

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN HOME ECONOMICS

Careers Serving Families and Consumers

SECOND EDITION

**Elizabeth Kendall Sproles
George B. Sproles**

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Families and Consumers**

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Professional Development in Home Economics

Preface

This is a book about professions serving families and consumers. Family- and consumer-oriented careers are found in all sectors of employment, including business, education, government, and the human services. In addition, many new, innovative, and nontraditional careers for men and women emerge almost daily. In short, careers centering on families and consumers are among the most abundant in our society.

The academic background that prepares men and women for family- or consumer-oriented careers is varied. Home economics has a long tradition of interest in families and consumers and has long provided graduates for professional fields such as foods, dietetics, textiles, clothing, consumer affairs, child development, family relations, housing, interior design, extension education, and home economics education. Newer programs in human development, human resources, human ecology, and family and consumer sciences have produced many successful professionals. The social sciences, business, and education offer valuable skills. Science, engineering, art, and design offer knowledge relevant to the aesthetic and technical development of products for consumers. Thus the range of skills and academic disciplines touching family- and consumer-oriented professions covers the full spectrum of knowledge created by our society.

We have written this book to increase students' awareness of the opportunities for those with degrees in family- and consumer-oriented fields. The book should be especially useful to students taking introductory courses in professional home economics or similar professional development courses. Much of the book is also directed at the graduating senior, with its practical information about identifying alternative career paths, job-seeking ideas, steps in résumé

writing, and job descriptions of specific careers. We have included the broadest possible range of topics that are important to all college students planning careers.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I, "Foundations for Career Planning," is a four-chapter introduction to the family- and consumer-oriented professions. Part II, "Exploring Career Choices," has six chapters containing career profiles and introductions to specific family- and consumer-oriented careers in the arts, sciences, business, education, extension, human services, government, and innovative or nontraditional positions. Part III, "Professional Development for Careers," explains how to prepare professionally for a career. Included are detailed discussions of topics such as obtaining professional education, establishing career goals, preparing résumés and portfolios, and securing professional employment. Part IV, "Career Development Following Graduation," focuses on managing a career successfully, participating in professional organizations, and preparing for changes in the future.

This second edition of *Professional Development in Home Economics* differs from the first edition in a number of important respects. Most significantly, the introductory Chapters 1 and 2 have undergone major changes, giving these lead chapters a new focus. Chapter 1, "Professions Serving Families and Consumers," combines former Chapters 1 and 4 and gives a broad overview of the careers our profession offers. It is vital for students to see outright our many and varied careers in advance of making choices, and this is a significant change. Chapter 2, "The Growth and Status of Our Profession," is a new chapter that introduces the historical evolution and current issues of our profession. Many colleagues and reviewers suggested the value of an early introduction to this historical and contemporary perspective, and we concur. We have included many valuable exercises and references on this subject for further reading and class activities as well. The remaining chapters will be familiar to previous users of the book, although some specific changes should be noted: Chapters 2 and 3 of the first edition are now Chapters 3 and 4 of the second, and Chapter 20 now focuses entirely on trends that are changing family- and consumer-oriented careers. You will notice other changes in each chapter as well—updating of the text, addition of more Self-Assessment Exercises, additions to Career Profiles, and the addition of many new references to each chapter's bibliography.

Our writing has been influenced by literally hundreds of colleagues and professionals in family- and consumer-oriented fields. Many professors who teach courses such as Professional Development, Introduction to Home Economics, and Careers in Professional

Home Economics shared with us their course outlines and, especially, their needs. Numerous practicing professionals in every profession have assisted our classes or shared their views. Colleagues at The University of Arizona, including Amy Jean Knorr, Maureen Kelly, Naomi Reich, Ellen Goldsberry, Roger Kramer, Carl Ridley, Brenda Brandt, and Soyeon Shim have provided encouragement, ideas, and feedback. Our colleague, Robert Rice, was highly supportive, and our school's director, Jerelyn Schultz, provided encouragement for the importance of professional development as a key subject in our programs. Various colleagues from The University of Arizona Placement Center have also provided advice and materials, including Susan Young and Lois Meerdink. Instructors and teaching assistants have commented on the manuscript or helped in research, most notably Patricia Aaron, Kathleen Busch, Barbara Hemmerick, Lisa Kay, Mary Lopez, Michelle Sciamé, Lisa Snyder, Kathy Sweedler, and Donna Swibold.

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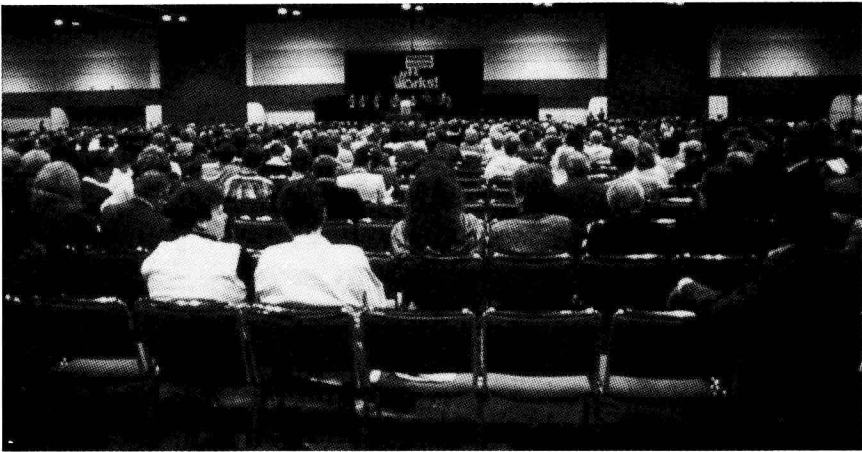
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Foundations for Career Planning



Part I establishes the foundations for family- and consumer-oriented professions. The four chapters are as follows:

- **Professions Serving Families and Consumers (Chapter 1)**
- **The Growth and Current Status of Our Professions (Chapter 2)**
- **Professional Career Planning—The First Steps (Chapter 3)**
- **The Career Market of Today—What to Expect (Chapter 4)**

These chapters present (1) an introduction to the varied careers serving families and consumers, (2) a view of what it means to be a family- and consumer-oriented professional, (3) a short historical perspective on the evolution and current status of our professions, (4) how to choose a professional career, and (5) the qualities that employers seek when hiring professionals.

Professions Serving Families and Consumers



What does an education mean to me? What is the value of my college education? Where do I go from here? These are just some of the questions most college students ask some time during their college years.

The goals of a college education are numerous. Your professors view education as the development of broadened and reasoned thinking. Parents think of education as the final maturing step to adulthood. Society thinks of education as a passport to personal advance-

ment and success in life. And many people think of education as preparation for work, learning professional skills and earning entry into the occupational world.

Certainly you expect many returns from your education. Some will be personal, and others will be social and economic. For instance, consider the following:

1. *Personal returns:* You'll learn to think and reason. You'll acquire knowledge of many subjects, thereby enriching your life.
2. *Social returns:* You'll take the final steps toward maturation, the final growth stage for entry into adult life. You'll broaden your view of society and social life and perhaps learn ways to improve life for individuals and society.
3. *Professional returns:* You'll learn marketable skills, and you'll improve your future prospects by aiming toward a carefully planned career.

Perhaps you as a college student had thought of all these reasons, and more, for attending college. You have probably wondered what kind of education would be best to achieve your goals. Should you choose a liberal education with broad and general subjects or a specialized professional major? This is a difficult choice that college students must make. Particularly if you are considering a specific career, you may want to ask the following questions:

- What knowledge and skills do I need?
- Will I like the work?
- Can I help improve society?
- Will I be able to advance?
- What salary can I expect?
- Will a job be available for me?
- What kind of working conditions do I want?
- What are the job's advantages and disadvantages?
- What is the nature of this work?

This book answers many of these questions. Its focus is on one general category of professional careers, careers focused on families and consumers. Today we live in a family- and consumer-centered society, and so there are many opportunities in education, business, government, science, humanities, and public service.

Professions serving families and consumers offer the most career opportunities in our society. Examples of well-known and well-established careers are the following:

- Retail store manager
- Fashion buyer
- Fashion designer
- Residential interior designer
- Commercial interior designer
- Hotel manager
- Restaurant manager
- Dietitian
- Foods technologist
- Consumer affairs professional
- Consumer advocate
- Financial planner
- Financial counselor
- Marriage and family counselor
- Vocational and career counselor
- Child development specialist
- Day-care manager
- Social welfare worker
- Human services executive
- Family life educator
- Home economics educator
- Vocational educator
- Extension educator
- Journalist
- Research scientist
- Business owner

These are among our most widely available and popular professional careers, and in later chapters many more are discussed. In addition, the modern job market is continually creating new opportunities and new job titles. (For example, have you heard about such newer careers as biotechnologist, gerontological nutritionist, retirement counselor, or designer of products for the handicapped or others with special needs?) Professionals in family- and consumer-oriented specialties are finding innovative careers consulting, free-lancing, and starting a business, and in public service, nonprofit human service organizations, public relations, market research, and many others. Trained professionals in family and consumer fields are found in almost all parts of our occupational market.

Obviously, the family- and consumer-oriented professions are diverse, given their widespread availability in business, education, government, and human services. But they also have much in common as one professional field. First, they have a strong orientation toward service to families and consumers. And they offer excellent,