

in their shoes

HELP WANTED, WANTING TO HELP

SCENARIO ELEVEN – BY ANNE STONEHOUSE AM AND OSLO DAVIS.



When you think you're being helpful—for example, helping a friend paint a room or cook a meal—and you feel good about contributing, how would you feel if the friend said, 'Gee, you're really making a mess of things. Why don't you go do something else and I'll finish up'? Why do we sometimes speak more bluntly, less tactfully and respectfully to a child than we would to an adult?

We may misinterpret children's behaviour when we don't try to see situations as they see them. For example, their good or innocent intentions may be carried out in ways that adults mislabel as annoying, 'naughty' or defiant. Sometimes children make messes or are unhelpful in their attempts to be helpful. A young child wiping up a spill is likely to spread the spill. A child helping to clear the table after a meal may drop something. It's important to encourage their contributions and respond to their good intentions in helping with a task, while helping them learn better ways to carry it out.

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