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Study on Motric Activity in the Life of Children with Disabilities

Alina Ionela CUCUI¹

Abstract

Children and adolescents with Down syndrome have a range of physical problems and difficulties that can affect their motor development and implicitly social integration. The physical development of children with Down syndrome is often slower. Despite this leaner, children with Down syndrome may participate in sports activities, they will take more time to do some things, but eventually they can do most of them. Cognitive problems - thinking and learning - are characteristic of people with Down syndrome and are usually moderate. Cognitive and behavioral problems include: attention deficit, impulsive behavior, slow learning and speech retardation. People with Down syndrome have a certain degree of difficulty. The degree of disability differs from one person to another and it is impossible to appreciate at the moment of birth how severe it will be. Therefore, it is important for these people to participate in various programs aimed at facilitating the development of motor skills, cognitive and social-emotional development. This research highlights the importance of adapted sports activities, aims to promote the necessary and useful practices in the lives of children and adolescents with Down syndrome. Approved sports programs are considered to offer learning opportunities to help people with Down syndrome overcome barriers to becoming a physically and socially educated person. The aim of the research is to identify sporting activities that generate progress in the physical development of children with disabilities, cognitive and social-emotional development.

Keywords: *children; disabilities; motor activity.*

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1. Introduction

Down syndrome (DS) is a genetic disorder caused by the presence of an additional chromosome, chromosome 21, is the most representative genetic disorder associated with the mental retardation. The disorder has some common physical characteristics. Also, cognitive problems - thinking and learning - are characteristic of people with Down syndrome and are moderate. Cognitive and behavioral problems include: attention deficit, impulsive behavior, slow learning, and speech retardation. People with Down syndrome have a certain degree of learning difficulty (mental retardation, which may vary from medium to severe). The degree of disability differs from one person to another and it is impossible to appreciate at the moment of birth how severe it will be.

Knowing these aspects, we consider it necessary to act to ensure that sedentary care does not interfere with the life of the disabled child. This phenomenon, which has begun to emerge from low school age due to modern technology, the less and less time spent with outdoor children, and the lack of attractive recreational programs, is considered a risk factor in life to normal persons and especially to the lives of people with disabilities. Sedentarism generates a number of chronic diseases with multifactorial determinations such as cardiovascular, nutrition and metabolic problems or various somatopsychic disorders, etc.

Physical characteristics and medical problems associated with Down syndrome may vary greatly from child to child. While some children with DS require a lot of medical attention, others have a healthy life. The degree of disability of each subject generates a series of deficiencies that affect the health of these subjects and implicitly reflects on the quality of life of these subjects.

Adapted physical activity can play an important role in lifelong health, with the physical condition being greatly influenced by the active participation of people in various programs that involve motoring activities. Sport increases cognitive capacity, increases resource management (time and effort), cooperative capacity, and concentration. Nanu, M., states that "motor activity is a process of satisfying a necessity (functional requirement) or, from the structural perspective, a lot of actions, operations, acts or gestures oriented towards achieving a certain objective" [8].

So, driven work towards well-established goals generates an improvement in quality of life. Physical deconditioning caused by inactivity can lead to physiological problems, minor physical abilities and, implicitly, greater social isolation.

Through this research I have proposed to highlight the importance of driving activities and their benefits. We believe that the person with disabilities needs movement, adapted, recreational programs to complement the kinetherapist's program to help the subject play an active role in society.

The adapted physical activities of children with Down syndrome can be performed in groups of children with the same syndrome but also with children without disabilities, training and engaging in executions being favored by the imitation desire specific to children with Down syndrome [2].

The benefits of these activities carried out together with volunteers are infinite it is important to establish affective relationships between volunteers and people with special educational needs (SEN), to accept them as part of the group, without the slightest sense of rejection and to know how to behave and act within integration in the true sense of the word [7].

2. Problem Statement

The research shows that activities that are carried out in favor of people with disabilities are quite sporadic and without echo; they continue to feel marginalized, unnecessary and discouraged, considering themselves removed from the productive economic circuit and from the active social life.

A systemic vision permits uncovering the components of structural parts, relationships, interactions and inter-conditioning, which can explain a process, a phenomenon or an activity with the adjustments and mutual influences responsible for the unit, the coherence of certain actions, or responsible for the disorder or incoherence of others. A systemic approach leads to emphasis on the dynamics of the activities [3].

Specialized literature shows that Special Olympics promotes ongoing training as an essential element for the development of physical and mental qualities, it is states that the “conduct of exercises in a competitive environment characterized by equal conditions for all participants is an adequate method of testing the individual capacities and their sporting evolution, but also the possibility to provide motivating means for them personal development” [5].

The novelty of the research is the fact that the opinion of the supporters of people with disabilities, people who are unconditionally close to them and whose interest is to improve the quality of their lives, is brought in.

3. Research Questions/Aims of the research

We consider that the adapted motorized activities carried out systematically by specialists, helped by volunteers, act in the sphere of children's motricity, psycho-emotional development, socialization, thus managing to benefit the disabled subjects.

Starting from the premise that every motor activity by normal people contributes to the improvement of motorized luggage, and in the case of people with disabilities we consider that these activities bring benefits, even having a very important role, offering them independence and also the possibility to become active in social life.

The aim of the research is to identify the role of motor activities in the life of the person with disabilities from the perspective of their guardians.

4. Research Methods

In this research we used the survey method based on the questionnaire method of direct observation of behaviors and manifestations before, during and shortly after the adapted program.

Use of the survey is necessary, especially if we are interested in opinions, attitudes and motives, to individuals or groups [4].

The questionnaire used contained a total of 10 closed-ended items.

In order to accomplish the purpose of this research we applied the questionnaire to the parents of the children with disabilities, who have attended the adapted motorized activities proposed by the specialists for at least 2 years.

The sample consists of 16 tutors of children with disabilities, children of both genders (4 girls and 12 boys aged between 6 and 16) who participate in the adapted programs organized at the "Valahia" University of Targoviste.

Table 1. Item of the questionnaire

No.	Questionnaire items / answers
1.	Does your daughter / son participate in motorized activities following a recommendation from a specialist? Yes b) No

2. Did your daughter / son be consulted by a specialist before starting the program of driving? Yes b) No
 3. Consider that your daughter / son is a dear participant in the driving program within the adapted program?
Yes b) Sometimes not b) No
 4. You have noticed improvements in your child's effort?
a) very much b) much c) little d) not at all
 5. Adaptive driving has an impact on your child's independence?
a) very much b) much c) little d) not at all
 6. You have noticed improvements in the psycho-emotional sphere of your daughter / son?
a) very much b) much c) little d) not at all
 7. Consider that your daughter / son is positively motivated after practicing the motorized activities? Yes b) No
 8. What is the main reason that makes you bring your child to adapted motorized activities?
a) to maintain physical form b) to improve their state of health and physical condition c) to socialize d) for self-esteem
 9. You were knowledgeable about the benefits of adapted driving activities before enrolling in the adapted program?
a) very much b) much c) little d) not at all
 10. You've also recommended other parents to tailor the motorized activities practiced by your daughter / son.? a)Yes b) No
-

5. Findings

On the basis of the investigations carried out at the level of the investigated sample we found that there is interest and disposition from the subjects for the adapted activities. Most of the subjects are eager to start the tailor-made program each time, and are pleased to re-engage in tailor-made activities. Children's enthusiasm is obvious every time, and this has led to motoring and independence in performing physical exercise.

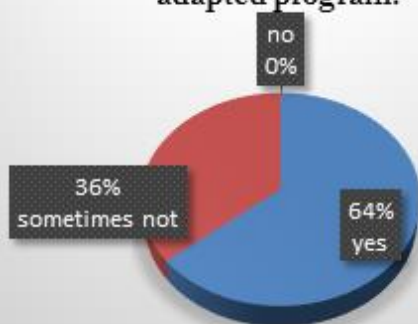
A percentage of 54% of the sample was guided by specialist staff, and 46% of the sample attended these guided activities by guided by other people.

Figure no. 1 Does your daughter / son participate in motorized activities following a recommendation from a specialist?

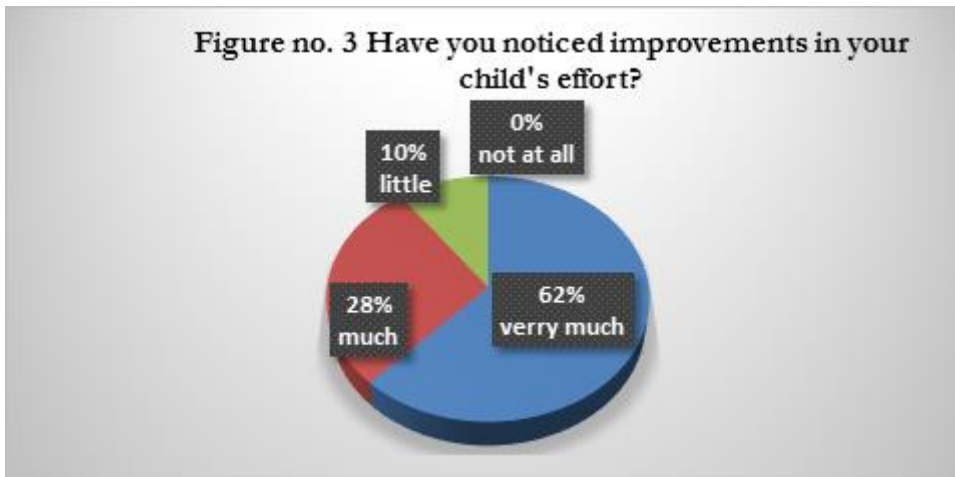


Most children's parents consider that they respond positively to the adapted program, 64% are involved with each other, while 36% of the sample still faces anxiety.

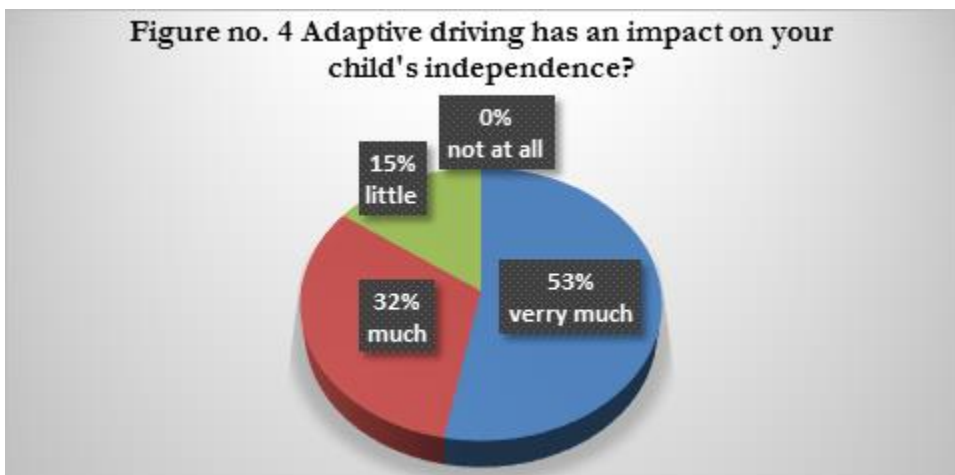
Figure no. 2 Do you think that your daughter / son is a dear participant in the driving program within the adapted program?



In terms of improving children's effort, the results highlight a better potential in most cases, 74%, which supports the idea of motorsports actively adapted to children with disabilities.



Adaptive motorized activity also played an important role in children's behavior, and guardians advocate for better showing of children, and they manage to rely on actions without the need for support. If at first they worked with their parents, they gradually moved to volunteer support and succeeded in conducting research alone to do many exercises and only needed encouragement to others.



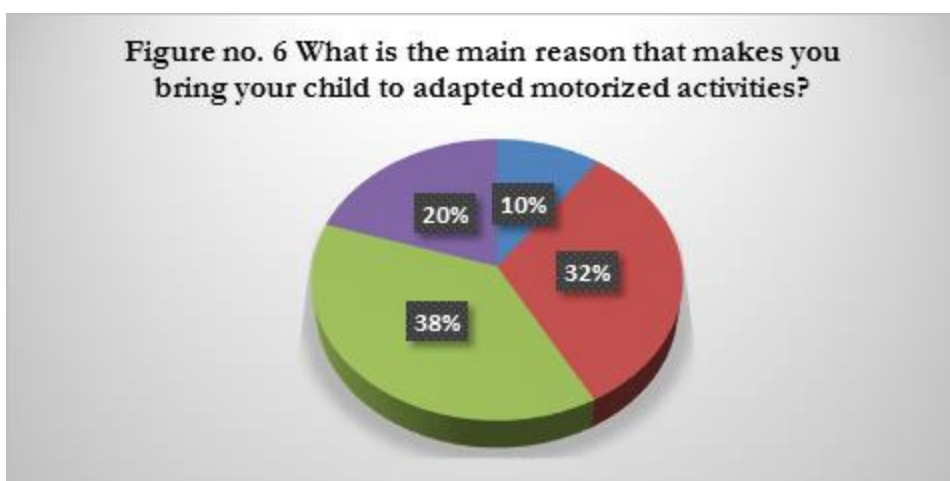
The psycho-emotional side is a sensitive point of the children with disabilities, but as long as the people around them are empowered with them and their purpose is to support them, in the sense of improving their quality of life, everything is in favor of the children and the results can be seen on the faces and behaviors of children, which is also identified in this research.

The vast majority of parents claim they have also experienced improvements in this regard, as can be seen from the chart below.



As far as the behavior of children is concerned with adaptive motorized activities, they claim that immediately after activities, children are euphoric, have a positive state, but after a while, children experience the effort and need rest.

Regarding the main reason children attend the program of first-time activities, socialization is 38% followed by the desire to improve their health and physical condition 32%, 20% of the sample surveyed are attending programs adapted to the increase of self-esteem, and 10% consider that they bring their children to actresses to maintain their physical form.



Most parents claim they have little knowledges of the benefits of adapted motric activities and only 28% have been well informed about these benefits of adapted motric activities.



The research findings highlight the fact that the vast majority of tutors included in this study believe that adapted motorized activities bring benefits to children with disabilities and recommends participation in adapted motorized activities and other people in the same situation.

6. Discussions

Research in the field advocates the motorsport activity adapted to children with disabilities. Pîrvan & Stănescu [6] asserts that the “adapted program, planificat and customized by a multidisciplinary team (doctor, physical therapists / physiotherapists, physical education and sports teachers, nutritionists, psychologists, etc.) can prolong life expectancy, improve the quality of life of the person, and can slow down of the degenerative process” [6].

“Physical education and adapted sport activities emphasize the qualities, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors which abilitate deficient subjects to participate as members of the society they live in” [1: 34].

Thus, adapted physical activities favor, on the one hand, the increase of the quality of life and, on the other hand, contribute to social integration and cohesion.

We maintain that there is a need for several centers, playgrounds for children with disabilities to promote mitric activities adapted from the early

age, early intervention being indispensable for the recovery of children with disabilities.

The caregivers of these people need to be informed, to know the need for early intervention in the lives of people with disabilities early, to know their benefits and to act in this respect.

7. Conclusions

Research findings identify that adapted motorized activities play an important role in the development of children with disabilities.

From the perspective of the caretaker of the disabled, we identify the improvement of the general condition of children with Down syndrome who are attending adapted motor activities. The people analyzed have made progress in terms of dependence on the tutor, have easily detached from them and have begun to gain confidence in them and others, to have more resistance to the effort and to work with volunteers.

Tutors are aware that steps can be taken, small but sure, to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.

Developed systematically, it positively influences the behavior of the person with disabilities, managing to impress their attitudes, developing new interests and concerns.

Research identifies the need to promote the benefits of adapted motorized activities, greater involvement of specialists and the development of tailored programs that meet the needs of people with disabilities.

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