

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Title: Ski course of children with mental disabilities**

**Aim of thesis:** To develop a set of individual preparatory exercises for training of downhill and cornering techniques in alpine skiing for children with mental retardation.

The sub-objective was to test the mastery of individual elements of skiing skills and skiing technique in several children with mental retardation who had completed a ski course

**Method:** This is a theoretical-empirical research. A set of preparatory exercises was tested on a cohort of four children with a diagnosis according to ICD-10 in the range F70-79. Mastery of the skills was assessed using a Likert scale (1-5). Children were observed performing specified, pre-explained and demonstrated skiing skills a total of three times (at the beginning, middle and end of the ski course).

**Results:** A set of preparatory exercises was compiled and tested on a six-day ski course. It showed that children with intellectual disabilities ranging from mild to moderate mental retardation are able to learn and, with prior experience, improve their skiing skills. The child with severe mental retardation did not acquire the skills as he was unable to accept the ski equipment and therefore did not participate in the lessons. All three children who received lessons improved in most of their skiing skills. There was a significant improvement for all the children involved, particularly in lift riding. The main conditions that influenced the success of the application of the methodology were fatigue, weather, individual approach to the child, reasonable demands and empathy from the instructor, creativity of the teaching unit and respect for the principles of working with children with mental retardation.

**Keywords:** teaching downhill skiing to children, mental retardation, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, skiing skills, didactics