



Outcomes Scale

A metaphor for social determinants of wellbeing, and resilience as outcome



The story you're telling:

"A positive child outcome is like a scale that is tipped toward one side. It can be influenced by counterbalancing weights and by adjusting the balance point."

Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:



- **Black Box of Development**
- **Determinism**
- **Environments Shape Outcomes**
- **Family Bubble**
- **Fatalism**
- **Stretch but not Break**

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:

- **Child outcomes – whether children turn out well or not – can be likened to a scale that is tipped toward one side or another:** sets up mechanistic/process thinking about outcomes.
- **The weight placed on a scale or teeter-totter affects the direction it tips:** establishes the role of external, environmental factors, and frames resilient outcomes as a dynamic process. Focuses attention on environmental and contextual influences, away from individual choices.
- **Positive experiences and influences that help health and development get placed on one side:** communicates the role of factors that promote development – be sure to enumerate.
- **Negative experiences or influences that aren't good for development get placed on the other:** communicates the role of risk factors and adverse experiences; give examples here.

(Continued on reverse)



Outcomes Scale

A metaphor for social determinants of wellbeing, and resilience as outcome

- **Weights can be added to or taken from either side at any time:** helps to establish that outcomes are open to influence and intervention, and development is an ongoing process.
- **Not all objects placed on the scale are the same weight:** opens up a way to communicate about strong predictors vs. relatively minor influences, whether negative or positive.
- **The goal of every community is to have as many kids as possible experience positive outcomes – which we can accomplish by stacking positive factors, and offloading negative factors, so that scales tip toward the positive:** orients attention toward development as a process that can be influenced by the community, through widespread supports and interventions.
- **When the scale tips positive even though it's stacked with negative weight, that's resilience:** Defines resilience as an unexpected outcome influenced by multiple factors – not just any good outcome, and not the result of individuals overcoming circumstances through sheer force of will.
- **What about individual differences? Well, there's another part of a scale – the fulcrum, or balance point:** Acknowledges, but limits, the role of individual-level influences (genes, biology, temperament, etc.)
- **Children start out with their fulcrums in different places. If the fulcrum is way over to this side, that makes the scale more likely to tip that way:** Communicates the scientific view of the role of individual differences in sensitivity to influences.
- **It's not just the weight on one side, or the other, or the fulcrum that determines the direction of the tip – it's all of these:** helps to communicate that multiple, interacting influences affect outcomes; offers a way to establish distinct but interacting roles for external (environments, experiences) as well as internal (genetic, biological, personal) factors
- **The fulcrum isn't fixed – it can shift based on experiences. We can build children's abilities to withstand negative experiences:** Helps to establish a rationale for targeted interventions for children and populations at risk for negative outcomes, to build skills and abilities that support resilient outcomes.