



Health and Wellness

Developed from *Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed* by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Stepping Up is a strategic framework from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that strengthens the Government of Ontario's commitment to young people. **Stepping Up** consists of seven themes and 20 outcomes that help inform and align the work of service providers, community groups etc. with research and what youth themselves believe they need in order to succeed. **Health and Wellness** is one of the framework's seven themes and has three associated outcomes.

Why Health and Wellness?

We want our young people to be happy, physically healthy, emotionally resilient, and making positive life choices. Healthy young people are better equipped to learn, develop and build the skills they need to succeed as adults. Healthy and engaged citizens contribute to their communities, reduce demands on health care and lower the risk of chronic disease and illness. Together, we can enhance the long-term health and wellness of our young people through early identification and support.

What outcomes do we want to see for Ontario youth?



01
Ontario youth are physically healthy.



02
Ontario youth feel mentally well.



03
Ontario youth make choices that support healthy & safe development.

Why is this important?

In order for Ontario's young people to reach their potential, we need to engage and support them to be physically and mentally healthy, emotionally resilient and able to make positive lifestyle choices. A healthy lifestyle in adolescence enables cognitive, social and physical development and can lead to a healthier adult life. Youth who are emotionally resilient can build positive social skills and relationships. Healthy young people also tend to participate in a wide range of opportunities that support their development.

01 / 20 How can we support Ontario youth to be physically healthy?

We can support Ontario youth to be physically healthy by:

- **Promoting healthy habits** by encouraging regular exercise, providing healthy food choices, and encouraging sufficient sleep.
- **Providing positive options** by ensuring access to more healthy and nutritious meals in schools.
- **Focusing on the social determinants of health** by assessing how a youth's personal living conditions and experiences in society can affect their health.
- **Improving access to health care** by ensuring youth have access to a regular family physician and can access transportation services to health care services in rural and remote communities.

02 / 20

How can we support Ontario youth to be mentally well?

We can support Ontario youth to be mentally well by:

- **Supporting youth to develop resilience** by teaching youth adaptive emotion regulation strategies.
- **Intervening early by addressing** mental illness and emotional problems during early childhood and adolescence.
- **Reducing stigma** by promoting equity, diversity and awareness on mental health issues.

03 / 20

How can we help Ontario youth understand and address risk taking?

We can support Ontario youth to understand and address risk taking by:

- **Supporting growth and independence** by helping youth build on their personal strengths and try new things in safe ways.
- **Helping youth to see the consequences of unhealthy risks** by discussing the risk and consequences involved with tanning beds, smoking, unsafe sex, drug use, and driving under the influence.

Learn More

This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets focused on the Government of Ontario's **Stepping Up** framework. Check out the other factsheets in the series by clicking on the links below:










- **An Introduction to Stepping Up**
- **Strong, Supportive Friends and Families**
- **Education, Training and Apprenticeships**
- **Employment and Entrepreneurship**
- **Civic Engagement and Youth Leadership**
- **Diversity, Social Inclusion and Safety**
- **Coordinated and Youth-Friendly Communities**

How can a youth program measure these outcomes?

YouthREX has curated measures directly related to the theme of **Health and Wellness**. Each one is youth-friendly and open access, making it easy to use when it comes to evaluating youth programs!

You can find YouthREX's measures [here](#).

Each measure includes the following information:

-  An Overview
-  Subscales
-  Stepping Up Theme(s) & Outcome(s)
-  Target Populations
-  Length & How it is Measured
-  Developers
-  Good to Know
-  Psychometrics
-  Learn More

For more resources related to Stepping Up, don't forget to visit the eXchange!

The **eXchange** is YouthREX's online learning community. You can visit it anytime and find hundreds of intentionally curated and created resources focused on youth work, all in one place.