

# Stepping Up in 2016: Executive Summary

In the past year, Stepping Up informed the design and delivery of government initiatives for youth across all seven themes identified in the framework. These initiatives created opportunities that promote well-being; support families, friends and caregivers; recognize diversity; and help youth get the education and employment opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

- Ontario launched, expanded or enhanced **82 strategies, programs or initiatives** for youth since the release of the *2015 Stepping Up Annual Report*.
- The Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities met **six times** to voice the experiences of vulnerable youth and share its insights on government programs and policies. The council hosted Listening Tours in **ten communities** across the province to learn about issues important to youth.
- **Twenty-five provincial ministries** collaborated to support youth and capture progress in the *2016 Stepping Up Annual Report*.
- The Stepping Up website had more than **5,350 unique visits** in the last year, and the *2015 Stepping Up Annual Report*, Executive Summary and Inventory of Youth Programs 2015 were downloaded **2,500 times** by community organizations, youth workers, parents and other allies.

## 2016 Profile of Youth Wellbeing

Data was updated for 34 indicators and 17 outcomes.

- ↑ 16 indicators showed small changes in the desired direction.
- ↓ 17 indicators showed small changes against the desired direction.
- ➡ 1 indicator showed no change.

## Supporting Youth Well-Being

Guided by *Stepping Up*, Ontario supported programs and services across all seven themes of youth well-being this year. Highlights include:



Health & Wellness

- The [Healthy Kids Community Challenge](#) reaches almost 40% of Ontario's population including municipalities, Aboriginal Health Access Centres and Aboriginal Community Health Centres.
- The [Ontario First Nations Health Action Plan](#) was launched and includes Indigenous youth life promotion, crisis coordination and support components.
- The [Mental Health Innovation Fund](#) supported 34 projects to help postsecondary students get access to mental health services faster.



Strong, Supportive Friends & Families

- Free dental care for eligible children and youth aged 17 and under was provided through the new [Healthy Smiles Ontario](#) program, as part of the [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#).
- Student income from scholarships, bursaries and fellowships became exempt from a household's rent-gear-to-income calculation as part of the [Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy](#).
- The [One Vision, One Voice](#) practice framework was launched. It supports culturally appropriate services for African Canadian/Black children, youth and families involved with the child welfare system.



Education, Training & Apprenticeships

- The [Specialist High Skills Major program](#) was expanded to serve an additional 2,000 high school students. The program gives students the chance to focus on a career path while meeting the requirements of their high school diploma.
- A [Renewed Math Strategy](#) was introduced to help support students across the province achieve better results in mathematics.
- [eCampusOntario](#), an online portal, was launched in fall 2015. It currently offers information on over 15,700 courses and 760 programs, most of which are delivered online.



Employment & Entrepreneurship

- The [Youth Job Link program](#) and the [summer component of the Youth Job Connection program](#) were both launched as part of the renewed [Youth Jobs Strategy](#).
- To strengthen rural communities and encourage youth opportunities, the province held a [Rural Ontario Summit](#) on the theme "Building the Future."
- An interim report was published on the changing nature of the workplace ([Changing Workplaces Review Special Advisors' Interim Report](#)). It includes a range of options to better protect youth and other vulnerable workers while supporting business.



Diversity, Social Inclusion & Safety

- Through the [Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy](#), Indigenous communities and the government continued to build stronger bonds and improve services to meet the needs of Indigenous children and youth.
- Ontario continued to collaborate with the federal government, community partners and others to support [settlement and integration of newcomers to Ontario](#). Efforts included taking action to welcome thousands of Syrian children, youth and families.



Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership

- The [Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016](#) includes amendments to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to add their names to a provisional voter register.
- Youth volunteers at the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games were recognized with [PREB-Ontario certificates](#), a legacy initiative of the Toronto 2015 Games.
- The Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities provided input on the development of the [Strategy for a Safer Ontario](#).



Coordinated & Youth-Friendly Communities

- The [Youth Mentorship program](#) and [Restorative Justice and Conflict Mediation program](#) were launched to support the [Enhanced Youth Action Plan](#).
- The Sport Pathway Initiative supported the [2016 Ontario Aboriginal Summer Games](#) that were co-hosted by the Aboriginal Sport and Wellness Council of Ontario and the Six Nations of the Grand River.

# Ontario's Profile of Youth Wellbeing

2016

**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.
- 87.6% of youth are attached to a primary care provider.

**Ontario youth feel mentally well.**

- 5.6% of youth are experiencing anxiety and/or depression.
- 34% of youth are experiencing elevated psychological distress.
- 12.4% of youth had serious thoughts about suicide in the past year.

**Ontario youth make choices that support healthy and safe development.**

- 8.6% of youth smoke cigarettes.
- 17.6% of youth have recently consumed excessive alcohol.
- 29% of youth have used any illicit drug.
- 2.6% of youth have had a sexually transmitted infection.

**Ontario youth have families and guardians equipped to help them thrive.**

- 6.3% of families live in deep poverty and are struggling to afford housing.
- 10% of Ontario families experience food insecurity.
- 14% of children and youth live in low-income households.

**Ontario youth have at least one consistent, caring adult in their lives.**

- 91.5% of youth have at least one parent who usually knows where they are.

**Ontario youth form and maintain healthy, close relationships.**

- 24% of youth feel lonely.
- 74.7% of youth can count on their friends when things go wrong.
- 65.4% of youth get the emotional support they need from their families.

**Ontario youth achieve academic success.**

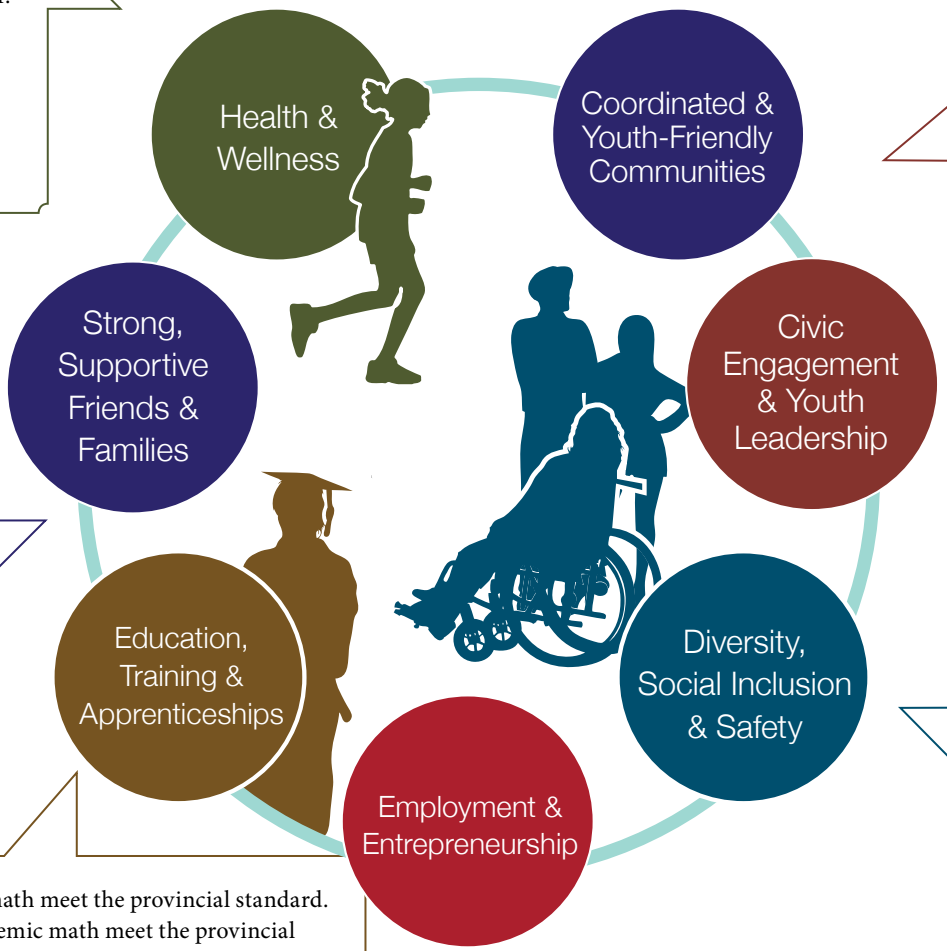
- English-speaking students enrolled in academic math meet the provincial standard.
- 82% of French-speaking students enrolled in academic math meet the provincial standard.
- English-speaking students enrolled in applied math meet the provincial standard.
- 49% of French-speaking students enrolled in applied math meet the provincial standard.
- 78% of English-speaking and 88% of French-speaking students completed 16 high school credits by the end of Grade 10.
- 85.5% of high school students graduate within five years.
- Ontario ranks 11 of 72 jurisdictions in overall mathematics achievement (PISA).

**Ontario youth have educational experiences that respond to their needs and prepare them to lead.**

- 14% of students are enrolled in the Specialist High Skills Major program.
- 319,204 students have Individual Education Plans.
- 36.8% of public district and 36.8% of Catholic district high school course credits are available through e-learning.

**Ontario youth access diverse training and apprenticeship opportunities.**

- 12.5% of youth have a postsecondary certificate or diploma.
- 21,924 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 child's needs.
- 75.7% of youth feel there are good places in their community to spend their free time.

**Ontario youth know about and easily navigate resources in their communities.**

- 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.

**Ontario youth play a role in informing the decisions that affect them.**

- 56.2% of youth voted in the last (2011) federal election.
- 10.6% of youth volunteer as a member of a board or committee.

**Ontario youth are engaged in their communities.**

- The youth donor rate in Ontario is 65%.
- The youth volunteer rate in Ontario is 69.3%.

**Ontario youth leverage their assets to address social issues.**

- 16.7% of youth volunteered to support a group or organization.
- 10.4% of youth volunteered in activities to protect the environment.
- 3.3% of youth participated in activities to support a political party or group.

**Ontario youth experience social inclusion and value diversity.**

- 78.7% of youth feel a sense of belonging in their community.
- 87.8% of students have positive attitudes toward diversity at school.

**Ontario youth feel safe at home, at school, online and in their communities.**

- 77.3% of youth have a happy home life.
- 95% of youth feel safe at school.
- 19.8% of youth have been bullied online.
- 98.6% of Ontarians felt "safe" or "very safe" in their communities.

**Ontario youth respect, and are respected by, the law and justice system.**

- 5.2% of youth participate in antisocial behaviour.
- Ontario's total youth crime rate is 3,175 per 100,000 youth.
- Ontario's total youth violent crime rate is 1,035 per 100,000 youth.
- 59.3% of youth believe officers in their local police force do a good job at treating people fairly.

**Ontario youth have opportunities for meaningful employment experiences.**

- 11.6% of students are enrolled in co-op placements.
- 61.1% of youth are in the labour force.
- 9.6% of youth are not in education, employment or training.
- 89.1% of youth who are employed full-time are in work related to their field.

**Ontario youth have the skills and resources needed to develop a successful career or business.**

- 1.5% of youth are self-employed.

**Ontario youth are safe and supported at work.**

- The annual Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Lost-Time Injury (LTI) rate for youth employees was 0.94 per 100 workers in 2015.

**LEGEND**

- Decrease since 2015 report
- Increase since 2015 report
- No change in data since 2015 report
- No new data since 2015 report
- A blue circle means the indicator has changed in the desired direction
- A red circle means the indicator has changed in a negative direction