

# Family Life Education - How it all Fits Together



## How is Family Life Education related to the Health curriculum?

Family Life Education in Catholic schools touches on many topics from a Catholic viewpoint including what it means to be human, what it means for us to be created by God, the gift of our families, the gift of children in families, the learning that takes place in families – learning to live, love and pray, learning to forgive and to serve.

Family Life Education is much more than just information about sexuality. It affirms the importance of virtues and the formation of our conscience in moral decision making. It encourages critical thinking skills. It complements the learning in Religious Education and seeks to affirm lessons that are modelled in the home.

The Ministry of Education sets the Health and Physical Education curriculum, which is sometimes called “HPE”. HPE has four strands or four areas of learning:

- Strand A: Social Emotional Learning Skills
- Strand B: Active Living
- Strand C: Movement Competence: Skills, Concepts, and Strategies
- Strand D: Healthy Living

Under Strand D: Healthy Living, five topics are covered including:

1. Healthy Eating
2. Personal Safety and Injury Prevention
3. Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviours
4. Human Development and Sexual Health
5. Mental Health Literacy

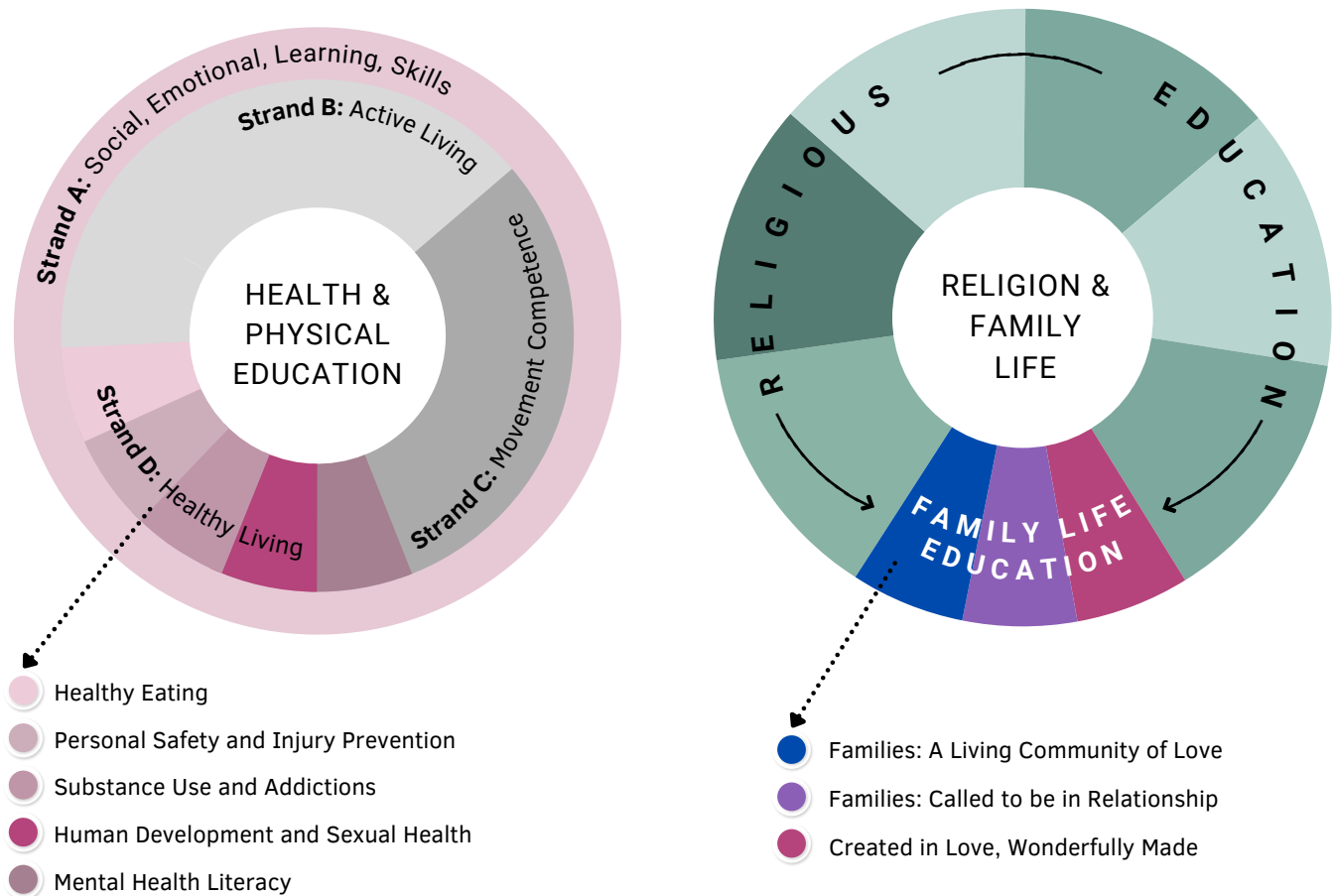
In Catholic schools, many of these topics of Healthy Living are touched upon in Family Life Education including mental health literacy along with many of the skills of Strand A for Social Emotional Learning Skills. Family Life Education also presents the human development and sexuality expectations (there are approximately 25 specific expectations from Grade 1 to 8 in HPE dealing with the body, sexuality, healthy relationships, healthy body image, reproduction, bullying and consent) through a Catholic viewpoint informed by Gospel values.

Family Life Education is complementary to the Religious Education program in Catholic schools. Religious Education represents 80% of the curriculum delivery and Family Life Education represents 20% of the curriculum delivery.

In practice, this means that Religious Education is typically taught 4 days per week and Family Life Education is taught one day a week. There are approximately 40 lessons of Family Life Education throughout the year in each grade.

We invite you to consider the graphic below to see the relationship between these important subject areas.

## HOW DOES FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION RELATE TO HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION?



Take a look at the Strands of Family Life Education and the topics they touch upon.

### Strand A - Families: A Living Community of Love

Students develop an understanding and appreciation of:

- the family as the first community
- the family as a 'little' church or a 'domestic church'
- the importance of their own family "there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems".<sup>1</sup>
- how God is present in the formation of their identity, through families, the church and the sacraments
- how everyone has a special purpose – God-given gifts and vocation

### Strand B - Families: Called to be in Relationship

Students develop an understanding and appreciation of:

- our Christian identity as bigger than just ourselves – that it is rooted in being members of the Body of Christ
- the Holy Family as an example of family life
- how family, school, and parish relationships work together to help them grow as loving, compassionate, respectful, and caring family members
- the sacramentality of marriage and families
- the duties, rights, responsibilities, decision making and discernment within families and communities

### Strand C - Families: Created in Love, Wonderfully Made

Students develop an understanding and appreciation of:

- the human person as a unity of body, mind, and spirit
- sexuality is a gift from God
- the Catholic belief in the sanctity and beauty of every single human life from conception to natural death

## Vocation

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*Our deepest hope for students is that they come to know they have been made on purpose for a purpose*

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## Our Deepest Hope

Our deepest hope for students is that they come to know they have been made on purpose for a purpose – that God calls them to holiness and gives each of them unique gifts for the good of their families, their communities and the world.

Through Family Life Education and Religious Education, we hope our students come to know ever more deeply who and whose they are as beloved children of God.

## A Special Note to Parents

The current Family Life program includes letters to parents at the start of every unit so that the home and school relationship can be strengthened by open communication about what topics will be dealt with in upcoming lessons. This will continue to be the case.

You can learn more about the curriculum by visiting our website: [www.iceont.ca](http://www.iceont.ca).

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## References

- 1 Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* of Pope John Paul II, 1981, 57.