

Growth Mindset Parenting

One area of professional development for teachers this year was "Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset." We studied the work of Dr. Carol Dweck. Dr. Dweck and her colleagues became interested in students' attitudes about failure. They noticed that some students rebounded while other students seemed devastated by even the smallest setbacks. After studying the behavior of thousands of children, Dr. Dweck coined the terms fixed mindset and growth mindset to describe the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence. When students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort makes them stronger. Therefore they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement. At CCE, we want all of our students to feel success, to have the desire to challenge themselves, and to know it is okay to make mistakes, struggle, and sometimes even fail, as this is when great learning can take place.

Dr. Dweck's research tells us that a big piece of developing a growth mindset in our students is providing them with **appropriate feedback**. The feedback teachers give students can influence their mindsets in surprising ways. For example, while praise for intelligence, such as "You're so smart!" is considered by some to be motivating, research demonstrates that it can actually have a negative impact on student motivation and achievement. Students praised for effort chose to progress to more challenging tasks. The effort-praised group exhibited more challenge-seeking behavior and cited learning goals as most motivating. The intelligence-praised group avoided challenge in favor of ensured success, and cited performance - i.e., looking smart - as a primary goal. Overall, praise for intelligence actually led to less persistence, less enjoyment, and worse performance than praise for effort. When students were praised for having high ability, they came to attribute their success to a fixed (and unchangeable) quality of themselves, while students praised for effort believed that their performance was subject to improvement.

During professional development, teachers practiced writing and using growth mindset feedback. Teachers are also using this new learning to work with students on identifying a growth mindset vs. a fixed mindset. CCE staff would like to see this be a comprehensive program which includes teachers, students, and parents. We know that when we all work together, great things can happen! For anyone interested in continuing the growth mindset in the home, I have included a link to a research-based site for training and encouraging "[Growth Mindset Parenting](#)." We hope parents are as excited as we are about developing a growth mindset in our students.

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