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Rhythmics for children with vision problems

Abstract

This article presents the rationale for musical and rhythmic education for children with visual impairments. Active games, music, and the development of a sense of rhythm significantly influence their development. The discipline "Rhythmics" offers this arsenal. Classes are aimed at developing children's psychomotor abilities, represented by specialized perceptions (sense of rhythm, tempo, time, balance, and space), which play an important role in the child's personal development and socialization.

In this article there are samples of musical and rhythmic games.

Key words: pre-schoolers, vision problems, rhythm, music, games, rhythmic musical education

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Introduction

The concept of *"rhythmics"* implies rhythmic-musical education, which is a direction of the physical education system: to a certain extent it is presented in the pre-university curriculum in the form of rhythmic lessons, and to a greater extent – in the curriculum of physical education. The basic objectives of rhythmic-musical education are *the formation of a sense of rhythm* and *the development of coordination of movements*.

Coordination, as a psychomotor quality, is presented in various spheres of human activity. And the more valuable it will be developed, the more the individual's mental state, his ability to coexist in society will depend on it. This especially applies to children with vision problems.[1–3]

Rhythmic lessons are oriented towards the rehabilitation and social adaptation of children and thus solve the basic objectives of complex influence (psychological, pedagogical and strengthening-recovery), such as the formation, development and correction of psychic, verbal processes, as well as individual peculiarities.

The preschool age period is characterized by an increased active motor activity of the child determined, first of all, by the lability of his nervous system. Children who attend a kindergarten consume the surplus of energy through organized activity (running, jumping, playing, imitating, etc.) under the guidance of a teacher, who constantly supervises them. Unsupervised children manifest their energy through spontaneous actions, which usually causes incorrect manifestations in their behaviour, sometimes delays in their responses or intellect. In the case of children with vision loss or poor functioning of the organ of vision, not only the limitation of their motor activity is observed, but also deficiencies in the development of speech and other psychomotor processes.

The results of pedagogical observation show us that most educators, even some teachers who teach different subjects, encounter difficulties in carrying out organized psychomotor actions, especially in the case of preschool groups.

Research purpose and methodology

The purpose of this article is to substantiate the impact of active games on the psychomotor development of children with visual impairments, enabling their socialization in modern society. The research methodology includes:

- Theoretical analysis of specialized literature in areas such as adaptive culture, specifically on the problems of psychomotor organization of motor actions in children with visual impairments; theory and methodology of musical and rhythmic education; theory and methodology of motor games;
- Designing a rhythm lesson for children with visual impairments;
- Developing musical and rhythmic games.

Results of the study and discussions

Data from the specialized literature, observations of some authors[4–6] show us that for the development of motor skills in children of this age, the means of rhythmic-musical education are very effective.

Like other activities, rhythmic-musical movements ensure the multilateral development of children: they develop musicality, rhythm of movements, creative abilities, and skills of collective actions are formed. The educational significance of movements to music is reflected in the fact that they develop a sense of rhythm, contribute to the development of psychomotor skills, and in-depth assimilation of the musical material of the lesson. With the help of movements, children convey the characteristic features of the work.[7–9]

Rhythmic presents a specific form of active therapy, which is based on a combination of speech, music and movement. The basis of rhythmic-musical activity is the plastic-motor and rhythmic processing of musical material. It contributes to the intensification of the emotional influence of music, to the development of representations about the means of musical expressiveness, about the elements of musical speech; movements with music help to track the development of musical content. All this is achieved due to the acquired qualities and skills of combining action with music, with its character.

Rhythmic-musical activity contributes to the improvement of movement coordination, improvement of posture, raising the tone of life, which creates a joyful mood in children and has a beneficial effect on the state of the whole organism. Under the influence of rhythmic-musical activities, positive qualities of children's personalities develop: they are thus put in situations where they have to show initiative, be active, confident and manage in different situations; musical-aesthetic senses are improved. The child is happy that through movements he can express his attitude towards the musical content, that is, we can talk about the development of creative imagination.[10–14]

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Taking into account the mentioned above, we have created a methodology for rhythmic/rhythmic-musical education lessons, using different means from various fields: basic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, music (means of expressiveness), dance, speech, games, all this with the participation of musical accompaniment throughout the lesson.

The innate sense of music and rhythm contributes to the successful use of gymnastic and dance exercises, which, in turn, contribute to the formation of correct posture skills, the development of physical qualities, a sense of rhythm and tempo, a sense of balance, freedom of movement, mastering the space around them. Thus, the rhythmic lesson program for children with visual impairments aged 6-7 should contain, in a certain volume, the means listed above, which help children acquire the necessary skills and abilities without negative emotions. Musical accompaniment increases the emotional perception of the environment, awakens positive emotions, giving confidence in one's own strengths, promoting the desire to be active and increasing the body's resistance.[5, 7,10,12,15]

If there is no musical accompaniment, the objectives of the lesson are limited to rhythmic counting accompanied by voice, clapping, snapping fingers, etc. The study of rhythmic motor structures is carried out according to didactic principles. After explaining the exercises, it is recommended to emphasize the rhythmic design of the task with the help of clapping. The techniques of performing the exercises are assigned a secondary role, since the attention is focused on the quality of the execution of the respective rhythmic structure.

Structure and content of the rhythmics lesson

Since our lesson is for preschool children (6-7 years old), we must mention that its duration should not exceed 25-30 minutes. It is traditionally structured.

The preparatory part of the lesson includes different variations of walking, running, jumping and variations of steps with different positions of arms/hands and their various movements. For the formation of correct posture and walking and running with stops when the musical accompaniment is interrupted. The passing tasks for assessing the register (pitch) have a game character and help to educate musical hearing. Also, this part of the lesson includes a complex of rhythmic gymnastics performed under musical accompaniment by the "continuous" method.

Depending on age, this part of the lesson lasts from 4 to 6 minutes.

The basic part begins with rhythmic tasks, which include all the sound effects produced by the participants themselves: clapping, kicking, beating the thighs, snapping the fingers; the use of any object (tambourines, drums, gymnastic sticks, etc.) is not excluded. For the formation of verbal-motor coordination, verbal material is proposed, which also solves rhythmic tasks. After this, the assimilation of elements of any fast dance follows, for example, "Sârba". To rehabilitate the physiological functions of children, it is proposed to perform smooth movements using the arms. Also, head, torso and body, in place and in motion, under appropriate musical accompaniment. In the basic part of the lesson, elements of classical dance are also performed, for example, "Polka".

The basic part of the lesson lasts 15-20 minutes.

The final part of the lesson contains 1-2 dynamic rhythmic-musical games. They develop in children a sense of rhythm and music, a sense of tempo and time, and last but not least, coordination of movements. In this part of the lesson, musical accompaniment is used according to the tasks of the proposed game.

The time allotted for the games is 5-6 min, giving the opportunity for each game to be repeated 2-3 times.

Games to develop the sense of rhythm

" Game with an object "

Formation. 2, 3 teams play. Each team is divided in half and the players are arranged in columns from right to left facing each other.

In two halves, right and left, of each team on the ground 8 circles are drawn at a distance of 1 m from each other. The team captains hold 8 not too large objects in their hands (cardboard figures, flags, etc.).

Team 1.	●●●●	OOOOOOOO	●●●●
Team 2.	●●●●	OOOOOOOO	●●●●

Conducting. The teacher gives them a rhythmic task. For example: the musical size 4/4, at each first beat of the measure in the musical work they must place the object in the circle drawn on the floor, starting from the first.

The captain, who stands on the left, distributes the objects in the given rhythmic order and arranges himself at the end of the column. After this, the first player on the left side of the team collects the objects distributed in the same rhythm and passes them to the next player, who stands in the column on the right, and he himself arranges himself at the end of the column, and so on.

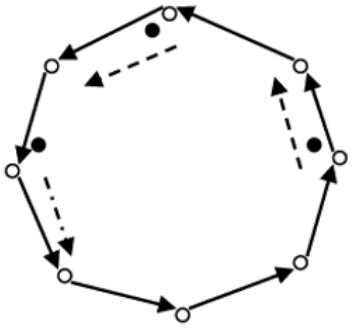
For each violation of the rhythm, the team accumulates penalty points.

The team that has accumulated fewer penalty points wins.

Patterns of rhythmic drawings:

"Dancing with the ball"

Formation. The players are arranged in a circle. One (two, three, if the group is large) of the players has the ball. The musical size of the musical work 2/4.



Conducting. On the strong part of the musical beat, the player (players) with the ball hits the ground, on the weak part – everyone takes a step to the right (around the circle) and the one to the left of that player must catch the ball. This task is repeated until all the players have performed it.

The player who doesn't manage to catch the ball accumulates penalty points, or is out of the game.

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Variant of the game. The players have formed a circle and stand with their right shoulder to the center at a distance of two steps. The musical size of the musical work is 3/4.

Development. On the first beat of the waltz step, they throw the ball up, on the second beat, the next player with the ball must catch it while performing the waltz step, on the third beat – the ball held in his hand. Everything starts from the beginning.

Conclusions and recommendations

The "Rhythm" category applies not only to physical characteristics but also forms the basis for human psychomotor activity. This is especially important for people with vision impairments. By developing a sense of rhythm in children with such problems, it is possible to develop other specialized perceptions, such as a sense of space, a sense of balance, a sense of time, and others as well.

Musical and rhythmic games can be very helpful in developing a sense of rhythm, as play is a fundamental way for children to understand the world, develop mental processes (memory, thinking, imagination), emotional development, and social skills. Through play, children learn to interact, develop speech and motor skills, and relieve stress. In turn, music in children's games stimulates a child's comprehensive development – it develops hearing, rhythm, creative imagination, motor coordination, and emotional responsiveness. Musical games help improve memory and cognitive abilities and also facilitate children's socialization.

The topic presented in this article can be explored and expanded upon for other categories of developmental disabilities in children, such as hearing impairments or hearing loss, where rhythm perception is based on the entire human body, as rhythmic signals are wave processes/oscillations perceived through tactile sensations (vibrotactile perception)—that is, by the skin, bones, and nerve endings.

In addition, this problem can be successfully implemented in the rehabilitation system for people after stroke, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, etc.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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