
Examples of Best Practices Regarding Data Entry

Physical Environment

1. Position work space to minimize visual, traffic, and other distractions.
2. Position desks to maximize privacy of materials on work surfaces.
3. Make sure computer screens do not face public areas.
4. Provide means for securing computer access (e.g., requiring passwords) and paper forms (e.g., providing locking file cabinets). [See *Examples of Data Security Best Practices* in the *Security and Confidentiality* lesson.]

Staff-Level Practices and Procedures

1. Maintain appropriate and up-to-date software and hardware.
2. Set aside certain times to focus on critical data entry.
3. Make sure all data-entry staff have access to and understanding of documentation regarding data-entry and data-correction procedures, including protocols for handling exceptions (e.g., when parent won't provide complete information).
4. Include basic edit checks in software.
5. Checking data against authoritative source of data (e.g., original paper forms).
6. Provide data-entry reference sheet based on data dictionary.
7. Provide detailed documentation specific to software.
8. Train data entry staff regarding procedures, timelines, etc.

School/District-Level Practices and Procedures

1. Establish data-entry timeline.
2. Provide clear and frequent communication and expectations w/in building and district.
3. Establish a help desk with regard to both the technology and the business rules of data entry.
4. Foster "Team" approach/effort for collection/reporting.
5. Offer leadership commitment to timeline, project plan, and resource allocation for data entry.
6. Offer on-going professional development of office staff to ensure understanding of data-entry impact, policies, and procedures.
7. Run periodic data verification reports.
8. Review business rules.
9. Provide ongoing training (e.g., best practices, data-elements updates, timelines, procedural changes, etc.) to all appropriate staff
10. Provide a supportive and safe environment (establish mentor – at whatever appropriate level) for asking questions and resolving issues.
11. Provide periodic review of business processes and procedures.
12. Establish a procedure for continuous-improvement planning.