



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

Parenting Education 2006

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- According to Georgia Kids Count 2006, the child abuse and neglect rate has been rising dramatically from 11.3 per 1,000 in 1997 to 23.1 per 1,000 in 2004.
- There were 72,000 child abuse reports in Georgia in 2005. Of those, 27,000 were substantiated as victims of child abuse. About 85% of those children were victims of severe neglect and 11% were physically abused.
- Every 30 minutes in Georgia, a child is the victim of confirmed abuse or neglect costing every Georgia family an average of \$1,500.¹
- According to Georgia DHR, almost 14,000 of Georgia's youngsters are in state custody for foster care, at an average annual cost of \$22,000 per child.
- The total number of reported juvenile crimes in Georgia increased from 11,497 in 2000 to 13,688 in 2004.²
- Child abuse and neglect are strongly related to family poverty, especially in combination with depression, social isolation, and substance abuse.³
- According to Georgia Kids Count 2006, poor parenting skills can place children at risk for abuse and neglect.
- Teen parents are twice as likely as older parents to abuse their children.

Research-based Solutions

- Practicing positive parenting habits can stop cycles of abuse.
- Positive parenting skills can be learned and used by parents.
- Teen parents are particularly receptive to research-based education.

Extension's Role

- Conduct parenting education for all interested parents.
- Present parenting education classes for parents identified as needing special assistance.
- Collaborate with other family-serving organizations to provide seamless support.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Provided more than 19,520 hours of parenting and family education to 6,051 Georgians. Of the Georgians who participated in parenting education programs, 39% were considered low income or at risk.
- A demonstration project funded by Georgia DHR targeted families in five southwest Georgia counties that were identified as at-risk for child abuse and neglect. The project's primary goal was to provide educational support to families diverted from open case status in child protective services.
- Parenting education was provided to many Georgians through media. This includes 104 newsletters targeted to 30,000 readers; 31 newspaper columns circulated to 0.5 million potential readers; and 4 radio broadcasts to over 6,400 listeners.

Impact on Georgians

- Eighty-four percent (84%) of the participants who evaluated the parenting education programs said that those educational programs were helpful to develop parenting knowledge and skills. After the

programs, most of the participants planned to adopt parenting practices which will help them guide their children with clear limits and less stress. For example, 89% plan to provide reasons for decisions they make that affect their children; 91% plan to forgive their child's mistakes and make them learning opportunities; and 87% plan to give their children a warning before ending an activity.

- Several parenting education programs targeted specific audiences. For example, Colquitt County Extension conducted parenting workshops for 33 Latino families in September 2006. Comparison of pre and post behavioral assessments show that the participants improved their scores related to parental involvement in their child's education. After the program, nearly all of the participants planned to carry out these recommended parenting practices: 100% planned to provide a quiet place for their child to do their homework; 97% planned to attend and participate in PTO meetings at their child's school; 100% planned to get to know their child's teacher, principal and school staff; and 100% planned to ask their child's teacher for help if their child was having difficulties with school work.
- A total of 118 families were enrolled in the *Back on Track* parenting and family management education program. Over half of these families are continuing to receive educational services specific to their identified needs; the remaining families either graduated from the program or withdrew due to changes in their situation. To date, none of the *Back on Track* families, except those who were already listed as open cases, have been referred for an open case with the Department of Family and Children Services.

Sources

- (1) Georgia First Lady's Our Children Campaign: Statistics about Georgia's Children. Available at http://www.gov.state.ga.us/summit_fl/statistics.shtml Accessed 02.16.06
- (2) 2004 Annual report. Atlanta: Prevent Child Abuse Georgia. Available at <http://www.preventchildabusega.org>
- (3) Boatright, S. R. & Bachtel, D. C. (2004). *Georgia County Guide 23rd Edition*. University of Georgia. Athens, GA.

Contact

Dr. Don Bower, Professor and Human Development Specialist, dbower@uga.edu,
Dr. Diane Bales, Associate Professor and Human Development Specialist, dbales@uga.edu,
& Dr. Ted Futris, Assistant Professor and Family Life Specialist, tfutris@uga.edu, (706) 542-7566,
or your local Cooperative Extension Service office

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University,
The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Counties of the State Cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs,
assistance, and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.
The University of Georgia is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.