

Welcome to The Board Room: May 2025 Meeting Highlights

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Each spring, just before the annual ACLP conference, the ACLP Board of Directors comes together to reflect on the year past, strategize for the year ahead, and transition leadership. The May 2025 meeting was a powerful reminder of the passion and purpose that unite our profession. Over two full days, board members engaged in meaningful dialogue, passed important motions, and reaffirmed our shared commitment to advancing the field of child life and our association. This meeting was also a time to welcome new voices, honour outgoing leaders, and set a clear course for the months to come.

Welcoming New Board Members

We are thrilled to welcome the 2025–2026 incoming board members:

- President-Elect: Vicky Isaacson, MA, CCLS
- Directors: Dora Castro-Ahillen, MA, CCLS, and Hillary Woodward, MS, CCLS
- Treasurer: Alyssa Luksa
- Public Member: Kathy Van Allen

These leaders bring a wealth of experience in diverse practice settings and a deep commitment to child- and family-centered care. Their insights will enrich our decision-making and help guide ACLP through a rapidly evolving professional landscape. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our outgoing board members Janelle Mitchell, Director, Alisha Saavedra, Immediate Past President and Stacy Palmer, our public member from the Beryl Institute, whose dedication and service have been instrumental in advancing ACLP's mission during a transformative year.

Supporting Leadership Transitions

To ensure that new leaders are equipped for success, incoming board members observed the May meeting, met with board mentors, and received comprehensive orientation materials. This process allows them to see board governance in action while building early connections with fellow leaders. By investing in orientation and mentorship, ACLP reinforces its culture of collaboration, respect, and shared responsibility.

Strategic Highlights and Committee Updates

The Board worked through a full agenda of motions, policy refinements, and forward-looking discussions. Each decision was guided by our strategic plan, our values, and the goal of supporting members in their daily practice.

Committee Infrastructure & Engagement

- Approved updates to the Committee Infrastructure and Appointment Policy, limiting committee service to one per member unless appointed by the President. This helps distribute volunteer opportunities more equitably and allows members to focus their time and talents.
- Emphasized the value of mentorship within committees, ensuring newer members have the guidance they need to be effective contributors.

Deepening Member Engagement

A recurring theme throughout the meeting was the importance of transparency and active engagement with members. The Board explored several strategies to strengthen connections, including:

- Creating regular blog posts to share board decisions, priorities, and behind-the-scenes perspectives.
- Hosting virtual listening sessions to hear directly from members and gather feedback.
- Reengaging with regional groups to build relationships, encourage collaboration, and amplify ACLP's presence at the local level.

Awards & DEI Initiatives

- Approved engaging an external consultant to review the awards process through a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens. This review will help ensure equitable access, transparent criteria, and broader representation in all ACLP awards.
- Discussed clarifying the scope of the International Award and developing strategies to diversify the applicant pool for research awards.

Community-Based Practice

- Approved the removal of the 6,000-hour experience recommendation for CCLSSs entering community-based roles. This change addresses misperceptions, lowers barriers, and reflects the diversity of skills needed in different practice settings.

Financial Oversight & Education

- Reviewed ACLP's financial portfolio, noting positive variances in reserve accounts and a strong net income position.
- Committed to strengthening financial education for board members through orientation sessions, clear narrative explanations of budget changes, and ongoing updates to promote transparency.

Internship & Pathways to the Profession

- Approved updates to the Internship Common Application to include more inclusive language that reflects the realities of today's workforce.
- Encouraged exploring innovative entry pathways into the profession beyond the traditional 600-hour internship model, recognizing that flexible approaches may open doors for more diverse candidates.

Publications

- Considered adding an "areas of expertise" field to the membership renewal process to better match members with relevant publications, committees, and special projects.

Research Fellows Transition

- Voted to decommission the Research Fellows Group in preparation for the launch of the ACLP Fellows Program at the 2026 Annual Conference.
- Offered current Research Fellows the opportunity to transition directly into the new program, ensuring continuity and recognition of their contributions.

Looking Ahead

Another meeting was held virtually in August and will be followed by an in-person meeting in November. In the months ahead, the ACLP Board will continue to focus on initiatives that advance the profession, support our members, and ensure that child life practice is inclusive, evidence-informed, and sustainable and all aligned with our current strategic plan.

We look forward to sharing more updates in the Fall issue of the ACLP Bulletin and invite every member to stay informed, ask questions, and lend their voice to shaping the vibrant future of child life.