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

Trunk Extensor Strength and Flexibility

This is an important aspect of fitness because it predicts first time and recurrent lower back pain, a major source of disability and discomfort. Awareness and attention to trunk strength and flexibility may reduce the risk for future back problems. There is only one option for this fitness area.

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

Upper Body Strength and Endurance

Upper body strength and endurance is an important fitness area because of reported benefits in maintaining functional health and good posture. There are three options available to assess this fitness area.

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

Modified Pull-Up. Students are instructed to complete as many modified pull-ups as possible. The student performs the test by lying on his or her back directly under a bar, and grasping the bar to pull up until the chin reaches a specified level, up to a maximum of 75 modified pull-ups. (The modified pull-up is shown in the upper left photo on the cover.)

Flexed-Arm Hang. To complete this test, students hang by the arms with their chin above a bar for as long as possible, up to a maximum of 90 seconds.

Flexibility

Flexibility of the joints is an important component of fitness that contributes to functional health. There are two options for this fitness area.

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

Shoulder Stretch. This simple test of upper body flexibility involves asking students to touch their fingertips behind the back by reaching over both the left and right shoulders and under the elbow. (The shoulder stretch is shown in the upper right photo on the cover.)

Additional information about the California PFT is available on the CDE PFT Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pf/. Additional information about the *FITNESSGRAM*, including the philosophy and administration of the fitness tests, is available on the Human Kinetics *FITNESSGRAM* Web page at http://www.fitnessgram.net.

The photos in this brochure were produced by the CDE with permission from Human Kinetics, publisher of the *FITNESSGRAM*. These photos are intended for the sole educational use of California physical education teachers and administrators. No other use is allowed without the express written consent of Human Kinetics.

2014–15 California Physical Fitness Test

Parent and Guardian Guide to the Physical Fitness Test and the *FITNESSGRAM*[1]

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

Background

California *Education Code* (*EC*) Section 60800 requires each local educational agency (LEA) in California to administer a physical fitness test annually to all students in grades five, seven, and nine. The State Board of Education designated the *FITNESSGRAM* as the required Physical Fitness Test (PFT) for California public schools. The *FITNESSGRAM* is a comprehensive health-related fitness test developed by The Cooper Institute. The primary goal of the *FITNESSGRAM* is to assist students in establishing lifelong habits of regular physical activity.

The PFT is administered between February 1 and May 31. *EC* Section 60800 requires that individual results be provided to students upon completion of the test. LEAs may also send each student's PFT results to parents and guardians.

There are several ways to use the PFT results. Schools can use them to determine the fitness levels of their students and provide direction for physical education programs. Students can use the results to assess their individual levels of fitness and develop personal fitness programs of maintenance or improvement. Parents and guardians can use the results to help their child plan fitness activities to meet their individual needs. LEAs can also use the PFT results to monitor the fitness status of their students in grades five, seven, and nine.

FITNESSGRAM

The *FITNESSGRAM* is designed to test six key fitness areas that represent three broad components of fitness: (1) Aerobic Capacity, (2) Body Composition, and (3) Muscle Strength, Endurance, and Flexibility. This third component is further divided into four areas: Abdominal Strength and Endurance, Trunk Extensor Strength and Flexibility, Upper Body Strength and Endurance, and Flexibility.

Performance Standards

The PFT uses the *FITNESSGRAM* objective criteria to evaluate fitness performance. Student's performance is classified into the Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) or into other zones, depending on the fitness area. For Aerobic Capacity and Body Composition, results are classified as in the HFZ, Needs Improvement, or Needs Improvement – Health Risk. For all other areas, results are classified as in the HFZ or Needs Improvement. The desired performance goal for each test option is the HFZ, which represents a level of fitness that offers some protection against the diseases resulting from physical inactivity. The Needs Improvement designation indicates an area of fitness where students would benefit from activities designed to improve performance. Needs Improvement – Health Risk specifically indicates increased health risks due to the level of fitness.

The *FITNESSGRAM* HFZ standards have been established according to gender and age and are updated on a regular basis. The latest version of the standards is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) PFT Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pf/healthfitzones.asp.

Test Areas

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

Aerobic Capacity

Aerobic capacity refers to the maximum rate that oxygen is taken in and used by the body during exercise. Good aerobic capacity has been associated with a reduction in health problems. The three performance task options for aerobic capacity assess the capacity of the cardiorespiratory system by estimating VO_2max or the maximum amount of oxygen, in milliliters, one uses in one minute per kilogram of body weight.

PACER (Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run). This test is an alternative to the distance run. The objective is to run as long as possible, going back and forth across a 20-meter distance, and at a specified pace that is set to music and gets faster each minute. (The PACER is shown in the photo on the lower section of the cover.)

One-Mile Run. The goal of this test is to walk and/or run a distance of one mile at the fastest pace possible.

Walk Test. This test is only for students who are 13 years or older. The objective of this test is to walk a distance of one mile as quickly as possible while maintaining a constant walking pace for the entire distance.

Body Composition

The three body composition options estimate the level of fat in the body. This is a key component of fitness because excessive fat content has been associated with health problems, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Skinfold Measurements. This test involves taking measurements of the thickness of the skinfolds on the triceps and calf with a device called a skinfold caliper. These measurements are used to calculate the percentage of body fat.

Bioelectric Impedance Analyzer (BIA). The BIA is a device that measures body fat by sending a safe, low energy electrical signal through the body and generating an index of resistance. The resistance value (along with other values such as height, weight, age, and gender) is used to estimate the percentage of body fat.

Body Mass Index (BMI). To calculate the BMI, a student's weight and height measurements are inserted into a formula to produce an index of the relationship between weight and height. Although not as accurate an indicator of body composition as skinfold measurements, particularly for students with high muscle mass, it is an acceptable option in LEAs where policies limit the use of skinfold measurements.

Muscle Strength, Endurance, and Flexibility

Abdominal Strength and Endurance

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