Data 101: the KIDS COUNT Data Center

- Welcome to the Data Center Training Video series as part of the Illinois KIDS COUNT Project. I'm Cassie Davis, Manager, Data & Research at the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, and I lead the KIDS COUNT work for Illinois. My pronouns are she/her/hers.

1. KIDS COUNT & YWCA

- KIDS COUNT is a project generously funded by the Annie E Casey Foundation in every state across the US. And in Illinois, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is proud to be the KIDS COUNT grantee. We provide timely and credible data through the Data Center, and provide policy analysis based on evidence, and we shine a spotlight on pressing issues in order to improve programs and policies for children and families across Illinois.

2. Goal & Purpose

- The goal of this video series is to introduce you to the Data Center. We also hope that this series will both equip and empower you to understand data, access data, and use data for storytelling to advocate for children and families in your community. So let's dive in…
- Data can be a powerful tool in your toolbox because it can provide evidence of a problem or bring to light a possible solution, or more simply data can tell us how many people live in our neighborhood.

3. Using Data: The Why

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- Let's focus on the Why first…As mentioned before data can tell us how many people live in our neighborhood, but why is this important? Well when we have data on the people in our neighborhood, we can provide goods and services, such as, businesses, schools, and clinics to meet the needs of our communities.
- Data helps us drive our decision-making for how we invest in our communities, which is why it is so important to use data, especially in advocacy.

4. Using Data: The How

- Now let's focus on the How…We use data to inform others through numbers and stories. Both types of data are equally important. So how would you use data for advocacy? Going back to the goods and services example, say you provide data on the number of children in public school in your community, and you also, collect stories from parents on issues facing the school, such as large classroom sizes. Both of these data points can help reveal the need for another school in your community because they show evidence of a problem, and they bring to light the solution needed.
- Data in advocacy can provide the evidence you need to create the changes in your community.

5. Data Center

- Luckily, the Data Center is a great tool to connect you to data on your community, specifically data in the form of numbers or calculations. It should be noted that there are

limitations to the data on the Data Center because some data are not currently collected, and some data are not publicly available. In these cases, data in the form of stories can be used to fill in data gaps. To learn more on Data Limitations, check out our one-pager that will be linked closely to this video.

- Fortunately, the Data Center does cover 100+ data points across the state, counties, and cities, so let's take a look at how to work with data from the Data Center…
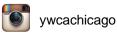
6. Identifying the Data You Need

- The first part working with data is to think about what data are you looking for, that may sound simple, but I would recommend taking a moment to think through this. It's a great first step to identify the data you need since there are a lot of data out there.

- Perhaps you've wondered about…

- How many children are receiving special education services in public schools by type of disability? Maybe you're interested in developing programming for students who receive special education in public schools?

- Or maybe you want to know the amount of state funding for the Teen REACH afterschool program in your community? Because you want to advocate for more state funding in the upcoming legislative session?

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- Or maybe you're interested in submitting a grant to provide services and support to guardians and foster care children in kinship care?
- All of these questions you've thought about can be answered by the Data Center! Before we dive into the ins and outs of the Data Center, it's important to review the types of data you may encounter on the Data Center, let's review those first…

7. Types of Data

- On the Data Center you'll find most data presented as a count or percentage. Another data type you will see on the Data Center is a rate. Let's review these so you can get familiar with the different types of data you will see on Data Center.
- Counts: This is a count or number of items or observations you may have. For example, the number of Illinois children living in poverty was 454,654 in 2020.
- Percentages: Percent means "per hundred" and represents the share of a population, experiencing a situation or with a characteristic, of the total population. Using our previous example, we can create a percentage of the number of Illinois children living in poverty out of the total population of Illinois children in 2020, which would be 16.2% of children living in poverty in 2020.
- Rates: A rate is similar to a percentage, but a rate is a quantity considered as a proportion of another quantity

(usually per 1,000 or more). For example, in our child welfare data, 9.7 children were victims of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children in FY 2015.

- These are the data types you will see on the Data Center, in addition, you will see data cover different years, let's take a look at those differences so you can be familiar with single year data vs. multiple year average data…

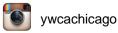8. **Data Year Types**

- Data can represent different years. You'll find a mix of single year data such as data representing a fiscal year or calendar year and you will also find multiple year average data, such as 5-year averages. Let's discuss these different data year types…

- Single Year: As mentioned previously, some data are presented for single year such as 1-year estimates. These data are collected over 12 months and are more current and can be useful for larger populations when you need the most recent data. These data can be unreliable for smaller populations, which is why some data are presented as multiple-year averages.

- Multiple Year Averages: Across the Data center you'll find the most common type of multiple year averages data are 5-year averages, which are data collected over 60 months. These data are most reliable for large AND small populations, but less current.

9. **Data Sources**

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- Last, but not least, I wanted to share data sources we commonly use on the Data Center. You will see a mix of national data sources like the US Census Bureau and state level sources such as state agencies. Keep these in mind and always be sure to cite your sources when working with data.
  - U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey
  - U.S. Population Estimates Program
  - U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)
  - U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates
  - National Center for Health Statistics
  - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
  - Illinois Department of Human Services
  - Illinois State Board of Education
  - Illinois Governor's Office of Management and Budget
  - Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map
  - Illinois Board of Higher Education
  - Illinois Student Assistance Commission
  - Illinois Department of Public Health
  - Illinois Office of the Comptroller
  - Illinois Department of Child and Family Services
  - University of Illinois Children & Family Research Center

10. **Closing/Contact Information**

- We hope this overview prepares you for using the Data Center. We strive to be a data resource to you and welcome your questions and any assistance needed as you become a data expert yourself. Stay tuned for the next video in the series where we will walk through the Data Center together!