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## Dressing toddlers at the Emmi Pikler nursery school in Budapest: caregiver instrumental behavioral pattern

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### ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to analyze the instrumental behavior of the caregiver at the Emmi Pikler nursery school in Budapest while dressing children from two to three years old to go outdoors to play in the garden. In order to study this routine in its usual context, the observational methodology has been chosen, adopting an *ad hoc* field format. The results show that the caregiver follows an instrumental behavioral pattern while dressing children, even when the child's attention, interest or desire moves away from the ongoing activity. To the extent that these educational behaviors involve the child's cooperation in the task, they promote both the child's understanding of the concept of care, and the acquisition of dressing skills.

### KEYWORDS

Piklerian pedagogy; early childhood education; observational methodology; behavioral pattern; dress

## Introduction

During early childhood, care routines provided by the caregiver form a substantial part of the lives of infants and young children. As Spagnola and Fiese (2007) point out, through daily routines young children and preschoolers learn new skills and culturally acceptable behaviors. According to Boyce et al. (1983), routines are observable and predictable since, as Wolin and Bennett (1984) argue, these are interactions that follow established patterns of behavior that are repeated over time. As stated by Spagnola and Fiese (2007), the predictability of routines provides the toddler with a sense of organization, which, according to McNamara and Humphry (2008), ensures that the child understands the overall vision of care. In addition to routine care, Moreno-Zavaleta and Granada-Echeverri (2014) stress that the forms of care received during the early years determine the prototype of affective interactions at later stages. That is to say, care is reproduced in the same way in which it has been experienced, both in the case of self-care and in the care of others. At the Emmi Pikler nursery school in Budapest, daily care is scrupulously organized by regulating the behavior of the caregivers with the aim of providing the young child with a care environment that is appropriate for his or her physical and mental needs and interests, and that fosters cooperation (Kálló 2016).

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