

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day for Canadians to reflect on the legacy of Canada's residential school system, honour the healing journeys of Survivors, their families, and communities, and remember the children who never made it home. This day, recognized as a federal statutory holiday since 2021, cultivates meaningful dialogue, reflection, and education on the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada and serves as a reminder of the Indigenous injustices and systemic inequities that persist today.

For many Indigenous Peoples, September evokes memories of children being separated from their families and isolated from their communities. September 30 is also known as Orange Shirt Day, inspired by the story of Phyllis Webstad, whose new orange shirt – a gift from her grandmother – was confiscated on her first day at St. Joseph's Mission Residential School in Williams Lake, Manitoba. Webstad's story initiated a grassroots campaign in 2013 that raised awareness of the forced assimilation of Indigenous children in residential schools and sparked a national movement across Canada calling for reconciliation and promoting the truth that every child matters.

ETFO's Ongoing Commitment to Reconciliation

Today and every day, ETFO is committed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. In our programs and resources, we support members through various acts of truth telling, reconciliation, and remembrance, and recognize that continued learning about the legacy of the residential school system must be approached in a culturally safe and trauma-informed way.

This September, ETFO released *Healing Conversations: A Collection of Activities for the Primary Classroom*. This resource is designed to support Primary (K-3) educators in "building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect," as stated in Call to Action 63 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. With an age- and stage-appropriate approach, the resource highlights the losses and challenges experienced by Indigenous Peoples while also speaking to the strengths of Indigenous individuals, communities, and nations. This resource also offers opportunities to concentrate on ideas of reclamation, revitalization, and Indigenous joy through reading Indigenous children's literature, engaging in

dialogue, and integrating aspects of storytelling, creative writing, art, and music in the classroom.

Healing Conversations and other resources to support educators in their learning journeys and introducing reconciliation to their classrooms are available on etfofnmi.ca.

Supplementary resources:

- Review the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)
- Access the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation \(NCTR\)](#) for learning resources