

# Growth Mindset

At Whittier Elementary School...



A Parent Guide About Growth Mindset at Whittier

## **So...what is this mindset stuff my kids keep talking about?**

Simply put, there are two types of mindset, growth and fixed. A growth mindset is the belief that intelligence can be grown or developed with persistence, effort, and a focus on learning. A fixed mindset is the belief that we are born with given intelligence, skills, or talents and those can not be changed.

“Mindset change is not about picking up a few pointers here and there. It’s about seeing things in a new way. When people change to a growth mindset, they change from a judge-and-be-judged framework to a learn-and-help-learn framework. Their commitment is to growth, and growth takes plenty of time, effort and mutual support.”

-Carol S. Dweck

## **Brain-Based Research**



Current brain research indicates that the brain has the ability to change, adapt, and “rewire” itself. This is called neuroplasticity. Think of a person recovering from a stroke. The brain begins rewiring so that patients can speak and walk again, if they are willing to work hard and re-learn these skills. The brain creates new connections and eliminates connections that are not used.

At Whittier, we believe in teaching our students about how the brain works so that they can have a deeper understanding of growth mindset.

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## Growth Mindset School Culture

There are four essential components that we integrate into our school culture

- Equitable access to advanced learning opportunities - Differentiation
- Deliberate Cultivation of SEL skills such as perseverance, resiliency and grit
- Student understanding of neural networks in the brain
- Growth mindset feedback and praise

## The Skills

Embracing growth mindset is much more than just saying, “I have a growth mindset.” Students will experience and be taught social-emotional and growth mindset skills throughout their experience at Whittier. These skills below have been identified as essential skills for life and career success.



## The Learning Targets

**GROWTH MINDSET LEARNERS...**

**ACCEPT FEEDBACK**

**I CAN USE MY GROWTH MINDSET AND ACCEPT FEEDBACK.**

**I CAN SET GOALS AND CARRY OUT STEPS TO ACCOMPLISH MY GOALS.**

**GROWTH MINDSET LEARNERS...**

**EMPATHIZE**

**I CAN SHOW EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING.**

**GROWTH MINDSET LEARNERS...**

**INITIATE & PERSEVERE**

**I CAN TAKE INITIATIVE AND PERSEVERE.**

**GROWTH MINDSET LEARNERS...**

**PROBLEM SOLVE & PERSEVERE**

**I CAN PROBLEM SOLVE AND PERSEVERE.**

**GROWTH MINDSET LEARNERS...**

**ACCEPT FEEDBACK**

**REVISE**

**SELF-REFLECT**

**I CAN ACCEPT FEEDBACK, SELF-REFLECT, AND REVISE MY WORK.**

## Four Phase Approach

Monthly Grade Level Assemblies - Direct Teaching of Skills

Classroom Read Alouds with Reflective Questions - Engaging Read Alouds Correlated to Each Skill

School-Wide Classroom Experiences - Engaging Experiences to Enforce Each Skill

Application of Skills in Problem-Based Learning Format - Authentic Application in Spring 2018

Our School Improvement Team will continue to provide professional development for teachers. All teachers have received a copy of *Mindsets in the Classroom: Building a Culture of Success and Student Achievement in Schools* by Mary Cay Ricci. Last year we read and studied *Mindset* by Carol Dweck.

## How can I help my child at home?

Mary Cay Ricci, author of *Mindsets in the Classroom: Building a Culture of Success and Student Achievement in Schools*, suggests that building resilience in our children is key. Here is what she suggests:

- **Use growth mindset praise.** Praise the willingness to try, effort, patience, and practice. Do not attribute success to “being smart” or “being the best.”
- **Model flexibility.** Kids aren’t born thinking flexibly. They need modeling to see adults handle challenging situations without anger or frustration.
- **Adopt a “glass half full” mentality at home.** Setbacks help us grow. Model a positive attitude when faced with challenges.
- **Help children find their own niche.** Give kids the opportunity to try lots of things until they find an area they thrive in.
- **Resource: Mindset Kit for Parents:** <https://www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents>

“If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don’t have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence”

-Carol S. Dweck

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