



**PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS A RESOURCE FOR
DEVELOPING VOLITIONAL SELF-REGULATION IN
OLDER PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

Turdimuratov Dilmurad Yuldashevich

*Senior Lecturer, Department of Physical Education,
Termez State Pedagogical Institute*

ARTICLE INFO:

Received: 09.10.2026

Revised: 10.10.2026

Accepted: 11.10.2026

KEY WORDS:

*preschool education,
physical education,
physical activity,
volitional qualities,
volitional self-
regulation, self-control,
persistence, executive
functions, active games,
school readiness.*

ABSTRACT

The article examines the pedagogical potential of physical education in fostering volitional self-regulation among older preschool children. The relevance of this issue stems from the need to prepare children for the demands of systematic schooling, which require the ability to accept activity goals, control one's behavior, adhere to rules, overcome obstacles, and see tasks through to completion. It is demonstrated that physical education offers significant opportunities for developing goal-orientation, persistence, endurance, independence, decisiveness, discipline, and self-control. The article discusses pedagogical mechanisms for cultivating volitional qualities through active games, physical exercises, movement tasks with changing conditions, relay races, and elements of competitive activity.

Introduction. Modern preschool education focuses on the holistic development of the child, encompassing physical, cognitive, social, and emotional-volitional domains [3, 7]. In this context, particular importance is attached to a preschooler's ability to voluntarily regulate their own behavior: accepting a given task, maintaining focus on it during the activity, acting in accordance with established rules, and overcoming emerging difficulties. The combination of these manifestations is linked to the development of the volitional sphere and the formation of the prerequisites for conscious self-regulation.

The relevance of this issue is heightened during the older preschool years, a period of intensive preparation for the transition from predominantly play-based activity to more structured learning activities [1, 4]. Schooling places greater demands on behavioral self-regulation: the child must control impulsive reactions, sustain attention, execute sequences of



actions, comprehend the teacher's instructions, interact with peers, and remain engaged when facing challenges [5, 6, 8].

However, volitional qualities do not emerge in isolation. Their development occurs through specific activities that involve setting a goal, encountering obstacles, choosing a course of action, and evaluating the outcome [1]. For this reason, physical education can be viewed as a favorable pedagogical environment for fostering volitional self-regulation [1, 2, 4, 9].

Physical activity constantly requires children to align their own desires with the demands of the situation [12]. They must wait for a signal, follow game rules, control the speed and direction of movement, complete an exercise despite fatigue, repeat an unsuccessful attempt, interact with partners, and respond appropriately to victory or defeat. Consequently, physical exercise constitutes not only a motor activity but also a regulatory and developmental process [10, 11].

The aim of this article is to provide a theoretical rationale for the role of physical education in fostering volitional self-regulation among older preschool children and to identify the most promising pedagogical methods for developing this skill during organized physical activity.

Materials and Methods. This study is theoretical and analytical in nature. The research involved the analysis and synthesis of psychological and pedagogical literature, a comparative analysis of scientific approaches, pedagogical modeling, and the systematization of physical education methods based on their potential impact on a child's volitional and regulatory spheres. Methodologically, physical education is viewed as a pedagogically organized process in which a motor task can simultaneously serve as a condition for a child's physical, cognitive, and emotional-volitional development.

Physical Education within the Holistic Development of Preschoolers. The preschool years constitute a sensitive period for the intensive development of motor skills, coordination, mental processes, and mechanisms of voluntary behavior. During this period, physical activity is both a natural need for the child and a primary means of interacting with the surrounding world.

However, the pedagogical significance of physical activity extends beyond health promotion. Through well-structured physical education, the child learns to:

- comprehend a motor task and retain it until the action is completed;
- align their actions with established rules;
- inhibit premature motor reactions;
- adapt their method of action to the situation;
- persist in an activity following an error or failure;
- independently evaluate the outcome;
- interact with other participants in the activity.

Thus, physical education is directly linked to the mechanisms of voluntary behavioral regulation.



Volitional qualities in older preschool children. Willpower is a mechanism of conscious behavioral regulation that becomes particularly evident in situations where achieving a result requires overcoming internal or external obstacles.

Regarding the preschool age, it is appropriate to speak not of a fully developed, adult-like will, but rather of the emergence of its prerequisites and the gradual formation of voluntary behavior.

The following qualities hold particular pedagogical significance within the structure of a preschooler's volitional sphere:

Goal-orientation manifests as the child's ability to accept the goal of an action and maintain a focus on achieving it.

Persistence entails continuing an activity despite encountering moderate difficulties and striving to complete a task once begun.

Restraint and self-control are linked to the ability to inhibit impulsive actions, wait for one's turn, and adhere to signals or rules.

Decisiveness is expressed through a readiness to initiate action independently and to choose a method for executing a motor task.

Independence manifests as the ability to carry out age-appropriate activities without constant adult assistance.

Discipline implies the conscious observance of rules governing the organization of a lesson, game, or joint activity.

These qualities are closely interrelated and develop primarily in situations where the child has the opportunity to act, make choices, make mistakes, overcome manageable challenges, and receive meaningful feedback.

Physical exercises serve as situations requiring acts of will. Developing qualities of willpower requires more than just the mechanical repetition of exercises; it necessitates a specific pedagogical approach to organizing physical activity.

The first condition is having a clear and achievable goal. The child must visualize the desired outcome-such as walking along a line while maintaining balance, performing a set number of jumps, hitting a target with a ball, or completing a course.

The second condition involves a manageable challenge. A task that is too simple requires virtually no willpower, whereas one that is excessively difficult may cause the child to give up entirely. The ideal task is one that slightly exceeds the child's usual level of ability but remains attainable through effort.

The third condition is the opportunity to try again. From a pedagogical standpoint, the goal is not to avoid mistakes but to foster a constructive attitude toward them; an unsuccessful attempt should serve as a foundation for the next action.



The fourth condition is an emotionally safe environment. It is impossible to develop persistence in an atmosphere of constant fear of criticism. Adult support should focus primarily on the process-specifically, the effort exerted, the child's independence, and their attempt to find a solution.

This fosters the mindset: "It didn't work this time, but I can change my approach and try again".

Active play as a means of developing self-regulation. Active play holds a special place in the physical education of preschoolers. Its advantage lies in the natural combination of emotional engagement, physical activity, rules, and social interactions.

The rules of the game serve as an external regulator of behavior. Gradually, requirements that were initially monitored by the educator are internalized and become part of the child's internal self-regulation.

The educational value of the game is further enhanced if, upon its conclusion, the educator invites the children to reflect briefly: "What was the hardest part?", "How did you manage not to move before the signal?", "What helped you perform the task better the second time?".

Such questions gradually shift physical activity from a predominantly impulsive level to a more conscious one.

A comparative analysis of various approaches to organizing physical education.

Table 1. Comparative Characteristics of Traditional Physical Education and Physical Education Focused on the Development of Volitional Self-Regulation in Preschool Children

Criterion	Predominantly Traditional Approach to Physical Education	Physical Education Focused on Volitional Self-Regulation
Primary pedagogical objective	Acquisition of motor skills and development of physical qualities	Integrated development of motor abilities and volitional self-regulation
Child's role	Following the teacher's instructions	Active participation, decision-making, and independent problem-solving in motor tasks
Nature of physical exercises	Predominantly repetitive activities	Varied, problem-based, and play-oriented activities
Response to errors	Correction of incorrect movement execution	Identifying the causes of errors, encouraging repeated attempts, and exploring alternative solutions



Application of rules	Teacher-directed regulation of behavior	Gradual transition toward independent adherence to established rules
Opportunities for overcoming difficulties	Challenges arise primarily spontaneously	Developmentally appropriate challenges are intentionally incorporated into educational activities
Self-monitoring	Monitoring and evaluation are primarily performed by adults	Children are progressively engaged in observing and evaluating their own actions
Choice of action strategies	Limited opportunities for independent choice	Provision of several acceptable movement strategies
Competitive activities	Emphasis on winning and performance outcomes	Emphasis on individual progress, effort, cooperation, and constructive acceptance of outcomes
Expected educational outcomes	Disciplined participation in physical exercises	Development of goal-directed behavior, perseverance, self-restraint, independence, and self-control

The comparison presented here demonstrates that a focus on volitional development does not entail abandoning the traditional objectives of physical education. Rather, it involves expanding the pedagogical potential of existing exercises by modifying how they are organized.

Physical education and a child's school readiness. Volitional readiness is a significant component of a child's overall readiness for school. A future first-grader will need to perform tasks not only when personally interested but also based on an understanding of the necessity of the action. Physical education can help lay the groundwork for such readiness.

Modern trends in improving physical education for preschoolers. One promising approach is shifting from a model focused primarily on the volume of physical activity to one centered on high-quality organization of physical activity.

High-intensity movement alone does not guarantee the development of self-regulation. To achieve this, physical activity must incorporate elements of cognitive and volitional challenge.

Discussion. An analysis of contemporary scientific approaches suggests that the issue of fostering volitional qualities in preschoolers should be viewed more broadly than within the traditional context of moral education. Manifestations of willpower are linked to the development of intentionality, self-control, executive functions, and the ability to regulate one's own activity.



This approach helps explain why physical education holds significant developmental potential. Motor actions require the continuous integration of sensory information, as well as body control, attention, memory, emotional regulation, and decision-making.

Particularly valuable are not the standardized repetitions of previously mastered movements, but rather exercises that involve a degree of uncertainty and require the action to be adapted to a changing situation.

Consequently, in preschool educational practice, it is advisable to gradually shift the focus from the "educator demonstrates-child repeats" model to a model where the educator sets a motor task, and the child explores, executes, monitors, and evaluates the method of solving it.

This does not diminish the educator's role. On the contrary, it places greater demands on their professional practice: they must determine the optimal level of complexity, prevent emotional overload, ensure safety, foster independence, and simultaneously guide the child toward constructively overcoming challenges.

Conclusion. Physical education in preschool settings holds significant potential for fostering a child's volitional self-regulation. Its impact is determined not merely by the physiological effects of physical exertion, but primarily by the content and organization of motor activities.

Active games, exercises, relay races, and tasks involving balance, coordination, and obstacle navigation can foster goal-orientation, persistence, resilience, independence, decisiveness, discipline, and self-control, provided they are implemented with clear pedagogical intent.

Key conditions include the presence of a clear goal, a manageable challenge, behavioral rules, opportunities for independent choice and repeated attempts, self-monitoring, and emotionally safe feedback.

The interplay between physical education and the development of executive functions-specifically inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility-is of particular importance. This allows motor activity to be viewed as a natural mechanism for developing the prerequisites of voluntary behavior and a child's readiness for school.

References.

1. Turdimurodov D. Y. Features of the manifestation of volitional efforts in the process of external stimulation in schoolchildren of 10-12 years old // Academic Research in Educational Sciences. 2021. Vol. 2, No. 4. P. 1348-1354.
2. Turdimurodov, D. (2022). Volitional qualities of a person and their formation in adolescent age. Models and methods in modern science, 1(14), 13-17.
3. Turdimurodov, D. Y. (2021). Preschool period: pedagogical aspect of education of will in a child. Current Research Journal of Pedagogics (2767-3278), 2(09), 47-51.



4. Yuldashevich, T. D. The impact of volitional qualities of primary school students on the development of behavioral responses ensuring effective sports performance.

5. Yuldashevich T. D. Application of Innovative Technologies in the Process of Formation of Will Qualities // European Multidisciplinary Journal of Modern Science. 2022. Vol. 4. P. 826-828.

6. Yuldoshevich T. D. The formation of readiness for skilled tensions in the process of physical education // Archive of Conferences. 2021.

7. Yuldashevich T. D. Education and development of volitive qualities in schoolchildren by means of physical education. 2022.

8. Турдимуродов Д. Ю. Готовность подростков к волевым напряжениям и педагогические условия ее формирования в процессе физического воспитания в общеобразовательной школе // Science, Research, Development. 2020. № 2. С. 309-311.

9. Турдимуродов Д. Ю. Особенности проявления волевых усилий в процессе внешней стимуляции у школьников 10-12 лет // Academic Research in Educational Sciences. 2021. Т. 2, № 4. С. 1348-1354.

10. Турдимуродов Д. Й. Влияние занятий единоборствами на уровень проявления морально-волевых качеств учащихся общеобразовательной школы // Academic Research in Educational Sciences. 2022. Т. 3, № 1. С. 691-698.

11. Турдимуродов Д. Й. Спорт ўйинлари билан шуғулланиш жараёнида ўқувчиларда иродавий сифатларнинг шаклланиш хусусиятлари // Актуальные научные исследования в современном мире. 2021. № 3(9). С. 77.

12. Турдимуродов Д. Й. Ўқувчиларнинг иродавий сифатларини шакллантиришда жисмоний тарбия воситаларининг имкониятлари // Инновации в педагогике и психологии. 2021. Т. 4, № 7.