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Investigation of Social Behavior Experiences Created by the Little Athletes Project Applied to Children with Special Needs and Partners in the 2-7 Age Group

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Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of this research is "Examination of Social Behavior Experiences Created by the Little Athletes Project Applied to 2-7 Age Group Children with Special Needs and Partners".

Materials and Methods: 12 children with special needs and 14 partner children participated in the study. Children formed a 3-6 age group. Of 12 special needs children, 7 were boys and 5 were girls. The partner children consisted of 8 boys and 6 girls.

The studies continued for 2 days a week, 50-60 minutes and 8 weeks. In the program, the movement and game training program in the application program guide of the little athletes project was applied. Before and after the application, interviews were made with the parents and recorded. In addition, it was observed and reported by 2 volunteer instructors.

Findings: From the observations made as a result of the research, it was concluded that the children started to

communicate with each other, helped each other in the games, obeyed the commands, had a lot of fun, did not want the study to end, and still wanted to continue the applications after the study.

In the interviews with the parents, it was stated that their children, who had seen a special child before, acted shyly, but during and after the program they called "these are our friends", they did not exhibit any avoidance or hesitation behavior, and they stated that they wanted to play with them when they met in their neighborhood.

Conclusion And Evaluation: As a result, positive developments were observed in social behaviors in both groups (children with special needs and partner children) in the movement education program for inclusive children with special needs, while positive developments were observed in communication skills. In addition, according to the opinions of the parents, it was stated that positive behaviors were observed in the children in both groups.

Keywords: Special Needs, Partner, Junior Athletes, and Social behaviors

Introduction

The most distinct distinguishing feature between children with special needs and normally developing children is the retardation in the learning abilities of children with mental special needs. However, motor functions as well as mental special needs are affected. The progress in motor development in individuals with intellectual special needs during the transition from infancy to childhood is slower in children with average intelligence (Westendorp, Houwen, Hartman, & Visscher, 2011; Hartman, Houwen, Scherder, & Visscher, 2010; Vuijk, Hartman, Scherder, & Visscher 2010; Clever, Hunter, & Queller-Kuntz, 2009).

Most children with intellectual special needs have some central nervous system disorders that affect balance, coordination, walking and fine motor skills. Mental weakness in children's muscle strength and unstable joints affect the child's motor development from the first years of life and cause delays in the child's developmental stages (Savucu and Biçer, 2009).

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Physical activity programs are important for developing motor skills. "Physical activity is defined as activities that occur in daily life by using muscles and joints, expending energy, increasing heart and respiratory rate, and resulting in fatigue of different degrees" (Baltacı and Düzgün, 2008). In this context, in addition to sports activities, exercise, games and various activities performed during the day are among the activities that affect the lives of individuals in many aspects. Fine motor skills are necessary as well as gross motor skills in order to successfully perform the activities of daily life (Henderson and Sugden, 1992).

There are studies evaluating the effect of participation in regular sports activities on both fine and gross motor skills in children with mild mental special needs (Göbel, Ballı, & Göbel, 2014).

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of an educational game-oriented movement training program on basic motor skills, which brings together partner children between the ages of 2-7 with special education needs under the same roof, aimed at developing basic motor skills.

Materials and Methods:

22 children aged 2-7 participated in the project. 12 of the

children (6 girls + 6 boys) were partnered little athletes (without special education needs), and 10 of the children (6 boys + 4 girls) were little athletes (with special education needs).

For the project, parents were informed by meeting with the administrators of a special education school and a kindergarten. Volunteer parents and their children participated in the project. Volunteer students from the faculty of sports sciences and the department of recreation were selected for the applications. Volunteer students were informed about the project and two seminars were given to children about behavior and communication.

An eight-week (Saturday-Sunday, 2 days a week) plan sample was applied for the project implementation. Different games were also added to the plans.

Analysis:

At the beginning and end of the project implementation, interviews were conducted with parents and volunteers and recorded. Additionally, observations were made and reported by 3 trainers. Observations made by the instructors were also presented in the form of a report.

In Table 1, 12 students participating in the research are stated as partner students and 10 students are stated as students in need of special education.

Table 1: Age, Height, Weight and IQ Status of the Students Participating in the Research

Age	N	%	Height	N	%	Weight	N	%	IQ	N	%
3	1	5,5	123-125	1	5,5	39-42	1	5,5	50-70	1	5,5
4	4	10,5	137-139	4	10,5	40-43	4	10,5	50-70	4	10,5
5	4	10,5	135-137	4	10,5	45-48	4	10,5	45-60	4	10,5
4	2	10,5	145-147	2	10,5	46-49	2	10,5	45-60	2	10,5
5	3	15	152-154	3	15	52-55	3	15	Normal	3	15
4	3	15	158-160	3	15	55-59	3	15	Normal	3	15
3	2	10,5	157-159	2	10,5	58-61	2	10,5	Normal	2	10,5
4	2	10,5	160-162	2	10,5	60-63	2	10,5	Normal	2	10,5
5	1	5,5	162-164	1	5,5	63-65	1	5,5	Normal	1	5,5

Table 2: Special Movement Training Program Applied in the Research

Purpose	Content	Benefits
Walking, running, jumping.	Straight walking, slalom walking, straight running, slalom running, standing jump, jumping while walking.	Ability to walk, run and jump in a balanced way.
Holding, grasping, throwing.	Ball catch, ball throw, tennis ball grab, grip and throw, puff ball grip throwing.	Ability to hold, grasp and dispose of objects correctly and firmly.
Lying down and rolling over, turning the body.	Lying and rolling on the gymnastics mat, turning the body in different directions.	Ability to move, rotate and roll your body on the ground.
Walking, running, jumping.	Straight walking, slalom walking, straight running, slalom running, standing jump, jumping while walking.	Ability to walk, run and jump in a balanced way.
Holding, grasping, throwing.	Ball catch, ball throw, tennis ball grab, grip and throw, puff ball grip throwing.	Ability to hold, grasp and dispose of objects correctly and firmly.
Lying down and rolling over, turning the body.	Lying and rolling on the gymnastics mat, turning the body in different directions.	Ability to move, rotate and roll your body on the ground.
Hand holding and throwing, foot holding and hitting, throwing at the target.	Holding and re-throwing the thrown ball, holding and hitting the rolling ball with the foot, throwing the ball to the target with the hand and foot.	Ability to hold, control and throw balls of different sizes and weights.
Cannon shots at the target with hands and feet.	Don't throw the puff ball at the target, Don't throw the tennis ball at the target, Don't throw the soccer ball at the target with your foot.	Ability to hold, control and throw balls of different sizes and weights with both hands and feet
Moving on the gymnastics mat.	Forward somersault, rolling on an inclined mat.	Ability to do somersaults on cushions of different thicknesses and hardness, roll on inclined cushions.
Hand holding and throwing, foot holding and hitting, throwing at the target.	Holding and re-throwing the thrown ball, holding and hitting the rolling ball with the foot, throwing the ball to the target with the hand and foot.	Ability to hold, control and throw balls of different sizes and weights.
Cannon shots at the target with	Don't throw the puff ball at the target, Don't throw	Ability to hold, control and throw balls of different sizes

hands and feet.	the tennis ball at the target, Don't throw the soccer ball at the target with your foot.	and weights with both hands and feet.
Moving on the gymnastics mat.	Forward somersault, rolling on an inclined mat.	Ability to do somersaults on cushions of different thicknesses and hardness, roll on inclined cushions.
Rolling, climbing, balancing walking, bouncing.	Rolling on a flat mat, climbing on a high mat, walking during gymnastics, one foot on a rope ladder, double foot hopping.	To be able to roll, climb, walk in balance, bounce in a balanced and smooth manner.
Rolling, climbing, balancing walking, bouncing.	Rolling on an inclined mat, climbing on an inclined mat, walking during gymnastics, one leg on a rope ladder, double foot hopping.	To be able to roll, climb, walk in balance, bounce in a balanced and smooth way.
Climbing, clinging and swinging	Climbing bars, cladding to pull-ups and swinging in a ring.	Ability to climb gymnastics bars, hold on to the pull-up bar and swing on the ring.
Rolling, climbing, balancing walking, bouncing.	Rolling on a flat mat, climbing on a high mat, walking during gymnastics, one foot on a rope ladder, double foot hopping.	To be able to roll, climb, walk in balance, bounce in a balanced and smooth manner.
Rolling, climbing, balancing walking, bouncing.	Rolling on an inclined mat, climbing on an inclined mat, walking during gymnastics, one leg on a rope ladder, double foot hopping.	To be able to roll, climb, walk in balance, bounce in a balanced and smooth way.
Climbing, clinging and swinging	Climbing bars, cladding to pull-ups and swinging in a ring.	Ability to climb gymnastics bars, hold on to the pull-up bar and swing on the ring.
Dribbling, shooting, passing the ball in basketball.	Working with techniques specific to the sports branch.	To be able to perform skills specific to sports branches in accordance with the technique.
Dribbling, shooting, passing in football.	Working with techniques specific to the sports branch.	To be able to perform skills specific to sports branches in accordance with the technique.
Jumping, jumping,	Don't jump up to the crate, don't jump down from the crate.	Ability to jump up on the gymnastics case, jump down from the gymnastics case.
Dribbling, shooting, passing the ball in basketball.	Working with techniques specific to the sports branch.	To be able to perform skills specific to sports branches in accordance with the technique.
Dribbling, shooting, passing in football.	Working with techniques specific to the sports branch.	To be able to perform skills specific to sports branches in accordance with the technique.
Jumping, jumping,	Don't jump up to the crate, don't jump down from the crate.	Ability to jump up on the gymnastics case, jump down from the gymnastics case.
Sports educational games, Group work.	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	Ability to hold, control and throw balls of different sizes and weights with both hands and feet.
Sports educational games, Group work	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	To be able to roll, climb, walk in balance, bounce in a balanced and smooth way.
Rhythmic movements, step.	Performing rhythmic movements accompanied by music, being able to climb up and down the step board.	To be able to make rhythmic movements as a group accompanied by music, to be able to climb up and down the step board as a group.
Sports educational games, Group work.	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	To be able to perform skills specific to sports branches in accordance with the technique.
Sports educational games, Group work.	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	Ability to play games in pairs and groups, to follow the rules.
Rhythmic movements, step.	Performing rhythmic movements accompanied by music, being able to climb up and down the step board.	To be able to make rhythmic movements as a group accompanied by music, to be able to climb up and down the step board as a group.
Sports educational games, Group work.	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	Ability to play games in pairs and groups, to follow the rules.
Sports educational games, Group work.	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	Ability to play games in pairs and groups, to follow the rules.
Skill coordination tests.	Practice skill coordination tests in the gymnasium.	Ability to perform skill coordination tests that require strength, quickness and skill in the gymnasium.
Sports educational games, Group work.	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	Ability to play games in pairs and groups, to follow the rules.
Sports educational games, Group work.	Working with educational games specific to sports branches.	Ability to play games in pairs and groups, to follow the rules.
Skill coordination tests.	Practice skill coordination tests in the gymnasium.	Ability to perform skill coordination tests that require strength, quickness and skill in the gymnasium.

Table 2 shows the content applied in the movement training program.

The project started with a training seminar for all participants and volunteers. Since this date, we have tried to draw a road map by holding a meeting with our faculty members who are interested in special athletes at Atatürk University Faculty of Sports Sciences. First of all, meetings were planned with special education schools and partner schools. As a partner, we met with the kindergarten administrators of a private foundation school and informed

the parents. A positive response was received from parents. Information was given regarding the compliance with the necessary safety and health conditions.

It was stated that the required application materials will be provided by the faculty of sports sciences. In the second stage, parents of students attending special education schools were interviewed. Parents expressed their satisfaction because they had information about previous studies. It was stated that transportation and sports clothing would be covered by the families.

Working days and hours were determined by a general meeting with the families.

Taking into account the special schedules of the children participating in the project, activities were planned between 15:00-16:00 on Saturday and Sunday, which is suitable for all of them.

Regarding the volunteer students, a group of 20-25 people was formed among the students taking Physical Education and Sports for Individuals with Special Needs and therapeutic recreation courses at our school. Meeting with students twice and giving information about the project in the implementation phase;

On Saturdays and Sundays, volunteer students and faculty members came to the halls 1 hour before the study and prepared the work plan for that day.

When all the little athletes arrived, they started working together with general games and warm-ups.

Then, 1 or 2 volunteer students were assigned for each of our little athletes.

During the study, the groups were checked with our faculty members and necessary warnings were made.

At the award ceremony, medals were given to each child, highlighting one of their characteristics (the fastest runner, the fastest performer, the best thrower, the one who collected the most balls, the most ambitious worker, etc.).

According to the observation results made during the project implementation process;

One of our partner students came to the first study with her sister and participated without leaving her sister throughout the study. It was observed that starting from the 3rd study, he built up self-confidence by participating in studies.

Again, one of our partner students, a girl, placed herself in the circle and 10 cm away. While he could not jump onto a high step board with help, recent studies have shown that he can jump 10-15 cm on his own. Confidence to jump to heights was formed.

While one of our special education students was just sitting on the ground and playing with yellow balls in the first days, towards the last studies, he started running with the volunteer student and filling all the balls into the bucket.

Again, one of our special education students, while working only with her volunteer aunt, started working with other volunteer students towards the end.

During the project phase, a striking feature in every study was that the parents were constantly smiling, taking pictures and videos, and expressing their satisfaction after the study.

Conclusion and Evaluation

In conclusion; In the research, it was concluded that the communication skills of the students receiving special preschool education and their partner students for inclusion purposes improved, their individual anxiety decreased, their socialization was contributed, and the satisfaction level of their families increased. In the interviews, it was stated that children do not have or have few opportunities for movement training and sports activities, and that such inclusion projects will contribute to the physical and social development of children.

Preschool period of children is a period when emotional, cognitive and academic competencies begin to develop. The social skills that the child will acquire during this period make it easier for the child to communicate with other people in a healthy way, to know himself, to adapt to the social environment and to reach the necessary academic

proficiency (1). Social, physical and communicative skills, which have very important effects, are defined as behaviors that are necessary to ensure adaptation, interaction and communication of people to their society. All of these behaviors enable individuals to maintain healthy relationships with their environment^[2].

Assessing children's social skills in the pre-school period and teaching them social skills in this period, where they are inadequate and their opportunities for movement and socialization are insufficient, is effective in reducing the social interaction difficulties that the child may experience in primary education and the risks of being neglected and rejected by their peers^[3, 4].

In evaluating social skills, sociometrist, observation, behavior rating scales and interview methods are used^[5, 6].

Behavior rating scales included in these methods are preferred over other techniques because they provide the opportunity to make objective evaluations in a short time^[5, 6].

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