Gearing Up lays the groundwork for an integrated and coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of services and programs for young people in Ontario ages 6–12 and their families.

**COMMON VISION**
All middle years children thrive as individuals and as members of their families and communities.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- Establish a balanced, wholistic and strengths-based approach to child development
- Target support to those who need it
- Collaborate and partner effectively
- Address discrimination and foster equity and inclusion
- Empower children and families
- Deliver high quality services that reflect evidence and research
- Embed the principles of the Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy

**GOALS**
- Children Engage in Learning
- Children Are Active and Well
- Children Have Caring and Connected Families
- Communities Support Children and Families
- Children Have Positive Relationships
- Indigenous Children Thrive

**Who are middle years children in Ontario today?**
Ontario is home to more than one million children ages 6–12. They make up 7.4% of the total population.

- 67% live in urban centres
- 33% live in small, rural or remote communities

- They are more and more diverse
  - 32% are racialized
  - 3% are Indigenous
  - 46% are first or second generation Canadian
  - 4% are living with disabilities or special needs

**At a developmental turning point**
- Burst of brain development
- Identity formation and intersections
- Establishment of healthy habits and attitudes
- Increasing independence
- Onset of puberty

**A time to watch for warning signs**
- Up to 74% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence
- 43% of children spend at least 3 hours a day of sedentary screen-time
- 20% of girls and 6% of boys report feeling hopeless

**Back to basics: supporting MY kids to thrive**
1. Establish and model healthy habits (food, sleep, exercise)
2. Structure screen-free time
3. Support kids as they explore personal and cultural identities
4. Recognize and encourage each child’s strengths
5. Take an interest – in school, friends, opinions, online lives
6. Talk through and support them to express feelings
Ontario children play and are physically healthy.
66.4% of children engage in vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes at least 5 times a week.
49% of children eat vegetables at least once a day.
82% of children play outdoors after school.
63% of children sleep at least 8 hours per night.
93.3% of families have a primary care provider.
86% of children rate their health as good or excellent.

Ontario children have at least one consistent, caring adult in their lives.
96.7% of children have at least one parent/caregiver who usually knows where they are.
67% of children feel they have a family member who could provide emotional help and support when needed.
50% of children talk about the activities they do in school with their parents/caregivers.
77% of children feel their teachers care about them as a person.
3.3% of families live in deep poverty and struggle to afford housing.
14% of children live in low-income households.
10% of families experience food insecurity.

Ontario families are financially stable and secure.
74% of children eat dinner with a parent on a regular basis.
89.2% of teachers share information with parents/caregivers.
93.5% of children have rules at home about talking to people they don’t know online/on cellphone.
63% of children have rules at home about computer use.
14% of children regularly take part in a school club or group.

Ontario children learn and practise healthy habits and connect to the natural world.
43.3% of children spend at least 3 hours per day of sedentary screen time (playing/chatting/surfing/emailing/watching).
92% of children brush their teeth at least once a day.
64% of children think it is important to feel connected to nature.
58.3% of children have rules at home about talking to people they don’t know online/on cellphone.

Ontario children are strongly connected to their families.
89% of children feel safe at school.
76% of children feel their community is safe for children to play outside during the day.
60% of children feel they can trust people in their community.
83.5% of children feel confident they have the skill needed to protect themselves online.

Ontario families are supported, engaged and informed to make decisions that affect them.
83% of parents feel confident in themselves.
74% of parents have access to after-school care.
52% of parents have access to public facilities and programs for sports/recreation.
71% of parents are satisfied with the accessibility of opportunities to be active in their community.

Ontario communities advocate, participate and contribute to policies and initiatives that support families.
46.4% of children would speak to a school social worker, counsellor, psychologist, nurse or other school staff if they needed help for concerns regarding their mental health.
71% of parents are satisfied with health care in their community.
87.3% of families are satisfied with health care in their community.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families are physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually well.
First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families are engaged in and contribute to their families, communities and cultures.
First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families are supported to self-determining in defining and meeting the needs of their children, families and communities.

- Many of the indicators in the broader Profile of Middle Years Wellbeing do not accurately reflect the disparities in outcomes experienced by Indigenous children and families.
- Indicators for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, families and communities are being developed under the Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy.