

# CHILD LIFE CODE OF ETHICS

*Effective October 1, 2023*

Certified Child Life Specialists (“CCLSs”) subscribe to a body of ethical Principles and Rules which are in accordance with the Association of Child Life Professionals’ Mission, Values, and Vision Statements and Operating Procedures and which are derived primarily for the benefit and protection of children (unless modified, children refers to infants, toddlers, teenagers, and other individuals under the age of majority), and families in settings where the potential for damaging stress or trauma exists. The Child Life Certification Commission (“Commission”) is the sole body authorized to award the CCLS designation. The CCLS designation bestows a recognized level of excellence for child life professionals. Part of that competence relates to an understanding that members and their leadership and staff will abide by the Child Life Code of Ethics, thereby protecting the public they are called to serve.

CCLSs recognize that they are ethically responsible to: (1) children and families; (2) other professionals; (3) staff, students, and volunteers who are receiving training and supervision; and (4) the profession.

It is understood that ethical behavior should not result from an edict but from a personal commitment on the part of the individual as a professional. In any situation, the course of action chosen is expected to be consistent with the Principles and Rules either stated or implied herein.

All those providing child life services (including specialists, administrators, assistants, interns, and students) share as a goal: (1) maximizing the physical and emotional health as well as the social, cognitive, and developmental abilities of children, and (2) minimizing the potential stress and trauma that children and their families may experience. These goals are best accomplished by adhering to this Child Life Code of Ethics.

To this end, the Commission hereby establishes this Child Life Code of Ethics stating that all individuals holding the CCLS credential are bound to:

I. Conduct their businesses according to high standards of integrity and fairness and to render that service so that any “prudent person” would agree that those holding the CCLS credential conduct their businesses in a manner that is beyond reproach.

II. Provide competent, “patient and family-centric” service that protects the public.

III. Abide by all applicable governing rules, regulations, and standards.

The Child Life Code of Ethics consists of two parts: The Principles and The Rules. The Principles embody the ethical and professional standards expected of those holding the CCLS credential. These Principles address the “substance” and not merely the “form” of service provided. The Principles are the guidelines of professional conduct, the same conduct that any individual would expect of any professional organization on which they rely. The Rules serve as a description of best-practice or CCLS standards and outline how the principles must be implemented in specific circumstances.

### **The Principles:**

**Principle 1** -- CCLSs hold a primary commitment to the psychosocial care of the patient and family and uphold the mission, vision, values, and operating principles of the profession.

**Principle 2** -- CCLSs have a duty to maintain objectivity, integrity, and competence while exhibiting compassion.

**Principle 3** -- CCLSs have an obligation to maintain an environment that respects every variation of race, identity, ability, and community.

**Principle 4** -- CCLSs respect the privacy of children and families and maintain confidentiality within the standards and requirements of employers, local governing regulations, or private practice standards.



**Principle 5** -- CCLSs demonstrate the competencies of the child life profession by continuous efforts to improve professional services and practices provided in the diverse settings in which they work, and in the community at large.

**Principle 6** -- CCLSs provide services within their competencies and make appropriate referrals with due regard for the professional competencies of other members of the health care team and the community within which they work.

**Principle 7** -- CCLSs respect the duties, competencies and needs of their professional colleagues and maintain the utmost integrity in all interactions with the institutions or organizations that employ them or in their private practices.

**Principle 8** -- CCLSs continually seek knowledge and skills that update and enhance their understanding of all relevant issues affecting the children and families they serve.

**Principle 9** -- CCLSs respect the conventions of scholarly inquiry and recognize their responsibility for ethical practice in research.

**Principle 10** -- CCLSs use integrity to assess and amend any personal relationships, social media exchanges, or situations that may interfere with their professional effectiveness or objectivity, or otherwise negatively impact the children and families they serve. Childlife professionals ensure the conclusion of their professional role before any personal relationship is permitted to develop with children or the members of families they have served.

**Principle 11** -- CCLSs recognize that financial gain should never take precedence over the mission, vision, values, and operating principles of the profession.

**Principle 12** -- CCLSs accountable for the supervision and training of others (e.g., staff, students, volunteers) assume responsibility for teaching ethical professional values and providing optimal learning experiences.



## **The Rules**

### **Competence**

*Rule 101:* CCLSs shall keep informed of developments in the profession and participate in continuing education throughout their professional careers in order to improve professional competence in all fields in which the designee is involved.

### **Confidentiality**

*Rule 201:* A CCLS shall not reveal or use, without written consent, any personally identifiable information except and to the extent that disclosure or use is reasonably necessary to: (a) Comply with legal requirements or legal process; or (b) Defend the CCLS against charges of wrongdoing; or (c) Defend the CCLS in connection with a civil dispute between the CCLS and the individual.

*Rule 202:* A CCLS shall maintain the same standards of confidentiality to employers and employees as to individuals.

### **Professionalism**

*Rule 301:* A CCLS shall use the designation in compliance with the current policies of the Commission, as established and amended.

*Rule 302:* A CCLS shall show respect for other businesses, professionals, and related occupational groups by engaging in fair and honorable competitive practices.

*Rule 303:* A CCLS who has knowledge that another CCLS has committed a violation of this Code shall promptly notify the Ethics Committee. A violation would be any act that raises substantial questions as to another CCLS' integrity, competence, or business practices. For the purposes of this Rule, knowledge means no substantial doubt.

*Rule 304:* A CCLS who has knowledge that raises a substantial question of legally actionable, unprofessional, fraudulent, or illegal conduct by a CCLS shall promptly inform the appropriate regulatory body if appropriate, as well as the Ethics Committee. For purposes of this Rule, knowledge means no substantial doubt.

*Rule 305:* In all professional activities, a CCLS shall perform services in accordance with: (a) Applicable laws, rules, and regulations of governmental and other applicable authorities; and (b) Applicable rules, regulations, and other established policies of the Commission.

*Rule 306:* CCLSs shall not engage in any conduct that reflects adversely on their integrity or business practices.

*Rule 307:* A CCLS shall always act in the best interest of individuals, serving the overarching requirement to protect the public.

## **Fairness and Integrity**

*Rule 401:* A CCLS shall, in rendering services, disclose all material information relevant to the professional relationship, including but not limited to conflict(s) of interest(s), address, telephone number, certification status, and qualifications.

*Rule 402:* A CCLS shall not, during the course of rendering professional services, engage in conduct that involves dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, or knowingly make a false or misleading statement to a patient, employer, employee, professional colleague, governmental or other regulatory body or official, or any other person or entity.

*Rule 403:* A CCLS is prohibited from the unauthorized or misleading use of the CCLS designation. If the CCLS renewal date has passed and the CCLS has not fulfilled requirements to maintain certification, the CCLS designation may not be used until the CCLS meets all current requirements. Additionally, CCLSs are prohibited from using the CCLS designation to represent their organization as specialists in a particular business service, or from using the designation in any way to mislead individuals about their expertise or breadth of experience.

*Rule 404:* A CCLS shall not discriminate against others based on, but not limited to, gender, race, age, religion, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or other protected class.

### **Violation of the Child Life Code of Ethics**

CCLSs that violate the Child Life Code of Ethics shall be subject to disciplinary action. Policies and procedures related to ethics violations can be found [here](#).

**Child Life**  
**CERTIFICATION**



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**ASSOCIATION OF CHILD LIFE PROFESSIONALS**