



THE PIKLER INSTITUTE

Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA



WELL-BEING
FOR THE
CHILDREN OF
THE WORLD

INTERNATIONAL EMMI PIKLER FOUNDATION

Fall 2004

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The Pikler Institute Lóczy, Budapest

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Mexican Ambassador visits The Pikler Institute

By Elsa Chahin - Pikler/Lóczy Fund Director - RIE Associate

In July of this year, Mexican Ambassador to Hungary, His Excellency Mr. Jose Luis Martinez visited the Pikler Institute. He was so taken by the quality of care given to the children of this Institution that he wrote the following letter:

Dear Ms. Tardos,

Thank you for the opportunity of allowing me with Mrs. Chahin and Mrs. Gordon, to visit the wonderful institution under your care.

I believe that the Pikler Institute is a valuable asset not only for the children in Hungary but at an international level.

The task that the Institute accomplishes in relationship to child development is based on the respect for the baby as a person. This is a very important advancement in the field of childrens education and care.

I hope that this approach can be implemented in Mexican institutions, and I am sure that it will be with a high degree of success.

Sincerely Yours,

Jose Luis Martinez H.

Ambassador

Anna Tardos was honored with Mr. Martinez' presence and commented that he is the first foreign Ambassador to visit the Institute.

Mr. Martinez has offered to continue to support the Pikler Institute in future endeavors and to help promote this approach in Mexico. In December, the Association of Diplomatic Spouses in Budapest will be having a fundraiser to benefit the Pikler Institute.

The Board of Directors of The Pikler/Lóczy Fund thanks Mr. Jose Luis Martinez for his kind support.



PIKLER INSTITUTE | ENGLISH TRAINING STUDY GROUP

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Anna Tardos is the daughter of Dr. Emmi Pikler and is the Institute's Director. Anna has trained people from all over the world using the Pikler methods. Last June the Institute provided English training for 15 women from the United States and New Zealand. The following excerpt was taken from an e-mail sent to Laura Briley of the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA from Anna Tardos.

"The summer course is over. The participants expressed many times how much this course meant to them. I also have the feeling that it went off well. True, it was more tiring than usual. To speak English is unfortunately more difficult for me than German or French, which I use more often. But, we managed to understand each other and there were other presenters as well. The group was really open and interested, and my colleagues remarked how cheerful the group was. The only disturbing thing was the heat sometimes.

Regarding our financial situation, our problems are not solved yet, but we hope and we are optimistic. We have some nice plans. Next year, we plan to organize two summer courses and then to offer a second level in 2006. Apart from this, from the amended materials translated into English for this course, we plan to publish a book. For the time being the working title is: "Articles From Lóczy".

I hope you will hear nice things of the summer course from the other participants also. I can't tell you enough times how grateful I am for the help you offer us. With Love, Anna".

We are also grateful to all of you who are helping in our movement to support the Pikler Institute. Thank you from the Pikler/Fund USA Board of Directors.



NEW DIRECTOR ANNOUNCED FOR PIKLER/LÓCZY FUND USA

Janet Gonzalez-Mena is a writer, consultant in early childhood education, and former community college instructor with experience as an early childhood education practitioner. She taught preschool and directed several child-care programs including an infant-toddler center. She is co-author of *Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers* and several college textbooks on early childhood education. She writes occasionally for Child Care Information Exchange and *Young Children*. Her book, *Dragon Mom* is about her experience as a parent. Janet has a Master in Arts Degree in Human Development from Pacific Oaks College and was a student of Magda Gerber.

LETTER FROM Deborah Greenwald to AMBASSADOR OF HUNGARY

August 10, 2004

Dear Ambassador,

I am writing to share with you the profound impact the work of the Emmi Pikler Institute has had on me as an early childhood professional in the United States. I was first introduced to the work through my teacher Magda Gerber in the late 80s. My interest in the Pikler Institute continued to grow and I and a small group of colleagues were fortunate enough to be allowed to visit the institute in the summer of 1998. My experience was humbling and deeply influenced my passion and increased my understanding of the work. The care provided at the institute is nothing short of profound. There is no other place in the world that comes close in terms of sensitivity to the unfathomable potential of the human infant. The care is conducted with such warmth and attention to every detail, that rather than feel pity for these children, who have all suffered in some way in order to land in the institute, I felt that they were privileged.

This visit showed me that the actual institute itself is vital to continuation of the development and dissemination of the philosophy and pedagogy around the world. Perhaps it will never have a mass appeal and that is because it attracts intellectuals, academics, and educated professionals who are ready to look more deeply into infancy and the effects of adult care on infant development. The people who are influenced by the Pikler Institute, like myself, bring this inspiration back into our work in our respective countries. The work of Dr. Pikler and those who have followed in her footsteps influences early childhood philosophy and pedagogy all over the United States. I would like to give you a few examples of this from my own work, I have many other examples that I will not include here in the interest of keeping this brief.

I wrote my Master's thesis for Pacific Oaks College comparing Emmi Pikler's and Maria Montessori's philosophies. Montessori is a well-known philosopher of education, there are many private and public Montessori schools around the US and the world. I submitted my thesis to the American Montessori Society and received an award for best thesis pertaining to Montessori Education. This led to an intense interest in Pikler at Montessori conferences. I have had articles published and presented in many places such as New York, Chicago, California and Florida.

LETTER *continued . . .*

As a trainer I often show videos and tell stories from the Pikler Institute to help child care providers increase their understanding of and sensitivity to the infants and toddlers in their care. In many cases participants have been moved to tears and feel that their interactions with infants will forever change as a result.

Most recently I have been directing a project through the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies for the California Department of Education. We have developed Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Guidelines. Concepts from the Pikler philosophy are woven throughout the publication, which is currently in press. Materials on early childhood from the California Department of Education tend to be progressive and are often used all over the country, not just in the State of California.

The WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies has also developed a very well respected, award winning system of training called the Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers (PITC) that is used by many states and even other countries to train child care providers (and promote policy changes) in the art of infant/toddler group care. These materials have also been influenced by Dr. Pikler's work.

The Pikler philosophy has also deeply affected me as a parent. Dr. Pikler wrote about peaceful babies and contented mothers and I feel we embody this. Through her work I have been able to understand infancy in such a respectful way that my own child glows with this respectful care and handling. He is a joy to be with.

So, please continue your efforts to protect the Pikler Institute. Forgive me as I wax poetic. The Pikler Institute is a gem, a bright place in this world. The institute is place where humanity shines and grows. This tiny place in Budapest could honestly hold the hope of the world. Its loss would leave a dark hole in many hearts. I would be honored to write or speak in support of the institute if this would be helpful. Dr. Emmi Pikler unlocked a profound secret to humanity, it will take us many years to absorb and share this with the world and the Pikler Institute is the font to which we return again and again. It is a place of hope.

Respectfully,

Deborah Greenwald, M.A.

49 Lyford Drive #5

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RELATIONSHIPS

Beverly Kovach - RIE Associate - Infant Toddler Montessori Practitioner

This past summer I had the privilege of attending a two-week summer intensive at the Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary under the direction of Anna Tardos. The training experience was uplifting to me personally and professionally. Personally it was a pleasure to meet other professionals from the United States, New Zealand, and Holland. The mixture of the group enriched the process as we shared our thoughts and views about children and families.

Even though we came from various regions and experiences we had a common interest. We were all there to learn more about the Pikler Institute, its philosophy and methodology. We were interested in knowing more about the techniques that support the respectful relationship between the adults and young infant and/or toddler that has made the Pikler Institute so renowned. We understood the success of the Institutes' 60-year record of caring for infants and their families. Yet many of us were there to learn how the Pikler babies could influence our own practice in

today's world of center based care.

One of the highlights of my personal experience at the Pikler Institute was the way faculty and staff showed interest in the participant's opinions and thought regarding the subjects presented. Many of the faculty presenters were a part of the original staff with Dr. Pikler when she started the orphanage. It was apparent they lived their belief about the value of human life by the way they treated each member of our group. It certainly was an honor to be in the presence of people who devoted themselves to the Pikler philosophy and demonstrated their belief through how they valued human beings.

What I gained professionally by attending the intensive was heightened awareness of how each child in the group was respected as an individual by the care-giving adults. Each caregiver's interaction supported the child's autonomy and competence. This relationship occurred during normal routines like the bath. The adult caregivers touch; tone, and gestures reflected the intense interest the adult felt in caring for each child. They believed

that what they did with one child made a difference in how the child developed and how he came to feel about himself. The way the babies were consistently cared for was not like anything I had seen in centers in the United States, talked about, but rarely seen.

Magda Gerber, my mentor and friend and founder of RIE often talked of Emmi Pikler's work and the influence it had on her first, as a mother, and then as a practitioner. Magda said of Emmi, "I have felt fortunate to have had the opportunity for her guidance." When Magda talked about predictability she would invite her participants to visit Lóczy. "You cannot imagine how predictable the children's lives are at Lóczy, unless you see it with your own eyes. Because in the United States we have no real concept of predictability. We think faster is better and change means you become adaptable." The Pikler babies are able to rely on their adult to provide predictable routines of care. Each baby is given the time to find pleasure as the caregiving relationship unfolds with the adult.

EFFORTS TO KEEP THE PIKLER INSTITUTE OPEN

By *Elsa Chahin*
Pikler/Lóczy Fund Director
RIE Associate

In the Spring Issue of The Pikler/Lóczy Fund Newsletter, Laura Briley wrote "State of Emergency: Are we too late?" In her article, Mrs. Briley stresses how the Pikler Institute is on the verge of closing its doors after 58 years of existence. She emphasized the importance of raising awareness in the Country of Hungary itself.

In our efforts to fight for the life of the world famous Institute, the Board of the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA sent out a press release on July 8th, 2004 through the Rowland Agency in Hungary. The title of the press release was: Pikler Institute to close down in August!?

It was a brief overview of the activity of the Institute: "The Pikler Institute accommodates endangered children coming from families in crisis. Forty babies are taken care of

and nursed therapeutically. Year by year, the number of chronically ill and mentally handicapped children is increasing. The Institute provides thoughtful and competent care and education, adjusted to the pace of development of the particular child, and not of secondary importance, provides a happy childhood. The children growing up here are able to develop deep emotional attachment, which facilitates their adapting to their new adoptive or foster family". It continues to add to the importance of the institute worldwide by hosting an average of 200 educators a year that participate in training courses offered in Hungarian, German, English and French. A Curriculum of Doctor Emmi Pikler, founder of the Institute was also included in the release.

The Rowland Agency set up

interviews between the media and the representatives of the Institute: Anna Tardos, and Vera Tenyi.

Altogether 20 press releases were published in the Hungarian media. Printed media: 5 appearances in national dailies, 3 in weekly newspapers. Electronic media: 5 appearances on the Internet, 1 on television, 6 on radio.

Due to the distribution of the press releases about the severe financial situation of the Institute, the problems have been solved temporarily. Some donations have been offered. Public awareness has been raised and the number of persons contacting the institute has increased.

This is only the beginning and a lot more is yet to be done. We continue to ask for your support for the survival of this world model.

16TH ANNUAL RIE CONFERENCE FOR PARENTS & PROFESSIONALS MAY 21, 2005 CABRILLO COLLEGE, APTOS, CA

**"The RIE Approach:
Societal and Personal
Meanings"**

**Keynote speaker:
Peter Mangione, Ph.D.**

For more information, please call
323-663-5330, fax 323-663-5586,
email educarer@rie.org, or visit www.rie.org

Presentation by Stephanie Petrie and Sue Owen, editors in England of a new book being released this year by publisher Jessica Kingsley titled *Authentic Relationships: Group Care for Infants and Toddlers*, RIE Principles into Practice

NEXT RIE I INTENSIVE TRAINING:

JANUARY 16 - 28, 2005 / SILVER LAKE, CA

RIE Parent/Infant Guidance Classes ongoing in the RIE Center in Silverlake, California for families with children from birth to two years, facilitated by RIE Associates and RIE trainees, the classes offer individualized attention to both parents and infants.

Classes take place in eight-week sessions and are limited to seven infants and their parents, grouped according to stages of motor development.

PIKLER INFLUENCES ON MONTESSORI

Beverly Kovach - RIE Associate - Infant Toddler Montessori Practitioner

As a Montessori instructor in the Birth-Three program in several American Montessori Society training centers, I have had the opportunity and the privilege to influence many professional minds in the care and handling of infants and toddlers.

Pikler and Montessori philosophy espouse to the same belief that all children deserve the right to be respected. So what can the Pikler philosophy offer the Montessori practitioner?

One of the most fundamental concepts that can have an impact on Montessori education is exposure to a deeper understanding of Dr. Emmi Pikler's work regarding self-initiated, motor activity - to manipulate children's movement less and allow natural development to occur unaided by contraptions is a great lesson to underscore.

The Pikler methodology can influence the Montessori method by their ability to respond to infants and toddlers as they relate.

The Pikler baby's exposure to relationships are built on the everyday routine of care while feeding, diapering, dressing, and bathing. These times are used as responsive and collaborative educational opportunities. When refueled in this way, Pikler babies are able to satisfactorily play independently with objects unaided by adult entertainment. Exploring their bodies, manipulating objects and being with other children at the same developmental level is what they know how to do and do well. Montessori practitioners can utilize this model to increase their skills while relating to infants and toddlers.

The Pikler method focuses on giving time, giving full attention and to allow observation. Participation and cooperation is to be reciprocated between the adults and child. This is the essence in their relationship. This give and take promotes a communication that allows each member of the relationship to feel understood. The Piklerian model can be adapted for use in improving all center-based care for infants, toddlers, young children, and their families across the United States. We can all learn a lot from babies if we would just give them "time".

THANK YOU!

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