Innovate • Educate • Partner • Support • Lead • Inspire
ROE 47
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
& EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
LET THEM GROW
EMPOWERING AMAZING STUDENTS

Opening Reflection

What do you have?

What did you NOT have?

Who supported you?

The Student Paradox

TODAY'S STUDENTS ARE LIVING A SERIES OF CONTRADICTIONS

More Connected

843 friends online
7+ hrs screen time
Always reachable

More Disconnected

Fewer deep bonds
Rising loneliness
No eye contact

More Protected

Helicopter parenting
Safety nets everywhere
Curated environments

More Anxious

Record anxiety rates
Fear of failure
Low distress tolerance

More Supported

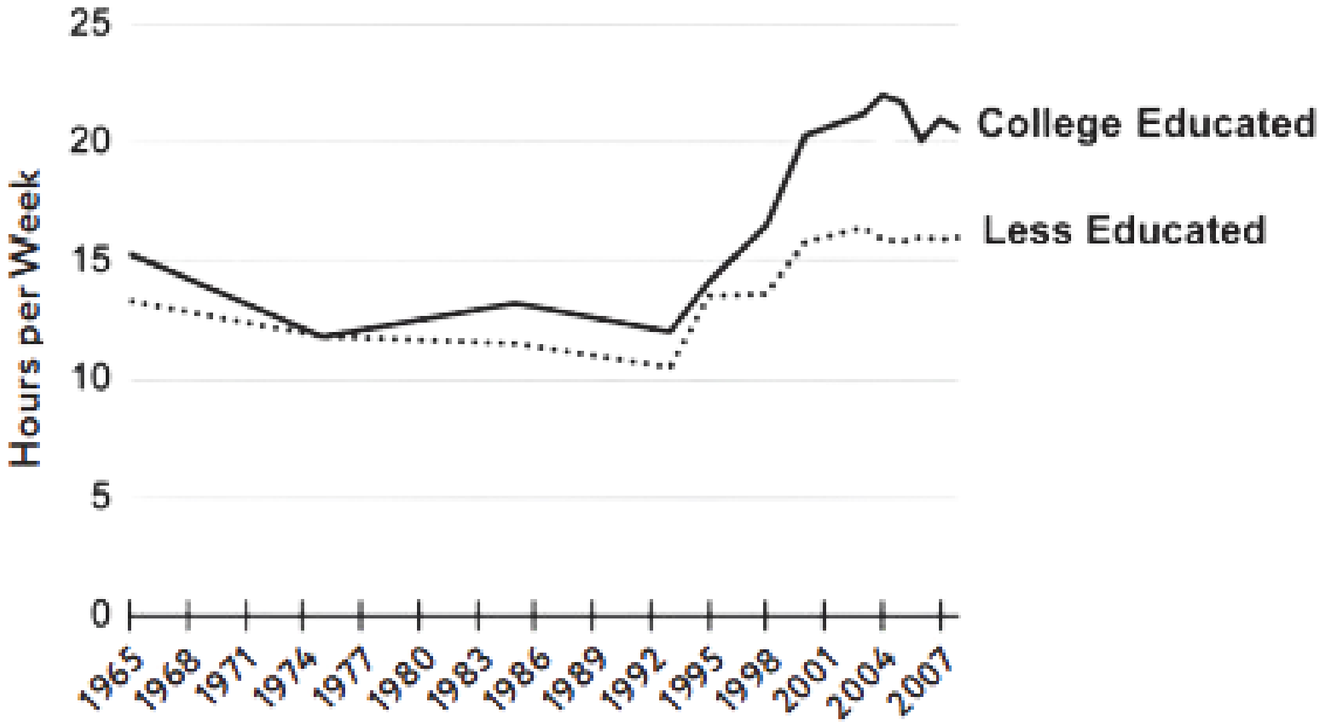
Tutors, coaches
Mental health resources
Instant expert access

Less Independent

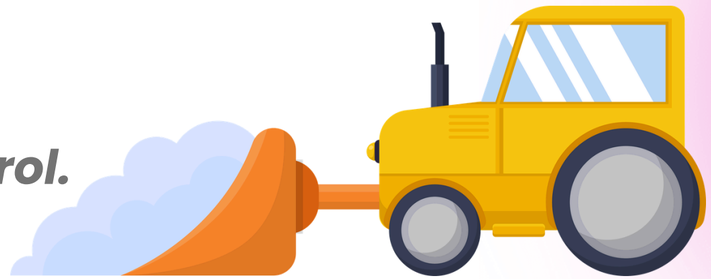
Struggles with autonomy
Decision paralysis
Fears being alone

The greater the gap between these contradictions, the deeper the crisis.

TIME SPENT PARENTING BY MOTHERS



We have reduced childhood independence while increasing adult control.



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

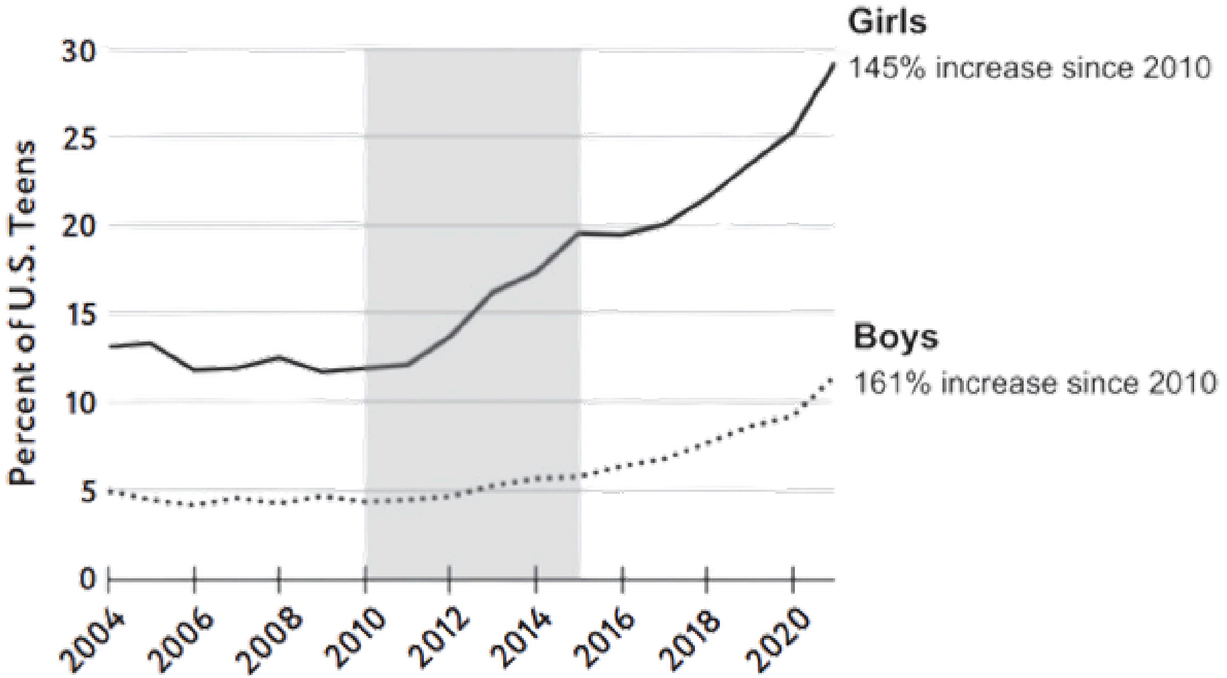


Figure 1.1. Percent of U.S. teens (ages 12–17) who had at least one major depressive episode in the past year, by self-report based on a symptom checklist. This was figure 7.1 in *The Coddling of the American Mind*, now updated with data beyond 2016. (Source: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health.)[3]

Root Causes

Shift Over Time:

- Less free play
- Less unstructured time
- Fewer real responsibilities
- Increased supervision & pressure

In Schools:

- Over-scaffolding
- Compliance-driven environments
- Limited student voice

The Growth Equation

Student growth happens when:

Connection

Safety & Trust

+

Independence

Confidence & Competence

+

Belonging

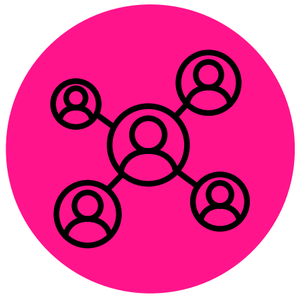
Identity & Purpose

=

Growth & Success

The Growth Equation

Student growth happens when:



Too much

Connection

without ***independence***
leads to

DEPENDENCE

+

Too much

Independence

without ***connection***
leads to

ISOLATION

+

Too much

Belonging

without **voice**
leads to

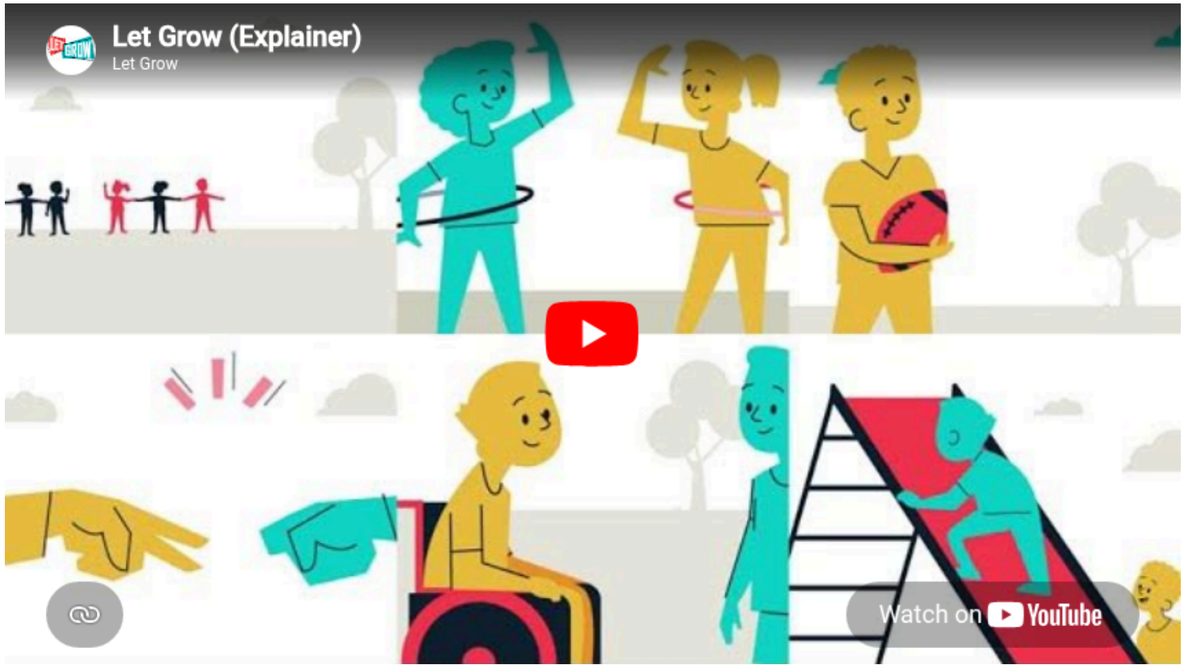
COMFORMMITY

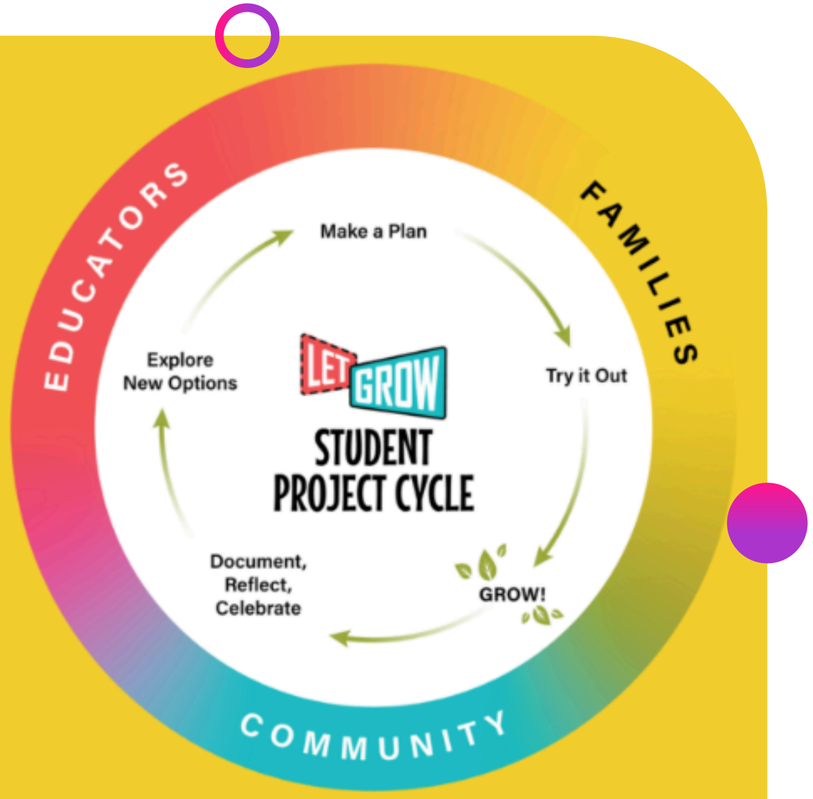
=

Growth & Success

The Mission

Make it easy, normal, and legal to give kids the independence they need to grow into capable, confident, and happy adults.





The Case for Let Them Grow

Students need:

- **Real responsibility** - opportunities to contribute in meaningful, authentic ways
- **Chance to fail safely** - where mistakes are part of learning, not punishment
- **Problem-solving experiences** - space to think, struggle, and figure things out
- **Trust from adults** - belief in their ability to handle challenges and grow

Brain Science

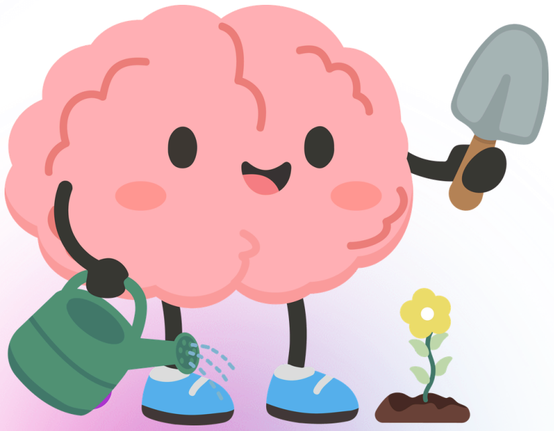
- Challenge builds neural pathways
- Productive struggle strengthens executive functioning
- No challenge = limited growth

What We Often Do

- Step in too quickly
- Solve problems for students
- Prevent discomfort
- Over-scaffold learning

Our Shift

- Fixer → Coach
- Protector → Guide
- Controller → Partner
- Rescuer → Co-regulator



Struggle is not the problem, unsupported struggle is.

Practical Strategy #1: Build Independence

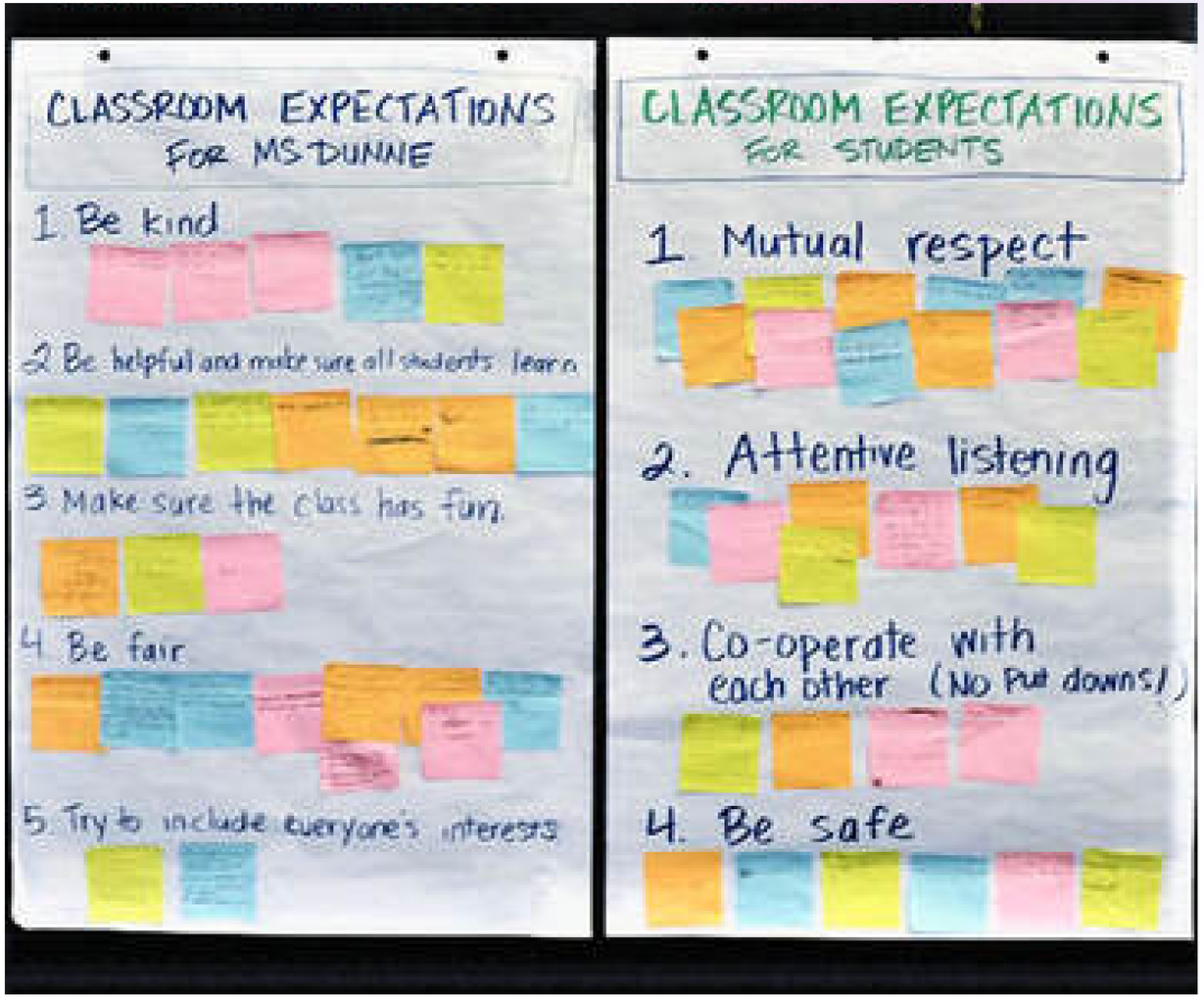
In the classroom:

- Meaningful Classroom Jobs
- Experience Struggle
- Use “What do you think?”
- Normalize mistakes

Practical Strategy #2: Increase Student Voice

In the classroom:

- Choice. Choice. Choice.
- Student-led conference
- Co-create norms and expectations
- Project-based learning tied to “real life”



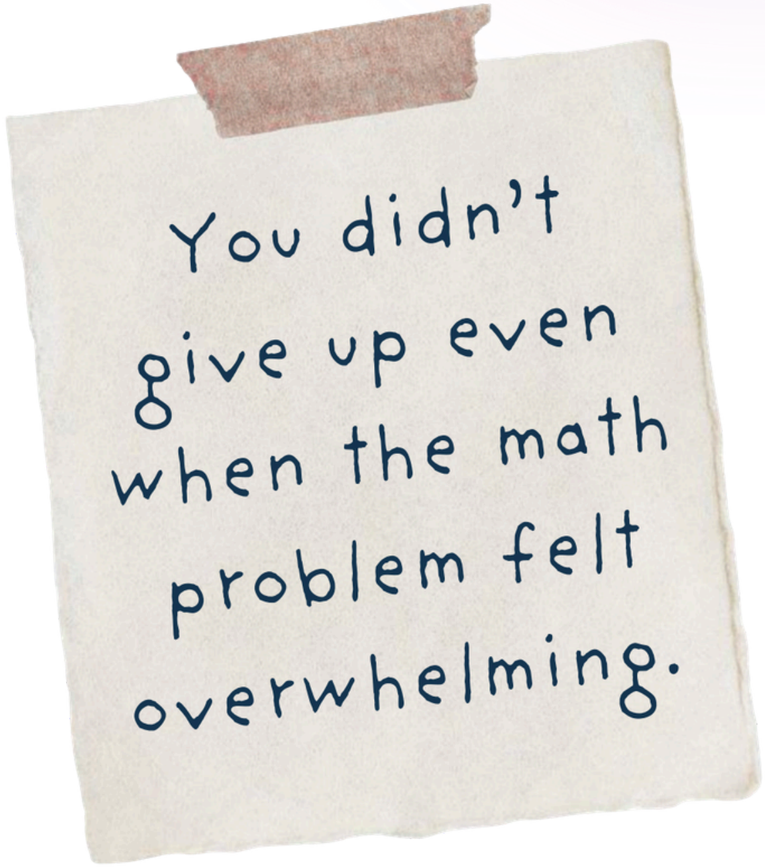
Practical Strategy #3: Create Safe Risk Taking

In the classroom:

- Normalize discomfort
- Celebrate effort, not just outcomes
- Build “failure-friendly” environments

Language Shifts:

- “You’re not there...yet.”
- “What did you learn?”
- “Try a different strategy.”



Practical Strategy #4: Strengthen Connection

In the classroom:

- Daily Relationship rituals
- 2X10 strategy
- Check-ins
- Adult modeling vulnerability

Connection is the secret sauce that ignites engagement!

THE GOAL

Capable Problem Solvers

Confident Risk-Takers

Connected Humans

GROW BOLDLY THIS SUMMER

Welcome to Grow Bold: A Let Grow Summer

This summer, we're following the ideas of Jonathan Haidt and the Let Grow Project: kids thrive when given the space to explore, struggle, and succeed on their own. You don't need to fill every hour. Let boredom spark creativity. Let small risks build big confidence. Let Them Grow.

How to use this calendar

- Each week has a theme + a Let Grow Challenge. Read it together as a family.
- Check out the daily activities to fill your days with purposeful play.
- Let your child lead wherever possible. Resist the urge to jump in.
- At the end of summer, answer the reflection questions together.

June 1

Summer Kickoff

Let Grow Challenge: Ask your child: 'What's something you want to learn to do on your own this summer?' Summer doesn't need to be busy to be meaningful.

This Week's Activities

- Talk together about what independence looks like for your family
- Write down 3 things your child wants to try on their own
- Create a Summer Bucket List

Notes & Reflections

Final Reflection

What is one way you will “LET THEM GROW” this week?