



Family Life Education: The Practice of Family Science

National Council on Family Relations, Minneapolis, MN

The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) was established in 1938 as a multi-disciplinary professional association to provide a forum for family researchers, educators, and practitioners to share in the development and dissemination of knowledge about families and family relationships, to establish professional standards, and to promote family well-being. NCFR publishes three journals, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Family Relations*, and *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, and sponsors the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) program.

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About the Editors



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Acknowledgments

Michael Walcheski

This book is dedicated to my wife Elizabeth, and our two children Simon and Hope, without whose unconditional love and support this work would be hollow. It is in their eyes, I realize the importance of building healthy family relationships.

Jen Reinke

This book is dedicated to Jonathan, who is just about the best partner a person could hope for: supportive, patient, and committed to nurturing a relationship that champions and embodies mutuality to the highest degree. Thank you for relentlessly supporting my passion and indulging with me in conversations about the curiosities and possibilities embedded in couple and family relationships. And to Michael, whose insights into the study and practice of family science have served as a continuous source of inspiration and cognitive stimulation. Without your leadership, commitment, creativity, and vision, the ideas that comprise this text would simply not have come to fruition.

Introduction

Family Life Education: The Practice of Family Science

Jen Reinke and Michael Walcheski

Over the past 30 years, many scholars, researchers, and practitioners have worked to define and refine the discipline of family science and the application of such to the profession of Family Life Education (FLE). Most recently, the journal *Family Relations* (Vol. 63, No. 3) included articles (Gavazzi, Wilson, Ganong, & Zvonkovic, 2014; Hamon & Smith, 2014; Hans, 2014) calling for a continuation of the work suggested at the 1985 National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) conference (Cushman, 2014). The practice of family science rests on a rich history of program development.

History

The following list comprises a concise summary of the development of the field of FLE.

1968

The desirability of defining the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities of Family Life Educators resulted in the appointment of a task force on family life education.

1981

Based on concerns for standards and criteria, and the added impetus from the 1980 White House Conference on Families, the Committee on Standards and Criteria for Certification of Family Life Educators received unanimous approval from the NCFR Board of Directors to establish a certification program for professional family life educators.

1982

The College/University Curriculum Guidelines, the Standards and Criteria for the Certification of Family Life Educators, and “An Overview of the Content in Family Life Education: A Framework for Planning Programs over the Life Span” received final approval (Smart, 2009). The NCFR Board of Directors recommended “immediate implementation” of the certification program.

1983

NCFR President Wesley Burr posited the family field be recognized as its own discipline.

1984

The College/University Curriculum Guidelines, the Standards and Criteria for the Certification of Family Life Educators, and “An Overview of the Content in Family Life Education: A Framework for Planning Programs over the Life Span” were published (Smart, 2009).

1985

At NCFR annual conference, the Task Force for the Development of a Family Discipline recommended *Family Science* as the name of a new discipline in the study of families (Bailey & Gentry, 2013).

The College/University Curriculum Guidelines and Standards and Criteria for Certification of Family Life Educators are implemented. The Curriculum Guidelines included a framework of seven interdependent topics (Human Development and Sexuality; Interpersonal Relationships; Family Interaction; Family Resource Management; Education About Parenthood; Ethics; and Family and Society, and three age levels—childhood, adolescence, adulthood) specifying the major content areas intended to encourage

family life educators to “plan programs to fit the developmental levels of their learners, to reflect community norms; as well as to demonstrate sound family life education programming” (NCFR, 1993, p. 1). The College and University Curriculum Guidelines were intended to provide “knowledge about the research and theory” (NCFR, 1993, p. 1).

The Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) program is launched (Darling, Fleming, & Cassidy, 2009).

The first Certified Family Life Educators were approved through a portfolio process.

1987

The poster version of the Family Life Education Framework (1st ed., NCFR) was released.

1988

Family Science Review published a classic article arguing for family science as a discipline: “What Is Family Science? (NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline, 1988).

1992

The Family Discipline Section was renamed the Family Science Section.

1995

The College/University Curriculum Guidelines (2nd ed., Bredehoft & Cassidy, 1995) expanded the substance areas (10) and major concepts within each substance area (Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts; Internal Dynamics of Families; Human Growth and Development Across the Life Span; Human Sexuality; Interpersonal Relationships; Family Resource Management; Parent Education and Guidance; Family Law and Public Policy; Professional Ethics; Family Life Education Methodology, and four age levels—childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and later adulthood).

Ethical Thinking and Practice in Family Life Education was developed on the basis of the College/University Curriculum Guidelines.

Doherty’s (1995) Levels of Family Involvement Model was published in *Family Relations*.

Ganong, Coleman, and Demo publish a special section on “Issues in Training Family Scientists” in *Family Relations*, which identified the core competencies family scientists should have (1995).

1996

NCFR began approving college and family degree programs for adherence to the criteria needed for the CFLE designation.

An abbreviated application process was created for institutions through the Academic Program Review.

1997

The poster version of the Framework for Life Span Family Life Education (2nd ed., Bredehoft, 1997) was released (nine substance areas are represented; Family life education methodology is not represented).

1998

The faculty at Weber State University created “Competencies for Family Life Educators,” which were based on the College and University Curriculum Guidelines but incorporated knowledge, understanding, skills, and abilities relevant to each of the 10 CFLE content areas (National Council on Family Relations, 2012).

2007

The national exam for family life educator certification replaces the portfolio process.

NCFR used the Weber State University “Competencies for Family Life Educators” as a foundation for the practice analysis used to determine the content of the exam. Survey respondents rated the relevancy and importance of each component for the effective practice of family life education.

2009

The CFLE practice analysis was the first organized effort to measure the relevancy of the content of family life education to the practice of family life education. On the basis of the feedback from the analysis, NCFR created a new document that included content from the College and University Curriculum Guidelines, the Competencies for Family Life Educators created by faculty at Weber State University, and information from the Lifespan Family Life Education Framework. The most recent version of this document is referred to as the “Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines.”

It appears that the College and University Curriculum Guidelines and the Framework were combined as one concept in the first two editions of each. At the advent of the national exam, it looks as if the Curriculum Guidelines evolved into the Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines and has gone through several revisions (NCFR, 2014). In addition, the Family Life Education Framework was revised in 2011.

2011

Myers-Walls, Ballard, Darling, and Myers-Bowman (2011) published “Reconceptualizing the Domains of Family Life Education” in *Family Relations*.

The third edition of the Framework for Family Life Education was released, with program outcomes for each content area. Edited by Bredehoft & Walcheski, (2011).

2014

The Family Science Section was renamed Advancing Family Science.

Definitions

Clarifying the definition of family life education has not been an easy endeavor. In their historical review of the definition of family life education, Hennon, Radina, and Wilson (2013) estimated the formal development of a definition that began 50 years ago. Broad encompassing definitions of family life education have been criticized for being too vague, while narrow, more specific definitions have been criticized for being too restrictive and limiting (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993; Darling & Cassidy, 2014; Thomas & Arcus, 1992). However, many notable discussions have worked to clarify the definition of (Arcus et al., 1993; Darling, 1987; Darling & Cassidy, 2014; Duncan & Goddard, 2011; Kerckhoff, 1964; Thomas & Arcus, 1992). NCFR is the professional home for family life education and has defined it as follows:

Family life education has as its primary purpose to help individuals and families learn about human growth, development, and behavior in the family setting and throughout the life cycle. Learning experiences are aimed at developing the potential of individuals in their present and future roles as family members. The core concept is relationships, through which personality develops, about which individuals make decisions to which they are committed, and in which they develop self-esteem. (National Commission on Family Life Education, 1968)

While definitions evolve, Hennon et al. (2013) identified the difficulty of defining family life education as a primary challenge for the field. The ongoing effort to clarify the field is a “positive step toward the development of a definition of family life education that best reflects the focus and content of family life education practice” (p. 817). At present on the NCFR website is a working description of family life education that extends the previous definition and incorporates primary themes from previous definitions:

Family life education focuses on healthy family functioning within a family systems perspective and provides a primarily preventive approach. The skills and knowledge needed for healthy functioning are widely known: strong communication skills, knowledge of typical human development, good decision-making skills, positive self-esteem, and 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.

Family life education professionals consider societal issues including economics, education, work–family issues, parenting, sexuality, gender and more within the context of the family. They believe that societal problems such as substance abuse, domestic violence, unemployment, debt, and child abuse can be more effectively addressed from a perspective that considers the individual and family as part of larger systems. Knowledge about healthy family functioning can be applied to prevent or minimize many of these problems. Family life education provides this information through an educational approach, often in a classroom-type setting or through educational materials. (NCFR, n.d.).

Consistently identified as a source of operationalizing family life education (Darling & Cassidy, 2014; Duncan & Goddard, 2011; Hennon et al., 2013), Arcus et al. (1993) examined the practical and programmatic features of family life education in the context of what it is and what it should be. They arrived at these principles:

- Family life education is relevant to individuals and families throughout the lifespan.
- Family life education should be based on the needs of individuals and families.
- Family life education is a multidisciplinary area of study and multi-professional in its practice.
- Family life education programs are offered in many different settings.
- Family life education takes an educational rather than a therapeutic approach.
- Family life education should present and respect differing family values.
- Qualified educators are crucial to the successful realization of the goals of family life education (pp. 15–20).

The sections and chapters of the present volume have been shaped by the description and principles of family life education as we now have them.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this volume is to meet readers at the intersection of family research and practice. The practice of Family life education is grounded in and sustained by Family Science. This foundation, family science, has a rich history extending back to the beginning of the previous century (Smart, 2009). NCFR has named *Family Science* as the identifying term for the discipline twice in the past 30 years (Cushman, 2014). During this time, NCFR has been diligent in advocating the sound dissemination of high-quality family research and its application to the practice of Family life education (Hennon et al., 2013). The NCFR Task Force on the Development of a Family Discipline identified family science as “a field of study where “the primary goals are the discovery, verification and application of knowledge about the family” (1987, p. 49). The application of such knowledge is the framework (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011) by which Family Life Educators practice family science. Furthermore, the purpose of

this book is to provide a reliable resource for the preparation of Family Life Educators and for the certifying CFLE exam. We are confident that the chapters herein will be a benefit for new and experienced family professionals.

Outline of the Text

Three overarching themes informed the development of this book: (a) recognizing family science as the foundation for family life education, (b) identifying the audience as the family science student and family life education professional, and (c) and reflecting the prescriptive work of family life education across the lifespan. As editors, we have organized this volume into three sections.

The chapters in **Section I** are organized around current themes in family life education. These first three chapters are a starting point for discussing concepts central to the practice of family science. They introduce the science, art, and wisdom in family life education as “The Science of Family Life Education: History, Status, and Practice” (Jason Hans); “The Art of Family Life Education: Getting Our Hearts Right” (Wally Goddard and James Marshall); and “Family Life Education: Wisdom in Practice” (Stephen Small and Dayana Kupisk). In the fourth chapter, William Allen and Karen Blaisure provide an essential lens in their discussion of “Family Life Education and the Practice of Cross-Cultural Competence.” The practice and involvement of professionals in family life education is captured in the next two chapters: “The Levels of Family Involvement Model: 20 Years Later” (William Doherty and Angela Lamson) and “Reconceptualizing the Domain and Boundaries of Family Life Education” (Judith Myers-Walls, Sharon Ballard, Carol Anderson Darling, and Karen Myers-Bowmam). Three innovative areas of practice are introduced in the next chapters: “Family Coaching: An Emerging Family Science Field” (Kimberly Allen and Nichole Huff), and “Community Engaged Parent Education: Strengthening Civic Engagement Among Parents and Parent Educators” (William Doherty, Jenet Jacob Erickson, and Beth Cutting), and “Opportunities and Challenges in Coparenting Education” (Alan Hawkins and Paul Florsheim). Shelece McAllister, Stephen Duncan, and Alan Hawkins present a meta-analytic study in “Examining the Early Evidence for Self-Directed Marriage and Relationship Education.” The next two chapters present challenges to the family and the family life educator’s approach to them: “Misperceptions of Work–Life Balance: The Five Secret Strategies for Family Life Educators” (Beth A. Quist) and “Family Life and Technology: Implications for the Practice of Family Life Education” (Susan K. Walker). The last chapter in Section I identifies one of the fastest growing trends in education: “Strategies for Designing Online Family Life Education Programs” (Robert Hughes, Jr., Aaron Ebata, Jill Bowers, Elissa Thomann Mitchell, and Sarah Louise Curtiss).

Section II begins with an outline of the Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines. These guidelines should be referenced in the study of the following chapters as a guide in preparation for the CFLE Exam. Each chapter in this section focuses on one of the 10 Family Life Content Areas. Each presents the learning outcomes of the content area from the Framework for Family Life Education (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011) and the practice component from the Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines (National Council on Family Relations, 2014). Chapter authors were asked to follow the same template; however, the uniqueness each author brought to the task produced distinctive results. As editors, we attempted to provide a sense of continuity without disturbing the distinct contribution of each author. Many of the content areas overlap and interact with each other. The chapters in this section encompass the following topics:

- The Practice components from the Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines.
- The specific Framework’s concepts and area outcomes.
- An introduction to the Content Areas.
- A discussion, intended for students and practitioners in the field of family life education, integrating the practice components from the Family Life Education Content Area Guidelines and the content area outcomes from the Family Life Education Framework for the practice of family life education. Authors were asked to provide visual tools and case studies to encourage the application of current themes and best practices in family life education.
- References of works cited in the chapter.

Section III includes chapters for the development of family life education teaching and practice for the profession and the professional. This section begins with an important discussion of program evaluation and the creation of assessment knowledge in family life education, “Principles for Improving Family Programs: An Evidence-Informed Approach” (Stephen Small and Mary Huser). Each of the next five chapters offer specific suggestions and resources for the professional development of the family life educator: “Marketing Family Life Education Programs: Building Relationships Instead of Selling” (Jody Johnston Pawel), “Preparing For Your Profession” (Sterling Wall and Sandra McClintic), “Developing a World-Class Portfolio for the Family Life Educator” (Melinda Stafford Markham, Yolanda Mitchell, and Jaimee Hartenstein), “Social Media and the Family Life Educator” (Jason DeBoer-Moran), and “Family Life Educators in the Legislative Process” (Marlene S. Lobberecht).

The next two chapters hold up the important dimension of ethics and the family life educator: “The Development and Teaching of the Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists” (Rebecca Adams, Kathleen Gilbert, David C. Dollahite, and Robert E. Keim) and “Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Life Educators” (The Minnesota Council on Family Relations). The final two chapters discuss the profession of family life education: Dawn Cassidy reviews the ongoing effort to promote the profession in “Family Life Education: Advancing the Profession,” and Justin Petkus operationalizes one way of advancing the profession in “A First-Hand Account of Implementing a Family Life Education Model: Intentionality in Head Start Home Visiting.” This section concludes with a postscript to the field of family science and the professional development of the family life educator.

This book continues the rich history of writing about work with families. For family life educators, it is necessary to question and discuss changing definitions, to review old and offer new approaches to program and delivery, to evaluate work and effectiveness with individuals and families across the lifespan, and to assess the relevancy of training programs. As members of a profession, family life educators are consistently faced with pioneers who leave, the arrival of new explorers, and the ever-changing territory of work with families. It is imperative that we remain vigilant to the evolving nature of family life education as described and explained in this volume.

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Foreword

Family Life Education: The Practice of Family Science is an important work.

Family science is often referred to as a “discovery major.” Whether because they are in need of a class in forming couple relationships or family finance, many students enter family science through interest in a single course that, with exposure and understanding, grows into a passion. Indeed, family life educators are some of the most passionate human beings you will have the honor to meet.

Like many of you, I too discovered family science. I was the manager of work/life and advancement of women at a Fortune 500 company when I was recruited to assist with a panel presentation at a National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) annual conference. It was not until many years later, when I became the executive director of NCFR, that I began to understand the importance of family science and the value of it to all families around the world.

In 1938, three diverse professionals—Paul Sayre, a law professor, Ernest Burgess, a sociology professor, and Sidney Goldstein, a rabbi—came together to host the first national conference on family. Although family science has a rich history in many areas of study, including sociology, home economics, law, psychology, medicine, religion, education, social welfare, social policy, and demography, it is now recognized as a discipline in its own right. This single discipline has spawned many professions, such as family scientist, couple and family therapist, and family life educator. It is this last profession that is the topic of this book. The practice of family science relies on underlying research and evidence-based practice and is brought to life and enhanced by the experiences and wisdom of the practitioners.

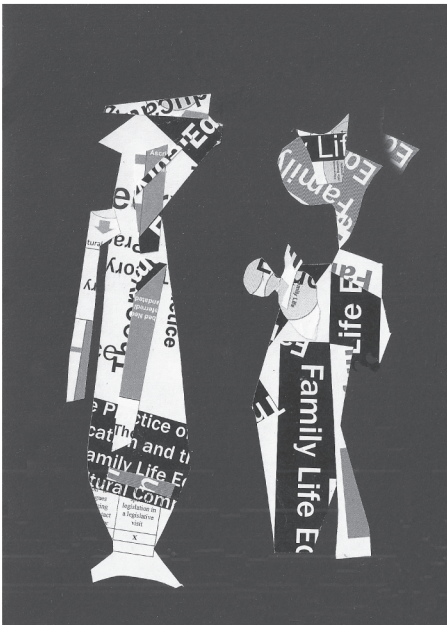
The editors of this book, Michael Walcheski, PhD, LMFT, CFLE, and Jennifer Reinke, PhD, LAMFT, CFLE, have assembled a collection of chapters from among today’s most accomplished family scientists, educators, and practitioners. Through this insightful assemblage of work you will come to know that well-adjusted, emotionally healthy, and fulfilling family relationships are not a matter of some haphazard collection of circumstances that come together serendipitously and result in happily-ever-after families. There is an underlying science to the practice of family life education. There are skills involved in being a good parent, having fulfilling relationships, and creating rich and rewarding lives together. There are proven methods of teaching and learning those skills.

As a family life educator, you have the opportunity to practice family science. Your skills and knowledge help hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people learn how to create healthy nurturing environments and relationships for their loved ones. This volume will help you achieve your professional and personal goals. I extend my warmest thanks to the editors and authors for their contributions to family life education, the practice of family science.

Diane L. Cushman
Executive Director
National Council on Family Relations

Current Themes in Family Life Education

Section 1



The Science of Family Life Education: History, Status, and Practice

Jason D. Hans

Family science has a short history relative to many fields of science, but over the past century it has steadily developed as a unique discipline while maintaining its multidisciplinary status and producing professions through which the science is applied. In this chapter I review the history of family science, describe family science today, and explain how family science is practiced by family life educators.

The History of Family Science

The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline (1988 [hereafter *NCFR Task Force*]; see also Bailey & Gentry, 2013; Hamon & Smith, 2014; and Hollinger, 2002) described three developmental stages through which family science has evolved as a discipline: (a) the discovery stage, (b) the pioneering stage, and (c) the maturing stage. The *discovery stage* was marked by the emergence of family as a legitimate topic of scientific inquiry by scholars trained in numerous fields, such as sociology, law, economics, criminology, and psychology. In the 1920s, sociologist Ernest Groves developed the first college course and authored the first college textbook focused on family issues; in 1938, the National Council on Family Relations was founded; and the volume of family research conducted by scholars in numerous academic disciplines began to grow through the 1930s.

The study of family was purely interdisciplinary during the discovery stage, but the transition toward a disciplinary identity—the *pioneering stage*—began when Groves (1946) published an article in which he envisioned a “science of marriage and family” undertaken by scholars who would approach the task “from a background shared by no other science” (p. 26). Over the ensuing decades, numerous new degree programs and academic departments were established that focused on family, academic journals were launched and gained recognition for their emphasis on family, and the volume of family research mushroomed. Over time, a multidisciplinary field emerged as the interdisciplinary mixture of scholars who studied family coalesced to form a distinct perspective on family that was not aligned within any existing discipline.

The beginning of the *maturing stage* was marked by Wesley Burr’s presidential address at the 1982 NCFR conference (see also Burr & Leigh, 1983), where he argued that Groves’s vision had come to fruition and a new discipline had been born. Burr and Leigh (1983) asserted that the family field had met five of seven criteria for a discipline—unique subject matter, body of theory and research, supporting paraphernalia, utility of work/application, and ability to train scholars were deemed to have been met; unique methodology and a belief that the discipline exists were thought to be only partially met—which they believed was sufficient to proclaim that a new discipline had emerged. Discussions to settle on a name for the new discipline ensued. In 1985, the NCFR Task Force adopted *family science* as the term “to refer to the field of study where the primary goals are the discovery, verification, and application of knowledge about the family” (Leigh, 1985a, p. 15). However, this term has not been fully adopted; *family studies* and numerous other terms continue to be used to refer to the family field (Hans, 2014).

A key reason for the family field’s naming issue is that, even as family science has matured into a discipline, the study of family remains a topic of investigation from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Indeed, the ubiquity of family ensures that the field has and will retain its interdisciplinary roots even as family science continues to emerge as a distinct discipline (NCFR Task Force, 1988). Adding to the confusion, the faculty of family science academic departments are commonly composed of both family scientists and scholars trained in other fields, such as sociologists, psychologists, and economists who study family issues. However, one does not become a family scientist simply by studying family or being a faculty member in a family science department. Scholars trained in other disciplines and who use those disciplinary perspectives in their scholarship on family have different approaches to and perspectives for understanding family than do those whose primary training and identity are rooted within family science (Ganong, Coleman, & Demo, 1995).

Davis (1985; see also Leigh, 1985b) offered a typology of disciplines and suggested that naming patterns are distinct according to degree of independence from other disciplines. Specifically, he contended that core disciplines are completely independent and commonly have names ending in *-ology*, newer and less independent secondary disciplines are labeled with descriptive terms followed by *science*, and tertiary fields of study that are entirely dependent on other disciplines are labeled with descriptive terms followed by *studies*. In the mid-1980s, Burr believed that the family field was a secondary discipline but had the potential to eventually emerge as a core discipline in Davis's typology (Leigh, 1985b). Family science has continued maturing on each of Burr and Leigh's (1983) seven criteria for a discipline over the three decades since Burr's declaration that a discipline had been born (Bailey & Gentry, 2013), but in Davis's typology the discipline seems likely to remain a secondary discipline. It is important to note that this does not imply that family science is of secondary importance; instead, it means that family science stands on the shoulders of core disciplines to discover aspects and nuances of the human experience that would not be discovered without that foundation, and without family science.

Hamon and Smith (2014) believe that family science is now transitioning to a new stage in its development, (which they labeled the *evaluation and innovation stage*), that will require clarification and articulation of the relevance and application of family science. Indeed, several other scholars have also recently articulated a pressing need to establish a clear identity for family science because there is concern about the long-term viability of family science as a discipline if a clear identity is not established (e.g., Gavazzi, Wilson, Ganong, & Zvonkovic, 2014; Hans, 2014). However, some are leery of a movement toward increasing disciplinary exclusivity. Blume (2014) and Zvonkovic (see, e.g., Gavazzi et al., 2014), for example, believe that the field will be better served by working toward a transdisciplinary approach to understanding family. Indeed, courting transdisciplinary opportunities to understand family in ways possible only through the synthesis of multiple disciplinary perspectives holds much promise. Nonetheless, prior to blurring disciplinary boundaries through transdisciplinary research, the discipline of family science seems best served by continuing to develop its own distinct identity and perspective, just as scholars and clinicians commonly advocate that the path to experiencing a consummate relationship begins with knowing oneself (Hazleden, 2003).

Toward that end, NCFR's Future of Family Science Task Force was formed in 2014, and its members are actively discussing the issues and challenges currently facing family science in an effort to understand the current state of the discipline and to chart its future course. For example, although the training, identity, and perspective of family scientists is perceived to be different than those who study family but were trained in another discipline (Ganong et al., 1995), family science has not yet formulated a clear identity with regard to "what skills, perspectives, and knowledge are (or, should be) developed and nurtured in the family field which distinguishes it from those of related social and behavioral science disciplines" (Hans, 2014, p. 330).

What Is Family Science?

Although the identity and scope of family science continue to evolve, there is no doubt that "the primary goals are the discovery, verification, and application of knowledge about the family" (NCFR Task Force, 1987, p. 49). However, this definition does not distinguish family science from research on family conducted by scholars from other disciplinary perspectives, such as sociology, history, psychology, biology, home economics, psychiatry, anthropology, political science, family law, and communications (NCFR Task Force, 1988).

Family science has been declared to be a formal discipline by numerous family scientists (e.g., Bailey & Gentry, 2013; Burr & Leigh, 1983; Hamon & Smith, 2014; NCFR Task Force, 1988; Smart, 2009). However, disciplines have systematic and unique perspectives, or ways of understanding issues, that lead to discoveries or interpretations that would be missed when examining the given issue from any other disciplinary perspective. Therefore, attempts have been made to formulate a more precise description of the unique perspective on family that is accentuated by family science relative to the unique perspectives taken by other disciplines through which family is sometimes studied. For example, the following definition was offered in a textbook titled *Family Science*:

Family science is the discipline devoted to the study of the unique realm of the family. Its primary concentration focuses on the inner workings of family behavior and centers on family processes such as emotions in families, love, boundaries, rituals, paradigms, rules, routines, decision-making, and management of resources. When the family is studied from a family science perspective, researchers, practitioners, and clinicians treat information from other related disciplines (i.e., sociology, psychology, and anthropology) as vital background information. The foreground emphasis, however, is on the family system and its intimate workings. (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1993, pp. 17–18)

However, this narrow definition does not reflect the breadth of what is considered family science today; family is certainly at the foreground of the family science perspective, but most scholars who were trained in, or are faculty members in, a family science academic unit do not necessarily focus on the inner realm of family processes. The same can be said of most articles published in family science journals. Perhaps not coincidentally, NCFR's Executive Director recently proposed to "create a term that describes the study of the social, relational, psychological, emotional, and developmental aspects of family" (Cushman, 2013, p. 7), which again proposes a field of breadth that belies disciplinary boundaries.

These seemingly incompatible views can be reconciled by viewing family science as both an emerging discipline (see Bailey & Gentry, 2013, for the current state of the discipline) and a *multiple disciplinary field of study* (a term coined by Choi & Pak, 2006,

The Art of Family Life Education: Getting Our Hearts Right

Wally Goddard and James P. Marshall

As family life educators, we invest time helping people create better family relationships. Our efforts usually focus on two main areas. First, we try to arm people with knowledge in order to help them prevent or solve problems. Second, we help them develop skills for applying that knowledge. We teach communication skills, negotiation skills, organizational skills, and self-soothing.

If we want to be great family life educators, we must continue to develop our own knowledge and skills. We seek better ways to manage classes and engage learners. Knowledge and skills are foundational to being effective family members and family life educators.

But knowledge and skills are not enough. We can use the analogy of washing a car: The washing makes the car shiny and clean, but if the engine is malfunctioning or the transmission has failed, the shininess will not get us far. We see the powertrain in our relationships being the quality of our hearts.

The *quality of our hearts* might be defined as our motivation and willingness to use our knowledge and skills in the best interest of others. We have all known people with excellent knowledge and skills who devastated people and relationships because they were thoughtless or malicious. All of us, at times, have been those people. The problem was not that we did not know the helpful thing to say; the problem was a lack of willingness. Our hearts were not right.

Relationship scholar Doug Brinley (2002) once observed that “If all we do is stress communication skills to people without softening their hearts, we will simply make people more clever fighters!” (p. 115).

This perspective is compatible with many scholars’ recognition that even the most ambitious relationship education and skills training programs have often had puny impacts (e.g., see Gottman, Coan, Carrère, & Swanson, 1998). In fact, many programs have shown no effects at all! How can that be? Blaine Fowers (2001, 2008), a prominent marriage scholar, has argued that relationship education and skills training do not work in the absence of personal virtues such as self-restraint, courage, generosity, justice, and good judgment. His work suggests that healthy relationships are not merely the result of acquiring knowledge and interpersonal skills but, more importantly, cultivating qualities of character.

After we have taught knowledge and skills, we still need to help our students get their hearts right. It is not enough for them to know the right thing to say—the kind, generous, and gracious thing. They must be willing to say it. We have all stood face to face with someone who irritated us and said something that was guaranteed to escalate conflict and increase distance. Why do we insist on saying words that cause injury and damage relationships?

There are at least three reasons we say unhelpful things. First, we don’t fully understand each other. We think we do, but we are wrong. We impose our meanings on someone else’s experience. Second, our strong, innate sense of justice causes us to judge others according to our rules. We feel it is our responsibility to correct others. Third, we lack impulse control. Sometimes we blurt out our thoughts without considering the impact of our words.

When we understand the problem as a “heart problem” rather than a knowledge or skill problem, the solutions become clear. We all need a change of heart. We all need to be more open to each other, more compassionate in our assessments, and more willing to manage our words.

For me (Wally), the person who has best taught me this truth is my dear wife, Nancy. She does not study the standard relationship skills. She does not read the research journals or even the popular relationship books. She cannot reliably create a proper “I” statement. But she blesses people because her heart is pure. She is without guile. She is abundantly kind. It is not her knowledge or her skill but her will—her qualities of character/virtues—that makes her the master of relationships.

We believe that most family problems are due not to a lack of knowledge or skill but to hard hearts and an unwillingness to use the knowledge and skill we do have in ways that benefit and build up our relationships with others. Our hard hearts prevent us from seeing people and situations as they are. Instead, we see them as *we* are (Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004).

At this point in such a discussion, it is common for a person to say something like, “Wow. You’re so right! My brother-in-law really needs this!” We hope we can convince you that we *all* need a change of heart. As humans, we all see through mud-spattered glasses. We all have giant distortions in our vision that keep us from seeing things clearly.

This blindness or hard-heartedness creates problems for the people we teach; it also creates problems for us as educators. We often think we know just what our students need and are quite glad to sit in harsh (but unspoken) judgment of those who come to us for help. Yet we are as likely to be wrong about other people and their circumstances as any other fallible human. When we impose our meanings on others’ experiences, we are sure to miss the mark.

In an effort to help us be more aware of our potential blind spots, in the following sections we provide a brief summary of eight well-established biases in human perception. These biases are not tidy and separate but instead are overlapping and interacting. After discussing the biases, we recommend three remedies that seem to be consistent with extant research.

Eight Biases

1. Egocentrism Keeps Us Focused on Our Own Needs

The problem of egocentrism is obvious with babies. They are almost completely focused on themselves and their comfort. That’s because people are not born with an advanced concern for others. As we learn and grow, we hope to become more sensitive and responsive to the needs of others. Unless we can do this, our own comfort and well-being will continue as the central issues of our individual lives. We will imagine that our needs are at the center of the universe.

There is an accumulating body of research evidence indicating that, as a society, we have become more narcissistic in recent decades (Kimonis, Harrison, & Barry, 2011; Twenge & Campbell, 2010; Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2010). Yet, in family life, when we fail to displace core egocentrism with concern for others, we are not good family citizens. Even as family life educators, when we fail to get out of our own perspective and enter the experience of our students, we are likely to fail.

2. The Fundamental Attribution Bias Causes Us to View Others Less Favorably Than Ourselves

The *fundamental attribution bias* is the tendency to excuse our errors and faults because of our circumstances while blaming others’ misdeeds on their character defects. For example, when I cut in front of someone in traffic, I see it as being due to the many demands on my time. However, when others do the same thing, I judge them to be rude and selfish. In other words, we tend to see other people’s faults through a microscope and our own faults through a telescope.

The fundamental attribution bias is not surprising because we know more about our own circumstances and motivations for doing things than we do about other people’s. This bias can keep us showing compassion for ourselves while condemning others for the very same kinds of humanness that we exhibit. In family life, we can resist this bias and assume good faith. We can assume that people do what they do for reasons that make sense to them. The same is true for students in our classes; we can give them the benefit of the doubt. When their actions do not make sense to us, we can try to understand their point of view.

3. The Myth of Pure Evil Causes Us to Polarize

This human quirk causes us to exaggerate differences between groups, giving the “us-es” too much credit and the “thems” too little credit. Jonathan Haidt (2006), the insightful psychologist, made the following observation:

We all commit selfish and shortsighted acts, but our inner lawyer ensures that we do not blame ourselves or our allies for them. We are thus convinced of our own virtue, but quick to see bias, greed, and duplicity in others. We are often correct about others’ motives, but as any conflict escalates we begin to exaggerate grossly, we weave a story in which pure virtue (our side) is in battle with pure vice (theirs). (p. 73)

Psychologists have observed that the myth of pure evil helps us feel justified when we treat other people badly (“After all, they deserve it!”). Many of us invoke the myth of pure evil in politics, race relations, history, and religion. We even fall into this trap in family relations (and family life education), vilifying any family member (or student) with whom we are at odds. This tendency in human relations may cause more tears to be shed than almost any other tendency. We judge and hurt each other while feeling noble and justified (Baumeister, 1999).

4. Naïve Realism Makes Us Smug in Our Assessments

Regarding naïve realism, Jonathan Haidt (2006) said the following:

Each of us thinks we see the world directly, as it really is. We further believe that the facts as we see them are there for all to see, therefore others should agree with us. If they don’t agree, it follows either that they have not yet been exposed to the relevant facts or else that they are blinded by their interests and ideologies. The background of other people is used to explain

their biases. It just seems plain as day, to the naïve realist, that everyone is influenced by ideology and self-interest. Except for me. I see things as they are. (p. 71)

Again, our natural wiring puts us at odds with family and students. To compound our difficulty, we think we are the only ones who are right. Consider the mischief this tendency has caused in families, classes, communities, and nations! Oddly, the problem is exacerbated when we have a lively sense of idealism. We feel that we are advancing a noble cause even as we violate the social contract to treat each other with respect. Haidt referred to naïve realism as the “biggest obstacle to world peace and social harmony.” (p. 71)

5. Our Guts Often Hijack Our Heads and Cause Us to Make Irrational Decisions

Each of us has gut reactions in dangerous situations. Unfortunately, this same wiring often causes us to react to people and safe situations without taking counsel from compassion or good sense (Gardner, 2008). We may instinctively dislike a person and then go to work to justify our unflattering assessment.

In family life and family life education the tyranny of our gut reactions can result in snap decisions that can damage relationships (Williams & Williams, 1993). We can see our partner or a student as an enemy, when it is really misunderstanding and stressful circumstances that are the enemy. Being ruled by our guts can also cause us to live in fear.

6. Confirmation Bias Causes Us to Be Narrow and Selective in Our Perceiving and Processing

Daniel Gardner (2008) described confirmation bias in the following way: “Once we have formed a view, we embrace information that supports that view while ignoring, rejecting or harshly scrutinizing information that cast doubt on it” (p. 110). We humans are not objective scientists but prejudiced processors of data.

When we have decided to judge some person or position, we often gather like-minded people around us to buttress our narrow view. As we do this, our views become more narrow and rigid. Whether the issue is religion, politics, family battles, or workplace relationships, we all tend to look for information that proves we are right. We ignore any evidence that contradicts our view. We would rather be right than wise. We develop a hardening of the categories.

In family life, confirmation bias can keep us from a broader and more balanced view of things. In family life education, we may form hard categories (“selfish,” “lazy,” “disruptive,” etc.) into which we place our students.

7. Our Unreliable Memories Shape Our Perception of the World to Fit Our Objectives

We shape, prune, and edit our memories far more than we realize. That is one reason there are so many arguments at family reunions. Each of us has our own version of history—and we are sure we are right. We are quite unaware of the liberties we have taken with truth. We systematically shape memories in order to support the narrative we favor.

Two psychologists made this insightful observation:

Between the conscious lie to fool others and unconscious self-justification to fool ourselves lies a fascinating gray area, patrolled by that unreliable, self-serving historian—memory. Memories are often pruned and shaped by an ego-enhancing bias that blurs the edges of past events, softens culpability, and distorts what really happened. Over time, as the self-serving distortions of memory kick in and we forget or distort past events, we may come to believe our own lies, little by little. (Tavris & Aronson, 2007, p. 6)

In close relationships we can train ourselves to look for bad things. This, of course, sets up self-fulfilling prophecies. There is enough bad in the best of partners that we will certainly find it if we’re looking for it. This is part of the process Hawkins, Carrère, and Gottman (2002) described as “negative sentiment override,” which provides a gloomy filter through which partners see each other.

One of the most remarkable discoveries of psychology is that we can also do the opposite: When we look for good, we can find it. This is what healthy partners do. Psychologists call it wearing “rose-colored glasses” (Gottman, 1994) or “positive sentiment override” (Hawkins et al., 2002).

We are active creators of our family life narratives. We create the image and supporting storyline of a great spouse or a villainous one, of earnest children or failing ones, of receptive family life students or contrary ones. Likewise, in family life education we can see our students in accusatory or compassionate ways.

8. Anger Narrows and Blinds Us

Research shows that when we get angry, we find it almost impossible to empathize with and understand the people who irritate us (Haidt, 2006). Consider how this plays out in parenting:

Scolding and punishment frighten children. Their natural tendency when scared is to cling to their mother, but she is the one doing the scolding, and in doing so she is pushing the child away from her. This causes additional anxiety, and the child is frustrated—unable to act on his or her natural impulses. The people who are supposed to shield the child from anxiety and comfort the child are instead the source of an anxiety from which the child can find no shelter. (Sigsgaard, 2005, p. 143)

Family Life Education: Wisdom in Practice

Stephen A. Small and Dayana Kupisk

Janie is the mother of a preschooler. She is enrolled in a multisession parent education program that she has been mandated to attend by the county child welfare services. Her daughter, Miley, is currently living with a relative. Janie must pass the class as a condition of regaining custody. Janie says she loves her daughter and desperately wants her back. She comes to all the classes, but isn't very engaged. When Janie does say something in class, it is often inappropriate. Her presence is beginning to have a negative influence on the overall atmosphere of the class. At the end of the class it will be the instructor's responsibility to determine whether she has successfully passed.

Imagine that you are the family life educator facilitating this program. What would you do in this situation? Is there a single “right” response? Do current research and theory provide you with enough information to guide you to a clear solution? What additional information might you need? What exactly is the problem that you are trying to solve? Are there multiple perspectives that need to be considered and balanced? Are professional ethics or personal values part of the equation? Problems like this one often arise in practice. To come up with a creative, practical, and principled solution requires experience, reflection, understanding, ethics, purpose, and deliberation—what we refer to as *wisdom in practice*. In this chapter we provide an overview of wisdom in practice and discuss how family life educators and other family practitioners can apply it in their work.

The Strengths and Limits of Evidence-Based Practice

In recent years, evidence-based programs and practices have been heralded as the gold standard for youth and family programs and services (Axford & Morpeth, 2013; Fixsen, Blase, Metz, & Van Dyke, 2013). Although this rapidly growing body of scientific knowledge provides a good foundation for practice, it is only a small piece of what is needed to deal with the dilemmas that are a part of everyday family life education and practice. As the above example illustrates, educational practice sometimes involves having to make critical decisions or solve difficult problems that are unpredictable, complex, and may not have a single, right answer. A growing number of professional disciplines, including medicine (Woolf & Atkins, 2001), social work (O'Sullivan, 2005), education (Vandervan, 2009), nursing (Cathcart & Greenspan, 2013), and psychology (American Psychological Association, 2005), have called on practitioners to make greater use of what is referred to as *evidence-based practice*. It has commonly been defined as “making decisions about how to promote health or provide care by integrating the best available evidence with practitioner expertise and other resources, and with the characteristics, state, needs, values and preferences of those who will be affected” (“Defining Evidence-Based Behavioral Practice,” 2014, para. 1). As reflected in this definition and in most conceptualizations, evidence-based practice comprises three overlapping elements: (a) scientific evidence; (b) client needs, preferences, and context; and (c) practitioner expertise and experience. The area of common intersection is considered the center at which effective practice and positive outcomes are most likely to occur (American Psychological Association, 2005). A glimpse into other professions supports the notion that going beyond research findings and empirically tested procedures is critical for the development and implementation of effective practice. The field of nursing, for example, recognizes that effective practice results from multiple forms of knowledge (Benner, 2000) and that the most ethical and tailored treatment for patients is achieved when experience, science, and values are integrated into a continuously developing, dynamic practice (Tarlier, 2005). Similarly, scholars have noted that even as our empirical knowledge base grows there is still room for systematically incorporating professional expertise in order to provide optimal care that is both relevant and effective (Baker, 1974; Eisikovits & Beker, 2001). This notion has trickled into related fields of professional practice. For example, child and youth workers are increasingly acknowledging their work as a *craft*; even though it is supported by scientific knowledge, it is often idiosyncratic and a function of unique situational contexts (Eisikovits & Beker, 2001). The need to draw on additional knowledge, perspectives, and expertise not captured through empirical research is equally necessary for practitioners working in family life education and other family-related professions (Garfat, 2004).

What constitutes research evidence for effective family programs and practices has grown considerably in recent years. In contrast, the other two components of what constitutes evidence-based practice (i.e., practitioner expertise and client context) have received much less attention. For instance, models of evidence-based practice refer to *practitioner expertise*, yet little research has examined what this actually entails, how it is developed, or how it is best applied. Similarly, context and client needs, values, and preferences are a central part of most evidence-based practice models. However, exactly how such characteristics should be assessed, taken into account, and weighed as part of the client–practitioner relationship has not been well delineated.

The Art of Practice: What Science Doesn't Tell Us

Although empirical studies can inform us about the types of families or individuals who benefit, on average, from certain programs or practices, most practitioners understand that the majority of people with whom they work do not adhere neatly to the average (Mitchell, 2011; Small, 2005). A common reservation about evidence-based programs is the assumption that one size fits all. A family's past experiences, cultural background, values, and household norms can color the way programs are received and interpreted by participants, ultimately affecting program outcomes (Larson & Walker, 2010; Mitchell, 2011). Practitioners who interact with families firsthand are uniquely positioned to gather information on what might be most appropriate and effective, beyond what has been shown, on average, to produce positive outcomes. Such a role can be challenging to practitioners who must balance multiple work-related tasks alongside numerous individual clients' needs, situations, and goals at any given moment (Larson, Rickman, Gibbons, & Walker, 2009).

For example, the parent educator dealing with the situation outlined at the start of this chapter may have evidence that the average parent who successfully completes the program will, on average, show significant increases in parenting skill. But what about a parent like Janie, who deviates from the average? Without taking into account her distinct circumstances and needs, it is not likely that Janie's participation will lead to the same successful outcomes. Although there are no guarantees, the educator who personalizes a program to account for Janie's unique needs and circumstances increases the chances that Janie's participation will lead to more positive outcomes.

One of the ways practitioners and organizations standardize their approach and ensure that they are adhering to current research and theory is to have research-based rules and guidelines that they follow. In the vernacular of evidence-based programs, this is referred to as the need to *maintain program fidelity*. Although there are certainly benefits to following research-based guidelines or maintaining program fidelity, there are times when an overreliance on rules and regulations can impede good practice. Schwartz and Sharpe (2010) argued that too many guidelines can inhibit the ability of professionals to use creative strategies and make wise choices because their thinking is narrowed and a predetermined solution is expected. For example, teachers who have been asked to teach to standardized tests so that their school will be evaluated favorably may produce higher test scores, but they are prevented from using their experience and skills to promote students' deeper understanding and application of the material.

Clear guidelines can be useful for executing specific tasks, such as instructing parents in a family life education program on how to use evidence-based techniques such as time outs or parental monitoring. However, they may be less helpful when it comes to dealing with unpredictable or challenging situations that arise in the course of everyday practice or program delivery. Family practitioners who possess not only scientific knowledge, but also the skills and reasoning processes to assess and weigh the values, preferences, and situational factors faced by their clients, are much more likely to be effective, especially in situations where rules and research do not provide an obvious response.

Practical Wisdom

In recent years, scholars across a number of professional disciplines have suggested that part of the solution to the research–practice gap may be found in what has been referred to as *practical wisdom* (Haggerty & Grace, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2005; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010). The concept of wisdom has had a long history, going back more than 2,000 years. It has been defined in a variety of ways, beginning with religious and spiritual traditions that view spiritual practice and commitment as the path to wisdom (Fox, 2007). In contrast, developmental scholars have viewed wisdom as an optimal endpoint in the process of human development that may be attained with age and experience (Bluck & Glück, 2004). Erikson, for example, theorized that wisdom was the final ego strength that emerged in the last stage of adulthood as a result of positively navigating life's challenges and accepting one's life circumstances (Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986). From this perspective, wisdom is something that is rare and attained by only a few exceptional individuals (Baltes & Smith, 2008). A third perspective on wisdom has its roots in philosophy, viewing it as process of quality judgment that can guide personal and professional decision-making, problem solving, and action (Schwartz, 2011; Sternberg, 2004).

The above approaches to wisdom constitute three of the most common types of wisdom discussed in the literature and might be termed *religious–spiritual*, *developmental*, and *practical* wisdom, respectively. It is this last type of wisdom, practical wisdom, that is most relevant to professional practice and family life education and the focus of this chapter. We define practical wisdom as the ability to take thoughtful, practical, and ethical action in response to important, difficult, and uncertain situations. Practical wisdom entails a mix of ethics, creativity, and problem solving. Building on the work of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, Schwartz (2011) described practical wisdom as involving “the moral will to do the right thing and the moral skill to figure out what the right thing is in any particular situation” (p. 4). O'Sullivan (2005) argued that wisdom in practice is valuable because it provides “a willing-

ness and exceptional ability to formulate sound executable judgment in the face of uncertainty” (p. 222) and is supported by a profound understanding of circumstances and the variability of solutions available to address a given dilemma. For most practitioners, the idea that their practice would benefit from wisdom is an obvious notion. By bringing wisdom to our practice we can more effectively address the inherently complex situations that arise in our work, while being better able to promote positive, desirable outcomes for the greatest good (Smith, 2011).

It is important to point out that not all situations of practice require practical wisdom. There are some situations in which a “right” answer may be fairly easy to ascertain. Such close-ended problems might best be described as *puzzles* (Treverton, 2007). Like a crossword or jigsaw puzzle, puzzles have a definite answer. In order to solve the problem a person needs to have the necessary information and a willingness to commit the time and effort to pursue the solution. For example, if we suspect the possibility of child abuse, notifying child welfare authorities may be the correct and legal response. In contrast, some problems are *mysteries* (Treverton, 2007). These are difficult, “messy” problems that usually lack a perfect solution. They are not just technical issues requiring practical problem solving but also moral/ethical dilemmas that involve balancing competing goals, values, and perspectives. Many of the most difficult challenges of family life practice (and life, more generally) are mysteries. They have no “right” answer because the answer depends on many dynamic factors, both known and unknown, as well as the ethics by which we work and the values our clients hold. Knowing what career path will make a child happy and successful in the future is a mystery. It is impossible to identify a path that will guarantee employment, let alone a lifetime of enjoyment and happiness. Because problems that are mysteries usually lack a perfect solution, the end result may simply be the best we can do with the information and resources available in light of difficult and uncertain circumstances.

Given the variable nature of youth and family programs, family life educators may be particularly likely to encounter mysteries that call for practical wisdom. Research, rules, and standardized practices have a central place in the delivery of family life programs because they serve to address clear-cut questions and general goals. However, most programs also operate in gray areas where there is not always an obvious solution or even a single, clear understanding of the problem or desired outcome. Programs typically involve a variety of people with differing needs, skills, and values, as well as multiple program goals that must be achieved with limited resources, staff, and time. Such an environment creates uncertain circumstances within which a wide range of decisions and judgments must be regularly considered and weighed. Moreover, within the course of delivering programs, dilemmas regularly occur without warning, and practitioners must respond in real time without the benefit of a reference book that can supply a definitive answer (Toth & Manly, 2011). Practical wisdom, as a guide to thoughtful, principled judgment and action, may provide a powerful process for helping practitioners respond to such complex situations as they arise in their work.

A New Model of Wisdom in Practice

For the past several years we have been studying practical wisdom in order to better understand how people make wiser decisions in their everyday lives, in professional practice and when working with and raising children. This research builds on the work of contemporary behavioral scientists as well as philosophers across the ages. We began by conducting interviews with highly respected adults and professionals. More recently, we have created several competence-based protocols for assessing wisdom in practice. From this body of knowledge we have been developing a model of wise practice. The model is composed of six components that can help family life educators and other practitioners make wiser decisions in their professional practice. The six dimensions are (a) reflection, (b) purpose setting, (c) problem framing, (d) perspective taking, (e) knowledge, and (f) balance. In Box 3.1 we list some of the assumptions underlying the model that have guided our work.

Components of Wisdom in Practice

Reflection. A cornerstone of wise practice is the need to be calm and reflective when faced with a difficult problem or decision (Ardelt, 2008). Being reflective means approaching problems deliberately, stepping back from the situation, and making the time to actively think without distractions. Although the ability to think quickly on one’s feet is certainly a valuable trait to have, it is also important to recognize that it is often best not to simply react when the issue is a difficult and important one that needs thoughtful consideration.

Among the biggest distractions to our ability to reflect are our emotions. We almost always make better, more thoughtful decisions when we are cool, calm, and collected (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011). When upset, we often experience strong emotions, signaling that something is worthy of concern. This can be a good thing when we need to respond quickly, like when we are in danger or a saber-toothed tiger is about to attack. But the world we live in today often makes strong emotions counterproductive. They can lead us to respond rashly, resulting in ill-advised decisions made in the heat of the moment. Emotions can also make us fearful, and our fear can get in the way of us focusing on the problem, considering multiple options, and clearly thinking it through (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011). It can lead us to say or do hurtful things that may make the situation worse. When we are faced with a significant challenge in our work, recognizing our emotions and then waiting until they have subsided and we are able to think clearly about our response is more likely to result in a sensible, caring action. In addition, when we are calm, we are better listeners, with an enhanced ability and willingness to understand the perspectives of others (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011).

Family Life Education and the Practice of Cross-Cultural Competence

William D. Allen and Karen R. Blaisure

In this chapter, we explore how awareness of cultural diversity and the development of cross-cultural competence are critical components of family life education. In doing so, we first provide several definitions as background to our description of cross-cultural competence. Next, we suggest a three-step process for conceptualizing cross-cultural development and offer a template to assist family life educators in the development of effective action plans to increase their cross-cultural competency. Finally, we offer suggestions for implementation of these concepts at the organizational level to encourage adoption of increased cross-cultural competence.

Families are diverse in the ways they come together, what forms they take, perceived membership, and how they are affected or interact with extrafamilial influences. One important factor influencing family life is culture, which can both determine as well as reflect family formation and process. However, other significant factors shape contemporary families as well, including societal norms (e.g., caregiving, substance use), law and policy (e.g., marriage/partnership, health care, climate), international migration, and technology (e.g., cell phones, social media; Darling & Cassidy, 2014).

In response to the growing ethnic, socioeconomic, and structural diversity in the population of the United States and throughout the world, family science researchers and practitioners of family science (i.e., family life educators) are and have been pursuing contextual understandings of families and best practices with diverse families, moving beyond monolithic or universal conceptions of family life. Family science researchers and theorists have focused their attention on factors such as ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and intersectionality as important influences on family formation, structure, and process (Demo, Allen, & Fine, 2000; Few-Demo, 2014; Lloyd, Few, & Allen 2009; Marks, 2000; McAdoo, 2007; Trask & Hamon, 2007). In terms of family life educator practice, the concept of *ambiguous loss* (Boss, 2006) and the *family resilience approach* (Walsh, 2006), for example, remind us of the power of, respect for, and assumed strength of families. Given the complexity of family life, family life educators can play an important role in promoting family well-being, and several resources are available to enhance culturally sensitive, ethical, and competent practice (e.g., Ballard & Taylor, 2012b; Boyd-Franklin, 2003; see also the Children, Youth, and Families Education and Research Network [www.cyfernet.org], the National Center for Cultural Competence [<http://nccc.georgetown.edu/>], and the University of Georgia's Center for Family Research [www.cfr.uga.edu/]).

What Is Cross-Cultural Competence?

In order to establish a good understanding of cross-cultural competence and its importance, we first need to discuss a few related terms. The lack of consistency in language about diversity can hamper understanding and development of effective programming and interventions. Terms such as *race*, *culture*, and *ethnicity* are often used interchangeably, making discussion of culture's influence in family process unnecessarily confusing. Therefore, to have a meaningful discussion of the benefits of weaving diversity into the fabric of family life education, we will define several key terms here, including *culture*, *ethnicity*, *family*, and perhaps most important, *cultural competence*. Readers may research each of these terms in greater detail using resources suggested later in this chapter as a starting point.

Culture and Cultural Diversity

Culture can be experienced as an *inner* sense of shared identity and as an *outward* reflection of an individual's or a group's identity. We use the term *cultural diversity* to refer to: differences in ethnic or racial classification and self-identification, tribal or clan affiliation, nationality, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, education, religion, spirituality, physical and intellectual abilities, personal appearance, and other factors that distinguish one group or individual from another. (Bronheim & Goode, 2013, p. 4)

In the field of family science, other factors that distinguish families from one another are generation, family structure, and family processes (Demo et al., 2000). Individuals and families often identify with a number of cultures, and that identification can change over the lifespan and life cycle. We assume families describe themselves by using the cultural groupings that are most salient to their lived experiences. For example, family members might describe themselves as part of a multiethnic, college-educated, religious, athletic family or as an Asian, working-class, same-sex, stepfamily.

When working with individuals, couples, and families it is important to ascertain which factors are most important to their identity. For example, ethnicity is often experienced as a primary component of identity, especially because it, along with gender and other socially relevant differences, often determine levels of privilege and oppression in a society (Blume & de Reus, 2009; Collins, 1990; Few, 2009; Lewis, 2009). Indeed, social and cultural influences outside a family may reinforce, or alternatively undermine, cultural connections within a family (e.g., van Eeden, Moorefield, Martell, Williams, & Preston, 2011).

Differences exist within any cultural group and often are greater than those between groups. Individual and family diversity are experienced in an array of intersections. Knowing a family's socioeconomic status does not tell us about the family members' ethnicities, education level, religion, and so on. Imagine four working-class families, each of which has a different religion, ethnicity, family structure, language, and physical abilities. We cannot assume they all would respond in the same way to a global economic downturn. As a result, family life educators must remain curious about how culture shapes identities, perceptions, and behaviors.

For example, not all members of a given cultural group might endorse cultural expressions commonly associated with that group. Music is often a cultural expression of group identification. Reggae music can be a reflection of the Jamaican roots of many West Indian American immigrants, while salsa music can echo the Cuban and Puerto Rican roots of many Latinos. Although these groups are clearly not the only ones who appreciate these particular genres (and many of their members may favor other genres), reggae and salsa are stereotypical expressions of each group's sense of shared identity that represent examples of culture.

Food, dress, and speech patterns also can be cultural expressions of individual or group identifications. Cultural preferences can change as people are exposed to varying cultural influences and over the course of time. Because individuals typically operate in a variety of cultural contexts simultaneously it can be difficult to attribute specific cultural expressions to specific cultural groups. Thus, persons who primarily identify themselves as Asian Americans may simultaneously love pizza, enjoy rap music, as well as celebrate the Chinese New Year.

Ethnicity

We are highlighting ethnicity because it is central to how many people and families experience life. *Ethnicity* is defined as the inner sense of identity or connection with others we perceive to be similar to us. Ethnicity can be a “common ancestral origin,” national identity, or be based on one or more dis-

tinct characteristics (Sue et al., 1998, p. 10). Although some refer to this social construct as “race,” many scholars have suggested avoiding this term because it suggests genetic differences in human beings that do not exist (see American Anthropological Association, 1998; for a discussion of inherent problems in using the term *race*, see Smedley, 2007, and www.understandingrace.org).

For example, many people of African descent in the think of themselves as *African American* or *Black*, and many indigenous peoples in the Americas might identify themselves collectively as *First Nation*, *Métis*, *Inuit* (Canada), *Native American* or *Indian* (United States), or *Maya* (Mexico). Ethnicity can also be intertwined with a shared sense of identity that comes from a common belief system, as in the formal or informal pursuit of spirituality or religion. Thus, many followers of the teachings of Jesus Christ call themselves *Christians*, and those who follow Islam think of themselves as *Muslims*. As in the case of common ancestral origin, what binds these groups together is their sense of shared history or common destiny.

Thus, ethnicity can be thought of as the perceived commonality within a particular group that shapes their perception of the world and their interactions in it. However, the sense of commonality can also arise from shared physical characteristics, such as skin color, eye shape, or hair type. These can individually produce the sense of shared identity, or combine with other characteristics such as those mentioned above (e.g., ancestral origin) to produce ethnicity. The perception of shared identity within ethnic groups may also shape the perceptions of those outside of these groups. Often, these differences in group perceptions account for differences in the ways groups treat each other (as in the case of institutional racism). It is important to note, however, that there is typically as much diversity within ethnic groups as between them. Therefore, ethnic groups should never be seen as homogeneous.

Family

A universal definition of *family* in this discussion is both central and elusive, because norms regarding families and their place in society are dynamic and continue to evolve. Most definitions of family include mention of their initiation through birth or intentional affiliation (e.g., adoption), shared financial and material resources, mutual emotional support, and the potential for sexual intimacy (between adults). Myers-Walls (2000) identified a danger associated with a

“vague definition” of families based on “default norm(s)” that in effect exclude some families. Similarly, Marks and Leslie (2000) suggested that “disciplines that deal with ‘families’ must have an inclusive reach and remain ever alert to the question of who gets

left out by how we see and define social reality” (p. 403). Alternatively, they asked, what is the “nonreducible aspect of family—one essential element that, if absent, would signal for each of us a nonfamily status?” (p. 403).

It is clear that the definition of what constitutes a family can determine the answers to questions such as how families can form, who can or cannot marry, and who is (or is not) part of a family. It can also shape critical familial outcomes, such as who can have a say in the medical treatment of a loved one and who can inherit family wealth. For example, a family life educator’s definition of family might affect the degree to which cohabiting heterosexual or gay parents are welcomed to a parenting class, or whether couple education programs are open to cohabiting couples or those in nontraditional relationships. In this chapter we do not propose a more definitive description of the family except to suggest that how families are ultimately “defined” has real consequences for family members, in particular those from and living in diverse contexts.

Cultural Competence

Noting the groundbreaking work of Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989), Benjamin and Benjamin (2004) defined *cultural competence* as “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals [that enable them] to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (p. 128). The term *cross-cultural competence* describes the practice of a combination of insights, knowledge, and skills. These include an awareness of the influence of culture on one’s life experiences and appreciation of the diverse influences that potentially shape the lives of others. When combined, these can enhance a

family life educator’s capacity to serve others, particularly when working *across* cultural boundaries. For this reason we include the word *cross-* in the term *cross-cultural competence*.

The word *competence* here does not imply that these practices are or can be perfected. Indeed, diversity in society and the dynamic nature of family forms and processes make such perfection highly unlikely. Cross-cultural competence demands a sincere appreciation of the perspectives, experiences, values, and aspirations of families seen in typical family life education settings. As a lifelong developmental process, cross-cultural competency evolves as family life educators expand their self-awareness, gain knowledge, and learn appropriate interventions and skills (Cross et al., 1989; Sue & Sue, 2013; Wiley & Ebata, 2004). It requires a mindful, conscientious dedication to the ethical importance of a lifelong pursuit of personal and professional development (Talbot, 2003).

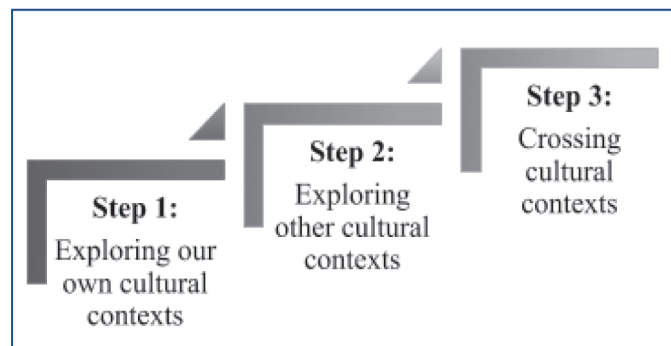
Family life educators can encounter a number of words and phrases in the effort to describe how to develop and deliver culturally competent programs and services. In addition to *cultural competence*, a term used by the National Center of Cultural Competence and the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, other phrases include *cultural awareness*, *cultural responsiveness* (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), *cultural sensitivity*, *cultural borders*, and *cultural humility* (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Family

life educators are encouraged to consider these or other terms to best reflect their understanding and pursuit of working effectively with others and offering effective programs and services.

Cross-Cultural Competence: A Three-Step Process

Cross-cultural competence can be conceptualized as a three-step process: (1) exploring one’s own cultural contexts, (2) learning about the cultural contexts of others, and (3) building cross-cultural bridges of service between ourselves and others (see Figure 4.1). This three-step process is based on the work of Cross et al. (1989) and Sue and Sue (2013).

Figure 4.1 A Three-Step Process



Step 1: Looking inward. A first step on the road to cross-cultural competence is to examine how personal assumptions, biases, values, and learned prejudices potentially affect one’s professional practice (Sue et al., 1998). Exploring our own cultural contexts provides insight into our perceptions, thought processes, and behaviors. It often involves having the courage to honestly examine the basis for previously untested values and unconscious prejudices. Reflexivity is another process by which one can become more aware of one’s own cultural experience. Reflexivity promotes an understanding of how our psychological and emotional processes have developed and a willingness to take responsibility for the implications these resulting beliefs, feelings, and behaviors have on others (Allen & Farnsworth, 1993).

The Levels of Family Involvement Model: 20 Years Later

William J. Doherty and Angela L. Lamson

For the past 80 years theorists, researchers, and practitioners have written about and discussed the distinction between family life education and other forms of family services or treatment. Most notably, education has been distinguished from psychotherapy. Examples of these discussions date back to Lindeman and Thurston (1935, cited in Brim, 1965), who wrote that “Parent educators are now searching for that new line of demarcation which reveals where education leaves off and psychotherapy begins” (p. 13). Three decades later, Brim (1965) saw little progress toward clarity between education and therapy, and three decades after that no better resolution had come to fruition (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993).

In 1995, Doherty offered a model in response to this “dichotomous dilemma” (i.e., family education or family therapy) that better attended to the diverse needs of families while also recognizing that unique skills were needed as the level of intensity for services increased. The foundation of this model was first conceptualized by Doherty and Baird (1986, 1987), who realized the importance of using a continuum of intensity to describe appropriate services based on the severity of families’ needs. They developed their model while training family physicians who worked with families facing illness and disabilities. Doherty and Baird named this continuum the *Levels of Family Involvement* (LFI).

The LFI continuum has been implemented as part of family education training throughout the past two decades and cited in more than 70 national and international publications (e.g., Distelberg & Castanos, 2012; Hawley & Dahl, 2000). The levels were intended to be implemented in the following ways: (a) to consider the intensity of the family’s needs, (b) to determine the kinds of services that the system wants to offer to families served by their context, and (c) to ensure that the educator or practitioner who is providing the service is skilled at delivering what is necessary to meet the severity of the family’s needs along with the expertise to best address the issue in a culturally sensitive manner. Based on feedback about the model in the ensuing years, along with evolving programs and policies in education and health care, the purpose of this chapter is to provide updated definitions and descriptions of each LFI level, review literature and research relevant to each level, illustrate what each level looks like in practice, respond to criticisms by clarifying what the LFI is not, and describe implications for contemporary practice.

In this chapter we use the National Council on Family Relations (2014) definition of family life education:

Family life education focuses on healthy family functioning within a family systems perspective and provides a primarily preventive approach. The skills and knowledge needed for healthy functioning are widely known: strong communication skills, knowledge of typical human development, good decision-making skills, positive self-esteem, and healthy interpersonal relationships. The goal of family life education is to teach and foster this knowledge and these skills to enable parents and families to function optimally. . . . Family life education provides this information through an educational approach, often in a classroom-type setting or through educational materials. (www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/what-family-life-education)

Levels of Family Involvement

The LFI model, as adapted for family life educators, applies primarily to direct work with family members who are dealing with common and complex issues. It offers five levels of increasing intensity in relation to the need of families and involvement with families as opposed to a dichotomy between education and therapy. We emphasize at the outset that the model has been misunderstood to imply that services received at Level 5 are “better” than those received at other levels. On the contrary, the continuum was intended to convey the need for different degrees of response based on the severity and complexity of the family’s problems. What is best in any situation is the level most appropriate to the needs of the family. We describe the LFI model in more detail below and summarize it in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Levels of Family Involvement for Family Life Educators

<p>Level 1: Institution-Centered Family members are included only for practical reasons, not as collaborators. Communication is typically unidirectional, with family members expected to cooperate with institutional norms, policies, or procedures.</p> <p>Level 2: Collaborative Dissemination of Information <u>Knowledge Base:</u> Content pertaining to typical human development, family development, and healthy interpersonal relationships <u>Personal Development:</u> Openness to engage parents in collaborative ways <u>Skills:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Communicating information clearly and in an interesting format2. Eliciting questions related to the content3. Engaging a group of parents in the learning process4. Making pertinent and practical recommendations5. Providing information on community resources</p> <p>Level 3: Working With Family Members' Feelings and Need for Support <u>Knowledge Base:</u> In addition to Level 2, content pertaining to affective learning in groups and ways to engage in collaborative and culturally sensitive problem solving <u>Personal Development:</u> Awareness of one's own feelings, biases, and ethical challenges in relation to participants, the content presented, and group process <u>Skills:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Eliciting expressions of feelings and concerns2. Empathic listening3. Normalizing feelings and reactions4. Creating an open and supportive climate5. Protecting a parent from too much self-disclosure in a group6. Engaging parents in collaborative problem-solving discussion7. Sensitively exploring cultural issues8. Tailoring recommendations to the unique needs, concerns, and feelings of the parent and family9. Identifying family and psychological dysfunction10. Tailoring a referral to the unique situation of the parent and family</p> <p>Level 4: Psychoeducational Intervention for Complex or Chronic Family Concerns <u>Knowledge Base:</u> Family systems theory, cultural sensitivity, ethical and legal standards, consent process, process for building rapport and intervening with families, assessment for complex and chronic challenges, and recognition for when and how to collaborate with larger systems <u>Personal Development:</u> Awareness of one's own participation in a system, including one's own biases and beliefs in relation to the family's system, the topic of concern for the family, and the inclusion of the larger community systems <u>Skills:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Asking a series of questions to elicit a detailed picture of the family dynamics and their concern2. Joining, assessing, and intervening in a culturally sensitive manner based on the unique needs of the family3. Engaging multiple levels of the system at the same time, including the family and any larger systems that are involved in the family's experience4. Helping the family use its cultural resources to address a problem5. Knowing when to end the intervention effort and either refer the family to other sources or return to Level 3 support6. Working with therapists and community systems to help maximize continuity of care7. Having an ethical awareness in relation to the family's complex or chronic concern, including knowing one's own scope of practice8. Utilizing consultation and supervision to attend to content, process, and the role of the educator in relation to the family's circumstances</p> <p>Level 5: Family Therapy This referral level is outside the scope and mission of parent education. The following description is offered to show the boundary between Level 4 education and Level 5 family therapy. <u>Knowledge Base:</u> Assessment of mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage, couples, and family systems; individual, couple, and family patterns that influence relationships and human development, behaviors, and biopsychosocial health; knowledge of larger systems as they affect families and treatment; research and best practices pertaining to assessment, diagnosis, and intervention; ethical and legal practices <u>Personal Development:</u> Ability to handle intense emotions in families and oneself and to maintain one's balance in the face of diverse beliefs and perspectives among family members and other professionals <u>Skills:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Joining, assessing, diagnosing, and intervening with family members in relation to their presenting concern2. Efficiently constructing treatment plans that promote a culturally sensitive continuity of care with the family3. Working intensively with families during crises4. Attending to ethical and legal standards pertaining to the family's dynamics, process, and presenting concern5. Negotiating collaborative relationships with other professionals and other systems who are working with the family</p>

Level 1: Institution Centered

Level 1 describes programs or activities in which family members are included only for practical reasons, not as collaborators. Communication is typically unidirectional, with family members expected to cooperate with institutional norms, policies, or procedures (e.g., arrive on time to school, have zero-tolerance rules for substances or weapons).

Contexts that are not family oriented, such as some medical settings, may function routinely at Level 1. At Level 1 a professional would not recognize relational or systemic perspectives and thus would not consider the ways in which change may occur for persons not represented in the room. Furthermore, programmatic policies, trainings, or continuing education at this level are created by professionals with little explicit attention to the systemic needs of family members, who are expected to support and cooperate with the professional's recommendations or services or those aligned to their context. At this level professionals will likely determine that an individual (who is part of a parent subsystem or family) has a need that must be attended to but that the end goal will not be assessed or evaluated beyond the individual unit of analysis. An example of this level in practice may be a company seminar on work–life balance whereby the presenter gives information in a directive or noninteractive lecture approach without sensitivity to the family systems of the participants.

This level is included in a discussion of family life education mainly to indicate a boundary that is outside of what is consistent with family life education or the role of family life educators (just as Level 5, Family Therapy, is outside of the boundary of family life education). However, family life educators may interface with such professionals or contexts when advocating for family needs. Family life educators could quickly find that some professionals within a given context may function at Level 1, whereas others function at different levels, and thus interactions and collaborations will need to be adjusted on the basis of the individuals and professionals involved. Family life educators in some instances may be asked to help professionals or contexts that function at Level 1 become more collaborative and family centered.

Level 2: Collaborative Dissemination of Information

Level 2 involves educational activities with family members around communication skills, knowledge of typical human development, good decision-making skills, positive self-esteem, and healthy interpersonal relationships (i.e., common areas of expertise for family life educators). At Level 2 the family educator has good skills in communicating information clearly, collaborating with group organizers and participants, eliciting questions, engaging a group in the learning process, and making pertinent and practical recommendations to participants. Level 2 needs are typically determined when the concern is one that is commonly experienced by many families from similar cultures or subcultures (e.g., parents of kindergarteners or grandparents raising grandchildren). Examples of appropriate Level 2 activities in family education may include speakers' programs and one-time didactic workshops that engage family members in an informative and collaborative way. The principal strength of Level 2 is that the family educator can reach a large number of families with important information in a didactic setting.

Educators are consistently finding unique ways to offer Level 2 services, such as through online prevention and education programs (Hughes, Bowers, Mitchell, Curtiss, & Ebata, 2012). These programs have the ability to meet families' needs around the world and may also allow for interactive components to the session (e.g., offering the sessions virtually to real-time audiences or providing a way for attendees to post questions to the presenter). The interactive component at Level 2 typically focuses on the content of the presentation rather than on personal or unique experiences of participants.

However, Level 2 is limited when it comes to the typical small-group learning environments of family life education because it does not typically involve an emphasis on feelings and sharing personal goals and experiences. Furthermore, educators at Level 2 must be careful when their program content involves recommendations for change among family members who are not present in the workshop. Doss, Simpson, and Christensen (2004) described the dangers of requesting change among partners and coparents who are not involved in sessions, given that their needs may differ from those who are attending the session. Furthermore, because of Level 2's focus on content and information, and less on context (e.g., how the content may fit for urban families, but less for rural families in attendance), there is always a risk that the material will not be sensitive to the needs of all participants.

Level 3: Working With Family Members' Feelings and Need for Support

Level 3 embraces the activities, knowledge, and skills to meet families' needs, as described in Level 2, but also includes the eliciting of feelings, experiences, and personal disclosures from family members as part of the educational process. This is the quintessential level for family life education, because participating family members are able to engage in comprehensive education programs whereby disclosure of personal experiences that are relevant to their family's needs is commonplace. Level 3 involves low stigma compared to more intensive family interventions as well as ease of access and relatively lower cost. Furthermore, the context of the families is taken into consideration (i.e., awareness and sensitivity to social locations, e.g., ethnicity, ability, sexual identity, and education level, to name a few) and can be safely addressed in a group format (e.g., parent–child communication, developmental transitions; Ballard & Taylor, 2012).

The educator not only brings good content to the learning environment but also listens empathically, elicits feelings and personal stories, creates an open and supportive group climate, engages in collaborative problem solving, and tailors recommendations to

Reconceptualizing the Domain and Boundaries of Family Life Education

Judith A. Myers-Walls, Sharon M. Ballard, Carol Anderson Darling,
and Karen S. Myers-Bowman

What is Family Life Education (FLE) and how is it similar to and different from other family-related fields? We begin to answer these questions by sharing the following comments that were among those posted on the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) listserv in 2010. They are included to illustrate the struggle experienced by many professionals in the field:

“I am bothered by the correlation of FLE with therapy... Certainly the two have similarities, but they are not the same.”
- Esther Schiedel, MS, CFLE

“For years, we have struggled with developing a clear definition for ‘Family Life Education.’” - Amelia Rose, CFLE

“While there is a difference and there is a boundary that goes up at some point between CFLEs and doing clinical work, I do see room for both to work together. I think it depends on the service itself that is being delivered.” - Tammy Whitten, LMFT, CFLE

“While there are some similar topics dealt with in FLE as in clinical work, they are different, should be different and need to be different... . What might it look like if CFLEs were part of a team approach to addressing family needs? How would this be done? How would we work to clarify roles and responsibilities [and] respect each profession’s contribution to family health? ... I hope that in 10, 25, and 40 years we see both more recognition of our field and a better collaborative approach to family health.” - Jennifer Best, CFLE

These quotes reflect the frustrations of many of us in a developing field and provide the context for this chapter. The field of Family Studies emerged out of a concern in the mid-19th century regarding the abilities of families to address the social problems of their times (Doherty, Boss, LaRossa, Schumm, & Steinmetz, 1993). Family Life Education provided the means by which professionals worked with families to help them learn to solve these problems (Kerckhoff, 1964; Mace, 1971). This work continues. But, what is FLE? For more than 50 years family scholars have composed stipulative definitions of FLE, descriptions that define the concept according to the particular author for his or her current purposes regardless of other definitions (Thomas & Arcus, 1992). Authors have provided definitions that focus on individuals, couples, and families; relationship development and maintenance; sexuality; personal development; and so forth. Many continued with the focus on problems and problem solving; however, over the decades, descriptions of FLE have shifted to include and even emphasize prevention of problems within families. More recently, FLE has begun to focus on assisting families in identifying and developing their strengths to meet their potentials (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993). Currently, the definition of Family Life Education as accessed on the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) website for the CFLE program presents the profession’s function as using information about healthy family development within a preventive, family systems perspective in order to teach knowledge and build skills so that individuals and families may function at their optimal levels (National Council on Family Relations, n.d.). It includes recognition of the reality that all families face problems they must solve, as well as the idea that all families possess strengths they can employ to face these challenges.

Although the NCFR’s definition begins to describe the scope of FLE, it includes such breadth that it leaves unanswered questions about the boundaries of the field. One important component of this discussion is what FLE does include. A related question remains: What is beyond the boundaries of FLE or what does it not include? How should professionals conceptualize their work with families, and to which family professionals should individuals and families turn for assistance in various times of need? Cassidy (2009) concluded that FLE has made some progress in this area by defining itself through the creation of curriculum guidelines and standards for certification. But, as she also noted, “employers and the public are still unclear on what family life education is and how family life educators differ from social workers, therapists, counselors, etc.” (p. 13).

As suggested by Cassidy (2009), one of the areas of professional conflict or tension is differentiating between FLE and family therapy (FT). In 1995, Doherty addressed this issue in an article in *Family Relations*. He created a model of family involvement that included five levels: (a) minimal emphasis on families, (b) information and advice, (c) feelings and support, (d) brief-focused intervention, and (e) family therapy. A primary stated goal of this model was to help family life educators avoid “crossing the boundary into family therapy” (p. 353). This model has been cited extensively and has helped numerous students and professionals situate themselves professionally; however, in our opinion as family life educators it does not provide an accurate description of FLE, nor does it identify the boundaries and differentiation we seek. Because it addressed only the domains of FLE and FT, it is also incomplete. In this chapter we will reexamine the assumptions of Doherty’s model and broaden its scope in order to develop a new, alternative presentation of FLE and further advance the development of the profession. We expand the model to include family case management (FCM)—an aspect of social work and other human-service professions. Although we recognize that social work also operates in other areas, such as medical and juvenile justice fields, and that FCM may occur in non-social-work fields, we chose to focus on the designation of FCM as a segment of social work that clearly involves work with families and that can represent an area of confusion when differentiating from FLE.

We acknowledge that all of the authors of this chapter are family life educators. Therefore, we are viewing this definitional process as FLE insiders and as outsiders in relation to FT and FCM. Using that perspective and building on our interactions with and feedback from several family therapists and family case managers, we outline our concerns about the Levels of Family Involvement (LFI) model and propose an alternative and innovative structure. Our goal is to position FLE, FT, and FCM as related but unique professions, rather than suggesting one as more advanced than the others, and to provide assistance for family professionals as they define and identify the parameters of their work.

Concerns With Doherty’s LFI Model

Our concerns about Doherty’s (1995) LFI model center around three areas: (a) it conceptualizes FLE and FT in a hierarchical relationship, (b) it presents a description of FLE that is inconsistent with the established definition, and (c) it distinguishes between FLE and FT using superficial and sometimes inaccurate criteria.

FLE and Family Therapy in a Hierarchical Relationship

The LFI model is composed of five levels. Doherty (1995) very clearly stated that only the first three levels are appropriate for FLE. (Actually, just Levels 2 and 3 are appropriate, because Level 1 is conceptualized as not focused on families.) According to the LFI model, a few advanced FLE professionals may occasionally move into Level 4: Brief Focused Intervention. All nontherapists, however, are specifically instructed to avoid intervening at Level 5. Doherty explained that family therapists can help FLE professionals learn to use Level 4 effectively, because Level 4 includes overlap between the professions, but beyond Level 4 family life educators must step aside to let family therapists work with families at the highest level.

Although it is not stated directly, it is implied within the LFI model and its vertical, additive structure that family therapists are able to do everything at the lower levels in the model plus what is above those levels. Level 5 addresses tasks that require different training and experience when compared to the tasks at the lower levels, but the model implies that the tasks at lower levels are subsumed in the final level. Doherty (1995) stated, “When family members see a therapist, they know they are in mental health treatment and not in an educational program, although education is also likely to occur” (p. 356). This presumes that therapists are qualified to provide the educational experiences and that they will have learned to intervene educationally. We question that presumption. Although some marriage and family therapists have had this training, many have not. We contend that FLE training is specific and unique and will not automatically be included in therapy training. (Later sections of this chapter outline these and other unique characteristics.) Therefore, we assert that this is an inappropriate distinction to make between FLE and FT.

The LFI hierarchy also states that dealing with feelings and support is a higher order professional skill (higher on the model’s ladder) than dealing with information and skills. We question that assumption. Additionally, putting those two categories in separate levels suggests that knowledge and skills can be taught without referring to feelings and support and vice versa. As the title of an article by Mace (1981) indicated, it is “a long, long road from information-giving to behavioral change,” and there has been much controversy about the steps and their sequence along that road. If behavior change and positive end results are the ultimate goals of educational interventions, these interventions, although they may occur in a different order, are likely to require attitude changes, knowledge gain, skill development, increased perceptions of support, and self-reflection regarding feelings and motivations. Campbell and Palm (2004) highlighted the importance of needs assessment as a step in program planning and development, and eliciting and assessing participants’ feelings, values, and attitudes are presented as critical parts of that process. Separating information and advice from feelings and support is neither possible nor desirable. It takes considerable skill to educate families in all of these areas—information, skills, feelings, and support—but we assert that it is most effective when all are addressed. From an educational point of view, the LFI levels leave us looking for a clearer description of professional involvement with families that recognizes both the overlap and the uniqueness of FLE and FT without placing them in a hierarchy.

Inconsistent Definition of FLE

FLE has been defined most clearly in application to the certification program for family life educators (CFLE) by the National Council on Family Relations, in which the NCFR considers FLE to involve “prevention and education for individuals and families relevant to the 10 FLE content areas” (National Council on Family Relations, n.d., para. 2). The 10 FLE content areas include (a) families and individuals in societal contexts, (b) internal dynamics of families, (c) human growth and development across the lifespan, (d) human sexuality, (e) interpersonal relationships, (f) parenting education and guidance, (g) family resource management, (h) family law and public policy, (i) professional ethics and practice, and (j) family life education methodology (National Council on Family Relations, 1984, 2009).

In contrast to this broad definition, the LFI model places some of the CFLE content areas in the FLE realm and others in the FT domain. Doherty (1995) stated that Level 4 of the model is “confined to parenting related issues [whereas] Level Five may move beyond parenting into couple relationship issues” (p. 356). He further stated, “Level Four deals only with issues of parenting, not marital functioning, psychological disorders, or personality problems of adults” (p. 355) and that “anger management with children is appropriate [at Level Four], but anger management with one’s mother-in-law or boss is not” (p. 355). In the LFI model, couple relationships are excluded from the knowledge base a professional should hold until Levels 4 and 5, and family systems theory is not identified as an important theoretical background context for any levels below 4.

Although we agree that psychological disorders and personality problems are outside the realm of FLE, we contend that education about couple and family relationships, in addition to education about parenting, is very appropriate within FLE. Indeed, Arcus (1995) contended that an “early specialization in family life education was that of marriage education” (p. 340). As stated in the definition of FLE on the NCFR’s website, FLE professionals should understand the basics of the entire family system in all of their work. Clearly, all 10 CFLE content areas have been identified by the NCFR as relevant for FLE. So the LFI framework is inconsistent with the NCFR’s conceptualization and does not accurately distinguish between FLE and FT.

Superficial and Inaccurate Criteria

As stated above, a differentiation between FLE and FT based on which of the 10 CFLE content areas is included is not appropriate. There is significant overlap in the content areas addressed in both fields. In a similar way, we believe it is not adequate to draw the boundaries by focusing on the type of clientele served by FLE and FT professionals. Doherty (1995) wrote, “some parents’ needs and problems are too intense to be worked with constructively in an education/supportive approach” (p. 355). He went on to say that Level 4 is for “families who are in high-risk situations ... [such as] teen parents with family and peer problems, families involved in the mental health or child protective services systems, and parents facing the stress of a chronically ill or disabled child” (p. 355). This statement suggests that audience type determines appropriate levels of intervention. He asserted that an active problem-solving approach goes beyond Level 3, and, as he stated several times in the article, therapists need to help educators provide services above Level 3.

We fully agree that work with audiences in high-risk or high-need situations requires professionals to be highly skilled and experienced, but we also believe that those audiences may need various types of services, including those within the scope of FLE practice. For example, assessment of family situations, problem solving, goal setting, and helping families develop a plan of action are activities that Doherty (1995) identified as occurring in Level 4 work. These activities are not only appropriate for both the content and the methods of FLE, but include the skills that many FLEs possess. Darling, Fleming, and Cassidy (2009) examined the importance of these activities within a FLE practice-analysis survey conducted with CFLEs and a comparable group of noncertified family practitioners. Among the tasks that were rated high in importance in that study were “assess family dynamics from a systems perspective,” “evaluate family dynamics in response to crisis,” and “assist individuals and families in effective developmental transitions” (Darling et al., 2009, p. 336). These tasks fit within the Level 4 activities in the LFI model described by Doherty (1995), where he indicated they belong in the domain of therapy. We question this assertion and declare that these tasks may be completed appropriately in different ways by therapists and educators.

Consequently, FLEs can be very effective with high-need populations, such as teen parents or incarcerated fathers, by providing research-based information or materials, support-group opportunities with open sharing and peer support, or skill-building sessions that teach problem solving and goal setting. Those audiences also could be served by a therapist through therapeutic interventions designed to address psychological issues or dysfunctions. We conclude that defining FLE by target audience is another LFI model approach that does not satisfy our quest to identify the boundaries defining FLE and other family professions.

In summary, FT and FLE are different careers with different certification or licensure requirements. It is important for professionals to understand the boundaries, but Doherty’s (1995) LFI model does not adequately address these boundaries for our purposes. So how can the two fields and other family-related professions be differentiated?

Family Coaching: An Emerging Family Science Field

Kimberly Allen and Nichole L. Huff

As the field of family science continues to adapt to the changing needs of families, its methods of delivery for family practice are also evolving. Family coaching is one such example in its approach to delivering prevention and intervention services to families. Much like family life education, family therapy, and family case management, the aim of family coaching (FC) is to help families become more successful. FC is an emergent field; in this article we highlight existing coaching efforts in family science and explore FC as an extension to the Domains of Family Practice (DFP) model by Myers-Walls, Ballard, Darling, and Myers-Bowman (2011).

Although family practitioners are “coaching” families, there is a gap in family science literature with regard to theoretical and empirical research on FC. The exact fit of FC within family science remains unclear, as does its fit within the domains of family practice. To better delineate FC as a domain of family practice, however, it needs to be more clearly operationalized with regard to scope and constructs. Specifically, in this chapter we suggest that FC is unique in its delivery of services. We propose this knowing that historically FC is in its infancy. Thus, our aim is to initiate a collaborative conversation about FC among family professionals.

Defining Family Coaching

Like other family professionals (e.g., family therapists and family life educators), the role of a family coach is to guide clients “into increased competence, commitment and confidence” regarding a specified goal (Hudson, 1999, p. 6). Broadly defined, it is a process-driven relationship between a family system (as represented by an individual or familial group) and a family practitioner designed to foster the achievement of family-identified goals. Family coaches may work with more than one family member, but most likely a family coach will work with an individual, parent(s), or couple on family life issues.

Unlike family life education which uses a set of materials such as a curriculum or an educational program, FC is a strengths-based approach to helping families reach goals and improve family functioning through coaching techniques. Family coaches strive to create coach–client partnerships that offer support and cultivate growth opportunities through the use of coaching techniques and models. Family coaches strive to develop the capacity of a parent or family member to improve abilities and skills (Rush, Shelden, & Hanft, 2003). Family coaches utilize practices such as powerful questioning (e.g., probing, comparative), providing feedback, conducting assessments (e.g., strengths, self-awareness), planning actions, evaluating actions, and offering accountability in nonjudgmental interactions (Rush & Shelden, 2006). Although the coach and client come to the setting with different abilities and roles (and therefore are never completely equal), the emphasis is consistently on creating a relationship of parity where power is shared (Stober, 2006). An egalitarian and collaborative relationship facilitates positive interactions and benefits to the client (Ives, 2008). The core focus of coaching is to partner with clients in working toward the goals and aspirations they choose for themselves (Grant & Cavanaugh, 2007).

The General Evolution of Coaching

Although coaching is considered a developing field of study, the first reference to coaching was found in a 1937 article describing a coaching process that led to increased profits (Gorby, 1937). Since this time, the field of coaching has grown exponentially (Maynard, 2006). With this increase, the need for rigor and evaluation arose (Grant, 2004), and coaching psychology research began to populate the psychological literature during the 1960s, becoming particularly prevalent by the 1990s. Much of that research, however, was and still is phenomenological in nature, making some skeptical of the validity of coaching given its nomenclature as popular psychology, protoscience, and/or pseudoscience (Grant, 2004; Grant & Cavanagh, 2007).

In the past decade, the field of coaching has begun to link practice with evidence-based research, a major step toward the academic credibility of a discipline (Stober & Grant, 2006). As a result of new empirical research, the science of evidence-based coaching continues to evolve (Cavanaugh, Grant, & Kemp, 2005).

Based on their research, Stober and Grant (2006) made strides toward establishing coaching as an effective, theoretically-based approach for helping clients experience change and growth in their book *Evidence Based Coaching Handbook: Putting Best Practices to Work for Your Clients*. The authors applied behavioral sciences research to coaching practices to empirically demonstrate coaching efficacy. In the field of psychology, coaching psychology has begun to distinguish itself as unique from the practice of clinical and counseling psychology (Joseph, 2006). In this push for rigor, Cavanaugh et al. (2005) identified three challenges that the field must continue to overcome to gain a stronger professional footing: (a) the field of coaching must articulate shared theoretical bases, (b) the field of coaching must articulate competencies and skills required of coaches, and (c) the field of coaching must develop scientifically informed evidence for the efficacy of the theories and techniques utilized by coaches.

Coaching—including the use of coaching with families—is gaining ground in all three of these areas, with research showcasing the efficacy of coaching and the qualities of effective practices (Grant & Cavanaugh, 2007). The theoretical foundation for coaching is solidifying; governing bodies are gaining in rigor and are thus becoming more specific about competencies and skills required of coaches. As Theeboom, Beersma, and Van Vianen (2013) suggested, there is growing evidence for the efficacy of coaching as an effective approach to change, especially as the field of coaching has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade (Grant, 2011).

In recent years, the business of coaching has become an industry worth more than \$2 billion annually (International Coaching Federation, 2012). Popular culture and industry has fully embraced the field of coaching: Results show that businesses that hire coaches for their managers yield higher profits for their companies. In fact, research shows that the return on investments ranges from \$5 to \$6 for every \$1 invested (McGovern et al., 2001). With executive coaches earning up to \$3,500 per hour (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009), the growth in the number of coaches in the overall field is phenomenal. Although published research on the demand for coaching families is not available, preliminary results on concurrent research shows that parents see coaching as a viable alternative to therapy and education and express an interest in seeking help from a family coach (Baker & Allen, 2014).

Theoretical Foundation of Family Coaching

Family coaching developed from coaching psychology and family life education (Allen, 2013). The process of coaching psychology is the “systematic application of behavior science to the enhancement of life experience, work performance, and well being” (Grant, 2006, p. 16). In its own right, the field of coaching psychology is still emerging. The definition of coaching psychology as defined by the British Psychological Society (2014) is “enhancing the well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches.” What Allen (2013) did to extend coaching psychology, however, is draw parallels between it and family life education and to apply the tenets of coaching psychology from individual to family contexts.

The theoretical underpinning of coaching psychology originates from the humanistic traditions of psychology, such as Rogers (1961), as well as from the positive psychology movement (Grant, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to Rogers, people have an inherent tendency to move forward toward wellness and function, or “actualization.” In FC, it is the family coach’s role to help clients move toward actualization by using coaching techniques such as the use of powerful questions, goal-driven work assignments, and accountability. Hanft, Rush, and Shelden (2004) identified five essentials of coaching families: (a) collaborative relationship between coach and learner, (b) reflection and use of questioning, (c) reciprocal observations and actions, (d) focus on performance, and (e) context-driven process determined by learner. More specifically, coaches guide the process by asking probing questions and offering insightful assignments, such as self-awareness assessments or reflection activities, and then checking in with the client during the next session to see if the client has followed through. Coaching fosters a warm, empathetic relationship between the coach and the client(s), with alliance and rapport as major technical components of FC.

As the above sentence suggests, coaching psychology also includes practices and models from diverse and varied theoretical approaches, including adult learning theory, cognitive psychology, solution-focused therapy, and systems theory (Stober & Grant, 2006). According to Allen (2013), by extension, FC is a person-centered approach that expands on the theoretical and clinical work of humanist psychology, positive psychology, ecological theory, and family systems theory. Therefore, family coaches need a theoretical and practical understanding of family science and evidence-based practices including human growth and development, mental health, relationship education, and parenting.

Distinctive Qualities of Family Coaching. Although there are many parallels among FC, family therapy, and family life education, there are also differences—sometimes subtle—that make FC a unique field of practice and study. In an article by Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic (2001), 30 professionals holding a clinical graduate degree who had a practice in coaching and therapy were interviewed to discern the differences and similarities of the two fields. The study showed that perceived differences included primarily that therapists are often trained to focus on unconscious issues, psychological discord, and earlier experiences and relationships. In contrast, the participants perceived their role of coach as more likely to focus on the future, the clients’ goals, and their untapped potential. According to Hart et al., the perception among respondents was that coaches tend to be more relaxed, flexible,

and use “the self” as a vehicle for change. They attributed this to a collaborative coach–client relationship, viewing the client as having the knowledge, power, and motivation to change. Participants described coach clients differently than clients in therapy who often see the therapist as an expert or a healer.

Other researchers who have also looked at the difference between coaching and therapy identified therapy as designed to ameliorate dysfunction, whereas coaching is designed to stimulate development (Grant, 2003). Cavanagh (2006) pointed out that coaching is a unique approach to serving clients with a focus on changing actions through the promotion of a controlled instability; therapy “seeks to comfort the afflicted,” he argued, but “the coach is often called upon to afflict the comfortable” (p. 320). The coaching process helps to create insights and understanding, which ultimately creates action (Cavanagh, 2006). Coaches tend to enable clients to take responsibility for change rather than to fix a problem or educate the client about an issue (Steele, 2000).

Despite these distinctions, there is still a gap in empirical research that looks at the similarities and differences of family life educators and family coaches. However, differences and similarities can be and have been inferred. Unlike family life educators, who often have a structured course of study designed to educate families, family coaches tend to partner with the family to help members reach self-identified goals (Allen, 2013). Family life education “focuses on healthy family functioning within a family systems perspective and provides a primarily preventive approach” and is typically offered through an educational setting or through educational materials designed to address societal issues (National Council on Family Relations [NCFR], 2013). In contrast, family coaches partner with a family in a process led by the family to make changes identified by the family. In essence, the coaches are client focused, allowing the family member(s) to lead the direction of change. In coaching, less emphasis is placed on education and more is placed on awareness, action steps, and accountability.

In defining FC as a unique and separate family science field, more work is needed. To be considered a field, Cavanagh and Lane (2012) suggested a professional in that field meet requirements for specific academic qualifications, adhere to a code of ethics, possess credentials that include accreditation and hours served, and meet state-sanctioned regulations. Family coaching is an incipient field that does not yet meet all of these requirements, but there is a movement among family coaches to make the necessary strides to establish FC as a discipline.

Delivery of Family Coaching. The family coach role is multifaceted, with many FC professionals offering services on family-specific issues (e.g., parenting, couple relationships, youth with special needs, aging, health and wellness, financial management). Coaching psychologists have traditionally served highly functioning clientele: successful people who want to achieve higher goals (Grant, 2001). This is in contrast with clinical and counseling psychologists who have traditionally served individuals presenting with psychopathological needs. That is not to say, however, that families with psychological distress cannot benefit from FC. Coaching techniques are used in intervention as well as prevention services. For example, intensive in-home therapy providers are using coaching with families at risk and/or in need of clinical intervention (Timmer, Zebell, Culver, & Urquiza, 2010). Coaching approaches are also being tested in social work professions that utilize coaching with families needing psychosocial intervention (Beyer, 2008; Noble, Perkins, & Fatout, 2000). Additionally, in children with nonnormative developmental delays, Rush et al. (2003) advocated an early-intervention coaching process that partners families with coaches. More research is needed on the effective use of coaching with lower functioning families.

Although the collective term *family coaching* has only recently been introduced into coaching literature, the practice of coaching families has been well documented. For example, literature on coaching efficacy includes articles on maternity coaching (Filsinger, 2012), parenting (Graham, Rodger, & Ziviani, 2009; Wade, Oberjohn, Conaway, Osinska, & Bangert, 2011), early education (Hanft et al., 2004; Salisbury, Cambray-Engstrom, & Woods, 2010), emotion coaching (Lunkenheimer, Shields, & Cortina, 2007), in-home therapy (Timmer et al., 2010), family nutrition (Heimendinger et al., 2007), and family financial planning (Dubofsky & Sussman, 2009). It is important to note that though coaching is considered a key component to the interventions showcased in these articles, the articles did not offer a theoretical overview or an applied operational explanation of coaching. The term *coaching* was most often used to describe the process of working one on one to help the client make changes and improve relational skills in any of the aforementioned areas.

Upon the authors’ collective review of these articles, however, a common thread surfaced: Family functioning improves when the intervening professional utilizes coaching techniques. In one particular example, Hanft et al. (2004) utilized coaching with families of children with developmental disabilities. Rather than directly working with the children on a series of developmental competencies, the coaches worked with the family to create systemic changes using FC. In this example, common FC methodology was used that highlights a specific four-part coaching process: (a) initiation (e.g., identifying goals), observation and action, (c) reflection, and (d) evaluation. Hanft et al. specified, “a coach is someone who encourages and guides another person to develop his or her competence” (p. 1). The primary author has also found this process to be highly effective and is working nationally and abroad to train family practitioners to utilize coaching techniques with families.

Credentialing of Family Coaches. As the demand for coaching increases, so does the number of coaching practitioners and training programs designed to meet the needs of the growing coaching industry. However, despite academic advances in coaching research and literature, there is little overall regulation or national governance in the credentialing of coaches (family or otherwise). Professional backgrounds vary for those who practice coaching, though most are associated either with psychological, behavioral, and so

Community Engaged Parent Education: Strengthening Civic Engagement Among Parents and Parent Educators

William J. Doherty, Jenet Jacob Erickson, and Beth Cutting

In the half-century since Orville Brim organized knowledge about parent education in his classic book *Education for Child Rearing*, parent education has become a distinct profession working to help parents acquire the knowledge and skills to raise their children well in today's world (Brim, 1959). Although most parent education literature has focused on developmental and familial aspects of parenting, there also has been attention to the larger social, economic, and cultural forces that create the ecology of parenting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Myers-Walls & Myers-Bowman, 1999). As Goddard, Myers-Walls, and Lee (2004) observed, rapid societal and even global changes are changing the landscape of parenting and therefore of parent education.

In this chapter, we introduce and evaluate *Community Engaged Parent Education*, an approach that builds on insights in the field about the role of parents as members of communities and the larger world. In Community Engaged Parent Education, the parent educator interweaves the personal and public dimensions of parenting when working with parent groups. It is not a specialized curriculum but a way of teaching all topics in parent education. We begin with the origins of this model and the principles and practices of Community Engaged Parent Education. Then we present data from a demonstration project on this approach to parent education (Doherty, Jacob, & Cutting, 2009).

Community Engaged Parent Education emerged from the *Families and Democracy Model*, which emphasizes the importance of civic engagement to strengthen family life and the need to transcend traditional provider/consumer models of professional service delivery (Doherty & Carroll, 2002; Doherty & Mendenhall, 2006; Doherty, Mendenhall, & Berge, 2010). There have been 14 community initiatives in the Families and Democracy Project (in health care, the work is called *Citizen Health Care*). Projects have ranged from the Partners in Diabetes Project, for the engagement of individuals and families as producers of health care, to the Putting Family First Project, in which families and professionals engaged to address the problem of overscheduled kids and under-connected families (Doherty & Anderson, 2005).

Origins of Community Engaged Parent Education

The role of community concerns in parent education in the United States can be traced to the beginning of organized parent education efforts. As early as 1815, "maternal associations" met regularly to discuss child-rearing problems and improve child-rearing practices. The improvement of child-rearing practices could, they believed, eliminate corrupt behavior in society (Brim, 1959; National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1947). By the mid-1800s, informal discussion groups gave way to collaborative, formal efforts between church and state to help ensure that children were raised according to standards that would enhance the community at large (Duncan & Goddard, 2010; Fein, 1980). The land grant university system enacted into law by the Morrill Act in 1862, and the subsequent passage of the Smith–Lever Act in 1914, established a system for carrying out community parent education programs by "taking the university to the people" through hired agents (Rasmussen, 1989, p. vii). Belief in the newly developing science of child development also created interest in forming community groups for the self-instruction of mothers. In 1897, several hundred of these child study groups formed the National Congress of Mothers, a forerunner of the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA; National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1947).

By 1920s, the Progressive Era ideology of public responsibility for all children was challenging the private orientation toward child rearing that had dominated during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. John Dewey's widely accepted social philosophy stressed parents' and educators' responsibility to the larger society and called them to stimulate individuals to "conceive of themselves from

the standpoint of the welfare of the group” (Dewey, 1897, p. 77; Florin & Docecki, 1983). This way of thinking broadened the orbit of parent education beyond the private family to the best interests of all children in society. Parent discussion groups such as those sponsored by the PTA included instruction for mothers on their political and social responsibility. The PTA urged women to adopt a role of citizen–activist because collective political participation by mothers was “essential to the well-being of children” (Schlossman, 1983, p. 9). Political education and action were so central that any definition of parent education that did not include political action was considered “merely self-serving” (Schlossman, 1978). The Progressive Era had another strong current—reverence for expert knowledge—that cut at cross-purposes with the emphasis on grassroots citizen work (Boyte, 2004). As social reform movements waned in the aftermath of World War I and concerns grew about family breakdown, the new science of child development knowledge came to be seen as the pathway to raising successful children (Schlossman, 1983). The earlier vision of parent education as a method to promote political action and social reform (especially on behalf of the poor) virtually disappeared. Parent education shifted to a middle-class, individualistic movement, committed to transmitting empirically based child-development knowledge (Boyte, 2004; Schlossman, 1978).

As the field of parent education grew rapidly in the mid- to late 20th century it focused on making the world better through the work of university-trained professional experts who would “generate new knowledge and pass it on to families in the community” (Doherty & Beaton, 2000, p. 319). The strength of this approach lay in the use of experts who could provide families with knowledge to effectively address problems when experiential knowledge was relatively lacking, or when an objective view was needed to clarify a highly controversial issue. Its weakness was that it neglected the role of parents as citizens or builders of the communities in which they raise their children, and not as consumers of professional services. Even from a research perspective, without the collaboration of communities and families in the research process the information disseminated from researchers risked becoming separated from the real needs and issues facing families (Duncan & Goddard, 2010; Lerner, 1995).

In the past two decades a new model of parent education has been emerging. Scholars have increasingly argued that effective parent education results from a family and community-collaborative approach to producing scientific knowledge and addressing family issues (Doherty, 2000; Lerner, 1995; Myers-Walls & Myers-Bowman, 1999). In this way of working, families and professionals “become partners in identifying strengths and needs and in mobilizing to address identified problems” (Duncan & Goddard, 2010, p.p. 14–15). The approach reflects a renewed recognition that communities are integral to parent education because they affect parents’ capacity to raise their children (Connell, Kubisch, Schorr, & Weiss, 1995; Doherty & Anderson, 2005). Likewise, citizen participation and community engagement are necessary to address the social problems that undermine parenting (Wandersman & Florin, 2000).

The Families and Democracy Project provided the framework for the current project in which parent education professionals partnered with families in a democratic process of identifying and addressing social problems (Doherty & Carroll, 2002; Doherty & Mendenhall, 2006). The Families and Democracy Project grew out of the Public Work Model of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota (Boyte & Kari, 1996). *Public work* is defined as “sustained effort by a mix of people who solve public problems or create goods, material or culture, of general benefit” (Boyte, 2004, p. 5). In this way of viewing citizenship, people see themselves as cobuilders of a democratic society, not simply as customers, clients, voters, protestors, or volunteers.

Development of the Families and Democracy Project was influenced by initiatives that took root in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. These were not traditional activist groups speaking out for the disadvantaged. Instead, community organizers attempted to restore local democracy and accountability by reclaiming the capacity of communities and families to organize themselves to take action on issues in their own communities. Contemporary versions of the Industrial Areas Foundation Project created by Alinsky (1946) in the 1940s have influenced the Public Work Model and the Families and Democracy Project through a focus on listening to families to determine what is most important to them, mobilizing families around a problem before generating action solutions, discovering what families’ resources can be brought to bear, and continually identifying and developing new leaders in communities (Warren, 2001).

Goal, Principles, and Core Practices of Community Engaged Parent Education

The goal of Community Engaged Parent Education is to develop parents’ capacity for citizen deliberation and action on public issues related to families’ and children’s well-being. In the parenting groups, the main focus is on deliberation about public issues as they interface with personal parenting concerns. Personal and collective action sometimes emerge out of these deliberations, but action is not expected out of any particular conversation.

The main principle of this work is that all personal parenting concerns, without exception, have public dimensions. *Public dimensions* are defined as all societal factors influencing children and families—including neighborhood, economic, political, cultural, religious, institutional, and environmental factors. Community Engaged Parent Education aims to take seriously the public dimensions of parenting by asserting that comprehensive parent education should include the public dimension along with the personal dimension.

Community Engaged Parent Education includes four other central ideas. First, parents can influence the world in which their children are growing. Second, parent educators can partner with parents in naming and deliberating on challenges that arise in the

public sphere and identify ways to address these challenges. Third, parent educators can promote the skills of democracy through facilitating conversations in which all parents have a voice, diverse perspectives are respected, and public issues are examined and addressed collaboratively. Fourth, providing this space and opportunity for parents requires an intentional educational process that goes beyond the traditional training of parent educators.

We have identified three main skills for parent educators to learn and practice in this work. *Surfacing* public themes involves engaging parents in identifying and articulating public issues related to children and families. Through surfacing, parent educators direct parents' attention to public themes related to their personal parenting concerns. *Deliberation* involves facilitating the exploration of the complex ways in which public issues influence personal parenting and parents influence their world. *Encouraging citizen action* involves activating families "as builders of their world" to address the issues explored in the deliberation process. Citizen actions can be done either individually by parents or collectively by parent groups or communities. Individual citizen actions may include gathering information on an issue, discussing public issues with family and friends, joining community groups already working on an issue, or contacting community leaders and public officials. Collective actions may be short-term projects, such as working together as a group of parents to help reduce pesticides in public playground lawn areas. Long-term action projects are those in which a citizen parent group meets over time, explores a problem, defines the group's goals, seeks input from other interested citizens, formulates a plan, and implements it over time.

These skills take considerable preparation and practice for parent educators. The first step is for parent educators to learn to choose questions and bring information that open up the community or public dimensions of traditional parenting topics. For example, when discussing sleep and young children, the parent educator would not only cover the basics of children's needs for sleep and standard bedtime strategies but would also open up the conversation to how larger social forces affect bedtime and children's sleep. The educator might ask this surfacing question: "What obstacles to sleep come from outside the home—from the broader world we live in?" Within a short time, parents are apt to generate a list of issues, such as parents' work schedules, the scheduling of children's activities, school start schedules that do not reflect children's biological clocks, and many others. In this way, the discussion moves beyond the traditional focus on personal parenting concerns (where there might be only a nod to external forces) to include the public dimension. Even if there is not extensive deliberation on the public forces or a specific action step emerging from this conversation, parents are likely to develop a more complex view of the challenge and feel less as if it is only their personal problem.

Here is an illustration of a surfacing question that led to deliberation and then citizen action. In an Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program, the parent educators asked parents in every class this general question: "What community issues impact your family?" The comments from parents were compiled and returned to the parenting classes in a handout. After they had perused the list, parents were asked, "Do you see any issue here that you would like to work on?" *Deliberation* began in one class when one mother mentioned her commitment to work on the problems at Douglas Park, a small park near her home where teenagers were committing nuisance crimes, and where there was more serious vandalism, and possibly drug traffic. She did not feel safe having her children use the playground; other parents in the group echoed this feeling. The mother added that she had been calling the police and the park board but had received no response. The other parents in the group appreciated her individual actions but decided it would be more effective to work collaboratively, bringing neighbors together to talk about the park situation. Their *citizen action* began with making and distributing flyers for their meeting and inviting the police to come discuss possible solutions. The meeting generated additional actions: regular parent-child play dates at the park; a block party for neighbors to meet each other and the neighborhood teens; and planned summer activities, such as a weekly free soccer camp and "art in the park" projects. Families joined together in a block club and continue to meet to address issues of neighborhood safety.

As noted earlier, most conversations in this community-collaborative approach to parent education do not lead to direct action, and certainly not to collective action. Instead, the process involves surfacing and deliberating on one issue after another in classes over many months (a process we call *weaving threads*) as parents learn to think and speak about the public dimensions of their concerns and consider the well-being of all children in the community. Sometimes an issue sparks deeper concern and lends itself to action by individual parents or a group of parents. The parent educator should encourage this energy of parents for action when it arises and crystallizes into a plan.

The Community Engaged Parent Education Demonstration Project

The overall purpose of the Community Engaged Parent Education Demonstration Project was to determine whether parent educators could learn this new process and how parents would respond to it. The project was carried out from January 2005 to January 2008, with three specific objectives. The first objective was to develop the capacity of the participating parent educators to engage parents in reflection on public issues related to children and families and teach them the skills of civic dialogue. Development of the model over 6 years had made it clear that this process is best accomplished through mentoring rather than traditional workshop training, which is not sufficient for the kind of developmental process required for this work. In Community Engaged Parent Education, mentoring allows for ongoing, face-to-face coaching by an experienced mentor as parent educators develop Community Engaged Parent Education skills and a new identity as a citizen professional working alongside fellow citizens in the public domain. For parent educators, internalizing the identity and skills of a "citizen professional" cannot be accomplished through traditional episodic workshop training methods alone.

Examining the Early Evidence for Self-Directed Marriage and Relationship Education: A Meta-analytic Study

Shelece McAllister, Stephen F. Duncan, and Alan J. Hawkins

Recent meta-analyses examining marriage and relationship education (MRE) have generally demonstrated that such programs are effective in improving couples' communication skills and relationship satisfaction (Blanchard, Hawkins, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2009; Fawcett, Hawkins, Blanchard, & Carroll, 2010; Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2008; Hawkins & Fackrell, 2010). Participation in these programs appears to have increased over time. Stanley, Amato, Johnson, and Markman (2006) found that although only 7% of those married during the 1930s and 1940s had participated in premarital education, 44% of couples married since 1990 had participated. More distressed couples and couples at higher risk of divorce are underrepresented in MRE attendance (Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, Markman, & Johnson, 2009; Halford, O'Donnell, Lizzio, & Wilson, 2006), which is unfortunate, as these are perhaps the couples who could benefit the most from participation. Also participation in premarital education is likely higher than in marital enrichment programs.

Perhaps some of this lack of participation is due to an overemphasis on the traditional classroom format for MRE. Although this is an important format that appears to be effective, it might not be practical for everyone in today's busy, fast-paced, online world. Research by Blair and Cordova (2009) found that women are less likely to participate in MRE if they perceive barriers to attendance, such as a high monetary cost or time commitment. In an earlier study, Roberts and Morris (1998) found that both men and women nonparticipants were more likely than participants to agree that a lack of time and interest interfered with their involvement. Other more recent research has examined numerous factors predicting involvement in MRE (Duncan, Holman, & Yang, 2007; Morris, McMillan, Duncan, & Larson, 2011), but these factors did not include format as an attracter or an inhibitor to involvement. It may be that alternative MRE programs that branch out from traditional classroom learning can mitigate inhibitions to involvement resulting from perceived costs to involvement, providing increased MRE options and opportunities to reach a different audience than traditional MRE efforts.

The advent of the Internet has caused a revolution in the way information is shared. Increasingly, there is an expectation that information must be available immediately and at any time. Self-directed forms of MRE programs (e.g. self-help books and DVDs) have existed for some time, but in response to this educational shift, we are seeing an increase in the number of self-directed MRE programs available on the Internet. This article seeks to synthesize the literature on self-directed MRE using meta-analysis to determine the overall effectiveness of these programs. Understanding the effectiveness of these interventions can guide educators in their efforts to create and refine self-directed MRE.

Self-Directed Marriage and Relationship Education

Self-directed MRE programs are an alternative to classroom learning. Self-directed MRE programs are educational interventions "initiated and participated in by the couple at home, with little or no external professional intervention" (Duncan, Steed, & Needham, 2009, p. 163). Self-directed education exists in many forms, such as self-help books (Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2009), websites (Duncan et al., 2009), flexible delivery programs (Halford, Moore, Wilson, Farrugia, & Dyer, 2004), and Internet assessments (Halford, Petch, & Creedy, 2010), among other types. At a time when the Internet has revolutionized the ways in which knowledge is shared (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010), there is an increasing expectation that information will be available at any time and from any place (Casey & Halford, 2010). Fincham, Stanley, and Rhoades (2011) noted that "a visit to any campus will show that today's emerging adults live in a very real digital world. . . . Relationship education must

adapt to this reality to be viable as a public health intervention” (p. 306). Family life educators seem to be aware of this issue, and self-directed programs are growing. Some existing traditional programs are also beginning to explore new delivery channels such as the Internet; for example, the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) has begun piloting studies of online MRE (Braithwaite & Fincham, 2007, 2009; Markman, Rhoades, Delaney, White, & Pacifici, 2010). The widely used PREPARE/ENRICH program also is online now, called “Couple Checkup” (Olson, Larson, & Olson-Sigg, 2009). We can expect to see more such programs created in the future.

Part of the value of self-directed education lies in its potential to reach a different or larger audience than traditional face-to-face MRE. Issues such as a high monetary cost or a high time commitment may prevent some couples from attending (Blair & Cordova, 2009). Because self-directed materials could minimize such barriers, it could be that these materials are reaching a different audience than traditional programs. Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman (2009) recently examined factors related to seeking self-directed MRE in the form of books. Their research found that seeking self-help books was significantly related (trend) to higher levels of self-reported negative communication as well as physical violence and to lower marital satisfaction. This study provides intriguing evidence that self-directed education may be reaching a unique audience, perhaps even more distressed couples who may be underrepresented in traditional MRE settings. Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman postulated that these couples may be more comfortable accessing self-directed materials rather than attending classes in a public setting. Additionally, in the Duncan et al. (2009) study, posttest mean scores for couples participating in a web-based intervention with a pretest score of less than 95 on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (within the cutting points signaling marital distress) were higher than at pretest. Thus, even couples experiencing more distress in their relationships may benefit from self-directed approaches.

In addition, the Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman (2009) study suggests that nondistressed couples may turn to self-directed materials before seeking any other type of education, if indeed another type of education is sought later. Their research found that, out of those couples who turned to MRE in the first 5 years of marriage, 64% reported turning to self-help books as compared to 53% attending workshops or retreats and 39% participating in marital therapy. Of those who did turn to books, 51% turned to books before seeking out any other form of education. Similarly, research by Duncan, Childs, and Larson (2010) found that, out of 322 individuals turning to self-directed MRE, one third (32.2%) reported that it was the first relationship education in which they had participated. It may be that self-directed education is the first place many couples turn to for help, because these sources are more convenient; more comfortable; less expensive than a workshop, class, or counseling; and more private and less intrusive, resulting in the person having less risk-taking anxiety about disclosing fears or doubts about a relationship (Larson & Halford, 2011). In addition, self-directed sources may be more flexible, allowing individuals to tailor learning, pursuing knowledge unique to her or his own issues or questions (Duncan et al., 2010).

Some research suggests that self-directed approaches can be effective in producing measurable change. A study by Duncan et al. (2009) compared a classroom intervention to a similar online program and found no significant differences between the two groups in the magnitude of change produced by the interventions. Research from other related fields is also relevant. Notably, a meta-analysis of self-directed treatments in psychotherapeutic contexts showed that they were reliably more effective than no treatment and that differences between self- and therapist-directed treatments were not significant (Scoggin, Bynum, Stephens, & Calhoun, 1990). A more recent meta-analysis of psychotherapeutic treatments found the overall effect size indicating the difference between guided self-help and face-to-face psychotherapy was virtually zero ($d = -.02$, in favor of guided self-help). No significant difference was found at follow-up, and no significant difference was found in the dropout rates for the different treatment formats (Cuijpers, Donker, van Straten, Li, & Andersson, 2010).

Blended Programs

Elements of self-directed education are not always used alone, but are often combined with traditional educational methods in an effort to strengthen their impact. For example, participants may attend a class on marriage preparation, but, in addition, they may be expected to complete a workbook or read a self-help book on the topic (e.g., Halford et al., 2010). In the realms of corporate and educational research, programs that combine instructional modalities are called *blended programs*. A recent meta-analysis by Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, and Jones (2010) compared the effects of online, traditional face-to-face, and blended formats in education (mostly postsecondary). They found that blended education had a larger advantage in comparison to face-to-face instruction than purely online education did. At this time, little research has been done comparing blended MRE programs to more traditional programs or self-directed programs. The addition of a self-directed component to a traditional program could potentially increase the impact of the intervention. As with self-directed education, the blended format is an area that has yet to be fully explored. We included such programs in our analyses so that, in addition to understanding the impact of self-directed interventions alone, we can also come to a greater understanding of the impact of self-directed education when it is incorporated with more traditional forms of education.

Purpose of the Study

At this time, we are in the early stages of understanding the effects of self-directed MRE. Even though research in this area is still relatively young, a meta-analytic approach at this early stage is of value because the pace of work in this area is increasing

dramatically. As more of these curricula are developed, it becomes important for us to understand whether self-directed education is an effective form of intervention. Hence, our research questions are as follows:

1. Are self-directed MRE approaches effective in producing positive relationship outcomes for participants?
2. How do self-directed MRE approaches compare to the effectiveness of traditional classroom MRE?
3. How do blended programs that combine traditional and self-directed components compare to traditional and self-directed-only efforts?

In addition, we seek to highlight some of the most effective self-directed programs in the current literature to better explore what elements of these programs may make them effective.

Method

Selection and Inclusion Criteria

To be included in the meta-analysis, studies needed to report on a psychoeducational rather than a therapeutic intervention. Because therapeutic interventions generally have stronger effects than psychoeducational interventions (Shadish & Baldwin, 2003), therapeutic interventions were excluded in order to provide a clear picture of the effects of psychoeducational programs. The psychoeducational interventions that focused on improving either couple communication or marital satisfaction and quality were included; these are the two most common outcomes reported in the MRE literature, and they are key targets of intervention in virtually all interventions (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000). Communication skills reflected a broad range of constructs and methodologies, including global assessments, positive and negative communication, and positive and negative problem solving; both self-reports and observational methods were included. When broken down into these specific subconstructs, there is not enough statistical power to produce fair tests (Blanchard et al., 2009). Therefore, we aggregated all of these measures into a single communication outcome that reflected the aggregated effect of the interventions on global communication skills. For studies examining relationship quality, we found that most studies used existing standardized measures such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). In one case, a study examined the divorce rate of participants a year after the intervention (Stanley, Allen, Markman, Rhoades, & Prentice, 2010). We included this measure, as we felt divorce rates can be a strong indicator of marital quality or satisfaction. We combined all measures of relationship quality into a single outcome that reflected the global effect of the interventions on marital satisfaction and quality.

We included only control or comparison-group studies in this meta-analysis. Many MRE evaluation studies are one-group/pre-post designs without a control group (Blanchard et al., 2009). These studies, however, are subject to many internal validity threats (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) and thus do not provide confident answers about program effectiveness. Accordingly, we limited our coding only to studies with control or comparison groups. We included both institutionalized programs (those with an ongoing established presence, formal manuals, formal instructor training, etc.) and noninstitutionalized programs. Past research by Hawkins, Stanley, Blanchard, and Albright (2012) found no evidence that institutionalized programs lead to stronger effects than noninstitutionalized programs. Further, because our study was meant to be an exploratory meta-analysis of all existing research on self-directed MRE, we wanted to be inclusive of various types of self-directed MRE, not simply those programs that have been previously established.

Studies were included only if they gave sufficient quantitative information for effect sizes to be calculated. When this information was not available, authors were contacted in an attempt to find the necessary data or efforts were made to derive effect sizes from other data given in the study (see Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). Nevertheless, in some cases the information required could not be obtained or calculated. Significant efforts were made to include both published and unpublished studies in an effort to minimize the potential for publication bias (Vevea & Woods, 2005). (Further details about selection and inclusion criteria are available in Hawkins et al., 2008.)

Search Procedure

We searched for MRE studies from 1975, when evaluation of MRE first gained momentum, through late 2010. Initially, we reviewed reference lists of previous MRE meta-analyses (Butler & Wampler, 1999; Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Giblin, Sprenkle, & Sheehan, 1985; Hight, 2000) as well as the actual search list from a recent MRE meta-analysis (Reardon-Anderson, Stagner, Macomber, & Murray, 2005). To find more recent articles as well as any missed by previous meta-analyses, we searched the PsycINFO and Dissertations and Theses databases. Our key search terms were *marriage*, *relationship*, or *couple*, as well as *intervention*, *education*, or *program*. We also contacted active researchers in the field to see if they had recent evaluation studies in their files.

Variable Coding

We used a 56-item codebook to code various moderators within each study. The chief moderator of focus for this study looked at whether interventions were traditional or self-directed. (For information on other moderators coded, consult Hawkins et al., 2008. A copy of the codebook is also available upon request.)

Opportunities and Challenges in Coparenting Education

Alan J. Hawkins and Paul Florsheim

Coparenting education refers to the practice of family science focused on educational interventions to help parents learn to work together and cooperate effectively on behalf of their children, regardless of their family circumstances. Although coparenting is an important family process in nearly all kinds of families (McHale & Lindahl, 2011; McHale, Waller, & Pearson, 2012), its importance has increased over the last few decades as the diversity and complexity of family structures have grown. More than half of children born to the least educated and to women under 30 are born to fragile nonmarital unions (Wildsmith, Steward-Streng, & Manlove, 2011). The trend toward unwed parenthood disproportionately affects poorer children (and adults), adding to the social and economic disadvantages they face (Cherlin, 2009). Although children born to married unions fare better, on average, there is significant instability in married families too. Demographers estimate the current divorce rate at nearly 50% for first marriages, and over the past 30 years that rate has doubled for those over age 35 (Kennedy & Ruggles, 2014). Divorce rates are higher for couples with lower income and less education (Wilcox, 2010). Divorce often ushers in an extended period of “churning” relationships and family instability (Cherlin, 2009). Most children born today will, before their 18th birthdays, witness their parents separate (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider, 2013). Unfortunately, high levels of family instability put children at greater risk for a wide range of social, cognitive, emotional, and health outcomes (Amato, 2005; Amato & Anthony, 2014; Beck, Cooper, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010; Brown, 2010; Cherlin, 2009; Osborne & McLanahan, 2007).

The risks to children (and adults) associated with increasing family instability in U.S. society challenge family scientists to develop new strategies for helping mothers and fathers forge an effective coparenting relationship—regardless of the status of their couple relationship—for the sake of their children (Carlson & McLanahan, 2006). Over the past decade, federal and state governments have been experimenting with social policy to support greater access to and participation in educational interventions for at-risk couples, seeking to help them strengthen romantic relationships, increase responsible fathering, and improve coparenting cooperation (Hawkins & VanDenBerghe, 2014).

In this chapter, we focus on a wide range of educational efforts to help mothers and fathers be cooperative coparents. We acknowledge that coparenting couples do not always include mothers and fathers who are currently or formerly romantically involved. Coparenting couples sometimes are made up of mothers/fathers and grandmothers/grandfathers, mothers/fathers and aunts/uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers, and so on. However, here we place emphasis on the more common coparenting relationship between mothers and fathers, regardless of whether they are in a committed romantic relationship.

Note that coparenting interventions are distinct in family life education because of their triadic target within the family system (McHale & Lindahl, 2011). Most family life education efforts are directed at the dyadic components of family systems: the couple relationship, parent–child relationship, grandparent–child relationship, and so on. Although diverse approaches to strengthening families are valuable, programs that target the mother–father–child triad, especially in families at high risk for instability, have a key role to play in strengthening families in contemporary society. Unfortunately, in many respects coparenting education is less developed—and it is certainly less researched—compared to dyadic educational interventions designed to help couples form and sustain healthy romantic relationships and marriages or to improve parenting practices.

In this chapter we briefly review a typology of coparenting education programs and the early, applied research evaluating their potential. Then we suggest important areas for progress in applied research to guide the practice of family science to improve coparenting.

The Diversity of Coparenting Education Programs

The need for effective coparenting interventions presents a valuable opportunity for family life educators, yet it also presents significant challenges. First, interventions need to match the diversity of coparenting circumstances, including working with parents who are married, cohabiting, divorcing, divorced, or even those who have never been in a serious relationship together. Similarly,

the age range and family life course circumstances differ dramatically for coparents, from teen parents with relatively short and casual relationships to divorcing parents who share coparenting duties perhaps decades together. In addition, participation in many coparenting interventions is court mandated, which can be a difficult pedagogical task compared to the voluntary participation that characterizes most family life education. Similarly, these mandated courses often are quite brief, demanding efficient education compared to typical family life education programs with volunteer participants. Moreover, family life education for couples emphasizes the value of couples participating together in a program, but for various reasons coparenting programs sometimes need to be delivered to gender-segregated groups. Also, although there is a growing body of basic research that illuminates coparenting relationships (e.g., McHale & Lindahl, 2011), the volume of applied research evaluating coparenting programs lags behind, as our review of the research in this chapter will document. Although evaluation research likely will increase over the next decade, coparenting practitioners will be challenged to develop successful programs and forge best practices based on their own knowledge, wisdom, and experience until applied research catches up with the volume of coparenting programs in the field.

In this section we review the variety of coparenting education that exists and the limited research on these programs. For heuristic purposes, coparenting programs can be distinguished on the basis of the parents' relationship status. There are programs that focus on coparenting in the context of a marriage or a committed cohabiting relationship. Probably the most common context for coparenting education to date is during and after a divorce or the breakup of a long-term cohabiting relationship. But an important, emerging field of work focuses on unmarried couples whose relationship status is fragile, ambiguous, no longer romantic, or virtually nonexistent.

Coparenting instruction in couple and relationship education programs. Some couple and relationship education (CRE) programs for intact couples include coparenting instruction in their curricula. A few evaluation studies have shown positive effects on coparenting (e.g., P. A. Cowan, Cowan, Pruett, Pruett, & Wong, 2009; Shapiro, Nahm, Gottman, & Content, 2011). Kirkland et al. (2011) found in a small sample of Head Start parents in Alabama that CRE participants had less coparenting conflict after the program than nonparticipants. Moreover, Adler-Baeder and her colleagues (2013) found in a pre–post study with a large and diverse sample of lower income parents in Alabama that positive changes in couple relationships during a CRE program were associated with reductions in coparenting conflict. On the contrary, a meta-analysis of CRE programs with lower income participants (Hawkins & Erickson, in press) found that CRE programs, overall, have not shown positive effects on coparenting behavior, at least as assessed with rigorous, random control trial studies. The study did find moderate, positive effects in less rigorous fieldwork (pre–post) and quasi-experimental studies.

Conceptually and pragmatically, there is considerable merit in including coparenting instruction in CRE programs. The ultimate purpose of CRE programs' efforts to strengthen couple relationships is to improve children's well-being. The quality of the couple relationship is related to positive father involvement and better parenting (P. A. Cowan, Cowan, & Knox, 2010). Yet good parenting is even more proximate a factor in child well-being than the parental relationship itself; coparenting curriculum embedded in CRE directly addresses this objective of child well-being. Moreover, coparenting is a common source of relationship conflict (C. P. Cowan & Cowan, 2000; Sobolewski & King, 2005). Thus, dealing directly with coparenting may reduce couple conflict. Also, CRE programs help individuals assess how healthy their relationships are and can lead some to decide to end an unhealthy relationship. In these cases, cooperative coparenting becomes the most important objective of the intervention. We know now that many couples who participate in CRE are distressed (Bradford, Hawkins, & Acker, 2014), and the reality is that some will break up in the near future. Thus, coparenting education may help them care better for their children in the event of a breakup. Pragmatically, coparenting education can make use of the expanding CRE infrastructure for delivering educational programs for families, especially lower income families. Greater integration of relationship and parenting education makes sense for many families and for many reasons (Hawkins, 2013).

Coparenting education for intact, new-parent couples. A few prevention scholars have developed and tested educational interventions primarily focused on coparenting behaviors, although they have done so with samples of mostly married parents. As such, these programs bear some resemblance to and overlap with the CRE programs discussed in the previous section. Most notably, Mark Feinberg, with the Penn State Prevention Research Center, developed and tested the efficacy of the Family Foundations coparenting program with expectant new parents. This is an eight-session (pre- and postnatal) universal intervention focused on emotional self-management, positive communication, conflict management, problem solving, and mutual support strategies that foster positive joint parenting. A series of published reports evaluating Family Foundations have found moderate, positive effects upon completion of the program for treatment group parents on self-reported coparenting behavior, with less educated parents and those in less secure relationships benefiting the most from the program, as well as those who received a greater dose of the curriculum (Feinberg & Kan, 2008). Subsequent analyses at 1-year postintervention using observational measures of coparenting also found moderate positive effects (Feinberg, Kan, & Goslin, 2009). Three-year follow-up reports still found positive effects on coparenting, and positive change in coparenting was associated with positive change in child behavior and well-being (Feinberg, Jones, Kan, & Goslin, 2010; Solmeyer, Feinberg, Coffman, & Jones, 2014). This work now needs to be tested with couples in more fragile relationships and disadvantaged circumstances.

Coparenting education for divorcing parents. Research on coparenting grew during the 1970s and 1980s in the wake of increased divorce rates and problematic coparenting (McHale & Lindahl, 2011), so it is not surprising that the largest body of edu-

cational interventions and corresponding evaluation research is focused on programs for divorcing parents, programs that likely reach 1–2 million parents each year. Most states have mandated a coparenting program of some kind for divorcing parents, and many other jurisdictions encourage voluntary participation (Pollet & Lombreglia, 2008). Sometimes courts mandate participation for divorced parents who are fighting in the legal system over parenting issues. A meta-analytic review of 28 (court-mandated) divorcing parents education (DPE) program evaluation studies found evidence of small to moderate positive effects on self-reported coparenting behavior and other parenting outcomes (Fackrell, Hawkins, & Kay, 2011).

One emerging challenge for DPE programs is the recognition that these programs contain a number of participants who are ambivalent about divorce and who still have a desire to repair and save the marriage. Most DPE programs assume that a final decision about the divorce has been made, and the curriculum is designed to help divorced parents be effective coparents. But recent research now suggests that one quarter to one third of individuals participating in DPE programs still want to try to save the marriage, and in about 10% of cases both spouses have such a desire (Doherty, Willoughby, & Peterson, 2011). A solid case can be made that repairing the relationship rather than divorcing is the optimal (and safe) outcome for a nontrivial minority of parents engaged in DPE (Hawkins, Fackrell, & Harris, 2013) and a worthy public policy goal, although it needs to be done carefully and sensitively. Only a few states (e.g., Oklahoma, Utah) require mandated DPE programs to address the possibility of reconciliation and suggest resources for repairing the marriage for couples who may want to do so. But this additional component of DPE is likely to grow over the next decade. Accordingly, family life educators will need to deal with the challenge of multiple goals for DPE programs: helping those couples who divorce to be better coparents but also helping those who desire reconciliation (and who can do so safely) find resources to pursue that course.

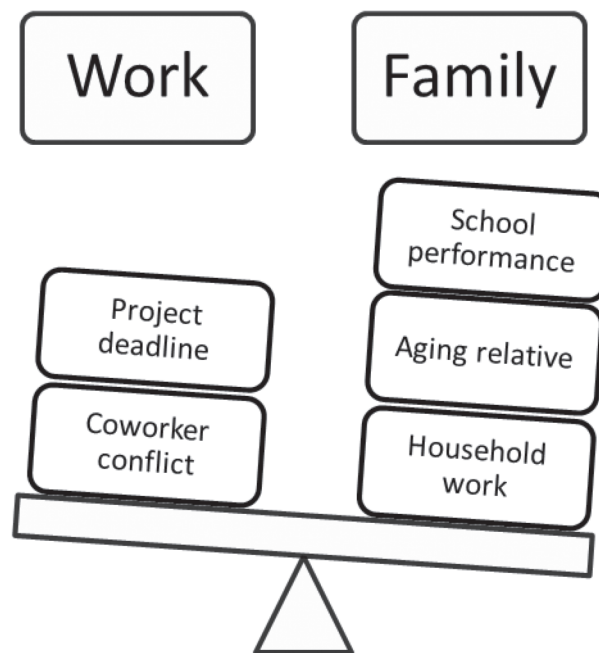
Coparenting education for unmarried, fragile family parents. The research documenting some success of coparenting education for intact couples and divorcing parents is encouraging, but it does not adequately address the crucial question of whether coparenting programs can help unmarried parents and children in more disadvantaged circumstances who face greater risks of family instability and conflictual coparenting. Only a few programs have targeted parents in unmarried, fragile romantic relationships or single parents. Cox and Shirer (2009) evaluated the efficacy of the Caring for My Family program, which has a significant coparenting component, with a sample of lower income individuals and couples and found a moderate positive effect on self-reported coparenting 1 week after the program for (nonrandomized) treatment group participants compared to control group participants. Fagan, Cherson, Brown, and Vecere (2013) tested the efficacy of the Understanding Dads program in a small pilot study of mostly unmarried or divorced mothers. This 8-week program, developed by the National Fatherhood Initiative, is designed to improve the quality of the parental relationship for the sake of children by increasing mothers' understanding of fathers and improving communication and cooperative coparenting with the father. These researchers reported significant gains in coparenting knowledge at the end of the program. This early pilot work is encouraging, but we are still in the infancy stage of coparenting programs for fragile families. There is a tremendous need for more programs and accompanying research in this part of the field.

Coparenting education for never-married, nonresident fathers. Some fatherhood programs for never-married, nonresident fathers address the father's relationship with the child's mother because parent conflict is one of the prime obstacles to positive father involvement. There are two kinds of programs targeted to fathers who are no longer romantically involved with the mother that may include coparenting components. First, facilitation/mediation programs have shown some early encouraging results for reconnecting absent fathers to their children and promoting more regular child support payments (see McHale et al., 2012). These programs are designed to establish parenting plans or address visitation problems for nonresident fathers, sometimes connected to courts and child support enforcement agencies that establish and enforce formal child support orders. Second, many responsible-fatherhood programs try to help nonresident fathers obtain visitation rights and become connected or reconnected with their children. Such programs are important to coparenting, however, because they serve an important function as the gateway to helping many nonresident fathers become involved in their children's lives again or for a first time; that is, without programs to establish parenting plans and visitation rights coparenting would not even be a possibility for many nonresident fathers, especially never-married fathers. It is worth noting that some couples may need coparenting education prior to establishing visitation, and some may need a visitation order before they can begin to function as coparents. Incorporating a coparenting component into court-supported visitation programs may have a positive payoff for all family members.

Coparenting education for adolescent parents. Another line of coparenting intervention work focuses on the special circumstances and needs of unmarried adolescent and young adult parents, many of whom are growing up in disadvantaged circumstances. Paul Florsheim developed the Young Parenthood Program to help these parents develop the skills to maintain a positive, supportive coparenting relationship in order to provide a stable, nurturing environment for their child. The 12-session program is designed to be delivered by trained clinicians within a variety of settings, using an individualized, couple-focused format. In a pilot study of the program (Florsheim et al., 2012), researchers found that treatment group fathers were more engaged with their children and reported more positive coparenting. In addition, young mothers' changes in relationship competence predicted higher rates of fathers' nurturing behavior with their toddlers and higher rates of fathers' relationship satisfaction with their coparenting partners, suggesting the value of a couples-focused approach to this kind of intervention. The program also was associated with reductions in intimate partner violence, although this effect diminished over time (Florsheim, McArthur, Hudak, Heavin, &

Misperceptions of Work–Life Balance: The Five Secret Strategies for Family Life Educators

Beth A. Quist



Created by Beth A. Quist (2014).

Work–life balance is a familiar term coined in 1986 that became mainstream for employees, employers, and human resource professionals around 2000 (Lockwood, 2003). Work–life balance no longer needs defining, because we all have perceptions about what the term means. As both work and life evolve, we continue to use the word *balance*; it is the word we recognize in working with the conundrum of juggling our daily work and family lives. And yet, even the perception of the word *balance* may be inadvertently causing stress and anxiety in making us feel that that the equilibrium we are striving for is actually an unattainable goal.

The misperception is that work–life balance is 50–50. The reality is that work–life balance is rarely a partnership of equals. As family life educators, we have started thinking in terms of “managing” work and family. Much as we manage any other task during the day, our work–life balance ebbs and flows and interacts together for a greater purpose. Work–life balance is not about carving out time evenly, or even setting strict goals for oneself; instead, it is about identifying one’s personal values, being creative about making both parts work together, and recognizing that everyone’s solution is unique and that what works for one person may not work for another.

Lifetrack is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing the strengths within children, adults, and families who are facing the greatest life challenges. Through Lifetrack’s education services individuals are helped to self-manage the issues that can interfere with work and inhibit personal and professional growth. The in-person and online information Lifetrack offers applies

to the different stages of work and life and better equips individuals and families to manage the daily challenges that can affect healthy family functioning. In seeking innovative ways for family educators to teach the management of work–life balance, we at Lifetrack have framed five simple work–life balance strategies.

Real-Life Case Studies

To set the stage, I now offer two work–life balance scenarios based on a real testimony of people who have worked with Lifetrack. (Names have been changed.)

Diane

Four years ago, Diane was the sole caregiver to her father; in addition to having young adult children of her own and working a full-time job. The responsibility of taking care of her father was so time intensive that Diane had to quit her job. After her father passed away, Diane got her mother back on her feet and returned to the workforce. Then her uncle's health declined, and he needed caregiving until he passed away. Now, Diane's mother is beginning to struggle and Diane is anticipating she will need to fulfill the caregiving role once again. As an added challenge, her mother lives two states away. Diane is anticipating she will need to eventually move her mother in with her, adding another level of complexity to her family life as she struggles to balance her roles and responsibilities as caregiver and employee.

Steve and Julie

Steve and Julie both work full time and have just added to their family a new baby. Steve and Julie planned well for the maternity leave. They have their day care situation confirmed, and after 12 weeks of staying home with the baby, Julie has gone back to work full time. However, the new caregiving roles Steve and Julie are fulfilling are providing new challenges as they struggle with a lack of sleep, negotiating who stays home when the baby gets sick, and learning the nuances that occur in life with a new baby in the home. Steve's work requires long hours and travel. Julie has flexibility with her work hours, but when Steve is traveling for work the burden for caregiving falls completely on Julie's shoulders. Julie is questioning the wisdom of going back to work full time, but the family needs her second income.

What are some of the hidden work–life balance problems occurring in these cases? What are some work–life balance strategies Diane and Steve and Julie can use? Let's take a closer look.

The Balancing Act: Work and Life

Work: One Side of the Balancing Act

The “work” in work–life balance has significantly and positively affected the lives of many working individuals and their families in the past 14 years. Because of the increase in education and in prioritizing work–life balance, many more employers have been offering work–life balance-friendly programs (World at Work & Alliance for Work–Life Progress, 2011). Employers are more likely to understand that ensuring employees' professional and personal success at every stage of life requires specific resources, and many companies offer a host of work and family solutions, such as flexible work schedules, backup care (both elder and child care), college coaching, education assistance, and personal counseling.

Despite the strides in workforce efforts, a number of organizations have recently begun to deemphasize or even eliminate their work–life balance programs and strategies, for two reasons (Bailyn, Drago, & Kochan, 2001).

The first reason is due to the economic downturn the United States has experienced in the past 7 years. In 2008, many employers felt the impact of the economic downturn; layoffs, downsizing, and “doing more with less” became the norm. Baby boomers who had planned on retiring were not able to, for economic reasons, and the younger millennial generation coming into the workforce was not finding jobs. The result? The work–life balance programs and supports readily offered to employees in the past were eliminated because of budget cuts. Programs that had been viewed as nonessential were cut from the employee resources and services. These cutbacks included work–life balance programs and strategies.

Far too many employees are still forced to make difficult choices between work demands and caring for family members. Many work–life balance programs are viewed as being for white collar professionals only (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2004). This means the working-class families who may need the help the most, but do not have as many educational or financial resources, are not being provided the resources for work–life balance.

Even communication of the resources and support available is difficult in organizations. Even though, for example, a brochure and a page on the employee section of a company's website have been created as proof of the existing strategy, many employees may be unaware of the support. The other communication issue is that although the intention of providing work–life balance strategies should be to support the employee, the hidden agenda may be to include the programs as a public relations campaign to achieve an award for a “family friendly” company status. Therefore, the work–life balance programs are not supported in a way that actually benefits the employee.

Second, there appears to be a sense that the work–life concerns of most employees have been adequately addressed (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2004). If the concerns have all been addressed, there is no need for a work–life balance program or strategy. Although proponents of work–life balance strategies have addressed a multitude of issues, such as child care, increasing workplace flexibility, promoting women’s advancement in the workplace, and creating inclusive work environments, there continue to be existing challenges.

Even though workplaces have made progress on certain foundational issues, work–life balance is ever evolving, and new problems and challenges have emerged that may be more complex to address. These issues require more sophisticated and multifaceted solutions. According to Harrington, Van Deusen, and Fraone (2013) at the Boston College Center for Work and Family, past workforce challenges such as child care, women’s issues, conflict, diversity, health maintenance, flexibility, and work–life balance have not gone away but have added complexities and evolved to include men’s issues, elder care, job meaning and enrichment, inclusion, well-being, virtual workplaces, and workplace culture.

Life: The Other Side of the Balancing Act

The changing family. A recent study by the Pew Research Center (Parker & Patton, 2013) showed that the norm now has shifted way beyond two-paycheck families to a complete reversal in family roles. The demographic and sociological revolutions that helped facilitate the changes in family roles make it appear the changes are here to stay (Changing Family Dynamics, 2013). These family role changes contribute to the complexity of maintaining work–life balance.

The study found that mothers are the sole or primary earners in 40% of U.S. households with children. In 1960, less than 10% of mothers were the primary breadwinners (Parker & Patton, 2013). Single mothers now head roughly two thirds of those households, and wives earn more than their husbands in the rest of the families, making the woman the primary breadwinner (Changing Family Dynamics, 2013).

Many factors were cited in the study as influencing its findings. Women now make up close to half of the U.S. workforce, and the societal upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s have allowed women to be more focused on educational opportunities (Harrington, 2012). For example, women today are more likely than men to hold bachelor’s degrees. In addition, women report finding personal, purposeful fulfillment when using their skills and knowledge outside the home (Harrington, 2012). Finally, the changes in conceptual-skilled and information-related jobs and the decline of jobs in fields normally occupied by men, such as manufacturing and construction, were both identified as contributing factors.

Another striking difference is that fewer people than ever are getting married, and 40% of births today are out of wedlock (Parker & Patton, 2013). Those single mothers remain at a huge disadvantage to married couples regardless of the primary breadwinner’s gender. A single mother’s median family income is about 29% that of a married couple, and the options for improvement are slim, given that single mothers often are poorly educated or racial/ethnic minorities (Changing Family Dynamics, 2013).

Sandwich generation. In addition, an aging population and a generation of young adults struggling to achieve financial independence, and the burdens and responsibilities of middle-aged Americans are increasing. Nearly half (47%) of adults in their 40s and 50s have a parent age 65 or older and are either raising a young child or financially supporting a grown child age 18 or older. The term used to refer to these families is the *sandwich generation*. And about 1 in 7 middle-aged adults (15%) is providing financial support to both an aging parent and to a child (Parker & Patton, 2013).

The financial burdens for the sandwich generation associated with caring for multiple generations of family members are mounting. The increased pressure is coming primarily from grown children rather than aging parents. According to a nationwide Pew Research Center survey (Parker & Patton, 2013), roughly half (48%) of adults ages 40 to 59 have provided some financial support to at least one grown child in the past year, with 27% providing the primary support. These shares are up significantly from 2005. By contrast, about 1 in 5 middle-aged adults (21%) reported having provided financial support to a parent age 65 or older in the past year, basically unchanged from 2005 (Parker & Patten, 2013).

Looking just at adults in their 40s and 50s who have at least one child age 18 or older, 73% have provided at least some financial help in the past year to at least one such child. Many are supporting children who are still in school, but a significant share say they are doing so for other reasons. Although middle-aged adults are devoting more resources to their grown children these days, the Pew survey found that the public places more value on support for aging parents than on support for grown children (Parker & Patton, 2013).

One likely explanation for the increase in the prevalence of parents providing financial assistance to grown children is that the Great Recession and a sluggish recovery have taken a disproportionate toll on young adults. In 2010, the share of young adults who were employed was the lowest it had been since the government started collecting these data, in 1948 (Parker & Patton, 2013).

Adults who are part of the sandwich generation—that is, those who have a living parent age 65 or older and are either raising a child under age 18 or supporting a grown child—are pulled in many directions. Not only do many provide care and financial support to their parents and their children, but nearly 4 in 10 (38%) say both their grown children and their parents rely on them for emotional support (Parker & Patten, 2013). These structural dynamics in family are the contributing factors to the ever-changing and evolving life side of work–life balance.

Family Life and Technology: Implications for the Practice of Family Life Education

Susan K. Walker

Without question, family life in the United States has experienced a revolution through meteoric changes in information and communications technologies (ICT) over the past 30 years. From the rise of personal computers in the 1980s at work and then at home, to access to the Internet, cell phones, and social media; to the demand for mobile, multifunction, and “smart” technologies, ICT adoption by families in the last few decades has been, as Robert Aponte (2009) claimed, “breathtaking” (p. 578). And why not? With the new media, families can efficiently connect, share family experiences, forge new relationships, and access information. They offer countless opportunities for learning, having fun, and managing day-to-day tasks. For family life educators, innovations in ICT have created an “electronic frontier” (Smith, 1999) of new opportunities. Families need guidance on how to integrate new media into family life in ways that complement and support values and goals, not create conflict or tension. Also, new media offer family life educators new ways to reach a wide range of learners and tailor content to meet individual learning needs (Long, 2004; Walker, 2010).

In this chapter I offer an overview of technology use and impacts in family life and the implications for family life education. I begin with a look at how families are using new media in daily life and how use might vary between families. Then, with two conceptual frameworks of technology use in family life (Hertlein, 2012; Lanigan, 2009) as a foundation, I offer key insights from research. This includes technology’s impact on couple and family relationships; on work–life balance; and on parenting, inclusive of parents’ roles in monitoring the use of ICT by their children. I then move to implications for family life education: guidelines for assistance to families and for the integration of ICT into family life education practice and recommendations to the field for support to professionals on technology in family life.

Trends in Information and Communications Technologies Use in Families

A variety of terms are used to describe the ICT used by families in the scholarly literature, in the popular press, and by families themselves. In this chapter I refer to the range of devices and applications that use the Internet, are computer mediated, and/or feature digital connections as *information and communications technology* (ICT), *new media*, or simply *technology*. Within that range are specific devices, including personal computers (stationary and mobile), cell phones that enable text-based messaging and access to the Internet, media players, and gaming systems. *Smartphones* are devices that combine cell phone capabilities with multiple technologies, including cameras, global positioning systems, media players, plus features of touch-screen computers (“Smartphone,” n.d.). *Social media* are online services that enable users to share and jointly create content (e.g., blogs, discussion forums, social networking sites such as Facebook or Pinterest, etc.).

Cell phones are now ubiquitous, owned by 90% of U.S. adults (Pew Internet Project, 2014), a number that shows little demographic variation. Families with children report multiple cell phones in the house (Wellman, Smith, Wells, & Kennedy, 2008), with a majority of preteens and teens having a phone (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010); in approximately one third of families with young children, children have access to a parent’s phone (Wartella, Rideout, Lauriella, & Connell, 2013). Research on the use of ICT in families indicates that high portions of individuals use cell phone texting and calls for communication with family members, nonresidential/extended family, and friends (e.g., Connell, 2012; Coyne, Stockdale, Busby, Iverson, & Grant, 2011; Dworkin, Connell, & Doty, 2013; Plantin & Daneback, 2009; Walker & Rudi, 2014). The Internet is accessed via personal

computers, tablets, and smartphones for information gathering, exchange, decision making, and knowledge management (Connell, 2012). Families also fulfill productivity functions, such as shopping, banking, home organization, and task coordination, online (Connell, 2012; Jones & Fox, 2009). An estimated 75% of adults report access to the Internet on any device, and just over half (58%) report owning smartphones (Pew Internet Project, 2014). Most children have access to the Internet, and one third of children age 8–18 report Internet access in their bedrooms (Rideout et al., 2010; Wartella et al., 2013).

Extended, intergenerational, and nonresidential family and friends particularly benefit from family communication via e-mail and video conferencing (e.g., Houston, Pfefferbaum, Sherman, Melson, & Brand, 2013; Rudi, Dworkin, Walker, & Doty, 2015). Social networking sites like Facebook enables connections to those familiar and to wider personal communities (Bartholomew, Schoppe-Sullivan, Glassman, Kamp Dush, & Sullivan, 2012; Walker & Rudi, 2014). Social media applications like blogging and Twitter are also popular ways for parents to share personal expressions and experiences about family life (Friedman & Calixte, 2009; McDaniel, Coyne, & Holmes, 2012). Also, the Internet, media players, and video- and computer-based gaming systems provide couple and family leisure and recreation (Coyne et al., 2012; Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2014; Rideout et al., 2010).

Differences in family access and device use have been studied along two dimensions: (a) socioeconomic status and (b) attitude and comfort with devices. Regarding the latter, for example, using data from an online national survey of parents (Connell, 2012), Walker, Dworkin, and Connell (2011) identified 10 user types among adults with children ($n = 1,653$). The types reflected differences in device ownership, frequency of use of 15 activities, and attitudes toward technology. These types reflected a range of users, from the “hyperconnected,” who own many devices and are “always on,” to those lighter in use and who may hold negative views about technology; the majority of households trended moderate, with some noting the use of ICT for specific purposes (e.g., for calls, to find information). Another study of 2,300 parents of young children age 0–8 (Takeuchi, 2011) identified household use patterns as media centric (29%), media moderate (45%), and media light (19%).

Variation in access or ownership by socioeconomic status appears to be primarily with newer technologies. Wartella et al. (2013) and the Pew Internet Project (2014) have reported income differences in tablet and smartphone ownership, respectively, with ownership trending with higher incomes. Research on use of ICT across socioeconomic groups suggests that numbers reporting high levels of access may mask differences in impact of use. For instance, Rothbaum, Martland, and Jannsen (2008) determined that although the majority of parents report access to the Internet, those with a higher socioeconomic status used more sophisticated Internet searching skills (e.g., changing a keyword to improve search results) and were better able to assess the credibility of a sponsoring organization.

Conceptual Models of Technology and Family Life

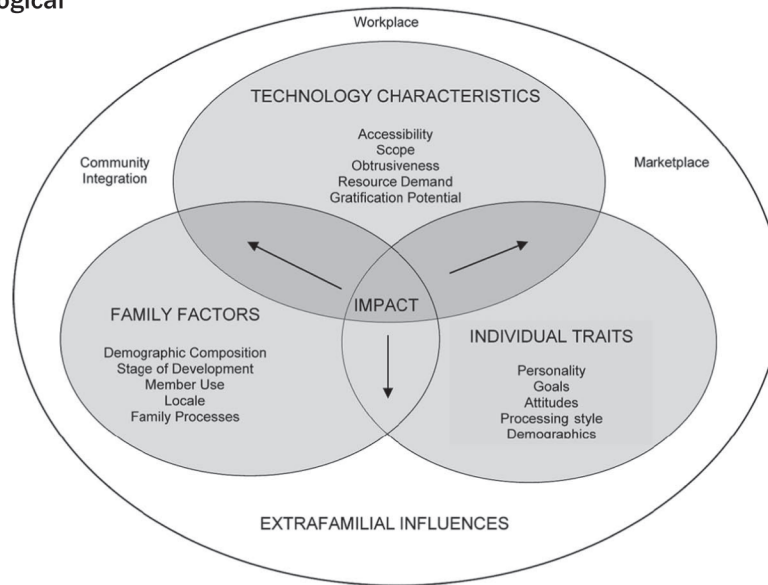
Early observations of ICT and families resulted in calls for theoretical models that could shape research and would characterize how these new media affect individuals within families and families as a dynamic, changing unit (Aponte, 2009; Blinn-Pike, 2009; Watt & White, 1999). Two models characterize the interaction between family use of technology and changes brought about by the use of technology. Both come from family system ecological perspectives, viewing ICT as comprising tools external to the family unit that facilitate family processes (e.g., communication, knowledge acquisition) and structures that play out continuously in virtual and “real” worlds. Use of ICT by families is also viewed as a recursive process in that changes in the technologies themselves can occur (witnessed by the growth in availability of social, mobile media in response to popular use). Both models also reflect variation in use by individual or family factors and technology characteristics. Whereas the *sociotechnological model* (Lanigan, 2009) offers a comprehensive view of technology use and family life impacts, Hertlein’s (2012) model is more specific to impacts on the structure and processes of couple and family relationships

Lanigan’s (2009; see Figure 1 in that article) sociotechnological family model “acknowledges the effect of multifunctional [ICTs] on families and the influence of familial, extrafamilial and individual characteristics on how those technologies are assimilated within the family context” (p. 595). ICT factors that influence selection and use include access, scope, adaptability, and malleability of the technology; obtrusiveness; resource demand (e.g., cost); and gratification potential. Individuals within the family are influenced to use technology on the basis of their goals and intentions, attitudes, processing styles, personality (e.g., introversion), and demographics. Family factors relate largely to demographics, stage of development, use by individual members, locale, and family processes. Lanigan identified family processes based on the Circumplex model of the family: cohesion, adaptability, and communication (for an extended discussion on the Circumplex model, see Reinke & Walcheski, this volume). Technological, individual, and family factors are encompassed in the extrafamilial context (see Bronfenbrenner’s [1995] exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem).

As Lanigan (2009) noted, the sociotechnological model can help us better understand “successful” ICT integration in family life. From her own research, she made the following observation:

Successful families used the information capability of the technology to enhance family time by learning about community activities and by planning vacations and time together . . . Less successful families experienced conflict related to the computer. The conflicts resulted from difficulties establishing rules, perceptions that computer use was distancing a family member, and a reduction of family time, communication, and emotional bonding. (p. 604)

Figure 12.1. Sociotechnological family framework



Hertlein (2012) offered a multitheoretical model to “to describe how technology influences the way couples and families establish rules, roles and boundaries and interact with each other and the outside world” (p. 375). The model organizes research literature into elements that integrate perspectives from family ecology (how technology as an environment influence affects the family), structural functionalist (how technology affects rules, boundaries, and roles in families) and interaction–constructionist (how technology changes intimacy, relationship initiation, and relationship maintenance).

Hertlein’s (2012) framework sheds particular light on the characteristics of new media that differentiate them from other forms of communication and relationship interaction. She called these characteristics “vulnerabilities” (p. 376). The Seven A’s in Hertlein’s model include the following:

1. Anonymity—presence online can be masked
2. Accessibility—meaning easier, 24/7 access to the individual
3. Affordability—relating to the lower cost for means of interaction and entertainment
4. Approximation—representation of face-to-face interaction through text and video
5. Acceptability—for using technology as, for example, the format for relationship communication
6. Accommodation—enabling individuals to behave as their real versus their ought self
7. Ambiguity—problematic behavior resulting from time spent online.

The structures of couple and family relationships are influenced through a redefinition of relational rules, a redefinition of boundaries, and a redefinition of roles. Impact on processes of couple and family relationships occurs through redefining intimacy, altering relationship formation and initiation, and facilitating changes in relationship maintenance.

Impacts of Technology Use on Family Life

Research interest in ICT has focused on technologies’ affordances that have the potential to be used in ways that are unhealthy (e.g., game playing time and displaced physical activity, checking text messages as an intrusion on couple communication). Researchers also have looked at the benefits of these new media (e.g., diminished sense of isolation for a new mother, flexibility to work from home and reduced stress).

In the sections below I provide insights from significant areas of research on couple and family relationships, work–family balance, and parenting. Although salient points are offered, several cautions are warranted. Much of the research to date is descriptive and associative, based on data from limited samples (Aponte, 2009; Blinn-Pike, 2009). Samples are often composed of White, female, well-educated, and higher income individuals (Dworkin et al., 2013; Plantin & Daneback, 2009). Exceptions to this are in demographic reports that used random sampling for representative analysis (e.g., Wartella et al., 2013). By focusing on behavior at a single point in time, research also has little explanatory value about the realities of family dynamics over time. So, although research is beginning to put a spotlight on families across contexts, our understanding of ICT’s impact on family life is still in development. Therefore, readers are encouraged to remain cautious about extrapolating the research to date to specific families and to stay abreast of findings on family life impacts as they unfold. Given the time delays inherent in the publication process, readers will find many of the sources listed in Table 12.1 helpful in staying current in this area of scholarship.

Strategies for Designing Online Family Life Education Programs

Robert Hughes, Jr., Aaron T. Ebata, Jill Bowers, Elissa Thomann Mitchell,
and Sarah Louise Curtiss

In the past decade, technology has become ubiquitous in our daily lives, and family life educators are using technology to deliver family life education through videos, websites, online newsletters, blogs, and apps. Online family life education is defined “as any educational outreach effort that is primarily delivered via the Internet and intentionally facilitates individual and family well-being by using online technologies that include programmatic educational strategies or structure” (Hughes, Bowers, Mitchell, Curtiss, & Ebata, 2012, p. 712). Family life educators are expected to produce and deliver high-quality, research-based content to individuals and families (see Family Life Educators Code of Ethics; National Council on Family Relations, 2012) and have been doing so in many different contexts for decades. Moving family life education to an online delivery mode brings challenges as well as opportunities for family life educators. Such challenges include defining high-quality online family life education, reaching the intended population, and engaging online participants.

Despite an increase in the quantity of online family life education, there has been little discussion about quality. Without best practices or evidence-based research, online family life education may become technology centered rather than learner centered, focusing more on the capabilities of the devices and software rather than the learning outcomes or goals of the program (Mayer, 2005). We have synthesized the literature and built on earlier work (e.g., Ebata & Dennis, 2012; Hughes, 1994) to identify steps for developing online family life education. In this chapter we present an online program development framework (adapted from Hughes et al., 2012) as a guide for family life educators who wish to develop, evaluate, and improve online family life education programs.

We also address two common situations in which family life educators may find themselves: (a) converting an existing program to an online delivery format or (b) creating a new online program. We discuss each planning situation and use examples to highlight unique aspects of online program development.

Online Program Development Framework

We begin with an overview of the online program development process. Hughes and colleagues (2012) outlined five general steps in online family life program design:

1. Problem analysis: Determine the family life problem that needs to be solved.
2. Program content: Synthesize theory, research, and practice that are critical to solving the problem and develop content that is contextually relevant and for diverse audiences.
3. Instructional design: Choose online educational activities that will promote the development of skills, knowledge, and behaviors to solve the problem with the intended target population.
4. Program implementation: Operationalize ideas for the online program, including recruitment and retention strategies that meet the needs of the target population.
5. Program evaluation: Continuously monitor program processes and effectiveness.

The basic steps of online program development are the same as designing any type of family life education experience, although there are some specific issues in the instructional design, program implementation, and evaluation stages that are unique to online delivery. Critical design questions that should be considered in each of these five steps are outlined in Table 13.1.

Problem analysis. To begin, it is important to have a clear idea about the issue or problem in family life that needs to be addressed. For family life educators, clearly articulating the problem is often critical to receiving funding and developing a program that effectively addresses the issue. Family life educators can tackle big problems, such as reducing family violence, or more concrete issues,

Table 13.1. Main Questions for Consideration When Designing Online Family Life Education Programs

<p>Problem Analysis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What developmental or family life problem needs to be solved? 2. Who is the target audience? 3. What contextual issues or audience characteristics (including online activities) are critical to an effective program? <p>Program Content</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What theory, research, and practice are critical to solving this problem? 5. What are the important knowledge and skills necessary to solve this problem? 6. What theory of change will guide program design? <p>Instructional Design</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What learning experiences will lead to new knowledge, skills, or change? 8. How will learning experiences and content be organized to foster learning? 9. How will participants make choices about what and how they learn? 10. How will participants interact with the content? 11. How will participants contribute to the content and/or discussion of the content? 12. How will participants form helpful relationships with co-learners and facilitators? <p>Program Implementation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. How will content and learning be created, managed, and monitored? 14. How will participants be recruited? 15. How will participants be retained to reach their goals? <p>Program Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. What information will be collected to examine the effectiveness of the program? 17. What information will be collected to improve the program?

such as increasing parents’ skills in dealing with a fussy baby. To effectively address an issue it is useful to know about the potential target audiences for the program and to understand the circumstances or context within which the issue emerges. With online programming, this includes an understanding of how the target population accesses the Internet, the types of online tools they are currently using, and the types of issues for which they seek online help. For example, an approach that protects participant anonymity may be important if the problem is a sensitive topic (e.g., domestic violence) versus a topic that would benefit from a public discussion forum. Even the delivery style will depend on the issue. An entertaining or humorous YouTube video may be appropriate for a program designed to target couples’ relationship issues, for example, but it may be viewed as offensive if placed in an online program to prevent suicide. A robust problem analysis can provide the foundation for the content, design, and implementation features used in an online program.

Program content. Similar to designing content for face-to-face program delivery, the topics covered in online family life education should be based on theory and research. In fact, the process of developing and refining program content does not change with the type of delivery system; it is just as important to design online program content rigorously. People seeking help on the Internet have many choices, so it is critical that online family life education provide audiences with the tools to know whether the content is reliable and based on credible sources. Family life educators have a responsibility to their online audiences to provide research-based content and demonstrate their credibility. Developing content begins with a synthesis of what is known about the issue. For example, family life educators interested in the creation of an online program for adolescents coping with the divorce of their parents need to start with theories about how divorce affects adolescents, research that describes the issues facing adolescents, an understanding of adolescent development, and research findings that identify specific factors (e.g., coping mechanisms) that have been shown to be effective in reducing adverse outcomes for adolescents.

In addition to theory and research about the focus issue for the program, family life educators also should examine the existing programs related to this topic. For example, Bowers and colleagues (Bowers, Mitchell, Hardesty, & Hughes, 2011) examined the content of online divorce education programs and compared this to relevant theory and research. Their analysis noted that most of the programs included the latest findings about parent strategies for helping children cope with divorce, but many programs failed to include important information about adult adjustment and information about intimate partner violence and how this factor may influence postdivorce adjustment. Through a careful analysis of existing programs and research synthesis, family life educators can design new programs that build on past knowledge while adding new insights from current research.

Instructional design. The exciting aspect of online family life education is that programs can be created with many different features and educational strategies. They can combine on- and offline experiences and can make use of simulations and participant engagement. They can vary in length and intensity, and they may be tailored to a wide range of participants. All of these design options can

seem overwhelming, especially to the first-time online program developer. First, it is worth remembering that basic instructional principles that work (or do not work) in other settings also apply to online programs. For example, programs with long lectures and few examples or limited opportunities to ask questions or practice skills rarely work in person, and these strategies are even less likely to engage online audiences. Experienced family life educators know that it is essential to engage participants in exploring ideas, sharing their experiences, and trying new skills. These fundamental concepts do not change, although the online environment changes the available tools for instruction. The key is to create online strategies that facilitate engagement and learning. There is a growing body of knowledge about effective online instructional design (see Bonk & Zhang, 2008; Conrad & Donaldson, 2004; Hughes et al., 2012). In addition, there are more focused examinations of specific topics for online family life educational programs (e.g., divorce education, Bowers et al., 2011; parents who have a child with a special need, Zaidman-Zait & Jamieson, 2007). A good place to begin when designing a program is to consider each of the following design issues that face online designers.

Participant engagement. One of the most powerful features of online instruction is the chance to engage participants more deeply in the exploration of content. The term most often used is *active learning*, which means that participants are encouraged to try out ideas, get feedback, and share information and examples. There is wide agreement that effective online instruction is based on a high degree of active participant engagement (Bonk & Zhang, 2008). To begin thinking about participant engagement, we offer the following four questions that can guide the process.

1. How will participants make choices about what and how they learn? One advantage of online programming is that instructional designers have more flexibility in terms of how participants begin to learn about a topic and what direction this learning takes. Unlike most face-to-face educational experiences that are taught in a linear sequence, online programs can offer multiple pathways through the content. An important strategic decision in the design of a program is how much control participants will have in how they learn. Will the program be designed so that participants can choose to start anywhere in the program, or is more structure needed? Structured or scaffolded learning has been demonstrated to be the most effective way for people to learn in most instances (Cavanagh, 2010), yet all participants will bring different backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge to the program, and it may be useful to provide some degree of flexibility so the program can be tailored to participants' individual needs. Likewise, participants may vary in their preference for different types of instruction. Some may prefer to read and others to listen or watch a lecture. Providing choices about delivery methods will meet a wider range of learning preferences.

2. How will participants interact with the content? Exploring new ideas by reflecting on how they might apply to your own family or thinking about how to use a new skill is generally more effective than merely reading text or watching multimedia presentations. There are many simple ways to get people to interact with program content (e.g., taking short quizzes, maintaining personal journals for reflections, summarizing the key points in a presentation, developing personal plans to change behavior, comparing their answers with other participants). These instructional interactions can provide participants with an opportunity to get feedback about their ideas, determine whether they understand concepts, practice applying the material, and so forth. Developing a range of interaction opportunities is key to successful online programs.

3. How will participants contribute to the content and/or discussion of the content? In addition to interacting with the content, participants can contribute their own ideas. These contributions may be informal, such as participating in an online discussion of an issue, or they may have a more formal structure in which participants are actively involved in designing content for others. Family life educators increasingly have explored engaging participants more actively in the development or refinement of content by inviting them to provide examples, thereby applying the concepts to a wider variety of family circumstances.

4. How will participants form helpful relationships with co-learners and facilitators? Another important way to foster growth and learning among participants is to create support groups and peer mentoring relationships. There are numerous informal online communities, and family life educators have the opportunity to create and facilitate extended learning in these settings (see Kraut & Resnick, 2012, for an outline of effective online community ideas).

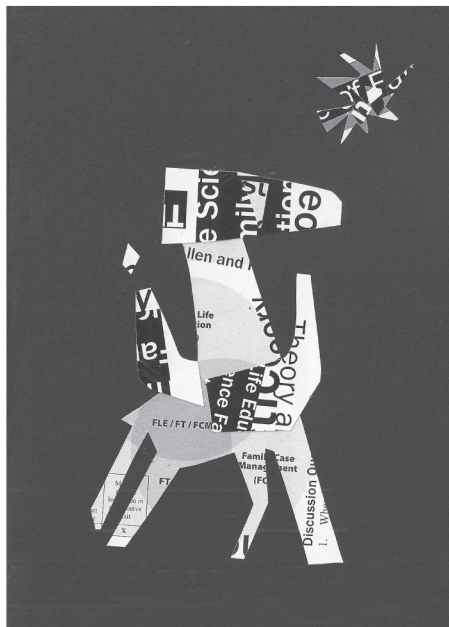
Online delivery media and tools. There are multiple methods for delivering educational content online—text, audio, video, pictures, games, simulation—and there are many different platforms to use in delivering the content, from course management software to blogs to short messages. All of these methods can be used to create effective online family life education, and all of them can be used to produce terrible online family life education. It is important to choose delivery methods and platforms that serve the educational purpose rather than trying to use the latest fad technology.

Text. Written words remain an essential way to present family life education, but reading online presents some challenges. Some newer devices, such as tablet computers, are better suited to reading online, yet individuals are more likely to scan than actually read content with such devices. Therefore, online text needs to be different than material that appears in print. In general, effective online writing is shorter and broken up into smaller reading sections. In online writing, the first sentence often needs to provide a summary of the ideas in the paragraph so that the reader can make a decision about whether to read further (see Nielsen, 2008).

Multimedia. Sometimes topics are easier to illustrate with pictures and video than with text. Demonstrating a harsh parenting episode and a more moderate alternative is easier to show on video than to explain, for example. Effective video use in this case could include a demonstration with commentary about what is being seen and what it means. In addition, video can be used to

Integrating Family Life Education Content Areas into Practice

Section 2



Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines

These guidelines represent the content from the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) *University and College Curriculum Guidelines* and *Competencies for Family Life Educators*, developed by faculty at Weber State University. It represents the knowledge, skills, and abilities included within the examination for the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) designation. These content areas include theory, research, and practice within the field of family life education. Examples of some of these core theories/frameworks/perspectives include family systems, ecosystems, individual and family development, exchange, symbolic interaction, conflict, feminist, and stress.

The content areas are illustrated in the *Family Life Education Framework* (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011), which outlines all 10 content areas specific to four age groups: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and older adulthood. The four age groups demonstrate the principle that family life education is relevant to individuals and families across the lifespan. The fact that FLE is inclusive of all audiences is represented by the words *value; diverse cultures, communities, and individuals; and justice*, which are woven throughout the framework. Additionally, FLE has a foundation in systems thinking (both family systems and larger ecosystems) and this systems approach is represented by the words “within the context of the family system” and “reciprocal interactions between family and ecosystem,” which also are woven throughout the framework.

In 2007 and again in 2014 NCFR, along with Schroeder Measurement Technologies, conducted a job analysis survey that was distributed to current CFLEs who were asked to rate the importance of each knowledge, skill, and ability in the content outline to competent practice. The results of the surveys were used to establish the content outline which represents the foundation of the CFLE Exam.

There are two parts to each of the following 10 content areas. The first is *Content*, which gives an overview of the subject matter included within this content area. The second component includes *Practice*, which relates to the tasks expected of an entry-level CFLE. The *Practice* segment is the basis of the questions in the CFLE exam.

I. FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

Content: An understanding of families and their relationships to other institutions, such as the educational, governmental, religious, health care, 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, health care, & economic).

Practice—A CFLE is prepared to:

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

- f. Assess the impact of demographics (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, religion, generation, gender, sexual orientation) 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 and 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 as well as those members with chronic illness and/or disabilities).

Practice—A CFLE is prepared to:

- a. Recognize and define healthy and 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. Analyze family dynamics in response to normative and nonnormative stressors
- e. Analyze family dynamics in response to stress, crises, and trauma
- f. Facilitate and strengthen communication processes, conflict-management, and problem-solving skills
- g. Develop, recognize, and reinforce strategies that help families function effectively

III. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Content: An understanding of the developmental changes (both typical and atypical) of individuals in families across the lifespan 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 is prepared to:

- a. Identify developmental stages, transitions, elements and 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 and wellness on families
- d. Assist individuals and families in effective developmental transitions
- e. Apply appropriate practices based on theories of human growth and development to individuals and families
- f. Recognize socio-ecological influences on human development across the lifespan (e.g. sexual/gender identity, trauma, etc.)

IV. HUMAN SEXUALITY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Content: An understanding of the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of sexual development across the lifespan, 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 is prepared to:

- a. Recognize the biological aspects of human sexuality (e.g., sexual functioning, reproductive health, family planning, sexually transmitted infections)
- b. Recognize the psychosocial aspects of human sexuality:
 1. Characteristics of healthy and unhealthy sexual relationships
 2. Interpersonal dynamics of sexual intimacy
 3. Risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, social pressures, media)
- c. Address human sexuality from value-respectful positions

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 is prepared to:

- a. Recognize the impact of personality and communication styles
- b. Recognize the developmental stages of relationships
- c. Analyze interpersonal relationships using various theoretical perspectives
- d. Develop and implement relationship enhancement and enrichment strategies
- e. Develop and implement effective communication, problem solving, and anger and conflict management strategies
- f. Recognize the impact of violence and coercion in interpersonal relationships
- g. Recognize the influence of unhealthy coping strategies (e.g., substance use, disordered eating, avoidance) on interpersonal relationships

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 is prepared to:

- a. Recognize the multiplicity of resources families need, acquire, and manage (e.g., personal, familial, professional, community, environmental)
- b. Recognize and facilitate the reciprocal relationship between individual/family/community choices and resources
- c. Apply and facilitate effective decision-making processes (e.g., assessment of individual and family needs, identification and evaluation of options and resources, implementation of decision, evaluation of outcomes)
- d. Understand the impact of values and goals in the decision-making process
- e. Apply organizational and time management strategies
- f. Apply basic financial management tools and principles
- g. Inform individuals and families of consumer rights, responsibilities, and choices of action/advocacy

VII. PARENTING EDUCATION AND 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 Lifespan.

Practice—A CFLE is prepared to:

- a. Promote healthy parenting from systems and lifespan perspectives
- b. Promote healthy parenting from a child’s and parent’s developmental perspective
- c. Apply strategies based on the child’s age/stage of development to promote effective developmental outcomes
- d. Identify different parenting styles and their associated psychological, social, and behavioral outcomes
- e. Analyze various parenting programs, models, and principles
- f. Evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of various parenting strategies
- g. Recognize various parenting roles (e.g., father/mother, grandparents and other caregivers) and their impact on and contribution to individuals and 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 and diversity
- k. Identify strategies to support children in various settings (e.g., schools, legal system, and health care)
- l. Recognize the various pathways to parenting and their associated issues and challenges, (e.g., assisted reproduction, adoption, childbirth, blending)

VIII. FAMILY LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY

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

e.g., Research and theories related to: 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 is prepared to:

- a. Understand the following policy processes (e.g., policy formation, policy implementation, policy evaluation)
- b. Identify current laws, public policies, and initiatives that regulate and influence professional conduct and services
- c. Identify current laws, public policies, and initiatives that affect families

- d. Distinguish between lobbying, policy evaluation, analysis, education, and advocacy
- e. Analyze policy resources for evidence of bias (e.g., unintended, inherent, political, self-interest)
- f. Inform families, communities, and policymakers about public policies, initiatives, and legislation that affect families at local, state, and national levels

IX. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND 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 is prepared to:

- a. Demonstrate professional attitudes, values, behaviors, and responsibilities to clients, colleagues, and the broader community that are reflective of ethical standards and practice
 1. Understand the domains and scope of practice for family life educators and the role of collaboration
 2. Establish and maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries
 3. Create a personal ethics plan to support/reflect the standards of the profession
 4. Maintain current knowledge and skills in the field
- b. Evaluate, differentiate, and apply diverse approaches to ethical issues and dilemmas
- c. Identify and apply appropriate strategies to deal with conflicting values
- d. Demonstrate respect for diverse cultural values

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 is prepared to:

- a. Employ a variety of strategies to identify and meet the needs of different audiences
- b. Employ techniques and technologies to promote application of information in the learner's environment
- c. Create learning environments that are respectful of individual vulnerabilities, needs, and learning styles
- d. Demonstrate group process and facilitation skills
- e. Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity and community needs, concerns, and interests
- f. Develop culturally competent educational materials and learning experiences
- g. Identify appropriate sources for evidence-based information
- h. Implement evidence-based programs
- i. Design educational experiences:
 1. Needs assessment
 2. Goals and objectives
 3. Content development
 4. Implementation
 5. Evaluation/outcome measures
- j. Promote and market educational programs
- k. Implement adult education principles into work with individuals, parents, and families

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Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts

Shelley M. MacDermid Wadsworth, Kevin M. Roy, and Natasha Watkins

Think back to the turn of the 19th century. Members of your family typically expected to live into their 40s; seeing their 50th birthday would have been an accomplishment. However, you, in this century, expect to live well into your 70s—especially if you are able to maintain a healthy lifestyle. How is it that we are able to live longer, healthier lives? Is it because of personal choices or because of changes in public institutions, such as health care? And how do those additional years change society's notion of how life should be lived?

In this chapter we consider links between the characteristics of societies and the daily lives of their members, with the goal of generating ideas that can be applied in family life education settings. The chapter was designed to address the points of view of a variety of audiences, holding the interest of a class of high school students or providing useful information for a community group of parents to consider.

We begin the chapter with a summary of concepts from some of the theories that have influenced scholars' thoughts about families and society. We then apply these concepts to specific issues related to each of four major segments of the lifespan: (a) childhood, (b) adolescence and emerging adulthood, (c) adulthood, and (d) later adulthood. Finally, we offer resources and tips that family life educators might find useful.

Although it seems obvious that the characteristics of a society affect its members, it can be difficult to make the connection compelling for family life education audiences. If society is a forest, the daily lives of individuals and families are like the blades of grass on the forest floor: It is very hard to get a clear understanding of the forest from the vantage point of the grass. But there are at least two very important lessons about the blades of grass. First, they are not just influenced by the trees; they also exert their own influence in return. For example, they compete with the trees for nutrients, protect the roots of the trees from heat, and attract beneficial organisms. Second, although each blade of grass interacts with only its most proximal environment—air, soil, nutrients—it is also affected by much more distal factors. Similarly, families have become increasingly aware of the impact of global warming. What used to be something quite abstract and distal now appears to be affecting daily life in the form of turbulent weather and shifting temperature patterns. Family members may consider using alternative fuels and perhaps changing daily routines, which in turn would shape the pace of climatic change. Thus, individuals and families affect societies, not just the reverse, and large-scale societal factors influence individuals in ways of which they are not always aware.

Many people are uncomfortable with the idea that policies shape family life; the dominant culture in the United States maintains a public stance of governmental nonintervention in family decisions. However, even though social institutions may be invisible at times, it is important to consider how institutions shape family life and, in turn, how families shape social institutions. In the following sections, we describe two theoretical perspectives that can be used as lenses for examining connections between societies and daily life: (a) the ecological perspective and (b) the life course perspective.

Ecological Perspective

According to *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* (n.d.-b), a *society* is “a community, nation, or broad grouping of people having common traditions, institutions, and collective activities and interests.” One way to examine societies is to think of them as comprising interconnected settings or contexts within which each of us grows and develops. Within this ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1988), the smallest or most immediate setting we experience is labeled the *microsystem*. Examples of microsystems are the home or children's school classrooms. Microsystems are linked by *mesosystems*. The relationships between home and school or home and workplace are examples of mesosystems; these can vary in strength depending on the degree to which activities in one setting support those in another. When the developing individual is affected by but does not participate in a particular setting, the term *exosystem* is used. For example, parents' workplaces are exosystems for children.

National Council on Family Relations. (2014). *Family life education content areas: Content and practice guidelines*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES: FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

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Macrosystems are the institutions of a society: “significant practices, relationships, or organizations” (*Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary*, n.d.-a). Religion, health care, education, the economy, and government are examples, but families are perhaps the most common of all societal institutions. All over the world and throughout history, cultures rely on families to nurture their members, prepare them for participation as citizens, and support them throughout life (Goode, 1982). Families thus are mediators between social change and individual lives, and because of that they have been targets for social policy, media, and other efforts to change human behavior.

Families are not isolated, self-enclosed social systems[,] and the other institutions of society, such as the military, the church, or the school system, continually rediscover that they are not dealing with individuals, but with members of families. Even in the most industrialized and urban of societies, where it is sometimes supposed that people lead rootless and anonymous lives, most people are in continual interaction with other family members. (Goode, 1982, p. 3)

Life Course Perspective

Alternatively, a focus on time may help family life educators understand the interaction of families and social institutions. The life course perspective on family life (Bengtson & Allen, 1993) suggests that individual family members move through a succession of roles over the course of their lives, such as

parent, spouse, worker, or student. Family members work together to build these roles. However, each role is played out in unique ways due to the historical moment. For example, in 1900 male breadwinning was at the heart of American fatherhood (Griswold, 1993). Today, social expectations of fathers are shifting: Are fathers more than breadwinners? Do we, as a society, expect and support fathers to be caregivers as well?

Social institutions are woven from the experiences of groups of men and women born at the same time, such as the Baby Boomers. The sheer size, amount of resources, and increased longevity of this birth cohort has reshaped society. The life course of individual Baby Boomers has been age structured, so that the transitions from school to work to retirement are socially created, socially recognized, and shared (Hagestad & Neugarten, 1985; Riley & Riley, 1994). The collective experiences of Baby Boomers have also loosened the age structure of the life course, encouraging a return to education for older adults, later childbirth, flexible retirement, and multiple phases of family formation. In other words, social changes affect different birth cohorts in different ways, and cohort experiences in turn create new social changes.

Social institutions also fit together with families in unique ways to manage the flexibility of the life course. The typical school day schedule of 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., with 3 months of summer vacation, reflects the concerns of a primarily agricultural economy that relied on the support of children during crop-tending seasons. Recent local moves to around-the-year schooling are efforts to update social institutions to changed postindustrial rhythms. The typical workday schedule of 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. likewise reflects the needs of a mostly White, mostly married, and mostly male workforce. In the global economy, flexible scheduling, temporary hires, and rapid readjustments to market forces have revolutionized family members’ experiences with work. However, workday expectations still govern many of our lives, reflecting a time lag needed for social institutions to reform themselves in sync with family life.

Social institutions appear invisible in part because we experience these issues so individually. We hold intense discussions with partners over when a working mother should go back to work, who should pick up the children, and whether or not to move and take a better job offer. These late-night debates are not necessarily private—they echo debates held across hundreds of dinner tables every night. In part, changing family roles reflect shifting expectations in social institutions. When the life course of family members is shaped so intimately by institutions in today’s society, private issues become public concerns, as C. Wright Mills suggested over 40 years ago (1959). In the following sections, we explore these theoretical perspectives by looking at four distinct periods of the lifespan. In each period, we identify an issue that is shaped distinctively by institutions in society.

Demographic change and children’s experiences. In this section, we bring together concepts related to the content and practice guidelines of families in society and the lifespan framework concept of childhood. To accomplish our purpose, we explore the connections between a demographic trend—changes in mothers’ employment—and the daily lives of children.

Demographic changes occur at the level of the society or the macrosystem. One well-known macro-level change is the increase in women's participation in the labor force. Like many others, this change is actually more complex than first meets the eye. Overall, women's participation began to increase more than a century ago (Rubin & Riney, 1994; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975, 1993), but women of color and poor and unmarried women had always participated in large numbers. The biggest recent change is that the participation of mothers has increased substantially in the past 40 years (Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004).

This macro-level change is made up of the decisions of millions of individual women to enter the labor force while their children are young, in response to financial pressures in the economy, personal fulfillment goals, or other reasons. These individual decisions have changed children's microsystems, specifically where and with whom they spend their time. For example, children today spend more time in the care of people other than their parents than in the past, regardless of whether their mothers are employed: In 2011, 88% and 28% of the children of employed and nonemployed mothers, respectively, were in at least one non-parental child care arrangement on a regular basis (Laughlin, 2013).

Another micro-level change is that mothers and fathers have begun to reallocate *carework*: the work of nurturing family members. For example, both employed and nonemployed women have substantially reduced their involvement in housework (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). Parents today—both mothers and fathers—are spending more time with their children than was the case 40 years ago (Bianchi et al., 2006). Fathers in families where mothers are employed tend to be more knowledgeable about their children's whereabouts and activities (Crouter, 2002). Scholars also have begun to pay more attention to the “invisible” carework of planning and coordination that keeps families running (England, 2005).

As a result of these microsystem changes, workers quite different from their predecessors now populate workplaces. Women now comprise almost half of the labor force. Most employed mothers and fathers are now in families with two paid jobs, not just one. Parents' workplaces are exosystems for children because children do not participate directly in but are affected by them. Workers—in particular, those who are highly skilled and highly

Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts

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Internal Dynamics of Families

Jennifer S. Reinke and Michael J. Walcheski

Every day you likely surf the Internet, send an e-mail, or share a tweet or a Facebook post. Although any of those tasks can be done with a few keystrokes and the click of a button, there are hundreds of processes happening behind the screen. The inner workings of a computer, tablet, or smartphone are similar to the internal processes of families: What we see on the outside is minuscule compared to what is going on behind the screen (or inside the family unit). For many, a casual observation of the family is a lot like using a computer—the specific movements are out of sight, yet arguably present.

Moreover, even while using only the most basic functions on a computer, gigabytes of information are concurrently being sent and received, encoded and decoded. It is the same with families. Just as we often find ourselves multitasking with technology (e.g., responding to e-mails *and* paying bills *and* looking up directions *and* listening to music), families are often multitasking in a similar manner. Rather than focusing solely on parenting responsibilities *or* economic security *or* relationship enhancement *or* managing health issues, families attend to cumulative demands in these multiple areas simultaneously.

The inner, often seemingly hidden, processes embedded in family life are known as the *internal dynamics of families*. Just as a computer technician must understand the inner workings of electronic devices to be successful in working with these gadgets, a family life educator must understand the internal dynamics of families to be effective in working with families.

The Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines, the Family Life Education Framework, and Internal Dynamics of Families: Connecting the Dots

Understanding the internal dynamics of families across the lifespan is essential in the preparation of family life educators, as normative family processes inform the development, execution, and evaluation of family life education programs. Moreover, helping family members understand specific dynamics is an essential component in assisting families in anticipating the internal processes across the lifespan. Integrating theory and practice involves two essential tools that assist family life educators: (a) the Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines (National Council on Family Relations [NCFR], 2014) and (b) the Family Life Education Framework (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011). When brought together, these two tools provide a context for understanding the internal dynamics of families.

Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines

The Internal Dynamics of Families Family Life Education content area focuses on identifying and understanding families' strengths and challenges and how family members relate to one another (NCFR, 2014). To be a competent practitioner in this content area, the Content and Practice Guidelines suggest family life educators have an acute awareness of the internal social processes of families, that is, an understanding of (a) communication patterns and challenges, (b) conflict management, (c) decision-making and goal setting, (d) normative and nonnormative family stresses and crises, and (e) special needs in families (e.g., understanding the unique joys and challenges inherent to being an adoptive, foster, blended, military, or migrant family, or families that include a person with a disability). In addition to identifying relevant content, the Content and Practice Guidelines outline what a family educator should be prepared to do relative to each content area. In terms of demonstrating competency in the area of internal dynamics of families, family life educators should be proficient in:

- identifying healthy and unhealthy characteristics of family relationships and family development;
- analyzing family functioning using various theoretical perspectives, including family systems;
- evaluating family dynamics in response to normative and nonnormative stressors and crises;
- strengthening communication processes, including conflict-management and problem-solving skills; and
- promoting strategies that help families function effectively.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES: INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF FAMILIES

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Family Life Education Framework

Intended as a guide for program development, delivery, and assessment of family life education programs, the Family Life Education Framework broadens the definition of family life education to include major content for the 10 family life education content areas throughout four major life stages: (a) childhood, (b) adolescence, (c) adulthood, and (d) later adulthood. This framework draws the family life educator's attention to

- families as sources of protection, guidance, affection, and support;
- the presence and nature of family problems;
- internal changes and stress in the family;
- different needs and expectations of family members;
- overt and covert family rules;
- intergenerational dynamics throughout the lifespan;
- power and authority in the family; and
- the value of family history, traditions, and celebrations.

Together, the Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines and the Family Life Education Framework strengthen the preparation of family life educators and informs the process of conducting family life education by outlining and normalizing what families can anticipate over the lifespan.

What Is Happening Behind the (Computer) Screen?

Contemporary films are a rich resource for exploring the internal dynamics of families (Hesley & Hesley, 2001; Shepard & Brew, 2005; Stinchfield, 2006). Using films such as *Life as a House* (Winkler, 2001), *My Sister's Keeper* (Furst et al., 2009), and *The Kids Are All Right* (Levy-Hinte et al., 2010) can be an effective way to bridge theory with practice. Observing family dynamics within a film accomplishes an important objective; the film becomes the common experience to study and discuss family dynamics. Family science students can use a film to identify common internal social processes and patterns, and family life educators can use films with families to explore their own family dynamics, providing a common ground to discuss shared experiences (Seery, Harpel, & Russo, n.d.).

One movie that illustrates the complexity of internal family dynamics undeniably well is *Rachel Getting Married* (Demme, Armian, & Platt, 2008). At the opening of the film, we are introduced to the Buchman family as Kym is released from drug rehab for a few days so she can attend her sister Rachel's wedding. At home, tension between Kym and the rest of her family is high, particularly with her dad (Paul) and Rachel. Paul expresses concern for Kym's well-being and whereabouts, which Kim interprets as mistrust. Kym balks at Rachel's choice of her best friend as maid of honor rather than she, and Rachel, for her part, resents the attention Kym's drug addiction is drawing away from her wedding. Underlying the family's dynamic is a tragedy that occurred years previously. Kym was responsible for the death of her preschool-age brother, Ethan, whom Kym's mom (Abby) left in her care one day when Kym was 16 years old. Kym was high on pain medication while driving home with Ethan and lost control of the car, veering off the bridge and into a lake. Kym was not able to get Ethan out of the car seat, and he drowned.

Throughout much of the film, Kym refuses to take responsibility for Ethan's death and blames her mother for leaving him in her care when she knew Kym struggled with addiction. During a tense confrontation about the accident, Abby defends her choice to leave Ethan with Kym by saying, "You were good with him! You were the best you were with him. I didn't expect you to kill him, sweetheart. You were not supposed to kill him!" The confrontation escalates and Abby slaps Kym; Kym returns the slap. Upset, Kym leaves Abby's house and purposefully drives into a boulder, wrecking her car.

This family tragedy, paired with the felt cumulative relational stressors that come with addiction, rear their heads intermittently throughout the film. We see a surge of lies, family secrets, mistrust, ire, blame, guilt, emotional distance, and unresolved conflict. Thus, we see the Buchmans' struggled repair attempts to mend damaged relationships from these cumulative stressors.

Rachel Getting Married illustrates what family life may be like for families negotiating the aftermath of a tragic event. As the story unfolds, the movie illustrates several internal family dynamics. Family members must manage their conflict by strengthening their communication processes and renegotiating family roles, rules, and boundaries. Using the Buchmans in *Rachel Getting*

Married as an example, we present the internal dynamics of families in light of the preparation of family life educators and the practice of family science in the following sections.

Integrating Theory and Practice

The content area of internal dynamics of families addresses one of the primary assumptions of family life education: learning about couple and family patterns and processes (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993; Darling & Cassidy, 2014). Perhaps more subtle than other content areas in the Content and Practice Guidelines, understanding the internal dynamics of families is essential to effective practice with families in family life education. To understand the complexity of movement in families, it is essential to have a fundamental understanding of primary theories and processes related to families. Theory provides a lens in which family dynamics, behaviors, and patterns can be viewed and analyzed (White, Klein, & Martin, 2015); this lens has changed and evolved into a clearer picture of the family over the past several decades (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001).

An in-depth discussion of theoretical underpinnings is beyond the scope of this work (for additional resources on these and other theoretical underpinnings, see the Key Resources noted at the end of this chapter. Instead, we have chosen to focus on four of the main theories that inform family life educators about the internal dynamics of families: (a) family systems theory (with some discussion of the circumplex model), (b) the ABC-X model of family stress, (c) human ecology theory, and (d) family development theory. Following the description of each theory is a direct application for the family life educator.

Family Systems Theory

Derived from general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), *family systems theory* made its way into family science in the late 1960s/early 1970s (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). In its most basic form, family systems theory is an approach to try to understand the interactions between and among people and patterns of family life, even across generations.

Family systems theory holds a couple of assumptions that are particularly important for family life educators. The first assumption states that all parts of the family system are interconnected and mutually influence each other; what happens to one family member affects every other member in some way (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Consider the dynamic nature of a mobile. Similar to the movements and shifts in balance in a mobile (some subtle and

Internal Dynamics of Families

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Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan

Julie Leventhal

Imagine that you are building a house. It is likely that you have never been considered a contractor or a home builder before, but that is ok because building a home is a fairly predictable process. The first step in building a home is planning. We decide whether building a house is really the right choice for where we currently are in life or for where we are going. We consider our options by weighing the benefits of home ownership with the costs. When we finally decide to move forward, we think about the materials that we are going to need to build a strong, long-lasting home. We deliberate about the bricks, roofing materials, siding, and so on, but there is one significant feature that we typically pay little attention to: the foundation. We do not normally think about the foundation all that much, instead leaving it to professionals. Even though we don't see it, it affects the entire structure of the house. Without a solid foundation, the house may not make it past the building phase. A durable foundation is chosen because we know that it will still provide continuous support regardless of the adversity it endures. Once the foundation is laid and the house is in place, we get to experience the home in ways we never had during the planning process. Building the house was exciting, new, and challenging, but now that it is complete other new experiences will continue to challenge us and teach us about what it means to own a home and be a part of a neighborhood or community. We remain confident that because our home was built on a lasting foundation, we will be able to face these new challenges and experiences with certainty and resolution.

Now take a moment to think about this home-building example, but replace the word *home* with *family*. Imagine that you are building or creating your own family. You plan and consider your options. Childbirth? Adoption? Surrogacy? How many? When? You weigh the benefits and costs of your various options. If and when you decide to move forward, you think of everything you are going to need to help your family grow: support, love, compassion, patience, and fun. But what about your foundation? What do you ultimately need to know in order to help your children and your family flourish? What is durable enough to help you endure the challenges that will surely arise at some point throughout your family life? What do you need to know in order to ensure that, regardless of the struggles you will face, you will be able to create and maintain a wonderful, encouraging, and inspiring family life? Sometimes you might think, "Oh, I will leave that for the doctor or the teachers to deal with. They're the professionals; they are trained to know what to do." However, you soon realize that during pregnancy you will need to know about how the baby is growing and changing, before he or she even meets a doctor or a teacher! Or, you may need to know how your child's development is influenced by his or her birth family, if you are adopting, and how that will ultimately affect your new family. The foundation that will provide you with a solid groundwork in your future family life is your knowledge of *human development*. Your child or children come along, and you get to experience your family in an entirely new way. Planning for this new family is scary yet exciting; new fears and excitement are ever present. When family or societal change comes your way, your knowledge of the foundation of human development will carry you through and you will be better equipped to handle the challenges that may sometimes rock your family.

As family life educators, teachers, professionals, parents,—basically anyone who works with individuals in any context—know, human development is a field that significantly assists us with understanding those around us. The field of human development has long been around to inform us of how we behave and interact differently at various points in time and why we do so (Berger, 2011). This chapter is intended to provide you with a brief overview of the main tenets of human development and to emphasize why understanding human development is essential for anyone who works with families. Before I discuss human development in more detail and the impact development has on families, take a moment to consider the various hypothetical scenarios provided below. Each scenario illustrates the importance of recognizing why certain behaviors occur, how they influence child and family functioning, and why we base practice on this knowledge.

Carl sees a flyer at the local recreation center advertising a series of parent sessions on childhood obesity. He figures it could not hurt anything to go and try to figure out why his son Jaxon continuously eats unhealthy foods. During the first session, Patti (the

**CURRICULUM GUIDELINES:
HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**

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parent educator) informs the parents of the multiple influences on childhood obesity. Some children may be more genetically prone to become overweight or obese. Others may constantly have numerous opportunities to eat fast food or unhealthy options due to unmonitored food choices. Finally, some children may observe their parents' eating habits and think that if their family members eat it, they can/should too. Carl does not understand how any of these potential risk factors are related to Jaxon's weight problems. Both Carl and his partner are of "average" size, and Carl has fairly efficient metabolism. The family tries to limit fast food consumption as much as they can. Carl is also in good shape, so he believes that Jaxon's weight gains are not the result of his own behaviors or influence. Regardless, Carl decides to complete the homework that Patti has assigned before the next parent session. He is supposed to track Jaxon's food choices as well as his own for the next week. As the week progresses, Carl begins to see a disturbing trend in Jaxon's eating habits. Every time Carl grabs a Coke or a small

snack like a bag of chips, Jaxon seems to grab a snack as well. When Carl takes multiple servings during dinner, Jaxon also takes more. At the next session, Patti discusses how even though Carl's snacks don't seem like much for him, Jaxon may not share the same metabolism as his father. Consequently, when Jaxon mimics his father's eating habits, it has a different effect on Jaxon than it does on Carl. Through the help provided by this assignment and Patti's knowledge of physical development (i.e., differences in metabolism) and social development (i.e., observing and imitating behaviors from others), she is able to help Carl see the impact that his habits have on his son.

Ten-year-old Mario and his mother were forced out of their one-bedroom apartment because his mother Janet was unable to pay rent. They have stayed at friends' homes for the past 2 weeks and Janet is desperate to find something more permanent and closer to a new job that she is about to start. One of Mario's teachers tells Janet about a neighborhood where the homes are inexpensive because they are fairly old and outdated. Janet investigates and finds a two-bedroom cottage from the 1940s that she is able to afford each month. After living there for a few months, Mario starts to have difficulty paying attention in class. His once-good test scores in school have slowly been slipping. After consulting with Mario's pediatrician, it is determined that Mario has an elevated blood lead level. Janet is confused because she doesn't understand how Mario could be ingesting or absorbing any lead. A case worker from the school meets with Janet and eventually they determine that lead may be present in the current home they are renting because it was built before the legal regulations regarding the use of lead in construction materials (e.g., paint) had been put into place. Janet is shocked, because she never knew that lead could be present in the paint of older homes and that lead exposure or poisoning could affect Mario's cognitive abilities in such a way. However, with a little bit of information provided by the case worker regarding how the environment affects the brain and thinking processes, Janet is now more informed and better prepared to watch out for new, unfamiliar dangers for her son. Without this education, Janet might have never been able to uncover the issue and eventually resolve it by seeking out a new home.

Mr. Edwards is a teacher at a preschool near a military base. He occasionally has 4- and 5-year-olds in her class who are from military families that do not live on the base. One student, Ciara, started in his class after her family was transferred to the nearby base a few months back. Although Ciara initially had very few problems integrating into the classroom and everyday life, she has started to act aggressively toward her peers by hitting and kicking. She also interrupts frequently during group time and has difficulty engaging in independent activities; she has a tendency to interfere with what others are doing rather than seeking out activities for herself. Initially, Mr. Edwards would simply remove Ciara from the classroom in order to stop the behavior and prevent the other children from responding in similar ways. However, these behaviors were occurring so frequently that Ciara was often missing important time that could have been spent strengthening her skills in the classroom. Mr. Edwards finally decided to call a meeting with Ciara's parents and, in doing so, he found out that Ciara's family was currently going through a post-deployment phase and a pre-deployment phase simultaneously. Her mother had unexpectedly come home on leave but was headed back overseas within 3 months. Both of Ciara's parents stated that they had been noticing problems with her behavior at home too. Mr. Edwards began to realize that many of Ciara's behaviors might be occurring due to feelings of insecurity and anxiety related to her mother coming home and leaving again within such a short period of time. The next day, Mr. Edwards spoke with Ciara, who indicated that she was sad that her mother was leaving her again and felt like she did not care about her. As a result of this new awareness, Mr. Edwards integrated some work on recognizing difficult emotions and on understanding military family life into the class curriculum and he slowly saw changes in Ciara's behavior. Although she still had occasional angry outbursts, Ciara was not trying to seek out negative attention as often, and she was better able to process

her feelings without taking it out on her friends. Ciara's father also mentioned that her behavior problems at home had lessened as well and that Ciara was now able to get along with her siblings in a more positive way. Mr. Edwards's knowledge of how emotional development and family issues are related helped inform him of the best practices he could use in the classroom that would help not only Ciara but her family as well.

Rakesh and Sari are going through a divorce. They have engaged in some intense marital conflict at home, but they have done their best to keep it behind closed doors so that they are not arguing in front of their children. As part of their divorce agreement, they have decided to go to a 6-week seminar on how to help their children through the divorce. During one of the seminar sessions, they learn about the various outcomes children can experience if they witness negative marital conflict: anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, negative attention-seeking strategies, and destructive conflict resolution strategies with peers. They are surprised to hear this because their youngest child, Fatima, is experiencing some of these negative outcomes; specifically, aggression with her peers. However, even though they see similar behavior patterns, Rakesh and Sari are adamant that it is not the result of their arguing because they usually just walk away from one another after conflict or raise their voices in their bedroom only after the children are asleep. As the divorce seminar continues, Rakesh and Sari learn more about why children may engage in these behaviors and how they process their related emotions. As part of the required work for the divorce seminar, Rakesh and Sari are asked to observe Fatima's peer-related behaviors for two weeks in order to identify possible trends in these new behaviors. While at the park one day, Sari hears Fatima say, "I just don't love you anymore, so you need to get out!" to a child she is playing with. Sari is taken aback because she said similar words to Rakesh one night during an argument that they thought the children were not aware of. Through more observations and experiences like this, Rakesh and Sari come to realize that Fatima has been picking up a lot more conflict and tension related to the divorce than they initially thought. This knowledge of social development and the effect that marital conflict can have on children's relationships helped Rakesh and Sari chose different conflict strategies during their divorce process. The change they experienced ultimately led to some noticeable changes in how Fatima deals with conflict with her friends as well.

Human Growth & Development Across the Lifespan

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ADULTHOOD

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LATER ADULTHOOD

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Human Sexuality Across the Lifespan

Carol Anderson Darling and Stacy Howard

Many individuals and families are struggling to sort out conflicting messages about sexuality. Whereas the influences of movies, music, advertisements, and the Internet provide the allure and excitement of sexuality, the dangers and problems associated with sexual interactions are often conveyed through news programs, public policies, school messages, and parents. Thus, in our culture we must find our way in a world of contradictions. While the media scream, “Always say yes,” many individuals admonish, “Just say no,” but the majority just say nothing (Brown & Taverner, 2001).

Sexuality Education

Over the years, the term *sex* education was commonly used; however, it has been replaced by *sexuality* education, an expansive term that goes beyond biology and sexual behaviors to indicate who you are as a person. It encompasses the sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, pleasures, and behaviors of individuals, along with the feelings you have about your body, gender, and the persons to whom you are attracted and love. It is a natural part of who you are, how you live, and how you express your sexuality that all change through time (Darling & Cassidy, 2014). Whereas *human sexuality* is defined as “an understanding of the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of sexual development across the lifespan so as to achieve healthy sexual adjustment” (National Council on Family Relations, 2014), *sexuality education* is a lifelong process of developing a strong foundation for sexual health by acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, 2004).

Over the past few decades in the United States, the activities related to sexuality education have increased and changed in shape, scope, and size because of new diseases, technologies, economic and social changes, and changing political paradigms about what roles government should play (Kendall, 2008). The Internet and other media sources provide considerable content related to sexuality education, but have fewer regulations than traditional media venues, such as public television and radio. Formal sexuality education is less accessible online than sexuality-related content; moreover, the availability of sites with quality sexual content is mixed. Whereas the Internet provides access to a broad range of valid and informative sites on sexuality education, they are difficult to locate compared to learning about particular topics, such as how to correctly put on a condom (Isaacson, 2006).

Sexuality education is multifaceted; it begins with parents, deals with examining issues honestly, and is not about telling others what to do. Nonverbal sexuality education is just as important as verbal communications. When people squirm at the mention of sexual topics, stop talking as others enter the room, or display facial expressions and body language in reaction to sexual matters, they are providing nonverbal sexuality education. Parents often do not talk about sexuality with their children because they are embarrassed and/or perceive that there are things they do not know.

Although parents are still important sexuality educators, adding school-based sexuality education can result in greater parent–child communication about sexuality. However, this all depends on whether the type of program being implemented is (a) abstinence only, (b) abstinence-based or comprehensive sexuality education (with the inclusion of contraception and safer sex), or (c) holistic sexuality education (elements of comprehensive sexuality education within a wider context of personal and sexual growth and development). Studies comparing the results of the first and second type in the United States have indicated that abstinence-only programs have no positive effects on sexual behavior or the risk of teenage pregnancy, whereas comprehensive sexuality programs have such outcomes (Kohler, Manhart, & Lafferty, 2008). Although in the United States the first two types predominate, in Western Europe the third type is more common (World Health Organization & Federal Centre for Health Education, 2010). An overview of the general goals of sexuality education includes the following (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, 2004):

- Information—present accurate information about human sexuality (e.g., growth and development, reproduction, gender identity, contraception, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections [STIs])

National Council on Family Relations. (2014). *Family life education content areas: Content and practice guidelines*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

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- Attitudes, values, and insights—provide opportunities to question, explore, and assess sexual attitudes and values; increase self-esteem; and understand obligations and responsibilities
- Relationships and interpersonal skills—assist development of interpersonal skills (e.g., communication, decision-making, assertiveness, peer-refusal skills) and enhance capacity for caring, supportive, and pleasurable intimate and sexual relationships
- Responsibility—facilitate responsibility in sexual relationships, encourage resistance to pressures for involvement in unwanted and early sexual intercourse, and encourage use of contraception and other health measures

Integrating Theory and Practice into Sexuality Education

Theories contribute to our understanding of sexual behaviors and interactions by providing reasonable explanations of various phenomena and guiding the practice of sexuality education. Although no single theory can explain all there is to know about sexuality, scientific theory provides a foundation by utilizing a set of concepts to explain particular occurrences. Because we

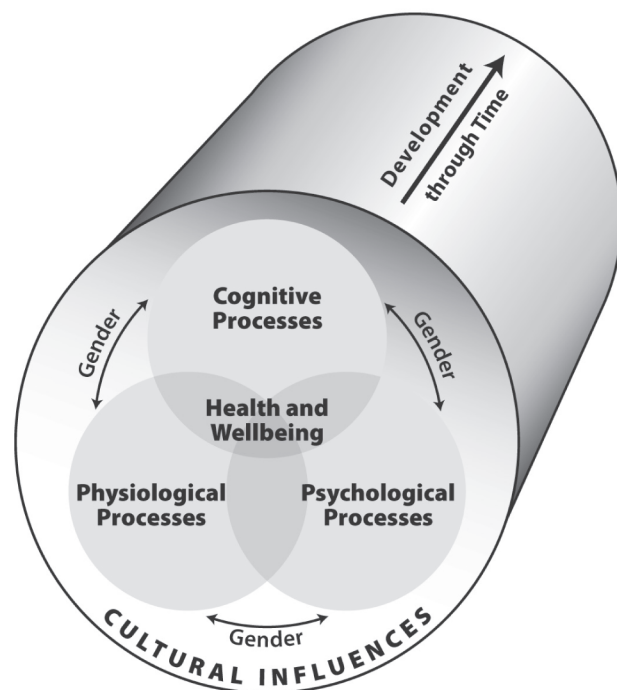
are affected by our childhood, familial, gendered, and socialization experiences along with our cultural beliefs, the integration of multiple theories is warranted. Although sexuality can be analyzed from numerous theoretical frameworks, a few theories and applicable examples are highlighted here to provide a broad perspective for analyzing human sexuality:

- The *family ecosystems framework* can be used to provide an environmental context when analyzing contraceptive decision making (e.g., physiological, relational, legal, educational, and sociocultural dimensions).
- *Family systems theory* can provide insight regarding intergenerational communications about sexuality, physical and psychological boundaries related to sexuality, feedback in coupled relationships, and parent–child sexual communications. It can include discussions of boundaries and distance regulation related to parental, sibling, relational, or personal subsystems. For example, what, when, and why are certain doors closed in the home, and what boundaries do family members have related to their own bodies?
- *Social exchange theory* can enhance understanding some of the rewards and costs related to the potential outcomes of various sexual behaviors and interactions (e.g., premarital or extramarital sexual relationships along with equity of exchanges in relationships).
- *Developmental theory* can facilitate an understanding of sexuality from a perspective of change. Sexuality is a natural part of life from birth to death that can be seen as children begin to learn the norms surrounding their newly discovered bodies, as teens begin to struggle during puberty, as adults continue to seek and enjoy sexual relationships, and as we continue to age. Regardless of the decade or one’s point in life, sexuality remains important throughout each stage and not only in one’s reproductive years, as some may believe.

Model of Sexuality: Organization of Sexuality Content

The content in sexuality courses can vary according to the needs, ages, and developmental levels of the students, as well as the settings in which the course is taught and the length of time allotted. The Model of Sexuality (see Figure 18.1) can be used to facilitate planning and organizing the content of sexuality education programs, whether in short, long, formal (structured institutional),

FIGURE 18.1. MODEL OF SEXUALITY



Note: From *Family life education: Working with families across the lifespan* (3rd ed., p. 209, by C. Darling and D. Cassidy, with L. Powell, 2014, Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Copyright 2014 by C. Darling and D. Cassidy. Adapted with permission.

setting), or nonformal (organized, but flexible nonacademic) settings (Darling & Cassidy, 2014). This model focuses on the interaction of development through time of physiological, psychological, and cognitive processes; gender; and culture as they influence health and well-being. To help readers further understand this model, each element will be highlighted along with learning experiences that can be used to facilitate applying the concepts in this model. Because we are examining human sexuality through the lifespan, activities have been shared that can be used at different points during the lifespan.

Development Through Time

Within the context of sexuality, time has two parallel dimensions: (a) historical time and (b) personal time. *Historical time* refers to changes over time in our culture; interpersonal relationships; and science related to love, gender transitions, and understanding of the physiology of sexuality. Sexuality knowledge, attitudes, and interactions are influenced by the historical era in which they occur, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. For example, the public's view of lesbians and gay men has become significantly more favorable in the past decade, with both supporters and opponents now believing that the legal recognition of gay marriage is "inevitable" (Pew Research Center, 2013). Technological advancements, social media, and provocative behaviors have also permeated our cultural context, as noted by the increasing role of cell/smartphones in relationships (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), sexting (e.g., sexually explicit messages or pictures transmitted by phones), and twerking (dancing in a sensual manner). These changes affect the age cohorts of people moving through the life cycle at that time.

Historical time. The role of historical time can be demonstrated through the integration of data from research articles that review several decades of findings and trends regarding sexual behaviors, such as examining premarital intercourse over time (Darling & Kallen, 1985). In addition, using older books on sexuality, which can be found in antique shops, garage sales, and/or libraries, can be enlightening regarding how things have changed through the years. In *Light on Dark Corners*, diagrams of healthy sperm and testicles compared to unhealthy sperm and testicles from victims of sexual excess can result in some interesting conversations (Jefferis & Nichols, 1860). Another example can be found in *How to Attain and Practice the Ideal Sex Life* (Rutgers, 1940). Discussions of the "nuptial flight of new sperm cells" and "surprising effects of yoghurt and oil of turpentine" in removing the "odour of putrefactive processes" is an enlighten-

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Interpersonal Relationships

Richard Glotzer

The term *relationship* covers a large aspect of human experience and presents a challenge for family science professionals to make sense of it. The descriptors used to identify relationships are actually shorthand for various types of human interactive experiences. In this chapter, I situate the components of relationships across the lifespan in various periods of developmental time and social environments. Readers who have specific interests or simply want to learn more are encouraged to consult the References section of this chapter or consult the website of the National Council on Family Relations (www.ncfr.org). For those pursuing the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential, reflecting on how relationships fit into the required areas of mastery is a worthwhile effort.

Time provides the measure across which relationships unfold. The growth, maturation, or fading of relationships may be sampled at discrete points, as in research, or informally if we are reflective. We tend to experience relationships as continuous in real time. I begin this chapter with an overview of relationships, starting with the fundamental relationship of parents (or caregivers) with children and adolescents; and then friendships; and finally to the significant others with whom we share and define our days through love, long-term bonds, and lives spent together. Throughout, I provide several case studies that illustrate various components of relationships and how family life educators can play an important role in helping families, couples, and individuals, navigate through them.

Parents, Caregivers, and Children

Infancy and Young Childhood

Beginning with attachment and the meeting of basic physical needs by their mother, infants need socially interactive environments of trust and certainty. Developmental processes drive the desire for mastery of one's physical space and the objects in that physical universe, and a safe physical and emotional environment encourages trial-and-error experimentation (Diamond & Hopson, 1998). The gradual mastery of language, beginning in infancy with the hearing and making of sounds, is an important component of entering into relationships with parents, siblings, and others. Infants learn that specific patterns of speech provide social cues about meaning and participation. Intensity, volume, and tone all provide these cues (Kuhl, 2010).

Recent research has demonstrated that at 18 months there are already differences grounded in socioeconomic status in language acquisition and vocabulary (Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder, 2013). This may be less important in the family than when children face the challenge of relating to others in a wider environment (Sinatra, 2008). Language development is marked from 18 months to preschool age by increases in vocabulary. The 200-word vocabulary of an 18-month-old may grow to 900 words by 30–36 months. By kindergarten, the ability to speak in full sentences using a 2,000+-word vocabulary, vary verb tenses (locating actions in time), and describe events and their environment have been achieved. Mastery of language provides a means of expressing wants, desires, and feelings without resorting to visual displays or aggression, eliciting more positive interactive social responses from peers (Hart & Risley, 1995). Language skills also advance self-efficacy in that it allows for the expression of needs or desires.

By kindergarten age, play and other forms of self-expression become more complex, self-directed, and interpersonal. Imagination is used in play with others. Deciding on the setting for imaginative play (e.g., a kitchen, party, fire station, dressing up) provides the social cues of what one is likely to observe in such settings and includes remarkable room for creativity and improvisation. Interactive play promotes the development of a variety of skills that are important for relationships. The benefits of reciprocity, listening to others, and learning to read body language and facial expressions are all valuable (Capone, 2007).

Children learn both through what is told to them and what is modeled in the home. The way parents communicate, solve problems together, and relate to the outside world models behavior and ways of responding to people and the environment. Families

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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offer negative examples for relationship building if they are isolating social fortresses or socially chaotic; one mode is constructed to keep others out, and the other is so unregulated that disruption rather than predictability is the dominant mode of life (Erel & Burman, 1995; Meyer, Raikes, Virmani, Waters, & Thompson, 2014; Rothbaum & Weisz, 1994).

Most families establish permeable social limits in their households, exercising regulation and allowing nonfamily visitors entry on the basis of individual characteristics and the interfacing of outside visitors with internal family routines. Organized play dates and, later, independent visits by children to one another's residences, are a part of this process. Encouraging the development of relationships involves accentuating the prospects of enjoyable interactions through welcoming behaviors, play activities, refreshments, and offering a child-friendly physical environment. Friendship development benefits from comfortable, stress-free

interactions; good communication; reciprocity; and the expectation of fair and predictable behavior (Berndt, 2004).

Moral sensibility and empathy for others begin in the home and are carried into the wider environment of nonfamily members. Empathy is an important component of all relationships, be they intimate or casual and momentary. Through empathy we learn to interpret and understand the emotions and circumstances of others. Part of social development over time involves applying empathic thinking to progressively larger, more abstract collectives of people. Mature empathy allows us to express concern and pursue engagement in prosocial behaviors on behalf of others with whom only a symbolic attachment is shared (Decety, 2014; de Waal, 2008).

Middle Childhood and Early Adolescence

The transition from physicality to words—as in the often-heard parental admonishment “Use your words”—parallels self-directed autonomous action. This is followed by an incrementally complex scaffolding of rewards and penalties in the elementary school setting between ages 5 and 12. Children learn about the self and modes of relational behavior that are taught, modeled, and monitored through collaborative projects, school, and classroom “citizenship” as well as rule-regulated recreation (Berns, 2013; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Gender differences in socialization become evident as well. Boys tend to be more rule bound and girls more focused on the emotional and caring aspects of interactions and activities (Gilligan, 1982). As children form relationships, they organize them into networks as well as inner and outer circles of friendship. Distinguishing among social circumstances, expectations that arise from the social environment and the dimensions of relationships (e.g., close friends, schoolmates, and acquaintances) are important skills for appropriate interactions (Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004).

Peer relationships. The desire for friendships and social belonging is basic among children and has developmental implications for the lifespan (Hartup & Stevens, 1997). The skills necessary to make friends are important, and many children (and adolescents) need assistance in developing such skills. Although all children desire social acceptance, some children have fewer but closer relationships, whereas others are gregarious and seek individual friendships and membership in social groups, and still others have difficulties making friends (Engle, McElwain, & Lasky, 2011). The dimensions and intensity of friendships vary. Watching a favorite movie may be most satisfying with a few close friends, but organizing a soccer game requires a different calculus for inclusion. In other words, interpersonal closeness, loose familiarity, gender, age, and other criteria matter far less when one is trying to ensure that there are enough players. Relationships outside of the home indicate a degree of autonomy, the development of interests, and the ability to manage peer relations. We also get glimpses of temperament and personality in children at this developmental stage (Lansford, Yu, Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 2014).

Personality traits and styles. Psychologists have identified five core personality traits: (a) Extraversion, (b) Openness, (c) Agreeableness, (d) Conscientiousness, and (e) Neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992). These very broad traits are hard to measure; however, each is associated with clusters of more specific behaviors (Rothbart, Ahadi, & Evans, 2000). Parents can more readily identify the subcategories (extraverts are gregarious and express emotions easily; open children have wide interests and imagination; agreeable children are aware of the feelings of others and inclined to be affectionate; conscientious children exercise self-control goal-directed behaviors; and neurotic children are more likely to display moodiness, anxiety, or irritation with others [Cherry, 2010]). Personality traits are partly genetic predispositions but are strongly influenced by life experience and the social environment. Personality becomes stable between young and middle adulthood but retains an element of plasticity over the life course (Roberts, Wood, & Caspi, 2010).

Lifespan theorists have long divided experience into *idiographic* (individually occurring) and *nomothetic* (commonly or collectively occurring) events (Nesselrode & Molenaar, 2010; Thomae, 1999). Idiographic experiences are unique and occur at the

individual level. They can become positive or negative reference points in socialization and relationships. Nomothetic experiences promote shared occurrences and a common culture. Some combination of both contributes to personality development and its expression in the self and relationships. By observing the focal point of peer relationships (e.g., sports, movies, conversation, books, hobby interests), we see something of the focus of one's developing personality.

School. Forming relationships and becoming a schoolmate are intrinsic aspects of education. The school creates an entire social realm that is regulated and monitored by adults who are nonfamily members. Children are introduced to the age-graded peer group. Woven into the fabric of the school experience is the development of self-esteem, or how one feels emotionally and psychologically about oneself and one's worth compared to others (Salmivalli & Isaacs, 2005; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Being in step with one's peers during schooling promotes a sense of group belonging and positive self-appraisal in relation to peers on a variety of criteria. Children who achieve a positive self-appraisal tend to be more confident, discerning, and efficacious (Fitzpatrick & Bussey, 2014).

The influence of mass media. The intrusion of consumer culture into childhood and adolescence influences parent-child and peer relationships and is increasingly common to Western societies (Lindsay & Mayher, 2013). Aside from material culture, parents and children are encouraged to view peer groups through socially constructed needs. Households with children and teens account for about \$300 billion in spending in the United States. Although estimates vary, The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood (n.d.) estimates that children under 14 spend about \$40 billion, and adolescents spend another \$159 billion. Child- and teen-influenced adult purchases account for \$500 billion in spending (Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, n.d.). Advertising costs are in the \$15–\$18 billion range. Marketing is growing in sophistication, with marketers increasingly willing to cross sensitive social boundaries to capture this bonanza. As children pass into adolescence, they become more potent consumers, increasingly conscious of the values and tastes of peer groups.

Current marketing trends attempt to encourage parents to acquiescence to their offspring, thus embracing the social lives of children and adolescents at more advanced developmental stages. For example, fourth- and fifth-graders are encouraged to emulate junior high preteens, and preteens are encouraged to dress, act, and emulate the social preoccupations of high school. Experimentation with cigarettes and alcohol may come at earlier ages. Sexualized gender roles are also part of the marketers' social construction of growing up and inevitably a component of the trappings of relation-

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Family Resource Management

Tami James Moore and Sylvia M. Asay

The family remains the world's oldest form of relationship and is a universal phenomenon (Sokalski, 1994). Across time, families have comprised the basic units of any society. Although recently there has been much discussion about the decline of the family, this seems improbable when the majority of us still search for meaningful intimate relationships and make the decision to become parents. There is no question that the family is changing. Skolnick and Skolnick (2014) pointed to evidence that the family is in transition, with dramatic changes in its structure and functions, the changing roles of men and women, and shifting views of the marriage relationship. Evolving communications and technology systems have accelerated this transition. We cannot imagine life without cell phones, the Internet, or fast food. All these changes are occurring in an environment of economic uncertainty. Families of the future will not only need to be aware of the changes that are taking place, but they also will need to adapt the way they manage resources to meet these new challenges.

What Is Family Resource Management?

The National Council on Family Relations (n.d.) defines *family resource management* as “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.” Historically, the field of family science has been closely associated with business management. Both fields began with efforts to facilitate efficient and effective use of resources. Business management emphasizes planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the use of resources to accomplish their goals. Although the family is not a business, it has many of the same goals. Most of family management begins with that same decision-making process, but family management is more personal, with more emotional, intangible factors to consider.

Families are units whose members strive to meet the needs of all members while preserving that family unit over a period of time. Both individual and group needs are present. To fulfill these needs, resources must be identified and secured. Money and other material possessions are easy to identify as important family resources; however, the human resources that all family members have are just as important as, if not even more critical to, the survival and maintenance of the family.

The process of identifying needs and securing resources is always changing within a family unit. Some decisions are made frequently and are repeated over and over. Family members shopping for groceries may choose the same products with very little deliberation each week. These products have been identified through previous decision-making processes, and until family members decide that these basic products no longer meet their needs they will be habitual purchases. Other situations require more deliberation and information seeking. The working parent who is confronted on Monday morning with an ill child care provider must find a specific resource to meet the immediate need. The stress level in this type of decision is much higher because this decision affects the family unit on multiple levels.

Contextual Influences in Family Resource Management

Because families do not exist in a vacuum, outside influences come into the family environment to change the way that the family thinks and behaves. These influences come from history, culture, and the environment.

Historical influences. Throughout history various ideas and circumstances have influenced the way families manage their resources. The early Greek and Roman cultures left a wealth of information about family management that can be found in the writings of the ancient philosophers. The word *economy* comes from the ancient Greek *oikos nomos*, which means *house* and *management*. The 13th-century Church of England also left a legacy of instruction for management. As the Church experienced a reform movement, more clergy were encouraged to speak out on marriage and family issues (Murray, 1987). By the turn of the century,

National Council on Family Relations. (2014). *Family life education content areas: Content and practice guidelines*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

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the world was changing at a rapid pace. The Industrial Revolution had forced men and women to move into very different spheres of influence. Men gave their energies to their work, now outside the home, and women gained more power over the household. Since the early 1900s, many changes have taken place in living conditions, equipment, and even our own values and standards. The way in which the egalitarian family of today secures and uses resources is drastically different than in previous decades.

Cultural influences. Goode (2014) stated that the family is not only a group of individuals but is also part of the larger social network. Any study of individuals and families in the context of a global community could not ignore the enormous impact that culture and diversity have on the identification, use, and production of resources.

One cultural influence is one's own family experience.

When two individuals marry, they bring with them expecta-

tions for their new family that stem from the experiences in their family of origin, including their unique cultural heritage. How their family managed resources will follow them into their new relationship, and these two individuals will eventually develop their own way of managing resources.

Another important cultural influence on family resource management is *worldview*. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) developed a framework for comparing and contrasting the different value systems between and among different cultural groups. The three assumptions underlying their work include the idea that (a) there is a limited number of common human problems for which all peoples at all times must find some solution, (b) there is a wide range of possible solutions for these problems, and (c) the alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times. They identified five distinctive *orientations* that exist within any particular cultural group yet differ between groups: Human Nature, Man–Nature, Time, Activity, and Relational.

The Human Nature orientation may be viewed by a cultural group as evil, a mixture of good and evil, or as basically good. Often, cultural practices are based on these beliefs. The practice of imprisoning criminals for certain periods of time and providing them rehabilitative treatment suggests a culture that believes that humans are basically good but can be misled.

The relationship between humans and nature (Man–Nature) is an orientation that can be categorized in three perspectives. Humans can be subjugated to, in harmony with, or have mastery over nature. Refusal of medical treatment is illustrative of a subjugation orientation. Air conditioning and heating systems are used by many to gain mastery or control over the weather elements.

Every cultural group must deal with all three components of the Time orientation—past, present, and future—to maintain existence over time. The preference or dependence on a particular time orientation separates cultural groups. Participating in a financial savings plan implies that an individual is preparing for the future. Investing 4 or more years to obtain a college degree is another example of future-time orientation. Cultural groups that devote a great deal of time to the study of and the continued practicing of past rituals, art forms, and doctrine are reflective of past-time orientation.

The value placed on human activity in the Activity orientation also differs between cultural groups. Some focus on being, or on living only for the day. Others focus on becoming, searching, and working for self-growth and improvement. A third orientation places more emphasis on accomplishments that are measurable by external standards. All three orientations may exist within any large group of people; however, the group as a whole often shows a preference for one. Members who show evidence of that preferred activity are then deemed to be successful.

The last orientation identified to differentiate between cultures is Relational. The Relational orientation comprises three different patterns: (a) lineal, (b) collateral, and (c) individualistic. The lineal pattern is characterized by dominant group goals, a chain of command, and a commitment to maintaining the group over time. A collateral pattern is reflected in the concept of a team. Someone operating from the individualistic pattern will place a primary emphasis on personal goals and objectives as well as on personal autonomy.

How does this worldview framework influence family decision-making? Each and every decision made by a family reflects cultural preferences at multiple levels. For instance, when a parent decides to participate in a college savings plan for his or her child, this decision reflects core beliefs that education is important, that sacrificing today for something that might come to be in the future is a worthy action, and that a college degree is an accomplishment viewed positively by the larger social group.

Environmental influences. The resources that are available for use also influence family management. The availability and accessibility of resources greatly influence how they are used. Some families may have a limited amount of resources available because of their geographic location or their economic status. For example, if a family member has an illness that requires help from a specialist,

and the family lives in an area that is far from where a doctor with that kind of expertise is located, they may be unable to access that help. Getting help from a specialist may also be a problem if they are unable to pay or their insurance does not cover that expense.

If a resource is limited, the family may have to pay more to get that resource than they would if it were plentiful. A family who wants to provide fresh fruits and vegetables year 'round will have to pay more if they live in an area where that resource must be shipped in from other places.

Another environmental influence that needs to be considered is that of the economic climate and its effect on the family, whether it is the recent recession or the Great Depression of the 1930s. Even years after a financially difficult period of time, the family may make decisions that were formed as a result of a time when they had to cut back or go without.

How Do Families Use Resources?

Humans require massive amounts of resources necessary for survival, physical growth, and personal growth. Basic needs, such as food, water, shelter, and clothing, are obvious. Other resources are necessary to facilitate education, community, and recreation. The study of family resource management considers both the consumption of resources and the availability and expenditure of human resources by family members.

The identification of resources to meet specific needs is guided by *culture*, *availability*, and *accessibility*. Ordinary tap water will quench your thirst, but you may choose to buy bottled water because it is popular. Your family may want to buy a single-family detached house, but if apartments are the only choice available you will have to settle for that until other options are available. You may want to attend an Ivy League college, but if you do not meet the requirements for admission, another selection must be made.

As families identify needs, their focus turns to finding ways to fulfill those needs. The larger the pool of resources, the higher the probability that needs will be met efficiently and effectively. In managing family resources, sufficiency is also an important consideration. Because family needs are dynamic and ongoing, any one particular resource may prove useful on some occasions but not even be considered at other times. For example,

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Parenting Education and Guidance

Arminta L. Jacobson

As parents assume roles and responsibilities for their children and adolescents' development, they often need guidance and support through parent education. *Parent education* has been defined as programs, support services, and resources offered to parents and caregivers that are designed to support them or increase their capacity and confidence in raising healthy children (Carter, 1996). The National Parenting Education Network (NPEN, 2014) states that the goals of parenting education are to (a) strengthen families by providing relevant, effective education and (b) to support and encourage an optimal environment for the healthy growth and development of parents and children. NPEN defines *parents* as key persons who play a central parenting role in a child's life. Parent education and support for child guidance has evolved historically (Darling & Cassidy, 2014; Duncan & Goddard, 2011) and continues to evolve as communities become more diverse, as the science of teaching and learning advances, and as new technologies foster new ways of accessing information and communicating with and within families. Strengthening parenting and families is the focus of a variety of programs and models, with group and individual approaches, across a wide range of settings. Parenting education is also concerned with the context of parenting within the family system and larger ecosystem while addressing specialized needs and concerns of parents (see the National Council on Family Relations' [NCFR, 2014] *Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines*).

Interests and needs related to parenting change across the family lifespan. As families develop, issues may become more complex and concerns about guidance change. Guidance and other issues vary across the lifespan, within individual families, and across the diversity of cultures and environments. In families with infants and children, basic issues of protection, caregiving, and socialization highlight concerns. Parenting school-age and adolescent children focuses on encouraging and guiding children as they learn to make decisions for themselves and enter into relationships apart from the family (Hamner & Turner, 2001).

The body of knowledge needed for effective parent education and guidance includes knowledge of parenting processes, parenting roles, parent-child relationships, effective guidance, human development, the dynamics of family development and relationships, knowledge of diverse cultures and special needs of families, and learning processes across the lifespan (Jacobson & Hirschy, 2000a). The National Extension Parent Education Model provides a useful frame for planning content of parent education (Smith, Cudaback, Goddard, & Myers-Walls, 1994). Twenty-nine critical parenting practices are organized under the six themes of *self-care, understand, guide, nurture, motivate, and advocate*.

Parent educators not only need a strong foundational understanding of developmentally appropriate parenting and guidance as children develop from birth to the launching stage but also knowledge and understanding of adult stages of development, which correspond to stages of parent development. In addition, parent educators need specialized knowledge for educating parents with special needs or in special circumstances. Examples include (a) educating grandparents raising grandchildren, (b) supporting parents of children with medical or other special needs, (c) strengthening parenting in families with violence, (d) addressing the needs of children and parents during marital separation and divorce, (e) teaching strategies for parenting at a distance (e.g., military deployment or incarceration), and (f) understanding parenting issues from the perspectives of diverse cultures and environments.

The 10 family life education content areas for which Certified Family Life Educators are formally prepared suggest the depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding they are prepared to apply and integrate into their professional roles as parent educators. These content areas are listed in Table 21.1.

Behaviors of parent educators vary depending on their attitudes and assumptions as well as their experiences with parenting and knowledge of the teaching/learning process. The assumptions and attitudes parent educators hold about human development, relationships, parenting, and variations within parenting practices are important keys to empowering and strengthening parents in their roles. To be effective with parents it is important to have knowledge and understanding of parents' ecological influences as well as to practice self-reflection to examine one's own attitudes and assumptions. The basis of these assumptions and atti-

National Council on Family Relations. (2014). *Family life education content areas: Content and practice guidelines*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

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PARENTING EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE**

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tudes should be a commitment to strengthening parenting, knowledge, experience, and sensitivity to others (Jacobson & Hirschy, 2001).

Parent educators who nurture, respectfully encourage, and motivate others to learn and develop build on individual and family strengths. They involve parents as collaborative and active participants and partners in their own learning and development through assessment, planning, discussion, and reflection. The essential fostering of a sense of trust and empowerment requires parent educators to listen attentively, communicate clearly, and encourage confidently while believing and integrating the values and principles of the Family Life Education Code of Ethics into their practice (NCFR, 2012). Skilled, positive, and purposeful behaviors of parent educators also provide a model for parents as they subsequently teach, guide, and influence their children and adolescents (Dunst, Trivette, & Johanson, 1994). For exam-

ple, skillful reciprocal, two-way communications and conflict resolution techniques demonstrated and taught to parents empower these parents to apply these techniques as well as model and teach interpersonal skills to their children.

The goal of all parent educators should be to be as effective as possible in their professional role. Achieving the Certified Family Life Educator credential is a way of establishing that one has met, through education and experience, the high standards and criteria needed to provide quality parent education. In the process of becoming certified, students and professionals typically have the opportunity for mentorship from a more experienced parent educator.

Continuous, purposeful development can take place through study, experience, and dialogue with other Certified Family Life Educators as a community of family science practitioners and scholars (e.g. the Certified Family Life Educator listserv [www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/cfle-news-and-products/cfle-listserv]). The NPEN website (www.npen.org) provides links to specialized degree and certification programs leading to professional development in parenting education.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes for successful parent education can be developed through formal education or through professional conferences and webinars such as those provided by NCFR and its affiliates, the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, other organizations and collaboration efforts or through specialized training through parent education programs, curriculum providers, Cooperative Extension, or universities. Surveys to assess training needs for research-based core knowledge,

Table 21.1. Content Areas of Family Life Education

Family Life Education Content Areas	Examples of Applications to Parent Education
Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts	Planning & implementing parent education that meets family needs across family structures, circumstances, and cultures
Internal Dynamics of Families	Addressing parent–child issues across diverse families
Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan	Facilitating parent education that is appropriate for parents’ and children’s life stages and developmental needs
Human Sexuality	Guiding parents, children, and youth in understanding human sexuality
Interpersonal Relationships	Strengthening communications between parents and between parents and children
Family Resource Management	Supporting parents in communicating and teaching about management of resources with children and youth
Parent Education and Guidance	Understanding of parenting and parent–child interactions for planning and implementing parent education
Family Law and Public Policy	Understanding effects of family laws and public policies on families served in order to meet needs
Professional Ethics and Practice	Understanding and practice of family life education ethics in all professional endeavors
Family Life Education Methodology	Developing and implementing appropriate educational experiences for diverse individuals and families

attitudes, and skills of parent educators and professionals who work with families is an example of an approach to begin planning for professional development (Jacobson & Hirschy, 2000b). Parent educators fulfilling specialized roles, such as educating parents through early childhood intervention programs, or those charged with evaluating or marketing programs, may require additional education or training across disciplines.

The Family Life Education Framework and the Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines

The Family Life Education Framework (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011) conceptualizes family life education as a lifelong process from childhood to later adulthood. Key concepts in NCFR's (2014) Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines for parent education and guidance include an understanding of how parents teach, guide, and influence children and adolescents on the basis of their knowledge of (a) parenting as a process, (b) parental rights and responsibilities, (c) parental roles over the life cycle, and (d) variations in parenting practices.

Learning to parent is a lifelong process. Through experience and direct teaching, children, adolescents, and adults can gain basic knowledge and understanding about parenting and nurture the development of others. Children learn about responsibilities of family members, caregiving, and different approaches to parenting both by being parented and by observing parenting. Programs such as Heath's (1995) Learning How to Care: Education for Parenting curriculum teach children parenting and caregiving through direct teaching and the experience of observing parents and infants who visit their classrooms. Children learn about needs of infants and toddlers while learning about parental responsibilities and differing styles. Teaching parenting to children and adolescents has been the goal of the Prepare Tomorrow's Parents group (<http://preparetomorrowparents.org>), a national effort, as well as Parents Under Construction through ChildBuilders (www.childbuilders.org), which was developed and taught in Houston, Texas. Parents Under Construction is taught in grades K–12 in the public schools and combines knowledge and skill building through interactive learning, reinforcing the concept that learning to parent is an active process. (For more information about these programs, see the Key Resources section at the end of this chapter). Babysitting classes offered through youth organizations, such as the 4-H Club and Girl Scouts, provide opportunities to teach children and adolescents about caregiving (parenting) responsibilities and roles, safety, and meeting needs of children at different ages. Learning when and how to seek help are key features of babysitting classes.

Family and Consumer Science courses taught in secondary schools across the United States provide both classroom instruction and guided hands-on experiences in child

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Bredehoft, D. J., & Walcheski, M. J. (Eds.). (2011). *The Family Life Education Framework* [Poster and PowerPoint presentation]. Minneapolis, MN: National Council on Family Relations.

Family Law and Public Policy

Karen Bogenschneider

One important role of family professionals is myth-busting. For family life educators, the myth of the “family bubble” may be one of the most important to burst. How well families perform their functions depends not only on what happens inside the confines of the “family bubble” but also on forces outside the boundaries of the bubble (Frameworks Institute, 2012). For example, many stresses that contemporary families face are difficult for them to handle entirely on their own, whether it’s the inability to find a job, afford health insurance, secure quality child care, or send their kids to good schools. One powerful force that extends well beyond the family bubble is public policy. Even though families are inherently private, they are inevitably affected by public policy.

Policymaking is not working as well as it could for families, but it doesn’t have to be that way. There are better ways of doing public policy. Family life educators can play an influential role in the story of how we do family policy in the United States. By mastering this core competency, family life educators can build better public policy that strengthens families and supports their ability to deal with stressful conditions as surely as our other professional endeavors.

Just as policy shapes the environment in which families operate, it also shapes the environment in which family life educators operate. Whether family life educators decide to seek a career in which they can shape policy, it is likely that their career will be shaped by policy. Being competent in public policy may be especially critical for family life educators because they work on the front lines and often are the first to encounter the constraints families face in fulfilling their functions. Consider these situations that family life educators have encountered and ponder how you would respond:

- An elementary school teacher noticed that some of her students were coming to school hungry. No matter how hard she tried, she was unable to engage her class in any serious learning during the hour before lunch. What would you do? Would you succumb to doing the best you can in a tough situation, or would you venture into the policy arena to take the actions needed to feed children too hungry for serious learning?
- An educator working in a family institute became alarmed at the repeated stories of how services were implemented in ways that added to the stress families in challenging circumstances already were experiencing. For example, families with a special needs child divulged to the educator how difficult it was to navigate the maze of services that were needed and how discouraging it was to have to prove over and over again that their child was “inadequate” enough to deserve services. At the other end of the lifespan are family caregivers, who provide heroic service to the aged but do not have access to the service they need most: respite care to give them a break from the strain of “round-the-clock” caregiving. When confronted with these stories, the family life educator found herself lending a listening ear and encouraging families to persevere. Yet she couldn’t get these stories out of her mind. Wasn’t there something more that she could do?
- A Cooperative Extension family living educator was intrigued by the strong evidence of the value of parent involvement in early childhood programs. She was fully aware that child care centers were stretched in terms of finances and staff and that parents were overwhelmed, yet she couldn’t help but wonder if there were ways that child care centers could better support families and families could better support child care centers.

What is your role as a family life educator when these family challenges arise? What would you do if you found yourself saying, “Something ought to be done,” or “This just isn’t right!”? Would you shrug off these policy constraints that families face as outside the scope of your job or as just too complex or controversial to get involved in? Would you weigh the role that money and influence play and shy away from the political fray? Or would you muster up the courage to wade into the policy arena and bring your expertise to bear on behalf of families?

Developing competency in family law and public policy begins with having clear definitions of terms and concepts. Before getting involved, you may find yourself asking three key questions. First, and perhaps foremost, is whether family policy really matters:

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“Just how effective are family-focused policies in strengthening and supporting families, anyway?” Second, you may question whether it is worth your time and effort to bring attention to family policies: “Aren’t most policies in the United States already focused on families?” Finally, you may ask, “Why me?” Certainly, there must be a number of other people and professions that are pushing for a family focus in policymaking: “Why should I get involved, how can I make a difference, and what ‘value-added’ perspective can I contribute?” This chapter examines these key questions, beginning by putting forth a set of definitions and concepts and concluding with recommended resources on family policy.

What Are Family Policy and Family Law? What Is the Family Impact Lens?

In this chapter, I distinguish between *family policy*, which is *what* is enacted, and *family law*, which is *how* what is en-

acted is interpreted and applied. I also forward an explicit definition of *family policy* and an implicit definition of the *family impact lens*, which build on the thinking of the pioneers in the field (Kamerman & Kahn, 1978; Ooms, 1984, 1990). In 1978, Kamerman and Kahn made a clear distinction between *explicit policies*, which are designed to achieve specific goals regarding families, and *implicit policies*, which are not specifically or primarily intended to affect families but have indirect consequences on them. Viewed in this way, family is both an end and a means of the policy process (Strach, 2007). Both these definitions build on a broad definition of *policy* as a plan or course of action carried out through a law, rule, code, or other mechanism in the public or private sectors.

Conceptualizing family policy as an explicit end goal includes policies that aim to protect, promote, and strengthen families (Blankenhorn, 1990; Bogenschneider et al., 2012; Ooms, 1990; Strach, 2006; Zimmerman, 1995). Policies that aim to explicitly support families focus attention on five functions that families fulfill: (a) family formation (e.g., to marry or divorce, to bear or adopt children, to provide foster care), (b) partner relationships (e.g., to strengthen commitment and stability among family members), (c) economic support (e.g., to provide for members’ basic needs), (d) childrearing (e.g., to socialize the next generation), and (e) caregiving (e.g., to provide assistance for the ill, frail, elderly, and those with disabilities). Family policies support families across the lifespan, including, as noted in the family life education content areas, childhood (e.g., adoption, child abuse, and child support policies), adolescence (e.g., contraceptive availability, juvenile crime, and teenage pregnancy policies), adulthood (e.g., divorce, marriage, and parent education policies), and late adulthood (e.g., elder abuse, family caregiving, and social security policies). To further clarify, tax provisions that create a child care tax credit or decrease the marriage penalty would be classified as family policies. However, this definition would exclude a health care policy that targets individuals as well as families and a tax reform law that lowers taxes for individuals, some of whom happen to live in families.

Many other policies that do not explicitly address families or family functions—and there are many (e.g., health care, housing, jobs, long-term care, poverty, substance abuse, unemployment)—that would still benefit from being viewed through the companion implicit term, *the family impact lens* (Ooms, 1984, 1990). To clarify the term’s meaning, I draw an analogy with a more well-known counterpart: the economic lens. Most policymakers would not think of passing a law without first asking, “What is the economic impact?” The family impact lens encourages policymakers to routinely ask a similar question: “What is the impact of this policy, program, or practice for families?” When economic questions arise, it is almost axiomatic to consult economists for economic data and research to assess the impact of the proposed action on selected aspects of the economy. Similarly, when family questions arise, policymakers should turn to family scientists for family data and research on which to base an assessment of the effects of the proposed action on family roles, structure, and function.

The family impact lens acknowledges the critical implicit roles that family considerations can play, three of which I discuss here: (a) as a criterion for determining the impact of any policy or program on families; (b) as a means for achieving other, unrelated policy goals; and (c) as administrators of public policy by determining eligibility for benefits and by distributing them to members (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010b; Strach, 2006). First, families can be used as a criterion for assessing the advertent and inadvertent impact of policies on family well-being. Using the example of prisoner reentry policy, 63% of federal inmates and 52% of state inmates in 2007 were parents of an estimated 1.7 million minor children (Arditti, 2012). Yet political discourse on prisoner reentry has focused primarily on the prisoner as an individual, despite the ripple effects of incarceration on family earnings, family relationships, and parenting practices.

Second, families can be used as a means to achieve other policy goals. In the United States, child care for sick children is an example of how a policy may be more “work friendly” than “family friendly.” On the surface, having child care available when your

child is sick sounds family friendly, but it could be a disguised attempt to promote employee productivity and increase time spent on the job (Moen, 2010).

Third, families can act as administrators of public policy by determining eligibility for benefits and by distributing them to members. For example, students' eligibility for financial aid is determined by the economic status of their parents, regardless of whether parents plan to make any contribution to their child's education or how much they plan to provide (Strach, 2006, 2007); in fact, students are not eligible for either the Hope or Lifetime Learning Credits if parents still claim them as dependents on their tax returns. Families are also central to administering many public benefits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Responsibility for claiming this credit on their tax form falls to families, many of whom hire tax preparers to file their returns at an estimated annual price tag of \$994 million.

The definition of the family impact lens also encompasses two important dimensions that distinguish between family-focused policies or programs (i.e., what is enacted or established) and family-centered practices (i.e., how policies or programs are implemented; Bogenschneider et al., 2012; Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2007). According to Dunst and colleagues (2007), policies and programs can build family self-efficacy if they are implemented in ways that incorporate relational practices that treat families with dignity and respect and participatory practices that provide choice and input into decisions (Dunst et al., 2007). Table 22.1 illustrates what the family impact lens can bring to policies or programs as they are enacted and implemented.

At the heart of both the explicit and implicit definitions is the critical family element, which moves beyond the individual to a relationship between two or more persons tied together by blood, legal bonds, or the joint performance of family functions. This conceptual distinction is often overlooked in policy and practice. For example, lobbyists or special interests typically ask, "What does the policy or program do for me or my personal agenda?"—in other words, who will win and who will lose in a narrow, self-serving sense? In contrast, advancing the lens of family impact has the potential to broaden political discourse because it embodies an essential quality found in few other frameworks: commitment to others even when such actions exact a personal cost. The family impact lens can counter individualistic, narrow, or parochial agendas by moving away from a concentration on narrowly defined problems or single solutions and towards a more holistic, multidimensional way of thinking. This family-centered view enlarges our organizing frame by adopting a lifespan perspective that

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Professional Ethics and Practice

Glen F. Palm

A middle school teacher teaching a family life class concluded a presentation of different family structures that introduced single-parent families, blended families, and gay and lesbian families. A student asks the teacher what she thinks about gay and lesbian families. The teacher holds strong religious beliefs about the immorality of gay and lesbian lifestyles. She has been trying to teach acceptance of family diversity in the class, but her personal belief system is in conflict with this value. How should she answer the student?

An experienced Certified Family Life Educator is working at a community agency with parents of preschoolers with social/emotional issues, providing an “Incredible Years” parenting class. One of the parents mentions that her son’s father has been incarcerated for drug use and will be getting out of jail in a month. She is afraid that he will come back and get involved with drugs again. The dad has been attending a parenting class and writing to his son for the last 2 months. The 4 ½ year old son has missed his dad and is anxious to be with his dad again. Mother wants to protect the son from being exposed to drugs and is refusing to let the dad see his son. Dad is not married and has no legal rights to visitation. What should the Certified Family Life Educator do?

A young woman is applying for a job in a social service agency to work with families in a battered women’s shelter. She has just completed her BS degree in family science and has applied for the provisional Certified Family Life Educator certification. She has done some practice teaching with a parent support group for parents of toddlers but has limited experience working with families. None of the other staff have any experience doing parent education, and she would be in charge of creating a parent education program for the women and their children. She really needs a job, and this sounds like an exciting opportunity, but she is not sure she has the skills and experience to work with this particular group of parents and children. What should she do?

A mother of a 3-year-old in a parent education group tells the group about a new strategy that she uses to keep control over their child while her husband is away on business trips. She has purchased a wooden paddle at her husband’s request and tells the child that daddy will paddle him when he gets home if he doesn’t behave. She feels this new technique has been very effective. How should the parent educator respond?

A family life educator is working in a Responsible Fatherhood Program with a 24-year-old father of three young children from three different mothers. He would like all of the mothers to allow the children to visit each other and to know each other as siblings. The mother of his oldest child wants nothing to do with this father or his other children. The father asks for the family life educator’s help in trying to get this mother to cooperate in making his family feel connected. What should the family life educator do?

Family life educators are likely to encounter difficult ethical situations such as the ones described above on a regular basis. The field of family life education has struggled to establish ethical guidelines to guide practitioners who face situations like these (Brock, 1993; Darling & Cassidy, 2014; Leigh, Loewey, & Lester, 1986). Professionals who practice family life education may receive information on ethics from different professional groups, such as family science, early childhood education, or counseling. The fields of counseling and family therapy have developed codes of ethics through different professional organizations (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2001; American Counseling Association, 2005), and early childhood educators have also defined ethical standards (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2005).

Family life educators trained through the Certified Family Life Educator program of the National Council on Family Relations are expected to develop the critical skills that are required for ethical thinking and practice. This group has adopted the Minnesota Council on Family Relations’ (MCFR’s) guidelines for Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Life Educators (MCFR, 2009). These guidelines and the ethical decision-making process will be the basis for exploring important questions around ethical thinking and practice for contemporary family life educators. The issues to be examined include (a) why ethics are

National Council on Family Relations. (2014). *Family life education content areas: Content and practice guidelines*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

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important for family life educators, (b) theories that inform family life education guidelines for ethical decision-making, (c) ethical decision-making as a process, (d) tips for new family life education practitioners, and (e) future issues and challenges around integrating ethics into family life education practice.

Importance of Ethical Thinking and Practice in Family Life Education

Ethical thinking and practice are particularly relevant to the evolving field of family life education, for a number of important reasons.

The continued growth and maturity of the field means that the age of innocence is past and family life practitioners have to acknowledge that they can in fact do harm. Doherty (1995), in his conceptual framework about involvement with families, described the different levels of involvement that family life educators may encounter in working with families. As educators move from Level 2, at which information

is given, to Level 3, of addressing emotional family issues in a more direct manner, or Level 4, of brief family system interventions, the possibility of doing harm to family members also increases. Myers-Walls, Ballard, Darling, and Myers-Bowman (2011) introduced a new model, called *Domains of Family Practice* that defines boundaries in a different way for family life educators. It redefines the scope of practice of family life educators and clarifies the goals of practice, competencies needed by family life educators, target groups and methods used in comparison with family therapists, and family case managers. For more information on the levels of family involvement and the domains of family practice, see Chapter 5 and 6, this volume.

As family life educators continue to work with more diverse families and complex family systems they will encounter diverse family values and parenting practices that are more likely to conflict with the current understanding of effective and nonabusive parenting practices. An increased diversity in beliefs and practices will lead to ethical dilemmas where conflicts between principles are likely to emerge (Palm, 1994). The family life educator’s responsibility to provide universal access and to cover all of the content areas of family life comes with the challenge of addressing diverse family and individual needs and abilities (Myers-Wall et al., 2011).

Society will hold family life educators more accountable as professionals as we move toward greater involvement with families. More intense scrutiny about the effectiveness of family life educator practice will lead to potential conflicts between evaluation research and ethical practice (Darling & Cassidy, 2014). The increased focus on evidence-based practice and how this fits with the role of family life education as primary prevention will create some tension about how to assess the effectiveness of programs whose impacts may be long term and more difficult to measure.

The increase in the number of programs (Carter, 1996), along with the intensity and complexity of family life education, demands clearer standards for our moral behavior as well as a public and professional dialogue about ethical thinking and practice within the field. The evolving boundaries and need for collaboration among family professionals to best serve family needs will require clarity about ethical thinking and practice.

Ethical Theories and Family Life Education

Box 23.1. Ethical Decision-Making Process (MCFR, 2009)

Step 1. Identification of Relationships

Step 2. Application of Principles

Step 3. Identification of Contradictions/Tensions

Step 4. Identification of Possible Solutions

Step 5. Selection of Action(s)

Note: For more detail regarding this process, see p. 10 of MCFR (2009).

Ethics is a complex branch of philosophy that has produced many different theories about how to define moral thinking and behavior (Freeman, 2000). The most recent set of ethical guidelines developed by the MCFR (2009) represents a unique integration of different ethical theories. These guidelines combine concepts from three different theoretical traditions: a *principles approach*, *relational ethics*, and *virtue ethics* (Freeman, 2000). The different approaches are integrated into a model of creative tension that balances absolutist and relativist tendencies. This integration of

theories is incorporated into the decision-making process for the discussion of ethical dilemmas (MCFR, 2009).

The code-of-ethics approach has been the most prevalent way for professional groups to articulate and monitor ethical behavior (e.g., American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2001; Minnesota Board of Teaching, 1997; National Association of Social Workers, 2008). A code of ethics carefully defines professional conduct through the delineation of broad principles. Codes do not always offer clear directions in the face of ethical dilemmas where two principles in the code come into conflict with each other, or when codes tend to reflect past problems in a profession (Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 1988). The strength of a code of ethics is that it carefully describes expectations for professional behavior and reflects core professional values. The downside is that most codes are not grounded in theories and that professionals often are not familiar with the code because they do not use it on a regular basis.

There are two different approaches to ethics. The first is *mandatory ethics*, which includes compliance with the law and a specific code of moral conduct for a profession. The second approach is *aspiration ethics*, which is more than compliance with the law and a code of ethics. The aspiration ethics approach encourages individuals to be sensitive to the effects of their intervention on the welfare of others. They should strive to follow a set of ideal standards in their practice. The MCFR (2009) guidelines were designed in the spirit of aspiration ethics versus mandatory ethics.

One of the three theoretical frameworks to ethics that the MCFR guidelines use is a *principles* approach to ethics. The specific principles were derived through several workshops with family life education practitioners who identified, in an inductive manner, general principles they would use in addressing specific ethical dilemmas. The guidelines describe an ideal level of practice that is defined through a set of specific principles that reflect important professional values. This provides the advantage of a code of ethics through a clear description of expectations and aspirations for professional conduct. The major limitation to this principles approach as articulated in the MCFR document is the lack of enforcement by a professional body. This may be a future task for the group as the field evolves.

A second theoretical framework to ethics is *relational ethics*, which forms the basis for organizing ethical principles in the MCFR (2009) approach:

The use of relational ethics is critical to working with individuals and families. The principles of relational ethics form a basis for understanding the specific ethical dilemmas and guide practice first and foremost towards the development of caring and respectful relationships with all family members. (p. 4)

This focus on relationships is very similar to feminist ethics (Freeman, 2000), which focuses on moral judg-

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Family Life Education Methodology

Martin Covey

Sophia, a recent university graduate, applied for and received her designation as a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE). Shortly after receiving her CFLE designation she accepted a job offer at a community housing agency. During Sophia's first week on the job she was informed that one of her first projects would be to rewrite the agency's family resource management curriculum, the successful completion of which is required by families wanting to gain access to the agency's funds for long-term housing. Sophia is somewhat daunted by the idea that a curriculum she designs and implements will be the gateway through which deserving families will need to pass in order for them to achieve an important life time goal—home ownership. What should she include in this curriculum? What are the important topics to address? How can she be certain that the right topics are included? How can she design the curriculum to ensure that, at least as far as she is able, the participants will see the benefits of learning these concepts and not get bored? How can she be certain that the curriculum is thorough enough that her agency's goals and mission are met? Where to begin?

Sophia's concerns are well founded. Agencies whose mission is to help individuals and families often run on limited incomes, and resources available for distribution to their clients are limited. Criteria to receive these limited resources, such as in the scenario above, are from time to time implemented to ensure that agency monies are disbursed in the most practical, equitable, and reasonable fashion possible. Balancing agency goals and mission, a thorough treatment of vital topics and concepts, and meeting the needs of clients fall under the purview of the practitioner of family science. Sophia's concerns are encompassed in the broad category of family life education methodologies and, more specifically, revolve around the issue of effective program design. This chapter will discuss best practices involved in effective program design through a brief review of the Family Life Education Framework (hereafter the *FLE Framework*; Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011), with specific attention given to the 10th content area: Family Life Education Methodology. To these ends, the topics Sophia should consider are the following: (a) needs assessment, (b) writing effective program goals and objectives, (c) issues of program implementation, (d) evaluation, and (e) redesign. While this is not an exhaustive examination of this content area of the Family Life Education Framework, the topics discussed encompass the major concepts.

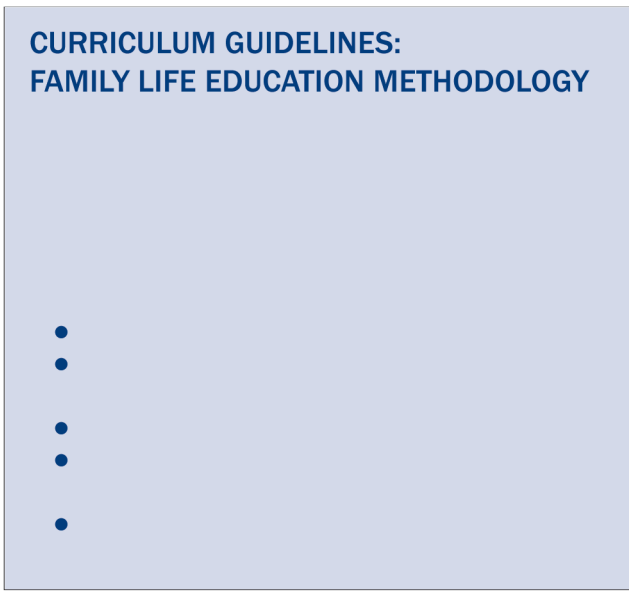
Family Life Education Methodology

The FLE Framework is a singularly outstanding tool for attaining and maintaining the balance between agency goals and mission and meeting the needs of clients. It provides a thorough treatment of vital topics and concepts within the field. The FLE Framework comprises 10 content areas that outline salient topics in each area. Each of the 10 content areas is divided into four life cycle stages, giving the family professional suggestions for key concepts and topics in each content area for each stage of the life cycle.

The content area of the FLE Framework that would go the furthest in helping Sophia with her programming concerns is the content area of Family Life Education Methodology. According to the Family Life Education Methodology content area of the FLE Framework, the planning and implementation of effective family life education programs include:

- designing programs that meet the needs of the audience;
- evaluating materials, participant progress, and program effectiveness;
- using a variety of educational techniques;
- applying principles of pedagogy and andragogy;
- engagement of stakeholders and participants;
- developing sensitivity and respect for all forms of diversity; and
- implementing outreach and public relations strategies (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011).

National Council on Family Relations. (2014). *Family life education content areas: Content and practice guidelines*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.



The best practices highlighted in the FLE Framework give direction for incorporating the above elements of effective program design and provide an effective basis for the discussion of program design and implementation that follows. The “best practices” included in the FLE Framework are:

- using a variety of educational practices and strategies,
- using ground rules or identifying group norms,
- applying age-appropriate teaching techniques,
- structuring cognitive content in sequential steps appropriate for audience age,
- honoring learning style preferences, and
- using group size that effectively supports and manages group processes (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011).

Bredehoft and Walcheski (2011) placed the best practices in context in the FLE Framework as they outlined a seven-step process of program development, called *The Planning Wheel* (for an extended discussion of the use of The Planning Wheel, see Clarke, 1998). The seven steps in the process of program design are as follows:

- Step 1: Beliefs
- Step 2: Purpose
- Step 3: Outcomes
- Step 4: Design
- Step 5: Implement
- Step 6: Evaluate
- Step 7: Redesign

Needs Assessment

Discovering the needs of a target group is an essential first element in effective program design. To conduct a systematic needs assessment, one must recognize a foundational operating principle of family life education, namely, that “family life education should be based on the needs of individuals and families” (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993, p. 15). But another step in the needs assessment process would be to assess the fit, or congruence, of a proposed program and the core values and mission, either of one’s professional values and mission or those of the sponsoring organization for whom the program’s construction is intended. Duncan and Goddard (2011) observed that ideas for family life education programs are most effective (a) when they are grounded in sound scholarship; (b) when they ring true or fit with our values and instincts; (c) when they fit with and incorporate the knowledge, culture, expertise, and lived experience of the learners; and (d) when they work in practice (p. 36). Discovering the needs of the target group and determining the congruence of the proposed program with the mission of the agency or organization encompasses Steps 1 and 2 of the Planning Wheel included in the Family Life Education Framework (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011).

To these elements could be added an additional consideration: that program ideas coincide with and promote the goals and mission of the organization or agency in which the program may be delivered. Conducting such an assessment, even informally, can provide a positive, reasonable rationale for agency administrators to support the development and implementation of a program when the link between what the agency claims in its mission and the goals of the proposed program are clearly and explicitly linked together. In other words, it is easier for administrators to give approbation in principle, and fiscal support, to programs that clearly aid the agency in achieving its stated mission.

In the past, a common practice among family science practitioners has been to have a great idea for a program that, in their personal estimation, and by observation, has every indication that it is needed by a particular target group. And although good ideas have merit, if they are the only means used to assess the needs of a target group the resulting program may not live up to its potential because key stakeholders, and members of the target group themselves, were not considered during the beginning phase of development (Arcus et al., 1993; Calheiros, Patricio, & Graça, 2013; Zarrett, Skiles, Wilson, & McClintock, 2012).

Conducting a thorough and systematic needs assessment will aid the program design endeavor by providing necessary and meaningful perspectives from a variety of viewpoints (Duncan & Goddard, 2011). Requesting input from stakeholders such as agency directors, potential funding sources, agency staff, and potential members of the proposed target group can provide the family professional with a wider perspective, giving opportunity to include topics, stories, and examples unique to the agency and/or the target audience (Darling & Cassidy, 2014).

The methods of needs assessment can be viewed as lying on a continuum ranging from informal information gathering techniques to formal surveys (see Figure 24.1). These methods could include observing the interactions and discussion in “water cooler” conversations whereby needs, concerns, and unique perspectives may be voiced by staff and stakeholders. Another informal approach would be to ask questions to individuals who represent the various stakeholders.

More formal techniques for gathering information in a needs assessment could involve gathering demographic data and community characteristics of the target group for the proposed program. An additional consideration would be gathering information regarding unique cultural attributes of the target population. Any cultural or subcultural attributes unique to the target population

should be a strong influence on the choice of methods and means of program delivery. In addition to the gathering of demographic and community data, the family professional should conduct a thorough review of the scholarly literature relating to both the target population and the proposed area of concern that drives the proposal of the program. A thorough literature search will also aid in the writing of grants to fund the program as well as help garner support of agency administrators.

Using focus groups to gather information from potential participants, agency staff and administrators, and other stakeholders would be a more formal method of gathering data. Another more formal method of gathering data from these same groups—potential participants, agency staff and administrators, and other stakeholders—would be the use of pen-and-paper or online surveys. The data gathered, whether through informal or formal means, not only can provide important information regarding the needs of the target population but also can inform the program designer about unique methods of delivery, program content, and approaches to implementation.

Writing Goals and Objectives

Much has been written about what goals and objectives are and how to write them effectively, and I encourage readers to read further regarding this essential skill that will enable them as family professionals to design successful and effective programs. Some resource suggestions are provided at the end of this chapter to guide readers in this worthwhile endeavor. That being said, the goal of this section is to provide the basics of writing goal statements and objective statements.

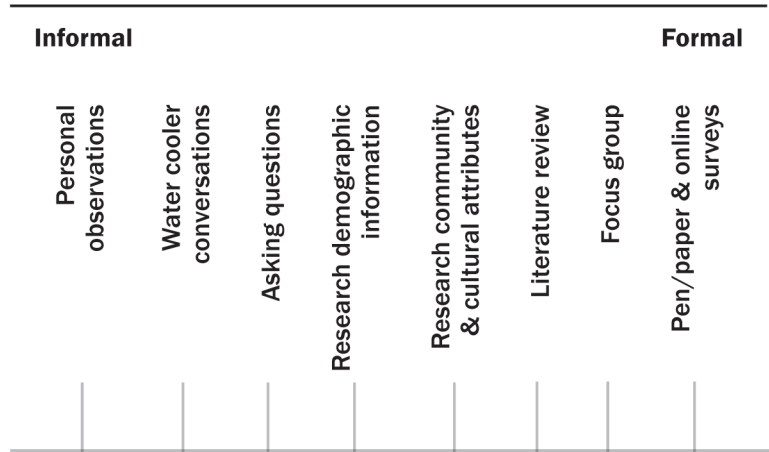
Once the needs of the target population, agency, and other community stakeholders have been assessed, the next step in the program design process is writing effective goals and objectives that will guide the program through development, implementation, and evaluation stages. Ideally, by this time the program designer will have assessed and aligned the *idea* of the program with the values, purpose, and mission of the agency or organization for which the program will be designed. A clear and meaningful program goal statement and clearly written, effective learning objectives is the next step—which coincides with Step 3 of the FLE Framework.

The terms *goals* and *objectives* are sometimes used interchangeably, but in reality they serve much different purposes, and the savvy program designer should know the difference. Goals are “very broad and general, but they should be related to the vision and to the desired program and program participants” (Powell & Cassidy, 2007, p. 125). A goal statement is a very broad statement of intent that lays out the direction of the proposed program. At the program level, objectives “articulate specific steps and principles to achieve the goals of the desired program” (Powell & Cassidy, 2007, p. 125). At the instructional level, learning objectives provide a description of an action learners are able to do to exhibit their comprehension of new information (Mager, 1984). In other words, program goals are a statement of where the program and the participants will go, based on the needs assessment. Program objectives specify how the participants will get there.

As stated above, goal statements are broad, general statements that provide direction for the program. A list of characteristics of goal statements that can guide the program director in the writing of an effective goal statement:

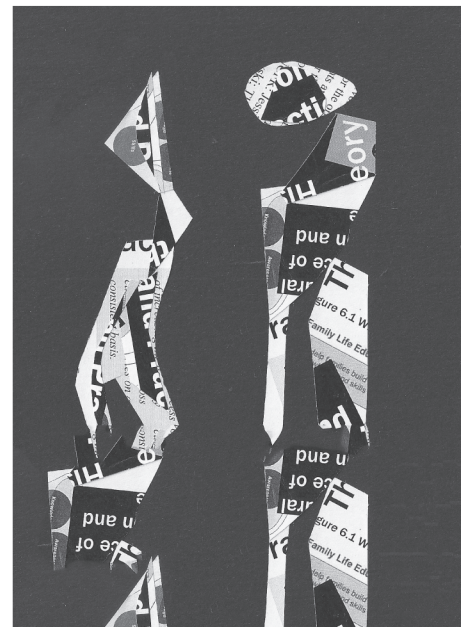
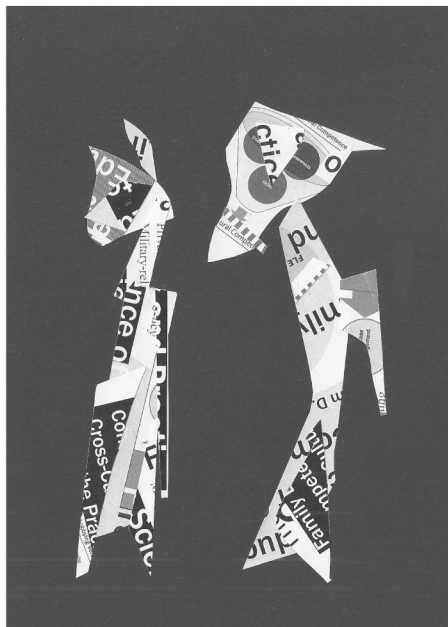
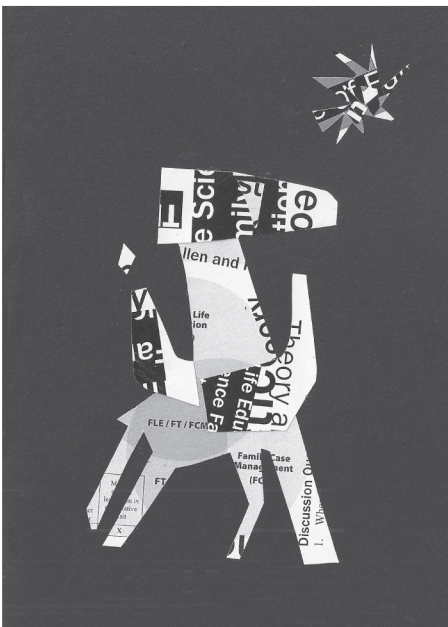
1. A goal is a very broad statement of intent.
2. It provides a big outline for what is to be accomplished.
3. It is not stated quantitatively.
4. It is timeless. It will have value today and in the future.
5. It should be related to the mission of the organization but provide more specificity.
6. It should be verifiable. Though not stated in quantitative terms, the goal statement should have the capacity to be verified in the future.
7. It should be cost effective.

Figure 24.1. Continuum of Approaches to Needs Assessment



Family Life Education Teaching and Practice Resources

Section 3



Principles for Improving Family Programs: An Evidence-Informed Approach

Stephen Small and Mary Huser

In recent years there has been growing pressure for family life education programs, as well as prevention and promotion programs of all types, to demonstrate greater effectiveness and accountability. Funders, organizational boards, and elected officials want to be assured that their dollars and support are being invested in high-quality programs that produce results. Program administrators and staff want to demonstrate that their programs are the best they can be and that they are achieving their intended outcomes. These are commendable expectations but often unrealistic for most emerging programs. Unrealistic situations often occur when stakeholders and funders expect or require data on a program's impact soon after its initial implementation, before the program has had time to become established. Most programs—whether a simple parenting class or a sophisticated clinical prevention trial—need time to develop. Rarely is a program fully mature after only one or two iterations.

In order for a program to become effective, a cumulative and deliberate process of development, improvement, and refinement is required. Such a process involves a type of evaluation known as *formative*. Formative evaluation is typically used during a program's development to provide information about how best to revise and modify it for improvement. It can be contrasted with *summative* (or outcome) *evaluation*, which involves assessing a program at its conclusion to determine whether it was effective and whether it should be adopted, continued, or expanded (Weiss, 1998). Although evaluation is most often equated with summative evaluation and the assessment of program impacts, formative evaluation positions a program to be ready for summative evaluation, thus underscoring its importance. This is because formative evaluation increases the likelihood that a program will be well functioning and actually have significant impacts worth assessing.

In this chapter, we present a formative evaluation process that can be used with family-focused programs. This approach, which we call *Evidence-Informed Program Improvement* (EIPi; Small, Cooney, & O'Connor, 2009; Small & Huser, 2012), draws on recent science regarding what is known about effective youth and family programs. The EIPi model can provide family life educators and other family practitioners with a method that can be used to improve the quality and impact of new and existing youth and family programs. The approach is built on the current knowledge base of what makes evidence-based programs effective and draws on the work of a wide range of youth, family, and prevention scholars (e.g., Bond & Hauf, 2004; Borkowski, Akai, & Smith, 2006; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003; Nation et al., 2003; O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009; Small et al., 2009) as well as our own experiences working with youth and family programs.

We begin by describing the 13 principles of effective youth and family programs and briefly discussing how these principles are used in the EIPi process. Drawing on these principles, we pose some initial questions for program staff to consider in regard to their own programs. Finally, we discuss how this process of program improvement can be used by family life educators and the organizations they support. These 13 principles are organized into four categories, reflecting (a) program design and content, (b) program relevance, (c) program delivery and implementation, and (d) program assessment and quality assurance.

Throughout the chapter we use the analogy of constructing a building to illustrate the EIPi process. This is because developing an effective family life education program is like constructing a well-designed, functional building. Both have a clearly defined purpose, draw on the expertise of a wide range of individuals, need a well-designed plan, take into account best practices, and require regular feedback and communication so that the process is well coordinated and the staff can learn as they develop their project and refine their efforts. The chances that positive outcomes will be achieved are greatly increased if the developer understands how the construction process works and takes an active role in its implementation.

Principles of Effective Family Programs

Program Design and Content

Just as blueprints and building materials are critical to the construction process, so too are design and content to the development of family programs. This first category of principles is concerned with the program's goals, theory of action, and the scientific evidence that underlies it. You cannot create a building without knowing what purpose it will be serving and having a well-designed plan based on sound science and best practices.

Effective programs have clear goals and objectives. When constructing a family life education program, you need to know its purpose. If you are not clear about who the program is for, or what you hope to achieve as a result, it is difficult to design an intervention (or a building) that will meet the needs of its participants. Consequently, the first step in designing a program is having a clear understanding of its purpose or goals (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2013). Although this may seem obvious, in our experience many family programs have only vaguely defined program goals and objectives—or, even more problematic, they have goals and objectives that are unrealistic or poorly aligned with the needs of the target audience. Sometimes this is a result of a funding source that requires certain objectives be addressed and, in the process of meeting these funder objectives, the needs of the participants get discounted or haphazardly integrated. Program goals can also change over time as program designers and staff gain a better understanding of the audience and how their needs and strengths evolve. In a well-designed program, staff and stakeholders agree on and have a mutual understanding of the goals and objectives that need to be achieved along the way if the intended results are to be realized.

Case example: In our work with local organizations, it is not uncommon to be asked to recommend a program, any program, which can be used with a particular audience. What is often missing from this request is information about the purpose or goal that is sought. Our first response is usually to ask questions to clarify the purpose (e.g., who is the audience, and what are their needs? Is an educational program a realistic approach to meeting these needs? If the program were effective, what would success look like?). After working to clarify the purpose, we then explore possible strategies and programs with our partners that can help them reach their clarified and agreed-on goals.

Effective programs are theory driven and research based (Bond & Hauf, 2004; Borkowski et al., 2006). Before you begin construction of a building or a program, you need to create a blueprint to serve as a plan; otherwise, there is no guarantee what you create will serve your purposes; have the appropriate elements; or fit together in a thoughtful, logical, and well-designed way. Effective programs are based on empirically supported theoretical models. They target risk and protective factors or assets that research shows are related to the program's targeted outcomes (Durlak, 2003; Sussman & Wills, 2001). In addition, an effective program's design and implementation are guided by a clear and logical program theory about how the program's activities are linked to one another and to the program's intended goals (Sussman & Sussman, 2001). Ideally, there is empirical evidence that such activities are effective in bringing about the desired changes.

Case example: During a consultation with the advisory board of a juvenile delinquency program, we learned that much of the program was composed of unrelated sessions mainly determined by who in the community was willing to offer their time to teach. For example, one major program activity was nutrition education; another focused on financial management skills. Although nutrition education and financial management are important life skills, research has not found them to be significant factors linked to delinquency prevention. As we explored this with the group, it became clearer that focusing on more established factors linked to delinquency, such as peer refusal skills and school engagement, would likely result in a more effective program.

Effective programs are of sufficient dosage and intensity (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008; Kumpfer & Alder, 2003). Dosage and program intensity can be measured in quantity of contact hours, duration of the total program, intensity and complexity of the program activities, and participants' level of engagement. In general, the more severe or entrenched the problem or issue being addressed, and the larger the change desired, the greater the dosage and intensity need to be (Borkowski et al., 2006). Like a building that is constructed in a high-risk area (e.g., a hurricane or flood zone area) and needs to have stronger materials and structural designs, programs that are targeting higher risk individuals and families also need to be specifically designed to meet more intensive needs. This may involve a greater number of sessions; longer, more in-depth classes; and smaller group sizes. In addition, many effective programs also include booster or follow-up sessions to help reinforce behaviors and knowledge that might have faded over time. What is crucial is that participants are exposed to enough of a program or intervention for it to have a significant effect.

Case example: On several occasions when we have been asked to consult on an evaluation of a child maltreatment prevention program, we have discovered that the program consisted of little more than a single session or one-time media campaign. As part of our consultations, we worked with the program staff to generate ideas on how to bolster the dosage and intensity of their programs, such as increasing the number of face-to-face sessions or complementing media campaigns with other services. By increasing the intensity of their program efforts, the staff increased the likelihood that their future efforts would have a positive impact and thus be in a better position to conduct the summative evaluation they were requesting.

Effective programs are comprehensive (Durlak, 2003; Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003). To construct a quality building requires the use of many different materials and a variety of different tradespeople working together. Similarly, quality family programs usually target more than one setting or process in their design, or they partner with other programs that reach the same audience in different settings. This is because they recognize that learning and behavioral change are most likely to occur when individuals are exposed to a variety of settings and processes working together. For example, many effective child development programs have components involving both families and schools. Similarly, the most effective drug prevention programs address a range of risk and protective processes, resulting in a more synergistic effect.

Case example: *“Raising a Thinking Child”* (Shure, 2000) is a parent education program that targets parents of 4- to 7-year-olds. It is an evidence-based program with good proof of effectiveness. Yet the most rigorous evaluation for the program shows that even stronger outcomes are possible when the school-based companion program is in place. This provides a 1-2 punch of reinforcement across both home and school. In our own work with the program we have tried to find ways to involve teachers and child care providers in order to complement our direct efforts with parents and create a synergy across settings.

Effective programs use a variety of learning approaches (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008; Caspe & Lopez, 2006). Construction crews work in a variety of ways while building a structure. Sometimes they rely on individual workers to independently complete a specific task using a written set of directions. Other times, they gather together to plan a team approach around a bigger task, and sometimes they need to practice a building technique in a test setting before using it on the actual building. Similarly, participants in family programs learn in many different ways, and programs that are able to appeal to the different ways people learn are better able to help them acquire new knowledge, develop new skills, and change unwanted behaviors.

Most people learn best when they are actively engaged and have opportunities to practice new skills. Programs that use active and varied teaching methods and keep participants interested tend to be most successful. Whether allowing parents to practice using a calm tone of voice while disciplining their children or role playing with youth how to refuse drugs when they are with their peers, effective programs engage participants in the topic and encourage them to practice and apply new behaviors, rather than just presenting information.

Case example: *Incarcerated parents are one of the newest audiences for our work around parenting and family strengthening. Jails and prisons have stringent rules about the materials that can be brought into correctional facility classrooms, sometimes forbidding anything beyond paper. This severely limits the types of educational strategies that can be used with learners and calls for more creative approaches. In addition, it is not uncommon for many inmates to have had negative school experiences in their youth, thus making them wary of any educational program. As we have worked to adapt programs to this environment, we have made an effort to limit the amount of traditional lecture and sought to find creative ways to build in other learning techniques. For example, educators have experimented with a variety of learning activities such as charades, role playing, and storytelling.*

Program Relevance

From skyscrapers and igloos, to log homes, pyramids, and pagodas, local architecture differs a great deal across cultures around the world. These differences are influenced by many factors, including religious and cultural preferences, weather trends, geographical features, and economic conditions. In general, the people who live in and use these structures find them appealing, comfortable, and functional because they are reflections of local religious, sociocultural norms and well adapted to economic and geographical conditions. Similarly, when family programs are tailored to reflect the sociocultural, religious, developmental, and personal characteristics of the targeted audience they are more likely attract and retain participants and result in broader success (O’Connor, Small, & Cooney, 2007).

Effective programs are developmentally appropriate (Nation et al., 2003; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003). Buildings are designed for the intended occupants and reflect the attributes and characteristics of these users. Consider how unique and specific to the audience are a child care center, an office building, and a student dormitory. Similarly, effective programs are specifically tailored to particular ages or developmental stages. Rather than trying to address the widest possible group of individuals or families, they acknowledge the developmental differences that often characterize children and youth of even slightly different ages as well as the needs and interests of their parents. For instance, a parenting program that addresses a specific developmental stage will typically be more attractive, engaging, and beneficial to parents than a program that addresses parenting more generally.

Case example: *Age-paced programs and newsletters that target parents when they most need and desire information have been found to be particularly effective. For example, the University of Wisconsin—Extension’s Parenting the First Year newsletter (University of Wisconsin—Extension, 2014) is a series of 12 age-paced newsletters delivered monthly to new parents. The content is timed to parallel a baby’s typical development over the first year of life, making it highly relevant and useful to parents at exactly the time they need and desire such information.*

Effective programs reach people when they are ready to change (Durlak, 2003; Lowenkamp, 2004). Programs with the greatest impact tend to intervene when the targeted individuals are most receptive to change. This can mean reaching out to families or individuals as they go through a transition (e.g., birth of a first child, divorce or separation, transition to middle school) or when a

Marketing Family Life Education Programs: Building Relationships Instead of Selling

Jody Johnston Pawel

Mau^{de}, a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, has been a parent educator for 30 years. Thirty years ago, she started a nonprofit Christian counseling center and became an ordained minister. She's developed expertise in treating people who have experienced trauma, specifically dissociative identity disorder. She has written four training curricula, offers healing workshops worldwide through mission trips, trains her trainers, and certifies abuse counselors. She celebrated her 80th birthday by finishing her fifth book, a 1,000-page tome. At 83, she has difficulty traveling, so she wants to create a way for her life's work to go on and reach more people, but her nonprofit is totally dependent on donations and barely makes ends meet.

Judy, Maude's daughter, has also been a parent educator for 30 years, 20 of them in nonprofits. She has written a research-based parenting curriculum and book, trains her trainers, and provides workshops worldwide. Her company is a for-profit, but she ran it like a nonprofit for the first 10 years and got deep in debt. After training with business and marketing experts, she's been able to reinvest her profits back into the company, and is working to get her legacy plan into place before she's of retirement age.

Mark was working a 9-to-5 sales job but wanted a career of passion and purpose. He was really good at dating, so he started a coaching practice, calling himself "The Relationship Master." He had no formal education or training, so he got certified in neurolinguistic programming. Within 6 months, he had over 1,000 people on his mailing list and was making thousands of dollars each month.

Jolie was a stay-at-home mom who loved parenting. When she divorced, she started a parent coach practice. A close friend was her marketer. Within 2 years, she was training more coaches worldwide and bought her friend's share of the seven-figure business.

If you had one of the problems these people help solve (e.g., trauma, parenting, dating), which would you want to work with? Which is the most qualified? Did you notice the ones with the most qualifications made the least income, and the least qualified are making the most? Can you guess why?

Family Life Education is *Finally* a Hot Topic!

Well, it's finally happened: Parenting, relationships, and families have finally become hot topics in the mainstream media. For years, most of us have been hoping this would happen. What we didn't expect is that family life educators aren't at the front of the pack, leading the way. So why is this? Is it because of the change in who people go to for advice?

In 1997, if people were looking for an answer to a question, they would most likely turn to teachers first; then religious leaders; then family, friends, and acquaintances. In 2007, people preferred strangers with experience; then family, friends, and acquaintances; then teachers (Hibbard, 2009). As a result, lots of "strangers with experience" are presenting themselves as experts and building million-dollar businesses serving *your* potential clients—sometimes giving horrible advice—while many family life educators, who *are* truly qualified experts, are still struggling to fill their classes and session slots. Because those "strangers" with questionable expertise are willing to pursue their passion and purpose as a business, they have shot leap-years ahead of family life educators. People deserve quality expert services, so family life educators need to catch up! But how? And what can family life educators do to become the most visible experts and serve more people?

For the purposes of modeling, this chapter has been written in a language, tone, and style of effective marketing and article writing rather than in an academic style.

Family Life Educators: Become Social Entrepreneurs!

In the past, there were social service professionals who worked in nonprofit organizations and entrepreneurs who ran for-profit businesses. With the tanking economy, funding cuts, people wanting to pursue careers that fulfill their passion and purpose and use their money to “do good,” there are now *Social Entrepreneurs*.

Social Entrepreneurs pursue goals that improve society, using entrepreneurial business methods and innovative practices (Pawel, 2014). Social Entrepreneurs build strong, sustainable organizations, whether nonprofit groups or for-profit companies or individuals. Social entrepreneurship grew from skilled employees who became dissatisfied with making lots of money for commercial corporations. They donated to good causes but wanted to use their skills as entrepreneurs to solve a social problem they felt passionate about and to feel like their lives had more purpose.

Family life educators and other social service professionals are already solving social problems, but they have traditionally done so through nonprofit organizations that are dependent on donations and grants. Most have never been formally trained in marketing and have sometimes even been conditioned by the nonprofit culture to equate marketing with selling or to perceive making a profit as bad. As a result, they are hesitant to use strategies others use to gain visibility and clients for their businesses. By blending heart-centered, relationship-focused social service and thinking and operating like for-profits, family life educators can strategically position themselves for self-sufficiency, growth, stability, and scalability.

Effective Marketing Starts With Your Mindset

Before you take any action, it’s important to have a positive mindset. You could skillfully implement every strategy and still not get results if you have a negative, resistant marketing mindset. With a healthy mindset, you can make mistakes but still be successful.

The first thing you need to know about marketing family life education programs is that you don’t have to sell anything. Marketing is about building relationships, awareness, and serving others, things you already do skillfully.

You also don’t need a large budget to market your programs. There are tons of free or inexpensive strategies and resources you can use. Most you can do yourself; they aren’t difficult. You just need good communication skills, conversational (nonacademic) writing skills, moderate computer skills, persistence, and a willingness to learn by doing. If you budget only 15 to 30 minutes a day to these tasks, you can accomplish a lot and get great results.

You Are the Best Person to Market Your Service

As a family life educator, you provide valuable programs and services that improve people’s lives. If you aren’t actively and consistently marketing them, you are invisible, which is a disservice to the people who need them. Furthermore, by serving too few clients, you might not earn what you need to make family life education your primary source of income, sustain your programs, or justify continued support from grant funders. That’s a disservice to yourself and your valuable programs (Pawel, 2006a).

If you feel resistant to marketing, it’s probably because you are turned off by selling. Be assured, you never have to sell, because the most effective marketing is a Relationship Marketing approach (Pawel, 2003). *Hard sell* marketing is impersonal and focuses on us, by talking about what we have to offer and convincing clients that they need it—whether they do or not! *Relationship Marketing* is personal and focuses on building relationships with potential clients, by listening to their needs and helping them find solutions—whether you have the solution or can refer them to someone who does.

You already do the latter every day, so you are actually better suited to market your programs than commercial marketers because you understand your clients’ needs and know how to solve their problems. You just need to learn how to market your services in ways that feel comfortable and authentic to you.

Plan Your Marketing Campaigns

When it comes to successful marketing, planning is half the battle, so you want to follow these seven steps (Quirk eMarketing, 2014):

1. *Define your goals.* What would you like to achieve: referrals, client leads, newsletter signups, and so on? Remember to think SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely).
2. *Research your market.* Gain as much understanding as possible to ensure that your approach is effective.
3. *Plot your presence.* Decide which strategies to use and how to cross-pollinate between them.
4. *Define your message.* What tone and angle are you going to take to inspire your target audience to get involved?
5. *Create sharing opportunities.* Create share points and invite users to share your content or information.
6. *Feed your campaign.* Fan the flames by releasing updates and encouraging renewed interest.
7. As with all marketing campaigns, you want to *track, analyze, and optimize*.

Lay a solid foundation for your launch. If you are going to build relationships with your marketing and truly serve people, there are some foundational groundwork steps you need to take before you begin any marketing.

Have a remarkable service. Before you start any marketing, your program must be top quality in every way: how it’s delivered, the quality of the training or services, and the ongoing support clients receive. It must be remarkable, with proven results, or you won’t get clients or referrals (Port, 2006).

Focus on one niche. Simple logic would say that the broader your audience, the more people you can reach and serve. If you try to meet everyone’s needs, however, people won’t connect with your message and will be more likely to disregard it. By selecting a specific niche market and targeting your messages to that audience, your messages will be clear and compelling, and speak to them in ways that help them understand how you can specifically meet their needs (Abraham, 2000).

Research your target market. Right now, most people probably don’t know you even exist and might not even be looking for what you offer. To reach, develop relationships with, and best serve potential clients, you need to know the answers to the following important questions, because you’ll use this information in a variety of ways:

- Who are they?
- What are their needs?
- Where are they?
- What are they already looking for?
- Where are they already looking for it?

Identify your target market’s level of awareness. Your target market’s level of awareness will dictate most of the decisions you make. It affects each step of your relationship with them—from your marketing messages; to what programs you offer; and even when you offer those programs: from first contact, while building a relationship, and when delivering your services and resources.

It’s critical to understand and think about the following five levels of awareness (Masterson & Forde, 2011) in all you do:

1. *Unaware* people who don’t know they have a problem, don’t know that they don’t know what you know they don’t know, or don’t think they need your services! If so, connect with them where they already are, talk about what they are talking about, and tie in information that would build awareness about what they don’t know or why your type of service could benefit them.
2. *Problem Aware* people know they have a problem and are looking for a solution. You want to provide information about the problems they know they have and offer some basic “what to do” solutions and explain why they work.
3. *Solution Aware* people know there’s a solution and are looking for the best solution. Now you can start talking about what you do that’s different or better than other solutions.
4. *Product Aware* people know you have a solution and want to evaluate it. Now you can tell them details about what you offer.
5. *Most Aware* people know you have the best solution for them and want details of your offer. Only now do you ask for their purchase or registration.

Most people word their marketing materials for the Product Aware and Most Aware prospects, telling them what they offer and why they are the best choice, but most people are at the Unaware or Problem Aware level and think “That’s for someone else, not me!”

Identify your ideal client. Describe the characteristics of the people who energize and inspire you when you work with them—these are your ideal clients. Screen potential clients against this criterion and refer those who aren’t a match elsewhere (Port, 2006). Your energy and motivation will stay high, and you will have space for more ideal clients.

Establish your brand. Branding involves more than developing a logo and choosing colors. Consistent, strategic branding helps people immediately recognize who you are and what you stand for. To create your brand, there are decisions to make and parts to develop, including your brand, unique service position, and tagline.

First, what type of brand do you want to build? A personal brand, such as Dr. Phil or Dr. Mom, positions you as an expert but can take years to establish; is nearly impossible to scale to reach many without becoming a media celebrity; and, once you retire or die, the brand usually does too. A company brand, such as Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Active Parenting, or Toolshop®, is easier to scale or expand, through licensing, and can continue on after the original founders have retired or died. Strict screening, training, and monitoring of standards and practices is critical, however, or a few “bad apples” can spoil the reputation of the brand. If you represent a company, you can leverage its existing brand, which gives you immediate recognition and credibility.

Second, what is your unique service position (USP)? For you to stand out among others who do what you do, you must be somehow unique. Communicating how you are unique is a critical factor in helping people choose your service. A USP is one crystal-clear, compelling sentence that highlights a benefit your clients get from you but cannot get from others. Your USP must be a consistent theme in all of your marketing efforts.

Third, develop a catchy tagline. Taglines are similar to a commercial slogan. Ideally, a tagline ties together your branding, USP, and the benefit people receive. Taglines are meant to be short and catchy, so if you can’t get your USP and biggest benefit in the tagline, be sure they are somewhere nearby so your branding communicates them all.

Preparing for Your Profession

Sterling Wall and Sandra McClintic

It is said that one should “begin with the end in mind.” Towards that end, we begin this chapter by discussing the importance of your professional home. Although a strong résumé with plenty of volunteering, internship, and other work experiences is important (Harvey, 2005), the odds of finding such experiences increase with the degree to which you are connected to other professionals in the field.

Professional Home

By *professional home* we mean a professional organization, such as the National Council on Family Relations, or perhaps your state chapter, such as the Wisconsin (or “your state name here...”) Council on Family Relations. Regardless of your specific profession, there is a professional organization that brings like-minded professionals (and young professionals, e.g., students and recent grads) together. You should belong to it ... now!!!

Volunteering

Volunteering is often associated with young, unskilled students, desperately seeking experience in the field—wrong! I (the first author) have an experienced colleague, Amie Lapp Payne, who was top notch in graduate school, has *lots* of experience, and is married to a military spouse (yes, in fact, he was officially called, “Major” Payne), which means that she moved every 3 to 4 years with his assignments. She did not have the time to get to know people, apply for a job, and wait for weeks to get a response. So, she would find out when the government meetings for child and family service-type agencies were being held and she would sit along the wall, listening. You may be surprised at how many government meetings are legally open to you, the public, to attend. Sitting there, she heard them talk about some program they wanted to implement, how they needed someone to do analysis, heard them ask, “Who do we know that can do that?” And Amie raised her hand, introduced herself, and stated that “I can do those analysis for you. However, you also need to consider x, y, z while setting up the program in order to do effective analysis.” It is no surprise that just a few months later she was employed as Deputy Director of that state’s Department of Early Learning, overseeing a budget of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Practicum/Internship

A practicum is typically meant to introduce you to the field, in a small amount of unpaid time, under the supervision of a professional. Later in your academic career, perhaps as you are graduating even, you may consider an internship, in which you are expected to apply your academic learning and be the professional. Internships may be full time; some are paid, some not. Our students often intern with county extension agents, usually unpaid. But when they are done, they know many extension agents and program directors of other organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters of America or Healthy Beginnings. They are very well poised—connected, actually—to land a paid position, if they haven’t already.

Diversity Service Learning

I (the first author) just returned from a 3-week service learning trip to a Romanian orphanage for special-needs children. Studying or service learning abroad is usually done as a student, and many do it right around graduation. (Have you noticed how many job ads mention “experience or ability in working with diverse populations”?) There is nothing that will faze these students now—not poverty, not special needs, not language barriers. They have been there, done that, and they have the confidence to engage whatever diverse needs lie before them. Whether for a semester, 3 weeks, or minoring in a foreign language such as Spanish or Hmong (check your regional demographics), studying and/or doing service learning abroad are invaluable character-building experiences (Crossman & Clark, 2010; Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2008). Stories abound of candidates who walk into interviews and

find that all the panel wants to talk about is their time abroad. Everyone in your field is getting a degree, volunteering, and so on. But who goes to an orphanage in Romania? Or the landfills of Mexico? Or runs summer camps on the Lakota reservations? You do!

In short, my students have told me, “We don’t go shopping alone, we don’t work out alone, we don’t do anything alone. We like to do things with friends!” They are spot on. Join your national, state, or even student chapter of your professional organization, now, so you can make friends, build connections, land volunteer or internship positions, and make more friends and contacts, to eventually land those paid career positions you are earnestly pursuing.

Now that you have your professional network set up, let’s talk about how to put your best face on and really showcase all you now have to offer!

Résumés

Keeping “the end in mind,” know that the résumé gets you the interview, which then gets the job! Much thought should go into developing this “living document.” The résumé needs to fit each job application (Leslie & Williams, 2013), so it should be “tweaked” depending on the job description. You can easily Google information about résumés, and samples and templates, but we offer just a few words here to get you started. Each résumé will have an objective: a short, specific statement that should directly address the position sought, for example, “To obtain a position as parenting educator in the Mooresville Independent School District.” Next, education and experiences are listed; as a soon-to-be graduate, this important information should come first on your résumé. List the university degree first and then any community college degrees second (Crosby, 2009).

The next step involves deciding the type of résumé: functional, chronological, or a combination (Leslie & Williams, 2013). A *functional* résumé will highlight your accomplishments or skills rather than job titles. Functional résumés are often used by individuals who have transferable skills, other (and often varied) work experiences, or gaps in their work history. These acquired skills can be used in future jobs (e.g., creative problem-solver, good communicator). If you had several jobs during college, rather than listing the jobs find phrases that describe your skills, knowledge, and qualities. A student who has worked in retail, restaurants, and child care settings could use a functional résumé to showcase his or her skills and qualities first and state the work history near the end of the résumé.

Chronological résumés list your most current job first and then subsequent jobs. This résumé is not usually effective for recent graduates but is best for individuals who have worked in the same field and want to stay in the same field. However, it did work well for a recent child development graduate who sought a position as an assistant director at a child care center. Her work history was exclusively working part time as a child care provider for a few years during her studies.

Last, the *combination* résumé combines the functional aspect of listing your experiences and skills first and then stating your work history, in chronological fashion, at the end. Positioning your relevant experiences and skills first (before the work history) will be putting your finest attributes first.

An important point for future family life educators is to educate potential employers about family life education. Key words or phrases distinctive to family life education, but familiar to potential employers, include *prevention and education, collaboration, advocating for children and families, strengths-based approach, and providing resources and referrals*.

A one-page résumé typically will conclude with an area for listing awards/honors, activities, and memberships. Community service or volunteer work can be listed here or, if the volunteer experience is relevant to the position, record it as “relevant or volunteer experience” in the body of the résumé. Remember that student observation hours, practicum hours, and/or internship hours are considered volunteer or relevant experiences.

We offer a note of caution about formatting: Use a conservative, 10- to 14-point font (Crosby, 2009). Be consistent in your use of headings and the use of bold, italics, or underlining. Avoid too much “white space” because then the résumé will appear to be lacking information. Increase or decrease margins (top and bottom) as needed to make the information “fit.”

While developing your résumé, let everyone know what type of job you are seeking. Family, friends, church members, neighbors, anyone—let them know! LinkedIn, a professional online networking website, provides many features to showcase you in a professional manner. Most jobs are obtained through personal contact or networking (Leslie & Williams, 2013), which includes professional organization membership(s). I encourage students to take business cards with them to their state’s Council on Family Relations annual conferences.

Interviewing

Keeping the end in mind, your résumé has landed the interview! Just like creating a résumé, preparation for the interview is crucial. Research the agency’s website. Incorporate agency information into your interview answers, and develop a couple of questions to take to the interview. You will want to interview the interviewer as well; this shows you really are interested in the agency, and not just a job.

Dressing for the interview is crucial as well because it is your first impression. Before you answer the first question, an impression has already taken place. Even if people at the agency are “dressed down,” remember: They are not the one looking for a job, you

Developing a World-Class Portfolio for the Family Life Educator

Melinda Stafford Markham, Yolanda T. Mitchell, and Jaimee L. Hartenstein

Because the field of family life education is very broad and family life educators can work in a variety of settings with various populations, the range of opportunities in the field can be difficult to conceptualize. Family life education students often struggle with understanding the various options available for careers as well as how to successfully market their skills, knowledge, and credentials, including the formal designation of Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE; Mitchell, Hartenstein, & Markham, 2012).

Portfolios can be a powerful tool for family life educators to use to showcase their knowledge and skills to potential employers. They consist of a collection of one's work and achievements over time (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991) and should provide a comprehensive view of one's knowledge, skills, and experience. Family life educators can develop a hard copy or an electronic portfolio (i.e., an e-portfolio), although e-portfolios have been found to be easier to reproduce, distribute, and access; allow for greater organization through the use of hyperlinks to various pages; permit linking to supporting documentation; and can demonstrate one's technological skills (Woodbury, Addams, & Neal, 2009).

On the basis of our experiences in teaching family life education, we have some recommendations for family life educators in developing portfolios. We will use the portfolio requirements for the Family Studies and Human Services major at Kansas State University (KSU) as an example. First, we recommend that family life educators personalize their portfolios. Portfolio personalization allows family life educators to illustrate their individual knowledge and skills relative to working with specific populations. At KSU, the Family Studies students include a brief self-introduction; a résumé; and the student's written professional philosophy, in which the student reflects on his or her strengths and weaknesses as well as values and beliefs relating to working with individuals and families as a family life education professional.

We also recommend using the 10 CFLE content areas (see www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification) as an organizational structure for a family life education portfolio. The students at KSU provide a descriptive page in their portfolio in which they describe the CFLE credential and explain the organization of the portfolio. Sections for each of the 10 CFLE content areas are included in the portfolio, with the following included for each content area: an introduction to the content area; a summary page of academic, work, and volunteer experience; and a reflection page. Students are able to customize all of this information and include what they feel will best demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Using the CFLE content areas allows potential employers to gain a better understanding of family life education and the certification requirements.

Finally, in developing a family life education portfolio to be used as a career portfolio, we recommend discussing one's experience, knowledge, and skills for each CFLE content area as they relate to the family life educator's future career aspirations. Similar to a résumé, one's portfolio can, and should, be tailored to a particular job opportunity by showcasing how one's knowledge and experience are beneficial to the particular position to which one is applying. A beneficial aspect of using e-portfolios is that one can create multiple portfolios geared toward different job opportunities (e.g., one focused on working with the aging population, one focused on working with parents of young children, etc.).

Through the use of an e-portfolio, family life educators are also able to demonstrate other skills to potential employers, including their use of technology, written communication skills, creativity, and certification in family life education. In addition, an e-portfolio can be easily distributed to potential employers. Family life educators have the flexibility to send a link to their portfolio to potential employers with a job application, and links to the portfolio can be provided on social media sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook (Mitchell et al., 2012).

Social Media and the Family Life Educator

Jason DeBoer-Moran

It is expected that family life educators engage with families “where they are.” Increasingly, that place is in an online world (Pew Research, n.d.). In the past, concerned family members may have picked up a book on managing familial conflict, talked to a certified counselor about an aggressive child, or attended a seminar to learn how to rekindle the fire in a marriage. Today, these family members search Google or look to blogs, forums, and social media like Facebook and Twitter (McDaniel, Coyne, & Holmes, 2012; for a discussion on technology and family life, see Chapter 12, this volume). Establishing an online identity allows you to grow your business by interacting professionally with families and helping them improve their lives (for a discussion on marketing family life education, see Chapter 26, this volume).

Do not think that you must have an aptitude for technology to use social media. The reality is that anyone who can communicate and is comfortable sending an e-mail can amplify his or her expertise through social media.

Why Should You Care About Social Media?

Social media is a personal branding powerhouse and, whether you know it or not, you already have a personal brand. The goal is to amplify your brand and get people to notice you by establishing a presence where they choose to spend their time (Brynteson, DeBoer-Moran, & Rinkoff, 2011). Google tends to be the first stop for potential clients. When you use social media effectively, you increase the chance of being seen in an online search. You can take a passive role and hope that search engines drive appropriate traffic to your website, or you can be active and use social media to influence how your clients will see you (Evans, 2010). Will you consciously or unconsciously brand yourself?

Social Media Opportunities

I would never recommend that one person create an account on every social network. It may be helpful to think of each social media account as a door to your office. When someone knocks, they expect to find you. Spend some time reading up on each of these sites, and activate one. When you are comfortable with that, branch out to another while you continue to monitor and use the first site.

Every professional should have a personal **LinkedIn** profile. These profiles are ranked highly by major search engines and provide an authoritative source to help connect you with clients. The first step in using LinkedIn (or when establishing any professional brand) is to have an appropriate professional headshot to use on your profile. Keep the selfies for your personal Facebook page and arrange to have a professional photo taken every 5 years, specifically for LinkedIn and other professional social media sites. After a professional photo, populate your summary and begin listing your resume. List only the jobs that are relevant to the brand you are trying to convey. That summer job at a fast food restaurant, though formative, simply does not fit expectations of a Certified Family Life Educator. A connection on LinkedIn is often considered an endorsement; therefore, you should be selective when adding new contacts.

If you enjoy writing short articles, blogging is a great way to get your foot in the door with social media. A **blog** post is generally a 300- to 500-word article that provides new information or observations. Scott (2009) described blogs as “a special kind of site that is created and maintained by a person who is passionate about a subject and wants to tell the world about his or her area of expertise” (p. 46). As a result, many professionals consider their blog as their main website. As you continue to establish yourself professionally, a blog can help potential clients learn a bit more about how you think and what areas you are driven to explore. When establishing your blog, consider a memorable and professional name for the site and web address to help individuals find you.

Facebook provides a great opportunity for you to develop a company page, which is powered by the sharing of content. Share links to articles that you have written or popular news that may help connect people to the things that interest you. Facebook

Family Life Educators in the Legislative Process

Marlene S. Lobberecht

In most policymaking settings, family life educators, agency volunteers, and board members are in a better position and more knowledgeable about needed public policies and programs than the individuals with the authority and power to make the changes. Therefore, it is critical that those involved in these services become advocates and voices for change through legislation (Lobberecht, 2012a).

Public Policy Involvement Advocacy

Advocacy can involve identifying a problem, proposing a solution, or building support to act on a problem. Technically, advocacy is defined as the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active public support. Advocacy is expected to be non-deceptive and in good faith (Lobberecht, 2011).

Advocacy strategies for involvement. The following 11 advocacy strategies for involvement are extensively explained in the resource *Tips for Public Policy Involvement* eBook (Lobberecht, 2011), with tips for successful implementation:

1. *Be informed.* Use the Internet to identify bills in progress; follow other organizations to learn what they are doing to promote their agenda.
2. *Identify who represents you.* Register to vote and know who represents you at the local, state, and national levels.
3. *Share your story.* Discuss how an issue affects your family's life or how it influences your community, or both.
4. *Make the community connection.* Talk about concerns to people at work, in your faith community, in your neighborhood, and with organizations with a common mission. Group size matters in gaining attention.
5. *Communicate with your policymakers.* The best way to communicate with legislators on an issue is face to face, but letters, e-mails, and telephone calls can also be effective.
6. *Organize a letter campaign.* People who would otherwise remain quiet may be willing to send a letter to a legislator if they know they have your support and guidance.
7. *Connect policymakers to local efforts.* For example, invite policymakers to see what occurs on a daily basis in a variety of settings.
8. *Work with the media to raise awareness about an issue.* Policymakers monitor the media and tend to respond to their messages. Write a letter to the editor or contribute a community impact article.
9. *Visit your policymaker or his or her staff.* A personal visit provides an opportunity to share valuable information and data about critical issues with leaders.
10. *Testify at the Capitol and supply legislators with key information on a specific piece of legislation.* Be prepared to present in 3 minutes or less.
11. *Become a direct action organizer and develop a plan to resourcefully resolve an issue.* An example is forming a political action coalition.

The public tends to obscure the important role of community and/or government in creating the conditions for healthy development. Necessary programs are not just nice to have. We must first communicate necessity by reminding people of the family connection to community. The community benefits from families producing children who grow up to be productive adults.

A second communications approach is to focus on solutions and how a particular program or effort works. When people have a concrete picture of how a program helps, they are more likely to see its importance. Research conducted by Douglas Gould and Company and The Child Advocacy 360 Foundation (2010) suggests that the "solutions story" is a powerful but underused tool which can promote and build support for action without increasing cynicism about government.

Crafting an effective solutions story. To craft an effective solutions story, communicators should consider positive key phrases to advance particular ideas while avoiding others (Lobberecht, 2012b). Some examples are provided in Table 30.1.

Table 30.1. Phrases and Approaches That Will Help Advance Your Agenda, and Those to Be Avoided

Phrases that advance your agenda	Phrases and approaches to avoid
We have solutions	We have problems
Getting children off to the right start	Fixing the problem
We all benefit	Children are struggling
The community has a role	Parents are responsible
We all rely on public structures	Children need a safety net
Many effective solutions	Here’s one case study
There are lots of solutions	There are lots of programs
How a solution works	The emotional appeal of a solution
Hard evidence if available, anecdotal if not	Stories that don’t demonstrate effectiveness

Many advocacy efforts are unsuccessful because communicators fail to help people see issues in a new way. They emphasize “crisis/epidemic” or characterize the problem in a frightening tone. Solutions story research has demonstrated that an emotional connection is not enough, and the wrong kind of emotional connection may prove counterproductive (Douglas Gould and Company & The Child Advocacy 360 Foundation, 2010). Effective communication must fill a gap in understanding, or correct misunderstandings in perceptions, to inspire support or motivate action.

When people lack a useful conceptual picture of an issue and the key causal dynamics at work, their engagement is limited and they may act as consumers rather than responsible citizens. Try to incorporate the following five concepts for the most convincing stories (Douglas Gould and Company & The Child Advocacy 360 Foundation, 2010):

1. *Stress community connection to becoming contributing individuals.* Small Community Development Block Grants, called *small smart start community investments*, make more sense than paying to fix problems later; plus, they prove your outcomes can make an evidence-based difference.
2. *List solutions.* Suggest successful public models to give a “big picture” view of integrated programs that work.
3. *Explain how it works.* Move your story from theory to practice with a practical, reality-based example.
4. *Inspire action.* When enough people stand together to demand change, things happen.
5. *Measure effectiveness.* Program outcomes determine public and private sustainability support.

By changing your message emphasis from problem to solution, and making the role of community visible, you will gain public support for your healthy family initiatives message.

Advocacy covers a broader range of activities that may or may not include lobbying. To differentiate between the terms is to understand that lobbying always involves advocacy, but advocacy does not necessarily involve lobbying.

Lobbying

Lobbying is a form of advocacy with a specific definition: communications with elected officials/staff that urge a position on pending legislation. That too is legal, within certain limits. All nonprofit organizations certified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as Section 501(c)(3) organizations must let the IRS know the degree to which they might be “lobbying.” Nonprofit organizations must comply with federal and state laws and regulations governing lobbying (IRS, 2013).

There are provisions in the law that identify important exceptions to the “lobbying” definitions. The IRS (2009) allows the following by any individual or nonprofit organizations:

- Making available the results of nonpartisan analysis, study, or research (as long as you are not advocating legislative action).
- Providing technical advice or assistance to a governmental body or committee, in response to a written request by such body.
- Appearances before, or testimony and other communications to, any legislative body, with respect to a possible decision by such body which might affect the existence of the organization, its powers and duties, its tax-exempt status, or the deduction of contributions to the organization (self-defense exception).
- Communications between the organization and its members with respect to legislation or proposed legislation of direct interest to the organization/members, as long as members are not directly encouraged to lobby.
- Communications with government officials/employees whereby the nonprofit organization is not attempting to influence legislation.

The Development and Teaching of the Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists

Rebecca A. Adams, Kathleen R. Gilbert, David C. Dollahite, and Robert E. Keim

U.S. society is more pluralistic, faster paced, and more mobile than in the past. Family roles and structures are evolving, and there is deep disagreement on family issues, values, and the definition of family itself. Because of the complex, sensitive, and personal nature of the family, family professionals have a distinct relationship with society. Unlike telephone solicitors or used-car salespersons, whose motto may be “Let the buyer beware,” family professionals are expected to be trustworthy, competent, and ethical (Arcus, 1999; Keith-Spiegel & Koocher, 1985; Leigh, Lowen, & Lester, 1986).

In the past, when family life was less complex, the sentiment among some family professionals seemed to be that no ethical code was needed. Family scholars, however, have shown that psychoeducational interventions used in family education and enrichment are increasingly popular, potent, and potentially harmful (Brock, 1993; Doherty, Lester, & Leigh, 1986). For example, educators who teach about families can lead students to explore their personal lives in ways that can facilitate positive growth and development. At the same time, however, the interaction also can open emotional wounds that are still unhealed. Similarly, therapists who counsel individuals and families, and researchers who gather data from individuals and families, can have a powerful impact on the emotional welfare of their clients and research participants.

The literature also indicates that university professors who teach the value and emotion-laden content found in family courses have serious ethical obligations and often experience complex ethical dilemmas (Allen & Crosbie-Burnett, 1992; Knaub & Meredith, 1991; Quoss, 1993; Swartzlander, Pace, & Stamler, 1993). For example, a significant unique ethical issue for teachers of family life courses in formal educational settings involves the potentially troubling combination of highly personal and value-laden information and evaluating the work of the student for a grade (Brock, 1993; Lee, Weber, & Knaub, 1994). Many family professionals indicate they find themselves unprepared to adequately respond to the ethical dimensions of the cultural and structural complexities of today’s families (Knaub & Meredith, 1991; Quoss, 1993). Responding to the growing need for a code of ethics that would guide the professional conduct of its members, the Family Science Section of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) undertook the task of developing a code. In this chapter, we (a) describe the developmental process of the *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists* (see Appendix at the end of this chapter) adopted by NCFR (1998), which were unanimously approved at the April 1998 board meeting; (b) review the literature on ethics education and apply principles from other disciplines to the family science context; and (c) delineate the ethical principles and guidelines themselves.

The Development of Ethical Principles and Guidelines

NCFR was founded in 1938 as an informal organization, “a welcomed relief from the big, disciplined, aloof organizations to which most of us belong” (Walters & Jewson, 1988, p. iii). Membership was interdisciplinary and included participants in such areas as law, sociology, religion, home economics, marriage counseling, psychology, medicine, and education.

A constitution was developed, but a code of ethics was not. In retrospect, such a code may not have been needed because the purpose of the organization as defined by the constitution was “to advance the cultural values that are now principally secured through family relations for the advantage of the individual and strength of the nation” (Walters & Jewson, 1988, p. 1). The time was not ripe to ask the questions “Which cultural values?” and “What family structure?” NCFR was not alone in lacking a code of ethics at that time. The American Psychological Association (APA), for example, established an ethics committee in 1938, but an official code was not adopted until 1953 (Keith-Spiegel & Koocher, 1985).

The perception of NCFR as an informal organization continued into the 1960s, when Jessie Bernard (1964) wrote, “[NCFR] is an association of professionals but not a professional association of professionals . . . Its members come together to think about problems, to teach one another, to learn from one another” (p. 29). Many NCFR members belonged to other professional organizations, such as APA, the American Sociological Association, and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Each had its own code of ethics and served as the primary professional organization for its members.

At the same time that Bernard argued NCFR was not a professional organization, interest in professionalizing it appeared to grow. For example, concern for professional competency regarding teaching about families led to the establishment in 1964 of a committee on Standards and Certification for Family Life Educators. Even though a chapter in the *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* (Kerckhoff, 1964) urged the field of family life education to develop a code of ethics, interest focused on other issues of professionalization, and no membership code of ethics was addressed (Walters & Jewson, 1988).

In his presidential address at the 1982 NCFR annual conference, Wesley Burr “struck terror in the hearts of traditionalists in the family field” (Walters & Jewson, 1988, p. 115) by suggesting that the study of family be recognized as a separate discipline, albeit a young discipline. He also suggested that it met five of the seven criteria needed to be considered a unique discipline and should be considered a newly emerging one (Burr & Leigh, 1983). Although response to Burr’s proposal was mixed, many family scholars and practitioners began thinking of themselves as part of an emerging discipline and profession, and the Family Discipline Section (now called the *Family Science Section*) was formed within NCFR.

At the 1992 NCFR annual meeting, Family Science Section members voted and approved, as a top priority, the development and adaptation of a code of ethics for its membership. Section Chairperson Kathleen R. Gilbert appointed Rebecca A. Adams to chair the newly established Ethical Code Committee, with David C. Dollahite and Robert E. Keim as committee members.

Through the ensuing year, the committee studied codes of ethics from other professional disciplines and associations, discussed the professional arenas in which Family Science Section members operated, studied the value of a professional code of ethics, and began formulating possible ethical statements for family scientists. As the committee members discussed the developing ethics code, they came to think of it as a “living document” that would be flexible enough to respond to emerging ethical concerns. It also was decided that the document should be considered a set of “ethical principles and guidelines” rather than a “code of ethics” because of the diverse professional activities represented by family scientists and because the document was meant to be educational and sensitizing rather than a legalistic code with enforcement potential.

The initial draft, along with the “living document” concept, met with favorable responses when presented at the section business meeting the following year. To provide for maximum input from all section members, the draft was published in the December 1995 issue of the *NCFR Report* (Adams, Keim, & Dollahite, 1995) and was mailed to all section members for feedback. The document was then modified and presented at the 1996 section meeting. Section members were given an additional year for input. The final draft, along with related changes in section bylaws, was then approved as the *Family Science Section Ethical Principles and Guidelines* by a mail-in vote of the section membership.

While the document was in the review process, committee members and the section chairperson received numerous inquiries about the possibility of NCFR, as a whole, adopting the guidelines. Principal among those was NCFR Executive Director Mary Jo Czaplewski, who had provided extensive feedback throughout the developmental process. Section members were receptive to the broader application of the guidelines but were concerned that relinquishing control of the guidelines might result in the document being “set in stone,” without periodic review. Therefore, they authorized the section chairperson at the time, Rebecca A. Adams, to propose the guidelines to the board, with the section maintaining some continued responsibility for ongoing review.

This was done at the April 1997 meeting of the NCFR Board of Directors, and the overall interest of the board was positive. The guidelines were printed again in the *NCFR Report* (Adams, Keim, & Dollahite, 1997), and input by the entire NCFR membership was invited. In addition, NCFR section chairs were asked to include discussion of the *Ethical Principles and Guidelines* at their section business meetings at the November 1997 annual conference, and the NCFR attorney was asked to review them regarding liability issues. There were surprisingly few minor revisions recommended from the general membership, section chairs, and attorney. This suggests that the principles and guidelines adequately addressed the kinds of concerns most members felt were important. Following these efforts, including making the minor revisions suggested, the *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists* (see Appendix, at the end of this chapter), were unanimously approved at the April 1998 meeting of the NCFR Board of Directors.

The eight ethical principles and 51 specific ethical guidelines are intended to apply to all members of NCFR in their roles as family life educators, therapists, researchers, professors, employees of agencies, and citizens of their communities. Of course, NCFR members and students who also are members of other professional associations are bound by the ethical codes of those bodies. For example, parent and family educators who obtain the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) designation from NCFR are expected to abide by 36 *Ethical Guidelines for Parent and Family Educators*. Just over 1,500 individuals currently hold CFLE status, with almost 850 of them active NCFR members. These 850 active NCFR/CFLE members comprise approximately 25% of the just over 3,300 active NCFR members (D. Cassidy, personal communication, July 2014). We encourage the many NCFR members who practice some type of family life education, but who are not CFLEs, to obtain the document titled *Tools for Ethical*

cal Thinking and Practice in Family Life Education (3rd ed., NCFR, 2012) from the NCFR office and incorporate those ethical guidelines into their work. The latest edition of this very useful text includes chapters on professional ethics and practice in family life education, ethical thinking and practice specifically for parent and family life educators, the development of the Domains of Family Practice Model, and family life education content and practice guidelines.

As we searched numerous databases for recent information on ethics education, it became apparent to us that very little work has been published since the turn of the 21st century. We applaud NCFR, the Minnesota Council on Family Relations, and Glen Palm for their proactive approaches in providing the tools to practice ethically to family life educators who work directly with parents and families. A void continues to exist, however, for other family professionals, for example, academicians who conduct family research and those who train students who provide direct services to families.

Implications for Ethics Education

Postmodernism has brought much-needed attention to the importance of recognizing and appreciating variation in family life. An unintended negative consequence of postmodernism, however, is the tendency for some students to wonder whether there are *any* legitimate standards of moral, responsible, or ethical professional behavior—other than to be tolerant of all people’s choices and conditions. Teaching ethical principles and guidelines that ground students in a way of thinking and acting as ethical family professionals can help diminish this unintended consequence.

Garner and Smith (1991) argued that “all who teach are involved in ethics education either by design or by default. Our implicit ethical perspective is shown in countless everyday behaviors and decisions” (p. 11). It appears that the only question is how consciously and effectively we will teach ethics to our students. An important study for family scientists was conducted by Knaub and Meredith (1991), in which they explored ethical issues among 357 family scientists selected from the Family Science, Family Therapy, and Education and Enrichment Sections of NCFR. This study provided empirical evidence for the need for both ethical guidelines and for explicit education in ethical behavior among those who teach about and work with families. The authors reported that:

- 76% of respondents stated that they had experienced a serious ethical dilemma in their work;
- of those in the entire sample who said they had faced a serious ethical dilemma, only 47% said that their educational preparation had helped them resolve it;
- of the family therapists in the sample (who are required to have course work in ethics), 71% said their ethics education helped them resolve the dilemma;
- professors and graduate students in nonclinical family programs indicated that they felt poorly prepared to deal with ethical questions;
- when asked if they believed that family life educators should have a code of ethics, 96% answered yes; and;
- family professionals who had not studied ethics believed that coursework in this area would have been helpful.

These data suggest both a fundamental need for better education on ethical principles and guidelines and a strong desire on the part of family life professionals for ethical guidance. These findings, combined with the *Ethical Principles and Guidelines* adopted by NCFR, demonstrate that it is the responsibility of family professionals who belong to that association to educate and encourage one another, as well as future family scientists, in ethical reasoning and action. This is no small challenge, as Knaub and Meredith (1991) stated:

The need for competent instruction may cause the profession difficulty. As revealed in the study, professors feel ill-prepared to deal with ethical dilemmas; yet, it is professors who must design and teach practical ethics to upcoming family scientists. How will this lack (or perceived lack) of education be corrected? (p. 19)

In the following sections, we present suggestions on ethics education, in particular as related to family science. Given the diversity of programs and contexts in which ethics education occurs, the emphasis will be on concepts and principles rather than on specific pedagogical strategies.

Ethics Education: Goals and Principles

The literature on ethics education includes philosophy, theory, and application to various domains (e.g., counseling and other professional practices). Professional ethics are both highly dependent on the specific professional context in which the work is done, and they are extremely complex and value laden (Craig, 1991; Kitchener, 1986; Knaub & Meredith, 1991; Leigh et al., 1986). Thus, it is not sufficient to ask students to read an article or book about ethics in general or about another professional context, for example, and expect them to be well educated on the ethical principles they should know and the dilemmas they may face as family professionals. Broad, superficial, or out-of-context discussions of ethics will not adequately prepare students for the complex, value-laden, diverse, and changing professional arenas in which they will work (Craig, 1991; Knaub & Meredith, 1991). In addition, general discussions are less likely to elicit strong commitments to ethical behavior (Arcus, 1980).

Garner and Smith (1991) stated that “Ethics education has a transdisciplinary quality that makes it everyone’s concern and no one’s exclusive domain” (p. 10). The good news is that the surge of interest in professional ethics from the 1970s to the 1990s

Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Life Educators

Developed by the Ethics Committee, Parent and Family Education Section,
Minnesota Council on Family Relations

Revised by Ada Alden, Betty Cooke, and Glen Palm

Parent and family life educators face difficult ethical issues on a daily basis regarding parenting practices that may be harmful to children, responding to parent remarks about their partners, or sharing information about a family with a professional in another agency. Some of these situations may be resolved by reviewing general principles of good practice with a colleague, and others may reveal a true ethical dilemma.

Parent and family educators are working with complex family systems, diverse belief and value systems, and a variety of social institutions and agencies. Many face these issues in relative isolation and with limited guidance from an emerging field. This document was developed to offer a thoughtful and balanced approach to understanding ethical principles and a concrete process for using them to address difficult ethical issues and dilemmas.

History

The information on ethics described here was developed by the Ethics Committee of the Minnesota Council on Family Relations. This group has studied ethical thinking and behavior for parent and family life educators since 1992. This journey has involved an initial needs assessment of Minnesota parent and family educators, several workshops to develop and field test an inductive process for identifying guidelines and virtues for parent and family educators, and consultation with professionals from other fields. The process led to new understandings and the development of a multi-perspective approach to ethics. The blending of the traditional ethical principles approach with virtues ethics and relational ethics was an outcome of meetings with Dr. William Doherty, Professor in Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota, who has adapted virtues and relational ethics to the field of family therapy. These three different approaches provide different but compatible lenses for understanding ethical practice. Together they provide a unique approach to ethics for parent and family life education.

A second set of workshops was developed to test and refine the integration of the three approaches and fine-tune a case study process for generating ethical thinking and solutions. The guidelines and case study process presented here are a result of several workshops during 1995–1997, in which practitioners applied the guidelines to case studies. The Ethics Committee has used input from these workshops to edit and refine the principles. The ethics process has been shared with both state and national audiences from 1997 to 2002 through workshops at local and national conferences. The National Council on Family Relations has published this information as part of a resource booklet for family life educators.

In 2007, the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) program went through a transition, with the initiation of an exam as a new criterion for certification. The question about adopting an official code of ethics for CFLEs came up during this time, and the revision of the original National Council on Family Relations document as a working code of ethics was proposed as a way to meet this need for CFLEs. A code of ethics provides an additional indicator of professionalism as the CFLE program continues to evolve and gain recognition. This document should be seen as a foundation for the CFLE code of ethics that could be adopted and revised as needed.

Integration of Three Approaches to Ethics

The *relational ethics approach* provides a starting place for understanding relationships as the context for making ethical decisions. This perspective allows for a careful examination of the multiple relationships that parent and family life educators encounter as a step toward applying principles. Parent and family life education professionals also see it as a guide for action. Striving for caring relationships in all professional interactions is the goal of relational ethics. Relational ethics provides a clear understanding of the immediate state of a relationship as well as goals for establishing a caring relationship. It provides both process and content for ethical behavior. General principles for developing caring, respectful relationships with family members are outlined in the section titled Relational Ethics: An Introduction.

The *principles approach to ethics* has been linked to the relational ethics approach by organizing principles around the concept of relationships. This allows parent and family life educators as a group to articulate important principles that can guide interactions with different populations. The principles are intended to guide parent and family educators in everyday decisions and actions.

The third approach to ethical thinking involves the more individual lens of *virtues ethics*. It attempts to fill in a gap in our current way of defining professional behavior, which tends to focus more on technical competence than on moral character. Good practice in family life education should be tied to internal standards of excellence as well as external behavior. Virtues are “dispositions to do the right thing for the right reason.”

Virtues can be defined on two different levels. The first level identifies core virtues that are necessary for every profession. These include virtues such as justice, truthfulness, and courage. Their implementation varies over time and in specific professions. The second level includes those virtues that are essential for ethical practice in the current social context for parent and family life education.

Three essential virtues have emerged from the discussions between Ethics Committee members and practitioners:

1. **Caring:** A disposition to enhance the welfare of family members as agents in their own lives
2. **Prudence/Practical Wisdom:** The ability to understand competing needs and decisions based on reflection and consultation
3. **Hope/Optimism:** A disposition to look at the strengths of family members and other individuals and to see positive potential in situations related to family life

These dispositions provide family life educators with internal strengths to think and behave in an ethical manner.

The strengths of a multi-perspective approach depend not only on the richness of having different perspectives but also the dynamic tensions that keep a balance between absolutism and relativism. The creative tensions in this approach include (1) a balance between the dynamic nature of relationships and the more static nature of principles; (2) a balance between the individual in the context of a relationship and the group in thoughtful reflection of important principles; and (3) a balance between wisdom of the past, learnings of the present, and striving to be good in the future. These tensions provide a dynamic balance to ethical thinking as it continues to evolve through reflection and refinement.

Relational Ethics: An Introduction

The use of relational ethics is critical to work with families. The principles of relational ethics form a basis for understanding specific ethical dilemmas and guide practice first and foremost toward the development of caring and respectful relationships with all family members. Some of the important principles that assist family life educators towards this end are the following.

1. The parent and family life educator’s relationship with individual family members, peers, and the community is both the context and the point of contact for our ethical thinking and actions. This means that parent and family life educators will focus on relationships in understanding ethical issues and depend on the development of caring relationships to guide movement towards ethical actions.
2. Parent and family life educators bear the primary responsibility to initiate a relationship built on trust, caring, and understanding. All relationships are two-way interactions, and parent and family life educators cannot ensure that all their relationships will be positive. However, parent and family life educators will model acceptance, caring, and understanding toward family members and peers while pursuing a mutually respectful and caring relationship.
3. All relationships have predictable stages of development. Parent and family life educators will adjust their practice to their understanding of the state and stage of a relationship.
4. Parent and family life educators will bring a knowledge base of general principles about children and youth, parenting, family, and community systems to share with family members. Parent and family life educators will work in collaboration with parents to understand how these principles apply to individual family members and situations.
5. Parent and family life educators will set boundaries on their relationships with family members and be responsible for potential negative influences of care taking beyond these limits. The intensity of relationships will vary, but the good family life educator will be vigilant of his or her responsibility to nurture interdependence between family members and other community systems.

In many ways, the caring and respectful relationships that parent and family life educators build with family members are analogous to healthy parent–child relationships. Parent and family life educators need to take the major responsibility for initiating healthy relationships and must work to maintain these relationships. In many cases, relationships with adults quickly assume a stance of mutual respect and understanding. In other cases there may be a number of barriers that make this relationship more difficult to build into an egalitarian and respectful one. Parent and family life educators must continue to develop an understanding of the relationship process and how to best facilitate healthy relationships among family members, colleagues, and themselves.

Ethical Principles for Parent and Family Life Educators

Family Life Education: Advancing the Profession

Dawn Cassidy

I wished for a way to reach young people in a more effective way. It seemed backwards to help with so many recurring problems after they appeared rather than taking a more proactive approach. Why not teach some of the concepts and skills necessary to ward off many of the problems before they developed? It made sense to me.

—Char Kamper, CFLE, developer of relationship skills curricula for the Dibble Institute

This individual was profoundly impacted by an activity I had facilitated. She believed that the course of her life may have been different if it weren't for that human sexuality class. It was at that moment I knew exactly what kind of educator I wanted to be.

—Cherie Seitz, CFLE, CSE, Director of Education and Outreach, Planned Parenthood

What I discovered was a profound interest in extending my love of being a father and husband into work with families by helping them build stronger connections, foster respect, and clarify family rules and responsibilities.

—Scott MacGregor, CFLE, Dads and Daughters, YMCA

With my background in family life education, I was able to add a new aspect to finances: the family. I developed curriculum for “Money in Marriage” and “Raising a Money-Smart Child,” as those are both critical to family functioning yet so often go unaddressed. I found many people were interested in these topics but never knew where to go for help and resources for these types of conversations.

—Heather Johnson, Family Life Educator, Utah State University Extension

These family life educators have found joy and satisfaction in devoting their professional lives to the practice of family life education. There may be other occupations that carry more prestige or provide a higher salary but, as many family life educators can attest, few are as rewarding as the practice of family life education.

This chapter includes a discussion of family life education and its status as a profession. A review of the Standards and Criteria and application process for the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential and the National Council on Family Relations' (NCFR's) Family Life Education Job Analysis will provide insight into the content, people, employment settings, and practices that make up this important and impactful occupation (Schroeder Measurement Technologies, 2014). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the challenges facing the field and strategies for advancement.

Family Life Education: An Overview

Family life education is a growing and developing field. Although the profession of family life education has not yet reached its full potential, progress is being made toward the goal of having family life education be the norm—something that all individuals and family members participate in throughout their lifespan.

Family life education is carried out in a variety of settings, including health care, community education, public education, faith communities, social services, the military, business, and many more, but it is not always referred to as *family life education* specifically. Although the title “family life educator” is becoming more common, family life educators practice under a variety of titles, including parenting educator, family coach, extension specialist, family service worker, family case manager, and many more. This inconsistency has contributed to a lack of clear identity for the profession, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The profession of family life education. First, let us consider the following question: Is family life education a profession? How do we know? East (1980) defined eight criteria that should be in place in order for a field or occupation to be considered a profession:

1. the activity becomes a full-time paid occupation;
2. training schools and curricula are established;

3. those who are trained establish a professional association;
4. a name, standards of admission, a core body of knowledge, and competencies for practice are developed;
5. internal conflict within the group and external conflict from other professions with similar concerns lead to a unique role definition;
6. the public served expresses some acceptance of the expertise of those practicing the occupation;
7. certification and licensure are the legal signs that a group is sanctioned for a particular service to society and that it is self-regulated; and
8. a code of ethics is developed to eliminate unethical practice and to protect the public.

Table 33.1. Family Life Education as a Profession: East's (1980) Criteria

Criteria	Progress made	Room to grow	Criterion (1= no progress, 5 = criterion has been fully met)
1. Activity becomes a full-time paid occupation	Though rarely called <i>family life education</i> , many professionals practice family life education on a full-time basis under such descriptions as parent education, sex education, marriage enrichment, etc.	Family life education is often only part of a family life educator's job responsibilities because employment specifically in family life education may be available on only a part-time basis.	4
2. Training schools and curricula are established	Family-related degrees have been offered since the 1960s. The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) began recognizing academic programs that meet the criteria needed for the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) designation, beginning in 1996. To date, there are 132 NCFR CFLE-approved programs.	Few degrees are called Family Life Education but rather Child and Family Studies, Human Development and Family Studies, Human Services, Family Studies, etc. The lack of consensus results in a fragmented identity for the field.	4
3. Those who are trained establish professional associations	Numerous family-related associations have been in existence since the early 1900s, including NCFR and the American Association for Family & Consumer Sciences. Associations focused specifically on parenting education (e.g., the National Parenting Education Network) and marriage education (e.g., the National Association for Relationship and Marriage Education) have also been formed.	There are numerous family-related associations and organizations, which can cause a fragmented identity.	4
4. Name, standards of admission, core body of knowledge, and competencies for practice are developed	NCFR developed the <i>University and College Curriculum Guidelines and Standards and Criteria for the Certification of Family Life Educators</i> in 1984.		5

5. Internal conflict within the group and external conflict from other professions with similar concerns lead to a unique role definition	Numerous organizations and credentials exist with some overlapping content but development of <i>Curriculum Guidelines</i> and CFLE criteria defines family life education content areas. The Domains of Family Practice Model helps clarify unique role of family life education.	Employers and the public are still unclear on what family life education is and how family life educators differ from social workers, therapists, and counselors.	4
6. Public served expresses some acceptance of the expertise of those practicing the occupation.	Increased popularity of parenting, marriage, and sexuality education programs throughout the United States reflects the public's increased acceptance of education related to family issues.	The public is often unaware that specific credentials exist for family life educators.	3
7. Certification and licensure are legal signs that a group is sanctioned for a particular service to society and that it is self-regulated.	The CFLE designation was developed to regulate qualifications of family life education providers. CFLEs must meet continuing education requirements in order to maintain their designation.		5
8. A code of ethics is developed to eliminate unethical practice and to protect the public.	The Family Science Section of NCFR established <i>Ethical Principles and Guidelines</i> in 1995. In 2009, NCFR formally adopted principles from the Minnesota Council on Family Relations' ethical guidelines process as the official CFLE Code of Ethics.		5

From *Family Life Education: Working With Families across the Lifespan* (p. 29-30, by C. Darling and D. Cassidy, with L. Powell, 2014, Longview, IL: Waveland Press. Copyright 2014 by Carol Darling and Dawn Cassidy. Adapted with permission.

Table 33.1 provides an overview of East's criteria and the status of family life education as a profession within each of these criterion. The scope of this chapter does not allow a thorough review of each of these criteria, but the discussion in the "Challenges in the Field of Family Life Education" and "Strategies for Growth" sections of this chapter will provide some insight into where the profession stands. Although not all criteria for formal recognition of family life education as a profession have been met, it is clear that considerable progress has been made. A discussion of the Standards and Criteria for the CFLE credential will provide further clarification regarding the profession of family life education.

Standards and Criteria for Family Life Education

Establishment of curriculum guidelines. Initially, and still in many cases today, those carrying out the practice of family life education have come to their vocation through a variety of disciplines (Arcus, 1995). Until fairly recently, few people were trained specifically in family life education; instead, professionals practicing family life education held degrees in child or human development, family science, education, psychology, therapy, social work, sociology, and so on. They responded to a need for preventive education and attempted to strengthen their knowledge in family life education through in-service trainings, workshops, conferences, and more (Czaplewski & Jorgenson, 1993).

A First-Hand Account of Implementing a Family Life Education Model: Intentionality in Head Start Home Visiting

Justin Petkus

The Administration for Children and Families division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Head Start (2008a), states that the purpose of the Head Start home-based option is as follows:

To help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment. The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child's growth and development.

Although this performance standard must be adhered to nationally in home-based Head Start programs, the interpretation of the standard vastly varies from program to program, resulting in a lack of a consistent model for the deliverance of the home visit.

Correlating with the variance of models and interpretations of them is the diversity of professionals serving in the home visitor role. There is no singular educational requirement to qualify as a home visitor; instead, the Administration for Children and Families (2008b) states that a candidate must meet the following criteria:

Knowledge and experience in child development and early childhood education; the principles of child health, safety, and nutrition; adult learning principles; and family dynamics. They must be skilled in communicating with and motivating people. In addition, they must have knowledge of community resources and the skills to link families with appropriate agencies and services.

As such, the range of educational experience level for the home visitor may range from holding a high school diploma to a master's degree. To my knowledge, no national percentage data have been collected on the educational background of practicing home visitors, making it difficult to ascertain whether any trends exist.

As an administrator to a Head Start home visiting program in Michigan, I have been presented with the many challenges—and yet at the same time, opportunities—that the ambiguity within the performance standards present to our agency. First, it was clear from the beginning of my appointment to the position of department supervisor that I needed to identify my own interpretation of the home visit purpose and, perhaps more important, the practical approach my team of home visitors would be taking in the home with families. To do so meant asking some questions:

- What is our current philosophical model/approach?
- From where was this model/approach derived?
- What are the qualifications of the home visitors implementing this model?

At the same time that I started in my position and began asking these questions, our agency was in the middle of an integration of our two program options. Early Head Start (home visiting) serviced pregnant mothers and children to age 3, and Head Start (pre-school) serviced 3- to 5-year-olds. The integration aimed to deliver seamless prenatal-to-age-5 services for low-income children and families. Prior to integration, there was limited coordination between the two programs, which essentially operated independently of one another. The changes occurring with integration provided the groundwork allowing for evaluation of how our home visiting program would look moving forward—although admittedly, our exact vision of what operational changes might occur was still unclear. What was clear is that we sought ways to improve delivery of best practice.

With best practice in mind and open to new ideas, our agency hosted Dr. Lori Roggman and Dr. Mark Innocenti of Utah State University. Dr. Roggman and Dr. Innocenti presented their findings on the effectiveness of an infant/toddler home visit and how

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to measure the quality of a home visit through their Home Visiting Rating Scales (Roggman et al., 2010). The scale identifies seven essential factors predictive of the effectiveness of the home visit: (a) home visitor responsiveness to the family, (b) home visitor–family relationship, (c) home visitor facilitation of parent–child interaction, (d) home visitor nonintrusiveness/collaboration with family, (e) parent–child interaction during home visit, (f) parent engagement during home visit, and (g) child engagement during home visit. These factors are rooted in a strengths-based developmental parenting approach that emphasizes the role of the parent as the child’s first teacher and most important attachment figure. Although this philosophy is one that many on our team could identify as being valid, the approaches taken in the home still were largely contradictory and lacked continuity between home visitors due to the various interpretations of what the “parent as the child’s first teacher” meant to the individual home visiting professional. Recognizing the consistency in monitoring quality that the Home Visiting Rating Scales would bring to our program, our administrative team determined to adapt it.

The questions I posed earlier were still ever present as I factored in this new monitoring tool and attempted to form our home visiting department’s identity. As I reflected, I continuously came back to the performance-standard-stated purpose of the home visit: to “work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child’s growth and development.” The words *work with parents* stood out to me as I began to learn more about our previous model and realized the distinction that needed to be made between *working with parents* and *working with children*. I discovered that the home visits our staff provided were a mixture of time spent between working with parents versus children, and even the approach of how each was conducted varied between home visitors. Specifically, some visits very clearly appeared to look like a therapy session between home visitor and parent. Although in such an example the home visitor was technically *working with the parent*, I would argue that the conversations would detract from the development of the child and instead focus on family problems. Other visits appeared to be similar to a respite session for the parent in that the home visitor would directly interact with the child for 90 minutes while the parent would be present to watch. The use-of-self varied from being a model of how to parent “correctly” to somebody who was in the home to “fix the problems.”

By no means do I wish to diminish the well-intentioned home visits the staff provided. In fact, they had established excellent rapport with families. However, the good intentions of modeling, fixing, and *doing for* were not productive measures for fostering sustainable, self-sufficient, and empowered parents. Monsignor Ivan Illich (1968) summarized this point well when he said:

To hell with good intentions. This is a theological statement. You will not help anybody by your good intentions. There is an Irish saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions; this sums up the same theological insight.

Many human service providers have good intentions with the work they do to improve the lives of families; however, they are unaware of the disruption to which they may actually be contributing. Those who have good intentions to help others by “doing for,” or “modeling,” are making an assumption that parents are empty vessels—in effect, sponges that will absorb the service provider’s expert knowledge. The approach is not strengths based and sets up an unrealistic expectation that the family will replicate the behavior or information when the provider is absent. Disruption then occurs when, for whatever reason, the provider is no longer providing services and the parent has no transferable skills after the home visits end because he or she had relied on the provider to do the work of parenting. Furthermore, the good-intentioned “help others” mentality is often self-rewarding. Service providers have the luxury of being able to think that they have improved the lives of others and then feel good about themselves for doing so. The damage done to them is nonexistent, and the thought of what wrong they may have done likely will not occur to the service provider if he or she feels “liked” by the family. Although rapport is important, the true test of successful work *with* parents is when they recognize and identify the developmental progress of their child by saying, “We have done this ourselves.”

To clarify, mere intention alone is never sufficient to make a difference. True impact is made through empowerment. In Head Start, that empowerment means building the confidence of the parents to be their child’s first teacher. Without a good sense of self-efficacy in the parent, the child is likely to become detached. When a parent is efficacious enough to form a *cathexis*, or attachment, with his or her infant/toddler, then the child is less likely to exhibit behavior issues, more likely to develop necessary cognitive and social skills, and overall be better prepared for school—which is at the root of Head Start programming goals (i.e., school readiness).

Our departmental paradigm shift can really be summarized as *doing for* versus *being with*. In the *being with* approach, home visitors serve as a coach to support the parent. The parent does the work, and the home visitor provides education by narrating the parent–child interaction to assist the parent in understanding the child’s responsive behavior and developmental growth, thereby fostering sustainable

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Additional commentary from Justin Petkus:

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