



**Q. Why are fitness tests important? I'm a parent, and my child is not going to be a professional athlete. Who cares if he/she can do push-ups or run a mile?**

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--and physical fitness is vital to overall health. FITNESSGRAM provides accurate and reliable information about your child's level of physical fitness. The FITNESSGRAM test (and report) includes a number of different assessments because fitness has multiple components. Some kids may have good muscular fitness but need improvement on aerobic fitness. By having a complete report, you (and your child) will know more about their overall level of physical condition and how it can be improved

**Q. What happens if my child "fails" the FITNESSGRAM test?**

There is no pass or fail to the FITNESSGRAM report. The category below the Healthy Fitness Zone on the FITNESSGRAM test is referred to as "Needs Improvement," to indicate 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 adjustments can be made to improve those levels. Therefore, the Needs Improvement message should be used prescriptively to help children set goals or targets to improve their fitness. The wording used for this category does not imply "bad fitness" or "poor fitness" but rather areas in which the child should seek improvement.

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. However, students who desire to achieve a high level of athletic performance may need to consider setting goals beyond the HFZ.

The Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) 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. Because of this, we recommend that all students should strive to achieve a score that places them inside the HFZ. However, 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.

**Q. How does a fitness report lead to better health and fitness?**The FITNESSGRAM report generated by the FG software provides information about fitness in an easy to read format. More importantly, the report provides personalized tips and suggestions

that can help in planning an individualized fitness plan. An accurate assessment of physical fitness is one component of a comprehensive physical education curriculum that incorporates health-related fitness education. The report provides a way for teachers (and parents) to teach children about the importance of being active and fit throughout their life.

**Q. Will my child be compared to other children?**

No. FITNESSGRAM uses health-related criteria called Healthy Fitness Zones to determine students' overall physical fitness and suggest areas for improvement when appropriate. Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZ) are not based on class averages or any other peer comparisons. They are "criterion-referenced" standards that are based on how much fitness is needed for good health. 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.

So, your child will not be compared with other children. Your child will get personalized information on his or her own fitness as it relates to good health.

For more detailed information about the development of the Healthy Fitness Zones, a definition of the criterion-referenced standards they're based upon, and why these standards are important, go to the FITNESSGRAM Reference Guide at <http://www.cooperinstitute.org/youth/fitnessgram/references.cfm>.

**Q. What are the "Healthy Fitness Zones" and how are they determined?**

FITNESSGRAM's Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZs) are research-based standards for aerobic capacity; body composition; and muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. These standards indicate levels of fitness necessary for good health. They have been developed and refined over more than 25 years by the FITNESSGRAM Advisory Board.

A score in the HFZ represents the level of fitness thought to provide some protection from the potential health risks that result from a lack of fitness in this measure. The beginning of the HFZ represents a minimum level of fitness necessary to have acceptable health. These standards reflect reasonable levels of fitness that can be attained by most children that participate regularly in various types of physical activity. Because of this, we recommend that all students should strive to achieve a score that places them inside the HFZ. It is not uncommon 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.

Healthy Fitness Zones differ for boys and for girls, and they differ based on age.