

6 Shifts: Where Is Your School or Organization?

The 6 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, circle the number that best fits your approach as a whole.

FROM AN EMPHASIS ON...			TOWARDS AN EMPHASIS ON...		
1 Particular Developmental Periods, Settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest most resources in early childhood programs. Assume that early experiences “inoculate” for the future. Set up separate programming for each age. Focus on individual sectors, most often schools. 			Engage Across Transitions and Settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep continuity from birth to adulthood, adjusting with needs. Guide families to new options that fit them. Help families navigate challenging transitions. Engage families across settings, including schools, youth programs, faith communities, child welfare, etc. 		
1	2	3	4	5	
2 Deficits or Risks in Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on how families fail their kids. Connect primarily when problems arise. Offer programs focused on risks. View failures as evidence of dysfunction. Assume that professionals know more about what the family should do than the family does. 			Families' Strengths and Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See families as resourceful and resilient amid adversity. Recognize the strengths in all types of families. Build on the qualities that are already present in the family, culture, and community. Respect every families' dignity, autonomy, and goals. Recognize systemic injustice, barriers families face. 		
1	2	3	4	5	
3 Recruiting Families to Participate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We know what families need; they just need to come. Communication is primarily one way. Transactional—accomplishing tasks If they don't show up, they must not care. 			Deepening Relationships WITH Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time to build mutual trust. Show interest in a family's situation. Invite based on their goals, priorities. Build your own intercultural humility and competence. 		
1	2	3	4	5	
4 Building Parenting Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach parents to manage their children's behaviors. Send them lots of information and resources so they can solve the problems. View parents as almost solely responsible for what their children do. 			Nurturing Relationships WITHIN Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for families to have opportunities for meaningful and fun time together. Give time to practice relational skills and strategies. Reinforce routines, habits, rituals that sustain relationships. Support families as relationships change. 		
1	2	3	4	5	
5 Working Primarily With Individual Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on helping individual families. See your organization as connecting hub. Offer expert help for major issues. Become overwhelmed with all the issues. 			Cultivating Relationships AMONG Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View culture and community as strengths. Recognize community, home as the hub. Support formal, informal networks about general and specific challenges. 		
1	2	3	4	5	
6 Serving Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are our “customers” or “clients.” We have what families need. Focus on marketing services. 			Empowering Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize families as resources. Encourage engagement in community service, civic action. Informal and formal leadership roles that fit families' gifts. Partner with families for equity and justice in society 		
1	2	3	4	5	

Reflect:

In areas where you marked 4 or 5, what are examples you can point to that show these strengths? How would families describe these strengths? How can you build on these strengths to enhance other areas? What are strengths you could draw on to address areas where you don't see as much progress? Who would be important allies for you on this journey?