**PUT YOURSELF IN A KIDS SHOES TO BECOME A BETTER PARENT**

**Source:** www.involvedk12.org

You probably have heard that the key to empathizing and relating to others is to put yourself in their shoes. This helps you gain perspective so you can understand how the other person might feel. It helps people to respond with kindness when dealing with others. While parents may teach their child to put themselves in someone else's shoes, many don't follow their own advice with their children. Many times adults just assume their child thinks like an adult and should know how to act. However, this is not the case in almost all instances. How one behaves and acts is usually dependent on their brain development, knowledge and experiences they have gone through up until that point.

To gain perspective on your child's behavior, try to remember when you were a kid of that age. How did you think of adults, what they said, their rules? What was life like for you at that age? Most likely you probably possessed the same logic and weren't any wiser than your child. By putting yourself in their shoes, you can better understand your child's behavior at their developmental level. Most of the time, parents just need a little reminder that kids don't have the self-control, the knowledge, the experience and hindsight that adults have. So of course they are going to behave differently than an adult would in that same situation. Their maturity levels are vastly different from an adult.

Putting yourself in your kids shoes helps relate to children and teens of all ages. For example, your teen doesn't want to come down to dinner, yells at you and slams their door.  This might cause a parent to yell back, ground their teen or take away privileges. Instead, put yourself in your shoes and remember those days. Your teen could be facing some social crisis that to them is like the end of the world. You remember how that was like.  Or maybe your 2 year old dumps a basket of laundry that you just folded. You may view this as them being naughty and you want to scold them and put them in time out. But in reality your toddler doesn't understand that this will make your life more difficult. Maybe they just wanted to climb in the basket because you laughed at them the last time they did it and they want to see that again.

When you put yourself in your kids' shoes, it helps you come from a place of understanding and kindness, rather than a place of frustration and anger. Consider that your kid is just behaving based on their developmental level. If they are misbehaving, it is probably due to them trying to cope with the experiences, feelings and adult rules they face every moment of the day. Next time you are frustrated or angry with your child, ask yourself how you would have handled that at that age. Chances are, their behavior will make a whole lot more sense to you and will help you handle the situation more positively and more effectively.