



EECEME

European Early Childhood
Education Movement Experts

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Basic motor activity

Promoting movement and exercise in children, you foster a proper health education and a balance personality development. From this, children would benefit from a motor point of view as from the psychological and social ones. (Van Capelle et al., 2017); unfortunately, you often lose sight of the health matter of the motor activity, related to physic well-being (WHO, 2019), hence it is necessary to give back to exercise its educational value for people's wellness and integral health, in a climate of pleasure in doing, and particularly in the case of children, in a playful context which lets them learn and best express their motor skills.

According to the above mentioned, it is evident that exercise must be understood as life style and not as a two hours a week activity to which one can dedicate himself. It is so necessary from the first years that exercise is included as a daily activity for children but also for there families, which we want to emphasize is the main model from which children take training (Lindsay et al., 2017).

WHO (Bull et al., 2020) asserts that at least 120-180 min / day non-competitive activity should be promoted to children both at week days and weekends; particularly to children up to one year old, it is recommended 30 minutes a day in prone position (with exercises like crawl) and no longer of one hour of sedentary activity, among which it is recommended activities with parents such as telling stories; from 1 to 2 years old it is recommended at least 180 minutes of exercise throughout the day and no longer of 60 minutes a day of sedentary activity; the same is recommended for children between 3 and 4 years old except that of the 180 daily minutes at least 60 should be dedicated to moderate and powerful exercise (WHO, 2019).

Basic activities develop basic motor tactics and, in general, increase exercise levels, the same should be done as a game, favouring some multiplicity of environments and not to limit to home, for instance it is advisable outdoor activities where children can test a different repertoire of motor gestures. (Jones et al., 2020)

It is to know that compulsory enrolment to sport competitions or motor activities which some children can not or believe not to be able to do, they do not produce the aforementioned benefits, also they provoke in children to distance themselves permanently from basic motor activity and in old age to exercise in general.

Best Practice basic motor activity

Austria: Ninja Kids Training

In Ninja Kids Training, children develop the mastery of some balance stations common to parkour. The purpose of these one hour activities, for children from six years and up, is the promotion of the joy of movement and the bodily experience intended as the knowledge of the variety of movements that our body can do and the perception of the different body parts.

The classes will better dexterity, coordination, strength and resistance in children, of central importance in Ninja Kids Training.

The courses will be structured so as to be a stimulating challenge for children, so they will not have to be nor too easy nor too difficult, it is important that children have fun, furthermore security is essential in these kind of activities, it will be the teacher's task to take care of it.

Examples of materials which is usually employed for the Ninja Kids are: equipment and structures for climbing, such as the wall and the ropes to climb, a bench for gym exercises, jumping box, trampoline, cones, mats, etc. The lesson will be divided in an initial welcome and warm-up part (i.e. running games, exercises, stretching, etc.), a central part in which the emplacements of the course are shown highlighting the parts in which manati high control pertinent to safety (i.e. safety handles, posture on the equipment, etc.). Before the ending of the class feedback and assistance if necessary will be given and finally cool-down with stretching exercises and with a dance/song all together.

Spain: The walking game!

The aim of this activity is to develop the psychomotor abilities in children between 3 and 5 years old, emphasizing the laterality processes, strengthening the muscular appearance and developing balance.

To carry out this activity it is important to have a previous knowledge of the space in which the exercise will be conducted and the numerical relationship between teachers and children. It is recommended a maximum of ten children for each session.

Furthermore, it is suggested to keep tabs on the children's specific needs and the psychomotor problems. These will have to be taken in consideration to adapt the activity, best to answer to all the attendants' needs.

To carry out the class you will need a large space (indoor o outdoor) and yarns of wool of different colours.

Activity description which last about 10 minutes.

Step 1. Each child are given a long yarn of wool and will be asked to place it from an extremity to another of the gym, creating a straight line. At any time, the facilitator will prevent to the yarns to criss-cross each other.

Step 2. Children are asked to stand in front of an extremity of the yarn.

Step 3. The facilitator will give specific instructions which children must follow to reach the other side of the yarn. Some examples of instructions are below specified:

-Walk on the left side of the rope.

-Walk on the right side of the rope.

-Walk just above the yarn.

-Walk on the rope, and when I say "Now!", you will take the rope with the right hand and stay under it.

-Walk on the rope and when I say "Auch!", you must stay silence.

This game lets different variations: you can ask the children to jump over the line with the right foot, alternate right and left foot, increase or decrease the instructions frequency, etc.

This game allows to increase the manipulation ability of objects creating shapes and

This game allows for the manipulation of objects to create figures and shapes, which improves manual dexterity and skills and, consequently, improves hand-eye coordination. This exercise is recommended for the development of fine motor skills and may have favourable results in other activities of daily life such as dressing, undressing, showering, washing the face.

Greece: Box the Ball

IASIS, in collaboration with Amuse Concept Events, has organised and managed a Christmas Village for children during Christmas 2018. For all the month, children of all ages could participate to all kinds of recreational activities (face painting, story telling, origami creation, ornament workshop). For the purpose of the event a simple and efficient 15 minutes per session game has been developed, entitled "Box the Ball".

The aims of this game are: to increase the sense of collaboration and teamwork, to foster an entertaining and interactive environment with sports elements through game.

Here, the general steps for the preparation of the project:

1. Set a big box and in front of it places two hoola-hoops which mark the start for each team, creating a straight path;
2. Make sure that each groups have the same number of colored balls;
3. Children are divided in 2 groups. In case there are mixed aged groups, the facilitator supports the younger participants and makes sure that they are together with the oldest ones so that they can also support them.

The material is divided by sports material and spur-of-the-moment material.

Sports material includes 12 football-sized spongy balls of the sizes of a football in 2 different colors (6 of each), 8 hoola-hoops in the same colour of the balls, a big box divided in 3x3 smaller boxes. As spur-of-the-moment material, it is intended bright colors of the equipment which will make the activity more attractive for the children.

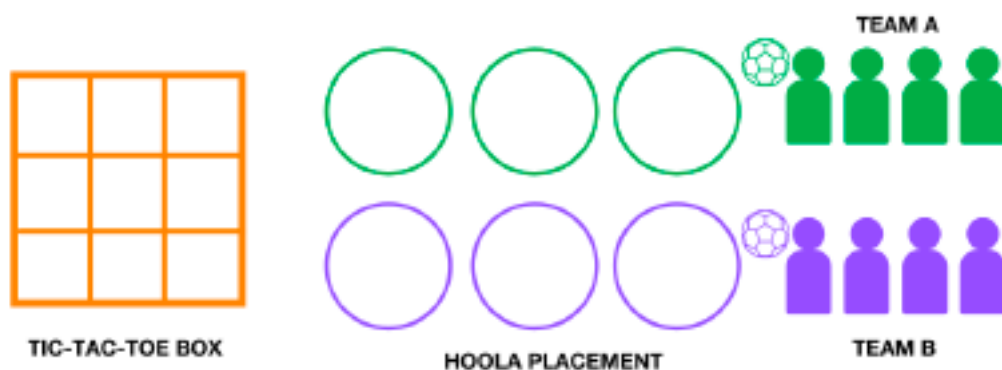
To develop the project you need to structure the environment organisation, the routine organisation which include that each group may have from 1 to 4 attendants, making sure that an equal allocation among groups of ages and the activities organisation and planning is provided.

Participants form a straight line in front of the first hoola-hoop and hold a spongy ball. Their goal is to jump from one hoola to another, and when they reach to the final one, they must toss the ball inside the box. Then, they come back jumping and hit the hand of the next participant to make him/her start. The first team that will put 3 of their balls in a straight line (tris) inside the box is the winner.

If the activity becomes challenging for participants, the number of hoola-hoops can be reduced (minimum = 2, maximum = 4), and the goal of the game can be altered to just the team that will put most of its balls inside the box is the winner.

This simple game is essentially tic-tac-toe that is turned into a sport activity.

Fig. 1: activity chart



Germany: Child movement badge

The activity is mail organised for kindergartens, but it may be extended to the first years of primary school up to 7 years old. A path with at least 10 emplacements is organised for children which can experiment different basic motor tactics with activities and games suitable for their age. All the activities must be of a playful nature and non-competitive, as to stimulate children through games and their imagination. A symbolic reward will be given to all children for completing the path apart from the time employed.

All the games will be proposed by recognised sports associations in collaboration with schools. The former will supply all the need material for the making of the activity, while schools will place at the disposal the rooms, which will be both already structured and familiar places for children; teachers could and must be a valuable help to the experts in the children's management and I the activities prior a proper training.

Germany: Recognized movement kindergarten

The aim of this project is to provide a set of tools to kindergarten schools so as to be able to guarantee to their children a propri motor training based on playful activity and which follows the propri steps of the child's development.

Particularly, the schools which had to be interested, may contact one of the specialised sports associations to ask help which consists in provide a specific training to teachers through the employment of 60 learning units. Experts will contribute to adapt the space of play so as to reduce to the mimimim sedentary activities, most favouring movement activities. Finally more relationships with local sports associations will be implemented and developed.

The training part and the following implementation of the forecast proposals allow the kindergarten school to obtain a recognition which certifies them as movement schools and to this important significance is given.

Macedonia: Program for early education and development - national level (up to 2 years old)

The program for early education and development structured on national level for children up to 2 years old

is designed to develop basic motor skills through different experiences able to stimulate their interest in research of new activities, increasing at the same time their motivation to learn new things both related to the perception of their bodies and to the discovery of the surrounding environment through play.

This program must last at least one month to be properly developed; of course all the proposals may prolong also over this time lapse.

In its entirety the national program includes three inescapable elements to a good development of the activities and are:

- specific training for teachers in motor training and promoting health life styles;
- make kindergartens supplied with the needed materials to structure activities;
- suitable playful-motor, among these there are not only sports material but most of all games and recover materials to make activities more focused on play;
- indenti appropriate spaces to conduct the activity, in case of kindergartens large spaces are not necessary but it is important that they are safe and free from unwanted barriers.

Examples of activities which may be implemented are:

- Sound making activities with body such as clapping hands or feet, makes lip sounds;
- games with different paces such as jumping like bunnies, to crawl, etc.;
- games in which children manipulate objects and with their imagination can identify new ways to use common objects;
- exploration and discovery games in which children are motivated in research new solutions to solve simple problems;
- balls games or with other objects to begin to learn their usage and get to know them.

Macedonia: Program for early education and development - national level (2-3 years old)

The program for early education and development structured on national level for children between 2 and 3 years old is designed to develop psycho-physical health and motor development of children let them develop the motor competences and giving them a good opportunity of movement also inside the kindergarten supporting their interests.

This program must last at least one month to be properly developed; of course all the proposals may prolong also over this time lapse.

In the same way of the previous best practice based on motor activity programs organised in Macedonia on a national level, again inescapable elements to a good development of the activities and are: teachers training, the supply of objects for playing and exercise and suitable spaces for the activities.

Among the possible proposals to do we may find:

- fantasy and imitation games of activities which adults do
- games to better balance
- Paths based on paces
- games in which you have to hit target, for i.e. with ball
- games centred on basic motor abilities such as climbing, jumping, etc.

Macedonia: Program for early education and development - national level (3-4 years old)

The nationally structured motor program for children aged 3-4 is designed to promote both physical and psychological health and motor development of children by supporting their interests with new and stimulating experiences.

This program must last at least one month to be properly developed; of course all the proposals may prolong also over this time lapse.

As has already been seen in the previous motor activity programs organized at state level in Macedonia, the following elements are essential for the exercise: the training of teachers, the presence within schools of objects for play and motor activity, and the presence of suitable spaces for the activity

Examples of possible activities include:

- games in which different gaits are represented by simulating an animal or object (e.g. flying like an airplane or jumping like a horse)
- play-ways in which children are stimulated to develop basic motor skills
- games in pairs with playful materials such as balls, circles, etc.
- games that allow the development of basic motor skills such as running, jumping, climbing, etc.
- games organized through music to develop the sense of rhythm.

Italy: Summer camp KIFORMA A.S.D.

The activity takes the form of summer camps dedicated to children from 3 to 9 years old and focused on movement and play. Each season takes a different theme and assumes a different name in relation to it; the main aim is to promote motor activity and to focus on promoting proper nutrition. From an organizational point of view, the steps to which attention must be paid start from the identification of a suitable place to carry out the activity (which may be both inside and outside), the selection and training of operators, the organization and planning of the activities, the advertising promotion of the activities and finally the actual implementation of the project. As regards the materials needed for best practices, they can be broadly divided into three categories: sporting materials, both conventional and non-conventional, technological materials such as all the instrumentation it takes to have the music or the amplification of the voice, recovery materials which are intended to create games that can stimulate the imagination of the child from both a motor and psychological point of view.

Italy: Fairy tales in motion

The activity organized in the children's schools (between the ages of 3 and 6) is carried out during the school period and then between September and June.

The cornerstone of this activity lies in stimulating the learning of basic motor skills in children through the use of stories and fairy tales. This allows the child to immerse himself in an invented world by becoming the protagonist himself of the activity that is carried out, allowing him to learn directly from the experience in a context familiar to him.

The project is also very well suited to promote integration and inclusion as well as provide opportunities for children to experience new forms of sociality and new cognitive as well as physical skills through play.

In order to organize this project within the classes, specific training of the operators in working with this age group is of primary importance, and the activities must be implemented with the help of teachers who know children while paying attention to the spaces to be used. Periodic review periods can also be provided to calibrate the activities in relation to the specific needs of the group by aligning with what is done by the teachers during the remaining curricular hours (e.g. a common history can be decided that guides both the motor play and all other activities carried out), and an analysis of the results obtained can be provided.

As far as material is concerned, no special items are needed, those already in possession from childhood school are fine, very simple sporting objects (such as balls, carpets, cords, circles, etc.) or recovery, everything can be used provided it is suitable for the age group. The instructor, according to his fiction, must be able to create stories with the objects available.

Italy: Let's play measure

The aim of this regular activity for about one month is to introduce to children the concept of measurement through the body testing of the top and bottom, long and short in a playful context such as that of the construction of a nativity scene during the Christmas period using recovery material found in natural environments. It is in these environments that children can compare with the size of trees, branches, shrubs, etc. while in the classroom the basic concepts of measurement can be introduced through the use of colored sticks of different lengths and materials recovered outside such as branches, leaves, sticks, etc.

The dual value of the activity carried out both in the classroom and in the natural environment can be a stimulus to children by allowing them to experience his motor skills in different contexts with a particular attention to the playful aspect so as to make the experience tested more fun and rewarding, thus promoting learning.

Italy: Neurofunctional Psychomotricity

The activity can be carried out daily alongside the normal curricular activities proposed within the kindergarten reworking the educational content through the use of the body, promoting through body experience the achievement of its identity, autonomy and gnostic-practitioner skills. The reference methodology allows children to focus the activity with their personal history and learning times, promoting not only an educational purpose but also a specific focus on preventing the possible psycho-bodily disorders that children may encounter in its developmental stages. Through their bodily experience children will be able to experience, communicate, explore, make adjustments through the encounter with the adult able to understand his times and his spaces.

Special tools are not needed to carry out the activity such as: balls, circles, cones, ribbons, scissors, flour, wire, etc.

On the other hand, through this activity, a whole range of motor skills can be developed, including the main ones which will be described below.

Controlled motor-postural adjustment in which basic body patterns and postures are developed through inhibition and control of movement using the trust relationship established with the operator where motor wealth corresponds to expressive and cognitive wealth;

Controlled equilibrium adjustment for both dynamic and static improvement that allows the development of autonomy in the child;

General dynamic and oculo-manual coordination in order to have precise, harmonic and fluid control of motion in order to achieve a good relationship with objects and the outside world;

Tonic control (tension and relaxation) of muscle tone through the relationship between tonic and

relaxation in order to test the value of communication through the expression of one's emotions and needs;

Controlled adjustment to rhythm and music and perception of external time data (succession, duration, accent, rhythmic structure);

Controlled space adjustment to promote the full use of space through relationship with others and objects by widening the emotional space in opening to the outside world;

Time-controlled adjustment to facilitate the compression of the experience of time by learning to manage frustration towards the future;

Perception of external data relating to space (representation, shapes, trajectories in speed, size, distance and quantity) to facilitate the use of different sensory organs in order to better process information;

Sensitive activity through the use of small and large tools to understand the concepts of association, identification, name, classification, etc.;

Body scheme and proper body perception (static and dynamic) (body parts, laterality, differentiated distribution, breathing, egocentric orientation) to foster a positive and enhancing body image;

Communication to stimulate and develop both verbal and non-verbal communication so that children are able to express their feelings better by observing the communication modalities of himself and others.

Italy: Sports Game

The activity that takes place in both indoor and outdoor school spaces, has a period of three days per year divided according to age and involves all schools in the territory that participate in the initiative. In the course of these activities children are involved in games and motor activities with the support of teachers and families in order to provide a playful moment in which it is possible to experience their motor skills and at the same time observe and share these activities with their classmates in a context different from that of the classroom.

Obviously, the organization of these days can be complex if there are many children involved; there must be a sharing of activities with the school and parents, in order to then choose the place that best lends itself to the realization of the days for the conduct of the games in the most appropriate way, bearing in mind that it must be fun but never forgetting the safety.

Italy: Motor Education Activity

The best practices is conducted throughout the school year for once a week in the schools participating in the initiative. With the help of a Graduate in Motor Sciences, we will offer activities of a playful and motor character in order not only to improve children's motor skills but also to gain awareness about his own body, to experiment and strengthen basic motor schemes and coordination, to socialize, to learn to relate to other children in a functional and rewarding way, to share clear rules among all children, etc.

The organization of the activity must pay the greatest attention to the preparation of spaces, whether internal or external, with an appropriate division of children by small groups of homogeneous age, as regards the necessary equipment, the activity can be carried out through simple objects suitable for motor activity that are easily available in any school, such as: sticks, circles, cones, balloons, ropes, mats, etc.

The various proposals which must be motor but above all playful must be shared with teachers so that they can be connected with the activities normally carried out in the classroom in order to promote not only motor but also cognitive learning.

Italy: Relational Psychomotricity Activity

The psychotricity project takes place over a period of two months per year with a weekly frequency for each group of children. They will be divided by age, a first group from 12 to 24 months and a second group from 24 to 36 months. The aim is to promote the harmonious development of children through play not only from a motor point of view but also from an affective, relational and cognitive point of view.

The activities will start through a rhyme accompanied by music and all can be carried out with the help of small motor tools such as: circles, balloons, ropes, etc. or with recovery materials such as: fabrics, paper, boxes, etc. It will be important, however, to properly set up the area dedicated to

activities so as to organize them without affecting the safety of children. Sharing with reference educators who have a more in-depth knowledge of children is important for the successful implementation of the activity, as is the involvement of families in the active participation in small psychotherapeutic laboratories where activities can be developed to highlight the parent child relationship.

Outdoor base motor activity

Scientists generally agree that children are more active when they are able to perform outdoor activities than indoors (Raustorp et al., 2012; Vanderloo et al., 2013), this seems to be almost obvious but it becomes less so if one wonders if the same thing happens in the schools of childhood. This seems to be almost obvious but it becomes less so if one wonders if the same thing happens in the schools of childhood. (Truelove et al., 2018). Imagining outdoor activities can be the first step to increase the amount of motor activity practiced by children and decrease the level of sedentary activity, also taking into account that children (even in the age group 3-5 years) spend a large part of their daily hours at school and the time outside it, where motor activity is significantly reduced due to the multiple afternoon engagements, spent eating, traveling, etc.

Although the benefits of outdoor activities are now clear and recognized, today's society poses risks that were not or were not considered by parents in the past, for example there is a growing concern about leaving children to play alone in the courtyards, there is a greater concern about possible accidents that may occur in public parks, etc. (Tremblay et al., 2015) with different positions between those who consider it important to encourage the use of the game (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2012) and those who raise concerns about the possible safety risks of the same (Fuselli & Yanchar, 2012); it can be argued that, given the importance of the outdoor game, it is equally important to provide children (especially young children) with a suitable place from the point of view of safety and supervision of adults, while leaving room for children to perform unstructured activities. This kind of activity will allow children to develop their motor fantasy by building games and activities that stimulate movement, of course you can join these games more structured and managed by movement professionals.

Several elements favor the practice of outdoor activities and consequently the amount of activity and motor variety of children:

- firstly, it is important that the parents are the first to be in favor of this type of activity, because for children the first example to be followed is precisely the parents and in the range of younger children this aspect is even more important as they cannot enjoy the autonomy necessary to be able to choose which activities to do (Reimers, et al., 2018).
- the school itself can promote teaching programs where ample space is given to outdoor activity both during motor activity and during regular curricular activities planned (Federici, 2015).
- the cities themselves must, or better, should provide adequate space to be able to engage in outdoor activities both structured and unstructured, in fact, the proximity of parks and the fact that they are maintained in good condition is an essential prerequisite for the increase in the amount of motor activity (Bauman et al., 2012); Stefansdottir et al., 2019).

Best Practice Basic motor activity outdoor

Macedonia: Razvigorci (Razvigor-south spring wind) - Scouts activities for age 6 to 10.

The activity taking place in North Macedonia is aimed at children from 6 to 10 years of age and is part of the general national Scouting program.

It aims to make children socialize with each other by enabling them to acquire basic motor skills in an environment that is in contact with nature and at the same time teaching them to care for themselves as the environment around them, through outdoor activities; the main focus that is developed for this age group is related to knowledge of nature, through camping and outdoor games, during which children learn to be responsible for themselves and for the community.

In addition to direct contact with nature, the possibility of visiting cities and countries different from their place of origin is very important, both as a cultural growth (thanks to visits to historic sites, churches, monuments, museums, monasteries, mosques, etc.) and as a civil growth (thanks to visits to places of public interest such as factories, hospitals, post offices, fire stations, etc.), allowing children to mature its independence away and in situations other than the classic ones such as family or school; for the children of the city, it is important to visit the villages, suitable to know the life and work of the country and to approach agricultural production.

All activities conducted and monitored by adults or by larger scouts enable the development of group work skills and personal attitudes such as honesty, fairness, equality, courage, etc. mitigating the more aggressive aspects of children. Di fondamentale importanza per la realizzazione delle attività sono un'attenta pianificazione delle attività e una continua cura alla creazione di reti di partner che possano offrire ai ragazzi esperienze diversificate ed educative.

Adult educators and senior scouts must give children real responsibilities and tasks, ensuring their physical and emotional safety.

Italy: Seasons and more

The activity is part of the primary school path allowing children to learn in a natural and stimulating context, starting from direct experience to arrive at the notions to learn.

In particular, this activity is part of the observation of the changes in the environment related to the succession of seasons, allowing children through the stimulation of the five senses to discover, explore and experiment the different materials present in the territory.

Of course, we cannot ignore the identification of suitable spaces both for the quality and quantity of stimuli and for safety, and the possibility of testing materials typical of the place where they are (such as fruit and vegetables during the season) in order to bring them closer to the territoriality and uniqueness of nature, encouraging them to observe and mature a greater descriptive capacity. Through this kind of practice, it is possible to combine the aspects of motor development with the learning provided by curricular programs, allowing experiential activity in a natural environment which, by its characteristics, can easily allow a more sedimentation of learning.

Italy: The tree study

Five meetings are planned with each group of children in the kindergarten or primary school, with the aim of approaching the natural environment by combining motor activity with outdoor teaching.

Through the use of cameras, magnifying glasses, recycling materials, materials collected in the open air with respect to nature, children are offered a teaching experience aimed at the reconstruction and identification of the trees near the school's building, allowing them to observe and discover the environment surrounding them through play and movement.

A series of activities can be planned in the classroom or directly outside, alongside the natural motor playground, in which children, having chosen a tree of their own preference, must undertake to reproduce it as faithfully as possible through the pictures collected by photographs or using the materials of recovery or as stored by direct experience, in order to make it capable of reproducing and describing what has been observed in the course of the direct experience.

Italy: Movement in Handle

The project involves the participation of class groups in activities within a handling in which they emphasize the ability to perceive their body and its movements through direct relationship with animals. The emphasis is placed on the creation of a direct relationship with the animal also on the possibility of implementing the autonomy and self-effectiveness of the child in a natural environment very different from the school context while maintaining the dynamics created with classmates.

As a more structured activity, some preparatory steps should be addressed, such as: identification of a suitable and secure structure, drafting a project shared with all involved parties, presenting parents and children with the design, setting a suitable time to allow children to learn about animals by learning to empathize with them. It is also important to consider for a uniform age division, to provide for the presence of a qualified instructor who is able to relate positively to children, to provide for the constant presence of reference educators of the school, and finally, but not least for importance, to share with children a few but precise rules that can be educational while not creating interference with the playful climate that must come about. As we have just seen, one of the most important aspects must be placed in the knowledge and creation of a relationship between the child and the pony that must be gradual in order to develop a mutual trust that allows both to enjoy the best of experience and to draw as much teaching as possible.

Technically, too, it is necessary to provide specific equipment, because in this kind of activities it is necessary to have appropriate clothing, brushes to take care of animals, cones and auctions for activities and some food for the animal; of course, all these elements can be expected to be provided directly from the structure to which the activity is based.

Italy: The house in the wood

This best practices is based on a historic building dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, surrounded by greenery with the great opportunity to use shaded open spaces so as to allow activities of a playful motor in a suitable space.

The design includes two daily exits in the spring or autumn months in which the primary school class groups are accompanied by their teachers and welcomed by specialized staff and animals present on the estate.

Children can, in this way, experience an entire open-air teaching day by entering into an empathic relationship with the surrounding nature by learning through direct experience that becomes in this way an integral part of the educational project of schools.

As this is a structured activity outside the school, great attention must be paid to the organizational aspects which must be: organization of exit and transport details, agreement with the host structure, presentation of the project to families, preparation of the activity with children and preparation of all the material required for the activity.

In addition to the motor aspect, it is important to work with children on the development of sociality and rules, aspects that are already foreseen in the school curriculum but are better suited to be learned in a natural context and in experiential teaching.

Propaedeutic to sports

From birth, children use the body as a tool to discover and research new stimuli. The playful activity encourages children to experiment and learn about new objects and forms. For children, play is one of the greatest physical, psychological and social stimuli: with the game they experience, test touch and balance, develop imagination and learn to socialize with others as well as with adults.

When talking about propedeutic activities, it is understood a set of activities and exercises in a playful form that are usually carried out in the age range ranging from 3 to 6 years, which aim to bring children closer to a sport or more generically to sports.

Many children are beginning to practice specific sports activities organized rigidly from the point of view of the intensity, practice and specialization of discipline and frequency of weekly practice. The consequence of a rigidly structured early approach to motor-sports activities can be manifested through the abandonment, after a few years, of any form of sports activity (Tortella & Fumagalli, 2019; Malina, 2010; Jayanthi et al., 2013).

The American Pediatric Academy's guidelines on motor activity in childhood (2001) argue that much attention must be paid to the activity dedicated to this age group and that it must be managed by competent and prepared people.

Children should be guided, through play and motion activities, to develop basic motor patterns such as running, jumping, crawling etc., and, not least, be able to acquire the sense of rhythm. Participants in sports training will have to learn how to manage space and move through space and time properly, as well as recognize and govern their emotions.

The sports propedeutic is a preparation activity in which children, through the play and help of the instructors, can discover their passions and their abilities. (Baker, 2003). It will allow children to choose their future sports activity in a conscious way and this could lead in the future to fewer sporting absences. This activity will also allow children to face the sports world prepared also from a physical and psychological point of view.

Best Practice Propaedeutic to sports

Austria: Parent-child gymnastics

In Austria, there are seven best practices relating to sport propaedeutic; The first best practice proposed by Austria is the "Parent-child gymnastics".

These activities are proposed for children from 1 year to 4 years, accompanied by the mother and/or father or grandparents, who are not only companions and supervisors, but are also actively involved in the events... During these activities, children experience the first movements with the help of rhymes and songs in an unknown environment but with familiar people. The goal is to know your body and its possibilities for movement. Climbing, suspension, balance and leap activities are proposed to develop the basis for the acquisition of an early and multidisciplinary movement experience through fun.

The material that is used is provided in sufficient quantities for each child and his companion, and it is varied such as: balloons of different sizes, ropes, circles, scarves, gymnica bench, pads, climbing ropes, jumping box, slides, mats, etc. and there can be no missing a cd player.

The lesson lasts 50 minutes and is structured with an initial part with welcome and warm up games, such as a dance, then goes on with the explanation and demonstration of the focus exercises of the day and ends with a song and a dance involving children and accompanying persons.

Austria: Children's gymnastics

The second proposal is "Children's gymnastics."

The motor activity for children aged three to six years, aims to develop the learning of basic motor elements and to promote: the joy and variety of motion, the perception of body and body experience. The games offered are simple and within reach everyone's means, for example, obstacle routes and group activities offer a varied program in which every child can slowly discover their own interests and personal talents. During the 50-minute lesson many materials are used (scarves, gymnica bench, pads, climbing ropes, jumping box, slides, mattresses) and are often inserted propaedeutic sessions at parkour.

The lesson is structured in three parts the reception, the central part and the final part in which it is intended to store the material used and a final dance. These sessions should take place without the presence of the parents, but the companions can naturally be present at the beginning of the courses to help the integration of the child into the group.

Austria: Polysportive gymnastics for children

The third best practices is "polysport gymnastics for children."

This best practice involves offering a wide range of sports games and activities to train coordination and conditional skills in children aged six and up. In sports activities where the equipment is intended to be used, for example, the first "tricks" are learned, which can then be deepened in advanced courses.

In football, children can play games against each other and practice the technique with their peers. In Zumbatomic, there are easy steps to learn at familiar rhythms for the entire session. Many diversified sports activities are used to exploit children's strengths, express their preferences and address new and differentiated challenges.

There are 80-minute sessions with welcome activities and then the instructor will have to explain and demonstrate the individual exercises with the materials/equipment to be used inside: individual parkour stations, individual football training exercises, individual choreography steps, etc. This will end with a final group dance.

Austria: Children's dance

Fourth best practices: Children's dance.

This activity aims to develop in children from 3 to 6 years the joy of the movement combined with music, the promotion of the variety of movement and the awareness of the body, through the learning of choreographies of famous rock and pop songs. This also has a positive effect on coordination and concentration, it is a good memory training with the aid of fun that amplifies learning.

The lesson lasts 50 minutes and after welcoming and warm-up, which take place through movement games and stretching exercises, there is the development of choreography, which involves the demonstration of individual steps/sequences and repetition of them, to conclude with defatigue.

Developed dances are often presented at events to parents, grandparents, etc.

Austria: Children's yoga

Fifth best practices "Children's yoga".

During the lessons, which last about 50 minutes, various elements of yoga are held, which take their name from nature and animal kingdom, children enjoy imitating them and experimenting on their own body. All yoga sessions for children from 3 years and up are delivered through dance, play and are based on the story of fantasy. Movement and rest alternate, as well as the experience of sharing with others and concentration on your body.

The joy of the movement is at the forefront of yoga for children, but it also trains motor skills, supports health and, above all, it is very fun. Through yoga exercises, children gain even more confidence in themselves, in their abilities and in the world.

Yoga mat, possibly Tibetan bells, CD player, candles, essential oils, etc. they are the essential material for the conduct of the lessons divided into:

- welcome, with breathing/warm-up exercises, possibly short meditation;
- demonstration of individual exercises with precise verbal instructions and, if necessary, with assistance, for example with regard to the correct posture;
- ending, it can be a fantastic journey, meditation or dance.

Austria: Children's football

The sixth best practices is "Children's football".

The main goal of this activity is to bring children from the age of 4 and up to the world of football in a playful way. The specific goals are primarily to stimulate them to a ball approach and develop their ability to work as a team. Later, the game will be played using early tactical modes such as dribbling, passing and shooting, and will promote conditional, coordinated, and cognitive abilities. The warm-up is done together, then there is a moment that is devoted to isolated exercises (running and spinning, etc.) and the rest of the time is used for games or recreational activities. Training should be fun for children, they should be neither underestimated nor overloaded, the motivating feedback of the coach reinforces the joy of playing football.

Only a few shirts, scorecards, football doors, balls and cones are needed for this activity.

The lesson lasts from 60 to 90 minutes and is divided into a first part that includes warm-up exercises and movement games, then there will be the demonstration of various exercises to promote strength, endurance and basic techniques, then it will move to the formation of two teams, to play football games to children playing different roles and finally there will be the last part of the lesson dedicated to joint mobility, fatigue and stretching.

Austria: Freestyle acrobatics

Seventh best practices: "Freestyle acrobatics".

Freestyle acrobatics creates exciting evolutions using acrobatic gymnastics movements, parkour, freerunning, breakdancing, etc.

Freerunning is moving from point A to point B as fast as possible with any method of translocation. Through creative and fluid body movements, a freerunner makes unlimited use of space, quickly overcoming obstacles and in the most creative way possible.

The ability to fit the body to space and the self-assessment of space and time play the most important role in freerunning along with the choice of the type of movements to be made in that specific situation. In the warm-up part are used several movement games, to prepare children from six years and up to different activities.

For this purpose, the material that can be useful to the teacher during the lesson, which lasts on average about 80 minutes, includes: the high bar, the parallel bars, the beam, the bench, the shoulder pad, the rings of gymnastics, the rope ladder, the vault material, pads, cd player, etc.

The lesson begins with welcoming and warm-up, with demonstrations of several acrobatic and choreographic exercises. There is a time for independent tests and exercises during which the teacher

must provide assistance and indicate precautions to be put in place for safety issues (e.g. safety grips, body posture etc.).
It ends with defatigation, stretching exercises and running games.

Greece: Mini tennis

Greece declares only one type of best practices inherent in the sports preparation and is a “Mini Tennis” program for children ages 4-12. This takes place on the premises of the Stauros Niarchos Foundation, where usually several sporting activities are held, with the support of the Orthopedic Clinic of the National and Capodistrian University of Athens, together with the Organization Rejuvenation and Progress.

Lessons are given on weekends, ranging from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30, depending on the age group. The goal is to introduce children to tennis through games and fun.

Participants have to register through a digital platform to reserve a seat for each session. If the participant does not show up 15 minutes before the start time the reservation is canceled.

Children must wear sportswear and carry bottles of water and snacks.

The material that will be used will be: racquets, tennis balls, cones, brightly colored obstacles to make them more attractive to children and other equipment that will be provided by the facility.

The project will take place in a small open field (usually a basketball court) where courses are set up and there is a smaller tennis net.

After a quick warm-up, activities are organized around getting over obstacles, how to hold the racket and how to use it to pass the ball across the net. Activities are strongly based on the fundamentals of tennis but with the goal of entertaining children.

Spain: Yoga for children

Children’s yoga activities can last 30 to 60 minutes and at all ages want to contribute to children’s well-being.

The practice of yoga in schools fosters the development of children at different levels.

At the physical level, children develop motor skills, increase flexibility, strengthen muscle system, improve coordination and balance, and sharpen their senses.

At the psychological level, yoga improves concentration, develops self-control, attention, and memory, and also increases self-esteem and self-awareness of one’s body due to its lack of competitiveness. Yoga is also practiced because it reduces anxiety, teaching participants to relax and reduce stress, it teaches the proper breathing and different relaxation modes; It encourages concentration and self-discipline, thus improving academic performance and developing imagination and creativity. Allows a variety of other activities: drawing, music, storytelling and more.

Emotionally, it encourages group cooperation and cohesion, it increases self-confidence, it conveys different values, it helps to channel emotions.

It is important that the atmosphere is relaxed and there is a friendly climate during the practice.

With the youngest children, the lesson is structured in different ways, the yoga preparation, involves activities such as telling stories, listening to relaxing music and painting; through storytelling, children can easily understand concepts such as karma and chakra.

Materials that can be used for a yoga lesson for children include, for example, drawing sheets, colors, audio equipment, musical instruments, mats, and recyclable material for murals.

A yoga class is usually divided into three parts: asana or physical posture, creative activity and guided relaxation.

Asana, being an ancient practice, has names and forms taken from nature. Exploiting these similarities, a story is told in which children reproduce animals, plants or objects and perform the actions that are narrated in the story.

After a number of classes, scenarios and stories change, but the “characters” played in the form of yoga positions must be recurring, so that children can memorize them and familiarize themselves with them.

Yoga has a multitude of asanas/postures, which will be taught progressively.

Classes with asana always begin by asking children to sit or lie down with their hands on their bellies. In this way they can feel the movement of their breath and abdomen. This pranayama yoga (breathing) exercise helps children connect with the rhythm of their own breath and heartbeat, an important aspect is to induce children to pull their belly into every inspiration and out at every

expiration, inspiration and expiration must always be done through the nose.

Some of the recommended positions are:

Tree (Vrkasasana): it improves concentration and it teaches balance.

Cat (Marjaryasana): strengthens back and pelvis, improving flexibility.

Face down dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana): This inverted V-shaped posture strengthens the upper back and relaxes the mind.

Face up dog (Urdvha Mukha Svanasana): strengthen the upper limbs, lengthen the back and open the chest.

Cobra (Bhujangasana): it strengthens the spine, shoulders, abdomen, and buttocks, while opening the chest.

Lion (Simhasana): It strengthens the ability to communicate, helps prevent throat problems and defuses accumulated tensions in the face and chest.

Candle (Sarvangasana): The reversed position stimulates the thyroid gland and improves digestion, helps to relieve asthma and reduces hyperactivity.

Lotus (Padmasana): It helps to keep your back straight and your mind alert.

The second part of the lecture involves creative activities like painting mandala and creating them with your body, producing murals with positive messages and illustrations of peace. In addition, one learns to play instruments such as Tibetan bells and instruments with materials found in nature, singing and dancing.

The lesson ends with guided relaxation where children are put in a relaxed position, possibly lying down, to perform the exercises proposed by the practitioner.

Italy: Propaedeutic to Sports through the local sporting realities

The sporting activities concerned are: Basketball, Rugby, Dance, Judo, Minivolley, etc. And the children of the "Santa Maria delle Grazie" kindergarten are involved.

Italy proposes as best practices for children aged 0-6 years weekly activities divided into 2-month renewable cycles for each type of sport.

These activities are aimed at raising awareness and bringing children closer to the world of sport, but also aim to bring the school closer to the territory through collaboration with local sports associations.

Lessons are structured into pathways with specific sport-related tools and take place at the different gyms where the proposed sports are practiced. Children are divided into groups by age and are asked to wear appropriate clothing.

For the implementation of the activity, the teachers team is required to share the observations and objectives achieved in the course of activities that are most representative of the course carried out with children within the school or with families.

The activities are provided by specialists from the local associations of the conventions who propose activities prior to the sport of their membership.

Water environment

A recent systematic review of the scientific literature tried to take stock of the situation regarding the development of swimming skills in pre-school children from 1 to 6 years old, providing important conclusions as to what may be the best criteria for setting a proper activity with children. (Langendorfer, 2019).

Many of the basic swimming skills such as voluntary control of breathing, the ability to enter and exit water autonomously, swimming “puppy” can be acquired between 18 months and 5 years (Erbaugh, 1978; 1980; 1986; Langendorfer & Willing, 1985) although it is not possible to establish exactly the best time to start, as the same should be evaluated by parents in the first place according to the individual needs of the child such as being familiar with water, being or not afraid or depending on the motor skills already acquired (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000; 2003; Committee on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention) (2010) e.g. basic motor skills such as balance, walking, jumping have a good feedback in helping decide when to start with swimming activities (Langendorfer & Bruya, 1995). From 1 to 4 years it is always recommended to supervise an adult and to use flotation devices to decrease the risk of drowning (Yang, et al., 2007).

The acquisition of basic motor skills related to swimming during childhood school can be of great help in the improvement of skills acquired later with particular reference to stroke effectiveness (Erbaugh, 1978; 1980; 1986; Langendorfer & Bruya, 1995), while what is learned between 1 and 3 years has a lower impact than the acquisition of skills in later ages, not being decisive in the development of swimming skills above 6 years and in adulthood (Asher, et al., 1995; Brenner, et al., 2003; 2009; Rahman, et al., 2009; Rahman, et al., 2012; Yang, et al., 2007) while the period between the ages of 4 and 6 is crucial and of greater impact to develop swifter and more effectively swimming skills not only in that age group but also and above all in later ages (Blanksby et al., 1995; Parker & Blanksby, 1997).

Best Practice water environment

Austria: Baby swimming

As regards 'Baby swimming', it is a 30-minute activity performed by children from 6 weeks of age and it is recommended to start before 10 months.

It aims to bring the child into the water world, in order to develop his innate motor skills as well as the strength and respiratory capacity that could hardly be developed outside this environment, obviously always through the support of parents.

Games that involve wetting and/or splashing the child's face, help him gain a good confidence with the water while going underwater is advisable only if there is a very close relationship of trust with the parent accompanying the child.

To provide this kind of activity it is necessary that the pool is heated and reserved for children, that the lesson is scheduled, then a time of reception is provided, there is a demonstration of the exercises with the related instructions on how to perform it, and sequences of water games. In addition, it is essential to use appropriate materials to play children in water such as watering holes, balls and swimming noodles; children and parents have to bring a costume, towel and slippers with them.

Austria: Toddler swimming

Toddler swimming is a 30- to 35-minute activity, suitable for children from 2 to 6 years old, which aims to develop the motor, psychological and social skills of children who already have sufficient confidence with water can approach basic swimming skills such as going underwater, floating, and sliding. Through this method children can develop their motor skills rapidly in combination with those learned in out-of-water activities.

The proposed activities are carried out through the game and at least at the beginning with the help of flotation tools, with the aim of abandoning them as soon as the child feels sufficiently confident of himself and his abilities, the same is true with regard to the help of parents, which, although foreseen at the beginning, is taken away when the child gains confidence and in the same way the parents learn to believe in the child's ability to be able to do it by yourself.

As with the previous best practice, it is necessary for the pool to be heated and reserved for children, that the lesson is scheduled then a time of reception, there is a demonstration of the exercises with the related instructions on how to conduct it, and sequences of water games. In addition, it is essential to use appropriate materials to play children in water such as watering holes, balls and swimming noodles; children and parents have to bring a costume, towel and slippers with them.

Italy: Let's play with water

The best practice "let's play with water" has a duration of 4 months and aims to bring children closer to the water element through an activity that can be carried out together with classmates and preferably with the help of teachers or educators who follow them habitually offering a new range of motor experiences in a context different from the school but with the participation of classmates.

Water-based motor activity allows you to perceive your body in an unusual way while developing new motor and psychological skills as a heightened sense of self-efficacy and autonomy.

The realization of this activity in addition to requiring a heated pool can be carried out with the help of tools normally present in the pool such as: balls, circles, rubber games, watering holes, glasses, pipes, etc.

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