



# Realization of individual-personal development potential of children with intellectual disabilities in the process of adaptive physical education

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** was to determination of the leading principles of adaptive physical education aimed at realizing the individual development potential of students with intellectual disabilities.

**Methods and structure of the study.** A theoretical analysis of scientific and methodological literature in the field of adaptive physical education on the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of children with intellectual disabilities was carried out.

**Results and conclusions.** The concept of «individual-personal development potential of children with intellectual disabilities» is formulated as a set of their biological-individual and personal-social characteristics that make it possible to realize what is inherent in nature (physical abilities, functional capabilities and mental (cognitive) processes) and to form socially necessary qualities in the process of various activities. General pedagogical and specific principles of adaptive physical education are identified, which make it possible to realize the individual and personal development potential of children with intellectual disabilities.

**Keywords:** *children with intellectual disabilities, individual and personal development potential, principles of adaptive physical education.*

**Introduction.** The humanization of the modern social worldview has led to a change in the medical paradigm to a socially-oriented path of development of children with disabilities. The group that is particularly in need of adaptation to life's realities is children with intellectual disabilities (hereinafter referred to as ID), who are characterized by weakness and inertia of excitation and inhibition processes, insufficient development of cognitive functions, difficulty in understanding and using abstract concepts and complex tasks; delayed development of motor skills, which causes difficulties in performing simple everyday actions; emotional and behavioral problems; lack of communication skills and difficulties in establishing and maintaining social relationships and adapting to new life situations. For a long time, this category was considered by specialists in

the aspect of comparison with normotypic children, which determined the tasks of a predominantly corrective plan, solved in the process of education and upbringing. It should be noted that scientists have repeatedly proven that children with ID, like any other children, develop throughout their lives. Moreover, the emergence and formation of various mental properties is determined by the child's lifestyle during ontogenesis under the influence of education carried out in specific socio-historical conditions [2, 4, 5].

**Objective of the study** was to identify the leading principles of adaptive physical education aimed at realizing the individual and personal development potential of students with intellectual disabilities.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific



and methodological literature in the field of adaptive physical education (APE), as well as generalization of pedagogical experience based on pedagogical observation of children with disabilities (2015-2024) were carried out: conducting physical education and sports classes under the program of the Special Olympics of Russia; implementation of the projects: «Sports Express of the Special Olympics», «Inclusive Sports Saturday», «Inclusive Swimming Sea of Opportunities», «Inclusive Sports for All», «Unified Leader-Ship»; organization of the All-Russian Spartakiad of school sports clubs among students with disabilities and children with disabilities, the Unified Games of the Special Olympics - 2023, the Annual Swimming Tournament «Let's Win Together», etc.

**Results of the study and discussion.** At the present stage of the evolution of education, the conceptual humanistic views of the pedagogical community have formed the basis for changing the state's target settings in creating conditions for the maximum disclosure of individual potential, taking into account the unique characteristics of each person, without infringing on the interests of other people. The category of people with mental disabilities is characterized by numerous heterogeneous manifestations of intellectual disability, which predetermines a differentiated approach to the content of education, taking into account special educational needs. It is impossible to single out people of this category into some clear typological group, in accordance with standard and unified criteria, with specific learning outcomes that each student with intellectual disabilities must achieve. This is due to the fact that each of them has their own innate biological potential (interrelated physiological functions and anatomical structures, internal individual-psychological characteristics) and various socio-environmental conditions (actions, tasks and

spheres of life, external social connections and socio-cultural environment), which significantly affect the nature and effectiveness of the social development of a special child. The methodological basis of our work was the research of L.S. Vygotsky, who substantiated the divergence of cultural and biological processes of development of this category of children. According to his theory, the development of higher mental functions (memory, attention, thinking, perception, imagination and speech) in children with disabilities is limited by the core signs of mental retardation (poor susceptibility and insufficient activity) and is possible in the process of cultural education by activating cognitive interests and the need for new impressions [2]. In our opinion, one of the most effective tools for social integration, development of the internal and cultural potential of students with disabilities is well-organized physical education and sports activities [3, 6, 8], the importance of which is due to its extrapolation to the indicators of development of cognitive processes and physiological functions of this contingent of children.

This conclusion defined the conceptual idea of our study, which determines the need to create conditions for the implementation of the individual-personal development potential of children with ID in the process of APE. Defining the substantive essence of the concept of «individual-personal development potential», we came to the conclusion that individual-personal potential is a complex structural organization and is considered by scientists from the position of studying personal potential and biological potential separately, often identifying the concepts of «individuality» and «personality». In his scientific works, A.N. Leontiev convincingly proves the inadmissibility of mixing the concepts of «individuality» and «personality», revealing the process

*List of «life competencies» of children with disabilities*

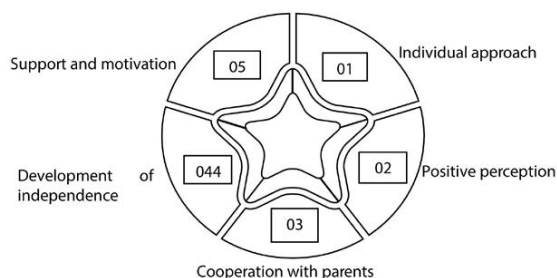
| Name of the competency     | Content of competence  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Social competencies        | Ability to communicate, build relationships, resolve conflicts, cooperate with other people                              |
| Communicative competencies | The ability to clearly and understandably express one's thoughts, listen to others, understand and interpret information |
| Emotional competence       | Ability to understand your emotions and the emotions of others, regulate your emotions, manage stress                    |
| Cognitive competence       | Ability to learn, solve problems, think critically, analyze information  |
| Practical competencies     | Ability to take care of oneself, run a household, earn money, use transport, manage finances                             |



of formation of a person's personality in his activities [5].

We define the «individual-personal development potential of children with intellectual disabilities» as a set of their biological (individual) and personal (social) characteristics that allow, to one degree or another, to realize what is inherent in nature (physical abilities, functional capabilities and mental (cognitive) processes) and to form socially necessary qualities in the process of various activities. In order to realize the individual and personal development potential of children with disabilities in the process of physical education and sports activities, it is necessary to identify guidelines (principles) that update and supplement the groups of principles of AFC developed by the scientific school of S.P. Evseev, as applied to the AFC process, taking into account the modern needs of students with intellectual disabilities, social and state challenges that aim the educational process at ensuring psychophysical development, social adaptation and the formation of life competencies [4]. N.O. Bulanova understands the concept of «life competence» as «an integral characteristic that determines a person's ability to solve life problems and tasks in typical life situations using the experience of various types of activities» [1]. Therefore, for children with intellectual disabilities, life competencies are a set of knowledge, abilities, skills and personal qualities necessary for successful adaptation in society and independent life.

Successful implementation of the individual-personal development potential of children with intellectual disabilities is possible only with close cooperation between parents, teachers, specialists and the child himself. We have proposed key general pedagogical principles for the implementation of the individual-personal development potential of the child.



*Key general pedagogical principles for the implementation of the individual and personal development potential of a child*

In addition to the general pedagogical ones, we have established specific guidelines of the APE, which underlie the implementation of the individual and personal development potential of children with intellectual disabilities. These include: 1) sports ethics and communication; 2) ensuring psychological safety; 3) creating an inclusive sports environment; 4) integrating virtual (VR) and motor activities. Sports ethics and communication are determined by the uniqueness and specificity of sports activities, during which a system of principles, norms and values regulating the relationships between athletes, coaches, fans is formed, as well as the interconnection and interdependence of an individual athlete and the team as a whole. Ensuring psychological safety in classes with children with intellectual disabilities includes understanding the characteristics of children's development, creating safe and comfortable conditions for classes, developing confidence and self-esteem, as well as conflict management.

The creation of an inclusive sports environment plays an important role, since it is aimed at developing physical activity in all members of society, contributes to the creation of a more tolerant and socially responsible society, as well as maintaining the physical and psychological health of all people [7].

The integration of virtual and motor activity is a new and promising area in the development of children with disabilities, which allows creating interactive, motivating and effective educational and rehabilitation programs that help improve the physical and mental health of children, as well as develop their cognitive abilities, social skills and emotional intelligence.

When organizing APE for children with disabilities, it is necessary to take into account that the level of intellectual development, learning speed and personality traits of each child are individual, and regardless of the diagnosis, each child has unique talents and strengths that need to be identified and developed based on the conceptual position on the presence of individual-personal development potential for children with intellectual disabilities, which manifests itself with adequate support and the creation of a favorable environment. It is also important to realize that individual-personal potential is not static, but changes and is revealed throughout a person's life [1].

**Conclusions.** Adaptive physical education is a key factor in the disclosure and implementation



of the individual and personal potential of children with intellectual disabilities, contributing not only to physical development, but also playing an important role in the development of cognitive abilities, social adaptation, emotional stability and the formation of personality as a whole. The main specific provisions of APPE, which underlie the implementation of the individual and personal development potential of children with intellectual disabilities include: sports ethics and communication; ensuring psychological safety; creating an inclusive sports environment; integration of virtual (VR) and motor activities.

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