NATIONAL CENTER ON DEAF-BLINDNESS

DEAF-BLIND CHILD COUNT: DATA ACCURACY AND USING THE DATA FEEDBACK FILE

JANUARY 8, 2020

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>> ROBBIN BULL: It looks like we have a few people joining us today. That's great. We'll get started in about five minutes.

Okay. It looks like we are at the top of the hour. I wanted to make sure I wasn't on mute, still. This is Robbin Bull, and I'm with the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. And I want to begin by welcoming everybody. I'm going to go through a few housekeeping items before I get started. Currently, all phone lines have been muted to reduce the background noise, and we ask that you do keep your phones on mute unless you're going to speak. At that time, you can use #6 to unmute your phones. *6 will mute your line. This is intended to be an informal presentation, so I do encourage you to ask questions via phone or chat pod, as they arise, and I will try to get to them as we go.

This session and the session on the 15th are planned to be a repeat of the same content, to give as many people the opportunity to attend as possible. However, they also will be recorded and archived on the website for those who cannot attend, or if you want to refer back to them.

So with that, I think I will go ahead and get started. I appreciate Toni getting things started in the chat pod in the bottom, center of the screen. I've asked there that you share what data system you use to manage your child count data. That's helpful to us, and possibly to other people, other directors and project people, just to know who else is using different systems. I get asked that quite a bit, and it would just be helpful for people to know what others are using. So if you could just add that as we go.

In the general chat pod where we have just the regular notes and stuff, if you can add in there your name, your role in your state, that would be good. We have some people here that are newer to projects and might not know others. We have some here that are also focused more on child count than other parts of project work. So that would help people know who is here and what their focus is. That would be great.

So outcomes for today, I want to give you a little better understanding of the reporting process, particularly as it comes into the National Center, and just give a little more detail about data management, best practices, help give improved strategies for cleaning your deaf-blind child count data. And hopefully, give increased confidence in working with your state data records and files.

What we will not be covering today is a detailed review of the deaf-blind child count reporting process. We did that back in September. And I have a link there for the presentation that we did back in September, if you need to get to that. And all the reporting resources for that, for reporting your child count, is on the website there. There's a link there, as well.

But I am going to go through just a quick review of the important piece of the course [sounds like] submitting your child count. That is, the data can be collected in any spreadsheet or data program. Even with the child count packet we provide on the website, it has a spreadsheet that's available. You can collect your data in any format. But you need to export it and provide it to us in an Excel readable file. Whether that's an Excel.xls or.xlsx or a.CSV file. That's how we need it to merge it together from every state.

The data is due May 5 this year. Not next year, now. [LAUGHS] It's this year. 2020. We do need to have it submitted via the portal. Again this year. That worked out pretty well for us and hopefully for you, as well. That was a pretty easy way to get it and that was secure for the files. Again, there is the link there that has the details for how to do that.

This year, we're going to be asking for data notes to be included with that submission. The spreadsheet example that we did provide with the packet has a separate sheet within that Excel file that you can add notes if you want to there. Or, you can add some additional files along with your file that you submit. You can submit more than one document with your submission. So if you have just a separate document, we can submit it that way, as well. It's helpful, I think, for us, as well as, we want to be able to explain our data and their different trends in the data a little bit better. So I'm just giving a few examples here of some data notes that could be provided.

Last year, one state last year actually provided me with some data notes that were helpful. It doesn't have to be this detailed, I have a few different example here. But this is one of the states that give me some extra details about the summary of their children, some that they added and those that they took off their child count. They just gave a short description on some of those that they had coded in a certain way, as well as one that they weren't sure exactly how to code, and gave me a description of how they coded them. So if we have further discussion to be made, we could do that.

Here are a few other examples, and these are just helpful so that we can explain the data and, this is something we'll talk further about, is the transition between Part C and Part B and the differences between the states and how they handle that. So, this is good detail to know.

Example 3 is a really important detail, if there was a data entry error, for example. So that increased some numbers one year. Then, it was corrected in the next year, that's really going to influence the numbers. So we want to be able to explain why that happened. So if somebody is looking at the numbers here across year, we want to be able to know that. So those are just some examples of different things that you can explain in your data notes.

So why are we doing this? We do need to have confidence that the data means the same thing across the nation. So this is an opportunity for us to have this conversation, to help get us on board with meaning the same thing, for all of us to be looking at our data and making sure that we're aligning gives the stability to ask the good questions. And the data helps us to do that and to know that the data is good and clean so that we can interpret what the data means. On that last example, where there was an increase in residential facility, for example, if that was something that wasn't a data error, we might be wondering okay, was there a change in that state law that impacted that? Or not?

So it also gives us the ability to analyze the data in new and meaningful ways if we have confidence in the data that we have on a national level. And, on a state level, as well.

It also gives us the ability to decide on appropriate actions for TA work to do.

Okay, for good data practices, on any data, whether that's for child count data or if your evaluation data, any data that you have, you do want to be checking your data for accuracy and completeness. Those of you who have had a chance to look at more files, they're in instruction, you kind of go over these concepts of investigating for missing data.

You want to look at is the missing data unknown? Or was it an error? Those are things that you want to find out for that missing data. You want to confirm data format and ranges. Are they codes out of date or are they out of range? If the data set is, the codes are 1 - 8 for example, and you have a 10 showing up in that space for race/ethnicity. For example, if you had a code that was out of range, you would want to investigate why that number is showing up there.

Do we have alpha characters instead of numeric characters in there? Is the data in the wrong category for the age of the child? Is it an EI code for a child who's in ED setting category, for example, based on their age. They're a five-year-old, but they have a code in the Early Intervention setting category, for example.

You want to check for data entry errors. Are there entries that don't belong? For example? Or was some data missed during entry? That might also be that somebody was entering data into they somehow missed entering data for a few of the cells in the record, or a few of the fields.

With that, you want to determine where the problem originated. Was it in the data system? Was it in the data entry? Was it within your data system? Or was it within your forms? And we'll talk a little bit more about that, or you need to check for where the data error originated. And there's different places to look, data forms that you sent out and collect information is one place. Your data system where you collect your information and enter your information and manage it is another place. And then, also, or you export your data. And that file is another place where there could be, the error could originate. So those are different places to look.

Okay, so these are fields that cannot be blank. Identification code, that is something that all kids should have. And child number, this we can talk further about at a later time. But these are very helpful for us to know and for you to know if the child has a duplicate record or not. And that's one of the things that you want to check to find out if your records, if you have a duplication, it may be that the child, that the record got changed at one point in time and later, I got updated again and somehow, that's duplicated in your data file.

And we will look at the files I sent, there is an easy way to spot that, if you don't have an easy way within your data system. We do need to have the date of birth information for the children. We do a lot of work on age and that impacts in lot of the categories, and you do need to know how old those children are. So birth month, birth day, and birth year, those are things we need to have data for. We should know how the kids are we are providing services for.

Hearing loss and vision loss, we should have data for those categories, even if further testing needed is something that you have for this year. That's something that can be put in there. For one year

Then we get to the exiting data. These are our key pieces of information, and we'll look at that further, too. But we use this information to determine whether or not the children are included in our national report. All three of these fields are used to determine that snapshot number that we see that's used for all the other tables that we report on. So those are important pieces that we want to make sure that they're not blank.

Now, when they age, so for example, if they're over two, so they're having Part B exiting information, then we will have a code that we put in for Part C so there's some code there, obviously, it would be appropriate to have an exiting piece of information for a two-year-old or in the zero to two year category for exiting Part C if they're over two. But we don't want to leave it blank.

So as you're going through looking at this file, or even if you're just using your own data system to check your data, you want to have a few things on hand to make it more helpful to you. We want to have the instructions or the quick reference code sheet.

And, that's on the website. And the deaf-blind child count change/has the crosswalk of outdated values for you to cross reference. I'm just looking here at Brian's comment, "If we are not able to get the info on birth year, prefer to not get that record? Or make notes that this data is missing and not able to be confirmed?"

Well, Brian, that's a good question. You can include the data, but know we're going to have to exclude them, because we cannot include that information in the other data runs that we do, the other analysis that we do. So, yeah. It's a toughie, but you want to work on getting that first year. You want to find out if they're getting Part C or Part B services. So you should be able to determine some age range. Yeah, get as much information as you can. But definitely include that information in the data notes. That's helpful. And then we can go on a case-by-case basis on what we need to do on that. All right.

So we want to get oriented to the data feedback file. And, if you had a chance to look at that, again, on the first sheet, there's the instruction. Then, on the second sheet within the file is the data, and that's your data that was sent to NCDB last year for your 2018, your December 1, 2018 child count. So it may be out of date. If you want to send your data into me, if you have a current, updated data that you want to export and send to me, you can do that through the portal. And I can put it into this file and regenerate a file for you and see how it comes out. We can do that. But currently, this is what I had. So it just checks it.

But it has been updated, the date on it has been updated for December 1, 2019. That might sound a little confusing, but the file name is dated so you understand it was your December 1, 2018 data submitted. But the date for calculating the age was updated to your December 1, 2019, because your children have aged, and wanted to be able to calculate the correct age at this point in time for you to be looking at your children on that file. So we'll look at that a little closer here.

All right, what I'm going to do now is see if anybody has any questions before I go over to the file. I am going to pause here. If anybody has any questions in the chat pod, or if you want to do #6 to come off mute and come on the phone.

Danna asked about the PowerPoint. Danna, this will be recorded. The recording and the PowerPoint will be put on the website, so you can access it there.

So what I'm going to do is, I am going to switch over to a different share screen. So if you are navigating this by keyboard, you can do Ctrl F6 to get to the other presentation control share screen.

If it's too small, on your own screen, if you scroll to the very top of the presentation screen, it will show an arrow pointing in all four directions, and that will do a full screen on your own screen. Let me get it up. All right.

Okay. So is that showing, now? Are you seeing the spreadsheet on the screen? Thank you, Julie. I am just going to quickly look at the instructions here. The instructions are all down column A, or if you are navigating by keyboard, you should be able to just move down the column for the instruction.

The data notes explain that the header rows are where you get most of your information to help you understand how to interpret the spreadsheet. And with that, the top header row is just, really was added for your information. Then, the second header row has the detail that you will really want to use as you're going through the spreadsheet. And then, the third header row is the column headings in the field and that information.

Then, the file, I'm just continuing to go down through the notes here, just briefly. The file does have formulas in it to flag errors, possible errors, as it goes through here. And, the way it's set up, I am going to just... let me get back here. The colors, if you can see the colors here, it is highlighting potential errors by colors of the cells, or the numbers, or the rows here.

So, for example, I'm going to look at the gender column in the spreadsheet. And, if we look down to row 17, there was a 888 put in that cell, and that was an invalid code for that, so that was highlighted. So if you fix that, just going to put a 1 in there, it will clear. So that's an example of how that's working, a sample.

If you're looking across the spreadsheet, you have different types of columns of data. You have your regular data fields that you're used to seeing for your regular child count. And those are the ones that are mostly white. The yellow ones, if you can see ... I'm so sorry ... I'm precariously balanced.. Okay. Are you still with me?

So the yellow ones are calculated numbers that we use for getting some of the national numbers that you see in the report. So you look over to column J, etiolsum, we collapsed some of those into a category, so that's where that number comes from. So that's yellow on here. I'm going to scroll over. We have another column X, it's yellow. And again, one that we use when we calculate for a number of other disabilities. And that totals the number of disabilities between those other disabilities that you have added in there. So that's just totaling them.

Then we come over to the columns that you've added the data, but I've colored them because they are where we are looking at some of the important data that we're checking these calculations on columns to the right. So I'm again scrolling all the way to the right hand of the spreadsheet to column AU - AZ. This is where a lot of the checks that are creating the colored rows of data. That was just to make it easier for you to check against the child code and to look across the whole record for the child.

And, so it's checking, it's going to give you a flag based on what it's checking, again. It's going to give you the word check in a lot of instances. If there is something for you to check. Then, for example, AU and AV are looking at the early intervention and ED setting fields. So they are blue, just to make it a little easier. So if we look back to columns AA and AB, those are your EI and ED settings fields. So they also are blue, just to help your eyes look at [indiscernible] looking at for the data checks there.

So that's generally how this is working. There's some additional notes in the instructions, just giving you some other detail about that. The row 2, I tried to put in -- no again, this is something that I originally created for myself, just doing data checks. I was just trying to put in the handy notes up top there in row 2, what were valid codes, what were invalid codes, or what was in the range for looking at the numbers. So that information is generally in row 2.

Some of them are collapsed, so you may need to just click on the cell to get the full information, or you can expand it if you need to. This, in rows 4 and 5, those were the rows that I created the conditional formatting. And so, you don't need to have them in anymore. I would recommend before you change this file you create and save a new file. So if something gets messed up ... conditional formatting can be kind of tricky, so if something gets messed up, you can always pull up this file again if you need to. Or you can just ask me for it. [LAUGHS] But you can take out those rows. The reason why I suggest you do that is because if you do some sorting on your data, then you don't have to mess with those getting mixed up with your data.

I'm going to just double check my notes here. All right. So I'm going to do, show you a little bit about how some, how you can do some quick checks here on the data. Let me first look at the instructions we can get off of this. So Section 2 of this instruction takes you through step-by-step of different things for you to look at. And, step three is looking for duplicates. That's one of the things I'm going to show you next. Then, it steps you through [sounds like] looking for large gaps in your data. Looking for things that fall out of range that we talked about and looking for things in the correct age range. So we'll go over ways to do that here in the data. Here we go.

So within your file, we have ID code and child number, child code. I have your file set up to where it's going to flag those duplicates in those two fields. And ID code, it's likely that you're going to have duplicates in both of those field. Or excuse me, in that field. Because that might be a common, you might have common names or something. So that's not necessarily something to be concerned about. But if you have a duplicate flag in both ID code and number, that would be something to investigate further.

And so, on a small state, you can just scan down and see that, rows 59 and 60, there's a red, it's flagged for both of those in ID code and child number. So that would be something to look at. Is the gender the same, and so on. You know how to do that. But another way to do this, and filters are really helpful in doing this. So I'm going to highlight C and D rows, and if you're in Excel, you might have the option to going down to Editing or you have Sort and Filter or you can go to Data and you have Filter. And with that, you get this little arrows on your columns. And, what I'm going to do is I'm going to filter by cell color.

So, it just shows me, it just brings it right up there so you're not looking through all your data. You can just do it by the color. So that's an easy way.

You can also filter... I just took off the filters... You can filter by numbers, also. So for example, I'm going to come over here to Hearing Loss. So vision and hearing loss, you have a code of 7 that can only be used one year. Then, you should be changing that code. So I'm going to filter this one, and I could either filter by green, which is what I have done, or I have, it's filtering, it's showing all the numbers that are in that particular field. I'm going to unselect all, and I'm going to select 7 and say okay. And it's just going to pull up all of those that have the 7. So it's an easy way to just look at those that you're needing to have for those particular cases.

Then in this instance, we see that there's one that has a 5 and 1, that's out of range. There's also an easy way to see if things are out of range, just by doing a filter, you can see that there's an out of range one. You can also see if there's blanks. So that's one that would be easy to get to your blanks. Then in this instance, we see that there's one that has a 591, that's out of range. There's also an easy way to see if things are out of range, just by doing a filter, you can see that there's an out of range one. You can also see if there's blanks . So that's one that would be easy to get to your blanks.

So, filters are really helpful. It's also helpful to sort your data by age. And, that's going to line them up based on your age. If you do that, I recommend making sure that you select or rows by the row number, and not trying to select or data. Or you might miss something. You can select your full sheet with this one, since you have so many headings, you can still do it this way. You just have to tell it which columns you want to sort by. I recommend that you sort by birth year, birth month and birth day. I do that rather than, even though I have in here birth date, you could sort by that. You could sort by age. December 1 age, age group. But it won't exactly sort them in that order. So it gives you the best sort order by doing birth year, birth month, and birth day. So that's a way to do it.

Another tip on looking at your data is to hide the rows, or excuse me, the columns that you're not using at that particular time. I had locked the columns and headings so that I get the ID code and child number. I tried to do that for all of your files. So it needs to get your ID code numbers. But if you're looking, for example, over here, and you're looking at your Part B and Part C data, the spreadsheet's too wide to get to the fields that you really want to be checking here. So if you want to just hide these ones, these columns, there's columns in between that are necessary for you to be looking at right now, it will help you in what you're looking at.

At this point in time, we're going to be looking at these validity checks that we have that are primarily at the far right of the spreadsheet. And that's, again, looking at the Part C and Part B codes. The EI and ED Settings, and the Part B exiting, Part C exiting.

I will just mention while I'm here on this ED Setting in column A/B, in this particular case you see these large numbers, this 24079 in row 7, this is actually, it's not flag because it's actually out of the range. I did the conditional formatting to 999, which is a number that we use for missing. So that's beyond that range. The reason why this number comes up, for those of you who may or may not know, is that the old NCDB FileMaker Pro, sometimes when it exported, it would export these numbers for a 2 - which is 40 to 79% of the time. So this is common for us to see. This 1140 would be 11, 40% of the time. So it was pulling in numeric values. So this three, 40% of the time, 340, it got flagged because it was within range. That's why you see these numbers sometimes. And some of you might see that in your file.

I have the codes for transferring those, if any of you see those and you need them. Again, you don't need to make the changes in this file. You can make all the changes within your own data set if you're not using [indiscernible] data set. You can just use this to spot some things to check and change that in your own data set. You can change it here if you want. But this is just really to help flag and see areas where you need to look.

So I'm going to talk about Part B and Part C. This is where we have a lot of issues, because there's a lot of confusion about Part B and C. On our child count, we have some fields that really should be mutually exclusive, and that once a kid turns 3, then their child count data that was in the Part C field should be removed and they should only have data in the Part B field. So that's one area where we have some checks that come up.

And, there's some flags that come up and check against that. Then, there's some flags that come up and check, do they have a valid code? So this particular one, for example, is checking if 0 to 2, do they have a valid code in Part C? And it's not blank. So this one is saying that this child is in the 0 -2 , they're one-year-old. And they do not have a code in Part C. So that's why, in AX, they have a check in that cell. I'm going back to AU, where we're asking they reported on your EI, ECSE or school aged, or both have a 999. So in this case, I'm coming back over here to flags under columns AA and AB, and we see that this one has a code in EI and in ED setting. Again, this is a child who is one, and they have a code in both. So it's showing you that you should be checking for those.

I am going to pull up a poll right now. I'm looking at Donna's question here. "What if the student was in Part C and then went into Part B services? Do we need to go in and remove the Part C info from the database? Or can we delete the Part C info and make sure the existing status access eligible for Part B? Would this work?"

Donna, we need you to remove when they get from transition to Part C, if they're exiting Part C, we want to have that information for the one year that they transition. But after they transition for that one year, then we want you to remove that data for Part C and just have the information for Part B. Otherwise, we get really messy data for Part C.

MaryAnn and Chevonne, "When kids are in Part C, do you want us to leave the intervener fields blank?"

We don't want to leave any fields blank. We want to have something filled in for interveners in all cases. So you will want to use the 0, 1, or 2 in the Intervener field for all kids. So I'm going back to... I hid that field. But look at the codes and use the appropriate code, even if they're under, if they're in Part C, just so there's a code in there.

I'm going to open up a poll. And this is an area where, we're trying to figure out how best to report Part C and Part B information. In the past, if they're over two and we have Part C information, we don't count them. We do count them, I'm sorry. But their data that's still in Part C, we strip out. There's some instances where, in particular states, it's a lot. So, Donna, this is where it gets to where we need to have information taken out if it's no longer valid for your state, because some states allow it and some states don't.

So, I'm putting up two polls here. And if you are using a keyboard, you can use the Ctrl F6 to get to the poll. Number 1 is, does your state allow children to continue to receive Part C services for ages 3 and older? You have the option of yes, no, and not sure. There are some states that do. Some that don't. Most don't. And some, we just are not sure. That's quite appropriate. Some will not know.

And then, does your state allow children under the age of three to receive Part B services? And again, yes, no, or not sure. This is going to help us as we decide going forward how to handle these Part B and Part C fields with the national data. So we appreciate you responding to those poll questions. All right, as you're doing that, I'm just going to check my notes.

Okay, MaryAnn, I see your note about in your state, you have all C kids are flagged. We can talk about that, so your particular instance there. And, I do want to talk about the ED setting field.

As we know, that was a difficult field for us this last year. It will continue to be a difficult field for us as we work through the next few years. But I do want to say on this particular validation sheet, use it with some caution. But it is something that's useful for you to look at. But those of you who used new codes, particularly be careful with this, because the data that I put in here, in most instances, was the raw data that you submitted, which would have been your new codes. And this is checking against the old codes. And, so you might get some false flags on some 17's, for example, that were out of range. Because it's checking the code 16, and you also, because there are certain codes that are appropriate for ages 3 to 5 in ED Setting and certain codes from 6 to 21, it's checking based on those age ranges. And also that the child has aged, some of them are going to be flagged, those that are just in that little transition age, might be flagged. So, it might not be an appropriate error for your child at this point in time. But it may be that their codes need to be updated in your data system anyway, because they transition from the 3 to 5 codes to the 6 to 21 codes and need to be updated. So that's something to look at. So that ED setting field is something to really be familiar with and to look at with caution and to understand why it might be flagged.

Let me know if you have questions on it. I'm happy to work with you looking at that. And, just remember that we are going to continue to use the old codes next year, but if you use the new codes, continue to use those and we will just crosswalk them as you get them reported. So it's okay if they're in there, new codes.

The important thing, also, to think about with this is to make sure that you're checking against the forms that you're sending out and your data system to look and see if you're codes match, and your labels match. And this is why the instructions we talked about the differences between codes and labels, and looking at your forms, your data systems and your export files to make sure all of those align. In the past, I've come across where one state had a form that went out. They had some codes in the data system, their codes were a little bit different. Like they had updated their codes in their data system, but not on their form, so then there was a mismatch. You want to just double check those. Then as you export, you want to just double check again, just spotcheck. Pick a few kids and look at their data, especially those of transition age from ECSE to school-age, etc. Just double check what codes are coming out, and what they're labeled as within your system.

All right, I'm going to now switch back to the presentation. I'm flipping through these because we really covered all this information, but it's in the presentation if you want to go back to it. You can send your information to us. This information we have covered before in our September, but basically, I just wanted to remind you that this information is available on the website for other tools to help you as you look at your data.

The online reports you can look at, you can also download the data. The online maps are available to look at your data across years, so you can see some changes that might have occurred from last year to this year. And, the self-assessment guide is also something that populates your data across years, for those who have younger kiddos.

And just mentioning that we are putting together that Needs Assessment workgroup, and will be getting that group together. We have gotten some names of people that are interested. If you're interested, go ahead and send me your name. We'll be looking at all of those people who are interested and forming a group that's representative of the state projects, getting that started probably midmonth, and looking at how they might want to change the child count collection going forward. So go ahead and shoot me your information if you're interested, I will add it to the list.

Next week we'll be doing this same thing. So you don't need to attend if you got all your questions answered now. But I will be here again for those who might not have been able to attend. If you have any other questions, feel free to pop in and let me know here or just contact me, also, individually, if you need to.

Sorry, Robert, for making your brain hurt. [LAUGHS]

I'm hoping that it's helpful to you, not overwhelming. All right, well, I appreciate you all coming. I do want to just be there as a resource for you, and hope this file is helpful to you. I do look forward to talking with you if you want to talk individually about your own particular situation. We'll just keep working and progressively make things better. All right. Thank you all for coming. Bye-bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]