

Editorial

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...whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward

I cannot believe that it has been two years since Dr. Lisa Schelbe and I were given the opportunity to guide the *Advisor* toward new beginnings. We are grateful to have provided members of the APSAC community with a platform from which to share their experiences in fulfilling the promise to meet the needs of children, families, and communities. Although it saddens me to see a transition in our editorial team as Dr. Schelbe completed her term, I count myself lucky enough to have benefited from her guidance and mentorship. It is my hope to continue the pursuit of the goal and vision she put in motion during her tenure as Editor.

In her inaugural editorial for the *Advisor*, Dr. Schelbe highlighted the challenges that we as a field were faced with, which included the pandemic, racial injustices, and political tensions. She acknowledged our ongoing progress toward addressing these major challenges, and it continues to ring as true now as it did then that “we’re not there yet” and that “APSAC members are at the frontline...making a difference.” For example, despite the downward trend in COVID infection and death rates, there continues to be over 1,000 people dying every week (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>), highlighting the need to remain vigilant of the risks for and consequences of this disease for the children, families, and communities we work with. Social injustices continue to permeate our communities despite best efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.

For example, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (<https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>), biases related to race/ethnicity/ancestry continue to make

up a large percentage of hate crimes in the United States, increasing from 54% of 7,287 reports in 2019 to 64% of 7,287 reports in 2021. Anti-black or African American hate crimes rose from 27% in 2019 to 31% in 2021, still making up a large proportion of race-based hate crimes that continue to this day. We are also seeing an increasing trend in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender hate crimes from 4% to 6% in the same time period, which may continue to rise with the passing of multiple anti-LGBTQ state laws such as those restricting gender-affirming health care (http://apsaclibrary.org/alerts_all.php#). We continue to see bias against women with the systemic and systematic dismantling of access to a full spectrum of medical care that includes abortion with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. This is particularly concerning given that such access is deemed essential health care by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential>).

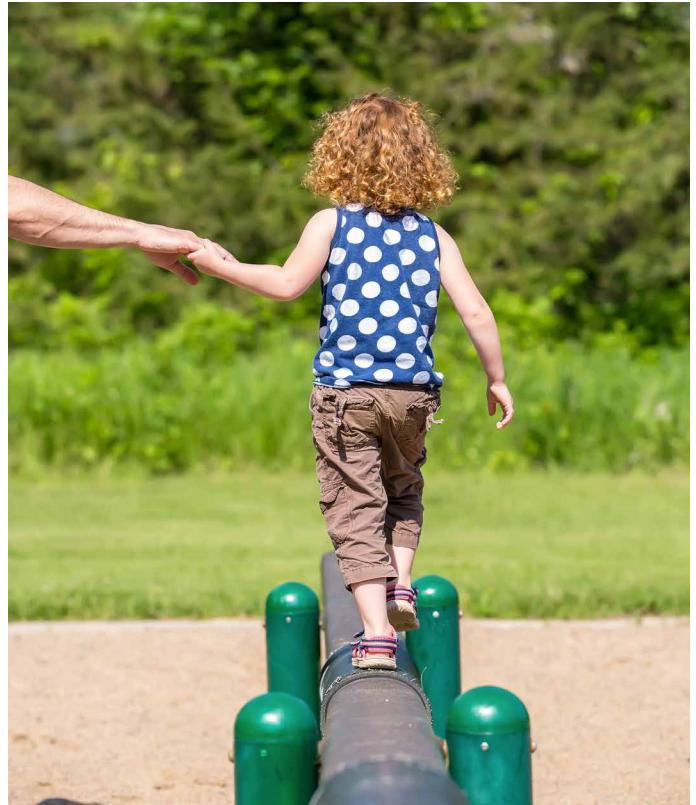
Unfortunately, these basic human rights have become fodder for politics that continues to thicken the tension and further the division of our country. Such basic human rights should not reside in a political aisle and instead should be a concern for everyone. APSAC members continue to be in the frontline, and regardless of policies being passed or revoked, each of you continues to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children, families, and communities. Despite limits on resources placed on our communities, each of you continues to find innovative ways to help families and to help each other. I echo what Dr. Schelbe had previously said in that “context matters” and these are the contextual factors that continue to influence the work that you do in the prevention of child maltreatment. The work that you do is made more difficult in these trying times and I continue

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to believe that we need to maintain our connection with each other and find support from one another. We do this no matter what the challenging context is, and if possible, embody what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said in a 1960 speech delivered at Spellman College that, “if you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.” As interdisciplinary professionals in the field of maltreatment prevention, creating a network of support can only help to strengthen our resolve to maintain forward momentum and continue to help uplift the children and families in our communities.

To this end, I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of my dear friend, Dr. Schelbe, and to assume leadership of the *Advisor* as its Editor. Her leadership is a tough act to follow but, as mentioned at the opening of this letter, I promise to continue her vision and goal for the *Advisor*. I remain committed to bringing in empirical, practice-oriented articles that will be presented in a manner that can easily be translated into practice and policy. I will continue to increase emphasis on racial equity as is consistent with the APSAC Board of Directors’ position statement on eliminating systemic racism and implicit bias in the child maltreatment field (<https://www.apsac.org/fighting-racism-and-bias>). This is particularly important, as we are starting to see many in the field return to “business-as-usual,” to continue the fight against racial injustices. Therefore, each *Advisor* issue will continue to include a social justice commentary section that will continue to shine a mirror to ensure that we hold ourselves accountable to the promotion of equity.

I will continue to solicit new authors and new voices to bring in new and different perspectives in the community and the articles that we present. I therefore encourage our members, especially in practice across the frontlines, to submit practice-based articles that can provide other members with insights into what works (and what doesn’t) when delivering services to children and families in the communities. For far too long, most evidence-



based interventions have been implemented with the expectation of fidelity, yet most communities may not match what was used in empirical studies. Therefore, I welcome members to share their experiences and insights. As part of expanding perspectives and voices, I am also hoping to bring in voices from education given that schools, though a major source of CPS referrals and location for universal prevention efforts, have been absent in our conversations. As such, I encourage you to reach out to members of the education community who are your friends, colleagues, or multidisciplinary team members and ask them to join our APSAC community and share their voices through the *Advisor*.

I am excited to be in community with each of you and encourage you to reach out to me so we can have a dialogue. I would also like to recognize and welcome Ms. Crystal Marks, who has recently joined our team and is our new Director of Publications and Member Services. I can be reached at panlilio@psu.edu and Ms. Marks at cmarks@apsac.org.