



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

School Foodservice Training 2006

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The Problem

- The School Nutrition Program in Georgia provides meals that meet the school-day nutritional needs and promotes the long-term health of children and youth. According to the Georgia Department of Education, it is the fifth largest program in the nation serving over 1.5 million meals daily to school children throughout Georgia. (1)
- 25% of Georgia's public school students eat breakfast at school; over 74% are served lunch (2).
- The State Department of Education requires every County School Nutrition Program Director to provide annual continuing education for foodservice workers.
- Young children are among those most at risk for foodborne illnesses from poor food handling practices.
- According to USDA Economic Research Service estimations, the cost for a single case of salmonellosis is \$472, but this increases to \$9,284 for a case involving hospitalization. The economic burden to the U.S. for all foodborne salmonellosis is \$ 2.9 billion annually. The economic burden of acute listeriosis in the U.S. is estimated at \$2.3 billion. ERS estimates that, each year in the U.S., foodborne *E. coli* O157:H7 disease costs \$659.1 million to society and foodborne *E. coli* non-O157 STEC disease costs \$329.7 million for a combined total of \$988.8 million (3).

Research-based Solutions

- The school nutrition program provides education and assistance for personnel so they can deliver quality meals that contribute to the health and nutritional well-being of Georgia's students and their performance at school.
- The application of the Dietary Guidelines, including food safety goals, in the school nutrition program affects nearly every aspect of on-site management and meal delivery.
- The USDA Food and Nutrition Service is requiring that schools nationwide implement a HACCP system of food safety.

Extension's Role

- Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents are a primary resource for School Nutrition Education programs in various locations. In many counties, agents individually meet requests for research-based training.
- Through a partnership with school nutrition directors and area consultants, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents have delivered six or more hours of training in a 25-county area of South Georgia yearly since 1991.
- Extension offers both nutrition and food safety training, including HACCP training, for school foodservice.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Almost 5,800 contact hours of food handler training were provided to 1,866 school foodservice staff. Of them, 125 foodservice employees completed the *ServSafe*® employee training and 116 managers completed the *ServSafe*® manager training in 2006.
- More than 7,000 contact hours of food and nutrition and chronic disease prevention education were provided to 2,547 school foodservice personnel.

Impact on Georgians

- Of the school foodservice employees who completed the *ServSafe*[®] employee training, 87% improved their food handling knowledge. The comparison of pre and post test score indicates that the school food service employees significantly improved their food handling knowledge in all major areas of food safety namely recognizing hazardous situations, receiving and storing foods, preparing and serving food safely, preventing contamination, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitation. After training, more than 90% of the participants expressed their preparedness to follow recommended food handling practices. For example, 99% of the participants planned to wash their hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before working with food; 100% of the participants indicated that they planned to wash, rinse, and sanitize their cutting boards, especially after cutting raw meat, poultry, or fish; and 95% of the participants indicated that they planned to use a thermometer to decide if meat, poultry, egg dishes or fish are done before serving.
- Of the school foodservice staff who received *ServSafe*[®] manager training, more than 87% said that they planned to follow recommended food handling practices. For example, 96% of the participants planned to discuss food safety more often with their employees; 98% planned to have written standards for personal hygiene; and 99% planned to train and monitor employees on proper hand washing procedures.
- Of the approximately 1,200 school foodservice personnel who participated in the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) workshops in South Georgia, over 90% indicated that they would improve how they handle food. For example, 91% of the participants planned to slice down large cuts of meat and package them in shallow pans for cooling; 94% planned to reheat leftovers to at least 165°F measured by a thermometer before serving them; 95% planned to check the temperature of foods on hot and cold buffets and serving lines at least every 2 hours; and 94% planned to analyze the flow of food for potential hazards, identify critical control points, and write down standards for critical control points in recipes. Overall, 96% of the participants rated the workshops as helpful or very helpful in teaching them how to safely handle food.
- Over half of the foodservice personnel who participated in the nutrition and cancer prevention workshops in South Georgia significantly improved their knowledge of the nutritional value of fats, oils and sweets as well as the relationship between nutrition and cancer. Almost 88% of the participants planned to use the “Nutrition Facts” on the food label to select healthier foods and 86% planned to participate (or already have participated) in a breast and cervical cancer screening.

Sources

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