



**Ontario Home Economics Association
and OFSLC (Ontario Family Studies Leadership Council)**

Ask a Professional Home Economist

For Immediate Release

Revised Curriculum in Family Studies Long Overdue

By: Laura Featherstone, OCT, P.H.Ec.

Teachers of Ontario Family Studies classes are disappointed because they have been forced to use outdated curriculum while newly rewritten curriculum is held back by the McGuinty government for unexplained reasons.

Family Studies (FS) education in Ontario is designed to support learning in individual and family development through courses relating to food and nutrition, parenting, financial literacy, fashion and consumer education. Such courses enable students to become strong contributing members of society. However, students who opted to take FS classes this year have not been receiving the new curriculum. Instead, teachers had to use outdated curriculum written in 1999 and 2000. Family Studies students deserve revised curriculum as much as students in Arts, Sciences, Math and English.

The renewal process of the FS curriculum began in 2007 on schedule with all other subject area updates. Writing was completed in the summer of 2008. Subsequently, documents were sent to stakeholders for feedback and revision took place in 2009. Editing followed revisions and documents were slated for full release in 2010. The intent was that the revised curriculum would be implemented in September 2011.

In November 2010 after directors of education were promised descriptors for the course catalogues, the Ministry of Education announced that the Family Studies curriculum would not be released and that the existing (outdated) curriculum would continue to be used until further notice. The question remains. Why?

Much has changed in society in the past 12 years since existing curriculum was written. Families are more diversified and teachers know that Canada's families do not exist in isolation but are greatly influenced by our changing world. FS curriculum must reflect reality.

In a draft of the revised FS curriculum there are several new courses designed to increase post secondary destinations for students while allowing more success in high school. Previously, in Food and Nutrition there were only two courses available to Grade 9 and 10 students. Under the new plan, there will be six courses offered. Some courses will be available to students destined for college or university; while others are designed for students with more immediate workplace ambitions. The goal is to educate students in how to select and prepare healthful foods for life. Why would the province hold back this much-needed area of study?

One Fashion course has potentially been added and another changed to support students wishing to pursue a degree in Fashion and Design.

Parenting will include a Grade 12 course entitled *Working with School-Age Children and Adolescents*. It's slated to be a college destination course to assist students seeking further studies in Early Childhood Education.

Over the years, one of the most subscribed FS courses has been *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society*. The title is expected to be changed to *Canadian Families* with one version offered for college bound students and another for students destined for university.

For each new and revised course, resources need to be developed to ensure teachers have all the tools required to support students in their academic studies. Family Studies curriculum is important to the students, teachers and to society in general.

You can help! To encourage the government to release the new curriculum soon, please consider writing to your MPP. Contact information can be found at:

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/member_addresses.do?locale=en. You may also wish to contact the Minister of Education, Leona Dombrowsky, at: ldombrowsky.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

At this time, implementation of this curriculum will not take place until at least September 2012, but earlier release would allow teachers to read and prepare for the new curriculum and for the exciting new courses that are just waiting to be taught.

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OFSLC (Ontario Family Studies Leadership Council) is composed of representatives of boards of education throughout the province of Ontario. Its purpose is to assist school boards with jurisdictional responsibilities for Family Studies/Social Sciences in the curriculum management process, to provide a forum where the broad educational issues that impact on existing and future Family Studies/Social Science curricula, programs and guidelines may be investigated, analyzed, and appropriate action initiated and be knowledgeable about and contribute to, the educational programs and pedagogy related to the preparation of new members entering the teaching profession. OFSLC is grateful for the support from the Gwenyth Bailey Simpson Communications Award from the Canadian Home Economics Foundation (CHEF), and support from the Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) and the Ontario Family Studies Home Economics Educators Association (OFSHEEA). Its' members have been instrumental in professional development by teachers for teachers. <http://www.ofslc.org/>

Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life. **For further information, please contact:** Ontario Home Economics Association, 14 Totten Place, Woodstock, ON N4S 8G7 Tel/Fax: 519-290-1843

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