AIM HIGH PARENT NEWSLETTER

November Newsletter 2016 | Archived Newsletters

Click on any headline listed below to be redirected to a specific article

Note from Jim Jordan, Director of Programs

Welcome to the November edition of the Aim High Parent Newsletter. This month we will feature two topics, growth mindset and talking about failure as a positive opportunity for growth and success. Both provide tips that you as parents can use to help your Achiever thrive in this age of transitions. I encourage you to visit the websites provided in the articles for more information. The October Saturday session saw all our Achievers on field trips to Washington University Medical Center (Young Scientist Program), Missouri Botanical Gardens and St. Louis Science Center.

Best,

Jim Jordan

Jim Jordan, Director of Programs
314-432-9500
jjordan@aimhighstl.org

Aim High was one of the top 20 searched camps for a second year in a row in Blueprint4summer!

Blueprint4summerSTL is a free, easy-to-use mobile app that helps connect St. Louis metro families to thousands of summer learning opportunities and camps. 56% of users in 2016 came from St Louis City and North County. Blueprint4summer helps parents search and find programs that connect their children to activities that develop creativity and problem-solving skills and help kids succeed. www.Blueprint4Summer.com

Even though Aim High recruits through its partner schools in St. Louis City, Normandy and Ritenour, parents contact us that have hear about Aim High through word of mouth or Blueprint4summer. We are expanding to serve more students from a larger geographic area in the city. A five-week commitment is HUGE for families like yours to make and we thank you for supporting your Achiever in Aim High.

Saturday, October 8 Saw Our Achievers Out and About

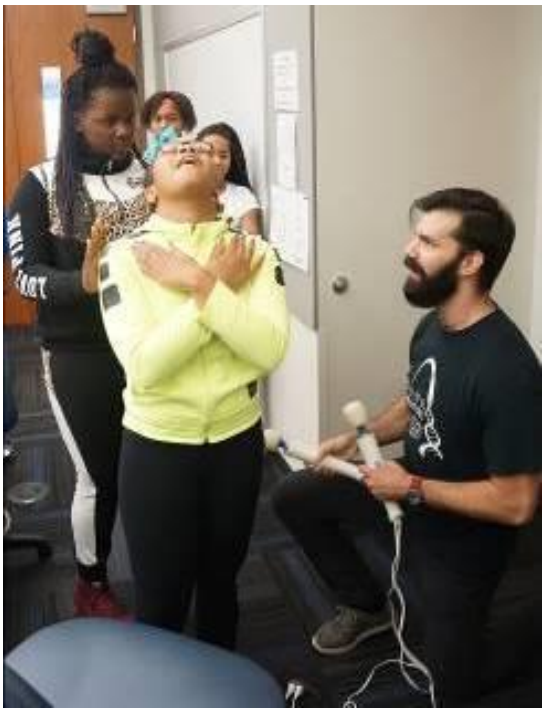
46 Villa Achievers visited Washington University Medical Center for the Young Scientist Program on Neuroscience. Students rotated through 5 activity stations to learn how the human brain and nervous system works, controls muscles, how our body senses where it is in space, how we adapt to different visual stimuli, and examining real human brains.

Students watch as an electric stimulus causes a cricket leg to twitch.

Through optical illusions, students learn how our brain processes what we see and how we are sometimes tricked by the images we are looking at.

Examining a real brain and learning which areas are responsible for our senses

Learning about our "6th Sense" Proprioception—sensing where our body is in space



Priory Achievers visited Missouri Botanical Gardens and explored how plants are important to our lives as well as the many colors it brings to our world.

In the Climatron discovering the origins for chocolate and vanilla that we all enjoy

Cactus are pretty wild. Loving the Wild at the Gardens.

Aim High Saturday schedule 2016-1017 School Year

Bus Schedules are on the Aim High Website.

November 12 – John Burroughs and Villa (Social Studies focus) at school Priory is touring Monsanto Chesterfield Campus

December 3 – John Burroughs

December 10 – Priory and Villa

January 14 – Priory and Villa

January 21 – John Burroughs

February 11, 2017

February 18 – John Burroughs

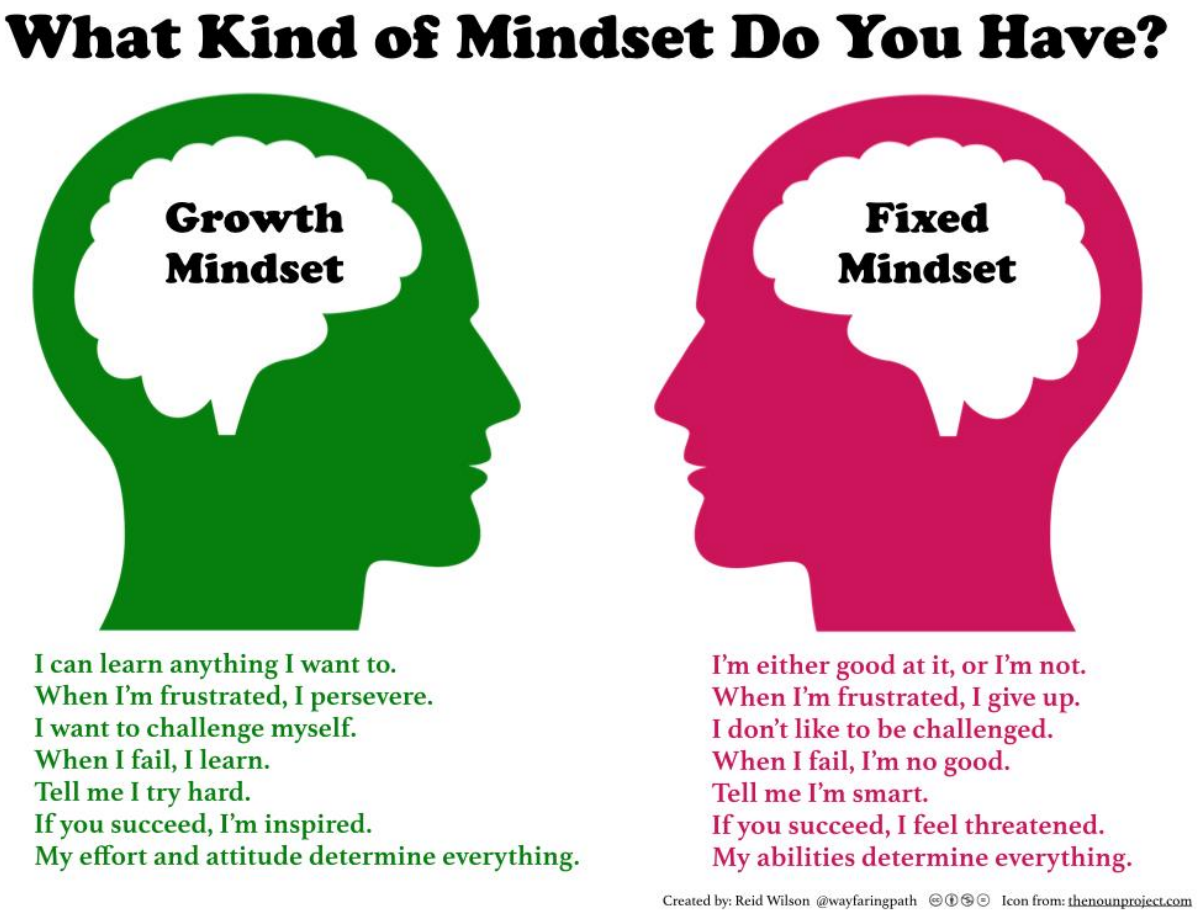
March 11 – John Burroughs, Priory and Villa

April 8 – Priory and Villa

April 22 – John Burroughs

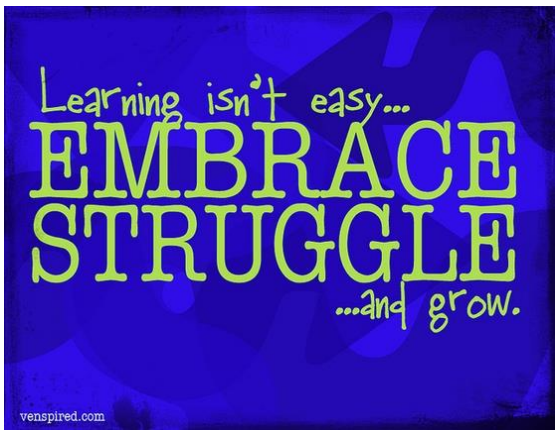
What is a Growth Mindset?

We hear how Grit and not giving up is an important part of learning. The Growth Mindset is an accepted part of many of our school's philosophy, but it is often misunderstood. The next two articles will help you as parents put some of its major tenets to good practice to help your achiever achieve success.



What is a growth mindset?

Discovered by Stanford Professor Carol Dweck, Ph.D., a growth mindset is the belief that we can develop our abilities, including our intelligence, which is our ability to think. It is distinguished from a fixed mindset, which is the belief that abilities can't change, such as thinking that some people can't improve in math, creativity, writing, relationship-building, leadership, sports, and the like. Learn more at www.mindsetworks.com and https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/



How Parents Can Instill a Growth Mindset at Home

Mindset works https://www.mindsetworks.com/parents/growth-mindset-parenting

Parenting is really hard. Having a growth mindset helps. Research shows that parents can have a powerful impact on their childrens' mindsets. The language you use and the actions you take show your children about what you expect. Giving process praise, talking about the brain, accepting mistakes as learning opportunities, and understanding the role of emotions in learning are all practices you can begin today.

Say This, Not That

The way we praise our children can have a profound impact on their mindset. Research on praise and mindsets shows that when we praise children for being smart, it promotes a fixed mindset. It sends a message that their accomplishments are trait-based, and tied to something innate. In contrast, praising kids for working hard promotes a growth mindset. It sends a message that the child's effort is what led them to success. Want more tips on what to say, and what not to say, when praising your kids? Say This, Not That!

Say This	Not That
"I can see you worked so hard on this!" ***Say this because*** *it helps your children understand you value their effort.*	"You are so smart!" ***Do not say this because*** *it makes them think of intelligence as a fixed quality.*
"It seems like it's time to try a new strategy." ***Say this because*** *it lets your children know that they control their outcomes by making choicest.*	"It's okay. Maybe you're just not cut out for this!" ***Do not say this because*** *it makes your children think they don't have the capacity to improve.*
"I like watching you do that." ***Say this because*** *it conveys a message of approval of an activity they enjoy doing, regardless of outcome.*	"You're a natural at that!" ***Do not say this because*** *the next time your children fail or make a mistake, they might think*

	they do not have that talent after all.
"It looks like that was too easy for you. Let's find you something challenging so your brain can grow." ***Say this because*** *it teaches kids that learning should be challenging, and if tasks are too easy them your brain isn't growing.*	"That's right! You did that so quickly and easily; great job!" ***Do not say this because*** *praising tasks completed without much effort paints effort in a negative light and encourages a fixed mindset.*
"That's not right. You don't understand this yet. What strategies can you try to understand it better?" ***Say this because*** *it important to be honest about what your child knows and doesn't know, but also explain that you believe in their capacity to improve.*	"That's not right. Are you paying attention in class? It seems like you're not even trying." ***Do not say this because*** *the fight or flight response may be preventing your child from giving their best effort in class.*
"That was really hard. Your effort has paid off! Next time you'll be ready for this kind of challenge!" ***Say this because*** *reminding children of how they were able to overcome challenges by putting forth a lot of effort cultivates a growth mindset.*	"That was really hard. I'm so glad it's over and you don't have to do that again." ***Do not say this because*** *there will always be more challenges, and children should feel that they have the tools for what comes next.*
"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." ***Say this because*** *putting your children in the challenge zone is how to inspire lifelong learning.*	"You have a real talent for writing. You should take a creative writing class because you're so good at it." ***Do not say this because*** *if you only encourage your children to do what they're good at, they'll be afraid to take risks and learn new things.*

Talk About the Brain

The brain is far more malleable than we once thought. Teaching our kids that they actually have control over growing their brains through the actions they take is empowering! Tell your children that when they work hard, that's the feeling of their neurons connecting. The dendrites are reaching out to other dendrites, trying to connect to make a stronger brain. What strengthens those connections is practice, asking questions, and actively participating in learning. When children learn that their brains physically change with effort, it leads to increased motivation and achievement. Show your kids this Brain Animation video to explain!

Accept Mistakes as Learning Opportunities

One of the best ways you can model a growth mindset is to speak candidly about the mistakes you've made, and what you've learned from them. Speak positively about your mistakes and struggles, and this will show your children that taking risks and making mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. Explain to your children that trying hard things is what helps us grow, and you can't be perfect when you try something hard!

Understand the Role of Emotions in Learning

When we get angry, scared, or feel threatened, our fight or flight response is activated. This can happen anytime, whether we're scared of a spider or scared of math! Our brains are wired to protect us when we feel threatened, and stress symptoms such as sweating, stomach cramps, and your mind going blank are completely normal. There are strategies we can use when the fight or flight response tries to take over, to help us learn. One of those strategies is called Square Breathing and it helps to break down the adrenaline that is flooding the bloodstream and preventing learning from occurring.

Talking About Failure: What Parents Can Do to Motivate Kids in School

Talking About Failure: What Parents Can Do to Motivate Kids in School

By Tara Haelle, published in KQED's MindShift, May 2016

Is failure a positive opportunity to learn and grow, or is it a negative experience that hinders success? How parents answer that question has a big influence on how much children think they can improve their intelligence through hard work, a study says.

"Parents are a really critical force in child development when you think about how motivation and mindsets develop," says Kyla Haimovitz, a professor of psychology at Stanford University. She coauthored the study, published in *Psychological Science* with colleague Carol Dweck, who pioneered research on mindsets. "Parents have this powerful effect really early on and throughout childhood to send messages about what is failure, how to respond to it."

Although there's been a lot of research on how these forces play out, relatively little looks at what parents can do to motivate their kids in school, Haimovitz says. This study begins filling that gap.

"There is a fair amount of evidence showing that when children view their abilities as more malleable and something they can change over time, then they deal with obstacles in a more constructive way," says Gail Heyman, a professor of psychology at the University of California at San Diego who was not involved in this study.

But communicating that message to children is not simple. "Parents need to represent this to their kids in the ways they react about their kids' failures and setbacks," Haimovitz says. "We need to really think about what's visible to the other person, what message I'm sending in terms of my words and my deeds."

In other words, if a child comes home with a D on a math test, how a parent responds will influence how the child perceives their own ability to learn math. Even a well-intentioned, comforting response of "It's OK, you're still a great writer" may send the message that it's time to give up on math rather than learn from the problems they got wrong, Haimovitz explains.

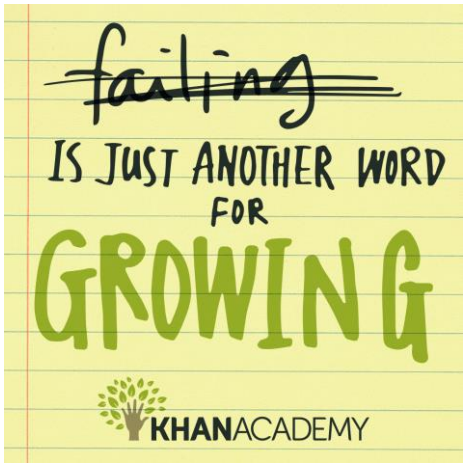
She and Dweck conducted a series of smaller studies to explore how the interactions between parents' failure and intelligence mindsets affected their children's beliefs about intelligence. The way children perceived "being smart" was not related to how their parents perceived intelligence, but it was related to how their parents reacted toward failure. "Parents who had more of a failure-is-debilitating mindset had children who were significantly more likely to believe that intelligence is fixed," they found, even after accounting for how parents perceived their children's academic success.

"The more parents believed that failure is debilitating, the more likely their children were to see them as concerned with their performance outcomes and grades rather than their learning and improvement," the study found. Parents who saw failure as negative were more likely to worry about their child's abilities in that subject or to comfort their child about not being talented in all subjects. But parents who saw failure as an opportunity were more likely to ask their child what they learned from the quiz, what they still can learn and whether asking the teacher for help would be useful.

"The takeaway is that when your child is struggling on something or has setbacks, don't focus on their abilities, focus on what they can learn from it," Haimovitz says. One way, she says, is to ask a child: "How can you use this as a jumping-off point?"

But it's unclear how much the study's findings relate to children of various ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Related research Heyman has done in China revealed a mixed bag in terms of results. "Cultures have very different beliefs about effort and ability, and asking subtly different questions you can get different answers," Heyman says.

Whereas academic success often correlates with athletic or social success among white students, the same is not necessarily true among black or Latino students, according to Cleopatra Abdou, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Southern California. What is consistent across cultures, however, is the powerful influence that beliefs people internalize as children follow them through life.



"The messages we get from our parents, whether explicitly or symbolically or subconsciously, stay with us and are very hard to unlearn and to overcome" if they're not helpful, she says. "Sometimes we have internalized faulty beliefs or beliefs that don't serve us."

Further, taking the learn-from-failure message too far might backfire eventually. "If you're being told this message you can learn anything and you've done everything you can and you're not getting anywhere, then maybe at a certain point you say you're going to say I just don't believe this," she adds.

Further, children's mindsets can also be influenced by their temperament, such as their tolerance for frustration, Heyman says. "One thing we do know in recent years, there's too much blaming of parents," Heyman says. "Temperament is extremely important and it's biologically based, and to deny that causes all kinds of problems."

The challenge for parents is to support children without setting them up for failure. "There's this very difficult fine line between parents and teachers helping children enough so that they can do things on their own that they couldn't do otherwise but not to help them so much that they expect other people to do it for them and don't get pulled up to a higher level," Heyman says. "You slowly pull back as the kids get better on their own, but not let them flail around so much that they get frustrated and give up."

Tara Haelle is the co-author of The Informed Parent: A Science-Based Resource for Your Child's First Four Years*. She's on Twitter:* @tarahaelle

STAY CONNECTED WITH AIM HIGH!

Aim High is on social media so you can always stay in the loop! We have a Facebook page and Twitter account that we regularly update with program information, pictures of student activities, and more. Use the links below to find us on Twitter and Facebook or click the icons below. No worries if you don't use social media sites. You can still view our information on either site without creating an account.

Twitter- https://twitter.com/aimhighstlouis
Facebook-https://www.facebook.com/Aim-High-St-Louis-166574511442/