



For Immediate Release

HIGH FIVE[®] Offers Hope To Overall Health Of Canadian Children

Toronto, May 29, 2008 – HIGH FIVE[®] applauds Active Healthy Kids Canada for the 2008 Canadian Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth for bringing attention to the health of Canadian children. In the wake of Canada's unsettling failing grade, HIGH FIVE[®] is emphasizing that physical activity alone is not enough. To produce positive results, it is essential to offer sport and recreation experiences fostered within a constructive, encouraging environment.

“This report confirms that our children’s health is in a state of crisis. Kids have to want to be physically active. If the overall health of Canadian children is to improve, sport and recreation activities must be fun and enjoyable experiences that children want for themselves. The solution must include not only physical but also mental aspects to achieve healthy child development. Sport and recreation leaders who are aware of this can make all the difference.”

– LJ Bartle, HIGH FIVE[®] National Manager

HIGH FIVE[®] National, a division of Parks and Recreation Ontario, is leading the pack to ensure that coaches and recreation programs and leaders have the skills to build strong minds and bodies for Canadian children.

“HIGH FIVE[®] has developed a quality assurance standard designed to support the safety, well-being and healthy development of children in all recreation and sport programs. This doesn't just apply to physical health but mental health as well.”

- Dr. Kellie Leitch, Advisor to the Federal Minister of Health on Healthy Children and Youth

HIGH FIVE[®] training ensures that children’s programs offer high quality mental, social and physical skill sets and life experiences. It provides instructors, coaches and leaders working with children aged 6 to 12 with the expertise in learning patterns, physical and social stressors as well as developmental needs.

Hundreds of organizations across Canada implement HIGH FIVE[®] training in the Principles of Healthy Child Development. One such organization is Futures Gymnastics, whose President, Lorraine Currie, believes that the HIGH FIVE[®] training her staff receives is a key component in providing top quality experiences as part of their athletic programs.

“All of our staff feel more prepared to work with children and their individual needs. Through HIGH FIVE[®], we have been able to make a positive difference in their lives which shows through their increased self-esteem and how they deal with issues.” - Lorraine Currie, President of Futures Gymnastics



Maya is a 7-year old girl with Tourette's Syndrome who participates in one of Ms Currie's classes. Maya's mother, Ingrid Smith, is impressed with Futures' child-centered approach.

“Her disability is a behavioral ability and mental health issue. Building her self-esteem now is crucial for her development – it’s the foundation of her character. The staff are well equipped to handle such a challenge. These staff never push and are always encouraging. When she got to a point where her disability made gymnastics especially difficult, the staff were completely adaptable.” - Ingrid Smith

HIGH FIVE® training, tools, resources and Accreditation process help many organizations across the country deliver positive child-centered programs. Implementing HIGH FIVE® training and embedding its key ingredients into an organization's operating practices demonstrates a commitment to children's physical and mental health.

BACKGROUND

HIGH FIVE® is a national quality standard of Parks and Recreation Ontario for children's sport and recreation. HIGH FIVE® is committed to assisting children along the path of healthy child development by:

- ensuring that recreation and sport practitioners develop a high level of knowledge and expertise in child development;
- helping parents to make informed choices; and
- providing practitioners with the tools for enhancing and maintaining a high level of program quality.

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) is an all-inclusive member-based association dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of the people in Ontario.

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