



## Problems Faced by Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Their Participation in Sports Education: Parent Views\*

Sevim AKŞİT<sup>1A</sup>, Emine Büşra YILMAZ<sup>2B</sup>, Reyhan Dağ<sup>1C</sup>, İrem Altan AKSU<sup>3D</sup>,  
Semra ARSLAN<sup>4E</sup>, Seher AKŞİT<sup>5F</sup>, Hüseyin Can İKİZLER<sup>1G</sup>

<sup>1</sup> İstanbul Rumeli University, Faculty of Sport Sciences, İstanbul, TÜRKİYE

<sup>2</sup> Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Sport Science Faculty, Burdur, TÜRKİYE

<sup>3</sup> İstanbul Gedik University, Vocational School of Higher Education, İstanbul, TÜRKİYE

<sup>4</sup> Development Garden Children's Activity and Consultancy, Special Education Specialist, İstanbul, TÜRKİYE

<sup>5</sup> Pamukkale University, Education Science Institute, Master's Thesis Student, Denizli, TÜRKİYE

Address Correspondence to Sevim Akşit: e-mail: [sevim.askim@gmail.com](mailto:sevim.askim@gmail.com)

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A: Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4861-2677 B: Orcid ID: 0000-0001-7369-9965 C: Orcid ID: 0000-0002-5192-3548 D: Orcid ID: 0000-0002-1396-0313

E: Orcid ID: 0000-0003-1257-3159 F: Orcid ID: 0009-0006-2380-6375 G: Orcid ID: 0000-0003-2055-939X

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### Abstract

The research aims to examine the problems encountered by students with intellectual disabilities in their participation in sports education in terms of parents' views and to develop solutions to the problems based on Socio-Ecological Model (SEM). Case study design, one of the qualitative research approaches, was used in the study, and the study group was reached by maximum diversity sampling from purposeful sampling methods. Parents of children with intellectual disabilities in different cities of Turkey in the spring and autumn semesters of the 2021-2022 academic year were included in the study. During the research process, data were collected by individual interviews. Thematic analysis was used and analyzed by creating codes, categories, and themes. The findings obtained were categorized under four main themes created according to SEM. These are individual problems, social problems, problems arising from the physical environment, and problems arising from politics. Despite the difficulties encountered, as a result, in this study, it was concluded that parents of students with intellectual disabilities have a positive attitude towards physical activities and sports education, they are aware that their children with intellectual disabilities need to participate in physical activities and sports education.

**Keywords:** Students with Intellectual Disabilities, Sports Training, Parents' Views, Socio-Ecological Model, Special education.

## Özet

### Zihinsel Yetersizliği Olan Öğrencilerin Spor Eğitimine Katılımlarında Karşılaştıkları Problemler: Veli Görüşleri

Araştırmanın amacı, zihinsel yetersizliği olan öğrencilerin spor eğitimine katılımlarında karşılaştıkları problemleri veli görüşleri açısından inceleyerek, problemlere yönelik çözüm önerilerinin Sosyo-ekolojik Model (SEM) temelinde geliştirilmesidir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yaklaşımlarından biri olan durum çalışması deseni kullanılmış ve amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden maksimum çeşitlilik örneklemeyle çalışma grubuna ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmaya, 2021-2022 eğitim-öğretim yılının bahar ve güz döneminde Türkiye'nin farklı şehirlerinde zihinsel yetersizliği olan çocuğa sahip veliler dahil edilmiştir. Araştırma sürecinde veriler bireysel görüşme tekniği ile toplanmıştır. Veriler tematik analize tabi tutularak kod, kategori ve tema oluşturularak analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular SEM'e göre oluşturulan dört ana tema altında toplanmıştır. Bunlar; bireysel sorunlar, toplumsal sorunlar, fiziksel çevreden kaynaklı sorunlar ve politikadan kaynaklı sorunlardır. Karşılaşılan sorunlara rağmen sonuç olarak bu araştırmada zihinsel yetersizliği olan öğrenci velilerinin fiziksel aktivitelere ve spor eğitimine olumlu baktıkları, zihinsel yetersizliği olan çocuklarının fiziksel aktivitelere ve spor eğitimine katılmalarının önemli olduğunun bilincinde oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Zihinsel Yetersizliği Olan Öğrenciler, Spor Eğitimi, Veli Görüşleri, Sosyo-Ekolojik Model, Özel Eğitim.

## INTRODUCTION

Intellectual disability can negatively affect people's daily, social and practical skills (1). For example, unhealthy nutrition, sedentary life and physical movement limitation are among the most common lifestyle problems encountered in students with intellectual disabilities (2). Students with intellectual disabilities engage in less physical activity than their typically developing peers, and a sedentary lifestyle is quite common (3). Sports training is associated with improvements in the motor functions like balance (5), muscle strength development and hand-eye coordination (6) of students with intellectual disabilities (7,6,8) but it is known that, there are many obstacles to the regular participation of students with intellectual disabilities in sports education (4). In addition, sports training can positively contribute to the motivation levels, anxiety levels, neurotic and behavioral problem levels of students with intellectual disabilities, as well as their psychological adaptation (9,8).

The positive effects of sports education on the development of students with intellectual disabilities and other types of special needs have been proven. However, these students encounter some problems in physical education and sports classes at school. These students cannot participate in physical activity sufficiently due to reasons such as not being included in the class, not being able to socialize with their peers, being excluded, having a negative experience in physical education and sports classes, structuring the course content, limited resources, architectural structure of the school and environmental factors (10,11,12,13,14,15,16).

Parents also play an important role in the participation of students with intellectual disabilities in sports education (17). In some research results, it has been stated that the support given by parents of special students may be low level (4) and, parents' expectations from physical education and sports lessons are met at a moderate level (18). It has been reported that parents with intellectual disability generally welcome their children's participation in sports activities (18,19,20) and that parents' awareness of the effects of sports is at a moderate level (21). Although parents with intellectual disability welcome students' participation in sports, it is known that these students struggle with various problems in sports participation due to policies, environment and personal problems (4,22,23,24,25). Therefore, it is limited in an important issue such as the evaluation of parents' views on the restrictions faced by students with intellectual disabilities in their participation in physical activities and sports education. However, the number of studies on the reasons for the difficulties encountered by students with intellectual disabilities in their participation in sports is not sufficient. For this reason, this study aims to examine the problems encountered by students with intellectual

disabilities who receive education and training in primary and secondary education levels in their participation in sports education, in terms of their parents' views.

For this reason, it seems important to examine the problems encountered by students with intellectual disabilities who receive education and training at primary and secondary education levels in their participation in sports education in terms of parents' views. Because revealing the problems faced by parents of students with intellectual disabilities can be a guide for the solution of these problems. In this context, in this study, the problems faced by the parents of students with intellectual disabilities were examined within the framework of the Socio-Ecological Model.

Socio-Ecological Model (SEM), based on the individual, the factors affecting the individual are categorized with certain systems: The closest system, which includes factors such as family, school and kinship ties, is the Microsystem; Exosystem, which includes factors such as relations with neighbors, social services, and the legal system; Mesosystem, which is responsible for the transition and/or relationship between the Microsystem and Exosystem; Macrosystem, which includes factors such as culture, values, and the effects of mass media (26) and finally, there is the Chronosystem, which expresses time from past to future (27). The system closest to the individual, SEM, focuses on the individuals themselves and divides the factors affecting their participation in physical activity from near to far, respectively, as individual (their own cognitive and affective process), interpersonal (the process with family and friends) and physical (the neighborhood, region, policies, culture) explains. These three dimensions holistically affect individuals' participation in physical activity (28, 29). Sallis et al. (30) describe five levels of impact regarding SEM: 1. Internal factors; It includes characteristics of the individual such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills. 2. Interpersonal factors; These are social networks and social support systems established with friends and family. 3. Institutional factors include organizations in society. Examples include day care centers, schools, universities and business environments. 4. Community factors refer to the rules and norms that exist formally or informally among individuals, groups, and organizations. 5. Public policy includes local, state, and federal policies. All factors at five impact levels have the potential to affect individuals' active participation in physical activity at different levels (31).

Since multiple factors must be considered together in the participation of students with intellectual disabilities in physical activities and sports training, this study is based on the SEM. SEM provides the opportunity to consider multiple factors in individuals' participation in physical activity. SEM is an exploratory model in understanding the multidimensional and complex factors that are effective in the decision-making and continuation process of individuals' participation in physical activity, as well as in their experiences (32,33). For this reason, the study was designed based on SEM's levels; the problems faced by intellectually disabled students were examined from the perspective of their parents. At this point, the findings and discussion of the study are structured based on the levels in SEM.

## METHOD

This study is a case study, one of the qualitative research approaches. It is a method that makes it possible to examine a single situation or event in depth through systematically collected data in order to reveal what is happening in the real environment (34).

Study group; the parents of intellectual disabled students studying in primary and secondary schools in different provinces of Turkey in the 2021-2022 academic year were included in the study. In this study, the sample group was reached by maximum diversity sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. Accordingly, parents of students with different characteristics were included in the sample group. According to our purposive sampling, the criteria for inclusion of parents in the study are as follows (35):

1. The parents' students has mild and/or moderate intellectual disability, 2. The student with intellectual disability continues his/her education in general public schools (mainstreaming education-special sub-class) and special education and rehabilitation centres,

In addition, 12 of the participants' children with intellectual disabilities receive mainstreaming education in special education and rehabilitation schools, 6 in special subclasses and 12 with typically developing peers.

Verbal information about the purpose and procedure of the research was given to physical education teachers and administrators working in different provinces of Turkey. 40 participants voluntarily contacted the study team. However, 10 participants were not included in the study because they did not meet the criteria for their child's special needs and the type of service they received. Data saturation was reached after 30 individual interviews during the research process.

The demographic information of the participants is as follows: Their ages ranged between 29 and 58. Two of the participants are male and 28 of them are female. Six of them graduated from primary school, eight from secondary school, eight from high school and eight from bachelor's degree. 26 of the participants were married and four were single. All participants undertake the care and education of their child with intellectual disability. 24 participants have children with typical development and one participant has other children with special needs. When the monthly income levels of the participants are analysed, it is seen that 11 participants are below minimum wage, three participants are at minimum wage level and 16 participants are above minimum wage. The duration of receiving special education for children with intellectual disabilities varies between one year and 12 years.

### **Data collection**

In this research, the interview technique was used as a data collection tool. A semi-structured interview form was used in the interviews. In the interviews, a semi-structured interview form was developed by the research team based on literature reviews, the opinions of two experts (who have conducted research with individuals with special needs in the field of Physical Education and Sports) and pilot interviews with three participants. Some examples of interview questions are as follows: 1. What kind of education does your child benefit from in the special education institution or school he/she attends? 2. Who provides sports education to your child at the special education institution or at the school he/she attends? 3. How do you think the teacher's approach to students with special needs is? 4. What are your views on the necessity of the child's participation in sports education? 5. Does your child face difficulties in terms of participation in sports education? If yes, what kind of difficulties does he/she face?

During the data collection process, three researchers conducted in-depth individual interviews. 20 of the interviews were held over the internet (Zoom and WhatsApp); 10 were held face-to-face. The interviews started with general information about the research, legal rights, and obtaining verbal permission. The interview then continued by asking the participants to describe their experiences with their intellectual disabled children in the education and training environment. Later, when the participants came to the opinion that there were parts of the interview process that were not understood by the researchers or that they needed to be explained in more depth, participants were asked the following question: "Can you explain this opinion in more detail?" (36). Examples of basic questions in the semi-structured interview form are as follows: "What are your views on the necessity of the child's participation in sports training?" "Does your child have difficulty participating in sports training? If your answer is yes, what difficulties do you encounter?" Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 40 minutes. The interviews were recorded with the knowledge of the participants.

### **Data analysis**

The data obtained from the participants were subjected to inductive thematic analysis and analyzed by creating codes, categories and themes. Common themes and patterns among the participants were identified according to the six-stage thematic analysis method suggested by Braun and Clarke (37). The steps to create themes are as follows: Raw data was transcribed electronically, word for word, by two researchers. Three researchers read the transcribed data until they became familiar with the data. Afterwards, the data was coded separately by three researchers, independently of any expression or sentence. Each code was examined and compared with the coding of other researchers. Similar codes were categorized to capture common meanings of the codings. As a common decision of the research team, the categories were grouped under four main themes. These emerging themes were compatible with SEM, the theoretical framework of the research. Theme titles „individual problems“, „social problems“, „problems arising from the physical environment“, and

“problems arising from politics” were determined. Finally, care was taken to ensure that the theme titles were compatible with the content and that the content of the themes was supported with verbatim quotations in their explanations. Quotations that best exemplify the content of each theme have been selected.

### Credibility

In order to ensure the credibility of the data in this research, expert opinions were taken in creating the items of the semi-structured interview form. In the findings section, participants' opinions are expressed with direct quotes. The data obtained from the participants was submitted for participant confirmation. Afterwards, data triangulation was performed. The data obtained was coded separately by three experts simultaneously and compared with the codes of other researchers. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (36), it is important to determine the reliability of the coding made from the same data. This inter-coder reliability must be at least 70% in research. According to Miles and Huberman (38), the consensus between coders should be at least 80%. In this study, the inter-coder reliability of analyzes made by different researchers was calculated by using Miles and Huberman's (38) reliability calculation formula (Reliability = Number of Agreements / (Agreement + Number of Disagreements) × 100). The intercoder reliability between three researchers was 0.97.

As a result, both methods supported the credibility of the data obtained. The method is explained in detail to ensure the transferability of the research results in a similar environment. The data obtained was described in detail. However, in order to ensure the confirmability of the research, the interview records were transcribed electronically. The coding made by the researchers, the notes and inferences created during the reporting phase are stored on a hard drive by the responsible researcher.

### Ethical approval and institutional permission

For this research from Istanbul Rumeli University Ethics Commission (Ethics Commission permit No. 24.03.2022-2022-03 dated 24.03.2022, Article No. 05) ethical permission numbered E-53938333-050-13678 was obtained.

## FINDINGS

According to parents' views, 4 themes emerged as a result of the thematic analysis of the data regarding the problems faced by children with intellectual disabilities in their participation in physical activity. These are individual problems, social problems, problems caused by the physical environment and problems arising from Politics (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Themes and Categories of Parents 'Views

Themes	Categories	f	Themes	Categories	f
<b>Individual problems</b>	Parents feeling helpless	30	<b>Problems caused by the physical environment</b>	Limited social activity opportunities	30
	Parents' concerns about the future	30		Limited sports opportunities	14
	Parents feeling lonely	30		Limited transportation facilities	14
	Parents feeling guilty	30		Inappropriate architectural structure of schools	14
	Parents feeling inadequate	28		Limited equipment and materials	
	Insufficiency of financial means	14			
<b>Social problems</b>	Social problems faced by parents		<b>Problems arising from Politics</b>	Limited class hours	30
	Parent's perception that he is not accepted by society	30		Professional competence and competence limitation	20
	Parent's perception that his child is not accepted by society	30		Inadequacy of the curriculum	20
	Problems caused by socialization	30		Limited number of teachers	20
	Communication problems	30		Educators do not like their jobs	
	Problems originating from the parent's own family	15			

Theme 1 Individual problems: According to the findings obtained within the scope of the theme of individual problems, participants have concerns about the opportunities they can provide to their children with intellectual disabilities and their own emotional processes. They feel inadequate, helpless, guilty, and abandoned by their families and society. Parents aim to enable their children with intellectual disabilities to live independently in society. However, they are concerned about their children's health. They state that lack of financial means restricts the access of children with intellectual disabilities to sports education. They think that this situation negatively affects the physical development of the intellectual disabled child.

All participants feel inadequate and helpless because they cannot pay enough attention to their children with intellectual disabilities. Parents stated that they did not have sufficient financial means for the education and training of their children with intellectual disabilities. Parents stated that their children with intellectual disabilities cannot receive adequate sports training in line with the opportunities offered by the state. According to parents, their children need support because their access to sports education is limited. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P2: "We are slightly above the minimum wage. I sent him to a public education course. I also sent him to the municipality's course. I even took a private course. I am tired. "I want my child to be well, I want him to be self-sufficient, I want him to have no movement restrictions."

All participants said that they were left alone by their families and relatives after their child was diagnosed with intellectual disability. Some participants even emphasized that they could not take care of their other children because they could not get support from their families. According to parents, children with intellectual disabilities need more attention than other children. Therefore, parents devote most of their time to their children with intellectual disabilities. Parents think that they cannot be good parents because they cannot show the necessary attention to their other children. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P3: "I have insufficient funds. My other children need me too. I can't get enough. My mother-in-law thinks I'm not a good mother."

Parents emphasized that the development of their children with intellectual disabilities can be supported through sports education, thus contributing to their continued life as an independent individual in society. However, parents emphasized that they had problems accessing sports education for their special children. For this reason, parents stated that they were worried about the future of their children with intellectual disabilities. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P10: "It's too far, we can't go. I cannot use public transportation with my child. How will my child reach the level of self-sufficiency?"

Some parents reported that they had to stay strong for their children with intellectual disabilities. However, they said that they could not manage their situation without the help of any medication. For this reason, some parents emphasized that they use antidepressant medications. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P7: "My child cannot control his impulses, he is obsessed. We need support. I am sometimes good and sometimes bad. I use antidepressants."

As a result of the analysis, it was seen that some female parents thought that the intellectual dysfunction of their children with intellectual disabilities might be due to them. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P5: "Is it my fault? Did I make mistakes while pregnant? I had problems with my husband. But I didn't smoke or drink alcohol, but I was very stressed during my pregnancy."

Theme 2 Social problems: Within the scope of the theme of social problems, all participants stated that they and their children were excluded by their peers and society. Parents emphasized that they and their children with intellectual disabilities do not feel like they belong to society. Parents stated that the problems they experienced were caused by the social environment, including their immediate surroundings. Parents stated that they had difficulty in going out, that social support was not provided, and that people looked at them with pity and strangeness when they went out with their children with intellectual disabilities. For this

reason, parents said that they could not see themselves as a part of society. Furthermore, they reported that their children had limited mobility. An excerpt from parents' opinions regarding this is as follows:

P9: "They look at us with pity from outside. Some of my neighbors have reduced communication. Shouldn't we support each other?"

According to some participants, exclusion of children with intellectual disabilities also occurs in the school environment. While some of the participants stated that the teachers and school principals of their children with intellectual disabilities experienced problems, some of them stated that they were satisfied with the teaching of their children with intellectual disabilities.

P6: "My child's first teacher was very good. He was kind and patient with my child. However, our current teacher is impatient with my child."

Parents stated that their children with intellectual disabilities experienced problems due to their inability to socialize with typically developing students, their inability to receive sports training, and their expectation of more attention from their teachers. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P7: "I accompany my son. The teacher cannot pay special attention. I expect the teacher to be more patient. I want him to spend more time with my child. Some teachers behave very well. We cannot attend physical education and fine arts classes. The classroom teacher does not want us to participate."

Some participants stated that they could not get their intellectually disabled child accepted by their own family. He especially emphasized that his child with intellectual disabilities was ignored. Some participants emphasized that they were ignored by their neighbors and did not communicate with them. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P30: "Even my own parents do not accept it. I look at our genetics and no one has it. But both of my children have it. I want help. I want opportunity. I want sports education for their future."

Theme 3 Problems caused by the physical environment: Within the scope of the theme of problems arising from the physical environment, participants stated that their children with intellectual disabilities could not participate in sports training or could only participate in limited numbers. Parents reported that this was due to the lack of sports activities suitable for their special child or the fact that suitable sports courses were located far away from where they are living. It has also been stated that the tools, equipment and materials to be used in the current courses are insufficient and the course environment cannot be adapted to the student with special needs due to the physical structure of the school.

All participants stated that their children with intellectual disabilities have limited opportunities in sports education and social activities. Some participants reported that they enabled their children to participate in social activities within their own means, because the social activity planning that children participate in at schools is not sufficient. It has been stated that the reason for this is the environment where the schools are located, the lack of transportation to the schools, the architectural structure of the school and the lack of materials to be used in lessons. Parents' opinions on the subject are as follows:

P13: "There are no sports or social activities at the school my child attends. I cannot reach other institutions by public transportation."

Participants claimed that their children encountered indifference in the classroom environment, that the course could not be adapted to the student, that there was a lack of materials, tools and equipment for the course, and that the schools were physically inadequate. Some participants emphasised that their children were not included in the lesson because of their disabilities. Some participants reported that they were left alone with their child with intellectual disability in the special lower class. A parent's opinion on this is as follows:

P7: "I stay alone with my child in the classroom environment. Also, my child does not receive sports training, because there was no suitable material."

Theme 4 Problems arising from Politics: Within the scope of the theme of policy-related problems, participants stated that the curriculum for their child with intellectual disability was inadequate; it has been

suggested that the inefficiency of the lessons, the inadequacy of the lesson time allocated for sports education, and the teacher's inability to adapt the lesson due to the large number of students in the class. For these reasons, some participants claimed that their special children encountered negative attitudes in the classroom environment. Parents' opinions regarding this are as follows:

P1: "Lessons are 20% effective, 80% ineffective. The physical education teacher cannot care about my child."

P3: "There is no sports-related activity. I don't know if the teachers are inadequate or not. My child is being ignored"

P28: "It's hard work, I agree. Sometimes we, as a family, have a hard time. We need teachers who will do this job wholeheartedly. My child goes to school. We cannot get efficiency."

P17: "Classroom teachers give physical education lessons. But he doesn't want us to participate."

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this research is to examine the problems encountered by students with intellectual disabilities in their participation in sports education in terms of parents' opinions. The results of the analysis of the data obtained were grouped under 4 main themes in accordance with SEM: individual problems, social problems, problems caused by the physical environment and problems caused by politics.

**Individual problems:** According to the literature, the opinions, attitudes, alexithymic states and social skill levels of their parents affect the participation of students with intellectual disabilities and other special needs in physical activities and sports education and parents are aware of the importance of sports education (4, 17, 39).

In this study, parents are aware of the importance of their children's participation in sports education for their development, despite their individual problems (parents feel helpless, worry about the future, feel lonely, feel guilty, feel inadequate, lack of financial means). Parents do not consider the sports education provided by the state to be sufficient for their children with intellectual disabilities, they try to provide sports education support with their own means. Some parents receive information from government institutions such as the municipality and public education courses; some parents try to receive training from paid sports centers by applying for scholarships to various companies. Parents with medium and high financial status receive support from private courses, paid teachers, life coaches or life leaders.

Another point that draws attention here is that sports education is received from people who are not sports educators. As can be understood from all these efforts, according to parents, the positive effects of sports education on their children are too important to be ignored. For this reason, it is thought that it is important to increase state support according to the income level of parents or to increase the number of courses where children with intellectual disabilities can receive free sports training in line with their needs. This application can make it easier for parents who do not have financial means to access sports training for their children with special needs, and increasing the number of free sports courses can also eliminate the transportation problem.

**Social problems:** Studies have shown that there is a significant and negative relationship between the level of perceived social support and symptoms of depression (40). As in this study, the problems encountered by students with intellectual disabilities in accessing sports education include social problems and social exclusion (41,42).

Under the theme of problems arising from social problems, it has been determined that the social problems faced by the parent are the parent's perception that he is not accepted by the society, problems arising from socialization, communication problems, and problems originating from the parent's own family. Parents try to make their intellectually disabled children and themselves accepted by society. However, the negative attitudes they encounter in their own families and social circles put parents in an even more difficult situation. They are not getting the support they need. He is even ostracized by society. This situation causes parents to become isolated from their social environment and negatively affects the social development of children with

intellectual disabilities. There is discomfort due to social pressure. These negative attitudes have a negative psychological effect, especially on some female parents.

It is necessary to raise awareness about intellectual disability in society and achieve social acceptance. For this, the number of inclusive / integrated social events should be increased. The activities not only integrate typically developing children with children with special needs; parents should also be actively involved. In such activities, guidance from special education, psychology and physical education experts should be provided. Thus, by providing an opportunity for social awareness and acceptance, a tolerant approach can be created within the framework of mutual understanding and empathy.

The source of problems by the physical environment: Studies show that the problems encountered by students with intellectual disabilities in accessing sports education due to the physical environment include inappropriate environmental conditions and lack of transportation (43, 42). The subheadings obtained in this research within the scope of the theme of problems arising from the physical environment are limited social activity opportunities, inadequacy of sports opportunities, inadequacy of transportation facilities, architectural structure of schools, and lack of equipment and materials. It is thought that students with intellectual disabilities have limited access to direct social activities due to the physical environment. It is thought that the number of school types should be increased and the school types should be arranged to include each other in terms of physical structure. This may enable students with typical development and students with intellectual disabilities and other special needs to understand each other and integrate with each other in their free time.

The source of problems by the Politics: In the studies conducted, the problems encountered by students with intellectual disabilities in accessing sports education include problems arising from politics; it is stated that the activities do not match the child's ability, the need for special support, the lack of programming, the lack of trained personnel, the inadequacy of the curriculum and the inability to adapt the curriculum to the field of application (39,42). Columna et al., (44) in their systematic review covering the dates between 2007 and 2018, revealed that parents encounter many obstacles (e.g. lack of programs, lack of time, children's disabilities) that negatively affect the participation of their children with intellectual disabilities and other special needs in physical activities and sports training. Results have been obtained that physical education teachers stated that students with intellectual disabilities cannot receive support from parents regarding sports education (4). This situation is revealed in more detail with the results of this study.

When we look at the results of this research, it was substantiated as insufficiency of lesson hours, professional competence and competency, inadequacy of the curriculum, and the quantity of the number of teachers. According to the results obtained, parents experience problems due to limited access to schools suitable for students with intellectual disabilities, the education system, curriculum, inability to adapt the course, lack of interest, and lack of materials that can be used in the course. Particularly, classroom teachers' lack of interest in sports education can be given as an example of this situation. However, negative attitudes towards special children encountered in the school environment also negatively affect parents. According to the parents, the education system should be restructured, inclusive education should be applied to students with intellectual disabilities after individual education, when their level progresses, educator competencies should be increased, educators should be supervised, and teachers who are sympathetic towards students with intellectual disabilities should be preferred, because parents think that the physical and motor development of students with intellectual disabilities can be supported through sports education. However, parents are of the opinion that the student with intellectual disability cannot receive sports education or cannot receive it at a sufficient level.

As a suggestion to teacher training programs in Turkey, courses on how to teach physical activity skills to individuals with special needs can be included more in physical education teaching programs. An internship requirement may be required for applications to teacher training programs (46). This may provide the teacher candidate with the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience about the teaching profession. The teacher candidate knows the content of this profession and may have the opportunity to evaluate whether it is suitable for him or not before choosing to study in the training program. Again, oral evaluation may be required in teacher training programs. Thus, the communication skills of the teacher candidate could be evaluated and the opportunity to determine why he/she prefers this profession can be provided.

## CONCLUSION

The most important finding obtained from the research is that, according to parents, the reason why their children with intellectual disabilities cannot participate in physical activities and sports training is primarily due to problems arising from society. According to SEM, the factors identified as society-related problems in this research can be evaluated within the exosystem and macro system. Based on this model, which focuses on the individual and examines the effects on the individual, it can be said that the two systems located outside the center have the greatest impact on individuals with intellectual disabilities. Also, it was found that parents of students with intellectual disabilities have a positive attitude towards physical activities and sports education, and they are aware of the importance of their children with intellectual disabilities to participate in physical activities and sports education; however; they face individual problems (financial impossibility, feeling lonely, helpless, inadequate and guilty), social problems (social pressure, lack of acceptance, inability to socialise and communicate), problems arising from the physical environment (limitation of social activity opportunities, inadequacy of sports facilities, inadequacy of transportation facilities, architectural structure of schools, lack of equipment and materials) and problems arising from politics (inadequacy of course hours, professional competence and competence, inadequacy of curriculum, quantity of teachers, educators' dislike of their jobs).

As a suggestion, increasing the number of school types and arranging the school types to include each other in terms of physical structure, organizing school clubs for peer education and including activities where children can work together, organizing teacher training programs, diversification of in-service training, increasing state support according to the income level of parents or increasing the number of courses where children with mental disabilities can receive free sports training in line with their needs, it is recommended to organize events that will increase public awareness.

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