The Journal of Child Life: Psychosocial Theory and Practice

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Purpose: The Journal of Child Life 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, descriptions of innovative service delivery models, and substantive reviews of issues relevant to child life practice. Each contribution to The Journal of Child Life 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 ACLP, available on the ACLP website. It is helpful to contact the managing editor at journal@childlife.org with an article proposal; often the editors can provide helpful guidance about the scope or timing of your writing project.

All submissions to The Journal of Child Life 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

Article Suggestions: The Journal of Child Life welcomes submissions in the following areas:
  - Quantitative research
  - Qualitative research
• Substantive, systematic literature reviews
• Program development, with pre- and post-implementation data
• Analysis of theory as applied to child life

**Style Guidelines:** ACLP adheres to American Psychological Association (APA) style in all published materials. Please review the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*, 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. Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (Purdue OWL: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/1/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/1/)) is a helpful resource for APA formatting.

**Blinding:** Because *The Journal of Child Life* articles are subject to anonymous review by members of the Journal Review Board, the author must 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)
- Three keywords that describe the manuscript’s topic

**Word Count (Article Length):** *The Journal of Child Life* articles are in-depth explorations of a topic, but lengths will likely vary by topic. Articles should not exceed 7000 words.

**Graphics:** Tables, graphs, pictures, or other figures are not included in the above word count. 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, JPG, or PNG format preferred
- Minimum 200 dpi resolution (300 preferred)
- RGB color mode

If you have questions about the graphic elements you plan to use in your article, please consult with the managing editor at journal@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 journal@childlife.org.
✓ **Cover Sheet** (see above)

✓ **Manuscript with abstract** (blinded)

✓ **Separate graphic/artwork files** (if applicable)

✓ **Signed Submission and Copyright Agreement Letter** (available for download on the ACLP website). Email a scanned version to the managing editor at journal@childlife.org.

Please note: Submissions are reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received. Due to space limitations, the 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. Issues of *The Journal of Child Life* are published biannually in March and September of each year.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

After you submit your article to *The Journal of Child Life*, 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 an email of acknowledgement and pass all files along to the executive editor for further review. The editorial team will evaluate the article, and if appropriate for the journal, will pass it along to the review board for review. After a review period of several weeks, the executive editor will contact you with the review board’s feedback and recommendations and give you further instructions on how to proceed. If the article is not deemed appropriate for the journal, you will be contacted with feedback.

Manuscripts that undergo review 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 accepted with minor revisions will have approximately two weeks 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.

ACLP members are able to earn PDUs by reading *The Journal of Child Life* articles and successfully completing a quiz related to the content of the article.
Once an article is accepted for publication, authors will be asked to write and submit five multiple choice and/or true/false questions related to the content of the article. The author must indicate the child life domain addressed in the manuscript: Professional Responsibility (Ethics, if applicable), Assessment, or Intervention (see the exam content outline on the ACLP website for details).

**TIPS ON WRITING A PROFESSIONAL PAPER**

A format that may help you organize your thoughts and materials is the standard outline for writing a research paper presented below. If the article is not about research or a clinical intervention, authors can use just the Abstract, 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.

1. **Abstract**
   The abstract should provide a brief synopsis of your paper and clearly state the paper’s purpose and significance. The abstract should be brief, approximately 100-250 words in length.

2. **Introduction**
   - Begin with a statement of problem or issue.
   - Explain the purpose of the article, research study, or clinical intervention.
   - Present the discussion, research, or assessment questions
   - Address gaps in the literature as an argument for the pursuit of the research topic.
   - Specify the significance of the study/intervention to the body of knowledge in the area and to the field of child life.

3. **Literature and Research Review**
   All clinical or evidence-based articles should begin with 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 the subject.
   - First, define your issue 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. The literature review can also provide you with information beyond your academic and clinical experience. Has anyone already addressed your issue? Is your issue 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 the literature, 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, most of the literature you review should be less than 8-10 years old. If searching online, adding the word “journal” to your topic will bring you more scholarly search results. For additional information on accessing research, visit: https://www.childlife.org/resources/for-child-life-specialists/child-life-resource-library
• Write a review or summary of the relevant literature and research, with subheadings as needed. Using APA format, cite any information or ideas you gained from your reading of the literature and include all cited sources in your reference list.

4. Methods and Procedures
• Describe the research methodology or the procedures of the clinical intervention.
• Be very detailed. Someone reading this section should be able to replicate your procedures in their setting.
• Include a description of any instruments that were used to collect data, as well as the data analysis techniques used.

5. Results
• State any results, outcomes, and effects from data collection and/or the clinical intervention.

6. 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.

7. Conclusion
• Tie your content back to the field of child life.

For more guidance on how to write a research paper, see Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) at the following link: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/research_papers/index.html If you have any questions about writing or formatting your manuscript or The Journal of Child Life editorial process, please contact the managing editor at journal@childlife.org.
SPECIFIC COLUMNS

Authors writing general articles for The Journal of Child Life can use the above information to guide the process. There are also specific columns that recur in each issue of the journal. Details on these columns are listed below.

Point/CounterPoint

“Point/CounterPoint” is a feature that pairs opposing viewpoints to discuss a dilemma or issue related to child life practice, policy, or theory. Each “Point/CounterPoint” submission should consist of two written pieces that present different perspectives on the issue.

Content: Each submission should include a central issue, dilemma, or question, discussed through two articles that present differing perspectives. The articles should have different authors, but each piece can have more than one author.

• Because this is an opinion piece, feel free to write in the first person and draw on your experience to support your point. That being said, research and evidence-based practice can also strengthen an argument.
• Interested writers may choose an issue or dilemma that is of interest, or articles may be solicited by the editorial team as relevant issues emerge from the ACLP Forum or other more informal avenues. Once a central issue or dilemma is chosen, a one-paragraph proposal should be sent to journal@childlife.org for review. Knowing about work underway helps us to plan cohesive issues of the publication, as well as avoid duplication of effort that may occur if multiple authors write about the same issues.
• If you have an idea for an article, but don’t know of an author to write the opposing view, please contact the editors at journal@childlife.org for possible suggestions. As you’re writing, it may be helpful to speak with the author supporting the opposing view to make sure that you are paralleling one another’s ideas and to give feedback on your work.
• Once you have written your article, we recommend that you ask one or more colleagues to review and help edit your work before you submit your final draft.

Word count: 750 to 1250 words.

Research Corner

“Research Corner” is a recurring column that highlights research efforts in the child life community with the goal of promoting continued research and scholarship in the profession.

Content: Because “Research Corner” is a feature that highlights the process of doing research rather than the results, variation in the format of individual articles is expected, and can include (but is not limited to):
• Description of an ongoing child life research project and how it came to fruition
• An interview with a child life specialist currently conducting research
• Tips and tricks gathered from a particular child life research group
• A spotlight on a recently published child life article (without reprinting)
• Highlighting a particular research stumbling block and how a particular researcher overcame it
• Research Q&A with a particular child life researcher
• Word count: 750 to 1250 words.

Media Reviews:

Media reviews published in *The Journal of Child Life* are an excellent way to increase the exposure of ACLP members to resources that may enhance their child life practice. Such resources may include articles, books, movies, podcasts, etc. Resources reviewed in this column should be items that are primarily aimed at child life professionals and add to their knowledge base, their understanding of an issue, or their toolkit of interventions, and not resources that specialists would primarily recommend for patient and caregiver use.

Content:
• A media review for *The Journal of Child Life* should be a critical analysis of the resource and evaluation of its usefulness for the child life community. Its main purpose is not to summarize, but to provide information about what the reader might gain, and what it contributes to the overall body of knowledge.
• Media reviews in *The Journal of Child Life* should not be undertaken with the intention of promoting one’s own work or the work of a colleague or friend. Media reviews are intended to provide an unbiased look at a potential resource.
• Word count: 750 to 1000 words

Process:
Before beginning to write, it is helpful to reach out to *The Journal of Child Life* editorial team. Knowing what media reviews are underway helps in planning cohesive issues of the publication, as well as avoiding duplication of effort that may occur if multiple reviewers write about the same resource. To do this, please contact the managing editor at journal@childlife.org.

As you delve into the media resource, keep in mind:
• A good review begins with more than one thorough reading or exposure to the resource, with a different eye than you might use if you were reading for enjoyment or information. It is important to have some background knowledge about the topic under discussion so that the work under review can be put into context.
• When identifying a media resource for the purpose of review, look for (and take notes on) the stated purpose of the book, the organization of the
material, the writing style of the author, and your impressions of how well the author conveys the message.

- Mark passages that may be useful to reference as you are making your critique of the resource. If you see areas that are illustrative of particular strengths, weaknesses, or particular patterns that you would like to point out to your reader, make note of them as you explore the resource.

For a useful worksheet to organize information as you read a book, see: https://www.journalchiroed.com/doi/pdf/10.7899/1042-5055-24.1.57

Points to consider when writing the review:

- It may be useful to provide some brief information about the author or resource creator and his or her background. Does the individual have a certain point of view that colors the way the resource is presented?
- How is the resource organized? Does this seem to you like a logical way to present the information?
- What is the author or creator of the resource’s purpose in sharing the material? Do you think those goals were met with the finished product? Do you see any areas that were overlooked or left insufficiently covered?
- Remember that being critical does not necessarily mean being negative. You do not need to search out faults in a book to balance an overwhelmingly positive review. On the other hand, if you provide nothing but praise, your reader may not think you read the resource with a critical eye.
- What resources has the author or creator of the resource used? Evaluate the quality of these. Are they adequate to support the arguments the author or creator of the resource is making?
- Think about the writing style. How did this contribute to or detract from the book?
- How does this resource add to the body of knowledge about working with children in a health care setting? Does it make a direct contribution to child life practice? Does it make a significant contribution in an indirect way? How does it compare to similar works?
- Does the media resource have any other strengths or weaknesses?

Structuring your written review: Your first paragraph should introduce the form and function of your review and provide information about the media resource. Try to describe the media resource, rather than summarizing it. Your introductory paragraph will include your thesis statement, which should include a summary of your judgment about the media resource, its relevance for the reader, and for child life practice. The body of your article should support your thesis by providing evidence of why this media resource is or is not useful for the child life community. Generally, this part of the review should be three to five paragraphs long, with each paragraph dealing with a single aspect of your argument about the media resource. Look back at the points to consider above, and discuss those you found useful in evaluating the work (or other thoughts you have) along with supporting statements to back up your evaluations. You may include a quote
or two from the media resource if it can be used to support a point you are making, but do so carefully so as not to detract from the purpose of your review. Close with a paragraph containing a summary or restatement of your evaluation of the media resource and its application to the child life profession. Help your reader tie together all of the evidence that you have presented in your review to come up with a conclusion about the relevance of the media resource for them.

For a sample book review please see: