Introduction to Special Edition of Pediatric Plastic Surgery

Normally, when parents bring their infant or child for evaluation and management of a birth defect, congenital anomaly, or acquired deformity, they seek a plastic surgeon with expertise in the field of pediatric plastic surgery. Challenges for the plastic surgeon can involve relatively routine clinical problems, ranging from a congenital nevus to a particularly complex craniofacial deformity inclusive of both the bony foundation and its overlying skin envelope. Pediatric plastic surgery is an ever-evolving subspecialty within the expansive boundaries of our specialty of plastic surgery. Over the last decade, this subspecialty has witnessed the expansion of ingenious advancements in diagnosis, thereby enabling pediatric plastic surgeons to reconstruct even the most multifaceted malformation, allowing many of these children to have the prospect of developing a rewarding existence. Most of our pediatric clinical and basic science research experience originates from our comprehensive familiarity with cleft lip/palate and craniofacial patients; however, the steady and timely dissemination of scientific information and innovative techniques has expanded our abilities as pediatric plastic surgeons to care for even the most unique and varied clinical challenges.

This special edition of The Journal of Craniofacial Surgery, the official organ of the American Association of Pediatric Plastic Surgery, presents both the diversity of clinical problems encountered by the pediatric plastic surgeon as well as the demand for such subspecialization from our patients and the public. Pediatric plastic surgeons continue to create extensive advances in the biological understanding of certain disease processes, as confirmed in basic research in molecular biology and in utero wound repair, as well as in innovations in diagnostic examinations and therapeutic technologies. This information has resulted in a vast array of management alternatives. For this reason, pediatric plastic surgeons will continue to deliver the highest quality of care to our patients. This special edition communicates to our colleagues in both plastic surgery and pediatrics the key pioneering trends and accessible treatments. Contributors to this special edition have documented important advancements in a broad range of subjects, from anesthesia to the physiology of wound healing.

The American Association of Pediatric Plastic Surgery originates from the efforts of Drs Mutaz Habal, Kenneth Salyer, and Bob Parsons. Since its inception, the society has grown and prospered, both as an independent society and as a section of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The goal was to encourage an educational organization for members to disseminate innovative ideas and techniques encompassing all facets of pediatric plastic surgery, including craniofacial surgery, cleft lip/palate surgery, reconstructive microsurgery, pediatric hand and upper extremity anomalies, congenital breast and trunk anomalies, vascular anomalies, and other related congenital and acquired defects involving the pediatric age group. Currently, the society centers on approximately 70 energetic and dedicated members who have been able to maintain a comprehensive educational program for our colleagues in plastic surgery as well as for both practicing general pediatricians and the pediatric subspecialties. The society has a goal to continue to increase our membership and sustain our educational programs so that we may fulfill our mission to improve surgical care to our pediatric patients through constant advocacy and remain an important venue for the discussion and dissemination of information for plastic surgeons involved in the field.

Seth R. Thaller, MD, DMD
Miami, Florida, USA