Opinion

There is nothing wrong with leashing your kids

A plea from a formerly leashed child

By VIVIAN GAGE
Copy Editor

Children benefit from being put on a leash when out in public. I know this not as a mother, but as a formerly leashed child; living proof that leashing works.

The word 'leashing' sounds strange, even comical. It leads one to instantly think of dogs, which is why many people denounce the act, calling it oppressive. The method has led to debates online, the harassment of parents and both anti-leash and pro-leash Facebook groups.

Obviously, it's not an actual leash with a collar we are talking about here. Children aren't dogs, even if they are just as easily distracted. The leash I'm referring to, and the one parents use, is a soft leash backpack, sometimes called a harness. Parents mostly use them for toddlers, then retire the backpack once their kid's desire to randomly bolt has lessened. They are super cute — and as I'll soon prove — very convenient.

Many people would disagree. One article posted on the website Your Tango claimed a leash "meant that the kid's mom was too sadistic to put him in a stroller." The article suggested strollers as an alternative, stating, "most of the moms online who have tested or tried child leashes…apparently have never heard of a stroller or baby carrier."

This just makes me giggle. Obviously, every mom has heard of a stroller. Maybe, just maybe, moms who leash their kids are tired of pushing strollers, or are going somewhere a stroller won't fit. They may just want to encourage their children to walk on their own. Letting toddlers do so actually helps build their confidence and improve their coordination. With a leash, it's freedom with minimal risk.

The anti-leash author said leashed children look like golden retrievers out to do their business. I suppose she thinks strollers make children look more normal.

I hate to break it to them, but in the 21st century, if you see someone walking with a stroller, there's a good chance there's a small shaking dog inside wearing a cute sweater, not a baby. Strollers won't save you from the "Dog or kid?" questions.

And even if you can't help but compare leashed kids to dogs, is that really so bad? People leash dogs to keep them safe and protect them from others, which to me sounds like a good idea for everyone.

Some moms use child leashes/harnesses because medical conditions, like arthritis, make it harder for them to run after pesky toddlers. Some are simply in postpartum recovery and don't want to sprint with a newborn in their hands. Others have children with disabilities, such as those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or intellectual disability (ID), who elope often.

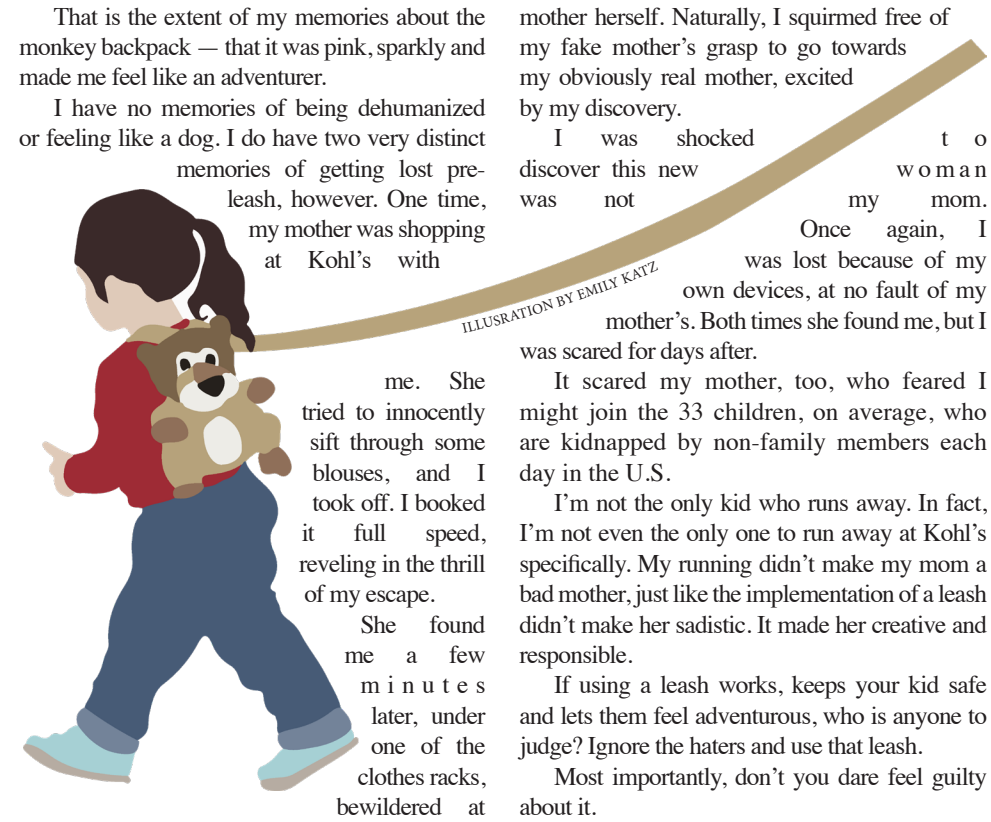
"I don't laugh at kids on leashes anymore. I feel bad for them," the anti-leash writer wrote. "... especially the kids with the monkey backpacks. Someone's convinced them that leashes are cool."

Ouch. She got me there.

Two-year-old me had a bright pink monkey backpack, with the leash being the monkey's tail. It was sparkly and I loved it. I was matching with my sister and brother, and I felt super cool. We are triplets, so we were like a little gang. In the eyes of some skeptics, I suppose that would have made my mother a dog walker, but really, she was just ahead of her time.

That is the extent of my memories about the monkey backpack — that it was pink, sparkly and made me feel like an adventurer.

I have no memories of being dehumanized or feeling like a dog. I do have two very distinct memories of getting lost pre-leash, however. One time, my mother was shopping at Kohl's with me. She tried to innocently sift through some blouses, and I took off. I booked it full speed, reveling in the thrill of my escape.



ILLUSRATION BY EMILY KATZ

She found me a few minutes later, under one of the clothes racks, bewildered at how I could get lost in a store that flows in a clear rectangular path.

The second time, I was holding my mom's hand at a fair, bustling with people. Being an observant young toddler, I noticed a different woman who looked more like my mom than my mother herself. Naturally, I squirmed free of my fake mother's grasp to go towards my obviously real mother, excited by my discovery.

I was shocked to discover this new woman was not my mom. Once again, I was lost because of my own devices, at no fault of my mother's. Both times she found me, but I was scared for days after.

It scared my mother, too, who feared I might join the 33 children, on average, who are kidnapped by non-family members each day in the U.S.

I'm not the only kid who runs away. In fact, I'm not even the only one to run away at Kohl's specifically. My running didn't make my mom a bad mother, just like the implementation of a leash didn't make her sadistic. It made her creative and responsible.

If using a leash works, keeps your kid safe and lets them feel adventurous, who is anyone to judge? Ignore the haters and use that leash.

Most importantly, don't you dare feel guilty about it.

Tanking in the rankings

Tyler Herro is too low in ESPN's NBA Rank 2025

By MATTHEW MARIANI
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With the NBA season right around the corner, ESPN released its list of the top 100 players going into the 2025-26 season.

According to ESPN, "ESPN's NBA Rank panel, made up of more than 150 reporters, editors, producers and analysts, was asked to rank players based on their predicted contributions — quality and quantity — for the 2025-26 regular season only."

Surely a list of the best NBA players made by 150 of the best sports journalists should be pretty accurate, right?

Well, I would have to agree — for the most part.

Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokić was ranked as the top player going into the season, followed by the reigning MVP, Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and then Lakers guard Luka Dončić in the No. 3 spot.

Pretty hard to mess up and I would say they did not. But what about the rest of the list? One player's ranking that stands out to me is Miami Heat guard Tyler Herro, at No. 68.

Sixty-eight? In the 2024 season, Herro averaged a career high 23.9 points per game and 5.5 assists per game, in his first year as the first option in Miami, after forward Jimmy Butler III was traded to the Golden State Warriors. Twenty-four players were selected to play in the NBA All-Star game last season, including Herro, who got his first nod in his sixth season.

He was also chosen to shoot in the Starry 3-Point Contest, in which he won, defeating Warriors guard Buddy Hield in the final round. Herro had a great year across the board and played in a career high 77 games.

Herro has been overlooked his entire career. The 6'5" guard was drafted 13th overall to Miami in 2019 and helped Miami get to the NBA Finals his rookie season. He would then go on to break the record for most points scored by a rookie in a conference finals game with 37 in game four against the Boston Celtics.

Even with all this success, his amazing play was credited to the NBA bubble and he was nicknamed "Bubble Boy" after not taking the leap many fans expected him to in his second season.

In his third season, Herro won the Kia Six Man of the Year award, averaging 20.7 points per game and shooting nearly 40% from behind the arc. Herro hovered around the 20 point per game average in his third, fourth and fifth seasons, while facing injuries.

But you could see the progression, and fans saw the potential. Once Butler III was traded, and the door was open for Herro to be "the guy" in Miami, he did just that. Herro took the star leap and had a career year, leading the Heat into the playoffs in a confusing and drama-filled season.



ILLUSTRATION BY LILLIAN CURTIN

Basically, my point is, Herro has improved consistently over his career and there doesn't seem to be any reason he wouldn't continue getting better in his second year as the main option.

When I saw ESPN was releasing a top 100 players list, I was excited to see where "experts" ranked the top players on my favorite team, the Miami Heat and my favorite player, Herro. I would say I have above-average "ball knowledge" and assumed Herro would be ranked in the top 30 to top 40, maybe top 50 at worst. But the 68th best player in the NBA is mind-boggling to me.

Former NBA guard and member of Club 520 Podcast, Jeff Teague, also disagreed with the low ranking.

"Mannn, they got Alex Caruso ranked higher than Tyler Herro? He was just a All-Star," Teague said on the Club 520 Podcast on Sept. 25. "Hold on Tyler Herro was just a All-star…and he in the 60's bro?"

While yes, Oklahoma City Thunder guard Alex Caruso was a key part of the Oklahoma City Thunder's championship run, there is no way you can argue that he will be a better overall player than Herro in 2025. Okay, he will be better defensively, but the Miami Heat without Herro is a far worse team than the Oklahoma City Thunder without Caruso.

Teague also mentioned rookie phenom forward Cooper Flagg of the Dallas Mavericks ranked 52nd. Sure, Flagg will likely be a top player in the next few seasons, but not yet. He has never played a real NBA game, how can he be ranked over an All-Star?

Other players that stand out to me are Oklahoma City Thunder guard Lu Dort (No. 64), Denver Nuggets guard Christian Braun (No. 62) and Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green (No. 51), who I believe are not even close to Herro's level.

Moving on to the top 50 players, I believe Herro's skill is very close, if not better than Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray (No. 46), Cleveland Cavaliers guard Darius Garland (No. 38) and San Antonio Spurs guard De'Aaron Fox (No. 35). Murray averaged 21.4 points per game, shooting similar splits to Herro last season. While Garland was not Cleveland's number one option, he averaged 20.6 points per game. Fox, while only playing 17 games last season, averaged 19.7 points per game and shot 27.4% from three.

I understand all of these rankings are speculation and prediction, but I find it hard to believe Herro won't improve his play and become more and more comfortable as the main guy in Miami. I think it is disrespectful to place Herro so low after the season he had last year and the season I believe he will have in 2025.

The Miami Heat tip the 2025 season off on Oct. 22 against the Orlando Magic. Herro will likely be sidelined until sometime in November after having ankle surgery on Sept. 19.