

Checklist to Identify and Address SSIP Data Quality Issues

Data quality issues in a state’s State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) can undermine a state’s ability to evaluate progress and make needed adjustments to the plan. This can, ultimately, affect the state’s ability to create better outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Identifying and resolving data quality issues can be tricky, but this checklist can help. Based on six key principles of high-quality data outlined in [Working Principles of High-Quality IDEA Data](#), using this checklist can help a state identify data quality issues that may exist in its SSIP work, specify the potential consequences of those issues, and determine actions to address issues the state may find. Anyone involved in a state’s SSIP work can use this checklist to help identify and address SSIP data quality issues.

When using this tool, ask yourself one of the questions below about your SSIP work. Then review the associated consequences to understand how that lack of high-quality data could affect your SSIP work. Finally, look at the actions to learn how you could address that particular data quality issue.

Questions	Consequences	Actions
Timely data are current per a specific period of time		
Are your data up to date for the relevant period of SSIP activities?	You may not have data in time for SPP/APR reporting.	Change data collection or reporting timeline to capture appropriate data effectively.
Do you collect data at intervals that allow assessment of SSIP progress?	You may be unable to determine if SSIP activities are effective in time to make changes.	Change data collection or analysis process to make data available in time for effective changes.
Accurate data are consistent across time, methods, and locations (reliable) and represent what they intend to measure (valid)		
Do your evaluation measures align with the theory of action, and are they reliable and valid?	Your measures may not give you the information you need to evaluate your SSIP.	Review your theory of action and evaluation plan to make sure that evaluation measures are aligned, reliable, and valid.
Do you have effective processes for accurate data collection, entry, verification, and storage?	Errors may impair your results and conclusions.	Document, review, and, if necessary, improve all data collection and management processes to ensure accuracy at each step.
Are your analysis methods appropriate for the type of data you are gathering and the questions you are asking?	Inappropriate analysis methods could lead to the wrong conclusions.	Consult with an evaluator or IDC State Liaison to determine if your analysis methods are suitable.

Questions	Consequences	Actions
Complete data represent the expected population and subgroups		
Are you collecting data at the relevant levels of student, family, provider, district, or state?	You may not have the data you need.	Examine your data to make sure that data you need are not missing and that you have data on the levels that you need for your evaluation.
Are data representative of the groups exposed to the coherent improvement strategies?	You may not have data on subgroups of interest to know how the SSIP is working for them.	Carefully compare your target population to the data you are collecting to make sure that the data represent all groups in which you are interested.
Secure data are collected and stored with due consideration to maintaining confidentiality and with electronic and physical protections consistent with the sensitivity of the data		
Are you collecting, managing, storing, transmitting, using, reporting, and destroying your SSIP data in ways that preserve privacy and confidentiality?	Insecure data could threaten the privacy of current evaluation participants and cause potential future participants to hesitate to share data.	Examine your data processes to make sure that each step is secure.
Do you have appropriate data sharing agreements with third parties, such as external evaluators?	Without data sharing agreements, you cannot be confident that all third parties will adhere to security procedures.	Obtain signed data sharing or data use agreements with all parties who have access to the data.
Accessible data are readily available in formats that are understandable, user-friendly, and practical		
Are you sharing evaluation data with stakeholders on an ongoing basis and in a way that is user-friendly?	Stakeholders will not be able to provide thoughtful, informed input on the SSIP.	Engage meaningfully with stakeholders and provide ample opportunity for questions and discussion so they gain a clear understanding of the data.
Are the SSIP data available to state decisionmakers in formats they can use?	Decisionmakers will not be able to consider information they need to make decisions about the SSIP.	Provide data in easy-to-understand formats, including reports and data displays. Communicate with state decisionmakers about their understanding or need for additional information or explanation.

Questions	Consequences	Actions
Usable data support decisionmaking for sound management, strong governance, and improvement of results for children and youth with disabilities and their families		
Do your data allow comprehensive analyses to assess progress toward achieving intended improvements, including building infrastructure, improving implementation fidelity, and achieving short-term and intermediate outcomes necessary for achieving the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)?	You will not be able to assess your progress effectively.	Make sure that you have all the necessary data to evaluate progress, including data on infrastructure, implementation fidelity, and all outcomes.
Do your data meaningfully inform about next steps in the SSIP implementation?	You will not know whether you need to make changes or continue your existing SSIP activities.	Review data periodically with state staff and stakeholders to ensure that usable data continuously inform decisionmaking.

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