

Raising Kids Who Thrive During COVID-19: A Virtual Panel

Panelists:

Ann Dolin (moderator), from Educational Connections: Tutoring and Test Prep

Maria Zimmitti, PhD, from Georgetown Psychology

Allison Sibley, PhD, from The Sibley Group therapy

Steve Harner, PsyD, from Child and Family Associates of Greater Washington

Sara Weiser, OTR/L, from Good Beginnings Therapy

Our goal: Keeping our kids in a growth mindset during this time of COVID.

What is a growth mindset?

For more information, check out the work of [Carol Dweck](#)

In short, a growth mindset views ability as something that can be developed and not as something that is predetermined or fixed.

- If math is hard, you can work at it and get better.
- If riding a bike is a challenge, you can work on it and get better.

Growth mindset is a lifelong pursuit and a continual process of development. It is something that can be learned and cultivated.

With a growth mindset, setbacks are opportunities and challenges are seen as opportunities not crises.

Develop your own growth mindset first.

Acknowledge and accept the fact that this is something we are all working on. Resist judging yourself when you fall prey to a fixed mindset.

We tend to remember the worst rather than the best. When this happens to you, stop and recognize what occurred, and then move forward.

Identify your areas of fixed mindset so that you are more aware.

Model growth mindset thinking with how we talk to our children about the things they find challenging

- It's less about **what** we say and more about **how** we say it
- Be aware of your tone and body language
- Be aware of the words you use (Do your words communicate a "Yes, but" or a "Yes, and" model of thinking?)

How to help your child develop a growth mindset

Talk to your child about the two different kinds of mindsets—fixed and growth.

Share examples from your own life of ways in which you are trying to shift from fixed to growth.

Explain that just like people exercise to build muscle and take care of their physical health, developing a growth mindset is a way to build brain muscle and take care of mental health.

Boost mindset by boosting a sense of security, which is very needed now.

- Security can be boosted by focusing on confidence, competence and connection
- Confidence is how you feel and is boosted with a sense of “I can do it. We can do it.”
- Competence is what you know and is boosted with a sense of “I’m okay, you’re okay.”
- Connection is how you feel in relation to others and is boosted with a sense of “I’m with you.”

When your child starts falling into negative thinking and a fixed mindset:

- Confronting the negative thoughts and challenge how likely they are to occur them.
- Look for alternative ways of thinking that are more likely than the negative one
- Focus on the most positive outcomes rather than anticipating negatives and catastrophizing.
- When your child gets into “What if…” thinking, refocus on “What now”—what is happening right now and what do we have control over.

Have a family “Just right” challenge

- For every task, there is a sweet spot that feels just right. Try to find that.
- Too easy is often not stimulating enough
- Too hard can frustrate to the point of self-defeat

Have a family growth challenge

- Everyone finds something they currently have a fixed mindset about and works on it for 1-2 weeks
- Then the family has a showcase to share and talk about their work.

How to give praise to develop a growth mindset

Identify what it is you are praising them for

- You worked really hard to get your shoes on after the first time I asked you. Thank you.

Acknowledge the process and not the product

- Instead of, “You got all of those correct!” try this, “I noticed you took your time on this and that made me really proud of you.”

Recognize the effort not the talent it took to get there

- Instead of: “You’re a good writer.” try this, “You worked really hard on this story and I enjoy it so much.”

Contact the NPS Counselors

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