



Ontario Home Economics Association

1760 Waddell Avenue, Peterborough, ON K9K 2G5

Nov. 5, 2020

Daryl Kramp, MPP  
Hastings – Lennox & Addington  
Legislative Building, Toronto, ON M7A 1A8

**Dear Mr. Kramp:** via email: [daryl.kramp@pc.ola.org](mailto:daryl.kramp@pc.ola.org)

**Re: Bill 216 - Food Literacy for Students Act, 2020**

The Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) wishes to congratulate you for introducing the Private Members' Bill 216 which we understand has passed its Second Reading and is awaiting review by the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

OHEA is a self-regulated body of registered Professional Home Economists that promotes high professional standards among its members so they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life. (Bill Pr35 – Statutes of Ontario, 1989)

OHEA endorses Government action to address Food Literacy. Home Economists connect professionally with Ontarians through diverse and influential roles such as Family Studies Educators, University Professors, Food Industry Analysts/Food Label and Regulatory Consultants, Health Promoters, Food Product & Test-Kitchen Managers, Registered Dietitians, Nutrition Consultants, Cookbook Authors, Food Writers, Speakers, Media Personalities, to name a few.

For several years, OHEA has prioritized the need for increased Food Literacy by joining forces with like-minded groups, making presentations, writing media releases, and posting an online petition to achieve Government response. OHEA has been concerned that *“the elimination of home economics programs from Ontario schools resulted in a generation of children and young parents lacking*

*food literacy and food skills.”* Food Literacy in Ontario, Nutrition Connections, Ontario Public Health Agency, 2019.

Family Studies Educators disagree that Home Economics was totally ‘eliminated’ from Ontario schools. Rather, it was ‘reduced and renamed’. The current multidiscipline ‘optional’ subject area, **Family Studies (FS)**, at the secondary level, is well-designed to nurture individual and family development through food, nutrition, parenting, financial literacy, and consumer education. Food literacy is deeply embedded in all seven of the current food- and nutrition-related courses.

*“One of the existing FS Food and Nutrition Courses could be the basis for a mandatory course to save reinventing the wheel,”* says Camille Naranjit, P.H.Ec. - President of OFSHEEA (Ontario Family Studies Home Economics Educators’ Association).

There is huge concern at the elementary level since Home Economics was largely eliminated by the Ministry some years ago; therefore, curriculum is lacking.

OHEA strongly advocates that Food Literacy be taught by qualified Family Studies Educators to provide credible, consistent, and accurate nutrition messaging and cooking skills. It is also logical that qualified Family Studies Educators be closely involved in curriculum development.

*“Unhealthy eating is estimated to cost Ontarians \$5.6B annually in direct healthcare costs and lost productivity, including \$1.8B directly from inadequate vegetable and fruit consumption.”* Cancer Care Ontario and Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, 2019.

OHEA believes that experiential Food Literacy education will better equip Ontario graduates with the essential life skills and knowledge to:

- select/prepare nutrient-rich food to promote growth and development, support positive health outcomes, and help reduce healthcare costs;
- appreciate local food, food production challenges, food safety, and food security;
- reduce dependency on food banks and convenience foods;

- support family food budgets, promote family mealtime, and reduce food waste;
- increase self-reliance, especially in times of emergency or pandemic;
- prepare to leave home and make wise consumer choices.

*“Being food literate is important to help children and adults navigate a complex food environment and enable them to make healthy food choices that satisfy their preferences, cultural traditions, and nutritional needs. Food literacy is particularly important in the early years, when children are developing the eating patterns and skills that they will carry into adulthood and pass on to future generations.”* Food Literacy in Ontario, Nutrition Connections and Ontario Public Health Agency, 2019.

*“As COVID-19 unfurls, and families cocoon at home, we observe an even greater need for essential food and life skills education.”* Mary Carver, P.H.Ec., Former OHEA Food Literacy Coordinator.

Again, thank you for shining a spotlight on Food Literacy. Kindly keep OHEA informed of the progress of **Bill 216** and the next steps.

Sincerely,



Jason Eaton, P.H.Ec.,

**President – Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA)**

OHEA -Partner: *Six-by-Sixteen* Project

OHEA -Partner: *Ontario Food & Nutrition Strategy*

OHEA -Presenter: *Unpacking Food Literacy*. OPHA/Nutrition-Resource-Centre

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Cc: by email to:

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