

In 2018, after working for three years in Israeli child care settings, my colleague and I opened Educare Gan¹, a RIE®- and Pikler®-inspired child care center for children from birth to 3.

And no, we did not just put a Pikler triangle in the room. We studied and brought Emmi Pikler and Magda Gerber's ideas to our daily routine and built a real care-based curriculum.

After three years of this wonderful journey, I would like to share an amazing experience of child-led toilet learning, and my discoveries along the way.

At Educare Gan, we did not potty train children. Toilet learning happened from the first diaper change until the

moment a child mastered using a potty/toilet. It was completely child-led and worked wonderfully.

It is important to mention that the educational team worked hand-in-hand with parents, and before joining the program, every family had an interview during which they were informed that there is no potty training happening in the child care and there is no support for families who decide to undertake it. We also provided materials to read about why it is important to trust the child to lead this process. As a result, 80 percent of families were on-board with child-led toilet learning, and it was a fantastic experience for the children, their families, and the caregivers at the nursery.

The children whose parents were not able, for whatever reason, to let them lead the process, still were able to come

to the center and use a diaper if they wanted it.

Why were we so insistent about child-led toilet learning?

I have been working in institutional care for young children for nine years and, unfortunately, never witnessed a non-harmful potty training. I saw a lot of damage done as a result of trying to potty train children. I hope one day potty training will be recognized by UNICEF as a procedure that has a harmful impact on the psychological D

1 [https://www.educaregan.com/](#)

- Increasing tantrums

- Shame

When my colleague and I decided to

or put on the potty, which negates the whole idea of listening to any cues from her/his body and mind.

I quite often read in parent support groups the same story about how a child decided to be without a diaper one day and then at some point there was a problem with “holding in” or constipation. I always ask the same question: does the child have free access to a diaper? Does the child know they can still wear ~~the~~(a) chhey c