Center for Educational Performance and Information

Early Childhood Collections Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 5/27/2026

Questions:
Email: cepi@michigan.gov
Phone: 517-335-0505 x3

Table of Contents

Introduction....3
Frequently Asked Questions....3
1. What is the Michigan Student Data System?....3
2. I am new to my position, and I am responsible for submitting our early childhood data. HELP! Where do I start?....4
3. I have access to the MSDS application. Now what do I do?....4
4. What is my "entity code" and how do I find it?....4
5. Which MSDS collections do I submit Early Childhood data in?....4
6. What are the EC collections?....5
7. Which programs should I report in an EC collection?....5
8. Should I upload my students to the Early Childhood Collection or manually enter them into the collection?....6
9. What is a Unique Identification Code (UIC)? Why do I need one for my student?....6
10. How do I know if a student already has a UIC?....7
11. How do I get UICs for our students? What is "UIC Resolution" and how do I fix it? 7
12. Somebody took a child in our program's UIC to report for a collection. What now?....8
13. What happens when the same UIC is assigned to two different children or if one child is assigned to multiple UICs?....8
14. If I have a child in an early childhood program and a special education program concurrently. How do I submit them in MSDS?....8
15. Why am I getting a Data Quality email? Am I reporting incorrectly?....8
16. I want to remove MSDS access for a staff member who no longer works for my program. What do I do?....9
17. What if I forget to report a student?....9
18. Can I decertify my collection?....9
19. I accidentally reported a child in my collection that was never in my program. How do I undo my mistake?....9
20. Do I have to report program end dates?....10
Reports Help....11
More Questions?....11
Appendices....11
Appendix A: Collections, Components, Characteristics Visual....11
Appendix B: Submitting Your Data to MSDS....11

Introduction

This document includes frequently asked questions about the Michigan Student Data System Early Childhood Collections. A few additional CEPI resources to help answer your questions are:

- The CEPI website is where you will find a wealth of information on CEPI, the applications, the Michigan Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and more. A few examples are:
  - The MSDS web page has help and training documents for the MSDS application, as well as security forms and other helpful information.
  - The EC Collections web page, where specific information on the Early Childhood Collections is available. This includes XML (extensible markup language) schemas, summaries of XML schema changes from previous collections, and XML sample files.
- The MSDS Manual for the current school year, available on both web pages above (in the sub-bullets) under the "Manuals" tab. This includes information on all components and characteristics submitted in MSDS.
- The Collection Component Matrix for the current school year, available on both web pages above under the "Technical Material" tab. This matrix indicates which components are required, conditional, or optional for each collection, and has links to business rule documents for each component.

Frequently Asked Questions

The questions below were received by our Customer Support team and Business Analysts for the Early Childhood Collections.

1. What is the Michigan Student Data System?

MSDS is a web-based application used to securely collect student data for the State of Michigan. The data are used for state and federal reporting, as well as for allocations. MSDS interacts with other State of Michigan data applications to improve tracking, consistency and accountability, as well as reduce data duplication.

There are three C's that are important to know when it comes to MSDS (see Appendix A for visual):

1. Collection – A set of components submitted for a purpose within an identified timeframe.
2. Component - A group of related characteristics that are consistent across collections (e.g., the Submitting Entity Component is composed of the same characteristics in all collections). Collections may accept more than one occurrence of a specified component.
3. Characteristic - The term that MSDS uses to describe a single data element.

The current year's MSDS Collection Component Matrix shows the relationships between these three groups. It is available on the MSDS web page under Technical Material.

2. I am new to my position, and I am responsible for submitting our early childhood data. HELP! Where do I start?

Early childhood data are collected in CEPI's MSDS application. For a list of basic steps for submitting your data, see Appendix B.

Best Practice Tips for Logging In:

- Do not let others use your personal login. If it is found that an unauthorized user has accessed the system through your login, your account will be removed, and you will no longer be allowed access to MSDS.
- Keep your contact information current. If you are submitting data and we cannot contact you, this could impact the quality of your data and the longitudinal analysis of your students in the future. (For example, if we cannot send you data quality alerts.)

3. I have access to the MSDS application. Now what do I do?

Familiarize yourself with the application and resources. There are many documents on the CEPI website to support you in submitting your data. Visit the link to the MSDS web page, and look under the "Help and Training," "Manuals" and "Technical Material" ribbons near the bottom of the page. Also, the Early Childhood Collections web page has resources available to help you.

4. What is my "entity code" and how do I find it?

The entity code is an identification code assigned to entities in the Educational Entity Master application. This code serves as a unique identifier for entities of a specified Entity Type. For early childhood data reporting, the number will be either a 5-digit district code (for districts including ISDs, LEAs and PSAs) or a 9-digit agreement number (for Other Non-School Recipients). This code provides a link among all educational data collection applications in Michigan.

If you are unsure what your entity code is, the Educational Entity Master can be a useful tool. Type your entity name in the "EEM-Search" bar or perform a more detailed search by clicking "Search" on the left-hand side of the screen. You can perform different searches based on your entity's information. If you are still unsure, please contact CEPI customer support for assistance.

5. Which MSDS collections do I submit Early Childhood data in?

Within MSDS, the majority of Early Childhood data are collected in the EC collections. This includes EC program data, personal core data, and other information on services the child is receiving. EC special education services are collected in the MSDS General collections and will not be discussed in this document.

6. What are the EC collections?

The EC Collections in MSDS are used to gather educational data for children, birth to school-age. CEPI uses these data for various state and federal reports, and the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) uses these data to ensure that entities are meeting specific program compliance requirements. These data are used on the MI School Data portal, the State of Michigan's official public portal for education data, to help citizens, educators and policy makers make informed decisions that can lead to improved success for our students.

There are three MSDS EC Collection windows throughout the year. The Fall EC Collection is open from mid-September to mid-November, the Spring EC Collection is open from mid-December to mid-February, and the EC End-Of-Program Collection is open from mid-March to late-August. Each collection has a unique reporting period (a date range, for example 02/22/24-08/21/24). Children served at any point during a given collection reporting period should be entered in that collection.

For specific dates, please reference the CEPI Calendar on the CEPI website. Your data must be certified by the corresponding certification deadline to be submitted in a collection.

Data submitted in the Fall EC Collection are used with other MSDS data to report fall preschool student headcounts. The Michigan Department of Education uses the GSRP data reported in the fall and spring collections for funding purposes. Data collected in the EC Collections are also reported to the U.S. Department of Education.

7. Which programs should I report in an EC collection?

The programs reported in the EC Collections are:

- Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)
- GSRP/Head Start Blend
- Head Start
- Title I Preschool or Services
- Early Head Start
- Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership
- GSRP – Wait List
- Michigan Strong Beginnings
- Michigan Strong Beginnings – Wait List

The state encourages you to report all children, but you are only required to report children participating in the Great Start Readiness Program, GSRP/Head Start Blend, GSRP-Waitlist, Michigan Strong Beginnings, or Michigan Strong Beginnings-Waitlist. It is a federal expectation that children participating in a Head Start, Early Head Start or Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program be reported.

The Early Childhood program types available in MSDS are below. The program types are either required (R) or optional (O) to be reported in each of the collections.

Program Type	Fall	Spring	End of Program
Great Start Readiness Program	**R**	**R**	**R**
GSRP/Head Start Blend	**R**	**R**	**R**
Head Start	O	O	O
Title I Preschool or Services	O	O	O
Early Head Start	O	O	O
Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership	O	O	O
GSRP – Wait List	O	**R**	O
Michigan Strong Beginnings	**R**	**R**	**R**
Michigan Strong Beginnings – Wait List	**R**	**R**	**R**

8. Should I upload my students to the Early Childhood Collection or manually enter them into the collection?

This depends on three things: preference, the number of students you are entering, and the data system you have available locally. If you have a small number of children to enter, it may be easier to do it manually. If you have many students to enter and your student information system has an output compatible with MSDS, it may be easier to export the file from the SIS and upload it into MSDS.

If you have a SIS or vendor software that does not have a format compatible with MSDS, another option is to work within the Macomb ISD error checking tool known as "MISDmsds". The MISDmsds program incorporates all the error checking, field validation, and field interdependencies as written in CEPI's MSDS Manual. The MISDmsds program is used like a workbook to prepare your files to be submitted to the state and to verify your pupil membership. You can download the software for free and view helpful documentation on the MISDmsds Collection Program web page of the Macomb ISD website.

9. What is a Unique Identification Code (UIC)? Why do I need one for my student?

UICs are distinct, state-assigned, ten-digit codes used to identify a student. Public schools in Michigan are required to have UICs for all students. Once a student has been assigned a UIC, school administrators or individuals authorized to act on behalf of schools may submit student data for state reporting needs.

The UIC links records across multiple school districts and time periods to a single student. Consequently, UICs make it possible to analyze educational outcomes for students as they progress through the school system.

CEPI is the Michigan agency responsible for maintaining student UIC information.

10. How do I know if a student already has a UIC?

There are two ways of finding out this information: The Student Search tool and the Request for UIC Collection, both in MSDS.

Student Search: This method works well when you have a few students. From the MSDS home screen, click the "Search" button on the left-hand side of the screen. Beneath that will be the button "Student Search," and clicking that will take you to the main Student Search page. A new window will appear where you can enter personal core information (Name and Date of Birth, for example). You can search for the student based on these identifiers, and MSDS will return any results matching these parameters.

Request for UIC Collection: If you have more than a few students, you can use the automated XML data upload method. For instructions and more information about the Request for UIC collection, visit the MSDS Request for UIC Collection web page on the CEPI website.

11. How do I get UICs for our students? What is "UIC Resolution" and how do I fix it?

Authorized individuals must request UICs for students using MSDS. There are two options available. First, the Student Search feature accessed from the MSDS navigation menu allows you to search for a single student and to request a UIC if no record of the student is found. Second, MSDS users can upload a file with multiple student requests for UIC matching (Request for UIC Collection).

When CEPI's UIC system cannot decide whether the submitted request details match an existing student record (i.e., a "potential match") in MSDS, the request is sent for manual resolution. Manual resolution involves a human who must decide if the UIC System has found a legitimate match (the existing UIC will be returned), or whether the request is distinct from any potential matches (a new UIC will be created).

If you click on the student record in your entity's data staging area, a window will display the student request details alongside details for potential matches. You can select to "Use This Potential" match, and you will see the match's UIC back in the staging area. Alternatively, you can "Request new UIC" and submit justification text explaining the need for a new UIC. CEPI staff will then use all available information to make the final determination. This decision will be reported back in the data staging area, along with UIC details for the student in question.

For more information on requesting UICs and the Request for UIC collection, visit the MSDS Request for UIC Collection web page on the CEPI website.

12. Somebody took a child in our program's UIC to report for a collection. What now?

Please contact CEPI customer support. This is a serious issue that impacts multiple stakeholders, so we ask that you tell us as soon as you find a submission conflict. CEPI staff will work with you to resolve the situation – UIC creation, if necessary, then splitting of records.

13. What happens if one child is assigned to multiple UICs or if the same UIC is assigned to two different children?

Duplicate UICs cause confusion and, if undetected, make it possible to splinter student histories with some collection records submitted for one UIC, and others submitted for another UIC. If you determine that the two UICs actually are for the same child, you should submit a request within MSDS, along with an explanation, to link the UICs.

If it is determined that these are really two different children, please contact CEPI customer support. CEPI staff will review the student history and unlink UICs if necessary. If two different districts submitted collection records for two different children that appear for the one UIC, splitting records is necessary. This is an administrative activity that involves moving a previous collection record associated with one student UIC to another student UIC. If you need to request a UIC split, please reach out to CEPI customer support.

The MSDS Request for UIC web page provides additional FAQs and information about UICs.

14. If I have a child in an early childhood program and a special education program concurrently. How do I submit them in MSDS?

During the timeframe that the child is participating in both programs, submit the child with the correct early childhood program information in the EC Collections and the correct special education information in the General Collections. All special education data is required to be reported, whereas early childhood program data requirements vary (see #7). If your role does not include submitting special education data, it is important to make sure the data gets submitted by the responsible party.

15. Why am I getting a Data Quality email? Am I reporting incorrectly?

Not necessarily. DQ emails are used to identify anomalies in your collection; your data could be entirely correct, or it could contain errors. These are a resource to use to ensure you are reporting your data correctly, and that CEPI is receiving accurate data. When you receive a DQ email, a best practice is to review the Data Quality Report Title Summary and Report Details to ensure that the data are what you expected to report. If the data are not what you expect, or need to be corrected, follow the instructions at the top of the email. It could be beneficial to compare the DQ with data in your local system.

DQ alerts are sent after "DQ snapshots," which are point-in-time representations of the certified and error-free staging area records in a current collection. For the Early Childhood collections, these snapshots happen at mid-collection (generally a few weeks before the collection close) and post-collection (immediately after the certification deadline).

16. I want to remove MSDS access for a staff member who no longer works for my program. What do I do?

To remove access to CEPI applications for yourself or another user at your entity, complete the user removal request form found on the Application Security Forms web page of the CEPI website. After completion, email the form to cepi@michigan.gov.

17. What if I forget to report a student?

If you forget to report a student, they need to be reported in the next available collection with the appropriate program start and end dates.

Best Practice Tip for Reporting Students:

- Before the certification deadline, run the Early Childhood Student List report in either the Data Staging area (for uncertified data) or in the Certified Reports area. Compare the report to the information you have stored locally to ensure that you report the correct students and information.

18. Can I decertify my collection?

If you certify and later find errors in your collection, you can decertify prior to 11:59pm on the certification deadline. Your collection must then be re-certified by the deadline. If the certification date has passed, contact CEPI customer support to discuss your options.

19. I accidentally reported a child in my collection that was never in my program. How do I undo my mistake?

The answer to this depends on whether the child was incorrectly submitted in a collection for which the certification deadline has passed or not.

If a child is in the data staging area for the current collection that has not been certified yet and was never certified in a previous collection with the incorrect information, you can delete the record out of the staging area.

If the child was reported with incorrect information in a previously certified collection, they cannot be deleted. If it was a previous collection within the current school year, the child needs to be reported again with the same program start date as in the previous collection. You will need to input an end date equal to the start date. This will clean up the school year record for longitudinal data analysis.

20. Do I have to report program end dates?

Students in a GSRP or GSRP/Head Start blend program must be reported with program end dates in the collection year they are enrolled. If a student was not exited in a prior collection during the school year, they must have an exit date in the EC EOP collection. For other programs, it is a best practice to report program end dates for all other children reported in your Early Childhood collection. If the child is not reported with the correct end date, it can negatively impact longitudinal data analysis on the child over the course of the individual's academic career. You do not have to report program end dates for GSRP – Wait List.

Reports Help

Within the MSDS application, there are reports available for your use. Using reports can help ensure that you are reporting accurate data. The MSDS Reports List is available on the MSDS web page on under "Help and Training." This Excel document will provide the report names and descriptions, where each report is located within MSDS, recommendations for use, and any additional information that could be helpful to you. If you have questions regarding a report, contact CEPI customer support.

More Questions?

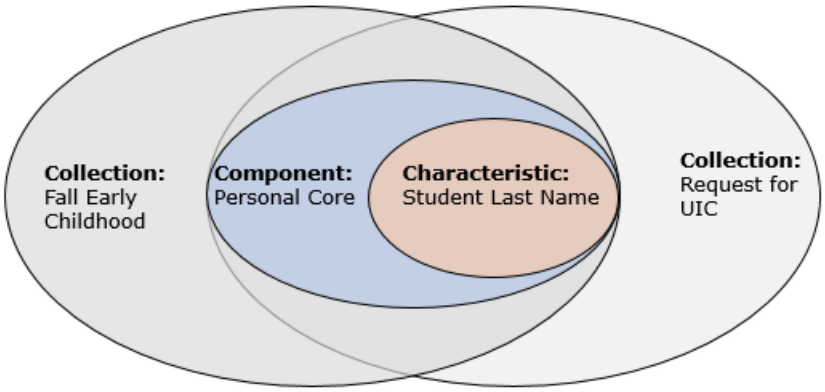
If you have questions not covered in this FAQ document or other posted support material, please contact our customer support team by email at cepi@michigan.gov or by phone at 517-335-0505 x3. Having the following information ready upon your call/email will be beneficial in CEPI staff helping you:

- What action did you take, and with what goal in mind?
- When did this occur?
- What result are you seeing?

Appendices

Appendix A: Collections, Components, Characteristics Visual

This visual shows two distinct collections, Fall Early Childhood and Request for UIC, that both collect the Student Last Name Characteristic Personal Core component.



Appendix B: Submitting Your Data to MSDS

You submit information for children participating in EC programs to CEPI via the EC Collections in the MSDS application.

1. Find your entity code in the Educational Entity Master. This will be a 5-digit District Code or a 9-digit Agreement Number.

2. Check your entity's authorized users for the application(s) you need to access and submit security agreements for employees who need access. Check your authorized users by contacting CEPI Customer Support. Security forms are found on the CEPI website, on the MSDS web page. Find the security agreement for your entity type, fill it out, and submit to CEPI via email at cepi@michigan.gov.
    - Note: entity information is in EEM; student information is in MSDS
3. Request a UIC for each child. The UIC Request Guide and other helpful information on this can be found on the CEPI website, on the Request for UIC collection web page.
4. Once all children have a UIC assigned, submit student data in the current MSDS EC Collection. More information on the Early Childhood Collections is available on CEPI's Early Childhood Collections web page. Submitting can be done a few different ways:
    - Export data from your local student information system to an XML document following MSDS schema requirements.
    - If your SIS does not export files in XML format, you can input information in the Macomb ISD MSDS software, export the XML file, then upload into the current MSDS Early Childhood Collection.
    - Manually enter children into the current Early Childhood Collection in MSDS.
    - If your entity is affiliated with a school district or ISD, contact the MSDS contact and work with them to submit.
5. Complete the Quality Review process and certify that the data submitted is correct before the collection's certification deadline. You can use system reports and data quality snapshots to ensure the data you have submitted is correct. Collection dates are available on the CEPI Calendar on the CEPI website.