
Parents' views on the role of physical activity in maintaining the health of children with hearing impairment

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Abstract: The article examines the role of physical activity in maintaining and strengthening the health of children with hearing impairments through the prism of parental views. The research problem is caused by the fact that children with sensory impairments belong to a risk group for the development of concomitant deviations in physical and psycho-emotional development, and their level of motor activity is often lower than that of their peers without impairments. Parents are the main agents of influence on a child's lifestyle, determining the level of their participation in sports or health activities.

The purpose of the article is to identify the attitude of parents of children with hearing impairments towards physical activity and its role in maintaining and strengthening health. To achieve this goal, a set of theoretical and empirical methods was used, including analysis of scientific literature, questionnaires, and data generalization.

The results of the study showed that the vast majority of parents recognize physical activity as an important condition for the physical and social development of a child. At the same time, in practice, the regularity of classes is insufficient, which is associated with a lack of adapted programs, a shortage of qualified teachers, financial barriers, and low awareness of parents about the possibilities of inclusive classes. It was also found that the active position of parents directly correlates with the level of physical activity of children.

It was concluded that the development of adapted physical education programs, training specialists to work with children with hearing impairments, and raising parental awareness are key conditions for forming a healthy lifestyle. The results obtained can serve as a basis for further scientific research and practical initiatives aimed at integrating children with sensory impairments into the sphere of physical culture and sports.

Keywords: physical activity, children with hearing impairment, parents, health, inclusive education.

1. Introduction

Physical activity in modern scientific discourse is considered one of the leading factors in shaping a child's health, covering not only physical but also mental and social aspects of development [1]. Regular physical education and sports contribute to the harmonious growth of the body, improve the functional capabilities of the cardiovascular, respiratory, and musculoskeletal systems, and strengthen the immune system [2]. In addition, physical activity has a significant impact on the development of cognitive processes, emotional stability, and social skills in children [3]. In the case of children with hearing impairments, physical activity becomes even more important, as it can compensate for sensory deficits, help develop alternative communication strategies, and improve quality of life [4].

The problem of maintaining and strengthening the health of children with special educational needs, in particular those with hearing impairments, is one of the key areas of modern pedagogy and special psychology. Scientific research confirms that children with hearing impairments often face

certain limitations in physical development: less developed coordination of movements, reduced endurance, and difficulties in maintaining balance [5]. This is explained not only by medical and biological factors, but also by social conditions - insufficient access to sports clubs, a lack of adapted physical education programs, and low awareness among teachers [6]. In this context, it is extremely important for parents to understand the role of physical activity in their child's life, because the family is the primary social environment that shapes a child's attitudes, motivations, and behavior patterns [7].

Parents' attitudes toward physical activity determine not only the frequency of participation in sports activities, but also the overall level of the child's involvement in an active lifestyle. Parental support or, conversely, indifference directly influences the child's interest in sports, discipline, regularity of training, and ability to overcome difficulties [8]. Studies show that children whose parents are actively involved in sports or have a positive attitude towards physical culture have a significantly higher level of motivation for physical activity and demonstrate better results in physical development. In the case of children with hearing impairments, this influence is even stronger, as such children need additional support in overcoming communication barriers, adapting to specific training conditions, and acquiring new motor skills [9].

Scientific sources indicate that parents often underestimate the importance of physical activity for maintaining the health of children with special educational needs [10]. Common reasons include concerns about the safety of classes, doubts about the competence of coaches and teachers, and the lack of specialized programs [11]. At the same time, existing research convincingly proves that physical education adapted to the individual abilities and needs of the child can significantly reduce the manifestations of secondary developmental abnormalities, promote the formation of self-confidence, and ensure full integration into society [12].

In the current context of inclusive education, the issue of interaction between schools and families in shaping a healthy lifestyle for children with hearing impairments is particularly relevant [13]. The role of parents is not only to create favorable conditions for their child's participation in physical activity, but also to foster a positive emotional background, maintain interest, and ensure regularity of classes [14]. Parents become an important mediator between the child and social institutions that organize sports and health activities [15].

In view of this, research into parents' views on the role of physical activity in maintaining the health of children with hearing impairments is extremely important both scientifically and practically [4; 7]. First, it allows us to identify the level of awareness and attitudes of families towards the issue of physical activity. Second, it helps to identify barriers that limit children's participation in sports and health activities. Third, it provides a basis for the development of targeted programs to support parents and foster effective cooperation between teachers, doctors, coaches, and families [6].

Thus, physical activity is not only a means of maintaining the health of children with hearing impairments, but also a socio-pedagogical factor that unites the child, family, and society in the process of inclusive interaction [5]. Research into parental views in this context opens up prospects for improving educational policy, developing adapted physical education programs, and creating favorable conditions for the harmonious development of children with special educational needs [8].

2. Object and subject of research

The object of the study is the process of physical activity in children with hearing impairments.

The subject of the study is the views and attitudes of parents toward the role of physical activity in maintaining and strengthening the health of their children.

3. Target of research

The purpose of the study is to identify the attitudes of parents of children with hearing impairments toward physical activity and its role in maintaining and strengthening health.

Research tasks:

1. To analyze scientific approaches to the problem of the importance of physical activity in the lives of children with hearing impairments.
2. To investigate the level of parents' awareness of the benefits of physical activity for children with special educational needs.
3. To identify the main barriers that, according to parents, prevent regular physical education classes.

4. Literature analysis

In scientific literature, the issue of physical activity in children with hearing impairments is examined through the lens of medical, biological, psychological, and socio-pedagogical aspects [1; 4]. Researchers emphasize that sensory deficits directly affect the development of motor skills: in particular, children with hearing impairments have reduced coordination, balance, and reaction speed [5]. However, regular physical education classes can partially compensate for these difficulties by increasing physical performance and the body's adaptive capabilities [2].

An important trend is the shift from traditional approaches to inclusive ones, where physical activity is seen as a means of socializing and integrating children into school and extracurricular environments [3]. In this context, the family plays a special role, as it is the parents who determine the child's lifestyle and shape their attitude towards sports [7; 13]. Parents' positive attitude toward physical activity significantly increases the likelihood of children's regular participation in sports clubs [9].

Ukrainian researchers also emphasize the importance of cooperation between schools and families in motivating children with hearing impairments to participate in physical education [12; 15]. They emphasize that parents often lack information about adapted methods and fear for their child's safety during classes. This indicates a need to create programs aimed at raising awareness among families and involving them in the educational process [6].

Thus, the analysis of the literature confirms that a combination of physical activity and active parental involvement is key to maintaining the health and harmonious development of children with hearing impairments, and scientific and practical research should be aimed at overcoming barriers in this area [10; 11].

5. Research methods

To achieve the goal and implement the research tasks, a set of methods was used that allowed combining theoretical analysis of scientific sources with practical study of the views of parents of children with hearing impairments.

Theoretical methods. An analysis and synthesis of contemporary scientific literature on the problem of physical activity of children with special educational needs, in particular with sensory impairments, was carried out. A comparative approach was used to identify general trends and specific features of families' attitudes toward physical culture in the domestic and foreign contexts. This made it possible to outline scientific and methodological approaches to the problem and identify factors that influence the participation of children with hearing impairments in sports and health activities.

Empirical methods. The main method of collecting primary information was a survey of parents of children with hearing impairments (n=50) who attend specialized and inclusive schools. The questionnaire contained 15 open-ended and closed-ended questions aimed at determining:

- the level of parents' awareness of the benefits of physical activity;
- the frequency and forms of organized and informal sports activities for children;
- obstacles and barriers that limit participation in physical education and health activities;
- parents' expectations of schools and sports clubs regarding the conditions of classes.

Methods of mathematical statistics. Descriptive statistical indicators (mean values, percentage ratios) were used to process the results, which made it possible to generalize the data and draw conclusions about common trends.

Organization of the study. The survey was conducted over two months in three regions of Ukraine. The anonymity of respondents was guaranteed, which ensured the openness of responses and increased the reliability of the results obtained.

The use of these methods made it possible to comprehensively assess the views of parents and identify both positive trends and problem areas in families' attitudes toward the physical activity of children with hearing impairments.

6. Research results

A study of parents' views on the role of physical activity in maintaining the health of children with hearing impairments provided a comprehensive understanding of families' attitudes toward this issue, their level of awareness, the nature of their support for their children, and the barriers that prevent regular exercise. The results are presented below in a systematic manner, taking into account quantitative and qualitative characteristics. For clarity, the results are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Parents' perspectives on the role of physical activity (% of respondents, n=50)

Indicator	Percentage (%)
Consider physical activity important	72
Children regularly attend sports clubs/sections	38
Aware of health benefits of exercises	65
Barrier: lack of adapted programs	54
Barrier: lack of qualified coaches	47
Barrier: low awareness of opportunities	41
Barrier: financial difficulties	29
Concern about social adaptation in mixed groups	32

Analysis of the data obtained showed that parents of children with hearing impairments highly value the importance of physical activity in maintaining their children's health. In particular, 72% of respondents directly stated that they consider regular physical exercise necessary for building strong health and preventing various diseases. This indicator is positive and demonstrates a fairly high level of awareness of the benefits of physical activity in families.

However, despite these high declarative assessments, only 38% of children actually attend sports clubs or groups, while the majority are limited to physical education classes at school. This gap between understanding the importance of physical activity and its practical implementation is explained by a number of barriers that parents identified in their responses

The most common barriers to children's participation were the lack of adapted programs 54% and the lack of qualified coaches 47%. These results indicate that the sports and educational infrastructure is not sufficiently prepared to work with children with special educational needs. Even when they want to participate in sports, children and their parents face objective difficulties in finding suitable conditions.

Another important problem is low awareness 41%. Parents are not always aware of the existence of specialized clubs or inclusive programs, which reduces the possibility of involving their children in regular activities. Added to this are financial difficulties 29%, which limit access to paid sports clubs or private lessons.

The factor of social adaptation deserves special attention: 32% of parents noted that children with hearing impairments may feel uncomfortable in regular groups due to communication difficulties and

misunderstanding on the part of their peers. This indicates the need not only for physical but also for psycho-emotional support for children, the creation of a supportive inclusive environment where physical exercise would be combined with the development of social skills.

Thus, the results of the study confirm that parents of children with hearing impairments are aware of the importance of physical activity, but systemic barriers significantly reduce their actual participation. Overcoming these barriers could become a strategic task for educational institutions, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations, which in the long term will lead to improved health, social integration, and quality of life for this category of children.

7. Prospects for further research development

Further research in the field of physical activity among children with hearing impairments is promising due to its high social significance and practical usefulness. Development in this area will make it possible to clarify the impact of physical activity on health and socialization, as well as to develop effective adapted programs. Research methods can be expanded by involving a larger sample, an interdisciplinary approach, and analysis of the latest pedagogical technologies. The results can be implemented in schools, sports clubs, and inclusive programs, which will contribute to the creation of a sustainable support system for children with hearing impairments.

8. Conclusions

A study of parents' views on the role of physical activity in maintaining the health of children with hearing impairments has identified key patterns and problematic aspects in this area. Firstly, most parents recognize the importance of physical activity for the physical, psycho-emotional, and social development of their children. This confirms the generally positive attitude of families toward physical activity as a factor in health and harmonious development.

Secondly, the results of the study indicate a significant gap between awareness of the importance of physical culture and the actual practice of its implementation. Only a small proportion of children regularly attend sports clubs or groups, with the majority mainly involved in informal activities. The main barriers limiting regular participation in physical education are the lack of adapted programs, insufficient qualifications of teachers and coaches, and financial and logistical difficulties.

Thirdly, the study confirmed the role of the family as a determining factor in motivation and regularity of exercise. Children whose parents actively support physical activity or lead an active lifestyle themselves are more likely to demonstrate consistent involvement in sports and better results in physical development. This highlights the need to develop school-family cooperation programs aimed at encouraging children to lead an active lifestyle.

Fourthly, the results open up prospects for scientific and pedagogical work: the development of adapted physical education programs, the introduction of innovative communication techniques in classes, and raising parents' awareness of the benefits of physical activity.

Thus, physical activity acts not only as a health factor, but also as a socio-pedagogical mechanism for integrating children with hearing impairments into society. The effective combination of active parental involvement, competent support from teachers, and adapted programs creates the conditions for the harmonious development, socialization, and health promotion of children with sensory impairments.

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