

INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

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Abstract

This article comprehensively examines inclusive approaches to physical education aimed at ensuring the full and equal participation of children with developmental disabilities in physical education programs. Physical, social and emotional impacts, difficulties encountered and proposed solutions are considered in detail.

Keywords: Inclusive physical education, developmental delay, special education, motor skills, adapted physical education, social integration, teacher training.

Introduction

Physical education is an activity aimed at developing a person's movements, improving health and increasing physical abilities. It includes sports, exercises, games and other physical activities. Through physical education, a person develops motor skills such as strength, endurance, balance, speed and coordination, and prevents diseases. Activity improves mood, reduces stress, and generally improves the quality of life.

Physical education plays a critical role in the overall development of children. The development of motor skills, the maintenance of physical health, the increase in self-confidence and the development of social skills are directly related to physical education. However, for children with developmental delays, this process may not be sufficiently supported in standard physical education programs. Therefore, inclusive physical education should be designed and implemented taking into account the individual needs of each child.

Physical and psychosocial consequences of developmental delayThe health benefits of physical education are manifested in many ways. First of all, it strengthens the cardiovascular system, improves blood circulation and reduces the risk of heart disease. Regular exercise strengthens muscles and bones, increases the body's endurance. but also for mental health - it reduces stress, improves mood and sleep quality.

For children and adolescents, physical education plays an important role in healthy development, proper growth and the formation of social skills. Also, through physical activity, you can avoid excess weight and prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes.

Developmental delay refers to a child's lagging in the development of age-appropriate motor, cognitive or social skills. This can make it difficult to participate in physical activity, as there may be problems with motor coordination, balance, and endurance. Difficulties in social



interaction can also affect relationships with peers and self-confidence. In this context, physical education should create an environment conducive to the comprehensive development of the child.

Children with developmental delays may lag behind their peers in areas such as motor skills, balance, and coordination. Therefore, they need special exercise programs that support their physical development. Such exercises contribute not only to physical, but also to mental development.

Special exercises and their meaningSpecial exercises are designed to meet the individual needs of the child. They are usually aimed at developing balance, flexibility, muscle strength, and coordination. For example, walking on a balance board, playing with soft balls or simple gymnastic exercises promote development. In addition, such exercises increase the child's self-confidence and improve his social interaction. Exercise programs are usually designed and delivered by physical therapists and special education specialists.

The Importance of Inclusive Physical EducationInclusive physical education uses adapted methods and materials to ensure the participation of all learners – especially those with developmental delays. This approach focuses on equity in education and helps children develop their abilities to the maximum. Through inclusive practices:

- Children develop physical skills and gain self-confidence.
- Improve social skills through peer interaction.
- Increase the sense of belonging to the school environment, reduce the risk of isolation.

Problems and difficulties

- **Unadapted physical environment:** gyms and equipment do not meet special needs.
- **Insufficient training of teachers:** teachers do not have enough knowledge and experience in working with children with special needs.
- **Lack of flexibility in programs:** standard curricula are not adapted to individual needs.
- **Social barriers:** lack of empathy among peers, misunderstanding, or exclusion from the group.
- **Lack of awareness of the family and society:** lack of information about the importance of inclusive education.

Strategies for implementing inclusive physical education

1. Individual Educational Plans (IEP) Setting physical education goals and choosing activities in accordance with the child's level of development is critical. IEPs should take into account the strengths and weaknesses of the child.
2. Teacher training and professional developmentTeachers should have basic knowledge of special education, be proficient in adapted physical education methods and be able to apply them. Professional seminars and master classes will be useful in this direction.
3. Collaboration and supportRegular interaction between families, special education professionals, physiotherapists and physical education teachers helps to better meet the needs of children.
4. Adaptation of the environment and equipmentThe accessibility of the physical environment should be improved and aids (e.g. a balancing ball, special balls or soft surface) should be used if necessary.



5. Activities that promote social inclusion Team games, group exercises and peer support systems promote social inclusion. To create a positive atmosphere, it is important to raise awareness in the classroom.

Conclusion

Inclusive physical education for children with developmental delays promotes their physical, social, and emotional development and ensures equal opportunities in education. To achieve this goal, an individual approach, professional development of teachers and the provision of appropriate environment and materials are necessary. Education policies should support inclusion and expand resources to improve the quality of inclusive physical education. Thus, each child will be able to realize his potential in the best conditions.

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