

THE KEY TO A BRIGHTER, HEALTHIER, HAPPIER CLASSROOM

A Primary Teacher's Guide to Improving Children's
Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Chapter 4 – Growth Mindset

Learning how to cope in stressful situations, and then being mentally strong enough to find a way to solve a problem is a process that should be addressed as soon as a child can understand... 'I can't do it yet, but if I practice, I CAN'.

I'm going to take you through a series of active tasks you can do to teach and promote growth mindset to your children.

Step 1 – Understanding mindset

Describe each mindset to the children and discuss their understanding of each concept.



To have a growth mindset is to look at the world through optimistic eyes. You may see possibilities instead of limitations. Failing is a valuable tool for learning, and others who enjoy success inspire me to do better.



To have a fixed mindset is to be defined by one's own abilities. You may feel that *"I'm either good at it or I'm not"* or *"I don't like to try anything new incase I fail"* or *"If others achieve success and I don't, I feel discouraged to try again."*

Use an appropriate image to represent each concept such as fully-grown TREE as this fixed mindset image with little growth to achieve and a SAPLING with plenty of growth to achieve.

Here is an active learning task using flashcards to help develop their understanding around these mindset concepts.

Create up to 8 flashcards with different FIXED (age appropriate) mindset thoughts such as:

I can't do that because...I'm not clever enough, or

- I'm not strong enough
- I'm not good enough
- I don't have good ideas

Create up to 8 flashcards with different GROWTH (age appropriate) mindset phrases such as:

- I can't do that yet, but I can if I practice
- I'm not sure about the answer yet, but I will keep trying
- It doesn't matter if I get it wrong, I'll learn from my mistakes
- Failing is ok, as I can try a different approach

Flashcard activity 1 (5 – 7 years)

- Children are stood behind their tables and chairs.
- Teacher then holds up flashcards one by one in a random order.
- Children must act out growing like a seed into a plant to illustrate GROWTH MINDSET or create a fixed tree shape with their bodies to illustrate FIXED MINDSET.

Not only is this approach fun, children will retain new information with greater effect if a movement and image is associated with it.

Flashcard activity 2 (7 to 11 years)

- Stick your flashcards around the room safely under chairs and tables so they must bend and up high so they must stretch.
- Task children to move around the room in pairs reading each flashcard and then writing down which statement refers to which mindset.
- Discuss as a group their ideas and any other words or statements that would fit in to each mindset. Children could write their ideas on the board as they think of them.

Step 2 – Changing a Fixed mindset to a Growth mindset

Now that your children have a clearer understanding of each mindset concept it's time to challenge them to move from fixed mindset thoughts to growth mindset statements.

For younger children write simple fixed mindset thoughts on the board, one at a time, and discuss how to change these statements or thoughts into a growth mindset.

You could do this as a matching pairs activity to develop their understanding. Simply create 5 fixed mindset thoughts children may have and then create a growth mindset statement to match it, examples are below:

Fixed mindset thoughts	Growth mindset statements
It's good enough	It's OK, but I can do better!
If I'm not very good at it, I can't improve	Even if I'm not good at it, I can improve
I don't want to look like a failure	If I fail, it's OK because I will keep trying
I don't ask questions in case I sound stupid	Asking questions will help me to improve
I don't like challenges in case I fail	Failing is the best way to learn and succeed

Print off several copies of each fixed thought and growth mindset statement. Cut them up and hand out FIXED thoughts to half of the class and the other half of the class receive GROWTH mindset statements, so each child has either a FIXED thought or GROWTH mindset statement. The task is for children to move around the class finding the fixed thoughts and growth statements that match. It's a great way to keep the children engaged, learning and

developing social skills.

Here's an active learning activity to do with older children using a circuit method.

- Children standing in small groups 4 or 6 around each table.
- Each team must write down as many fixed mindset thoughts as possible on sticky notes, one thought per sticky note. Give them around 5 minutes.
- Each group must move tables clockwise and discuss how to try to change each fixed thought they find on that table from a fixed to growth mindset statement. Allow 1 – 2 minutes per station and move the children on to the next table.
- Repeat until all fixed thoughts on all tables have been discussed and progressed into a growth mindset statement.
- Discuss as group their ideas and understanding of FIXED and GROWTH mindset.

Step 3 – share stories of how growth mindset really works

Share a personal story that happened recently or in your past, where you faced a challenge but stuck at it and found a way to overcome the problem and succeed. Talk to them about how you felt once you had achieved success and not just given up.

Then, challenge children in small groups to discuss and share their own growth mindset stories. You could progress this into an active lesson by asking the groups to choose a story, then dramatise and act out their chosen story to their peers.

Step 4 – Reaffirm your messages

You could collectively agree on a phrase which they can say to themselves or others, reminding them to PERSEVERE even if a task appears too difficult. I've listed a few below:

- If at first, we don't succeed, we try and try and try again.
- A little progress everyday adds up to BIG results.
- Strive for progress not perfection.
- Learning is my superpower!
- Failures are the building blocks for success.
- Ask yourself "what did I do well?" and "what could I do differently?"

Growth Mindset Literacy Activity for 5 – 7 years

For children aged 5 - 7 years, you could create a simple poem around a growth mindset theme such as **The POWER of PRACTICE** to develop the concept of resilience. Ask the children to create movement and actions to this poem either in small friendship groups or as a whole group.

I've written a short verse with actions you could try:

Words	(Actions)
I can't do it, it's too tough,	(grumpy face hands on hips, arms in strong man pose)
I can't do it, but I must,	(grumpy face hands on hips, scared anxious face shaking body)
If I practice, I may get it wrong,	(thumbs up, thumbs down)
But that's OK, as I'll get strong.	(thumbs up, arms in strong man pose)
Now I've practiced, it's plain to see,	(running on the spot, create binoculars with hands)
That PRACTICE will get me where I want to be!	(happy face jumping up and down)

Then the children (in small groups) could use body percussion or a back beat to bring the poem to life. In my experience it works well when children are given time to practice in groups, make it their own, and then perform it to their peers.

Growth Mindset Literacy Activity for 7 and upwards

Older children from 7 years upwards could write their own poem or rap, and then bring it to life with music and actions. Below are the **Power of Yet** lyrics which I produced to use as one of the **imoves growth mindset active blasts**, to encourage children to not give up and use the power of YET! This movie has been one of the most popular active blasts used in primary schools in 2019 in the UK. I'd like to share the lyrics with you for inspiration to your children.

The Power of YET! (Imoves active blast)

This doesn't work!

I can't do it!

I don't know it!

I don't get it!

This doesn't make any sense!

BUT I've got the Power of Yet...

This doesn't work YET.

I can't do it YET.

I don't know YET.

I don't get it YET.

This doesn't make any sense YET.

I've used the Power of YET!

This doesn't work YET, but soon it will!

I can't do it YET, but I'll do it soon!

I don't know YET, but soon I'll know!

I don't get it YET, but soon I will!

This doesn't make any sense YET, soon it will be really clear!

I LOVE the Power of YET!

If you like this and want to get your children more active, build resilience and confidence, you can access all our primary active blasts in our free trial at imoves.com.

Growth Mindset Power Posters

Having positive mindset posters around the classroom like the ones below reinforce the growth mindset messages every day.



Create Growth Mindset posters and stick them on the walls of your classroom. I have created some templates which are available in our Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme. You can find out more www.imoves.com, or children can create their own messages in a poster for the wall of your classroom.