



NEBRASKA CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES & SCHOOLS

Identifying the Needs of Vulnerable Children and Families in Lancaster and Saunders Counties: A Community Assessment

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Outline

- ⊙ Rationale for study
- ⊙ What is Early Head Start/Head Start?
- ⊙ Method of data collection
- ⊙ Analyses/Results
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 - Presentation #3 – Voices from the outside
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- ⊙ Questions

Rationale for study

- ① Current project investigates educational, social, and health needs of low-income children age birth to five years, and their families in order to identify appropriate services in the community
- ① Identify strengths and needs to improve Early Head Start/Head Start program outcomes

What is Early Head Start/Head Start?

- ◉ Who do programs serve?
- ◉ What does programming look like?
- ◉ What is their purpose?
- ◉ In Lancaster and Saunders Counties, Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties operates EHS and HS.



Method of Data Collection

Data Collection

- ◉ Data was collected as part of a community needs assessment project for a local Early Head Start/Head Start.
- ◉ Participants in the study included children and families who were enrolled in the early childhood program, as well as families who were eligible but not participating.
- ◉ Survey and interview were conducted with both groups. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed.



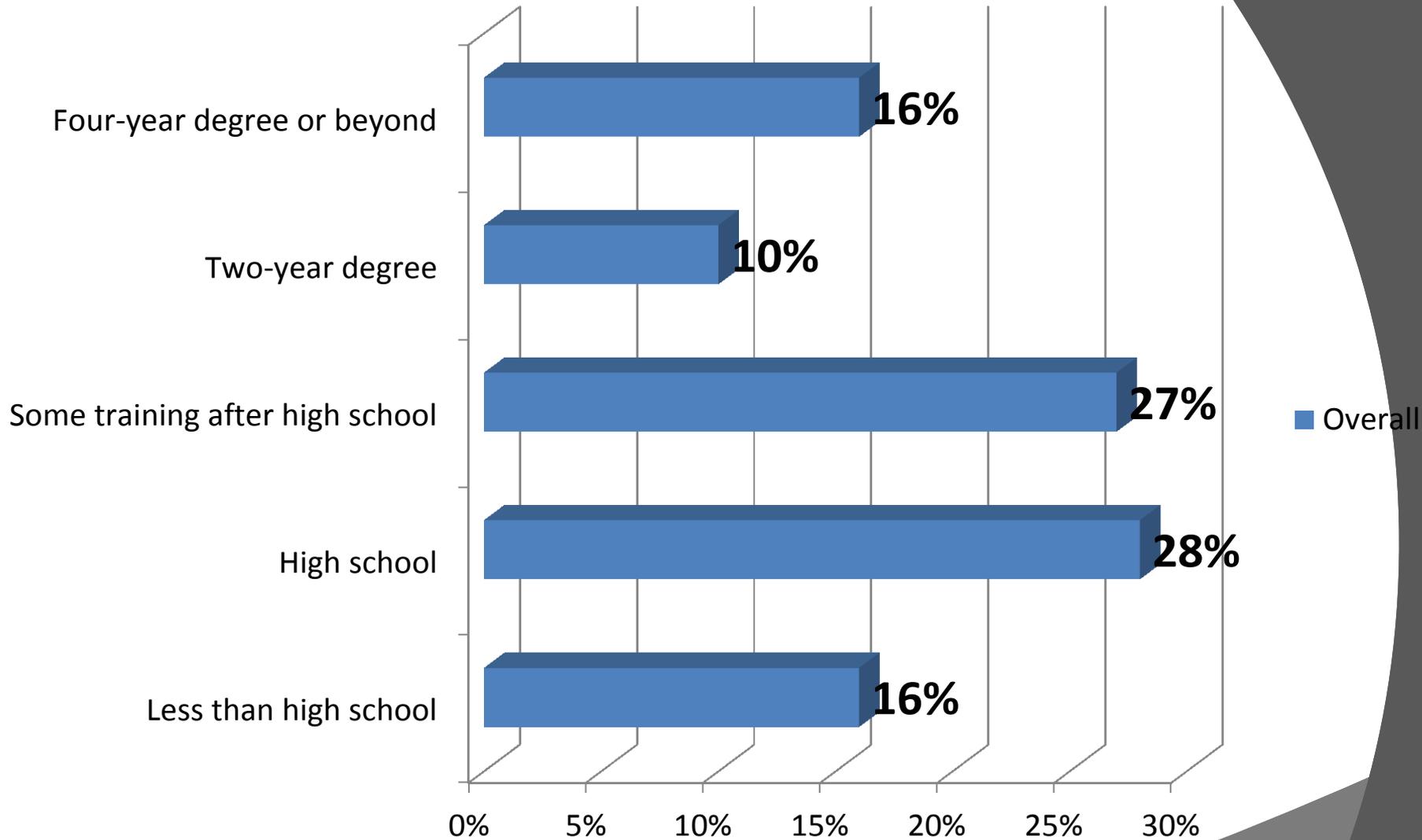
Results

Survey Sample

- ⦿ N = 206 needs assessment surveys
- ⦿ Data was analyzed by looking at two age groups: infants and toddlers and preschoolers
 - Infant/Toddler: n=74
 - Preschool: n=132
- ⦿ Data was also divided by language: English, Spanish, and Arabic
 - English: n=150
 - Spanish: n=30
 - Arabic: n=26

Parenting Sample Data

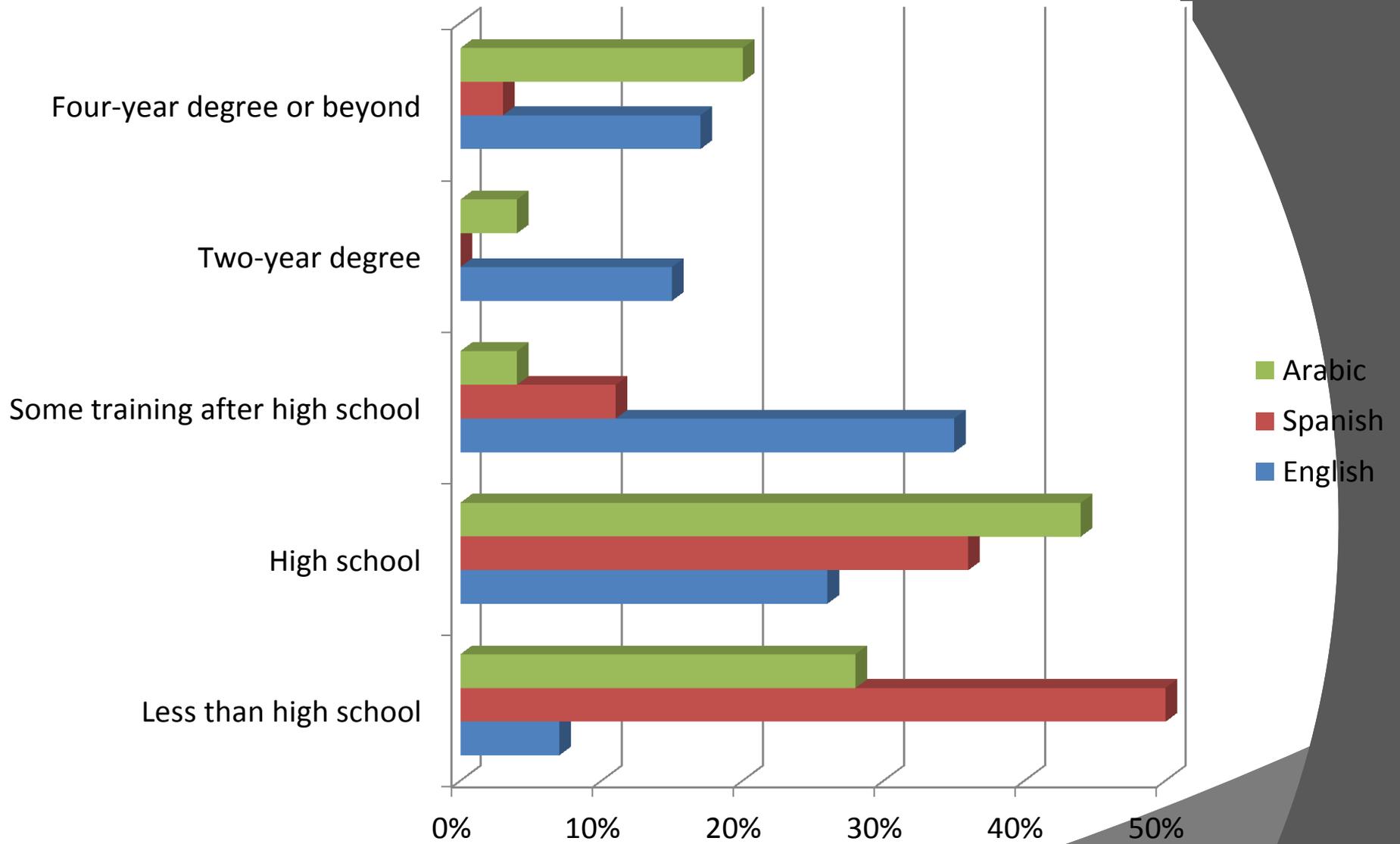
- Education was recoded into the following groups:
 - Less than high school
 - High school
 - Some training after high school
 - Two-year degree
 - Four-year degree or beyond

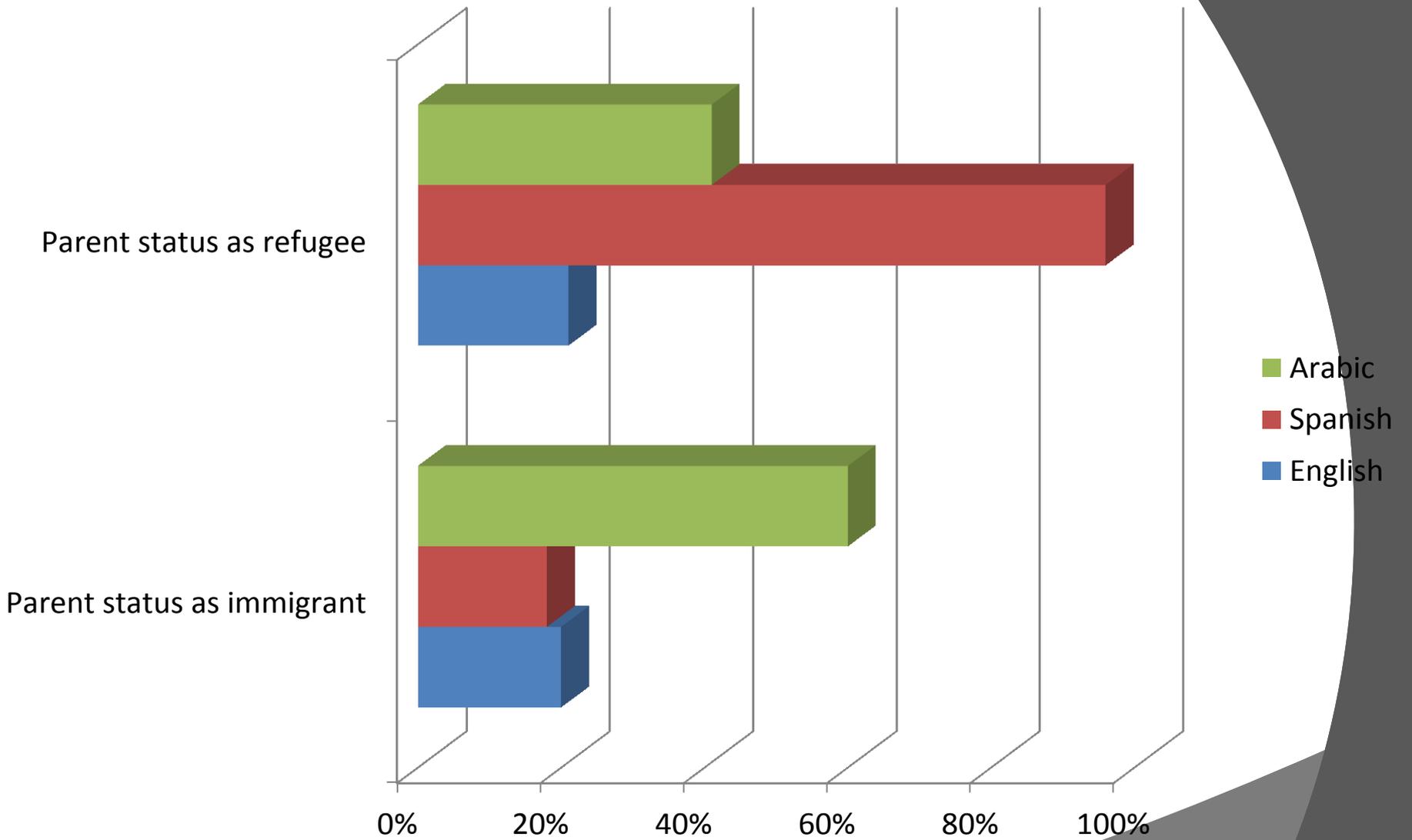


Parenting Sample Data

⊙ Language Group

- There was a significant relationship between parent education level and parent language group, $X^2(8)=51.40$, $p<0.001$
- There was a significant relationship between parent status as a refugee and parent language group, $X^2(2)=13.86$, $p=0.001$
- There was a significant relationship between parent status as an immigrant and parent language group, $X^2(2)=36.72$, $p<0.001$







Presentation #1 Child Health

Child Health

- ① What % of children had a low birth weight and length?
- ① What is parent perception of their child's health overall?
- ① What is the parent's assessment of child weight?
- ① Does the child have an identified disability?
- ① Does the parent have concern of their child's developmental delay?
- ① What are the sleep habits of children?

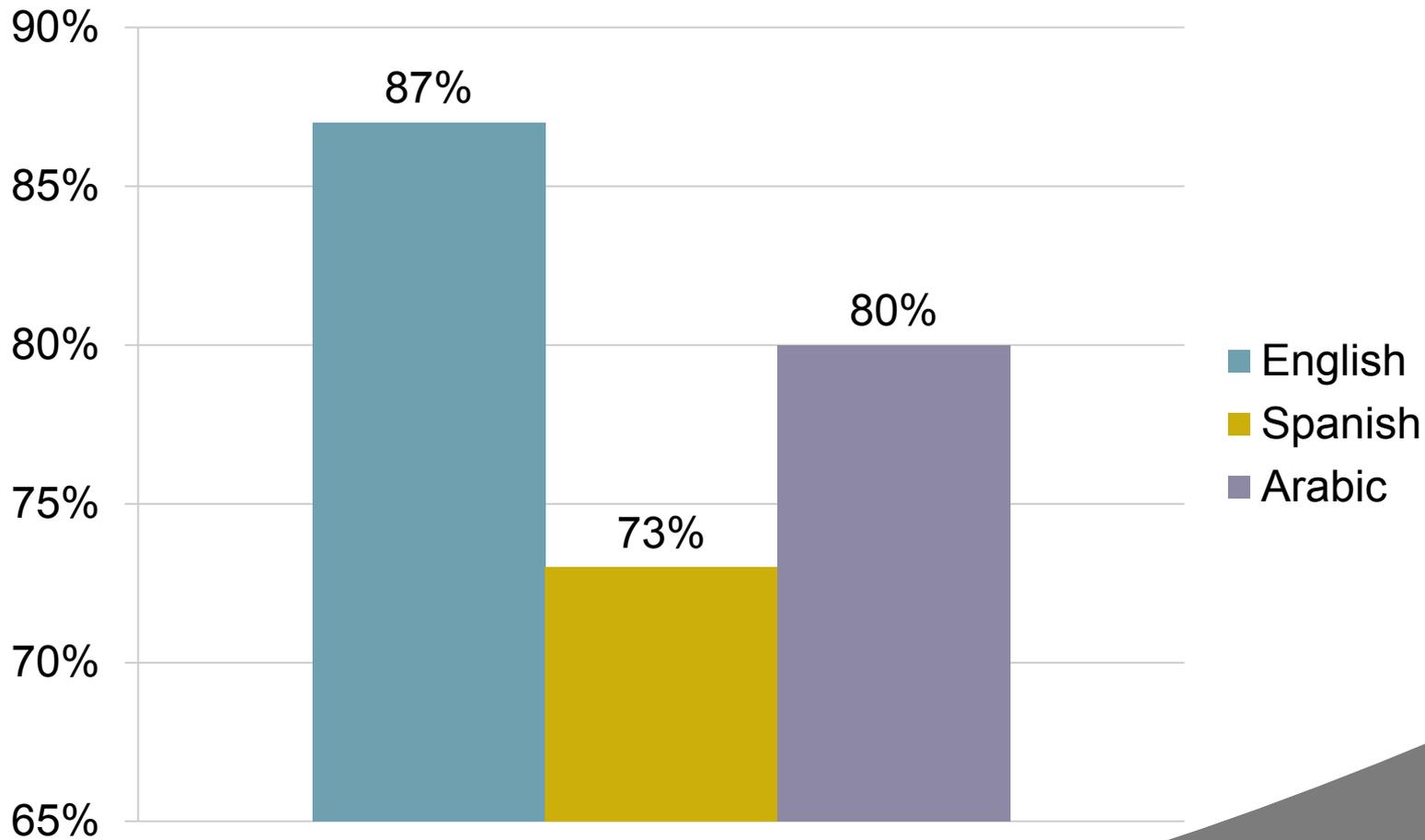
What % of children had a low birth weight and length?

- ◉ Overall, 11% of parents reported a low birth weight for their child. (≤ 5.5 lbs.)
- ◉ 16% of children measured in the 10th percentile and below. (≤ 18.5 in.)
- ◉ No language or age differences
- ◉ National data reports that 8% of children are born with low birthweight.¹

What is parent perception of their child's health overall?

- ◎ Across both age groups, parents generally reported their children's health as very good or excellent (84%).
 - Nationally, Head Start reports about 82%²
- ◎ No differences between age groups
- ◎ There was variation in parent perception of child health across language groups.

What % of parents reported their children's health as very good or excellent?



What is the parent's assessment of child weight?

- ① The majority of parents rated their children's weight at "about right" (92%).
- ① Only 2% of parents reported that their children were overweight, and no parents reported that their children were obese.
- ① No language or age differences.

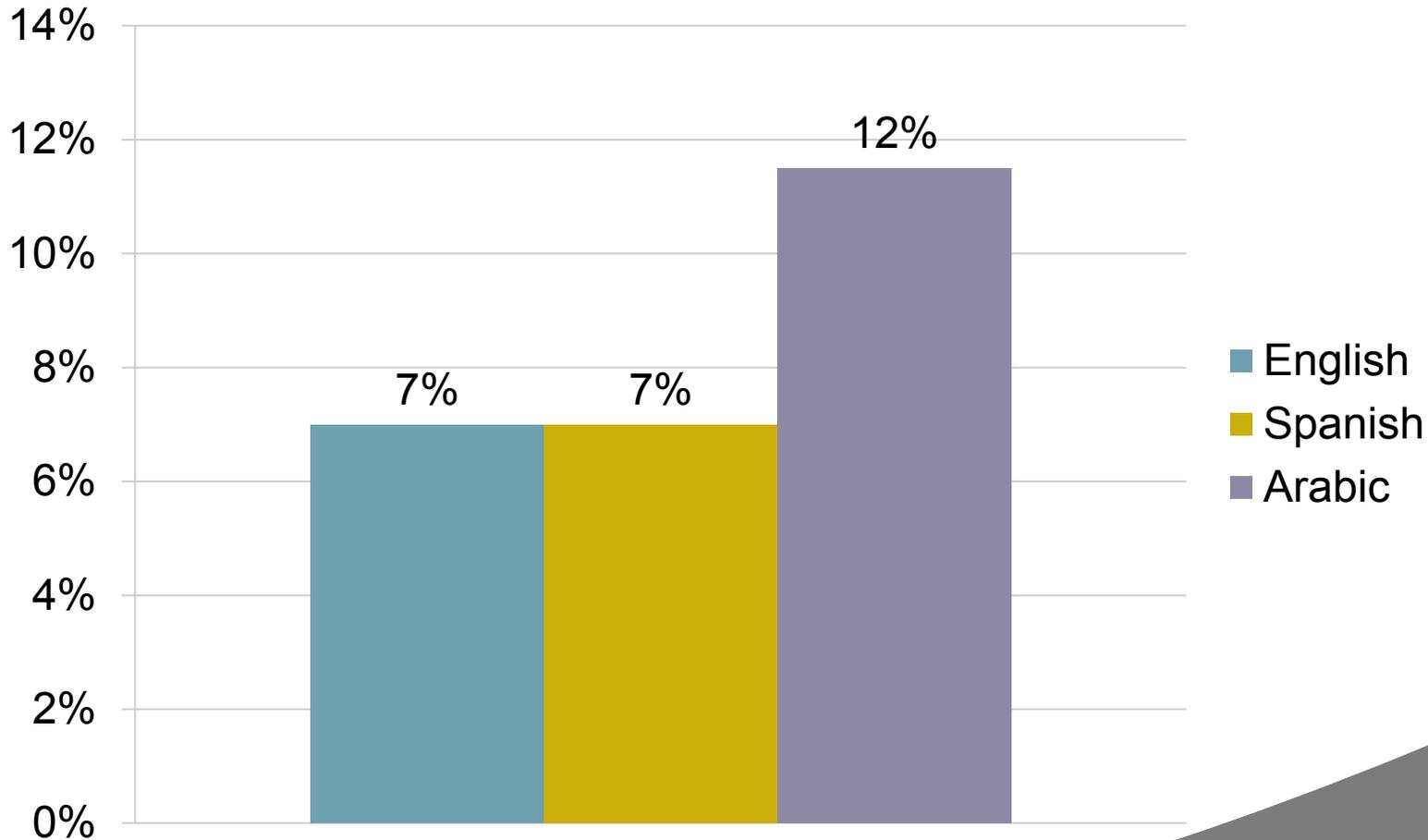
What is the parent's assessment of child weight?

- Nationally, about 13% of preschoolers are overweight or obese.
 - The prevalence of obesity among low-income children is about 14%.
- This average is true of Nebraska. In 2011, 14% of low-income children aged 2–4 years were obese.
 - This percentage has slightly increased between 2008-2011³.

What is the parent's assessment of child weight?

- Overall, 8% of parents reported that they were concerned about their children's weight.
- No age differences
- There was variation in parent concern about their child's weight across language groups.

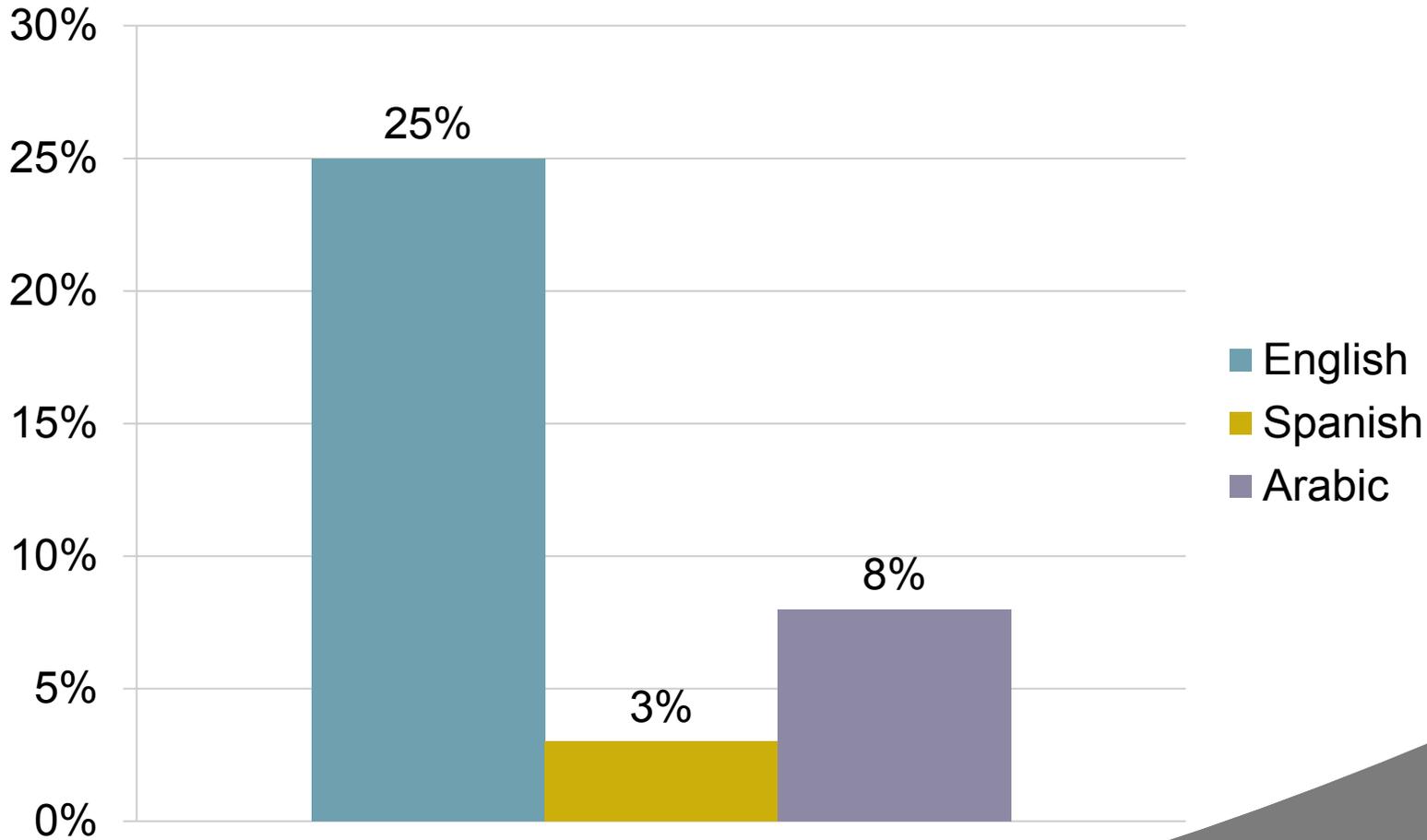
Are you concerned about your child's weight?



Does the child have an identified disability?

- Overall, 20% of parents indicated that their child has an identified disability.
 - Nationally, about 11% of children in Head Start have an identified disability².
- No differences were found between age groups.
- Significant results were found across languages.

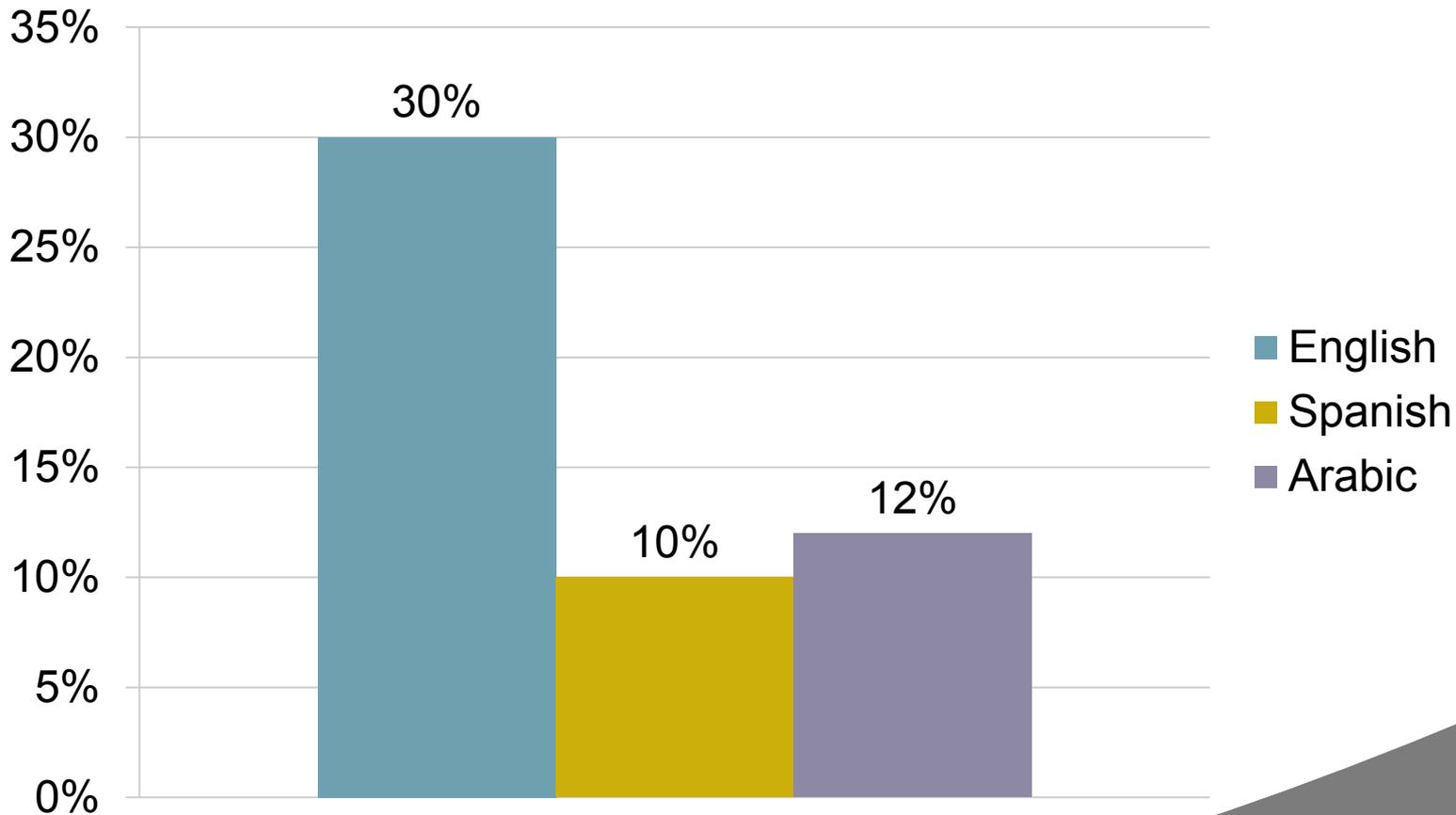
Does the child have an identified disability?



Does the parent have concern of developmental delay?

- ⦿ Overall, 25% of parents reported concern that their child may have a developmental delay.
- ⦿ No differences were found between age groups.
- ⦿ Significant results were found across languages.

Does the parent have concern of developmental delay?



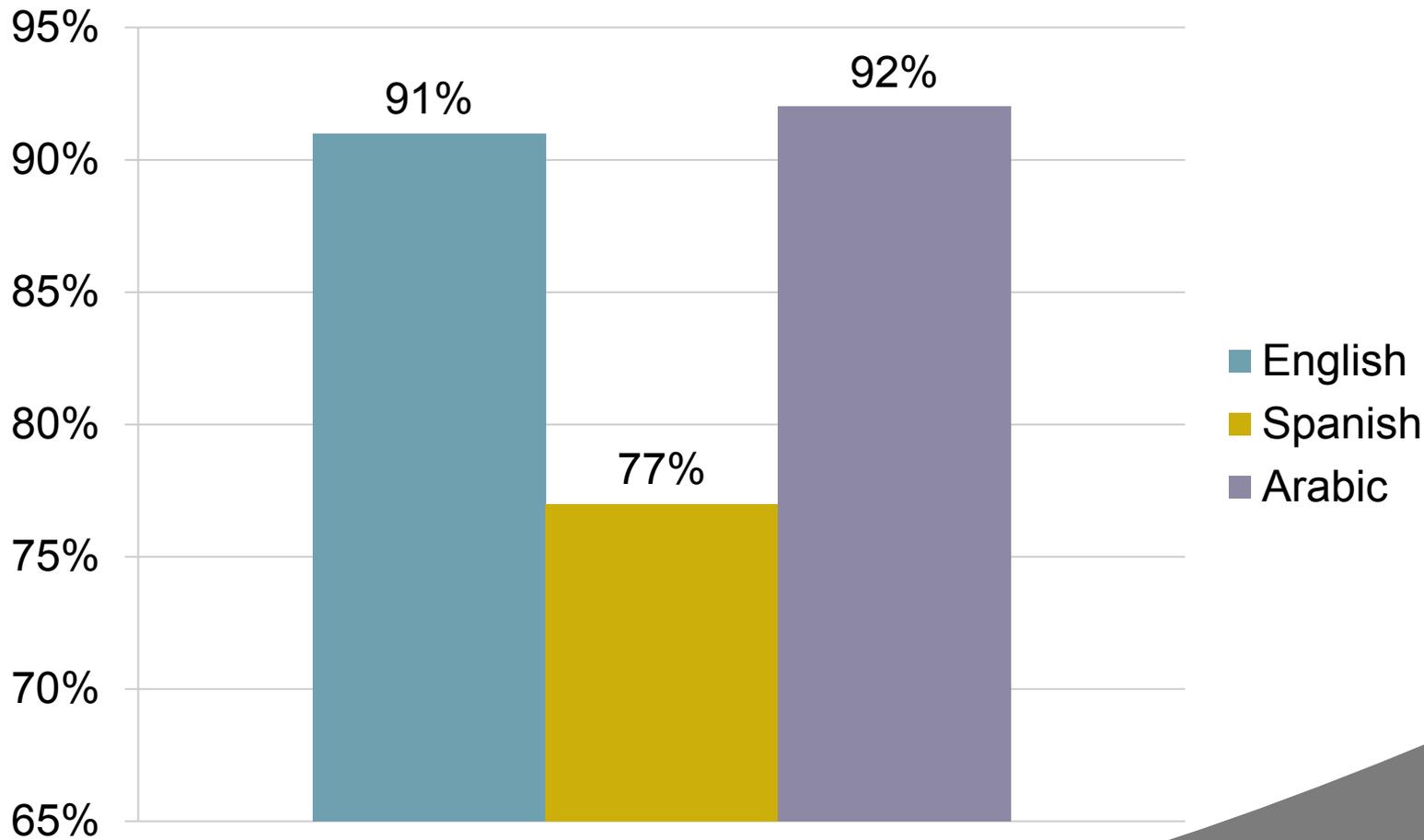
Identified Disability vs. Concern

- ◉ More parents have concerns about their children's development than there are children who have been identified.
- For English- and Arabic-speaking families, the % of children with identified disabilities and the % of parents who reported concerns were comparable.
- For Spanish-speaking families, only 3% of children had an identified disability, whereas 10% of parents reported a concern.

What are the sleep habits of children?

- ⊙ Generally, parents reported that their child has a regular bedtime during the week (89%).
- ⊙ No differences were found between age groups.
- ⊙ Language differences were found.

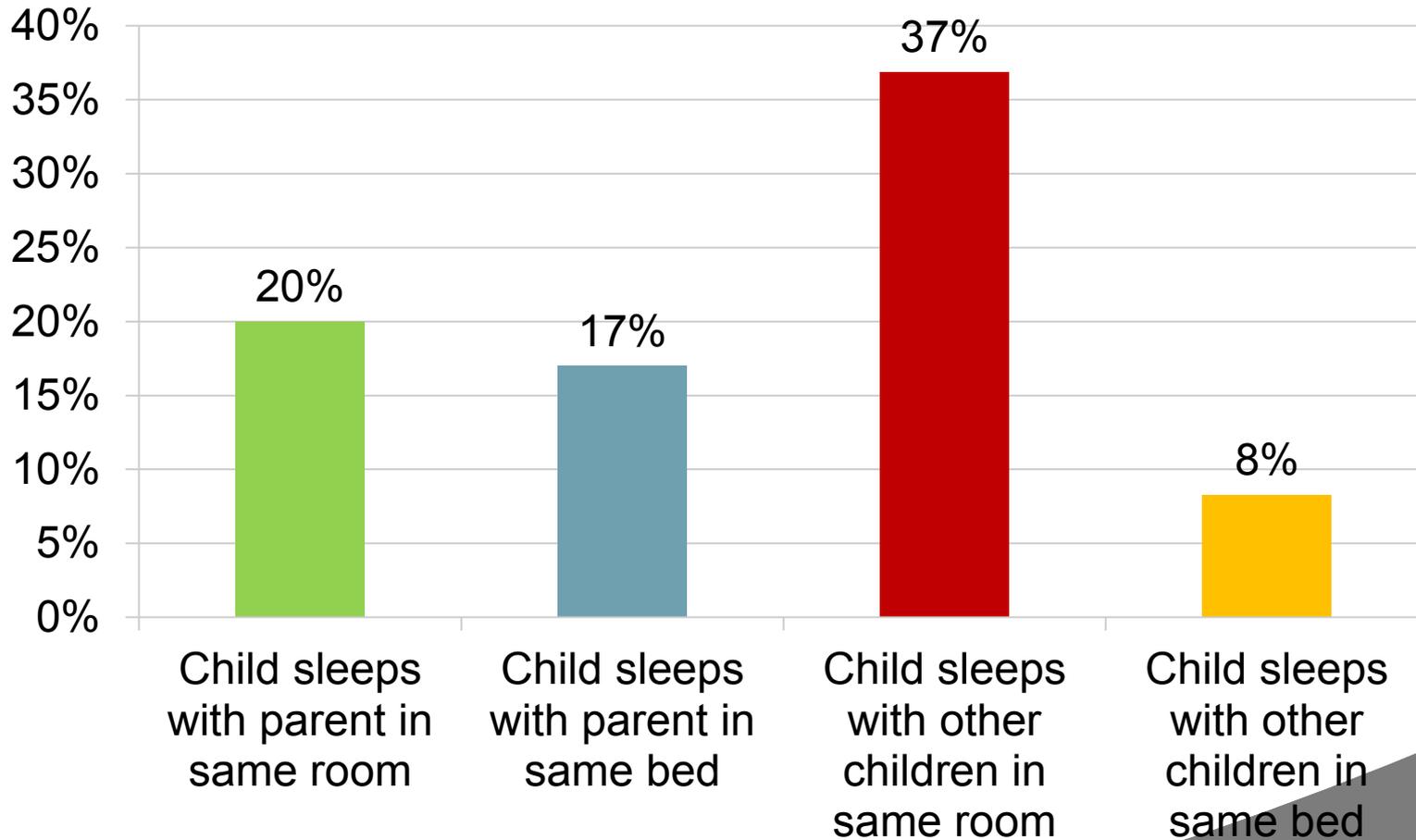
Does your child have a regular bedtime during the week?



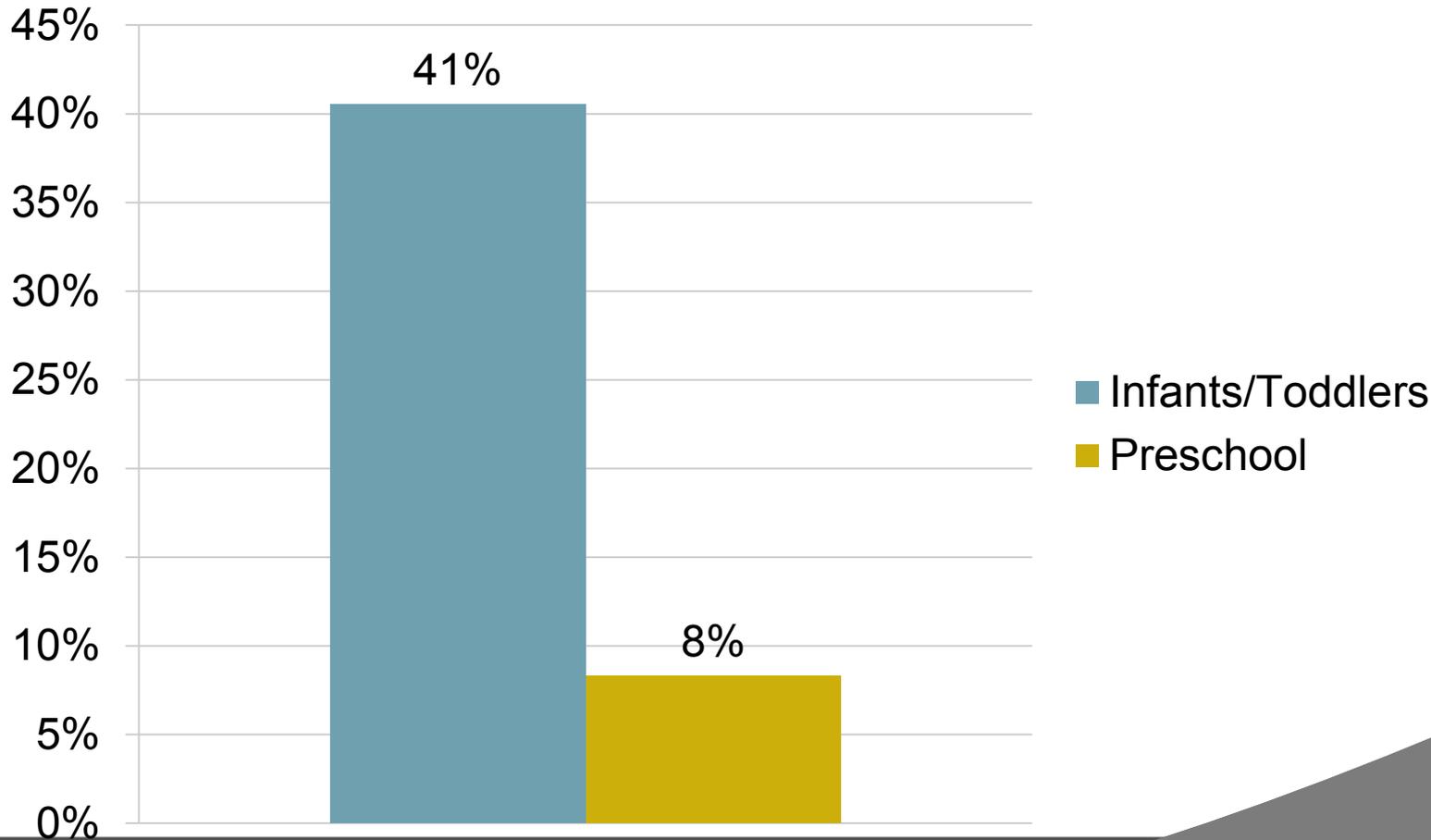
What are the sleep habits of children?

- Overall, 13% of children regularly have trouble sleeping.
- Children generally have a regular sleeping place (96%).
- Children are most likely to sleep in their own room (89%) and alone (47%).
- Other sleeping arrangements were also reported by families.

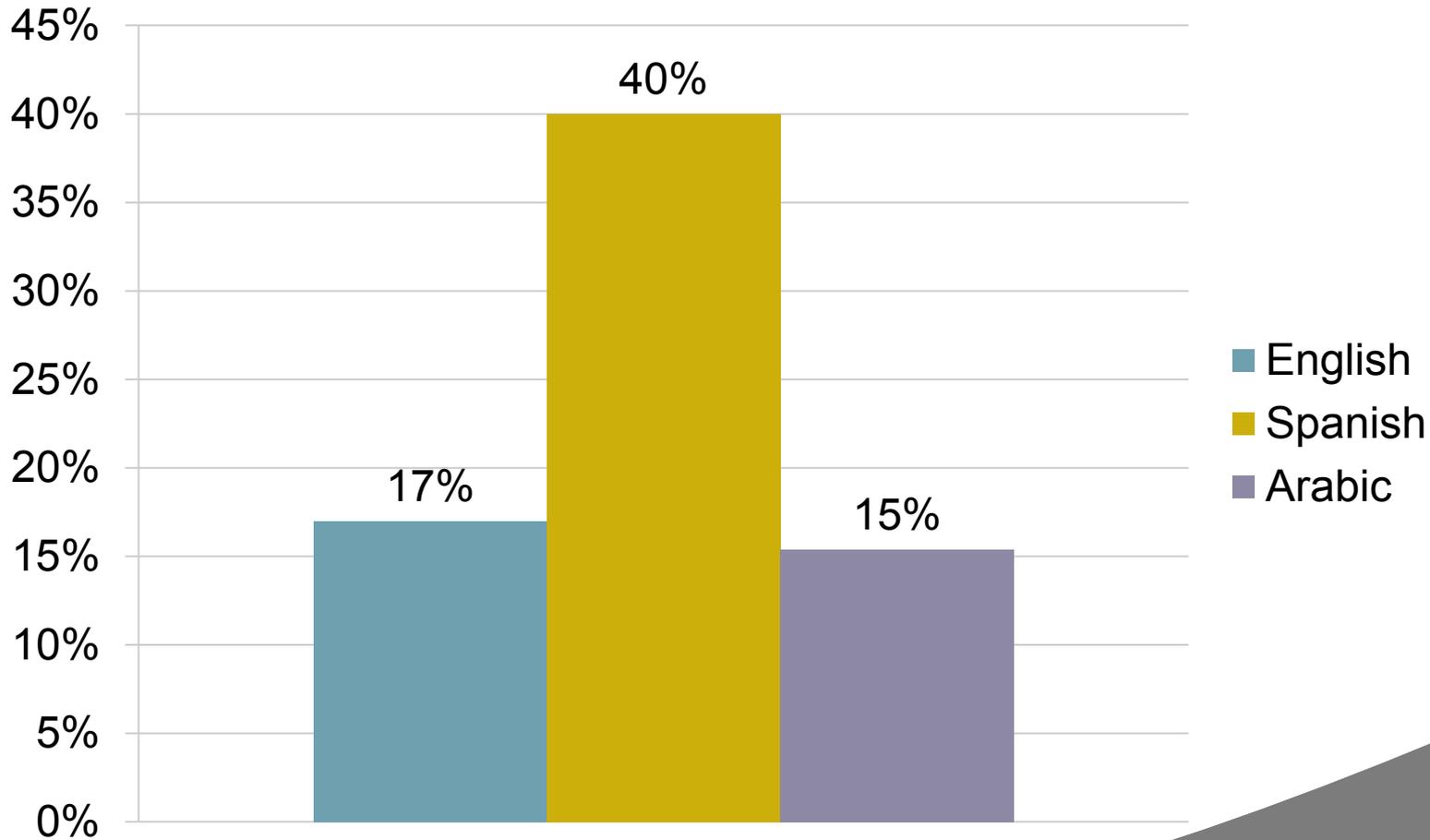
Where else do children sleep?



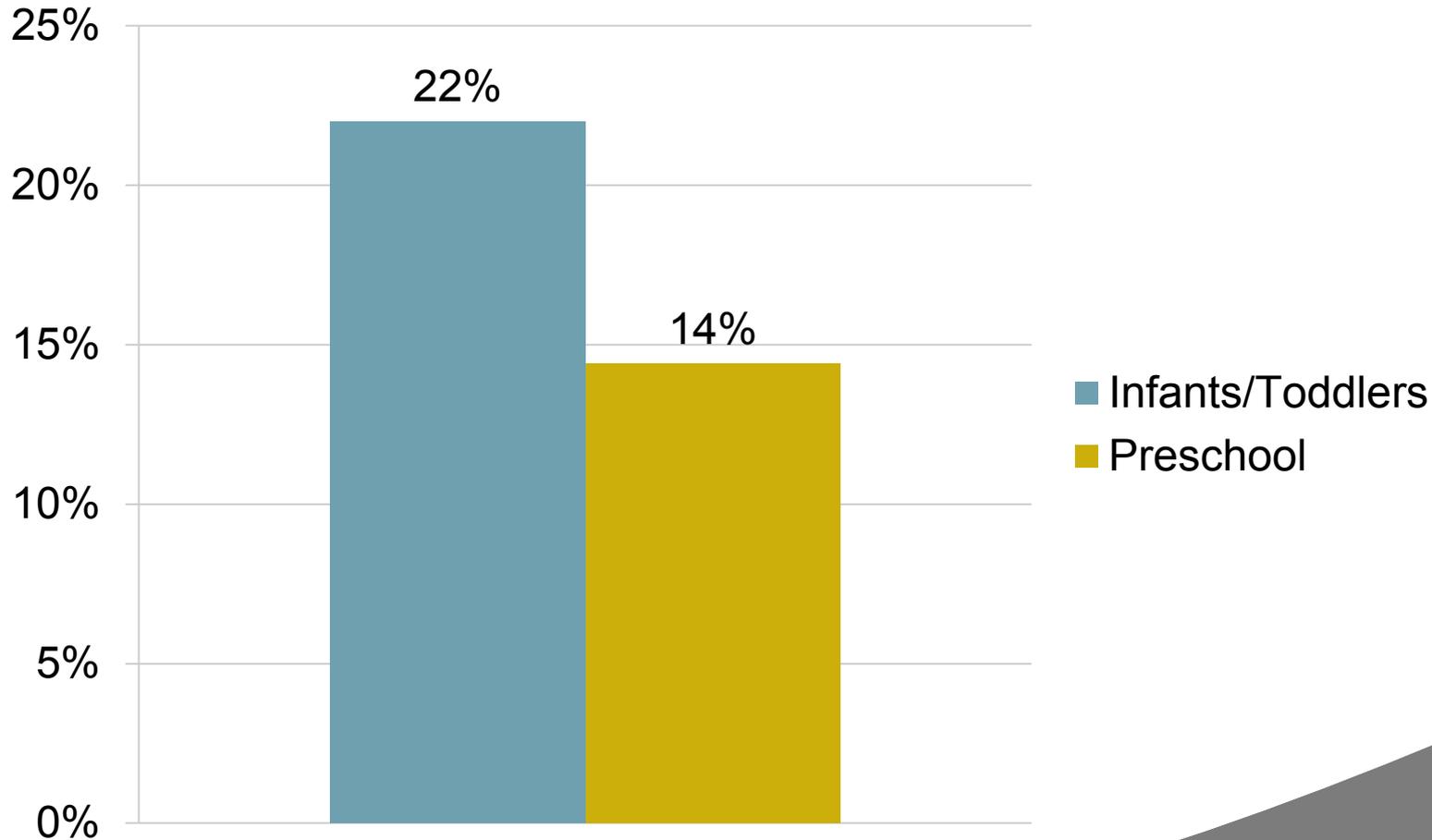
What % of children sleep with their parents in the same room?



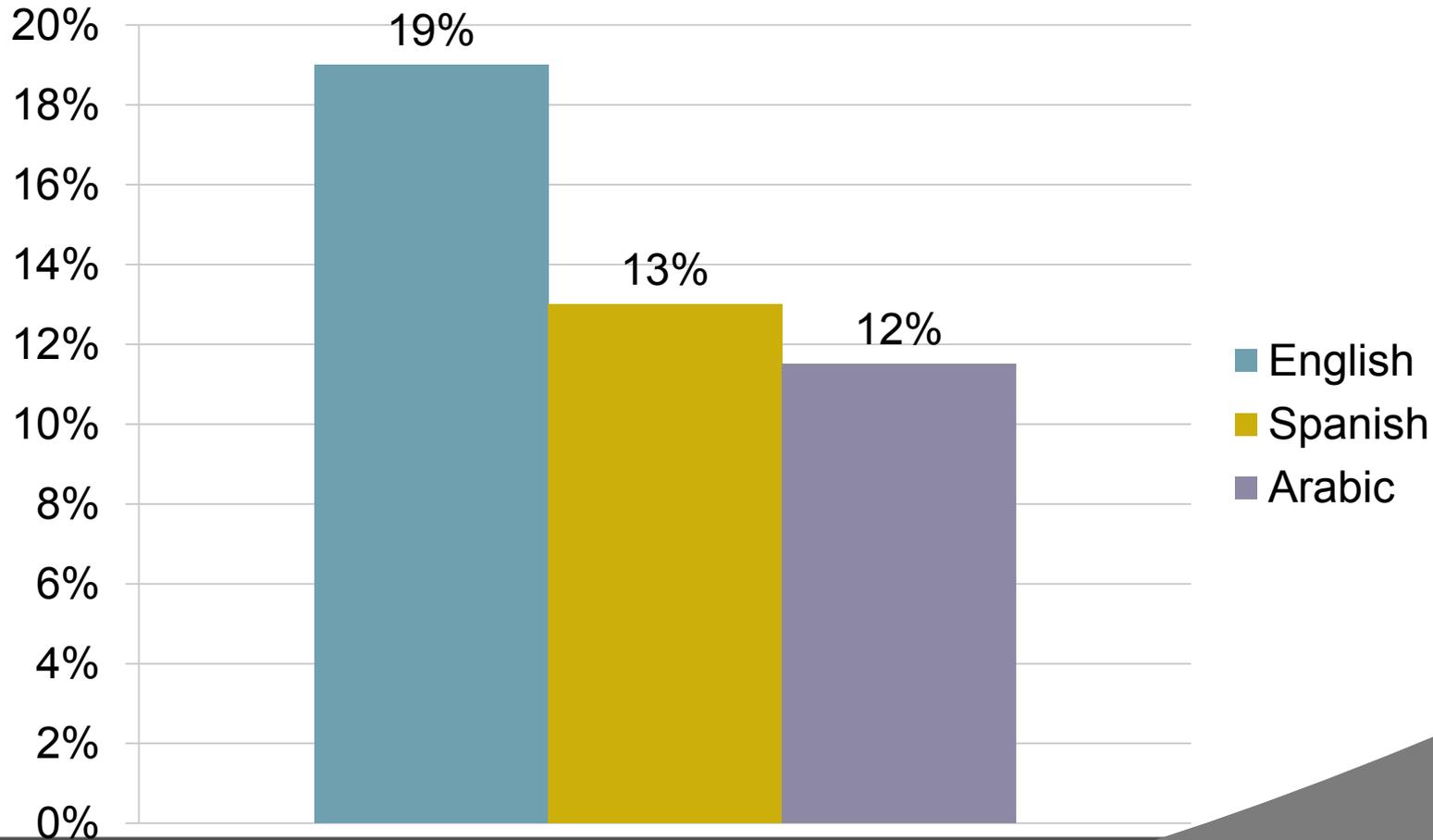
What % of children sleep with their parents in the same room?



What % of children sleep with their parents in the same bed?



What % of children sleep with their parents in the same bed?



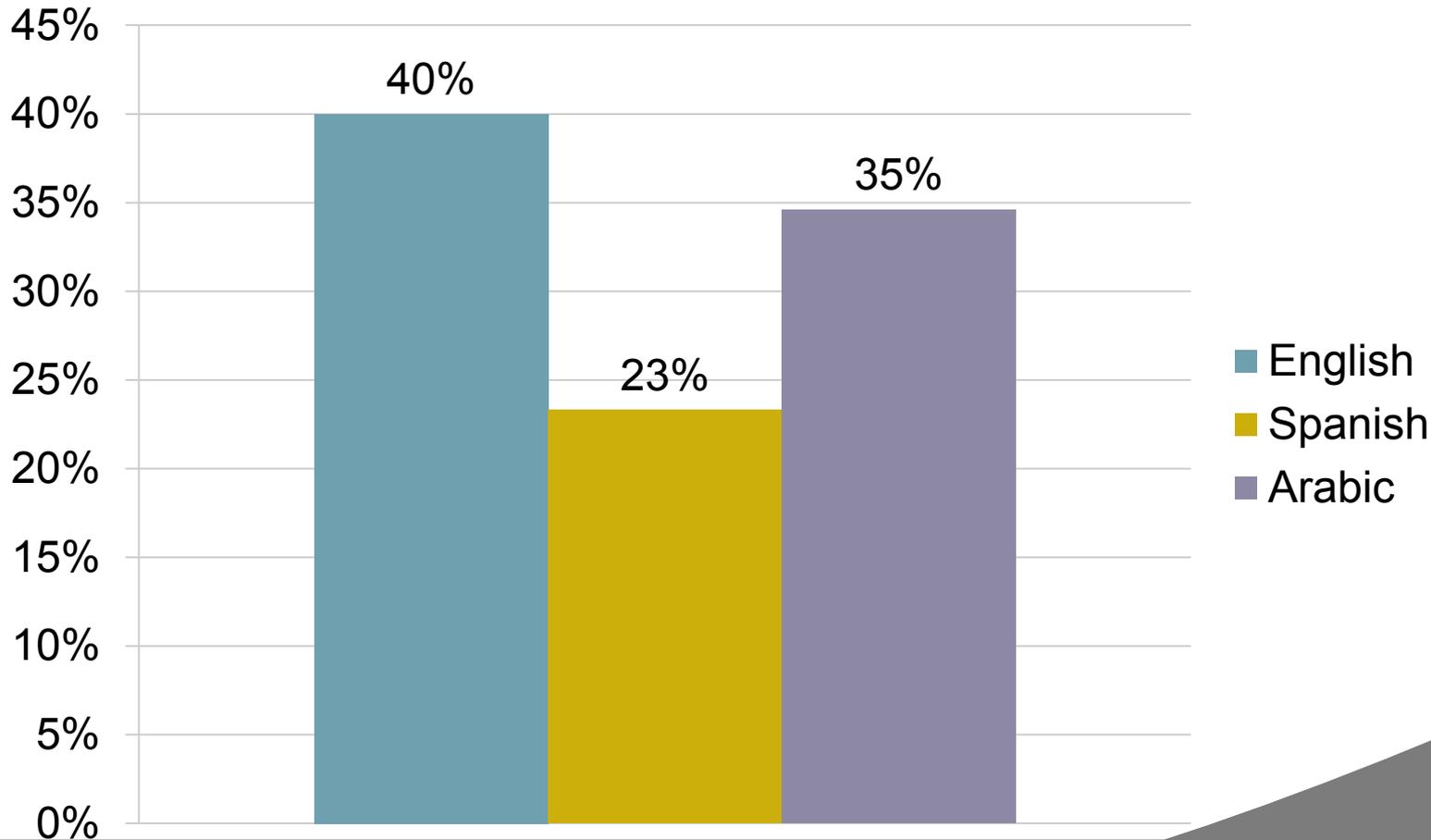
Co-sleeping and Cultural Differences

- ◉ Spanish-speaking families were more likely to sleep in the same bed than other languages.
- ◉ Compared with white American young children, research suggests that Hispanic-American children are **8 times** more likely to sleep in the same room and **3.5 times** as likely to sleep in the same bed⁴.

Do children share beds or rooms?

- ⦿ Generally, infants and toddlers are less likely to share a bed or even the same room with other children.
- ⦿ Differences were found between languages.

What % of children sleep with other children in the same room?



Summary

- ① What % of children had a low birth weight and length?
- ① What is parent perception of their child's health overall?
- ① What is the parent's assessment of child weight?
- ① Does the child have an identified disability?
- ① Does the parent have concern of their child's developmental delay?
- ① What are the sleep habits of children?

Take-Aways/Implications

- About 1 in 10 children in Early Head Start/Head Start in Lancaster and Saunders Counties had a low birth weight.
- In Nebraska, 14% of low-income children aged 2-4 are obese, however, no parents in our survey reported that their children were obese.
- More parents have concerns about their children's development than there are children who have been identified with a disability.
- In Spanish-speaking families, children are more likely to sleep in the same room as their parents.

References

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Presentation #2

Parenting:

Practices/Beliefs,

Excursions, and Activities

Background Literature

- ◉ The level of parents' education is related to child academic achievement, efficacy, and endorsement of insecure attachment (Hortacsu, 1995)
- ◉ Parents' level of education and income are associated with children's reading and math outcomes (Epstein, 2008)
- ◉ Endorsement of disciplinarian beliefs by mothers results in decreased child efficacy and academic achievement (Hortacsu, 1995)
- ◉ High level of education for fathers influences endorsement of non-disciplinarian beliefs, increases child efficacy (Hortacsu, 1995)

Background Literature

- ◉ Parent involvement in school is positively associated with child's reading and math outcomes (Epstein, 2008)
- ◉ Parenting behaviors change in importance across child's lifespan (Shamah, 2011)
- ◉ Parent role in education is more important for younger child age groups (Shamah, 2011)
- ◉ Ethnic differences in parenting practices and child outcomes for families in Early Head Start (Iruka, 2009)
 - Cognitive development, problem behaviors

Study Questions

- What are the parenting practices and beliefs of Early Head Start and Head Start parents?
- What differences, if any, exist among Early Head Start and Head Start parents in terms of excursions with the child?
- What are the common parenting activities of Early Head Start and Head Start parents with their children?
- All questions were examined for sample overall, as well as age groups and language groups.

PARENTING PRACTICES

*WHAT ARE THE PARENTING PRACTICES
AND BELIEFS OF EARLY HEAD START
AND HEAD START PARENTS?*



Parenting Practices & Beliefs

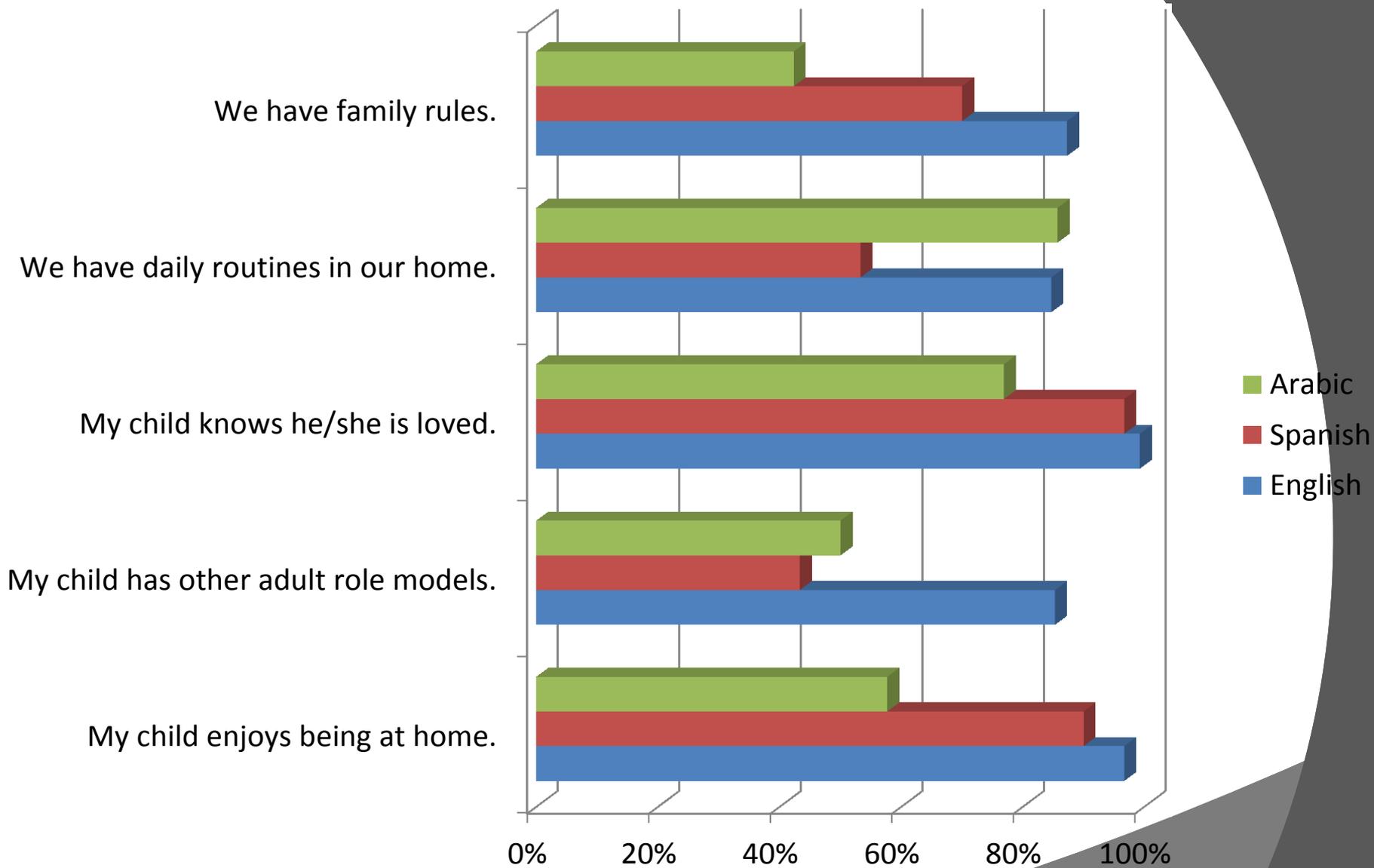
- ⦿ Parents were asked to identify whether or not certain parenting practices agree with their parenting.
- ⦿ Child Age Group
 - There was only a significant relationship between child age group and **whether parents feel they are a good parent**, $X^2(1)=3.88$, $p=0.049$.
 - Infant/Toddler = 90.5% answered yes
 - Preschool = 97% answered yes

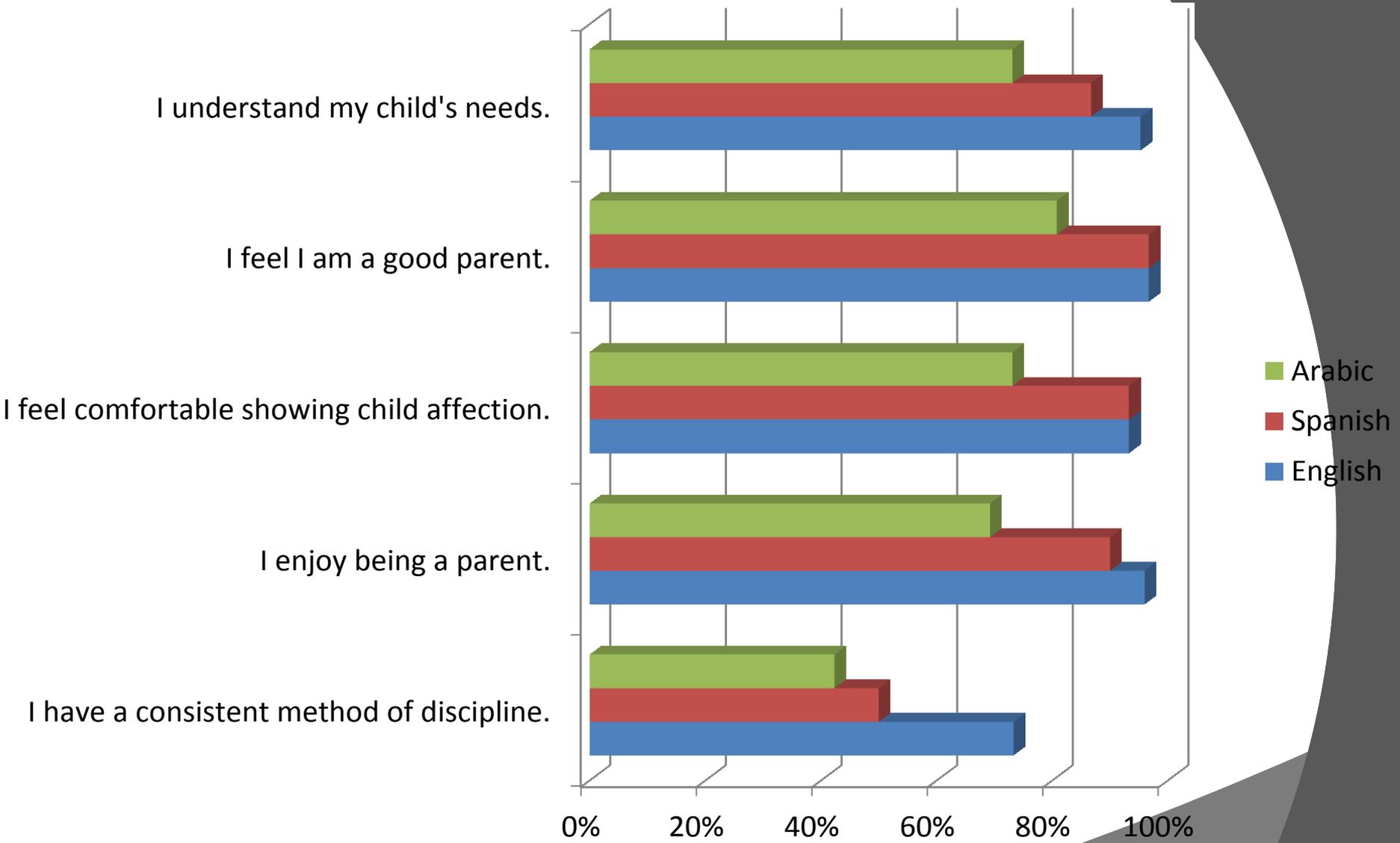
Parenting Practices & Beliefs

◉ Language Group

- There was a significant relationship between language and all of the parenting practices

| Parenting Statement | χ^2 | <i>P</i> |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| My child enjoys being at home | 40.23 | <0.001 |
| My child has other adult role models | 33.03 | <0.001 |
| My child knows he/she is loved | 29.84 | <0.001 |
| We have family rules | 28.97 | <0.001 |
| I enjoy being a parent | 21.11 | <0.001 |
| We have daily routines in home | 19.75 | <0.001 |
| I know and understand my child's needs | 14.70 | 0.001 |
| I have a consistent method of discipline | 13.53 | 0.001 |
| I feel I am a good parent | 11.36 | 0.003 |
| I feel comfortable showing affection to my child | 11.13 | 0.004 |





PARENTING EXCURSIONS

WHAT DIFFERENCES, IF ANY, EXIST AMONG EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START PARENTS IN TERMS OF EXCURSIONS WITH THE CHILD?



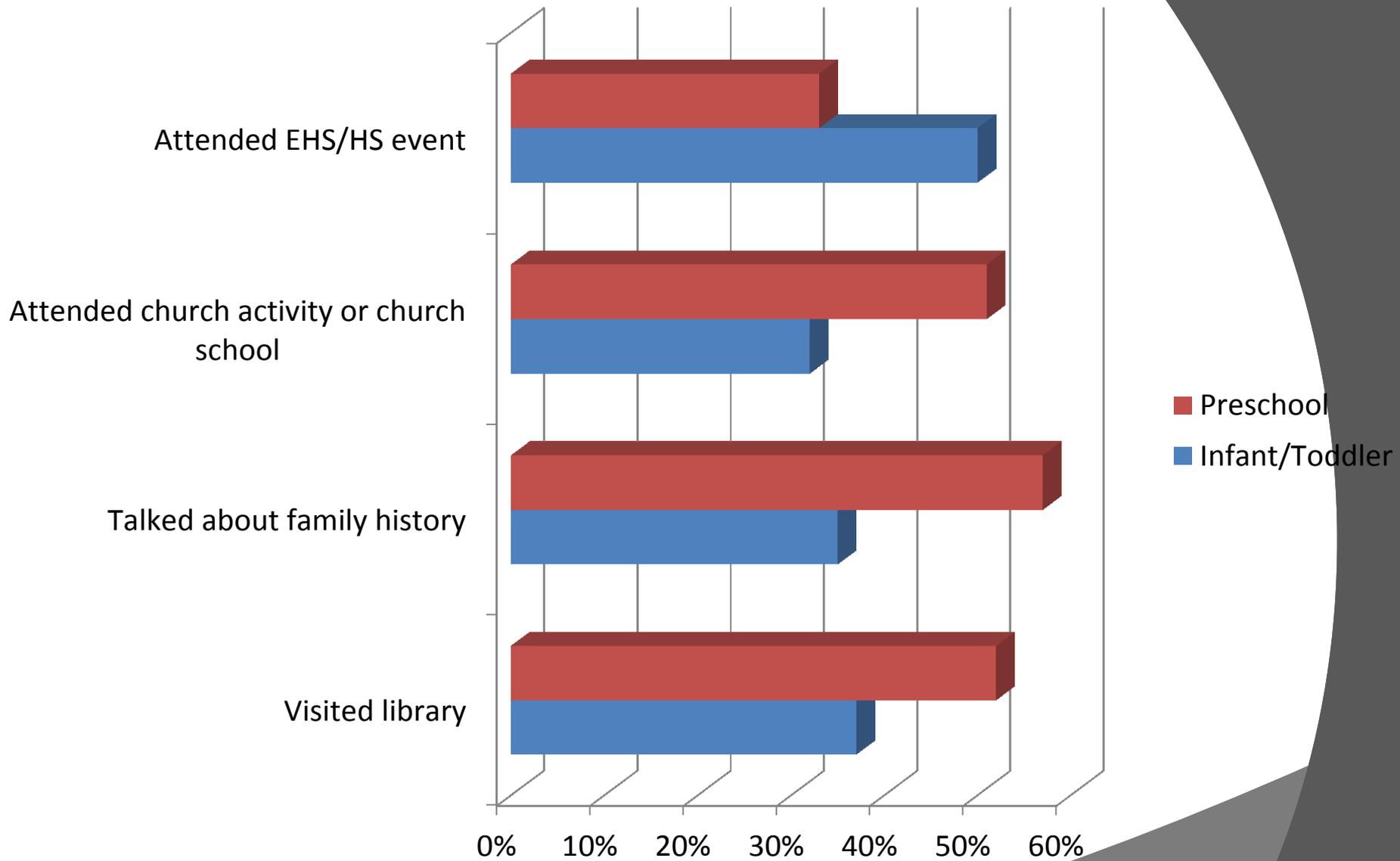
Parenting Excursions

- ◉ Parents were asked if anyone in their family had gone on certain excursions with the child in the past month.
- ◉ Excursions:
 - Visited a library
 - Gone to a movie
 - Gone to a mall
 - Visited a museum, historical site
 - Visited a playground, park, or gone on a picnic
 - Talked with your child about his/her family history or ethnic heritage
 - Attended an event sponsored by a community, ethnic, or religious group
 - Attended a church activity or church school
 - Attended an EHS/HS event

Parenting Excursions

⦿ Child Age Group

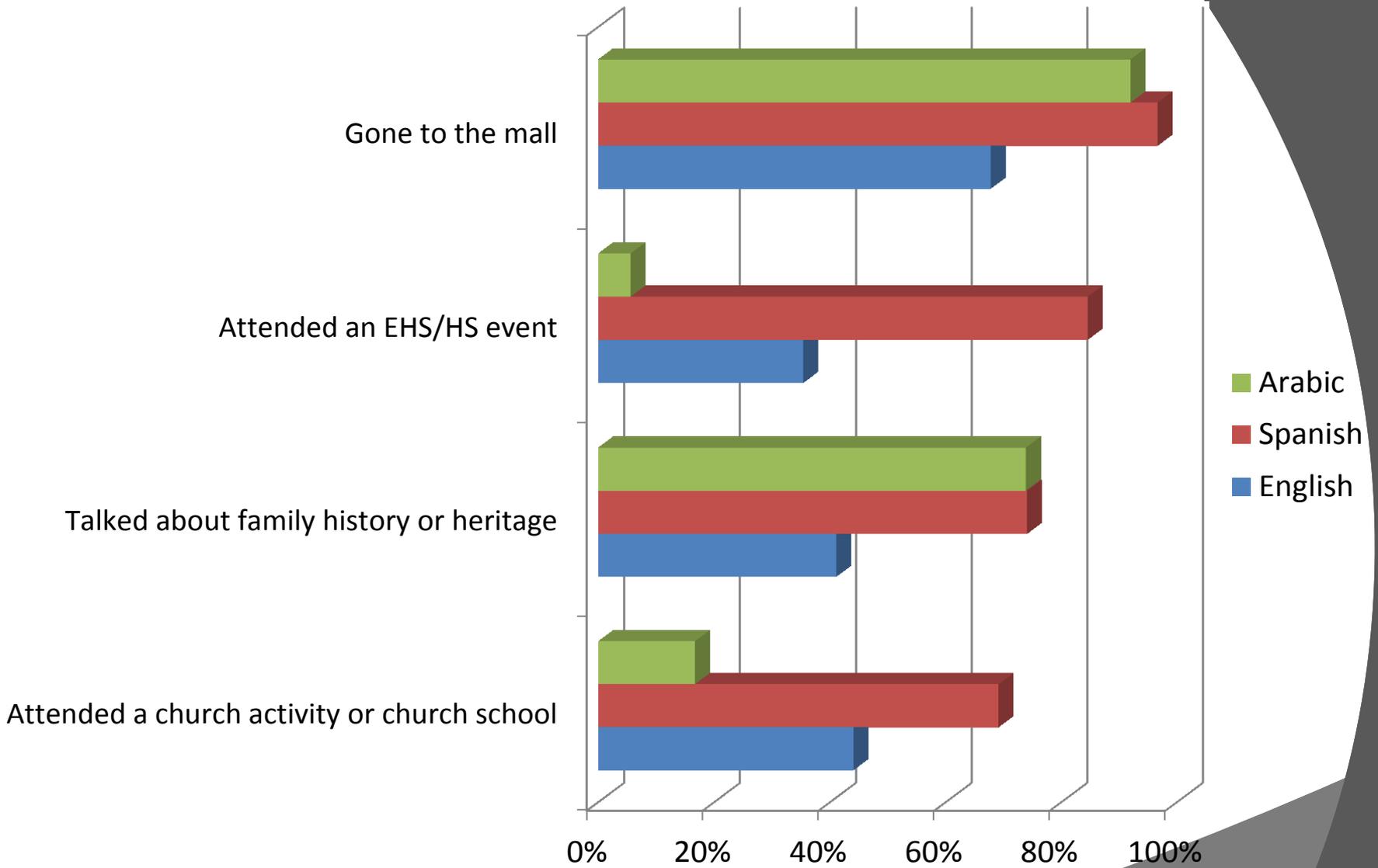
| Parent Excursions | χ^2 | <i>P</i> |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Visited the library with child in the past month | 3.99 | 0.046 |
| Talked with child about family history in the past month | 8.39 | 0.004 |
| Attended a church activity with child in the past month | 6.42 | 0.011 |
| Attended an EHS/HS event with child in the past month | 5.70 | 0.017 |



Parenting Excursions

⊙ Language Group

| Parent Excursions | χ^2 | <i>P</i> |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Gone to the mall with child in the past month | 15.44 | <0.001 |
| Talked with child about family history in the past month | 16.13 | <0.001 |
| Attended a church activity with child in the past month | 12.05 | 0.002 |
| Attended an EHS/HS event with child in the past month | 31.93 | <0.001 |



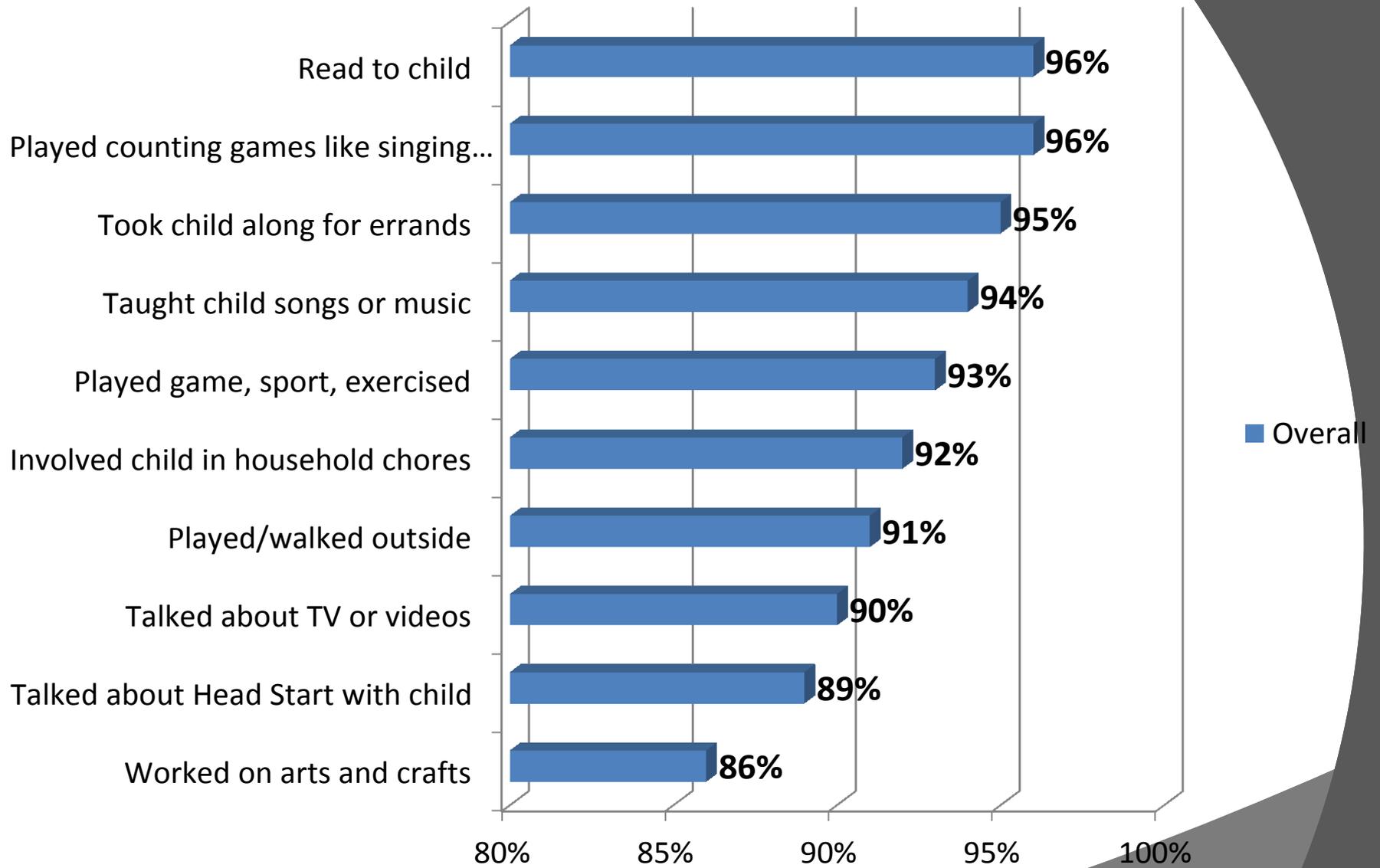
PARENTING ACTIVITIES

WHAT ARE THE COMMON PARENTING ACTIVITIES OF EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START PARENTS WITH THEIR CHILDREN?



Parenting Activities

- ◎ Parents were asked to how many times someone in their family had done certain activities with the child in the past week.
 - Parent answers of not at all, once or twice, several times, or everyday were recoded into not at all, or yes the activity occurred.



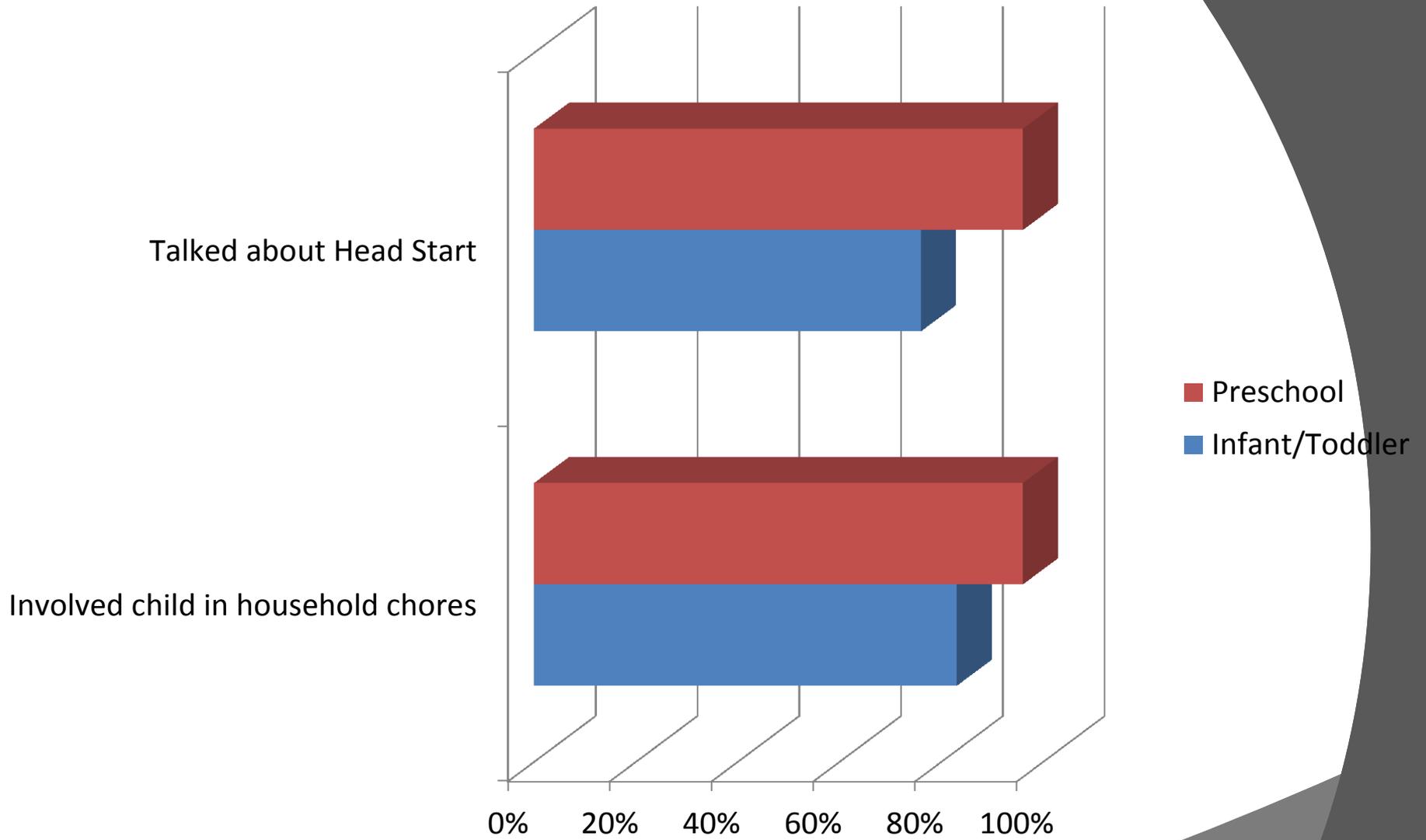
Parenting Activities

⊙ Child Age Group

| Parent Activities | χ^2 | <i>P</i> |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Involved child in household chores like cooking, cleaning, setting the table, or caring for pets | 11.39 | 0.001 |
| Talked about what happened in Head Start | 20.39 | <0.001 |

⊙ Language Group

- There were no significant results for the chi-square test based on language group.



Conclusions

- ⊙ There are significant differences for child age group and parent language group for the statements:
 - “I feel that I am a good parent”
 - Age group and Language group
 - “My child knows he/she is loved”
 - Language group
 - “My child enjoys being at home”
 - Language group
 - Arabic speaking parents had the lowest % yes response to these statements

Conclusions

- ⊙ There are significant differences for child's age group and what parents do with their children.
 - Excursions and Activities
- ⊙ While there was a significant relationship between parent language group and all of the parenting practices, there was not a significant relationship between parent language group and any of the parenting activities.

Limitations and Future Research

- ⊙ There was a small sample size, N=206
- ⊙ Group membership was not equally distributed
 - Child Age Group
 - Infant/Toddler: n=74
 - Preschool: n=132
 - Language Group
 - English: n=150
 - Spanish: n=30
 - Arabic: n=26
- ⊙ Potential translation errors

References

- Hortacsu, N. (1995). Parents' education levels, parents' beliefs, and child outcomes. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 156(3), 373.
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doi:10.1080/10409280802206916

Presentation #3

Voices from the Outside



Voices from the Outside

- ⦿ A study of **potential** Early Head Start/ Head Start participants
- ⦿ Efforts made to collect data
 - Mailed surveys
 - Focus group
 - Phone interviews
- ⦿ A qualitative study

Voices from the Outside

⊙ Research Questions:

- What are the experiences of families who are **not** participating in EHS/ HS with regard to the rewards/ challenges of parenting, future expectations for their children, and community resources both used and still needed?
- In addition, what influences the decisions these families make regarding childcare arrangements and have they considered EHS/ HS?

Voices from the Outside

◎ Sample:

- 9 parents of young children eligible for Early Head Start/ Head Start but not currently enrolled
 - focus group with 4 parents
 - one-on-one telephone interviews with 5 parents

◎ Interview Protocol:

- Covered 5 topics--
 - the experience of parenting
 - expectations for parent and child futures
 - parent's goals, dreams, aspirations for child
 - resources accessed and needed
 - childcare arrangements

Voices from the Outside

⦿ Data Collection:

- All interviews audio-taped and transcribed
- Phone interviewer notes

Voices from the Outside

◎ Data Analysis:

- Basic qualitative approach
- Constant comparative method
- Meaningful segments of text identified and labeled to form initial codes
- Categories of codes aggregated to identify patterns and establish themes
- Relationships between themes identified
- A thick, rich description of the parents' experiences developed
- Identification of “what was learned” (Creswell, 2013, p. 191)

Voices from the Outside

◎ Three Themes

1. Busy, but worth it!
2. Bright futures
3. The Early Head Start/ Head Start enigma

Busy, but worth it!



“When they get old enough, I’ll be able to get my normal sleep again. So, I make it happen. I get through it.”

Bright futures



“I play a huge part in developing the desire for learning.”

The Early Head Start/ Head Start enigma



“The application process is confusing. When you think you’re applying for one program, you may very well be applying for a different program... So to be honest, being able to differentiate which program has gotten difficult for me at this time.”

Voices from the Outside

What was learned?

- ⦿ Caution regarding representativeness of the sample
- ⦿ Challenges of parenting young children are compounded by poverty
- ⦿ Optimism for the future
- ⦿ Emphasis on parent role in child education
- ⦿ Keys to promoting participation in Early Head Start/ Head Start

References

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Thank you!

- ◉ We thank all the parents and guardians who participated in focus groups, phone interviews, and surveys to make this investigation possible.
- ◉ We also thank our funder, Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties.

Implications



Early Head Start/ Head Start program considerations:

● Strengths

- Programs provide individualized supports across age groups and family language groups
- Irrespective of family language/ SES, parents are engaged in excursions and learning activities with their children
- Families continue to be optimistic for brighter futures
- Goals of families match mission of the EHS/ HS program

Early Head Start/ Head Start program considerations:

⊙ Issues/ Concerns

- Parent perceptions of obesity
- Identifying children with disabilities in non-English speaking populations
- Promoting culturally-sensitive methods of consistent and positive discipline
- Impact of financial stress for families with young children
- Spreading the word- EHS/HS mission matches family mission

Questions?