

## The Review PROCESS

Waiting for a letter from the editor is one of the more difficult aspects of writing for publication. Authors work for days, sometimes months, on an article, carefully select the journal that seems "just right" for their masterpiece, and then they wait, wait, wait, and wait, until a letter of acceptance or rejection arrives.

For some authors it's the "not knowing what's going on" that worries them the most. Like sending a youth off to camp, they know their work will return sooner or later. It may come back with minor or major changes, accepted or rejected, and ruffled or neat, but it will probably be back. However, similar to the youth who never writes home and says nothing once he returns, editors often keep their writers in the dark about how their articles have been handled during what is often a very rigorous absence.

In keeping with our child and youth care traditions, the editorial staff at Child and Youth Care wants authors to know how their "child" is being treated while it is in our "care." The following description of our review process is designed to shed some light on how important we feel the word "process" is in reviewing the work of fellow professionals.

When a manuscript is first received by the editorial office, a careful check is made to see if the author has followed the submission requirements (printed in each issue of the Journal) and if the general content is appropriate. If a manuscript is inappropriately submitted (e.g., insufficient copies or improper format), it is sent back to the author with a request for necessary changes or additions. If the content doesn't appear to be appropriate for our purposes, the manuscript is sent back with a written explanation and, whenever possible, a recommendation for an alternate journal.

Articles that pass the initial screening are sent on by the editor for review by two mem-

bers of the Editorial Review Board. All members of the Board are child and youth care workers with writing experience. In selecting reviewers, the editor attempts to choose individuals who have some expertise in the area being covered by the author. If no one on the Board is familiar with a specific area, consulting reviewers are selected.

Attached to the copies of the article are review sheets which the reviewer fills out after a careful reading of the article. Reviewers are asked to comment on a number of areas including content, clarity, relevancy, conviction, writing style, organization, and technical level (see *Shaping An Editorial Policy*). They are also asked to make comments on the manuscript wherever it is appropriate. All comments are made with the knowledge that they may be sent to the author to help him or her with revisions. Once a thorough review has been completed (reviewers are usually given two or three weeks), the reviewer makes one of the following recommendations: "Publish — no revisions necessary," "Publish with minor revisions as noted," "Publish with major revisions as noted," "Major revisions required — manuscript to be rereviewed if submitted," or "Reject — alternative publication would be \_\_\_\_\_."

After receiving both reviews, the editor makes a decision about whether or not to proceed. If both reviewers make the first recommendation above, the article is usually accepted outright. If the article receives recommendations for revisions (recommendations 2, 3, and/or 4), the editor will, in most cases, send the article back to the author with the reviewers' suggestions and encouragement to make either minor or major changes. In our experience, most of the articles require at least some changes. However, we are aware that many authors interpret requests for revisions as "polite rejection slips." They don't know that most articles

are revised before being published. For example, all the articles in this issue were revised by the authors. Therefore, we try to explain that we are sincere about our requests for changes.

If the authors who fall in one of the revision categories are willing to consider changes, the editorial staff will do whatever it can to help. All of our Review Board members are sensitive to the feelings that experienced, and especially inexperienced, writers have. Their shared goal is to be supportive and to give authors as much assistance as possible. For example, one of our Board members worked for several months with an author to get her article in shape for this issue. The result was a first publication and a very fine article.

In general, revised articles are eventually accepted for publication. We have only had to reject a couple of articles which have been changed, and in each of these cases we have been able to make solid recommendations for an alternative outlet.

Finally, if an article receives two "rejections," the editor will return it with a letter of explanation. Rejections are part of writing. Every author has had his work rejected at some point. Those who look at this as a learning process usually go on to eventually publish their work, while those who take rejections personally usually do not. In this context, we try to make comments that will encourage and teach.

Hence, "process" is equally as important to our Journal as "publish." We believe that if we can make the review PROCESS a positive learning experience, the field will be one major step closer to developing a professional knowledge base. So, if you are one of the many practitioners with a good idea that has been tabled because of uncertainties about how it will be received, why not give us a try? We'll do everything we can to make the experience a rewarding one.

*M.K.*

## Instructions To Authors

Articles submitted to the Journal of Child and Youth Care Work should be completely typewritten, double spaced on standard letter sized paper, with ample margins, and no handwritten corrections. Four copies of each article must be submitted. All articles should have implications for child care practice or child care education.

In general, articles should conform to the specifications in the PUBLICATION MANUAL OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION. In the case of research articles, exact conformance to APA standards is expected. Articles in addition must include an abstract of 100-200 words. NOCCWA policy prohibits an author from submitting the same manuscript to more than one publication at a time.

All articles are reviewed by at least two members of the editorial review board in addition to the editor. Because the editors subscribe to a blind review process, authors who submit manuscripts are required to include, with each copy, a cover sheet indicating the title of the manuscript, authors' names and institutional affiliations, and date of submission. The first page of the text should repeat the title and submission date but omit the authors' name or affiliations. Footnotes that identify the authors should be typed on a separate page. Authors should carefully examine manuscripts to insure that it contains no clues to the identity of the authors, or their institutional affiliations.

Manuscripts will not be returned to authors unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and adequate postage.

CHILD & YOUTH CARE WORK encourages contributions from new authors, particularly child care workers. Editorial assistance is available to child care workers who have not previously published. To request such editorial assistance, new authors should submit a single copy of manuscripts (5-20 pages) along with a short biographical sketch. A self addressed envelope with adequate postage must also be included. Manuscripts submitted in this format will not be considered for publication, but will be critiqued by the editor or an associate editor and returned to the author with suggestions and comments.

