

National Council on Family Relations

Graduates wishing to apply for the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) designation through the Abbreviated Application process must complete all coursework on their school's NCFR CFLE checklist. They may substitute *up to two* classes from the checklist. Courses used in substitution for NCFR-approved courses must cover the same content. Following are the **NCFR University and College Curriculum Guidelines**. These Guidelines represent the course content required to meet the CFLE criteria for each of the ten family life content areas. Any course that you use in substitution for an NCFR-approved course must include this same content. Please refer to the information listed under each content area for guidance as to what information needs to be included within the substitution course. While it is not required that every single component be address directly, the majority of the concepts must be included.

Substitutions must be approved by the National Council on Family Relations. You can request approval of a course prior to submitting your application by sending a request for substitution along with a syllabus for the substitution course. Otherwise, make note on your checklist which courses are being used as substitutions and include a copy of the course syllabi. This can be done at the time of application.

University & College Curriculum Guidelines

These curriculum guidelines are formulated to insure a minimum level of post-secondary training in the areas judged to be essential for the Certified Family Life Educator. The basic foundations upon which family life education is built are Family Relations and Dynamics, Human Growth and Development over the life span, and Human Sexuality. At least one three semester hour or four quarter hour course in each should be included. These guidelines are intended to accommodate institutional variations in course content and combinations of courses. The requirements for certification include evidence of knowledge about areas of subject matter as well as the attainment of certain skills.

These guidelines are also intended to provide guidance to colleges and universities in curriculum planning and course development. In the interest of adequately preparing persons for the field of family life education, the curriculum shall, therefore, include, but not necessarily be limited to, knowledge about the research and theory in:

I FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

Content: Families in Society - An understanding of families and their relationships to other institutions, such as the educational, governmental, religious, and occupational institutions in society.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Structures and Functions; Cultural Variations (family heritage, social class, geography, ethnicity, race & religion); Dating, Courtship, Marital Choice; Kinship; Cross-Cultural & Minority (understanding of lifestyles of minority families & the lifestyles of families in various societies around the world); Changing Gender Roles (role expectations & behaviors of courtship partners, marital partners, parents & children, siblings, & extended kin); Demographic Trends; Historical

Issues; Work/leisure & Family Relationships; Societal Relations (reciprocal influence of the major social institutions & families, i.e., governmental, religious, educational, & economic).

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify the characteristics, diversity, & impact of local, national, & global social systems
- b Identify factors (e.g., media, marketing, technology, economics, social movements, natural disasters, war) influencing individuals & families from both contemporary & historical perspectives.
- c Identify factors that influence the relationship between work & family life
- d Identify social & cultural influences affecting dating, courtship, partner/marital choice & relationships, family composition, & family life
- e Recognize the reciprocal interaction between individuals, families, & various social systems (e.g., health, legal, educational, religious/spiritual)
- f Assess the impact of demographics (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, generation, gender) on contemporary families

II INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF FAMILIES

Content: An understanding of family strengths and weaknesses and how family members relate to each other.

e.g., Research & theories related to: Internal Social Processes (including cooperation & conflict); Communication (patterns & problems in husband-wife relationships & in parent-child relationships, including stress & conflict management); Conflict Management; Decision-making and Goal-setting; Normal Family Stresses (transition periods in the family life cycle, three-generation households, caring for the elderly, & dual careers); Family Stress & Crises (divorce, remarriage, death, economic uncertainty & hardship, violence, substance abuse); Special Needs in Families (including adoptive, foster, migrant, low income, military, & blended families disabled members).

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Recognize & define healthy & unhealthy characteristics pertaining to:
 - 1. Family relationships
 - 2. Family development
- b Analyze family functioning using various theoretical perspectives
- c Assess family dynamics from a systems perspective
- d Evaluate family dynamics in response to normative & non-normative stressors

- e Evaluate family dynamics in response to crises
- f Facilitate & strengthen communication processes, conflict-management, & problem-solving skills
- g Develop, recognize, & reinforce strategies that help families function effectively

III HUMAN GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

Content: An understanding of the developmental changes (both typical and atypical) of individuals in families across the life span. Based on knowledge of physical, emotional, cognitive, social, moral, and personality aspects.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Prenatal; Infancy; Early and Middle Childhood; Adolescence; Adulthood; Aging.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify developmental stages, transitions, tasks, & challenges throughout the lifespan
- b Recognize reciprocal influences
 - 1. Individual development on families
 - 2. Family development on individuals
- c Recognize the impact of individual health & wellness on families
- d Assist individuals & families in effective developmental transitions
- e Apply appropriate practices based on theories of human growth & development to individuals & families

IV HUMAN SEXUALITY

Content: An understanding of the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of sexual development across the life span, so as to achieve healthy sexual adjustment.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Reproductive Physiology; Biological Determinants; Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Sexual Involvement; Sexual Behaviors; Sexual Values & Decision-Making; Family Planning; Physiological & Psychological Aspects of Sexual Response; Influence of Sexual Involvement on Interpersonal Relationships.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Recognize the biological aspects of human sexuality



1. sexual functioning
 2. reproductive health
 3. family planning
 4. sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- b Recognize the psycho-social aspects of human sexuality
1. characteristics of healthy & ethical sexual relationships
 2. interpersonal dynamics of sexual intimacy
 3. risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, social pressures, media)
- c Address human sexuality from a value-respectful position

V INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Content: An understanding of the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Self and Others; Communication Skills (listening, empathy, self-disclosure, decision making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution); Intimacy, Love, Romance; Relating to Others with Respect, Sincerity, & Responsibility.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Recognize the impact of personality & communication styles
- b Recognize the developmental stages of relationships
- c Analyze interpersonal relationships using various theoretical perspectives
- d Develop & implement relationship enhancement & enrichment strategies
- e Develop & implement effective communication, problem solving, & conflict management strategies
- f Communicate aspects of relationships within the context of their developmental stages

VI FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Content: An understanding of the decisions individuals and families make about developing and allocating resources including time, money, material assets, energy, friends, neighbors, and space, to meet their goals.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Goal Setting and Decision-Making; Development and Allocation of Resources; Social Environment Influences; Life Cycle and Family Structure Influences; Consumer Issues and Decisions.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify personal, familial, professional, & community resources available to families
- b Recognize the reciprocal relationship between individual/family/community choices & resources
- c Apply value-clarification strategies to decision-making
- d Apply goal-setting strategies & evaluate their outcomes
- e Apply decision-making strategies
- f Apply organizational & time management strategies
- g Apply basic financial management tools & principles
- h Inform individuals & families of consumer rights, responsibilities, & choices of action/ advocacy
- i Apply stress management strategies

VII PARENTING EDUCATION & GUIDANCE

Content: An understanding of how parents teach, guide and influence children and adolescents as well as the changing nature, dynamics and needs of the parent child relationship across the lifespan.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Parenting Rights and Responsibilities; Parenting Practices/Processes; Parent/Child Relationships; Variation in Parenting Solutions; Changing Parenting Roles Across the Life Cycle.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Promote healthy parenting from a systems perspective
- b Promote healthy parenting from a child's & parents developmental perspective
- c Apply strategies based on the child's age/stage of development to promote effective developmental outcomes
- d Identify different parenting styles & their associated psychological, social, & behavioral outcomes
- e Promote various parenting models, principles, & strategies
- f Evaluate the effectiveness & appropriateness of various parenting strategies

- g Recognize various parenting roles (e.g., father/mother, grandparents, other caregivers) & their impact on & contribution to individuals & families
- h Recognize parenting issues within various family structures (e.g. single, blended, same-sex)
- i Recognize the impact of societal trends on parenting (e.g., technology, substance abuse, media)
- j Recognize the influence of cultural differences & diversity
- k Identify strategies to advocate for children in various settings (e.g. schools, legal system, healthcare)
- l Recognize the various pathways to parenting & their associated issues & challenges, (e.g. assisted reproduction, adoption, childbirth, blending)

VIII FAMILY LAW & PUBLIC POLICY

Content: An understanding of legal issues, policies, and laws influencing the well being of families.

e.g., Family and the Law (relating to marriage, divorce, family support, child custody, child protection and rights, and family planning); Family and Social Services; Family and Education; Family and the Economy; Family and Religion; Policy and the Family (public policy as it affects the family, including tax, civil rights, social security, economic support laws, and regulations.)

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Identify current law, public policy, & initiatives that regulate & influence professional conduct & services
- b Identify current laws, public policies, & initiatives that affect families
- c Inform families, communities, & policy makers about public policies, initiatives, & legislation that affect families at local, state, & national levels

IX PROFESSIONAL ETHICS & PRACTICE

Content: An understanding of the character and quality of human social conduct, and the ability to critically examine ethical questions and issues as they relate to professional practice.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Formation of Social Attitudes and Values; Recognizing and Respecting the Diversity of Values and the Complexity of Value Choice in a Pluralistic Society; Examining Value Systems and Ideologies systematically and objectively; Social Consequences of Value Choices; Recognizing the Ethical Implications of Social and Technological Changes, Ethics of Professional Practice.

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Demonstrate professional attitudes, values, behaviors, & responsibilities to clients, colleagues, & the broader community, that are reflective of ethical standards & practice
- b Evaluate, differentiate, & apply diverse approaches to ethical issues & dilemmas
- c Identify & apply appropriate strategies to deal with conflicting values
- d Demonstrate respect for diverse cultural values & ethical standards

X FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

Content: An understanding of the general philosophy and broad principles of family life education in conjunction with the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate such educational programs.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Planning and Implementing; Evaluation (materials, student progress, & program effectiveness); Education Techniques; Sensitivity to Others (to enhance educational effectiveness); Sensitivity to Community Concerns and Values (understanding of the public relations process).

Practice—A CFLE can:

- a Employ a variety of current educational strategies
- b Employ techniques to promote application of information in the learner's environment
- c Create learning environments that are respectful of individual vulnerabilities, needs, & learning styles
- d Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity & community needs, concerns, & interests
- e Develop culturally-competent educational materials & learning experiences
- f Identify appropriate sources for evidence-based information
- g Develop educational experiences
 - 1. needs assessment
 - 2. goals & objectives
 - 3. content development
 - 4. implementation
 - 5. evaluation/outcome measures

- h Promote & market educational programs
- i Implement adult education principles into work with families & parents
- j Establish & maintain appropriate personal & professional boundaries

References

Bredehoft, D. J., & Cassidy, D. (Eds.) (1995). *Family life education curriculum guidelines* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis: National Council on Family Relations.

Bredehoft, D. J. (Ed.). 1997. *Life span family life education*. (2nd ed.) [Poster]. Minneapolis: National Council on Family Relations.

National Council on Family Relations. (2007). Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) Exam Content Outline. In D. J. Bredehoft & M. J. Walcheski (Eds). *Family life education: Integrating theory and practice* (2nd ed.). (pp. 261-263).