



Texarkana
Independent School District

Physical Fitness Assessment Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the FITNESSGRAM test and what components will be administered to my child?
A. FITNESSGRAM is a physical fitness assessment selected by the Texas Education Agency to increase parental awareness of children's fitness levels. The assessment will be given during the spring semester, and it measures three components of health-related physical fitness that have been identified as important to overall health and function.

- aerobic capacity;
- body composition;
- muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility

Q. What specific exercises will be administered to Texarkana ISD students as part of the FITNESSGRAM Assessment?

A. Aerobic Capacity: Students will be administered one of the assessments listed below:

Elementary Students:

- PACER Assessment – The objective is to run as many laps as possible back and forth across a 20 meter space at a specified pace that gets faster each minute.

Secondary Students:

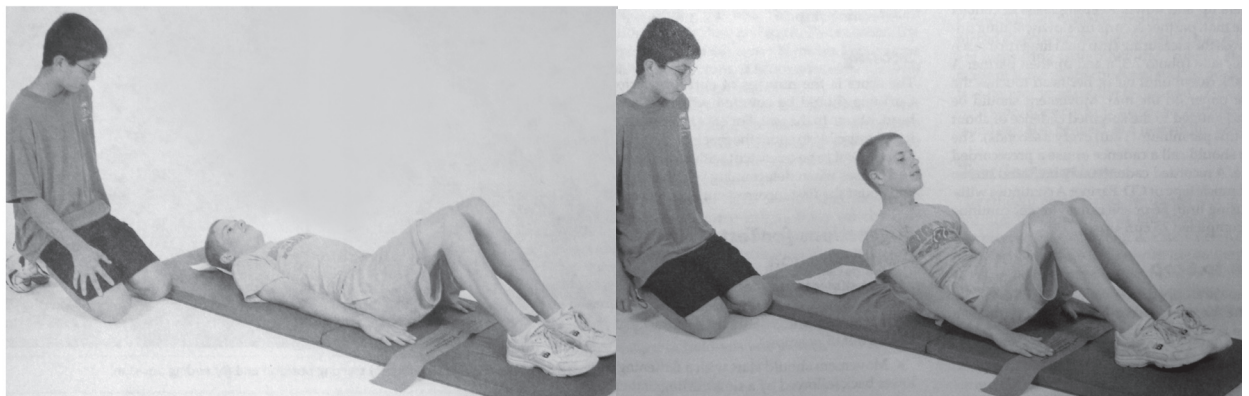
- PACER Assessment – The objective is to run as many laps as possible back and forth across a 20 meter space at a specified pace that gets faster each minute.
- One-Mile Run, or
- One-Mile Walk

Body Composition:

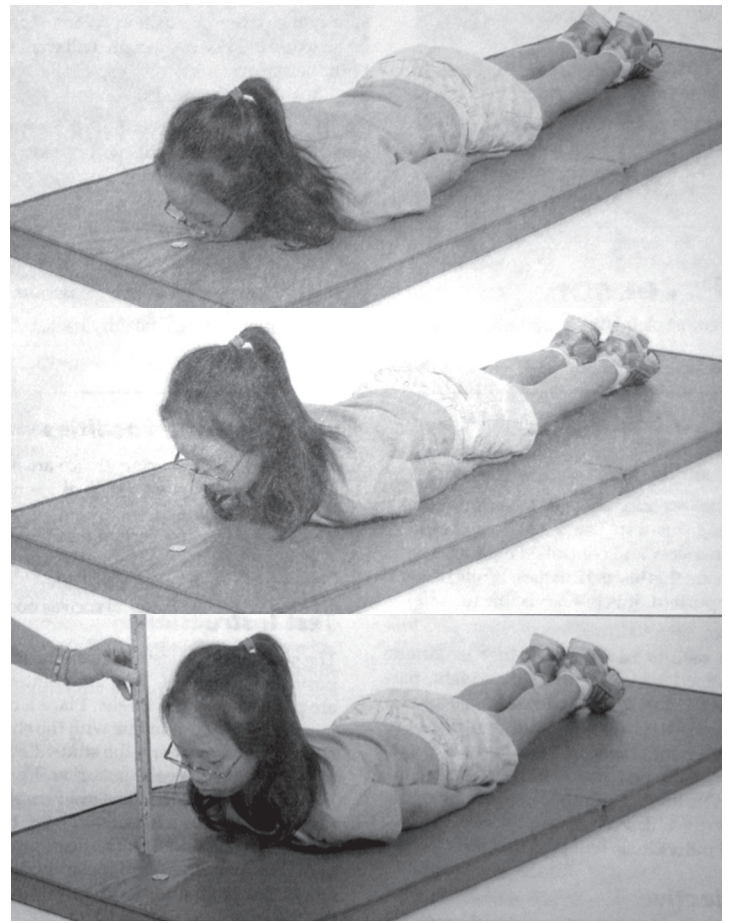
- Body Mass Index – Height and Weight

Muscular Strength, Endurance, and Flexibility:

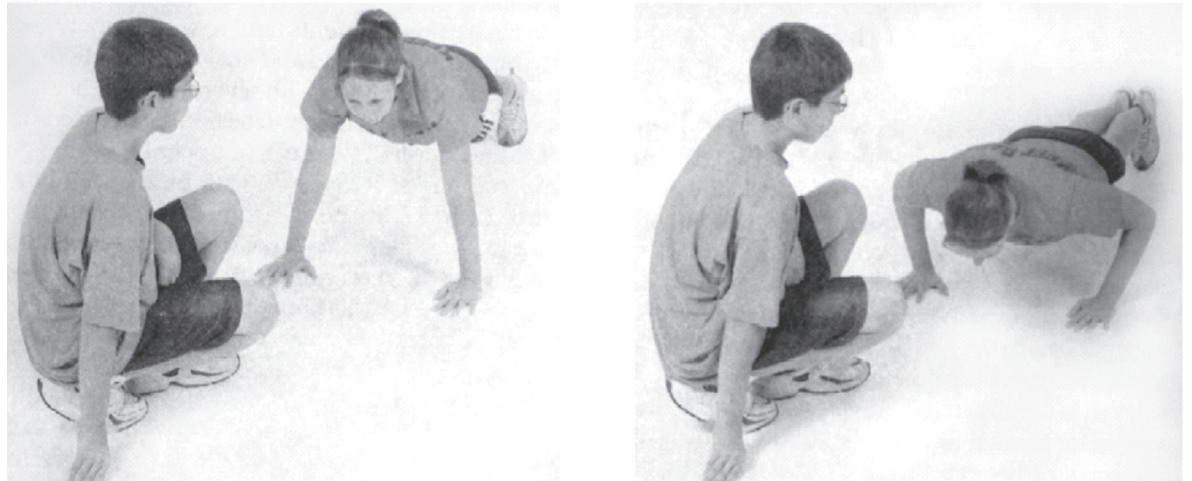
- Curl-Up Exercise



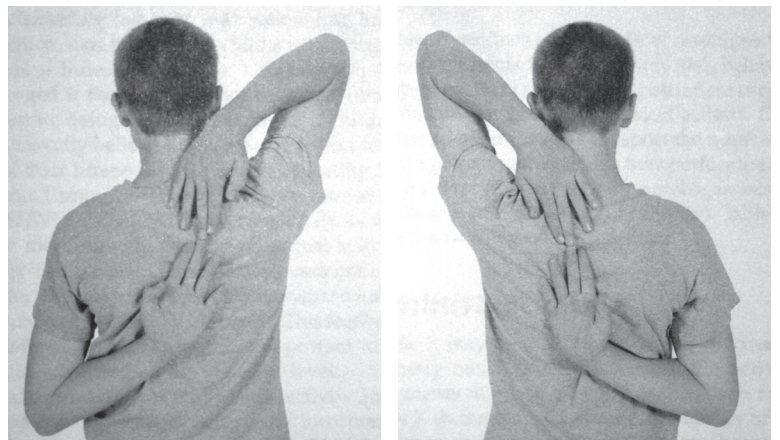
- *Trunk Lift Exercise*



- *Push-Up Exercise*



- *Shoulder Stretch Exercise*





Q. Who currently uses FITNESSGRAM?

A. Tens of thousands of schools nationwide use the FITNESSGRAM assessment. These include individual school settings as well as large district implementations in cities like New York City (NY), Baltimore County (MD) Public School District, and Miami-Dade County (FL) Public Schools--and even statewide implementation, as in Delaware and California.

Q. Why are physical activity and fitness important?

A. Physical activity and physical fitness are not the same thing. Participation in regular physical activity leads to improvements in physical fitness and provides many important health benefits.

Physical activity may reduce the risk of premature mortality, coronary artery disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes mellitus. Physical activity also improves mental health and is important for the health of muscles, bones, and joints. These are only a few health benefits that may result from participating in physical activity.

Physical fitness also has been shown to be important for health and quality of life. Assessments of physical fitness provide an effective way to evaluate overall physical condition and potential risk for negative health outcomes. Physical fitness is also more easily assessed than physical activity since it doesn't vary on a day-to-day basis. It is important to note that physical fitness is also influenced by factors that are out of a person's control. One example would be a person's genetics. While not everyone can be an elite athlete, most people can achieve healthy levels of fitness by performing the recommended amounts of physical activity.

Q. Why are fitness tests important for students who are not athletes?

A. The FITNESSGRAM physical fitness assessment is based not on athletic ability, but on good health. No matter what your children grow up to become, they will live happier, more productive lives if they are healthy. FITNESSGRAM provides accurate and reliable information about your child's level of physical fitness. The FITNESSGRAM test and report include a number of different assessments because fitness has multiple components. Some students may have good muscular fitness, but need improvement on aerobic fitness. By having a complete report, you and your child will learn more about their overall level of physical fitness and what you can do to improve it.

Q. Who will take the FITNESSGRAM assessment?

A. All students enrolled at Texarkana ISD in grades 3 -12 must take the FITNESSGRAM Assessment unless they have a physical disability.

Q. Does my child have the option of not participating in the FITNESSGRAM Assessment?

A. Yes, the Texas Education Agency will allow districts to excuse a student from testing if they are unable to complete the exercises because of a physical disability. Texarkana ISD will make a determination regarding the testing of students with physical disabilities on an individual student basis.

Q. Will my child's FITNESSGRAM scores be posted or made public?

A. FITNESSGRAM results are meant to be individualized and personal. Texarkana ISD will not post the assessment results but will mail to Parents/Guardians the results of your student's physical fitness assessment.

The FITNESSGRAM data will be collected by the state. However, the students' name and other information that may identify a student will be removed to ensure confidentiality. That data will be used to study trends and not to judge individual students.

Q. Will my child be compared to other children?

A. No. FITNESSGRAM uses health-related criteria called the Healthy Fitness Zone to determine a student's overall physical fitness and suggest areas for improvement when appropriate. Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZ) are not based on the performance of your child's peers. The standards are set specifically for boys and girls of different ages using the best available research. The FITNESSGRAM report defines the recommended range of fitness for each test measure and calls this range the Healthy Fitness Zone. If your child's score falls within the Healthy Fitness Zone it means they have achieved the recommended level of fitness for their age.

Q. Will my child be made to feel that he or she is overweight or underweight?

A. No. FITNESSGRAM recognizes that physically fit and less-fit people come in all shapes and sizes. The beginning level of the FITNESSGRAM Healthy Fitness Zone for body composition is based on research that links these levels to an increased risk for cardiovascular disease. The FITNESSGRAM parent and student reports use carefully worded terminology to help parents and youth understand possible risks associated with higher levels of body fatness. Language that could be used to describe physical appearance is not used in the FITNESSGRAM reports.

The person responsible for administering the test may tell the child their height and weight, but will not know if the student is considered to be in the Healthy Fitness Zone since it varies for every student.

Q. Can my child fail the FITNESSGRAM test?

A. There is no pass or fail on the FITNESSGRAM test. There are three categories listed below that may appear on your child's FITNESSGRAM report.

- **Needs Improvement** – It indicates dimensions of fitness that may require special attention. While the effect of low fitness may not influence health until later in adulthood, it is important to identify potential risks early on so that you and your child have the opportunity to make adjustments as you see fit.
- **Above the Healthy Fitness Zone** – It should be noted that it is also possible for some students to score above the HFZ. FITNESSGRAM acknowledges performances above the HFZ but does not recommend this level of performance as an appropriate goal level for all students.
- **Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ)** – The standards in the FITNESSGRAM test reflect reasonable levels of fitness that can be attained by most children who participate regularly in various types of physical activity. It is common for children to achieve the HFZ for some dimensions of fitness but not for others. Most children usually have areas that they excel in more than others.

The categories used are to help you determine what goals, if any, you may want to set at home for your child.

Q. Why is body composition testing important?

A. Research has shown that excessive fatness is associated with increased blood pressure, elevated blood lipids and type II diabetes. Long-term studies show a relationship between adult obesity and childhood obesity, especially as children become adolescents. Together these studies indicate that excessive fatness in children and youth increases the likelihood of obesity-related adult diseases including coronary heart disease, hypertension, high cholesterol and type II diabetes.





Q. What is Body Mass Index (BMI)?

A. BMI stands for body mass index. BMI is a ratio of weight over height. Recent charts have been published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for quickly determining body mass index (BMI) in boys and girls, ages 2 to 20 years. These charts are used to identify children who may be overweight. While your child may appear to be overweight according to the chart, he or she may be within normal limits because muscle weight has more mass than body fat weight.

Q. How are body composition test results described in the FITNESSGRAM student and parent reports?

A. Body composition scores are reported as Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) or Needs Improvement. Height and weight measurements are taken so the report will include the Body Mass Index score.

Body composition testing (like any fitness assessment) is a personal matter. Because body composition is a particularly sensitive issue, additional care will be taken to ensure that it is conducted in a setting in which the child feels safe and the results can be kept confidential.

Q. Are the FITNESSGRAM parent reports available in English and Spanish?

A. Yes, all student reports are available to parents in English and Spanish.

Q. Who should I contact if I have questions regarding the FITNESSGRAM assessment?

A. If you have any questions regarding FITNESSGRAM, please contact Ronnie Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of School Improvement, at 903.793.7561 ext 1325.