

SPORTS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AMONG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Editorial

The Brazilian Journal in Health Promotion (*Revista Brasileira em Promoção da Saúde*), driven by the need for a culture that encourages the participation of children with disabilities in sports activities, wants to emphasize its concern with the content of its publications on the subject. Therefore, it is intended to foster reflection on health promotion in children with disabilities, awakening the urge of working professionals and those receiving training to extend professional commitment and recognize its importance.

To start, it is essential to vociferate the term “equity”, although it has been used more often in recent years thanks to the push given by public policies and the entry of virtual media in households. The fact that the word causes allergy to some people is not new, but it is clear that the term has given coverage to glaring inequalities.

Equity, in the case of the possibility of access to sports, is a sign of evolution, particularly with regard to civility. Developed countries allow, with some limitations, greater access to sport, and Brazil, which is in a slow-paced process, must rely on the support from everyone in order to move faster.

Thus, it is appropriate to raise some references, the first being the term “equity”, which means equality, righteousness in the way of doing things, recognition of the rights of each person, righteous and natural justice⁽¹⁾.

As makers of a new humanity and guided by professional ethics, it is essential that we consider the word “equity” in the development of a lesson plan to be carried out regardless of the type of sport. Regarding children with or without disabilities, to despise equity is a gesture similar to castration. One castrates and offends a developing human being who needs treatment and care for identity formation.

For Physical Education professionals, as well as those of other fields of knowledge who share our daily work routine, it is appropriate to separate the making of thinking, the practice of theory. As for the teaching practice, the focus should remain on the person practicing the sport. In the case of someone with a disability, it is a *sine qua non* condition that the professional should consider the specificities surrounding the subject, such as the time and cause of disability, the functionality and the previous experiences⁽²⁾.

The second reference portrays equity as something very similar to accessibility, as both are able to arouse concern if not made possible.

In this era of shallow values, dreams and ideas, providing an embracing atmosphere can become utopian; however, it must be idealized, as every embracement is considered a game changer in the lives of children. Regardless of the sensory, motor or intellectual impairment presented, respect should become a constant so that security would sprout, talents would awaken and opportunities would arise.

Three factors are listed as responsible for the growth of sports for people with disabilities, which are called adaptive sports: the effectiveness of sport in the rehabilitation process, the right of persons with disabilities to sports practice and the characteristic of sports as entertainment activities⁽³⁾.

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Yet, a third reference sees beyond the obvious: to be born, to grow up and to grow stronger only makes sense with the aid of family support and of the school of letters and life.

Not much of it is needed to be born, but to grow up and to grow stronger, it is necessary to live with others, feel included and have a voice. The inclusion of children with disabilities in sports is a way to promote health and improve the quality of life. The sports practice should be encouraged at an early stage by the family and through interventions of professionals in the education and health fields.

Regarding the educator's role, it is worth to mention Rubem Alves as he warns that a teacher or a doctor must be an agent and a spreader of essential sensitivity⁽⁴⁾. In this case, attention should be given to physical education teachers, especially due to the possibility of action in the licentiate and bachelor's degree fields.

The sports practice should be considered a facilitator of social inclusion as it allows athletes to be part of a group in which there are more people with the same conditions as theirs and where their deeds are valued⁽⁵⁾.

However, social inclusion is not only living together with other disabled athletes. The most appropriate is to live in society, among people with and without disabilities. Obviously, some people choose to live with people with disabilities; however, it is ideal to create an inclusive and heterogeneous environment where there is respect for the diversity, potentiality and limitations of others.

Studies have associated the sports practice with benefits regarding rehabilitation⁽⁶⁾, social inclusion⁽⁷⁾ and health⁽⁸⁾. But for people with disabilities, the sport is a complex construct that cannot be limited to physical fitness, rehabilitation or an inclusion tool.

Therefore, encouraging children with disabilities to practice sports is a way to consider that they are not less competent than the others⁽⁹⁾. It is through this encouragement that the benefits related to body composition, cardiorespiratory function and neuromotor parameters improve.

Thus, it is a fundamental civilizational right to choose between doing and not doing a sport as well as which sport is more appropriate for a child with or without disabilities to do. Given this fundamental right, the spotlights herein have highlighted something called equity.

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