

# An Introduction to *Stepping Up*

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. By identifying the government's priorities, *Stepping Up* serves as an important tool when it comes to making decisions about Ontario's youth.**

This framework recognizes that for young people to reach their full potential, they need opportunities, support, and guidance from various sectors and communities as these all play significant roles in youth wellbeing.

***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.



## What is *Stepping Up*'s purpose?

The purpose of *Stepping Up* is to “support all young people to become healthy, safe, hopeful, engaged, educated and contributing members of their communities and province.”

## What/who helped inform *Stepping Up*?

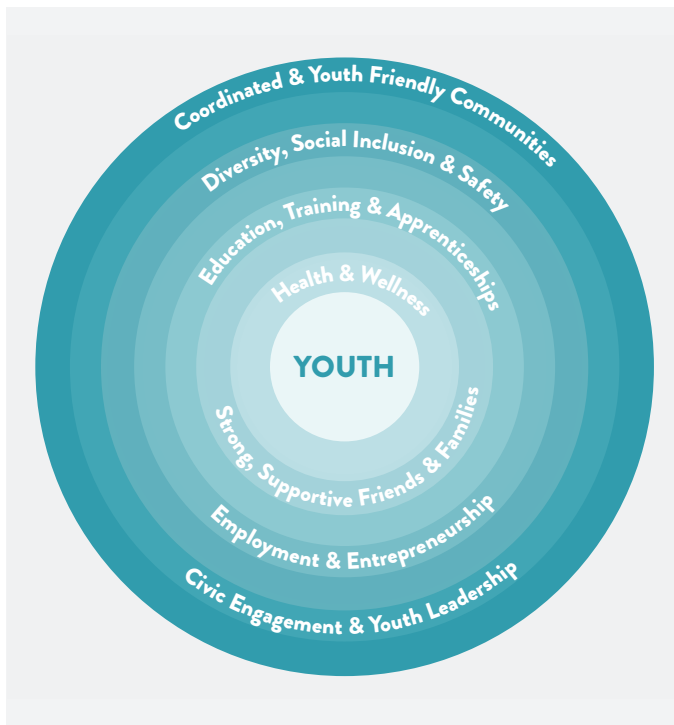
***Stepping Up*** relied on past consultations with youth and partners. It was informed by the [Review of the Roots of Youth Violence](#), [Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development](#), and [Ontario's Youth Action Plan](#).

In addition to these reports, ***Stepping Up*** also collaborated with 18 provincial ministries, the [Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities](#), various partners in the youth-serving sector, and youth themselves.

## What are *Stepping Up*'s guiding principles?

There are 7 guiding principles of ***Stepping Up*** that influence the ways in which the Government of Ontario develops policies, designs programs, and uses data that relates to youth.

1. Positive, Asset-Based View of Youth
2. Targeted Support for Those Who Need It
3. Collaboration and Partnership
4. Meaningful Youth Engagement and Leadership
5. Diversity
6. Evidence-Informed Choices
7. Transparency



## What are the seven themes of Stepping Up?

Taking a holistic view of youth, these themes are “based on an ecological model of development and a person-centred approach that is also consistent with Aboriginal ways of knowing.” Having youth at the centre, the circles are representative of what youth need through various stages of development.

Each theme is dedicated to supporting positive youth development.

1. Health & Wellness
2. Strong, Supportive Friends & Families
3. Education, Training & Apprenticeships
4. Employment & Entrepreneurship
5. Diversity, Social Inclusion & Safety
6. Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership
7. Coordinated & Youth-Friendly Communities

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 above.

## How are youth defined in Stepping Up?

In the context of **Stepping Up**, youth are defined as “... young people **between 12 and 25 years**. Research has shown this to be a distinct, critical period of human development, where young people experience internal cognitive, emotional, social and physical developmental changes and establish new external roles, relationships and responsibilities.”

Although **Stepping Up** is dedicated to helping all youth, it acknowledges that some of Ontario’s youth face unique challenges and living conditions. **Stepping Up** therefore strives to ensure that the diverse needs of the province’s youth are met.

In order to better serve vulnerable youth across Ontario, **Stepping Up** pays particular attention to the following groups (while recognizing that youth may belong to more than one):

- LGBTQ youth
- Francophone youth
- Youth living in rural and remote communities
- Youth living in poverty
- Youth in conflict with the law
- Racialized youth
- Newcomer youth
- Aboriginal youth
- Youth with disabilities or special needs
- Youth in and leaving care

## Learn More

The following links provide research that helped inform

**Stepping Up:**

- [Stepping Up Annual Report, 2015](#)
- [Review of the Roots of Youth Violence](#)
- [Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development](#)
- [Ontario’s Youth Action Plan](#)

## 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.