



Growth Mindset

Parent Mini
Guide

The Three
Schools

Growth Mindset

Fixed or Growth Mindset?

"In a fixed mindset, students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it"

Dweck

At The Three Schools, we feel it is important to encourage and promote a growth mindset; the idea that all our pupils have the potential to progress and get better with hard work and practise and that there is nothing wrong with making a few mistakes along the way. Through this, we aim for our pupils to be independent learners and great thinkers by the time they leave in Year 6.

Five quick things you can do to help develop a growth mindset in your child:

- 1. Ask open-ended questions to solve a problem or achieve a goal.**
"What do you think will happen if..." or "Why do you suppose...". These questions build **logical thinking skills** and often lead to **rich discovery**.
- 2. Use specific feedback that identifies what the child accomplished.**
We all use phrases like "You're brilliant", "You made that look so easy", "You're so clever", but praise like this doesn't tell your child what they have done well - these comments just reinforce a fixed mindset in your child. Instead, praise what they have done specifically - "You sounded that work out really carefully and used your phonics - well done", "I like how you kept going at swimming and tried to get all the way to the other side"
- 3. Encourage children to take a risk**
Watch and listen to your child so you can take cues about what else they are ready to tackle. Vygotsky calls this the "zone of proximal development" - when we gently nudge children to use what they know to try something just a bit out of their reach, but yet developmentally appropriate. By offering small but achievable challenges, confidence and persistence emerge.
- 4. Be persistent and demonstrate a growth mindset yourself**
Narrate your thoughts as you try something new or frustrating. Your child may even be able to offer you some helpful tips. This allows children to see we all have to work hard to solve problems and we all continue to learn new things. Try to avoid labelling yourself in a fixed mindset way - telling your child "Oh, I'm rubbish at Maths" gives them the message that you are either good at Maths or not good at Maths and there is nothing you can do about it. A more growth mindset comment would be "Oh, I found Maths tricky at school, but if you keep trying and learning from your mistakes, you'll get there".
- 5. Don't worry about the small stuff**
Accidents and mistakes happen. Show your child there is something to be learned when we don't achieve what we set out to accomplish. Maybe someone else lends a hand. Maybe you return to the task at another time. Maybe it is best to take a break for a while, or split a task up into smaller steps. Be specific about what worked, identify the emotions involved, and offer encouragement for the next time.

What to say to your child to help them develop a growth mindset:

"The effort you put in makes us so proud."

"You tried so hard - I can see that."

"That was a struggle for you and you kept going - well done."

"Let's go back over the words that you found difficult - they're a real chance to learn"

"You did that so easily - maybe it wasn't enough of a challenge. What can we do next?"

"Your commitment and practice have paid off"

"I found learning maths tricky at school, but I needed to keep going and I learnt from my mistakes"

"What can you do if you don't know what this word says?"

"Are there any clues that can help you work it out?"

"Let's see if we can get to the end of this page."

"What will you be able to do when you can read fluently?"

"You can't swim yet, but if you keep trying, you'll get there"

Praise effort, persistence, strategies, seeking challenges, setting goals, planning, using creative ways of solving problems.

"If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning" - Carol Dweck