Title: Rockin’ Around the Infant Classroom Training for Child Care Providers Working with Infants

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Summary:
Child care providers working with infants need specialized training to provide sensitive and responsive care. The Rockin’ Around the Infant Classroom initiative was developed by a team of FACS Extension agents and service-learning students from Child and Family Development to provide a combination of face-to-face and self-paced online training focused on infant development and infant child care. Participants reported increased understanding of how to provide high-quality infant care following the training. Service-learning students became more aware of issues and challenges in child care, became more familiar with the work of Cooperative Extension, and expanded their technology skills.

Situation:
According to a recent statewide study, more than two thirds of center-based child care for infants and toddlers in Georgia is of low quality. Because child care providers play an essential role in infant and toddler brain development, improving the quality of infant-toddler care is essential. Research indicates that child care providers who participate in in-depth training courses in child development provide higher-quality care.

Response:
The Rockin’ Around the Infant Classroom curriculum met the need for specialized training for child care providers working with infants, using a “hybrid” method that combined face-to-face and online training. Participants attended two 2-hour face-to-face training sessions about a month apart. Between sessions, participants completed six self-paced online modules. Participants who completed all parts of the course received 7 hours of training credit to help meet annual licensing requirements.

Undergraduate service-learning students teamed with Cooperative Extension agents in four Georgia counties to develop and deliver the content of this multi-session training series for infant teachers in and around Chatham, Colquitt, Douglas, and Oglethorpe counties. Specific topics covered in the training included infant development, the importance of play, infant temperaments and goodness of fit with caregivers, facilitating play in pre-mobile and mobile infants, feeding infants, language development, health and safety in the infant classroom, and communication with families. Infant teachers also shared ideas, asked questions, and shared photos of their infant classrooms on a secured social networking site.

Impact:
A total of 53 infant teachers in four counties completed the Rockin’ Around the Infant Classroom curriculum and received 7 hours of state-accepted training to meet child care licensing requirements.
Overall, participants were satisfied with the training. Most participants (96%) reported that they enjoyed the course; 97% learned new information that they could use in their work with infants; 97% felt more confident in their ability to provide quality care, and 98% would recommend the course to others.

The number of participants rating their knowledge of child development as high increased from pre-test to post-test on all items. After completing the course, nearly all participants rated their knowledge about infant development and care as high, and nearly all participants believed their knowledge of high-quality infant child care was significantly better than before the course. Participants also reported more comfort with online training following the course.

This service-learning project provided an opportunity for Child and Family Development students to take leadership, to learn about Extension child care training, and to translate information from CHFD courses into practice. Students reported heightened awareness of the challenges child care providers face, expanded technology skills and ability to help others use technology, and better group work skills.

Scope: State

County: Clarke

Group: Family & Consumer Sciences

State Issue: Positive Development for Individuals, Families and Communities
Program Function(s):
Extension

Program Area(s):
Family and Consumer Sciences

Topic(s):
Child Health and Safety
Improving Child Care Quality
FO-1: The quality of child care in Georgia will improve.

Keyword(s):
Brain Development
Early Childhood Curriculum activities
Infant/Toddler Development

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County Funds
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