



Activity – MOOC1 Benefits of sport: On-going communication and reporting to the parents. Further parental involvement and support

IO2 Portfolio of the Four-minute BarrierS Erasmus+ project

Objective of the activity	Create and maintain contact with parents in order to motivate and support the child’s involvement in sport/physical activities
Any materials necessary	No specific materials are necessary for this activity
Participants / stakeholders	PE teacher or coach, parents, parasport/VIP sport associations, the child itself
Detailed description	<p>The first contact with parents is key because it will have a decisive impact on the rest of the process. If the PE teacher and parents start off on the wrong foot, the latter might dig their heel and reject the PE teacher’s propositions. Therefore this first contact ought to be prepared carefully by the PE teacher. For this reason we recommend to first meet people active in clubs and associations for VIP, who have a greater experience with this specific audience.</p> <p>Step 1: Reach out to associations and clubs</p> <p>VIP associations and sport clubs for children with (visual) impairments have a larger experience than the average teacher in dealing with parents of v.i. children. They are aware of parents’ fears and concerns, and know how to reassure them and overcome their reluctances to let their child participate in activities with other children. Some of them (for example) provide individual supports to parents, and organise meetings with and between parents of v.i. children to share experiences and discuss about everyday life topics.</p> <p>People active in those organisations will be able to give advice to the PE teacher as to how to address parents from the first contact and establish a climate of trust all along the process.</p> <p>Step 2: Preparation of the first meeting with the parents and their v.i. children</p>



Based on the recommendations collected from the members of VIP clubs and associations, the PE teacher will organise a first meeting with the parents of the v.i. student.

The PE teacher will also have to do prior research before meeting the parents. They will search information about physical and sport activities that can be proposed and/or adapted to v.i. children. Numerous researches conducted around the world can help them in this task. The Four-Minute BarrierS portfolio also contains sport and physical activities created or adapted for v.i. students. Finally, they could attend continuing training on this issue and how to communicate with parents.

Sometimes one of the biggest challenges to overcome for a v.i. student/kid to get involved with physical activities and sports, is the fear of their own parents. In fact, fears related to a possible injury, hold back parents from enrolling their v.i. children indifferent sports or PE activities. The biggest assets for helping parents overcome these fears are awareness and knowledge regarding benefits of sports and physical activities on v.i. children on every level: physical, emotional, social, and so on. Besides fears, there are also other factors related to the possibility for a v.i. child to practice a sport activity, linked to costs, availability of appropriate and reachable facilities, mobility and time. Some of these factors, common to parents in general, are more highlighted for parents of v.i. children, because v.i. children tend to rely more often on their parents than sighted children for getting to various locations and involvement in different activities.

Therefore, improved preparedness of the schools to a) provide sports possibilities at their own locations or b) organise school transport to venues where v.i. students can practice a certain sport can be of immense value for overcoming this particular challenge.

A number of possibilities of sport activities exist that do not require any investments or considerable changes to the facilities in order to include students with impaired vision.

Another beneficial opportunity can be offered by mixed sports camp where children with v.i., accompanied by their families or not, can practice different sports in order to test themselves and check what they like and/or dislike and what they would like to practice more.

The PE teacher will explore all these issues before the first contact with parents and keep them in mind during the meetings in order to provide advice and support to the parents.

Step 3: First contact with the parents and their v.i. children



Early support fosters successful integration and family support is one cornerstone of this integration.

One of the first steps is to tone down the disability showing through examples of successful integration that the child will be able to blossom.

Meeting between parents and visually impaired people is therefore crucial. It eliminates preconceptions and gives parents the necessary energy; an energy they will inject into their child to give them the best chances to live the life they want.

During their first contact with the parents, the PE teacher will mostly listen: they will take information about the child's disability (nature, degree, limitations...), their tastes, strengths and weaknesses, relations with other (sighted or not) children and adults, their leisure activities...

They will try to know if the child already practices (or has already practiced) a physical/sport activity and how it went.

Based on this information and data collected before, the PE teacher will propose to introduce the child to some activities likely to suit them, either in the school (as part of a lesson or a special sport day), or outside, in a club or for a discovery day for example.

If the parents and the child accept this proposition, the PE teacher will commit to organise the activities and will invite them to a subsequent meeting to present the programme to them.

Step 4: Validation of the activity program by parents and v.i. children

Based on the child's personal characteristics and the resources available in the school and outside (clubs, sport infrastructures, etc.), the PE teacher will draw up an activity programme (integrating sighted and v.i. children) and submit it to the parents and the child during another meeting.

In cooperation with them, the PE teacher will adapt the programme where necessary and ask them to validate it.

Step 5: Experimentation of the activity program

During the following weeks, the PE teacher submits the planned activities to the child and observes their reactions and behaviour. They also observe how the class group reacts. A log will be useful to review the situation with the parents and the child during the following meetings, which will be regularly held in order to make quick adjustments that could be necessary.



Step 6: Feedback and ongoing evaluation

Regularly during the school year, the PE teacher will meet the parents and their child to collect their feelings about the proposed activities and communicate to them their own feeling. Together they will search a solution to the problems that could have come up and think about how to improve the programme even more. Adjustments considered useful by all will be implemented immediately and evaluated during the following meetings. Thanks to this continuing evaluation process, the programme will evolve so as to meet at best child’s needs and aspirations.

Step 7: Keep in touch through meetings with teachers, experts, other parents and v.i. children

All along the child’s development, new questions will inevitably arise. Problems are shared but experienced differently in families.

For this reason, it is beneficial to regularly organise meetings to let parents of v.i. children share their experience between themselves, with their children, and with the larger school staff (teacher, counsellors, management staff, supervising staff...) and experts who could be occasionally invited to school meetings. The objective of those round tables is to share (positive or negative) experiences taking inspiration from the testimonials of young v.i. people or expert and specialists’ contributions.

To provide support and encouragements

The parents of v.i. children may sometimes feel isolated, anxious, confused, worn out and powerless. When they experience these difficulties, they like to have you present to listen to them. They will also appreciate your support and encouragements, and to be informed of progresses achieved by their child at school.

Examples of learning activities

Working with parents

With 3 or 4 other teachers, make a list of all the ways you already cooperate and communicate with the parents. How could you cooperate and communicate more efficiently with the parents?

Ask an expert



	Invite the parents of a v.i. child to your school to discuss with the staff about the challenges they meet and the help they need.
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