

EDITORIAL NOTE

Advancing Policy, Practice, and Research in Early Childhood Environmental Education: Helpful Information for Writing Research to Practice Briefs

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Writing research briefs is not a usual part of academic and research training, nor is it a usual activity engaged by teacher educators, researchers, or other personnel in institutions of higher education. There are many benefits in writing research briefs, however. Writing research briefs can broaden a researcher's portfolio, increase the research's impact by disseminating findings to new readers, including historically marginalized communities, and strengthen partnerships with community stakeholders (Institute of Education Sciences, 2021). As the role of research in enhancing policy, suggesting licensing recommendations, instigating further research, recommending program operation changes and improvements, and improving curricular and teaching practices are particular goals of both IJEECE and Exchange Magazine, we invite authors of original published research as well as authors collaborating with original research authors in submitting Research to Practice Briefs for peer-reviewed publication in IJEECE.

The Institute of Education Sciences (2021) offers a guide to writing effective research briefs. IJEECE and Exchange Magazine share the definition of a *research brief* provided by the staff of the institute, described below:



What Exactly *IS* a Research Brief?

A research brief is a concise, non-technical summary of the key takeaways from a research study. Briefs communicate research insights to the public, thereby translating research and evidence-based practices into real-world settings.

The focus of a brief varies depending on the intended audience. Provide explicit recommendations for practice if you want to reach a practitioner audience. Explore policy and infrastructure needs when writing for a policymaker audience.

Plan to share briefs in diverse settings. Share briefs with research partners (participating districts, schools, teachers), professional networks (at conference presentations), and broader audiences (on personal websites).

Source: <https://ies.ed.gov/learn/blog/being-brief-skills-and-supports-translating-research-practice-brief-reports>

Be sure to check out the many examples of research briefs provided on the institute's website:

<https://www.pbismaryland.org/resources/research-briefs>. The examples provide a variety and many models as possibilities.

FOCUS AND PARAMETERS OF RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEFS

Specific to **International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education**, we invite Research to Practice Briefs focused on early childhood environmental education, early childhood education for sustainability, nature-based early education, nature-based early learning, and/or related constructs, contexts, and topics that encompass children and their caregivers in conservation education, environmental civic engagement, environmental education, environmental literacy development, nature-based learning experiences, science education, sustainability education, and many other relevant and intersecting or related ideas. IJECCE also invites research briefs that focus on program development and operations as well as policies at multiple levels focused on the forementioned considerations. The research briefs should be between 750 and 850 words, not counting author references and headings. Should a research brief be accepted for publication in IJECCE, the brief will be formatted to fit in two published pages.

In this issue, you will find the journal's first published research to practice brief. The brief was organized around four areas that flowed from important descriptions of the research study (challenge or problem statement, and research approach and methodological information) to practical information (key findings, and recommendations for practice). This format likely represents an option for future research to practice briefs in IJECCE, although distinct possibilities are open of other creative organizations of the briefs. Each brief submission's structure will be considered based on the principal focus of the original published article (e.g., policy, program development, research).

Specific to **Exchange Magazine**, author(s) with accepted or published IJECCE research briefs will be invited to write extended versions for **Exchange Community Voices** online platform. Authors who accept this invitation will collaborate with Exchange Bridging Research and Practice Advisory Team to expand application of their research for a practitioner audience. Exchange Advisors will offer written reflections with application examples from their own professional context including educators, teacher educators, and program administrators. Ultimately authors will submit their Bridging Research to Practice article and grant permission for Exchange to publish it.

AUTHOR PARAMETERS

We invite authors of original research, authors collaborating or partnering with original authors, as well as authors with permission from original study authors to submit research to practice briefs for publication in IJECCE and Exchange Magazine. For the latter, authors are required to acknowledge that permission was granted by the original researchers along with a full citation of the published studies in the research briefs.

SOURCES OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH OR STUDIES

Ideally, the sources of original research studies should be dissertations or theses reviewed and approved by faculty committees or published research in scholarly journals reviewed and accepted by peers with expertise in early childhood environmental education and/or related areas. Sources must be fully referenced in the Research to Practice Briefs. The editors are also open to research briefs encompassing other forms of peer- and/or faculty-reviewed original studies such as action research papers and other types of research-based papers completed and graded as part of academic course assignments.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR FLOW OR STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH BRIEFS

It would be useful to start with a short description of the study along with a full citation. Ensure use of accessible language that is tailored to your audience(s). The short description describes the research's problem statement and/or research questions. Express your interest (or interest of the field at large) on the topics addressed and acknowledge author(s) and their work.

Following the short description, provide a succinct summary of the participants, settings, research design, study procedures and data collection, and analysis approach. Relatedly, it will be important and useful to present the delimitations of the original study (i.e., parameters describing critical inclusions and exclusions).

Next describe the significant findings of the original research. Use non-technical and easy-to-follow explanations that maintain the fidelity of the original and described findings. Be succinct and parsimonious at the same time. If there were identified limitations of the study, it would be important to mention it in clear terms.

The spotlight or focal point of the research brief should be restatements of original author implications - and your own more contextualized applications and implications in theory, research, practice, and/or policy, emphasizing practical examples for indoor and outdoor teaching and guidance, program practices, setting designs, affordances of nature-based education in early childhood experiences, and more.

You may add a meaningful and short remark to close the research to practice brief.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Please submit research to practice briefs to Yash Bhagwanji (IJECEE Editor, ybhagwan@fau.edu) and Christine Kiewra (Exchange Bridging Research and Practice Advisory Team Coordinator, ckiewra2@unl.edu).

REVIEW AND FEEDBACK PROCESS

Following the submission of research to practice brief, reviewers composing of peers and experts on the topics addressed will be invited to review and provide suggestions, recommendations, and decisions for the research brief. Up to two rounds of reviews will be available, following which the research to practice brief may either be accepted or rejected.

References

- Institute of Education Sciences (retrieved June 12, 2026), On Being Brief: Skills and Supports for Translating Research to Practice via Brief Reports. <https://ies.ed.gov/learn/blog/being-brief-skills-and-supports-translating-research-practice-brief-reports>.
- PBIS Maryland (retrieved June 12, 2026). Research Briefs. <https://www.pbismaryland.org/resources/research-briefs>.

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