

THE PARTICULARITIES OF SWIMMING AND ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF BABIES AND THEIR PARENTS

Preliminary communication

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Abstract

The aim of our study is to reveal through the inclusion of parents in the process of swimming training for their babies, whether there are changes in social aspect, both for children and for their parents. The study covered 58 parents of children aged between 6 months and 3 years in the cities of Sofia, Varna, Bourgas and Sandanski where the swimming training for this age group is taking place. Questions were asked to clarify their attitude to this issue. Children's relationships with parents at the early age of 3 play an important role in the social skills of children later. The inclusion of parents in the process of swimming training will contribute to the improvement of social relations, both for children and the parents.

Keywords: *physical condition, social adaptation, children and parents, Questionnaire, motor habits*

INTRODUCTION

Every child is born with a need to move. The forming of motion habits is conducive for the general development of each little child. The infant period of development is typical with its great intensity and quick changes. These predispositions are possibilities for their development. Whether they will be realized exclusively depends on the social background and the upbringing. Swimming is helpful not only for the physical condition, but also for the intellectual development and social adaptation. As one of the few things which parents could exercise together with their children, the sport swimming appears to be an advantageous tool for the education and socialization of the child and his/her parents. In the swimming pool, babies love to contact and they alone initiate it. Swimming builds up a connection of trust between the children and the parents. A huge part of the swimming coaches accents that during the swimming lessons it is desirable for the parents to participate as well. When a parent is involved in the demonstration of the taught technical elements and in the assistance for their implementation in water, the widespread opinion claims that the contact with the trained children is significantly easier.

The development of movements and activity in babies is a continuous process. The construction of motor habits based on natural motor activity is beneficial for the overall development of a young child. The positive influence of physical activity on behavior and the development processes of mentality, as well as the possibilities for amendment in cases of various deviations, is significantly more in early childhood than in any other age groups.

The age period we are considering has intense changes in all displays which are in direct relationship with the physiological development of the child. With constant interactions between the internal conditions (hereditary and innate predisposition) and the external influences, a long and complicated process starting from the moment of birth, is happening. These dispositions represent an opportunities

for development. If they are to be realized and developed solely depends on the social environment and upbringing the environmental exposures can activate or suppress the propensities. Many scholars who have discussed various aspects of the problem whether children should start swimming from the period of infancy, claim that the positive effects are numerous for the development, both of the physics and the psychics of the child (Ahrendt, 2001; Backus (Бакюс), 2009; Mitlina, 2010; Pavlova (Павлова), 2004).

It is on this basis that we consider the sport, in particular the swimming, as a means of development and education.

In early childhood, sport is mostly an entertainment. Bathing and swimming should be fun and a nice spent time. The common bathing between the child and his mother is a daily ritual in many tribes and nationalities residing in adequate climatic conditions. Swimming helps for the invigoration of the lungs and the improvement of the general physical condition, as well as for the intellectual development and the social adaptation. According to experts, these abilities provide faster and seamless transition from home to kindergarten and to school, and therefore it affects favorably and exclusively the children with various physical and mental challenges.

1. In a study, Diem (1967) shows that the children swimmers are with great confidence and are better adapted to new situations.

We realize that swimming is not only a means for the improvement of the socialization of infants but is also an important moment in the socialization of young mothers, who, instead of staying isolated with their children at home, weekly meet with each other in a pleasant atmosphere. Children feel the mood of their parents. The first thing that must be realized by the parents is that the water is not a risk for their children. The parent should calmly and confidently approach the swimming lessons. His/her task is to prepare the child for fun and positive emotions from the stay in the water environment (Mitlina, 2011).

Watching how their children approach them under the water is the most exciting part for the parents. Swimming lessons bring a joy and are a kind of social life source, both for the infants and for their parents. Swimming builds relationships of trust between children and parents, and in many countries it is recommended for adoption so that the physical contact could be reached more naturally. In Germany, exercises in water with the child are almost mandatory in the process of the adoption of a baby. The aim is the contact that is not biological, to be supplemented with physiological. The so-called contact "skin on skin" and the positive emotions, enrich the communication between parents and the children.

METHODS

The aim of our study is to reveal through the inclusion of parents in the process of swimming training for their babies, whether there are changes in social aspect, both for children and for their parents.

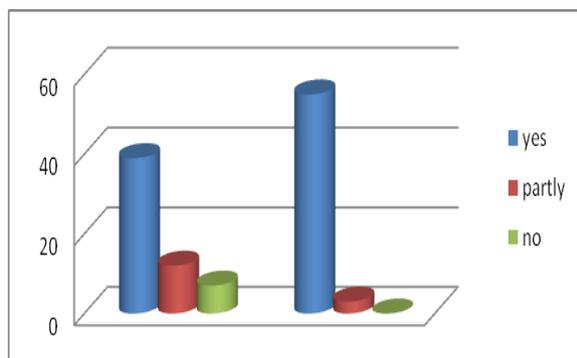
In terms of that, we set ourselves the following tasks:

- Research and analysis of the attitudes of parents, whose children are engaged in swimming, towards the process of swimming training;
- Research and analysis of the attitudes of parents, whose children are swimming, towards their role in the process of swimming training;
- Research and analysis of the attitudes of parents, whose children are engaged in swimming, towards the need for their involvement in swimming training;

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study covered 58 parents of children aged between 6 months and 3 years in the cities of Sofia, Varna, Bourgas and Sandanski where the swimming training for this age group is taking place.

Questions were asked to clarify their attitude to this issue. In the conducted preliminary study, most of the swimming coaches emphasized that during the swimming lessons for infants, it is advisable for their parents to participate, to demonstrate the studied elements of technology and to help in their implementation in water, as the opinion, that the contact with the educated person is easier in these conditions, was clearly expressed. (Graphic 1.)



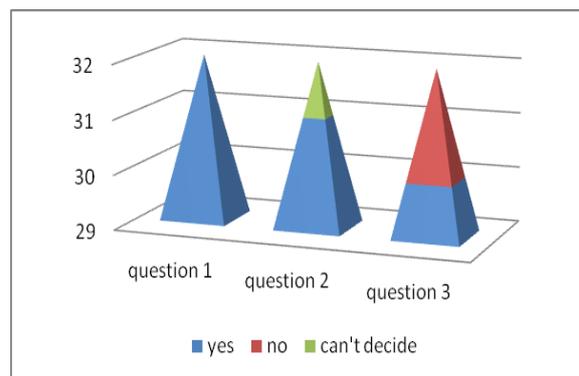
Graphic 1. The opinion of trainers

The opinion of 32 swimming experts who participated in the experiment was investigated. According to their answers, the help of the parents has a positive effect not only

on the effectiveness of training, but also on the education and socialization of their children. The answers to question 1. "Do you think that the children you are training, more easily acquire the educational content with parental help?" are categorically "Yes" – 100%, to question 2. "Do you believe that the children you are training become more independent at the end of the experiment?" and question 3. "Do you think that the children you are training become more sociable at the end of the experiment?", are respectively "Yes" for almost all 30 respondents, 1 was "can't decide" and only 2 of the respondents answered with "no".

The positive attitude of professionals, confirms our assertion that the swimming training for babies with inclusion of the parents in the learning process is to attract, retain durable and to enhance their interests and occupation with physical activity, in particular swimming.

In the survey conducted with the parents on the issues related to their attitude to the learning process of swimming (Graphic 2.) all 58 respondents are unanimous that in this age group the learning process needs to be specially adapted and that the tools that are traditional for the initial training of children, are not effective with such young students. To the questions "are you familiar with the traditional methods of swimming training", 39 answer positively, 7 negatively, and a 12 - "partially", "do you consider it necessary for children at this age to be taught with specially adapted swimming methods" answer "Yes" are 55 against 3 partially.



Graphic 2 Attitude of parents to learning process

To the questions related to the role of the parents in the process of learning (Table 1.) the vast majority responds that they feel an immense pleasure to participate in the learning process – 47 of the respondents. This makes them more sensitive to the development of the child - 42 replies, provides them with positive emotions - 39, the relationship between the parent and the child is enhanced in a positive aspect - 41, develops the positive attitude towards physical activity, both for their children and for themselves - 35.

The attitudes of parents towards the need for their involvement in swimming training is visible in the responses to the questions "Do you find it necessary to do joint trainings with the child?". The following activities were sorted by a preference: to be at the swimming lesson with your baby, to go out with friends and to rest at home.

Table 1. The role of parents in the learning process

Answers	Plesure	Empathy	Positive emotions	Relationships	Positive attitude
Yes	47	42	39	41	35
No	3	2	3	10	6
Can't decide	9	13	16	1	17

CONCLUSIONS

Children's relationships with parents, at the early age of 3, play an important role in the social skills of children later.

Children whose parents are caring, understanding and have a healthy relationship with them, show more subtle social skills and have positive expectations from the meeting and contacts with their peers.

The pleasure of playing in water, in combination with the process of getting acquainted with its physical features, stimulates the cognitive abilities of children and their desire to learn more about the environment.

The inclusion of parents in the process of swimming training will contribute to the improvement of social relations, both for children and the parents.

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