



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

School Foodservice Training 2007

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.
- With the last reauthorization, school food authorities were required to implement a food safety program that complies with a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system established by USDA (3). Group and individualized assistance with converting operations to HACCP principles were required.
- According to USDA Economic Research Service estimations, the cost for a single case of salmonellosis is \$489, but this increases to \$9,840 for a case involving hospitalization. The economic burden to the U.S. for all foodborne salmonellosis is approximately \$ 2.9 billion annually. The economic burden of acute listeriosis in the U.S. is estimated at \$2.3 billion. ERS estimates an annual cost of foodborne *E. coli* O157:H7 disease of \$445.9 million to society and foodborne *E. coli* non-O157 STEC disease costs \$329.7 million for a combined total of \$775.6 million (4).

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, and implementation of new food safety requirements using HACCP principles into the school nutrition program affect nearly every aspect of on-site management and meal delivery.

Extension's Role

- Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents are a primary resource for School Nutrition Education programs in many locations.
- 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 each year since 1991.
- Extension offers both nutrition and food safety training, including HACCP training, for school foodservice.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- 14,768 contact hours of food handler training were provided to 3,550 school foodservice staff. Of them, 2,281 foodservice employees completed the *ServSafe*® employee training and 207 managers completed the *ServSafe*® manager training in 2007.
- More than 1,029 contact hours of nutrition and chronic disease prevention education were provided to 495 school foodservice personnel.

Impact on Georgians

- Of the school foodservice employees who completed the *ServSafe*[®] employee training, 100% improved their food handling knowledge of food safety issues with average post-test scores of 89%. After training, most 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 93% 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, most 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.

Sources

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