REFRAME CARDS

VALUES
Human Potential
Why does it matter? What's at stake?

The story you're telling: **Tennessee's most important resource is the potential of its children. When we support healthy child development, we invest in their ability to contribute fully to our community.**

Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Individualism, Fatalism, Separate Fates

Particularly effective in building support for policies in these areas:
Poverty; Racial Disparities; Child Services; Child Mental Health; Early Education

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:
- Investing in the potential of Tennessee's children is essential to building a strong state.
- Strengthening the systems that provide education, health care, and supports for parents is a matter of taking care of our greatest assets: our children.
- We need the talents and contributions of all children to be available to our communities in the future. Ensuring their health, building their skills and abilities, and assuring that all children have their best chance in life should be our top priorities.
- **Sense of agency**: We can, in fact, tap into the potential of Tennessee's children by acting together. Tennessee is coming together to make good things happen.
- **Sense of urgency**: If we fail to invest in children, our children will not be able to fully contribute to our community as adults – and we miss out on important resources.

When applying this frame element, keep these user notes in mind:
- Frame the idea of potential in collective, not individual terms – focus on expanding and supporting a collective pool of available talent, to benefit us all.

Ingenuity
Why does this matter? What's at stake?

The story you're telling:
"We have the know-how and resourcefulness to solve this problem."
Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Determinism, Fatalism
Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:
- Sense of agency: We are **resourceful**, clever, and thoughtful – so **we can tackle this problem**.
- It's in our culture to find **innovative** solutions to challenging problems – we have a history of rolling up our sleeves and getting to work on tough issues.
- Innovation isn't always inventing from scratch – it also includes **finding ideas that work**, borrowing them, implementing them thoughtfully.
- Ingenuity can make a difference on those long-standing problems that seem 'stuck.'

Civic Potential
Why does it matter? What's at stake?

The story you're telling: For Tennessee to become the state we know it can be, we must ensure that all of our children have the opportunity to learn and develop.
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Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Fatalism, Individualism, Separate Fates

Particularly effective in building support for policies in these areas:
Racial Disparities; Juvenile Justice; Physical Infrastructure; Early Education; Child Mental Health

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:
- Realizing the potential of Tennessee should be a top priority.
- Support for the state's children is crucial to realizing the shared potential of the state.
- We can only accomplish our goals if we support healthy child development and effective learning.
- Giving children a strong start in life gives Tennessee a strong start toward becoming the state it can be.
- Sense of agency: We can, in fact, improve the future of Tennessee by acting together. Tennessee is coming together to make good things happen.
- Sense of urgency: If we don't strive to meet the needs of children, the problems that our children face will get worse – and we run the risk of Tennessee not meeting its potential.

When applying this frame element, keep these user notes in mind:
- Frame the idea of potential in collective, civic terms – this value is about "our state's" potential
- In message testing conducted in Jacksonville, FLA aspirational frames – invoking the possibility of a better future – were more effective than pragmatic frames that focused on the here-and-now.

Civic Responsibility
Why does it matter? What's at stake?

Suggested image (crop to square/crop as needed)

The story you're telling: Tennessee is recognizing its shared obligation to the children of the state. By strengthening the systems that support child development, we are living up to our duty to make our state a place where all children can grow, thrive, and become responsible citizens themselves.

Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Children's Rights = Too Much Entitlement, Individualism, Separate Fates

Particularly effective in building support for policies in these areas:
Racial Disparities; Child Rights; Child Mental Health

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:
- Tennessee's residents and leaders are recognizing that we all have a shared duty to ensure that all of our state's children have the opportunity to learn and develop.
- Strengthening the systems that provide education, health care, and supports for parents is a matter of living up to our duties to children and to our state.
- We need a state where everyone can be a responsible citizen and contribute to Tennessee. Ensuring that children are given their best chance to grow, thrive, and fulfill their roles as citizens should be our top priorities.
- Sense of agency: We are, in many ways, living up to our obligations to Tennessee's children and our state by acting together. There's more to do, but Tennessee is coming together to make good things happen.
- Sense of urgency: If we fail to take responsibility for supporting our children and families, the problems our children face will get worse.

When applying this frame element, keep these user notes in mind:
- Frame the idea of duty/obligation in collective, not individual terms. Focus on the state's obligations to its children, and on residents' obligations to their state.

- Be extra careful with Tone when using this Value. Don't moralize. Avoid too many instances of *should;* consider using more aspirational or positive language such as "we are recognizing our responsibilities" or "this is an opportunity to meet our obligations."

METAPHORS

Levelness
A metaphor for child mental health
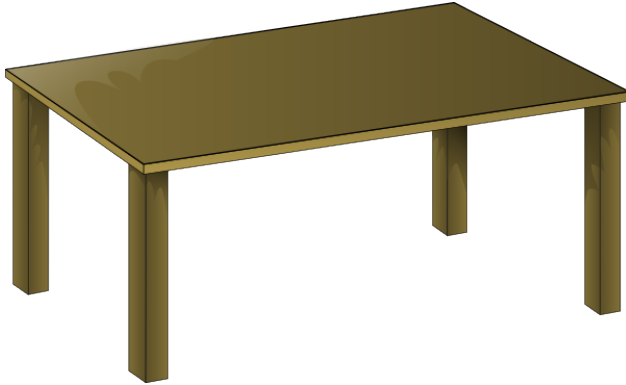
The story you're telling:
Just as the levelness of a table is what makes it functional, the mental health of children is what enables them to function well in all areas of life.

Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Children Can't Have Mental Health; Determinism; Fatalism; Mental illness is Uncontrolled Emotions; Mental Illness is "Chemicals' or "Genetics'

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:
- **A child's mental health can be likened to a table that is either level or wobbly:** helps to structure understanding that children do, in fact, have mental states.
- **A table needs to be level to perform its main function - supporting things:** good mental health is about functioning, and it supports other domains of development.
- **If a table is wobbly, it's less able to support its load:** points to the ways poor mental health disrupts learning and development in other domains
- **If the floor is sloped or slanted, that affects the levelness of the table:** communicates the role of the environment and the influence of multiple factors.
- **Tables don't level themselves, but could need anything from a sugar packet to a team of specialists:** establishes the need for intervention, and range of interventions.

Brain Architecture
A metaphor for sensitive periods of development (early years and adolescence)

The story you're telling:
"The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood."

Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Black Box; Children are Containers-Fill 'em Up; Early Learning Goals = Morals, Manners, Basic academics; Fatalism; Naturalism

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:

- **Construction is orderly – we lay the foundation, frame the rooms, and wire the electrical system in a predicable sequence:** similarly, advances in neuroscience have shown us that neurological development follows predictable stages, including rapid synapse formation at some periods, pruning of neural connections at others, and development of specific neural circuits at specific stages.

- **This construction project starts early…really early:** science shows that brain development begins before birth. The first three years, including infancy, are an especially intense period of neurological development.

- **The strength of the foundation matters a lot:** Early experiences literally shape the brain, and establish either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the development and behavior that follows.

- **Getting things right the first time matters:** Building a strong foundation in the early years increases the probability of positive outcomes. A weak foundation increases the odds of later difficulties.

- **Construction is a process, not an event:** development is an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood.

- **In any building project, there are periods of intense activity:** While development is ongoing from infancy, childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood, there are two especially intense periods of brain development: the early years, and adolescence. In addition to these general sensitive periods, specific brain circuits have specific sensitive periods.

- **This construction project takes longer than we once thought:** we now know that some parts of the brain don't develop fully until early adulthood.

- **Construction problems can be corrected:** It's easier and more cost-effective to get things right the first time, but it is absolutely possible to correct issues later on.

- **This house has a complex floor plan**: A diverse set of skills and abilities are established in the early years – including emotional development. Emotional development is a

biologically based aspect of human functioning. It is wired into young children's brains in response to their individual personal experiences and the influences of the environments in which they live.

- **Building is an active process:** neurological development occurs through early experiences, through interaction with adults and sensory experiences with the environment; pivot to *Serve and Return* to explain this interaction in more detail.

Serve and Return
A metaphor for responsive interactions between children and adults
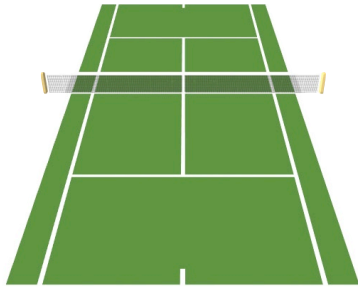
The story you're telling:
Brains are built through back-and-forth interaction, much like a game of tennis, ping-pong, or volleyball. Healthy development occurs when young children 'serve' through babbling, gestures, or words, and adults 'return' by getting in sync with the child.

Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Black Box Model of Development; Children are containers/sponges; Family bubble; Good environment = safety; Learning doesn't start until school; Naturalism: kids just develop; Self-makingness

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:
- **The way early brain development occurs is like a game of tennis or ping-pong, where back-and-forth interaction is the essence of the game:** communicates, in simple terms, the basic process of how neural connections are made through mutually contingent reciprocal interactions.
- **Children 'serve' and adults 'return' by responding appropriately:** establishes that contingent interaction is about adults getting in sync with children, not merely children copying adults.
- **Even infants want and need to be partners in this game**: helps to communicate that that even pre-verbal children seek and need this interaction from the earliest stages of life.
- **The 'ball' in this game is any kind of bid for attention – eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, babbling, shared focus, and eventually, words:** establishes that interaction comes in many forms, including but not limited to language.
- **Serve-and-return can happen between any two partners, but net games are at their best when partners are familiar with each other**: opens space for extra-family relationships but also highlights that consistent, long-term, supportive relationships between adults and young children are essential to healthy development.
- **If the serves are not returned, or not returned appropriately, the game is interrupted:** If a child's outreach is not returned, the interaction is not complete. If children do not have many positive responsive interactions each day, development can be disrupted. If these interactions are severely lacking, as in the case of chronic neglect, serious problems are sure to occur.
- **Serve-and-return is the essential process that establishes brain architecture – it literally shapes the developing brain:** the interactions that occur, or don't occur, in the

early years have a significant and lasting effect on all the development and learning that follows.

- **Now that we know how important serve-and-return is, let's think about the kind of environments that allow for lots of good serve-and-return**: connect the dots to point to policy-level conditions that help or hinder serve-and-return, such as child-teacher ratios, age-appropriate curriculum, parental leave policies, access to appropriate mental health supports.

Toxic Stress (Three Types of Stress)

A metaphor to explain how adverse experiences can influence biology and development

The story you're telling:
Chronic, severe stressors can cause a response that is toxic to the developing brain and has long-term effects on health and wellness. Supportive relationships can serve as a buffer against a toxic stress response.

Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:
Black Box of Development; Family Bubble; Good Health Comes from Good Choices; Kids Get Over It; Stress is Just Emotions; What Children Can't Remember Won't Hurt Them; What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger; Willpower

Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:
- **There are different types of stress. Short periods of low-level stress are normal and healthy – this is positive stress. But others can affect the body's alarm systems in ways that disrupt health and development:** Establishes stress as a factor in child development, and establishes a clear distinction between normal, everyday stresses and serious adversity that can cause disruptions in brain and biological development.
- **The way the body responds to serious or chronic stresses depends on the presence or absence of supportive relationships. If stable, responsive relationships are available to help buffer the experience, the stress can be tolerable:** Focusing on the scientific finding that responsive caregiving moderates stress responses is a powerful way to build public understanding of environmental influence, and channels attention away from purely individualist explanations.
- **In the absence of supportive environments, some kinds of stress are toxic to the developing brain and have long-term effects on health and wellness:** The idea of *toxic* helps to communicate the seriousness of adverse experiences, and establishing its effects on the brain provides a mechanistic, brain-based explanation that can dislodge notions as 'stress is just emotions.'
- **Toxic stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain, undermining cognitive functioning. It can lead to lifelong difficulties in learning, memory, and self-regulation:** Communicators can use this aspect of the science to connect to concerns about education and the workforce.
- **Toxic stress is a physical phenomenon, and it causes physical problems. When stress hormones remain elevated over long periods of time, they produce "wear**

and tear" on the brain and some of the body's systems, such as the cardiovascular system: Communicators can use this aspect of the science to better explain social determinants of health, or to connect social conditions (e.g. poverty or domestic violence) to public health considerations.

- **Toxic stress can affect behavior, through biology, changing the body's natural alarm system so that it responds to events that might not be stressful to others:** Communicators can use this translated science to build understanding and support for issues such as mental health, school climate/discipline policies, juvenile justice reform, and violence prevention.
- **Toxic stress is one explanation for how adversity and inequity gets "under the skin" and built into the body. When children grow up in chronically stressful conditions, such as communities characterized by high levels of violence or untreated mental health issues, their risk of toxic stress increases.** Communicators can use the frame this way to connect to issues of disparities across geographical or social dimensions, and channel attention away from default thinking that disparities exist because of poor choices.
- **Tackling toxic stress involves developing supportive community environments, to both reduce exposure to toxic stress and to make stressful life events more tolerable:** Focuses attention on policy-level interventions and continues to reinforce the role of environmental influences on outcomes.
- **Now that we know about toxic stress, it underscores the need for...** Close on Communications on a range of social and health issues can connect to the research on toxic stress to make a strong, science-based case for community services and opportunities.

Resilience 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; Family Bubble; Most Kids Turn Out Fine No Matter What; What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger; Willpower

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.
- **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.