



AFCARS Open Office Hours for the implementation of AFCARS 2020

Children's Bureau Data Analytics and Reporting Team

February 6, 2023

Technical Bulletins

Technical Bulletin 20: Regulations, Data Elements, and Examples

This includes detailed information on what and how to report each element.

Technical Bulletin 21: File Structure & Encryption

This includes the XML tags and the data groups. It also contains the encryption requirement for child record number.

Technical Bulletin 22: Reporting Population and Data Extraction

Contains how to extract the correct reporting population and data extraction examples.

Technical Bulletin 23: Compliance and Penalties

This includes the policy and rules that will be validated at the time you upload the AFCARS file and how to calculate the penalties.

AFCARS 2020 Technical Bulletins



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children & Families Select an ACF Office

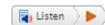
CHILDREN'S BUREAU
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

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About Focus Areas Grants Laws & Policies Data & Research Training & Technical Assistance Resources

Home > Children's Bureau (CB) > Laws & Policies > Technical Bulletins > AFCARS Technical Assistance PRINT

AFCARS Technical Assistance



Publication Date: August 31, 2012 | Current as of: June 30, 2022

The Children's Bureau develops technical bulletins (TBs) to supplement official guidance and assist states and tribes in implementing child welfare policies and practices. Below are the current technical bulletins to supplement AFCARS 2020 reporting, based on the AFCARS Final Rule published May 12, 2020 ([85 FR 28410](#)) and resources for AFCARS 1993 which ends September 30, 2022.

AFCARS 2020

Technical Bulletin #20: Data Elements for Out-of-Home Care & Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Data Files

- Publication Date: October 29, 2020, Revised: January 14, 2022
- This TB gives reporting instructions and provides examples for the AFCARS 2020 out-of-home care and adoption and guardianship assistance data elements.

Technical Bulletin #21: XML File Structure & Encryption

- Publication Date: January 15, 2021, Revised: January 24, 2022
- This TB provides agencies with information required to create the AFCARS data files. It provides technical specifications on the structural layout of the XML data and shares the XML schema for the files. It also covers information on encryption of the file records.

Technical Bulletin #22: Reporting Population and Data Extraction

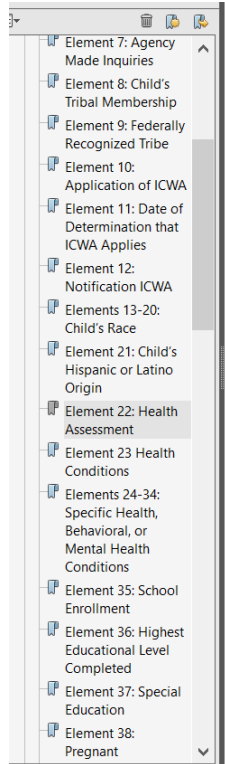
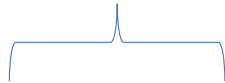
- Publication Date: June 22, 2021
- This TB addresses how to extract data for the Out-of-Home Care and Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Files defined in AFCARS Technical Bulletin #21. Additionally, this document includes guidance on extracting corrected files (previously referred to as subsequent files) after the required AFCARS reporting periods.

Technical Bulletin #23: Data Compliance & Data Quality

- Publication Date: June 23, 2021, Revised: June 6, 2022
- This TB provides title IV-E agencies with information on how compliance is determined and how penalties are assessed for noncompliant file submissions.

www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/afcars-technical-assistance

Navigation Pane



Structure of Technical Bulletin

Element 22: Health Assessment

Out-of-Home Care Element 22: Health Assessment (b)(9)

Indicate whether the child had a health assessment during the current out-of-home care episode. This assessment could include an initial health screening or any follow-up health screening per section 422(b)(15)(A) of the Act. Indicate “yes” or “no”.

For element 22, indicate if the child had an initial health screening or health assessment. An agency should indicate “1”, yes, if a child had a health assessment at any time during the current out-of-home care episode. If a child has multiple out-of-home care episodes, the agency should indicate if a child had a health assessment for the current out-of-home care episode.

For example, if a nurse administered a health screening after the child entered care, the agency should indicate “1”, yes.

For example, if a child had a health assessment during a previous out-of-home care episode, but not during the current out-of-home care episode, the agency should indicate “0”, no.

Element 22, health assessment, is ***new to AFCARS 2020***.

Data format	Numeric
Data constraint	0 = No 1 = Yes

Regulation

Explanatory Text

Examples

Change Status

Data Constraints

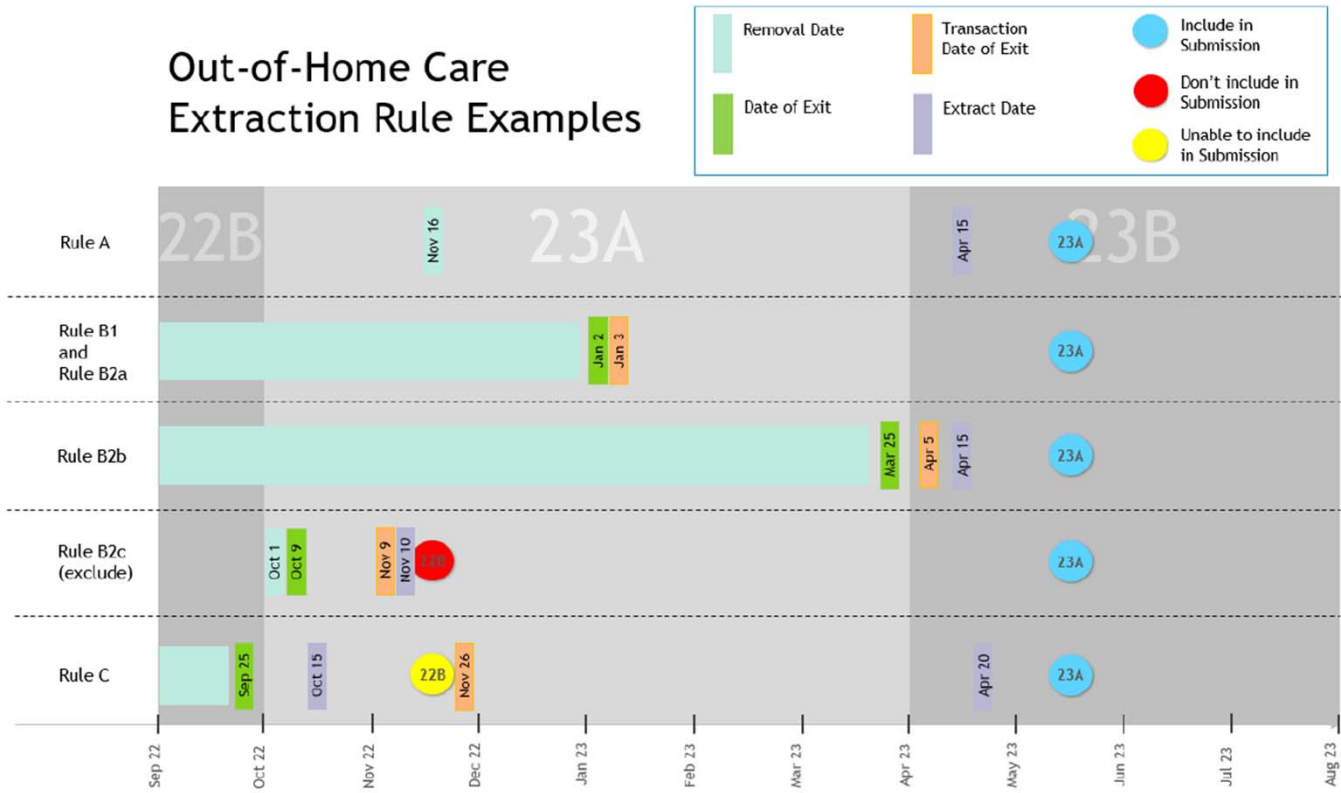
```

<xs:element name="records">
  <xs:complexType>
    <xs:sequence>
      <xs:element name="record" minOccurs="1" maxOccurs="unbounded">
        <xs:complexType>
          <xs:sequence>
            <xs:element name="E4_child_record_number" type="xs:string" />
            <xs:element name="E5_date_of_birth" type="acf:dateYMD" />
            <xs:element name="E6_sex" type="acf:domainOneTwo" />
            <xs:element name="E7_E12_tribal_information" type="acf:tribal_information" />
            <xs:element name="E13_child_race_american_indian_alaska_native" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E14_child_race_asian" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E15_child_race_black" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E16_child_race_native_hawaiian_pacific_islander" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E17_child_race_white" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E18_child_race_unknown" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E19_child_race_abandoned" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E20_child_race_declined" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E21_child_hispanic_latino" type="acf:domainZeroOneSevenEightNine" />
            <xs:element name="E22_health_assessment" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E23_health_conditions" type="acf:domainZeroThruThree" />
            <xs:element name="E24_34_specific_health_conditions" type="acf:specific_health_conditions" />
            <xs:element name="E35_school_enrollment" type="acf:domainZeroThruFive" />
            <xs:element name="E36_school_highest_completed" type="acf:domainZeroThruSixteenOrNull" />
            <xs:element name="E37_school_special_education" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />
            <xs:element name="E38_pregnant" type="acf:noYesNumericOrNull" />
            <xs:element name="E39_fathered_or_bore_child" type="acf:noYesNumeric" />

```

Appendix A – Out-of-Home Care Extraction Rule Examples

An agency may use extraction logic based on rules A, B1, and C.
OR
An agency may use extraction logic based on rules A, B2a, B2b, B2c, and C.



CB-496 Claim Lines Used for Penalty Calculation

- Line 5. In-Place Admin – Case Planning and Management
- Line 6. In-Place Admin – Eligibility Determination
- Line 7. In-Place Admin – Provider and Agency Management
- Line 8. In-Place Admin – Legal Representation
- Line 10a. FC Candidate Admin – Case Planning & Management
- Line 10b. FC Candidate Admin – Legal Representation
- Line 10c. Sex Trafficking Admin
- Line 11a. Non-CCWIS Project Operations
- Line 11b. Non-CCWIS Project Development
- Line 15. Training Costs – Staff, Provider & Professional Partner

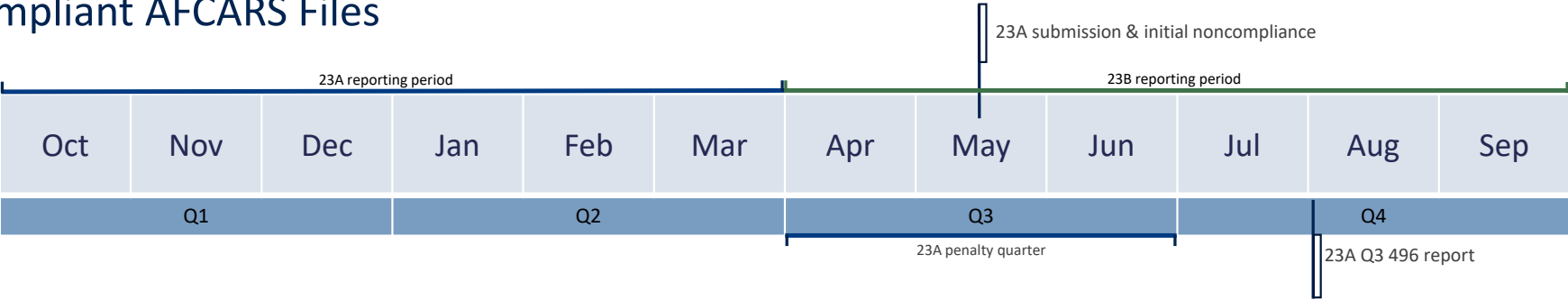
[illegible]

Partial Penalty Examples for 23A, 23B, 24A, & 24B Noncompliant AFCARS Files

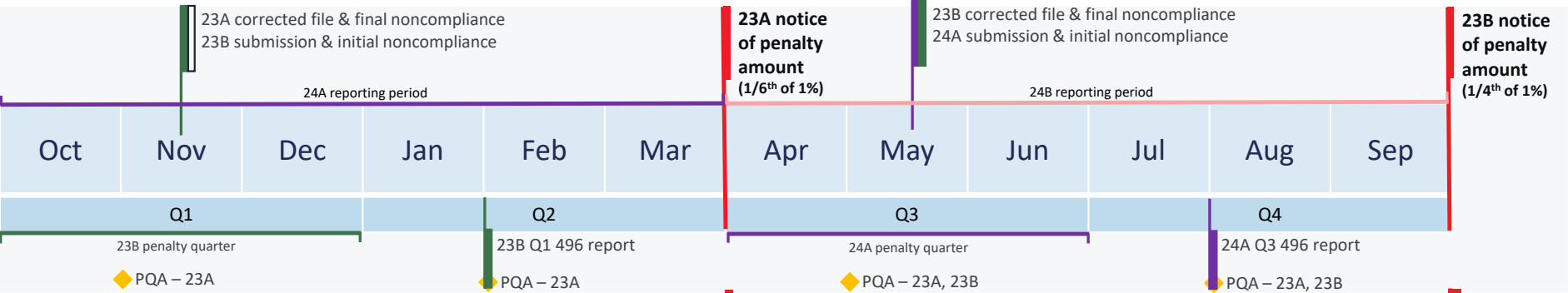
KEY

◆ PQA = Prior Quarter Adjustment on CB-496

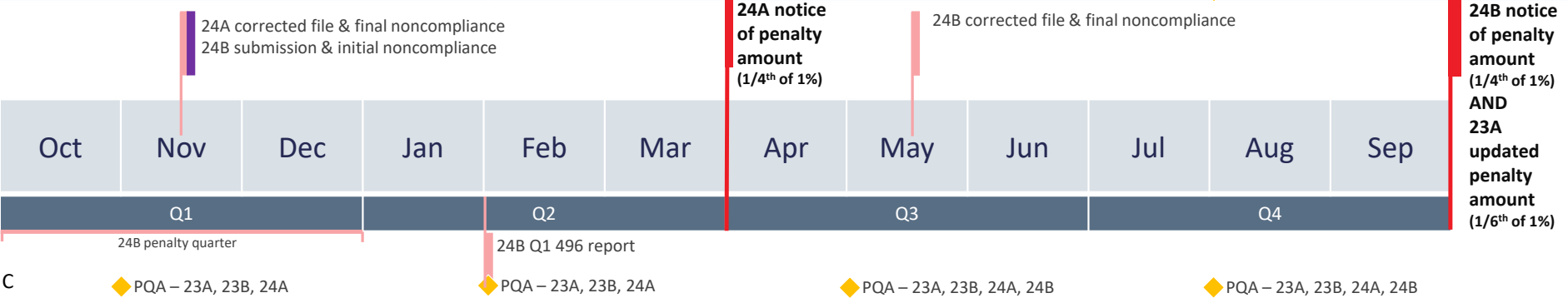
FY 23



FY 24



FY 25





National Child Welfare Data Management System (NCWDMS)

AFCARS 2020 Pilot Training
2/6/23

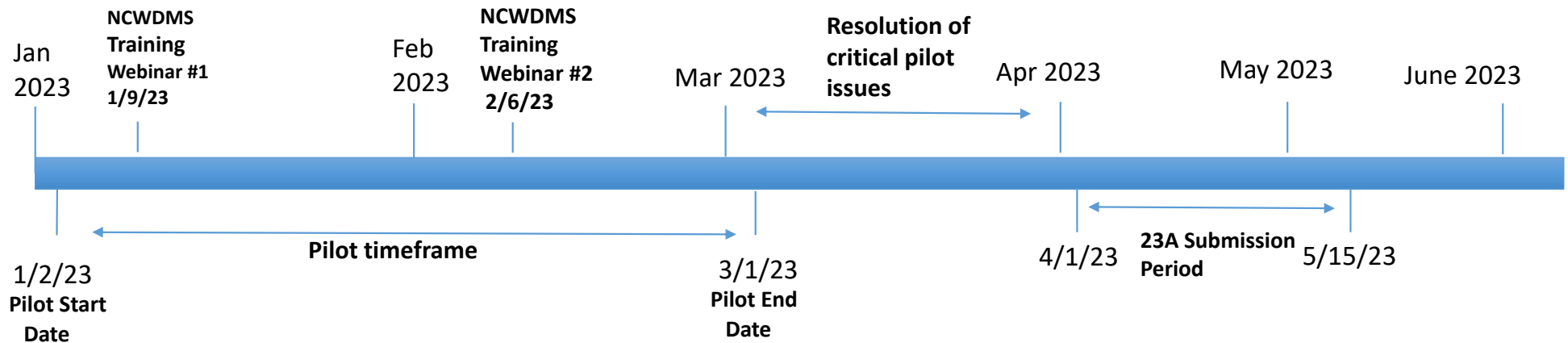
Pilot Metrics at a Glance (so far)



- A couple of approximate metrics to share with you all based on the pilot usage thus far as of the end of last week:
 - **212 new accounts** were created for users for participation in the pilot
 - We already have **105 logins** from users
 - A total of **21 STTs** have participated in the pilot thus far
 - **221 total transmission files** have been uploaded into NCWDMS

Note: Please keep testing in the system as this is a great time to obtain your feedback during this pilot timeframe. 😊

Pilot Timeframe & Upcoming Milestones



Remember: Testing of the file upload process can continue after the pilot period ends and can even continue through the submission periods as transmissions can be done without having to become official submissions.

Sources of XML Upload Failures



- Invalid XML Syntax
 - Unclosed tags
 - Unmatched open and closing tags
 - Improper nesting of tags
 - Invalid characters

Problems can be detected in your browser!

Invalid XML will always result in a file upload failure.

- Invalid XML Schema (element relationships, structure, and data types of the XML document).
 - Unknown tags
 - Missing tags
 - Missing namespace on data tag
 - Structure otherwise inconsistent with XML Schema Definition (XSD)

Problems can NOT be detected in your browser but can be identified through manual inspection of your XML and XSD or using available parsing tools.

Depending on the issue, some XSD issues may result in file upload failures, whereas others (e.g., out-of-range values) may result in compliance or data quality errors.

XML Schema Definition (XSD) Files



AFCARS Technical Bulletin #21: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/training-technical-assistance/technical-bulletin-21-xml-file>

- AFCARS 2020 XML File Structure & Encryption
 - Overview of file structure, elements, and element groupings:
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/AFCARS_Technical%20Bulletin%2021_updated.pdf
- Out-of-Home Care XSD
 - XSD Schema Definition for Out-of-Home Care Data File (zip of schema_ooh.xsd):
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/XSD%20Schema%20Definition%20for%20Out-of-Home%20Care%20Data%20File%20%20%28.zip>
- Adoption and Guardianship Assistance XSD
 - XSD Schema Definition for Adoption and Guardianship Assistance File (zip of schema_assistance.xml):
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/schema_assistance.zip
- Family First: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/training-technical-assistance/revised-technical-bulletin>

AFCARS XSDs



XSDs define the elements, attributes*, data types, and relationships within XML documents.

The AFCARS XSDs ([schema_ooh.xsd](#), [schema_assistance.xml](#)) each specify:

- A root data element containing a sequence of required additional elements, including a set of 1 or more record elements.
- A series of “simple” and “complex” data types that define each element.

*Note: the AFCARS XML documents do not include any attributes.

AFCARS XSD Manual Inspection



- **Check the XML against the XSD:** In a text editor, compare the elements in the XML document with the elements defined in the XSD. Ensure that the elements in the XML match the elements defined in the XSD, including the names, order, and number of elements.
- **Validate the data types:** Verify that the data in the XML elements is of the correct data type, as defined in the XSD.
- **Validate the structure:** Ensure that the structure of the XML document matches the structure defined in the XSD, including the nesting of elements.

AFCARS OOHC Examples



- [Valid file](#) with 3 records
- Invalid syntax:
 - [Tag prematurely closed](#): line 29.
 - [Invalid character](#): line 232.
- Invalid schema:
 - [Unknown tag](#): <E110_E111_victim_sex_trafficking_reporting_foobar>, line 676.
 - [Missing tag](#): <E110_E111_victim_sex_trafficking_reporting>; should be on line 676.
 - [Mis-ordered sequence](#): <E15_child_race_black> precedes <E14_child_race_asian>, line 19.
 - [Out-of-range value](#):, Value “2” specified instead of one of the valid un-quoted values (0,1, 2, or 3), line 28

Pending Enhancements



- Improvements to handle compliance checks on very large child-records (*deployed*)
- Improvements to provide useful feedback for failures due to XML syntax errors
- Improvements to handle large files
- Implementing the remaining batch of data quality checks
- Navigation to the compliance report directly from the transmission and submission screen display of the corresponding file record
- Will be working soon on requirements for the STT Frequency Report as well as printing of reports.



Questions???