



American Adoption Congress Code of Ethics

The AAC *Code of Ethics* is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional/volunteer conduct of Board, Regional Representatives, and the Membership of the organization.

AAC Mission:

The American Adoption Congress is comprised of individuals, families, and organizations committed to adoption reform. We represent those whose lives are touched by adoption or other loss of family continuity.

We promote honesty, openness and respect for family connections in adoption, foster care and assisted reproduction. We provide education for our members and professional communities about the lifelong process of adoption. We advocate legislation that will grant every individual access to information about his or her family and heritage.

The AAC is committed to:

- Increasing public awareness about the realities of adopted life for birth and adoptive families
- Changing public policies related to adoption practices in order to acknowledge adoption as an extension of family
- Enacting legislation in all states that guarantees access to identifying information for all adopted persons and their birth and adoptive families through records access and preservation of open adoption agreements
- Facilitating birth family reunification for all adopted adults, without prior restraint, through search and support group networking and/or social service assistance

AAC Beliefs

The American Adoption Congress believes that growth, responsibility, and respect for self and others develop best in lives that are rooted in truth. The AAC is therefore committed to achieving changes in attitudes, policies, and legislation that will guarantee access to identifying information for all adoptees and their birth and adoptive families.

The AAC believes that all children have the same core of basic needs, and that these needs can be met most easily when children can grow up in the family into which they were born. Every effort shall be made to preserve the integrity of this family. When birth families are unable to meet the ongoing needs of children born to them, however, we believe that adoption provides the best alternative—provided the adoptions are humane, honest, and rooted in the understanding that adoption does not erase a child's connections to the family into which they were born. We believe that those who have lived the adoption experience are in the best position to articulate the importance of these conditions and to bring about an adoption system that is based on them.

Purpose of the AAC Code of Ethics

Ethical standards of operation are core to adoption reform and the development of adoption practices; thus as an organization dedicated to that reform, AAC requires all associated with the organization to follow ethic principles and values.

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all AAC Board, Regional Representatives, and membership. These standards concern (1) ethical conduct; (2) ethical responsibilities to the adoption constellation, (2) ethical responsibilities to colleagues, professionals, legislators, and one another, (3) ethical responsibilities to the organization, (4) ethical responsibilities to Adoption Reform.

1. The representative of the AAC CONDUCT as:
 - A. PROPRIETY - The AAC member shall maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as AAC representative.
 - B. SERVICE - The AAC Board members and Regional Representatives shall regard their volunteer role as a service role that positively impacts the mission of the AAC.
 - C. INTEGRITY - The AAC representative shall act in accordance with the highest standards of integrity.
 - D. RESPECT, FAIRNESS AND COURTESY - The AAC representative shall treat everyone with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.
2. THE AAC MEMBER'S ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CONSTELLATION
 - E. PRIMACY OF CONSTELLATION MEMBER'S INTERESTS - The AAC's representative primary responsibility is to the constellation ensuring that efforts for reform are fair, provide support to all, and engage in openness at all times.
 - F. RESPECT OF THE CONSTELLATION MEMBERS – The AAC representative shall respect the views and values, and variations of opinions from the members of the constellations and respectfully engage in advocacy that promotes openness in adoption
3. THE AAC MEMBER'S ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE AAC ORGANIZATION and ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH AAC
 - G. - The AAC Representatives shall adhere to commitments made to the organization and those organizations with which AAC is associated and/or partnered.
4. THE AAC MEMBER'S ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ADOPTION REFORM
 - H. MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF ADOPTION REFORM - The AAC Representative shall uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the organization.
 - I. COMMUNITY SERVICE - The AAC representative shall assist the community by providing adoption information, knowledge and education regarding the need for openness available to the general public.

Definitions:

Board Member – Someone who holds a current membership in good standing within the American Adoption Congress (AAC) and has been elected to the AAC Board of Directors

State/Country Representative – Someone who holds a current membership in good standing within the AAC and has been appointed to represent a specific State within the United States, or a country outside of the United States.

Member – Someone who holds a current membership in good standing with the AAC.

Approved by the AAC Board of Directors May 7, 2014