



Igniting the SPARK



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Free Your Brain: Change Your Mindset

This year I am specifically teaching about mindset and how it can influence learning. This is based on the research of Dr. Carol Dweck, author of the book **Mindsets**. The basic premise of her research is that all skills and talents can be improved through hard work and determination. There is an excellent TED video: https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=en

I believe that this is essential to our kids; most of them have breezed through their lives without having been forced to develop the skills that come from failure. If they have never had to struggle, they have not developed the resiliency they need for when something is difficult.

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! The first unit we will explore is With Great Brain Power Comes Great Brain Responsibility. We will be learning about what SPARK class can do to help us understand ourselves as gifted learners.

We have been learning about different structures in the brain. Ask your child about axons, dendrites and synapses.

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."

Coming Up:

Our Mindset 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.

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 1)

Parents Work Towards a Growth Mindset for Themselves

- We can't expect our children to develop a growth mindset if we don't have one ourselves. Recognize fixed mindset thinking in yourself and use positive self-talk to find a growth mindset. This is an opportunity to model ways to change mindset for your child. For example, "I can't figure out how to complete this document" is an opportunity to say, "I need to check the website or call the bank and ask some questions to help understand how to complete this accurately."
- Be aware of your own fixed mindset statements such as "I am a terrible cook," or "I was never good at math, either." These goals can be accomplished with perseverance and practice.
- Be careful about comparing your kids to other kids. Everyone develops at different rates.
- We want our kids to develop a love for the process of learning. Model this at home.



The Power of Yet!

Fall Family Fun!

From: http://www.travelok.com/article_page/top-fall-events-in-oklahoma

As the summer heat gracefully surrenders to the cooler temperatures of fall, Oklahoma's festivals and events gear up for the autumn season with numerous fairs, one-of-a-kind parades and vintage craft shows. If you're searching for something to make your autumn dreams come alive, look no further than Oklahoma's wide and varied fall event calendar. Browse through this list of some of the top fall events in the state and come along on a journey through Oklahoma's pumpkin patches and hometown celebrations this fall to see why autumn is the perfect season to get out and about in Oklahoma!

Robbers Cave Fall Festival

Set amidst the spectacular scenery and beautiful fall foliage of Wilburton's [Robbers Cave State Park](#), the annual [Robbers Cave Fall Festival](#) invites visitors to enjoy an array of outdoor events and seasonal activities. Grab a sweet caramel apple or a heaping bag of kettle corn and wander through the event grounds searching for handmade arts and crafts, live entertainment and amusement rides for the kids. Don't miss the Fall Foliage Cruise held on Saturday and be rewarded with over 500 vintage hot rods, custom trucks and classic cars on display.

Poteau Balloonfest

This annual hot air balloon festival, held each fall in [Poteau](#), highlights the skies above eastern Oklahoma with hot air balloon races, rides and balloon glows at dusk. The fun times don't stop there at the [Poteau Balloonfest](#), since activities such as mud pit races, monster truck rides and live concerts are waiting to entertain visitors from far and wide. Bring the kids for high-flying carnival rides and stick around for a variety of craft vendors and delicious festival food. Bring a blanket or lawn chair, grab a corn dog or a hot barbecue sandwich, and watch as colorful hot air balloons take to the crisp fall air above Poteau.

Tulsa Oktoberfest

A must-see event on the fall festival roster, the [Tulsa Oktoberfest](#) serves up a huge slice of German, Czech and Austrian culture each autumn. Whether learning how to polka or competing in a rip-roaring beer keg race, the Tulsa Oktoberfest will have you kicking up your heels in celebration of all things Bavarian. Munch on treats such as bratwurst with sauerkraut or smoked turkey legs while enjoying live entertainment, an on-site German marketplace, beer pong competitions and wiener dog races. Grab a German beer, check out a dance troupe on stage or bring the kids for a variety of carnival rides.

Beavers Bend Folk Festival & Craft Show

Take a trip back to simpler times at the [Beavers Bend Folk Festival & Craft Show](#) and enjoy the sounds of some of the best folk musicians in the region while marveling at the spectacular fall foliage on display throughout southeast Oklahoma's gem, [Beavers Bend State Park](#). A true autumn delight, the Beavers Bend Folk Festival offers visitors the chance to try their hand at vintage craft making – so grab a fresh apple cider and a piping hot funnel cake and learn how to make candles, lye soap and musical instruments. Come join re-enactors in turn-of-the-century costume, dance a jig to the sweet sounds of the fiddle and visit the petting zoo set amidst the park's towering trees.

Calendar of Caring

October Focus: Make the World a Less Scary Place

Tips for Parents: Anxiety, Sensitivities and Social Struggles among Profoundly Gifted Kids

From http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10750.aspx

Among profoundly gifted children, anxiety can manifest in multiple ways. For example, students may have fears about being away from their parents that decreases participation in extracurricular activities and social events. Given their propensity for perfectionism, profoundly gifted children can manifest fears of failure and go to unrealistic lengths to have their products be free of errors. If given corrective feedback, they may have trouble "turning off" these messages and begin to believe there is something "wrong" with them. Other profoundly gifted children may have fears of being in public or in large groups and avoid such situations. In some cases, the children's fear response can be quite intense, overwhelming, and scary. Finally, profoundly gifted children can experience uncontrollable worry about issues outside their control, such as global warming or poverty in urban areas. These worries can lead to feelings of irritability, frustration, and hopelessness.

1. Talk to your child. Often, children who worry benefit from one-on-one time with a parent who is willing and able to listen to their concerns without judgment or interpretation.
2. Schedule special time with your child. Families today have busy schedules and it quickly becomes nearly impossible to have alone time with your child. Schedule a "date" with your child where you plan something purely fun. Try to focus your energies on enjoying each other's company rather than discussing stressful topics.
3. Recognize the benefits of getting professional help. In our society, there still exists a stigma around mental health services, yet ample evidence points to the benefits of therapeutic intervention for anxiety and social concerns. Normalizing what it means to see a therapist or counselor can dispel any misconceptions your child may hold about what it means to seek help.
4. Accept that sensitivities are outside your child's control. Many children outgrow sensitivities and others learn better ways to cope.
5. Expose your child to various social settings and talk about the experience
6. Increase opportunities to interact with peers with similar interests and experiences.
7. Model social interactions and praise attempts at social interactions. Positively reinforcing social attempts and pro-social behaviors can build confidence and willingness to broaden one's social experiences.
8. Praise students when they take educational risks. When your profoundly gifted student decides to take a more challenging class at the risk of not getting a "perfect" grade, it should be celebrated. While society continues to place emphasis on outcomes, we as parents can also emphasize process and the joy of learning, instead of the need to get an A.
9. Model letting go and facing fears. Children benefit from watching their parents face their own fears, be it social, behavioral, or environmental. The next time you are scared to try something (like ride that really big rollercoaster or attend that new social event) give it a try and share with your child what it was like for you.
10. Take care of yourself. Raising children is extremely stressful. You are going to make mistakes – you are human! Schedule time for activities you enjoy so that you get a break from stress and life's demands. You're a parent – you deserve it.