



Research in Practice Series (RIPS)

Writers for the *Research in Practice Series* are expected to conform to the guidelines below. Please read these guidelines thoroughly before you begin writing.

Target audience

The *Research in Practice Series* is produced for experienced professionals and those interested in keeping up to date with the latest research in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. Its text should have a practical emphasis and must be written in an easily accessible language for all educators in the sector.

Word count

Maximum length of manuscript (including references) is 6,000 words. Please write the accurate word count at the beginning of the document. **Manuscripts over the word limit will be returned.** Please aim to write under the limit to allow for editing changes.

Deadlines

For commissioned manuscripts, authors will be provided with an approximate production schedule to complete drafts by specified deadlines (this schedule will include the compilation of a PowerPoint presentation based on the title, due after finalisation of the manuscript). It is the responsibility of the authors to inform the Publishing Editor as soon as possible if they cannot meet the agreed deadlines.

If the author supplies a commissioned manuscript after the agreed deadline, it may be published at a later date or rejected. Non-commissioned manuscripts, submitted

without prior arrangement with the ECA Publications and Production team, will be subject to internal selection processes and may or may not be accepted for publication. Authors will be informed of either outcome as soon as possible.

Writing style

Please ensure when writing for the series that your manuscript:

- is easily accessible for the intended audience:
 - minimises use of academic language
 - avoids jargon
 - provides context where essential
 - uses a reader-friendly style and plain English (please see next page to learn how to check readability and reading-ease score statistics)
- uses an **expository writing style**
- links to a broad range of national and international research
- **does not focus solely on a single research study**
- clearly articulates what research findings mean and how they can be translated to strategies for practical implementation
- assumes minimal prior knowledge of the topic among readers, while being evidence-based
- acknowledges all children's service types (where appropriate)
- provides four to six case studies, i.e. tells 'true stories' that make the theme and context real to readers (case studies must have a purpose, e.g. something that readers could adapt to practice)
- provides a minimum of eight reflective questions across different sections



- defines new terms when they are introduced and uses the same term throughout the document
- is culturally sensitive and inclusive
- does not use chunks of quotations from academic sources
- breaks up the text in reader-friendly ways, e.g. uses concise subheadings
- has applicability for educators working with children aged birth to eight, unless specified (birth to three or three to eight)
- avoids footnotes and endnotes to minimise academic style
- supports the *National Quality Standard* and the *Early Years Learning Framework V2.0* and, where appropriate, links to specific parts of these documents
- uses verbal quotes only after gaining permission and acknowledges both written and verbal quotes appropriately
- complies with ECA's Reconciliation Action Plan and the *ECA Code of Ethics*.

Manuscripts will be edited to conform to ECA's in-house style and register. Edits may be substantial or minor, depending on the quality of the manuscript. It is advised that authors read recent copies of the series to familiarise themselves with the expected writing style. Edited versions will not be published without the author's written consent.

ECA style requirements

The current *Australian Government Style Manual* (<https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/>) is the basis for ECA's house style. Its use allows for uniformity of spellings, punctuation, formatting, etc. in all our publications. Some

instances may require divergence, but they are treated on an individual basis. *Macquarie Dictionary* is the accepted dictionary of ECA publications. Authors must follow these reference works.

Readability

Language

ECA expects the authors to write their manuscripts in a way that makes the concept and language accessible to different reading levels. The Flesch reading-ease score of your manuscript must be no lower than 40. Revisions will be required if the reading-ease score is outside this range. Take the following steps to check the reading-ease score of your manuscript within MS Word:

- **Windows**
 - Go to **File > Options**.
 - Select **Proofing**. Under **When correcting spelling and grammar in Word**, make sure the **Check grammar with spelling** check box is selected.
 - Select **Show readability statistics**.
 - After you enable this feature, open a file that you want to check, and check the spelling by pressing F7 or going to **Review > Spelling & Grammar**. When Word finishes checking the spelling and grammar, it displays information about the reading level of the document.
- **MacOS**
 - On the **Word** menu, click **Preferences** (you must have a document open to see preferences).
 - Under **Authoring and Proofing Tools**, click **Spelling and Grammar**. Under **Grammar**, select the **Check grammar with spelling** check box.
 - Select the **Show readability statistics** check box and close the **Spelling & Grammar** dialog box.



- On the **Tools** menu, point to **Spelling and Grammar** and click **Spelling & Grammar** (after Word finishes checking spelling and grammar, it displays information about the reading level of the document).

Note: Regardless of the operating system, you must correct or ignore all errors before the readability statistics will display.

You may also use external readability tools to assess the reading level of your document:

<https://readable.com/>

Terminology

ECA prefers to use non-stereotyped language and situations in its publications, i.e. authors should avoid the use of sexist, ageist or racist terminology. For example, use 'firefighter' rather than 'fireman'. In describing work in the early childhood sector, use general terms to ensure broad application, e.g. 'parents and carers', 'settings', 'practitioners', 'early childhood educators' (not 'teacher', unless specifically applicable), 'the adult working with the children', 'early childhood professionals', 'early childhood service'. For more information, consult ECA's free publication, 'How to talk about early childhood education and care' (<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/How-to-talk-about-ECEC.pdf>).

Numbers and figures

The use of metric measurement is the accepted form of measurement in ECA publications. Words should be used when expressing numbers from zero to nine, inclusive. (This form may have to be varied to make a particular mathematical point, e.g. where the item being described is normally represented arithmetically: 4 + 2 + 12 children = our group of 18 children.)

Figures rather than words should be used in the following examples:

Sum of money: \$5.08 or 25 c, \$2,000, \$10,000

Time of day: 10.30 am, 50 minutes, eleven o'clock

Date: 14 September 1994 (day, month, year)

Mass: 250 t, 120 kg, 50 g

Measure: 56 litres, 25 mL, 26 km, 25 cm, 16 mm

Inclination: (degrees): angle of 45 degrees or 45°

Temperature: 35°C

Percentage: 9% (numeral followed by percentage sign is the preferred style of expression in text)

Age: 60 years old, an eight-year-old, five- to six-year-old children

Formatting

Manuscripts should have minimal formatting and indication should be clearly given for the placement of tables, graphs and charts. If it is necessary to include a table, use the table function of your software. Use of dot points is encouraged, where possible, to break up the text. Please mark headings, subheadings and paragraphs clearly. For example:

Heading level 1

(Bold, size 16, only the first letter is capitalised)

Heading Level 2

(Bold, size 14, only the first letter is capitalised)

Heading Level 3

(Bold, italic, size 12, only the first letter is capitalised)



capitalised)

Heading Level 4

(Italic, size 11, only the first letter is capitalised)

Use plain text in your document—the only formatting permitted is discussed in the points below:

- Only use one space after full stops, commas, colons and semicolons.
- Only use one line space between paragraphs.
- Only use single spacing between words in the text.
- Only use italics to indicate emphasis or names of publications.
- Use single ‘smart quotes’.

It is very important to conform to these guidelines. Manuscripts that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to authors and may miss publication deadlines.

References

APA 7th style referencing is used in RIPS; please see <https://apastyle.apa.org/>.

In the body of the article, reference should be made only to the author/s and the year of publication (Johnson & Johnson, 1992), or Johnson and Johnson (1992). If a direct quote is cited, a page number should be added (Johnson & Johnson, 1992, p. 139), or Johnson and Johnson (1992, p. 139).

Please list all references and resources at the end of the manuscript in the following formats:

From a book

Dorn, L. R., & Ryrerson, D. (1984). *Elements of a healthy childhood* (2nd ed.). Macmillan.

From a journal

Scott, I. (1992). Home injury to children. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 17(3), 18–24.

From the internet

Center on the Developing Child. (2018). *Brain architecture*. Harvard University.
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture>.

Acronyms

When using an acronym or initialism, the first occurrence must be spelt in full with the acronym/initialism quoted in parentheses, e.g. Early Childhood Australia (ECA). Subsequent occurrences should use the initialism.

Photographs/illustrations

If photographs/illustrations are supplied by ECA, ownership and copyright will be retained by ECA.

We encourage authors to supply their own illustrations and photographs. Authors are responsible for ensuring that ECA receives a Photograph Permission Form signed by the parents of children appearing in any supplied photographs, as well as approval from the photographer to use the photo, before publication.

Permission forms can be obtained from the Publications and Production team. Required format is minimum 300 dpi resolution in tiff or jpeg file format. **Email images separately—do not embed them into the manuscript.** ECA retains the right to omit the use of author-supplied photographs if they do not meet the required printing standards noted above.

Form of submission

Please email the commissioned manuscript to



the publishing editor. Unsolicited manuscripts can be emailed to publishing@earlychildhood.org.au.

Manuscripts should include page numbering and a running header. **Microsoft Word (doc) is the preferred format.** If using other formats please specify the software used or contact the Publications and Production team before submission.

Publication process

All manuscripts are subject to internal reviews as well as external blind reviews. Authors will be notified on receipt of their work and advised of reviewers' comments within six months. **Manuscripts being considered for publication will often undergo numerous drafts before being accepted.** Authors will have every opportunity to make changes up to the design and layout stage. Authors will be sent a draft layout for approval, and they will be allowed to make minor changes and comment on the layout. Major editing at this stage will not be accepted. Any concerns over and above a reasonable level* of final editing must be discussed with the publishing editor.

*A 'reasonable' level of editing is determined as that which does not have a dramatic effect on the layout.

Final authority for approval of changes rests with ECA and the Publications Advisory Group.

All authors will receive a maximum payment of \$1000 (exc. GST) after publication and one (1) complimentary copy of their book at the time of distribution. (If there is more than one author, payment will be split accordingly.)

Title and cover design

The final title of the publication will be negotiated with ECA to ensure its appeal to the target market.

PowerPoint presentation

Once the title is finalised for publication, **the authors will be required to submit a PowerPoint presentation (of approximately 10–15 slides) based on the title** for leaders working in early childhood education and care services. The aim of the presentation will be to help leaders facilitate professional learning in that topic area for their educator teams. A sample presentation template will be provided to authors for reference.

Assignment of Copyright— Author license agreement forms

Author license agreement forms will be sent to authors on acceptance of the final manuscript, illustrations and photographs (if used) to show assignment of copyright prior to publishing. These must be signed, completed and returned to the publishing editor before publication.

Further enquiries

Please contact the ECA Publications and Production team at the earliest possible stage if you have any queries regarding the publication of your manuscript.

Contact details

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