



# Family and Consumer Sciences in the National Career Clusters<sup>®</sup> Framework

Achieving a vision of Career Technical Education (CTE) that is accessible and supportive to every learner without limits requires a cohesive, flexible, and responsive career preparation ecosystem that aligns systems and removes barriers between and across programs and learner levels. It also calls for fully connected systems through which each learner can skillfully navigate their own career journey and explore, decide on, and prepare for dynamic and evolving careers.

Family and consumer sciences (FCS) is a multifaceted field of study “focused on the science and the art of living and working well in our complex world.”<sup>1</sup> This discipline invites learners to understand the challenges and opportunities of supporting and building families and communities and developing well-informed consumers. FCS education recognizes the interconnectedness of work and family life, acknowledging that a supportive and fulfilling home environment can significantly contribute to an individual’s well-being and success in their professional endeavors.

Embedded across multiple Career Clusters, this field contributes to many state- and local-level programs of study starting in the middle grades and extending into postsecondary experiences.

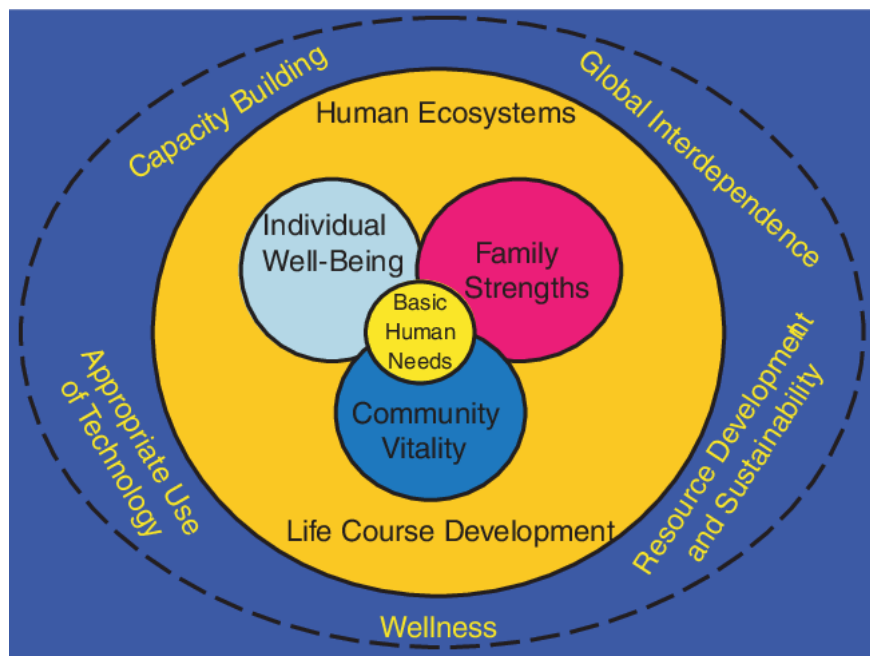
## Overview

FCS is a long-standing discipline, first coined more than 100 years ago as “home economics” but over time referred to by a variety of other names, including “human sciences,” “human ecology,” and “health and human sciences.” In 1993, leaders met to determine the future direction of the profession, renaming it “family and consumer sciences” to adapt to a more modern and industrialized world of work.<sup>2</sup>

The development of programs and research is built around a body of knowledge model (Figure 1) that presents core concepts, integrative elements, and cross-cutting themes, all central to FCS as a discipline.<sup>3</sup> The core concepts at the center of the model recognize the conditions a career-ready individual needs to thrive, similar to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, and the interconnectedness of their impact on society. Surrounding the core concepts are integrative elements that reflect the changing needs of individuals, families, and communities and center the relationships between these groups and their physical and social environments.

Finally, the body of knowledge elevates five cross-cutting themes that surround all aspects of FCS education, research, and practice and should be regularly incorporated to ensure that programs meet the current and future needs of each community and the country.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1: FCS Body of Knowledge Framework** <sup>5</sup>



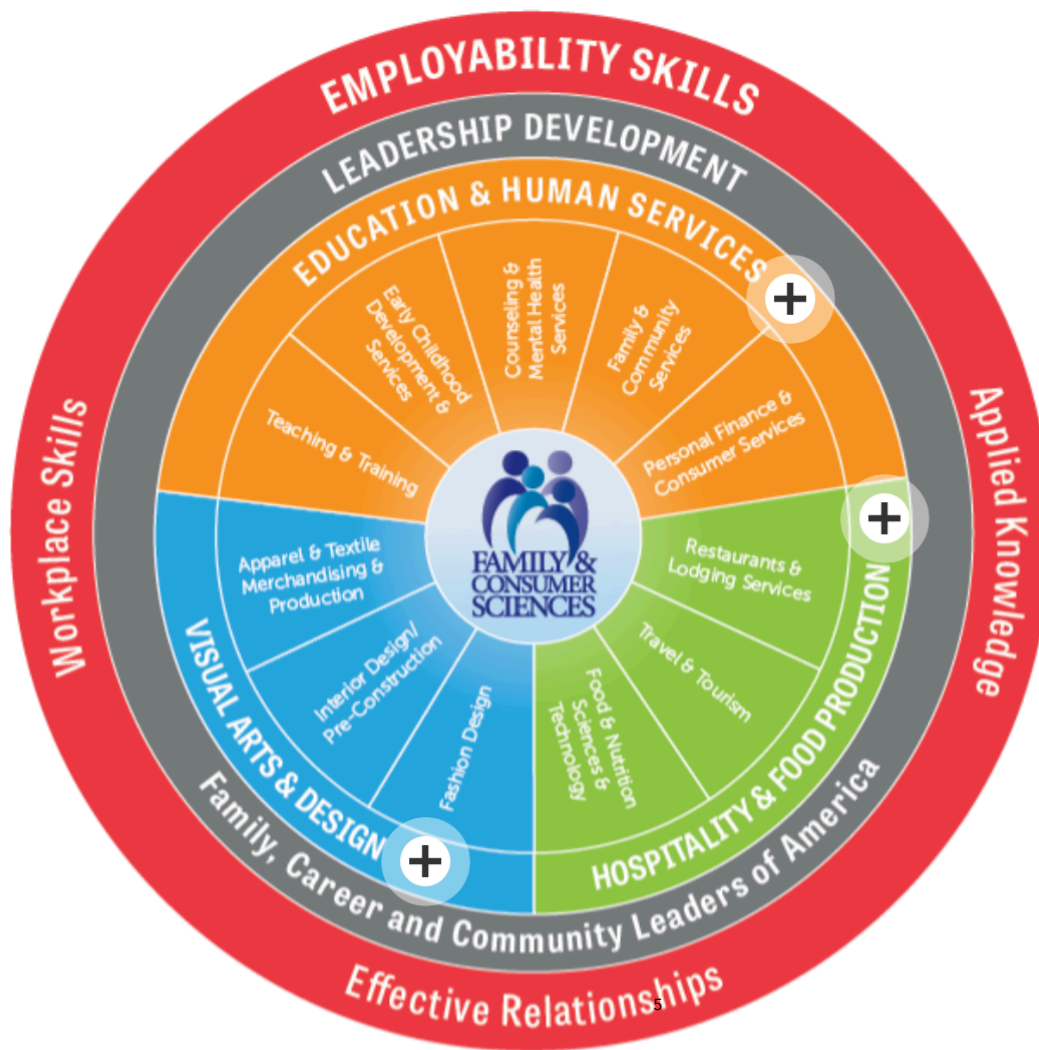
Using this body of knowledge model as a theoretical foundation, national FCS education leaders built a number of programs that support enrollment for 5 million secondary learners, though these learners are not necessarily enrolled in CTE programs.<sup>6</sup> FCS programs are strengthened by a set of [national standards](#) that are “based on knowledge and skills needed for home/personal and family life as well as those needed to succeed in related careers.”<sup>7</sup>

The standards are organized into 16 content areas, including career, community, and family connections; consumer services; and parenting. FCS professionals apply these standards in conjunction with state and local CTE standards to eight major career areas: culinary arts, hospitality, and tourism; education and training; food science and nutrition; health management and wellness; housing and interior design; human/child development and family relations; personal and family finance; and textiles, apparel, and retailing.<sup>8</sup>



This list is often expanded to include other opportunities in event management, fashion design and merchandising, community well-being, and other family and community-connected pathways. In their “Framework for Family & Consumer Sciences in CTE” (Figure 2), national FCS organizations group these and other CTE programs into three large umbrellas (education and human services, hospitality and food production, and visual arts and design), surrounded by themes of leadership development and employability skills, including workplace skills, effective relationships, and applied knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 2: Framework for Family and Consumer Sciences in CTE <sup>10</sup>



### Career-Specific Training for Many, Employability Skills for All!

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), a nationally recognized Career Technical Student Organization, has existed since 1945 to support learners in CTE programs through participation in competitive events, community service opportunities, and student leadership engagement.<sup>11</sup> More than 244,000 middle and high school learners from approximately 5,300 chapters participate in FCCLA programs and events annually.<sup>12</sup> FCCLA has four career pathways—Human Services, Hospitality and Tourism, Education and Training, and Visual Arts and Design—aligned with the Framework for Family & Consumer Sciences in CTE.<sup>13</sup>



## Connection to the Career Clusters Framework

FCS plays a role in equipping learners with diverse skillsets, preparing them for various careers in many distinctly different industry areas, including human services, education, and hospitality. Its interdisciplinary approach provides learners with insights into how they can affect the world around them, as well as strategies to adapt to changing industry demands.

Given the organization of [The National Career Clusters Framework](#) by distinct industry area, isolating FCS as a standalone Career Cluster is counterproductive to the multidisciplinary approach of FCS; instead, learners in FCS programs can demonstrate career readiness by leveraging industry-specific language that speaks directly to professionals in a given industry sector while still receiving an FCS-grounded education.

While FCS is not recognized as a standalone industry sector, qualitative and quantitative data analyses demonstrate that the skills provided by FCS programs correlate directly with the specific needs of many existing industry sectors. This alignment ensures that FCS education remains relevant and targeted, offering flexibility and impact across multiple Career Clusters and expanding opportunities for FCS programs to reach learners.

The following chart provides examples of alignment of existing secondary and postsecondary programs within the FCS discipline to the modernized National Career Clusters Framework and identifies potential career opportunities for each program. This list is not comprehensive, and FCS programs are not necessarily connected to every Sub-Cluster in a given Career Cluster.



## Example FCS Programs of Study Aligned to Career Clusters

Career Cluster/ Sub-Cluster	Example FCS Programs	Sample Occupations
Advanced Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production &amp; Automation</li> </ul>	Apparel & Textile Production Commercial Embroidery	Textile Millworker Tactical & Service Clothing Manufacturer Production Manager
Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Science &amp; Processing</li> </ul>	Food Science	Agricultural & Food Scientist
Arts, Entertainment, & Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fashion &amp; Interiors</li> </ul>	Apparel & Textile Sciences Fashion Design Interior Design	Textile Scientist Fashion Designer Interior Designer
Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Childhood Development</li> <li>• Learner Support &amp; Community Engagement</li> <li>• Teaching, Training, &amp; Facilitation</li> </ul>	Early Childhood Education & Child Care  Job Training & Career Counseling  Education	Early Childhood Educator Preschool Teacher Career Coach/Advisor FCS Educator Extension Agent
Financial Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting</li> <li>• Real Estate</li> </ul>	Family Financial Management  Real Estate  Consumer Finance	Certified Public Accountant  Financial Advisor  Real Estate Agent

## Example FCS Programs of Study Aligned to Career Clusters

Career Cluster/ Sub-Cluster	Example FCS Programs	Sample Occupations
<b>Healthcare &amp; Human Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavioral &amp; Mental Health</li> <li>Community &amp; Social Services</li> <li>Personal Care Services</li> <li>Physical Health</li> </ul>	Mental Health Counseling  Physical Wellness Counseling  Gerontology & Elder Services	Individual and Family Services Coordinator  Social Worker  Rehabilitation, Behavioral, or Mental Health Counselor  Senior Living & Care Employee  Corporate/ Personal Wellness Coach
<b>Hospitality, Events, &amp; Tourism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodations</li> <li>Conferences &amp; Events</li> <li>Culinary &amp; Food Services</li> </ul>	Hospitality Management Conference & Event Planning Culinary Services Nutrition Pastry Arts	Meeting, Convention, Wedding, or Other Event Planner Chef Pastry Artist Nutritionist/Dietician
<b>Marketing &amp; Sales</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market Research, Analytics, &amp; Ethics</li> <li>Retail &amp; Customer Experience</li> </ul>	Merchandising Consumer Protections	Retail Specialist Market Researcher Consumer Advocate

## Interdisciplinary Nature

FCS programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels lead learners through a wide range of content, including connections to careers, family, and community; textiles, fashion, and apparel; nutrition and wellness; and interpersonal relationships, among others.<sup>14</sup> FCS programs for the middle grades often focus on foundational skill development and career exploration, encompassing many of the topics that undergird CTE programs, including those not historically associated with FCS.

The updated Career Ready Practices align closely with the goals of FCS programs at all learner levels; a few, however, are directly connected to FCS programs, including the following:

Collaborate productively while using cultural and global competencies (e.g., teamwork and collaboration and relationship building)

---

Remain resilient in a changing workplace and world of work (e.g., resilience, stress management, and mindfulness)

---

Act as a good steward of organizational and personal finances and resources (e.g., budgeting, financial planning, and resource conservation).

---

Consider the environmental and social impacts of decisions (e.g., ethical decisionmaking, community awareness, and sustainable practices).



## Key Organizations and State Resources

The following resources provide additional information about FCS and can be used to support the connection of this discipline to CTE and the Framework:

[Advancing Connections](#)

[American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences](#)

[Council of Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences](#)

[Family, Career and Community Leaders of America](#)

[Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association](#)

[LEAD FCS Education](#)

## Acknowledgement

Advance CTE thanks the national, state, and local partners who reviewed and provided considerable insight in the creation of this resource.

<sup>1</sup> American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. (n.d.). What is FCS?  
<https://www.aafcs.org/about/what-is-fcs>

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, L. N. (n.d.). The history of a profession from home economics to family and consumer sciences. In A. K. Holland & K. L. Alexander (Eds.), Teaching family and consumer sciences in the 21st century (3rd ed.). The Curriculum Center for Family and Consumer Sciences.  
<https://raider.pressbooks.pub/teachingfcsinthe21stcentury/chapter/the-history-of-a-profession-from-home-economics-to-family-and-consumer-sciences/>

<sup>3</sup> Nickols, S. Y., Ralston, P. A., Anderson, C., Browne, L., Schroeder, G., Thomas, S., & Wild, P. (2009, July 2). The family and consumer sciences body of knowledge and the cultural kaleidoscope: Research opportunities and challenges. Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal, 37(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077727X08329561>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. (n.d.). AAFCS and FCS FAQ.  
<https://www.aafcs.org/about/about-aafcs/faqs>

<sup>7</sup> Lead FCS Education. (n.d.). Family and consumer sciences national standards 3.0.  
[https://www.leadfcsed.org/uploads/1/8/3/9/18396981/fcs\\_natstandards\\_3\\_updated\\_2023.pdf](https://www.leadfcsed.org/uploads/1/8/3/9/18396981/fcs_natstandards_3_updated_2023.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Palombit, R. A. (2019, April). A framework for leveraging family & consumer sciences in CTE. Technique, 16-21. Association for Career and Technical Education.

<sup>9</sup> Lead FCS Education. (n.d.). Framework for family and consumer sciences in CTE. '  
<https://www.leadfcsed.org/career-pathways-through-fcs.html#/>

<sup>10</sup> Lead FCS Education. (n.d.). Framework for family and consumer sciences in CTE.  
<https://www.leadfcsed.org/career-pathways-through-fcs.html#/>

<sup>11</sup> Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. (n.d.).  
<https://fcclainc.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. (n.d.). Join.  
<https://fcclainc.org/join>

<sup>13</sup> Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. (n.d.). Engage.  
<https://fcclainc.org/engage/career-pathways>

<sup>14</sup> Lead FCS Education. (n.d.). National standards for family and consumer sciences.  
<https://www.leadfcsed.org/national-standards.html#/>