



# Asset-Based Mindset



## What is an Asset-Based Mindset?

**“An asset-based approach is one that focuses on strengths. In the context of family engagement, this means understanding that all caregivers are capable of supporting student learning and development as equal partners in the education of their children and the improvement of schools.”**

*- Embracing a New Normal: Toward a More Liberatory Approach to Family Engagement, Mapp, Karen L and Eyal Bergman*

An asset-based mindset is a way of thinking that emphasizes what people and families can do, rather than what they cannot do. It's about recognizing the skills, strengths, and resources each family member brings to the table. This approach helps people see potential in themselves and others, creating a more positive and empowering environment.

When partnering with their student(s)' school, an asset-based mindset can be a powerful tool for caregivers. It encourages collaboration, helps identify strengths, and fosters a positive relationship between families and educators.

Mapp, K. L., & Bergman, E. (2021). *Embracing a new normal: Toward a more liberatory approach to family engagement*. Carnegie Corporation of New York.



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# Asset-Based Practices for Family Engagement

Practice	Educator	Caregiver
<p><b>Flexibility in engagement opportunities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize that engagement looks different for each family —meet them where they are.</li> <li>• Offer various ways for families to engage (in-person, virtual, written, informal gatherings).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel supported when the school respects my time and availability.</li> <li>• Being given options makes it easier to stay connected and involved.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Shared decision making</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a culture of collaboration</li> <li>• Involve families as equal partners in the decision-making process (encourage input on classroom activities, school policies, and student goals).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be part of the conversation, not just told what's happening.</li> <li>• When my voice is heard, I feel empowered and respected.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building trusting relationships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be consistent, approachable, and respectful in all interactions.</li> <li>• Follow through on commitments and be transparent in communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust builds when communication is open and consistent.</li> <li>• I'm more likely to engage when I feel welcomed and understood.</li> </ul>

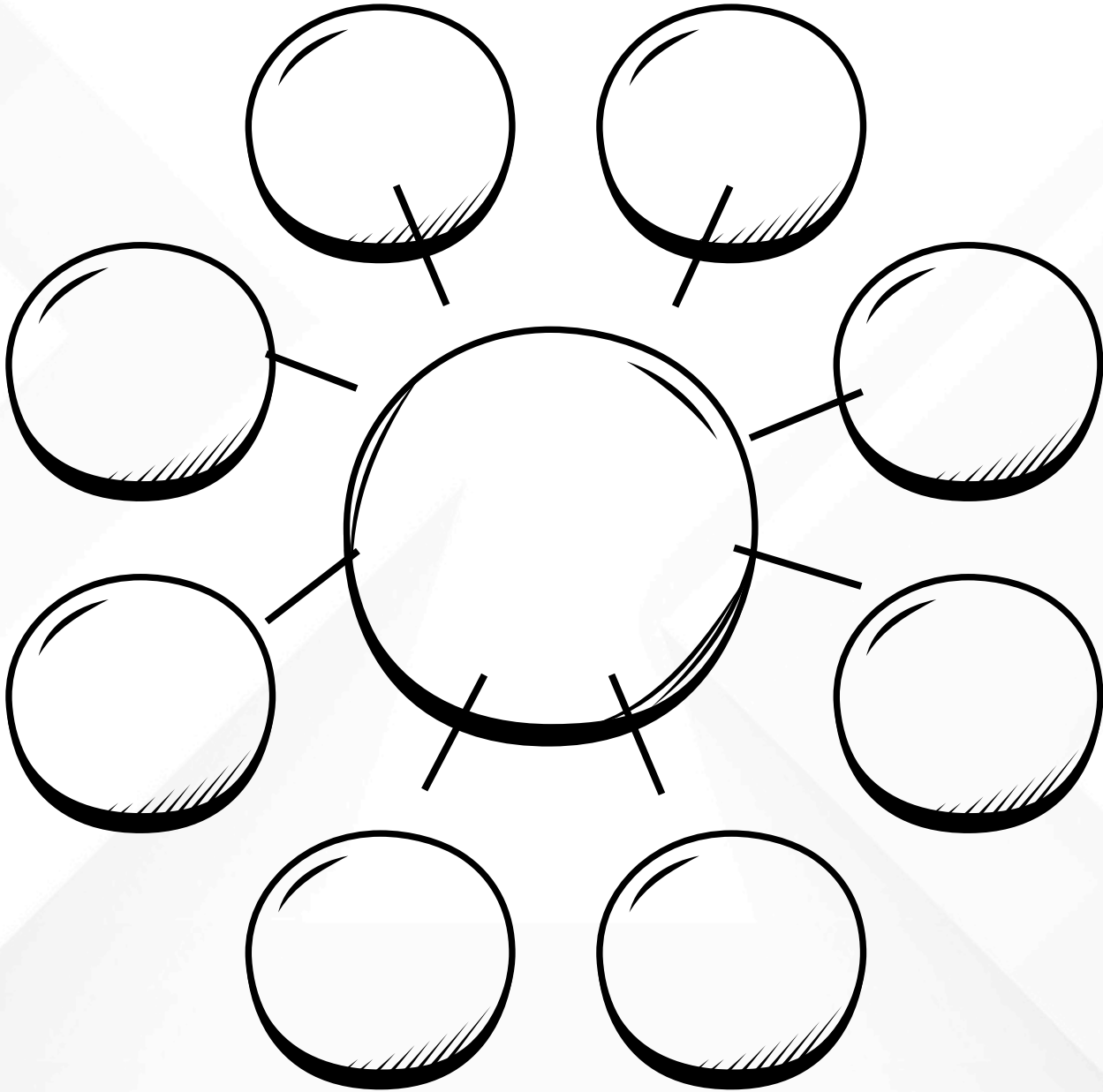
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Practice	Educator	Caregiver
<p><b>Engaging families in strength-based approach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower families by recognizing their expertise and role in their child's development.</li> <li>• Focus on what families do well and how they support their children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I want my child's strengths—and our family's strengths—to be recognized.</li> <li>• Encouragement and positive feedback make a big difference.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effective Communication</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain regular two-way communication channels (calls, texts, apps, newsletters).</li> <li>• Use clear, respectful, and responsive language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, kind, and culturally respectful communication matters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources &amp; support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer guidance on how to support learning at home.</li> <li>• Connect families to resources that align with their needs and strengths (academic, social, community-based).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing what resources are available and who to contact.</li> <li>• Knowing where to go for help reduces my stress and helps me better support my child.</li> </ul>



# Strengths as a Caregiver

Write your name in the middle circle. In the other circles, write your strengths, passions, or interests.



**How can you use your skills to boost your confidence and strengthen family engagement?**

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# Your Student(s)' Strengths

Write your students name in the middle circle. In the other circles, write their strengths, passions, or interests.

- What brings my student joy?
- What is my student interested in?
- When have I seen them be brave, creative, or kind?

