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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7408003>**GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN ISRAEL***Einas SHAMA/DANIEL**Moldova State University*

The current article addresses the issues of the physical education in Israel, with specific attention on people with disabilities. Physical education is a core subject in the education system which is taught from first grade till 12th grade. Physical education teachers can initiate programs and activities in the field. School principals and physical education teachers are requested to submit in writing proposals for carrying out initiatives during the school year to the inspectors of physical education of the districts. Examples of initiatives: physical education week, sports classes, sports days, programs to promote an active and healthy lifestyle, peak days, class consolidation days centered on sports activity and transition programs related to physical education. The assessment of students' achievements in classes should be carried out by the physical education teachers as part of the teaching, learning and evaluation processes.

Keywords: *disability, physical education, teacher, achievements, learning.*

PREZENTARE GENERALĂ A EDUCAȚIEI FIZICE ÎN ISRAEL

Prezentul articol abordează problemele educației fizice în Israel, cu o atenție specială asupra persoanelor cu dizabilități. Educația fizică este o materie de bază în sistemul de învățământ care se predă din clasa I până în clasa a XII-a. Profesorii de educație fizică pot iniția programe și activități în domeniu. Directorii de școli și profesorii de educație fizică sunt rugați să înainteze în scris inspectorilor de educație fizică ai raioanelor propuneri de realizare a inițiativelor în cursul anului școlar. Exemple de inițiative: săptămâna educației fizice, cursuri de sport, zile sportive, programe de promovare a unui stil de viață activ și sănătos, zile de consolidare a clasei centrate pe activitatea sportivă și programe de tranziție legate de educația fizică. Examinarea realizărilor elevilor la ore trebuie efectuată de profesorii de educație fizică ca parte a predării, învățării și evaluării.

Cuvinte-cheie: *dizabilitate, educație fizică, profesor, realizări, învățare.*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted education, as a result – it significantly increased the rates of stress, anxiety and other mental health issues. Taking into consideration that the right to education and the right to health are core human rights and are essential for social development, now it is important to make all schools places that promote, protect and nurture health [1] of all students, including those with additional needs and disabilities.

The World Health Organization defines the school system as a significant framework to education and health promotion [2], and this enables accessibility to the majority of the children population. According to Global standards for a health-promoting school, the school curriculum should support physical, social-emotional and psychological aspects of students' health and well-being [3].

The physical activity of young people is an important criterion in defining health. Participating in sports maintains a healthy body and it is a social tool that can be used to connect different people. Physical activity develops social communication skills, so it is important to understand the factors that drive participation in sports, and to understand the goal of each person to participate in physical activity [4].

The theory suggests that schools, and mainly principals, emphasize projects that encourage physical activity habits, especially in religious and Arab public schools, where the percentage of obesity and health diseases are considered higher than in public schools.

Background

In Israel, physical education is a core subject in the education system, which is taught from first grade till 12th grade. The subject has several goals: acquiring motor skills and experience in various sports, increasing physical activity and promoting the students' health along with the education of moral-social behavior. Besides these goals, there is a meaning to the enjoyment of activity and to the challenges they pose. This kind of teaching deals with physical education for its diverse purposes in educational institutions during school hours, in school sports clubs and in other initiatives and programs at all age levels.

The professional literature shows that, as the students go up a grade, the physical activity wears off even more (children spend many hours watching screens). Physical education classes in school, especially in junior high and high schools, are included in the category of classes that many students seek to avoid participating in. According to studies conducted, it is clear that the dropout from participating in physical education classes is increasing among the youth.

According to the studies conducted, it is possible to deal with the problem through: the principals' focus on promoting health in schools through modifying health behaviors, physical activity in the school framework, adding another hour of physical activity in addition to the two hours which already exist in the weekly schedule and, in addition to an active break, lectures for parents and students about the importance of physical activity.

The experience gained across the world in studies on this subject is reflected in the fact that the principals' role is a quite significant one in the physical activity habits and it influences the behavior within the process of changing and perceiving good habits, which can be combined with specific tools to build a program adapted to school with the intervention of teachers, parents and students altogether. In addition, the influence of physical activity in terms of the individual's self-image and social achievements will be analysed further on.

According to official statistics, in 2020, people with disabilities accounted for 20% of the population in Israel (more than 1.5 million people), of those, about 326,000 children (accounted for 11% of all children in Israel) [5].

People with disabilities work less, are less educated, earn less, and are lonelier than people with no disabilities and this fact stands out in its harm to their quality of life, as children of their age belong to the education system – after all, the Knesset approved to the change of the special education law- according to the law in 2018- the goals of the special education services are the following:

1. To promote and develop the learning, the skills and the abilities of the student with disabilities and his physical, intellectual, mental, social and behavioral functioning – to bestow upon him knowledge, proficiency, life skills and social skills.
2. To anchor the right of the student with disabilities to an equal and active participation in society – in all areas of life, as well as to provide an adequate response to his needs.

The physical education classes, compared to other classes taught at school, make it possible to provide students with experiences of success relatively quickly and easily, and thus many positive reinforcements are needed.

The findings indicate a considerable gap between the current situation and the desirable situation in the area of physical activity hours per child, especially in institutions for children with physical disability (83%).

Moreover, it was found that there is a lack in appropriate facilities, in vocational training (only 25% have a special training) and in budget (only 57% of the activities is financed by the Ministry of Education).

General Instructions on physical education

Director General's Circular in Physical Education deals with planning the physical education pedagogy and adapting it to the school population. In the instruction, the different frameworks in which physical education is taught are brought up – in kindergartens, in regular classes, in sports clubs, in extended electives and others – and it provides detailed instructions for optimal utilization of the presence in school hours and individual hours that are dedicated to physical education and for conducting institutional sports events, in swimming classes and in various educational initiatives in the field of physical education.

The General Instructions stipulate the following strong points:

- The teaching of physical education in schools will be based on pedagogy planning, which includes all the lessons and events during the school year. This planning will be based on the physical education curricula published by the department for curriculum planning and development.
- In each school, a person in charge or a professional coordinator will be appointed, who will coordinate the institutional planning that will include goals, objectives and expected achievements in physical education, as well as define the methods of measurement and evaluation of the extent of their achievement. The school's teaching plan will be in the hands of the school principal.
- Before the opening of each school year, the physical education teachers will submit a proposal to the principal for planning the teaching adapted to the school's population and conditions. The planning will include goals and content for the entire school year and periodic planning for each class. The physical education events will be held according to the updated "Physical Education Events Regulations" published on the website of the Chief Inspector and the Commissioner of Physical Education [6]. Teachers who are interested in the information regarding the events will contact the district inspector of physical education.

- The security and safety instructions in physical education classes are given in the Circular Standing Instruction No. 0123 of 2019 section 9 “Ensuring the well-being of the students and their safety in physical education classes in the education system” [7].
- The physical education teachers will make sure that the students wear soft gymnastic shoes, suitable for the physical education classes. Students wearing commando shoes, hiking shoes and the like, which restrict free movement and may cause damages, must not be allowed to participate.

Physical Education Classes Held during the Summer Season:

The main dangers in physical education classes that are held during the summer are heat stroke and dehydration. In order to avoid these injuries, physical education classes in the summer, particularly in the extremely hot summer days (30 degrees and above), will be held subject to the restrictions detailed below:

- a. these classes should be held in shaded places, where there are taps or other water arrangements nearby;
- b. the level of difficulty of the exercises should be adjusted to the weather restrictions;
- c. the students should be encouraged to drink more and wear appropriate clothing, including a head covering and a T-shirt, and apply radiation-filtering ointments to exposed body parts;
- d. it is desirable for physical education classes to take place after 12 o'clock in a sports hall or in another shaded place (mainly in May, June and September).

Physical Education Classes Held in the Winter Season:

The main dangers in the physical education classes that are held in winter are frostbite (hypothermia, which may develop from combination of low temperatures, wetness and wind) and exposure to illness factors as a result of the weakening of the body's defense mechanisms. In order to avoid these injuries, physical education classes during the winter, and particularly in rainy and cold days, will be held subject to the detailed restrictions below:

- a. the lessons should be held in dry and protected places from the wind;
- b. the level of difficulty of the exercises should be adjusted to the weather restrictions;
- c. the students' clothing should be appropriate to the weather conditions.

Special note. *It is proposed that the lessons schedule of schools be built in such a way as to allow the utilization of presence in school and individual hours for the following purposes:*

- a. providing a special response for children who have difficulty or excel in physical education;
- b. working with a small group of students to train teams or to prepare for shows;
- c. activating the sports committees;
- d. engaging the students in writing the school's sports newspaper and articles about sports on the school's website;
- e. organizing a break for sports activities;
- f. holding staff meetings for physical education teachers to build teaching plans and put together tests to monitor achievements.

The curriculum for the matriculation certificate in high school requires the selection of at least one increased subject at a five-point level. One of the options offered for selection in this framework is “Physical Education”. The expansion of the physical education subject combines practical and theoretical subjects that include the sciences of physical education aimed at developing knowledge and understanding of the human body, the principles of movement and the place of physical activity in promoting health. The curriculum of physical education as an elective subject of 5 credits is aimed at all students in all sectors.

Conclusions

Physical Education should be an integral part of the curriculum and education in the school because physical activity is an important factor in child development, not only in physical but also the psychological and social aspects. It is important to develop appropriate inclusive PE lessons that aim to involve the students with disabilities on equal basis with regular students.

Examining the students' achievements in classes can be carried out by the physical education teachers as part of the teaching, learning and assessment, based on the “Physical Education Letter” [8].

Physical Education in school should be combined with Physical Activity in Leisure Time (non-formal education). As a part of their work, the physical education teachers will locate students with suitable abilities and encourage them to take part in sports classes and sports activities that are popular and competitive, organized and independent, that are held in the school or outside in the afternoon as well as in frameworks for

nurturing excellence in the various sports. On this regard, it is recommended that the local authorities open community classes for remedial exercise and physical fitness, and that school principals and physical education teachers refer students who need it to these classes.

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