

CHILDREN COUNT: TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY



REVISED JANUARY 2019

Ontario needs a coordinated and cost-effective system for measuring the health and well-being of children and youth. Such a system will enable stakeholders at all levels (local, regional and provincial) to effectively measure the health and well-being of our kids, and in turn, the return on investment in relevant programs.

Without a coordinated assessment and monitoring system in Ontario, the ability to inform public health planning for child and youth well-being at the local level is hindered. Monitoring, often referred to as 'surveillance' in the public health field, includes the systematic collection and analysis of health data for the purpose of planning, implementing and evaluating effective public health programs in local communities. In order to appropriately understand health behaviours of children and youth that influence well-being, and to properly measure health program investments over time, good quality assessment and monitoring data are needed at local levels. Good quality data are accessible, reliable, accurate, consistent and comparable. In particular, it is important that sample sizes are large

enough and representative enough to allow for valid analysis at local levels, ensure ethical standards for privacy and to draw solid conclusions to inform decision making.

Based on the recommendation of the Children Count Report, a provincial task force of key stakeholders was convened in the spring of 2017. This task force included representation from boards of education, local public health units, government, researchers, and non-governmental organizations in Ontario. The aim of the task force was to identify next steps for improving assessment and monitoring of child and youth health and well-being in Ontario. The following recommendations of the Children Count Task Force represent next steps and actions needed to coordinate and connect the current data collection systems that exist in Ontario.

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION

Suggested lead Ministries:
Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Children,
Community and Social Services

Create a secretariat responsible for overseeing the implementation of the systems, tools and resources required to improve the monitoring of child and youth health and well-being. The secretariat shall be so enabled to:

1. Guide the implementation of the five recommendations of the task force that are contained in this report.
2. Develop a process to ensure that assessment and monitoring systems remain effective and relevant over time by addressing emerging issues and data gaps.



RECOMMENDATION 1

Suggested Lead Ministries: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Supporting Ministry: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Create an interactive web-based registry of database profiles resulting from child and youth health and well-being data collection in Ontario schools.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Suggested Lead Ministry: Ministry of Education

Supporting Ministries: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Mandate the use of a standardized School Climate Survey template and a coordinated process across Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Suggested Lead Ministries: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Supporting Ministry: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Develop and formalize knowledge exchange practices through the use of centrally coordinated data sharing agreements.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Suggested Lead Ministry: Ministry of Education

Supporting Ministries: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Develop and implement a centralized research ethics review process to support research activities in Ontario school boards.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Suggested Lead Ministries: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Education

Supporting Ministry: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Work with the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) of Ontario to develop a guideline for the interpretation of privacy legislation related to student health and well-being monitoring data collection in schools.

For a complete list of recommendations and their associated actions see the full report at www.wechu.org/reports/ldcp-task-force-recommendation.

THE CHILDREN COUNT TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL LEAD TO:



Better Data



More Efficient Data Collection



Reduced Costs



Healthier Children and Youth



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