



## Promote a Positive Math Mindset

**Mistakes are part of learning.** Your child might make the same mistake many times. That's okay. Remind your child that mistakes are a normal part of learning. Help them problem-solve so they can fix the mistake on their own. Talk about a time you made a mistake. As adults, we can help children to reframe a mistake by changing our perspective and creating an opportunity. Try reacting to a mistake in a positive way, such as brain-storming new strategies, thinking about what you would do differently next time, or focusing on what they learned from the mistake.



Before [trying this], I noticed children might attempt a new activity, but if it didn't work out the way the child was picturing it, the child would often just give up. But by showing the children that a mistake is a good thing, I will say, "Oh so it didn't work out like that; what is another way you can do it?" Now I'm helping them to problem-solve, and instead of giving up, this helps them to persist.

—Head Start Educator



**Stay calm.** Research shows that the way adults react to children's mistakes influences their mindset. The key is to try not to react with anxiety or frustration when a child makes a mistake or faces a setback. This is not easy, but try reminding yourself (and your child) that mistakes are a chance to learn something new.



**Link effort to pride or accomplishment.**

Along the way to achieving a goal, point out how hard work and the process of learning new things makes each child feel. "I noticed you worked really hard to solve that problem! How do you feel now?" "You feel good? Wow, that's interesting! When you work hard at something you feel good about yourself!" You could also say, "I can see you feel really proud of yourself when you try to do something new and challenging!"

**Emphasize the joy of learning.** The key here is to build the child's sense that they enjoy hard work and effort, persistence and problem-solving, and that trying things that are challenging (like puzzles!) is fun.

**Support children's persistence.** As children engage in more challenging activities, make it fun! Help children to see that problem-solving is like a puzzle. "Oh boy! This looks like a problem! I wonder how we could solve it?" or "I like to exercise my brain by trying to solve problems!"



**Make everyday moments math moments.** You can help children see that math and numbers are all around us by looking for opportunities to talk about math throughout the

day. When children are playing with blocks you can ask, "Which block is longer when you lay them on the ground? Which one is taller when you place them on one end?" If children are building towers, you can ask, "Which tower is taller? Which is shorter? How can we figure out how much bigger the taller one is?" When children help set the table, for snack you can ask, "How many people are eating at this table? How many plates do we need? How many napkins? Can you set the table so we can all eat?" Or while making crafts, "Did you make a pattern with your headband? What pattern is it?"



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