

Introduction to the Special Section

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APSAC consistently attempts to improve benefits for its members. In 2018, the APSAC Board of Directors approved a proposal for a special section within an issue of the *APSAC Advisor* to address contested issues in child maltreatment and child welfare. As professionals working in the fields of child welfare and child maltreatment, we are constantly confronted with complex problems and difficult decisions. The goal of this special section is to enhance members' ability to think critically about the issues addressed.

There are no easy answers in our field. There are frequently multiple sides to the problems we need to address, and there may be unintended consequences of our interventions.

Each year APSAC aims to publish articles in the *Advisor* that focus on current contested issues in the field. The Publications Committee, the Amicus Committee, the Policy Center, and the current *Advisor* editor(s) determine which controversies each issue should address, and identify a guest editor for each of the contested issues. Each guest editor selects authors to write succinct arguments for each side of the topic (pro/con). Authors on each side of the argument then exchange papers and write brief responses to the opposing viewpoints.

The inaugural Contested Issues Special Section explores two topics:

1. **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).** Passed by Congress and signed into law in 1978, ICWA has been a controversial statute from

the beginning. Its intent is to decrease the alarmingly high rate of removal of Indian children from Indian families and their tribal communities. Advocates for the importance of culture for children's wellbeing support the statute. Advocates for children's rights argue that ICWA puts the interests of the child's tribe above the needs of the individual child. Guest Editors: Frank Vandervort, JD & Kathleen Coulborn Faller, PhD

2. **Appropriate responses of child welfare agencies to drug exposed newborns.** How should the child welfare system respond to substance-exposed newborns? Should substance use during pregnancy be treated as child abuse, and how do we balance the interests of the mother and child? Guest Editor: Kenneth Feder, PhD

About the Guest Editor

Kathleen Coulborn Faller, PhD, ACSW, DCSW, is Marion Elizabeth Blue Professor Emerita of Children and Families in the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan and Co-Director of the Family Assessment Clinic of Washtenaw Co., MI. She is involved in research, clinical work, teaching, training, and writing on child sexual abuse, child welfare, and the child welfare workforce. She is the author, editor, or co-editor of ten books. She has published over 100 research and clinical articles.

She has been a member of American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) since its inception and served on the APSAC Board of Directors 1991-1997 and the APSAC Executive Committee 1992-1997. She was a member of the APSAC Board (2013-2019) and the Executive Committee (2014-2019). She chairs the Practice Guidelines Committee (2013-2019). She also served as chair of the Publications Committee (2015-2019).