

# Kinesiology Culture in the Education of the Modern Child

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## Abstract

*Contemporary lifestyle has significantly changed compared to that in the past. The role of educational systems, which are a kind of social leverage, is to provide responses to the changes that have affected the younger generations of today because that is what their preparation for life really implies. The response to challenges of the modern life, which are also reflected in the life of every human from the earliest and most vulnerable age, is the kinesiology content, which can reduce any negative repercussions of such a state through increased physical activity. An individual has no power to change the living conditions, but (s)he has the power to adjust and to optimally respond to them. By stressing the positive effects of exercise, an emphasis is also placed on the comprehensiveness in relation to the development of environmental and ethical awareness, and the culture of leisure time while simultaneously ensuring optimal number of hours of Kinesiology culture at all levels of education.*

**Key words:** *child; education; kinesiology; kinesiology culture; upbringing.*

## Introduction

Children today live different lives from those of their peers ten or more years ago because contemporary lifestyle significantly differs in comparison to that in the past. A response to these changes should be visible across all the “leverages” of the society, since only an optimal response is good enough (Findak, 1994), especially when referring to children and young people because they are unquestionably the only true future of this civilization. The objectives and tasks of school and of the entire physical and health education area should be remodelled in accordance with the conditions of life and work in the modern society (Findak, 1992). Early childhood and preschool education institutions, where children first encounter organized physical exercise,

should also be included. Findak (1994) emphasizes the need for selecting the best response to the daily changes which we are increasingly witnessing. Sadly, at the time when children are seen as a “burden”, when the interest in scientific achievements remains in the shadow of the “hunt” for scientific errors, and when bibliographic bases are searched more for the purpose of pointing to errors than finding scientifically proven facts which could be applied in everyday life to help improve our lives now and in the future, it is doubtful that this analysis of the current state and recommendations for the improvement will fall on fertile soil. After all, that too is one of the features of the present times, which requires a satisfactory response. Politicians can afford the luxury of ignoring the truth, but eventually everyone has to pay for their mistakes, some more than others, depending on how blinded they might be by election results and their desire to rule rather than to serve. On the other hand, emphasis is also placed on the role of scientists and professionals engaged in securing the only future of the people, society and civilization.

### ***Modern Living Circumstances as a Precondition of Education***

Modern times bring about changes in lifestyle, one’s understanding of reality, and acceptance or rejection of certain values; therefore, it is rightly claimed that there is only one constant in life, and that is change (Findak, 2016). Obviously, individuals or smaller groups simply cannot influence these changes; nevertheless, they have to accept inevitable trends as preconditions of modern education. These trends indicate, among other things, that in addition to industrial revolution, which has set the criterion of progress in the gross social product, and in the modern era IT revolution, civilization knowledge multiplies daily and becomes general thanks to globalization trends. Population census data from 2011 show that the population of the Republic of Croatia was 4,284,889 inhabitants (Buršić, 2013). According to the data provided by the City Office for Strategic Planning and Development, the population of the city of Zagreb was 790,017 inhabitants, which represents 18.44% of the total population of the Republic of Croatia (City of Zagreb, 2014). The same source further states that 1 km<sup>2</sup> was inhabited by 1232 persons. This situation, or rather “the concentration of population in cities does not provide suitable surroundings for a steady development even from a demographic point of view, thereby imposing on the majority of inhabitants in the Republic of Croatia poor living conditions from the environmental perspective, but also from the point of view of kinesiology” (Prskalo & Babin, 2008, p. 32). On the other hand, the progress of society is measured by the highest economic development, so the indicators of progress are measured by economic, technological, production and similar measures. Technological progress, as experiences have confirmed, is mainly related to new health concerns brought about by even less movement and even more negative consequences for healthy and secure environment. However, the industrial development is not the only source of

threats for the future. The above-mentioned computerization, which does not imply only the development of information and communication technology, creates ever more complex living and working conditions for people. Daily exposure to stress, the amount of time spent working, and increasingly complex conditions required to secure basic existence, have a significant impact on family life, and especially on its most vulnerable member - a child, starting as early as the child's conception. Diseases related to the circulatory system have become the most common cause of mortality (Čorić & Miler, 2013), and considering the trends of changes in living conditions, it is rather unlikely that this primacy will be taken over by another cause although recent studies have found that 3-5% of adolescents are susceptible to depression (Zdenković, 2014). The concentration of lower quality nutrition, its excessive consumption and decreased physical activity, and its significant component - kinesiology activity, may be linked to an increase in the percentage of obesity, which is subsequently associated with a range of health problems (Burke, 2006; Daniels, 2006) and exposure to stress from the earliest age. All this requires relevant stakeholders of the society, and primarily doctors and kinesiologists, to take action and respond appropriately.

## **Kinesiology Culture in the Education of a Modern Child**

Physical and health education belongs to the civilization inventory known as the general knowledge and is its indivisible part. A suggestion for a more appropriate term - Kinesiology culture -that would reflect the concord of scientists, professionals and experts (Findak & Prskalo, 2003, 2004; Prskalo & Babin, 2007, 2008) "is a result of the knowledge/theory achievements in the area of kinesiology as a substrate science, kinesiology education as its applied area and kinesiology teaching methodology as an applied scientific discipline" (Findak, 2014, p. 635). In 1999 Findak emphasized its cultural, health, biological and pedagogical values. It is the Kinesiology contents that will in the broadest sense be the optimal response to the condition outlined in the previous chapter. Unlike short-term health programmes that do not have a significant effect on obesity and the prevention of chronic diseases, physical activity has proven to be an important factor in its reduction (Flynn, McNeil, Maloff, Mutsingwa, Wu, Ford, & Tough, 2006). Rowlands, Ingledeu, and Eston (2000) point to a negative relationship between obesity and physical activity, whereby the relationship is determined by the level of activity. The aforementioned studies discuss physical activity in general, while kinesiology activity is primarily defined by its goal, which is directed towards health, raising or retaining the level of abilities and capabilities and their maximum development in competitive activities (Mraković, 1997). "Physical activity in the broader sense and kinesiology activity in the narrow are among the most important health determinants associated with the way of life" (Heimer & Sporiš, 2016, p. 171). Therefore, kinesiology education is supposed to have the greatest impact on the entire population because it is present from a person's preschool to high-school

age (Prskalo & Babin, 2006). The problem of obesity associated with insufficient movement in childhood significantly results in obesity in adulthood (Barsh, Farooqi, & O'Rahilly, 2000). Lack of motor knowledge and skills may be the cause of avoiding kinesiology activity (Cools, De Martelaer, Samaey, & Andries, 2011). In order for the goals and tasks of Kinesiology culture to be accomplished it is necessary to achieve the minimum, if not the optimal, amount of kinesiology activity per day, which is possible by involving children and pupils in other organizational forms of activity appropriate to their age, and implementing the number of lessons recommended by the Croatian Association of Kinesiology Teaching Methodologists, as shown in Figure 1.

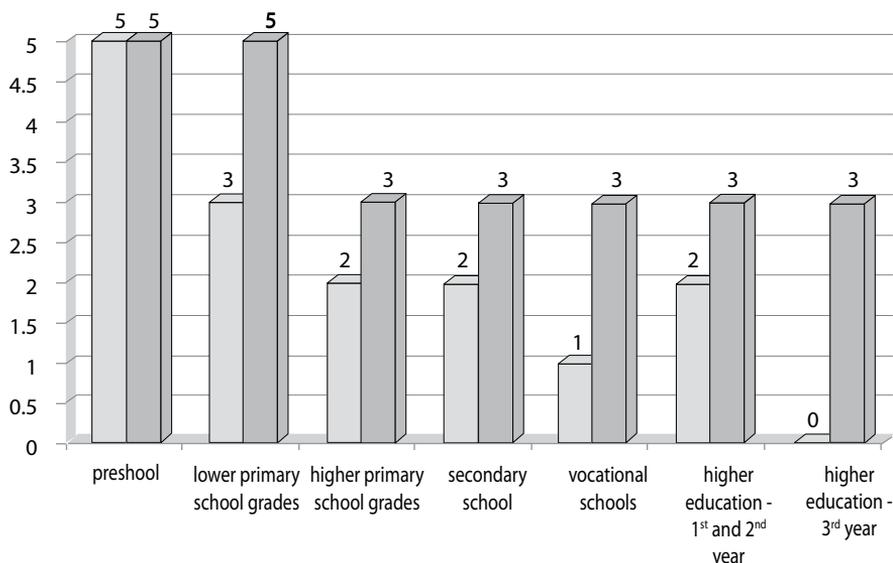


Figure 1. Number of weekly lessons of Kinesiology culture at all levels of education - the prescribed minimum and the actual number of lessons needed to meet the pedagogical standard (Prskalo & Babin, 2008, p. 36)

Reduced physical activity in everyday life also reflects on children, which is why 2 and 3 lessons per week are insufficient to achieve a desirable development or provide a desirable health minimum. In this way, the social role of preschool institution and school is not fulfilled. It is also unacceptable that both in the 4th grade of primary school and in subject teaching in primary education the number of lessons has not changed since the introduction of physical education into the curriculum despite the radical change of living conditions characterised by reduced physical activity.

## Indirect Values of Kinesiology Culture

In addition to the above-mentioned and emphasized cultural, health, biological and pedagogical values (Findak, 1999), Kinesiology culture has a much wider significance for an individual, as well as for the society. Therefore, in the overall destruction of contemporary civilization the environmental imbalance may be mitigated by

kinesiology activity through which a person may create positive attitudes to the environment from the earliest childhood, and which is a prerequisite for positive action, environment protection and becoming involved in other environmental issues as well (Findak & Prskalo, 2004). Relationship towards others, which is manifested in the positive relationship between the persons doing exercises together as well as those who are “adversaries” in agonistic activities, may also contribute to the formation of volitional traits and ultimately to a highly developed ethical awareness. In this way, kinesiology activity in the strict sense, as well as physical activity in the broader sense, provide such a wide-ranging positive effect that they have also become a first-class content in spending leisure time as a special social and increasingly current issue (Prskalo, 2007, 2010). “There are a multitude of leisure time circumstances, contents, activities and events which need to be pedagogically articulated and planned: leisure time as a pedagogical category; family and children’s leisure time; media and children’s leisure time; leisure time, quality of life and health; new approaches to scientific and pedagogical study, research and spending leisure time as an educational practice; pedagogy of leisure time in the system of pedagogical disciplines” (Previšić, 2000). Professionally taught kinesiology culture classes as well as sports training and recreational exercise have an incomparable impact on a large number of traits and abilities (Findak, 2016; Findak, Metikoš, & Mraković, 1995), and that is why the comparative advantages of kinesiology education should be exploited, which was not the case in the previous curricular reforms. Declarative orientation towards the welfare of children while simultaneously ignoring the scientific facts leaves an irremediable mark on the future of every nation and every civilization, thus questioning the value orientation of such quasi-reform movements. According to research (Prskalo, 2007), lesser involvement of children in extracurricular activities than in out-of-school activities indicates unwillingness of contemporary schools to respond to the needs of children, especially in primary education.

## **Conclusion**

The response to contemporary challenges that are necessarily reflected on a person’s life from the earliest and most vulnerable age is kinesiology content, which can, in cases of increased activity, reduce the negative repercussions of such a state. Specifically, an individual has no power to change his/her living conditions, but they have the power to adjust and react to them. Social structures may not be exempt from this responsibility, either although the medical and kinesiology structures are the ones most emphasized. Curricular reform, which is a major national document, must consider scientific knowledge, and not vice versa. Emphasizing the immeasurable and comprehensive positive effects of exercising, this paper also emphasizes comprehensiveness with respect to the development of ecological and ethical awareness as well as the culture of leisure time. Simultaneously, it is imperative to ensure optimal number of lessons for Kinesiology culture at all levels of education.

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# Kineziološka kultura u odgoju i obrazovanju suvremenog djeteta

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## **Sažetak**

*Način života danas je znatno promijenjen u odnosu na način života u prošlosti. Zadaća obrazovnih sustava, svojevrsnih društvenih poluga, jest dati odgovore na promjene koje će zahvatiti i sadašnje najmlađe generacije, jer je to smisao njihove pripreme za život. Odgovor na izazove suvremenog svijeta, koji se nužno odražavaju na život čovjeka od najranije i najranjivije dobi, jest kineziološki sadržaj koji uz povećani aktivitet može umanjiti negativne posljedice takvog stanja. Pojedinač nema moć promjene životnih uvjeta, ali ima moć prilagodbe i optimalnog odgovora. Naglašavajući pozitivne učinke vježbanja, ističe se i sveobuhvatnost u odnosu na razvoj ekološke, etičke svijesti i kulture slobodnog vremena, uz istodobno imperativno osiguranje optimalne satnice kineziološke kulture na svim razinama odgoja i obrazovanja.*

**Ključne riječi:** *dijete; kineziologija, kineziološka kultura, obrazovanje; odgoj.*