

# THE MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION

HOW TO SURVIVE AND  
HELP YOUR CHILD THRIVE



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Middle School is a TRAINING GROUND for developing the  
skills to become an

**INDEPENDENT LEARNER.**

Mistakes are not only accepted,  
they are encouraged.



# ENCOURAGE A GROWTH MINDSET

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*“In a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” ( Dweck, 2015)*



# Fixed

Mindset

# Growth

Mindset

Carol Dweck

## Intelligence is static.

Leads to a desire to LOOK SMART and therefore a tendency to:

- ✓ AVOID CHALLENGES
- ✓ GIVE UP EASILY DUE TO OBSTACLES
- ✓ SEE EFFORT AS FRUITLESS
- ✓ IGNORE USEFUL FEEDBACK
- ✓ BE THREATENED BY OTHERS' SUCCESS

## Intelligence can be developed

Leads to a desire to LEARN and therefore a tendency to:

- ✓ EMBRACE CHALLENGES
- ✓ PERSIST DESPITE OBSTACLES
- ✓ SEE EFFORT AS PATH TO MASTERY
- ✓ LEARN FROM CRITICISM
- ✓ BE INSPIRED BY OTHERS' SUCCESS

Silvia Rosenthal Tolisano - @langwitches

# WHAT ARE YOU FIXED ON?

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Think of something that you've always felt you were "bad at"...

- dancing?
- singing?
- math?
- technology?
- sports?
- cooking?
- ???

YOU ARE ***FIXED*** ON WHATEVER THAT SKILL IS

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“I can’t dance!”

“I’ve never been good at math.”

“I’m the worst cook...”

“I cannot sing to save my life!”

“I am **NOT** athletic at all.”

“Technology never works for me.”



# WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE FOR OUR STUDENTS?

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“I’m so bad at math.”

“I always get multiple choice questions wrong.”

“I’ll never understand the periodic table.”

“I’m the worst writer.”

“Shakespeare is awful! I have no idea what he’s talking about.”



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EMBRACE THE  
POWER OF  
“YET”

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*“I’m so bad at math!”*

“No. You simply haven’t  
learned this skill yet.”

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# GROWTH MINDSET – WHY?

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With a growth mindset:

- Students believe they CAN and options become limitless
- Students are MOTIVATED because they aren't afraid of failure
- Students take more academic risks because they know they can keep trying
- Students remain open to challenges and do not shut down as easily

# WHY IS A **GROWTH** MINDSET IMPORTANT?

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## **Students who develop a growth mindset:**

- Perform better in school
- Have higher self-esteem
- Enjoy learning
- Are persistent and try new things
- Desire understanding and are proud of achievement

## **Students who develop a fixed mindset:**

- Experience decreased performance
- Lose confidence
- Fear failure and bad grades
- Give up easily or avoid difficult tasks
- Desire achievement and often feel inadequate

# AVOID A FIXED MINDSET

- Encourage a **GROWTH** mindset
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- A **growth** mindset is when children believe that they are able to find ways to improve and mature
  - Focus on the process of learning and transitioning
  - Allow children to strategize, make decisions, and analyze the next steps
  - Praises effort, not ability

**DO THIS!**

- A **fixed** mindset is when children believe that their success depends on things they can't control or have a hard time controlling: intelligence, emotions, final grades.
  - Focus on grades, intelligence, or ability
  - Adults strategize, make decisions for the child, and focus on outcomes
  - Praises ability, not effort

**NOT THAT!**

# PRACTICAL IDEAS TO HELP CHILDREN TRANSITION USING A **GROWTH** MINDSET

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- Tone down the “cheerleading” and focus on acknowledging specific accomplishments
- Embrace the power of “YET”
- Accept and appreciate your child just as they are
- Give specific, genuine, and positive feedback about effort as often as possible
- Accept that growth comes with challenge & struggle



# Say This, Not That

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## Instead of saying...

“Reading has never been your thing...but you’re so good at math!”

“Great job!”

“You won the race! You’re the best!”

## Say...

“You’re still working on your reading skills and you’ll get there.”

“You really organized your room.”

“You worked so hard practicing for the race! It sure payed off!”

*Focus on the process and the effort...not the final result.*



# THANK YOU!

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*Please do not hesitate to contact your child's counselor with any concerns you have about your child.*

# WANTED:

## Middle School Counseling Department Advisory Council Parent Members

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### Duties Include:

- Attend 2 meetings per year
- Provide feedback and insight on middle school programs
- Parents of 7th grade student preferred, but all are welcome
- We will welcome the first 4 parents who volunteer

Please email Mario (MG) Giamporcaro [magiamporcar@fcps.edu](mailto:magiamporcar@fcps.edu) if you are interested!



# Back to School Night: WHERE DO WE GO NOW???

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- Please report to your child's  
***First period class by 6:30pm***
- Need your child's schedule?
  - Please go to the Career Center