



DATA QUALITY IMPROVEMENT NEWSLETTER  
OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS  
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT UNIT  
ISSUE #5 SEPTEMBER 2010  
www.nyc.gov/evers

## Location Variables in the Electronic Birth Registration System (EBRS)

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### HIGHLIGHTS

- The Bureau of Vital Statistics identified numerous errors in location variables, like Mother/Parent's Usual Residence and Mother/Parent's Birthplace.
- These errors cause problems with the mailing of birth certificates and Social Security Numbers and affect public health statistics.
- Use the Places table when entering location variables to prevent data entry errors, like spelling mistakes.

**Mother/Parent's Address**

Mother/Parent's Usual Residence

Street Number Pre Directional Street Name, Rural Route (No P.O. Box, etc.) Street Designator Post Directional Apt #, Suite #, etc.

City or Town County State Country United States Zip Code

Inside City Limits

Mailing Address

Same As Residence Address  No Mailing Address

In Care Of

Street Number Pre Directional Street Name, Rural Route (No P.O. Box, etc.) Street Designator Post Directional Apt #, Suite #, etc.

City or Town State Country United States Zip Code

Mother's Telephone Numbers

Day -\_- Ext -\_- Evening -\_-

Validate Page Next Clear Save Return

**Mother Birthplace**

Birthplace City or Town Birthplace State Birthplace Country United States

Never lived in United States

The Quality Improvement Unit of the Office of Vital Statistics is dedicated to improving the quality of vital event data by providing education and training to data providers. This newsletter is the fifth in a series of quality improvement newsletters that will be distributed to all birthing institutions and Regional Perinatal Coordinators to help improve the entry and quality of birth data.



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### I. WHY IS ACCURACY OF LOCATION VARIABLES IMPORTANT?

Errors in location variables such as Mother/Parent's Usual Residence Address and Mother/Parent's Birthplace can:

- Delay the delivery of the birth certificate to the mother/parent's residence.
- Require the parents or hospital staff to apply to the Bureau of Vital Statistics for an official correction to the registered birth record.
- Prevent the parents from receiving via mail a Social Security Number from the Social Security Association due to an incorrect mailing address.
- Lead to inaccurate estimates of health statistics by geographic area. These statistics are used:
  - To study differences in pregnancy and infant health outcomes among geographic populations.
  - To allocate funds and resources for programs and policies.
  - To compute birth rates based on the population residing in the area<sup>†</sup>.
  - To prepare population estimates and projections<sup>†</sup>.
  - To plan for and evaluate community services and facilities, including maternal and child health programs, schools, etc<sup>†</sup>.
  - By private businesses and industries to estimate demands for goods and services<sup>†</sup>.
- Prevent the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene from providing services to at-risk families through the Newborn Home Visiting program, the Early Intervention Program, and other public health programs targeted at improving the health of mothers and their newborns.

Each year, the Bureau of Vital Statistics uses Mother/Parent's Usual Residence and Mother/Parent's Birthplace to calculate the number of births by NYC neighborhood, the number of births by mother's birthplace, and the number of births to foreign-born mothers. These statistics are presented in the Summary of Vital Statistics, which is published annually by the Bureau of Vital Statistics. You can find the Summary of Vital Statistics from 2008 and past years [online](#).

<sup>†</sup>Source: [Hospitals' and Physicians' Handbook on Birth Registration and Fetal Death Reporting](#)

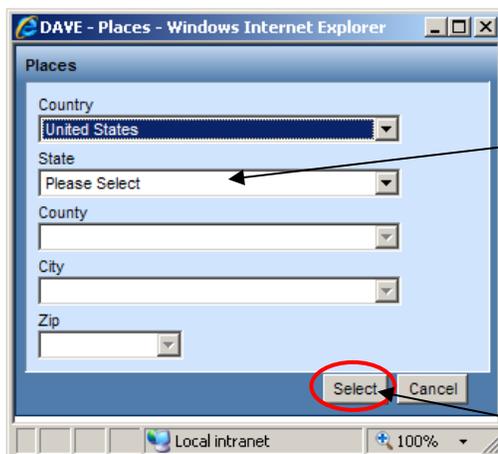
## II. USING THE PLACES TABLE

Entering addresses and birthplaces manually can lead to spelling mistakes and other data entry errors that can ultimately affect the mailing of a birth certificate and public health statistics. To avoid these errors, you should use the Places table to help you enter some or all of the fields for location variables.

To use the **Places table**, click the house icon and the Places table will display.



The Places table contains a separate drop down menu for Country, State, County, City, and ZIP. You must first select a country, before the State drop down menu will enable. Once you select a state, the County drop down menu will enable, and so forth. Once you have made all selections, click the Select button at the bottom of the Places Table. The system will then enter the information into the appropriate address or birthplace fields.



This level will not be enabled until you select an option for the level above.

Click the Select Button when you have finished making all selections.

The Places table prevents spelling mistakes and ensures that the Country, State, County, City, and ZIP code are all valid. This makes the address more accurate for mailing the birth certificate and the resulting data more useful to researchers and policy makers.

**If you do not see a Country, State, or City in the drop down menus in the Places table, you should double check that the location is valid. If valid, you can manually enter the name of the Country, State, or City in the appropriate field.**



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### III. 2009 LOCATION VARIABLE DATA QUALITY ISSUES

In 2009, the Office of Vital Statistics identified a large number of errors in location variables. These errors demonstrate how entering the data manually can lead to mistakes. The data quality issues and ways to use the Places table to improve reporting are outlined below. **All instructions for How to Improve Reporting apply to both Mother/Parent and Father/Parent Information.**

DATA ITEM(S)	ISSUE(S)	<b>HOW TO IMPROVE REPORTING</b> <i>For all data items, careful review of the Mother's Worksheet is necessary. This is a requirement for accurate data entry.</i>
<b>Mother/Parent's Usual Residence</b>	<p><b>New York City addresses were recognized as New York State addresses:</b></p> <p>For 2,269 records where the mother lived in one of the five New York City boroughs, the address was recognized as New York State due to data entry error in the <b>County</b> field. Some specific examples of data entry error include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For 697 records, the user entered Manhattan instead of selecting New York from the Places table. Many of these entries were also misspelled.</li><li>• For 1,561 records, the user entered NY or N.Y. instead of selecting New York from the Places table.</li></ul>	<p>Mother/Parent's Usual Residence is composed of multiple fields. We are focusing on the <b>County</b> field.</p> <p>For <b>County</b>, the mother usually lives in one of the five boroughs of NYC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the mother lives in <b>Manhattan</b>, select <b>New York</b> from the Places table (<b>DO NOT</b> enter Manhattan or NY).</li><li>• If the mother lives in the <b>Bronx</b>, select <b>Bronx</b> from the Places table.</li><li>• If the mother lives in <b>Brooklyn</b>, select <b>Kings</b> from the Places table.</li><li>• If the mother lives in <b>Queens</b>, select <b>Queens</b> from the Places table.</li><li>• If the mother lives in <b>Staten Island</b>, select <b>Richmond</b> from the Places table.</li></ul>



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DATA ITEM(S)	ISSUE(S)	<b>HOW TO IMPROVE REPORTING</b> <i>For all data items, careful review of the Mother's Worksheet is necessary. This is a requirement for accurate data entry.</i>
<b>Mother/Parent's Birthplace</b>	<p><b>EBRS did not recognize Mother/Parent's Country of Birth.</b></p> <p>For 838 records, mother's birthplace was not recognized by EBRS due to data entry errors and was therefore considered missing. Some specific examples of data entry error are outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For 276 records, the user entered a foreign country in the City or State field.</li> <li>• For 67 records, the user entered a foreign country in the Country field, and also entered something in the City and/or State fields.</li> <li>• For 90 records, the user entered a US city in the City field and left the State field blank.</li> <li>• For 40 records, the user entered a US state in the City field.</li> </ul>	<p>Mother's Birthplace is composed of a city, state, and country fields. When entering Mother's Birthplace, follow the guidelines below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the mother was born in the United States or a United States territory, select a city and state or territory from the City and State drop down menus in the Places table. Leave United States for the Country. <i>This includes Puerto Rico and Guam.</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the mother was born outside of the United States, select a different country from the Country drop down menu in the Places table and <b>leave all other fields blank.</b></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the mother did not fill out her birthplace on the Mother's worksheet, select Unknown from the Country, State, and City drop down menus in the Places table.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: For all cases, the Country field defaults to United States.</p>

**Questions? Contact Us!**

If you need assistance or have questions regarding birth data quality, please contact Melissa Gambatese in the Quality Improvement Unit at 212-788-4583 or [VitalQI@health.nyc.gov](mailto:VitalQI@health.nyc.gov). If you have questions regarding EBRS, please contact the EVERS Help Desk at 212-788-4575 or [EBRS@health.nyc.gov](mailto:EBRS@health.nyc.gov).