

Growth Mindset

At Bampton CE Primary and Nursery School we encourage children to have a **Growth Mindset**.

Growth Mindset Theory:

Research shows that humans' brains have a quality known as 'neuroplasticity' – in other words, it is actually possible to learn new things and make new connections between the neurons in our brains, even as we progress through into adulthood. People who innately recognise this fact tend to bounce back quickly from failures and setbacks and are more likely to explore how they can get better at doing something. They are described as having a 'growth' mindset; they do not define themselves by the outcomes of tasks but by the effort put in.



Growth Mindset in school

We believe that intelligence and ability can be developed through persistence, effort, learning from our mistakes and trying different strategies. So, staff ensure that effort and attitude are rewarded rather than results. We also believe in the power of 'yet'! We discourage children from saying 'I can't do this' and instead, encourage them to say, 'I can't do this **yet**'.



Helping Your Child Develop a Growth Mindset

Try these simple strategies at home:

- Set high expectations. Tempting though it may be to say, 'never mind, try the easier one', this approach doesn't nurture self-esteem. By expecting your child to try something more challenging, you are showing them that you believe they can do it.
- Don't be afraid to criticise your child supportively. Teach your child to see criticism as useful feedback on how to improve. Remind them that it is always the 'mean' judges on reality shows whose criticism means the most to the contestants!
- Don't do everything for your child (at an age-appropriate level). If you do everything for them, you are simply telling them that you think you can do it better, and that they are not good enough.
- Encourage resilience and 'stickability', even when something is tough. It's helpful to talk to children in terms of 'growing their brains' – when something is at its most challenging for them, that is when their brains are making lots of new connections. Encourage them to see that struggling is a sign of learning, not of failure.
- Celebrate mistakes. Children should not be made to feel ashamed of mistakes since mistakes can help us to learn. If in doubt, look online for examples of famous sports people, inventors and other well-known people who struggled with errors, setbacks and failures before achieving their goals.
- Whilst looking at these famous people, find out about their approach to effort. Many people who have achieved great things have also talked at length about the hard work, effort and persistence they have put in, in order to achieve their goals. The modern 'reality-show' approach to fame can persuade children that results can be achieved through little effort; but truly successful people, who have worked hard to achieve their goals, are far better role models.

- Think about how you talk to, question and praise your child. Try swapping the following phrases with some alternatives:

Don't say:	Instead say:
'You're a natural.'	'You're getting better because you're working so hard!'
'Is it too hard for you?'	'It's challenging you, so you must be growing your brain.'
'You're so clever!'	'You always try so hard to do your best.'
'Not everyone is good at that, just do your best.'	'If it's hard, it's because you are learning something new.'
'Why did you get these ones wrong?'	'Let's look at the ones you got wrong and find out why.'

- Similarly, encourage your child to use growth mindset language. Try these:

Don't say:	Instead say:
'I'm no good at this.'	'What am I missing?'
'I'm really good at this.'	'I'm working hard at this.'
'This is too hard.'	'This may take some time and effort.'
'I'll never be as clever as her/him.'	'I'm going to work out how she/he does it so I can do it too.'
'I can't do maths.'	'How can I train my brain to be better at maths?'

Finally, don't be concerned if this language and way of thinking is very new to you, in your own life and in your interactions with your child. It is never too late to change the way you think, and even a small change will have a positive outcome. Try it out and see what happens. Remember – it's not about the end result, it's about the effort you put in to get there!