



Don't judge

Who among us has never sneaked a chuckle at a child's silly blunder or flaw in logic?

Imagine a kid starting the microwave before putting in the food. Or perhaps repeatedly pushing down the lever in frustration, trying to toast a pop tart, only to realize she forgot to plug the toaster into the wall. Watching children make silly mistakes is hilarious. Admit it.

It's easy to judge children, because they so frequently make little errors and don't always think things through. Sometimes it causes us to simply sit and laugh at them. Other times, we make assumptions about their abilities, thinking they're limited because they're "only children."

It took finding Justin Bieber lyrics scrawled on the wall only one time for me to lock up all the permanent markers in the house. I recognized the potential for the children I care for to misuse the items, and I assumed the worst would happen if I gave them access to the markers.

My mind was filled with all the things that could go wrong. I pictured the counters, walls and ceilings covered in scribbles. I imagined them running through the yard, wielding butter knives and forks, with Sharpie war paint covering their faces.

Obviously I couldn't have those things happening on my watch. So after the first strike, I didn't even give them the option to use the markers.

Nail polish suffered a similar fate, as I preemptively locked every last bottle up, before they could be misused. Frankly, this particular cabinet quickly became filled with all sorts of potential mess-makers. (No, not the children, silly.)

Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

It took a couple mistakes of my own to make me stop and think about what I've been doing.

I started the week normally enough, wanting to make a note on the whiteboard in our kitchen. I unlocked the cabinet, reached for the cup of dry erase markers, pulled one out and wrote on the board without a second thought.

It wasn't until I later tried to erase, that I realized I had used a Sharpie on the dry erase board. What an idiot. I just stood there and rolled my eyes at myself.

A few days later, the girls asked if they could paint their nails. Feeling slightly nervous about their flailing limbs and easily distracted minds, I bargained with them. I offered to paint their nails for them. Fortunately, they agreed, and I set about painting, relieved that they wouldn't be making a mess.

Moments later, I stuck my hand right on wet nail polish, getting it all over myself. I shook my head and cleaned up my mess, wondering what had gotten in to me.

Twice in the span of a couple days, I found myself making mistakes I would expect from the children. It made me think back to the super glue I squirted on the floor and the nail polish remover I sloshed onto a leather couch. Come to think of it, I've spent quite a bit of time cleaning up paint I've dripped around my apartment as well.

I might as well be a child, for all the messes I've been making. The only difference is there's no one taking away the markers and paints from me when I make a mistake. I just keep getting second chances.

It made me think: where are the second chances for my students? I sure do appreciate forgiveness and the opportunity to try again—in all areas of my life.

So I'm opting to show a little trust and give the kids back some of the privileges I so hastily

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snatched away from them. After all, what are a few more messes to clean up in my already apparently clumsy existence?

Even if my worst nightmares do come true, they ought to make for a good story.

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