



## DEVELOPING A **GROWTH MINDSET**

Has your child ever said to you ‘There’s no point, I’ll never be able to do it’ or avoided doing something because they’ve failed at it in the past?

Feelings like this can be related to what children believe about what makes them ‘good’ at something – whether it’s school work, sport, or even their ability to manage their emotions and behaviour.

Some children will tend to give up on challenging tasks easily, or avoid tasks they’ve failed at before. They tend to believe that being ‘good’ at a particular activity is a fixed state, and is something they can’t control. In psychology, this way of thinking is called a ‘**fixed mindset**’.

Others might bounce back quickly from failure and be more likely to explore how they can get better at doing something. They tend to be children who believe that you can improve your abilities by practising, or by finding a different way to achieve your goal. This way of thinking is called a ‘**growth mindset**’, and developing it can help make children more resilient for life.

FIXED MINDSET		GROWTH MINDSET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOMETHING YOU'RE BORN WITH</li> <li>• FIXED</li> </ul>	SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COME FROM HARD WORK.</li> <li>• CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOMETHING TO AVOID</li> <li>• COULD REVEAL LACK OF SKILL</li> <li>• TEND TO GIVE UP EASILY</li> </ul>	CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHOULD BE EMBRACED</li> <li>• AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW.</li> <li>• MORE PERSISTANT</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNNECESSARY</li> <li>• SOMETHING YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH</li> </ul>	EFFORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESSENTIAL</li> <li>• A PATH TO MASTERY</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GET DEFENSIVE</li> <li>• TAKE IT PERSONAL</li> </ul>	FEEDBACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USEFUL</li> <li>• SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM</li> <li>• IDENTIFY AREAS TO IMPROVE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLAME OTHERS</li> <li>• GET DISCOURAGED</li> </ul>	SETBACKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USE AS A WAKE-UP CALL TO WORK HARDER NEXT TIME.</li> </ul>

There are lots of small things you can do every day that can help your little one develop a growth mindset.

Children (and adults!) with a **growth mindset** think very differently. They believe that they can get better at something by practising, so when they’re faced with a challenge, they become more and more determined to succeed, wanting to persevere and overcome knockbacks. They tend to feel as if they’re in control and are not threatened by hard work or failure.

Although no one likes failing, children with a **growth mindset** do not let failure define them; instead, they use setbacks to motivate them. Children encouraged to adopt a **growth mindset** enjoy challenges and the sense of achievement they get when they succeed.

Researchers have found that building a **growth mindset** helps children at school; making them more motivated, more engaged in the classroom and likely to receive higher marks and greater rewards from their work. However, it’s not all about educational outcomes. Research also suggests that having a **growth mindset** increases children’s ability to try all sorts of different challenges and problems that they might not have otherwise tackled. **Growth mindset** also appears to improve behaviour and help children to control their emotions.

## How can I help my child to develop a Growth Mindset?



INSTEAD OF.....	TRY THINKING....
I'm not good at this	What am I missing?
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's good enough	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I am going to train my brain
I'll never be that smart	I will learn how to do this
Plan A didn't work	There's always Plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them

There are lots of ways that we can help our children to develop a **growth mindset**. Research has shown that Mindsets can be changed relatively quickly and there are plenty of things that parents and families can do to help. Below are a few tips and ideas that can help promote a **growth mindset** in children.

### Set high expectations for your child:

It is commonly believed that lowering our expectations promotes self-esteem in children (e.g. "never mind, let's try an easier one"), but this is not the case. Having high expectations works like a self-fulfilling prophecy. It shows that you believe they can do it, which in turn has a positive impact on their own beliefs, behaviour and outcomes.

### Encourage children to be resilient and not give up, even when they find something difficult or frustrating:

We now know that the brain adapts to new information and practise by creating new connections, so help your child to believe that challenge is a positive thing because it means they are growing their brains! This can help them to be comfortable with the times that they struggle and means that they see this as a sign of learning.

### Celebrate mistakes!

The fear of making mistakes and associated shame can stop children from giving something a go in the first place. We all make mistakes, so try to embrace these mistakes and use them as learning opportunities, rather than feeling embarrassed about them. If we are not making mistakes then we are not stretching ourselves.

### Use inspirational role models:

Think about your child's favourite athlete, musician or teacher and talk about their journey to success. We call this unravelling the talent myth. If someone has done well we have a tendency to think they were born that way. We need to show our children that this is not the case. Rather than focusing on somebody's 'natural talents', focus on their early efforts, strong work ethic, and the mistakes and learning that led them to where they are now.

## How can the way I praise my child help develop a Growth Mindset?

It's natural to want to praise children when they do something well, but we need to do this carefully. Research suggests that the type of praise that we use can have a big impact. It's all a matter of context in fact and even positive praise can encourage a **fixed mindset**.

Praising our children by saying things like "you're a natural!" or "you seem to be able to turn your hand to anything!" without clarity of the process by which they got to that point can lead to the belief that being good at something is out of their control. In other words understanding how they got there is the key.

Focus praise on the **effort they've made** to get to that point of triumph, the **strategy they used** or the **outcome** itself, saying things like "you've worked so hard on this, well done!" or "you get better every time because of all the practise you've been doing" or "you have found a great way to do that, it worked out really well".

This kind of feedback helps to develop children's resilience to failure as it teaches them what to do when they are challenged or fail – try again, try harder or try a different way, all things that are within their own control.

This type of praise is sometimes called 'process praise' and research has found that children were more motivated when their parents used more of this kind of praise.

*Source of text - Dr Frances Warren and Dr Sherria Hoskins, University of Portsmouth*  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/help-your-child-try-new-things>



DEVELOPING A **GROWTH MINDSET**

At King's Meadow School, we are developing a Growth Mindset by asking the children to:

<p><b>Concentrate</b></p>	<p>Manage distractions Get lost in the task Plan and think it through Draw diagrams, jot down thoughts or things which help you think</p>	<p>Do one thing at a time Break things down</p>
<p><b>Don't give up</b></p>	<p>Work hard Keep going Ask for help Take a brain break</p>	<p>Practise lots Try new strategies Start again</p>
<p><b>Be cooperative</b></p>	<p>Listen to others Say when you don't understand Explain things to help others</p>	<p>Be tolerant Be kind when you disagree</p>
<p><b>Be curious</b></p>	<p>Ask questions    Notice things Look for patterns and connections Think of possible reasons</p>	<p>Research Ask 'What if..?'</p>
<p><b>Have a go</b></p>	<p>Have a growth mindset Don't worry if it goes wrong Learn from mistakes Be excited to try new things</p>	
<p><b>Use your imagination</b></p>	<p>Be creative Let your imagination go Think up new ideas and questions</p>	
<p><b>Keep improving</b></p>	<p>Keep reviewing your work Identify your best bits Try to be better than last time Don't compare yourself to others, only yourself!</p>	<p>Improve one thing first Take small steps</p>
<p><b>Enjoy learning</b></p>	<p>Feel proud of all your achievements Feel your neurons connecting! Imagine your intelligence growing by the minute! Use what you have learnt in real life Know you can do it if you have input and you practise</p>	