

MINDSET INTRO FOR PARENTS



Your school is teaching kids about Mindset. It is important for you to be aware of what it is, why it's important, and how you can support it.

What is mindset and why is it important?

Mindset is a simple idea discovered by world-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck from decades of research on achievement and success—a simple idea that makes all the difference. Dr. Dweck realized that there are two mindsets: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort. They're wrong.

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all people who have achieved top performance, had these qualities. Research shows that people with this view reach higher levels of success than people with fixed mindset beliefs.

Teaching a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity in the worlds of business, education, and sports. It enhances relationships, and increases achievement.

How can you support a growth mindset in your children?

No parent thinks, “I wonder what I can do today to undermine my children, subvert their effort, turn them off learning, and limit their achievement.” Of course not. Rather, we think, “I would do and give anything, to make my children successful.” Yet, many of the things we do boomerang. Our best intentioned judgments, lessons, and motivating techniques often, unintentionally, send the wrong message.

In fact, every word and action sends a message. The things we do and say tell children how to think about themselves. They can hear a fixed mindset message that says, “You have permanent traits and I’m judging them,” or they can hear a growth mindset message that says, “You are a developing person and I am interested in your growth.”

The most important thing you can do to help your child instill a growth mindset is to praise them for effort rather than for talent. Messages like, “You learned that so quickly! You’re so smart!” teach children that effort is a sign of weakness and that they are either smart or not smart. If these children encounter difficulty in the future, they may not know how to deal with it. Instead, messages such as, “I like the way you approached that problem,” or “Good job to hang in there and find a different strategy that worked,” or “Sorry, that seemed to be too easy for you; let’s do something more challenging.” teach kids that effort is something we can all benefit from to reach our full potential, and that we need to be working purposefully in order to grow.