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Careers in Family Science

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National Council on Family Relations

The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) was founded in 1938 as a multidisciplinary 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: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, and *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, and sponsors the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) program.

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Careers in Family Science

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FOREWORD

One of my all-time favorite actors, Michael J. Fox once said, “Family is not an important thing. It’s *everything*.” All of us are intricately connected to others whom we deem as family in some way, through bonds that are biological, emotional, psychological, or fictive. Thus, it is only natural that some who are curious about families will want to address that curiosity by pursuing a family science degree.

But what can you do with a family science degree? This booklet will help you discover the many rewarding family science career possibilities. It opens with information on **Family Science as a Discipline and Profession** with consideration of three domains of practice. **Family Science: Capitalizing on a Family Science Degree** provides helpful points to consider when researching family science degree programs as well as information on skills and traits valued by employers. **Family Science: The Graduate Path** discusses options for those pursuing an advanced degree.

The second part of the booklet, **Career Opportunities for Family Science Graduates**, provides information on employment opportunities in a variety of general practice settings and on possible areas of focus. The **Family Career Profiles** section, which includes information on 18 currently practicing family professionals, provides a wonderful sampling of the variety of employment opportunities available to those with a family science degree.

In addition to exploring potential careers, this booklet will help you learn more about the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) and how you can get involved. As families and family issues have evolved over time, so have the needs for comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding of families that can support the families of today and of the future. This is where NCFR comes in. NCFR’s mission includes strengthening the well-being of families, advancing family science, and establishing professional standards through the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) designation. Consistent with this mission is NCFR’s commitment to students, like you, who want to work with families as future leaders, researchers, educators, and/or practitioners.

NCFR is a “professional home” to many students and new professionals, both in the U.S. and worldwide. Many have found NCFR to be a student-friendly organization, which I wholeheartedly agree. The Annual NCFR Conference is an ideal venue to network and meet peers and mentors with similar academic and career interests. The conference also is a wonderful setting to present your undergraduate or graduate work where the audience and atmosphere are nothing short of friendly and supportive. I still think fondly of my first ever NCFR conference in 2005 and how the experience has left me coming back for more! Additionally, students are given many opportunities to actively participate, develop, and thrive as professionals and leaders. Currently, our students and new professionals serve as leaders in state, regional, and student affiliate councils across the country, as elected representatives of their Sections, and as elected members of the NCFR Board of Directors. We even have a representative on the conference planning committee, who develops innovative conference sessions that

are tailored to the professional interests of students and new professionals each year. Indeed, serving on the Board of Directors over the last four years has taught me so much about the field and fostered a deeper appreciation for the efforts NCFR puts into engaging students and new professionals.

On behalf of the Board and NCFR, I wish you the very best in your academic journey in family sciences. It truly is an exciting time to be a part of this evolving and all-encompassing discipline. As you explore your career niche, I invite you to consider NCFR as your “professional home.” You are most certainly welcome here.

Lyndal B. Khaw, Ph.D.

Students and New Professionals Representative
NCFR Board of Directors

FAMILY SCIENCE: THE DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION

Family Science

Family science is rooted in many social science disciplines including anthropology, communication, law, political science, psychology, sociology, and family and consumer science. While recognizing its interdisciplinary origins and nature, family science has evolved into its own discipline with unique scholarship and diverse specialties. But what is family science exactly?

An NCFR Task Force, convened in 1988 to explore the field of family science, stated that it is a field of study where “the primary goals are the discovery, verification and application of knowledge” about families (NCFR Task Force, 1988). NCFR convened a similar task force in 2014 to further consider the definition of family science and the visibility and identity of the discipline. While this work continues, we have chosen to use the term *family science* in this publication to describe the vast array of programs preparing students to work in family research, practice, and policy. These programs fall under a variety of department and program names including Family Science, Family Studies, Human Development, Child Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, Marriage and Family Therapy, and more, but all share a common focus on the role and importance of family and family systems.

Family systems thinking recognizes the interrelationship between family members and their environment. Family scientists also understand that individuals are not limited to a single family environment, but often co-exist among a variety of multi-dimensional, multi-layered family settings. They believe that societal problems such as substance abuse, domestic violence, financial struggles, delinquency, and child abuse can be more effectively addressed from a perspective that considers the individual and family as interrelated and part of a larger system. Knowledge about healthy family functioning can be applied to prevent or minimize many of these problems. The skills gained through education in family science enables graduates to bring a family perspective to their professional work. This perspective often translates into an interpersonal awareness and skill set to relate with others that is less common among students from other disciplines. The same knowledge and understanding of families that family scientists bring to their profession also can be of practical use in strengthening their personal relationships.

Domains of Practice for Family Professionals

Family professionals can specialize in a number of areas as diverse as the families they serve. They may develop expertise in specific stages of life such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, or later adulthood. They also may focus their practice on certain topics or issues such as sexuality, spirituality or faith, health and wellness, parenting, adoption, relationships, family law, family policy, family resource management, poverty, or immigration, to name just a few. The approach that family professionals take when working with families can vary as well. Family professionals can practice as family life educators, counselors or therapists, or in family case management.

The Domains of Family Practice Model (DFP) facilitates understanding of family science and the various ways that family science is translated into work with families. The DFP model incorporates a collaborative paradigm of family life education (FLE), family therapy (FT), and family case management (FCM), which are three of the primary roles that family scientists can take in working with families. (For a more detailed discussion of the DFP model see Myers-Walls, Ballard, Darling, & Myers-Bowman, 2011). The following questions: *Why? What? When? For whom?* and *How?* differentiate the domains and boundaries of these three professions.

The “Why” of the DFP model focuses on the purpose of each of these professions and *why* each profession works with families. While all three professions want to promote strong healthy families, FLE tries to help families build knowledge and skills, FT helps repair families and functioning, and FCM helps families comply with legal and policy systems and locate resources (see Figure 1).

The “What” element of the model refers to the content or research base in family science that family professionals use when working with families. Certain elements of the “what” can be found in all three professions such as family systems theory and an ecosystems context, sensitivity to diversity, research-based practice, and values and ethics. A discussion of how the methods used to actually work with families varies with each approach is included in the *How* section below.

The “When” dimension of the model focuses on the timing of when services are delivered by the family practitioners. The timing of services is based on *primary prevention* (protection of healthy people from harm before something happens), *secondary prevention* (protection after problems, conflicts, or risks have occurred so the progress of the problem can be halted or slowed as early as possible), and *tertiary prevention* (helping people manage complicated, long-term problems to prevent further harm). FLE most often includes primary and secondary prevention, FT manages secondary and tertiary prevention, and FCM focuses on tertiary prevention. In regard to timing of services, FT often focuses on the past to determine family background factors that may be affecting the family, and on the present to help families manage their problems. FT also projects into the future to prepare families for a future that minimizes the issue of concern. FLE deals with the present with a goal to help families in the future by teaching new skills, and FCM deals with the present by trying to find resources to manage their daily lives.

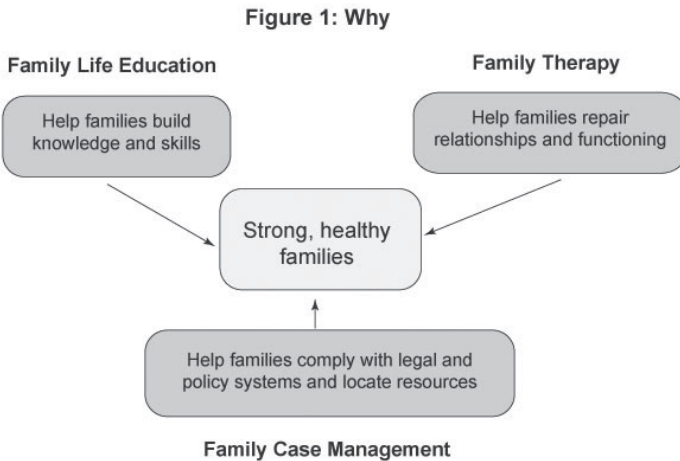
For whom are the services of these three professions intended? There are two primary factors involved in determining for whom services are to be delivered - eligibility and motivation. *Eligibility* is determined by family professionals delivering services and often based on *ascribed needs*, which are identified by others as something a family needs. *Motivation* represents the participants’ perceptions that a service is needed and appropriate, and is based on *felt needs*, which are needs identified by the participant based on his or her personal experiences. While FLE and FT often deal with felt or ascribed needs, FT and FCS are often based on ascribed needs, referrals, or mandated attendance. For example, parents who want to better understand their teenager and want guidance on how to parent might chose to attend a family life education course on parenting or voluntarily seek a therapist, (*felt need*) while a

parent whose child is in the juvenile justice system may be mandated to see a family therapist or family case manager to help with their parenting issues (*ascribed need*).

The *How*, or techniques and strategies of these three professions, is highly variable and dependent on the responses to the questions of *Why*, *What*, *For whom* and *When*. In other words, one has to examine the participant's needs as well as the best delivery system. It is important to consider whether the needs are felt or ascribed and how these needs were assessed. The delivery method, setting, and mode of learning (mass, distance learning, group, or individual) will vary in order to best meet each family's needs.

There is not one profession that is better than the others as all three are interrelated and collaborative. All have different purposes, methods, timing of services, and individuals and families that can benefit from the services provided. However, at times a family may benefit from being involved with one, two, or all three of these family professionals. Understanding the domains and boundaries of these professions can be helpful when thinking about your career goals.

The authors of the Domains of Family Practice Model have created several related lesson plans, one of which (Self-reflection) can assist in the identification of personal characteristics, knowledge, and skills that can help a potential family professional determine for which role they are best suited. These lesson plans can be accessed via the NCFR Professional Resource Library (search Domains of Family Practice in the keyword field). http://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/research/family_practice.php



Myers-Walls, J. A., Ballard, S. M., Darling, C., & Myers-Bowman, K. S. (2011). Reconceptualizing the domain and boundaries of family life education. *Family Relations*, 60, 357-372.

FAMILY SCIENCE: CAPITALIZING ON A FAMILY SCIENCE DEGREE

Since you are reading this booklet you most likely have an interest in families and are considering or already enrolled in a family science program. You may be wondering what to expect as a family science student. Most family science programs provide students with opportunities to learn valuable content through academic coursework, acquire new skills, and gain experiences by working within the community.

Academic Coursework

Students are given educational opportunities to explore various family forms, functions, issues, and challenges – all viewed within a lifespan and multicultural lens. Family science students are equipped with the skills and abilities to consider the multitude of societal and human-based issues within the context of the family. Most family science majors are eager to be trained and equipped to empower families through education and to prevent problems through a strengths-based approach.

While academic departments will vary in focus, academic coursework is an important aspect of career preparation. Many family science programs include coursework relevant to the ten family life content areas included within the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential. These content areas include: Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts, Internal Dynamics of Families, Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan, Human Sexuality, Interpersonal Relationships, Family Resource Management, Parent Education and Guidance, Family Law and Public Policy, Professional Ethics and Practice, and Family Life Education Methodology. An internship experience also is required for the CFLE designation. In addition to courses that specifically align with the ten CFLE content areas, other common courses include family theories, family cultural diversity, research methods, statistics, and evaluation.

The knowledge obtained through these courses provides students with an understanding of the relationships among research, theory, and practice and the ability to apply these concepts to family systems and family processes. This knowledge base also allows students the ability to identify evidence-based programs and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational offerings.

Minors and Concentrations

Undergraduate students often opt to strengthen their marketability by augmenting their major with a minor or a concentration in a different program area. This can add value to any undergraduate degree because employers desire employees who are well-rounded. Family science students might augment their degree by minoring or pursuing a concentration in business or marketing, early childhood education, political science, sociology, psychology, social work, communication, gerontology, Spanish, health promotion and wellbeing, or criminology or criminal justice. A family science student with a minor or concentration in political science would have the academic preparation to work in family policy; a minor or concentration in criminology would provide a family science student with the ability to bring a family perspective when working

with at-risk youth. Undergraduates should work with their advisor to develop a course plan to meet their individual interests and professional goals.

Importance of Experiential Opportunities

While completion of relevant academic coursework provides the foundation of a family science degree, the value of experiential opportunities cannot be underestimated, both for the benefits provided to the student and the value placed on it by potential employers. Experiential learning opportunities such as internships, service learning, volunteering, and study abroad merge students' academic education, theory, and data with real world experience.

Service-learning and Internship Experiences

Students can apply concepts learned by participating in service learning and internship opportunities. Service learning outside of the academic setting is an effective method of gaining vital skills and experience after classroom instruction and under instructor supervision (e.g., providing parenting education to community members). It provides a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in organized service activities that meet identified community needs and actively engage students as a way to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the family science discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. The ultimate goal of service learning is to promote learning through active participation within the community.

Internships usually consist of 2-12 semester credits (approximately 40 hours per credit) in which students are responsible for securing placement within agencies or organizations that serve families, youth, or children. A minimum of 120 hours are required for the CFLE certification, but some programs require lengthier internships. Students also choose to expand their internships for additional learning.

Both service learning and internships allow students to sample potential specialties, explore workplace culture, and gain the experience necessary to build a resume. Most experiential learning activities provide students with time to reflect on their experiences which can confirm their interest in working in a particular setting or, equally important, identify settings in which they would not want to work. Finally, internships and service learning enable students to develop a network of professional relationships that is useful when seeking employment after graduation.

Study Abroad Experiences

Studying and living in a foreign country can positively influence a student's career path, self-confidence, and world-view. Study abroad experiences also help students better "understand their own cultural values and biases," increase their cultural competence, and be more "respectful of other cultures" (Dwyer & Peters, 2014, para. 8-9). Additionally, these experiences can often result in long-lasting friendships. Students should question their current or potential college about study abroad programs, find out how competitive the application process is, and policies around grades and financial aid.

Skills Valued by Employers

Academic training in family science is only part of what is needed to achieve professional success and career advancement. Job applicants are often surprised to discover

employers may focus less on an applicant's actual transcript and grade point average (GPA) and more on the personal attributes of the applicant. Specifically, supervisors are interested in employees who can effectively problem solve, relate well to others, and have experience or interest in that particular field. Employers also consider personal skills and qualities when making hiring decisions. In a study of 245 community agency directors from six counties across the U.S., directors were asked questions regarding the importance of the accumulation of work experience, formal academic knowledge, and skills (Taylor, 2009). Agency directors were asked the following question: *When hiring new employees for your agency, do you place more weight on learned skills, work experience, or formal academic knowledge?* Overall, learned skills were valued the most of the three areas; yet over 40% of agency directors indicated that all three were equally important.

Many skills acquired through a bachelor's degree with a family science emphasis can contribute to success in the profession. Students gain these abilities and useful experience in undergraduate programs that include rigorous academic training in family systems. Graduates having strong family science coursework and related experience should have acquired the following skills:

- *analytic skills* - the ability to take a big idea or a big problem, break it down into parts, and understand how the parts work together and affect each other;
- *applied skills* - the ability to use theory and knowledge in a variety of settings and situations;
- *interpersonal communication skills* - the ability to write and speak clearly, accurately, succinctly, and persuasively;
- *creative problem-solving skills* - the ability to think "outside the box," come up with new strategies, or put ideas together in novel and productive ways;
- *critical-thinking skills* - the ability to examine an idea or plan critically; hold it up against past experience and existing knowledge; and identify errors, flawed assumptions, or illogical thinking;
- *learning skills* - the ability to quickly assimilate new information, adapt to new demands, pick up new responsibilities, and broaden the scope of one's thinking;
- *research skills* - the ability to quickly locate and summarize key information from an array of data and resources;
- *program development skills* - the ability to develop objectives, activities, and an evaluation plan for a family life education program;
- *program implementation skills* - the ability to effectively implement a family life education program;
- *program evaluation skills* - the ability to use outcome measures to determine the effectiveness of various programming efforts;
- *grant writing skills* - the ability to effectively write grant proposals in an effort to secure funding;
- *collaborative/teamwork skills* - the ability to build relationships with others and effectively work together toward a common goal;
- *leadership skills* - exemplifying professionalism, followership, community engagement, and self-awareness/self efficacy;

- *technology skills* - the ability to utilize the latest and cutting-edge technological tools (computers, data processing, software, networking, internet);
- *ethical thinking and decision-making skills* - the ability to think about and evaluate ethical judgments that might impact the protection and respect for others.

The Taylor research study included a question regarding the value of various skills: *When looking to hire recent family science bachelor's degree graduates, which skills are considered most important/valuable in order for these new employees to be successful at your community agency?* Skills in order of value included: oral communication; ethical decision-making; interpersonal; teamwork; written communication; analytical and problem solving; computer; interviewing and intervention strategies; leadership; case management; needs assessment/treatment planning; word processing, data/presentation software; program evaluation; group facilitation; research, statistical, and data management; grant and proposal writing; marketing (e.g., materials brochures, pamphlets); curriculum development and implementation.

FAMILY SCIENCE: THE GRADUATE PATH

Research, Education, Administration, Practice

Some students choose to further their career by obtaining graduate education. A master's degree or doctorate is necessary for a research position in family science, to teach at a college or university, and often to work as an administrator or practice in a family services setting.

Master's Degree

A master's degree can take between one to three years to complete and requires 30 to 60 semester credits beyond the bachelor's degree. A master's degree prepares professionals for employment in a variety of settings such as community, early childhood, and higher education; Extension; healthcare; child, adolescent, and adult services; family social services; military services; public policy; administration; gerontology; faith communities; and more. (See Family Science: Career Opportunities, page 16).

A master's degree can either be a step toward a Ph.D. or an end in itself. Some master's degree programs offer a coursework option that does not include a thesis. The non-thesis option prepares students for leadership roles in social service administration and direct work with families. The thesis option typically prepares a student to conduct and evaluate research.

Students interested in a clinical career in marriage and family therapy (MFT) may practice and receive state licensure with a master's level education. Master's programs in marriage and family therapy usually take between 2-3 years to complete. Training in marriage and family therapy prepares students to work from a systemic perspective with couples and families to overcome a variety of clinical problems including: depression, marital stress, anxiety, individual psychological issues, and parent-child interactions.

Ph.D.

Doctoral programs prepare students for careers through extensive training in research methodology and statistics; theory and conceptual frameworks; content related to family systems; and the skills to communicate this knowledge through writing, presenting, and teaching. Obtaining a Ph.D. requires at least five years of study beyond the bachelor's degree, and requires that students contribute new knowledge to the field by completing a dissertation, (i.e., original research). A Ph.D. in family science can lead to research careers, college or university teaching, leadership positions in public or private institutions, or a variety of governmental positions.

Selecting a Graduate Program

Potential students should explore the various family science departments and select one that meets their personal and career goals. When students decide to attend graduate school, they have a choice of over two hundred family science programs at various universities and colleges throughout the U.S. and Canada. Students may wish to consider the following criteria when selecting a graduate program that best meets their professional and personal needs. (Some of these same points can be utilized by

undergraduate students seeking a family science program that will provide the necessary skill building, academic coursework, and community work experiences to meet their career aspirations.)

Faculty - A graduate department's reputation rests heavily on the reputation of its faculty. For some it is more important to study under someone well-known than it is to study at a prestigious college or university. Become familiar with research in your interest area by reading professional family journals like *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, and *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, and to discover where the authors teach. Identifying a faculty member to serve as a mentor can provide increased value to the educational experience.

Students - What type of students enroll in the program? What are their mean undergraduate GPA and test scores? What are their academic abilities, achievements, program completion rates, and levels of professional success upon completion of the program? What is the experience of students in the program?

Resources - Is the institution financially stable? What kind of financial support can the program offer? See *Financial Considerations below*. How complete are the library collections, computer resources, and other facilities? Are assistantships and fellowships available?

Accreditation - Does the school have the appropriate accreditation? Most universities and colleges are accredited by one of six regional accrediting agencies. Accreditation "affirms that the standards and processes of the accrediting organization are consistent with the academic quality, improvement and accountability expectations" (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2014, para. 1).

Program Curricula and Services - what courses are offered? What is the student/faculty ratio? Are there opportunities within the curriculum to earn any certificates or professional credentials such as CFLE? Are job placement and student advisement services available? Are there opportunities for internships?

Environment - The size, setting, or location of the academic institution may be important to potential students. Students can choose between a small, medium, or large institution in a rural or urban environment or one that is close to home and family. Climate, recreational possibilities, and opportunities to work also may be important considerations when balancing education, work, and family needs.

Financial Considerations - Students who are interested in graduate study should not immediately be discouraged by a lack of finances or reject a school because it is expensive. Students should investigate and apply for all types of aid for which they may be eligible. Some sources of aid for graduate students include:

Grants and Fellowships - These awards are usually granted to students with the requirement of maintaining a minimum GPA. Grants are usually provided to those with financial need. Fellowships are prestigious awards given selectively without attention to financial need.

Teaching and Research Assistantships - These awards are given to recipients in exchange for a university service such as conducting family research and teaching.

Graduate assistants develop mentoring relationships with faculty and staff, and are an excellent method to become further engaged in the academic environment. Some assistantships might be outside of one's academic department designated specifically for programs or departments that have limited, if any, graduate students (e.g., tutoring, career counseling, and retention services for undergraduate students).

Student Loans - There are many types of financial aid available to help offset the rising costs of higher education. The U.S. Department of Education offers a variety of student financial aid programs accessible via the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For more information go to: www.fafsa.ed.gov

Work-study - Work-study awards are a form of financial aid which provide paid hourly employment to students who demonstrate financial need. Earned income is deposited in the student's bank account, and not credited to the student's University account. Students must complete a FAFSA to be considered for a work-study award. Each university also has qualification requirements to determine the number of work-study awards available each school year.

Additional Considerations - Undergraduate professors and advisors are available to guide students through the process of identifying and selecting a graduate program. Departments differ in specialty areas, environment, and student support and guidance. It may be worth visiting graduate programs once or twice to compare schools to determine the "best fit." The Internet has become a useful tool, allowing students to "virtually visit" a college or university through its departmental website and compare faculty, curriculum, and specialties. When a visit is not possible, students will benefit from communicating with the advising office, Department Chair, or Director of Graduate Studies via email or the telephone.

Undergraduate students considering graduate school should begin the planning process in their junior year or early in their senior year. Nontraditional students should begin the planning process approximately 12 to 18 months prior to the anticipated start date. Admission to graduate school can be very competitive. Students may wish to apply to several programs to increase their odds of being accepted. The application process usually includes an application form, letters of recommendation, and a personal statement summarizing goals, reasons for choosing family science, and reasons for applying to each respective program. Students often are also required take the nationally recognized Graduate Record Examination (GRE) which measures verbal and quantitative skills, or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) which is a high-level mental ability test that requires one to identify the solution to problems stated as analogies. Like any exam, students should study for both the GRE and MAT.

NCFR Resources

Students seeking information on potential undergraduate or graduate family science programs can access NCFR's website for the *Degree Programs Guide in Family Science* at www.ncfr.org/degree-programs. The website allows individuals to look for family programs located within a specific geographic area or region in the U.S. and Canada. Each graduate and undergraduate family program is described, including a faculty list, and details regarding program accreditation and professional certification such as the designation of CFLE. <https://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification>

Another resource available for prospective students is the University Reception at the National Council on Family Relations' Annual Conference each November. Family science faculty from approximately 30 universities are available to meet with students during the reception to provide valuable information regarding their universities, departments, and programs. This event provides students an opportunity to personally meet with faculty from several universities all in one evening, potentially eliminating the travel costs to individual campuses.

FAMILY SCIENCE: CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY SCIENCE GRADUATES

A degree in family science provides students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for a successful career in a variety of employment sectors. Unlike some fields where graduates focus their job search activities on specific settings such as hospitals or corporations, employment opportunities for family science graduates exist in almost all sectors of society. The variety of employment opportunities can be a plus in that family science graduates have a wealth of employment opportunities available to them. However, it can also make it difficult when trying to determine what job settings and populations on which to focus.

Family science undergraduates may garner their interests through volunteer or internship experiences, or to obtain an entry level position in various employment setting. A family science master’s or doctorate degree prepares students for careers in administration, education, research, therapy, or the health field.

Most family science graduates will work from a systems perspective - individual, couple, and family systems - and should be prepared to work at any system level in any organization such as social service, business, and government systems. There are numerous opportunities for family science graduates to work independently and collaboratively in a variety of occupational roles (see Domains of Practice for Family Professionals, page 5). Therefore, it is important for graduates to have the ability to clearly articulate the knowledge, skills, and abilities learned from a family science degree within any organization.

Table 1 includes a list of the many areas of practice available to family professionals.

Table 2 provides a fairly comprehensive list of areas in which a family professional can focus their practice. Following are some suggestions for employment opportunities in a few general categories;

Administration - Many opportunities exist for family science graduates with an advanced degree to work in a

Table 1 Areas of Practice

- Courts/corrections system
- Family/parent education – community or workplace
- Family/parent education – school based
- Government, administrative agency
- Government, human services agency
- Health/wellness clinic or agency
- Human Service agency – faith based
- Human service agency – nonprofit, secular
- Media/communications organization
- Military-related agency
- Policy organization (analysis, advocacy, research)
- PreK-12 teaching (center or school)
- Private practice/consulting
- University Extension/outreach
- University or college academic Dept/school

Table 2 Focus of Practice

Administration	Family Preservation
Adoption/Foster Care	Grant writing
Adult Daycare	Head Start
Advocacy	Healthcare & Wellness
Aging/Gerontology	Hospice
At-risk Youth	Housing
Child & Family Advocacy	Immigrant & Migrant Family Services
Child Life Specialist	K-12 Education
College/University Education	Marriage & Couple Relationship Education & Enrichment
Community Action/Service	Media (TV, Radio, Magazine, Newspaper, Internet, Film)
Communication & Writing	Mediation
Cooperative Extension	Mental Health Services
Community Education	Military Family Support
Counseling/Therapy	Ministry
Criminal Justice	Nutrition Education & Counseling
Crisis & Hotline Services	Parent Coordination
Curriculum & Resource Development	Parenting Education
Daycare/Preschool	Policy Development
Disability Services	Pregnancy/Family Planning
Disaster Relief/Humanitarian Services	Program Development, Evaluation & Assessment
Diversity/Cultural Awareness Education	Recreation
Domestic Abuse/Violence Prevention & Intervention	Residential Treatment
Drug & Alcohol Prevention & Intervention	Sexuality Education
Early Childhood Education	Student Affairs
Early Intervention Services	Victim/Witness Support Services
Employment Assistance	Vocational Rehabilitation & Job Training
Family Financial Planning & Counseling	Volunteer Coordination
Family Law	Work-Life Balance
Family Life Education	Youth Development Programs
Family Policy	

leadership capacity in government agencies, non-profit organizations, and corporate businesses. Potential employment settings include;

- *Federal, state, and local government agencies* - Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Nutrition, and Cooperative Extension;
- *Social service agencies* - mental health agencies, child protection agencies, clinics, health promotion agencies, senior centers, domestic violence centers;
- *Family policy* - “think tanks,” advocacy work, policy education, legislative offices;
- *Corporate business* - employee assistance programs, human resource development, employee wellness, training, counseling, or family and employee mediation;
- *Entrepreneur* - business entrepreneur (start a business disseminating family life education products and services to families), social entrepreneur (start a nonprofit organization), business consulting.

Education - A desire to help others is often one reason people go into family science, and education is one way to make a difference. A route some individuals take when working with families is through family life education. Family life educators empower families by recognizing family strengths and teaching new knowledge, skills, and abilities. Family life educators work in various community settings including for-profit and non-profit human service agencies, Extension, faith communities, the court system, the military, and self-employment, and more (see Table 1).

Another route family science graduates may chose is to teach in a more formal educational setting. Teaching opportunities are available in high schools, 2- and 4-year colleges, and universities. A Ph.D. is usually required to teach at a college or university. A master’s degree is usually sufficient to teach at a 2-year college. Many teaching positions in high-schools require licensure with additional requirements that vary by state. Each state also has specific requirements for teaching at 2-year colleges.

Research - Conducting research is another possible profession for family scientists. A family science advanced degree prepares students to contribute to the field by expanding the current body of knowledge and by conducting evaluations of programs and services. Researchers seek answers to questions such as the following:

1. How does economic stress affect family well-being?
2. How does religion influence fathers’ relationships with their children?
3. How does job satisfaction influence marital quality and vice versa?
4. What factors might improve health among family caregivers?
5. How do race, immigration, and public policy intersect in the southwest U.S.?
6. What family dynamics promote adolescents’ enrollment in college?
7. How does culture impact program design and evaluation?

Research can be conducted in a variety of employment settings including universities, local, state, or federal agencies, businesses, research institutes, advocacy organizations, or in the non-profit sector. At most universities and 4-year colleges, researchers also are

required to teach. Some institutions place more emphasis on teaching or on research; therefore, family scientists searching for work in an academic setting should explore personal preferences and the institution's expectations for teaching and research.

Marriage and Family Therapy - Marriage, couple, and family therapy is a distinct profession in which the family is the focus. Family therapists believe that a family's patterns of behavior influence the individual. The unit of treatment isn't just the person - even if a single person is interviewed - it is the set of relationships in which the person is imbedded. Therefore, family members may be included in the treatment plan. Advanced degrees and state licensure are required for therapeutic positions.

Child Life Specialist - An increasingly popular profession pursued by family science graduates is that of a Child Life Specialist. Child Life Specialists provide "emotional support for families, and encourage optimum development of children facing a broad range of challenging experiences, particularly those related to health-care and hospitalization" (Child Life Council, 2014a, para. 4). The requirements for becoming certified are based on specific academic coursework, clinical experiences, and successful completion of the Child Life Professional Certification Examination. Currently, students can become employed as a Certified Child Life Specialists within a hospital setting after earning a bachelor's degree. However, by 2025 all newly credentialed Certified Child Life Specialists will be required to hold an advanced degree in child life from an academic program accredited by Child Life Council.

Students pursuing a family science degree are typically passionate about families. The familiarity with family systems and dynamics coupled with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to minimize adversity and enhance prevention efforts enables family science graduates to make a difference in a number of settings.

NCFR Career Resources and Job Center

NCFR's Career Resources website provides a wealth of information relevant to career opportunities for family professionals. Career Resources includes special sections for *Academia*, *Research*, *Practice*, and *Students*. General career resources also can be found and include information on resumes and CVs, interviewing, networking, and more for all family career disciplines and stages. Career Resources are found at www.ncfr.org/professional-resources/career-resources

Academia - includes resources to help navigate teaching, research, service, and more in the academic world.

Research - includes resource to advance and strengthen professional research activities.

Practice - includes CFLEs' and NCFR members' career profiles in various employment settings.

Students - includes resources to help undergraduate and graduate students in career exploration, strategies and tips for getting a job, and transitioning into the field.

The *Career Resources* section of the NCFR website is continuously being updated with new resources. Be sure to also check out NCFR's *Job Center* to view or post available jobs. The *Jobs Center* includes job announcements for various family-related employment positions. <https://www.ncfr.org/jobs-center>

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FAMILY CAREER PROFILES

Bachelor's Level

Allison Ciborowski, B.S., CFLE

Education Coordinator, the Copper Ridge Institute

EDUCATION:

B.S. Family and Human Services, Towson University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE)

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Act as a key member of the Leadership Team at Copper Ridge Institute, overseeing educational offerings and managing all faculty and courses. Conduct needs assessments and plan courses and programs as requested for healthcare organizations and companies across the country. Oversee all continuing education sponsor and program approval applications. Manage all marketing and outreach efforts, including social media, e-mail, website, print, and community relations. Manage online educational offerings. Plan and implement intensive day and week-long education programs. Write grant proposals to support educational initiatives.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

Bachelor's degree

CAREER PATH:

My first job after graduation was working in hospice admissions. I visited patients and families in their homes, facilities, and hospitals to conduct informational and registration admission visits.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I enjoy the creativity that comes with planning and implementing a variety of programs and courses as well as the opportunity to work with many different people.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Always act with integrity and pursue excellence.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Creativity, flexibility, professionalism, honesty, being able to work well with others (even when it is challenging), having a positive attitude, being resourceful, and taking initiative.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I didn't think I would end up working in an academic setting, and I wish I would have focused more on statistics and research methods while in college. I use these skills almost daily.

Kasey Kaepernick, B.S.

Healthy Beginnings Manager and Trauma Informed Coordinator, Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services

EDUCATION:

B.S. Family Life Education, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Interface Master Trainer

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

As the Healthy Beginnings Manager: Supervise Case Managers as they provide parent education and support to new parents through home visitation and the Parents as Teachers curriculum. I engage in evaluation, performance management, and development of assigned public health employees. I coordinate client services of other Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) divisions for optimum effectiveness. As the Trauma Informed Care Coordinator, implement the Trauma Informed Care (TIC) philosophy into the Waupaca County DHHS services. Provide community education on being a TIC organization and Waupaca County DHHS resources.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

I knew I wanted to work with kids but was unsure in what capacity. I chose to work in child care. This experience taught me how to work with children and parents of different ages, ethnicities, and cultures. After five years of hands-on experience, I became a Healthy Beginnings Case Manager conducting home visits. I understood family needs in my community and was able to transition into the Program Manager. My eight years of home visitation allowed me to observe quality management and to develop my own style of management; I am a leader not a boss.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

The positive aspects of my career are endless. I am blessed with the opportunity to offer families the strengths-based support they want and seek out. I have been able to witness a child born prematurely, with a low survival expectation, walk on a balance beam at age five and experienced the child's mom hugging and thanking me for my support. I am part of a state-wide change to TIC that focuses on "What has happened to you" vs. "What is wrong with you." I am able to bring parents hope, guidance, and an ear to listen when they just want to talk. I am on a team that wants to make a difference in the lives of families and will do what it takes to ensure they are advocates for people without a voice.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Be the change - If you think you can make a change, push for it. "We must become the change we want to see in the world" (Mahatma Gandhi, 1869-1948).

Care - "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." (Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*, U.S. author and illustrator, 1904-1991).

Travel - when you see and experience how others live, you learn how to replace your own values and needs with acceptance and caring.

Get experience during college - The five years of hands-on experience during and after college contributed to my confidence in working with children and families.

Make connections and develop relationships - You'll be shocked at what networking can do for you and the people you support.

Knock down silos and barriers - it will help everyone including clients and co-workers.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Flexibility - Accepting others' ideas and being ok with not being right all the time. Teamwork - Employees and co-workers are the best resources - together we can move mountains! Optimism - What matters is making a difference in one person's life. Being driven - help families reach their goals. Being a broad thinker - It is not about personal needs, it's about what others need.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I'm not sure there is anything I truly wish I would've known prior to this point in my career. I'm not sure I would've listened to some people's advice during college. But, having a solid, caring, competent support system around me allowed me to fail and bounce back. The mistakes I made molded me into the person I am today.

I guess the one thing that would've been helpful is knowing we all come from somewhere. It is extremely important that we are understanding of people's experiences and not to judge them. We all have life experiences; if we care enough to understand the experiences of others we can make a difference in people's lives.

Sarah Sanchez, B.S.

Community Representative, U.S. House of Representatives – Office of Representative Keith Ellison

EDUCATION:

B.S. Family Science, University of Minnesota

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

None

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Serve as a representative for the Congressman within assigned policy areas including women and family issues, education, youth development and violence prevention, and unemployment. Meet with various local nonprofits, schools, and state and local governments to build partnerships and discuss issues and concerns that arise in the congressional district. Attend meetings and briefings in the communities, meet partners on-site, and coordinate public forums around timely issues. Work with constituents on an individual basis to assist in navigating various federal, state, and local agencies, departments, and programs.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

I interned in the Congressional office during my senior year of undergraduate studies. When the Staff Assistant/Internship Coordinator position opened up around my graduation date, I applied knowing that my previous experience in the office would be an asset. Because of my family science background, I also was asked to manage the women's outreach portfolio. I transitioned into the Executive Assistant/Scheduler role for a year. I now do outreach and casework full-time in my role as Community Representative.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I have the opportunity to hear both the successes and struggles that families and youth face in the Congressional district. Every day, I connect people to resources, assist them in navigating State and Federal agencies, and collaborate with nonprofits and organizations that have the same goals both the Congressman and I share. I am fortunate to interact with the community in a meaningful way that will ideally help shape legislation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Keep your mind open to the possibilities of what you can do with a family science degree. Before I graduated, I was certain I would work with a nonprofit on prevention or direct services. It was made clear to me in my current role that families and children need advocates at all societal levels, including government. I also would recommend interning at an organization or agency that you see yourself working for in the future. Whether the experience is positive or not, you will walk away with a much clearer sense of where you want to commit your time and skill set.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Relationship building, networking, comfort with public speaking, attention to detail, responsiveness and flexibility.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known I could do meaningful work outside of a direct service setting. I always questioned how the larger issues facing families and children could be addressed before intervention was needed. Informing legislation that can reduce barriers for families is a crucial form of prevention that I had not considered.

Jessica Sigai, B.S.

Child Development Teacher, Kennedy Krieger, South East Early Head Start

EDUCATION:

B.S. Family and Human Services, Services to Children and Youth, Towson University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Child Care Certification; Infant and Toddler Certification

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Provide a developmentally appropriate classroom environment for two year olds. Document observations to monitor progress of learning and growth over a year span. Establish a professional relationship with the parent and child.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

Child Care Certification (90 hours) + at least six early childhood classes; Infant and Toddler Certification (45 hours)

CAREER PATH:

I completed a 120 hour internship at South East Early Head Start and was offered a position upon completion. Prior to my internship I worked at the Towson University Child Care Center for almost five years.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I enjoy establishing professional relationships with parents and children, the ability to

apply my family science concepts, and look at a situation from a family science and an educational prospective.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

If you have an opportunity to participate in a training, sit in a meeting, or attend an event in the field you want to pursue, do so. I found that networking early in my primary school years was beneficial. I was able to pull from many sources for different projects and presentations during my undergraduate career. As a new professional, I also was able to contact those I met with questions, comments, and concerns about entering the early childhood field.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Problem solving, self-motivation, organization, ability to multitask, information recall, computer skills, ability to think on your feet, communication, active listening, professional writing skills, and ability to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) Goals.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known about family science sooner. I have always wanted to work with children and families and was originally an education major. I thought going into education was my only option until I was introduced to family science.

Master's Level

Kay Higgs Adams, M.S.W., LISW, CFLE

Military Family Life Consultant, Magellan Health Services

EDUCATION:

B.A. Family/Human Services, Glenville State College
M.S.W., West Virginia University School of Social Work, Morgantown, WV
Concentration: Family and Children, Internship in Domestic Violence Education and Prevention.

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator; Licensed Independent Social Worker-Supervisor (LISW); Military Family Life Consultant credential

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Provide non-medical consultation to armed forces members, retirees, families, and children. Provide family life consultation to both adults and children. My work history includes education, administration, community based mental health, private practice, and military social work.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

Licensed Independent Social Worker-Supervisor; Military Family Life Consultant credential; Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Prevention Education credential; Family Advocacy Standards Training (FAST) and Family Advocacy Standards Training Advanced (FASTA) from both the US Air Force and US Army; Child Abuse Prevention and Neglect training certificate from the Armed Forces Center for Child Protection

A Ph.D. in Psychology, or a Master's in Counseling, Social Work, or Marriage and Family Therapy, and advanced clinical licensure from the state one resides in is required. Note that the military family life consultants may be required to have licensure from the same state that Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools are located.

CAREER PATH:

I was initially given an opportunity in 2002 to work in military family advocacy program settings because I held credentials in child abuse and domestic violence prevention education programming. I also became credentialed in 2012 as a Military Family Life Consultant. Re-credentialing is required yearly and requires one to have knowledge of military culture in all branches of the armed forces.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

The opportunity to support military families and understand their challenges in and outside of the continental U.S. is rewarding.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Students and new professionals should obtain the CFLE credential. Consider career opportunities in military Family Advocacy programs or as a military family life consultant. The Marine Corps has recently begun recommending the CFLE credential for their Prevention and Education Specialists.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

The ability to be creative, flexible, and adaptable especially when traveling to support military families. The ability to teach and mentor.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

Women have and continue to make significant contributions to our military. Had I understood this earlier, I would have joined the military to become a pilot. I would have earned a Ph.D. earlier in my career. I hope to mentor students to consider working with military families.

Mara Briere, M.A., CFLE

Family Life Educator, Private practice for Grow a Strong Family, Inc.

EDUCATION:

B.A. Philosophy, Queens College

M.A. Family Life Education, Concordia University-St. Paul

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator; Certified Facilitator/Mentor *Becoming a Love and Logic Parent Program*; Certified Myers Briggs Administrator, Certificate in Substance Abuse Counseling; Certificate in Pet Therapy

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Provide community and home-based services to families with loved ones experiencing mental illnesses. Develop and implement community-based parenting education workshops. Coach parents by teaching parenting skills, co-parenting strategies, and psycho-education around behavioral health issues with their children. Refer as needed. Provide research and resources customized to the needs of the families, including pet therapy services as the handler of a pet therapy team.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None.

CAREER PATH:

I began my career as a community based Therapeutic Recreation Specialist working with diverse populations. I then earned a degree in Elementary Education and began working in an after-school program as the Site Director. The bulk of my work involved meeting with parents explaining child and family development as well as behavior management. I went on to work as the Child Development Specialist and Parenting Education Facilitator in a homeless shelter for families. Following that I worked with families as a liaison between preschools, nursery schools, and community hospitals as a Family Support Specialist. From there I went into private practice where I worked with families with loved ones diagnosed with behavioral health or mental health conditions while also working part-time in a social service agency alongside families with loved ones who had a mental health diagnosis. When the fee-for-service structure changed at the agency, I left and embraced private practice full-time. I decided to focus on families with loved ones experiencing mental illnesses since there were no programs or supports in place for these families. My business is now a tax-exempt non-profit corporation. Services are specifically tailored to meet the needs of the families, supporters, and caregivers of those with mental illnesses.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I love the flexibility and customized approach I have in meeting the needs of the families with whom I work. I like that I can teach, coach, and do research. I like knowing that I support families that are otherwise adrift. I also like the fact that my work is evidence-based.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Acquire as much experience as you can with a variety of populations and settings. See what fits for you. Move on when you become aware that your interest in that population or setting has waned. Learn. Participate in workshops that combine theory with practice, and develop the most diverse skill set that you can. Keep an open mind. Think out of the box. You are a guide, maybe a mentor; but, remember the best solution for a family is usually the one which they develop!

HELPFUL SKILLS:

The ability to listen; willingness to learn; honesty; gentleness and firmness; being on time; research and communication skills; knowing personal limits and how to make good referrals (networking is vital for success); and a variety of strategies to match the different learning styles and needs of families. Becoming certified in Myers Briggs also is enormously helpful in defusing family conflicts.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known my professional happiness would come from knowing with which population I really wanted to work. I wish I knew more about my strengths earlier so they could be better developed. I wish I had the opportunity to identify my growth areas and identify mentors to teach me. Better supervision would have enabled me to grow more. I wish I had known how to effectively market myself.

Kendall Carlson, M.A., CFLE

Manager of Strategic Growth & Compliance, CLUES - Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio

EDUCATION:

B.A. Education, Concordia University-St. Paul

B.A. Spanish, Concordia University-St. Paul

M.A. Family Science, Concordia University, St. Paul

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coordinate internal communications between service areas. Develop tools and strategies to enhance service integration. Organize and train program leaders on goal-setting, evaluation, and other program management related strategies. Create tools and systems to enhance program sustainability and efficiency. Facilitate the gathering of data, client success stories, and program narratives for fundraising. Plan and implement new program pilots in collaboration with program staff and partners.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

I began as a Parent Educator for Latino families developing an educational curriculum and partnering with local school districts and staff to implement the program for Latino parents.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I like that I am making a difference in the community. I appreciate that I have a flexible, positive work environment with opportunities for growth. I enjoy having the opportunity to share our organization's impact story.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

It's a big world out there - I've been in the workplace for seven years and continue to discover new and exciting career paths. Explore multiple sectors and organizations as much as you can through volunteer and internship opportunities to identify those features that you would like to pursue both in your career and in the organization for which you would like to work. These experiences also can help you eliminate the type of career and organization you would not like to pursue in the future which can be just as helpful and important. Talk to professionals, network in-person and online, and request informational interviews to learn more about their career paths and to solicit their advice on your own path.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Familiarity with grant-writing; creativity; the ability to create tools and systems to efficiently organize work and engage multiple individuals on one project; effective communication, organization, and problem-solving skills. Proficient use of Microsoft Office Programs.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known that what I studied in college would not dictate my future career path. I have met very few individuals working in a field related to their undergraduate degree. What I found to be important is to have a broad base of communication and language skills coupled with subject-based knowledge.

Lisa Greene, M.A., CFLE

Author, Speaker, Family Life Educator of Happy Heart Families. Executive Director of Parenting Children with Health Issues

EDUCATION:

B.S. Business - Organization Management and Marketing, Central Washington University
M.A. Family Life Education, Concordia University-St. Paul

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Write and distribute articles about parenting children with special healthcare needs including parenting styles, family resilience, and coping skills as well as general parenting topics. Create and present workshops and short presentations about parenting, coping, family resilience, advocacy in the healthcare system, and medical adherence and transition-readiness. Create resources (parenting books, a children's book, audio, and video) for a program called "Parenting Children with Health Issues." Conduct research and present findings about educational resources to best help families cope well with pediatric special healthcare needs. Consult with pharmaceutical companies to create resources for patients and families. Engage in business management such as marketing and accounting.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

I stumbled upon parent education by attending a parenting class when my children were little and I was struggling to manage the medical care they required. It changed my life. As I shared my knowledge about effective parenting practices to my peers, I received requests to teach what I was learning. As interest in my work grew and I continued to learn more, I began writing books and other resources which blossomed into public speaking on a national level. After working in the field for about nine years, I decided to get my Master's in Family Life Education for many reasons including being better prepared for research projects, robust program development, and evaluation methods; to improve my technical writing skills (which is necessary for abstract development), speaking, and teaching skills; and to generally increase my level of knowledge about families and human development. My degree and subsequent CFLE certification opened many doors to my work with families, including the ability to teach classes at a college level.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I enjoy helping families and communities and find my work to be meaningful. I like the many creative aspects, creating something tangible and lasting, and making a difference in the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

There are many aspects of family life education (FLE) that can be pursued so find an area in which you are really passionate. I am successful in large part because I love what I do and am enthusiastic, excited, and knowledgeable. Consider a different area of focus if you don't like teaching the public and working through the challenges that can occur. Be prepared to make sacrifices along the way.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Creativity, perseverance, people skills, independence, initiative, persistence, excellent writing skills, ability to learn quickly, time management and organization skills, and fortitude.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

There isn't a whole lot of money in this career path unless one works in an educational setting or is part of a company. I am a self-employed entrepreneur, and it has been very hard to get my own business started and running solidly. It takes years to build a name, reputation, and a "bio." People think authors and speakers make a lot of money and that there is a lot of "glamour" in it. Some do though most, like me, are quietly working to make a difference- one family at a time.

Rachel Loggins, M.S., CFLE

Wyoming Foreclosure Hotline Representative, Brothers Redevelopment, Inc.

EDUCATION:

B.S. Human Development and Family Science, Texas Tech University
M.S. Family Studies, Texas Woman's University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Engage in community outreach across Wyoming to promote the Wyoming Foreclosure Hotline and housing counseling services. Track call center data and client file information for monthly reports. Monitor grant compliance for client files and grant reporting.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

I knew I wanted to work with seniors in the housing industry so I researched non-profits in the Denver, Colorado area that work with senior adults. I interviewed with a couple of different non-profits ultimately choosing the one where I thought I would have the most room for growth and opportunity. I was right, but my jobs have yet to be in one of the departments working with senior adults either doing home maintenance and repair or property management. Although many of my callers and clients happen to be seniors, housing counseling was not ever on my radar as a career path. I have learned so much about the housing industry and know my new skills are highly transferrable.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I love helping people! I have had so many different roles with my current employer, and have been given many opportunities to do new things, learn more, and participate in grant writing and reporting. I also love that our counselors try to help clients save their homes with foreclosure prevention counseling options.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

You never know where the rip current will take you, but along the way you can soak up information and new skills like a sponge. Take every opportunity you can and you will find the right path. Your first job may not be your dream job, but it also will most likely not be your last. Job hunting can be very difficult, as is getting your foot in the door, especially in a new city or state. Building relationships, getting involved with community committees and meetings in your area of interest, and pursuing avenues other than internet applications will pay off.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Being client-centered, open-minded, and flexible. The ability to say “yes” to new opportunities. Staying up-to-date on the housing industry and grant pools. Building community awareness of services and community relationships. Working with care and consideration for both fellow employees and clients. Working with integrity and civility in everything.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

Non-profits are ever-changing. Money can come and go in both small and large amounts requiring flexibility in responsibilities. Non-profits also can be slow moving with new positions and changes in job availability; both of which usually depend on available funding.

Janeal McCauley, M.S., CFLE

Faith Engagement Coordinator, Habitat for Humanity: Calcasieu Area, Inc.

EDUCATION:

B.A.A.S. Sociology, Lamar University

M.S. Family and Consumer Sciences, Lamar University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator; Certificate in Theological Education for Ministry

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Advocate for the elimination of poverty housing. Educate local faith communities about poverty housing issues and assist with exploration of the theological implications of poverty housing in our community. Develop opportunities for individuals and groups to partner with Habitat for Humanity. Work with local churches to develop strategies to effectively combat poverty housing. Support Partner Families during their transition out of poverty housing into a new, safe, affordable home. Serve as a referral source for staff, clients, and volunteers to aid in accessing available community resources.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

I began my career in FLE after taking Family Resource Management during college at which point I sought opportunities to learn how to improve families’ quality of life through education. After serving as an active volunteer with Habitat for Humanity for 10 years, I joined my local affiliate’s staff.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I love working with diverse families, and providing education to them about opportunities for homeownership. I am able to integrate my passion for the elimination of poverty housing with my love for educating families. The result is an eagerness to go to work every day, and tackle each challenge as it is presented. I am never bored. I am constantly assessing new ways to educate families and the community about the agency’s work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

I recommend becoming involved with NCFR as a source of support and encouragement. I have received many benefits from the colleagues and mentors I connected with through

NCFR. I also recommend taking advantage of every opportunity to learn about new programs, services in your community, and other resources...your clients will benefit from your growing knowledge.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Persistence, organization, time management, creative problem solving, effective written and verbal communication, and compassion.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known how useful a binder filled with community resource literature would be in my daily work; that I would have to respond to a crying mother facing homelessness and feelings of hopelessness; how important I would become in the lives of the families I serve.

Ebonyse Mead, M.A., CFLE

Early Childhood Program Manager, East Durham Children's Initiative (EDCI)

EDUCATION:

B.A. Policy, University of Illinois-Chicago

M.A. Education, Northeastern Illinois University

M.A. Human Services, Concordia University-Chicago

M.A. Family Studies, Texas Woman's University

Graduate Certificate, Infant-Toddler Mental Health, Arcadia University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator; North Carolina Qualified Professional Parenting Educator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Provide supervisory oversight to EDCI's early childhood initiatives and programs. Provide comprehensive child and family support services to children and their families living in East Durham. Conduct home visits with families to identify their needs and assist families in connecting with community resources. Promote the educational development of young children by engaging children and families in age appropriate developmental activities that stimulate the child's learning. Provide training and support to families to help them meet their family needs. Facilitate parent education workshops and trainings. Maintain files in the database and prepare monthly reports. Recruit families into the program and determine their eligibility. Facilitate positive parent, school, and student relationships. Establish relationships with community partners and stakeholders. Encourage parental involvement in child development activities and educational programs.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

Comment: My CFLE credential was not required for my current position, but has helped me tremendously in my work with children and families.

CAREER PATH:

My career in family life and early childhood education began in 2002 while employed as a Parent Educator with an adolescent parenting program. I provided family support to teen mothers and conducted developmental screenings such as the Ages and Stages Ques-

tionnaire with children ages birth to three. Since then, I have provided administration and leadership in early childhood programs such as Early Head Start and Head Start. I have served in direct service and leadership positions in three evidence based early childhood home visiting programs (Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, and Healthy Families). I have also worked with women and young children exposed to domestic violence as well as in early childhood mental health. Working with children from birth to three is my true gift and passion.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

The positive aspects of my work include meeting and working with different families. Each family is unique and has their own individual story that should be heard. I love sharing my experiences to inspire others to make positive changes in their lives. Another positive aspect of my work is building relationships and making connections with people. The art of connecting really comes alive when working alongside families and community agencies as partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

For students, I recommend enjoying the learning process. Do not hurry through your undergraduate or graduate program. Take in every piece of information so you are able to apply theory to real world experiences upon graduation and in your first job. Know that additional learning happens in the community when working alongside families. For new professionals, I recommend throwing away your “I can save everybody cape.” There is no such thing as saving everyone. It’s important to help, but know the difference between helping and hindering. Remember to meet families where they are; acknowledge and build upon each family’s strength and refrain from being judgmental. Be open to learn from families; they are the experts on their family.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Being sincere, understanding and flexible, resourceful, open, resilient, and empathetic, not sympathetic; having the ability to make connections and build relationships; and active listening.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

Although, I have worked with young children and families for over 12 years, I realize that I still have a lot to learn as families become more diverse and unique. The learning process is not over for me.

Hazel Parker, M.S., CFLE

Senior Consultant, South Carolina Department of Social Services

EDUCATION:

B.S. Counselor Education, South Carolina State University

M.S. Individual and Family Development, South Carolina State University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator; Certified Parent Educator; Human Development Consultant Certificate; Schwarz Skilled Facilitator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Manage a grant program that provides scholarships and intensive case management for

low income individuals who study health science at a technical college. Promote life skills including family resource management.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

My undergraduate and graduate majors prepared me for a career in human services. I worked in the family services field during the eight years between my bachelor's and master's degrees. I was promoted many times over the course of my 30 year tenure at the Department of Social Services. My positions include frontline case manager, supervisor of case managers, trainer, training supervisor, training director, and senior consultant in charge of special projects (training initiatives, grants).

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I enjoy helping TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) clients obtain training to earn sustainable wages through a federal grant that I co-wrote. I also enjoy seeing participants complete their certifications in Allied Healthcare fields. It is rewarding to know the program I created is making a positive difference in the lives of those served. Being able to provide services to participants that are not available from other sources also is a positive part of my work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Follow your passion. If you like helping others, choose a job that will help you feel fulfilled. Strive to make a difference, not just money. Working in social services has not made me rich in dollars, but I leave work every day knowing that what I do is making a better life for those I serve.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Patience, customer service, good communication (listening, oral, written) and training skills, perseverance (work hard in spite of obstacles), and being resourceful (knowing how to find answers to questions and referring clients).

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I would have known early in my career all the jobs available in the human services arena, and about NCFR.

Patrice Powers-Barker, M.A., CFLE

Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, The Ohio State University

EDUCATION:

B.A. Social Justice, Hiram College

M.A. Family Science, Spring Arbor University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Provide leadership to the Family and Consumer Sciences program in the county Extension office, including educational programming on health and wellness, household finances,

and family relationships. Work collaboratively with other community agencies and programs to promote healthy systems and environmental changes in the community.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

Comment: For the position of Extension Educator in Ohio, in Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), the requirement is a master’s degree with one degree in FCS or a closely related area such as Nutrition, Public Health, Adult/Secondary/ Elementary Education, Family Life Education, Family Financial Management, or Social Work/Counseling.

CAREER PATH:

I served a year with AmeriCorps VISTA working on city housing and neighborhood safety. I applied for a Program Assistant position at The Ohio State University Extension working with community gardens. As a Program Assistant, I worked with horticulture and leadership development while also learning more about nutrition and food safety. When I returned to school for a master’s degree, I took FLE. I now use FLE methodology as a basis for planning programs on a variety of topics within Family and Consumer Sciences.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I love serving my community and providing education. I like that my position offers many different topics and programs to share and that no two work days are alike. I like the personal challenge of “walking the talk” of a healthy lifestyle whether I’m teaching about nutrition, parenting, household finances, growing a vegetable and herb garden, being mindful to my work, or promoting practices such as sun safety, food safety, or buying local food!

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Find a mentor you respect, even if it’s an informal partnership. Express appreciation: I read in a book, “write six fan letters a year;” it’s also a nice reminder to write “thank you” letters throughout the year. In a career where you could potentially work all day, evenings and weekends, decide how you want to be flexible for your community while being fair to your personal and family time.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Flexibility, organization, team work, listening skills, and creativity.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

Recognizing that we are all lifelong learners, it is hard to answer “things I wish I had known.” One of the best things I learned from my career is that I do not have to know all the answers right away, on the spot. I can take people’s contact information and get back to them with correct answers to their questions.

Maria Samaniego, M.S., CFLE

Faculty and Cooperative Extension Services Associate II, New Mexico State University

EDUCATION:

B.S. Family Consumer Science, New Mexico State University

M.S. Family Consumer Science, New Mexico State University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Conduct personal assessments with participants in order to identify needs and barriers to self-sufficiency and connect them to community resources and information. Provide parent education as a Family Educator for the Family Wellness Program and case management through Job Readiness and Career Advancement. Collect resources from, as well as network and collaborate with, agencies and businesses for recruitment purposes. Provide presentations and educational workshops.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

A bachelor's degree for the Family Educator position; the CFLE certification was encouraged; a master's degree for the Case Manager position.

CAREER PATH:

I have been with Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI) for 14 years and under that umbrella conducted three different programs: The Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP), Can We Talk, and the Family Wellness Program (FWP). I completed my internship with SFI under the NPP Curricula. After I graduated with my B.S., I was offered a position with SFI as a Family Educator. I worked part-time with SFI and part-time as a Coordinator with the Can We Talk program. I worked with both programs for two years and was then offered a full-time Family Educator position with the NPP Curricula. The grant for NPP came to an end in 2010 terminating my job. Fortunately a job became available with the FWP and I was rehired as a Family Educator. I conducted the FWP for one year while also pursuing my master's degree. The grant was renewed and revised requiring a new component of Job Readiness and Career Advancement, leading to my present job.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I am passionate about working with people and helping them achieve their goals. It's about meeting people where they are, offering encouragement and understanding, and believing they can make healthy and wise choices. I like working with the whole family: adults, children, grandparents, step-parents, etc. Visiting participants in their homes also puts things into perspective. It's not about material possessions but rather the relationship with their children and partners that matter. I love my job because I am treated and respected as a professional. I also have the opportunity to continue learning by attending trainings and workshops. I cannot see myself doing anything else.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Work well during your internship; it could be your first job after graduation. Always give your best to your job and the people you serve. Never forget you have a job because of the people you serve. Your education has opened up doors for you as you work in the community. Be open and honest and treat people with respect. I would encourage anyone serving the community to network, collaborate, and get involved. Always keep up with your professional development skills through workshops, webinars, seminars, and trainings. If you

find yourself discontented and unhappy, maybe it's time to make a career move. Otherwise you will not be of great service to the people that are needing your assistance.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Be flexible, teachable, dependable, reliable, and motivated. Have initiative and be willing to take the lead. Most of all be trustworthy to carry out your assignments. It's OK to say, "I don't know, but I will find out." Work collaboratively with other professionals to accomplish your program's mission; it's a win-win-situation for both groups. Don't be afraid of public speaking. There is no place for shy people in this type of work. You are an advocate for the people you are serving and representing.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known about the various types of jobs available for a person with a family science degree.

Doctoral

Deborah Coehlo, M.N., Ph.D., CFLE

Development and Behavioral Specialist, Juniper Pediatrics

EDUCATION:

B.S. Nursing, Chico State University

M.N. Parent and Child Nursing, University of Washington

Ph.D. Human Development and Family Science, Oregon State University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator; Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner; Pediatric Mental Health Specialist

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Complete comprehensive behavioral and developmental assessments on children ages 3 to 25 years, including a family assessment. Meet with the family and other partners (e.g., school counselors, health care providers) to review recommendations for treatment. Work with families to thrive, using a variety of interventions ranging from helping parents understand and obtain specialized educational services for their child, to medication management, to counseling and education regarding major transitions in family life.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner; DEA License (Drug Enforcement Administration)

CAREER PATH:

I was a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner with families and children with special needs for 30 years. I also taught nursing, human development family science (HDFS), psychology, and counseling programs in several universities. I directed the HDFS Department at Oregon State University Cascades Campus for seven years. I worked in research and have published several articles and books in the area of family nursing. I decided to try private practice when I discovered how many people struggled to find comprehensive services for their family and children in Central Oregon. I was amazed at how splintered the care was and how devastating the effects of this type of care was on the development of both the child and family. I felt I had less impact doing research and being one step removed

than I could have providing direct care. Now, I do my best to combine an academic career continuing research and teaching with a clinical career providing direct services.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

The best aspect of my work is seeing a child move from specialized education, peer and teacher rejection, and family stress to a child that has friends, graduates with a high school diploma, and has a family that can honestly brag about their child to anyone who will listen. Recently one of my clients, whom I met after three months of residential care, gave a speech at our annual conference. He told his story of going from “a complete failure as a person” to a “pretty successful student, son, and friend.” He and the audience were crying by the end of his talk. Who could ask for more?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

My recommendation for students is to follow your heart, but don’t turn down opportunities that may seem irrelevant. Embrace each aspect of a fulfilling career including teaching, research (whether you do your own, help others with their research, or just consume good research), writing, caring, providing direct care, and helping the community. My biggest disappointment after achieving my doctorate was the disparaging comments from colleagues about clinical practice being “less important” than research. Both are important and, as experts in our field, we should honor and embrace both.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Research, writing, networking, teaching, organization, technology. There’s also a need for education and experience in working with families, including interviewing, assessment, counseling, education, and evaluation skills.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I would have known how much I would love education when I started college so I would have enjoyed the beginning more. I wish I knew then what I know now. I wish I had less fear and more wonder as I entered my career. I wish I would have written down more of the stories that shaped my career. I wish I knew more about publishing, tenure track success, and how to run a business (i.e., taken more business courses in college). I wish I knew more about how important colleagues are in helping to form, guide, and support my career. I wish I knew more about the importance of gratitude; gratitude for my parents (who introduced the idea of a career and education, and then paid the first four years), my family, my friends and colleagues, and of course, the families that taught me most of what I use and cherish today.

Susan Meyerle, Ph.D., CFLE

Family Life Educator, Life Resources, LLC

EDUCATION:

B.A. Psychology and Biology, Drake University

M.S. Family Science, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Ph.D. Human Development and Family Science, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator; Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner; Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP)

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Provide informal and formal education to individuals, couples, and families to improve family functioning. Topics addressed include: effective communication and conflict resolution skills, parenting (across the ages), caring for aging parents, premarital education, identifying marital strengths, embracing difficult family relationships, among others.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

Licensure as a mental health practitioner (LMHP) is required for therapy.

Comment: No licensure is required in an educational setting. The CFLE and CEAP are credentials I maintain to enhance credibility.

CAREER PATH:

Upon graduation I began volunteering at Family Services providing domestic violence education classes. I then worked as a Counselor Assistant in a dual diagnosis (substance abuse and mental health) treatment program. While there, I ran the family education group and the interpersonal dynamics group. These opportunities existed as I was working on my master's degree.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I enjoy the variety of work and array of people we serve. The variety of topics we teach also is appealing and helps keep the job "fresh." Additionally, people are more receptive to hearing information and learning how they can apply the information when they understand I am providing education, as opposed to therapy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Be open to exploring opportunities to share what you've learned. Some opportunities may not take the form you expect, and yet, they may serve as a way for you to communicate important information. Listening skills are the most critical. I love Stephen Covey's quote, "Seek first to understand, then be understood." This is especially important in the role of CFLE. You must establish rapport and credibility with your audience for them to be able to hear your information. You must understand where they are coming from and what their pain is to know how to impart the information necessary for change. A desire to learn is critically important. The research is consistently providing new information to share and professionals who love learning embrace and share that material. A passion for helping families is essential to being an effective family life educator. There are days when the work is tough, but the desire to make a difference can sustain you during those times.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Ability to work with others, needs assessment, presentation and training skills, problem-solving, and organizational skills.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known how much I would need to educate people, in general, about CFLE and the scope of information CFLEs can share. I teach a lot about the concept of FLE and how FLE can help particular audiences. I also wish I had known earlier in my career more about how to price and market my services. It was a slow learning curve to understand pricing and marketing as I wasn't aware of other resources in the private practice setting to tap into as I was learning.

Suzanne Smith, Ph.D.

Academic Director, Department of Human Development, Washington State University

EDUCATION:

B.A. Family Science, Erskine College

M.S. Child/Human Development, Virginia Tech

Ph.D. Child/Human Development, University of Georgia

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

None

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Plan, coordinate, budget, and develop the Department of Human Development and other programs in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. Supervise the Child Development Program, a full day Preschool and Kindergarten.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

CAREER PATH:

I started by teaching at the university level and working towards tenure and promotion. I was given the opportunity to serve in an administrative position nine years ago and have been serving in that position ever since. I still enjoy teaching and appreciate that I am able to integrate teaching into my current position.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I like that my work is challenging, is different from one day to the next, that it allows me to work with other people while attempting to find creative solutions to problems, and that I am able to work with both students and peers on a daily basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

Take advantage of all the opportunities provided to you for professional development as those opportunities diminish as you progress in your career. Having a good mentor is important too as you begin your career. Seek the help of others who are currently in the type of position you would like to hold.

HELPFUL SKILLS:

Being intellectually creative and comfortable with change. Having good critical thinking and people skills.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

I wish I had known that getting tenure is just the beginning and the real work starts once you reach that milestone. I wish I had sought out a mentor to help me through the transition into the world of academics, and to help me with job negotiations. I wish I had chosen one area of research rather than allowing myself the luxury of exploring various topics of interest. While it has been good to have variety, it makes it more difficult for promotion to full professor.

Cynthia Wilson, Ph.D., CFLE

Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Studies, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, University of Montevallo

EDUCATION:

B.S. Child Development, Florida State University

M.S. Family Relations, Florida State University

Ph.D. Family Relations, Florida State University

ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS OR LICENSES EARNED:

Certified Family Life Educator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Teach courses such as Family Relationships, Parenting and Guidance, Child Development, Human Sexuality, and Adult Development and Aging. Provide academic advising to HDFS students. Serve on departmental and university committees. Conduct scholarly research on parent-child relations, family stress, and family strengths.

REQUIRED LICENSE OR CREDENTIAL FOR POSITION:

None

Comment: While the CFLE credential was not required for this specific position at the University of Montevallo, many universities do require this credential for faculty in HDFS or related fields. I do believe I had an advantage over other applicants in large part due to the CFLE credential. Having the content knowledge gained from the CFLE, as well as previous experience in actually performing FLE, has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher in my program. Since being hired at the University of Montevallo, I have had the privilege of applying for and being approved for our program to offer the CFLE to our students.

CAREER PATH:

I was a non-traditional student completing my undergraduate degree at the age of 30. I was blessed to go through an undergraduate program that allowed me to complete the courses required to obtain the CFLE credential as part of my degree. Through a practicum course, I taught my first parent education class which ignited a passion for FLE while giving me valuable experience. Upon graduation I immediately started graduate school while also serving as a Minister to Children and Families in a church. Having the CFLE proved extremely useful in my position at the church as I was able to lead FLE courses and provide premarital education to church members. While completing my doctorate, I served as a teaching assistant allowing me to gain experience teaching at the college level. I later became a part-time Adjunct Professor at Baylor University until I began working full-time at the University of Montevallo.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WORK:

I have had two very fulfilling careers in my life: ministry and higher education. Both careers have benefited greatly from my education in family science as this degree helped me gain an understanding of how to effectively meet the needs of children and families. Serving with children and families at the local church level is both a privilege and an awesome responsibility as I am partnering with parents in the spiritual development of their children. Now, in academia, my degree in family science prepared me to teach a variety of courses that are applicable to everyday, real life. It is extremely fulfilling and enriching to prepare future family life educators, scholars, and practitioners who all have the goal of

building healthy, strong children and families. I truly feel there is no greater work on earth than raising up healthy children and families!

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS:

My recommendation to students and new professionals is to get as much hands-on experience as you can throughout your education and as a new professional. My early experiences with parent education as an undergraduate and graduate student proved invaluable later as a minister, family life educator, and professor. Graduate students who have the opportunity to teach at the college level should take advantage of that opportunity to gain real classroom experience. It is also incredibly valuable to have a mentor who can guide you through your education and profession. Finally, know your limits, and always be open to learning!

HELPFUL SKILLS:

My degree in family science taught me many valuable skills that have been very helpful in my careers in ministry and education. As a children and family minister, family science prepared me to understand the developmental needs of children and families, to create developmentally appropriate experiences for children in a church context, and to support parents in the spiritual education of their children. As a professor, family science prepared me to teach the same valuable content to my students. I can honestly say that every day I use the information and skills that I gained from family science!

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN:

Early in my college education, I remember anticipating graduation and thinking that once I graduated I would know everything about families! I have since learned that you never stop learning, and that families are so complex and diverse that one can never know everything. I believe one can never be called an “expert.” My university uses the term “developing professionals” to signify that education is a continuous and evolving processes that occurs over an individual’s professional lifetime. We should all be lifelong learners, always developing as professionals.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS

About NCFR

Organized in 1938 by Rabbi Sidney E. Goldstein, sociologist Ernest W. Burgess, and attorney Paul Sayre, NCFR has over 3,200 members in the U.S. and abroad. NCFR, the oldest multidisciplinary family organization in the U.S., is a non-profit organization of professionals who work in the multi-faceted areas of family science. It is the only professional organization focused solely on family research, theory, policy, and practice. NCFR is highly regarded as an authority for information on a broad range of family concerns.

NCFR Mission

The National Council on Family Relations provides an educational forum for family researchers, educators, and practitioners to share in the development and dissemination of knowledge about families and family relationships, establishes professional standards, and works to promote family well-being.

NCFR provides a variety of benefits for its members. Notably, NCFR sponsors an Annual Conference of juried, cutting-edge research papers, methods, and practices for research and services conducted in family science. The Annual Conference typically brings together over 1100 professionals and students and presents over 200 sessions including papers, plenaries, workshops, and posters.

NCFR publishes three scholarly journals: *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, and *Journal of Family Theory & Review*. Since 1938, ***Journal of Marriage and Family*** has published seminal work on and about families from a rich cross-disciplinary mix of scholars. It is a journal without equal in family science, presenting innovative theory and research and sparking critical debate. From its inception, *Journal of Marriage and Family* has led the way in research by developing new areas of inquiry.

First Published in 1951, ***Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*** presents the latest in applied research, program evaluation, and curriculum development and assessment. It is established as the leading source for innovative, original materials for family life educators, family practitioners, family policy specialists, and researchers with an applied or evaluation focus.

Introduced in 2009, ***Journal of Family Theory & Review*** specializes in publishing original contributions in all areas of family theory, integrative and theoretical reviews of content areas, and book reviews. *Journal of Family Theory & Review* does not publish empirical reports with the exception of meta-analyses of content areas.

NCFR offers a variety of methods to communicate with its members: NCFR's quarterly member news magazine, ***Report***, contains information on Section news, organization activities, and includes a pull-out section, ***Family Focus***, that highlights a different topic each issue. ***Zippy News***, a weekly e-newsletter, features a compre-

hensive compilation of family-related publications, funding sources, conferences, job announcements, NCFR news, and more. NCFR's website, <http://www.ncfr.org>, offers information on all of NCFR's activities and information.

NCFR Member Groups

State, Regional, and Student Affiliate Councils - Ten state and regional affiliate councils and 25 student affiliates give NCFR a local flavor. The purpose of affiliates is to provide a group in which members can exchange ideas and experiences with others family professionals in their area, and discuss ways to strengthen families on a local level through affiliation with NCFR.

Student Affiliate Councils are student-led affiliates of NCFR. They provide family science students a forum for professional development, leadership experience, service, and networking. Student affiliates organize and coordinate projects at a local, regional, or state level. Members of student affiliates attend professional meetings, discuss research and public policy, and conduct service learning projects.

NCFR Section Membership - The purpose of Sections is to promote NCFR's mission and the common interests of NCFR members in specified areas of concern. Both the growth of membership in NCFR and the proliferation of special interests have brought about a need for Sections. They are a means of increasing communication and interaction among NCFR members with similar interests within the framework of the larger organization.

NCFR has ten membership special interest Sections that provide members opportunities to exchange ideas, research, and information with colleagues with similar interests. The networking opportunities that result from Section membership assist with professional growth and enable members to build lifelong professional relationships.

Just as interest in a specific Section may shift over a lifetime, NCFR members are often members of more than one Section. The following list describes overall Section interest and purpose:

Advancing Family Science Section - The Advancing Family Science Section expands, strengthens, and enhances family science as a scholarship discipline.

Education and Enrichment Section - The Education and Enrichment Section unites the members of NCFR who are concerned with family life education and enrichment and shares information on effective methods, materials, programs, and processes. The Section's purpose is to improve the teaching of family relationships and the effectiveness of family enrichment events by making specific the competencies needed by family life educators and enrichment facilitators.

Ethnic Minorities Section - The Ethnic Minorities Section unites those members of NCFR who are concerned with issues pertaining to ethnic minorities families, to help increase their participation in the organization and annual programs of NCFR, and to help create a better understanding of the variations in families from diverse ethnic groups.

Families and Health Section - Health is viewed holistically, as more than physiological diseases and/or stress. Health also encompasses various wellness states and is

inclusive of health promotion and prevention activities at the individual, family and systemic level.

Family Policy Section - The Family Policy Section devotes itself to promoting effective social action for individuals and families by monitoring pressing policy issues, evaluating the potential impacts of new policies, working for effective change, and creating strategies to educate and raise awareness resulting in improved quality of life for individuals, families, and society.

Family Therapy Section - The Family Therapy Section unites members who share common interests, goals, and purposes in marital and family therapy. The Section improves the practice of marital and family therapy through the promotion of (a) open dialogue between clinicians, and researchers relative to marital and family therapy theories, research, practice and training; (b) the integration of theory, research and practice; and (c) effective, efficient and ethical practice methods.

Feminism and Family Studies Section - The Feminism and Family Studies Section works to integrate feminist scholarship and perspectives into theory, research, and applied work with families.

International Section - The International Section generates better understanding of unique variations of family process throughout the world by promoting cross-national family research, facilitating communication among international family scholars, sharing information on current and proposed research projects, and sponsoring educational cross-national family programs, presentations, and seminars.

Religion and Family Life - The Religion and Family Life Section furthers the cause and study of religion and its relationship to the family. The study and examination of the impact of religion on family life is examined as well as the relationship of religion to other family-related disciplines and NCFR Sections.

Research and Theory Section - The Research and Theory Section facilitates research and theory activities in all content areas related to couples, marriage and families.

Focus Groups - Seventeen different focus groups within NCFR are an important component of the organization that foster common interests at the grassroots levels of the membership and contribute to coherence among members.

Students and New Professionals - NCFR is committed to its students and new professionals. They have an elected role in each Section, and are represented on the NCFR Board of Directors, the Affiliate Councils Board, and the Conference Program Planning Committee. Their voices are important to the organization's development, growth, and core.

NCFR students and new professionals are encouraged to join Sections as they are particularly helpful. Although Section membership is optional, it is a key to being involved in the organization. Since Sections more intimately address individual and group needs, members can give their unique voice to issues, solutions, and future endeavors. Sections also provide opportunities to develop a leadership path. All Sections have a Students and New Professionals (SNP) Representative as an officer, so student interests and needs are represented. Several Sections also provide monetary support for SNP. Some Sections offer travel funds to the national meeting for the

SNP representatives or provide travel awards for the best proposals/papers written and presented by SNP at NCFR's Annual Conference, whereas other Sections fund a policy internship or dissertation award.

For information on NCFR Member Groups including Affiliates Sections, Focus Groups, and Students and New Professionals, visit <https://www.ncfr.org/member-groups>

NCFR Honors Student Recognition

NCFR sponsors an Honors Student Recognition program to acknowledge the outstanding accomplishments and academic success of family science students. Eligibility criteria include evidence of Academic/Scholarship Ability (a GPA of 3.5 or higher for their major) evidence of accomplishments for Leadership and Community Service, and current membership in NCFR. For complete information on the NCFR Honor Student Recognition Award visit <https://www.ncfr.org/honors>

Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential

NCFR provides certification for family life education professionals. The CFLE certification program encourages applications from professionals with preparation and experience in family life education settings, including formal teaching, research/scholarship, community education, public information and education, curriculum and resource development, health care, military family support, and ministry. CFLEs have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and many have advanced degrees.

There are two levels of certification: provisional and full. **Provisional** certification is available to applicants who can demonstrate content knowledge in each of the ten family life content areas but who have not yet earned enough work experience hours in family life education to qualify for full-certification status. **Full** certification is available to CFLE applicants who can demonstrate *both* content knowledge and sufficient work experience in family life education.

There are two ways to become a CFLE. The Abbreviated Application process is for recent college graduates (graduated within two years of their CFLE application date) of CFLE-approved academic programs. Information on over 130 universities and colleges with CFLE-approved coursework can be found at <https://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/become-certified/cfle-course-checklists-school>

The CFLE Exam Application process is available for those who are not recent graduates of a CFLE-approved academic program. More information on the CFLE designation and application process can be found at <https://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification>

Need Family Life Education Resources? Visit the NCFR Store

NCFR offers a plethora of resources for students and family life education professionals. Visit the NCFR online store for more information and to order: <http://www.ncfr.org/store/publications>

Tools for Ethical Thinking and Practice in Family Life Education – Third Edition

This popular NCFR publication is a great resource for practicing family professionals as well as for use in the classroom. The booklet includes an article on the *Domains of Family Practice Model*, an article on *Professional Ethics and Practice*, and the *Family Life Education Content Areas: Content and Practice Guidelines. Ethical Thinking and Practice Guidelines*, developed by the Minnesota Council on Family Relations include a helpful case study process. 2012.

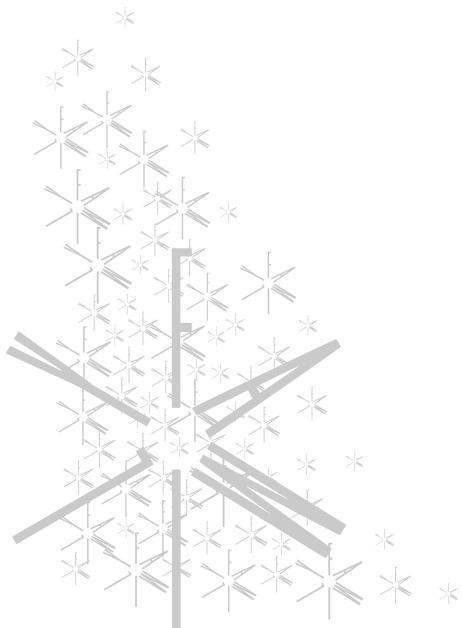
Family Life Education Framework Poster and PowerPoint – Third Edition

This attractive, full-color, laminated 36” x 52” wall poster, based on the Certified Family Life Educator framework, describes ten major content and learning concepts for family life education programs over four life stages. Consideration of family life education methodology has been added as an additional component to this new edition. Ideal for curriculum design, program development, continuing education, classroom instruction, and program assessment. Includes PowerPoint presentation which includes a separate slide for each of the 36 cells that make up the Framework. 2011.

Family Life Education: The Practice of Family Science is an excellent resource to support practicing family life educators and students alike. It considers family life education as both an art and as family science. It contains applied research and leading edge information on the *content* of family life education – parenting education, family life and technology, marriage and relationship education, work life balance, etc., and the *practice* – strategies for designing online programs, assessment and evaluation, cultural competency, marketing, and much more. The ten content areas core to the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential also are discussed. Each chapter is written by a leading professional in the field. 2015.

Careers in Family Science

What can you do with a degree in Family Science? This booklet includes a discussion of family science as a discipline and profession. It includes information useful when considering undergraduate and graduate degree programs and related career options. Helpful profiles of NCFR members and CFLEs working in the field provide real-life examples of family career options. 2015.





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