FCS Education Connected to ‘Kansans Can’ Initiative

The purpose of this publication is to link how Family & Consumer Sciences Education in Kansas schools is addressing the new Kansans Can vision.

What is it?

Q: What is Family and Consumer Sciences Education?
A: Family & Consumer Sciences Education is problem based instruction where the person is at the center, assisting them in living in the complex society around them as family member, community leader and member of the workforce. It is about educating youth to be successful and healthy people financially, socially, emotionally, physically, as well as develop as community and workforce leaders. This is called life literacy.

Q: Why Family and Consumer Sciences Education and ‘Kansans Can’?
A: ‘Kansans Can’ is a new vision for K-12 Education in Kansas. In addition to attaining a solid academic foothold, students must learn to persevere, problem solve, work collaboratively, and think critically — all skills required to be successful in the workplace. Family and Consumer Sciences Education mission is strongly aligned with this principle.

Family & Consumer Sciences is built upon the philosophy that informed decisions can lead to an improved lifestyle, to respect all people and acknowledge each person has a unique background, personal/family goals and problems to overcome.

“If work is good, people come home with renewed energies for their families. And if family life is good, people come with renewed energies for work.”

- Ellen Galinsky, CEO Family and Work Institute

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- The Family System
- Kindergarten/Early Child Readiness Connection
- Setting Career and Life Goals...making a difference
- Gaining Authentic Experiences Through FCCLA.

Family & Consumer Sciences includes both life literacy and occupational instruction.
Moving from “Information” to “Processing Information”

In the mid 1990’s, Family & Consumer Sciences identified a need to transition from just an information dissemination focus to a dissemination AND processing information focus. This included the move in educational practices to inquiry based instruction while developing the eight process skills—problem solving, decision making, goal setting, cooperation, management, leadership, communication and critical thinking. This focus leads youth to become independent thinkers and intelligent decision makers in their personal lives, therefore enhancing the transference of the skills to their community and work lives.

Tie to ‘Kansans Can’ Initiative

Employers asked for these same skills in 2007, calling them 21st century skills or soft skills. Family & Consumer Sciences Education is in a prime position to offer foundational skill development all students can benefit from which aligns to the Kansans Can Initiative. This is true regardless of life goals. The background of the Family & Consumer Sciences Education teacher is strong in lifespan human development, counseling related content, practical problem solving and processing of information, making their understanding of learner needs across multiple platforms beneficial to the Kansans Can vision.
Family & Consumer Sciences is positioned to have a strong impact on the school readiness of children. Family studies and parenting education is a component of Family & Consumer Sciences programs which promotes to future parents the need for engagement, and developmentally appropriate interactions as well as early childhood educational experiences. Early STEM skills and school readiness is part of this understanding.

IN ADDITION, Family & Consumer Sciences Education leads the Early Childhood Development and Services pathway which introduces students to the occupations that provide for children’s needs. This introduction includes what it means to enhance the experiences as listed above when providing care and education of children not your own.

ANOTHER CONSIDERATION is the comfort to parents when they know their children are receiving quality care. They are more likely to be productive and effective at work at an estimated value of $42 billion dollars. (www.ced.org).

The Family System

Many studies have shown that a strong family, offering support for children financially, socially, emotionally and developmentally, is more likely to produce children who will be successful in school and careers later in life.

Family & Consumer Sciences Education provides a platform to pull from research how the family system functions, how to create a relationship that is healthy for all members and how to work together to meet individual and family goals.

This environmental theory builds from a variety of sources including developmental theory and parenting styles.

- It addresses discipline and providing for the financial and nutritional needs of its members.
- It is focused on the family system and how individual decisions impact all its members.

We know that families and home are a child’s first learning environment, where they learn how to communicate, feel valued, build self confidence and learn about relationships.

We know that families that eat together produce children who are less likely to use drugs and are more likely to graduate from high school and have higher GPAs.

We know that a strong family system can decrease interactions with gangs and sets the child up to “play it forward” when they create their own family in the future.
Individualized Plans of Study—Setting Life and Career Goals

For many years, Family & Consumer Sciences has offered guidance in setting life and career goals as well as creating a plan to achieve them and learning how to address roadblocks along the way. Career and life balance and family relationship impact is key to picking a career that fits the individuals needs.

In addition, Family & Consumer Sciences leads the career pathways that promote the technical training toward careers in the Human Resources and Human Services field. These helping professions including social work, family therapy, geriatric services, early childhood, nutrition education, consumer advocacy and credit counseling, ALL which directly impact the ability of the person to be successful. Work with business and industry locally establishes community roots to encourage youth to make a difference in families, schools, communities and in the work place.

Family & Consumer Sciences Educators...

- Have a skill set with a strong background in lifespan developmental theory, mental and physical health practices, work/career balance and family resource management;

- Have degrees from accredited universities and are linked to national standards that address the ever changing society in which we live.

- Have established professional development and access to research in areas to continually update methodology to meet the needs of students. Many hold certifications in social work, marriage therapy and mental health which makes them excellent educators to address the Kansans Can initiative in local schools.

Family & Consumer Sciences: Building Sustainable Individuals and Families

Gaining Authentic Experiences

Family & Consumer Sciences Education is tied to a career and technical student organization, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (www.fcclainc.org or www.ksfccla.org). FCCLA offers authentic experiences to practice the skills learned to promote personal and work related success.

Examples include:

- Applying a problem-based planning process to teach critical thinking, management and problem solving skills
- Leading community service initiatives which expects total immersion by the students, not just a one time event;
- Demonstrating skills learned and applied in peer education or competitive events such as Life Event Planning, Career Investigation, Nutrition and Wellness, Leadership, Interpersonal Communication, or Consumer Math Challenge.
- Earning recognition for work as set by the rigor of a rubric, which establishes enhanced personal development and goal setting.

Tie to ‘Kansans Can’ Initiative

Employers asked for skills such as perseverance, teamwork, leadership, responsibility and critical thinking. All of these are enhanced through FCCLA. In fact, a recent survey of 30,000 youth* indicated over 63% attributed their ability to communicate well with others and over 61% attributed their ability to work successfully with others to FCS Education with FCCLA applications. (*NRCCUA, 2013 www.fcclainc.org )

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