



**Journal of Child and Youth Work
Call for Proposals**

Ethical Practices in the Post-COVID Era: A Special Edition Celebrating the 2022 Update of the Standards for Practice of North American Child and Youth Care Professionals

Guest Editors

Dr. Christina L. Scanlon, University of Chicago

Dr. Varda Mann-Feder, Concordia University

Dear Colleagues,

Ethics are the cornerstone of youth work, serving as the guiding principles that underpin every interaction, decision, and intervention within this critical field. At its core, youth work is fundamentally concerned with the well-being, development, and empowerment of young individuals, and ethical considerations play an integral role in ensuring that these objectives are achieved responsibly and with integrity. Youth workers are entrusted with the task of fostering positive environments, building trust, and respecting the autonomy and dignity of young people. Ultimately, ethics not only guide the actions of youth workers but also contribute to the establishment of a foundation built on trust and respect, fostering a nurturing environment conducive to the holistic growth of the youth they serve.

Led by Dr. Martha Mattingly at the University of Pittsburgh, the Association of Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP) developed the first Standards for Practice of North American Child and Youth Care Professionals in 1995. The Standards have always existed as a living document that reflects the growth and development of the youth work profession; however, the first formal revision did not take place until 2017. Areas of content revisions included strengthening the importance of supervision and mindfulness of self, (2) clarifying language describing self-determination, personal agency, and advocacy, (3) acknowledging the virtual/online dimension of everyday life, (4) emphasis on necessity of equity and inclusion, (5) expansion of topics to include social justice, racial equality, and cultural humility. During the ratification of the 2017 code revision, the ACYCP board set an initiative to review the code every five years to ensure that the field's ethical standards remain in line with the current sociocultural and sociohistorical context.

Since the 2017 revision, much in the world has changed—so much so that the ethical challenges facing the youth work as a profession are both more numerous and significantly more complex. Social media and information communication technologies have evolved exponentially, with much of all communication manifesting in virtual spaces. The young people we work with are at the forefront of these shifts. Not only are the modalities they use constantly changing, their communication processes in and of themselves are transforming. These developments challenge our traditional notions of relational practice and push the field to constantly recalibrate notions of consent, confidentiality, and boundary management. As such, practitioner must examine their own virtual presence to ensure that they are ethical and professional, all the while assisting the children, youth, and families in their care to similarly act in ways that are safe and responsible.

The onset of the global pandemic in 2020 and the continuing concerns about emerging variants have altered our practice contexts in ways that may not be reversible. More and more youth work is happening in virtual spaces, and scholars and practitioners alike need to attend to the ways in which limiting face-to-face contact compromises the relationships that are foundational to what we do. Even more concerning is that poverty, unemployment, marital conflict, domestic violence and compromised mental health have all increased during the pandemic, and the children, youth, and families are struggling more than ever. This both increases the urgency and magnifies the importance of youth workers' ethical responsibilities to provide respectful, empathic, and empowering care that is responsive to the needs and the contexts of youth and their families.

Lastly, the intensification of social problems across North America has sparked intensified demands for social justice, personified by the growth of protest movements such as Black Lives Matter and Indigenous Lives Matter. The disproportionate impacts of the pandemic have highlighted the legacy of racism and oppression everywhere, and across the continent, protests have led to the destruction of monuments to the founders of residential schools, slave traders, and white supremacists. Perhaps now more than ever, youth workers have an ethical responsibility to engage in anti-oppressive practice and undertake advocacy that promotes a better world for all.

The 2022 revision of the Code of Ethics is thus extremely timely given the many changes since the last revision. Youth work as a profession has never been more in need of a moral compass, and it is critical that we find 'true north' so that practitioners can continue to maintain an ethical stance individually and collectively and remain true to the core values of the field. In celebration of this milestone, the *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work* is excited to announce a call for proposals for a special issue that will delve into the crucial and nuanced aspects of ethics within the realm of child and youth work. We invite scholars, researchers, practitioners, and experts in the field of child and youth work to submit proposals that address various dimensions of ethics. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Ethical Dilemmas in Child and Youth Work: Exploring real-world challenges and proposing solutions.
- Cultural Sensitivity and Ethical Practices: Understanding and navigating diverse ethical frameworks in working with children and youth.

- Ethical Leadership in Child and Youth Organizations: Examining leadership practices that prioritize ethical considerations.
- Technology and Ethical Boundaries: Investigating the impact of technology on ethical guidelines and boundaries in child and youth work.
- Ethical Decision-Making Models: Presenting and evaluating models for ethical decision-making in the context of child and youth services.

Those interested in submitting an article should email an expression of interest to Chris Scanlon (CLScanlon@uchicago.edu), Varda Mann-Feder (varda.mann-feder@concordia.ca), and Jody Rhodes (jodyrhodeswi@gmail.com) by **April 1, 2024**. Your expression of interest should consist of a title, name of author(s), and a 250-word summary of your proposed contribution, explicitly indicating how it addresses ethical practice in youth work. Authors will be notified of the editors' decision by May 1, 2024. Should your abstract be selected, first drafts are due by October 1, 2024, although we welcome earlier submissions. We look forward to receiving your thoughtful proposals that will enrich our understanding of ethical considerations in child and youth work.

Sincerely,
Chris

Christina L. Scanlon, PhD
Vice President and Ethics Committee Chair
Association for Child and Youth Care Practice