

## A DAY TO LISTEN - BRAD BAKER

Hello. My English name is Brad Baker and I'm from the Squamish Nation on the North Shore here in British Columbia. I'm also the District Principal in the North Vancouver School District that oversees the Indigenous education programs.

My father is an Indian residential school Survivor and I live with the impacts that he went through for seven years at St Paul's Indian Residential School. And that brings me to the work that I do in my school district currently, where we want kids, students as young as five years old to learn what the true history of this country is. Part of the process of us talking about this is that it allows everyone to understand what happened in North Vancouver with the Indian residential school that was here, but also how the impacts of the residential school are still with all Indigenous people today.

So how do we talk about that? We bring in age-appropriate curriculum to allow children to go home to talk to their parents about what they're learning about in schools. Many parents of this generation have also not learned about Indian residential schools. So it's our responsibility as educators to educate not only the students and also the parents of the impacts of the Indian residential school. The ultimate goal for us is for all of us to have an understanding of the true history of this country, but also how we need to work together as a society to bring forward positive change with Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people.

Since the findings of the 215 children at the former site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School, many thoughts have gone through the minds of Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people in this country. We have honoured the 215 missing children that were found in the unmarked graves with memorials, acknowledgments of what they went through, but not only that, but what their families are going through today as we move forward. Some people are making statements that five-year-olds or six-year-olds are too young to hear about the impacts of Indian residential schools. Five-year-old and six-year-old children who are in kindergarten, grade one, grade two - we need to give them more credit of what their understanding really is of being away from home. We give them information of loved ones, of them not able to go home to loved ones, or be able to hug their mum or dad when they are sick, to acknowledge what the 215 children in Kamloops had endured and other Survivors of the Indian residential school system. They question, how did this happen in Canada? Why would this happen in Canada?

One question from one six-year-old is: "What can we do to ensure that this never happens again?" We have to give children's voices more credit than we usually do because they understand what it means to have a childhood and they acknowledge and recognize the 215 children in Kamloops had lost their childhood and their opportunity to grow old. As we move forward, I would ask all Canadians to go forward with courage, be vulnerable, and hear the stories of Indigenous Peoples, as we have a shared history in this country.