

# Methods of using hippotherapy in the health of children with physical development defects

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**Abstract:** This article is dedicated to practical recommendations for the implementation of hippotherapy in children with physical developmental disabilities, outlining the priorities of the state and society in the social sphere, in particular, the legal framework for the rehabilitation and rehabilitation of children with disabilities, social protection, and comprehensive support for them. The author also provides practical recommendations on the methods of conducting hippotherapy classes.

**Keywords:** Child with physical disabilities, hippotherapy, health improvement, rehabilitation, social adaptation in society, integration.

**Introduction:** In our country, large-scale efforts are being undertaken to further improve the system of social protection for persons with disabilities, to increase the effectiveness of their medical, social, and vocational rehabilitation, and to enhance their integration into society. The legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes guarantees for the protection and implementation of the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities and their families on an equal basis with other citizens. This is ensured through the recognition of their dignity, independence, and freedom of choice.

## Literature review

This article, to a certain extent, contributes to the implementation of the tasks set forth in the following regulatory and legal documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan: Presidential Decree No. PQ-5024 dated March 11, 2021, "On additional measures for the further development of equestrianism and horse sports, as well as the promotion of modern pentathlon and polo"; Presidential Decree No. PQ-5211 dated August 5, 2021, "On the State Program for the Development of Equestrianism, Horse Sports, Modern Pentathlon, and Polo in Uzbekistan until 2025"; Presidential Decree No. PQ-5212 dated August 5, 2021, "On measures for organizing the activities of Equestrian Schools"; Presidential Decree No. PQ-5280 dated November 5, 2021, "On the Program for the

Development of Sports-Education Institutions until 2025", as well as other regulatory and legal documents relevant to this field.

## METHODOLOGY

On December 7, 2021, in his congratulatory speech dedicated to the 29th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of Uzbekistan, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated: "...Today, Uzbekistan is confidently moving toward building a social state and a just society. Therefore, the time has come to enshrine the principle of 'New Uzbekistan — a social state' as a constitutional provision." He further emphasized: "A social state provides housing and ensures a minimum level of essential consumer goods for those in need. It requires the provision of a living wage sufficient for a person and their family to live with dignity, employment opportunities, safe working conditions, and the reduction of poverty. Additionally, protection against unemployment, guaranteed access to quality education, qualified medical care, equal opportunities for all, and comprehensive support for families, children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are fundamental duties of a social state. In short, in a social state, no one is left behind or abandoned with their problems."

In light of these priorities, it is necessary to carry out activities such as training and professional development of qualified personnel in this field,

involving young researchers in scientific studies, and preparing and publishing modern educational literature. Taking these into account, systematic and effective organization of rehabilitation and wellness measures for children with physical disabilities, as well as the development of age-appropriate personal qualities required for social integration, including social activity, curiosity, motivation for self-expression, and the formation of essential social competencies and habits for independent life, must be prioritized. Based on an analysis of the current situation, practical recommendations have been developed on methods of conducting hippotherapy sessions aimed at the rehabilitation and wellness of children with physical developmental impairments, as part of a scientific and methodological support framework.

## **RESULTS**

Hippotherapy for children with physical impairments requires a carefully considered approach that takes into account the child's age, physical condition, and individual needs. The main practical recommendations for organizing sessions are as follows:

### **1. PREPARATION FOR SESSIONS**

#### **Medical Consultation:**

Before starting sessions, it is essential to obtain a medical opinion from a doctor (neurologist, orthopedist, or other specialized physician). This helps identify possible contraindications and develop an individualized program.

#### **Horse Selection:**

The horse must be calm, well-balanced, and trained for hippotherapy. The height and width of the horse's back should be suitable for the child's size and needs.

#### **Preparing the Child:**

It is important to explain to the child what will happen during the session to reduce fear and anxiety.

The child's clothing should be comfortable and not restrict movement. Wearing a protective helmet is mandatory.

### **2. CONDUCTING THE SESSIONS**

#### **Duration and Frequency:**

Initial sessions should not exceed 15–20 minutes. Gradually, the duration can be extended to 30–40 minutes.

For stable results, sessions should be conducted 2–3 times per week.

#### **Stages of the Session:**

##### **a) Introduction to the Horse:**

The child can pet or feed the horse to establish contact. This is especially important for anxious children.

The instructor helps the child mount the horse and ensures correct posture.

##### **b) Main Part:**

The horse moves at a slow pace. The instructor monitors the child's posture and assists with exercises aimed at improving coordination, balance, and muscle tone.

Possible exercises: stretching arms forward and sideways, turning the head, grasping objects.

##### **c) Conclusion:**

After the session, the child may help take care of the horse (brushing, feeding), which promotes a sense of responsibility and emotional connection.

#### **Positioning on the Horse:**

**Sitting position:** Used to strengthen the back, improve balance, and posture.

**Lying on back or stomach:** Used to relax muscles and stimulate deep muscle activity.

#### **Instructor Support:**

The instructor constantly monitors the child's movements and provides assistance when needed.

For children with severe disabilities, additional support staff may be required.

### **3. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Always use specialized equipment, including a protective helmet.

The horse must move slowly and smoothly, without sudden movements.

A trained hippotherapy instructor must be present during sessions.

### **4. CORRECTIONAL FUNCTIONS OF HIPPOThERAPY**

**Improving muscle tone:** Regular sessions help relax tense muscles or strengthen weak ones.

**Developing coordination and balance:** The horse's rhythmic movements stimulate the vestibular system.

**Enhancing circulation and breathing:** Contact with the horse's warm body improves blood circulation and respiratory function.

**Building trust and social adaptation:** Interaction with the animal supports emotional stability and develops communication skills.

### **5. EXAMPLES OF EXERCISES ON THE HORSE**

"Sun" – stretching arms upward and to the sides.

"Twist" – slowly turning the torso and head in different directions.

"Bridge" – the child, lying on their back, slightly lifts their pelvis from the horse's back.

"Object collection" – the child tries to reach small toys placed at their level.

#### **6. COOPERATION WITH PARENTS**

Explain the goals and importance of hippotherapy to parents.

Regularly inform parents about their child's progress.

Provide home support recommendations when necessary (e.g., exercises to strengthen muscles, massage, physiotherapy treatments).

Hippotherapy is not only a method of physical rehabilitation but also an effective way to improve the child's emotional well-being. The most important factors are a systematic approach, consideration of individual characteristics, and teamwork with qualified specialists.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion of this work on practical recommendations for conducting hippotherapy for children with physical developmental disabilities, the main aspects have been summarized, with particular attention paid to the significance of hippotherapy as an effective method for rehabilitation and health improvement of children with various physical impairments. The theoretical and practical aspects of hippotherapy have been examined, confirming its effectiveness in the treatment and rehabilitation of children with physical developmental disorders. Research shows that interaction with a horse helps improve physical condition, correct posture and motor activity disorders, and also positively affects the psycho-emotional state of children. This method not only develops physical skills but also helps build self-confidence, improve children's social skills, and enhance their overall quality of life, which is especially important for children with disabilities.

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