Stepping Up in 2014–2015: Executive Summary

In the past year, the Stepping Up framework informed the design and delivery of government initiatives for youth by creating opportunities, promoting well-being, and focusing supports on Ontario’s most vulnerable and marginalized youth populations.

2015 Profile of Youth Wellbeing
Data was updated for 24 indicators and 17 outcomes.
- Fifteen indicators showed small changes in the desired direction.
- Nine indicators showed small changes against the desired direction.
- Eight indicators were replaced.
- Four new indicators were added.

What the Numbers Say

Ontario launched, expanded or enhanced 52 initiatives for youth since the release of the 2014 Stepping Up Annual Report.

The Premier’s Council on Youth Opportunities met eight times to voice the experiences of vulnerable youth and share its insight on government programs and policies.

Twenty provincial ministries collaborated to support youth and capture progress in the 2015 Stepping Up Annual Report.

Stepping Up was downloaded more than 7,000 times in the last year, and the 2014 Stepping Up Annual Report was downloaded more than 6,000 times by community organizations, youth workers, parents and other allies.

Read the 2015 annual report at www.ontario.ca/steppingup
Guided by Stepping Up, Ontario supported programs and services across all seven themes of youth well-being this year. Highlights include:

- Encouraged physical activity by expanding the After-School Program and launching a new initiative to promote 60 minutes of physical activity every school day
- Revised the health and physical education curriculum to include up-to-date information on human development and sexual health to help students be safe and healthy
- Passed the Making Healthier Choices Act, a new law that helps Ontarians make healthier choices when dining out, strengthens the Smoke Free Ontario Act and protects youth from the potential harms of e-cigarettes
- Increased access to services and improved youth transitions to adult services through the next phase of Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy
- Enhanced funding to the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS) to increase support to many programs accessed by Aboriginal peoples, including a youth treatment centre to help Aboriginal youth with addictions problems
- Increased the Ontario Child Benefit, Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent, minimum wage and support for people receiving social assistance, including those who rely on the Ontario Disability Support Program and the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program, as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Learned about solutions to end homelessness through the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness and launched a pilot research project to help end the cycle of homelessness for Toronto youth
- Launched Experience Ontario, a new pilot program designed to help recent high school graduates choose their career direction and next steps
- Extended Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) to all eligible children in care under the age of 18
- Released Achieving Results through Partnership: First Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework. The report highlights the progress made in improving Aboriginal learners’ access to, participation in, and completion of postsecondary education and training programs in Ontario
- Released an enhanced Ontario Youth Action Plan to reduce youth violence and create new opportunities for high-risk youth
- Worked with Aboriginal partners to co-develop the first-ever Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy
- Released Community Safety and Well-Being in Ontario: Booklet 2—A Snapshot of Local Voices
- Released It’s Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment
- Led a review of the Child and Family Services Act to identify areas for change to improve outcomes for children and youth
- Encouraged civic and electoral participation through youth-focused electoral reform
- Created a social legacy for youth through leadership and volunteer opportunities with the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games
- Reduced wait-lists and expanded services to support youth with special needs
- Launched the Youth Collective Impact Program (Youth CI) to improve outcomes for youth and the Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX) to measure and enhance the success of community programs for youth
Ontario’s Profile of Youth Wellbeing 2015

Health & Wellness

Strong, Supportive Friends & Families

Coordinated & Youth-Friendly Communities

Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership

Diversity, Social Inclusion & Safety

Employment & Entrepreneurship

LEGEND

A red circle means the indicator has increased since 2014 report.
A blue circle means the indicator has decreased since 2014 report.
A green checkmark means the indicator has remained the same since 2014 report.
A blue checkmark means the indicator has improved since 2014 report.
A yellow checkmark means the indicator has worsened since 2014 report.
A blue square means the indicator has a new data since 2014 report.
A red square means the indicator has no new data since 2014 report.
A blue square means the indicator has a new indicator since 2014 report.
A red square means the indicator has changed direction since 2014 report.

Ontario youth are physically healthy.

- 76.7% of youth are a healthy weight.
- 68% of youth are physically active.
- 41.3% of youth consume at least five servings of fruit or vegetables daily.
- 91% of youth are attached to a primary care provider.
- 6% of youth are experiencing anxiety and/or depression.
- 26% of youth are experiencing elevated psychological distress.
- 13.4% of youth had serious thoughts about suicide in the past year.
- 8% of youth smoke cigarettes.
- 2.6% of youth have had a sexually transmitted infection.
- 5.1% of families live in deep poverty and are struggling to afford housing.
- 10% of Ontario families experience food insecurity.
- 13.6% of children and youth live in low-income households.
- 92.3% of youth have at least one parent who usually knows where they are.
- 44% of youth do not get along with their mothers.
- 6% of youth do not get along with their fathers.
- 24% of youth feel lonely.
- 74.7% of youth can count on their friends when things go wrong.
- 65% of youth get the emotional support they need from their families.
- 85% of English-speaking and 84% of French-speaking students enrolled in academic math meet the provincial standard.
- 47% of English-speaking and 31% of French-speaking students enrolled in applied math meet the provincial standard.
- 78% of English-speaking and 88% of French-speaking students completed 10 high school credits by the end of Grade 10.
- 84% of high school students graduate within five years.
- Ontario ranks 9th of 65 jurisdictions in overall mathematics achievement (PISA).
- 12% of students are enrolled in the Specialist High Skills Major Program.
- 330,555 students have Individual Education Plans.
- 33.5% of public district and 30.1% of Catholic district high school course credits are available through e-learning.
- 11.5% of youth have a postsecondary certificate or diploma.
- 21,588 youth were served through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.
- Ontario youth have access to safe spaces that provide quality opportunities for play and recreation.
- 62% of parents feel recreation opportunities in their community meet their children’s needs.
- 75.7% of youth feel there are good places in their community to spend their free time.
- 78% of students use social media to find information about news, health issues, or relationships.
- 10% of callers to 211 looking for community referrals are young people.
- 87.8% of students use social media to find information about news, health issues, or relationships.
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- 38.2% of youth voted in the last (2011) federal election.
- 10.6% of youth volunteer as a member of a board or committee.
- The youth donor rate in Ontario is 65%.
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- 78% of youth feel a sense of belonging in their community.
- 87.8% of students have positive attitudes toward diversity at school.
- 77.3% of youth have a happy home life.
- 95.7% of youth feel safe at school.
- 95% of youth have bullied online.
- 98% of Ontarians feel “safe” or “very safe” in their communities.
- 7% of youth participate in antisocial behaviour.
- Ontario’s total youth crime rate is 3,201 per 100,000 youth.
- Ontario’s total youth violent crime rate is 1,048 per 100,000 youth.
- 33.6% of youth believe officers in their local police force do a good job at treating people fairly.
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