

Influence of Intelligence and Failure Mindsets on Parent's Failure Feedback

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Abstract : Children's implicit beliefs regarding intelligence (i.e., intelligence mindsets) influence their motivation, perseverance, and success. Previous research suggests that the way parents perceive failure influences the development of their child's intelligence mindsets. We invited 151 children-parent dyads (Age= 5-6 years) to complete a series of difficult puzzles over zoom. We assessed parents' intelligence and failure mindsets using questionnaires and recorded parents' person/performance-oriented (e.g., "you are smart" or "you were almost able to complete that one) and process-oriented (e.g., "you are trying really hard" or "maybe if you place the bigger pieces first") failure feedback. We were interested in observing the relation between parental mindsets and the type of feedback provided. We found that parents' intelligence mindsets were not predictive of the feedback they provided children. Failure mindsets, on the other hand, were predictive of failure feedback. Parents who view failure-as-debilitating provided more person-oriented feedback, focusing on performance and personal ability. Whereas parents who view failure-as-enhancing provided process-oriented feedback, focusing on effort and strategies. Taken all together, our results allow us to determine that although parents might already have a growth intelligence mindset, they don't necessarily have a failure-as-enhancing mindset. Parents adopting a failure-as-enhancing mindset would influence their children to view failure as a learning opportunity, further promoting practice, effort, and perseverance during challenging tasks. The focus placed on a child's learning, rather than their performance, encourages them to perceive intelligence as malleable (growth mindset) rather than fix (fixed mindset). This implies that parents should not only hold a growth mindset but thoroughly understand their role in the transmission of intelligence beliefs.

Keywords : mindset(s), failure, intelligence, parental feedback, parents

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