



## Academy Awards

At a recent meeting of colleagues, I overheard a discussion regarding the pros and cons of becoming a member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD). The discussion took me by surprise because the benefits of membership are so self-evident. Following the meeting, I thought of the many attributes of our association, attributes which deserve recognition. Now, when it is traditional to assign awards for being the best in something, whether for the best discovery, best author, best social program, best movie, or even best health plan, it is worthwhile to note the best characteristics of our organization, those which merit *Academy Awards*.

10. **Service to its members:** The AAPD has developed a wide variety of programs to fulfill the needs of its members. It also provides an opportunity for members to meet in fellowship and discuss their common problems and concerns. Because of the success in providing member services, there are now more than 5,000 AAPD members representing more than 90% of pediatric dental specialists in the United States.
9. **Service by its members:** The mission of the AAPD is "to improve and maintain the oral health of infants, children, adolescents, and persons with special health care needs." The organization is dedicated to the fulfillment of that mission with 11 councils and numerous committees. Among others, there are councils of clinical affairs, scientific affairs, governmental affairs, continuing education, and membership services. More than 200 volunteers spend countless hours developing policies and procedures for the association.
8. **Printed materials:** The association provides for its members, and for the lay public, a variety of printed materials. In particular, an annual reference manual containing more than 50 oral health policies, guidelines, and definitions is circulated to guide the practice of pediatric dentistry.
7. **Web site:** The AAPD has developed and supports a highly successful Web site that provides services for its members and the lay public. On a daily basis, the site has more than 20,000 visitors. In November 2002, there were an astounding 830,000 hits to the site.
6. **Continuing education:** AAPD provides a variety of continuing education opportunities for its members. It is expected that 3,000 registrants will attend the 56th annual session in New York where a plethora of continuing education courses, seminars, and table clinics will be offered.
5. **Journals:** The association publishes the journal, *Pediatric Dentistry*, with a paid circulation of more than 5,000, and recently, the *Journal of Dentistry for Children* was added to its list of publications. Not only do these journals provide information for its members, but they also develop a core base of scientific literature that supports pediatric dentistry as a specialty.
4. **Sponsors other groups:** The association sponsors other groups that contribute in great measure to the development and promotion of pediatric dentistry as a specialty. The AAPD currently sponsors the AAPD Foundation, which promotes research, and the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, which promotes the achievement of excellence by the specialty.
3. **Lobbying efforts:** There are a variety of AAPD lobbying efforts in Washington, including those by the child advocate, the congressional liaison, and the political action committee that all serve to encourage governmental policy promoting oral health of children.
2. **Headquarters office:** The headquarters office is the conduit through which the association conducts business. The executive director has developed a dedicated, competent, and hard working staff who implement the business of the association. Without its professional staff, the organization would not be as great, effective, and successful as it is.
1. **Health of children:** Above all, the AAPD exists to promote the health of children. It is the single most important group promoting dental health for children.

Although this list could have included many other characteristics of the organization and although the order of the list could have been different, nevertheless, the list highlights many of the strengths of the organization. Each attribute constitutes a meritorious activity deserving of recognition, hence, these are the *Academy Awards*.

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