

North Oakville Youth Voices Matter
Survey 2018 Highlights



Final Report

Table of Contents

1.	Asset-Building in Halton	
	a.	The 18 Developmental Assets measured 3
	b.	About the 18 Developmental Assets 4
2.	Key findings: Opportunities to make a difference in North Oakville	5
3.	About the Youth Voices Matter (YVM) Survey	6
	a.	Who participated 6
4.	Important Findings	7
5.	About the North Oakville Youth Initiative	9
6.	Do More with Data	10
	a.	Understanding the data 10
	b.	Interpreting the Data 10



Asset-Building in Halton

Halton is an Asset-Building community. Our Kids Network adopted the Developmental Asset® framework to provide professionals with an approach to collectively and uniformly understand, promote and measure positive child and youth development. It is a strength based, research based framework that identifies positive experiences, relationships and personal qualities that all kids need to succeed. The research has shown that the more assets a young person has, the more likely they are to succeed. The less assets a young person has, the more likely they are to be involved in risky behaviours. The key ingredient to Asset-Building is Relationships. Once meaningful relationships with children and youth are established, it is more efficient and effective to build Developmental Assets. Assets are for all kids - regardless of gender, ethnicity, income, or geographic location, the assets have been linked to positive behaviours and attitudes.

The 18 Developmental Assets Measured

Safety	88%
Time at Home	75%
School Engagement	74%
Self Esteem	73%
Positive Peer Influence	72%
Family Support	70%
Positive View of Personal Future	69%
Youth Programs	64%
Peer Connectedness	62%
Positive Family Communication	61%
Family Boundaries	58%
Caring Neighbourhood	56%
Personal Power	55%
Equality & Social Justice	39%
Spirituality	39%
Service to Others	37%
Youth as Resources	36%
Caring	22%

Percentage of North Oakville youth scoring high on developmental assets. Assets have been ordered from highest to lowest percent.

The 18 Developmental Assets

Developed by the Search Institute, the 40 Developmental Assets represent the positive relationships, youth competencies, self-perceptions and values needed for children and youth to succeed. The full list of assets is broken into eight categories: support, empowerment, boundaries/expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.

Eighteen assets drawn from the eight categories have been measured through the Youth Voices Matter (YVM) Survey.

Support

1. Family Support: Family provides high levels of nurturing and support.
2. Positive Family Communication: Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. Caring Neighbourhood: Young person experiences caring neighbours.

Empowerment

4. Youth as Resources: Young people are provided opportunities to contribute to their community.
5. Service to Others: Young person volunteers in the community.
6. Safety: Young person feels safe in their neighbourhood.

Boundaries and expectations

7. Family Boundaries: Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
8. Positive Peer Influence: Young person's close friends model responsible behaviour.

Constructive use of time

9. Youth Programs: Young person spends time participating in youth programs.
10. Time at Home: Young person spends quality time with his or her family at home.
- Commitment to learning
11. School Engagement: Young person is actively engaged in learning.

Positive values

12. Caring: Young person places high value on helping other people.
13. Equality and Social Justice: Young person tries to help solve social problems.
14. Spiritual Engagement: Young person places importance on spiritual or religious values.
- Social competencies
15. Peer Connectedness: Young person gets along well with peers.

Positive identity

16. Personal Power: Young person feels they have control over their life and can cope well with challenges.
17. Self-esteem: Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
18. Positive View of Personal Future: Young person is optimistic about the future.

Opportunities to make a difference in North Oakville

Find more ways for youth to give back to the community

Our youth tell us that they do care deeply about their communities but find it difficult to find ways to get meaningfully involved.

Only 22% of students report high levels of caring. That means that the majority of students in North Oakville did not report caring community interactions; they rarely or sometimes help to make their community a better place or serve others in their community.

Service to others is among the 5 lowest scoring assets in North Oakville. Just 37% of students volunteer without pay. Youth as resources is the percent of students reporting they can make a difference in their community. Only 36% of students reported high levels of this asset

Thirty-nine percent of students had high levels of equality and social justice. This means that the majority of students reported that they rarely or sometimes try and help solve social problems.



Focus on relationships, especially in the transition years.

Our youth tell us that they want deeper relationships with parents, teachers and other adults.

Grade 10 students continue to report having fewer assets than their Grade 7 counterparts. This decrease in assets is consistent with our findings from previous surveys and with the findings from the Search Institute.

The assets that decrease the most in North Oakville during the transition from elementary to high school are:

- Positive peer influence (-13%)
- Family Support (-11%)
- Positive view of the future (-10%)
- Family boundaries (-10%)
- Caring neighbourhood (-9%)
- School engagement (-9%)

Gender identity is something other than male or female. Non-binary youth have much fewer assets

The 55 students who indicated their gender as non-binary or indicated that they preferred not to answer, had a significantly lower average number of developmental assets (6.83) compared to females (10.91) or males (10.58).

About the Youth Voices Matter (YVM) Survey

The Youth Voices Matter Survey measures developmental assets, relationships and youth experiences. Students in grades 7, 8, 9 and 10 in North Oakville were invited to voluntarily complete the survey online during school hours between February and May, 2017. Students in 10 schools from the Halton Catholic District School Board and Halton District School board participated.

Who participated?

Students	North Oakville			Gender			
	Eligible	Participated	Response Rate	Female (%)	Male (%)	Other (%)	Missing
Grade 7 and 8	848	715	84%	333 (47%)	348 (49%)	32 (4%)	2 (0%)
Grade 9 and 10	1643	678	41%	325 (48%)	312 (46%)	37 (5%)	4 (1%)
Total Students	2491	1393	56%	658 (47%)	660 (47%)	69 (5%)	6 (1%)

The majority of students were born in Canada (76%), and speak an official language (i.e., English or French) most often at home (75%).



The questions on the YVM Survey have mostly been taken from the previous OKN coordinated survey for youth, the Halton Youth Survey ([link](#)), and from other large Canadian and Ontario surveys. The questions are written by leading experts on adolescent development in Canada and have been carefully tested to be age-appropriate for youth 11 – 18 years old.

The YVM Survey relies on self-reported information from students. This type of survey has been researched to assure adequate validity and reliability. However, all measurement methods are subject to limitations. Caution should be exercised when interpreting the meaning of the findings as they may not be representative of all students.

The survey is voluntary and if students did not respond to the question, the missing responses were not included in the calculation of responses.

Important Findings

Most North Oakville students feel safe in their community.

“I like my neighbourhood . . . and feel safe.” Grade 10 student

Safety is the highest ranking asset for North Oakville students. This asset measures the percentage of students reporting that they live in a safe neighbourhood. However, 12% of youth do not feel safe.

Just over half of students report that they live in a Caring Neighbourhood.

“I think my neighbourhood is a great place but in order to be a better place, everyone needs to communicate more” Grade 10 student

Research shows that youth are more likely to report better mental health if they feel that they live in a neighbourhood that encourages trust, collaboration and strong relationships. In North Oakville, 56% of students report high levels of caring neighbourhood. This developmental asset reflects the percent of students reporting that they experience caring neighbours. It is made of the survey item “my neighbours care about me”. This finding does not vary by immigration status or gender. However, students in elementary school are more likely to report high levels of caring neighbourhood compared to those in high school (60% vs. 51%)

Students are engaged in their schools

“I understand that homework is important but there is a line. Sometimes it’s too much that we don’t have time to spend with our family’s which is really important.” Grade 9 student

This developmental asset reflects the percentage of students reporting that they are actively engaged in learning. The asset is made up of 6 survey items that measure how important it is for students to learn new things, participate in school and express themselves in class. Females are much more likely to report high levels of school engagement compared to males – 82% vs. 70%. The findings do not vary by immigration status. However, elementary students are more likely to report high levels of school engagement compared to high school students (78% vs 70%).

The majority of students have friends with positive behaviours

“My neighbourhood is already a really good place to live but if I could change one thing I would like there to be more people my age that live there rather than adults or younger children.” Grade 10 student

Relationships are vital for youth during their growth and development. This developmental asset is the percentage of students reporting that their best friends model responsible behaviour. This asset is called positive peer influence and is comprised of 4 survey items that measure how many of their close friends demonstrate positive behaviours, like getting along with their parents, not using drugs or smoking. As children transition from elementary to high school, their relationships with others also change and develop. Levels of positive peer influence differ by grade; elementary students are more likely to report high levels of positive peer influence than those in high school (79% vs. 65%). Also, females are more likely to report high levels of positive peer influence compared to males (78% vs. 68%). Students not born in Canada are more likely to report high levels of positive peer influence compared to those born in Canada (74% vs. 67%).

Family Support

“I wish that parents would stop keeping such a close eye on their children, I wish they would be more confident with their children going out.” Grade 10 student

This developmental asset reflects the percentage of students reporting that their family provides high levels of nurturing and support. It is made up of five questions that measure the degree of support that youth perceive from their parents/caregivers, such as feelings of appreciation, warmth, pride and praise.





About the North Oakville Youth Initiative

The North Oakville neighbourhood was identified by our key stakeholders and our local data as a community that has many needs as well as many opportunities for impact. This initiative enables us to strengthen engagement of local youth, stakeholders, including parents/caregivers. We bring the community together, both youth and key adult stakeholders (parents/caregivers, education, recreation, social service, police, health, local business etc.), in a variety of settings to elicit their voices and stories in order to facilitate community planning, develop action plans, and optimize opportunities for intentional relationship building with youth.

The Halton Youth Survey research tells us that youth lose assets between Grades 7 – 10 and many of those assets are relationship based. In focus groups, North Oakville youth have validated that meaningful relationships with adults are valued, but hard to find.

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, The North Oakville Youth Development Council's goal is:

To increase mental well-being and decrease at-risk behaviour in youth (Grades 7 – 10) by increasing meaningful relationships and Developmental Assets.

For more information about the Halton Youth Initiative and the North Oakville Youth Development Committee visit [Youth Voices Matter Community Initiative](#) or contact Siobhan Laverdiere, North Oakville Youth Initiative Project Coordinator: siobhan@ourkidsnetwork.ca



Do More with Data

The Youth Voices Matter Survey provides a snapshot about developmental assets, relationships and youth experiences in North Oakville. The next step is to share the findings from this report and have conversations about what the results mean, and how we can work together in Halton to respond to these findings.

These guidelines for interpreting and using the data can help you put research into action in your work:

Understanding the Data

- It is more useful to look for patterns of findings than to focus on a specific finding
- Using multiple indicators as evidence of strength and need is a much stronger approach than using a single indicator.
- Use caution when making comparisons. Look for at least a 5% change or difference between groups. This helps to avoid “over-interpreting” small differences as being important
- Several types of response bias have been identified related to self-report surveys. Use caution when interpreting the meaning of findings because some data may not represent all youth in North Oakville
- The data presented in this report are meant to provide a snapshot of information about how North Oakville youth are doing. The data cannot explain why an indicator is at a certain level

Interpreting the Data

Bring groups of different community partners together to talk about and explore the data. Try using the [Data Conversation Tool](#) to explore the data further as a team.

Questions to consider:

- What data points stand out to you? Why?
 - What issues does the data bring to mind for you?
 - What story does the data tell for you?
 - How can this data help you or your organization?
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