



ROYAL FOUNDATION  
Centre for  
Early Childhood

# Understanding public attitudes to early childhood

## Key findings

A report produced by Ipsos on behalf of the  
Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood

16 June 2022



# Methodology

- Ipsos was commissioned by The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood to conduct research into public perceptions and knowledge of the early years.
- Ipsos interviewed 4,682 adults aged 16+ across the UK through the online Ipsos i-Say panel from the 21<sup>st</sup> April – 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- From these responses, we present nationally representative results from interviews with the **general population based on 4,002 interviews**. Data were weighted by gender, age, region, working status and ethnicity.
- Separately, we present results from interviews with **parents of children aged 0-5 based on 1,114 interviews**. This includes 434 parents of children aged 0-5 from the general population sample, and a boost of a further 680 interviews. Data were weighted by gender, age and ethnicity.
- As this is a sample of the population, all results are subject to a ‘margin of error’, which means small differences may not be statistically significant. Where results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of “don’t know” categories.

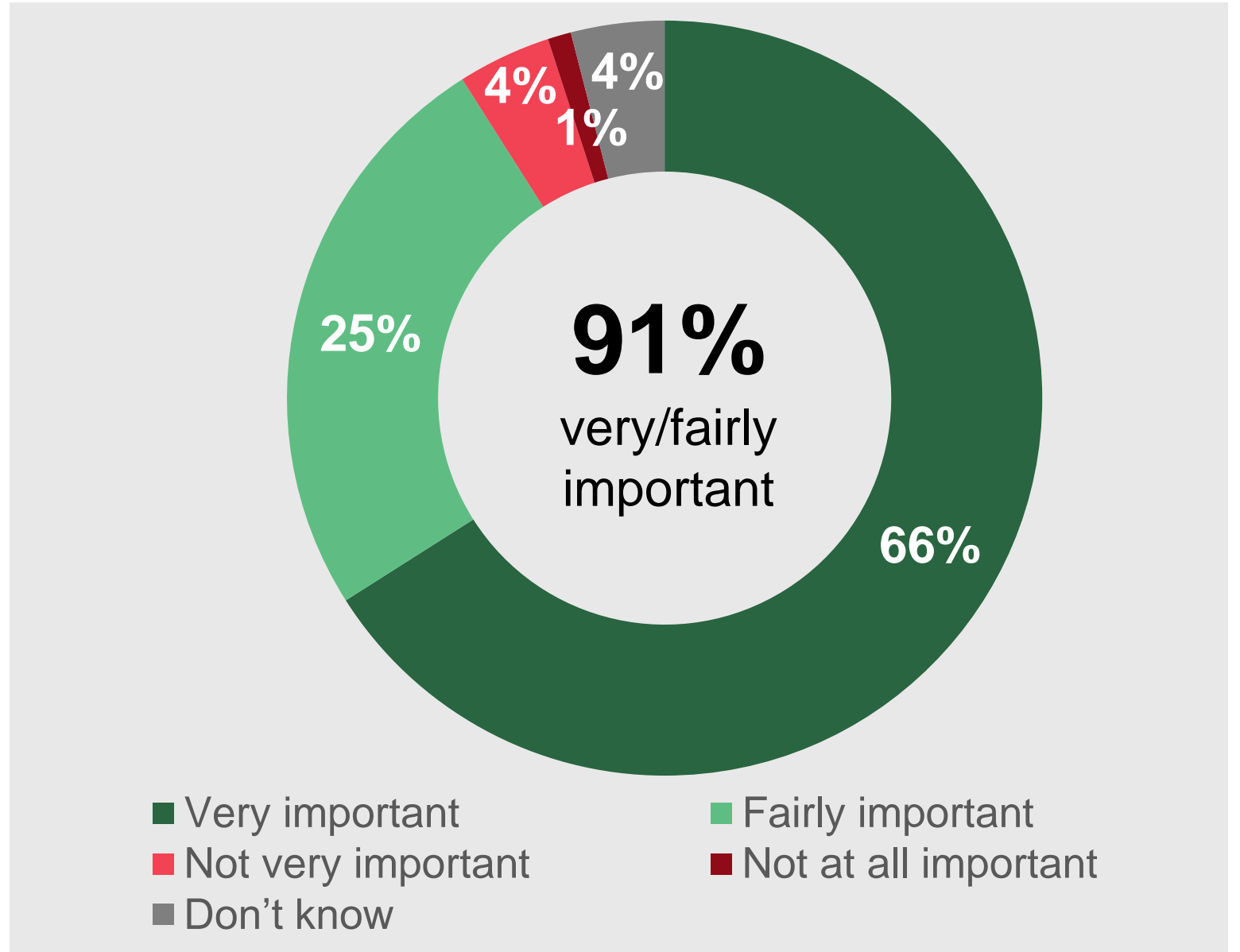
# Perceived importance of early years



# Nine in ten (91%) recognise the importance of early childhood in shaping later life

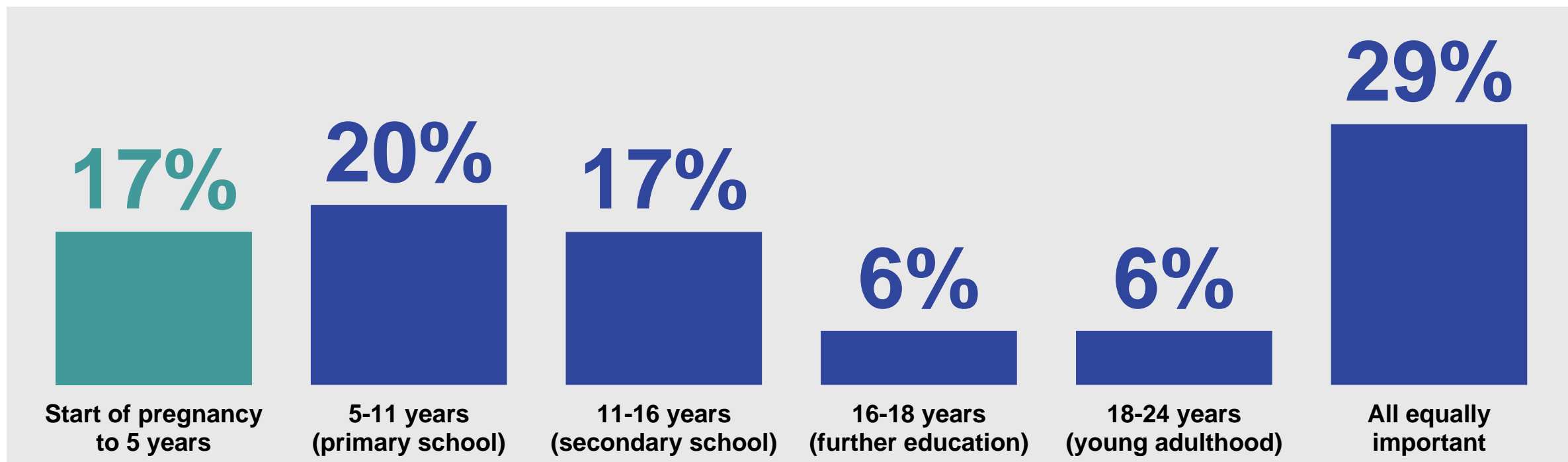
How important, if at all, do you feel the period of early childhood is in shaping a person's future life?

Base: 4,002 UK adults aged 16+, surveyed in April – May 2022.



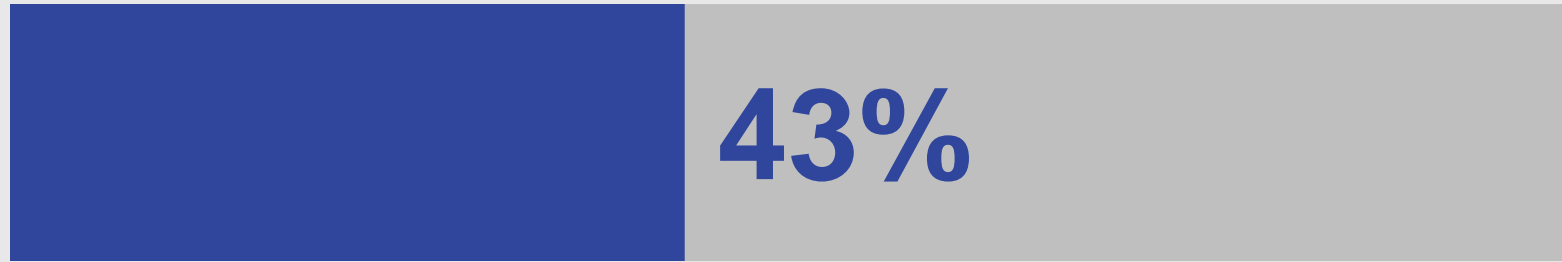
# However, there is relatively low recognition of the importance of early childhood compared with other life stages

Which period of a child and young person's life do you think is the most important for shaping their future lives?



Base: 4,002 UK adults aged 16+, surveyed in April – May 2022.

# There is clear appetite for a greater societal focus on early childhood



**agree that early childhood is currently a top priority for society**



**agree that early childhood should be a greater priority for society**



**agree that early childhood should not be a priority given other problems UK society is facing**

Base: 4,002 UK adults aged 16+, surveyed in April – May 2022.

# More needs to be done to offer parents support with their children's development during the early years



48%

of the public agree there's not enough support for parents to help children develop in early childhood



65%

this rises to two in three among parents with children aged 0-5

Base: 4,002 UK adults aged 16+ / 1,114 parents of children aged 0-5, surveyed in April – May 2022.

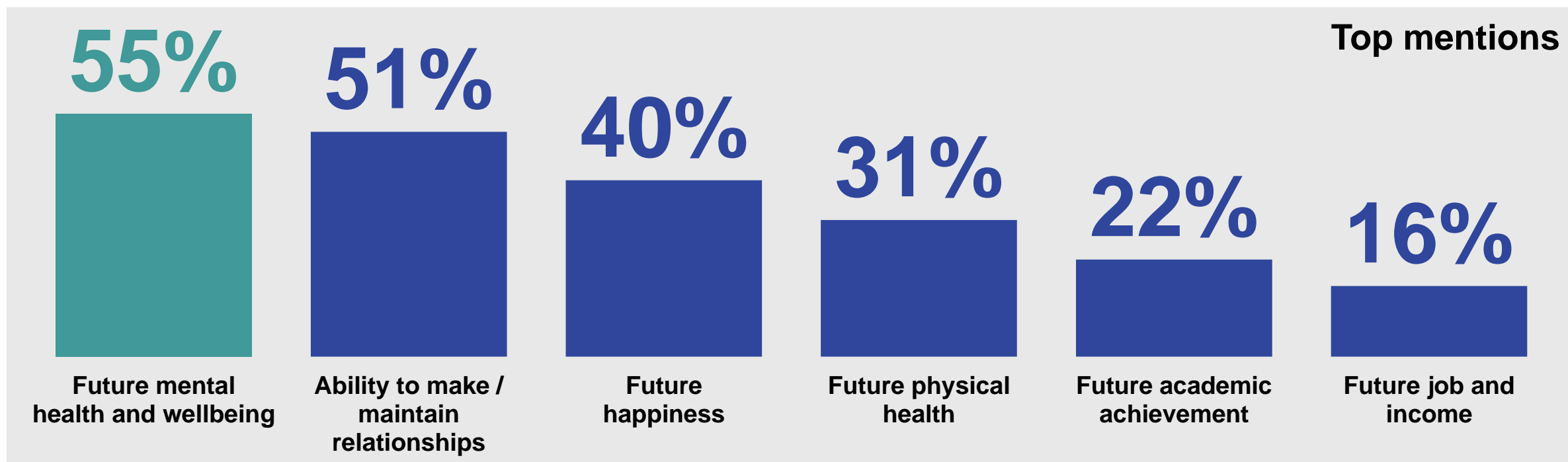
# Mental health and wellbeing





# There is high recognition of how early childhood affects mental health in later life

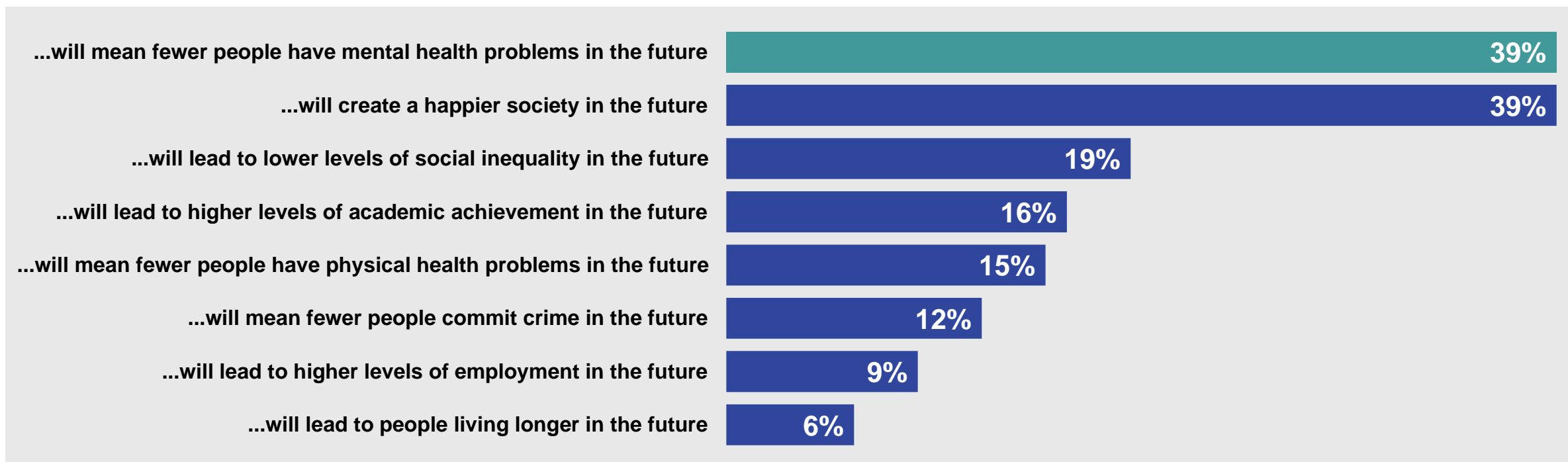
Which of the following, if any, do you personally think are likely to be the MOST affected by a child's development during their early childhood? Please select up to three



Base: 4,002 UK adults aged 16+, surveyed in April – May 2022.

# And mental health appeals as an important reason for focus on early childhood

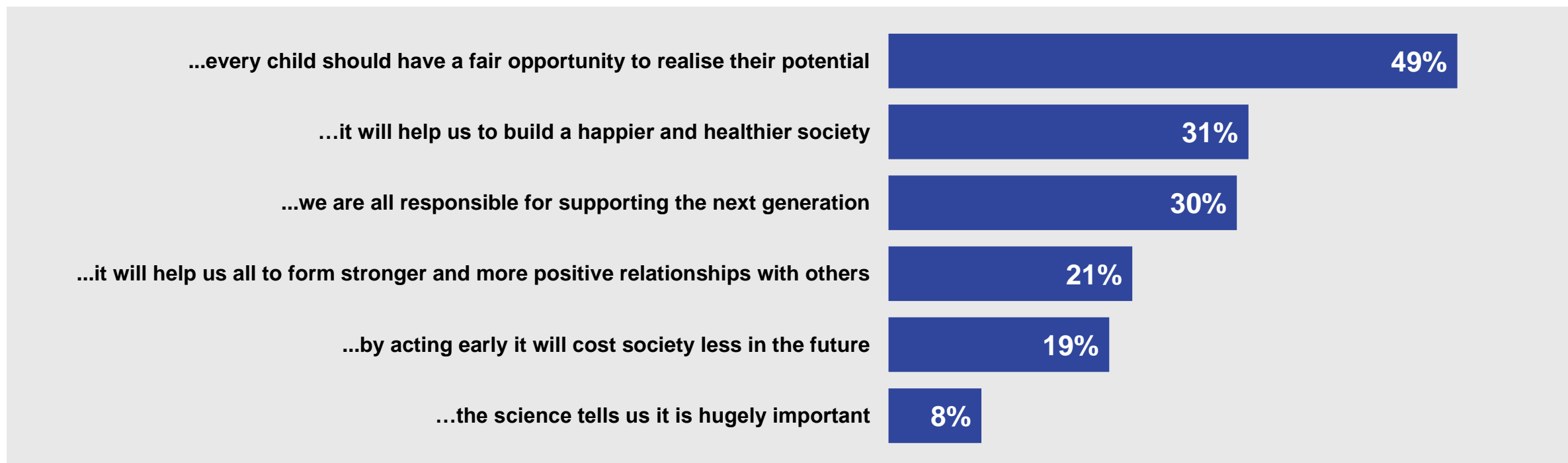
I'm going to show you a list of things some people say are important reasons for investing in early childhood. Which, if any, of the following statements MOST appeal to you?



Base: 4,002 UK adults aged 16+, surveyed in April – May 2022.

# Perceived fairness in helping everyone reach their potential is also important

I'm going to show you a list of reasons why some people say it's important to invest in the early years of childhood. Which, if any, of the following statements MOST appeals to you?



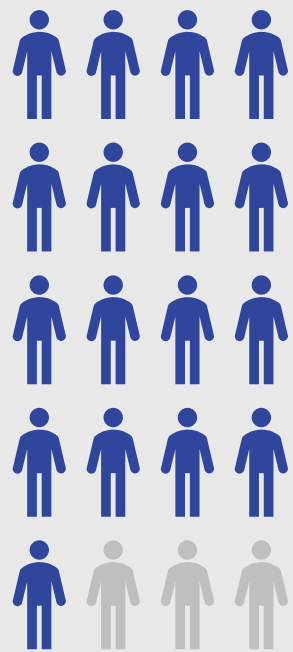
Base: 4,002 UK adults aged 16+, surveyed in April – May 2022.

# Help and support



# Though most parents of children aged 0-5 seek out advice and support, few seek support on emotional or social development

In the last year, what types of information, support or advice, if any, have you sought for bringing up children?



**85%**

looked for **any form** information and advice



**23%**

sought information on **emotional development**



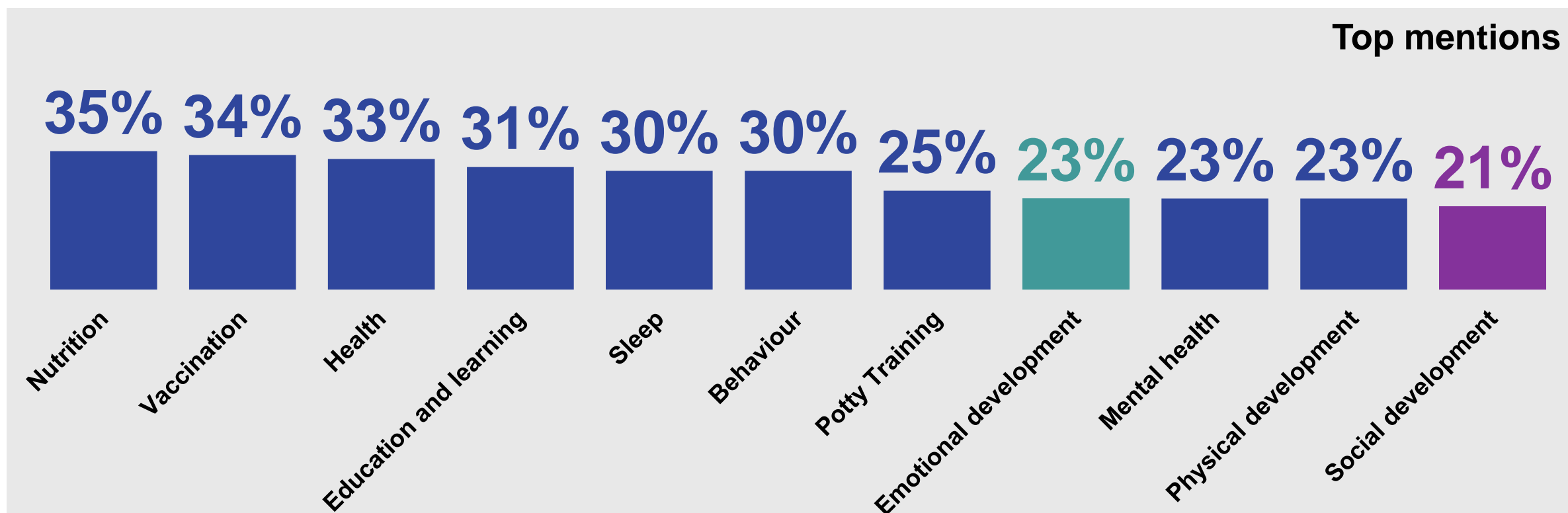
**21%**

sought information on **social development**

Base: All parents of children aged 0-5 (1,114), surveyed in April – May 2022

# Parents are more likely to seek out information relating to nutrition and vaccination

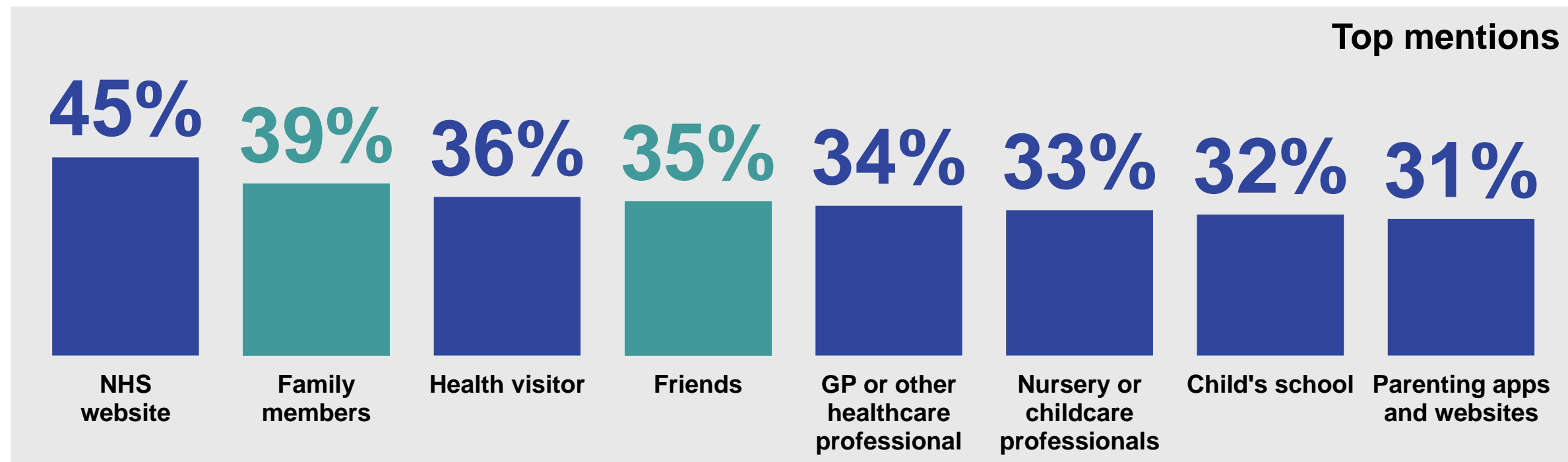
In the last year, what types of information, support or advice, if any, have you sought for bringing up children?



Base: All parents of children aged 0-5 (1,114), surveyed in April – May 2022

# Parents of children aged 0-5 have a wide community of sources for help on social and emotional development – over half (56%) sought help from family or friends

**Q** In the last year, where have you sought information, support or advice about children's social or emotional development? Please select all that apply



Base: 377 parents of children aged 0-5 who sought advice on social and emotional skills, surveyed in April – May 2022.

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NETS:

56% of parents of children 0-5 sought advice from either family members or friends

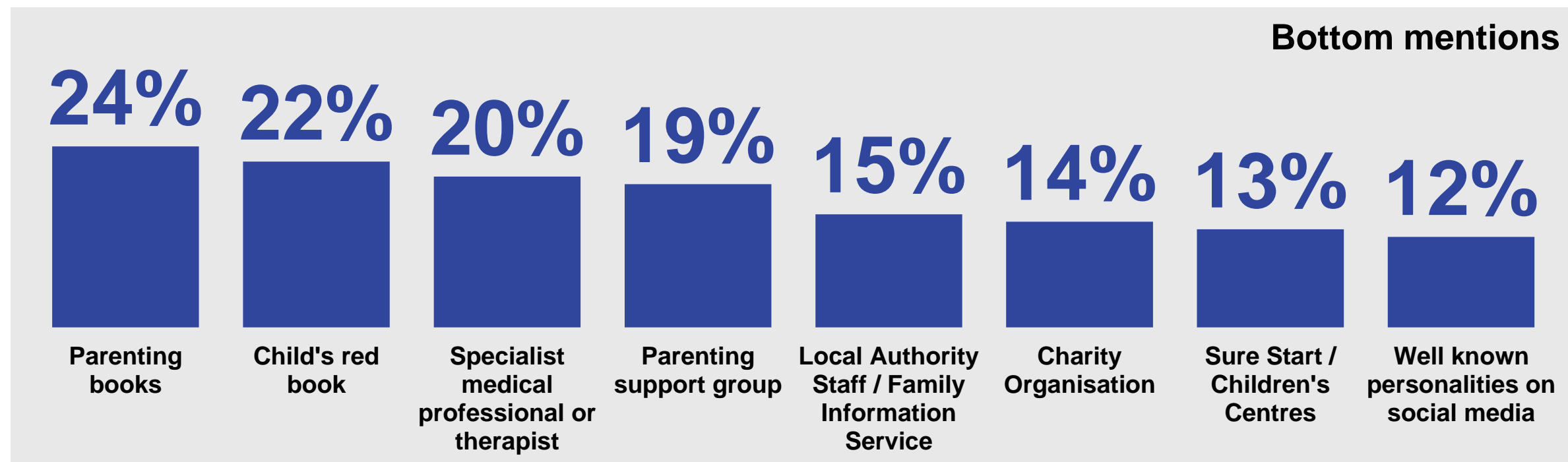
92% Public Service / health professionals, including NHS Website, Health Visitors, GPs, Schools, Local Authorities

59% Charity / parenting support (apps, books, groups)



# Around one in five mention using the child's red book for help with social and emotional development; fewer have used local authority, Sure Start or Children's Centres services

In the last year, where have you sought information, support or advice about children's social or emotional development? Please select all that apply



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GAME CHANGERS

