



CECIDS

Chicago Early Childhood
Integrated Data System

CECIDS Practice Resource

Business Analyst Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

A program-year cycle for learning, validating, classifying, confirming, and maintaining documentation

Program Year Definition: CECIDS uses August 1 – July 31 for this documentation cycle. Other initiatives should align the cycle to the reporting periods and operating rhythms of their sources.

Purpose

Provide a repeatable cycle for maintaining the documentation ecosystem so that structural information, program-year conditions, technical decisions, and unresolved questions are routed to the correct artifact. The function may be assigned to a business analyst, data steward, product owner, analyst, or cross-functional team.

Core Documentation Standard

- Data Dialogue Notes are working evidence, not authoritative documentation.
- The Fact Sheet holds relatively stable structural characteristics.
- The Annual Data Summary holds program-year changes, exceptions, and interpretation issues.
- The Yearly Overview holds the program-year operating picture.
- ETL and mapping documentation remains authoritative for technical implementation.

Mandatory Change Classification

Decision Standard: Before updating a governed artifact, classify what changed and how durable it is. Do not update the Fact Sheet simply because a change appeared during one program year.

Is this definitely happening in August—or still a possibility?	[Confirmed /anticipated / unresolved]
Is this August–July specific?	[Yes / No / Unclear]
Will this still matter three years from now?	[Yes / No / Unclear]
Did this change affect how analysts should read the data?	[Yes / No / Explain]

Phase 1 – Pre-Program Year Planning

Timing: May–July

- Surface anticipated changes before the next program year begins.
- Review prior-year carry-forward items and unresolved questions.
- Identify expected changes in programs, partners, reporting requirements, source systems, funding, or service delivery.
- Keep possibilities in working notes until implementation is confirmed.
- Coordinate with technical staff when anticipated changes may require mapping, ETL, or data-model changes.

Phase 2 – Program Year Launch Confirmation

Timing: August–October

- Confirm what actually launched at the start of the program year.
- Compare actual implementation with pre-year expectations.
- Update the Yearly Overview with the operating footprint active this year.
- Open or update the Annual Data Summary for confirmed year-specific changes.
- Update the Fact Sheet only when a change is confirmed as structural and durable.

Phase 3 – Mid-Year Stabilization & Data Reality Check

Timing: January–February

- Compare observed data with documented expectations.
- Use Data Dialogues and technical evidence to investigate unexpected patterns, new exceptions, or inconsistent field use.
- Confirm whether mapping or transformation logic changed and ensure technical documentation is versioned accordingly.
- Record material interpretation or comparability issues in the Annual Data Summary.
- Do not “clean up” history by rewriting prior program-year records.

Phase 4 – Year-End Close & Finalization

Timing: June–July

- Finalize the Annual Data Summary and Yearly Overview for the closing program year.
- Resolve or explicitly carry forward remaining questions and anticipated changes.
- Confirm that material technical changes are reflected in ETL / mapping documentation.
- Check that analysts have clear do / do not guidance where program-year conditions affect comparability.
- Preserve the finalized version and effective period of each governed artifact.

Fact Sheet Maintenance Rule

Practice Note: Do not update Fact Sheets annually by habit. Fact Sheets should be structurally validated every 2–3 years and updated sooner only when confirmed durable changes warrant it.

End-of-Cycle Checklist

- ☐ Annual Data Summary finalized for the program year.
- ☐ Yearly Overview reflects the programs, sites, and relationships active during the year.
- ☐ Structural changes have been confirmed before the Fact Sheet was changed.
- ☐ Technical changes are reflected in versioned ETL / mapping documentation.
- ☐ Unresolved issues and next-year questions are explicitly carried forward.
- ☐ Prior versions and effective dates are preserved.

Related CECIDS Resource: Documenting Integrated Early Childhood Data: An Introduction to the CECIDS Documentation Templates