



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

—*Child Care Education 2003*

Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

The Problem

- Child care that is affordable, accessible, convenient, and of high quality is not available to many Georgia parents needing it.
- Most child care in Georgia and nationwide is only of marginal or poor quality. High staff turnover, lack of training and experience, and low pay contribute to low quality care. According to the Center for the Child Care Workforce, the average hourly wage of a child care worker is \$7.86, compared to \$9.66 for a preschool teacher, \$13.10 for a bus driver, and \$26.82 for a kindergarten teacher.
- Child care is the third highest household expense for most families of young children (after shelter and food).
- Many parents seek the least expensive source of care because they do not understand the benefits of high-quality early care and education.

Research-based Solutions

- Children in high quality early care settings are more likely to be emotionally secure, self-confident, better able to regulate aggression, and more advanced intellectually.
- High-quality care is developmentally appropriate with caregivers who are sensitive and responsive to individual children's needs.
- Child care providers who receive continuing education and training in early childhood development are more likely to provide high quality care.

Extension's Role

- Extension helps ensure high-quality child care by:
- Organizing and presenting local and regional training workshops and conferences for child care professionals.
- Providing self-study courses for caregivers who cannot attend in-class training sessions.
- Providing print information on child development for child care professionals
- Providing consumer information to help parents identify quality child care.
- Consulting with employers and community leaders to ensure the availability of consistent, high quality child care as a vital part of community infrastructure.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Extension is one of the largest single sources of the required community-based education for Georgia child care providers. Extension provided nearly 279,000 educational contact hours to nearly 29,460 child care providers, parents, and others in 2003. Extension provides this training at approximately 1/4th the cost of utilizing consultants and other agencies.
- Conducted six *Early Childhood Institutes* (ECI) in Georgia in 2003.
- The Child Care Self-Study Program was delivered to 80 child care providers.
- Extension collaborates with numerous other organizations, including child care resources and referral agencies, technical agencies, and the *Advancing Careers through Education and Training* initiative to ensure that high-quality community-based training is available for child care providers.
- Extension is a partner in grant projects to support professional development for child care providers.
- Media efforts have been undertaken to increase awareness and child care knowledge: Newsletter articles have reached more than 103,100 clients; radio spots have been broadcast to a listening audience of nearly 1.6 million; newspaper columns have gone to a circulation of almost 2 million; and television has targeted 147,000 viewers.

Impact on Georgians

- \$ Almost 95% of the child care providers who participated in the Early Childhood Institute (ECI) said the program was helpful for them to improve their child care knowledge and skills. Nearly 89% of the participants said that the ECI met their child care learning needs.
- \$ The child care providers who participated in the *Dare to be Messy* training program indicated that they intend to apply learned activities in their child care setting. For example, 76% of the participants indicated that they plan to try out some of the sensory recipes they made in the class.
- \$ Overall, the majority of the participants in child care extension programs planned to adopt learned practices and to improve the quality of child care. For example, 97% planned to expose children to a variety of sensory materials and to display children's art at their eye level; 87% planned to use consequences to guide children's behavior; 74% planned to give children choices of activities; and 91% planned to include free art opportunities and materials in the classroom regularly.
- \$ Most of the child care providers who participated in the *Teaching Basic Health and Safety* extension program learned to teach basic safety concepts. For instance, 85% said they plan to provide children with opportunities to recognize and respond to emergencies appropriate for their age; 91% said they plan to help children overcome their fear of emergency situations by teaching them about community rescue workers and their equipment; 93% said they plan to give children examples of ways they can prevent injuries when they are at home; and 68% said they plan to help children become familiar with sights and smells they may experience at the doctor's office.

Contact

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