



Somerdale
Educate Together

Neurosculptors, the Stretch Zone & the Achievosaurus!



Our Growth Mindset Approach

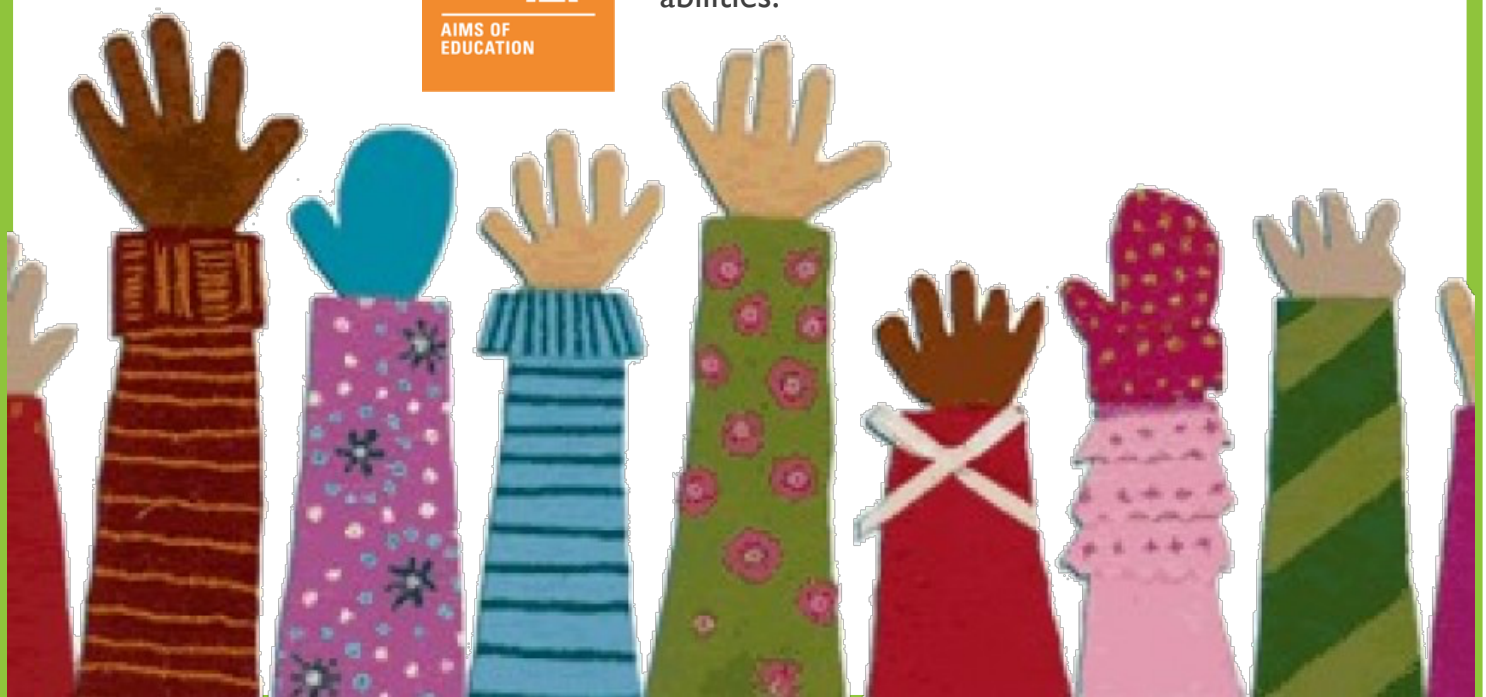
A guide for parents

No Child an Outsider

Learn Together to Live Together



Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities.



Growth Mindsets – Helping children to try new things

What is a fixed mindset?

Has your child ever said to you ‘There’s no point, I’ll never be able to do it’ or avoided doing something because they’ve failed at it in the past?

According to someone with a **fixed mindset**, if you fail at something, make a mistake, or even have to put effort in, it must be because ‘you’re just not good enough’. Because of that belief, children (and adults) begin to avoid challenges and choose activities that they find easy.

People with a **fixed mindset** feel as if they have no control over their abilities, and are helpless in the face of difficulties and setbacks. They begin to feel disheartened if they find something difficult, which can lead to low self-esteem and a developing sense that there is ‘no point’ in trying.

What is a growth mindset?

Children (and adults!) with a **growth mindset** think very differently. They believe that they can get better at something by practising, so when they’re faced with a challenge, they become more and more determined to succeed, wanting to persevere and overcome knockbacks. They tend to feel as if they’re in control, and are not threatened by hard work or failure.

Although no one likes failing, children with a growth mindset do not let failure define them; instead, they use setbacks to motivate them. Children encouraged to adopt a growth mindset enjoy challenges and the sense of achievement they get when they succeed.

Researchers have found that building a growth mindset helps children at school; making them more motivated, more engaged in the classroom and likely to receive higher marks and greater rewards from their work.

Research also suggests that having a **growth mindset** increases children’s ability to try all sorts of different challenges and problems that they might not have otherwise tackled.

And because children no longer need to engage in various self-protection strategies, developing a **growth mindset** also appears to improve behaviour, increase life satisfaction, and help children to control their emotions.

Scan the QR code below to watch a short 6 minute clip to watch Carson Byblow, a 10 year-old child in the US explain his views on what a growth mindset means to him and how it has helped him.



Developing a growth mindset is a crucial skill, and as a Rights Respecting School and through our founding principles of being equality-based and child-centred, we have developed an approach to help every child to see themselves as successful, confident individuals and to remove any barriers that impede on learning and the holistic development of children. On the next few pages, we will explain the images, language and techniques used to develop a growth mindset.

We are Neurosculptors!

Growth mindset is based on research, and neuroscience. We use the book 'Your Fantastic Elastic Brain' to teach children about how different parts of their brain work and how we can develop and stretch our brain.



We are neurosculptors!

Cerebrum

Suh-ree-bruhm
This helps us think and speak.

Hippocampus

This is our filing cabinet. It helps us store and find memories.

Prefrontal Cortex

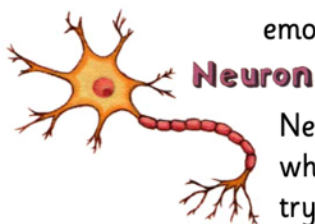
This lets us make plans and decisions.

Amygdala

This controls our emotions.

Cerebellum

SAIR-uh-bel-uhm
This helps us to balance and move.



Neuron

Neurons make electrical signals to send messages in your body, telling them what to do. We can make our brains bigger, stronger, and more elastic by trying hard in our learning and growing the connections.

In class, we refer to the parts of our brain when talking about the learning that has taken place.

Examples:

"Wow, I love the way that you solved that maths problem by using your hippocampus to think back to what we had learnt last week, and then using your prefrontal cortex to make a decision about the method you were going to use to solve the problem."

"You worked really hard on your balance, your neurons were making lots of connections with your cerebellum!"

We are Achievosaurus!

The Achievosaurus are a set of three characters developed to help children to learn the language to be able to describe their learning process and the skills used to help them to be successful learners.

Solvosaurus Rex



We are problem solvers.

- Problem-solving *Identify the problem, test ideas*
- Making links *Notice patterns & connections*
- Reflecting *reflect on strategies used*
- Predicting *build on what we know*
- Resourceful *Toolkit of strategies, collaborate*
- Questioning *share thoughts and ideas*
- Being courageous *Embrace challenge and take risks*



Tryatops



We are resilient.

- Resilience *Be persistent & determined*
- Curiosity *Be playful with ideas, question processes*
- Finding another way *Learn from trial and error*
- Challenge-taker *Put effort into our learning*
- Taking risks *Remain calm, growth mindset – give it a go*
- Bouncing back *understand mistakes are important*

Thinkadocus



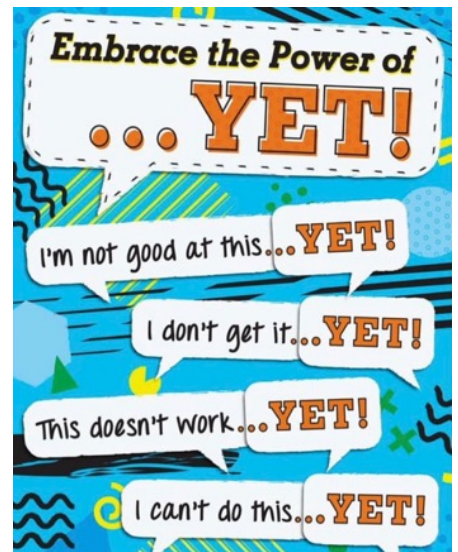
We are deep thinkers.

- Listening *Careful listening*
- Concentration *Keeping focussed on the task*
- Being focussed *Recognising and controlling distractions*
- Paying attention to details *Be a critical, creative and empathetic thinker*

Having a positive can-do approach

Developing a growth mindset takes time and practice – we can have a growth mindset in some things but it may take more practice to develop a growth mindset in other areas of life. We have some key phrases that we use around the school with the children that we use regularly to help embed a growth mindset.

Mindset of a champion Hope fires a neuron!

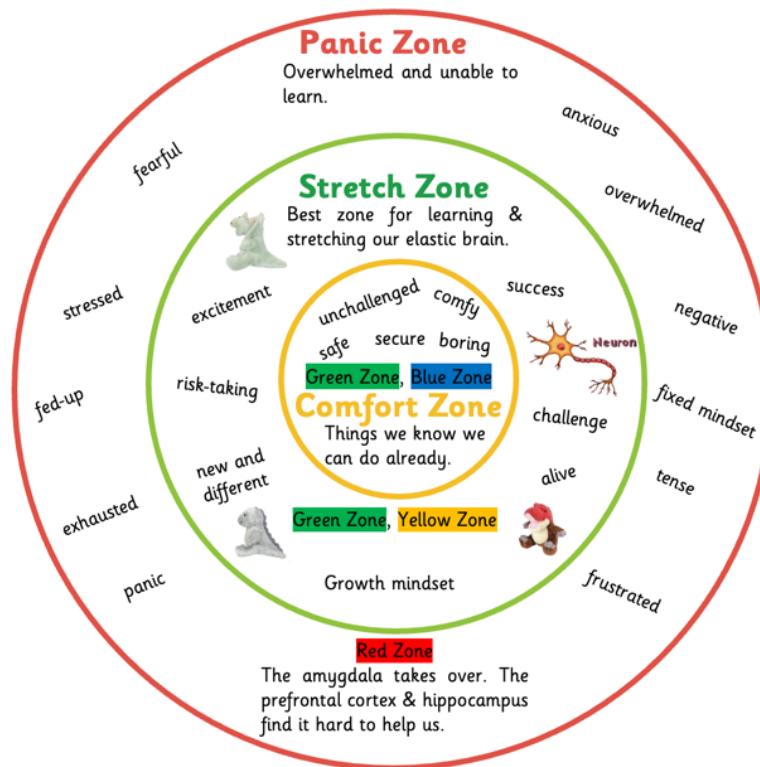


We are neurosculptors!

Understanding our emotions

Sometimes things can be tricky and we can feel lots of different things. We use the visual below to help children to identify and understand their thoughts and feelings. We talk about the stretch zone being the best zone for learning and stretching our elastic brain. In this zone we be using our Achievosaur skills and firing lots of neurons with our growth mindset.

In the panic zone we are overwhelmed and unable to learn. This means we need some help or coaching with whatever the task is. If we are in our comfort zone, we might feel good, but we are unchallenged and we aren't being neurosculptors and stretching our brain.



How can I help promote a growth mindset at home?

Research has shown that mindsets can be changed relatively quickly and there are plenty of things that parents and families can do to help. Alongside using the language described above, here some other tips and ideas taken from the BBC website that can help promote a growth mindset in children.

Set high expectations for your child:

It is commonly believed that lowering our expectations promotes self-esteem in children (e.g. “never mind, let’s try an easier one”), but this is not the case. Having high expectations works like a self-fulfilling prophecy. It shows that you believe they can do it, which in turn has a positive impact on their own beliefs, behaviour and outcomes.

Encourage children to be resilient and not give up, even when they find something difficult or frustrating:

We now know that the brain adapts to new information and practise by creating new connections, so help your child to believe that challenge is a positive thing because it means

they are growing their brains! This can help them to be comfortable with the times that they struggle and means that they see this as a sign of learning.

Celebrate mistakes!

The fear of making mistakes and associated shame can stop children from giving something a go in the first place. We all make mistakes, so try to embrace these mistakes and use them as learning opportunities, rather than feeling embarrassed about them. If we are not making mistakes then we are not stretching ourselves.

Use inspirational role models:

Think about your child's favourite athlete, musician or teacher and talk about their journey to success. We call this unravelling the talent myth. If someone has done well we have a tendency to think they were born that way. We need to show our children that this is not the case. Rather than focusing on somebody's 'natural talents', focus on their early efforts, strong work ethic, and the mistakes and learning that led them to where they are now.

Be specific in praise:

Research suggests that the type of praise that we use can have a big impact. It's all a matter of context in fact and even positive praise can encourage a **fixed mindset**.

Praising our children by saying things like "you're a natural!" or "you seem to be able to turn your hand to anything!" can lead to the belief that being good at something is out of their control.

Instead the grown-ups around the child can focus praise on the **effort they've made** to get to that point of triumph, the **strategy they used** or the **outcome** itself, saying things like "you've worked so hard on this, well done!" or "you get better every time because of all the practise you've been doing" or "you have found a great way to do that, it worked out really well".

This kind of feedback helps to develop children's resilience to failure as it teaches them what to do when they are challenged or fail – try again, try harder or try a different way, all things that are within their own control.

References

BBC – What is Growth Mindset? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/help-your-child-try-new-things>

Ted Talk – Carson Byblow – Mindset of a champion
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=px9CzSZsa0Y>