

THE IMPACT OF A RESOURCE GUIDE ON NEW MOTHERS' KNOWLEDGE, SELF-EFFICACY
AND STRESS

By:

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(Under the Direction of Ted Futris)

ABSTRACT

Acquired parental knowledge and competence have been shown to help parents feel better prepared to handle the copious stressors involved in the transition to parenthood. Parent educational materials delivered at a “teachable moment” containing information pertinent to the age of the child have been shown to help parents feel more confident in their abilities to parent and less stressed in the parenting role leading to better long-term child and family outcomes. The current study evaluates the impact of a parent education resource delivered to new mothers immediately following the birth of their child. Results indicate that printed educational materials delivered at a *teachable moment* may help parents feel more knowledgeable about, adjusted to and prepared for their parenting role. Further mothers here reportedly understood the information they read and applied it to their everyday lives and kept the *Guide for New Parents* and read more of the publication over time as their needs and those of their families evolved. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Printed Parent Educational Materials, Newsletters, Parent Education,
Parenting Self-efficacy, Parenting Stress, Transition to Parenthood,
Adjustment to Parenthood, Parental Knowledge

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The perception of parenthood as a valued and desired life-role has remained an established mainstream societal view for many developed nations (Hoffman & Manis, 1979; Langridge, Sheeran, & Connolly, 2005). In fact, both women and men are attracted to procreation and childrearing and many of these parents-to-be have commonly reported feelings of joy, pleasure and excitement for their impending role (Demmore-Ko, Pancer, Hunsberger & Pratt, 2000; Green & Kafetsios, 1997). Consequently, a consistent increase has been observed in birth rates during the past decade. Nationally, the total number of births from 1997 to 2006 has generally increased 1-3% with a total of 4,265,555 births recorded in 2006 (Martin, et al., 2009). Comparatively, the number of babies delivered to mothers in the state of Georgia has also steadily increased from a little over 118,000 in 1997 to 150,804 in 2007 (Georgia DHR Division of Public Health, 2007).

Although some new mothers have reported viewing the future responsibilities of parenting with excitement, others have reported more stressful reactions (Blanchard, Blalock, DeVellis, DeVellis, & Johnson, 1999; Kach, & McGee, 1982; Hull & Mendolia, 1991; Peterson & Vaidya, 2001). Even those mothers with positive expectations for parenting may become overwhelmed and stressed by the multitude of new demands inherent in the parenting role (Cox, Paley, Burchinal & Payne, 2002; Huston, 2002; Langridge, Connolly, & Sheeran, 2000). New parent stressors may include the challenges of managing conflicting temperaments and mastering new infant care giving tasks. Additionally, coping with significant lifestyle changes such as

leaving or postponing work commitments or adjusting to evolving familial relationships has also been shown to be a source of stress for new parents (Belsky & Kelly 1994; Cox et al., 2002; Feeney, Hohaus, Noller & Alexander, 2001). Greater parental stress, even in ideal conditions, has still been associated with poorer child outcomes (Teti & Gelfand 1991) externalizing problems and less secure levels of parent-infant attachment (Leerkes & Crockenberg, 2002) and some parents are at higher risk for elevated stress than others. First time mothers may have an especially difficult time managing stress related to their new parental role (Pridham, Egan, Chang & Hansen, 1986). In Georgia, over half (62%) of babies born in 2007 were born to first-time mothers (Georgia DHR Division of Public Health, 2007). Measures to reduce new parent stress should be utilized to help these new mothers through the transition into their new role. One such measure is the acquisition of parental knowledge and skills.

Acquired parental knowledge and competence in parenting skills has been shown to bolster new parents' perception of preparedness to cope with parenting stress (Bornstein, Hendricks, Hahn, Haynes, Painter, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003; Hess, Teti, & Hussey-Gardner, 2004). For example, researchers have regularly demonstrated that mothers' knowledge of child rearing and child development is positively associated with their perceptions of competence, satisfaction, and investment in parenting (Bornstein, et al., 2003; Conrad, Gross, Fogg, & Ruchala, 1992; Hess, et al., 2004). Perceptions of confidence or positive feelings of self-efficacy in the parenting role have also been linked with greater ease in the transition to parenthood, a reduction in maternal depression and a decrease in parents' perception of the child as possessing a difficult temperament (Hess, et al., 2004). Further, mothers' perception of behavioral competence (i.e., their ability to perform routine parenting tasks such as feeding and diapering)

has been shown to relate significantly to parental self-efficacy beliefs (Teti & Gelfand, 1991; Conrad, et al., 1992). Thus, parents' perception of competence in the parenting role may have a significant impact on parent-infant relationships, positive parenting behaviors and the level of parenting stress a new mother experiences during the transition to parenthood.

Educational interventions focused on helping new parents better understand child development and child care related tasks may improve how prepared parents feel in their new role (Cowan, & Cowan, 2000; Lee, & Brage, 1989). While many face-to-face interventions have been addressed in the literature, prior research provides less attention to printed parent education materials delivered at a “teachable moment” during the transition to parenthood. Because face-to-face parent education is not always feasible or affordable, age-based newsletters and resource guides can be a means for reaching and teaching a greater number of parents who may not otherwise be accessible. Further, parents often rely on printed materials to enhance their knowledge and skills to become successful in the parenting role (Bogenschneider & Stone, 1997; Cudabeck, et.al., 1985; Dickinson & Cudaback, 1992; Riley, et.al., 1991; Zimmer, Scheer, & Shriner, 1999). Parent educational materials containing information pertinent to the age of the child have been shown to help parents feel more confident in their abilities to parent and less stressed in the parenting role leading to better long-term child and family outcomes (Bogenschneider & Stone, 1997; Garton, et al., 2003; Weigel & Martin, 2004).

In summary, new mothers may experience elevated stress due to new parental role demands during the transition to parenthood. Stress that arises from these demands is linked to several negative aspects of parenting, including low parental warmth, negative and controlling behavior and harsh discipline practices and elevated risk for child abuse and neglect. Although

numerous studies have documented the link between parental knowledge, self-efficacy and stress, few studies have looked at the role printed educational materials play in impacting parental knowledge, self-efficacy and stress. Perhaps reaching new parents with educational materials, delivered at a “teachable moment” during the transition to parenthood, designed to increase knowledge and parenting self-efficacy may result in parents who are less stressed in the parenting role leading to more positive outcomes for children and families.

Statement of the Problem

Efforts to reduce parenting stress in new mothers are very important for the development of the novice family. Several studies indicate that high parenting stress is related to increased child abuse potential (Holden & Banez 1996; Rodriguez & Green 1997) in that stress is a contributing factor to harsh, abusive parenting (Azar 1986; Milner 2003; Schellenbach, Monroe, & Merluzzi, 1991). Furthermore, a parents’ low tolerance for stress initiates a chain of events toward abusive parenting (Wolfe, 1999). In 2007, approximately 794,000 children were victims of child abuse or neglect, with 42% being under the age of 1 year old and 76% being under the age of 3 years old. Comparatively, in the state of Georgia, in 2007 substantiated child maltreatment cases totaled 35,729 with 32% of victims being children under the age of three (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, 2009). Though there is no single profile of a perpetrator of fatal child abuse, most perpetrators are female (57%), the biological parent of the victim (80%), age 20-39 (76%), have less than a high school diploma, live at or below the poverty level, are often depressed, and may have difficulty coping with stressful situations (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, 2009). Further, the estimated annual cost of child abuse and neglect in the United States is nearly \$104

billion (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2008). Thus, prevention services to support and reduce the stress of new parents are very important in order to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Purpose of the Study

Printed parent education materials have long been a means of reaching and educating parents on aspects of child development and child care. However, to date no studies have looked at how printed parent education materials impact parental knowledge and self-efficacy or parental stress during a critical moment in the life span: the transition to parenthood. Thus the current study evaluates how a parent resource guide developed by Family and Consumer Sciences Extension at The University of Georgia impacts the parenting knowledge, self-efficacy and stress of new mothers. Specifically, the current study examines the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. If provided with information on helping parents to adjust to their new role during the first few months, what do parents report reading and how much do they read over time? Do variations exist in the profile of mothers who read more versus less of the publication?
2. How much do mothers report the articles helped them understand the content read and do mothers report applying the information?
3. What is the association between how much mothers report reading, how much the articles helped them understand the content read and their perceived parenting self-efficacy.

4. Did reading the articles help mothers feel prepared to take care of their baby, adjust to their new role as a parent, and feel less stressed? How do these perceptions of preparedness, adjustment and stress vary by reading level, understanding, and self-efficacy?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The current review examines the research surrounding parental stress, parenting self-efficacy and parental knowledge acquisition during the transition to parenthood. First the current review explores what constitutes parenting and how it has evolved over the past few decades. Second, parenting stress is explored and, from a developmental theory perspective, the risk factors associated with elevated parenting stress are considered. Third, using the lens of self-efficacy theory, the current review investigates how self-efficacy, specifically *parenting self-efficacy*, develops during the transition to parenthood and influences perceived parental stress. Finally, this review examines the link between parental knowledge acquisition, parenting self-efficacy and stress and how printed education materials may prove to be a cost-effective means of helping parents acquire knowledge, increase parental self-efficacy and reduce parental stress during the transition to parenthood.

Parenthood

Parenthood is defined as a socially constructed distinctive role in adulthood based on values, beliefs, norms and behaviors related to child care specific to an individual's society (Bigner, 2006). Further, parenthood is considered a developmental role in adulthood because parenting interactions and behaviors must adapt to the development of the child (Bigner, 2006). Thus, the act of parenting refers to a complex set of behaviors associated with the current societal concept of parenthood. In many developed countries this concept of parenting includes the process of reproduction (procreation), guardianship (nurturing, teaching, care-taking of

children until the legal age of adulthood) and socialization (teaching children socially acceptable behaviors) (Bigner, 2006).

As expected, with each societal shift comes a new outlook on parenting. For instance, in 1946, Dr. Benjamin Spock wrote the largest, best-selling parenting manual ever recorded, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. This publication helped to popularize and facilitate a major shift in child-rearing philosophy. In relation to child discipline, Spock wrote: “Doctors who used to conscientiously warn young parents against spoiling are now encouraging them to meet their babies’ needs, not only for food but also for comforting and loving.” (p. 47). With the publication of this resource and works from scholars of the era (e.g., Bowlby, Baumrind, Erikson, Levy, Piaget, and others) parenting had become endowed with child development knowledge and the role parents play in influencing this development. Today researchers believe that a parents’ capacity to fulfill their parenting responsibilities depends in part upon the provisions of education, family support, opportunities for employment, and protection from poverty (Sanson & Lewis, 2001; Saunders, 1999). Further, for families living in less than ideal conditions, a leading assumption among early interventionists is that supports for parents will lead to better care of children and better child development (Dunst & Trivette, 1988). One such method of support includes interventions that help reduce parental stress.

Parenting Stress

Professionals have long recognized the importance of reducing parenting stress in the parenting role (Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Hobbs & Wimbush, 1977; Lemasters, 1957). According to a 1957 study, 83% of new parents were shown to have experienced "a moderate or severe crisis" in their personal lives during their transition to parenthood (Lemasters, 1957). The research that

followed concluded that the transition to parenthood, although not necessarily a crisis, does bring with it many stressful situations in the form of parenting stress (Huston, 2002; McKim, 1987; Miller & Sollie, 1980). Further, sociologists and psychologists have come to recognize that familial reorganization and adaptation, though stressful, is paramount during the transition to parenthood in order to maintain the health of the developing family (Hobbs & Wimbush, 1977).

Today, psychologists and other mental health professionals realize that low parental stress is vital for positive parent and child outcomes (Cowan & Cowan, 1988, 2000; Crnic & Low, 2002; Deater-Deckard, 1998). Thus, parenting stress, and the management of it, has significant implications for family life. For example, in a review of research on parenting stress, Deater-Deckard (1998) reported consistent evidence regarding the relationship between poor parenting behaviors, parental attitudes and parental stress concluding that “parenting stress is clearly linked to adult functioning, quality of parent-child relationships, and child functioning” (p. 326). Further, parenting stress exerts negative influences on both the quality of maternal-infant interaction and maternal role acquisition. Parenting stress also affects the mother’s ability to assess her infant’s cues and to appropriately provide care and comfort (Pridham, Egan, Chang, & Hansen, 1986; Tessier, Piche, Tarabulsky, & Muckle, 1992). Likewise, mothers who report more stress in the parenting role are more likely to view their infants as difficult to care for (Mulsow, Caldera, Pursley, Reifman, & Huston, 2002). Additional support for the link between parenting stress and family outcomes was found by Abidin (1995) who reports that heightened parenting stress can lead to negative parenting behaviors including aggressive, authoritarian parenting styles. Finally, Crnic and Low (2002) suggest that cumulative parenting stressors are

related to less responsive, less competent, and less satisfied parenting behaviors resulting in both problematic child development and problematic parent-child relationships.

Parenting stress as described by Deater-Deckard (1998) is “the aversive psychological reaction to the demands of being a parent...not indexed by a single measure but instead represented by a complex process linking (a) the task demands of parenting, (b) the parent's psychological well-being and behavior pertaining to parenting, (c) the qualities of the parent-child relationship and (d) the child's psychological adjustment. Parenting stress is experienced as the negative feelings toward the child or children, and by definition these negative feelings are directly attributable to the demands of parenthood” (p.315). More specifically, parenting stress can be directly related to the behavior of the child, to parental difficulty in managing parenting tasks, or to dysfunctional interaction between child and parent (Abidin,1995). In the current study, parental stress is conceptualized as the level of perceived stress pertaining to parental role demands during the transition to parenthood.

All parents experience some form of parental stress during the transition to parenthood. Yet, because society views this transition as positive and the resulting developmental challenges as normative, the parenting stress new mothers experience is seen as “normal” which may put these novice families at risk (Deater-Deckard, 1998). These developmental challenges include the requirement of numerous modifications in parental cognition (e.g., learning new child-care related skills and problem-solving quickly in order to soothe a crying infant), behavior modifications (e.g., managing fluctuating schedules, negotiating couple/co-parenting roles) and emotional adaptations (reading baby's cues, setting a precedence for familial needs) which demand resources and personal skills not yet fully understood by the new parent but necessary to

ensure the development of a successful family unit (Cowan, 1988; White, 1997; Wicki, 1999). Therefore, parenting stress, at its worst, can affect a mother's ability to assess her infant's cues and provide consistent and sensitive care and comfort to her new baby (Pridham, et al., 1986; Tessier, et al., 1992). Conversely, studies have found that mothers with low levels of parenting stress still view parenting as a challenge but report more personality strength (Levy-Shiff et al., 1998; Younger, 1991), social support and self-efficacy (Harrison & Magill-Evans, 1996; Reece & Harkless, 1998), and positive attitudes towards taking care of an infant (Noppe, Noppe & Hughes, 1990).

Interventions designed to reduce the parenting stress of new mothers can be very important for the developing family. Research suggests that these interventions should include resources designed to promote parental knowledge, positive family dynamics and parental psychological adaptation (Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Hobbs & Wimbush, 1977; Miller & Sollie, 1980; McKim, 1987; Cowan & Cowan, 1988). One such psychological adaptation is the development of *parenting self-efficacy*.

Parenting Self-Efficacy

The transition to parenthood brings about many changes affecting the dynamics of novice families including significant cognitive and psychological adaptations on the part of new parents (Hobbs & Wimbush, 1977; Miller & Sollie, 1980; Cowan & Cowan, 1988, 2000). One such psychological adaptation is the development of *parenting self-efficacy*. Self-efficacy theory and particularly parenting self-efficacy has received much attention in the literature on the transition to parenthood (Coleman & Karraker, 1998, 2003; Dunst, Trivette, Boyd, & Brookfield, 1994; Teti & Gelfand, 1991). For instance, Coleman and Karraker (1998) found that in the parenting

domain, self-efficacy has regularly surfaced as a key link to positive parenting behaviors. Further, a recent review cited a substantial number of articles showing a strong relationship between maternal efficacy and parenting behavior and stress, such that parents experiencing high levels of stress exhibited less parenting self-efficacy and more negative parenting behaviors than parents experiencing lower levels of stress (Coleman & Karraker, 1998). Likewise, parents with lower levels of parenting self-efficacy have difficulty putting their parental knowledge into action in order to problem-solve, resulting in parents who feel overly burdened by the responsibilities inherent to the parental role (Coleman & Karraker, 2003).

Bandura's (1982, 1989) social learning theory defines *self-efficacy* as a person's belief in his/her ability to perform effectively in a specific situation or successfully accomplish a specific task. Further, the concept of self-efficacy states that individuals act based on multiple influences from both the internal (how they perceive themselves) and external (how others perceive them) worlds (Bandura, 1977, 1989, 1992). Self-efficacy describes how cognitive functioning affects new behavior patterns and Bandura (1977) argues, "an efficacy expectation is the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (p. 193).

Self-efficacy beliefs influence behavioral, cognitive, and affective responses across a wide range of domains (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Bandura, Reese, & Adams, 1982; Jensen, Turner, & Romano, 1991; Lackner, Carosella, & Feuerstein, 1996; Stockman & Altmaier, 2001). Individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs have confidence in their own abilities and are more likely to perceive problems as surmountable challenges rather than as threats or uncontrollable events (Bandura, 1992). These individuals also typically experience less negative emotional arousal when engaged in challenging tasks, and persevere in the face of

difficulties (Bandura, 1992, 1997). Individuals with beliefs conducive to those with low self-efficacy are more likely to experience significant levels of anxiety and self-doubt when faced with adversity, assume more responsibility for failure than success, perceive environmental stressors and demands to be intimidating and impossible, avoid challenges, and deal with problems in a dysfunctional manner (Bandura, 1992, 1997).

Moreover, general self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to have powerful influences on the psychological well-being of individuals during times of adaptation and change. During these times, high self-efficacy beliefs can be a positive “psychological resource” an individual can utilize to buffer the effects of environmental stressors, whereas low self-efficacy beliefs may leave an individual psychologically vulnerable (Cozzarelli, 1993; Maciejewski, Priegeron, & Mazure, 2000; Major et al., 1990). Thus, an individual with a high level of self-efficacy is more likely to accept a challenging goal (Vancouver, Thompson & Williams, 2001) and be more committed to achieving that goal (Bandura, 1989).

Applying self-efficacy theory to parenting, for the purposes of the current study, *parenting self-efficacy* (also called parental self-efficacy, parental sense of competence, maternal confidence, maternal efficacy, maternal self-definition and maternal self-esteem) is defined as a mother's beliefs regarding her competence in the parental role. More specifically parenting self-efficacy is the mother's perceived ability to positively influence the development and behavior of her children (Bandura, 1989). According to Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, high perceived parenting self-efficacy is developed through multiple experiences in relation to being parents, individuals, and part of a community.

During the transition to parenthood an individuals' sense of self-efficacy may play an

important role in family development in that new parents with a high sense of parenting self-efficacy are likely to have a more positive outlook on their parental role and feel more confident in undertaking parenting tasks (Coleman & Karraker, 2003; Unger & Waudersman, 1985).

Likewise, high parenting self-efficacy has been related to positive parent involvement (Swick & Broadway, 1997), stimulating and responsive caretaking (Unger & Waudersman, 1985), and active maternal coping in the face of challenges (Machida, Taylor, & Kim, 2002; Wells-Parker, Miller, & Topping, 1990). Teti & Gelfand (1991) argue that parenting self-efficacy can be “a critical determinant of risk insofar as it affects the quality of mothers’ behaviors toward their children” (p. 928). A mother’s sense of parenting self-efficacy is related to how she interacts with her child, how much effort she puts towards positive child-rearing practices, and her perception of the parenting role (Mash & Johnston, 1990). A mother who feels efficacious, skilled, and successful will exhibit positive parenting attitudes and behaviors and may find more satisfaction in the parenting role (Hess, Teti, Hussy-Gardner, 2004; Teti & Gelfand, 1991). Conversely, negative perceptions of maternal efficacy are associated with negative thoughts related to parenting, low amounts of effort put toward parenting, and negative interpretations and reactions to child behaviors (Mash & Johnston, 1990; Teti & Gelfand, 1991). Measures that positively influence self-efficacy can help support mothers in the development of optimal levels parenting self-efficacy during the transition to parenthood.

According to Bandura (1977), one key influence of self-efficacy is knowledge. Bandura argues that although a person’s belief in his or her ability to complete a specific task is important, it is not always sufficient for mastery of a given task. Thus, achieving adequate parenting self-efficacy must also include the acquisition of accurate knowledge of child development and

mastery of parenting behaviors related to infant and child care.

Parental Knowledge

Applying Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory to the parenting domain, parents not only need to feel efficacious about their parenting abilities but they must also possess adequate parental knowledge of childcare and child development with the ability to apply that knowledge toward skills related to parental care-giving tasks. Prior research exploring parenting self-efficacy has shown that the association between knowledge and self-efficacy and the combined impact on parenting behavior and well-being vary. Some researchers have found that increased parenting self-efficacy is directly related to increased knowledge and quality of specific parenting behaviors such as parent-infant play interactions, feeding and nourishment, and soothability (Bohlin & Hagekull, 1987; Donovan, Taylor, & Leavitt, 2007). Donovan, et al., (2007) explored knowledge and self-efficacy in 70 mothers with infants under 9 months of age and found that the association between mothers' self-efficacy (operationalized as perception of control in the care giving task) and their ability to read the negative emotional cues their baby displayed and respond appropriately was moderated by knowledge of infant development. Also Conrad, et al. (1992) studied the relationship between maternal self-efficacy, parental knowledge and parent-infant interactions in a group of 50 mothers with toddlers and found that when mothers reported high self-efficacy and displayed greater parental knowledge they exhibited more positive interactions with their infants. Further, when mothers reported high self-efficacy but low knowledge, they were found to display care-giving behaviors that were less sensitive than their more knowledgeable counterparts.

Hess, Teti, and Hussey-Gardner, (2004) argue that self-efficacy beliefs and knowledge of

child development are central correlates of parenting behavior. According to these authors, knowledge of infant social and emotional development is essential to the achievement of parenting self-efficacy. Further, other researchers have demonstrated that mothers' knowledge of child development and caretaking tasks is positively associated with their perceptions of parenting self-efficacy, satisfaction, investment in parenting (Bornstein, Hendricks, Hahn, Haynes, Painter, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003) and parenting skills (Stevens, 1984).

The Role of Parent Education

The birth of a child may represent a time when parents may be especially receptive to new knowledge and parenting strategies, a “teachable moment” (Merkowitz, Jelly, Collins, & Arkin, 1997; Weigel & Martin 1996). According to McBride and Ostroff (2003) a “teachable moment” (a) increases an individual's perceptions of risk and positive or negative outcome expectations, (b) produces a strong emotional response in the individual, and (c) causes a redefinition of an individual's self-concept or social role emphasizing ‘cues to action,’ which influence the perceived threat of a negative outcome prompting a change in behavior. Furthermore, based on aspects of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), McBride and Ostroff (2003) focus attention on the ways teachable moments might alter an individual's expectancies and judgments about the outcome of a particular behavior suggesting that situations with strong emotional components (negative or positive) will result in those events becoming more significant and meaningful to an individual and will therefore be more likely to be teachable moments for behavioral change. They also argue that teachable moments are more likely to arise when life events alter an individual's self-concept or when individuals experience a change in their social role (McBride & Ostroff, 2003). These new normative role obligations

may be incompatible with current behavior. Thus, McBride and Ostroff point to a cueing event (in the case of new parents the moment baby is born) with particular characteristics as the essential element of a teachable moment. In other words, a “teachable moment” is a particular event or set of circumstances leading an individual to be open to altering their behavior appropriately in order to achieve positive outcomes.

For new parents this alteration in behavior includes learning new and additional skills to be successful in the parental role. Prior research demonstrates that parents find parent education most helpful when information is provided at a “teachable moment” at the time of need, not prior to or after the time of need (Hennon & Peterson, 1981) and particularly following the birth of a new baby (Riley, et al., 1991). Further, young parents who are making life decisions for their families often prefer some form of family life education in order to help them make “good decisions” for their families (Hennon and Peterson, 1981). One such parent education delivery method is that of printed parent education materials.

According to Cudaback et al. (1985), “new parents often rely on printed materials for information about infant care and development” (p. 272). For instance, Gotts, Coan and Kenoyer (1977) found, in a nationally representative sample, that reading was the most preferred method of learning about childrearing, regardless of educational level, socioeconomic status, or race of the parent. Further, printed materials such as newsletters have proven a cost-effective means for parent education among parents of infants (Cudaback et al., 1985; Riley et al., 1991), school-age parents (Garton, et al., 2003), adolescent parents (Dickinson & Cudaback, 1992), and single parents (Hughes, Clark, Schaefer-Hernan & Good, 1994; Nelson, 1986). Additional research has revealed that parents not only report a desire for information in the face of challenges associated

with parenthood (e.g., Weigel & Martin 1996) but they often prefer written educational materials and rate them as relevant, easy to understand, and helpful (Hennon, & Peterson, 1981; Merkowitz, Jelly, Collins, & Arkin, 1997; Zimmer, Scheer, & Shriner, 1999; Weigel & Martin 1996). Further, research has shown that parents perceive age-paced educational materials as more useful than other common sources of parenting help, including physicians or nurses, books, magazines, or newspapers, child care providers, County Health Nurses, relatives, in-laws, and other parents and friends (Riley, et al., 1991). Consequently, reading these educational materials leads parents to change their behavior in areas such as responding to baby more quickly or providing more stimulation to baby when needed (Riley, et al., 1991).

Since increased parental knowledge and parenting self-efficacy may result in decreased feelings of stress and anxiety for many new parents, providing educational resources that enhance knowledge, skills, and efficacy can be very important for the development of the novice family (Brashers, 2001).

The Current Study

The goal of the current study was to explore if printed parent education materials could impact parental knowledge, self-efficacy and parental stress during the transition to parenthood. Based on a convenient sample of new mothers across the state of Georgia who received the new parent resource guide developed by Family and Consumer Sciences Extension at The University of Georgia, this study explored the following research questions and hypotheses.

First, this study sought to determine what new mothers would report reading and how much they would read over time (research question1). In general, prior research studying the efficacy of newsletters and other printed materials has seldom documented levels of readership

and specific content, with few exceptions. For example, Linda Harriman (1980) reported that of the 501 parents who received the 6-series “Living and Learning with Infants” newsletters based on early care and development (e.g., baby’s need for attention, baby’s health, baby’s growing abilities, parent-child relationships), 72%-78% of the parents reportedly read all of the articles. Likewise, Garton, et al., (2003) reported 75% of respondents read the majority of newsletters distributed. Further, Waterson and Welsh (2007) conducted a randomized trial on the effects of receiving the *Baby Express* newsletter in a cohort of 185 first-time mothers and found that 82% of mothers read all the articles in each of the 12 issues offered. Because 7 of the 12 articles in the GNP deal with immediate developmental needs of the infant, mother and family it was hypothesized that at least 75% of mothers would read 7 of the 12 articles. As well, the current study explored whether variations exist in the profile (e.g., marital status, education, race/ethnicity, income and baby’s birth order) of mothers who read more versus less of the publication. Because no prior research has examined variations in readership, no a priori hypotheses were established.

Next, research question 2 examined how much mothers reported the articles helped them understand the content read and if mothers reported applying the information. According to Waterson and Welsh (2007,), 98% of the mothers reported that the newsletter was very useful in helping them care for their child and the majority reported referencing the newsletter when they needed help. Thus, for the current study it was hypothesized that at least 75% of the mothers would report that the articles helped them to understand the content read and that they applied the information read.

Research question 3 examined the association between how much mothers reported reading, how much the articles helped them understand the content read and their perceived parenting self-efficacy. With no prior research in understanding the association between reading level of an educational publication, understanding and self-efficacy the current study pulled from the premise that for a parent to achieve adequate parenting self-efficacy they must also acquire accurate knowledge of child development as well as mastery of parenting behaviors related to infant and child care (Bandura, 1977). Acquiring accurate knowledge and mastering parenting behaviors begins with understanding those concepts and skills. Thus, it was hypothesized that mothers who reported reading more articles and reported they understood more of the content read would also report feeling more efficacious as a parent than their lower reading and lower understanding counterparts.

Last, this study sought to determine if reading the articles helped mothers feel prepared to take care of their baby, adjust to their new role as a parent, and feel less stressed (research question 4). Again no prior research on the impact of printed education materials exists. However, based on findings from parenting education programs that show an association between knowledge gained and parenting self-efficacy (Coleman & Karraker, 2003) it was hypothesized that mothers who reported higher levels of understanding of the content read and self-efficacy would also feel more prepared, better adjusted and less stressed in the parenting role (Hess, Teti, and Hussey-Gardner, 2004).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Data for the current study were collected as part of a larger study, The Reaching New Parents Project (Futris, 2008), to determine if printed materials such as the *Guide for New Parents* (GNP) can impact knowledge acquisition, parenting self-efficacy and parenting stress during the transition to parenthood. In this chapter is a description of the GNP, and the information contained in each article. Further, this chapter details the dataset and methods used in the current study for defining the sample. Likewise, the measures, methods of scoring and plan of analyses will be explained.

The Guide for New Parents

The *Guide for New Parents* (GNP) (Futris, 2008) 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. Table 1 provides a description of each article in the GNP. Additionally, each article reinforces the available resources and expertise obtainable at the county level and includes a referral to the FACS Extension website (www.gafamilies.com) and the local county Extension office (via 1-800-ASK-UGA1) for more information and support.

For the purposes of the current study, 7 of the 12 articles (see Table 1) in the GNP were chosen as focal articles because of their emphasis on the immediate needs and concerns pertaining to new parenthood (e.g., infant development, early brain development, breastfeeding, bottle feeding, parenting together, family dynamics and budgeting for baby), while the remaining articles focused more on future needs (e.g., choosing quality child care, paying for your child's education, maintaining a healthy home and car seat safety). One additional article was written specifically for fathers and therefore not chosen as a focal article for this study. Further, these 7 focal articles were chosen because concepts and information contained in these articles directly related to the variables of interest in the current study (parental stress, self-efficacy and knowledge).

Table 1. Title and Content of Articles in the Guide for New Parents

Article	Title	Focus
1*	What to Expect the First Month	Neonatal period, sleeping, crying, infant development
2*	Nurturing Your Baby's Brain	Brain development, early experiences, parent-infant interaction
3*	Breast-Feeding	Tips for successful breastfeeding, self-care while nursing
4*	Successful Bottle-Feeding	Tips for successful bottle feeding, preparation & storage, bonding
5*	Parenting Together	Co-parenting, communication, support, flexibility, respect
6*	A New Set of Family Dynamics	Managing familial relationships: siblings, partner, in-laws, others
7	Daddy Time	Tips for dads: nurturing, bonding, support, balancing work-family
8	Child Care Quality Matters	How to identify quality child care, choices, finding programs
9*	Putting Baby on a Budget	Assessing spending habits, designing a budget, reducing spending
10	Paying for Your Child's Education	How to save money, popular programs, tips on cutting spending
11	A Healthy Home for Baby	Tests for environmental toxins: mold, lead, radon, allergy triggers
12	Baby's First Road Trip	Car seat safety, choosing a car seat, installation, position of baby

**Focal article for current study*

The 7 GNP focal articles. The 7 focal articles chosen for this study are described here in the numerical order they appear in the GNP. As discussed, sources of stress for new mothers

often include concerns about infant care and development (Deater-Deckard, 1998). Therefore, (1) *What to Expect During Your Baby's First Month* and (2) *Building a Bright Future: Nurturing Your Baby's Brain*, were chosen as focal articles because they cover infant development, crying, interacting with baby, reading baby's cues and baby's brain development. Further mothers often have difficulty with feeding and reading baby's hunger cues in the beginning (Cutrona & Troutman, 1986; Gross, et al., 2010; Pridham & Chang, 1992). Thus, the article (3) *Breastfeeding: A Mother's Special Gift* models things mothers can do if they are struggling with breastfeeding their baby. In this article mothers read about tips related to how to breast-feed successfully and learn the importance of self-care for lactating mothers. The next article chosen which also addresses feeding practices is related to bottle-feeding, (4) *Feeding Time is Bonding Time Tips for Successful Bottle-Feeding*. Mothers who choose to bottle-feed are often concerned with attachment and bonding with their baby (Pridham, et al., 1986; Tessier et al., 1992). This article covers these concerns as well as concepts such as preparation and care of bottles and formula. Another source of stress for new mothers is lack of social support (Cappuccini & Cochrane, 2000). The article (5) *Parenting Together: A Team Approach to Caring for Baby* helps parents alleviate some of the stress associated with defining and sharing parental role demands with their partner. Further this article addresses how to manage stress and relationship conflict in a supportive, co-parenting approach to taking care of a new baby. Likewise, (6) *A New Set of Family Dynamics*, introduces new mothers to concepts related to relationship management both with their partner and with other family members. Further, this article helps to prepare new mothers for evolving familial growth and development. Last, stress also arises from money management issues (Cappuccini & Cochrane, 2000; Cowan & Cowan, 1988). The 7th article (9)

Putting Baby on a Budget, was designed to help new parents manage their finances in order to control and afford baby-related expenses. In this article, tips for developing a family budget and methods to cut spending are offered.

Design and Procedures

Due to the method of distribution of the GNP and the recruitment of the convenience sample of new mothers who participated in the Reaching New Parents Project (Futris, 2008), a quasi-experimental static group comparison research design was chosen for this study. There were two reasons why this design was applicable: (1) a pretest was not possible and (2) randomly assigning participants to different groups was not an option. More specifically, a post-test only static group comparison research design was employed for the current study in order to compare mothers who vary on reading level and perceptions of helpfulness of the GNP across variables of interest (e.g., reported parental knowledge, self-efficacy and stress).

Recruitment of participants. The GNP was distributed to new mothers at 24 hospitals located in 22 counties across the state of Georgia from September 1 to December 30, 2008. County Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agents established partnerships with their local labor and delivery hospitals in order to distribute the GNP. In coordination with the labor and delivery unit and other special programs offered to new mothers at each hospital, FACS agents ensured that the GNP was included with other materials provided by hospitals and handed to mothers by a nurse or educator either during their stay at the hospital or as mothers left the hospital.

To collect feedback and initial demographic information on the mothers who received the GNP, business reply survey postcards (see Appendix A) were included in the GNP for mothers

to return in exchange for a baby's first year calendar incentive. Mothers were also asked to indicate whether they would be willing to complete a follow-up survey and then to specify a preferred method (i.e., phone, email, US mail) for follow-up contact. Mothers who returned a business reply survey postcard were invited to complete a follow-up survey, based on the following criteria: (1) the mother was 18 years or older; (2) English was the mother's native language; (3) the mother resided in the state of Georgia; (4) and the mother gave birth in the state of Georgia. Mothers selected to participate in the study were contacted approximately 2-3 months after their baby's birth month, as indicated on the survey postcard, and asked to complete a mail or Internet survey. Because all of the mothers provided either a mailing address or an email address as a method of follow-up, the phone survey option was omitted. Further, mothers who provided an email address were selected to receive an online survey and those who provided a mailing address were selected to receive the mail survey. Because most of the mothers only provided a mailing address, and in an attempt to balance the mail survey group with the internet survey group, if both an email address and a mailing address were provided, mothers were placed in the internet survey group. The follow-up survey protocol (described below) followed Dillman's (2007) methods to maximize survey response rate. Upon completion of the survey, each participant was entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25 gift cards.

Mail survey. For those mothers contacted by US mail, a copy of the follow-up survey (see Appendix A1), a cover letter describing the study (see Appendix B), and a self-addressed stamped return envelope was mailed, along with the Baby's First Year Calendar incentive. The survey was designed to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. One week after mailing the survey, mothers were mailed a reminder postcard (see Appendix C). Three weeks after mailing

the initial survey, if the survey had not been returned, mothers were mailed a final letter (see Appendix D) and a copy of the survey along with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Internet survey. For those mothers contacted online, an email (see Appendix E) was sent that described the study, provided a URL link to the survey, and notified the mother that her copy of the Baby's First Year Calender was to be mailed within one week. If a completed survey was submitted online during the first week, a thank you letter (see Appendix F) was mailed to the mother along with the Baby's First Year Calender. If a completed survey was not submitted within the first week, a letter (see Appendix G) describing the study and confirming that an email was sent was mailed via the US Mail along with the Baby's First Year Calender. A follow-up reminder email was also sent via the Internet (see Appendix H). If the original email bounced back as undeliverable, the follow-up mailing included a modified letter (see Appendix I) explaining that the researchers were unable to reach the mother by email as well as a print copy of the follow-up survey and a self-addressed stamped return envelope (Mail Survey procedures were then followed). Three weeks after the initial email, if the survey had not been completed, the participants were emailed a final notice (see Appendix J). The Internet survey was available online for the duration of the study to ensure mothers who relocated or were having Internet issues had an opportunity to complete the survey.

Participants

Twenty-four hospitals within 22 counties across Georgia distributed the Guide for New Parents (GNP) during a three-month period between September 1 and December 30, 2008. Based on monthly reports collected from these hospitals (see Table 2), 9465 women gave birth during the distribution period and approximately 8600 (91%) of these new mothers received a copy of

Table 2. Pilot County and Hospital Reported Number of Live Births: Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2008.

Pilot County and Hospital		Reported Live Births During GNP Distribution Month					Estimated GNPs Distributed ^a	
		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

^a Estimate based on reports from participating hospitals and total number of GNPs remaining from original quantity provided to each county/hospital.

the GNP. As of April 30, 2009, 295 completed business reply post cards were returned: 279

mothers and 4 fathers from Georgia, as well as 12 mothers residing outside of Georgia (7

Alabama, 1 Louisiana, 1 Pennsylvania, 2 South Carolina, and 1 Texas). Of those mothers

residing in Georgia, 65% resided in one of the pilot counties where the GNP was distributed

while nearly one-third (35%) of the mothers who responded delivered their baby at a pilot hospital but resided in a neighboring county. Figure 1 illustrates the representation of mothers from across Georgia; overall, mothers from at least 73 Georgia counties have been reached based on responses from the returned survey postcards.

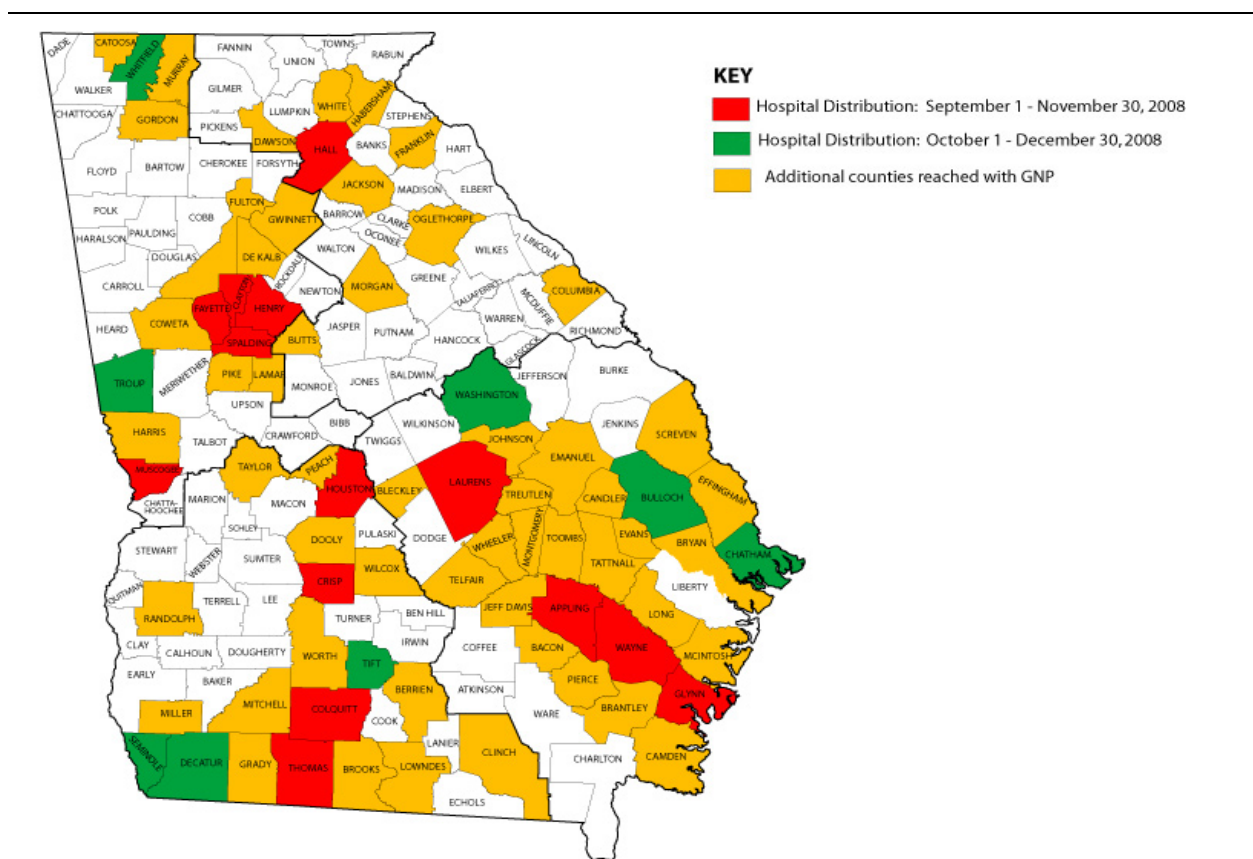


Figure 1. Counties Reached with GNP Based on Postcard Survey Responses

Of the 279 Georgia mothers who returned a survey postcard, 255 mothers met the selection criteria and were surveyed. Of those mothers surveyed, 191 were contacted via US Mail and 64 were contacted via the Internet. A summary of the survey response rate by survey method and response time is shown in Table 3. Of those mothers who were mailed a survey, 109

returned a completed survey (58%). Of those mothers contacted via the Internet, 31 responded (48%) but 17 completed a paper survey mailed to them after the 3-week follow-up; only 14 mothers completed the online survey. Thus, the majority of the surveys were completed in print format.

Table 3. Summary of The Survey Response Rate By Survey Method And Time

Survey Method	Total Number Contacted	Timing of Response			Total Responses	Response Rate (%)
		1 week	1-3 weeks	After 3 weeks		
Mail Survey	191	20	57	36	114	59.69
Internet Survey	64	2	12	18	32	50.00
Overall Total	255	23	69	54	146	57.25

As seen in Table 4, of the 146 mothers who completed the follow-up survey the majority were 20-29 years old (56%; $M = 26.39$; $SD = 5.75$), and most were White/Caucasian (66%). Further, most were married (56%), at least high school educated (82%) and, of those who reported their household income (not in Table 3), 45% reported earning less than \$20,000, 36% reported earning 21,000-59,000 and 19% reported earning 60,000 or more. Almost half (47%) of these mothers reported this baby was their first child, and 51% ($n = 75$) gave birth to a girl. Overall, the 146 mothers who returned a survey closely resembled Georgia mothers and those who returned a postcard but did not return a completed survey with few exceptions. Compared to mothers across Georgia, the current sample was more likely to be Caucasian and slightly more educated. Likewise, compared to the 109 mothers who were surveyed but did not return a completed survey, the current sample of 146 mothers were more likely to be married or cohabiting ($X^2 = 14.36$, $p = .001$) and Caucasian ($X^2 = 11.66$, $p = .003$).

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of New Mother Respondents

	Postcard Respondents (N = 279)	Surveyed Mothers			Georgia Mothers (2007) ^a
		Total (n = 255)	Respondents (n = 146)	Non-Respondents (n = 109)	
Age					
17 or younger	15 (5.5)	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.0
18-19	40 (14.4)	37 (14.6)	19 (13.0)	18 (16.8)	8.1
20-24	87 (31.5)	85 (33.5)	47 (32.2)	38 (35.5)	27.1
25-29	68 (24.6)	66 (25.9)	34 (23.3)	32 (29.9)	27.4
30-34	44 (15.9)	43 (17.1)	32 (21.9)	11 (10.3)	20.7
35-39	18 (6.5)	18 (7.2)	12 (8.2)	6 (5.6)	10.5
40 or older	5 (1.8)	4 (1.6)	2 (1.4)	2 (1.9)	2.2
Missing	2	2		2	
Race/Ethnicity					
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	159 (57.2)	144 (56.7)	96 (65.8)	48 (44.4)	44.4
African American	91 (32.7)	86 (33.9)	40 (27.4)	46 (42.6)	31.9
Hispanic	18 (6.5)	15 (5.9)	8 (5.5)	7 (6.5)	5.9
Other	10 (3.6)	9 (3.5)	2 (1.4)	6 (5.6)	16.2
Missing	1	1		1	1.6
Highest Education					
Some high school	54 (19.9)	42 (16.8)	27 (18.5)	15 (14.4)	24.2
High school diploma/GED	107 (39.9)	102 (40.8)	54 (37.0)	48 (46.2)	75.8 ^b
Some college	62 (22.9)	59 (23.6)	31 (21.2)	28 (26.9)	
College degree	48 (17.7)	47 (18.8)	34 (23.3)	13 (12.5)	
Missing	8	5		5	
Marital Status					
Single	93 (33.7)	79 (31.3)	32 (21.9)	47 (44.3)	43.8 ^c
Not married/cohabiting	53 (19.2)	48 (19.0)	32 (21.9)	16 (15.1)	
Married	130 (47.1)	125 (49.6)	82 (56.2)	43 (40.6)	56.2
Missing	3	3		3	
First child (% Yes)	134 (48.4)	115 (45.5)	69 (47.3)	46 (43.0)	37.9
Missing	2	2			
Baby's Sex (% Girl)	140 (50.7)	131 (51.6)	75 (51.4)	56 (51.9)	
Missing	1	1			
Baby's Birth Month					
September 2008	74 (27.3)	67 (26.5)	40 (27.4)	27 (25.2)	
October 2008	74 (26.9)	70 (27.7)	41 (28.1)	29 (27.1)	
November 2008	65 (23.6)	61 (24.1)	35 (24.0)	26 (24.3)	
December 2008	34 (12.4)	33 (13.0)	21 (14.4)	12 (11.2)	
Jan.-April 2009	27 (9.9) ^c	20 (7.9)	9 (6.2)	13 (12.1)	
Missing	4	2		2	

^a Source: Georgia DHR Division of Public Health (<http://oasis.state.ga.us/>). ^b Percent with 12 or more years of education. ^c Percent unmarried.

Measures

A combination of established instruments as well as measures developed specifically for this study were used to assess parenting stress, parenting self-efficacy and parental knowledge.

Below are descriptions and information about each of the measures used to collect responses from mothers at Time 1, on the postcard survey (see Appendix A), and at Time 2, on the follow-up survey (see Appendix A1).

Demographic questions. Demographics on participants were collected first on the business reply postcard (T1) and included age, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, baby's birth month and gender. The same information was collected again on the follow-up survey (T2), with the addition of household income. In order to reduce missing data participant responses on the postcard were compared to those provided on the follow-up survey and missing items were filled in where possible.

Reading level. In order to determine what and how many articles mothers read a comparison was made between the number of articles mothers reported reading at T1 and T2. On the post card survey mothers were provided with a list of the 7 article titles and asked to check off each article they read. T1 reading scores were summed based on total number of 7 focal articles read with a range of scores from 0-7. On the follow-up survey, mothers were again asked to report which articles they recalled reading. (e.g., *Did you read the article What to Expect During your Baby's First Month?*) Possible response items included and were coded (0) *I don't know*; (0) *No*; and (1) *Yes*. It was determined that if the mother could not recall reading the article, they recalled no benefits from it, so responses of *I don't know* and *No* were coded the same. T2 reading scores were summed and ranged from 0-7 with higher scores indicating greater

numbers of articles reportedly read. In addition to examining variations by the number of articles read at T1 and T2, mothers were also divided into three groups based on their reported reading level over time: (1) those who read a low number (0-3) of articles at T2 (Low, $n = 25$); (2) those who read a low number of articles (0-3) at T1 but who reported reading a high number of articles (4-7) by T2, (Low-High, $n = 58$); and (3) those who read a high number of articles (4-7) at both T1 and T2 (High, $n = 56$).

Parental Knowledge. Parental knowledge, assessed on the follow-up survey (T2) was operationalized as whether mothers felt each article they reported reading helped them to *understand* the concepts presented in the article. For example, if mothers checked off that they read the article *What to Expect During your Baby's First Month* they were then asked *Did this article help you understand what to expect from and how to interact with your baby...?* Possible response items included and were coded (0) *I don't remember*, (0) *Not at all*, (1) *Not much*, (2) *A little*, (3) *A lot*." Again, it was determined that if the mother could not recall if the article helped them to understand the content presented, they received no benefits from the article, so responses of *I don't know* and *No* were coded the same. Because scores were dependent on number of articles read, mean scores were calculated with higher scores indicating greater reported conceptual understanding of the content in the articles they read. Internal consistency for this measure was (Cronbach's Alpha = .81). Next, mothers with complete data were classified into two groups: those who felt the articles they read, on average, helped them understand the concepts "a lot" ($M = 2.51$ or higher; High Understanding, $n = 77$) versus "a little" or less ($M = 2.50$ or less; Low Understanding, $n = 62$).

Application. In order to determine what information mothers applied, they were asked “*Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read in this article?*” for each article they reported reading. Possible response items included and were coded (0) *I don’t know*; (0) *No*; and (1) *Yes*.

Parenting self-efficacy. Parenting self-efficacy is conceptualized as a person’s belief in his/her ability to perform effectively as a parent. In order to assess mother’s self-efficacy the 12-item competence subscale from Abidin’s (1995) Parenting Stress Index was utilized to measure the level of each mother’s confidence in her ability to perform well in the parenting role (see Appendix A1: Q29-32). Participants were asked to evaluate each item on the competence subscale pertaining to how they felt in the parenting role. Sample items included “*I enjoy being a parent,*” “*I feel capable and on top of things when I am caring for my baby,*” “*I have had doubtful feelings about my ability to handle being a parent,*” and “*Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be.*” Mothers indicated to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each item on a five-point Likert-scale: (1) *Strongly Disagree*; (2) *Disagree*; (3) *Not Sure*; (4) *Agree*; or (5) *Strongly Agree*. Responses to negatively worded items were reverse-scored and an overall mean score was computed so that higher scores reflected feeling more efficacious in the parenting role (Cronbach’s Alpha = .76). According to Hess, Teti & Hussy-Gardner (2004) the current competency subscale (Abidin,1995) is strongly correlated with the 10-item Maternal Self-Efficacy scale (Teti & Gelfand, 1991) confirming adequate concurrent validity. To conduct later comparisons, mothers were also divided, using a median split (MD = 4.33), into high (n = 67) and low (n = 77) parenting self-efficacy groups.

Preparedness. In order to assess *preparedness*, mothers were asked to respond to the question: “*Overall did the articles you read help you feel prepared to take care of your baby...*” Response items on this question included and were coded (0) *Not at all*, (1) *Not much*, (2) *A little*, and (3) *A lot*. Higher scores indicated feeling more prepared for the parenting role.

Adjustment. In order to assess *adjustment* mothers were asked, “*Overall, how useful did you find the Guide for New Parents in helping you adjust to your new role as a parent?*” Responses on this numerical rating scale ranged from (1) *Not at all useful* to (10) *Extremely useful*. Higher scores indicated feeling the GNP was more useful in helping them adjust to the parental role.

Parenting stress. Parenting stress for the purposes of this study represents stress resulting from parental dysfunctional behaviors or behavioral characteristics of the child (Abidin, 1995). In order to determine the level of stress new mothers reported in the maternal role during the first few months following delivery, the 23-item Parental Stress Inventory (Terry, 1991) was utilized (see Appendix A1: Q 28. Mothers were asked to choose the best answer to describe their experiences with a variety of parenting-related issues such as baby’s colic, maternal sleep deprivation, uncertainty about parenting skills, lack of social contact with other parents, loss of work/career commitments and changes in partner relationship were used to determine the level of maternal stress at the time of the survey. Responses were scored at an ordinal level of measurement differentiated between four choices: (1) *Have not experienced*, (2) *Experienced but not difficult*, (3) *Experienced and somewhat difficult*, (4) *Experienced and very difficult*. An overall mean score was computed with higher scores indicating more parenting stress (Cronbach’s Alpha = .90). Terry (1991b) posits adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha

= .89), relatively good test-retest reliabilities, and high correlations with instruments measuring the same construct indicating high internal validity.

Data Analysis

Data analyses were conducted using SPSS 17.0 software. First, in order to determine if mothers read the articles in the GNP and how much they read over time using data from T1 to T2 (research question 1), frequency analyses were conducted on mothers responses from both T1 (the postcard survey) and T2 (the follow-up survey). Further, in order to establish if there were any differences between the survey respondents and non-respondents on reading level at T1, chi square analyses were conducted. Next, frequency analyses were again conducted in order to determine how much mothers reported the articles helped them understand the content read and how much they applied the content read in the articles (research question 2). In order to evaluate if parenting self-efficacy varied as a function of reading level and understanding (research questions 2 and 3) mothers were divided into two groups based on high and low parenting self-efficacy and high and low reading level. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to compare mean scores of reading level with measures of reported low and high self-efficacy. Additionally correlations were conducted to explore relationships between the various dependent and independent variables. Last, to determine if the articles helped mothers feel prepared to take care of their baby, adjust to their new role as a parent, and feel less stressed and if these perceptions of preparedness, adjustment and stress varied by reading level, understanding, and self-efficacy (research question 4) One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was again conducted comparing mean scores of reading level (low, low to high and high level readers) with mean scores of reported preparedness, adjustment and stress.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In the following chapter, results from the study are presented. The results are divided into sections that are ordered by the four research questions posed in this study.

What Mothers Report Reading

The first question proposed in the current study was, “If provided with information on helping parents to adjust to their new role during the first few months, what do parents report reading and how much do they read over time? Do variations exist in the profile of mothers who read more versus less of the publication?” In order to answer this question frequencies were run on articles mothers reportedly read at T1 (postcard survey) and T2 (follow-up survey).

First, as seen in Table 5, of the 279 mothers who initially responded to the postcard survey (T1), 229 (82%) reported reading the first article *What to Expect the First Month*. Of the 6 other focal articles described earlier, the article on breastfeeding was second most frequently read (56%), followed by *Parenting Together* (49%), *Nurturing Your Baby’s Brain* (48%), *Tips for Successful Bottle Feeding* (46%), *Putting Baby on a Budget* (33%), and *A New Set of Family Dynamics* (22%). Likewise, of the 255 mothers who were invited to complete a follow-up survey, and the 146 mothers who returned a survey, a similar reading pattern at T1 was evident.

Table 5. Articles in the Guide for New Parents that Mothers Reported Reading

Article	Postcard Respondents ^a (Time 1; n = 278)	Surveyed Mothers ^a (Time 1; n= 254)	Survey Respondents (n = 146)	
			Time 1 (Postcard)	Time 2 (Survey)
<i>7 Focal Articles</i>				
What to Expect the First Month	229 (82.4)	206 (81.1)	123 (84.2)	136 (95.1)
Nurturing Your Baby’s Brain	134 (48.2)	125 (49.2)	76 (52.1)	110 (80.3)
Breast-Feeding	155 (55.8)	147 (57.9)	95 (65.1)	95 (66.9)
Successful Bottle-Feeding	129 (46.4)	116 (45.7)	62 (42.5)	120 (85.7)
Parenting Together	135 (48.6)	122 (48.0)	70 (47.9)	116 (83.5)
A New Set of Family Dynamics	62 (22.3)	59 (23.2)	37 (25.3)	108 (78.8)
Putting Baby on a Budget	91 (32.7)	84 (33.1)	48 (32.9)	92 (69.2)
<i>Additional Articles</i>				
Daddy Time	122 (43.9)	112 (44.1)	66 (45.2)	108 (77.7)
Child Care Quality Matters	84 (30.2)	76 (29.9)	42 (28.8)	87 (64.9)
Paying for Your Child’s Education	74 (26.6)	68 (26.8)	40 (27.4)	81 (60.4)
A Healthy Home for Baby	120 (43.2)	109 (42.9)	64 (43.8)	120 (85.7)
Baby’s First Road Trip	94 (33.8)	89 (35.0)	51 (34.9)	109 (77.3)

^a Data on the postcard survey at Time 1 was missing for one mother, thus reducing the reported n-size from 279 to 278 and 255 to 254.

In regards to specific articles read over time (see Table 5), the focal articles proved to be the most popular in that nearly all of the 146 mothers (84%) reported they had read the first article *What to Expect the First Month* at T1 and 95% reported they had read it by T2. Likewise, other articles reportedly read over time covered similar content that may have been perceived by the mothers as more prominent in the first few weeks following the birth of their child: *Nurturing Your Baby's Brain* (52% at T1 and 80% at T2), *Tips for Successful Bottle Feeding* (43% at T1 and 86% at T2), and *Parenting Together* (48% at T1 and 84% at T2). Further, the largest percentage increase in readership was found on the article *A New Set of Family Dynamics* which

shifted from 25% readership at T1 to 79% by T2 (a 54% increase). This increase in readership may be explained by the mothers' perception of the content as more applicable to their lives several months after their baby's birth (versus immediately after birth) as this article covers topics related to managing evolving familial relationships.

As illustrated, in Figure 2, the number of articles ($n=12$) that mothers read increased from T1 ($M=5.30$; $SD=3.67$) to T2 ($M=8.78$; $SD=3.23$). At T1, 39% of mothers had read 6 or more of the 12 articles provided, whereas at T2, 81% of mothers had read 6 or more of those articles.

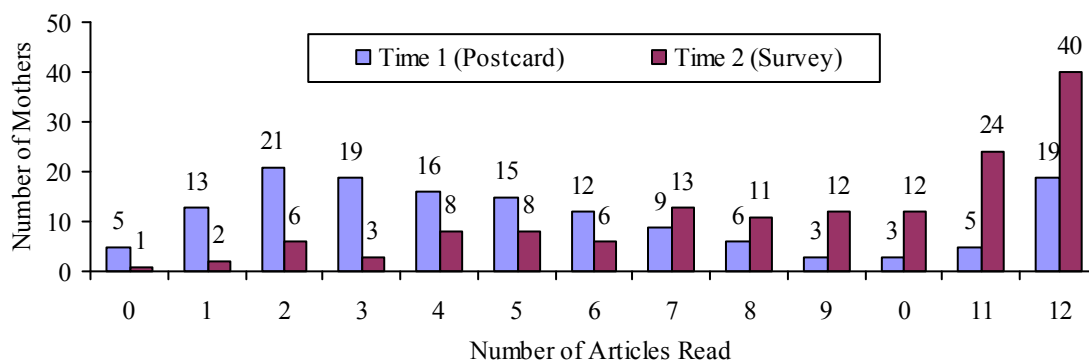


Figure 2: Total Number of Articles Read from Time 1 to Time 2 for Survey Respondents ($n=146$)

Likewise, as illustrated in Figure 3, the number of focal articles ($n=7$) that mothers read increased from T1 ($M=3.50$; $SD=2.11$) to T2 ($M=5.32$; $SD=1.81$). Further, similar reading patterns emerged in that at T1, 44% of mothers had read 4 or more of the 7 focal articles provided, whereas at T2, 80% of mothers had read 4 or more of those articles indicating that the longer mothers kept the GNP, the more of the sample read at least half of the resource.

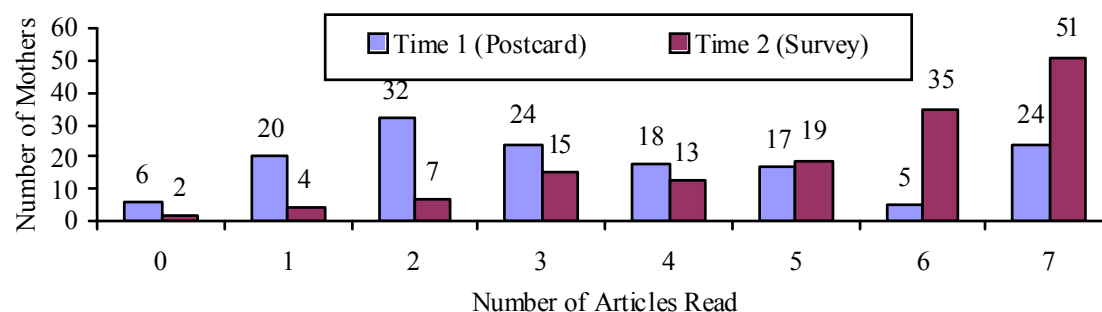


Figure 3. Total Number of Focal Articles Read from Time 1 to Time 2 for survey respondents (n=146)

In order to determine if variations exist in the profile of mothers who read more versus less of the publication (see Table 6), mothers were divided into reading level groups based on their reported reading level over time: (1) those who read a low number (0-3) of articles at T2 (Low, $n = 25$); (2) those who read a low number (0-3) of articles at T1 but a high number (4-7) of articles by T2 (Low-High, $n = 58$); and (3) those who read a high number (4-7) of articles at both T1 and T2 (High, $n = 56$). Chi-square analyses were conducted comparing each of the reading groups on race/ethnicity, education, marital status, baby birth order, baby sex and household income; no significant differences were detected. Likewise, a one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing reading groups on age and, again, no significant difference was found. Thus, mothers reading patterns over time did not vary as a function of their demographic profile.

What Mothers Understood and Applied

After establishing what mothers read, the second question proposed in the current study was, “How much do mothers report the articles helped them understand the content read and do mothers report applying the information?” Reported parental knowledge was assessed on the follow-up survey (T2) and operationalized as whether mothers who reported reading an article also felt the article helped them to *understand* the concepts presented in that article.

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of Mother Respondents by Reading Level

	Low-level Readers (n = 25)	Low to High- level Readers (n = 58)	High-level Readers (n = 56)
Age			
Range	18-36	18-40	18-39
Mean (SD)	26.50 (5.69)	26.65 (5.78)	26.05 (5.74)
Race/Ethnicity			
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	18 (64.3)	36 (58.1)	42 (75.0)
African American (non-Hispanic)	8 (28.6)	19 (30.6)	13 (23.2)
Other	2 (7.1)	7 (11.3)	1 (1.8)
Highest Education			
Some high school	7 (25.0)	10 (16.1)	10 (17.9)
High school diploma/GED	10 (35.7)	26 (41.9)	18 (32.1)
Some college or more	11 (39.3)	26 (41.9)	28 (50.0)
Marital Status			
Single	6 (21.4)	16 (25.8)	10 (17.9)
Not married/cohabiting	15 (53.6)	34 (54.8)	33 (58.9)
Married	7 (25.0)	12 (19.4)	13 (23.2)
First child (% Yes)	11 (39.3)	27 (43.5)	31 (55.4)
Baby's Sex (% Girl)	17 (60.7)	29 (46.8)	29 (51.8)
Household Annual Income			
Less than \$20,000	10 (40.0)	28 (49.1)	22 (42.3)
\$20,000 - \$39,999	7 (28.0)	11 (19.3)	14 (26.9)
\$40,000 – \$59,999	5 (20.0)	5 (8.8)	6 (11.5)
\$60,000 or more	3 (12.0)	13 (22.8)	10 (19.2)
Missing	6	9	4

For each of the 7 focal articles, nearly all of the mothers (86% to 99%) reported that the articles read helped them to better understand the topics they read “a little” or “a lot” (see Table 7). For instance, 98% of mothers who read *What to Expect the First Month*, reported it helped them “a little” or “a lot,” with similar patterns on all other articles.

Table 7. Mothers' Reports on Understanding and Application of Information Read (n=146)

Article	Number who Read	Helped "A Little"	Helped "A Lot"	Applied information read
7 Focal Articles				
What to Expect the First Month	136	37.0	60.7	88.9
Nurturing Your Baby's Brain	110	33.6	63.6	92.7
Breast-Feeding	95	37.9	48.4	71.3
Successful Bottle-Feeding	120	21.7	75.0	92.4
Parenting Together	116	31.9	58.6	74.8
A New Set of Family Dynamics	108	35.2	58.3	81.1
Putting Baby on a Budget	92	37.0	62.0	86.8
Additional Articles				
Daddy Time	108	23.1	72.2	86.9
Child Care Quality Matters	87	23.0	74.7	68.2
Paying for Your Child's Education	81	29.6	61.7	67.5
A Healthy Home for Baby	120	22.5	73.3	91.6
Baby's First Road Trip	109	22.9	72.5	94.4

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

Likewise in order to determine what information mothers applied, they were asked "Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read in this article?" for each article they reported reading. As seen in Table 7, of the 146 mothers who responded to the survey, at least 71% of mothers reported that they used or applied the information they read from each of the focal articles with 89% of mothers reporting they applied information read in the article *What to Expect the First Month*. Additionally, 93% reportedly applied information from *Nurturing Baby's Brain*, 92% and 87% said they applied information read in *Successful Bottle-Feeding* and *Putting Baby on a Budget* respectively.

Association Between Reading Level, Understanding and Parenting Self-efficacy

The third question proposed in the current study was "What is the association between how much mothers report reading, how much the articles helped them understand the content

read and their perceived parenting self-efficacy?” In order to answer this question, the sample was reduced from the 146 mothers who completed the follow-up survey to 139 mothers with complete data on the remaining variables of interest (e.g., parenting self-efficacy, parental stress, parental understanding and parental adjustment to the parenting role). First, the association between reading level and understanding was examined. As explained before, mothers were divided into reading level groups (see Table 8) consisting of their reported reading level over time: (1) Low, $n = 25$; (2) Low-High, $n = 58$; and (3) High, $n = 56$. Understanding was found to vary across the three reading groups, although this difference only approached statistical significance, $F(2,136)=2.92$, $p=.057$. Specifically, the average understanding of the low-to-high level reading group was significantly higher than that of the low-level reading group ($p=.02$). Additionally, a moderate correlation between number of articles read at T2 and understanding was found ($r = .21$, $p = .019$), indicating that mothers who read more articles by T2 tended to report higher understanding.

Table 8. Variations in Mothers’ Reading, Understanding and Parenting Self-efficacy ($n=139$)

Level of Reading	n-size	Number of Articles Read		Understanding	Parenting self-efficacy
		Time 1	Time 2		
Low Reading	25	2.64 (2.10)	2.48 (0.71)	2.38 (0.60)	4.33 (0.53)
Low-High Reading	58	2.07 (0.88)	6.10 (0.95)	2.63 (0.36)	4.36 (0.44)
High Reading	56	5.55 (1.29)	5.98 (1.12)	2.50 (0.43)	4.31 (0.47)

Note: Means and (SD) presented

Second, with regards to parenting self-efficacy, mothers in this sample tended to agree with the 12 items measuring self-efficacy ($M = 4.33$, $SD=.46$), indicating these mothers felt relatively efficacious in their parenting abilities. However, no significant differences were found

between the three reading groups, $F(2,136)=.151$, $p=.860$. Last, analysis examining the association between parenting self-efficacy and level of understanding revealed a weak, albeit positive, correlation ($r = .14$, $p = .10$) suggesting that mothers who felt the articles helped them better understand the content also tended to feel more efficacious. To further examine this association, post-hoc analyses were conducted separating mothers into two groups: High Understanding ($n = 77$, $M = 2.51$ or higher) and Low Understanding ($n = 62$, $M = 2.50$ or lower). Again, no significant differences in parenting self-efficacy were found between mothers with low ($M=4.28$; $SD=.39$) and high ($M= 4.38$; $SD=.52$) understanding, $F(1,137)=1.51$, $p=.22$.

Preparedness, Adjustment and Parenting Stress

The fourth question proposed in the current study was, “Did reading the articles help mothers feel prepared to take care of their baby, adjust to their new role as a parent, and feel less stressed? How do these perceptions of preparedness, adjustment and stress vary by reading level, understanding, and self-efficacy?” In order to answer this two-part question, a series of One-Way Analyses of Variance were conducted using mean scores calculated on the various indicators of interest (preparedness, adjustment and stress). These mean scores are presented in Table 9.

First, on average mothers reported that the articles they read helped them feel prepared “a lot” for the parenting role ($M=2.68$). Correlation analyses revealed that mothers tended to report that the articles in the GNP helped them to feel more prepared for the parenting role when they read more articles by T2, ($r=.24$, $p=.005$) and felt that the articles helped them better understand the topic ($r=.56$, $p=.000$); no significant association was found with parenting self-efficacy ($r=.07$, $p=.414$). Further, ANOVA results indicate that mothers feelings of preparedness to take

care of their baby varied by reading group, $F(2,136)=4.65$, $p=.011$. Post-hoc comparisons showed that mothers in the low reading group felt the articles were not as useful in helping them feel prepared as the mothers in the low-to-high group ($p=.003$) and high groups ($p=.042$). With regards to understanding, the results presented in Table 9 indicate that mothers' perceptions of preparedness varied by understanding, $F(1,137)=34.68$, $p<.001$), in that mothers who reported high understanding of the articles read (mean understanding of over 2.5) also reported the articles in the GNP helped them to feel more prepared ($M= 2.87$, $SD= .36$) than their low understanding counterparts ($M= 2.44$, $SD= .53$). Last, consistent with correlational analyses no significant differences in preparedness were found between mothers with low versus high levels of self-efficacy $F(1,137)=.37$, $p<.542$).

Table 9. Mother's Sense of Preparedness, Adjustment, and Parenting Stress by Reading and Parenting Self-efficacy Level (n=139)

	N	Preparedness for Parenting		Adjustment to Parenting		Parenting Stress	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Overall Sample	139	2.68	.50	7.83	1.60	2.00	.48
Level of Reading							
Low Reading	25	2.44	.58	6.69	1.89	2.06	.51
Low-High Reading	58	2.79	.41	8.16	1.40	1.94	.43
High Reading	56	2.68	.51	8.00	1.44	2.05	.51
Understanding							
Low Understanding	62	2.44	.53	6.98	1.52	1.98	.42
High Understanding	77	2.87	.36	8.51	1.31	2.02	.52
Parenting Self-efficacy							
Low Competency	67	2.66	.51	7.66	1.68	2.17	.47
High Competency	72	2.71	.49	7.99	1.51	1.84	.42

With regard to adjustment, on average mothers reported that the articles they read were useful in helping them feel more adjusted for the parenting role ($M=7.83$). Correlational analyses reveal that the more of the key articles mothers had read by T2, the more they felt the articles in the GNP helped them to feel more adjusted to the parenting role ($r=.33$, $p<.001$). To further explore this association results from an ANOVA revealed that mothers' reported feelings of adjustment to the parenting role also varied by reading group, $F(2,136)=8.92$, ($p<.001$). Post-hoc comparisons revealed that mothers in the low reading group felt the articles were not as useful in helping adjust to the parenting role as the mothers in the low-to-high ($p<.001$) and high groups ($p<.001$).

With regard to the association between understanding and adjustment, correlational analyses reveal that mothers who understood more of what they read also felt more strongly that the articles in the GNP helped them to feel more adjusted for the parenting role ($r=.52$, $p<.001$). Likewise, consistent with the correlational analyses, mothers who reported higher understanding of the articles read also reported the articles in the GNP helped them to feel more adjusted to the parenting role ($M= 8.51$, $SD= 1.31$) when compared to their low understanding counterparts ($M= 6.98$, $SD= 1.52$). Thus mothers' perceptions of adjustment also varied by understanding ($F(1,137)=40.07$, $p<.001$).

Last, with regard to parenting stress, on average the mothers in this study reported that they were not overly stressed in the parenting role ($M=2.00$). Further, mother's reported levels of parenting stress did not vary significantly by reading level, $F(2, 136) = .849$, $p=.430$. With regard to understanding the results here indicate that mothers' reported stress levels showed no significant difference ($r=.00$, $p<.967$), and an ANOVA test confirmed that high understanding

and low understanding groups reported similar (and low) levels of stress ($F(1,137)=.287$, $p=.593$).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate if a parent resource guide would have an impact on new mothers' parenting knowledge, self-efficacy and stress. The discussion presented here is divided into sections that are ordered by the four research questions posed in this study followed by the limitations, implications and finally the conclusion.

What mothers read. The first question in the study looked at how much mothers read and what they read over time. The findings here are consistent with prior research that parents will read parent education materials when they are provided (Garton, et al., 2003; Weigel & Martin, 2004). However, when it comes to what parents actually read, few studies were discovered that have looked at participant reading patterns other than to report a percentage of articles or newsletters read and only one was identified that looked at readership over time (Waterson & Welsh, 2007). Thus, of particular interest here are the findings that show an increase in readership over time. For instance, relatively soon after receiving the GNP (T1) 21% reportedly read at least 9 of the 12 articles but approximately 2-3 months later (T2), 60% of mothers reportedly read at least this many. With regards to the 7 focal articles similar patterns emerged: 44% of mothers had read at least 4 of these articles at T1 whereas 80% had read at least 4 by T2. However, only 35% read all 7 focal articles by T2 compared to 16% at T1. Thus, the hypothesis

that at least 75% would read all 7 focal articles was not supported. Still, these findings suggest that mothers apparently kept the GNP, and read more of it over time.

In regards to which articles were read, the most commonly read articles were specific to mothers' current developmental needs. For example, mothers were most likely to report having read articles focused on their infant's immediate development and nutritional needs which may have been perceived as most prominent at the time: bottle feeding, nurturing baby's brain, and parenting together. For instance, by T2 95% reportedly read the first article *What to Expect the First Month*. One mom commented "What to expect in the first month was fun to read and gave helpful information." Likewise, other more preferred articles read by T2 included additional articles relating to infant's immediate development and nutritional needs but also expanded to include content on parenting and family relations. Another mother wrote: "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."

Although only one third of the mothers read all of the 7 focal articles, analyses of the specific articles reveal that mothers may have chosen to read what was most important to them at the time. This pattern is illustrated most prominently on the Family Dynamics article (maintaining/managing relationships). For instance, 25% of new mothers reported reading the article at T1 but at T2 (2-3 months later) 79% reported having read it (a 54% increase) indicating mothers may have turned to the article for information as relationships in their family evolved. One mother commented, "I liked Bringing Baby Home: A New set of Family Dynamics most useful since I have a 2 yr old daughter already." Another mother commented: "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).” Other articles that were reportedly read later rather than earlier covered more future-oriented needs such as maintaining a healthy home or paying for baby’s education as illustrated in these comments, “A healthy home for baby [was most useful] b/c you forget the small things that are big things in babies world,” and “Several articles contained useful information, especially ‘paying for your child’s education.’” Clearly these comments illustrate a trend that mothers kept the GNP and may have perceived the additional articles in the publication as an important source of information that became more relevant as their baby grew older and their families matured (e.g., negotiating familial relationships, child care, maintaining a healthy home, paying for their baby’s future education). Another mother reported, “The article about childcare helped me find him a good daycare.”

Last, of note here was that no significant differences were found on demographic characteristics in the mothers who read the GNP and those who did not. These results are promising for practitioners developing parent education materials for broad audiences. The GNP for instance, was written at low reading level in order to be easily understood by low-literacy audiences but seemingly was well-received by more affluent audiences as well. One mother commented, “I think that this was a very informational packet that was easy to read. I feel all parents should receive this guide. I am a second time mom with lots of experience & I still found the packet informative and I’m glad it was given to me by my nurse.” Perhaps the design and layout of the GNP was also a factor in encouraging mothers to read it. Care was taken during the design process to ensure the GNP was aesthetically appealing to new mothers by utilizing easy-

to-read charts, graphs and tables to help mothers understand the information being presented.

One mother commented, “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.” Further, a selection of photographs depicting a diverse group of mothers, fathers and babies in various caregiving settings illustrated the main points in the GNP in order to help mothers of varying backgrounds identify with the information being presented.

Likewise, of particular interest, though not evaluated here, is that the reach of the GNP was beyond the new mother. From the data collected, it was found that (65%) of mothers checked off that someone else read the publication with 80% (n=160) reporting it was their husband/partner who read it. According to one mother, “This book was very helpful. I learned things that I didn’t know. It also helped my husband also.” Others who read the GNP included baby’s grandparents (n=48; 24%) and other family or friends (n=28; 14%). As shared by one mother: “Thank you for the great information. I passed it all on to a friend who is expecting a baby in August!” This finding that parents reportedly passed the GNP along to others is further confirmation that they found it useful. Though the current study does not look at what other people read or if there was any discussion about the GNP in the family support network, these findings suggest that the GNP had a larger reach than originally anticipated. Future research could examine what knowledge was shared or discussed and how other family members used the information in the GNP.

What mothers understood and applied. The second question evaluated what mothers reported understanding and applying from the articles read. The GNP utilized a “just in time”

delivery method of providing information to parents when they need it most. As hypothesized, of those mothers who reportedly read the 7 focal articles, 86%-99% felt that what they read helped them understand the content read “*a little*” or “*a lot*” and 71%-93% reported applying the information read. These findings support prior research showing that parent education materials such as the GNP delivered at a *teachable moment* may help parents feel more knowledgeable leading to better long-term child and family outcomes (e.g., Garton, et al., 2003; Weigel & Martin, 2004). Moreover, printed text often gives credibility to the information provided in written format and influences parents to equip themselves with the knowledge of positive child rearing (Laurendeau, 1991). Based on data collected from the mothers in this study, findings suggest that the GNP may have had these same positive impacts. For example, one mother, commenting on her appreciation of the article on breastfeeding, wrote: “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 commented, “Bond[ing] with baby while feeding was helpful too because I couldn’t breastfeed so it gave useful tips for me [on how] to bond with my baby.” Comments from mothers also highlight how brief articles can have an economic impact (e.g., “The baby budget was very helpful, especially with my spending habit. We have a new budget plan and are saving money now.”) as well as an impact in infant safety (e.g., “I loved the safety first – it helped me figure out I had the car seat in wrong!”). Finally, the most notable result found here was that the mothers who *made a shift from low to high level reading over time*, on average, reported higher understanding scores. These findings support the premise that with regard to reading comprehension, there is a direct relationship between the amount of reading an individual engages in and the level of comprehension one acquires,

(Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005). Future research could examine more closely parents reading patterns over time and application of information read in parent education materials in order to develop publications that encourage new parents to read and apply more of the information provided.

Association Between Reading Level, Understanding and Parenting Self-efficacy. The third question examined the association between how much mothers report reading, how much the articles helped them understand the content read and their perceived parenting self-efficacy. Overall, this particular sample of mothers perceived themselves to be relatively efficacious in their parenting abilities and no significant associations were found between reading level or understanding and parenting self-efficacy. Therefore, the hypothesis that mothers who reported reading more articles and reported they understood more of the content read would also report feeling more efficacious as a parent than their lower reading and lower understanding counterparts was not supported. Still, prior research has shown a link between acquired knowledge and parenting self-efficacy. Coleman and Karraker (2003) found that parents with high levels of parenting self-efficacy typically fare better in their ability to comprehend and problem solve, whereas those with lower levels of parenting self-efficacy are more likely more likely to experience significant levels of self-doubt when faced with the challenge of understanding new knowledge and skills. Likewise, Bandura (1977) argues that a person's belief in his or her ability to complete a specific task it is not always sufficient, therefore achieving adequate parenting self-efficacy must also include the acquisition of accurate knowledge of child development and infant and child care tasks. Clearly mothers in this study were already reportedly highly efficacious in their parenting abilities and felt strongly that what they read in

the GNP helped them to understand the concepts being presented (as seen in the discussion on research question 2). Therefore it appears there was not enough variability in the self-efficacy measure to determine if reading level and understanding had an impact on their parenting self-efficacy. Likewise it could also be that the measure of understanding did not adequately capture the parental knowledge of the mothers in this study. Thus, research utilizing a more variable sample to examine these constructs and their association to reading level is needed.

Preparedness, Adjustment and Parenting Stress. Last, this study looked at the association between preparedness, adjustment and parenting stress as it related to what mothers read in the GNP. The findings here indicate that parenting stress was not directly associated with the number of articles mothers read or how much mothers felt the articles helped them understand the content read. Therefore, the hypothesis that mothers who reported higher levels of understanding of the content read and higher levels of self-efficacy would also feel more prepared and better adjusted and less stressed was not supported. However, of particular interest here was that mothers who read more and felt they “gained” knowledge tended to report that what they read in the publication *did* help them feel better prepared and adjusted for their parenting role. One mother commented, “It really helped me and my partner out. It let us relax more and know that we can be great parents.” Further, mothers tended to report feeling positively reinforced in their parenting skills. Another mother commented, “I really found the article ‘What to expect during your baby’s first month’ [useful]. I am a first time mom and it has helped me figuring out the baby’s needs. I also found the article ‘Feeding Time is bonding time’ really helpful too. I can talk to my daughter and make her smile.” Perhaps if reading a parent education publication leads to better comprehension of infant growth and development and offers

parents a sense of normalcy in their parenting skills, the GNP may have helped mothers feel more at ease with the parenting role enabling them to feel more prepared and adjusted. In other words, this data reveal that it seems reading level and understanding drove the effects on preparedness and adjustment. These findings support the research that acquired parental knowledge helps parents feel better prepared to handle some of the stress resulting from the transition to parenthood (Hess, Teti, & Hussey-Gardner, 2004). In contrast, self-efficacy was strongly associated with parenting stress such that mothers who were highly efficacious in their parenting abilities and also tended to report low amounts of stress in the parenting role. These findings support prior research showing that self-efficacious parents tend to experience less stress while parents with low self-efficacy tend to be overwhelmed, often feeling burdened by the daily demands of parenthood (Coleman & Karraker, 2003).

Limitations

This study has limitations which minimize the generalizability of the findings. First, because this pilot study used a quasi-experimental static group comparison design there was no pre and post-test assessment to clearly determine changes in competency, preparedness and stress prior to and following the infant's arrival. As such, this study has a single-group threat to internal validity. While this does not invalidate the results, it does serve as a reminder to interpret the findings presented here with caution.

Second, because this was a pilot project, there was no experimental and control group to determine the true impact of the GNP. Future research is needed that incorporates an experimental and a control group where comparisons are made between one group of parents that receives the GNP at birth and another that does not. This would ensure that both groups

experience all the same history and maturation which could potentially yield stronger internal validity.

Third, although respondents were from 22 counties across the state of Georgia and their demographic profile was representative of new mothers across Georgia, this was still a convenience sample and thus threats to external validity are worth considering. The sample here is mostly “low stress” and “high competent” mothers and thus lacks variability on constructs measuring parenting stress and parenting self-efficacy. Those who responded may have been the mothers who were highly motivated, felt most positively about the GNP, or represented those already doing relatively well during the transition to parenthood. Thus, it could be that mothers who were struggling were less likely to complete and return the survey. The groups established after the fact were an effort to examine possible differences but in the future a more variable (and perhaps less well-functioning) sample should be sought. Future research could implement a more active recruitment process targeting distribution sites where high risk mothers are identifiable (e.g., WIC offices, Health departments) and randomly assign participants to receive the GNP and participant in the study.

Fourth, the data here were collected using a very common method of self-report surveys. However, as with all self-report survey methods the answers that were provided could have been exaggerated or the respondents could have been too embarrassed to reveal private details. Likewise, the mothers could have distorted data based on feelings of social desirability in the parenting role either intentionally or unintentionally resulting in inflated impact results. According to Ellen Wentworth (1993), “False claim exaggerations of socially desirable behavior occur more frequently than untruthful denials, false classes, or minimizations, or exaggerations

of socially undesirable behavior.” (p.180). To rectify this, measures were taken in writing the survey to reduce the social desirability bias. For instance, questions on parenting issues were worded so as to reduce any perceived socially undesirable answer options, (i.e.; “*Below are some common experiences for new parents. Please choose the answer that best describes what you have experienced.*”) Similarly, although mothers reportedly applied the information read, there is no way to ensure that they actually did so. To increase immediate face validity in the study overall, questions were worded to ensure the respondent thought about the question in relation to the information read in the GNP before answering. For example, on the question about feelings of adjustment in the parenting role mothers were asked, “*Overall, how useful did you find the Guide for New Parents in helping you adjust to your role as a parent?*” And on the questions about the content of the articles such as the one about car seat safety participants who reported they read the article were then asked, “*Did this article help you understand car seat safety...?*” and “*Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?*”

However, the reality is that we do not know what content they actually applied. One of the challenges in creating the survey instrument was keeping questions short and brief so new mothers would respond. New mothers are often busy and overwhelmed with new responsibilities and longer more detailed surveys could have resulted in participants, being less likely to complete and return them. Further, a longer more detailed survey would be more costly to produce, process, and mail to participants. Utilizing focus groups could result in a more robust study helping researchers to learn more about how mothers used the information read and the specific content they applied to their everyday lives. Further these groups could provide insight into how (if at all) mothers refer to the GNP to find answers about their developing baby or

family. Moreover, to assist in developing partnerships to distribute the GNP, these focus groups could be used to learn if mothers use any of the resources listed in the publication.

Last, the current measure of “understanding” was limited to what mothers reported reading and provided limited measurement variability. For example, on the article about nurturing baby’s brain participants who reported they read the article were then asked, “*Did this article help you understand ways to nurture your baby’s developing brain. . .?*” Again, while questions such as this have face validity, developing a strong, independent measure of parental knowledge acquisition based on specific content from each article could increase content validity and provide a clearer understanding about what mothers actually learned. However, as noted above, it is recognized that assessment via survey of such a measure would be challenging due to the added length to the survey instrument.

Implications

Despite these limitations, this study has some very important implications for practice. According to these findings, mothers who responded do read the GNP and perceive it to be helpful. Likewise, the current study suggests mothers’ reading levels change over time though we do not know when they read what. It would be beneficial for future research to look at how mothers use the publication over time and ultimately what they do with it. Because parents rely on printed materials to enhance their knowledge and skills to become successful in the parenting role (e.g., Bogenschneider & Stone, 1997; Riley, et al., 1991), it is important to make such information more readily accessible to new parents as they transition into parenthood.

The findings here also have implications for cutting costs while building partnerships with others who value parent education. In a world of continued budget cuts limiting time,

money, and personnel long-term face-to-face contact with families is not always possible. Better understanding is needed of alternative methods for delivering important information to new parents at the time they need it most. Consistent with previous studies (Garton, et al., 2003; Weigel and Martin, 2004) the current findings indicate that a well-written parent education publication such as the GNP focused on age-paced parenting content can have a positive impact on new mothers. Thus, the GNP and publications like it may serve as a cost-effective method of programming because professional time and expenses involved in distributing these resources to targeted audiences may be considerably less than the coordination and implementation of traditional individual or group parenting classes. Further, partnering with public institutions (e.g., WIC offices, health departments, hospitals, doctors offices, schools) that have convenient access to the focal audience (e.g., new parents, parents whose children are starting school, parents of teenagers) can facilitate cost-effective distribution of inter-disciplinary educational resources like the GNP while building a sense of community around the responsibility of educating parents.

These findings also have implications for reaching a much broader audience than possible with face-to-face meetings. As demonstrated here, an additional strength of the GNP was that nearly 8600 new parents were reached in a short amount of time through hospitals located across 22 counties. Likewise, the mothers sampled here did not discard the publication but instead passed the GNP on to others to read as well. Future research could help inform how these other family members and friends use and apply the educational resources they receive (e.g., Do fathers discuss articles they read with other fathers? Do mothers? Do topics in the GNP become part of the conversations in social settings with other parents? Do friends and family discuss, share, or apply portions of the GNP in their everyday lives while parenting?)

Further, the findings here also have implications for providing new mothers with information to meet immediate as well as future needs. Again, this represents a more efficient method of disseminating information to new parents. Most mothers reported reading over half the articles by the time they returned their survey and nearly all of them indicated that they had read articles that were more time sensitive and relevant (e.g., what to expect the first month, breast and bottle feeding). But mothers also kept the publication for future use when the additional content became more applicable as illustrated in this mother's comment, "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." These findings reinforce the importance of delivering educational resources to audiences in general, and parents specifically, that respond to their immediate needs as well as providing additional information that is more future-oriented. For example, with regards to new mothers, saving for college, child care or managing family relationships may be of less immediate concern but offering the information when these mothers are more accessible and susceptible to reading it may prove to be more cost-effective for stakeholders and beneficial to the intended audience.

Finally, although not a focus of the current study, additional analyses demonstrate this type of publication also proves helpful in creating awareness of community resources that can support new mothers and their families. According to Futris and Stone (in press) the GNP was paramount in creating awareness of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension in that 75% of mothers never heard of FACS Extension and only 3% ever received

something from FACS Extension in past. This is illustrated in this mother's comment: "I had not heard about the GNP or this particular division of the FACS, but the hospital where I delivered gave me the GNP 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!" Further, the GNP increased likelihood that mothers would access FACS resources in the future (67% reported that they are somewhat or very likely to call and 75% reported they are likely to visit the website). Also, the current findings highlight that cross-programmatic publications like the GNP, which contain information reflective of the various FACS Extension content areas (e.g., parenting, nutrition, food safety, finance, housing), may serve to educate the community about the plethora of programming available through Cooperative Extension. Even though the majority of mothers reported that they were likely to contact and access resources from FACS Extension in the future, additional research is needed to determine whether and how they did so.

Conclusion

The current study was a first step to examining programmatically comprehensive, printed parent education materials and their usefulness as either stand-alone educational tools or supplements to face-to-face programming for new mothers. Importantly, the study reported here demonstrated that printed parent education materials such as the GNP delivered at a *teachable moment* may help parents feel more knowledgeable about, adjusted to and prepared for their parenting role. Likewise, mothers reportedly understood what they read and applied the information to their everyday lives. Further, unique to this study was the finding that mothers

here reportedly kept the GNP and read more of the publication over time as their needs and those of their families evolved. And because the readership in the current study did not vary by demographics, mothers from all backgrounds and socio-economic systems may benefit from publications such as the GNP. Finally, educational resources that integrate Cooperative Extension programming in a focused manner, adapted for specific audiences and delivered via family and community organizations can be useful in building greater public awareness of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension.

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APPENDICES



Hey Mom!

Let us know what YOU think!
Return your response card and
we will send you a FREE

Baby's First Year Calendar

*The calendar includes what to expect
each month, parenting tips and
70 stickers to help record your
baby's milestones*

•

*For more information, be sure to call your
FACS Cooperative Extension Agent at
1-800-ASK-UGA1 (275-8421)
or visit online:*

www.gafamilies.org

Moms – Let us know what you think! Complete this survey, **fold and tape closed**, and drop in the mail.
As our gift to you, we will send you our Baby's First Year Calendar, free!

☐ Please mail me a Baby's First Year Calendar

Name _____

Street Address or PO Box _____

City, State and Zip Code _____

**We would like to contact you in 3-4 months to see if this
resource has been useful to you. Please let us know the
best way to contact you (check all that apply):**

☐ Phone: _____

☐ Email: _____

☐ US Mail (add address above)

Who else has read the "Guide for New Parents?"

☐ No One ☐ Husband or Partner

☐ Baby's Grandparents ☐ Other

About You:

Your Age _____

Race/Ethnicity:

☐ White (non-Hispanic) ☐ Black (non-Hispanic)
☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian ☐ American Indian ☐ Other

Are You:

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Not Married/Cohabiting

Highest Education Level:

☐ Some High School ☐ High School Diploma/GED
☐ Some College ☐ College Degree(s)

About Your New Baby:

Is this your first child? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Baby's birth month: _____

Your baby is a ☐ Boy ☐ Girl

Which, if any, of the articles in the "Guide for New Parents" have you read so far? (Check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> What to Expect the First Month	<input type="checkbox"/> Parenting Together	<input type="checkbox"/> Putting Baby on a Budget
<input type="checkbox"/> Nurturing Your Baby's Brain	<input type="checkbox"/> A New Set of Family Dynamics	<input type="checkbox"/> Paying for Your Child's Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Breast-Feeding	<input type="checkbox"/> Daddy Time	<input type="checkbox"/> A Healthy Home for Baby
<input type="checkbox"/> Successful Bottle-Feeding	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care, Quality Matters	<input type="checkbox"/> Baby's First Road Trip

Overall, how useful were the articles you read?

☐ Didn't read any yet ☐ Very Useful ☐ Somewhat Useful ☐ Not Very Useful

**Before getting this guide, were you aware that UGA Family & Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension
provides information on the following topics? (Check all that apply)**

☐ I had not heard of FACS Extension until now ☐ Child Development ☐ Child Care ☐ Relationships
☐ Parenting ☐ Financial Management ☐ Nutrition & Health ☐ Food Safety ☐ Housing & Environment

Have you ever received information or gone to a program offered by UGA FACS Cooperative Extension in the past?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Now, how likely are you to contact your UGA FACS Cooperative Extension Agent (1-800-ASK-UGA1) for information?

☐ Very Likely ☐ Somewhat Likely ☐ Somewhat Unlikely ☐ Very Unlikely

Now, how likely are you to visit the UGA FACS Cooperative Extension website (www.gafamilies.org) for information?

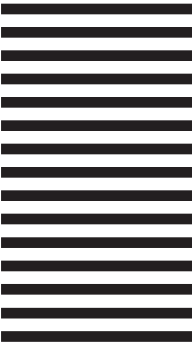
☐ Very Likely ☐ Somewhat Likely ☐ Somewhat Unlikely ☐ Very Unlikely

Comments? _____

FOLD AND TAP HERE



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IF MAILED
IN THE
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FACS Guide for New Parents
University of Georgia
c/o Campus Mail Service
240-A Riverbend Road
Athens, GA 30605-9581



APPENDIX A - BUSINESS REPLY POSTCARD

TAPE
CLOSED
HERE

Date Mailed _____

Date Returned _____

ID _____

Reaching New Parents Project



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences

A study conducted by Dr. Ted Futris, Extension Family Life State Specialist

Questions? Call 706-542-7566 or Email family@uga.edu

**1. The *Guide for New Parents* (GNP) was given to you in the hospital where you delivered your baby.
In which county and hospital did you deliver your baby?**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appling County: Appling HealthCare System | <input type="checkbox"/> Hall County: Northeast Georgia Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bibb County: Coliseum Medical Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Henry County: Henry Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bibb County: Family Birth Center, Medical Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Houston County: Houston Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulloch County: Statesboro East Georgia Regional Medical Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Laurens County: Fairview Park Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carroll County: Tanner Medical Center (Carrollton) | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscogee County: One Baby Place at Doctors Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carroll County: Tanner Medical Center (Villa Rica) | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscogee County: The Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chatham County: Memorial University Medical Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Pike County: Upson Regional Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chatham County: The Mary Telfair Women's Hospital (St Joseph/Candler Hospital) | <input type="checkbox"/> Seminole County: Donalsonville Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clayton County: Southern Regional Medical Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Spalding County: Spalding Regional Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colquitt County: Colquitt Regional Medical Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas County: Archbold Memorial Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crisp County: Crisp Regional Hospital | <input type="checkbox"/> Tift County: Tift Regional Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decatur County: Memorial Hospital and Manor | <input type="checkbox"/> Washington County: Washington County Regional Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Douglas County: Wellstar Douglas Hospital | <input type="checkbox"/> Wayne County: Wayne Memorial Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fayette County: Piedmont Fayette Hospital | <input type="checkbox"/> Whitfield County: Hamilton Medical Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glynn County: Southeast Georgia Health System | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I received the GNP from a family member, friend, or other person. |

2. Is this your first child?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Is your new baby:

- ☐ a Boy ☐ a Girl

4. Did you deliver multiples (2 or more babies)?:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. What is your baby's birth month?

6. Are you breastfeeding your baby?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. How did you receive the GNP?

- ☐ I found it in the new packet of materials or baby kit the hospital gave me
- ☐ Someone in the hospital handed it to me
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- _____
- ☐ I don't remember

8. When you received the GNP did someone explain what was in it or tell you anything about it?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't remember

9. Before you left the hospital, were you visited by someone from the First Steps Program?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't remember

10. Since leaving the hospital, have you talked with someone from the First Steps Program?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't remember

11. Since leaving the hospital, have you participated in any other type of new parenting program?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Who lives with you and your baby? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ No one else
- ☐ Baby's father
- ☐ Baby's grandparent(s)
- ☐ My partner (not the baby's father)
- ☐ Other _____

13. Who else has read the GNP? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ No one else
- ☐ Baby's father
- ☐ Baby's grandparent(s)
- ☐ My partner (not the baby's father)
- ☐ Other _____

14. You may have received information on parenting from other sources. Compared to these other sources, how useful was the *Guide for New Parents* (GNP) in helping you to adjust to your new role as a parent? (If you have not used a resource listed below, please check “not applicable.”)

	Less Useful	About the same	More useful	Not sure	Not applicable
A. Other parenting materials I received from the hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Parenting books I have read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Parenting magazines I have read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Parenting classes I have attended	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Parenting newsletters I have read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Parenting websites I have visited	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Parenting advice from doctors/health care professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Parenting advice from child care providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Parenting advice from my spouse/partner/baby’s father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Parenting advice from my baby’s grandparents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Parenting advice from other parents, peers, or friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Did you read the article *What to Expect During your Baby’s First Month*?

(This article covered early development, crying, sleeping, exploring, and all the things your baby can do at one month old.)

☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 16) ☐ I don’t Know (Skip to Question 16)

A. Did this article help you understand what to expect from and how to interact with your baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Not much
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ I don’t remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don’t know

16. Did you read the article *Building a Bright Future: Nurturing Baby’s Brain*?

(This article covered early brain development and the importance of early experiences that help your baby’s brain develop.)

☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 17) ☐ I don’t Know (Skip to Question 17)

A. Did this article help you understand ways to nurture your baby’s developing brain. . .

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Not much
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ I don’t remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don’t know

17. Did you read the article *Breast-Feeding: A Mother's Special Gift*?

(This article covered tips on successful breast-feeding, how often to nurse, working while nursing and taking care of you.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 18) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 18)

A. Did this article help you understand ways to be successful when you breastfeed your baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

18. Did you read the article *Feeding Time is Bonding Time*?

(This article covered tips for successful bottle-feeding, choosing formula and preparing and storing your bottles safely)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 19) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 19)

A. Did this article help you understand ways to be successful when you bottle feed your baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

19. Did you read the article *Parenting Together*?

(This article described positive ways to connect with your baby's father and build a team approach to care for your baby.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 20) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 20)

A. Did this article help you understand how you and your baby's father can work together to care for your baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

20. Did you read the article *Bringing Baby Home: A New Set of Family Dynamics*?

(This article described ways to communicate with other family members and help them adjust to your new baby.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 21) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 21)

A. Did this article help you understand how to relate with family members about your new baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

21. Did you read the article *Daddy Time*?

(This article helps teach dad what to expect and healthy ways he can bond with baby and become an involved father.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A, B and C below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 22) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 22)

A. Did this article help you understand healthy ways your baby's father can bond with your baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

C. Has your baby's father put to use or applied any of this information?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

22. Did you read the article *When it Comes to Child Care, Quality Matters*?

(This article described what to look for in choosing a high-quality child care program for your baby.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 23) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 23)

A. Did this article help you understand what look for when choosing child care for your baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

23. Did you read the article *Putting Baby on a Budget*?

(This article described ways to look at your budget, assess your spending habits and plan for expenses related to your baby.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 24) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 24)

A. Did this article help you understand how to assess your spending and plan for baby's expenses. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

24. Did you read the article *Paying for Your Child's Education is Not as Hard as You May Think*?

(This article described programs and strategies to help you save for your baby's future education)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 25) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 25)

A. Did this article help you understand how to save for your baby's future education. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

25. Did you read the article *A Healthy Home for Baby*?

(This article talked about keeping baby's home safe by checking for mold, lead, chemicals, allergens, and radon.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 26) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 26)

A. Did this article help you understand what to look for to keep your home safe for your baby. . .

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't remember

26. Did you read the article *Baby's First Road Trip: Safety First!*?

(This article talked about purchasing and installing a car seat, and how to properly strap your baby into the seat.)

- ☐ Yes (Please answer A and B below) ☐ No (Skip to Question 27) ☐ I don't Know (Skip to Question 27)

A. Did this article help you understand car seat safety...

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all
☐ I don't remember

B. Have you put to use or applied any of the information you read from this article?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't remember

27. Now, think about all of the articles that you have read.

A. Overall, how easy or difficult were the articles you read to understand?

- ☐ Very easy to understand
☐ Somewhat easy to understand
☐ Somewhat difficult to understand
☐ Very difficult to understand
☐ I don't remember

B. Overall did the articles you read help you feel prepared to take care of your baby...

- ☐ A lot
☐ A little
☐ Not much
☐ Not at all

C. Overall, what information did you find most relevant and useful from the articles you read?

In this section we would like to know how things have been going and how you feel about your role as a parent.

28. First, think about your current role as a new parent. Below are some common experiences for new parents. Please choose the answer that best describes what you have experienced.

	Have not experienced	Experienced but not difficult	Experienced and somewhat difficult	Experienced and very difficult
A. Baby's feeding problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Baby's colic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Baby slow to establish routine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Baby slow to establish sleep pattern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Baby unsettled, fussy or irritable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Your own lack of sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Uncertain about whether baby's health and progress are within normal limits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Being interrupted by your baby in the middle of doing something	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Not being able to manage your daily routine at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Receiving contradictory advice from other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Less time with other adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Lack of friends with babies or young children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Less time to do the things you enjoy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Less freedom to do what you want to when you want to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Lack of intellectual stimulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P. Changes to your work commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q. Loss of independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R. Changes to your marital or intimate relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S. Feeling more distant from your partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T. Less time with your partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U. Changes to you and your partner's sexual relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V. Problems sharing parenting tasks with your partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W. Problems sharing household tasks with your partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29. We are almost finished. Now, think about how you feel about your current role as a parent. For each of the following statements please indicate how much you agree or disagree.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
A.	During the past month, I have had doubts about my ability to handle being a parent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B.	Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C.	I feel capable and on top of things when I am caring for my baby.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D.	I can't make decisions about caring for my baby without help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E.	I have had more problems raising my baby than I expected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F.	I enjoy being a parent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G.	I feel that I am successful most of the time when I try to get my baby to do or not do something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H.	I find that I am not able to take care of my baby as well as I thought I could.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I.	I often have the feeling that I cannot handle taking care of my baby very well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**30. When I think about myself as a parent, I believe...
(Choose only one)**

- ☐ I can handle anything that happens.
- ☐ I can handle most things pretty well.
- ☐ Sometimes I have doubts, but I can handle most things without too much problem.
- ☐ I have some doubts about being able to handle things.
- ☐ I don't think I handle things very well at all

31. I feel that I am,

- ☐ A very good parent
- ☐ A better than average parent
- ☐ An average parent
- ☐ A person who has some trouble being a parent
- ☐ Not very good at being a parent

32. How easy is it for you to understand what your baby wants or needs?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ It is very hard
- ☐ I usually can't figure out what the problem is

33. Overall, how useful did you find the *Guide for New Parents* in helping you adjust to your role as a parent?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all Useful									Extremely Useful

The Guide for New Parents (GNP) was developed by the University of Georgia Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension. Next, we would like to ask you about your experience with FACS Extension.

34. Before getting this guide, were you aware that UGA Family & Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension provides information on the following topics? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ I had not heard of FACS Extension until now
- ☐ Child development
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ Relationships
- ☐ Parenting
- ☐ Financial management
- ☐ Nutrition & health
- ☐ Food safety
- ☐ Housing and environment

35. Have you ever received information or gone to a program offered by FACS Cooperative Extension in the past?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

36. Since receiving the GNP have you called your FACS Cooperative Extension Agent at 1-800-ASK-UGA1 for more information?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't remember

37. Since receiving the GNP, have you visited the FACS Cooperative Extension website at www.gafamilies.org for more information?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't remember

38. When you contacted your FACS Cooperative Extension Agent and/or visited the website, what information were you interested in? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ I have not contacted FACS Extension or visited the website. (*Skip to Question 40*)
- ☐ Child development
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ Relationships
- ☐ Parenting
- ☐ Financial management
- ☐ Home safety
- ☐ Nutrition & health
- ☐ Food safety

☐ Other (please describe): _____

39. In general, were you able to get or find what you were looking for?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (*Please use the space on the next page to explain*)

40. How likely are you to call your FACS Cooperative Extension Agent and/or visit www.gafamilies.org for more information in the future?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely

This is the last section of the survey. Please tell us a little bit about you. Again, all your answers are confidential.

41. What is your age? _____ years old

42. What race do you consider yourself to be?

- ☐ White (non-Hispanic)
- ☐ Black (non-Hispanic)
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Asian/ Pacific Islander
- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ Other _____

43. Are you:

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Not Married but living with your partner

44. What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?

- ☐ Some High School or less
- ☐ High School Diploma / GED
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ College Degree(s)

45. What was your total family income (before taxes) this year? We don't need an exact figure just an approximate amount.

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20K – 29,999
- ☐ \$30K – 39,999
- ☐ \$40K – 49,999
- ☐ \$50K – 59,999
- ☐ \$60K – 69,999
- ☐ \$70K – 79,999
- ☐ \$80K – 89,999
- ☐ \$90K – 99,999
- ☐ \$100K or more

Please use the space provided below to share any additional thoughts about the Guide for New Parents, your experiences as a parent so far, your interactions with the UGA Cooperative Extension County Office and/or website, and any information that you would be interested in receiving in the future.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Thank you for your time and feedback!



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences

A study conducted by Dr. Ted Futris, Extension Family Life State Specialist

Questions? Call 706-542-7566 or Email family@uga.edu

APPENDIX B – MAIL SURVEY FIRST LETTER

DATE

PARENT NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

Again, congratulations on the birth of your new baby! Before you left the hospital, you were given a copy of the ***Guide for New Parents***, a publication developed by Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension at the University of Georgia. We thank you for taking time to complete and mail back the response card you received with your *Guide for New Parents*. Enclosed is a copy of the *Baby's First Year Calendar* that you requested on your response card. The calendar includes what to expect each month for your baby's first year along with parenting tips to help you along the way. Also enclosed in the calendar are stickers to help you record your baby's many milestones. On the back of your calendar is the contact information for your local county Cooperative Extension office and FACS county agent.

Also, because you expressed a willingness to be contacted by mail we are also writing you today to invite you to participate in the **Reaching New Parents Project**. Because every baby is different, parenting is not something that just comes naturally. For some new moms, this transition is easy, while for others this transition is more difficult. Your participation today will help us understand how the *Guide for New Parents* may have helped you and your family during this transition to parenthood.

Your participation is very important to us as you are one of only a select few new mothers across Georgia receiving this survey! This survey will only take about 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in The Reaching New Parents Project will help us understand some of the difficulties new parents are facing today in order to develop future educational programs that can support new parents like you. This study will also help us to understand what you thought about the articles in the *Guide for New Parents*. The questions on this survey ask you about what you have read, what you have used, and how you are feeling as a new mom.

Please understand that your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts from participating in this research study. But if at any time you feel uncomfortable with a certain question you can skip it or stop filling out the survey. You may refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your participation in the study also includes allowing us to use your answers on the response card you returned. You may request to have the results of your participation returned to you, removed from the study records, or destroyed by contacting us.

Continued on back

If you choose to complete this survey, your answers will be kept confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual's answers can be identified. In other words, no personal information will be given away or seen by anyone else except us. An identification number is printed on the front cover of the survey so that we can check your name off of the mailing list when it is returned. All data sheets with information about you will be stored in a locked office at the University of Georgia, and only we will have access to them. We will keep any forms with identifying information about you for one year, after which time these forms will be destroyed. No information that could identify you individually will be shared with anyone without your prior consent, except as required by law. Protecting the confidentiality of people's answers is very important to us, as well as the University.

We hope that you will fill out and return the questionnaire soon. By completing and returning the survey, you are consenting to participate in the study as described above. As a token of appreciation for completing this survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards. You may enter the drawing even if you do not want to participate in the research. If for some reason you prefer not to participate, please let us know by returning the blank survey in the enclosed stamped envelope.

If at any time you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project please feel free to contact us by phone at 706-542-7930 or by email at family@uga.edu.

Thank you for participating in the Reaching New Parents Project and providing us with feedback about the *Guide for New Parents*! Your feedback will help us improve future resources developed for new parents like you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ted Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

H. Marissa Stone
Graduate Student
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail IRB@uga.edu

The Guide for New Parents was just an introduction to some of the educational resources we have available to serve you and your family's growing needs. Your local county Cooperative Extension office has more information, resources, and programs available on a variety of topics, including: child development, parenting, relationships, financial management, home and food safety, and nutrition and health. We hope that you call your county Cooperative Extension office at 1-800-ASK-UGA1 (275-8421), or the number included on your calendar, and ask for your Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent for more information. You can also find some of these resources on our website at www.gafamilies.org. We look forward to supporting you and your growing family!

APPENDIX C - MAIL SURVEY FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD

DATE

Last week a survey was mailed to you seeking your opinions about your experiences as a new mother and the **Guide for New Parents** magazine that you received in the hospital.

If you have already completed and returned the survey to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not had a chance yet to return the survey, please do so today. As a token of appreciation for returning your complete (or incomplete) survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards.

If you did not receive a survey, or if it was misplaced, please call (706-542-7930) or email (family@uga.edu) me and I will get another one in the mail to you right away.

We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking mothers like you to share your experiences that we can better understand the experiences and educational needs of new mothers in Georgia.

Dr. Ted G. Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
University of Georgia

DATE

Last week a survey was mailed to you seeking your opinions about your experiences as a new mother and the **Guide for New Parents** magazine that you received in the hospital.

If you have already completed and returned the survey to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not had a chance yet to return the survey, please do so today. As a token of appreciation for returning your complete (or incomplete) survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards.

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Dr. Ted G. Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
University of Georgia

DATE

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Dr. Ted G. Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
University of Georgia

DATE

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If you have already completed and returned the survey to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not had a chance yet to return the survey, please do so today. As a token of appreciation for returning your complete (or incomplete) survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards.

If you did not receive a survey, or if it was misplaced, please call (706-542-7930) or email (family@uga.edu) me and I will get another one in the mail to you right away.

We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking mothers like you to share your experiences that we can better understand the experiences and educational needs of new mothers in Georgia.

Dr. Ted G. Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
University of Georgia

APPENDIX D – MAIL SURVEY FINAL LETTER

DATE

PARENT NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

About three weeks ago we sent you a survey that asked you to share with us your experiences as a new mother and your opinions about the *Guide for New Parents*. To the best of our knowledge, it has not yet been received.

The Reaching New Parents Project is a research project that attempts to understand the challenges faced by new mothers like you and how the *Guide for New Parents* may have helped you during your transition. The comments from other new mothers just like you include a wide variety of experiences. We feel the results will be very useful to state leaders and others in developing programs and services to better meet the needs of new mothers like you.

We are writing you again because of the importance that your survey has in helping us get accurate results. Although we have sent surveys to other new mothers in Georgia, it is only by hearing from nearly everyone that we can be sure the results truly represent all new mothers in Georgia.

This survey asks you to describe your experiences as a new mother and to tell us your opinion about the *Guide for New Parents*. Your responses will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to the survey and no personal information will be given away or seen by anyone else except us. Protecting the confidentiality of people's answers is very important to us, as well as the University.

Please understand that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. This survey will only take about 15 minutes to complete. As a token of appreciation everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards. You may enter the drawing even if you do not want to participate in the research; just let us know by returning the blank survey in the stamped envelope provided.

Finally, we appreciate your willingness to consider our request as we conclude this effort to better understand the educational needs of new mothers in Georgia. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ted Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

H. Marissa Stone
Graduate Student
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

P.S. If you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project, feel free to email us at family@uga.edu or call us at 706-542-7930.

APPENDIX E– INTERNET SURVEY FIRST EMAIL & SURVEY WELCOME PAGE

From: family@uga.edu [mailto:family@uga.edu]
Sent: Monday, September 15, 2008 11:12 AM
To: 'H. Marissa Stone'
Subject: YOUR GUIDE FOR NEW PARENTS SURVEY – PLEASE REPLY!

Again, congratulations on the birth of your new baby! We thank you for taking time to complete and mail back the response card you received with your *Guide for New Parents*, a publication developed by Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension at the University of Georgia. In about one week you will receive a copy of the *Baby's First Year Calendar* that you requested on your response card.

Also, because you expressed a willingness to be contacted by email we are also writing you today to invite you to participate in the **Reaching New Parents Project**. Your participation today will help us understand how the *Guide for New Parents* may have helped you and your family during this transition to parenthood.

Here is a link to your survey. Please click on the link in blue below to access the survey or copy/paste this URL into your web browser:

www.Surveymonkey.com/LINK TO GO HERE

PASSCODE: ## (Please use this number to access your online survey)

Because every baby is different, parenting is not something that just comes naturally. For some new moms, this transition is easy, while for others this transition is more difficult. By completing this brief, 15 minute, survey you will also help us understand some of the difficulties new parents are facing today in order to develop future educational programs that can support new parents like you.

Your participation is very important to us as you are one of only a select few new mothers across Georgia receiving this survey! As a token of appreciation for completing the survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards. You may enter the drawing even if you do not want to participate in the research. If for some reason you prefer not to participate, please let us know by replying to this email or by clicking "I do not agree" at the link above.

If at any time you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project please feel free to contact us by phone at 706-542-7930 or by email at family@uga.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ted Futris, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
H. Marissa Stone, Graduate Student
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

SURVEY WELCOME PAGE

Reaching New Parents Project

Thanks for helping with this survey. Please read the following, and click on the “I agree” button located at the bottom of this page if you would like to participate in this study.

My name is Dr. Ted Futris and I am the main researcher for this study. I am an assistant professor and a Family Life Extension State Specialist in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences at The University of Georgia. It is my hope that results from this study will help us understand some of the difficulties new parents are facing today in order to develop future educational programs that can support new parents like you. This study will also help us to understand what you thought about the articles in the *Guide for New Parents* and whether and how they helped you during your transition to parenthood.

Your participation is very important to us as you are one of only a select few new mothers across Georgia receiving this survey! This survey will only take about 15 minutes to complete. The questions on this survey ask you about what you read in the *Guide for New Parents*, what you have used, and how you are feeling as a new mom. As a token of appreciation for completing this survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards. You will also be entered into the drawing even if you do not agree to participate in this research study.

Please understand that your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts from participating in this research study. But if at any time you feel uncomfortable with a certain question you can skip it or stop filling out the survey. You may refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your participation in the study also includes allowing us to use your answers on the response card you returned. You may request to have the results of your participation returned to you, removed from the study records, or destroyed by contacting us.

If you choose to complete this survey, your answers will be kept confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual's answers can be identified. In other words, no personal information will be given away or seen by anyone else except us. Also, this online survey is maintained within a secure and encrypted environment, thus protecting the privacy of your answers. No information that could identify you individually will be shared with anyone without your prior consent, except as required by law. Protecting the confidentiality of people's answers is very important to us, as well as the University.

If you would like to participate in this study using a method other than the online survey, you may do so by contacting the researcher and requesting a written copy of the survey. If at any time you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project please feel free to contact me by phone at 706-542-7930 or by email at family@uga.edu.

Thank you for participating in the Reaching New Parents Project and providing us with feedback about the *Guide for New Parents*! Your feedback will help us improve future resources developed for new parents like you.

**Place the four digit Password we sent you
in the box to the right**

Click on the “I agree” button below to indicate that you have read this form and understand the information above. By clicking on the “I agree” button, you are providing an online signature for your consent to participate in the study. If for some reason you prefer not to participate, please let us know by choosing “I Do Not Agree”

I AGREE

I DO NOT AGREE

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail IRB@uga.edu

**APPENDIX F – THANK YOU LETTER AFTER COMPLETION
OF PHONE OR EMAIL SURVEY *WITHIN FIRST WEEK***

DATE

PARENT NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

Again, congratulations on the birth of your new baby! On behalf of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension at the University of Georgia and your local county Cooperative Extension office, we thank you for taking time to complete and mail back the response card you received with your *Guide for New Parents* and for participating in the Reaching New Parents Project by completing our follow-up survey this past week. Your feedback will be most helpful to us in developing future resources and programs for parents and families!

Enclosed is a copy of the *Baby's First Year Calendar* that you requested on your response card. The calendar includes what to expect each month for your baby's first year along with parenting tips to help you along the way. Also enclosed in the calendar are stickers to help you record your baby's many milestones. On the back of your calendar is the contact information for your local county Cooperative Extension FACS agent.

The Guide for New Parents was just an introduction to some of the educational resources we have available to serve you and your family's growing needs. Your local county Cooperative Extension office has more information, resources, and programs available on a variety of topics, including: child development, parenting, relationships, financial management, home and food safety, and nutrition and health. You can also find some of these resources on our website at www.gafamilies.org.

We hope that you will turn to your local experts when you need answers that matter most in your life. Call your county Cooperative Extension office at 1-800-ASK-UGA1 (275-8421), or the number included on your calendar, and ask for your Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent for more information.

We look forward to supporting you and your growing family!

Family and Consumer Sciences, UGA Cooperative Extension

PS., If at any time you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project please feel free to contact Dr. Ted Futris by phone at 706-542-7930 or by email at family@uga.edu.

APPENDIX G - INTERNET SURVEY FOLLOW-UP LETTER (REMINDER)

DATE

PARENT NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

Again, congratulations on the birth of your new baby! On behalf of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension at the University of Georgia and your local county Cooperative Extension office, we thank you for taking time to complete and mail back the response card enclosed in the *Guide for New Parents* that you received in the hospital. Enclosed is a copy of the *Baby's First Year Calendar* that you requested on your response card. The calendar includes what to expect each month for your baby's first year along with parenting tips to help you along the way. Also enclosed in the calendar are stickers to help you record your baby's many milestones. On the back of your calendar is the contact information for your local county Cooperative Extension FACS agent.

Also, about one week ago we sent you an email from family@uga.edu inviting you to participate in the **Reaching New Parents Project** and share your opinions about your experiences as a new mother and the *Guide for New Parents* magazine. If you have already completed the survey, please accept our sincere thanks.

If you have not had a chance yet to go online and complete the survey please do so today. You can go to www.Surveymonkey.com/LINK TO GO HERE and use the following password, ##, to access your online survey. Or, you can email or call us and we would be happy to resend the email or mail you a printed survey.

Because every baby is different, parenting is not something that just comes naturally. For some new moms, this transition is easy, while for others this transition is more difficult. Your participation in The Reaching New Parents Project will help us understand some of the difficulties new parents are facing today in order to develop future educational programs that can support new parents like you.

As a token of appreciation for completing the survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards. You may enter the drawing even if you do not want to participate in the research. If for some reason you prefer not to participate, please let us know by contacting us or by clicking "I do not agree" at the link above.

If at any time you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project please feel free to contact us by phone at 706-542-7930 or by email at family@uga.edu. Thank you for participating in the Reaching New Parents Project and providing us with feedback about the *Guide for New Parents*! Your feedback will help us improve future resources developed for new parents like you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ted Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

H. Marissa Stone
Graduate Student
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

P.S. The Guide for New Parents was just an introduction to some of the educational resources we have available to serve you and your family's growing needs. Your local county Cooperative Extension office has more information, resources, and programs available on a variety of topics, including: child development, parenting, relationships, financial management, home and food safety, and nutrition and health. We hope that you call your county Cooperative Extension office at 1-800-ASK-UGA1 (275-8421), or the number included on your calendar, and ask for your Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent for more information. You can also find some of these resources on our website at www.gafamilies.org. We look forward to supporting you and your growing family!

APPENDIX H – INTERNET SURVEY FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

From: family@uga.edu [mailto:family@uga.edu]
Sent: Monday, September 15, 2008 11:12 AM
To: 'H. Marissa Stone'
Subject: YOUR GUIDE FOR NEW PARENTS SURVEY – PLEASE REPLY!

About a week ago we sent you an email inviting you to participate in the **Reaching New Parents Project** and share your opinions about your experiences as a new mother and the *Guide for New Parents* magazine that you received in the hospital. Because every baby is different, this transition is easy for some moms while more difficult for others. We are asking for your help with understanding how the *Guide for New Parents* may have helped you and your family during your transition.

If you have already completed your online survey, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not had a chance yet to go online to complete your survey, please do so today. In case you have misplaced the last email, here is a link to your survey (Please click on the link in blue below to access the survey or copy/paste this URL into your web browser):

www.Surveymonkey.com/LINK TO GO HERE

PASSWORD: ## (Please use this number to access your online survey)

We realize life with a new baby is a busy time. That's why we greatly appreciate your time and feedback on this brief 15 minute survey. Your answers will help us understand some of the difficulties new parents are facing today in order to develop future educational programs that can support new parents like you.

As a token of appreciation for completing the survey you will be entered into a drawing to receive one of four \$25.00 gift cards. You may enter the drawing even if you do not want to participate in the research. If for some reason you prefer not to participate, please let us know by replying to this email or by clicking "I do not agree" at the link above.

If at any time you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project please feel free to contact us by phone at 706-542-7930 or by email at family@uga.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ted Futris
 Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
 Child and Family Development
 The University of Georgia

H. Marissa Stone
 Graduate Student
 Child and Family Development
 The University of Georgia

P.S. Your copy of the Baby's First Year Calendar was mailed to you and should have either arrived by now or should arrive shortly. Your local county Cooperative Extension office has more information, resources, and programs available on a variety of topics, including: child development, parenting, relationships, financial management, home and food safety, and nutrition and health. We hope that you call your county Cooperative Extension office at 1-800-ASK-UGA1 (275-8421), or the number included on your calendar, and ask for your Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent for more information. You can also find some of these resources on our website at www.gafamilies.org. We look forward to supporting you and your growing family!

APPENDIX I-2: INTERNET SUREY FOLLOW-UP PROBLEM W/ EMAIL

PARENT NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

Again, congratulations on the birth of your new baby! On behalf of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Cooperative Extension at the University of Georgia and your local county Cooperative Extension office, we thank you for taking time to complete and mail back the response card enclosed in the *Guide for New Parents* that you received in the hospital. Enclosed is a copy of the *Baby's First Year Calendar* that you requested on your response card. The calendar includes what to expect each month for your baby's first year along with parenting tips to help you along the way. Also enclosed in the calendar are stickers to help you record your baby's many milestones. On the back of your calendar is the contact information for your local county Cooperative Extension FACS agent.

Because you expressed a willingness to be contacted by email, we sent you an email from family@uga.edu inviting you to participate in the **Reaching New Parents Project** and share your opinions about your experiences as a new mother and the *Guide for New Parents* magazine. Unfortunately we have not heard back from you so we aren't sure if you received our request, or you began the survey but did not seem to have a chance to finish it. We would very much like to hear back from you. Enclosed is a printed survey and stamped, self-addressed envelop.

Because every baby is different, parenting is not something that just comes naturally. For some new moms, this transition is easy, while for others this transition is more difficult. Your participation in The Reaching New Parents Project will help us understand some of the difficulties new parents are facing today in order to develop future educational programs that can support new parents like you.

Your participation is very important to us as you are one of only a select few new mothers across Georgia receiving this survey! This survey will only take about 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in The Reaching New Parents Project will help us understand some of the difficulties new parents are facing today in order to develop future educational programs that can support new parents like you. This study will also help us to understand what you thought about the articles in the *Guide for New Parents*. The questions on this survey ask you about what you have read, what you have used, and how you are feeling as a new mom.

Continued on back

APPENDIX J – INTERNET SURVEY FINAL EMAIL

From: family@uga.edu [mailto:family@uga.edu]

Sent: Monday, September 15, 2008 11:12 AM

To: 'H. Marissa Stone'

Subject: YOUR GUIDE FOR NEW PARENTS SURVEY – FINAL REQUEST!

About three weeks ago we sent you an email inviting you to participate in the **Reaching New Parents Project** and share with us your experiences as a new mother and your opinions about the *Guide for New Parents* that you received in the hospital. To the best of our knowledge, your online survey has not yet been completed.

Here is a link to your survey (Please click on the link in blue below to access the survey or copy/paste this URL into your web browser):

www.Surveymonkey.com/SURVEY LINK TO GO HERE

PASSWORD: ## (Please use this number to access your online survey)

Because every baby is different, parenting is not something that just comes naturally. For some new moms, this transition is easy, while for others this transition is more difficult. The Reaching New Parents Project is a research project that attempts to understand the challenges faced by new mothers like you and how the *Guide for New Parents* may have helped you during your transition.

The comments from other new mothers just like you include a wide variety of experiences. We feel the results will be very useful to state leaders and others in developing programs and services to better meet the needs of new mothers like you. We are writing you again because of the importance that your survey has in helping us get accurate results. Although we have sent surveys to other new mothers in Georgia, it is only by hearing from nearly everyone that we can be sure the results truly represent all new mothers in Georgia.

Your answers will be kept confidential. No personal information will be given away or seen by anyone else except us. Protecting the confidentiality of people's answers is very important to us, as well as the University.

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Finally, we appreciate your willingness to consider our request as we conclude this effort to better understand the educational needs of new mothers in Georgia. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ted Futris
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

H. Marissa Stone
Graduate Student
Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia

P.S If you have any questions about the Reaching New Parents Project, feel free to email us at family@uga.edu or call us at 706-542-7930.