

Introduction



IDEA DATA
CENTER

Collect, Report, Analyze, and
Use High-Quality Part B Data



Why an LEA Data Processes Toolkit?

There is a continuous need for state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) to collect and report comprehensive, high-quality data and ensure they report data accurately and on time. The customizable IDC *LEA Data Processes Toolkit* is a new resource that can support improved decisionmaking about children and youth with disabilities. States and LEAs can use the toolkit to help ensure data are of high quality and processes are clearly defined and documented, while providing data staff a map for documenting data processes within LEAs.

Benefits to using the LEA Data Processes Toolkit

High-quality state data is dependent on high-quality local data. Using this toolkit to create protocols for local data collections will provide opportunities for states to collaborate with LEAs in establishing a well-managed process for data collection, analysis, and submission. In addition, states and LEAs can use the toolkit to create and maintain a culture of high-quality data, establish and support consistent practices that produce valid and reliable data, and build the capacity of data staff at the LEA level.

Establishing a well-managed data process

Having a well-managed data process can

- increase the accuracy and validity of the data from the LEA;
- ensure required submissions are completed on time at the LEA level;
- assist in larger conversations regarding the importance of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and using high-quality data; and
- enhance communications among staff within an LEA.

How to complete these protocols

IDC strongly recommends a team approach and collaboration between state and LEA staff to complete the protocols. Here are some suggested staff, if available, who can help complete these protocols:

- LEA director of special education;
- LEA data managers (special education and general education);
- LEA data governance coordinator;
- IT staff;
- other data staff (e.g. assessment); and
- other local staff as appropriate

Documenting local data processes requires dedicated time, effort, and commitment. IDC has specialized technical assistance (TA) providers available who can facilitate the process with your state.

Child Count and Educational Environments



IDEA DATA
CENTER

Collect, Report, Analyze, and
Use High-Quality Part B Data



LEA Name:

Date:

Date Updated:

Essential Elements

Data Collection Name:¹ Reference the name the collection is known by in the LEA. For accuracy of communication throughout the LEA, reference each data collection by only one name.

Child Count Date and Required Data Containing Unduplicated Counts of Children and Educational Environments

SEA Child Count Date:

Data containing unduplicated counts of children:

- Receiving services on the child count date and are ages 5 (in kindergarten) through 21
- Receiving services on the child count date and are ages 3 through 5 (and not in kindergarten)

Data containing unduplicated counts of educational environments:²

- Inside regular class 80% or more of the day
- Inside regular class 40% through 79% of the day
- Inside regular class less than 40% of the day
- Residential facility
- Homebound/Hospital
- Correctional facilities
- Parentally placed in private schools
- Separate school

¹ **Data Collection Name:** This template is customizable and users should update it to reflect the language used within the state. Local education agencies may be referred to as LEAs, districts, etc.

² **Child Count Date and Required Data Containing Unduplicated Counts of Children and Educational Environments:** Refer to the SEA's policies and procedures document for definitions of these educational environments.

Data Collection Protocol—Child Count and Educational Environments

Data Staff:³ Provide titles and names, contact information, department, and any notes for persons responsible for collection, validation, and submission. If there are multiple parties responsible or involved in the process, list them all (e.g., special education coordinator/case manager, special education data manager, district data manager).

Data Collection Levels: These are the levels at which the LEA collects and submits data to the SEA.

- Counts at the individual student and aggregate levels
- Counts by student demographics (race/ethnicity, gender, disability, age, educational environment, and English learner status)
- Counts at the school and LEA levels
- Other _____

LEA Submission Schedule: Provide a list of dates when the data collection period opens, when data are due to the LEA from the school, and when the LEA pulls data after the collection closes.

³ **Data Staff:** When reviewing processes and procedures for Child Count and Educational Environments data collection and submission, include all departments associated with this collection. This often includes data and special education personnel and other school coordinators.

Data Collection Protocol—Child Count and Educational Environments

Processes

Collection: Provide detailed information about how the LEA pulls data from the database, how schools submit data to the LEA, etc., including the titles of persons responsible.

Data Validation:⁴ Describe the data cleaning processes the LEA uses to prepare these data for submission.

Internal Approval Process:⁵ Describe any internal approval processes (e.g., who must sign off and timelines) and dates relative to these data being certified by the LEA (e.g., via online certification, hard copy signature, electronic signature).

Submission:⁶ Describe the process for generating and submitting the data to the SEA.

Responding to State Request for Information About Discrepancies in Data: Describe how your LEA responds to the SEA's requests for information about inconsistent or incomplete data submissions. Identify the position of the lead contact for handling this request and describe how the request is communicated to the school level. Include information regarding the timeline for responding.

Data Analysis:⁷ Describe the process for data analysis.

⁴ Data Validation:

- Confirm sums of all category sets and subtotals reported equal to the education unit total at each level of the Child Count files.
- Compare year-to-year LEA and school counts to identify possible data quality issues.
- Check master file for duplicate records. Verify correct association of student records with schools.

⁵ Internal Approval Process:

- Describe any internal LEA process the LEA uses or requires to certify these data as final. This might include the data manager sharing/vetting data with other staff, such as the special education director, special education coordinator, etc.

⁶ Submission:

- Describe where and how the LEA stores or accesses a copy of the submitted Child Count and Educational Environments file(s) for future reference.

⁷ Data Analysis:

- Review data year to year, looking for patterns districtwide and within schools, outliers, information about whether targets are met or not met, and slippage.



Data Collection Protocol—Child Count and Educational Environments

Data Use: Record any strategies and procedures for the LEA or schools to use Child Count and Educational Environments data (e.g., for professional development, student supports, systems improvement). Describe how the LEA engages with the schools to help them utilize data for school improvement.

Data Governance: Describe the process for reviewing potential or actual future changes to the data collection and associated requirements.

Blank Heading: Use this row for additional topics. Create new heading rows as needed.