

# Writer guidelines

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*Texas Child Care Quarterly* offers practical and research-based articles about the care, development, and education of children from birth to age 8. It is intended primarily for early childhood teachers and in-home child care providers. Other readers include program administrators, high school vocational educators, parent educators, college and university students and instructors, and parents.

We encourage submissions from those who work in the field of early care and education. Articles selected for publication are considered a professional contribution. Writers are not compensated with fees or royalties.

We do not accept articles published elsewhere—either in print or online. Simultaneous submissions are discouraged. We do not accept fiction or poetry.

The best way to learn about writing for the journal is to read and study back issues, particularly the ones from the past two or three years.

## What we want

We look for articles that reflect the best knowledge and practices in early childhood education, as determined by organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Topics include child development theory, appropriate teaching practices for children from birth to age 8, school-family communication, health and safety, program administration, and professional development of teachers and caregivers. Articles may focus on a specific age group, such as infants and toddlers, preschoolers, or school-age children (up to age 8).

We welcome articles containing hands-on learning activities that teachers and caregivers can do with children to promote their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. Activities must:

- be appropriate to the age and developmental level of the targeted group,
- be inexpensive to conduct,
- support cooperative (rather than competitive) learning,
- value creative expression, and
- enhance self-confidence.

## How to query us

We encourage prospective writers to contact us with a query or an outline for a proposed article. A query gives us a better idea of the content and your writing style and can save you time if your proposal doesn't fit our needs. We are not averse to considering whole articles, however, if you prefer to work that way. We are also happy to discuss ideas for articles and willing to assist first-time writers in getting started.

Indicate your academic or professional experience in early childhood education or the article topic. If there is more than one writer, designate which one is the primary contact and include the person's day-time telephone number.

We respond to queries within a few days. If your idea sounds appropriate for the journal, we will give further guidance and a deadline for submitting the article.

## Writing the article

Articles range in length from 1,500 to 3,500 words.

Craft a first sentence or paragraph that grabs the reader's attention. A vignette or anecdote often serves the purpose well. Provide a rationale for the topic and an overview of recent research literature.

Decide on one or two main ideas that you want to communicate and develop them fully in the body of the article. Provide practical recommendations (how-to) for working with children and support your

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views and opinions with realistic examples drawn from the classroom. Consider using bulleted or numbered lists for tips and how-to suggestions.

End with a summary of the main points and a list of references or resources for adults and children.

Some writing tips:

- Use common words: “buy” instead of “purchase,” for example, and “use” instead of “utilize.”
- Write in a natural, conversational style: “Take children outdoors every day for physical activity” instead of “Physical movement in the outdoor environment should be integrated into the children’s daily regimen.”
- Write in the active voice. “Children followed the rules” instead of “The rules were followed by the children.”
- Use gender-neutral writing, except when referring to a specific male or female. Plural nouns and pronouns can often avoid the awkward “he/she” and “her/him” construction.
- Choose specific words over general words. Instead of “large box,” for example, write “refrigerator-sized box.”
- Prefer strong verbs such as “run,” “paint,” and “cry” over to-be verbs (*is, are, was, were*). “The child climbed onto the table” instead of “The child was on the table.”

For more writing tips, consult *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White.

## References and text citations

Writers are responsible for the accuracy of all statements. If you are quoting more than 40 words from copyrighted material, obtain written permission from the copyright holder before submitting the article.

Give sources for statements and statistics within the text by citing the author and date within parentheses. Use the complete citation in a list of references at the end of the article. Here are examples:

### Book

- Reference citation: Fishbaugh, Angela. 2011. *Celebrate Nature! Activities for Every Season*. St. Paul, Minn.: Redleaf Press.
- Text citation: (Fishbaugh 2011)
- Reference citation: Schickedanz, Judith A. 2008. *Increasing the Power of Instruction: Integration of Language, Literacy, and Math Across the Preschool Day*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for

the Education of Young Children.

- Text citation: (Schickedanz 2008)

### Journal article

- Reference citation: Siegel, D. 2006. Physical Fitness and Academic Achievement. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 77 (2).
- Text citation: (Siegel 2006)
- Reference citation: Rose, K.K. and J. Elicker. 2008. Parental decision making about child care. *Journal of Family Issues*, 29 (9), 1161-1184.
- Text citation: (Rose and Elicker 2008)

### Electronic source

- Reference citation: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2010. *Raising Healthy Children*. [www.cdc.gov/parents/infants/](http://www.cdc.gov/parents/infants/).
- Text citation: (CDC 2010)
- Reference citation: Guitar, B. and E.G. Conture. 2011. If you think your child is stuttering... Stuttering Foundation of America. [www.stutteringhelp.org](http://www.stutteringhelp.org).
- Text citation: (Guitar and Conture 2011)

For other types of sources or more information, consult *The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition*.

## Formatting your article

Prepare your article in Microsoft Word or compatible software. Do not send PDF files or embed graphics or photographs.

Prepare the article in plain text with no formatting like justified type, underlined or bold faced type, or other design features. Use italic for titles only.

Use a readable type font such as Arial or Times New Roman in 10- or 12-point size. Double space between paragraphs; do not indent. At the end of a sentence, put one space, not two, before beginning another sentence.

On the first page, write the article title and author’s name. Write subheads to indicate the article’s different sections. List references at the end. Include a brief biographical sketch. Two or three lines about your current position, education, and experience are sufficient.

## Accepting your article

We acknowledge receipt of articles by e-mail within a few days of receipt. We review and accept articles

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throughout the year. In some cases, we will send an article to early childhood education professionals or topic experts for blind review.

We review articles for content, appropriateness for our readers, and writing style. We may ask for revisions or additions before acceptance. If the article meets our guidelines, we will e-mail an acceptance message and author agreement form.

We may choose not to accept an article for a variety of reasons. It may not be aimed at our target audience, the content may not reflect sound education practice, or we may have addressed the same topic within the past two or three years. Non-acceptance does not necessarily reflect negatively on your work.

Once we accept an article, we edit it for grammar, punctuation, and style, using the *AP Stylebook* (Associated Press) to determine such matters as capitalization and abbreviations. We use *Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Ed.*, for spelling. We send the edited article to you for final approval before we post the article on the website. ■