



# What kinds of environments support the wellbeing of young people with disability?

Young people with disability have poorer physical and mental health than their non-disabled peers. Growing evidence suggests that this is often not due to their disability, but instead is a result of societal barriers. Young people with disability are less likely to be exposed to the positive experiences (e.g., employment) that underpin a smooth transition to adulthood, and good health and wellbeing. This is because of unequal living conditions and inaccessible environments.

## What did we do?

We set out to map out what has currently been studied about the types of geographic environments that support good health and wellbeing for young people (ages 15-30 years) with disability.

- We reviewed 35 studies from 9 countries
- We identified 10 major themes studied, as well as some evidence gaps
- We mapped out the major theories about how geographic environments relate to the health and wellbeing of young people with disability
- We identified evidence gaps, including a lack of studies on: local employment availability, access to healthcare, leisure and recreation environments, neighbourhood safety, and transitions into independent living.

## What did we find?

- Ten geographic environments or characteristics are thought to be important for young people with disability (see figure below).



- Social cohesion (e.g., sense of community) was found to be important for wellbeing.
- Yet, young people with disability often did not feel a part of their community.



## What do these findings mean?

A growing body of research suggests that the environments where young people with disability live, learn, socialise, work, and develop into independent adults plays a key role in their health and wellbeing.

We still lack evidence in several important areas, and future research is needed to address these gaps so that we can make these environments more accessible and supportive for young people with disability.

To learn more read the full paper [here](#).

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