Cambridge Elements

Elements in Psychology and Culture
edited by
Kenneth D. Keith
University of San Diego

CHILD HELPERS

A Multidisciplinary Perspective

David F. Lancy
Utah State University
Child Helpers

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Elements in Psychology and Culture

DOI: 10.1017/9781108769204
First published online: February 2020

David F. Lancy
Utah State University

Author for correspondence: David F. Lancy, david.lancy@usu.edu

Abstract: In most of the worlds’ distinct cultures, children – from toddlerhood – eagerly volunteer to help others with their chores. Laboratory research in child psychology supports the claim that the helper “stage” is biologically based. This Element examines the development of helping in varied cultural contexts, in particular, reviewing evidence for supportive environments in the ethnographic record versus an environment that extinguishes the drive to be helpful in WEIRD children. In the last section, the benefits of the helper stage are discussed, specifically the development of an ability to work and learn collaboratively.

Keywords: child, helper, developmental stage, ethnographic studies, lab experiments

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ISBNs: 9781108738552 (PB), 9781108769204 (OC)
ISSNs: 2515-3986 (online), 2515-3943 (print)
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