Water familiarization testing battery adapted for young children

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The degree of development required to learn a swimming style is not reached before the age of five to six years old (1, 2).

⇒ Before that age, it is very interesting to discover the aquatic environment to develop specific skills (2, 3). Entering into the water – Immersion – Floatation – Breathing – Propulsion

Not satisfied by the existing water familiarization testing batteries, only evaluating a global level, we elaborated a testing battery able to assess the children with an increased precision.

METHODS

o Testing battery with 20 subtests was identical for all children.

o According to children performance, a score is attributed for each subtest.

o The sum of all scores gives a total score, representing the water familiarisation level.

o 250 children from 18 kindergarten classrooms have achieved the testing battery. They were allocated into three groups:
  ▶ Group 1: < 4yo (n=42)
  ▶ Group 2: between 4 and 5yo (n=51)
  ▶ Group 3: > 5yo (n=157)

RESULTS

The testing battery was successful to assess and compare the water adaptation level of children from 3 to 6 years old.

Linear score progression was observed from three to six years old for most items.

However, we observed that very well familiarized children, who were already able to swim, obtained nearly maximal scores... So, for those children, it would be interesting to add an assessment of the swimming styles.

A problem is the very long time spent to analyze videos.

CONCLUSION

The testing battery elaborated in this present study appears to be an effective method to assess the five skills implicated in children water familiarization. Reference datas have been established for each age and could be used to detect backwardness or to verify a program effectiveness. Including swimming style assessment. Evaluation in live to avoid video recording and to spare time.

References: