



Wisconsin Family Support Professional Code of Ethical Conduct



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board



Supporting Families
Together Association

The Wisconsin Family Support Professional Code of Ethical Conduct provides guidelines for professional behavior within the daily practice of family support programming which benefits children and their families. These guidelines show the public and members of the profession the principles and values that guide professional practice for family support staff.

Core values:

We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle.
- Base our work on knowledge of how children, adults and families develop and learn.
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family.
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society.
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, colleague, and community member).
- Respect diversity in children, families, colleagues, and community members, striving to ensure that all people, especially those who are vulnerable or oppressed, are treated equitably, and are included.
- Recognize that children and adults reach their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.
- Engage all significant caregivers in a positive and inclusive manner as a means of enhancing the well-being of the child and family.
- Increase professional knowledge and skills in the field of family support and child development.
- Act in a manner that encourages trust and demonstrates ethical decision making, responsibility, honesty, mutual respect, and accountability.

Section 1: Ethical Standards for Relationships with Children and Families

1.1 Avoid practices that harm or exploit.

- Refrain from exploiting others to further personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- Do not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current participants, even if consensual.
- Maintain appropriate and culturally sensitive physical and emotional boundaries with participants.
- Any physical contact with a participant or child requires explicit permission of that individual and their caregiver or should be initiated by the child or caregiver, as appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with participants.

1.2 Respect cultural beliefs, backgrounds, and differences, and engage in practice that is responsive to and inclusive of each family.

- Respect the dignity and preferences of each family, including their structure, culture, language, customs, and beliefs, and be mindful of one's own bias to ensure best practice for all children and families.
- Strive to understand individuals, families, and communities within their contexts.
- Demonstrate acceptance and respect for each family within the spaces we share.
- Create culturally responsive and inclusive environments for families.
- Provide services to all participants, children, and families regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, education, socioeconomics, political belief, religion, cultural influence, parenting styles, immigration status, preferred language, and mental, cognitive, or physical ability.

1.3 Respect individuals' and families' right to privacy, and maintain confidentiality, except when disclosure is necessary to prevent harm.

- Family support professionals must take protective measures to preserve the privacy of all personal information (written, oral, or audio or video recorded).
- Family support professionals solicit private information from participants only when it is essential to providing services or for evaluation or research purposes.
- Family support professionals share confidential information only with individuals identified on a consent form signed by a parent, or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a minor.
- Participants must be advised at the outset of services of their right to privacy and confidentiality with exception that family support professionals have an ethical responsibility to report a participant threatening or demonstrating harm to self or others, including child abuse or neglect.
- Family Support Professionals have a responsibility to be conversant of written policies for protection of confidentiality and the disclosure of family records.

1.4 Treat individuals and families with dignity, respect, and sensitivity to their needs and rights as developing persons.

- Promote the wellbeing of all family members, understanding that all individuals and families are part of complex, interactive systems.
- Utilize a strengths-based perspective to recognize and build upon family strengths.

- Honor participants as experts on their own family, children and lived experience and support them in their task of nurturing children.
- Uphold the foremost obligation to attend to the safety of children and consistently promote, teach, and encourage non-violent communication and discipline within the family.

1.5 Engage individuals, families, and communities as partners in problem solving and decision-making.

- Develop relationships of mutual trust to create partnerships with families.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for parent voice, leadership and decision-making for their own family, for the organization and within the community.
- Advocate in partnership with individuals and families.
- Support individuals, families, and communities as they make decisions about the use of resources to best meet their needs.
- Be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources and professional support services, including follow-up after a referral to ensure that services have been appropriately provided.
- Collaborate with individuals, families, and communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services.

1.6 Communicate respectfully and clearly in our work with individuals and families.

- Make a good faith effort to communicate effectively with all families, using the language they prefer and/or meeting literacy needs.
- Use resources for translation and interpretation when sufficient resources do not exist within the organization.
- Take time to listen and check for mutual understanding.
- Seek to understand and honor cultural norms for communication with each family.
- Clearly inform participants of the nature and extent of services provided, including the purpose of the services, risks, applicable costs, reasonable alternatives, right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame.

1.7 Ensure services and program environments are safe both for the family and the professional.

- Attend to the physical, emotional, and mental safety of children, families, and professionals.
- Provide options to meet family safety needs.

1.8 Foster and build parent support networks and social connections.

- Provide opportunities for families to interact with program staff, other families, and community resources.

Section 2: Ethical Standards for Colleagues and the Profession

2.1 Promote professional satisfaction and foster positive, collaborative relationships in the workplace with dignity and respect.

- Value and promote diversity in the workplace.
- Maintain relationships of respect, trust, confidentiality, collaboration, and cooperation with co-workers.
- Support co-workers in meeting their professional needs and their professional development.

2.2 Demonstrate integrity in practice and decision-making.

- Recognize the difference between personal and professional values in our professional interactions.
- Practice within one's level of competence and area(s) of expertise.

2.3 Be knowledgeable of best practice within the family support field and participate in continuing education and training.

- Provide the highest quality of service through upholding model fidelity and following program policies.

2.4 Do nothing to diminish the reputation of the organization in which one works unless it is violating laws and regulations.

2.5 Regularly solicit and participate in appropriate supervision and reflective practices, such as journaling, documentation, mindfulness practices, and self-reflection.

Section 3: Ethical Standards for Interactions within the Community and Society

3.1 Provide and contribute to the development of programs and services that meet the diverse needs of community families.

3.2 Collaborate with agencies and professionals that share the responsibility for children and families and assist families in gaining access to those agencies/professionals.

3.3 Support the rights of all families to have access to education, health and community resources.

3.4 Advocate for laws and policies that empower individuals, families, and communities and reflect our changing knowledge base.

Acknowledgements

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