

# **FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES PROGRAM OVERVIEW**



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Family and Consumer Sciences Education refers to an educational program designed to assist individuals and families with knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of every-day living. This program consists of instructional programs, including, but not limited to: consumer education, food and nutrition, family living and parenthood education, child development and guidance, housing and home management, resource management, clothing and textiles, and careers related to Family and Consumer Sciences.

## **II. PHILOSOPHY, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Philosophy**

The value of Family and Consumer Sciences Education and the impact it can have upon future generations is becoming more fully recognized by parents and educators. Because of the complexity of living in a changing society and the challenge of coping with resulting problems, tomorrow's adults urgently need skills and knowledge required of responsible individuals, family members, and productive workers. Knowledge of nutrition, parenting education, consumer education management of resources, decision making, and interpersonal relationships is essential for quality family life.

Family and Consumer Sciences Education programs in Utah are designed to strengthen and improve the quality of life for individuals and families. Although society and lifestyles have changed and will continue to do so, everyone assumes the role of homemaker regardless of ability, income, status, or gender. Family and Consumer Sciences Education is a program that has great implication on the present and future generations of this state and the nation.

The Family and Consumer Sciences program is composed of two types of instructional programs: Consumer Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Occupational Family and Consumer Sciences Education. Occupational Family and Consumer Sciences Education prepares students for paid employment in Family and Consumer Sciences related occupations, whereas Consumer Family and Consumer Sciences Education prepares students for unpaid employment in the home and to become contributing members of the family. The two instructional programs are related--students are provided the opportunity to gain skills in balancing work and family life. Courses provide information and skills that allow access to a wide variety of career fields. The well-being of family members affects the productivity of workers, and one's work life affects the satisfaction of one's life at home. Quality family life enriches the social and economic well being of our society.

"The occupation of homemaking requires knowledge and skills that are interrelated and necessary for optimum quality of life for individuals and families. Values, management, and interpersonal relationships are major concepts that unify the content of the subject matter areas: child and family development, clothing and textiles, foods and nutrition, consumer education and resource management, and housing.

Family and Consumer Sciences occupations for paid employment utilize knowledge and skills related to the subject matter area. The same concepts and applications basic to preparation for the occupation of homemaking are basic to the Family and Consumer Sciences occupations classified as paid employment. The difference lies in the setting, the instructional objectives, the level of competency and responsibility required, and the scope of operation. This overlap remains a strength and a link between preparation programs for paid employment and for the occupation of homemaking."

-Coalition Statement, Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences, 1979

Family and Consumer Sciences Education should be perceived as an important part of the academic curriculum which is a practical application of academics to everyday life. It helps prepare students to cope not only with the present, but also provides them with a desire to make learning a continuous process. Family and Consumer Sciences programs provide learners with the skills to know where to find information and stimulate them to keep current with their ever changing needs and those of society through the various forms of media. As a result of their enrollment and exposure to Family and Consumer Sciences Education, it is envisioned that students will become more productive, responsible citizens ready to take their places in society.

### **Goals**

- To improve the quality of life for individuals and families
- To help students develop their maximum potential physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally
- To prepare all students, male and female, for the occupation of homemaker-wage earner
- To provide students with decision-making and critical thinking skills to help them make more informed choices
- To prepare students to manage financial and other resources
- To prepare students to balance their roles as workers and family members
- To prepare students for Family and Consumer Sciences-related careers

## **Learning Objectives**

- The learners will demonstrate the ability to make intelligent decisions concerning the use and management of all resources (human, natural, and material).
- The learners will demonstrate the understanding of personal and family development at the various stages of life--human development/life span learning.
- The learners will demonstrate the ability to establish satisfying personal relationships and to develop flexible role relationships as family and community members.
- The learners will demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain healthy lifestyles which promote the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of individuals and family members and to develop life-long patterns of health care.
- The learners will demonstrate the ability to make career decisions based on family commitments, individual capabilities, personal attributes, the job market, and self-fulfillment.
- The learners will demonstrate the ability to achieve an appropriate balance between self-expression and the practical use of the physical and aesthetic components related to basic human needs (clothing, food, housing).

## **III. MISSION STATEMENT**

Utah has adopted the national vision statement: "Family and Consumer Sciences Education empowers individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenge of living and working in a diverse global society. The relationship between work and family is our unique focus."

Vocational Family and Consumer Sciences prepares youth and adults for competence in the work of the family as well as for occupations based on Family and Consumer Sciences skills. The concept of work, whether in a family or job setting, is central to vocational/applied technology education.

Competence in the work of the family requires knowledge and skills in the areas of individual, child, and family development; textiles and clothing; nutrition and foods; housing and living environments; and consumer and resource management.

Instruction in Family and Consumer Sciences wage-earning occupations prepares students for jobs in food service, child care service, fashion and fabric service, housing and interior design service, community and home service, and institutional management and administration.

## **Work of the Family Instruction**

The ultimate aim of Family and Consumer Sciences is to improve the quality of

home and family life. The family represents our greatest national strength. The economic well-being of our nation is influenced by the social and economic well-being of families.

Families, to a great extent, determine who a person is and what an individual becomes. Various authorities have supported the notion that the family is critical to the development of the human being. In the words of Bronfenbrenner,

"The family is the most humane, the most powerful, and by far the most economical system known for making and keeping human beings human."

The family is an enduring institution which serves as the primary source of fulfillment by providing the basic human needs of love, security, and acceptance. Families nurture and educate the young. Authorities have indicated that approximately 75 percent of learner achievement is associated with socio-economic status and family background--what children bring to school. (Sternberg, 1985)

Family may be defined as a unit of intimate, transacting, and interdependent persons who share values and goals, responsibility for decisions and resources, and have commitment to one another over time. Families affect and are affected by the global society in which they live. Brown and Paolucci (1978) recognized this in the mission statement for Family and Consumer Sciences:

"...to enable families, both as individual units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action which contribute: (1) to maturing in self-formation, and (2) to enlightened, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them."

The family fosters physical, social, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual conditions of the home and family in order to nurture optimum development of each family member.

Family and Consumer Sciences Education helps students be critically reflective of social forces influencing families. In addition, students are prepared to be proactive in economic, social, political, and technological change.

Perennial problems of nurturing human development, feeding, clothing, housing people, and managing finite resources are faced by each generation across cultures and over time. Family and Consumer Sciences enables individuals to solve such problems in satisfactory ways.

Family and Consumer Sciences is the only curriculum area for youth and adults that focuses entirely on developing knowledge and skills for the work of the family.

Instruction for family life is structured in comprehensive courses and specialized courses at the elementary, middle school, junior high school, and high school levels. In addition, courses are provided at the college level and for adult education programs.

### **Wage-Earning Occupations Instruction**

Service occupations are the most rapidly growing sector of the labor market. Family and Consumer Sciences wage-earning occupational training prepares students for service occupations.

Basic content in the occupational courses includes career development and skills for general employability. Curricula are based on occupational analysis of the duties and tasks related to specific jobs of career clusters.

Concepts for preparation for the work of the family are basic to Family and Consumer Sciences occupations classified as paid employment. The difference in education for paid employment and education for work of the family lies in the setting, the instructional objectives the level of competency developed, the responsibility required, and the scope of operation. The common content remains a strength and a link between preparation programs for paid employment and from family life.

### **Interrelationship of Work and Family**

Congress, in funding Family and Consumer Sciences Education since the Smith Hughes Act of 1917, has recognized the relationship between a well-ordered, quality home and family life and a productive, satisfying work life. Work attitudes and values are formed in the home. Worker productivity is founded on the family's ability to promote development of family members. Family and Consumer Sciences contributes to strengthening families and to the prevention of problems related to family instability, child abuse, substance abuse, inadequate nutrition, and resource management. Family and Consumer Sciences Education prepares youth and adults for both the work and family spheres of life and is unique, as well, in focusing on their interrelationship.

### **Curriculum**

Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum is drawn from various disciplines including the social sciences, physical sciences, biological sciences, economics, psychology, philosophy, and the arts. Knowledge from these disciplines is structured in relationship to the home and family.

"The uniqueness of knowledge in a professional field comes not from the uniqueness of its concepts, it comes from the formulation and ordering of the knowledge for the problems which the profession is to attempt to solve in providing services."

(Brown and Paolucci, 1978)

Curriculum content must be selected and arranged in order to achieve the goals of the curriculum. Knowledge alone is insufficient for solving problems competently and responsibly. Therefore, problem-solving skills are required to integrate knowledge and solve technical, theoretical, practical, personal, family, and social problems.

Basic skills including reading, writing, oral communication, and computation are integrated into the Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum. To function effectively in the information age, students must also develop the basic skill of reasoning in order to organize and make meaning of the content. Since Family and Consumer Sciences is concerned with helping individuals and families develop the competencies to make reasoned and informed decisions, reasoning skills must become substantive content of all home and family problems.

To make ethically defensible judgments, students need to develop skills in searching out and evaluating the reliability of information, creatively generating alternatives, value reasoning, and critically analyzing consequences to self, family and society. An expanded conceptualization of Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum recognizes content in both Family and Consumer Sciences subject matter and reasoning skills.

Courses have been defined and competencies have been identified for each course within the Family and Consumer Sciences content as reflected in this Utah Family and Consumer Sciences Planning Guide. State curriculum guides have been developed for most courses and programs. These courses have been carefully designed to reflect current research, trends in families, society, and business. The competency-based outlines were derived from professional sources, collaboration among business leaders, individuals from the community, public school teachers, and teacher educators.

Through the National Family, Career, Community Leaders of America Inc., the national vocational student organization, students gain leadership skills. FCCLA is an integral part of the vocational Family and Consumer Sciences Education curriculum.

Family and Consumer Sciences instruction is intended for all students including those with special needs: the handicapped, disadvantaged, and gifted. Curriculum planning requires consideration of cultural and individual learning styles.