



## Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines (2020)

These guidelines represent the content from the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) *University and College Curriculum Guidelines* and the *Competencies for Family Life Educators*, which were developed by faculty at Weber State University. It represents the knowledge, skills, and abilities identified as necessary for attainment of the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential. 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 *Lifespan Family Life Education (FLE) Framework* (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011), which outlines all ten content areas specific to four age groups: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and older adulthood. The four age groups demonstrate the principle that FLE 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*, that 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” that also are woven throughout the framework.

In 2007 and again in 2014 NCFR, along with Schroeder Measurement Technologies (SMT) (now SMT/Prometric), conducted a job analysis survey which was distributed to current Certified Family Life Educators 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 update the content outline which represents the foundation of the CFLE credential as assessed through both the CFLE-approved program and exam processes. In 2020 the content outline was further revised to align content area objectives with Bloom’s Taxonomy.

There are two parts to each of the following 10 FLE content areas. The first is “Content” which gives an overview of the subject matter included within each content area. The second component includes “Practice” which relates to the tasks expected of an entry-level CFLE. The “practice” segment serves as the basis for questions on the CFLE exam. It also provides guidance to academic programs as they develop course objectives and learning outcomes.

### **I. FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETAL CONTEXTS (12% of exam)**

**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:**

- Describe the characteristics, diversity, and impact of local, national, and global social systems on individuals and families
- Explain factors (e.g., media, marketing, technology, economics, social movements, war, natural disasters, epidemics, environment, sustainability) influencing individuals and families from both contemporary and historical perspectives
- Describe factors that influence the relationship between work, personal, and family life
- Articulate social and cultural influences affecting various aspects of family life (e.g., dating, courtship, partner/marital choice and relationships, family composition, divorce, and dying/death).
- Exemplify the reciprocal interaction between individuals, families, and various social systems (e.g., workplace, health, legal, educational, religious/spiritual)
- Assess the impact of demographics (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, religion, generation, gender, sexual orientation) on contemporary families

**II. INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF FAMILIES (12% of exam)**

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

e.g., Research & theories related to: Internal Social Processes (including cooperation & conflict); Communication (patterns & problems in couple 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 ambiguous loss, chronic illness and/or disabilities).

**Practice—A CFLE is prepared to:**

- Recognize and describe healthy and unhealthy characteristics pertaining to:
  - Family relationships
  - Family development
- Analyze family functioning using various theoretical perspectives
- Analyze family dynamics from a systems perspective
- Compare and contrast family dynamics in response to normative and non-normative stressors
- Assess family dynamics in response to stress, crises, and trauma
- Facilitate and strengthen communication processes, conflict-management, and problem-solving skills
- Describe, develop, and/or reinforce strategies that help families function effectively

### **III. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN (12% of exam)**

**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; and Adulthood (early, middle, and late).

#### **Practice—A CFLE is prepared to:**

- Explain developmental stages, transitions, elements, and challenges throughout the lifespan
- Illustrate reciprocal influences:
  - Individual development on families
  - Family development on individuals
- Describe and exemplify the impact of individual health and wellness on families
- Assist individuals and families in effective developmental transitions
- Apply appropriate practices based on theories of human growth and development to individuals and families
- Compare and contrast various socio-ecological influences on human development across the lifespan (e.g., sexual/gender identity, trauma, etc.)

### **IV. HUMAN SEXUALITY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN (8% of exam)**

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

- Describe the biological aspects of human sexuality (e.g., sexual functioning, reproductive health, family planning, sexually transmitted infections)
- Explain the psycho-social aspects of human sexuality:
  - Characteristics of healthy and unhealthy sexual relationships
  - Interpersonal dynamics of sexual intimacy
  - Risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, social pressures, media)
- Address human sexuality from value-respectful position
  - Apply best practices associated with sexuality education programming

### **V. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (9% of exam)**

**Content:** An understanding of the development, maintenance, and dissolution of interpersonal relationships among friends, roommates, coworkers, neighbors, as well as family members.

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

**Practice—A CFLE is prepared to:**

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

**VI. FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (10% of exam)**

**Content:** An understanding of the decisions individuals and families make about developing and allocating resources including money, time, energy, space, material and health assets, and networks of support 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:**

- Explain the multiplicity of resources families need, acquire, and manage (e.g., personal, familial, professional, community, environmental)
- Recognize and facilitate the reciprocal relationship between individual/family/community choices and resources
- Exemplify 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)
- Explain the impact of values and goals in the decision-making process
- Apply organizational and resource management strategies to a variety of circumstances
- Apply basic management tools and principles to a variety of contexts
- Inform individuals and families of consumer rights, responsibilities, and choices of action/advocacy
- Assist families as they cope with the loss of valued resources
- Apply best practices associated with financial literacy programming

**VII. PARENTING EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE (10% of exam)**

**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:**

- Promote healthy parenting from systems and lifespan perspectives
- Promote healthy parenting from a child's and parent's developmental perspective
- Apply child guidance strategies based on the child's age/stage of development to promote effective developmental outcomes
- Explain different parenting styles and their associated psychological, social, and behavioral outcomes
- Articulate best practice associated with high quality parent education
- Analyze and assess various parenting programs, models, and principles
- Evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of various parenting strategies
- Exemplify various parenting roles (e.g., father/mother, grandparents, and other caregivers) and their impact on and contribution to individuals and families
- Articulate parenting strengths and challenges within various family structures (e.g., single, blended, same sex)
- Describe the impact of societal trends on parenting (e.g., technology, substance abuse, media)
- Exemplify the influence of cultural differences and diversity on parenting practices
  - Compare and contrast strategies to support children in various settings (e.g., schools, legal system, healthcare)
- Illustrate the various pathways to parenting and their associated issues and challenges, (e.g., assisted reproduction, adoption, childbirth, blending)

**VIII. FAMILY LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY (8% of exam)**

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

e.g., Family and the Law (relating to marriage, cohabitation, 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); and Roles for Family Life Educators.

**Practice—A CFLE is prepared to:**

- Understand the following policy processes (e.g., policy formation, policy implementation, policy assessment and evaluation)
- Identify current and proposed laws, public policies, and initiatives that regulate and influence professional conduct and services
- Identify current and proposed laws, public policies, and initiatives that affect families (e.g. intended and unintended consequences)
- Distinguish between lobbying, policy evaluation, analysis, education, and advocacy
- Analyze policy resources for evidence of bias (e.g., unintended, inherent, political, self-interest)

- Inform families, communities, and policymakers about public policies, initiatives, and legislation that affect families at local, state, and national levels
- Facilitate opportunities for family and community members, professionals, and policymakers to discuss family issues and propose possible remedies.

## **IX. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND PRACTICE (7% of exam)**

**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:**

- Demonstrate professional attitudes, values, behaviors, and responsibilities to clients, colleagues, and the broader community, that are reflective of ethical standards and practice
  - Describe the domains and scope of practice for Family Life Educators and the role of collaboration
  - Establish and maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries
  - Recognize and deconstruct personal biases
  - Devise and implement a personal ethics plan to support/reflect the standards of the profession
  - Maintain current knowledge and skills in the field
- Evaluate, differentiate, and apply diverse approaches to ethical issues and dilemmas
- Identify and apply appropriate strategies to deal with conflicting values
- Choose approaches that demonstrate respect for diverse cultural values

## **X. FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION METHODOLOGY (12% of exam)**

**Content:** An understanding of the general philosophy and broad principles of Family Life Education in conjunction with the ability to plan, implement, assess, and evaluate such educational programs.

e.g., Research and theories related to: Planning and Implementing; Assessment and Evaluation (materials, program outputs, implementation & effectiveness); Instructional 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:**

- Employ a variety of strategies to identify and meet the needs of different audiences
- Utilize appropriate techniques and technologies to promote application of information in the learner's environment
- Create learning environments that are respectful of individual vulnerabilities, needs, and learning styles and demonstrate sensitivity to diversity and community needs, concerns, and interests

- Apply best practices in group process, facilitation, and coaching skills
- Develop and implement culturally competent educational materials and learning experiences
- Identify and utilize appropriate sources for evidence-based information
  - Understand basic research and evaluation methods (i.e., survey/questionnaire, interview, focus group, observation)
  - Recognize and locate reliable sources of information (i.e., scholarly journals, governmental agencies, etc.)
  - Evaluate sources of information
  - Interpret basic demographic and other data sources
  - Translate research-based information into plain language appropriate for the public
- Implement evidence-based programs
- Design educational experiences that include the following:
  - Needs assessment
  - Knowledge of audience
  - Goals, objectives, and/or learning outcomes
  - Content development
  - Implementation/means of delivery (i.e., activities, teaching strategies)
  - Assessment measures and evaluation of process and outcomes
- Promote and market educational programs
- Adhere to principles of adult learning and education when working with individuals, parents, and families
  - Apply best practices of program evaluation (i.e., needs assessment, theory of change/logic model, process evaluation, outcome/impact evaluation, cost efficiency analysis) as appropriate throughout the development and implementation of educational programs

## References

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