Quick Guide for Manuscript Preparation

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 and formatting. Adhering to these guidelines can speed the review of your work and, should it be accepted, its movement into production.

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 a title, abstract, highlights, introduction, methods, discussion, and references, along with tables and figures as appropriate. It 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. 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.

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 databased manuscript is 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. 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. **Paragraphs.** Please do not use single-sentence paragraphs.

4. **Abstract.** Write an abstract of up to 250 words in a single paragraph, in line with the APA publication guide.

5. **Keywords.** Provide 5 keywords, separated by a comma, directly below the abstract.

6. **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 (maximum 85 characters, including spaces, per bullet point).

7. **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**

8. **Citations and References.** Please follow APA style for all references and citations and check carefully that each citation appears in the reference section.

9. **Footnotes.** This journal does not allow footnotes in text.

10. **Quotes and Italics.** Quotes and italics make the text hard to read and 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**

11. 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.

12. 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 “desk reject” the paper or move it forward in the review process. 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.

13. **Timeline.** Should you be invited to revise and resubmit a paper, the Action Editor will provide 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.

14. **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.

15. **Editorial Decisions.** The appropriate forum for responding to reviewer input is in the response letter submitted (as a separate document) 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.

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.

Sincerely,

**Cheri J. Shapiro, Ph.D. & Anne F. Farrell, Ph.D.**
Editors-in-Chief

**Cara Karter**
Editorial Manager

*Journal of Child and Family Studies*

*Updated: February 2020*