
Physical Fitness Assessment

Trunk Extensor Strength and Flexibility This is an important aspect of fitness because it predicts first time and recurrent lower back pain, a major source of disability and discomfort. Awareness and attention to trunk strength and flexibility may reduce the risk for future back problems.

Trunk Lift. The goal of this assessment is to lift the upper body a maximum of 12 inches off the floor using the muscles of the back. Students hold this position long enough to allow for the measurement of the lift distance.

Upper Body Strength and Endurance Upper body strength and endurance is an important fitness area because of reported benefits in maintaining functional health and good posture.

Push-Up. Students are asked to complete as many push-ups as possible and at a specified pace, up to a maximum of 75 push-ups.

Flexibility. Flexibility of the joints is an important component of fitness that contributes to functional health.

Back-Saver Sit and Reach. The goal of this task is to assess the flexibility of the lower back and posterior thigh. Using a special box designed for this test, students are asked to reach forward as far as possible and to a maximum distance of 12 inches. The actual reach distance is measured for both the left and right sides of the body.



Parent and Guardian Guide to the Physical Fitness Assessment and the FITNESSGRAM¹

¹The FITNESSGRAM and the Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZ) are registered trademarks of The Cooper Institute.

FITNESSGRAM

The *FITNESSGRAM* assesses five main fitness areas: (1) Aerobic Capacity, (2) Body Composition, and (3) Muscle Strength, (4) Muscle Endurance, (5) and Flexibility. This brochure provides parents and guardians with information about specific physical fitness assessments. Detailed information about aerobic capacity is available in the brochure entitled "Parent and Guardian Guide to the Physical Fitness Assessment and the *FITNESSGRAM — Aerobic Capacity*."

Performance Standards

The physical fitness assessment uses the *FITNESSGRAM* objective criteria to evaluate fitness performance. Student's performance is classified into the Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) or Needs Improvement. The desired performance goal for each test option is the HFZ, which represents a level of fitness that offers some protection against the diseases resulting from physical inactivity. The Needs Improvement designation indicates an area of fitness where students would benefit from activities designed to improve performance.

The *FITNESSGRAM* HFZ standards have been established according to gender and age and are updated on a regular basis. The latest version of the standards is available on the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) *FITNESSGRAM*® Web page at <http://www.ok.gov/health/Wellness/FITNESSGRAM/index.html>

Physical Fitness Assessments

The *FITNESSGRAM* provides assessment options for most of the fitness areas so that all students, including those with special needs, have the maximum opportunity to participate in the tests. For the fitness areas that have multiple options, only one option is reported for each student.

Aerobic Capacity

Aerobic capacity refers to the maximum rate that oxygen is taken in and used by the body during exercise. Good aerobic capacity has been associated with a reduction in health problems. The three performance task options for aerobic capacity assess the capacity of the cardiorespiratory system by estimating VO_2 max or the maximum amount of oxygen, in milliliters, one uses in one minute per kilogram of body weight.

PACER (Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run). This assessment is an alternative to the distance run. The objective is to run as long as possible, going back and forth across a 15 or 20-meter distance, and at a specified pace that is set to music and gets faster each minute.

Muscle Strength, Endurance, and Flexibility

Abdominal Strength and Endurance

Abdominal strength and endurance are important in promoting good posture, correct pelvic alignment, and lower back health.

Curl-Up. This is the only assessment option for abdominal strength and endurance. The objective of the curl-up is to complete as many curl-ups as possible at a specified pace, up to a maximum of 75 curl-ups.