

New research traces impact of weather safety training

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Credit: George Hodan/public domain

Does knowledge about severe weather translate into meaningful planning that helps the public protect themselves? A new study authored by University of Georgia researchers demonstrates the effectiveness of

weather science and safety education for teachers, their students, and the students' parents.

Weeklong weather science and safety workshops were conducted over the course of the summers of 2011 and 2012 with 66 teachers of kindergarten through eighth grade in three Georgia counties using the American Red Cross Masters of Disaster curriculum. The workshops were designed to build teacher interest and increase teacher knowledge about the curriculum, evaluate its use by teachers, evaluate students' weather science and safety knowledge, and evaluate students' and families' weather safety behavior.

The researchers focused the workshops and disseminated the curriculum materials in regions of Georgia that in the past were climatologically and socioeconomically vulnerable to the effects of [severe weather](#) (i. e., central, south, and coastal Georgia).

In the follow up study of parents whose children had received instruction in the curriculum, a clear majority of the families sampled in the following year indicated that they had developed [safety](#) plans and took additional steps to prepare for severe weather.

"Through our teacher workshops, we wanted build a culture of readiness for severe weather by pairing instruction on weather [science](#) with education on ways to prepare for and stay safe when thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, or floods threaten," said Alan Stewart, professor in the UGA College of Education department of counseling and human development services and co-author on the study.

"Our research shows that over 70 percent of families we were able to sample had made changes to their severe [weather](#) preparations as a result of the [teacher](#) training and the teachers' classroom instruction. The message got through," said John Knox, Sandy Beaver Teaching professor

in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences department of geography and co-author. "Hopefully this knowledge and greater awareness, coupled with the follow-up evaluations, results in the development of contingency plans by families that save lives."

More information: Alan E. Stewart et al. Reaching Students and Parents Through Weather Science and Safety Workshops for Teachers, *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* (2018). [DOI: 10.1175/BAMS-D-17-0114.1](https://doi.org/10.1175/BAMS-D-17-0114.1)

Provided by University of Georgia

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