



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

—*School Food Service Training 2003*

Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

The Problem

- The School Nutrition Program in Georgia provides meals that meet the school-day nutritional needs and promotes the long-term health of children and youth. According to the Georgia Department of Education, it is the fifth largest program in the nation serving over 1.5 million meals daily to school children in Georgia in 2002.
- 25% of Georgia's public school students eat breakfast at school; over 74% are served lunch (3).
- The State Department of Education requires every County School Nutrition Program Director to provide annual continuing education for foodservice workers.
- Young children are among those most at risk for foodborne illnesses from poor food handling practices.
- According to USDA Economic Research Service estimations, costs for a single case is \$2126 for salmonellosis, but this increases to \$13,117 for cases involving hospitalization. The economic burden of acute listeriosis in the U.S. is estimated at \$2.3 billion. ERS estimates that, each year in the U.S., foodborne *E. coli* O157:H7 disease costs \$659.1 million to society and foodborne *E. coli* non-O157 STEC disease costs \$329.7 million for a combined total of \$988.8 million (1).

Research-based Solutions

- The school nutrition program provides education and assistance for personnel so they can deliver quality meals that contribute to the health and nutritional well-being of Georgians and their performance at work.
- The application of the Dietary Guidelines, including food safety goals, in the school nutrition program affects nearly every aspect of on-site management and meal delivery.

Extension's Role

- County Family and Consumer Sciences Agents are a primary resource for School Nutrition Education programs in various locations. In many counties, agents individually meet requests for research-based training.
- Through a partnership with school nutrition directors and area consultants, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents have delivered six or more hours of training in a 25-county area of South Georgia yearly since 1991.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Extension Agents provided food handler education to over 1000 school foodservice personnel.
- Provided nutrition education to 1,281 school foodservice personnel.
- Provided *ServSafe*® educational program to 61 school foodservice employees.
- Indoor Air Quality education programs reached 2087 school foodservice employees.

Impact on Georgians

- Nearly 91% of school foodservice personnel who participated in food handler education improved their food safety knowledge.
- Nearly 85% of the school foodservice personnel who participated in school food service training programs significantly increased their meal planning and nutrition knowledge.
- Over 80% of the school foodservice employees who participated in the Indoor Air Quality programs planned to take steps necessary to improve the air quality of their school lunch rooms.
- A three-month follow-up survey conducted with the school foodservice employees who completed the school foodservice training program revealed that 86% of them have applied learned food safety practices to improve their school food services. After food handler education program, most of the school foodservice personnel implemented recommended practices to improve the quality of school foodservice. For example, 99% of the participants paid attention to keep the kitchen clean and free of insects; 97 % made changes to improve the quality of the food service; and 97% of the participants had paid attention to incorporate a variety of different colored fruits and vegetables into school meal. More importantly, 96% of the trained school foodservice employees have shared learned food safety information with school children.

Source

1. Economic Research Service/U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. 2003. Economics of Foodborne Disease. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodborneDisease/>
2. Facts and Figures 2001-2002. School Nutrition Program, Georgia Department of Education. http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/_documents/schools/nutrition/snpfactssy02.pdf
Accessed 11/21/03.
3. School Nutrition. School Nutrition Program, Georgia Department of Education. <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/schools/nutrition/nutrition.asp> Accessed 11/21/03.

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