# How Parents Can Instill a Growth Mindset at Home

Research shows that parents can have a powerful impact on their children’s mindsets. The language you use and the actions you take show your children about 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.

The way we praise our children can have a profound impact on their mindset. 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.

## Say this

- "I can see you worked so hard on this!"  
  ... it helps your children understand you value their effort.

- "It seems like it’s time to try a new strategy."  
  ... it lets your children know that they control outcomes by making choices.

- "I like watching you do that."  
  ... it conveys a message of approval of an activity they enjoy doing, regardless of outcome.

- "It looks like that was too easy for you. Let’s find you something challenging so your brain can grow."  
  ... it teaches kids that learning should be challenging, and if tasks are too easy then your brain isn’t growing.

- "That’s not right. You don’t understand this yet. What strategies can you try to understand it better?"  
  ... it’s important to be honest about what your child knows and doesn’t know, but also explain that you believe in their capacity to improve.

- "That was really hard. Your effort has paid off! Next time you’ll be ready for this kind of challenge!"  
  ... reminding children of how they were able to overcome challenges by putting forth a lot of effort cultivates a growth mindset.

- "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."  
  ... putting your children in the challenge zone is how to inspire lifelong learning.

## Not this

- "You are so smart!"  
  ... it makes them think of intelligence as a fixed quality.

- "It’s okay. Maybe you’re just not cut out for this!"  
  ... it makes your children think they don’t have the capacity to improve.

- "You’re a natural at that!"  
  ... the next time your children fail or make a mistake, they might think they have that talent after all.

- "That’s right! You did that so quickly and easily; great job!"  
  ... praising tasks completed without much effort paints effort in a negative light and encourages a fixed mindset.

- "That’s not right. Are you paying attention in class? It seems like you’re not even trying."  
  ... the fight or flight response may be preventing your child from giving their best effort in class.

- "That was really hard. I’m so glad it’s over and you don’t have to do that again."  
  ... there will always be more challenges, and children should feel that they have the tools for what comes next.

- "You have a real talent for writing. You should take a creative writing class because you’re so good at it."  
  ... if you only encourage your children to do what they’re good at, they’ll be afraid to take risks and learn new things.

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