



# Cedarwood School

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## FOSTERING A GROWTH MINDSET IN YOUR CHILD

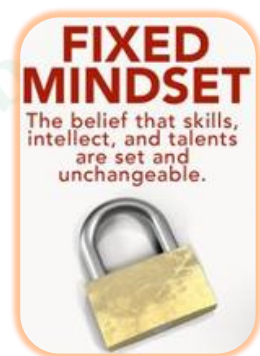


Parenthood is a journey filled with love, care, and a strong desire to nurture your child's development. One of the gifts parents can give to their children is to foster a mindset that can help them overcome challenges, embrace learning, and persevere in the face of adversity. Dr. Carol Dweck, a professor of psychology at Stanford University and author of the book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, has done research that has revealed the profound impact of **mindset** on children's academic achievement, engagement, and happiness. Her research has shown how success in school, work, sports, the arts, and almost every area of human endeavour can be dramatically influenced by how we think about our talents and abilities. Therefore, children's beliefs about intelligence play a crucial role in shaping their educational experiences. Dr Dweck believes children are similar to adults in that they have one of two possible mindsets—a fixed mindset or a growth mindset.

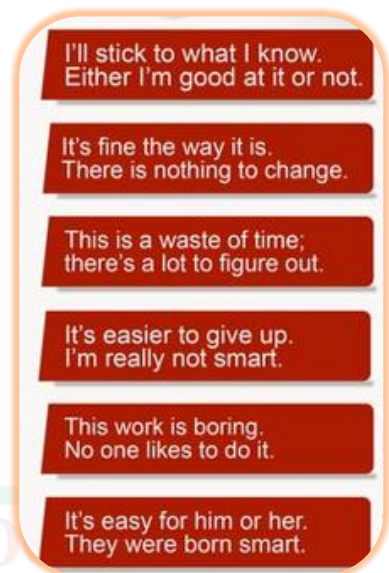
A **fixed mindset** revolves around the belief that intelligence and abilities are fixed traits. Children with a fixed mindset may categorise themselves as either 'smart' or 'dumb', 'talented' or 'untalented'. They might view the world as a place of some gifted people, whom the rest admire from the sidelines.

There are **several downfalls of a fixed mindset**, including:

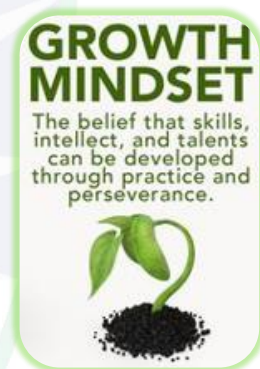
- 1. Fear of Failure:** Children with a fixed mindset tend to avoid challenges to protect their self-image. They fear failure and avoid situations where they might make mistakes or not excel.
- 2. Low Resilience:** A fixed mindset can lead to low resilience in the face of setbacks. When children believe that their abilities are unchangeable, they may be quick to give up when they encounter difficulties.



3. **Negative Self-Image:** A fixed mindset often leads to a negative self-image. Children with this mindset may tie their self-worth to their achievements and believe they are not "good enough" if they don't succeed in a particular area.
4. **Limited Learning:** Children with a fixed mindset are less likely to embrace challenges and opportunities for learning. They miss out on the growth that comes from making mistakes and persevering.
5. **Stagnation:** A fixed mindset can lead to a sense of stagnation and a lack of personal development. Children with this mindset may resist trying new things and limit their potential.
6. **Avoidance of Effort:** Children with a fixed mindset often believe that if they must exert effort, it means they lack natural talent. This avoidance of effort can hinder their ability to grow and improve.



In contrast to a fixed mindset, a **growth mindset** is rooted in the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed. Children with a growth mindset see challenges as opportunities for growth. They believe in the power of effort, learning, and perseverance to improve their abilities. They recognise that people aren't 'smart' or 'dumb', that there are no talented geniuses; only hard-working people who have chosen to take their abilities to the next level. Children who embrace a growth mindset, believing that intelligence can be developed, tend to outperform those with a fixed mindset. They approach learning with enthusiasm and resilience, understanding that effort and learning lead to improvement.



**Encouraging a growth mindset** in your child will help with their personal and academic development. Here are some tips for promoting a growth mindset in children:

1. **Celebrate Effort and Praise the Process, not the Results:** Help children understand that the brain works like a muscle, that can only grow through hard work, determination, and lots and lots of practice. It is effort, hard work, and practice that allow children to achieve their true potential. Avoid praising results as test scores and other outcome-based means of measuring learning and knowledge limit the growth that would otherwise be tapped. Direct your praise to the effort and persistence that your child puts in, acknowledging their hard work and determination as commendable, not the outcome.
2. **Embrace Challenges and Normalise Mistakes:** Encourage your child to welcome challenges as learning opportunities. Teach them that making mistakes is a normal part of growth. Mistakes are part of the learning journey and are nothing to be ashamed of. They are stepping stones to progress. Children sometimes learn the most when they fail. Let them know that mistakes and failures are a big part of the learning process. There is nothing like the feeling of struggling through a very



difficult problem, only to finally break through and solve it! The harder the problem, the more satisfying it is to find the solution.

3. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Help your child establish attainable goals and steer clear of unrealistic, perfectionistic standards.
4. **Be a Growth Mindset Role Model:** Lead by example by showing your enthusiasm for learning, your willingness to make mistakes, and your commitment to personal growth in various aspects of life.

As the **school holidays** approach, you can **continue to nurture** a **growth mindset** when the structured learning environment isn't present. Here are some tips:

1. **Embrace Holiday Learning Opportunities:** Encourage your child to explore new hobbies and interests during the holidays. Whether it's learning to cook, paint, or play a musical instrument, these activities promote learning and personal growth.
2. **Set Holiday Goals:** Help your child set specific, achievable goals for the holiday period. These goals can be related to their interests or hobbies. Encourage them to plan how they will work towards these goals.
3. **Practice Resilience:** When your child faces challenges or setbacks during their holiday activities, emphasise the importance of perseverance. Remind them that mistakes are part of the learning process and that it's okay to struggle. Mistakes help us learn if we allow them to.
4. **Explore Nature:** Spend time in nature, whether it's hiking, camping, or simply taking a walk in a nearby park. Nature offers ample opportunities for learning, exploration, and observation.
5. **Encourage Reading:** Encourage your child to read books that interest them. Reading not only enhances knowledge but also develops critical thinking and empathy.
6. **Foster Independence:** Give your child some independence during the holidays. Allow them to plan outings or activities, make decisions, and learn from their experiences.
7. **Volunteer and Give Back:** Engage in volunteer work or community service with your child. This not only teaches empathy and compassion but also offers valuable life lessons.
8. **Reflect and Set New Goals:** At the end of the holiday period, encourage your child to reflect on what they've learned and experienced. Help them set new goals for the upcoming school term.



## Coaching a Growth Mindset

**5 Questions to Develop a Growth Mindset**

- What did you learn from today's performance?
- What steps did you take to make you successful today?
- What are some different strategies you could have used?
- How did you keep going when things got tough?
- What can you learn from your opponent today?

**5 Feedback Comments to Develop a Growth Mindset**

- This will be a challenging concept to learn, but I believe you can master it.
- You haven't got it yet, but you will if you keep working and thinking about it.
- I really appreciated your effort today.
- It is okay to take risks, that's how we learn.
- Getting better takes time and I see you improving.

In conclusion, practising a growth mindset is a wonderful way to reinforce the principles of learning, effort, and resilience both inside and outside the classroom. Nurturing a growth mindset in children equips them with a valuable tool for navigating the challenges they will encounter throughout their lives. However, it is important to remember that developing a growth mindset is a gradual process, and guidance and support from the adults in children's lives play a crucial role in shaping their perspective on learning and personal development.

**OPTIMISM IS THE  
FAITH THAT LEADS  
TO ACHIEVEMENT.  
NOTHING CAN BE  
DONE WITHOUT  
HOPE AND  
CONFIDENCE.**

*Helen Keller*

Be the best you can be