



Boys with Braids Resource Sheet for Teachers

Below provides some further resources and readings for educators in their support of the boys with braids in their classrooms. It is in no way an exhaustive list and we will continue adding to it including resources/ideas by elementary, junior high and high school.

Significance & Meaning:

The significance of having long hair is sacred amongst all American Indians. It connects us to our cultural identity, our spirituality and our ancestors. While all tribes are different and have varying stories and traditions about what having long hair signifies, they have teachings and a cultural connection. Long hair promotes self-esteem, self-respect, and pride. Long hair is a form of self-expression that reinforces a connection to one's family, tribe, community and traditions.

Dos & Don'ts:

- Do encourage inclusiveness - make it part of your classroom environment. Ask your student to bring in and share part of their culture. Ex: Student of the Week or Student Share – Invite your student to bring in their grandparent, parent or other person as a guest speaker
- Junior high and high school teachers could explore Tribal government or current events/issues that involve American Indians in history classes; Science classes can bring in guest speakers on American Indian ways use the stars for seasons, telling time and more
- Do promote cultural awareness and create an appreciation for diversity. (Ex: Have books & literature by American Indian authors, posters and/or AI presenters.
- Do promote strategy discussions with colleagues & make it part of the routine to increase relevance.
- Do not ask to braid, brush or play with their long hair.
- Sports/Coaching – Do NOT tell them they must cut their hair. (For safety reasons you can ask them to pull back or tie their hair or even tuck in their jersey.)

American Indian Youth Coping Styles

- Music
- Traditional beliefs and practices (e.g., spirituality)
- Reflecting on ancestry
- Support from traditional cultural elders

Articles on Boys with Braids:

- Boys with Braids Campaign Website: <https://www.michaellinklater.com/boyswithbraids>
- Video on BwB Campaign: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/why-indigenous-boys-and-men-wear-braids-1.3463817>
- Hair Teachings with Cecil Sveinson <https://www.facebook.com/cbcunreserved/videos/1415409068483282/UzpfSTE0MTU2MTIxMDg0NTM3ODU6MTU0MzU4MjQ4MjMyMzQxMw/>
- Boys with Braids: Hair as Resistance to Colonization: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/indigenous-masculinity-and-the-lasting-impacts-of-colonization-1.5109762/boys-with-braids-hair-as-resistance-to-colonization-1.5120620>
- Why Indigenous boys and men choose to wear braids <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/why-indigenous-boys-and-men-wear-braids-1.3463817>
- Music Video DJShub - Indomitable fr. Nothern Cree Singers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTJvpfkRRdA>

Articles on youth and long hair:

- School District Apologizes For Teacher Who Allegedly Cut Native American Child's Hair <https://www.npr.org/2018/12/06/673837893/school-district-apologizes-for-teacher-who-allegedly-cut-native-american-childs->
- Arizona basketball team wins reversal of Navajo hair bun ban <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-arizona-navajo-hairbuns/arizona-basketball-team-wins-reversal-of-navajo-hair-bun-ban-idUSKCN0VE2MM>

Links related to bullying among American Indians:

- <https://youth.gov/federal-links/resource-bullying-prevention-indian-country>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/ttac-bullying-factsheet-2.pdf>
- <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=kicjir>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4094365/>
- <https://www.falmouthinstitute.com/files/SS047/Why%20It's%20So%20Hard%20To%20Stop%20Bullying.pdf>
- <https://www.wernative.org/my-life/life-hacks/bullying-prevention>

Books | Literature:

- Thunder's Hair Book by Jessie Taken Alive – Rencontre
 - Thunder is tired of dealing with bullies at school who pick on him because of his long hair. They don't understand why a boy would grow his hair long. When he is sure he has made up his mind to cut it, his grandmother reminds him of the power of having long hair.
- American Indians in Children's Literature
 - <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2021/01/carole-lindstrom-and-michaela-goade-two.html>

Organizations With Further Information for Teachers

- National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian – Native Knowledge 360:
<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/about/native-knowledge-360>
- Native American Heritage month <https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers/>

Organizations who support American Indian Youth & Educators working with American Indian Youth

- <https://www.hud.gov/planetyouth/havefun/nyo>
- <https://www.cnay.org/>
- <https://www.ncai.org/native-youth>
- <https://www.nicwa.org/youth-engagement/>
- <https://www.powwows.com/3-organizations-helping-native-youth-change-indian-country/>
- <https://www.firstnations.org/our-values/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/tloa/native-youth-resources>

About the Phoenix Indian Center:

We are the oldest American Indian non-profit organization of its kind and are now 74-years old. We were formed by community members in 1947 as an outgrowth of American Indian people moving to urban areas across the country - as a result of a Federal Government public policy.

Today we continue to service our urban-living American Indian community through workforce development, youth development focusing on being college and career ready, drug and alcohol prevention and language/culture revitalization. We are a home-away-from-home for many American Indians in the greater-Phoenix area and work diligently to educate others about who we are and where we come from as American Indian people.

We encourage you to reach out to us with questions and ways we can continue to support each other in this world of diversity we celebrate with you.

www.phxindcenter.org

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