Ensure Data Quality

ONE: Ways to Set Yourself Up For High Quality Data
Here are ten strategies to keep in mind:

- Develop clear goals, objectives, indicators, and research questions
- Have a detailed plan for data collection and analysis (i.e. who, when, how, etc.)
- Pre-test methods and tools
- Train staff in monitoring and evaluation, data collection
- Create ownership and belief in data collection among responsible staff
- Incorporate data quality checks at all stages
- Supervise the work: review all forms for completeness, check that all answers are clearly written, check to see if answers consistent and that all figures are tallied correctly
- Take steps to address errors right away
- Document any changes and improve the data collection system as necessary
- Other: _________________________________

TWO: How To Check Quality Once Data Returns From The Field And Is Entered Into Computers.
The following are some common sources of error to watch out for:

- Transposition—An example is when 39 is entered as 93. Transposition errors are usually caused by typing mistakes.
- Copying errors—One example is when 1 is entered as 7; another is when the number 0 is entered as the letter O.
- Coding errors—Putting in the wrong code. (i.e. an interview subject circled 1 = Yes, but the coder copied 2 = No.)
- Routing errors—A person filling out a form places the number in the wrong part or wrong order.
- Consistency errors—Consistency errors occur when two or more responses on the same questionnaire are contradictory. For example, if the birth date and age are inconsistent.
- Range errors—Range errors occur when a number lies outside the range of probable or possible values.

THREE: What To Do When Mistakes Or Inconsistencies Are Found.
Determine the source of the error. If the error arises from a data coding or entry error, it can be resolved in the office. If the entry is unclear, missing, or otherwise suspicious, it may be necessary to contact field staff for correction or verification.