



Adaptive sports as a way of socialization of children with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to analyze the possibilities of adaptive sports in overcoming neurological disorganization in people with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities.

Methods and structure of the study. The experiment involved 33 respondents (31 mothers and two fathers) raising children aged 7 to 12 with ASD and intellectual disabilities. The study also involved children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and intellectual disabilities.

Results and conclusions. On the basis of the experiment, practical recommendations have been developed for attracting such children to adaptive physical culture and the possibility of their social adaptation through sports.

The authors come to the conclusion that the involvement of children with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities in adaptive sports creates positive dynamics not only in the process of socialization of such children, but also in the interaction of the child and parents, as well as overcoming neurological problems that children with autism spectrum disorder have. Adaptive sports significantly increase the level of a child's trust in the world around him and allow him to overcome neurological disorganization.

Keywords: *neurological disorganization, persons with intellectual disabilities, children with autism spectrum disorder, adaptive sports, adaptive physical culture.*

Introduction. The psychological state of parents raising a child with ASD and intellectual disabilities, the nature of their attitude towards the child's condition and their attitudes are inextricably linked with how the child himself will treat himself. The parent witnesses how the child grows; it is the parent who educates, cares for the child, and lays down the child's attitudes and values. Raising a child with autism spectrum disorder leaves an imprint on the parent, since the need for constant monitoring of the child's emotional sphere and health, regularly arising difficulties at the social and everyday level, pedagogical issues and many other aspects of the child's neurological disorganization require increased attention from the parent. This places increased demands on the mental resources of parents, plunging them into a chronic state of stress, which is potentially threatening to the mental well-being of not only the parents, but also the child.

All this leads to the fact that the help of a sports psychologist is needed in working with such children, which should be aimed at both the child himself and his parents, in order to maintain the optimal psychological state of the family. In this case, the result of the work will cover not only certain aspects of the mental functioning of a child with ASD and intellectual disabilities, such as the cognitive sphere, but will also contribute to the realization of the child's individual needs and interests, help overcome neurological problems, the harmonious development of his personality and the realization of his mental needs.

For children with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities, adaptive physical education is one of the ways to successfully socialize in society. It is very important that not only the child is involved in adaptive sports, but also that conditions for family sports are created. Together with a parent, it is much



easier for a child with ASD and intellectual disabilities to go through all stages of socialization and become a full-fledged member of society. In recent years, children with ASD and intellectual disabilities have been actively participating in adaptive sports, and relying on their physical and mental characteristics and capabilities allows them to socialize faster and more effectively. Adaptive sports for children with ASD and intellectual disabilities allow such children with mental problems, in addition to adaptation, to also solve problems of a neurological nature.

Objective of the study was to analyze the possibilities of adaptive sports in overcoming neurological disorganization in people with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities.

Methods and structure of the study. The experiment involved 33 parents (31 mothers and two fathers) and 33 children aged 7 to 12 years with ASD and mild intellectual disabilities. Practical recommendations are given on how to attract such children to adaptive physical education and the possibility of their social adaptation through sports.

Of the 33 parents, in the framework of the DIA questionnaire, 12 were identified with inharmonious types of upbringing, while within this part of the sample, only three types of inharmonious upbringing were identified - dominant hyperprotection, emotional rejection and hypoprotection.

Results of the study and discussion. Neurological disorganization – within the framework of the definition, it assumes the presence of functional maladaptation of the regulatory reflex mechanisms of the nervous system, which includes neurological disorganization of the corresponding level or specific system [3].

An important factor is also to take into account the presence of these comorbid pathologies, their severity and what areas of the child's life they affect, what parental involvement they require in the child and how they are perceived by the parent.

One of the main recommendations for parents of children with ASD and intellectual disabilities is the active involvement of such children in adaptive physical education. It is important to take into account the following mental characteristics in autism spectrum disorder:

– *the psycho-emotional state of the child, the characteristics of his psyche*: children with ASD show greater isolation in comparison with other groups of children (Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities), and it will take more time for them to be involved in

adaptive sports, or, conversely, they may be hyperactive, and such activity will have to be carefully adjusted, directed in a direction that is beneficial for the child's psychological development;

– *physical capabilities of the child*: children with ASD and intellectual disabilities are more constrained, are not always able to fully control themselves, and one of the tasks of adaptive physical education for them is to teach them how to control their body;

– *psycho-emotional climate in the family*: it is important that parents are active participants not only in the socio-psychological adaptation of children with ASD and intellectual disabilities, but also involve them in participation in adaptive sports, starting from pre-school age. Children with ASD and neurological disorganization are more withdrawn, cautious, less communicative (unlike the other two groups of children), and therefore the involvement of such children in adaptive sports should take place together with their parents. In this case, children with ASD will be able to integrate into the process of playing sports earlier, and adaptation to sports conditions will be disproportionately higher.

Thus, when working with a family raising a child with ASD and intellectual disabilities, a sports psychologist should highlight two areas:

1) working directly with a child – with neurological disorganization and maladjustment;

2) work with parents - their attitudes, individual personal characteristics, the nature of the relationship with the autistic child.

Strategies for working with children with disorders of this nature are well developed by authors such as A.V. Semenovich, A.V. Tsvetkov, L.S. Tsvetkova, and all involve the use of neuropsychological correction methods. First of all, it is necessary to mention the method of replacement ontogenesis - an integrated approach to the correction of developmental disorders of higher mental functions. By influencing the sensorimotor level of functioning, not so much the correction of existing HMF deficits is achieved, but rather the foundation is laid for the unhindered formation of higher mental functions. By using specific motor, respiratory and oculomotor exercises, the strengthening of cortical-subcortical and interhemispheric functional connections is achieved, which helps to improve the functioning of the first and second functional blocks of the brain, as well as interhemispheric interaction [1].

Speaking about working with parents, we note a certain gap between the actual problem and the present-



ed theoretical basis. In order to formulate initial ideas about the prevalence of problematic attitudes toward raising children on the autism spectrum, the "Analysis of Family Relationships" questionnaire was used.

Dominant hyperprotection as a parenting style is characterized by a high amount of attention to a child with autistic problems and his needs, but is accompanied by multiple restrictions and prohibitions. During upbringing in this way, a child with autistic disorder does not develop independence [2]. It is through the involvement of a child with ASD and intellectual disabilities in adaptive sports that allows the child to develop a sense of independence and responsibility. Adaptive sports make it possible to give more and more independence in decision-making to a child with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities. Emerging independence in sports gradually extends throughout the child's life.

Emotional rejection - parents may remain emotionally cold in relation to the child, even if the child's objective needs are met.

Hypoprotection - the child is left to a certain extent to himself, parents show little interest in him and exaggerate his independence. Such upbringing is especially unfavorable for accentuations of the hyperthymic and unstable types [4].

The distribution of types of parental relationships in the family where children with ASD and intellectual disabilities were raised was as follows: dominant hyperprotection occupies 42% of the total number of parents, 16% demonstrated hypoprotection, another 42% demonstrated this type of dysfunctional relationship such as emotional rejection. At the same time, such types as condoning hyperprotection and cruel treatment of parents with children were not identified. It is important to note that among parents with children with ASD and intellectual disabilities and involved in adaptive sports, the level of overprotection is significantly lower than among families where children are not involved in adaptive physical education.

This distribution leads to the fact that the structure of maladaptive relationships between a parent and a child with ASD and intellectual disabilities can hide both externally manifested aspects and exclusively internal dynamics, as in a situation of emotional rejection [5].

Involving children with ASD and intellectual disabilities in adaptive physical education classes creates positive dynamics not only in the process of sociali-

zation of such children, but also in the interaction between the child and parents. Not only the external, but also the internal compliance of the parent with the process of social adaptation of the child through sports increases significantly, the level of trust of the child in the parent increases, and through this in the world around him, since often for such children parents become one of the main guides to the outside world.

Conclusions. Involving children with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities in adaptive physical education classes can significantly increase the child's opportunities for socialization, as well as overcoming his neuropsychic problems.

According to the results of the study, families in which children with ASD and intellectual disabilities are actively involved in adaptive sports showed significantly higher results in terms of interaction in the process of socialization, and lower results in terms of hyperprotection from parents. This allows us to conclude that adaptive sports are clearly beneficial in the process of socialization of children with ASD and intellectual disabilities.

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