# 7 Shifts: Where Is Your School or Organization?

The 7 shifts of family engagement highlight opportunities to energize how your organization partners with families. **As you reflect on your school or organization’s default mindsets, check the box that best fits your approach as a whole.**

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| **FROM AN EMPHASIS ON . . .** |  |  | **TOWARD AN EMPHASIS ON . . .** | |
| **1. Deficits, Risks, or Dysfunction in Families** | |  | **Families’ Strengths and Resilience** | |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| * Talk about how families fail their kids * Offer programs focused on risks * View failures as evidence of dysfunction | |  |  | * + See families as critical resources   + Tap strengths to tackle challenges   + See failures as opportunities to learn |
| **2. Recruiting Families to Participate** | |  | **Building Relationships with Families** | |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| * We know what families need * Communication is primarily one way * If they don’t show up, they don’t care |  |  |  | * + Take time to build mutual trust   + Learn about interests, sparks   + Show interest in a family’s situation |
| **3. Advancing Our Organization’s Agenda** | |  | **Connecting with Families’ Agenda, Priorities** | |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| * Focus on what we need families to do * “Engagement” = participation * Send lots of information about our priorities | |  |  | * + Listen to families’ hopes, fears   + Find common ground   + Invest in helping them be their best |
| **4. Building Parenting Skills** |  |  | **Deepening Family Relationships** | |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| * Teach parents to manage behaviors * Send them lots of information & resources * View parents as responsible for what kids do | |  |  | * + Give families time together   + Create routines, habits, and rituals that sustain relationships |
| **5. Early Childhood as Primary Opportunity** | |  | **Multiple Transitions as Connecting Points** | |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| * Family programs are synonymous with “early childhood” programs * Assume families won’t show up later |  |  |  | * + Check on progress, challenges   + Be attentive to transitions   + Mark public, private milestones |
| **6. Individual Families on their Own** | |  | **Families Embedded in Communities** | |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| * Focus on helping individual families * See organization as connecting hub * Offer expert help for unique issues |  |  |  | * + Culture, community as strengths   + Support formal, informal networks about general & specific challenges |
| **7. Serving Families** |  |  |  | **Empowering Families** |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| * Families are our “customers” * We have what families need * Focus on marketing services |  |  |  | * + Recognize families as peer resources   + Community service, civic action   + Informal and formal leadership roles |

NOTE: Shifting *emphasis* does not require abandoning everything you might do on the left side.