

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for staff)

## Bear Witness to **Jordan's Principle**



Photo courtesy of Jean Moir

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Born with complex medical needs, Jordan spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospital while the Province of Manitoba and the federal government argued over who should pay for his at home care. Jordan died in the hospital at the age of five years old, never having spent a day in his family home. Jordan's Principle aims to make sure First Nations children can access all public services in a way that is reflective of their distinct cultural needs, takes full account of the historical disadvantage linked to colonization, and without experiencing any service denials, delays or disruptions related to their First Nations status.

Payment disputes within and between federal and provincial governments over services for First Nations children are not uncommon. First Nations children are frequently left waiting for services they desperately need or are denied services that are available to other children. This includes services in education, health, childcare, recreation, and culture and language. Jordan's Principle calls on the government of first contact to pay for the services and seek reimbursement later so the child does not get tragically caught in the middle of government red tape.

In a landmark ruling on January 26, 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordered the federal government to immediately stop applying a limited and discriminatory definition of Jordan's Principle, and to immediately take measures to implement the full meaning and scope of the principle.

In November 2016, the Caring Society, Assembly of First Nations, and interested parties (Chiefs of Ontario and Nishnawbe Aski Nation) filed motions stating that Canada has failed to comply with the Tribunal's ruling and remedial orders. Three days of hearings on the non-compliance motions were held in March, 2017. On May 26, 2017, the Tribunal found that the Government of Canada has continued "its pattern of conduct and narrow focus with respect to Jordan's Principle," resulting in unnecessary and unlawful bureaucratic delays, gaps and denial of essential public services to First Nations children. As such, the Tribunal issued a third set of non-compliance orders. For more information please visit First Nations Child & Family Caring society of Canada at [fncaringssociety.com/jordans-principle](http://fncaringssociety.com/jordans-principle).

# Jordan's Principle

## Latest News



To report a Jordan's Principle case, call the 24-hour line at 1-855-JP-CHILD or visit [www.canada.ca/jordans-principle](http://www.canada.ca/jordans-principle). If you have any difficulties, please contact the Caring Society at [info@fncaringsociety.com](mailto:info@fncaringsociety.com) or (613) 230-5885



Jordan's Principle: Summary of Orders from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (March 2018)



Tribunal issues third non-compliance order on Jordan's Principle. (May 2017)



Caring Society Press release on third non-compliance order issued May 26, 2017 (May 2017)

## Letter to Families

# Bear Witness to Jordan's Principle



Bear Witness or “Bring a Teddy to School” Day is on May 10<sup>th</sup>. We are planning school-wide participation in this event as part of our Social Justice and Aboriginal Education curriculum. May 10<sup>th</sup> is a celebration of Jordan River’s birthday and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal’s ruling on Jordan’s Principle. This event will provide our students with the opportunity to make personal, meaningful connections to important social issues in Canada in a child-friendly way. Taking part will also allow our children to make an important contribution to fair and equal treatment for all children in Canada.

Jordan’s Principle is named after Jordan River Anderson, a little boy born with complex health issues. Jordan began his life in hospital and had to stay there until doctors felt he could be cared for at home, with additional medical help. Tragically, the provincial government and the federal government could not agree on who should pay for Jordan’s care after he left hospital. This was only an issue because Jordan was Aboriginal. This would not have happened to a non-Aboriginal child. So ... Jordan had to stay in hospital until a decision was made. Jordan stayed in hospital until he died because the two governments wouldn’t agree. He was only five years old. Jordan never got to spend a single day in a real home.

A very brave, caring woman, Cindy Blackstock, and an organization she helped create (The First Nations Caring Society), decided they had to do something. They knew this should never happen to any child, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. Ms. Blackstock and her group

decided to take the government to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and fight for the rights of children like Jordan. After a very long, drawn out court case (about nine years!), the Tribunal passed a ruling that is now called Jordan's Principle. This ruling states that the government of "first contact" with the child will pay for her/his care. The hope (and law) is that Aboriginal children will receive the same interventions and health care as non-Aboriginal children in Canada. Unfortunately, this is still not always happening. We are encouraging our students to add their voices and take action to insist all children receive fair and equal health care.

Teddy Bears are used to celebrate this day because Jordan loved teddy bears. We would like all of our students to bring a favourite teddy bear to school by \_\_\_\_\_, so we can decorate them. Through their decorations, students will be asked to honour and remember Jordan, and use their teddies as a way to add their voices to the call for equitable health care. The school will provide all the beads, elastic string, and buttons needed to create special bracelets and necklaces for the bears. If families have any teddy bears they would like to donate to the school for children who do not have a teddy, we would appreciate receiving them as soon as possible. Thank you. We want to ensure every child is included in this initiative.

As our students are learning about Jordan's Principle and inequalities in our health care system, we want to provide them with another opportunity to create change. Students will be writing a letter to the Prime Minister asking him to make things fair for all Aboriginal children in Canada. Parents, please let your child's teacher know if you do NOT want your child to participate. Your child will be signing their full name (in case the PM wants to write back!) and including the name of our school.

We will be having a Teddy Bear Parade on \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. Parents, please feel free to join us. We would love to have you! If you would like more information on this initiative, you may want to visit:

*<https://fnCaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>*

*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGAVqRjgXko>*

Thank you so much for supporting this event,

# Bear Witness to **Jordan's Principle**



BRING YOUR TEDDY BEAR TO SCHOOL BY

---

DECORATE YOUR BEAR TO HONOUR JORDAN  
TAKE PART IN OUR SCHOOL-WIDE PARADE ON

---

And **ALWAYS** stand up and fight for equal health care  
for **ALL** children - Indigenous and Non-Indigenous

**EVERY CHILD MATTERS!**



# Teaching Ideas



## Recommended Book —*Spirit Bear and Children Make History*

Likely the best available resource to teach about **Jordan's Principle** and the on-going fight to get fair and equitable health care for Indigenous children in Canada. Provides teachers and their students with valuable background and knowledge. Reading and discussing the story is easily adaptable for different age groups. The book is most suitable for grades 3 and up. Teachers of younger children might want to adjust or summarize the story as appropriate for their age group.

Although this story contains a lot of factual information, the authors have tried very hard to make it child friendly by using Spirit Bear (and friends) as the main character in a “story” format. “*Spirit Bear*” is, of course, a symbol chosen to represent Jordan and Jordan’s Principle because Jordan River Anderson loved teddy bears and they are an appealing way to remember and honour him.

### **WAYS TO USE THIS BOOK:**

Read the story more than once to the class, with lots of discussion and explanation. Most children will find it too hard to grasp all the ideas and information without numerous readings.

To deepen engagement, understanding and empathy, photocopy the book and divide students into pairs. Give each pair two or three pages of the book to study and ask students to highlight words or phrases they find important “messages” of what the story is about. There are many appropriate choices on virtually every page! Students should discuss each word/phrase before highlighting to decide if each choice is suitable. Encourage finding short phrases, combining words (e.g., love and hugs, fair and equal) and dropping prefixes or suffixes, etc. (e.g., unfairness to fairness, hopeless to hope). Record students’ findings on chart paper or a projector and discuss the words/phrases – talk about what makes particular words suitable choices, powerful choices, or not good choices. For example, discuss why “wonderful”, “First Nations”, “happy” would not be good choices.

Have children bring in their own teddy bears and use alphabet beads to make necklaces/bracelets for their bears with their message of choice. Alphabet beads are readily available for purchase. Use other colourful beads between words and for the rest of the necklace. Another option is to do paper teddy bears. Download teddy bear colouring pages available at [fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle-school-resources](http://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle-school-resources).

Photocopy these pictures onto white, tan or brown construction paper (enlarging to 129% fits 8.5 x 11 inch paper nicely). Children can decorate these “teddies” just as they would a real teddy. Create a “Bear Witness” display in the classroom or hallway. This may motivate other students to participate.

This activity is perfect for Bring a Teddy Bear to School Day or Bear Witness Day (May 10<sup>th</sup>) but could be done any time of the year.

---

### **Suggested sites to visit:**

- Bear Witness Day: [fncaringsociety.com/BearWitness](http://fncaringsociety.com/BearWitness)
- Jordan’s Principle: [fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle](http://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle)
- Great Video to show children: [youtube.com/watch?v=RatzhHmFd-M&feature=youtu.be](http://youtube.com/watch?v=RatzhHmFd-M&feature=youtu.be)
- Cindy Blackstock on Jordan’s Principle: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGAvqRigxko](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGAvqRigxko)
- “When You See Jordan” song by children:  
[drive.google.com/file/d/1iFFqyh5ykfJYndKcw-l9PUWV5JC6oDkm/view](http://drive.google.com/file/d/1iFFqyh5ykfJYndKcw-l9PUWV5JC6oDkm/view)
- BCTF Aboriginal Education page - [bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx?id=45200](http://bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx?id=45200)



# TEDDY BEAR PREPARATION NOTES

## for our

### JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE PARADE!

---

Dear Staff,

Between the letter sent home to families, the information page(s) provided to you, the posters and colouring pages, and the copies of *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* book and lesson plan ideas, you should have lots of background info ☺.

Start decorating your teddy bears whenever you wish. Please stress to students that they are decorating their bears FOR JORDAN – to remember him, to honour him, and to raise awareness of unequal health care for Aboriginal children in Canada, etc.

Just a few examples include:

Remember	Jordan	Equality
We miss you	Love	Equal Health Care
Honour	Never Forget	Fairness

No doubt your children will amaze you with their thoughtfulness and creativity! They can make necklaces, bracelets, or badges: whatever you deem appropriate. Teddies must be ready for the parade on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm.

All the beads, stretchy cord, etc., that you need are ready to go. Please get your supplies from \_\_\_\_\_.

We are hoping to provide teddy bears to any child who cannot bring one in – however, we need to know asap how many are needed. Please double check that children do not have a teddy, not just that they would like another one from the school ☺

As part of their contribution to Social Justice and fair health care for all children in Canada, children will be writing letters to the P.M. (template letters for children to complete and sign, as well as envelopes and labels will be provided).

Thank you so much to you all for taking part in this initiative.

Any questions? Ask \_\_\_\_\_.

## TIPS FOR BEADING:



Be sure to cut the string long enough. Necklaces should be a bit longer so the word(s) can be read. You will also need extra length for tying the ends together.



It is very important that you used a “balloon tie” method when tying the ends together; otherwise, the necklaces will fall apart quite easily. Balloon method is keeping the two ends lined up together and tying them “as one”.



Be sure kids put at least one bead between each word, so the message is easy to read.



You may want to check that kids have letters/words all facing the correct way before tying off – i.e., no letters are upside down or backwards 😊



Kids need to keep the string and beads flat on the table while working to avoid all their work falling off the other end! You could use small clips or clothes pegs to prevent beads falling off if desired.

Jordan's Principle:  
FAIR AND EQUAL HEALTH CARE



SAFE AND COMFY SCHOOLS FOR ALL  
CLEAN DRINKING WATER FOR ALL

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Please make sure ALL Aboriginal children in Canada

---

---

---

---

Respectfully,

My School:

---

Name and Grade