



Living in Niagara – 2023 Report Recreation and Sports

Introduction

Having access to local facilities, spaces, and opportunities to participate in recreation and sport activities enriches residents' lives and helps to attract people to Niagara.

This Sector aligns with SDG #3 Good Health and Well-Being; #4 – Quality Education; #5 – Gender Equality; #8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth; #11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities; #16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

Happening Now

- From August 6 to 21, 2022, Niagara hosted the [28th Canada Summer Games](#). More than 5,000 athletes participated in 18 sports and 250+ events. More than 3,600 volunteers contributed 100,000+ hours to support the success of the Games; and 300,000+ spectators attended competitions, cultural festivals and ceremonies. The Games included an inaugural women's rugby competition, the return of men's lacrosse after a 37-year absence, and the first-ever women's lacrosse competition in the history of the Canada Games. This marked the third time in history, and the first time in 21 years, that the event has taken place in the province of Ontario.
- In 2022, the Centre for Sport Capacity at Brock University described work underway to inventory the breadth of diverse sport and [sport tourism activity](#) in Niagara, including participation, number of organizations, events, facilities and [how they are driving economic activity](#). This inventory is informing legacy activities of the Canada 2022 Summer Games.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the [Active Niagara Network](#) of municipal parks and recreation directors held frequent virtual meetings, to address the volume of decision points required to navigate restrictions on programs and facilities. As service delivery re-opened, network meetings focused on meeting pent-up demand, and matching skilled labour with that demand.
- A 2021 Brock University [policy brief](#) cites the health benefits of positioning parks and recreation as an essential service. The COVID-19 pandemic period raised awareness of the importance of people having equitable access to recreation experiences.
- The [2023 Sport for Life Summit](#) hosted in Niagara highlighted the importance of aligning sport policies, programs and resources to engage diverse communities in benefitting from equitable access to quality sport programming and physical literacy development.
- [Older Adult Infolink](#) is an online tool launched in 2021 by the [Age-Friendly Niagara Council](#). It draws on 211 Ontario data, to allow for easier, enhanced, more centralized access to information about community services, for older adults in Niagara. It also links to Recreation program details provided by each of Niagara's 12 local municipalities.

What's Emerging

- Municipal recreation departments have noticed a marked increase in program participation levels, since the COVID-19 pandemic. This presents challenges for Niagara's local communities to be able to provide equitably accessible opportunities to participate. The challenge exists in terms of both present-day capacity; and future demand, based on population growth projections as well as provincial priorities for increased housing builds.
- The Niagara Geopark Trail Network is being formed, as an outcome of the June, 2023, [Niagara Geopark Trail Summit](#). The summit highlighted the importance of Niagara's trail systems, and how access to trails can draw both locals and visitors to areas of natural, Indigenous and local significance.
- Awareness is increasing about the lifelong importance of people being outdoors and having access to connect with nature. This was highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic experience.
- Organizations across Niagara and beyond are seeing a shift in volunteering patterns. This trend is being closely watched by people working in recreation and sports.
- There is increasing cross-over of recreation and active living programs with the health and wellness sector in Niagara. [Exercise programs](#) are being offered by primary care Family Health Teams and Community Health Centres; municipal recreation departments are seeing program participation referrals from health professionals; and many local municipalities have Active Transportation or Active Living Advisory Committees.
- The [2022 Niagara Active Economy Report](#) outlines a 10-sector ecosystem where the organized sport, active recreation, and active tourism sectors serve a key role in generating community value. This cluster model is now part of [Niagara Region's 10-year Economic Development Strategy](#).

Suggested Community Action Steps

- Acknowledge the benefits of innovative programming structures that have arisen from changes brought about during the pandemic period. These include safety protocols and accessible online programming.
- Work collaboratively across sectors in Niagara, to help engage people moving to the region, including those arriving as newcomers to Canada, in recreation and sport opportunities in our community.
- Invest in recreation and sport infrastructure in Niagara, to meet increasing demand for access to programs and facilities. Monitor provincial legislation that may benefit or inhibit putting the necessary infrastructure in place.



Recreation and Sports

- Pay attention to workforce sustainability in the sector by creating jobs for young people to stock and restock the field, and to ensure we have workers to meet demand created by provincial policy priorities for projected home builds in Ontario.
- Expand on work already underway to develop the Active Economy model for Niagara.

Indicators

- **Facilities**
- **Green and Open Space**
- **Participation Levels**
- **Benefits**
- **Partnerships**

Indicator: Facilities

Recreation and Sports Programs in Local Municipalities in Niagara

Each of Niagara's 12 local municipalities provide online information about their recreation and sport facilities and programs, at the following links:

Grimsby

<https://www.grimsby.ca/en/parks-recreation-culture/recreation-programs.aspx>

West Lincoln

<https://www.westlincoln.ca/en/recreation-and-leisure/recreation-and-leisure.aspx>

Lincoln

<https://www.lincoln.ca/parks-forestry-recreation-culture>

St. Catharines

<https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/playin/recreation-programs.asp>

Niagara-on-the-Lake

<https://www.notl.com/recreation-events>

Thorold

<https://www.thorold.ca/en/recreation-and-culture/recreation-culture.aspx>

Pelham

<https://www.pelham.ca/en/recreation-and-leisure/recreation-and-leisure.aspx>

Welland

<https://www.welland.ca/RecCulture/>

Wainfleet

<https://www.wainfleet.ca/recreation-and-culture>

Port Colborne

<https://www.portcolborne.ca/en/recreation-and-leisure/recreation-and-leisure.aspx>

Niagara Falls

<https://niagarafalls.ca/living/community-facilities/default.aspx>

Fort Erie

<https://www.forterrie.ca/en/recreation-and-culture/parks-trails-and-sports-fields.aspx#>

Seniors Active Living Centres in Niagara

Seniors Active Living Centres in Ontario offer social, cultural, learning and recreational programs for seniors that promote health, well-being and social connections. The provincial government provides funding to support almost 300 Seniors Active Living Centres across Ontario. Of those, a total of 13 are located in the Niagara region, in: Grimsby; Beamsville (Lincoln); St. Catharines (3); Thorold; Niagara Falls; Pelham (Fonthill); Welland; Port Colborne (2, of which one is francophone); Fort Erie (2).

An interactive map to locate the Centres is available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-seniors-active-living-centre-near-you>

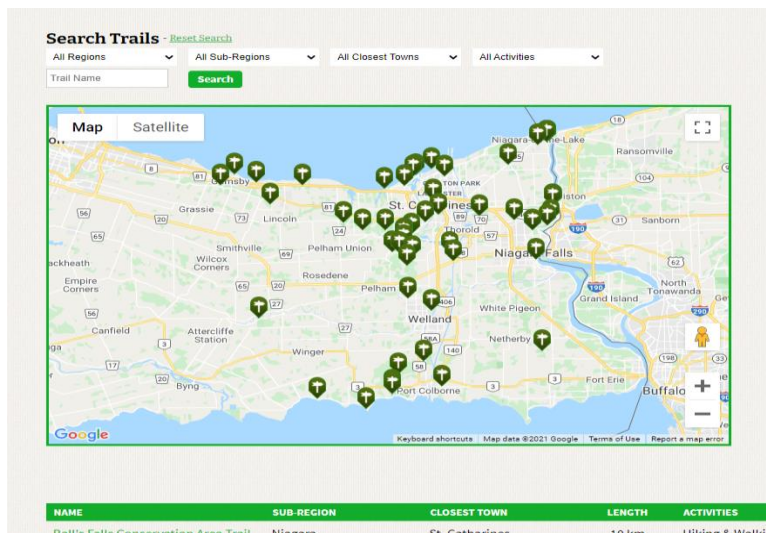
Source: Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

Trails in Niagara

The Ontario Trails Council (OTC) includes 'Niagara Canada' as one of 15 distinct Trail tourism regions in the province. The Trails in Niagara are classified in categories, including:

- Backpacking & Camping
- Canoe or Kayak
- Cross Country Skiing
- Cycling – Off-Road
- Cycling – Roads & Paths
- Dog Sledding
- Equestrian
- Hiking & Walking
- Motorcycling
- Mountain Biking
- Running
- Snowmobiling
- Snowshoeing & Backcountry
- Winter (Fat) Biking

The OTC website provides a searchable map, which [shows 54 Trail locations within the Niagara region](#). A list appears below the searched map, with a description of each trail and a link to access more information about that trail.



NAME	SUB-REGION	CLOSEST TOWN	LENGTH	ACTIVITIES
Ball's Falls Conservation Area Trail	Niagara	St. Catharines	10 km	Hiking & Walking

Source: Ontario Trails Council

Retrieved from: <https://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/> and <https://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/find-a-trail/niagara-canada>

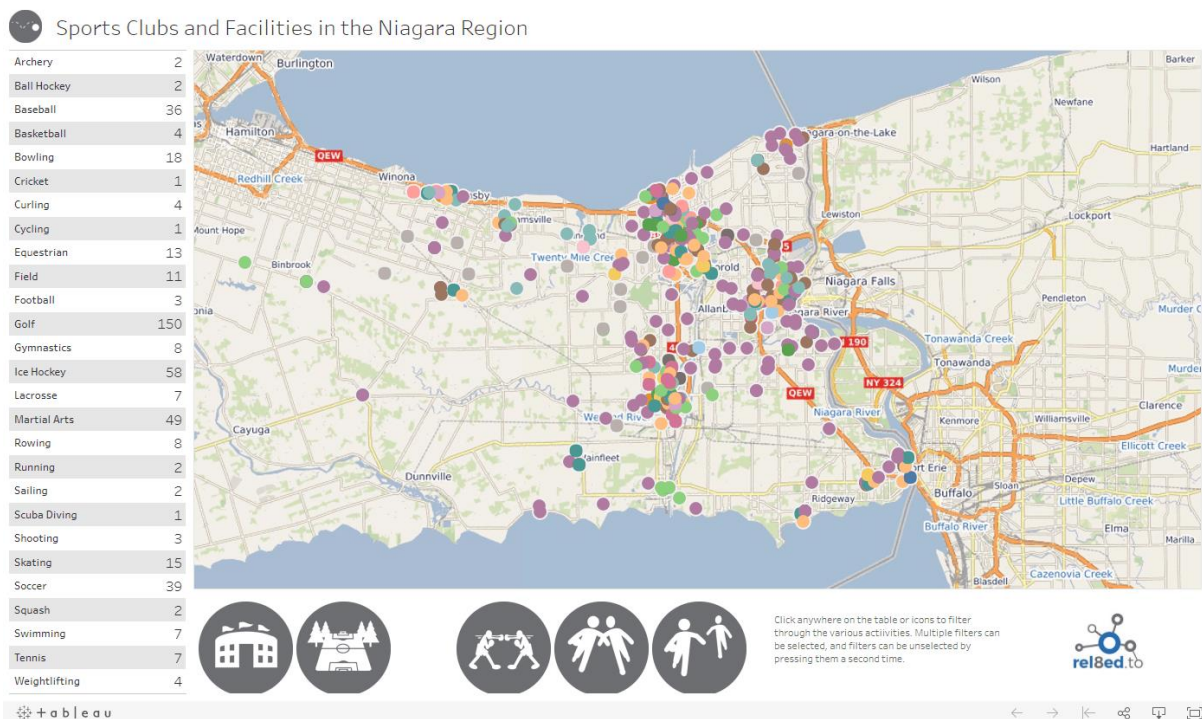
Cycling, Walking and Hiking in Niagara is provided by Niagara Region. This web page links to 200+ cycling routes; 40+ hiking trails; a list of local bike clubs, associations and committees; and parks and naturalization sites in the Niagara region.

Source: Niagara Region

Retrieved from: https://www.niagararegion.ca/transportation/cycling-walking/default.aspx?home_task=1

Sports Clubs and Facilities in the Niagara Region

This geospatial map is based on openly-shared data provided by rel8ed.to a St. Catharines-based data analytics company. The data, originally published in 2017, was updated in 2023.



The data is made available as an open csv file, and in data visualization format on Tableau Public. The set includes 458 Sports Clubs and Facilities in the Niagara region. Of the 458, indoor facilities comprise 180; and 278 are outdoor facilities. Of the 458, the top 5 categories by facility type are:

- Golf – 150
- Ice Hockey – 58
- Martial Arts – 49
- Soccer – 39
- Baseball – 36

Go to map:

https://public.tableau.com/profile/rel8ed.to#!/vizhome/openRaspberry_v4_0/ClubsFacilities



Niagara Open Data Portal “Recreation datasets”

Niagara Region hosts the Niagara Open Data Portal. The portal provides a total of 21 datasets tagged as “Culture and Recreation”. These include (in no particular order):

- Arenas
- Bike Routes
- Campgrounds
- Cemeteries
- Historic Sites
- Libraries
- Marinas
- Wineries
- Beaches
- Designated Heritage Properties
- Pedestrian Ferry
- Places of Worship
- Seniors Homes
- NOP Area of Archeological Potential
- Native Centres
- Museums
- Golf Courses and Driving Ranges
- Farmers Markets
- Bike Routes Niagara Trails Start Locations
- Historic Welland Canal Points of Interest
- Niagara Census Profiles

Source: NiagaraOpenData, Niagara Region.

Retrieved from:

https://niagaraopendata.ca/dataset/?keywords_en=Culture+and+Recreation&page=2

The Brock University Faculty of Applied Health Sciences includes the [Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies](#), as well as Research Centres:

- [Brock Functional Inclusive Training \(Bfit\) Centre](#) - pursues innovative, multi-disciplinary research and provides supervised community exercise programs to improve health and quality of life in older adults, cardiac patients, and individuals with spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s, and amputees.



- [Brock-Niagara Centre of Excellence in Inclusive & Adaptive Physical Activity](#) – promotes and enhances awareness and development of inclusive and adaptive physical activity programming
- [Centre for Bone and Muscle Health](#) – facilitates new knowledge to enhance or optimize musculoskeletal function and quality of life throughout the lifespan
- [Centre for Healthy Youth Development Through Sport](#) – matches people, organizations, and information to optimize youth development through sports.
- [Centre for Sport Capacity](#) – a hub for sport management research, student experiential learning, and practical support to sport organizations.

Source: Brock University

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/applied-health-sciences/recreation-leisure/> and <https://brocku.ca/bfit/> and <https://brocku.ca/capa/> and <https://brocku.ca/bone-and-muscle-health/> and <https://brocku.ca/chyds/> and <https://brocku.ca/sport-capacity/>

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/applied-health-sciences/faculty-research/research-centres/>

Canada Summer Games – Legacy

From August 6 to 21, 2022, Niagara hosted the [28th Canada Summer Games](#). More than 5,000 athletes participated in 18 sports and 250+ events. More than 3,600 volunteers contributed 100,000+ hours to support the success of the Games; and 300,000+ spectators attended competitions, cultural festivals and ceremonies. The Games included an inaugural women’s rugby competition, the return of men’s lacrosse after a 37-year absence, and the first-ever women’s lacrosse competition in the history of the Canada Games. This marked the third time in history, and the first time in 21 years, that the event has taken place in Ontario.

A goal of the 2022 Games was to provide a legacy of sport infrastructure and programs that are vital for Niagara, Ontario and Canadian sport development. Legacy items include:

- Development of Lacrosse – Eighteen teams (9 women and 9 men), including 396 participants competed in front of sixteen thousand spectators and 100,000 online viewers. Lacrosse was added to the 2022 Summer Games for the first time since 1985, despite being declared the national summer sport of Canada in 1994. Prior to the 2022 Games, women had never competed in Lacrosse in the previous 27 Canada Games. It is notable that the Niagara lacrosse community is home to the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame as well as the St. Catharines Athletics organization, established in 1877. The addition of Lacrosse in the 2022 Games is acknowledged as a major milestone in the promotion of Indigenous sport development.
- New and Upgraded Sport Facilities
 - The Walker Sports and Abilities Centre at Canada Games Park is a 200,000 square feet facility featuring two NHL-sized twin ice-pads, a 200-meter indoor track, six competition beach volleyball courts, a multipurpose field house and 400-meter



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- outdoor track, a sports performance centre, parasport compatible gymnasium, and health and wellness centre in addition to office spaces.
- The Neil Campbell Rowing Centre at the Henley Rowing Course in St. Catharines provides essential off-water training and support facilities for the course, which has hosted provincial, national and international rowing competitions for 100+ years.
 - Vital upgrades to existing sport facilities, including:
 - Improvements to mountain bike trails along 12 Mile Creek in St. Catharines. A [2021 BPS Sports Niagara article](#) describes progress being made by the Niagara Trail Maintenance Association, a group of more than 70 volunteers, to upgrade the 12 Mile Creek Trail. Doug Hamilton, Chair of the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games Board stated, “The Canada Games are a volunteer-organized, and volunteer-delivered event. The legacy of the Games is critical — it’s what we leave after the Games – and it’s not just the legacy of facilities, but the legacy of volunteerism.”
 - Improvements to the diving and swimming facilities at the Eleanor Misener Aquatic Centre at Brock University
 - A new scoreboard and other improvements at the Welland Baseball Stadium
 - Upgrades to the Oakes Park baseball complex in Niagara Falls; and
 - Upgrades to the Southward Community Park softball complex in Grimsby
 - Sport Equipment - A large amount of new sport equipment was also purchased to support the various sport competitions at the Games. This equipment continues to be available for community use and includes:
 - A basketball floor was purchased for the 2018 FIBA U18 Basketball Championship and to host the basketball competition at these Games. This basketball floor will continue to be used at the Meridian Centre in St. Catharines and at other venues
 - Wrestling mats were purchased for the 2019 Canadian Olympic Wrestling Trials and to host the wrestling competition at the Games. These mats will continue to be used at the Walker Sports and Abilities Centre and their venues
 - Turf floors were purchased for the lacrosse competition and will continue to be used at the Walker Sports and Abilities Centre and at other venues
 - Athletics equipment was purchased for these Games and will continue to be used at the GFL International Track and Field Centre at Canada Games Park
 - A large amount of sport equipment was donated and distributed to sport clubs across Niagara after the Games.
 - Parasport Development – momentum was built for parasport in Niagara and beyond.
 - Sport Niagara – a non-profit community sport council established to focus on advancing sport in Niagara, including supporting the bidding for and hosting of future sport events in Niagara. Sport tourism is a significant contributor to Niagara’s vitally important

tourism industry, and an important opportunity for growth. The activities of Sport Niagara are funded in part by the 2022 Canada Games Legacy Fund; this is a fund established with the Niagara Community Foundation by the Niagara 2022 Canada Games Host Society, with the surplus generated by those Games.

Source: Canada Summer Games

Retrieved from: <https://www.canadagamespark.ca/p/getinvolved/history-and-legacy> and <https://www.bpsportsniagara.com/12-mile-creek-trail-upgraded/> and <https://www.canadagamespark.ca/p/facility> and <https://www.canadagames.ca/previous-games/niagara-2022> and <https://sportniagara.ca/>

Venues in Niagara utilized for 2022 Canada Summer Games

The 2022 Canada Summer Games featured a total of 18 sport competitions at venues across 13 municipalities in Niagara, including 3 sports with Para-athletes and 2 sports with Special Olympics athletes.

Venues included:

- Royal Henley Rowing Centre (St. Catharines)
- Meridian Centre (St. Catharines)
- Brock University (St. Catharines)
- Canada Games Park (Thorold)
- Southward Community Recreation & Sports Park (Grimsby)
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club
- Welland Tennis Club
- Welland International Flatwater Centre
- Oakes Park (Niagara Falls)
- Welland Sports Complex
- Niagara College (Welland campus)
- Legends of Niagara golf course (Niagara Falls)
- Youngs Sportsplex - soccer (Welland)
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club
- Roads (cycling) – Port Colborne, Town of Pelham, Brock University
- Queen Victoria Park (closing ceremony) – Niagara Falls

Source: Brock University

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/canada-games/venues-sports/>

Indicator: Green and Open Space

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA)

The NPCA is one of 36 Conservation Authorities in the Province of Ontario and manages [41 Conservation Areas](#) within the Niagara Peninsula watershed. The conservation areas are held in public trust by the NPCA for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education.

NPCA provides additional information on [recreation opportunities](#) available at its various conservation areas, including:

- Fishing
- Camping
- Birding
- Hiking
- Cycling
- Hunting
- Geocaching
- Dog Walking
- Cultural Heritage
- Photography
- Cross Country Skiing

Source: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Retrieved from: <https://npca.ca/> and <https://npca.ca/parks-recreation/conservation-areas> and <https://npca.ca/recreation>

Niagara Parks Commission (NPC)

The Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) was established in 1885 to control the lands and buildings immediately surrounding the Canadian Horseshoe Falls. That original NPC area, now known as Queen Victoria Park, encompassed 62.2 hectares (154 acres). Over the years, the NPC has grown to own and maintain over 1,325 hectares (3,274 acres) of parkland along the entire length of the Niagara River, stretching 56 kilometers (36 miles) from Fort Erie in the south to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the north.

The NPC operates like a city within a city, with its own police services, road maintenance, waste collection and other services. During the height of the tourist season, Niagara Parks employs over 1,700 staff: approximately 300 full-time and 1,400 seasonal employees. The NPC receives no government financing and raises its own revenues through its attractions, restaurants, golf courses, gift shops and parking lots.

Information about Nature and Gardens is provided by the NPC, at <https://www.niagaraparks.com/visit-niagara-parks/nature-gardens/>. A range of spaces and attractions offer varied opportunities for people to experience the world-renowned sights and sounds of nature that are available in the Niagara Parks, including:

- Parks
- Gardens
- Garden Theatre
- Floral Showhouse



- Floral Clock
- Butterfly Conservatory
- Botanical Gardens
- Niagara Glen Nature Centre
- Trails
- Whirlpool Aero Car
- Journey Behind the Falls
- Niagara River Recreation Trail (cycling)
- Paradise Grove Oak Savannah Restoration area
- White Water Walk Viewing Platforms (self-guided tour to learn about Niagara Gorge geology and plant and animal life)

The Niagara Parks Commission 2018 to 2028 strategic plan focuses on being stewards of environmental sustainability in regards to the Niagara River corridor, making the parks more accessible and inclusive, and making Niagara Falls a source of national pride and the parks world renowned.

Source: Niagara Parks Commission

Retrieved from: <https://www.niagaraparks.com/corporate/about-us/> and

<https://www.niagaraparks.com/visit-niagara-parks/nature-gardens/> and

<https://www.niagaraparks.com/media/2023/11/FINAL-Niagara-Parks-Commission-Annual-Report-22-23.pdf>



Indicator: Participation Levels

The social climate of physical activity among Canadian adults is assessed by the 2022/2023 ParticipACTION Impact Report – *Helping people in Canada move more where they live, learn, work and play*. Achievements include: advancing the physical inactivity issue, creating urgency, and encouraging prioritization among policy makers.

The report states:

- 82% of people living in Canada agree that the Government of Canada should help improve physical activity levels, and 89% agree that physical inactivity is an urgent issue in Canada.
- 88% of organizations in Canada’s physical activity, sport and recreation sector agree that ParticipACTION is advancing and communicating knowledge on issues associated with physical activity.
- ParticipACTION was called on to address the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health [Study on Children’s Health](#), which examined the challenges and issues faced by children and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Portrait of Children’s Health in Canada is an infographic shown on the next page. It highlights evidence presented by witnesses in 2022 - 2023, to inform the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health study report, [Fostering Healthy Childhoods: A Foundation for Resilient Generations](#). Recommendation 17 in the report states: *That the Government of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with municipalities, provinces, territories, and Indigenous peoples, continue to invest in programs and initiatives that promote physical activity and active lifestyles in children, including funding for sports and recreation facilities, community programs, and initiatives to increase physical activity in schools*. Witnesses suggested that the federal government’s 2018 pan-Canadian framework, [A Common Vision for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada: Let’s Get Moving](#) should serve as a foundation for developing and implementing strategies.

The [2022 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth](#) gives a “D” grade for Overall Physical Activity; this is a decrease from “D+” for the 2020 Report Card. The 2022 grade is based on an average of only 28% of children and youth meeting the physical activity recommendation(s) within the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth. The 2022 Report Card report is titled, *Lost & Found – Pandemic-Related Challenges and Opportunities for Physical Activity*.

Sources: ParticipACTION and Library of Parliament of Canada

Retrieved from: <https://www.participaction.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/PA-ImpactReport2023-ENG-Final-FINAL-ua.pdf> and

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/HESA/report-18/page-60> and

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/lets-get-moving.html> and

<https://www.participaction.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-Children-and-Youth-Report-Card.pdf>



A Portrait of Children's Health in Canada



International Comparison



The 2020 UNICEF Report Card ranked Canada:
*(out of 38 peer countries)

30th*
on children's **physical health**

31st*
on children's **mental health**

Canada is the only G7 country **without** a national school food program.



Physical and Mental Health Indicators



Around **half** of **calories** children consume come from ultra-processed foods.



An estimated **1.2 million** children and youth have a **mental illness**.



Canadian children received a "Grade D" for **overall physical activity** on the 2022 ParticipACTION Report Card.



An estimated **30%** of children have a **chronic health condition**.



Tooth decay is the **most common preventable** childhood chronic disease.

Social Determinants of Health



Sources of **health inequities** include poverty, abuse, discrimination, racism and limited access to care.



An estimated **1 in 3** adults have experienced **child abuse**.



Around **1 in 5** children live in **relative poverty**.

Access to Care



Over **20,200** pediatric patients were wait-listed for surgeries across 7 of 16 children's hospitals in 2022.

Almost half were past the window for timely intervention.



Less than 20% of youth who need mental health services receive appropriate treatment.

The wait for publicly funded mental health care services for children can be **over 2 years long**.



Up to **80%**



of medications prescribed to children in pediatric hospitals are administered off-label.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic led to disruptions in:

children's routines

education

social and physical activities

access to health care





The [2021 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults](#), *Moving toward a Better Normal*, states that Canada faces a physical inactivity crisis deepened by COVID-19. The report card spotlights key grades: Grade 'C+' for Light Physical Activity; Grade 'F' for Sedentary Behaviours; and Grade 'F' for Active Transportation.

Source: ParticipACTION

Retrieved from: <https://www.participaction.com/the-science/2021-adult-report-card/>

The [2022 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth](#) – *Lost & Found: Pandemic-Related Challenges and Opportunities for Physical Activity* is an assessment of physical activity among young children in Canada. It summarizes the impact that the COVID pandemic and lockdown had on children's mental and physical health. The report card highlights why physical activity is important for:

- Children and Youth with Disabilities
- Children in the Early Years
- Indigenous Children and Youth;
- 2SLGBTQ+ Children and Youth
- Newcomer Children and Youth
- Racialized Youth; and Girls.

The 2022 grade for Overall Physical Activity for Canadian children and youth is 'D', based on an average of 28% of children and youth meeting the physical activity recommendation(s) within the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth. This grade is a decrease from the previous two years.

Source: ParticipACTION

Retrieved from: <https://www.participaction.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-Children-and-Youth-Report-Card.pdf>

Physical Activity Statistics in Niagara - Niagara Region Public Health (NRPH) emphasizes the importance of being physically active, to help prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart diseases and cancers.

- In Niagara, 57.5 % of residents aged 12 and older report being active or moderately active during their leisure time.
- Among students in Niagara schools, 29.4% of grade 7 and 8 students and 18.8% of secondary students walk or bike to school.
- A total of 59.4% of grade 7 and 8 students and 46.3% of secondary students meet the Canadian guidelines for physical activity, with at least 60 minutes of activity per day.

Injuries - Statistics in Niagara – Every 10 minutes someone from Niagara visits an emergency department because of an injury. Unintentional injuries are accidental, and include injuries from motor vehicle collisions, falls and sports. In 2016, in Niagara, there were 930 emergency department visits and 21 hospitalizations for injuries that resulted in a concussion (main diagnosis). Since 2009, emergency department visits for concussions have increased



significantly. The most common reason for a concussion is falling. When the concussion is sports-related, the most common sport being played when the concussion occurred is hockey.

Source: Niagara Region Public Health

Retrieved from: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/statistics/behaviour/default.aspx> and <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/statistics/injury/default.aspx#concussions>

Online Directory of Recognized Provincial Sport Organizations – This resource is provided by the Ontario Ministry of Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries. A total of 64 organizations are listed, with links to their websites. Many provincial organizations' websites provide links to their local member organizations, including those in Niagara.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries

Retrieved from: <http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/sport/sport/psolistings.html>

Cycling Niagara is provided by Tourism Partnership of Niagara. The Niagara Region Cycling Map includes the Waterfront Trail; Greater Niagara Circle Route, Greenbelt Route, Pelham Route, West Lincoln and Wainfleet Route, as well as Wineries, Breweries and more. Road Routes include scenic bicycle routes with over 200 loops mapped and available to download.

Source: Cycling Niagara

Retrieved from: <https://www.visitniagaracanada.com/do/cycling/> and

<https://www.visitniagaracanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Niagara-Region-Cycling-Map-WEB.pdf> and <https://www.visitniagaracanada.com/do/regional-cycling-road-routes/>

Bike-Friendly Communities Designation

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition works to enhance access for cyclists on roads and trails, improve cycling safety and educate citizens on the value and importance of cycling as active, healthy transportation. In 2023 the coalition released Ontario polling data, showing that 68% of Ontarians cycle occasionally, and 3.2 million Ontarians (22%) are daily cyclists.

The Coalition designates municipalities as Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC). The Award Program helps communities evaluate how bicycle friendly their community is, celebrate progress, and work toward achieving higher-level awards over time, through education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation and planning. Six municipalities in Niagara are listed as BFCs, at different levels of BFC progress: Welland (Bronze); St. Catharines (Bronze); Thorold (Bronze); Lincoln (Bronze); Pelham (Silver); Niagara Falls (Bronze).

Source: Share the Road Cycling Coalition

Retrieved from: <https://sharetheroad.ca/> and <https://sharetheroad.ca/current-bfc-award-winners/> and <https://sharetheroad.ca/news/ontario-bike-summit-opens-in-hamilton-with-release-of-new-province-wide-polling-data-on-cycling-in-ontario/>

In 2023, Niagara Region launched Niagara Kids Benefit, a rebrand of the ProKids program formerly administered through the YMCA of Niagara. The benefit supports youth up to 17 who reside in Niagara to participate in sports, recreation and arts programs of their choice. Eligibility



is specific to Ontario Works recipients and is part of broader social investments provided by Niagara Region.

Source: YMCA of Niagara

Retrieved from: https://ymcaofniagara.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/S.03_17_Letter-to-Community-Partners_April-2023.r2.pdf

[Parent Direct Niagara](#) presents listings of children's programs that provide early learning opportunities to foster various areas of development including social, emotional, cognitive, physical and language development. Listing Categories include:

- Camps
- Financial Assistance for Sports and Camps
- Children's Programs and Clubs
- Municipal Recreation Services
- Beaches, Pools & Splash Pads
- Parks, Trails & Outdoor Events
- Gardens, Markets and Farms
- Festivals and Parades
- Culture, Music & Arts Programs
- Exercise/Fitness
- Arenas & Skating

The Categories may be searched by local municipal area in the Niagara region. Parent Direct Niagara is operated by the [Early Childhood Community Development Centre](#).

Source: Parent Direct Niagara

Retrieved from: <https://www.parentdirectniagara.ca/cat/recreation-and-leisure> and <https://www.eccdc.org/>

[Canadian Tire Jumpstart](#) supports kids in need through sports and physical activity by providing financial support to families through individual child grants, grants to help community organizations develop or sustain recreational programming, and support for para sports.

In 2023:

- Jumpstart helped approximately 440,000 kids across Canada access sport and play.
- Jumpstart's Play to Lead program engaged 133 girls and young women with workshops in Toronto and Edmonton.
- More than 51% of those supported by Jumpstart belonged to equity-deserving communities.
- Jumpstart disbursed \$12,874,645 in Ontario; the total for Canada was \$30,879,272.

Source: Canadian Tire Jumpstart

Retrieved from: <https://jumpstart.canadiantire.ca/pages/about> and https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0122/8124/9892/files/Jumpstart_Annual_Report_2023_Final_ENGLISH.pdf?v=1719584330





Indicator: Benefits

Legacy aspects of Brock University's 2022 Canada Games Research Grants are highlighted in a 2022 Special Report published by the Niagara Community Observatory at Brock University, [Leveraging Research for Legacy](#). The research grants program encouraged faculty and staff at Brock to pursue projects that would contribute to a transdisciplinary exploration of the 2022 Games using research, creativity, and innovation. The research, combined with teaching and experiential learning initiatives tied to the Games, set a novel model of how higher education institutions in a host community can leverage a large, community-hosted sporting event to build on-campus research capacity, and benefit the community at large.

The report draws on the following data sources: a pre-Games survey sent to grant recipients; a brief questionnaire sent post-Games from the research communications officer based in the Office of Research Services; and media coverage from The Brock News.

A total of approximately \$200,000 was awarded to 30 research and creative works projects from 2020 to 2022, spanning a diverse range of subject matter related to the Canada Games. Additional project data highlighted in the report includes:

- Thirteen projects were involved in community collaborations, for a total of 32 organizations involved in 40 partnerships.
- Positive impacts on Niagara residents and beyond included benefits such as: better injury prevention strategies for athletes; insight into the collaboration between local municipalities in hosting a region-wide event; economic benefits from showcases resulting from various art-related studies happening during the Games; increased access to news and historical data about the region; and updated databases including newly digitized Canada Games historical media and expanded library collections pertaining to Niagara region.
- To illustrate the reach of the projects beyond sport, researchers were asked how their research aligned with the [Living in Niagara quality of life Sectors](#). Most projects (13) fell within the Recreation and Sport sector, followed by Arts, Culture & Heritage (six), Community Belonging (six), Health & Wellness (six), Learning & Education (four), Economic Prosperity (two), Environment (two), and People Getting Started (one).

Source: Niagara Community Observatory at Brock University

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/niagara-community-observatory/wp-content/uploads/sites/117/NCO-Special-Report-CSG-Research-Legacy-10.2022-FINAL-WEB-1.pdf> and <https://www.livinginniagarareport.com/>

The 2022 webinar, [Sport and Economic Development](#) is presented by Dr. Julie Stevens, Special Advisor to the Brock University President for the 2022 Canada Summer Games. Dr. Stevens discusses how sport can play a role in economic development, and highlights the value of sport, recreation and wellness in relation to economic prosperity in a community. "By positioning sport as an economic driver, new perspectives and possibilities for economic growth strategies emerge, and we can begin to dialogue about the ways we might capture



these new opportunities for our Niagara community,” Stevens said. The webinar is geared toward people who work in economic development, chambers of commerce members, business improvement associations, business owners, sports organizers and anyone looking to connect sport and business.

Source: Brock University

Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NAQeZ9KpQw>

The 2023 research report, [*The Price of Inactivity: Measuring the Powerful Impact of Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in Canada*](#) is presented by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CLFR) and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA). The report provides new research, tools and resources that demonstrate the comprehensive social, health, economic and environmental impact of the sport, physical activity, and recreation (SPAR) sector in Canada.

The report provides decision-makers with data and evidence to make the case for SPAR investment. It underscores SPAR's role as a pivotal sector in fostering healthy individuals, inclusive communities, and a thriving economy.

- **Social Impact:** Sport, physical activity, and recreation are powerful agents of social transformation, contributing an estimated \$13.6 billion annually through volunteerism alone.
- **Health Impact:** Physical inactivity accounts for \$3.9 billion of annual health care expenditures. Integrating SPAR into daily life boosts public health, improves physical and mental well-being, and reduces the economic burden of physical inactivity.
- **Economic Impact:** The SPAR sector plays a vital role in Canada's economy, contributing \$37.2 billion annually to the gross domestic product (GDP), offering direct and indirect economic benefits.
- **Environmental Impact:** SPAR can help build climate-resilient communities. The replacement value of aging SPAR infrastructure is estimated at \$42.5 billion. This underscores the essential role the physical and built environment plays in promoting health and reducing pollution, while highlighting the significant benefits derived from maintaining and upgrading aging community infrastructure amid a growing climate crisis.

Source: Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

Retrieved from: https://measuring-impact.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CFLRI-CPRA_Price-Inactivity-Full-Report-EN-FINAL.pdf and <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/how-canada-s-investment-in-sport-physical-activity-and-recreation-pays-off-824229470.html>



Indicator: Partnerships

The [Older Adult Infolink](#) online tool was launched in 2021 by the [Age-Friendly Niagara Council](#). Older Adult Infolink draws on [211 Ontario](#) data, to allow for easier, enhanced, more centralized access to information about community services, for older adults in Niagara. It also links to Recreation program details provided by each of Niagara's 12 local municipalities

Source: Age-Friendly Niagara Council

Retrieved from: <https://www.agefriendlyniagara.com/older-adult-infolink/> and <https://www.agefriendlyniagara.com/about-us/> and <https://211ontario.ca/about/>

The [Active Niagara Network](#) (ANN) is a collective of municipal parks and recreation directors from across the Niagara Region, as well as other provincial and community sport and recreation leaders. The ANN meets throughout the year to foster discussion and collaboration related to sport and recreation initiatives throughout Niagara's municipalities.

Source: Brock University Centre for Sport Capacity

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/sport-capacity/research-projects/descriptions/#1646245706704-634633b0-c382>

In 2021, the Niagara Community Observatory (NCO) at Brock University released the Policy Brief, [Parks and Recreation as an Essential Service – Using a health equity lens to strengthen provision in Niagara](#). COVID-19 and its restrictions on parks and recreation delivery highlighted the importance of this sector to the health and well-being of Niagara's citizens.

The challenges of pandemic crisis management in the sector have provided an opportunity to position parks and recreation delivery within a broader public health and community well-being conversation. This policy brief was created by the NCO in partnership with the Centre for Sport Capacity at Brock University. The brief addresses the role of parks and recreation as an important policy tool to address broad society-level crises facing all Niagara communities. It states, "The pandemic is a catalyst for the parks and recreation sector to validate and advocate that community members of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds must be able to access essential spaces and services."

The brief presents two recommendations on ways the Niagara Region as a whole, and individual municipalities specifically, can strengthen the parks and recreation sector moving forward:

- The enhanced coordination of the parks and recreation sector in Niagara is essential in both the pandemic recovery and continued progress of moving forward as a sector.
- The development of a research agenda that focuses on the local needs of the parks and recreation sector.

Source: Brock University, Niagara Community Observatory

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/sport-capacity/wp-content/uploads/sites/222/NCO-51-Parks-and-Rec-May-2021-web-version.pdf>



The November, 2022 Niagara Active Economy Summit was hosted by the Centre for Sport Capacity at Brock University. The summit highlighted the current strength of Niagara's active economy and built awareness about its potential. A proposed Active Economy framework for Niagara draws upon work done by the Calgary ActiveCITY Collective to explore the role of an active ecosystem in generating community value.

The Active Economy is an innovative way to identify and measure the economic value of 10 sectors that tap into the organized sport, active recreation, and active tourism supply chain.

Active Tourism includes all tourism directly associated with active living, sport, recreation, physical education, physical literacy, indoor & outdoor play, health, wellness and other associated sectors.

Active Recreation includes activities engaged in for the purpose of play, relaxation, health & well-being or enjoyment with the primary activity requiring physical exertion, and the primary focus on human activity.

Source: Centre for Sport Capacity, Brock University

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/sport-capacity/events/past-events/> and Centre for Sport Capacity [data files]

The June, 2023 [Niagara Geopark Trail Summit](#) highlighted the importance of Niagara's trail systems, and how access to trails can draw both locals and visitors to areas of natural, Indigenous and local significance. Summit participants unanimously agreed to form the Niagara Geopark Trail Network.

Source: Niagara Geopark

Retrieved from: <https://www.niagarageopark.com/niagara-trail-summit>

The 2023 Sport for Life Summit hosted in Niagara highlighted the importance of aligning sport policies, programs and resources to engage diverse communities in benefiting from equitable access to quality sport programming and physical literacy development. [Sport for Life Resources](#) focus on topics such as a framework for the development of every child, youth, and adult to enable optimal participation in sport and physical activity.

Source: Sport for Life

Retrieved from: <https://brocku.ca/sport-capacity/2023-sport-for-life-regional-summit-of-niagara/> and <https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-Conference-Program.pdf> and <https://sportforlife.ca/resources/>



The [2023 Niagara Region Active Economy/Sport Tourism Sector Profile](#) report informs the emerging Active Economy/Sport Tourism sector in Niagara, initially identified in [Niagara's 10 Year Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032](#). The report concludes:

- Niagara Region's successful hosting of the 2022 Canada Summer Games proves its ability to compete for national events and the region has earned status as a recognized hosting location.
- The Games also built sports facilities and infrastructure for the benefit of the community and toward hosting other events in the future. To realize sport tourism event attraction requires the coordination of diverse partners, volunteer recruitment, funds to support bids, and staff time to prepare event bids. Stakeholders reported a need for leadership in the network and support for a strategic process to align the region's efforts in event attraction to follow on this success. Air transportation is preferred to move people and staff for large events, and more regular air service would be an asset for the sector.
- The business investment opportunities associated with the Active Economy / Sport Tourism sector are found in infrastructure for sport event hosting, sports technology, rehabilitation, and wellness industries, which can offer some potential alignment with the emerging health care and life sciences sector.
- To become a leader in the Active Economy / Sport Tourism sector, a strong coordination of diverse stakeholders and intentional efforts to support recovery of the tourism sector post-pandemic will assist in increasing the impact and presence of major sporting events and business investment.

Source: Niagara Region

Retrieved from: <https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=32166> and <https://niagaracanada.com/about-us/economic-development-strategy/>