

Family Life Educators Code of Ethics*

Preamble

Family life education (FLE) is the educational effort to strengthen individual and family life through a family perspective. The objective of family life education is to enrich and improve the quality of individual and family life by providing knowledge and skills needed for effective living.

FLE emphasizes processes to enable people to develop into healthy adults and to realize their potential. Family life education helps people to work together in close relationships and facilitates the ability of people to function effectively in their personal lives and as members of society. While various professionals assist families, it is the family life educator who incorporates a family-systems, preventive, and educational approach to individual and family issues.

Family life education includes knowledge about how families work; the inter-relationship of the family and society; human growth and development throughout the life span; both the physiological and psychological aspects of human sexuality; the impact of money and time management on daily life; the importance and value of education for parenting; the effects of policy and legislation on families; ethical considerations in professional conduct; and a solid understanding and knowledge of how to teach and/or develop curriculum for what are often sensitive and personal issues.

A professional code of ethics provides guidelines when confronted with challenging and difficult ethical dilemmas. They serve notice to the public, and profession, as to the principles and values that will guide decision making under such circumstances. The ethical principles put forth in this Code of Ethics are standards of conduct in which Family Life Educators consider in ethical and professional decision making.

Ethical Principles for Parent and Family Life Educators

I. Relationships with Parents and Families

1. I will be aware of the impact/power we have on parents and family relations.
2. I will strive to understand families as complex, interactive systems where parents have the primary responsibility as educators, nurturers and limit-setters for their children.
3. I will respect cultural beliefs, backgrounds and differences and engage in practice that is sensitive to the diversity of child-rearing values and goals.
4. I will help parents and other family members recognize their strengths and work with them to set goals for themselves, their children, and others.
5. I will respect and accept parents and other family members for who they are, recognizing their developmental level and circumstances.
6. I will support and challenge parents to continue to grow and learn about parenting and their child's development.
7. I will communicate respectfully and clearly with all family members.

8. I will communicate openly and truthfully about the nature and extent of services provided.
9. I will support diverse family values by acknowledging and examining parenting practices that support healthy family relationships.
10. I will include parents/other family members as partners in problem solving and decision-making related to program design and implementation.
11. I will be proactive in stating child guidance principles and discipline guidelines and encourage non-violent child rearing.
12. I will create data privacy and confidentiality guidelines respectful of family members and protective of their legal rights.
13. I will provide a program environment that is safe and nurturing to all family members.
14. I will ensure that all family members have access to and are encouraged to participate in family education.
15. I will support family members as they make decisions about the use of resources to best meet family needs.
16. I will support healthy interpersonal relationships among all family members.
17. I will encourage family members to explore their values and promote healthy sexuality in their family.

II. Relationships with Children and Youth

1. I will treat children and youth with respect and sensitivity to their needs and rights as developing persons.
2. I will strive to understand children and youth in the context of their families.
3. I will do no harm to children and youth and insist on the same from others.
4. I will advocate for children and youth and their best interests at the same time that we work with the parents and other family members.
5. I will provide environments that are respectful of children and youth and sensitive to their developmental and individual needs.
6. I will support the right of all children and youth to have access to quality education, health and community resources.

III. Relationships with Colleagues and the Profession

1. I will value and promote diversity in staff.
2. I will provide staff with policies and support systems for addressing difficult situations with family members, colleagues and others.
3. I will follow data privacy policies that meet legal standards and are based on respect for family members.

4. I will follow the mandatory reporting of abusive family behavior in a respectful and prudent manner.
5. I will define our role as parent and family life educators and practice within our level of competence.
6. I will recognize the difference between personal and professional values in our professional interactions.
7. I will support the ongoing development of a knowledge base that guides us towards ethical and effective practice.
8. I will be committed to ongoing professional development to enhance our knowledge and skills.

IV. Relationships with Community/Society

1. I will be knowledgeable about community resources and make and accept informed, appropriate referrals.
2. I will be aware of the boundaries of our practice and know when and how to use other community resources for the benefit of family members.
3. I will communicate clearly and cooperate with other programs/agencies in order to best meet family needs.
4. I will advocate for laws and policies that reflect our changing knowledge base and the best interests of parents, families and communities.
5. I will respect and uphold laws and regulations that pertain to our practice as parent and 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 they will guide my professional practice as a Certified Family Life Educator

Print Name

Signature

Date

This signed document should be submitted along with the CFLE Abbreviated Application, the CFLE Exam Application, or as part of the Recertification and Upgrade processes.

* Drawn from the Minnesota Council on Family Relations (MCFR). (2009). Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Life Educators. Minneapolis: Minnesota Council on Family Relations.