

President's Address

Celebrating Effective Practices

AMY KOESTER

In a conversation recently with members of the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), we discussed our associations, our members, and the work we do for our communities. We talked about how we share the great examples of programs and services that different members offer in their unique settings.

I immediately connected to the terminology that ACM uses—"effective practices." This is an intentional alternative to "best practices," which implies practices that have been formally evaluated in some way—rigorously tested, evidence-based practices that are "best" in their area.

"Effective practices," on the other hand, are those that produce excellent, consistent results in the contexts in which they are used. Even though effective practices may not be subject to research studies, and they may not be applicable to every setting and community, they are notably successful at delivering a particular value to a specific community.

I found this concept of effective practices to be really empowering because every single one of us has developed effective practices in our work. Best practices and evidence-based evaluation are, of course, vital parts of our work and profession. But so, too, are the everyday successes that every single library worker tries, tests, and shares with their colleagues.

Think of that colleague who seems to have a magic touch for outreach storytime, or the ways in which you approach reader's advisory that is a bit different from what you see others do, but always results in kids overjoyed with the books you help them find. These are effective practices—those tips, tricks, and processes that we all develop through our experience of

Best practices and evidence-based evaluation are, of course, vital parts of our work and profession. But so, too, are the everyday successes that every single library worker tries, tests, and shares with their colleagues.

serving our communities to the best of our abilities. We all have effective practices.

That's what you've got in this issue of *Children and Libraries*—a collection of effective practices, shared by colleagues like you who have learned something that allows them to be really successful in their work, and they wanted to share with anyone else who could benefit. What a gift!

Because of the production schedule for this journal, I'm writing this welcome message shortly after returning from the 2022 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC—the first



Amy Koester, 2022-2023 president of ALSC, is the Learning Experiences Manager at Skokie (IL) Public Library.

opportunity for ALSC members to gather in person to learn together since January 2020. While it is impossible to know what our future holds with regards to the pandemic, I can say that those few days were invigorating.

It felt like a “welcome back” to getting to share space with other library workers who serve children—a chance to once again hear about the exciting and effective practices of colleagues, in their own voices. I got to hear so many effective practices not only in program sessions, but in hallway conversations and over outdoor meals with old friends and new.

I am so grateful that the existence of great ALSC publications like this very journal means that we can all hear the voices of our colleagues no matter where we are and whether we can be physically together; we can hear their effective practices and be invigorated, curious, and inspired. And did you know that you can also access back issues of *Children and Libraries*

online, so that you can read and return to the effective practices that are relevant to your work, whenever you want? (I find myself on the *CAL* site pretty frequently, as I often want to refer back to an article when I'm nowhere near my print copy!)

Whether you've been feeling like you're missing hearing the voices of your colleagues, or you're looking for some new-to-you effective practices to explore, now is a perfect time to bookmark the *Children and Libraries* page and to crack open this issue.

Alongside peer-reviewed research, the journal is filled with voices like yours, sharing the practices that make a difference in communities across the globe. I'm grateful to be a part of a profession that so highly values sharing our effective practices, and I look forward to exploring these and many more practices, from many more colleagues, as we continue to do this work together. We all have something to share! &