

Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset Environment at Home

Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset Environment at Home Part 1: Parents Work Toward a Growth Mindset for Themselves

- We can't expect our children to have a growth mindset if we don't have one ourselves. Recognize fixed mindset thinking in yourself and talk yourself into a growth mindset. This can also be done out loud so that your child can hear how you are changing your mindset. For example, you might catch yourself saying, "I can't figure out how to fill out this document." Then quickly rephrase it to add, "I think I need to check on the website or call the bank so I can ask some questions. Then I am sure I will be able to fill it out accurately."
- Be aware of your own fixed mindset statements such as "I am a terrible cook," "I was never good at math either," or "I wish I could play the piano like you do." (You can, with practice and perseverance!)
- Be aware of blaming genetics for anything—both positive and negative.
- Be careful about comparing your kids to their siblings or other kids.
- We want our children to enjoy the process of learning—not just be successful. Model this concept at home. For example, after a less than desirable outcome trying to bake something challenging, you might say "I really learned a lot making those cookies" rather than "Ugghh, what a waste of time. That was an epic fail. I will never try that recipe again."

Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset Environment at Home Part 2: Using Growth Mindset Praise and Feedback

- Praise what your child does, not who he or she is. Instead of saying, "You are so smart/clever/brilliant," say "I can see you really worked hard/put forth effort/tried hard." Praise perseverance and resiliency when you see your child struggle or face challenge. Avoid praising grades. Focus on praising work ethic and effort—not achievement.
- Adopt the word "yet" into your vocabulary. If your child proclaims that he doesn't understand something, can't dribble a basketball, or can't play a song on his guitar, remind him that he can't "yet" but with hard work he will have success.
- Avoid comparing your child's success with that of siblings or friends—achievement is not a competition. There is enough success for everyone.

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Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset Environment at Home Part 3:

Redirecting Fixed Mindset Thinking

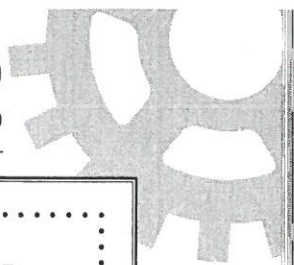
- Redirect your child's fixed mindset statements. If you hear your child say "I am no good in math" or "I just can't understand Shakespeare," point out the fixed mindset thinking and direct her to a growth mindset place. Remind her that she may not understand yet, but will by asking questions, finding new strategies, setting small goals, and working hard. Two examples of how to redirect such statements are included below.

If Your Child Says	Then You Might Say
"I am no good in math."	"You may not understand this yet, so let's practice some more."
"I don't need to study; I always do well on math assessments."	"Studying can help prime the brain for further growth. Maybe you should let your teacher know that these assessments don't require much practice for you and that you are willing to take on more challenge."

Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset Environment at Home Part 4:

Struggle

- Help your child become curious about errors or lack of success. Remind your child that failure is important on the way to success. Model this!
- Show your child the Michael Jordan *Failure* commercial (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45mMioJ5szc> and only 30 seconds long). Talk to your child about what the last line of the video means.
- Provide some puzzles and games that may create a little struggle for your child. Work together and discuss why struggle shows that you are learning and that you can build resiliency.
- Model and encourage resiliency—the ability to bounce back from errors and failures.



Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset Environment at Home Part 5:

Flexibility and Optimism

- Model flexibility. Communicate that change is an important part of living life. Model this by taking a flexible mentality when things don't go as planned. Don't let frustrating situations get the best of you—make your children aware of your ability to adapt due to a change in plans. Praise your children for their flexibility and adaptability when plans change or success is not met.
- Model optimism. Adopt a "glass half full" mentality in your home. A person with "hope" believes there can be a positive side to most situations.
- Play a game with your kids: For every time something happens that is perceived as "bad," try to find the good in every situation. This game can get a little silly but it gets a message of positivity across. For example, when a glass is accidentally broken, a possible response might be, "Now we have more room on our shelf!"

Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset Environment at Home Part 6:

Learning and the Brain

- Talk about neural networking. Ask your child what he or she has learned in school about the brain.
- Whenever you hear your child say "I give up" or "I just don't get this," remind your child to visualize neurons connecting every time he learns something new. Encourage your child to work hard and practice new skills and concepts so that he can develop strong neural connections in his brain.
- Share with your child some things that you have not yet mastered and your plan for practicing and building stronger connections in your brain.

Growth Mindset Links

The following links can be included in school, district, or classroom bulletins.

Moving Toward Growth Mindset

The following link will help with your goals in moving toward a growth mindset:

- **Fostering Growth Mindsets** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsP43BqinQY>): This 4-minute video, *Fostering Growth Mindsets*, is part of a discussion series created by the Greater Good Science Center between Christine Carter (sociologist, mom, and happiness expert) and Kelly Corrigan (author and mom) about moving toward a growth-oriented mindset.

Growth Mindset Praise

The following links are centered on growth mindset praise:

- **How to Praise Children** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vUAxLi0Zo>): This is another part of a discussion series created by the Greater Good Science Center between Christine Carter and Kelly Corrigan about how praising your children can make them feel great and strive to be even greater.
- **Carol Dweck—A Study on Praise and Mindsets** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWv1VdDeoRY>): This is a great synthesis of Carol Dweck's research about the effects that praise has on our children. CEO and cofounder of the Championship Basketball School, Trevor Ragan, presents the data highlighting the differences in praising intelligence versus praising effort.

The Importance of "Yet"

The following are links about the importance of the word "yet":

- **Carol Dweck on the Power of Yet** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyAde4nllm8>): This video contains a summary of the importance of the word "yet" in about 1 minute.
- **Sesame Street: Janelle Monae—Power of Yet** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLeUvZvuvAs>): This is an engaging video with the Sesame Street friends learning about the power of "yet" through a song sung by R&B singer Janelle Monae.

Learning From Failure

To read more about learning from failure, consider these links:

- **The Importance of Mistakes: Helping Children Learn From Failure** (<http://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/e-family-news/2013-the-importance-of-mistakes-helping-children-learn-from-failure/>): This article provides ideas for parents for encouraging risk-taking and helping them learn from their errors.
- **Allow Your Children to Learn From Failure** (<http://www.thenownews.com/community/allow-your-children-to-learn-from-failure-1.1386910>): Parenting columnist Kathy Lynn explains why failure is not a bad experience for our children in this video.
- **How Children Learn From Failure** (<http://www.enannysource.com/blog/index.php/2014/01/22/how-children-learn-from-failure/>): This article, written for both parents and childcare providers, provides a list of strategies to try when your child is facing failure.