



AEJMC Creating a Caregiver and Child Friendly Culture

This policy was created by the Commission on the Status of Women which is affiliated with the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication seeks to establish a space where all people are equal and are treated with respect. AEJMC seeks to include all people, regardless of their gender, age, classification, academic achievement level, institutional affiliation, marital and familial status, race or origin, creed, or religion.

“This corporation is committed to the achievement of inclusiveness in the professions of journalism and mass communication, in its own membership, and in participation in its programming. The corporation will not discriminate on the basis of gender identity, race, color, religion, age, ethnicity/national origin, disability/differently abled, sexuality or sexual orientation, marital status, family/parental status. In efforts to achieve this goal of diversity and inclusion of membership and participation, the corporation has charged the Commissions with monitoring and upholding the highest standards of diversity, inclusion, and justice in the profession and the corporation on a regular basis, report its findings to the membership, and take affirmative steps to rectify problems.” (AEJMC Constitution, Article 1, Section 5)

Parents and caretakers are welcome to bring their family members to the conference. Caretakers should feel comfortable bringing their family members to sessions and social events at the conference site, and should receive support as requested. Any AEJMC member who disrespects or mistreats a child, their parents, or caregivers could be asked to leave a session or event.

We, as an organization, understand that:

- 1) Having children is a common life path;
- 2) Parents and caregivers should be able to participate fully in AEJMC and its conferences;
- 3) Care during a conference, for any length of time, is costly and hard to find;
- 4) Children are often in the room during their parents’ sessions;
- 5) It is wrong to penalize/judge a scholar for bringing their children with them to a conference;
- 6) Lack of childcare and related support may cause parents and caregivers to miss out on conference events, or the conference in its entirety, making supportive family policies an issue of equity;

7) We trust parents and caregivers to know what's best for their child and other family members in terms of making use of this policy.

As an organization we can guarantee that the following accommodations and resources will be made available to parents and caregivers at our conferences:

- 1) A space will be provided for parents of children where children can take a break from the conference under the supervision of an adult.
- 2) Children ages 12 and younger should be under the supervision of a designated adult at all times during the conference.
- 3) Children who attend the conference will have some sort of identification, provided at registration for parents, with their parents' contact information in case they become lost.
- 4) At the written request of a parent or caregiver, program chairs and moderators will attempt to incorporate breastfeeding, pumping, or other care-related tasks into the scheduling of presenters' sessions. Upon having a paper or panel accepted to a conference, all presenters are invited to contact their division, interest group or commission's research chair to make these requests. That said, accommodations are not always possible given AEJMC scheduling constraints.
- 5) A private space that is free from intrusion and shielded from view but accessible will be provided for breastfeeding parents to pump breast milk, if they prefer to use it, and store it during the conference. Whenever possible, this space will be large enough to accommodate multiple pumping stations; include comfortable furniture; and supply sanitary items, such as towels, disposable breast pads, and hand sanitizer.
- 6) Support spaces will be available for parents/caregivers and children. There will be at least two spaces: 1) a designated room where adults can be with children, and 2) a room for feeding and changing children.
- 7) A quiet room that is accessible to all conference attendees will also be available.
- 8) Children are welcome at all social events held at the conference site.
- 9) The Commission on the Status of Women will host a family event during the conference, such as a movie night at the conference site, and provide activities and food for families in the family spaces.
- 10) A first aid kit will be available on site if someone is to get a scrape or minor injury during the conference.
- 11) A community exchange will be offered when possible to parents for connecting with one another and providing support during the conference or childcare.

We ask that members consider the following when bringing their children to a conference:

- 1) We ask that all members work together to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status. Please communicate with members if you face challenges and if you need additional support.
- 2) Please be aware that content in some sessions might not be appropriate for children, and caretakers should contact other panelists about their panels if they wish to know how appropriate it is. Presenters are under no obligation to modify their content.
- 3) All breastfeeding babies and children are welcome in sessions; breastfeeding is always welcome wherever the caretaker is comfortable breastfeeding.
- 4) If children are around when a presenter is on video, please encourage them to be quiet and keep their electronic devices muted to prevent disruptions.
- 5) For older children and babies, disruptions in childcare often place parents in the position of having to miss a session and stay home. We understand that parents or caretakers might have to make the decision to miss a presentation or the entire conference. Parents or caretakers may always designate a proxy to present their work at the conference.
- 6) When attending meetings and sessions with younger children, parents and caretakers are encouraged to sit near the door if possible, so they can step outside easily if the child needs special attention.
- 7) In the case of last-minute emergencies and changes, parents must notify the session chair or moderator of the change in a timely manner. Alternative methods for presenting can be made available in emergencies.