How can we describe and expand our understanding of the history of pediatric psychology and learn from it? This is an important question as the field matures and grows in size and impact. There are valuable articles describing the history of the field, including its defining period in the mid to late 1960s (c.f., Mesibov, 1984; Routh; 1975; Walker, 1988; White, 1991) and of the first 25 years of the Journal of Pediatric Psychology (JPP) (Kazak, 2000). Evidence of collaborations between psychologists and pediatricians dating further back to the late 1890s is also recorded (Lee & Kazak, 2014; Routh, 1975). However, what has been largely missing so far are scholarly papers explicitly focused on identifying and interpreting key influences, trends, events, and developments in the field.

Recognizing the timeliness of such reflective and integrative papers, JPP is initiating a new feature—Historical Analysis in Pediatric Psychology. Papers in this series are intended to expand our understanding of the roots, evolution, and/or impact of pediatric psychology as a discipline. They may focus on the influence of individuals, published works, organizations, conceptualizations, philosophies or approaches, or clinical and professional activities.1 Writing a “history paper” is a different type of writing from standard psychology research papers or clinical reports. These papers require stepping back to articulate a clear question or premise and developing a compelling argument for it. To be credible, they must include a breadth of coverage and ensure that contradictory data and potential biases are considered and acknowledged respectfully. Historical analysis is more than a recounting of the “facts” and should include a thoughtful and scholarly interpretation of the subject matter. It is important to understand the context and the period in which events occurred and to make sense of changes that have occurred that may have altered or expanded our present understanding. Finally, careful fact-checking and reliance on primary sources whenever possible is essential for accuracy and credibility. Authors and readers must also be mindful that any singular paper cannot possibly capture all the nuances and factors addressed in the paper. Thus, it is hoped that ongoing dialogue in future papers can provide other, novel, and enriching detail to promote dialogue and ultimate understanding of the evolution of the field.

We have ample primary sources (“data”) for Historical Analysis papers and it is these data that we encourage authors to use for these papers. In addition to published papers (there are now close to 40 volumes of the JPP), each outgoing editor of JPP has published a detailed valedictum summarizing trends in publications during their terms. The articles in the ongoing Pioneers in Pediatric Psychology series in JPP offer rich descriptions of the work of pediatric psychology leaders. Progress Notes, the newsletter of Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP), also provides important information relevant to the history of the field, and now includes short focused articles on historically relevant topics in a History Spotlight feature (http://www.apadivisions.org/division-54/publications/newsletters/). In addition, there are archival materials such as presidential addresses, conference programs, minutes from executive board meetings, and summaries of activities during the terms of presidents of SPP from 1969 to 1989 in Recollections (http://www.apadivisions.org/division54/about/history/recollections.pdf). Many of these materials are accessible on the SPP Web site (http://www.apadivisions.org/division-54/). Importantly, many of the individuals involved in

1Interested authors should refer to the Instructions to Authors for specific details about preparing Historical Analysis papers.
the early days of JPP and the SPP remain actively engaged in the field and can provide first-hand information about events that shaped our field.

The first two papers in the Historical Analysis series appear in the current issue of JPP.

Two classic and often cited papers by psychologists from the 1960s—Jerome Kagan’s paper in the American Journal of Diseases of Children (Kagan, 1965) describing the connections being made between psychology and pediatrics as a “marriage” and Logan Wright’s (1967) paper in American Psychologist “The pediatric psychologist: A role model”—are analyzed by Genik, Yen, and McMurtry (2015). This article is unique in analyzing and interpreting these two papers from an integrative historical perspective and including an interview with Kagan to further amplify their argument. The authors show how these two papers reflected the gestalt of their time, when increasing attention was being paid to children in our society in general, advances in medicine were remarkable, public recognition of psychology was increasing, and there was, in general, growing appreciation of empirical research. While these two papers were “seeded” at an opportune time socially, Genik et al. (2015) also show how their influence has continued, as reflected in more recent special issues of JPP, research themes, and training recommendations.

The second paper in the Historical Analysis series is written by a noted pediatric psychologist and senior statesman in the field, Dennis Drotar, who identifies challenges faced by pediatric psychologists in the 1970s and argues that these early constraints continue to impact the field (Drotar, 2015). Key issues such as gaining access to clinical care and research populations and the development of professional identities as psychologists in medical settings are linked to the same papers by Kagan (1965) and Wright (1967) noted above. Drotar (2015) then shows how these themes were actualized over time as psychologists forged roles in medical settings and coped with the reality of medical authority and control in these settings. Providing compelling examples from his experience and from the literature, Drotar (2015) shows how pediatric psychologists were successful in establishing the profession in pediatrics and evolving treatment models and outcomes that benefit children and families across settings.

Both of the Historical Analysis papers in this issue of JPP are excellent examples of papers that capture topics of great relevance to pediatric psychologists today. They illustrate in thoughtful and thorough ways how these themes and issues have persisted as well as changed over time in a social and historical context. It is hoped that readers will be stimulated by these thought-provoking ideas and interpretations and that they will be inspired to contribute to our efforts to document the history of pediatric psychology.

Conflicts of interest: None declared.

References