

Code of Ethics and Professionalism

Adopted

2026

How to Cite: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Code of ethics and professionalism. *The Reference Manual of Pediatric Dentistry*. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; 2026:12.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry holds a position of privilege and trust in society as stewards of pediatric oral health and as advocates for the well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and individuals with special health care needs. The unique position of pediatric oral health professionals comes with corresponding responsibilities to patients, families and caregivers, dental teams, other health care professionals, and the health care system that supports delivery of care. This document outlines core responsibilities and establishes guiding principles to empower our members in navigating ethical challenges.

Trust: Foster and sustain the public's trust through honesty, a commitment to evidence based scientific practice, and dedication to lifelong learning.

Integrity: Honor professional responsibilities, maintain professional competence, and contribute to the self-regulation of the profession.

Connection: Foster a pediatric dental professional community by promoting a sense of belonging, collegiality, mentorship, and collaboration.

Justice: Treat all persons with respect, demonstrate empathy, practice social and cultural humility, and promote optimal oral health for all children.

Well-being: Advocate for the well-being of children, their families, and pediatric oral healthcare professionals.

Safety: Prioritize safety and quality, promote the highest standards of health and safety for patients and teams, and mitigate harm.

For additional information and considerations, we encourage members to turn to the *Policy on the Ethical Responsibilities in the Oral Health Care Management of Infants, Children, Adolescents, and Individuals with Special Health Care Needs*,¹ as well as comparable guidance provided by our partners in dentistry,^{2,3} and pediatrics.⁴

References

1. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Policy on ethical responsibilities in the oral Health care management of infants, children, adolescents, and individuals with special health care needs. *The Reference Manual of Pediatric Dentistry*. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; 2026:27-28.
2. American College of Dentists Foundation. *Ethics Handbook for Dentistry—Introduction to Ethics Professionals, and Ethical Decision Making*. American College of Dentists; 2024. Accessed September 4, 2026. <https://www.acd.org/communications/ethics-handbook/>
3. Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs. Principles of Ethics & Code of Professional Conduct. The ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Conduct. American Dental Association; 2025. Accessed September 4, 2026. <https://www.ada.org/about/principles/code-of-ethics>.
4. American Academy of Pediatrics; Committee on Bioethics; Fallat ME, Glover J. Professionalism in pediatrics: Statement of principles. *Pediatrics*. 2007;120(4):895-897. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2007-2229. Accessed September 4, 2026. <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/120/4/895/71227/Professionalism-in-Pediatrics-Statement-of>