



## **CT-PEN Parenting Educators Code of Ethics**

CT-PEN is an organization of professionals dedicated to helping Connecticut's children and families by promoting excellence in parenting education. CT-PEN works to improve the social, emotional, and educational lives of Connecticut children and families.

This document is intended for all individuals who are Parenting Educators. This may include, but is not limited to, college students, social service professionals, educators, therapists, and administrators. This Code of Ethics for Parenting Educators was drafted by CT-PEN and based on the "Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists" drafted by the Family Science Section of National Council on Family Relations (NCFR), adopted by the NCFR Board of Directors at its 1998 spring board meeting. The guidelines are meant to be educational and sensitizing rather than a legalistic code with enforcement potential.

**Purpose:** These ethical principles and guidelines were developed to:

- Inspire and encourage Parenting Educators to act ethically;
- Provide guidance in dealing with often-complex ethical issues;
- Provide ethical guidance in areas in which Parenting Educators engage;
- Enhance the professional image and status of Parenting Educators by increasing their level of professional consciousness.

The principles that apply to Parenting Educators in all their professional situations are included in the first section. The remaining sections relate to Parenting Educators in specific professional arenas.

**Principle I:** Parenting Educators maintain professional boundaries and are respectful of all individuals, do not develop inappropriate intimate personal relationships in their role as Parenting Educators, are sensitive to the complications of multiple role relationships, protect the confidentiality of their participants, and do not engage in harassment of any nature.

### **Guidelines**

1.01 Parenting Educators are respectful of others, show sensitivity to the dignity of all humans, and avoid all forms of exploitation.

1.02 Parenting Educators will not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability or socioeconomic status.

1.03 When attempting to influence the behavior or attitudes of participants, Parenting Educators should not use methods that involve undue influence, such as coercion or manipulation.

1.04 Parenting Educators will not knowingly engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with participants, relatives of participants or other individuals with whom the participant maintains a close personal relationship.

1.05 Parenting Educators will not harass participants. Harassment includes inappropriate behavior of a verbal, physical, emotional or sexual nature.

1.06 Parenting Educators are sensitive to the ethical complications that exist in multiple role relationships with participants.

1.07 Parenting Educators protect confidentiality in their professional role as Parenting Educators, whether it be in teaching, service, public speaking, writing or consulting activities.

1.08 If information is shared with the Parenting Educator that mandates reporting (such as child abuse or the possibility of extreme harm) such information is reported to the proper authorities. Whenever possible, individual(s) involved should be informed in advance of the Parenting Educator's need to report.

1.09 The CT-PEN Code of Ethics does not supersede the professional code of ethics of other professional organizations or licensing bodies to which the Parenting Educator may belong.

## **Principle II: Parenting Educators Are Respectful of Participants**

Parenting Educators are respectful of diverse family forms. Parenting Educators do not exploit the hierarchical relationship with persons they serve and are respectful of privacy issues.

### **Guidelines**

2.01 When Parenting Educators teach classes or provide training workshops on topics that may evoke painful memories, the Parent Educator should inform the participant(s) of appropriate counseling resources available to them as needed.

2.02 Parenting Educators recognize the strengths and weaknesses of various family systems and operate from a strengths based perspective.

2.03 Parenting Educators encourage an open, respectful, and thoughtful atmosphere that acknowledges and respects diversity of values, beliefs, and attitudes.

2.04 Parenting Educators do not insist that participants agree with or adopt a particular perspective. In fairness to participants, Parenting Educators should, where appropriate, divulge personal values and biases and label them as such.

2.05 Parenting Educators differentiate between knowledge and insight gained from clinical or personal experience and knowledge obtained from published theory or research.

2.06 Parenting Educators who are also clinicians, do not pursue or allow clinical relationships to develop with participants during the course of instruction. If participants request clinical services, they should be directed to an appropriate provider of the clinical service.

2.07 Parenting Educators who are not clinicians do not cross into a therapeutic role while interacting with participants. Parenting Educators make referrals for clinical services when appropriate.

2.08 Parenting Educators will not coerce their participants to be subjects in research.

2.09 Parenting Educators base material taught on what is appropriate for participants, rather than solely on the Parenting Educator's personal or professional needs or interests, such as a research agenda.

### **Principle III: Parenting Educators Abide by High Professional Standards**

Parenting Educators are responsible for upholding high professional standards.

#### **Guidelines**

3.01 Parenting Educators are supportive of and cooperative with other Parenting Educators and the profession at large regarding the timely sharing of new ideas, theories, research findings, and innovative program development.

3.02 Parenting Educators will promote the profession in such a way that members can make contributions to society for the enhancement of families and the growth and development of individuals in various family settings.

3.03 Parenting Educators give proper credit or acknowledgement to the works of others when formally sharing that information.

3.04 Parenting Educators are adequately prepared for their professional responsibilities. If there are professionally recognized standards of certification, credentialing or licensing requiring experience, supervision, or additional education, Parenting Educators seek such credentials.

### **Principal IV: Parenting Educators Are Ethical in Their Interactions with Employing Organizations or Agencies**

Parenting Educators seek to promote the highest standards of policies and practice by their employers.

#### **Guidelines**

4.01 When Parenting Educators have information pertaining to an organization's internal activities that may hinder or harm the organization if known by outsiders, the information is treated as confidential unless these activities are unethical or harmful to others.

4.02 Parenting Educators abide by the policies and procedures of their respective employing organizations. Where such policies and procedures are believed to violate professional standards or cause unprofessional conduct by employees, attempts are made to rectify the situation within the employing agency. If such attempts are unsuccessful, concerns for the pertinent policies or procedures are reported to an appropriate governing or investigative body.

4.03 Parenting Educators collaborate with other community organizations that provide services to mutual participants. Parenting Educators do not share participant information with other agencies, unless the participant has given written permission or it is mandated by policy or law.

**Principle V: Parenting Educators Conduct Research Ethically**

Parenting Educators contribute to society and to the profession through research and evaluation activities. When conducting research or evaluation, Parenting Educators recognize that their ultimate responsibility is to the participants and report honestly the findings of their study.

**Guidelines**

5.01 Parenting Educators conduct all aspects of the research process with respect for the dignity of those who participate in the research, and they ensure that those who assist in the research process do likewise.

5.02 Parenting Educators inform research participants in writing, of the purpose of their research, any potential risk of involvement, how confidentiality will be protected, the right to withdraw from the study at any time, the way the data will be used, and available referral resources if risks are involved.

5.03 Parenting Educators will obtain from participants a signed consent to participate in the research project.

5.04 Parenting Educators are truthful and objective when reporting research data.

5.05 Parenting Educators use research money for the stated purpose described in the research proposal.

**Principle VI: Parenting Educators Are Involved in Improving Society**

Parenting Educators are advocates for individuals and families and participate in developing policies and laws that are respectful and empowering to them.

**Guidelines**

6.01 Parenting Educators are encouraged to advocate at the local, state and national levels to develop policies that are respectful of and empowering to all individuals and families.

**Principle VII: Parenting Educators Are Ethical When Reviewing Professional Writing**

**Guidelines**

7.01 Parenting Educators read materials carefully and in their entirety and evaluate them objectively.

**Principle VIII: Parenting Educators Understand and Abide by Ethical Principles and Assist Others in Doing So**

Parenting Educators understand and abide by ethical principles, encourage and assist other Parenting Educators to know and apply them, and teach ethical principles to students of Parenting Education.

**Guidelines**

8.01 Parenting Educators assist other Parenting Educators to understand and abide by ethical principles in their professional roles.

8.02 Parenting Educators assist the profession to further identify and articulate ethical issues.

8.03 When modifications or additions to the principles and guidelines seem appropriate, Parenting Educators should make known their concerns or ideas to officers of CT-PEN.

Reference

"Ethical Principles and Guideline for Family Scientists" Family Science Section of National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) adopted by the NCFR Board of Directors, 1998