
PART V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report is the first in a series of reports that focus on the health of Toronto's children. It provides an introduction to the series as well as the broad, positive perspective of young children's health which informs the issues highlighted in this and future reports. It also describes the socio-demographic context of young children and their families living in Toronto and the overall health of young children as perceived by their parents.

Diversity among Toronto's families with young children is a key theme emerging from this report. Toronto is an ethnically and racially diverse city, and this diversity is increasing. Variations in family size and structure, parental age, family income, neighbourhood income, and other demographic characteristics, all play a critical role in the experiences, development and functioning of Toronto's young children, and ultimately may result in differences in health outcomes.

Society as a whole has a responsibility to promote and protect the health of young children. Individuals, families, and communities all have unique, but interconnected roles to play. Recognition of the importance of the early years of childhood has led TPH to make the promotion of young children's health a priority.

Other Reports in This Series

Assessing Toronto's health status is one of the foundations of TPH practice; it enables TPH to identify current and emerging health issues and informs decision making regarding competing priorities. It helps to answer questions such as: 'How healthy is Toronto's population?' 'Who is healthy and who is not?', and 'What can we learn from current trends in health status to help prepare for the future?' This approach is particularly useful for uncovering inequalities in health status among Toronto's diverse populations.⁶³

Other reports in this series will explore particular aspects of health status in Toronto's young children and the impact of diverse environments and conditions on child health outcomes. Some of the key issues which will be discussed include birthweight, breastfeeding, parenting practices, family functioning, safety, physical activity, injury, communicable diseases, and oral health. These issues are clustered by themes based on a broad, positive understanding of healthy development and functioning of young children. In addition, each report presents new and updated information on specific indicators and where possible, includes discussions on child health inequalities.



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