

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION OF PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN: HEALTHY
GENERATION – GUARANTEE OF A BRIGHT FUTURE**

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Abstract

This article comprehensively examines the theoretical and practical aspects of physical education for preschool-age children. It analyzes the perspectives of ancient scholars, including Plato and Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna), regarding health and physical development. The concepts of physical culture and physical development are elucidated, while the health-promoting, educational, and developmental tasks implemented in preschool educational institutions are described in detail.

Special attention is devoted to children's daily routines, hygienic conditions, nutrition, sleep, clothing requirements, and the organization of outdoor activities. Furthermore, the article highlights effective methods for developing cultural-hygienic skills and emphasizes the critical role of physical exercises for children aged 3 to 7 years. The study substantiates the necessity of close cooperation between families and preschool educational institutions in nurturing a healthy generation.

Keywords

preschool age, physical education, healthy generation, physical culture, daily routine, hygienic skills, child health, active games

The initial stage of human life—the preschool period—constitutes the most crucial foundation that directly influences an individual's future physical and spiritual development. During this stage, a child's organism undergoes rapid growth and development while remaining highly sensitive to environmental influences. Therefore, the issue of physical education for preschool-age children represents not merely a pedagogical concern, but a strategic direction of significant social and national importance.

Reflecting on history, the great ancient Greek philosopher Plato, contemplating the nature of happiness, emphasized that the foremost blessing for a human being is health, followed by beauty. This insight remains profoundly relevant today. Indeed, good health is the source of all wealth. The descendants of a nation whose lineage is healthy and whose spirituality is elevated will themselves be healthy, vigorous, faithful, and loyal—qualities that become powerful factors contributing to the glory and strength of the Motherland. It is precisely for such happiness and well-being of the nation that a healthy generation is essential.

The great scholar Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna) devoted special attention to the issue of physical education in his works, stating the wise words: "Physical training is a noble method for preserving health." This idea resonates with the widely known proverb among our people: "Whoever strives for movement shall find blessing in their health." In ancient times, our people referred to physical training as riyozat (disciplined exercise). In his seminal work "The Canon of Medicine," Ibn Sina elaborates on riyozat, i.e., physical education, noting that it encompasses several forms. He particularly emphasizes that moderate engagement in physical exercises benefits health, whereas a sedentary lifestyle may lead to the accumulation of negative traits within the body.

The immense benefits of physical exercises for health and well-being are eloquently described by J. Addison: "Just as reading is essential for the mind, physical exercises are equally essential for the body." Similarly, the wise Socrates stated: "Through gymnastics, I restore and maintain the balance of my body."

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, with the aim of implementing comprehensive measures grounded in universal human values to cultivate individuals who are spiritually rich, morally mature, intellectually developed, highly educated, physically robust, and harmoniously developed, the year 2000 was declared the "Year of the Healthy Generation." The primary objective of this initiative was to raise our children—who serve as our support and hope—as healthy and well-rounded individuals in every respect. To achieve these noble goals and implement related activities according to a strict framework, a special State Program was adopted.

The critical role of physical education and sports in nurturing a healthy generation is evident to all. The competitions held in our country since 2000—such as the "Alpomish Games," "Umid Nihollari" (Springs of Hope), "Universiada," "Sog'lomjon, Polvonjon" (Healthy and Strong Youth), and "Barkamol Avlod" (Harmoniously Developed Generation)—serve as compelling evidence of this commitment. Furthermore, the establishment of the International Charitable Foundation "For the Healthy Generation" has drawn global attention to efforts aimed at preserving and strengthening the health of the rising generation.

The theory of physical education constitutes an integral component of pedagogy. When defining various phenomena related to this field of pedagogical science, key concepts such as "physical training," "physical culture," "physical maturity," and "physical development" are utilized. Each of these concepts possesses a unique content, and understanding them correctly is of paramount importance in the process of educating children.

The concept of "physical culture" is relatively broad in scope, encompassing not only physical exercises but also skills related to labor and daily life. For instance, factors such as tidiness, cleanliness of clothing, and room hygiene are indispensable parts of physical culture. Furthermore, habits related to the hygienic regime—such as a rational schedule of activity and rest, sleep hygiene, nutrition hygiene, and others—fall within the scope of this concept. Conditioning the organism using natural environmental factors, namely air, sun, and water (often referred to as hardening), is also a crucial component of physical culture.

Physical development, on the other hand, is a biological process that expresses the formation of the human organism and changes in its forms and functions. In a narrow sense, this refers to anthropometric and biometric indicators: height, body weight, chest circumference, lung capacity, posture, and others. Physical development occurs in accordance with the biological laws of life—specifically, the unity of the environment and the organism, and the regular transition of quantitative changes into qualitative changes. Indeed, by altering living conditions, including physical education methods, it is possible to significantly enhance the level of the organism's functional capabilities and modify physical development indicators.

The physical education of preschool-age children is aimed at preserving their lives, strengthening their health, forming movement skills, providing comprehensive physical education, developing cultural-hygienic skills, and instilling the habit of maintaining an organized routine.

The successful implementation of any educational activity undertaken with a child depends on the child's health. Therefore, most pedagogical work is carried out taking into account the child's physical capabilities and health status. A child's physical development plays a significant role in their growth into a harmoniously developed individual. A healthy, physically

robust child possesses higher work capacity, adapts easily to conditions, and completes various tasks quickly and effortlessly.

A distinct feature of the preschool-age child's organism is that it grows and develops very rapidly. Simultaneously, the formation of organ functions and systems is not yet complete, making the organism highly susceptible to injury. Therefore, when providing physical education to children, priority tasks must be clearly established.

The process of physical education for preschool-age children necessitates addressing tasks across several domains. Primarily, health-promoting tasks are prioritized. These encompass strengthening children's health, ensuring the harmonious development of the organism's forms and functions, enhancing work capacity, increasing resistance to various external influences, and promoting longevity.

The second category comprises educational tasks. The heightened receptivity characteristic of preschool-age children, along with their ability to adapt easily to changing conditions, creates opportunities to implement a range of educational objectives. These include forming necessary skills and habits, developing physical qualities (such as agility, strength, endurance, speed, flexibility, balance, and visual estimation), cultivating correct posture and hygiene skills, and mastering knowledge regarding physical education.

Motor skills in children, such as crawling, walking, running, cycling, and others, are formed relatively easily and facilitate the child's interaction with the environment. For instance, while sledding, a child learns about the properties of snow and wind; while swimming, they learn about the properties of water. Initial knowledge related to mastering physical exercises and hygiene skills is established. It is crucial to impart concepts and knowledge regarding the benefits of lessons, the importance and technique of physical exercises, methodologies for conducting them, active games, and more. Children should know the names of body parts, directions of movement (up, down, forward, backward, right, left), full turns, the names of physical education equipment, their purposes, how to handle and store them, and rules for caring for clothing and footwear. During physical exercise activities, it is necessary to reinforce knowledge about natural phenomena, social life, animals, birds, and insects.

The third category is referred to as upbringing tasks (corresponding to "developmental tasks" in the Abstract). It is essential to cultivate a love for sports activities and an interest in athletes' achievements among children. Performing physical exercises creates favorable conditions for demonstrating positive character traits (such as organization, discipline, modesty, kindness, etc.) and moral virtues (honesty, fairness, sense of camaraderie, mutual assistance), skills for working in a collective, caring for physical education equipment, fulfilling tasks responsibly, as well as exhibiting volitional qualities (courage, decisiveness, self-confidence, perseverance in overcoming difficulties, endurance, and others).

When addressing the tasks of physical education for preschool-age children, their age-specific characteristics must be taken into account. Rapid growth and development are distinct features of the preschool-age child's organism. However, the formation of systems and their functions is not yet complete. Consequently, the preschool-age child is highly vulnerable. In this regard, health-promoting tasks are prioritized. Goals are established such as life preservation, disease prevention, increasing the organism's resistance to external environmental influences, ensuring the proper and timely development of all bodily systems, expanding their functional capabilities, and achieving harmonious physical development with correct posture.

A child's daily routine (or regime) refers to the rational alternation and consistent daily repetition of wakefulness, sleep, nutrition, and various types of activities. The routine must provide favorable conditions for development; therefore, it varies depending on the child's age,

health status, characteristics of parents' work, family lifestyle, and the specific institution where the child is raised.

The regularity of the routine is based on the rhythms of natural phenomena and the rhythms of the organism's functioning. This is manifested in the cyclical patterns of wakefulness and sleep, fluctuations in body temperature, respiration and heart rate rhythms, the digestive tract's functioning, and more. A rational routine is constructed based on the optimal balance between wakefulness and sleep, during which functions are redistributed among areas of the cerebral cortex and received information is processed. It is also designed considering the balance between mental and physical activities, as well as digestive rhythms. Deviations from the established routine are immediately reflected in the child's mood and, consequently, in their behavior.

When designing a routine, several factors must be taken into account:

Age-specific characteristics of higher nervous activity must be considered first.

Age-related features of the digestive system should be accounted for.

Individual characteristics of children are important; for example, nervous children or those with a weak nervous system require more sleep.

Age-specific needs for physical activity must be recognized. The daily volume of movement ranges from 10,000–19,000 steps for 3-year-olds to 14,000–25,000 steps for 7-year-olds.

Seasonal and climatic conditions, as well as the organization of children's sleep, should be considered.

Only when all these factors are comprehensively evaluated can an effective daily routine be established.

Hygienic Conditions and Environment

In our society, physical education is grounded in the state's care for mothers and children, the continuous improvement of living conditions for workers, and the growth of material well-being. For the proper physical development of children, appropriate hygienic conditions are essential. These include suitable buildings, playgrounds, equipment, clothing, and footwear, as well as a scientifically based daily routine that encompasses rational nutrition, development of movement, and hardening measures. Additionally, continuous supervision by medical personnel and the implementation of necessary preventive and therapeutic measures are required.

Children's meals—breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack, and dinner—should take place in a calm and pleasant atmosphere. When a child sits at the table with a good appetite, favorable conditions are created within their organism for effective food digestion. A healthy appetite also supports the development of independence, cultural-hygienic skills, and proper table manners.

Most importantly, ensuring that children develop a good appetite from an early age is of paramount significance. Some children may eat more than necessary, while others may eat too little. Therefore, food portions should be provided according to the child's age-appropriate norms. However, children should never be forced to finish their meals, as coercion consistently diminishes the pleasure derived from eating, complicates digestion, and may occasionally lead to complete food refusal. The primary indicator of a child's proper nutrition is their harmonious physical development.

Teaching children to eat independently from an early age helps foster a positive attitude toward food and encourages eating with appetite. From the beginning of the second year of life, children should be taught to use a spoon; by the fourth year, they should learn to use a fork; and by the fifth year, they should develop skills in using a knife.

Additionally, the following cultural-hygienic skills related to eating should be cultivated:

Washing hands before meals

- Eating in an orderly manner
- Chewing and drinking quietly without smacking sounds
- Using napkins appropriately
- Maintaining correct posture while seated
- Expressing gratitude for the meal
- Rinsing the mouth after eating

During mealtimes, it is inappropriate to scold or reprimand children, as this disrupts their nervous system, suppresses appetite, and creates a negative association with food. Any correction directed at one child should not distract the attention of others. Educators or caregivers should assist children who have difficulty eating independently.

Cultivating cultural-hygienic skills related to nutrition requires positive role modeling from adults. Educators should monitor how children perform these skills and, for older preschoolers, ensure they consciously understand the importance and proper techniques of these practices.

The Role of Sleep in Physical Development

Sleep plays a crucial role in the physical education of children. It restores the energy necessary for the normal functioning of the cerebral hemispheres. Deep, restful, and sufficiently prolonged sleep is the primary means of preventing nervous system fatigue and overall organism exhaustion.

If a child sleeps poorly or does not obtain sufficient rest, this may indicate disturbances in nervous system functioning. Children with highly excitable nervous systems often experience poor sleep quality. In such cases, the inhibitory processes of sleep may be insufficient to ensure deep, restorative rest, causing children to awaken easily at the slightest noise or disturbance.

The poorer a child's sleep quality, the more their behavioral norms, interpersonal relationships, and communication skills may deteriorate—a condition commonly understood as irritability or capriciousness. Conversely, restful sleep is a strong indicator of a child's overall health.

Age Group Key Skills and Expectations

4 Years Old • Wash hands correctly
• Brush teeth and rinse mouth after meals

- Use handkerchiefs appropriately
- Observe rules of cultural behavior at the table
- Handle toys carefully
- Maintain cleanliness and order

5 Years Old • Wash face, neck, and ears independently with soap
• Dress neatly and carefully
• Know the sequence of actions for each task
• Begin to notice flaws in their own appearance or surroundings

- 3–7 Years (General) • Perform all self-service movements faster and more precisely
- Wash without wetting clothes or the floor
 - Dress neatly and quickly
 - Monitor their own appearance
 - Use forks and knives correctly
 - Eat in an orderly manner
 - Tidying up play areas
 - Duty roles expand and become more complex

The fundamental condition for ensuring good sleep is the proper organization of an age-appropriate daily routine from the very first days of life. To facilitate quick

and restful sleep, appropriate environmental conditions should be created, and engaging, activating activities should be organized during wakeful periods.

Development of Cultural-Hygienic Skills (Ages 3–7)

The cultivation of cultural-hygienic skills is conducted throughout the entire preschool period for children aged 3 to 7 years. Significant cognitive advancements linked to the development of motor coordination enable children to manage various movements required for self-service, duty roles, and communication within the collective.

Age-Specific Hygiene Skill Expectations:

Cultural-hygienic skills must be reinforced regularly. Changes in the system of educational work or a lack of attention to forming skills and their application can lead to their rapid loss.

Organization of Physical Activities

For children aged 3 to 7 years, physical exercises play a significant role in working with preschool-age children. During this period, children should master basic movements and sports exercises under the guidance of an educator and independently, as well as learn to play various active games. This extensive program can only be fulfilled by utilizing diverse means and forms of work.

In conclusion, the process of physical education for preschool-age children constitutes a complex and multifaceted system that encompasses not only physical exercises but also daily routines, hygiene practices, nutrition, sleep, and environmental conditions.

Talent represents a uniquely developed, exceptionally strong, and irreplaceable ability that flourishes through holistic development. The formation of a perfectly developed individual represents one of the stages in the intellectual refinement of humanity. Physical culture, in this context, is a process that actualizes all of an individual's natural and social capacities, progressively humanizing them while strengthening both their physical and spiritual dimensions.

In nurturing a healthy generation, the cooperation between families and preschool educational institutions, as well as state policy in this field, plays a decisive role. The physical and spiritual development of children serves as the foundation for their future life achievements and success.

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