

## **FITNESSGRAM Safety Considerations when Using Test Protocols**

It is important for teachers to understand the *FITNESSGRAM Test Administration Manual* and DVD prior to conducting fitness testing. The test procedures are designed for the safety of the students and to apply consistency in the testing process. The manual combined with the finely tuned common sense attributed to physical educators will help them meet safety concerns for their students.

Teachers are urged to visit the FITNESSGRAM web site ([www.FITNESSGRAM.net](http://www.FITNESSGRAM.net)) for complete information on the science behind the program. Select the Reference Manual button on the left-hand nav bar.

### **Relevant chapter information**

- *Part I, Chapter one: Mission Goals and Philosophy of FITNESSGRAM and ACTIVITYGRAM*  
An important safety concept in this chapter in addition to explaining the importance of the HELP philosophy is that HELP focuses on the personal needs of and eliminates the practice of comparison which at times can be unsafe.
- *Part I, Chapter 2: Fitness Education and Assessment Guidelines* provides useful information on recommended progression and appropriate uses of the programs for safe participation, and effective development of students taking responsibility for their own fitness in a safe educational environment.
- *Part I, Chapter 3: Promoting Physical Activity* provides the basic information on the importance of physical activity and promoting physical activity. This chapter is important to safety for children and students. It covers appropriate physical activity guidelines and many safety considerations that promote physical activity. Children must learn how to use their personal assessment data in a safe way to set goals which are based on standards, measurable, authentic, realistic, and timed (SMART).
- *Part II, Chapter 4:* This chapter deals with specific information for testing at the primary levels of K-4, considerations, and special populations.
- *Part II, Chapters 5,6,7, and 8* provide information on all 15 assessments that will lead to safe participation by students. Safety considerations include testing objectives, appropriate equipment and facilities needed, specific safety instructions, effective scoring, and other considerations for test administration.
- *Part II, Chapter 9:* This chapter provides critical information on safety in discussing body size, physical maturation, personal performance, and interpreting the assessments.

## Experiences and Ideas from Teachers

### *Aerobic Capacity*

1. *Follow the instructions in test manual.*
2. Teachers find that training the student first in the proper techniques and corrections is the most effective way to be safe when doing the tests.
3. Teachers should make sure students monitor their heart rates when doing aerobic capacity tests. Be sure to set up the testing site to provide for this type of monitoring. Some example are:
  - a. Grouping of students based on previous aerobic performance, lanes for safety, practice sessions
  - b. HR monitoring station for monitoring and recording pre-HR, immediate post-HR, and HR after a set time for cool down.
  - c. Teachers have also set up walking cool-down stations or small walking circuits for these activities.
4. If possible have students set goals for aerobic capacity tests, have students work at or slightly above their target HR.
5. If students are above their target HR, another goal could be to lower their HR and laps/time to a safe level rather than increase their number of laps
6. Teachers should report any unusual HR activity to the Health service professionals as needed.

### *Body Composition:*

1. Follow the instructions in test manual.
2. Just providing a report with a body composition score is not acceptable without the critical education component. Teachers first need to understand that body composition is a hot button issue and learn the need to diffuse it. Only when that has been accomplished can teachers impart this to their students in an educational manner. While not necessarily a safety issue, it is a privacy issue and not giving students the full picture of this component can result in adding to a perceived negative body image.
3. Understanding the differences between BMI and skinfolds/percentage of body fat and being able to verbalize this to students and parents is critical.
4. Some school/districts have developed Powerpoints and information pamphlets for student and parents.
5. Some schools/districts don't report body comp info at all in terms of the FG student and parent reports.

### *Abdominal Strength and Endurance*

1. Follow the instructions in test manual:
2. Teachers find that training the student first in the proper techniques is the most effective way to be safe when doing the tests.
3. Can use measuring strips or own imagination. Remember you need a tactile change for the students when sliding their fingertips during the curlup (i.e., felt, tape, carpet samples, etc.)

### *Trunk extensor strength and flexibility*

1. Follow the instructions in test manual.
2. Teachers find that training the student first in the proper techniques and corrections is the most effective way to be safe when doing the tests.
3. Teachers have used a variety of rulers, some soft fabric measuring tapes, foam rectangle shaped blocks marked with measurements, and a variety of rulers which will not poke, pinch, scratch, or cut the student taking the test.

### *Upper Body Strength and Endurance*

1. Follow the instructions in test manual.
2. Teachers find that training the student first in the proper techniques and corrections is the most effective way to be safe when doing the tests.
3. Measuring the 90 degree push up. Teachers have created a number of ways to safely measure this accurately. One example is a string and ball measuring device which measure the angle of the students in a 90 degree position.

### *Flexibility*

1. Follow the instructions in test manual.
2. Teachers find that training the student first in the proper techniques and corrections is the most effective way to be safe when doing the tests.