# 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.