



METHODS OF APPLYING VARIATIVE PROGRAMS TO ASSESS THE PHYSICAL PREPAREDNESS OF PRESCHOOLERS

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Abstract

The article examines the importance of variative (optional) programs in preschool educational institutions, as well as the criteria of play-based (movement-based) tests used in monitoring the physical preparedness of children and the indicators applied in their implementation.

Key words: physical preparedness, monitoring, physical qualities, variative program, physical development.

Introduction

In the current era of educational and technological development, fundamental reforms are being implemented in preschool educational institutions. Regulatory documents aimed at shaping and further developing the physical, intellectual, aesthetic, psychological, and cognitive abilities of preschool children are being developed and introduced by state governing bodies. In preschool education, children's adherence to the daily routine, the meaningful organization of their free time, and the monitoring of competencies across the five developmental areas indicate the stage and level of their overall development.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, preschool educational institutions operate on the basis of the "First Step" State Curriculum. The program places significant emphasis on the physical development of the child, and among the areas that define the developmental domains of the child's organism, primary attention is given to "Physical development and the formation of a healthy lifestyle."

Materials and Methods

A variative curriculum is considered an additional educational program offered as a supplementary, expanding, or alternative direction to the state curriculum within the education system. The variative program is developed based on the needs, interests, and level of development of the learners, as well as the conditions of the preschool educational institution. In preschool institutions, variative curricula such as "The Child of New Uzbekistan," "Gentle Step," "Step into the Future," and "Path of Knowledge" have been developed, and extensive work has been carried out to enhance children's competencies across the developmental areas: "Physical development and the formation of a healthy lifestyle," "Social-emotional development," "Speech, communication, reading and writing skills," "Cognitive development," and "Creative development."

The variative program "Strong Child," proposed by us for monitoring the physical preparedness of preschool learners, is designed to assess children's physical (motor) qualities—strength, speed, agility, flexibility, and endurance—as well as their physical development indicators such as height and weight throughout the academic year. The purpose of the program is to systematically monitor the physical preparedness of preschool learners during the academic year and to develop their physical readiness through physical exercises and active (movement-based) games.



In organizing the monitoring of learners' physical preparedness and in improving their physical readiness, the following tasks were set:

- to monitor the physical preparedness of preschool-age children, taking into account their age groups;
- to record the learners' physical preparedness indicators three times during the academic year;
- to organize age-appropriate physical exercises and active games;
- to foster children's interest in physical education classes, active games, and performing physical exercises.

The program is implemented over the course of one academic year and includes the following expected outcomes:

- physical education instructors and educators will acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills in organizing and assessing physical fitness tests;
- physical education instructors and educators will gain knowledge about sport-specific exercises, health-improving activities, and movement games aimed at developing physical qualities, and will apply them in practice.
- The physical preparedness data of preschool learners throughout the academic year are obtained through the implementation of the program;
- The development of physical qualities in learners of different age groups is monitored through selected physical exercises.

In preschool educational institutions, the monitoring of learners' physical preparedness is divided into initial, intermediate, and final stages, each consisting of specific periods. The initial monitoring is conducted at the beginning of the program (September), the intermediate monitoring in the middle of the program (January), and the final monitoring at the end of the program (May). Tests for determining physical preparedness are administered three times during the academic year – at the beginning (September), middle (January), and end (May) of the program. These tests are organized for children in the small, middle, large, and preparatory groups, taking into account their physical development, preparedness, psychological characteristics, and health conditions, and are conducted by the physical education instructor and the educator.

Before administering the tests, a 3–5-minute warm-up is required. The recommended schedule for test administration is as follows:

- at the beginning of the academic year, during the second and third weeks of September, in sessions 3–4–5–6;
- in the middle of the academic year, during the first and second weeks of January, in sessions 1–2–3–4;
- at the end of the academic year, during the third and fourth weeks of May, in sessions 5–6–7–8.

The results of the tests conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year are compared to organize the monitoring of learners' physical preparedness. The physical development of learners (body height and body weight) is assessed during the initial and final monitoring stages, at the beginning of the program (September) and at the end of the program (May).

Results

In developing the physical preparedness of preschool learners, physical exercises and active (movement-based) games are organized separately for each age group. These serve as the main tools for developing physical qualities (strength, speed, agility, flexibility, endurance) and fundamental movements (walking, running, crawling, jumping, throwing, and balance). Table 1 presents the criteria of play-based test exercises used in the “Strong Child” program to monitor the physical preparedness of learners in the small, middle, large, and preparatory groups of preschool educational institutions.

Table 1
Technological map of play-based tests for assessing learners' physical preparedness



No	Type of Criterion	Expected Outcome	Name of Play-Based Test
1	10-meter run	Speed	“Cheetahs”
2	2x5-meter run	Agility	“Fetch the Ball”
3	10-meter zig-zag run	Agility	“Zig-Zag”
4	3x10-meter shuttle run	Agility	“Who’s the Quickest”
5	Standing long jump	Speed-Strength	“Kangaroos”
6	Throwing a football backward over the head with both hands	Strength	“The Strong Ones”
7	Throwing a basketball backward over the head with both hands	Strength	“The Strong Ones”
8	Sitting stretch	Flexibility	“Who’s the Most Flexible”
9	Balancing on one leg	Balance	“Flamingo”

Using the test criteria presented above, it is possible to observe the degree to which children’s physical preparedness improves or declines throughout the academic year during physical education classes. Through specially developed exercises and active games for physical education, children’s physical preparedness improves according to age-specific indicators.

Table 2 presents the physical preparedness indicators of learners in the large group (5–6 years old) of Preschool Educational Institution No. 530. The “Strong Child” variative program, developed for physical education, allows not only monitoring children’s physical fitness but also tracking their physical development. Physical development parameters include measurements of body height, weight, chest circumference, hand span and waist strength, as well as vital lung capacity.

Table 2

Physical preparedness indicators

No	Type of test	High level	Medium level	Low level
1	10-meter run (second)	3,12	3,73	5,01
2	10-meter zig-zag run (second)	3,59	4,03	5,27
3	Standing long jump (centimetr)	128	90	50
4	Basketball throw (centimetr)	310	190	100

Discussion

The test criteria presented in the table reflect the results obtained in monitoring the physical preparedness of large-group children (5–6 years old), specifically assessing strength, speed, agility, and speed-strength abilities. These measurements are repeated at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year, ultimately providing overall development indicators. For children whose development lags behind, it is important to provide special exercises to enhance their physical qualities.



In conclusion, the widespread use of monitoring in developing the anatomical-physiological and physical preparedness of preschool learners allows educators to track the extent of their growth and serves as a primary tool for physical education instructors and caregivers.

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