

Strong, Supportive Friends & Families

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. **Strong, Supportive Friends & Families** is one of the framework's seven themes and has three associated outcomes.

Why Strong, Supportive Friends & Families?

It is vital that parents, guardians, mentors and friends support young people along their path to adulthood by helping and encouraging them to gain important life skills. Adults who understand the developmental needs of youth are better able to help them navigate new challenges, and access services in their communities. For some families, however, providing the basic necessities is hard. These families may require additional services and supports. This is particularly true when young people continue to receive support from their families as they transition into adulthood.


What outcomes do we want to see for Ontario youth?

04




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

05



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

06



Ontario youth form and maintain healthy, close relationships.

Why is this important?

All young Ontarians should have caring families and adults to turn to when they need guidance - and those adults should have the resources needed to support youth. Young people who have access to caring adults and peers have the strong, supportive foundation they need to believe in themselves, pursue positive opportunities and contribute to their communities.

04/20 How can we support Ontario families and guardians?

We can support Ontario's families and guardians by:

- **Supporting families and guardians so they are equipped to provide basic needs** by helping family and caregivers provide safe places for youth to live and eat healthy food.
- **Building families' and guardians' capacity to promote positive development** by encouraging parents and guardians to be supportive and teach important life skills- such as resolving conflicts, opening a bank account, writing a resume, or doing laundry.
- **Helping parents and caregivers find additional support when it is needed** by providing information on counselling and respite services for families of youth with disabilities or special needs.

05 / 20 How can we improve Ontario young people's relationship with caring adults?

We can support Ontario youth to have healthy relationships with caring adults by:

- **Increasing access to caring adults** by providing youth with more access to role models through the community, school, and work place.
- **Building the capacity of caring adults to better support youth** by providing education to adult allies and mentors on the developmental needs of young people and creating safe spaces for youth to express themselves.

06 / 20 How can we support Ontario young people to support positive peer relationships?

We can support Ontario youth to promote positive peer relationships by:

- **Providing spaces and opportunities for youth to interact in positive ways** by providing youth with community hubs, drop in centers, recreation facilities, and libraries where they can make friends and develop their social identity.
- **Helping youth to develop pro-social relationships and interpersonal skills** by providing more recreational services and programs that help youth develop positive relationships, especially for youth living with disabilities or special needs.

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**
- **Health and Wellness**
- **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 **Strong, Supportive Friends and Families**. 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.