Higgy Con 2026 Impact Report

What Families Are Seeing After Higgy Con

If you've ever watched your child struggle with scoliosis, you know that the hardest parts aren't always the ones that show up on an X-ray.

It's feeling different. It's being the only kid at school wearing a brace. It's trying to hide the outline of that brace under a sweatshirt. It's worrying about surgery or wondering what a scar will look like. It's having people who love you, but still wishing you knew someone your own age who actually understood.

That is why Higgy Con exists.

Higgy Con gives kids and teens with scoliosis something that can be incredibly difficult to find in everyday life: **each other.**

After Higgy Con 2026, we asked families what happened after they went home. **Sixty-six families responded.**

The Overall Impact

95.5% of families reported that Higgy Con had a positive impact on their child.

22 families (33.3%) said the impact was **life-changing**.
30 families (45.5%) said Higgy Con had a **significant positive impact**.
9 families (13.6%) reported a moderate positive impact.
2 families (3.0%) reported a small positive impact.

In total, **63 of 66 families (95.5%)** reported some level of positive impact, and **52 of 66 (78.8%)** described the impact as significant or life-changing.

Your Kids Feel Less Alone

92% said their child feels less alone in having scoliosis.
86% said their child feels more connected to other kids who understand what they are going through.
77% said their child has made or maintained a friendship or connection with someone they met at Higgy Con.

52 kids have talked about a child or teen they met at Higgy Con, and **50 kids** have stayed in contact with someone they met there.

You're Seeing More Confidence at Home

83% said their child feels more confident about having scoliosis.
77% said their child is more comfortable talking about scoliosis with other people.
75% said their child feels more comfortable with their body and/or scoliosis experience.

Parents also reported real changes: **39 kids** seemed less embarrassed, **38** talked more openly about scoliosis, **38** told a friend or someone new that they have scoliosis, **36** showed someone their brace or surgical scar, and **32** showed greater confidence at school or around friends.

Higgy Con Is Also Affecting Treatment

88% of families said Higgy Con made it easier for their child to cope with scoliosis. Among families who answered the treatment-engagement question, **83%** said Higgy Con positively affected their child's willingness to participate in scoliosis care or treatment.

Putting the Brace Results in Context

The survey did not include a separate question asking every family whether their child currently wears a brace, so the exact number of brace-wearing children cannot be determined from the survey alone. For the clearest context, the results below use the number of families who answered each brace-specific question.

More willing to wear their brace: 31 of 59 families who answered this question (52.5%) said their child was somewhat or much more willing to wear their brace after Higgy Con.

More confident wearing their brace around other people: 41 of 60 families who answered this question (68.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that their child was more confident wearing their brace around other people.

Wearing their brace more consistently: 23 of 60 families who answered this question (38.3%) said their child was definitely or somewhat more consistent with brace wear after Higgy Con.

Wearing their brace outside their clothing more often: 25 of 58 families who answered this question (43.1%) said their child was definitely or somewhat more likely to wear their brace outside their clothes after Higgy Con.

Why Wearing a Brace on the Outside Matters

If your child wears a scoliosis brace, you probably understand immediately why this matters.

Most kids hide their brace. They put it underneath their clothing. They choose clothes based on whether the brace will show. They worry about someone noticing the outline.

And then they come to Higgy Con. Suddenly, braces are everywhere. Kids are wearing them, talking about them, comparing them, and taking them on and off without trying to hide.

The thing that makes them different at home becomes completely normal.

So when **25 of the 58 families who answered this question - 43.1% - said their child was wearing their brace outside their clothing more often**, that can represent something much bigger: **I'm not as embarrassed anymore. I don't have to hide this. There are other kids like me.**

A Note From Lauren

I grew up with scoliosis, and I never knew another kid like me. I felt very alone.

That experience is ultimately why Higgy Bears exists and why Higgy Con means so much to me. I wanted kids growing up with scoliosis today to have something I didn't have: **each other.**

When I look at these survey results, I don't just see percentages. I see the child who went home and showed someone their brace. I see the kid who isn't hiding their scar anymore. I see friendships that started at Higgy Con and continued after everyone went home.

We can't take scoliosis away from our kids. We can't make every brace night easy or take away every fear about

surgery. **But we can make sure they don't have to go through it alone.**

- Lauren Higginson
Founder, Higgy Bears & Higgy Con

Parents Feel Less Alone, Too

86% of parents said they feel less alone as the parent or caregiver of a child with scoliosis.
86% feel more confident supporting their child.
85% better understand what their child may be experiencing emotionally and socially.
79% feel more hopeful about their child's future.

16 parents (24%) called Higgy Con life-changing and **30 parents (45%)** reported a significant positive impact. Together, **46 of 66 parents (70%)** said Higgy Con had a significant or life-changing impact on them, too.

Thank You for Being Part of Higgy Con

Higgy Con is made up of hundreds of individual scoliosis stories. Different curves. Different braces. Different surgeries. Different experiences.

But for a little while, our kids get to be in a place where scoliosis doesn't make them the different one. **They belong.**

To every parent who brought a child to Higgy Con, trusted us with them, completed this survey, encouraged a new friendship, exchanged phone numbers with another family, or helped your child realize there are other kids out there just like them: **thank you.**

95.5% EXPERIENCED A POSITIVE IMPACT.

92% FEEL LESS ALONE.

AND 100% DESERVE A COMMUNITY THAT UNDERSTANDS.

Higgy Con by Higgy Bears
Making scoliosis bearable.
Results based on 66 Higgy Con 2026 Family Impact Survey responses.

In Your Words

Open-Ended Family Responses

What is the biggest positive change you have noticed in your child since Higgy Con?

My daughter had been already excited and proud of her brace but now **the confidence radiates** and there isn't a shred of doubt when she wears it. Making friends with the same diagnosis who have the same interests has been **life changing** for her because for so long she felt alone.

She now sees her scoliosis as something that **makes her unique**, not something that makes her different.

She is much **more open with talking about her scoliosis and brace with people now.** Before Higgy Con, she didn't want to even acknowledge that she has scoliosis or that she wears a brace 23 hours a day. This has been a huge change for her!

Ever since Higgy Con my daughter has **worn her brace without fight and on the outside of her clothes** and says *I now know it's okay to be different and I'm not alone.*

Being confident!

Not feeling alone and knowing there are others who brace also. *Less embarrassed to take the brace on/off in public.*

She **feels less alone** than she did before.

She is much more willing to discuss her scoliosis and **much less nervous** doing so.

Her being proud of her brace and not feeling so alone now that she has made friends and kept in contact with other kids in braces.

Having a friend with scoliosis has been HUGE for him! **He doesn't feel alone anymore. He doesn't think he's weird anymore. He doesn't feel the need to hide anymore.** Also, seeing and hearing from the teens who have had surgery was helpful because it showed him that he can overcome that hurdle and that life can be even better after surgery.

Wearing her brace more and **confidently**. She will be celebrating one-year braceaversary next month.

She doesn't hide anything anymore.

Positive attitude towards her body. As a parent with a visible scoliosis myself, I know I was much more embarrassed by my body and brace at her age and cannot believe the healthy attitude and openness she has presenting herself with at her school and with her group of friends.

More **positive attitude** and realizes she is not the only one.

Knowing she's not alone is the **most helpful thing in the world for a young girl.**

She is not afraid to show off her scar or tell others about scoliosis.

Wearing her brace on the outside.

Loved seeing how she made friends at Higgy Con.

She's just so much more committed to her own treatment, showing a lot more independence with it. And she found these other girls who are truly her people, who just happen to also have scoliosis. So the diagnosis isn't the main thing, their friendship is, which I think is beautiful!

She saw and met other kids that have been through what she has gone through and is about to go through (surgery). *That made an enormous world of difference*, as she felt very alone prior to.

More confident about herself.

My daughter has spoken more openly about scoliosis and chose to do her 8th grade project on Navigating Scoliosis and How it Can Affect One's Daily Life. This means she has spoken out about and will continue to speak openly about it throughout the year with her classmates, as she works on the project. Then she will present it at the end of the school year to students in other grades, as well as to their parents, who attend the project presentations.

More consistent with brace wear.

Is there something your child has said or done since Higgy Con that showed you the event was impactful?

She said **she hopes she still has scoliosis next year just so she can go to Higgy Con.** (Her scoliosis is not going away.)

This is her first school year to change attire for PE at school and she said *she wasn't embarrassed* when a friend asked her about it in front of everyone.

More self-love & better body image. He wants to keep connecting with other teens with scoliosis.

Wearing her brace on the outside of her clothes, **educating people**, being more involved at the doctors appts, etc.

I am not alone.
I think my brace is cool.
I am stronger because of my scoliosis.

She has been making an effort to *put on & remove her brace by herself.* Even her teacher at school has remarked on the demonstration of independence that was not there the last academic year.

My child wrote in a school paper just last week that *her scoli friends from Higgy Con are the most important people in her life.*

My daughter gave me a big thank you for taking her to Higgy Con. **Connecting with other teens makes all the difference.**

The joy on her face as she told friends family all about Higgy Con.

He went swimming without a shirt on the first time in his life at Higgy Con Chicago. He didn't feel like he needed to hide his scars anymore, and that continued once we got back home. He gained so much confidence! He also swam for the first time after his fusion with no shirt on at Higgy Con Grand Rapids. **He doesn't feel the need to hide anymore!!**

She feels so much more confident. She was glad she went to the conference. Made so many friends.

She has just been **more comfortable in her own body.** Although she has always participated in her treatment, meeting friends with similar experiences has put a smile on her face and I can see how she is more confident

wearing her brace when she knows there are others out there just like her. Thank you so soooo much for this **life-altering experience** you are facilitating for these kids. The impact is just barely at the beginning. I am absolutely certain that as they turn into adults, they will look back at their Higgy Con experience and see how it has contributed to the healthy adults they will become.

She is more confident about talking about her scoliosis to friends at school.

My daughter started an Instagram page was influenced by the teens at Higgy Con to share her scoliosis journey.

She's just *more confident* and now actively tracks how long she wears her brace.

For one, she **started wearing her brace every night** without me having to check on it and she started tightening it to the level it's supposed to be at, which she had never done before Higgy Con. Second, she has been constantly staying in touch with three other girls on the regular they call themselves the Green Gals. They are truly becoming friends!

She wears her scoliosis sweatshirt in public and even wore it (although particularly not viewable) to open house at school which was HUGE.

The excitement in her voice and the smile on her face said it all. During the event, immediately after, and since we have been home, the talk about the event has been energetic and lively.

Wearing the brace much more without being reminded or asked to put it on.