



UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYED PARENTS USING INFORMAL CHILD CARE

JUNE 2022

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BACKGROUND

The research conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of the Bipartisan Policy Center sought to understand the following:

1. Reasons why employed parents choose informal child care
2. Circumstances for using informal child care including flexibility and multiple children
3. Interest and barriers in using formal child care
4. Community responsibility for providing child care

AUDIENCE

Survey respondents were screened on having a child ages 0-5, all parents of the household being currently employed, and currently using an informal child care provider. For simplicity, this audience is referred to as **parents**.

METHODOLOGY

This poll was conducted between May 19-24, 2022, among a sample of 1,000 parents who have a child ages 0-5, currently employed, and currently using an informal child care provider. The interviews were conducted online. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

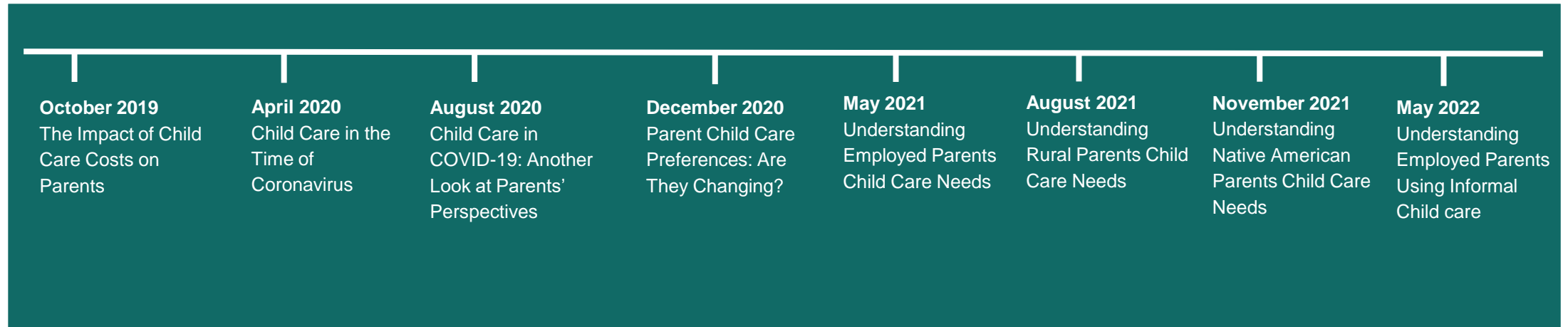
DEFINITION

Throughout the analysis **formal child care** refers to a child care center, family child care home, pre-K, and a head start program, while **informal child care refers** to child care from relatives, parents, non-relative friend/neighbor, or a nanny.

BACKGROUND

PARENT SURVEY SERIES

BPC and Morning Consult have conducted a series of parent surveys to understand parents’ need and preferences for child care.



Parent Survey Series: <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/parent-survey-resource-center/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Consistent with previous polling, safety, and trust are the most important factors to parents as they think about their child care arrangement which could be driving their preference for an informal child care arrangement.** In open-end questions, distrust in formal child care, trust in family members to provide the best care, and safety are leading factors in why informal child care is their preferred arrangement. [See slides 8, 9, and 23.](#)
2. **Parents need child care arrangements that are available over the weekends and during non-traditional work hours to accommodate their unpredictable work schedules.** A quarter of parents are aware of their work schedule two weeks in advance or less, and a quarter need child care outside of traditional work hours and during the weekends so that they and/or their spouse/partner can work during those times. In an open-end question, some parents describe their formal care options as limited, and among parents who prefer a formal child care arrangement, local availability and hours were both listed as reasons they do not currently use a formal child care arrangement. [See slides 11, 16, 17, 26 and 27.](#)
3. **Parents are satisfied with their informal child care arrangements, and most say formal child care arrangements are unappealing to them.** A plurality of parents would prefer their current arrangement even if child care were free and in a convenient location. Parents who are personally providing care or alternating with their spouse are least likely to be satisfied with their current child care arrangement and prefer a formal child care arrangement. A majority of parents say formal child care arrangements are unappealing (62%) rather than inaccessible (38%) to them, but low-income and minority parents are particularly likely to say it is inaccessible to them. [See slides 19, 21, 22, and 30.](#)
4. **Cost is frequently referenced as a barrier to using a formal child care arrangement.** Cost may be seen as such a large barrier to using a formal child care arrangement because a majority of parents (55%) do not currently pay for their child care arrangement, and this number is even higher among parents using relatives for child care (67%). Among parents who would prefer to use a formal child care arrangement or used to use a formal child care arrangement and stopped, cost of care is the main reason they do not use formal child care. Additionally, nearly half (48%) of parents would be likely to consider sending their child to a formal child care arrangement if it was affordable and within their budget. [See slides 15, 24, and 33.](#)
5. **COVID-19 has influenced how parents think about the safety of their child at child care and created more flexibility in their work arrangements.** Concerns about COVID-19 and the ability to work from home or have more control over their work hours are referenced in why parents prefer to use informal child care and why they stopped using a formal child care arrangement. [See slides 8, 24 and 26.](#)

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BARRIERS TO FORMAL
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RESPONSIBILITY OF
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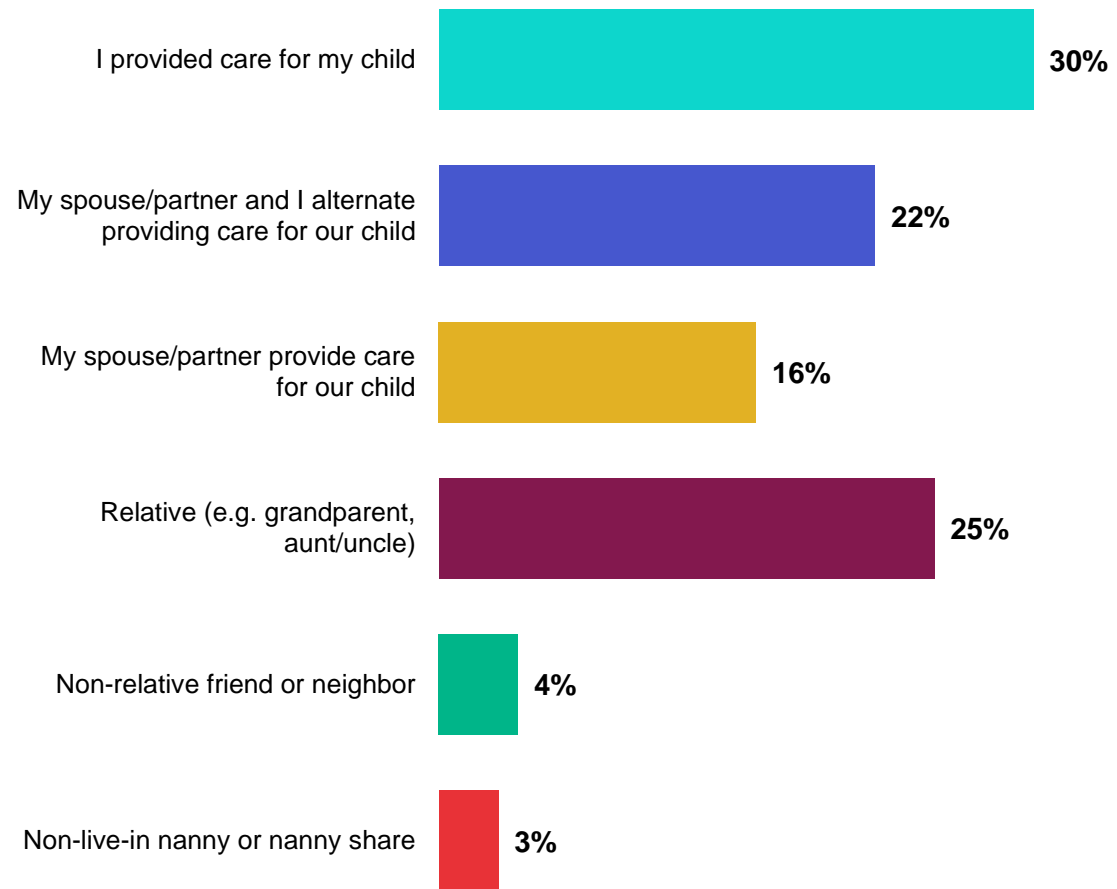
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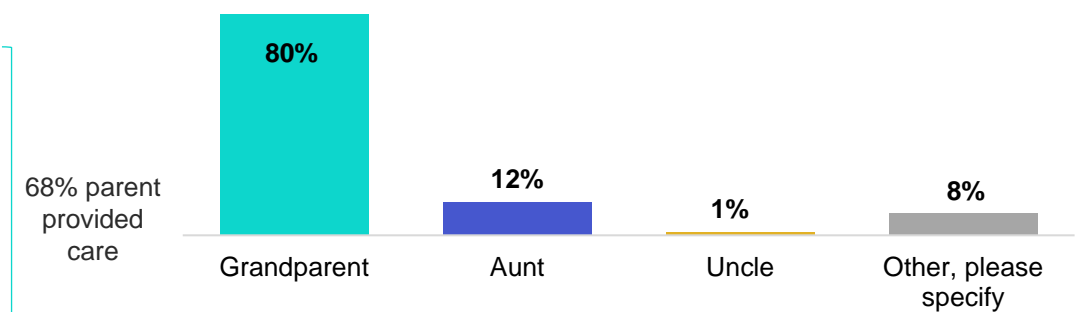
REASONS FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Over half of parents (68%) are using parent-provided care as their primary child care arrangement for their youngest child.

Which of the following best describes the current primary child care arrangement for your youngest child?



Which of the following best describes which relative is responsible for your primary child care? (among parents using relatives, n=246)



- A quarter of parents (25%) use relatives as their primary child care arrangement for their youngest child. Among those who use relatives as their primary child care provider, 80% say grandparents are responsible for the care.
- Older parents are more likely than younger parents and rural parents are more likely than urban parents to use *relatives* as their primary child care provider. [See appendix slide 39.](#)
- Black and parents of other ethnic groups are more likely than white and Hispanic parents to personally provide care for their child, while white and Hispanic parents are more likely to use relatives. [See appendix slide 39.](#)
- Parents with older children are more likely to personally be providing care. [See appendix slide 40.](#)

REASONS FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

When choosing your current child arrangement for your youngest child, what factors were top of mind?

Many parents specifically referenced COVID-19 as a factor.

SAFETY

“That she is safe and well taken care of.”

“I look for security and safety and prefer them around family.”

“Covid and her being a preemie had a lot to do with it. I had to keep her from getting sick and the best place was with me.”

COST

“The amount of money that we would save by working during his preschool program is better used by us than a babysitter.”

“Ridiculous cost of child care.”

“We both work from home. That’s the only way we could afford it.”

“Child care is expensive, so we were glad family was willing to watch our child, or would we really struggle.”

TRUST

“The fact that I don’t trust anyone with her but myself and my husband.”

“That the child is kept safe with someone that I can trust and I can afford.”

FAMILY

“That she always had at least one parent with her.”

“Having a loving family member care for my child was a huge factor.”

“Availability of family to help with caretaking.”

QUALITY OF CARE AND TIME

“Quality time with my child before she begins preschool next year.”

“Spending time with them and watching them grow.”

“I want my child to be in the best hands possible. So for now, mommy is here.”

SOMEONE KNOWN

“I wanted my children to have a relative be their caregiver because I trust a relative more than I would some stranger.”

“Didn’t want my child to be raised or watched by anyone but immediate family just as I have with my other children.”

NOT FORMAL CHILD CARE

“I refuse to let my kids be in a daycare.”

“After working in a daycare, I am iffy about daycares for my children.”

“I did not want my child in daycare so we opted for a grandparent to watch him.”

WORK ARRANGEMENT

“Working from home so I could care for them.”

“We considered our work schedules and worked with family and friends and around how we plan to work.”

“Our work schedules were at the top of our minds. We both work third shift, so we can’t use traditional daycare.”

REASONS FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Across the different types of informal child care arrangements parents are currently using, *safety* and *trust* are the two most important aspects of the items tested. *Location* is an especially important aspect to those who are currently using a friend/nanny/neighbor for child care (97%).

How important or unimportant to you are each of the following aspects of your current child care arrangement for your youngest child?

% Important	Parents	Current Arrangement-Relative	Current Arrangement-Personally Provide Care	Current Arrangement-Spouse/Partner	Current Arrangement-Alternate Care	Current Arrangement-Friend/Neighbor/Nanny
Flexibility of days child care is provided	86%	85%	87%	81%	88%	90%
Flexibility of hours child care is provided	87%	88%	87%	87%	86%	89%
Cost of care	84%	83%	86%	81%	84%	87%
Location	90%	93%	90%	82%	89%	97%
Individualized attention provided to my child	93%	95%	92%	88%	93%	96%
Opportunities for social-emotional learning for my child	90%	92%	91%	83%	91%	91%
Opportunities for cognitive development	92%	95%	93%	87%	91%	93%
Approaches to guidance and discipline of my child	92%	94%	90%	91%	90%	99%
Safety of the child care that is provided	96%	98%	94%	91%	96%	99%
Trust in the child care provider	95%	98%	92%	90%	96%	99%

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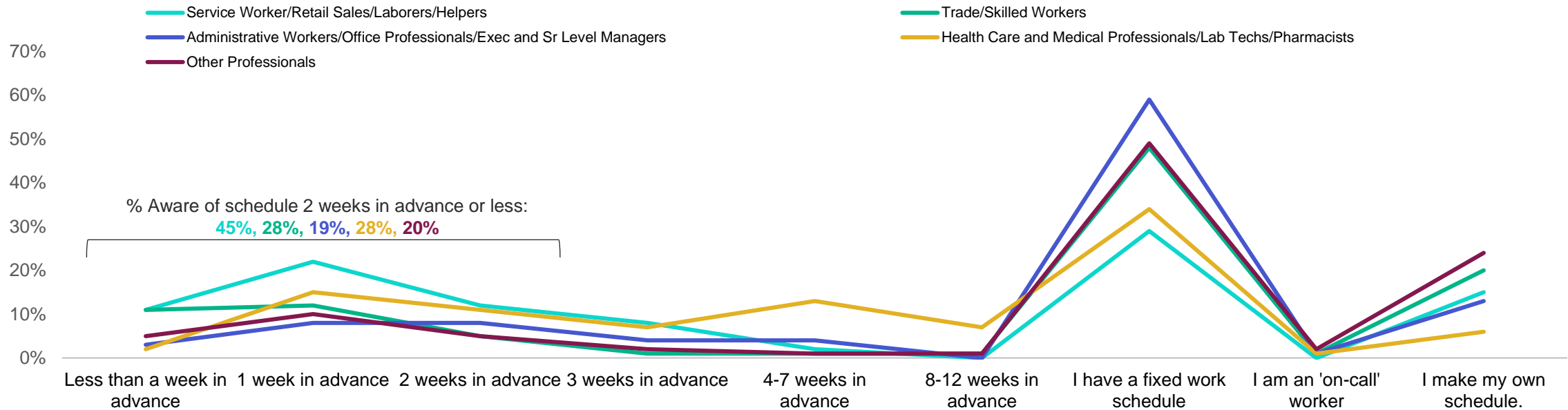
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CIRCUMSTANCES FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Nearly half of parents who have a service/retail occupation (45%) are aware of their work schedule *two weeks in advance or less*.

Awareness of Work Schedule By Occupation

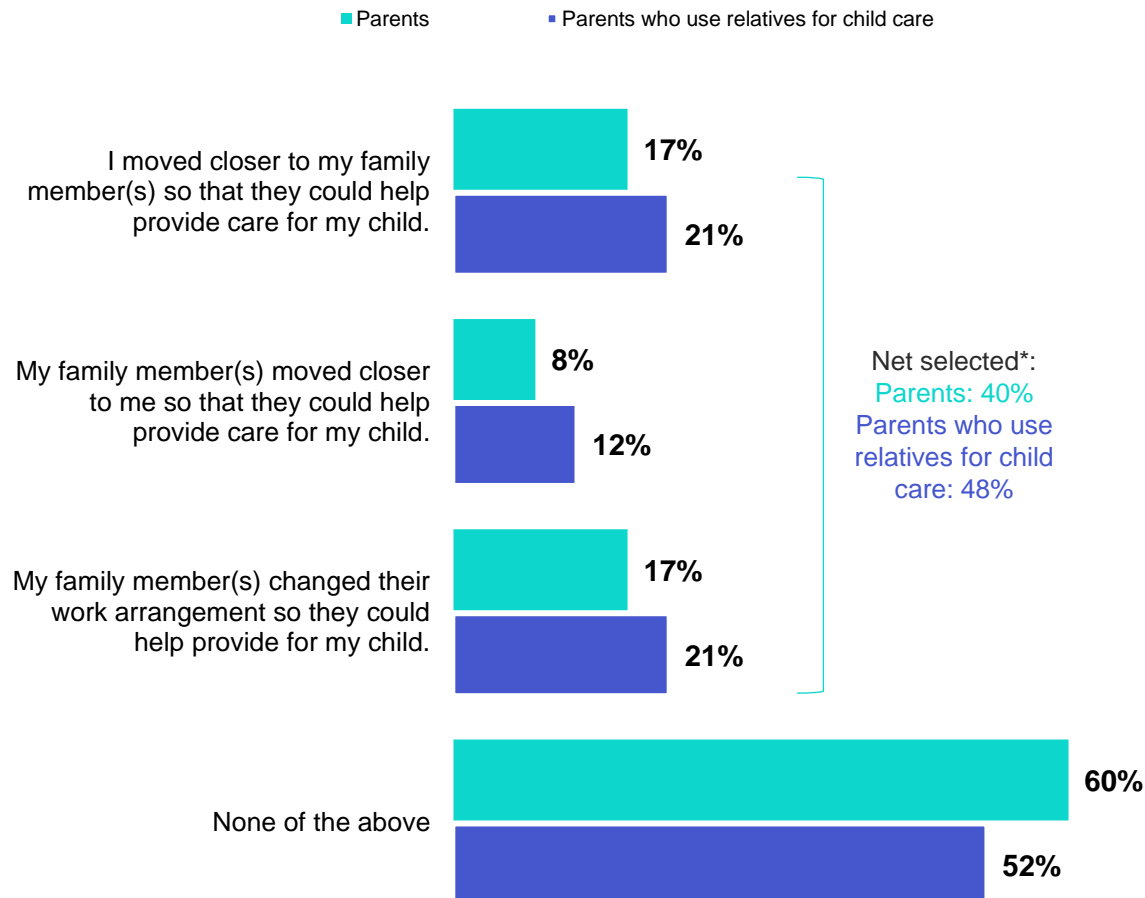


- Overall, a quarter of parents (28%) are aware of their work schedule two weeks in advance or less, while nearly half (44%) have a fixed work schedule and 16% make their own schedule. [See appendix slide 42.](#)
- Awareness of work schedule differs significantly across demographic groups including income and occupation.
- Among those with a household income under \$50k, 40% are aware of their work schedule *two weeks in advance or less*, compared to 25% with an income of \$50k-\$100k, and 11% with an income of \$100k+. [See appendix slide 42.](#)
- Across occupation classification, 45% of parents who have a service/retail occupation, 28% who have a trade/skill occupation, and 28% who have a health care occupation are aware of their work schedule *two weeks in advance or less*.

CIRCUMSTANCES FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

A fifth of parents who are using relatives for child care say they *moved close to family members so they could provide child care (21%)* or that *family members changed their work arrangement (21%)* to provide child care.

Which of the following statements, if any, apply to you? Please select all that apply. % **selected**



- Parents living in an urban community are more likely than those living in a rural community to have personally moved (19% urban, 14% rural) or had family members move closer (11% urban, 6% rural) so they could provide child care. [See appendix slide 43.](#)
- Parents who are salaried (47%) are more likely than those who are hourly (39%) to have made one of the tested changes in order to provide child care. [See appendix slide 43.](#)
- There are no significant differences in the percent selected across age, income, and ethnicity.

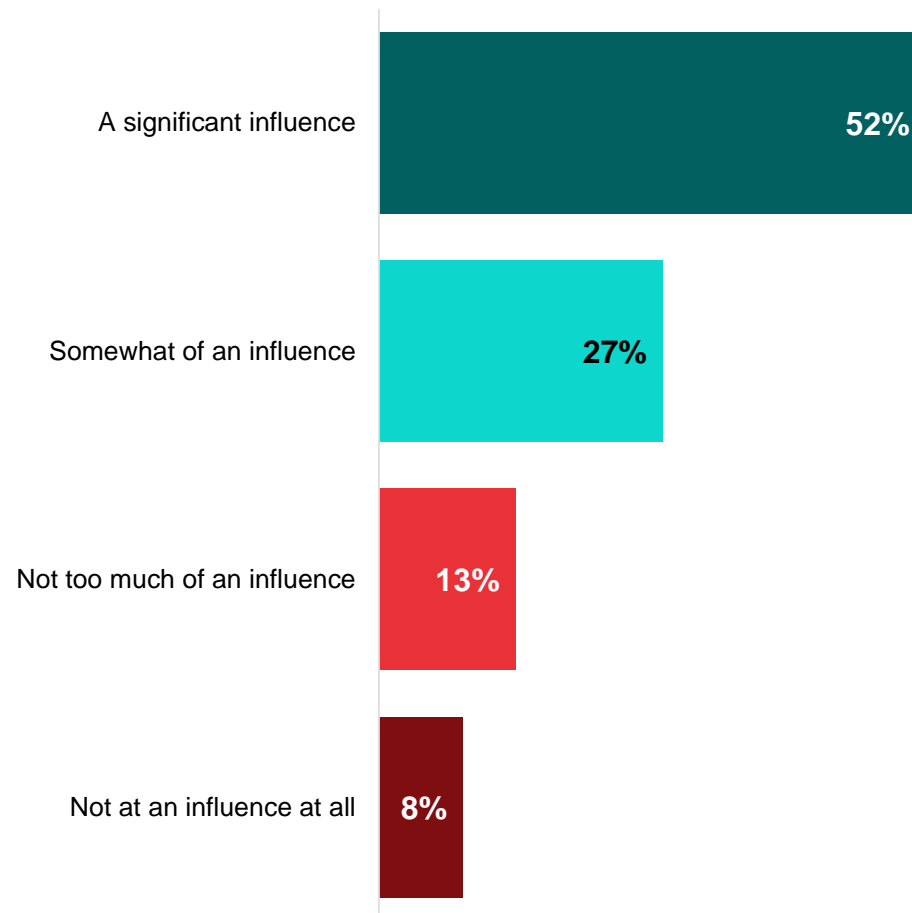
*Net selected de-duplicates multiple selections.

CIRCUMSTANCES FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Four-in-five (79%) parents who have more than one child ages 0-5 say this influences their current child care arrangement, and are most likely to reference cost as an influential factor.

How much of an influence, if at all, is having more than one child ages 0-5 on your current child care arrangement?

AMONG PARENTS WHO HAVE MORE THAN ONE CHILDREN AGES 0-5, n=292



How does having more than one child ages 0-5 influence your current child care arrangement?

AMONG PARENTS WHO SAY HAVING MORE THAN ONE CHILD INFLUENCES THEIR CURRENT CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT, n=230

40% of parents who say having more than one child influences their current child care arrangement specifically referenced **cost** or **money** as an influential factor.

- Cost
 - “The cost of care for 2 kids is literally more than I make, so any time there is a conflict where we can’t arrange care via family, I have to cut work.”
 - “It is hard to work with both, but we cannot afford two in daycare.”
 - “I am not able to afford daycare for 1 child much less, multiple children.”
 - “I have a 3 and 4-year-old. I had to drastically reduce my work hours, drop my position at work due to costs of child care for 2 kids. It wasn’t worth me paying for 2 kids at daycare, wouldn’t make enough working than it cost.”
- More complicated
 - “Can their grandparents handle more than one little monster at a time.”
 - “It is very hard to find places that take two not potty-trained babies.”
 - “The grandparent is obviously getting older so it would be up to him to decide whether he could care for multiple kids.”
- Difficult to find care
 - “They would need to go to the same place and sometimes it is hard to find a place that will have room for both in my experience.”
 - “I would need to consider if my mother is physically able to care for a future newborn plus my current toddler in order for me to keep working.”
 - “It makes things more hectic and harder to find daycare that has two open slots.”

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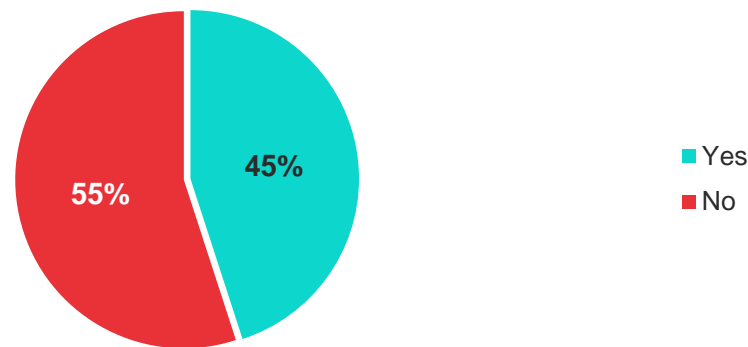


FLEXIBILITY OF INFORMAL CHILD CARE

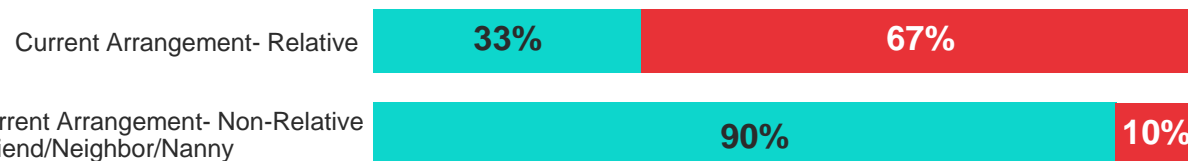
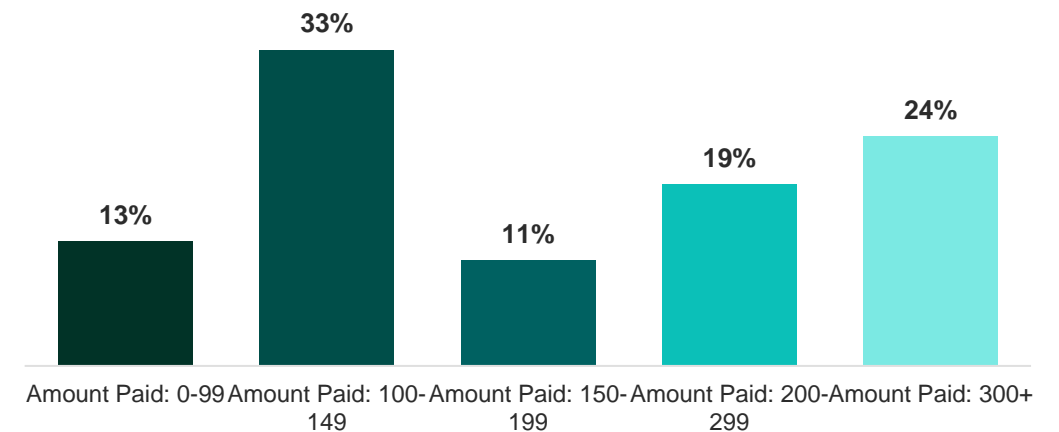
Among parents using a relative, friend, neighbor, or nanny for child care, 45% *pay* their child care provider, while 55% *do not pay* their child care provider.

You previously mentioned you use a relative, friend, neighbor, or nanny/nanny-share as your primary child care provider. Do you currently pay your child care provider? If yes, please indicate how much you pay for child care on a weekly basis. Please use only numbers, with no letters, symbols, or punctuation.

AMONG PARENTS USING A RELATIVE, FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, OR NANNY FOR CHILD CARE, N=316



Average Amount Paid Weekly: \$221



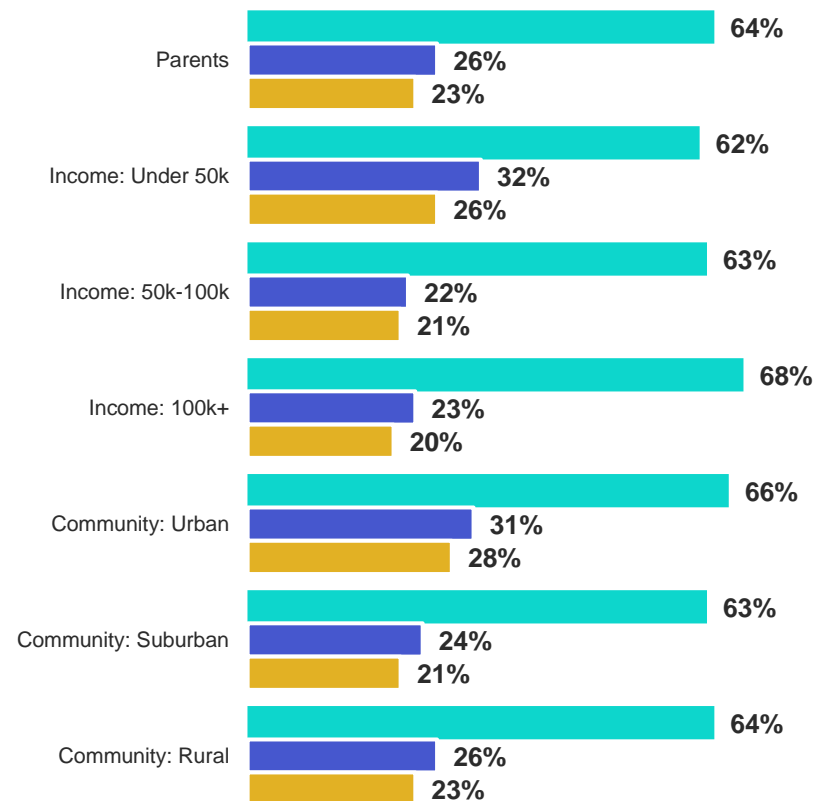
- A third of parents using relatives (33%) currently *pay* for their child care provider, compared to 90% who use a friend, neighbor, or nanny for child care.
- Among those who pay for child care, on average they are paying \$221 per week.

FLEXIBILITY OF INFORMAL CHILD CARE

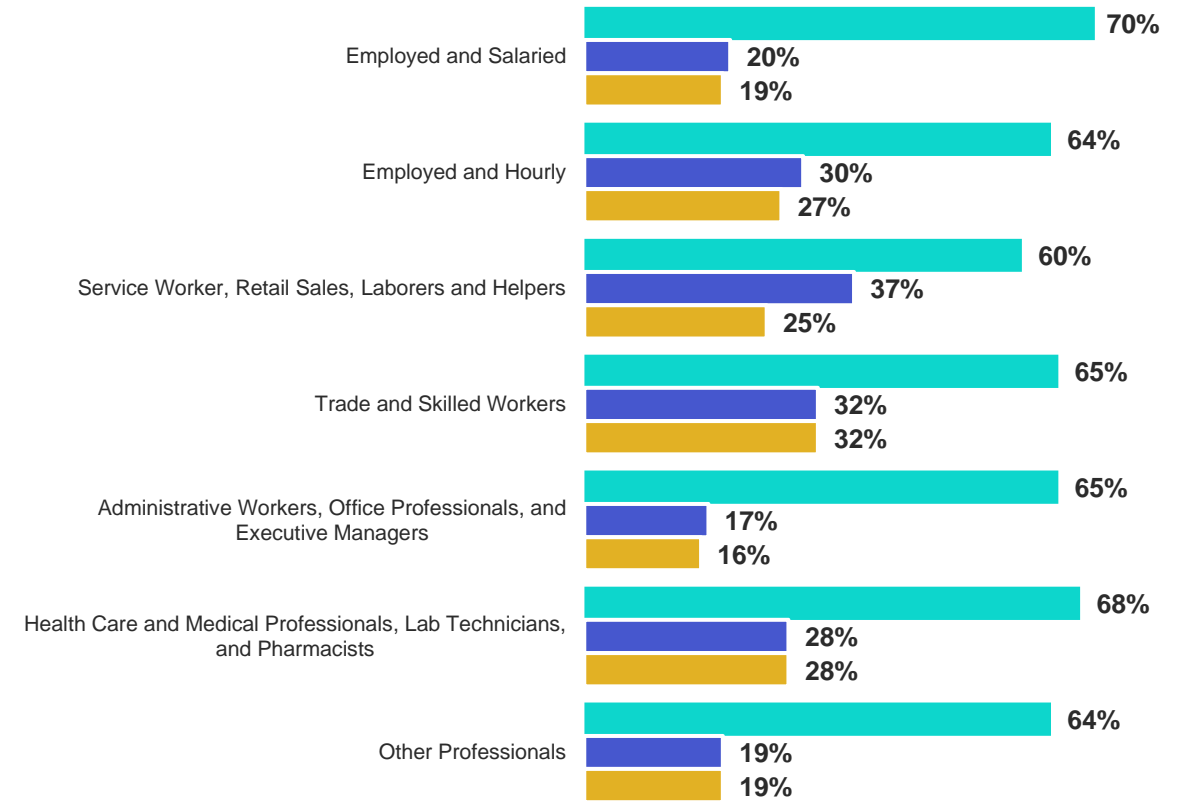
Parents need child care during *traditional* work hours (64%), during the *weekends* (26%), and *outside of traditional work hours* (23%). Urban (28%), hourly employees (27%), trade/skilled workers (32%), and health care workers (28%) are most likely to need care *outside of traditional work hours*. For weekend child care, urban adults (31%), hourly employees (30%), and service workers (37%) are most likely to need care during this time. [See appendix slides 45 and 46.](#)

In a typical week, does your family need a child care arrangement for your children under 5 so that you (or both you and your spouse/partner) can work during the following hours?

■ Traditional Work Hours ■ During Weekends ■ Outside of Traditional Work Hours



■ Traditional Work Hours ■ During Weekends ■ Outside of Traditional Work Hours



FLEXIBILITY OF INFORMAL CHILD CARE

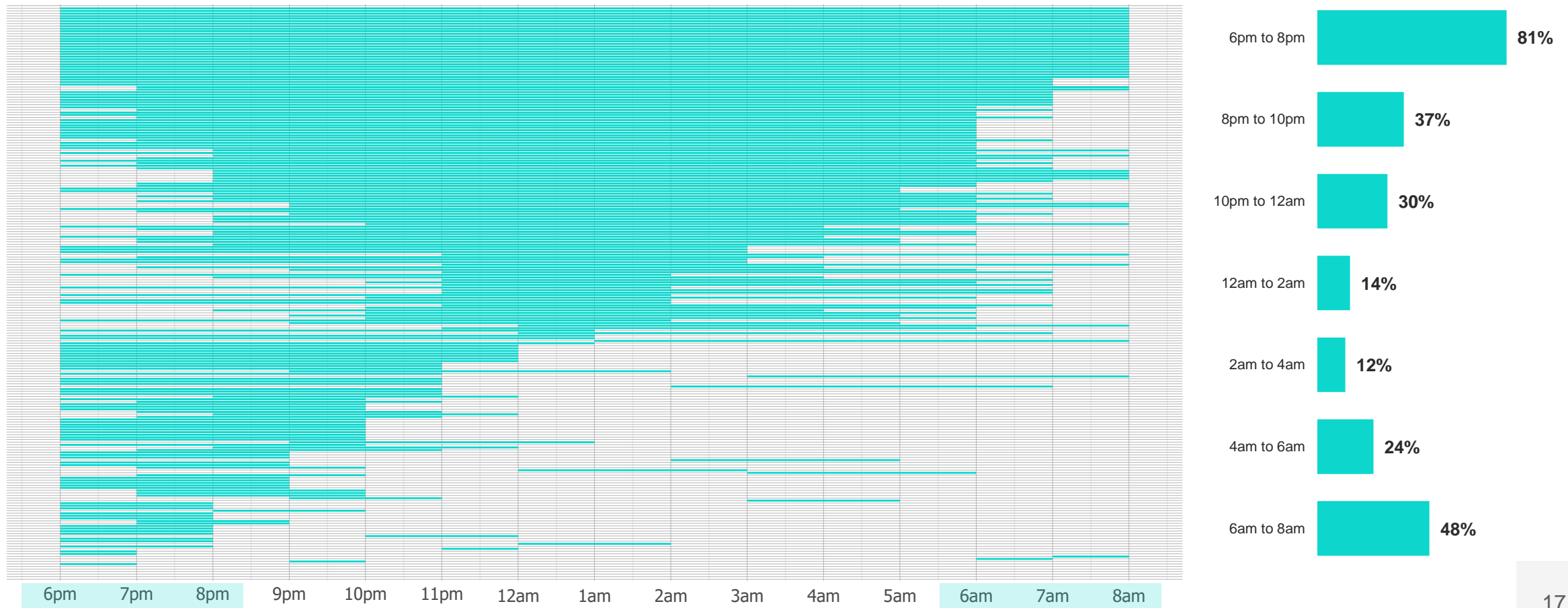
You mentioned that in a typical week, your family needs a child care arrangement for your children under 5 outside of the traditional 8am-6pm work hours in order to work. Which of the following hours do you require a child care arrangement? Please select the best hours for the child care to start and for it to end.

AMONG PARENTS WHO NEED CHILD CARE OUTSIDE OF TRADITIONAL WORK HOURS, N=227

When do parents need care? 81% need child care from 6pm-8pm, 48% need care from 6am-8am.

Each line is a respondent

Average number of hours child care is needed: 7.8 hours



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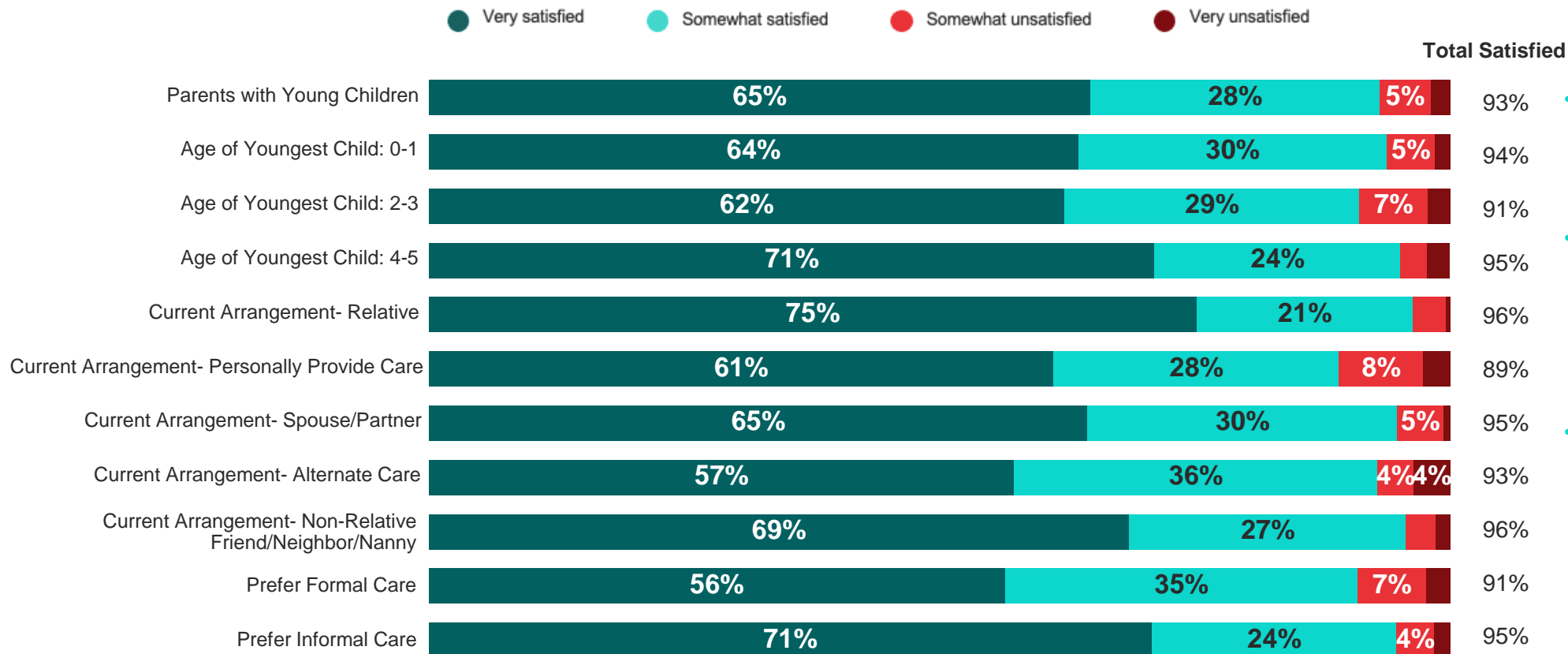
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INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

Overall, a strong majority of parents (93%) are satisfied with their current child care arrangement, including 65% who say they are *very satisfied*.

Overall, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with your current child care arrangement for your youngest child?

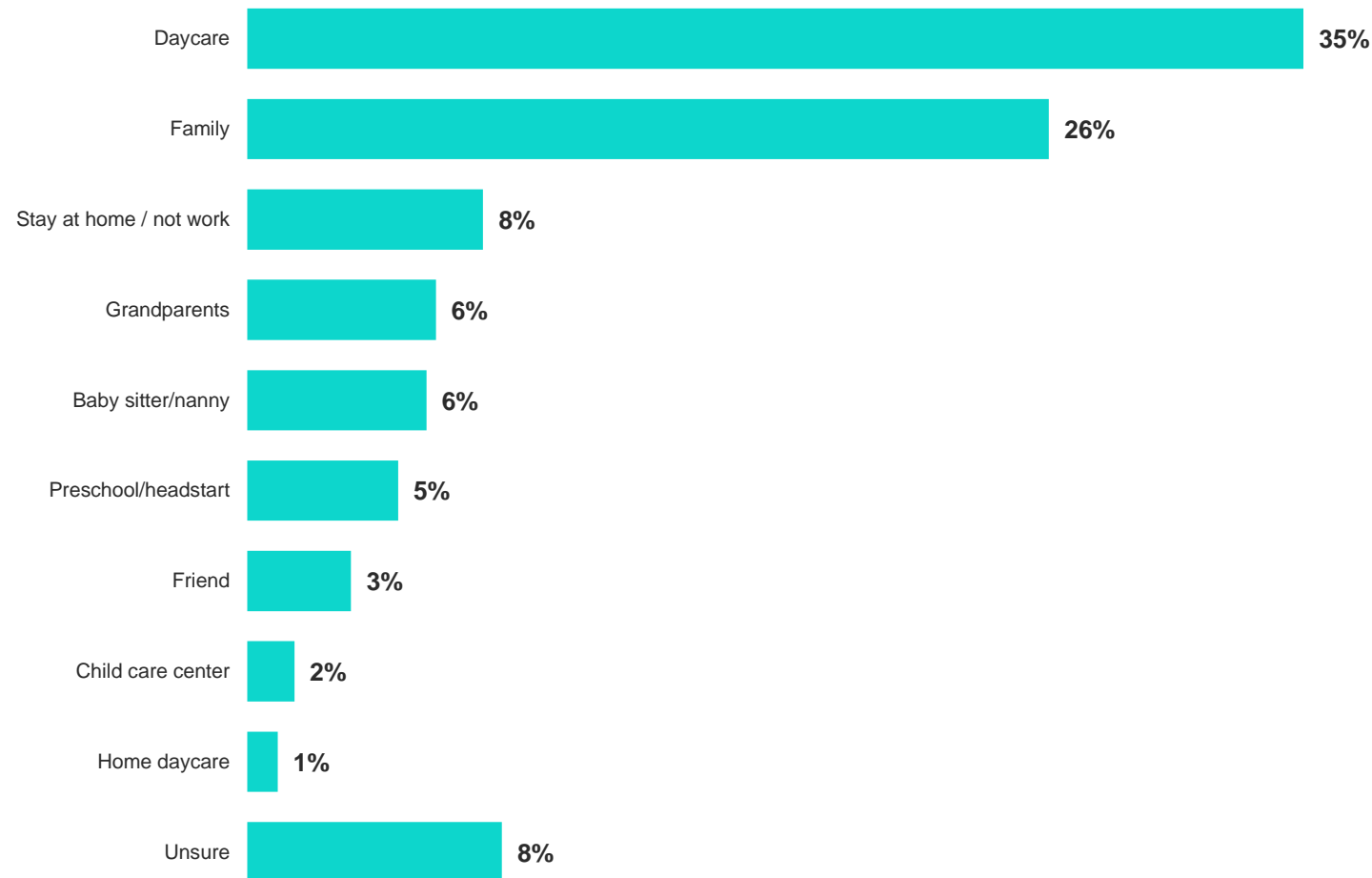


- Satisfaction is particularly high among those who currently use relatives for child care (96%) or a friend/neighbor/nanny (96%).
- A majority of those who prefer informal child care are *very satisfied* (71%) with their arrangement over parents who prefer formal child care (56% *very satisfied*).
- Parents with older children are especially likely to say they are *very satisfied* (71%) compared to parents with younger children.

INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

If parents were not able to use their current child care arrangement, their next option for child care would be daycare or a family member.

If you were not able to use your current child care arrangement, what would be your next option for child care? **[OPEN END]**

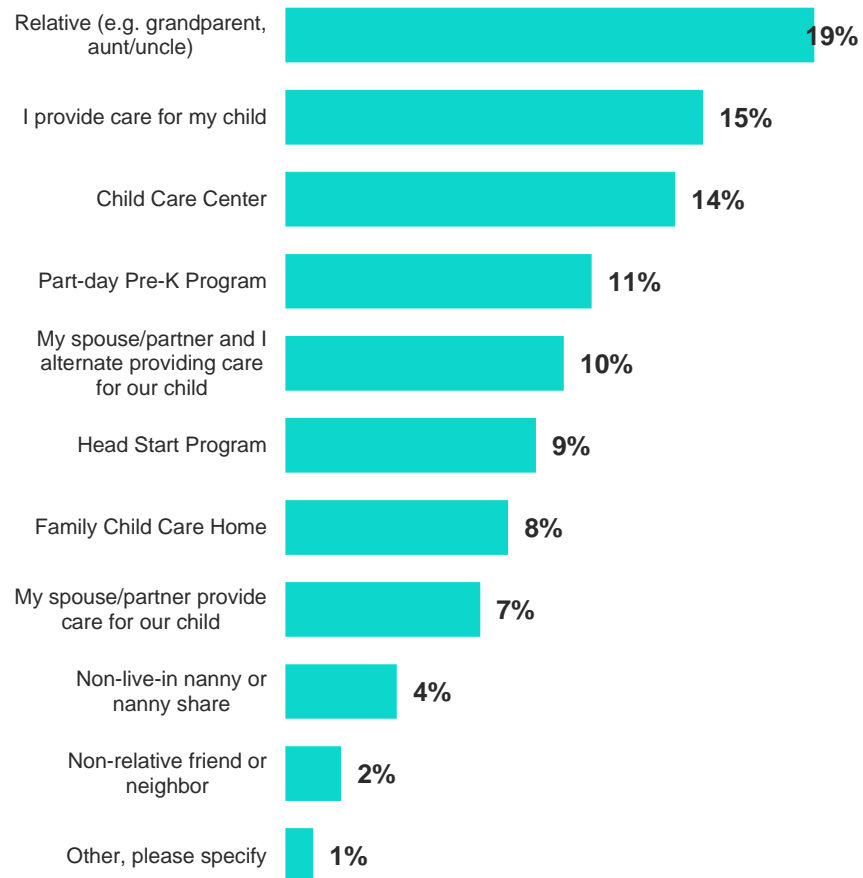


43% say a **formal** arrangement would be their next option
 49% say an **informal** arrangement would be their next option

INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

If child care were free and in a convenient location, parents are divided on what type of arrangement they would most prefer for their youngest child with a majority (57%) preferring an informal arrangement.

If child care were free and in a convenient location for your family, what type of child care arrangement would you most prefer for your youngest child?



42% prefer a **formal** arrangement
57% prefer an **informal** arrangement

- A plurality of parents would prefer their current arrangement even if child care were free and in a convenient location. This preference is strongest for relative (46%) and non-live-in nanny care (44%). Across current types of child care, about two-fifths would prefer a formal child care arrangement. [See slide 22.](#)
- Rural parents (24%) are more likely than urban (17%) and suburban (17%) parents to most prefer relative care. [See appendix slide 47.](#)
- Low-income parents (46%) are more likely than middle (38%) and high-income parents (40%) to prefer a formal child care arrangement. [See appendix slide 47.](#)
- White (21%) and Hispanic (23%) parents are more likely than Black (12%) and adults of other ethnicity groups (18%) to prefer relatives for child care. [See appendix slide 47.](#)
- Parents with older children are slightly more likely to prefer a formal child care arrangement. [See appendix slide 48.](#)
- When asked why parents selected their preferred child care arrangement, trust in care and quality time with family members are reasons why parents prefer an informal arrangement, whereas a structured learning environment and the development of social skills are reasons why parents prefer a formal arrangement. [See slide 23.](#)

INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

If child care were free and in a convenient location for your family, what type of child care arrangement would you most prefer for your youngest child?

		Current Arrangement						
% Selected		Relative (e.g. grandparent, aunt/uncle) (25%*)	I provided care for my child (30%)	My spouse/partner provide care for our child (16%)	My spouse/partner and I alternate providing care for our child (22%)	Non-relative friend or neighbor (4%)	Non-live-in nanny or nanny share (3%)	
Preferred Arrangement	Child Care Center	13%	14%	14%	16%	19%	7%	
	Family Child Care Home	8%	7%	8%	8%	9%	15%	
	Part-day Pre-K Program	10%	13%	10%	12%	9%	4%	
	Head Start Program	9%	10%	9%	8%	14%	0%	
	Relative (e.g. grandparent, aunt/uncle)	46%	11%	12%	10%	12%	0%	
	I provide care for my child	4%	33%	10%	9%	2%	11%	
	My spouse/partner provide care for our child	2%	3%	27%	7%	0%	4%	
	My spouse/partner and I alternate providing care for our child	3%	5%	6%	28%	5%	7%	
	Non-relative friend or neighbor	1%	1%	1%	0%	26%	7%	
	Non-live-in nanny or nanny share	4%	3%	4%	1%	5%	44%	
	Other, please specify	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

*Percentage indicates the percent of parents surveyed currently utilizing this type of care.

**Percentage in brackets indicates total preference for formal and informal care.

INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

In a short sentence, why would **[SELECTED]*** be your preferred child care arrangement for your youngest child if child care were free and in a convenient location?

FORMAL CARE

- Structured **learning environment**
- Development of **social skills**
- **Flexibility to work**
- **Exposure** to different settings
- **Convenience**
- **Preparation for school** in the future
- **Ability to be home for part of the day** for part-time programs
- **Formal training** of caretakers
- **Prior experiences** with formal care

INFORMAL CARE

- **Trust** in self, relatives, and spouses to provide care
- **Lack of trust** in formal institutions
- **Familiarity** with self, relatives and spouses
- Higher control over the **quality of care provided** and **what children are learning**
- More **quality time** with family members
- **Reliability** and **safety** of care
- Concerns related to **special needs**
- **Convenience**
- **COVID-19 concerns**

“They do a lot to help develop and teach them and provide and will be around other kids their age to learn and play and interact with.”

“It is a place geared towards children with other kids to play with and an environment structured for a child's growth and development.”

“Simply because nobody can take better care of my child than me.”

“...I know that family member and trust them. And have no doubts my child's cares and needs are being fulfilled.”

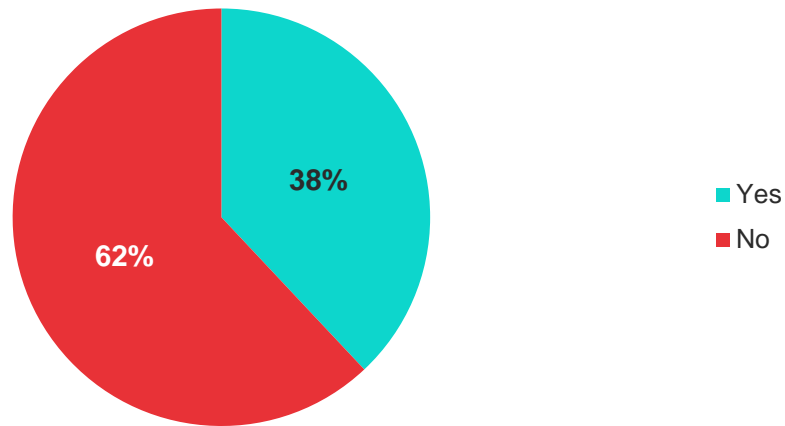
“We love being able to spend time with our kids and build a strong relationship.”

*Preferred child care arrangement indicated in the previous question piped in here.

INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

Over a third (38%) of parents have used a formal child care arrangement before and reference a variety of reasons they stopped using formal care including cost, COVID-19, preference, and change in their work arrangement.

Have you used a formal child care arrangement before?



- Parents with a higher income level (\$100k+, 46%) are more likely than those of lower-income levels (under \$50k: 35%, \$50k-\$100k: 38%) to have used a formal child care arrangement before. [See appendix slide 50.](#)
- Parents in the West coast (33%) are less likely than parents from other regions to have used formal child care before. [See appendix slide 50.](#)
- Parents with older children (ages 2-3: 42%, ages 4-5: 43%) are more likely than parents with a child ages 0-1 (32%) to say they have used a formal child care arrangement before. [See appendix slide 51.](#)
- Among parents who say they would prefer to use formal care, nearly half (46%) have used a formal arrangement before compared to those who would prefer informal child care, 33% have used a formal arrangement before. [See appendix slide 51.](#)

In a few words, please describe why you stopped using a formal child care arrangement?

AMONG PARENTS WHO USED A FORMAL CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT BEFORE, n=384

- Cost / Too Expensive
 - “I could no longer afford to send my child.”
 - “They weren’t in our budget.”
- COVID-19
 - “I stopped using it because the pandemic had started and I didn’t want my child to be around people that might get it.”
 - “Once Covid happened I pulled her out of the program, we have not returned since.”
 - “COVID 19 caused me to look for alternatives.”
- Work Arrangement Changed
 - “Arranged work so that I could care for my children by myself.”
 - “I stopped because I was able to stay home more and would only need a caregiver when I have meetings.”
 - “COVID allowed me to transition to work from home and take care of my child.”
- Experience in/Perception of Formal Care
 - “We weren’t getting what was advertised from the daycare.”
 - “Lack of safe, trustworthy care.”
 - “People that work in those facilities just don’t treat your child with the love and caring as family does or especially a parent.”
- Started Using Another Arrangement
 - “Family members became available to watch my child.”
 - “I felt as if my child would be taken care of properly by his grandparents versus by a stranger.”

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BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

Cost is a leading reason why parents who prefer a formal child care arrangement do not use one, but the decision to use informal child care is also explained by safety concerns, limited hours and availability, and the availability of family support.

You identified a preference for a formal child care arrangement. In a few words, please describe why you do not currently use a formal child care arrangement.

AMONG PARENTS WHO IDENTIFIED A PREFERENCE FOR A FORMAL CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT, n= 422

COST	COVID/SAFETY	TRUST	HOURS	AVAILABILITY	NO NEED/FAMILY CARE
<p>“Cost. There is no other consideration that is as limiting as that for my family.”</p>	<p>“I do not want him catching COVID.”</p>	<p>“Haven’t been able to find a trustworthy one yet and cost is high at this moment.”</p>	<p>“The hours do not accommodate my working hours and the rates are too high.”</p>	<p>“We couldn’t get one because our area is short of it...”</p>	<p>“Because I choose my family to watch my kids.”</p>
<p>“Because I can’t afford it.”</p>	<p>“Two reasons: cost & COVID.”</p>	<p>“I’m not too trusting of people.”</p>	<p>“I work non-traditional hours and my mom watches her for next to nothing cost.”</p>	<p>“There are no openings in my area and waitlists are out over a year.”</p>	<p>“I do not need to use it because we have people at home at all times.”</p>

BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

Parent perspective on formal child care options in their local community vary, but common themes include that the options are limited, expensive, and low quality.

How would you describe your options for formal child care in your local community?

NUMEROUS

“My community has **many different [options for] formal child care**. Some are free and some cost money.”

 “We have **several daycare centers** in my community.”

LIMITED

“Not as many as I would like. We are pretty rural here so the few options are a bit **inconvenient.**”

 “There are **very few options** and the options that are there will not work with my schedule.”

 “Very **limited since COVID.**”

EXPENSIVE

“There are plenty but **they’re all expensive.**”

 “Not very good. **Too expensive** and a long waitlist to get in.”

 “They are expensive at \$400+ a week it didn’t make any sense for me to work and **my entire paycheck goes to child care.**”

LOW QUALITY

“They are **not the best or safest options** in my opinion.”

 “We do have daycare facilities, but I feel they are a bit **cold and impersonal.**”

 “The ones that we can afford are **unsafe, unsanitary, and just not a good place** to send your child.”

UNTRUSTWORTHY

“We have 2 in my town that you can get help with paying but one is always **understaffed and dirty and not trustworthy** at all and the other one is always booked.”

 “**Untrustworthy and anxiety inducing.**”

NOT SURE

“I’m not too sure since I’ve **never looked into it.**”

 “I **don’t know enough** about it in my community to say.”

 “**Unsure.** I’ve never participated.”

BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

At least half of parents say all of the tested child care options are limited in their local community.

See appendix slide 55.

In your point of view, how limited or unlimited are each of the following child care options in your local community?

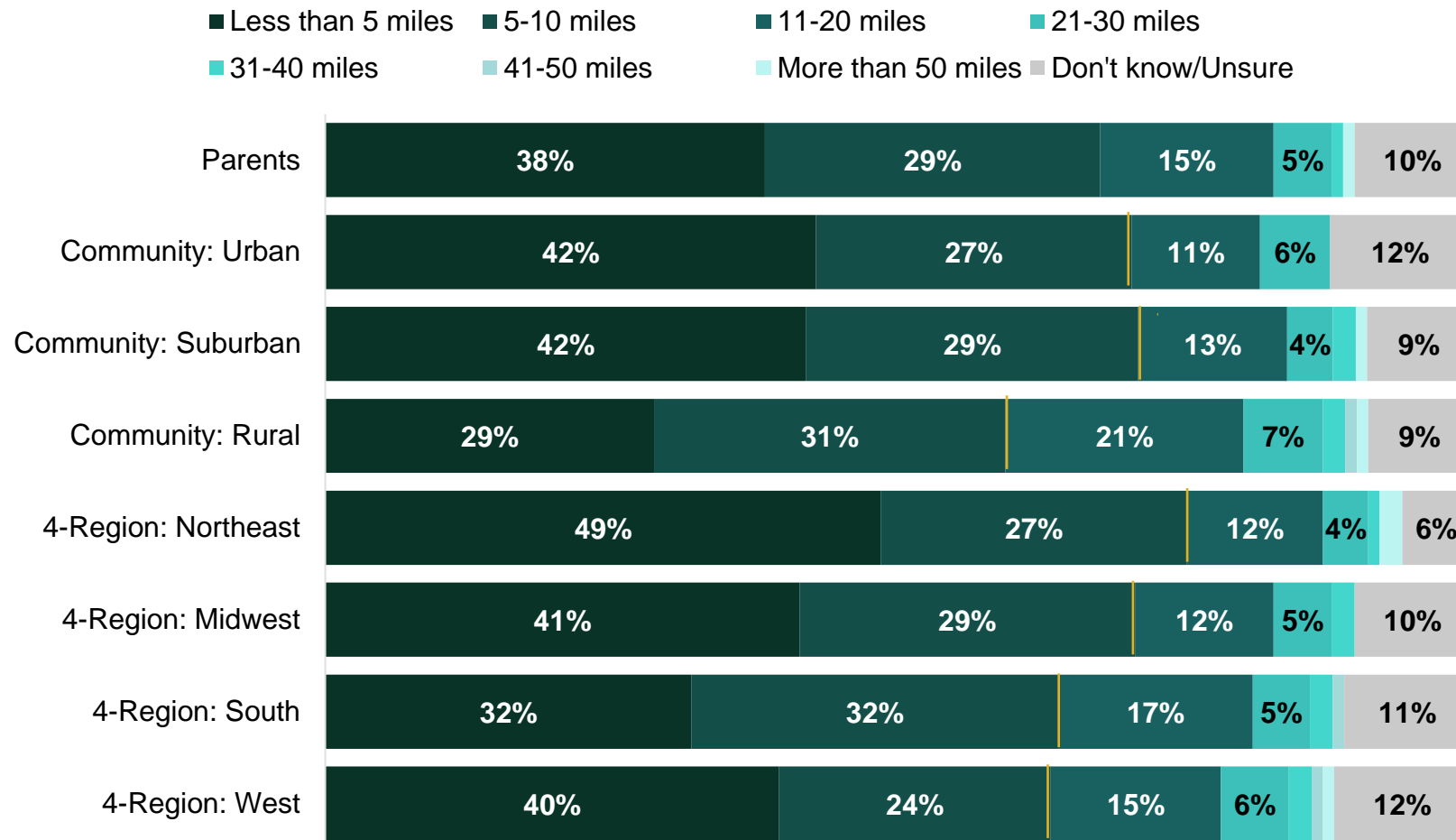
% Total Limited	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Home	Part-day Pre-K Program	Head Start Program
Parents	56%	54%	52%	51%
Community: Urban	51%	45%	45%	46%
Community: Suburban	54%	54%	52%	51%
Community: Rural	66%	60%	58%	56%
4-Region: Northeast	52%	46%	51%	48%
4-Region: Midwest	60%	56%	54%	56%
4-Region: South	59%	56%	54%	51%
4-Region: West	50%	53%	47%	48%

- **Rural parents** are especially likely to say all of the tested child care options are limited in their community, followed by suburban and urban parents.
- **Parents in the Midwest and South regions** are more likely than parents in the Northeast and West regions to say all of the tested child care options are limited in their community.

BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

Two thirds of parents (67%) say their home is less than a 10-mile one-way drive from a formal child care arrangement.

Approximately how many miles is a one-way drive from your home to a formal child care arrangement?



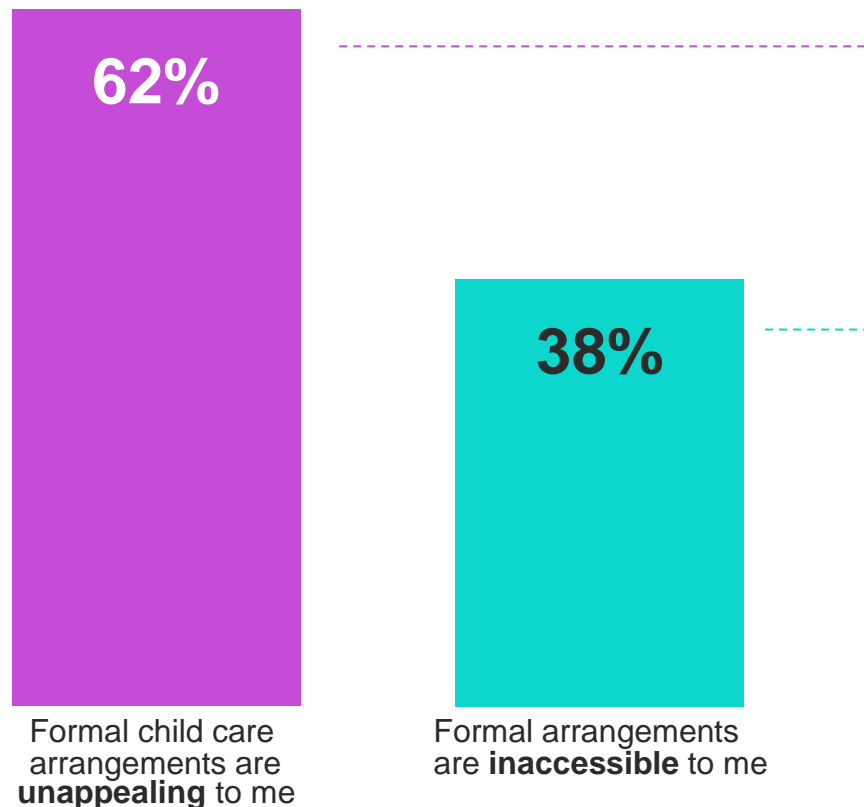
- Less than a third of **rural parents (29%)** say a one-way drive from their home to a formal child care arrangement is less than 5 miles, compared to urban (42%) and suburban (42%) parents.
- Across regions, **parents in the South (32%)** are least likely to say their home is less than a 5 mile one-way drive to a formal child care arrangement, while **parents in the northeast (49%)** are most likely.

*Indicates 10 miles or less

BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

A majority of parents (62%) say formal child care arrangements are unappealing to them, while other say the arrangements are inaccessible (38%) to them.

Which of the following statements best describes your point of view, even if neither is exactly correct?



In a few words, please describe why a formal child care arrangement is **unappealing** to you? [OPEN END] (n=496)*

- **Cost** and **lack of trust** are leading reasons why formal child care arrangements are unappealing to parents.
- Many parents say they **prefer the care of a relative or to take care of the children themselves.**
- Others site **concerns about the safety and quality of care**, including poorly trained staff, COVID concerns, and negative reputations.

In a few words, please describe why a formal child care arrangement is **inaccessible** to you? [OPEN END] (n=304)**

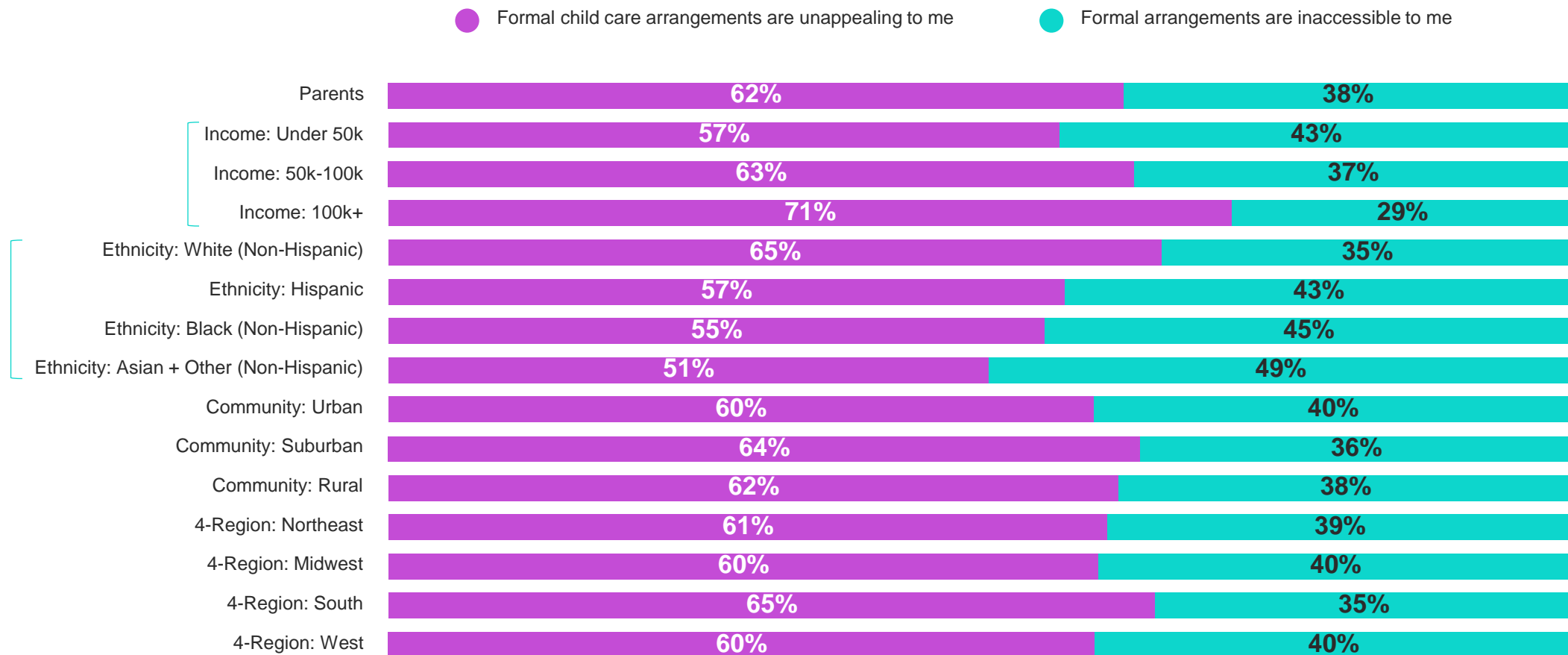
- Cost** is also a leading reason why formal arrangements are inaccessible to parents. Other reasons include:
- Distance to arrangement/inconvenient location
 - Incompatible hours
 - Lack of transportation
 - Ineligibility for programs
 - Long waitlists
 - Lack of information about options

*Among parents who say formal child care arrangements are unappealing to them. **Among parents who say formal child care arrangements are inaccessible to them.

BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

Low-income parents are more likely than middle and high-income parents to say formal arrangements are *inaccessible* to them. Additionally, non-white parents are more likely than white parents to say formal arrangements are inaccessible to them.

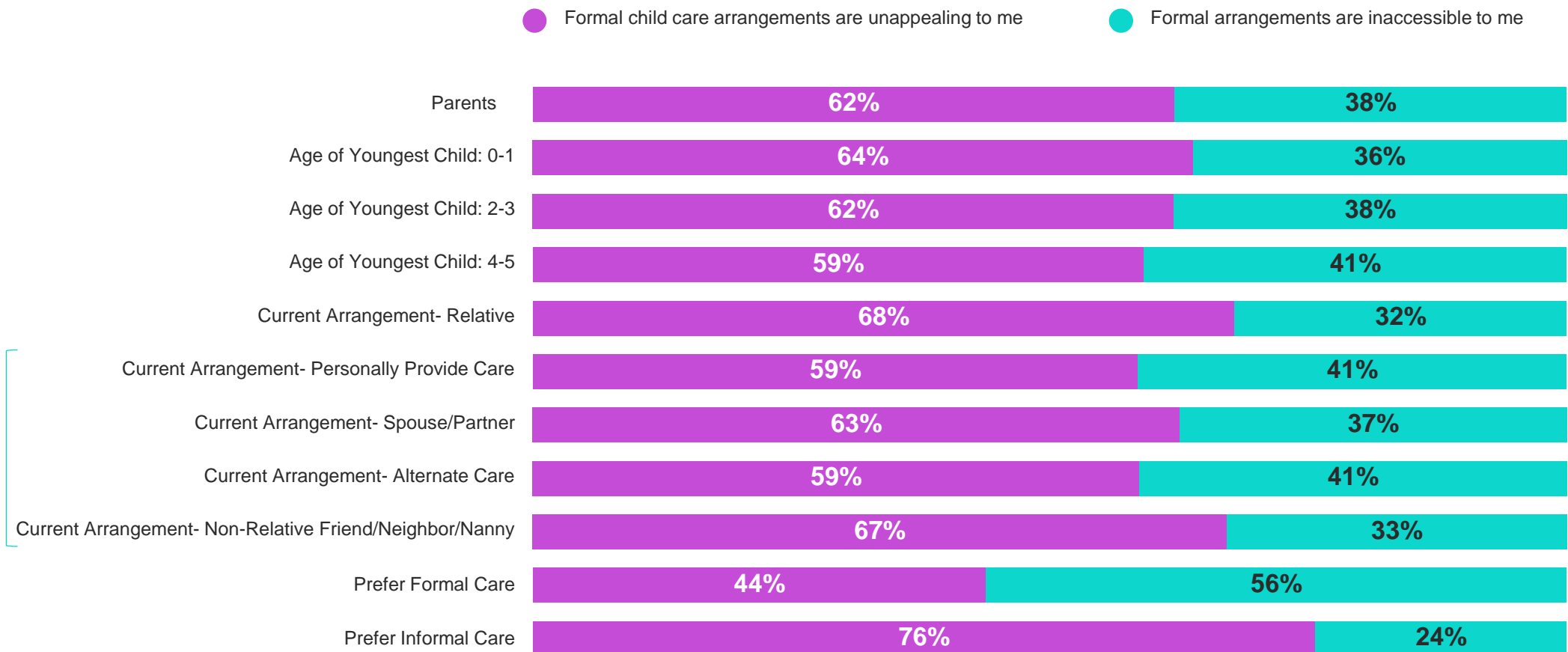
Which of the following statements best describes your point of view, even if neither is exactly correct?



BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

Parents who are currently using a relative or friend/neighbor/nanny for child care are *more likely* than those personally providing care with their spouse/partner to say formal child care arrangements are *unappealing to them*.

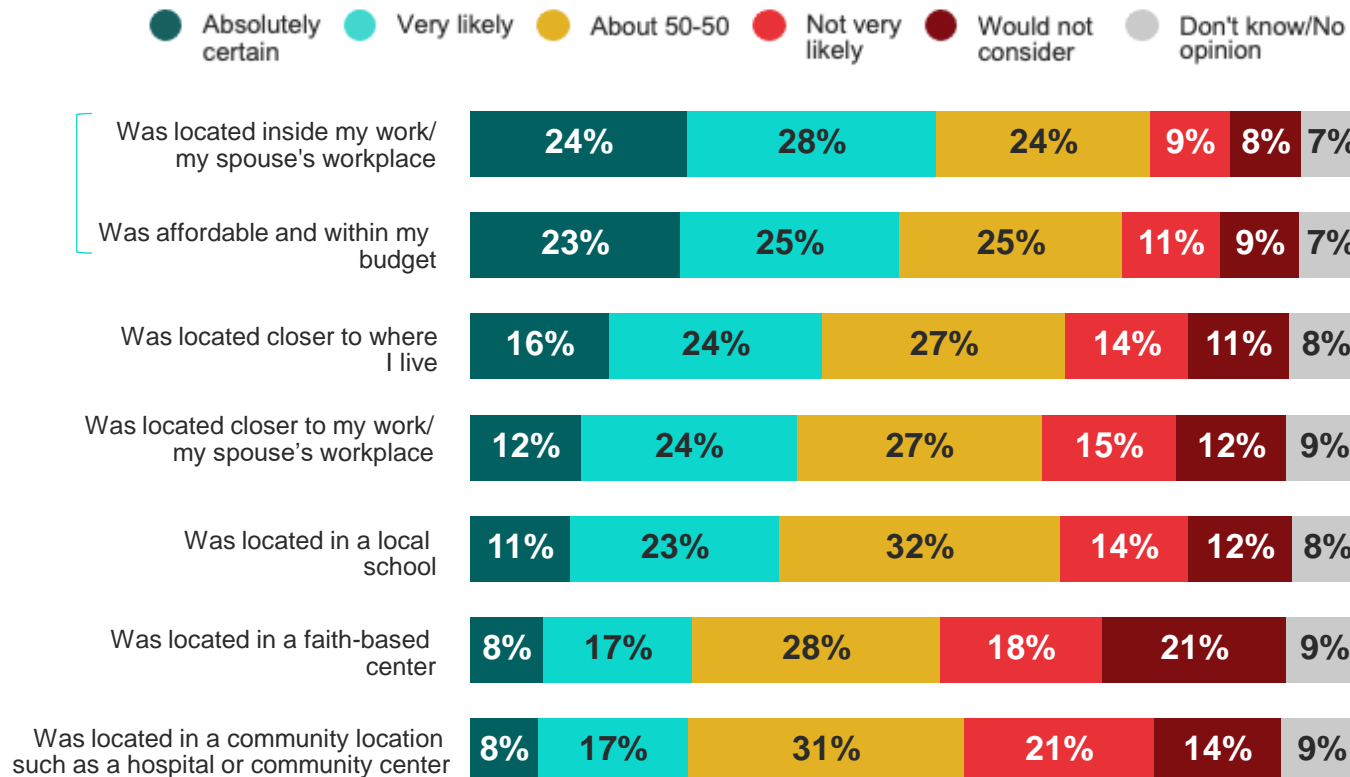
Which of the following statements best describes your point of view, even if neither is exactly correct?



BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

About half of parents say they are likely to consider sending their child to a formal child care arrangement if it was located inside their work or their spouse’s workplace (52%) or if it was affordable and within their budget (48%).

If a formal child care option had the following attributes, how likely, if at all, would you be to consider sending your child to a formal child care arrangement?



- **Democrats are more likely than independents and Republicans** to say they would consider sending their child to a formal child care arrangement if it was affordable and within their budget (53%), located closer to where they live (46%), located closer to their workplace or their spouse’s workplace (45%) or located in a school (41%). [See appendix slide 58.](#)
- **Rural parents** are especially likely to say they would consider sending their child to a formal child care arrangement if the arrangement was located in a faith-based center (32%) while **urban parents** say they would consider it if the arrangement was located in a community location (31%). [See appendix slide 58.](#)
- **Parents in the Northeast region** are especially likely to say they would consider sending their child to a formal child care arrangement if it was affordable and within their budget (52%), located closer to where they live (43%), located closer to their workplace or their spouse’s workplace (43%) or located in a local school (39%). [See appendix slide 59.](#)

AGENDA

REASONS FOR INFORMAL
CHILD CARE

CIRCUMSTANCES FOR
INFORMAL CHILD CARE

FLEXIBILITY OF
INFORMAL CHILD CARE

INTEREST IN FORMAL
CHILD CARE

BARRIERS TO FORMAL
CHILD CARE

RESPONSIBILITY OF
CHILD CARE

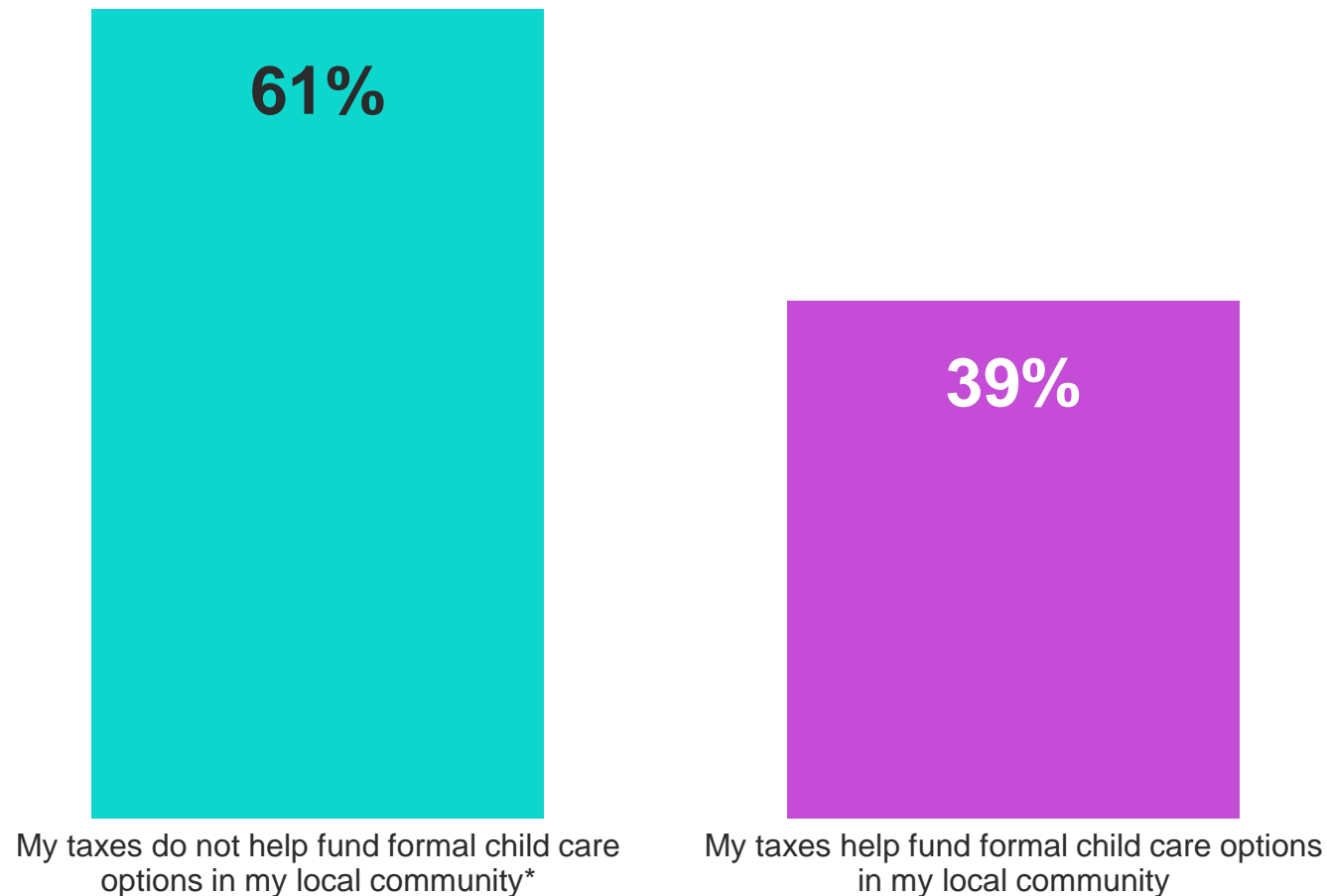
APPENDIX



RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILD CARE

Three in five parents (61%) say their taxes do not help fund formal child care options in their community.

Which of the following best describes your perspective, even if neither is exactly correct?



- Nearly half of **urban parents (49%)** say their taxes help fund formal child care options in their local community, compared to suburban (37%) and rural (34%) adults. *See appendix slide 61.*
- **Parents in the Northeast (48%)** are also especially likely to say their taxes help fund formal child care options in their local community, compared to parents in the Midwest (39%), South (35%) and West (39%) regions. *See appendix slide 61.*
- **Democrats (42%)** are more likely than **Republicans (37%)** to say their taxes help fund formal child care options in their local community. *See appendix slide 61.*

* Due to a grammatical error, the response text read "My taxes do not help formal fund child care options..."

RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILD CARE

A strong majority of parents say parents (86%) are responsible for financing child care, but are divided on how responsible state (52%) and local (50%) governments are for financing.

How responsible, if at all, are each of the following for financing child care?

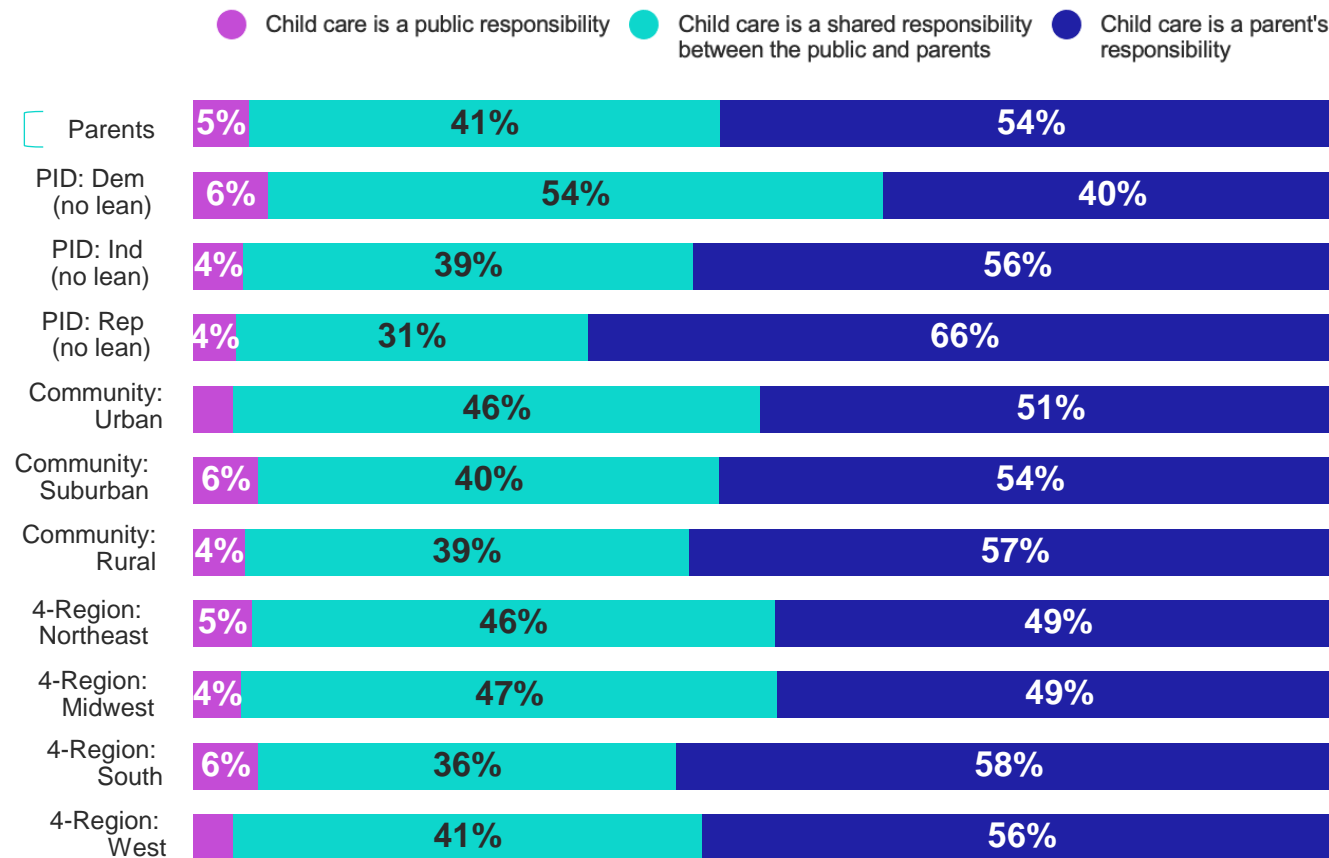
% Total Responsible	Parents	State government	Local government	Employers	Businesses
Parents	86%	52%	50%	38%	31%
PID: Dem	85%	63%	61%	45%	34%
PID: Ind	84%	49%	48%	39%	30%
PID: Rep	88%	45%	41%	31%	29%
Community: Urban	83%	59%	57%	43%	39%
Community: Suburban	87%	52%	50%	40%	31%
Community: Rural	87%	45%	43%	33%	25%
4-Region: Northeast	84%	52%	52%	40%	32%
4-Region: Midwest	86%	54%	52%	40%	29%
4-Region: South	86%	51%	47%	37%	32%
4-Region: West	85%	53%	51%	38%	32%

- Of the options tested, parents are least likely to say **employers (38%)** and **businesses (31%)** are responsible for financing child care. *See appendix slide 62.*
- **Democrat parents** are especially likely to say **state (63%)** and **local (61%) governments** are responsible for financing child care compared to independent and Republican parents.
- **Urban parents** are especially likely to say **state (59%)** and **local (57%) governments** are responsible for financing child care compared to independent and Republican parents.
- **Rural parents** are less likely than urban and suburban parents to say **employers (33%)** and **businesses (25%)** are responsible for financing child care.
- Parents that are **administrative workers, office professionals, and executive/senior level managers** are especially likely to say all of the tested entities are responsible for financing child care compared to parents in other industries. *See appendix slides 62 and 63.*

RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILD CARE

Half of parents (54%) say child care is a parent’s responsibility, but two in five (41%) say it is a shared responsibility between the public and parents. Perspectives vary by demographic.

Which of the following best describes your perspective, even if none are exactly correct?



- **Republican parents (66%)** are especially likely to say child care is a parent’s responsibility compared to independent (56%) and Democrat (40%) parents.
- **Rural parents (57%)** are more likely than suburban (54%) and urban (51%) parents to say child care is a parent’s responsibility compared to a shared responsibility between the public and parents.
- Over half of parents in the **South (58%)** and **West (56%)** regions say child care is a parent’s responsibility.
- **Service workers (38%)** and **trade and skilled workers (29%)** are less likely than parents in other industries to say child care is a shared responsibility.

AGENDA

REASONS FOR INFORMAL
CHILD CARE

CIRCUMSTANCES FOR
INFORMAL CHILD CARE

FLEXIBILITY OF
INFORMAL CHILD CARE

INTEREST IN FORMAL
CHILD CARE

BARRIERS TO FORMAL
CHILD CARE

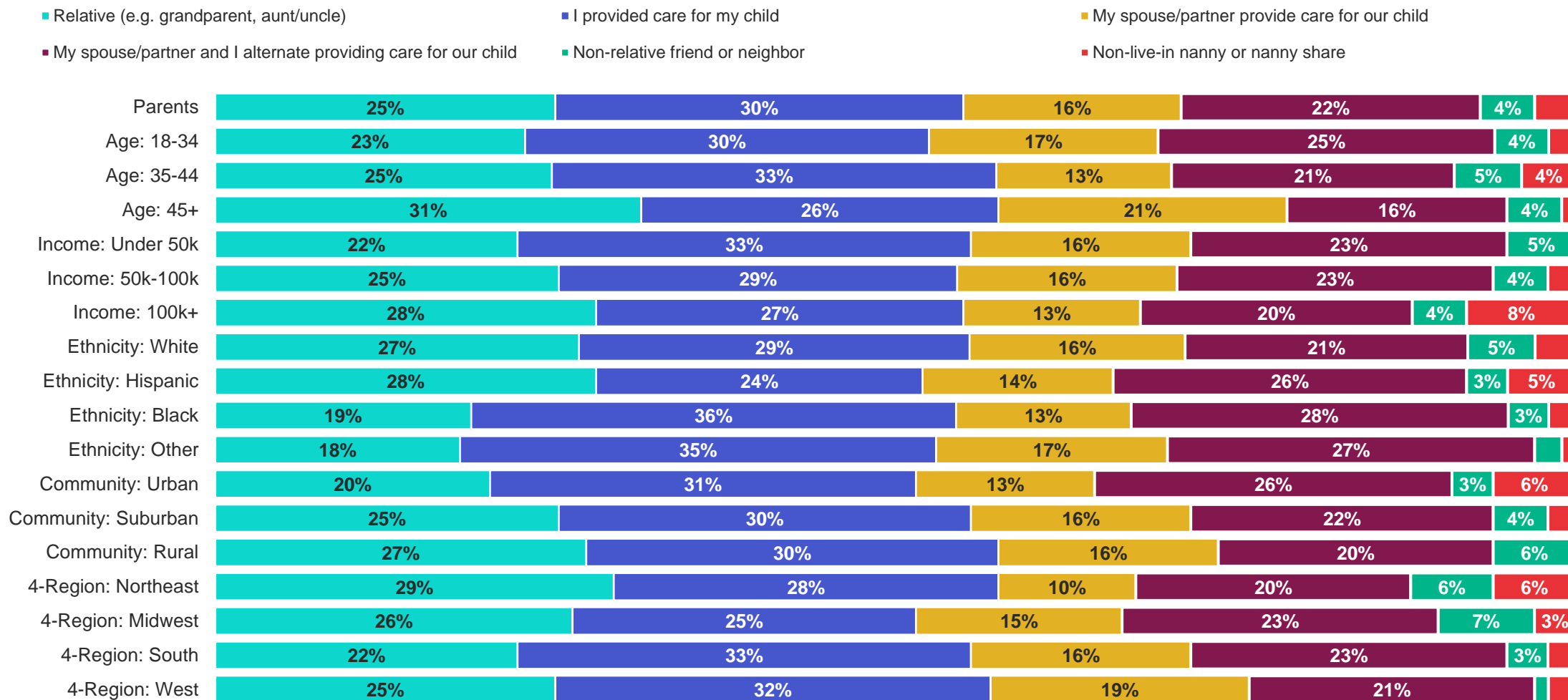
RESPONSIBILITY OF
CHILD CARE

APPENDIX



APPENDIX: REASONS FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Which of the following best describes the current primary child care arrangement for your youngest child?

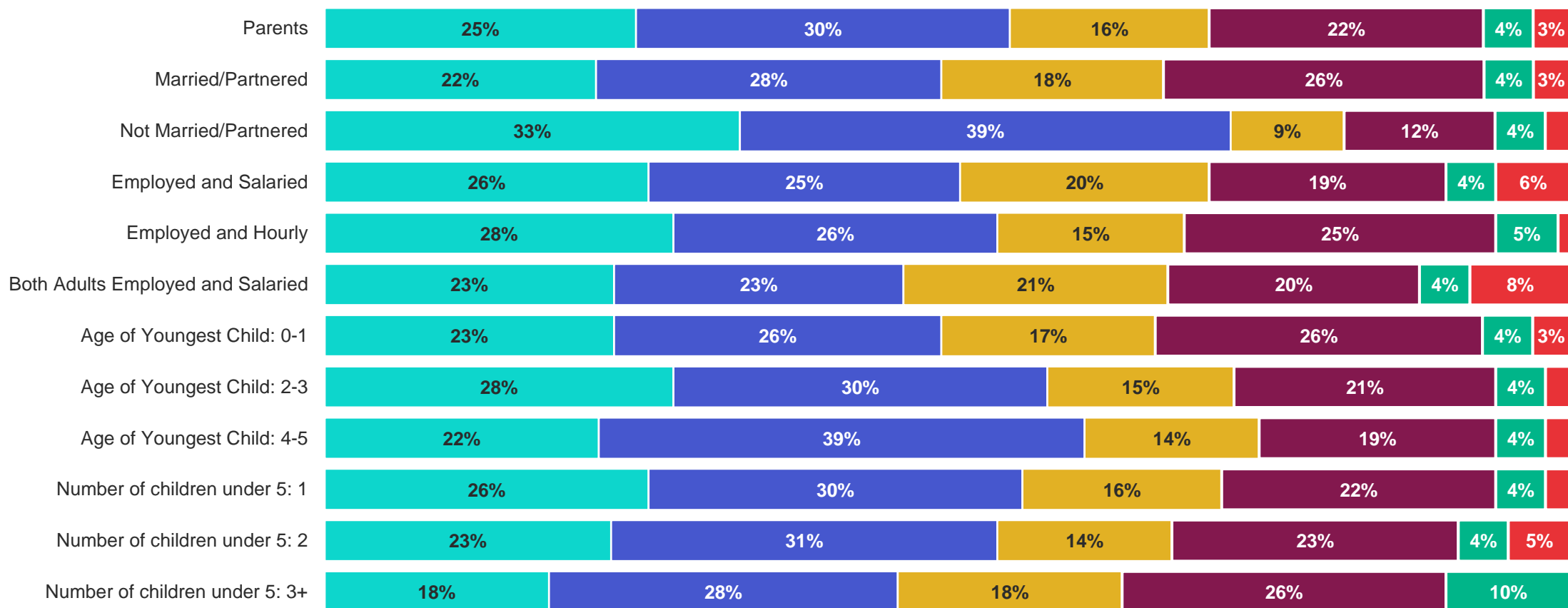


*Includes parents who describe their race or background as American Indian, Asian American, or other.

APPENDIX: REASONS FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Which of the following best describes the current primary child care arrangement for your youngest child?

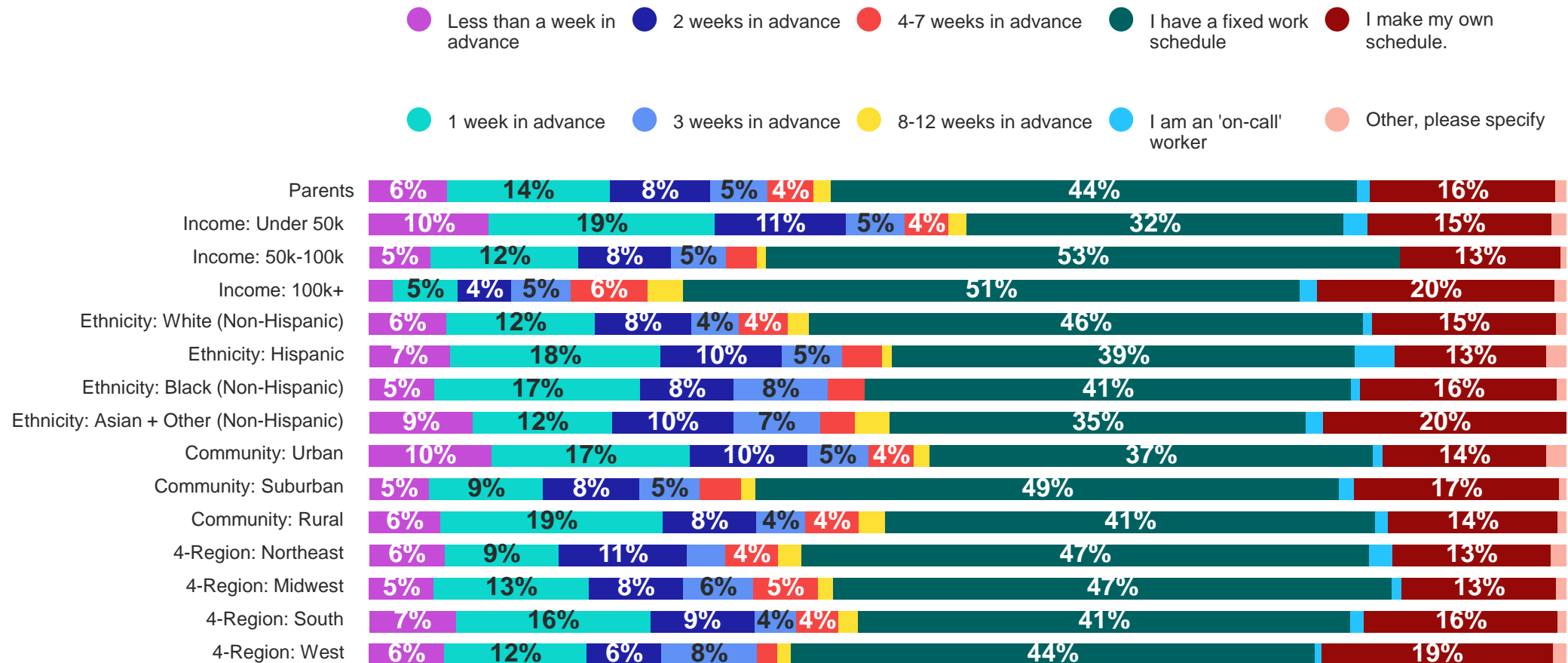
- Relative (e.g. grandparent, aunt/uncle)
- I provided care for my child
- My spouse/partner provide care for our child
- My spouse/partner and I alternate providing care for our child
- Non-relative friend or neighbor
- Non-live-in nanny or nanny share



*Includes working moms who describe their race or background as American Indian, Asian American, or other.

APPENDIX: CIRCUMSTANCES FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Thinking about your work hours, how far in advance are you aware of your work schedule, or do you have a fixed work schedule?



APPENDIX: CIRCUMSTANCES FOR INFORMAL CHILD CARE

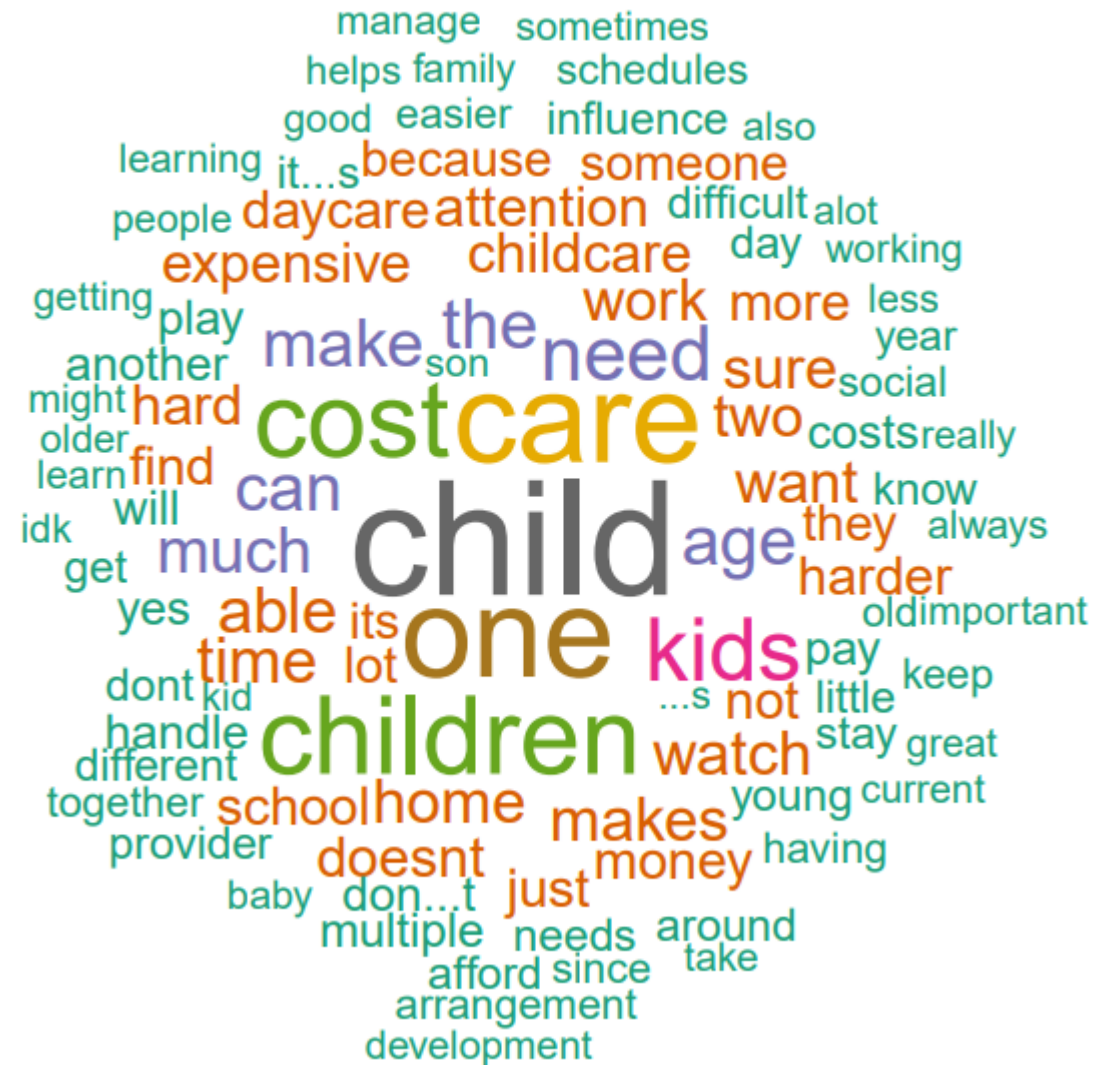
Which of the following statements, if any, apply to you? Please select all that apply.

% Selected	Parents	Community: Urban	Community: Suburban	Community: Rural	Employed and Salaried	Employed and Hourly
I moved closer to my family member(s) so that they could help provide care for my child.	17%	19%	19%	14%	20%	16%
My family member(s) moved closer to me so that they could help provide care for my child.	8% 40%*	11% 46%	6% 40%	6% 36%	10% 47%	6% 39%
My family member(s) changed their work arrangement so they could help provide for my child.	17%	20%	17%	17%	21%	19%
None of the above	60%	54%	60%	64%	53%	61%

*Net selected de-duplicates multiple selections

How does having more than one child ages 0-5 influence your current child care arrangement?

AMONG PARENTS WHO SAY HAVING MORE THAN ONE CHILD INFLUENCES THEIR CURRENT CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT, n=230



APPENDIX: FLEXIBILITY OF INFORMAL CHILD CARE

In a typical week, does your family need a child care arrangement for your children under 5 so that you (or both you and your spouse/partner) can work during the following hours?

% Selected	Parents	Income			Community		
		Income: Under 50k	Income: 50k-100k	Income: 100k+	Community: Urban	Community: Suburban	Community: Rural
During traditional work hours (8am-6pm)	64%	62%	63%	68%	66%	63%	64%
Outside of traditional work hours (6pm-8am)	23%	26%	21%	20%	28%	21%	23%
During the weekends (Saturday & Sunday)	26%	32%	22%	23%	31%	24%	26%

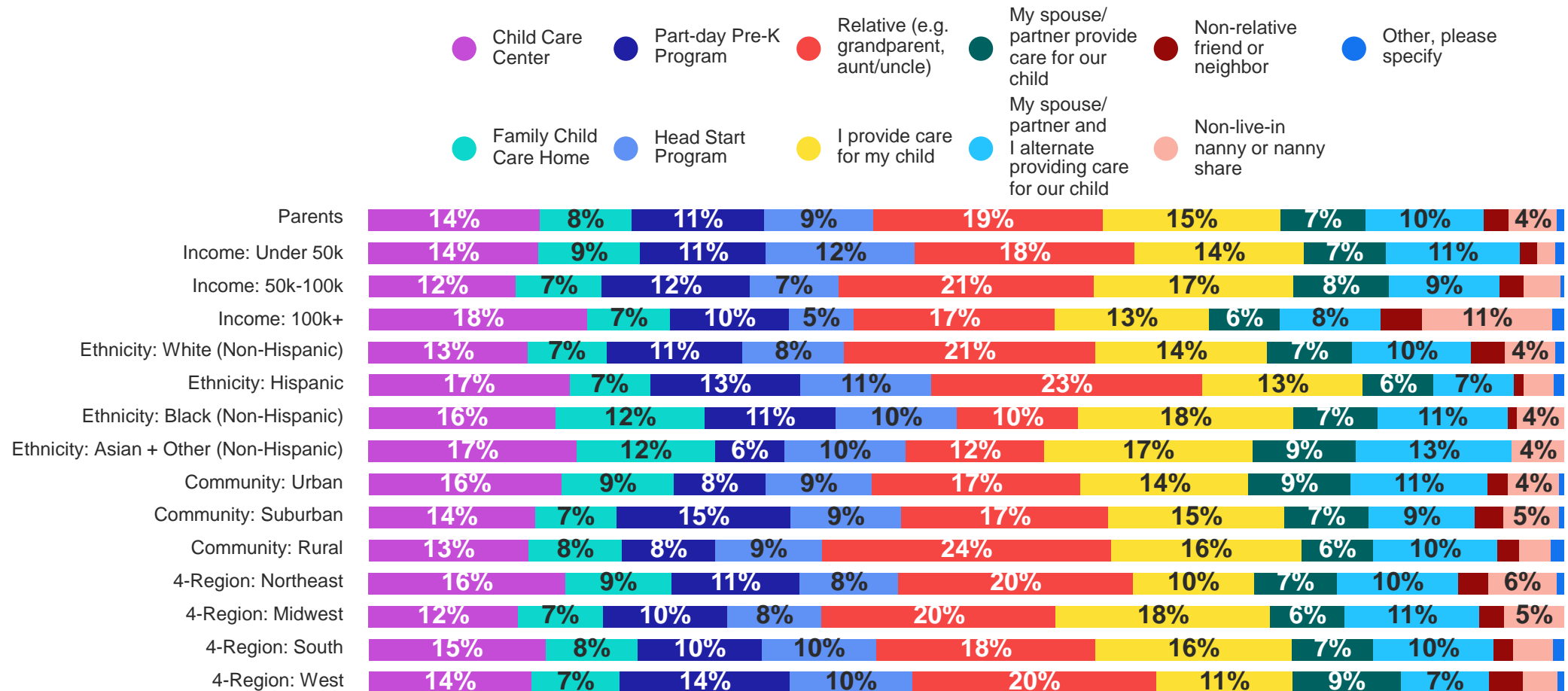
APPENDIX: FLEXIBILITY OF INFORMAL CHILD CARE

In a typical week, does your family need a child care arrangement for your children under 5 so that you (or both you and your spouse/partner) can work during the following hours?

% Selected	Parents	Employed and Salaried	Employed and Hourly	Service Worker, Retail Sales, Laborers and Helpers	Trade and Skilled Workers	Administrative Workers, Office Professionals, and Executive/Senior Level Managers	Health Care and Medical Professionals, Lab Technicians, and Pharmacists	Other Professionals
During traditional work hours (8am-6pm)	64%	70%	64%	60%	65%	65%	68%	64%
Outside of traditional work hours (6pm-8am)	23%	19%	27%	25%	32%	16%	28%	19%
During the weekends (Saturday & Sunday)	26%	20%	30%	37%	32%	17%	28%	19%

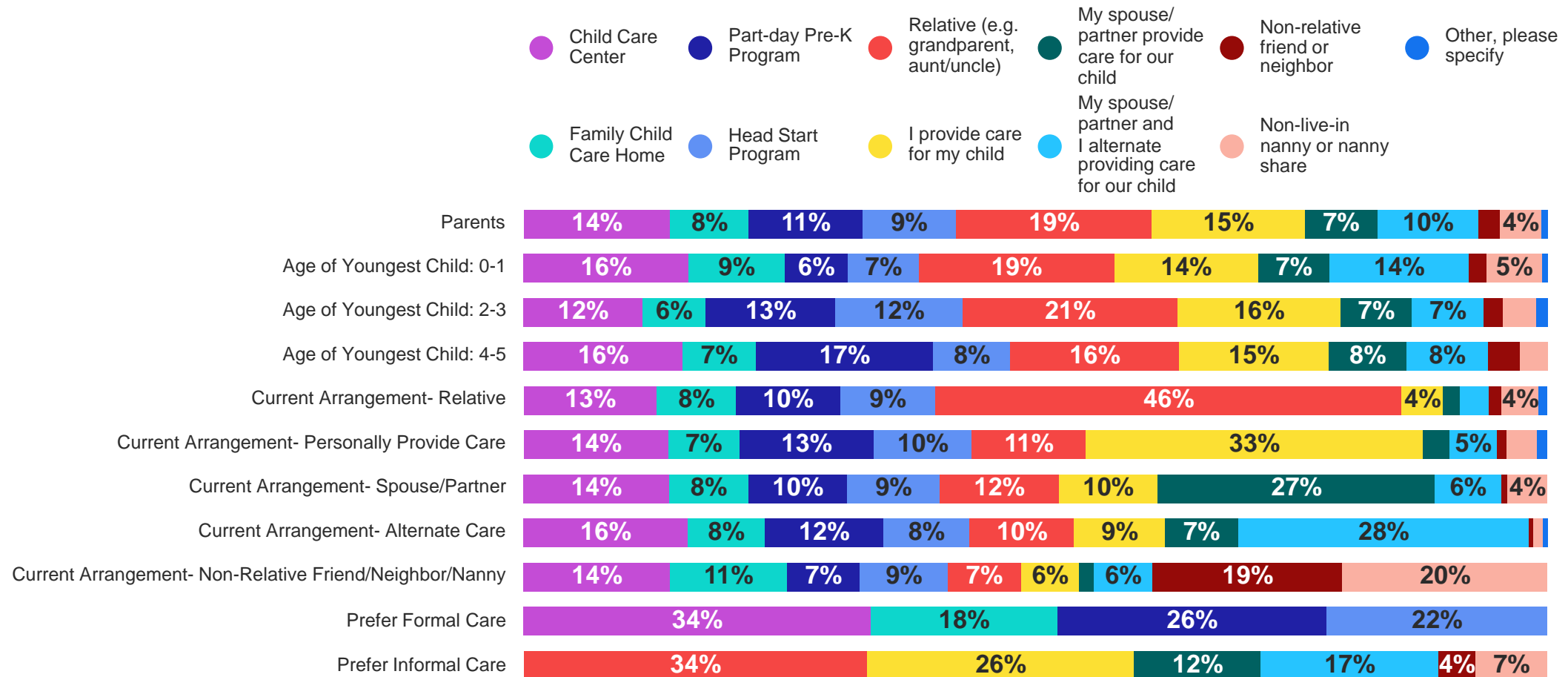
APPENDIX: INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

If child care were free and in a convenient location for your family, what type of child care arrangement would you most prefer for your youngest child?



APPENDIX: INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

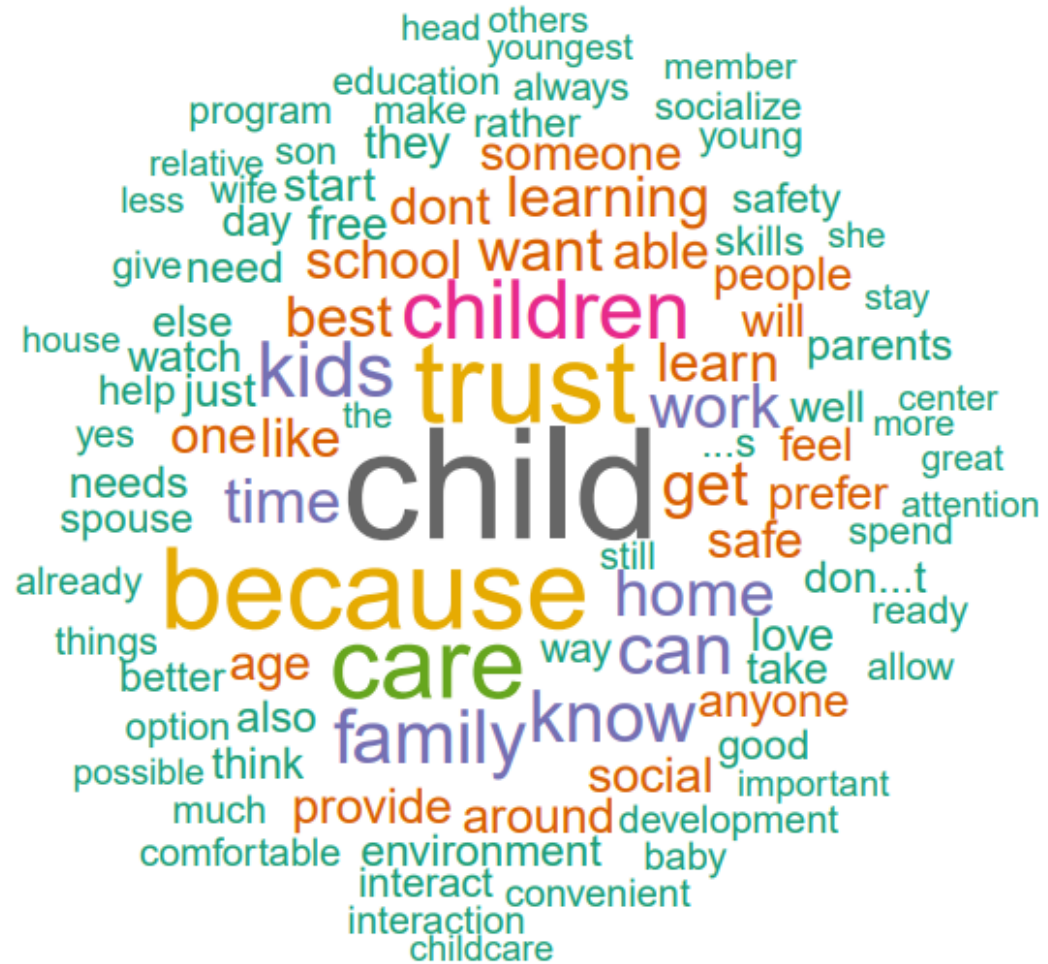
If child care were free and in a convenient location for your family, what type of child care arrangement would you most prefer for your youngest child?



APPENDIX: INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

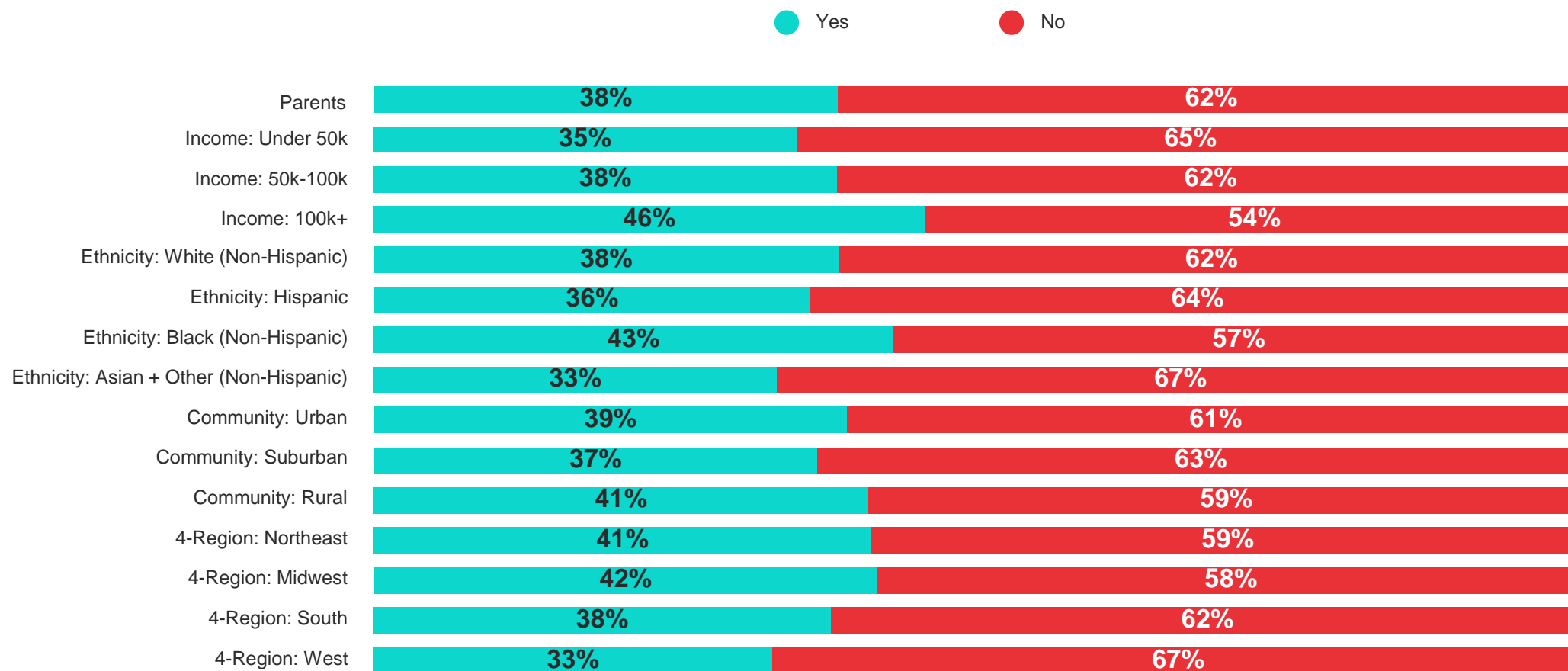
In a short sentence, why would
[SELECTED ARRANGEMENT]*
be your preferred child care
arrangement for your youngest child
if child care were free and in a
convenient location?

**Preferred child care arrangement indicated in the previous question piped in here.*



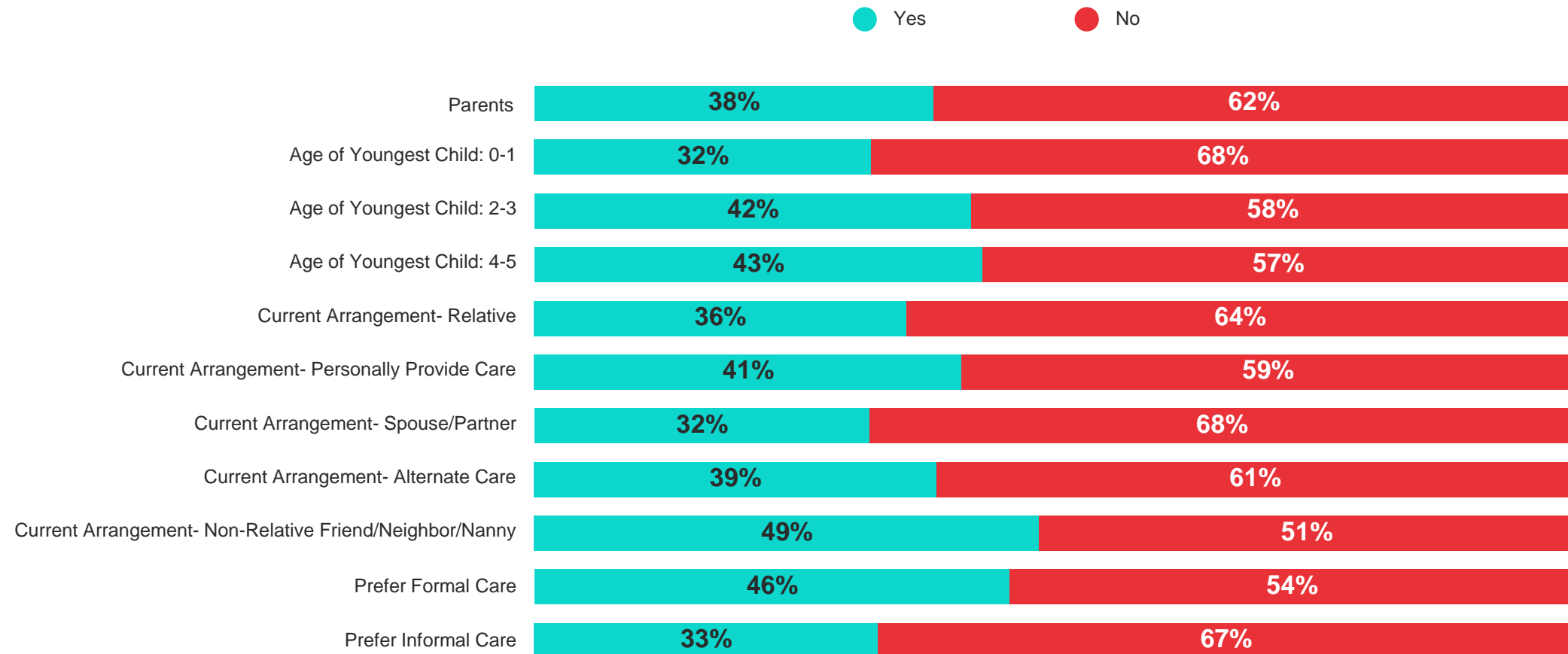
APPENDIX: INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

Have you used a formal child care arrangement before?



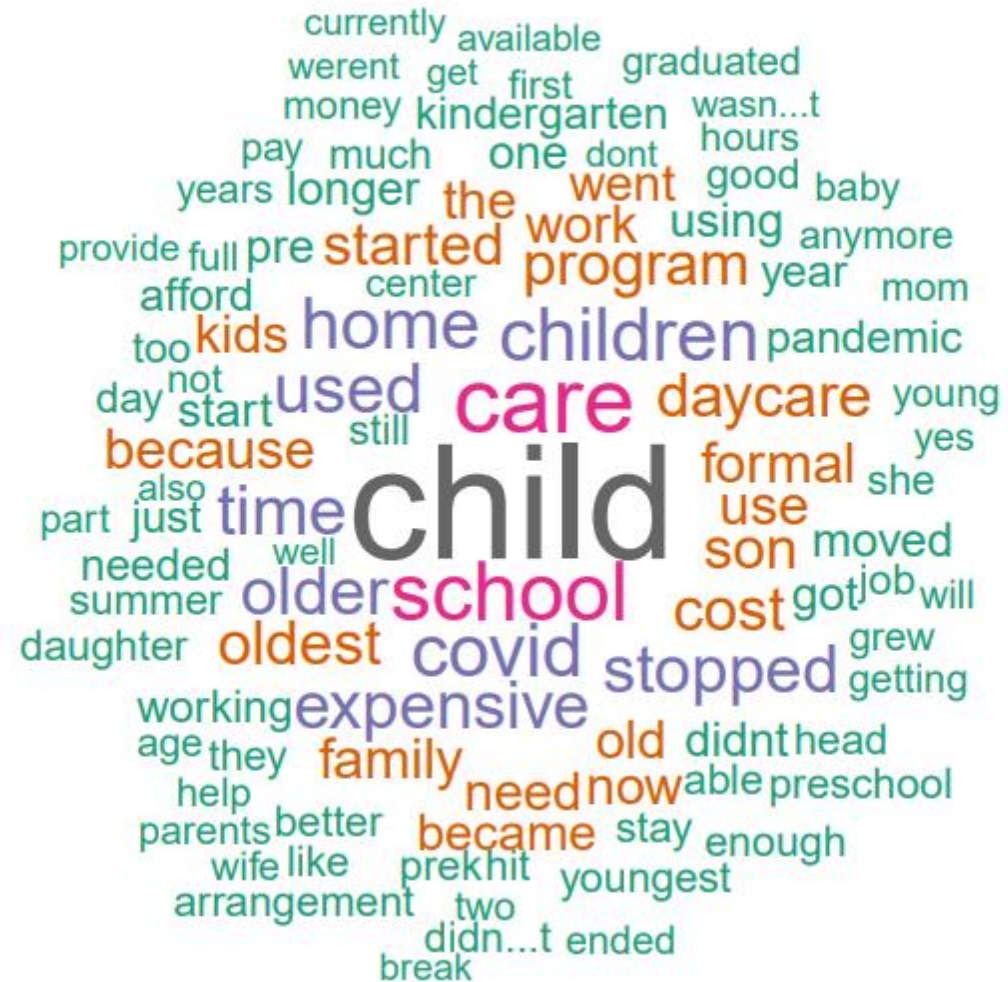
APPENDIX: INTEREST IN FORMAL CARE

Have you used a formal child care arrangement before?

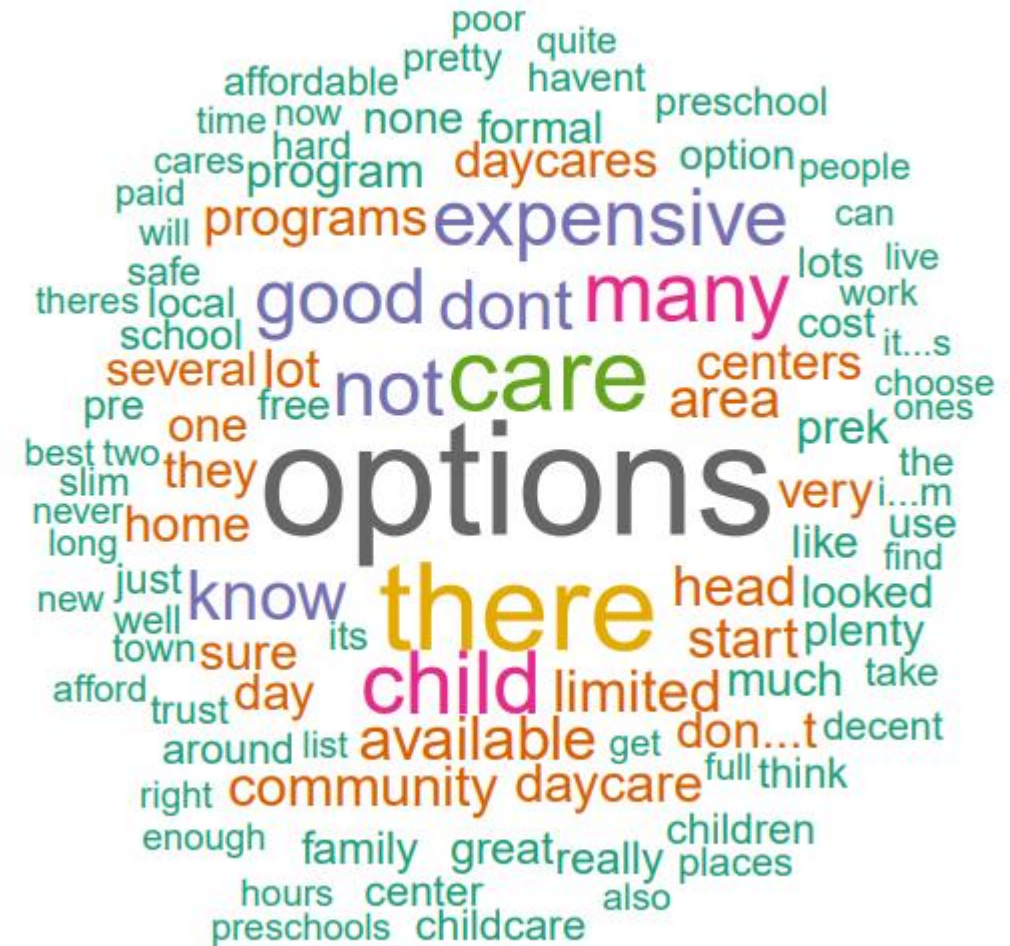


In a few words, please describe why you stopped using a formal child care arrangement?

AMONG PARENTS WHO USED A FORMAL CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT BEFORE, n=384



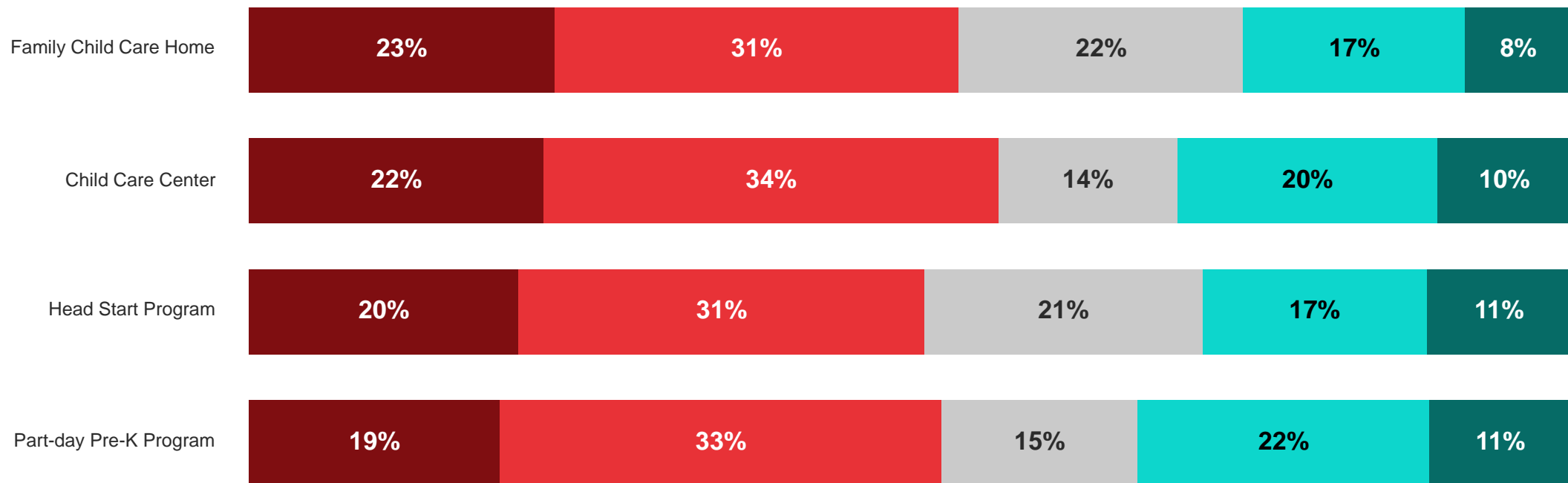
How would you describe your options for formal child care in your local community?



APPENDIX: BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

In your point of view, how limited or unlimited are each of the following child care options in your local community?

● Very limited
 ● Somewhat limited
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Somewhat unlimited
 ● Very unlimited



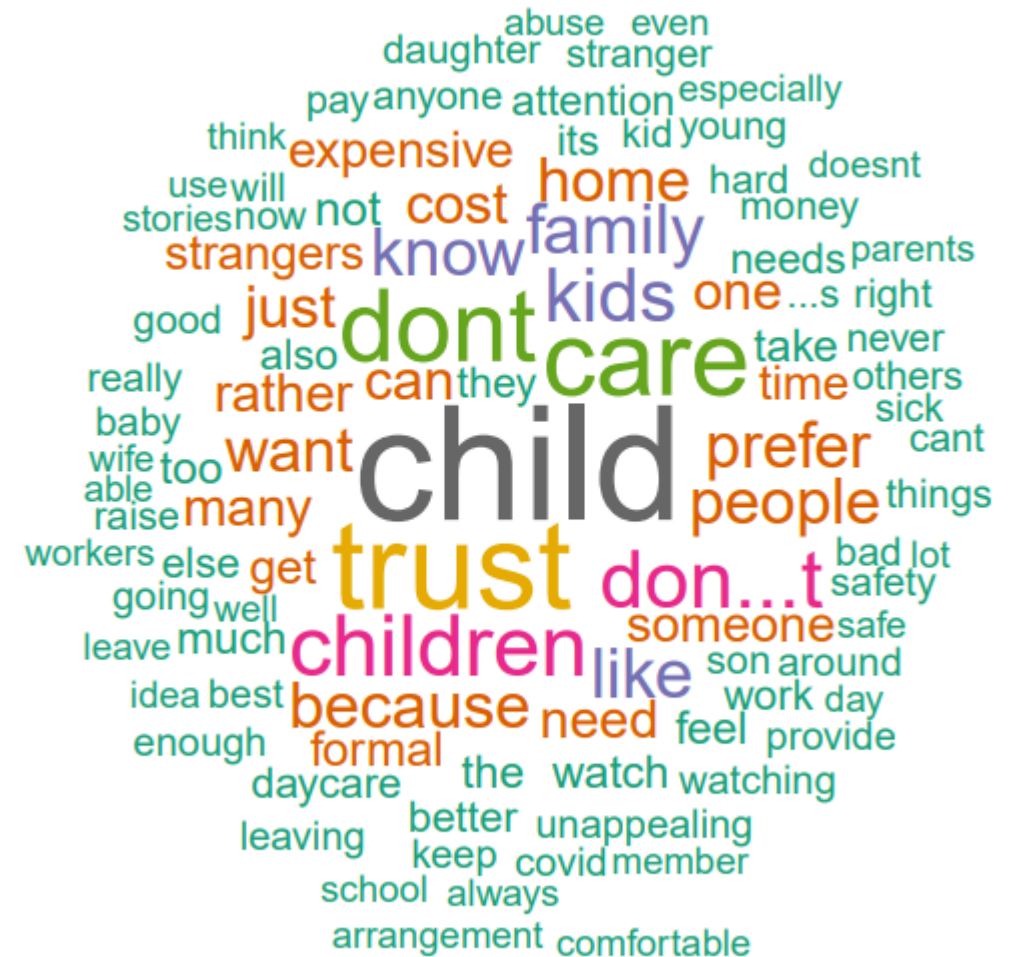
In a few words, please describe why a formal child care arrangement is **inaccessible** to you?

AMONG PARENTS WHO THINK FORMAL CHILD CARE IS INACCESSIBLE, n= 379



In a few words, please describe why a formal child care arrangement is **unappealing** to you?

AMONG PARENTS WHO THINK FORMAL CHILD CARE IS UNAPPEALING, n=621



APPENDIX: BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

If a formal child care option had the following attributes, how likely, if at all, would you be to consider sending your child to a formal child care arrangement?

% Total Likely	Parents with Young Children	PID: Dem (no lean)	PID: Ind (no lean)	PID: Rep (no lean)	Community: Urban	Community: Suburban	Community: Rural
Was affordable and within my budget	48%	53%	46%	46%	49%	51%	42%
Was located in a community location such as a hospital or community center	24%	27%	23%	25%	31%	23%	21%
Was located in a faith-based center	25%	25%	19%	32%	25%	24%	26%
Was located in a local school	35%	41%	32%	32%	37%	35%	32%
Was located closer to my work/my spouse's workplace	37%	45%	31%	35%	43%	37%	30%
Was located closer to where I live	39%	46%	37%	36%	43%	43%	29%
Was located inside my work/my spouse's workplace	52%	55%	50%	53%	53%	54%	47%

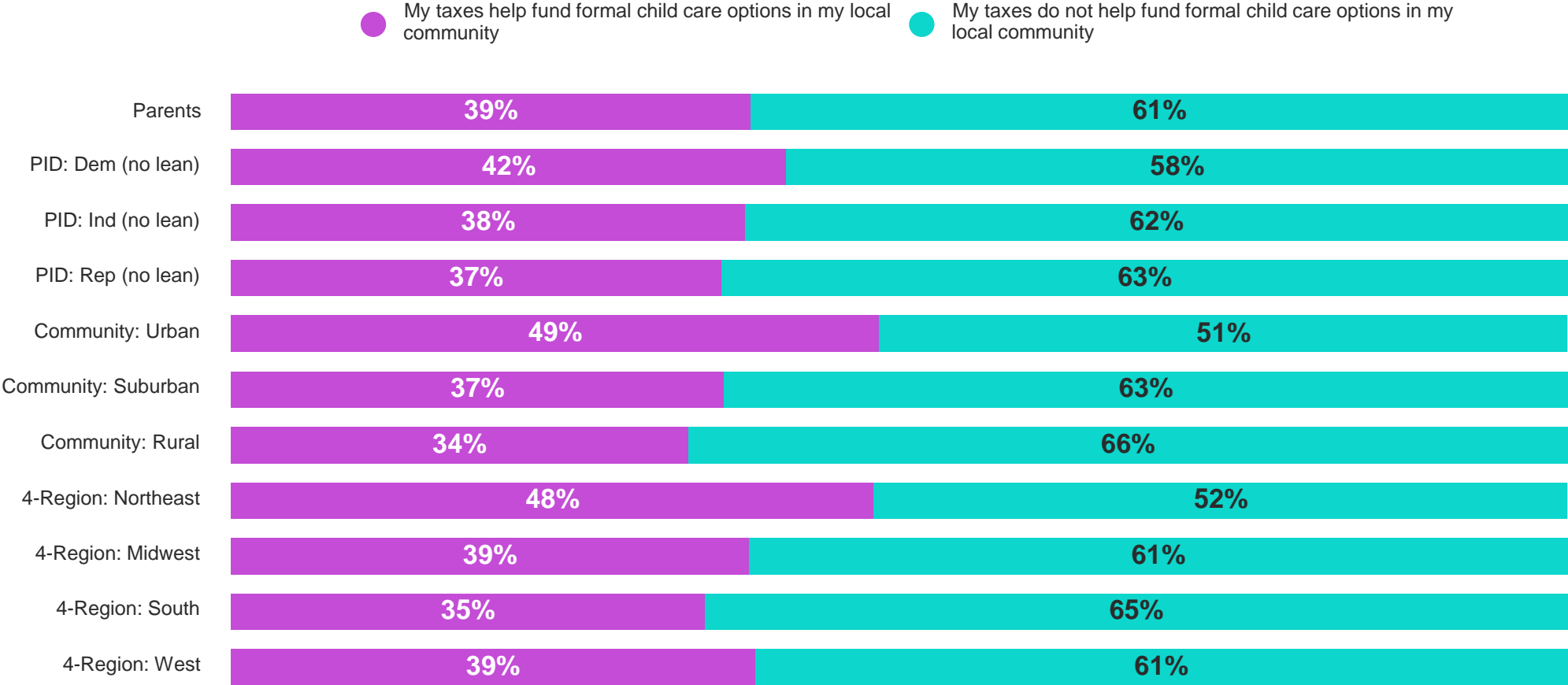
APPENDIX: BARRIERS TO FORMAL CHILD CARE

If a formal child care option had the following attributes, how likely, if at all, would you be to consider sending your child to a formal child care arrangement?

% Total Likely	Parents with Young Children	4-Region: Northeast	4-Region: Midwest	4-Region: South	4-Region: West
Was affordable and within my budget	48%	52%	48%	47%	47%
Was located in a community location such as a hospital or community center	24%	25%	23%	25%	24%
Was located in a faith-based center	25%	18%	24%	29%	22%
Was located in a local school	35%	39%	32%	35%	34%
Was located closer to my work/my spouse's workplace	37%	43%	36%	34%	39%
Was located closer to where I live	39%	43%	41%	37%	39%
Was located inside my work/my spouse's workplace	52%	55%	51%	52%	52%

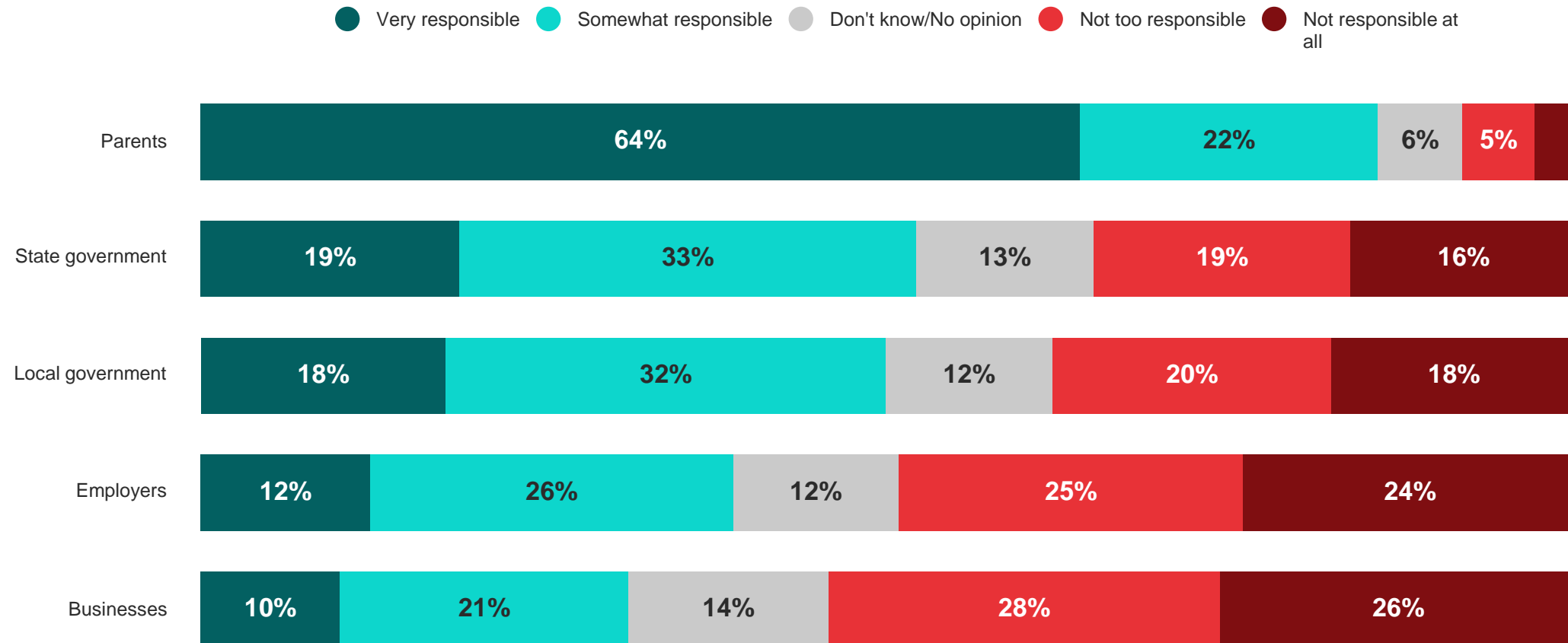
APPENDIX: RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILD CARE

Which of the following best describes your perspective, even if neither is exactly correct?



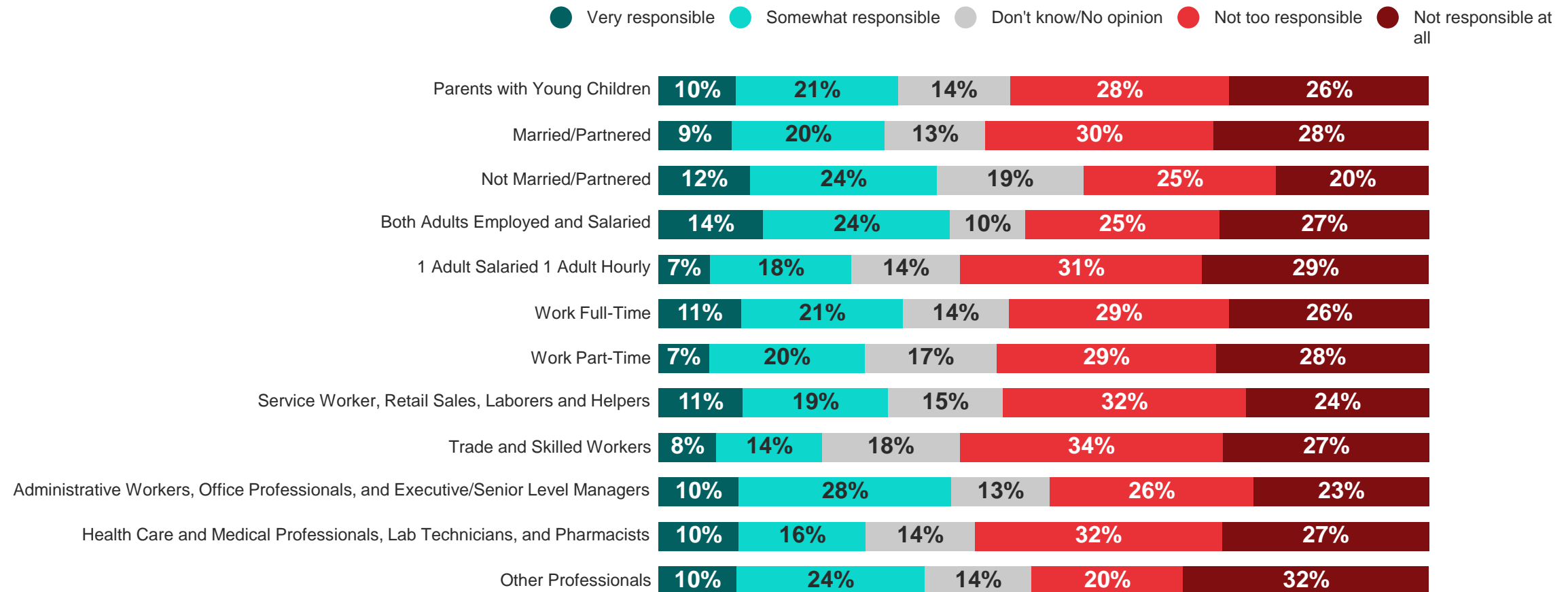
APPENDIX: RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILD CARE

How responsible, if at all, are each of the following for financing child care?

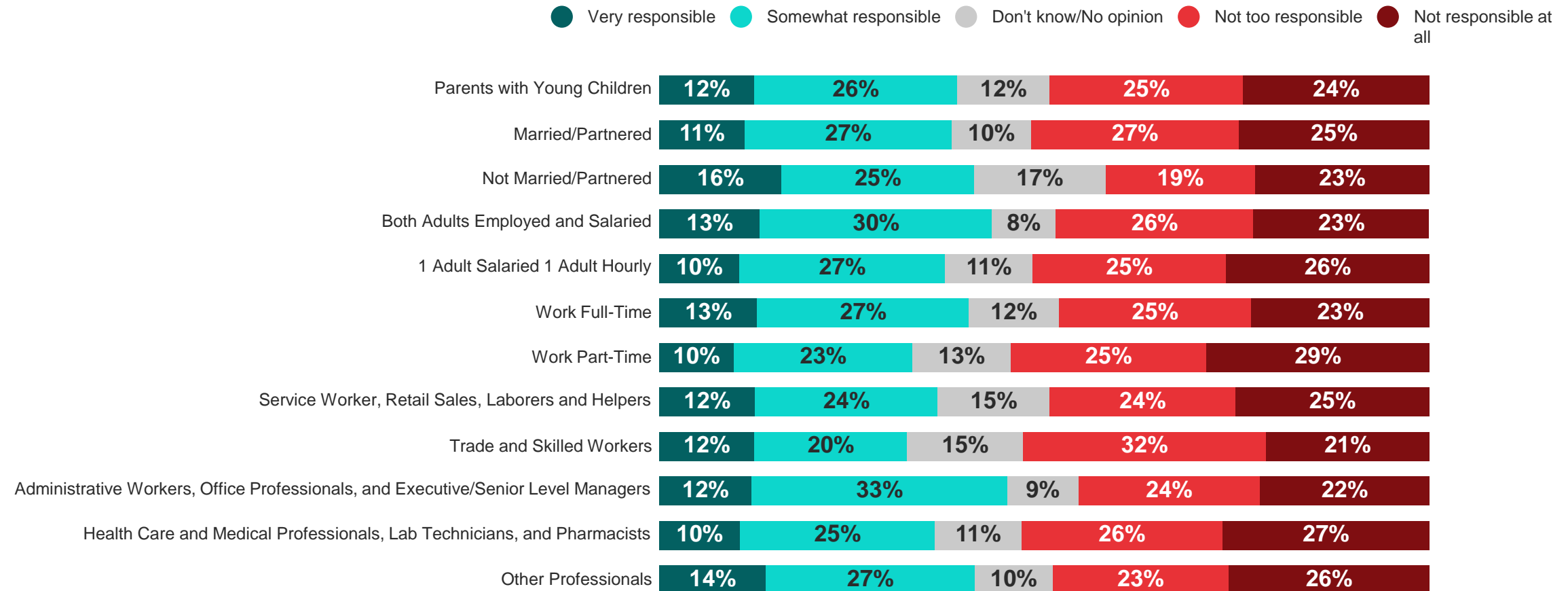


APPENDIX: RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILD CARE

How responsible, if at all, are each of the following for financing child care?



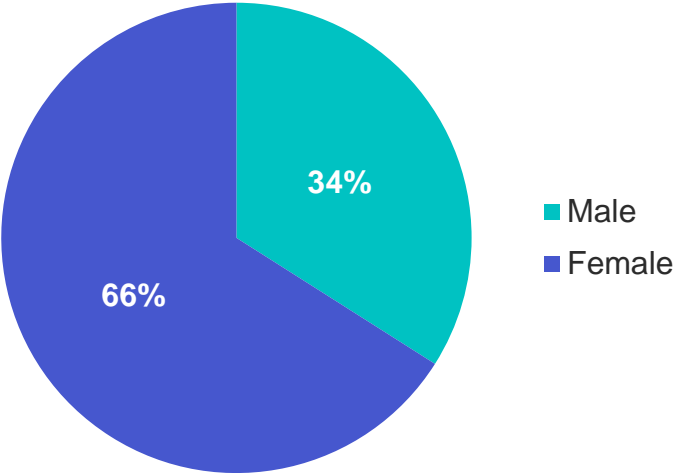
How responsible, if at all, are each of the following for financing child care?



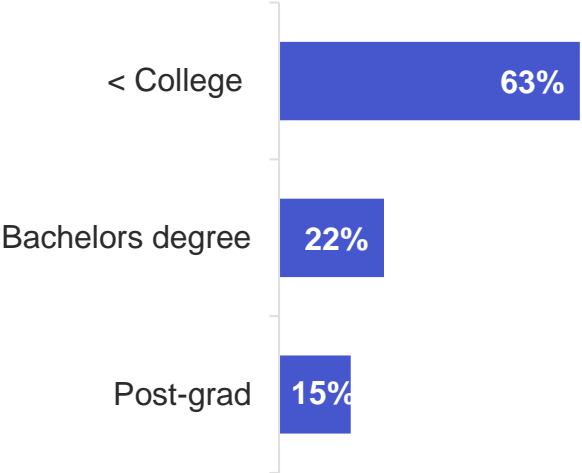
RESPONDENT PROFILE

Demographic Information

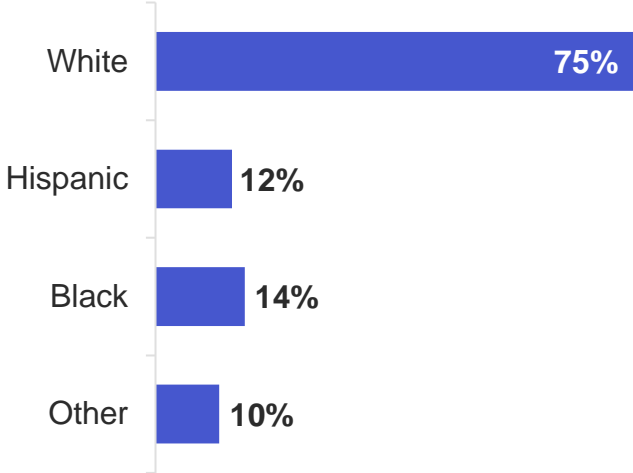
Gender



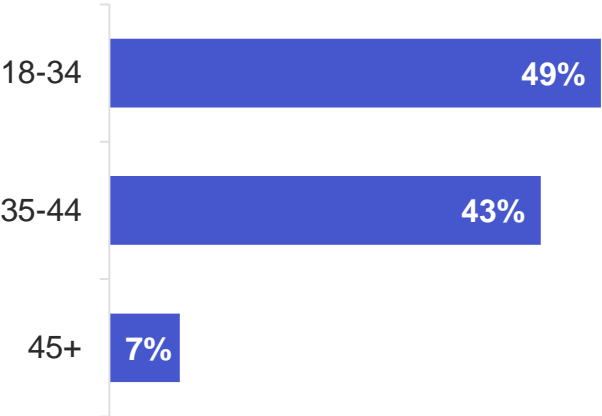
Education



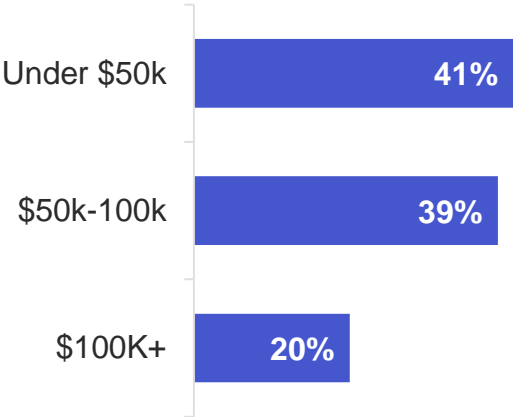
Ethnicity



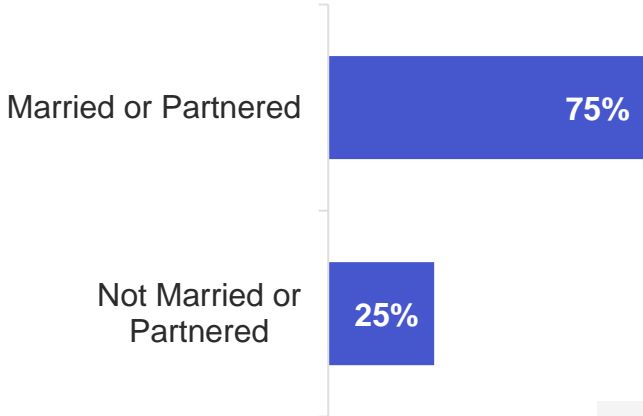
Age



Income



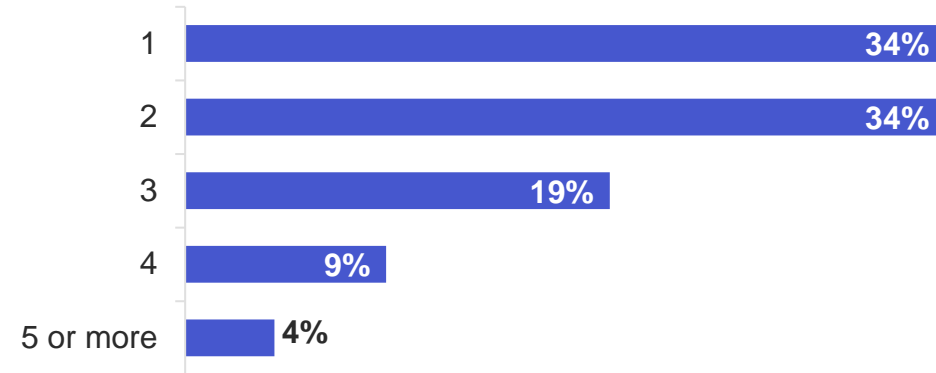
Marital Status



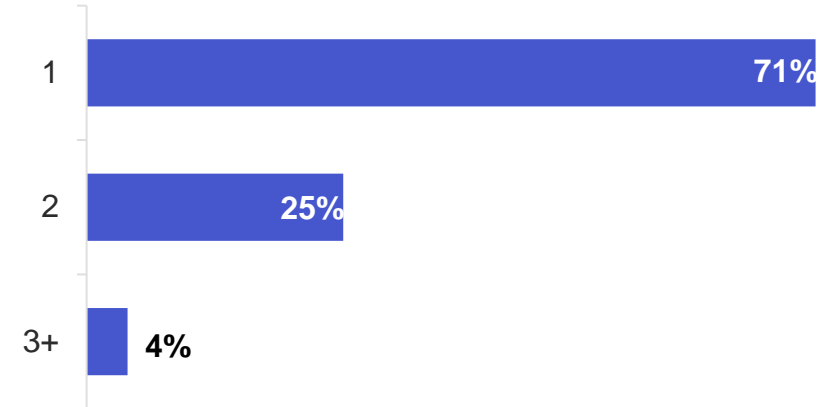
RESPONDENT PROFILE

Family Demographics

How many children do you have?

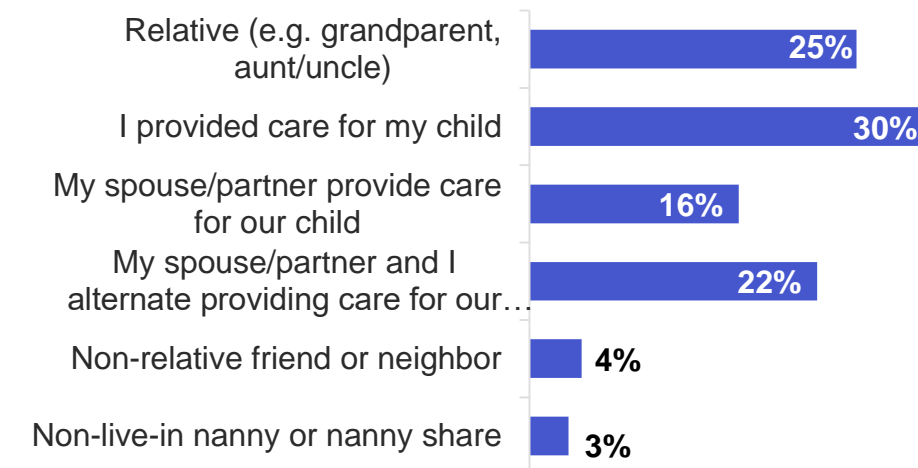


Number of children under 5

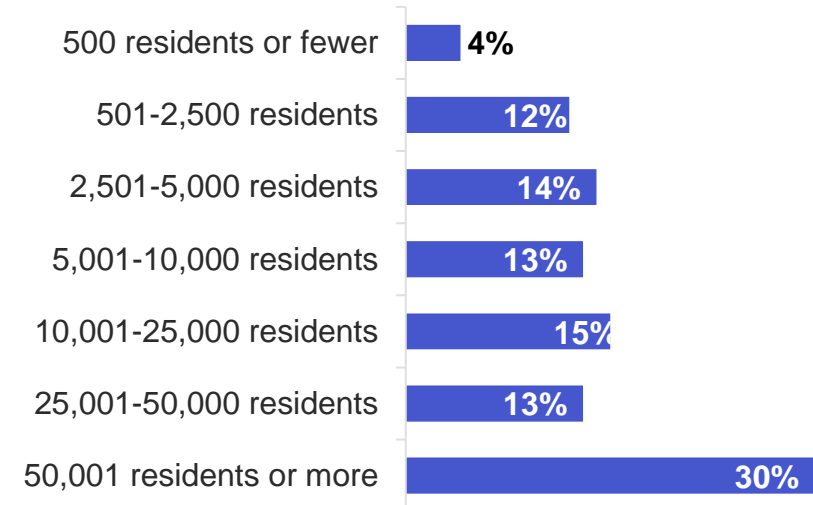


Community Demographics

Which of the following best describes the current primary child care arrangement for your youngest child?



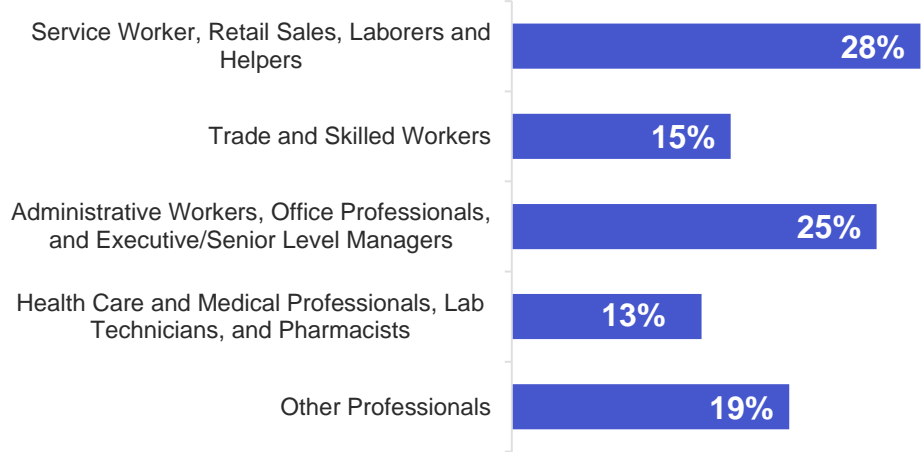
What is the approximate population in your town?



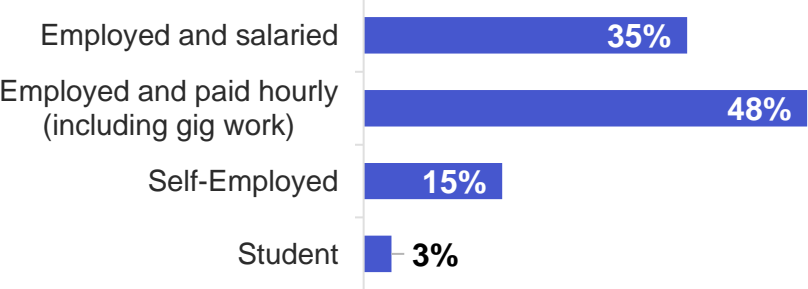
RESPONDENT PROFILE

Employment Demographics

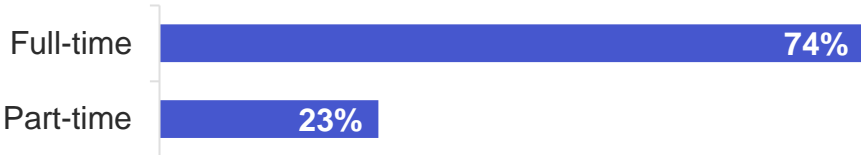
Which of the following categories best describes your current job?



How would you describe your present employment situation?

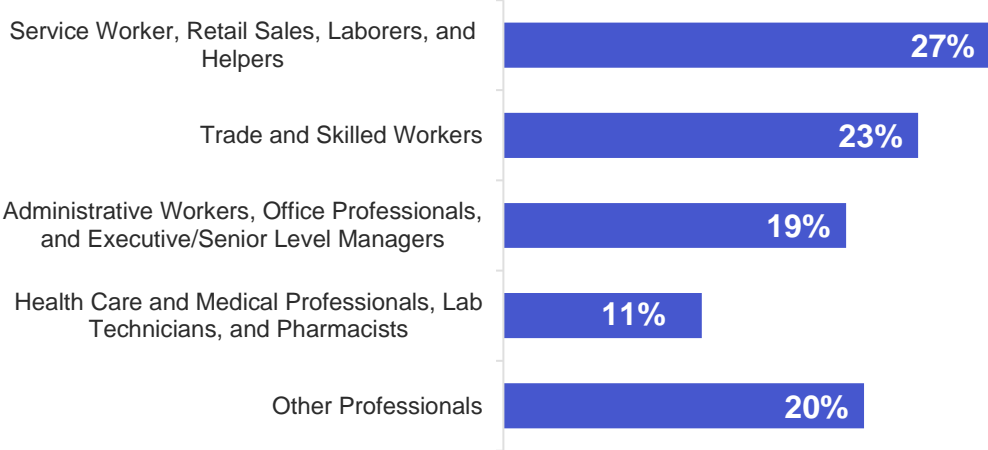


And, would you consider your job full-time or part-time?

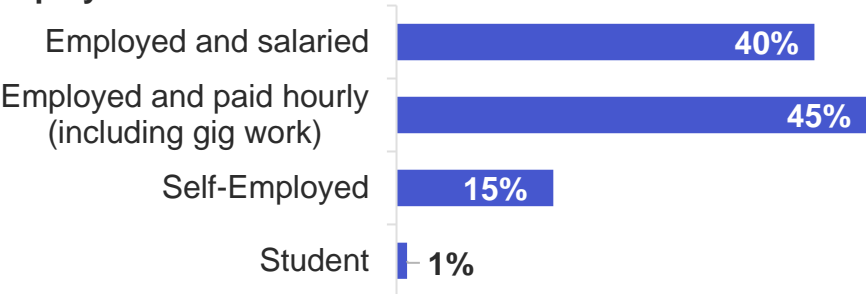


AMONG PARENTS WHO ARE MARRIED/PARTNERED, n=743

Which of the following categories best describes your spouse's or partner's current job?



How would you describe your spouse's or partner's present employment situation?



And, would you consider your spouse's or partner's present job full-time or part-time?





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