An exploratory investigation into the success of a health enhancing activity program for children in a gymnasium equipped for adults

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine if the physical activity levels and physical fitness of children between the ages of 6 and 13 years will improve as a result of participation in a 5 months (1-4 times/week) health enhancing kinderkinektics program in a gymnasium equipped for adults. An availability sample consisting of 20 subjects whose parents are members of a gymnasium were chosen for this study. The group consists of 11 girls and 9 boys between the ages of 6 and 13 years (mean age = 9.05 years). The measuring instrument used in this study was the “FitnessGram” – test battery and a physical activity questionnaire, which parents had to complete during the pre-(PreT) and post-testing (postT). Covariance of analysis was used to analyse the data and partial eta-Squares (d) were calculated for interactions to determine practical significance of differences between preT and postT. Results indicated that children's activity levels improved from an inactive to moderately active classification to a moderate to active classification. Sit-ups, BMI, push-ups, hip flexibility left and right, trunk flexibility and fat percentage all changed significantly after completion of the program. The group (n=12) that participated more regularly (3-4 times/week) in the program, showed the most improvement, where five of the eight physical fitness components improved significantly after completion of the program. Those who participated 1-2 time/week (n=8), also exhibited positive results, especially with regards to cardiovascular endurance, fat percentage and trunk flexibility. The results of the study showed that participation in such a program can improve PA levels and physical fitness and can also be beneficial to the inactive or overweight children, even if they only exercise once or twice a week.

Key words: physical activity, exercise, physical fitness, children, total wellness