



## A study on the current status of physical education at special schools in Ho Chi Minh City

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### Abstract

Based on the results of a survey to 26 administrators from 26 special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City (with 3123 pupils in training), it was found that the physical education (PE) programs currently applied for children with disabilities in Ho Chi Minh City were not synchronized yet. Among the investigated units, 46.2% of them adopted the "Framework program for pupils with 03 main types of disability" issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2010 with adjustments to suit the disabled children. Only 46.8% of the units rated the program as "Very appropriate" and "Appropriate". Hence, the physical education programs for pupils with disabilities need be improved to get more suitable in terms of both the content and number of periods per week. Moreover, the team of physical education teachers was discovered inadequate in both quantity and quality (only 34.6% of the units had qualified physical education teachers while the rest employed multi-subject ones) which shows the demand on additional qualified physical education teachers. Parallely, it is necessary to foster knowledge about special education for physical education teachers. Also, the quality of physical education facilities was very limited. As a result, more attention and investment should be given to the physical education for children with disabilities in Ho Chi Minh City in terms of curriculum, human resources, and facilities.

**Keywords:** physical education (PE), pupils with disabilities, Ho Chi Minh City

### Introduction

Physical education (PE) plays an important role in educating children for all-round development. For unlucky children with disabilities, PE is even more necessary and has special significance. However, there are not yet PE specialized institutions for children with disabilities. As a result, realizers of the PE for these subjects face many difficulties. In order to promptly grasp the limitations, difficulties and inadequacies for grounds to further studies that provide solutions to overcome the current status, the research "A Study on the Current Status of Physical Education at Special Schools in Ho Chi Minh City" was implemented.

### Materials and Methods

During the research process, employed methods consisted of the followings: document synthesis and analysis; survey and interview (direct and indirect); and statistical calculation.

### Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Results of the survey on the application of PE program at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City

The results of the survey on the application of PE program at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Survey results about the application of PE programs at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City

No.	PE program as part of the following general programs	Number of centers/ schools to apply	Percentage %
1	General education program issued by the Ministry of Education and Training before 2018	0	0.0
2	General education program issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2018	2	7.7
3	General education programs issued by the Ministry of Education and Training before and after 2018	0	0.0
4	Framework program for pupils with 03 main types of disability (vision impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disability) issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2010	3	11.5
5	The general education program issued by the Ministry of Education	3	11.5

	and Training before 2018 and adjusted to suit the disabled children		
6	General education program issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2018 and adjusted to suit the disabled children.	3	11.5
7	General education programs issued by the Ministry of Education and Training before and in 2018 and adjusted to suit children with disabilities	3	11.5
8	Framework program for pupils with 03 main types of disabilities (vision impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disability) issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2010 and adjusted to suit children with disabilities	12	46.2

It is shown in Table 1 that there were 12 units (accounting for 46.2%) which used the "Framework program for pupils with 03 main types of disability (vision impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disability) issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2010 and adjusted to suit children with disabilities ". The remaining 14 units (accounting for 53.8%) applied 05 of the 08 options presented in Table 1. Based on this finding, it could be seen that PE programs applied for pupils with disabilities in HCMC were not synchronized yet.

**Table 2:** Survey results about the suitability of the current physical education programs for pupils with disabilities

No.	Result of evaluation	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Very appropriate	1	3.8
2	Appropriate	11	43.0
3	Neutral	10	38.5
4	Inappropriate	4	15.4
5	Totally inappropriate	0	0.0

The results presented in Table 2 show that units rating at Very appropriate and Appropriate accounted for 46.8% while 15.4% chose the Inappropriate level. This reflects the requirement of adjustment to make the PE programs more suitable for pupils with disabilities.

**Table 3:** Survey results about the suitability of the number of PE teaching periods

No.	Result of evaluation	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Very appropriate	1	3.8
2	Appropriate	8	30.8
3	Neutral	5	19.2
4	Inappropriate	2	7.8
5	Totally inappropriate	0	0.0
6	Other idea	10	38.4

Results in Table 3 show that 34.6% of the centers/ schools rated at Very appropriate and Appropriate, 7.8% of the units rated Inappropriate, 38.4% of the units had other ideas among which 01 unit proposed to provide over 02 periods per week, 06 units proposed to provide 02 periods per week, and 03 units proposed to provide 01 period per week). According to Table 3, it is necessary to adjust the number of PE periods to be more appropriate,

**Table 4:** Survey results about pupils' attitudes in PE class

No.	Result of evaluation	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Very active	3	11.5
2	Active	18	69.2
3	Normal	3	11.5
4	Inactive	2	7.7
5	Totally inactive	0	0.0

The data in Table 4 illustrates that the centers/schools with comments that pupils were *Very active* and *Active* in PE accounted for 80.7%, those that evaluated their pupils to be *Normal* accounted for 11.5%, and 7.7% of the units commented their pupils to be *Inactive*. This proves that pupils with disabilities are very interested in participating in sport activities.

**Table 5:** Survey results about the need of extra-curricular PE activities for pupils at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City

No.	Result of evaluation	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Very necessary	11	42.3
2	Necessary	13	50.0
3	Neutral	1	3.8
4	Unnecessary	1	3.8
5	Totally unnecessary	0	0.0

The data in Table 5 shows that: The number of units commenting at the *Very necessary* and *Necessary* levels accounted for a very high rate (92.3%). It proves that the administrators are very interested in PE for children with disabilities at the special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

Table 6. Survey results about the content that should be included in the in-course PE curriculum in accordance with the institutions' conditions

No.	Sports	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Athletics	12	46.2
2	Gymnastics	21	80.8
3	Soccer	8	30.8
4	Volleyball	4	15.4
5	Basketball	9	34.6
6	Swimming	6	23.1
7	Martial arts	7	26.9
8	Badminton	7	26.9
9	Shuttlecock	6	23.1
10	Movement games	22	84.6
11	Aerobic	5	19.2

According to the survey results in Table 6, the sports chosen by most units to be included in the PE curriculum consisted of Movement games (84.6%), Gymnastics (80.8%), Basketball (34.6%), Football (30.8%), Martial arts (26.9% selected), and Badminton (26.9%).

**Table 7:** Survey results about the content that should be included in extra-curricular PE activities for pupils with disabilities at the special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City

No.	Sports	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Athletics	16	61.5
2	Gymnastics	9	34.6
3	Soccer	10	38.5
4	Volleyball	4	15.4
5	Basketball	5	19.2
6	Swimming	15	57.7
7	Martial arts	7	26.9
8	Badminton	5	19.2
9	Shuttlecock	3	11.5
10	Movement games	17	65.4
11	Aerobic	7	26.9

As can be seen in Table 7, sports chosen by most units for extra-curricular PE activities for pupils with disabilities at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City included Movement games (65.4%), Athletics (61.5%), Swimming (57.7%), Soccer (38.5%), and Gymnastics (34.6%).

**Table 8:** Survey results about the need to organize traditional sports competitions for officials, teachers, and pupils at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City

No.	Result of evaluation	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Very necessary	6	23.0
2	Necessary	14	53.8
3	Neutral	3	11.6
4	Unnecessary	3	11.6
5	Totally unnecessary	0	0.0

Table 8 indicates that most units (accounting for 76.8%) considered it *Very necessary* and *Necessary* to organize traditional sports competitions for officials, teachers and students at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City. *Survey results about the current status of human resources for PE program at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City* As reflected in Table 9, there were 09 units employing teachers with the right expertise to teach PE. Seven (07) units employed Headteachers. Three (03) had multi-subject teachers (who teach many subjects including PE). Two (02) invited both the headteachers and multi-subject teachers. This shows that it is necessary to form a team of PE teachers with the right expertise for special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

**Table 9:** Survey results about the PE teaching staff at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City

No.	PE teachers	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	PE teachers with right expertise	9	34.6
2	Headteacher	7	26.9
3	Multi-subject teacher	3	11.5
4	Teacher in charge of team activities	0	0.0
5	Head teacher and multi-subject teacher	2	7.7
6	Others	6	23.0

**Table 10:** Survey results about the training qualifications of PE teachers at special centers/ schools

No.	PE teachers	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Bachelor (majored in Physical Education - Sports)	9	34.6
2	Degree of Associate (majored in Physical Education - Sports)	2	7.7
3	Intermediate (majored in Physical Education - Sports)	0	0.0
4	Not trained (specialized in Physical Education and Sports)	15	57.7

The data in Table 10 shows that the number of teachers in charge of PE subject without being trained for the PE major was very high accounting for 57.7%. It is necessary to pay more attention to and provide the teaching staff with professional training.

**Table 11:** Survey results about PE teachers' level of professional training in Special Education

No.	PE teachers' level of professional training in Special Education	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	100% with degree of associate or higher	6	23.1
2	From 70% to less than 100% with degree of associate or higher	4	15.4
3	From 50% to less than 70% with degree of associate or higher	4	15.4
4	Less than 50% with degree of associate or higher	0	0.0
5	Trained for 200 hours or more	1	3.8
6	Trained for 150-200 hours	0	0.0
7	Trained from 100 to less than 150 hours.	1	3.8
8	Trained under 100 hours	0	0.0
9	Never attended any training course	10	38.5

Table 11 shows that 06/26 units (accounting for 23.1%) had 100% of PE teachers trained in special education with degrees of associate or higher. Four (04) units (accounting for 15.4%) had from 70% to less than 100% of PE teachers trained in special education with degrees of associate or higher. Four (04) units (accounting for 15.4%) had from 50% to less than 70% of PE teachers trained in special education with degrees of associate or higher. Ten (10) units (accounting for 38.5%) had PE teachers to have never attended any training courses. Thus, it can be said that few PE teachers at special centers/ schools ever received general knowledge about Special Education.

**Table 12:** PE teachers' level of in-depth professional training according to pupils' types of disability (vision impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, physical disability, language disorder, etc.)

No.	PE teachers' level of in-depth professional training according to pupils' types of disability	Number of centers/ schools	Percentage %
1	Trained for 200 hours or more	5	19.2
2	Trained for 150-200 hours	0	0.0
3	Trained from 100 to less than 150 hours	1	3.8
4	Trained from 50 to less than 100 hours	6	23.1
5	Trained for less than 50 hours	0	0.0
6	Not trained yet	10	38.5

It can be found through Table 12 that there were 05 units (accounting for 19.2%) to have PE teachers who received in-depth professional training according to pupils' types of disability from 200 hours or more. Six (06) units (accounting for 23.1%) had PE teachers who received short-term intensive training from 50 to less than 100 hours. Ten (10) units (accounting for 38.5%) employed PE teachers who never participated in any in-depth training courses of the focused types. This shows that very few PE teachers at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City got trained in-depth according to pupils' types of disability.

#### Survey Results about the Training Focus for PE Teachers at Special Centers/ Schools

- PE teachers without right expertise need training for expertise of PE, sports laws, relaxation massage, rehabilitation, knowledge and skills for organization of movement games, and knowledge and skills for fitness training.
- PE teachers with right expertise need training for basic knowledge of children with disabilities, in-depth knowledge of children with vision impairment, vision impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, physical disability, language disorder, etc.

**Survey results about the current status of PE facilities and educational environment at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City:** According to the survey results shown in Table 13, most of the units were not fully equipped with PE facilities and tools for children with vision impairment. There was still a lack of adaptive facilities and equipment.

**Table 13:** Survey results about PE facilities and equipment including adaptive equipment for children with vision impairment

No.	Facilities and equipment in service of teaching PE for children with vision impairment	Number of Schools/Centers equipped	Percentage %
1	Big gymnastics balls of various types for pupils to sit/ lie on	4	15.4
2	Balls with high-contrast shadows	3	11.5
3	Types of balls with sounds for learning of soccer and volleyball	3	11.5
4	Goal with sound	3	11.5
5	Automatic scoreboard with sound	1	3.8
6	Adaptive swimming pool with suitable equipment for children with vision impairment	2	7.7
7	Playground and running equipment suitable for children with vision impairment	2	7.7
8	Multi-purpose gymnasium/sports room suitable for children with vision impairment	2	7.7
9	Types of swings suitable for children with vision impairment and those with both multiple disabilities and vision impairment	4	15.4
10	Climbing ladders, ball pools that are adjustable to suit children with vision impairment and those with both multiple disabilities and vision impairment	3	11.5
11	Bounce trampoline	3	11.5
12	Treadmill	3	11.5
13	Multi-purpose gymnasium and sports training room	2	7.7

**Additional PE facilities and equipment needed for children with vision impairment (if a school provides special education for children with vision impairment):** Footballs with sound, single bar, double bar, functional rooms, types of chess such as chess, Chinese chess, and domino.

**Table 14:** Survey results about PE facilities and equipment including adaptive equipment for children with developmental disabilities (intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, language disorder, physical disability)

No.	PE facilities and equipment for children with developmental disabilities	Number of Schools/Centers equipped	Percentage %
1	Multi-purpose gymnasium/sports room with specialized equipment and tools for general sports activities	3	11.5
2	Multi-purpose gymnasium/sports room with adaptive equipment and tools for children with developmental disabilities	8	30.8
3	Types of swing	8	30.8
4	Climbing ladders, ball pools that are adjustable to suit children with developmental disabilities	11	42.3

5	Types of bounce trampoline	9	34.6
6	Treadmill	8	30.8
7	Big gymnastics balls for students to sit/ lie on	11	42.3
8	Swimming pool with adaptive equipment included	5	19.2
9	Yard and equipment accessible for wheelchair users	6	23.1
10	There is no gymnasium/ multi-purpose sports room	11	42.3

As revealed in Table 14, most of the units were not fully equipped with PE facilities and tools for children with developmental disabilities. The number of equipped units was less than 50% for 09 items in the list of necessary equipment and tools. This shows the need for more attention and investment to form a better environment for children with disabilities to exercise.

**Survey results about facilities and equipment needed to be supplemented for teaching PE to children with developmental disabilities** (if a school provides special education for children with developmental disabilities):

Multi-purpose gymnasium, fitness center, field, boccie playground, mini soccer field, rope ladder, outdoor ladder, bicycle, slide, underpass, pitching pole, swimming pool, psychomotor playroom, equipment for finger mobility development, toys for fine mobility development, and outdoor exercise machines.

**Table 15:** Survey results about PE facilities and equipment for children with deaf or hard of hearing

No.	PE facilities and equipment for children with deaf or hard of hearing	Number of Schools/Centers equipped	Percentage %
1	Multi-purpose gymnasium/sports room with adaptive equipment and tools for general sports activities	3	11.5
2	Multi-purpose gymnasium/sports room with appropriate adjustments for children with deaf or hard of hearing (pictures, symbols)	4	42.3
3	Multi-purpose gymnasium/sports room with soundproofing system to help eliminate background sounds and interference for children with deaf or hard of hearing	1	3.8
4	Multi-purpose gymnasium/sports room, with soundproofing system and suitable adjustments for children with deaf or hard of hearing (pictures, symbols)	2	7.7
5	Types of swings	1	3.8
6	Climbing ladders and ball pools are adjusted to suit hearing impaired children	5	19.2
7	Types of bounce trampoline	2	7.7
8	Treadmill	2	7.7
9	Big gymnastics balls for students to sit/ lie on	5	19.2
10	Swimming pool with adjustments suitable for children with deaf or hard of hearing	3	11.5
11	Private gymnasium and sports room	3	11.5
12	There is no gymnasium/ multi-purpose sports practice	11	42.3

As shown in Table 15, most of the units were not equipped with yards and adequate training equipment according to the professional requirements for children with deaf or hard of hearing. The PE facilities for these special pupils were still very poor.

## Conclusions

### Survey results about the current status of PE programs at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City

- The PE programs applied to students with disabilities in HCMC were not synchronized. Most of the units used the “Framework program for pupils with 03 main types of disability (vision impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disability)” issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2010 with adjustments to suit children with disabilities.
- The current PE programs for pupils with disabilities at the investigated units were not truly appropriate which was shown with the rating of 46.8% for Very appropriate and Appropriate. Similarly, the number of PE teaching periods was also not highly appropriate, which could be revealed with the rating of 34.6% for Very Appropriate and Appropriate.
- Regarding pupils’ attitudes in PE class, the majority were Very active and Active (87%). This shows that pupils with disabilities are very interested in exercise.
- The sports chosen by many units to be included in the PE curriculum for pupils with disabilities at the special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City consisted of Movement games (84.6%), Gymnastics (80.8) %, Basketball (34.6%), Football (30.8%), Martial arts (26.9% selected), and Badminton (26.9%).

- The majority of units supported the need to organize extra-curricular PE activities for pupils at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City (92.3% of the units chose the responses of Very necessary and Necessary).
- The sports selected by most units for addition to extra-curricular sports for pupils at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City included Movement games (65.4%), Athletics (61.5%), Swimming (57.7%), Football (38.5%) and Gymnastics (34.6%).
- Most of the units (accounting for 76.8%) chose the responses of Very necessary and Necessary in the aspect of organizing traditional sports competitions for officials, teachers and pupils at special centers/ schools in HCMC.

#### **Survey Results about the Current Status of Human Resources for PE Programs at Special Centers/ Schools in Ho Chi Minh City**

- Concerning the teaching staff for PE: 34.6% of the units employed PE teachers with the right expertise (42.3% with bachelor's degrees or degrees of associate). Most of the rest units had multi-subject teachers who never got professionally trained to teach PE.
- Fifty-three percent (53%) of the units had over 50% of PE teachers who used to be professionally trained in Special Education.
- Among the units, 19.2% of them had PE teachers who ever got in-depth professionally trained according to the types of disabilities for 200 periods or more. Regarding the short-term training, 23.1% of the units had PE teachers who received this type of fostering before, from 50 to less than 100 hours.

#### **Survey results about the actual status of PE facilities and educational environment at special centers/ schools in Ho Chi Minh City**

- Survey results show that the majority of units were not adequately equipped with PE yards and equipment to meet the professional requirements for children with disabilities (vision impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, developmental disabilities). The PE facilities were still very inadequate and needed to be supplemented.

In summary, the research results reveal that the PE programs for children with disabilities in Ho Chi Minh City were not synchronized yet among special centers/ schools. The programs were inappropriate in terms of both the content and number of periods. The team of professional PE teachers was not highly guaranteed in both quantity and quality. The PE facilities were still limited. It was concluded that PE for children with disabilities in Ho Chi Minh City needed more attention and investment for the aspects of curriculum, human resources and facilities.

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