

THE INDIANA **FITNESSGRAM**[®] PROJECT



TOOLKIT



Contents

Click on a page number to jump to that section.

The Indiana FITNESSGRAM® Project: An Overview	3
About FITNESSGRAM® and ACTIVITYGRAM®	4
Volunteers Can Help it Happen	5
How Will Indiana Schools Benefit?	5
Funding Your FITNESSGRAM Program	6
Communication is Vital	7
Using Fitness Data to Create Healthy Policies and Practices	8
On Implementing FITNESSGRAM – And the Link to Academic Achievement	10
Frequently Asked Questions	12

VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT

Introduction	18
Organization's Responsibilities	19
School or District Responsibilities	20
Volunteer Training Session	21
The FITNESSGRAM Stations	25
FITNESSGRAM Resources	30

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The Indiana FITNESSGRAM® Project: An Overview

The Indiana FITNESSGRAM® Project is an initiative of [Jump IN for Healthy Kids](#). Jump IN is a community-wide campaign to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in central Indiana by ensuring that children and their families have real opportunities to make healthy choices in healthy environments. In partnership with the Indiana State Alliance of YMCAs (State Alliance), Jump IN leads the effort to convene and coordinate the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project, providing resources for and outreach efforts to school districts and communities seeking to implement FITNESSGRAM testing. Together, these partners aim to enhance student health and promote academic achievement.

About the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project

By helping measure and track fitness data of students in grades 4-12, the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project supports the goal of preventing and reducing childhood obesity. The newest version, FITNESSGRAM 10, is hosted on servers at the Cooper Institute, so schools no longer need to install and maintain software on their systems. FITNESSGRAM 10 uses the highest data security and encryption available and is fully compliant with FERPA and other privacy laws.

While FITNESSGRAM is implemented at the school level, the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project is a statewide effort that allows use of de-identified data at the school, district or statewide level.

Recognizing schools' concerns about data privacy, budget constraints and limited access to IT support, the Cooper Institute and the Presidential Youth Fitness Program have produced a robust set of tools, training, and student recognition awards that schools can use to assess student health, teach healthy behaviors and reward student progress.

With the support of Jump IN for Healthy Kids, the Indiana State Alliance of YMCAs, NFL Play 60 and the Presidential Youth Physical Fitness Program, the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project represents a statewide effort to encourage participation in regular physical activity that leads to improvements in physical fitness and provides many important health benefits. As noted in the U.S. Surgeon General's [Report on Physical Activity and Health](#) (1999):

Physical activity reduces the risk of premature mortality in general, and of coronary artery disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and Type II diabetes mellitus. Physical activity also improves mental health (student academic success), emotional health (stress reduction and self-confidence) and is important for the health of muscles, bones, and joints.

Tools in the FITNESSGRAM Toolkit: Sample Materials and Presentations

This toolkit contains information about successful policies and programs that have been developed to promote healthy lifestyles among youth. We encourage everyone to share these ideas with their local partners and to develop community wellness coalitions that bring related efforts to communities around Indiana. To help you participate in these policy discussions, the toolkit includes sample talking points and resources for additional information.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

About FITNESSGRAM® and ACTIVITYGRAM®

FITNESSGRAM® is the most widely used tool to assess students' health-related fitness (not sports-related skills). Designed for students in grades 4-12, FITNESSGRAM measures aerobic capacity, body composition, and muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. It has been adopted by the [Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#) and by schools in all 50 states. FITNESSGRAM was developed in 1982 by the [Cooper Institute](#).

Many schools use FITNESSGRAM to:

- Tailor physical education programs to better meet students' needs
- Provide helpful reports for students, parents and educators

FITNESSGRAM assessments measure five components:

Station 1: PACER Fitness Test (15 or 20 meters)

Station 2: Height (inches)

Station 3: Weight (pounds)

Station 4: Curl-Up

Station 5: Push-Up

Detailed information about FITNESSGRAM is available at

<http://www.cooperinstitute.org/FITNESSGRAM> and <http://www.FITNESSGRAM.net>.

Healthy Fitness Zones

FITNESSGRAM uses health-related criteria to identify Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZ) to determine students' overall physical fitness levels and to note improvements. HFZ are not based on class averages; they are "criterion-referenced" standards that are based on attainment of fitness levels for good health. HFZ were established by the FITNESSGRAM Advisory Board, which includes some of the foremost scientists and practitioners in fitness and physical activity.

ACTIVITYGRAM®

An important component of FITNESSGRAM is ACTIVITYGRAM®, a three-day recall that allows students to reflect on their activity over two school days and one non-school day. Using half-hour segments, students enter their activities into ACTIVITYGRAM noting the type of activity, the intensity level of the activity, and the duration of the activity.

Gathering fitness test results is only one part of the overall solution to deal with Indiana's childhood obesity. The ACTIVITYGRAM® module in the FITNESSGRAM® program tracks data about a child's activity behaviors, such as the degree to which a child was active for a given period of time, the types of activities which the child was engaged, the duration of the child's screen time, and the total amount of time that child spent in physical activity. The goal, of course, is not simply to get kids fit, but to get them active and to appreciate the value of being active—now and as adults. This information also helps PE teachers further develop their approach to fitness with each student and class.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Volunteers Can Help it Happen

Schools using FITNESSGRAM must invest staff time to conduct the assessments. In some cases, physical education teachers devote several weeks that otherwise could be used for instructional time. The benefits are clear, but is there a way to compress the time needed to conduct FITNESSGRAM assessments and free up teaching time?

YES! The answer is to use trained volunteers to conduct the assessments under the guidance of professional staff. This toolkit includes resources to help you recruit, train and deploy adult volunteers in your school or school system, allowing you to conduct FITNESSGRAM testing in hours instead of days or weeks.

Access the [FITNESSGRAM Volunteer Toolkit](#)

How Will Indiana Schools Benefit?

FITNESSGRAM will allow Indiana schools to track and measure improvement of fitness levels and academic achievement of students' over time. The hosted software is user-friendly and Web-based with instructional tools, easier imports and school reports, and more.

- **No need to purchase or maintain servers at the district level** – It is hosted with its founders and developers at The Cooper Institute. Hosting services include full technical support and all updates and enhancements as they become available.
- **Easy access with Internet** – All schools in each district can have access to the software anywhere with Internet connectivity.
- **FITNESSGRAM 10 state license** – Allows Indiana to analyze de-identified individual performances, without undue burden on the local education agencies.
- **New FITNESSGRAM 10 student app** – Available for iPad, iPhone, and Android devices. Complete with ACTIVITYGRAM surveys and reliable FITNESSGRAM Knowledge Tests (also available in PDF format).
- **New PACER** – Updated PACER equation to predict VO_2 max. Look-up tables will be available for students to see how many laps are necessary to achieve the Healthy Fitness Zone®.
- **New BMI standards** – Healthy Fitness Zone standards now in alignment with the CDC growth charts (commonly used by pediatricians).
- **Web-based instruction** – Online staff development tools available for teachers.
- **Email student reports** – Increase student privacy, time efficiency, and reduce paper waste.
- **Student-centered tools** – ACTIVITYGRAM three-day recall and Activity Log.
- **Statistical reports** – Reader-friendly with graphics to increase impact.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Funding Your FITNESSGRAM Program

NOTE: Check the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project [website](#) often for updates on funding opportunities.

If you've decided that you want to engage your school in the FITNESSGRAM Project but don't have funds for the licensing, there are several ways in which Indiana schools can fund FITNESSGRAM.

1. NFL Play 60

Through the NFL Foundation, each state that has an NFL team has been selecting 35 schools or after-school programs to participate in FITNESSGRAM annually. To find out more about this opportunity, check out the [NFL Play 60 FITNESSGRAM website](#).

2. IU Health Strong Schools

Indiana University Health is committed to improving health and wants to support opportunities for more physical activity in our elementary schools and communities.

Because healthier and more active kids tend to learn better, IU Health and Action for Healthy Kids have teamed up to provide IU Health Strong Schools grants to 27 elementary schools across the state. Grants support the purchase of FITNESSGRAM and initiatives that increase physical activity for students, teachers and the broader community. Awardees will receive one-on-one support for schools, connections with other Indiana schools focusing on wellness, school events that engage family/community during Every Kid Healthy Week, and linkages between schools and IU Health resources/programs/affiliates. For more information, visit the [IU Health Strong Schools website](#).

3. Presidential Youth Fitness Program

Through the generosity of a grant from General Mills, the Presidential Youth Fitness Program (PYFP) has been awarding three-year grants toward this effort. Schools are eligible to apply for the PYFP funding, which provides supports implementation of the PYFP program, including access to content-specific virtual training course for physical educators, FITNESSGRAM software, and recognition items for students.

Previously, applications were only available to individual schools; however, school districts are now eligible and strongly encouraged to apply. An application and more information on this funding opportunity, including details on what it provides and application requirements, are available on the [PYFP website](#).

Other Funding

You might also find opportunities through local businesses, local foundations or civic funding clubs (e.g., Kiwanis), or your local chamber of commerce. If you are going to engage volunteers, think about asking a business to donate the cost of a license and the time of ten volunteers to get a school up and running. Fitness testing takes approximately one hour per class, based on 30 students in a class.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Communication is Vital

Three key targets of communication are essential to the success of the FITNESSGRAM program as a district initiative or a single-school curriculum. The following outline is a recommended sequence for introducing the program to your school or district, your community and, importantly, to the individual students and parents.

NOTE: The sample documents linked in this section are included as a guide. They are adapted from materials successfully used by one district. While some of this language may be helpful in preparing your communications, make sure to adapt these tools to reflect the needs and programs of your district or school.

District level (if applicable) – 6 months before implementation

The support of the district is imperative in the successful launch of this program. It also serves as a support system once the program is in place. It is key that the school board and the district administration be well versed in the program goals, implementation and evaluation process if they are indeed part of your support system.

1. Hold a meeting with school board members to educate them about FITNESSGRAM.
2. Hold a training session with building principals and curriculum directors.
3. Hold a training session with Physical Education teachers and any other personnel who will be conducting assessments.

Community – 3 to 6 months before implementation

Public awareness and education are vital to easing the transition into a new health awareness/fitness program.

1. Contact student-oriented health facilities to educate them and gain their endorsement. For example:
 - Community YMCA
 - Fitness facilities with student activities or access
 - Boys & Girls Clubs
2. Upload educational materials on school websites (district and individual schools). For example:
 - (Video) [FITNESSGRAM: A Healthier Generation](#)
 - Document: “FITNESSGRAM and Your Child” ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - Document: “The Importance of Fitness Assessments” ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
3. Advertise at local community fitness activities (e.g., charity walks, half marathons, “Fitness Fridays”, etc.)
4. Publicize in local papers, school newsletters, community magazines
(Sample article: [“Hamilton Southeastern Foundation Delivers with FITNESSGRAM”](#))

Students/Parents – 3 months prior, during and after implementation.

The personal piece of the puzzle is direct communication with parents and students.

1. Advertise/educate in all registration materials
 - Intranet
 - Scheduling: class description including FITNESSGRAM (PE/Health/Wellness)
2. Upload educational resources on school websites
 - Lesson(s) about self-esteem, body image, BMI/% body fat, and body composition.
 - (Video) [FITNESSGRAM: A Healthier Generation](#)
 - Classroom handouts/parent letters about FITNESSGRAM:
 - Sample Letter to Parents: Fitness, Learning and Your Child ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - Sample Letter to Parents about Wellness ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - FITNESSGRAM and Your Child ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - Sample Letter to Parents about Body Composition Testing ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Using Fitness Data to Create Healthy Policies and Practices

Once you have collected all students' height and weight measurements and communicated the results to parents, now you can use the data to create lasting changes in the functioning of the school system and to track progress in improving student health.

Here are some ideas for making the most out of your BMI data.

Analyze it

Student height and weight data do no good if the data just sit in a file on somebody's computer. Measurements should be analyzed to calculate the proportion of students who are obese, overweight, at a healthy weight, and underweight. If your school is doing a screening program, the data should be analyzed to identify children who may have an unhealthy weight. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention created the [Children's BMI Tool for Schools](#) to assist schools in calculating student BMIs. This tool also develops summaries and graphs of the aggregate BMI data.

NOTE: When we talk about sharing this data with anyone other than the parent or student, it will be in aggregate form. Only the parent and student receive child-specific data.

Use it to Change School Policies and Practices

Data can be a powerful tool for justifying why specific changes need to be made to the school system's policies and practices. Quantifying the number of students who are overweight and obese could help school administrators and decision-makers to understand the need for providing a healthy school environment. If you are looking for specific policies and practices to improve based on BMI data, your School Wellness Policy would be a great place to start.

Incorporate it Into Lesson Plans

The process of measuring, analyzing and reporting height, weight and BMI can be incorporated into lesson plans. Measuring and reporting lend themselves to lessons on fractions, percentages, decimals and equations. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight through proper nutrition and physical activity is an excellent topic for physical education and health education classes. Discussions on weight status can be incorporated into lessons on self-acceptance and anti-bullying.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Using Fitness Data to Create Healthy Policies and Practices (cont.)

Use it to Track Progress Over Time

When collected year after year, student BMI data can show improvements in student health that might have resulted from the improved policies and practices that have been implemented in your school or school system. There are several ways you might track progress over time, including:

- 1) Following cohorts of students as they age through the school system, or
- 2) Measuring the same grades of students every year, such as 4th, 8th and 12th graders.

With several years of data, you can answer some very interesting questions, such as, “Are our efforts leading to improvements in students’ weight status? Do students tend to have healthier or less healthy BMIs as they age through the school system?”

NOTE: the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project recommends capturing fitness level data in grades 4–12.

Encourage Healthy Lifestyles

Perhaps the greatest benefit of health-related fitness data is the opportunity to cultivate healthy habits for life. It’s important to note that the assessments are not used to grade students or measure their athletic abilities. Rather, they are evaluated against criterion-referenced (Healthy Fitness Zone) standards. Students and parents receive confidential reports which explain in non-technical terms why physical activity is important and how regular physical activity leads to improved health and fitness.

The ACTIVITYGRAM® assessment— included as part of FITNESSGRAM 10— is a three-day recall of physical activity. FITNESSGRAM and ACTIVITYGRAM reports put the test results into the broader context of what it means to be physically fit, and suggest ways that students can be more physically active and improve their level of fitness.



Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

On Implementing FITNESSGRAM – And the Link to Academic Achievement

FITNESSGRAM can be used as both a formative assessment – providing feedback on students’ progress toward fitness goals – and a summative assessment – measuring their fitness levels against benchmark standards. In K-12 schools, it is most effective as a summative assessment, which calls for a benchmark level to be set early in the school year. This is the familiar pre-test and post-test method. On the other hand, using FITNESSGRAM just once per year doesn’t allow the before-and-after comparison, making it less useful as an assessment tool.

Here are ways in which schools typically use FITNESSGRAM and the data it provides:

- (1) **Individual fitness changes** – Many schools use FITNESSGRAM to track changes in individual students’ fitness levels over time. For example, a student’s fitness would be tracked not only from August to May of any one school calendar, but also over a longer period of time (longitudinally), such as from 4th grade to 5th grade to 7th grade, etc. Typically, students are sent home with a one-page report on their current fitness level as measured by the testing, which allows parents to compare to previous reports or simply review understand their child’s fitness level at that time.

This is comparable to the annual standardized testing used to assess and track competency in math and language skills.
- (2) **Informing curricular changes** – A Physical Education program can evaluate the effectiveness of its chosen curriculum model and its impact on youth fitness. For example, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) is a commonly listed outcome of a fitness-based Physical Education curriculum. The more minutes of MVPA students accumulate over the course of a Physical Education class, the more apt they are to improve their fitness levels. Therefore, if a PE program adopts fitness-based curriculum programming, a Physical Educator could implement consistent (formative) fitness assessments throughout the year to measure the extent to which the desired outcomes were achieved. FITNESSGRAM could be the tool to accomplish this.
- (3) **Link fitness to academics** – Some programs make associative links, using de-identified (but aggregated) data about fitness levels and academic achievement. Typically, these programs focus on aerobic fitness and standardized statewide academic tests.
- (4) **Fulfill grant expectations** – Some schools have been awarded grants by external agencies which request that annual fitness assessments be used to document or evaluate planned interventions to the targeted populations.

A Word of Caution

It may be over-reaching to claim that one PE class per week is responsible for a child’s significantly improved fitness level over the course of a school year. Such changes are more likely the result of the child’s natural maturation rather than the Physical Education programming. Yet, for some programs (like middle schools) that may have block scheduling and nine-week Physical Education units, the data from a pre-test and post-test may help reveal how the PE program influenced fitness levels. Furthermore, as schools increase opportunities for students to accumulate MVPA throughout the school day, the pre-test and post-test design could indicate how effective the comprehensive nature of physical activity programming is for the fitness level of participants in a particular school building.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

On Implementing FITNESSGRAM – And the Link to Academic Achievement (cont.)

Link to Academic Achievement

It's important to note that the extent of changes between pre-test and post-test depends on both the quantity and quality of the Physical Education programming. The research is clear: Students who spend time consistently and regularly in a *quality* daily Physical Education program outperform their peers not only in post-test measures of fitness, but also on select indicators of academic readiness. Moreover, recent research (Khan and Hillman, 2014) suggest that there is a promising link between the cardiovascular fitness of school-aged youth (expressed as VO_2 max) and cognitive function. There also appeared to be a benefit from being more aerobically fit as it relates to the actual brain structure (volume of hippocampus), with the more aerobically fit kids having more volume in this brain structure.¹ The result is that they outperform their less aerobically fit peers on select cognitive tasks.

Notes on BMI

Finally, in regard to the collection and dissemination of Body Mass Index measures, there are a few things to note:

- BMI is calculated from an individual's height and weight. This is known as a measure of anthropometry (size, shape and proportion of someone).
- Because of how it is calculated, BMI does not directly measure body composition (lean muscle mass, fat mass, etc.) However, there is general consensus that BMI can be used as an indicator of weight status;^{2,3} which is the extent to which one may be overweight or obese.
- BMI is a relatively simple measure. BMI screening is recognized as a preferred screening tool for overweight and obesity in school-aged youth.^{2,3} While students' BMI would ideally be taken, stored and reported to their medical home (doctor's office), school nurses and/or Physical Educators can calculate BMI as part of a comprehensive fitness assessment such as FITNESSGRAM. As there are many indicators of fitness that contribute to childhood obesity, BMI should not be the sole measure of fitness.³

To sum up, a comprehensive fitness assessment tool such as FITNESSGRAM can be used to establish the fitness levels of school-aged youth. In particular, using the PACER test for aerobic fitness and calculating BMI, for anthropometry, are two easily attained measures with high potential for improving the health and academic readiness of our children.

¹ Khan, N.A. & Hillman, C.H. (2014) The relation of childhood physical activity and aerobic fitness to brain function and cognition: A review. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 26, 138-146.

² American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003. Policy statement: prevention of pediatric overweight and obesity, *Pediatrics*, 112(2), 424-430.

³ Krebs, N.F., Himes, J.H., Jacobson, D., Nicklas, T.A., Guilday, P., & Styne, D., 2007. Assessment of Child and Adolescent Overweight and Obesity, *Pediatrics*, 120(4), 193-228.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Frequently Asked Questions

FITNESSGRAM®

What is FITNESSGRAM® ?

FITNESSGRAM is the most widely used tool to assess students' health-related fitness (not sports-related skills). Designed for students in grades 4-12, FITNESSGRAM measures aerobic capacity, body composition, and muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. It has been adopted by the Presidential Youth Fitness Program and by schools in all 50 states. FITNESSGRAM was developed in 1982 by the Cooper Institute.

Many schools use FITNESSGRAM to:

- Tailor physical education programs to better meet students needs
- Provide helpful reports for students, parents and educators

FITNESSGRAM assessments measure five components:

Station 1: PACER Fitness Test (15 or 20 meters)

Station 2: Height (inches)

Station 3: Weight (pounds)

Station 4: Curl-Up

Station 5: Push-Up

Detailed information about FITNESSGRAM is available at

<http://www.cooperinstitute.org/FITNESSGRAM> and <http://www.FITNESSGRAM.net>.

NOTE: Though students in grades K-3 don't take the whole array of FITNESSGRAM assessments such as push-up, curl-up or the PACER run test, some schools collect height and weight for these younger students and enter it as FITNESSGRAM data. This information—either measured at school or reported by parents—gives schools and districts data to inform planning for a larger student population.

What is the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project?

The Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project is a collective effort to allow schools to collect fitness level data on students through five specific assessments. This program – including ACTIVITYGRAM – also helps children learn and adopt lifelong healthy behaviors. Through the project, Indiana will be one of the first states to implement a statewide-hosted solution for collecting child fitness data.

The effort will facilitate the creation of a statewide aggregated database that enables IDOE, schools, public health officials and health care providers, among others, to understand health trends of Indiana youth and provide appropriate services and programs in response.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

The objectives of the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project are to:

- Provide students with an annual fitness assessment as part of their Physical Education curriculum that provides them with information to learn and adopt lifelong healthy lifestyle behaviors.
- Use FITNESSGRAM to perform annual health assessments, including aerobic capacity and body composition measurements, of students from grades 4-12 in as many schools as possible across the state.
- Enable FITNESSGRAM to be implemented by schools quickly and easily at a minimal investment.
- Create a statewide aggregated database of FITNESSGRAM® data to enable IDOE, schools and community health partners to better understand health trends and areas that need additional services or programs.

What is FITNESSGRAM® 10?

FITNESSGRAM® 10 is a Web-based version of the FITNESSGRAM software. This iteration of the Web program offers a state model in conjunction with the school assessment that serves as a data collection tool for state departments of education to gather fitness data on children. Fitness data at this level is often used in an aggregate format for comparisons of other student variables captured by states, including academic achievement, absenteeism, federal meal programs, etc.

Why did Jump IN for Healthy Kids select FITNESSGRAM as the fitness assessment tool of choice?

Because FITNESSGRAM is the national fitness test of choice and provides a health-related fitness snapshot of each child's health, it was selected as the fitness tool for this initiative. FITNESSGRAM uses criterion-referenced standards allowing each student to be compared to what is needed for good overall health. FITNESSGRAM assesses all five components of health-related fitness and has the capabilities to provide personalized messaging through student and parent reports. It is the only assessment tool currently available with these credentials.

When will Indiana schools begin using FITNESSGRAM 10?

During the 2015-16 school year. Fourth through 12th grade students enrolled in Physical Education during the September 2015/2016 school year could have their fitness levels annually assessed and data entered into FITNESSGRAM. While the tool can be used annually, it is most impactful when a benchmark level has been established early in the school year and again at the end of the school year. Using FITNESSGRAM one time of year greatly limits the utility of the data and restricts its meaningfulness. The parents/guardians of those students tested annually should receive reports in the spring of 2016.

What is the cost to Indiana schools to use FITNESSGRAM?

Each participating district will pay an initial licensing fee per school for the first year of the program, with an annual renewal fee. Jump IN is currently negotiating a discounted rate for schools that implement FITNESSGRAM in the 2015-16 school year. Pricing information will be announced soon. Various sources of funding are available through local, regional, state and federal funders. See [Funding your FITNESSGRAM Program](#).

Are all Indiana schools required to participate in the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project?

No. Participation in the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project is strictly voluntary and a participation commitment should ideally be made by district administration. Districts or schools interested in participating and willing to assess students in grades 4 through 12 should contact fitnessgram@jumpinhealth.org to learn more.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

Can I work at home to enter FITNESSGRAM scores?

Yes, Indiana's program is hosted on The Cooper Institute's servers and is accessible from any computer meeting the system requirements.

When will FITNESSGRAM 10 be available for Indiana schools?

The program will be up and running for the 2015-16 school year.

I would like to get started now and purchase FITNESSGRAM 10 on my own. Will I get reimbursed by IDOE or any other party?

At this time there are no plans to reimburse schools or districts that decide to purchase the FITNESSGRAM program on their own.

I am an elementary school teacher. How do I assign students to classes?

Because student lists are preloaded into FITNESSGRAM, you do not need to add them. Once you have created classes, you will need to assign students to their respective classes.

I am a middle school teacher. How do I enter class lists into FITNESSGRAM?

Classes are already created for you and students are already assigned to those classes. All you need to do is create your FITNESSGRAM test event, enter students' test scores, and generate the student and parent FITNESSGRAM reports.

I teach high school. How are my students assigned to classes?

Classes are already created for you and students are already assigned to those classes. All you need to do is create your FITNESSGRAM test event, enter students' test scores, and generate the student and parent FITNESSGRAM reports.

What test items are required for participation in the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project?

The Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project uses five tests:

Station 1: PACER Fitness Test (15 or 20 meters)

Station 2: Height (inches)

Station 3: Weight (pounds)

Station 4: Curl-Up

Station 5: Push-Up

Can I do other FITNESSGRAM tests?

Yes, you may do other FITNESSGRAM tests in addition to the five specified tests.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

Which students should be assessed using FITNESSGRAM in Indiana?

For participation in the Indiana FITNESSGRAM Project, a school district must annually assess the physical fitness of students enrolled in grades 4-12.

Do we also test students with disabilities?

Students with disabilities will be tested in accordance with system and school physical education guidelines. Any student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) should be assessed using protocol that has been modified to be consistent with that student's IEP and needs.

My school/district has very large class sizes. What is the best way to do fitness testing?

You can divide large classes into stations and use volunteers or students to help conduct testing. There are many test items in FITNESSGRAM that students can use for self-testing and for peer testing. The videos on the DVD in the FITNESSGRAM manual illustrate how students can help with testing. All teachers will receive a manual at training. This toolkit contains several tips as well.

If students are absent on test day, have an injury, and are unable to be tested, do I still have to test them?

All absent students should be given an opportunity to participate in the assessment. Injured students will be tested in accordance with physical education guidelines for their system and school.

What is my deadline for entering FITNESSGRAM test scores?

Scores should be entered within 24 hours and sent home to the parents within 30 days of the assessment completion date. Height and weight should be entered directly into FITNESSGRAM at the time they are measured. This protects the confidentiality of this sensitive data.

Do I have to send in my year-end reports to IDOE by the end of the school year?

No. There is no need to physically send student scores to IDOE at the end of the school year, because data are stored on a Web-based platform. IDOE can access the password-protected aggregate data once you've entered it.

Can I export my students' data to make my own school-level analysis?

Yes—your data will be available, for example to correlate fitness levels with academic scores. You will not need to export your data for state-level reporting—that's automatic.

Whom do I contact for technical support?

1. First, contact online support at <http://www.fitnessgram.net/help>.
2. Connectivity from home: If you cannot access the FITNESSGRAM site nor any website, you need to contact your Internet provider.

My school IT staff is overworked. What do they have to do to install the program?

The FITNESSGRAM program is Web-based. There is nothing to install at the local school or district level. However, you will need an Internet connection to access the FITNESSGRAM program.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

ACTIVITYGRAM®

What is ACTIVITYGRAM® ?

ACTIVITYGRAM® is a three-day recall that allows students to reflect on their activity over two school days and one non-school day. Using half-hour segments, students enter their activities into ACTIVITYGRAM noting the type, intensity level and duration of each activity.

What are the advantages of using ACTIVITYGRAM?

The ACTIVITYGRAM module in the FITNESSGRAM program tracks data about a child's activity behaviors, such as the degree to which a child was active for a given period of time, the types of activities in which the child was engaged, the duration of the child's screen time, and the total amount of time in that child spent in physical activity. The goal, of course, is not simply to get kids fit, but to get them active and to appreciate the value of being active—now and as adults. This information also helps the PE teacher further develop their approach to fitness with each student.

What schools can use ACTIVITYGRAM?

All schools participating in The FITNESSGRAM Project are encouraged to use ACTIVITYGRAM.



Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

THE INDIANA FITNESSGRAM® PROJECT



VOLUNTEER PLANNING TOOLKIT



Introduction

Schools using FITNESSGRAM must invest staff time to conduct the assessments. In some cases, physical education teachers devote several weeks that otherwise could be used for instructional time. The benefits are clear, but is there a way to compress the time needed to conduct FITNESSGRAM assessments and free up teaching time?

YES! The answer is to use trained volunteers to conduct the assessments under the guidance of professional staff. Following is a guide to help you recruit, train and deploy adult volunteers in your school or school system, allowing you to conduct FITNESSGRAM testing in hours instead of days or weeks.

20,000 in One Day?

In the first large-scale use of FITNESSGRAM volunteers, 800 employees from Eli Lilly & Co. worked with Indianapolis Public Schools staff to assess almost 20,000 students in a single day. ([See highlights.](#))

That experience points the way for using volunteers in a single school or an entire system. The following tools will help you develop a volunteer program in your school or district.

In addition to recovering instructional time, benefits include:

- Greater awareness in the community of FITNESSGRAM as a tool to promote healthy lifestyles
- Bringing community members into local schools, creating a basis for further engagement

Where Do the Volunteers Come From?

There are many possible sources for volunteers, including:

- PTA/PTO or other school support groups already in place
- Service organizations such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Optimists and many others
- Churches, synagogues or other faith-based groups
- Civic-minded employers with enough workers to “adopt” one or more schools (8-16 volunteers)

For schools in Central Indiana, United Way of Central Indiana shares strategies to help recruit, train and manage volunteers. For information, see <http://www.uwci.org/volunteer> or call 317-921-1271.

Clarifying Roles

As in any collaboration, it's important that each party knows what is expected of them and how they can best contribute to success. Communication and clear expectations are the key. The following outline spells out what the volunteer organization and the school need to do in advance and on Assessment Day.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Organization's Responsibilities

NOTE: Volunteers may come from an employer, service organization, church or other group, but we use "Organization" here to represent any volunteer group.

The Organization Should:

- Invite members (or employees, if a company) to participate, explaining why FITNESSGRAM is important, why the organization is participating and what will be expected of the volunteers. This can be done through a letter, email message or in-person presentation.
- Create an Organizational Chart/Staff Volunteer List for each school.
- Have each volunteer complete a Volunteer Packet which may include, for example:
 - Application Form (to be completed one month before training)
 - Background Check when applicable (see below)
 - Release form: This is your organization's release of liability
 - Pledge of Confidentiality, Code of Conduct Agreement
 - Grievance Policy
- Schedule one or more Training Sessions, which all volunteers must attend no more than two weeks before Assessment Day. When training a large number of volunteers, it may help to train team leaders who can then train their volunteer teams.
- Have each volunteer view the FITNESSGRAM Activity video online before training (about 20 minutes.)
- Provide a list of volunteers and completed Volunteer Packets to each school before the day of training.

Plan on 8-16 volunteers per school. (Eight volunteers per half-day shift.)

Important Dates:

1 month before Training Session: All volunteer applications submitted

2-4 weeks before Assessment Day: Volunteer list & Volunteer Packets to schools

≤ 2 weeks before Assessment Day: Hold Training Session(s) for all volunteers

About Background Checks

It is important to determine whether your school district requires background checks for volunteers. The Indiana State Police conduct limited criminal history checks on prospective volunteers free of charge for schools or school districts. Details and a link to the "Request for Fee Exemption" form are [available online](#).

You will need to have the [Application For Fee Exemption](#) form signed by your principal or superintendent and returned to the State Police prior to the background checks being administered. Once you have submitted the form, the State Police will contact you to set up the process. You will need to submit the data in a specified format. If you have a large number of employees to screen, you may want to set up a weekly process of sending the files. Once the State Police have screened the volunteers, they will return results so that your school or district can determine whether all volunteers are acceptable for this opportunity. If any are not acceptable, you will want to have the school or school district notify the volunteer directly. This allows for confidentiality on behalf of the volunteer.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

School or District Responsibilities

The School or District Should:

- Download to their Student Information System (or the FITNESSGRAM vendor) the rosters for all school classes that will be tested. Rosters will then be loaded into the FITNESSGRAM software.
- Identify a school staff person to coordinate the entire project. If the whole district will use FITNESSGRAM, this is typically the district wellness director. For individual schools, the Physical Education teacher usually coordinates.
- Make sure each building's principal and Physical Education teacher support using volunteers within this program. At the district level, a meeting with all principals and Physical Education teachers will allow your team to answer all questions at one time. Individual schools implementing FITNESSGRAM may need only an informal meeting with the building principal and Physical Education teacher.
- Ensure that the Physical Education teacher introduces all students to FITNESSGRAM prior to Assessment Day.
- Appoint a School Liaison in the office of each school to serve as a point of contact on Assessment Day.
- Determine how volunteers will enter FITNESSGRAM data. For IT security reasons, staff should log in to the system and then let the volunteer enter the data from each rotation. Tablet or laptop computers, if available, allow volunteers to enter data as each assessment is completed.

Communication:

- Send a letter home to parents at least a month before Assessment Day, explaining FITNESSGRAM prior and the assessment process and allowing them to opt out of the assessment if desired. Some schools may do this with other materials they send home at the start of school each year.

Here are sample letters you may adapt:

- Fitness, Learning and Your Child ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
- Student Wellness: The Parent-Teacher Connection ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
- Body Composition Testing ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
- FITNESSGRAM and Your Child ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
- After Assessment Day, send the parent or guardian of each student a letter or email with their students' FITNESSGRAM assessment results confidentially.
- After Assessment Day, send thank-you letters to all participating organizations or volunteers and report the number of students served.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Volunteer Training Session

RESOURCE: [Training Session Rundown](#)

In planning the Training Session(s), consider which Physical Education teachers can best prepare the volunteers. It is often help to have building principals participate, as well. In a school-level implementation, the School Liaison will distribute nametags to volunteers and go over the following during the Training Session:

- Sign-in procedures, distribute nametags
- Layout of building:
 - Emergency Procedures and Exits – Go over emergency and evacuation routes and procedures to be used in case of tornado, fire, lockdown, etc. Make sure volunteers have main office telephone numbers and other needed contact information such as mobile numbers or emails for key people. A map of the building would be also be helpful.
 - Room assignments for Assessment Day
 - Restroom locations
 - Teachers' lounge or other arrangements for lunch break, if needed
- Guidance and policies concerning issues such as handling student misbehavior.

Preparing For Assessment Day

- Schools will set times for each classroom to have testing done.
- Print rosters with name and IDs of all students the day before Assessment Day (classroom teacher or Physical Education teacher). One roster of each student group needed at each station.
- Print a [PACER Score Sheet](#) for each student.
- Print a name tag for each volunteer.
- Print signs identifying each station. Post these signs outside the room for each station.
 - Station 1: PACER ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - Station 2: HEIGHT ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - Station 3: WEIGHT ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - Station 4: CURL-UP ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
 - Station 5: PUSH-UP ([Word](#)) ([PDF](#))
- Make sure all equipment is set up in rooms the night before event.

Setting up the Assessment Stations

Physical Education teachers will set up the five FITNESSGRAM assessment stations in four rooms. If four rooms are not available, all stations can be set up in the gym.

Station 1: PACER Fitness Test (15 or 20 meters)

Station 2: Height*

Station 3: Weight*

*Height and Weight can use the same room

Station 4: Curl-Up

Station 5: Push-Up

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Volunteer Training Session (cont.)

Equipment for Each School

- Calibrated scale for Weight station
- Stadiometers (two per school) or tape rules on wall for Height station
- Exercise mats or yoga mats for Curl-Up and Push-Up stations
- Tape for fingertip measurements on Curl-Up mats
- iPad or computer at each station for recording data. If performing manually, then you will need classroom lists with places to record each step of the assessment.
- 3 CD players (one each for Curl-Up, Push-Up and PACER stations)
- 3 sets of FITNESSGRAM CDs – (2 CDs per set). Include batteries or extension cords as needed.

If the gymnasium is the only room used, rotation for each class will take approximately one hour. All equipment can be used and set up in the gymnasium. Most students perform best by taking the PACER test first, then height and weight, then Curl-Up and Push-Up tests.

School's Responsibilities on Assessment Day

- School Liaison should greet volunteers at the front of building.
- Have volunteers sign in and take a name badge.
 - Orientation them to the building (office, rest rooms, teachers' lounge, etc.)
 - Direct volunteers to testing (assessment) area.
- Announce as each class is ready to go to testing rooms.
- Classroom teachers should line up students alphabetically and bring them to the testing area. Teachers bring the class roster and hand it to the Monitor at each area.
- Teachers stay with class throughout testing (approximately 60 minutes).
This is especially important if volunteers have not been subject to background checks.
- Classes will rotate through each station, then return to class with their teacher. Rotations can be varied based on the school's needs, but starting with PACER can improve students' overall performance.

Miscellaneous Administrative Items to Consider:

- If volunteers have any concerns make sure they are brought to the attention of the Principal or liaison immediately.
- You may want to use the teachers' lounge for breaks.
- You may want to allow volunteers to purchase lunch in the cafeteria.
- You may want to designate the faculty restrooms for the volunteers to use.
- You may want a process for signing in and out at the front office at the beginning and end of each shift.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Volunteer Training Session (cont.)

Training Session Rundown

Volunteers can be a great boon to your FITNESSGRAM program. If they enjoy helping on Assessment Day and feel their contribution is appreciated, they may go on to a deeper engagement with their local school. Volunteers must understand their roles and how the assessments are conducted.

The volunteer training session is vital to a successful program. Following are suggestions to help you prepare for and conduct effective training sessions for your volunteers.

Set up an orientation table with sign-in sheet. Have a name tag and information packet for each volunteer. Have a video screen or projector with audio connected to a computer with Internet access. Be prepared to show the [FITNESSGRAM website](#), demonstrate how data entry works, and review details of each station.

Set up each station as it will be for Assessment Day:

- Station 1: PACER
- Station 2: Height*
- Station 3: Weight*
*Height and Weight can use the same room
- Station 4: Curl-Up
- Station 5: Push-Up

NOTE: Each station will have a volunteer responsible for Data Entry.

Use Physical Education teachers to train volunteers at school or at another location such as the volunteers' worksite.

- Each station will need a trainer, or if no more than 10 volunteers, then one trainer can cover all stations. This will take around 1½ hours, allowing for explanations and questions.
- For a large group of volunteers you will need a trainer for each rotation. Divide volunteers into five groups. Height/Weight will be in same group, so a total of five trainers will be needed.

Actively demonstrate each station for every group. Trainers perform the test as if they were students. Demonstrate how to tell a student he/she has a warning due to a lapse in protocol or form, and then that he/she has completed the station. Have every volunteer simulate each test so they better understand the students' experience.

Leave ample time to answer volunteers' questions and address concerns. Thank them for volunteering and for making time to attend the training session. Make sure they have contact information for a Team Leader or school staff to address any additional questions or logistical needs.

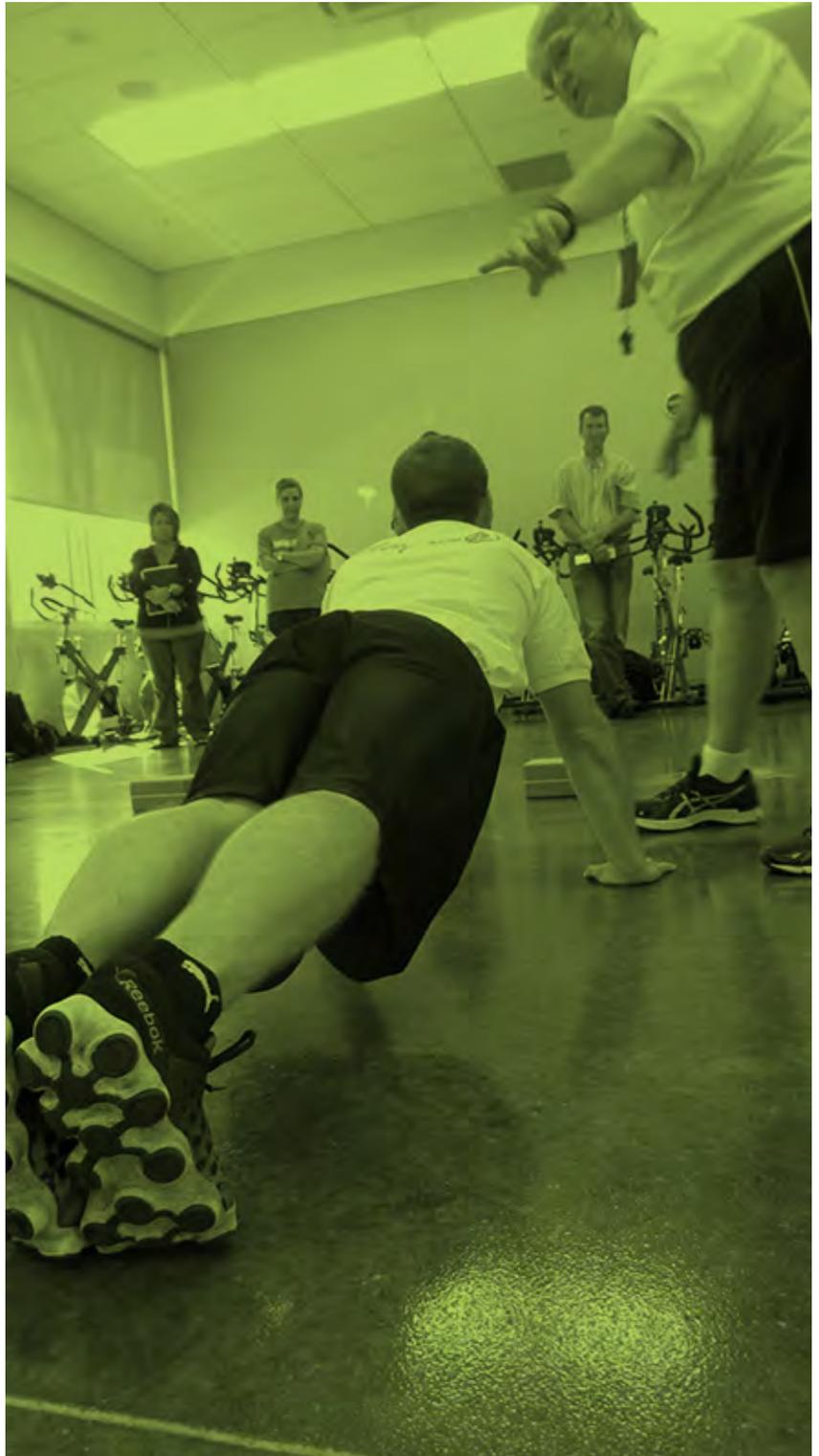
Team Leaders for volunteers should meet with school staff before Assessment Day to do a walk-through of the building, meet the Physical Education teacher, exchange contact information and review logistics for Assessment Day.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

Volunteer Training Session (cont.)

Notes:

- The number of volunteers needed at each school will vary based on school enrollment.
- Hours will depend on each school's start time and end time.
- Plan on approximately one hour for a class of 30 students to complete all assessments.
- Layout of the testing stations can affect total time required. Moving between locations can take additional time, but a setup with all five stations in one gym may move more quickly.
- A minimum of five volunteers is needed per school (one per station).
- Having sufficient volunteers, well trained and supported, helps Assessment Day run smoothly and contributes to more accurate data.
- Accommodations are to be made for all students with Individualized Education Plans. Use modified testing protocol to be consistent with each student's IEP.



Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

The FITNESSGRAM Stations

STATION 1: PACER FITNESS TEST

PACER = Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run. This is a progressive run to measure aerobic capacity. Location is typically the school gymnasium.

Resources

[How to Score PACER](#)

[PACER Score Sheet](#)

[PACER Video](#)

Volunteers Needed

- 3-5 PACER Monitors
- 1 PACER Recorder
- 1 PACER Controller (group leader for this station)
Gets students on baseline; makes sure all students and monitors understand the correct procedure; starts the testing.

Equipment Needed

- CD player/boombox
- FITNESSGRAM CD
- iPad/tablet or computer
- [PACER score sheet](#) for each student

PACER Protocol

- Mark lines for lanes. Play CD so students know what to expect. Allow two practice times before actually testing.
- Hand out PACER score sheets to all students and have them put enter their name at top.
[SEE HOW TO SCORE PACER](#)
- Have students count off in ones and twos. Ones start on the line and twos line up behind them. Have a group of 15 students go at one time.
- First group hands their sheets to second group, who will serve as scorers. First group starts PACER assessment. Scorers mark each lap completed. Monitors watch to ensure protocol is followed for each of their assigned students.
- Controller starts FITNESSGRAM CD for PACER cadence and makes sure protocol is followed. Each student must perform as many correct PACER runs as possible to a rhythmic beat.
- The test is finished after the second incorrect 15- or 20-meter run.
- Scorer marks a diagonal line through the number of each completed lap and a circle around the number of any missed lap (a lap not completed before the beep). After the second circle, the test is complete for that student. For example, if miss one is recorded at lap six and miss two is recorded at lap nine, the student's score would be eight. (See example.)
- Students then go to the PACER Recorder and present their score sheet showing student's name and number of PACER laps achieved. Rotate to the next group of students and do the same. Students in the first group serve as scorers for the second group.
- ALTERNATE METHOD: Each monitor follows five students per testing period, then turns in their score sheets to the PACER Recorder.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

The FITNESSGRAM Stations (cont.)

PACER Setup and Protocol Notes

To set up and conduct the PACER fitness test, you'll need to follow a few basic steps. It's important to carefully follow these guidelines to avoid putting any student at risk:

1. Mark off a 20-meter course that allows sufficient room for each student to have enough space to run. Use brightly colored sports cones to distinguish a clear path for each runner.

NOTE: For smaller gymnasiums, the PACER test can use a 15-meter course. Resources such as [Aerobic Capacity Lookup Charts](#) are provided both 15-meter and 20-meter options. This toolkit refers to the more common 20-meter test, but the protocol applies to 15-meter PACER courses as well.

2. Play the PACER fitness test CD to familiarize participants with it. The CD is designed to play for one minute and to keep each runner on pace.
3. Line up the runners at the starting line and press play on the CD. Each runner should then run the full 20 meters, touch the line at the end of the 20 meters with their foot and wait for the CD to beep. After the beep, they can then pace themselves and run back to the starting place. Runners then wait for the next beep before repeating the run. They continue doing this until they cannot get to the next line before the CD beeps. The beeps will start off slowly, so make sure to tell students to pace themselves before trying the PACER fitness test. The second time they fail to reach the other end before a beep, they are finished with PACER.
4. Each 20-meter run counts as one lap. As a participant runs, have a partner watch and mark down each lap completed. Once a student fails to reach the line before the next beep, he/she is finished. The total of laps completed is their total score.



Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

The FITNESSGRAM Stations (cont.)

STATION 2: HEIGHT

The student's height and weight are used to calculate the student's Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is a measure of the appropriateness of weight relative to height, which is related to body composition.

See Body Composition [video](#)

Volunteers Needed

- 1 Height Monitor
- 1 Height Recorder
- 1 Height Controller (group leader for this station)
Gets students lined up; makes sure all students and monitors understand the correct procedure; starts the testing.

Equipment Needed

- Stadiometer or 2 measuring sticks marked or attached to wall
- iPad/tablet or computer

Height Protocol

- Students remove shoes.
- Monitor cues student to step up to wall and stand with back flat against the wall.
- Recorder takes measurement and records height in feet and inches into FITNESSGRAM.
- Students keep shoes off until both height and weight are collected.

STATION 3: WEIGHT

Volunteers Needed

- 1 Weight Monitor
- 1 Weight Recorder
- 1 Weight Controller (group leader for this station)
Gets students lined up; makes sure all students and monitors understand the correct procedure; starts the testing.

Equipment Needed

- 2 Scales
- iPad/tablet or computer

Weight Protocol

- Student steps on scale (shoes remain off from Rotation 2.)
- Monitor records weight into FITNESSGRAM.
- Students keep shoes off until both height and weight are collected.
(Classroom teacher will direct students when to put shoes back on.)

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

The FITNESSGRAM Stations (cont.)

STATION 4: CURL-UP

Measures abdominal strength and endurance. Students are asked to complete as many Curl-Ups as possible at a specified pace, up to a maximum of 75.

See Curl-Up [video](#)

Volunteers Needed

- 3-5 Curl-Up Monitors
- 1 Curl-Up Recorder
- 1 Curl-Up Controller (group leader for this station)
Gets students lined up; makes sure all students and monitors understand the correct procedure; starts the testing.

Equipment Needed

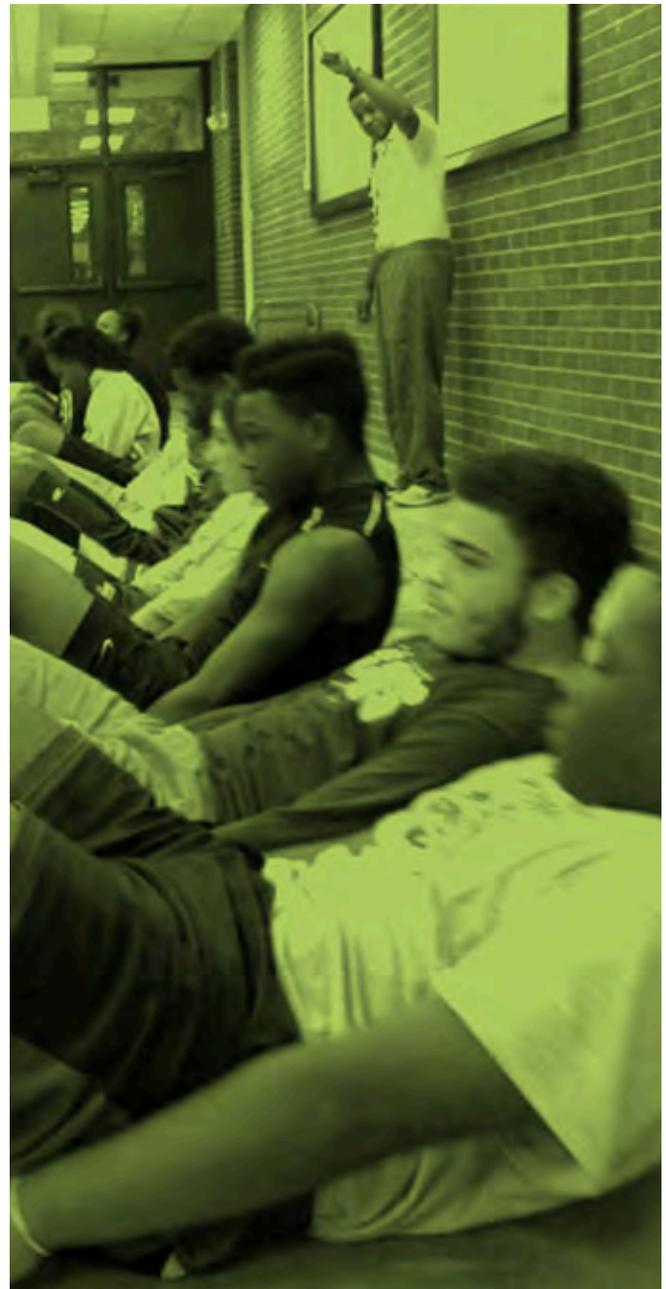
- CD player/boombox
- FITNESSGRAM CD
- iPad/tablet or computer

Curl-Up Protocol

- Divide class into groups of no more than nine-15 students (three to five students per monitor).
- Students lie face-up on mat and prepare to start assessment.
- Monitors listen for Curl-Up Cadence and make sure protocol is followed. Each student must perform as many correct Curl-Ups as possible to a rhythmic beat. The test is finished after the second incorrect Curl-Up.

NOTE: A line of tape on the mat provides a visible target for fingers to touch after each Curl-Up.

- Monitors tell students when they have not followed correct protocol. Monitors warn students after the first break in protocol. After the second break, monitors inform students they have finished this station.
- Students then go to Curl-Up Recorder and report name and number of Curl-Ups they achieved.
- Rotate to the next group of students and do the same.



Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

The FITNESSGRAM Stations (cont.)

STATION 5: PUSH-UP

Measures upper-body strength and endurance. Students are asked to complete as many Push-Ups as possible and at a specified pace.

See Push-Up [video](#)

Volunteers Needed

- 3-5 Push-Up Monitors
- 1 Push-Up Recorder
- 1 Push-Up Controller (group leader for this station)
Gets students lined up; makes sure all students and monitors understand the correct procedure; starts the testing.

Equipment Needed

- CD player/boombox
- FITNESSGRAM CD
- iPad/tablet or computer

Push-Up Protocol

- Divide class into groups of no more than nine to 15 students (three to five students per monitor).
- Students lie face-down on mat and prepare to start assessment.
- Monitor starts FITNESSGRAM CD for Push-Up Cadence and makes sure protocol is followed. Each student must perform as many correct Push-Ups as possible to a rhythmic beat.
- Monitors tell students when they have not followed correct protocol. Monitors warn students after the first break in protocol. After the second break, monitors inform students they have finished this station.
- The test is finished after the second incorrect Push-Up.
- Students then go to Push-Up Recorder and report name and number of Push-Ups they achieved.
- Rotate to the next group of students and do the same.



Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.

FITNESSGRAM Resources

Detailed information about FITNESSGRAM is available at <http://www.cooperinstitute.org/FITNESSGRAM> and <http://www.FITNESSGRAM.net>.

Videos

[FITNESSGRAM 10 for Indiana Schools](#)

The California Department of Education has produced videos in cooperation with the publisher of FITNESSGRAM to show how the tests are set up and conducted. Volunteers may benefit from viewing the videos at training sessions or independently before Assessment Day.

[PACER Fitness Test](#)

[Body Composition](#)

[Curl-Up](#)

[Push-Up](#)

FITNESSGRAM Station Signs

Signs to print and post at each assessment station in Microsoft Word and PDF formats.

- Station 1: PACER [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)
- Station 2: Height [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)
- Station 3: Weight [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)
- Station 4: Curl-Up [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)
- Station 5: Push-Up [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)

Sample Letters and Fact Sheets

Documents to adapt for your school, district or program

- Sample Letter to Parents: Fitness, Learning and Your Child [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)
- Sample Letter to Parents about Wellness [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)
- FITNESSGRAM and Your Child [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)
- Sample Letter to Parents about Body Composition Testing [\(Word\)](#) [\(PDF\)](#)

Volunteers

For schools in Central Indiana, United Way of Central Indiana shares strategies to help recruit, train and manage volunteers. Phone: 317-921-1271

Volunteer Background Checks

Indiana State Police information on [Limited Criminal History Search](#) fee exemptions for non-profit organizations.

Other Resources

[PACER Aerobic Capacity Lookup Charts](#)

[How to Score Pacer](#)

[Pacer Score Sheet](#)

Numerous vendors offer FITNESSGRAM-related products, including reference manuals and testing tools/supplies. In addition, users have posted numerous files that are identifiable through a Web search.

Click on the page number in the corner to return to the table of contents.