

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).

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. Checking data against authoritative source of data (e.g., original paper forms).
5. Provide data-entry reference sheet based on data dictionary.
6. Provide detailed documentation specific to software.
7. Train data entry staff regarding procedures for data entry, checking data, timelines, etc.

School/District-Level Practices and Procedures

1. Provide a supportive and safe environment: establish mentor – at whatever appropriate level - for asking questions and resolving issues.
2. Establish data-entry timeline.
3. Provide clear and frequent communication and expectations w/in building and district.
4. Establish a list of resources to provide help with software, hardware, and data issues.
5. Foster a “Team” approach.
6. Offer leadership commitment to timeline, project plan, and resource allocation for data entry.
7. Offer on-going professional development of office staff to ensure understanding of data-entry impact, policies, and procedures.
8. Run periodic data verification reports.
9. Provide ongoing training (e.g., best practices, data-elements updates, timelines, procedural changes, etc.) to all appropriate staff
10. Establish a procedure for continuous-improvement planning.