

Journal of Child and Family Studies

Quick Guide for Manuscript Preparation *for Authors*

Updated June 2021

Dear Author:

Thank you for considering the *Journal of Child and Family Studies* (JCFS) as an outlet for your work. We prepared this Quick Guide as a reminder on style, formatting, and more. Adhering to these guidelines can speed the review of your work and, should it be accepted, its movement into production. Contained in this document are a general introduction, tips for manuscript preparation, and a checklist to assist you in submitting your paper.

JCFS follows the guidelines provided in the 7th edition of the APA Publication Manual; in addition, there are detailed author guidelines at the journal website: JCFS author guidelines. Please ensure adherence with respect to: format (numbering, tables, figures, etc.); organization (headings and levels of headings); writing style, grammar, and punctuation; bias free language; presentation of analyses; and citations and references.

Your manuscript includes seven main sections: (1) title, (2) abstract, (3) highlights, (4) introduction, (5) methods, (6) discussion, and (7) references, along with tables and figures as appropriate. Your paper should include a clear and cogent rationale for the study undertaken, articulate research aims, questions, and/or hypotheses, and state with clarity the methods and analytic approaches used. Please make clear how your work fills an existing gap in the literature and informs the field. Each paper makes clear the procedures for protection of human research participants (e.g., review and approval by the researcher's cognizant Institutional Review Board, International Standards).

Please adhere to APA guidelines for bias free language. Ensure that descriptions of participants and disaggregation of findings by human characteristics (such as culture, race, ethnicity), meaningfully align with the topic, context, and questions at hand. For example, if you disaggregate your findings by race, provide a compelling rationale for doing so and a sensitive examination of the import of differences in outcomes or findings. The introduction should provide sufficient rationale for any disaggregation or subgroup analysis conducted and the discussion section should include appropriate exploration of findings.

Please align the results and discussion sections with your research aims, questions, and/or hypotheses. JCFS translates the latest research results into practical applications for providers, program implementers, and policymakers; accordingly, please include these elements in the discussion section of your paper.

Authorship of papers submitted to JCFS follow the criteria in the APA Publication Manual and the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. All authors carry the responsibility of ensuring adherence to these principles and practices. Changes in authorship following initial submission require written approval of all authors and the Action Editor. This requirement applies to additions, deletions, and change in author order.

Tips for Authors: Manuscript Submission

General

1. *Length.* The length of a manuscript should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages of text, references, tables, and figures in 10-point font. Consider submitting additional content as Supplementary Material that can be electronically linked to the published article.

Style

2. *Copy editing and proofing.* In all circumstances, manuscripts need to be copy edited and carefully proofed. Style should be fully aligned with the current edition of the APA style guide. Reviewers, Associate Editors, and Action Editors are not responsible to proof or copy edit papers and the journal simply lacks the resources to do this. In addition to the APA style guide, there are numerous online resources to assist you with APA format, including the [OWL at Purdue](#). Papers that are not aligned may be subject to a “desk reject,” e.g., not sent out for review.
3. *English language editing.* For editors and reviewers to accurately assess the work presented in your manuscript you need to ensure the English language is of sufficient quality to be understood. This is a common challenge and the journal unfortunately lacks the resources to assist extensively. We refer authors to the resources on the Springer website (author instructions) and sometimes recommend the use of an English language that you obtain the services of a professional editor who is acquainted with technical (research) writing styles
4. *Paragraphs.* Please do not use single-sentence paragraphs.
5. *Paper Title:* The most effective titles (more likely to attract readers and citations) are of medium length and complexity. Long, complex, and/or jargon-laden titles are not read or cited as much as their more accessible counterparts. Capture the most important or salient aspects of the work and understand that not all variables or study components can be represented in the title.
6. *Abstract.* Include an abstract of up to 250 words in a single paragraph, in line with the APA publication guide. Do not include abbreviations or statistical notations.
7. *Keywords.* Provide 5 keywords, separated by a comma, directly below the abstract.
8. *Highlights.* JCFS publishes highlights for each paper. These are accessible, high level summaries of the import or impact of papers. Highlights capture the key, top-line messages of your research, for example, novel results or methods, implications. Highlights are included directly below the keywords on the same page as the Abstract. Please format highlights as 3 to 5 bullet points (approximately 125 characters, including spaces, per bullet point). Please be sure that your highlights conform to character limits and provide an “at a glance” understanding of your work, methods, and implications. Your first highlight should provide a general introduction to the study and make clear the context and sample. Please reflect the aims, findings, and implications of the study.

9. *Page Numbers.* Number the pages of the manuscript, with the Cover Page as page 1, Abstract as page 2, Introduction as page 3 and so on. Please do not number lines, as the Springer portal does this automatically once you submit a manuscript.

References, Citations, and Quotes

10. *Citations and References.* Please follow APA style for all references and citations and check carefully that each citation appears in the reference section.
11. *Footnotes.* This journal does not allow footnotes in text. Please use APA style citations.
12. *Quotes and Italics.* Quotes and italics make the text hard to read and can weaken impact. Words and phrases should be in italics only on their first occurrence in the text and not thereafter. Quotes should not be in italics.

Discussion Section

13. All manuscripts need to include an evaluation of practical implications (clinical, policy, training or otherwise) as a separate paragraph(s) in the discussion section. In addition, a separate paragraph(s) should also discuss limitations in study design or execution that may limit interpretation of the data and generalizability of the findings.
14. JCFS believes in openness and transparency in science. We encourage authors to meet the standards of the Peer Reviewers Openness Initiative (<https://opennessinitiative.org/>). That is, authors are encouraged to make publicly available data and related research materials, e.g., online or as supplemental materials attached to the published paper. This may include stimulus materials, instructions and programs, non-copyrighted measures, and details for interpreting any files or code, and how to compile and run any software programs used in the study. Include the location of these materials in a statement such as "Data Availability Statement: All data are available at the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/6t7c4/>)."

The Review Process

When a manuscript is submitted, the editorial desk assesses its fit with the journal aims and scope, its general conformity with APA style, and overall quality. The editorial team decides whether to move the paper forward in the review process or to "desk reject." The editors reserve the right to desk reject papers that do not appear aligned with journal aims and scope, are not prepared/submitted in keeping with the journal's formatting and quality standards, and if they appear to be otherwise flawed in such a way that further review is not indicated.

When a paper moves forward, the editorial team either recruits an Associate Editor (AE) to manage the review or invites potential reviewers directly. Expert peer reviewers read the manuscript and make recommendations to the Editors regarding the paper's suitability and quality. This process enables authors to receive valuable feedback and guidance that ultimately improves the work. The editorial team integrates the reviewer feedback and author response in determining the disposition of a paper under review.

The editorial team considers with care the feedback provided by reviewers and works to integrate and reconcile it across reviewers. However, the action editor's decision (taken by an editor-in-chief or senior associate editor) may not always be consistent with reviewer appraisals and recommendations. The editors are at liberty to weigh the value of reviewer input and to determine the disposition of papers accordingly. Please be assured that all of the editorial staff aims to treat each paper with care even as some will not succeed in the peer review process.

15. *Timeline.* Should you be invited to revise and resubmit a paper, the Editorial Manager system will automatically generate a due date by which the revision is expected; revisions not received in accordance with the timeline are considered withdrawn by the author. Any subsequent submission is considered new and is assigned a different manuscript number. If you need an extension, reach out to Springer or the Action Editor.
16. *Response to Reviews.* Peer reviews are the primary means by which the value and quality of research papers are examined. The review process is a time honored one; reviewers commit their time and expertise to provide a valuable service to the field. Authors are required to respond to every point raised by each reviewer. Unless otherwise directed by the Editor or AE, the response to reviews directly addresses the questions raised, in turn, providing page numbers for modifications made and including in the response the additions or edits made. Authors make the changes requested by reviewers or provide a rationale as to why those changes are not made.
17. *Editorial Decisions.* The appropriate forum for responding to reviewer input is in the response letter submitted along with a revised paper. We discourage authors from moving outside the formal review process and assure you that the editorial team is well positioned to consider all reviewer feedback and to act accordingly. Editorial decisions are final.
18. *Automated emails:* Please note that the Editorial Manager system sends out numerous automated emails, prompts, and reminders, including due dates.

Again, we thank authors for considering JCFS as an outlet for your work. Additionally, we are enormously grateful to the Associate Editors and Reviewers whose voluntary service make possible the publication of the journal and provide enormously valuable feedback. We know how much work it takes to bring your work to the point of submission and we value your efforts.

Sincerely,

Cheri J. Shapiro, Ph.D. & Anne F. Farrell, Ph.D.

Editors-in-Chief

Jackie Nelson, PhD.

Senior Associate Editor

Phoebe Haney
Editorial Manager

Gita Connolly, Grace Finley, Raya Kennep
Editorial Assistants

JCFS Author Check List for Manuscript Submission

Before considering the paper ready for submission, be sure your paper conforms to journal requirements. Consult this page: <https://www.springer.com/journal/10826/submission-guidelines>.

- After consulting those instructions and before submitting your paper, ensure that you have prepared a statement addressing compliance with ethical standards: conflicts of interest, protection of human research participants, and informed consent.
- The **title page** should include a section called Declarations, to include:
 - (1) Funding, (2) conflicts of interest/competing interests, (3) ethics approval, (4) consent, (5) data, (6) materials and/or code availability and (7) author contribution statements. The Springer submission page contains sample language and a template for these elements.
- The article title in Editorial Manager (EM) and in the paper are identical and formatted in sentence case (not all capital letters).
- Unmasked manuscript title page includes:
 - Title (maximum of 15 words; effective titles are succinct and reflect only the most important concepts/constructs)
 - Full names of authors and affiliations
 - Corresponding author information
- Separate abstract page includes:
 - Abstract (single paragraph; no sub-headings; maximum of 250 words; no abbreviations)
 - 5 keywords
 - 3-5 bullet point highlights. Be sure that highlights conform to character limits and provide an "at a glance" understanding of your work, methods, and implications. The first highlight should provide a general introduction to the study and make clear the context and sample.
- Manuscript sections, headings, and subheadings conform to APA style, 7th Edition.
- Manuscript pages are numbered (do not number lines; EM does this automatically).
- As noted above, the Title page of the submission includes the appropriate declarations.
- References and citations are in APA 7th edition style (no footnotes or end notes).
 - Example, *in-text*:

The stress associated with homelessness may negatively influence parenting behaviors (Coley et al., 2015).
 - Example, *reference list*: (hanging indent, includes DOI)

Coley, R. L., Lynch, A. D., & Kull, M. (2015). Early exposure to environmental chaos and children's physical and mental health. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 32*, 94–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.03.001>
- Manuscripts should be no more than 30 pages, including tables, figures, and references (excluding supplementary materials). Manuscripts must be free of tracked changes and highlights.
- Tables and figures should be included following the reference list; authors should indicate where they would like these illustrations placed upon publication with written indicators throughout the manuscript (for example: "place Table 1 about here").
- Manuscript should be double-spaced using standard 8" x 11" paper dimensions and 10 pt. font

size and a default typeface (recommended fonts: Times, Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial) with 1" margins on all sides.

- The paper should discuss limitations in study design or execution that may limit interpretation of the data and generalizability of the findings.
- Systematic and scoping reviews, as well as meta-analyses, should follow PRISMA guidelines.

Please ensure the following are addressed:

- Does the paper have a clear theoretical and conceptual frame?
- Have you articulated how your study advances knowledge and fills extant gaps in the literature?
- Does your population of interest involve children and/or families?
- Have you conveyed the cultural and historical context for your study, as appropriate?
- Is the work translational?
- How does the paper contribute to an understanding of child and/or family well-being (in alignment with JCFS aims and scope)?
- Have you clearly articulated the practical and/or policy implications of your work?

Revisions

- Revised papers must include a file with individual responses to each specific reviewer and editor comment (can be line by line or as a table).
- Please respond point-by-point to each comment and include page references and quotes for the edited/revised material and/or justification for not making changes suggested. This enables the editorial staff and reviewers to quickly and efficiently appraise the extent to which you consider their feedback. Please know that author response letters that fail to provide point-by-point replies are less than fully responsive to feedback and complicate the review process.

We look forward to seeing your paper and appreciate you entrusting your work with JCFS.