



TEXAS WOMAN'S
UNIVERSITY™

UNDERGRADUATE PRACTICUM
STUDENT HANDBOOK
HDFS 4943

School of Human Sciences
College of Professional Education
Texas Woman's University
Denton, TX 76204

Effective June 1, 2026

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Dear Senior!

Welcome to your Practicum in Family Sciences!

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to facilitate and coordinate the practicum experience in the School of Human Sciences. The handbook is to be utilized as a reference to become familiar with the perspective and scope of the HDFS 4943 Practicum. This handbook is also valid for HDFS 4923 Professional Development, which is the pre-requisite course for HDFS 4943. It is the responsibility of the practicum student to read this manual, to become familiar with their responsibilities, and to seek clarification from the Practicum Coordinator, as needed. All practicum students are bound by the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

What is Practicum?

Practicum is a planned and closely supervised “hands on” learning experience providing the student with a wide range of actual work activities and opportunities to shadow or observe portions of operations or administration for which actual work experience is not practical or possible. The objective of the practicum is to give the student reality-based experience to balance (augment) the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom. Practicums are to be secured by the student and taken as concurrent placements. This means that you may be taking other classes while you complete your practicum and must be able to successfully balance your practicum, other classes, work, and your personal life.

Roles and Responsibilities of People

The Practicum Student is a Child Development and/or Family Studies undergraduate student who accepts a temporary professional role within an organization or a placement setting related to their degree. See pg. 8 for more information about roles and responsibilities of students.

The Practicum Site is an organization that offers services to children, families and/or individuals throughout their life span.

The Site Supervisor is the professional full-time employed representative of the practicum site who oversees, mentors, and assesses the Practicum Student’s semester project, semester goals, overall performance and signs a time log during the duration of the Practicum experience.

The Practicum Liaison (PL) is a Faculty Coordinator that coordinates the Practicum experience between the student, the participating agency, and the University. The PL supports students’ process of securing a practicum site before the Practicum begins. The PL checks for compliance history and licensure of the child care sites and if the proposed site will be likely approved. The PL will get in touch with the site supervisor to clarify supervisor and student expectations. They approve the practicum site and add the HDFS 4943 registration course code in student planning after the site is approved.

The current PL and practicum faculty coordinator is:

Dr. Dimple Vadgama (dvadgama@twu.edu)



The Child Life Faculty sign all forms and attestations for students applying for hospital placements. Please see the Child Life Practicum section for students completing an ACLP endorsed Child Life practicum.

The current Child Life faculty responsible for signing all forms for hospital placements is:

Dr. Elizabeth McCarroll (emccarroll@twu.edu)



The Undergraduate Advisor approves the student to add the HDFS 4923 and HDFS 4943 Practicum in Family Sciences courses in their student planning which is required in the practicum application. This course is completed in the final semester of the degree program.

The current undergraduate advisor is:

Ms. Larisa Kliman (lkliman@twu.edu)



The Coordinator of Field Experience and Assessment coordinates the contracting and educational agreements between Texas Woman’s University, the student, site supervisor, and the practicum site. They will reach out to the site supervisor after the practicum site is approved by the PL in order to secure the legal educational experience agreement (EEA) if an EEA is not currently active.

The current Coordinator of Field Experience and Assessment is :

Dr. Renee Blanchard (rblanchard@twu.edu)

The Practicum Instructor approves the final start of practicum hours during the practicum semester and oversees the Practicum assignments and overall requirements during the Practicum experience. Information about your practicum course instructor will be available on [Webadvisor](#) when the class schedule is published.

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Mission statement

The School of Human Sciences is committed to excellence in transformational learning, discovery, and service in a collaborative environment that embraces diversity and social justice. We prepare students for academic, clinical, and professional opportunities serving individuals, children, families, and communities. The department builds engaged leaders and global citizens honoring the interconnectedness and individuality of all people.

Practicum in Family Sciences

HDFS 4943 Practicum in Family Sciences is a supervised field experience in family sciences. Clinical and educational experiences working with children, families, and communities. Prerequisite: HDFS 4923 and permission of department advisor. 120 practicum hours. One lecture hour a week. Credit: Three hours.

Prerequisite for Practicum

HDFS 4923. Professional Development in Family Sciences. Professional development issues in family sciences. Ethics and professional standards. Preparation for practicum. Prerequisites: HDFS 1001 and permission of department. Three lecture hours a week. Credit: Three hours

HDFS 4923 is a prerequisite course students must take before the practicum semester, usually in the second to last semester of the degree program. The course is offered in-person and online; however, the online section is reserved for students who are enrolled in the 100% online degree completion program. In rare, extenuating circumstances, such as when students live outside of Texas or live more than 3 hours from campus, students may be permitted to enroll in the online section with the approval from the Practicum Liaison and/or Director of the School of Human Sciences.

Objectives

By completing this Practicum course, students are expected to learn the following:

1. Competently connect content knowledge to professional practice in programs serving children, families, and communities.
2. Courteously collaborate with professionals who work with children and families.
3. Effectively appraise professional goals and objectives to enhance professional learning and growth.
4. Appropriately assess personal qualities and skills related to working with children, families, and communities.

Practicum Class Attendance

Practicum class sections meet as a large group once every month. Attendance is mandatory with assigned grades. In-person sections of HDFS 4943 meet on the Denton campus, and online sections meet synchronously via Zoom. Specific class meeting dates will be announced on [Webadvisor](#) when the class schedule is published.

The online section of HDFS 4943 is reserved for students who are enrolled in online degree completion programs. The course is offered in-person and online; however, the online section is reserved for students who are enrolled in the 100% online degree completion program. In rare, extenuating circumstances, such as when students live outside of Texas or live more than 3 hours from campus, students may be permitted to enroll in the online section with the approval from the Practicum Liaison and/or Director of the School of Human Sciences.

Students are expected to be available and make prior arrangements to attend the synchronous class meetings and take active participation in class discussions.

PRACTICUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURE

The following guidelines have been prepared to outline the responsibilities of the TWU School of Human Sciences, the participating agency, and the student.

HDFS Practicum Liaison Responsibilities

1. Ensures that the student has the necessary knowledge, skills, ability, and professionalism needed for a successful practicum experience. Where deficits exist the student will be advised accordingly.
2. Outlines the practicum application process for students.
3. Supports and guides students to successfully secure practicum sites.
4. Notifies the student about the approval status of their practicum application upon review.
5. Adds the registration code in student planning for Practicum class registration.
6. Maintains an updated list of local, state level and national level practicum sites in which practicum experiences were successfully completed in the past and makes the list available to students.
7. Develops policies and guidelines for practicum experiences in cooperation with faculty, practicum sites, and students.
8. Ensures that the Practicum Site Agreement is completed accurately and in full.
9. Assists practicum students and Practicum Site Supervisors with any concerns or problems.

Site Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Meets with the student and interviews them for a practicum fit.
2. Provides the student an affirmative confirmation for the requested semester practicum placement.
3. Signs the site agreement once the student's practicum application is approved by the university.
4. Provides an oversight about the student responsibilities at the practicum site.
5. Signs the student's time log every week.
6. Site supervisors are expected to make time for mentoring and supervision of the student each week, and discuss student's practicum goals and project.
7. Practicum students must be supervised by a director or experienced staff member. They may not be supervised by another practicum student, intern, substitute, or volunteer worker.
8. Ensures students are involved in degree related activities and responsibilities.

Student Responsibilities

1. Read the practicum manual, and closely understand the process for securing a practicum site related to the degree.
2. Review the [Approved Sites list](#) and Site Agreement provided in HDFS 4923 Professional Development.
3. Explore your interests and career goals related to your degree and future plans.
4. Approach potential sites and interview with the site to receive placement confirmation.
5. Get a tentative confirmation for placement from at least three different site supervisors. It is highly recommended that you have one confirmed placement site and two back-up sites.
6. Check-in with the Practicum Liaison for possible approval or disapproval of your placement.
 - a. *Note:* If you are attempting to complete a practicum at your current place of employment, you must reach out to the Practicum Liaison for approval. Approvals are only given if the Practicum duties are in a different department, with different responsibilities.
7. Submit the application before the specified deadline:
 - a. Fall practicum applications due: **July 1st**
 - b. Spring practicum applications due: **October 1st**
 - c. Summer practicum applications due: **March 1st**
8. After the practicum application is approved, students will be asked to submit the Site Agreement signed by them and the site supervisor. **DO NOT** get the Site Agreement document signed before you receive the approval.
9. Submit the Site Agreement by the semester specific deadline:
 - a. Fall site agreements due: **July 15th**
 - b. Spring site agreements due: **November 15th**
 - c. Summer site agreements due: **April 1st**

Student may NOT Engage in the Following Activities:

1. Sign the Site Agreement before the Practicum Application is approved.
2. Complete practicum at a job site they are employed at within the same job responsibilities.
3. Start the 120 practicum hours before getting approval from Practicum Instructor or prior to the start of the semester.
4. Take up clerical responsibilities, such as answering phone calls at the reception desk, or excessively involved in filing paper work, cutting materials, organization documentations, which takes away from their participation in other degree related activities.
5. Serving as a full time employee or substituting for a full time employee. Students must be shadowing a professional at the site. However, this may be appropriate if the student is teaching a lesson plan or conducting an activity supervised by the supervisor or a full time employee.

6. Serving as a child life specialist, therapist, counselor, teacher, or other licensed or credentialed professional in a professional capacity.
7. Driving clients in their vehicle, accepting keys to open or close the facility.
8. Handling alcohol, money, or other valuable materials.

PROCESS OF SECURING PRACTICUM SITES

How to Initiate Selection, Review, and Select a Practicum Site

Carefully read through the process of selecting and approaching a potential practicum site for your 4943 Practicum, followed by the process of filling and getting your practicum site application approval, and finally securing the practicum site by getting the Site Agreement letter signed.

Students are expected to be proactive throughout this process! Students are also expected to continuously communicate and update the instructor on their application process for best results in securing a practicum site and registering for 4943 Practicum in Family Sciences.

Approved Sites document:

1. First, students will explore this [previously approved sites document](#) and shortlist or select a minimum of three sites of interest to complete their 120 Practicum hours.
2. If you have a site in mind that is not on the approved sites list, immediately let your HDFS 4923 course instructor **AND the Practicum Liaison** know. It can take 3 months or more to approve and contract with a new site, so it is imperative that you begin the process early and alert the HDFS 4923 course instructor and the PL immediately of a new site.
3. If you select a childcare center, your instructor and even you can check if the non-approved site would be approved, based on the DFPS website of violations by an organization. If it has many violations, it may not get approved, and students will need to look for other potential sites. (Here is the website where you can check for violations: TxChildCareSearch.org)
4. Selecting a site from the previously approved list does not automatically confirm student's placement for practicum at that site. Students have to complete all of the following steps in this section.
5. Students are expected to approach the shortlisted sites to find a potential site supervisor by emailing, phone call, or visiting the site in-person and finding out if the site accepts students for a practicum of 120 hours. Students may share (via email or print out) the Site Agreement Letter with the site for more details about what Practicum entails. Students **MUST NOT** get any signatures on the Site Agreement Letter yet! However, students must get contact information from the site supervisor.
6. Site supervisors must be full-time employees at the site, not volunteers.
7. If email and phone call are delaying the process, students are encouraged to visit the site in-person.
8. Students will get a verbal confirmation from the site supervisor/site personnel, agreeing to accept the student for their practicum of 120 hours.
9. If required, students will always give the 4923 course instructor information to the site supervisor, or add the 4923 course instructor in cc on their email communication to the site personnel.

Practicum Application document:

1. Students will submit the practicum application to the instructor via [Qualtrics survey](#) by specified semester deadline.
2. Students who do not submit this application by the specified deadline, may not be able to enroll in Practicum in the following semester, unless they received prior approval for an extension of the submission deadline.
3. Details on filling the application form will be provided by your instructor.
4. Students must have a confirmed site address and supervisor contact information in order to complete this application form.
5. Students must also know which courses they need to register for during the Practicum semester. Contact the undergraduate advisor for course advising.
6. Course instructors will check the application forms and submit the same to the department before the semester specific deadline. Applications will be reviewed in the order received.
7. Students must be patient and wait for the approval email from the department. **Approval may take a few weeks after the specified deadline.**
8. Once approved, students will then receive a confirmation to register for the 4943 Practicum with a registration code.

Site Agreement Letter/document:

1. Students will get the Site Agreement Letter signed by their site supervisor **only after students have received an approval for the site** from the PL.
2. Site Agreement letters with signatures of supervisor and student are due to the HDFS 4923 instructor by semester specific deadlines.
3. Students must communicate and keep the instructor notified if more time is needed.
4. Students who do not submit this Site Agreement by the specified deadline will be dropped from Practicum, unless an extension is requested and approved.
5. HDFS 4923 instructors will check for completion of these letters and submit them to the practicum coordinator.
6. Students must remain patient during this process.
7. Students will get a response within two weeks of the practicum application deadline.
8. Students are expected to continuously communicate and update the instructor on their application process for best results in securing a practicum site and registering for 4943 Practicum.

Educational Agreements:

Once the practicum application is submitted and approved by the PL, the Coordinator of Field Experience will initiate establishing educational agreements between the University and the site. This process can take **45 days or longer**. Students will be notified during this process. Educational Agreements must be established before approval to begin Practicum hours is granted.

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT AND SITE SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Practicum in Family Sciences (HDFS 4943) is a capstone course which requires students to do field observations and hands-on training and to apply what they have learned in their coursework to the experiences and observations at the site. Below is a list of requirements for practicum students and practicum sites:

Practicum Goals

1. In collaboration with the site supervisor, students set forth knowledge goals and skill goals that they wish to accomplish during their practicum.
2. Goals are linked to NAEYC or NCFR ethical national standards used by the department.
3. If you would like the student to become familiar with a code used in your field, then you may include this information in addition to the ethical codes present within the department.
4. The Statement of Goals serves as a contract between the student and the site.
5. Site supervisor signs the document at the beginning of the semester (indicating agreement with the goals) and signs off on each goal when it is completed.

120 hours of supervised work at the site

1. Students are expected to receive a myriad of practical experiences, rather than being assigned to one area/classroom/office for the duration of practicum.
2. All hours must be completed by the end of the semester.
3. Site supervisor must sign the student's time log every week.
4. Site supervisors are expected to make time for mentoring and supervision of the student each week.
5. Practicum students must be supervised by a director or experienced staff member. They may not be supervised by another practicum student, intern, substitute, or volunteer worker.
6. Practicum students at childcare centers may not be counted in the provider/child ratio.
7. Students will not be allowed to start hours before the first week of Practicum semester and formal approval by their Practicum instructor who will review submission of required assignments.
8. An average of 10-12 hours per week is suggested to make sure the 120 hours are not completed before the end of semester.
9. Students may not complete all practicum hours prior to mid semester, and must plan to span the hours throughout the semester.
10. Any hours beyond 120 hours may be counted towards volunteer hours.
11. All hours must be completed by the end of the semester and failure to do so may result in a failing grade for the course.

Semester-long project

1. Students are expected to complete a project that benefits the site. Students work out the topic and details of the project with their site supervisor.

2. Site supervisor signs the document at the beginning of the semester (indicating agreement with the project) and signs on the final signature line at the end of the semester (indicating satisfactory completion of the project).
3. The project should be broad enough in scope to qualify as a semester-long project, and it should be an authentic and usable resource for the center/facility.
4. Students should be given a reasonable amount of time while at the practicum site to work on the project, and the hours spent working on the project are included in the required 120 hours.
5. Students will leave behind the project and/or instructions for continuation at the end of the semester. However, students will bring their project (if tangible object) to class to present it during the last class meeting.

Report and Reflections

1. Students submit four (4) report and reflection papers to their TWU practicum instructor, detailing their observations and experiences, reflections on what they have learned, and applications of theory and course content.
2. The reports are confidential (only read by the practicum instructor), and students are instructed not to share the names of children and families.
3. Students may not submit these reports to anyone other than their practicum instructor. If the practicum site requires students to complete reports or other written summaries of their work, these documents must be separate from the course-required reports.

Formal evaluation

1. At the end of the semester, we ask that site supervisors complete a formal evaluation of the student. The student will provide the site supervisor with the evaluation form.
2. The site supervisor should discuss the evaluation with the student and provide constructive feedback. Both supervisor and student must sign the form.

Contact with TWU Practicum Instructor, PL, and Coordinator of Field Experience

1. The student's assigned Practicum instructor will contact the site supervisor at the beginning of the semester either via e-mail or telephone for a short introduction.
2. The Practicum instructor is available via e-mail or telephone throughout the semester if the site supervisor has any questions or concerns related to the student's performance or course requirements.
3. The PL faculty is available if the site supervisor has any questions regarding the above mentioned list of requirements for practicum students and practicum sites including experiences at the site, code of conduct, performance, assignments, and any concerns.
4. The Coordinator of the Field Experience can be contacted regarding educational agreements.

ACLP Endorsed Child Life Practicum

This section is for students who are interested in completing an ACLP endorsed Child Life Practicum. This opportunity is **ONLY** available for students who are in the Child Life Emphasis track in the Child Development degree program and is recommended only for those who are interested in becoming a Certified Child Life Specialist or pursuing a master's degree in child life. If you are not currently on the Child Life Emphasis track, but would like to be, please contact the undergraduate advisor.

The ACLP Endorsed Child Life Practicum has several additional requirements beyond those required for HDFS 4943 Practicum in Family Sciences. The Child Life Practicum may also be completed prior to the last semester of the program.

Students who are seeking a Child Life practicum must complete the questionnaire located at the following link: <https://forms.gle/NvyvgAJbj4bCbxfD8>

What is an ACLP Endorsed Child Life Practicum?

A Child Life Practicum is a specialized, introductory experience designed for students who wish to pursue a career as a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS). The primary intent of this practicum is to familiarize students with the unique environment of pediatric healthcare, the operations of a hospital-based child life department, and the distinct emotional and psychosocial needs of hospitalized children and their families. It is different from the Family Science Practicum in that it takes place in a high-stress, acute, or chronic hospital environment working with pediatric patients and their families facing non-normative stressors, such as illness, medical trauma, physical limitations, pain, and separation anxiety. Instead of general classroom management or broad family case management, students learn how to observe and apply specialized therapeutic play, normalization strategies, and coping mechanisms tailored to a child's medical vulnerabilities. For more information, see the "Child Life Practicum: Exploring the Practicum Options for BS in Child Development with an Emphasis in Child Life Students" handout below.

Child Life Faculty Contact

Dr. Elizabeth McCarroll emccarroll@twu.edu is the faculty contact for CL practicum related queries.

Important Deadlines and Communication Expectations

Child Life Practicums have separate deadlines and application processes from HDFS 4923 Practicum, which must be completed before seeking approval from the department. You can find more information on the application process and deadlines here:

<https://www.saclp.org/aspiringprofessionals>

If a student is pursuing a child life practicum, the student must monitor the specific application deadline, documentation and approval notification dates, and inform their HDFS 4923 instructor, the practicum liaison, and the undergraduate advisor as soon as possible. Oftentimes, you will need to begin this process prior to enrollment in HDFS 4923 Professional Development.

Required Prerequisites

A Child Life Practicum requires students to complete the following courses prior to beginning the practicum:

- HDFS 4403: Child Life: Working With Hospitalized Children and Families
- HDFS 3423: Play and Development in Early Childhood
- HDFS 4923: Professional Development in Family Studies
- HDFS 2513 Early Child Development **OR** HDFS 3513 Childhood & Adolescence

Enrollment Information

Students who complete a Child Life Practicum **will enroll in HDFS 5093 Child Life Practicum in lieu of HDFS 4943 Practicum**. Students must work with the undergraduate advisor and Dr. Elizabeth McCarroll for enrollment and to complete the necessary course substitution form.

CastleBranch Account

TWU Child Life students will use CastleBranch for all compliance tracking and screening requirements. CastleBranch, is the digital data warehouse for uploading forms required for the Child Life faculty Dr. McCarroll's signatures on the attestation form the student will need to onboard at their Child Life practicum site. This electronic database will improve your experiences as a practicum student or intern by assuring confidentiality, compliance, and a speedy preparation process.

Instructions for how to set up your CastleBranch account can be found at:

<https://disahealthcare.com/login/disa-cb/>

Please note that the student should purchase package XB12. For questions about how to set up your account, or assistance needed with document uploads, please refer to the instructional videos at this link:

<https://disahealthcare.com/login/disa-cb/>

For additional assistance, please contact the CastleBranch IT department.
CastleBranch Customer Experience Team assistance: (888) 723-4263.

Child Life Practicum

Exploring the practicum options for BS in Child Development with an Emphasis in Child Life students

Child Life Internship

What is it?

The 600-hr supervised child life internship required for certification with the ACLP. Usually unpaid, full-time work.

Requirements to be selected

Completion of 10 required HDFS courses per the ACLP. Students should follow the child life track degree plan. Coursework can be in progress at time of application, but recommended to complete before applying.

Which course to register for

HDFS 5893 Child Life Internship*

Child Life Practicum

What is it?

While not required for certification, completing a child life practicum is recommended before internship. 150-200-hr supervised child life practicum.

Requirements to be selected

Completion of HDFS 2513, HDFS 3423, HDFS 4403. Coursework can be in progress at time of application, but it's recommended to complete before applying.

Which course to register for

HDFS 5093 Child Life Practicum*

Child Development Practicum

What is it?

If an undergrad is not able to get a CL internship or CL practicum, they may complete a child development practicum. This 120-hr practicum should be working with chronically ill, terminal, or grieving children.

Requirements to be selected

No coursework required, but HDFS 4923 must be completed with a B or higher to take the practicum course.

Which course to register for

HDFS 4943 Practicum in FS**

*Department approval needed to register. Please contact the undergraduate advisor. If selected, this will count in place of HDFS 4943.

**Department approval needed to register. Please contact the practicum coordinator.

Paperwork needed

Completion of Castle Branch paperwork and vaccinations. Attestation form may be required.*

Paperwork needed

Completion of Castle Branch paperwork and vaccinations. Attestation form may be required.*

Paperwork needed

Educational Experience Agreement form and any site required paperwork.**

*Coordinator of field experience and division head of child life will work with you on this.

**Coordinator of field experience and practicum coordinator will work with you on this.

Can I complete after graduating?

Yes, re-apply as a non-degree seeking grad student and enroll in above course for affiliation.*

Can I complete after graduating?

Yes, re-apply as a non-degree seeking grad student and enroll in above course for affiliation.*

Can I complete after graduating?

No, this is a requirement for graduating.

*Financial aid is not available for non-degree seeking students. \$50 application fee, ~\$1200 tuition, & \$150 Castle Branch account.

For any questions, reach out to your advisor or the child life faculty advisor.

REQUIRED ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

All students are expected to adhere to the ethical codes and professional behavior expectations for TWU students ([URP: 06.210 Academic Integrity](#), [URP 06.200 Student Code of Conduct](#)), the [School of Human Sciences](#), The National Council of Family Relations, and National Association for the Education for the Young Children (listed below).

National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)

CODE OF ETHICS

NCFR Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists These Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Family Scientists were drafted by the Family Science Section of NCFR and adopted by the NCFR Board of Directors.

Although the Family Science Section of the NCFR is the professional association vehicle that helps to clarify and publicize ethical principles and guidelines, this document is intended for all individuals who consider themselves Family Scientists. This may include university students, social service professionals, educators, therapists and administrators.

PURPOSE: These ethical principles and guidelines were developed to inspire and encourage Family Scientists to act ethically; provide guidance in dealing with often complex ethical issues; provide ethical guidance in areas that Family Scientists may overlook; and enhance the professional image and status of Family Scientists by increasing the level of professional consciousness.

The principles that apply to Family Scientists in all their professional situations are included in the first section. The remaining sections relate to Family Scientists in specific professional arenas. For the full text, please visit:

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://www.ncfr.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/NCFR%20Ethical%20Guidelines.pdf>

PRINCIPLE I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR FAMILY SCIENTISTS

This section identifies general ethical principles that are relevant to Family Scientists in all professional settings. Family Scientists are respectful of all individuals, do not unethically discriminate, do not develop intimate personal relationships in their role as Family Scientists, are sensitive to the complications of multiple role relationships, protect the confidentiality of their students or clients, and do not engage in sexual harassment.

PRINCIPLE II: FAMILY SCIENTISTS ARE RESPECTFUL OF STUDENTS AND CLIENTS

Family Scientists are respectful of diverse family forms. They are respectful of students' sensitivity in discussing personal family issues. Family Scientists do not exploit the hierarchical relationship with persons they serve and are respectful of privacy issues.

PRINCIPLE III: FAMILY SCIENTISTS ABIDE BY HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Family Scientists are responsible to uphold high professional standards. They are encouraged to be cooperative with other Family Scientists in gathering and sharing of scientific information. They strive to keep current with material in their domain. They are ethical in representing their profession at their place of employment as well as other settings.

PRINCIPLE IV: FAMILY SCIENTISTS CONDUCT RESEARCH ETHICALLY

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

PRINCIPLE V: FAMILY SCIENTISTS ARE ETHICAL IN THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYING ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES

Family Scientists are respectful of the internal policies and procedures of current and past employers. Family Scientists seek to promote the highest standards of policies and practice by their employers.

PRINCIPLE VI: FAMILY SCIENTISTS ARE INVOLVED IN IMPROVING SOCIETY

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

PRINCIPLE VIII: FAMILY SCIENTISTS UNDERSTAND AND ABIDE BY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND ASSIST OTHERS TO DO SO

Family Scientists understand and abide by ethical principles, encourage and assist other Family Scientists to know and apply them, and teach ethical principles to students of Family Science.

CFLE Code of Ethics

Read the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) Code of Ethics below, or [download a PDF copy](#) that contains a signature field.

Family Life Education focuses on healthy individual and family functioning within a family systems perspective and provides a primarily educational/preventive approach. Application of knowledge about healthy individual and family functioning can prevent or minimize many societal problems.

The skills and knowledge needed for healthy functioning across the lifespan are widely known: knowledge of human development, good decision-making skills, effective parenting, strong communication skills, and knowledge of healthy interpersonal relationships. The goal of Family Life Education is to teach and foster this knowledge and these skills to enable individuals* and families to function optimally within the context of their environments.

Family Life Education professionals consider societal issues — social justice, economics, education, discrimination, family policy, poverty, and more — within the context of families and through a strengths-based perspective. Family Life Educators are inclusionary in practice, recognizing diverse individual and family identities and structures.

Professionals that are Certified Family Life Educators (CFLEs) have demonstrated knowledge of the following 10 content areas:

1. Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts
2. Internal Dynamics of Families
3. Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan
4. Human Sexuality
5. Interpersonal Relationships
6. Family Resource Management
7. Parent Education and Guidance
8. Family Law and Public Policy
9. Professional Ethics and Practice
10. Family Life Education Methodology

The CFLE Code of Professional Ethics identifies guidelines for professional behavior. These guidelines show the public and members of the profession the principles and values that guide professional practice for Family Life Educators. The following core values are reflected in the ethical principles: do no harm, respect diversity and practice cultural competence, engage in ethical decision-making, practice with integrity, recognize and build on individual and family strengths, and practice with humility and warmth.

Ethical Principles

- A. Relationships with Individuals and Families
- B. Relationships with Colleagues and the Profession
- C. Relationships with Community/Society

Deeper Dive Into CFLE Ethics: Perspectives, Case Studies, and Application

The [CFLE Code of Ethics](#) provides a fundamental framework for ethical decision-making and professional conduct. However, to truly understand and apply ethical principles in practice, it is valuable to explore the various perspectives and nuances involved. [Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Life Educators](#) offers case studies and application processes to enhance the practical understanding and implementation of CFLE ethics.

National Association for the Education for the Young Children (NAEYC)

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

NAEYC recognizes that those who work with young children face many daily decisions that have moral and ethical implications. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered in early childhood care and education. For the full text, please visit: [Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment](#)

Section I. Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children’s development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children’s self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical well-being.

Section II. Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Families are of primary importance in children’s development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child’s wellbeing, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child’s development.*

** The term family may include those adults, besides parents, with the responsibility of being involved in educating, nurturing, and advocating for the child.*

Section III. Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility to colleagues is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace. (Note: Section III includes responsibilities to co-workers and to employers. See the “Code of Ethical Conduct: Supplement for Early Childhood Program Administrators” for responsibilities to personnel (employees in the original 2005 Code revision), online at http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05_supp.pdf.)

Section IV. Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Early childhood programs operate within the context of their immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children’s welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet the diverse needs of families, to cooperate with

agencies and professions that share the responsibility for children, to assist families in gaining access to those agencies and allied professionals, and to assist in the development of community programs that are needed but not currently available. As individuals, we acknowledge our responsibility to provide the best possible programs of care and education for children and to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. Because of our specialized expertise in early childhood development and education and because the larger society shares responsibility for the welfare and protection of young children, we acknowledge a collective obligation to advocate for the best interests of children within early childhood programs and in the larger community and to serve as a voice for young children everywhere. The ideals and principles in this section are presented to distinguish between those that pertain to the work of the individual early childhood educator and those that more typically are engaged in collectively on behalf of the best interests of children—with the understanding that individual early childhood educators have a shared responsibility for addressing the ideals and principles that are identified as “collective.”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Some common questions are highlighted below. A living document where students' queries regarding practicum are updated can be found [here](#). Please read Q&As and if you have a different question email your query to the PL Dr. Dimple Vadgama at dvadgama@twu.edu.

- What is HDFS 4943 Practicum?
 - HDFS 4943 Practicum in Family Sciences is a capstone experience and career preparation for undergraduate students in the final year of their Bachelors degree program in Child Development or Family Studies.

- Is this a Child Life Internship?
 - This is Practicum in Family Sciences and not a Child Life Internship.
 - Students are required to complete 120 hours of supervised Practicum under a full-time employee such as the director, owner, or experienced professionals in the degree related organizations.

- Are Practicum and Internship the same thing?
 - Practicum is supervised degree related work wherein students get a myriad of experiences to learn from experienced professionals and are given the opportunity to apply their education content and knowledge.
 - Internship is more independent work usually done after the completion of all degree requirements.
 - Some organizations offer only internships but if they satisfy the requirements of TWU HDFS 4943 requirements they may be approved as a Practicum.

- I am a Child Development major with specialization in Child Life. Do I need a Child Life practicum to successfully graduate?
 - No. A Child Life practicum is not required for successfully completing HDFS 4943 Practicum in Family Sciences course and the degree.

- What is the Timeline and Prerequisites
 - Students must take the prerequisite course HDFS 4923 Professional Development in the second to last semester and the HDFS 4943 Practicum in the final semester.
 - Students must interview with potential sites and secure a placement confirmation before submitting the Practicum Application and per specified deadlines on pg.8.
 - Students will be notified of an approval decision with following steps.
 - Students must submit a signed Site Agreement before the specified deadlines on pg.8.
 - Students must wait for the Practicum Instructor to approve the final start of hours during the first week of practicum course and only after the first day of the practicum class

meeting. Students can check the class schedule on TWU Webadvisor for specific class meeting dates.

- 120 Practicum hours must begin and be completed during the HDFS 4943 Practicum course semester dates. Check TWU Academic Calendar for semester dates.
- Can I do an online practicum? I see there is an online practicum section 50.
 - No. HDFS 4943 does not offer or approve an online or virtual practicum. Students must go in-person on the field for 120 hours of supervised degree related work.
 - The online practicum section 50 is reserved for students enrolled in the online completion program.
 - All students are required to attend the four monthly class meetings of this course in-person for face-to-face class sections and via Zoom for the online section.
- If a site is on the approved list, can I submit my application and confirm a placement?
 - No. Submitting an application without meeting and confirming the placement with the site does not secure a practicum spot.
 - The student first reviews the site agreement document, the approved site list, meets with the potential site supervisor to get a confirmed “yes” and then submits the department practicum application for approval.
- Can I choose a site that is not on the approved list?
 - Yes. Students can request a new site for practicum. It is recommended you first explore the approved sites list and check with your instructor about the sites you are interested in pursuing.
- There are no potential sites in my city, what should I do?
 - Reach out. In order to successfully complete the degree requirements, this course is required and students will need to make arrangements to secure a practicum site to complete the 120 hours practicum in family sciences. Students must reach out to their HDFS 4923 professional development instructor or practicum coordinator to seek help with finding a practicum site.
- Can I complete my practicum at the site where I work?
 - On rare occasions approval may be given to do practicum at the site a student is employed if the student provides sufficient proof that the practicum duties will be separate from work related duties and responsibilities and in a different division/department.

APPENDIX: Helpful Resources for Students

Practicum Letter to Potential Supervisor

Students can provide the letter below to their potential practicum supervisor.

Students can use the below email blurb along with Resume to send their potential practicum supervisor. Students must replace personal information in the parentheses and delete the parentheses before sending the final email. Students must check that the email is free of errors or typos and has accurate information.

Email draft:

Dear (practicum supervisor last name),

My name is (full name), and I am currently pursuing my Bachelor's degree in (mention full degree with emphasis such as Child Development/Child Development with Child Life emphasis/ Family Studies). I am seeking a practicum placement as part of my academic program and am very interested in the opportunity to complete my practicum with your organization to gain hands-on experience in the field.

I believe completing my practicum with your team would provide valuable insight and practical exposure to help guide my professional goals. I am deeply passionate about working with children/families and am eager to contribute in any way that supports their growth and well-being.

I am planning to complete my practicum in Fall 2026 for a total of 120 hours beginning in the last week of August through the first week of December. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss any available openings and the requirements for placement. Please let me know if there is any additional information or documentation you may need from me.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Email:

Contact:

Best regards,
Full Name



What is Practicum in Family Sciences?

Practicum in Family Sciences (HDFS 4943) is an undergraduate capstone course which requires students to do 120 hours of supervised field observations and hands-on training and to apply what they have learned in their coursework to the experiences and observations at an organization serving children and/or families.

Practicum course is taken in the final semester of the degree program and students must have an approved practicum site and an active educational experience agreement before starting hours. All practicum students must complete their practicum between the official TWU semester dates for that specific practicum semester.

Below is a list of requirements for practicum students and practicum sites:

- 120 hours of supervised work at the site

- Students are expected to receive a myriad of practical experiences related to their degree, rather than being assigned to one area/classroom/office for the duration of practicum.
- All hours must be spread throughout and completed by the end of the semester.
- The site supervisors must sign the student's time log every week.
- Site supervisors are expected to make time for mentoring and supervision of the student each week.
- Practicum students must be supervised by a director or experienced staff member. They may not be supervised by another practicum student, intern, substitute, or volunteer worker.
- Practicum students at child care centers may not be counted in the provider/child ratio.
- An average of 10-12 hours per week is recommended.

- Practicum Goals

- In collaboration with the site supervisor, students set forth two knowledge goals and two skill goals that they wish to accomplish during their practicum.
- Goals should be linked to NAEYC, NCFR, or other ethical standards used by the department. If you would like the student to become familiar with a code used in your field, then you may include this information in addition to the ethical codes present within the department.
- The Statement of Goals serves as a contract between the student and the site.

- Site supervisor signs the document at the beginning of the semester (indicating agreement with the goals) and signs off on each goal when it is completed.

- Semester-long project

- Students are expected to complete a project that benefits the site. Students are to develop the topic and details of the project with their site supervisor.
- Site supervisor signs the document at the beginning of the semester (indicating agreement with the project) and signs on the final signature line at the end of the semester (indicating satisfactory completion of the project).
- The project should be broad enough in scope to qualify as a semester-long project, and it should be an authentic and usable resource for the center/facility.
- Students should be given a reasonable amount of time while at the practicum site to work on the project, and the hours spent working on the project are included in the required 120 hours.
- Students will leave behind the project and/or instructions for continuation at the end of the semester. However, students will bring their project (if tangible object) to class to present it during the last class meeting.

- Reports & Reflections

- Periodically, students will be submitting reports and reflections to their TWU practicum instructor. This information will include reporting of the hours that they have been on site, what they have been working on, and what they have completed. They will also be providing reflections detailing what they have been observing and experiencing.
- This information is to demonstrate what they have learned and how they have been applying theory and course content to their experiences.
- The Reports and Reflections are confidential (only read by the practicum instructor), and students are instructed not to share the names of children and families.
- Students may not submit these Reports and Reflections to anyone other than their practicum instructor. If the practicum site requires students to complete journals or other written summaries of their work, these documents must be separate from the course required Reports and Reflections.

- Formal evaluation

- At the end of the semester, we ask that site supervisors complete a formal evaluation of the student. The evaluation form will be sent to the site supervisor by the student.
- The site supervisor should discuss the evaluation with the student and provide constructive feedback. Both supervisor and student must sign the form.
- Students must turn in the evaluation to the practicum instructor no later than 5:30pm on the date indicated in the syllabus.

- **Conduct Code**

All practicum students are advised on the following conduct codes. If any of these are violated, please contact the student's practicum instructor or the PL:

- Students may only render services for things that they are legally and professionally qualified to provide.
- Students must follow all site policies/rules that are in legal compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Students are expected to follow directions when given and not in violation of applicable laws, regulations, or relevant ethical codes.
- Dress and physical attire while at the site must be in compliance with site standards, policies, and/or regulations. If the site does not have written policies or standards, then it is the student's responsibility to discuss what would be appropriate with hers or his supervisor.
- Punctuality is expected. If a student is sick or running late, then he/she must notify the site supervisor, instructor, or other relevant personnel. Regular tardiness or repeated absences are unacceptable.
- Professional behavior is expected at all times. Students may not use offensive language and are expected to maintain a positive attitude while at the site, during class time, and when meeting with instructors.
- Students must adhere to standards of confidentiality as required by the site and/or relevant ethical codes.
- Students may not remove any files or items from the site and may not make copies of site documents unless approved by the site supervisor.
- Students may not use telephones (including personal cell phones) or e-mail for personal communication while at the site or during class time. Cell phones may only be used for emergency situations and at the discretion of the site supervisor.
- Students may not use site computers or their own laptop for their personal or school related work unless it is directly related to completing approved practicum goals and projects.
- Students may not work on homework for other courses, or engage in other personal activities, while present at the site or during class times.
- All information provided by students to their instructor about the site and their work, as well as to the site about the class, must be as professional, representative, and honest as possible. Providing false information is unacceptable.

If any of these are violated, it will be grounds for being dismissed from the practicum site and/or receiving a failing grade for the course.

Contacting the TWU Practicum Liaison

If the student or the site supervisor has any questions or concerns related to the course requirements, they can contact the Practicum Liaison Dr. Dimple Vadgama at dvadgama@twu.edu, or they can also contact the SHS office at 940-898-2685.

Students, please let us know your degree program, your student status and expected practicum semester. Supervisors, please let us know who you are, what agency you are with, and the name of the practicum student. The PL or the instructor will call you to discuss your queries.

We appreciate you have begun your practicum journey. Should you have any questions along the way, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Sincerely,

School of Human Sciences
College of Professional Education
Texas Woman's University

List of Approved Practicum Sites

To view the current list of approved Practicum Sites, click on the following link:

[Approved Sites list](#)