



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.

Because of that, in September 2012, First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. Created by a partnership between the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Society of Health and Physical Educators; National Foundation on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition; 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. 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 Foundation on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition

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 partners listed on page 3 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 helps physical educators and their schools:

- Meet Standard 3 of the National Standards for K–12 Physical Education;
- Meet elements of the School Health Index and, consequently, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program; and
- Become a *Let's Move!* Active School.

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 for participation (see page 7).



Some of these requirements may already be in place or practiced. For some schools, meeting these requirements may take one or more years. Resources to support adherence to the associated checklist item are listed in the column to the right. These are only resources available through pyfp.org and do not reflect all products or tools that a teacher may use or have access to (including lesson plans and activities).

Presidential Youth Fitness Program: Participation Checklist	Related Resources
<p>Teacher provides instruction on and assesses* student's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the components of health-related and skill-related fitness and how they are influenced • Principles of training • (Understanding of) the importance of regular physical activity for good health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essentials of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program virtual or in-person training • FITNESSGRAM® 101 online course**
<p>Teacher provides instruction and assesses* students on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of conditioning • Physical activities students can do at home or in their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Educator Resource Guide: "Role of Schools," page 20 • Physical Best Teacher/Activity Guides** • Parent Resource Guide • PALA+
<p>Teacher provides students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction and assesses* how to do FITNESSGRAM® assessments properly • Multiple opportunities to practice before formalized testing is conducted or self-testing is encouraged <p>Grades K–3: Emphasis of assessment is on enjoyment and learning proper technique on fitness test items.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Educator Resource Guide: Sample letter to parent/guardian, page 11 • FITNESSGRAM® test protocols • Personal Fitness Record • General Brockport Physical Fitness Test Form or Data Entry Form • PYFP Fitness Club**
<p>Teacher provides instruction on and assesses* student's knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The component of fitness and its corresponding assessment • How each fitness component relates to good health • The types of physical activities appropriate for each component 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PYFP Online Community • Physical Best Gets FITT virtual course • PYFP Webinar Archive
<p>(Grades 4–12) Teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides instruction and assesses* students on the purpose and use of the Healthy Fitness Zone® (HFZ) standards and how to analyze results against the HFZ • Encourages students to achieve personal health/fitness or physical activity goal(s) or age/gender appropriate health related fitness standard and, as appropriate, recognizes students for that achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Fitness Zone standards • PALA+

*Assessments may be in the form of verbal checks, classroom observations, demonstrations, etc.

**There is a cost to purchase this item.

Continued on next page



Presidential Youth Fitness Program: Participation Checklist (continued)	Related Resources
<p>Teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes accommodations for students in physical education classes as needed • Uses Brockport Physical Fitness Test items to assess students with and without disabilities who are not presently able to perform one or more items on the FITNESSGRAM® assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brockport Physical Fitness Test Manual chapters
<p>Student fitness assessment results/scores are not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to assign a physical education grade • Used to evaluate teacher performance • Posted publicly or shared except when in aggregate form and/or when confidentially communicated with student and/or parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Appropriate Uses of Fitness Measurement” guidance document • Physical Educator Resource Guide: “Uses for Fitness Data,” page 16
<p>(Grades 4–12) Teacher instructs and assesses student’s ability to use personal fitness assessment to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals for improvement • Personal fitness or physical activity plan utilizing the principles of training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivating Students to Become Their Physical Best virtual course
<p>(Grades 4–12) Teacher instructs and assesses student’s ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record and maintain physical activity log aligned with personal fitness plan • Record physical activity during physical education and out-of-school time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALA+ activity log
<p>(Grades 4–12) Teacher instructs students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess personal fitness levels • Use reassessment to keep or revise goals and to plan for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Fitness Record

*Assessments may be in the form of verbal checks, classroom observations, demonstrations, etc.

**There is a cost to purchase this item.

Check out page 14 to see how this checklist can help your school get national recognition.

Keep up the good work! The road to becoming recognized as a Presidential Youth Fitness Program School may take some time to travel, but the results will impact students for a lifetime.



GETTING STARTED

If you are new to fitness assessment or are ready to try a new approach, consider these steps to help you get started.

1. **Sign up** via the login/registration page on pyfp.org. It's free!
2. **Complete** one of the program's trainings. Completion of the *Essentials of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program* training (in-person or online) or the free PYFP 101 webinar counts.
3. **Review** the checklist for participation on pages 7 and 8. Are all of these components a part of your fitness education and assessment process?
 - Yes, see page 14 on steps to recognize your school.
 - No, see number 4.
4. **Incorporate** all relevant practices from the checklist into your classroom. The trainings or other resources, such as colleagues on the PYFP Online Community, may be able to help. Learn more at pyfp.org.
5. **Download** the free school recognition certificate. See page 14 for more information. Share your participation and the outcome of your participation, such as more active and fit students, excitement over physical education, and/or a healthier school culture, with your school and community.





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 only appropriate for parents/guardians of students in grades 4+, when formal assessments are appropriate.

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 your student 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, students will participate in FITNESSGRAM®, a comprehensive health-related fitness assessment for youth designed to assess aerobic capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition.

FITNESSGRAM® is 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 or athletic ability. Students who are regularly physically active (at least 60 minutes a day) should be able to achieve their health fitness goals.

The Presidential Youth Fitness Program will help your child 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 USING FITNESSGRAM® SOFTWARE AND/OR RECOGNITION> You will receive a copy of your student's FITNESSGRAM® report. <ENTER SCHOOL NAME> believes that by providing you and your child with this health-related information, you can guide and support your child in his/her efforts to lead a healthy lifestyle. Your student 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 day(s). For your student's safety, it is important, if possible, for your student 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. Many of these resources are listed on the Participation Checklist. All of them can be accessed at pyfp.org. The following resources are available for free:

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

* Accessible upon registering at pyfp.org.

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.

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+).





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
- Balanced Body Composition
- Correct Curl-Up
- Terrific Trunk Lift
- Perfect Push-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 President's Challenge website, presidentschallenge.org or by calling the toll-free number: 1-800-258-8146.



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 (PALA+)

The promotion and adoption of physical activity is at the heart of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. The President's Challenge—the premier program of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition—offers PALA+ as a tool to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles. PALA+ is designed to motivate anyone aged 6 and older to make physical activity and healthy eating part of everyday life.

The physical activity requirements for PALA+ are 60 minutes/day for youth (ages 6–17), 30 minutes/day for adults, five days a week for six out of eight weeks. There are daily step equivalents for boys and girls and adults to allow for easier tracking with a pedometer. The nutrition component requires participants to add a weekly healthy eating goal and build upon those goals throughout the same six-week period. This helps participants make gradual changes that, when combined with regular physical activity, can improve overall health and well-being.

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 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010.

The healthy eating goals of PALA+ are:

- 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

Once a participant meets his or her goals and earns the PALA+, he or she can receive a certificate signed by the co-chairs of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition or order other recognition items available from the President's Challenge at presidentschallenge.org.

The next two pages are provided by The President's Challenge. These can be copied and given to students, staff and parents who may be participating in PALA+.



PALA+
activity+nutrition

Be active. Have fun.

Presidential Active Lifestyle Award: Activity + Nutrition (PALA+)

PALA+ promotes physical activity AND good nutrition, because it takes both to lead a healthy lifestyle. Sign up for the six-week program to help you maintain or improve your health. Anyone age 6 and older can earn their PALA+ today – sign up at www.presidentschallenge.org or use the log on the reverse side.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY A healthy life is an active life. Youth (6-17 years old) need to be active at least 60 minutes a day (or 11,000 steps for girls and 13,000 steps for boys). Adults (18 and older), 30 minutes (or 8500 steps). So, take a walk with friends, bike ride after dinner, garden, or play a game of basketball at the park. Get your heart pumping and your muscles moving. When you've logged six weeks of physical activity, congratulations. You've started a regular routine for a more active lifestyle.

GOOD NUTRITION

Start eating healthy. It's easier than you think! Take it one step at a time. Commit to one new healthy eating goal this week, and circle it on your weekly PALA+ log. The following week add a different goal – but make sure you continue to maintain your healthy eating goal(s) from the week(s) before. Focus on your healthy eating goals every week and remember, the more often you incorporate them into your lifestyle, the better you will feel. When you've achieved six different healthy eating goals, congratulations. You've started a routine for a healthier lifestyle.

Tips for Healthy Eating:

Make half your plate fruit and vegetables.



Keep it simple by filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables at meal time. The more colorful you make your plate; the more likely you are to get the vitamins, minerals, and fiber your body needs to be healthy. Remember that all forms count – fresh, frozen, canned (fruit in water or 100% juice), dried, or 100% juice.

Make half the grains you eat whole grains.



An easy way to eat more whole grains is to switch from a refined grain food to a whole-grain food. For example, eat whole-wheat bread instead of white bread, brown rice instead of white rice, and low-fat popcorn instead of snack chips. Read the ingredients list and choose products that list a whole-grain ingredient first. Look for things like: "whole wheat," "brown rice," "bulgur," "buckwheat," "oatmeal," "rolled oats," "quinoa," or "wild rice."

Choose fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, yogurt, or cheese.



To help build your bones and keep them strong, dairy products should be a key part of your diet because they provide calcium, vitamin D, and many other nutrients your bones need.

Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



Regular soda and other sweet drinks such as fruit drinks and energy drinks are high in calories because they have a lot of added sugar. Instead, reach for a tall glass of water. Try adding a slice of lemon, lime or watermelon or a splash of 100% juice to your glass of water if you want some flavor.

Choose lean sources of protein.



Meat, poultry, seafood, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the protein foods group. Select leaner cuts of ground beef (label says 90% lean or higher), turkey breast, or chicken breast. Grill, roast, poach, or boil meat, poultry, or seafood instead of frying. Include beans or peas in main dishes such as chili, stews, casseroles, salads, tacos, enchiladas, and burritos.

Compare sodium in foods like soup and frozen meals and choose foods with less sodium.



Read the Nutrition Facts label to compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, canned vegetables, and frozen meals – and choose the foods with lower amounts. Look for "low sodium," "reduced sodium," and "no salt added" on food packages.

Eat some seafood.



Seafood includes fish (such as salmon, tuna, and trout) and shellfish (such as crab, mussels, and oysters). Seafood has protein, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids (heart healthy fat). Adults should try to eat at least 8 ounces a week of a variety of seafood. Children can eat smaller amounts of seafood too.

Pay attention to portion size.



Check to see what the recommended portion sizes of foods you eat look like in the bowls, plates, and glasses you use at home. For example—check 3/4 cup cereal, 3 ounces cooked chicken, 1 cup milk, 1/2 cup of juice. When dining out avoid "supersizing" your meal or buying "combo" meal deals that often include large size menu items. Choose small size items instead or ask for a "take home" bag and wrap up half of your meal to take home before you even start to eat.



PALA+
activity+nutrition



www.presidentschallenge.org

Participant Name _____

Age _____

Date Started _____

Group ID (if applicable) _____

Date Completed _____

Week 1	Day	Physical Activities	# of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
	Mon		
	Tues		
	Wed		
	Thurs		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		

Healthy Eating—Select a goal for this week.

Week 2	Day	Physical Activities	# of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
	Mon		
	Tues		
	Wed		
	Thurs		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		

Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.

Week 3	Day	Physical Activities	# of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
	Mon		
	Tues		
	Wed		
	Thurs		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		

Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with previous goals, and add a new goal.

Week 4	Day	Physical Activities	# of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
	Mon		
	Tues		
	Wed		
	Thurs		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		

Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with previous goals, and add a new goal.

Week 5	Day	Physical Activities	# of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
	Mon		
	Tues		
	Wed		
	Thurs		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		

Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with previous goals, and add a new goal.

Week 6	Day	Physical Activities	# of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
	Mon		
	Tues		
	Wed		
	Thurs		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		

Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with previous goals, and add a new goal.

Healthy Eating Goals

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 in foods like soup and frozen meals and chose foods with less sodium

I ate seafood

I ate smaller portions

INSTRUCTIONS: Online: Create an online account at presidentschallenge.org. Participate as an individual or join a group (ID at the top of page if applicable). Once you achieve PALA+, you're eligible to receive a certificate! **Paper:** Use this hard copy log to track your progress. Once completed, report your accomplishment and receive your certificate at presidentschallenge.org! Or, if part of a group, make sure to return it to your group administrator to get recognized.