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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to begin to seek new ways of measuring some of the previously uninvestigated areas in which Project Follow Through might be having an impact. In particular, the rates of promotion in school, assignment to special education classes, and assignment to low ability groups were investigated. The following three hypotheses guided the research: 1) there is a lower rate of nonpromotion for Follow Through children than for non-Follow Through children; 2) non-Follow Through children are more likely to be assigned to special classes or schools than Follow Through children; and 3) after the third grade, Follow Through children will be assigned to higher ability tracks more frequently than their non-Follow Through counterparts. The second and third hypotheses proved to be unfeasible so the report focuses on the nonpromotion study which was carried out. This report is divided into four main sections. Section 1 provides an introduction, Section 2 describes the non-Promotion Study, Section 3 presents the feasibility study for investigating the impact of Follow Through on assignment to special education classes, and Section 4 reports on the feasibility study for assessing the impact of Follow Through on ability group placement. This section includes a discussion of the problems of locating an appropriate sample and identifying ability groups. The appendix includes a breakdown by ethnicity of promoted and nonpromoted children in Project Follow Through and in non-Follow Through in 22 sites, from 1969 to 1971. (CS)

FINAL REPORT ON THE

PUPIL ASSIGNMENT AND PROMOTION STUDY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Follow Through was created as an extension of Head Start to bring to elementary school children compensatory services and a parent community action program. Its broad aims and many components make any full assessments of the program a monumental task. The National Data Collection effort measures the impact of the program on a national scale using primarily test scores, classroom observations, and questionnaires. But these traditional approaches are able to provide only partial insight into the multiple effects of the Follow Through program. The purpose of this study was to begin to seek new ways of measuring some of the previously uninvestigated areas in which Follow Through might be having an impact.

In particular, we chose to look at the effects of Follow Through on rates of promotion in school, on assignment to special education classes, and on assignment to low ability groups. It seemed possible that the extra help of Follow Through might prevent children with minor difficulties from being held back or placed in special classes now or later in their school years. If the program was in fact having an impact on child placement, it was obviously of great importance, both in any overall evaluation and in a cost benefit analysis of the program.

We first investigated the feasibility of collecting data and carrying out studies which would test the following three hypotheses:

1. There is a lower rate of non-promotion for Follow Through children than for non-Follow Through children.

2. Non-Follow Through children are more likely to be assigned to special schools or classes than Follow Through children.

3. After the third grade, Follow Through children will be assigned to higher ability tracks more frequently than their non-Follow Through counterparts.

Our conclusion was that the first study on non-promotion was feasible while the second two were not. Consequently, the focus of our report is the non-promotion study that was carried out.

This report is divided into three main sections. Section II describes the Non-Promotion Study. The first part provides some background and the rationale for the study. The second part describes the procedure followed the and design employed. The third part describes the two data sources and the fourth and fifth parts present the findings from the two sources. The last part of Section II presents our conclusions on the Non-Promotion Study.

Section III presents the feasibility study for investigating the impact of Follow Through on assignment to special education classes. This section presents the background and rationale for the study, the problems we encountered and our conclusions about future investigation of this issue.

Section IV presents the feasibility study for assessing the impact of Follow Through on ability group placement. This section includes a discussion of the problems of locating an appropriate sample and identifying ability groups.

II. The Impact of Follow Through on Non-Promotion

A. Background and Rationale

Educational research in the past fifteen years has strongly refuted the idea that non-promotion improves a child's learning performance. Gaite (1969) found that some repeating students made significant improvement in some subject areas, but the gain was not sufficient to justify repeating a whole year's work. Students showed a marked drop in performance when repeating courses already completed successfully.

Kamii and Weikart (1963) studied a group of 7th graders to determine if those having repeated a grade in elementary school came up to the level of those regularly promoted. They found that repetition of a grade did not bring children's scores up to the level of the regularly promoted. The authors could not attribute the poor marks of the non-promoted to low intelligence nor to poor basic skills such as reading.

Likewise, Coffield and Blommers (1956) reported that

1. Failed pupils typically gain approximately only six months in educational progress during the repeated year and still fail to achieve the norm for the grade involved.

2. Failed pupils typically gain approximately one year and three months in educational progress during the two years following failure and still fail to achieve the norm for the grade involved.

3. During the year following failure, the educational progress of failed pupils is typically about four to six months less than that of promoted pupils

who were matched on the basis of Iowa test scores both in the same and in differing schools. [p. 248]

Research has indicated not only that grade repetition may not improve a student's achievement, but also that it can be detrimental to the social and personal development of an individual. Carefully controlled experiments have not been conducted to determine if social and emotional characteristics of repeaters are a cause or effect of non-promotion. Goodlad (1954) found that between promoted and non-promoted chidlren there were 29 instances of significant differences in social and personal adjustment favoring promoted children. Whether these differences are in fact a cause or effect of non-promotion, Goodlad recommends that the practice of non-promotion be questioned because of its failure to meet the needs of slow-progress children.

Thomas and Knudsen (1965) report that non-promotion produces a poor self-image and an attitude that makes it impossible to achieve or gain recognition in school. Non-promotion disrupts a child's relationship with his peer group and where family pressure has increased the anxiety of failing, it alienates the child from his family. Thirdly, their research showed that non-promotion is highly associated with later drop-out rates. For example, in a white school population in a Southern city of 100,000, they found that 27.2% of the students who had repeated an elementary grade became drop-outs, as compared to 6.7% of those who had never repeated a grade. Of all the dropouts, 23% had been non-promoted.

Other studies support the argument that non-promotion has a residual effect, relating strongly to dropout rates at higher levels. Peyton (1968) found that failure rate was the best predictor of dropping out at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Failure rate alone accounted for 34% of the variation in the dropout rate. Robert and Jones (1962) found in a study of Louisiana dropouts that 72% had repeated a grade at least once. Other research indicates similar findings (Hall, 1963; Dresher, 1954; Liddle, 1962).

Although the validity of extensive non-promotion as an educational practice has been sharply challenged, the difficulty of establishing an acceptable rate of non-promotion is difficult, if not impossible. It is recognized that non-promotion may at times be an appropriate decision based on careful consideration of the child's needs by teachers, principal, parents, child, and other appropriate school personnel. The issue is not whether a school system is maintaining a 0% non-promotion rate, but whether the system is using non-promotion excessively without seeking alternatives to failure.

The research literature gives no clear-cut answers as to acceptable non-promotion rates. Rogers (1972) reports that researchers in the 1920's recommended that annual retention in any one grade should not exceed 2%, and that cumulative retention*

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* Cumulative retention (by grade 7) is defined as the total percent of children in that grade who have repeated at least one year in their elementary schooling.

by grade seven should not exceed 8%. Rogers did not report his sources but indicated that more recent estimates of excessive cumulative retention ranged from 10% and over. Stroud (1956) reported that it should be less than 10%. Rogers, in his own study in Ohio, classified a school district as having a high retention index if 14% or more of the students were held back at least once in the first six years of schooling. If a school district cumulatively retained less than 5% of its students, then it was classified as having a low retention index.

A second problem is the lack of knowledge available about the present rates of non-promotion in many cities, states, and in the nation as a whole. Reliable statistics on the extent of non-promotion in many states are virtually unobtainable because few school administrators are apt to acknowledge the existence of a high rate in their system. Gorton and Robinson (1970), in an attempt to collect statistics on rates of promotion and non-promotion from state departments of education, found that 28 states had no available statistics, two had data for selected grade levels, 16 responded with the information requested, and four failed to respond after three inquiries. In the 16 states which did respond, several patterns in the data are worthy of note. The highest percentage of non-promotion seemed to occur at the early grade levels of elementary schools, and rates of retention seemed to increase at points of change in grade level structure, such as 1st, 7th and 9th grades. The data collected indicated a much higher rate of

non-promotion in the South than in other areas of the nation, as indicated in Table 1.

From the available data, Gorton and Robinson found that the overall percentage of non-promotion was 5.43 for the years 1966-1967. If these data are at all reflective of the national average, the percentage of students repeating a grade each year is 5%, approximately 2,000,000 students across the United States. If we assume the approximate cost of educating a pupil in the United States is roughly $800 per year, then the annual cost of non-promotion could amount to $1,600,000,000. One must ask if this money cannot be spent more profitably in meeting the needs of children with difficulties.

William Rogers found in the state of Ohio that a large proportion of schools had high retention policies (cumulative retention of 14% and over). In his study, the data showed that:

> Cities:* 35% of the cities (56 out of 160) had retention rates greater than 14%.
> Villages:* 34.3% of the villages (21 out of 61) had greater than 14% retention.
> Locals: 37.91% of all local school districts (188 out of 497) had greater than 14% retention.
> All Schools: 36.91% of all schools in the state of Ohio had retention rates greater than 14%.

Peyton (1968), in a study of 50 school districts in Kentucky, found that the failure rate in 1965 approximated 6.06%. Promotion policies differed not only from district to district as

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* The distinction between city and village was not defined in the article.

Fig. 1

Percentage of Non-Promotion
In Public Schools of the
United States

1966-1967*

Region	Number of Pupils in ADM	Number of States	Percentage of Non-Promotion
North	350,167	2	1.9
East	908,956	3	3.6
South	6,781,437	8	6.9
West	2,781,039	3	2.9
TOTAL	10,821,599	16	Weighted Average 5.43

* Gorton and Robinson (1970), p. 264.

one might expect, but also from grade level to grade level. Using median failure rates for 202 districts, it was found that grade 1 had the highest incidence of failure, 12.4%. This rate dropped with each successive grade until the lowest incidence of failure, 2.9%, was reached at the sixth grade level. At grade 7 and grade 9, the rate climbed to 5.4% and 7.6% respectively. The peaks, 1, 7 and 9, seemed to prevail regardless of the type of school organization.

Our conclusion from previous research is that there are few, if any, beneficial effects of holding a child back in school, and the effects may in fact be detrimental to the child. If this is the case, then it is of great importance to ask whether special educational programs (particularly of a compensatory nature) have any impact on retention rates. It is of special interest to ask this question of programs for young children.

Few studies have investigated the impact of special programs on reducing the high rate of non-promotion, even if these programs may be aimed at other outcomes. Weikart (1971) studied the effect of pre-school training on class placement in a longitudinal study of children labeled disadvantaged and/or educable mentally retarded. Weikart compared the 3rd through 7th grade placement of children who had attended the two-year Ypsilanti Perry Preschool Project with the class placement of a control group, matched on the basis of socio-economic status and Stanford-Binet score. Weikart found that 83% of the pre-

school experimental children were at their expected grade level in regular classes, whereas the control group had 61% at grade level. Two percent of the experimental subjects were over-age in grade, as opposed to 15% for the control group. Weikart concluded that a higher proportion of preschool children were able to operate in regular programs as normal achievers than children without preschool.

Secondly, the investigation of the impact of special programs is of critical importance in the early grades, particularly first grade, where the highest non-promotion rates exist. At no other age is there such a wide range of pupil variation, both in terms of physiological and emotional maturity. It is not surprising that not all are able to meet the expectations rigidly set for first graders. More studies are needed to determine if preschool, or programs such as Follow Through, do have an effect on non-promotion.

One of the largest programs in compensatory education for young children is the Follow Through program. In light of the potential ill-effects of retention and the limited research on effects of programs in decreasing retention, the data collected in the National Follow Through Evaluation provide a basis for investigating whether or not the Follow Through program has an impact on retention of children. While a decrease in retention rate has never been specified as a particular goal of the program, it provides one way of assessing the program's multi-faceted goals. Although the overall mean achievement levels of poor

children in Follow Through programs may not increase greatly, the program may still be having a significant effect on the life chances of the children. This could be the case if the program reduced the probability of a child's being held back in school. Additionally, since retaining a child raises school costs, Follow Through might be producing a net saving even if the effects in other domains were relatively small. Consequently, we have undertaken an investigation of the impact of Follow Through on the probability of a child being held back in school.

B. Procedure and Design

The question we sought to answer is whether or not the Follow Through program affects a child's probability of being held back in school. This question can be asked in two ways: First, does a Follow Through experience increase a child's chances of being promoted once he has left the program? Second, is there a difference in retention rates of children in Follow Through and of children not in Follow Through?

In order to answer these questions, we first investigated the availability of data to determine what sources exist and how well they could answer the questions. The first question -- does Follow Through increase the chance of promotion after a child has left the program -- can be looked at in two ways. First, the question can be asked of children who have completed

the entire Follow Through experience -- kindergarten or first grade through third grade. And second, it can be asked of children who have left the program before third grade with varying amounts of Follow Through but less than the maximum.

We first considered attacking the strongest question of the impact of the total Follow Through experience on a child's chances for promotion after third grade. The real test of Follow Through's ability to fortify a child against later non-promotion can be examined only when he returns to the regular school system in the later grades, not when he is in the program with the Follow Through teacher determining his class placement. However, this year the necessary information was not available in most sites because FT's first cohort had not completed the fourth grade. This first group (Cohort I entering first grade) will not reach this stage until Spring 1973. Consequently, we were forced to abandon this approach. We strongly recommend that plans be made for such a study for children as they move into the later grades.

Our second approach was to ask the question of those children who had left Follow Through at various points in time without having completed the entire program. This would involve comparing Follow Through children who had left FT since 1969 to the non-Follow Through comparison group. Our FT population would have consisted of those present in FT in 1969, and absent in 1970 and 1971. We would be essentially comparing children with one or two years of Follow Through or less, with the non-

Follow Through control group. There were several problems with this type of study.

1. If we tracked a child who was in FT in Fall 1969, but missing in Fall 1970, we could not be sure he or she was in FT more than a month or so. It was possible that the majority who left did leave in the middle of the year. The rosters in most cities did not indicate how many months of FT treatment the child received. Even if a child had been recorded in FT in Fall 1970 and 1971, that could mean only 10 or 11 months of FT involvement.

2. The group who left FT after one year or two years were not likely to be representative of the Follow Through population. The same problems and crises that caused them to move may have caused them to have greater difficulty in the school setting. For example, if we believe that a large part of the Follow Through effect on a child comes from the parent involvement component, then we cannot expect to see a strong Follow Through influence on a child whose family decisions suggest a lack of commitment to that program.*

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* The relationship between attrition and degree of involvement in Follow Through is an interesting one. Follow Through directors have indicated that there is a lower attrition from FT than from the regular school system. This could reflect parents' commitment to the program. This commitment by families can happen in several ways. It may mean simply that the family chooses not to move out of the community. Some of the letters of gratitude from Mexican-American FT mothers in Tulare expressing their new sense of belonging and involvement in the community make a decision to stay seem most plausible. In Brattleboro parents accept the payment of tuition so their child can continue in FT after they have left the city. In Los Angeles, many FT mothers have been willing to transport their children to FT after moving into another borough.

Added to the conceptual problems are tremendous problems of locating sufficient numbers of children who had left Follow Through. Consequently, we decided against trying to investigate the retention issue with the group of Follow Through leavers.

This left us with the question of whether or not there is less retention in Follow Through than in comparable non-Follow Through schools. One concern we had was with the kind of inferences which could be drawn from finding a lower non-promotion rate in FT. If a model in a site had a strict policy of no retention, would our data reflect this policy or would it reflect a real program impact, i.e. the child's difficulties were actually being met in other ways than through non-promotion. The information gathered about FT indicates that the program does not automatically promote a child on the basis of its strong objections to retention. Children do repeat grades in Follow Through if it is felt to be beneficial to the child. The important issue is whether Follow Through's individualized instruction and greater resources enable alternative solutions to be found for problem children other than non-promotion. We need to ask whether such a program does in fact reduce non-promotion, consequently benefitting the child's psychological and intellectual development and, in the end, costing a school less than would holding back a child.

Therefore, we have compared the rates of non-promotion of Follow Through children while in the program with those of the non-Follow Through comparison group. The following sections

describe the sources of data and the findings of those data.

C. Description of Data Sources

We used two sources of data for the study. The first is the Index Tape for the SRI Data Bank for the Follow Through Evaluation. The second is data collected directly at several Follow Through sites. The Index Tape provides basic information on each child in the Follow Through evaluation. It contains both roster information (such as sex, ethnicity, preschool experience, and age) and information on when the child was in the program and when he was tested.

It was necessary to have complete roster information on children in order to include them in the sample. This permits us to identify child characteristics and the grade level for the child at a given year. Additionally, it was important to use projects in which total rostering occurred -- that is, every child in the program was rostered -- so that we would be confident that our data were representative of all children in the project. Since we could be assured that full rostering occurred only in those sites which were tested, we needed to restrict the sample of projects to those which were tested.

Of those projects tested we again restricted the sample to projects in Cohorts I and II with all intermediate test points. This is because our procedure required comparing a child's actual grade each year with the grade he would be expected to be in. Therefore we had to insure that full rostering occurred

each year for each cohort. Since we were interested in looking for non-promoted children, we could only use the cohorts for which data exist for at least two years (restricting us to Cohorts I and II).

This left us with twenty-two projects -- eleven of which are entering kindergarten projects (projects in which public school begins at kindergarten) and eleven entering first grade projects. As a result, we cannot pretend that our sample is representative of the entire Follow Through program. Nor do we have enough data to compare rates among sponsors.

The second source of data came from the local school systems of four Follow Through sites. In these small school systems the non-promotion data were easily accessible through the use of June promotion lists of FT and NFT classrooms. There was no attempt to make these projects representative of any larger population. Our intent was merely to have a few sites where we could try to understand more about non-promotion and have a comparison for data from the SRI Index Tape. We selected the four sites, Uvalde, Texas; Ft. Walton Beach, Florida; St. Martin Parish, Louisiana; and Fall River, Massachusetts, primarily for ease in data collection and because we suspected them of having significantly different retention rates between FT and NFT. Consequently, the data from these sites should not be generalized from but rather should serve as examples of a few projects.

The next section describes the data obtained from the SRI Index Tape, and the following section describes the data

gathered from the four Follow Through projects we visited.

D. Findings from SRI Index Tape

Our procedure in using the Index Tape for comparing retention rates between FT and NFT was as follows. For the twenty-two sites which we selected for analysis, we looked at six groups:*

(1) entering kindergarten children who moved from kindergarten to first grade in Cohort I (1969-1971);
(2) entering kindergarten children who moved from kindergarten to first grade in Cohort II (1970-1972);
(3) entering kindergarten children who moved from first grade to second grade in Cohort I (1970-1972);
(4) entering first grade children who moved from first grade to second grade in Cohort I (1969-1971);
(5) entering first grade children who moved from first grade to second grade in Cohort II (1970-1972);
(6) entering first grade children who moved from second grade to third grade in Cohort I (1970-1972).

1. Non-Promotion by Project. We first present data from the Index Tape in two tables: the first with the entering kindergarten projects and the second with the entering first grade projects.

Table 1 presents the eleven entering kindergarten sites. Column I gives the site name and code. Columns 2-5, 6-9 and 10-13 present retention data for the first three groups listed above. The first column under each group gives two numbers for the Follow Through children in each project. The top number is

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* These sites were selected on the basis of having had testing at the grade levels we were studying. This was to insure that they had been fully rostered at each grade level.

the number of children who were not promoted and the bottom number is the total number of Follow Through children in the project. The second column under each group translates the first into a percentage: the percent of all Follow Through children who were not promoted. The third column under each group presents the same two numbers for the SRI comparison (non-Follow Through) sample in each project with the top number being the number not promoted and the bottom number the total number of non-Follow Through children in the comparison group. The fourth column for each group gives the percentage of non-promoted non-Follow Through children out of all non-Follow Through children in the sample. The bottom row presents the same figures in summary form: the total number of non-promoted Follow Through children over the total number of Follow Through children and the corresponding percent followed by the total number of non-promoted non-Follow Through children over the total number of non-Follow Through children with the corresponding percent.

Table 2 presents the same information for three groups in the entering first grade sites: Cohort I from grade 1-2; Cohort II from grade 1-2; and Cohort I from grade 2-3.

Pooling across all projects, cohorts and grades, we find that 320 Follow Through children were held back out of a total of 7,233 (4.42%). The non-Follow Through comparison groups held back 204 out of 3425 children (5.95%). The difference is statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 1

Entering Kindergarten Projects
Number of Non-Promoted Children and Total Number of Children by Project, by Group (Cohort, Grade), by Follow Through vs. Non-Follow Through

Cohort/Grade		Group 1 I. K-1				Group 2 II K-1				Group 3 I 1-2			
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
Project Status*		FT	%	NFT	%	FT	%	NFT	%	FT	%	NFT	%
0114 Portland	NP	12	6.6%	1	1.2%	7	5.1%	--	0%	11	10.9%	2	10.5%
	T	181		82		137		65		101		19	
0201 Berkeley	NP	--	0%	--	0%	2	1.2%	--	0%	2	2.4%	1	2.2%
	T	121		54		162		105		83		46	
0204 Duluth	NP	3	2.2%	3	4.1%	5	3.8%	3	2.7%	1	1%	1	1.6%
	T	134		74		130		113		109		61	
0302 Baltimore	NP	1	1%	--	0%	--	0%	2	50%	--	0%	--	0%
	T	99		79		138		4		60		55	
0309 Lakewood	NP	--	0%	--	0%	1	1%	1	1.5%	2	1.9%	5	11.6%
	T	120		47		115		67		104		43	
0502 Brattleboro	NP	3	6.5%	1	2.9%	4	9.5%	2	5.3%	--	0%	1	3.3%
	T	46		34		42		38		36		30	
0506 NYC PS 243	NP	4	3.2%	2	5%	6	4.2%	1	1%	5	5.4%	--	0%
	T	125		40		142		101		92		32	
0707 NYC PS 137	NP	--	0%	--	0%	2	3.9%	2	3.1%	1	2.6%	--	0%
	T	58		0		51		65		39		0	
0804 Portageville	NP	--	0%	--	0%	1	1.5%	--	0%	2	2.9%	6	20%
	T	89		32		65		61		70		30	
0801 NYC PS 77	NP	--	0%	--	0%	--	0%	1	1.9%	1	3.2%	--	0%
	T	35		22		42		54		31		19	
1301 Atlanta	NP	3	2.5%	--	0%	3	1.2%	2	2.1%	--	0%	2	4.5%
	T	120		77		258		95		83		44	
TOTAL	NP	26	2.3%	7	1.3%	31	2.4%	14	1.8%	25	3.1%	18	4.7%
TOTAL	T	1128		541		1282		768		808		379	

* NP = Number of children non-promoted
T = Total number of children

Table 2

Entering First Grade Projects
Number of Non-Promoted Children and Total Number of Children by Project, by Group (Cohort, Grade), by Follow Through vs. Non-Follow Through

Cohort/Grade		Group 1 I 1-2				Group 2 II 1-2				Group 3 I 2-3			
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
Project Status*		FT	%	NFT	%	FT	%	NFT	%	FT	%	NFT	%
0104 Miami	NP	--	0%	3	6.8%	2	1.4%	1	16.7%	--	0%	1	3.3%
	T	53		44		147		6		40		30	
0307 Ft. Worth	NP	3	1.3%	10	9.9%	11	4.2%	9	50%	4	2.3%	--	0%
	T	232		101		262		18		175		64	
0308 Walker Co.	NP	1	1.5%	2	6.7%	7	8.3%	11	23.4%	4	7.1%	11	45.8%
	T	67		30		84		47		56		24	
0510 Tuskegee	NP	10	3.7%	17	19.8%	13	4.4%	9	6.7%	12	5.3%	1	1.8%
	T	268		86		296		135		226		57	
0604 Pickens Co.	NP	20	16.3%	2	4.3%	20	22%	13	13.8%	9	11.4%	1	2.1%
	T	123		46		91		94		79		48	
0711 Tupelo	NP	6	6.7%	6	10.5%	3	3.2%	5	10.2%	6	8.7%	3	6.3%
	T	89		57		93		49		69		48	
0901 LeFlore	NP	9	8.5%	9	9.9%	--	0%	--	0%	3	3.5%	--	0%
	T	106		91		112		26		86		69	
1002 Jonesboro	NP	8	7.1%	2	3.1%	22	19.5%	15	68.2%	5	5.9%	1	2.0%
	T	113		64		113		22		85		49	
1102 Laurel	NP	18	10.1%	--	0%	9	6%	1	50%	3	2.1%	--	0%
	T	178		48		151		2		146		46	
0201 Elkins	NP	23	21.5%	13	17.8%	1	1.0%	1	2.6%	3	3.8%	6	10.2%
	T	107		73		99		39		78		59	
0902 Ft. Walton	NP	--	0%	10	12.2%	--	0%	--	0%	3	5.1%	5	10%
	T	70		82		62		33		59		50	
TOTAL	NP	98	7%	74	10.2%	88	5.8%	65	13.8%	52	4.7%	29	5.3%
TOTAL	T	1406		722		1510		471		1099		544	

* NP = Number of children non-promoted
T = Total number of children

However, an overall comparison of the non-promoted Follow Through rates with those of non-Follow Through tells us little about the impact of Follow Through and patterns of non-promotion. A more informative and accurate comparison of non-promotion between the two groups can result only from an analysis of the data by factors such as grade, cohort, entering level, and project.

Secondly, one must be cautious about comparing FT to NFT for two reasons. First, the groups are not necessarily comparable on several important characteristics (such as ethnicity).* Second, comparisons of percentages may be misleading because of the unequal sizes of the FT and NFT samples in many of the sites. For example, in Laurel, Mississippi, there are only 2 NFT children.

There are no clear patterns by project in either the entering kindergarten or entering first grade data. In Table 1, only one project shows a consistent FT/NFT relationship (FT has a higher non-promotion rate than NFT in all 3 groups). The others shift considerably with no consistent pattern emerging. In Table 2, three projects hold a consistent FT/NFT relationship across all 3 groups -- two show NFT with a higher rate, one shows FT higher.

2. Non-Promotion by Cohort. Overall, both Tables show the same total FT/NFT relationship across Cohorts. In Table 1

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* See breakdown by ethnicity in Appendix

Cohort I K→1 has a FT non-promotion rate of 2.3% while NFT is 1.3%. In Cohort II K→1, FT has a rate of 2.4% and NFT 1.4%. Similarly, in Table 2 Cohort I 1→2 shows a total FT rate of 7% compared to the NFT rate of 10.2%. Cohort II 1→2 shows 5.8% for FT and 13.8%* for NFT.

In general, from the Entering Kindergarten sites of Table 1, there is no indication that Follow Through has made an impact on non-promotion rates. In the majority of projects in the sample, both Follow Through and non-Follow Through had fairly low rates of retention. Out of 33 Follow Through cells, only 6 had non-promotion rates higher than 5%. Out of 33 NFT cells, 5 had non-promotion rates higher than 5%. The first grade rates of non-promotion for both FT and NFT were, however, slightly larger than that of the kindergarten rates.

3. Non-Promotion by Grade Level and Entering Level. Since the cohorts showed similar patterns, we combined them for the same years, producing the summary in Table 3 (following page).

The first grade category (grade K-EK) contains data from the Entering K sites (grade K); the second category presents data from the Entering K sites (grade 1); the third presents the data from the entering first sites (grade 1); and the fourth

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* This is probably a slight over-estimate since it includes one project which is probably not representative (1002 with 15/22 NFT's not promoted), and 1102, which has only 2 NFT children.

Table 3

Number of Non-Promoted Children, and
Total Number of Children by Grade, by Follow Through
vs. Non-Follow Through

	Grade K (EK)		Grade 1 (EK)		Grade 1 (E1)		Grade 2 (E1)	
	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT
Number of children non-promoted	57	18	25	18	186	139	52	29
Total number of children in group	2410	1309	808	379	2916	1193	1099	544
Percent of children non-promoted	2.36	1.37	3.1	4.7	6.37	11.65	4.7	5.3

presents the data from entering first sites (grade 2). For each of these categories, the number of children non-promoted, the total number of children and the number held back translated into percents are indicated for both Follow Through and non-Follow Through children.

The most outstanding feature of Table 3 is the higher non-promotion rates for the entering first (E1) projects as compared to the entering kindergarten (EK) projects. This is particularly evident in comparing the rates in grade 1 for the two cohort streams -- 6.4% versus 3.1% for FT and 11.7% vs. 4.7% for NFT.

There are two plausible explanations. Several studies discussed in the first part of this report have found (a) that non-promotion is generally higher in first grade than in other elementary grades* and (b) that non-promotion is higher in the south and in rural areas.**

In light of the higher non-promotion in the E1 projects, it is interesting to note that for both grade levels, the FT rate is lower than NFT. The difference is significant for the first grade group ($p < .05$). One conclusion from this could be that FT has a greater impact on reducing retention in school systems where there is high non-promotion.

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* Gorton and Robinson (1970).
Peyton (1968).

** Gorton and Robinson (1970).
Rogers (1972).

The next step in the analysis was to look at the characteristics of the non-promoted children as compared to the promoted children. We were interested in determining whether non-promotion operated differentially with respect to prior preschool experience, sex, or ethnicity. For each of these variables we have chosen to look only at summary figures since the numbers by project are too small.

4. Non-Promotion by Preschool Experience. The question posed is whether a child without preschool experience is more likely to be retained in early elementary school than a child who has had preschool. To look at this we broke the summary table on p. 23 (Table 3) into children with prior preschool and those without. The totals are different because we did not have preschool information on the entire sample. The following table presents by grade and entry level and FT/NFT the number of non-promoted children with and without preschool, and the total number of children with and without prior preschool. The percentages (the number of non-promoted children without preschool divided by the total number of children without preschool) permit a comparison across the groups with and without prior preschool. If the distribution of preschool experience is the same for all children and for non-promoted children, the percents will be the same. Consequently, we are interested in comparing the percent of non-promoted children with and without preschool in each of the groups for FT and NFT.

Table 4

Breakdown by Preschool Background
of Promoted and Non-Promoted Children
in FT and NFT Grades

	Grade K (EK)		Grade 1 (EK)		Grade 1 (E1)		Grade 2 (E1)	
	No Presch.	Presch.	No Presch.	Presch.	No Presch.	Presch.	No Presch.	Presch.
Follow Through								
NP	3	36	0	13	10	132	2	38
Total	200	1386	41	512	106	2106	33	874
%	1.5%	2.6%	--	2.5%	9.4%	6.3%	6.1%	4.3%
Non-Follow Through								
NP	0	8	0	9	8	61	3	13
Total	47	342	30	111	73	449	24	244
%	--	2.3%	--	8.1%	11.0%	13.6%	12.5%	5.3%

Table 5

Summary
Non-Promotion by Preschool
FT/NFT

	All Grades; EK & E1	
	No Preschool	Preschool
Follow Through		
NP	15	219
Total	380	4878
%	4%	4%
Non-Follow Through		
NP	11	91
Total	174	1146
%	6%	8%
Follow Through and Non-Follow Through		
NP	26	310
Total	554	6024
%	5%	5%

This particular comparison is a difficult one in the case of preschool experience since most of the sample has had pre-school. However, in general it appears that there is not much difference. Although the percentages are different, particularly for the entering first grade children (groups 3 and 4) -- where three of the four groups show a greater percentage of non-pre-school children retained -- the total number of non-preschool children is so much smaller that the percentage is easily affected by one or two children. Consequently it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions about the effect of prior preschool on a child's chances of being retained in school.

When these figures are summed across grade level and entering level, it appears even less likely that there is an effect of pre-school on promotion. The following table presents the summary figures, first for FT, then for NFT, and then FT and NFT together. Both for FT and the overall total, there is no difference between the children with preschool and those without -- the percentage not promoted is the same in each case.

5. Non-Promotion by Sex. Since the groups are fairly well balanced on sex, it is safer to look at the percentage comparisons than in the case of preschool. Table 6 presents by grade, entering level, and FT/NFT, the number of non-promoted boys and girls, the total number of boys and girls and the percentage of those non-promoted by sex.

Although the differences are not large, there is a consistent

Table 6

Non-Promotion by Sex
FT/NFT

	Grade K (EK)		Grade 1 (EK)		Grade 1 (E1)		Grade 2 (E1)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Follow Through								
NP	35	22	16	9	127	104	31	21
Total	1173	1213	389	419	1610	1556	595	588
%	3.0%	1.8%	4.1%	2.1%	7.9%	6.7%	5.2%	3.6%
Non-Follow Through								
NP	9	12	12	6	106	58	24	8
Total	669	639	196	183	659	580	306	257
%	1.3%	1.9%	6.1%	3.3%	16.1%	10.0%	7.8%	3.1%

pattern showing that more boys were retained than girls. The one exception is the grade K group for NFT, where the percentages are very close but slightly larger for girls. When these figures are collapsed across grades and entering level, and percentages computed, we have the following table:

Table 7

Summary
Non-Promotion by Sex
FT/NFT

		Boys	Girls
FT	NP	209	156
	Total	3767	3776
	%	6%	4%
NFT	NP	151	84
	Total	1830	1659
	%	8%	5%
FT + NFT			
	NP	360	240
	Total	5597	5435
	%	6%	4%

Here the pattern is clear: the rate of retention is higher for boys than for girls. The bottom rows present the totals with FT and NFT together. Although the percentage difference is not great (6% for boys as compared to 4% for girls), with samples this large (approximately 5500 each), this difference represents over 100 boys.

While the evidence is not overwhelming, it does seem clear that there is a slightly greater tendency for boys to be retained.

6. Non-Promotion by Ethnicity. In order to look for relationships between different ethnic groups and non-promotion, we pooled the projects across grade level within entering level. We looked at only two groups: black and white. This is because of the small numbers of children who were of other ethnic groups. The following table presents these data. The top half of the table presents the Follow Through children and the bottom half, non-Follow Through. The percentages reflect the number of non-promoted children out of the total number of children in each group.

Table 8

Non-Promotion by Race
FT/NFT

	Grade K EK		Grade 1 EK		Grade 1 E1		Grade 2 E1	
	B	W	B	W	B	W	B	W
Follow Through								
NP	27	25	17	6	59	122	25	24
Total	1517	723	481	275	1475	1112	601	426
%	2%	3%	4%	2%	4%	11%	4%	6%
Non-Follow Through								
NP	8	9	9	6	61	75	3	25
Total	733	468	194	162	509	653	210	307
%	1%	2%	5%	4%	12%	11%	1%	8%

For the two entering kindergarten groups, there is very little difference between the proportions of black and white children as compared with the proportions for those who were not promoted. This is the case for both FT and NFT. For the

two entering first grade groups, there seems to be a tendency for the proportion of white children retained to be slightly higher than their proportion in the total group. This is true in three of the four comparisons.

If we look at the summary of these data, pooling across grade level and entering level, we see again a slightly greater proportion of white children in the non-promoted group than would be expected. From the above table, it is clear that this difference is accounted for almost entirely by the two entering first grade groups.

Table 9

Summary
Non-Promotion by Race
FT/NFT

	All Grades EK & E1	
	B	W
Follow Through		
NP	128	177
Total	4074	2536
%	3%	7%
Non-Follow Through		
NP	81	115
Total	1646	1590
%	5%	7%
Follow Through and Non-Follow Through		
NP	209	292
Total	5720	4126
%	4%	7%

Since the entering first grade sites are primarily southern, this may imply that a poor white child has a slightly higher

chance of being retained in the south than a poor black child. For patterns within projects, see Appendix.

7. Conclusions. There were no striking and consistent patterns in our comparison of FT and NFT non-promotion rates. The data on the entering kindergarten projects are similar for both FT and NFT -- and both show a low rate of retention, averaging 2.6%. The entering first grade projects show higher retention rates than the kindergarten projects for both FT and NFT. This may be attributable to the fact that the entering first projects are predominantly southern and rural. Although both the FT and NFT rates are high, the FT rates are generally lower than NFT, which may imply that FT's greatest effect is where retention rates are high.

The investigation of child characteristics and retention found no difference in the relationships between FT and NFT. For FT and NFT together the following results were found for prior preschool, sex and ethnicity.

Because of the small number of children without preschool in the sample, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the effect of prior preschool on a child's chances of being retained. The data on FT and NFT children indicate that preschool is probably not related to non-promotion.

A comparison between the percentage of boys non-promoted and that of girls shows that boys probably have a slightly greater tendency to be retained than girls.

The relationship between ethnic groups and non-promotion

was limited to blacks and whites, due to the small number of other ethnic groups represented in our sample. The entering kindergarten data show little relationship between retention and ethnicity. The entering first sites indicate a slight tendency for white children to be retained over black children. Once again, however, this may be a function of the southern and rural nature of the sites.

E. Findings from Local Data Sources*

In four sites, Uvalde, Texas; Ft. Walton, Florida; St. Martin, Louisiana; and Fall River, Massachusetts, we collected non-promotion data on FT and appropriate NFT groups. Our procedure was to visit the sites in order to go through the June non-promotion records and talk with school personnel. This investigation served two purposes: First, it provided information about the local site peculiarities which affect non-promotion rates. Secondly, it provided a comparison for SRI data in two of the four sites.

Since we had neither the time nor the manpower to visit a large number of sites, we made no attempt to select a representative sample. We were interested in collecting both hard data -- number of children non-promoted -- and background information in order to interpret the numbers adequately. We wanted particularly to document instances in which local peculiarities might make the interpretation of numbers meaningless. The following pages describe our findings in each of the four sites.

1. Uvalde. Uvalde has two schools (Anthon and Robb) containing Follow Through classrooms. The population of these schools is 98% Mexican-American. In order for SRI to find a NFT comparison group of comparable ethnic composition, it selected schools outside Uvalde. Since we wanted comparison schools which were affected by the same school system policies

* The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Joy Wolfe and Nancy Kleinman in the collection of these data.

of non-promotion as the FT schools, we selected the two NFT schools in Uvalde as our comparison group. However, these two NFT schools serve the white, higher SES children of the town. As a result, there is no adequate comparison group for either the SRI FT sample or the Uvalde FT sample.*

However, two comparisons are possible. The first is between the SRI and Uvalde data for the three Follow Through groups measured by both. The second is a comparison between FT and NFT constructed by looking at the FT schools before and after FT. Each of these comparisons will be discussed in turn.

(1) First, there are three groups for which data currently exist both from SRI and Uvalde. These figures are presented below:

Table 10

Uvalde, Texas
Comparison of SRI and Uvalde Data
Number of Non-Promoted and Total Number of
Follow Through Children by Group (Cohort, Grade)
1969-1971

		1	2	3
year		1969-70	1970-71	1970-71
cohort		I	II	I
grade		1-2	1-2	2-3
Uvalde	NP	52	1	0
	Total	210	170	144
	%	25%	0%	0%
SRI	NP	39	6	0
	Total	134	103	84
	%	29%	6%	0%

* There are NFT classes in the 2 FT schools, but there are not enough children to provide an adequate comparison.

Column 1 shows children in Cohort I going from grade 1 to grade 2. Column 2 shows children in Cohort II going from grade 1 to grade 2, and column 3 shows children in Cohort I going from grade 2 to grade 3. The first three rows reflect the data gathered by us in Uvalde. The second three rows show the data from the SRI Index Tape. The three rows present first, the number of children who were not promoted, second, the total number of children (including those not promoted), and third, the percent of non-promoted children of the total.

Overall, the figures from the two sources are quite similar.* The only real discrepancy is found in column 2. Although we do not know exactly how to explain the fact that SRI shows more children non-promoted out of a smaller total, there are several possibilities we can speculate about. First, we may not have in fact included all the FT children in the Uvalde sample of 170; thus, some overlooked may be non-promoted children who were picked up in the SRI sample. Alternatively, children may be misclassified either on the Uvalde classroom lists or on the SRI Index Tape. While this is not an overwhelming difference, it is something to be concerned about.

The most striking part of the table is the extraordinarily high rate of non-promotion in column 1, for both sources of data. Since this figure was so high, we investigated the reason and obtained an explanation in Uvalde.

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* The SRI figures are all lower. This is probably due to missing rosters.

During the 1969-70 school year, Uvalde experienced a walkout by Mexican-American students, causing children to miss two months or more of school. This boycott did not affect the Dalton or Benson Schools in Uvalde, being largely white, and it did not, of course, affect the SRI comparison schools in a neighboring county. As a result, the FT non-promotion rate that year was roughly 25%, but dropped the following year to almost 0%. That first year obviously cannot serve as an indicator of the impact of Follow Through.

Secondly, in the early years of Follow Through, many non-promoted first graders from traditional classrooms were placed in Follow Through's first grades. Some of these children had failed first grade two or three times. It is not known how many of these repeaters in 1969-70 again repeated in 1970-71. It does seem worthy of note, however, that in 1969-70, 39% of the FT first grade in the Robb School had failed first grade in traditional classrooms. The number of non-promoted NFT children placed in FT first grades and the total number of FT first grade children in the two FT schools (Anthon and Robb) is shown in Table 11. These data are shown for 1968 to 1971.

We learned also from Uvalde the strong danger in determining non-promotion rates by matching age with grade. The tendency of many children to start school late contributed a great deal to the large number of "overaged" children in the school system. In the two FT schools, for example, there were 50 and 62 children respectively who were overaged by two years

Table 11

Uvalde, Texas
Number of NFT Failures Repeating in FT 1st Grades and Total Number FT in the Two FT Schools

	ANTHON SCHOOL		ROBB SCHOOL	
	No. of non-prom. placed in FT 1st	Total no. in FT 1st	No. of non-prom. placed in FT 1st	Total no. in FT 1st
1968	9	97	35	90
1969	3	74	14	84
1970	0	80	0	89
1971	0	59	3	93

or more in grades 1-5.

(2) The second comparison we made required the construction of a comparison group. To do this we used the data we collected from the classroom lists in Uvalde. We have data on the two Follow Through schools from 1966-1972. We also have data on the two non-matching NFT schools. From this we constructed a two-way comparison. We first pooled the data from 1966-67 and 1967-68 for both groups. For the FT schools this gave us non-promotion rates before the Follow Through program had begun. We then followed the same procedure for the years 1970-71 and 1971-72. This gave us non-promotion rates after the inception of Follow Through. These summary figures appear in the following table.

Table 12

Uvalde, Texas
Percent Non-Promoted

		Grade			
		1	2	3	4
1966-68 (prior to FT)	pre-FT	26%	5%	3%	3%
	NFT	10%	10%	5%	3%
1970-72	FT	4%	2%	3%	
	NFT	7%	4%	3%	

We eliminated the years 1968-69 and 1969-70 because the first was the pilot year of the program and the second was the year of the walkout. The above figures allow us to make two comparisons. First and most important, we want to assess the

impact of Follow Through by looking at the non-promotion rates in the two FT schools both before and after the inception of FT. These figures show a startling FT effect in the non-promotion rates in first grade. Prior to FT, the rate was 26%. After FT, the rate dropped to 4%. Such a drop may reflect unusual circumstances in the two schools in 1966-68 that we don't know about; however, it could also reflect the impact of the Follow Through program.

We have included the non-Follow Through schools in order to have a comparison over time. Even if the schools are not comparable, a change in the school system policies between the two time periods should be reflected in both sets of schools. This gives us some indication of whether or not the Follow Through effect is in fact a change in school policy. While the rates do drop for the non-FT schools, the drop is not nearly as large as the 26% to 4% drop in the FT schools.

An additional pattern emerges from these data, apart from Follow Through. That is, in general, the rate of non-promotion is much higher for first to second grade than in later years. These data support the hypothesis mentioned in Section D that non-promotion occurs more frequently at the first grade level and that a child's chances of being retained diminish as he proceeds from the first to fourth grades.

2. Ft. Walton Beach. In Ft. Walton we collected non-promotion data for the years 1969-1972. Follow Through classes exist in two of the Ft. Walton schools. For the non-Follow

Through comparison classes, we took the four schools in which SRI has comparison classes.* Additionally, we included the NFT classes in the two Follow Through schools. We then completed Table 13, which presents the number of children non-promoted, the total number of children by grade level, cohort and FT/NFT. The top of the table presents the data we collected in Ft. Walton. The bottom half of the table presents the data from the SRI Index Tape.

The Ft. Walton FT data and the SRI FT non-promotion data are quite similar. Ft. Walton shows more FT children in each group -- a difference which probably stems from the SRI rostering procedures. The promotion pattern for the FT children is virtually the same for both data sources -- no children are held back in FT. The only discrepancy is in Cohort I grade 2 where SRI shows three children held back and Ft. Walton data show none. This again is probably a combination of errors on the Ft. Walton class lists and coding errors or misinformation recorded on the SRI tape.

There is a greater difference in the NFT non-promotion figures for the two data sources. This is primarily because the samples are so different. Since the SRI comparison sample is quite small, the percentages may be somewhat misleading. In general, however, the pattern is similar for both data sources --

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* One of the four schools, the Baker School, did not have the necessary data for inclusion in the 1969-70 Cohort I (Grade 1) group.

Table 13

Ft. Walton, Florida
A Comparison of SRI and City Data
No. of Non-Promoted Children
and Total Number of Children
by Group (Cohort, Grade), by
Follow Through vs. Non-Follow Through
1969-1972

Source of Data		1969-70 Cohort I Grade 1 FT	1969-70 Cohort I Grade 1 NFT	1970-71 Cohort II Grade 1 FT	1970-71 Cohort II Grade 1 NFT	1970-71 Cohort I Grade 2 FT	1970-71 Cohort I Grade 2 NFT	1971-72 Cohort III Grade 1 FT	1971-72 Cohort III Grade 1 NFT	1971-72 Cohort II Grade 2 FT	1971-72 Cohort II Grade 2 NFT	1971-72 Cohort I Grade 3 FT	1971-72 Cohort I Grade 3 NFT
Ft. Walton	NP	0	30	0	36	0	21	0	47	0	30	1	14
	Total	91	400	82	419	85	425	93	430	91	449	87	455
	%	0%	7.5%	0%	8.6%	0%	4.9%	0%	10.9%	0%	6.7%	1.1%	3.1%
SRI	NP	0	10	0	0	3	5						
	Total	70	82	62	33	59	50						
	%	0%	12.2%	0%	0%	5.1%	10%						

the NFT non-promotion rate is higher than for FT and the rate generally decreases from first to third grade.

If we look at just the two FT schools which have both FT and NFT classes, we find that no children are held back in FT classes, while some children are held back in the NFT classes. This may be a better test of a FT effect, since we can be more confident that the same policy operates within a school as opposed to across schools. The following table shows the non-promoted and total number of children for the FT and NFT classes by grade and Cohort:

Table 14

Ft. Walton, Florida
Number of Non-Promoted and
Total Number of Children in FT and NFT
Within FT Schools by Group
1969-1972

		1969-70 C. I Grade 1	1970-71 C. II Grade 1	1970-71 C. I Grade 2	1971-72 C. III Grade 1	1971-72 C. II Grade 2	1971-72 C. I Grade 3
FT	NP	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	91	82	85	93	91	87
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
NFT	NP	3	10	2	8	8	6
	Total	168	154	226	147	170	201
	%	2%	6%	1%	5%	5%	3%

Since we can assume that the Follow Through classes do not have children who are better off educationally or economically than the non-Follow Through classes, it is quite clear that Follow

Through is reducing the rate of non-promotion. However, none of the NFT rates is exceptionally high, especially since this is a southern site (but not rural).

3. Fall River. In Fall River, non-promotion data were collected on two schools, the Small School (a NFT school) and the Lincoln School (containing both FT and NFT classrooms). Table 15 shows the data by grade for each of these two schools from the years 1969 to 1972. For each grade, the number non-promoted, the total number of children in that grade, and the percent derived from that ratio are given.

The table indicates that from 1969 to 1972 the NFT classes in two schools held back 39 out of 1127 children (3.46%), while FT held back 3 out of 235 children (1.27%). Since the numbers of non-promoted children are so small in Lincoln School, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about a FT effect.

In general, non-promotion rates were low in both Follow Through and non-Follow Through. In FT, 8 cells out of 11 had no non-promotion. The remaining three had a non-promotion rate that did not exceed 4.8%. In NFT, out of 23 cells, 10 had 0 non-promotion and 6 had non-promotion rates of more than 4.8%.

4. St. Martin Parish. St. Martin is a small rural parish in southwest Louisiana with only two schools which are non-Follow Through. These two schools are small and isolated, and we considered them inappropriate comparisons. In order to form a comparison group for the FT non-promotion rates, we took

Table 15

Fall River, Massachusetts
Number of Non-Promoted and Total Number of Children by Grade in FT and NFT from the Lincoln and Small Schools, 1969-1972

	Small School				Lincoln School							
	K	1st	2nd	3rd	K		1st		2nd		3rd	
	NFT	NFT	NFT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT
1969-70												
NP	0	1	4	0	0	--	0	0	0	0	--	2
Total	64	76	69	61	27	--	20	20	15	10	--	50
%	0%	1.3%	5.8%	0%	0%	--	0%	0%	0%	0%	--	4%
1970-71												
NP	0	8	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	66	64	76	70	22	30	21	26	21	26	18	24
%	0%	12.5%	5.3%	7.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4.8%	0%	0%	0%
1971-72												
NP	1	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	0	1	0	0
Total	55	69	71	72	25	38	22	37	22	29	22	24
%	1.8%	4.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4%	5.3%	4.5%	5.4%	0%	3.4%	0%	0%

two approaches. First we used data from the two Follow Through schools in 1966-68, before Follow Through began. This allows us to compare similar children before and after Follow Through. We used as a second comparison group the non-Follow Through classes in the Follow Through schools.

The following table presents these data for first and second grades. The top two sets of data present the number of children held back and the total number for the pre-FT years 1966-67 and 1967-68. The bottom three sets of data present the same information separately for FT and NFT children in the same schools after the inception of the Follow Through program.

Table 16

St. Martin, Louisiana
Number Non-Promoted and Total Number of Children by Grade, 1967-1969, and by Follow Through/ Non-Follow Through, 1969-1972

	Grade			
	1		2	
1967-68				
NP	15		32	
Total	251		240	
%	6%		13%	
1968-69				
NP	22		25	
Total	250		236	
%	9%		11%	
1969-70	FT	NFT	FT	NFT
NP	1	55		
Total	144	345		
%	1%	16%		
1970-71				
NP	2	64		
Total	112	371		
%	2%	17%		
1971-72				
NP	0	32	0	2
Total	112	348	112	340
%	0%	9%	0%	1%

It is evident, whichever comparison group is used, that Follow Through has had a profound effect on the reduction of retention in St. Martin. Both the rates of retention before FT and in the NFT classes during FT show much higher rates of non-promotion than for the FT classes. The FT retention rates range from 0% to 2% while the NFT rates (both before and during FT) range from a low of 6% to a high of 17% in first grade and a low of 1% to a high of 13% in second grade.

Table 17

St. Martin, Louisiana
Average Rates of Non-Promotion
by Grade, by Pre-Follow Through (1967-1969),
by Follow Through vs. Non-Follow Through (1969-1972)

	Grade 1	Grade 2
Pre-FT	7.5%	12%
FT	1%	0%
NFT	14%	1%

In conclusion, the impact of FT on non-promotion in this project is quite impressive. The low rate of retention for the FT classes is considerably less than the previous rates in the school and less than the NFT rates in the same school.

5. Conclusions.

Comparison between Project Data and SRI Data: In two sites a comparison between the two sources of data was possible. In Uvalde, the non-promotion rates for FT were quite similar in both sets of data. The SRI totals were smaller and inconsistent in one case, but this is probably a result of incomplete rostering. In Ft. Walton, the figures are again quite similar for the FT children with one discrepancy. The NFT figures are somewhat different, but this is a function of the difference in the samples.

Findings from Local Data Sources: Three of the four projects present quite compelling data demonstrating a Follow Through impact on retention. In two of the projects, Uvalde and St. Martin, two comparisons were possible: between FT schools prior to FT and between FT and NFT. In both projects there is a much smaller rate of non-promotion for FT than for either the same classes before FT or the current NFT classes. In a third project, Ft. Walton, the comparison between FT and NFT showed FT consistently lower with a FT rate of 0% in five of the six groups. The fourth project does not negate a FT effect; it merely has too few children retained overall to permit an adequate comparison.

In conclusion, the data collected in the sites themselves present much more convincing evidence that FT may be reducing retention. While we have no way of definitively attributing the low FT rates to the program itself, it is certainly a plausible

explanation. These findings also indicate that there are perhaps FT effects which for various reasons are not picked up by the National Evaluation.

F. Follow Through's Alternatives to Failure

Follow Through at times creates programs or classes to meet the problems of children rather than contenting themselves with the options of non-promotion or special education referral.

In Uvalde, for instance, FT has started first grade classes in mid-year in the last three years to help NFT children who are failing in the regular classroom, and migrant children who move into the area. Further, they have special "1-2" and "2-3" classes in which children who have completed only part of their last year's curriculum can complete the work of that year at an accelerated pace while being officially promoted. This differs sharply from the policy of the traditional school system, which is to retain any child who does not complete a prescribed portion of the year's work.

In Ft. Walton, 18 out of 100 Cohort I children were not ready for 4th grade last year. Instead of forcing the children to repeat the entire 3rd grade curriculum, FT created a transition class with a full classroom team of three adults. All but one child are now in the regular 4th grade. (While this may appear to be a FT failure, one must take into account that the first two cohorts came to FT with many problems.)

In Fall River, FT designed the K-1: Early Intervention Program

for children coming out of kindergarten who are considered not ready for regular FT first grade. The class of 11, first formed in 1972-73, was geared to offsetting future academic failure by providing an intensive program that worked prescriptively with children who had either perceptual, social or cognitive disabilities. A child, if ready, could move into the first grade class during the course of the year, or into second grade at the end of K-1. The FT staff did not expect this to happen in 1972-73, however, as the year's children in K-1 had worse problems than anticipated.

These programs demonstrate FT's flexibility in providing alternatives to non-promotion for its children who are making slow progress. An example of a FT alternative to special education placement is given in Section IIID (p. 61).

G. Overall Conclusions

The non-promotion data from the SRI index tape do not show striking or consistent patterns in our comparison of FT and NFT groups. However, the data collected locally do suggest an impact of Follow Through on non-promotion rates. It also appears from our data and the literature that non-promotion is practiced extensively.

The question of Follow Through's impact on non-promotion seems worthy of further investigation, particularly as third grade FT children leave the program and the regular school

system determines their class placement in the later grades. It is also important to have more extensive research which analyzes the extent of non-promotion, the nature of the problems of the non-promoted children, and to develop programs that can serve as alternatives to failure.

III. Follow Through's Impact on Special Education

A. Background and Purpose

One of the unique aspects of Follow Through is found in the numerous services it offers to the individual Follow Through child. The parent coordinator, the FT social worker, and the FT nurse and health component are each able to carefully address themselves to a child and family's problems; the teacher and aide have been able to provide more individualized instruction to meet the needs of children with difficulties. The National Evaluation attempts to assess the impact of some of these aspects (for example, through non-cognitive testing), but it is limited in scope, primarily due to the lack of adequate measurement instruments.

In light of this, we proposed to investigate an area in which the composite effects of these services might show up: the number of FT children assigned to special classes. Specifically we wished to test the hypothesis that fewer children are removed from Follow Through classes and placed in special education schools and classes than those children in regular (non-FT) school classes.

B. Feasibility Study

Our first step was to assess the feasibility of testing such a hypothesis. We looked at cities containing Follow Through

sites in order to learn about their special education procedures and the accessibility of data on special education enrollment. From this early investigation several major problems in carrying out the study became quickly apparent.

(1) In the past few years there has been a growing tendency in many school systems to keep children with "special education" problems within the regular classroom. Resource teachers and resource rooms have become a frequent substitute for removing children from the mainstream of school life. The total number of children assigned to special education classes has diminished substantially.

This tendency was apparent to various degrees in all the cities we considered for our study. For example, in Houston, under the new plan that went into operation in 1972-73, only the brain damaged received special education. All other "special" children were absorbed by regular classes, Follow Through included. Philadelphia, under the administration of former Superintendent Mark Shedd, encouraged much less use of special education classes throughout the system.

Because of this widespread change in the philosophy of assignment to special education classes, we became concerned about the appropriateness of comparing the assignment rates of FT and its NFT comparison groups to special classes. If, in fact, very few children overall are sent to special classes, it would be almost impossible to detect a significant difference

between FT and NFT.

(2) The second problem arose when we tried to identify the children in our sample who had been placed in special classes. In order to gain accurate information on special class assignment of NFT children, we had to look for each child in alphabetized lists of children enrolled in special education classes. In Philadelphia and Los Angeles the data banks did not contain information on special education placement. Because of the enormity of the task of looking through alphabetized lists in large cities, we decided to drop the investigation in these cities.

In smaller cities, cumulative records on individual children could provide us with special education information. These records were usually kept in each school. The task of locating the record and checking the record of each FT and NFT child did not seem worth the expense and time involved in such an operation.

(3) A third problem stemmed from varying definitions of special education. A comparison of special education programs in different cities revealed that special education or learning problems were not similarly defined or provided for. One city had special classes only for the brain damaged and emotionally disturbed. Another provided only for those with learning disabilities. One city limited the educable mentally retarded to those with IQ's of 70 and below, while another put the ceiling at 75. The decision as to whether a class would be

included in our special education population had to be decided independently for each city. This difficulty alone made generalizations about the impact of FT across cities virtually impossible.

(4) An additional concern with this study was the small population of Follow Through and non-Follow Through children in some projects. It seemed most likely that we could not find a large percentage of children being placed in special education classes from either group, particularly if we could not justify pooling projects. If the numbers ranged from 0-5 for both Follow Through and non-Follow Through, it was likely that obtaining a significant difference would be impossible.*

(5) A potential source of bias exists both in referral procedures and the FT and NFT samples which could make the hypothesis concerning special education meaningless. It is conceivable that the number of FT referrals to special education classes could be greater than the number from regular classes for two reasons. First, due to more staff, there may be a higher probability in a FT class that a child's problems will be recognized. And if a teacher, social worker, health component and family recognized that a child needed greater specialized services than FT could provide, they were able to proceed quickly to obtain that help, and had access to the appropriate services which could attend to such problems. On

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* The SRI Tracking Study shows that in most projects the number of FT and NFT children found in special classes is zero or close to zero.

the other hand, one found that referrals from regular classes often took months of grinding through the slow wheels of procedure before help was received. Secondly, because of FT's services, the FT classes may be perceived by the school as "special" classes and thus receive a larger number of children with problems in the first place. This is expanded upon below, in part C.

Conclusion: For the reasons stated above, it did not seem feasible to test the hypothesis that Follow Through had a lower rate of referrals into special education classes than those of an equivalent non-Follow Through comparison group. On the other hand, two issues did seem appropriate to consider with respect to special education placement.

The first deals with the proportion of children in Follow Through that might normally be considered "special education" children. One must ask to what extent FT is overburdened with children who cannot succeed in the regular school system. Secondly, we give an example of an alternative for special education classes that FT has provided for its children. These issues are discussed in the following section.

C. Special Education Children in Follow Through Classes

Many factors may cause Follow Through classrooms to have a greater than usual number of special education or problem children. The reasons for this are often complex and result from the peculiarities of a particular site. In some sites,

the poverty group has brought to the school a high percentage of learning problems which the school has few resources to handle. Consequently, it is only natural that a child in need of services be referred to a classroom with services, namely a FT class.

However, it is difficult to distinguish between FT's purpose and FT's overburden. Most Follow Through directors have been anxious to protect Follow Through from assignment of large numbers of problem children. They have been keenly aware that this would affect their test scores and evaluations. In the early years of Follow Through, however, the use of FT as a place for problem children occurred more frequently, due to the confusion concerning the purposes of the program.

How and why a child is sent to Follow Through is important in that it tells us something about the composition of the class. Thus we have concentrated on descriptive information that tells us about the possible uses of Follow Through for children with special problems.

In Ft. Walton, during the first and second years of Follow Through, many problem children were placed in FT because the school administration did not know what else to do with them. Ft. Walton now has special classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded and the deaf. There are no services for the emotionally disturbed or physically handicapped child. Consequently, this year a cerebral palsied child remained in Follow Through.

The FT director in Ft. Walton says, "We have kept FT

from being a complete dumping ground. We do not accept over-aged children, but the school system thinks that FT often does more for a child than the special education classes. So if a child meets the FT guidelines we take him." Follow Through accepts "problem children" from NFT any time during the year in kindergarten, first and second grades, but strongly discourages the entry of children into FT in third grade.

One interesting aspect of Ft. Walton FT is the rate of addition into and attrition out of Follow Through. In 1969-70, Cohort I was increased by 20% by the entrance of children into FT second grade. In 1970-71 the cohort was further enlarged by 10% when children with no prior FT entered the program in third grade. We do not know where these children came from, or how they were referred.

Uvalde and, to a lesser extent, Fall River, have had some NFT non-promoted moving into FT. In Uvalde this occurred at the E1 level, so they were included in the FT test sample. In Fall River and in other EK sites this first grade transfer did not affect scores.

In St. Martins, the first cohort was made up of repeaters, slow learners, emotionally disturbed, hard of hearing, etc. "The classroom looked more like a physical therapy room."* Principals, having little understanding of what FT was for, went through the lists and picked out the children who were

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* Follow Through Site Evaluator, St. Martin Parish.

worst off. To offset this problem, since 1969-70, parents have applied to be in FT, and a Parent Selection Committee selects the FT population.

Each year, roughly 60 children (12%) are evaluated by the special education diagnostic team. In 1971-72, of those 60 evaluated, the following distribution of IQ scores was found:

No. of Children	IQ
6	90-110
26	76-89
28	50-75
0	25-49

A large number of those evaluated in 1971-72 were a part of Cohort I.

Brattleboro's own studies on their Follow Through children showed an unusual proportion with language ability, visual perception, hearing, vision and mental health problems. Originally, Brattleboro did assign large numbers of special education children to FT, but now the director has tried to find placement for children that Follow Through cannot handle. The resources are shockingly inadequate. There are two classes in the school, servicing a total of 25; a mentally retarded class is run by the state outside the system. There are no extra teachers and there is no program to support the type of service the Follow Through children have needed. There is a preschool program for the handicapped, with 20-30 enrolled; one wonders, after preschool, where these children are placed.

D. A Follow Through Alternative to Special Education Placement

In Fall River, Follow Through has created a Transition program, which provides a large number of children with special educational needs. Transitional teachers in each FT school give supplementary support and academic work to children on a one-to-one basis, in small groups, or within the regular classroom. An attempt is made to integrate that work with the ongoing program in the classroom. Although the transition program recognizes that it cannot, in some cases, replace intensive special education classes, it is able to provide desperately needed help to children who normally would not receive it because they are able to function in the normal environment.

Programs such as this are not plentiful, but they do show a flexibility in FT's programming, and a genuine alternative to enrollment in special education classes.

E. Summary

In conclusion, it seems as if the task of the FT program may be even greater than anticipated. In many sites it does not make sense to compare FT/NFT rates of special class assignment because the FT classes are the special classes. It does make sense, however, to realize that FT, as a compensatory program, is attempting to compensate for much more than educational deficiency.

IV. The Impact of Follow Through on Ability Group Placement

A. Purpose

Our purpose in investigating this area was primarily to determine the feasibility of studying the impact of Follow Through on group placement. We considered two major factors: the identification of an appropriate sample and the identification of ability groups.

B. An Appropriate Sample

We considered two possibilities. The first was to look at children who had completed the Follow Through experience through the third grade and study their class placement after entering regular schooling. The second was to look at children who had left Follow Through before completing the program. The hypothesis to be tested is that children with Follow Through treatment are less likely to be placed in low ability groups than comparable children without a Follow Through experience.

Clearly the best test of this hypothesis is to look at children who have had the total Follow Through experience. This would necessitate a study of children as they entered fourth and later grades after completing Follow Through. Since the majority of the children have not yet reached the fourth grade,

the first time to look at this question adequately would be Fall 1973 at the earliest (when Cohort I entering kindergarten children enter fourth grade). A better time would be Fall 1974 when the Cohort II entering kindergarten children enter fourth grade since this cohort is a more representative sample than Cohort I and the programs reflect more experience with the sponsors. Cohort III, the strongest cohort in terms of number of sites per sponsor, would be at this stage in Fall of 1975.

We next considered looking at children who had left Follow Through without completing the program, since this could be done at the present time. After considerable thought we decided that this approach was not reasonable, primarily because of the small number of children who leave and enter comparable situations combined with the practical difficulty of locating such children. Consequently, there is no way to isolate a usable sample following this approach.

C. Identification of Ability Groups

The second area which concerned us was the feasibility of identifying ability grouping where it exists. This proves to be a difficult problem. There is a current trend away from rigid ability grouping stemming in part from court decisions which have found the practice in some instances to be discriminatory. While we believe that grouping practices still exist to a great extent, they tend to exist informally within classrooms rather than as a stated school or district practice.

Consequently, ascertaining to what extent grouping exists is extremely complicated.

School administrators tend to deny the existence of grouping practices. But even when the practice of grouping is recognized, it rarely operates in the same way throughout a school system. For example, in the sites we investigated the use of ability grouping was decided by the principal or teacher in a school. Consequently, grouping practices are different among schools and often different among classrooms within a school. Additionally, grouping might exist only for certain subjects, either at the school or class level.

Because of the enormous variety of grouping patterns and policies combined with the tendency not to acknowledge their existence, it is extremely difficult to determine whether a Follow Through child has been placed in a high or low ability group. We still feel that this is an important issue, but are concerned about its feasibility. Since the study should be based on Cohort II and III children after they leave the third grade, we recommend that FT-OE consider seriously the problem of identifying ability groups. Since we visited only a small number of sites, it is possible that our impressions of the problem are biased and misleading in terms of overall feasibility.

D. Summary

In conclusion, the issue of group placement is both

interesting and important. If there is a way of measuring group placement, the study should not go by the wayside. FT-OE should take steps now to satisfy themselves that the problem is insoluble, but if this is not the case, steps should be taken soon to plan the implementation of such a study for the Fall of 1974.

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APPENDIX

BREAKDOWN BY ETHNICITY OF PROMOTED AND NON-PROMOTED IN FOLLOW THROUGH AND NON-FOLLOW THROUGH IN 22 SITES, 1969-1971

Site:	0114 PORTLAND				0201 BERKELEY				0204 DULUTH			
Ethnicity	#Non-Prom.		#Promoted		#Non-Prom.		#Promoted		#Non-Prom.		#Promoted	
	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT
Black	18	2	262	132	3	0	196	79	0	1	13	5
Chicano	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	0	0	2	0
White	10	1	118	30	1	1	114	119	8	5	317	225
Other	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	0

Site:	0302 BALTIMORE				0309 LAKEWOOD				0502 BRATTLEBORO			
Black	0	2	295	134	2	0	194	73	0	0	0	0
Chicano	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	0	0	10	0	1	1	92	69	7	3	117	98
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Site:	0506 NYC PS 243				0707 NYC PS 137				0804 PORTAGEVILLE			
Black	13	8	335	161	1	1	135	57	1	2	63	43
Chicano	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	158	93
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Site:	0801 NYC PS77				1301 ATLANTA			
Ethnicity	#Non-Prom.		#Promoted		#Non-Prom.		#Promoted	
	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT
Black	1	0	57	24	4	4	414	202
Chicano	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	0	0	3	12	2	0	38	0
Other	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0

Site:	0307 FT. WORTH				0308 WALKER CO.				0510 TUSKEGEE			
Ethnicity	#Non-Prom.		#Promoted		#Non-Prom.		#Promoted		#Non-Prom.		#Promoted	
	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT
Black	8	0	391	129	5	2	46	3	28	27	713	246
Chicano	8	1	198	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	2	1	59	7	7	22	147	74	6	0	33	4
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0

Site:	0604 PICKENS CO.				0711 TUPELO				0901 LE FLORE			
Ethnicity												
Black	2	0	17	0	12	0	200	3	9	9	263	176
Chicano	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	47	15	225	172	3	14	33	137	3	0	21	1
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Site:	1002 JONESBORO				1102 LAUREL				1201 ELKINS			
Ethnicity												
Black	8	2	56	4	10	0	114	8	0	0	0	0
Chicano	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	27	16	218	109	20	1	326	87	27	20	255	140
Other	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Site:	0902 FT. WALTON				0104 MIAMI			
Ethnicity	#Non-Prom.		#Promoted		#Non-Prom.		#Promoted	
	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT	FT	NFT
Black	0	5	147	31	2	0	40	55
Chicano	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	3	10	37	112	1	1	30	17
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0