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Development and assessment of young children's motor giftedness

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Abstract

The article deals with the approach to development and assessment of advanced motor skills in young children on the basis of realization of the author's program 'Motor Intelligence of children aged 5-6 years old', which includes games to ensure the underlying interconnected development of children's cognitive abilities and motor skills. Experimentally proven methods for evaluating children's motor giftedness as well as psychological and pedagogical conditions can significantly improve the main indicators characterizing development of young children's psychomotor abilities which constitute the foundations of their physical giftedness.

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1. Introduction

Humanization of the Russian educational system has activated the work with gifted children. The social awareness of the problem of gifted children's education has become an important step towards its solution. The concept of 'motor giftedness' is interconnected with that of 'physical intelligence' in the works of foreign authors. Thus, according to F. Galton, to determine giftedness one should take into account particular sensory processes [1]. His ideas were later reflected in pedology, Stanley Hall's scientific study of children [2].

The study of giftedness in terms of physical intelligence is highly interdisciplinary in its nature. Therefore, it is considered from the standpoint of psychophysiology, physiology of aging, neuropsychology and psychogenetics. The research of the concept of giftedness is still ongoing (G. Doman, J. Doman, Vladimir Klimenko, E. Thomas and others). Of particular interest is the concept of giftedness proposed by G. Doman. In justifying the concept of

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‘physical intelligence’, the author focuses on six vital functions which form the basis of his method of children’s physical development [3].

Motor giftedness in physical culture and sports is determined by psychomotor skills.

By a psychomotor ability we understand the core of motor skills associated with an arbitrary reflection of motor activity at the expense of fine differentiation of adequate motor image, imagination, memory which ensures efficient motor regulation based on accurate self-control and self-regulation [4].

The structure of children’s psychomotor skills, as we see it, should include a range of sensory, motor and cognitive skills, namely:

- Effective self-control and self-regulation of motor activity;
- Fine differentiation of sensitivity and adjustment of movements on the main control parameters (time, space, effort, speed, rhythm);
- Responsiveness and efficiency of motor activity regulation;
- Good physical memory and movements recall on the main control parameters;
- Strong-willed motor regulation;
- Psychomotor performance and reliability.

Development of children’s psychomotor skills involves:

- Enhancement of the motor component of a motor action;
- Formation of a correct motor image;
- Improvement of sensory motion control;
- Effective storage and recall of the motor pattern.

According to E.P. Ilyin, a man’s motor skills, as a rule, cannot be equally highly advanced [5]. This point of view has served as a basis for classifying children’s motor giftedness by the following physical characteristics:

Motor giftedness can be represented as:

1. Responsiveness and strength manifested in speed strength.
2. Efficiency characterized as stamina or an ability to resist fatigue.
3. Coordination of movements manifested as agility.

This grouping fully corresponds to the orthodox classification of psycho-physical characteristics proposed by physiologist V.S.Farfel [6].

2.Method

We identified five criteria for an overall assessment of children’s motor giftedness:

- Type of motor activity and mental spheres supporting it intellectually, emotionally, motivationally and volitionally;
- Degree of its formation (differentiated as potential and actual);
- Form of its manifestation (explicit and latent talent giftedness);
- Range of its manifestations in various forms of motor activity (total giftedness and special giftedness);
- Features of child development stages (early and late giftedness).

Developed psychomotor skills as the physical characteristics of a child are one of the criteria for motor giftedness. Given the criteria we identified the following levels of motor giftedness: (normal / standard) and degrees of motor giftedness (high / maximum).

The normal level refers to the test results of psychomotor skills corresponding to the norm for the children in question.

The high level refers to the test results of psychomotor skills exceeding the norm for the children in question by 25-30%.

The maximum level refers to the test results of psychomotor skills exceeding the norm for the children in question by 35% and more.

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