

Lesson 3.14: Types of Families and How Families Change

Unit: Unit 3, Growing Up, Getting Along (Human Development and Relationships) **Topic:** 3.4 Families and Caring for Others **Grade:** 6 to 8 (written at grade 7; see Differentiation for the grade 6 support and grade 8 stretch) **Days:** 1 class period of 40 minutes **Room:** Either (classroom or FACS lab)

Standards

- NYS module line: NYS HDR 5. Family Role in Society a) Evaluate the significance of family and its impact on the well-being of individuals and society
- NYS module line: NYS HDR 5. Family Role in Society b) Examine “family” as the basic unit of society
- NYS module line: NYS HDR 5. Family Role in Society c) Investigate family structures and transitions
- CTE theme line: CTE CIR 4. Relationships a) Define the term “relationship”
- CTE theme line: CTE CIR 4. Relationships b) Analyze the functions and expectations of various types of relationships and how they may change over time
- NYS FACS Learning Standard 2 (Intermediate), Key Idea: Students will know the basic principles of home and community safety. They can demonstrate the skills necessary to maintain their homes and workplaces in a safe and comfortable condition. They can provide a safe and nurturing environment for themselves and others.; Performance Indicator: none of the three Standard 2 indicators names the family. The state assigns only Standard 2 to this module, so this lesson cites the key idea’s last sentence and no PI. (Crosswalk Part E.3 notes that Standard 3 PI A, “Students understand how the family can provide for the economic, physical, and emotional needs of its members,” fits this topic better; Sal can add it if he decides to cite outside the state’s block.)
- CDOS Standard 3a Universal Foundation Skills: Thinking Skills
- National FCS 3.0: 6.1.1 Examine why the family is society’s basic unit.
- National FCS 3.0: 6.1.6 Examine how change and life transitions affect people over the life course.

Enduring understanding and essential question

Big idea: A family is the people who care for you, teach you, provide for you, and claim you. Families come in many shapes, every shape is a family, and every family changes over time.

Essential question: What makes a group of people a family: who is in it, or what they do for each other?

Objectives

These are Sal’s own tiered objectives for Types of Families, from his FNES 538 notes, rewritten in the course template.

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. (Low) Given a set of short family scenarios, identify the family structure each one shows (nuclear, single parent, blended, extended, adoptive, foster, grandparents raising, guardian, and others) and define the key family vocabulary.
2. (Mid) Given two family structures and a case study, compare how the two are alike and different, determine which structure the case study shows, and explain how roles may differ depending on the structure.
3. (High) Given examples from the scenarios, defend the claim that no one family structure is better than another, and evaluate how different structures can provide support and stability through a transition.

Vocabulary

Tier 2 (general academic): structure, transition, function, diverse Tier 3 (FACS): nuclear family, single parent family, blended family, extended family, adoptive family, foster family, guardian, family life cycle. See the unit vocabulary list (Vocabulary 03.md) for Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Materials and setup

- Handout, one per student: Handout 03.14 - Family Structures and Life Cycle.md (the structures chart, twelve scenario cards on the page, the life cycle and transitions chart, and the “four things every family does” box)
- Slides: Slides 03.14 - Types of Families and How Families Change
- Index cards, one per student, for the closure
- Setup notes: none beyond printing. Read the teacher notes on how this lesson handles students’ own families before you teach it. No allergy check needed.

Pre-assessment

The Unit 3 pre-assessment (given in Lesson 2.22 or the first day of the unit [*Sal: confirm where the Unit 3 pre-check landed*]) asked students to list “kinds of families.” Most lists have two or three. Today’s do now asks for the count again; the change by the end of the period is the measure.

Do now and hook (Time: 5 min)

On the board: “Think of families you have seen in shows, movies, books, or games (not real people you know). List as many different kinds of families as you can in two minutes. Just kinds, not names.”

Debrief: hand vote on how many kinds each student listed (1 to 2, 3 to 4, 5 or more). Collect the kinds on the board without judging any. Then the hook: “By the end of today you will have at least nine kinds on your list, and you will be able to prove that every one of them is a family.”

Procedure

Step	Teacher will	Students will	Time
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1. Direct instruction: what every family does	Start with the function, not the shape. Show the four things every family does: care (keeps you safe and fed), teach (rules, language, how to treat people), provide (a home, food, clothes, money), belong (you are theirs and they are yours). Say the line: a family is defined by what it does, not by who is in it. Define “relationship” (CIR 4. a)): a connection between people with expectations on both sides. A family is a set of relationships with the four jobs attached. Then the state’s phrase, “the basic unit of society”: society is built from families the way a wall is built from bricks; if families do their four jobs, schools, towns, and workplaces work better.	Copy the four jobs. On the handout, write one example of each job from a family in a show or book.	7 min
2. Direct instruction: the structures	Show the structures chart one row at a time, each with a plain definition and a fictional example: nuclear (two parents and their	Fill the chart’s “example” column as you go. Circle any structure they had not thought of during the do now.	8 min

	children), single parent, blended (two families joined, with step-parents and step-siblings), extended (grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins in the home or close by and part of daily life), adoptive, foster (a family caring for a child placed with them for a time by the state), grandparents raising grandchildren, guardian (an adult who is legally responsible but is not a parent), and others (two moms or two dads, a family where a parent is deployed, a family split between two countries, a family of an only child and one parent plus a close family friend who is “like an aunt”). Say it every time: every one of these is a family because every one of them does the four jobs.		
3. Learning activity: scenario match and compare	Pairs read the twelve scenarios on the handout and write the structure each shows. Some fit	Match, compare, write.	9 min

	two structures (a blended family that is also extended); that is fine and the handout says so. Then each pair picks two structures and fills the compare box: one way they are alike, one way they are different, one way a role (who cooks, who signs the permission slip, who you go to when you are sick) might differ. Circulate with the clipboard (see Check for understanding).		
4. Direct instruction and share: how families change	Show the family life cycle as a loop, not a ladder: forming (two people or one person decide to make a home), growing (a child comes, by birth, adoption, or fostering), school years, teen years, launching (a young adult leaves), later years (a couple or a single adult again, often grandparents). Then the transitions that can happen at any point: a move, a new sibling, a job change or a job lost, a divorce or a separation, a death, a new country. Say plainly: a transition	Answer. Fill the transitions line on the handout.	7 min

	changes the shape; it does not un-family the family. Ask pairs: pick one scenario from the handout and one transition; what changes, and what stays the same? Take three answers. Land the High objective: no one structure is better; what matters is whether the four jobs get done, and every structure on the chart can do them. Ask for one example that proves it.		
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Questions to ask

Monitor understanding:

- What are the four things every family does? Which one is “you are theirs”?
- Scenario 4: a child lives with her grandmother and her grandmother’s sister. Which structure or structures?
- What is the difference between adoptive and foster?

Deepen learning:

- If a family does three of the four jobs well and struggles with one, is it still a family? What would help with the fourth?
- Why does the state call the family “the basic unit of society”? What would a town look like if no family did the “teach” job?
- Somebody says a nuclear family is the “normal” one. Using two scenarios from the handout, what would you say back?

Check for understanding

Clipboard checklist during Step 3, one line per pair: “matches at least nine of twelve scenarios,” “compare box names a real difference, not ‘they are different,’” “the role line names a real role (who signs, who cooks, who you call).” A pair that writes “extended” for every scenario with a grandparent in it gets the question “is the grandparent part of daily life, or visiting?”

Closure (Time: 4 min)

Exit card on an index card: 3 structures from memory, 2 of the four jobs every family does, 1 sentence that starts "No one family structure is better than another because ___" with an example from a scenario, not from a real family. Three students read their "1." Sort into "got it" (the sentence uses the four jobs or a scenario) and "needs more."

Differentiation and supports

- ELL: every structure on the chart has a simple icon (stick figures in the arrangement) and a one-line definition; the twelve scenarios are short and use fictional first names; the structure names are listed in Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish on the handout (marked [check with a native speaker]); sentence starter for the compare box: "___ and ___ are alike because . **They are different because .**"
- IEP and 504 (general): the scenario match is done in pairs with one writer; the chart has the definitions printed, so the task is matching, not recalling; a student may match six scenarios instead of twelve; extended time; the exit card sentence has a frame.
- Grade 6 support: scenarios 1 to 8 (the first four structures plus adoptive and grandparents), and the compare box is one likeness and one difference only.
- Grade 8 stretch: scenarios 9 to 12 (a family split between two countries, a deployed parent, a guardian who is an older sibling, a blended family that is also extended), plus the question "which transition on the chart would be hardest for the structure you chose, and what would help?" Grade 8 students also write two sentences on why the family life cycle is drawn as a loop and not a line.
- UDL checkpoint used: multiple means of representation (icons, definitions, scenarios) and multiple means of engagement (every example is fictional, so no student's own family is ever the example).
- No-kitchen or no-machine alternative: none needed.

Assessment

Objective	Standards met	Learning task	Assessment (formative or summative; tool)
1. Identify structures and define the vocabulary	HDR 5. c); CIR 4. a); National FCS 6.1.1	Step 2 chart, Step 3 match	Formative; handout checked against the key (nine of twelve)
2. Compare two structures and explain how roles differ	HDR 5. c); CIR 4. b); CDOS 3a Thinking Skills	Step 3 compare box	Formative; clipboard checklist
3. Defend "no one structure is better" and evaluate support through a	HDR 5. a), b); National FCS 6.1.6; Std 2 KI	Step 4 debrief, exit card "1"	Formative; exit card sentence scored got it or needs more

transition			
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All three objectives are assessed summatively on the Unit 3 Test (a structure match item and the short written response on why no one structure is better).

Homework

None. Optional: pick one transition from the chart and write two sentences on what a family could do to make it easier. No real families.

Connections

Inside the building: the social studies teacher covers families in other cultures and times; the “basic unit of society” idea lands harder if both rooms say it in the same week. The counselor should know this lesson is running, because a student in a transition (a move, a separation, a death) may want to talk afterward. Community: the public library has picture books showing every structure on the chart; a small display in the room for the unit is worth asking for.

Sources

- NYS Middle Level CTE FACS Content Module 02, Human Development and Relationships (nyctecenter.org, June 2018), lines 5. a), 5. b), and 5. c). Copy in 02 Standards/NYS Module PDFs/.
- NYS Middle Level CTE Theme Module, Communication and Interpersonal Relationships, lines 4. a) and 4. b). Same folder.
- NYS Learning Standards for Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences (1996), Standard 2, Intermediate, FACS strand. Wording per 02 Standards/STANDARDS SOURCES - web research.md, section 2.
- National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education 3.0 (LEAD FCS Education, 2018), competencies 6.1.1 and 6.1.6.
- Sal’s own materials: the Types of Families tiered objectives (Low, Moderate, High) in FNES538_notes_NextWeek-NutritionLabels-Tiered_2026-03.docx are the source of the three objectives above, including the High objective to defend that no one family structure is better than another using examples.

Teacher notes

- If time runs short, cut Step 3 to eight scenarios and take two answers in Step 4 instead of three. Never cut the “four jobs” opening; it is the reason every structure counts.
- The rule for this lesson, said to yourself before you walk in: no student is asked to describe their own family aloud. Every example is a scenario, a show, or a book. A student who volunteers their own family may, and you say “thank you,” and you do not follow up in front of the class. A student who says “my family is not on the chart” gets “then the chart is missing a row; tell me the four jobs and it goes on.”
- “Foster” appears here only as the name of the family type. There is no other word for it.

- Watch the word “normal.” If it comes up, the answer is on the slide: normal is any family doing the four jobs.
- The family life cycle is drawn as a loop because a family can be at two stages at once (a teen and a toddler in the same home) and because launching leads to later years, which is where grandparents raising grandchildren enters the loop again. Grade 8 students can be asked to explain this; everyone else just needs to see it is not a ladder.
- *[Sal: your Brentwood classes had families from many countries and some split between two. Scenario 9 (a family with a parent in another country who sends money home and calls every night) is there for them. If it is too close for a particular class, swap it for scenario 12.]*