



Application to present—2026 AJEC Research Symposium ***Making young children's rights, safety and wellbeing the paramount consideration***

30 September 2026

Hosted by The University of Melbourne

Venue: The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

The *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* (AJEC) is Australasia's foremost scholarly journal and the world's longest-running major journal within the early childhood field. Published quarterly, AJEC offers research-based articles that are designed to impart new information and encourage the critical exchange of ideas among early childhood practitioners, academics and students.

The 2026 AJEC Research Symposium, *Making young children's rights, safety and wellbeing the paramount consideration*, will be held in person on 30 September 2026 at The University of Melbourne in Melbourne, Australia. The Symposium aims to bring together early childhood researchers, policymakers and workforce professionals working with young children, their families, communities, educators and allied professionals. It will provide a forum to share innovative theoretical and methodological perspectives and research findings through partnerships and collaborations. The event will also explore current research priorities, emerging agendas and policy initiatives within the early childhood sector, while strengthening research networks across Australasia and beyond.

Theme and streams

Theme: Making young children's rights, safety and wellbeing the paramount consideration

We invite contributions to the 2026 AJEC Research Symposium that explore the most important focus of early childhood education—children and families. The specific focus will be on the principle, 'paramount consideration'. By reflecting on this, we hope to share current insights into equity, fairness, children's rights and wellbeing, safe environments and high expectations to support all young children. We invite early childhood educators and researchers to share innovative research methodologies, evidence-based findings and insights within each of the streams.

Streams

- Children's rights and wellbeing
- Responsive and safe environments
- Equity and social justice
- Policy and leadership
- Partnerships with families and communities.

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Application process

Applications are now open for potential presenters. To apply, please submit an abstract of your research paper that is relevant to the overall theme and one or more of the five streams. Successful applicants will be asked either to present, or present and publish in the *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*.

Please note: While authors may be named on up to three papers, they will only be able to present on a maximum of two papers.

Submission requirements:

Abstracts and biographies

Abstracts and presenter biographies are to be submitted during the application process. Abstracts for Roundtable discussions should be no more than 500 words per paper (including references), and for Provocations, no more than 250 words (including references). At the end of the abstract, presenters must offer two or three questions that can be used as provocations for researchers and interested stakeholders to discuss (questions are also included in the word limit).

Please highlight which stream/s you wish to address and format preference (see below). Abstracts will be put through a blind peer review process conducted by AJEC reviewers.

Biographies must be no more than 150 words (for individuals) or 350 words (for groups).

Please read the terms and conditions below for more details on the application requirements.

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Format preference

Applicants must identify their preferred presentation format: Roundtable discussion or Provocation (see guidelines below). Please note: The final formats will be decided through the review process.

Roundtable discussion

This will be an oral presentation of 25 minutes, including a five-minute Q&A segment, based on an individual paper. It will be given by a single presenter or a team of presenters and designed to promote discussion.

Roundtable presentations **will not** have access to audio-visual equipment and should prepare for a discussion format. A facilitator will be assigned to each themed group to assist in a group discussion once all papers have been presented.

Provocation

Rather than reporting on research that is complete or in the process of being completed, this format is an opportunity to present new ideas, including (but not limited to) new methods and ways of thinking about research and/or impact. Presenters will share their provocation for seven minutes, and then pose three questions for participants to discuss. The goal is to inspire a rich discussion of new ideas and points of view. There will be a competitive review process as places are limited; preference will be given to thought-provoking contemporary perspectives.

Presenters will be allowed to share up to two (2) PPT slides without any animations during their presentation, limited to one content slide and one question slide.

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Review process

- All proposals submitted for presentation at the symposium will go through a blind peer review process conducted by the AJEC reviewers.
- All applications to present will be assessed to ensure the quality and relevance of the presentations in accordance with the [AJEC Reviewer Guidelines](#) and ECA selection criteria.
- Once the blind peer review is completed, all applicants will be notified of the outcome.

Selection criteria

Roundtable discussions will be selected on the basis of the:

- relevance to the symposium theme and streams
- treatment of theoretical or methodological perspectives
- congruence between aims of the project or research questions and/or focus of inquiry
- clarity of explanation of research methods and/or analytical and/or theoretical framework, in brief
- strength of emphasis on research findings and/or translation to practice and contribution to the sector
- abstract of no more than 500 words (including references and questions).

Provocations will be selected on the basis of the:

- relevance to the symposium theme and streams
- provocative nature of the abstract
- questions for discussion
- abstract of no more than 250 words (including references and questions).

Free of commercial interest

Any paper that is selling or promoting a particular product or commercial service will be rejected.

Outcome/Final selection

Categories

Abstracts will be assessed and classified under two categories:

- **Accepted:** selected delegates will get the opportunity to present at the AJEC Research Symposium.*
- **Unsuccessful:** no further information or submissions will be required.

* Selected authors will be given the opportunity to present at the AJEC Research Symposium and invited to submit a full-length paper for publication in a special edition of the *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*. **All papers to be published will go through a blind peer review process, which will be conducted by the AJEC Editorial Committee. There is no guarantee of publication.**

This means papers may still be rejected or held over for later publication. Authors selected for publication must be in attendance and present at the symposium.

Authors who do not present at the Symposium will lose the opportunity to have their papers published in the special edition of AJEC.

Invitation to present at the ECA National Conference

Some presenters may be invited to present their research, and its implications for practitioners, at the ECA National Conference in 2027. Further instructions will be provided by the ECA Events team, as required.

Terms and conditions

Application requirements

- Applications must be **submitted online no later than 15 April 2026**. Applications received in any other way, including hard copy, or after the due date, **will not be accepted**.
- Individual applicants must include a 150-word biography and groups must include a 350-word biography when submitting their abstracts.
- Abstracts must be no more than 500 words and must be submitted electronically via the specified portal. (All selected presentation abstracts and biographies will undergo copyediting before being printed in the symposium program.)
- Applications **must** address the **selection criteria**.
- Abstracts will go through a review process to ensure quality and diversity.

Presentation requirements

Successful applicants must:

- be available to speak at any time during the symposium
- register by 30 June 2026.**

** Presenter registration

A condition of being able to present is that all presenters must register for the symposium. Only three (3) presenters per paper will receive the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) member discount rate for full event registration. **Abstracts will be withdrawn from the program if registration and payment have not been received by 30 June 2026.**

Audio-visual requirements

- Roundtable presentations **will not** have access to audio–visual equipment and should prepare for a discussion format. A facilitator will be assigned to each themed group to assist in a group discussion once all papers have been presented.
- Provocation presenters will be allowed to share up to two (2) PPT slides without any animations during their presentation, limited to one content slide and one question slide.

Key dates

Procedure	Deadline
Application to present opens	11 March 2026
Application to present closes	Extended to 15 April 2026
Abstract reviews completed and authors notified of outcomes	Week of 18 May 2026
Program at a glance published on ECA website	June 2026
Presenter registration deadline	30 June 2026
Final program published on ECA website	July 2026

Please note: Dates are subject to change. Candidates will be informed in case of changes to the schedule.

Before you apply online, please ensure that you have read and understood this information.
If you have any questions, please contact the AJEC Research Symposium office for more information:
Phone: (02) 6242 1800 Email: publishing@earlychildhood.org.au or events@earlychildhood.org.au

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