

FCS Careers

CAN YOU GIVE EXAMPLES of careers in family and consumer sciences? There are many options, in a variety of areas. From child care provider to chef and from dietician to counselor, there are opportunities to help people in the FCS industry. In this unit, you will learn more about the types of work done in many FCS careers.



Objective:



Describe family and consumer sciences careers.

Key Terms:



dietitians
first in, first out
food additives
food scientists
franchise food service managers

gerontology
HACCP
nutrition
nutritionists
OSHA

prototype
sanitarians
venue
WIC

Exploring FCS Careers

Family and consumer sciences used to be called “home economics,” but the name change more accurately reflects all that the area of study encompasses. Although the careers are varied, workers in the FCS field strive to help individuals, families, and communities and to improve their relationships.

FOODS, NUTRITION, AND WELLNESS STUDIES

Careers in foods, nutrition, and wellness focus on health and wellness issues related to foods and **nutrition**, the processes by which the body takes in and utilizes food. Many of these jobs involve educating others.

Community health care workers teach people about grocery shopping, nutrition, and wellness. Persons in sports wellness careers emphasize the benefits of nutrition in different sports. Food program specialists work in programs such as **WIC** (Women, Infants and Children) to provide mothers with information about nutrition and wellness for their families. Family and consumer sciences instructors teach nutrition and wellness in middle schools, high schools, and two- and four-year colleges and universities. County Extension educators facilitate nutrition and wellness education for 4-H groups and for adult and community education.

Food scientists, or food technologists, are people who develop products for the food industry. Product development scientists develop recipes. Test kitchen specialists create recipes for food manufacturers. Quality assurance specialists focus on quality control problems that develop during the production and utilization of a food product. Other food scientists research the effects of **food additives**, which are preservatives and nutrients, designed to enhance the quality of food products.

Nutritionists are people who study how foods affect health. Consulting nutritionists answer questions relating to nutritional needs. Weight reduction specialists advise clients who want to lose weight with diet and exercise programs. Public health nutritionists are employed by county and state governments and advise clients on nutrition issues.

Food safety is a burgeoning career field.

Sanitarians are people who inspect food processing and packaging plants for food safety issues. Food sanitation inspectors evaluate HACCP issues in food storage and preparation. **HACCP** (pronounced “has-sip”) is an acronym for hazard analysis and critical control point.

Food composition careers analyze how food is arranged for visual images. Food stylists create and organize visual images of food for magazines and advertisements. Test kitchen specialists arrange food for photos to visually market a recipe on product packaging.

Dietitians are people who apply the principles of nutrition to a diet and specialize in nutritional issues related to health. A registered dietitian (RD) has passed an exam by the American Dietetic Association after coursework and an internship. Community dietitians prevent disease and promote health by working with clients on life cycle nutrition issues. Clinical dietitians work in hospitals and health care facilities to create nutrition and wellness programs for individuals and groups.



FIGURE 1. Dietitians can recommend nutritious food choices for those wanting to be healthy.

FACILITIES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Guest services managers distribute promotional materials, check for safety hazards, and greet guests as they enter the **venue** (the location of an event—ballpark, ballroom, hotel, golf course, church, resort, etc.). Special event planners design a business plan to sell and execute an event for a trade show, convention, wedding, or reception. Sports event managers design a plan for the physical facilities, such as half-time events at a football game. Facility managers plan and supervise the buildings and grounds for a resort, campus, hotel, or spa.

Other careers focus on aesthetic and functional design. Interior designers create safe, functional, and attractive spaces for client use. They also may solve design problems in an existing space. Landscape architects design outdoor spaces to be attractive and useful. Floral designers plan the artistic use of flowers in arrangements for facilities, individuals, and groups.

There are several types of environmental and psychological specialists. Public relations specialists advocate for a business or other entity and are concerned with how the client reacts to the facilities. Occupational therapists create an environment to help a client be self-sufficient in specific skills, such as shopping or homemaking. Personal and home care aids offer physical and psychological support in a private home or in a residential care setting environment.

Real estate rental and leasing agents manage property sales for a corporation. Urban and regional planners analyze the needs and assets of an area to determine the facilities that should be built.

Occupational safety and health specialists or technicians include industrial sanitation and safety experts. These workers follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (**OSHA**) regulations to protect employees in the workplace. OSHA regulations have brought about several laws to safeguard workers from hazards in the workplace. For example, OSHA rules require knife guards on automatic meat slicers and automatic shut-off buttons on manufacturing equipment. They also require ground fault circuit interrupter outlets and safety and fatigue mats.

Operations managers implement methods to streamline operations or tasks. They also study and follow regulatory policies.



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Finding FCS Jobs

Now that you have learned about a variety of FCS occupations, try to find out more about what opportunities exist in your community. Visit websites that post job listings, such as your local newspaper's or www.monster.com, to see what jobs are available. If you live in a very small town, you may need to widen your search to include opportunities in a larger city. Choose three FCS careers, and try to find at least two job listings for each. Make note of which career seemed to have the most positions available. Were there any careers for which you were unable to find any job postings? How do your findings affect your opinions of the FCS careers you chose to examine?

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

There are many careers in human development and family studies, including teachers, caregivers, and other specialists who work with families.

Family and consumer sciences instructors often include human growth and development in the curriculum of middle schools, high schools, and two- and four-year colleges. Early childhood center directors manage educational infant and toddler centers. Early childhood or pre-K teachers utilize basic human growth and development principles in an educational setting. School counselors assist students to choose a college major and an occupational field suited to individual strengths and interests.

Other workers focus on human growth and development. Infant caregivers apply principles of human growth and development to children in their care.

Gerontology, which is the study of the effects of aging, offers many career opportunities in health care–related occupations, or as adult day care providers, residential living aides, visiting homemakers, and recreational and activities managers for hospitals, assisted care facilities, and nursing homes.

Family systems specialists offer counseling and investigations.

Adoption agency officials conduct investigations prompted by reports. They ultimately place children for adoption with families. Counseling specialists include grief counselors, marriage and family therapists, and career consultants. Crisis center specialists evaluate behavioral characteristics about social issues, such as suicide or teen runaways. Youth services workers may be employed at a residential treatment facility for clients with behavioral problems.

Parent educators are specialists who assist parents in the care of newborns and toddlers. Food program specialists assist parents with nutrition and wellness information for their families. For instance, the WIC program provides services in a community setting.

Other workers help individuals with special needs. Clinical social workers treat clients with mental illness and substance abuse problems. Child life specialists train children and families to manage a health care experience.



FIGURE 2. There are many FCS jobs that involve working with the elderly, including adult day care providers, residential living aides, and visiting homemakers.

APPAREL AND TEXTILES

Apparel and textiles careers focus on clothing and textiles. They study the effects and elements of apparel, as well as the design and distribution.

Apparel has a psychological effect on people. Fashion illustrators design apparel and choose the textile for the design. The design and textile choices should appeal to the audience or target group. Advertising specialists use appealing illustrations and photos of apparel and textiles in various publications.

There is a social effect as well. Product brand managers work with brand-name clothing and market the social aspects of the apparel to the appropriate audience. Fashion coordinators utilize the latest fads and trends when displaying apparel.

Workers in the apparel and textiles industry consider economic and physical elements. Buyers select merchandise based on the local economy and physical needs of those purchasing clothes from their retail facilities. Quality assurance evaluators analyze apparel during the design and construction phases to determine the most cost-efficient methods of production that meet the physical requirements of the target audience.

Construction and design must be considered, as well. A fashion designer sketches a design, selects the color and fabric, and produces a **prototype**, which is a full-size model of the design, in a fabric less expensive than the selected fabric. This allows the designer to check for any adjustments that may be necessary. Patternmakers design the patterns in various sizes to match the fashion designer's sketch before the apparel is placed in mass production.

Finally, apparel marketing specialists promote sales and make decisions about distribution. Market researchers analyze trends to determine the styles, colors, and textures for a specific apparel design.

COOKING AND CULINARY ARTS

There is a variety of careers related to cooking and culinary arts, including food preparation and service. Cookbook and magazine editors design and test recipes for publication. Catering directors organize the food preparation and service for events held at off-site locations. Chefs and cooks work in food preparation in a variety of positions. Examples include line cook, grill chef, sous chef, pastry chef, short-order cooks, and executive chef.

Other workers specialize in equipment operation and maintenance. Equipment specialists maintain and repair culinary equipment. Equipment operators, such as dishwashers and janitors, operate specific industrial equipment and are part of all food service establishments.

Food sanitation, safety, and regulatory workers help keep food safe. Sanitarians inspect food processing and packaging plants for food safety issues. Food sanitation inspectors evaluate HACCP food storage and preparation areas for possible contamination. Certification is sometimes required. In Illinois, for example, food service managers are required to hold an Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) food service sanitation certificate. Pantry and storeroom managers purchase food and follow proper storage techniques, such as **first in, first out**, a standard of the food industry in which stock is rotated to ensure that the oldest food items are

used or consumed first. State inspectors regulate the design and monitor the cleanliness standards of food service facilities.

There are multiple jobs in food service management. **Franchise food service managers** are people who grant the rights or license to an individual or group to market a company's goods or services.

Restaurant managers hire and schedule personnel, oversee food production, conduct the finances, practice customer service skills, and adhere to food service sanitation standards. Health care food service managers are responsible for safe and healthy food production for those in health care facilities, such as hospitals, retirement or assisted-living complexes, and nursing homes.

Specialty food service managers include Meals on Wheels directors, who organize the production and delivery of food to the homebound. Food court coordinators organize the food production and management of food kiosks at shopping malls or corporate installations. Food bank directors organize food contributions and distribute food items to needy clients. Food sales managers offer food products for purchase to businesses in retail, service, and food service establishments.

Some careers are found in corporate and government-sponsored food service management. Health care and corrections managers are required to meet dietary requirements for the health and religion of the patients and inmates. Cafeteria, airline, and college managers review data on the past food choices of clients and select methods of preparation and presentation prior to designing menus. Managers of institutions for children, older adults, and people with special needs analyze the requirements for nutrition, texture, preparation, and presentation for their population.

Summary:



Family and consumer sciences is an area of study that offers opportunities for a wide variety of careers. Main areas of concentration include food, nutrition, and wellness, with careers in nutrition and food science, and facilities planning and management, with careers in real estate and design. Other areas include human development and family studies, with careers in education and counseling, and apparel and textiles, with careers in fashion design and marketing. Cooking and culinary arts careers include jobs in food preparation and restaurant management.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What are the five areas of study in family and consumer sciences?
2. What is HACCP?
3. What is gerontology?
4. What are franchise food service managers?
5. What is the “first in, first out” rule?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Identify a family member or acquaintance with an FCS-related job. Ask that individual if you can spend a few hours “shadowing” him or her as he or she works. Before you visit the workplace, think about what you expect the job will be like. What types of duties do you think are included in the job? After you spend some time working in the FCS job, reevaluate your thoughts on the job. Did any aspects of the job surprise you? Did your overall opinion of the job change? Share your experiences with your classmates.

Web Links:



Career in FCS

<http://www.aafcs.org/Students/CareerFCS.asp>

Family and Consumer Sciences

http://www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors_careers/profiles/majors/19.0101.html