



# Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

## *Childcare Education 2006*

### **Learning for Life**

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

### ***The Problem***

- According to the 2006 Kids Count Data Book, 62% of Georgia's children under age six have all parents in the labor force. Some form of childcare is needed while those parents are at work.
- Childcare that is high-quality, affordable, and accessible is not available to many Georgia parents needing it.
- Most childcare 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 Childcare Workforce, the national average annual wage of a childcare worker is \$17,495, compared to \$24,560 for a preschool teacher, \$44,940 for a kindergarten teacher, \$19,200 for a home health aide, and \$21,890 for a nursing aide. Childcare provider wages have increased only 3.2% nationally over the past five years, and Georgia's childcare provider wages have actually decreased 0.9% in that same time period. Georgia's average annual wage for childcare providers is nearly \$2,000 lower than the national average.
- Childcare is the third highest household expense for most families of young children, after only 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.
- Childcare providers who receive ongoing education and training in early childhood development are more likely to provide high-quality care.

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

Extension helps ensure high-quality childcare by:

- Providing state-accepted training hours for childcare providers.
- Coordinating local and regional training events and conferences for childcare professionals.
- Providing self-study courses for caregivers who cannot attend in-class training sessions.
- Providing print information on child development for childcare professionals.
- Providing consumer information to help parents identify and select high-quality childcare, including the Childcare Quality Matters! Interactive web site ([www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/ccqm/index.php](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/ccqm/index.php)).
- Collaborating with employers and community leaders to ensure the availability of consistent, high quality childcare as a vital part of community infrastructure.

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

- Extension provided 30,876 educational contact hours to 9,976 childcare providers in 2006. Extension provides this training at approximately one-fourth the total cost of consultants or other agencies. Extension is one of the largest single sources of the required community-based education for childcare providers in many Georgia counties.
- Three Childcare Self-Study courses were provided to almost 110 childcare providers.

- Extension collaborates with numerous other organizations, including childcare resource and referral agencies, technical colleges, and the Georgia Association on Young Children, to ensure that high-quality community-based training is available for childcare providers.
- Extension is a partner in grant projects to support professional development for childcare providers.
- Media efforts have been undertaken to increase awareness and childcare knowledge: 112 newsletters reached more than 31,000 readers; 4 radio spots have been broadcast to nearly 6,400 listeners; and 31 newspaper columns have gone to a circulation of over 544,000 potential readers.

## ***Impact on Georgians***

- Ninety-six percent (96%) of the participants in the childcare and child development trainings offered by Extension said that those programs helped to improve their knowledge and practices. Over half of the participants intended to adopt practices that will improve the quality of childcare they provide. For example, 90% of the participants planned to set clear limits and enforce them every time they are broken; 99% planned to encourage children to explore and experiment; 100% planned to create a safe environment for infants and young children to explore; and 98% planned to read aloud to children every day.
- The childcare providers who participated in the *Sun Safety for Kids* training workshop in Colquitt County indicated that they intended to apply learned practices in their childcare settings. For example, 92% of participants planned to share the information they learned about sun safety with the parents of children in their care; 85% planned to wear a cap to protect their face, scalp, ears, and neck against UV rays; and 87% planned to use sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and UVA/UVB protection when going outside.
- Of the childcare providers in Bulloch County who completed *Positive Guidance and the Spirited Child*, 82% planned to expect the best of each child every day; 84% planned to rethink and use new words instead of old labels; and 82% planned to work to prevent and eliminate “triggers” in the environment.
- Over 96% of participants in the *Play is Children’s Work* training program in Baker County indicated that they are likely to include more activities in dramatic play, art and music; 82% are likely to assign small groups so that children can interact with others; and 91% are likely to get on the floor and play with the child.
- The comparison of pre and post-test results indicates that childcare providers who participated in the self-study courses significantly improved their childcare development knowledge. Of the participants, 71% scored higher on the post-test than the pre-test.
- Targeted childcare educational efforts were continued in 2006 through a community collaborative in Muscogee County. Results from pre and post data indicates that 81% of the participants significantly improved their child caring behaviors and 75% improved their confidence levels in their child caring abilities.

## ***Economic Impact on Georgians***

- The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension provided high-quality childcare training programs at low cost that helped childcare providers save money on their required training. The total estimated value of cost savings to childcare providers in Georgia was \$123,504 in 2006.

## ***Contact***

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