

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND PARASPORT AS A FACTOR OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The inclusion of students with special educational needs in regular schools has gained greater prominence in recent years. By analyzing this theme, it is perceived that the process of school inclusion requires the mobilization of society for a new look at human differences, recognizing them as an essential value to be assumed by educators, families and the community. Inclusion is based on the principle that diversity is the main characteristic of human beings, and not equality or uniformity. In this context, sports practice emerges as a fundamental tool to promote social inclusion, allowing individuals with disabilities to develop their skills, interact with others, and gain greater autonomy. Adapted sport plays a crucial role in providing opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sports activities that are modified or specially developed to meet their needs, promoting physical, social, and emotional benefits. **Objective:** To verify whether the practice of sports in sports initiation contributes to the social development of children with disabilities. **Methods:** This is a descriptive study conducted with a sample of 10 children and adolescents with diagnosed disabilities, attended by a center of excellence located in Goiânia, Goiás, Brazil. **Results:** When asked about their favorite leisure activities, 50% of the volunteers mentioned the use of computers, 40% prefer to play sports and 10% like to listen to music. Regarding the reasons that led them to practice sports, 30% started to improve well-being, while others said they started to improve communication, spend energy or correct posture. When evaluating the impacts of sport on their attitudes, 50% said they felt safer, 30% reported becoming more emotional and 20% said they were calmer. When asked if sport contributed to their social life, 90% of participants answered yes, while 10% indicated that it maybe. **Final considerations:** Adapted sport proves to be an essential tool for promoting social inclusion, providing equitable opportunities for participation and competition for individuals with disabilities. In addition to the physical benefits, paraports contribute significantly to the social, emotional and psychological development of children and adolescents, strengthening their self-confidence, socialization and sense of belonging to society.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, people with disabilities have been seen by society from different perspectives, influenced by the social, moral, religious, and ethical values of each period. The trajectory of inclusion is marked by extreme policies of exclusion, but also by significant advances in the guarantee of rights. Inclusive education is a reflection of these historical and social changes, consolidating it as a fundamental right (SASSAKI, 1997).

In the 1990s, the process of school inclusion became a focus in special education (MANTOAN, 2003). This structural transformation aims to integrate people with disabilities into the social environment, ensuring not only access to education, but active participation in various spheres of society. Inclusion in schoolgirls required society to adopt a new perspective on human differences, recognizing them as an essential value (GLAT and PLETSCH, 2012).

The inclusive school was based on the principle that all children can learn and participate in school and social life. Diversity is valued as an enriching factor of learning, providing equal opportunities to all. According to Aranha (2004), the inclusive school must ensure the quality of teaching for all students, respecting diversity and meeting individual needs. In addition, when families actively participate in school life, they develop the awareness that the school is a public good that also belongs to them. To ensure inclusion, it is essential that the school plans and implements necessary adaptations, enabling students with special educational needs to access learning and knowledge.

Within the school environment, through the discipline of physical education, the practice of sports can be inclusive, reinforcing the principle of diversity by providing a space in which differences are not only respected, but also valued. Sport allows people with disabilities to develop their potential, overcome challenges and gain recognition, strengthening their active participation in society (GRUBANO, 2015). The school, by adopting inclusive sports practices, expands the reach of inclusive education, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to meaningful experiences that go beyond the classroom. Adapted sport can be a powerful pedagogical and social tool, aligned with the principles of inclusion and equal opportunities (SANCHES and RUBIO, 2011).

Currently, adapted sports can be practiced in an integrated way, allowing individuals with and without disabilities to participate together in various sports. However, in official competitions, athletes with disabilities compete separately from those without disabilities

(GORGATTI, 2005). According to Duarte (2013), it is essential that society understands the needs of people with disabilities and prepares itself to meet them.

From the second half of the twentieth century, with the strengthening of human rights, the world was faced with challenges and requirements to ensure respect for the dignity and equality of all. Among these needs, the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities stands out. The same author states that one of the most evident forms of social inclusion occurs when people with disabilities are prepared to assume relevant roles in society through sport (DUARTE, 2013).

Adapted sport plays a key role in providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in sports activities that are modified or specially developed to meet their needs. In addition to the physical benefits, parasports contribute significantly to the development of independence, self-confidence, self-concept and self-esteem of practitioners, providing a playful and pleasurable experience (GORGATTI, 2005). The growth of parasports has increased the visibility and opportunities for people with disabilities, allowing them to try new movements, overcome physical barriers and strengthen their social integration in different environments (LABRONICI, 2000).

In this way, parasport represents a valuable opportunity for children and adolescents with disabilities, enabling their active involvement and the acquisition of physical, social and emotional benefits through sport (PALLA, 2001). Based on this, the objective of this study was to verify whether the practice of sports in sports initiation contributes to the social development of children with disabilities. Based on these assumptions, the objective of this study was to analyze whether sports initiation contributes to the social development of children with physical disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN

This study is descriptive, cross-sectional and observational, with data collection carried out quantitatively (FREIRE; PATTUSSI, 2018).

LOCATION OF DATA COLLECTION

The entire research was carried out at the Center of Excellence, located at Avenida Oeste, Goiânia – Goiás.

RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS

The study sample included ten children, of both genders, 6 boys and 4 girls with diagnosed physical disability. The inclusion criteria were: age between 8 and 14 years; regularly practice some sport for at least six months. Exclusion criteria: any difficulty that would prevent the volunteer from answering the questionnaire.

All volunteer guardians were invited to sign the Informed Consent Form (ICF) where the objective and procedures of the research are found. No a priori sample size was calculated, and the sample size was defined by convenience.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was carried out in two stages. In the first, the teachers responsible for the paraspot modalities were verbally invited to participate in the study. After acceptance, the invitation was extended to the children's legal guardians.

In the second stage, the children answered a questionnaire based on the model of Neves and Filho (2018), containing open and closed questions related to age, education and social aspects acquired through sports practice.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed and presented in graphs, with values expressed in relative frequencies (percentage).

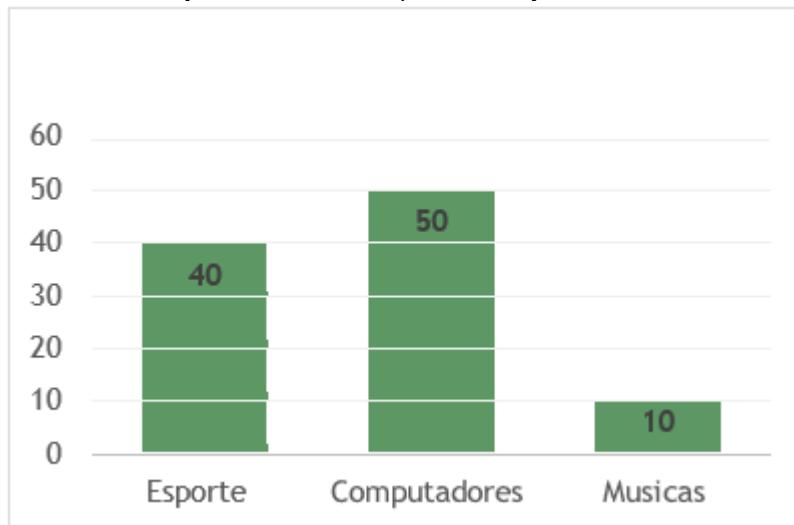
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study included 10 volunteers with physical disabilities, of both sexes, with a mean age of 11.1 years (± 2.22), mean height of 1.51 m (± 1.17), mean weight of 44.5 kg (± 12.4) and mean BMI of 19.18 (± 3.8).

Among the participants, 80% have been attending sports initiation for more than a year, while 20% have been practicing sports for approximately six months. The sports practiced by the volunteers include swimming, athletics and badminton.

When asked about their favorite leisure activities, it was observed that 50% of the volunteers prefer to use computers, 40% opt for sports practice and 10% prefer to listen to music (**Graph 1**).

Graph 1. Distractions preferred by volunteers



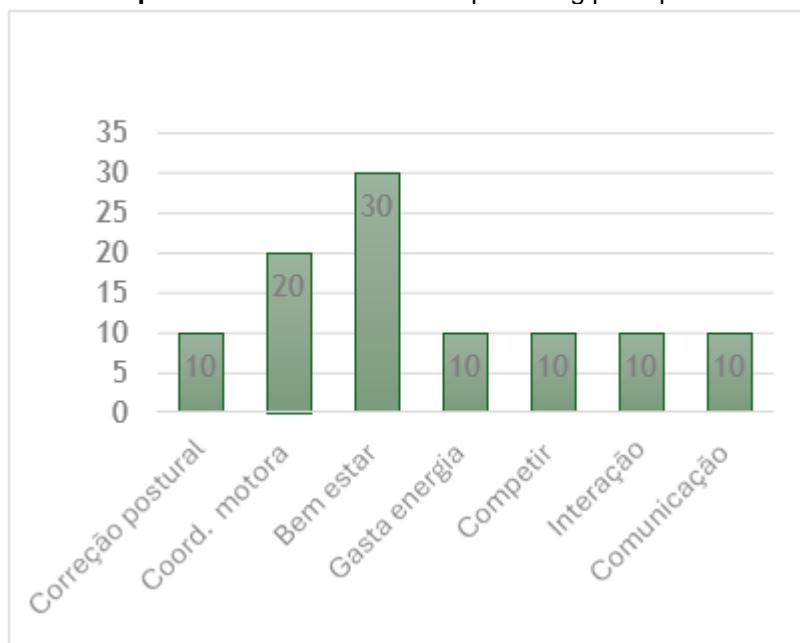
The main competitor of sports practices is screens, as can be seen in the data of this study, where 50% of the volunteers still prefer electronic devices as the main form of distraction. The advancement of technology, with the popularization of smartphones, tablets, and high-definition games, has contributed to the distancing of children and adolescents from sports spaces and outdoor physical activities, making it a challenge to reverse this trend (ASSIS et al 2022 and SILVA 2016).

On the other hand, 40% of the volunteers reported a preference for sports practice. This data is relevant, considering the benefits that sport provides for the physical, emotional and social development of practitioners.

According to Labronici (2000), sports programs encourage the desire to excel in people with disabilities. This not only promotes individual growth but also facilitates social integration, strengthening a positive identity. Children who practice sports learn a modality and are prepared to face daily challenges.

In view of the literature and the results obtained, it is clear that balancing the involvement between sports activities and the use of technology is a current challenge, directly influencing children's choices. Thus, the promotion of diversified options for sports and other healthy activities can be an essential factor in encouraging a more balanced and active lifestyle.

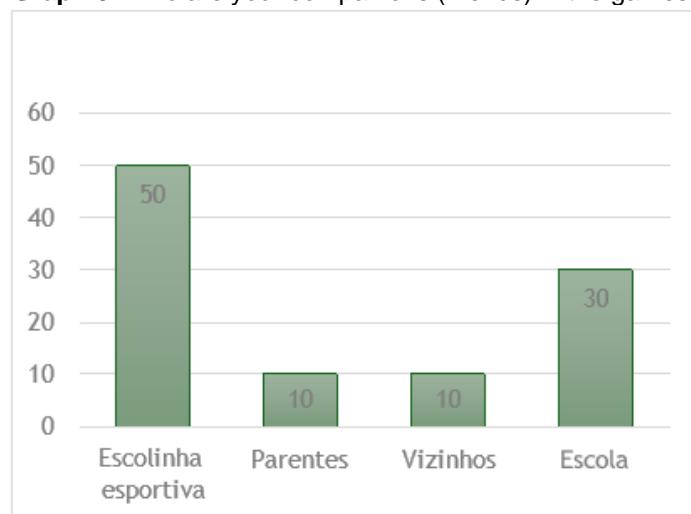
Graph 2. Which led him to start practicing parasports.



Corroborating the results of the present study, Mazontta (2011) points out that sport for the disabled plays a crucial role in several aspects, from social integration to the development of individual skills, promoting independence and competitiveness, well-being, postural correction, communication and other positive characteristics. The diversity of sports can offer options adapted to different needs and preferences. In addition, sport for the disabled provides a valuable opportunity to explore limits and potentialities, contributing to rehabilitation and quality of life (Nascimento 2023).

Regarding who are their friends in the games (most of the volunteers are their friends from the school's sports school (**Figure 3**).

Graph 3. Who are your companions (friends) in the games?

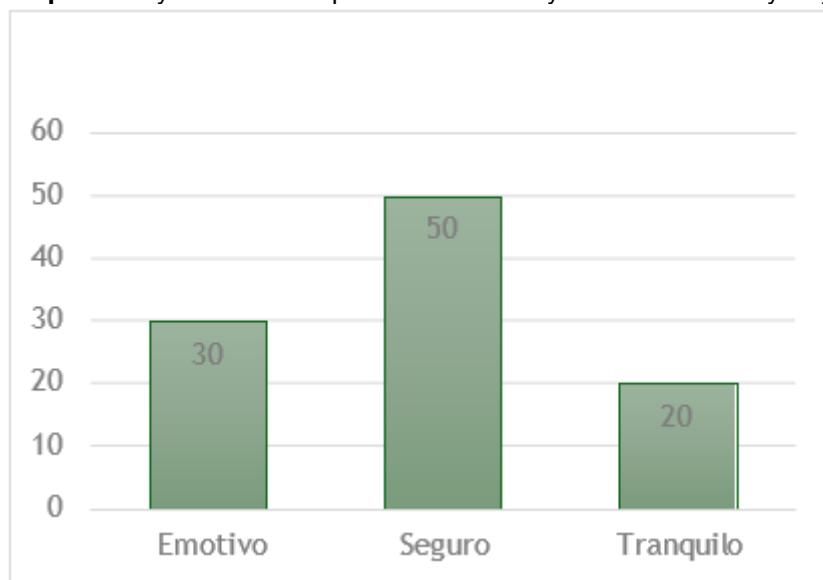


Such results show how crucial the integration of individuals with disabilities is, both in education and in sports. In the graph, it shows that 50% of the school's friends are companions in their games and 30% are school-school friends. These two institutions provide a good and friendly interaction, developing the social aspects of children and adolescents.

The literature highlights the importance of understanding the learning process of children with disabilities, promoting interventions that facilitate interpersonal relationships between them and educators. This approach encourages collaboration, sharing knowledge and cultural experiences, taking into account the children's family and school context (DUARTE, ALVES, SOMMERHALDER 2017). Therefore, interaction with friends and the formation of new friendships during sports activities are valuable components of this process (OLIVEIRA; SON; ELIKER, 2014).

When asked if the practice of sports can contribute to their attitudes, 50% said they feel safer, the other 30% more emotional and 20% calmer (**Figure 4**).

Graph 4. Do you think that sport contributes to your attitudes in any way?

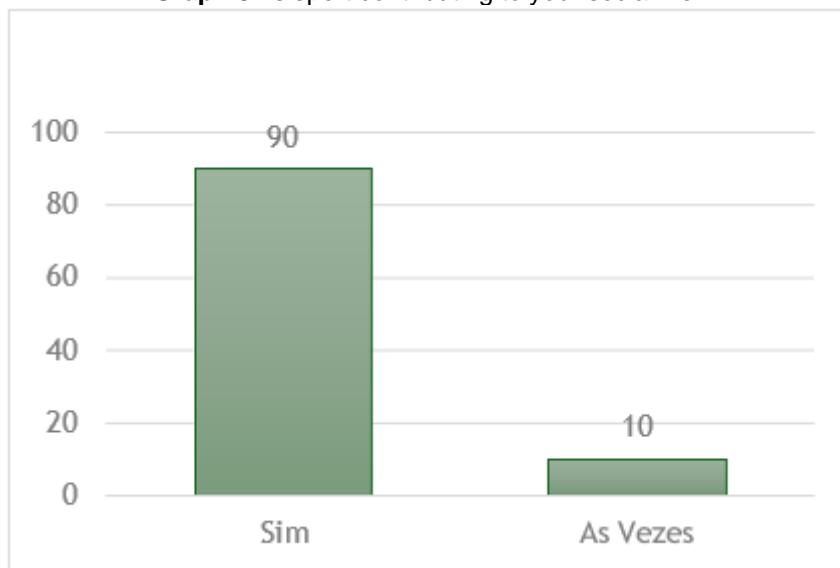


The results of the survey indicate positive impacts in relation to sports practice. The literature consistently highlights the social and emotional benefits associated with participating in sports, such as promoting self-confidence and facilitating social integration. These findings are valuable to highlight the importance of sport in the integral development of individuals (OLIVEIRA; SON; ELIKER, 2014).

Adapted sports are an important tool in the life of the disabled, as sports help with self-confidence and have a positive impact on various areas of life, promoting a sense of accomplishment and raising self-esteem (CARDOSO, 2011).

In the result on the question of whether sport is contributing to their social life, it was collected that (90%) of the children and adolescents answered yes and 10% maybe (**Figure 5**).

Graph 5. Is sport contributing to your social life?



The research indicates that the practice of sports is important in the social development of people with disabilities, providing opportunities for interaction, strengthening social skills, increasing self-esteem and promoting inclusion. Participating in sports activities helps to deconstruct stigmas and raise awareness about the capabilities of people with disabilities (SILVA et al. 2013).

The inclusion of people with disabilities in sport is crucial to promote equality and eliminate social barriers. Sport helps in rehabilitation and is a powerful tool to overcome limitations and strengthen social integration (GRUBANO, 2015).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Developing an inclusive society requires changes in educational values, practices, and policies. The school, as a fundamental part of this process, must reevaluate its culture, its principles and its methodologies, ensuring that education not only welcomes, but effectively integrates all students, regardless of their individual characteristics. More than accepting the

presence of students with disabilities, the inclusive school must ensure the active participation of all, promoting an environment that values diversity as an enriching factor for learning.

Adapted sport is crucial for social inclusion. Sports practice for people with disabilities improves physical and cognitive capacity, promotes emotional well-being, socialization, and the development of skills such as motor coordination, discipline, and self-confidence. Parasport also strengthens community bonds, breaks down social barriers, and reinforces values such as respect, equality, and cooperation.

Inclusion goes beyond access to formal education; It means ensuring equitable opportunities for everyone to develop their potential in various areas, including sport. Celebrating achievements in school and outside of it creates an environment of respect for differences, allowing each person to stand out. Parasports, therefore, are not only recreational, but also a powerful tool for social transformation, promoting the active participation of children and adolescents with disabilities in society.

Inclusion is neither a threat nor a distant utopia, but an ongoing process that requires collective commitment. School and sport play complementary roles in building a more just society, where everyone, regardless of their limitations, can fully exercise their citizenship and reach their full potential.

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