

# Growth Mindset and Learning Behaviours

## Parent Guide

### What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?

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I can learn anything I want to.  
When I'm frustrated, I persevere.  
I want to challenge myself.  
When I fail, I learn.  
Tell me I try hard.  
If you succeed, I'm inspired.  
My effort and attitude determine everything.



I'm either good at it, or I'm not.  
When I'm frustrated, I give up.  
I don't like to be challenged.  
When I fail, I'm no good.  
Tell me I'm smart.  
If you succeed, I feel threatened.  
My abilities determine everything.

Holding a fixed or a growth mindset has huge implications when it comes to **motivation**. If children have a fixed notion of intelligence, they probably believe that success has a lot to do with talent. They may think that some are born with the ability to succeed, and others just aren't. They might view successful people as possessing some unattainable, innate gift. The side effect of the fixed mindset is a helpless or apathetic attitude toward effort — especially when it comes to challenging tasks.

The simple belief that intelligence is malleable can better equip children for **challenging tasks and difficult subject matter**. If they know that they can develop their abilities, that effort and dedication make a difference in the formula for success, then children won't become paralyzed by challenge. The growth mindset creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for achieving goals.

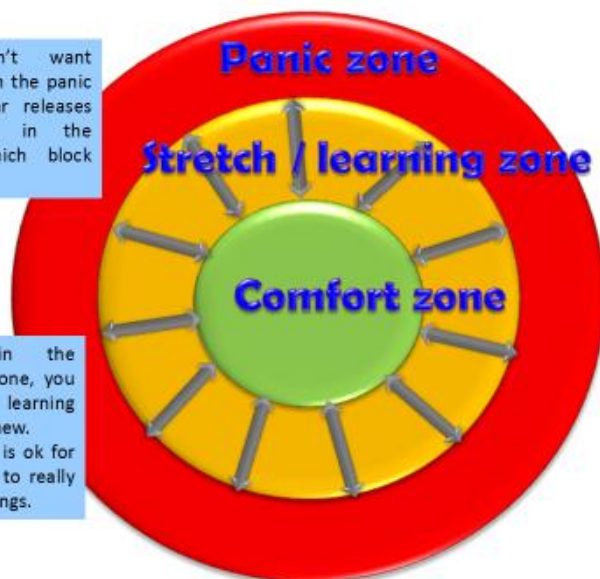
## Growth Mindset

There are SIX CORE ASPECTS OF GROWTH MINDSET



We don't want children in the panic zone. Fear releases chemicals in the brain which block learning.

When in the comfort zone, you are not learning anything new. This zone is ok for practising to really master things.



The stretch or learning zone is the place to be! It is where new learning takes place and one makes progress.

One crucial element of Growth Mindset is children understanding that to make great progress, one needs to regularly 'grapple' with learning and come out of their comfort zone.

## Phrases that help children to develop a growth mindset

Say this.....because.....	Not that..... because.....
<p>"I can see you worked so hard on this!"</p> <p>It helps your children understand you value their efforts.</p>	<p>"You are so smart!"</p> <p>It makes them think of intelligence as a 'fixed quality'.</p>
<p>"It seems like it's time to try a new strategy."</p> <p>It lets children know that they control outcomes by making choices.</p>	<p>"It's okay. Maybe you're just not cut out for this!"</p> <p>It makes your children think they don't have the capacity to improve.</p>
<p>"I like watching you do that."</p> <p>It conveys the approval of an activity they enjoy doing, regardless of the outcome.</p>	<p>"You're a natural at that!"</p> <p>The next time your children fail or make a mistake, they may think they don't have that ability after all.</p>
<p>"It looks like that was too easy for you. Let's find you something challenging so your brain can grow."</p> <p>It teaches children that learning should be challenging and if tasks are too easy then your brain isn't growing.</p>	<p>"That's right! You did that so quickly and easily; great job!"</p> <p>Praising tasks completed without much effort paints effort in a negative light and encourages a fixed mindset.</p>
<p>"That's not right. You don't understand this yet. What strategies can you try to understand it better?"</p> <p>It's important to be honest about what your child knows and doesn't know but also explains that you believe in their capacity to improve.</p>	<p>"That's not right. Are you paying attention in class? It seems like you're not even trying."</p> <p>The fight or flight response may be preventing your child from giving their best response in class.</p>
<p>"That was really hard. Your effort has paid off! Next time you'll be ready for this kind of challenge!"</p> <p>Reminding children of how they were able to overcome challenges by putting lots of efforts cultivates a growth mindset</p>	<p>"That was really hard. I'm so glad it's over and you don't have to do that again."</p> <p>There will always be more challenges and children should feel that they have the tools for what comes next.</p>
<p>"You've worked hard to become a good writer. You should challenge yourself with an advanced class, and learn something you don't know how to do yet."</p> <p>Putting your child in the challenge zone is how to inspire lifelong learning</p>	<p>"You have a real talent for writing. You should take a creative writing class because you're so good at it."</p> <p>If you only encourage your child to do what they are good at, they will be afraid to take risks and learn new things.</p>

# Developing Good Learning Behaviours in Children

At John Rankin Schools we believe that learning should be a life-long enterprise. We aim to develop our pupils' Learning Behaviours, not just so they can complete school learning more easily and effectively, but so they will leave school with the 'disposition' (a set of habits and attitudes) which will serve them through the journey of life.

What are Learning Behaviours all about? Learning Behaviour or Power is about learning how to be a better learner. It is about the individual learner, their personal 'disposition' towards learning. They are a set of 'learning muscles' that need to be exercised so that they grow strong. This is something that can be learnt, practised and improved. It is a learning culture that encourages children and teachers to become better learners.

It allows children to;

- ✓ approach difficulties in learning without fear of failure
- ✓ take small steps within learning
- ✓ develop confidence in their abilities
- ✓ challenge themselves
- ✓ develop motivation and perseverance

It is not additional to teaching but should be grounded within everyday teaching and learning

It gives clear labels for the children to use to develop understanding of learning processes.

Promoting Learning Behaviours, in this way, allows us to develop a common language for learning across school. The language is used in all classrooms, with all children. This helps everyone talk about understanding learning to learn. We hope that this understanding will go beyond the school gates, where you will be able to reinforce the ideas by encouraging the children to use learning language in their everyday lives.

The idea is that the four dispositions (4 Rs) are like a group of 'learning muscles'. Just as we can build our physical muscles with the right kind of exercise, learning muscles can also be developed and can grow in strength and stamina. It is these we are aiming to develop in the children.

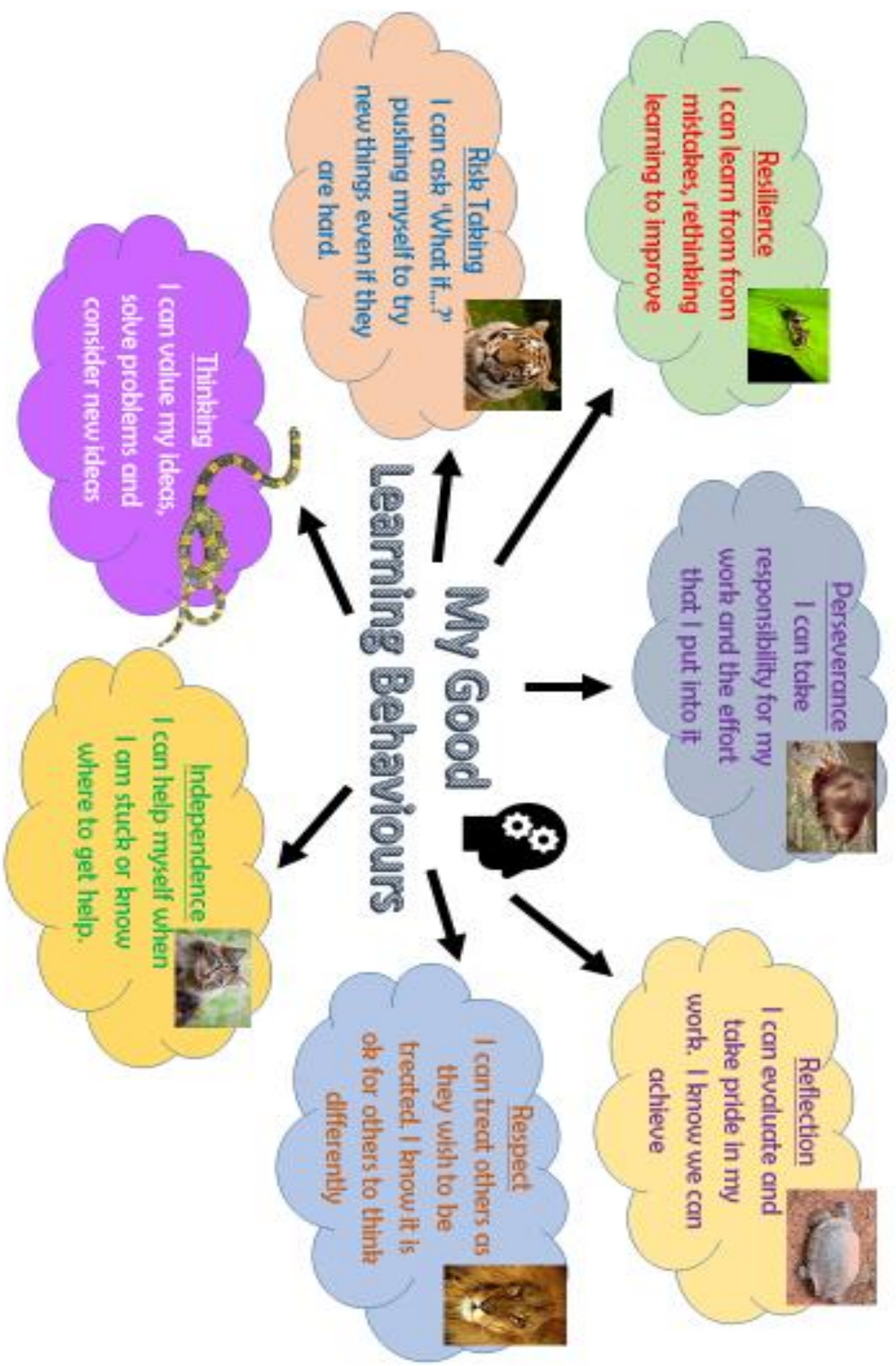
There are four main learning dispositions:

**Resilience:** not giving up

**Resourcefulness:** being able to use a range of learning strategies and knowing what to do when you get stuck

**Reflectiveness:** being able to think about yourself as a learner and how you might be able to do this better

**Reciprocity:** being able to learn with and from others, as well as on your own





# Resourcefulness

## The Power to Shape the Future

Resourcefulness is the ability possessed by successful kids to find and use available resources to achieve goals, problem-solve, and shape their futures. It draws on skills like planning, goal-setting, strategic thinking, and organizing. We encourage children to be resourceful when we set high expectations and support them to accomplish their goals. When we teach them to be strategic thinkers and adaptable problem-solvers, they learn to live without rigid rules or preconceived ideas. As parents, we help children become resourceful when we walk beside them through the everyday practice of being goal-directed rather than setting objectives and problem-solving for them.

### LET GO OF PERFECTIONISM

Studies show that perfectionist attitudes can interfere with a child's ability to achieve goals. Parents help children avoid the pitfalls of perfectionism by focusing on the learning process, not just the result, and by helping kids set realistic goals.



### REINFORCE THE POWER OF REFLECTION

Encourage your child to review her thinking processes. What did she learn? What would he do differently next time? This process not only develops resourcefulness, but also increases a child's self-awareness.

### EXPOSE KIDS TO POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

Children learn positive strategies to achieve goals by modeling others with growth mindsets. When parents see themselves as active learners and achievers who accomplish goals through hard work and perseverance, kids also strive to be their best selves.

### TEACH THE ART OF POSITIVE SKEPTICISM

When we teach kids to be skeptics—to require additional evidence before accepting someone's claims as true—we also teach them to be curious and resourceful problem-solvers.



# What is Independent Learning and how does it benefit children?

‘Independent Learning’ is often linked with other approaches to learning such as ‘personalisation’, ‘student-centred learning’ and ‘ownership’ of learning.

Dependent Learners	Independent Learners
Rely heavily on the teacher.	Are self reliant.
Cannot make decisions about their learning.	Can make informed decisions about their learning.
Do not know their own strengths and weaknesses.	Are aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
Do not connect what they learn in class with the real world.	Relate what they learn in class to the real world.
Think that the teacher is solely responsible for their learning.	Take responsibility for their own learning. Know about different strategies for learning.
Do not know the best way to learn something.	Plan their learning and set goals for themselves.
Do not set learning goals: will only work when intrinsic motivators such as grades or rewards are offered.	Are motivated by making progress in learning.
Do not reflect on how well there are learning and the reasons for this.	Often reflect on the learning process and their own progress.

## What are the benefits of independent learning for students?

greater student awareness of their limitations and their ability to manage them

increased motivation and confidence

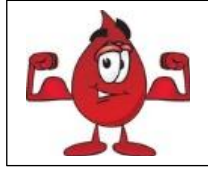
better engagement in the learning process and target setting

fostering social inclusion

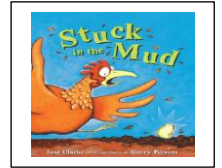
better academic performance and sustained progress

# How you can help at home?

- ✓ Ask your children about their learning muscles they have been using at school.



- ✓ Use the language of learning when undertaking tasks at home.
- ✓ If your child becomes stuck in their learning ask them to think of what they would have to do at school to get 'unstuck'.



- ✓ Welcome and foster your child's questioning spirit as much as you can.
- ✓ Involve them in your own learning activities. Try to "think aloud" as you try a new recipe or struggle with a bit of DIY. It helps children grow if they see that you too can struggle with uncertainty.
- ✓ Promote independence and Resourcefulness in everyday tasks – putting clothes on, making good choices, organising themselves.



- ✓ Let them make mistakes (and encourage them to find ways in which they can learn from them) – let them see you make mistakes (and stay calm, in order to find solutions)
- ✓ Encourage them to explain how they got to an answer or solution (reasoning)



**First  
Attempt  
in  
Learning**

## The Secrets of Success

*It is easy to think that success is all about knowledge and skills and whilst these are of great importance. It is also imperative that pupils learn the attributes and competencies of how to be an effective learner in life. At Long Lane we really value these lifelong learning attitudes. The Secrets of Success programme is woven through our curriculum, celebrated and explicitly taught in assemblies. It is a child-friendly way of supporting children to be ambitious, motivated and resilient in all their learning which we know will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives and enable them to contribute effectively to society.*



**Understand Others** – This means that you are able to offer help and give to others. You can share ideas and empathise with others. People who have empathy make more successful friendships and working relationships. If you understand others, you will get along and be happier.

**Work Hard** – You need to practise and put effort in to get results. Working hard means setting the right environment with no distractions. Put in the hours!

**Try New Things** – It is really brave to try something new and to put yourself out there. It takes courage to try something for the first time. You may be nervous but the proud feeling you get is so worth it. Remember, it is ok to make mistakes (First Attempt In Learning), this is how you learn.

**Push yourself** – When you feel shy or don't think you'll be good enough or when someone tries to stop you, you should be strong and keep going. Push yourself to reach a goal or go that bit further than you did before. Fight your fears, it will be worth it.

**Don't Give up** – Did you know that successful people also have bad luck, setbacks, failures and criticism but they find a way round these problems? 'Stickability' or 'bouncebackability' (some people call this resilience).

**Concentrate** – Some things stop you concentrating. What works best for you to concentrate? Take away the distractions of TV, games, other people, and be clear about what you are trying to do. Try not to do too many things at once.

**Imagine** – Using your imagination gets you to places you wouldn't believe. If you have ideas, share them, develop them, don't be afraid to make them big. Keep a bank of ideas handy for different times and places in your work. Magpie ideas to make them your own but don't copy. Remember, great ideas only come from people who are willing to be wrong.

**Improve** – Successful people are always trying to make things better. Great things come from lots of small changes. Always look at what you have done with a goal to make it 'just a little bit better'. Ask other people to help you to do this with your work. Take your time and think carefully.