

 **SAMPLE MATERIAL: What a Data Dictionary Does**

Purpose:

A data dictionary primarily serves as a quality control mechanism for both data programmers and users. Including a data dictionary in your evaluation plan also allows program staff to work with evaluators to ensure that data needs are addressed.

Note: A data dictionary is a collection of descriptions of the data objects or items in a data model, for the benefit of programmers and others. After the descriptive name of each data object (e.g., sex, age) and data type (e.g., text, image, binary value), its possible predefined values are listed, and a brief textual description is provided. A “crosswalk” or a matrix that lists the evaluation questions by row and the dictionary items by column can also be developed to help evaluators and program staff communicate about and check the data.

Source:

Adapted from: WestEd. (2002). *California healthy kids survey*. San Francisco, CA: Author

Data Dictionary

The following data dictionary includes the list of variables for grade, age, sex, and test scores (shown in percentile ranges).

Name	Position
GRADE	8
Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Right Print Format: F3 Write Format: F3 Value Label	
6	6th
7	7th
8	8th
9	9th
10	10th
11	11th
12	12th
13	Other grade
14	Ungraded
A1	A1. Student Age
	11
Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Right Print Format: F3 Write Format: F3 Missing Values: 0, 98, 99 Value Label	
0 M	Not Marked
1	10 years old or younger
2	11 years old
3	12 years old
4	13 years old
5	14 years old
6	15 years old
7	16 years old
8	17 years old
9	18 years old or older
98 M	Out of Range
99 M	Multiple Marks
A2	A2. Student Sex
	12
Measurement Level: Scale Column Width: 8 Alignment: Right Print Format: F3 Write Format: F3 Missing Values: 0, 98, 99 Value Label	
0 M	Not Marked
1	Male
2	Female
98 M	Out of Range
99 M	Multiple Marks

A3 A7. Reading score on Iowa Test of Basic Skills 42

Measurement Level: Percentile

Column Width: 8 Alignment: Right

Print Format: F3

Write Format: F3

Missing Values: 0, 98, 99

Value Label

0 M Missing data

1	80-99
2	60-79
3	40-59
4	20-39
5	<20

98 M Out of Range

99 M Multiple Marks

A8 A8. Mathematics Score on Iowa Test of Basic Skills 43

Measurement Level: Percentile

Column Width: 8 Alignment: Right

Print Format: F3

Write Format: F3

Missing Values: 0, 98, 99

Value Label

0 M Not Marked

0 M Missing data

6	80-99
7	60-79
8	40-59
9	20-39
10	<20

98 M Out of Range

99 M Multiple Marks