



How to help your child understand Sacred Tobacco

June is National Indigenous Peoples Month. It's a time to celebrate the rich history and culture of Indigenous communities. This is a great month to help kids learn about the traditions of First Nations and Métis peoples across Alberta's three Treaty areas.

One tradition is using Sacred Tobacco (also called traditional tobacco). Many Indigenous peoples see the traditional tobacco plant as sacred. They use it in a good way, with honour and respect for the wisdom of their ancestors.

Using Sacred Tobacco is different than using commercial tobacco that is harmful, like smoking cigarettes, cigars, or using spit tobacco. It's important to make sure kids know the difference.

This June, ask your child what they know about Sacred Tobacco. Use these tips to help build their understanding.

Teach respect for Sacred Tobacco

Talk with your child about the uses of Sacred Tobacco. Remind them that these uses have traditional meanings and purposes. For example, some Indigenous peoples use Sacred Tobacco to:

- Support ceremonies, prayers, and blessings
- Show respect and thanks
- Connect with the Creator
- Exchange as a gift for knowledge, teachings, and time

- Make an offering to Mother Earth
- Support healing

Tell your child using tobacco in traditional ways has deep cultural roots. Use these child-friendly tools to guide your conversations:

- [Be tobacco smart](#) (story and activity book)
- [Traditional tobacco use](#) (brief video)

Hear from Indigenous Elders

Help your child learn from Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers – people who share traditional wisdom and spiritual knowledge.

Elders are our most important cultural guides and teachers on Sacred Tobacco. They hold teachings and stories that have been passed down for generations.

If your family doesn't have access to an Indigenous Elder or Knowledge Keeper, visit keeptobaccosacred.ca/elder-voices with your child. It's a hub for tobacco teaching videos and stories shared by Elders and Knowledge Keepers from across Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8.

Learn about Sacred Tobacco where you live

Find out about efforts to reclaim tobacco as a sacred plant in your community. Reflect on what you and your child can do to offer your support. For example:

- Go to Indigenous cultural events and gatherings that are open to the public, like drum circles or powwows. Teach your child to respect the tobacco protocols in place.
- Visit public gardens where tobacco is being grown in its natural form (*Nicotiana rustica*). For example, explore the medicine gardens at Edmonton's Alex Decoteau Park or the healing gardens at Calgary's Arthur Child Cancer Centre.
- If your child uses social media, help them follow the [Tobacco Warriors](#). These are young Indigenous influencers who inspire kids in Alberta to respect Sacred Tobacco and avoid smoking and vaping.

Together, let's celebrate Sacred Tobacco during National Indigenous Peoples Month. Respecting traditional tobacco is an act of reconciliation.

For more information, go to:

- [Keep tobacco sacred](#)
- [Traditional tobacco and commercial tobacco](#)
- [Acts of reconciliation you can do with your child](#)