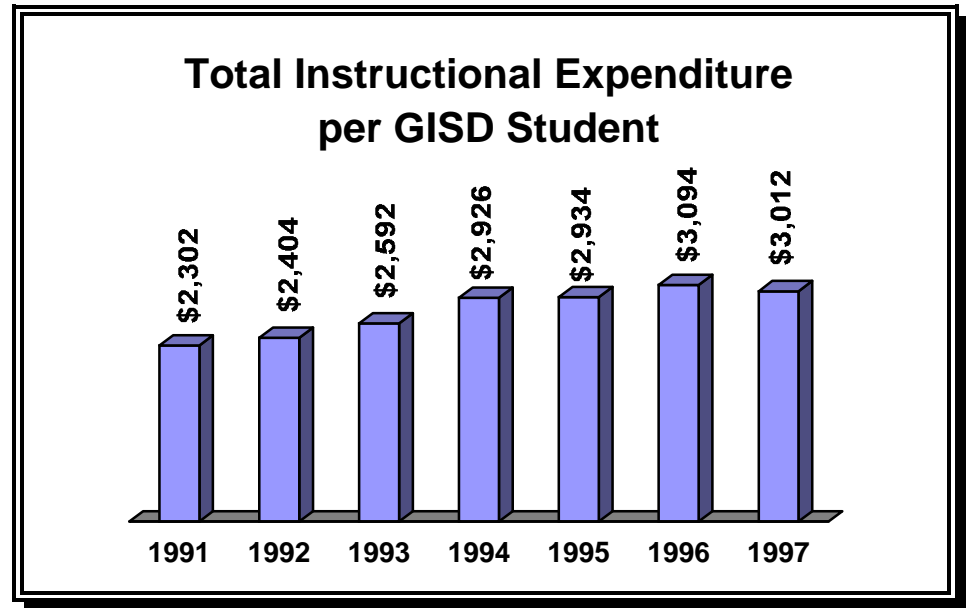


# EDUCATION

## EDUCATION

The Georgetown Independent School District (GISD) serves the City of Georgetown and surrounding areas. GISD currently serves approximately 7300 students in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve at seven elementary schools, two middle schools, one ninth grade campus, one high school, and one alternative high schools. Due to rapid economic development and population growth, the local residents face higher property valuations that result in significant decreases in state funding for GISD. With lessening state financial support, GISD strives to continue to provide a quality education for every child in the district. All school districts are classified by the Texas Education Agency as either exemplary, recognized, academically acceptable or academically unacceptable. GISD is ranked 'academically acceptable'.



Source: Georgetown Independent School District Snapshots

## QUALITY

Although enrollment in GISD increased by almost forty percent between 1991 and 1998, school administrators and officials have ensured students will still receive a quality education. During this time span, the student-teacher-ratio improved from 15:1 (the fourth highest in the county) to a little over 13:1. Meanwhile, the statewide student-teacher-ratio was over 15:1 in 1998. Similarly, instructional expenditure per pupil increased by over thirty percent during this seven year period. It is not surprising, then, that most school performance measures have shown improvement during the past seven years

Total instructional expenditure per student is often thought to correlate with the quality of education a student receives. This figure is the portion of the school district budget that is allocated directly to teaching students. After increasing by 27 percent between 1991 and 1994, instructional expenditure per student has remained relatively level. In 1997, the average instructional expenditure per GISD student was 10 percent greater than that statewide.

### THIRD GRADE READING LEVEL

Reading deficiency can make learning difficult and lead to a host of other educational obstacles. Thirty-three percent of GISD third graders were found to be below reading level according to the Reading Inventory of the Classroom (RIC) taken in August of 1997. However, by May of 1998, only fourteen percent were below level.

### TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS (TAAS)

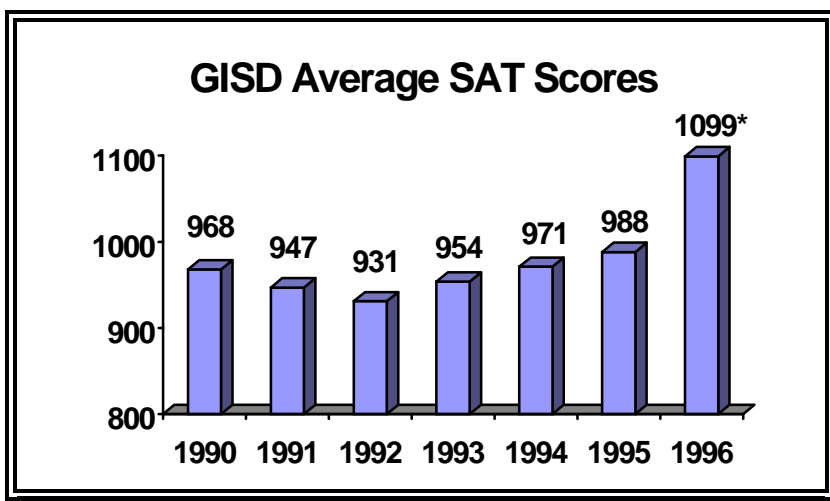
As the chart below indicates, Georgetown has made great improvements in the percentage of children passing all sections of the TAAS. Between 1992 and 1997, this rate increased by over twenty percent, reaching a passing rate of 83.8 percent. This is more than 10 percent above the statewide average.

Percentage of Georgetown Students Passing All Sections of TAAS						
1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
73.3%	60.9%	70.7%	75.7%	80.3%	80.1%	83.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency Annual Reports

Between 1992 and 1997, Georgetown passing rates for minority students on the TAAS improved dramatically. African American student passing percentages rose by more than 26 percent while percentage of Hispanic students passing grew by 28 percent. Despite this improvement, passing rates for minority students are still much lower than overall passing rates. In 1997, 60.2 percent of statewide economically disadvantaged students passed all sections of the TAAS. In Georgetown, 62.4 percent of these students passed all sections.

### SAT AND ACT TESTS



Source: Georgetown Independent School District

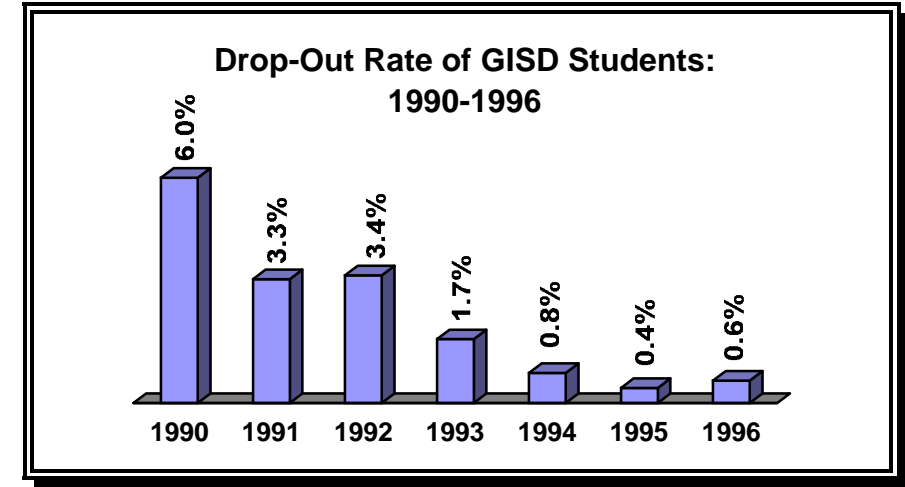
The SAT and ACT provide a uniform measure with which colleges and universities can gauge a student's preparedness for higher education. By the same measure, the average SAT and ACT scores of Georgetown students provide an indication of how well our community prepares its young people for college. Despite a decline from 1990 to 1992, Georgetown SAT scores seem to be rising. In 1996, the mean SAT score in Georgetown was more than 100 points higher than the state mean. It is important to note that the SAT and ACT are voluntary tests. The scores shown on the

# EDUCATION

previous page represent only the portion of the student population which takes the tests--the portion of the population which plans on attending college. 71% of eligible Georgetown students took the test compared to only 65% of those eligible in Texas. \*Also, scoring of the SAT changed in 1996 to raise the mean score to 1,000. This accounts for the sudden jump in mean score from 1995 and 1996. In 1996, 48.4 percent of Georgetown students scored above the criterion, compared to 26.3 percent statewide.

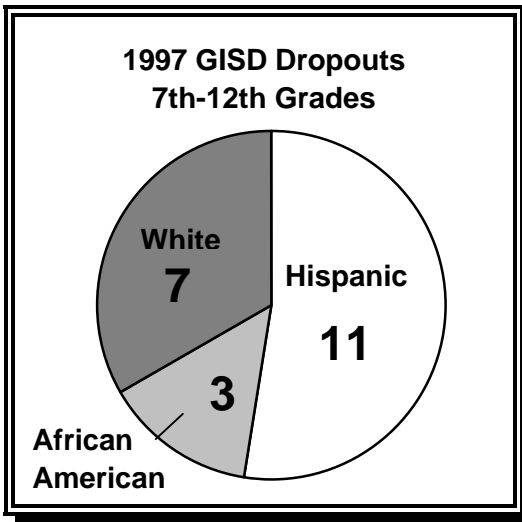
## DROP OUTS

As a measure of child welfare, school drop-out rates can reflect a number of things, such as learning, behavioral or developmental problems. This measure is also useful as a predictor of future well-being, as drop-outs generally have lower lifetime earnings and have a greater likelihood of ending up in the prison system, as a welfare recipient, and as a teen parent. The drop-out rate in GISD schools has decreased dramatically over the past six years. In 1996, the most recent year for which *both* GISD and state dropout rates



Source: Georgetown Independent School District

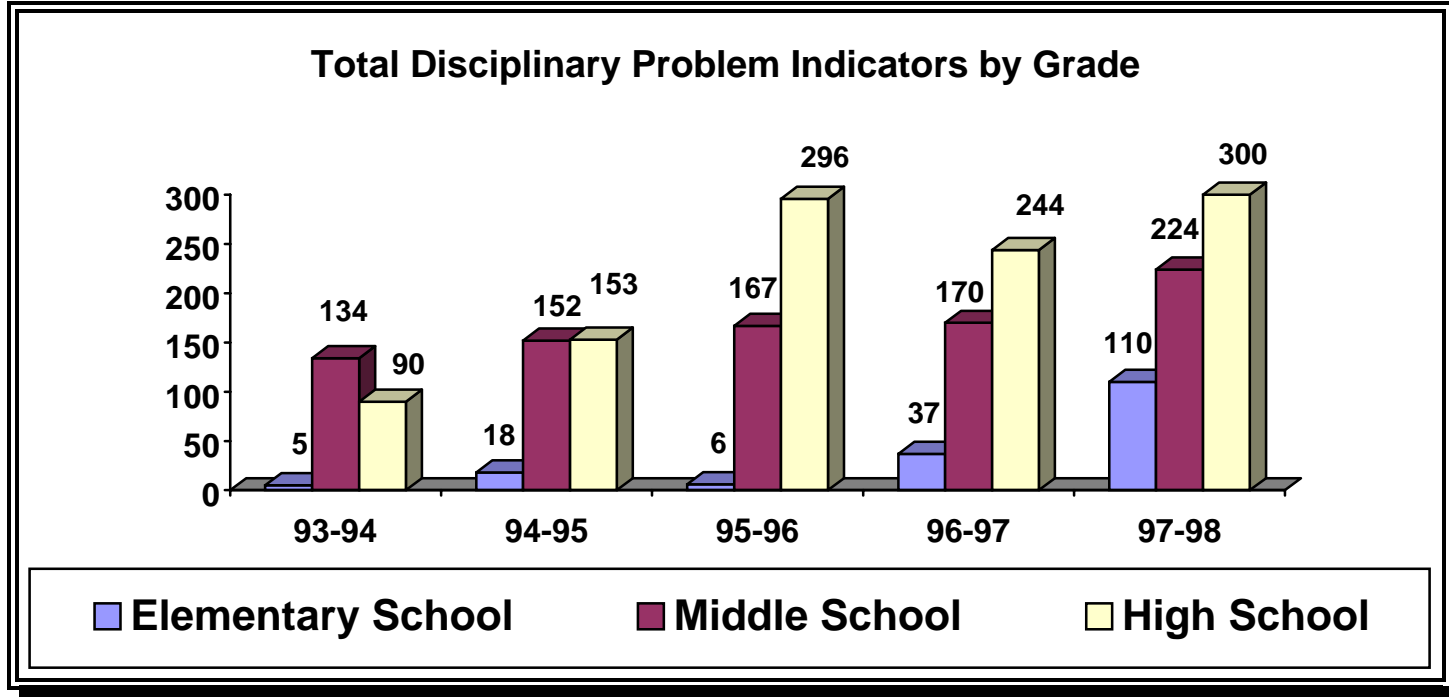
are available, the GISD dropout rate was one-third the statewide rate. Despite this, GISD minority dropout rates continue to be higher than rates among white students. While minorities accounted for less than 21 percent of all 7th through 12th grade students, they accounted for two-thirds of dropouts in those grade.



Source: Georgetown Independent School District

## DISCIPLINE

Each year, principals at each GISD campus submit a report documenting instances of 16 different types of disciplinary actions including suspensions, expulsions, assaults, confiscated weapons, drug-related incidents, and gang activity. The graph on the facing page is an index of these incidents derived by adding all incidents in each of the categories together. This index, then, gives an unweighted measure of district-wide student disciplinary actions.



Source: Georgetown Independent School District

# EDUCATION

Partners in Education (PIE) is a school-community partnership begun in 1994 whose purpose is to enhance and enrich the educational process so that all students have a greater opportunity to become productive citizens. Examples of PIE programs include **Business Link** which provides 8th graders detailed exposure to the workplace, Parent Network which provides educational opportunities for parents and encourages parental involvement, **Seeds of Learning**, an opportunity to make financial or in-kind contributions, and **Project Mentor** which pairs students with caring adults that offer guidance on academic and personal growth. The mentors involved have grown from 51 in 1995 to 241 during the 97-98 school year.

Operation Achievement is a partnership between GISD and Southwestern University begun in 1987 which pairs 7th and 8th graders with student mentors at Southwestern. The program offers enrichment and help with studies as well as the availability of bilingual mentors. In 1997 the program was expanded to 9th graders and currently serves 55 students.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

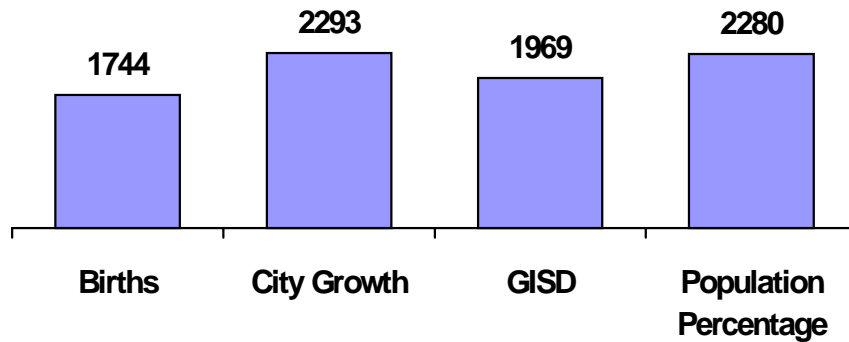
Children zero to five face unique developmental challenges which warrant a section devoted entirely to this age group. A great deal of research has shown that the developmental gains made, or obstacles encountered, during this time are often the most significant predictors of future well-being.

Using data such as live birth rates, city and school district growth rates, and actual population counts from the 1990 census to project the number of children in the zero to five population, there are estimated to be approximately 2000 children under age 5 (see insert); a little under ten percent of the population as a whole.

The period in a child's life between birth and entering school presents a unique difficulty for tracking development. It is challenging to develop early child welfare measures which are both relevant and easily accessible. However, there are a number of indirect, even retrospective, measures which speak to the developmental obstacles and quality of care encountered during this phase of growth.

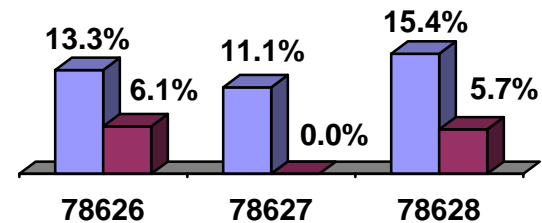
Researchers looking for new answers to old questions about the importance of heredity and environment have discovered that much of what makes a person unique is the result of experiences in the first three years of life.<sup>18</sup> Early-childhood experiences exert a dramatic and precise impact, physically determining how the intricate neural circuits of the brain are wired. Early childhood development is a continuous and individualized process of change in which a child learns to handle ever more complex levels of moving, thinking, speaking, feeling, and relating to others. These processes occur through interaction with the child's physical and emotional environment.

**Estimated Georgetown Population of 0-5 Year-Olds for 1998**



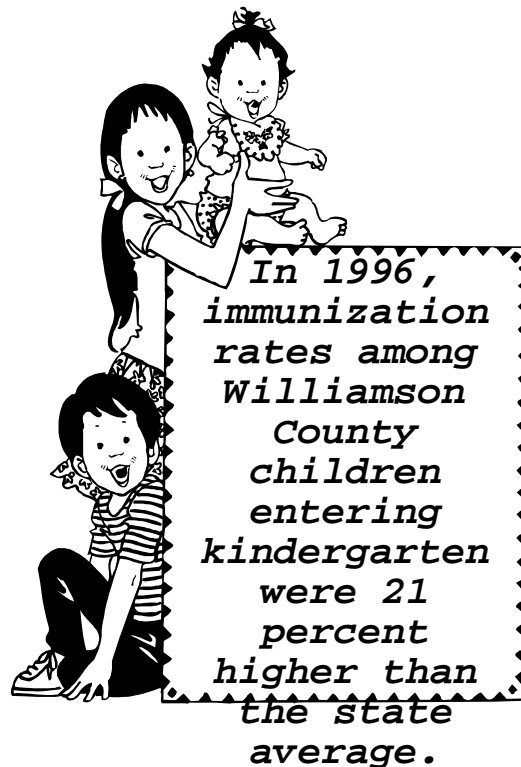
Source: Calculated by Chris Dial, based upon data from U.S. Census Bureau,

**Prevalence of Inadequate Prenatal Care and Low Birth Weight, 1996-1997**



Source: Texas Department of Health, special Georgetown zip code data run by Sharon Riley

The impressionability of this age group makes it the most receptive to intervention. Unfortunately, this sector of the population is the one we know the least about.



## IMMUNIZATIONS

Children usually receive immunizations from birth through their third year. It is not until they enter kindergarten, when they are required to be fully immunized, that it is possible to know the number receiving their immunizations when they should. Immunization rates based on children entering kindergarten may indirectly reflect other forms of neglect in early childhood. Often, parents who neglect preventive measures such as immunizing their child may be prone to neglecting other educational and developmental needs of their children.

## EARLY PREVENTION OF SCHOOL FAILURE

Another retrospective measure of early childhood is the Early Prevention of School Failure (EPSF) test administered to GISD kindergartners. This test measures development in language, auditory, visual, fine, and gross motor skills. This test has been used to identify children who are potentially “at-risk” for school failure. Children who do poorly on this test typically have no pre-school experience and little or no experience having someone read to them. During the 1997-1998 school year, 12.7 percent of the 488 kindergartners in Georgetown tested below level on the EPSF.

## CHILD CARE

Nationwide, 3 out of 5 young children are in child care.<sup>19</sup> As increasing numbers of American children grow up in either single-parent homes or homes in which both parents are working, the need for safe, affordable, quality child care has become a pressing issue in all communities. Welfare reform requires that many impoverished single mothers find jobs while federally subsidized child care becomes less abundant. Local organizations in Williamson County have been forced to fill the gaps in the system left by these changes.

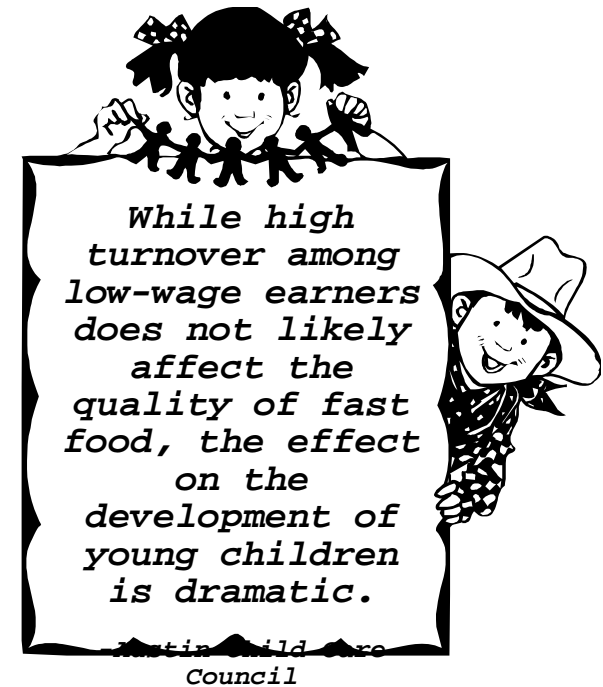
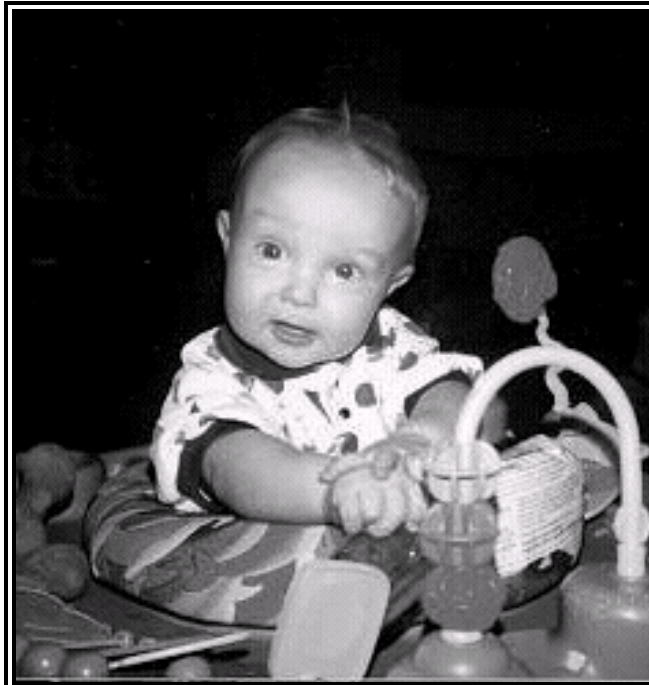
The Children’s Defense Fund reports that children in poor quality child care have been found to be delayed in language and reading skills, and display more aggression toward other children and adults.<sup>20</sup>

Recent Georgetown community focus groups, as well as general opinion among child care experts, reflect a scarcity of affordable, quality child care in Georgetown. As of August, 1998, Georgetown had 15 licensed child



# EARLY CHILDHOOD

care centers, 3 group day homes and 30 registered homes with a capacity to serve approximately 1300 children under age six. All child care centers in the area are reporting difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified staff and finding substitutes, a result of the expanding area economy. Child care is one of the lowest paid occupations with an average starting wage in Austin of \$5.78 per hour! A recent study by Austin's Child Care Council shows high rates of turnover among child care workers due to the disparity between child care wage rates and high wage rates in readily available jobs in the computer technology field. The most important determinant of quality child care is the adults who are responsible for children's care and education. Therefore, ensuring a sufficient number of well-prepared, competent, and adequately compensated staff greatly increases the probability of high quality programs for children. "Access to quality, affordable child care is a major concern for employees of most larger Georgetown businesses," says Bruce Barton, Executive Director of Georgetown Industrial Foundation.



The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) purchases child care for eligible families through Child Care Management Services (CCMS). CCMS helps parents who are striving to become self-sufficient by giving them more choices in child-care arrangements which they know to be qualified through TWC. The three areas in which CCMS provides services are: children with disabilities; children referred by PRS; and those in income-eligible families. Typically, there is a waiting list for these services with priority given to children with disabilities and PRS referrals. Five providers in Georgetown are CCMS vendors, three with waiting lists. One is a before- and after-school program and another is a three day per week program. 17 children are served by CCMS in Georgetown.

Head Start serves sixty 4-year-olds in Georgetown. Currently, 25 four-year-olds and 40 three-year-olds are on waiting lists for Head Start.