

# **The Intergenerational Effect of Forcible Assimilation Policy on School Performance**

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## **Abstract:**

I investigate whether policies that effect parent's experiences with education carry over to the educational and behavioral outcomes of their children using a dramatic Canadian policy. For nearly a century, the Canadian government forcibly separated indigenous children from their families and placed them in live-in institutions, known as Indian Residential Schools. Close to 50 percent of North American Indian children have a family member who attended residential school in Canada, and many speculate that the legacy of residential schooling has contributed to the educational struggles Aboriginal children face today. Using a unique confidential data set, I identify the effects of mother's attending a residential school on their children. I find that children whose mother attended a residential school are less likely to perform well in school, less likely to enjoy school or to get along with their teachers, but if anything fare better along health and social dimensions and receive more parental investment. I provide evidence that these findings are not due to location choice of the parents and argue that these findings are consistent with a standard Heckman model of skill production where parental attitudes toward education play a pivotal role. I add to the existing literature on childhood development by demonstrating using policies that negatively influence parental attitudes toward education may negatively influence the next generation even if the policy has little or positive effects on parental cognitive and non-cognitive skills and positive influences on child health.