

WORLD-CHANGING KIDS

# Writing Letters for Reconciliation

Template for kids ages 9 and up and their families



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

## Step One: Date, Contact Info, Greeting

April 7, 2022

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, two or all three of these options or come up with your own.

I am writing to demand that your government 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, two or all three 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 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; resources devoted to family support and reunification; restorative justice options; reintegration programs; and addressing underlying social factors to decrease 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 answers 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