



# Holmston Primary School

## Parents' Guide – Thinking with a Growth Mindset

Further information can be found on the school we pages at:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sa/holmstonps/>

### Fixed mindset thinking can result in:

- A false sense of superiority, undermined by a deep sense of self-doubt
- A fear of failure; refusal to take risks
- A feeling that failure permanently defines you as a loser
- The belief that only untalented, ungifted people have to work for success, effort somehow reduces you
- A desire to blame others or outside circumstances when things don't go your way
- Being motivated by reward and praise from others

### Growth mindset thinking can result in:

- A love for learning and self-improvement
- A desire to be challenged
- A willingness to work for positive results
- A belief that you can control the outcomes in your life with effort and practice
- The ability to learn from mistakes and failures
- Emotional resilience
- Being self-motivated



# How can we help our children develop thinking with a growth mindset?

## Key points for Parents

- Praise carefully – not for intelligence but for effort
- Encourage deliberate practice and targeted effort
- Encourage high challenge tasks to grow those brain cells!
- Discuss errors and mistakes and help your children to see them as opportunities to learn and improve
- Encourage family discussions about mindset and which mindset they (and you?) are choosing to use
- Teach children to talk back to their ‘fixed mindset’ internal voice with a ‘growth mindset’ internal voice
- Start now by redefining the meaning of a few ordinary words...

Try not to say this...

### Intelligence Praise

You're so clever at...

You're so intelligent at...

You're lucky you're gifted at ...  
and it's easy for you to..

Don't worry if you didn't get a great result, did you get a better score than X child?

Ah...you made a mistake, how many times have we told you to get it right first time?

Say this instead...

### Effort Praise

I've noticed the effort you're putting into...

All of your hard work and practice is resulting in progress in....

I'm proud of how committed you have been to learning...

How do you feel about not getting the result you wanted first time?  
Are you clear on what you need to do to improve your learning next time?

You made a mistake, that's ok, we all make mistakes when we're learning something new. What can you learn from it, to improve next time?

## Effort is...

The secret to getting smarter. The more targeted effort you put in, the more you'll get out. You can help your children to focus their effort and attention, encourage practise. Regularly recognise this effort with effort praise.

## Difficulty...

Difficult and challenging tasks give the opportunity for growth. Create excitement with your children as they take on a new challenge and push outside of their comfort zone. Recognise each achievement and point out to them how much they're learning.

## Mistakes...

Mistakes are a great opportunity to get feedback, to learn and to grow. Help your children to see that mistakes are feedback (not failure). They provide a great opportunity and motivation for growth. Recognise that when working outside of their comfort zone, they are likely to make mistakes that they can learn from.

## Yet...

A small and empowering word....YET...shifts thinking from a fixed to a growth state instantly, use it in conversation with your children. When you hear...

"I can't do it"....rephrase and add 'Yet'. "You can't do it yet, is there anything I can do to help you?"

Or "I'm rubbish at this"....rephrase and add 'Yet'. "You haven't found the best way to learn it yet. What could you do next?"

# First Attempt In Learning

## Further Reading

### Books

'Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential' by Carol Dweck

'Growth Mindset Pocket Book' by Hymer and Gershon

'Your Fantastic Elastic Brain' by Jo Ann Deak Ph.D.

'Bounce' by Mathew Syed

### Websites

The Effect of Praise on Mindsets (Carol Dweck) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTXrV0\\_3UjY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTXrV0_3UjY)

The Perils and Promises of Praise (Carol Dweck) [www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct07/vol65/num02/The-Perils-and-Promises-of-Praise.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct07/vol65/num02/The-Perils-and-Promises-of-Praise.aspx)

Growth Mindset (Carol Dweck's website) [www.mindsetonline.com/abouttheauthor/](http://www.mindsetonline.com/abouttheauthor/)

'How Not to Talk to Your Kids - The inverse power of praise' <http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/>

Youcubed Parent resources [www.youcubed.org/resource/parent-resources/](http://www.youcubed.org/resource/parent-resources/)

## A few mind shifting tips for cultivating a growth mindset at home:

1. HELP CHILDREN RECONNECT WITH A TIME WHEN THEY LEARNED SOMETHING NEW THAT WAS A CHALLENGE.

Point out the developmental nature of “getting good” – we all go through the process of making a lot of mistakes, practising and then getting better.

2. HELP CHILDREN GET CURIOUS ABOUT MISTAKES. Help them reframe a mistake as new information or as a step in the process of learning. In addition, help them incorporate self-correction in their own learning process.

3. HELP CHILDREN LEARN TO HEAR THEIR OWN FIXED MINDSET “VOICE”.

Capture and, in a gentle and appropriate way, share their own statements with them. Most children are unaware of this self-talk because it has gone on so long and is subliminal.

- That guy is brilliant; he never tries and he gets it.
- I got it wrong again, I’ll never get this.

4. HELP CHILDREN TALK BACK TO NEGATIVE SELF-TALK WITH A GROWTH MINDSET VOICE (I.E. GIVE THEM LANGUAGE).

- I am willing to learn new skills to improve, and I know it will be hard at times.
- I get better and better with practice. This is hard but it will get easier.
- Practise makes permanent

5. MODEL GROWTH MINDSET AT THE TABLE

- At breakfast: Ask questions about their opportunities for learning and growth in the coming day or week. What questions do they need answers to? What do they want to learn, practise, and/or get better at today/this week?
- At dinner: Tell you child about a time when you didn’t know the answer to a recent question. Who did you ask for help? How did you learn the answer?

6. AVOID LABELS AND GIVE GROWTH MINDSET PRAISE

- Don’t label yourself in ways that model a ‘fixed mindset’ (e.g. I’m a terrible cook...I was never good at maths.)
- Shift your child’s attention to a process that leads to an outcome.
- Praise and value effort, practise, self-correction and persistence.
- Don’t shelter your child from a failed task. Ask, “What can you learn for this experience? What could you try differently next time?”

7. GET CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR CHILD’S WORK THROUGH QUESTIONING

How did you work that out? What’s another way you could have done that? How many times did you try before it turned out that way? What here was challenging and how did you figure it out? What do you plan to do next time?