

Mindset in Early Years

Impact Report: June 2023



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WINNING SCOTLAND



Winning Scotland is a charity that acts as a catalyst for change. Working with like-minded partners, we build confidence and resilience in all of Scotland's young people. We collaborate with a range of partners to develop innovative resources and practical solutions that improve outcomes for children in Scotland.

We engage and empower the individuals and groups who have the greatest influence on young people, giving them the tools and knowledge to create sustainable impact. For example, a school with a positive learning culture will impart crucial skills for life and learning to its pupils, year-after year. A community with healthy lifestyle habits is more likely to achieve and be aspirational and a child with confidence and resilience is more likely to be successful in life.

Since our inception in 2005, we have impacted many hundreds of thousands of young people in Scotland, working with partners across the public, private and third sectors, and operating in every corner of the country.

We have achieved this by customising proven approaches for a Scottish context, and collaborating with some of Scotland's largest organisations to create the biggest impact.

In everything we do, we're always:

- committed to young people
- collaborative in our delivery
- pioneering in our approach
- innovative in our solutions
- independent

Our mission is to empower all young people in Scotland to be ambitious, versatile and resilient. Whatever the circumstances, we want them to be full of confidence and prepared for the future.

Our approaches are based on robust evidence, developed to be effective in settings where children spend their time – like education, communities and sport.

Young people in Scotland deserve the best chance at achieving success in life. Being confident and resilient will set them on their way, whatever life throws at them.

We identify how to help children and young people by working with our partners. We collaborate to investigate, research and develop solutions that will work for young people in their own contexts – whether it's at home, school or in the community.

"I would most definitely rate this course 5. It was packed with useful information which I have been able to incorporate into my practice and importantly it has allowed me to reflect and improve my practice."

The twilight courses were a great way to speak to peers from all around the country, sharing good practice and also realising that we all experience the same difficulties, within early years and we are very much not on our own – great support network."

Early years practitioner
(East Renfrewshire)



PARTNERSHIP WORKING



Winning Scotland are a charity that acts as a catalyst for change. Working with like-minded partners, we build confidence and resilience in all of Scotland's young people.

Children's brains develop connections faster in the first five years than at any other time in their lives.

This is the time when the foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life are laid down. It is arguably the most important time to influence a child's life chances.

In recognition of this powerful evidence, Winning Scotland partnered with Early Years Scotland, Renfrewshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council to support early years practitioners –specialists who look after the social and educational development of babies and young children up to the age of five years old in settings like nursery schools – to empower children and their parents and carers in areas **experiencing disadvantage** to develop a growth mindset outlook.

Research tells us that the brain is most receptive to new information in the first five years of life. That's why helping our youngest children - when their brains are more receptive than at any other stage in their lives - to develop a growth mindset is so crucial.



Early Years Settings



In October 2021, in partnership with Early Years Scotland, Winning Scotland conducted a survey with **123** early years practitioners, two-thirds of whom had more than 10 years' experience working in the profession.

This identified that early years practitioners consider themselves the 'poor cousins' of their peers in primary and secondary schools – with only 1 in 4 agreeing that their roles are seen as 'equal' to that of a school teacher.

The survey also showed evidence of 'fixed' mindset attitudes towards the developmental potential of young children in their care – a belief that there is an upper limit to what children can achieve.

1 in 4 practitioners do not believe that 'all children can improve at anything if they work hard for it', while 81% agreed that some children are simply 'born with natural ability'.

When asked for their feelings on the statement, 'There will always be times in a child's life when they feel they can't do something no matter what they do', 93% agreed.

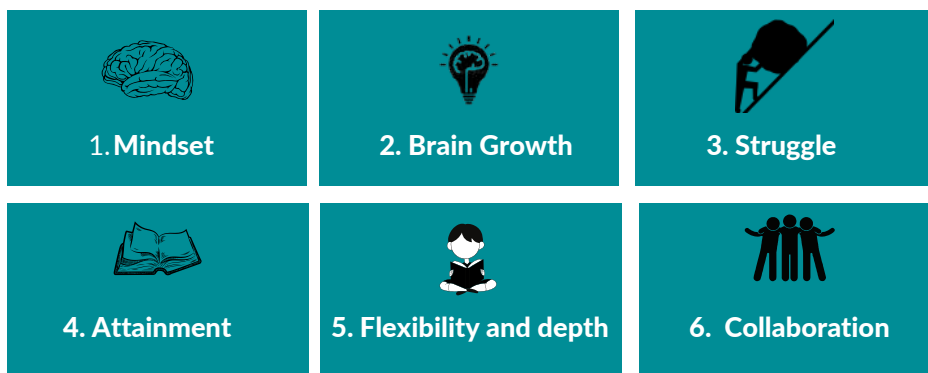
These perceptions indicate a need to encourage a more 'growth mindset outlook' in the sector.



MINDSET IN EARLY YEARS

The curriculum is based on increasingly clear research. The idea that we simply don't have or can't develop certain abilities (e.g., "I'll never be able to play the piano" or "I'm not a maths person") is, for most people, a myth. The reason some of us don't feel like a "maths person," isn't because of some fundamental difference in our brains.

Instead, it's because of our early life experiences, or our peers and mentors indicated it's okay or normal to feel this way. Research has shown that in most cases many of us never truly put in the time, and in particular, the struggle necessary to grow our abilities. This is the fundamental reasoning behind fixed and growth mindset theory. Recognising these issues, Mindset in Early Years identifies six key areas of learning and contextualises them to the Scottish curriculum.



This course is for anyone who wishes to develop their practice. Split into six different units, the course is designed to improve your understanding of growth mindset but also give an opportunity to collegiately engage with other early years professionals.

This is facilitated through the following learning outcomes.

- **Learning Outcome 1:** Demonstrate an understanding of growth mindset principles, concepts and theories, and how we might apply them to ourselves, our colleagues, young people and families, and the systems we work in.
- **Learning Outcome 2:** Understanding of growth mindset principles, tools and techniques, discussing their relevance in an early years setting and relating these practices to themselves, colleagues, young people or families.
- **Learning Outcome 3:** A reflection on growth mindset applications in your own work context.
- **Learning Outcome 4:** Demonstrate an understanding of how to connect mindset theory to the context of an early years setting.



MINDSET IN EARLY YEARS: PROGRAMME REPORT



Mindset in Early Years

In total **168** learners registered on the course, with some terrific engagement both online and during the 'live' twilight sessions.

Commencing in September 2022 and completing in May 2023, engagement on the course was very good with **72%** of active learners completing all of the online learning and **68%** learners attending the required number twilight sessions.

Online Completion Rate



72% of learners completed the required online learning content

Twilight attendance

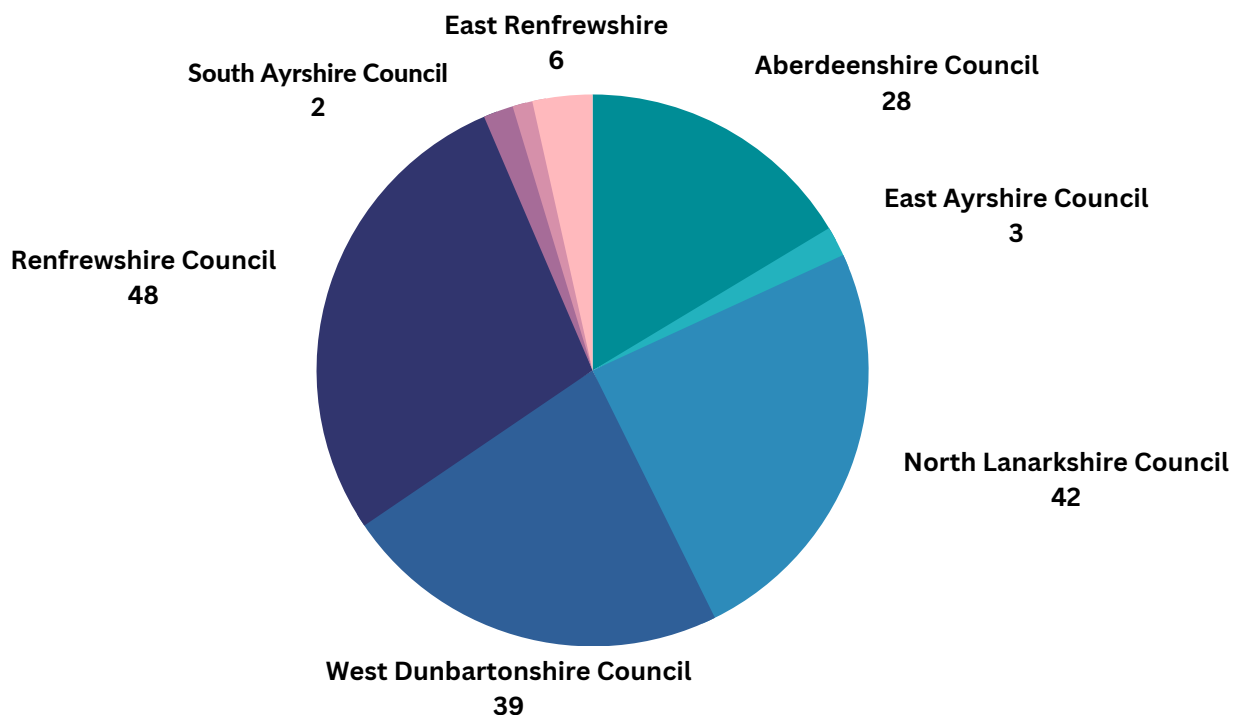


68% of learners attended at least 4 of the 6 twilight sessions

BREAKDOWN BY LEARNERS

During the recruitment phase of this course there was clearly a lot of interest in being able to join the course with registrations capped at **168**.

These learners were across 7 local authorities as detailed below:



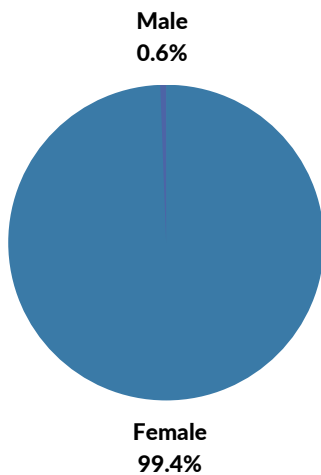
LIMITLESS LEARNING EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

ABOUT OUR LEARNERS

A total of 168 learners registered on the course during 2022-23. A breakdown of these learners are shown below.

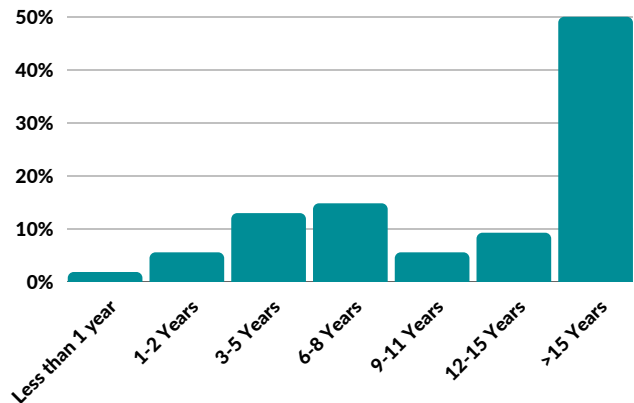
GENDER BREAKDOWN

The vast majority of course participants are female, making up 99% (n=167) of the learners with 1 male 0.6%.



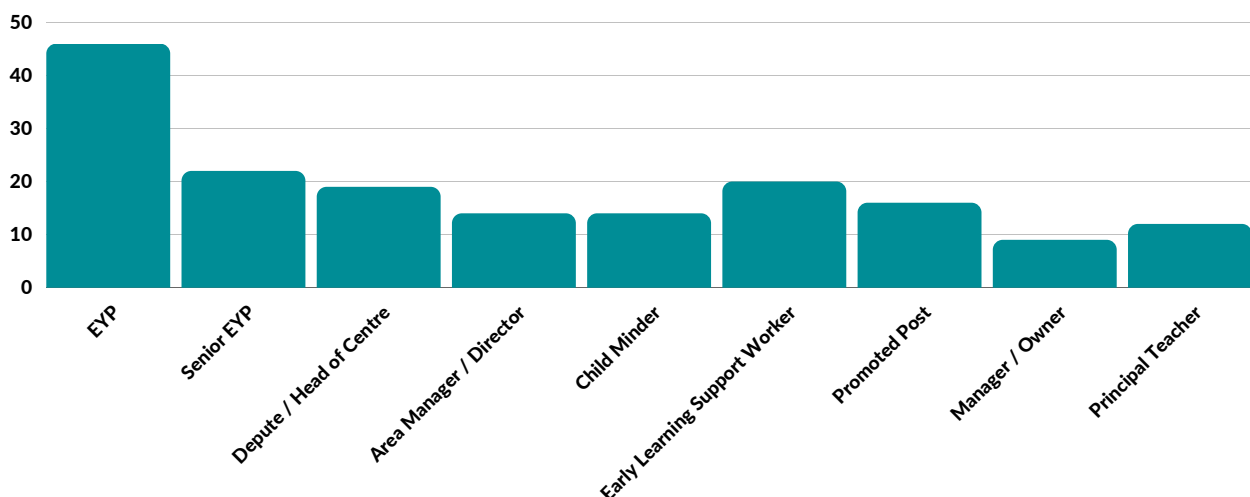
BREAKDOWN BY EXPERIENCE

The majority of early years practitioners registered on the course had 12 or more years experience as early years practitioners (59%) whilst 20% had less than 5 years 'experience.



BREAKDOWN BY PRACTITIONER ROLE

The majority registered on the course were senior / early years practitioners, however 11% were senior management, whilst 12% early learning support workers.



SURVEYS RESPONSES

To establish baseline attitudes, learners are asked to complete online surveys aiming to identify their thoughts about learning, their understanding of mindset and importantly their attitudes towards struggle, challenge, mistakes and the potential of the young people they support.

The pre course responses were collated from the **153** learners.

Each of the learners were allocated with a unique, randomly assigned ID code in order to compare responses given before, and after the learning content.

It is important to note that a blind methodology is assigned meaning whilst the ID codes allow individual pre- and post-responses to be compared, the individuals are unidentifiable.

INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

Increasing learners knowledge of growth mindset principles and practices is a key objective of the course. Prior to the course knowledge of growth mindset principles and practices is a key objective of the course.

Prior to the course **51%** (n=77) were either 'Aware' or 'Very aware'.

Following completion of the course learning content, **100%** (n=65) of the learners responded that they were 'Aware' or 'Very Aware' of growth mindset practices and principles.



What is your current awareness of the growth mindset?

Pre Course (n=77)
51% either 'Aware'
or 'Very aware'



What is your current awareness of the growth mindset?

Post Course (n=65)
100% either 'Aware'
or 'Very Aware'



WHAT PREVENTS A MINDSET APPROACH?

When asked to explain (if anything) what the main reason preventing learners from implementing a growth mindset culture in their setting, a wide range of responses were collated.

Time (22%), lack of specific knowledge (64%) and lack of confidence (51%) were the main factors.

BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING

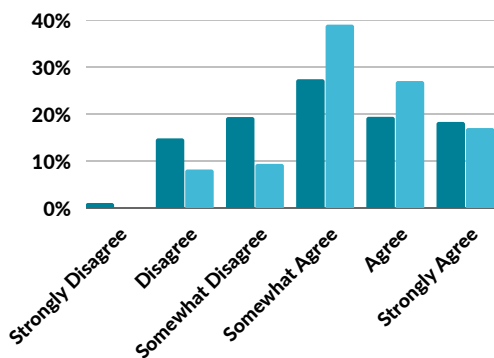
Having completed the Limitless Learning course, learners are asked to provide responses that identify any shift in opinion.

The following responses represent the views of teaching professionals that completed the Limitless Learning content.

For all the tables below the following key applies:

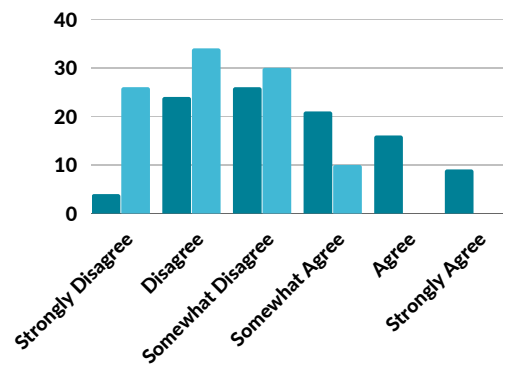
Pre course responses ■ Post course responses ■

All of the young people I work with would improve their ability if they worked hard at it



Figures show that prior to the course, 38% of learners disagreed in some form, however post course this shows a drop to 13%.

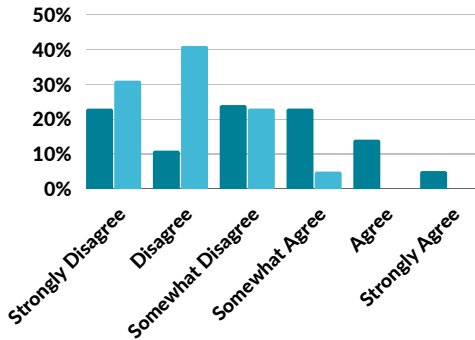
There will always be some young people who simply won't "get it" no matter what I do



Prior to the course, 27% of early years professionals agreed in some form with this statement. Encouragingly, only 9% agreed from the post course responses

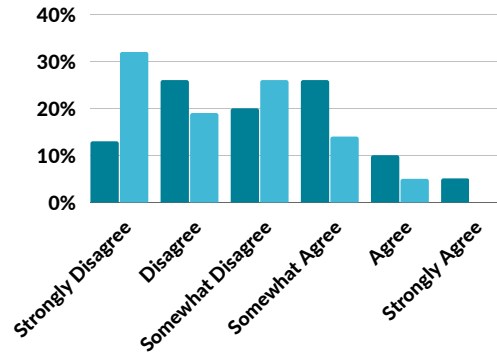
CHANGING ATTITUDES

Intellectual ability is something that remains relatively fixed throughout a person's life



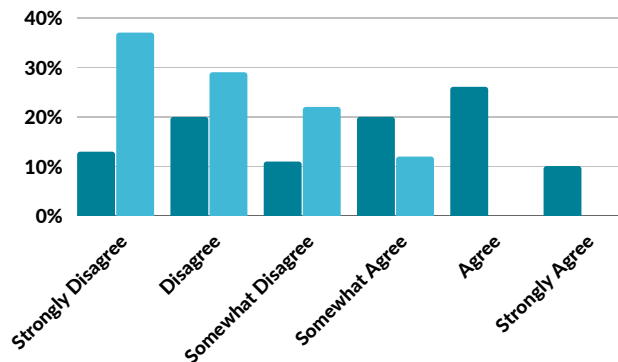
Fixed ability was questioned, pre course responses indicated that **58%** agreed that intellectual ability is fixed throughout life. Significantly, this drops to **5%** following course completion.

Learners who finish their work quickly understand the material better than those who take longer



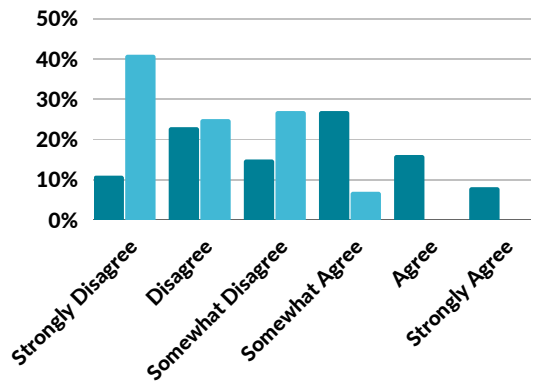
When asked if finishing work quickly signals better understanding of materials, pre course **59%** agreed with this, however post course responses do show a shift, dropping to **23%**.

There is usually only one way to solve a problem



Differentiation in problem solving was put to the learners. Pre course responses show that **56%** agreed that there is only one way to solve a problem, however this drops significantly to **12%** post course.

Young people can improve their skills but not their basic level of ability



When asked if skills can improve, but not their ability, prior to the course, of the responses, **51%** agreed in some form, however post course results show a significant decrease to just **7%**

My setting is a mistake making zone



43%
Pre Course Responses



68%
Post Course Responses

LEARNER FEEDBACK

Use 3 words to explain the Mindset Teams course



How likely are you to recommend the Limitless Learning course to a colleague?



91%

Do you feel the Limitless Learning course has improved your knowledge?



100%

Do you feel the Limitless Learning course will make you a better practitioner?



92%

Please rate the online learning element of the Limitless Learning course (1 star very poor - 5 stars excellent)



4.8 Stars

Please rate the Limitless Learning 'live' seminars (1 star very poor - 5 stars excellent)



4 Stars



Nexus Business Space,
21 Young Street,
Edinburgh,
EH2 4HU

+44(0)131 344 4603



www.winningscotland.org



info@winningscotland.org



[@winningscotland](https://twitter.com/winningscotland)