

Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) Code of Professional Ethics

Preamble

Family Life Education focuses on healthy individual and family functioning within a family systems perspective and provides a primarily educational/preventive approach. Application of knowledge about healthy individual and family functioning can prevent or minimize many societal problems.

The skills and knowledge needed for healthy functioning across the lifespan are widely known: knowledge of human development, good decision-making skills, effective parenting, strong communication skills, and knowledge of healthy interpersonal relationships. The goal of Family Life Education is to teach and foster this knowledge and these skills to enable individuals* and families to function optimally within the context of their environments.

Family Life Education professionals consider societal issues — social justice, economics, education, discrimination, family policy, poverty, and more — within the context of families and through a strengths-based perspective. Family Life Educators are inclusionary in practice, recognizing diverse individual and family identities and structures.

Professionals that are Certified Family Life Educators (CFLEs) have demonstrated knowledge of the following 10 content areas:

1. Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts
2. Internal Dynamics of Families
3. Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan
4. Human Sexuality
5. Interpersonal Relationships
6. Family Resource Management
7. Parent Education and Guidance
8. Family Law and Public Policy
9. Professional Ethics and Practice
10. Family Life Education Methodology

The CFLE Code of Professional Ethics identifies guidelines for professional behavior. These guidelines show the public and members of the profession the principles and values that guide professional practice for Family Life Educators. The following core values are reflected in the ethical principles: do no harm, respect diversity and practice cultural competence, engage in ethical decision-making, practice with integrity, recognize and build on individual and family strengths, and practice with humility and warmth.

* The term “individual” is used in this document to include children, youth, and adults, with the understanding that there are unique and qualitatively different stages of development for each of these groups.

Ethical Principles

A. Relationships with Individuals and Families

The Family Life Educator will:

1. be aware of the influence we have and avoid practices that harm or exploit.
2. respect cultural beliefs, backgrounds, and differences, and engage in practice that is responsive to diversity.
3. respect individuals’ and families’ right to privacy, and maintain confidentiality at all times, except when disclosure is necessary to prevent harm.
4. treat individuals and families with warmth, respect, and sensitivity to their needs and rights as developing persons.
5. regard individuals and families as complex, interactive systems.
6. strive to understand individuals, families, and communities within their contexts.

7. practice with humility from a strengths-based perspective.
8. support healthy interpersonal relationships.
9. engage individuals, families, and communities as partners in problem solving and decision-making.
10. advocate in partnership with individuals, families, and communities.
11. communicate respectfully and clearly in our work with individuals, families, and communities.
12. communicate openly and truthfully about the nature and extent of Family Life Education services provided.
13. provide services and program environments that are safe and nurturing.
14. collaborate with individuals, families, and communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of Family Life Education programs and services.
15. support individuals, families, and communities as they make decisions about the use of resources to best meet their needs.
16. encourage individuals, families, and communities to reflect upon their values, and promote their healthy development and well-being.
17. support the right of all individuals and families to have access to quality education, health, and community resources.
18. acknowledge and strive to maintain professional boundaries and not exploit families or individuals when multiple relationships exist.
19. openly acknowledge potential conflicts of interest.
20. strive to ensure that all individuals, families, and communities have access to and are encouraged to participate in Family Life Education.

B. Relationships with Colleagues and the Profession

The Family Life Educator will:

1. value and promote diversity and work collaboratively with colleagues.
2. demonstrate integrity and strive to make ethical decisions.
3. recognize the difference between personal and professional values in our professional interactions.
4. define our role as Family Life Educators and practice within our level of competence.
5. engage in current, evidence-informed practice.
6. be committed to ongoing professional development to enhance our knowledge and skills.
7. obtain informed consent when providing services or conducting research.
8. use policies and support systems for addressing difficult situations.
9. follow the mandatory reporting of abusive behavior in a respectful and prudent manner.

C. Relationships with Community/Society

The Family Life Educator will:

1. be knowledgeable about community resources and make and accept informed, appropriate referrals.
2. be aware of the boundaries of our practice and know when and how to use other community resources for the benefit of individuals and families.
3. communicate clearly and cooperate with other programs and agencies in order to best meet individuals' and families' needs.
4. advocate for laws and policies that empower individuals, families, and communities and reflect our changing knowledge base.
5. respect and uphold laws and regulations that pertain to our practice as Family Life Educators and offer expertise to legal authorities based on professional knowledge.

By my signature below, I verify that I have read these ethical principles and that I will use the principles to guide my professional practice as a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE).

Printed Name

Signature

Date

This signed document must be submitted along with the CFLE-approved program application, the CFLE exam application, or as part of the recertification or upgrade processes.

Adapted from the Minnesota Council on Family Relations Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Life Educators (2016) by members of the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) Advisory Board Ethics Subcommittee: Dorothy Berglund, Ph.D., CFLE; Dawn Cassidy, M.Ed., CFLE; Bryce Dickey, M.S., CFLE; Susan Meyerle, Ph.D., CFLE; and Ahlshia Shipley, Ph.D., CFLE. Approved by the CFLE Advisory Board in May 2018.