

MOVEMENT GAMES AND BODY EXERCISES IN PRESCHOOL INSTITUTIONS

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(Professional paper)

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Abstract:

The idea of the importance of body activities and games in preschool education is not new. There is historical evidence proving the interest of famous pedagogues in the phenomenon of game. The need for physical activities is becoming ever more obvious and is a prerequisite for a normal growth and development of a young person. Having this in mind, the organization of work in physical education in preschool institutions, as well as importance and applications of movement games and body activities are presented in this study.

Key words: *physical development, physical education, leisure activities, active resiting, dancens.*

Organization of work in physical education in preschool institution

Physical education is defined as “social, intended, and organized educational sphere in which through various physical (movement) activities and by way of various methodical procedures targeted transformations of a versatile personality of child are attained fulfilling his needs for movement and recreation” (Kragujević, 2005).

Advancement of physical development and strengthening of health are some of the most important objectives in preschool education. These objectives are facilitated by physical activities, and especially by hygienic activities. “Child’s stay in a preschool institution must include: a systemic stimulation of organism through gradual enhancement of scope and intensity of movement during the day, a rational diet, fulfilling the needs for sleep and active recreation, spending as much time as possible outdoors, and contact with other natural factors strengthening child’s immunity toward adverse climate impact and illnesses, as well as activities for hygienic purposes” (Kamenov, 1985).

In order to make the stay in a preschool for children exciting, interesting and useful, it is necessary to plan efforts according to the needs, as well as to have a comprehensive approach to the growth and development. With regard to this the program of

physical education should be conceived to accomplish the following tasks:

- to stimulate development of mobility through the natural forms of movement: walking, running, jumping, crawling, climbing, throwing, etc.

- to stimulate general physical abilities: coordination, balance, deftness, strength, quickness, and stamina.

- to act in a preventive manner so as to establish the right stature and a harmonious relationship between the body parts.

The development of movement habits, fine motorics – coordination and deftness, for example, is stimulated by the more complex activities with low intensity, while the development of biomotorical abilities is attained by high intensity activities of less complexity. These are attained through various activities like: games, shaping exercises, overcoming natural obstacles individually or in a polygon, rhythmical games, complex activities (swimming, skiing, bike riding, or roll-shoe skating).

Children spend their time in preschools according to the program that is supposed to provide succession of various activities. Some of these are done while sitting (maths, art) and they should be followed by movement activities, and they should take place outdoors, whenever possible. In order to have as many as possible various movements, the

program of education offers the following forms of activities (Djurković, 1995):

- movement games
- morning body exercises,
- guided activities
- walks,
- freelance activity
- expression through movement (child's dance)

Movement games and body activities offer particular possibilities for realization of the objectives of physical education in preschool institutions. For this reason in the following chapter a particular attention is given to the aforementioned games and activities.

Movement games

The importance of physical activities and games was emphasized in all epochs and is becoming ever more obvious. Underlying the significance of physical education, Lock gave a new sense to the Juvenal's saying *Mens sana in corpore sano*, that is: a healthy mind and creativity can only be developed in a healthy body. Healthy organism, and full physical constitution is the basis for education (Krulj, Kacapor i Kulić, 2003).

Game plays a significant role in the education of preschool children. However, "game in itself is not sufficient, because all the benefits, values, and possibilities are comprised in the ability of educator who shapes and applies it. That is why games, in addition to sanitary, have a huge educational value" (Spiritović, 2001).

Game is especially important for child's health and physical development. "It creates merry disposition, increases liveliness, and fulfills the needs of child for movement. While playing games child learns to direct his movements, and becomes aware of their purpose: catching ball, chasing others" (Levin-Scirina i Mendzerickaja, 1950).

Movement games are guided games and are based on performing of certain movements and actions by bodies, using occasionally various equipment and devices, like, ball, ring, baton, convenient toys, swings, slides, etc., whereby gaining motivation. In its appeal games don't necessarily have a theme, roles and elements with symbolic meaning, rather, action is in the foreground the execution of which requires strength, neatness or quickness, and the sense is acquired by the game's objective. This could be, for example, chasing others, throwing games, passing the ball, high jump,

etc. (Kamenov, 2006).

Movement game is seen as the key form of activity in physical education in preschool children, where movement is a prerequisite of physical development. Through movement children secure rapid breathing, blood pumping, metabolism, rapid release of wastes from body, appetite is improved, as well as rapid growth. In addition to this, a balanced and comprehensive physical development is attained. While selecting a game it is very important to take into account abilities of children in an age group.

Movement game is versatile because child learns coordination routinely and with ease, minding when to run, when to stop, when to stoop down, when to catch the ball, with which hand. Due to this "muscles grow strong, flexible and supple. Game can yield even more benefits if it takes place in a natural environment. All too often winter games, (throwing balls, sleighing, skiing) are neglected, especially in cities. Movement games in fresh air are especially important for functioning of endocrine glands, they facilitate metabolism, speed up oxidation of oxygen in cells, and help organism release wastes (Trnavac, 1979).

Movement games do not only promote physical development. Advocates of the theory of "energy surplus" claim that active play serves as energy exhaust valve, which, when accumulated, makes child uptight, nervous, and irritable. In the main, it has been determined long ago that there is a correlation between physical and psychological development.

Movement games for children are selected with simple, logical, and interesting content, with easy objectives and rules. The role child plays is of utmost importance to him while the outcome is of less importance. In games children have the same tasks, while the role of educator is separate. For middle aged children games with more difficult tasks and rules are selected, since their abilities exceed those of three-year old children. Those children have a better sense of space, their memory and capacity to think is better and that is why they can be given games with separate roles. While playing child is able to run, to chase, and catch other children.

Older preschool children are able to be engaged in the same movement pattern for an extended period of time, and in more than one movement pattern. They can be given games with more diffi-

cult tasks and rules, with different activities in which children have separate roles. At this age there is a desire with children to stand out, so generally they are ready to make more effort.

In selecting games the principle of individualization should be adhered to, since children of same age may differ in abilities, physical development, interests, responsiveness, memory and capacity to think. Some children may be timid and clumsy, while others easily engage in mutual games. The most important thing that there is movement in the game, which is the most interesting thing for children. In this sense games including running, climbing, jumping, crawling, throwing, and catching should be selected. These games make children cheerful, giving them opportunity for affirmation.

In the same way, while selecting games care should be taken of objectives of game, since not all the games have the same impact on children. Some games help development the sense of space, responsiveness or deftness, while other games improve precision in movements, muscle strain etc.

How long the game lasts depends on intensity, objective, interests and number of children. Games of higher intensity require heavier strain on the part of organism, and they should be short. Particular attention should be given to frail children, as well as those recovering after illness.

Game should be repeated 6-8 times, depending on interest shown. However, regardless of the interest shown in the game, it should not last for too long, so as to avoid fatigue. Here are the guidelines as to how long should game last (Djurković, 1995):

- younger age: 5 – 7 minutes
- middle age: 3 – 10 minutes
- older age: 10 – 12 minutes

Body exercises

Body exercises are done every day before breakfast, and in the afternoon before lunch. This is necessary for two reasons: stimulation of essential functions of organism after sleep, and creation of good humor and making regular exercising a habit. Everyday exercising is bound to stimulate the essential processes in organism, first and foremost blood circulation and breathing, as well as general health.

This form of activity can be managed in hall or

in studio, but when weather conditions permit it, exercises in fresh air yield the most benefits.

Duration of body exercises varies depending on age, abilities, and interests:

- younger age: up to 5 minutes
- middle age: up to 6 minutes
- older age: up to 8 minutes

Educator assesses whether the time of morning exercises can be prolonged occasionally. Anyway, familiar movements and exercises should be selected so as to avoid losing time giving explanations.

To achieve optimal organization of educational efforts, as well as to make optimal selection of exercises, body activities can be divided into three stages, which in practice make a whole. They are: introduction, main part, and final part.

Introduction takes up about a quarter of the whole time during which all kinds of walking, running, and jumping are used. For the most part these activities are combined. With younger age, those movement are imitated, while with older age setting goals, and movement games are prevalent. In *main part* muscle development exercises are applied. For each muscle group educator chooses two exercises at the most, up to eight altogether. *Final part* should be executed in walking, or in a quiet movement game. A reverse movement order from introduction can be used (Djurković, 1995).

It is desirable that this form of activity is accompanied with appropriate music, a song, a drum, or hand clapping. Piano music seems to be the most appropriate for these occasions.

Conclusion

Physical education content in preschool institutions is realized through the following activities: movement games, everyday body exercises, guided activities, walks, freelance activities, expression through movement (child's dance).

Taking into consideration that game is the principal form and method of activity in preschool institutions, it is as a unique activity particularly suitable for preschool children. At this age movement game is seen as the most important component of child's development. It provides all the conditions to ensure realization of educational objectives for preschool children. Movement games, are in fact, games with ready-made rules and are based on execution of certain movements and actions with body, but occasionally various devises and equipment are used, such as: ball, ring,

baton, appropriate toys, swing, slide, etc. Action is given supremacy over theme. It requires strength, deftness, or quickness, whereby game objective makes sense of it all.

Body exercises is done before breakfast, or/and before lunch. It is perceived as necessity mainly for two reasons: stimulation of essential functions of organism after sitting or sleeping, and, creating a cheerful frame of mind and making recreation a habit. This form of activity can be managed in hall, or studio, open air is preferable, whenever weather conditions permit.

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ПОДВИЖНИТЕ ИГРИ И ТЕЛЕСНОТО ВЕЖБАЊЕ ВО ПРЕДУЧИЛИШНИТЕ УСТАНОВИ

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(Сѝручен ѝруд)

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Апстракт:

Идејата дека телесниот активност и игра се мошне значајни во воспитно-образовниот процес на децата од предучилишната возраст не е нова. Тоа го потврдуваат историските содржини кои сведочат за интересот на познатите педагози за феноменот на играта. Потребата за занимавање со физичките активности, денес станува се поизразена и е предуслов за нормалниот раст и развој на младиот организам. Заправо, поради тоа, во овој труд е прикажана организацијата на работата за реализација на програмата по физичко воспитување во предучилишните установи, како и значењето и моќноста за примената на подвижните игри и телесните активности.

Клучни зборови: физички развој, физичко воспитување, слободни активности, активен одмор, таници