

## **New Study Finds Physically Fit Students Perform Better on Academic Tests**

A study conducted by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DMH) and Department of Education finds that physically fit students perform better on academic tests than their less fit counterparts, United Press International reports. To examine the correlation between physical fitness and academic performance, researchers reviewed the academic and fitness records of students attending kindergarten through eighth grade in New York City public school who participated in the New York City FITNESSGRAM, a standards-based fitness curriculum and assessment. The researchers found that scores on standardized English language arts and math tests increased accordingly with higher FITNESSGRAM assessment scores for all racial and ethnic groups. Noting that physical activity has proven benefits in regard to reducing obesity and mitigating its associated health consequences, New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley contends that the report "suggests that healthy, active kids also learn better." To that end, the report provides recommendations for parents, schools and health care providers to encourage daily physical activity and healthy eating habits. According to the report, parents should ensure their children engage in at least one hour of physical activity daily; limit television, video game and Internet use; prepare healthy meals at home; and provide low-calorie beverage options. In addition, school leaders should ensure that all students receive the required physical education instruction each week, provide skills-based health education and encourage students to consume healthy food items provided by the school. The report also notes that teachers and administrators can encourage fitness breaks in classrooms through planned physical activity ([UPI](#), 7/14/09; DMH [report](#), June 2009). *From RWJF*