

Sport and sport activities during the pandemic (COVID-19) in a Slovenian school

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It is well known, being physically active improves everyone's general health condition. Regular and enough movement is very and especially important for kids and adolescents. It impacts their holistic development. It is proven, kids with daily movement regulate, develop, and maintain health (Kropej, 2007). Sport activities besides affecting physical conditions, improves and beneficially affects mental health for kids (Ortega, Ruiz, Castillo, Sjöström, 2008).

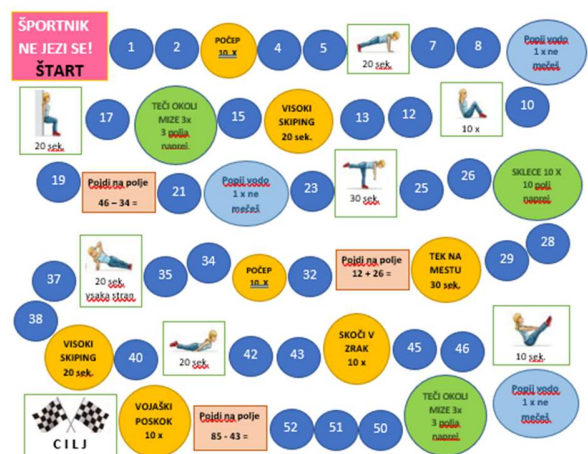
Sport activities during Covid-19 pandemic were quite a challenge. Kids were, most of the time, closed in between 4 walls with limited movement. All indoor and outdoor sports were mostly banned, and all trainings were suspended. Their work for school was mostly behind the computer. They were socially distanced from their friends and in many cases, they were not able to do things they like.

At the elementary school Milojke Štrukelj Nova Gorica, sport teachers tried keeping sport hours (as a subject) on the normal routine with some theoretical and practical tasks. We did our best to preserve the educational process as planned, but we added some "common sense addons" to keep kids motivated and willing to do sport.

How did we teach sport from home?

At least twice a week we sent kid's tasks. Usually they were given some theoretical quizzes and some practical exercises. As previously mentioned, the curriculum was adjusted as we focused a bit more on healthy lifestyle.

- We sent them different workout videos, example standards workouts, dance workouts, Tabata and other sports material. We were mostly using videos from YouTube.
- In cooperation with kinesiologists, we made a video with exercises suitable for both, kids, and their parents.
- We made training plans, so they could keep up and track their workout results.
- A family fun board game with sports exercises was created to entertain young and elder people (Picture 1).
- The pandemic could not stop us from having two sport days.



Picture 1. Family fun board game.

How the sport day look like?

The Slovenian curriculum provides five sport days per year for every class. Sport days are carried out in nature. In the current school year, we couldn't organize sport days as usually, so we made some changes to carry them out.

We had two sport days for the entire school, meaning from first to ninth grade and we invited their families too.

First sport day consisted on hiking. All kids got tasks to go hiking with their families. Due to certain limitations, example, parents were doing their daily routine, we extended from one to four days (starting on Friday till Sunday) to go hiking to the nearest hill. A series of options and destinations were given to them, so they could freely choose the one they liked best. As proof (Picture 2), kids were asked to send pictures to their own sport teachers.

For the second sport day, teachers suggested two options. The first one was cycling, and the second one was doing physical activities, together with their families at home.

The cycling route was not fixed and therefore they could pick one from their preference. For ones choosing doing sport at home, we prepared schedules with activities. They could try more workouts like (morning workout, aerobics, interval workout, Pilates, workout with weights, dance, and mental workouts). For each workout, a video from YouTube was chosen and sent.

We had great response and feedback from kids as well as from their parents. They liked the way sports day were planned and carried out, especially because entire family was involved.



Picture 2. Photos of pupils from sport days.

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic for sure turned the entire world upside down. First impressions and thoughts on how to educate sport remotely was for sure a topic on a big scale. From the beginning we were trying not to occupy pupils too much with sport workload as they were already occupied with other subjects, besides getting used to the new remote teaching approach. Soon, we realized that they're getting quite stressed due to the situation and we knew we need to help them. We were their motivators when they needed us most.

Nevertheless, every challenge brings us new opportunities, but most important is to keep focus and motivate yourself and others. Based on this experience and feedback we got, we learnt a lot, and we can use this as a future driver for such unpredictable situations. To end, keep your body fit and your mind sharp.

Literature

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