

Growth Mindset Guide

Provided by Hoffman Tutoring Group

Introduction

If you're reading this, you may already know that helping your child change their mindset around education is beneficial, but you may not know where to start. This guide was written with you in mind. We know you're doing everything you can to help your child get the education they deserve, and we want to help. Check out this Growth Mindset Guide for a rundown of what growth mindset is and how you can help your child develop it.

What is growth mindset?

- Growth mindset is knowing your abilities aren't fixed and that you can grow and change through effort and keeping with a task (even when you fail). For example, someone with a fixed mindset might view themselves as a bad soccer player after not making the soccer team, while someone with a growth mindset believes that they can become a better soccer player through practice and hard work.
- The theory of growth mindset was created by Dr. Carol Dweck. Dr. Dweck wrote a popular book on growth mindset called "[Mindset: The New Psychology of Success](#)" which details her theory and how adults and children can develop a beneficial growth mindset.
- To find a more detailed description of growth mindset, [click here](#).

How does growth mindset help kids learn?

- When students have a growth mindset, they're more likely to challenge themselves in the classroom, try new learning tasks, ask questions, and push through setbacks and failures. Students with this mindset understand that knowledge and skill are acquired through their efforts and that mistakes don't define their abilities.
- A student with a fixed mindset might give up on a concept after receiving a poor grade or poor feedback, while a student with growth mindset might aim to improve their score next time.

How can you help your child develop a growth mindset?

Change the way your child views mistakes.

- As humans, we're often embarrassed by our mistakes and frequently try to cover them up or brush them under the rug. This is a very normal way to feel and behave, but this could be damaging the development of the growth mindset in our kids.
- When we're learning something new and pushing our minds or our bodies, we're bound to mess up. In this way, mistakes are proof that we're learning and growing. When we present mistakes in this light to students, they're set free to take pride in their errors and what they learned from them instead of feeling embarrassed. When students aren't afraid of making mistakes, they're less likely to feel shame when an error occurs and more likely to pick themselves up to continue trying.
- *Easy action:* Be honest with your child about your mistakes and how they're proof of your learning. You could even go as far as having everyone share a mistake from the day at the dinner table.

Change the language you use.

- The way we praise students and their work can affect the way they think about themselves and their abilities. When a child is frequently complimented on how "smart", "bright" or "talented" they are, they can become afraid of making a mistake and shattering that label. Students can begin to believe that there are smart and dumb people in the world and that they have no control over these attributes.
- Instead of using the praises mentioned above, try to praise effort, thought, and taking risks. Let your child know you see that they worked hard on something. Praise your child for putting themselves out there or for picking themselves up when things didn't go as planned. Praising effort and other growth centered actions can help your child find value in their pursuit of learning instead of in fixed "smarts".

➤ **Easy action:** Try out some variations of these praises to replace “you’re so smart”.

- You really worked hard on that!
- I can see you put in a lot of effort.
- I love how you kept trying.
- I love seeing the work you did here.
- Can you tell me how you did that?
- I can tell you paid a lot of attention to detail.
- You have really improved.

Help your child change the language they use.

➤ The language we use can greatly affect the way we think and act. Help your child step away from saying things like “I can’t” and “I’m not” and toward more productive and growth centered language. When students stop using limiting language, they’re more likely to focus on how they can grow and accomplish the goal.

➤ **Easy action:** Next time your child says they can’t do something, suggest one of these phrases instead:

I need help with this

I need more practice

I can’t do this yet...

This is challenging me

I’m having a hard time with this concept

My brain needs a break

I’m working hard to understand

Can you please help me?

I’m feeling frustrated

I think I’m missing something

I need more time to master this

I know I can do it with more practice

I’m feeling discouraged

Take opportunities to push yourself and take (safe) risks.

- Growth mindset is all about increasing your abilities through effort and embracing all the steps along the way. The best way to teach your child to have a growth mindset is to model it yourself. Consider trying something new, pushing yourself toward a goal, or facing your fear of a certain subject or activity. These actions will put you in the position to practice growth mindset and therefore will provide great opportunities for you to show your child what this mindset looks like in action. Talk about your growth mindset journey with your child, and don't be afraid to talk about the hard parts!
- *Easy action:* Choose something challenging to do this week. Talk with your child openly about how it feels to challenge yourself and the stumbling blocks you're experiencing along the way.

Encourage your child to push themselves and take (safe) risks.

- As your child sees you putting yourself out there and practicing the growth mindset, nudge them to do the same. Encourage your child to put effort into something they aren't good at, face a fear, or take a risk by choosing a challenging project. This will lead to great practice in keeping with it, learning from mistakes, and putting in effort to see growth and change. Be sure to praise your child for their effort, and to point out the growth and progress they are experiencing while encouraging them.
- *Easy action:* Next time your child says something will be too hard to try, or passes up on that challenging bonus problem, encourage them to give it a go.

Make goal setting a priority.

- Learning how to set goals and take actionable steps toward those goals is a skill that will serve your child for the rest of their life. Goal setting is also a great way to practice the growth mindset! Help your child learn how to set goals by making goal setting a priority for your family. Start by setting a family goal with clear action steps, and move toward challenging each family member to set their own goal. Stay accountable to each other and make sure to praise the successes as well as the mistakes (after all, if we aren't making mistakes we aren't learning).

- For more help with teaching your child how to set actionable goals, check out this [goal setting guide](#).
- *Easy action:* Have a family meeting and set an actionable family goal. Use this as a springboard for teaching goal-setting skills and encouraging your child to set personal goals.

Thank you for downloading this guide. If you have any feedback, questions, or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can email us at hoffmantutoringgroup@gmail.com or call us at 208-996-0497.

Happy Learning!

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