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UGA ANNOUNCES FIRST STATEWIDE TRAINING FOR HISPANIC CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

ATLANTA, GA, May 24, 2004 – The Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute (GTIPI) today announced Georgia's first statewide accredited training for Spanish-speaking child care providers.

Hispanic population growth in Georgia ranks third in the nation. Metro Atlanta's Hispanic population is up 362% since 1990. Hispanics now account for 6.5 percent of all metro area residents. As a result, more Hispanic drivers and their children are on Georgia roads than ever before.

Of Georgia's more than 710,000 children under 6 years old, almost 48,000 (15%) are Hispanic. Many are cared for regularly by a licensed child care facility. Providers have daily contacts with parents and many transport children in their care. The Georgia Department of Human Resources requires most child care providers to receive at least ten hours of approved training each year to maintain licensing. Approved training in child passenger safety has not been widely available in Spanish until now.

GTIPI, a part of the University of Georgia's Cooperative Extension Service active in addressing the state's child passenger safety issues for 18 years, now provides training to Spanish-speaking populations. "Transportación segura para niños en los centros de cuidado" (Riding Safely in Child Care), an all-Spanish training for Hispanic child care providers, will be presented at 7:00 p.m. on June 3rd at the International Village Sheltering Arms in Atlanta. The class is being hosted by the Asociación Latina de Educadores Infantiles (ALEI – or, Hispanic Child Care Association) in partnership with GTIPI.

Marilu Montalvo, a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician, professional Hispanic interpreter, and member of UGA's GTIPI staff, has translated "Riding Safely in Childcare" from English to Spanish. Montalvo will be leading the course. "There are serious traffic safety issues that must be conveyed to the Hispanic community," Montalvo says. "We are teaching Hispanic child care professionals how to best protect the children under their care when being transported and provide parents with accurate, updated and technically correct information."

First developed in 2003, GTIPI's two-hour "Riding Safely in Child Care" course was designed specifically to increase awareness of the need for child care providers to transport children using current best practice recommendations. The comprehensive training addresses Georgia law, crash dynamics, types of safety seats, gross misuse, liability issues, and resources available in local regions.

Now, it is the first accredited standardized childcare training curriculum available statewide in English and Spanish specifically for child care providers. "The Hispanic community in Georgia needs traffic safety education and information to protect themselves and their children," says Steve Davis, GTIPI Director.

"We're targeting the metro area first," says Davis. "We will then reach out to other areas where there is a significant Hispanic population." GTIPI will conduct the course in Dalton, Gainesville, and Athens before this fall. More information is available at www.ridesafegeorgia.org

"This meets a critical need", says Gloria Sierra Rivera, President of the ALEI. "We are so pleased to see the University of Georgia take this lead to help prevent Hispanic children from being injured in traffic crashes".

About GTIPI

The Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute (GTIPI) is an educational outreach unit of The University of Georgia, with primary funding support from the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS). This UGA/GOHS partnership dates back to the mid-1980's when the project, then known as the Occupant Safety Education Program, received funding to purchase demonstrator child safety seats.

While the program has been active, the use of child safety seats in Georgia has risen from less than 20% to more than 90%. GTIPI has evolved into a comprehensive statewide traffic injury prevention and education effort. The project became known as GTIPI in 2002. Major educational program emphases now include child care provider training, traffic safety, seat belt use, child safety seats, and teen driving.

For more information about GTIPI and available programs, call (800) 342-9819 or visit GTIPI online at www.ridesafegeorgia.org