



What is Georgia Shape?

Georgia Shape is the Governor's statewide, multi-agency and multi-dimensional initiative that brings together governmental, philanthropic, academic and business communities to address childhood (0-18) obesity in Georgia. Over the next ten years Georgia Shape will work towards increasing the number of students in the Healthy Fitness Zone for Body Mass Index by ten percent. Other objectives set forth by the Governor and Georgia Shape include reaching disparate populations, increasing the aerobic capacity measure of Georgia's youth, increasing the breast feeding rate across Georgia, and increasing the number of early care centers that excel in nutrition and physical activity measures.

Georgia Shape was launched in 2012 by the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH), and includes strategies for addressing obesity from birth through age 18 involving statewide, coordinated efforts with targeted communication strategies and multiple partnerships among other state government agencies, private foundations, healthcare providers, professional athletic teams, and private companies. Efforts focus on schools, communities, child care centers, government and policy agencies, businesses, hospitals, and medical practices. Georgia Shape grew from the mandate passed in 2009 requiring all public school students in grades 1st-12th enrolled in physical education to participate in the Fitnessgram fitness test (which was recently named the national standardized fitness assessment). Georgia Shape, the Georgia Department of Education, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, and HealthMPowers worked together to effectively train physical educators across the state how to successfully implement the Fitnessgram assessment in their school setting. Training is still available through webinars and booster sessions are conducted as needed.

How is Georgia Shape governed and managed?

Georgia Shape is governed by the 16 member Governor's Advisory Council on Childhood Obesity. The various programs, work, strategies, and initiatives are divided into 5 different areas: Data Collection, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Marketing and Communications, and Healthcare. Each area (or sub group) is comprised of council members, academic experts, community experts, and subject-matter professionals.

Georgia Shape is managed by the Georgia Department of Public Health under Commissioner Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D. Georgia Department of Public Health staff manage, coordinate, and facilitate the Georgia Shape work and many partnerships.



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What kind of work does Shape do?

Some of the many Georgia Shape programs include: *Power Up for 30*, a statewide physical activity program for Georgia's elementary schools; the *Georgia Shape Grantee program*, a planning and implementation grant program that provides technical assistance to schools for starting or furthering their wellness policies and activities; the *Governor's Shape Honor Roll program*, a recognition program for schools engaged in best school wellness practices; the *Georgia Shape/Quality Rated Early Care Center program*, a recognition for early care centers that are adhering to the highest level of nutrition and physical activity best practices, and the *Five Star, Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative*, which recognizes birthing hospitals across the state that are working toward Baby Friendly status (breastfeeding best practices).

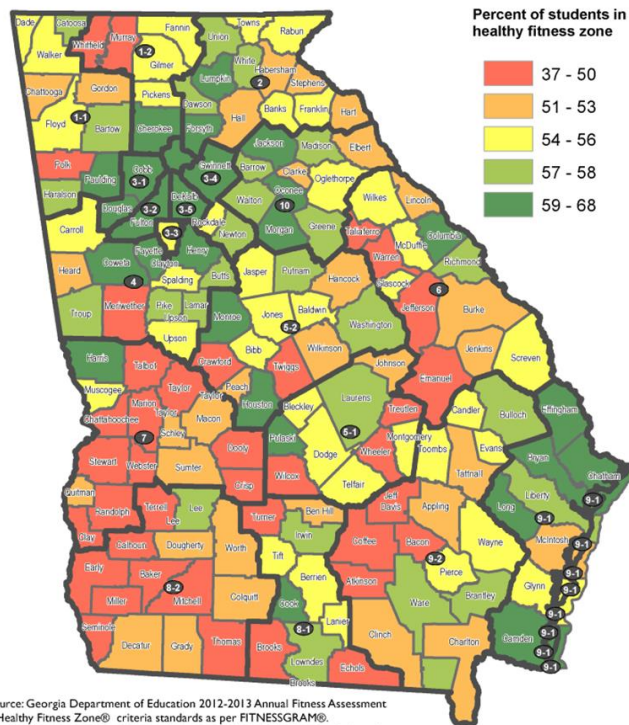
What data or evidence informs Georgia Shape?

Georgia ranks 17th in the nation for childhood obesity. (In 2009, Georgia ranked second.) Poor diet and lack of physical activity contribute to the rise in childhood obesity. Only 52% of middle school students and 43% of high school students in Georgia currently meet the CDC recommendations for physical activity. More than 44% of Georgia's middle school students and 39% of high school students watch television

for three or more hours on a school day and only 17% of high school students in Georgia consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day. In 2008, Georgians spent \$2.4 billion on the direct medical costs of obesity and productivity loss from disease, disability and death. In Georgia, obesity-related hospitalizations of children aged 2 – 19 years **increased 338%** over the eleven year period from 1999 to 2010 (see graph).

In 2013, Georgia Shape collected data from 1.14 million public school students via the Fitnessgram fitness assessment. The results were alarming: 41% of students were outside the Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) for Body Mass index (or at an unhealthy weight), only 19% were able to reach the HFZ for all five fitness assessments (basic assessments measuring flexibility, muscular strength, muscular endurance, aerobic capacity and body mass index), and 25% of the student population was unable to reach the HFZ for any of the five basic fitness components.

Healthy Fitness Zone® (HFZ) Body Mass Index (BMI)*



Source: Georgia Department of Education 2012-2013 Annual Fitness Assessment
 * Healthy Fitness Zone® criteria standards as per FITNESSGRAM®.
 Used with permission from Human Kinetics on behalf of The Cooper Institute®.



What are the overall goals and key objectives of Georgia Shape?

The overall goal of the initiative is to improve the health of young people in Georgia by offering assistance and the opportunity to achieve a greater level of overall fitness while decreasing childhood obesity measures. More specifically, over the next ten years, Georgia Shape will work toward increasing the number of students in the HFZ for Body Mass index by 10%.

This is accomplished by:

- Establishing a basic, benchmark measurement of fitness among Georgia students through the Fitnessgram standardized assessment
- Collecting rich baseline survey data regarding physical activity in elementary schools through the Power Up for 30 Initiative (*Currently piloting this instrument for middle school populations)

- Identifying areas of need (through Fitnessgram, Department of Education Data, Food Access Measures, Healthcare Data, and related partner data) and targeting those areas
- Increasing children's (and families') knowledge of their current health-related fitness levels
- Increasing children/family's capacity to develop and implement strategies for personal improvement

What is the theoretical foundation of Georgia Shape?

Georgia Shape aims to encourage healthy behaviors and promote individual health through coordinated statewide policy and school/community efforts as well as by offering resources to families and individuals. This ecological approach targets multiple influences on health and aims to create a supportive and coordinated environment for increasing physical activity and improving health for school-aged children. The Transtheoretical Model (behavior change) provides a framework for Georgia Shape's messaging and programming efforts. Georgia Shape encourages small, achievable health related behavior changes across all Georgia populations from babies to adults.

Does Georgia Shape use existing programs or best practices?

Georgia Shape incorporates several existing tools, national guidelines, and proven models:

- **FITNESSGRAM:** For the fitness assessments, the Georgia Department of Public Health and Georgia Department of Education selected FITNESSGRAM, a comprehensive health-related physical fitness assessment and computerized reporting system developed by The Cooper Institute. This system includes a complete battery of health-related fitness items that are scored using age and gender specific standards based on how fit children need to be for good health. The assessment includes body composition, abdominal strength, flexibility, and endurance. Physical education teachers in Georgia's public schools (and private schools that wish to participate) receive training on FITNESSGRAM. Parents receive a copy of their child's FITNESSGRAM report card which offers recommendations for fitness improvement. The goal is to motivate kids to score inside the "HFZ." FITNESSGRAM was used in this initiative to establish baseline data for evaluating progress and identifying areas for improvement. The reports provide a way for teachers and parents to teach children about the importance of being active and fit throughout the lifespan, while also promoting engagement in the Shape initiative.
- **Strategies to Increase Breastfeeding:** Strategies include sharing *The Business Case for Breastfeeding* broadly with the Georgia business community while encouraging them to adopt policies that support breastfeeding mothers. In addition, the Five Star Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative is a voluntary program recognizing birthing hospitals for taking the steps to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding. The state-level program creates step-by-step achievable goals and, provides funding and technical assistance to selected Georgia birthing hospitals to support implementation. Rewarding participating hospitals for incremental progress toward Baby-Friendly status. In addition, website messaging, WIC training for Registered Dietitians, and projects and partnerships with the Georgia chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Georgia Breastfeeding Coalition are currently being developed.
- **School initiatives for children and adolescents ages 6-18:** Georgia Shape has several strategies and activities to promote physical activity and health for children and adolescents based on national programs, guidelines and evidence-based recommendations:
 - ❖ *Activities to encourage recommended levels of daily physical activity:*
 - Power Up for 30 is a statewide program that trains educators to effectively integrate 30 minutes of daily physical activity for every student throughout the school day in addition to strengthening physical education. This program provides training, technical assistance, resources, and ideas for additional physical activity before, during, and after school in a way that adapts to each elementary school's needs. Through this program, additional

opportunities for continuing education are available through analysis of school specific data that informs action plans that are scripted by each schools' educators (an administrator, a physical education teacher, and a classroom teacher) during the training session(s). Pilot data suggest that this program significantly improved Aerobic Capacity and BMI measures across one school year.

- The Georgia Shape Grantee program is a technical assistance based program that provides schools (elementary, middle and high) with expert technical assistance and advisement in planning and implementing wellness policy and programming to their school in a way that fits their wants and needs.
 - Georgia Shape promotes joint-use agreements between schools and communities to increase opportunities for physical activity.
 - Georgia Shape promotes participation in the Georgia Safe Routes to School program to expand implementation of safe routes to school while increasing students' daily physical activity levels.
- ❖ *Activities to promote healthy nutrition:*
- The Strong4Life School Cafeteria program allows Georgia's school nutrition staff to understand and implement components of the Smarter Lunchroom Movement out of Cornell University. Cafeteria and school staff learn how to encourage healthy choices in the school cafeteria through marketing tools and promoting healthy options.
 - The Georgia Shape Grantee program provides schools with expert advisement and help in planning and implementing nutrition policy and programming for their school in a way that fits their wants and needs while adhering to the new standards being set forth at the federal level.
 - Encouragement to participate in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's Healthier U.S. School Challenge.
 - Participation in the national Healthy Schools Program to gain recognition for schools or districts achieving specific nutrition or nutrition education standards.
 - Work with local school districts to review, modify, and strengthen wellness policies to improve nutrition quality and nutrition education.
 - Participation in the Georgia Farm to School program to expand the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
 - Participation in Georgia's annual High Performance Healthy Schools Summit, the Georgia Farm to School Summit, and the Georgia Farm to Pre-School Summit
- ❖ *Promote use of existing evidence-based models:*
- The Governor's Shape Honor Role program recognizes Georgia schools and districts that have implemented innovative/evidence-based physical activity and nutrition programs. Schools are awarded based on current wellness activities and best practices in their environment.
 - The Georgia Shape Quality Rated Early Care Award recognizes early care facilities that excel in 14 physical activity and nutrition based components. This award is given in partnership with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

Georgia Shape's approach to increasing physical activity in schools is rooted in research. Research has shown that repeated stimulation and activation of the brain through exercise/physical activity can result in an improved learning capacity ("Spark" by Harvard physician John Ratey, 2008; and Research/Scan, Dr. Chuck Hillman, University of Illinois Physical Activity and Learning Connection). Additionally, the University of Kansas' Physical Activity Across the Curriculum (2009) involved 26 elementary schools integrating physical activity into curriculum for 3 years. For 90 minutes a week, moderate to vigorous physical activity was integrated into academic lessons. Significant improvements were made in academic achievement from baseline to three years compared to the control schools for the composite reading, math, and spelling scores.

Georgia Shape used these approaches to increase physical activity, and this study informed next steps in the initiative, such as the Power Up for 30 program. This program aligns with the National Physical Activity

Guideline recommendation that youth ages 6 to 17 accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. By adding 30 minutes to the school day in addition to physical education class, students are closer the recommendation by the end of the school day. The Institute of Medicine recommends that schools provide at least half of that time during the school day. This Program also aligns with the CDC's Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program. The Power Up for 30 teacher training sessions allow participants to script and then implement action plans that adhere to the CDC recommendations. Georgia Shape is also proud to announce that Power Up for 30 is now evidence- based! The Power Up for 30 pilot evaluated 39 elementary schools (4th grade) and showed significant improvements after implementation of the program. Aerobic Capacity, Body Mass Index (both overweight and underweight), and moderate to vigorous physical activity measures all improved. Third party, nationally known researchers analyzed these data which will continue to inform the initiative as it is delivered across the state.