How to Prepare Your Child for the FitnessGram® Assessment

FitnessGram® is the premier health-related physical fitness assessment for children with reporting capabilities. The health- related assessment focuses on aerobic capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition. There are multiple test items that teachers can choose from to assess each component of fitness. The list below shows the variety of test options included in FitnessGram® as well as the recommend items.

Aerobic Capacity
- PACER* (20 meter shuttle run), Mile Run or Walk Test

Muscular Strength/Endurance
- Push-ups*, Flexed Arm Hang, Pull-Up or Modified Pull-Up (measures upper body muscular strength/endurance)
- Curl-ups* (measures abdominal muscular strength/endurance)

Flexibility
- Back-Saver Sit and Reach* or Shoulder Stretch (measures flexibility)
- Trunk Lift* (measures trunk extensor strength and flexibility)

Body Composition
- Skinfold Test* (measures percent body fat by testing the triceps and calf areas)
- Body Mass Index (measures appropriateness of weight relative to height)
- Percent Body Fat using a portable bioelectric impedance analyzer (BIA) or device

Indicates recommended test item.

The test items are based on scientifically developed criterion-referenced standards associated with good health. FitnessGram® doesn't compare children to each other, but instead to the FitnessGram® Healthy Fitness Zone® Standards that have been carefully established based on age and gender. Once a FitnessGram® test event has been completed and children's scores have been entered into the software, the teacher can generate individualized reports to share with children and guardians. Make sure you ask for a copy of your child's report so you can review and continue to support your child's physical fitness and activity development.

Here are a few tips to help prepare your child for their FitnessGram® test event:

- Participate with your child in regular, enjoyable physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day. Try to participate in a variety of fun aerobic activities such as walking, running, jumping, dancing, and playing games such as catch, tag, or touch football. Strive to find activities you both enjoy.

- Make sure your child dresses appropriately and wears tennis shoes the day of the assessment.

- Eat a balanced diet by including more fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products and whole grains. In addition, try to decrease high amounts of fats and sugars in your child's diet.

- Make sure your child is well hydrated before the test. Encourage them to drink water, especially before, during, and after physical activity.

- Have an active "study" session. Do strength-training activities such as sit-ups, push-ups, modified push-ups, gymnastics, and/ or climbing activities at least three days a week. This time can also count towards your 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Start out with one set of 8-12 repetitions and as you continue to do these activities on a regular basis and your fitness level increases, heighten your workload to two or three sets of 8-15 repetitions.

- Assure your child that the FitnessGram® results should not affect their physical education grades, but will provide them with an individualized snapshot of their health. Use the report to encourage lifelong physical activity goals. FitnessGram® recommends that students shouldn't be graded on their performance. Encourage your child to do their best.

- Assure your child that it's not a competition, if your child doesn't achieve the Healthy Fitness Zone® see what areas need work and then ask your physical education teacher, nurse, and/or physician for tips on how to improve those areas.

- Ask a physical education teacher, nurse, and/or coach on your campus for specific tips on ways you can prepare not only for the FitnessGram® test, but for a lifetime of overall good health.

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