# Deafblind Child Count: Confidentiality and Consistency

Carlie Rhoads, NCDB Data and Evaluation Manager

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Hi, my name is Carlie Rhoads. I’m NCDB’s Data and Evaluation Manager. I oversee managing, cleaning, aggregating, and reporting the national child count data.

Every year, I receive many questions from state deafblind projects about collecting and reporting their child count data. In this video, I’ll share 10 tips that cover some of the most common questions and help ensure that NCDB and the state projects create the most accurate and consistent national child count possible.

Tip number 1 relates to confidentiality: It is absolutely critical to store your child count files and data in a secure location. And when you submit your count to NCDB, be sure that all identifying information has been removed. In other words, NCDB should not be able to see or read anything that can identify a child or their family, such as names or locations. This tip is so important, that the very last prompt you see before you click submit on the submission portal requires you to certify that all identifiable information has been removed.

And I am now going to go to that place on the website to show you where that certification is.

This is where the submission portal is located on NCDBs website. If you go to the child count management page, that is where the submission portal is located. If you have submitted the child count previously, this should be familiar to you. Once you scroll down after you have filled out everything for submitting your data as well as uploading your files, this is where the last important thing is where you're certifying all of your personally identifiable information has been taken out of your file. It says, by clicking on the button marked Submit Child Count Data below, I am verifying that I am not including personally identifiable information, such as first name, last name, within the child count data files. I further verify I am authorized to access, obtain, upload, and or discuss child count information on behalf of the deafblind project. I understand this data will be aggregated with other deafblind State project data to create a national deafblind child count report that will be used to improve outcomes for children who are deafblind. You then have to mark that you agree to these terms before you hit the submit button.

Tip number 2: Use consistent child numbers. These numbers should not change from year to year for children who are on your census for multiple years. If we are consistent about this, we can track data for specific children for years at a time.

Tip number 3: Update the information for each child every year. We cannot make assumptions about data for any child. Be sure to check the accuracy of the information you have for each child and update anything that has changed.

Tip number 4 builds on the last tip and involves the early intervention setting and educational environment categories. These are the categories most likely to have errors in the files NCDB receives and thus require correction and resubmission. Often when a child transitions to a new setting or environment, data about them is lost or not confirmed. So make sure to double check this during data collection and update the child’s file.

Tip number 5: Pay careful attention to when a child is transitioning, such as from Part C to Part B, or is exiting Part B. Update all of the requisite categories to reflect the transition. For example, when a child transitions from Part C to Part B, update the Part C Exiting code.

Tip number 6: Take careful note when NCDB sends updates or changes to the child count codes or submission process. Notifications such as these are sent via email and Basecamp. Changes typically occur in the early summer and we always include an updated codebook. You can also access the codebook on the Child Count Management page on NCDB’s website.

Tip number 7: Know the difference between codes 777, 888, and 999. Let’s talk about code 999 first. It’s used for unknown or missing data. So, be sure to enter code 999 for situations like that.

Now let’s discuss codes 777 and 888. 777 means not applicable. A 777 code is the correct choice when the child has, for example, aged out of part C, so the Part C codes no longer apply.

An 888 code means a child is not served or reported under Part C or B. So, for example, when a child is of age for those categories but is not receiving services for whatever reason, such as by parent request, use the 888 code. Please note that if a child is being homeschooled and is not receiving part B services, you would use the code 621.

Tip number 8: Review the Important Notes section of the codebook before submitting your child count file. This will help you avoid making any of the common mistakes that often result in your having to revise and resubmit a file.

I will now share my screen and show you where in the code book the important note section is located. This is the code book for the year 2024. But the layout and outline of the sections of each codebook will not differ from year to year. So, there will always be the submission details, the definition of deafblindness, and then the important notes section, which is located under instructional codebook. Always make sure to look at the important notes to see what you need to know that is new for the upcoming year.

Tip number 9: Be thoughtful about the intervener services category. Quite often, a code 2 (or “no”) is selected when a child does not have an intervener. This is sometimes the incorrect code. A “no” code should only be selected if the topic of intervener services was specifically discussed for a child and a decision was made that the child will not have an intervener. Otherwise, a code of 777 for not applicable should be used.

The final tip, number 10, is to always review your file carefully before you submit it via the submission portal. Don’t just download a file and assume everything is correct. When you click on the submit button, you are certifying that you have checked your file, that everything is as accurate as possible, and that identifying information has been removed. This is a crucial step. Do not forget to review!

I hope these tips are helpful as you prepare your project’s child count file. If you ever have a question or need assistance, I am always very happy to provide support. You can reach me via email at crhoads@helenkeller.org. I also have weekly office hours on Google Meet on Thursdays at 2 p.m. eastern. The Google Meet link is located on the Child Count Management webpage.

Thank you for your patience and careful attention. Together, we can continue working towards an accurate and consistent national child count.

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