age of five, never having lived in a home.

Jordan's family wanted to ensure this never happened to other children or youth, so Jordan's Principle was created in 2005 and adopted by the House of Commons in 2007. Unfortunately, Canada only started to implement Jordan's Principle after the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordered it to in 2016.

## About Jordan's Principle

**Jordan's Principle**<sup>43</sup> is a legal rule and child-first principle rooted in **substantive equality**<sup>44</sup> and named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. As you read above, Jordan spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospital, waiting to leave, while the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada argued over who should pay for his at-home care: care that would have been paid for immediately had Jordan not been First Nations. Jordan died in the hospital at the age of five years old, never having spent a day in a family home.

Sadly, payment disputes within and between federal and provincial governments over services for First Nations children and youth are not uncommon. The reason for this is that federal, provincial, and territorial governments often cannot agree on which government should pay for services of First Nations children and youth on-reserves, so they typically do not provide the service until they can sort out the payment issue.

With the support of their community of Norway House Cree Nation and others, the Anderson family gifted Jordan's name to the creation of the child-first principle to ensure First Nations children could access the services they need, when they need them, without denial, delay, or disruption. However, Canada did not implement Jordan's Principle as the family intended. Despite the unanimous support

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43 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

44 To learn more about substantive equality (versus formal equality), and analysis of how substantive equality is at the root of Jordan's Principle, see *Data Assessment and Framing of an Analysis of Substantive Equality Through the Application of Jordan's Principle* (2022): <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/data-assessment-and-framing-analysis-substantive-equality-through-application-jordans>





# How to Access Services and Supports Through Jordan's Principle

As of April, 2023

## What is Jordan's Principle?

Jordan's Principle is a legal rule and child-first principle named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. It ensures First Nations children receive the services and supports they need when they need them. Canada is legally responsible for implementing Jordan's Principle.

### Step 1

A First Nations child or a group of First Nations children needs services or supports.

### Step 2

Call the 24-hour Jordan's Principle call centre at **1-855-572-4453 (1-855-JP-CHILD)**. You will be connected with a Jordan's Principle Focal Point who will help you through the entire process. If the request is urgent, let the call centre know. Examples of urgent requests include: end-of-life care, risk of child entering child welfare system, safety concerns. If a situation changes to become urgent, call back to update the request. First Nations Service Coordinators are in some communities and agencies to assist families with requests. You do not need to work with Coordinator to make a request.

## Who is eligible?

First Nations children from birth to age of majority in the province/territory of residence who meet any one of the following criteria:

1. The child or one parent/guardian has *Indian Act* status or is eligible for status.
2. The child is recognized by their Nation for the purposes of Jordan's Principle.
3. The child ordinarily lives on reserve.

## What is covered?

Any service, support or item that a First Nations child needs. Multiple requests can be made for each child or group of children. Supports may be above what is normally provided in the province/territory.

### Step 3

You will be asked to provide some basic information, including:

1. Child's name
2. One referral from a professional or Elder/knowledge holder
3. Parent/guardian consent
4. Confirmation of eligibility

Quotes, cost estimates and length of service are not required for Canada to decide on the request.

In urgent cases, only verbal or written consent from the parent/guardian is needed; documentation can follow after the immediate needs are met.

In all cases, documentation should not be a barrier to accessing supports through Jordan's Principle.

Canada must approve or deny requests within these timelines:  
**INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS:**  
Urgent: within 12 hours  
Non-urgent: within 48 hours  
**GROUP REQUESTS:**  
Urgent: within 48 hours  
Non-urgent: within 1 week  
You will receive an official decision letter.

**IF APPROVED:**  
Canada will provide payment and reimbursement details.

**IF DENIED:**  
You will have one year to appeal the decision by emailing or writing a letter to your Jordan's Principle Focal Point. Full instructions will be in the official decision letter.

Learn more at <http://JordansPrinciple.ca>

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society  
[fncaringsociety.com](http://fncaringsociety.com)

of the House of Commons in 2007 for a broad definition, the federal government went on to implement Jordan's Principle in a manner so narrow that no First Nations children and youth qualified.

This started to change in 2013 when a courageous mother named Maurina Beadle from Pictou Landing First Nation in Nova Scotia took the federal government to court because they denied her son the help he needed under Jordan's Principle. Maurina won her case, and in 2013, the Federal Court ordered Canada to pay for her son's care (**2013 FC 342**).<sup>45</sup> This important case was the first step in establishing Jordan's Principle as a legal rule.

Jordan's Principle is grounded in substantive equality; it recognizes that First Nations children may need services beyond the kinds or levels of services available to non-First Nations children because of the impacts of Canada's colonial history and discrimination against First Nations children and families.



Learn more about Jordan River Anderson and Jordan's Principle on the Caring Society's website.<sup>47</sup>

You can download this poster from [this link](#).<sup>46</sup>

45 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/Ruling-%20Fed%20Court%20Beadle%20and%20Pictou%20Landing%20FN\\_0.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/Ruling-%20Fed%20Court%20Beadle%20and%20Pictou%20Landing%20FN_0.pdf)

46 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

47 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/jordans-principle-poster>

## The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Case

In a **landmark ruling on January 26, 2016**,<sup>48</sup> the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal) ruled that Canada's definition of Jordan's Principle was discriminatory and ordered the federal government to take immediate measures to implement the full scope of Jordan's Principle, so that all First Nations children and youth in Canada could get the health, education and social supports they need when they need them.

Canada failed to comply with the Tribunal's ruling, and three months later, in April 2016, the Tribunal issued its first non-compliance order against Canada. In all, the Tribunal has been forced to issue more than 20 additional orders, many of them non-compliance orders against Canada.

In 2020, Canada filed for judicial review (like an appeal) of the Tribunal's orders on eligibility for Jordan's Principle (**2020 CHRT 20**<sup>49</sup> and **2020 CHRT 36**<sup>50</sup>). The case was heard at the Federal Court from June 14–18, 2021, and the court once again ruled in favour of First Nations children.

Image adapted from *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2020), illustrated by Amanda Strong.



Today, First Nations children and youth on and off reserve who are recognized by their First Nation are eligible for Jordan's Principle. The most frequently accessed services are educational supports, allied health, and child development services.

In 2017, Cindy Blackstock and Eddie Robinson co-authored a book called *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, telling the story of Jordan's Principle and the related human rights legal case. The book is **available free online**<sup>51</sup> in French, English, Cree, and Carrier. Spotted Fawn Productions and the Caring Society produced a beautiful **stop-motion animated film**<sup>52</sup> by the same name in 2020. The book and the film both show how children and youth of all diversities stood with First Nations children and youth to achieve justice before the Tribunal and to ensure the government implemented Jordan's Principle. These resources are suitable for younger learners.

48 <https://fncaringsociety.com/fr/publications/2016-chrt-2-2016-tcdp-2>

49 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/2020-chrt-20>

50 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/2020-chrt-36>

51 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>

52 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/films>

In 2019, acclaimed National Film Board director Alanis Obomsawin produced a documentary film on Jordan's Principle entitled *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*,<sup>53</sup> which is suitable for middle school and highschool learners.

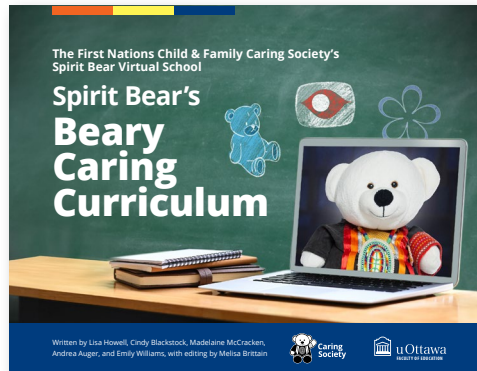
As of 2023, the Tribunal retains jurisdiction over Jordan's Principle, so further orders may be issued. Please refer to [jordansprinciple.ca](http://jordansprinciple.ca)<sup>54</sup> to stay informed, so that all your students understand the case and where it is at presently.

## Bear Witness Day

Celebrated annually on May 10, **Bear Witness Day**<sup>55</sup> honours Jordan River Anderson and invites people of all ages to "bear witness" to ensure Jordan's Principle is fully implemented. It is also Spirit Bear's birthday! Bear Witness Day invites people to learn about the legacy of Jordan River Anderson and the case before the Tribunal. On Bear Witness Day, students learn, spread awareness and take action to ensure First Nations children and youth receive the services and supports they need, when they need them.



## Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum



We recommend that you use this learning guide alongside *Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum*,<sup>56</sup> which draws on five guiding principles known as "Touchstones for Learning." Although we present the Touchstones as distinct from one another in the curriculum, it is important to remember are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The learning goals in this learning guide come from the curriculum, and the curriculum provides an overview of the guiding philosophies, worldviews, and framework for the learning guides created for the Spirit Bear Virtual School.

53 <https://www.nfb.ca/film/jordan-river-anderson-the-messenger>

54 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

55 <https://fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day>

56 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-beary-caring-curriculum>

# Ways to Learn with Spirit Bear!

1<sup>ST</sup> WAY

## WITH MY MIND

- I think a lot and learn things so it's important for me to get long sleeps and eat healthy food like honey and berries to make me feel the best I can!
- Learning about Canada's history and why reconciliation matters *beary* much!
- When I voice my thoughts, it can help my friends think, too! I won't be afraid to share my thoughts and I will be kind and respectful when others share theirs!
- Learning about the world around me helps me become a more caring, loving, and kind person. It also keeps my mind open to learn about new things!

2<sup>ND</sup> WAY

## WITH MY SPIRIT

- I can help my friends, family, and community reach their goals.
- I honour my culture and I think it is important to honour the cultures of other people, too. I know we can celebrate our different cultures and traditions in ways that make us feel proud, respected, and listened to.
- I am proud to be who I am because I am strong, hardworking, and kind to everyone around me.
- I believe every person living in Canada can end discrimination against First Nations kids.

3<sup>RD</sup> WAY

## WITH MY HEART

- I treat everyone I know with kindness, fairness, and respect.
- My love for my family, friends, community, and the land keeps me strong.
- I usually feel happy, but sometimes I feel sad because of what I learn or because of something I have gone through. I will take care of myself and talk about how I feel with a friend, or a trusted adult. I can also call the Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 or text the Kids Help Phone 686868 with the word CONNECT.
- When I learn about Jordan River Anderson and Shannen Koostachin, I want to make sure no other First Nations child is treated the way they have been because that makes me feel sad. I will share their stories with my friends, family, and community.

4<sup>TH</sup> WAY

## WITH MY BODY

- I will write letters and postcards to decision-makers in Canada and ask them to commit to the *Spirit Bear Plan* and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action*.
- I can create posters with my class, friends, family, and community, and stand up for First Nations kids at Have a Heart Day and Bear Witness Day.
- I love playing outside and learning from the land.
- By planting Heart Gardens, I can honour residential school survivors and the children who didn't come home.



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## Ways to Learn with Spirit Bear

Inspired by First Nations holistic learning philosophies, *Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum*, this learning guide, and the recommended assessment strategies are based on *Ways to Learn with Spirit Bear*.<sup>57</sup> Students can demonstrate what they know and how they know it using cognitive, physical, emotional, and non-denominational modalities. We encourage teachers to be creative using a range of assessment strategies, such as presentations, plays, songs, newspaper articles, letters, photography, discussions, podcasts, artwork, videos, PSAs, and many others. Opportunities for learning outdoors are suggested throughout this learning guide.

57 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/ways\\_to\\_learn\\_with\\_spirit\\_bear\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/ways_to_learn_with_spirit_bear_en_0.pdf)



# Learning Activities

This section is organized by the following levels: **Grades K-2**, **Grades 3-4**, and **Grades 5-6**. Each level features **learning goals** connected to *Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum*<sup>58</sup> and the TRC Calls to Action. Moreover, four **learning experiences (lessons)** with **guiding questions** and embedded resources are offered for each level. Educators are encouraged to respond to the students in their classrooms who may be working at different levels than their current grade. Again, although these guides were written primarily for educators, they are adaptable for community groups to use and learn with.

Throughout these sections, **orange links** will take you back to sections above in order to provide you with more context and knowledge as you teach and learn with your students. The **blue links** take you to external resources that are meant to be used as learning materials in your lessons. Words in **highlighted in light blue** are in *Spirit Bear's Virtual School Glossary*.<sup>59</sup>



Image from *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2020), illustrated by Amanda Strong.

58 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-beary-caring-curriculum>

59 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-virtual-school-glossary>



## Grades K-2

### Learning Goals

All words **highlighted in blue** are in *Spirit Bear's Virtual School Glossary*.<sup>60</sup>

- Demonstrate an understanding of what children and youth need to grow up safely and happily at home and at school. Begin to learn about **human rights** and **children's rights**.
- Describe the role of **fairness** in ensuring all children and youth have access to things like education, health, and help for families going through tough times.
- Learn about Jordan River Anderson, what **Jordan's Principle** is, and why Jordan's Principle is needed.
- Describe why First Nations children and youth were receiving fewer services than other children.
- Think about what it means to tell the **truth** and listen to the truths of others.
- Learn about **Spirit Bear** and the **TRC Calls to Action**.
- Understand and describe what it means to you to **bear witness**.
- Participate in **Have a Heart Day**<sup>61</sup> and **Bear Witness Day**<sup>62</sup> at your school or in your community.

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

From *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation and Commission of Canada Calls to Action*.<sup>63</sup>

- We call on Canada to count how many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children and youth are in alternative care and think about better ways to help them be happy, healthy, and safe with their families whenever possible.
- We call on all governments in Canada to make sure First Nations children and youth can get help through Jordan's Principle.
- We call on the leaders in charge of education in Canada to always work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples when working on how to improve education that is about them.

60 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-virtual-school-glossary>

61 <https://fncaringsociety.com/have-heart-day>

62 <https://fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day>

63 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action>

## Learning Experiences and Guiding Questions

### Learning Experience 1

**Title of lesson:** Learn about **Jordan River Anderson**'s life and legacy (see p. 17)

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-3 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- Who was Jordan?
- Who is his family?
- Why did Jordan stay in the hospital for his whole life?
- What can we learn from his story?
- How does learning about Jordan make you feel?
- Why does it make you feel that way?

**Lesson sequence:**

- Show your students a **picture of Jordan River Anderson** (see p. 17) and tell them his story in your own words. Focus on **the love his family had for him** (see photo on p. 26) and how happy they were that he was born. Explain that he had very serious medical needs and had to spend his first two years in the hospital. When he was two years old, the doctors said he could go home, but the adults in the **government** (see p. 18) argued about who should pay for his at-home care, and Jordan died at the age of five, still in the hospital.
- You can show your students **this short video**<sup>64</sup> honouring Jordan's birthday and watch the film *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*.<sup>65</sup>
- Read the book *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*<sup>66</sup> to your students. For younger children, you may need to read the story over several days and stop and talk about many of the words and concepts. Use your judgement here. For added learning, read the book to children in **Cree or Carrier**,<sup>67</sup> or show them what the book looks like in different languages. Try to say a few words in a First Nations language.

64 <https://vimeo.com/367749297>

65 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/films>

66 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>

67 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>

- Discuss how children and youth of all diversities stood with Spirit Bear and First Nations children and youth to make Jordan's Principle happen.
- Students can draw pictures that show their feelings about the situation. How do they feel that Jordan's rights were not respected?

**Next steps:**

Students will enjoy *Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation Activity Book*<sup>68</sup> as well as the *Bear Witness Day Colouring and Crossword*<sup>69</sup>

Photo of Jordan River Anderson with his mother, Virginia Anderson, from *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*. © National Film Board of Canada



68 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-reconciliation-2023-activity-book>

69 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear\\_witness\\_day\\_colouring\\_sheet\\_2.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear_witness_day_colouring_sheet_2.pdf)

## Learning Experience 2

**Title of lesson:** An introduction to **children's rights**

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-3 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- What does fairness mean to you?
- How does it feel when you are treated unfairly?
- How does it feel when someone is kind to you?
- How can you show kindness to others?
- What does it mean to have a "right" to something?
- What do you think all children and youth have a right to?
- Why?

**Lesson sequence:**

- Start your lesson off with a walk outside the school if possible. Stop and stand in a circle and ask students what their favourite things to do outside are. Is it playing on the play structure? Or swinging on the swings? What about playing soccer or basketball? Or maybe it's splashing in the puddles after the rain? Skipping? Hopscotch? There are so many wonderful things to do!
- After students have shared, ask them to think about the differences of playing outside and inside. Remind them that all children and youth have the right to play, no matter who they are, where they live, or what health issues they might have. Jordan had the right to play too, but because he was in the hospital for his entire life, he didn't get to ever play outside and experience all the wonderful activities the class just talked about.
- When you go inside, or on another day, have a discussion about rights. Remind students about your earlier talk about having the right to play. What are some other rights that children and youth have? Why are they important? Why do some children and youth not have their rights respected?
- Show your students the **Child-Friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child**.<sup>70</sup> You can decide how in depth you want to go into this based on your students.

<sup>70</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/child-friendly-convention-rights-child>

Image adapted from *Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams* (2018), illustrated by Amanda Strong.



- Ask your students to think about Jordan again. Which of Jordan’s rights were not respected? Talk about the word **fairness**. What does it mean? How does it feel when you are treated unfairly? Does fairness mean that everyone is treated exactly the same? What is the difference between equality and **substantive equality**<sup>71</sup> (see p. 12)?
- Next, your students can pick one or two children’s rights and design a poster with a drawing that shows their understanding of the right they chose. They can write, “I have the right to ...”

**Next steps:**

Your students can write or draw postcards with pictures of children’s rights and ask the government to be fair and kind to all children and youth in Canada by honouring Jordan’s Principle (TRC Call to Action #2). **Mailing letters to elected officials**<sup>72</sup> is Canada is free!

### Learning Experience 3

**Title of lesson:** Celebrate **Bear Witness Day** and Raise Awareness

**Suggested timeframe:** 2 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- What does it mean to bear witness?
- How can we each bear witness and honour Jordan?
- What is Bear Witness Day?

71 This term is also in Spirit Bear’s Virtual School Glossary: <https://fncaringociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-virtual-school-glossary>

72 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/en/contact-us>



**Lesson sequence:**

- After your class has learned about Jordan River Anderson and Jordan's Principle, it is time to celebrate **Bear Witness Day**.<sup>73</sup> Bear Witness Day is celebrated annually on May 10, which is also Spirit Bear's birthday. It is also an important day because it is the day by which the **Canadian Human Rights Tribunal** (see p. 20) ordered Canada to fully implement **Jordan's Principle** (see p. 18) in 2016. There are many ways that you and your students can celebrate and raise awareness of Bear Witness Day, including some of the ways we suggest below.
- Watch this **public service announcement about Bear Witness Day**.<sup>74</sup> Afterwards, invite your students into a circle, and ask: What does it mean to **bear witness**? How can we each bear witness and honour Jordan? How can we stand up for First Nations children's rights?
- On Bear Witness Day, invite your students to bring a teddy bear to school (ensure you have extras for children who might not have one). Your students can do a variety of activities: make their own bear hats (watch the tutorial **here**<sup>75</sup>), do a **crossword colouring puzzle**,<sup>76</sup> or listen to you read ***Spirit Bear and Children Make History***.<sup>77</sup> You could show the animated film ***Spirit Bear and Children Make History***<sup>78</sup> and pop some popcorn. (Fun fact: Did you know popcorn is an Indigenous food from South America?)
- Ask your students to share why Bear Witness Day is important. They can write or draw their thoughts and you can then put these together and display them outside the classroom to raise awareness (Our class celebrates Bear Witness Day because...)

73 <https://fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day>

74 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLJVn4jfvAw>

75 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sargT4sLX2Y&feature=youtu.be&ab\\_channel=fncaringsociety](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sargT4sLX2Y&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=fncaringsociety)

76 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear\\_witness\\_day\\_colouring\\_sheet\\_2.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear_witness_day_colouring_sheet_2.pdf)

77 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>

78 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/films>

**Next steps:**

**Mail postcards to elected officials**<sup>79</sup> to remind them that all First Nations children and youth deserve to be treated with kindness and Jordan's Principle must be honoured.

### Learning Experience 4

**Title of lesson:** Every Child Matters

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-3 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- What does Spirit Bear say about the TRC Calls to Action?
- How can we support the TRC Calls to Action in our learning and friendships?
- What does the 'Every Child Matters' movement teach us?

Image from *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2020), illustrated by Amanda Strong.



<sup>79</sup> <https://www.ourcommons.ca/en/contact-us>

**Lesson sequence:**

- You can begin this lesson by (re)introducing your class to **Spirit Bear**.<sup>80</sup> Start by asking them what they know about Spirit Bear and write down their ideas on a chart paper/smart/white board. Remind them that Spirit Bear represents all the First Nations children and youth who have not been treated fairly by Canada. He also represents the thousands of other children and youth who have committed to learning about the case and have taken part in actions that support reconciliation and fairness (**substantive equality**, see p. 12).
- Next, show them a picture of Spirit Bear wearing his orange shirt and talk about what it means when we say "**Every Child Matters**."<sup>81</sup> Write down their ideas. You may also wish to read them *Phyllis's Orange Shirt*<sup>82</sup> by Phyllis Webstad and *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past*.<sup>83</sup> Remember, honouring and remembering that Every Child Matters is important every day, not just on September 30. The **TRC Calls to Action** (see p. 9) are things we should be working on every day. When people have to work on a big unfairness, they often come together to fix things in what is called "a movement." You can explain that a social movement is when a group of people come together to make changes and the good changes begin to spread.
- Next, you can create a collaborative mural together to show everything you learned about Jordan River Anderson, **children's rights**, bearing witness, and Every Child Matters. You might make the theme of your mural "A world where every child matters looks like this ...." Students can draw pictures and write messages.

**Next steps:**

Consider partnering with another class so that your students can share what they learned with others. The other class could be with their older reading buddies or another class that they have a relationship with.

80 <https://fncaringsociety.com/about-spirit-bear>

81 <https://nctr.ca/education/every-child-matters>

82 [https://goodminds.com/products/9781989122242?variant=37622352543899&currency=CAD&utm\\_medium=product\\_sync&utm\\_source=google&utm\\_content=sag\\_organic&utm\\_campaign=sag\\_organic&gclid=Cj0KCQjw8e-gBhD0ARIsAjiDsaW47xc4r4E-jrD6jeQKNulrFfgFYC34b8UMaHaY7CT6OpOia5MPcawaApGvEALw\\_wcB](https://goodminds.com/products/9781989122242?variant=37622352543899&currency=CAD&utm_medium=product_sync&utm_source=google&utm_content=sag_organic&utm_campaign=sag_organic&gclid=Cj0KCQjw8e-gBhD0ARIsAjiDsaW47xc4r4E-jrD6jeQKNulrFfgFYC34b8UMaHaY7CT6OpOia5MPcawaApGvEALw_wcB)

83 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>



## Grades 3-4

### Learning Goals

All words in bold are in [Spirit Bear's Virtual School Glossary](#).<sup>84</sup>

- Demonstrate an understanding of what you need to grow up safely and happily at home and at school. Do you consider these needs **human rights**?
- Describe Jordan River Anderson's life and legacy and how the **discrimination** he faced impacted his life and his family's life.
- Identify the difference between living **on-reserve** and **off-reserve**.
- Explain what the words **non-discrimination**, **substantive equality**, and **fairness** mean and what you can do to put them into practice.
- Understand and explain what **Jordan's Principle**<sup>85</sup> is and why it is so important.
- Understand and describe what it means to **bear witness**.
- Create ways to raise awareness about **Jordan's Principle** and participate in **Bear Witness Day** at your school or in your community.
- Learn about the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** and the **TRC Calls to Action**. Think about how the TRC Calls to Action relate to your own life as a student, citizen in Canada, or other roles you have. How might you reimagine your learning (and your life) in relation to the TRC Calls to Action? How will you respond to the TRC Calls to Action?

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

From *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation and Commission of Canada Calls to Action*:<sup>86</sup>

- We call on Canada to count how many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children and youth are in care and think about better ways to help them be happy, healthy, and safe.

<sup>84</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-virtual-school-glossary>

<sup>85</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

<sup>86</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action>

- We call on all governments in Canada to make sure First Nations children and youth can get help through Jordan's Principle.
- We call on all governments in Canada to work with residential school Survivors and other First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to give teachers the tools they need so that every student in Canada can learn about First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and cultures, including residential schools.
- We call on the leaders in charge of education in Canada to always work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples when working on how to improve education that is about them

## Learning Experiences and Guiding Questions

### Learning Experience 1

**Title of lesson:** Learn about Jordan River Anderson's life and legacy

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-4 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- Who was Jordan? Who is his family?
- What can we learn from his story?
- Why did Jordan have to stay in the hospital for his whole life?
- How does learning about Jordan make you feel?
- Why does it make you feel that way?
- If you could talk to Jordan, what would you say to him?

**Lesson sequence:**

- As a class, learn about **Jordan River Anderson** (see p. 17). Who was Jordan? Who is his family? What can we learn from his story? How did **discrimination** impact Jordan's life and his family's life?
- Show your students **this public service announcement**<sup>87</sup> made by students.

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RatzhHmFd-M>



- Watch [these poignant interviews](#)<sup>88</sup> about Jordan River Anderson. Make sure that you stop and discuss key vocabulary before, during, and after the videos. After watching the videos, ask students to get into partners or small groups. Then, ask students to discuss the following questions:
  - > What did you learn about Jordan River Anderson?
  - > Why did Jordan have to stay in the hospital for his whole life?
  - > How does learning about Jordan's situation make you feel? Why does it make you feel that way?
  - > What do you think the **Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba** (see p. 18) should have done? Explain your opinions using what you heard in the videos.
- After students have had time to discuss these questions in a group, invite groups to share their learning with the larger group. Then, in groups or individually, students can do the following activity:
  - > Make a poster or a slide show about Jordan River Anderson and teach others what you have learned about him. Don't forget to outline your actions for reconciliation.




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#### Next steps:

Students can teach another class about their learning. This could be with their reading buddies or another class in the school.



Image adapted from *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2020), illustrated by Amanda Strong.

<sup>88</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hytamttN\\_5I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hytamttN_5I)

## Learning Experience 2

**Title of lesson:** Learn about Jordan’s Principle

**Suggested timeframe:** 3–4 classes

**Guiding questions:**

- Why is Jordan’s Principle so important?
- What does it mean to live on-reserve or off-reserve?
- What is funding?
- What types of services does the government fund?

**Lesson sequence:** For this lesson, your students should have some knowledge about **Jordan River Anderson** (see p. 17) and **Jordan’s Principle**.<sup>89</sup>

- If possible, start your lesson off with a walk outside the school. Stop and stand in a circle and ask students what their favourite things to do outside are. Is it playing on the play structure? Or swinging on the swings? What about playing soccer or basketball? Or maybe it’s splashing in the puddles after the rain? Skipping? Hopscotch? There are so many wonderful things to do!
- After all students have shared, ask them to think about the differences of playing outside and inside. Remind them that all children and youth have the right to play no matter who they are, where they live, or what health issues they might have. Jordan had the right to play too, but because he was in the hospital for his entire life, he didn’t get to ever play outside, and experience all the wonderful activities the class just talked about. Next, give your students the chance to play!
- Once your students have played (or the next day), head inside. Explain that today you will learn about the legacy that Jordan left for others: a gift called “**Jordan’s Principle**.”<sup>90</sup> Explain that Jordan’s Principle is a legal rule that makes sure First Nations children and youth get the services they need, when they need them. You will also need to teach your students about the **Jordan’s Principle** (see p. 18).

<sup>89</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

<sup>90</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

- Explain that children and youth all over Canada are learning about Jordan and taking action to demand that the government follow the rule. At this point, show your students these student-made Jordan’s Principle Youth Public Service Announcements (PSA): [Short version](#)<sup>91</sup>; [Long version](#)<sup>92</sup>; [American Sign Language](#)<sup>93</sup>. You can also read this [Jordan’s Principle Information Sheet](#)<sup>94</sup> and this [Jordan’s Principle infographic](#).<sup>95</sup> You can also show your students this [CBC Kids News video](#)<sup>96</sup> about Jordan’s Principle and the story that inspired it.
- Afterwards, do a “placemat activity” with your students. Prepare four sheets of chart paper with the following written in the middle of each sheet of paper (one question per sheet):
  - > What is Jordan’s Principle, in your own words?
  - > Why is Jordan’s Principle so important?
  - > What does it mean to live on-reserve?
  - > What are some of the impacts of First Nations children and youth on reserve receiving less funding?
- Put the four sheets of paper on tables around the room. Group students into four groups. Before they rotate, make sure they each have a marker to write with. Give each group a few minutes at each table. When the groups have rotated through all “stations,” ask the group to present the sheet of paper they are sitting at.



Image adapted from *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2020), illustrated by Amanda Strong.

91 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBLbI8szM2U>

92 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RatzhHmFd-M>

93 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K400DWGt5bE>

94 <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/Jordan%27s%20Principle%20Information%20Sheet%202023%20EN.pdf>

95 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/jordans-principle-poster>

96 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLlSjccF30k>

**Next steps:** Go back outside and have a circle. Ask students to reflect on what they have learned so far about Jordan and Jordan's Principle. Students will enjoy *Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation Activity Book*.<sup>97</sup>

### Learning Experience 3

**Title of lesson:** Children's Rights

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-3 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- How did discrimination impact Jordan's and his family's life?
- What do the concepts of substantive equality, fairness, kindness and non-discrimination mean?
- What do they have in common?
- What is the difference between substantive equality and equality?

**Lesson sequence:**

- In this learning activity, your students will learn about the **children's rights** (see p. 13). Begin your lesson by having a discussion about what rights are. Everyone has them, but why are some people's not upheld? Why do human rights and children's rights matter?
- Next, show your students the **Child-Friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child**.<sup>98</sup> As you and your students *Canadian Human Rights Act* (see p. 13) their rights as children and youth in child-friendly language, connect this to Jordan River Anderson and how his rights were not respected nor listened to because he was First Nations. This is called **discrimination**, and it is not right. How did discrimination affect Jordan's life and the lives of his family?
- Take some time to talk about these concepts: equality, **substantive equality** (see p. 12), **fairness**, kindness, and **non-discrimination**. Give examples of how these concepts work together to create healthy and safe environments for all of us.

<sup>97</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-reconciliation-2023-activity-book>

<sup>98</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/child-friendly-convention-rights-child>

- For this activity, students can work solo, in pairs, or in small groups. Ask them to pick (or assign) one or two of the children's rights on the [Child-Friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).<sup>99</sup> Once students have picked the right(s) they want to focus on, they can choose from the following activities:
  - > Research more about the right(s) they selected. What does this right mean? When did the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)<sup>100</sup> come to be? How many countries have recognized the Convention on the Rights of the Child? Students can make and present a “mini-research” report.
  - > Make a poster, painting, or drawing depicting the right(s) they have chosen. How do they visual these rights? Students can present their artistic interpretations to the class.
  - > Students can write a narrative based on one of the rights of the child. For example, article 15 is about having the right to make friends, so students might write a short story about making friends.
- Emphasize to the students that all the rights within the Convention on the Rights of the Child are minimum standards that every child should enjoy. There is no competition between rights- they are all important for everyone.

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**Next steps:**

Have a closing circle and ask, “Why are children’s rights so important, and what can we do to raise awareness of child rights?”

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<sup>99</sup> <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/child-friendly-convention-rights-child>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>



## Learning Experience 4

**Title of lesson:** Celebrate Bear Witness Day and Raise Awareness

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-3 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- What does it mean to bear witness?
- How can we each bear witness in our daily lives and on Bear Witness Day?
- How can you honour Jordan? How might you celebrate Bear Witness Day?
- What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- What are the TRC Calls to Action and what do they say about Jordan's Principle?

**Lesson sequence:**

- After you and your class have learned about Jordan River Anderson and Jordan's Principle, it is time to celebrate **Bear Witness Day**.<sup>101</sup> It is an important day because it was the day by which **Canadian Human Rights Tribunal** (see p. 20) ordered Canada to fully Jordan's Principle in 2016. It is also Spirit Bear's birthday!
- Watch this **public service announcement about Bear Witness Day**.<sup>102</sup> Afterwards, invite your students into a circle and ask: What does it mean to **Bear Witness**? How can we each bear witness and honour Jordan?
- Plan the day by inviting your students to bring their favourite teddy bear to school, depending on your student's ages and interests. Ensure you have extras for children and youth who might not have one.
- Your students can do a variety of activities: make their own **bear hat**<sup>103</sup> (watch the tutorial **here**<sup>104</sup>), do a **crossword colouring puzzle**,<sup>105</sup> or listen to you read ***Spirit Bear and Children Make History***.<sup>106</sup> You might show the film ***Spirit Bear and Children Make History***<sup>107</sup> and pop some popcorn!

101 <https://fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day>

102 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLJVn4jfvAw>

103 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear\\_crown\\_template.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear_crown_template.pdf)

104 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sargT4sLX2Y&feature=youtu.be&ab\\_channel=fncaringsociety](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sargT4sLX2Y&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=fncaringsociety)

105 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear\\_witness\\_day\\_colouring\\_sheet\\_2.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear_witness_day_colouring_sheet_2.pdf)

106 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>

107 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/films>



Image adapted from *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams* (2019), illustrated by Amanda Strong.

- As a class, read *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation and Commission of Canada Calls to Action* in **English or French**.<sup>108</sup> Explain that the **TRC**<sup>109</sup> spent many years travelling across Canada and listening to testimonies from residential school survivors and family members to understand the injustices that many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people faced while attending the schools. Based on what they found out, the TRC released **94 Calls to Action**<sup>110</sup> to help us learn from the past to help fix some of the injustices First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples still face. Some of the TRC Calls to Action are things that hospitals, schools, courts, sports and arts organizations, and the government have been called to respond to. The great thing is that you can get involved too! We all have a responsibility. Explain that today, on **Bear Witness Day**,<sup>111</sup> you are going to learn about some of the **TRC Calls to Action**. (There are 94 of them, so as the educator, you'll need to decide how to go about this in your context. Make sure that you do the first few, at least, as these have to do with Jordan's Principle).
- After students explore some of the TRC Calls to Action using *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation and Commission of Canada Calls to Action*,<sup>112</sup> they might choose one of the following activities:
  - > They can make a podcast or a Public Service Announcement about the Call to Action that they learned about to educate others;
  - > they can write a blog post or a journal reflecting on what it means to **bear witness** to the TRC Calls to Action;
  - > or they can create a work of art reflecting what they have learned about Jordan River Anderson and connecting his life and legacy to one (or more) of the TRC Calls to Action.

108 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action>

109 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEj5vjc2EDk>

110 [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

111 <https://fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day>

112 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action>

There is an opportunity here for children to learn about the importance of respecting the rights of persons with disabilities or persons speaking different languages by creating resources that are accessible to them too!

**Next steps:**

**Mail postcards to elected officials**<sup>113</sup> to remind them that all First Nations children and youth deserve to be treated with kindness and Jordan's Principle must be honoured!

Image from the film *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (2021), by Spotted Fawn Productions.



<sup>113</sup> <https://www.ourcommons.ca/en/contact-us>

## Grades 5-6

### Learning Goals

All words in bold are in [Spirit Bear's Virtual School Glossary](#).<sup>114</sup>

- Describe Jordan River Anderson's life and legacy and how the **discrimination** he faced impacted his life and the lives of his family members.
- Identify the difference between living **on-reserve and off-reserve**. Consider and compare how differences in **funding** affect **First Nations** children, youth, families, and communities living **on reserve** and the impact on their right to receive equitable and culturally appropriate services.
- Explain what the words **non-discrimination**, **equality**, **substantive equality**, and **fairness** mean and what you can do to put them into practice.
- Understand and explain what **Jordan's Principle** is and why it is so important. And describe what it means to **bear witness**.
- Understand some of the past and present consequences and harms of the **Indian Act**.
- Describe the human rights case for First Nations children and youth before the **Canadian Human Rights Tribunal** and how the case connects to Jordan's Principle and the rights of children. Create ways to raise awareness about **Jordan's Principle** and participate in **Bear Witness Day** at your school or in your community.
- Learn about the **TRC Calls to Action**, including **Jordan's Principle**, and respond to them in your schools, at home, and in your community.

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

From [Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation and Commission of Canada Calls to Action](#):<sup>115</sup>

- We call on Canada to count how many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children and youth are in care and think about better ways to help them be happy, healthy, and safe.

114 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-virtual-school-glossary>

115 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action>

- We call on all governments in Canada to make sure First Nations children and youth can get help through Jordan's Principle.
- We call on all governments in Canada to work with residential school Survivors and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to give teachers the tools they need so that every student in Canada can learn about and from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and cultures, including residential schools.
- We call on the leaders in charge of education in Canada to always work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples when working on how to improve education that is about them.
- We call on all governments in Canada to respect its obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- We call on all governments in Canada to use the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a guide for reconciliation.
- We call on Canada to create a plan to accomplish all the goals in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## Learning Experiences and Guiding Questions

### Learning Experience 1

**Title of lesson:** Learn about Jordan River Anderson's life and legacy

**Suggested timeframe:** 4 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

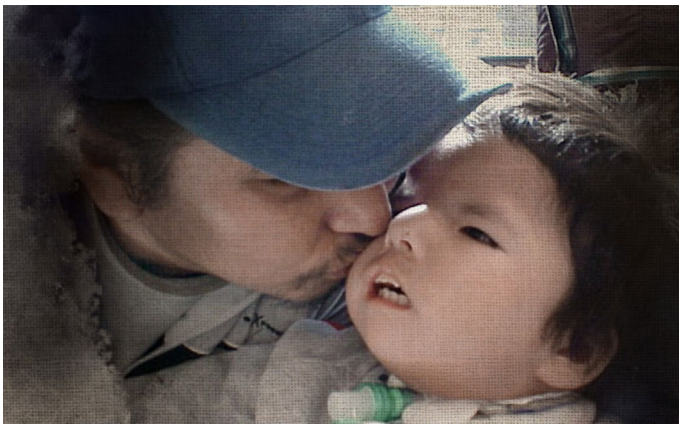
- What is Jordan's Principle?
- Why is Jordan's Principle so important?
- Who was Jordan River Anderson?
- How can you honour Jordan's life?
- How did discrimination impact Jordan's life and the lives of his family members?
- What do the concepts of substantive equality, fairness, kindness, and non-discrimination mean?
- What do they have in common?
- What is the difference between substantive equality and equality?



**Lesson sequence:**

- As a class, learn about **Jordan River Anderson** (see p. 17). Who was Jordan? Who is his family? What can we learn from his story? How did discrimination impact Jordan's life and the lives of his family? How did the **Indian Act** (see p. 14) impact Jordan's life?
- Start by watching **these poignant interviews**<sup>116</sup> about Jordan's life and legacy. Make sure that you stop and discuss key vocabulary before, during, and after the videos. Explain that children and youth all over Canada are learning about Jordan and taking action to demand that the government follow Jordan's Principle. At this point, show your students these student-made Jordan's Principle Youth Public Service Announcements (PSA): **Short version**<sup>117</sup>; **Long version**<sup>118</sup>; **American Sign Language**.<sup>119</sup> You can also read this **Jordan's Principle Information Sheet**<sup>120</sup> and this **Jordan's Principle infographic**<sup>121</sup> (in either English or French). You can also show your students this **CBC Children and youth video**<sup>122</sup> about Jordan's Principle and the story that inspired it. Remind your students that, along with applying to health, Jordan's Principle also applies to education and social services.
- After watching the videos, ask students to get into partners or small groups. Then, ask students to discuss the following questions:
  - > What did you learn about Jordan River Anderson?
  - > Why did Jordan have to stay in the hospital for his whole life?
  - > How does learning about Jordan make you feel? Why does it make you feel that way?

Photo of Jordan River Anderson and his father, Ernest Anderson, from *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*. © National Film Board of Canada



116 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hytamttN\\_5I&ab\\_channel=JulienLeGuerrier](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hytamttN_5I&ab_channel=JulienLeGuerrier)

117 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBLbl8szM2U>

118 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RatzhHmFd-M>

119 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K400DWGt5bE>

120 <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/publications/jordans-principle-information-sheet>

121 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/jordans-principle-poster>

122 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLlSjccF30k>

- > What do you think the Government of **Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba** (see p. 18) should have done? Explain your opinions using what you heard in the videos.
- > What is Jordan's Principle, in your own words?
- > What do the concepts of substantive equality, fairness, kindness, and non-discrimination mean? What do they have in common? What is the difference between **substantive equality** (see p. 12) and equality?
- After students have had time to discuss these questions in a group, invite groups to share their learning with the larger group. Then, in groups or individually, students can choose one of the following activities:
  - > Write to the federal government: **Prime Minister, Minister of Health, and/or Minister of Indigenous Services**<sup>123</sup> and ask that Jordan's life be honoured by fully implementing Jordan's Principle.
  - > Write to the provincial/territorial government: **Prime Minister, Minister of Health, and/or Minister of Indigenous Services**<sup>124</sup> and ask that they adopt Jordan's Principle in the same way the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordered the federal government to.
  - > Make a poster or a slide show about Jordan River Anderson and teach others what you have learned about him and what it means to bear witness.

**Next steps:**

Students may enjoy this **crossword colouring puzzle**.<sup>125</sup>

123 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/en/contact-us>

124 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/en/contact-us>

125 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear\\_witness\\_day\\_colouring\\_sheet\\_2.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/bear_witness_day_colouring_sheet_2.pdf)

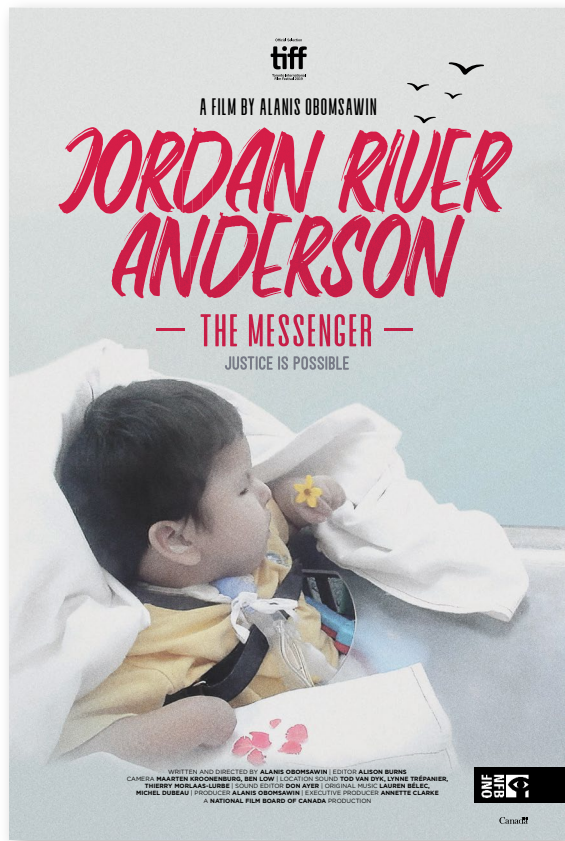
## Learning Experience 2

**Title of lesson:** Learn about Jordan's Principle and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal).

**Suggested timeframe:** 4-7 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- What is the *Canadian Human Rights Act*?
- What is the Canadian Human Rights Commission?
- What is the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal?
- What did the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal say about Jordan's Principle?
- How has the Canadian government responded to the Tribunal's orders to immediately and fully implement Jordan's Principle?
- What does it mean to live on-reserve?
- Why does access to services change whether you are on-reserve or off-reserve?
- In the film that Alanis Obomsawin from the Abenaki First Nation made about Jordan and Jordan's Principle, called *Jordan River Anderson, the Messenger*,<sup>126</sup> Alanis referred to him as "the messenger." What do you think this means?



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Board of Canada

126 <https://www.nfb.ca/film/jordan-river-anderson-the-messenger/>

**Lesson sequence:**

- Start this lesson off by teaching your students about the *Canadian Human Rights Act*<sup>127</sup> and the *Canadian Human Rights Commission*.<sup>128</sup> Show this [short video](#).<sup>129</sup>
- Next describe **Canadian Human Rights Tribunal** (see p. 20) human rights case filed by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Caring Society) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in 2007. You'll need to do some research on the case before this lesson. The Caring Society's *I am a witness*<sup>130</sup> website is the best place to start. Read the [Background](#)<sup>131</sup> page and explore the [Timeline and Documents](#)<sup>132</sup> section to begin your research.
- Show your students [this video about the Tribunal case](#).<sup>133</sup> Explain that the Tribunal case is connected to Jordan's Principle, because the case is about First Nations children and youth having the right to access the services they need to be healthy and safe. In 2016, [the Tribunal ruled](#)<sup>134</sup> that the Canadian Government must immediately stop discriminating by ensuring First Nations children, youth, and families receive substantively equal child and family services and implement the full scope of Jordan's Principle on and off reserve. The Tribunal retained jurisdiction to ensure its order was implemented. The Tribunal has issued over 20 non-compliance and procedural orders against Canada since 2016 to ensure the discrimination stops. As of the summer of 2023, the case is still ongoing.

127 <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/>

128 <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en>

129 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHiwAnx4ReA&t=1s>

130 <https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness>

131 <https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness/background>

132 <https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness/tribunal-timeline>

133 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sZkB5p4e6c>

134 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/2020-chrt-20>

- Show your students the National Film Board documentary *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*<sup>135</sup> by Alanis Obomsawin. We suggest that you show it over two classes and watch 30 minutes each time. Ensure that you stop the video and explain context and vocabulary as needed. Alternatively, you may choose to show your students clips of the documentary.
- Afterwards, ask your students to form a circle. Consider doing this outside, standing up for fresh air and mobility! Ask your students why Alanis called her film *Jordan River Anderson, the Messenger*. What messages does Jordan's Story send to all of us?
- Ask students to write an essay, record a reflection, prepare a podcast, slide show, etc., about what they have learned about Jordan, Jordan's Principle, and the Tribunal case so far.

**Next steps:**

Consider hosting a screening of *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*<sup>136</sup> for your school community.

### Learning Experience 3

**Title of lesson:** Children's Rights

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-3 Classes

**Guiding questions:**

- What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)?
- How does Jordan's Principle relate to the Convention on the Rights of the Child?
- What is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)?
- How does UNDRIP relate to the CRC and to Jordan's Principle?

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.nfb.ca/film/jordan-river-anderson-the-messenger/>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.nfb.ca/film/jordan-river-anderson-the-messenger/>



**Lesson sequence:**

- In this learning activity, your students will learn about the rights of children. Begin your lesson by having a discussion about what rights are. Does everyone have them? Why do they matter? Are children’s rights different from adult’s rights? Show your students [this video](#)<sup>137</sup> about children’s rights and have a discussion after the video.
- Next, show your students the [Child-friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).<sup>138</sup> As you and your students take the time to understand their rights as children in child-friendly language, connect this to Jordan River Anderson and how his rights were not respected because he was First Nations. This is called discrimination.
- Next, introduce your students to the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)<sup>139</sup> (UNDRIP). Explain that UNDRIP sets out how governments should respect the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is also an important guide for the proper implementation of other human rights agreements or conventions affecting Indigenous peoples, such as the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).<sup>140</sup> Your students can have a look at this [youth-friendly version of UNDRIP](#),<sup>141</sup> paying particular attention to how the rights outlined in UNDRIP relate to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Provide your students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning throughout this learning experience. You might invite them to create a work of art, write a reflection, or create a lesson to teach another class about children’s rights.

**Next steps:**

Invite your students to research the history of UNDRIP and the CRC. How and why were these declarations/conventions created? What were the challenges in implementation? Who were the leaders who ensured that the declarations came to be?

137 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S25L4jllAng>

138 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/crc\\_poster\\_rasterized.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/crc_poster_rasterized.pdf)

139 <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

140 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

141 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/know-your-rights-united-nations-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-indigenous>

## Learning Experience 4

**Title of lesson:** The Spirit Bear Plan

**Suggested timeframe:** 2-3 classes

**Guiding questions:**

- What is the *Spirit Bear Plan*?
- How would it address inequalities in federally funded services for children, youth and families?
- How does it relate to Jordan's Principle?

**Lesson sequence:**

- Explain that **Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba** (see p. 18) on reserve are cross cutting (water, health, education, social services), and that while the Tribunal case has helped address some of the problems, inequities remain. The *Spirit Bear Plan*<sup>142</sup> is about costing out all the inequalities and fixing them.
- Let students know about a report done by the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) that looks at the **federal government's data on Jordan's Principle requests**.<sup>143</sup> Figures 31 and 32 on page 47 show the types of requests made to Jordan's Principle. The report suggests that Jordan's Principle may be filling gaps and covering shortfalls in other program areas (for example, housing and drinking water), which it was not intended to do. This makes it difficult to understand whether the way Jordan's Principle is being implemented by the government is creating **substantive equality** (see p. 12) for First Nations children and youth, as it is intended to do.
- To begin, as a class, you can have a group conversation to "unpack" what you have learned in the previous three lessons. How does Jordan's Principle relate to **UNDRIP** (see p. 14) and the **CRC** (see p. 13)? Explain that now is the time for action!

142 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear-plan>

143 [https://www.ifsd.ca/web/default/files/Reports/8562\\_IFSD-Report\\_EN\\_F2.pdf](https://www.ifsd.ca/web/default/files/Reports/8562_IFSD-Report_EN_F2.pdf)



## Spirit Bear Plan

### End Inequalities in Public Services for First Nations Children, Youth and Families

First Nations children and families living on reserve and in the Territories receive public services funded by the federal government. Since confederation, these services have fallen significantly short of what other Canadians receive. This injustice needs to end and Spirit Bear's Plan will do just that.

**Spirit Bear calls on:**

- 1 CANADA** to immediately comply with all rulings by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordering it to immediately cease its discriminatory funding of First Nations child and family services. The orders further require Canada to fully and properly implement Jordan's Principle ([www.jordansprinciple.ca](http://www.jordansprinciple.ca)).
- 2 PARLIAMENT** to ask the Parliamentary Budget Officer to publicly cost out the shortfalls in all federally funded public services provided to First Nations children, youth and families (education, health, water, child welfare, etc.) and propose solutions to fix it.
- 3 GOVERNMENT** to consult with First Nations to co-create a holistic Spirit Bear Plan to end all of the inequalities (with dates and confirmed investments) in a short period of time sensitive to children's best interests, development and distinct community needs.
- 4 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS** providing services to First Nations children and families to undergo a thorough and independent 360° evaluation to identify any ongoing discriminatory ideologies, policies or practices and address them. These evaluations must be publicly available.
- 5 ALL PUBLIC SERVANTS**, including those at a senior level, to receive mandatory training to identify and address government ideology, policies and practices that fetter the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!**

- SPREAD THE WORD ON TWITTER** using #SpiritBearPlan and copy @CaringSociety
- CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT** and ask them to support the Spirit Bear Plan
- CONTACT US** to learn more at [info@fncaringsociety.com](mailto:info@fncaringsociety.com)



[www.fncaringsociety.com](http://www.fncaringsociety.com)

- Introduce students to the *Spirit Bear Plan*.<sup>144</sup> The *Spirit Bear Plan* to address all inequalities in federally funded public services for First Nations children, youth, and families was approved by First Nations leadership at an Assembly of First Nations meeting in 2017, but the federal government has not implemented it. Spirit Bear seeks to end discrimination against First Nations children, youth, and families by fixing all the inequalities in public services, from access to clean drinking water to shortfalls in education.
- Next, remind students that the *Spirit Bear Plan* will help Canada honour the **TRC Calls to Action** (see p. 9) by fixing discriminatory services for First Nations children, youth and families. Show your students *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action*.<sup>145</sup> Make sure you highlight that the full implementation of Jordan's Principle is the third TRC Call to Action.
- Ask the students to read the *Spirit Bear Plan* with a partner or in groups. Ask students to think about what Spirit Bear is calling on Canada to do and to put it in their own words. Give students 10 minutes to discuss and then regroup as a class. How does the *Spirit Bear Plan* uphold human rights?
- Ask students to share their thoughts about the *Spirit Bear Plan*. Ask the following questions: What does the Spirit Bear Plan ask Canada to do? How does the Spirit Bear Plan connect to Jordan's Principle? Write down the students' ideas on your chart paper/white board/smart board.
- Next, explain how words and intentions are important, but taking action to end discrimination means standing up for the rights of others. How might your class make a plan of action that honours Spirit Bear's Plan? How will they get involved in the movement for **substantive equality** (see p. 12) and social justice? How will they work to demand that officials fully implement the *Spirit Bear Plan*? Encourage students to "think-pair-share," and then record their ideas.

144 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear-plan>

145 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action>

- Possible actions to take as a class:
  - > Writing letters to elected and government officials calling on the them to implement the *Spirit Bear Plan*;
  - > Making a poster about the IFSD report and showing how many Jordan's Principle requests are approved or denied in the province/territory you live in. Also describing the types of services that are most often requested through Jordan's Principle.
  - > Planning, hosting, or attending a **Have a Heart Day**<sup>146</sup> or **Bear Witness Day**<sup>147</sup> event in your community;
  - > Making a podcast about Jordan's Principle and how it relates to the TRC Calls to Action and the *Spirit Bear Plan* in order to educate others (make sure to let people know how they can help);
  - > Hosting a school assembly to teach students and staff about the *Spirit Bear Plan*, why it is so important, and how they can help.

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**Next steps:**

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT! Help others learn! SPREAD THE WORD ON TWITTER using #SpiritBearPlan and copy @CaringSociety!

Image adapted from *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2020), illustrated by Amanda Strong.

146 <http://fncaringsociety.com/have-heart-day>  
 147 <http://fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day>



# Resources for Educators and Facilitators

Below are several resources that educators and facilitators may find helpful for their own learning as they teach the concepts in this learning guide. These resources will broaden your knowledge about colonialism, Jordan's Principle, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and indigenizing your approaches in the classroom.

- Learn more about Jordan's Principle by reading the [timeline and documents](https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle/timeline-documents) (https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle/timeline-documents)
- Read [Senator Brian Frances' Statement on Bear Witness Day](https://sencanada.ca/en/senators/francis-brian/interventions/523326/10) (https://sencanada.ca/en/senators/francis-brian/interventions/523326/10)
- Read this [APTN News Story on Jordan's Principle](https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/canada-uses-indian-act-to-fight-tribunal-jordans-principle) (https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/canada-uses-indian-act-to-fight-tribunal-jordans-principle)
- Read this report: [Jordan's Principle and Children With Disabilities and Special Needs: A Resource Guide and Analysis of Canada's Implementation](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/jordans_principle_resource_guide_2021_final.pdf) (https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/jordans\_principle\_resource\_guide\_2021\_final.pdf).
- Read these short CBC articles: [Indian Status: 5 things you need to know | CBC Newsnow](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indian-status-5-things-you-need-to-know-1.2744870) (https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indian-status-5-things-you-need-to-know-1.2744870) and [Indian Status: 5 more things you need to know | CBC News](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indian-status-5-more-things-you-need-to-know-1.3109451) (https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indian-status-5-more-things-you-need-to-know-1.3109451)
- Teach your students about the *Indian Act* with [this video lesson](https://www.facinghistory.org/en-ca/resource-library/indian-act) from Facing History and Ourselves (https://www.facinghistory.org/en-ca/resource-library/indian-act)
- Consider using the [Secret Life of Canada's Teaching Guide to the Indian Act](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada/teaching-guide-the-indian-act-1.5290134) (https://www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada/teaching-guide-the-indian-act-1.5290134)
- Watch [Cindy Blackstock who is considered a First Nations child | APTN News](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHnE_kRROTo) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHnE\_kRROTo)
- Read the Caring Society's [Information sheets on Mind Control and Colonization](http://fncaringsociety.com/publications/mind-control-and-colonization-information-sheets) (http://fncaringsociety.com/publications/mind-control-and-colonization-information-sheets)
- Watch [Settler Colonialism 101 with Chelsea Vowel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjOp4otASJU) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjOp4otASJU)

- Read the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports** (<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>)
- Watch **Truth and Reconciliation Commission: By the numbers | CBC News** (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-by-the-numbers-1.3096185>)
- Read **Sharing Circles – Pass The Feather** (<https://passthefeather.ca/sharing-circles/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>)
- Read the article **Using Circle Practice in the Classroom | Edutopia** (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/using-circle-practice-classroom/>)
- Read **Indigenous Counter-Stories in Truth and Reconciliation Education** (<https://www.edcan.ca/articles/trc-education/>)
- Read **As a teacher, here are the ways I see the Indigenization of classrooms unfolding | CBC News** (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/first-person-teacher-indigenization-classroom-1.5951835>)