

SPORT PERFORMANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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Abstract

This paper will focus on spending free time in a healthy way. Nowadays, it is evident that children spend most of their time sitting on their desks at school, or sofa at home while watching TV or chair while playing games in a PC or laptop. This is an indicator of a considerable lack of movement which to a certain extent results in the limitation of the psychomotor development of the child. The various sports activities are the best and healthiest way to spend free time. Sport's aim is the comprehensive and harmonious development of children, i.e through sports activities they acquire physical skills, have their will shaped, become disciplined, persistent, daring and build self-confidence. Sport guarantees overall development of personality, as it prepares the individual both at practical and psychological aspect. Moreover, sport is key to the anatomical-physiological development of the elasticity of muscles, functioning of the systems of the body, improvement of the neuromuscular processes, protection against overweight and obesity.

Keywords: *movement, sport, psychomotor development, anatomical-physiological development*

Introduction

The basis of health and physical development of children are created at an early age with the various games played in the family, schools and kindergartens. Games are considered to be the most important tools for the psychological and physical development of the child. They are seen as the reflection of reality and help them understand the active character in them.

Education of self-responsibility is probably one of the greatest help that we may give to the children nowadays, where there are only a few places for them to play with one-another and technology occupies most of their free time. We must educate them to organise their day and especially their free time.

The example of parents who love sport, play, walk for leisure, because they consider sports important for the healthy body, is better than convincing the children to be involved in sports activities. Children must know that the parents are in favour of sports and consider sports to be important part of life.

Aim of study/research

The aim of this study is to get to know and understand the role of sports in the development of children because from my work with children of all the ages I have observed considerable differences in their psycho-motor development. Children who have been encouraged by the parents to be involved from an early age in simple games within the family environment, various outdoor games in open air and even collective sports demonstrate their priority in the development of anthropometrical parameters of superior height, but above all, it is quite visibly in them the development of the physical capacities; they are more agile, flexible and willing to play. These features that I have seen, encouraged me to work with the children on daily basis and study thoroughly every single action they perform, so as to understand their development or shortcoming in both the motor and psychological aspect.

Research topics

I have elaborated this topic given my wish to forward to message to everyone. "Sport is the key for the psycho-motor development of children". It must be acknowledged by the parents, educators and teachers of physical education because children always play with the objects that surround them. While playing the children acquire the capacity to see the behaviour assessment of other friends. Game helps them develop the mental horizon and speech capacity as well as the capacity of the children to create. The parent can see in their games their interests and the reflection of life. Games are useful in the development of all the psychic processes starting from

the senses to the way of thinking, will and feelings. Game is a kind of training which prepares the children for life. Confrontation with new friends and sharing their time with them is quite a simple issue, because sports activities play an important role in the social aspect. Sport and mainly collective sports educate in them the spirit of cooperation, solidarity, tolerance and solving of problems. Sports helps them understand that all the parties may be winners when communicating, respectfully, and finding a satisfactory solution.

Research question

The main question of this study is: what is the role of sport performance in the development of children. Before answering this question, first we have to know if the sports activity is one of the means for their development and how does it affect their development and what are the sports disciplines which have a bigger impact on the development of psychological aspects. All these questions will be given an answer in the study.

Scientific methods

Parent - teacher meetings. Talking to parents is quite useful to me because I understand their progress and deficiencies during the class or training and come to relevant conclusion. When establishing my first contact with them I address questions as:

Do they talk to their children to inform them of the sports activities impact on their development?

How much time do they spend playing with the children? How do they organize their free time?

Observation: following the progress of every single child and studying carefully the changes to their motor development.

Findings:

Children who under the care of their parents have acquired already the elementary physical skills, have spent time playing in different places and going along with other children, have been subject to a regular daily regime, reflect their difference in the social aspect as well as physical aspect. Through sport performance the following are developed:

1-Interests. They are numerous, similarly as the sports activities they may perform. Based on the sports activity they are divided into:

- Active interests
- Passive interests

Active interests are powerful acting interests which encourage and mobilise the children to play and act so as to learn and acquire the elements of the game and reach their final goal of winning the game. Passive interests, on the other hand, do the contrary. Usually these are poor interests. Interests are formed and development at an early age during the leisure process of children. During the age of 2-3 years the child's interests related to walking and playing different games are development, but interests for the game is still persistent during the pre-school age, however at another level expressed in movement games and sports activities. In order to understand better the role of the demonstration of interests, let me explain it in a simple example:

Assume you are with your child in an open field and you have with you a ball and a bicycle. Your wish is to teach the child ride the bicycle and of course, this will be a good activity for the development of the lower limbs and mainly the muscles of the pelvis. Instead he meets some friend and looks forward to playing with them. Knowing something about interests, of course you will not insist that your child learns riding the bicycle, as this would be contrary to their wish and consequently, he will show no interest in riding the bicycle. If you let him play with his friends, thus respecting his wish, he will play, move, be active and try to overcome any difficulties.

2- Development of the thought and imagination. The children who have been active in movement activities have already developed the form of personality through which he fulfils his personal needs and tasks. Movement activities will help them to know how to plan in their mind their movement pattern, the limits and then their actions.

3- In the playgrounds the children establish contact and communication with other children of different group ages. They have informal talks and learn constructing their thoughts.

4- Cooperation and tolerance are developed as well through their active involvement in collective games and sports. Their willingness to talking and being as collaborative as possible, will result in the required success. Confronting their friends helps the children learn organising their time and creating friendly relations. Good relationship with the friends of the school or a certain group is the source of satisfaction for them. The strength of children come to surface in these relationship they have with other children. Personality is mainly defined by features which do not concern the level of knowledge; instead they are closely linked to the fundamental attitudes and aims. Education does not concern only the mind; it concerns the heart and spirit as well. Life skills are built upon many phenomena of the daily life. Therefore, we must provide for the children the proper orientation so that they maintain their character and develop further their personality.

5- Discipline is another aspect that they show. They must know how to be disciplined and respect the rules set by the teacher or trainer as regards the class hours and games. This adaptation of the rules with discipline emerges best in the children who are actively involved in collective sports including baseball, football, volleyball etc.

6-Sports is a way for the children to learn how to accept victory or loss (accept the result). As already said, sports, and mainly collective sports, educate in them the sense of collaboration, solidarity, tolerance and settlement of problems. In a game or race it is clear that only one party will be the winner and the other party will be the loser. Sports shows them that the teams may be winners or losers and in the end of the game they meet the members of the opposing team and accept the results communicating with them respectfully.

7- Sports helps in developing the will. It is through will that the person always makes efforts to change and improve the conditions for a proper environment, a process which otherwise would be impossible. All these activities are carried out through movements: voluntary and involuntary. Children who have spent most of their time at home, in front of the TV and computer, have poor qualities of will. All the movements that they make during the physical education classes and sports activities are voluntary movements performed for a certain goal and such movements are acquired and strengthened with their systematic exercise.

In order to illustrate this throwing the ball up high and catching when it falls, is the best example.

The first jump to catch the ball is voluntary because the child is aware that in order to do the exercise properly he must throw the ball up high and then catch it, which means that he is aware of these movements. When the child does this for the first time, he seems to catch the ball with difficulties even though the ball is not thrown considerably high. After doing the same exercise several times, one can easily see improvement in his movement and jumping, for a defined purpose of throwing and catching the ball.

8- Important aspects of any sports activity are the increase of concentration and attention and development of the creative skills. To this end it is important to choose the games adapting them to the age, gender and conditions of the surrounding environment. Little children are very much agile but they get tired quickly as well. This is a reason which their movements might not last long, and very often parents intend to ask them to rest. It is important to know that they should not be intensively involved in movements as it is damaging to the organism of the children. A combination of high and low intensive activities reduces fatigue in children and moreover they must be performed in a controlled way and with rests in between. The duration of physical activities must be adapted to the time of focus of attention of children, which varies depending on their age.

9. Every single child has certain personal skills, many of which unfortunately do not play any role in the training process. Children, on their way, are interested and eager to play. No child is lazy or lacks interest and fun in playing. It is for ten years one that I have encouraged them to do sports. A prerequisite to performing a successful sports activity is the will and desire because it is impossible to oblige a child to play or run, otherwise their attention and movement capacity will be damaged. They may stay, under this obligation, for many hours in the playground, and learn nothing and make no movements at all. Lack of will results in a total blocking of the body as well.

Shortcomings of children who are not involved in sports from the social aspect

1- Children refuse to be involved in organised games. Playing for long hours before the PC and restricting contact with the outside worlds and other children, isolates them and makes it difficult for the parent to convince them to go out for a walk or play with the friends. It is difficult and boring for them playing with the friends, because they must comply with the rules of the games, whereas with the computer they find it easier as it is a game controlled by them alone.

2-Lack collaboration and tolerance. During the games, there is a category of children who seeks to lead and guide as they want and refuse the suggestions of their peers. They insist on making their voice heard in all the ways and start shouting because they refuse playing a game in which they are not the leaders. If the contrary happens, they abandon the game and withdraw themselves to an environment where they may be the leaders.

3- Children refuse to accept losing. Some of the children during organised games want to be only the winners and if the contrary happens, they become nervous and bored. They want the game to start from the very beginning and make use of several unfair justifications just to have their wish fulfilled that is “winning”. This situation is a consequence of the frequent lack of systematic time that they must spend playing, so that they learn and understand that in a game there is only one winner. In the long run, that is the fun of the game.

4- Avoiding games of movement, because of their poor physical condition. Children get tired quickly and they are not in good mood. This is the reason they become sad and see everything negatively. It is further reflected in them missing classes, lack of desire to move and join different sports with the justification of being tired, having head ache, etc. This condition enhances their passivity which of course brings about negative consequences on the body. They may be helped by trying to create a nice atmosphere and telling them that tomorrow it's a new day and they will have fun in playing with their peers or even during the physical education classes. Try to tell them that you have gone through the same situation but with your hard work you became the leaders of the class. These optimisms will strengthen the trust in them and it will be converted into strength and work. Do not forget that the parents are their heroes in life.

5-Failure to wait for their turn and comply with the rules of the teaching classes. During the teaching classes some of the children fail to perform the exercises in an organised way based on the rules imposed by the teacher. The reason of this is the great wish that some of them have to work as hard as possible and demonstrate to their peers and the teacher how good they are at performing the movements. Most of them look forward to the physical education classes, as they want to have fun and see it as the only option of entertainment within the school premises. It is through the games that discipline is developed in children. The rules contained in a game are one of the factors which develops in them the sense of responsibility in applying certain rules. They are presented with the rules and they must apply the rules as they are, otherwise the game is invalid.

6- Failure to show fear and use of violence during the game. Such phenomena is a concern for all the other children and the teachers of physical education. Playing in this form is mostly demonstrated by the category of isolated children who are not familiar with the phenomenon of the game and the applicable rules, collaboration, tolerance, respect for friends and above all accepting the result. They have to be dominant, prevail over their friends and if any of their friends is better and well-prepared and mostly in charge of the game, they try to prevent them in all the ways, by pushing them, grabbing the ball from their hands, insulting them or even hitting at them.

7- Evident sense of inferiority. Children who spend most of their time at home, who have a poor psycho-motor development and consequently get tired quickly, fail to follow the pace of others or the pace determined by the teacher of physical education, fail to have the agility of others, are intolerant and have difficulties in finding a common language with other friends. Because of all these consequences they understand their difference from their friends, and significant sense of inferiority. Little children very often complain in the morning of tummy pain, their hands get wet of perspiration and they refuse eating. The children show all these symptoms because of fear of facing a situation which they consider difficult.

Conclusion

Sports activity plays an extraordinary role in the development of children. It serves not only to protecting and strengthening their health, building a strong and fit body, performing graceful movements but also developing their personality. Game is a special aspect of the activity employed for the physical development, entertainment and relaxation. Children, from the early age, must be involved in different sports activities, a process which develops to a considerable extent, their personality. The main type of activity of children, during the pre-school age, is game, as the appropriate form of entertainment and active participation in social life. Physical activity ensures overall development of personality. It prepares the children for life as regards the practical and psychological character.

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