

A Parent's Guide to Understanding Family Life Education in Catholic Schools

(and how it connects with Ontario's revised
Health and Physical Education Curriculum)



Institute for
Catholic Education

A Message from the Bishops of Ontario

Parents and guardians are the first and most important teachers of their children and no place is this statement more true than in the areas that are introduced and explored in family life education. As Catholics, we know that it is through their parents that children first learn of God's love. Within the family, the generous and unconditional love of parents provides children with valuable and fundamental lessons in life that cannot be learned anywhere else. Catholic schools seek to do all they can to support families as they fulfill this awesome responsibility.

Since 1989, the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) has coordinated the implementation of a family life curriculum, consistent with our faith, in Catholic schools across the province. The goal is to present a Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family, complementing the efforts of parents to teach their children at home.

With the guidance of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, resources are being developed to ensure that the family life curriculum in Ontario's Catholic schools continues to be consistent with our Catholic teachings, appropriate within the context of our Catholic classrooms, and complementary to the efforts of parents to guide their children to full Christian maturity. We know that Catholic teachers will continue to 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 persons, human relationships, commitment, and social responsibility.

Schools, parents, and parishes must continue working together to provide students with an education that is founded in the Gospel of Jesus, and reflects a Catholic worldview. This is our shared mission. It is what Catholic schools in Ontario have done for the past 175 years, and it is what we will continue doing. It is through this shared commitment to our faith, and to our Catholic schools, that we remain steadfast in our call to serve and honour God.

Education Commission
Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario

In February, 2015, the Ontario Ministry of Education released revisions to the Health & Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum, which will be taught in classrooms across Ontario, beginning in September, 2015.

The revised HPE curriculum, last updated in 1998, contains new material related to a number of issues, including mental health, online safety and the risks of sexting, respect for self and consent within healthy relationships, and respect for diversity.

This booklet and the accompanying resources will explain how the expectations of the revised HPE curriculum will be delivered as part of the family life curriculum offered in Catholic schools.



The Role of ICE

Established by the Ontario Bishops in 1986, the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) brings together 7 partners in the English Catholic educational community that work together and share responsibility for Catholic education in Ontario.

ICE coordinates the work of Catholic associations and organizations in writing Catholic curriculum within the guidelines established by the Ministry of Education.

The Bishops of Ontario have asked ICE to oversee the development of resources to implement the revised HPE curriculum as part of the Family Life program in Catholic schools.

The Revised Health & Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum

The HPE Curriculum is made up of 3 parts: Active Living, Movement Competence, and Healthy Living.

The *Active Living* strand consists of:

- Active Participation
- Physical Fitness
- Safety (e.g. bike safety, concussions)

The *Movement Competence – Skills, Concepts and Strategies* strand consists of:

- Physical Activity and Sports Skills

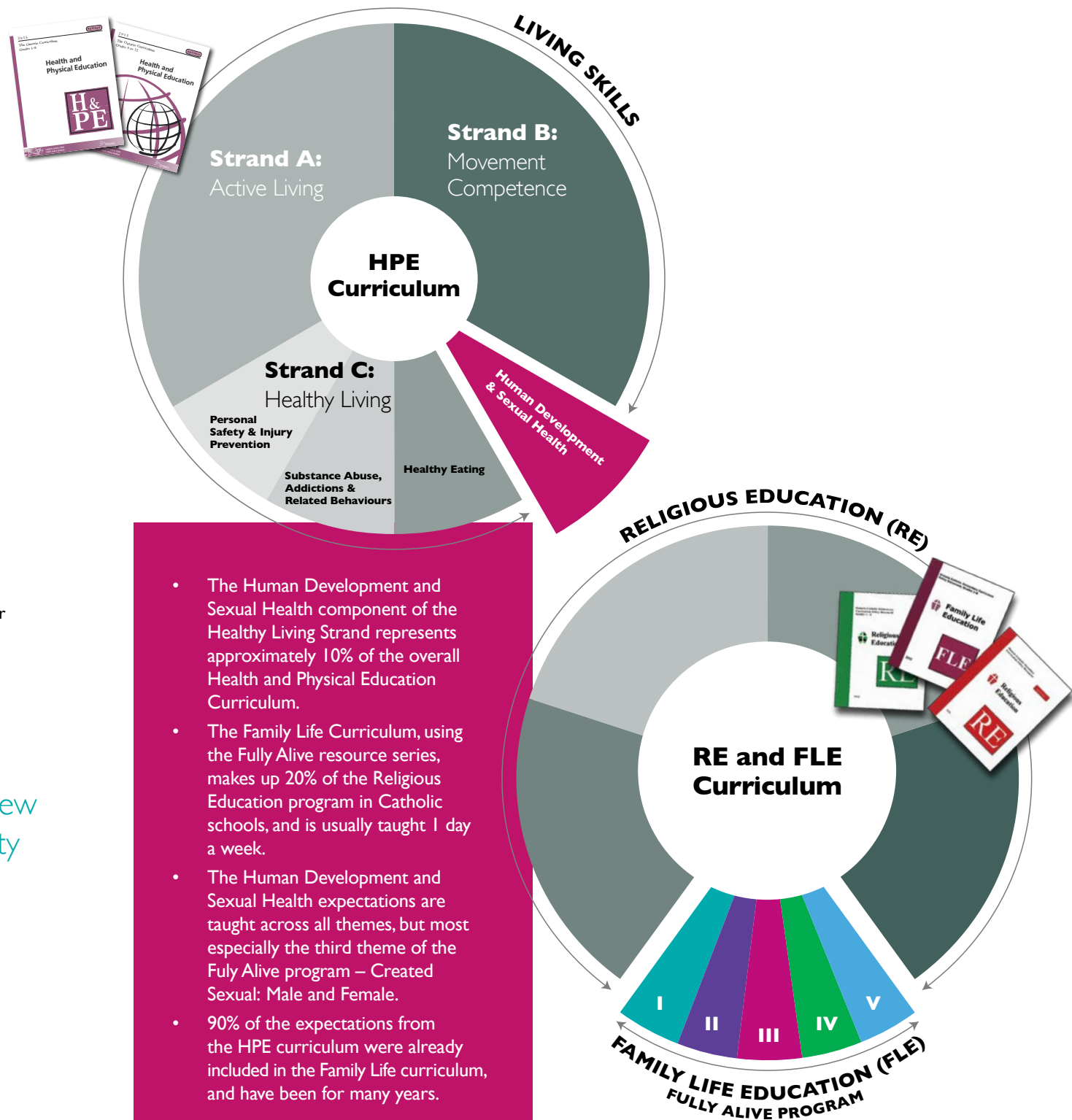
The *Healthy Living* strand consists of:

- Healthy Eating/Nutrition
- Personal Safety and Injury Prevention
- Substance Abuse, Addictions and other behaviour (e.g. gaming, screen time)
- Human Development and Sexual Health*

*The changes to the HPE curriculum that have attracted the most attention and have been the source of concern for many are found in the *Healthy Living* section, under *Human Development and Sexual Health*.

In order to understand how the revised HPE curriculum will be taught in our Catholic classrooms, we must first understand what curriculum implementation looks like in Catholic schools.

“In Catholic schools, Ontario’s new HPE curriculum is an opportunity for parents and teachers to talk to students about a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage, and family.”



Catholic Curriculum and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

In 1998, ICE developed the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*, which identified 7 expectations, or desired outcomes of a Catholic education:

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|  | <p>A DISCERNING BELIEVER formed in the Catholic faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflections and moral living.</p> |
|  | <p>AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR who speaks, writes, and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values.</p> |
|  | <p>A REFLECTIVE, CREATIVE, AND HOLISTIC THINKER who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience of the common good.</p> |
|  | <p>A SELF-DIRECTED, RESPONSIBLE LIFELONG LEARNER who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.</p> |
|  | <p>A COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTOR who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.</p> |
|  | <p>A CARING FAMILY MEMBER who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community.</p> |
|  | <p>A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.</p> |

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) provide the framework for designing Catholic curriculum and resource materials at all grade levels in Ontario. Teachers in Catholic schools use the OCSGEs to guide their work and make curriculum decisions related to instructional planning, strategies, assessment, and evaluation.

Learning in Catholic Classrooms

The relationship between learning and believing is fundamental to our Catholic schools. We focus not only on student knowledge and skills, but also on values and actions.



The Lens of Faith

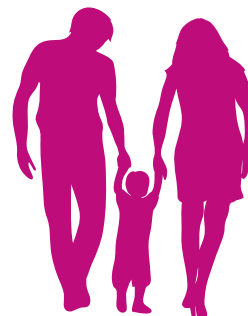


As a publicly funded Catholic school system in Ontario, we teach the curriculum established by the Ministry of Education. While curriculum across all subject areas is adapted so that it can be taught through the lens of faith, some subject areas, such as Religious Education and Family Life Education, deal more directly with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

What is Family Life Education?

In 1978, the bishops of Ontario published the 'Guidelines for Family Life Education' to affirm and support Catholic parents in the important role of raising their children according to the faith. The Bishops did so because they believe that family life education should be an important part of the Religion Education program offered in Catholic classrooms.

In Ontario Catholic schools, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values acquired in the Family Life Education program complement those instilled by families, and reflect a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family.



The Family Life Curriculum (FLE), using the resource series, Fully Alive, is broken down into 5 themes.

I CREATED AND LOVED BY GOD

Created and Loved by God, is the foundation of the curriculum and 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.

II LIVING IN RELATIONSHIP

In the Living in Relationship theme, the exploration of the meaning of human existence continues with a focus on the significant relationships of family and friendship.

III CREATED SEXUAL: MALE AND FEMALE

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

IV GROWING IN COMMITMENT

The Growing in Commitment theme is concerned with the integrity of our daily lives as persons who live in relationship with others.

V 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.

The Human Development and Sexual Health expectations of the HPE curriculum are taught across all the themes, most especially the third theme of the Fully Alive Program – Created Sexual: Male and Female.

A detailed breakdown of the focus of learning for the Fully Alive Program is provided for each grade level in the chart that appears on the flipside of this document.



Want more information?

More detailed information can be found on the Institute for Catholic Education website at:

www.iceont.ca

Parent resources for the Fully Alive program are found on the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario website at:

<http://www.acbo.on.ca/>

The Health and Physical Education Curriculum, and additional parent resources prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Education, are available at:

<http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/health.html>

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