



# Data Quality: **Using Text Fields in the Pediatric NFR-CRS**

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Learning Together, Protecting Tomorrows



## Key Funding Partner

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# What to Expect Today

## April Office Hours

1

### Text Fields

Explore challenges and best practices.

2

### Narrative

Tips for writing a helpful narrative.

3

### Discussion

Summarize and answer questions.



# Text Fields

Challenges and Best Practices


# Text Fields

## What Are They?

13. Child had disability or chronic illness<sup>+</sup>?

Yes  No  U/K

If yes, check all that apply:

Physical/orthopedic, specify: 

Mental health/substance abuse, specify:

Cognitive/intellectual, specify:

Sensory, specify:

U/K

If yes, was child receiving Children's Special Health Care Needs services?  Yes  No  U/K

14. Were any siblings placed outside of the home prior to this child's death?


N/A  Yes, # \_\_\_\_\_  No  U/K

15. Child's health insurance, check all that apply<sup>+</sup>:

None  Medicaid  Indian Health Service  U/K

Private  State plan  Other, specify: 

16. Was the child up to date with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) immunization schedule<sup>+</sup>?

NA  Yes  No, specify:   U/K

17. Household income:

High  Medium  Low  U/K



# Text Fields

## Why Are They Important?



### There are many of them!

There are over 300 text fields in the Pediatric NFR-CRS.



### Opportunities

They provide the opportunity to include specific, helpful details.



### Challenges

They are the source of several persistent challenges.

# Text Fields

## Persistent Challenges

- Inclusion of personal identifying information in text fields.
- Overuse of the “other, specify” category when an appropriate response already exists.



# What Is Identifying Information?

## Why Should It Not Be Included?



### Identifying Information

Any names, addresses, dates, service providers (e.g., hospital names).



### Risks

Potential for identifying individual decedents.



### Data Use Agreements

The National Center is permitted to analyze and share de-identified data.



### Confidentiality Agreements

Inclusion of identifying information risks violating these agreements.



# Solutions

## What To Say Instead



### State Relationship

For example, use “the decedent,” “mother of infant,” “babysitter.”



### Use Generic Terms

Rather than naming locations, use “hospital,” “childcare center.”



### Provide A Time Frame

Instead of dates, say “a month before the death.”

# Other, Specify

## A Persistent Problem



### Categorical Variables

“Other” is included for use when there is no fit with a listed category.



### Use “Other” Infrequently

The listed categories cover most circumstances.



### Overuse Of “Other”

Some variables have excessively high proportions of “Other” selected.



### Examining The Specify Field

When examined, most responses entered in “Other” fit into a listed category.

# Why Is “Other” Selected Over An Existing Option?

## Some Possible Explanations And A Solution



### Precision

The listed category is not an exact fit.



### Distinction

Team wants to ensure specific details are captured.



### Solution

Choose appropriate category, provide more detail in Narrative (Section O).

# The Problem With The Overuse Of “Other”

## Why Is This Important?



### Misclassification

Category numbers are not accurate.



### Loss of Information

Details in the “Specify” field may be missed if it is not examined.



### Data Analysis Challenge

Re-categorizing “Other” into an existing category is time consuming.



# Some Examples

Of “Other, Specify” Fields

# G6. Primary Cause Of Death

## From an External Cause of Injury

From an injury cause	Frequency	Percent
MV	26844	26.6
Fire	3786	3.8
Drowning	9426	9.3
Asphyxia	22980	22.8
Bodily force or weapon	23924	23.7
Fall or crush	1973	2.0
Poisoning, overdose, acute intoxication	6287	6.2
Undetermined	1108	1.1
Other	3990	4.0
Missing/Unknown	631	0.6
Total	100949	100.0



# What Is In The “Other, Specify” Field

## Some Examples

- Child abuse.
- Sleep-related circumstances (such as co-sleeping).
- Asphyxia.





# What Should Be In “Other” Cause of Injury?

## A Few Retired Categories

- Hyperthermia/exposure.
- Animal or insect bites
- What else?

## H3b. Drowning Location

### Open Water/Pond

Location	Frequency	Percent
Open water/pond	3063	32.5
Pool, hot tub, spa	4252	45.1
Bath tub	1207	12.8
Other	656	7.0
Missing/Unknown	248	2.6
Total	9426	100.0





## What Does The Data Dictionary Say?

### Instructions For Drowning Location

“Type of location in which drowning occurred. Bathtub includes in home bathtubs with jets. Open water includes rivers, ponds, creeks, gravel pits, canals, in addition to lakes and oceans.”

# What Is In The “Other, Specify” Field?

## Lots Of Open Water

- Ponds.
- Rivers.
- Lakes.
- Creeks, drainage ditch, canals.
- Also: Pools, bathtubs, hot tubs.



# H3b. Drowning Location

## For Open Water, Place

Open water, place:	Frequency	Percent
Lake	1043	34.1
River	756	24.7
Pond	696	22.7
Creek	248	8.1
Ocean	135	4.4
Quarry or gravel pit	28	0.9
Canal/drainage ditch	126	4.1
Missing/Unknown	31	1.0
Total	3063	100.0



# What *Should* Be In “Other?”

## Example

- Washing machine.
- Retired responses:
  - Bucket.
  - Well/cistern/septic.
  - Toilet.



# Narrative

Tips For Writing A Helpful Narrative

# Strategies For Writing A Helpful Narrative

**Remember: Never Include Personal Identifying Information**



## Describe

Paint a picture of the circumstances.



## Explain

Share details not captured in other variables.



## Clarify

Document any conflicting information.

# Narrative Example #1

## Drowning

John Doe went missing at a lake swimming with friends. He was found unresponsive several minutes after seen entering the water.





# Narrative #1

## Same Circumstances, Better Narrative

Child was known to be a strong swimmer with no personal history of seizures or heart conditions. Child went to the lake with friends and jumped off the dock into water that was approximately 12 feet deep. The child did not resurface, and witnesses reported they thought their friend was playing a game with them and hiding under the dock, so they did not immediately look for them. After several minutes, another child dove in and found the deceased under water, approx. 8 feet from the dock. There were no waves or current, though the water was dark and cold (66F) as it was late spring.

# Narrative Example #2

## Motor Vehicle Crash

A teenager driver missed a curve in the road, left the roadway and struck a tree, causing blunt force trauma to the head. The teenager was deceased when emergency medical personnel arrived.





## Narrative #2

### Same Circumstances, Better Narrative

The decedent was an inexperienced driver who was driving home late at night after they fell asleep at a friend's house. The road was snow covered and slick. The crash was unwitnessed, but investigators could see that the child tried to brake but failed to navigate a curve and left the roadway, striking a tree. Toxicology was negative, except for caffeine, consistent with the friend's statement that they said they were going to have an energy drink to 'wake themselves up' on the ride home. No personal or family history of heart conditions or seizures. The child had been feeling well in the days leading up to the crash.



# Discussion

Questions?

# Office Hours

## 2026 Sessions from the National Center

Date	Topic
<b>5/19/2026</b>	Building Support for Fatality Review in Your Organization
<b>6/16/2026</b>	Prevention in Action: Community Action Teams
<b>7/21/2026</b>	Version 7.0 of the Pediatric NFR-CRS
<b>8/18/2026</b>	Involving People Who Have Experienced Loss in Fatality Review
<b>9/15/2026</b>	Documenting Deaths Related to Consumer Products
<b>10/20/2026</b>	Family Engagement Resources
<b>11/17/2026</b>	Working with Small Numbers to Catalyze Prevention
<b>12/15/2026</b>	Celebrating Success: Highlights of Prevention Successes

Visit <https://ncfrp.org/news/> to register (each session requires individual registration).

# Thank You for Your Time!

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