



Empowering students to be fit for life.

Physical Educator Resource Guide

to the
Presidential Youth Fitness Program





Presidential Youth Fitness Program Physical Educator Resource Guide

The Presidential Youth Fitness Program Physical Educator Resource Guide provides an overview of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. This guide is offered here, at no charge, for use by school staff within the context of the school program only and cannot be sold for any purpose.

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In addition to the information available at no charge, there are also FITNESSGRAM® products available for a fee. This includes a web-based software program that provides individualized student and parent reports with messages based on student results. U.S. Games is the sole source provider of FITNESSGRAM® products. They may be purchased at FitnessGram.net or by calling 800-327-0484.

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Dear Physical Education Teachers/Physical Education Administrators:

Physical fitness is critical to our students' health. Developing students who are physically active and fit can positively influence academic success, too.

That's one reason the Presidential Youth Fitness Program is key to school success. Launched in September 2012 through a partnership between the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Society of Health and Physical Educators; National Fitness Foundation; and The Cooper Institute®, the program reinforces the fact that fitness education is a process integral to the development of children who are physically literate and fit for life. It is much more than just a test.

Quality physical education programs play a unique role in developing young people who have the physical competence and cognitive understanding about physical activity and fitness to adopt healthy, active lifestyles. Together, the program partners are providing free and supplemental resources to make sure every school in America, regardless of budget, has the ability to follow the Presidential Youth Fitness Program model and help their students reach their fullest potential.

We are excited about this program and the support it provides you and your students. Please visit the program website, pyfp.org, often for updates and other information, and "like" us on Facebook to get the latest news and information delivered straight to you.

With much appreciation,

Presidential Youth Fitness Program Partners:

President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Fitness Foundation

Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America)

The Cooper Institute®





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INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL YOUTH FITNESS PROGRAM

The Presidential Youth Fitness Program (PYFP) is the national fitness education and assessment program that offers presidential recognition to schools and students. The program provides a model to help schools achieve excellence in physical education through quality fitness assessment practices.

Our Vision

America's youth are active and fit.

Our Mission

To provide a model for fitness education that supports teachers and empowers students to adopt an active lifestyle.

Why Is This Important?

Physical activity is critical to our children's health and well-being. Children who are regularly physically active have

- higher levels of cardiorespiratory fitness and stronger muscles
- lower body fat percentage
- lower levels of anxiety and depression¹

Research shows that physically active students are in school more days, are better able to learn, have higher self-esteem, and are at lower risk for developing chronic diseases.

The Presidential Youth Fitness Program focuses on improving each student's health.

Since 1966, the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition has promoted the Physical Fitness Test. That test was phased out at the end of the 2012–2013 school year and for good reason. While the Fitness Test had changed over the years, it continued to place emphasis on performance fitness and catered to more athletic students who thrived on competition. Secondly, it was just a test. There was no training for teachers who chose to use it.

The founding program partners launched the voluntary Presidential Youth Fitness Program (PYFP) in 2012 to promote the use of an evidence-based, health-related fitness assessment, FITNESSGRAM®, and to emphasize the competencies teachers should employ to promote a positive and beneficial experience before, during, and after the fitness assessment takes place.

The PYFP takes the emphasis off the test and focuses on the process and promotion of health-related fitness. Emphasis is on individual goal setting and the achievement of age- and gender-appropriate standards. Students are no longer compared to their peers, which was the basis of the old youth fitness test.

1. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report Subcommittee of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report: Strategies to Increase Physical Activity among Youth. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012.



How Does it Work?

The Presidential Youth Fitness Program was developed to be easily integrated into your physical education curriculum. The resources and tools needed to do so are available on pyfp.org. There are supplemental resources, such as software and recognition items, that can be purchased, but the use of these items is not required to be recognized as a Presidential Youth Fitness Program school.

The program does not dictate how you incorporate the fitness education process into your curriculum. The checklist for participation (found on the following page) is provided to support the development of student fitness and, ultimately, physical literacy. The steps provided on page 9 guide you through the process of getting started.

Working in Sync

Incorporating the instructional practices and other elements identified on the program checklist, and implementing PYFP, supports schools':

- Adherence to the National Physical Education Standards;
- Achievement of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program enabling students to participate in 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day; and
- Following the Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community model developed by ASCD and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Bottom line, the Presidential Youth Fitness Program can be done in conjunction with and in support of national, state, and local school-based physical activity or wellness/health promotion initiatives.

Homeschool and Non-school Program Use

While the Presidential Youth Fitness Program emphasizes the importance of having trained physical educators implement the program and support quality physical education, there are instances that require use of the PYFP model in places outside a traditional school setting. These may include a homeschool, homeschool co-op, or community-based organization that provides physical and fitness education to area youth.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when implementing the program in this capacity:

- Fitness assessments should be grounded in a comprehensive fitness education process.
- Avoid over-testing. Students should be interested in the process. Do it too often, and it becomes routine and boring.
- There is a different purpose to using the assessment on students in grades K–3. Emphasis in these grades should be placed on enjoyment and learning proper technique. In grades 4–12, the focus shifts to personal goal setting.
- Test administrators should know the FITNESSGRAM® protocols, which are available to those who register at pyfp.org.
- Follow the PYFP Checklist (see page 7).



Presidential Youth Fitness Program Checklist

Teacher should provide instruction and assessment (i.e., verbal or written checks, classroom observation, demonstrations, etc.) for students at each step. It may take one or more years to incorporate all practices listed in the checklist.

Step	Instruction & Assessment
Teach Fitness Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Components of health-related fitness: why each is important, how each is measured and developed <input type="checkbox"/> Difference between skill- and health-related fitness <input type="checkbox"/> Principles of training <input type="checkbox"/> Importance of health-related fitness and physical activity for good health
Prepare Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explain and model the importance of conditioning <input type="checkbox"/> Review proper protocol for each FitnessGram® assessment SPECIAL NOTE: Use the PYFP Fitness Club in grades K-3 <input type="checkbox"/> Provide multiple opportunities to practice (formal, peer and self-assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> Identify physical activities students can do at home or in their community
Conduct Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine type of testing to be conducted (e.g., self-testing, individualized, institutional, or personal) SPECIAL NOTE: Use the Brockport Physical Fitness Test on students not presently able to perform one or more FitnessGram test items <input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce why each assessment is important, the component of health that it measures, and physical activities that can influence it
Analyze Results at Various Levels (student, class, grade, school)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explain the purpose of the Healthy Fitness Zone® standards <input type="checkbox"/> Compare FitnessGram results to the Healthy Fitness Zone standards <input type="checkbox"/> Use results to make student and program decisions SPECIAL NOTES: FitnessGram results should not be used to assign student grades or evaluate teacher performance FitnessGram results should not be posted publicly unless in aggregate form or when confidentially communicated with the student and/or parent For students in grades 4-12, FitnessGram or Brockport results can be used to determine achievement of the Presidential Youth Fitness Award
Help Students Set Personal Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explain and demonstrate how to use results to set realistic age and gender appropriate goals for improvement
Help Students Create Plan for Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explain and demonstrate how to develop a personal fitness or physical activity plan utilizing the principles of training
Help Students Track Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explain and demonstrate how to record and maintain physical activity log aligned to goals and personal fitness or physical activity plan <input type="checkbox"/> Explain and demonstrate how to record in- and out-of-school physical activity time SPECIAL NOTE: The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) provides a ready-made way to track daily physical activity and achievement of healthy eating goals
Reassess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Repeat FitnessGram assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Explain how to evaluate progress and revise goals and physical activity or fitness plan



GETTING STARTED

Ready to implement the Presidential Youth Fitness Program? If you are new to fitness assessment or ready to try a new approach, the following steps will help you get started.

To be recognized as a Presidential Youth Fitness Program School and receive a certificate showing this achievement, the following criteria must be completed by at least one physical educator at the school:

1. **Sign-up** on pyfp.org. It's free!
2. **Review** the PYFP Checklist.
3. **Determine** training, resource and equipment needs that may be necessary to implement the checklist. Completion of the free *Getting Started with the Presidential Youth Fitness Program* module or module 1 of the *Empowering Fitness Education Champions* in-person training is strongly encouraged. There are supplemental resources, such as software, testing equipment, or student recognition items that may be purchased to enhance implementation, but these are not required to be a PYFP school.
4. **Implement** the checklist. This may take one or more years depending on familiarity with the steps and instructional strategies to address those steps. Start with teaching fitness concepts, preparing students, and conducting the assessment. Work towards the remaining items as comfort with the fitness education and assessment process improves. Some schools may already be following the checklist.
5. **Login** to pyfp.org to download the free school recognition certificate.

States and districts can be recognized. Email info@pyfp.org to learn more.





Some Tips on Assessing Student Fitness

The following are some tips for physical educators who may be new to fitness assessment or who may want to refresh their approach to it.

- Be clear on why you are conducting a fitness assessment. Are you only doing it to help students identify their current level of health-related fitness and to develop goals and a plan for improvement, or is there more to it? It's important that you and your colleagues are clear on why you are assessing student fitness. Page 15 of this guide and, for a more in-depth overview, Chapter 2 of the FITNESSGRAM®/ActivityGram® Reference Guide (4th Edition), available on pyfp.org, are great resources to help you answer this question.
- Do you know the proper protocols for the health-related fitness components you wish to assess? If you don't, review the FITNESSGRAM® manual chapters, which are accessible upon registering on pyfp.org.
- Identify when students will practice the assessments and when formal fitness assessment days will take place.
- Do you need volunteers to assist, such as a school nurse to take height and weight measurements? Be sure you schedule them and provide training as needed.
- Communication is an important piece of what you do as a teacher, especially when it comes to assessment. Plan your communications with students, administrators, and parents. The following are samples of communications to consider:
 - Notification to parents that assessments are taking place (see page 11 for a template letter).
 - Method for sharing results with parents, students, and administrators (see "Uses for Fitness Data" on page 16 for ideas).
- Student recognition is a way to communicate with students and the school community. Recognition for students in grades K–3 may be through the PYFP Fitness Club. For students in grades 4–12, you might choose to recognize them for achievement of the Healthy Fitness Zone® standards using the Presidential Youth Fitness Award (see page 13 for more info) or develop your own way of recognizing achievement of their personal, health-related fitness goals. Recognizing students for meeting daily physical activity goals is another option. The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+) is a free tool to help you do that (see page 22).
- Make notes of what did or didn't work. Reflect on how you can make improvements next year.





Communication is Key

Sample Letter to Parent/Guardian

Note: Letter for parents/guardians of students in grades 4+, when formal assessments may take place.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As a part of your child's physical education program, <ENTER SCHOOL NAME> is participating in the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, which is the national fitness education and assessment program. Through participation in this program, we strive to empower students to be fit and active for life. After all, a healthy student is better prepared to learn and thrive in and outside the classroom.

As a result of our participation in the program, students will take part in the FitnessGram® health-related fitness assessment. This assessment, designed for students in grades K-12, measures aerobic capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition.

It was chosen as the assessment of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program because it:

1. Allows students to compare their scores with standards that have been identified for good health. This limits students from being compared to other students participating in the assessment.
2. Assesses the current fitness level of students and promotes individual goal setting, allowing students to take ownership of their health.
3. Does not assess skill nor athletic ability. Students who are regularly physically active (at least 60 minutes a day) should be able to achieve their health fitness goals.

Through our participation in the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, your child will learn how to set goals, interpret fitness assessment results, and learn what they can do to improve their physical well-being. When students focus on maintaining or improving their fitness level, a positive lifelong impact can be achieved.

<OPTIONAL DETAILS IF SENDING HOME RESULTS AND/OR RECOGNITION> You will receive a copy of your student's FitnessGram results and general information about what the results mean. <ENTER SCHOOL NAME> believes that by providing you and your child this health related information, you can guide and support your child in his/her efforts to lead a healthy lifestyle. Your child will also have the opportunity to be recognized for his/her efforts.

All students enrolled in physical education will participate. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed on fitness assessment days, which will take place on <INSERT ASSESSMENT DATES OR DAYS>. For your child's safety, it is important, if possible, for him/her to wear tennis shoes and socks.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact <ENTER NAME> at <ENTER PHONE/EMAIL INFO>. You may also wish to visit the program's website, pyfp.org, for more details.

Sincerely,

<ENTER YOUR NAME>

<TITLE>

<ENTER SCHOOL NAME>



Resources to Help

There are a variety of free tools and resources to support your implementation of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. All of them can be accessed at pyfp.org. The following resources are available for free:

- Virtual and in-person trainings
- FITNESSGRAM® test protocols*
- Healthy Fitness Zone standards*
- Pre-programmed FITNESSGRAM® score sheet*
- Parent Resource Guide

* Accessible upon registering at pyfp.org.

Please refer to pyfp.org for information on the Brockport Physical Fitness Test and for general information related to conducting fitness assessments on youth with disabilities.

Be sure to consider that many students with disabilities will be able to meet the criteria for the Presidential Youth Fitness Award or the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+).

** Brockport Physical Fitness Test provided by Human Kinetics and Joseph Winnick

Assessing Students with Disabilities

All students benefit from regular physical activity and being physically fit. Regular physical activity may help some students with disabilities delay or prevent the onset of secondary or tertiary conditions that may result from a sedentary lifestyle.

The Presidential Youth Fitness Program recommends modifications to the FITNESSGRAM® tests (when appropriate) and use of the Brockport Physical Fitness Test** when necessary. Additionally, physical educators may decide that other students without identified disabilities, such as those with asthma, also need modifications in one or more of the test categories. Note: If modifications are made to the FITNESSGRAM® test protocols or one or more test items from Brockport Physical Fitness Test are used, scores for these items should not be entered into the FITNESSGRAM® software or free, downloadable FITNESSGRAM® scoresheet.





RECOGNITION

Recognition must be meaningful and when done right, use of recognition in physical education class can be a powerful motivator for students to work toward their physical activity and fitness goals.

Students in Grades K–3: PYFP Fitness Club

Developed to reinforce the purpose of assessing students' health-related fitness in grades K–3, the PYFP Fitness Club puts the FUN in fitness. Participation requires that students learn how to properly perform the designated FITNESSGRAM® test items—something they are already learning

A teacher instruction sheet identifies the testing cues a student must follow in order to check off the corresponding assessment items. These are:

- Powerful PACER
- Terrific Trunk Lift
- Balanced Body Composition
- Perfect Push-Up
- Correct Curl-Up
- Stretchy Sit and Reach

A colorful classroom poster with test descriptions allows students to track their own progress. Once students have checked all boxes (it may take multiple attempts or a few years for them to get there), a certificate can be awarded to congratulate them for joining the Fitness Club.

Because only modest amounts of physical activity are needed to obtain health benefits, most students who participate in physical activity almost every day will be able to achieve a score that will place them in the Healthy Fitness Zone® and earn them an opportunity to be recognized.

Students in Grades 4–12: The Presidential Youth Fitness Award

To be eligible to receive a Presidential Youth Fitness Award, a student must score in the Healthy Fitness Zone® in at least five test categories of the FITNESSGRAM® assessment.* The test categories are:

- Aerobic capacity
- Body composition
- Abdominal strength and endurance
- Trunk extensor strength and flexibility
- Upper body strength and endurance
- Flexibility

Schools not assessing in one category, such as trunk extensor strength and flexibility (trunk lift), still have the opportunity to recognize students as long as they assess in the five remaining categories.

Like all youth, students with disabilities will benefit from lifelong engagement in physical activity and should have the opportunity to receive recognition for their achievements. In some cases, students not presently capable of participating in a particular FITNESSGRAM® test may qualify for the Presidential Youth Fitness Award by participating in a test and achieving the adapted fitness zone from the Brockport Physical Fitness Test or through an exemption from a particular test item. Physical educators may decide that other students without identified disabilities, such as those with asthma, also need modifications in one or more of the test categories or for award qualification. We rely on your professional judgment to make those determinations. You know your students best.

*If you have the FITNESSGRAM® software, you can run a PYFA Report, which will identify students eligible for the award.



Additional Recognition Options

Some educators may prefer to recognize students for developing and maintaining healthy levels of physical activity and good nutrition habits. The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+) is a great option to use in place of or in conjunction with the Presidential Youth Fitness Award or PYFP Fitness Club.

Physical educators or others wishing to recognize a student or students with any of the awards detailed here are not required to report scores or show proof of achievement of the award criteria. Recognition items may be ordered directly from the PYFP Awards Store accessible via pyfp.org.



Recognize Your School

Adhering to the checklist for participation (pages 7–8) is a big feat. That means your school is participating in THE national fitness education and assessment program. It is a place where students are empowered to be fit for life! Download the free school recognition certificate. The certificate can be accessed upon registration on pyfp.org by affirming adherence to the checklist. Notify your community about this accomplishment. Hang the certificate in the school and share the news through parent communications and local news outlets and/or a community site.

What happens in physical education shouldn't stay in physical education. Share your program successes. Be proud of all you are doing to develop healthier, more physically active youth. The only way anyone—parents, administrators, or a potential program supporter—is going to know about your valuable work is if you show or tell them.



EFFECTIVE WAYS OF USING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Provided by SHAPE America for the Presidential Youth Fitness Program

Philosophy

Combining fitness measurement and instruction is an appropriate instructional strategy for physical education and should be the main reason for measuring fitness. Measurement without a plan for using the data does little to serve students' needs and is not an educationally sound practice.

According to Meredith and Welk (2007), "The ultimate long-term objective of a physical education program is to teach students the physical and behavioral skills they need to be active for life." (1) Learning physical skills is essential and provides students with the opportunity to experience and enjoy a variety of physical activities. Developing a health-enhancing level of fitness and competence in a variety of skills will make it easier for students to learn sports and activities that they can perform to be physically active throughout their lives. Students also need behavioral skills to help them understand the intrinsic rewards associated with daily physical activity. Students need to learn to self-assess their personal fitness levels, analyze the data, develop personal fitness plans, and, ultimately, motivate themselves to remain physically active for a lifetime.

No matter what students aspire to become, they will live happier, more productive lives if they are healthy. Maintaining appropriate levels of physical fitness is vital to overall health, so the connection between maintaining personal fitness and overall health is a strong one.

Normative-Referenced Versus Criterion-Referenced Measurement

Fitness measurement can be divided into two types: norm-referenced and criterion-referenced.

Norm-referenced measurement compares a large sampling of student performances to determine fitness standards relative to each other.

Criterion-referenced measurement, on the other hand, compares student scores to a set standard of health-related fitness that will indicate the level of fitness necessary for good health regardless of other students' scores. Criterion-referenced measurements are based on a large sample of individuals' scores, which are analyzed with those individuals' risk factors for chronic diseases that affect long-term wellness. Scoring in this fashion places more focus on achieving health-related fitness.

Guidelines for Measurement Administration

Physical educators are placing more emphasis on health-related fitness. Using a pretest assessment allows students to establish baseline data for fitness and the foundation for developing personal fitness plans, setting goals, and evaluating progress toward those goals. Maintaining personal physical activity and nutrition logs are an integral part of the process, because they encourage students to focus on the process of improving fitness and not just an analysis of one-time scores.



Linking fitness measurement to the established curriculum and encouraging students to assume responsibility for their own health and wellness is the goal of all fitness measurement.

With proper measurement administration, the following appropriate practices support this belief.

- Use valid, reliable, and objective measures for all fitness measurement.
- Follow specific protocols for each measurement item. If using peer assessment, allow adequate time for instruction in the measurement administration.
- Ensure adequate instruction and ample practice time before formal measurement. Provide two to three weeks of instruction and preparation, for example, before measuring for aerobic capacity for items such as the Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run (PACER) test or mile run.
- Use a research-based set of standards or criteria for evaluating data.
- Keep student fitness scores confidential; do not post them.
- Consider administering fitness measurement in a small-group or station setting. Avoid administering the measurement items in a format that may embarrass or humiliate students.
- Allow for the monitoring of personal fitness and activity goals by ensuring that measurement administration is ongoing.
- Conduct no formal measuring for fitness in grades K–3. Instead, place emphasis on physical activity and instruction in the health-related fitness components.
- Establish a positive and motivating measurement environment for students.

Uses for Fitness Data

Fitness measurement can enhance teaching and learning in physical education when the key guidelines provided here are followed. These guidelines ensure the proper use of fitness measurement in relation to national standards and developmentally appropriate instruction.

Appropriate Uses

Fitness measurement facilitates the process of fitness education. Students are made aware of the components of health-related fitness and how to evaluate their personal levels of fitness through self-measurement.

Teaching self-measurement is an important objective because it provides the tools and experiences for students to learn how to measure themselves and develop personal fitness plans throughout life. Teachers should assure each student that his or her fitness information will be kept confidential and will not be shared with peers, unless the student desires it.

The main goal for fitness measurement is making students—and their parents—aware of the benefits of fitness. Students can use the personalized reports as a means to determine their own fitness levels and to take steps toward maintaining or improving their personal fitness levels. By providing personalized reports for the parents, including information about a student's level of health-related fitness, teachers can enhance parental involvement in promoting physical activity.

Reporting can take place through parent/teacher conferences or by sending reports via mail or email. *Note:* It's important to help parents interpret the results of the fitness measurement and suggest strategies for how to maintain or improve their student's fitness levels.



Students can use fitness data to explore types of activities that will lead to improving their personal fitness. Examining fitness data and the procedure for developing fitness plans can motivate students to make changes in their personal fitness levels.

The sequence of fitness plan development should include:

- Fitness data analysis
- Goal-setting based on test results
- Linking physical activities to personal goals
- Developing logs and journals and other physical activity measures

All of those strategies can be included as part of personal fitness portfolios that students create from year to year, as well as with annual student fitness results. Schools also can use fitness measurement to examine their instructional programs.

By analyzing school data, schools can determine areas of concentration and begin the discussion of how to make instruction-related changes in the physical education program to address areas of student need. Analyzing the data may show the need for more professional development, for example, to improve various aspects of health-related fitness, and it may reinforce the need for curriculum development within a school or school system.

Inappropriate Uses

Inappropriate uses of fitness measurement include grading students and evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Grading Students

Because students differ in terms of interests and ability, teachers should not use student scores to evaluate individual students within K–12 physical education. Grading students

on fitness may constitute holding them accountable for results that are beyond their control.

Likewise, posting fitness results can create a situation that fosters negative attitudes toward physical activity. Recognizing and posting students' fitness scores for fitness can create a feeling of frustration among students who struggle with their personal fitness levels.

Instead, recognizing student success in improving fitness levels can provide a more positive way to acknowledge student achievement. Rather than posting names of students who have attained a high level of fitness, recognizing students who have improved fitness scores over time from year to year may be a better strategy.

Also, posting names of students who are participating in the appropriate activities to improve or maintain their fitness can serve as an effective way of recognizing appropriate practices for improving fitness.

Exempting students from physical education based on high fitness test scores also constitutes an inappropriate practice related to fitness scores. Attaining a high level of fitness performance doesn't mean that a student will have the knowledge, skills, and motivation to be fit and active for a lifetime.

Standards-based grading should reflect students' knowledge of activities and concepts related to fitness education, including their understanding of fitness concepts, their ability to plan a fitness program by using appropriate activities, their maintaining a physical activity or nutrition log, and their developing personal portfolios related to fitness.



Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

Teachers can be effective at helping students develop and maintain fitness and still have students not perform well on fitness measurements. A better way to assess teacher effectiveness is to assess whether students understand the process for fitness improvement. Examining students' knowledge of the steps needed for developing a fitness plan provides a more accurate evaluation of teacher effectiveness. All teachers should strive to assess the "process, not the product" for fitness improvement.

Evaluating Physical Education Programs Overall

Promoting physical fitness is only one part of quality physical education programs. Other aspects include:

- competency in motor skill and movement patterns
- understanding of movement concepts, principles and tactics
- cooperation and conflict resolution as part of personal and social behavior
- valuing physical activity

Summary

Current concerns about the health and wellness of our youth have generated widespread interest in fitness measurement. Many states have begun the process of instituting statewide or districtwide fitness measurement.

It's important to remember that fitness measurement alone will not make students more fit. Instead, helping them value physical education and physical activity will serve as the foundation for improving personal health. Students' health-related fitness will improve only by using sound instruction practices and providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to be physically active for a lifetime.





DEVELOPING ACTIVE AND FIT YOUTH

Reprinted excerpts from the *Physical Activity Guidelines Midcourse Report: Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Among Youth*²

Regular physical activity in children and adolescents promotes health and fitness. Compared to those who are inactive, physically active youth have

- higher levels of cardiorespiratory fitness and stronger muscles
- lower body fatness
- stronger bones
- reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression

Youth who are regularly active also have a better chance of a healthy adulthood. In the past, chronic diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension, or type 2 diabetes were rare in youth. However, a growing literature is showing that the incidence of these chronic diseases and their risk factors are now increasing among children and adolescents.

Regular physical activity makes it less likely that these risk factors and resulting chronic diseases will develop and more likely that our kids will remain healthy as adults.

Current Levels of Physical Activity among Youth

Despite the importance of regular physical activity in promoting lifelong health and well-being, current evidence shows that levels of physical activity among youth remain low,

and that levels of physical activity decline dramatically during adolescence.

Opportunities for regular physical activity are limited in many schools. Daily PE is provided in only 4 percent of elementary schools, 8 percent of middle schools, and 2 percent of high schools.

In addition, the 2011 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which collects self-reported physical activity data from high school students across the United States, found that many youth are not meeting the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day:

- 29 percent of high school students participated in at least 60 minutes per day of physical activity on each of the 7 days before the survey. Boys were more than twice as likely as girls to meet the guidelines (38 percent vs. 19 percent).
- 14 percent of high school students did not participate in 60 or more minutes of any kind of physical activity on any day during the 7 days before the survey.

A separate study of U.S. youth used accelerometers to objectively measure physical activity. This study found that 42 percent of children and only 8 percent of adolescents engaged in moderate- to vigorous-intensity activity on 5 of the past 7 days for at least 60 minutes each day.

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued the first comprehensive guidelines on physical activity for individuals ages 6 and older. The 2008

2. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report Subcommittee of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition. *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report: Strategies to Increase Physical Activity among Youth*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012.



Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans provide information on the amount, types, and intensity of physical activity needed to achieve health benefits across the lifespan.

The guidelines provide physical activity guidance for youth ages 6 to 17 and focus on physical activity beyond the light-intensity activities of daily life, such as walking slowly or lifting light objects. As described in the guidelines, youth can achieve substantial health benefits by doing moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity for periods of time that add up to 60 minutes or more each day. This activity should include aerobic activity as well as age-appropriate muscle- and bone-strengthening activities (see Key Guidelines).

Current science suggests that as with adults, the total amount of physical activity is more important in helping youth achieve health benefits than is any one component (frequency, intensity, or duration) or specific mix of activities (aerobic [e.g., tag, bike riding], muscle-strengthening [e.g., push-ups, climbing trees], or bone strengthening [e.g., hopscotch, tennis]).

Parents and other adults who work with or care for youth should be familiar with the guidelines, as adults play an important role in providing age-appropriate opportunities for physical activity. They need to foster active play in children and encourage sustained and structured activity in adolescents. In doing so, adults help lay an important foundation for lifelong health, for youth who grow up being physically active are more likely to be active adults.

Key Guidelines for Children and Adolescents

Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.

- **Aerobic:** Most of the 60 or more minutes a day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week.
- **Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.
- **Bone-strengthening:** As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.

It is important to encourage young people to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable, and that offer variety.

Role of Schools

More than 55 million children were expected to attend public or private school in the fall of 2012 and a typical school day lasts approximately 6 to 7 hours, making schools an ideal setting to provide physical activity to students. School-based physical activity can provide a substantial amount of students' daily physical activity as well as engage them in opportunities to enhance their motor skill development, fitness, and decision making, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills.

Promoting physical activity in schools has traditionally been a part of the U.S. education system, and schools continue to play a critical role in promoting physical activity.



This can occur in a variety of ways, such as through encouraging participation in physical education (PE) classes, recess, or other activity breaks during the school day, active transport to and from school, sports clubs, intramural and interscholastic programs, and afterschool programs.

Schools are a key setting for physical activity interventions also because of a growing body of research focusing on the association between physical activity and academic achievement. These studies indicate that school-based physical activity can improve grades, standardized test scores, cognitive skills, concentration, and attention.

A Closer Look at Opportunities to Increase Physical Activity through Physical Education

PE provides students the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain a physically active lifestyle through childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. PE can enhance students' knowledge and skills about why and how they should be physically active, increase participation in physical activity, and increase fitness.

Traditionally, PE has been characterized by sports- and performance-based curriculum and instruction. A newer approach—enhanced PE—is characterized by a focus on increasing overall physical activity, particularly moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity during PE class.

Enhanced PE

Enhanced PE can increase the amount of time students are active during PE classes as well as increase students' physical fitness levels. Enhanced PE is characterized by the following components:

- Increasing the amount of time students spend in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity during PE lessons.
- Adding more physical education classes to the school curriculum.
- Lengthening the time of existing physical education classes.
- Meeting the physical activity needs of all students, including those with disabilities.
- Including activities that are enjoyable for students while emphasizing knowledge and skills that can be used for a lifetime.

Conclusion

School settings hold a realistic and evidence-based opportunity to increase physical activity among youth and should be a key part of a national strategy to increase physical activity.





PRESIDENTIAL ACTIVE LIFESTYLE AWARD

The promotion and adoption of physical activity is at the heart of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. The Office of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition offers the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+) as a tool to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles. PALA+ is designed to motivate you and your students (aged 6 and older) to make physical activity and healthy eating part of everyday life.

Physical Activity + Nutrition = A Little Effort that Goes a Long Way

Committing to physical activity and building upon the healthy eating goals each week helps you make gradual changes that, when combined with regular physical activity, can improve your overall health and well-being.

Get Physical	Eat healthy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 minutes/day for kids, 30 minutes/day for adults 5 days a week for 6 out of 8 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> add a weekly healthy eating goal build upon those goals throughout the same six-week period

Healthy eating goals in PALA+ include:

- I made half my plate fruits and vegetables
- At least half of the grains that I ate were whole grains
- I chose fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, yogurt, or cheese
- I drank water instead of sugary drinks
- I chose lean sources of protein
- I compared sodium (salt) in foods like soup and frozen meals and chose foods with less sodium
- I ate seafood this week
- I ate smaller portions

Earn Your PALA+

A free certificate can be downloaded once you achieve your physical activity and healthy eating goals.

Participation in PALA+ is one way to meet the recommendations of the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. The healthy eating goals are based on the consumer messages from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Sign Up

Schools, classes, and families can sign up online at supertracker.usda.gov/PALAPlus or use a paper log form (included at the end of this guide).



PALA+
activity+nutrition



SUPERTRACKER

Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+)

PALA+ is a program of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition that promotes physical activity and good nutrition because it takes both to lead a healthy lifestyle. Anyone age 6 and older who completes PALA+ can earn a free award in recognition of establishing healthy habits. Start a PALA+ program by using this log or online with U.S. Department of Agriculture's SuperTracker.

PALA+ is an 8-week program but can be completed in as few as 6 weeks.

- **Weeks 1-5:** In the first 5 weeks, log your food and physical activity to begin a routine and reach as many goals as you can.
- **Weeks 6-8:** Beginning in week 6, you must reach your weekly physical activity goal and at least 6 of the 9 weekly healthy eating goals, including at least 1 of the dietary limit goals, to complete the program. If you need more time to reach your goals, you can try again in weeks 7 or 8.

Physical Activity Goal

Achieve the PALA+ physical activity goal by reaching the weekly minute goal. **Youth ages 6-17** need to be active for at least 300 minutes (5 hours) per week. **Adults 18 and older** need to be active for at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) per week.

Healthy Eating Goals

With PALA+ you have the freedom to choose what healthy eating goals you want to work on, which allows you to tailor the program to meet your specific needs. See below for tips on how to achieve the PALA+ healthy eating goals.

Tips for the PALA+ Healthy Eating Goals



Focus on Whole Fruit: Aim to choose whole fruits over fruit juice for extra fiber. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.



Make More of Your Grains Whole: Read the ingredients list and choose products that list a whole-grain ingredient first, such as "whole wheat," "brown rice," or "oatmeal."



Vary Your Veggies: Select a variety of colorful vegetables to get the vitamins, minerals, and fiber your body needs to be healthy. This includes fresh, frozen, or canned varieties.



Move to Fat-Free or Low-Fat Dairy: Dairy products, as well as soy milks, offer calcium, vitamin D, and many other nutrients your body needs.



Vary Your Protein Routine: Meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the Protein Foods Group. Select leaner cuts of beef and pork and eat turkey and chicken without skin.



Drink Water Instead of Sugary Drinks: Regular soda and other drinks such as fruit drinks and energy drinks can have added sugars. Instead, reach for a tall glass of water.

Dietary Limit Goals



Select Food With Less Sodium: Read the Nutrition Facts label to compare sodium in packaged foods like soup, canned vegetables, and frozen meals; choose the foods with lower amounts.



Limit Added Sugars: Added sugars increase calories without contributing essential nutrients and include syrups and other caloric sweeteners.



Replace Saturated Fats With Unsaturated Fats: Most saturated fats come from animal products. Choose lower fat dairy and lean options for meat and poultry—like lean beef and grilled chicken breast without the skin.

For more information on how physical activity can help promote health and reduce the risk of chronic disease, and on healthy eating patterns and how to ensure your diet is meeting your nutritional needs, please consult the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans and Dietary Guidelines for Americans available at health.gov.



Participant Name _____ Age _____

Date Started _____ Date Completed _____

Paper Log Instructions:

Circle each healthy eating goal you achieve. Enter your daily physical activity in minutes and add up the total at the end of the week. Circle the total if your goal is met. Once you achieve your goals in week 6, 7, or 8, you're eligible to receive the PALA+ award certificate at www.fitness.gov!

Healthy Eating Goals (key)

- Focus on Whole Fruits
- Make More of Your Grains Whole
- Select Foods with Less Sodium
- Drink Water Instead of Sugary Drinks
- Move to Fat-Free or Low-Fat Dairy
- Vary Your Veggies
- Vary Your Protein Routine
- Limit Added Sugars
- Replace Saturated Fats with Unsaturated Fats

PARTICIPATION LOG									
WEEK	HEALTHY EATING GOALS	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GOAL							
		Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Total
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									

Online Instructions:

The PALA+ program can also be completed online using USDA's SuperTracker! Create an account at www.supertracker.usda.gov. You can earn your PALA+ award by logging your food and physical activity to reach your goals.

