

HIGH FIVE®

2026 Impact Report

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This 25-year report examines what HIGH FIVE® has built, what the available evidence tells us, and where further measurement is needed. Its central argument is that a quality framework has value when it changes everyday decisions: how a leader welcomes a participant, how a supervisor supports staff, and how an organization identifies and acts on improving its programs.

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Everyone deserves a place to *feel Safe*

HIGH FIVE® has changed the way Canada defines quality in Recreation and Sport. A positive recreation experience can stay with a participant long after a program ends. It may be the first time they feel they belong, or the first activity they are confident enough to try again. Yet these experiences do not arise automatically because a program is available or a registration is filled. They depend on how programs are planned, how leaders respond, and whether organizations take responsibility for quality.

Since 2001, HIGH FIVE® has offered a practical response to that challenge. Developed by Parks and Recreation Ontario, the framework puts participants' experiences at the centre of recreation and sport. It gives staff a common language for quality and organizations tools for training, assessment and continuous improvement. The goal is not simply to deliver more activities, but to make the experience within those activities more intentional, consistent and responsive.



HIGH FIVE®

25 Years of Sector Impact.

1994 • **Defining Quality**

Pioneering a research-based definition of quality recreation for children.

2001 • **HIGH FIVE® Launch | Setting a New Standard**

HIGH FIVE® turns healthy child development research into a practical quality framework for the sector.

2006 • **From Training to Quality Assurance**

Training, assessment and continuous improvement combine to strengthen quality across organizations.

2011–2018 • **Responding to a Changing Sector**

HIGH FIVE® expands its influence across after-school programming, mental health, inclusion, sport and healthy aging.

2016 • **National Leadership**

HIGH FIVE® gains national recognition as a standard for quality in recreation and sport from Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

2019–2022 • **Advancing Quality at Scale**

Stronger measurement, digital learning and accreditation help organizations embed quality into everyday practice.

2023–2025 • **Redefining the Quality Journey**

Modernized assessment, learning and the Pathway to Accreditation strengthen organizational accountability and continuous improvement.

2026 • **25 Years of Raising the Bar**

A quarter-century of helping recreation and sport organizations create better experiences for participants.

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National network, local responsibility.

One framework.



National Partner Spotlight

Through its partnership with Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, HIGH FIVE® supports Personnel Support Programs (PSP) in delivering quality recreation and sport experiences to military families across Canada. Operating across provinces, military bases and wings, PSP serves communities with unique needs shaped by military life, including frequent relocations, deployments and changing family circumstances.

HIGH FIVE® provides a consistent national standard for quality while allowing PSP to adapt its programs to provincial contexts, local communities and the realities of military life. Through training, assessment and the Pathway to Accreditation, PSP is embedding quality into its recreation and sport services, demonstrating that one national framework can respond to very different local needs without compromising quality.

2016
BRIDGING IMPACT
2026



95% of organizations agree that HIGH FIVE® training helps staff build healthy relationships.

Learner Satisfaction

8,000
Annual Feedback Opportunities

94%
Strong Satisfaction with Training

4 out 5 Learners
Learners Report Gained Knowledge and Skills

25 Years of HIGH FIVE®

OUR COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

855
Trainers

357,000
Learners

15.9
million
children

3,600
Organizations

55
Verifiers/Advisors



The voices of Caring Leaders



From coast to coast

"The HIGH FIVE® framework has become an essential tool for ensuring consistent, high-quality recreation programming. It provides a common national standard helping our 36 Bases deliver safe, inclusive, and positive experiences for children and youth, regardless of location."

-Martin J,
Canadian Forces Morale & Welfare Services

The Impact

"The impact is evident in the confidence and growth we see in our campers. Children are more willing to try new activities, develop friendships across age groups, and demonstrate resilience when faced with challenges. Parents have shared positive feedback about their children's increased confidence, social skills, and enthusiasm for attending program because of the great work they see our Program Activity Leaders doing."

-Jenn C, BGC Durham

One caring leader. One welcoming environment. Five years of growth.

When Nithya joined a dance class three weeks into the program, she was quiet, withdrawn and recovering from a difficult experience with bullying that had forced her to change schools.
Her instructor understood something important from HIGH FIVE® training: friendships and a sense of belonging are essential to positive experiences for children. Each class began with a simple activity called "the wiggles," encouraging children to laugh, connect and interact with different partners. One day, Nithya laughed out loud. That small moment marked the beginning of a remarkable transformation.

Nithya grew into a confident dancer and natural leader, remaining with the team for five years and taking on increasingly challenging roles.
The friendships she developed through recreation also gave her the confidence to navigate her new school.
The impact: What began as a welcoming dance class became a place where a child found friendship, confidence and the opportunity to lead.
"Having taken HIGH FIVE® training, I was aware of how important it was for children to make friends during the program in order to encourage them to participate and come back to the activity."



Guideline - Safety

"One little girl arrived at camp in tears, having never spent a day away from her mom. Rather than asking her to join the activities right away, one of our sport leaders invited her to pick flowers together for five minutes. As they walked and talked, her tears stopped, and she began to relax. By the next activity, she was ready to join in. Sometimes, making a child feel safe and supported is as simple as meeting them where they are and giving them the confidence to take that next step."

-Jaxon B, PacificSport Vancouver Island

Foundations of Programs

"Perhaps most importantly, HIGH FIVE® gives me confidence that our staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to work with children and youth. The training reinforces the importance of creating safe, welcoming, and engaging environments where young people can thrive. Knowing that our staff have been trained through HIGH FIVE® provides reassurance to both our organization and the families we serve."

-Emily G, PSP Halifax/Shearwater







quality

Mastery and Experience

"I had opportunities to practice facilitating, observe other participants, and receive specific feedback. Connecting the content to real situations in children's programming also helped me understand how to apply it."

-Angelo C, Trainer Candidate



Welcoming of Diversity and Uniqueness

"A highlight for me was hearing that learners felt safe, supported, and comfortable asking questions and trying something new. I also love seeing learners overcome their fears and the laughter - always so much laughter."

-Sarah G, Trainer

Turning Insight Into Action

QUALITY SHOULD NOT JUST BE EXPECTED.

It should be measured.

Every assessment provides an opportunity to recognize strengths, identify areas for improvement and support staff in delivering quality recreation experiences.

Training prepares leaders. Policies establish expectations. But what matters most is what participants actually experience when they participate in a program.

Through QUEST 2, HIGH FIVE® goes beyond the training and into recreation programs to observe how the five Principles of Healthy Child Development come to life.



110, 531

QUEST 2 Assessments Completed

86%

Average Score

THE PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Across 110,531 QUEST 2 assessments, programs achieved an 86% average quality score, demonstrating that the five HIGH FIVE® Principles are being put into practice in recreation settings. 25 years of setting the standard. Measurable evidence of **quality in action**.

HIGH FIVE®

in the next quarter century

Evolving Quality Assessment

Modernizing QUEST 1 and QUEST 2 to strengthen quality measurement, support continuous improvement and ensure assessments remain relevant to today's recreation and sport environments.

Expanding Training Opportunities

Growing our training and professional development opportunities through enhanced content, flexible delivery options and practical resources that help more leaders put the five Principles into practice.

Strengthening Evidence & Reporting

Improving data collection and reporting to help organizations track progress, make informed decisions and demonstrate quality, while building stronger national evidence of HIGH FIVE®'s impact.

ONE STANDARD. AN EVOLVING APPROACH.

HIGH FIVE® is more than training. Our integrated framework connects principles, standards, assessment and accreditation to make quality measurable and accountable. The standard remains. How we support organizations in achieving it continues to evolve.



HIGH FIVE® TRAINING

Training builds the skills needed to deliver quality recreation and sport experiences. HIGH FIVE® equips staff, volunteers and leaders-in-training with the knowledge and practical skills to create Safe, inclusive and positive experiences for every participant, as reported by Accredited organizations.



CORE SKILLS

01 Understanding Participant Development

02 Positive Leadership

03 Relationship Building

04 Play-Based Programming

05 Inclusive Program Adaptation

06 Safe and Developmentally Appropriate Program Design

Stronger Staff. Quality Experiences.

HIGH FIVE® is the catalyst that supports this development; when staff have the knowledge, confidence and skills, the whole recreation and sport sector rises with them.

CONTACT US

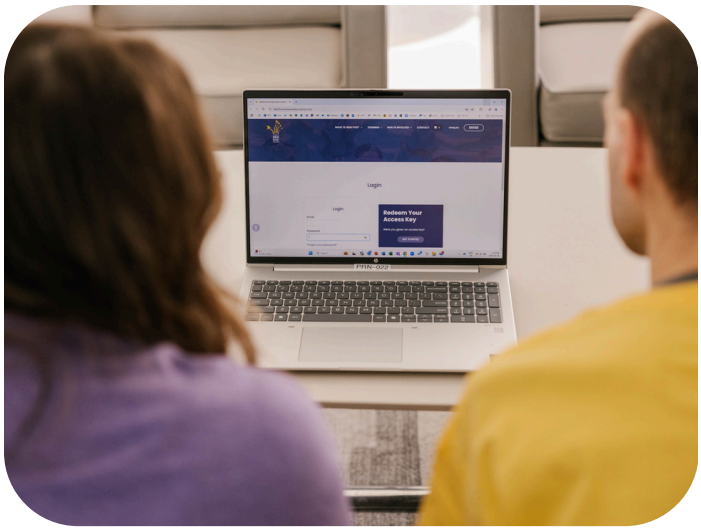
Let’s connect.

We encourage you to share the findings and stories in this report to help celebrate and advance quality recreation experiences for children across Canada. When sharing, please credit HIGH FIVE®.

Have a question about HIGH FIVE®?

Start here.

info@HIGHFIVE.org



FIND WHAT FITS YOU



- Certifications offered
- In person or· Virtual
- On demand | Self-paced
- Accreditation opportunities
- FAQs

The HIGH FIVE® website offers a clear path to explore our trainings, supported learning formats, accreditation opportunities and frequently asked questions.

www.HIGHFIVE.org