

WORKSHOP – Parent-Child Exercise Class for Japanese Residents in Germany in Cooperation with the Japanischer Kindergarten e. V. (15th February, 2020: Düsseldorf, Germany)

Overview

15th February 2020, 1st Parent-Child Exercise class was held in the Japanischer Kindergarten e. V. (Düsseldorf, Germany) with the cooperation of the kindergarten's physical education teachers and Takafumi Tomura (the author) as a student from the Tsukuba International Academy for Sport Studies (TIAS, <http://tias.tsukuba.ac.jp/>). In total, **80 participants** including parents and children joined in the Parent-Child exercise class learning a variety of physical activities that can be performed together by parent and child.

Introduction

Japanese community in Dusseldorf is expanding with increasing Japanese residents who mainly came due to working purpose of the father. There are Japanese primary and secondary school, and Japanese Kindergarten to provide the educational opportunity based on Japanese educational curriculum for children. Japanese Kindergarten e. V. was established in 1983 and has been **playing an important responsibility to develop the physical and mental abilities of preschool children** with qualified teachers from Japan. The school and kindergarten institution is the central facility for Japanese residents to experience Japanese style physical activity since there is **less physical activity opportunity which conduct in Japanese in the local area**. Therefore, Parent-Child exercise class was opened with the aim to motivate parents to engage in physical activity with their children to promote a more active lifestyle through the enhancing the awareness of the importance of physical activity for children.



Preparation for Parent-Child Exercise Class

For the preparation of Parent-Child exercise class, the author held detailed discussions with the physical education teachers (**Syogo Fukumoto, Kentaro Shimizu, and Takatsugu Yasuda**) multiple times to decide the purpose and the contents of physical activity/ies. As a motivation of us teachers to hold the parent-child exercise class, the outcome is to reduce the potential of the deficit of physical education of parents. Further to motivate parents to increase physical activity time for children to accelerate motor skill development. The kindergarten conducted a brief investigation of parent's physical activity habits and the results indicated that 40% of parents do not perform the amount of intended physical exercise in a year. Moreover, 37% of the parents perform physical exercise usually one to three times in a week; however, it can be said that physical activity habits of parents are not enough due to reasons such as living abroad. Based on the result, the author (Takafumi) and PE teachers came together with a common purpose to hold the parent-child exercise class. Furthermore, PE teachers were concerned about building a relationship with parents, especially with the fathers. Hence, we considered the parent-child exercise class could be a great chance to communicate with parents within a comfortable atmosphere.

We also considered that the contents of physical activity is an important factor to enrich the experiences from the parent-child exercise class. Hence, not only discussion was carried out in a theoretical way but we also conducted practicals of the physical activity in order to finalize **the**

plan for Parent-Child exercises. We set a **key indicator** for the contents of the parent-child exercise class as follows: 1) parent and child can play together cheerfully, 2) child can experience a physical activity which needs parent’s support, and 3) physical activity which can be done or is available at home or in the neighbourhood.



The Day of the 1st Parent-Child Exercise Class

Fortunately, it was a beautiful day and all participants who applied beforehand could join in the class. The class was separated into three sections to avoid any issues due to the high population density during the class.

- First section : from 9:30 am to 10:30 am with 27 participants (Parent = 13, Child = 14)
- Second section : from 10:45 am to 11:45 am with 27 participants (Parent = 13, Child = 14)
- Third section : from 12:00 am to 13:00 pm with 26 participants (Parent = 13, Child = 13)

Each section was conducted for **60 minutes** including introduction, **warming-up**, **exercise for the physical release**, **moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (circuit training)**, **expression physical activity (colourful balloon)**, and conclusion (see Table 1, and Figure 1 on the next page).

Timeline	Content
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction about the concept of the event. • Learning the importance of physical activity for parent and child. • What is a parent-child exercise?
Warming-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance • Stretching exercise
Exercise for the Physical Release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foot rock, paper, scissors • Parent and Child imitation • Hip touch game • Rhythm jump grasping the hands • Jump and tunnel • Ball exercise
MVPA (Circuit Training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous high knee (10 times) • Rolling on the mat together. • Balance duration • Horizontal iron bar exercise • Continuous hopping • Jump box exercise (parent becomes a box) • High jump using a trampoline
Expression Activity (Colourful Balloon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing with the music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wave • firework • mathroom • coffee cup • rainbow sky • octopus • hideout
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback • Hearing comments from the participants

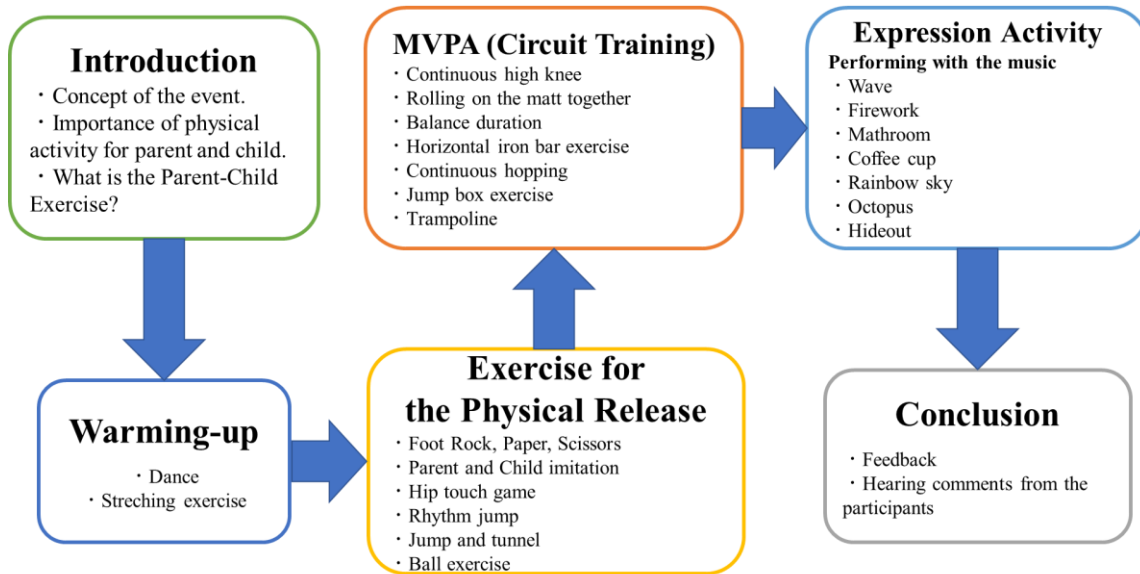


Figure 1. The Content of Parent-Child Exercise Class

When the class started, the facial expression of participants was not relaxed, however, we could see the change in expression among the participants (the young child and the parent alike) as the activities progressed; and, one could see many smiles and an enjoyable atmosphere during the class. I played the role of main teacher of the first and second section with Mr. Syogo Fukumoto as the main teacher for the final (third) section. Physical education teachers encouraged participants to be more active and assisted when they needed help (e.g., when children hesitated to join in the activity).



Children were energetic and enjoyed doing physical activity with the parents. To note, such an enjoyable and exciting expression and diligent attitude of children was never seen in a normal kindergarten’s curriculum. Parents also realized the child’s positive feeling toward physical activity, and so they could have a wonderful time with their energetic children.

After the class, we were happy to hear these comments from the participating parents and children:

Parents:

“The contents of physical activity in the parent-child exercise class made me tired (fatigued) more than I thought. But it was **so much fun and good for losing weight**”.

“**I realized that my motor ability has been declining**, so I need to perform physical activity more often in daily life.”

“It was surprising for me **to see the pleasant faces of my children** during the physical activity. I want to try to do such a parent-child activity from now on.”

Children:

“I was nervous at the beginning, but it was very fun. And I don’t want to finish.”

“I could do better motor performance than my father. My father needs to practice more!”

From the class, parents could learn the importance of the physical activity to promote not only their health but also to **increase the amount and quality of enjoyable time** for their children. Furthermore, it was a great chance for parents **to realize/understand the actual motor condition**. Therefore, it can be said that the **1st Parent-Child Exercise Class** could provide Japanese residents the opportunity of practical learning through a variety of physical activity and it was a successful event in the kindergarten.

Reflection

After all of the sections were finished, the author and physical education teachers conducted a reflection of the 1st Parent-Child Exercise Class. Looking at the positive side, most of the parents and children seemed to be satisfied with the contents of physical activity and could move the body actively. Most of the parents gave us a positive feedback after the class and answered that they want to join in any future parent-child exercise program. Furthermore, children also gave us a positive comment which they want to join the activity again. Physical education teachers were also surprised at the enjoyable atmosphere during the class and perceived the potential of parent-child exercise to boost the motivation of parent and child to engage in an active lifestyle. Hence, physical education teachers decided to open the class periodically to provide an opportunity for the parents to see children’s development practically and to make the parent realize their actual motor ability condition.

Positive reflection from PE teachers:

“It was a fantastic time to join in the activity as a teacher and I recognized the value of education.”

“Most of parents and children were satisfied with joy after the activity. And we need to hold it again.”

“I could communicate with fathers naturally and make a relationship of trust during the class.

Contrast to positive reflection, we found some limitations of the parent-child exercise class; those were population density and participant’s limitations. During the preparation phase, we were concerned about the population density to avoid any potential incident/accident during the activity, and so the class was separated into three sections. However, we also found some risky situation that connects to an accident in the actual situation. Moreover, we offered this event for only parent-child who attends the kindergarten normally and we did not invite other Japanese residents living in same the area. However, now we are assured that such a ‘parent-child exercise’ is an effective tool to motivate parent-child engagement in physical activity. Hence, hence, the kindergarten could contribute towards social/societal activation by inviting more Japanese residents to join in the program/activities. This is our mission to leave the legacy of sports in the Japanese community abroad.

Learning

It was an amazing experience to manage a Parent-Child Exercise class by cooperating with the physical education teachers at the Japanese Kindergarten e. V (Germany). For one, the author learned the potential of parent-child exercise to overcome the world-wide discussion in the trend of increasing inactive children. Furthermore, it was noted that importantly, the physical education teacher/s can build a relationship of trust with the parents during the activity, and it connects to creating a comfortable atmosphere in the normal kindergarten’s curriculum such as the sports festival and the open class day. While the frequency of physical activity of Japanese parents tends to be low in

Germany, parent-child exercise can be one of the powerful instructional methods to promote an active lifestyle of Japanese residents living abroad.

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