


How Parents Can Instill a Growth Mindset at Home



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Parenting is really hard. Having a growth mindset helps.

Research shows that parents can have a powerful impact on their childrens' mindsets. The language you use and the actions you take show your children what you expect. Giving process praise, talking about the brain, accepting mistakes as learning opportunities, and understanding the role of emotions in learning are all practices you can begin today.

Say This, Not That

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Research on praise and mindsets shows that when we praise children for being smart, it promotes a fixed mindset. It sends a message that their accomplishments are trait-based, and tied to something innate. In contrast, praising kids for working hard promotes a growth mindset. It sends a message that the child's effort is what led them to success. Want more tips on what to say, and what not to say, when praising your kids? Say This, Not That!

Say This	Not That
"I can see you worked so hard on this!"	"You are so smart!"
"It seems like it's time to try a new strategy."	"It's okay. Maybe you're just not cut out for this!"
"I like watching you do that."	"You're a natural at that!"
"It looks like that was too easy for you. Let's find you something challenging so your brain can grow."	"That's right! You did that so quickly and easily; great job!"

"That's not right. You don't understand this yet. What strategies can you try to understand it better?"

"That was really hard. Your effort has paid off! Next time you'll be ready for this kind of challenge!"

"You've worked hard to become a good writer. You should challenge yourself with an advanced class, and learn something you don't know how to do yet."

"That's not right. Are you paying attention in class? It seems like you're not even trying."

"That was really hard. I'm so glad it's over and you don't have to do that again."

"You have a real talent for writing. You should take a creative writing class because you're so good at it."

Talk About the Brain

we once thought. Teaching our kids that they actually have control over growing their brains through the actions they take is empowering! Tell your children that when they work hard, that's the feeling of their neurons connecting. The dendrites are reaching out to other dendrites, trying to connect to make a stronger brain. What strengthens those connections is practice, asking questions, and actively participating in learning. When children learn that their brains physically change with effort, it leads to increased motivation and achievement. Show your kids this [Brain Animation video](#) to explain!

Accept Mistakes as Learning Opportunities

One of the best ways you can model a growth mindset is to speak candidly about the mistakes you've made, and what you've learned from them. Speak positively about your mistakes and struggles, and this will show your children that taking risks and making mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. Explain to your children that trying hard things is what helps us grow, and you can't be perfect when you try something hard!

Understand the Role of Emotions in Learning

When we get angry, scared, or feel threatened, our fight or flight response is activated. This can happen anytime, whether we're scared of a spider or scared of math!

Our brains are wired to protect us when we feel threatened, and stress symptoms such as sweating, stomach cramps, and your mind going blank are completely normal. There are strategies we can use when the fight or flight response tries to take over, to help us learn. One of those strategies is called **Square Breathing** and it helps to break down the adrenaline that is flooding the bloodstream and preventing learning from occurring.

Want to Learn More?

Additional Reading:

The New York Times Magazine

New York Magazine cover story:

[How not to Talk to your Kids](#) ▶

(<http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/>)

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Huffington Post: **[Growth Mindset](#)**

[Parenting](#) ▶

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/smart-parents/growth-mindset-parenting_b_6951252.html)

CBSNEWS

CBS News: **[The Praise Puzzle](#)** ▶

(<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2012/11/15/the-praise-puzzle-how-to-motivate-kids-to-be-successful/>)



Scientific American: [The Secret to Raising Smart Kids](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-secret-to-raising-smart-kids1/) ▶
(http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-secret-to-raising-smart-kids1/)
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The New York Times

NY Times: [If you're open to growth, you tend to grow](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/06/business/06unbox.html?_r=0) ▶
(http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/06/business/06unbox.html?_r=0)

Videos from the Greater Good Science Center:



[Fostering Growth Mindsets](#) ▶



[How To Praise Children](#) ▶



[Effort, Not Achievement](#) ▶



[Embracing Kids' Failures](#) ▶



You can find other videos and resources from the [Greater Good Science Center at their Half Full Blog](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/).
(<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>)

[Learn about implementing at home](#) ▶ (implementing-at-home.aspx)

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