

Healthy Kids: Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Programme in Primary Classes

1. Introduction

In order to make the bright future of children their physical, mental, social, and emotional development has to be given prime importance along with educational activities. Agility and enthusiasm to engage in games and physical activities, is a characteristic of children of primary stage. But, at present, children do not get an opportunity to engage in games and other recreational activities as part of the teaching learning process. Moreover, lack of interest of teachers, lack of proper training, lack of availability of physical education teachers, and the attitude of parents curtails children from engaging in games and other sports / recreational activities.

It is the need of the hour to increase the health and physical efficiency of the future generation. Through excellent health and physical education activities, it is possible to reduce and solve many health issues that Kerala faces, including life-style diseases. Models of suitable health and physical education activities that are scientifically executed have not been implemented for children in lower primary classes in Kerala. Physiologists have remarked that the stage of growth up to the age of eight is a very important period in the life of a child. Each activity for the development of physical efficiency that the child undertakes should have a scientific basis. The SCERT proposed an activity package titled 'Healthy Kids' to improve the health and physical efficiency of children in primary classes. An activity package has been prepared as a part of the research study for children of 2nd and 4th standards. 'Healthy Kids' project is being implemented with extreme care.

2. Aim of the study

To devise and implement a comprehensive Health and Physical Education programme suitable for children of lower primary classes in Kerala.

3. Objectives of the study

- To find out the practicability of Health and Physical Education activities that are implemented at the primary school level
- To check whether teachers are able to complete the health and physical education activities within the stipulated time
- To understand the problems and limitations faced by the teachers, while imparting training on health and physical education activities

4. Methodology of the study

4.1 Sample

The sample selected was a group of ten teachers and 272 students from the 2nd and 4th standard in Govt L P School, Anad, in Nedumangad Taluk of Thiruvananthapuram district.

4.2 Tools used for the study

- i. **Observation Schedule:** the tool that was used by Observers during training.
- ii. **Questionnaire for teachers:** questionnaire for ten teachers who participated in teacher training as well as the training imparted for the children
- iii. **Questionnaire for resource teachers:** tool for resource teachers to document practical reflections

4.3 Process

- i. Under the guidance of experts in physical Education, a six day programme was designed for the comprehensive development of health and physical efficiency of children in primary classes (Class I to IV). The practicability of the activities was tested in two sessions at Govt U P School, Poojappura. The activities were given a final shape considering the opinions of experts who observed the try-out.
- ii. In Govt L P School, Anad, a three-day teacher training for ten teachers was conducted. The training module and activities of the teacher training were subjected to scientific observations and analyses, and inferences were arrived at.
- iii. Children were given training under the leadership of teachers who were trained. The training was conducted after collecting information using observation schedules, giving questionnaire to the teachers and consolidating daily reports. The study report has been prepared consolidating the information thus collected.

5 Findings

- i. The children of 2nd standard performed select activities such as High Five, Walking, Running, Knee Tag, Toe Tag, Statue, Jumping, Bending and Stretching, Swinging, Swaying, Pushing, Pulling, Twisting, Turning, Hoop activities, Fire on the Mountain, Banana Dance, Wellness Dance, Co-operative Games, Balloon Volley, Combination Relay and Circuit Training in an excellent manner. Other activities have been done in a better manner. Thus, the study proves that select activities can be performed by children of 2nd standard.
- ii. It was observed that the teachers who participated in the training were able to train the children in an excellent manner. It was also found that they could train other activities in an excellent manner.
- iii. The study proved that the activities that were selected for 2nd standard were suitable for training. It was found that all activities that were selected from these were found to be suitable for both teachers and children.

- iv. Among the activities selected for 4th standard, the children could perform Zig-Zag, Hurdle Relay, Forward Squat Jump, Tennikoit Ring, High Five, Treasure Hunt, Banana Dance and Wellness Dance in an excellent manner. Along with that they could perform all other activities also in a good manner.
- v. The teachers who trained the children in 4th standard were able to train the children in High Five, Personal Space, General Space, Houdini Hoop, Fire on the Mountain, Zig-Zag Relay, Forward Squat Jump, Back Throw, Tennikoit Ring, Treasure Hunt, Banana Dance and Wellness Dance in an excellent manner.
- vi. All activities designed for fourth standard were found to be suitable.
- vii. The resource teachers could not complete all the activities that were prescribed for all teachers within stipulated time.
- viii. The study found that the teachers and children could use the equipment for training with ease.
- ix. The teachers have faced some difficulties. Physical discomfort, uncomfortable dressing, and lack of awareness about some activities are found to be the reasons for this.
- x. Opportunity provided for self-assessment and correction within the time frame provided, gave ample chances for planning of activities for the upcoming days.
- xi. The study found that children are able to take up many activities that are complementary to learning activities and this was rated as an achievement of this programme.
- xii. All the teachers opined that the ideas and activities in the package for teacher training were easy to understand and transact.
- xiii. When 70 percent teachers opined that the time allotted for transaction of concepts and activities in the package was sufficient, 30 percent teachers were of the opinion that it was insufficient. Majority of teachers remarked that more time has to be allotted to rhythmic activities like Wellness Dance.
- xiv. All teachers remarked that the children were able to perform in an easy manner in items such as Kids' Athletics and Manipulative Activities which use equipment.
- xv. Fifty percent teachers commented that the language and description of the package were comprehensible. 20 percent of the teachers found that style of language of the package was difficult and 30 percent of teachers commented that description in the training module was not easy to understand.
- xvi. All teachers opined that teacher training related to Health and Physical Education can be made better by relating them to learning activities inside the classroom.
- xvii. According to the teachers, activities that posed a problem to the children were various types of jumps, scarf and activities with bean bag.
- xviii. Sixty percent teachers marked that items like Natural Play (Treasure Hunt) and Rhythmic Activities could not be performed by differently abled children.

- xix.** All the teachers remarked that the activities prescribed in the package were suitable for the physical and mental development of the children. The activities were also sufficient and helpful for increasing the physical fitness of the future generation, for increasing co-operative attitude and were suitable for an integrated approach.

6.Suggestions

- i. Select activities to improve health and physical efficiency that can be implemented at the first stage and can be used by stages.
- ii. Activities have to be made interesting by adding games to the activities for each day.
- iii. Any comfortable dress can be chosen for teachers and children.
- iv. More equipment (simple and less dangerous) have to be made available for conducting more activities.
- v. More activities have to be identified for differently abled children.
- vi. Teachers remarked that pictures also have to be included to make each activity easy and self-explanatory.
- vii. Video clippings can be used to facilitate the assimilation of health and physical activities and gain an awareness on locomotor and non-locomotor activities.
- viii. Select activities have to be implemented in more schools for a fixed period and its effect has to be found out through research. For this, pre-test and post test have to be administered.
- ix. If teacher training is implemented stage by stage, using ample time, it will be effective.
- x. Effective monitoring is necessary to make the support of experts available for children. Activities have to be made effective through review meetings, visits, and documentation.
- xi. Devising tools for self-assessment, time-bound assessment and observation will be useful for the activities.
- xii. More time has to be allotted for rhythmic items like Wellness Dance and activities using equipment for the teacher training.
- xiii. As many of the activities designed for children as part of Health and Physical Education nurturing programme can be related to academics, more activities should be related to learning activities.
- xiv. It should be ensured that all activities that are selected are suitable for the physical and mental development of children, sufficient for improving physical efficiency and helpful for increasing a co-operative attitude.

Conclusion

The ultimate objective of education is the overall development of children. At present, proper attention is not given for health and physical education at the primary level. It is a fact that this remains an obstacle for the physical, mental and emotional development of the children. The findings of this study reveals that select activities can solve existing limitations.

