

Residential Schools

Residential schools are schools where students live. They do not go home at the end of the day. They live together and eat together.

In Canada, a residential school system was made for First Nations children starting in 1883. Even earlier, there were some schools like that. The children were taken away from their parents and communities when they were seven years old. Often, they were taken far away. They were not brought back until next summer.



Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School (Residential School) from an Indian Affairs Annual Report, 1895. Parents had to camp outside the school grounds if they wanted to see their children.

The idea of the schools was to change the children so they would not be First Nations any more. The word is “to assimilate”. The schools did not want the children to have the First Peoples culture,

language or beliefs any more. The schools were very sad places because the managers were very strict, children were punished for all kinds of things and the children had to work hard. There was lots of abuse of all kinds. They were forced to change their beliefs.

How many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were placed in Residential Schools in Canada	more than 150,000
Chances of dying there from tuberculosis, flu, lack of food, poor living conditions	1 in 25
How many children died while in Residential Schools	more than 6,000
About how many people are alive today who attended Residential Schools	80,000
How long the First Nations families and communities feel the effects of the Residential Schools	Continuously to future generations

Canada had residential schools in every province and territory. The last residential school closed in 1996. We call the people who are alive today and went to those schools, **Survivors**. They have many hard memories of those days.

The government has apologized for the schools and had to pay the Survivors money. It **also created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission** to look into the Residential School problems.



The Residential School system did much damage. The children who went to the schools did not know who they were as people, or how to be parents as they weren't allowed to

A Residential School in the Northwest Territories grow up with parents.

Their problems made them have problems: some tried to ease their pain with alcohol or drugs. Some people became violent. The problems passed from one generation to another. The problems are still not over.

Now people talk about the residential school days and most Canadians know about them. **The residential school days are a sad part of Canadian history.**

Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School photo: Creative Commons, Wikimedia, Qu'Appelle-Indian-School-sask-jpg, ca. 1885 Used in 1895 Annual Report, Department of Indian Affairs

R.C. Indian Residential School Study Time, Fort Resolution, NWT photo: Creative Commons, Wikimedia, Library and Archives Canada, P-A042133, no date

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