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# Youth Policy Framework Bulletin

## Understanding Youth Development

Volume 1

May 2, 2011

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### Welcome to the First Edition of the Youth Policy Framework Bulletin

The Youth Policy Framework (YPF) Bulletin is being produced in order to provide up-to-date information and resources to YPF partners and stakeholders. This bulletin will be distributed to a range of individuals, organizations, and young people who have expressed an interest in the project, and will include information on important project milestones, lessons learned, and mobilization opportunities.

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#### Important Dates and Milestones

<b>April 15</b>	Research Forum
<b>May</b>	Start of Province-wide Dialogues with Youth
<b>June 25</b>	YDC Meeting #4

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### What is the Youth Policy Framework?

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) is developing a YPF to compile the current state of evidence on how youth aged 12-25 develop—physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially—and describe the supports and opportunities that can help ensure they reach their full potential. In this way, the Framework will be a resource for governments, families, communities and providers to better understand youth and what can be done to support their successful transition into adulthood.

There are two core components to developing the YPF: a research process and a youth engagement process. This bulletin will provide updates on both of these processes and help identify how they will come together to form the YPF.

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### Meet the Youth Development Committee!

The Youth Development Committee (YDC) was formed this past January. A total of 25 young people were selected to participate on this Committee.

MCYS received more than 400 applications from youth interested in working on the YDC, and the decision of which 25 to select was very difficult. Ministry staff worked closely with an external selection panel to read, review and score each application. The selected Committee members range in age from 18-25, come from across Ontario, and bring with them exceptional experiences and skills that represent the diversity of Ontario's youth.

The primary task for the YDC will be to provide expertise and advice to MCYS about how to engage young people from across the province in discussions about what they need to succeed.

The first meeting of the YDC took place on Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at an MCYS office in Toronto. The meeting provided an

opportunity for YDC members to learn more about each other and about the YPF. Committee members got to work quickly at the first meeting, providing feedback and direction to guide the ongoing development of a Policy Literacy Toolkit (see **page 2** for more information).

The YDC met for the second time on February 26<sup>th</sup> at the Multi-Ministry Youth Meeting hosted by MCYS. This meeting brought the YDC members together with youth councils and committees from several ministries to discuss their experiences working with government and share knowledge on best practice for engaging youth from across the province.

The YDC met again on March 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss and define a youth engagement strategy for the YPF. The Strategy will reflect the YDC's advice on principles of good engagement and consultation approaches that will be successful in hearing from youth in different areas of the province.

## The Policy Literacy Toolkit

The ministry has obtained the services of the Students Commission of Canada to develop a Policy Literacy Toolkit.

The Toolkit will be used to teach young people about policy and the decision making process as part of the project's dialogues with youth.

The ministry will hold regional dialogue sessions that ask youth to

identify what supports and opportunities are needed to help them reach their full potential. To prepare young people for this discussion, participants will also attend a Policy Literacy Workshop where they will have a chance to learn about how government works and what policy making involves. The purpose of this is to ensure that they are able to

meaningfully participate in future discussions about youth development and policy.

The Policy Literacy Toolkit will be available as a public resource to engage young people in a discussion on policy development.

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## The Research Process

Last fall, the ministry launched a call for research on *Child and Youth Development Beyond age 6 – Transitions to Adulthood*. As a result of the call, the ministry commissioned 13 research papers to synthesize the current state of evidence from a variety of disciplines across multiple domains (social, emotional, cognitive and physical development).

These research syntheses will inform the creation of a Developmental Trajectory – a document that will depict youth development across several domains, and act as the primary tool for discussion in the youth dialogues.

To develop the Trajectory, the ministry has procured the services of Dr. Charles Ungerleider and his team from *Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group* to coordinate the process of integrating the research syntheses.

The resulting Developmental Trajectory will be combined with the supports and opportunities identified by youth to develop Ontario's Youth Policy Framework.

The research and a draft Trajectory were shared with members of the research community, youth-serving sector, government ministries and the Youth Development Committee at the Research Forum on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

This Forum provided an opportunity for feedback and discussion about the current state of research on youth development and also on the Developmental Trajectory.

More information on the Research Forum will be provided in the next edition of the YPF Bulletin.

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## Additional Resources and Information

If you have questions about the Framework or would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Laura Flynn-Northcote at:

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For more information and additional updates about the Youth Policy Framework and to learn more about the Youth Network, please visit [www.youthconnect.ca](http://www.youthconnect.ca).

If you or someone you know is between the ages of 12 and 25 and is interested in taking part in the Youth Network, please visit the [sign-up page](#).