

# **Process Evaluation of SC FitnessGram**

## **Issue**

Physical inactivity is associated with 6-10% of all deaths from non-communicable diseases and is as high as 30% for heart disease. 42% of children and 8% of adolescents engage in the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity on 5-7 days of the week. Physical activity brings a multitude of health benefits for youth including improved cardiorespiratory fitness, muscle and bone strengthening, maintenance of healthy weight and reduced likelihood of developing risk factors for chronic diseases such as hypertension and type 2 diabetes.

Physical education has long been a staple of schooling during childhood and adolescence. FitnessGram developed by The Cooper Institute is a non-competitive health-related fitness assessment to establish Healthy Fitness Zone standards. In May of 2015, Blue Cross Blue Shield funded a statewide implementation of FitnessGram in South Carolina to collect health-related fitness information of students in participating school districts.

## **Intervention**

During the practicum experience, I was tasked with two main projects pertaining to the FitnessGram evaluation. The first was to create a success story document about FitnessGram with over 300 responses from PE teachers around the state. The 1-page document displayed FitnessGram successes in PE, beyond PE class and students using the data.

I was also tasked with developing a survey for principals in participating districts and gathered over 275 responses. Reasons for the survey include:

- First survey assessing principals point-of-view of FitnessGram
- Assessing knowledge about FitnessGram benefits to school, PE program and Students
- Determine how schools were using FitnessGram data
- Determine resources needed for maintenance of FitnessGram implementation

## **Impact**

These projects are important to the implementation and maintenance of FitnessGram. The success stories and Principal Survey Summary will be included on the FitnessGram website and used to help guide FitnessGram in participating schools by ensuring the project team addresses these needs and helps provide proper resources for maintenance. The success stories are being used to help persuade schools and individuals in leadership roles that FitnessGram is a beneficial program for the schools to keep implementing. Continuing to implement FitnessGram in future years can help the state and schools to keep tracking students fitness levels to continue improving PE programs and school/district wellness policies to ensure students receive the proper amount of activity and continue to improve towards healthy fitness zone standards.

## **Contact**

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