

## Frequently Asked Questions on Logic Models

### Why are Logic Models useful<sup>1</sup>?

They help:

- Provide a common language
- Differentiate between “what we do” and “results”
- Enhance understanding about the program
- Guide and focus the work
- Guide decision-making and allocation of resources
- Help identify important variables to measure and ensure wide utilization of evaluation resources
- Leverage funding as they are increasingly being required

### What can I use a Logic Model for? Program Planning? Evaluation?

A logic model is a graphic depiction of the relationship between your program’s activities and its intended effects. While logic models are typically used for program planning, they can also be used for implementation, evaluation and communication.

To see examples of different types of logic models, visit:

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>

### How do SMART goals fit in with Logic Models?

Developing SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) goals is a structured way to write very specific goals. Particularly for those who aren’t accustomed to writing goal statements it can be a useful exercise to utilize the SMART style to develop goals.

As far as SMART goals and logic models, a more appropriate application may be to use the SMART principles when thinking broadly about your project. SMART thinking can come into play with both your logic model - and particularly documents like the Action Plan that we're using for the this project - where outcomes and indicators are specified. So you should be able to take in all the major activities that you are doing and the outcomes that you are trying to accomplish and apply the SMART philosophy: Are your goals and outcomes specific enough? Can you measure them? Are they achievable, etc? So it is essentially taking a broader picture into consideration beyond just an actual goal statement.

The following table provides some examples of how SMART goals can be written.

Who/what	Change/desired effect	In what	By when
Families in the target areas	Increase	their use of community resources and services	within one year of learning about available supports

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/powerppt/nutritionconf05.ppt#256,1>. Logic Models: A framework for program planning and evaluation

Local child abuse prevention councils	Increase	Their utilization of evidence-based programs and/or evaluation activities	by Dec 2008.
---------------------------------------	----------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------

Do I need to put evaluation activities into a Logic Model along with programmatic activities or should that be a separate Logic Model?

A program logic model tells you why activities are related and provides direction for how to evaluate those activities. However, the actual evaluation is an extra component and *does not* need to be reflected in the logic model. To capture these evaluation activities, you'll want to use something like the Outcomes Matrix that was included in your summit binder or the Action Plan you are all utilizing as a part of this project. Items that should be included in your evaluation plan include: goals and objectives, outcomes, indicators, measures/data sources, schedule of assessment and staff responsible.

We heard about environmental factors like political environment, funding environment, turf issues, etc during our TA call on Logic Models. Do those belong in a Logic Model and if so, where should they be placed?

There are a number of different documents that can be utilized when you embark on program planning and evaluation. These include a Logic Model, Action Plan, Outcomes Matrix, Evaluation worksheets, etc. (some samples of these were included in your Summit binder). Environmental factors could impact your activities and therefore might surface in your logic model in that area. For example, if you needed to do some outreach to get buy-in for a specific initiative, that might become an activity that would be included in your Logic Model and Action Plan. It may also end up in your assumptions (ie because there was political bias against a particular initiative, you decided to approach your work from another angle). Or it could be listed outside the primary columns of your logic model (see <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html#more> for an example).

**We talked about using arrows during the TA call. What is the best way to use arrows?**

Arrows should enhance the reader's comprehension of the logical sequence of what you're trying to do. Arrows can go from:

- Activities to other activities: Which activities feed which other activities?
- Activities to outcomes: Which activities produce which intended outcomes?
- Early outcomes to later ones: Which early outcomes produce which later outcomes?

**Can you provide definitions of the main components of a Logic Model one more time?**

**Assumptions:** The rationale, evidence, and/or best thinking that goes into the decision to do what you are going to do. The beliefs we have about the program, the people involved, and the context and the way we think the program will work.

**Inputs/Resources:** The human, financial, and material resources that the program uses to produce the desired results. Types of inputs include, but are not limited to, people, money, equipment, facilities, supplies, partnerships and collaborations, and agency priorities, regulations, and requirements.

Think of everything you could possibly need to accomplish your goals. Think about people (staff, volunteers, board members, partners, etc), funding, physical space, research/curriculum/trainings that might be available, survey tools, databases, websites, etc. These are all your inputs.

**Activities:** All the things that need to happen to reach your outcomes. These could include: planning, implementing, developing, researching, fundraising, evaluating, hiring. The actual events or actions that take place as a part of the program. Ask yourself, "What are the big action steps required to get to my outcomes?" What the "program" and its staff actually do.

**Outputs:** The direct products of program activities. Outputs consist of products and services provided. It might help to ask yourself, "Who will have participated?" and "What will be produced?" Generally speaking, outputs are more often measures of quantity than quality. Outputs can include: # of trainings, # of materials, # of outreach efforts, # of programs. Outputs may signify "tangible" accomplishments as a result of activities.

**Shorter Term Outcomes:** The immediate changes or improvements directly resulting from program actions. Typically accomplished in 1 to 3 years. The first level of change that must occur in order to bring about intermediate outcomes. Short-term outcomes are typically changes or improvements in awareness and knowledge. Changes in attitudes or intentions may also be short-term outcomes.

**Intermediate Outcomes:** Results that occur some time after the intervention has been initiated, such as changes in behavior or environmental conditions. Outcomes occurring as a product of short-term results.(i.e., short-term outcomes lead to intermediate outcomes). Unlike short-term outcomes, which occur under the direct influence of program activities, there may be other causal factors contributing to the achievement of intermediate outcomes.

**Longer-Term outcomes/impact:** Longer term societal changes – public policy changes, changes in public perceptions, changes in funding. The desired end-results of a program. Long-term outcomes are typically changes or improvements in the overall condition of a population or system that result from achievement of intermediate outcomes (e.g., reduced morbidity). Given their broader scope, long-term outcomes usually take more time to achieve.

**Examples of outcomes:**

Ultimate goal: Prevent shaken baby syndrome. A short term outcome might be to propose policy changes. This leads to an intermediary outcome of changes in policies, laws and regulations being

adopted which ultimately leads to changes in surveillance and/or the availability of programs and services.

Ultimate goal: Creating an evidence-based culture within child abuse prevention organizations. A short term outcome might be to increase knowledge and change perceptions of prevention providers. An intermediate outcome might then be increased motivation of providers to integrate certain evidence-based practices. This ultimately leads to a greater utilization of evidence-based practices.

### What is the difference between outputs and outcomes<sup>2</sup>?

Outputs are things that you have control over: the number of materials printed, the number of training sessions held, or the amount of sports equipment delivered to schools. Outcomes are things that happen because of what you do: changes in awareness or knowledge, attendance at training workshops, an increase in parent-child interaction.

### Should I have reducing child abuse and neglect listed as an outcome in my Logic Model?

This question raises an interesting debate. On the one hand – listing this as an ultimate long-term outcome demonstrates that this is what you are working towards. It helps to create the linkages between shorter term outcomes such as increasing knowledge, skills and capacity with the longer term outcome of preventing child abuse and neglect.

The flip side of the debate is that by listing this as an outcome on your logic model there may be an expectation that you will be measuring and evaluating it.

One thought is instead of listing preventing child abuse and neglect as an outcome, you may want to consider listing it as an overall goal so people know that this is ultimately what you are working towards.

### Other Helpful Resources on Logic Models

- Tips for developing logic models. Poster presentation at 2007 APHA Meeting. Provides some very practical and helpful rules of thumb on developing logic models. *Thanks Christie Ferris for identifying and sharing!* [http://www.rti.org/pubs/apha07\\_burke\\_poster.pdf](http://www.rti.org/pubs/apha07_burke_poster.pdf)
- Evaluation 101: An Overview for New Evaluation Practitioners. Tom Chapel's presentation at the 2007 American Evaluation Association's conference. <http://www.eval.org/SummerInstitute07/Handouts/si07.chapelF.pdf> Logic model information begins around slide #10
- CDC's Listing of Logic Model resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/resources.htm#logic%20model>
- Creating Program Logic Models: A Toolkit for State Flex Programs <http://www.flexmonitoring.org/documents/PLMToolkit.pdf>

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.rti.org/pubs/apha07\\_burke\\_poster.pdf](http://www.rti.org/pubs/apha07_burke_poster.pdf)

- University of Wisconsin Extension  
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>