

Mindset Approach Information for Parents

Uffculme Primary School

Aims:

- To define the terms 'growth mindset' and 'fixed mindset'
- To explain how and why we teach mindsets
- To identify ways in which you can support your child at home

Prime Minister

Winston Churchill **repeated** a grade during elementary school.

He was placed in the **lowest** division of the **lowest** class.

Composer

Beethoven's teacher called him a **hopeless** composer.

He wrote **five** of his greatest **symphonies** while **deaf**.

Writer

Leo Tolstoy **dropped** out of college.

He was described as '**unable** and **unwilling** to learn.'

Role models

- Einstein's teacher said that he was 'academically subnormal'
- Michael Jordan's coach said that he wasn't more talented than other people
- Walt Disney was told that he lacked 'creative imagination'

What do we mean by the word 'mindsets'?

The term growth mindset was coined by Professor Carol Dweck at Stanford University as a result of her quest over 30 years to find out what motivates us to learn. She streamlined her ideas and devised a simple way of understanding what matters : the fixed and growth mindset.

Mindsets:

Fixed mindset:

- Belief that ability is fixed
- People are born smart/sporty, etc.
- Depressed after failure
- Puts in less effort
- Doesn't try new strategies

Growth mindset:

- Belief that people can grow and develop
- Sees failure/setback as a learning opportunity
- Puts in effort and persists
- Tries alternative routes to success

Mindsets: not just intellect

People embrace fixed or growth mindsets about all of their qualities, not just intelligence. Many people believe that our other qualities – creativity, artistic ability, athleticism, personality traits – are qualities with which we are born. However, Carol S. Dweck asserts that any and all of these qualities can be cultivated.

When do you feel smart?

Fixed mindset:

- “When I don’t make any mistakes.”
- “It’s when I finish first and it’s perfect.”
- “When something is easy for me and others can’t do it.”

Growth mindset:

- “When it’s really hard, and I try hard, and I can do something I couldn’t before.”
- “When I work on something for a long time and finally figure it out.”

What's the big deal?

Fixed mindset thinking results in:

- a false sense of superiority, undermined by a deep sense of self-doubt
- a fear of failure and a refusal to take risks
- a feeling that failure permanently defines you as a loser
- a need to prove yourself again and again

What's the big deal?

Fixed mindset thinking results in:

- the belief that only untalented, ungifted people have to work for success and that effort somehow reduces you
- a need for validation and reassurance in labels ('smart', 'jock'), whether earned or not
- a desire to blame others or outside circumstances when things don't go your way

Growth mindset in the classroom

- Feedback
- Success criteria
- Challenge
- Direct teaching of growth mindset

Feedback and Praise

Praising children's intelligence puts them in a fixed mindset.

Parent:



Fabulous! You are amazing!

Child:



I'LL ALWAYS need praise

How do you respond...?

- When a child succeeds?
- When a child fails?

Messages children hear

- Parent says: “You learned that so quickly! You’re so clever!”
- Child hears: “If I don’t learn something quickly, I’m not clever!”

Messages children hear

- Parent says: “You’re so brilliant, you got an A without even studying!”
- Child hears: “I’d better stop studying or they won’t think I’m brilliant.”

Praise

- Praise effort rather than ability
- Encourage children to see learning as a process that is more valuable than the end results
- Model how to give feedback to the children as this will provide them with a structure to work with
- Identify challenges for children and ask them to identify their own challenges

Our mindset curriculum is designed to develop:

- resilience
- a desire to be challenged
- the quality of talk within the classroom
- independent learners
- strategies to success

How do we do this?

- Initially a series of six lessons to embed the concept every year
- Classroom displays
- The language the staff and the children use
- Feedback and explicitly discussing effort

Lessons use:

- stories and familiar characters
- talk-based learning
- debates
- the brain
- pictures and objects to represent challenges and barriers to learning
- follow-up activities in the classroom
- enjoyment to promote learning and understanding

Why should you teach growth mindsets to children?

- Research shows that the children make greater academic progress if they embrace the growth mindset concept
- It helps to create independent learners
- It builds resilience and life-long learners
- It creates a collaborative culture in the classroom where everyone is supported

How can you support your child?

- Model your own growth mindset and discuss things you find challenging
- Praise their hard work and process rather than the marks they get
- Praise them when they think for themselves, work well in teams and change their minds after thinking something through
- Accept that failure is a really important part of learning
- Encourage them to challenge themselves in their learning

Useful links

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/help-your-child-try-new-things>
- <https://www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-13128701>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zrtHt3bBmQ>

Resources for home

Books:

- *I Can Be Anything* – Jerry Spinelli
- *Someday* – Eileen Spinelli
- *You Be You* – Linda Kranz
- *Making a Splash* – Carol E. Reiley

App:

- My Fantastic Elastic Brain