

Exceptional Children

Impact Factor: 4.3

5-Year Impact Factor: 4.3

Submission guidelines



Submit manuscript

Please read the guidelines in full before submitting your manuscript. Manuscripts not conforming to these guidelines may be returned.

Submit Manuscript 

Before submitting your manuscript, please read the information on this page to ensure that your manuscript adheres to the recommended guidelines for content, style, and format.

When you are ready to submit a manuscript to the journal, please click here:

<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ecx>.

Any correspondence, queries, or additional requests for information on the manuscript submission process should be sent to the *Exceptional Children* editorial office as follows: ECeditors@exceptionalchildren.org. Manuscript decisions will typically be provided in 10-12 weeks.

Policies for *Exceptional Children*

PURPOSE OF *EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN*

The purpose of *Exceptional Children*, the official research journal of the Council for Exceptional Children, is to publish scholarship that examines and advances education and related development of individuals with disabilities or who are considered gifted and talented across the lifespan.


TYPES OF ARTICLES *EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN* PUBLISHES

Exceptional Children publishes original research including mixed methods, qualitative, and quantitative research; scoping and systematic reviews, including meta-analyses; data-based,

theoretical, or conceptual essays and position papers; and commentaries engaging debates and other developments within the field.

- **Original Research Studies:** This includes mixed methods, qualitative, and quantitative designs, including systematic reviews. Submissions of all types of empirical research should report rigorous methods consistent with best research practices and adherence to the most recent [Journal Article Reporting Standards](#) from the American Psychological Association. Any systematic review submitted to *EC* should have a comprehensive method section including search, selection, coding procedures, analytic procedures (e.g., SAS, R, or similar code), and actual data available on a permanent, open source repository, if applicable. Replications should explain the importance of the original study (i.e., its influence on practice, research, or policy) and why a replication of it is otherwise warranted. Both successful replications and failures to replicate will be considered regardless of whether a study corroborates or contradicts previous findings.
- **Data-based, Theoretical, or Conceptual Essays, Position Papers, and Commentaries:** This includes manuscripts that address important contemporary topics such as a practical, policy, research methods, or theoretical matters. Manuscripts addressing positions and policies must be primarily based on data, theory, or conceptual frameworks. Commentaries may debate issues within the field, including scholarship published within *EC*, but should be primarily grounded in scholarship.
- **Registered Reports.** *EC* will review and grant conditional acceptance to plans for studies that are submitted prior to the actual conduct of the research work and have been documented on third-party, publicly accessible site. All study designs can be submitted as Registered Reports. Regardless of the methods employed, it is critical that submissions explicitly describe the rationale, methods, and analytic processes in the initial submission.

Registered Reports require that *EC* review a submission in two stages. In stage 1, researchers submit a thorough rationale including a description of pilot and non-registered study findings (if applicable), catalog of research questions, proposed experimental methods, and proposed analyses before data have been collected; the submitters must clearly show that the results of their study would be important even if there was a failure to reject the null. Generally, the submission will consist of the introduction and method. Group contrast studies must be sufficiently powered (80%) for the main dependent variable of interest. Please consult the [Open Science Foundation documents regarding Registered Reports](#).



Peer reviewers for *EC* will review the planned study and provide feedback to the researchers. If, after the authors have met the reviewers' recommendations, the

proposed article is determined to be sufficiently informative, it may be conditionally accepted in principle. Once they have conducted the study, the researchers submit the report of the research; regardless of the final results, if the researchers have faithfully conducted and reported the research and adhere to the *EC* policies, *EC* will likely publish the report, provided that the study is completed and the stage 2 manuscript is submitted within two year of stage 1 acceptance. The two year deadline may be extended via editorial discretion. Citations of accepted stage 1 manuscripts that are withdrawn, rejected or fail to meet the stage 2 submission deadline will be listed in the journal preview with a link to the online stage 1 submission.

The researchers' final report must clearly identify any deviations from the original research plan. Significant deviations, determined via peer and editor review, may be a cause for rejection of a stage 2 submission. Supplemental exploratory analyses may be added, provided they are reported in a separate subsection and labeled as exploratory. Subject to editor and peer review, changes to the introduction submitted at stage one may be permitted.

Although *EC* publishes studies that examine the effectiveness of interventions, it does not publish papers that are primarily descriptions of instructional procedures unless they are a part of a rigorous study of an intervention. *EC* does not publish accounts of personal experiences, letters to the editor, book or test reviews, and anecdotal case studies. *EC* also does not publish reports on innovative techniques, programs, policies, or models, unless they are based on rigorous data, nor does it publish reports about instrument development or studies involving a pretest-posttest only design with no comparison condition.

WRITING FOR *EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN*

Articles published in *EC* are typically based on 28- to 35-page manuscripts, including cover page, abstract, references, tables, and figures. In special circumstances, slightly longer manuscripts may be considered if a compelling rationale is provided in the cover letter, but in no case should a manuscript be more than 40 pages. Consistent with guidance from APA's current Publication Manual, the reference list, each table, and each figure should begin on a new page. Manuscripts should be double spaced throughout with 1-inch margins and use a 12-point Times-New-Roman font. Please review and adhere to the guidelines of APA's Publication Manual (7th Edition, 2020). Submissions that do not conform to the recommendations of APA's *Publication Manual* may be returned to the authors without review. Please see <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/sample-papers> for templates and other guidance on required formatting.

Although *EC* is a scholarly research journal, its articles are read by a broad audience. Readers include international, regional, state, and local individuals who are concerned with disability, special education, gifted education, and rehabilitation. The readership represents

administrators, educational practitioners, parents, and policy makers. Because readers have diverse interests, articles written for *EC* must communicate with this broad audience. Each article must be clear and concise; communicate with limited use of jargon (including acronyms); and provide enough general information so that readers can understand the issues or questions addressed, what was done, the basic findings, and recommendations. Articles should discuss implications for practice, research, and policy. Authors need to provide enough specific information about their methods so their work can be replicated by other researchers.

In order to be considered for review, manuscripts submitted to *Exceptional Children* must:

- include (a) a clear purpose statement, research questions, or hypotheses; (b) articulation of theoretical or conceptual bases, and (c) have implications for research, practice, or policy in special or gifted education;
- be prepared according to the current Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association;
- if empirical, follow APA's [Journal Article Reporting Standards](#), including providing a method section detailed sufficiently to allow replication;
- be anonymized and free of personal references, including suppression of personal citations (i.e., provide the full citation and referred to in third person rather than entering Author, 2023, for example. Manuscripts with references as Author, year will be returned); and
- be accompanied by a cover letter following recommendations from the current Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

The following items should be addressed in research manuscripts submitted to *Exceptional Children*:

- Authors must indicate whether the conducted research was preregistered with an analysis plan in an independent, institutional registry (e.g., <http://osf.io/>, <https://sreereg.icpsr.umich.edu/sreereg/>). What should be preregistered depends on study design. For group contrasts studies, preregistration involves registering the study design, variables, and treatment conditions. This includes an analysis plan including specification of sequence of analyses or the statistical model that will be reported. Recommended preregistration components for qualitative and secondary data analyses can be found at the following website: <https://osf.io/zab38/wiki/home/>. Recommended guidelines for single-case design research can be found in the following *EC* publication: Johnson, A. H., & Cook, B. G. (2019). Preregistration in single-case design research. *Exceptional Children*, 86(1), 95–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402919868529>. A template for single-case design preregistration can be found at: <https://sreereg.icpsr.umich.edu/sreereg/>

- Regardless of design, a link to the preregistration in an institutional registry must be made available to the journal prior to publication. The journal, or an entity acting on behalf of the journal, will verify that preregistration adheres to the specifications for preregistration and then provide certification of the preregistration in the article.
 - - Authors must, in the paper's method section, indicate if they did or did not preregister the research with or without an analysis plan on an independent, institutional registry.
 - If an author did preregister the research with an analysis plan, the author must:
 - confirm in the text that the study was registered prior to conducting the research, with links to the time-stamped preregistrations at the institutional registry, and that the preregistration adheres to the disclosure requirements of the institutional registry or those required for the [preregistered badge with analysis plans maintained by the Center for Open Science](#).
 - report all pre-registered analyses in the text, or, if there were changes in the analysis plan following preregistration, those changes must be disclosed with explanation for the changes.
 - Clearly distinguish in text, analyses that were preregistered from those that were not, such as having separate sections in the results for confirmatory and exploratory analyses.
- Participants in research studies must be described appropriately; such descriptions are critical to both the science and practice of special education. This should include adequate depth regarding participant demographics and justification/rationale regarding the level of data disaggregation in findings. See *Exceptional Children*, 2005, Volume 71, Issue 2, for guidelines about describing research participants and other research quality indicators (see also *EC* volume 89, issue 4).
- Authors should provide adequate evidence about the trustworthiness (e.g., reliability, validity, interscorer agreement) of measure and instruments.
- In studies that report survey data, authors should demonstrate that their sampling methods provide a representative sample of the population to which their results should apply.
- For intervention studies, evidence that treatments were implemented as intended (i.e., fidelity) should be provided. Evidence about the trustworthiness of outcome measures is also essential; estimates of interscorer agreement should be corrected for chance agreement.
- All data, program code and other methods must be appropriately cited. Such materials should be recognized as original intellectual contributions and afforded recognition through citation.

- All data sets and program code used in a publication must be cited in the text and listed in the reference section.
- References for data sets and program code should include a persistent identifier, such as a Digital Object Identifier (DOI). Persistent identifiers ensure future access to unique published digital objects, such as a text or data set. Persistent identifiers are assigned to data sets by digital archives, such as institutional repositories and partners in the Data Preservation Alliance for the Social Sciences (Data-PASS).
- Data set citation example: Campbell, A., & Kahn, R. L. (1999). American national election study, 1948. ICPSR07218-v3. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor].
<http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR07218.v3>

Regardless of the research methods used, authors must also address implications for research and practice. For example, the authors should discuss studies that would need to be conducted in the future. They should also explain how their findings expressly guide practice.

Submission Process and Requirements

All manuscripts should be submitted using the *Exceptional Children* portal site:

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ecx>

The steps for submission are as follows:

1. Log in to your account on the portal site. If you are submitting for the first time, create an account and then log in.
2. On the right, click “Submit an Article.”
3. Read and accept submission agreement. Note: All information in the submission agreement should also be addressed in your submission cover letter.
4. Fill out your personal information as it appears on your manuscript.
5. Add additional author email addresses so they receive correspondence about the submission.
6. Upload manuscript, cover letter, and related items such as tables and figures.
7. Submit.
8. Verify accuracy of submission and revise as necessary.

Accessibility Guidelines

Authors should familiarize themselves with [Sage’s Accessibility Guidelines](#) to ensure their manuscripts meet recognized accessibility standards.

Exceptional Children supports the [Transparency and Openness Promotion \(TOP\) guidelines](#). Please review publications in *EC* that explain the rationale for efforts to promote open science (Cook et al., 2018; Lloyd & Therrien, 2018). *EC* offers authors the opportunity to support the methods of their research. Consistent with the [Transparency and Openness Promotion](#) guidelines of the Open Science movement, *Exceptional Children* awards badges to authors who meet standards for providing access to data, materials, analytic procedures, and related features of their research that will promote replication, re-analysis, and broad integration of research.

In addition to Registered Reports, the editors encourage authors to report studies that include evidence via securely time-stamped, publically accessible resources (e.g., uniform resource locations, document object identifiers, etc.) that the studies

- Have been pre-registered,
- Make the data for the study available for independent review and analysis and provide access to procedures and code used in analyzing the data, and
- Provide access to materials used in a study.

During submission of manuscripts, authors will have opportunities to seek an Open Data badge, an Open Materials badge, or a Preregistration badge and provide documentation supporting their application. In their cover letter for a submission, in addition to the contents identified in Section 12.11 of the APA Publication Manual, authors should state which of the open science practices in the foregoing set of bullets they are seeking.

Review Process

After an initial screening by the editors, selection of manuscripts for publication is based on an anonymous peer-review process handled by *EC*'s associate editors. Those manuscripts that do not fit the journal aim and scope or meet all the manuscript submission guidelines are not forwarded for peer review. In such cases, the submitting author is notified and asked to make changes in the manuscript so that it meets requirements or is told that it is not acceptable for publication.

Editors who find manuscripts consistent with the purpose of the journal and meeting all requirements solicit reviews from as many as three or more peer reviewers with expertise about the manuscript content. Reviewers evaluate the manuscript on its overall importance, quality of the work, and clarity of writing. Although the editors know identities of both the reviewers and the authors, reviewers will not know the identity of the authors, nor will authors know the identities of the reviewers. As appropriate in instances of a lack of arm's length relationship with manuscript authors, an individual editor will recuse themselves from primary decisions about manuscripts.

Based on the review and their own reading of the submissions, the editors make preliminary editorial decisions ranging from rejection to minor revision:

- Acceptance with minimal routine editing;
- Conditional acceptance with minor revisions indicated;
- Resubmission encouraged with revisions indicated
- Resubmission encouraged with major revisions indicated;
- Rejection with reviews provided; and
- Rejection without review based on lack of adherence to *EC* policies.

Reviewers usually recommend revisions if there is a chance that the manuscript can be made acceptable for publication in *Exceptional Children*. Manuscripts often go through three to four revisions before acceptance.

Usually, the editors correspond with authors about reviews of their manuscripts within three months of manuscript receipt. Once a manuscript is received, the date is recorded and the submitting author is notified by email. If the authors fail to submit following the directions in the portal, the manuscript is not listed as received until the uploaded manuscript meets all requirements.

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

Author Responsibilities Following Publication Acceptance

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

- 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 or adapt previously published figures, tables, and other materials.
- Granting CEC the exclusive license to publish the article by signing the contributor agreement.

[Browse journal](#)

Current issue

OnlineFirst

All issues

Free sample

Journal information

Journal overview and metrics

Editorial board

Submission guidelines

Reprints

Journal permissions

Subscribe

Recommend to library

Advertising and promotion

Keep up to date



Facebook



X



LinkedIn



YouTube



RSS feed



Email alerts

[View all options](#)

Also from Sage



CQ Library

Elevating debate

Sage Data

Uncovering insight

Sage Business Cases

Shaping futures

Sage Campus

Unleashing potential

Sage Knowledge

Multimedia learning resources

Sage Research Methods

Supercharging research

Sage Video

Streaming knowledge

Technology from Sage

Library digital services

