

Indigenous Peoples' Day Activities for Kids

1) "We Are Thankful for the Land" Nature Walk

Go on a short walk and practice noticing the world around you.

- **Infants:** look at leaves/sky; name what you see ("tree," "wind," "sun")
- **Toddlers:** collect safe nature items (leaves, pinecones)
- **Preschool:** "I notice..." sharing circle
- **School-age:** nature journal (sketch + 2 observations)

Talk about how many Indigenous communities teach **respect for the land and water**.

2) Land Acknowledgment (Simple Classroom Version)

Keep it short and kind—focused on respect.

- **All ages:** say a one-sentence message during morning meeting like:
"We care for the land and we respect the First Peoples who have cared for it for a very long time."

(Use calm, neutral language and avoid making promises you can't keep.)

3) "Our Community Circle" (Belonging & Respect)

Teach values like listening, kindness, and helping.

- **Toddlers:** practice "gentle hands" and taking turns
- **Preschool/School-age:** use a talking object and practice listening
Prompt ideas:
- "How can we show respect when someone is speaking?"
- "How can we care for our classroom like we care for nature?"



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4) Storytime by Indigenous Authors

Choose books created by Indigenous authors/illustrators when possible.

- **Infants/toddlers:** short picture books and animal/nature themes
- **Preschool:** discuss “What did the character learn?”
- **School-age:** compare themes like community, responsibility, seasons

5) Art Inspired by Nature (Not Cultural Copying)

Focus on *nature patterns* instead of copying sacred or specific cultural designs.

- leaf rubbings
- bark/rock texture art (paper over texture + crayon rub)
- collage with natural colors
- “four seasons” mural

6) “Three Sisters” Planting Activity (Beans, Corn, Squash)

Many Indigenous communities have grown the “Three Sisters” together.

- **Infants:** sensory play with dried corn/beans (supervised)
- **Toddlers:** scoop and pour seeds; plant with help
- **Preschool:** plant seeds in cups; observe growth
- **School-age:** chart changes and learn why plants support each other

Background (kid-friendly learning support): <https://www.nmai.si.edu/learn/teachers>

7) Music & Movement: Rhythm and Respect

Keep it general—focus on rhythm, not imitation.

- **All ages:** use shakers/drums to copy simple rhythms
- Practice “listen, then play” to build self-control and respect



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Avoid pretending to do specific ceremonies or copying regalia.

8) Indigenous Languages: “Hello” and Place Names

A gentle, respectful activity is learning that many places have Indigenous names.

- **Preschool/school-age:** learn one local place name and what it means (if you can verify it)
- **All ages:** “Words can be from many languages.”

(If you don’t have a verified local source, keep it general and avoid guessing.)

9) “Helpers and Leaders” Spotlight

Share that Indigenous communities are here today—families, artists, scientists, athletes, teachers, and leaders.

- **Preschool:** “Indigenous people are part of our world today.”
 - **School-age:** research an Indigenous changemaker and make a mini poster.
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10) Kindness Project: “Care for Our Space”

Connect respect for land to classroom care:

- pick up litter (with gloves)
 - water classroom plants
 - recycling sorting game
 - “turn off lights to save energy” helper job
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Inclusivity Tips (Important!)

- Use **real, respectful language** (no costumes, no “pretend tribes,” no stereotypes).
- Prefer **Indigenous-created books, art, videos, and museum resources**.
- Teach **present tense**: Indigenous peoples are here today.



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- Focus on values kids can understand: **respect, listening, community, caring for nature.**



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