

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAM

TO: Parents of Roanoke County Public School Students

In compliance with the mandate of the Virginia General Assembly and Department of Education, components of the family life education program are printed in this memo along with an overview of the RCPS family life education curriculum. Please read this information carefully and, if you have questions, call or visit your child's teacher to further review the curriculum and/or materials to be used. Copies of the curriculum resources are available in each school counseling department and the family life standards/learning objectives for each level are and posted on the RCPS web page. If, after review, you wish to "opt" your child out of any part of the family life instruction, you must contact the school and request the appropriate form. Students who opt out of family life instruction will be given an alternate health assignment.

Background: The Board of Education shall develop Standards of Learning and curriculum guidelines for a comprehensive, sequential family life education curriculum in grades kindergarten through 12. Such curriculum guidelines shall include age-appropriate instruction in family living and community relationships; the benefits, challenges, responsibilities, and value of marriage for men, women, children, and communities; the value of family relationships; abstinence education; the value of postponing sexual activity; the importance of setting boundaries and respecting others' boundaries; the benefits of adoption as a positive choice in the event of an unwanted pregnancy; human reproduction; the prevention of human trafficking; dating violence, the characteristics of abusive relationships, steps to take to deter sexual assault, the availability of counseling and legal resources, and, in the event of such sexual assault, the importance of immediate medical attention and advice, as well as the requirements of the law; the etiology, prevention, and effects of sexually transmitted diseases; and mental health education and awareness. All such instruction shall be designed to promote parental involvement, foster positive self-concepts, and provide mechanisms for coping with peer pressure and the stresses of modern living according to the students' developmental stages and abilities.

Family Life Education in Roanoke County Public Schools

The family life curriculum in RCPS is included in a comprehensive health education curriculum based on Board of Education guidelines.

Elementary: In grades K-3, the family life curriculum focuses on personal safety which includes appropriate vs. inappropriate touching, physical and sexual abuse, identifying trusted adults, and appropriate vs. and inappropriate approaches by others. Grade four and five instruction discusses changes that take place during puberty; personal hygiene; the reproductive system; pregnancy and fetal development and a continuation of personal safety issues. Boys and girls will be separated for sensitive topics during this instruction.

Grades 6, 7, and 9: These grade levels will utilize the Draw the Line/Respect the Line curriculum for instruction. The Draw the Line/Respect the Line program is an evidence-based, three-year sex education program that focuses on developing interpersonal and intrapersonal skills so that teens can set healthy limits. The 6th grade curriculum contains no sexual health information. The primary message of the overall program is that postponing sexual activity during adolescence is the healthiest choice. Program sessions encourage participants to discuss social and peer pressures they face to take part in risky behavior. Students also learn how to set personal limits, respect the limits of others, enhance refusal skills, and avoid destructive decisions. Emphasis is placed on the formation of healthy relationships and the development of good decision-making skills, using an abstinence-based approach. The themes throughout are respect for self and others and the assumption of personal responsibility for one's behavior. The curriculum also discusses the risks associated with being sexually active, and how abstinence protects you from those risks. Boys and girls will be separated for selected areas of instruction in grades 6 and 7, while grade 9 will use a coeducational approach. The H/PE course for grade 8 is an elective course and does not include health content, therefore, there is no family life education.

Grade 10: A coeducational approach will be used for all instruction in grade 10. Students will have the opportunity to explore the qualities of a healthy relationship and how to build and maintain healthy relationships. Students will discuss considerations and concerns pertaining to relationship building, including dating and the risks associated with a sexual relationship. Emphasis will be placed on sexual abstinence and the benefits associated of that choice. Other topics of discussion are marriage, family planning, fetal development, childbirth, and parenthood.

Thank you for your consideration and review of this information. If you have concerns now or in the future, please contact the school principal or your child's teacher. Please sign, detach and return the form at the bottom of this sheet to your child's teacher.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OPT YOUR CHILD OUT OF FAMILY LIFE, PLEASE ASK FOR AN OPT-OUT FORM.