

## FITNESSGRAM

The objective of the FITNESSGRAM is to increase parental awareness of children's fitness levels by developing an easy way for physical education teachers to report the results of physical fitness assessments. It establishes a baseline from which students can set goals and check progress. It also allows students to experience and better understand the components of health-related fitness.

FITNESSGRAM is more effective than other available physical fitness tests for three reasons. First, it compares scores to carefully researched and developed health standards rather than to national averages. Second, it emphasizes measures of health-related physical fitness instead of performance of physical or sport-related skills. Third, it goes beyond mere measurement to recommend individualized physical activity program options that will help students in the areas where they need improvement. (FITNESSGRAM, 1999) Participants receive objective, personalized feedback and positive reinforcement which are vital to changing behavior and serve as a communications link between teachers and parents.

### **FITNESSGRAM Assessment**

FITNESSGRAM is a health related physical fitness assessment. Each of the test items were selected to assess important aspects of a student's health related fitness, not skill or agility. **Students are compared not to each other, but to health fitness standards**, carefully established for each age and gender that indicate good health.

### **What is the FITNESSGRAM?**

The FITNESSGRAM is a series of health-related fitness activities that assess physical fitness levels in children.

### **Why do it?**

Students should learn to self-assess their fitness levels and interpret the results. This will help them learn about fitness concepts, plan and set goals for fitness and serve as a motivational tool to remain active on their own.

### **How will I know if my child is fit?**

Each student will receive a computerized printout of their test results. These results will be used as a learning tool for physical fitness. Students will interpret the data and write down their short term and long term goals. This test will be administered again in April/May to compare data.

## **What fitness areas do the activities test?**

### Cardio respiratory (Cardiovascular) Endurance:

**PACER Test:** The Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run is a multistage fitness test adapted from the 20 meter shuttle run test. The test is progressive; it is easy at the beginning and gets harder each stage. Set to music, this test is a valid, fun alternative to the customary distance run test for measuring aerobic capacity. The PACER is recommended for all ages. The children have a good time while learning how to pace. (FITNESSGRAM, 1999)

### Muscular Strength and Endurance:

**Curl-up Test:** For the curl-up test, the students complete as many curl-ups as they can at a specified pace (maximum 75). The curl-up has been selected because it does not involve the assistance of the hip flexor muscles and minimizes compression in the spine, when compared to a full sit-up with the feet held. Strength and endurance of the abdominals are important in promoting good posture and correct pelvic alignment. (FITNESSGRAM, 1999)

**Push-up Test:** The push-up to an elbow angle of 90 degrees is the recommended test for upper body strength and endurance. The PACER test CD contains a recorded cadence of 20 push-ups per minute (1 push-up every 3 seconds). The tests ends if a student: 1- stops to rest; 2-does not achieve a 90 degree angle with elbows on each rep; 3-does not maintain correct body position; 4-does not extend arms fully. (FITNESSGRAM, 1999)

### Flexibility:

**Trunk Lift Test:** Students lie prone (face down) with their hands under their thighs. The student lifts the upper body off the floor in a slow, controlled movement to a maximum of 12 inches. Trunk extensor strength and flexibility are important for lower back health, especially vertebral alignment.

Musculoskeletal fitness of the abdominals, hamstrings and back extensors work in concert to maintain posture and low back health. (FITNESSGRAM, 1999)

**Back Saver Sit and Reach Test:** The sit and reach measures predominantly the flexibility of the hamstring muscles. Both the right and left sides of the body are tested separately to discourage hyperextension. Normal hamstring flexibility allows rotation of the pelvis in forward bending movements and posterior tilting of the pelvis for proper sitting.

**Shoulder Stretch Test:** The shoulder stretch test is a simple test of upper body flexibility. It is useful in educating the students about the importance of flexibility in all areas of the body. The student reaches with the right hand over the right shoulder and down the back as if to pull up a zipper. At the same time she/he places her/his left hand behind her back and reaches up, trying to touch the fingers of the right hand. This is also done with the opposite hand.