



Family Reading Fun



Have you ever watched gymnasts bend their body in amazing ways? They have amazing talent and flexibility. Most of us will never be able to achieve the physical flexibility of a gymnast, but we all have the potential to become mentally flexible. Flexibility is another component of a growth mindset. In their book, *Discovering the Habits of Mind*, Costa and Kallick describe flexible people, “They have the capacity to change their minds as they receive additional data. They engage in multiple and simultaneous outcomes and activities, and they draw upon a repertoire of problem solving strategies” (2005, 25) People with mental flexibility can see things from a different point of view. They can see many sides to a problem.

A great way to start to develop flexible thinking is by looking at how characters in a story solved their problem. Did the character have to try several different way to solve the problem? Was there more than one solution the character could have settled on? What would your child have done to solve the problem. Having these conversations while reading books is a great starting point to developing flexible thinking. Read on to find more tips to develop flexible thinking.

Family



Tips

A growth mindset is something that can be learned and developed. You can help your child develop flexibility by doing the following.

- This summer spend time with your child engaging in creative play. Take an ordinary object and think of all the different things it could be used for. For example, a jump rope could be a tightrope that you walk on. It could be a snake slithering through the grass. Multiple colored jump ropes could be put together to make a rainbow. How many different ideas can your child come up with?
- What if you take a trip to the park and your child wants to swing but all the swings are taken? What are different ways your child could solve his or her problem? Will they go on something else until a swing opens up? Will they stand and wait? Will they ask for a turn? Can they see



the problem from a different point of view? Those other kids on the swings wanted to swing too. What will he or she try before finding the solution that works?

- When watching a movie or TV show, talk about the perspective of one of the secondary characters. How do you think the secondary character feels about what is happening? See if from a different point of view.

Author Spotlight



Looking for more ways to teach flexible thinking? Try reading fractured fairy tales with your child. Fractured fairy tales are different versions of a traditional fairy tale. Perhaps the characters have changed. Maybe the story is told from a different character's point of view. Or it might be the same story just put into a different setting. Here are a few to check out.

- If you like *The Three Little Pigs*, try *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, *The Three Little Tamales* or *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.
- If you like *The Gingerbread Man*, try *The Run Away Tortilla*, *The Stinky Cheese Man*, *Gingerbread Baby* or *Gingerbread Friends*.
- If you like *Cinderella*, try *Cinderella Bigfoot*, *Cinderella's Rat* or the *Dogarella* books.

Talk about how the versions are different from the original. Have conversations about which version your child liked better and why? Up for challenge? Have your child write his or her own version of the fairy tale. All of these things will help promote flexible thinking.

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