



FEATURES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES

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The preschool period is one of the most responsible periods of human life in the formation of physical health and cultural skills, ensuring its improvement, strengthening and preservation in the future. Today it is known: 40% of diseases in adults were "laid down" in childhood, at the age of 5-7 years. That is why preschool physical education should form the level of health of the child and the foundation of the physical culture of the future adult, which includes the following:

- children's positive attitude towards physical exercises, games and hardening procedures, personal hygiene rules, observance of the daily routine;
- elementary knowledge, cognitive interest in physical education;
- elementary skills of natural movements of general developmental character, basics of rhythmic, correct posture, skills of orientation in space, participation in collective activities (games, dances and holidays), culture of behavior, independence, organization and discipline;
- skills of self-care, taking care of equipment for classes, etc.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the characteristics of physical education for preschool children in the United States.

Objectives:

- To study theoretical sources;
- to identify the features of physical education in the USA.

Physical Education of Preschool Children in the United States

There have been many studies abroad that show the indispensable contribution of purposeful physical education to the psychomotor, mental and emotional development of preschool children.

The results of medical research, in turn, indicate the need for physical activity to ensure the normal development of the musculoskeletal system, the fact that a passive lifestyle during these crucial years directly affects the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, the propensity to overweight and the general state of health in adulthood.

Other studies have shown that the preschool period is crucial in shaping attitudes toward physical education and the desire to learn new types of physical activity. There is evidence that at age 8, children make 70% of their decisions about participation or non-participation in physical activity based on their subjective assessment of their level of fitness. And because optimal emotional development requires a child to be confident and not feel



alone, this requires mastering a wide range of motor skills.

Thus, it is obvious that physical education is an essential aspect of preschool education in general. It is important to organize physical education of preschool children in such a way that it develops not only motor abilities, skills and physical qualities, but also a positive attitude toward physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

One of the most important aspects is the level of professional training of educators. As a review of the specialized literature has shown, in most countries, in public preschools, physical education classes are taught by a primary caregiver. This, however, does not apply to private preschools, especially children's play and health centers, where classes with children are taught by certified specialists in physical education.

As for professional training of kindergarten teachers, in most countries it is carried out in special educational institutions or on faculties of pedagogical educational institutions. In the USA, for example, there is a course for kindergarten teachers which prepares specialists for 2 years to work with pre-school children. One of the subjects in these educational institutions is also physical education.

In addition to generalists working with pre-school children, who are trained in teacher training colleges, physical education students at universities may choose to major in "Teaching Physical Education in Elementary Schools," which typically provides them with the necessary knowledge to work with pre-school children

Recently in the USA special attention is given to the organization of

groups of education and upbringing of preschool children (up to 4 years old) in public schools. Like most government programs, these groups are intended for children from low-income families. However, as American experts believe, the work in this direction is slow and in many respects unsatisfactory. At present, for example, only 24 states have such "preschool" groups in their school districts. As for state funding for these groups, its level is extremely low. For example, the cost of a quality program is \$5,000 per year per child, while state subsidies range from \$1,000 to \$2,300. According to one of the initiators of Head Start, J. Sugarman, the problem of funding preschool programs could be solved by raising the income tax by 0.3%. "In this case," J. Sugarman points out, "\$20 billion would be accumulated within 5 years."

Features of the physical education program

In the United States, the following are considered the main aspects of the preschool physical education program: formation of psychomotor skills, movement games, gymnastics, dance, physical fitness, and water games.

In the most general form the structure of physical education programs in the preschool period consists of four main sections:

1. Psychomotor development. During formation of psychomotor skills children are introduced to the name of body parts, their proportional sizes. Then children form visual perception (ability to visual observation, visual memory, etc.), auditory and finally kinesthetic perception.

2. teaching motor skills. This section includes, in turn, the following types of physical activity:



(a) playful physical activity aimed at developing and improving basic motor skills (running, jumping, throwing, grabbing, kicking (the ball) with their feet and hands). In addition to controlling the correctness of movements, children are taught to fully control their body movements so that the studied motor skills can be used in different situations.

When organizing games of physical activity for preschool children it should be remembered that the rules of games should be as simple as possible, and participation in them should be mass. The basis of competitive games should be mutual assistance and cooperation, and the main emphasis of such activity is on improving individual results, and not on winning over anyone;

b) gymnastics, including exercises for balance, climbing, somersaults, exercises to transfer weight from one part of the body to another, as well as exercises that contribute to the development of explosive strength, such as jumping. For gymnastics classes with preschool children simple equipment is needed: wooden benches, cubes. etc;

c) dances through which children learn to give their movements an interpretive, expressive and communicative character. In dance classes, children are taught to adequately perceive and evaluate space, time and power, relationships with their peers and the world around them. Dance implies exploratory, improvisational and inventive activities of children. Through dance, children develop a sense of rhythm. Children use different movements and their combinations in the process of dance.

3. Physical fitness, which is the most important part of physical education

programs for preschool children. It is at this, the initial, stage that children should be encouraged in every way to be physically active, to play moving games.

In addition to theoretical training, this section includes testing of preschool children's physical fitness levels. In the United States, there are plans to adapt the Physical-Best testing program for younger preschoolers. At the moment, however, only 5-6 year olds can be tested with this program.

4. Swimming and water games. This section of the physical education program is important for preschool children and if there are conditions (swimming pool, qualified instructors) it is recommended to use it when working with preschool children. In this case children are taught to overcome their fear of water by means of water games, they are taught safety rules on water, as well as the basics of swimming.

In preschool (3 to 6 years old) play becomes the leading activity of the child. Experts emphasize that play is the optimal basis for physical, mental, social and emotional development. The importance of play is recognized by educators around the world. As the results of the analysis of special literature data show, programs for physical education of preschool children in all countries include movement games, which are often called free games. The task of the teacher is in no way suppressing the initiative of children, to direct the game in the right direction. Such views are held by most experts, both in our country and abroad.

The American researcher K. Bennett distinguishes four basic situations which should be modeled by the tutor: free choice situations, problem-controlled situations,



imitations, creative situations. Each situation can best be modeled in certain conditions - on the playground, in the gym. Each situation requires a different degree of activity from the tutor.

1. The situation of free choice is best modeled on open sports grounds equipped with safe equipment. In this situation the instructor gives children an opportunity to explore and repeat arbitrarily carried out motor actions by themselves. Children are given freedom of choice - they can play alone if they wish, in cooperation with others or in the company of their friends, but independently.

2. The child learns about movement in space by creating problem-controlled situations. The task of the tutor is to simulate a problem and to encourage in every child a desire to find a solution.

3. imitations. This situation consists in that the tutor carries out certain motor actions, and then children imitate them as accurately as possible. The tutor should observe principles of individual approach, dividing all children into small groups according to their capabilities and setting adequate tasks in each of them.

4. The last situation used by educators to teach preschool children motor actions is a creative situation. Here the tutor sets a difficult task for children - to express this or that concept by means of movement. For example, to represent feelings of anger, joy, merriment, etc.

Besides maintenance of the optimum level of control over the actions of preschool children, creation of game situations, according to the American educator J. Klein, the following factors have great methodical value:

- a rational program based on knowledge of the psychological and

physiological characteristics of children in a particular age group;

- optimal quantitative composition of preschool groups, creating the basis for the application of the principle of individualization;

- the level of professional training of educators.

Conclusion

Private preschools are not financed by the state. These institutions exist primarily through tuition and fees charged to parents.

In many private preschools the fees are extremely high - this is primarily due to the prestige of the institution, the quality of the education and training programs, the large number of teachers, and other reasons. Nevertheless, realizing the importance of preschool education, parents are willing to pay as much for their child as their family budget allows. Fees for a child in private preschools vary enormously. In the United States, for example, according to a number of sources, it may be \$5,000 a year, \$1,000 a semester, \$100 a semester, or \$3 a day.

Additional funding for private preschools can come from subsidies received from sponsors, which can be individuals as well as various firms, companies, etc. In the U.S., for example, in recent years an increasing number of managers have been organizing day care centers and after-school programs for their employees' children at firms and businesses. As J.E. Onnen, Director of Program Development at the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, points out, physical education is not specifically provided in such children's groups, but they are provided with the sports facilities of these companies and



parents can come during the workday to exercise with their children.

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