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Research Bites

## The Secret to Raising Smart Kids

A '*growth mindset*' motivates higher achievement in school and life

UM Living Lab @ Missoula Public Library  
455 E. Main St., Missoula, MT 59802 | [living.lab@umontana.edu](mailto:living.lab@umontana.edu)

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## Encouraging a Growth Mindset

Children are very responsive to adult praise. The wording of the praise children hear can impact their motivation, enjoyment, and interest in certain activities. Researchers Claudia Mueller and Carol Dweck at Columbia University<sup>1</sup> praised children either for their **hard work** (growth mindset) or **being smart** (fixed mindset) while doing simple puzzles.



Creator: skynesher | Credit: Getty Images

Children praised for **being smart** wanted to keep working on the **easy puzzles**, but children praised for **their effort** wanted to **challenge themselves with the harder puzzles** and said they **liked challenging tasks** and **wanted to keep working on the harder puzzles**.

**What did they learn?** Children praised for **being smart** wanted to keep working on the **easy puzzles**, but children praised for **their effort** wanted to **challenge themselves with the harder puzzles** and said they **liked challenging tasks** and **wanted to keep working on the harder puzzles**.

**Final Takeaway:** Praising kids for their hard work and effort helps them to have a *growth mindset*. This means that children believe that they can get better at doing something with strategy and hard work.

**Parents:** Try praising your child's maze efforts by saying, "Wow, nicely done. You must have worked really hard."

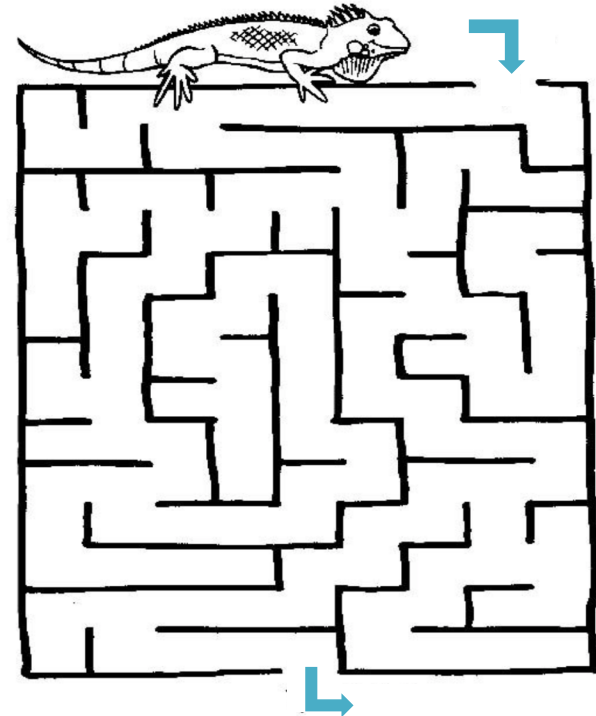
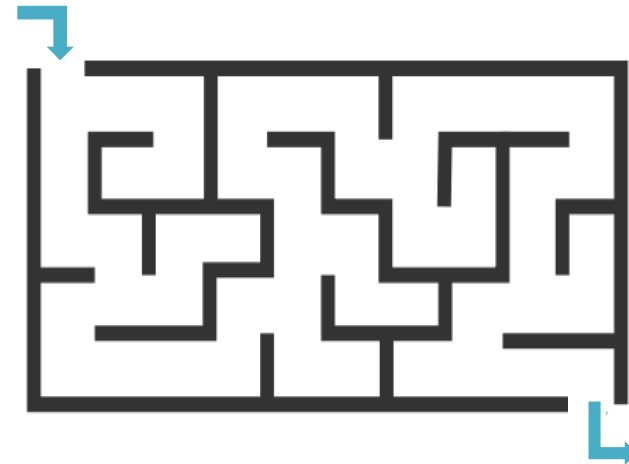
<sup>1</sup> Mueller, C. M. & Dweck, C. S. (1998). Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75(1), 33-53.

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## Can you find a path through the mazes?

Start with a maze you think you can complete!



More on back! 