

WORLD-CHANGING KIDS

Writing Letters for Reconciliation

Template for kids ages 7-13 and their families



Topic: Eliminate the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prisons and jails

WORLD-
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KIDS

Step One:

- Date
- Contact Info
- Greeting

August 26, 2021

The Right Honourable
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5K9

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Step Two: First Paragraph

State your purpose for writing the letter. You can choose one of these options (a shorter or longer version) or come up with your own.

I am writing to demand that your government take a leadership role in directing dramatic changes to help reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prisons.

The overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in federal custody has reached a new historic high – accounting for more than 30% of the federal inmate population, even though they only account for 4.3% of the population in Canada.

Even more shocking is the fact that the number of white inmates has decreased by 23.5% since 2010, and the total number of inmates has declined, but the number of Indigenous inmates has increased by 52%.

Step Three: Second Paragraph

Add info explaining why this issue is important to you. You can choose one or both of these options or come up with your own.

For more than a century, Canadian law has taken apart the Indigenous family, which has fuelled the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the prison system.

Are you aware that Indigenous youth made up 46% of admissions to correctional services in 2016-17 while making up only 8% of the youth population? In Manitoba, Indigenous youth represented more than 80% of all youth admissions in 2018; in Saskatchewan, 92% of boys in correctional services were Indigenous, as were 98% of girls. The Assembly of First Nations says that a First Nation youth is now more likely to end up in jail than to graduate high school. We cannot be OK with this. This needs to change.

Step Four: Third Paragraph

Include clear requests. You can choose one or both of these options or come up with your own.

I am calling on you to implement Call to Action #30 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report: Eliminate the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade.

I am asking you to make a genuine commitment to achieving equal access to justice for Indigenous peoples. This will require recognition of the historical betrayals of governments and the justice system itself. It will require a focus on rehabilitation, rather than punishment, through resources devoted to family support and reunification, to restorative justice options, to reintegration programs and to addressing underlying social factors to stem recidivism.

Step Five: Final Paragraph

Ask questions and request a response. You can choose these questions or come up with your own.

Despite the findings of royal commissions and national inquiries, court interventions and political promises, over the last three decades, every single government has failed to reverse the trend of Indigenous overrepresentation in Canadian jails and prisons.

Will you commit to making this a priority? How will you ensure that you are making real progress on eliminating the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian jails and prisons? Please respond with answer to these questions.

Step Six: Closing

Include your name,
age and address at
the end of the letter.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Age

Street Address

City, Province Postal Code