**Child Life Focus**

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**Purpose:** *Child Life Focus* encourages submissions that promote the development of the child life profession, through original research, conceptual and practical perspectives, effective assessment and intervention methodologies, theoretical articles, innovative service delivery models, and substantive reviews of issues relevant to child life practice. Each *Focus* contribution helps to increase the knowledge and use of evidence-based practice by child life professionals, reinforcing the validity of child life theory and practice.

Before you begin working on your article, please review the general writing and submission guidelines outlined in *Writing for the ACLP Bulletin: An Introduction*, and be sure to contact the Managing Editor at bulletin@childlife.org with an article proposal. For complete information, please visit: [http://www.childlife.org/files/WritingfortheBulletin-Overview.pdf](http://www.childlife.org/files/WritingfortheBulletin-Overview.pdf)

In addition to following the general guidelines outlined in Writing for the ACLP Bulletin, all *Focus* submissions should:

- **Be relevant to continuing child life education and development**
  - Address an important child life issue, problem or subject
  - Appeal to a wide audience of child life professionals and students
  - Contribute to the quality of continuing child life education, staff development, or training
  - Expand previous knowledge

- **Demonstrate evidence of scholarship,** including:
  - Sufficient statement of problem or subject
  - Appropriate identification of author’s assumptions and frame of reference
  - Sufficient methodology
  - Knowledge of relevant literature
  - Consistent treatment of the problem statement, content, and conclusions

**Topic Suggestions:**

*Child Life Focus* welcomes submissions in the following areas:

- Ongoing or completed research
- Current trends in child life, child development, education and other fields relevant to child life theory and practice
- Literature and research reviews that are evaluated for their impact within child life practice
- Articles based on an Annual Conference session proposal or past presentation

**Style Guidelines:** ACLP adheres to American Psychological Association (APA) style in all published materials. Please review the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for detailed information on how to prepare an article for publication, including guidelines on properly formatting references and citations and presenting data in tables and figures.
**Blinded Copy:** Because *Focus* articles are subject to anonymous review by members of the Focus Review Board, the author should "blind" the manuscript by removing any information that could reveal his or her identity (this includes organization affiliation). This information will be incorporated back into the manuscript by the Managing Editor after the review is complete. Each article should be accompanied by a separate cover sheet with the following information:

- Article title
- Word count
- Name, credentials, title, organization affiliation, and address for each contributing author
- Contact phone number(s) and email(s)

**Word Count (Article Length):**

As *Focus* articles are in-depth explorations of a topic, word counts will be higher than a typical *Bulletin* article. Articles should not exceed 7,000 words, but lengths will likely vary by topic. For example,

- 1750 words will yield approximately a two-page article
- 3500 words will yield approximately a four-page article
- 7000 words will yield approximately an eight-page article

Pictures, tables, or other figures are not included in this word count and will take up additional space. Tables can be formatted for publication during our design process, but graphic images that are to be published as submitted should be submitted in the proper format:

- PDF or PNG format preferred
- Minimum 72 dpi resolution
- RGB color mode

If you intend to incorporate graphic elements into your article, consult with the Managing Editor at bulletin@childlife.org before the submission deadline.

**Submission Checklist:** Before you submit your final draft, we recommend that you ask one or more colleagues to review and help you edit your article. Please email the following files to the Managing Editor at bulletin@childlife.org by the submission deadline.

- **Cover Sheet** (should include title, word count, author(s) information: name, credentials, title, institutional affiliation, address, daytime phone, email)
- **Manuscript** (blinded)
- **Separate Graphic/Artwork files** (if applicable)
- **Signed Submission and Copyright Agreement Letter** (available for download at http://www.childlife.org/files/BulletinSubmissionLetter.pdf). Email a scanned version or send to the Managing Editor by fax (301-881-7092).
Submission deadlines for consideration of each issue are as follows:

- Winter: Due October 1, published in January
- Spring: Due January 1, published in April
- Summer: Due April 1, published in July
- Fall: Due July 1, published in October

Please note: Submissions are reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received. Due to space limitations, the ACLP Bulletin editorial panel does not guarantee placement of an accepted article in a particular issue, and may at its discretion hold an article for publication in a future issue.

What happens next?

After you submit your Focus article, the Managing Editor will review the manuscript to ensure that all of the basic submission and style requirements have been met. Once this has been verified, the Managing Editor will send a letter of acknowledgement and pass all files along to the Executive Editor for further review. After a review period of approximately 1-2 weeks, the Executive Editor will decide whether to pass the article along to the Focus Review Board for a blind review. At this point, you will be contacted with further details about the process. The Focus Review Board will review your article over a period of several weeks, and will provide the Executive Editor with their feedback and recommendations.

Soon afterward, the evaluations will be summarized and forwarded to you with a decision on the status of the manuscript. Manuscripts are assigned one of four possible recommendations:

1. Accepted as-is with only minor changes
2. Recommended for acceptance with minor revisions
3. Recommended revision/rewrite and resubmit with suggested revisions for review
4. Submission declined

Authors of those manuscripts which are assigned minor changes or minor revisions will have approximately one week to make the changes and submit the revised manuscript for publication. Authors of manuscripts that receive a recommendation to revise/rewrite and resubmit will be invited to review the suggested changes and submit an updated article at a later date.

Tips on Writing for Child Life Focus

A format that may help you organize your thoughts and materials is the standard outline for writing a research paper or writing a report about research results. If the article is not about research or a clinical intervention, authors can use only the Introduction, Literature and Research Review, and Discussion sections as described below. The basic process is to ask questions, collect evidence to support or refute differing answers, and draw conclusions as to which answers are the most valid. For more guidance on how to write a research paper, see Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) at the following link:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/index.html
1. **Introduction**
   - Statement of problem or issue
   - Purpose of the article, research study or clinical intervention
   - The discussion, research or assessment questions
   - Gaps in the literature as an argument for the pursuit for the research topic
   - Significance of the study/intervention to the body of knowledge in the area

2. **Literature and Research Review**
   You should always start your clinical or evidence-based article by conducting a literature/research review. You need to be aware of underlying foundations for the concepts you are discussing, and have a working knowledge of the most recent information available on your subject. Take careful notes on all relevant resources, and write down the reference information to include in the list at the end of your article. You may need to cite the references in your text.

   **Process**
   - First, define your issue more clearly and place it in the wider context of the body or work on the issue
   - Explore the literature/research on the topic to find work that agrees or disagrees with your issue. It can also provide you with information beyond your academic and clinical experience. Has anyone already addressed your issue? Is your issue still worth revisiting, or is it unique? If it has been addressed before, do you think it is common knowledge among child life professionals?
   - As you search, themes and subthemes will be identified, which will provide the context for your issue, and will help you refine the focus of your article.
   - While books are important, journals are generally more current in their treatment of the issues. Unless you are providing the history or theoretical basis of your issue, you shouldn’t review literature that is older than 8-10 years. If searching online, adding the word “journal” to your topic will bring you more scholarly search results. For additional information on accessing research, visit: [http://www.childlife.org/Resource%20Library/AccessingResearch.cfm](http://www.childlife.org/Resource%20Library/AccessingResearch.cfm)
   - Write a review or summary of the relevant literature and research, with subheadings as needed.

3. **Methods and Procedures**
   - Ensure empirical soundness by making sure that the methods used for testing your hypothesis will truly test your research question
   - Describe the research methodology or the procedures of the clinical intervention
   - Someone reading this section should be able to replicate your procedures in their setting
   - Include any data analysis that was used

4. **Results**
   - Describe the way the data was analyzed
• State any results, outcomes and effects from data collection and/or the clinical intervention

5. Discussion
• Restate the general purpose of the article, research, or intervention. Then discuss the findings as they relate to the body of knowledge relevant to this issue. End with recommendations for future research or implications for practice.

If you have any questions about writing or formatting your manuscript, or CLC’s editorial process, please contact the Managing Editor at bulletin@childlife.org.

For more complete submission information, please visit: http://www.childlife.org/files/WritingfortheBulletin-Overview.pdf