

A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

CURRICULUM SERIES

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Implementing the Health & Physical Education Curriculum (2019) in Ontario's Catholic Elementary Schools

A Catholic world view is a way of looking at the world through a Catholic Church lens. This world view is derived from Catholic Church teachings, scripture and Catholic Church traditions. These teachings, scripture and traditions form the basis of what is taught in Catholic schools.”
(Catholic Curriculum Cooperative of Ontario, Writing Catholic Curriculum, 2006, p.7)

The introduction of the revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum (2019) provides another opportunity to:

- revisit the foundations of the Family Life program and explore the connections between Family Life (FL) and Health and Physical Education (HPE) curricula
- reinforce the role of our schools in communicating a distinctively Catholic world view
- renew our commitment to evangelization

“Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family. Every person, from the moment of conception to natural death, has inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. Human dignity comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment.” – Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions

In Catholic schools, we ground our work in this overarching Catholic Social Teaching. The primary

belief of the Dignity of the Human person guides all teaching and learning in Catholic schools, and the implementation of the revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum (2019) is just another example. Questions and inquiries about the HPE curriculum provide an opportunity to remind our stakeholders

and the public about the vision of Catholic Education — viewing human life as an integration of body, mind and spirit. It is another opportunity for us to engage with our students, supporting them in their journey to realize the Catholic Graduate Expectations, and assisting them

to navigate a world of uncertainty where they are bombarded by messages that are not necessarily aligned to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Addressing the “Healthy Living” Expectations of the HPE Curriculum through the Family Life Curriculum

The Healthy Living strand of Health and Physical Education Curriculum (2019) continues to identify overall and specific learning expectations that deal with human development and human sexuality.

“...Human dignity comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment.” – Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions

This monograph explores how overall and specific expectations are comprehensively addressed in Catholic elementary schools through the Family Life Curriculum. These topics are just one aspect of the HPE curriculum which, in its core, is rooted in student well-being.

What has changed between the HPE (2015) Curriculum and the HPE (2019)?

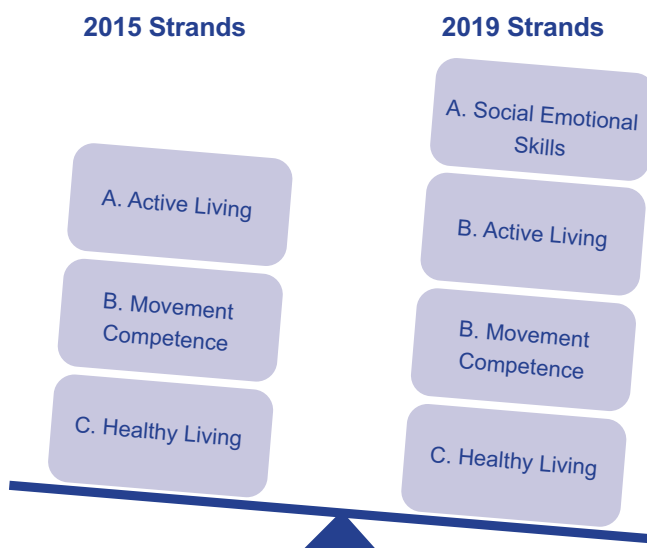
The 2015 (and the 2018 interim) curriculum had 3 strands:

- o **Strand A:** Active Living
- o **Strand B:** Movement Competence
- o **Strand C:** Healthy Living (Subsections include Personal Safety, Substance Abuse, Healthy Living, Human Development and Sexual Health)

2015 Curriculum included a section called “Living Skills” with a note that the skills expectations were integrated throughout the other three strands and that they should be assessed and evaluated within those other strands.

The 2019 curriculum has 4 strands:

- o **Strand A:** Social Emotional Learning Skills
- o **Strand B:** Active Living
- o **Strand C:** Movement Competence
- o **Strand D:** Healthy Living (with one additional expectation related to family life)



Highlights of the Healthy Living Strand:

- A new set of expectations for each grade level focusing on mental health has been introduced.
- The phrase “social-emotional learning skills” is substituted in place of “living skills.”
- More emphasis on consent, beginning in Grade 1.
- One additional expectation, now in grade two, is already incorporated into the Family Life/Fully Alive program.
- Updated information on Cannabis and Canada’s Food Guide included in the health section.
- New topics of vaping, and concussions are explored.
- New language on STIs. Now referred to as STBBI (Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infection).

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS for Healthy Living – HPE are same for each grade:

- D1. demonstrate an understanding of factors that contribute to healthy development;
- D2. demonstrate the ability to apply health knowledge and social-emotional learning skills to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health and well-being;
- D3. demonstrate the ability to make connections that relate to health and well-being — how their choices and behaviours affect both themselves and others, and how factors in the world around them affect their own and others’ health and well-being.

Delivering the “Healthy Living” Expectations of the HPE Curriculum through the Family Life Curriculum

Catholic schools deliver all of the curriculum expectations as established by the Ministry of Education in The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education, 2019, in a way that conveys, respects and models Catholic principles to our students. In Catholic elementary schools, the ‘Healthy Living’ expectations of the HPE curriculum that deal with human development and sexuality have always been addressed as part of family life education, rather than as part of the health and

How to Approach the Curriculum in Catholic Schools

Overall Expectations Specific Expectations	} All curriculum expectations must be accounted for in instruction and are taught through the <i>Fully Alive</i> Program. Evaluation focuses on students' achievement of the overall expectations.
Teacher Prompts Examples Student Responses	} Prompts and examples in the <i>Fully Alive</i> Teacher Resource binders align with the revised HPE curriculum, and should form the basis of instruction. Additional teacher materials developed by the Institute for Catholic Education provide teacher support.

physical education program, and this approach continues.

While many of the perspectives or attitudes that are embraced in contemporary society are entirely consistent with a Catholic world view, some aspects of ambient culture are not always aligned with the teachings of the Church. Catholic schools respond to this reality by presenting curriculum through the lens of faith. In this way we provide opportunities for our students to grow in their ability to acquire knowledge and discern truth. One such opportunity presents itself in the way in which the human development and sexual health component of the HPE curriculum has traditionally been taught in our schools within the Family Life curriculum, through the *Fully Alive* program.

The Family Life Curriculum, which is an integral component of the Religious Education program, and *Fully Alive*, the student and teacher resource for the family life education, have both been reviewed and approved for use in Catholic schools by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. Through the *Fully Alive* program, Catholic schools present the issue of human sexuality within the fullness of our faith-based family life curriculum that teaches the content of our faith, the value of all persons, human relationships, commitment, and social responsibility.

The *Fully Alive* teacher resource guides, as revised in 2015, are fully aligned with, and comprehensively address, all required specific learning expectations of the HPE (2019) curriculum with the exception of mental health.

How to Approach the Curriculum in Catholic Schools

The *Fully Alive* program presents a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family and is designed to encourage students to become the people God wants them to be — to be fully alive.

- The themes should be taught sequentially.
- Religion Education Program (Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ) is typically delivered 4 days a week and Family Life (*Fully Alive*) is delivered once weekly.
- Family Life expectations should be integrated into other curriculum areas whenever possible.
- Delivered by the classroom teacher and reported on in the Religion and Family Life section of the Provincial Report Card.
- Clear and consistent communication with parents is critical. Ensure parent letters are sent home for every theme.

“The glory of God is man and woman fully alive, but life for them consists in seeing God revealed in His Word.” – St. Irenaeus

The *Fully Alive* Program

Created and Loved by God

The foundation of the curriculum affirms the Christian belief that each person is made in the image of a loving God as the starting point in the search for answers about human existence.

Living in Relationship

The exploration of the meaning of human existence continues with a focus on the significant relationships of family and friendship.

Created Sexual: Male and Female

Human sexuality is a gift from God, a fundamental dimension of human identity and intended for life and love.

Growing in Commitment

This strand addresses the integrity and dignity of our daily lives as persons who live in relationship with others.

Living in the World

Students are encouraged to recognize that they have a unique contribution to make to the world, one that cannot be made by anyone else.

Theological Foundations of *Fully Alive*

Our Catholic tradition has always stressed the dignity of human life. Through scripture, we know that we are made in the image of God, and in particular we are like God in our ability to love, to know, and to create and support life. The *Fully Alive* program highlights these three aspects of human nature, created in the image of God. The nobility of our human nature, made in God's image, includes the whole person, body and spirit.

“Our Catholic tradition has always stressed the dignity of human life. Through scripture, we know that we are made in the image of God, and in particular we are like God in our ability to love, to know, and to create and support life.”

The Goals of *Fully Alive*

- *Fully Alive* is intended to help students to know God's love for them. It invites them to reflect on and appreciate the love they receive from friends, family and others. It offers hope to students who live in difficult and painful situations and encourages them to recognize the signs of God's love in their lives.
- *Fully Alive* encourages students to express themselves to their parents and other family members, friends and trusted adults. Self-revelation is first learned at home, and the *Fully Alive* program encourages self-knowledge and the joys of being known and accepted by others.

Fully Alive provides students with a positive sense of their developing sexuality. It presents fertility as a blessing from God, and promotes a sense of awe and respect for new human life from the moment of conception. The program promotes a view of sexuality as integral to the human person, created in the image of a life-giving and loving God, and presents the virtue of self-giving as essential to the Christian view of love, especially in its relation to sexuality.

Catechetics and *Fully Alive*

Fully Alive is intended to supplement but not replace the catechetical program. It presumes a complete religious education program, and is designed on the basis that there will be at least four religion classes for every one in family life.

What are the Specific Expectations of the HPE Curriculum in Grades 1, 2 and 3?

Healthy Living Expectations (2019) addressing Human Development and Sexuality

GRADE ONE

D1.3 identify body parts, including genitalia, using correct terminology.

D1.4 identify the five senses and describe how each functions.

D2.5 demonstrate an understanding of and apply

proper hygienic procedures for protecting their own health and preventing the transmission of disease to others.

GRADE TWO

D1.4 outline the basic stages of human development and related bodily changes, and identify factors that are important for healthy growth and living throughout life.

D2.4 demonstrate an understanding of and apply practices that contribute to the maintenance of good oral health.

GRADE THREE

D1.3 identify the characteristics of healthy relationships and describe ways of responding to bullying and other challenges in a relationship and communicating consent in their interactions with others.

D1.5 identify factors that affect physical development and/or emotional development.

D3.3 describe how visible differences and invisible differences make each person unique, and identify ways of showing respect for differences in others.

How are these HPE Expectations Addressed through *Fully Alive*? An example from the Grade 3 Curriculum:

HPE Curriculum expectation for student learning is:

D3.3. describe how visible differences and invisible differences make each person unique, and identify ways of showing respect for differences in others.

In Catholic schools, this expectation is covered in Theme 1 in the Family Life (*Fully Alive*) Curriculum: The first theme of *Fully Alive*, called “Created and Loved by God,” is like the foundation of a house. Everything else depends on it. In this theme, students will explore the Christian belief that we are made in God’s image, and that God knows and loves each one of us. Because we are each a very special creation, we are called to respect and value ourselves and others.

- Students explore what it means to be known and loved by God, known so well that God calls each of us by name.
- Students find out about what it means to be a person – to be unique, but also alike in many ways.
- Students explore what it means to have feelings and to make choices about the way we express them.
- Students explore what it means to have talents and gifts we need to develop, and discover when we share our talents and gifts with one another, we are sharing ourselves.

“...students will explore the Christian belief that we are made in God’s image, and that God knows and loves each one of us.”

What are the Specific Expectations of the HPE Curriculum in Grades 4, 5 and 6 Healthy Living Expectations (2019) addressing Human Development and Sexuality

GRADE FOUR

D1.5 describe the physical changes that occur in males and females at puberty and the emotional and social impacts that may result from these changes.

D2.4 demonstrate an understanding of personal care needs and the application of personal hygienic practices associated with the onset of puberty.

GRADE FIVE

D1.3 identify the parts of the reproductive system, and describe how the body changes during puberty

D1.4 describe the processes of menstruation and spermatogenesis, and explain how these processes relate to reproduction and overall development.

D2.4 identify intersecting factors that affect the development of a person’s self-concept, including their sexual orientation, and how these factors can support their personal health and well-being.

D2.5 describe emotional and interpersonal stresses related to puberty and identify strategies

that they can apply to manage stress, build resilience, and enhance their mental and emotional well-being.

GRADE SIX

D2.5 describe how they can build confidence and lay a foundation for healthy relationships by acquiring a clearer understanding of the physical, social, and emotional changes that occur during adolescence.

D2.6 make informed decisions that demonstrate respect for themselves and others and help to build healthier relationships, using a variety of living skills.

D3.3 assess the effects of stereotypes, including homophobia and assumptions regarding gender roles and expectations, sexual orientation, gender expression, race, ethnicity or culture, mental health, and abilities, on an individual's self-concept, social inclusion, and relationships with others, and propose appropriate ways of responding to and changing assumptions and stereotypes.

How are these HPE Expectations Addressed through *Fully Alive*? An example from the Grade 6 Curriculum:

HPE Curriculum expectation for student learning is:

D3.3. assess the effects of stereotypes, including homophobia and assumptions regarding gender roles and expectations, sexual orientation, gender expression, race, ethnicity or culture, mental health, and abilities, on an individual's self-concept, social inclusion, and relationships with others, and propose appropriate ways of responding to and changing assumptions and stereotypes.

In Catholic schools, this expectation is covered across 3 themes in the Family Life (*Fully Alive*) Curriculum:

THEME I: Created and Loved by God

- Students explore how love is able to transform people's lives and reflect on the way in which God created humans to be people of love.

- Students recognize the presence of life-giving people in their lives and examine some of the ways in which they can be life givers and make a difference in other people's lives.
- Students recognize the harm caused by bullying and the need to seek adult help for serious problems.

THEME II: Living in Relationship

- Students explore the need for relationship, especially with family and friends.
- Students discuss the importance of family histories and customs and examine the day-to-day stresses that all families experience and consider strategies to manage them.
- Students learn about common communication problems and ways to overcome them.
- Students analyze how friendships change as they mature and learn more about how to handle stressful situations with friends.

THEME V: Living in the World

- Students analyze the human capacity to influence others and to be influenced by others.
- Students explore the meaning of values and virtues, and examine the influence of television, advertising, social media and stereotypes on values.
- Students discuss human influence on the natural and social environment of the world and the responsibility to be a positive influence.

What are the Specific Expectations of the HPE Curriculum in Grades 7 and 8?

Healthy Living Expectations (2019) addressing Human Development and Sexuality:

GRADE SEVEN

D1.3 explain the importance of having a shared understanding with a partner about the following: delaying sexual activity until they are older the reasons for not engaging in sexual activity; the concept of consent and how consent is communicated; and, in general, the need to communicate clearly with each other when making decisions about sexual activity in the relationships.

D1.4 identify common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and describe their symptoms.

D1.5 identify ways of preventing STIs, including HIV, and/or unintended pregnancy, such as delaying first intercourse and other sexual activities until a person is older and using condoms consistently if and when a person becomes sexually active.

D2.4 demonstrate an understanding of physical, emotional, social, and psychological factors that need to be considered when making decisions related to sexual health.

D3.3 explain how relationships with others and sexual health may be affected by the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty.

GRADE EIGHT

D1.4 identify and explain factors that can affect an individual's decisions about sexual activity and identify sources of support regarding sexual health.

D1.5 demonstrate an understanding of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation and identify factors that can help individuals of all identities and orientations develop a positive self-concept.

D2.4 demonstrate an understanding of aspects of sexual health and safety, including contraception and condom use for pregnancy and STI prevention, the concept of consent, and matters they need to consider and skills they need to use in order to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity.

D3.3 analyze the attractions and benefits associated with being in a relationship as well as the benefits, risks, and drawbacks, for themselves and others, of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy.

How are these HPE Expectations Addressed through *Fully Alive*? An example from the Grade 7 Curriculum:

HPE Curriculum expectation for student learning is:

D3.1. explain the importance of having a shared understanding with a partner about the

following: delaying sexual activity until they are older; the reasons for not engaging in sexual activity; the concept of consent and how consent is communicated; and, in general, the need to communicate clearly with each other when making decisions about sexual activity in the relationships.

In Catholic schools, this expectation is covered across 3 themes in the Family Life (*Fully Alive*) Curriculum:

THEME I: Created and Loved by God

- Student explore what it means to be a person who is made in God's image.
- Students examine self-concept, personality traits, and human emotions and learn more about the influence of heredity and environment on individuals.
- Students explore some of the strengths and limitations that are part of each person and discuss the importance of self-honesty and self-discipline.

THEME II: Living in Relationship

- Students explore three aspects of relationships: intimacy, choice, and quality.
- Student discuss the importance of communication in their relationships with family members and friends.
- Students explore the relationship of friendship, including what they learn from it, the qualities of healthy relationships, and the challenges that are part of all relationships.

THEME V: Created Sexual: Male and Female

- Students examine some aspects of sexuality, including sexual characteristics, sexual identity and sexual roles.
- Students discuss the experience of sexual attraction and feelings, and examine the need for self-discipline and patience to reach the goal of becoming fully mature males and females.
- Student learn about chastity and the attitudes and behaviours that reflect their virtue and show respect for the gift of sexuality.

“ In Catholic Schools, we respond in a pastoral manner respecting the human dignity of each person.”

Issues Worth Noting

The revised curriculum maintains essentially all of the updates and new material related to healthy relationships, consent, mental health, online safety, the risks of sexting, and respect for diversity that was first introduced in 2015.

Consent. The foundation for understanding consent is linked closely to skills for healthy relationships. Young children learn to stand up for themselves; older children learn refusal skills as part of good decision-making. They also learn, in age-appropriate settings, to listen to others, show respect, and to take responsibility for not causing harm. From an early age, the message that consent is a two-way street has been strengthened in the curriculum.

Respect for Diversity. The curriculum is inclusive, addresses the education needs of all students, and reflects the diversity of the Ontario population. Students come to understand or appreciate how visible and invisible differences make each person unique and identify ways of showing respect for differences in others.

“ In Catholic schools we are called to recognize each person as a gift of God’s love. We hope to instill in students a profound sense of what it means to be created in the image of God.”

In Catholic schools we are called to recognize each person as a gift of God’s love. We hope to instill in students a profound sense of what it means to be created in the image of God. All staff and students must demonstrate respect for diversity in school and our community. Implementation of the curriculum should be done in such a way that honours the dignity of all students and values the diversity of life experiences that they bring to the classroom. Educators should reflect on their own attitudes,

biases and values with respect to the topics they are teaching, and ensure that your instruction remains grounded in the teachings of the Church and the Religious Education and Family Life Documents approved by the Education Commission of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. Teachers are reminded that effective instruction not only supports student success but is a response to and honours each student’s dignity. (FL 27).

OUR PASTORAL RESPONSE:

“Catholic schools provide educational opportunity within the context of a faith community which must clearly be seen to recognize that each individual is made in the image and likeness of God, to affirm the essential dignity, value and rights of the human person, and to model the gospel values of faith, hope and love to each and every student entrusted to their care. In part, the mission of the Catholic school is to create the lived experience of what it is like to be welcomed, cared for, loved without conditions, included, and taught values that students can commit to and find sustenance throughout their adult life.”
(Pastoral Guideline to Assist Students of Same Sex Orientation, p.9)

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) articulate a vision for the learner that aligns with 21st century skills.

The Health and Physical Education curriculum introduces Social Emotional Learning Skills, that also relate to 21st century skills, as well as to the OCSGEs. Implementation of the HPE curriculum in our Catholic schools offers the opportunity to make connections between the OCSGEs and the Social Emotional Learning Skills, thus bringing them to life.

In making these connections, teachers are educating the whole child — body, mind and spirit.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

- A discerning believer
- An effective communicator
- A reflective, creative and holistic thinker
- A self-directed, responsible, life-long learner
- A collaborative contributor
- A caring family member
- A responsible citizen

Social, Emotional, Learning Skills

Personal Skills

- Self Awareness and self-monitoring skills
- Adaptive management and coping skills

Interpersonal Skills

- Communication skills
- Relationship and social skills

Critical and Creative Thinking

- Planning
- Processing
- Drawing Conclusions/presenting results
- Reflective Evaluation

Effective Practices for Teachers

- Become familiar with the revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum (2019)
- Review the Family Life Education Curriculum in particular the Overview section for your division, and the summaries by strand found in Appendix A.
- Deliver the expectations related to human development and human sexuality through the Family Life program, *Fully Alive*, and resources from the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE).
- Send home parent letters for all themes of the *Fully Alive* program prior to the commencement of each strand in the family life education curriculum.
- Follow the principle of “first, do no harm” and ensure that the learning setting is always physically and emotionally safe.
- Recognize personal attitudes, biases and values with respect to the topics being taught and ensure that your instruction remains grounded in the Religious Education and Family Life Documents

approved by the Education Commission of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario.

- Ensure the Religious Education program is delivered four days a week and Family Life (*Fully Alive*) is delivered once a week.
- Seek opportunities to integrate both programs into all areas of the curriculum.

Effective Practices for Principals

- Devise a communication plan (e.g., Website, Parent Information Night, Catholic School Council presentation) and be familiar with all resources at your disposal.
- Ensure teachers have materials required to deliver the Fully Alive program.
- Ensure that the Religion and Family Life programs are reflected appropriately in timetables.
- Monitor that parent letters are sent home consistently at the start of each theme.
- Provide professional learning that will support implementation.

Accommodations and Requests for Exemptions

Catholic schools will address the HPE expectations related to human development and sexuality through the Fully Alive program, which has been endorsed by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. Teachers should draw confidence from the knowledge that student and teacher resources and supplementary materials have been developed to align with Catholic teaching, and have been carefully reviewed and vetted prior to distribution. This ensures that teachers are able to present lessons in a relevant, age-appropriate manner, through a distinctively Catholic lens.

“Parents value communication between the home and the school. Classroom teachers are trusted by parents and need to be able to address parent questions competently and confidently.”

Catholic schools have always recognized that parents and guardians are the primary teachers of their children in all areas of faith and morals, including sexuality. In keeping with the primacy of their role, parents and guardians retain the right to request their child be exempted from the program if they believe that it is in their child's best interest to do so.

Each school Board will have a policy/procedure in place to respond to parental requests for such exemptions. If a parent is concerned about part of the curriculum or classroom learning activities, the concern should be discussed with the teacher and/or principal as an important first step. Consider the following:

- Be familiar with your Board Policy and Procedure regarding accommodations and exemptions.
- Meet with the parent in person to discuss concerns.

- Review the curriculum with the parent, in particular the Appendix on pages 292 – 302 in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum
- Highlight the available parent resources online.
 - » Resources developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education are available at edu.gov.on.ca
 - » Parent resources prepared by ICE are available at iceont.ca
- Draw on the knowledge, support, and expertise of others, including appropriate Board resource staff, and the local Chancery Office.

The option to remove their child from specific lessons has always been available to parents, however it is the intent that all students in Ontario fully experience the curriculum.

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Ontario Institute for Catholic Education
 44 Hunt Street, Suite 2F
 Hamilton, Ontario, L8R 3R1
 Tel: 905-523-2469
 E-mail: office@iceont.ca

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