



Refugee Childcare Needs & Careers Report 2021

I. Overview

The following report is based on two related surveys conducted by AALV and USCRI of a sample of their clients in December 2020. Individuals currently being served by both agencies were surveyed by staff (including case managers and interpreters) on two related surveys, the first on childcare needs and the second on childcare as a career. There are a total of 40 respondents for the 28-question career survey and a total of 65 respondents for the 25-question needs survey.

The questions themselves were written in collaboration by the outside consultant and agency staff through an iterative process to ensure appropriateness for the target populations. Each of the surveys was tested question-by-question in a training session on November 30, 2020 attended by staff from both agencies and were further adjusted based on feedback during this meeting. Data collection began December 1 and concluded on December 23, 2020. Responses were entered into a database, checked for completeness and to ensure no duplication. Analysis commenced December 26, 2020. This report provides an overview of responses across a range of topics covered in each of the two surveys which asked questions in the following categories: participant demographics, current childcare needs, and experience with childcare centers.

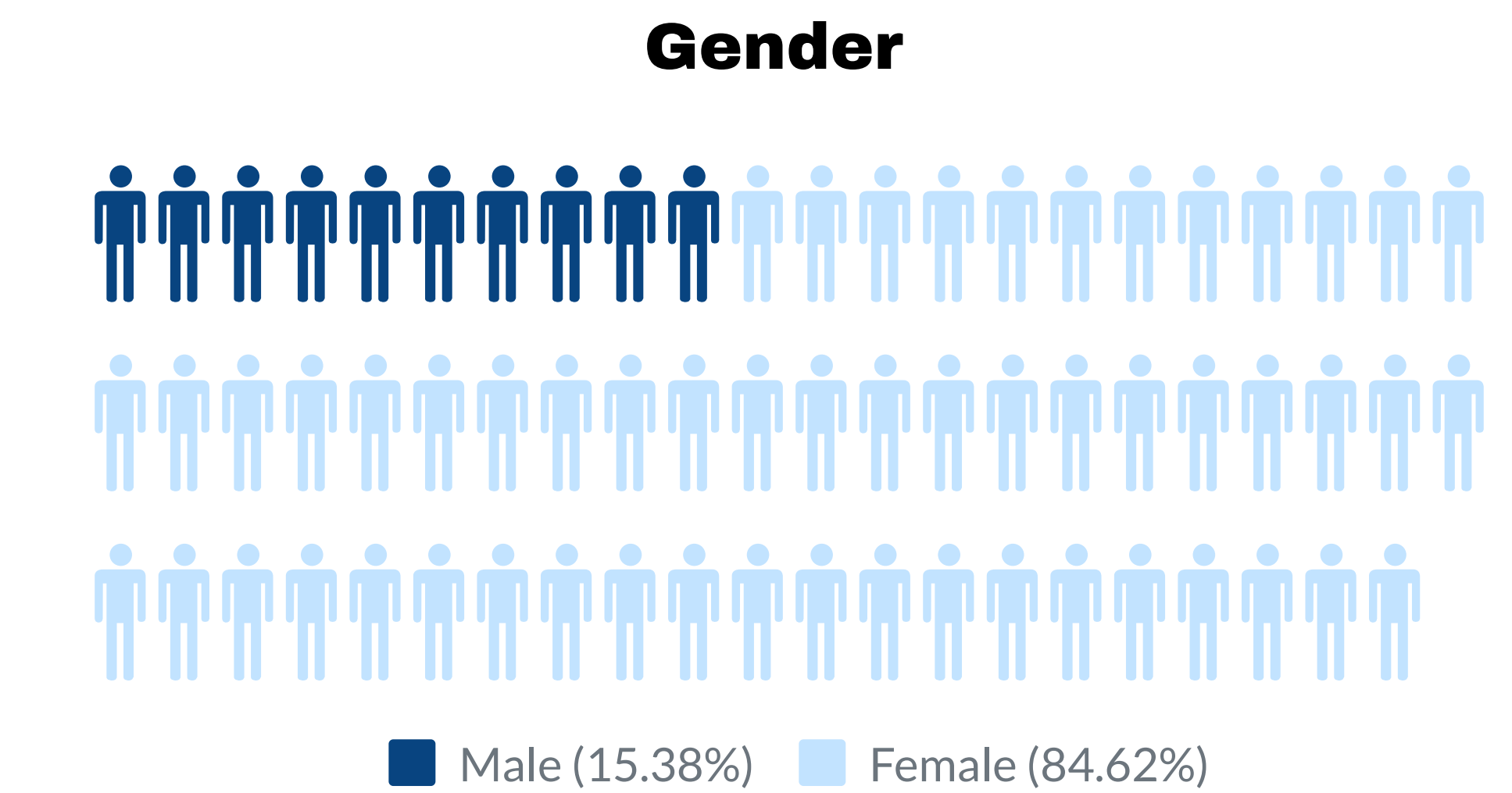
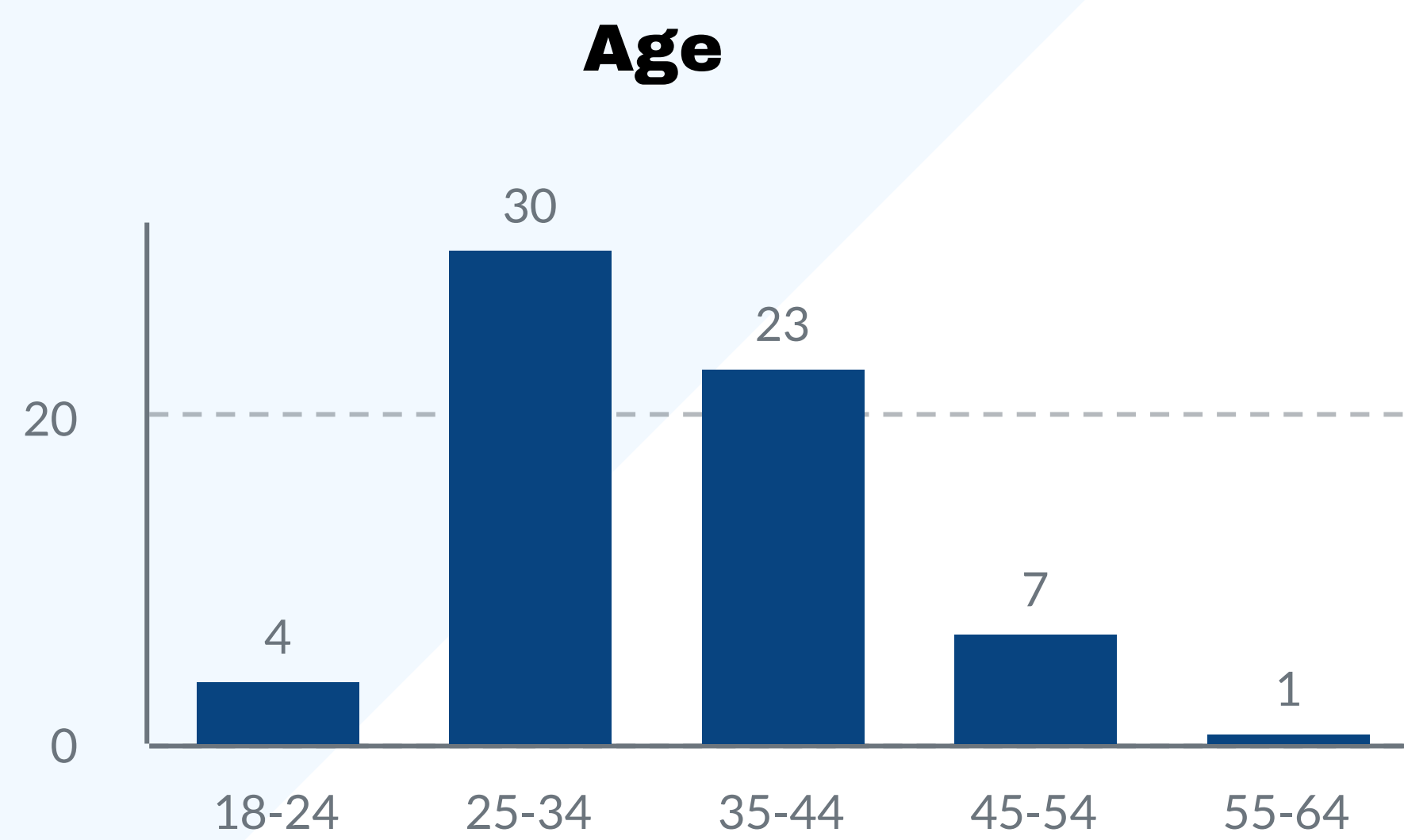
January 2021

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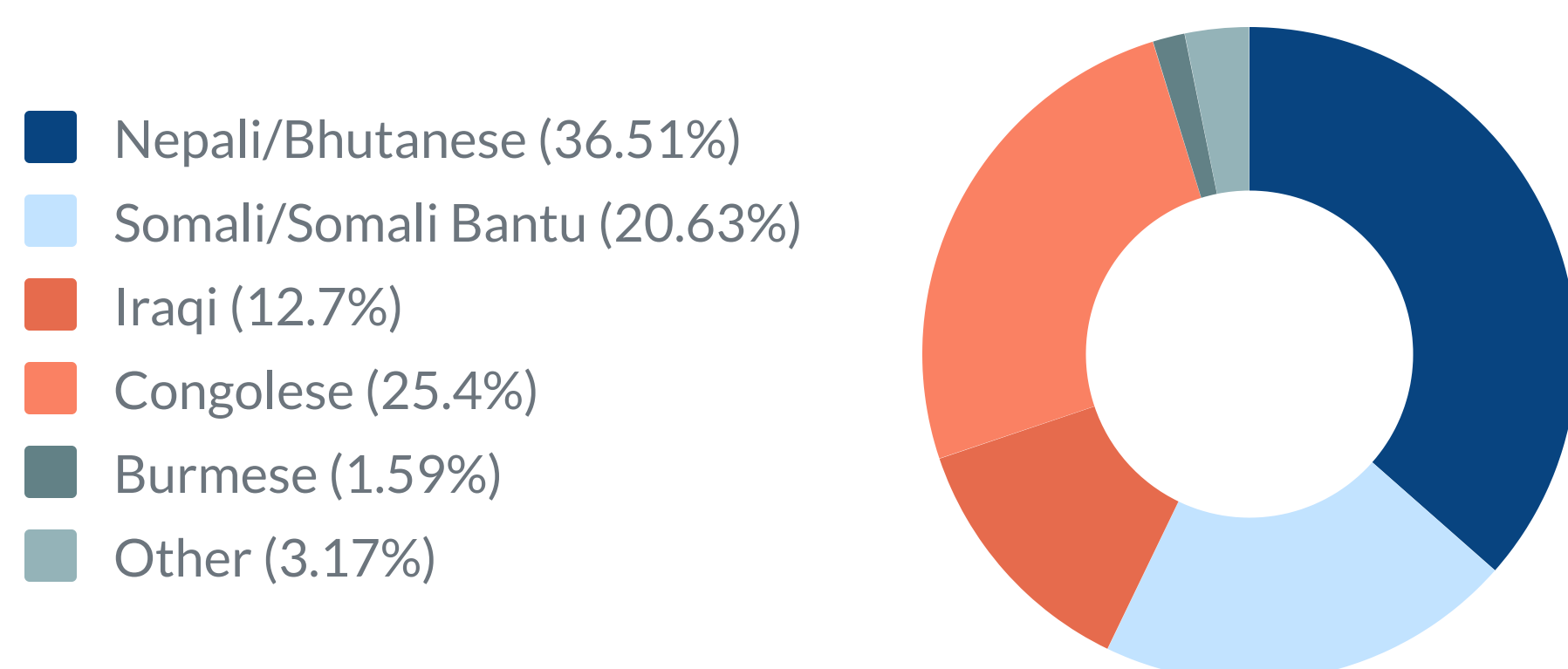
Prepared for AALV and USCRI-VT by
Pablo S. Bose, Department of Geography, University of Vermont
Lucas Grigri, RRSC Research Coordinator

II. Results - Childcare Needs Survey

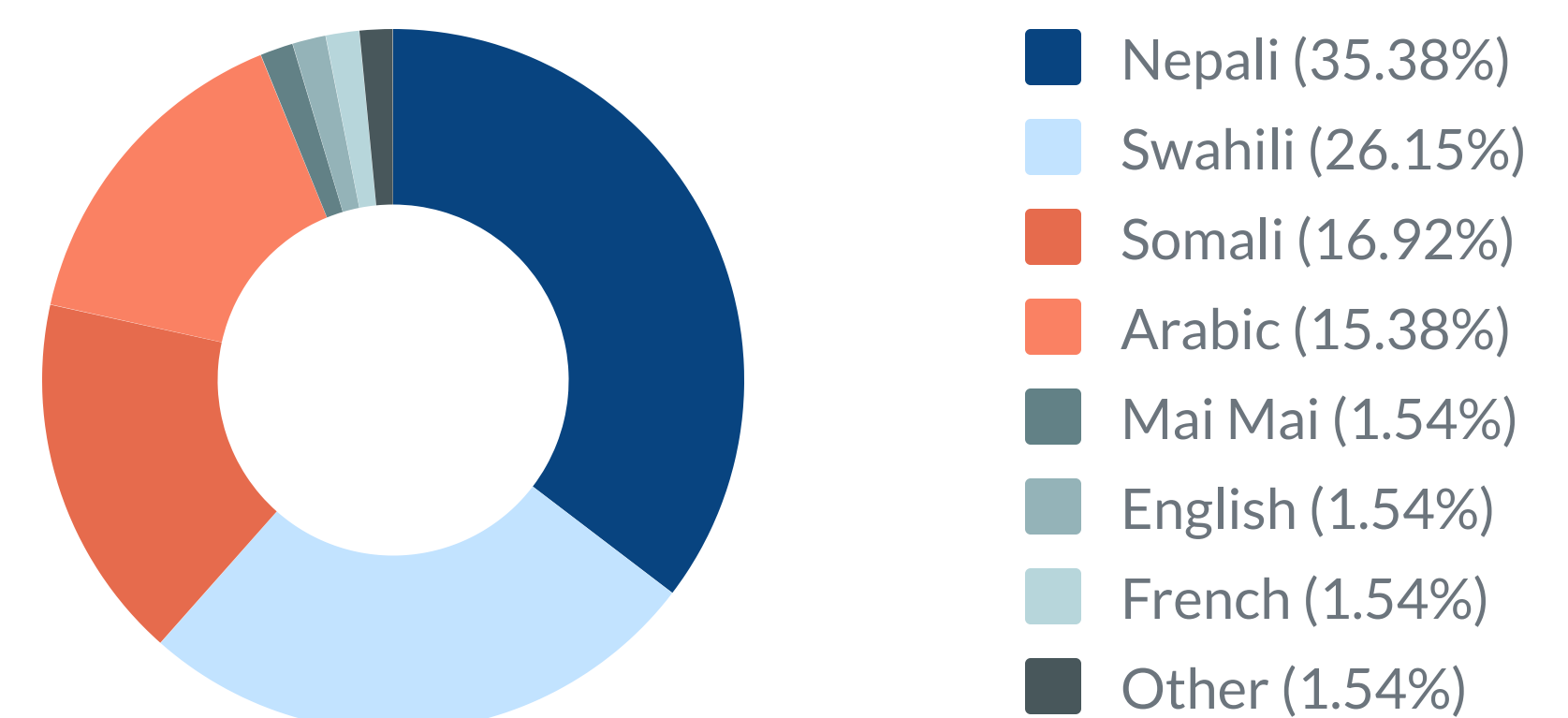
2a. Demographics



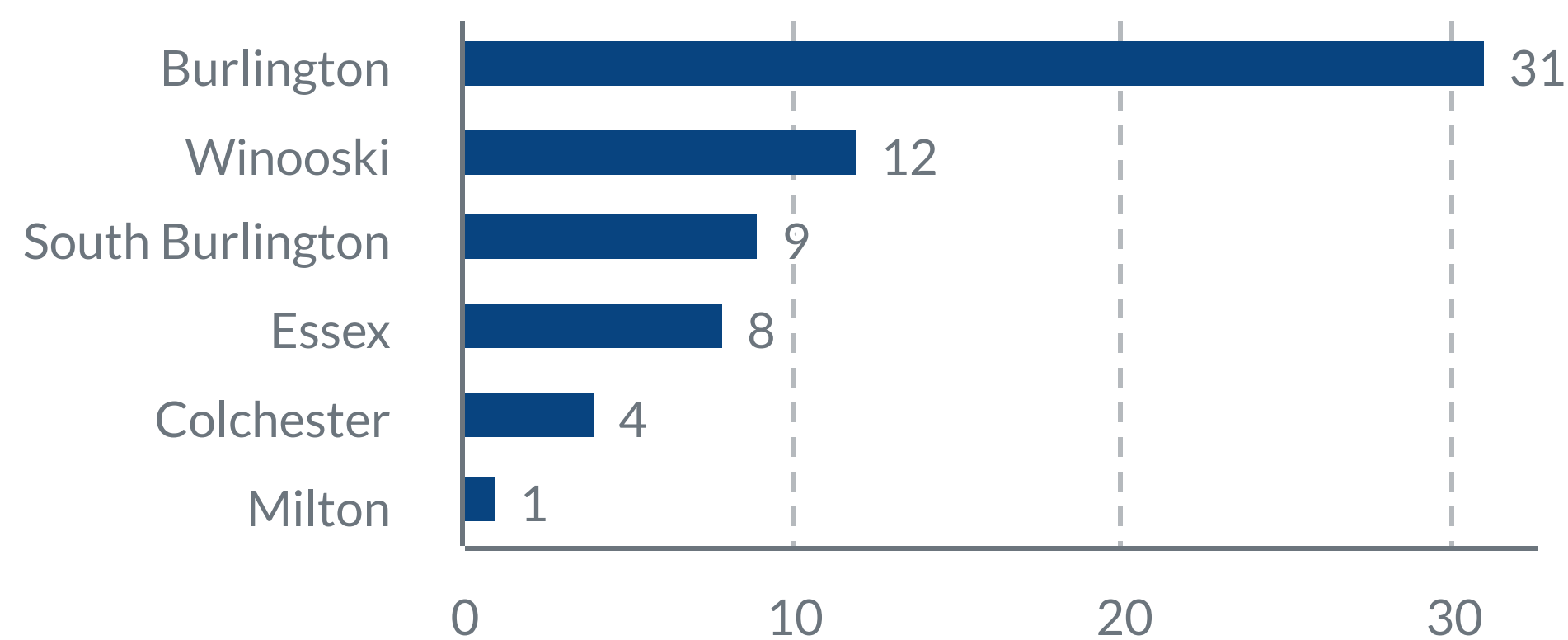
Community Background



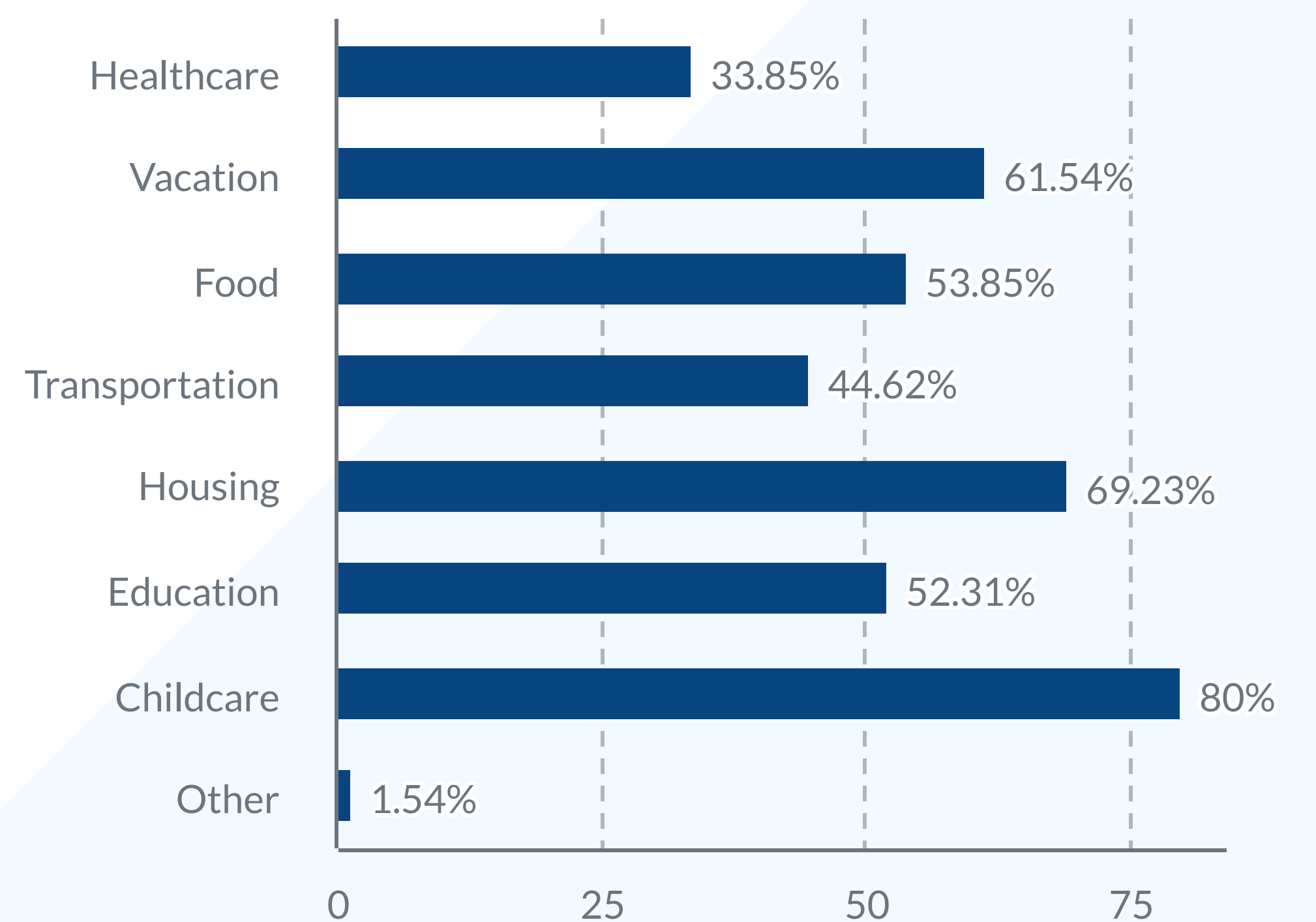
Language Spoken at home



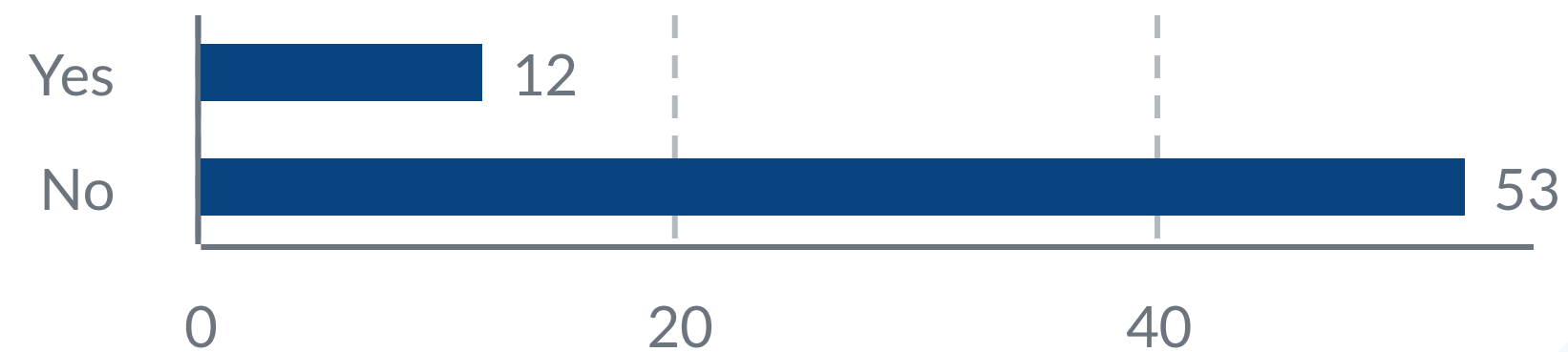
Town of Residence



Are there things you feel you cannot afford because of your income?



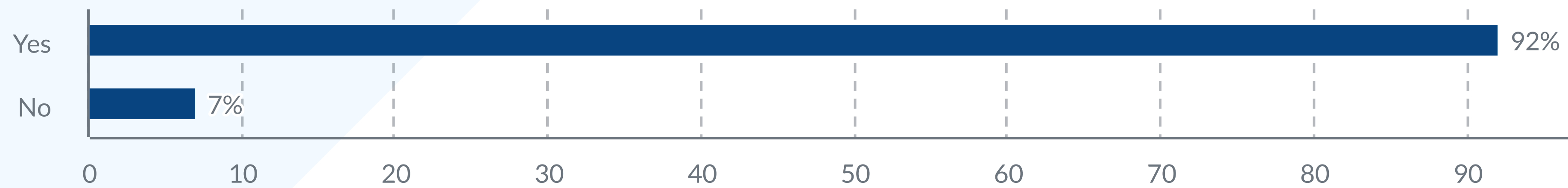
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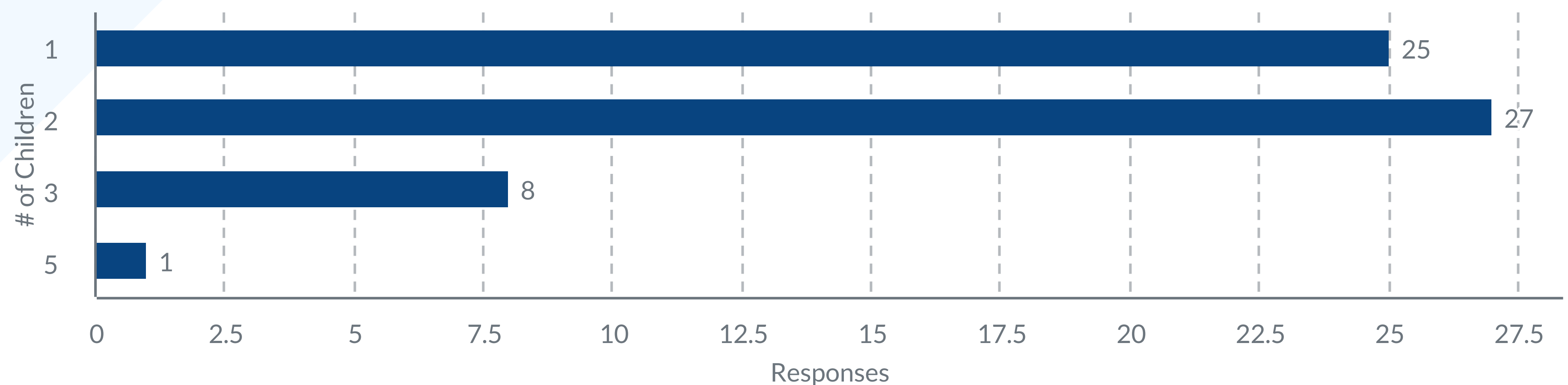
II. Results - Childcare Needs Survey

2b. Current Childcare

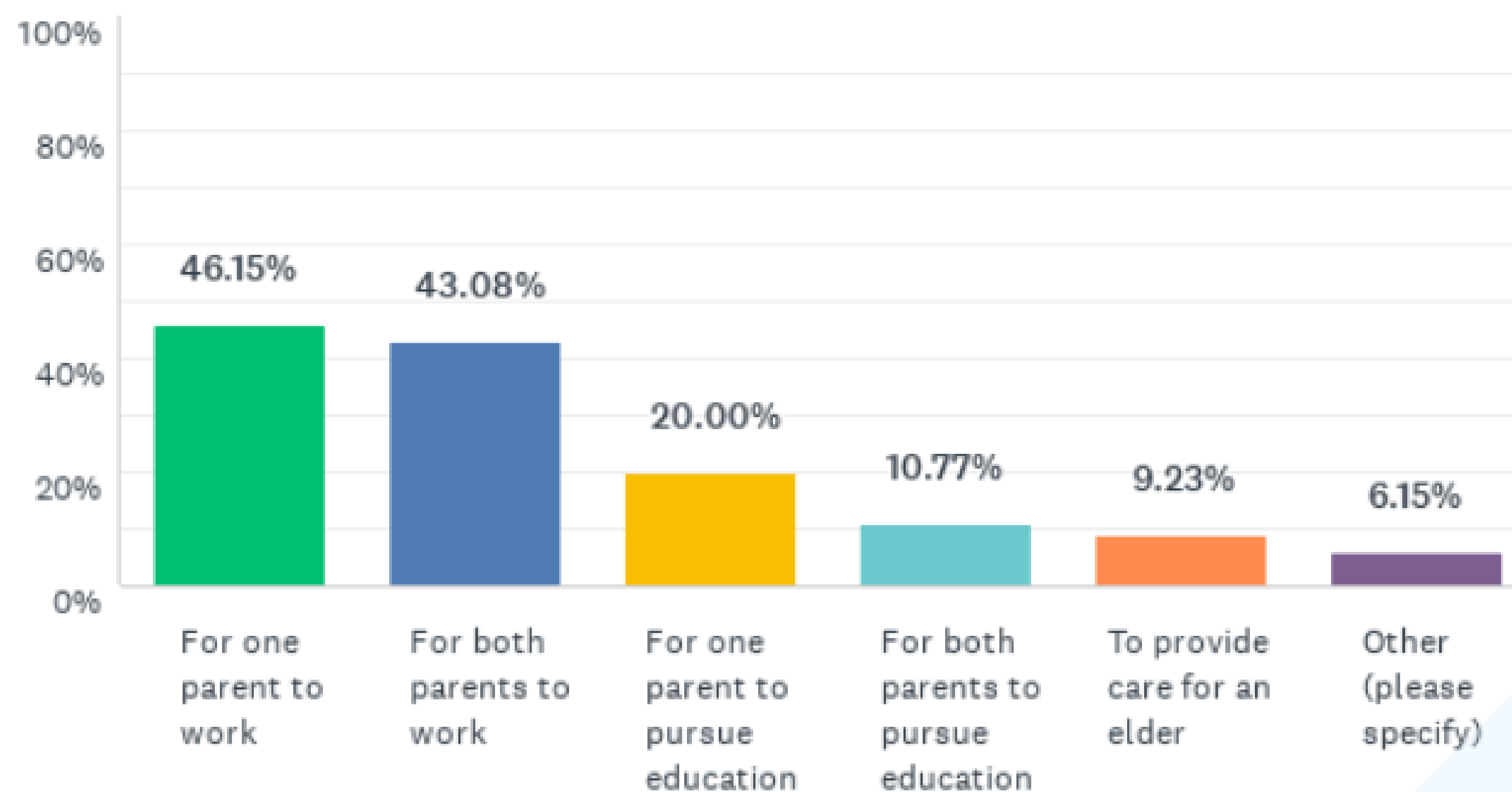
Do you have children at home who are in need of childcare?



How many children need childcare?



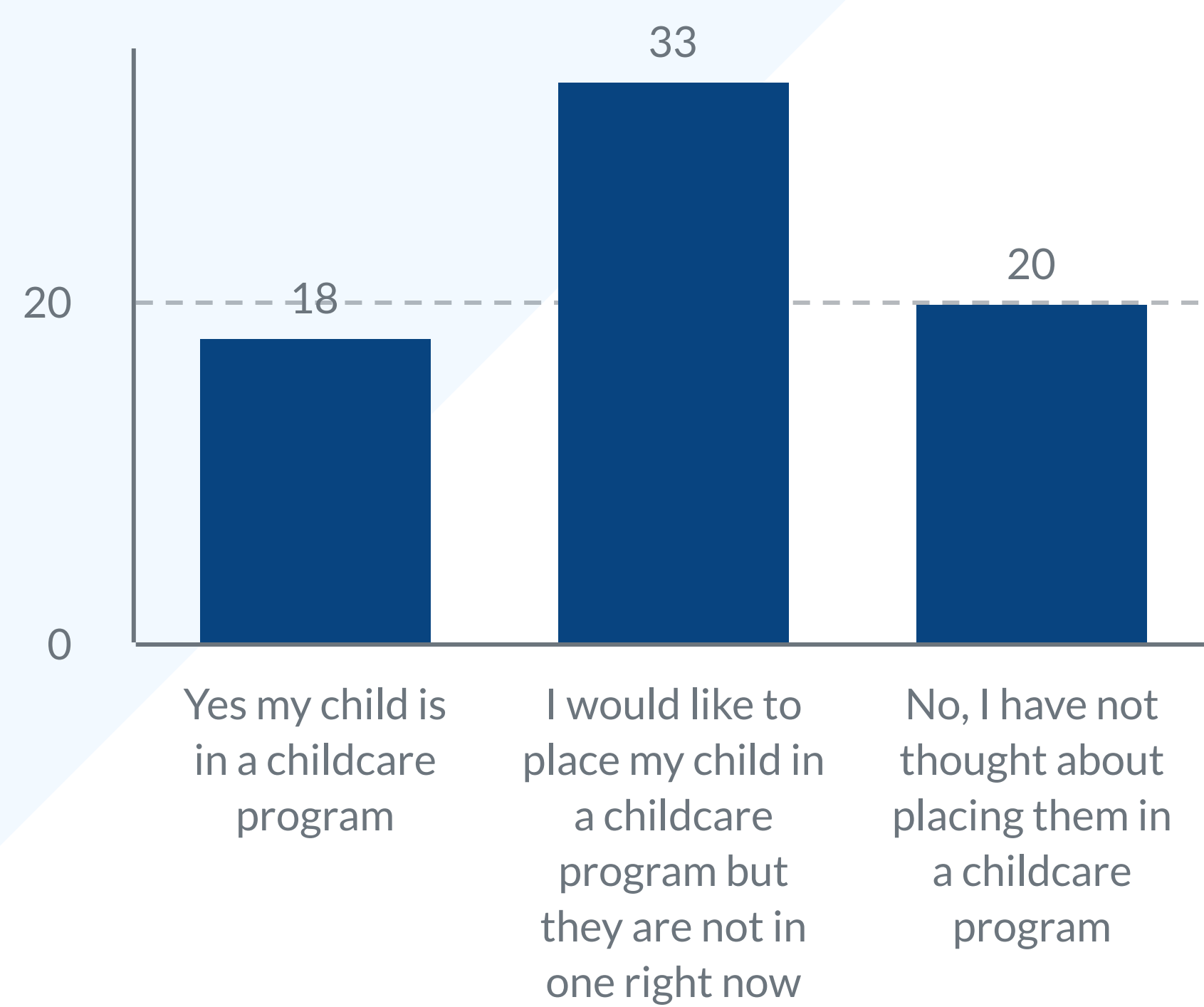
Why do you need childcare? You can give more than one answer



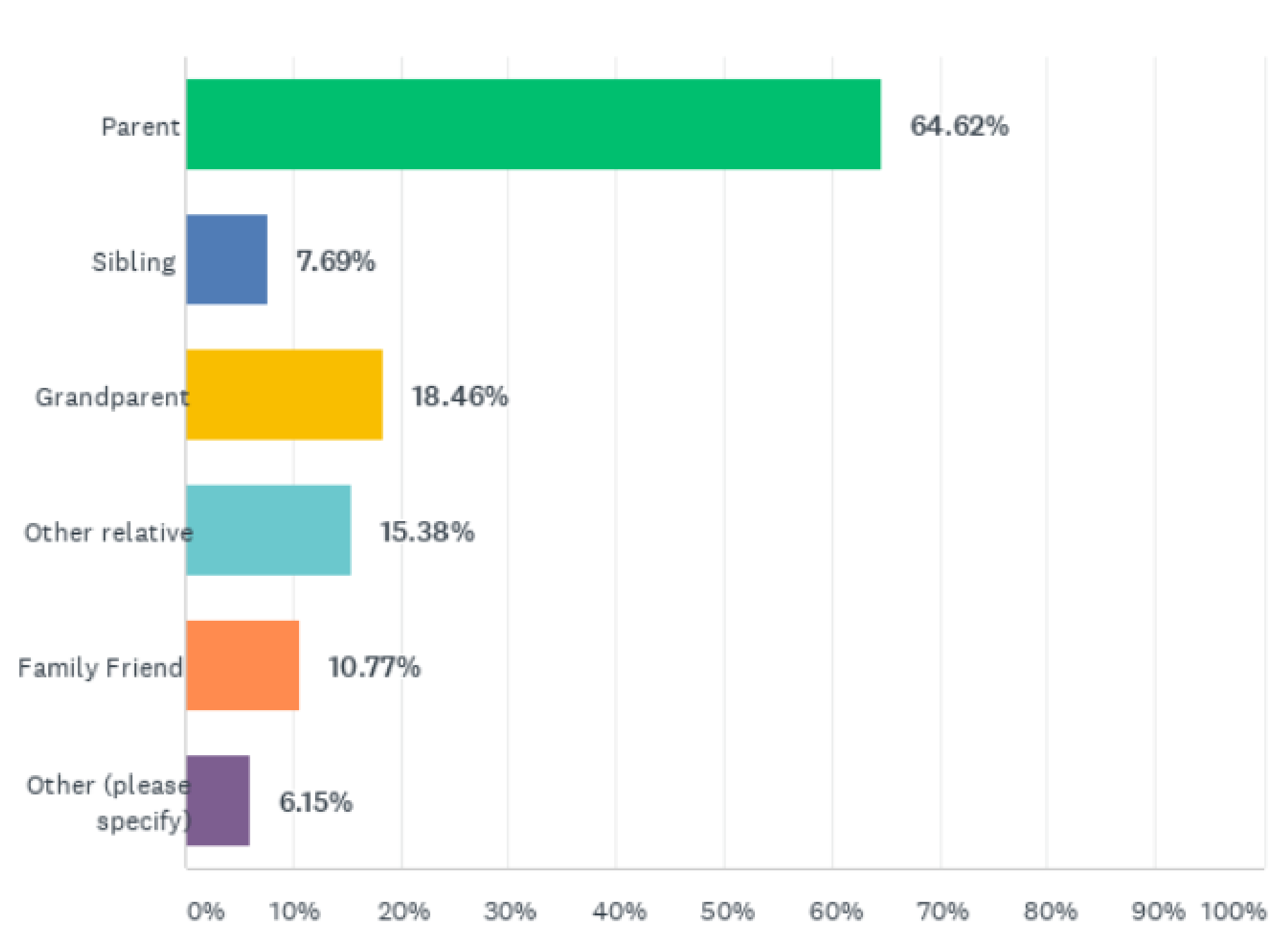
II. Results - Childcare Needs Survey

2b. Current Childcare

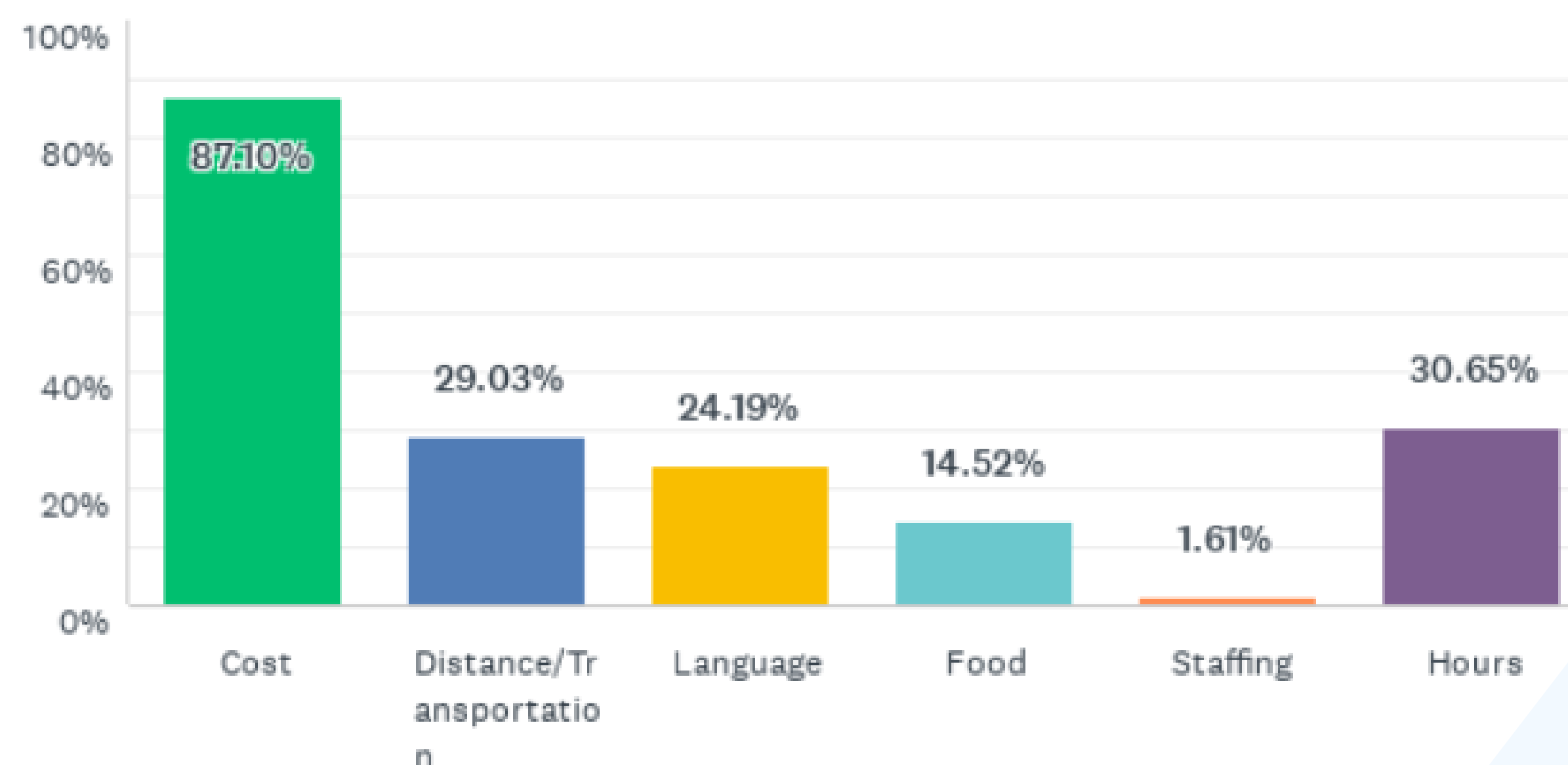
Have you consider placing your child or children in a childcare program?



Who provides childcare now? You can give more than one answer



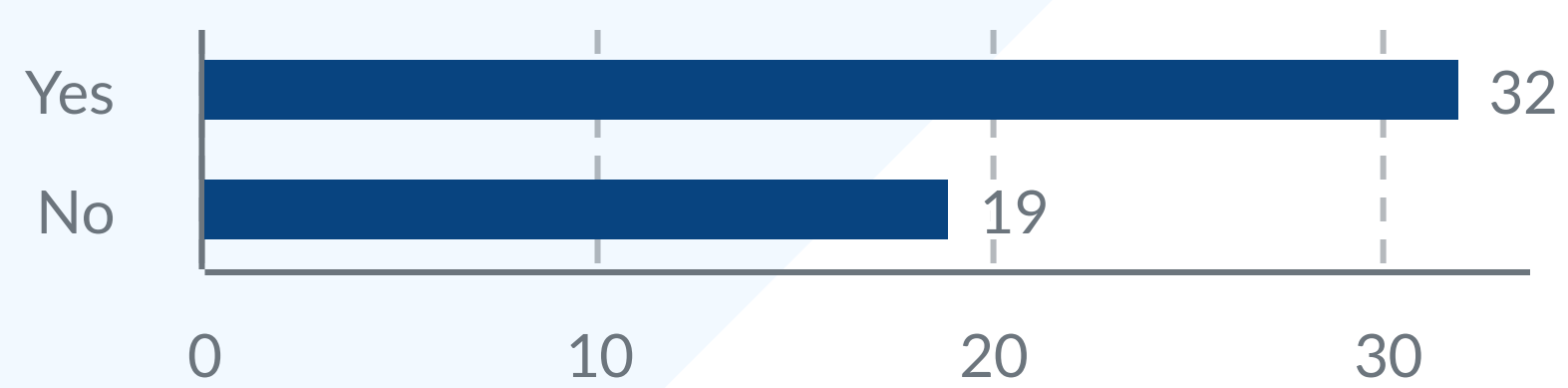
Q14 What makes it difficult to place your child or children in a childcare program?



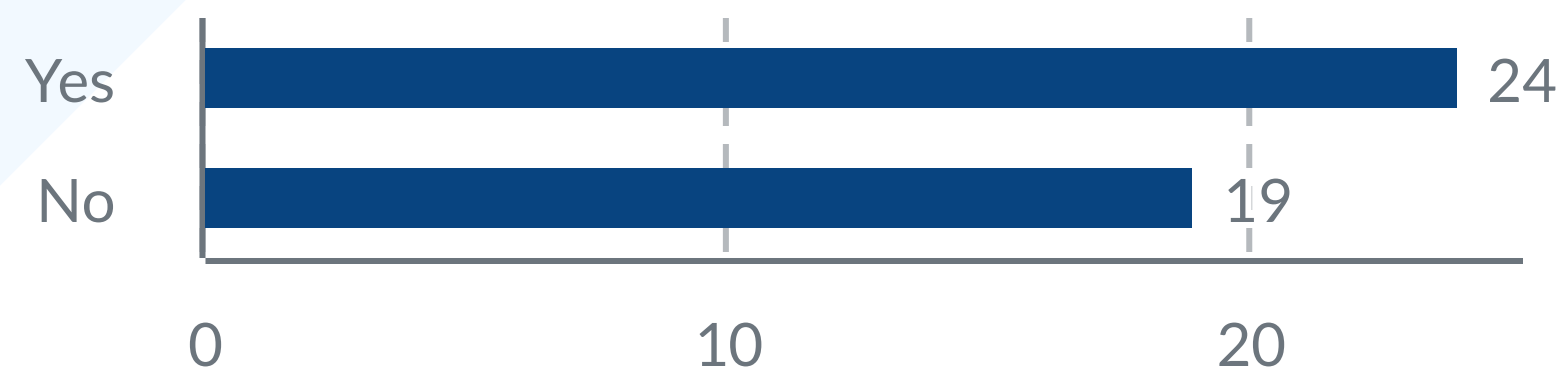
II. Results - Childcare Needs Survey

2c. Experience with Childcare Centers

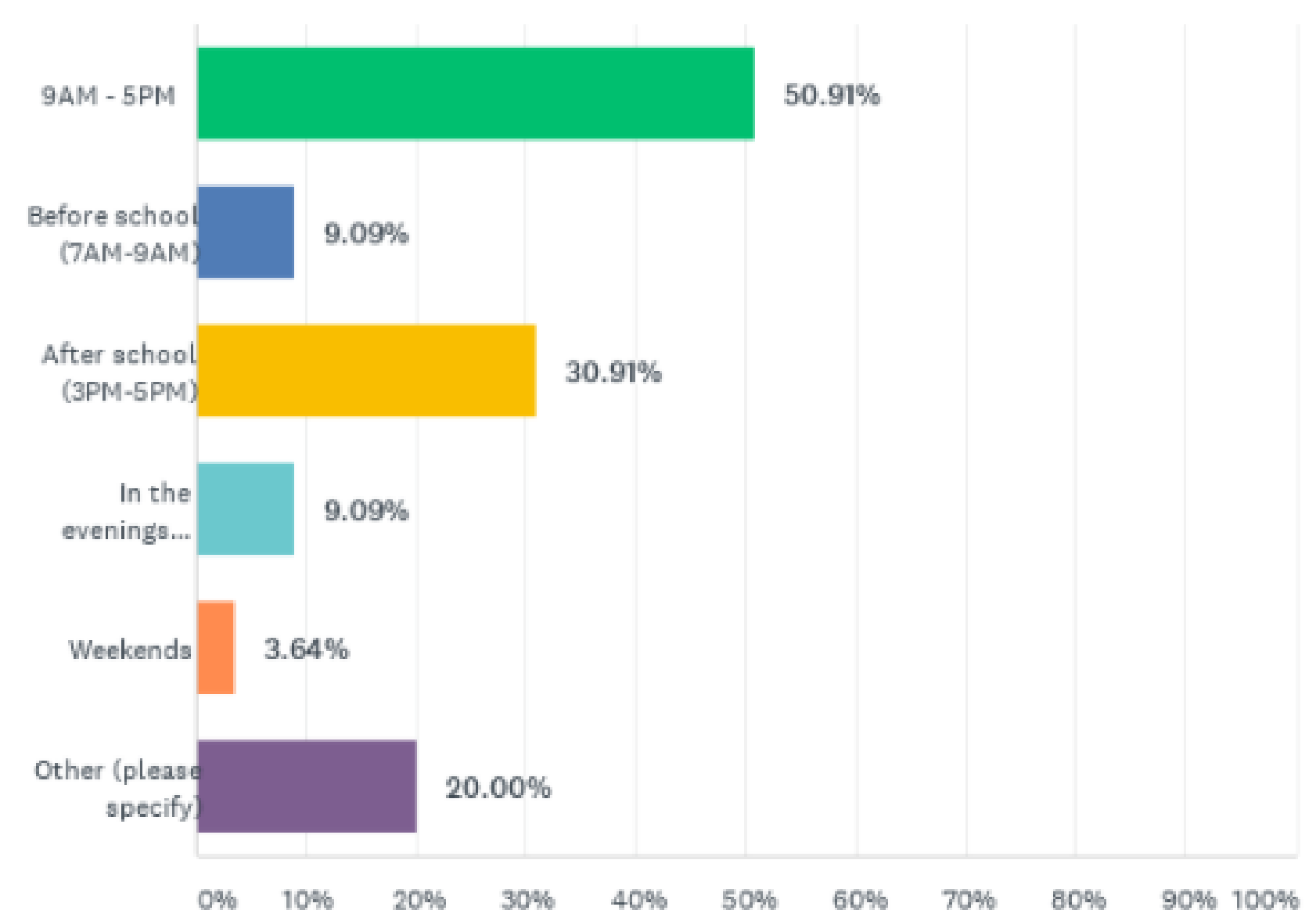
Does your child speak the language mainly spoken at the childcare program?



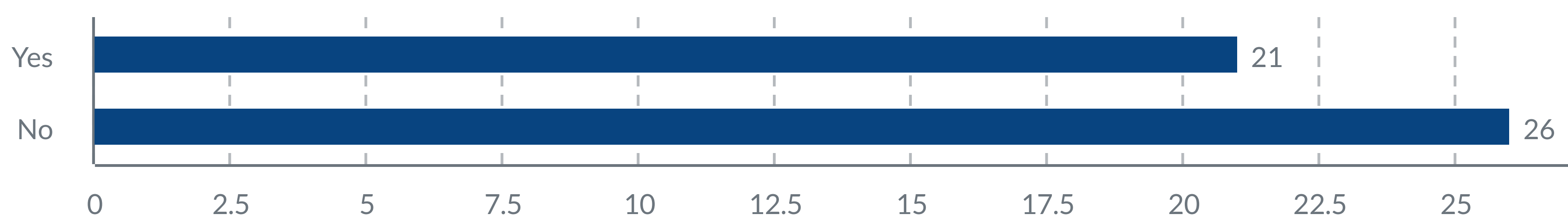
Do you feel that the childcare program has enough staff?



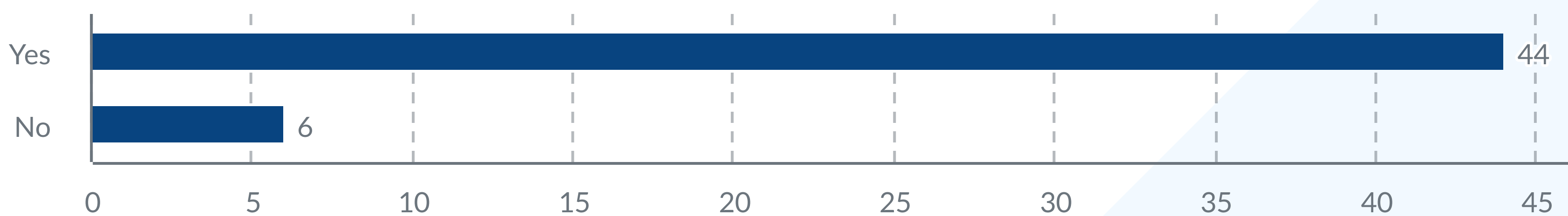
What hours do you need childcare? You can choose more than one answer



Do the hours that the childcare program is open meet your needs?



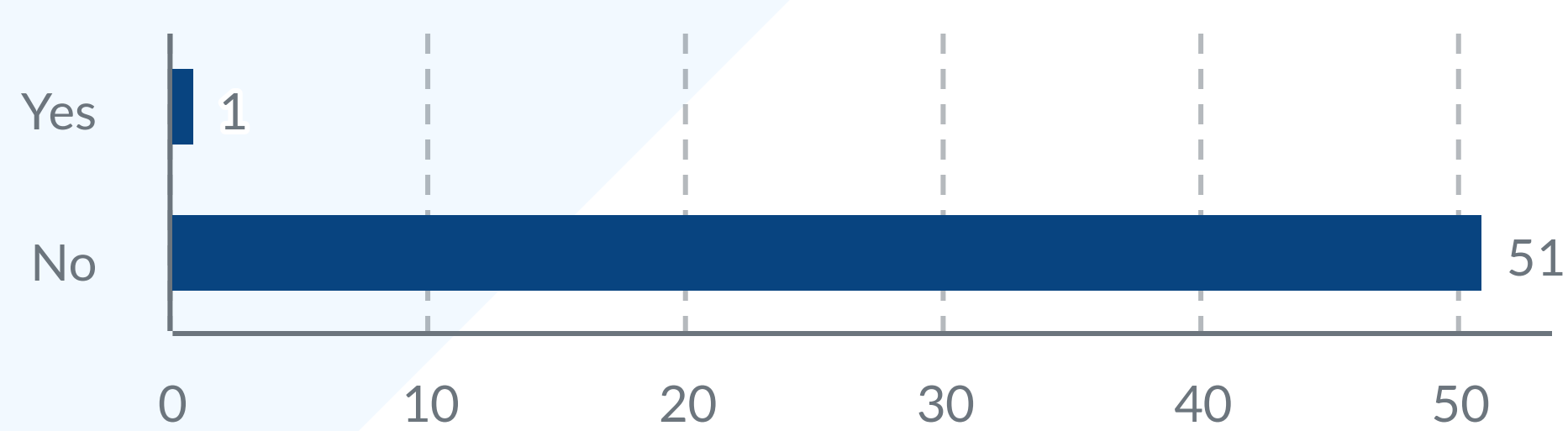
Have the hours changed as a result of COVID-19?



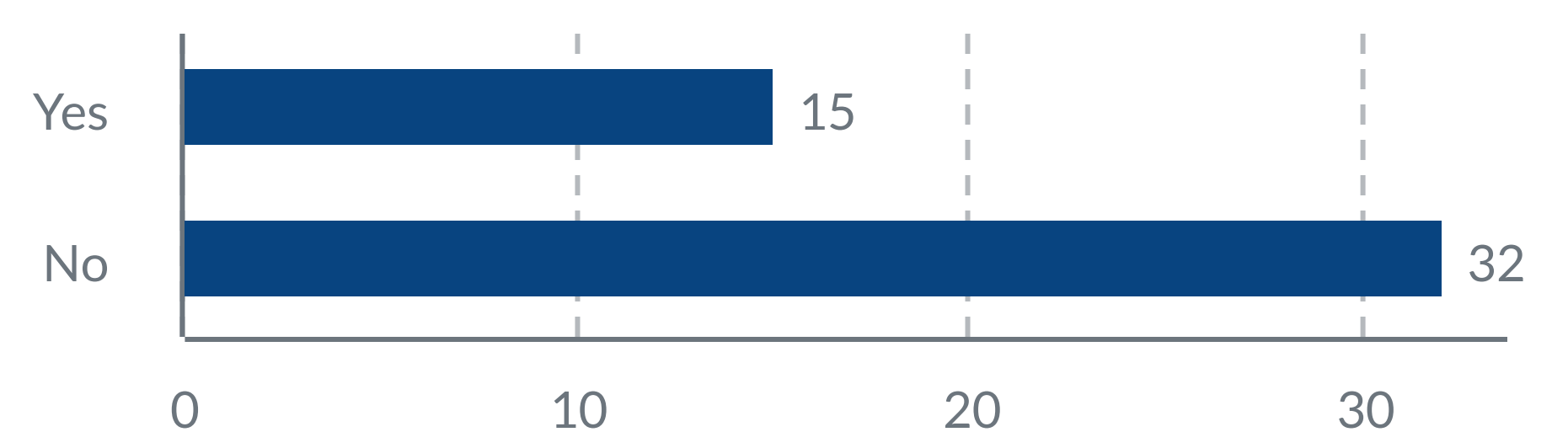
II. Results - Childcare Needs Survey

2c. Experience with Childcare Centers

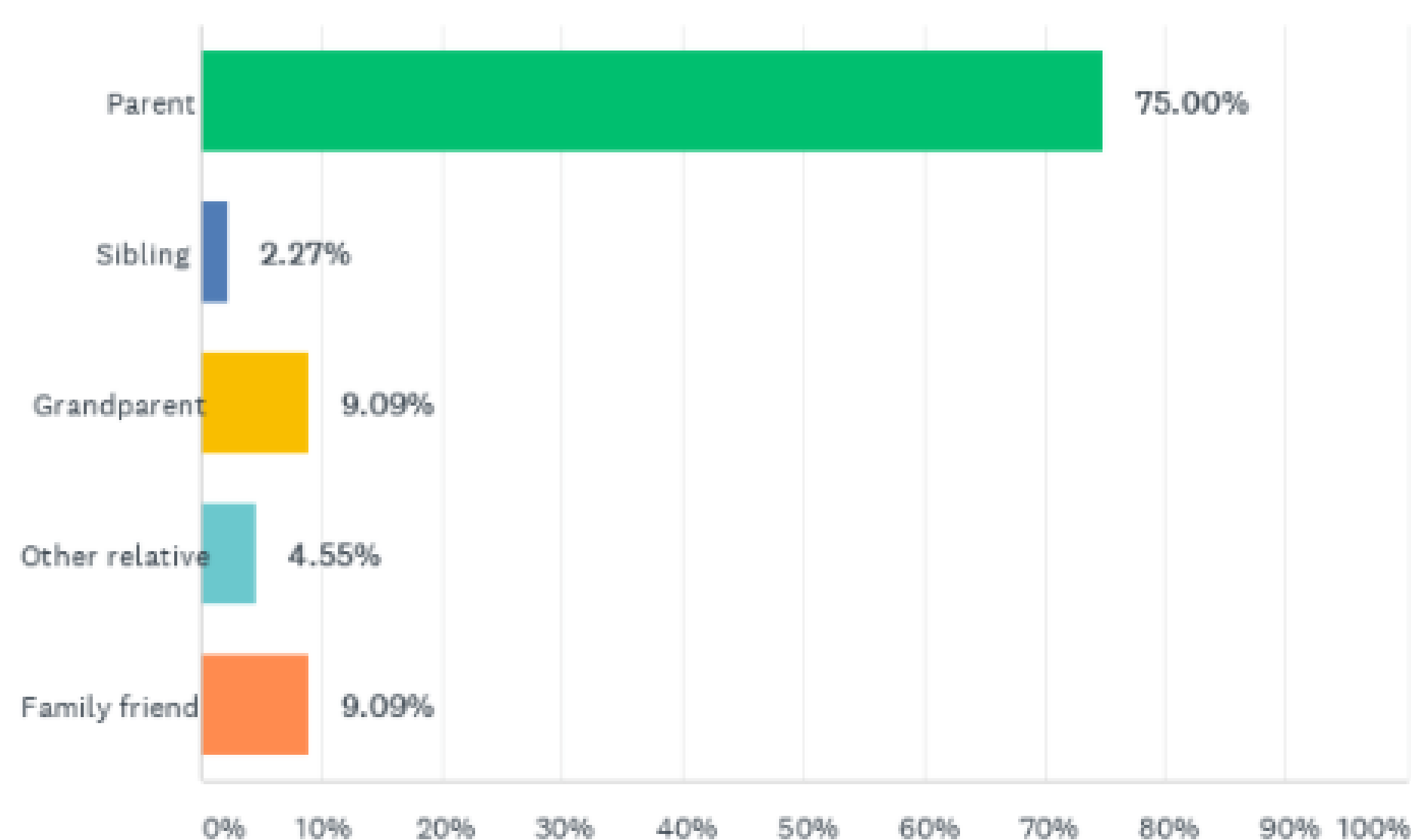
Is the cost of the childcare program affordable within your income?



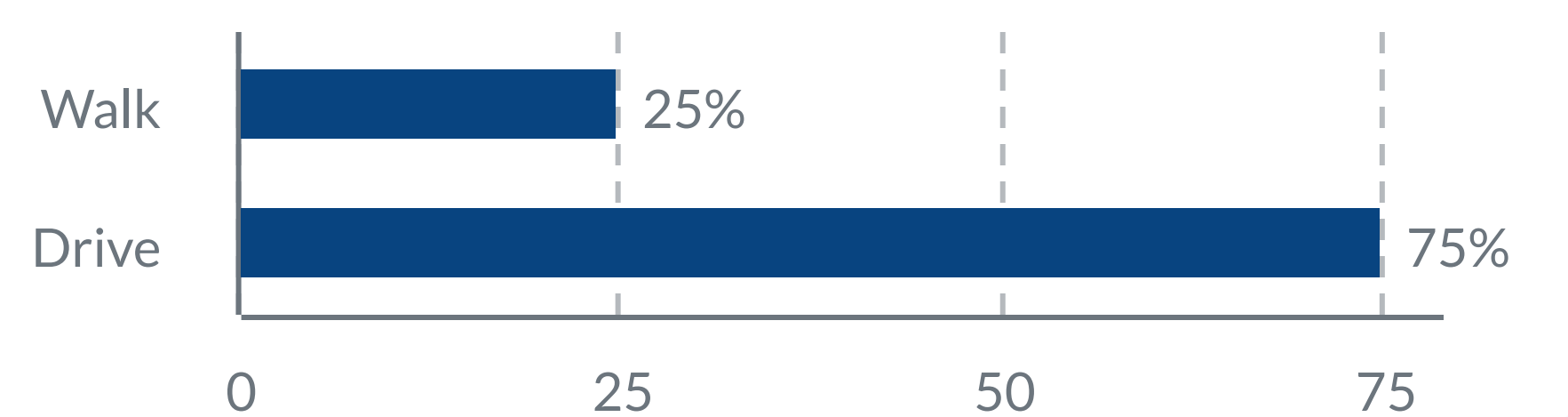
Does the childcare program provide culturally appropriate or preferred foods?



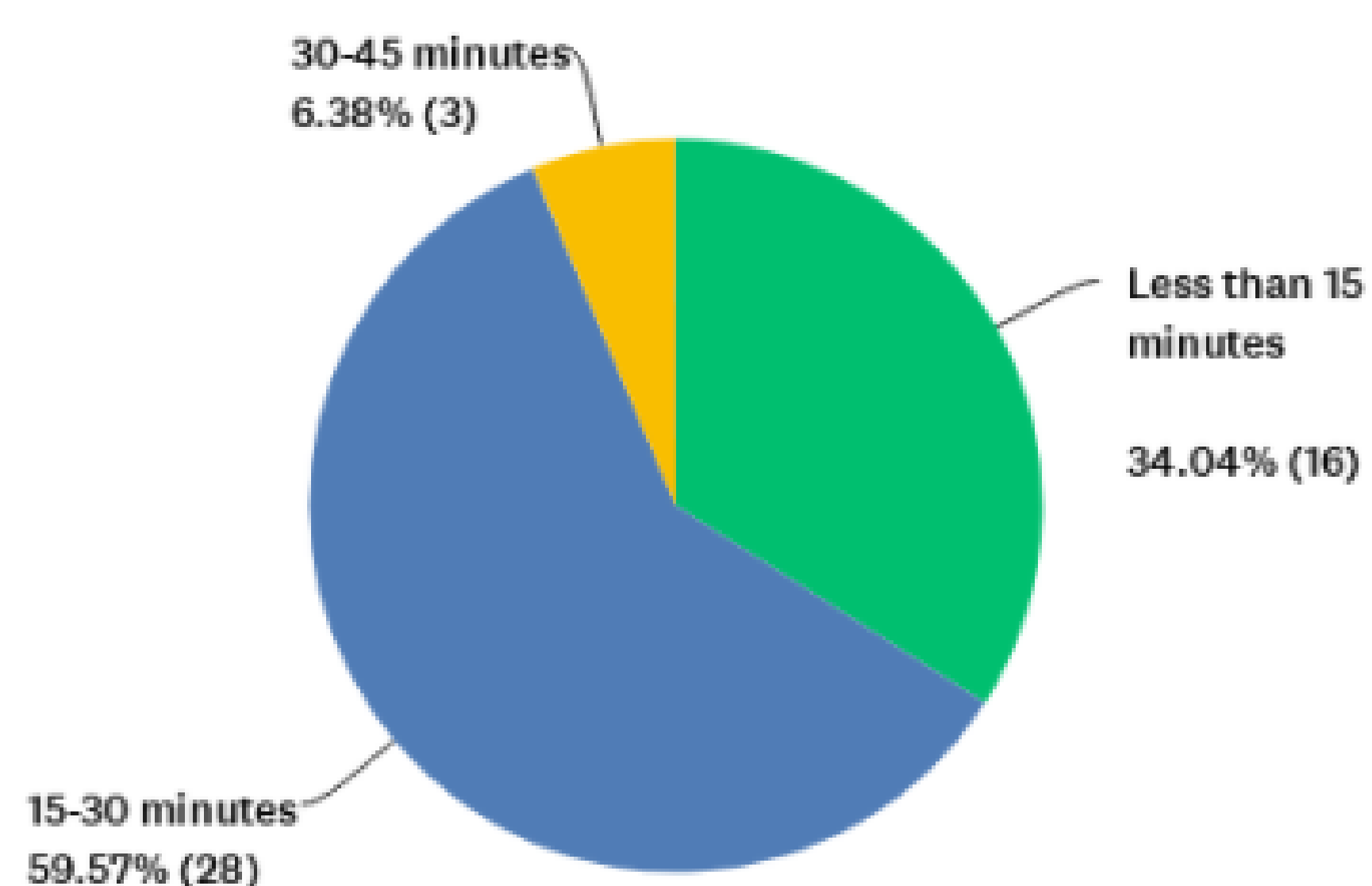
Q22 Who brings your child to and from the childcare program?



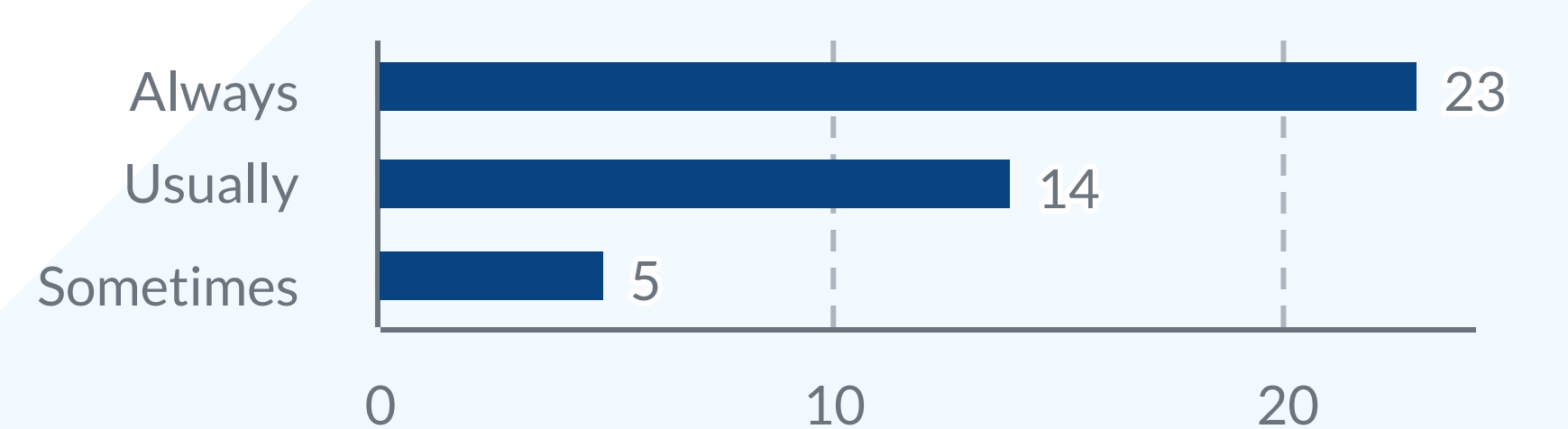
How does your child get to the childcare program?



How far is the childcare program from your home?

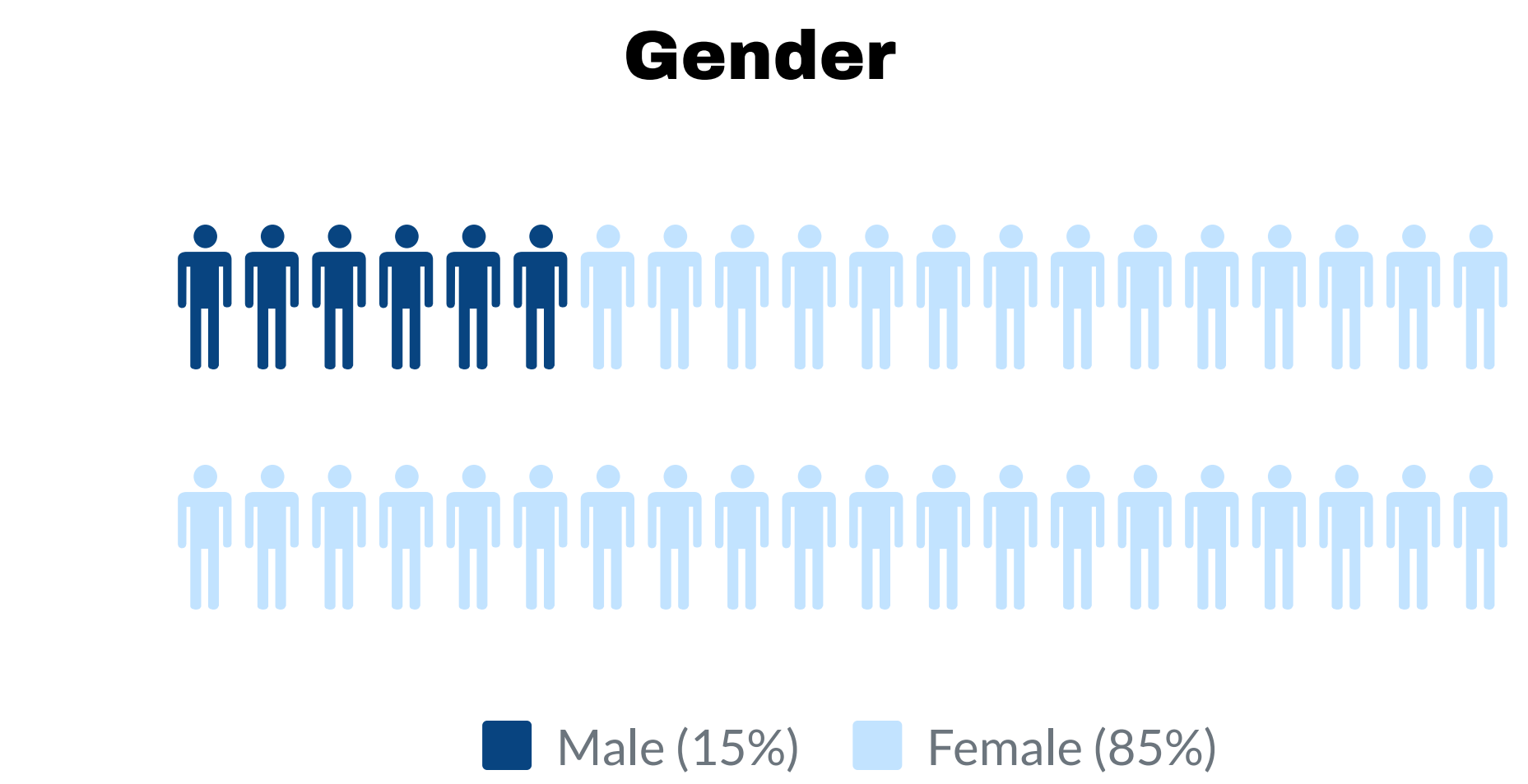
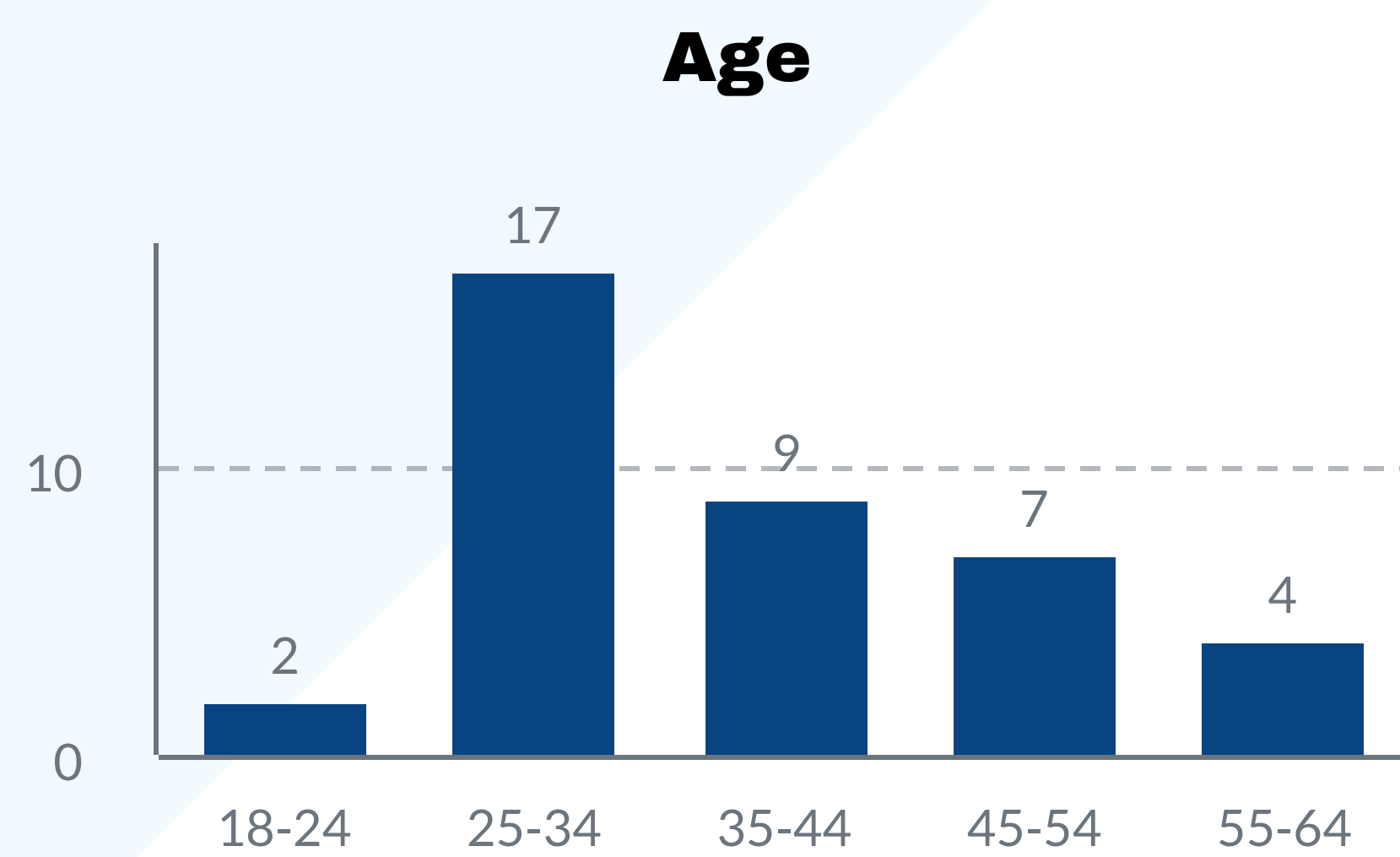


Is your child happy at the childcare program?

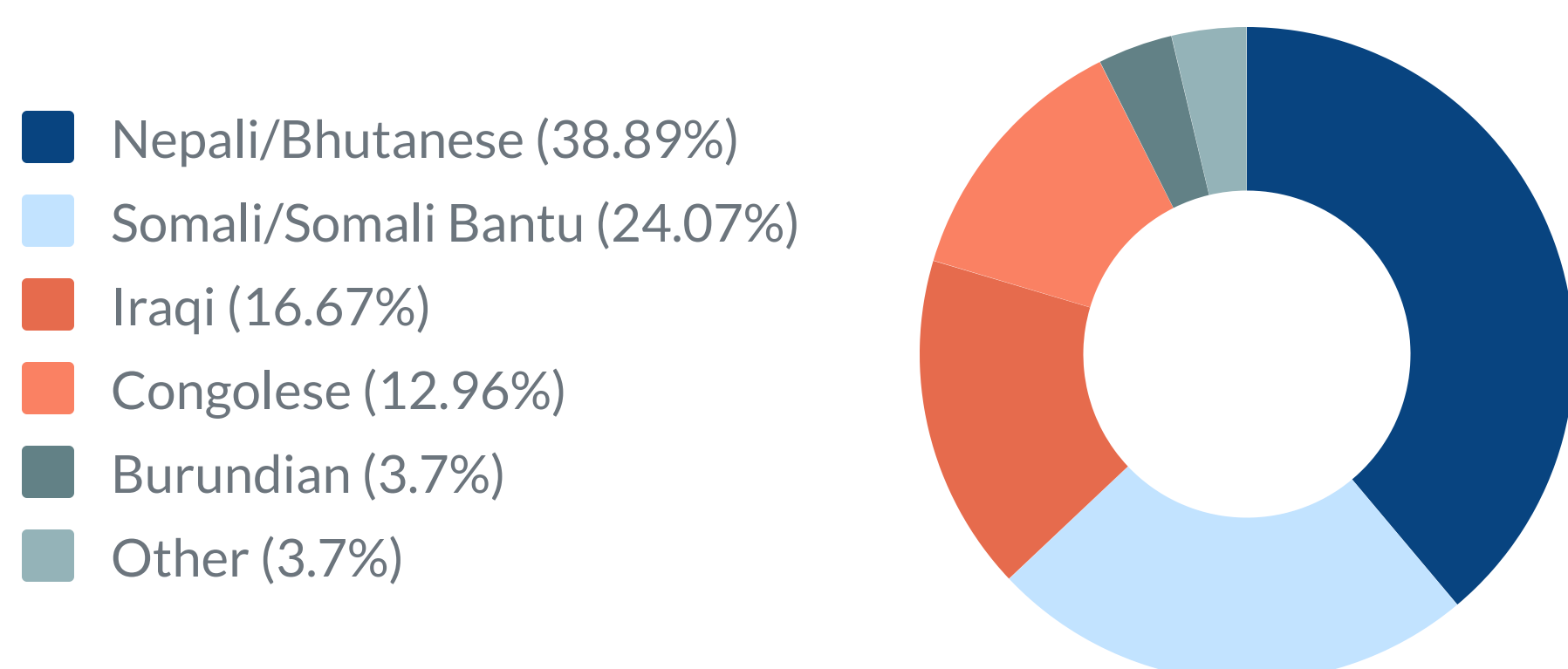


III. Careers in Childcare Survey

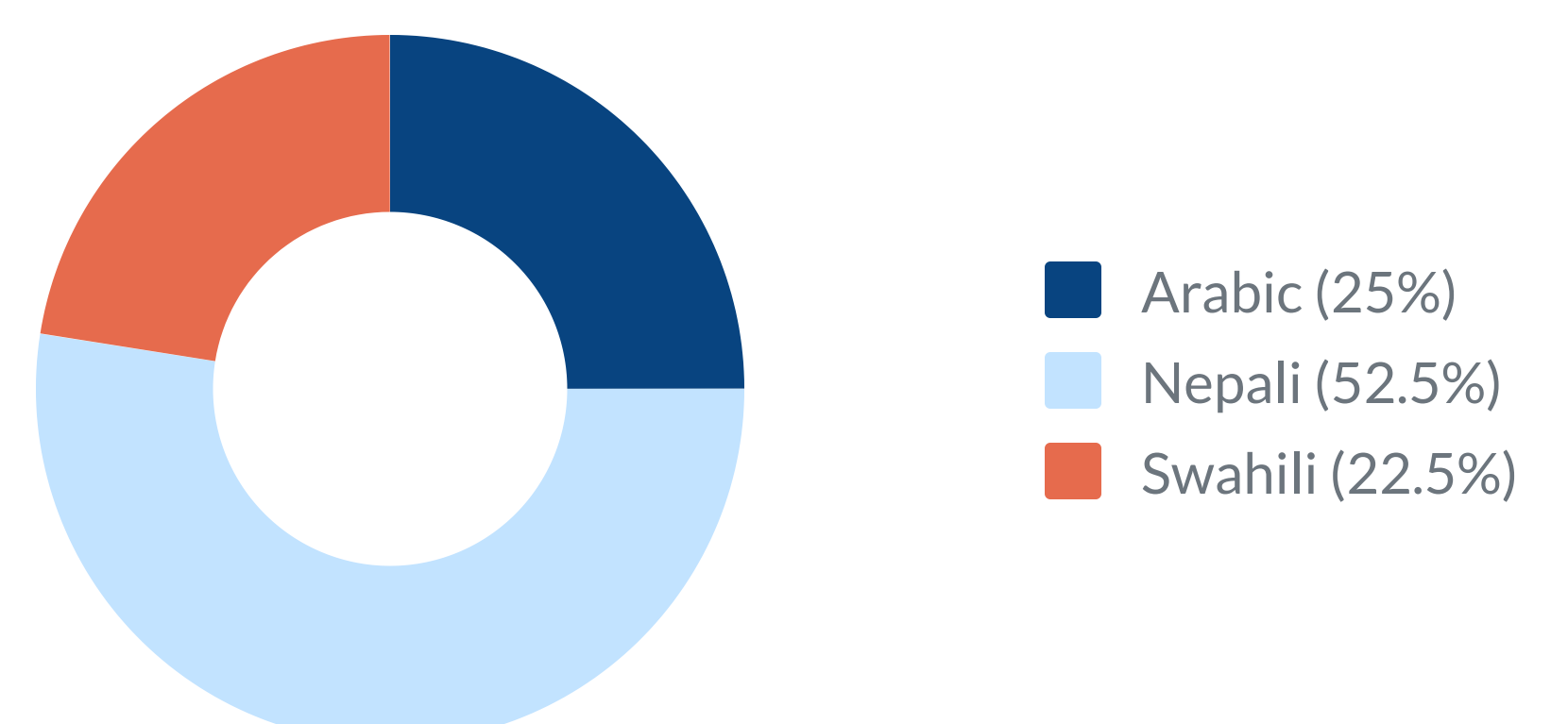
3a. Demographics



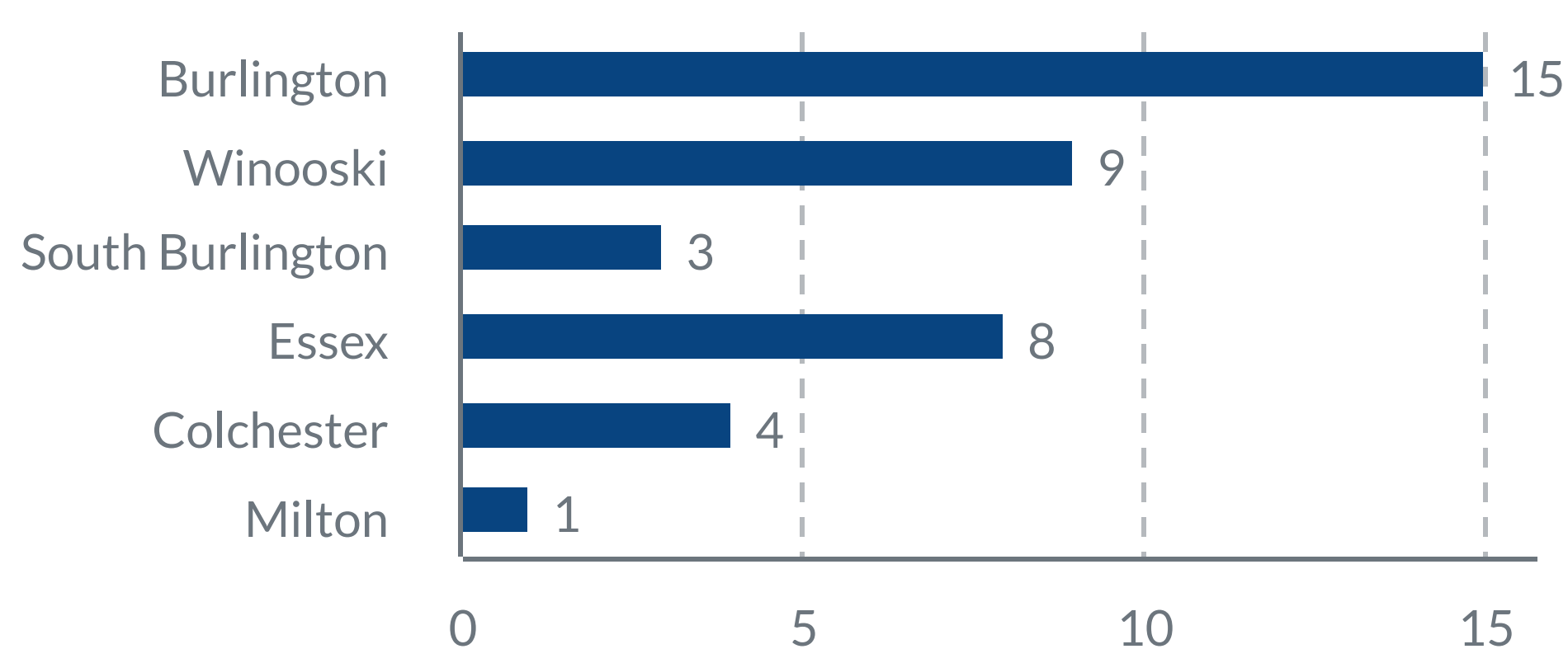
Community Background



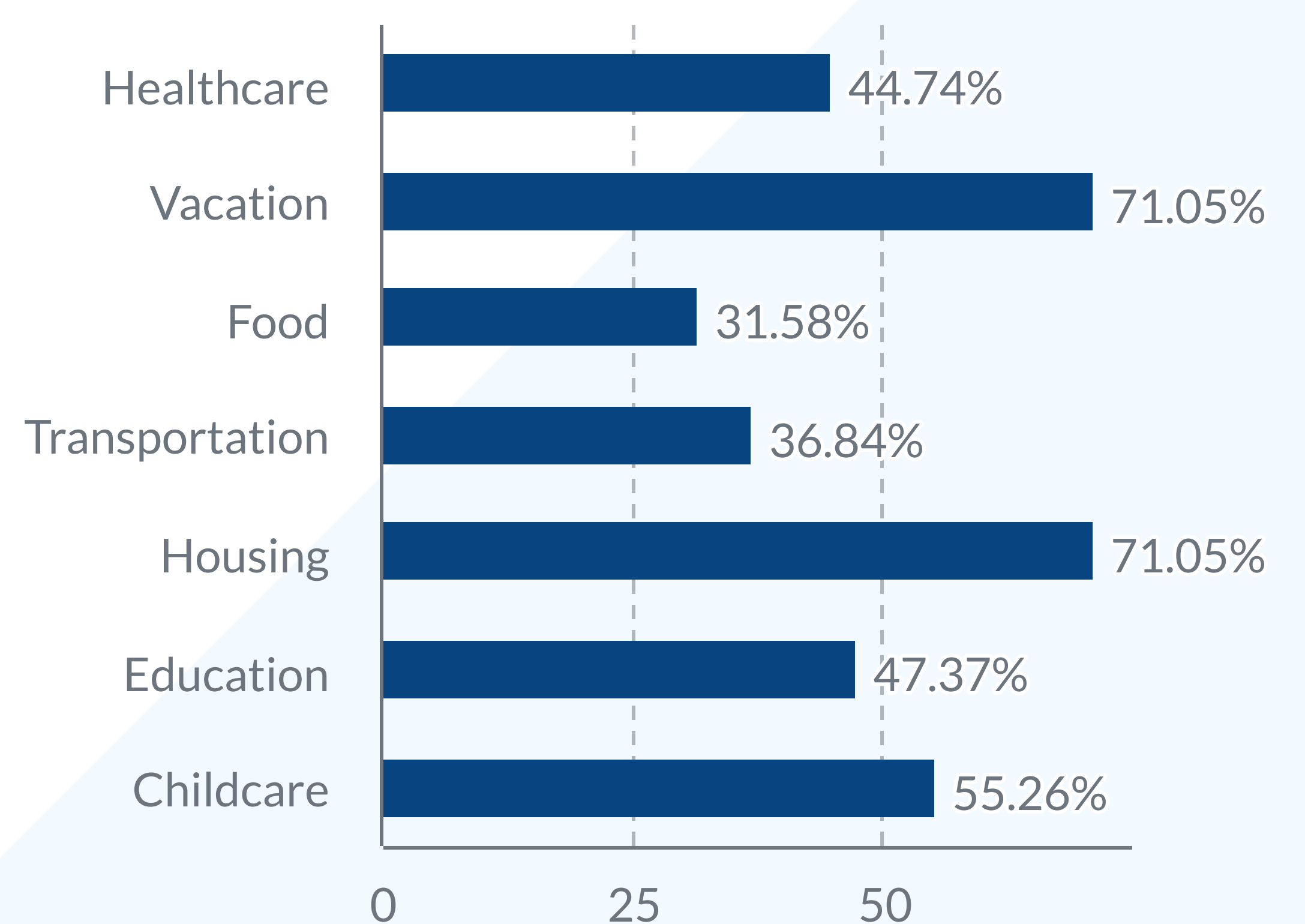
Language Spoken at home



Town of Residence



Are there things you feel you cannot afford because of your income?



Do you feel like your income is adequate for the cost of living in Vermont?



3b. Interest in Childcare

Are you interested in childcare as a career?

Yes (28) – 75%

No (9) – 24%

If you are interested in working in childcare how long would this be for?

As short-term employment, 1-2 years (15) – 42%

As employment while I pursue education or other jobs, 3-5 years (8) – 23%

As long-term employment, 6-10 years (3) – 11%

As a lifelong career 10+ years (8) – 23%

Did you know that you can start a childcare program in your home and get paid?

Yes (14) – 38%

No (23) – 62%

Have you worked with children in the past?

Yes (23) – 62%

No (14) – 38%

Would you be more comfortable working with children in your own home or in a childcare center?

In my own home (27) – 79%

In a childcare center (7) – 21%

Do you think childcare would be a rewarding career for you? If so why?

Yes (21) – 62%

No (13) – 38%

“I love working with children”

“I have never done it before but I think I am a natural mother”

“I will have extra income and I can help other women who go to work”

“Working with kids will refresh our mind and I like children”

“I will see every step of the child’s development”

Have you looked at the procedure for obtaining a home childcare program license?

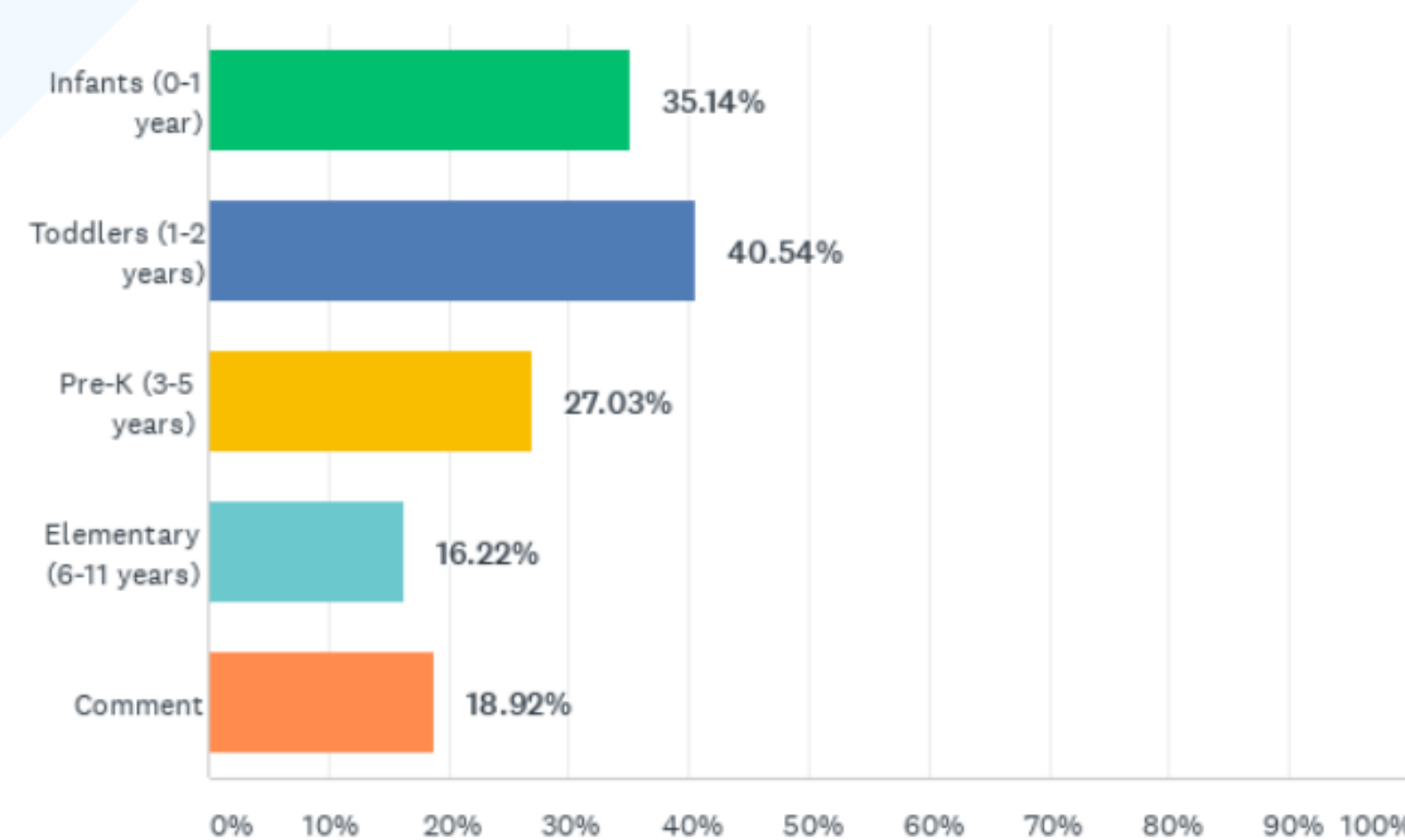
Yes (4) – 11%

No (33) – 89%

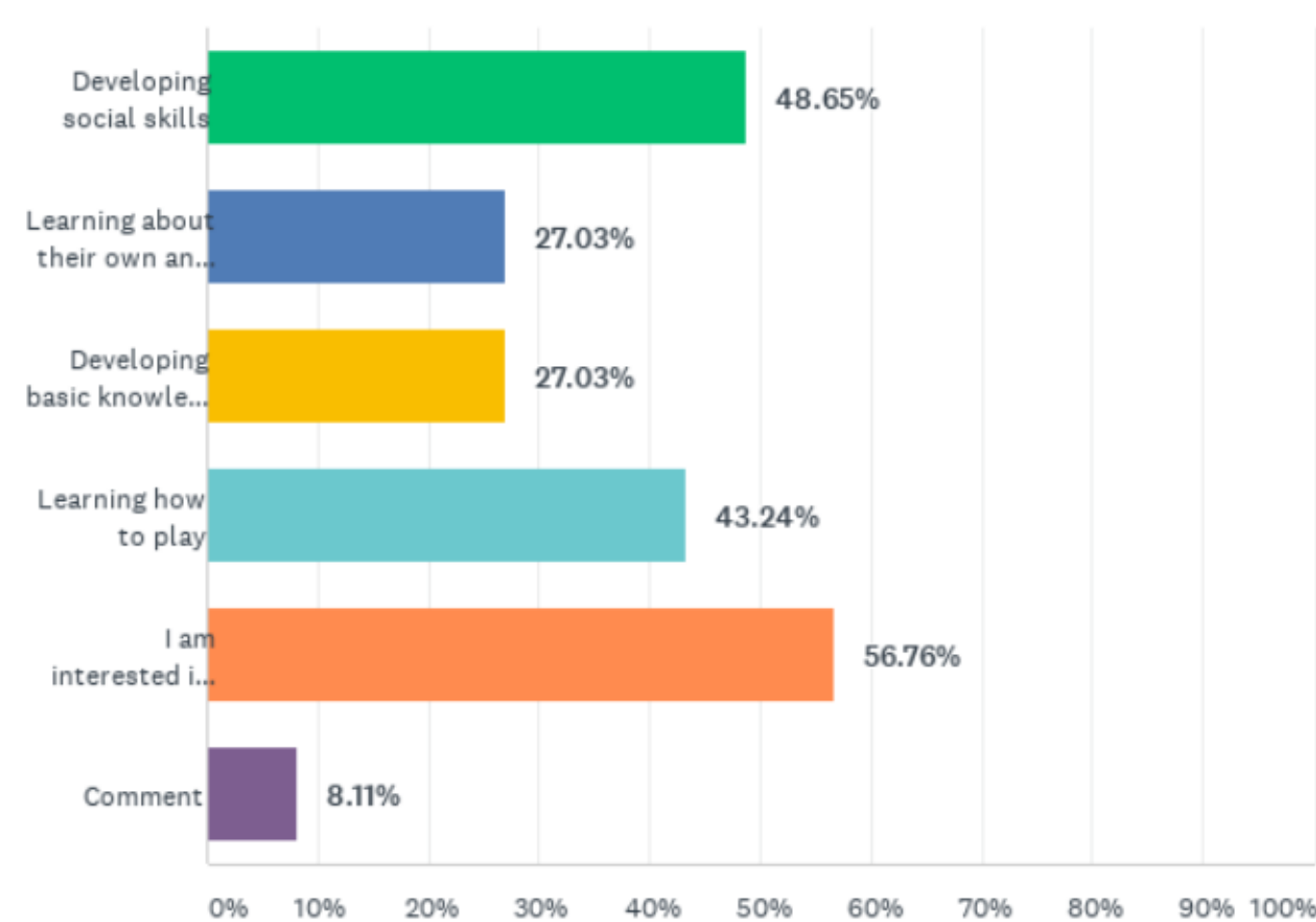
III. Careers in Childcare Survey

3b. Interest in Childcare

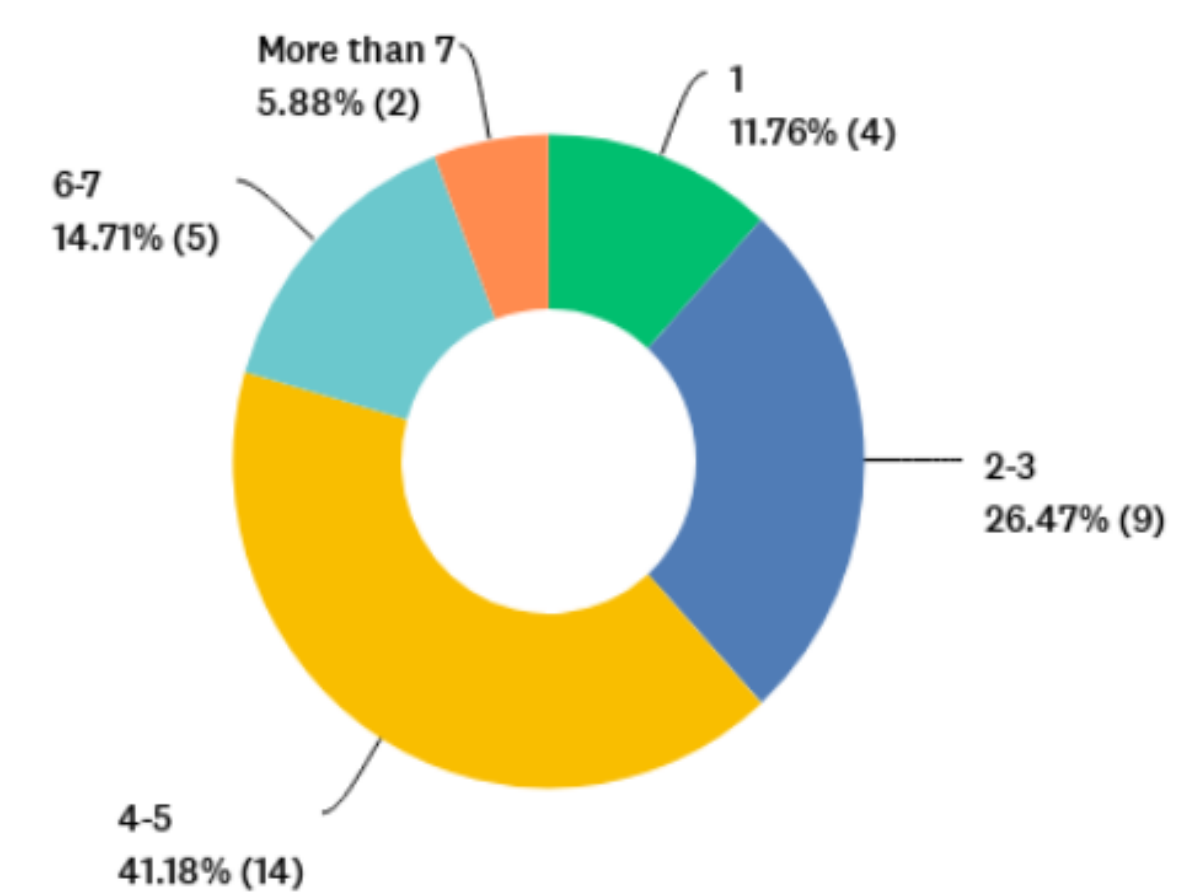
What age of children would you be comfortable working with and why? You can choose more than one option



Which of the following things make you passionate about children's development and education? You can choose more than one answer



How many children would you feel most comfortable taking care of?



Would you be comfortable working with children from a different cultural community than yours?

Yes (27) – 73%

No (10) – 27%

Would you be comfortable working with children who speak a different language?

Yes (25) – 68%

No (12) – 32%

Would you be comfortable working with children of a different gender than yourself?

Yes (32) – 91%

No (3) – 9%

Would you be comfortable working with children with disabilities?

Yes (16) – 43%

No (11) – 30%

Need training (10) – 27%

III. Careers in Childcare Survey

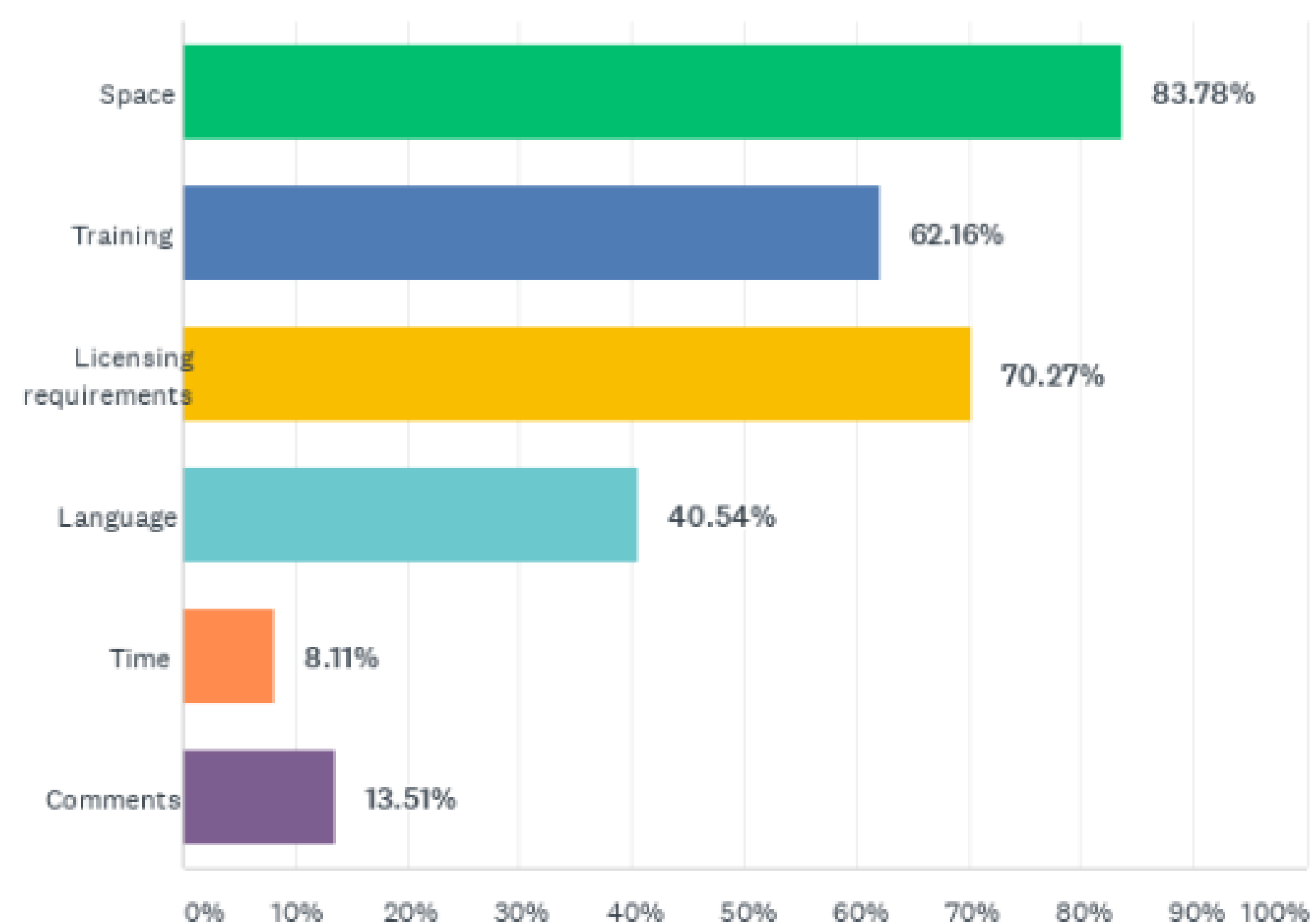
Home Childcare Centers



What would be the biggest challenges in running a home childcare business?

- Space/money
- Certification/licensing
- Language/food

Do you face any barriers that you know of to getting a home childcare license? You can choose more than one answer

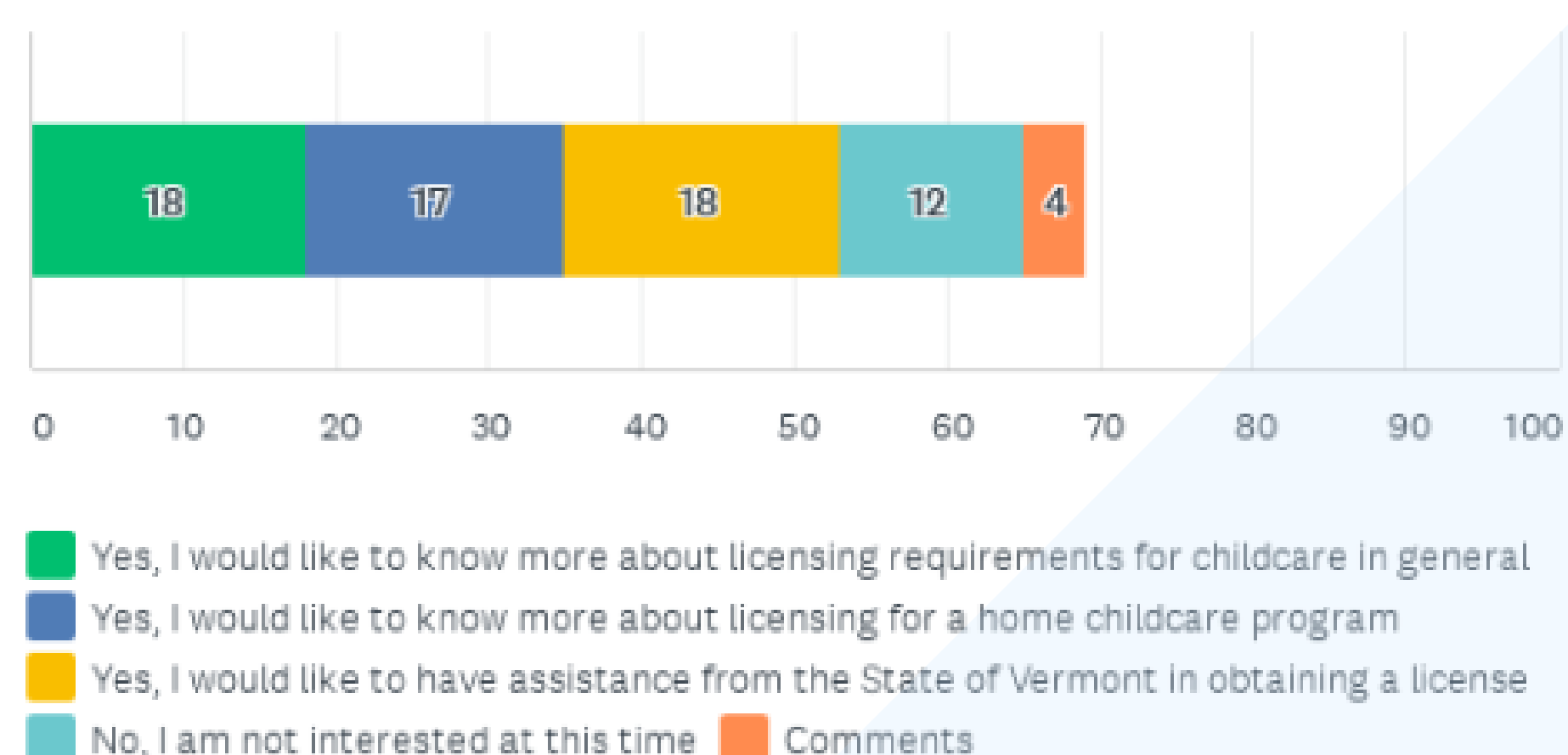


Does the amount of money you can make as a childcare provider make you more or less interested in this career?

More (20) – 62%

Less (12) – 38%

Would you like to learn more about how to become a childcare provider? Please answer as many as are relevant?



Findings

In this sample of resettled refugees in Chittenden County, several observations regarding childcare needs and the potential of childcare as a career can be made. In both surveys, cost and affordability are key concerns – as they are for the general population. When asked about income versus costs within their current lifestyle, 81% of needs survey respondents and 84% of career survey respondents rated their income as inadequate for Vermont. Housing, childcare and vacation were listed as the three most significant costs made particularly unaffordable due to financial constraints.

In terms of childcare needs, a large majority of needs survey respondents (92%) noted that they required childcare, with over 80% having one or two children with such needs. 80% of respondents listed work for one or more parent as a particular motivation for childcare. Currently, most receive childcare support from a parent and a majority have been unable to place their child in a care center despite wanting to do so. Cost is listed as the main reason for not doing so.

For those who do have children within a childcare center, a majority of these children speak the primary language used in the center, though a significant minority do not (37%). An overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) indicated that the cost of childcare was unaffordable within their current income. Also of note is the fact that a majority of respondents suggested that their children did not receive culturally preferred foods in their childcare center. In terms of transportation, a majority of children access their childcare center through private vehicle access, with a parent, sibling or grandparent having the primary responsibility for drop-off. A majority of respondents also listed their child as being always or usually happy at childcare.

A smaller set of respondents answered questions about childcare as a potential profession. Of the 40 survey respondents, 29 indicated an interest in childcare as a career. Even amongst those who did not see this as an occupational pathway, some considered childcare as a short-term job, while roughly half of respondents considered it as a long-term career. While a majority of respondents (23) had worked with children before, most did not know that home childcare businesses exist as an option and had not looked into licensing requirements. Providing more information on the latter would seem to align well with the preference expressed by a majority of respondents for a home-based childcare business. For those who are interested in this career path, the reasons for doing so ranged from a love of kids to an interest in their development and a desire to contribute to their own (and the broader) community. Most respondents seemed open to working with a number of children across gender, age and community lines, though a number asked for greater training to work with those with disabilities. The biggest challenges mentioned by respondents as they saw them were space to host a childcare center, money to operate it, and knowledge to both gain and maintain certification.

Recommendations

In terms of childcare needs, those expressed by respondents within the refugee communities surveyed are not unique to these groups and reflect broader challenges faced by parents and families across Vermont. Some specific issues that could be addressed might include the provision of culturally preferred foods and language supports if possible within childcare centers. The potential of childcare centers offered within/by members of the various resettled communities thus offers an opportunity to meet these needs.

In terms of childcare as a career path for members of resettled communities, it is clear that licensing and certification requirements are unclear for many respondents. We would thus recommend following up with those respondents who have indicated a strong interest in childcare as a profession and provide not only information but support and training to understand and complete such requirements. We would also recommend state investment in such training and support for subsequent new arrivals to build this career pathway as a potential future strength within both the resettlement and larger communities.