

Teach your child to change their thoughts, and they will learn to change their world.

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This article is the second of two articles and a part of a group of resources produced to help parents through the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shut down of K-12 schools. Resources can be found at <https://www.copperisd.org/covid/>

With only 2- 3 weeks left in the school year, most parents will breathe a huge sigh of relief once the end comes. However, remote learning is a great opportunity to develop growth mindset skills for students and parents.

According to Carol Dweck, “In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort.”

Alternatively, Dweck states, “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point.” People who exercise growth mindsets believe they can improve if they work hard and persevere. Students adopting growth mindsets may learn more, learn it more quickly, and view challenges and failures as opportunities to improve their learning and skills.

Approaching difficulties in remote learning is a great way to flex our growth mindset skills. As with any skill, you need to practice to improve. Here’s one way you can practice at home.

Role-Playing and Flow Charts:

Build a flowchart choosing an example of something your child struggles with. Drawing out a flow-chart can be extremely helpful. It can give valuable insight into thought patterns and beliefs.

First, create a scenario, and build a flow-chart to use for your role-playing. Ideally, your child will help you develop the chart. While role-playing, it is important to say the thoughts and actions out loud.

Often, kids will respond that they “can’t help” their response. They can. Practice will help them identify and change their mindset. Practice losing a board game, making a

mistake, or hitting a quitting point with something hard. Be creative and be prepared to model it.

Lead them through the fixed mindset on the left and then the growth mindset model on the right. For example, imagine that the trigger event is an assignment with fractions. Here is what the flow chart may look like:

Trigger Event:
Poor Grade
Made a Mistake
It's Hard

Thought:
I'm not smart
I can't do this
I hate math

Thought:
I need help
with fractions

Response:
Cry
Escape
Blame others
Self-Criticize

Response:
Ask for help
Take a break
Try again

Practice this type of scenario as often as you can because doing it just once will not magically change your child's mindset. Remember to praise their growth mindset response EVEN in the role play.

Sometimes as parents, you may think "my child just wants to meltdown, they are being difficult, they are being manipulative." The reality is that your child is probably not trying to give you a hard time. They are having a hard time. The difference is significant. This kind of behavior and underlying beliefs causing the behavior can shift. If you want to change remote learning meltdowns, you may need to change your own mindset towards your child's behavior.

The simple shift in perspective from "my child is giving me a hard time," to "my child is having a hard time," is something that can be a game changer for your experience with remote learning. Model for your kids the change you wish to see in your kids.

Take advantage of this opportunity to grow your child's growth mindset and help set them up for the challenges that life brings. Teach your child to change their thoughts, and they will learn to change their world.