

Child Indicator Data Quality

1. Overarching goal=data that inform program practices

- The purpose of the outcomes data is to improve programs for children and families
- But you can't use data for program improvement decisions until you know the data are good
- Good quality data are those that are valid and representative

2. Evidence, Inference, Action

- Evidence is the numbers
- Inference is the interpretation of the numbers
- Action is what should be done, based on interpretation of the numbers
 - First – data improvement
 - Then – program improvement

3. Improving data quality

- Training and communication
- TA for data providers
- Data analysis

4. Data analysis as a quality check

- Look at the aggregated data
- Look for validity of data – sensible patterns
 - Should NOT see wild variation across programs
 - SHOULD see variations for different kinds of kids, such as by disability category
- Look for representativeness of data -- program data must match the program it represents in terms of
 - Geography
 - Demographics
 - Types of disabilities and delays
 - Length of time in services

5. Data validity 'red flags'

- The n is too small
- The overall pattern is not what you would expect

6. Data representativeness 'red flags'

- Not all areas of the program are included in the data
- Not all types of families are represented
- Not all types of children are represented (disability, length of stay, etc.)

7. What to do when you find 'red flags'

- Work with data collectors to understand and explain why the data look like they do
- If red flags can be explained by data collection problems
 - provide training and TA on data collection
 - institute ongoing QA measures at various levels
- If variations are NOT due to data quality (no red flags) consider program effectiveness and improvement