Family Life Education (FLE)

About the discipline
Family life education is an applied field of study with a conceptual foundation drawn from psychology, education, home management, sociology, law, economics, social work, philosophy, biology and theology. The bachelor of arts degree is conferred upon successful completion of all graduation requirements.

Career opportunities
- **Social Services**: Family service agencies, foster care, legal services, referral programs, food stamp programs, Meals-on-Wheels and transportation programs.
- **Health Services**: Nursing homes, hospitals, day care centers, community mental health centers, housing projects and public health clinics.
- **Program Planning**: Group homes, senior centers, government agencies, parks and recreation departments, educational institutions, religious organizations and department of corrections.

Program strengths and emphases
The major centers on gaining insight into human development, dynamics of relationships, and the science and practice of family life education and consultation. Further refinement of skills increases this base of knowledge and the student’s ability to assess and analyze human dynamics and skills in communication, interviewing and problem-solving.

The FLE major is accredited by the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) and endorsed by Focus on the Family.

Students in this program will:
- Gain knowledge about concepts and principles relevant to family living;
- Explore personal attitudes and values;
- Identify and understand the attitudes and values of others;
- Provide guided learning experiences relevant to preventing family problems;
- Develop interpersonal skills that contribute to family well-being; and
- Gain practical experience through a required independent study project.

Requirements
**The 42-hour family life education major requires:**
- FLE 326 Human Life Cycle (4)
- FLE 335 Interpersonal Relations: Interviewing and Interventions (3)
- FLE 347 Family Theory (2)
- FLE 348 Marriage, Family and Sexuality (3)
- FLE 354 Research Methods (3)
- FLE 426 Parenting and Family Skills (3)
- FLE 436 Public Policy, Family Law and Family Life Education (2)
- FLE 492 Independent Study Project (4-6)
- IDS 300 Biblical Perspectives (3)
- IDS 400 Values: Personal and Social (3)
- PSY 310 Adult Devel & Life Planning (3)
- SOC 331 Family Facilitation Programming (3)
- SOC 312 Ethnicity, Social Class & Family (3)
- WRT 312 Critical Analysis and Research Writing (3)

**Note:** Students who are pursuing an Organizational Management (ORM) major may obtain a FLE minor.

**The 24-hour family life education minor requires:**
- FLE 326 Human Life Cycle (4)
- FLE 335 Interpersonal Relations: Interviewing and Interventions (3)
- FLE 347 Family Theory (2)
- FLE 348 Marriage, Family and Sexuality (3)
- FLE 426 Parenting and Family Skills (3)
- FLE 436 Public Policy, Family Law, & Family Life Education (2)
- SOC 312 Ethnicity, Social Class, & Family (3)

Approved electives to total 24 hours

An **Early Childhood Development Certificate** may be earned along with the Family Life Education major if the following are complete:
- Early Childhood Education degree
- Independent Study Project in an early childhood setting with supervision by an approved FLE academic coordinator.
Course descriptions:

FLE 326 Human Life Cycle (4)
(Module 4) This course will examine normal developmental patterns and issues from infancy and childhood to older adulthood and death, dying and grieving. It will take into consideration the biological, psychological and sociological aspects of human development at each stage. The essential concepts in each part of the developmental process will be the basis of the Family Life Educator’s cognitive understanding of human development. These essential concepts are defined and reviewed in the textual material selected. Another emphasis in this course will be the relationship of the normative development within the family context. Students will examine healthy and dysfunctional characteristics of family life and their impact on human development.

FLE 335 Interpersonal Relations: Interviewing and Interventions (3)
(Module 7) This module introduces students to theory and skills essential to effective interpersonal relations. Emphasis is placed on interviewing strategies for the analysis and assessment of family life issues for the purpose of appropriate educational recommendations. The outcomes are intended to enhance personal and professional growth.

FLE 347 Family Theory (2)
(Module 3) This module is designed to assist the family life professional in developing a foundational understanding of the major theories involved in family studies. Theories to be covered include the exchange framework, the symbolic interaction framework, the family development framework, the systems framework, the conflict framework and the ecological framework.

FLE 348 Marriage, Family and Sexuality (3)
(Module 5) This module is designed to increase student’s knowledge of human relationships and the dynamics of marital and family relationships. This course will help the student in his/her ability to analyze personal interactions and the characteristics of strong families. The course will address issues pertaining to human sexuality and the development of healthy family and marriage interactions. Methods of teaching human sexuality through the life span will be examined.

FLE 354 Research Methods (3)
(Module 6) The Research Methods module illustrates data gathered through qualitative and quantitative study concerning health and behavior within the family infrastructure. Techniques of this approach have the advantage of providing contextual information that assists students in the development of an independent study project.

FLE 426 Parenting and Family Skills (3)
(Module 11) This module is designed to assist the family life professional in establishing a foundation for understanding the dynamics of parent-child relationships. Parenting is presented as a process that changes over time as both child and parent develop across the life span. Topics covered are areas of concern to parents and to professionals working with parents. These include: definitions, changing conceptions of parenthood, communication, discipline, guidance, self-esteem, child maltreatment, day care, parenting by single parents and step-parenting.

FLE 436 Public Policy, Family Law and Family Life Education (2)
(Module 13) This module helps the family life professional gain valuable insight into the science and practice of family life education and consultation. It introduces the student to legal and professional concerns that shape family policy and well-being.

FLE 492 Independent Study Project (4-6)
(Module 14) The independent study project experience is individually designed for the interests and needs of each student. In practice it is an integrative activity. It brings together family life education program concepts and real life situations. Skills such as researching, interviewing, program design and evaluating programs will be developed.

IDS 300 Biblical Perspectives (3)
(Module 10) This course reflects the commitment of Spring Arbor University as a Christian liberal arts University, to nurture an appreciation for the rich resources of the Scriptures for creative personal faith and human life in the modern world. It is designed to foster knowledge and understanding of the literature and history of the Bible and the integration of faith, living and learning.

IDS 400 Values: Personal and Social (3)
(Module 12) This is a capstone course in which the student formulates a philosophy of life, providing the base for such concerns as ethics in business, accountability in government, respect for human rights, and a responsible lifestyle in our contemporary world. Ethical theories and personal values are examined through readings, analysis of family life issues and classroom discussion.

PSY 310 Adult Development and Life Planning (3)
(Module 1) This module emphasizes the experiential nature of nontraditional education and adult development theory. Students will be familiar with various theories and instruments that will provide a cognitive basis for personal analysis and understanding. The objective of the module is personal discovery and affirmation through examination
of one's strengths and the subsequent adjustments that may assist areas of personal growth.

**SOC 312 Ethnicity, Social Class and the Family (3)**
(Module 8) The focus of this course is on the effect of cultural and ethnic diversity in human development and family issues. Students examine cultural and ethnic diversity in the definition of family and family patterns. The main goal is the development of sensitivity and awareness so that students can identify important questions related to ethnicity and family patterns.

**SOC 331 Family Facilitation Programming (3)**
(Module 9) The purpose of this course is to acquaint the student with the essential principles for developing and delivering programs for families, with some emphasis on all age groups. The focus will be how the special learning needs of family members translate into program design. Through class exercises the student will gain some experience in all phases of program implementation. This will include the actual development and demonstration of a family wellness program.

**WRT 312 Critical Analysis and Research Writing (3)**
(Module 2) Equips students to become more competent and confident writers through an emphasis on the interrelationship between one’s ability to think critically, read actively, and write proficiently. Narrative, research and analysis are each employed as a means of increasing student mastery of the important technical components of college-level writing. Students are also taught how these skills can be used in the process of demonstrating experiential learning for college-level credit. This course does not meet the general education communication skills requirement.