

# Author Guidelines

## **Purpose of *Exceptional Children***

*Exceptional Children*, an official journal of The Council for Exceptional Children, publishes original research and analyses that focus on the education and development of exceptional infants, toddlers, children, youth, and adults. This includes descriptions of research, research reviews, methodological reviews of the literature, data-based position papers, and policy analyses. *Exceptional Children* publishes quantitative, qualitative, and single-subject design studies.

Articles published in *Exceptional Children* must have implications for research, practice, or policy in special or gifted education. Although *Exceptional Children* publishes research studies that examine the effectiveness of specific interventions, it does not publish descriptions of instructional procedures or classroom materials, accounts of personal experiences, letters to the editor, book or test reviews, and single case studies. Nondatabased reports on innovative techniques, programs, or models as well as studies involving a pretest-posttest only design with no comparison condition are also not published in *Exceptional Children*. Investigations involving questionnaires and survey are generally not published unless the sample is representative of the population being studied.

## **Types of Articles That *Exceptional Children* Publishes**

The Journal primarily publishes five types of articles:

*Research Studies* report a qualitative, large-group quantitative, or single-subject design study. Effect sizes should be reported for quantitative studies.

*Research Reviews* involve the analysis and integration of research in one or more areas. Reviews must be comprehensive and critical. Whenever possible, effect sizes for individual studies should be reported.

*Methodological Reviews* systematically examine the methodological strengths and weaknesses of a specific body of literature (e.g., a methodological review of the soundness of research on teaching phonological awareness). This can include a methodological analysis of qualitative, quantitative, and single-subject design studies.

*Data-Based Position Papers* address an important issue (practical or theoretical) in special or gifted education. This involves analyzing and integrating the existing research literature to provide a balanced and scholarly examination of the issue.

*Policy Analyses* include critical analyses and research related to public policy that impact the education of exceptional infants, toddlers, children, youth, and adults.

## **Writing for Exceptional Children**

Articles published in *Exceptional Children* are typically 25 to 35 pages in length (double-spaced pages with 1 inch margins and 12 font type). Occasionally, an accepted manuscript may exceed 35 pages.

While *Exceptional Children* is a scholarly, research journal, its articles are read by a much broader audience than just researchers and graduate students. This includes school administrators, state department personnel, service providers, teachers, and parents. Therefore, articles written for *Exceptional Children* must be developed with this broader audience in mind. Each article must be clear and concise, providing enough general information so that the lay reader can understand the issues or questions addressed, what was done, and the basic findings and recommendations. Authors should avoid educational jargon whenever possible, and each article must address implications for practice.

Authors must also provide enough specific information about their methodology so that their work can be replicated by other researchers. The participants in research studies must be appropriately described, as such description is critical to the science and practice of special education (see Rosenberg et al., 1992 in *Learning Disability Quarterly*, volume 15, pages 65-70 for guidelines on standards for describing research participants). In research articles, adequate evidence on the reliability and validity of tests, measures, or instruments must be provided. For intervention studies, evidence that treatments were implemented as intended should be provided as well. Authors must further address implications for research, indicating what needs to be done next.

## **Manuscript Requirements**

Manuscripts submitted to *Exceptional Children* are only reviewed if they meet the following criteria:

Content of the article is original, and it has not previously been published (in whole or in part). When submitting a manuscript for review, authors must indicate in their cover letter, if any part of the data on which the article depends has been published elsewhere or is part of another manuscript submitted for publication. Authors must also indicate if the data for their study is part of a larger data set, describing how this study differs from other investigations drawn from the same data set.

All of the authors agree to submit the article to *Exceptional Children*. This must be indicated in the cover letter.

Manuscripts are accepted for review with the understanding that the same work is not presently under review elsewhere. This must be acknowledged in the cover letter.

While under review (until authors receive word of a decision from *Exceptional Children*), the journal has exclusive options on possible publication. The manuscript should not be submitted elsewhere during this time.

The format of the manuscript conforms to the standards in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition, 2001), with two exceptions:

- (1) no footnotes should be used
- (2) reproductions of figures (rather than professionally prepared figures) may be sent for the review process.

Language in the article conforms to the recommendations outlined in Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities (Research and Training Center on Independent Living, 5th edition, 1996).

Four copies of the manuscript are mailed to the Editor. Each copy must include all tables and figures. The first page of the manuscript contains the running head, title of the article, authors' names, affiliations, date of submission, address of submitting author (including street name for overnight delivery), phone number, fax number, and e-mail address. The second page duplicates the first page except that only the running head and title are included. The third page contains an abstract of not more than 120 words.

An exact electronic copy of the article on a 3½" disk is mailed to the editor. The document should be saved in a Microsoft Word (preferred) or RTF file. The disk should be clearly labeled, providing an abbreviated title for the manuscript, the authors' names, file names, date submitted for review, and word processing program.

### **Author Checklist Before Submitting A Manuscript**

Before submitting a manuscript to *Exceptional Children*, please review the Author Checklist below. This will help ensure that your manuscript is not screened out or returned before review.

Manuscript is consistent with the purpose of the journal.

Manuscript conforms to APA format (see *APA Publication Manual*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2001) particularly:

- Manuscript is double spaced, with 1" margins (12 font type preferred).
- All pages are numbered in sequence, starting with the title page.

Effect size information is provided for quantitative studies.

All references in text are listed and in complete agreement with text citations.

Abstract is not more than 120 words long.

The first page of the manuscript contains the running head, title of the article, authors' names, affiliations, date of submission, address of submitting author (including street name for overnight delivery), phone number, fax number, and e-mail address. The second page duplicates the first page except that only the running head and title are included.

Four paper copies of the manuscript, including tables and figures, are provided.

An exact electronic copy of the manuscript on a 3½" disk is included and saved as either a Microsoft Word (preferred) or RTF file. The label on the disk includes an abbreviated title, the authors' names, file names, date submitted for review, and word processing program.

All word processing codes are removed from the electronic version of the manuscript for apostrophes, quotation marks, hyphens, and so forth.

Cover letter states that manuscript is original and not previously published, all authors have given consent to submit the manuscript to *Exceptional Children*, and the manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere.

The cover letter indicates if the data from this manuscript is part of a larger study or if any part of the data has been included in another manuscript. The cover letter must provide a full explanation if either of these situations exist.

## **Review Process**

Selection of manuscripts for publication is based on a blind peer review process; however, all manuscripts are screened first by the Editor. Those manuscripts that do not meet all the manuscript requirements, or that are not consistent with the purpose of the journal, are not forwarded for peer review. In such cases, the submitting author is notified that the manuscript is not acceptable for *Exceptional Children*, or is requested to make changes in the manuscript so that it meets requirements. The four copies of the manuscript and the 3½" disk are not returned to the authors in any event.

Manuscripts that are consistent with the purpose of the journal and meet all requirements are assigned an "action editor." This is either the Editor or one of the Executive Associate Editors. The action editor assigns two or more reviewers to evaluate the manuscript. The manuscript is either mailed or emailed to the reviewers (manuscripts are emailed to reviewers who live outside the United States). Reviewers are asked to evaluate the

manuscript on its overall importance, quality of the work, and clarity of writing. Reviewers will not know the identity of the authors.

After reading and evaluating the manuscript and the reviews, the action editor emails the submitting author a written decision and the reviews. The decision will be one of the following:

Acceptable, with routine editing

Acceptable, with revisions indicated by the action editor

Revise and resubmit

Unacceptable

Decisions on manuscripts submitted to *Exceptional Children* will be made in three months or less from the time that they are received by the Editor. Once a manuscript is received by the Editor, the date is recorded and the submitting author is notified by email. If the authors fail to submit four paper copies of the manuscript and an electronic copy on a 3½" disk (Microsoft Word or RTF file), the manuscript is not listed as received until this material is obtained.

### **Appeal Process**

If the action editor decides that the manuscript is "Unacceptable," authors have the right to appeal that decision. To initiate the appeals process, authors must write a letter to the Editor indicating that they believe that their paper was unfairly rejected. They must also specify why they believe that this is the case. If in the combined judgement of the Editor and Executive Associate Editors there is sufficient grounds for an appeal, the authors will be invited to resubmit their manuscript for a new review, involving a different action editor and new reviewers. If the appeal is rejected, the Editor provides the authors with a written explanation for this decision.

### **Author Responsibilities Following Publication Acceptance**

After a manuscript is accepted for publication in *Exceptional Children*, the authors are responsible for completing the following:

Obtaining publication clearance, if needed, if the manuscript was first presented at a professional meeting.

Acknowledging the funding agency for supported research.

Verifying the authenticity of all quoted material and citations and for obtaining permission from the original source for quotes in excess of 150 words or for tables or figures reproduced from published works.

Preparing camera-ready black and white copies of all figures included in the article.

Obtaining permission to reprint previously published figures, tables, and other materials.

Assigning literary rights to CEC by signing a Copyright Transfer Agreement.

Sending two (2) paper copies of the revised manuscript to the action editor.  
Sending an exact electronic copy of the accepted manuscript to the action editor on a 3½" disk, with the document saved as a Microsoft Word (preferred) or RTF file.

### **Where To Submit Manuscripts**

Until, December 25, 2004, send 4 paper copies of manuscript and an electronic copy on a 3½" disk (Microsoft Word or RTF file) to:

Steve Graham, Editor  
*Exceptional Children*  
University of Maryland  
Department of Special Education  
1308 Benjamin Building  
College Park, MD 20742  
Steve Graham can also be reached at:  
Telephone: (301) 405-6493  
Fax: (301) 314-9158  
E-mail: sg23@umail.umd.edu

After December 26, 2004, send 4 paper copies of manuscript and an electronic copy on a 3½" disk (Microsoft Word or RTF file) to:

Steve Graham, Editor  
*Exceptional Children*  
Vanderbilt University  
George Peabody College  
Department of Special Education  
Box 328  
Nashville, TN 37203