



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

—Child Care Education 2005

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- According to the 2005 *Kids Count* data book, 60% of Georgia's children under age 6 live in homes where their parents are employed. Some form of child care is needed while those parents are at work.
- Child care that is affordable, accessible, convenient, and of high quality is not available to many Georgia parents.
- 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 nationwide is \$8.37, compared to \$10.67 for a preschool teacher, and \$20.37 for a kindergarten teacher. Georgia's average hourly wage for child care providers is a dollar lower than the national average, and wages for child care workers in Georgia have decreased since 2002.
- 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 includes developmentally appropriate curriculum and caregivers who are sensitive and responsive to individual children's needs.
- Child care providers who receive ongoing 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.
- Collaborating 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 provided nearly 51,300 educational contact hours to 27,775 child care providers, parents, and others in 2005. Extension provides this training at approximately 1/4th the cost of utilizing consultants and other agencies. Extension is one of the largest single sources of the required community-based education for child care providers in many Georgia counties.
- Two *Early Childhood Institutes* (ECI) were conducted in Georgia in 2005. The ECI is a full-day training conference covering a wide range of topics.
- Three Child Care Self-Study courses were provided to 222 child care providers.
- Extension collaborates with numerous other organizations, including child care resource and referral agencies, technical colleges, and the Georgia Association on Young Children 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: A total of 8 exhibits have reached 2,791 Georgians; 151 newsletters reached more than 44,900 readers; 10 radio spots have been broadcast to nearly 400,000 listeners; 90 newspaper columns have gone to a circulation of almost 1.3 million potential readers; and 4 television shows have targeted 200,000 viewers.

Impact on Georgians

- The comparison of pre and post-test results indicates that child care providers who participated in the self-study courses significantly improved their child development knowledge. Of the participants, 80% scored higher on post-tests than on pre-tests.
- Of the child care providers who participated in child care programs sponsored by Extension, 99% said that those programs helped to improve their knowledge and practice.
- The child care providers who participated in the *Dare to be Messy* training workshop indicated that they intend to apply learned activities in their child care setting. For example, all participants planned to expose children to a variety of sensory materials; encourage children to explore and experiment; and include free art opportunities and materials in the classroom regularly.
- Of the child care providers who completed the *1-2-3-4: Counting and So Much More* training workshop, 76% said that they intend to give parents ideas for encouraging young children's math skills and 51% said that they plan to give children opportunities to practice measuring.
- Nearly 93% of the child care providers who participated in the *StoryTelling* Extension program planned to encourage children to use their imagination and pretend.
- Of the child care providers who participated in the *All Children Have a Culture* educational program, 68% said that they intend to use bilingual staff or trained interpreters when working with children and families who have limited English speaking ability.
- The majority of the participants in Extension child care programs intended to adopt practices that will improve the quality of child care. For example, 81% planned to read aloud to children everyday; 93% planned to schedule enough time for children to engage in meaningful dramatic play and 89% planned to teach children how to solve conflicts that arise during play.
- Of the child care providers who completed the *Teaching Basic Health and Safety* training workshops, 93% said that the program was very helpful to learn how to teach basic health and safety concepts to young children. Over 90% of the child care providers who completed this training planned to teach basic safety concepts in their child care center or home. For example, 100% planned to teach how to dial 9-1-1 in an emergency; 93% planned to allow children to learn about basic rescue equipment through dramatic play; and 100% planned to help children overcome their fear of emergency situations by teaching about community rescue workers, their vehicles and equipment.

Economic Impact on Georgians

- The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension provided high-quality child care training programs at low cost that helped child care providers save money on their required training. **The total value of cost saving to child care providers in Georgia was \$205,200.00 in 2005.**

Contact

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