

# about FITNESSGRAM<sup>®</sup>

## FITNESSGRAM PHILOSOPHY

- H** **HEALTH** comes from regular physical activity and the development of health-related fitness.
- E** Physical activity and fitness are for **EVERYONE** regardless of age, gender, or ability.
- L** Physical activity and physical fitness are for a **LIFETIME**. Aim to develop lifelong patterns of physical activity.
- P** Physical activity programs should be designed to meet **PERSONAL** needs and interests.

## UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTHY FITNESS ZONE

A unique feature of FITNESSGRAM is that it uses scientifically determined standards that are based on how fit children should be for good health. Most children can achieve the health-related fitness standards if they perform sufficient amounts of physical activity on a regular basis. The standards are set specifically for boys and girls and take into account changes with age. Regular participation in aerobic physical activity, which involves sustained movement of large muscle groups, may help children improve their aerobic capacity and maintain healthy body composition. Regular muscular and flexibility exercise can help to improve strength and flexibility.

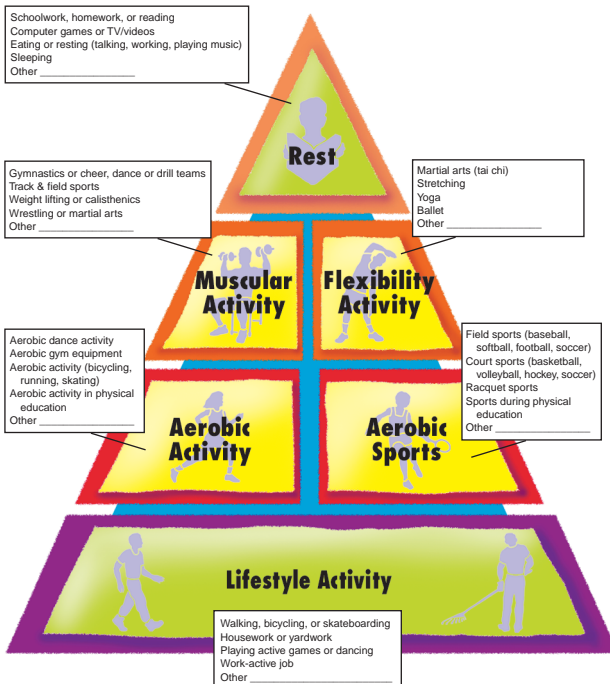
## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The FITNESSGRAM philosophy spells HELP because we need your help to promote physical activity and fitness for your child. If parents value physical activity and encourage their children to be active regularly, children are more likely to view physical activity as an important part of their daily lives. These tips may help you encourage your child to be active:

- Provide a safe play area for your child to play and opportunities to be active.
- Provide equipment and supplies that allow your child to be active.
- Put limits on television time and video game usage (especially right after school).
- Participate in physical activity with your child.
- Help your child develop good physical skills so that he or she can feel competent.

*For additional information on the FITNESSGRAM tests or to learn about how the Health Fitness Zones were established, visit the FITNESSGRAM Reference Guide at [www.fitnessgram.net](http://www.fitnessgram.net).*

## THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PYRAMID FOR CHILDREN



The Physical Activity Pyramid provides a way of describing the variety of physical activities that contribute to good health. Children are encouraged to learn and perform activities from each of the first three levels of the pyramid.

- Level 1 of the pyramid includes lifestyle activities, or activities that can be done as part of daily living. Activities at this level include walking to school, riding a bike, raking leaves, cleaning house, and general outdoor play of all kinds. These types of activity are emphasized because people are more likely to do them throughout their lifetimes.
- As children grow older, they will be interested in activities at level 2, including aerobic sports and other aerobic activities.
- Activities in level 3 include flexibility and muscular fitness activities.

Children should be introduced to the level 2 and level 3 activities gradually and at a rate consistent with their skills, age, and level of maturation.

Long periods of inactivity are inappropriate for children. For this reason it is important that children have several play periods in the form of recess or physical education each day and that they have opportunities to be active before and after school.

FITNESSGRAM was developed by The Cooper Institute and is endorsed by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. For information, go to [www.fitnessgram.net](http://www.fitnessgram.net).

Based in Dallas, The Cooper Institute ([www.cooperinst.org](http://www.cooperinst.org)) is a nonprofit research and education center dedicated to advancing the understanding of the relationship between living habits and health and to providing leadership in implementing these concepts to enhance the physical and emotional well-being of the individual.

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