

April 21, 2023

Dear Community Partner,

Niagara Region is launching the **Niagara Kids Benefit**, a rebrand of the ProKids program formerly administered through the YMCA of Niagara. This benefit continues to support youth up to age 17 who reside in Niagara to participate in sports, recreation and arts programs of their choice. Eligibility for the Niagara Kids Benefit is specific to Ontario Works recipients and is part of broader social investments provided by Niagara Region.

Niagara Region and the YMCA have worked together to ensure a smooth transition with the goal of little disruption for existing families enrolled in the program through the YMCA. The YMCA will continue to process and serve applicants that applied to ProKids up until April 21, 2023. Niagara Region would like to thank the YMCA for their dedication to ProKids and ongoing partnership.

Effective May 1, 2023, families who are interested in applying for the Niagara Kids Benefit will need to apply by:

- Completing an application on-line through the Discretionary Benefits Portal located at [Ontario Works Discretionary Health Benefits](https://www.niagararegion.ca/social-services/ontario-works/discretionary-benefits.aspx) (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/social-services/ontario-works/discretionary-benefits.aspx>)
- If the portal is not accessible, apply directly through the Ontario Works Discretionary Team by calling 905-641-9960 ext. 6072.

**Discretionary Benefits Portal:**

- A fast, easy and secure way to apply online for the Niagara Kids Benefit
- Must have a valid email address to register
- Can apply anytime, anywhere and on any device (smartphones, tablets and computers)
- Can track the status of current and past applications
- Can upload documents needed for an application such as proof of program costs
- Sends automatic email updates on application status
- See details about missing information or eligibility decisions

To learn more about changes to the program please see attached brochure or visit:

[Ontario Works Discretionary Health Benefits](https://www.niagararegion.ca/social-services/ontario-works/discretionary-benefits.aspx) (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/social-services/ontario-works/discretionary-benefits.aspx>)