

in their shoes

KNEES AND UNDERSIDES OF TABLES: CHILDREN'S VANTAGE POINTS

SCENARIO TWO – BY ANNE STONEHOUSE AM AND OSLO DAVIS.



Sometimes we overlook the impacts of children's physical abilities and size. Their literal vantage points and perspectives are often different to ours.

Before a baby can roll over or crawl, adults determine what they look at. Wouldn't you eventually get bored of staring up at dangling brightly coloured shapes or animals? Wouldn't it be frustrating to have your view of the real world blocked by these same-old, same-old objects?

Think about a baby's or toddler's vantage point when they walk with you or are pushed in a stroller at knee-level through a crowd. Claustrophobia, anyone?

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At a museum or art gallery, paintings, posters and other artworks are usually placed at adult eye level. How would it feel if all the interesting things to look at were over a metre above your head? Likewise, children often see the undersides of tables and chairs, and may learn to recognise people by their knees or ankles.

Getting down on your hands and knees to see the world the way a child sees it is a worthwhile exercise for any adult. Imagine trying to keep up with a giant who's walking at a brisk pace and whose legs are more than twice the length of yours? What if you had to climb stairs where each step was as high as the distance from your knee to the bottom of your foot? We forget sometimes, especially when we're in a hurry, one of the most obvious characteristics of young children: they have short legs.

Young children sometimes have to sit at tables that are chest high, and in chairs that do not allow their feet to rest on the floor. If you doubt how uncomfortable that is, try dangling your legs next time you're sitting on a bar stool. Try eating when the plate or bowl is level with your chest.

Another thing about comfort and a child's view of the world: would you enjoy being a pendant on a giant's necklace? Maybe the improved vantage point compensates for legs-splayed dangling? Just sayin'...



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