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## Promoting Motivation and Productive Effect to Empower Students

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Promoting Motivation and Productive Effect to Empower Students

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to inform educators and caregivers about the benefits of promoting motivation and productive effect to empower young children in their educational journey. The research looks at the effects of fostering a positive mindset in young children and how it can change their mind about education. In this research, we will look at practical ways to of encouraging growth mindset as well as understanding the factors that can effect how a child views learning. We will look at ways a growth mindset can effect the child's brain and future success in academia. Understanding parental styles is one of the keys in understanding thow to foster a growth mindset and motivation. Educators and caregivers will learn how to set realistic goals and expectations for their children and how they can be their best advocate. We will look at the effects and guidelines when promoting positive reinforcement and healthy ways of promoting self esteem. My hope is that I can help show educators and parents how to foster a growth mindset and show them that grit and failure is okay as it is all apart of the learning process. The research shows that mistakes are okay and if young children keep trying, they can improve their skills.

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### **Introduction**

In the education world, teachers understand that children either struggle or succeed with academics. But what if I told you it's not always because of their giftedness that children succeed, but because they are encouraged enough to believe that they are adequate and succeed? A clever man named T.C. Graves first defined the "placebo effect" in a published paper in *The Lancet* in 1920. Essentially, he discovered that people can take a simple sugar pill containing no drugs, but they still think this drug can cure their problems and believe they are fixed. Now obviously, doctors won't do this to their clients since it would be unethical. But there is something to be said here about believing that you can be better. I found in my research that a growth mindset has similar effects to the placebo effect. When one believes they can achieve something, they are more likely to achieve that specific goal through positive reinforcement than negative reinforcement. My goal is to help teachers, caregivers, and parents know how to help shade a growth mindset in their students/children, and in turn create an overall love for learning.

Through my research, I have observed that children can be coached into believing that they can achieve their goals, as long as the child is being nurtured in a positive, nonjudgmental environment. Our goal as teachers is to encourage a growth mindset. We want all students to feel as though they are being encouraged to perfect the quality of their learning, rather than the performance. There are two major concepts I will talk about through the duration of this paper. Those concepts are growth mindset and fixed mindset. A growth mindset is also a "not yet" mindset. This phrase "not yet" encourages students to keep working hard to improve. For example... "Math is hard, but if I keep trying, I can get better at it." A student with a growth mindset will view challenges as opportunities to grow. Children will begin to see that if they work hard enough, they can learn to do or be anything they want. As role models to young children, we always want to see that. Children should be taught that with hard work, anything is



possible and even if they do not get the result they were first expecting, there is value in the process. As educators, we should care more about process over product. Show the students that their hard work is still valuable even if they fail. After all, challenges help everyone grow. Educators should do their best to enforce the concept that effort and attitude determine our abilities. When building a growth mindset, feedback should always be constructive. But be careful to not over-praise the child as it will become meaningless if done the wrong way. Young children that have a growth mindset are inspired by the success and hard work of others. And finally, children who obtain a growth mindset will be open to trying new things.

### ***The Effects of a Fixed Mindset***

The opposite of what is discussed above is called a fixed mindset. Children with a fixed mindset will see failure as the limiting factor of their abilities. They believe that they are “either good at something or they are not.” There is no room for growth or the hard work that comes before a task. Young children with a fixed mindset will see their abilities as unchanging. They don't like to be challenged and hard work will either cause them to feel anxious or will discourage them from trying. When a child has a fixed mindset, they will see their potential and pre-determined rather than fluid. Overall, frustration will cause them to give up, feedback and criticism will be taken very personally, and the child will shut down altogether.

### ***The Power of Yet and Believing You Can Improve***

In the Ted Talk, “The Power of Believing You Can Improve” by Dr. Carol Dweck, she encourages educators to have the mindset of “not yet” with their students. Dr Dweck believes that teachers should “praise wisely, not praising intelligence or talent. That has failed. Don't do that anymore. But praising the process that kids engage in, their effort, their strategies, their

focus, their perseverance, their improvement. This process praise creates kids who are hardy and resilient...”(Dweck). Students with a growth mindset see mistakes as ways to learn, embrace challenges, and persist in the face of setbacks. People will face challenges all their life. As teachers, it is our jobs to help students see that they can persevere through any problem and can grow in the process.

### **The Iceberg Analogy**

Success is an iceberg. When people see an iceberg, they only see the top, which is such a small amount compared to the mass of it all. About 10% of an iceberg's bulk is visible above the water, with the rest 90% hidden beneath the waves as it floats on the ocean. With this said, when people see the success of others they don't see everything else that has come with their success, the 90% of the iceberg below the surface. What I mean by this is that people don't typically see the persistence, the failures, sacrifices, disappointments, good habits, hard work, and dedication. You see, just like icebergs that have so much more beneath surface, people have lots of other things that had to take place to reach the top. As an educator, it is important to teach young children about the iceberg illusion. The things worth having in education take grit, perseverance, mistakes, and growth. Students, and everyone else, get frustrated by failure, especially if they see their peers succeeding where they failed. The best way to help their frustrations is to visualize success by showing kids what success really looks like with the Iceberg Illusion. All anyone see is the tip of the iceberg, they do not see the time things went right for others. What students often don't see are all the times it went wrong for people and all of the hard work poured into both the failed attempts and the successful ones. They only see what went right, and not all the times it went wrong before they figured out how to make it right. Learning is a beautiful process of getting it wrong sometimes, and getting it right the others. With this said, the next time a student

is despondent because they didn't do as well as they liked, don't treat it like a failure, but rather like the bottom of the success iceberg. Help them visualize success. As an educator, show them that failure is only a step to reach the top of the success iceberg and that hard work and dedication can help them reach the top.

### **Helping Young Children Visualize Their Success**

In order to help young children visualize their success, educators have to guide them to be self-efficient. In the textbook, “Essentials of Educational Psychology” (5th Edition), I found several practical ways that educators can help their students gain self efficiency. The first thing I would like to mention is to “give Students control over some aspects of the classroom life” (Ormrod, 2023, p. 188). Request assistance. Children need to feel wanted and productive, just like parents do. Provide a little selection. Give them the option to select either "You may \_\_\_\_\_" or "You may \_\_\_\_\_." Allow the child to decide when something is finished. Establish routines for the child. Collaborate to find answers, listen to their ideas, and ask them questions.

### ***Protect and Enhance Students Self-Efficiency and Self Worth***

The next thing that educators can do to help their students gain self efficacy is to simply “protect and enhance students’ self-efficiency and overall sense of competence and self worth” (Ormrod, 2023, p. 191). A few great ways to do this would be practicing writing self affirmations. Have your students set goals for their future self by writing down where they can see themselves in the future. Next, have your students write down what they think they are doing good at, and some things they want to improve on. Make sure that this activity is positive and uplifting. Make sure the students are being encouraged to find the good within themselves. Care

about your student's dreams, interests and success. Act interested in who/what they want to become.

### ***Present Realistic Challenges***

The next thing that educators should do to promote self efficiency in the classroom is to “present challenges that students can realistically accomplish” (Ormrod, 2023, p. 192). So here are a few ways you can challenge students without overwhelming them. The first thing is to group different levels of learners together. When presenting challenges to students, group advanced students with other advanced students. Teachers can adjust education to a higher degree of difficulty, length, and speed by grouping accelerated learners together. Providing difficult content that piques their interest and motivates them to study more about a subject is typically the best way to support advanced learners. Accelerated learners can interact with classmates who have similar interests and passions when they are placed together. Another appropriate way to challenge students is to give them opportunities to lead. Giving students leadership responsibilities can be a stimulating way to support and encourage their development both academically and personally. Taking on leadership roles causes students to go through a process that builds their self-esteem, facilitates clear communication, and encourages a greater sense of accountability. Allow advanced students to be a helping buddy to another student that might be struggling in a topic. Students may better manage their time and duties and regain control over their surroundings by taking the initiative and mentoring others. This can help kids feel less stressed and anxious so they can concentrate more on their academics and personal growth.

### *Offer Desirable Incentives*

Another appropriate way to challenge students is to offer them desirable incentives. This approach also follows the positive reinforcement method which is becoming more and more prevalent in today's educational world. Offering rewards to students is a fantastic approach to push them but not too far. Students are more inclined to push themselves to reach their objectives when they receive rewards for their hard work. The students may become more motivated and responsible as a result of this, even when the work at hand is challenging. Working towards group incentives with young children would look like, certificates of achievement, small prizes like stickers, pencils, erasers, classroom supplies, books, extra recess time, choosing a class activity or game, sitting at a special spot in the classroom, classroom parties for meeting certain goals or achievements, theme days like pajama days, picnics as a break from the routine, outdoor lessons, or nature walks.

### *Communicating Optimistic Expectations*

Another great way to encourage self-efficacy in young children is to “form and communicate optimistic expectations and attributions” (Ormrod, 2023, p. 193). Teachers can communicate expectations to young children by displaying the classroom rules in the room. Behavior expectations should ideally be created for the entire school or center and serve as a foundation for instructors in enforcing rules and guiding students. For very young children, behavior expectations tend to be vague and broad ideas, therefore teachers should make rules that assist explain the expectations as they relate to particular activities and situations. Teachers can still set guidelines and expectations to direct children's conduct even in centers without these kinds of policies.

I consider these kinds of broad, overarching objectives that we have in mind when I consider behavior expectations. These are things that go far beyond anything we accomplish in the classroom or anywhere else. Thus, it involves acting responsibly, with courtesy, and with safety. Being a team player is one of the values we uphold at our school. Our desired beneficial activities are arranged according to these major notions. Specific acts that fit under these categories come to me when I think about regulations. The standards at the school where I work at are for the entire school. However, after sitting down with my children, I realized that, well, being responsible doesn't really mean anything to them.

### ***Setting Behavioral Expectations on Day One***

Teachers should clearly express behavioral expectations starting at day one of school. For example, teachers should set the expectation that children should be safe in the classroom, the playground, and the hallways. This rule could be visualized with pictures and key words of people using walking feet and using gentle touches to friends and things around them in the classroom. For the playground, teachers could display pictures with key words of children sitting on bikes, slides, and swings and continuing to use gentle touches while outdoors. For hallway rules, young children should be guided to use walking feet, use inside voice, use gentle touches, and stay together. Children should be guided by educators to be responsible. A few rules for the classroom might look like following directions and no talking when the teacher is talking. Playground rules for demonstrating responsibility would look like following directions and putting toys away. Hallway rules should be to follow directions of teacher. Another good classroom rule that teachers should incorporate is to be respectful. In the classroom, children are to use kind words to others and themselves, on the playground they are to continue using kind words and take turns. The hallway rules should consist of using kind words and quiet voice.

These are just a few practical rules and ways that teachers can guide their students to good behavior and set clear expectations. The biggest thing here is to remember that creating this environment really just helps kids know what to do and what to expect.

### ***Mastery Goals Over Performance Goals***

The last thing I want to add when helping children develop their self efficiency is to “focus students’ attention more on mastery goals than on performance goals” (Ormrod, 2023, p. 195). Mastery goals focus on long-term achievements whereas performance goals focuses on short term achievements in the moment. Mastery goals prefers challenging tasks while performance goals avoids challenging tasks for fear of appearing ‘dumb.’ Students that have mastery goals focus on task mastery whereas students with performance goals

When students adopt mastery-oriented goals, they engage in more effective learning strategies, such as learning from their mistakes, changing strategies that don't work, and seeking help when necessary. They also are more intrinsically motivated, the gold standard of motivation. Performance goals lead to a focus on the outcome rather than the process of learning, such as achieving success by any means, avoiding the appearance of incompetence, and being more susceptible to extrinsic sources of motivation (Elliott & Dweck, 2005; Harackiewicz et al., 2002).

Therefore, it is only natural that mastery objectives have a greater impact on long-term results than on short-term ones. Mastery goals are linked to active cognitive engagement and the importance and effectiveness of responsive cognitive strategies like organizing, planning, elaborating, and integrating when learning.

### **The Power of a Growth Mindset**

When it comes to the three key elements of education: reading, writing, and arithmetic, I am discovering that academic achievement happens when they are nurtured through a growth mindset, it's not all about nature. My research promotes ways of motivating students and young children in the classroom. Educators are my primary audience, as they are around their students. Educators can help students reach their fullest potential by encouraging them to build grit, self-worth, and self-efficiency and promote a growth mindset. We want all students to feel as though they are being encouraged to perfect the quality of their learning, rather than their performance. A growth mindset means believing that one can improve his or her skills and knowledge through hard work, dedication, and resilience. It implies that one's skills and abilities are not fixed but can be developed over time. Educators must learn to motivate and empower students so that they develop a positive attitude toward learning and can set and achieve their goals. Encouraging productive effect and a growth mindset in students protects and enhances students' self-efficiency and overall sense of competence and self-worth.

One of the most common subjects that children struggle with is math. In the journal, "Positive Mindset May Prime Students' Brains for Math; Scans Provide Support for Theory" by Sarah D. Sparks, she defines a growth mindset in which "a student believes intelligence or other skills can be improved with training and practice, rather than being fixed and inherent traits." Not only will a growth mindset make students more confident and qualified to succeed in math skills, but it will also help them enhance their ability to keep trying when they fail. Sparks states with full assurance that it will "prime students' brains to think better." She also explains how it can help students develop their math achievement and mental development. Sparks chose to focus on the subject of math because it tends to be associated with a 'fixed mindset.'



**Brain Scans Prove a Positive Mindset Works**

Lang Chen, a Stanford University postdoctoral fellow in cognitive psychology and neuroscience, completed a study and he found that students with higher positive mindset levels in math were more accurate at identifying correct and incorrect math problems, even after controlling for differences in IQ, age, working memory, reading ability, and math anxiety. In the study with Chen, he has 243 students ages 7 to 9 participating in math-related activities. In these activities, the students would be tested for their numerical problem-solving and math reasoning in word problems, reading ability, working memory, and math anxiety levels. Chen also gave the students a survey designed to identify positive-mindset groups in math, such as questions about “how much they enjoyed solving challenging problems and how competent they felt in learning math.” After this, he selected 47 of the students to stare at a blank spot of look at a series of math problems and identify if they were correct or not. He and his team used functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI, a noninvasive method of identifying brain activity by measuring changes in blood flow in the brain.

When Chen and his colleagues examined the scans, they found that “students with higher positive-mindset levels in math were more accurate at identifying correct and incorrect math problems, even after controlling for differences in IQ, age, working memory, reading ability, and math anxiety.” He also discovered that students with a lower positive mindset level were likewise associated with lower math performance, than people with a positive mindset. Carol Dweck, the Stanford psychologist, commented on Chen’s work and stated that it was very exciting. Dweck was the first educational psychologist who coined the terms “growth” and “fixed” mindsets. Though Dweck was not involved in the case study by Chen, they wanted her opinion on the growth mindset. She was quoted saying, “My hunch is that often in the fixed

mindset, your mind is preoccupied with 'Is this hard?' 'Will I look smart?' 'What will happen if I don't do this?' 'I'm not good at math,' instead of getting that brain ready to do it.” This being said, Dweck is a firm believer that you have to prep the brain by embracing the challenges and going at them with an open mind, rather than going at something and expecting to fail.

Sparks also touched on a similar case study that showed the effects of growth mindsets on performance anxiety or stereotype threats. The goal was to get students to learn from their mistakes, and not obsess over them. The 2011 study by Jason Moser, a neuropsychologist at Michigan State University, found people with a high growth mindset were more likely to show conscious attention to mistakes and learn from them more quickly. This was a great splice of information for my research. There is so much to be said and learned about when it comes to learning from our mistakes. My goal as an educator is to help children realize, it's okay to make mistakes. Mess-ups do not define a person's worth, but they have to teach us to try again, and this produces grit. Grit is another topic I want to cover in my final paper.

### **The Brain Does Not Separate Motivation From Performance**

Many cognitive scientists and researchers have previously thought of motivation as something completely separate from intellectual performance or ability. However, more modern psychologists and neurologists are finding out that the brain does not separate these things. Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, an associate professor of education, psychology, and neuroscience at the University of Southern California, is quoted saying, “The emotion and thought structures in the brain are totally entwined, totally docked in the brain,” she said. She has found the cognitive habits often associated with a fixed mindset--like focusing on grades or considering errors a threat to your identity--can make the brain react emotionally to the wrong things during learning.” “If you are trying to do the math and worrying about whether you are going to fail or

not, rather than the process of doing math, ... that is not deep learning," she said." Mindset can change a student's ability to learn and retain information. I am looking forward to learning how to promote students' learning, from all different backgrounds and learning styles. Encouraging students to be positive is only one small way to make a difference in their learning development, but yet it does so much.

### **The Keys to Building Resilience**

The article, "Who Will We Become After the Coronavirus?" For students, explains one of the key's to building resilience. I found this article to be extremely helpful when understanding teaching strategies through difficult times. I asked myself, what are some of the ways teachers helped students during COVID-19, even though all hope seemed lost? Nassif opens things up by defining what resilience is. She writes that "scientists define resilience as the capacity to absorb disturbance and then reorganize to regain one's identity." Nassif stresses the idea that resilience is not about changing oneself, but rather, it is about evolving. The evolution of a student's mindset evolves from what is learned or experienced in trials. The key word I'm gathering here is also—adaptation. Nassif states, "We are not all born resilient, but we are all born with the capacity to acquire resilience."

In education, there is something known as The Three R's; reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nassif believes educators should seek to instill a fourth R; resilience. During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents and teachers were not the only ones who suffered from feeling pressures like being under-prepared and underresourced. Children were also grieving the absence of their playgrounds and playmates, the structure of the classroom and routines they had each day, and their sports teams music classes, and clubs. Children were grieving the physical absence of their teachers and grieving for graduations, proms, and birthday parties that were postponed or

never to happen. Teachers were still supposed to teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Nassif has been questioning, how educators can help teach these kids resilience in the face of all these events.

### **Young Children Should Learn the Three W's**

Nassif believes that children should regain their identity, from everything that was lost by applying and teaching the Three W's. The first is "worth." Nassif says, "Every student needs to believe that he or she is worthy--worthy of our time, our interest, our belief in them, worthy of our highest expectations and, at this moment especially, worthy of our feelings of incompetence. We do not know all the answers and do not have to pretend otherwise."

The second W is "will." Nassif says, "The discipline and courage to achieve is essential. Will incorporates grit and sustained persistence to overcome obstacles when pursuing your passion or believing in the justice or rightness of a situation." As we have heard it said, "When there is a will, there is a way."

The third W Nassif explores is "wonder." "Students must have a belief in the promise, a belief in the more that we can become, as well as a belief that we can make a difference by choosing to create more for our world. They must have a curiosity fed by the optimism of all that is possible, even when experiencing grief." Worth, will, and wonder. This is how teachers can help their students amid loss and tragedy. However, teachers choose to instill the three W's would be for their student's benefit. But it also proves the point of my first article by Sparks. You see worth, will, and wonder are all connected and required when it comes to having a growth mindset.

### **How to Help Children Love Learning**

This leads me to the next question from my research. How can teachers help children to love learning? The author of the article I selected was Annette V. Janes and the title of the Journal is called; *Motivated Minds: Raising Children To Love Learning*. Janes wants readers to know first off that popular parenting aids emphasize nurture over nature— though they are both important factors they hold different roles. At the beginning of her writing, she quotes Conkling, a freelance writer specializing in health and alternative medicine. She notes that “experience and environment can change and improve children's intelligence and that early stimulation can alter the size, structure, and chemistry of a child's brain (“In fact, 70 percent of your child's brain development will be complete by the time she blows out her first birthday candle” she writes in the introduction).” Conkling used the research she has attained over the past 20 years to argue that even geniuses would not achieve their potential without the proper stimulation.

#### ***Parents Play a Key Role***

The research also concludes that maximum neural development can “take place in the womb, talking to your baby and appreciating her special gifts, encouraging artistic expression and speech development, and making good food choices.” In a perfect world, every person deemed to be a parent would give their child attention, affection, and approval. The research shows it is necessary to develop our brain functions. Unfortunately, in many families these days, the parents aren't around their children like they used to be. Especially with families whose dynamics are double income, and the parents have very little involvement with the child. Another reason these types of interactions are becoming less common is because of electronics and the constant stimulation of noise and pictures. This affects children's development because

they are becoming more stimulated by technology and screens than they are by human contact and playing with a mom or dad.

Janes also mentions someone by the name of Stipek, who is the dean of the School of Education at Stanford University, and Seal, a freelance psychology and education journalist. Stipek believes that most children are born with the desire to learn but that this desire starts to decline at about middle school. This has caused me to wonder why, considering children become more developed and cognitively involved as they get older. Stipek believes that “rather than focusing solely on boosting self-esteem (which she says can “do damage”), she advises parents to foster competence, autonomy, and relationship security in children.” One of the ways she encourages parents and teachers to do this is by encouraging them to connect book learning to the real world.

### **It is Okay to Make Mistakes**

One of the many reasons children are afraid of making mistakes is because they are afraid mistakes will make them look bad. Because children face this fear of rejection and lower self-image, they will avoid challenges. As I have mentioned before, challenging children and teaching them about trial and error is key to growth. The growth stretches more than cognitively, but also emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually. Educators need to create a safe environment where children are not afraid to make mistakes but embrace challenges. Without challenges, there is no growth. Without growth, people will never reach self-actualization.

In the last paragraph, Nassif, made me think about the effects of screen time and technology on kids and their attitude toward learning and being in school. With more families having two parents with full-time jobs, leads room for less monitored screen time, and technology to serve as a babysitter. I could write a book on this topic, but I will keep it relevant

to my next point. Technology is not always effective when it comes to teaching children about grit and a growth mindset. I think educators of young children should avoid screen time as much as possible.

### **Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior**

In the article, “Association of Screen Time with Internalizing, Externalizing Behavior Problems in Children,” it is mentioned that researchers did a study on how screen time affects children’s ability to think for themselves, think clearly, and exercise patience; which is a large part of having a growth mindset. The researchers “assessed the association between the duration of screen time and externalizing (such as aggression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms) and internalizing (such as anxiety, depression) behavior problems.” Unfortunately, the absence of any technology is nearly impossible in today's age, so we cannot eliminate their screen time. However, teachers have to ability to supplement technology for the children’s learning, rather than giving the students unlimited access and substituting their learning with technology. According to “Fountain Head Montessori: Is Technology Integrated into Montessori Learning?” Shandy Cole, states that “Hands-on, real-world learning is always preferable to learning something by looking at a screen.”

When it comes to teaching styles that help motivate children to build grit and develop perseverance, Montessori’s style of teaching is best. The value of Montessori education in schools has become more prevalent in today’s screen-obsessed world. Kids can be more self-disciplined and self-motivated. Children can talk, experiment, and learn by not hearing. At Montessori schools, children will learn from one another by allowing multiple age levels to be taught together in the same classroom. Dr. Montessori founded this type of education to encourage children to experience a love for learning, rather than being force-fed information in

the typical education lecture/lesson. This is exactly what I am trying to help educators see. Children need to develop a love for learning, and it does not come the same for each student. Every child comes from a different background and has unique needs, hands-on learning, when kids can practice with trial and error will help them to gain grit for their learning and future goals.

### **Environment Influences Child Brain Development**

I have learned that a child's brain development is greatly influenced by their environment. Parents and teachers can make or break a child's growth and development by how they talk to them and encourage them in their learning. According to news reporting out of Cleveland, Ohio, by NewsRx editors, research stated, "Parental behavior problems have long-term effects on children's limbic brain structures and functions. Parental behavior problems-related brain changes in children may lead to mental disorders and behavior dysfunction later in life."

Internalizing behavioral problems and externalizing behavioral problems were shown to influence the limbic structures of normally developing children and adolescents. The limbic system is the part of the brain involved in behavioral and emotional responses to different situations. People need these behaviors to work for their survival like fight or flight responses. The parent factor is key to making sure children first feel emotionally secure before their other needs are met up to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

The concept of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was introduced in 1943 and has been fundamental to understanding the theory of human motivation and behavior. The theory is that as



long as the base needs of the pyramid are satisfied, then the person can move to the next level and eventually reach the top of the pyramid, self-actualization.

The bottom of the pyramid is physiological needs. This includes air, water, food, shelter, sleep clothing, and reproduction. The next level of the pyramid is the safety needs. This includes everything from personal security to employment, resources, health, and property. The next level is love and belonging. This would include friendship, intimacy, family, and a sense of connection with others. The second to last level is esteem. The esteem portion includes respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, and freedom. The last level is the tip of the pyramid, it is called self-actualization. This means the desire to become the most that one person can be. So in this theory, a person's basic needs must be met so that their psychological needs are met, so that their self-fulfillment needs are reached. So how does Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs affect a child's learning?

When all the levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are met, young children can finally show their full ability and eagerness for learning. The higher up in the hierarchy a student is, the better the motivation, and therefore, the student will have a more effective learning experience. If a child is feeling hungry or tired, they might not be able to focus in class and learn about adding and subtracting. Many times poor nourishment can affect a child's ability to focus and make connections with the real world. Teachers must exercise patience and empathy with their students. That child might be acting up or unable to sit still because they were not fed breakfast or dinner the night before. Or perhaps that child is acting up because they did not get a restful sleep if the family lives in their car. You never know what a child has to deal with when they leave the classroom. Teachers should always be mindful of this.

**Parental Engagement is Key**

In the article, “Parental engagement that makes a difference. Educational Leadership...” the author Finns touches on several different parenting styles/strategies to help children be successful in school and the learning paths. They say “Monitoring children's use of time is identified as important in all studies of parental engagement. Research has shown that parents of academically successful students make sure they are informed about their youngsters' activities in school, their school performance, and whether or not they have been assigned homework; and they make certain that a place and time are allocated for homework.” In other words, parents of statistically higher-than-average students are actively involved with their child’s learning and they stay in the loop when it comes to homework and activities.

In addition, school performance is better among students whose parents know where they are, who they are with, and when they plan to come home. These parents also exercise reasonable control over nonschool activities - television viewing, in particular.” Parents can be some of the best tutors for their children. The familiarity of the child in their home environment, compared to the structure of the classroom, can serve as a great comfort to the child’s further learning development.

Furthermore, “Children whose parents converse regularly with them about school experiences perform better academically than children who rarely discuss school with their parents.” Parents should always be willing to have a listening ear about difficulties that their child may be facing as well as their successes. When a parent takes time out of their busy day to have a face-to-face conversation with their child they will find that it plays a major supportive role in encouraging persistence when schoolwork or relationships at school are troublesome. I want to stress the importance of the phrase “face-to-face” here. With the busy moving world, it

can be easy to look down at your phone when your child is speaking to you about something important to them, I implore you to not do this.

### ***Connecting With The Child on a Personal Level***

It is certainly understandable that you cannot take your eyes off every task you are performing, but if you give your child that 1-2 minutes it might be just what they need to feel validated. What an easy investment into their young lives! Not only will your child feel encouraged when they leave the room, but connecting with your child on a personal and respectful level can spark the joy that is needed to share new experiences and information about their lives with you. It is also great to model eye contact with your child so that they will gain confidence and be able to practice the same. The point here is to take time for your child, it will promote a lasting relationship and sense of value in their lives.

### ***Read Often***

In “Parental engagement that makes a difference” Finns point out another germane set of activities, particularly for younger children, consisting of parents reading to and being read to by their children. Finns states “The exact form that each of these takes may differ from one family to another, but research shows that each is important. Studies of student resilience indicate that many of these same behaviors explain why some students succeed academically despite the adversities posed by poverty, minority status, or native language” How wonderful is that? Finns acknowledge that it doesn’t matter what socioeconomic status the child is or where they come from, but rather the act of parents sharing that one-on-one quiet moment with their child in reading a story. These are the moments that kids will not forget and it will encourage them to be proactive in their reading and school work.

*Children Can Manage and Organize Their Time*

Children can learn to manage and organize their time starting at a very young age. Managing and organizing time starts within the home and transfers over to their future careers and schooling. Finn's study found that "parents of successful students actively helped them organize their daily and weekly schedules and checked regularly to see whether they were following the routines." Other similar studies have shown that children who are involved in regular routines at home tend to have overall better school performances.

A child's school performance is better among those whose parents know where they are, who they are with, and when they plan to come home. This is following the appropriate authoritative parenting style and guidelines. These parents also exercise reasonable control over nonschool activities - television viewing, in particular. With technology being everywhere and easily accessible, parents must be aware of what their children are doing on their screens and how much time they spend on certain apps. There are many ways parents can accomplish this with their child's devices. The first thing they can do is set screen time limits. This will help ensure that a child is not spending too much time playing a particular game or app. The other thing they should be doing is setting restrictions on their child's device to protect them from inappropriate and potentially dangerous content on the web. If a child is exposed to inappropriate content on the web, it can lead a child to normalize and become desensitized to high-risk behavior.

Parents must be engaged with their children rather than disengaged. In his work on child-rearing practices, Steinberg (1996) described parents who are "disengaged" - that is, who are authoritarian in their interactions and parental styles with their children, also fail to provide guidance or structure in the family setting, and who fail to provide the emotional support needed

when the child encounters problems. Steinberg found that children whose parents are disengaged have the “poorest developmental patterns, lacking psychological maturity, social competence, and self-esteem.” The problems encountered by these young children in and out of school multiply as they continue their school years.

### **Understanding the Different Parenting Styles**

Another key to being a positive teacher and parent to young children is understanding the different parenting styles and how they impact children. The 4 types of parenting styles we study in education are authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. While there are multiple parenting styles, authoritative parenting is the style parents should strive for. With this parenting style, the parent is saying with their discipline strategies, “Yes, I love you but no you cannot have everything you want, and here is why...” While there are several different parenting styles, experts say they only influence the overall outcome of a child's personality.

#### ***The Authoritative Parent***

Each parenting style holds a different level of responsiveness and demandingness towards a child. The authoritative parenting style solves problems together with the child. The authoritative parenting style sets clear rules and reasonable expectations for the child. Parents who use this style of parenting have open communication with their children and establish natural consequences when those boundaries are crossed. Research has repeatedly shown that children raised by authoritative parents tend to be more capable, happy, and successful. According to Baumrind, children of authoritative parents: Are self-confident about their abilities to learn new things. Develop good social skills.

### ***The Permissive Parent***

The next parenting style I want to look at is known as the “permissive parent.” A permissive parenting style is child-driven. The kid calls the shots, gets away with inappropriate behavior, and tends to have manipulative behavior to ensure they get their way. The parents in this parenting style rarely give or enforce any rules or boundaries. Parents with permissive parenting styles will overindulge children to avoid conflict or deal with a ‘meltdown.’ Because permissive parenting involves a lack of demands and expectations, children raised by parents with this style tend to grow up without a strong sense of self-discipline. They may be more unruly in school due to the lack of boundaries in the home and may be less academically motivated than many of their peers.

### ***The Neglectful Parent***

The next parenting style that will be discussed in this research is called the neglectful parent. Neglectful parents will repeatedly be uninvolved and absent in their child’s life. The parents will provide very little amounts of nurturing behavior or child guidance. Parents will be indifferent to the child’s social-emotional and behavioral needs. Children of uninvolved parents may feel unimportant and unloved due to a lack of attention and affection from their mom or dad. This may also affect the child’s confidence levels towards their abilities and decisions, as they get no guidance, not even a pat on the back for a job well done. The child’s personality is impacted because research indicates low self-esteem, confidence, and self-worth. Overall, there is a low drop-off in academic performance for children with neglectful parents.

### *The Authoritarian Parent*

The last parenting style to take note of is the authoritarian parenting style. Essentially this parenting style in simple terms is “No, I don’t love you and no, you cannot have everything you want.” The authoritarian parenting style is always parent-driven. Parents who practice this style set strict rules and unreasonable punishments for their children. There is a one-way communication street between the parents and child. Parents who practice this style of parenting have a very small amount of consideration for the child’s social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Furthermore, kids raised by parents with an authoritarian parenting style are at a high risk of having low self-esteem, becoming rebellious, having difficulty thinking critically, and being emotionally withdrawn.

### *The Long Term Effects of Parenting Styles*

The long-term effects of parenting style on children’s development can be serious. Every parenting style leaves a mark on a child’s future. The authoritative type is loving but firm. Their child might grow up confident, independent, and be a good decision-maker. Permissive parents are more lenient and laid back. Their children could very well be creative, free-spirited kids, but they might struggle with dealing with structure. The authoritarian side is strict and less warm. Very often, their child might follow the rules but lack self-confidence and belief in themselves. A neglectful parent sets a lot of emotional distance between the caregiver and the child. Their children will most likely have trust issues and emotional disturbances. With all of this said, parenting styles shape a child’s path in life and their ability to obtain a growth mindset in their academic journey.

A recent international journal from Social Behavior and Personality found that children from China had greater academic achievement consistently related to parent involvement. This

article examines the effects of parental involvement on children in China and how it has greatly impacted their learning. The most applicable research finding was that “Scores for both achievement and socio-economic status were highest among students with supportive home-based parent involvement, followed by those with basic, strict, and disengaged involvement, in descending order. The quantity and quality of parental involvement positively related to the children's academic achievement.”

### **Use High Quality Communication**

Gan and Bilige, the journalists, recommend that parents do their best to support their children's learning by using high-quality communication and involving their children in democratic decision-making. Whether parents are actively involved in their children's lives or helping them with homework, they hold a critical role in helping children develop their academic, social, emotional, and physical strengths. Gan and Bilige define parental involvement in home-based education as “parents' assistance and support of all kinds of informal learning and teaching practices related to school that takes place at home.” These strategies would include parents helping their children with school-related assignments like help with homework, (reading, projects... etc.). Parents also need to carefully consider their responses to their children's academic achievement (like test results, grades...etc.). Furthermore, parent-child communications about school-related issues, and parents' provision of supportive learning environments (Yotyodying & Wild, 2016).

Parents should offer their unwavering emotional support to young children regarding any conflicts they experience in school or problems with educational learning. Many times young children might not know how to express their feelings of frustration and agitation towards hard problems they face in school. Parents can be proactive by recognizing when their child is



overstimulated and stressed out. Parents can be supportive by offering quiet times and planning fun, family events for their child to look forward to at the end of a long week in school.

### **Families are Important to Children's Learning Process**

In the article, the writers looked at past research from Suizzo, Pahlke, Yarnell, Chen, & Romero, they found that “Families are important to children's learning processes, and parents transmit their educational philosophies, expectations, and values to their children (Suizzo, Pahlke, Yarnell, Chen, & Romero, 2014). In the journal, Gan and Bilige found a few appropriate parental participation activities for their child's education were parent-child communication, setting rules, homework supervision, parenting style, and expressing an educational vision for their children. In a study conducted in 2018, Huang and An proposed five dimensions of parental involvement in home-based education. These five dimensions included appropriate and respectful parent-child interactions, setting developmentally appropriate rules, offering emotional support, practicing and executing conflict resolution strategies, and parents helping with homework. Parental involvement in home-based education has been related to their children's academic performance throughout primary school, middle school, and secondary school. It is the one unchanging strategy that will forever impact a child's academic success.

Parents should practice being more than just ‘present’ with their children's day-to-day lives, they should practice being actively engaged in their children's lives. In a previous study, by Senechal & Young from 2008, they found that parents' conversations about television shows with their children allowed for more growth in the children's language development. Discussing with the parental figures offered more to the children than just viewing these programs with them. This was not the only area that this proved to hold. Another scenario found that listening to

children read improved the children's reading performance more than simply reading to them did.

### *Listen, Then Guide*

When children encounter certain challenges, frustrations, and setbacks in school, it is discovered to be more effective for parents to listen to their child, and guide them in a developmentally appropriate dialogue rather than criticizing and scolding them. Again, we are seeing that the authoritative approach is the most effective way of parenting young children. Many Chinese families follow what is known as the democratic family approach. A democratic family environment means that, when parents and children disagree, parents listen to their children's opinions and discuss the reasonability and practicality of their approaches. This in turn helps to increase children's sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. With the democratic family approach, joint decision-making, mutual respect, autonomy, and responsibility are all of equal value in the household. All of the members of the family have a voice when making family decisions and there are open discussions about the choices that are being made. In summary, the Chinese researchers concluded to support the notion that

Family context, including parenting practices and styles of involvement in children's activities, such as school, is important to the child's academic achievement. Emotional support positively influences the child's academic outcomes. In family environments where children participate, are heard, and are involved in decision-making, they are relatively likely to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation to learn because of the democratic and supportive characteristics of those contexts to foster children's learning (Parental involvement in home-based education and children's academic achievement in China...).

With all of this said, a democratic family environment is key to instilling a growth mindset in young children. Children will develop productive effects when their parents support them and believe that they are capable and able to participate in decision-making, and planning for the future, and they have a say in what they want from their academic journey.

### **Process Praise Over Product Praise**

The article, “How to Teach Growth Mindsets to Your Child?” by the United News of Bangladesh, focuses on different ways to teach children a growth mindset from a young age. Children develop their self-concept in preschool. Therefore, parents and educators must be objective, encouraging, and descriptive. They recommend “process praise” over “product praise”(How to Teach Growth Mindsets to Your Child?). Product praise is complimenting like “Good job!” or “I like it!” Children develop better confidence, resilience, and determination when they are given process praise. Parents and teachers can help children grow in their growth mindset by not being judgemental of their failures or mishaps. For example, if a child uses a word incorrectly/pronounces a word incorrectly, they can help guide the child to the right meaning/pronunciation in a gentle tone and then move on. Parents and educators should avoid making fun of children when they make a mistake unknowingly. Acknowledge what the toddler/young child said but avoid telling them that they said something wrong. So rather than making a big deal about their words, instead, it is best to model words correctly for them.

A growth mindset should be taught in every aspect of life and at any time. Teachers and parents should be open about their past failures and how they learned from them. Explain that the process is key. Let children understand the science of their brains with a growth mindset. Teach kids to try new things, always. When children struggle the first time, encourage them to go further and try different processes if necessary. The United News of Bangladesh encourages

educators to “Help your child set 'SMART' goals for himself where S = Specific, M = Measurable, A = Achievable, R = Relevant, T = Timely. Then guide him in the process of achieving those goals. If your child can set goals by brainstorming, they want to get better at it. It is also a great mindset to teach children” (How to Teach Growth Mindsets to Your Child?).

Why should educators want to instill a growth mindset? For one thing, numerous studies have shown that young children who believe that they have the potential to grow their brains have the highest range of academic achievement. Research shows that children who have a growth mindset get higher grades in subjects like mathematics, reading, and writing. Young children also go on to take more advanced classes in school. Children who obtain a growth mindset focus on learning from their mistakes so that they can better improve their skills.

### ***Mind Your Language***

How can educators promote a growth mindset? According to The United States News of Bangladesh, they recommend that educators should “mind their language.” Parents and educators must be mindful of the language they use and the tone of their voices when they respond to kids. The responses of parents and educators must be objective, descriptive, and encouraging. Parents should not grow their kids' development without first inspiring them to question, gather, test, and observe the real, physical world around them.

The second thing educators can do to help promote a growth mindset is to praise the process. Young children should feel proud of the progress they have made through 'progress praise' because it focuses on specific things they are doing well. With this said parents and teachers should understand the importance of 'process praise' rather than product praise. Process praise intertwines young children's actions with their successes. When young children grow up with process praise they are more likely to take ownership of their failures because they were

praised for their efforts. All young children must learn that to fail is just as important as growing. They must see the benefits of risk-taking and exploration to learn. When they master this, then they will expand their confidence, self-esteem, and resilience.

### ***Grow the Child's Brain***

The next strategy that “The United States News of Bangladesh” recommends for a growth mindset is to grow the child’s brain. Parents and educators should expand children's minds by asking them tricky questions that are developmentally appropriate and helping them to try new things. Although the child may think that it is funny, they are learning while describing. When they struggle to explain everything, they are helping their brain grow. Many children thrive on these challenges and have demonstrated resilience but some do not. What could be an explanation for this?

The main cause for this is the balance of nurture and nature. According to the article, “How to Teach Growth Mindsets to Your Child?” Children who are nurtured by their parents to build their resilience by modeling, by teaching, become growth mindset children. Besides, parents can grow their children's winner's mentality by encouraging children and being non-judgmental about failed attempts. Moreover, it is significant to develop perseverance in the children so that they gain the ability to take risks, survive and prevail (How to Teach Growth Mindsets to Your Child?).

### ***Take Advantage of Learning Moments***

The next thing that parents can do to foster a growth mindset is to read books with them often and discuss them afterward. Books have the potential to help young children grow their problem-solving skills. Remember, with all of this said, there is no specific time to teach a

growth mindset to your children. Teaching a growth mindset to young children can be started at birth. Set aside some extra time in your daily schedule to help you shape a growth mindset in your child. When parents have these learning moments, they can use these opportunities to model growth mindset skills. If teachers can empower parents with these skills, their children will ultimately, grow, thrive, and learn through every process.

### **Lead By Example**

Parents and educators of young children should lead by example. In education, we call this modeling. They should be open and honest about the mistakes they have made and how they have learned, grown, and made progress throughout their journey. Parents can always try something new and let their children know about their process. Whether it's cooking a new recipe, fixing things around their house, or learning a new type of exercise, parents should let their children know about their activities whether they are challenging or simple. Parents and educators should do their best to demonstrate a positive outlook toward challenging projects. They will demonstrate the learning process and the kids will pick up on it.

Explain the science behind growth and development. Young children are very perceptive to learning new things. Remember that teaching can help young children see why it's beneficial to have a growth mindset! Let the child believe that their brain really does have the ability to grow and become better. Caretakers should explain to the child that their brain does have to ability to change and form, just like clay can become a jar. With this said, tell them that they have the power to make their neurons fire and connections stronger by practicing a new skill.

When a caregiver introduces new experiences to learn about, the caregiver can instill a sense of adventure in them. Encourage children to always be open to trying new things and going above and beyond in their exploration. Explain to the child that learning new things will allow

them to make new connections in their brain. When the child faces new challenges, parents can help motivate them to persevere, as this will boost their confidence when they see their skills improve.

### ***Seek Outside Services if Needed***

Another thing parents or educators can do is to seek outside services to help. Every caregiver should know developmentally appropriate communication and fine and gross motor skills. There are a lot of early intervention services available for children in need of extra help to thrive. There was a quote that hung up in the school I used to work at in Murray. The quote said “Fairness does not mean everyone gets the same. Fairness means everyone gets what they need to succeed.” This was said by the famous American author, Rick Riordan. Some children might need a little extra help to succeed and grow in their mindset. Parents and teachers should be willing to take any extra steps that will help the child maintain a growth mindset as he or she improves abilities in these areas; communication, gross motor, and fine motor skills.

### ***Teach the Different Mindsets***

Lastly, the United News of Bangladesh, suggests that caregivers should teach young children different mindsets. Starting with self-awareness is key to fostering a growth mindset in your child. Encourage them to explore various mindsets through reading or watching educational content. Recommend the book "Making a Splash," a delightful story that follows two siblings with contrasting mindsets as they learn to swim. This book provides a valuable resource for explaining the concept of a growth mindset to your child

A stagnant attitude cannot adapt and overcome setbacks. People who have a fixed attitude have far less potential than those who want to expand their potential. According to The Pioneer

Indiana writing company researchers, young children who displayed a 'growth mindset' displayed higher levels of achievement in school (and outside) in areas where success could be measured, regardless of their initial aptitude. This is according to one of Dr. Carol Dweck and her team's studies. On average, children from low-income households who exhibited a growth mentality outperformed their high-income counterparts who had access to schooling of a higher caliber, according to the research. In the article, "To succeed, failure is important" from The Pioneer in New Delhi, India, they found that Athletics have the potential to be a productive way of conveying important life lessons, such as how to handle setbacks.

### **Sports and Clubs Can Help Children Understand Loss**

Sports can serve as a metaphor for life (on playgrounds), and when implemented properly, they can influence children's experiences and conduct in positive ways in educational settings like schools. Most significantly, children can be taught to fail frequently and learn from their mistakes on playgrounds since the consequences of failures there are small when compared to the repercussions of failures in the real world.

Although children can learn about developing mentality through sports, it cannot be fully implemented without the assistance of knowledgeable adults, such as parents or teachers. Caring adults can identify the best times to bring the child's attention back to the work or process. The adult might also help the child understand the value of purposeful practice, which is the process of applying oneself to any work or career while continually learning from mistakes in order to significantly enhance potential and abilities in that specific field. An old philosopher once said that to succeed, one must have previously failed, and vice versa. This philosopher was undoubtedly aware of the fact that failures always lead to success, but success is only ever a good thing that happens as a result of work, determination, and grit.



***Too Much Praise Can Be Harmful***

In the journal article, “Yep, life will burst that self-esteem bubble,” author Sharon Jayson from USA Today writes about how giving kids too much praise might make them feel incompetent and even deter them from attending school. Simply for participating in sports and other activities, children born in the 1970s and the 1980s were awarded prizes. We have all heard the phrase “everyone gets a trophy” at some point in our lives. However, workplaces today are witnessing these individuals mature and witnessing them fall at the first hint of criticism. According to Sandra Graham, a developmental psychologist who works at UCLA, “it may cause you to question your competence instead of boosting self-esteem.” Howe thinks that the “millennials” are a socially conscious, cooperative generation with potential societal advantages. However, some companies aren't so convinced, like Sobel, the director of recruitment for an entertainment company. “One of the things the managers talked about is an incredible sense of entitlement for people who don't deserve it,” she continues. “They'll come in right out of college and don't understand why they're not getting promoted in three months” (Jayson).

To make it clear, healthy development relies on self-esteem. Children who don't think well of themselves are assumed to be the most prone to problems, such as poor academic performance, drug misuse, or criminality. The requirements and stakes may be higher for people from underprivileged backgrounds. However, the self-esteem-boosting, hollow praise that many children received years ago caused more harm than good.

***Not Everyone Gets A Trophy, But That's Okay***

More than 20 years ago, psychologists, educators, and parenting authorities made self-esteem trendy. Believers proposed that successful students are happier when they have a high regard for themselves. It became a credo for parents to shield their kids from failure because that

culture was so embedded in them. The state of California, which established a task group to boost self-esteem, was the epicenter of this feel-good movement. Developmental psychologist Harriet Mosatche, senior director of research and program, says Girl Scouts of the USA fosters emotions of competence and self-worth by highlighting participants' abilities and talents. "It used to be, 'You're great at anything you do.'" That outdated misapplication of the concept of self-worth is not constructive. It's not helpful and unreasonable," the woman claims.

In the film *Meet the Fockers*, well-meaning parents embrace this mentality, as seen by Bernie Focker's proud exhibition of his grown son's accomplishments during a visit to meet his soon-to-be in-laws. "I had no idea they made ribbons for ninth place," the prospective father-in-law remarks. "They have them all the way up to 10th place," Focker responds. "There's a bunch on the 'A for Effort' shelf there.'" This line from the movie is particularly funny and applicable here because it makes light of how absurd the "everyone-gets-a-trophy movement" was.

When he started researching self-esteem enhancement more than 30 years ago, Roy Baumeister, a psychology professor at Florida State University in Tallahassee, says he had "high hopes" for its advantages. However, after a thorough analysis of 18,000 papers published in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, he came to the conclusion that having a strong sense of self-worth only really has two advantages: greater initiative, which in turn fosters confidence and greater happiness. "There is not nearly as much benefit as we hoped," he explains. "It's been one of the biggest disappointments of my career" (Jayson).

According to Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University, who reviewed studies on the self-esteem of 66,000 college students nationwide from 1968 through 1994, the majority of data indicates that self-esteem scores have risen with the generations. Usually, self-ratings serve as the basis for these investigations. She has also observed that her

undergraduate students frequently have an exaggerated sense of self. As a result, more college students are turning to counseling when the criticism gets too harsh. With all of this said, we cannot make the same mistake as educators and parents when it comes to constantly praising young children's efforts. Praise should be something that is earned. Criticism should always be constructive. Encouragement should not look like lying about a person's progress just to flatter them.

### **Teaching Emotional Traits**

In Ontario, it was required to teach children six "key traits"—empathy, tolerance, responsibility, optimism, and others—and similar initiatives were implemented in numerous other provinces. Suddenly, it was expected of teachers to teach their children etiquette in addition to the curriculum. It's acceptable for parents to want instructors to raise their children on their behalf, but they cannot then complain about the political slant that results from that choice. Many people believe that social-emotional skills cannot be taught by instructors unless they have a liberal or conservative political agenda. However, worried parents have expressed this letter to the editor. They essentially said that teachers have to evaluate and address real-life issues as they deal with a wide range of issues and challenges in the classroom. "Teachers should teach youngsters how to make their own way through a tough life ahead and not be encouraged to rely on others (government largesse, unions, etc.)," states Paul Taillefer, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Ottawa. Rather than being taught to picket, they ought to be taught money management skills from a young age (Justice in Education).

Toronto resident I.C. Giles feels that according to research, one of the biggest factors influencing student accomplishment is student involvement. In addition to improving their academic performance, students who are given the freedom to take charge of their education and

connect it to the real world around them also become more adept at solving problems and compassionate contributors to a just and inclusive society. Toronto further says that people would rather that our future leaders of the world sit quietly in rows, learn their textbooks by heart, and refrain from raising any questions during their schooling. Rather than being a "trend," social justice is a duty. All of these points were mentioned in a letter featuring a variety of opinions on how kids should be taught. Families got together to write the school board of education in Ottawa, Canada.

### **Modeling Healthy Levels of Self-Esteem and Self-Worth**

The next thing I wanted to touch on in this research is whether or not building children's self-esteem does as much good as some people think. It is misleading to believe that raising children's self-esteem will guarantee their social and academic success. Children can tell the difference between praise that is deserved and undeserved. The majority of Americans, contrary to most people, think well about themselves. Nobody would contest the fact that children flourish when they perceive themselves as significant, valued and cared for by others, or that they struggle when they lack the confidence and self-worth that comes with receiving such affirmation and assistance. But thanks to teachers who are willing to support students who are falling behind, a myth has emerged that says boosting children's self-esteem will increase their achievement and address many of the societal problems facing the country.

In the journal article, "Self-esteem: The Myth of Feeling Good About Oneself," Stevenson includes the quote that "Self-esteem is the likeliest candidate for a social vaccine,' something that empowers us to live responsibly and that inoculates us against the lure of crime, violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, chronic welfare dependency, and educational failure," suggests the California Task Force Promote Personal and Social

Responsibility report from 1990. As the twentieth century comes to a close, several private and public issues affecting our nation and our state are fundamentally caused by a lack of self-esteem.

If positive self-worth is a prerequisite for education and the answer to so many social problems, then it would be foolish to disagree with advocates like Jack Canfield, the author of renowned self-esteem books, who claims that classes that build it are the "major missing link to educational reform in America today," or Robert Reasoner, the director of the California Center for Self-esteem, who concludes that focusing on it "may well be our only hope for a better world." The significance of self-esteem is stressed in educational and popular media so frequently these days that it has given rise to a movement known as the "self-esteem movement," which is the practice of giving positive feedback to students regardless of their performance level.

Convincing the public of the value of having an excellent sense of self-worth is not a novel endeavor. The French psychologist Emile Coue's disciples declared over a century ago that "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." More recently, authors like B.F. Skinner, Nathaniel Branden, and Norman Vincent Peale have promoted the benefits of positive thinking and reinforcement. If only people could concentrate on the good and ignore the bad, they could ensure a happy and productive existence.

The self-esteem movement's basic beliefs can be questioned, regardless of its current popularity. What are the advantages of teaching a third-grader to replicate the phrase "I am Terri," for instance? If she is unable of writing a coherent sentence, how can she say, "I love and approve of myself"? Would Terri benefit from learning to tell herself "affirmative language" such as "I am smart," "I am a good student," or "I am me and I am enough"? These are examples

of affirmative language that Douglas Bloch and Jon Merritt support in their book, *Positive Self-talk for Children*.

Does winning a trophy truly boost the self-esteem of fifth-grade baseball players? Does it actually increase their physical ability, even though the team didn't win any games this season or demonstrate any discernible progress? When this performance history concludes with apparent approbation and satisfaction, what impact will this have on the coming year's efforts?

### *Model Empathy in the Classroom*

Does listening to classmates chant phrases like "You make my day," "I'm lucky to know you," or "You're a good buddy"—which are examples of positive affirmations—send a real message or one that comes across as fake or odd? We should applaud efforts that teach children empathy; we should not give them meaningless slogans to repeat back to themselves.

A record proclaims, in both English and Spanish, phrases like "I am special," "I am great," or "I am a very important person." Each morning, hundreds of Hispanic-American children assemble in auditoriums or on the playgrounds of their schools to pledge allegiance to the flag. As they hear the phrases, the students repeat them. The teachers regret the fact that nothing has changed and that life continues as usual. They continue to handle the problems raised by the kids in addition to losing thirty minutes of instructional time.

Many people are quick to praise young children for only trying to match form with a hole in a jigsaw board, and the toddler for taking a few hesitant steps. Such unconditional affection and acceptance help the young child develop a higher sense of self-worth. However, older children are sharp observers who understand when a performance is deserving praise and when it isn't. Reiterating gratuitous compliments or praising insignificant accomplishments carries the risk of twisting a favorable reaction into empty flattery or meaningless phrases.

*Encourage Self Evaluation*

It seems that proponents of self-esteem theory have it backward. Positive self-esteem and meaningful self-evaluation are typically the outcomes of achievement rather than its prerequisites. Acknowledgment is just one type of feedback; recognizing that one has met the requirements to achieve a task is more likely to give one a sense of self-worth. A child's development of a sound, realistic sense of self-worth depends on gaining the knowledge and abilities that allow them to move closer to their goals.

Americans are often not afraid to put in the time and effort necessary to succeed in sports. When athletes try to learn a particular skill in an organized manner, coaches are not afraid to call them out on their faults. Telling students they need to practice more and focus on the subject at hand doesn't seem to lower their self-esteem. In fact, it showed to "increased efforts to labor, practice, and learn are typically the result" (Stevenson).

On the other hand, caregivers in primary school are apprehensive to have their children's academic achievement described by instructors as anything other than "adequate" or "requires improvement." In the meantime, parents push for more accommodating grading schemes to be implemented by high schools, fearing that their kids' self-esteem may collapse upon seeing that their previous adequate grade has now dropped to a "C" or "D." It appears that parents are reluctant to put their kids in learning environments where making mistakes can be a learning tool since they are afraid that their low marks would be seen as a sign of failure or incompetence rather than a lack of effort in their studies.

### **Understanding That Life Happens**

Understanding that students face challenges in their daily lives, compassionate educators frequently lower expectations in an attempt to boost their students' self-esteem. By doing this, they deny children the experiences necessary for success in the future. Teachers who do not teach their students how hard work and dedication may help them avoid academic issues and who do not give their students realistic feedback when they reach well-defined, demanding goals are undermining their students and endangering their chances of finding employment later on. While teachers must understand that life happens, they should still keep in mind that they are not doing the child any favors by letting them half-heartedly get by with their work.

According to the article “Self-esteem: the myth of feeling good about oneself,” should they not be able to compete with their peers in the United States and other developed nations, American students will have a very poor future. The findings of research that compare academic achievement show how serious the issue is. In one study, for instance, the mathematics scores of 96% of Chinese and 90% of Japanese fifth-graders were greater than those of their American counterparts. The situation is not much better at the eleventh grade level, with 86% of Chinese students and 92% of Japanese students scoring higher than the average for Americans. These Japanese and Chinese are some of the classmates that American youth will face in the 21st-century economies.

Given the increasing focus on self-esteem, it seems to reason that American kids typically have a poor opinion of themselves. It's not true what you say. For example, we have found that Americans appear to have an unusually optimistic self-image based on studies with representative samples of parents and 11th students in Minnesota and Virginia. On a seven-point rating scale, with four representing average performance, participants were asked to assess the



student's achievement in mathematics and general academic topics. Ratings that were much above average, or above four, were provided by both the parents and the children.

The students rated themselves as "exceptional" on a wide range of attributes, not only academic performance; these included how hard they studied, their intelligence, athletic prowess, physical appearance, and interpersonal relationships. Parents and pupils from China and Japan gave better ratings; on average, their scores were more in line with the average as determined by the researchers.

The American evaluations do not portray children as having self-doubt issues and need a lot of confidence. Of course, there are young people in America who have poor self-esteem and give up on their academic goals as a result. Nonetheless, it appears that educating them that all students can improve their performance levels if they are prepared to work hard is the bigger obstacle than boosting their self-esteem.

In the journal article, "Self-esteem: the myth of feeling good about oneself," Thousands of East Asian and American kids were polled to find out what they thought was most crucial to succeeding in school. The East Asian students' most frequent response was "studying." The American pupils responded, "A good teacher." These responses' differing foci of accountability may highlight the drawbacks of a "feel good" strategy. Studying is indeed more difficult than listening, yet learning requires study.

With this said, it is important for parents and educators to realize these two things. First, achieving hard objectives and getting constructive criticism gives one a sense of competence that creates a sound, grounded foundation for self-worth. Second, young children get the confidence that forms the basis of strong self-esteem through their accomplishments and growth. No proof

making kids work harder and embracing higher expectations as they learn would make them feel less confident in their skills.

It's like having children convince themselves, as Stuart Smalley did on "Saturday Night Live," "I'm good enough." I have enough intelligence. Furthermore, while "people like me" may provide temporary solace, we fool ourselves if we believe that a "feel good" strategy would address the issues of teaching America's youth and safeguarding the country against societal evils.

Certificates of achievement and praise are the self-esteem movement's equivalent of cheap money. Reforms that are more concrete and depend on reorganizing establishments like schools are costly, challenging, and time-consuming. Still, Americans need to have the same resolve and clarity as their rivals when it comes to recognizing the importance of a strong educational foundation and kid- and youth-focused initiatives for the development of a country. It's okay to feel good; it's much better when one has something positive to feel about. Praise and Self-esteem should be earned through hard work, grit, and determination.

### **Interview With Dr. Mi-Hwa Park**

For this research topic, I wanted to interview one of my favorite professors from Murray State, Dr. Mi-Hwa Park of Early Childhood Education. I had an interview with Dr. Park on the first of February back in 2023. I could not think of a better person to interview. Dr. Park has taught young children all around the world and has experience teaching in their birth country of South Korea for many years. She has also taught in Texas, where she received her Doctorate, and now she is the head of the department of Early Childhood at Murray State. I have been in three of her courses, my favorite being Child Guidance. She has so much knowledge when it comes to

Children and their behaviors, learning, and guidance. Below, I have listed the key takeaways from my conversation with her.

Here are a few of Dr. Parks “why’s” when it comes to motivating and empowering young children. It is important for teachers to motivate and empower students so that they develop a positive attitude toward learning and can set and achieve their goals. Teachers can create a safe, supportive, and encouraging learning environment by motivating and empowering students. As a result, students will become more self-motivated and take ownership of their learning.

Additionally, it will promote a growth mindset and help students develop a sense of confidence in their abilities. A learning environment conducive to success can be created by motivating students and empowering them to achieve their goals.

Having a growth mindset means believing that one can improve his or her skills and knowledge through hard work, dedication, and resilience. It implies that one's skills and abilities are not fixed but can be developed over time. Growth mindset emphasizes learning and developing new skills, rather than being limited by one's current abilities. Students can be encouraged to take risks and stretch themselves while learning by promoting a growth mindset. As a result, they can develop a more resilient attitude to failure and learning, recognizing that mistakes are part of the process. Educators can instill the growth mindset in their students to help them develop a positive attitude towards learning, become more motivated, engage in their studies, and gain a deeper understanding of the material.

### ***What Dr. Park Suggests When Motivating and Empowering Students***

Dr. Park’s suggestions for how to motivate and empower students to achieve their goals are listed below. These are the notes from my interview with her.

1. Set clear goals and expectations. Let students know what they are expected to accomplish and how their performance will be evaluated. Make sure they understand how their individual goals fit into the larger picture.
2. Provide a safe and supportive environment. Let students know that they are respected and valued. Encourage them to take risks, experiment, and be creative.
3. Celebrate successes. Celebrate both individual and group successes. Show students how their individual achievements contribute to the overall success of the group.
4. Encourage self-reflection. Give students time to reflect on their work and their progress. Ask them to assess their own performance and identify areas for improvement.
5. Provide feedback. Give students meaningful and constructive feedback on their work. Let them know what they are doing well and what they can do to improve.
6. Make learning fun. Make learning engaging and enjoyable. Use games, activities, and real-world examples to help students understand the material.
7. Create a positive classroom culture. Show students that you care about them and are invested in their success. Create an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and expressing their opinions.
8. Connect with students. Get to know your students

### ***What Dr. Park Suggests For Building a Growth Mindset***

Lastly, Dr. Park and I talked about build a growth mindset in young children. The notes from my interview with her are listed below.

1. Encourage students to set challenging but achievable goals and to work towards them.
2. Celebrate effort and progress, rather than only results.
3. Create an environment where failure is seen as learning, not a setback.

4. Emphasize the importance of practice and persistence.
5. Provide feedback and support to help students develop their skills.
6. Encourage students to take risks and try new things.
7. Help students find their own unique strengths and interests.
8. Praise students for trying and working hard, rather than being focused on the outcome.
9. Model a growth mindset yourself and help students to develop their own.
10. Show students how to use their mistakes as learning opportunities and to build resilience

Overall, my interview with Dr. Park was very helpful because it helped me place the “How to” in everything I have learned and been working towards in this research. She gave practical tips for ensuring that you are helping foster a growth mindset and productive affect in young children. I think everyone has the ability to use these practical steps, whether it is from a teacher or a caregiver. We all have a role to play.

### **How To Address Challenging Behaviors**

There are many things that can impact young children’s academic success in school. A few things that we have talked about have been growth mindset, family involvement, parenting style, maslow’s hierarchy of needs, and behavioral problems. Children who internalize or externalize behavioral issues are more likely to experience low academic success and socioemotional maladjustment. It has been demonstrated that a child's linguistic abilities and emotional sensitivity level can lead to behavioral issues later in life. So what should educators and parents understand about challenging behaviors from young children?

Today's students are equipped with a variety of social, behavioral, and academic skills. Many pupils arrive at school prepared to learn and with the necessary abilities to support their

education. They effectively communicate their demands, control their displeasure, and engage with classmates and adults in a kind manner. On the other hand, some students could not possess these abilities for a number of reasons. These pupils frequently engage in behaviors that disrupt the classroom and detract from the educational setting. These are often called acting-out or difficult behaviors. These actions can be mild to more significant, as the chart below illustrates, and are frequently described as improper, aggressive, or even harmful.

*Examples of Challenging Behaviors:*

- Avoiding tasks
- Refusing to work
- Arguing
- Calling others names
- Teasing
- Yelling or cursing
- Hitting or kicking
- Threatening others
- Damaging property of others
- Damaging school property
- (What should educators understand about challenging behaviors?)

Low-level difficult behaviors, such becoming distracted, can swiftly develop from arguments to verbally aggressive conduct and even violent aggressiveness towards people or property if left unchecked. According to the The IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University, “What should educators understand about challenging behaviors?” “Challenging conduct, regardless of its severity, can have detrimental effects such as: lost time learning,

decreased academic performance for both the disruptive pupil and their peers, reduced student enthusiasm and involvement at school as well as a diminished feeling of belonging, anxiety and dissatisfaction among teachers, and an overall large teacher turnover” (What should educators understand about challenging behaviors?).

### *Impacts of Challenging Behavior on Educators*

Pamela Glenn, an instructional mentor, and former teacher states in an interview with the IRIS Center that challenging behavior, when expected or unexpected can prevent the teachers from getting through the material they plan to get through with their students. She often believes that children acting out can be a sign of something else going on in their life. She suggests that teachers should learn from each other about different strategies that work with correcting inappropriate behavior. Observe other teachers classrooms and find out what they are doing well with classroom management.

See who has experience communicating with children. Use your resources as soon as possible, especially at the beginning, as you never know what you won't learn. You have to know your children and pick up a lot of various tactics. Whether you are a first-year teacher or a tenured one, if you don't put in the effort to get to know your students, problematic conduct will still occur. Know your students, know their triggers, notice the things that motivate and encourage them, notice the things that discourage them. As a teacher or parent, get to know your kids well. Additionally, I think that pupils are aware of who supports and believes in them. Consequently, the difficulties are less common. Additionally, you can diffuse them considerably more quickly when they do surface. It all comes down to building relationships, learning all you can, and getting as much exposure as you can.

### *How Culture Influences a Child's Behavior*

Next, Dr. Gloria Campbell-Whatley explains how culture influences behavior and why it is important for teachers to understand their students' cultures and backgrounds when addressing inappropriate behaviors with their students. Children often need a reason why they should or should not do things. It helps them make sense of social and emotional boundaries. Dr. Gloria Campbell-Whatley believes that culture affects a lot of behaviors. A teacher who perceives a pupil to be rude is one example. You're dealing with tone changes, and because the level is so high, it can very well sound aggressive. You mistakenly believe that to be aggressiveness, but it is not. She says, "Raising the conversation is ingrained in the society. Simultaneous conversation may be ingrained in the society. Furthermore, it isn't rude or pushy. That's just the way things are at home and in communities." (What Should Educators Understand about Challenging Behaviors?). They are staring at the teacher directly as well.

For example, in many cultures, it's not rude to turn your eyes sideways; it only indicates that you're not interested in what you have to say. It is only a principle of the society. Speaking with passion might sometimes be misinterpreted. Occasionally, a student may interrupt the instructor while they are speaking; this might be interpreted as impolite behavior as well. Learning a fresh approach in order to get to know the pupils in this distinct culture is therefore challenging. In order to verify a culture, you also need to discover something about its surroundings, values, attitudes, and relationships. Since it differs greatly from your culture, you won't be able to confirm it if you don't know those things. You must consider the norms of such non-majority communities.

Typically, we focus on the norm of the majority group, but if you're going to work with diverse kids, you'll need to learn a little bit about their norms as well, particularly if you believe



that a particular conduct is inappropriate. However, it is conduct that is proper for that specific group, not deviance or defiance. Show tolerance and understanding to people that come from different backgrounds and cultures. Understanding that not all kids require the same approach to discipline and learning is a good step to becoming a great teacher.

### **Parental Belief Systems on Education and Mental Health Can Influence the Child**

By a News Reporter for Mental Health Weekly Digest, Staff News Editor Researchers release an updated study on mental health. As per the news reporting of NewsRx journalists from Cambridge, Massachusetts, parental belief systems have a significant impact on children's behavior, affect, and mental health (Investigators from Harvard University Release New Data on Mental Health...). However, there hasn't been much research done on the connections between certain parental views and kids' mental health.

A Harvard University study was cited by our news editors, which states that "Parental intelligence mindset—beliefs regarding the malleability of intelligence—is one pertinent belief system." Academic, self-control, and motivational challenges are more common among children of parents who believe that intellect is fixed (also known as a fixed intelligence mentality) as opposed to malleable through effort (also known as a growing intelligence mindset). It's unclear, nevertheless, if parental intellectual mentality and kid mental health issues are related.

The study investigated the relationship between parents' intellectual attitudes and internalizing issues in their offspring (N = 131, ages 5-8). In general, children of parents with more fixed intelligence attitudes had more internalizing issues, especially social anxiety (defined as the dread of being negatively evaluated). The results also showed that, in boys but not in girls, parents' fixed intellectual attitudes were linked to general internalizing issues and depressed symptoms. "Results are the first to suggest and clarify direct links between parents' intelligence

mindsets and youth internalizing problems," the news editors said of the study's findings (Investigators from Harvard University Release New Data on Mental Health...).

### **Hard Work, Grit, and Determination**

The last thing I would like to touch on in my research is the importance of teachers and caregivers helping young children believe that anything is possible with hard work, grit, and determination. It is important to encourage the young entrepreneur in your students/child. Early entrepreneurial skill development may help children perceive the world through a lens of potential, and teachers/parents can assist their children develop these talents. Children that are interested in entrepreneurship can improve their communication, creativity, and math abilities. Additionally, it can assist them in rejecting the conventional way of thinking that salaries are everything and in exploring other options that may result in more financial contentment and independence.

### **Fostering Financial Literacy Can Help Young Children Be Better Entrepreneurs**

Foster financial literacy in your child by introducing them to investing and saving at an early age. They may get an advantage over their future peers and increase their level of financial independence as a result. Give them the freedom to decide by engage the children in financial decision-making. Teach children about the risks, benefits, and possibilities of the financial market. Encourage the children to come up with ideas for their own enterprises by offering to help them brainstorm. Encourage them in their lemonade stand. In the book, *The Lemonade Stand: A Guide to Encouraging the Entrepreneur in Your Child*, by Emmanuel Modu, he informs readers about young entrepreneurs at the age of fourteen have started three distinct companies. Additionally, we read about young people who created businesses ranging from baseball card

dealerships to poultry farms. "Parents who raise their children without opening their minds to the possibility of running their own businesses or organizations are sentencing their kids to a life of what I call 'corporate bondage,' " Modu concludes. "As guardians and role models for your children, you owe it to them to expose them to alternative ways of leading satisfying lives" (The Lemonade Stand: A Guide to Encouraging the Entrepreneur in Your Child).

### ***How to Encourage the Entrepreneur in Children***

A few ways for parents and teachers to their entrepreneurs or 'kidpreneurs' would be as follows. The first thing is to create life long learners. Encourage kids to do research, read, and take active steps to help them turn curiosity into educational moments. The second thing I have learned in my overall research is that you have to encourage young children to be young leaders. Make sure that kids understand the importance of being a good leader at times and also a good follower at other times, both in school and at home. Remind them that leadership starts with a healthy respect for oneself and others. The next thing is to embrace subject matter experts. Help your kids connect the dots by engaging them in subject matter that challenges them. Connect with resources with resources you already know to be part of the team to get advice early. Lastly, teachers and parents are to encourage fearlessness in their little students. Kids are naturally fearless and many times curious about how things work. We, as teachers and parents have to learn not to let our own fears hold them back from achieving their dreams.

### **Conclusion**

As you can see the role of the adult is to guide the young children to a path of feeling competent and insuring a sense of self-worth and validation throughout their learning journey. Provide constructive criticism on students' work, emphasize areas for growth, seek out strategies

for promoting progress, and refrain from labelling certain students as sheep or goats. Give young children as much freedom as you can in their educational journey; permit students to select interests-based subjects for their papers and projects. Remember that no child is the same, they are like snowflakes in which all are different and unique in their own ways. Assessments and growth might look different from child to child. Be proud of little accomplishments they make in their educational journey. Learning is a process, there will be hard times and there will be wonderful moments where things make sense.

Overall, teachers are to encourage grit in their students by modeling it themselves. One of my role models and favorite writers, Fred Rogers, had a lot to say about teaching young children and was a great model himself. In one of his books called *You Are Special: Words of Wisdom for All Ages from a Beloved Neighbor*, he says, “There’s a world of difference between insisting on someone’s doing something and establishing an atmosphere in which that person can grow into wanting to do it” (Rogers). I believe that teachers should strive to create the "atmosphere" that Mr. Rogers describes. Adults frequently fall for the need to force youngsters to "do" things, instead of going after the path of sparking their interest. This is especially apparent when there is an underlying fear present, such as the concern that a kid would "fall behind," the educator's fear of failing to win over parents, or the fear of students scoring poorly on standardized exams or other measures of societal values. In the end, I think that this dread arises from the concern that one is not doing what society considers a kid “should” be doing, as opposed to watching the child and proceeding in a manner that fulfills the child's specific and unique needs.

So why should this be important to you? Children are growing out of their youth very fast. They will soon grow up to be self-sufficient adults. They are a strong group of people who,

although going through the turmoil of emotions that come with growing up, should be encouraged and acknowledged as they are a never-ending supply of kindness, altruism, and initiative. We as parents and teachers see it every day: their vision for the future, which inherits actual and very obvious major global concerns, is always filled with an overwhelming number of ideas and workable answers, but most importantly, it is filled with confidence and hope. Helping young children develop a love of learning, problem-solving, and creative thought is a joy. Even more astounding and significant is the fact that many students feel "valorized" as a result of the links to working hard for something. This is a concept from the Montessori method that means the satisfaction of knowing that your efforts count and that you have the power to change things. Thus, a youthful entrepreneur serves as our link to a future filled with competent, content adults who value their community. I don't know of a more noble cause, do you agree?

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