



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

— *Family Nutrition Program FY2005*

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- More than one million people in Georgia live at or below the poverty level (The Georgia County Guide 2005).
- 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 the United States Department of Agriculture, 921,427 people on average received food stamps each month in Georgia in 2005. The total value of food stamps issued in Georgia was \$1047 million in 2005.
- 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 (FNP), 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 Georgia. 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 30,400 hours of education to 33,705 individuals. Nearly 85% of the participants were low-income Georgians. The Family Nutrition Program presented nearly 1000 nutrition education sessions for food stamp eligible audiences in FY05. These lessons covered such topics as meal planning, food budgeting, making healthy food choices, and food safety.
- The *Building Healthy Bodies* youth programs reached over 9,400 children in 2005.
- 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 3.3 million Georgians.

Impact on Georgians

- Ninety-four percent of the participants in FNP programs said those training sessions were helpful to learn healthy meal planning and dietary guidelines. More than 75% of the participants indicated that they intended to adopt one or more healthy food and nutrition practices after participating in FNP education programs. For example, 85% intended to use nutrition facts on the food label to make food choices; 78% intended to consume whole grain breads or cereals; 81% intended to bake, broil or grill rather than frying; and 81% intended to eat at least two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables a day.
- All FNP participants in food buying education programs said those were helpful to learn the best strategies for stretching food resources. More than 70% of the participants indicated that they intended to adopt more beneficial shopping behaviors and food resource management techniques: 74% intended to compare unit prices and identify the best buys at the supermarket; 94% intended to look over store flyers in the store, in the mail, or newspaper for weekly food specials; and 74% intended to plan their families' menu ahead of time to save money and reduce trips to the store.
- After participating in FNP food safety education lessons, 94% indicated that they intended to wash their hands with hot running water and soap for at least 20 minutes before working with foods; 95% intended to thaw food either in the refrigerator, in cold running water, or in the microwave right before cooking; and 88% intended to use a thermometer to decide whether meat, poultry, or fish is done when cooking it.
- Of the children who participated in the FNP-sponsored *Smart Kids Fight BAC!* ® program, significantly improved their knowledge related to personal hygiene and safe food handling practices.
- There was a significant increase in nutrition knowledge among the children who participated in the *Building Healthy Bodies* nutrition education program. More than 75% of the participants learned to identify foods from five groups of the food guide pyramid.

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