



THE PIKLER INSTITUTE

Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA



WELL-BEING
FOR THE
CHILDREN OF
THE WORLD

INTERNATIONAL EMMI PIKLER FOUNDATION

Fall 2005

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The Pikler Institute Lóczy, Budapest

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July Study Tour To Budapest A BIG SUCCESS!



Sixty eager participants from 5 different countries came to Budapest from July 10-15 on a study tour to learn about the Pikler approach to infant-toddler care and education. The conference took place in the Danubius Thermal and Conference Hotel Helia overlooking the Danube River and included an array of Piklerian experts from Europe. Anna Tardos, a psychologist, Pikler's daughter and Director of the Institute orchestrated the 5 days and presented workshops as well. Other well-versed experts included Ute Strub from Germany, Agnes Szanto-Feder, who is French, Eva Kallo, Gabriella Puspoky, Maria Szucs, Judit Falk, Maria Vincze, Sjoukje Borbely (all from Hungary) and Hedio Meyling-Semah from the Netherlands. There was also a panel of caregivers (called nurses) who spoke about their experiences working at the Pikler Institute. Laura Briley, the President of Pikler/ Lóczy Fund USA opened the conference and introduced Mrs. Carol Walker, the wife of the American Ambassador to Hungary who gave a very informed welcoming speech. Janet Gonzalez-Mena (Secretary of the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA) closed the conference with a short talk called "Where do we go from here?" And, Mrs. Medija Nemi de Martinez, wife of the Ambassador of Mexico gave the closing. Thanks to the efforts of Elsa Chahin, the Fund's Public Relations Director) three other Ambassador's wives attended. They were the Austrian Ambassador's wife, wife of the Angolian Ambassador, Mrs. Marlis Boss Vahenkeni and Mrs. Irene McMahon, wife of the Ambassador of Ireland.

The Pikler Institute was the recipient of the Ambassadors wives annual fundraiser that had been held the previous December. They were very enthusiastic to take what they had learned and share it with the early childhood communities from their respective countries.

Every morning started with a sing-along session of Hungarian children's folk songs - led by Ilona Gall (a Hungarian music teacher). The plenary and workshop sessions focused on Dr. Pikler's concepts and practices. The participants, enthusiastically took away many valuable principles, including ideas about how to:

- * build a special trusting relationship between child and caregiver,
- * support free movement and self-initiated activity,
- * allow uninterrupted play, all of which contribute to feelings of trust and competence in each child.

The week was full of information, enlightenment, discussion, and laughter. There was a wonderful spa for people to experience at the hotel. Ute took several to the Turkish baths to experience true "freedom of movement". A delightful evening dinner on a riverboat on the Danube added cement to the relationships formed throughout the week. The whole experience was one for the "memory bank" and so many want to return for more.

The members of the Pikler/Lóczy Fund Board donated all of their time to coordinate the trip so that the Pikler Institute was able to receive a \$40,000 donation.

Looking For Connections: Emmi Pikler & Rudolf Steiner

By Joyce Gallardo

This article is excerpted from a longer article by Joyce Gallardo¹ who is director of a family child care home offering a Waldorf nursery and kindergarten program. She has been a Waldorf early childhood educator for 25 years. In summer of 2004 Joyce attended a summer intensive course at the Pikler Institute. Throughout the training with Anna Tardos and others, she looked for connections between the work of Pikler and that of Rudolf Steiner, Austrian-born philosopher and scientist who founded the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany in 1919. This article weaves together the ideas in common that Pikler and Steiner shared.

Free Movement

Both Emmi Pikler and Rudolf Steiner note that the child's very individuality and experience of competence arise out of self-initiated independent movement and that the proper attitude of the adult is of paramount importance to the child's development.

The Pikler approach, according to Anna Tardos, Pikler's daughter and director of Lóczy, focuses on the idea that "Self-initiated movement creates a sense of competency and self-reliance in the child. Flexibility in movement leads to independent, psychic flexibility, and eventually, independent, flexible thinking." She also said "When a space and time is provided for the infant to develop and one observes this capacity of self-reliance in the child, our image of the infant changes from the adult-oriented image of the child needing us to guide him to his capacity to the image of the child as active, independent and capable without our presence and help in all instances."

Rudolf Steiner described how in "developing the sense of movement, in the contraction and elongation of the muscles, the child perceives a feeling of freedom, the experience of being free in his soul."² Steiner also emphasized non-interference and a respect for the infant's autonomy and independent movement. He said that the first two-and-a-half years are the most important of all: "...during this time the child is learning to walk and speak and the formative forces of the head are shaping those organs which have the most intimate connection with the development and self-confidence of the individual in later life. In these years the child really does do everything of its own accord. It repels any will that seeks to impose itself from without...we should leave everything to the child. Of the child's own accord she will raise herself into an upright position when the right time comes. Premature efforts at walking and standing or gymnastic exercises can only do damage."³

Attention to Detail

At Lóczy, as well as in Waldorf kindergartens, preschools and parent-toddler programs, careful attention is given to detail. The preparation for the caregiving times of the children at Lóczy is done with meticulous care down to the last detail. The bathtub water, the soap, the clothing, oils for cleaning, diapers, etc. are prepared by the nurse before the baby is lifted from his bed. The nurse is also inwardly preparing herself for this time when she will give her undivided attention to the child. There is a rhythm to what she does, day after day, week after week with the children in her care, which creates an invisible mantle of security around the children, a sense of well-being.

In Waldorf programs, the teachers painstakingly prepare the physical space to receive the children daily. We, too, work with the principles of rhythm, repetition, and attention to the smallest detail in order to create a basis of security for the children. Each activity of the day is carried out with careful attention to detail, and repetition and rhythm are components of everything we do with the children.

Observation

At Lóczy daily observation of the children's growth and development are recorded by their nurses with meticulous attention to detail. These observations are shared amongst colleagues in weekly meetings. Out of these meetings, new insights about the children come to light and help guide their caregivers as to how they may best care for them.

Waldorf early childhood teachers have child studies wherein we create a picture of the whole child for our colleagues through out observations, from his birth experience, to movement, and speech with careful attention to detail. "We then share these observations with colleagues and out of this sharing often come insights about who the child is and how we might best serve that particular child.

Reverent Caregiving

Observing the reverence and quiet devotion with which the nurses at Lóczy approach the infants in their care, one senses what a holy task caring for these babies is. Bodily care becomes a sacred ritual, as Anna Tardos pointed out to us when we were observing a nurse gently applying oil on a cotton ball to the creases in the baby's body, hands and feet after his bath. "She is anointing the child, as Mary Magdalene anointed the feet of Jesus," Anna told us.

Every physical contact with the child is preceded by a verbal announcement and a visual announcement to the child. For example, the nurse holds up the diaper and tells the child, "I am going to change your diaper now." Anna told us that the nurse speaking to the infant during caregiving helps to keep her organized in her thoughts and focused on the child.

Dr. Henning Kohler, in his book *Working with Nervous, Anxious and Depressed Children* describes the infant's and young child's need for "nourishing and warming acts of bodily care" and says, "These acts must be done with true inner participation." At Lóczy the inner participation is called fully conscious caregiving or face-to-face caregiving.

In Waldorf early childhood programs, there is a recognition of the child's spiritual origin. Dr. Kohler writes, "When we care for a child out of this understanding, we are endeavoring to ease the pain of this loss of the human being's spiritual home. We know that our task is to...care for the child trying to make himself at home in his physical body."

Emmi Pikler recognized the child's struggle to feel at home in his physical body: "In the beginning, the child feels more or less uneasy during the care situation. Often he doesn't like it; he cries, wants his peace and quiet...If, from the start, we handle an infant peacefully, patiently and carefully, she will discover ever more joy in these activities, learning at the same time to trust us more and more, and to take an increasing part in our work."⁴ Caregiving at

Lóczy is so exquisite that one could observe how the nurse's every deed is designed to ease the pain of the loss of the child's birth home and of her family. The nurse's soft voice, her eyes, her gentle hands, help the child to feel at home in her body, to feel trust and joy in the world around her.

The Gesture of Protection

Another aspect of the two pedagogies is protection. At Lóczy the children are surrounded by a gesture of protection. They are sheltered from the onslaught of the many sense impressions of our modern world. The daily life of the children is quiet, rhythmical, consistent and predictable, which gives them a deep sense of security and well-being. There is a high level of conscious respect and protection for the children at Lóczy which one cannot help but admire. Observers are asked not to observe the children when the children cannot see them, and therefore, do not know they are being observed. Also, observers are asked to sit to one side of the room and be as unobtrusive as possible. They are asked not to initiate interaction with the children, as this would distract them from their play or their interaction with their caregiver.

In Waldorf early childhood programs, we also enfold the children in a protective gesture against the many sense impressions of our modern world. The development and protection of the child's senses are central in our work. Daily life in the kindergarten is quiet, rhythmical, consistent and predictable. Visitors to the Waldorf early childhood programs are few and are asked to not converse with the children or to distract them from their play. As at Lóczy, visitors are asked to remain quietly in the background.

Imitation

Dr. Falk, earlier (former) director of the Institute, spoke about imitation, "We believe in the ability of the children to learn and behave like the adults around them. We must be aware of what we do and say in the presence of the children so that they can develop properly." At Lóczy, they recognize that the adult's whole relationship to the world is copied by the child's fine sensing imitativeness: how one speaks, how one relates with others, how one moves, one's handling of everything about us, even lifeless objects.

In Waldorf early childhood education, we recognize that young children are completely united with their sense impressions, and because of this are deeply imitative. Everything in their surroundings makes a deep inner impression. Rudolf Steiner said that the young child learns through imitation. He said that a caretaker of young children must be worthy of imitation. It is our task to create truth and goodness for the children to "breathe" and imitate.

This is what they create at Lóczy, by giving the children a model for qualitative imitation in the caregiver's reverent care, in her profoundly respectful manner, her unhurried, deliberate movements, her gentle, considerate hands, her clear, soft voice, her equal treatment of all the children. This model for imitation extends to the other adults around the children who respect and support each other and act out of insightful, finely developed higher, social senses.

The wellsprings of the pedagogies of Emmi Pikler and Rudolf Steiner are profoundly deep and give us much to guide us in our work with young children. My daily work with the children in my care has been deeply enriched by all I saw and learned and by the deep human connections I made at Lóczy.

¹ Originally called "What are the Deeper Relationships Between the Work of Emmi Pikler and of Waldorf Early Childhood Education?" Published in Gateways: A Newsletter of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America, Spring/Summer 2005, Issue 48, pp. 16-24.

² Man's Twelve Senses in Their Relation to Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition, p. 16.

³ Understanding Young Children, p. 2.

⁴ Peaceful Babies-Contented Mothers.

Pikler Financial Report & Urgent Funding Request

As so many of our readers and infant toddler professionals all over the world know, the Pikler Institute can only continue to survive with donations. The government has mandated that the Director, Anna Tardos work diligently to raise funds for the continued operation. The government provides some funding, but cannot provide the total funding needed to operate. In addition to running the Institute, providing and giving training, publishing materials; Anna has the added burden of soliciting funding. As you can imagine, it is very difficult for her to ask professionals for money. So, the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA is assisting in those efforts. The Institute has been able to survive for the last 7 years since the government has made this change in their policy. The funds are almost gone again.

Many of you have been very generous in your support financially in the past. We are asking that you continue to help with your support, especially at this time of the year. The Institute has funding to continue its operation until the first of the year. After that they need \$75,000 to begin 2006.

Since we are a volunteer organization, we have not been able to find a grant that perhaps would help with these endeavors. If any of you could help, we would greatly appreciate your assistance. In the meantime, please take a minute to make a tax deductible donation to the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA. Your money will be sent directly to the Institute for its survival.

Please make your tax deductible donation for 2005 or 2006 to PIKLER/LOCZY FUND USA and mail to:
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New Director Announced For Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA

Beverly Kovach is the newest member of Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA Board of Directors. Beverly has trained in the Piklerian Approach in Budapest and is a RIE mentor-teacher and also a RIE board member. She is currently the President of Waverly Place in Melbourne, Florida, a consultant and training center for parents and professionals as well as a satellite RIE training facility. She found her love for infants and toddlers in 1982 when she opened the first Infant-Toddler center in Charleston, S. C. She continued her infant specialization when she began training with Magda Gerber in 1987. A trained Montessori Infant-Toddler teacher, Beverly has presented her work with under 3 year olds at various local, state and national conferences for the past fifteen years. She trains infant-toddler interns at AMS approved Montessori training institutes on how to be with infants and toddlers. She is also the consultant for Brevard schools program for pregnant teens, teen parents and professionals who care for infants and toddlers, training at four high schools. She has trained caregivers in center-based programs since 1982.

Tulsa Conference - Peace Begins with Babies - Draws Large Crowd

Thanks to the efforts of Laura Briley, her staff and colleagues, the first ever Pikler Conference held in April in Oklahoma was a roaring success. It took place on April 30 and drew a crowd of 150. Called "Peace Begins with Babies" the conference featured speakers on early development and included the board members of Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA headed up by Laura Briley, founder and president of the organization along with trainers with the Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) group. Board members who presented were Elsa Chahin, Janet Gonzalez-Mena, Beverly Kovach, and Alexandra Sargent. Karen Miller was a specially invited guest speaker who received an award from Leah Curry-Rood, President of Gryphon House Press for her many contributions to the field of infant-toddler development, care, and education. Gryphon House also presented a check to the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA for \$1,000 in Karen's honor. Mrs. Miller was also presented with the first copy of her new infant/toddler book, "First Steps". The proceeds of the conference were used to give 5 scholarships for people to attend the Pikler Study Tour held in July.

Pikler Presentation at the World Forum on Early Care and Education

"What Can an Orphanage Teach Us?" was the title of a presentation on the Pikler Institute at the The World Forum put on by Exchange Magazine held in Montreal in May. Presenters included Laura Briley, Elsa Chahin, Janet Gonzalez-Mena, Karen Gordon, and Diana Suskind. The focus was global as illustrated by the panel who have or are now working in Rumania, China, Mexico, and Central America. Care and respect are the bases for this specific approach that has been welcomed in different parts of the world because it focuses on treating the baby as a person, never an inanimate object. The baby is held with caring hands and a slower pace that invites him to get involved in caregiving activities by becoming an active participant. Respecting the child's natural development is also a key, therefore children are given the opportunity to develop at their own pace, without being pressured to do what they are not yet ready to do. The members of the panel shared with participants how slowing down, being gentle and nurturing, and paying attention to the child during caregiving activities, can have a deep impact on the child for the rest of his life. The workshop was another way of saying "Peace Begins with Babies".

The next World Forum is scheduled for May 15-18, 2007 at the Shangri La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Looking Forward To Upcoming Events...

Ute Strub in California!

Ute Strub will give a lively, interactive workshop in the San Francisco Bay Area in Northern California the weekend of February 11 and 12, 2006. She will be joined by Andrea von Gosen, who runs play groups based on Pikler principles. If you are interested in being kept up to date on this exciting event, contact Janet Gonzalez-Mena at jgmena@earthlink.net or Elsa Chahin at MAMADELEO@aol.com.

RIE and PLUSA Join Together!

RIE and PLUSA will join together on several ventures in the fall and spring. Members of both organizations will collaborate on a booth for the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Annual Conference in December in Washington, D.C.

The biggest news concerning PLUSA and RIE is that what has been traditionally the RIE conference will next year become the RIE/Pikler conference to be held jointly on May 20, 2006 at Valley College in Los Angeles. The theme will relate to finding balance in a world of chaos through empathetic care of the youngest members of society. Agnes Szanto-Feder, an internationally recognized authority on motor development will come from her home in Paris to give the keynote address, which is called "Keep Your Balance." Some Americans are familiar with Dr. Szanto-Feder's work from her presentation at the Pikler/Lóczy Study tour this past summer and her previous presentation at the RIE Conference a few years ago. This promises to be a rich experience and should draw a number of people from California and across the nation.

Upcoming Trainings In English At The Pikler Institute

Registrations are being taken to attend the next Summer Course at the Piker Institute, June 12-23, 2006. The Second Level training course to be held in Budapest, November 6-18, 2006.

Write to pikler-tardos@axelero.hu or the Pikler Institute, Lóczy Lajos u. 3, H-1022 Budapest, Hungary. More information about the training will be posted on the website, when it becomes available (www.pikler.org).



THANK YOU!

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