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CAPSAC Announces Award Recipients!



WED, APRIL 20, 2022

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

CAPSAC is delighted to announce one of Dr. Saywitz's longtime research colleagues, **Tom Lyon, JD, Ph.D.** at USC, is the 2022 recipient of CAPSAC's Karen J. Saywitz Legacy Award. Dr. Lyon's lecture, "Happy Mediums in Child Interviewing" will explore how the field has moved toward identifying the right balance between questions that are too specific and potentially leading and questions that are too broad and potentially misleading. Please join us April 20th for a live webinar, the second in a series of lectures over future years honoring Dr. Saywitz's work and legacy. Learn more about the award ceremony on page 4.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



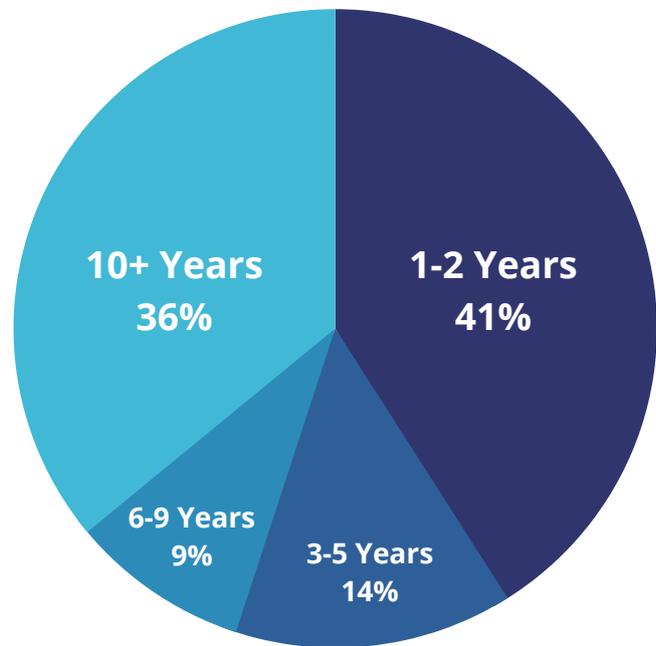
OFFERING
1.5 CEUs!

2022 Member Survey Results

Reasons respondents originally joined CAPSAC:

To meet other professionals in the field of child abuse:	45%
Professional membership to support/build my career:	36%
Other:	18%

Approximate number of years respondents have been a member of CAPSAC:



If you have been a member for more than a year, what is the primary reason you renew?

Professional membership to support/build my career:	57%
To receive discounted rates at trainings:	36%
To meet other professionals in the field of child abuse:	14%
Other	9%

New Board Member Spotlight

JOSHUA THOMAS

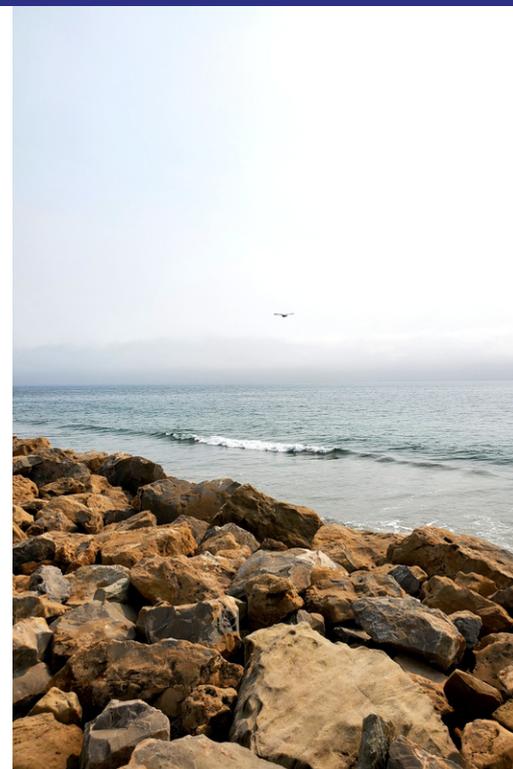
The CAPSAC Board of Directors is pleased to welcome newest board member, Joshua Thomas. Joshua is a professional with a passion and commitment to serving the community. He is currently a team member at two nonprofit organizations in California. He is the Program Manager at Diversity Uplifts, Inc. and eLearning and Graphic Specialist at the Center for Innovation and Resources, Inc. Additionally, he collaborates with the Frontline Doulas to support their community-based birth workers and virtual hotline doulas to support Black birthing families. Joshua previously served as the Multidisciplinary

Team Coordinator at the Children's Advocacy Center in Covina. Joshua brings a wide range of skills to the CAPSAC Board including web design, graphic design and video editing. Raised in the Central Valley, Josh later moved to Ventura County and then to Pasadena, where he currently resides.

In his free time, he enjoys snapping photos and exploring the beauty of California on its many hiking trails. Joshua is excited to serve on the CAPSAC board of directors to support professionals around the state working with children and families.



A few of Josh's photos from the trails of California.



Karen J. Saywitz Legacy Award Lecture and CAPSAC Awards Ceremony

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2022 | 12:00 – 2:00 PM (PT)



THOMAS J. LYON, J.D., PH.D.

CAPSAC is delighted to announce that one of Dr. Saywitz's longtime research colleagues, **Tom Lyon, JD, Ph.D.** is the 2022 recipient of CAPSAC's Karen J. Saywitz Legacy Award. Dr. Lyon is the Judge Edward J. and Ruey L. Guirado Chair in Law and Psychology at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law, and one of the preeminent researchers in the field of forensic interviewing. Dr. Lyon's lecture, "Happy Mediums in Child Interviewing" will explore how the field has moved toward identifying the right balance between questions that are too specific and potentially leading and questions that are too broad and potentially misleading.

This year, CAPSAC was extremely pleased to receive more applications than ever for CAPSAC's Paul Crissey Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Research. All were high-quality, making the decision to select just one very challenging. As a result, CAPSAC has decided to award two grants this year.



Congratulations to graduate student **Shreya Mukhopadhyay** of the University of California Irvine for her research study, "Foster Children's Placement Preferences: The Roles of Kin, Siblings, and Age".



Congratulations also to graduate student **Maha Al-Suwaidi** of University of California Los Angeles for her research study, "Socioeconomic Correlates of Childhood Neglect".

During the April 20th live webinar, Shreya and Maha will present a short summary of their research and each will be presented with a grant of \$750 and a one-year paid APSAC membership by the CAPSAC Board of Directors. Their study summaries will be published in the Summer 2022 issue of *The Consultant*.



CAPSAC is also pleased to announce that **David Love, LMFT**, of Valley Community Counseling Services, based in Stockton, will be presented with the Neal Snyder Outstanding Service Award on April 20th. In the words of nominator Sue Hardie, "An admirable attribute of David's is his ability to mentor trainees and his desire to educate and guide. He leads by example, and is passionate about teaching anyone including new forensic examiners, judges, police officers, social workers, nurses, and college students. As we've seen in his work with CATTa, CAPSAC, APSAC, and in his community, David demonstrates the ability to network with partners and promote a sense of collaboration among all disciplines working in the world of child protection. He directly demonstrates the mission and goals of CAPSAC, actively promoting education of professionals and community members who work with children about child maltreatment prevention, identification, intervention, and treatment."

Did you know that CAPSAC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization? This year marks the 23rd year CAPSAC has provided grants to graduate students. Your donation is tax deductible and will help CAPSAC continue to award student grants, service awards, and the Karen J. Saywitz Legacy Award and Lecture. Thank you for considering a donation of any amount to CAPSAC.

Body Talk: Tools for Parents and Caregivers

BY MONICA BORUNDA, LMFT, SEP

Many parents wonder what to teach their children about their bodies, but don't know how and when it is appropriate to start. Often, parents are so uncomfortable speaking to their children about their bodies, sexuality, and sexual abuse, that they end up not talking to them about it at all. This can make them more vulnerable to abuse. We want to empower our children by educating them about their bodies, and how to keep them safe.



The other thing I have heard in my clinical practice is that parents believe that if something does happen to their child, they expect their child to tell them what happened immediately. Yet parents often forget to — or are unable to — lay a foundation for open communication. This is an important first step; we want to set the groundwork for open and proper communication — for any topic. As professionals, we can help parents learn how to speak with their children about their bodies, boundaries, and how to keep them safe from child sexual abuse. The following are tips that can be shared with parents.

Lay the Foundation

Often, children who have been abused will not tell anyone what happened — even years after the abuse. They are much more likely to tell if they feel safe and supported; if they know someone will believe and protect them from further abuse. Parents can and should empower their children early on with ongoing and consistent conversations to help them clearly understand the following:

- They should know the names of their body parts — ALL OF THEM. Nose, ear, teeth, penis, anus, vulva, vagina, etc. Talk to them about what their parts do and how to keep them clean, safe, and healthy.
- Every child needs to know that they are ALWAYS “the boss” of their bodies. Teach them that they have the right to decide who is allowed to see it and touch it. This includes when we touch, hug, or kiss them.
- Tell them that if they ever tell a parent that someone has hurt them or done something to them, that they will be believed.

If they do disclose abuse, it will be critical for parents to manage their own reactions first. Seek support for themselves in order to be better able to provide their child what they need.

- Parents should reassure children that they will protect them, and then follow through and take immediate action. This may include reporting the abuse to the proper authorities, providing ongoing emotional support, looking for a therapist, taking them to the doctor, etc.
- Parents should avoid blaming, punishing, or shunning their child. A professional can help parents support their child through something like this.
- Parents should emphasize that abuse is NEVER, EVER the child's fault.

How to Protect Children: Tips to Share with Parents and Caregivers

1. Model healthy boundaries. Children should be taught that no one can look, touch, or handle their bodies in a way that feels uncomfortable. And what is or is not uncomfortable is up to the child to decide. Remember, they are the boss! This can be an uncomfortable conversation to have with a relative (especially a grandparent who wants to smother them with kisses!). You can and should include family and friends in your conversation about what you are trying to teach your child. A safe adult will be on board and reinforce this with your child.
2. Look at and ask about interactions with relatives and non-relatives. Get the child's take on how they feel when they interact with someone and listen to them. Disrespecting a child's right to control their body can set a lifelong pattern of falling into compliance.
3. Help children develop good sensory awareness. Teach them to trust "gut" feelings that might signal that something is wrong. Take opportunities to talk about how things feel and help them listen to what their body is telling them. "You grabbed my hand when that man looked at you. Tell me about that." Listen to what they say and then remind them that they should always listen to their gut.
4. Most perpetrators groom their victims and families, and don't always use force. Assure children that they do not have to engage in anything that causes them to feel funny, goes against family rules, involves a secret, or seems like it would separate them from others.
5. Offer opportunities for children to practice saying no, whether it is to grandparents, parents, authority figures or other children. Back up your child by saying "Maybe Sammy is not ready to hug you." Honor their decisions regarding who is safe or unsafe for them.
6. Make sure children understand they can yell "Stop!" when necessary and get away as quickly as they can.
7. Teach them how to tell someone if something happens. And if they do not get help the first time, to keep telling until someone takes action to help them.

Professionals Must Remember

- Many parents avoid discussion due to lack of knowledge. It is up to us to introduce the topic and provide psychoeducation in a manner that says to them that this is a topic that is important.
- If a parent has been a victim of abuse, or they lack models for healthy adult sexuality, it may be more difficult for that parent to know how or be able to protect their children.
- In some cases, another cause for concern might be that the perpetrator is the primary, or only source of income. Disclosing the abuse could mean losing food, shelter, and stability for the family. Keep this in mind when listening to the parent and planning necessary support.
- Studies suggest that gender non-conforming children may be at even greater risk. An estimated 50% of transgender people experience sexual violence at some point in their lifetimes.
- Healing can be greatly aided by the support of a professional trauma therapist. In addition to the victim, mental health support can be valuable for siblings, caretakers, and others.
- All children deserve protection.

Sources

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Monica Borunda is a bilingual Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, adjunct faculty at California State University Los Angeles, and a Child Forensic Interview Specialist and Parent Educator. She is also a trainer and consultant on topics of trauma, child abuse, and child forensic interviewing. In addition, Monica sees children, adults, and families in private practice in the city of Pasadena. Monica is currently serving on the Board of the California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children.



Social Workers' Beginning Practice: The Need for Child Development Knowledge

BY JUDITH VELAZQUEZ AND KAREN MARCIAL

The field of social work is very diverse. Social workers can be found working in: administration, advocacy, community organizing, the aging community, child welfare, healthcare, international development, corrections, clinical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, policy and planning, politics, public welfare, research, and school social work. Within all these variabilities of the discipline, an emphasis on children and families is present. Many social workers in any of these fields work with children and families. More specifically, many new social workers entering the field begin working in agencies such as the Department of Children and Family Services, where they may be the first professional that children and parents encounter. This magnifies the impact that social workers have on children and their families. It is important for new social workers to have a basic understanding of child growth and development, including developmental milestones, as well as parenting styles and skills and relevant cultural factors. Knowing this will lead to a more well-rounded, trusted and effective social worker.

New Social Workers and Child Development

Although social work courses may differ according to schools, the curriculum in The United States is governed by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The Council requires nine competencies to be taught in social work programs, which guide accredited MSW and BSW programs in providing courses that effectively meet the CSWE standards. When looking at one of these BSW programs in California as an example, only two courses out of a nineteen-course curriculum address child development. Social workers and the child welfare system have had a historically close relationship in that many new social work graduates are recruited to county welfare agencies. This close relationship includes the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) stipend program funded through Title IVE, where select California Master level social work students as well as a few BSW programs, are able to receive aid for their specialized education with the commitment of working two years in a public child welfare agency. Their coursework emphasizes the importance of child development knowledge for new social workers who are entering public child welfare agencies.



Heyer's (2016) research on client satisfaction with families who had children with special needs, led her to include these three aspects in her final questionnaire: Ability to give referrals that helped me with my family, got me medical services for my child and taught me how to obtain care for my child. Heyer (2016) showed that clients felt satisfaction when their social workers were knowledgeable, resourceful, and able to communicate effectively. This shows the importance that clients with a special needs child attribute to social work knowledge, referral generation and teaching how to obtain care for the child. It also shows the importance of building rapport and effectively knowing a client's needs when working in a setting with children and families.

The Importance Of Child Development Knowledge

Knowledge of child development is important for new social workers who choose to work with children and families. Those workers who enter the field with no child development education and no experience in working with children may find themselves lost. Having that knowledge allows social workers to serve children and their families more effectively. One way that having child development knowledge benefits workers is the ability to build rapport more effectively. According to some scholars, the interviewer's behavior, which includes communication methods and rapport building, is critical for the collection of accurate and quality data from clients (Bell, Fahmy and Gordon, 2016).

Whether it be conducting assessments or case work, when working with parents, a social worker's ability to build rapport with them may rest heavily on the ability to know certain factors regarding their children. For example, if a children's social worker is completely clueless about recognizing developmental milestones when observing a child, the parents or caregivers might be discouraged about the worker's ability to help them, and the social worker's credibility can be easily dismissed, as they may now be perceived as incompetent. Those parents may wonder to themselves how this worker can effectively help them and their child when they have no knowledge of children. Being able to show insight, awareness and expertise regarding a child's development can help the worker demonstrate commitment to their work, which in turn, will help the families have more trust in their workers and improve the process of building rapport.

Child development knowledge is also necessary for new social workers in order to be able to detect the need for early intervention. New social workers can often be the first professional contact that families and children encounter upon entering an agency. Studies show that early intervention is crucial when it comes to developmental delays, as early detection is beneficial to the child; furthermore, the importance of identifying developmental delays within the first three years is critical, as this lays the foundation of all future learning and determines the child's long term thriving in life (Singh & Akenar, 2018). If developmental delays are detected during these critical stages and early intervention is successfully implemented, then future developmental milestones have a secure pyramid on which to build, thus enhancing the child's opportunities for academic and behavioral success.

This puts into perspective the responsibility that social workers have in identifying delays when working closely with children and families. To detect any developmental delays, social workers must have knowledge of developmental milestones as well as have a broad understanding of their segregation into developmental domains such as cognitive, social emotional, communication, and physical development. Social workers should know when milestones (i.e., smiling, lifting the head and turning toward sound, turning over, sitting, crawling, walking, using expressive language, etc.) are typically achieved. When social workers are able to identify when a child isn't meeting milestones in specific domains, they have the ability to effectively address the situation and recommend the child and parent to the appropriate treatment or agency. Furthermore, understanding developmental milestones helps prevent child maltreatment as it helps parents set realistic expectations of their child's development and ability to achieve tasks.

Social workers working with children and family communities should be ready to provide information and skills as a preventive measure. Some of these preventive measures in regards to the overall wellness of the children, are to educate parents about maltreatment and adverse childhood experiences. Parents who are not aware of the different kinds of maltreatment may not fully understand the full scope of what is considered abuse. They may only understand abuse as being physical and sexual, which is typically what one thinks of when hearing about abuse, but disregard emotional abuse and neglect. Social workers can inform parents about the damage that all these types of abuse have on a child's development and how it affects their overall wellbeing once they reach adulthood.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) discusses specific strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect. Some of these strategies include changing social norms to support parents and positive parenting, providing quality care and education early in life, and enhancing parenting skills to promote healthy childhood development. Positive parenting skills can be provided by referring parents to neighborhood parenting classes and conducting an intervention in real time as problematic child behaviors occur. For example, a social worker who is comfortable with her child development knowledge might coach a parent to effectively use praise, redirection or implement a time out with their young child. Some beginning social workers shy away from this challenge, fearing that a parent might challenge them about whether or not they have children. There are many ways to navigate these situations, but at their heart, they begin with a high level of confidence in child development knowledge. Social workers have an important responsibility to guide parents through these topics as a form of child abuse prevention.

It is useful for the new social worker to be familiar with various parenting styles. Helping the parents figure out whether they are disciplinarians and use a strict discipline style with little negotiation possible, or permissive parents in which there is limited guidance and expectations are typically minimal, or authoritative parents who are reasonable and nurturing and set clear

expectations, or perhaps they are uninvolved parents who give children a lot of freedom and generally stay out of their way. Being able to correctly identify parenting styles will not only help parents gain insight on their own parenting, but might help them reflect on the parenting styles that their own caregivers had. Social workers can help the parents reflect on their own beliefs about parenting, their own experience as children, and whether any of these parenting styles were a positive or negative affect on their upbringing, and finally how they themselves as parents can apply this reflection to their own parenting.

Culture

Culture plays an important role in identifying developmental milestones and expectations of a child. One of the strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect is to change social norms, so it is important for new social workers to be culturally sensitive in order to assist parents or caregivers to recognize delayed development. Culture also influences how developmental delays and or developmental disorder symptoms are perceived, which may lead to a delay in identification or diagnosis. As previously discussed, developmental disorders are less hindering if identified early and services are obtained. However, culture may influence how soon a family seeks services or whether or not a family seeks services at all. Families may be more open to engaging in services if the worker is from the same ethnicity as the family or if the worker speaks the same language as them. In addition, the way families perceive delays could be influenced by their culture. For example, while Caucasian parents in the United States tend to notice language deficits before social deficits (Conrad & Stone, 2004; Filipek et al., 2000; Filipek et al., 1999; as cited in Morrier et al., 2008), in India, families notice social deficits first before language deficits in their children (Daley, 2004; as cited in Morrier et al., 2008). In addition, in the Navajo culture, children are viewed by their strengths instead of their limitations. This has resulted in Navajo children not receiving services for disabilities as they do not seek a “cure” (Connors & Donnellan, 1993; as cited in Morrier et al., 2008). As mentioned, culture plays a role in the type of developmental domain that may be first identified or that may go unnoticed. Due to the importance of early intervention with children with developmental delays, it is pivotal for new social workers to have child development knowledge and be culturally competent. Understanding a person’s culture and being culturally sensitive can help a new social worker build rapport and engage families to better support them and access services.

Being culturally competent is also important in understanding some of the challenges families may face when accessing services. Distrust of the system, mental health beliefs, low health literacy, language barriers, and difficulty navigating a bureaucratic health care system are some of the challenges that may be more common among minority groups.



Being culturally competent is essential to understand the needs and challenges of families and intervene with appropriate referrals or assistance. Understanding where families are coming from, respecting parent's beliefs about the root of their children's problems and validating their concerns can be key to engage families who may be resistant to services due to cultural beliefs.

Furthermore, regional centers are one of the main service providers for helping children with developmental delays. However, because there is a short time frame window for when children can be referred for regional center services, which is usually before the age of three, it is crucial that these developmental delays are identified early on. After the age of three, children are referred to their school district to receive services for their developmental delays. Although children benefit from services regardless of the age they are referred, the sooner they receive services, the more effective the intervention is.

Conclusion

Social workers are advocates, referral sources and educators for children and families. Therefore, it is extremely important to be able to advocate for our communities efficiently by understanding child development. Being knowledgeable in the field of childhood development is a critical way for social workers to meet the necessities of the families with which they work. Social work clients benefit when the worker is able to build rapport, is credible in their line of work, knowledgeable about early childhood intervention, can identify developmental delays, is culturally sensitive, can effectively educate parents on self-awareness and parenting styles, is aware of child maltreatment issues, and can provide meaningful advocacy and guidance. New social workers can enhance these skills by accessing additional child developmental courses, training, or certificate programs that focus on child development issues.

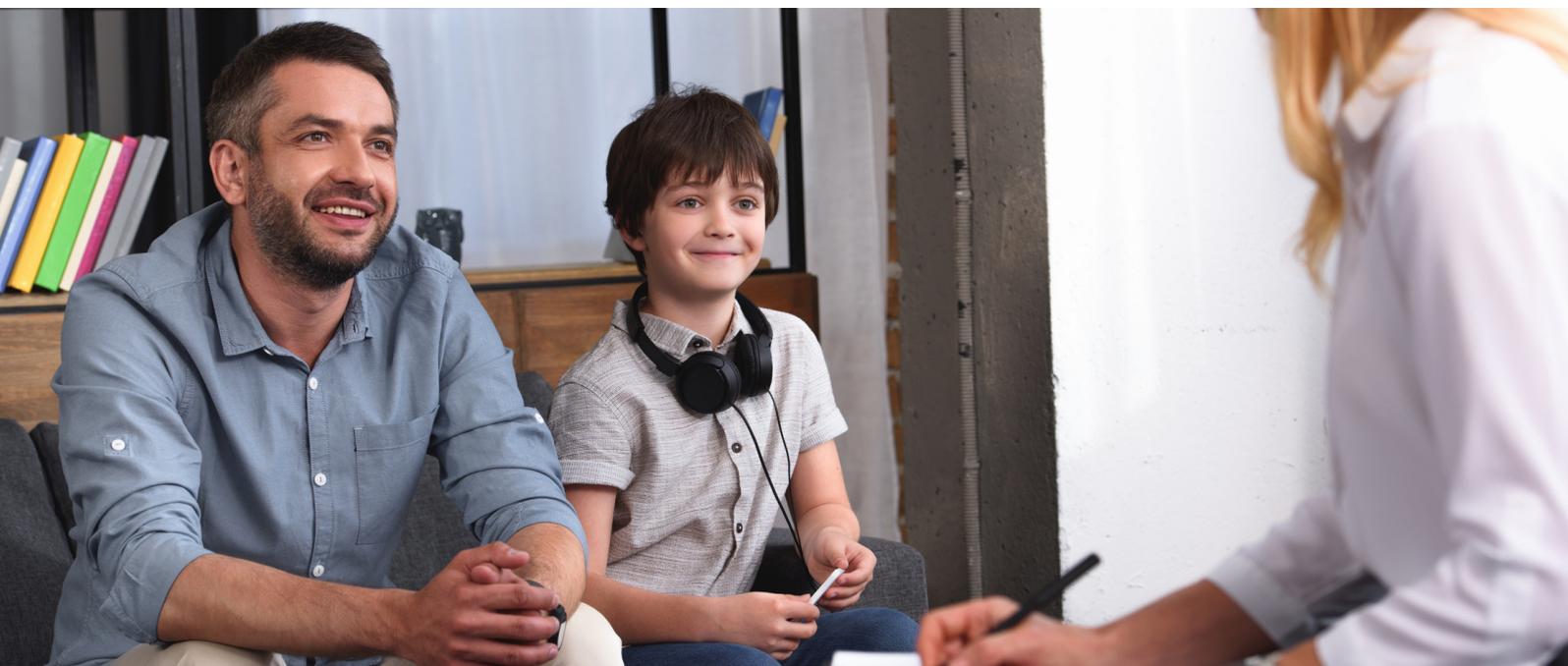
How can you help? Professionals in the field can also help motivate new social workers to acquire these skills by connecting them to learning opportunities in the workplace. You can introduce new social workers in the field to organizations like APSAC and CAPSAC where they will have access to free training and seminars, have the opportunity to collaborate and consult with other professionals working with children who will share their knowledge on child development issues and strategies that they have acquired over years of experience in the field. You can reinforce that it is not necessary to have your own children to understand child development, and share the practice encounters you have navigated well. As CAPSAC members, inviting new social workers to join APSAC and CAPSAC can open the doors for them to learn the value of being part of a multidisciplinary team early on in their careers and have the support system needed to further improve services and ensure all services for children and families are aligned with best practices.

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Karen Marcial, BSW is a Master student at the California State University Los Angeles School of Social Work. She has practice experience working with the homeless population and is currently an intern at the Child Abuse and Family Violence Institute.

Judith Velazquez is a Bachelor of Social Work student at California State University Los Angeles and a future Masters of Social Work student. She is an intern for the Child Abuse and Family Violence Institute and has experience working with children who are at risk for developmental delays as an Early Intervention Specialist.





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