

Growth Mindset



One of the things I'm learning about this year is something called a growth mindset. This is the belief system that suggests that one's intelligence can be grown or developed with persistence, effort, and a focus on learning. It is the opposite of a fixed mindset which is a belief system that suggests that a person has a predetermined amount of intelligence, skills, or talents. Now I have always valued persistence, effort, and a focus on learning. But, what I'm learning is that the brain is malleable. Hence, we can grow intelligence in our kids.

So, how can we do this?

One way that teachers and parents can really help children is by carefully choosing the words that are used when they praise them. Every word teachers and parents say and every action they perform sends a message to children. These words and actions tell children how to think about themselves. Teachers and parents should always praise their children's efforts instead of praising accomplishments.

Here are some examples:

Do Not Say: You are really athletic!

Do Say: You really work hard and pay attention when you are on that field!

Do Not Say: You are so smart!

Do Say: You work hard in school and it shows!

Do Not Say: Your drawing is wonderful; you are my little artist.

Do Say: I can see you have been practicing your drawing; what a great improvement!

Do Not Say: You are a great athlete. You could be the next Pele!

Do Say: Keep practicing, and you will see great results!

Do Not Say: You always get good grades; that makes me happy.

Do Say: When you put forth effort, it really shows in your grades. You should be so proud of yourself. I am proud of you!

So the next time you are ready to praise your child or student, stop and think about how to use the opportunity to praise his or her effort instead of accomplishments.

In His Service,

Jim Makey, Principal