

Excellence Grounded in Faith



Dear ASCA Families,

In the months of December and January, for our Social-Emotional Lesson (SEL), we will be talking about Growth Mindset. First, mindset is defined as an established set of beliefs or attitudes held by someone. Mindset is important because it plays a key role in our achievements. We all have beliefs about our own abilities and potential. These beliefs are part of our mindset which is so powerful it can fuel our behavior and predict our success. Mindset shapes our everyday lives, helping us interpret our experiences and future possibilities. Dr. Carol Dweck, is a Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University and one of the world's leading researchers on motivation and mindset. She classified mindset into two categories: **Growth Mindset** and **Fixed Mindset**.

Growth Mindset

Growth Mindset occurs when we believe our intelligence and abilities can be improved upon with effort and the right strategies. A willingness to confront challenges, a passion for learning, and viewing failure as an opportunity for growth are characteristics associated with a growth mindset.

In school, it would look like this - students would know/learn they can develop their skills and talents through effort and persistence, as well as being receptive to lessons and feedback and believe they can improve through hard work and trying new learning methods.

We also talk about **flexible thinking** and the ability to think about things in a new or different way. To be open to listening to others' perspectives and trying to see things from their point of view. It helps us deal with uncertainty, solve problems, adjust to changes, and incorporate new information into our plans and/or ideas. We talk a lot about being flexible friends.

Fixed Mindset

Those with a **fixed mindset** believe their intelligence and abilities cannot be altered in a meaningful way. As a result, mistakes are often seen as failures rather than opportunities to grow and learn. When stuck in a fixed mindset, we may fear new experiences, avoid risks, and feel the need to repeatedly prove ourselves to others.

In school, it can look like this - students believe their skills, talents and overall intelligence are fixed traits. They may resist learning and trying to improve, typically feeling embarrassed when they do not understand something.

The Power of Yet

We cannot talk about a growth mindset without talking about **The Power of Yet**. When talking about a growth mindset you want to remind children that failing and making mistakes are opportunities for growth. The power of "yet" relates back to those with growth mindsets as they see the word "yet" as

1155 Aurora Avenue, Naperville, Illinois 60540-6201

Phone (630) 961-6125 • Fax (630) 961-1771 • www.ascacademy.org

giving them confidence to continue and persist with their learning, making mistakes and correcting them. Those with a fixed mindset look at a challenge, don't engage, and give up.

But with **The Power of Yet:**

- I can't do this... *Yet.*
- This doesn't work... *Yet.*
- I don't know... *Yet.*
- It doesn't make sense... *Yet.*
- I don't get it... *Yet.*
- I'm not good at this... *Yet.*

Examples of Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset:

Fixed Mindset

- Feedback is an attack. Gets defensive.
- Avoids challenges. Views them as potential failures.
- Effort is a waste of time. Minimal effort.
- Obstacles are a reason to give up.
- Threatened by the success of others.

Growth Mindset

- Feedback is valued. Considers it.
- Accepts challenges. Views them as opportunities.
- Effort is worth it. Gives 110% effort.
- Obstacles are a reason to work harder.
- Inspired by the success of others.

Parents, apply your skills, self-reflection questions:

- What mindset do you normally have? How does it affect you?
- Think of a situation where you had a fixed mindset. How would things have been different if you had a growth mindset instead?
- How can you change your mindset?

Why Growth Mindset is important/Why Teach it in the Classroom?

Much of the research on growth mindset, especially in children and youth, deals with the beliefs about intelligence, and shows that students with a growth mindset of intelligence tend to perform better academically. There is new research that suggests the potential of cultivating social and emotional growth mindsets, as well, to increase well-being. When you encourage a growth mindset and praise students' efforts rather than focusing on intelligence, it makes them more likely to pursue more difficult challenges, they perform better in school and exhibit more motivation in the classroom.

- Growth mindset promotes better learning habits
- Growth mindset encourages creativity and innovation
- Growth mindset creates a willingness to take on challenges
- Growth mindset promotes healthy competition
- Growth mindset improves flexibility
- Growth mindset brings more success
- Growth mindset promotes emotional and mental health
- With growth mindset children are more likely to take responsibility

- Growth mindset can boost social competence and help overcome shyness
- Growth mindset can promote prosocial (kind and helpful) behavior

How to Foster a Growth Mindset in Students in School and at Home

Learning how to foster a growth mindset in students requires time and practice. The approach requires consistent instruction that reinforces and demonstrates the idea that students can improve their ability. At the most basic level, mindset techniques involve shifting emphasis away from outcomes and towards efforts, process, and growth. Rather than praising an accomplishment, praise the efforts and learning steps that led to the positive outcome.

A growth mindset approach still demands optimal performance from a student and part of growth mindset instruction is teaching students to ask for help and to use any resources available to assist them. Just as students are responsible for learning the material, we are responsible for giving them the tools they need to learn. Growth mindset and The Power of Yet doesn't only apply to the classroom but to work, home, homework, and even sports, hobbies and activities.

Resources:

Mindset Works

<https://www.mindsetworks.com/parents/growth-mindset-parenting#:~:text=Speak%20positively%20about%20your%20mistakes,when%20you%20try%20something%20hard!>

Big Life Journal

<https://biglifejournal.com/pages/growth-mindset>

Growth Mindset Institute

<https://www.growthmindsetinstitute.org/2018/07/17/growth-mindset-parenting/>

Books about Growth Mindset:

Big Life Journal

<https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/top-growth-mindset-books-children-adults>

We are Teachers

<https://www.weareteachers.com/perfect-read-alouds-for-teaching-growth-mindset/>

Children's Library Lady

<https://childrenslibrarylady.com/growth-mindset-books-for-children/>