

Student Fitness Assessments

How Can You Help?



Student fitness assessments should be part of a school physical education program.¹ Fitness assessments are used to determine students' current levels of fitness, which are linked to various health outcomes.^{1,2} Components of a health-related fitness assessment include the following: aerobic capacity (i.e., any activity that makes your heart beat faster); muscular strength; muscular endurance; flexibility; and body composition, which measures how much fat and muscle is in the body.³

Physical education teachers who use health-related fitness assessments and fitness education in their classes can motivate students to maintain or improve their fitness and physical activity levels.¹⁻³ Schools are encouraged to use the **Presidential Youth Fitness Program** as their fitness program, which includes:

- fitness assessment through use of the FITNESSGRAM;
- professional development for physical education teachers; and
- recognition of the school and students.⁴

Knowing the answers to these questions can help you support student fitness assessments in your child's school. If you don't know the answers to these questions, check out the school handbook or school website, attend a school wellness meeting or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, or simply ask your child's teacher.

What's Happening at School?

1. Does the school participate in the **Presidential Youth Fitness Program**? If not, does the physical education teacher know about it? If they do participate, how is it being implemented?
2. What components of health-related fitness are assessed in school-based fitness assessment programs?
3. Is the FITNESSGRAM the assessment being used? By whom?
4. Are fitness education lessons part of physical education classes? Fitness education is an important topic included in a physical education program that focuses on helping students understand health-related physical fitness (i.e., aerobic capacity, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition).
5. Are students taught about what their fitness results mean and how to improve their fitness?
6. Are the results of students' fitness assessments kept confidential, and are students assessed in a safe and confidential environment?
7. Does the physical education teacher ensure that results of fitness testing are not used to assign grades or used to assess how well a program or teacher is performing?
8. Are students' health-related fitness report results and their interpretation shared with them and parents (or guardians)?



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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Ideas for Parents

You can be involved in your child's school by **attending** meetings, workshops, or training events offered by the school; **communicating** with school staff and other parents; **volunteering** for school events or in your child's classroom; **reinforcing** healthy messages and practices your child learns at school; **helping** make decisions about health in the school; and **being part** of community activities supported by the school. Here are some specific ideas for how you can support your child's school in providing student fitness assessments.

- Join the school or district committee (e.g., wellness committee) that sets the policies for health and wellness, and work to include language about student fitness assessments.^{1,5}
- Encourage your child's school to be part of the **Presidential Youth Fitness Program**. Ask your child's physical education teacher if he or she receives professional development on fitness assessment and fitness education.
- Ask the physical education teacher (or school) for your child's fitness assessment results and for them to explain the results to you.
- Ask the physical education teacher for exercises and physical activities you can do at home with your child to keep up or improve fitness levels.
- E-mail or discuss the importance of student fitness assessments in physical education programs with other parents.



Check out additional resources for parents related to the school nutrition environment and services, physical education and physical activity, and managing chronic health conditions at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/P4HS.htm>.

REFERENCES

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