

# **Measuring Impacts – An Introduction to Evaluation**

presented by  
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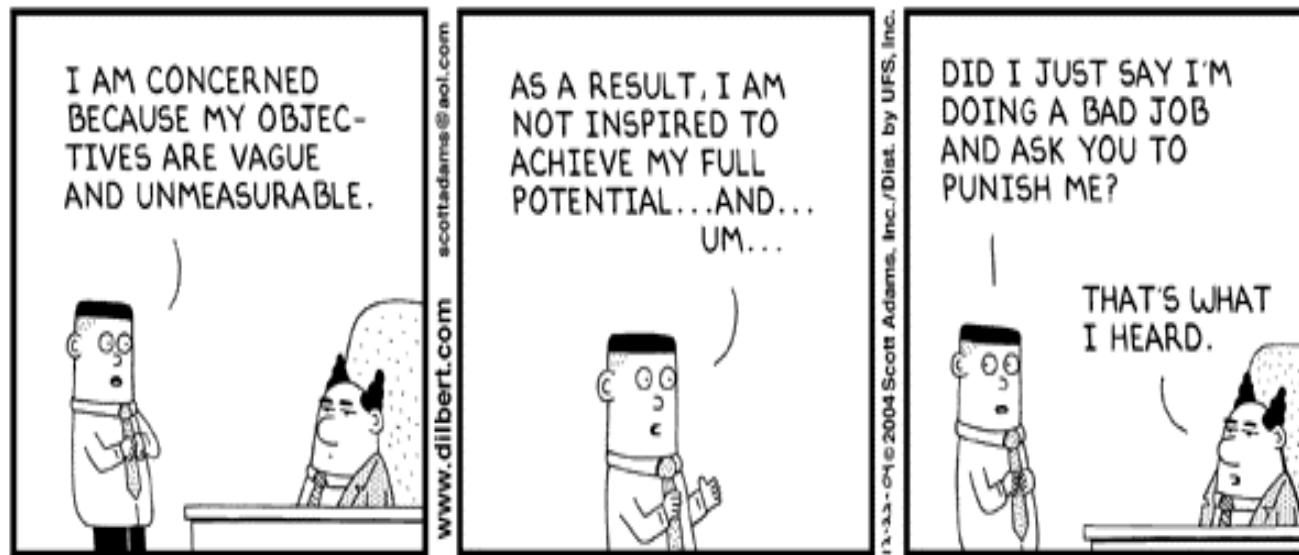
# A New Era

- What gets measured gets done.
- If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure.
- If you can't see success, you can't reward it.
- If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure.

- If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.
- If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

Osborne and Gaebler, 1992 in Patton, 1997

# IMPORTANCE OF MEASURABLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



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## **Measurable results – point/counterpoint**

- Success must be operationalized – defined in ways that can be counted
- Things that count can't be counted
- Things that can't be counted can't be funded

# Logic Models-- Why the Popularity?

- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993
- Shows difference between what we do and impact we are having.
- Provides a common vocabulary.
- Focus on quality and continuous improvement.

# Why Create a Logic Model?

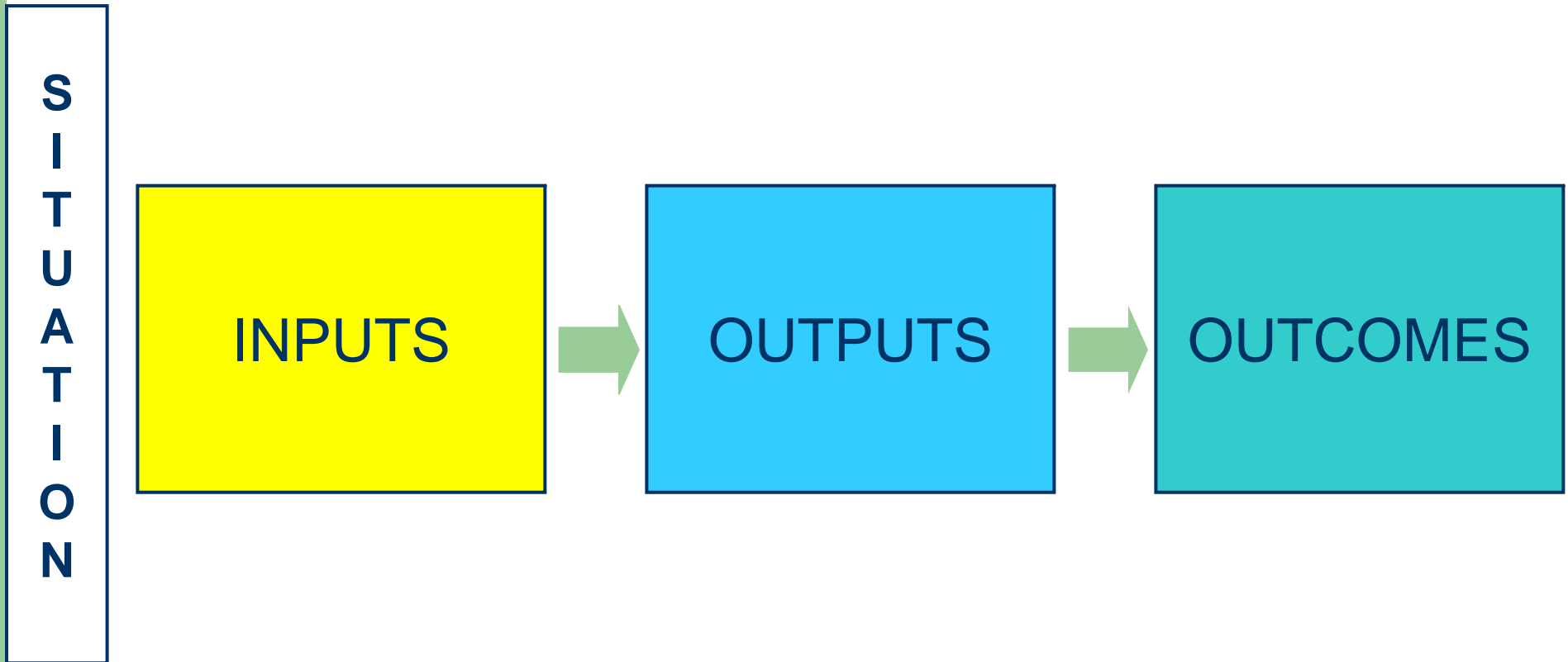
- Shows the 'chain of events' that link inputs to results.
- Helps bring detail to broad, fuzzy goals.
- Summarizes the key elements of the program.
- Clarifies difference between activities and outcomes.
- Signals what to evaluate.
- Builds consensus around what the program is.

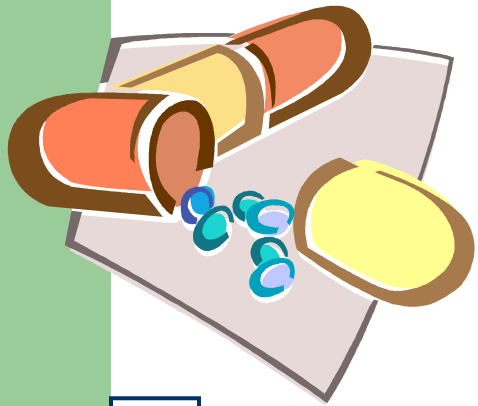
# Logic Model: What Is It?



- **Picture of a program.**
- **Graphic representation of the program “theory” or “action.”**
- **Relationship between what we put in (inputs), what we do (outputs), and what results (outcomes).**
- **Logical chain of if-then relationships.**
- **Core of program planning and evaluation.**

# Logic Model



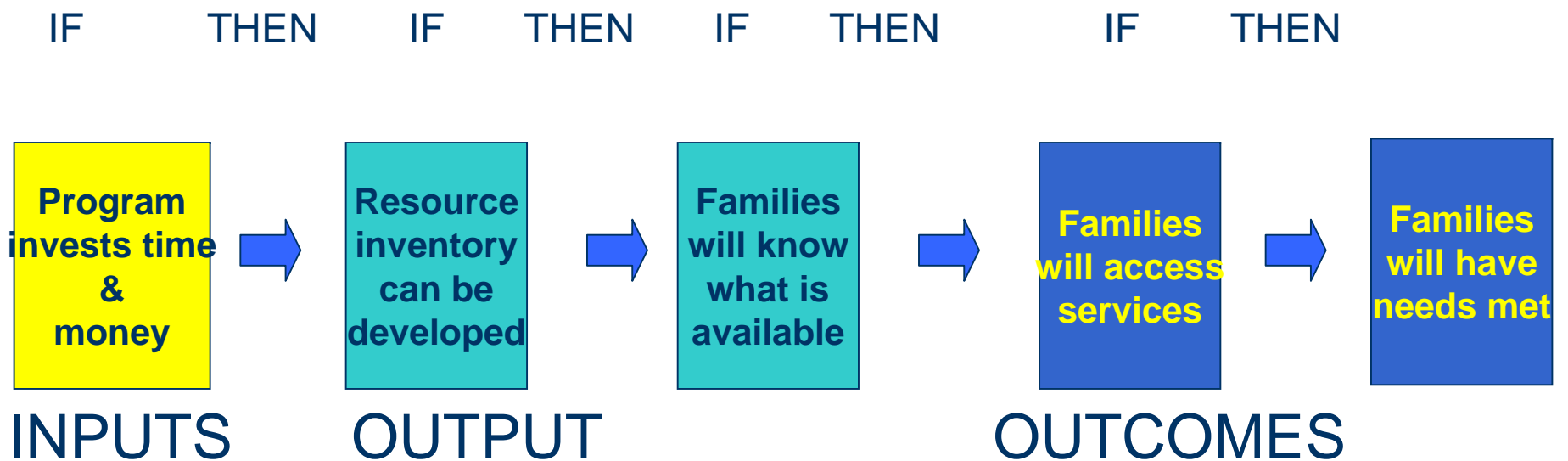


# Everyday Logic Model

H  
E  
A  
D  
A  
C  
H  
E



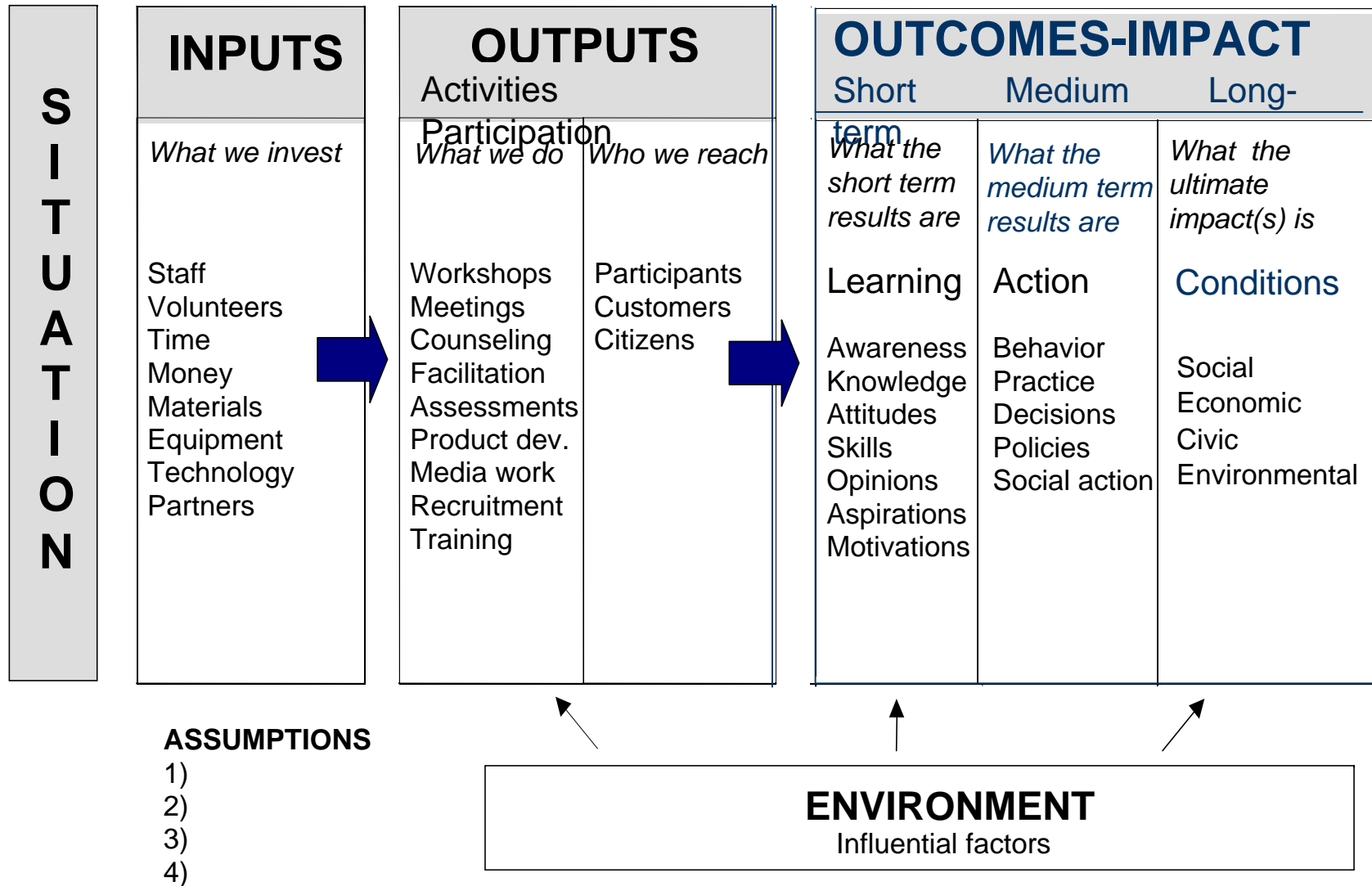
# Logical Linkages: Series of If-Then Relationships



# What Makes Up a Logic Model?

- Situation
- **INPUTS**
- **OUTPUTS**
- **OUTCOMES**
- Assumptions
- Environment

# LOGIC MODEL: Program Performance Framework



# **INPUTS**

**Staff**  
**Money**  
**Time**  
**Volunteers**  
**Partners**  
**Equipment**  
**Technology**

# OUTPUTS

What we do

Who we reach

## ACTIVITIES

*Number of:*

Workshops

Counseling sessions

Facilitation

Product development

Meals served

Trainings

Conferences

Media

## PARTICIPATION

*Number of:*

Participants

Clients

Customers

Users

# OUTCOMES

*What results for individuals, businesses, communities.....*

## SHORT

*Learning*

Awareness  
Knowledge  
Attitudes  
Skills  
Opinion  
Aspirations  
Motivation

## MEDIUM

*Action*

Behavior  
Practice  
Decisions  
Policies  
Social action

## LONG-TERM

*Conditions*

Human  
Economic  
Civic  
Environment

# Assumptions



- **Beliefs about the program**
  - the participants
  - the way the program will operate
  - how resources, staff will be engaged
  - the Theory of Change



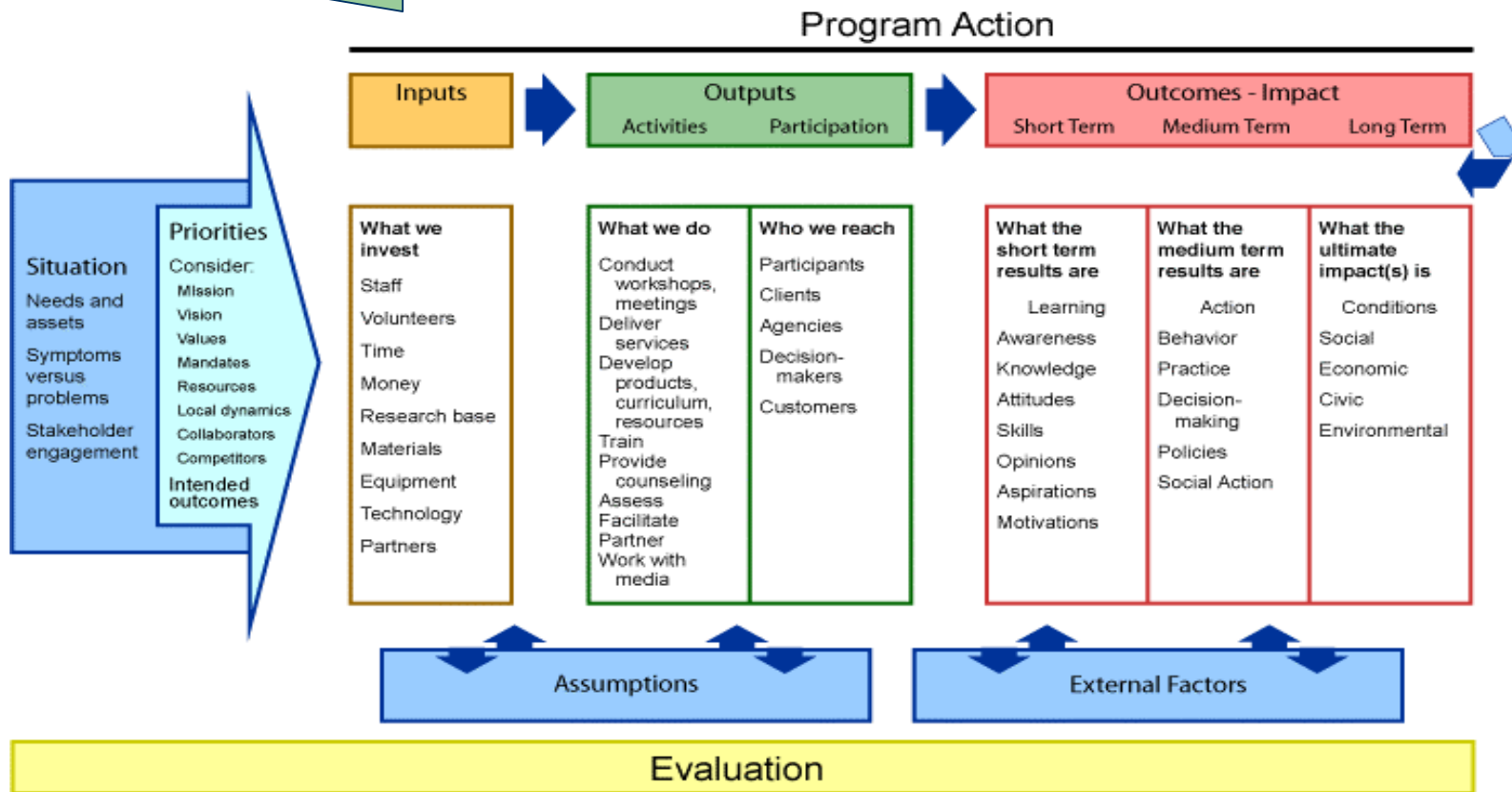
## **Assumptions, cont.**

- **Faulty assumptions are often the reason for poor results**
- **Check and test assumptions**
  - **Identify potential barriers for each 'if-then' sequence**

# **Environment–Influential Factors**

- **Context of the program**
  - **politics, family circumstances, cultural milieu, demographics, economics, values, biophysical environment, policies, services**
- **What affects the program over which you have little control?**

**PLANNING: start with the end in mind**



**What do you want to know?**

**How will you know it?**

**EVALUATION: check and verify**

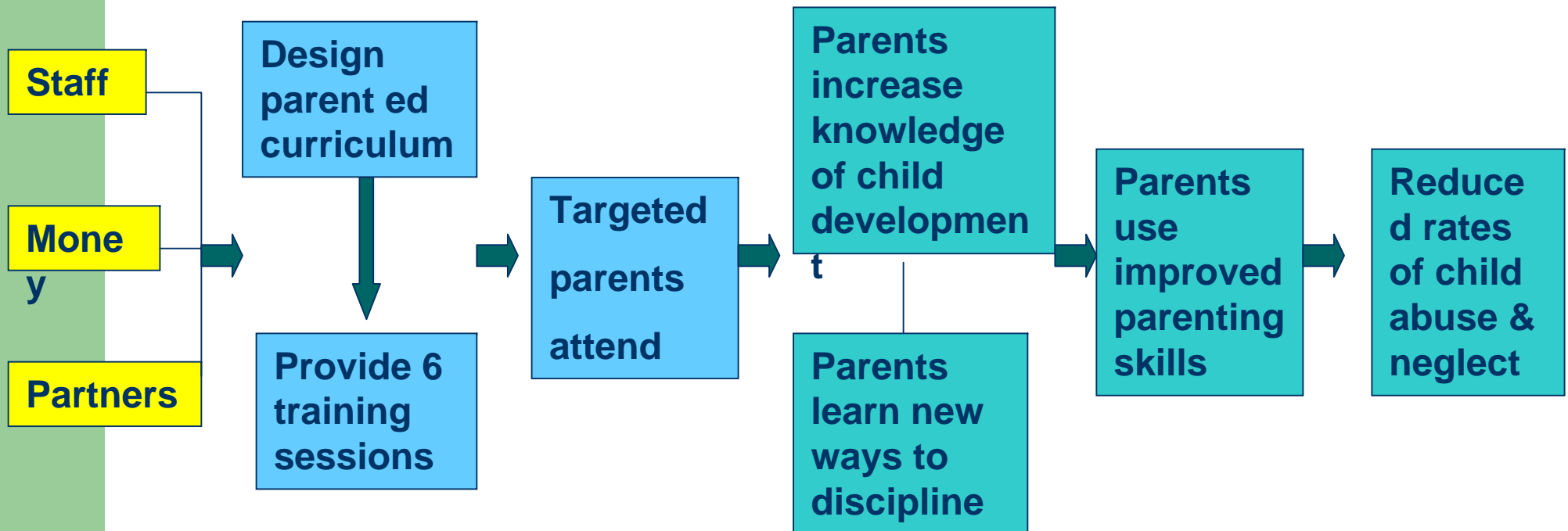
# Example of Logic Model

## Family Strengthening Program

### INPUTS

### OUTPUTS

### OUTCOMES



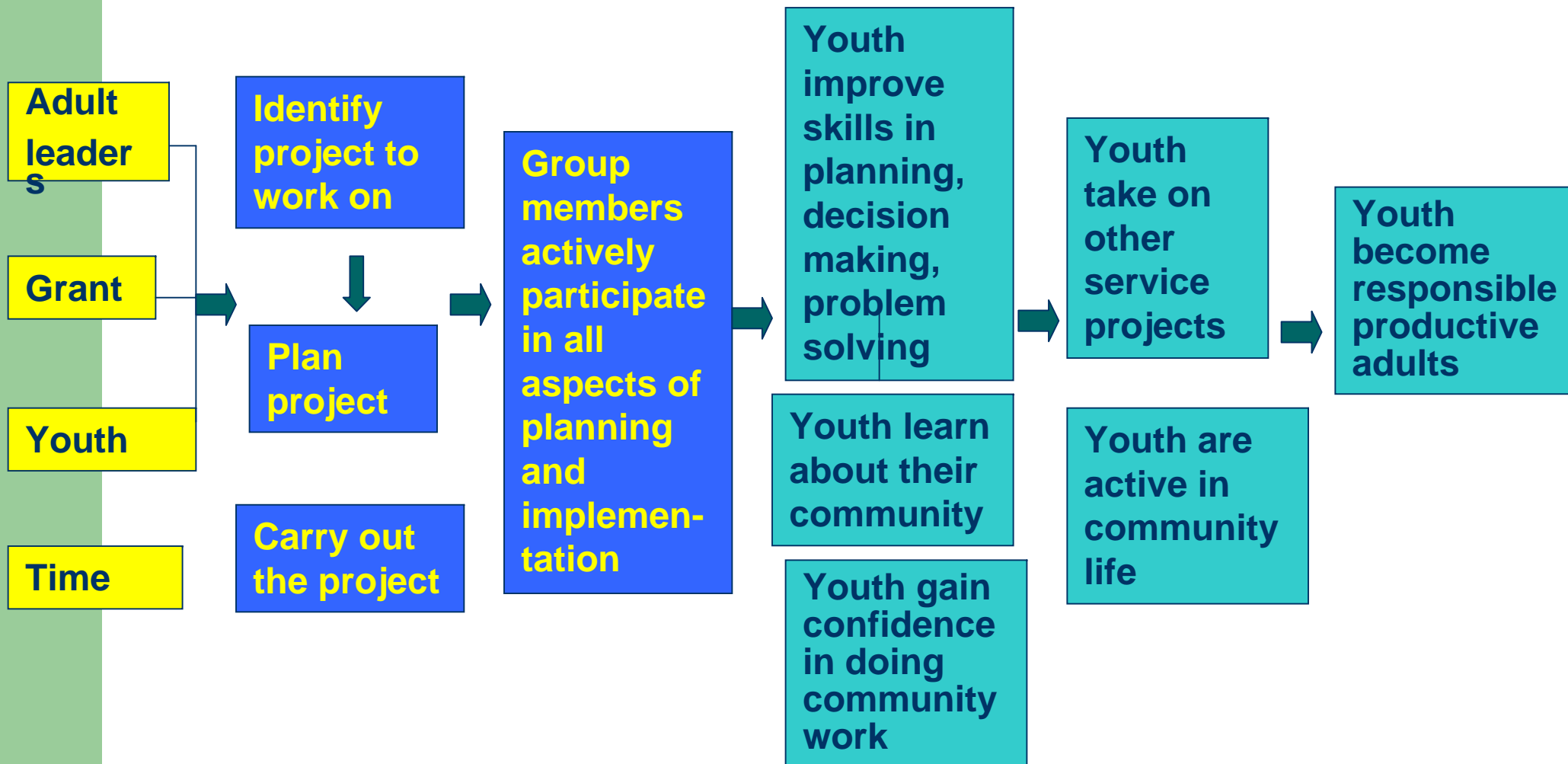
# Example of Logic Model

## Youth Prevention Program

### INPUTS

### OUTPUTS

### OUTCOMES



# Example of Logic Model

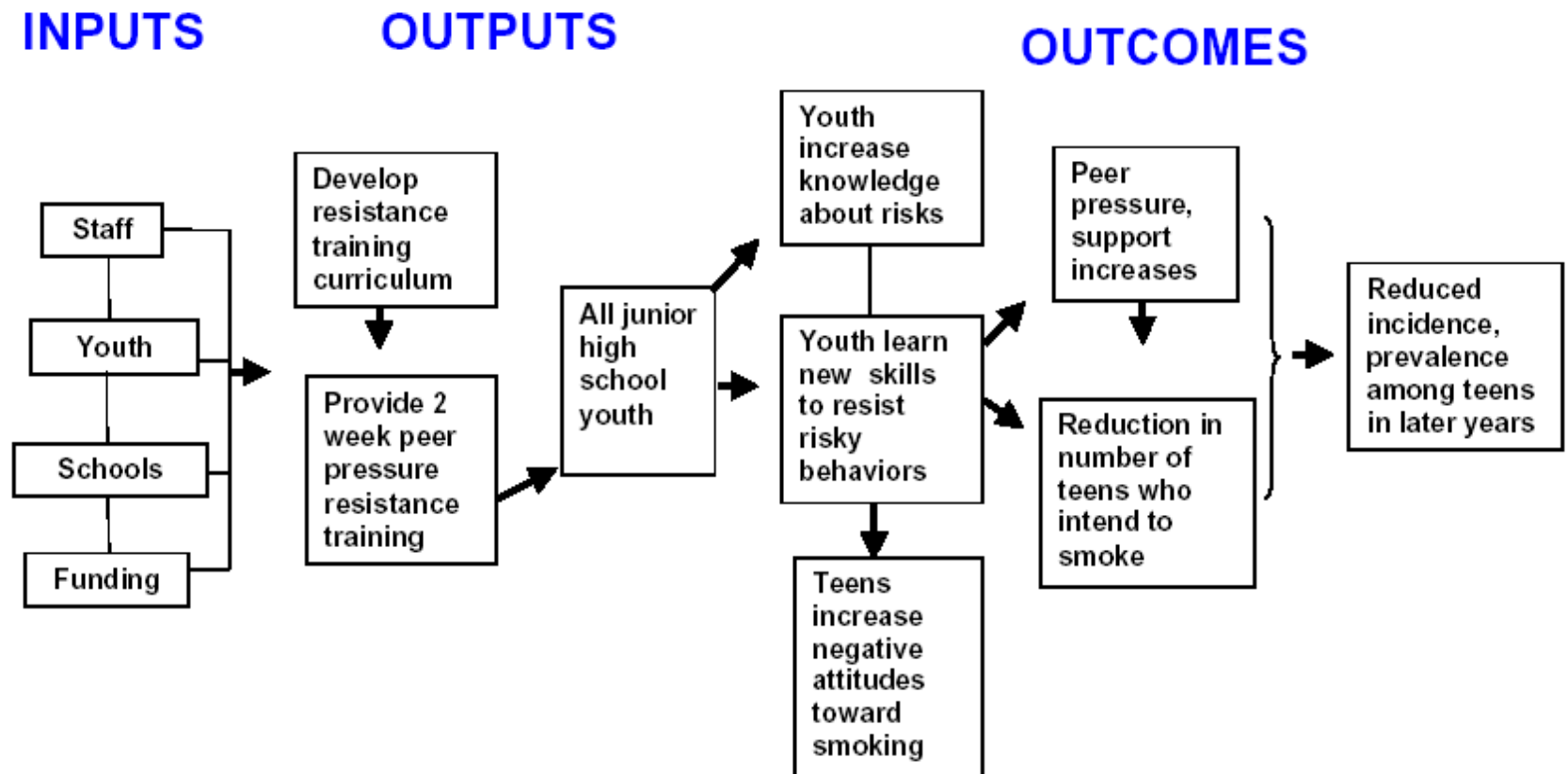
## Financial Management Education Program

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	Activities	Participants	Short	Medium	Long-term
<b>Staff</b> <b>Volunteers</b> <b>Agencies</b> <b>Materials</b> <b>Equipment</b> <b>Grants \$</b>	<b>Small group meetings</b> <b>Walk bys</b> <b>Newsletters</b> <b>Home visits</b> <b>One-on-one counseling</b>	<b># of Low-income families</b> <b># AFDC recipients</b>	<b>Able to assess own financial situation</b>  <b>Able to evaluate different low cost shopping strategies</b>  <b>Learn how to develop spending plan based on goals and needs</b>  <b>Learn ways to manage credit and debt</b>  <b>Know earned credit eligibility requirements; how to apply; where to go</b>  <b>Learn ways to gain control over budget</b>	<b>Use spending and savings plan</b>  <b>Adopts low cost shopping strategies</b>  <b>Stretches limited resources to meet monthly bills</b>  <b>Apply for and receive earned income tax credit when appropriate to increase income</b>	<b>Basic needs are met</b>  <b>Money lasts until end of month</b>  <b>No debt accruing</b>  <b>Increased personal satisfaction; self-efficacy</b>

# Example of Logic Model

## Smoking Cessation Program

### Logic Model: Smoking Resistance Program



# **Logic Model: Benefits**

- **Brings detail to broad goals**
- **Shows the chain of events that link inputs to results**
- **Builds understanding and consensus**
- **Identifies gaps in logic and uncertain assumptions**
- **Signals what to evaluate and when**
- **Summarizes complex program to communicate with externals**

# **Logic Model: Limitations**

- **Represents reality, but it's not reality**
  - Programs are not linear
- **Focuses on expected outcomes**
- **Challenge of causal attribution**
  - Many factors influence outcomes - doesn't deal with problem of covariates
- **Doesn't address: Are we doing the right thing?**

# Outcomes vs. Outputs

BE OUTCOME DRIVEN,  
NOT OUTPUT DRIVEN



# Be Outcome-Driven not Output-Driven

Output-driven	Outcome-driven
<b>Examples:</b>	<b>Examples:</b>
To train and empower community volunteers	Communities will have increased human capacity to deal with local issues
To teach financial management skills to low-income families	Low-income families will be better able to manage their resources resulting in less dependence on community resources
To have a fragile arts organization hire a development director	The organization will increase revenues from a variety of funding sources and will be financially secure.
Provide annual conference for on latest research and technologies	Consumers in Maricopa County will know current research information and use it to make informed decisions.

# Issues Defining Outcomes

- There is no right number of outcomes.
- There may be more than one "outcome track."
- In some cases, immediate outcomes may seem like outputs.
- The more immediate the outcome, the more influence the program has over its achievement.
- Conversely, the longer term the outcome, the less direct influence the program has over its achievement and the more likely other extraneous forces are to intervene.
- Because other forces affect an outcome doesn't mean it shouldn't be included.
- Long-term outcomes, however, should not go beyond the program purpose or target audience.
- However, longer term outcomes are less trivial and more important to funders

## **Ask yourself the following questions:**

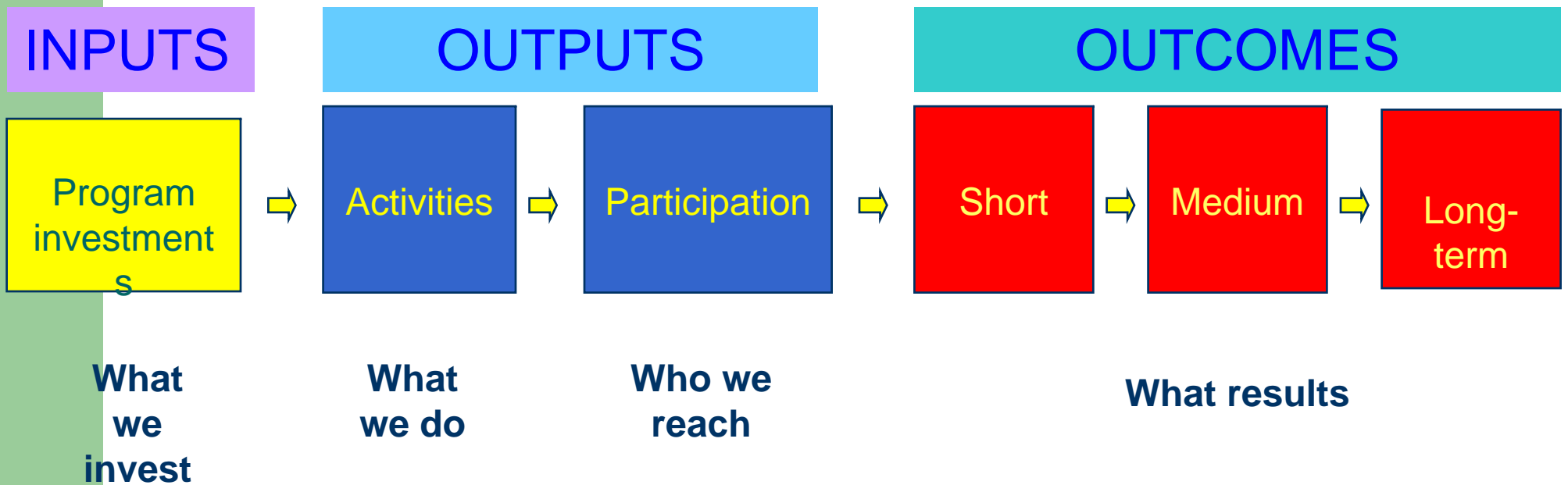
- *“Do these outcomes capture what the program aims to get done?”*
- *“Are we comfortable hanging an evaluation of our effectiveness on these outcomes?”*
- *“Are there other things we should look at instead of these outcomes?”*

# **Evaluating OUTCOMES**

# Differences between Evaluation and Research

- Research is general – evaluation is specific
- Research uses random assignment, evaluation uses existing groups
- Good research is typically poor evaluation and good evaluation is poor research

# Logic Model



# **Which Outcomes do you Evaluate?**

## **First...**

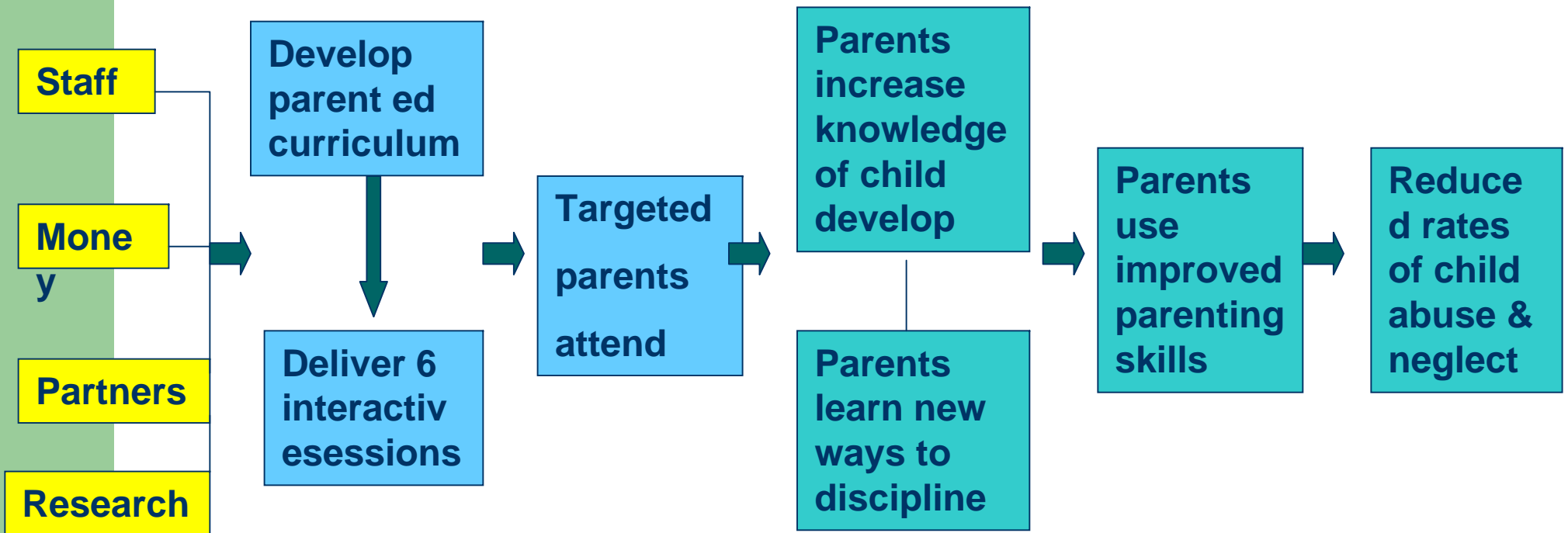
- **Make sure the outcomes are really outcomes.**
- **Examine the chain of outcomes.**
- **Is the chain logical?**
- **Is it realistic?**
- **Is the longest-term outcome meaningful?**
- **Does it represent the program's purpose; response to the situation/problem?**

# Follow the Chain...

## INPUTS

## OUTPUTS

## OUTCOMES



# Chain of Outcomes

## SHORT

Seniors increase knowledge of food contamination risks

Participants increase knowledge and skills in financial management

Community increases understanding of childcare needs

Graffiti and trash removed in neighborhood cleanup

## MEDIUM

Practice safe cooling of food; food preparation guidelines

Establish financial goals, use spending plan

Residents and employers discuss options and implement a plan

Youth and adults learn cooperation and community org skills.

## LONG-TERM

Better health and lower incidence of food borne illness

Reduced debt and increased savings

Child care needs are met

Crime goes down, residents enjoy greater sense of community

# Evaluation Plan

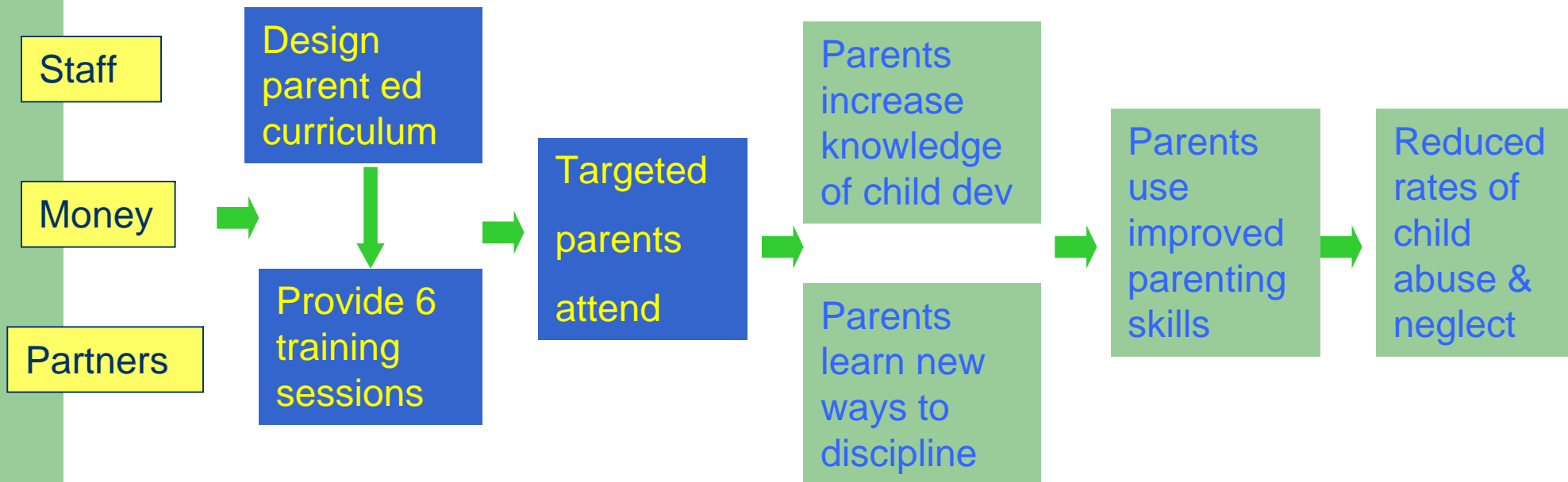
- **What do you want to know?**
- **How will you know the change if you see it?**
- **What will be the source of the information?**
- **What will be your method of collecting the information?**
- **How will the data be analyzed and interpreted?**
- **How will the results be shared? To whom?  
How? When?**
- **Who will do what, when, and with what resources?**

# Where Does Evaluation Fit?

## INPUTS

## OUTPUTS

## OUTCOMES



## EVALUATION: What do you want to know? What data do you need?

Quality of curriculum # of sessions delivered	# parents attending/session which parents	Increase in knowledge/skill- post session survey	Actual use - follow-up phone interview	Decrease in rates - agency records
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# **What to Consider in Selecting Measures**

- **What type of measure best captures the outcome of interest most directly?**
- **Should I develop my own or use an existing measure?**
- **How reliable and valid is the measure?**
- **How much does the measurement tool cost?**
- **How complicated is the measure to use? KISS**
- **How complicated to interpret are the results generated by the measure?**
- **Is the measure likely to be sensitive to changes?**
- **What obstacles might prevent us from using these measures?**

# Source and Method of Data Collection

## Source of information

- Participants
- Parents
- Teachers
- Key informants

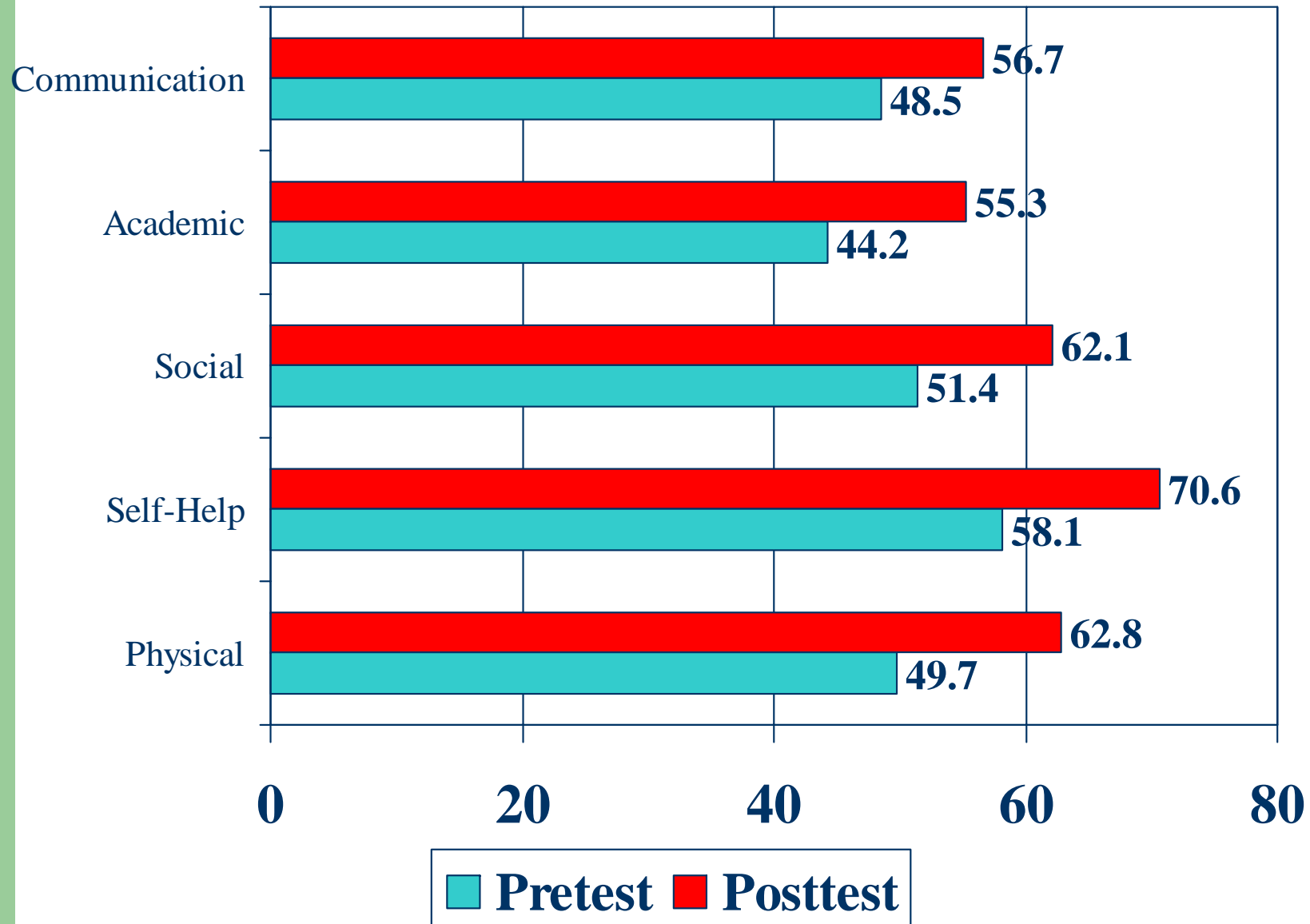
## Method of collecting the information

- Survey
- Interview
- Observation
- End-of-program questionnaire
- Focus group
- Records

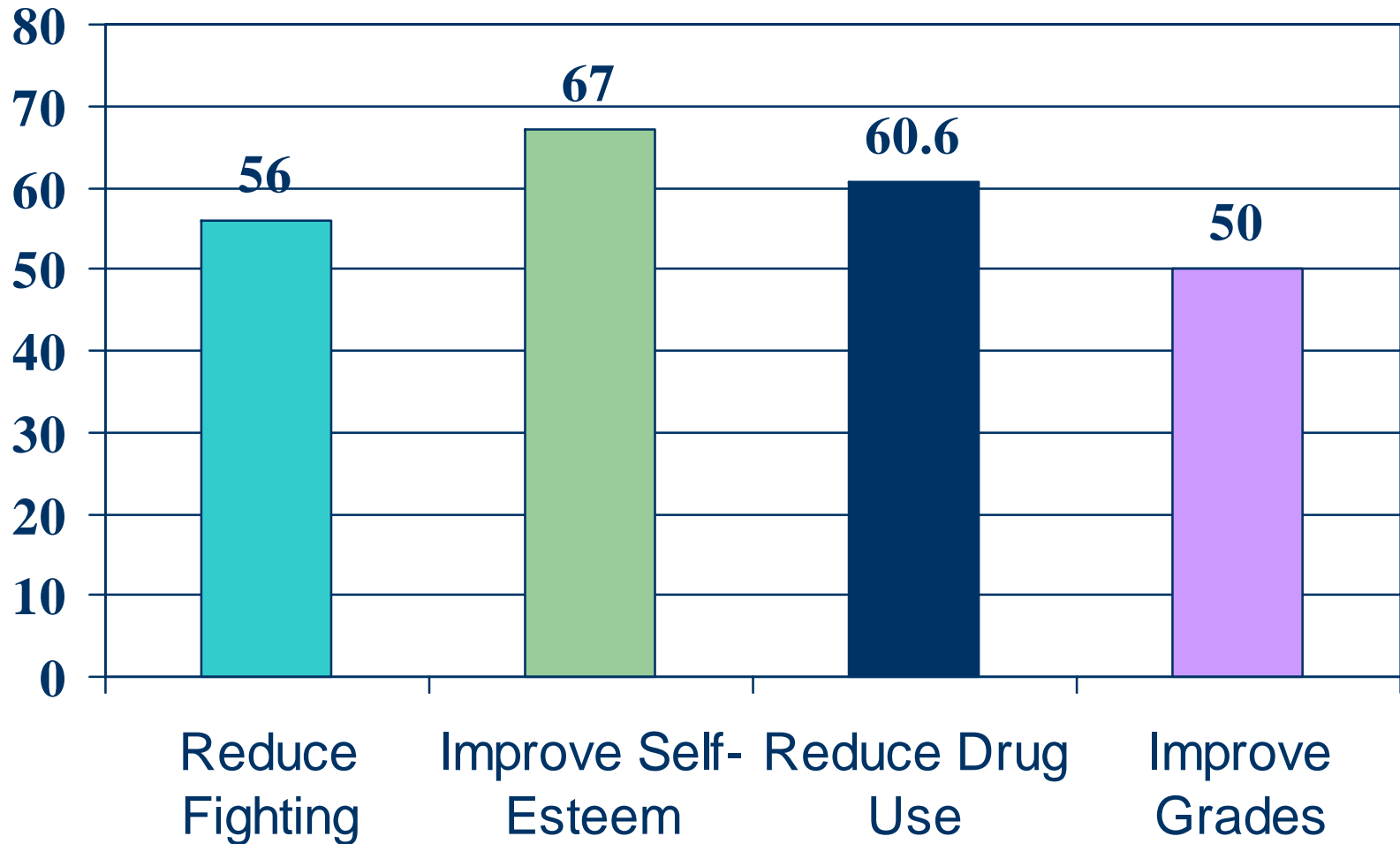
# Analysis and Interpretation

- Does not necessarily require advanced statistical skills.
- Many analyses can be done using MS Excel.
- Pre and post test results require the same people
- Use graphs and charts to illustrate results.
- Establish standards for success before the data are gathered, then test whether the standard was met.

# Pre and Post Test Scores on Outcome Measures



## Percent of Youth Reaching Performance Standard on Outcome Objectives



# Finally...

- View evaluation as learning.
- Ask 'tough questions' – Good evaluation is ALWAYS question rather than data driven.
- Integrate evaluation into the way you work.
- Build evaluation in upfront.
- Make measurement meaningful.
- Be accountable for highest professional standards.

This presentation drew from many sources. Included among them were the Kellogg Foundation, the University of Wisconsin Extension program, the Harvard Family Research Project, and the University of Texas Center for Research, Evaluation, and Technology