

# Reaching New Parents Project



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences

**Project Summary Report: Updated April 30, 2009**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The *Guide for New Parents* (GNP) provides parents with relevant information applicable to both immediate and future needs related to the care of self and their child, particularly during the first few months following birth. This 12 article publication includes content featuring research-based information specific to the respective Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension program areas, including: infant development, parenting, co-parenting and couple relations, child care, nutrition and health, food safety, housing and environmental safety, and financial management and planning. Each article reinforces the available resources and expertise available at the county level and includes a referral to the FACS Extension website ([www.gafamilies.com](http://www.gafamilies.com)) and the local county Extension office (via 1-800-ASK-UGA1) for more information and support.

From September 1 to December 30, 2008, 24 hospitals within 22 counties across Georgia distributed the GNP during a four month period of time. The GNP was included with other materials provided by the hospital and handed to mothers by a nurse or educator either during their stay at the hospital or at the time of discharge (as mothers left the hospital). Based on monthly reports collected from these hospitals, 9465 women gave birth during this period of time and approximately 8600 (91%) of these new mothers received a copy of the GNP (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Pilot County and Hospital Reported Number of Live Births: September 1 – December 31, 2008.**

Pilot County and Hospital	Reported Live Births During GNP Distribution Month					Estimated GNPs Distributed <sup>a</sup>		
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	N	%	
Appling	Appling HealthCare System	23	17	27		67	67	100.0
Clayton	Southern Regional Medical Center	300	298	335		933	399	42.8
Colquitt	Colquitt Regional Medical Center	57	74	67		198	198	100.0
Crisp	Crisp Regional Hospital	31	48	39		118	118	100.0
Fayette	Piedmont Fayette Hospital	153	154	157		464	464	100.0
Glynn	SE GA Health System *	140	119			259	230	88.8
Hall	Northeast Georgia Medical Center *	307	296	270		873	840	96.2
Henry	Henry Medical Center *	178	279	238		695	600	86.3
Houston	Houston Medical Center *	159	159	149		467	433	92.7
Laurens	Fairview Park Hospital	107	113	84		304	304	100.0
Muscogee	The Medical Center	236	236	215		687	651	94.8
Muscogee	One Baby Place at Doctors Hospital	134	118	123		375	375	100.0
Spalding	Spalding Regional Medical Center *	70	75	74		219	219	100.0
Thomas	Archbold Memorial Hospital	91	94	84		269	242	90.0
Wayne	Wayne Memorial Hospital	55	38	43		136	126	92.6
Bulloch	East Georgia Regional Medical Center *		139	103	143	385	385	100.0
Chatham	The Mary Telfair Women's Hospital *		229	266	268	763	763	100.0
Chatham	Memorial University Medical Center	234	259	204	221	918	918	100.0
Decatur	Memorial Hospital & Manor		27	34	24	85	85	100.0
Seminole	Donalsonville Hospital		30	30	34	94	94	100.0
Tift	Tift Regional Medical Center *		106	89	100	295	240	81.4
Troup	West Georgia Health Systems *		80	89	95	264	264	100.0
Washington	Washington County Regional Medical Center		13	16	17	46	46	100.0
Whitfield	Hamilton Medical Center *		192	169	190	551	551	100.0
	Overall Total	2275	3193	2905	1092	9465	8612	91.0

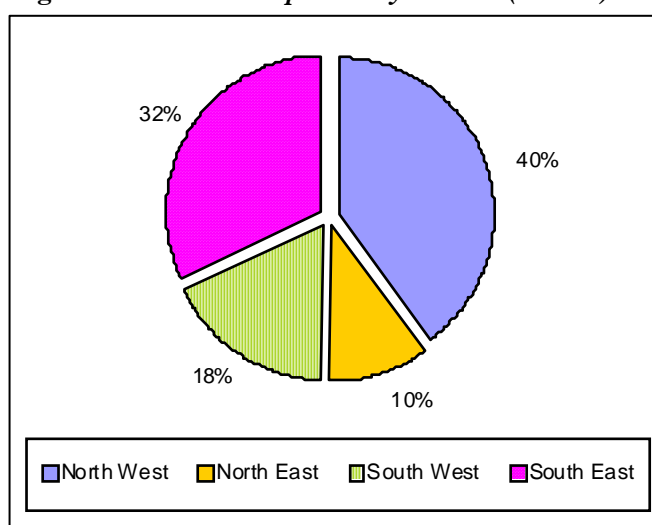
<sup>a</sup> Estimate based on reports from participating hospitals and total number of GNPs remaining from original quantity provided to each county/hospital. \* Hospital with a Prevent Child Abuse Georgia First Steps Program.

## POSTCARD RESPONSES

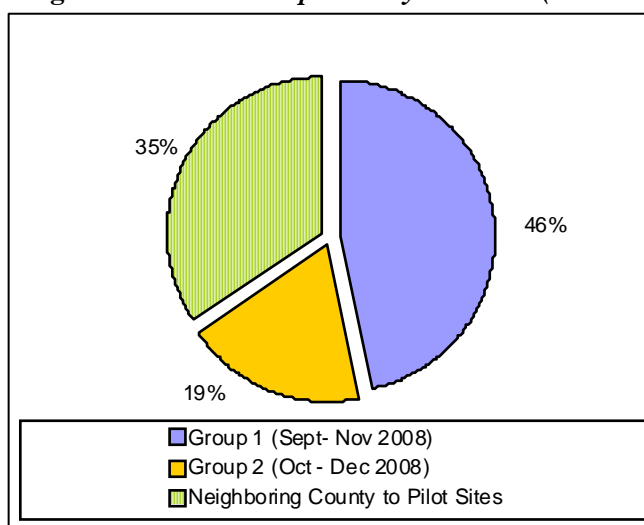
To collect feedback from the mothers who received the GNP, business reply survey postcards were included in the GNP for mothers to return in exchange for a baby's first year calendar. Mothers were also asked to indicate whether they would be willing to complete a 2-3 month follow-up survey. The current summary reflects the responses collected from the postcard surveys as well as the follow-up surveys collected to date.

As of April 30, 2009, 294 postcards were returned: 278 mothers and 4 fathers from Georgia, as well as 12 mothers residing outside of Georgia (7 Alabama, 2 South Carolina, 1 Louisiana, 1 Texas, and 1 Pennsylvania). The following summary report is based on the responses provided by the 278 mothers from Georgia. As illustrated in Figure 1, the majority of mothers who returned their postcard resided in or delivered their baby in northwest and southeast Georgia (where 14 of the 22 pilot counties were located). While most mothers resided in one of the pilot counties, nearly one-third of the mothers who responded delivered their baby at a pilot hospital but resided in a neighboring county (See Figure 2). Overall, mothers from at least 73 Georgia counties have been reached based on responses from the returned postcards (see Table 2 and Figure 3).

**Figure 1. Postcard Responses by District (N=278)**



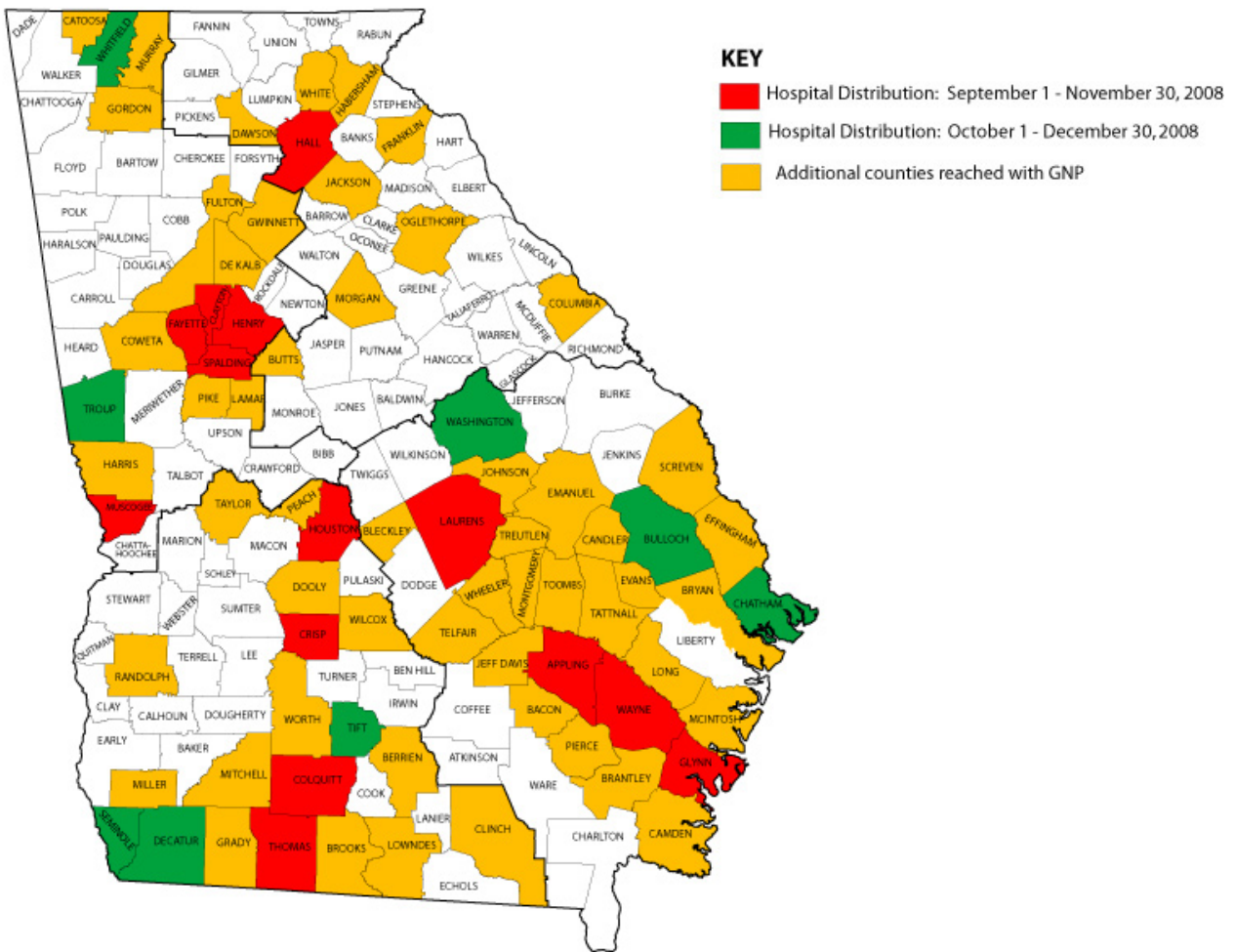
**Figure 2. Postcard Responses by Pilot Site (N = 278)**



**Table 2. Total Number of Postcards Returned, by County (N=278)**

County	#	County	#	County	#	County	#	County	#
Appling	6	Columbia	1	Gordon	1	McIntosh	1	Taylor	1
Bacon	4	Colquitt	3	Grady	6	Miller	1	Telfair/Wheeler	1
Berrien	3	Coweta	6	Gwinnett	4	Mitchell	1	Thomas	11
Bleckley	1	Crisp	1	Habersham	2	Montgomery	1	Tift	4
Brantley	1	Dawson	1	Hall	20	Morgan	1	Toombs	1
Brooks	2	Decatur	2	Harris	1	Murray	5	Treutlen	1
Bryan	1	Dekalb	1	Henry	23	Muscogee	22	Troup	6
Bulloch	4	Dooly	2	Houston	5	Oglethorpe	1	Washington	7
Butts	3	Effingham	7	Jackson	1	Peach	2	Wayne	4
Candler	1	Emanuel	1	Jeff Davis	4	Pierce	1	White	1
Camden	1	Evans	2	Johnson	1	Pike	1	Whitfield	7
Catoosa	1	Fayette	5	Lamar	1	Randolph	1	Wilcox	1
Chatham	22	Franklin	1	Laurens	5	Screven	2	Worth	1
Clayton	12	Fulton	6	Long	1	Spalding	6		
Clinch	1	Glynn	7	Lowndes	1	Tattnall	1		

Note: Of the remaining 16 postcards received (not reported here), 4 were from fathers and 12 were from mothers residing outside of Georgia: Alabama (n=7), South Carolina (n = 2), Louisiana (n = 1), Texas (n = 1), and Pennsylvania (n =1).

**Figure 3. Counties Reached with GNP Based on Postcard Survey Responses**

### **PROFILE OF MOTHERS WHO RESPONDED**

As shown in Table 3, of the mothers who returned a postcard ( $N = 278$ ) most were Caucasian (57%), between the ages of 20-29 (56%;  $M = 25.31$ ;  $SD = 6.0$ ), unmarried (52%) and at least high school educated (81%). Although the general profile of new mothers who returned a postcard compares to that of mothers across Georgia who gave birth in 2007 (the most recent year data is available), these mothers were slightly younger, more likely Caucasian and unmarried, and more likely to be first-time mothers.

Of the 278 mothers who returned a postcard, 257 were selected to be surveyed. Surveys were conducted with mothers ages 18 and older who delivered in or prior to February 2009, and were sent to each mother approximately 2-3 months following the birth month of her child. Although this sample of surveyed mothers (see Table 3) did not include those in their adolescence, the overall profile closely resembled that of the initial sample of 278 postcard respondents: most were Caucasian (57%), between the ages of 20-29 (60%;  $M = 25.92$ ;  $SD = 5.75$ ), unmarried (50%) and at least high school educated (83%). To date, 142 (55%) of the mothers surveyed have responded, and overall they too closely resemble the sample of postcard and surveyed mothers with two exceptions: those who have returned a survey to date are more likely to be Caucasian and married.

**Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of New Mother Respondents**

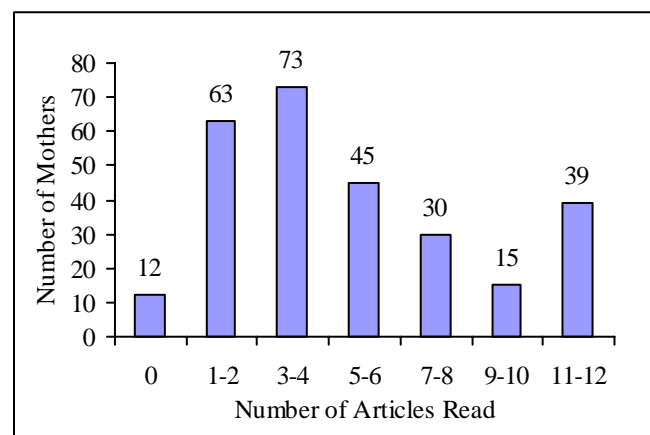
	Postcard Respondents (N = 278)	Surveyed Mothers (n = 257)	Survey Respondents (n = 142 )	Georgia Mothers (2007) <sup>a</sup>
<b>Age</b>				
17 or younger	15 (5.4)	N/A	N/A	4.0
18-19	40 (14.5)	37 (14.5)	18 (12.7)	8.1
20-24	86 (31.2)	84 (32.9)	45 (31.7)	27.1
25-29	68 (24.6)	68 (26.7)	35 (24.6)	27.4
30-34	44 (15.9)	43 (16.9)	30 (21.1)	20.7
35-39	18 (6.5)	18 (7.1)	12 (8.5)	10.5
40 or older	5 (1.8)	5 (2.0)	2 (1.4)	2.2
Missing	2	2		
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	158 (57.0)	145 (56.6)	93 (65.5)	44.4
African American (non-Hispanic)	91 (32.9)	86 (33.6)	39 (27.5)	31.9
Hispanic	18 (6.5)	16 (6.3)	8 (5.6)	5.9
Other	10 (3.6)	9 (3.5)	2 (1.4)	16.2
Missing	1	1		1.6
<b>Highest Education</b>				
Some high school	54 (20.0)	43 (17.1)	25 (17.6)	24.2
High school diploma/GED	106 (39.3)	101 (40.2)	53 (37.3)	75.8 <sup>b</sup>
Some college	62 (23.0)	60 (23.9)	29 (20.4)	
College degree	48 (17.8)	47 (18.7)	35 (24.6)	
Missing	8	6		
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Single	94 (34.2)	81 (31.9)	31 (21.8)	43.8 <sup>c</sup>
Not married/cohabiting	51 (18.5)	46 (18.1)	30 (21.1)	
Married	130 (47.3)	127 (50.0)	81 (57.0)	56.2
Missing	3	3		
<b>First child (% Yes)</b>				
First child (% Yes)	134 (48.2)	116 (45.5)	69 (48.6)	37.9
Missing	2	2		
<b>Baby's Sex (% Girl)</b>				
Baby's Sex (% Girl)	140 (50.9)	132 (51.6)	72 (50.7)	
Missing	1	1		
<b>Baby's Birth Month</b>				
August 2008	4 (1.5) <sup>d</sup>	4 (1.6)	3 (2.1)	
September 2008	70 (25.5)	64 (25.1)	37 (26.1)	
October 2008	74 (27.0)	70 (27.5)	40 (28.2)	
November 2008	65 (23.7)	62 (24.3)	34 (23.9)	
December 2008	34 (12.4)	33 (12.9)	20 (14.1)	
Jan.-April 2009	27 (9.9) <sup>e</sup>	22 (8.6) <sup>f</sup>	8 (5.6) <sup>f</sup>	
Missing	4	2		

<sup>a</sup> Source: Georgia DHR Division of Public Health (<http://oasis.state.ga.us/>). <sup>b</sup> Percent with 12 or more years of education. <sup>c</sup> Percent unmarried. <sup>d</sup> Some pilot hospitals initiated distribution the last week of August. <sup>e</sup> Some hospitals concluded within the first two weeks of January 2009 and a couple of hospitals distributed extra copies that remained up until mid-March 2009. <sup>f</sup> Only mothers who delivered their babies in January and February were included in the 2-month follow-up survey

## WHAT MOTHERS READ

On the postcard included with the GNP, mothers were asked to check off each article they had read. As shown in Figure 4, of the 277 mothers who responded<sup>1</sup>, 96% reported reading at least one article. Although most (49%) reported only reading 1-4 articles, 21% did read at least 9 of the 12 articles. In regards to the specific articles read (see Table 4), nearly all of the mothers (81%) reported that they had read the first article, “What to Expect the First Month.” Other articles that were reported by mothers as having been read also focused on topics that may have been perceived as most prominent at the time: breast and bottle feeding (56% and 44%, respectively), nurturing baby’s brain (48%) and parenting together (47%).

**Figure 4. Total Number of Articles Read (n = 277)**



*As a first time mom and dad, the articles most useful right out of the gate were those I read. You'll notice I didn't read some of them that seemed too far off in future. Baby is not mobile, so health and safety in home were not priority. Baby is hardly here, so higher education seemed not a priority. She's 6 weeks now, and now would be the time to get ready to read those articles.*

**Table 4. Articles in the Guide for New Parents That Mothers Reported Reading**

Article	Postcard Respondents (n = 277) <sup>a</sup>	Surveyed Mothers (n= 256) <sup>a</sup>	Survey Respondents (n = 142)	
			Postcard Report	Survey Report
What to Expect the First Month	189 (81.1)	208 (81.3)	119 (83.8)	132 (93.0)
Nurturing Your Baby's Brain	111 (47.6)	125 (48.6)	73 (51.4)	108 (76.1)
Breast-Feeding	130 (55.8)	147 (57.4)	92 (64.8)	93 (65.5)
Successful Bottle-Feeding	103 (44.4)	115 (44.9)	58 (40.8)	116 (81.7)
Parenting Together	109 (46.8)	124 (48.4)	67 (47.2)	112 (78.9)
A New Set of Family Dynamics	53 (22.7)	59 (23.0)	35 (24.6)	104 (73.2)
Daddy Time	101 (43.3)	112 (43.8)	63 (44.4)	103 (72.5)
Child Care Quality Matters	70 (30.0)	76 (29.7)	40 (28.2)	83 (58.5)
Putting Baby on a Budget	74 (31.8)	85 (33.2)	47 (33.1)	89 (62.7)
Paying for Your Child's Education	60 (25.8)	68 (26.6)	38 (26.8)	78 (54.9)
A Healthy Home for Baby	98 (42.1)	110 (43.0)	61 (43.0)	116 (81.7)
Baby's First Road Trip	78 (33.5)	89 (34.8)	50 (35.2)	106 (74.6)

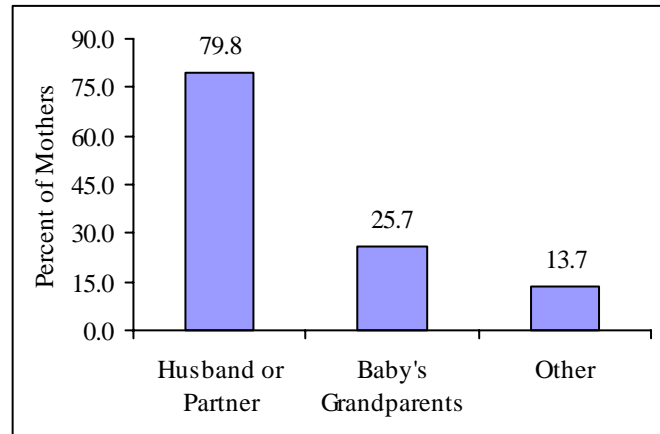
Note. Values represent number of mothers who reported reading (and valid percent). <sup>a</sup> Missing responses for one of the mothers.

Based on responses on the postcards from the 256 mothers who were surveyed and the 142 who returned a completed survey (see columns 2 and 3 of Table 4), similar patterns were found in terms of the articles mothers reported reading. Mothers who were sent a follow-up survey were again asked to check off each article they recalled reading since receiving the GNP in the hospital. As shown in column 4 of Table 4, it is clear that those mothers who responded reported reading more of the articles by the time they were surveyed compared to when they first mailed back their postcard.

<sup>1</sup> Of the 278 postcard respondents, one mother's postcard was missing the bottom half of the postcard so responses were missing and reduced the sample to 277.

Last, mothers were asked on the postcard to report who else had read the GNP. As shown in Figure 5, 183 of the 278 mothers (66%) reported that someone else read the GNP. Of these 183 mothers, 146 (80%) indicated their husband or partner read it compared to 47 (26%) and 25 (14%) mothers who reported that the baby's grandparent or someone else, respectively, read the GNP. Based on the reports from the 142 mothers who returned a survey, 46% (n=65) reported that someone else had read the GNP, and most (n=54; 83%) reported that it was their baby's father or their partner.

**Figure 5. Who Else Read the GNP (n=183)**

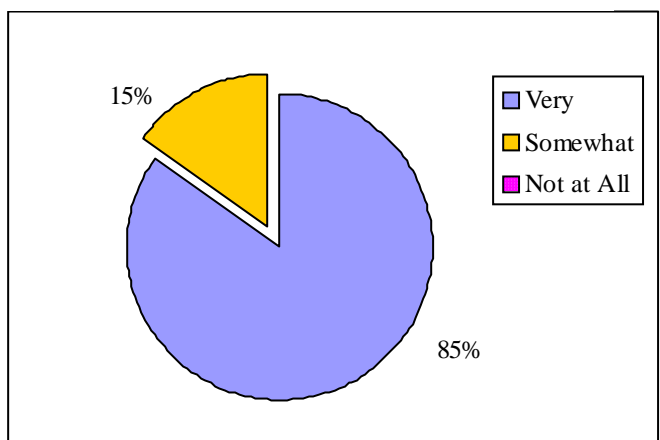


## **MOTHERS FEEDBACK ABOUT ARTICLES READ**

Based on feedback shared on the postcard, all of those mothers who read at least one article felt the information was useful (85% felt it was very useful; see Figure 6).

On the follow-up survey, mothers were asked to report how easy the articles were to understand. Most of the 142 mothers who have returned a survey, to date, reported that the articles were “very easy” to understand (90%) compared to 8% who felt they were “somewhat easy” and 2% who felt they were “somewhat difficult” to understand. When asked what information from the GNP they found most useful one mother commented “*The overall simple way you made it to understand and the step by step methods used.*” (Additional comments shared by mothers are provided at the end of this report).

**Figure 6. Usefulness of Articles Read (n = 253)**



- *The magazine was very helpful and I learned a lot of new things as far as the brain.*
- *The magazine seemed informative and touched on many key topics for first time/new parents.*
- *The Guide answered a lot of my "new mom" questions. Thanks!*
- *This book was very helpful. I learned things that I didn't know. It also helped my husband also.*
- *It really helped me and my partner out. It let us relax more and know that we can be great parents.*

As well, mothers who were mailed a follow-up survey were also asked to report whether each article they read helped them better understand that topic “a lot,” “a little,” “not much” or “not at all” (e.g., *Did this article help you better understand what to expect from and how to interact with your baby...; Did this article help you better understand ways to be successful when you bottle feed your baby...*). A summary of these mother’s responses is provided in Table 5. Overall nearly all of the mothers (81% to 99 %) reported that each article read helped them to better understand the topics they read “a lot” or “a little.” Further, between 68% to 94% of the mothers reported that they actually used or applied the information they read from each article.

**Table 5. Impact on Survey Respondents (n=142) who Read the GNP Articles**

Article	Number who Read	Helped "A Lot"	Helped "A Little"	Applied information read
What to Expect the First Month	132	61.8	35.9	90.1
Nurturing Your Baby's Brain	108	63.9	33.3	93.5
Breast-Feeding	93	49.5	36.6	70.7
Successful Bottle-Feeding	116	75.9	20.7	93.0
Parenting Together	112	58.0	32.1	75.7
A New Set of Family Dynamics	104	58.7	34.6	82.4
Daddy Time	103	72.8	22.3	87.3 <sup>a</sup>
Child Care Quality Matters	83	74.7	22.9	67.9
Putting Baby on a Budget	89	61.8	37.1	86.4
Paying for Your Child's Education	78	51.5	29.5	67.5
A Healthy Home for Baby	116	73.3	22.4	91.3
Baby's First Road Trip	106	72.6	22.6	94.2

Note. Percentages based on number of mothers who read each article.

<sup>a</sup> Mothers also were asked to report if the baby's father applied the information in the Daddy Time article: 73.5% reported that fathers had applied the information.

## **FAMILIARITY WITH FACS EXTENSION**

Mothers were asked on the survey postcard, "Before getting this guide, were you aware that UGA Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension provides information on the following topics?" and then asked to check off all of the program areas they were familiar with. Overall, the majority of mothers (75%) indicated that they "had not heard of FACS Extension until now" (see Figure 7).

Of those mothers who were familiar with FACS Extension (n=69), the program areas they were familiar with included child development (n=40), child care (n=33), relationship (n=20), parenting (n=37), financial management (n=15), nutrition and health (n=33), food safety (n=24), and housing and environment (n=18).

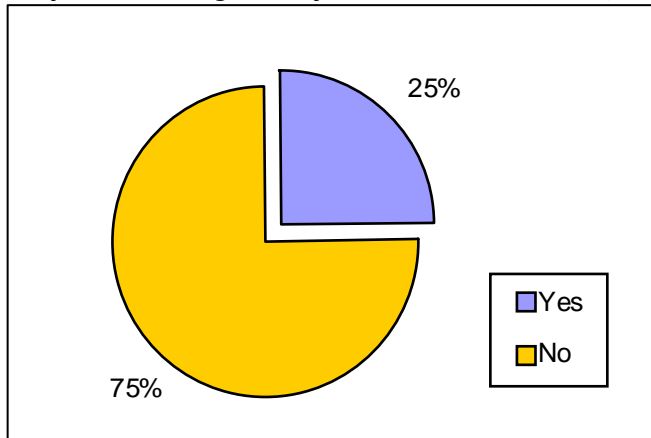
Only 3% of the mothers reported that they had ever received information or gone to a program offered by UGA FACS Extension in the past (see Figure 8). However, after receiving the GNP 67% of the mothers reported that they were somewhat or very likely to contact their UGA FACS Cooperative Extension Agent by phone (see Figure 9) and 75% were somewhat or very likely to visit the website ([www.gafamilies.org](http://www.gafamilies.org)) for more information (see Figure 10).

*I had not heard about the Guide for New Parents or this particular division of the UGA Cooperative Extension Office, but the hospital where I delivered gave me the Guide and it was a great tool to help early on in my baby's life. As a second-time mother, the articles offered great reminders and helped me to know that I was caring for my baby properly. I will visit the website any time I have questions or simply want to find out more about caring for my child. Thank you!*

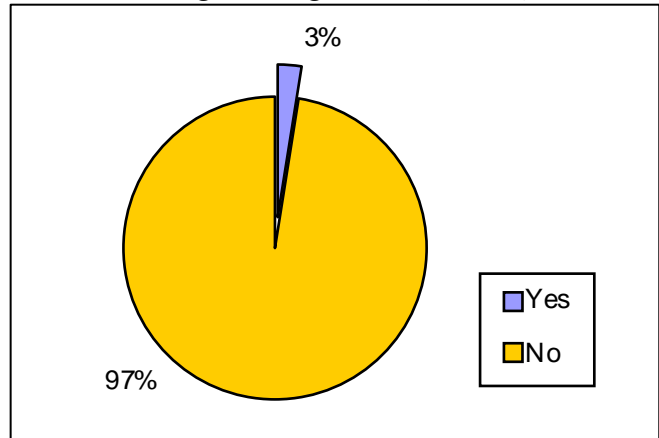
*I am very glad to know that there are programs such as this one to help new parents like me. I am personally experienced in the FACS department. This is because I took many FACS classes during high school. Out of all the classes I completed, I found the parenting class to be most informative. I would enjoy receiving more information from this program. I believe this program to be very helpful and reliable. So, thanks again for the information I have received so far and keep up the great work."*



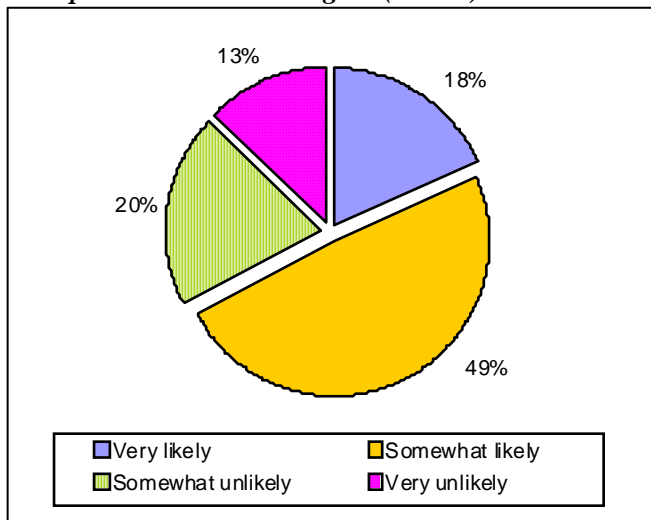
**Figure 7. Aware of FACS Cooperative Extension Before Receiving Guide for New Parents (n=276)**



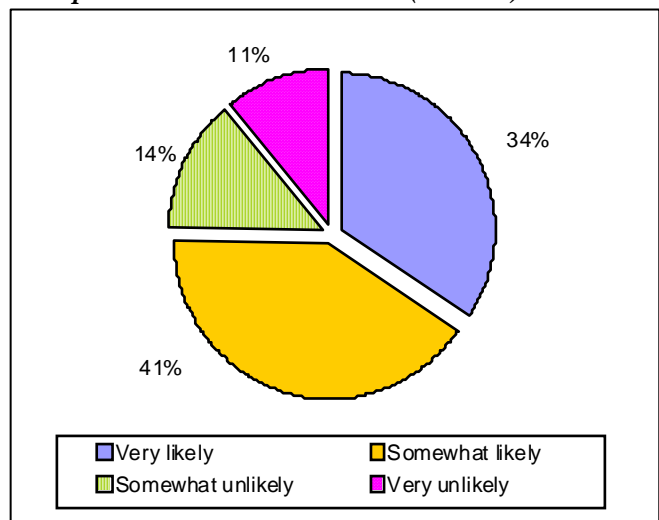
**Figure 8. Ever Received FACS Cooperative Extension Programming in Past (n = 272)**



**Figure 9. Likelihood of Calling FACS Cooperative Extension Agent (n=268)**



**Figure 10. Likelihood of Visiting FACS Cooperative Extension Website (n = 270)**



**CONCLUSION**

Overall, these results suggest the *Guide for New Parents* (GNP) may have positively affected new mother’s parenting knowledge and skills. One mom commented *“What to expect in the first month was fun to read and gave helpful information. Bond with baby while feeding was helpful too because I couldn't breastfeed so it gave useful tips for me to bond with my baby. The baby budget was very helpful. Especially with my spending habit. We have a new budget plan and are saving money now.”*

After reading the GNP, a significant proportion of readers reported positive changes in understanding and applying information from the topics read as illustrated in this mother’s comment when asked what she found most useful: *“The info about breastfeeding. I almost didn't do it because I was overwhelmed, tired, and in pain. I am so glad that I read the article because it encouraged me to give my baby the BEST.”* Another mother noted, *“I loved the safety first- it helped me figure out I had the car seat in wrong!”*

Further, the GNP has raised consumer awareness of the valuable educational resources available through FACS Cooperative Extension and encouraged new parents to improve the health and well-being of their child, themselves and their family by taking advantage of the educational resources offered by their local Extension Family and Consumer Sciences professionals.

*Being a parent is not as simple as I thought and I realize it is an ever learning process and would like to continue learning new things.*

## **SAMPLE COMMENTS FROM FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS COLLECTED TO DATE**

### **When asked what information from the GNP they found most useful . . .**

- *You were very thorough in your articles and touched on some topics that weren't covered by others. I appreciate the extent you took to talk about certain topics and keep my attention. It did cover some things that I hadn't thought of or had some questions about. I really liked the article about dealing with the in-laws (overbearing mother in law).*
- *All information about bonding, bottle-feeding, and car safety was most relevant to me.*
- *Breastfeeding it helped me much more than I expected it too.*
- *The breastfeeding article was very helpful. It is my first time doing it, so it was a challenge. I didn't breast feed with my first. I'm glad I did with my second. The dad article helped my husband understand his role a lot better.*
- *What to expect during your baby's first month. Even though I do have a one year old also, you still tend to forget what to expect when you have another one, because every baby is different. I really enjoyed the article.*
- *I liked the info on the baby's brain article because it was info I actually hadn't read yet.*
- *You covered a wide spectrum of articles that should be of good use for a 1st time parent or even if it is a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th child. There was new or differently worded information to be used in each article. I liked Bringing Baby Home: A new set of family dynamics most useful since I have a 2 yr old daughter already.*
- *The developmental articles and those that focused on father-child issues were most useful and less predictable in content - or refreshingly topical.*
- *I thought all the articles were useful. It really helped me feel more comfortable taking care of my baby.*
- *Daddy time, a healthy home for baby, and putting baby on a budget were the most useful.*
- *I really enjoyed and learned a lot from "Daddy Time", loved it. "Parenting Together" article is very important to me, cause I want my husband and I both to help each other with all the daily/needs of our "new baby" and adjusting our oldest son to having a baby brother in "his" house with his "mama" and "daddy."*
- *Parenting together. Help me and my husband to take care of the baby together.*
- *The information from the breastfeeding article was most helpful to me. As a mother of a five year old, there are many things that I had forgotten over the past five years, and the article about breastfeeding and information about the days following our hospital stay were a great reminder of what to expect!*
- *About daddy time, because me and my baby's father isn't together and I wanted him to read it and understand it because he is in jail and won't see his child.*
- *The article about paying for baby's future education motivated me to open an account for baby and make monthly deposits into it. The table showing examples of college funds was very helpful - I hadn't seen that in other magazines.*
- *The articles that appealed to me most were those relating to the specific care and nurturing of the baby. I think every parent wants to provide the very best care, make their home safe, and grow a healthy and happy baby.*

### **Closing comments shared by some mothers. . .**

- *Thank you for your magazine, busy moms like me appreciate it! It is useful and helps a lot.*
- *The articles on child development were extremely helpful as they provided a detailed, but quickly read synopsis on the various stages and expectations for child growth. Also, I thought the articles that involved father involvement were particularly useful.*
- *I feel that there was a lot of valuable information that was covered. It has been 13 years since I have done this so it was a great refresher. In my opinion it would be an excellent source of information for first time parents and those needing a refresher. The only thing that concerned me is that I got a ton of info about newborn infants, but once that stage is over there is not as much information provided. It can leave a parent feeling confused as to what to expect after the newborn is not longer a newborn.*
- *The GNP articles have been very useful to me, even when I had my other (2) children (6 & 4 years old). There's always something new I find out that I never knew.*
- *GNP was very helpful it would have been really good had I got it when I had my first child. It offers a little of everything I really liked that.*