Growth Mindset is Great for Me K-5

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Hello everyone. My name is Amy and I am a pediatric occupational therapist. I'm really excited to be here today to share with you some strategies about um what your brain can do when we learn
how it grows, how we talk to ourselves, how others talk to us, and why this thing called a growth mindset is good for us. So we're gonna talk about some different tools and ways that this information can help you learn and feel your best.
and um hopefully you'll have some fun and learn along with me. I get to play all day at a clinic in Dover that supports hundreds of children every week, and it's my joy to find ways to help bring these
these important concepts, important things that we're thinking about and learning about to children and teachers so that we can all do our very best. I have some tools here with me so that I can do my best learning and thinking when I'm
doing this PowerPoint presentation. So if you need to take a break or need some tools, this is a safe place to do that. So let's get started. What is a growth mindset? A growth mindset means that you believe your brain can grow.
and get stronger when you practice, try again and don't give up. This is science. Science tells us that the more you try and the more you know your brain can grow, the more you will learn. It means you're not born knowing everything and that when things are hard,
and you're trying, there are new connections being made-up here. Because your brain is like a muscle. And when you learn something new, when you make a mistake, when you practice something tricky, your brain makes connections and grows. The more you use your brain, the
stronger and smarter it gets. In this picture, you see a whole bunch of different connections happening in the brain. That might not be exactly how it looks, but we can imagine that it is when our cells are growing and connecting. That's how we learn.
Why is this so important? When you believe that your brain can grow, you understand your brain better. You try, even when it's not easy, and you don't give up as fast. You recover from mistakes,

because you know that they're part of learning, and then you learn more, and you feel really proud of yourself. When you believe, I can't do this, your brain shuts down, it shuts off, and it stops trying. Everything's trickier.
When you believe I can learn, your brain lights up and it grows even when things get hard. And sometimes we need some help, but the most important thing is that we don't give up.
Let's think about if this is about you. Let's think about something I couldn't do at first. Did I learn to walk right away? No. Could I read the very first time I tried?
No. Was I good at riding a bike, or tie my shoes, or doing math the very first time I tried? No, No no. I bet the answer is no for most of you to a lot of these things.
all work on learning different strategies and ways to learn things we do every day, including our schoolwork. And most of this comes through practice. There are definitely things that come a little bit easier to each of us based off of our own strengths
and interests. But with all of those things we were talking up there about, I know that I fell down. I made a lot of mistakes. And at first it really stressed me out because I thought I needed to be perfect.
But I learned to take breaks and to regulate. That's a big word. What does that mean? It means to calm your body. And that doesn't mean to just ignore what's going on, but to find ways that your body can feel calm again
after, it's become stressed. And that's also science. That's part of what your brain and body are supposed to do. They're supposed to become dysregulated to find a way to push forward.
And we know with these activities like learning to ride a bike or tying our shoes, it can be useful to have an adult nearby to help us figure out how to problem-solve, to take some deep breaths, take some breaks to try again, and
ohh that every time you fail and fall down, your brain is growing and that you are learning. Sometimes we're learning what not to do. Sometimes we're learning that we need to keep with it. That is what a growth mindset is all about.
So, how do we do this? What would it sound and look like? Well, a growth mindset sounds like, This is hard, but I can keep trying. I can't do this yet, but I can get a little help.
Mistakes help my brain grow, or I got better because I practiced. A growth mindset will look like sticking with a puzzle, even when it's tricky, practicing reading, trying again after missing a shot in sports.

asking for help instead of quitting a board game, or getting to the next level in karate. All of these things take repetition and practice and trying different strategies and seeing how we can do. Most importantly, not giving up when it gets tricky.
How might this sound in your own head? We all learn from those around us how to talk to ourselves inside of our head. And everybody's inner voice and how we talk to ourselves, how we coach ourselves sounds
different. Sometimes that voice that tells us whether we can or can't do something can sound pretty negative. And um another group came up with this concept called your inner critic. That means the inner thoughts that are kind of saying,
I don't think you really got this. So your inner critic, that voice might say, I'm bad at reading. I'll never get this. But a growth mindset could replace that with, I'm still learning. Reading gets easier when I practice, and this is gonna take a lot of work, but I know it'll be worth
The inner critic might say, everyone else gets math except me. Huh A growth mindset would say my brain learns at its own speed, and that's okay. We're all different. And what comes easier to me is not gonna come easier to them every time. And vice versa. The inner critic might say I messed this up every time, but the growth mindset could replace that with I haven't figured it out yet, but I'm working on it. When our brain gets stuck into thinking it can't do something, that word yet
Can really help us. We can add it to most of these sentences and it can really turn how we think about it and then the effort we're going to put in afterwards because of how we're talking to ourselves.
what you might say to yourself. Um,
when it comes to interacting with our friends, playing with our friends, or things that don't go right with them right away. So our inner critic might say, No one wants to play with me. And that probably won't help us to figure out
Who we can play with or how we'll play. But a growth mindset might say I can ask another friend or checking in with an adult if I'm having a hard time finding someone to play with.
The inner critic might say, I got in trouble. I'm bad. But a growth mindset would say, Making a mistake doesn't does not make me bad, and I can make it right. I like this quote from the Sesame Street crew because it really reminds us what
can do. Just because you can't do it yet, doesn't mean you won't. And a lot of adults remember that when they're working towards something that's really tricky for them. I bet your parents, your caregivers, and your teachers can think of times that they

wanted to
give up on something that they didn't get, but they stuck with it, and then they were really proud afterwards. You might be able to to too. And that's a great thing to check in with an adult on later to see if we already know some of these strategies. um have already used them or those in our lives are already.
That's how our brain learns and grows and how talking to our brain can change that. Um It can either make it trickier if our critics really loud, or it can be a little easier for us and we can keep with things if we use that growth
mindset. So now we're going to learn about a new tool that I came up with to help us practice how aware we are about using a growth mindset with ourselves and the adults in our life and how often they are using a growth mindset with us. We're going to learn how to
notice this and speak up for what helps us best through something called mismatch. Kind of like these socks over here. Sometimes things just don't match up, but that doesn't mean we have to give up on them or throw our socks away.
But we can find a way to speak up for what helps us feel our best and do our best. And sometimes that's with our self and sometimes that's with others. And hopefully this is going to help you figure out a way to problem solve and push forward.
Another great quote that I like is from Mr. Rogers. He said, Anyone who does anything really well had to learn how to do it first. That's a great reminder. All right, let's start with some sayings that you might have heard from an adult in your life. These can be kind of hard to hear, and I know that I've heard every single one of these. And I'll tell you, I did not like hearing it when it was said, but part of it was true too.
Let's go to these phrases. You're not paying attention. You're distracting others. You're not even trying. Why can't you just behave?
Can you nod your head if you ever heard one of these?
It might be helpful to your classmates to know that other people are hearing these things too.
Now we're going to go through the steps of mismatch. So each letter of mismatch stands for a different step, and we're going to walk through each one, and then maybe you can in your classroom with your teacher and see if this helps you all figure out how to find a match.
With everything that's going on. All right, the first M.
Message from my body. Hmm. Stop and think. Something about what someone just

said or did didn't feel right. It's okay to notice your body and your feelings. They are signals and they're so important to listen to.
We might not always know what they mean, but it's important you don't ignore them. On to I. Let's identify the impact. Hmm. What does that mean? Well, it means ask yourself, how did that make me feel?
What did I hear? Your feelings matter. How it sits with you after someone said it, or after you even thought a thought that matters. Those feelings matter.
S. Let's search for the signal. I wonder, what do they want me to learn or do? They might be trying to help, even if it didn't sound kind or sit easy with me at first. Sometimes that makes me think that what they said was mean. I don't know if they were trying to be mean. Those are things we're going to figure out.
M. This can help us figure that out. My why, your why. Ask, do we both care about the same thing, like learning or me doing my best? You and the adult who said what they said or your thought
You guys might both want the same thing, but are just saying it in different ways. This could be kind of tricky to stay with, but we're going to use an example in a minute and I think it'll make a lot of sense and help us understand so.
If you're feeling like, what is this lady saying? Take a minute, take a breath, use a tool, or stretch your body.
and stick with it. Your brain is growing and we'll soon be to the example. I think it'll make more sense then. On to A, ask for support. This is a really important step that I'm sure a lot of teachers tell you all the time.
It helps when you say it like this, or You can help me by. That's asking somebody for support in a specific way. Sometimes all we can say is, I need help, and that's okay too. There are plenty of ways to ask for support or ask for help.
And you can tell people how to support you once you start learning what works best for you. You are going to be your biggest advocate one day. That means you're going to know what works for you, and you're going to be able to communicate that to others.
On to tea. Think about needs. Ask, Is there something I need? Is there something that they need? What are the needs here? Hmm.
I think that'll make more sense in our example. Hold on. We're almost there. C. Choose the next step. Decide. What can I try? What can they help with? What can we do together?
Teamwork and working with those adults in your life who care about you so much

and want to see see you succeed is going to be the best choice. And sometimes they need help, and we're going to help them figure it out.
Help fix the message. Now you know a lot about growth mindset. You might know more than other people and that your brain can grow and thus the cells and neurons in your brain get stronger and faster. The more you practice, the more mistakes you make.
and reflect on. Now we're going to help others fix the message. If it didn't sit well with us, and we've thought about why, and we've thought about what might everybody need here? What things do we all want?
We can figure out how to fix that message that they delivered in the 1st place that we we didn't do well with. So one message that could empower the brain is I'm still learning or it helps me when you see what support I need and not focus on what I'm struggling.
going on. I can try again. Mistakes help me grow. These are all ways to fix the message because a growth mindset helps our brain learn better.
All right, the time is here. We've gone through all the letters of mismatch, and now we can try it. When having a hard time getting your homework done, an adult says you're not even trying.
Let's see how that works in mismatch. You're not even trying. Hmm. That made my cheeks feel hot and my forehead scrunch and a pit of anger rise up in my belly. That's the message from your body. It's OK to notice those signals and your feelings. Don't ignore them.
I identify the impact. How did that sit with me? I heard you're lazy. That's how that felt to me, and it made me feel stupid, and it made me want to give up. That's not a great feeling to have.
Search for this signal. Hmm. What did they mean by this? They mean maybe I want to help you finish so we have time for dinner and relaxing, not stress later. They might be trying to help, even if it didn't sound that way to me when they said. You're not even trying.
Hmm.
My why and their why. We both want me to learn. Both want me to work hard and do a good job. So we might want the same thing, but they're saying it in a different way. That didn't help me learn and didn't help me stick with it.
Ask for support. Can you ask me what part is hard instead?
You can tell people how to support you, and that often starts with how they talk to

you or how they talk to us. And so if someone's saying you're not even trying, you could say, Please just ask me what part is hard.
Even if you don't know which part it is, I'm sure that's going to be a piece of it. Something's tricky for you, and you might not be able to figure that out. An adult asking and getting curious about what might be tricky, what might be hard or what pieces you're missing could be just the right piece to this.
See, let's think about needs. I need help breaking these things down, the parts to each task to do this big project. And I need adults to know I'm doing my best. Adults need to know that it's going to get done and that I tried my best. Hmm, again, they both want the best to happen. Let's figure out what we each need here and choose the right step. Hmm, let's do the first problem together, just to practice.
Would that be a good solution? Not being able to get started, maybe one of the parts is tricky or you missed the directions. You could ask them to do the first one with you. You could ask them if they could help you figure out what part is tricky or what information you're missing.
missing. And sometimes they do that. Some of the adults in our life do that really well. Some of them might have a harder time with this. Sometimes when we're busy or we have a lot of people asking for our help at the same time.
We can miss this part and that's why it's important that kids know how to ask for help and how to break down problems like this and how to problem solve because together we can figure out how to make learning fun and grow our brain and stick with things and
Sometimes we have to tell people how to treat us and how to talk to us. And sometimes that's how we're talking to ourselves. So in this part, back to C, we're choosing the next step together. How do we best solve this with both of our ideas Our needs together.
H. Help fix the message. The child, you could say, I can ask for help when I'm stuck and it's okay to have hard days or things that are tricky for me. And adults, I have seen you get this before and I'm wondering what what might be going on for you. right now. Can I help you in some way? That's another way to say what you notice going on or what you think is going on in the beginning, right?
Sometimes our adults do that, sometimes they don't. And so it's important for all of us to learn how we can reshape these messages, how we can have boundaries, learn about ourselves, ask for the supports we need, and ask for how to be

spoken to. It goes both ways. Children and adults can both communicate respectfully in ways that make us feel great while we're doing this work, even if it's really hard for us and you might not think we're participating or doing our best.
I'm sure there's something to that, and we just need to look a little bit harder at the situation.
So today you've grown your your brain in really big ways, and you learned how to grow it even more, how to learn what's going on in your body, to know that those signals are normal and they're trying to tell us something. But so often
We push them down and we say don't listen to what's going on inside. I've got to just do this or I can't. I won't. I I don't know how. And that give up inner critic starts talking and it's tricky to get out.
But this helpful message today, it's short, but hopefully it can help us turn things around. And remember, we we can do hard things. We can stick with it, we can ask for help, and we can check in with our bodies along the way.
And another thing I always like to say is that we can feel many feelings all at once. Two, three, four feelings, and that's okay. When you're practicing this, you can feel nervous and brave.
and caring for yourself and for others. But practicing this and other things that are tricky will help us feel better and maybe feel other feelings at the same time. That's okay. You just learned this and others are learning too.
We all feel feelings. We all make mistakes. We all learn new things. You might not have this yet, but the more you practice, the better you will get. You may even teach adults about this and how to have a growth mindset again.
Remember, this can be a very powerful tool and it can help you learn more, feel your best, and be your best.
So these are the key important takeaways I want you to remember from today when we're learning about our brains and how great they are. You can change the way your brain thinks about tough moments, about tough moments and tricky things, and adults can too.
and this can change your life. Learning mismatch can feel hard at first. There are a lot of letters there and a lot of steps, and that is okay. Even if you only remember one or two when you're practicing, that's okay, and I'm sure it's going to help you do better each time. We start with one action, then we do it again and again and again until our brain gets stronger and we grow. I know you've got this.
Remember, there's no one right way to show up. We all have different brains and

different bodies, and that means they think different ways and they feel different things. We like different things.
We learn in different ways and need different kinds of help. All of that is OK and you are on your way to learning yourself best and your needs best. When we notice what we need, we can find support and we can each shine in our own way.
We can grow our brains and the adults in our lives can too. Thank you so much for learning with me today. Learning about your brain, my brain, other people's brains. And I just want to say many thanks to the Youth Well Foundation that sponsored this learning opportunity for your schools and teachers. I hope you have a great day learning and practice some of these strategies. You're gonna get it.

◉ **Amy Rich Crane** stopped transcription