

Overview of How to Run the CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators Syntax for Data Quality Checks and Observed Performance



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

Calculating observed performance of Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) statewide data indicators can help agencies explore and monitor performance on child safety and permanency outcomes. This document provides child welfare leaders, managers, and IT and data staff a high-level overview of how to run the SPSS syntax to calculate observed performance for an individual state on all or selected CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicators. While this overview outlines key steps and reminders, it is not intended to be an indepth guide to run the syntax. Step-by-step instructions to run the syntax and details about the indicators can be found in the "[Instructions and Tips for Running the CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators Syntax \(Instructions\)](#)."

The syntax files are provided by the Children's Bureau (CB) and are intended for use with Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) source files provided by the state.

Overview of How to Calculate Observed Performance

1. Make sure you have the correct software.

- Software requirements include:
 - IBM® SPSS® version 21.0 or higher
 - Python Essentials® for IBM SPSS® Statistics
 - SPSSINC Split Dataset and SPSSINC Process Files (using the SPSS drop down – Extensions\Extension Hub available when running SPSS)
 - Microsoft Excel 2007 or higher

2. Download and set up the CFSR Round 3 syntax revised zip folder and establish the subfolder and file structure.

- CB released the syntax and supporting files in a zip file ([CFSR_3_Indicator_Syntax.zip file](#)) that you can unzip and save.
- The zip folder includes data quality syntax files and five observed performance syntax files that produce observed performance calculations for the seven data indicators.
- See specific guidance on downloading and storing the zip file in the [Instructions](#) (pp. 2-3).

3. Prepare the files.

- **Define the cohort of interest.** For each indicator, specify a 12-month cohort of children. Some indicators require that sufficient time has passed to observe the outcome, so the 12-month period differs across indicators.
- **Save the required data files.** See the [Instructions](#) (pp. 5-6) for information on files needed from AFCARS and NCANDS and related considerations. In order to run the syntax for all CFSR Round 3 Statewide Data Indicators and time periods, 11 consecutive AFCARS submissions and 4 corresponding NCANDS submissions are needed.

- If you are working to replicate values reported in CB-distributed documents, use the files that were submitted to CB for that timeframe.

4. Prepare and run the syntax.

- **Confirm the file handle path.**
 - If the folders and subfolders extracted from the zip folder were saved to “C:\CFSR 3,” then no action is needed. If they are located elsewhere, then the “Root_FH” line must be changed to the correct path.
- **Create source data files and run the data quality (DQ) syntax.**
 - The “CFSR 3 Indicator Calculation Syntax” folder contains DQ files to create properly formatted source data and run the necessary DQ tests.
 - Once you have set up the files as described in the [Instructions](#) (pp. 4–5), you are ready to check your AFCARS or NCANDS data for missing or out-of-range values that could affect the calculations (see [Instructions](#) pp. 7–8).
- **Run the observed performance syntax for the desired data indicators.**
 - States can run data for one or all of the statewide data indicators for their particular state (see [Instructions](#) p. 8). They can be run in any order.
 - Only CB can run the risk-standardized performance, which requires child-level data from all states and calculates performance after adjusting for risk through multilevel statistical modeling.

5. Use data to explore and monitor performance.

- Data and IT staff can work together with child welfare administrators and program managers to monitor and analyze statewide data indicators performance information as part of CFSR and Program Improvement Plan activities, federal and state strategic planning, and continuous quality improvement.

For More Information

Additional resources on CFSR statewide data indicators and syntax can be found at:

- **The Capacity Building Center for States’ CFSR Statewide Data Indicator webpage** at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/cfsr-data-syntax-toolkit>
- **CB’s Round 3 of the CFSRs webpage**, “Supporting Documents for CFSR 3 Statewide Data Indicators Syntax Revisions” subsection, at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews/round3>

Need Help?

If you have questions on running the CFSR Round 3 Syntax or other related issues, **contact the Capacity Building Center for States** through your [State Liaison](#) or at capacityinfo@icfi.com.

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