

MINDSET INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS

Your school is teaching students 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 in decades of research on achievement and success. Dr. Dweck identified two mindsets people can have: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them, and believe that talent alone creates success, which is wrong. In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all people who 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. We think, "I would do anything, give anything, to make my children successful." Yet many of the things we do boomerang. Our best intentioned judgments and our motivational techniques often unintentionally send the wrong message. In fact, every word and action sends a message. It tells children – or students or athletes – how to think about themselves. It can be a fixed mindset message that says: "You have permanent traits and I'm judging them," or it can be a growth mindset message that says: "You are a developing person and I am interested in your development." The most important thing you can do to help your child develop 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 the child that they either are or aren't smart, and that effort is a sign of weakness. When they encounter difficulty in the future, they tend to then feel not smart and retreat. 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 did work," or "Sorry, that seemed to be too easy for you, let's do something more challenging," teaches kids that effort is something we can all benefit from to reach our full potential, and that they need to be working purposefully and taking on challenges in order to grow.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

You can visit the Mindset Works website, www.mindsetworks.com, read Dr. Carol Dweck's book *Mindset*, or visit the Mindset Works Parenting pages at www.mindsetworks.com/parents to learn about ways to infuse the growth mindset into your parenting.