



# **Family and Consumer Sciences Extension**

## ***Expanded Foods & Nutrition Education Program 2004***

*Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families*

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The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

### ***The Problem***

- Poverty puts families at higher risk for malnutrition, hunger, and disease. Hunger affects learning.
- More than one million people in Georgia live at or below the poverty level.
- According to Census 2000, the percentage of persons living in poverty in Georgia is higher than the percentage nationally (14.79% vs.13.3%).
- Georgia has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the United States. The younger the mother, the less likely she will have a healthy baby and the more likely the baby will require intensive medical care.
- Approximately 70% of low birth weight babies will require medical care that could average up to \$60,000 for hospitalization during the first year, plus an additional \$400,000 for outpatient care.
- Traditional extension programs often do not reach people living in poverty.

### ***Research-based Solutions***

- Community-based, culturally-appropriate nutrition education is an effective means of educating limited resource clients.
- Improving nutritional intake can decrease the risk of chronic disease.
- Food safety education can decrease the risk of foodborne illness, which is especially important in populations who are at greater risk for disease.
- Targeting preschool and elementary-age children is an effective means of reaching families with nutrition information.
- Improving the pregnancy outcomes of teens can be achieved by assuring adequate weight gain during pregnancy and increasing teens' knowledge of healthy food and nutrition practices.

### ***Extension's Role***

- The Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a federally funded nutrition education program conducted through the Cooperative Extension Service in every state and U.S. territory.
- Train paraprofessionals in low-income communities to teach nutrition to hard-to-reach audiences using culturally-appropriate methods and materials.
- Educate families on planning low cost nutritious meals in order to maximize the nutritional value of their diets and decrease the number of families who run out of food before the end of the month.
- Teach limited resource clients how to modify their diets to improve their health.
- Provide food safety education for limited resource clients.
- Reach families through their preschool and elementary-age children with nutrition information.
- Provide nutrition education to teenage mothers in order to increase maternal weight gain and intake of crucial nutrients.

## ***Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem***

- Recent studies have found that for every \$1.00 spent on EFNEP, \$10.64 will be saved on future health costs.
- In FY 2004, through the adult program, EFNEP reached a total of 12,254 individuals in 3,251 families. The demographic breakdown of those reached was 76% Black, 16% White, 7% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. Of the participants, 97% were female.
- In FY 04, 10% of EFNEP clients were pregnant at the time they were enrolled in the program. Seven percent were under the age of 20 and pregnant and/or nursing, for a total of 222 women.
- A total of 9,132 youth were reached through the EFNEP food and nutrition program. Of these, 19% were white, 78% black, 2% Hispanic and 2% Asian.

## ***Impact on Georgians***

- A total of 2,014 people graduated from the EFNEP program in FY 2004.
- As a result of the EFNEP program, 27% of participating families enrolled in the Food Stamp program. In addition, 16% enrolled in WIC and 11% began participating in the child nutrition program (free and reduced price school lunch).
- After completing the EFNEP program:
  - 88% of EFNEP graduates had a positive change in the nutritional value of their diets;
  - Georgians who graduated from EFNEP saved an average of \$14.82 per family per month on food;
  - 49% of participants showed improvement in one or more food safety practices, such as thawing and storing foods properly;
  - 75% improved one or more food resource management practices, including planning meals, using grocery lists, comparing prices, and not running out of food;
  - 80% improved nutrition practices such as making healthy food choices, preparing foods without adding salt, reading nutrition labels, and eating breakfast;
  - Among youth participants, 92% reported that they eat a variety of foods as a result of participating in EFNEP. In addition, 61% improved their food preparation and safety practices.

## ***Contact***

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