



Shine On

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Brock University and the YMCA of Niagara Collaborate to Help Advance Physical Literacy in Children and Youth

November 28, 2024 — Welland, ON — The YMCA of Niagara and Brock University [Centre for Healthy Youth Development through Sport](#) celebrated the impact of partnership earlier this week at a town hall event focused on advancing physical literacy in children and youth. Held at the Niagara Centre YMCA, the event reinforced the role of collaboration in fostering lifelong health and well-being.

The event centred on findings from a [multi-year study](#) exploring the [YMCA's Kid Fit programs](#), which encompass streams like *Kid Fit Fun*, *Kid Fit Cardio*, *Kid Fit Game On*, and *Kid Fit Yoga*, designed to support the development of physical literacy. This collaboration, initiated in 2022, has streamlined the assessment process to enhance reliability and confidence in outcomes. Data collected from April 2023 to August 2024 revealed significant improvements in participants' confidence, physical competence, and injury prevention.

The research leveraged PLAYBasic, a scoring tool assessing key skills like walking backward, hopping, and throwing, to provide a reliable and validated measure of physical literacy. This research-based approach highlighted essential movement skills and underscored their critical role in fostering growth and active engagement among children and youth.

"Kid Fit is about more than movement—it's about empowering children to embrace active, healthy lifestyles," said Ben McDermott, General Manager of Health, Fitness, and Aquatics at the YMCA of Niagara. "Partnerships like ours with Brock University enable us to make a deeper, lasting impact on our community."

Dr. Chimera, from the Brock University Kinesiology Department, co-presented findings with colleague Dr. Hall and reflected: "This partnership has been an incredible opportunity to apply research in a meaningful way, directly benefiting youth and families in Niagara. Together, we're setting a foundation for lifelong health and well-being."

This partnership's goals included becoming a leader in physical literacy for youth engagement and enhancing assessment tools for broader impact. Supported in part by funding from the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council](#), the initiative demonstrates the potential of academia and community organizations to create healthier futures.

"This collaboration is a testament to what we can achieve when organizations come together with a shared purpose," McDermott concluded. "By focusing on physical literacy, we're not just shaping healthier individuals—we're helping to create a more vibrant Niagara."

For more information regarding the [Centre for Healthy Youth Development through Sport](#), contact: [Nicole Chimera](#), PhD, CAT(C), ATC, CSCS or [Nathan Hall](#)

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For Media Inquiries:

[Jen Schmaltz](#)

General Manager of Marketing and Communications
YMCA of Niagara
905-246-7478

About the YMCA of Niagara

The YMCA of Niagara is a charity that ignites the potential in people, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities. We believe everyone has the innate potential to thrive and are dedicated to empowering individuals to tap into their full abilities. Through diverse programs and services, we foster connection, cultivate belonging, and support well-being to elevate the potential of every person and build a stronger, more connected Niagara Region. To learn more, visit www.ymcaofniagara.org