



Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 1

February 2012

Welcome Nancy Rea



IDEA Data & Research welcomes Nancy Rea to our staff as an

Administrative Specialist III. Nancy came to the U of A Systems in 2004 at The Cooperative Extension Service Federal Credit Union. She transferred to UALR working in Computer Science, Chancellors Office and Center for Innovation and Commercialization. Once again, Welcome Nancy!

Providing Parents/Guardians the Opportunity to Participate in the Family Survey is a Requirement!!

In accordance with federal reporting requirements LEAs **MUST** provide parents/guardians the opportunity to participate in the family survey. Failure to document the offer to participate will result in a non-compliance citation and a corrective action plan (CAP) when monitored.

While the 2009-10 Annual Performance Report revealed a low response rate for the family survey, I am happy to announce a significant increase in the number of surveys returned in the 2010-11 school year. However, we still have much room for improvement .

The response rate is approximately 30% of the 3-21 child count. This is the same rate one would expect if surveys were being mailed to all parents. If all parents are being offered the opportunity to answer the survey for each child at annual review conference or parent teacher conferences then one would expect to have a much higher response rate.

So there are concerns. First, LEAs are not offering parents the opportunity to participate each school year. Second, LEAs are not submitting the scan forms to IDEA Data & Research for processing by the deadline. Third, LEAs are not keying photo copies of the survey into the web-based system prior to the fiscal year rollover on July 15th.

Family survey scan forms **MUST** be received no later than June 30th to be included in the data collection for that school year. The IDEA Data & Research Office then spends an additional 2-4 weeks preparing the surveys for UALR Computing Services to begin scanning the thousands of surveys. Surveys not received by the June 30th deadline are processed for the following year.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1	Welcome New Staff/- Family Survey Information
2	Family Survey - Strategies/reminders
3	Stats Corner
4	Professional Development Opportunities
4	Data Quiz
5	General Information
6	Recipe

Family Survey – Strategies

LEAs with high response rates on the family surveys implement some or all of the following strategies for improving response rates. The most important strategy is to communicate with parents and staff.

Communication is KEY:

Communicate with parents/guardians as to why the survey is being conducted. The LEA staff should:

- inform parents that the survey is part of a federal data collection requiring LEAs to provide parents/guardians the opportunity to participate in the survey;
- inform parents how important their answers are for the improvement of services to children with disabilities;
- review the survey format with the parents; and
- discuss any questions on the survey believed to be unclear.

Strategies with Staff

Be proactive:

Probably the single most important tip we can give is to actively monitor response rates within your district and take measures to address low rates. Some districts discuss their Family Survey Response Rates (RR) in formal meetings, others distribute memorandums, and still others have implemented competitions between and/or within districts to reward those with highest RR's.

Communicate expectations:

Assuming you have followed step 1, it is crucial to communicate your expectations for improving response rates to the staff involved in distributing these surveys.

The introduction of accountability measures will not be effective if communication is poor. For example, districts requesting many surveys but with very low response rates may be experiencing the results of poorly communicated expectations.

Incorporate into annual conference:

The most logical time to distribute these surveys is during the annual conference. All districts we spoke with are utilizing this dedicated "face time" to distribute their family surveys.

Note: We strongly suggest that you distribute surveys face-to-face. Historically, response rates for surveys mailed to the recipients are very low, and distribution of the survey through the student is unlikely to be reliably effective.

Consider in-house data entry:

Some districts have internalized the data entry process by utilizing in-house staff to enter responses to Family Surveys into the online system (Link: [Online Family Surveys](#)). This method ensures that surveys do not get damaged or lost during transit through the Postal system.

Note: This method still requires your staff to maintain confidentiality of results as well as staff time to enter responses into the system.

Use all opportunities to make contact with parents:

Depending upon your district's methods, there may be multiple opportunities to distribute the Family Survey during the annual conference. One district distributes the survey while parents are waiting to enter the conference room. Others distribute the survey at the end of the conference. Still others distribute the survey at parent teacher conferences for parents who do not attend the scheduled annual conference.

Family Surveys – Reminders

- Only use the family surveys with six racial/ethnic categories. If your Scantron® forms do not include six racial/ethnic categories please request current forms and discard the previous forms. Remember that surveys submitted to IDEA for processing must be on **original Scantron® forms** and must be completed in **pencil**.
- There are four areas which an LEA should fill out prior to giving the survey to the parent if possible — LEA Number, Building Code or Resident LEA Number, Race/Ethnicity (select all that apply), and Disability. ***Note: The corresponding bubbles MUST be filled in under the LEA Number. Failure to fill in the bubbles can result in a noncompliance for Indicator 20.**
- Fill out the LEA number on each survey. Surveys sent to districts are tracked by district and survey number. A LEA Supervisor with more than one district could in error give one district's surveys to another. Without the LEA number on the survey the original district would get the credit not the actual district who had the survey filled out.
- If you want survey reports at the building level (school age) or by resident LEA (early childhood) please be sure to fill in that portion of the survey form and send a request to jafields@ualr.edu
- If an LEA prints the survey from the internet or photo copies a scan form, the LEA is responsible for entering the survey results into the online survey form.
- Photo copied forms sent to the IDEA Data & Research Office will be returned to the LEA.
- Document the offering of the family survey during the Annual Review Conference or any other time. Be sure that the documentation has
 - the date the survey opportunity was provided;
 - the method of delivery (face-to-face (scan form, photo copy, internet access, mail); and
 - whether or not the parent accepted the opportunity.
- Family survey passcodes are different from MySped Resource passwords. To request your family survey passcodes send an email to jafields@ualr.edu.

To request scan forms from the IDEA Data & Research Office - send an email to scwade@ualr.edu. Please include the following in your email:

1. District LEA Numbers
2. Type of survey requested Early Childhood or School Age (EC or SA)
3. Number of surveys requesting
4. Name of the requestor
5. Mailing Address



Know About Your Data

You are welcome to contact Jean Chen, Ph.D., research statistician, at cychen@ualr.edu or 501-683-7218 for statistical analysis and suggestions on the topics for the next issue.



Happy New Year and welcome to the Stats Corner! In this issue, we will review some statistical data concepts that provide the necessary foundations for more specialized areas of statistical data analysis in our later issues.

There are two main types of data. First, **Qualitative variables** are the data values in non-numeric categories, such as blood type or gender. Second, **Quantitative variables** are the data values originated from counts or numerical measurements. A quantitative variable can be either *discrete* or *continuous*. Furthermore, four data measurement scales are classified and introduced below:

1. **Nominal data** - A set of data is said to be nominal if the values or observations belonging to it can be assigned a code in the form of a number where the numbers are simply labels. We can count but not order or measure nominal data. For example, marital status of an individual could be coded as Y if married, N if single; in a data set with gender variable, males could be coded as 0, females as 1.
2. **Ordinal data** (also called "Discrete Data") – Data values are categorical and may be ranked in some numerically meaningful way.
 - The *discrete* values or observations belonging to it are distinct and separate, i.e. they can be counted (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ...). For example, number of students receiving an "A" in a math class, the number of teachers in a statistics workshop, the number of schools in five miles of town, gender (male, female), or blood group (O, A, B, AB) is discrete data. Partial values do not exist in discrete data (a respondent cannot be three-quarters of a person, a blood type cannot be half O and half A).
 - A set of *ordinal* data can be ranked (or put in order) or have a rating scale attached. We can count and order, but not measure, ordinal data. The categories for an ordinal set of data have a natural order, for example, a group of students were asked to taste varieties of cookies and classify each cookie on a Likert rating scale of 1 to 5, representing strongly dislike, dislike, neutral, like, strongly like. A rating of 5 indicates more enjoyment than a rating of 4, so such data are ordinal. However, the distinction between neighboring points on the scale is not necessarily always the same. For instance, the difference in enjoyment expressed by giving a rating of 2 rather than 1 might be much less than the difference in enjoyment expressed by giving a rating of 4 rather than 3.

3. **Continuous data** - A set of continuous data may take on any value within a finite or infinite interval. We can count, order and measure continuous data. For example height, weight, temperature, salary, the time required to run a mile, the amount of fat in a hamburger, are all continuous variables.

- **Internal data** – data values are ranged in real interval, which can be as large as from negative infinity to positive infinity. The difference between two values are meaningful, however, the ratio of two interval data is not meaningful. The data has no natural "0" such as temperature. 100 degrees is hotter than 50 degree, but not twice as hot.
- **Ratio data** – Both difference and ratio of two values are meaningful. The data has a natural "0" such as weight. 100 pounds is heavy than 50 pounds and is twice as heavy.

A good rule of thumb is that physically observable counting measures use **discrete** variables (number of students, number of cars, number of buildings), physically measureable results generally use continuous variables (height, weight, length, size, time), classification measures use data that is both **categorical and discrete** (number of students that have blood type O, number of cars that are black), and opinion surveys generally use **nominal data and/or ordinal data** (level of satisfaction with services, race, and marital status). When trying to decide between using **discrete and continuous variables**, ask ourselves if it is possible to have a non-integer value. Can we measure 1.5 inches in length? Yes. Can we have 1.5 cars? No. When trying to decide between categorical, nominal, and ordinal data, ask ourselves what is most important. If simply determining how many people choose each outcome in a multiple choice situation is desired, then **categorical** is the best way to represent the results. When dealing with a binary state (yes or no), **nominal data** is the best choice. When dealing with data that is difficult that measure objectively (i.e. opinions), **ordinal data** is the best choice. Trying to use the wrong type of data in a statistical analysis can lead to confusion or invalid results.

Statistics is the science of collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting data which comes from facts, observations, or information. In order to make decisions, statistics helps us organize numerical information in the form of tables, graphs, and charts, to understand statistical techniques underlying decisions that affect our lives and well-being, and to make informed decisions. Graphs and charts can present information visually. Graphical techniques will be introduced in our later issues.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Computer Lab Data Entry Training:

Current APSCN system

April 25 - Early Childhood (co-ops; districts)

April 26 - DDS Centers

May 15 & 16 - School Age

eSchool System

May 17 - eSchool (PCSSD, SIATech & Pine Bluff Lighthouse **ONLY**)

Registration is through Survey Monkey at the following link:

[April/May 2012 Training Registration](#)

Computer Lab Data Entry Training:

(NEW Staff Only)

September 4 - DDS Centers (co-ops; districts)

September 5 & 6 - School Age

September 7 - Early Childhood

Registration is through Survey Monkey at the following link:

[September 2012 Training Registration](#)



WATCH OUT FOR THE COMMISSIONER'S MEMO FOR THE CYCLE 7 REPORTING WEBINARS

Have questions about training?

Contact: Tammy Garrison

tsgarrison@ualr.edu

501.683.7219

DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWERS?

Can you name the APR Indicators in Numeric Order?

Indicator 1 _____	Indicator 11 _____
Indicator 2 _____	Indicator 12 _____
Indicator 3 _____	Indicator 13 _____
Indicator 4 _____	Indicator 14 _____
Indicator 5 _____	Indicator 15 _____
Indicator 6 _____	Indicator 16 _____
Indicator 7 _____	Indicator 17 _____
Indicator 8 _____	Indicator 18 _____
Indicator 9 _____	Indicator 19 _____
Indicator 10 _____	Indicator 20 _____

- A. Timely and Accurate Reporting
- B. Graduation
- C. Early Childhood Outcomes
- D. School Age LRE
- E. Secondary Transition
- F. General Supervision
- G. Disproportionality—Identification
- H. Drop Out
- I. Statewide Assessment
- J. Discipline
- K. Early Childhood LRE
- L. Resolution Sessions
- M. Post School Outcomes
- N. Due Process Hearing Timelines
- O. Family Outcomes
- P. Disproportionality—Disability Category
- Q. Child Find—Timely Evaluation
- R. Early Childhood Transition
- S. Complaints Timelines
- T. Mediation

Can you align the indicators with the data source?

Note: Some sources have more than one use

Child Count _____
Subset of District-wide data _____
Monitoring _____
Complaints _____
Hearings _____
NORMES _____
Referral Tracking _____
Early Childhood Exits _____
All Special Education Data sources _____
Survey of students one-year after high school _____
Families _____
UALR School of Law _____

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

IDEA DATA & RESEARCH OFFICE

(501) 683-7219

IF YOU NEED TRAINING IN APSCN APPLICATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT TAMMY GARRISON AT THE NUMBER ABOVE OR EMAIL HER AT TSGARRISON@UALR.EDU TO REQUEST A SPOT ON THE TRAINING WAITING LIST. ONCE WE HAVE ENOUGH INDIVIDUALS ON THE LIST, WE WILL THEN SCHEDULE A TRAINING AT APSCN IN LITTLE ROCK. MAKE SURE TO GIVE US THE NAMES OF THE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PLACED ON THE LIST, EMAIL AND MAILING ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS, AND LEA NAME AND NUMBER.

DIS/APSCN

(501) 682-HELP (4357) OPTION 3

1-800-435-7989 OPTION 3

DIS.CallCenter@arkansas.gov (24 hour email)

SPECIAL EDUCATION HOME PAGE

[HTTP://ARKSPED.K12.AR.US](http://arksped.k12.ar.us)

IMPORTANT LINKS FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATION HOME PAGE:

DATA AND RESEARCH

LINKS TO THE IDEA HOMEPAGE WHERE YOU CAN FIND DATA DICTIONARIES, USER GUIDES, WEB-EX TRAINING NOTES, THE LEA ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT, FOCUS MONITORING PROFILES, CONTACT INFORMATION, AND MUCH MORE. PLEASE VISIT REGULARLY AS WE ARE ALWAYS ADDING NEW INFORMATION.

MYSPEL RESOURCE

A SECURED WEBSITE WHERE DISTRICTS CAN REVIEW AND SUBMIT DATA TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SURVEYS

SCHOOL AGE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY OUTCOMES SURVEY,

AR-LEARN

[HTTP://WWW.ARLEARN.ORG](http://www.arlearn.org)

AED COMMISSIONER'S LINK

[HTTP://ADESHAREPOINT2.ARKANSAS.GOV/MEMOS/DEFAULT.ASPX](http://adesharepoint2.arkansas.gov/memos/default.aspx)
PLEASE CHECK THIS LINK REGULARLY FOR NEW UPDATES AND INFORMATION.

Just for Fun Recipe

Shepard's Pie

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/2 lbs. lean ground beef
- 1 cup frozen onions and bell peppers
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 1 bag frozen corn
- 1 bag frozen green peas
- 4 cups mashed potatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded casserole cheese blend
- salt and pepper to taste



DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
2. In skillet, cook beef over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until thoroughly cooked. Drain. Stir in frozen onions and bell peppers. Cook till soft. Stir in tomato sauce. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Spread meat mixture in bottom of 9 X 13 baking dish
4. Spread frozen corn over meat mixture followed by frozen green peas
5. Slowly cover peas with mash potatoes. The peas will stick to the potatoes and roll up on top if you are not careful.
6. Sprinkle casserole cheese blend over potatoes.
7. Bake 30-40 minutes until potatoes are lightly golden brown and cheese is melted.

You can:

1. Substitute the beef with chicken or sausage
2. Substitute the potatoes with rice