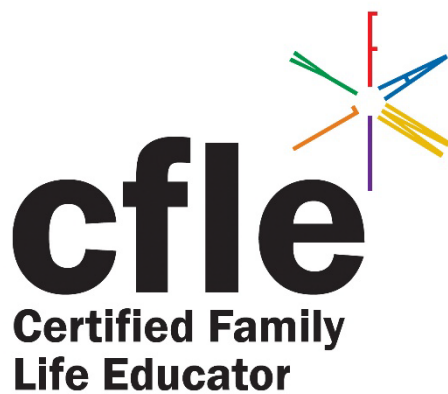


National Council on Family Relations

Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) Credential

Standards & Criteria



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WHAT IS FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION?

Family Life Education (FLE) is a complex and multi-faceted field that works to strengthen all aspects of family life by enriching and improving the quality of individual and family life. FLE emphasizes processes to enable people to develop into healthy adults, to help people work together in close relationships, and to facilitate the ability of people to bring out the best in others. While various professionals assist families, it is the Family Life Educator who incorporates a preventive and educational approach to individual and family issues.

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

ESTABLISHING THE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION CREDENTIAL

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 in 1968. The National Commission on Family Life Education published its report, "Family Life Education Programs, Principles, Plans, Procedures: A Framework for Family Life Education," in 1968. The Committee on Educational Standards and Certification for Family Life Educators proposed criteria for the education of family and sex education teachers in 1970. In 1978, a Committee on Standards for Family Life Educators reported recommendations to the National Council on Family Relations' membership. Based on this continued concern, 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 NCFR's Board of Directors in 1981 to establish a certification program for professional Family Life Educators. "The College/University Curriculum Guidelines," received final approval in October 1982. "Standards and Criteria for the Certification of Family Life Educators" received final Board approval in October 1982, as did "An Overview of the Content in Family Life Education: A Framework for Planning Programs over the Life Span." The Board of Directors recommended "immediate implementation" of the Certification Program.

NCFR History

The National Council on Family Relations, founded in 1938, is the oldest nonprofit, nonpartisan, multidisciplinary professional association focused solely on family research, practice, and education.

NCFR members are professionals dedicated to understanding and strengthening families. Our members come from more than 35 countries, from all 50 U.S. states, and work as researchers, demographers, marriage and family therapists, parent/family educators, university faculty, students, social workers, public health workers, extension specialists and faculty, early childhood educators, clergy, counselors, and K-12 teachers.

Why NCFR is the professional home for the FLE credential

The variety and number of disciplines represented in the membership of NCFR and the organization's commitment to improving the quality of individual and family life, made it uniquely qualified to provide leadership in the development of a national system of voluntary certification of Family Life Educators. In 1968, NCFR defined Family Life Education 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.

WHAT IS A FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION CERTIFICATION?

Certification for Family Life Education is a process by which the professional organization, the National Council on Family Relations, grants recognition to individuals who have met specified qualifications. It is not a certification to teach, but it is a credential indicating expertise in the field of Family Life Education. For those responsible for hiring and evaluating personnel, it is assurance that the designee possesses the professionally recognized knowledge, skills and abilities need to provide quality Family Life Education.

Qualified Family Life Educators are critical to the success of Family Life Education programs. They can be responsible for the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services that impact families. In addition, they often interact directly with program participants. Both professional training and personal experience are essential in the development of a qualified Family Life Educator.

In addition to the preparation and work experience deemed critical, ethical behavior and respect for others are basic personal characteristics of the Family Life Educator. Evidence is sought regarding intellectual and social skills, skills in verbal and written communication, the ability to relate well to groups and with persons on a one-to-one basis in a non-judgmental way, self-confidence, emotional stability, flexibility, maturity, empathy, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, awareness of one's own personal and cultural attitudes and values - especially regarding sexism, gender, sexual orientation, racism, ageism, religion, and work. Such evidence is provided through the Employer Assessment Form.

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION CREDENTIAL

NCFR began certifying Family Life Educators through a portfolio review process in 1985. This process required those seeking the credential to submit evidence of their educational study related to the content deemed essential in developing expertise in Family Life Education. Once a portfolio was evaluated and shown to provide the necessary evidence, NCFR, the applicant was recognized as a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE).

In 1996, NCFR added the Academic Program Review (APR) process for college and university degree programs that had course content that fully explored Family Life Education. Schools with such programs were invited to submit details of their family degree programs for review by the Academic Program Review Committee to determine if their program's course of study included all the content necessary to be recognized as an "NCFR CFLE-approved program." Graduates of NCFR CFLE-approved programs may apply for the CFLE credential through the CFLE-approved program process (page 6). Currently there are nearly 130 NCFR CFLE-approved programs in the U.S. and Canada.

Recognizing the increased value of a standardized method for assessing credentialing qualifications, NCFR conducted a job analysis for the practice of Family Life Education. That job analysis influenced the development of a national standardized exam for the CFLE credential, which was launched in 2007. The CFLE exam is available as an alternative to anyone who has not graduated from a CFLE-approved program or for those whose graduation from such a program occurred more than two years prior to their application date.

Presently, NCFR supports two processes to becoming a CFLE: NCFR CFLE-approved program the Exam.

BECOMING A CFLE – DEVELOPING AND DEMONSTRATING MASTERY IN 10 CONTENT AREAS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

The CFLE application process measures knowledge and understanding in each of the 10 FLE content areas deemed necessary for effective Family Life Education practice. In addition, applicants must document sufficient work experience in providing Family Life Education to receive full certification status.

NCFR has identified the following content areas as representing the field of Family Life Education. Applicants pursuing the CFLE credential must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following 10 content areas.

Family Life Content Areas

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

Minimum Requirements to become a CFLE

Applicants for the CFLE credential must have earned at least a bachelor's degree at an accredited* college/university. Applicants with a degree earned outside of the United States must provide evidence of degree equivalency to a degree earned in the United States. Credentials should be evaluated by an official credential evaluation service that is a member of the Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc. (AICE). Degrees earned in Canada must be accredited through the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

**An accredited college/university's programs have been reviewed by a recognized regional accreditation agency and have met the agency's educational standards. Acceptable agencies include the following: Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NEASC CIHE), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS COC), and Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University Commission (WASC WSCUC).*

Two Levels of Certification – Provisional and Full

Provisional Certification

Provisional certification is available to applicants who can demonstrate content knowledge in each of the 10 Family Life Education content areas, but who have not yet earned enough work experience hours in Family Life Education to qualify for full-certification status. Applicants successfully completing the CFLE-approved program application process receive provisional certification which can be maintained for up to five years. At any point during the 5 years, when enough work experience has been achieved, CFLEs with provisional certification can submit the necessary documentation and be upgraded to full status.

Full Certification

Full certification is available to applicants who can demonstrate both content knowledge and work experience in Family Life Education. Applicants of the CFLE-approved program application process with sufficient work experience at the time of application can apply for full certification by submitting information and documentation of relevant work experience. The applicant's employer must verify and assess at least 50% of the applicant's work experience. Applicants must also submit a current resume or vita.

Two Ways to Become a CFLE: NCFR CFLE-Approved Program or Exam

Graduate from a CFLE-Approved Program

The CFLE-approved program application is for recent college graduates – graduated within two years of their application date – of CFLE-approved academic programs. CFLE-approved programs offer coursework that meets the standards and criteria needed for the CFLE credential and allows graduates to apply for CFLE certification through the CFLE-approved program process. Recent graduates of CFLE-approved academic programs can apply for provisional or full CFLE certification. Applicants eligible to apply through the CFLE-approved program process **DO NOT** need to take the CFLE exam.

Submission Deadlines – CFLE-Approved Program process: CFLE-approved program applications can be submitted at any time. There is no specific deadline for submission, but the applicant must apply within two years of graduation. Applicants are typically notified of the review decision within 45 days.

Fees – CFLE-Approved Program Process: Applicants applying through the CFLE-approved program process must submit the CFLE-approved program application fee. Note there is a different price for provisional versus full certification. The CFLE-approved program application fee is non-refundable.

Take the CFLE Exam

Candidates who have not recently graduated from a CFLE-approved academic program or who have *not* graduated from an NCFR-approved academic program within the past two years can take the CFLE exam to become certified. Candidates must also submit a signed CFLE Code of Professional Ethics and an original official transcript showing degree completion (of at least a bachelor's degree) from an accredited college/university. The [Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines](#) represents the CFLE exam content outline. The content outline and a list of exam resources are accessible through the NCFR website.

Applicants with less than the required level of work experience for their degree and level will receive provisional certification upon successful completion of the exam. Provisional certification is valid for up to five years. A provisional CFLE can upgrade to full certification upon submission of sufficient work experience in Family Life Education.

Applicants pursuing full certification through the CFLE exam application process must also submit documentation of relevant work experience. In addition, an employer must verify and assess at least 50% of the applicant's work experience. Applicants must also submit a current resume or vita.

Submission Deadlines – CFLE-Exam process: The CFLE exam is available throughout the year through computer-based testing at testing centers located throughout the United States and Canada (and several other countries), and through paper and pencil format onsite at the NCFR Conference. There is a monthly submission deadline.

Fees – CFLE-Exam Process: Applicants applying through the CFLE exam must submit the CFLE exam application fee. Note there is a different price for provisional versus full certification. The CFLE exam application fee is non-refundable.

Appeal of Eligibility Denials – CFLE-Exam Process: An applicant denied eligibility for the exam has 45 days to submit an appeal application to NCFR requesting an appeal of that denial. If an applicant does not submit an appeal application within 45 days, the applicant forfeits any right to an appeal later. There is no additional fee for requesting an appeal.

Exam Retake Policy: Applicants who fail the exam must wait at least three months before retaking. In the event of a third failure, the candidate must wait three months and submit evidence of the completion of continuing education or study activity. There is a retake fee and the CFLE exam cannot be taken more than one time during a single testing window.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Applicants wishing to receive full certification must submit evidence of sufficient professional work experience in Family Life Education by submitting evidence of relevant work experience. In addition to documentation of work experiences, an employer must verify and assess at least 50% of the applicant's work experience. Applicants must also submit a current resume or vita and supporting documentation.

Candidates with family-specific degrees

A family specific degree will typically have the word "family" in the title and be taught within a Family Science department or program taught within the context of the family. A degree without family in the title may be accepted if it can be shown that the degree included coursework specific to each of the ten content areas and a total of approximately 30 credits. If you are unsure if your degree would qualify as family-specific, contact the NCFR office.

- Bachelor's degree: (minimum 3,200 hours work experience in Family Life Education)
- Master's or Ph.D.: (minimum 1,600 hours work experience in Family Life Education)

Candidates with non-family specific degrees

Minimum 4,800 hours regardless of level of degree. Bachelors, Masters, or PH.D., all require at least 4,800 hours experience in Family Life Education.

Family Life Education Work Experience Criteria

Family Life Education occurs in a variety of settings and under a multitude of titles. In general, NCFR considers Family Life Education to be professional activities that involve prevention and education for individuals and families that leads to more productive and satisfying living. Family Life Education work experience can include a variety of professional activities (paid or unpaid) such as program development, program coordination/administration, program evaluation, needs assessments, marketing of Family Life Education materials and programs, curriculum or resource development, publications, presentations, group facilitation, and community collaboration. Work experience hours must be presented within a professional context; NCFR does not allow personal experience to be counted toward CFLE work experience hours.

To consider work experience activities as Family Life Education the work should reflect these criteria:

- The work is educational and preventive in nature, rather than therapeutic.
- The work is related to at least one of the ten family life content areas.
- The work considers the whole family, even when working only with individuals (i.e., family systems perspective).
- The work reflects a lifespan perspective – childhood, adolescence, adulthood, later adulthood.
- The work includes identified content or a planned curriculum or program.

Volunteer work may be considered but it must be in addition to paid employment and should be supported with training or formal preparation.

Employment is typically demonstrated through curriculum and material development, and the development or presentation of workshops, courses or programs involving life skills, i.e. communication, parenting, financial management, sexuality, etc. Family Life Education can also involve program administration and policy development. Counseling, therapy, and case management are not typically considered to be Family Life Education. However, counselors, therapists and case managers/social workers can receive the CFLE credential if they can document the preventative and educational nature of their work.

Experience earned before graduation can be used, but most of the work experience should be earned post-graduation. Experience earned during an internship or practicum can be used but must be supported with other work experiences.

Applicants who work in a non-traditional Family Life Education setting, but have incorporated Family Life Education methods, and/or a preventive and educational approach into their work, should provide clarification as to how this is done. An example might be someone who works in a nursing home and has developed a series of classes and support materials for residents and family members about coping with change, making decisions, and/or managing assets.

Documentation of Work Experience

When documenting work experience, applicants seeking full certification provide job descriptions, course descriptions or syllabi for courses taught, brochures or materials including schedules or table of contents for curricula, workshops, seminars, classes, presented, etc. For authorship of books or articles, applicants can provide a copy of the article if fewer than five pages, an abstract, or the book's table of contents.

Duration and Maintenance of Certification

Certification will be valid for a period of five years from the date of original certification.

Full Certification must be maintained by fulfilling the following requirements:

- Payment of the required CFLE Annual fee. The fee covers the cost of the CFLE newsletter, Network, CFLE pricing on NCFR webinars, access to the CFLE discussion group, and general maintenance and promotion of the CFLE program.
- Submission of the required continuing education credits every five years.
- Payment of the Recertification Fee upon submittal of continuing education credits.

Provisional certification must be maintained through payment of the required CFLE Annual fee. Provisional designates must upgrade to full certification status within five years of approval.

NCFR will issue dated seals (2020, 2021, etc.) to the designee during each of the five years. The dated seals will be issued only upon receipt of the annual CFLE Annual fee for placement on the CFLE certificate. Seals are mailed the month after payment is received.

The CFLE Annual fee must be paid on an annual basis to avoid forfeiting the certification credential. If, after notification, this fee remains unpaid, the credential will be forfeited. Certification can be reinstated at any time. The application materials for CFLEs who have forfeited their credential will remain on file at NCFR for three years from the forfeiture date. After that time, NCFR reserves the right to discard the application materials.

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FULL CFLES

Certification of the Family Life Educator by NCFR is in effect for a period of five years. At the end of that time, the Certified Family Life Educator with full certification status must fulfill the following requirements to renew certification:

- Document and submit evidence of participation in professional growth and development activities related to Family Life Education, which continue to fulfill the standards established by NCFR. These activities should go beyond the requirements of normal employment and be earned in three areas: academic preparation, professional development, and/or work experience. A minimum of 100 contact hours (60 minutes each) over the five-year period is required. Continuing activity can be recorded online throughout the five-year period, but the final submission must occur in the fifth year.
- Submission of the Recertification Fee.
- Upon receipt and review of continuing education credits, and submission of the recertification fee, the designee will be re-certified for an additional five-year period. This recertification is contingent upon payment of the CFLE Annual fee.
- Recertification can be denied if the necessary 100 contact hours have not been accrued. Upon denial of recertification, the applicant may request reconsideration of the decision.
- Upon payment of the currently established recertification fee and subject to meeting the requirements for maintaining certification, the applicant will be issued a new certificate. NCFR will continue to issue dated seals to the designee during the next five-year period of certification thereby signifying continuation of certification. The dated seal will be issued only upon receipt of the CFLE Annual fee.
- Certification will be forfeited if documentation of continuing education credits is not submitted to NCFR headquarters by the due date. Extensions may be granted but must be requested in writing to the Director of Family Life Education.
- Content Areas for Continuing Education – The content areas in which credit for continuing education may be received are the same as those established for the certification program:

Family Life Content Areas

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

Continuing education activity is required in at least two of the ten content areas. It is not necessary to have continuing education activity in all ten content areas. Additional information on continuing education requirements will be sent to the designee upon approval of certification and is also available on the NCFR website. It is the CFLE's responsibility to keep track of their recertification date.

NCFR MEMBERSHIP

You do not have to be a member of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) to apply for or maintain certification. However, members of NCFR pay a lower rate for certification than non-members. All NCFR membership categories qualify for the member discount.

REINSTATEMENT OF THE CFLE CREDENTIAL AFTER FORFEITURE

The CFLE credential will be forfeited under the following conditions:

- Non-payment of the CFLE annual fee.
- Failure to submit continuing education credits and the Recertification fee every five years.
- For provisional CFLEs, failure to submit evidence of sufficient work experience at the end of the five-year provisional period.

Forfeited CFLEs may reinstate their credential by paying the Reinstatement fee and the current annual fee. In addition, they must submit any continuing education or work experience information, and related fees, that would have been due had they not forfeited. Reinstatement is only available within five years of forfeiture. CFLEs who have been inactive for more than five years must reapply by taking the CFLE exam.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OR APPEAL

Any applicant who has been denied certification or recertification may request reconsideration in writing to the Chair of the CFLE Advisory Board, c/o the Director of Family Life Education. This letter must state the reason(s) why the applicant believes the decision is inappropriate and may include any additional information, which the applicant believes may show his/her qualifications to be adequate. The request must be made within one year from the date of the notice to the applicant of the denial. Members of the CFLE Advisory Board will be responsible for conducting a review of the request and making a final decision. Review of the request will occur at the next scheduled meeting of the CFLE Advisory Board.

If, after reconsideration of the candidate's materials, the CFLE Advisory Board members again deny certification or recertification, the CFLE Advisory Board will inform the applicant of this decision. This notice will be timely and by letter. The letter will:

- State the reason(s) for the CFLE Advisory Board's decision.
- Advise the applicant of the right to appeal.

No appeal may be filed unless the applicant has first completed the reconsideration process.

APPEALS PROCESS

Any applicant who chooses to appeal the decision of the CFLE Advisory Board following completion of the reconsideration process must inform the Chair of the CFLE Advisory Board in writing of intent to appeal, within 30 days of the receipt of the letter denying certification or recertification.

The appellant will have the right to appear in person before the CFLE Advisory Board, and/or to submit evidence, including oral testimony, and to be represented by legal counsel, if desired.

The appellant will be notified by the Chair of the CFLE Advisory Board in writing, at least four weeks in advance of the meeting at which the appeal will be heard.

If the appellant is to be represented by legal counsel, the CFLE Advisory Board Chair will be notified, in writing, at least two weeks in advance of the committee meeting.

Meetings of the CFLE Advisory Board will, as a rule, be closed meetings except when the appellant whose case is being considered requests, in writing, that the meeting be open.

All decisions of the CFLE Advisory Board will be by majority vote and are final.

The appellant may challenge the specific composition of the CFLE Advisory Board on grounds of conflict of interest in a specific case by writing to the President of NCFR.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions regarding the CFLE program or the application process, contact the Director of Family Life Education, Dawn Cassidy at dawncassidy@ncfr.org. Information on NCFR and the CFLE program is available

on the NCFR website at www.ncfr.org.