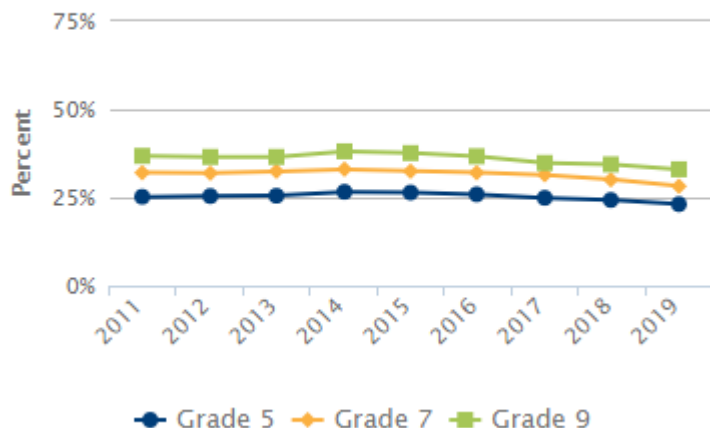


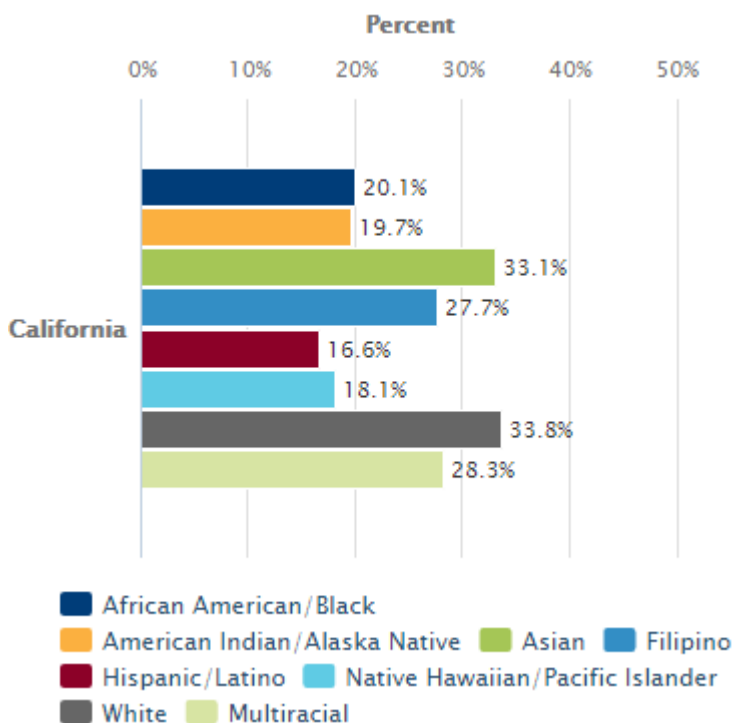
Children's Physical Fitness in California

Students Meeting All Fitness Standards, by Grade Level California



Definition: Percentage of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 scoring in the "Healthy Fitness Zone" on all six areas of the FitnessGram assessment, by grade level (e.g., in 2019, 23.1% of California 5th graders met all fitness standards).
Data Source: California Dept. of Education, [Physical Fitness Testing Research Files](#) (Jan. 2020).

5th Graders Meeting All Fitness Standards, by Race/Ethnicity: 2019



Definition: Percentage of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 scoring in the "Healthy Fitness Zone" on all six areas of the FitnessGram assessment, by race/ethnicity and grade level (e.g., in 2019, 16.6% of Hispanic/Latino 5th graders in California met all fitness standards).

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, indicators of physical fitness include the percentage of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 scoring in the "Healthy Fitness Zone" on all six areas (aerobic capacity, body composition, abdominal strength, trunk strength, upper body strength, and flexibility) of California's physical fitness test, the FitnessGram assessment. These data are available by [grade level](#), [gender](#), and [race/ethnicity](#).

School staff reports on the extent to which their school provides students opportunities for [physical education and activity](#) and their level of agreement that [students at school are healthy and physically fit](#) also are provided.

Why This Topic Is Important

Regular physical activity promotes health and well being. Consistent exercise is associated with improvements in muscle development, bone strength, weight control, mental health, and academic performance in young people. Compared with those who are physically inactive, children who exercise regularly are less likely to develop risk factors for chronic diseases such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes and are more likely to carry active lifestyles into adulthood.

Health experts recommend that children and adolescents ages 6-17 participate in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for a minimum of 60 minutes each day. Exercise should include aerobic activity (e.g., running or bicycling), muscle strengthening (e.g., push-ups), and bone strengthening (e.g., jumping rope), each at least 3 days per week. However, according to 2016 estimates, fewer than one in four young people nationwide get this recommended amount of physical activity. Further, inequities by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status persist, with children of color less likely to meet recommended levels of physical fitness and low-income communities offering fewer opportunities for children to be physically active.

How Children Are Faring

In 2019, fewer than one in four (23%) California 5th graders met state standards in all physical fitness areas, a figure that has remained relatively stable since 2011. During the same period, higher percentages of 7th graders (more than 28%) and 9th graders (at least 33%) met all standards. Girls were more likely than boys to meet fitness standards in 5th grade, but in 9th grade a higher percentage of boys met all standards. Across grade levels, Asian, Filipino, and white students were more

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, [Physical Fitness Testing Research Files](#) (Jan. 2020).

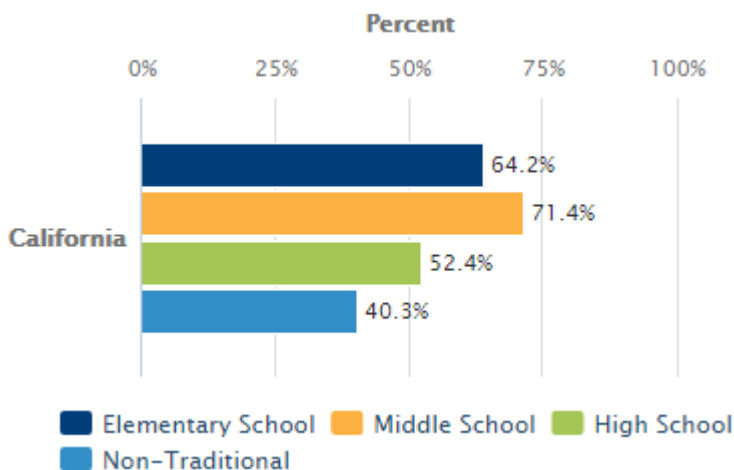
Students Are Healthy and Physically Fit (Staff Reported): 2017-2019

California	Percent			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Elementary School	14.0%	60.6%	23.1%	2.3%
Middle School	10.2%	59.9%	26.4%	3.5%
High School	8.6%	58.5%	29.3%	3.6%
Non-Traditional	6.6%	45.5%	41.4%	6.6%

Definition: Percentage of responses by public school staff on the extent to which they agree students at their school are healthy and physically fit, by type of school (e.g., in 2017-2019, 8.6% of responses by high school staff in California reported strong agreement that students at their school were healthy and physically fit).

Data Source: WestEd, [California School Staff Survey](#). California Dept. of Education (Oct. 2020).

Physical Education and Activity Opportunities Provided A Lot at School (Staff Reported): 2017-2019



Definition: Percentage of responses by public school staff on the extent to which their school provides opportunities for physical education and activity, by type of school (e.g., in 2017-2019, opportunities for physical education and activity were provided a lot according to 52.4% of responses by high school staff in California).

Data Source: WestEd, [California School Staff Survey](#). California Dept. of Education (Oct. 2020).

likely to meet fitness standards than their peers in other groups.

At the local level, there is wide variation in the percentage of students meeting fitness standards. For 5th graders in 2019, across locations with data, figures ranged from less than 15% to more than 40% at the county level and from less than 7% to more than 70% among school districts.

In 2017-2019, 14% of responses from elementary public school staff in California reported strong agreement that students at their school were healthy and physically fit; this compares with 10% of responses from middle school staff, 9% from high school staff, and 7% from non-traditional program staff. When asked about opportunities for physical education and activity available at their school, 71% of responses by middle school staff indicated that these were provided a lot, followed by 64% of responses from elementary school staff, 52% of responses from high school staff, and 40% of responses from staff at non-traditional programs.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:

<https://marin.kidsdata.org/topic/58/physical-fitness/summary>



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