# California Preschool Data Collection (CAPSDAC) User Manual Appendix B: Creating Electronic Files

**A Guide for Program Staff**

**Version 1.0**

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### Glossary

Below is an alphabetical list of commonly used acronyms, initialisms, and terms used throughout this document.

* **Agency**: Agency that maintains a California State Preschool Program contract with the California Department of Education, Early Education Division
* **CDE:** California Department of Education
* **CSPP:** California State Preschool Program
* **CalWORKs:** California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Program
* **CAPSDAC:** California Preschool Data Collection
* **EED:** Early Education Division
* **FICN:** Family Identification Case Number
* **HoH:** Head of Household
* **IEP:** Individualized Education Program
* **IFSP:** Individualized Family Service Plan
* **LEA**: Local Educational Agency
* **SMI**: State Median Income

### Revision History

| **Version Number** | **Revision Date** | **Section** | **Summary of Changes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| v1.0 | 04/05/2024 | All sections | User Manual Appendix B: Creating Electronic Files |

### Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide agencies maintaining a California State Preschool Program (CSPP) contract with the California Department of Education (CDE), Early Education Division (EED) with the technical description and format specifications of the California Preschool Data Collection (CAPSDAC) monthly Classroom, Staff, and Child electronic file(s) as well as comprehensive instructions for structuring, creating, and reading a file.

### Contents

This document contains the following sections and topics:

* Background Information
* Section A: Electronic File Technical Description
* Section B: Electronic File Upload Logistics
* Section C: Reading an Electronic File
* Section D: Spreadsheet Applications Guidelines

### Background

Agencies maintaining a CSPP contract with the CDE, EED may utilize the Electronic File Upload function of the CAPSDAC Online Portal to fulfill the monthly data submission requirement.

## Section A: Electronic File Technical Descriptions

This section provides technical descriptions of the various components of the files used to satisfy the CAPSDAC monthly data submission requirement.

### File Names

There are three files that are required to be submitted each month for children that are enrolled:

* Classroom Record Electronic File
* Staff Record Electronic File
* Child Record Electronic File

### File Format

All files uploaded to the CAPSDAC must be specifically formatted to meet CAPSDAC system standards. Specifically, files must maintain the following characteristics:

* Files must be in Comma Separated Value (CSV) format
* Files must follow the exact file specification format
  + Incorrectly formatted files will result in errors and are unable to be processed by the CAPSDAC

### Records (Rows)

The term “records” is used to refer to the rows of a file:

* The first record in the file must be the Header Row
  + The Header Row must be included in all files; it must follow the exact order as outlined in the template files
* Blank records are not allowed in the files
* Files must contain at least one record and no more than 100,000 records

### Fields (Columns)

The term “fields” is used to refer to the columns of a file:

* All fields must appear in the electronic transfer files, including fields with null or blank values.
* The complete list of fields and data definitions can be found in the [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix A: Data Definitions](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixa.docx) document.
* The complete list of fields and file format specifications can be found in the [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix C: File Format Specifications](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixc.docx) document.
* All fields are delimited (separated by commas)
* If the field delimiter (comma) itself may appear within a field, fields can be surrounded with quotation marks. The use of two commas next to each other indicates a blank field
* Fields must not be padded with spaces
* Fields must not contain control characters or format symbols
* If a field is marked as required, null values (no data) are not allowed, and will return an error
* Data fields where the field rules indicate a minimum and maximum data length must have a value between the minimum and maximum; the data length cannot be less than the minimum or exceed the maximum

If the field rule indicates a specific data length size, the data must be exactly that length.

### Data

Within each field, data elements must be specifically formatted. Detailed descriptions of the file's different data elements are presented in the [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix A: Data Definitions](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixa.docx) and [Appendix C: File Format Specifications](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixc.docx) documents.

## Section B: Electronic File Upload Logistics

This section provides users with instructions on how to upload Electronic Transfer Files (ETFs) to the CAPSDAC for the Classroom, Staff, and Child Records.

### Important Reminder

**Warning: Uploading Electronic Transfer Files overwrite existing information**

The CAPSDAC allows multiple file transfers for the same report period; however, every successful file transfer **completely overwrites all existing information**for the entire LEA in the Classroom, Staff, or Child Records section. You cannot upload multiple files for different sites and classrooms into the CAPSDAC; files must include data for the entire LEA, or you risk overwriting all data. Additionally, if you manually input data, and then upload an Electronic Transfer File, the file will overwrite your previously entered data.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

The Electronic File Transfer submission method of submitting the Classroom, Staff, or Child Records consists of agencies utilizing the “[Classroom, Staff, or Child] File Management” function of the CAPSDAC to upload a specifically formatted CSV file containing all information fields for a particular data submission period.

The CDE has published electronic file templates which include structured header rows and example values in the Comma Separated Values (CSV) format. These template files can be found by navigating to [CAPSDAC Data Submission Electronic File Templates](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/capsdacfiletemplates.asp).

#### Step 1: Understand The Upload Process

* Log on to the CAPSDAC Online Portal, review and agree to the terms and conditions in the privacy statement
* This Electronic File Transfer process allows LEAs to upload three (3) CSV files to report all their Classroom, Staff, and Child records for all of their preschool sites at once.
* The files you will use to upload data to the CAPSDAC system must be in Comma Separated Value (CSV) format. You can use any spreadsheet software (e.g., Excel) to prepare these files.
* The structure of the CSV files is a series of rows, each representing a Classroom, Staff, or Child record within a specified preschool, and corresponding columns that represent the data values for that entity. For each row, a value must be provided for every column (with the exception of **Optional** columns). In the "Data Columns" section of the [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix C: File Format Specifications](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixc.docx) document, each column is described in detail.
* **Important Note**: Uploading a validated file **irretrievably** **replaces** any existing data for the entire LEA’s Classroom, Staff, or Child Records; it **does not** append data. In the event of an uploaded file containing errors, no existing data will be changed.

#### Step 2: Download A CSV File

* Log on to the CAPSDAC Online Portal, review and agree to the terms and conditions in the privacy statement
* **Disclaimer**: The CAPSDAC Support Team does not recommend attempting to develop Electronic Transfer Files manually using spreadsheet software due to the system's specific processing requirements. This may result in wasted time if files are incorrectly formatted due to technical issues.
* It is recommended that you always start the process by downloading an appropriate file with which to work (usually either a blank template or the previous month's data file). By starting with a downloaded file, you will be sure to have the column names and other file format specifications already set up for you.
* Navigate to the "File Downloads" section of the “[Classroom, Staff, or Child] File Management” web page within the CAPSDAC to either download previously submitted data (if existing), current submission period data, a blank file template, or an example template with data.

**Caution**: Using spreadsheet applications (i.e., Microsoft Excel) to open the downloaded files will change the format of the Classroom, Staff, Child records; Please see the Spreadsheet Tips and Tricks for more information.

#### Step 3: Modify the CSV File and Upload

* Log on to the CAPSDAC Online Portal, review and agree to the terms and conditions in the privacy statement
* Add Classroom, Staff, and Child data as rows to the CSV files while following the guidelines described in the "Value Rules" section of the [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix C: File Format Specifications](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixc.docx) document
* Check the “Information Field Tables & Codes” section of the [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix A: Data Definitions](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixa.docx) to find appropriate codes
* When you are finished adding to or modifying your file, use the controls at the bottom of this page to upload the file
* If the system returns with error messages after the validation encountered first errors, please fix errors accordingly and try the upload again

#### Step 4. Upload a File

**To upload a Classroom, Staff, or Child file to the CASDAC, follow the steps below:**

1. Log on to the CAPSDAC Online Portal, review and agree to the terms and conditions in the privacy statement
2. Select the "[Classroom, Staff, or Child] File Management" button and then select the “File Download” drop-down option. In this section, the LEA can either download previously submitted data (if existing), current submission period data, a blank file template, or an example template with data.
   1. Note: Classroom, Staff, and Child Electronic Transfer Files must be uploaded separately, corresponding to the File Management button that is selected
   2. Note: Classroom records must be uploaded first before Staff and Child Electronic Transfer Files can be uploaded
3. The user must then input all the records for the Classroom, Staff, or Child CSV file
   1. Note: Please ensure the appropriate “Preschool CDS Code” has been entered for each record
4. Once you have finished entering your records into your Electronic Transfer File, save the file on your local computer as a CSV file
5. Scroll down to the “Choose File and Upload” section, click on “Choose File.”
   1. **Result**: A dialog box is displayed
6. Search your computer for the CSV file
7. Select the appropriate file
8. Select the "Open" button
9. Select the “Upload [Classroom, Staff, or Child] Record CSV File” button
   1. **Result**: The file upload process begins
10. If information for the specified report period has already been received by the CDE, a screen “Confirm File Upload” is displayed, indicating that CAPSDAC has already received the Classroom, Staff, or Child data for the current reporting period.
    1. **Warning**: If agencies choose to proceed, the data submission should irretrievably replace the data that had been uploaded in the CAPSDAC system, and the data currently in the CAPSDAC for that report period is deleted
11. Select the "Upload" button to proceed with the file upload, or
12. Select the "Cancel" button to discontinue the file upload and return to the previous page
    1. **Result**: If you do discontinue with the file upload and select “Cancel”, you will be navigated back to the CAPSDAC Dashboard
13. If the user receives a message stating, "The file is uploaded successfully," then the file has no errors, and the Classroom, Staff, or Child Records in that file have been successfully added to the respective report period
14. If the user receives a message stating, "The upload encountered one or more errors," then the file has errors, and the Classroom, Staff, or Child Records in that file were not added to the respective report period
    1. In this event, read the error message(s) and correct the errors while referencing the CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix F – Error Messages resource document. If errors persist, contact the CAPSDAC Support Team at [CAPSDAC@cde.ca.gov](mailto:CAPSDAC@cde.ca.gov)

#### After Uploading an Electronic File Transfer

After uploading a Classroom, Staff, or Child CSV file to the CAPSDAC, the following will occur:

1. The data from the electronic file transfer is processed and uploaded into the CAPSDAC database
2. The Classroom, Staff, or Child Records are available for review or editing under the Preschool Dashboard
   1. Users may manually add, edit, or delete any of the records after they’ve been uploaded
   2. The data can be edited by clicking “Edit [Classroom, Staff, or Child]” button
3. The CSV files are available to download in the “[Classroom, Staff, or Child] File Management] section in the “File Downloads” accordion menu. The download file is titled, “This LEA's current reporting period (Month Year) classroom records.”
   1. The Classroom, Staff, or Child CSV file includes all of the respective records for the entire LEA

## Section C: Reading an Electronic File

This section provides detailed instructions for reading files.

C.1 Read Classroom Records Electronic File

C.2 Read Staff Records Electronic File

C.3 Read Child Records Electronic File

### C.1 Reading the Classroom Records Electronic File

#### Reading Rows

Each Classroom Records electronic file must contain the following information:

* PreschoolCDSCode
* ClassroomID
* ClassroomName
* CareType
* LanguagesTeachersUse
* LanguagesTeachersProficient
* LanguagesAidesUse
* LanguagesAidesProficient
* LanguageProgramType

Note: The Header Row must be included, and data fields must follow the order listed above.

For the CAPSDAC Data Submission Electronic File Templates, please refer to the [CAPSDAC Support](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/capsdacsupportlanding.asp) webpage, and navigate to the [CAPSDAC Data Submission Electronic File Templates](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/capsdacfiletemplates.asp) subsection.

For all CAPSDAC Classroom, Staff, and Child Information Field Data Definitions, please refer to [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix A: Data Definitions](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixa.docx).

### C.2 Reading the Staff Records Electronic File

#### Reading Rows

Each Staff Records electronic file must contain the following information:

* PreschoolCDSCode
* StaffID
* LastName
* FirstName
* MiddleInitial
* DateOfBirth
* Gender
* IsHispanicYN
* Races
* StaffRole
* HighestDegree
* YearsExperienceInLEA
* WaiverYN
* SEID
* Permit
* ClassroomAssignment

Note: The Header Row must be included, and data fields must follow the order listed above.

For the CAPSDAC Data Submission Electronic File Templates, please refer to the [CAPSDAC Support](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/capsdacsupportlanding.asp) webpage, and navigate to the [CAPSDAC Data Submission Electronic File Templates](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/capsdacfiletemplates.asp) subsection.

For all CAPSDAC Classroom, Staff, and Child Information Field Data Definitions, please refer to [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix A: Data Definitions](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixa.docx).

### C.3 Reading the Child Records Electronic File

#### Reading Rows

Each Child Records electronic file must contain the following information:

* PreschoolCDS
* ChildID
* LastName
* FirstName
* MiddleInitial
* Gender
* DateOfEnrollmentStart
* DateOfEnrollmentEnd
* EligibilityStatus
* DateOfBirth
* CountryofBirth
* StateOfBirth
* CityOfBirth
* IsHispanicYN
* Races
* IEPorIFSP
* DateOfInstrument
* LanguagesHome
* LanguagesMostUsed
* IsDualLanguageLearnerYN
* IsDLLTeacherDesignatedYN
* FICN
* FamilySize
* FamilyMonthlyIncome
* CalWORKsRecipient
* ReasonForService
* HeadOfHouseholdLastName1
* HeadOfHouseholdFirstName1
* HeadOfHouseholdMiddleInitial1
* HeadOfHouseholdEducation1
* HeadOfHouseholdLastName2
* HeadOfHouseholdFirstName2
* HeadOfHouseholdMiddleInitial2
* HeadOfHouseholdEducation2
* LanguageFamilyWritten
* LanguageFamilyVerbal
* HomeAddress1
* HomeAddress2
* HomeCity
* HomeState
* HomeZIP
* MailingAddress1
* MailingAddress2
* MailingCity
* MailingState
* MailingZIP
* ServiceType
* FullTimeEnrollment
* PartTimeEnrollments

For the CAPSDAC Data Submission Electronic File Templates, please refer to the [CAPSDAC Support](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/capsdacsupportlanding.asp) webpage, and navigate to the [CAPSDAC Data Submission Electronic File Templates](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/capsdacfiletemplates.asp) subsection.

For all CAPSDAC Classroom, Staff, and Child Information Field Data Definitions, please refer to [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix A: Data Definitions](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixa.docx).

## Section D: Spreadsheet Applications Guidelines

This section provides users with detailed instructions on how to effectively use Spreadsheet Applications like Microsoft Excel to submit Classroom, Staff, and Child data to CAPSDAC in CSV format. It also includes best practice guidelines for downloading CSV templates from CAPSDAC to ensure accurate and efficient data transfer.

### Using a Spreadsheet Application

Spreadsheet applications, such as Microsoft Excel, enable agencies to apply specific formatting to each column to meet formatting requirements and save their data as a CSV file.

The Electronic File Transfer method for submitting classroom, staff, and child records entails agencies utilizing the “[Classroom, Staff, or Child] File Management” function of CAPSDAC to upload a specifically formatted CSV file containing classroom, staff, or child data for a particular reporting period.

**Warning**: Uploading new files overwrites existing information.

While CAPSDAC allows multiple file uploads for the same reporting period, each successful file transfer completely replaces all existing classroom, staff, or child information for the entire LEA for that data submission period.

### Spreadsheet Tips and Tricks

Agencies can create and utilize Microsoft Excel spreadsheet templates to input or format data, which can then be saved in Comma Separated Value format and then transferred to CAPSDAC.

These spreadsheets should be designed to include all fields specified in [CAPSDAC User Manual Appendix C: File Format Specifications](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/capsdacappendixc.docx). It is crucial that files adhere to the exact format outlined, ensuring all fields are in the correct order, even if they are not populated with data. When exporting data, it is generally recommended to save the file as a 'Comma Separated Values (CSV) file'.

* When utilizing spreadsheets, it is essential to adhere to the following best practices:
* **Have a working knowledge of the spreadsheet application**: Understand the functionalities and features of the spreadsheet application you are using to effectively manage and manipulate data.
* **Utilize custom formatting for each column of data**: Apply appropriate formatting to ensure consistency and accuracy in data representation. This includes formatting dates, numbers, and text as needed.
* **Exercise caution when altering file contents**: Be careful when making changes to the file to avoid unintentional modifications or errors. Verify data accuracy before making any alterations.
* **Save as a Comma Separated Value file:** When exporting the spreadsheet for CAPSDAC submission, save it as a Comma Separated Value file to ensure compatibility and adherence to submission requirements. This format maintains the integrity of the data and facilitates smooth transfer to CAPSDAC.
* When preparing spreadsheets for CAPSDAC submissions, it is important to avoid:
* **Allowing the spreadsheet application to auto-format file contents** (i.e., dates, numbers): Auto-formatting can sometimes lead to inconsistencies or errors in data representation. It is better to manually apply formatting to ensure accuracy and consistency.
* **Adding headers or punctuation** (i.e., commas, quotation marks, periods, parentheses) to or between data fields: Extra characters or punctuation can disrupt the structure of the data and cause issues during file processing. Keep data fields clean and free of unnecessary punctuation.
* **Saving as an XLS or XLSX file type, if using a Spreadsheet Application (i.e., Excel)**: While application formats like XLS or XLSX are commonly used, CAPSDAC submissions require Comma Separated Value (CSV) files. Saving as XLS or XLSX may introduce formatting issues or compatibility issues during file transfer. Always save spreadsheets intended for CAPSDAC submission as comma separated value files.

By avoiding these practices, you can ensure that your spreadsheet files are properly formatted and ready for submission to CAPSDAC, minimizing the risk of errors or complications during the submission process.