

# Children and Families

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION



## Editorial Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in writing for *Children and Families*, the award-winning magazine published by the National Head Start Association (NHSA) for today's early childhood professionals. Published three times a year, *Children and Families* delivers engaging articles meant to help early childhood directors, administrators, educators, and support staff provide exceptional services to children and their families. Readers turn to us for important information on best practices and the latest developments in the field regarding wide ranging topics such as teaching skills, advocacy strategies, practical and cost-effective solutions to common problems encountered in the classroom or the center, administrative issues, school readiness, professional development, special needs and inclusion, parental involvement and partnerships, and the latest early childhood development research.

Before you begin writing an article for *Children and Families*, please review these frequently asked questions. If you have any additional questions that aren't answered here, don't hesitate to contact me.

### **How do I know if an article is right for *Children and Families*?**

If you aren't certain that a specific topic is appropriate, start by sending a query letter that briefly describes the target audience, what readers would learn from the article, and why this information is important. Please try to summarize the focus of your article in five or six sentences. Queries may be sent by e-mail to [julie@nhsa.org](mailto:julie@nhsa.org).

### **May I submit an article that has already been published?**

*Children and Families* rarely reprints articles that have been published elsewhere, but all articles will be considered. When submitting a manuscript for consideration, authors are expected to point out if the article has already been published or submitted to any other publishers. Failure to do so is grounds for automatic rejection.

### **Do writers receive an honorarium if their articles are published?**

Authors are not financially compensated. The magazine does, however, provide writers with national exposure, and writers are encouraged to include titles of books they have written, describe products or services they provide, and their contact information in the author's biographical information that appears at the end of the article. Authors also receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their article is published.

### **How long should my article be?**

Most articles range between 1,800 and 3,800 words, not including sidebars. When writing your article, don't be overly concerned with the length; focus instead on the content and thoroughly covering your topic. If, however, you find your article running significantly longer than 3,800 words, reevaluate the scope of your article — you may be attempting to cover too much.

### **What type of information should *not* be included in an article?**

Articles should in no way attempt to sell, promote, or endorse a particular company, service, or product. *Children and Families* has a strict policy that prohibits any overlap in advertising and editorial content; consequently, specific products and services are almost never mentioned in the body of an article. Specific products and services can, however, be included in sidebars as long as it is not done in a way promote one item exclusively or in the author bio that runs at the end of an article. Failure to adhere to this policy is grounds for automatic rejection of an article.

### **What advice would you give someone interested in submitting an article?**

Although *Children and Families* is a serious publication, it is not an academic journal. Articles should be written in a conversational, lively style, not in scholarly prose. Be concise, remember that the readers are early childhood practitioners (not parents or family members), don't stray from your topic, and let readers know exactly how they can apply what they learn from your article in their classrooms or programs.

### **What can I do to increase the chances that my article will be published?**

An article that meet the following criteria is more likely to be published:

1. The article is not only informative but also instructive — offering practical advice that can easily be applied.
2. The writer has incorporated specific examples and descriptive details to help illustrate points made in the article.
3. The article contains new insights, advice, or information on topics that are of interest to our readers.
4. The article includes an interesting and creative lead, a well-crafted and logical structure, and a strong close.

### **How should I submit my manuscript?**

Articles should be saved as Microsoft Word Documents or in Rich Text Format (RTF). Do not save your article as a Word Perfect document. Submit your article by e-mail to [julie@nhsa.org](mailto:julie@nhsa.org).

### **Can I submit photographs or other supplementary information?**

High resolution digital photographs that are relevant to the topic are welcome. Sidebar information, such as quick tips, did-you-know facts, bulleted lists, safety warnings, recommended resources (e.g., Web sites, books, organizations, etc.), charts, and forms, are also strongly encouraged. Information for sidebars should be included at the end of the article, not within the body of the article.

### **When can I expect a response after submitting an article?**

Once a manuscript has been submitted, I contact writers as promptly as possible by telephone or e-mail to let them know I've received the article. (If you do not receive a reply, please e-mail or call to follow up.) After this, it may take several months before I determine if the article will be accepted for publication. If it is accepted, I then tentatively assign the article to a particular issue and arrange an editing schedule. Solicited articles are given priority. Please remember that there is never a guarantee that an article will be published. Both solicited and unsolicited articles are subject to rejection at any point.

### **What type of editing should I expect?**

Articles are edited for accuracy, clarity, length, and style. In many cases this involves some substantive editing, rewriting, and reorganizing. Whenever possible, writers are given an opportunity to review edits before publication.

### **Once my article is published, who owns the rights to it?**

All writers are asked to sign a statement of ownership that asserts that the content of the article is original and gives NHSA permission to publish it and to grant reprint permission to others for educational purposes (see the editorial release on the last page). After an article is published, writers retain ownership of the article. At this point, the author can distribute the article or have it reprinted elsewhere. All reprinted articles should include the following statement: Reprinted from the [fill in the blank] issue of *Children and Families*, the magazine of the National Head Start Association.

### **Additional Guidelines**

All submissions must include the following:

1. Author's full name, professional title, business affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address, which should appear at the top of the first page.
2. An author bio consisting of approximately 40 to 80 words. (Include contact information in this section at your discretion. If contact information is included, it will be published.) Specific products and services may be mentioned here.
3. A working title and subtitle. (All titles and subtitles are subject to change.) In general, the title should be brief and intriguing, and the subtitle should be longer and more descriptive.

### **Please adhere to the following typographic and punctuation guidelines:**

1. Use only *one space* after end punctuation (i.e., do not hit the space bar twice after periods, questions marks, or exclamation points).
2. Organize your article using bolded subheads throughout the article.
3. *Never* use all caps.
4. Do not indent paragraphs with spaces or tabs.
5. Do not automatically paginate your article.
6. Do not format your article into columns, do not insert line or page breaks, and do not insert text blocks or images.

With more than 50,000 readers, *Children and Families* plays a key role in keeping members of the Head Start community informed. By writing for the magazine, authors enhance their professional edge, gain national visibility, and — perhaps most important — join the hundreds of talented professionals who have given their time and shared their knowledge to enrich the lives of our nation's most vulnerable children and their families.

Thank you very much for your contribution.

Sincerely,

### **Julie Antoniou**

*Editor, Children and Families*

National Head Start Association

1651 Prince Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

Tel: (315) 214-3162

E-mail: [julie@nhsa.org](mailto:julie@nhsa.org)