

Five quick things you can do to help develop a growth mindset in kids:

Given to mentors and HOY's (after mind-set workshop)

1. Ask open-ended questions to solve a problem or achieve a goal.

“What do you think will happen if...” or “Why do you suppose...” These questions build logical thinking skills and often lead to rich discovery.

2. Use specific feedback that identifies what the student accomplished.

What small steps led to a larger outcome? Be supportive when your student attempts something new. It might not be the way you'd try to solve a problem, but if it works, acknowledge it honestly and without judgement. Pick your battles. Hair done by a three-year old might not be ready for the runway, but it brings a child great satisfaction to say, “I did it myself!” Skills that build persistence simultaneously allow children to feel confidence and independence. When frustration rears its head, offer an encouraging word about what steps worked well.

3. Encourage kids to take a risk. Watch and listen to your students so you can take cues about what else they are ready to tackle. Vygotsky calls this the “zone of proximal development – when we gently nudge kids to use what they know to try something just a bit out of their reach, but yet developmentally appropriate. By offering small but achievable challenges, confidence and persistence emerge.

4. Be persistent and growth-orientated yourself. Narrate your thoughts as you try something new or frustrating. Your student may even be able to offer some helpful tips. This allows children to see we all have to work hard to solve problems and we all continue to learn new things.

5. Don't sweat the small stuff. Accidents, and mistakes happen. Show your students that there's something to be learned when we don't achieve what we set out to accomplish. Maybe someone else lends a hand. Maybe you return to the task at another time. Maybe it's best to abandon things for a while or break things down into smaller steps. Be specific about what worked, identify the emotions involved, and offer encouragement for the next time.