

e swimming



Swimming as Therapy for Disadvantaged People

HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS, CARETAKES AND TUTORS

About the project

eSwimming is a project funded with support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission with the aim of promoting swimming as a therapy for disadvantaged people all over Europe. It is intended for teachers, social workers, volunteers, disadvantaged persons, their parents and caretakers. The project will provide materials on the use of swimming as a therapy, promotional materials as well as opportunities to exchange ideas, experience, information, knowledge and good practices. It is being carried out by a consortium partners from Italy, Germany, Spain, UK (Scotland) and Slovenia.

The use of swimming as a therapy: benefits for the user

There are many documented physical and psychological benefits associated with exercises and physical activity. Swimming is a healthy activity that can be practiced over your whole lifetime. Because of the water's buoyancy it is physically a low impact exercise unlike running and other land based exercises thus reducing physical stress on the body. This is the reason why swimming is also great for people with injuries, physical and mental disability. It makes movements that would be difficult or impossible on land, easy!

When practiced as a group it is also a great social activity helping a person build new friendships, learn sportsmanship, and other skill sets such as: self discipline and goal setting. Also learning a new skill and overcoming an obstacle is rewarding experience that builds the sense of self worth, confidence, and independence, leading to a better quality of life.

Special benefits for disadvantaged persons

There are several particular advantages for disadvantaged persons, not only for their physical well-being, but reaching to other areas.

1. Under the correct supervision, swimming is practically a low risk form of therapy for special needs persons. Water's buoyancy relieves stress normally placed on muscles by gravity, giving a person a grander range of motion and coordination. Such environment gives person a chance to build muscles and improve coordination. Added effect is that the sensation of water on the body is also good for neurological development.
2. Swimming is considered to be safer than land based physical therapy because there are no hard surfaces in the pool for the person to fall and hurt themselves on. As long as there is a qualified swim therapist present the water will prove to be a safe environment.
3. Another goal of using swimming as therapy for with special needs persons is to increase independence (physical activity, increase of capabilities, interaction with other

persons, etc.). Increasing their independence can increase their self-confidence. Such self-confidence can then further lead to a better quality of life.

4. Social integration has been one of the important effects of swimming as therapy witnessed at the swimming groups, e.g. like the one in Velenje, Slovenia. Kids that are participating in the program regularly, and according to their parents, started socializing more in school and outside school environment, not only amongst themselves but with the general public as well. They became more attentive in classes and less restless.

5. Mental skills are improved as swimming training includes various cognitive skills and links to their therapy (e.g. counting, repeating words, drawing or making geometrical figures in the water, etc.)



Where can we get involved?

Contact us or one of the partner in the project (see list of partners at <http://www.eswimming.eu/>)

Alternatively, contact the local swimming club and ask them for the information about the swimming training for disadvantaged people. Contact your local NGOs, which are working with disabled people. Contact your local and regional authorities about the possibility of financing such a programme in your area. Or you can contact your national, regional or local societies of disadvantaged persons.

Project webpage

You can check the project website at <http://eswimming.eu/>.



The website is multilingual and includes different educational materials for different target groups, pictures, video materials, animations, blog area, etc. and is divided into several different sections according to the needs of user groups: trainers, parents/tutors, swimmers.

Positive experiences of the parents

"My son is hyperactive. Participating in swimming helped him a lot. The day he is going to swimming, he is more motivated to do his duties, after swimming he is tired, goes to sleep. The participation in swimming courses is developing a sense of responsibility."

"There are not only physical benefits, but there are social too. My son became more socialized persons, he got new friends, starting to meet them and socializing."

"The swimming is not most important for my daughter but social elements are much more. She became more socialized persons."

Contact

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