

Information for Potential Family Studies Teachers

What is Family Studies?

Family Studies is an interdisciplinary subject area integrating social and physical sciences in the study of topics arising from daily life. It includes the study of individual and family development, relationships, parenting, decision-making, resource management, food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, housing and health science. Courses in family studies allow students to develop critical and creative thinking skills, and to gain the hands-on experience they need to develop practical skills and understanding. *

* From the Ministry of Education Curriculum Social Science and Humanities Guideline for Grades 9 & 10 (1999), and for Grades 11 & 12 (2000). See the Ministry of Education website www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/seccurric.html for course descriptions.

There are 13 Courses in the new 'Family Studies' curriculum.

- 2 are Food and Nutrition related, involving food labs
- 2 are Fashion-related, involving clothing labs
- the rest include courses on parenting, resource management, living spaces, family sociology

What Background Do I Need?

The prerequisite for the Family Studies teaching subject at OISE is three full courses in Family Studies. If you have completed a degree in Family Studies or Child Study, then you should have no trouble satisfying this prerequisite. Many universities do not have degree programs in these areas and so most people who select Family Studies as one of their Intermediate/Senior teaching subjects do not have a degree in one of these areas. Instead, most candidates satisfy the prerequisite requirement through courses taken in other departments that focus on issues related to the Family Studies curriculum, such as the following:

- Sociology of the Family
- Human Development
- Consumer Studies
- Aging/Gerontology
- Child Psychology
- Family Economics
- Gender Issues
- Adolescent Psychology
- Family Law
- Women's Studies
- Human Sexuality
- Interpersonal/Gender Communication
- Multiculturalism in Canada
- Nutrition/Well Being

If you are worried about food and sewing lab classes...don't be!

- No undergraduate degree programs in Family Studies offer courses in sewing, therefore, night-school interest courses in sewing are recommended.
- District Boards of Education, such as the Toronto District School Board, often offer summer institutes on how to run a food and clothing lab.
- Many excellent resources and support documents (e.g. textbooks, teacher's guides) have been developed for the new curriculum by Boards of Education and the provincial Family Studies Associations, to assist beginning teachers.

Is there a demand for Family Studies Teachers?

Family Studies is one of a number of teaching subjects at the Intermediate/Senior level that are offered as options for secondary students in the new Ontario Curriculum. While teachers will be needed and are hired to teach these optional subjects, candidates considering these subjects should be aware of a significant consideration:

- Securing a teaching position based primarily on optional subjects (particularly if both your teaching subjects are optional subjects) may prove difficult.

Candidates with social science degrees who are considering the Social Sciences – General teaching subject should be aware that there are far fewer approved courses offered in Social Sciences - General compared to the 13 offered in Family Studies.

Here are some quotes from Family Studies teachers:

"Teaching Family Studies is exciting, rewarding, and challenging every day of my teaching career because it touches the heart and mind of both the student and the teacher. The lessons you teach go beyond the semester's work; they carry your students through life and life is the final exam!"

"In Family Studies we teach life skills. What better reward could you receive as a teacher than knowing you have made a contribution to society and helped make someone's life better."

"Our students hear many loud and conflicting messages regarding career choice. We must be sure they hear from us that there is no more important field than family studies/home economics and no more challenging or rewarding profession than family studies teaching."

"For me, teaching family studies for fifteen years has been a series of transformations and challenges. It is impossible to stagnate in this profession, as each stage of development, or curriculum change brings new insights and growth, both personally and professionally. The family has changed many of its dimensions over time, so the family studies teacher is forever learning through the process of teaching. Students keep you informed and energized by new events in an ever-changing society. Ideas are continually generated and build on one another. The potential for growth is awesome. Teaching family studies is one place where you can change others and be forever changed. It is a great place to 'become.'"