

# 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



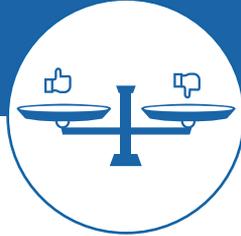
## Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:

- **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

*Continued on back.*

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## Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:

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.