



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

—*Family Nutrition Program FY2004*

Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

The Problem

- More than one million people in Georgia live at or below the poverty level (The Georgia County Guide 2004).
- According to Census 2000, the percentage of persons below poverty in Georgia (14.7%) is higher than the percentage of persons below poverty in the U.S. (13.3%).
- The Food Stamp Program through the United States Department of Agriculture provides food coupons for America's neediest people to prevent malnutrition, hunger and disease. According to Georgia DHR, 847,886 people on average received food stamps each month in Georgia in 2004. The total value of food stamps issued in Georgia was \$892.8 million in 2004.
- Poverty puts families at higher risk for malnutrition and disease. Providing food resources alone will not prevent malnutrition and disease. Education on planning meals within a limited budget is important so that nutritional adequacy is not sacrificed when spending on food is decreased.

Research-based Solutions

- Providing education and assistance in utilizing the food stamps for greatest benefit is the key to getting the greatest impact from the dollars spent for the food assistance program.

Extension's Role

- Through the Family Nutrition Program, funded and conducted in partnership with USDA through the Georgia Department of Human Resources State Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plan, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension provides comprehensive nutrition education to food stamp-eligible audiences in 108 Georgia counties. The goal of Food Stamp Nutrition Education is to improve the likelihood that Food Stamp Program participants and applicants will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- The Family Nutrition Program provided nutrition education to 88,242 low-income Georgians in FY2004.
- Over 4322 nutrition sessions were conducted for food stamp eligible audiences in FY04 through the Family Nutrition Program. These lessons covered such topics as meal planning, food budgeting, making healthy food choices, and food safety.
- The *Putting the Dietary Guidelines into Action* adult programs reached 28,377 adults through various delivery sites including Food Stamp (DFACS) offices, health departments, adult education and training sites, and Senior Citizens Centers.
- The *Building Healthy Bodies* youth programs reached 59,865 children and youth.

- Extension Agents organized and facilitated 37 *Food Resource Management* programs for 576 Georgians in 2004.
- The Family Nutrition Program used media outlets as a strategy for nutrition education and outreach. Extension events such as health fairs, exhibits, TV presentations, radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, and newsletters reached over 7.4 million Georgians.

Impact on Georgians

- Increases in knowledge and ability to plan menus and choose foods according to the Food Guide Pyramid and Dietary Guidelines were reported by 63% of the participants. Seventy-one percent of the participants indicated that they intended to adopt one or more healthy food and nutrition practices after participating in an FNP nutrition education program.
- After participating in Family Nutrition Program nutrition education lesson(s):
 - 86% of the participants indicated that they intended to adjust recipes to achieve dietary goals, such as reducing fat, calories, or sodium.
 - 47% of the participants improved their consumption of fruits and vegetables so that they were eating nearer the recommended number of servings of these important foods.
 - 36% of the participants increased the amount of time they spent in physical activity such as walking, while 51% of the participants reduced the amount of time spent in sedentary activities.
- Family Nutrition Program participants also gained awareness as to the best strategies for stretching food resources, with 78% indicating intent to adopt more beneficial shopping behaviors and food resource management techniques. In addition, 65% of the participants in a program series actually improved behaviors related to shopping techniques, such as menu planning, using a shopping list, and comparing food prices.
- Participants in the FNP Smart Kids Fight BAC campaign gained knowledge and awareness related to personal hygiene, with 79% of the participants that indicated increased knowledge of proper handwashing procedures.
- There was a significant increase in nutrition knowledge among the 1,685 children who participated in the Family Nutrition Program.

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