



Why Won't They Just Go?

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

I have a bit of news to share with you that has nothing to do with this week's topic. Last week I told you that Fry's pizza dough was kosher. This Sunday, when I was doing my weekly shopping, I was so disappointed to see that it no longer has a heksher (a kosher symbol). I will definitely be checking other stores and will keep you posted.

The other day, I was scrolling through my email, and found *Child-led Toilet Training Promotes Emotional Self-Awareness*. This is actually a topic that I am very passionate about or rather it is a topic that inspires a great deal of passion.

I hear it often from parents, "She is definitely ready to be potty trained. This weekend, little Darlene ran naked through the house with the potty chair in the playroom. Darlene went right over and did her thing each time. No more diapers!" And then, Darlene gets to school and lo and behold, Darlene has no interest in the potty. From my experience, the more the child can be in control, the better. This is really a part of my philosophy of many things, as there are a few activities that you can't make anyone do. Go to sleep, eat or drink, and use the bathroom.

In my weekly email from Exchange, I read the article, "*I Want to Wear a Diaper Today! What We Learned From Child-Led Toilet Learning*" by Ksenia Belous Enabi. In it, Ksenia shares her experiences of working in a child care setting in Israel, Educare Gan (Gan means preschool or daycare in Hebrew.)

"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." Ksenia says. "It is important to mention that the educational team worked hand-in-hand with parents...it was a fantastic experience for the children, their families, and the caregivers at the nursery."

Wow! Can you imagine being able to have this process occur without stress for the child, the parents or the teachers? And have it be successful?



Ksenia continues, “It is 100% successful. It is each child’s own body and only they know when they are ready. So, when they are in charge, there is no chance of failure. It can happen sometimes that a child is more excited about wearing underwear than the actual process of using a potty/toilet. In this case, you will be able to see it in a few days. And if it is so, you just need to support them by saying, ‘I see you want to wear your underpants, however since you still forget (prefer to not use) the potty/toilet, I want you to wear it on top of your diaper.’”

Confidence

When children are trusted to lead the process, they truly embrace this responsibility. There isn’t a time when parents or teachers need to put constraints on the children. The children are making the decisions and being given the opportunity to be in charge. Children feel proud when they can do this on their own. Ksenia says, “They feel extremely proud. Once they start (using) the potty/toilet they feel their achievement to the maximum, and they begin to glow with pride.”

A huge relief

“It is a big relief for parents/caretakers” says Ksenia. “Parents take this burden off their shoulders when they trust their child to be in control of this process. Parents do not need to ask their children if they need or want to use the toilet, read them books about it, or stimulate their interest around the topic. Just make the potty available, let them see you using a toilet, and trust them to listen to their body’s cues.”

An unforeseen benefit for children

“Children learn to understand their emotional state and to evaluate what they can and cannot handle at any given time.”

An unforeseen benefit for adults

Imagine taking this responsibility off your shoulders. What would your day look like as a parent or caregiver of a 2 or 3 or even a 4 year old? I am not sure you would gain back enough time to write the great American novel but I am sure that if you let go of needing to be in charge of this, in control, you will breathe easier and be a happier person!

Shabbat Shalom