



Free Your Brain: Change Your Mindset

We have been learning about the power of self-talk. There is a forbidden phrase in SPARK class: "I don't get it." This is a complaint that reflects a non-growth mindset. Instead, we are trying to reframe in a more positive way: "I don't understand this yet" or "The solution eludes me at this time."

Our yearlong focus includes, "The Power of Yet." The mascot for this positive mindset will be a Yeti. If anyone finds stuffed toys, pictures, t-shirts or anything else with a cute Yeti, please let me know—I want to put together a permanent class display.

I will be providing information about how families can support the development of a growth mindset at home in these newsletters. It is a difficult thing, helping our kids with this, because it means that they have to be frustrated and experience failure. We will learn how to do this together!

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Spark Class Update

Our main theme this year is Free Your Brain, Change Your Mindset! Our second unit is "Me On The Family Tree." We will be talking about how our backgrounds impact our learning, and we will celebrate our rich diversity!

HOMEWORK ALERT!

There are THREE parts to this unit homework.

They are all due by December 11th!

1. Work with your child to make a "Heritage Tree." This is like a family tree, but the focus is on the culture of our families. All of the cultures that are part of our background mix to make us who we are.
2. Have your child make a visual representation of one of your family traditions. Be creative! We will share these in class.
3. Food is such an important part of our heritage and traditions. If you are willing, please send me an electronic copy of a family recipe that I could share with our SPARK families. Feel free to send me a sample! 😊



Parenting for a Growth Mindset

Adapted From: *Ready-to-use resources for Mindsets in the Classroom*, Prufrock Press, Inc.

Ideas for Creating a Growth Mindset at Home (part 2)

Using Growth Mindset Praise and Feedback

- Praise what your child does, not who he or she is. Instead of saying, “You are so smart!” say, “I can see you really worked hard/used perseverance/put in a lot of effort!”
- Praise perseverance and resiliency when you see your child struggle or face challenge. Avoid praising grades; focus on praising work ethic and effort, not achievement.

From Mrs. DePalma:

- Adopt the “Yet-i” mindset. Skill development takes time. We might not have it YET, but we will develop skills with patience and hard work.



The Power of Yet!

Calendar of Caring November Focus: Parenting

Normally, I include something for Lifeskill development, but I ran into this article and NEEDED to share!—Mrs. DePalma

From: <http://sengifted.org/archives/articles/parenting-a-gifted-child-is>

Parenting a Gifted Child Is...

by Jane Hesslein

- exhausting
- exhilarating
- unnerving
- having a front row seat for the greatest entertainment ever (Greatest Show on Earth—yes, a little like the circus)
- working hard to craft a delicate partnership with your children’s teachers, especially if you are one
- wrestling with your own enthusiasm for your child’s passion so she discovers it for herself
- teaching your child to use the library himself instead of surprising him with books you’ve checked out for him
- enough to bring you to tears—of joy, as well as sadness
- intense
- much easier when you find a community of like-minded souls
- a real education, homework included
- not reacting visibly when your 20-month-old swears in public—appropriately
- knowing it is normal for your 3-year-old to yell in a museum, “Oh my gosh, that is the biggest trilobite I’ve ever seen IN MY ENTIRE LIFE!”
- hearing your child’s first cello teacher say after six lessons, “That child was a cellist in a former life.”
- figuring out that every request for extra attention for your child in school should include an offer to help the teacher
- charging the kid a quarter every time he brings up the Batman movie at the table
- hearing your 4-year-old ask why she is crying at the end of *ET*
- sharing the heartbreak when friendships shift
- crying along with your child when a kid in a masked costume accidentally steps on her cello’s neck and it breaks just before she is to perform
- learning to be a little subversive with the folks in charge at school so they’ll test the kid and “discover” that the “reading problem” you requested testing for is that he’s reading years above grade level

- chuckling at the sound the LEGOs make when they're vacuumed up
- realizing that your pre-verbal child is humming and you can recognize the tune
- watching your 6-yr-old memorize subway tile colors for 25 stops and then recite them backwards on the way home
- having your dinosaur pronunciation corrected
- watching your kid wake up reading one morning and then refusing to learn math facts because he expects to wake up one day knowing them, too
- feeling really relieved to learn that your child's spouse has an equally absurd LEGO and Star Wars fascination
- throwing the Tooth Fairy's money into a room so messy that your child takes weeks to find it
- carrying a pirate eye patch for your kids on the off-chance that you'll eventually run into a pirate ship—and then finding one
- trying not to panic when you realize that your child has tied his parka strings into knots around the subway car pole and now it's your stop
- explaining to teachers why your child's late project should not receive full credit
- working to convince schools that matching the special needs kid with the right teacher is good for both of them
- thanking the teacher who recommended all those sci-fi books with the strong female protagonists to your son
- remembering the itinerant teacher of the gifted at the end of the year
- thanking the teachers who've helped, and putting it into writing
- befriending librarians
- swallowing hard when your child finally hits the wall academically, especially if this doesn't happen until the university years
- taking early declarations of independence in stride—eventually
- watching with pride as your introverted child functions in another country and another language
- receiving a thank-you gift of a journal from a grade one teacher with a note that says: "I thought this small token of my appreciation would come in handy if you ever decided to write a book about your life with _____. I'm sure it would have to be classified as a work of fiction as no one would believe that it was true to life."

Grandparenting a gifted child is...

- smiling and thinking smugly, "What goes around..."