

# Conversation Toolkit



Smart  
Waterloo  
Region

[smartwr.ca](http://smartwr.ca)

We will become the benchmark community in Canada for child and youth well-being.

We want Waterloo region to be the **best community** in Canada for children and youth.

# Improving child and youth well-being takes all of us, so thanks for your help!

- Find a group of friends (old and new)
- Have a conversation prompted by these cards
- Share in-person and/or online
- Repeat

Your participation helps spread the word about **#SmartWR**.  
It also shares helpful ideas for child and youth well-being in our community.

What does this problem mean to you or someone you know?

# Children and youth are not involved in decisions about their lives and well-being.

Often, children and youth are not meaningfully involved in decisions that governments and social services make about their lives and well-being. As a result, young people's voices are not considered in decisions about community spaces, services and programs, curriculum, funding, and policy. When young people are not involved in these decisions, we miss out on their valuable input and may create solutions that are not best for them. We lack tools and processes that help young people feel informed, valued, and empowered to participate in decision-making that affects them.



How might we ensure children and youth are meaningfully involved in community decisions about programs, services, and policies related to their lives and well-being?

What does this problem mean to you or someone you know?

# Children and youth are discouraged from seeking help because of stigma and lack of empathy.

When children and youth face challenges, they can find it difficult to ask for help because of stigma. Peers, adults, and communities may reinforce expectations and stigma, making it harder to reach out when something is wrong. Legal requirements around disclosure and parental permission can make it difficult for young people to feel a sense of safety, privacy, and confidentiality. We need to build empathy and reduce stigma within our community. We need to provide resources that support caring adults and peers. This will make our community more open and caring for young people.



**How** might we make services and supports easier for young people to access by building empathy and challenging stigma in our region?

What does this problem mean to you or someone you know?

## Young people are lacking life skills and are worried about it.

Young people feel that there are not enough opportunities to learn important life skills, including financial literacy and skills for civic engagement. They worry about facing these skill gaps as they become more independent and move into adulthood. Children and youth need more time, space, and support to practice and explore life skills with supportive adults and peers. We also need to create opportunities for young people and adults to work together to identify what life skills are important.



**How** might we create more engaging and effective opportunities in the region for young people to learn life skills, build their confidence and resilience?

How can we use technology  
and data to **increase** the  
well-being of young people  
in Waterloo region?

How would we know if we've  
made our community **better**  
for children and youth?

What would be **different?**



How do you think being a kid  
is **different** today than it was  
in the past?

**Nudge:** Is there a young person  
in this conversation?

# What is:

- **one** thing you will start doing
- **one** thing you will stop doing
- **one** thing you will continue doing

...to help Waterloo Region be the best community in Canada for kids and youth?

# Connect

What stood out about your conversation today?

Share in-person or online:

- Tweet @ someone you think would love to be part of the conversation.
- Use #SmartWR so it's easy to find
- Tag the Canadian Government @INCF\_eng so they know what's happening in Waterloo Region!