

# Board Profile

BY SAM MITTELSTEADT

3 QUESTIONS WITH

## Dr. Susan Blair



Each month, Orthotown spotlights a member of its editorial advisory board—the doctors who've agreed to help our staff determine whether an article is a great fit for publication, vet those articles for accuracy and clarity, and suggest ideas and sources for content that will run in future issues.

**Dr. Susan Blair** is dual-credentialed in pediatric dentistry and orthodontics and applies that knowledge at two private practices she owns in the Chicago metro area: Hinsdale Orthodontics & Pediatric Dentistry (which Blair operates alongside Dr. Nick Riccio, her orthodontist husband) and Bloom Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics. This makes Blair uniquely situated to discuss patient referrals between pediatric dentists and orthodontists from both sides of the equation; for more, see her article “The Human Touch” (p. XX). To check out an Office Visit profile of the Hinsdale Ortho practice, head to [orthotown.com/sb-nr](https://orthotown.com/sb-nr).

### **By the time this publishes, your second child will have been born! You see patients at multiple practices, so how did you structure your maternity leave and coverage?**

The downside of owning the place is that you can't take time off—everything seems to come off the rails when you're away! I plan to check in frequently and visit with the baby, but I have blocked out time with patients for five to six weeks, thanks to the support of my pediatric dental associate doctor and my husband, who has made himself available to see all the orthodontic patients at both offices.

With my first son, I had just bought a practice and had a lot of pressure from the selling doctor, who had his own agenda, so I went back to work about two weeks after giving birth, which was miserable, especially with the first baby. Thankfully, this time around, I have owned both practices for a while and the transition has been much more relaxed at my newest office.

The upside of owning the place is that you can do whatever you want, and I plan to bring the baby with me—he might be strapped to my back or napping in the back room at the office!

### **Your article mentions the potential behind in-person communication such as lunch-and-learns. In your experience as a pediatric dentist, how common are those types of meet-ups, and why are they effective?**

Everyone is busy and lunches quickly get filled with plenty to do, but I think nothing beats face-to-face time. Getting

to know the referring office's team and providing information to them is important, so having a lunch-and-learn can be beneficial for both the referring doctor and the visiting orthodontist. It can be seen as a team-building exercise for the potential referring doctor (always a good use of time), and the team always appreciates a provided lunch.

### **You're an animal lover. What sort of volunteer work do you do?**

I am passionate about animal rescue! There is a huge crisis with pet overpopulation because so many people don't spay and neuter their pets, and still buy pets from breeders rather than shelters. My family fosters dogs, cats and kittens frequently through our awesome local humane society in Hinsdale. I also donate regularly to that humane society, one in my hometown of Oklahoma City (where I first learned about fostering and animal welfare) and two groups in Thailand.

### **Speaking of travel ... what have been your favorite destinations you've visited so far, and what's next on your bucket list?**

I've been fortunate to travel a lot over the years and hope to do more in the future, but practice ownership—even more so than being a parent!—has slowed me down for international travel.

The pandemic also changed the way I used to travel, and my husband and I have learned to enjoy road trips and various places we'd never been to in the United States.