

Challenges Facing Children & Youth in Ontario

Need for Attention to Child Well-being

Toronto young people "highlighted the **importance of being listened to and taken seriously**, and feeling like their **voices mattered**".

(UNICEF Canada and Students Commission of Canada, 2017, p. 43)



Young people highlighted **relatedness, equity, education and employment, and health** as important themes related to their well-being.

(UNICEF Canada and Students Commission of Canada, 2017)

Lack of Child Rights Education & Understanding

"A fundamental barrier to participation is that **youth may not know they have a right to participate**".

(Collins et al., 2020, p. 287).



"In Canada, the key challenge is to implement some form of entitlement to [child rights education] and **to ensure teachers are adequately trained**".

(Jerome et al., 2015, p. 32).

Rising Mental Health Challenges due to COVID-19

Young people



Reported feeling a combination of **worried, upset, sad** and **angry** about the abrupt end to the school year, ability to see their friends, and uncertainty about the future (Brown et al., 2020)

Young people



On returning back to school, children reported **moderate levels of anxiety**

(Brown et al., 2020)

Young people



On returning to school, less than 20% of children **reported severe levels of anxiety** (Brown et al., 2020)

Historical & Current Gaps in Child Rights Implementation



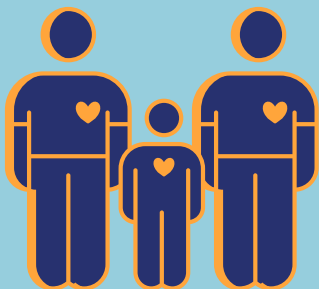
"The **social and economic issues that contribute to the overrepresentation of Black children in child welfare** include poverty, the lack of adequate and appropriate services and supports, and the **intergenerational effects of systemic racism.**" (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2020, pp. 13)

"...negative assumptions about poverty and race, policies and system-level practices, and an individual's **conscious or unconscious racial bias**... may lead to **incorrect assumptions about the level of risk** racialized children are exposed to, which could result in decisions that **adversely affect Black children and their families.**" (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2020, pp. 13)

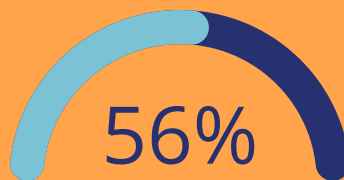
Barriers to Child Participation

"While youth participation is occurring in some spaces, there seems to be an **overall lack of commitment to ensure all young people are heard**...when young people are provided with opportunities to participate, they tend to be disproportionately represented or **underrepresented**..."

(Collins et al., 2020, pp. 283, 289)

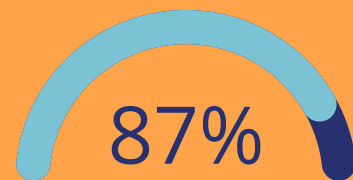


Overcoming Child Protection Obstacles



of youth in care **do not graduate high school** in Ontario

(Kovarikova, 2017)



of youth in care **withdraw from post-secondary education** in Ontario

(Kovarikova, 2017)