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Safe Touches: A Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program Offers Promising Results Among Multi-Racial Children

Mary L. Pulido, PhD, Brenda A. Tully, LCSW, and Jacqueline L. Holloway, PhD

The literature on school-based child sexual abuse prevention programs generally supports their efficacy in teaching children core prevention concepts and increasing disclosures of abuse, reducing self-blame, and raising awareness among parents and teachers. The Safe Touches study makes a significant contribution in this area of research by including a large sample of children drawn from schools serving lower-SES and ethnic minority families, using a cluster randomized control trial (RCT) design and applying appropriate statistical analyses.

APSAC Influences U.S. Supreme Court in Child Abuse Case

Jeremy Lawrence, JD, and Thomas D. Lyon, JD, PhD

The Supreme Court has relied on an amicus brief submitted by APSAC in a case that will have far-reaching effects on the ability of prosecutions to move forward despite child witnesses' inability or unwillingness to testify. The decision in *Ohio v. Clark* will remove barriers to prosecution in many cases, including any case in which very young children allege abuse, and many if not most cases in which children allege abuse when questioned by teachers, social workers, psychologists, and medical professionals.

A Model for Developing the Next Generation of Future Child Advocates

Christine E. Pawelski, EdD

The Future Child Advocates (FCA) initiative was launched in 2012 as a vehicle to bring the issues and concerns of bullying and child abuse prevention and intervention to the next generation of citizens and diverse professionals in each community. The idea was to establish model undergraduate and graduate clubs focused on advocacy in the areas of bullying and child abuse. The National APSAC Board recently endorsed Future Child Advocates as an important initiative in the field of child maltreatment and anti-bullying.

For Purposes of Medical Evaluation and Treatment

Martin A. Finkel, DO, FACOP, FAAP, and Debra Esernio-Jenssen, MD, FAAP

The American Board of Medical Specialties approved the sub-specialty of child abuse pediatrics in 2006, recognizing that expert knowledge and skills are required to provide optimal care for maltreated children. Child abuse pediatricians are integral members of CACs and hospital-based child protection teams. A well-conducted, balanced, and objective medical evaluation not only has value for the child and his family but also may have investigatory value for CPS and law enforcement.



A Model for Developing the Next Generation of Future Child Advocates

Christine E. Pawelski, EdD

Introduction

Mel Schneiderman - APSAC Board Member

The National APSAC Board recently endorsed Future Child Advocates (FCA) as an important initiative in the field of child maltreatment and anti-bullying and has agreed to form an advisory committee to help further the goals of the project. APSAC will become Future Child Advocates' national multidisciplinary partner, lending its credibility, providing a network of national and local experts to speak at club events, and helping to identify community sites for student volunteers. It is our hope that students across the nation will become APSAC affiliate or student members and serve on local, state, and national committees to further APSAC's aspirations. We are a leading voice in the field, intending to increase awareness of issues of child abuse and neglect as well as bullying among college students and the general public.

What Is the Problem?

All forms of violence, child abuse, harassment, and bullying continue to be an unfortunate reality of today's society. This is especially true for more vulnerable populations of children and young people.

Work has been done to provide greater support and attention to this concern, along with better training of professionals who are more directly involved with such children at risk. Since 2012, policy developers at the state and federal levels have introduced expanded guidelines in this area, such as licensure requirements that mandate additional training workshops to enhance understanding and promote interventions related to abuse, bullying, and harassment, especially for school-based professionals seeking certification or renewals across many disciplines (Sacco, D. T., Silbaugh, K., et al., 2012). New York State, for example, added 6 hours to the already required 4 hours of mandated training for school-based professionals seeking certification. But it is not enough! More work is needed not only to sensitize professionals but also to expose the next generation of citizens and future parents to these realities regardless of chosen profession. Each person can do something to help support and protect children in his or her life and community and thus become that needed child advocate.

Finding Solutions

The Future Child Advocates (FCA) initiative was launched in 2012 as a vehicle to bring the issues and concerns of

bullying and child abuse prevention and intervention to the next generation of citizens and diverse professionals in each community. The idea was to establish model undergraduate and graduate clubs focused on advocacy in the areas of bullying and child abuse. Student organizations and clubs can play a strategic role in intellectual and civic responsibility, thereby bridging academic discourse in the classroom and the need to support a human community striving for equity and justice. The FCA club concept offers undergraduate and graduate students opportunities to enhance or clarify their future professional roles while providing a greater understanding of what is needed to ensure a safe, enriching, and positive world for their own children along with understanding what role they can play in advocacy on multiple levels. Identified goals for Future Child Advocates clubs include the following:

- » Public Awareness events developed within the campus community around issues and advocacy related to anti-bullying and child abuse interventions.
- » Professional Development activities (such as speakers, workshops, and readings) which can expand student knowledge and identify community needs across targeted child abuse and anti-bullying areas. Libraries and community-national partners can help by identifying local experts as speakers or developing fact sheets or reading lists on critical topics. Other activities may include site visits to medical centers, child advocacy centers, or court locations to learn more about processes and procedures involved in child maltreatment cases. Libraries can also provide space or support for facilitated conversations on issues or demonstrations of unique programs in this area of work.
- » Community Service in the area of child abuse and bullying prevention and intervention can be done in a variety of ways. Multiple opportunities exist to volunteer at a local child advocacy center, for example, working with children and families in waiting room areas or raising funds for needed books and materials for these locations and families. School-based community service might involve leading various types of anti-bullying sessions during or after school.
- » Opportunities for all clubs to develop skills in Advocacy and Fundraising are important for to achieve projected outcomes.

Two formal FCA clubs have been developed as models: an

undergraduate program at Fordham University, Bronx, New York, and a graduate program at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. For more information, visit the Web site at www.futurechildadvocates.org.

Moving Forward

To sustain the work at these two pilot institutions and to promote the FCA concept among other higher education communities, it was decided to secure a formal partnership with an appropriate multidisciplinary national professional organization. Students becoming involved in this type of campus club are seeking exposure to multiple disciplines and aspects of child maltreatment, prevention, and intervention. Research also documents graduate students developing stronger professional identity as a result of out-of-class experiences (Lidden, D. L., Wilson, M. E., et al., 2014). Furthermore, students often transfer their focus of interest beyond their immediate community as enhanced knowledge broadens their horizons. Tapping into that widening circle of possibilities beyond university boundaries seems to hold promise for sustaining this particular child advocacy model. In addition, faculty can have greater confidence in supporting the activities of students participating in an FCA club given added oversight from national experts who could also provide materials useful to professional research and course development.

Given the vision and overall mission of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children and its interdisciplinary membership from around the world, FCA leadership sought to establish a formal connection with APSAC and its statewide chapters to help develop this next generation of child advocates. Partnership possibilities with APSAC include the following:

- » Creation of a Committee or Sub-Committee within the APSAC structure to ensure that APSAC is meeting the needs of undergraduate and graduate students interested in child advocacy in these areas.
- » Preparation of a listing of recommended articles across disciplines that could be available to FCA faculty advisors and student leadership and incorporated into club meetings or advocacy efforts.
- » Identification of an APSAC member to serve as a liaison with the national leadership of FCA, to help identify current topics that should be included in the FCA work at the college or university level in addition to assisting in questions and issues that might arise.
- » Provision of a listing of recommended local speakers for approved FCA club meetings, workshops, or events that would be appropriate for student groups and where possible encourage their involvement. Site visit recommendations also could be included.

- » In collaboration with the FCA national administrative staff, the APSAC liaison or committee could participate in reviewing the approval of new clubs, helping to ensure oversight and monitoring where necessary.
- » Provide to club faculty advisors free access to at least the APSAC Advisor and its online library for as long as they serve in this capacity for their university student organization.
- » Provide opportunities for FCA student leadership and graduates to serve on APSAC state or national committees where appropriate.
- » Help sponsor in collaboration with national FCA a biennial event that would provide opportunities for clubs to share their activities, outcomes, and challenges.
- » Assist in the design of an assessment tool to document the sustainability and support the replication of this initiative.

There are no simple and totally evidence-based models for securing a safe, quality world for children for today or the future. However, the time is right to build upon ideas that seem to hold promise for continuing to encourage a child advocacy agenda for the next generation of citizens and professionals. The work is not done, but positive changes can continue to occur if each of us does his or her part.

References

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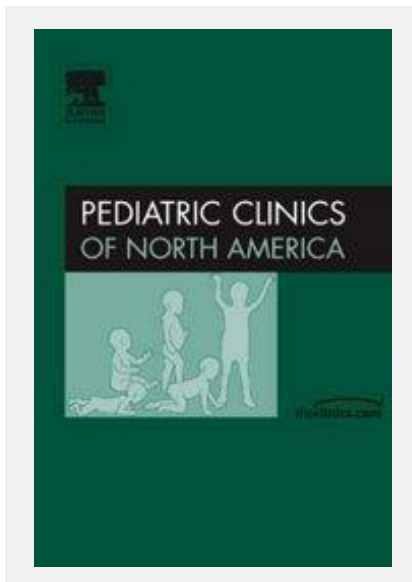
About the Author

Christine E. Pawelski, EdD, is Project Director in the Health and Behavior Studies Department of Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. She began exploring this area while working with undergraduate and graduate students involved in her various child advocacy projects at the Butler Child Advocacy Center, Bronx and Manhattan Child Advocacy Center, New York City. She was a long time member of the NYS Children's Justice Task Force with multi-year Web development grants from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services related to disabilities and child abuse. Contact - chrisp5908@gmail.com

Child Maltreatment and Culture

Lisa Aronson Fontes, PhD

This comprehensive article discusses a wide range of culture-related issues pertaining to child maltreatment. It describes international topics ranging from children tied by the leg to a post to “keep them safe” in Palau, to the beating of Taiwanese school children. Although the intended audience of the article is healthcare providers, other professionals who work in child maltreatment will also find it extremely relevant. While providing an impressive review of the literature, the article is also delightfully practical. It includes tables that provide a shorthand description of “what to do.” For instance, Table 3 provides four guidelines for speaking with parents about a harmful practice. Quite a few of these tables are adapted from other articles. Nevertheless, it is extremely useful to have them all in one place.



The article does not discuss any particular practice in depth. Instead, it provides the criteria for readers to consider practices in light of culturally sensitive norms, while always keeping child safety front and center. In addition, the piece provides the references for those who wish to investigate further ways to handle specific cultural practices.

Kolhatkar, G., & Berkowitz, C. (2014). Cultural considerations in child maltreatment: In search of universal principles. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 61, 1007–1022

About the Author

Lisa Aronson Fontes, PhD, is in the faculty of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and author of *Interviewing Clients across Cultures: A Practitioner's Guide*, among many other publications.

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1706 E. Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43203

News of the Organization

Michael L. Haney, PhD, NCC, CISM, LMHC

Since 1987, APSAC has worked hard to address the problem of child maltreatment at every level.

This year has been no exception. It has been filled with activity and change.

APSAC'S Advanced Training Institutes

A total of 90 individuals participated this past January in APSAC's Advanced Training Institute on Child Sexual Abuse with Barbara Knox and Debra Esernio-Jenssen. The Advanced Institutes are offered each year as part of the Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment sponsored by the Chadwick Center.

APSAC will be presenting three [Advanced Training Institutes at the 2016 San Diego Conference](#), held on January 23–24, 2016. They include the following:

- » C1: “The Law and Psychology of Introducing Children’s Statements in Court” - Thomas D. Lyon and John E.B. Myers
- » C2: “Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB) in Children: Current Findings and Implications of Practice” - Jimmy Widdifield, Jr., and Natalie H. Wilcox
- » C3: “Advanced Issues in Child Sexual Abuse” - Debra Esernio-Jenssen and Barbara Knox

For more information on APSAC's Advanced Training Institutes and the Annual San Diego International Conference, visit our website at www.apsac.org/events.

APSAC Co-sponsored Free Webinar

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, APSAC's Prevention Committee co-sponsored a free webinar with Prevent Child Abuse America in April, on the topic of “Child Maltreatment Prevention Messaging: What's New and What You Can Do.”

APSAC Publications

While the Prevention Committee is busy working on updating the [Prevention Guidelines](#), our Evidence-Based Practices Committee published the [Report of the APSAC Task Force on Evidence-Based Service Planning Guidelines for Child Welfare](#). APSAC members can access this resource free on our website.

Also available to APSAC members is [Volume 26, Number 2 of the APSAC Advisor](#) that addressed the issue of child maltreatment in Indian Country. This issue was informative and well received.

A new issue of [APSAC's Alert](#) was published this summer which focused on Evidence Based Service Planning for Child Welfare. Read it now!

In conjunction with Sage Publishing, we have begun revising the *APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment*, with Jon Conte, PhD, and Bart Klika, PhD, serving as the lead editors.

APSAC Board Update

In July, several members rotated off of the APSAC Board. We'd like to thank Julie Kenniston, Director of Training and Education in Hamilton, Ohio; Monica Fitzgerald, Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado-Denver; Detective William Marshall of the Spokane Police Department (Retired); Geri Wisner, Attorney in Oklahoma City; and Marilyn Stocker, PhD, of Loyola University in Chicago, for their service and commitment to APSAC.

Tricia Gardner, JD, was elected as APSAC President-Elect. Ms. Gardner is a long-time APSAC member, and during the 1990s, she served as APSAC's Operations Manager. Ms. Gardner will work in collaboration with current President Frank Vandervort as she transitions into the Presidency at APSAC's 2016 Colloquium in New Orleans.

David Corwin, MD, was elected to the Board for a second term; Mel Schneiderman, PhD, was elected to his first term and Paul Jenssen, CPA, was elected to his first term.

Dr. Corwin is Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah, School of Medicine. He is board certified in psychiatry, child psychiatry and forensic psychiatry. Dr. Corwin is a founder of APSAC's California's State Chapter (CAPSAC) and a founding member of APSAC, the Ray E. Helfer Society, and the Academy on Violence and Abuse (AVA).

Dr. Schneiderman is currently Senior Vice President of Mental Health Services at New York Foundling, a large child welfare agency in New York City, and is the co-founder and Director of the Vincent J. Fontana Center for Child Protection. Dr. Schneiderman has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, including the *APSAC Advisor* and has presented at national APSAC Conferences.

Mr. Jenssen, CPA, MBA, MEd is President of Jenssen Consulting and has over 35 years of experience in strategic planning, process improvement, finance, and accounting. Mr. Jenssen has served as principal accounting officer at Quick-Med Technologies Inc., was chief financial officer of Quick-Med Technologies Inc, and also has been the organization's Corporate Treasurer and Secretary.

APSAC's Opinion Is Being Heard by the United States Supreme Court

With pro bono representation by Jeremy Lawrence of the Los Angeles law firm Munger, Tolles & Olsen, and with the assistance of Professor Thomas D. Lyon, JD, PhD, APSAC filed an Amicus Curiae Brief with the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) in support of the petitioner, the State of Ohio. Not only did SCOTUS rule unanimously in Ohio's favor, they also cited APSAC's brief in their decision! (Check it out on page 9 of full-text SCOTUS opinion.)

» [Read APSAC's Amicus Curiae Brief](#)

» [Read the U.S. Supreme Court's decision \(full text\)](#)

APSAC's involvement in this case reflects our renewed commitment to being an active advocate for policies that best meet the needs of abused and neglected children.

APSAC'S 2015-2016 Advanced Forensic Interview Clinics

Interviews with children face intense scrutiny and increasingly require specialized training and expertise. APSAC's widely sought-after 40-Hour Forensic Interview Training Clinic focuses on the needs of professionals responsible for conducting forensic and investigative interviews with children in suspected abuse cases.

In August, APSAC held one of its clinics in Seattle, Washington. Participants had personal interaction with leading experts in the field and were provided with APSAC's curriculum, which teaches a structured narrative interview approach emphasizing best practices based on research and guided by the best interests of the child.

Attendees received a balanced review of several protocols and will be able to develop their own customized narrative interview approach based on the principles taught during the clinic.

If you have an interest in attending one of these clinics in 2016, visit our website at www.apsac.org.

APSAC's Growing State Chapter Involvement

Much of APSAC's interdisciplinary work is done through our state chapters. In an effort to build the relationship between APSAC's national organization and our states,

our State Chapter Committee has been working to help its newest state chapters get off to a good start. We want to welcome Wisconsin to the fold as well as New Jersey, currently reorganizing and reinvigorating its State Chapter. Several other States are early in the process of forming their chapters.

We want to recognize our long-term state chapters in California, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, New York, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

If you have an interest in forming a state chapter, contact Laura Hughes, lhughes@apsac.org.

APSAC Committees

APSAC committees prioritize the critical issues and challenges child maltreatment professionals are facing, and create opportunities and tools to educate, inform, and connect in an effort to enhance practice. We encourage you to get involved! Check out our listing of committees on our website and contact one of our committee leaders to see how you can get involved today!

APSAC's 23rd Annual Colloquium

For two decades, APSAC's Annual Colloquium has been among the nation's most highly regarded continuing education programs for child welfare professionals. The Colloquium fosters professional excellence in the field of child maltreatment by providing exemplary interdisciplinary professional education.

This year's Colloquium featured more than 80 institutes and workshops which addressed all aspects of child maltreatment, including prevention, assessment, intervention, and treatment with victims, perpetrators, and families affected by physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.

In addition, the Colloquium offered several special events and networking opportunities, poster presentations, exhibits, and the awards ceremony, celebrating outstanding service and commitment by child maltreatment professionals and APSAC members. Awards were presented during the Friedrich Memorial Lecture and Membership Luncheon on July 24, 2015. To see a listing of this year's award winners, visit www.apsac.org/awards

Save the Date and Call for Abstracts for the 24th Annual Colloquium in New Orleans

With the 2015 Colloquium behind us, we are already planning the 24th Annual Colloquium to be held in New Orleans on June 22-26, 2016. APSAC is now accepting abstracts for its 24th Annual Colloquium in New Orleans. Details on responding to the Call for Abstracts are available on the APSAC web site.

If you have a presentation that is designed primarily for professionals in mental health, medicine and nursing, law, law enforcement, education, prevention, research, advocacy, child protection services, and allied fields, we want to hear from you! All aspects of child maltreatment will be addressed including prevention, assessment, intervention and treatment with victims, perpetrators, and families affected by physical, sexual and psychological abuse, and neglect. Submit your proposal today!

To help attendees select their seminars, the Colloquium is divided into convenient tracks: Cultural Diversity, Child Protection, Law Enforcement, Interdisciplinary Practice, Forensic Interviewing, Law, Mental Health, Medicine and Nursing, and Prevention.

Visit our website for complete details and registration information next year.

Thank You for Your Support

APSAC would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Board Member Challenge and donated to APSAC's overall fund, including Amazon Smile. So far this year, we have received over \$17,000 in generous donations! This money is used to support and enrich our programs.

APSAC would like to thank its partners who work closely with us on critical issues on behalf of children and families. These organizations include the Academy on Violence and Abuse, the Institute on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma, Prevent Child Abuse America, the Chadwick Center, Sage Publishing, and the Institute for Human Services.

Connect with APSAC!

If you are not already a member of APSAC, we encourage you to join us in our efforts on behalf of maltreated children and their families.

Membership benefits include the following: the *APSAC Advisor*, free access to the electronic version of *Child Maltreatment*, reduced fees for APSAC's Colloquium, Institutes and Clinics, access to APSAC's other publications, and the ability to connect with colleagues from around the globe. You can learn more about our activities and join by visiting our website.

If you are interested in joining, please reach out to apsac@apsac.org.

Condolences to the Family of Dr. Mark Chaffin

APSAC extends its deepest sympathy to the family of Dr. Mark Chaffin, a long-time child maltreatment researcher, educator, advocate, and APSAC member who passed away unexpectedly on August 23, 2015. He dedicated his long career to helping at-risk and maltreated children and families. He leaves a strong legacy of always integrating the lessons of science into direct child maltreatment practice. He was also the first Editor of APSAC's journal, *Child Maltreatment*. He received many awards and commendations in his long career, including APSAC's Outstanding Service Award in 2000, and he was twice awarded APSAC's Child Maltreatment Journal Article of the Year award, in 2006 and 2009. He was also a three-time winner of the North American Resource Center for Child Welfare's Pro Humanitate Literary Award, given for "intellectual integrity and moral courage in transcending political and social barriers to best practice in the field of child maltreatment." He was a role model for his peers, and he will be greatly missed.



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Alexandria, VA
advisor@apsac.org

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University of Texas at Arlington
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Center for Child Welfare
Arlington, TX

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John Sciamanna
National Children's Coalition
Washington, DC