

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

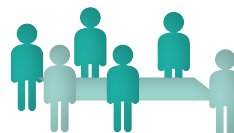
Data was updated for 24 indicators and 17 outcomes.

- ⬆️ 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.

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

- 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

Strong, Supportive Friends & Families

- 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

Education, Training & Apprenticeships

- 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

Employment & Entrepreneurship

- Renewed Ontario's [Youth Jobs Strategy](#)
- Launched [Youth Job Connection](#) to help young people who face complex and multiple barriers gain access to employment
- Supported [workplace safety initiatives for youth](#) and vulnerable workers
- Implemented the [Labour Market Information strategy](#) to improve access to high-quality labour market information that helps young people make better-informed decisions about their careers

Diversity, Social Inclusion & Safety

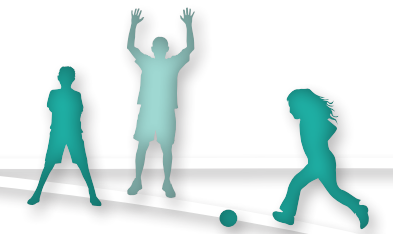
- Released an [enhanced Ontario Youth Action Plan](#) to reduce youth violence and create new opportunities for high-risk youth
- Worked with Aboriginal partners to co-develop the first-ever [Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy](#)
- Released [Community Safety and Well-Being in Ontario: Booklet 2—A 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

Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership

- 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

Coordinated & Youth-Friendly Communities

- 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

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.

Ontario youth feel mentally well.

- 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.

Ontario youth make choices that support healthy and safe development.

- 8.5% of youth smoke cigarettes.
- 19.8% of youth have recently consumed excessive alcohol.
- 30.7% 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.

- 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.

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

- 92.3% of youth have at least one parent who usually knows where they are.
- 4.4% of youth do not get along with their mothers.
- 6.5% of youth do not get along with their fathers.

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.

- 85% of English-speaking and 84% of French-speaking students enrolled in academic math meet the provincial standard.
- 47% of English-speaking and 51% 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.
- 84% of high school students graduate within five years.
- Ontario ranks 9th of 65 jurisdictions in overall mathematics achievement (PISA).

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

- 12% of students are enrolled in the Specialist High Skills Major Program.
- 310,555 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.

Ontario youth access diverse training and apprenticeship opportunities.

- 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 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.

- 38.2% 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.
- 95.7% of youth feel safe at school.
- 19% of youth have been bullied online.
- 98% of Ontarians felt "safe" or "very safe" in their communities.

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

- 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.
- 53.6% 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.

- 12% of students are enrolled in co-op placements.
- 61.9% of youth are in the labour force.
- 9.5% of youth are not in education, employment or training.
- 88.6% of youth who are employed full-time are in work related to their field.
- 1.7% of youth are self-employed.

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

- The annual Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Lost-Time Injury (LTI) rate for youth employees was 0.93 per 100 workers in 2014.

Ontario youth are safe and supported at work.

LEGEND

- Decrease since 2014 report
- Increase since 2014 report
- No change in data since 2014 report
- No new data since 2014 report
- Replaced indicator from 2014 report
- New indicator since 2014 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