

# Stepping Up

A Strategic  
Framework to  
Help Ontario's  
Youth Succeed



Stepping Up is a first-of-its-kind framework developed by the Government of Ontario to help guide, focus and maximize our collaborative actions to support young people.

Stepping Up defines what we believe matters most to our young people. It describes what we are already doing to support them and what we can accomplish by working better together. Stepping Up is an evidence-based framework, developed through existing research on youth development and in consultation across government and with young people and their allies. It builds on past consultations and recommendations from a range of reports and initiatives.

Stepping Up articulates the government's sustained commitment to supporting the well-being of Ontario's youth. Stepping Up's vision, guiding principles and priority outcomes will influence how the government develops policies and designs programs relating to youth.

Stepping Up is also a call to action for those that look out for the well-being of young people in Ontario. It has been developed so that young people themselves, families, governments, foundations, philanthropic organizations, public agencies, charities, community organizations and private businesses can identify ways to help youth succeed.

## Vision

Together, we will support all young people to become healthy, safe, hopeful, engaged, educated and contributing members of their communities and our province.

## Guiding Principles

- 1 A Positive, Asset-Based View of Youth:** A young person's social, emotional, physical and cognitive competencies, along with their "self" or "spirit", prepare them for future wellbeing. We will work to understand and nurture young people's assets to support them to succeed.
- 2 Targeted Support for Those who Need it:** We will focus on youth who need help to overcome barriers, including: Aboriginal youth, youth in and leaving care, youth with disabilities or special needs, racialized youth, newcomer youth, LGBTTTQ youth, francophone youth, youth living in rural and remote communities, youth from low-income families and youth in conflict with the law.
- 3 Collaboration and Partnership:** We will work to strengthen the leadership and accountability of, and connections between, service providers, foundations, community groups, governments, young leaders and families.
- 4 Meaningful Youth Engagement and Leadership:** Young people have valuable perspectives and can offer keen insight into the issues they face. We will work collaboratively with youth to better support them and empower them to lead.
- 5 Diversity:** We need to respect and foster the diversity of Ontario's youth. We can do this by ensuring the way we provide services is barrier-free, inclusive, and culturally responsive.
- 6 Evidence-Informed Choices:** We improve the ways we support youth through research, evaluation and information from front-line workers.
- 7 Transparency:** We will listen openly to, and gather input from, all stakeholders including youth, parents, different levels of government, communities, agencies and groups.

# Themes & Priority Outcomes



## Themes

## Priority Outcomes

### Health & Wellness

- 1 Ontario youth are physically healthy.
- 2 Ontario youth feel mentally well.
- 3 Ontario youth make choices that support healthy and safe development.

### Strong, Supportive Friends & Families

- 4 Ontario youth have families and guardians equipped to help them thrive.
- 5 Ontario youth have at least one consistent, caring adult in their lives.
- 6 Ontario youth form and maintain healthy, close relationships.

### Education, Training & Apprenticeships

- 7 Ontario youth achieve academic success.
- 8 Ontario youth have educational experiences that respond to their needs and prepare them to lead.
- 9 Ontario youth access diverse training and apprenticeship opportunities.

### Employment & Entrepreneurship

- 10 Ontario youth have opportunities for meaningful employment experiences.
- 11 Ontario youth have the skills and resources needed to develop a successful career or business.
- 12 Ontario youth are safe and supported at work.

### Diversity, Social Inclusion & Safety

- 13 Ontario youth experience social inclusion and value diversity.
- 14 Ontario youth feel safe at home, at school, online and in their communities.
- 15 Ontario youth respect, and are respected by, the law and justice system.

### Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership

- 16 Ontario youth play a role in informing the decisions that affect them.
- 17 Ontario youth are engaged in their communities.
- 18 Ontario youth leverage their assets to address social issues.

### Coordinated & Youth- Friendly Communities

- 19 Ontario youth have access to safe spaces that provide quality opportunities for play and recreation.
- 20 Ontario youth know about and easily navigate resources in their communities.

## Learn More

For more information on Stepping Up, and to see what more the Government of Ontario is doing to support positive youth outcomes, please visit [www.ontario.ca/steppingup](http://www.ontario.ca/steppingup)