

STUDY REGARDING THE SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE PLACEMENT CENTRES IN CARAS-SEVERIN COUNTY

BICHESCU ANDRADE IONUȚ¹, DACICA LILIANA¹, KISS ZOLTAN¹,

¹ "Eftimie Murgu" University Reșița, Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, ROMANIA

Abstract:

It is well known that every institutionalized child is or should be the beneficiary of a diverse range of services, of which I can mention: the educational, psychological and social services. Hence we can understand that for achieving these targets we require a holistic approach, multidisciplinary teams of specific intervention. In these activities, physical education and sport can play an important role in the growth and harmonious development of children and, not the least in their socialization and social integration.

In this way, the achieved research is of an exploratory type, and it proposed itself to collect information on how the physical education and sport facilities are employed during specialized activities carried out in foster care centres in Caras-Severin county and how the physical education teachers are involved in the activities of specialized intervention.

Keywords: physical education, institutionalised child, specialized staff, specific intervention plan

Introduction

Every institutionalized child is or should be the beneficiary of a diverse range of services, of which I can mention: the educational, psychological and social services. This is the aspect that should make those responsible to understand that in order to achieve the objectives, aimed by the institutionalized child protection system, it takes a holistic approach and multidisciplinary teams of specific intervention. Even if V.Miftode (1998) considers that the presence in the same team of a psychologist with a sociologist and an economist, or a social worker with a lawyer or an urban designer, generates confrontations and difficulties, however, without an approach that includes many specialists from various complementary fields, thus ensuring a holistic approach, it's unlikely that they could solve all problems referred to the highest standards.

In this respect, D. Tompea states that "social support appears to be a profession and a team of truly professional social intervention affirms itself especially through interdisciplinary states (apud. C. Bocancea,, G. Neamtu, 1999).

The fundamental idea from which we should start, when the individualized protection plans are elaborated by the case manager. Furthermore, specific intervention plans, which "are developed by various professionals who have expertise in different areas of intervention" (St. Cojocaru, D. Cojocaru, 2008) should provide a wide range of services. Only by ensuring a bigger variety of specialized interventions, it may seek to resolve certain problematic situations in which the institutionalized children find themselves.

In these activities, physical education and sport can play an important role in the growth and harmonious development of children and, not the least in their socialization and social integration.

In the activities, we can not talk at common sense level, where everyone can organize a game of football, since everyone is able to make the children run or roll. You must get over the barrier imposed by the impression that "everyone is good at sports". It takes a thought and a drive at the scientific sense level so that the whole activity is based on very well defined theoretical and methodological concepts. Otherwise, we risk producing

negative effects through the developed activities instead of correcting certain deficiencies, to compensate various deficiencies and develop motor and moral volition skills.

The lack of training and information of those dealing "at random" in these institutions, the lack of organization of leisure time and practicing physical exercise among children, is directly reflected in the quality of the activities they carry out and which not only may have negative repercussions on the beneficiaries of these activities. An increased degree of professionalism could lead to an increased number of beneficiaries who would participate in physical activities and an increased interest for the independent practice of physical exercise.

Focusing here on the role that physical education and sport and implicitly the specialist in this field can play, it is worth noting that the educational opportunities offered through sports should be a priority for partnerships between the centers of child protection and local sports organizations or other community organizations. Joint participation of non-institutionalized and institutionalized children in sports programs, simply means "a process of unification through which the majority and minority develop a new lifestyle that includes values of all groups and they are part of the process" (CENPO, 2008).

Research methodology

The need for understanding the diversity and complexity of the activities programs addressed to the institutionalized children imposed a research "on the spot" through interviews and questionnaires sent to heads of institutions and specialist practitioners and not the last to the beneficiaries of these services.

Knowing the way in which the IPP and SIP are developed and the activities programs which are put into practice, we can understand the place and the role that physical education and sport have in these specific intervention plans and, of course, the importance which is attributed to them.

In this sense, the subjects were 3 placement centers from Caras-Severin county, namely: "Hope" Placement Center in Resita, "Apartment" Placement Center in Resita, "Our House" Placement Center in Zagujeni.

Table 1. The structure of children's age groups in residential service (31 December 2008)

Placement Center	Number of children on age groups							Total No. of children
	< 1	1 -2	3 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	≥ 18	
“Hope” Placement Center in Resita	0	0	0	6	7	20	12	45
“Our House” Placement Center in Zăguzeni	0	0	3	5	9	16	10	43
“Apartment” Placement Center in Resita	0	0	3	5	22	28	17	75

Source: DGASPC Caraş-Severin (31december 2008)

Research hypothesis: The regular use of sports activities in specific intervention plans for the institutionalized children provides increased opportunities for networking with the medium outside the institution, which intensifies the process of their socializing, which is so necessary for the social integration.

From this general assumption of the research the following working hypotheses came out:

- The existence of daily programs to practice physical exercises or activities and sporting events is conditioned by the existence of a specialist, especially the physical education teacher.
- Sports programs conducted by specialized personnel (physical education teacher) contribute to the diversification and increase in quality of services offered to institutionalized children.
- The interest and concern expressed by the institutions in offering sport programs for the institutionalized children, are directly proportional to the characteristics of the specialised staff's life style.

The following methods and techniques of research were used in the research:

- Questionnaire based survey;
- Interview based survey;
- Analysis of specialised documents.

The questionnaires focused on two target groups, namely the specialized personnel in shelters who is responsible with the care, growth and education of children in institutions, respectively the beneficiaries of these services, children and young people for whom such

a protection measure has been taken.

Because the number of children over 14 years, but also the specialised staff from the three placement centers is not very large, we considered that it was not necessary the achievement of a sampling. Therefore, the questionnaires included the entire population.

The questionnaire for specialised staff was applied to a number of 36 people and included 18 items, which pursued:

- The understanding of the specialized staff's opinion in the institutions of child protection towards the importance of practicing exercise and sport in childhood;
- Determining the interest shown by the institutions for the children's protection towards the inclusion of sport activities in the specific intervention plans;
- How is perceived the children's need for movement among the specialised staff of these institutions;
- If there is qualified personnel, especially the physical education teacher, to deal with the sports programs for children;
- How is the presence of the physical education teacher understood among the specialized staff of the placement centers;
- Identifying ways of leisure among the specialized personnel.

Participants in the investigation: 19 education instructors, 1 specialized educator, 3 educators and 13 referees (social parents).

Table 2. Number of specialized staff participating in the investigation

Specialized staff		Institution			TOTAL
		“Hope” P.C. Resita	“Our Home” P.C. Zaguzeni	“Apartment” P.C. Resita	
Education instructors	Total	7	9	4	20
	Questioned	7	8	4	19
Specialized Educators	Total	2	1	-	3
	Questioned	1	-	-	1
Educators	Total	2	2	-	4
	Questioned	1	2	-	3
Referees (social parents)	Total	-	-	41	41
	Questioned	-	-	13	13
TOTAL IN CENTERS		11	12	45	68
TOTAL QUESTIONED		9	10	17	36

Source: DGASPC Caraş-Severin (31december 2008)

Likewise, there were a number of 12 interviews of directors, case responsible, an education instructor and a number of 6 advisers (social parents).

The Questionnaire addressed to institutionalized children from the three placement centers in Caras-Severin, aimed at children aged ≥ 14 years. Thus, the

survey involved 67 children aged 14-17 years and 34 aged ≥ 18 years.

Table 3. Number of institutionalized children in residential centers participating in the investigation

INSTITUTION	Number of children on age groups		No. all children
	14 - 17	≥ 18	
P.C. "Hope" Resita	20	10	30
P.C. "Our House" Zagujeni	16	10	26
P.C. "Apartment" Resita	28	17	45
TOTAL	64	37	101

Source: DGASPC Caraş-Severin (31december 2008)

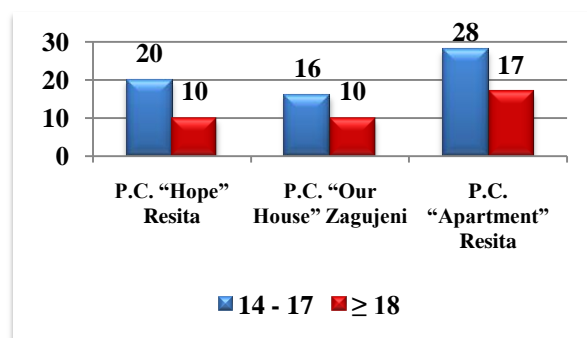


Fig. 1. Number of institutionalized children participating in research, by age group

Through those 21 items, the questionnaire addressed to children and young people surveyed the following:

- Identifying the preferred means of spending free time;
- Determine the level of participation and involvement of children in sporting activities;
- Perception of children's desire to practice exercise;
- Finding the main opportunities for interaction between institutionalized children and those outside institutions

Results interpretation

In the interviews addressed to heads of institutions, case responsables, education instructors and advisers, revealed that the three investment centers in which research was undertaken, the individualized plans of protection (IPP) are developed by the case manager (CM) together with other specialists within the multidisciplinary team, taking into account their reports.

In each placement center there is an individualized protection plan (IPP) for each beneficiary of such protection, which contain 5 SIP. The specific intervention plans (SIP) are:

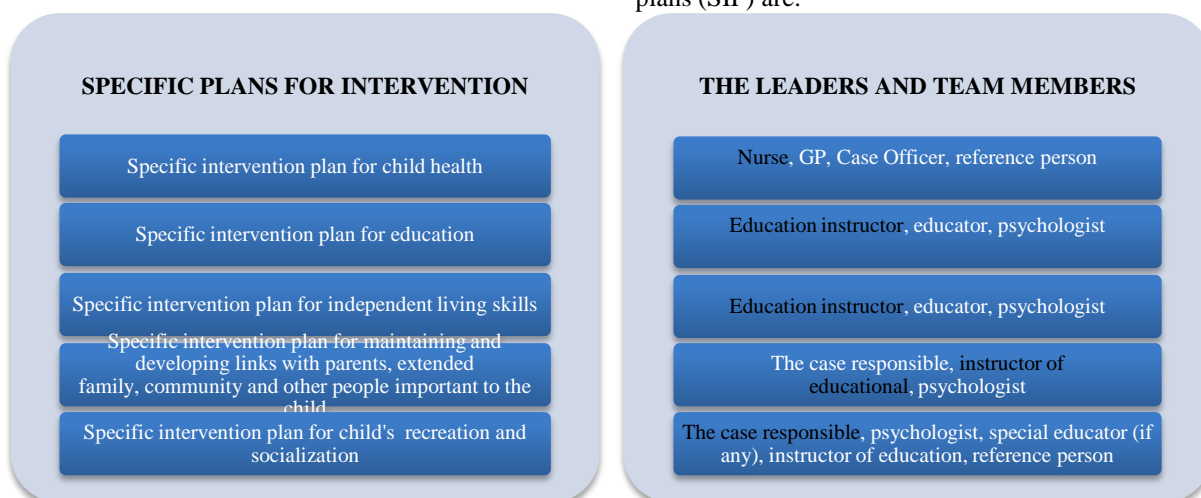


Fig. 2. The Structure of the Individualized Protection Plan and the members of the specific intervention team

Regarding the sports activities, these are reflected in the Specific Intervention Plan for Child's Recreation

and Socialization, where the recreational and socialization activities aim:

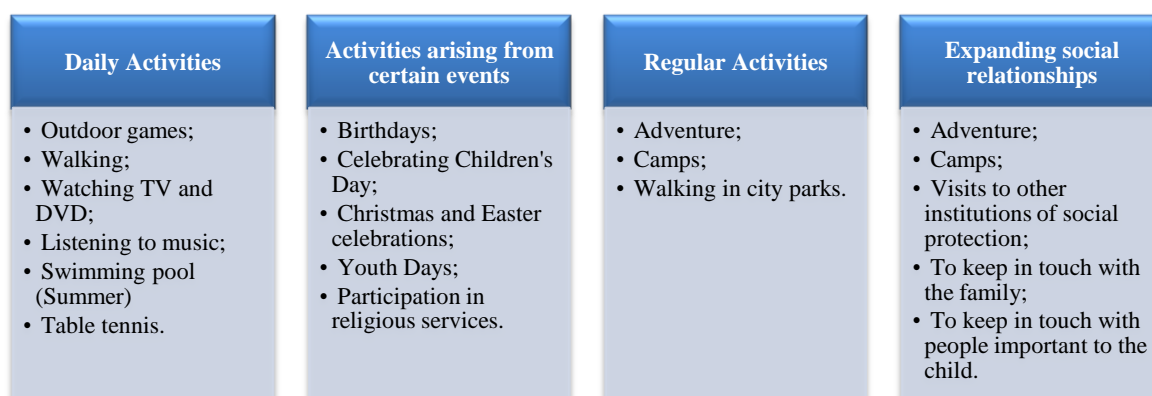


Fig. 3. Structure of the Specific Intervention Plan and the aimed activities

If you were to look only over the specific intervention plans we would be tempted to say that the activities developed with children in institutions are quite complex.

To what extent physical education and sport, through their means of action and their specialists, participate actively in this complex process of specialised intervention in placement centers, remains to be established after the analysis of responses to the representative questions of the interviews and questionnaires.

First of all it must be specified that in none of orphanages, whether it's the "Hope" Placement Center in Resita, the "Apartment" Placement Center in Resita or "Our House" Placement Center in Zagujeni, there is no teacher of physical education and sport to deal with the organization and conduct of sports programs. Although these activities are included in the SIP for Children's Recreation and Socialization, which is coordinated by the case responsible, it would appear that this is not fully known by all members of multidisciplinary teams responsible for these specific intervention plans. As proof we have the answers to the question nr. 13 of the questionnaire addressed to the specialized staff, where only a quarter of the respondents knew who is currently responsible for sport.

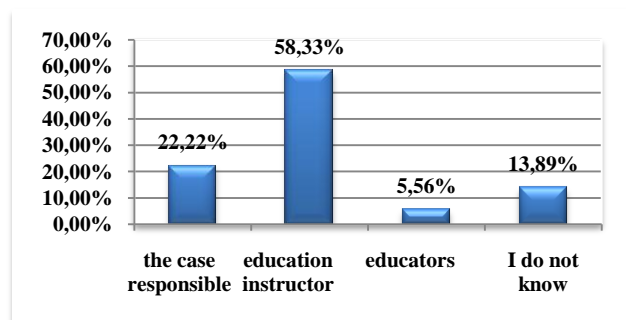


Fig. 4. Graphical representation of the responses concerning awareness about the staff responsible for organizing sports activities at the placement centers

The confusion caused by the lack of specialized people to deal strictly with the social-sports activities is reinforced by the responses in interviews to the question "Who is responsible at the moment for the organization of sport activities in your centre"?

"All are responsible with sport. For example, when we organize an event all the employees are involved. We have a young team that loves sports, so there's no problem from this point of view". (head of the placement center)

"One of the education instructors, which is also a man, is dealing with children. Most children do sport at school. We deal with vocational skills for independent living". (head of the placement center)

"The education instructor is in charge. In fact when we want or we have something to organize, everybody in the centre is involved, from director to administrator". (case responsible)

"Education instructor. I believe he is in the best position to handle this task". (education instructor)

"There is no specific person". (adviser)

"From the center, they announce us or directly the children when they have a championship. I do not know exactly who is in charge. I think the education instructors". (adviser)

"I do not know who is in charge. Children go alone to play when they are old enough. We are going with the little children". (adviser)

Regarding the existence of programs of physical exercise or sports activities organized for children in institutions, these are quite few in number. They are often held at events, as it appears from the responses to question no. 8 referring to how to organize sport programs in the center.

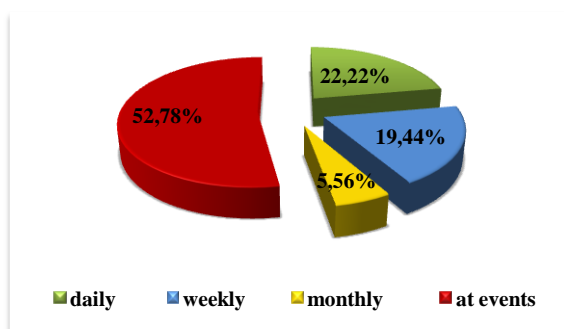


Fig. 5. Graphical representation of the organization frequency of sports activities in placement centers

Here it should be emphasized that there is actually a single sporting event held regularly, ie mini-football "Hope" Cup organized by the "Hope" Placement Center in Resita in partnership with the Caras- Severin Sports Board, activity covered under the program "We also do sports".



Fig. 6. Logo program manager "We also do sports".

This competition is able to gather at start children from orphanages in Caras-Severin county, namely "Hope" PC Resita, "Apartment" PC Resita ,St. Mary CP Resita and "Our House" C.P. Zagujeni.

Unfortunately, these activities are too few, especially since they involve only the institutionalized children and although some argue that the system tries to give "due consideration", as the responses to question 7 show us:

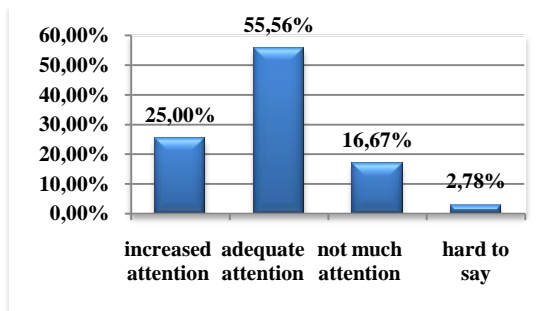


Fig. 7. Graphic concerning the attention paid to the sport activities by the system, in the specialized staff's opinion

or that there is interest of the institution for the daily sports activities, the answers to question no.14 and some responses from interviews show us a completely different side of the situation, namely, the absence and especially the disinterest for sport activities in general.

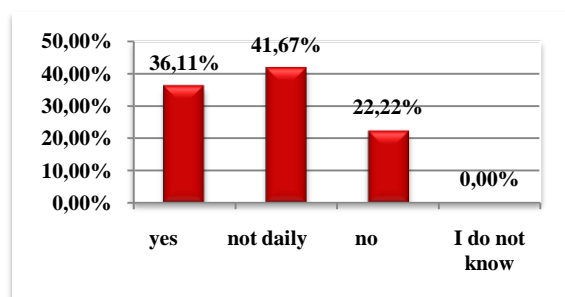


Fig. 8. Graphical representation of the existence of sports programs in the placement centers

“The elder boys come with us to play football in their spare time. Unfortunately, lately, our sports ground was pretty damaged and we have not managed to restore it. The roots of the trees came out and broke the ground in the courtyard of the center”. (head of placement center)

“We do not have the possibility to organize sports activities because we have no sports grounds”. (head of placement center)

“Our children play soccer every day. We have the ground in the yard and Mr instructor C.D., who is younger and he organizes games with the children. There are no regular activities, only on the 1st of June, the football team goes to Reșița for the «Hope» Cup”. (case responsible)

“I do not know if there are any. The children go outside in the park to play”. (adviser)

Likewise, this can only contrast with the assessment made by the specialised staff in question no. 5 for the interest of children towards the practice of sports activities.

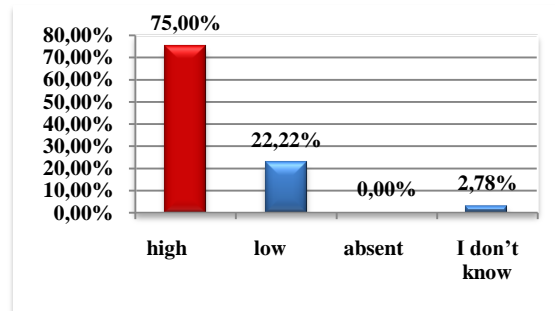


Fig. 9. Assessment made by the specialized personnel on the interest shown by the institutionalized children for sport activities

After analyzing the answers to the most relevant questions from the questionnaire addressed to children in institutions, we could present some issues which contrasts with the responses provided by specialized personnel.

First, children present an interest towards sport activities, an aspect revealed by the responses to question no. 1 of the questionnaire addressed to children in institutions.

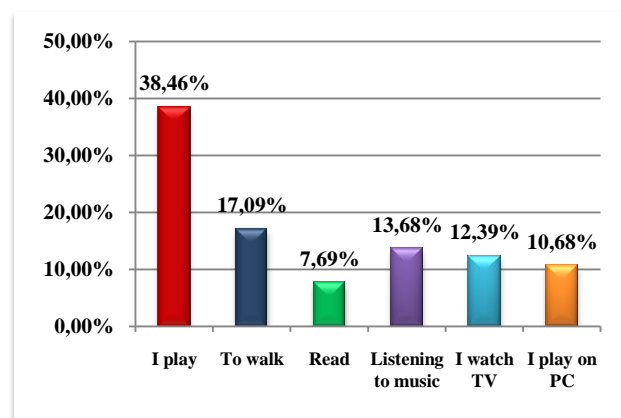


Fig. 10. The preferences of children's leisure activities

The answers to question 15, 76.24% of children state that they should practice physical exercises, and in question 14 even argue that they want to be part of a sports club.

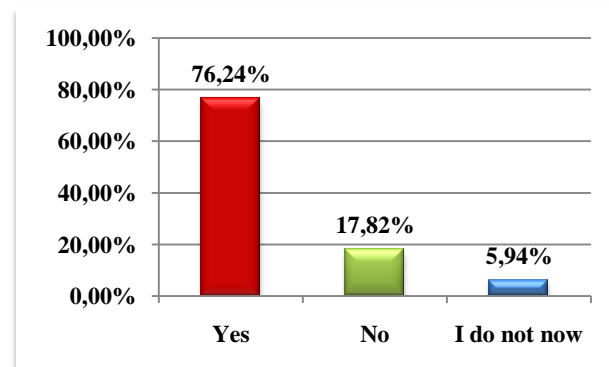


Fig. 11. Graphic representation of the children's opinions on the need to practice exercise

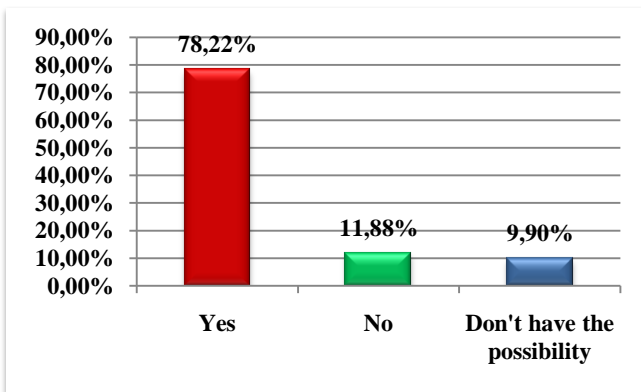


Fig. 12. Graphical representation of the children's desire to be part of a sports club

However, currently a relatively small percentage of the children surveyed are enrolled in a sports club.

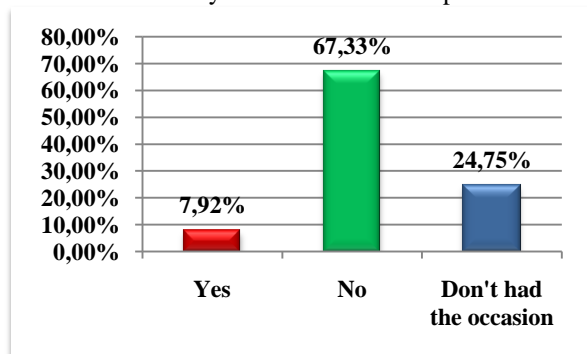


Fig. 13. Graphical representation of the proportion of institutionalized children enrolled in a sports club

According to responses to question. 9, 60.40% of children surveyed would like to organize sports activities in centers, "at least once a week, 29.70% would like them daily, while 9.90% said they are not interested.

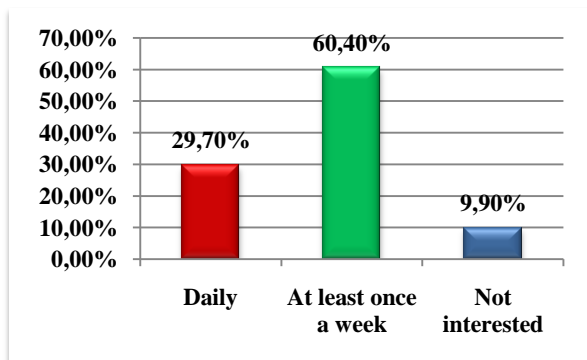


Fig. 14. Graph representing the desire to organize sports activities for children in orphanages

Conclusions

Following statistical evaluation and interpretation of the two questionnaires, and the analysis of the applied interviews, the following conclusions could be drawn:

- Although currently, in the Specific Intervention Plan for Children's Recreation and Socialization is foreseen with a range wide enough of sport activities, unfortunately, the reality is very cruel, namely: with the exception of manifestations held at specific events, the organization of sports programs is almost entirely missing. Any trace of sporting activity, which can be met in the center, is spontaneous, being in fact the result of momentary

initiatives of the children. Thus, we understand that these activities can not have too many beneficial influences on the children, and moreover, they do not offer the possibility of interaction with other persons than those institutionalized.

- While it is virtually impossible at present not to recognize the importance of conducting sports activities in partnership programs, institutional community - local community, they practically do not exist. This induces not only the idea that we can not give children the opportunity to interact with people institutionalized, they are actually deprived of a special type of social contacts, so much needed for the socialization process, and not least social integration.
- In none of the placement centers in Caras-Severin county there is a hired teacher of physical education and sport, to be part of the multidisciplinary teams responsible for the implementation of specific intervention plans. Therefore, at present, the development of children and the formation of their active style, healthy living, is dealt with by people without much experience, unqualified, who do not really know their role or the ways and means which could influence and lead to the fulfilment of the proposed objectives.
- Although most children expressed a preference for leisure sport activities, there are very few who are enrolled in a sports club. There are two main causes: the location of the protection center (as in "Our House" PC Zagujeni, located in the village with the same name), and the lack of people to deal specifically with these problems, children are not able to find a sports club based on preference and skill.

References:

- Bocancea, C., Neamtu, G., 1999, Elemente de asistență socială,** Editura Polirom, Iași, 85.
- CENPO, 2008, Ghid de bune practici în implementarea politicilor publice locale,** Editura AMM@SIGN, Cluj-Napoca, 47.
- Cojocaru, Șt., Cojocaru, D., 2008, Managementul de caz în protecția copilului. Evaluarea serviciilor și practicilor din România,** Editura Polirom, Iași, 49.
- DGASPC Caraș-Severin, 2009.**
- Miftode, V., 1998, Acțiune socială în perspectivă interdisciplinară,** Editura Proema, Baia Mare, 36.