



Arugot - Child and Family Development Center
Annual Impact Report 2024/25

**Arugot End of Year Review -
Where Hope and Action Meet**

Registered non-profit 580174225

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Arugot, Child and Development Center was founded 36 years ago in response to a pressing need in our community: the lack of culturally sensitive therapies for children facing learning disabilities, developmental delays, and emotional challenges. At that time, children were going untreated. Establishing the Center enabled dedicated efforts to promote the importance of early, intensive, and professional intervention.

Arugot helped change the way families approach therapy. Today, Arugot is recognized not only for its high standards of professionalism, but also for the warm, nurturing atmosphere that defines our Center.

This past year has brought significant challenges.

Israeli society continues to live under the shadow of ongoing conflict-an experience that has profoundly affected us all. At Arugot we see this reality play out every day. Children and parents alike are grappling with stress and uncertainty. The toll is real, but so too is the resilience we witness, and the healing we help to foster.

Through beneficial therapy interventions, we work to bring stability, hope, and meaningful growth to the families we serve.

Looking ahead, we are excited to share several new initiatives currently in development. These projects will allow us to reach more families and strengthen our mission.

None of this would be possible without the steadfast support of our partners-those who believe in our mission and trust in our ability to create lasting change.

For your continued support, we are profoundly grateful.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremiah Lubasch,
MD
President &
Founder



Jacob Vizel
Director
(pro bono)



Mission

Arugot, Child and Family Development Center is a dynamic therapy center with a vision to provide children and their families with vital educational, social, and therapy services previously lacking in the local Haifa community.

Established 36 years ago, Arugot is committed to answering the all-encompassing needs of children with learning disabilities, developmental delays, and emotional problems. We provide opportunities for a successful future.

Treating children is not enough. Arugot has extended its reach to provide family counseling, seminars and outreach programs, treat trauma and address issues of abuse and violence within the family.

The aim is to answer the growing needs of the local community as they change and develop, to empower parents to help their children, and to increase awareness on the importance of early intervention amongst parents and teachers.

Our message is one of hope!

Annual Organization Budget 2024: NIS 7,984,861



Major Programs

1. Assessment and Therapy Center for 300 children with developmental delays, emotional problems, and learning disabilities.

A range of therapies include:

Remedial Didactic Tutoring for the treatment of: dyslexia, dysgraphia, math difficulties

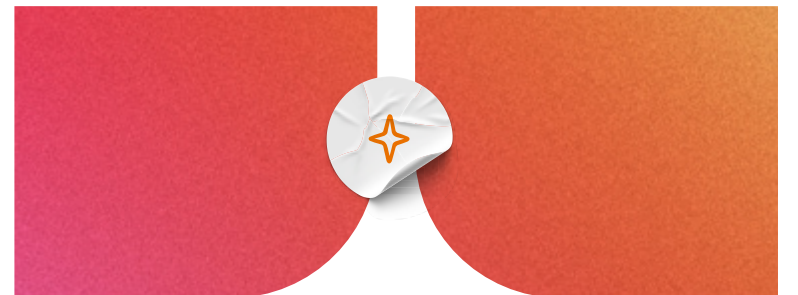
Occupational Therapy for the treatment of: developmental delays, sensory processing disorders, emotional regulation, motor skills and is beneficial for children who do not meet age-appropriate developmental milestones

Speech Therapy for the treatment of: speech and language delays, difficulty with articulation, fluency disorders, selective mutism

Emotional Therapies offer valuable support for children facing a variety of challenges, equipping them with skills and tools to thrive emotionally, socially and academically. Arugot offers a range of therapies for children and adolescents: Art Therapy, Drama Therapy, Animal Assisted Therapy, Gardening Therapy, Bibliotherapy, CBT, Therapy Kitchen, Snoezelen Room and Movement Therapy.

Goals include: emotional regulation, addressing trauma and stress, enhancing social skills and relationships and building resilience and self-esteem. In the therapy room children are provided with a safe place to explore their feelings and learn healthy communication patterns, which facilitates coping skills and improved overall well-being.

In the wake of the ongoing war in Israel, Arugot has provided crucial trauma treatments to children and adults. Entire families have benefitted.



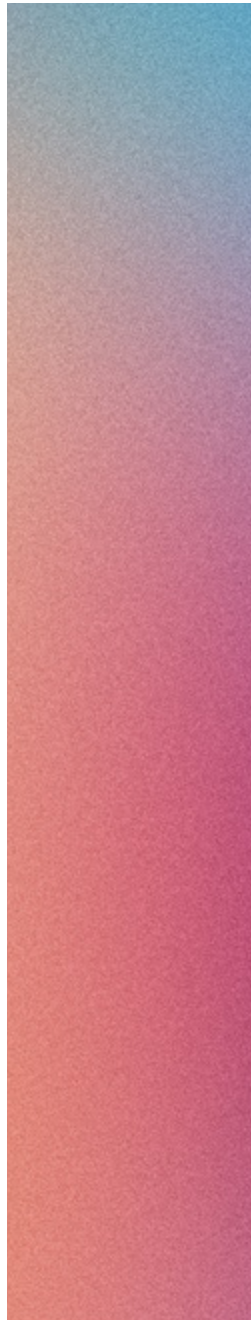
Reframing Challenges A Therapeutic Lens

This year, a guiding therapeutic approach at Arugot was "reframing" - a technique used to help individuals view challenges from a new perspective, one that is constructive, empowering, and emotionally manageable. By reframing experiences, children and adults alike can build deeper self-understanding and resilience, discovering options that may have previously gone unnoticed.

Groups to Enhance Social Skills

Children with learning disabilities are more likely to have difficulty internalizing accepted social skills. They often misinterpret social cues, and are themselves misunderstood by parents, teachers, and peers. This year a number of fun therapy group workshops enabled children at our Center to enhance their social skills. Results have been dramatic!

Therapies for women addressed a range of issues including abuse and family violence. Emphasis on women's issues has received special attention and will



continue to be in the forefront of our work in the coming year.

New Service

Arugot was chosen, by the Ministry of Education, to provide special ed. services to boys learning in Yeshivot and in need of therapies to overcome learning and developmental problems and delays. The service includes a range of therapy options.



2.

Early Childhood Center

1 Day Care Center for 40 children of working mothers and children referred by Social Services - full day program, including nourishing meals.

2 Network of 5 Special ed. Preschools for 50 children with developmental delays, speech and language disorders, selective mutism, behavioral problems, and attention deficit. Success rate since inception over 20 years ago: 75 - 80 % of the children are mainstreamed in regular first grade classes every year.

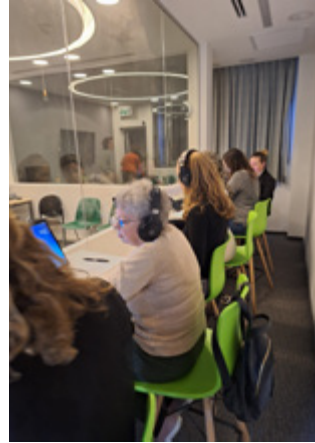
Empowering Therapy Staff

1.

Real Moments in Simulation

Keeping abreast with the latest professional developments has always been a priority at Arugot.

Professional staff participated in a training workshop that took place in a Simulation Room at Sha'anun Academic College. There, therapists who are also professional actors reenacted real-life scenarios from the therapy room as an experiential learning experience, promoting reflection and understanding of complex clinical issues. This unique approach enabled staff to grapple with unsolved problems and brainstorm to find solutions.



2.

Listening as a Therapy Tool

A lecture and workshop led by Dr. Gail Suskin, Director of Therapy Department at Arugot, and Dr. Ehud Opaz, an expert in interviewing and video documentation, offered a meaningful and impactful

**"Children are like wet cement,
whatever falls on them
makes an impression"**

Haim Ginott

experience for the team.

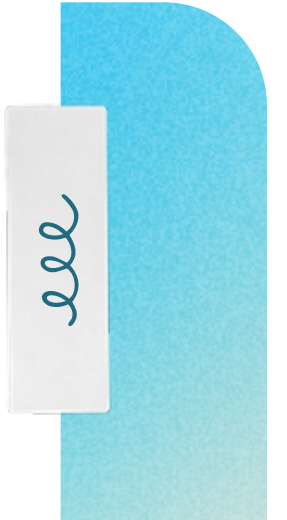
On October 7, the day after the attack on Israel, Dr. Opaz traveled with a group of volunteers to the Gaza envelope, where he began interviewing survivors and witnesses to ensure their stories would be recorded authentically. These powerful testimonies can be viewed on his website, Edut 710. During the workshop, Dr. Opaz shared profound insights on the art of truly listening—an essential skill for therapists. His presentation was deeply valuable, and the staff gained much from his expertise and perspective.



Events

• Purim Campaign

Once again, the Annual Purim Campaign was a huge success thanks to the generosity of our friends who participate year after year. Sweet packages were distributed to needy families, to children of single mothers, and to children whose fathers are serving in the army. The joy on the faces of the children tells the full story.



• Chanukah Activities in Therapy Kitchen

In the week leading up to Chanukah, all children participate in a special session dedicated to preparing traditional Chanukah potato latkes. The aroma fills the Center, creating a festive atmosphere as each child proudly takes home the results of their hard work. Throughout the activity, a wide range of skills are practiced—from sensory development to time management—making the therapy kitchen a lively and enriching place to be.



• Parents' Week

One week of the year children miss their therapy sessions. Instead of children coming to Arugot, their parents participate in one-on-one sessions with therapists, hearing about the work and connecting to the staff. The cooperation between parents and therapists is crucial to the success of therapy.



Important Meetings and Visitors

• Meeting with Mayor Yonah Yahav at Haifa Municipality

• Sofi Nakash, Deputy Mayor at Arugot preschool

• Ririvi Tjitendero visits Arugot



New Projects

1 | "Hashmi'ini" - Hear My Voice



Background and Emerging Need

Arugot has long been a trusted center for families seeking emotional support. Mothers bring their children for therapy, and through this process, develop confidence in Arugot's services and staff. In numerous cases, issues initially presented by a child were later revealed to originate from the emotional distress of the mother. This pattern pointed to a critical but underserved need in the community—mental health support for women and adolescent girls.

Over the years, Arugot has discreetly addressed cases of women facing challenges such as post-partum depression, trauma from war and abuse, cancer recovery, and parenting stress. However, these efforts lacked a centralized structure. The need for a more formal, consistent framework became increasingly evident.

Catalyst for Action

Pnina Berkowitz, Director of Arugot, participated in a leadership program at Haifa University, run by Lishma in partnership with the Lauder School of Government at IDC Herzliya. This experience served as a turning point, sparking the vision to create a dedicated center to address the mental health and trauma needs of women in the religious community.

She began building a professional network with key organizations in the field, including:

- **Bat Melech** - a network of shelters for battered women serving the religious sector, offering legal and social support.
- **Yuvalim** - the Haifa municipal center for violence and abuse intervention under the Ministry of Social Services.
- **Local Rabbinical leadership** - engaged to help bridge community trust and awareness.
- **Haifa Matnas** - where religious women engage in recreational and cultural activities.

Community Outreach and Awareness

A tragic event in Haifa, in which a man murdered his wife, galvanized the need for public discussion and intervention. Arugot organized a community outreach evening in response. The event, featuring staff from Bat Melech, addressed domestic abuse, shared information about available resources, and generated significant interest, including immediate requests for help. Notably, the children from this family were already receiving therapy at Arugot.

A second event followed, continuing the open conversation around topics often considered taboo—violence, trauma, and resilience. A well-known psychologist and author, Sari Berlinsky, spoke about the psychological impact of motherhood and provided insight into manipulation, gaslighting, and emotional abuse. These evenings marked a breakthrough in community engagement and awareness.

Birth of the Hashmi'ini Initiative

From these outreach efforts emerged **"Hashmi'ini" - Hear My Voice**, an initiative aimed at empowering women and girls affected by abuse and trauma. The goal is to establish a dedicated therapeutic center tailored to the unique needs of the religious community, modeled after national

frameworks for trauma care. Services will include emergency intervention, ongoing therapy, and long-term recovery support.

Recognizing that abuse can take many forms—physical, sexual, spiritual, emotional, and financial—the initiative focuses not only on helping victims but also on preventing the generational impact on children who witness abuse. Therapy empowers women to reclaim their rights, establish safety, and make informed choices about their futures. While separation or divorce may be necessary in extreme cases, the emphasis is on healing and empowerment.

Current Activities and Progress

- **Therapy Services:** Arugot continues to

provide low-cost therapy for women and adolescent girls, meeting the growing demand in the community.

- **Volunteer Training:** Community members were invited to get involved at the outreach events. A taskforce was formed, and the first volunteer course to become "sisters" is already underway at Arugot. In total, six specialized courses will be offered to train different groups to recognize signs of distress and provide appropriate support and referrals.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, Arugot aims to expand the Hashmi'ini project into a fully-fledged therapy and support center with:

- A multi-disciplinary team, including a psychiatrist and clinical psychologist
- Group therapy and peer support networks

- Vocational guidance for women seeking independence and self-reliance
- Couples therapy for navigating conflict and healing relationships

Additionally, a complementary initiative is underway: the establishment of a Green House, a comprehensive therapeutic framework for families dealing with mental health issues. This will offer holistic care for the entire family unit, recognizing the interconnected nature of mental health and family well-being.

2 | Special ed. Preschools - Playground Equipment

Two special ed. preschools for 25 children are located in a building complex without an equipped playground in the outdoor area.

The plan is to install equipment that will enhance the development of the children who are challenged with various developmental delays, speech delays, emotional problems, learning disabilities, attention deficit - or a combination of such problems.



The playground with its equipment will serve as a place for fun and play during recreation time and will enhance sensory development, gross and fine motor coordination, body awareness, balance, muscle building, imagination, social skills, and more.

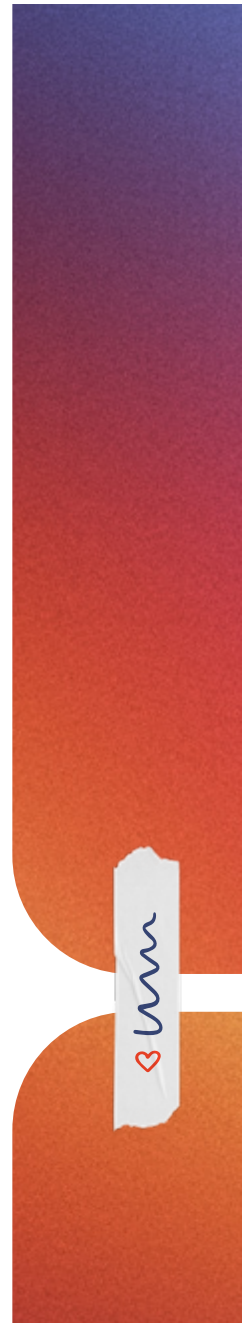
The children will be exposed to a range of stimulating opportunities which will be accessed through fun, play and informal learning.

The equipment will be installed in 3 outdoor spaces that surround the 2 adjacent buildings and will include a range of equipment pieces. A big combined climbing, swing and slide facility will be a central feature. There will be a seesaw for balance, co-ordination and spacial awareness. Fitness and sports equipment and a climbing wall will facilitate physical development, co-ordination, and motor skills. A wooden house and non-moving jeep will be used to develop imagination, foster social skills and provide a place to rest and relax. The flooring to be installed will have two layers - the top layer will be synthetic grass, while underneath will be shock absorbing underlay to ensure safety.

3 | Day Care Center - Installing Industrial Kitchen

Arugot runs a licensed Day Care Center recognized and supervised by the Ministry of Economy and Industry, providing a warm, safe and enriching environment for 40 infants and toddlers ages 3 months - 3 years. This framework empowers working mothers to pursue their careers with confidence, knowing their children's needs are well cared for.

The Day Care Center has professional and dedicated staff, a developmental educational program suited to the needs of each age group, a healthy and varied menu drawn up by a nutritionist, diverse enrichment activities such as music, movement, and art, and full cooperation with parents who receive regular updates and participate in events at the center together with their children.



After 25 years of use, the kitchen has to be completely refurbished. The old kitchen has to be removed and a new state of art industrial kitchen installed including new flooring, surfaces, sinks, electrical appliances, ventilation, lighting, safety features, adequate storage spaces, and more. This is a considerable outlay, necessary to ensure the smooth running of the Day Care Center.

Inside the Therapy Room

Building a Home of Her Own: Anat's Journey Through Animal-Assisted Therapy

Anat, the middle of three sisters, participates in Pet Therapy at Arugot. Hila, her therapist brings Tchupi, a therapy dog, into the process. Anat has formed a strong emotional bond with Tchupi - a relationship that has become a bridge to learning, healing, and growth.

At home, Anat faces challenges. She struggles with Attention Deficit Disorder and has recently been assessed as being on the Autism Spectrum. Unfortunately, due to family stress and limited support, this information has not yet been shared with her school. Socially, Anat longs for connection but has difficulty navigating peer relationships. Her attempts to connect - such as chasing or tickling other children - are often misunderstood, leaving her feeling isolated.

In one session, Anat confided in her therapist:

"I want to be their friend, but they don't want to be my friend."

Using her relationship with Tchupi as a model, Hila guided Anat through a conversation:

Hila: **"What happens if you run after Tchupi?"**

"He runs away", Anat replied.

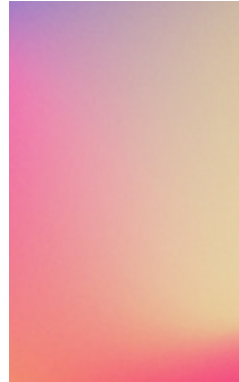
Hila: **"And if you tickle him?"**

"He gets scared and runs away."

Through these interactions, Anat began to understand how her behaviors might feel to others. This insight laid the foundation for developing socially accepted skills in a way that felt safe, supportive, and natural.

Inspired by her love for Tchupi, Anat began making gifts for him - a sweater, a crown, and eventually, a house. The house, complete with windows, a balcony, a plant, and a carpet inside, was crafted with care and imagination. Yet, when Tchupi hesitated to enter the house, Anat felt frustrated. She experimented with solutions: placing treats inside, rearranging the space. The process became an important therapeutic journey - learning to cope with frustration, accept limits, and persist in a caring, respectful way.

But more than that, the house she built for Tchupi reflected something deeper: a safe, loving home - one she longs for herself. In a family environment where consistency and emotional support are scarce, Anat created a space of love and belonging for someone she cherishes. Through therapy, she is not only learning about relationships with others - she is also learning how to imagine and begin building the emotional home she deserves.



Gali: Healing Through Art

While it is hard to believe, this is a true story.

In the midst of a rainy Hanukkah night, the Davis family experienced a miracle that would forever change their lives. Eight-year-old Gali, along with her parents and siblings, were returning to Haifa

from a warm family gathering when their ordinary drive turned extraordinary.

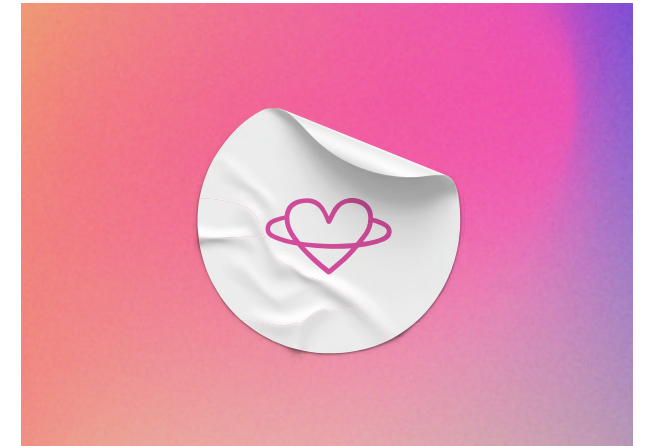
The first warning was subtle - an unusual sound from the engine. When her father pulled over and lifted the hood to investigate, flames suddenly erupted. In those crucial moments, her parents' quick thinking saved their lives. They rushed to pull their children, some still groggy from sleep, from the vehicle. Seconds later, the car was engulfed in flames, consuming their belongings but sparing what mattered most - their lives.

There on the dark highway, drenched and shivering, help came in the form of a compassionate truck driver who offered them shelter until a family member arrived to take them home. But the event's impact lingered, particularly on young Gali.

In a telling conversation with her grandmother, Gali revealed the depth of her understanding. "I'm so glad Yoni wasn't in our car," she said of her six-year-old brother, showing remarkable concern for his well-being. "I don't want him to have any trauma."

When her grandmother gently probed about Gali's own trauma - a word unfortunately familiar to even young children in Israel - Gali's response was profound: "When I go to bed at night, I think of what would have happened if we hadn't managed to jump out of the car."

Now, Gali receives weekly art therapy at Arugot. Her remarkable ability to articulate her feelings has become a crucial tool in her healing journey, helping her process and move forward from that harrowing night.



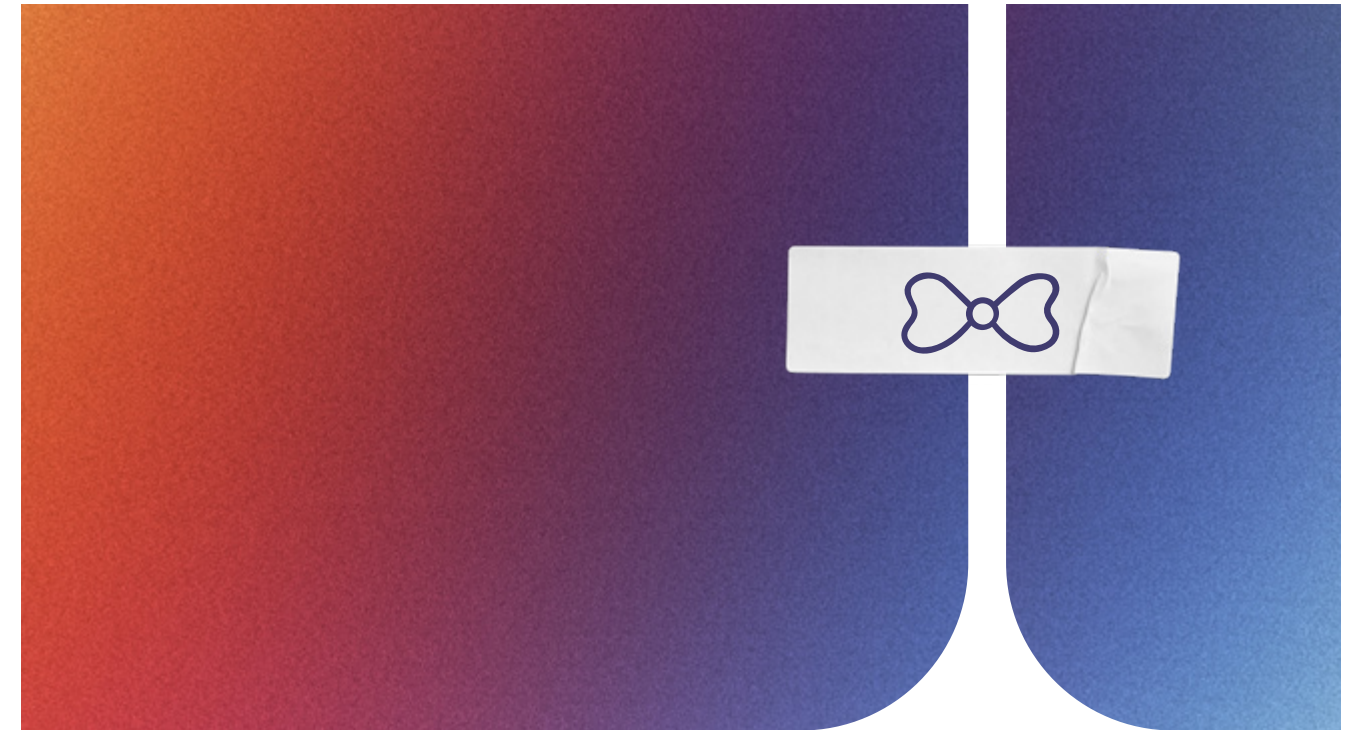
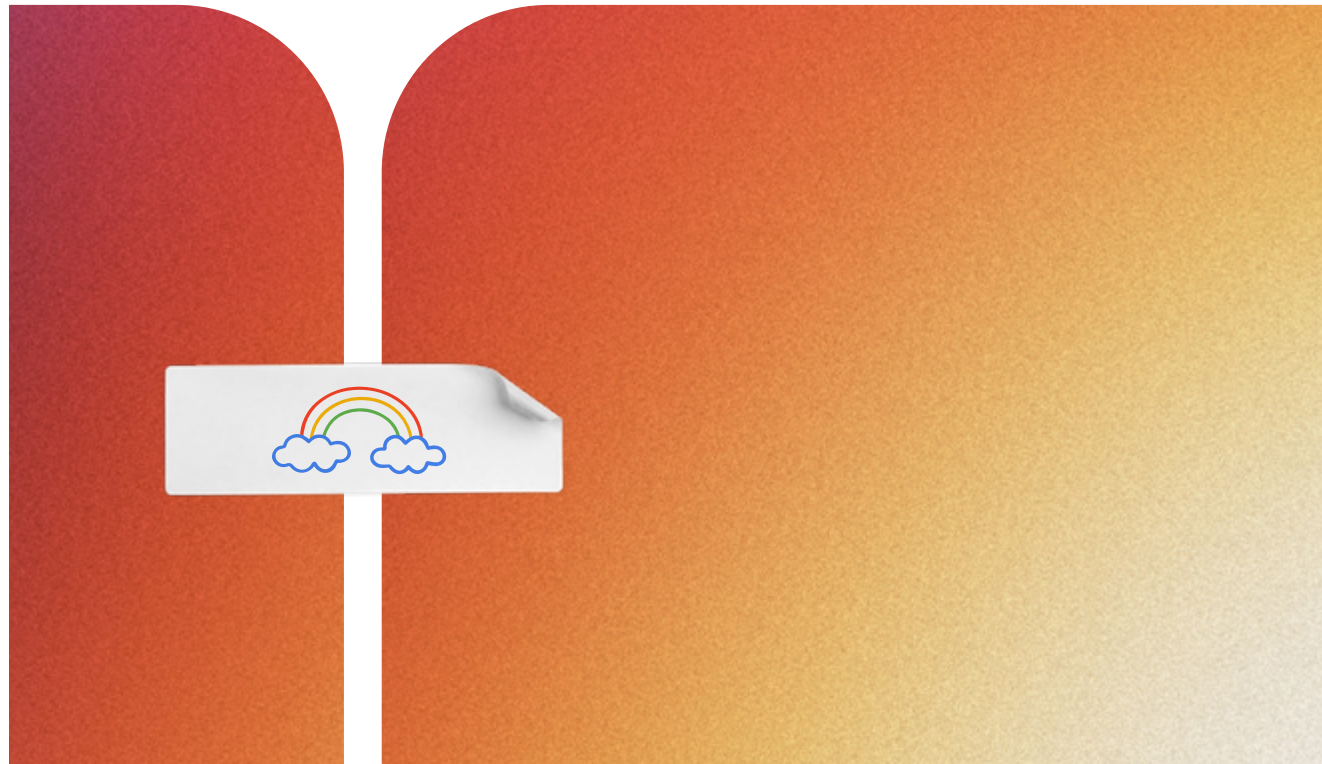
Diti: Finding Her Voice

Imagine the determination and dedication of parents who took their daughter for therapy over a period of 4 years. Diti suffered from selective mutism, she spoke at home, but not at preschool. Selective mutism is usually a form of anxiety preventing the child from speaking. Contrary to previous theories, the disorder does not go away as time passes.

Guided by Dr. Ruth Perednik's pioneering methods, Arugot therapists used Pet Therapy, Art Therapy, Gardening Therapy and Speech Therapy to help Diti open up.



Art Therapy



Through her connection with animals, she gradually revealed her inner world.

In the pet corner she nurtured two rabbits - one white, one black. Diti identified with the black one, and told her therapist how he felt rejected, frustrated, angry and dominated by others.

She began speaking in therapy, then whispering to teachers, and eventually engaging socially.

In her final year at Arugot she thrived in the therapy garden - planting and picking vegetables. The process she saw in the garden mirrored her own development, from being similar to a seed hidden under the ground to a burst of growth and blossoming.

Diti's mother has only praise for the therapists at Arugot - "they do wonderful work".

And Diti, through persistence and courage, found her voice.

"My advice to parents is - don't give up, try different approaches, keep going until you succeed".



Recognition

Ministry of Education; Ministry of Economy and Industry; Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs & Social Services; Ministry of Justice; Haifa Municipality; Health Services; Haifa University

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Partnerships

Health Services, Haifa University, Achiya, Oranim Academic College of Education, Bat Melech, Aluma, Pisga, Yuvalim Center

Board of Directors



Jeremiah Lubasch, MD President and Founder, born in Argentina, he studied medicine at the University of Buenos Aires. In 1977 he made Aliya and today lives in Haifa with his wife and family. Dr. Lubasch served in the navy and was promoted to rank of major. In 1989 he founded the Haifa Center for Children with Learning Disabilities, today Arugot - Child and Family Development Center. For close to 30 years he directed the Center on a voluntary basis while running his medical practice at the same time.



Jacob Vizel, Director (pro bono)

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