

# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT – KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES SURVEY

**May 2023**

**This public opinion poll in Montenegro was conducted by Ipsos with the support of UNICEF Montenegro and the European Union within the initiative “The EU and UNICEF for Early Childhood Development in Montenegro” 2020–2023**



Financed by the  
European Union



unicef   
za svako dijete

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- In partnership with the Government of Montenegro and with the support of the European Union, UNICEF Montenegro is implementing the Action “The EU and UNICEF for Early Childhood Development in Montenegro” from 2020 to 2023. The overall objective of the initiative is to improve the health and development of young children aged 0 to 6, including children with developmental disabilities, in order for them to reach their full human potential. The specific objective of the initiative is for young children and their parents/caregivers to benefit from quality, equitable and mutually reinforcing systems of health, education, social and child protection in Montenegro by the end of the implementation period.
- During the first two years of implementing the initiative, numerous activities have been carried out with the expected outcome of raising awareness about the importance of early childhood development at the national level. Various channels and platforms have been used to achieve this goal, including public events, trainings, mass media, and social networks. Notably, a free mobile parenting app called “Bebbo” has been developed for parents of children aged 0 to 6.
- Within the project, two quantitative surveys were conducted, one in 2021 and another in 2023, on a nationally representative sample of primary caregivers of children under the age of 6. The main objective of these surveys was to examine the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) related to early childhood development, as well as to monitor changes in these aspects during the implementation of the initiative (changes in caregivers’ awareness and knowledge of the importance of early childhood development, as well as parenting practices).

# METHODOLOGY – QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

<b>Realization:</b>	<b>Data collection was performed during the period 8–29 May 2023</b>
<b>Sample frame:</b>	<b>Parents or caregivers of preschool children (0–6 years) in Montenegro</b>
<b>Sample size:</b>	<b>1018 respondents</b>
<b>Type of sample:</b>	<b>One-stage representative stratified sample</b> <b>Respondents in the household</b>
<b>Type of survey:</b>	<b>Combination of telephone and online survey with questionnaire of average duration of 20 minutes</b>
<b>Fieldwork location:</b>	<b>23 Montenegrin municipalities, urban, suburban and rural settlements</b>
<b>Post-stratification:</b>	<b>By region, type of settlement and child’s age</b>

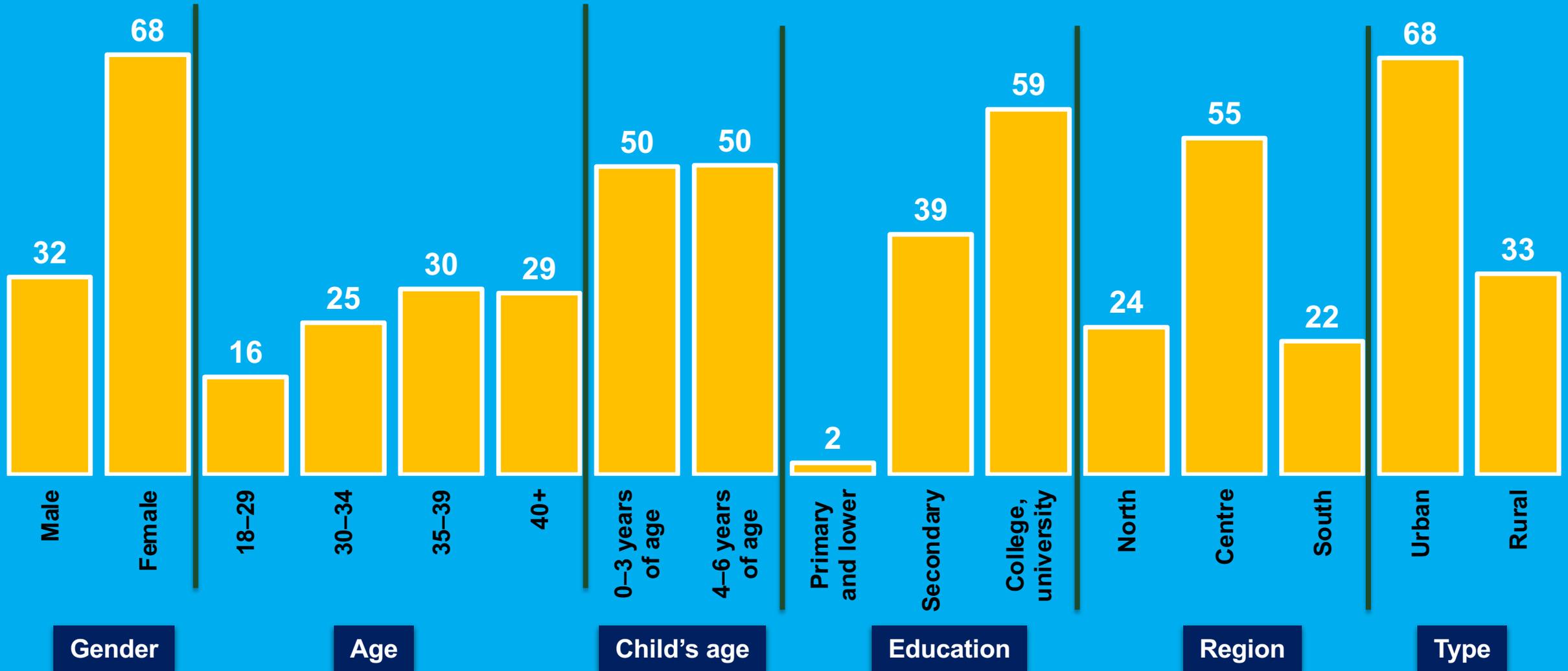
# METHODOLOGY – Research ethics

- The entire survey was conducted in accordance with UNICEF standards, and the methodology was approved by an Ethical Review Board engaged by UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro.
- The conducted research did not in any way cause pain, suffering or harm to the respondents – the participants in the research were exclusively adult citizens of Montenegro who voluntarily agreed to participate in it.
- All questions in the questionnaire were formulated in such a way that they did not harm the respondents (physically or mentally) in any way – no incident or unexpected situation was recorded during the fieldwork.
- Prior to the fieldwork, a detailed training of interviewers was conducted – a special focus was placed on the topics of early childhood development, but also on research ethics.
- Training of interviewers for behavior with respondents was also included, as well as training on how to react in unexpected situations – all interviewers received a written protocol of behaviour.
- The conducted research fully respects the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of all respondents – summary presentation of the data without revealing personal information to other parties, storage of the database on a password-protected server, to which only the research team of this project has access.
- Any conflict of interest was completely avoided during this research.
- Quantitative research respondents were not given any financial or non-financial compensation for participating in the research.

# SAMPLE

MAY 2023

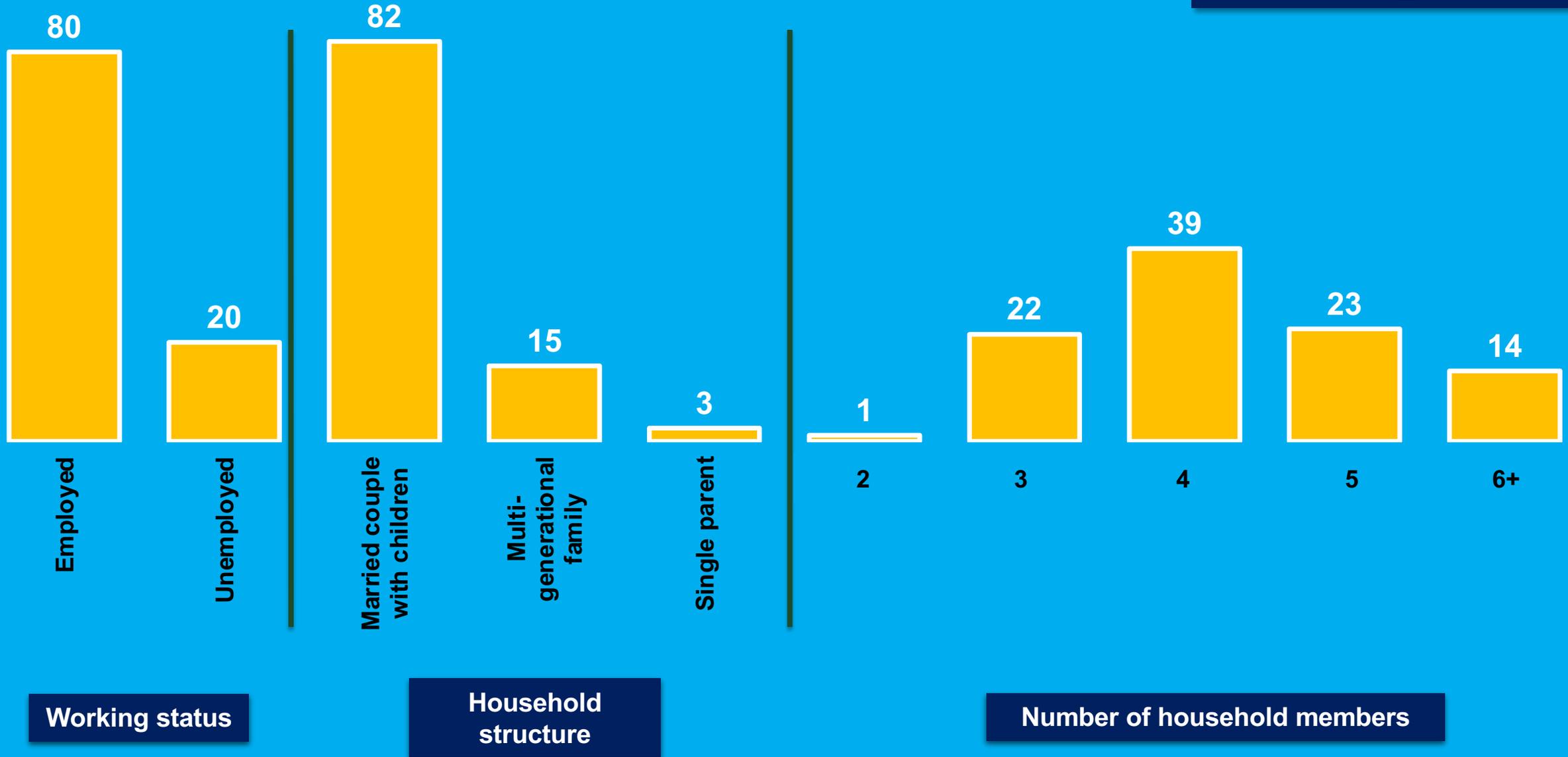
N = 1018  $\Sigma$  = 100%



# SAMPLE

MAY 2023

N = 1018  $\Sigma$  = 100%



Working status

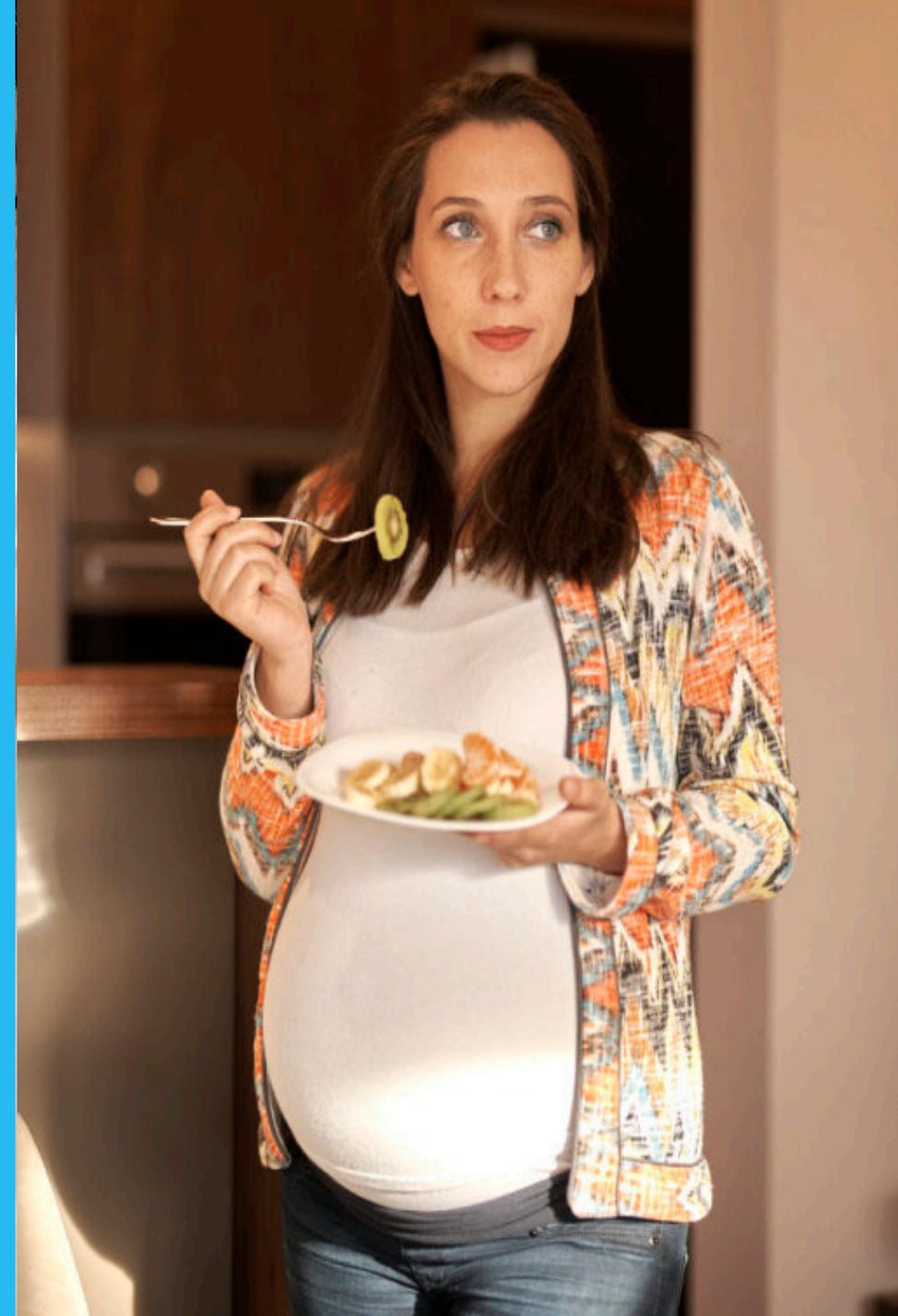
Household structure

Number of household members

# RESULTS



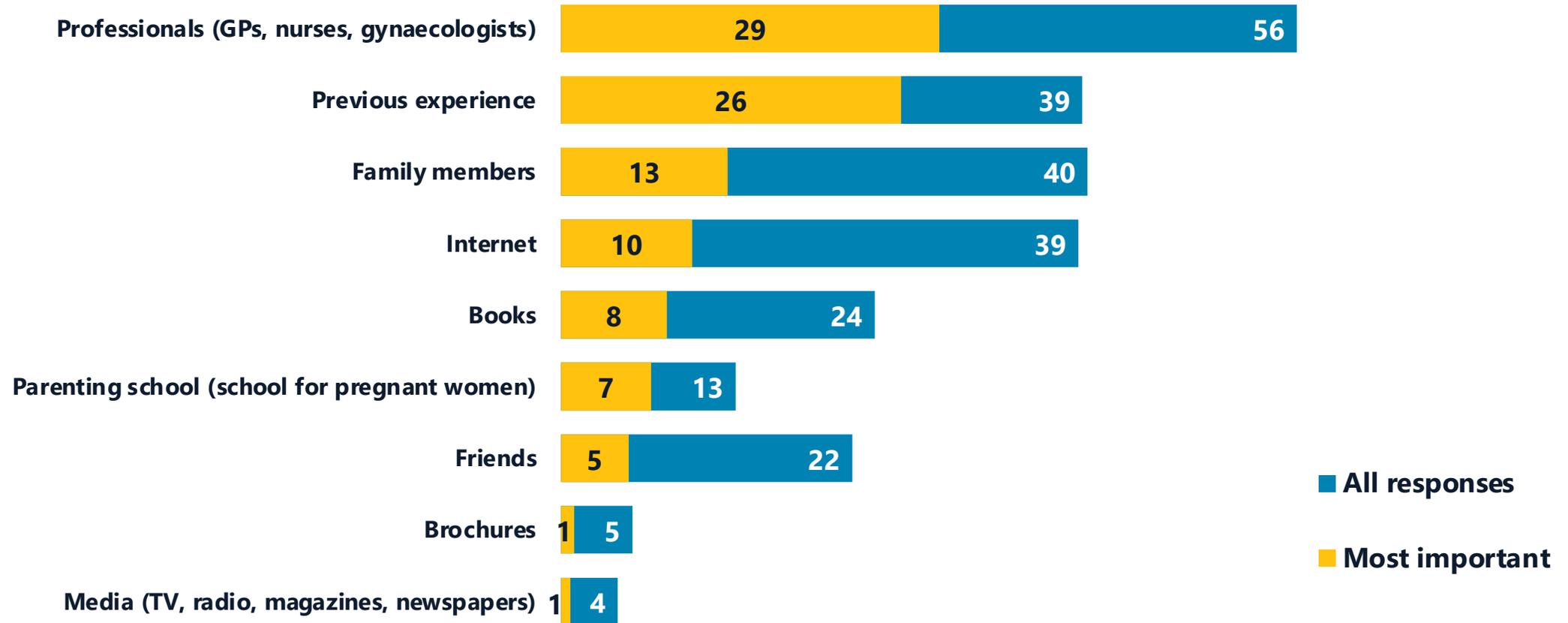
# PREGNANCY



# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PREGNANCY (2023)

When it comes to pregnancy, newborn care and related aspects, it seems that mothers in Montenegro trust the opinion and advice of health workers the most – 29% of the mothers mention them as the main source of information, and for half of them they are among the top three sources. A quarter of women first rely on their own previous experience, and 13% rely on the advice of family members. Observed collectively, experience, family and the internet are among the key sources of information for about 40% of mothers.

Data in %



How did you get information during pregnancy about things related to pregnancy, newborn care, etc.? Multiple answers.

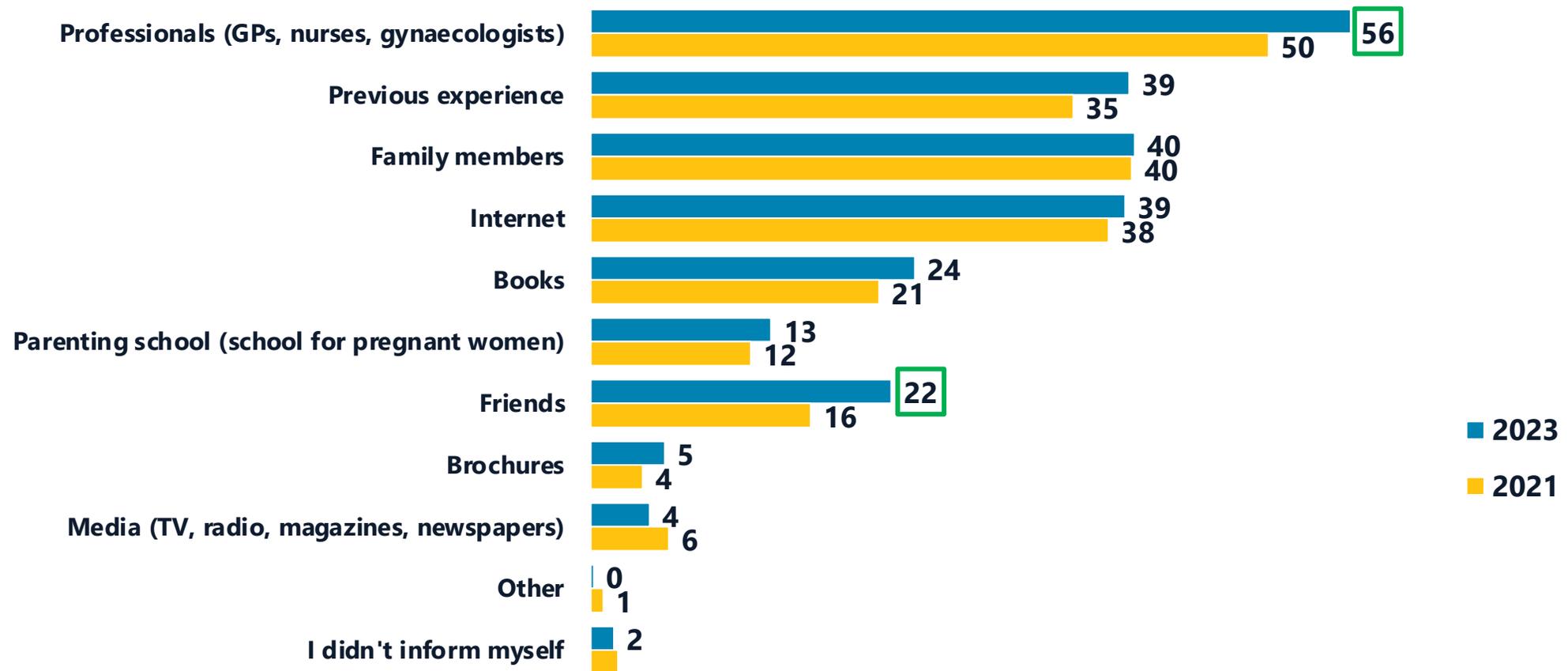
Base: Biological mothers, N = 690

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PREGNANCY

(comparison of waves – all responses)

Compared to the previous wave (2021), the results suggest that women are more likely to consult health workers for information about pregnancy, childcare and related topics. In addition, one in four women opt for friends' advice as one of the key sources of information, which is significantly more than in 2021.

Data in %



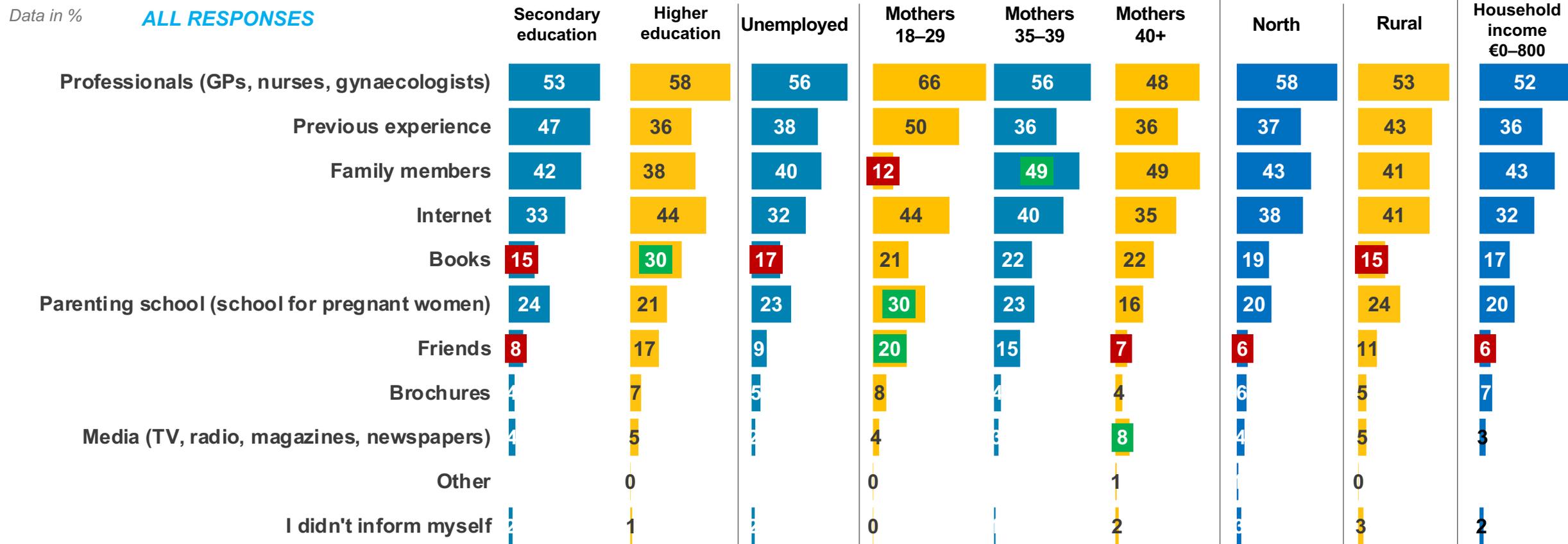
How did you get information during pregnancy about things related to pregnancy, newborn care, etc.? Multiple answers.  
Base: Biological mothers, N = 806 (2021), N = 690 (2023)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PREGNANCY

*(categories with statistically significant differences with respect to the total population)*

Mothers, regardless of socio-demographic characteristics, most often choose doctors and nurses as the key source of information about pregnancy and related topics. However, differences are visible in regard to other sources, so mothers in their late 30s are more likely than others to rely on their own experience, while, quite expectedly, mothers aged 18–29 years are less likely to do so. Women with higher education are more likely to read books about this topic, unlike mothers with secondary school education, the unemployed and residents of rural areas. Those from the youngest group (18–29) are more likely to consult friends and to attend parenting classes, while older mothers (40+) are a lot more likely than others to collect information in the media.



How did you get information during pregnancy about things related to pregnancy, newborn care, etc.? Multiple answers.

Base: Biological mothers, N = 693

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

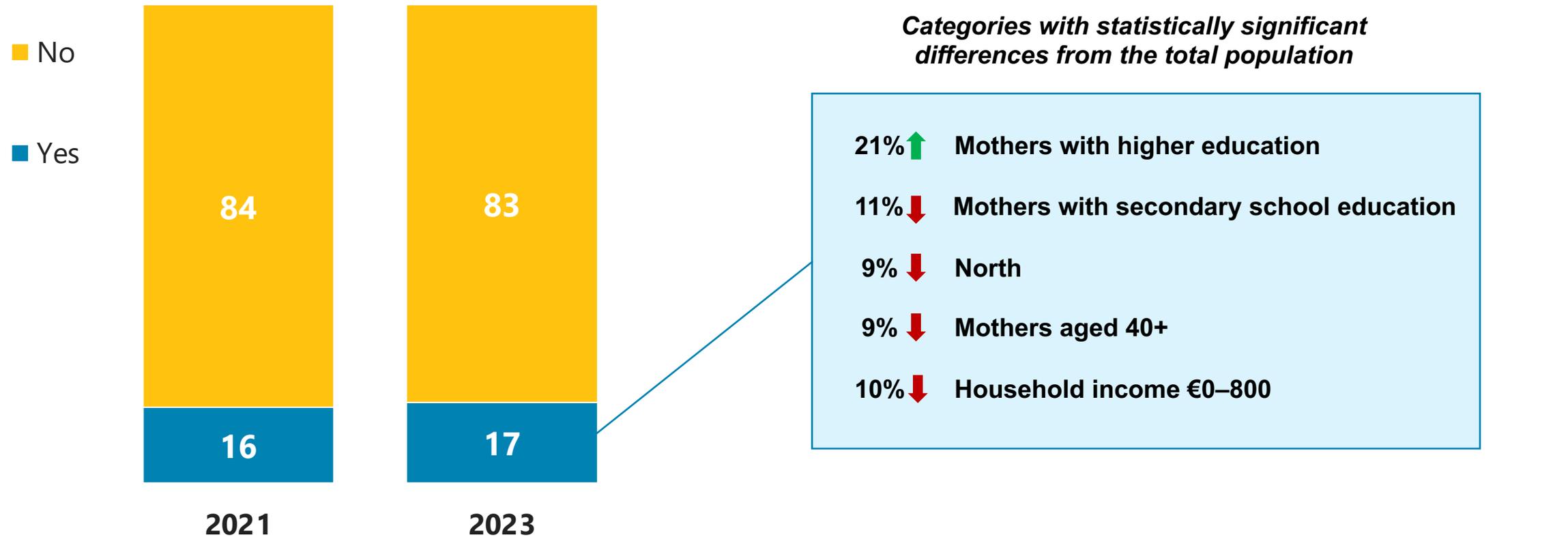
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# PARENTING SCHOOL (SCHOOL FOR PREGNANT WOMEN)

*(cross-wave comparison)*

This survey wave data confirm the 2021 results – approximately every sixth mother in Montenegro attended parenting school during pregnancy (17%). In addition, mothers with higher education (21%) were more likely than others to join this programme, while mothers with secondary school education (11%), residents of northern parts of the country (9%), those older than 40 years (9%), as well as those from households with lower incomes (10%) were less likely to do so.

Data in %



During your pregnancy, did you attend a parenting school (school for pregnant women) that is organized in a health centre?

Base: Biological mothers, N = 806 (2021), N = 690 (2023)

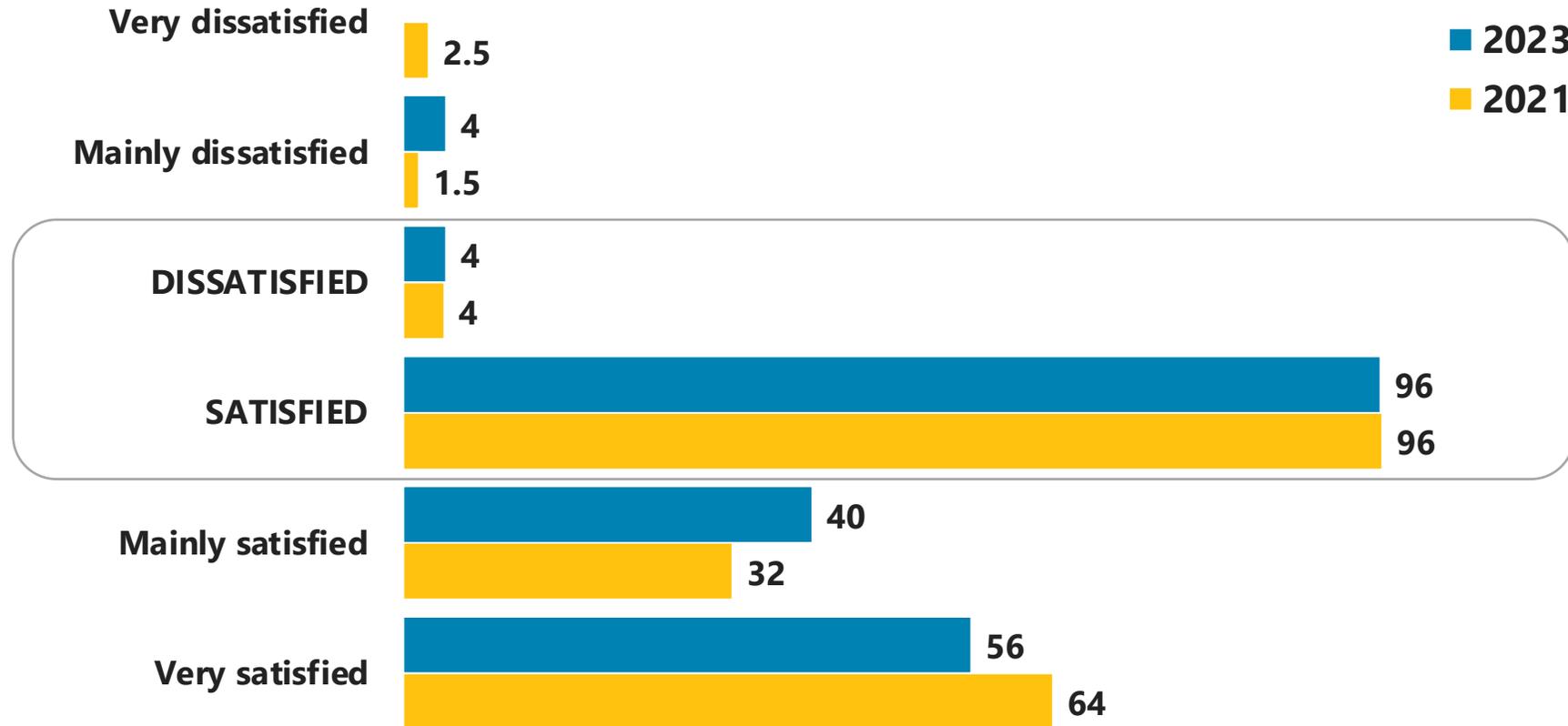
↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# SATISFACTION WITH PARENTING SCHOOL

(cross-wave comparison)

Almost all mothers who attended a parenting school were satisfied with the information and knowledge they received there (96%). There are no statistically significant differences between these two waves.

Data in %



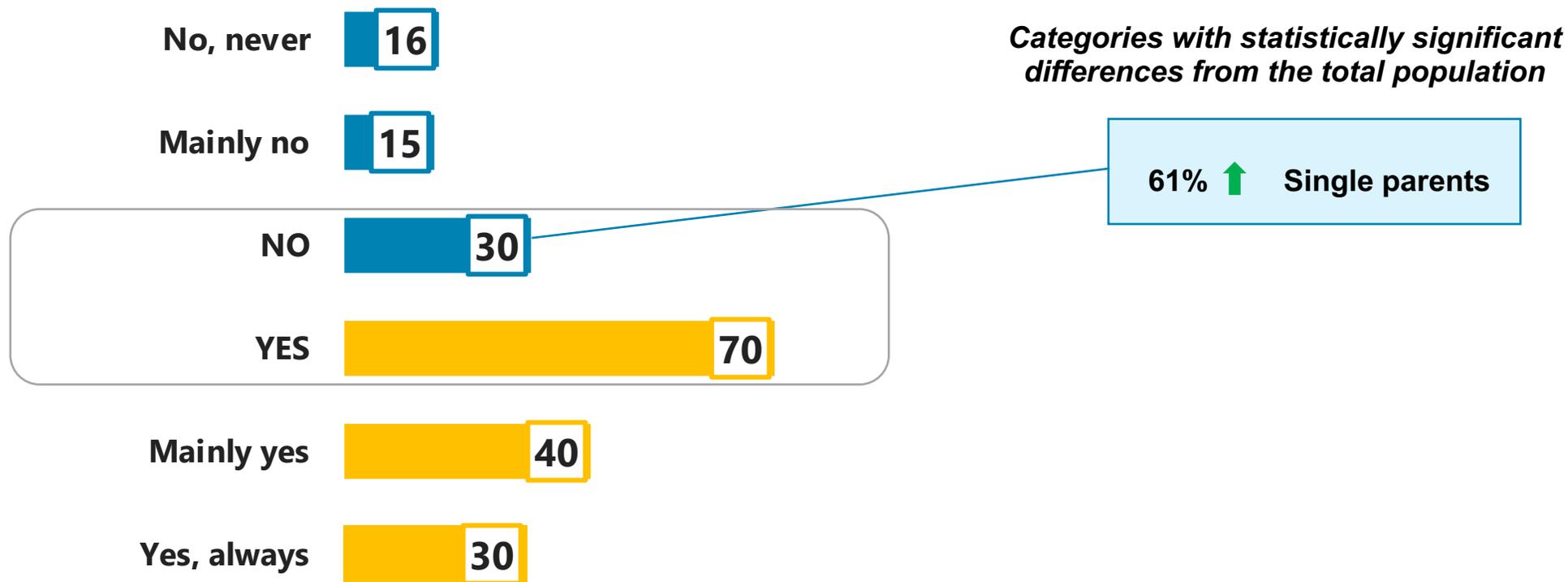
How satisfied are you with the information and knowledge you received in this school?  
Base: Mothers who attended a parenting school, N = 127 (2021), N = 116 (2023)

Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# VISITING THE DOCTOR WITH ONE'S PARTNER (2023)

Seven out of ten mothers stated that they mostly went for medical examinations during pregnancy together with their partner. Not surprisingly, the situation is reversed among single parents, thus three out of five single mothers visited the doctor without their partner.

Data in %



Did your partner visit the doctor with you during your pregnancy?  
Base: Biological mothers, N = 806 (2021), N = 690 (2023)

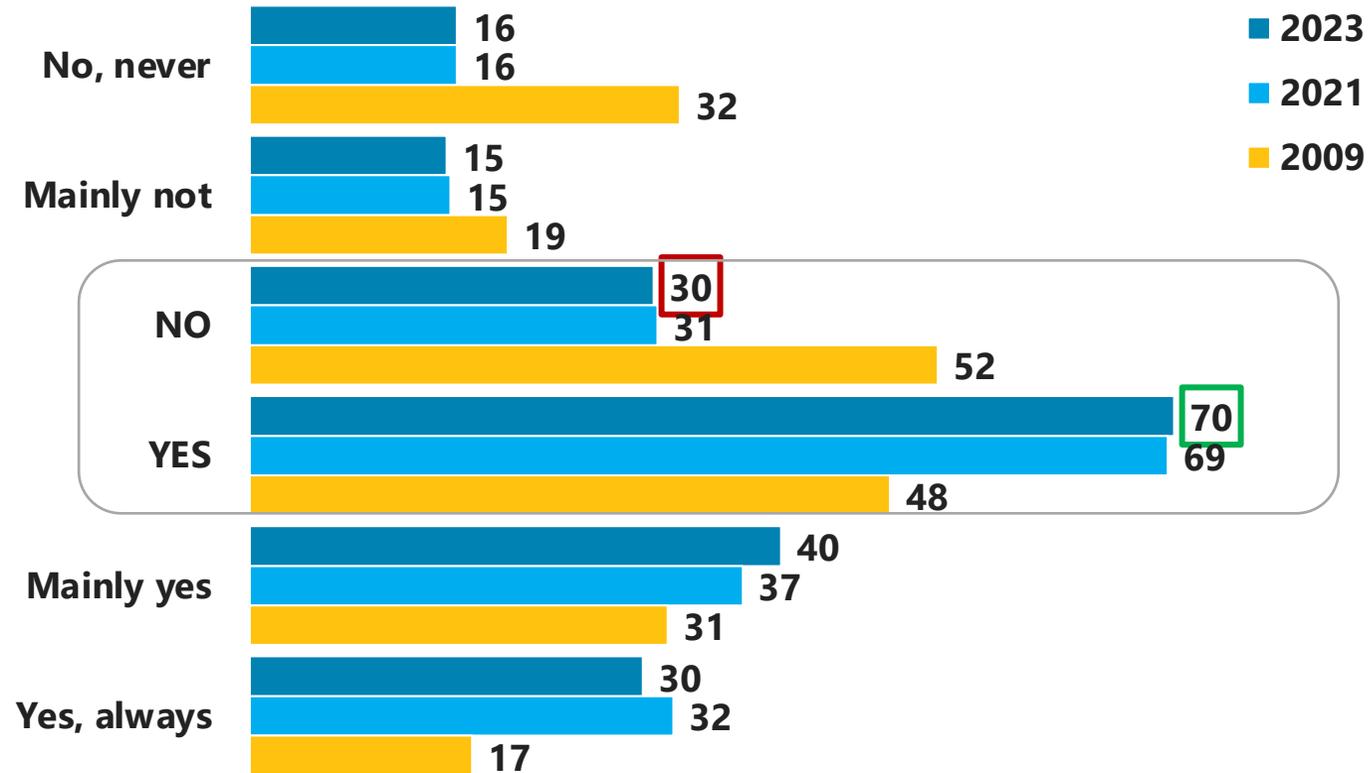
↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# VISITING THE DOCTOR WITH ONE'S PARTNER

(cross-wave comparison)

Almost 15 years ago (2009), only half of mothers visited the doctor together with their partner, much fewer than two years ago and now, when 70% of mothers are accompanied by their partners during health checks.

Data in %



Has your partner visited the doctor with you during pregnancy?

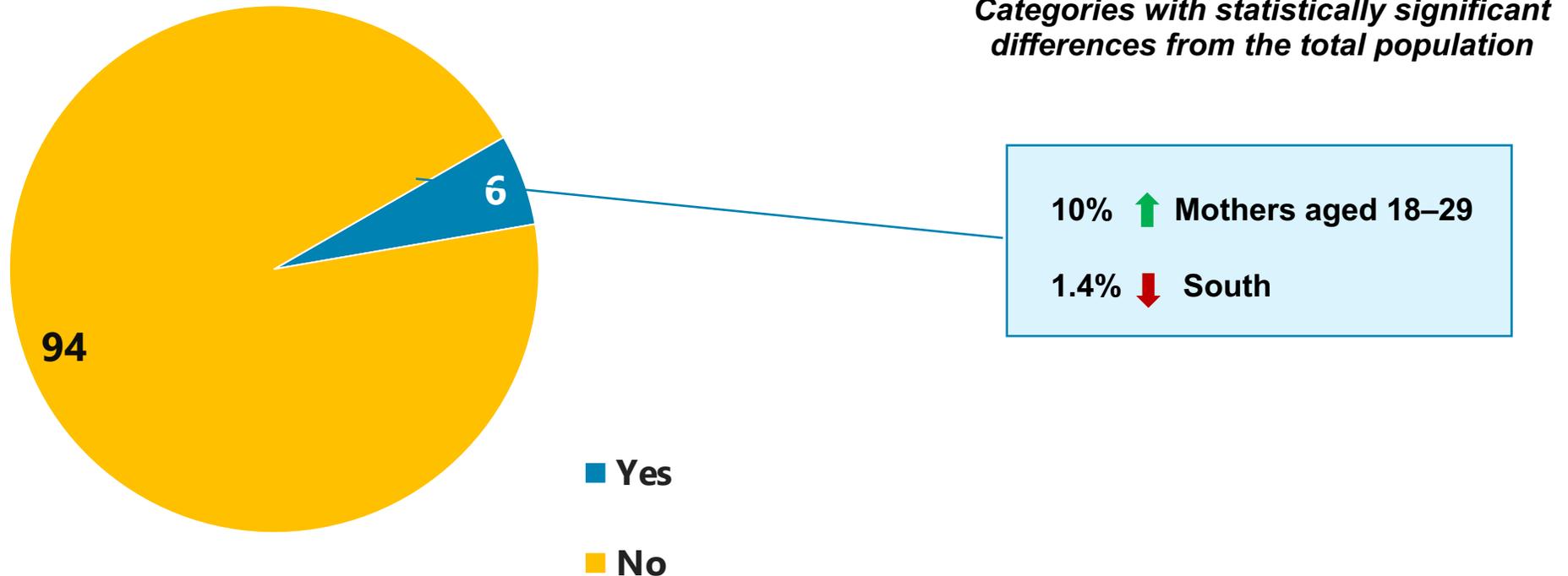
Base: Biological mothers, N = 806 (2021), N = 902 (2009), N = 690 (2023)

70 Statistically a lot more than in 2009  
30 Statistically a lot less than in 2009

# COMPANIONSHIP DURING LABOUR (2023)

The vast majority of women confirm that no one but medical staff was present at childbirth (94%), meaning not one's partner, nor other family members nor close people. Mothers aged 18–29 years were more likely than others to have the experience of having a companion during labour (10%), while this was less likely to occur in the south of the country (1%).

Data in %



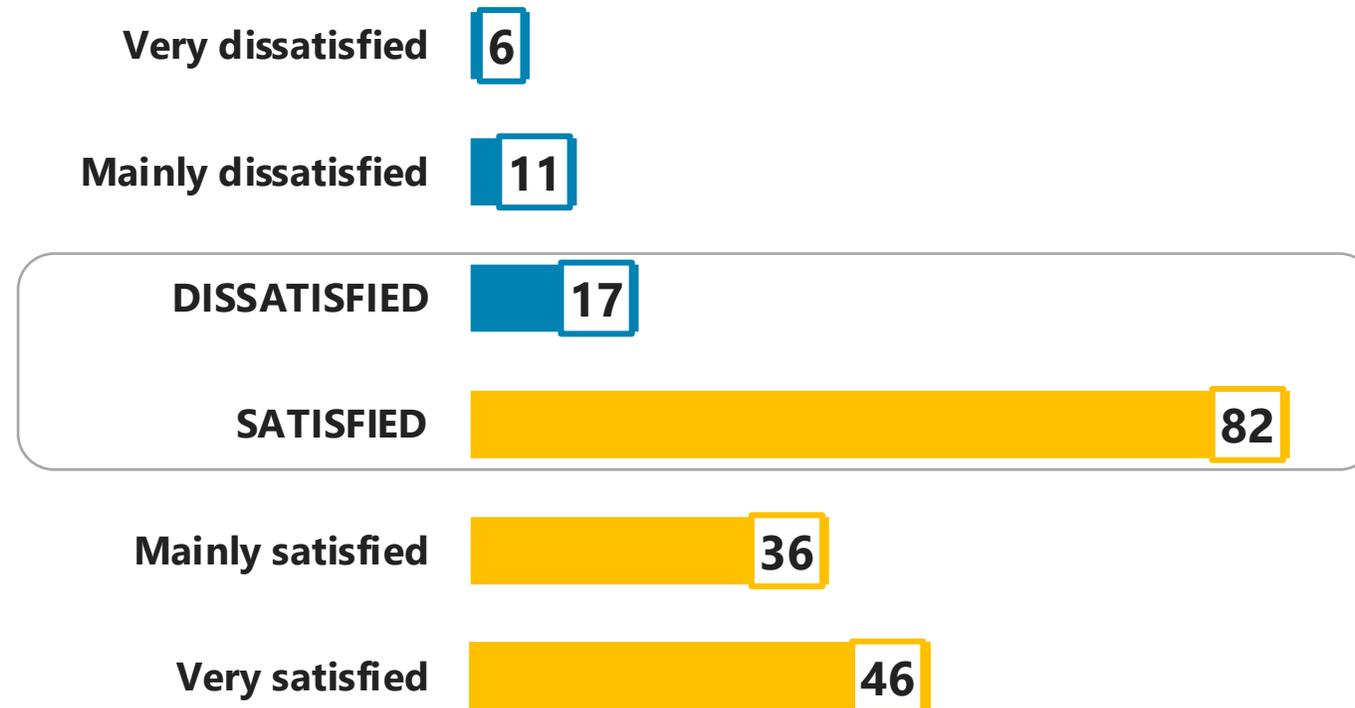
Was your partner or someone else from your family or close social circle present at childbirth?  
Base: Biological mothers, N = 690

↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# SATISFACTION WITH CARE IN THE MATERNITY WARD (HOSPITAL) (2023)

The results suggest that the majority of mothers were satisfied with care in the maternity ward. Four out of five mothers were satisfied, while the remaining 17% were dissatisfied with the treatment.

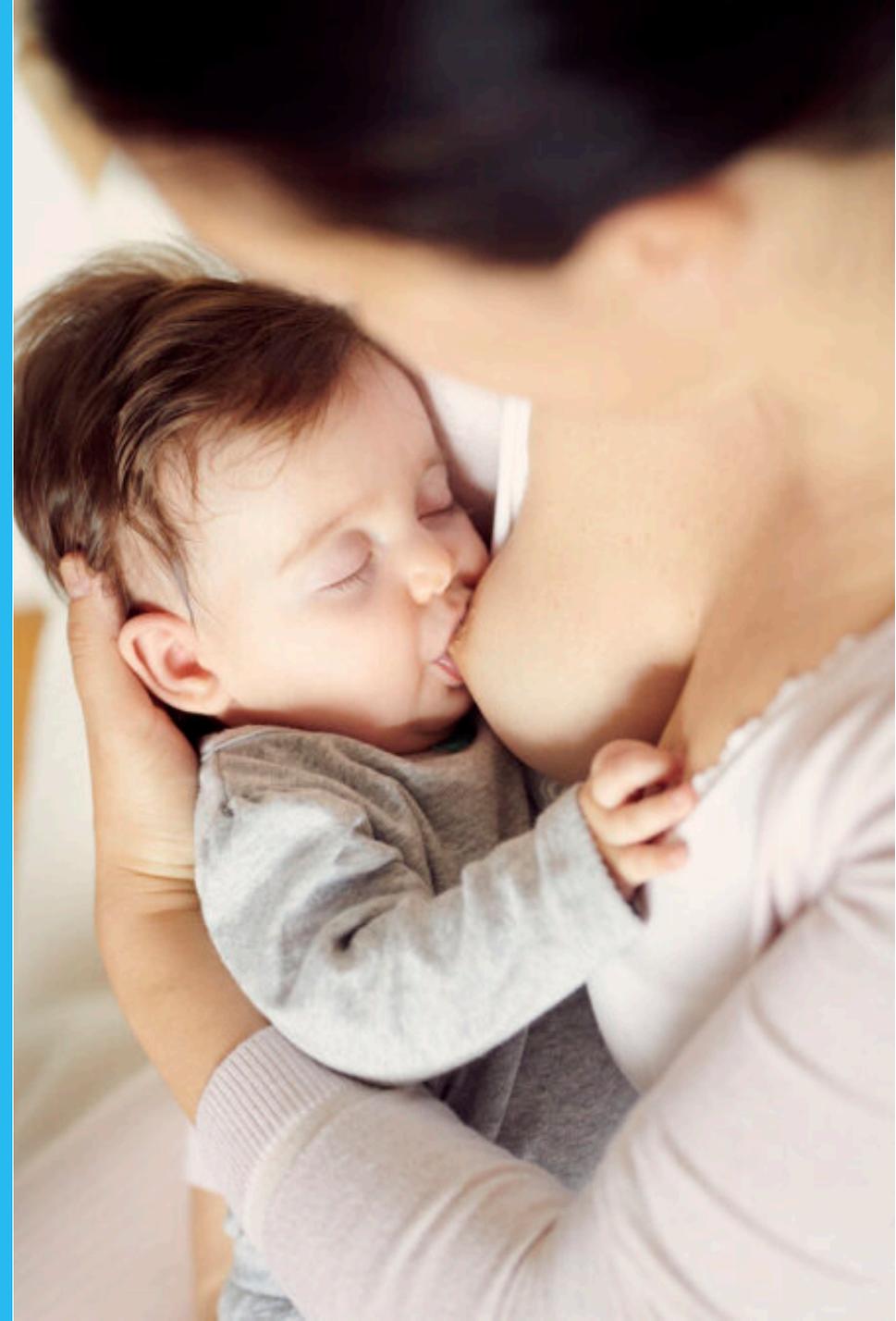
Data in %



How satisfied are you with the care you received at the maternity hospital? On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 means "very dissatisfied" and 4 "very satisfied".

Base: Biological mothers, N = 690

# BREASTFEEDING AND NUTRITION



# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Cross-wave comparison suggests that fewer breastfeeding mothers were covered by this survey wave (54%), and more parents/caregivers familiar with breastfeeding, so the latter now comprise one fifth of the sample. Similar to 2021, 15% of respondents said that their children were not breastfed, while the proportions of those whose children were breastfed, but who weren't familiar with the details, are also similar in the two waves (7% vs 6%).

Data in %

- Person who breastfed/breastfeeds the child
- Person familiar with breastfeeding practices
- Child was breastfed, but I'm not familiar with it
- Child was not breastfed



Are you a person who breastfed/is breastfeeding the child that we are talking about, or do you know the details of how the child was breastfed?

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

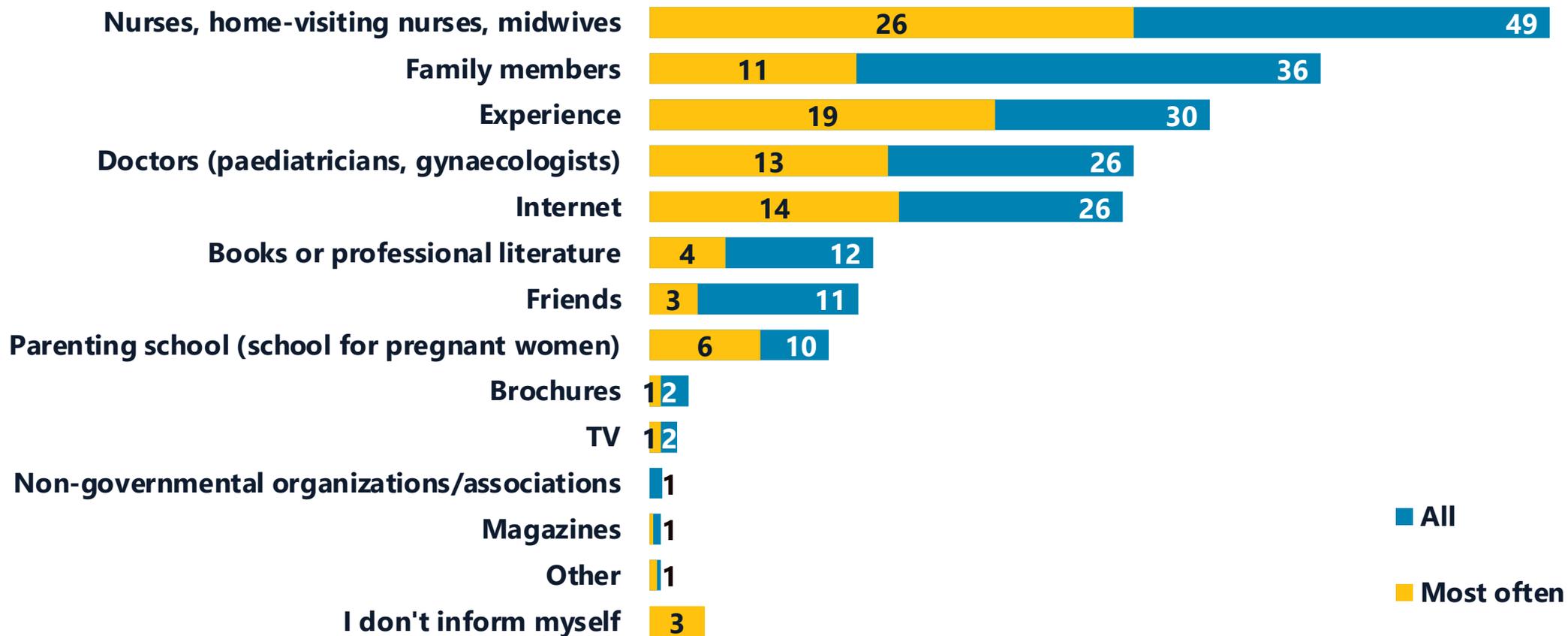
Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

(2023)

Mothers in Montenegro inform themselves about breastfeeding in different ways, but the key sources of information are nurses/home-visiting nurses and midwives, given that almost half of mothers consulted them. Slightly more than a third prefer to listen to the advice of family members (although they do not necessarily turn to them first – 36%), and somewhat fewer than a third of mothers rely on their own experience (30%). One in four mothers mention doctors and the internet as the main sources of information.

Data in %



Where did you MOST OFTEN inform yourself about breastfeeding? Second most often, third? Multiple answers.

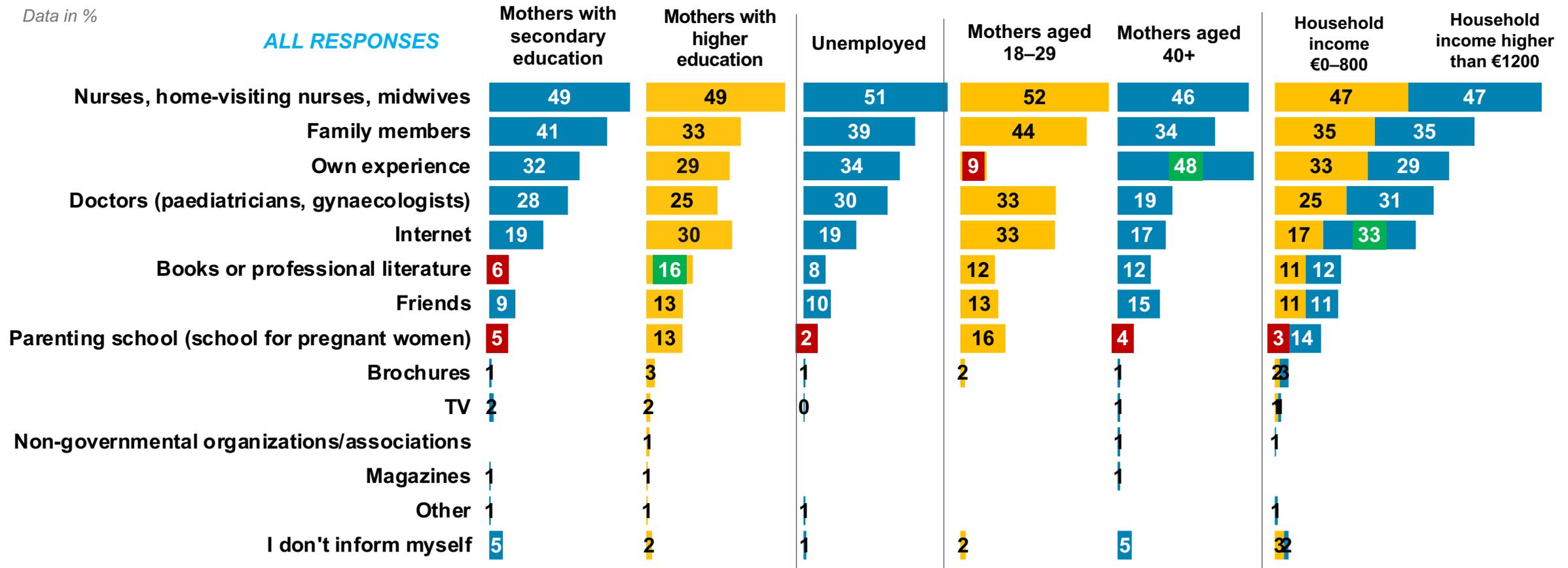
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 553

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)

Mothers with higher education, similar to the case of pregnancy, were more likely than others to inform themselves about breastfeeding from books, unlike mothers with only secondary school education. Mothers older than 40 years of age are a lot more likely to rely on their own experience, unlike the youngest mothers (18–29). In addition, mothers in their 40s, unemployed, with secondary education or from households with lower incomes were less likely than average to collect information about breastfeeding in a parenting school. On the other hand, mothers from households with high incomes more often cite the internet as a source of information.

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

Where did you MOST OFTEN inform yourself about breastfeeding? Second most often, third? Multiple answers.

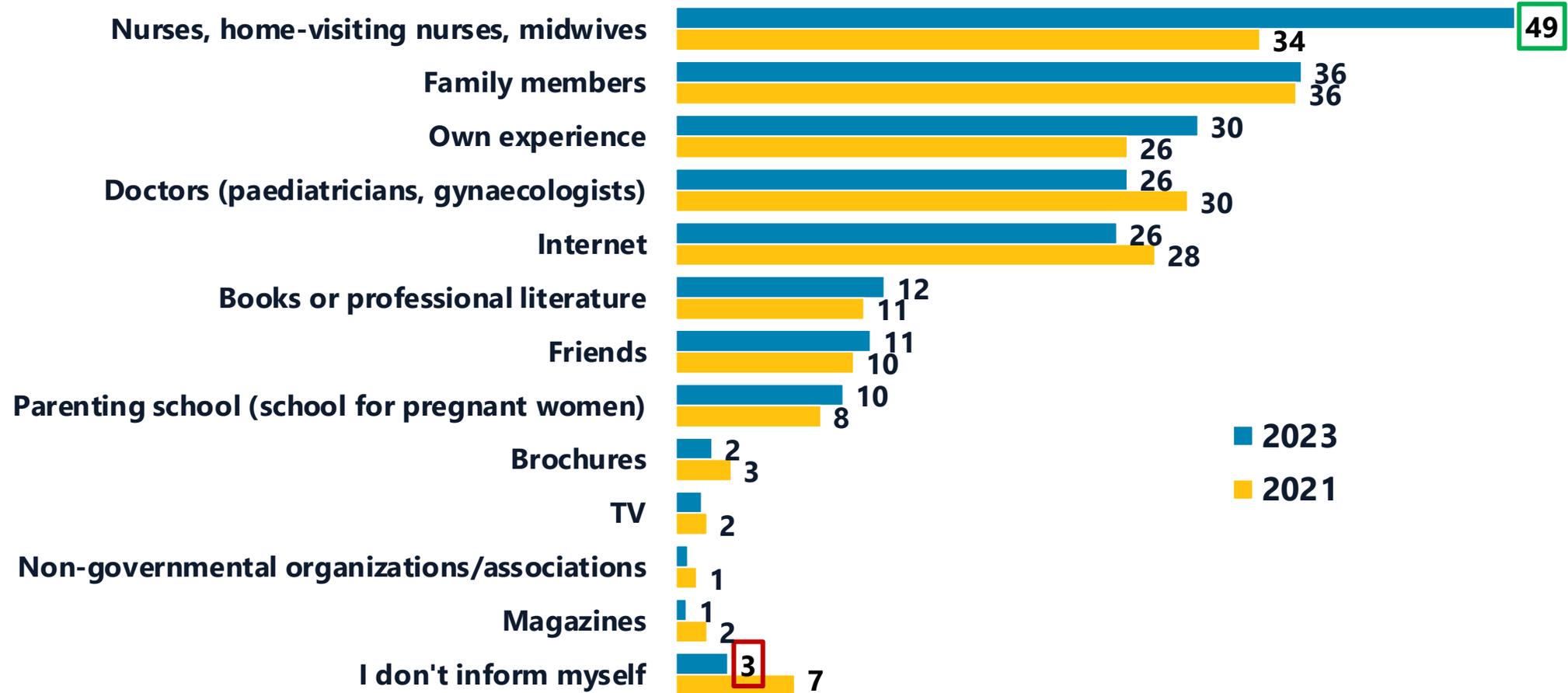
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

(cross-wave comparison – all responses)

Cross-wave comparison suggests that there has been an increase in the share of women who informed themselves about breastfeeding from nurses, home-visiting nurses and midwives (49%). In addition, the 2023 data suggests that there were fewer mothers who collected no information (3%). As for other channels used for collecting information, there were no significant differences recorded.

Data in %



   Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
   Statistically a lot less than in 2021

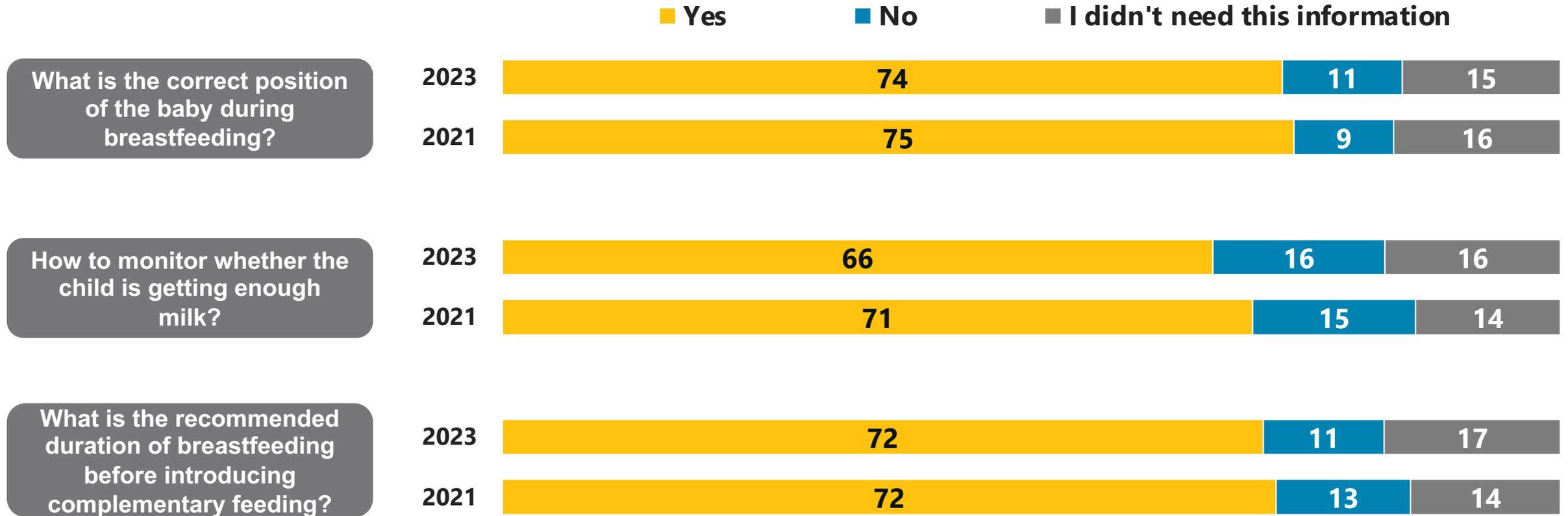
Where did you MOST OFTEN inform yourself about breastfeeding? Second most often, third? Multiple answers.  
 Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679 (2021), N = 553 (2023)

# RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION

(cross-wave comparison)

Regardless of the source, most mothers are satisfied with the information obtained regarding breastfeeding. So, approximately 70% describe the obtained information about breastfeeding aspects as clear and relevant. There are no significant differences compared with the previous wave in regard to the correct position of the baby during breastfeeding (74%), recommended duration of breastfeeding before introducing complementary feeding (72%) and how to monitor whether the child is getting enough milk (66%).

Data in %



Regardless of the method/source you used/use, are you getting clear and relevant information on the following issues?

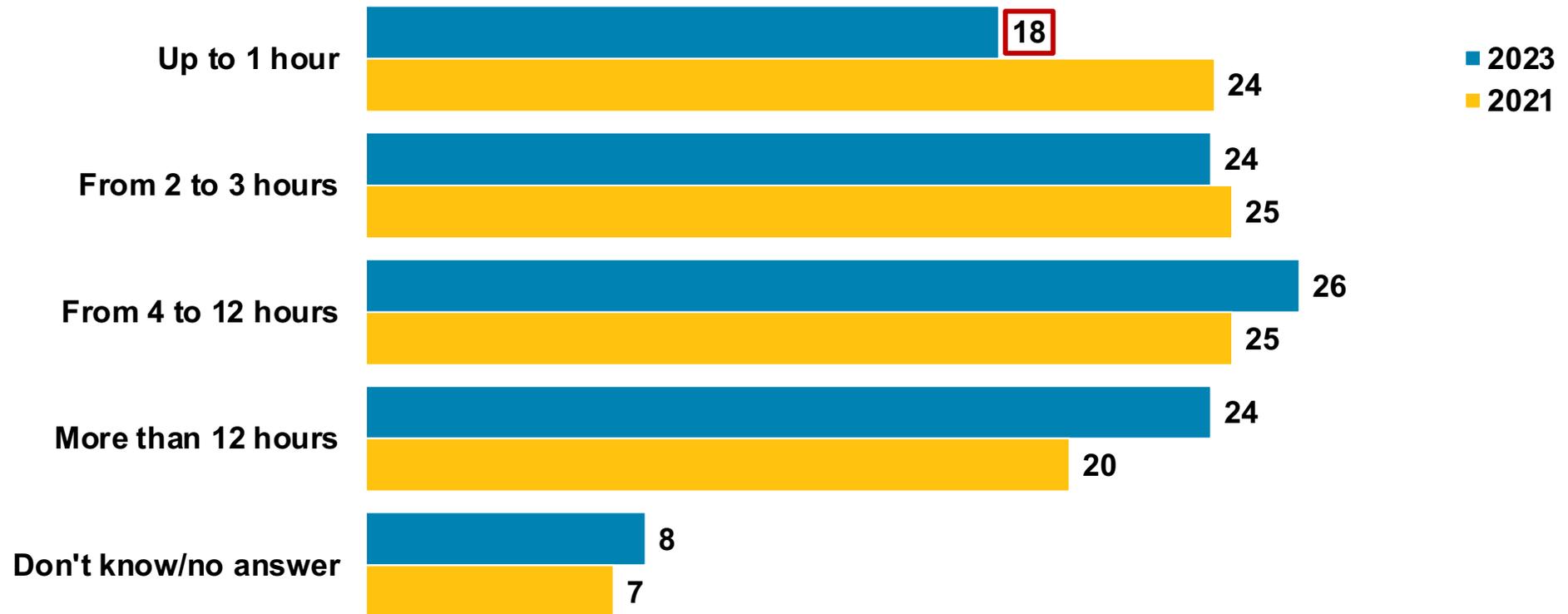
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679 (2021), N = 553 (2023)

# INITIATION OF BREASTFEEDING

*(cross-wave comparison)*

In general, the practice of initiation of breastfeeding varies a lot. There is not much discrepancy between the two waves, one quarter of mothers breastfed their baby in the first two to three hours after birth, another quarter in the first four to 12 hours, and a quarter after more than 12 hours. The difference from 2021 is the substantially less common practice of the first breastfeed in the first hour after birth, given that fewer than a fifth of mothers reported this experience in the latest wave.

Data in %



When was the first breastfeeding, how long after birth?  
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679 (2021), N = 553 (2023)

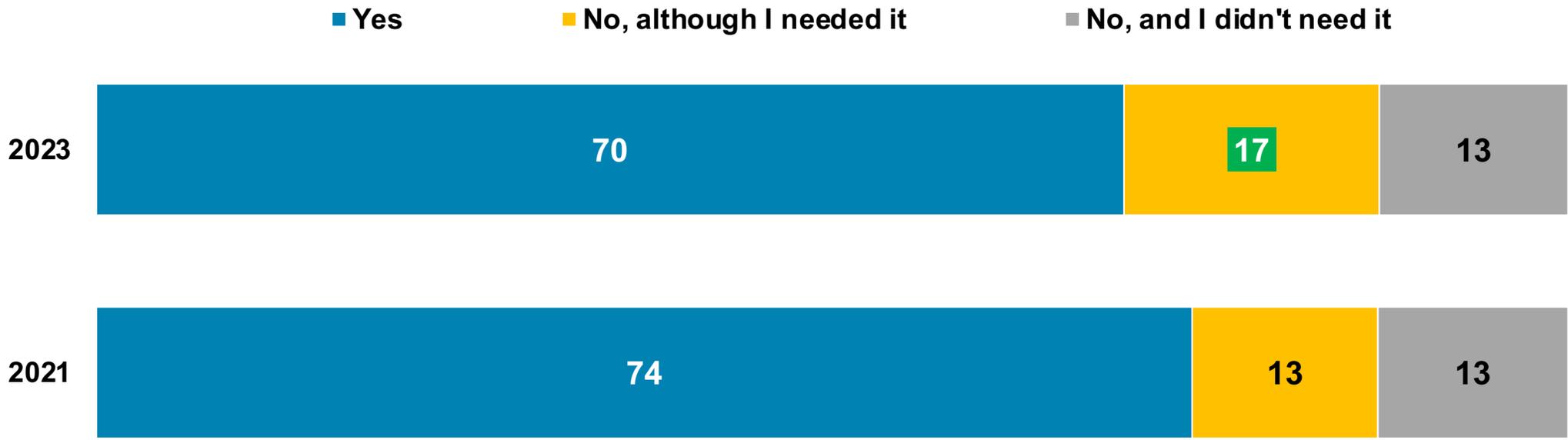
  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# SUPPORT WITH BREASTFEEDING IN THE MATERNITY WARD

*(cross-wave comparison)*

As suggested by the results of the previous survey, most mothers got assistance and support with breastfeeding by talking to nurses, doctors or midwives (70%), while 13% had no such experience because they didn't need it. However, 17% of mothers had no support although they needed it, which is a lot more than in 2021.

Data in %



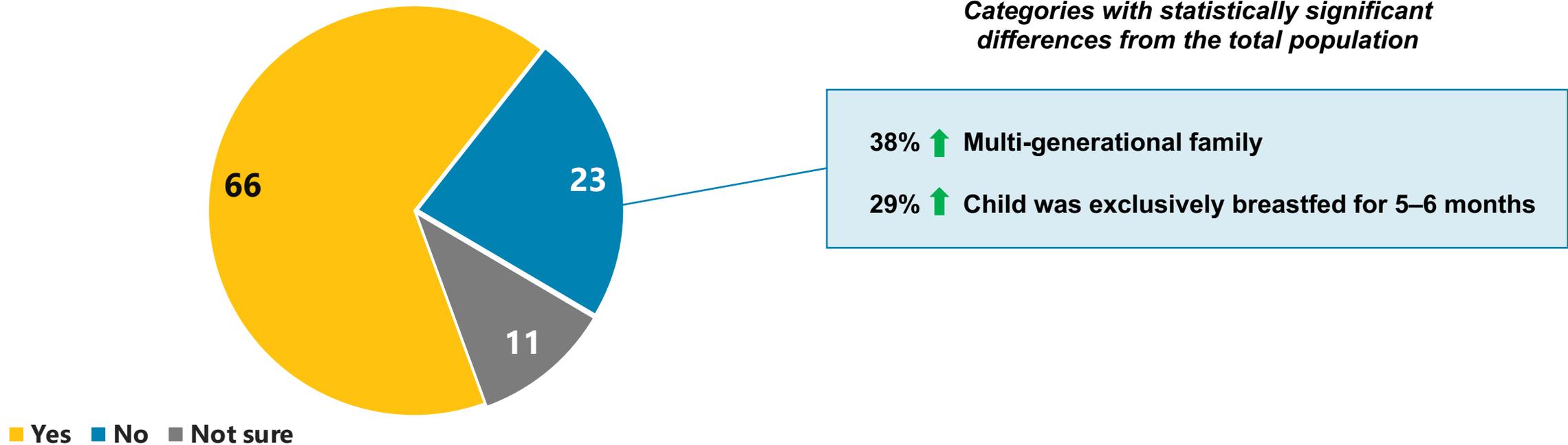
Did you have help and support with breastfeeding at the maternity hospital, in the sense that the nurse, doctor or midwife talked to you about it or showed you how to breastfeed your baby properly?  
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679 (2021), N = 553 (2023)

17 Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
13 Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING OF BABY IN THE MATERNITY WARD (2023)

Two out of three mothers confirmed that their baby was fed with formula milk in the maternity hospital, almost quarter of mothers denied it and one in ten wasn't sure. Women who live in multi-generational families (38%), as well as mothers of children who were exclusively breastfed for at least five months, were far more likely than average to say that their babies weren't given formula milk at the maternity hospital.

Data in %



Was your baby fed or supplemented with formula milk at the maternity ward?  
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 553

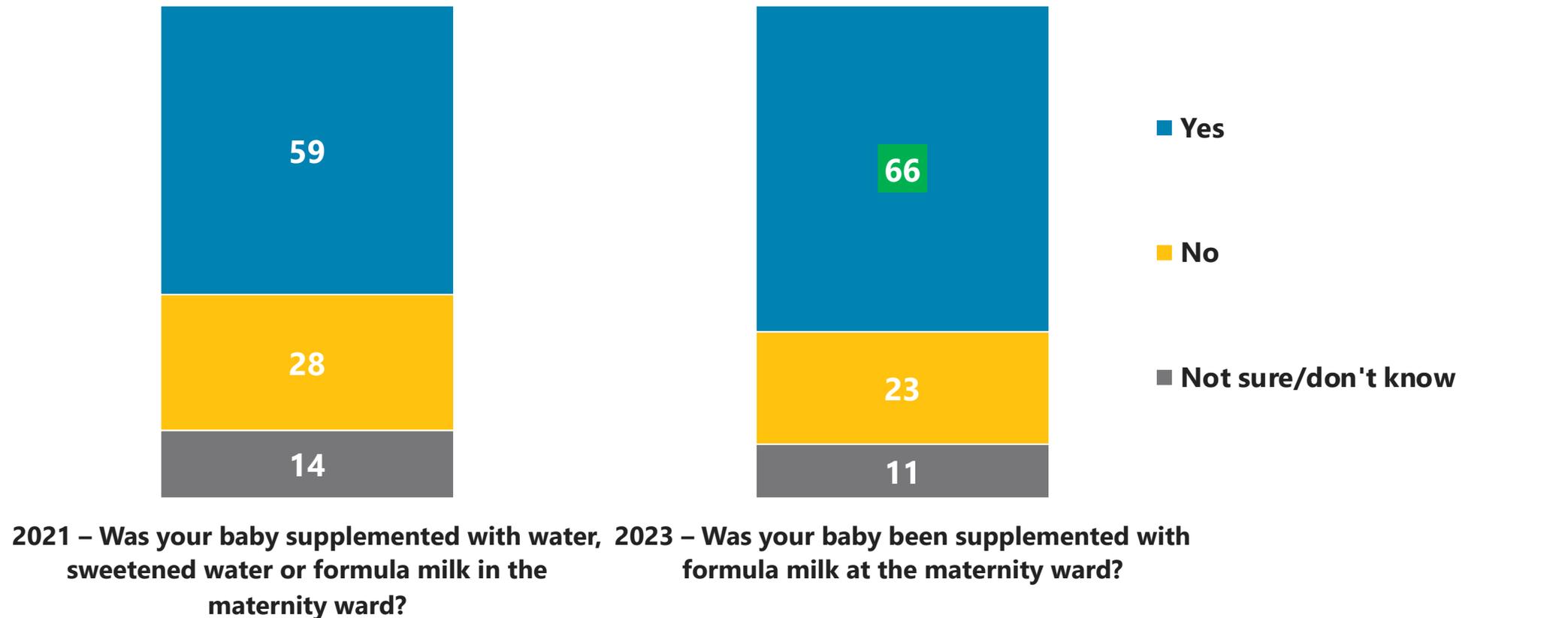
↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING OF BABY IN THE MATERNITY HOSPITAL

(cross-wave comparison)

Although this question is slightly different in this wave, it is obvious that supplementary feeding has become more common (66% compared to 59% in 2021).

Data in %

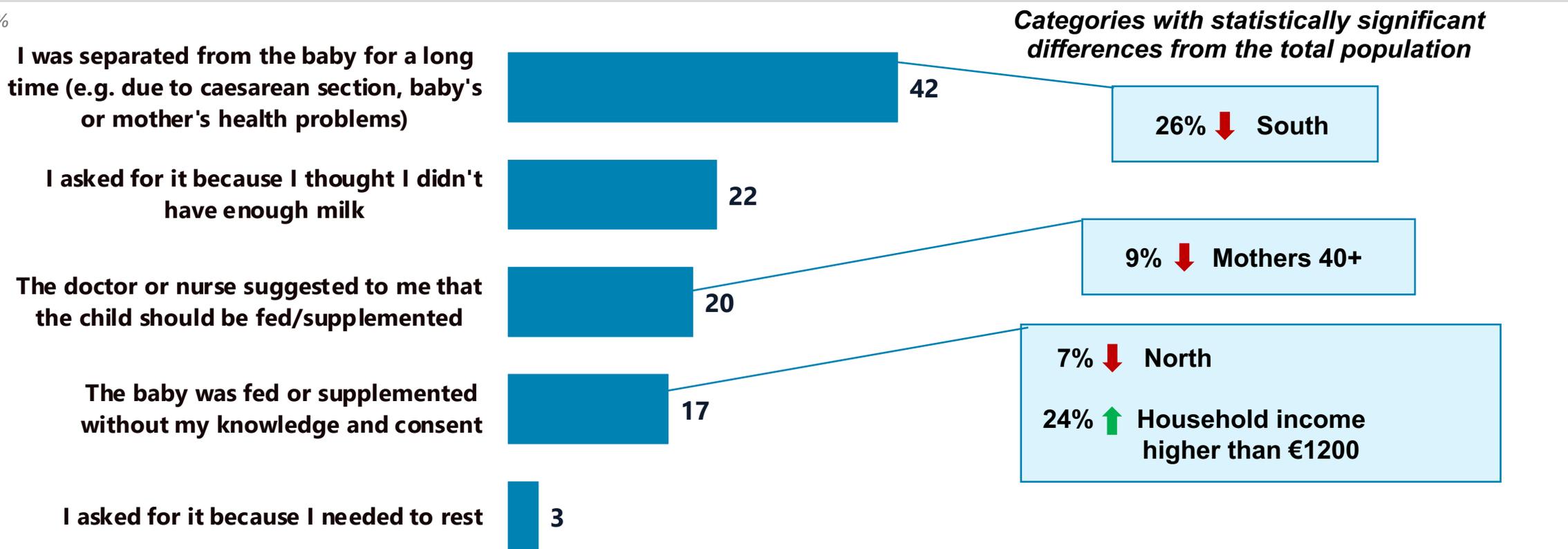


# SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING – REASONS

(2023)

The most common reason for supplementary feeding at the maternity hospital was the physical separation of the baby from the mother for a longer period of time (42%), however mothers who live in the south of the country were less likely to mention it (26%). One fifth of mothers mentioned insufficient milk, while supplementary feeding was recommended by medical workers to one fifth of mothers – less likely to mothers older than 40 (9%). A somewhat smaller share (17%) state that supplementary feeding was introduced to the baby without their knowledge and consent, which was less likely to be the case in the north of the country (7%), but this is more often reported by mothers from households with high incomes (24%). In addition, it wasn't explained to 60% of these mothers why supplementary feeding was necessary. Only 3% of mothers asked for supplementary feeding because they needed to rest.

Data in %



For what reason was the baby fed or supplemented in the maternity hospital?

Base: Mothers whose babies received supplementary feeding in the maternity hospital, N = 364

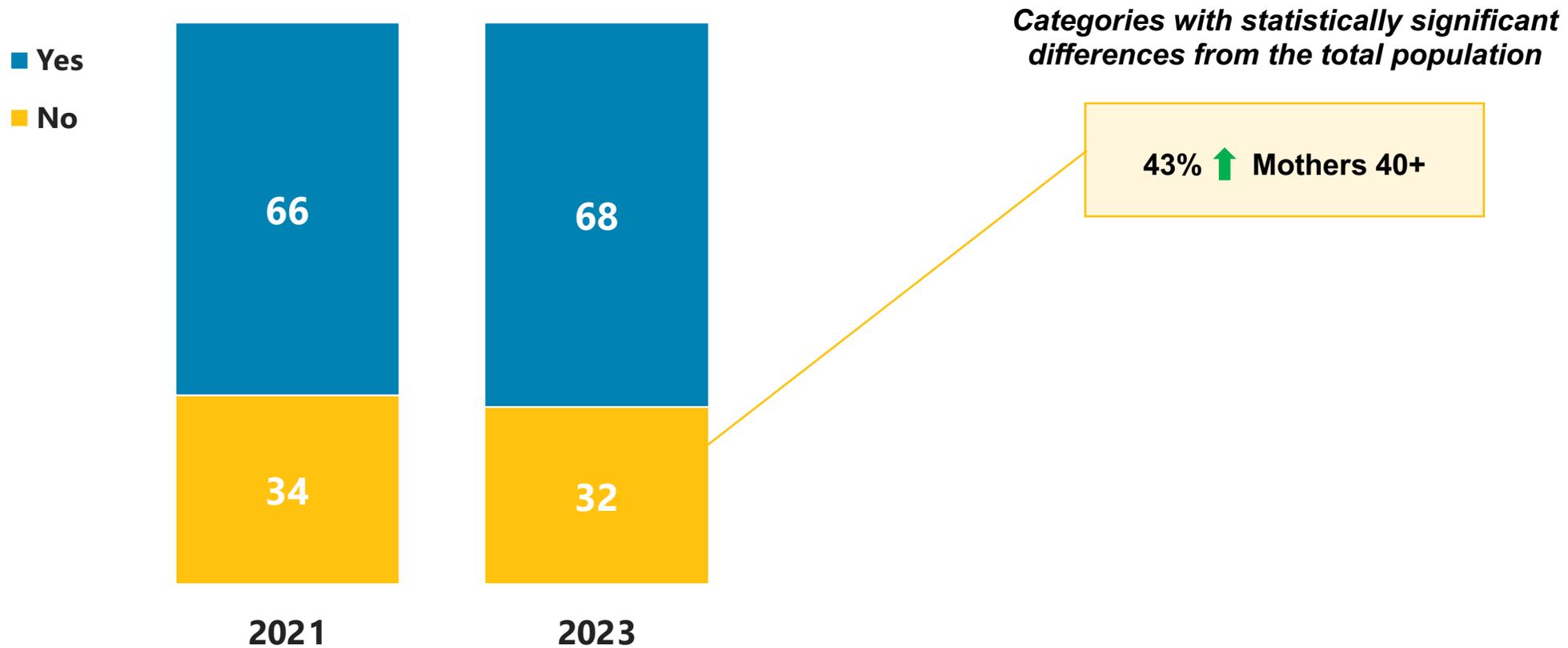
↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population

↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT UPON DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL

This survey wave confirms the results of the previous wave – most mothers had breastfeeding support immediately upon returning home by family members or professionals. More precisely, two thirds were supported, while one third were not. Mothers above 40 years of age were more likely to be in the latter group.

Data in %



↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

Did you in the first 72 hours, i.e. 3 days, after returning home, have help and support with breastfeeding from either family members or professionals?

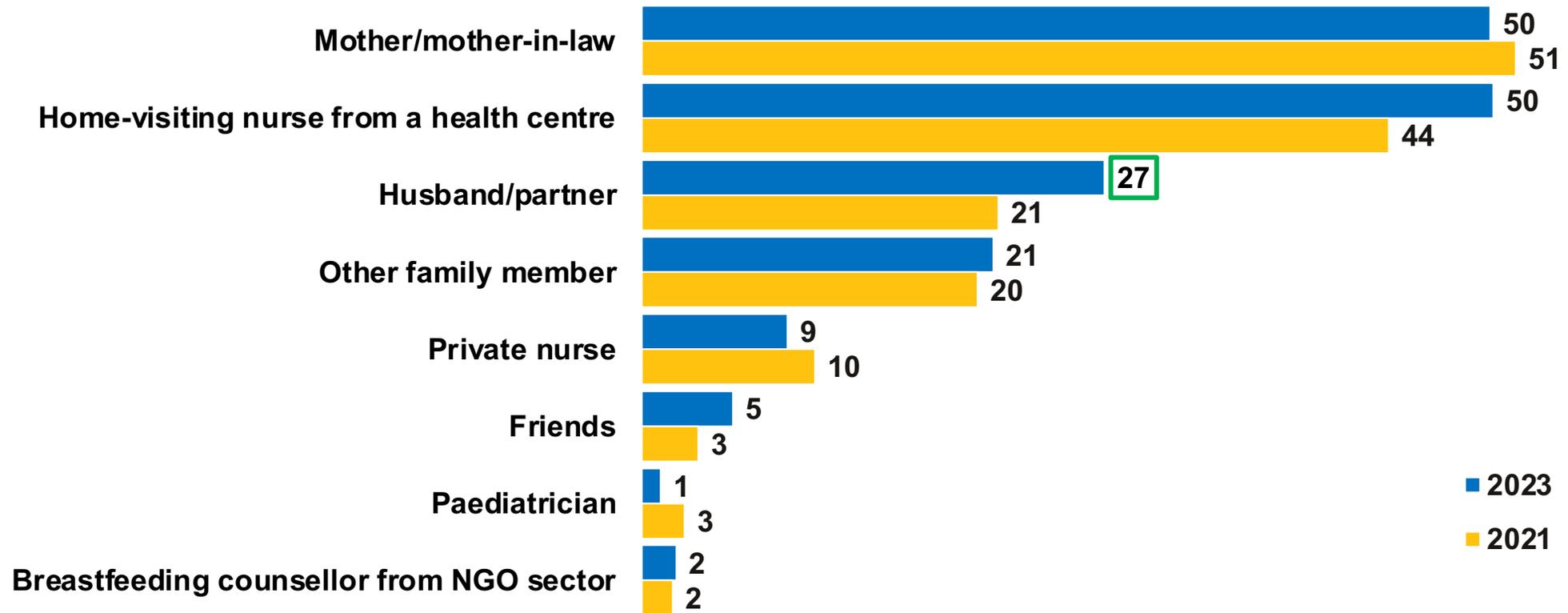
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679 (2021), N = 553 (2023)

# BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT UPON DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL

*(cross-wave comparison)*

There are mainly no differences between the two waves in regard to received support, except in one instance – mothers seem to rely on their partner’s support a lot more than they used to (27% compared to 21% in 2021). The situation is similar to that in 2021 in regard to other people who helped – half of mothers were supported by their mother or mother-in-law, or home-visiting nurses from health centres, one fifth were assisted by another family member, one in ten mothers hired a private nurse, while fewer mothers were supported by friends, paediatricians or breastfeeding counsellors from the NGO sector.

Data in %



Who helped you? Multiple answers

Base: Mothers who had help with breastfeeding immediately upon their return from the maternity hospital, N = 451 (2021), N = 377 (2023)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021

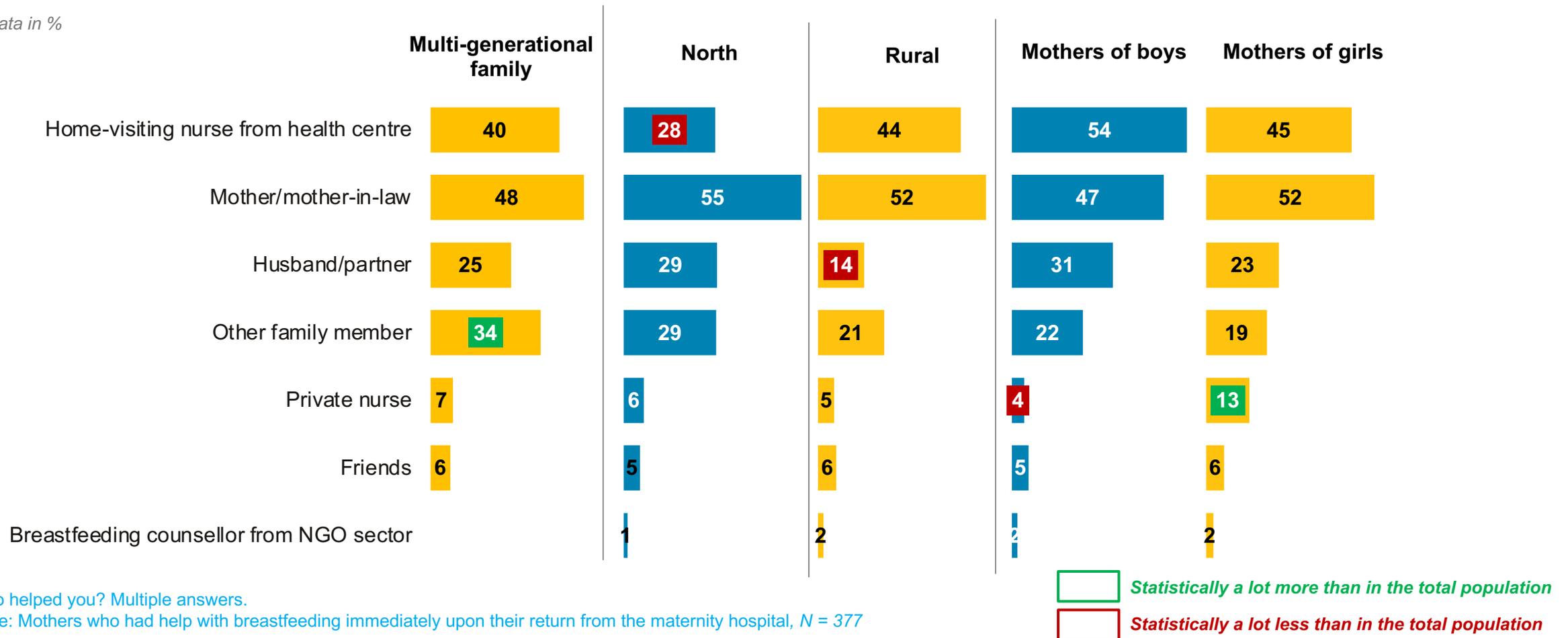
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT UPON DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Mothers who live in the north were a lot less likely than average to get help with breastfeeding from home-visiting nurses from health centres (28%), while mothers who live in rural areas were less likely to be supported by their partner (14%). As for mothers who live in multi-generational families, they were more likely to be assisted by other family members (34%). Additionally, mothers of girls report more often than mothers of boys that they hired a private nurse to help them with breastfeeding (13% vs. 4%).

Data in %



Who helped you? Multiple answers.

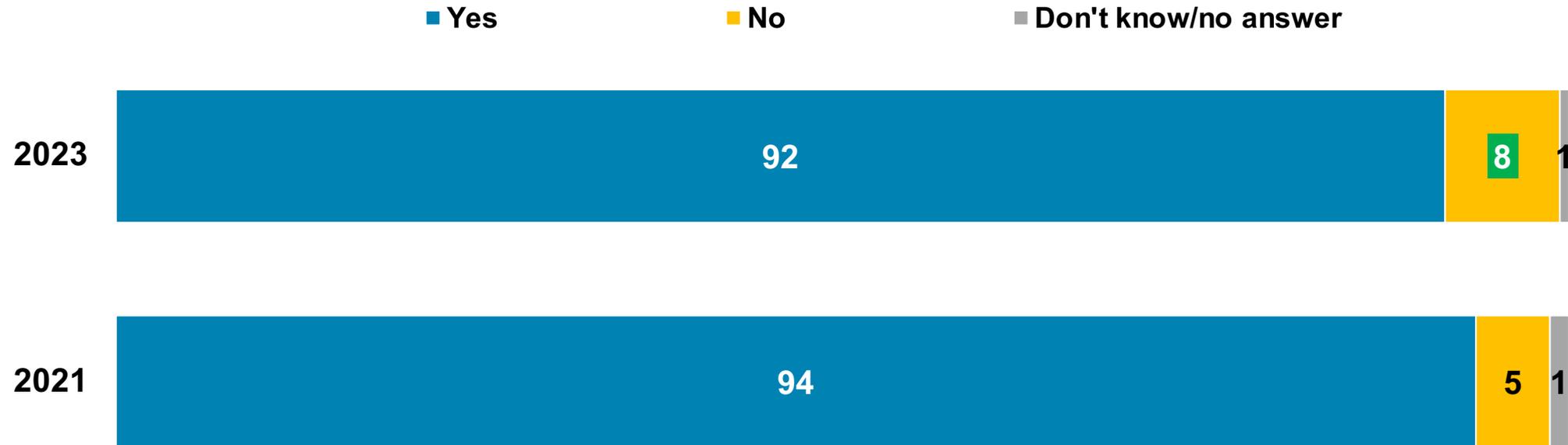
Base: Mothers who had help with breastfeeding immediately upon their return from the maternity hospital, N = 377

# IMPROVEMENT OF BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

(cross-wave comparison)

Just as in 2021, the vast majority of breastfeeding mothers agree that it is necessary to improve the support that mothers receive from health workers in order to successfully breastfeed (92%).

Data in %



Do you think that it is necessary to improve the support that mothers receive from health workers in order to successfully breastfeed?  
Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679 (2021), N = 553 (2023)

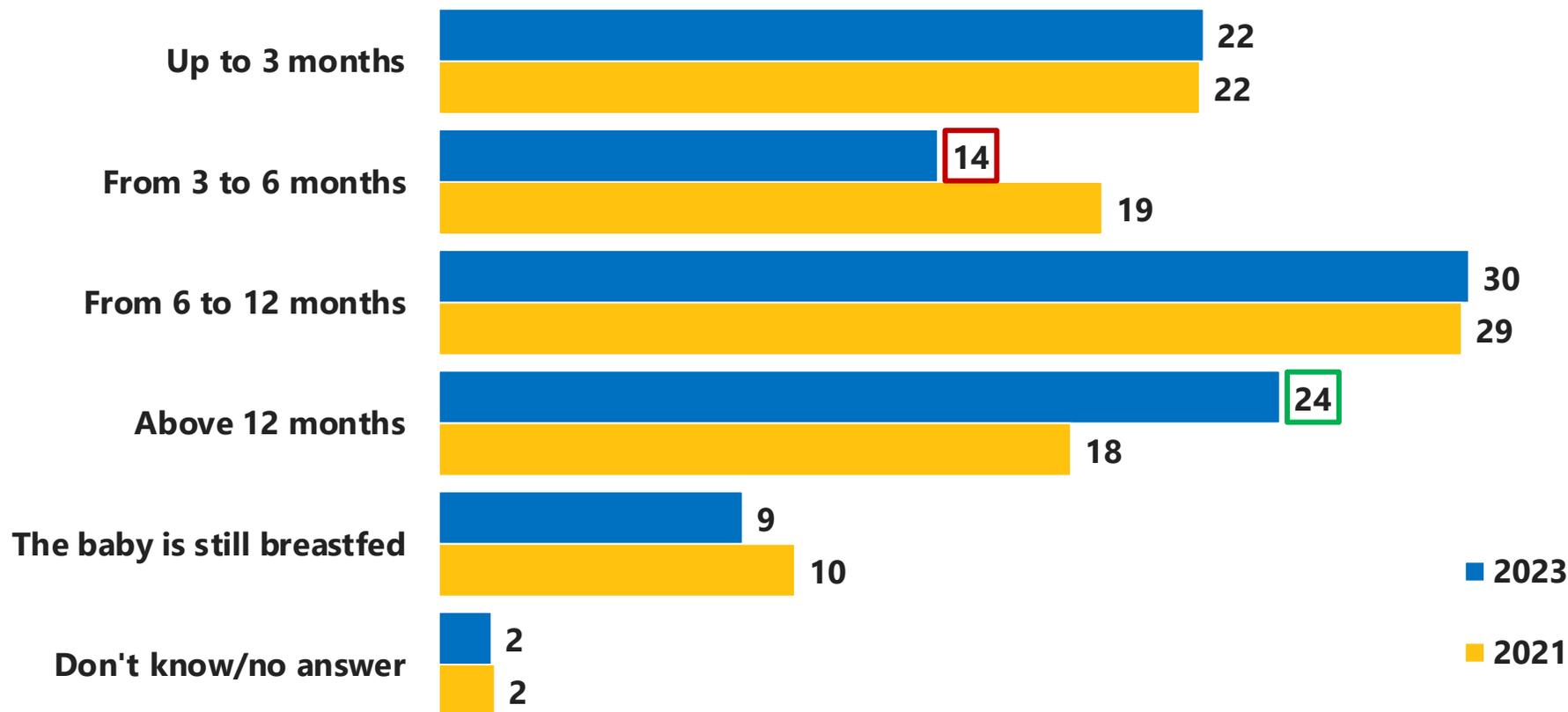
8 Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
5 Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# DURATION OF BREASTFEEDING OF A CHILD

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Mothers' experiences in relation to the duration of breastfeeding are quite diverse and they also vary between the two waves. On the one hand, just as in 2021, the most frequent response was that the baby was breastfed for between six and 12 months (30%), while one fifth again stated that the child was breastfed for three months. On the other hand, this wave data suggests that breastfeeding a child for more than 12 months was more common (24%), while breastfeeding for three to six months was less common (14%).

Data in %



24 Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
14 Statistically a lot less than in 2021

For how long after birth was the child breastfed?

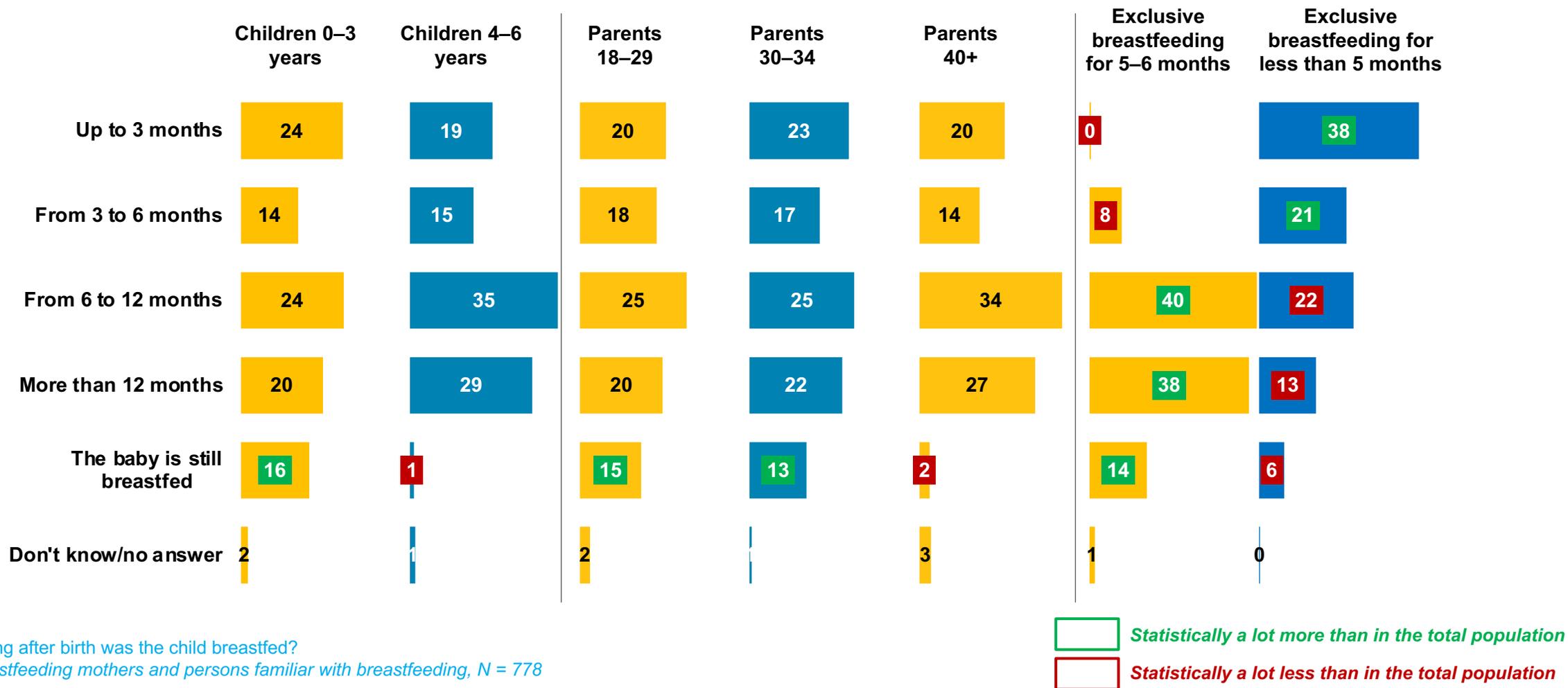
Base: Breastfeeding mothers and persons familiar with breastfeeding, N = 775 (2021), N = 778 (2023)

# DURATION OF BREASTFEEDING A CHILD

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population )*

Relevant differences between socio-demographic groups are related to the period of exclusive breastfeeding. Quite expectedly, parents whose children were exclusively breastfed for five to six months were more likely than others to say that the total breastfeeding period was a year or longer. On the other hand, those whose children were exclusively breastfed for less than five months were more likely than average to say that the total breastfeeding period was three or six months.

Data in %



For how long after birth was the child breastfed?

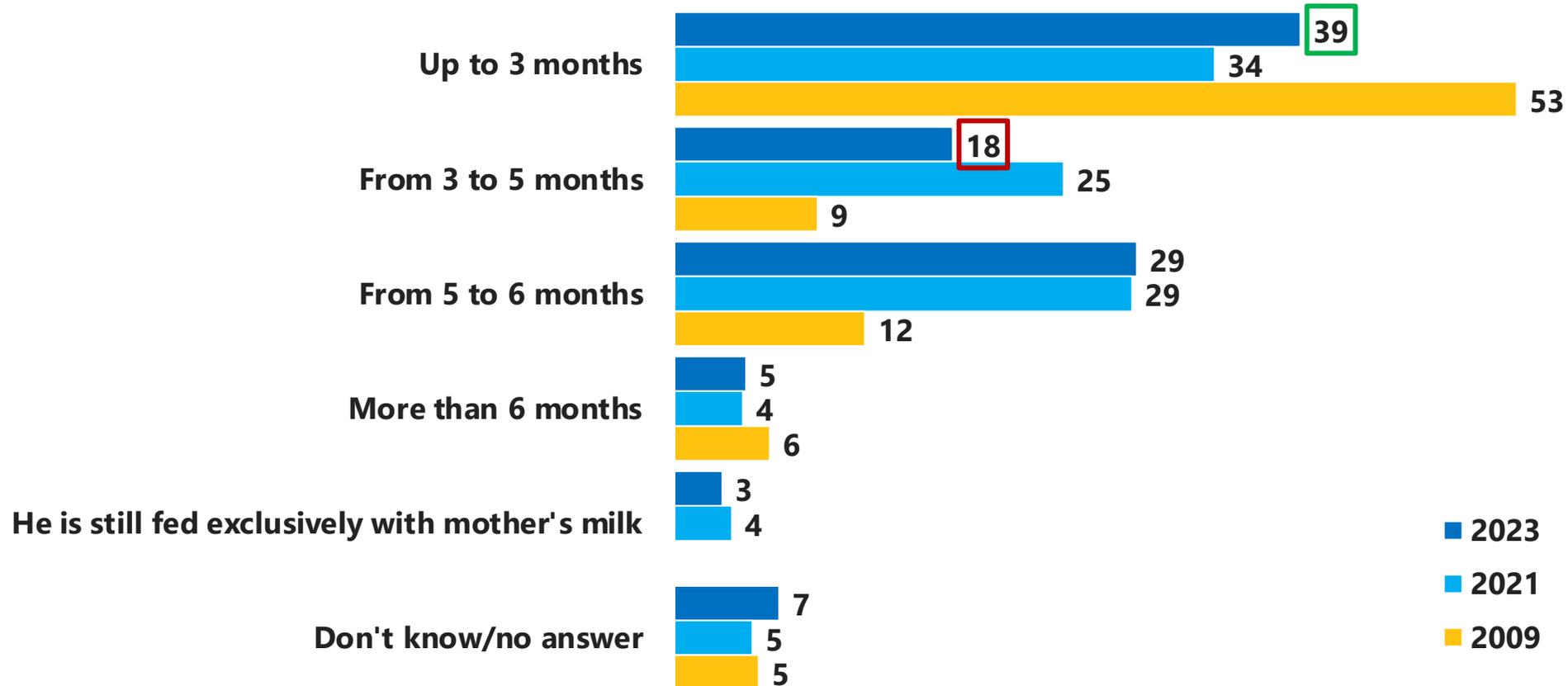
Base: Breastfeeding mothers and persons familiar with breastfeeding, N = 778

# EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING

(cross-wave comparison)

Although exclusive breastfeeding for up to three months was more common in this survey wave than in the previous survey wave, and less common for up to five months, a positive trend can still be noted in the past 10–15 years, given that in 2009 only one fifth of respondents familiar with breastfeeding practices reported that children were exclusively breastfed for between three and six months, while almost one half of those familiar with breastfeeding practices confirm it now.

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

How long after birth was the child exclusively breastfed (even without giving water)?

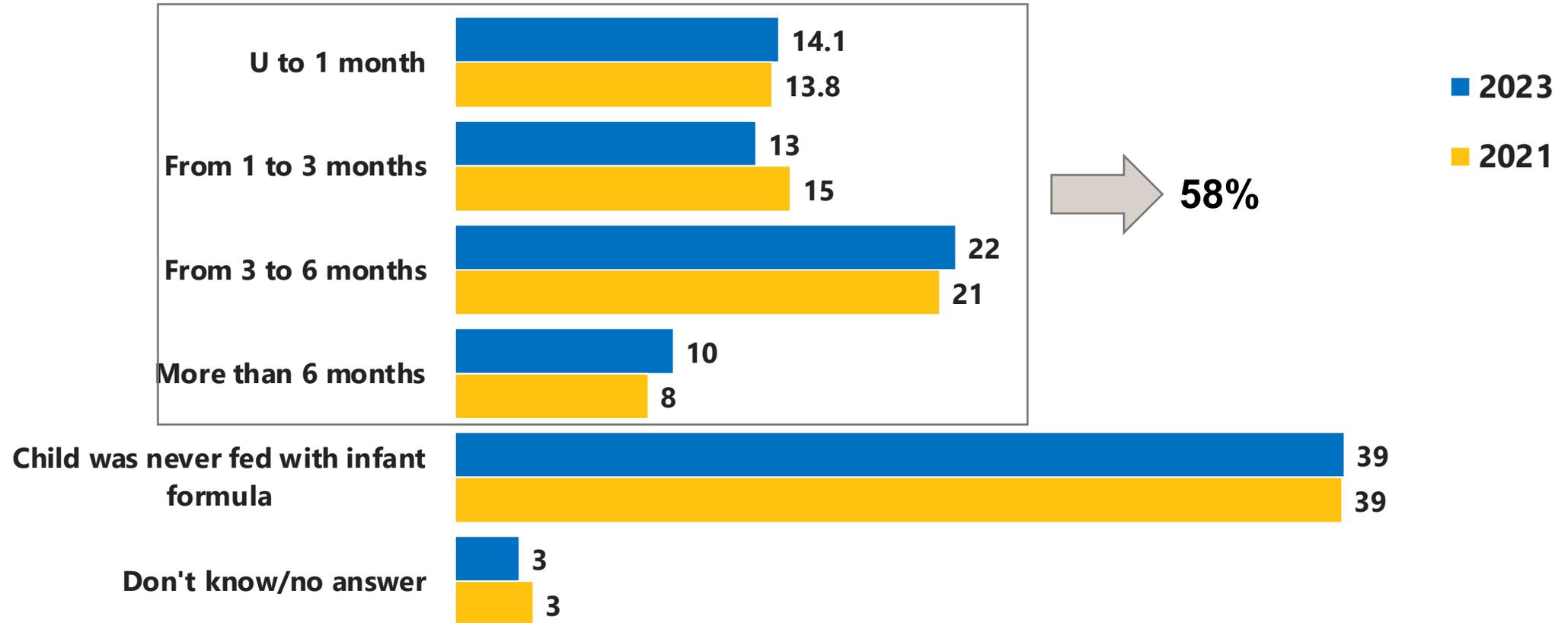
Base: Breastfeeding mothers and persons familiar with breastfeeding, N = 801 (2009), N = 775 (2021), N = 778 (2023)

# SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING WITH INFANT FORMULA

(cross-wave comparison)

Cross-wave comparison suggests no notable differences in regard to introducing supplementary feeding with infant formula – while three fifths of those familiar with breastfeeding practices said that their child was fed in this way, two fifths reported the opposite. Supplementary feeding is usually introduced between the third and the fifth months (22%), 14% supplemented their child’s diet as early as in the first month after birth, a similar share did it between the first and the third months, and one in ten after six months.

Data in %



How long after birth was supplementary feeding with infant formula introduced?

Base: Breastfeeding mothers and persons familiar with breastfeeding practices (child is not being fed mother's milk only at the moment), N = 749 (2021), N = 755 (2023)

Statistically a lot more than in 2021

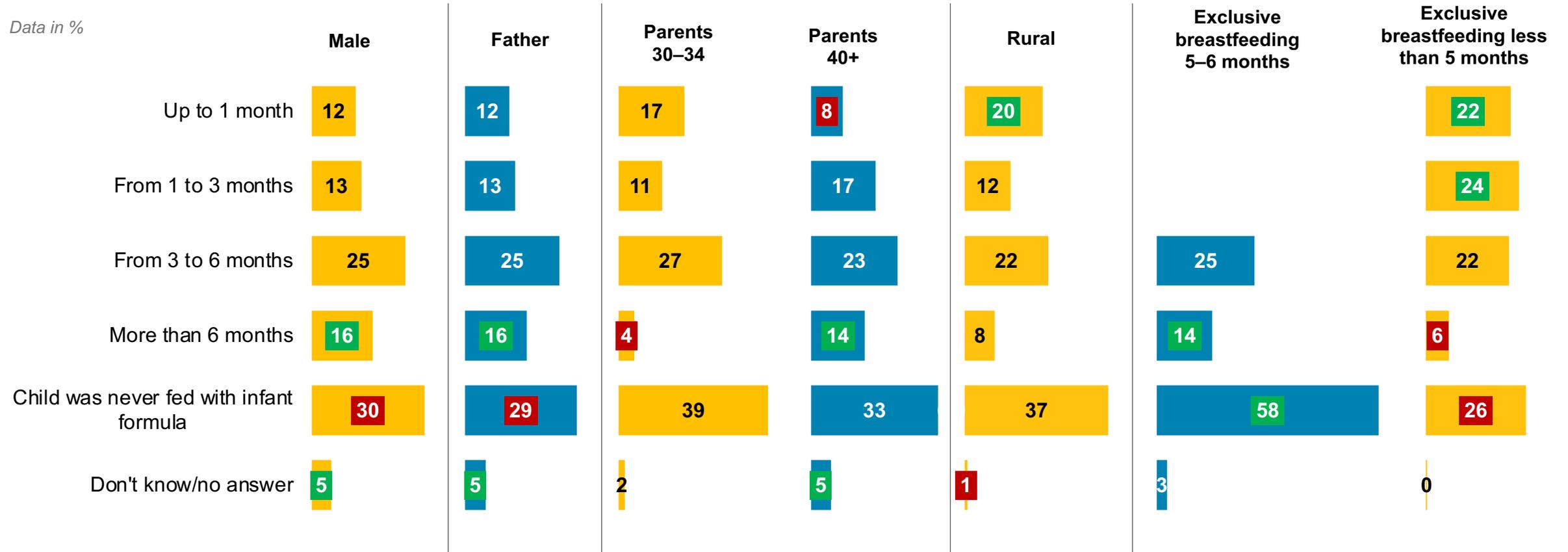
Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING WITH INFANT FORMULA

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population )*

Parents whose children were exclusively breastfed for less than five months, quite expectedly, were more likely to say that supplementary feeding with infant formula was introduced during the first three months after birth. On the other hand, children who were exclusively breastfed for at least five months were more likely to be introduced this type of feeding after six or more months (14%), or never (58%). Introduction of supplementary feeding with infant formula seemed to be more common in rural areas. Men/fathers and parents older than 40 were more likely than average to say that infant formula was introduced after child's six or more months of age.

Data in %



How long after birth was supplementary feeding with infant formula introduced?  
 Base: Breastfeeding mothers and persons familiar with breastfeeding practices (child is not being fed mother's milk only at the moment), N = 755

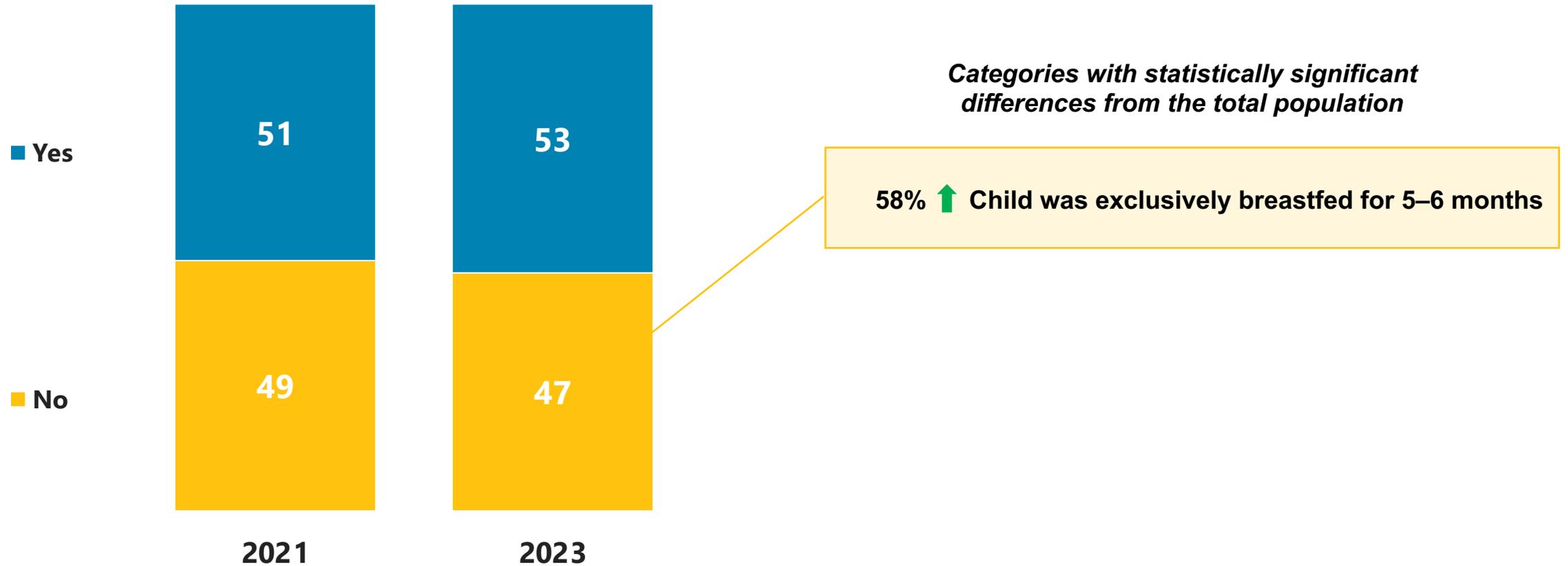
  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# DIFFICULTIES WITH BREASTFEEDING

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Similar to the previous wave, almost half of the mothers faced difficulties related to breastfeeding. Mothers who were exclusively breastfeeding their children for at least five months were more likely to deny having such problems (58%).

Data in %



Have you experienced any problems or challenges/difficulties with breastfeeding the child we are talking about (not enough milk, various problems with the breasts or nipples, the baby had a hard time learning how to suckle, etc.)?

Base: Breastfeeding mothers, N = 679 (2021), N = 553 (2023)

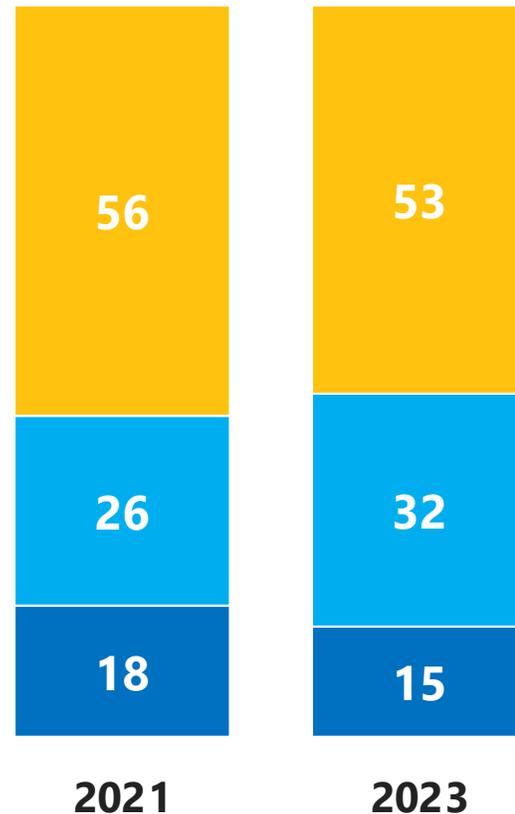
↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# THE IMPACT OF THE DIFFICULTY ON THE CONTINUATION OF BREASTFEEDING *(cross-wave comparison)*

Almost half of the mothers who experienced breastfeeding problems were persistent and continued to breastfeed exclusively. A third of mothers did not stop breastfeeding, but they had to introduce supplementary feeding, while 15% stopped breastfeeding due to the difficulties they were faced with. Quite expectedly, mothers who exclusively breastfed for at least five months were significantly more persistent in overcoming breastfeeding difficulties (85%) than mothers who breastfed their children exclusively for a shorter period of time (40%).

Data in %

- I was persistent to solve the problem and continue exclusive breastfeeding
- I didn't stop breastfeeding, but I had to introduce supplementary feeding with infant formula
- I stopped breastfeeding the child completely



**Categories with statistically significant differences from the total population**

85% ↑ Exclusive breastfeeding 5–6 months

40% ↓ Exclusive breastfeeding less than 5 months

How did these problems affect the continuation of breastfeeding the child?  
Base: Mothers who had problems with breastfeeding, N = 344 (2021), N = 292 (2023)

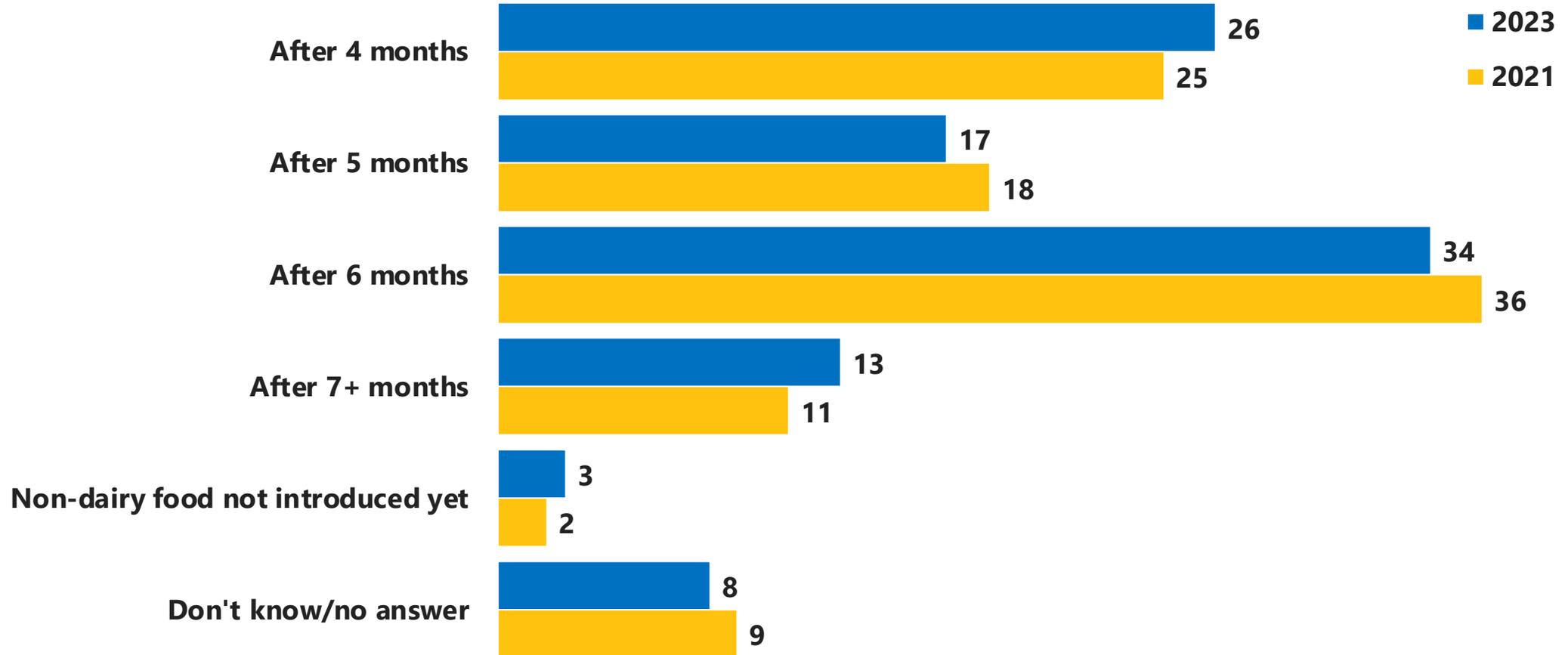
↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# INTRODUCING COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Just as in the previous wave, parents/caregivers were most likely to say that complementary foods were introduced after six months of age (34%). One quarter said that it was at the age of four months, and 17% five months.

Data in %



How long after birth were complementary foods introduced?

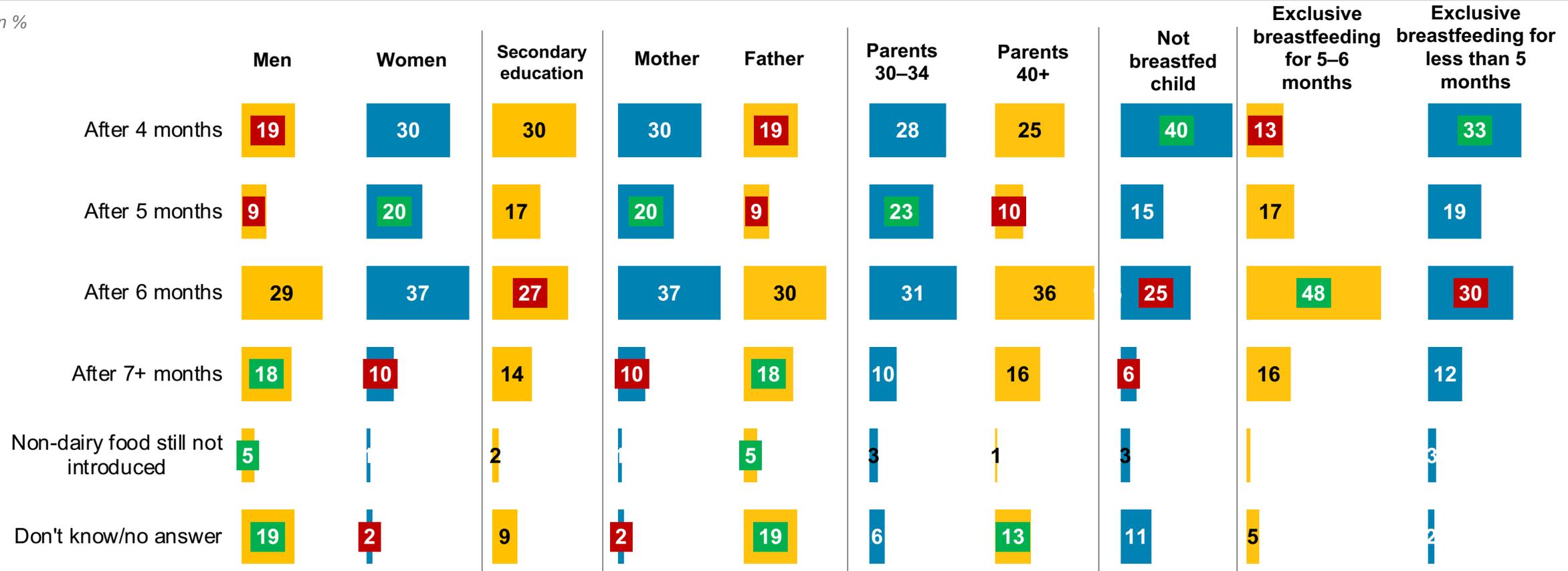
Base: Total target population, unless the child hasn't been introduced complementary food yet, N = 974 (2021), N = 972 (2023)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# INTRODUCTION OF COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING *(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

The experiences of introducing complementary feeding differ extensively in different socio-demographic categories. Complementary foods are more likely to be introduced as early as after the child's fourth month by parents of non-breastfed children (40%) and of children who were exclusively breastfed for less than five months (33%). Mothers/women (20%), as well as parents aged 30 to 34 years (23%), were more likely to report introducing complementary foods at the age of five months. Mothers/women (20%), as well as parents aged 30 to 34 years (23%), were more likely to report introducing complementary foods at the age of five months. Parents of children who were breastfed for at least five months (48%) were more likely to report introducing this type of nutrition at the age of six months. Men/fathers were more likely to report it after the seventh month of age (18%).

Data in %



How long after birth was the child introduced to complementary feeding?

Base: Total target population, unless the child has not yet been introduced a non-dairy diet, N = 972

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

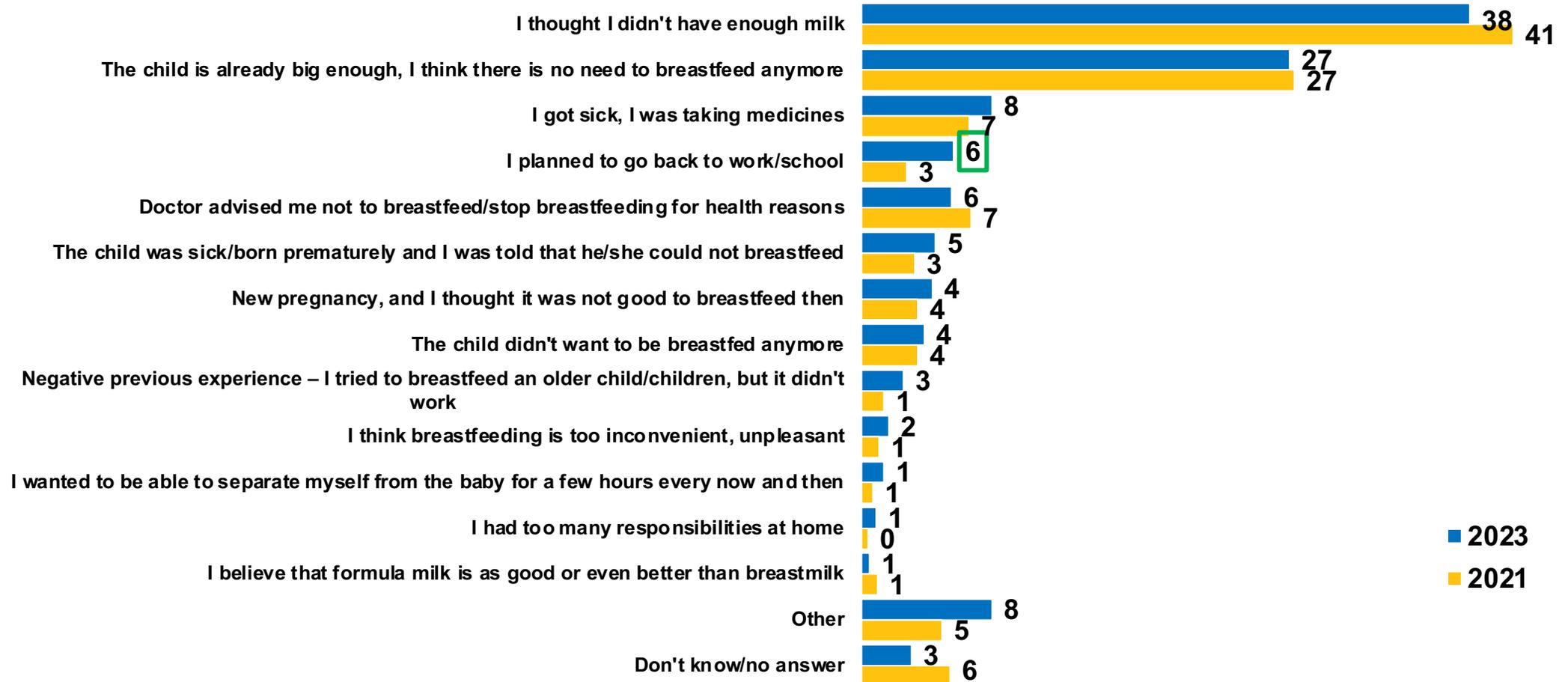
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# REASONS FOR NOT BREASTFEEDING/STOPPING BREASTFEEDING

(cross-wave comparison)

The main reasons for not breastfeeding or stopping breastfeeding remain the same as in 2021 – it's most usually the mother's belief that she didn't have enough milk (38%), followed by the opinion that the child has already grown enough (27%). The only statistically important difference refers to the motive of returning to work, which is now mentioned by double the number of mothers (6% compared to 3%).

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

Could you please state the reasons why you did not breastfeed or stopped breastfeeding the child we are talking about? Multiple answers.

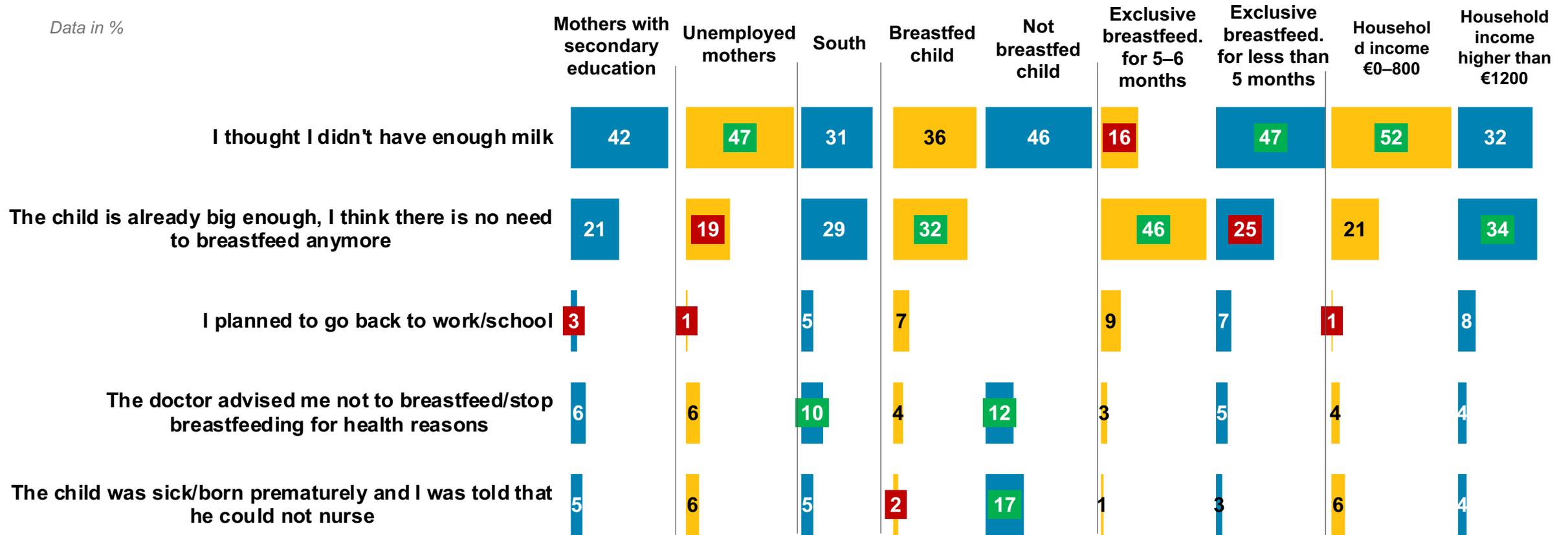
Base: Mothers who have never breastfed or have stopped breastfeeding, N = 732 (2021), N = 628 (2023)

# REASONS FOR NOT BREASTFEEDING/STOPPING BREASTFEEDING

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Unemployed mothers (47%), as well as those who exclusively breastfed for less than five months (47%), and those from households with lower income (52%), were more likely than other mothers who stopped breastfeeding to believe that they didn't have enough milk. The assessment that the child is too big to be breastfed was more likely to be mentioned by the parents of breastfed children (32%) and in cases when child was breastfed for more than 5–6 months (46%). As for those whose children were not breastfed, they were more likely to state that it was the doctor's advice due to health reasons (12%) or that the child was sick/born prematurely and they were told that h/she could not breastfeed (17%). The doctor's advice not to breastfeed was more widespread in the south of the country.

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

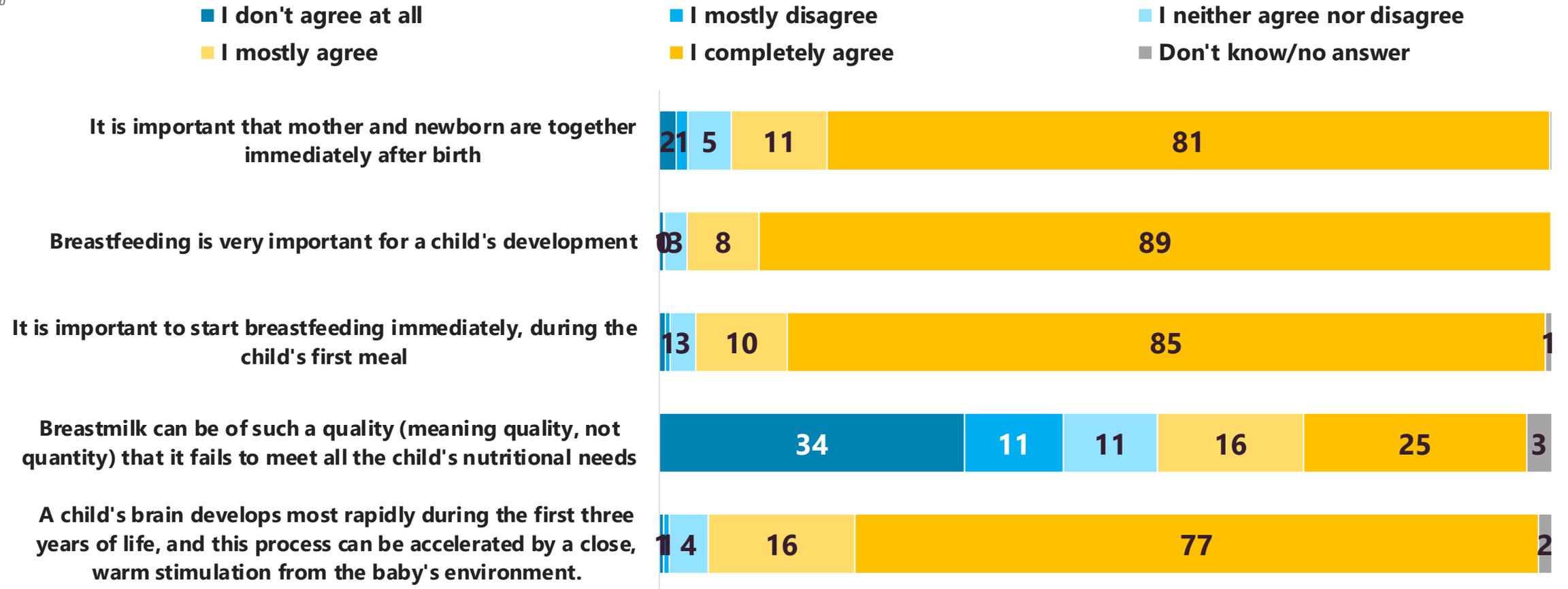
Could you please state the reasons why you did not breastfeed or stopped breastfeeding the child we are talking about?

Base: Mothers who have never breastfed or have stopped breastfeeding, N = 628

# ATTITUDES TOWARD STATEMENTS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (2023)

Almost all parents/caregivers agree that breastfeeding is very important for child development (97%) and that it should be started from the first child's meal (95%). The vast majority believes that it is important for mother and baby to be together immediately after birth (92%), as well as that a child's brain develops fastest during the first three years, which can be stimulated with a close and warm surrounding (93%). However, the opinion about the quality of mother's milk is not uniform – almost half believe that it is possible for mother's milk not to meet all the child's needs for nutrients, 41% disagree and 11% are hesitant.

Data in %



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

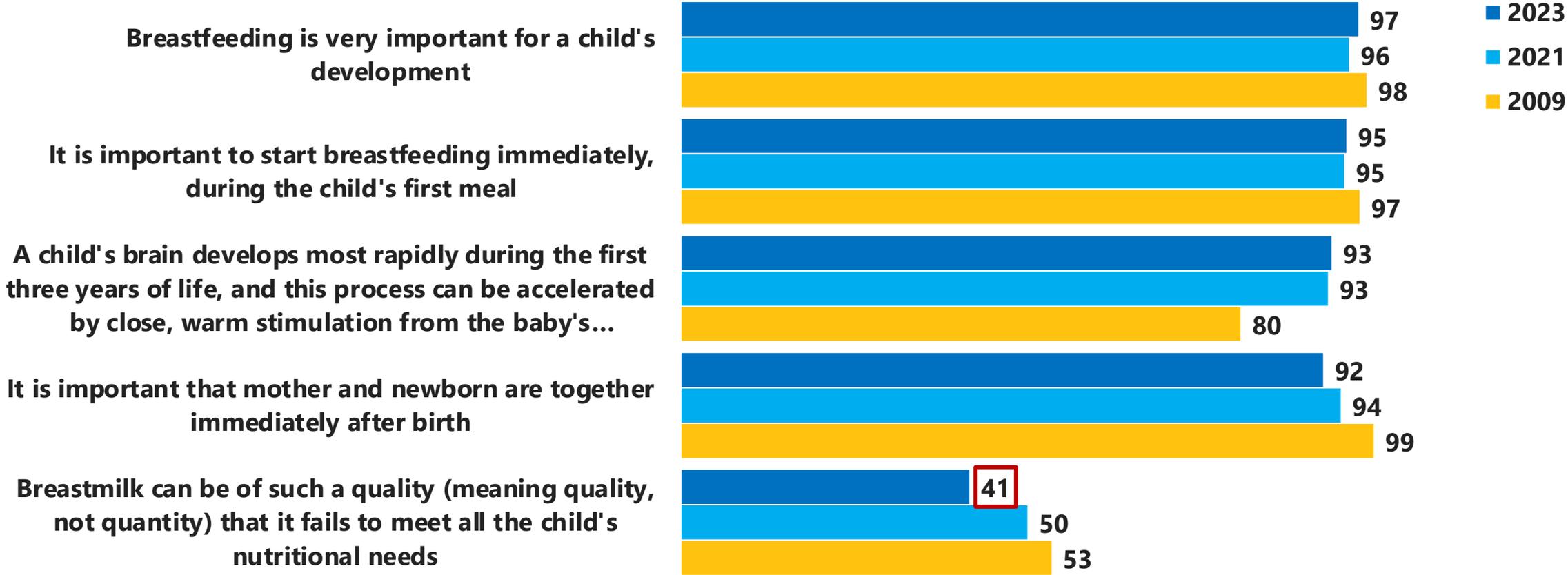
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# ATTITUDES TOWARD STATEMENTS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

(cross-wave comparison: I mainly agree + I completely agree)

Cross-wave comparison detects no differences between the last two waves, except for the opinion about the quality of mother's milk. The share of those who believe that it's possible for mother's milk not to meet all child's needs for nutrients is significantly smaller in this wave. If we compare the results of the 2009. wave, we may see that agreement with this opinion keeps decreasing.

Data in %



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?  
Base: Total target population, N = 1006 (2009), N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

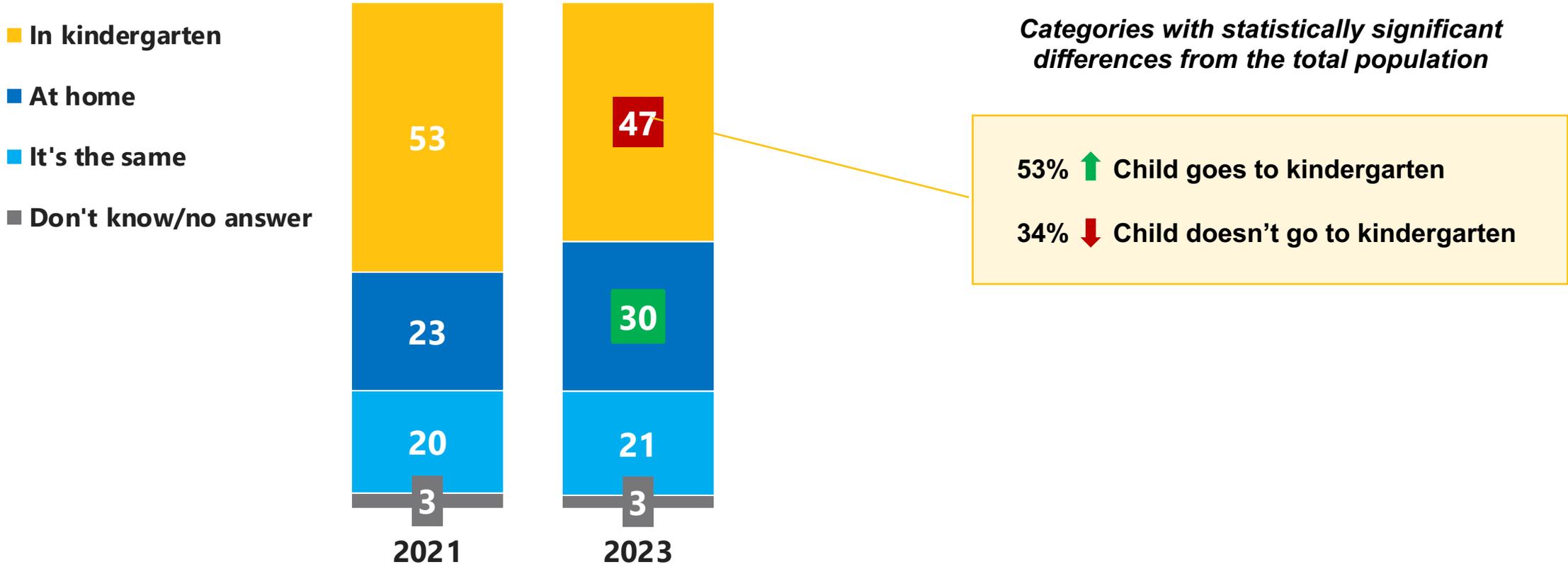


# DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS IN PRESCHOOLS AND AT HOME

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Although the majority of parents/caregivers, in both waves, agree that the child will better master the abilities and skills relevant for preschool age in kindergarten than at home, in this wave the share of those who favoured kindergarten was substantially smaller (47%). Quite expectedly, parents/caregivers, whose children were enrolled in kindergarten, were more likely to state that kindergarten was a better environment for children's development (53%).

Data in %



In your opinion, can a child better learn and master the most important abilities and skills that he needs to master by the age of 6 in kindergarten or at home?

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
 ↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# THE MAIN ROLE OF KINDERGARTEN

*(cross-wave comparison)*

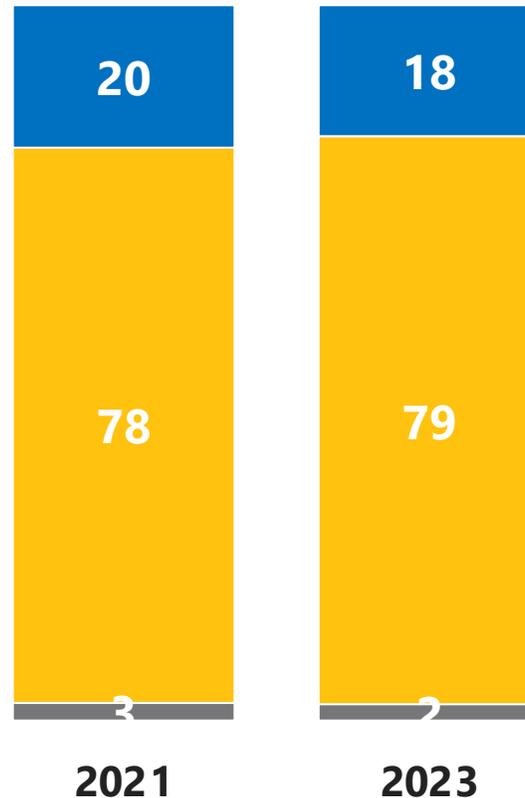
Just as in the previous wave, four out of five parents/caregivers believe that the basic role of the kindergarten is to contribute to child development and enable the acquisition of adequate knowledge and skills, while about a fifth see the main purpose of kindergarten as helping employed parents with childcare. This latter attitude is more common among unemployed parents/caregivers (26%), as well as those whose children don't go to kindergarten (32%).

Data in %

■ The basic role of kindergartens is to help working parents with childcare

■ The basic role of the kindergarten is to contribute to the early development of the child and enable the acquisition of adequate knowledge and skills

■ Don't know/no answer



*Categories with statistically significant differences from the total population*

26% ↑ Unemployed parents/caregivers  
32% ↑ Child is not in kindergarten

↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

People have different opinions about the development of preschool children and the role of kindergartens. Please choose the statement in each pair that is closer to your opinion.

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

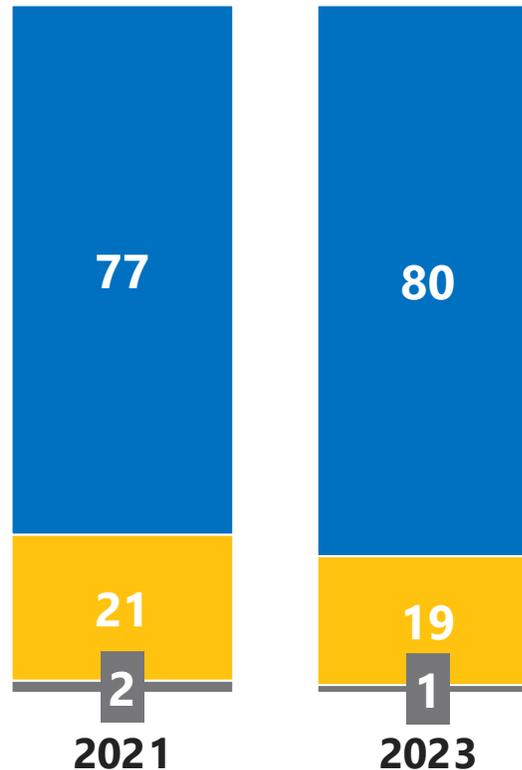
# LEARNING AND PROGRESSING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Again, without strong differences relative to the previous wave, four out of five parents/caregivers agree that children in early childhood need as many new experiences as possible because they learn and progress quickly. The remaining one fifth believe that children start learning only when they start school (19%), while unemployed parents/caregivers (29%), those with secondary school education (25%) and from households with lower incomes (27%) were more inclined to this opinion, while those with higher education were much less inclined towards it (14%).

Data in %

- In early childhood, children learn and progress very quickly, so they need as many new experiences as possible
- In early childhood, children grow and progress naturally, and they only start learning when they start school
- Don't know/no answer



*Categories with statistically significant differences from the total population*

29% ↑ Unemployed parents/caregivers

25% ↑ Parents with secondary education

14% ↓ Parents with higher education

27% ↑ Household income €0–800

People have different opinions about the development of preschool children and the role of kindergartens. Please choose the statement in each pair that is closer to your opinion.

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population

↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

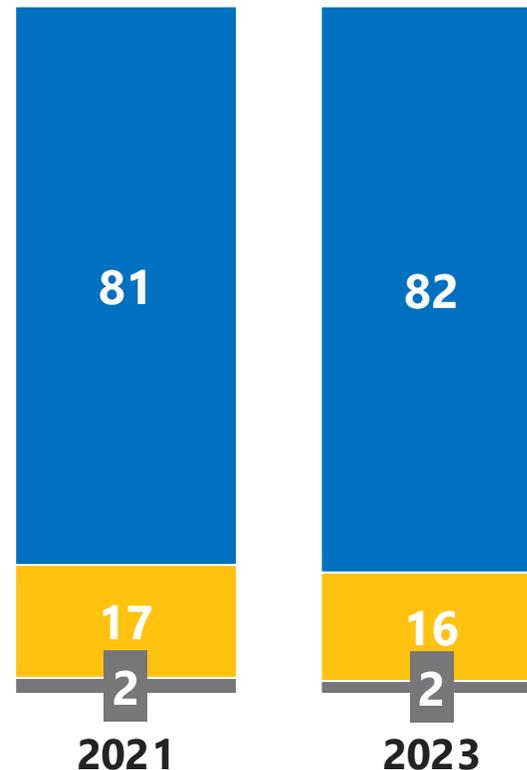
# ATTENDING KINDERGARTEN AND CHILDCARE AT HOME

(cross-wave comparison)

Again, without variations between waves – four fifths of parents/caregivers believe that it is better for a child to go to kindergarten even if there is someone to look after him/her at home, while 16% disagree. Quite expectedly, those with a child who is not enrolled in kindergarten (29%), members of multi-generational families (28%), the unemployed (25%) and from households with lower incomes (22%) more strongly support the child's stay at home in case there is someone to look after him. Parents/caregivers who live in rural areas (21%), as well as those with secondary school education (20%) tend to share this opinion, unlike parents/caregivers of children enrolled in kindergarten (10%) and those with higher education (13%).

Data in %

- It is better for the child to go to kindergarten even when there is someone to look after him/her at home
- If there is someone to look after the child at home, it is better that he/she does not go to kindergarten
- Don't know/no answer



## Categories with statistically significant differences from total population

- 20% ↑ Parents with secondary education
- 13% ↓ Parents with higher education
- 25% ↑ Unemployed parents/caregivers
- 28% ↑ Multi-generational family
- 21% ↑ Rural
- 10% ↓ Child goes to kindergarten
- 29% ↑ Child doesn't go to kindergarten
- 22% ↑ Household income €0–800

↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population

↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

People have different opinions about the development of preschool children and the role of kindergartens. Please choose the statement in each pair that is closer to your opinion.

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

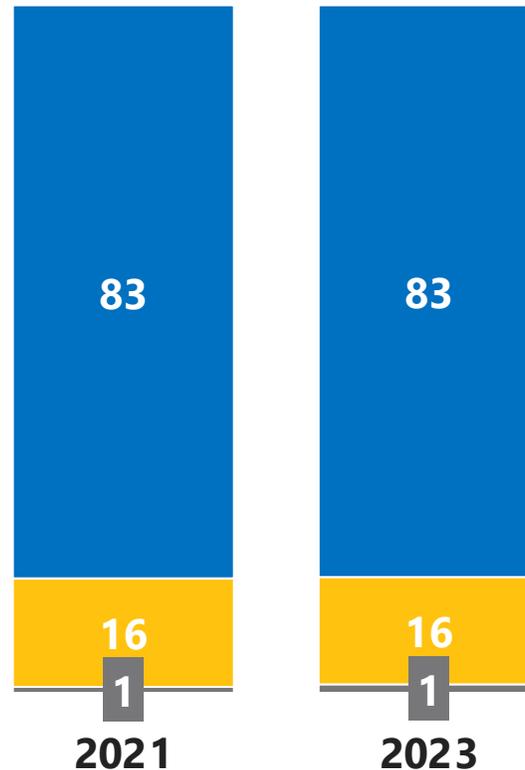
# ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Just as in the 2021 wave, the majority of parents/caregivers believe that kindergarten teachers, who are professionals, should be involved in their child's development, in addition to family members (83%). On the other hand, 16% of parents believe that there is no need for professionals, and these are more likely to be parents/caregivers of children not enrolled in kindergarten, men/fathers, parents with secondary school education, the unemployed, members of multi-generational families and those from households with lower incomes, as well as residents of the northern and rural areas of the country.

Data in %

- It is good that, in addition to family members, educators as professionals are also involved in the child's development
- A child with typical development does not need professionals, i.e. educators; everything can be provided within the family
- Don't know/no answer



Categories with statistically significant differences from the total population

- 20% ↑ Men/fathers
- 22% ↑ Parents with secondary education
- 11% ↓ Parents with higher education
- 21% ↑ Unemployed
- 22% ↑ Household income €0–800
- 25% ↑ Multi-generational family
- 21% ↑ North
- 20% ↑ Rural
- 9% ↓ Child goes to kindergarten
- 32% ↑ Child doesn't go to kindergarten

People have different opinions about the development of preschool children and the role of kindergartens. Please choose the statement in each pair that is closer to your opinion.

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population

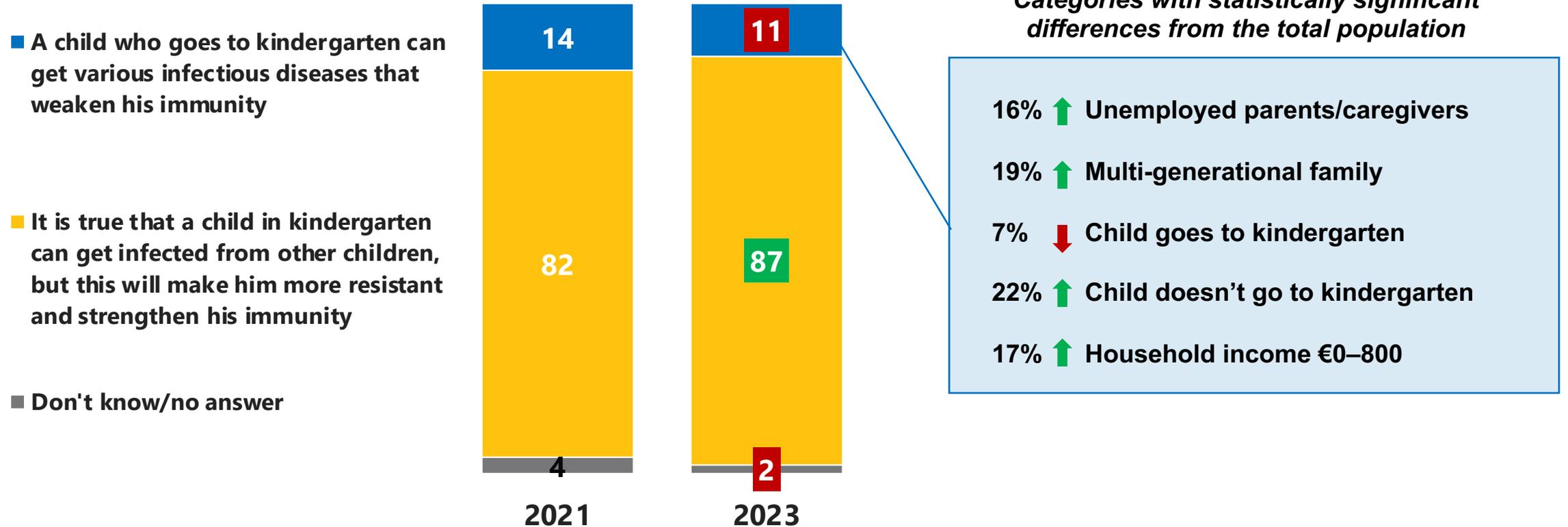
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# THE IMPACT OF PRESCHOOL ON A CHILD'S IMMUNITY

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Compared with the previous wave, parents/caregivers are a lot more likely to believe that it is true that a child in kindergarten can be exposed to infections from other children, but this will make him/her more resistant and strengthen his/her immunity (87%), and a lot fewer believe that a child who goes to kindergarten can get various infectious diseases that weaken his/her immunity (11%). Parents of children not enrolled in kindergarten (22%), members of multi-generational families (19%), as well as the unemployed (16%) and those from households with lower incomes are more likely than average to be concerned (17%), while those whose children are enrolled in kindergarten are less likely to be concerned (7%).

Data in %



↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

People have different opinions about the development of preschool children and the role of kindergartens. Please choose the statement in each pair that is closer to your opinion.

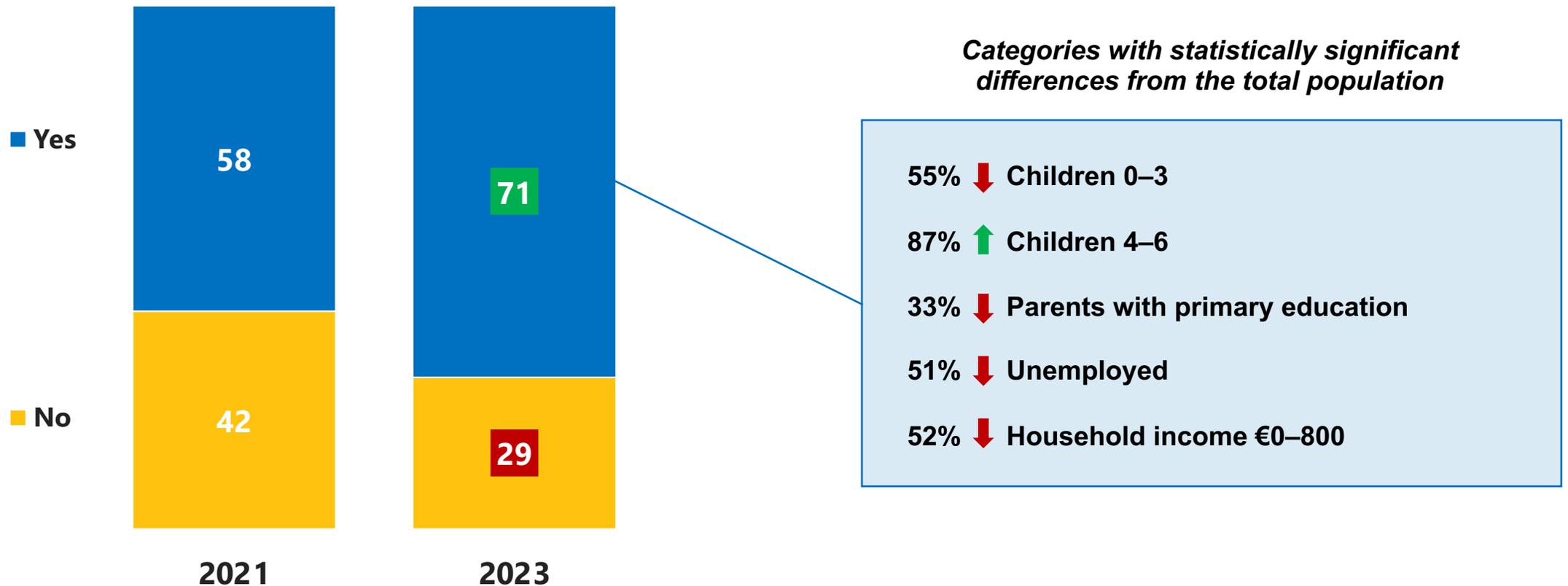
Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

# PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

(cross-wave comparison)

More than 70% of parents/caregivers confirm that their child is enrolled in nursery or kindergarten, which is a lot more than in 2021. This is more likely to be confirmed by parents/caregivers of children of senior preschool age (4–6 years: 87%), and less likely by parents/caregivers of younger children (0–3 years: 55%), those with primary education (33%), the unemployed (51%) and those with lower household incomes (52%).

Data in %



Is the child, the we are talking about, enrolled in preschool (nursery, kindergarten)?

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population

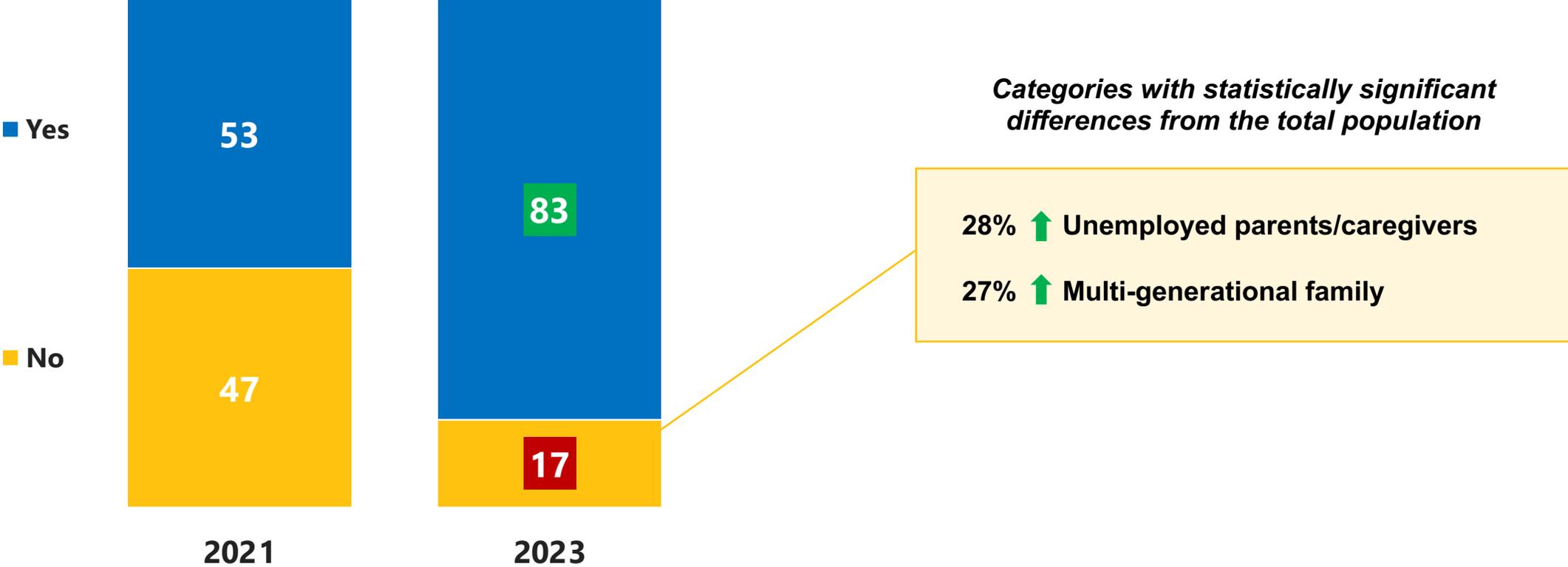
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE

(cross-wave comparison)

Cross-wave comparison suggests a substantial increase of the number of enrolled children who attend kindergarten, primarily due to the ending of the COVID-19 pandemic. So, in 2021 about a half of parents/caregivers confirmed that their children were going to kindergarten at the time, while this share is four fifths now. Accordingly, there are fewer of those whose children don't attend kindergarten (17%), and they are more likely to be unemployed (28%) and members of multi-generational families (27%).

Data in %



Does the child, that we are talking about, CURRENTLY go to preschool (nursery, kindergarten)?  
Base: Parents/caregivers of children enrolled in kindergarten, N = 581 (2021), N = 723 (2023)

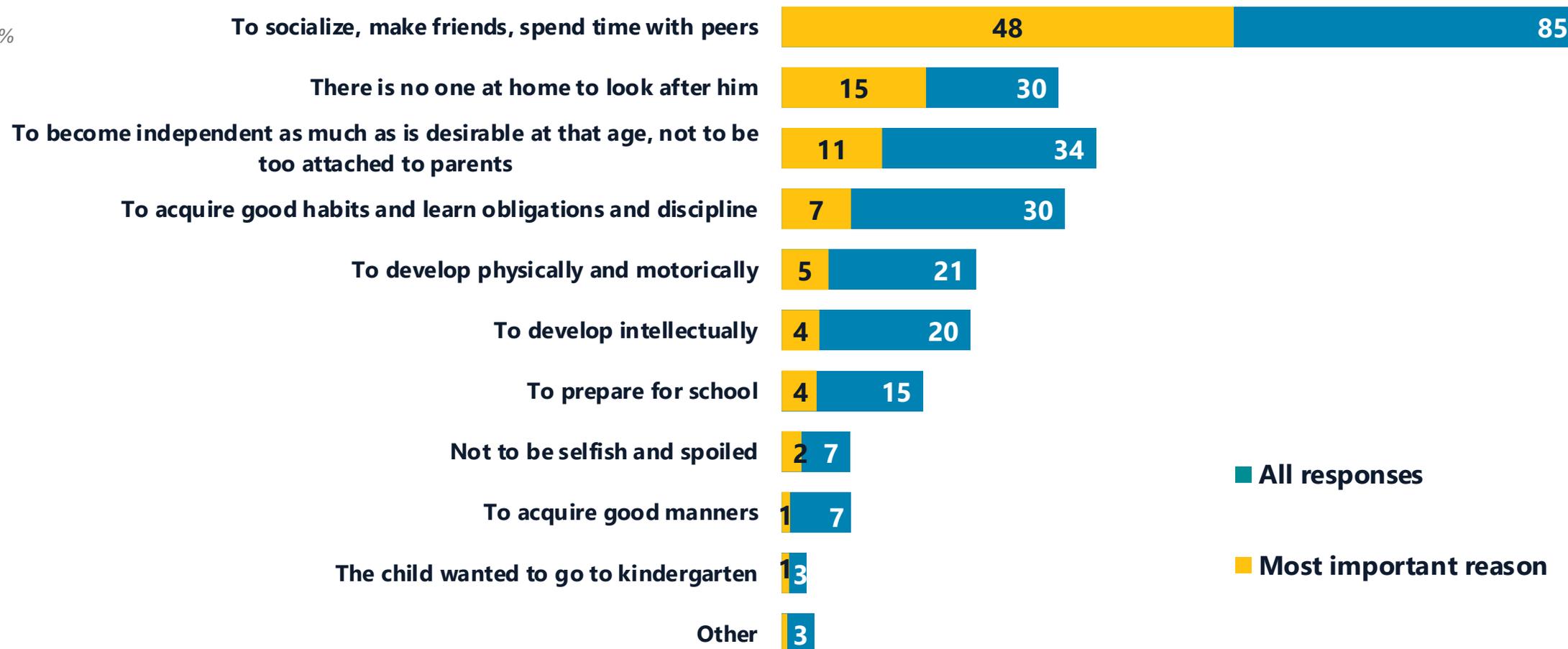
↑ Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
↓ Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# REASONS FOR ENROLLING CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL

(2023)

Socialization and socializing with peers is, by far, the most important reason for enrolling children in kindergarten, which is one of the top three motives for as many as 85% of parents/caregivers, and a priority for half of them. One third mentioned their wish for their children to become as independent as they should be for their age (34%), and for 30% the main motives are that they have no one at home to look after the child and they want the child to acquire good habits and learn obligations and discipline. One fifth consider physical and intellectual development most important.

Data in %



Why did you enrol your child in kindergarten/nursery? Please choose the three main reasons starting with the most important.

Base: Parents/caregivers of children enrolled in kindergarten, N = 723

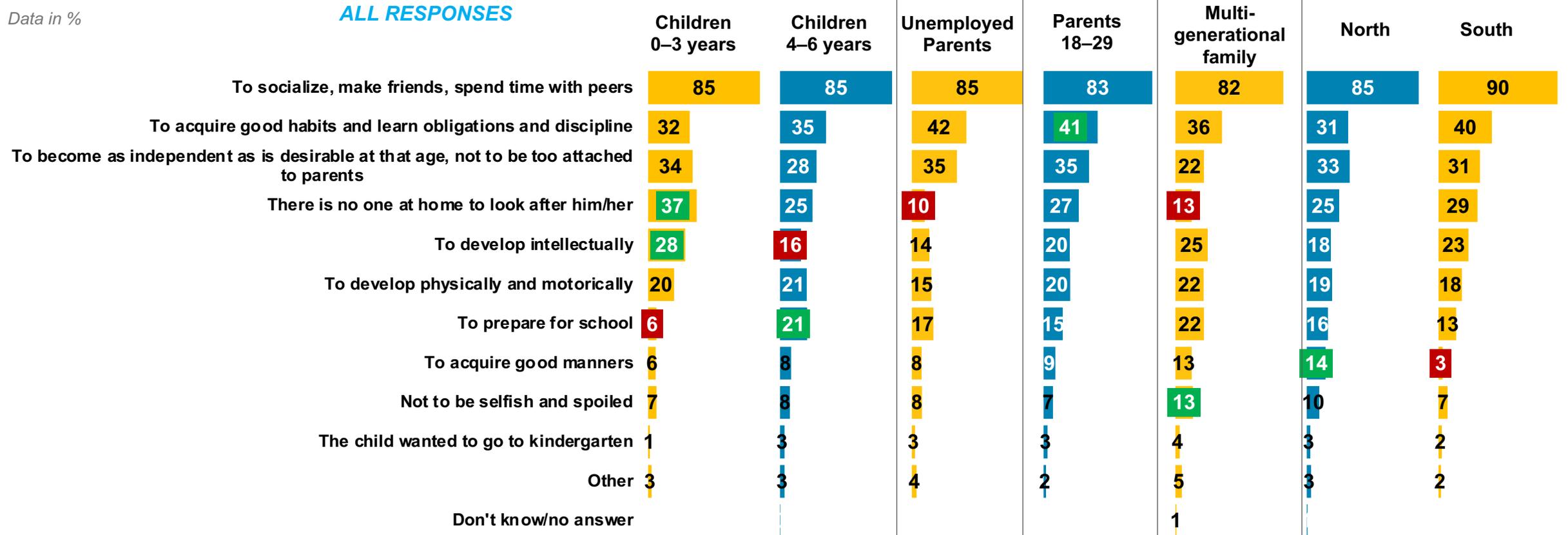
# REASONS FOR ENROLLING CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Without exception, all socio-demographic categories of parents/caregivers agree that socialization is the key reason why their child started kindergarten. Parents of younger children (0–3 years) were more likely to enroll their children because there was no one home available to look after the child (37%), as well as in order to stimulate intellectual development (28%), while those with children aged 4–6 years were more likely to enroll their children because they needed to be prepared for school (21%). Younger parents (18–29 years) were more focused on their children obtaining good habits and discipline (41%), those who live in the north were focused on teaching children good manners (14%), and members of multi-generational families on preventing children from being selfish and spoiled (13%).

Data in %

## ALL RESPONSES



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

Why did you enrol your child in kindergarten/nursery? Please choose the three main reasons, starting with the most important one.

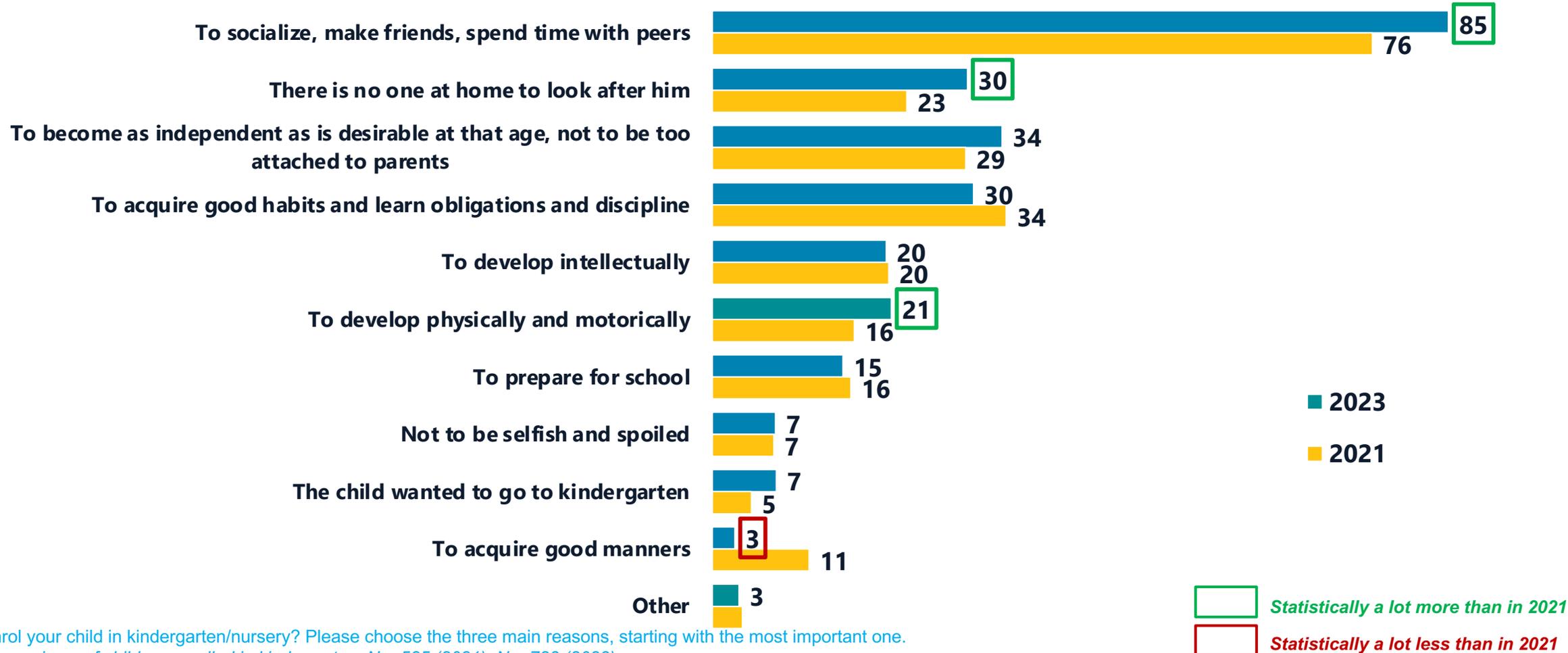
Base: Parents/caregivers of children enrolled in kindergarten, N = 723

# REASONS FOR ENROLLING CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL

*(cross-wave comparison – all responses)*

Compared with 2021, socialization and socializing with peers are more likely to be cited as the key reason for enrolling children in kindergarten (85%). In addition to this dominant motive, parents/caregivers are more likely now to say that there is no one at home able to look after the child (30%), as well as that they are guided by the child's proper physical and motor development (21%). On the other hand, there are fewer parents/caregivers who enrolled their children in kindergarten in order to learn good manners (3%).

Data in %

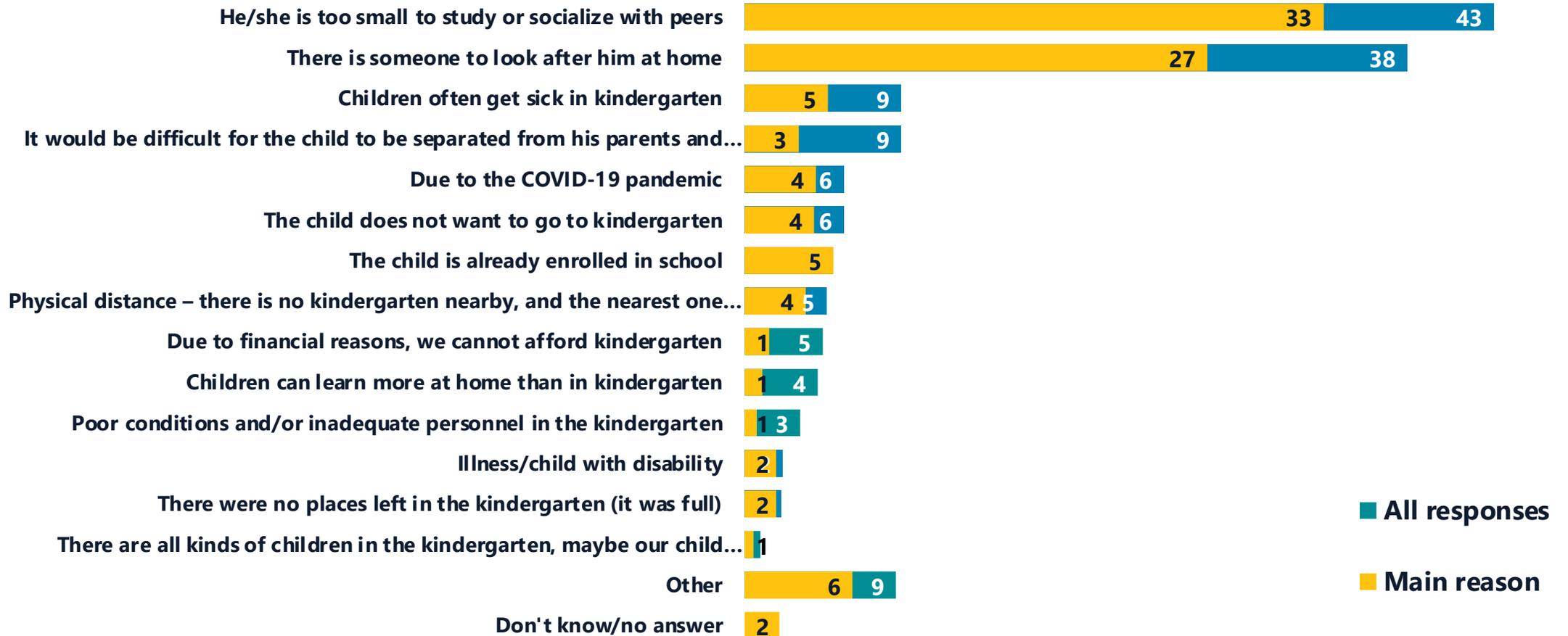


Why did you enrol your child in kindergarten/nursery? Please choose the three main reasons, starting with the most important one.  
 Base: Parents/caregivers of children enrolled in kindergarten, N = 585 (2021), N = 723 (2023)

# REASONS WHY CHILDREN ARE NOT ENROLLED IN PRESCHOOL (2023)

The child's age and the opinion that the child is too small for kindergarten are the key reasons for not enrolling children for one third of parents/caregivers, while this is one of the top three reasons for more than two fifths of parents/caregivers. The next most stated reason is that there is someone to look after the child at home (for 27% the main reason, for 38% one of the three reasons), while for one out of ten parents, one of the three top reasons is the children being ill often, as well as their belief that it would be difficult for the child to be separated from his parents and family.

Data in %



Why is your child not enrolled in kindergarten/nursery? Please choose the three main reasons, starting with the most important one.

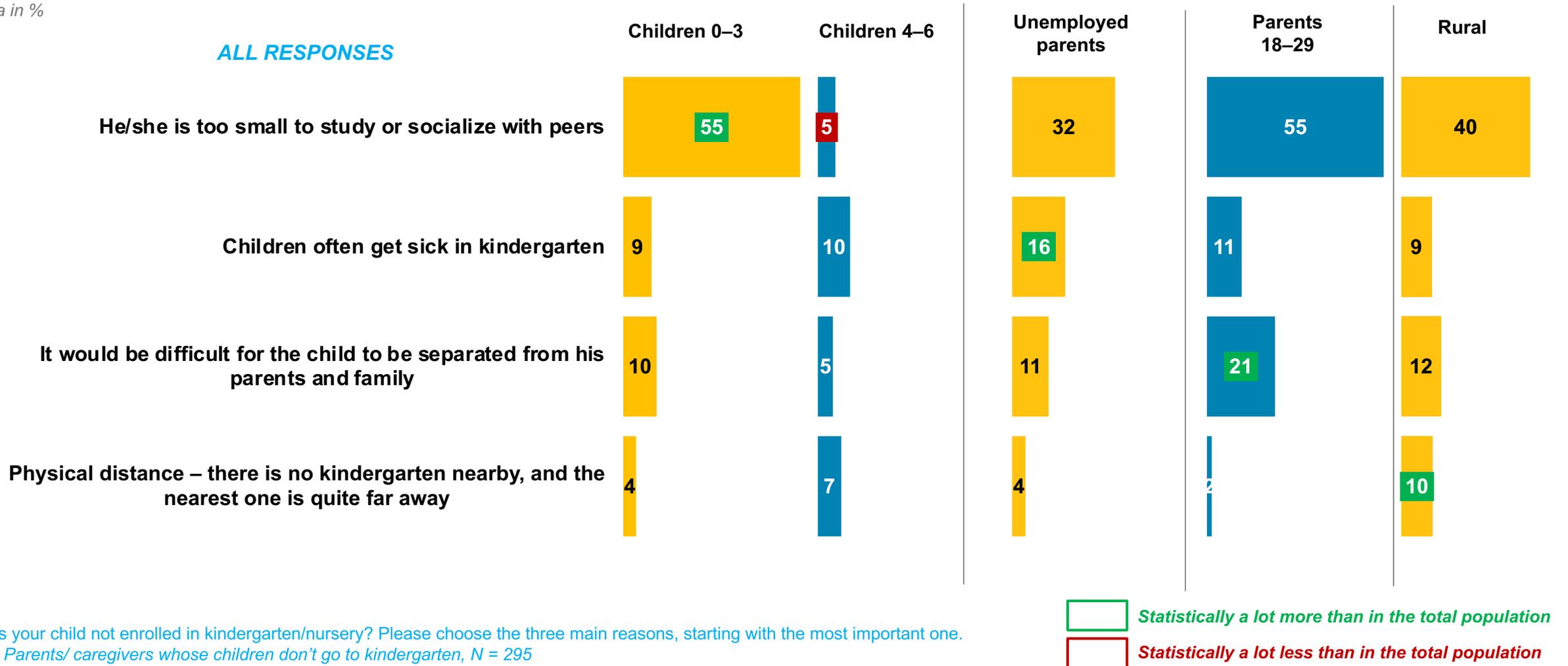
Base: Parents/caregivers whose children don't go to kindergarten, N = 295

# REASONS WHY CHILDREN ARE NOT ENROLLED IN PRESCHOOL

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

The group of parents/caregivers of younger children (0–3 years) were more likely than average to say that their children were too young to go to kindergarten (55%). Unemployed parents were more concerned than others about their children getting ill in kindergarten, younger parents (18–29 years) were more likely to think that separation would be hard (21%), while residents of rural areas were more likely to mention their physical distance from a kindergarten as a barrier (10%).

Data in %



Why is your child not enrolled in kindergarten/nursery? Please choose the three main reasons, starting with the most important one.

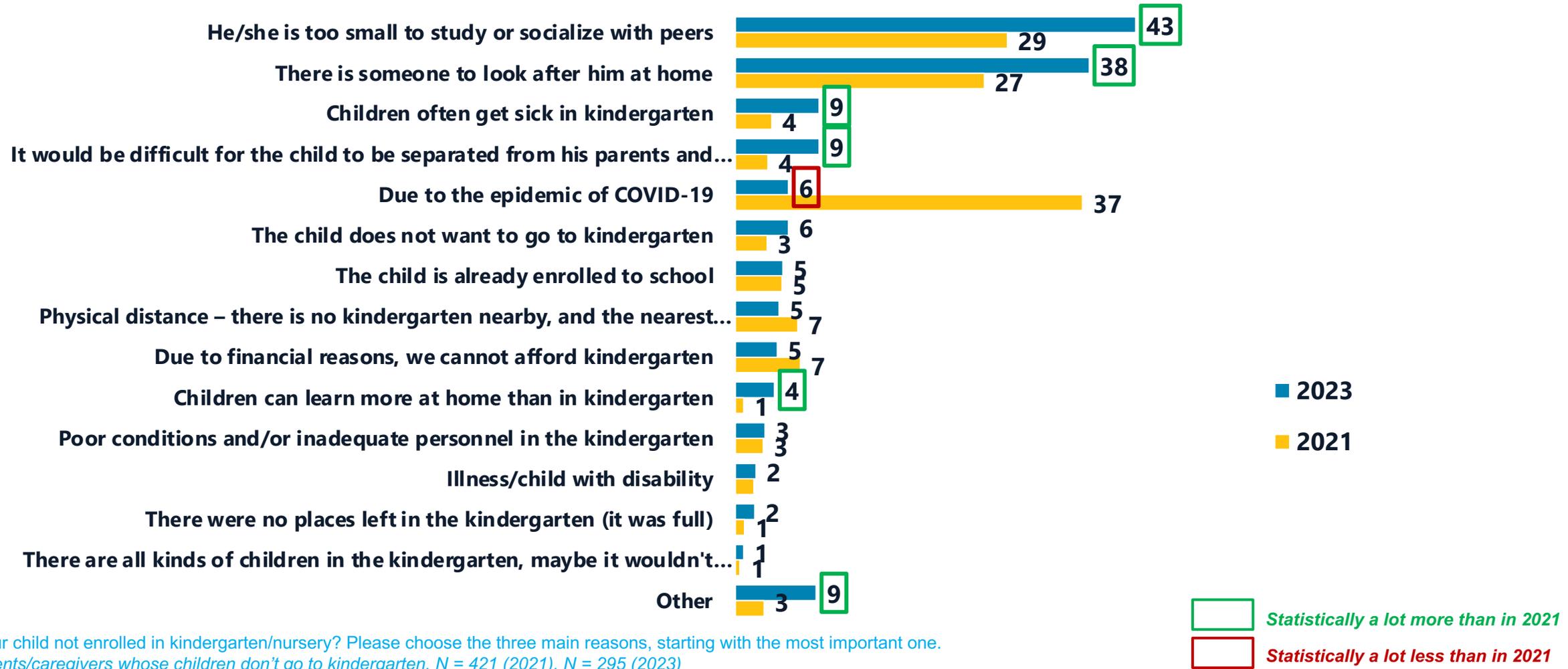
Base: Parents/ caregivers whose children don't go to kindergarten, N = 295

# REASONS WHY CHILDREN ARE NOT ENROLLED IN PRESCHOOL

(cross-wave comparison – all responses)

The barriers to enrolling children in kindergarten seem to be different in the last two survey waves. While the COVID-19 pandemic was the dominant reason in 2021, it is mentioned now by only 6% of parents/caregivers. Much stronger reasons now are the child's young age (43%) and having someone at home to look after the child (38%). Parents are also more concerned about frequent illnesses, the difficulty of separating the child from parents (9%), and more parents now believe that home is a better place for learning than kindergarten (4%).

Data in %



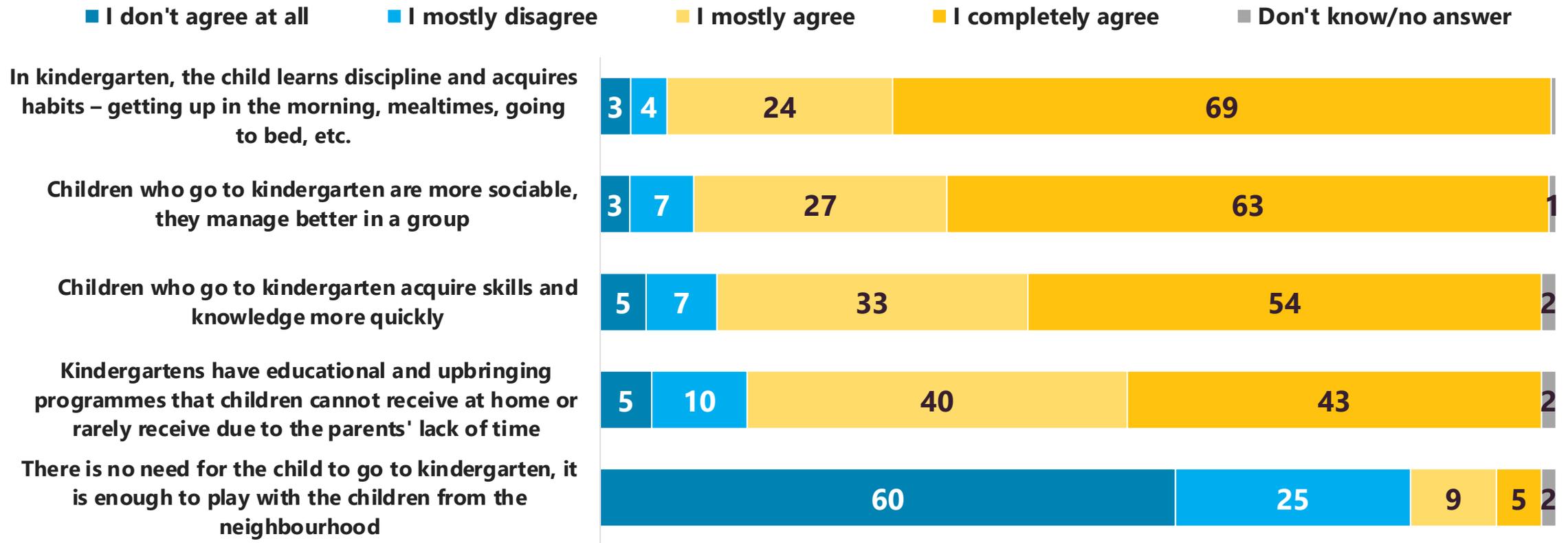
Why is your child not enrolled in kindergarten/nursery? Please choose the three main reasons, starting with the most important one.  
 Base: Parents/caregivers whose children don't go to kindergarten, N = 421 (2021), N = 295 (2023)

Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
 Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# THE IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGES OF PRESCHOOL (2023)

The results of the research suggest that parents/caregivers in Montenegro recognize the importance and advantages of preschool institutions, whether or not they have enrolled their child. The majority of parents/caregivers agree that kindergarten enhances discipline and the acquisition of relevant habits (93%), contributes to socialization and better coping in a group (90%), as well as the faster acquisition of knowledge and skills (87%). More than 80% agree that kindergartens have programmes that are hard to provide at home (83%). In addition, 85% of parents recognize that it is not enough just to play with children in the neighbourhood.

Data in %



How much do you agree with the following statements about preschool education?

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESCHOOL

*(cross-wave comparison: mainly agree + completely agree)*

All the results are quite similar in both survey waves, which implies that parents/caregivers share consistent attitudes in regard to the relevance and advantages of preschool institutions for children's development.

Data in %



How much do you agree with the following statements about preschool education?

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

# AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESCHOOL

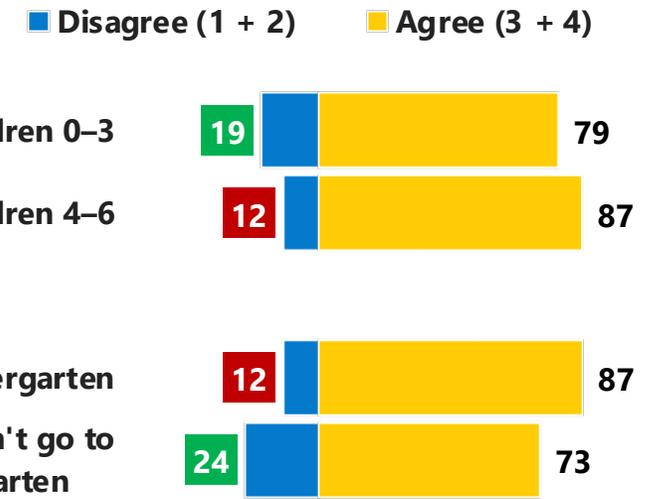
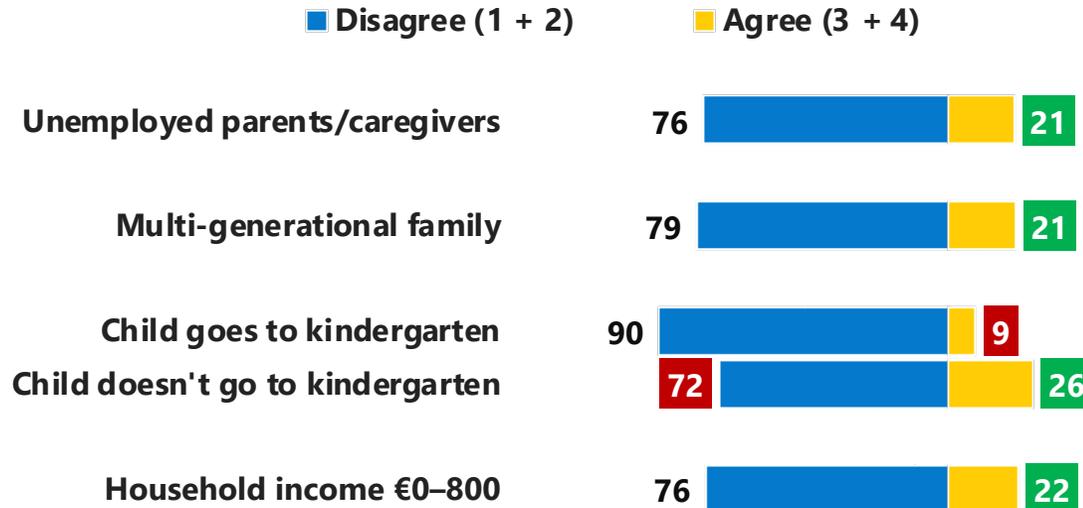
*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Significant differences between socio-demographic categories can be noted in several questions. Thus, unemployed parents/caregivers, members of multi-generational families, those with lower household incomes, as well as those who didn't enroll their children in kindergarten, were more likely than others to say that kindergarten was not necessary if their children could play with other children. Moreover, parents of younger children (0–3 years) and of children not enrolled in kindergarten were more likely to disagree with the statement that kindergartens have educational and upbringing programmes that children cannot receive at home.

Data in %

*There is no need for the child to go to kindergarten, it is enough to play with the children from the neighbourhood*

*Kindergartens have educational and upbringing programmes that children cannot receive at home or rarely receive due to the parents' lack of time*



# AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESCHOOL

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

The unemployed and those whose children are not enrolled in kindergarten were less likely to agree with the opinion that children who go to kindergarten acquire skills and knowledge more quickly. Finally, parents from households with a lower income are more likely to disagree that children who go to kindergarten are more sociable.

Data in %

*Children who go to kindergarten acquire skills and knowledge more quickly*

■ Disagree (1 + 2)

■ Agree (3 + 4)

Unemployed parents/caregivers



Child doesn't go to kindergarten



*Children who go to kindergarten are more sociable, they manage better in a group*

■ Disagree (1 + 2)

■ Agree (3 + 4)

Household income €0–800



Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
Statistically a lot less than in the total population

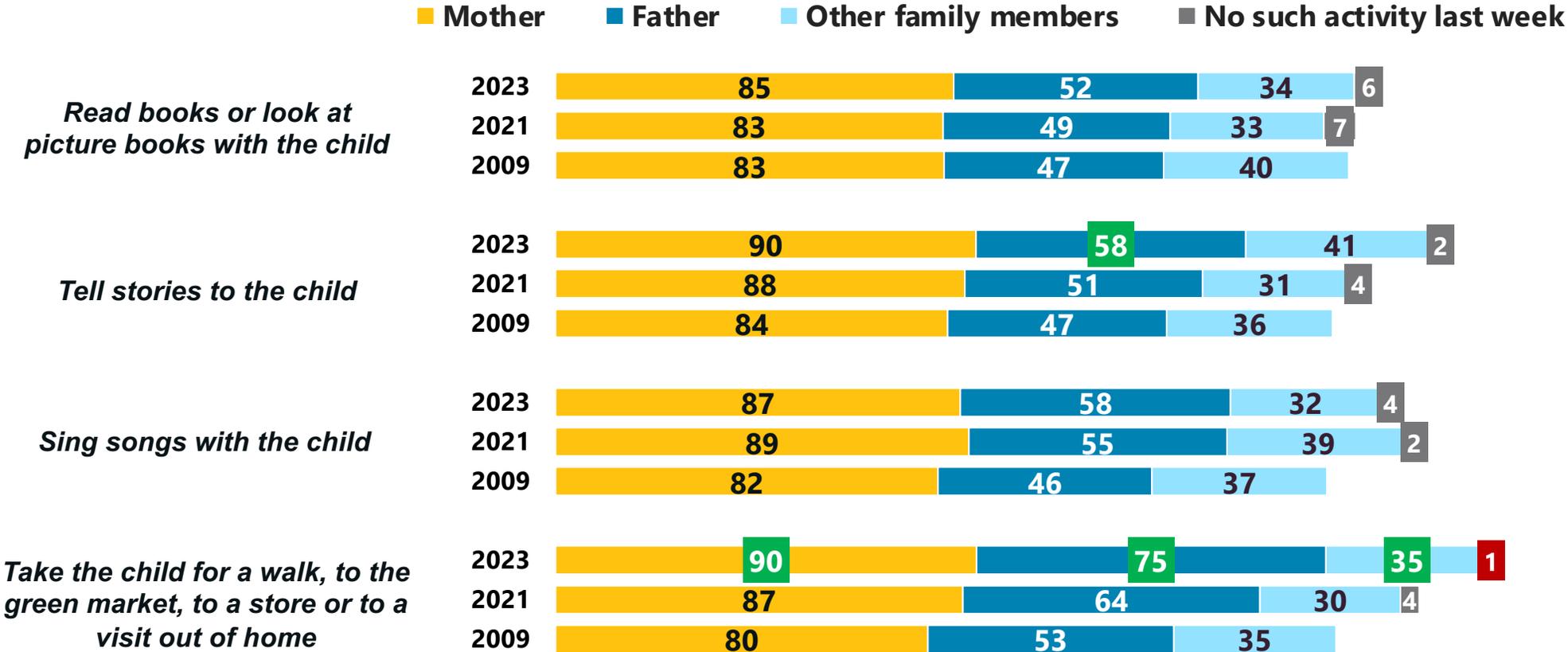
# CHILDCARE WITHIN THE FAMILY



# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS *(cross-wave comparison)*

Mothers are obviously most engaged in all activities with children, although greater engagement of other family members was registered in this survey wave. As for taking the child for a walk, going to the market or to the store – mothers, fathers and other family members do this more than in 2021, while fathers are now more likely to spend time with their children telling them stories. There are no statistically relevant differences in other activities.

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

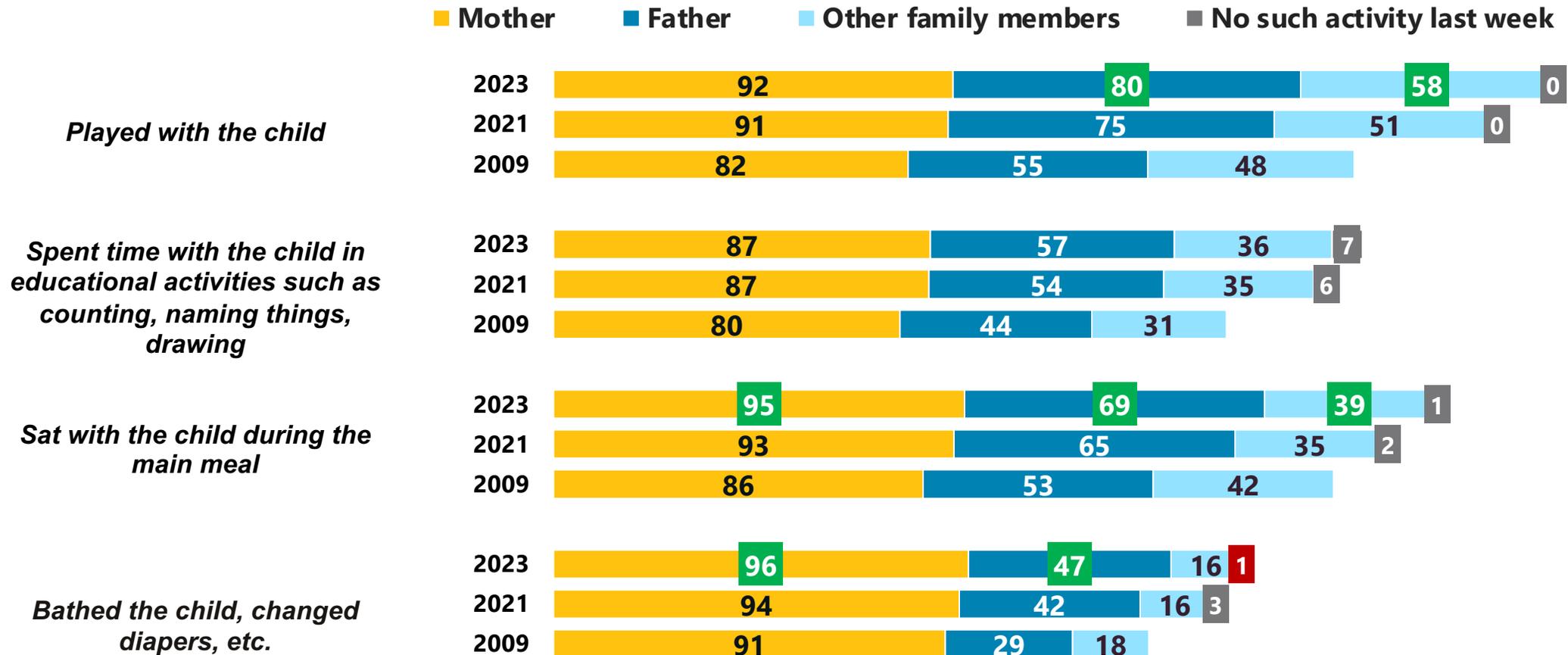
Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.  
 Base: Total target population, N = 1006 (2009), N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(cross-wave comparison)*

The survey results suggest that the majority of family members, especially fathers, interact with children more than they used to in 2021. All family members were more likely to sit with the child during the main meal, while mothers and fathers spent more time taking care of a child’s personal hygiene. Fathers and other family members also spent more time playing with their children.

Data in %



Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

Base: Total target population, N = 1006 (2009), N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

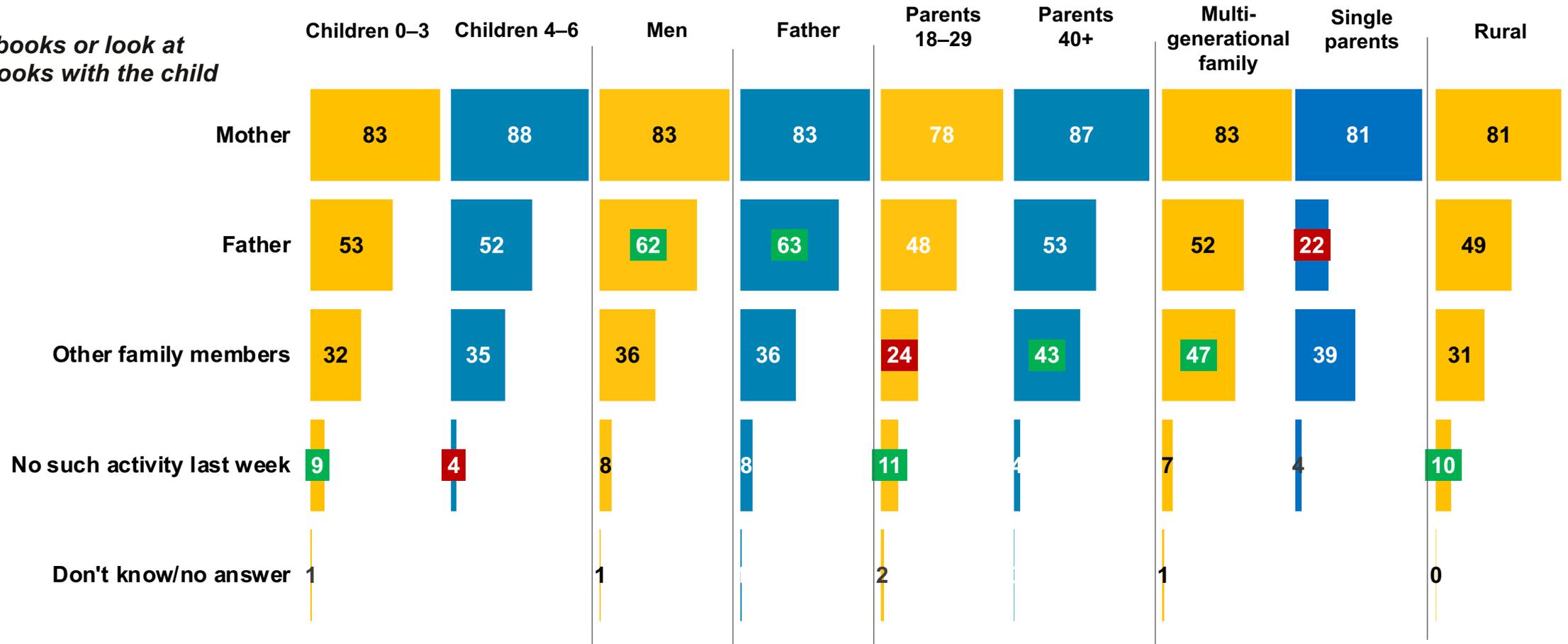
# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Compared with the total population, it is quite expected that men/fathers were a lot more likely to say that the father read books or picture books with their child, while this was less common among single parents. Members of multi-generational families, as well as parents older than 40 years, were more likely than others to say that some other family members did this, while this opinion was less common in the youngest group of parents (18–29 years). The absence of this activity was more common among parents of younger children (0–3 years), the youngest parents and residents in rural areas.

Data in %

*Read books or look at picture books with the child*



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

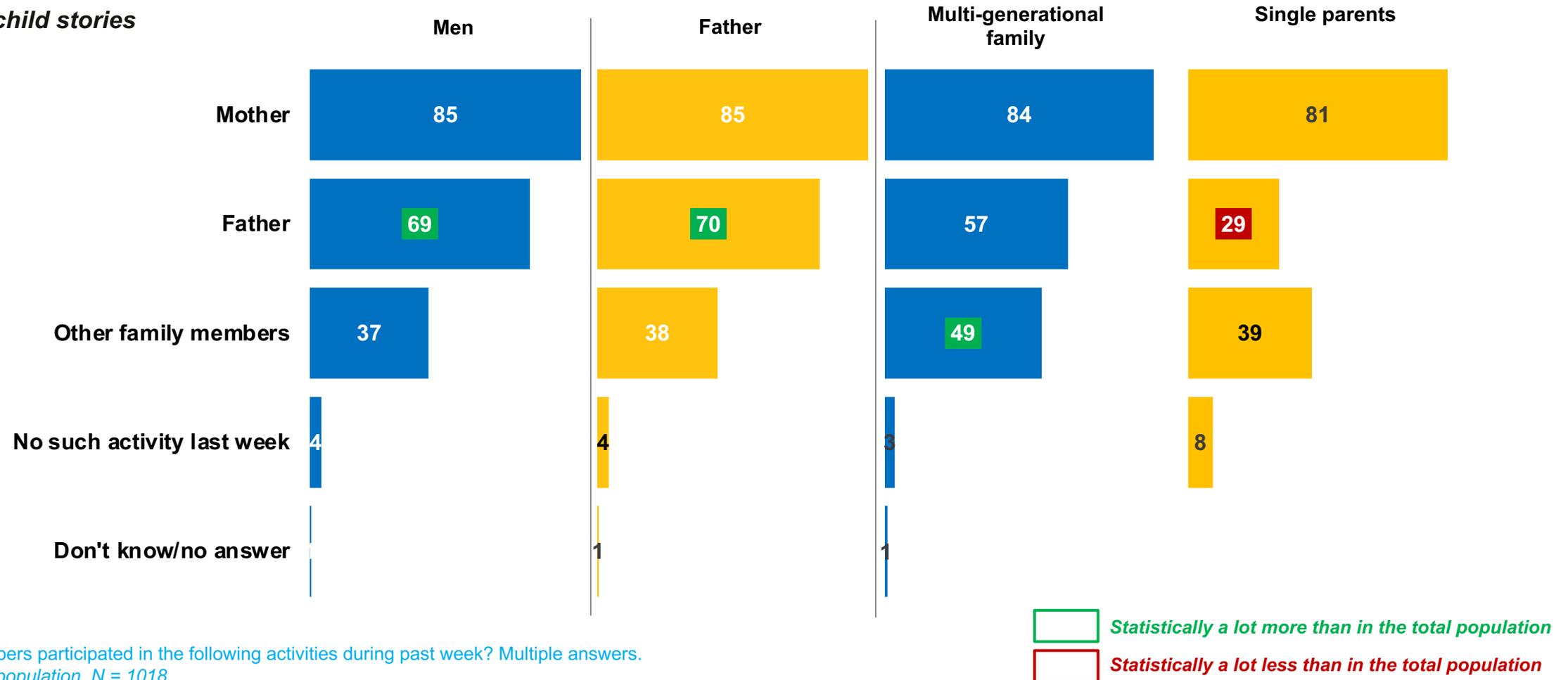
# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Again, men or fathers were more likely to say that the father read stories to the child, while this was less common among single parents. Members of multi-generational families were more likely to say that other family members participated in this activity.

Data in %

## Told the child stories



Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.  
 Base: Total target population, N = 1018

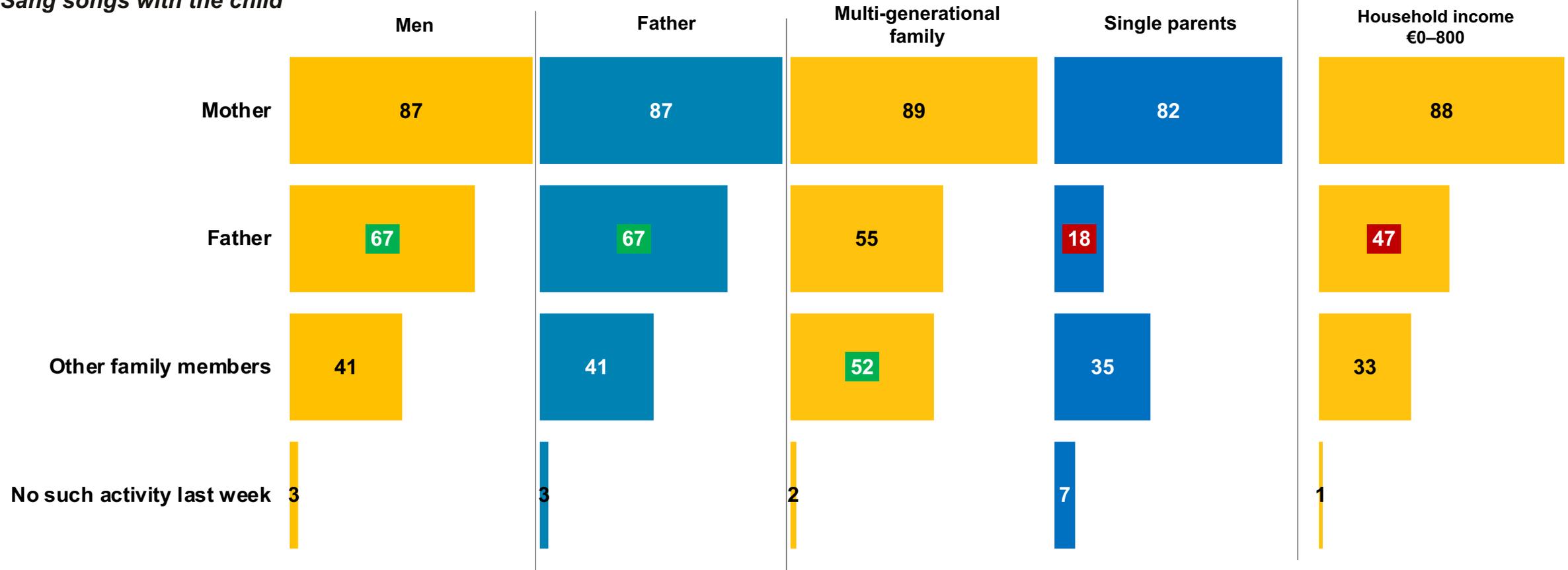
# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

The situation is the same with singing songs with the child, bearing in mind that men or fathers were more likely to say that the father participated in it, while an opposite trend was registered among single parents and those with lower household incomes. Just as in the previous finding, parents/caregivers who are members of multi-generational families were more likely than average to say that other family members sang songs with the child.

Data in %

## Sang songs with the child



Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

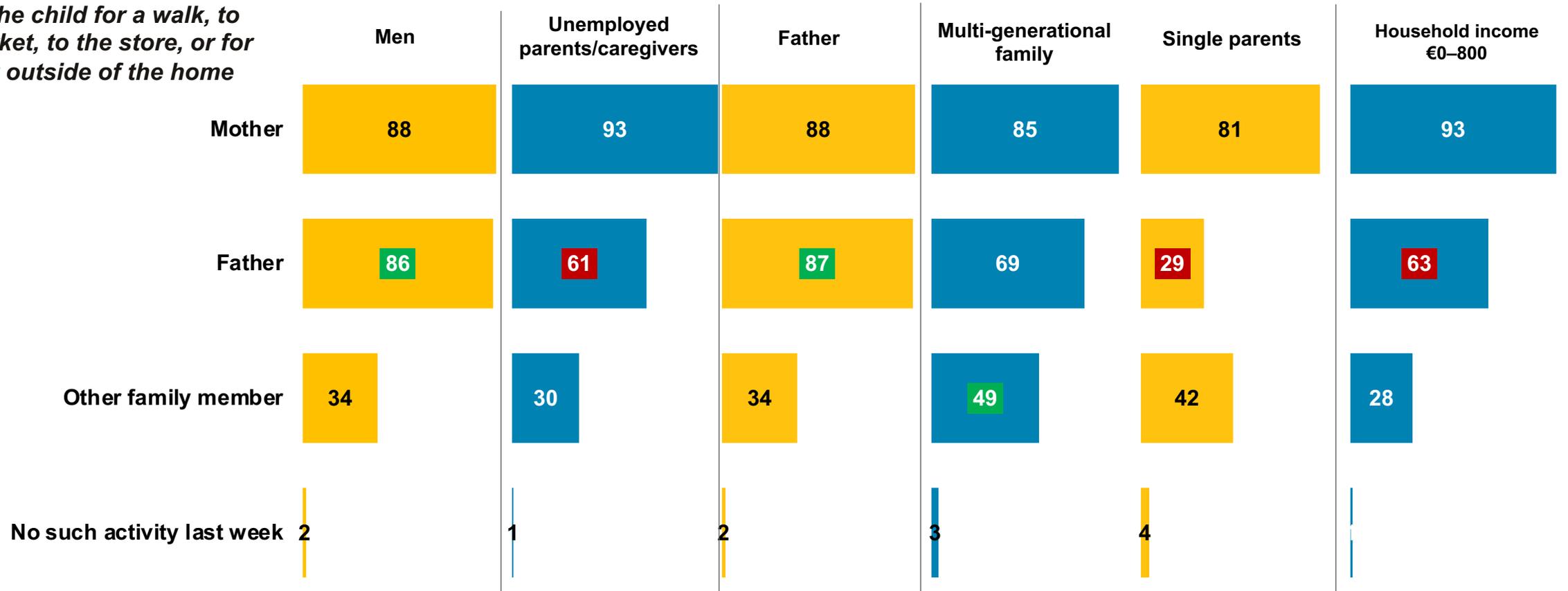
# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)

Once again, men or fathers were more likely to say that fathers are the ones who take the children outside, while single, unemployed parents and those with lower household incomes were significantly less likely to mention fathers in this context. Members of multi-generational families were more likely to say that other family members took the child outside.

Data in %

*Took the child for a walk, to the market, to the store, or for a visit outside of the home*



Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

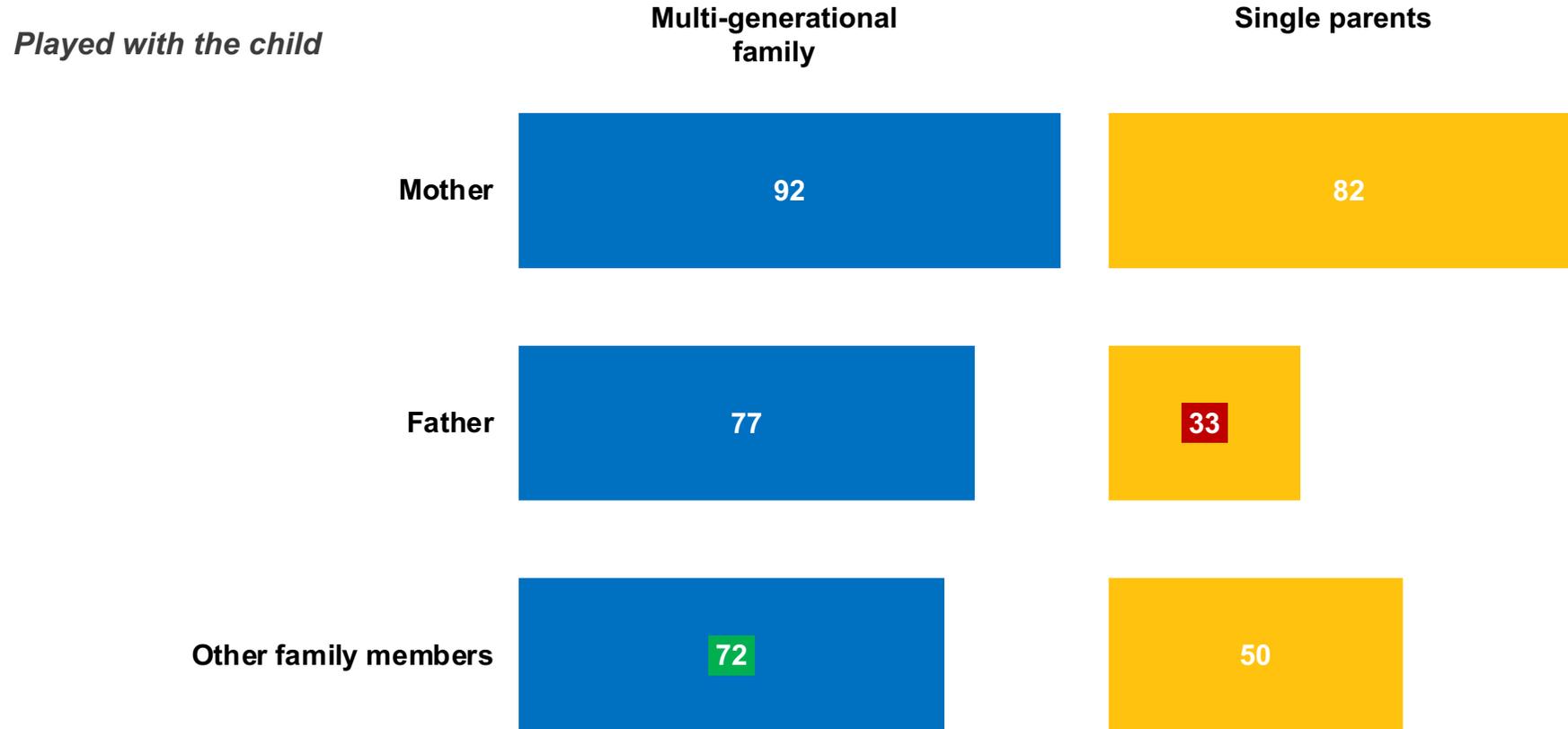
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Compared with the total population, members of multi-generational families were more likely to say that other family members spent time playing with the children. Single parents were less likely than others to say that the father was involved in this activity.

Data in %



Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

 Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
 Statistically a lot less than in the total population

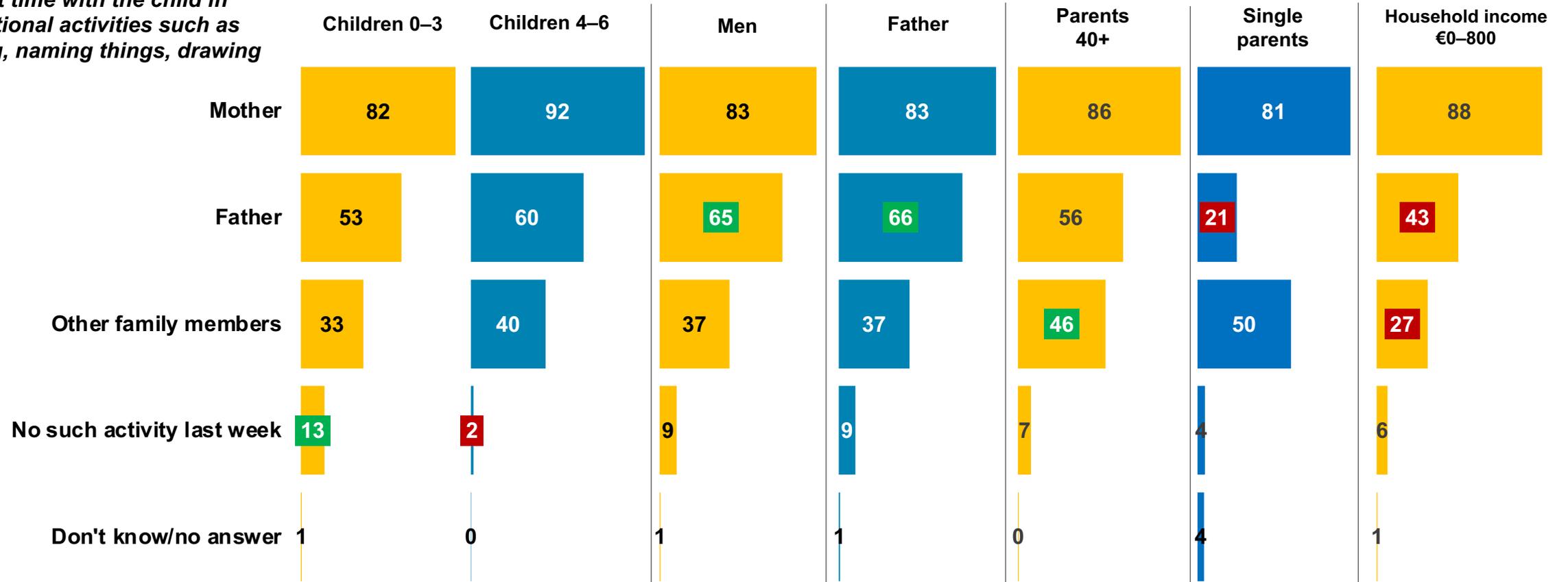
# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Men or fathers were more likely to say that the father was engaged in various educational activities with child, while single parents and those from households with lower incomes were a lot less likely to say so. Parents older than 40 years were more likely than others to talk about the inclusion of other family members in these activities, while parents of younger children (0–3 years) were more likely to say that that there were no such activities.

Data in %

*Spent time with the child in educational activities such as counting, naming things, drawing*



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

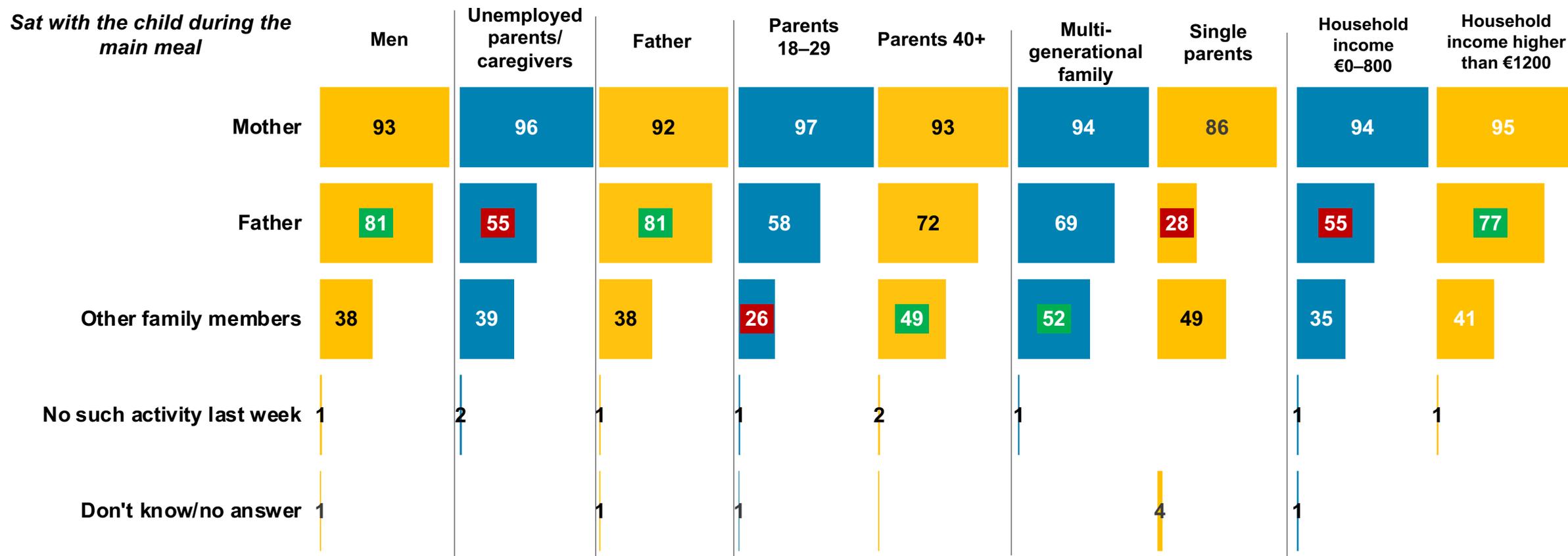
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

As has already been noted, men or fathers were a lot more likely than average to underline the fathers' participation, so in this case it refers to spending time with the child during the main meal. Single, unemployed and parents from households with lower incomes were less likely to single out the father as a family member present during the child's mealtime. While parents older than 40 years and members of multi-generational families were more likely than others to point out that other family members also spent time with the children in this way, parents aged 18–29 years were less likely to say so.

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

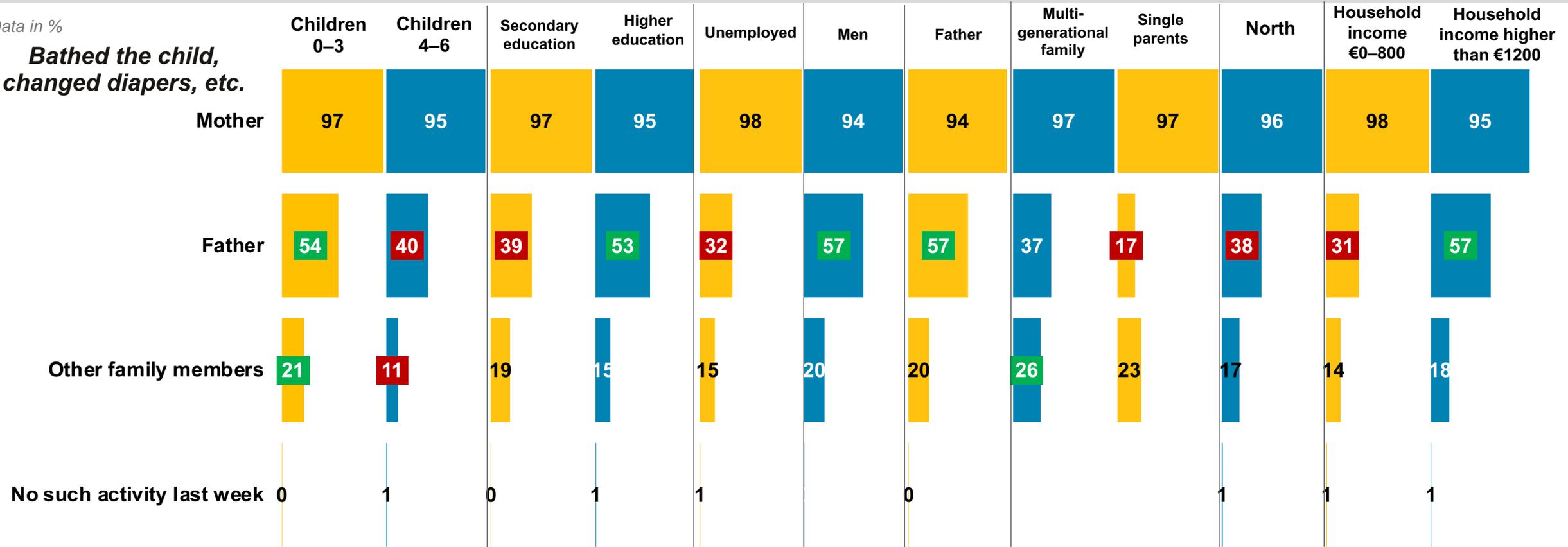
# ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN – FAMILY MEMBERS

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Men/fathers, parents/caregivers of children under 3 years of age, those with higher education and with higher household incomes were more likely than average to confirm that the father bathed the child or changed diapers, unlike the parents of older preschool children, those with secondary education, the unemployed, those with lower household incomes, single parents and those who live in the north of the country, who were less likely to confirm the fathers' engagement. As for participation of other family members in these tasks, parents of younger children and members of multi-generational families were more likely to talk about their participation, unlike the parents of older children.

Data in %

**Bathed the child, changed diapers, etc.**



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

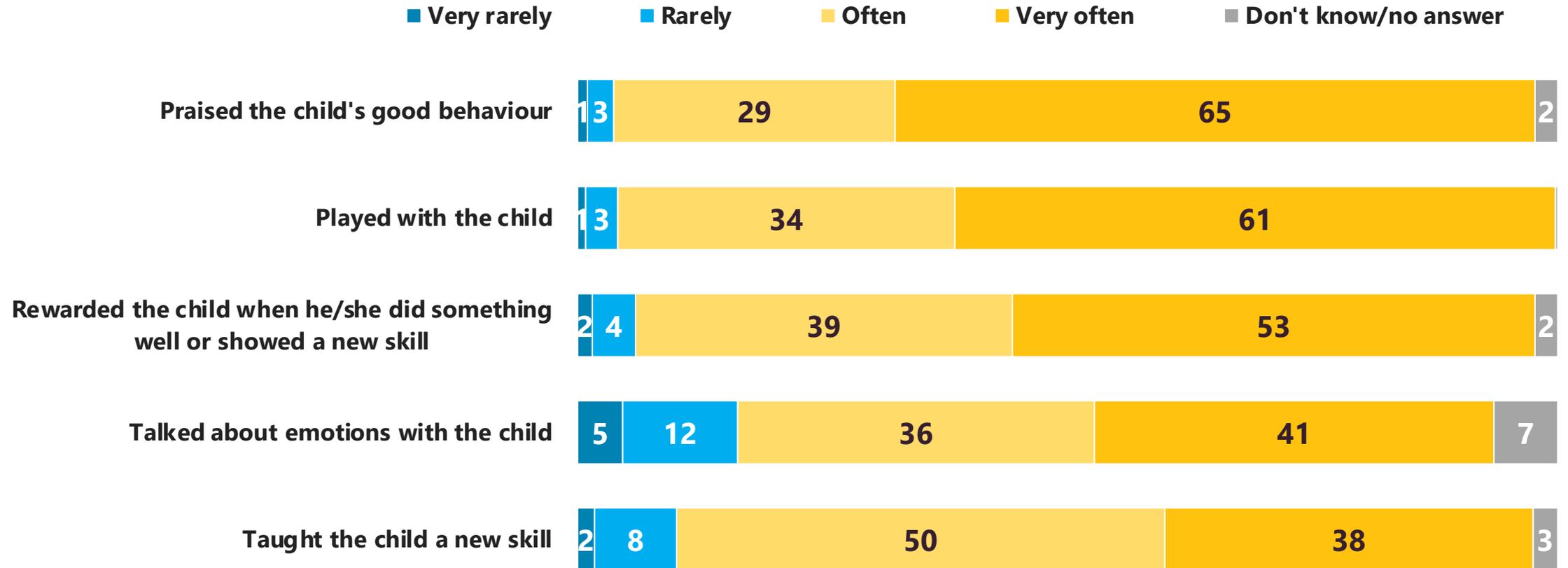
Which family members participated in the following activities during past week? Multiple answers.

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

The survey results suggest that parents/caregivers are dedicated to raising their children, so the great majority mentioned playing with the child often during past month (95%), praising the child's good behaviour (94%), rewarding the child when he/she did something well or showed a new skill (92%) and making an effort to teach the child something new (88%). Although three quarters of parents/caregivers said that they talked to children about emotions, this aspect seems to be less present than others, given that 17% said that they talked about this rarely, while 7% gave no answer.

Data in %



A little while ago, you told me which family members participated in certain activities with the child in the past week, and now please tell me how often YOU PERSONALLY did the following in the previous MONTH?

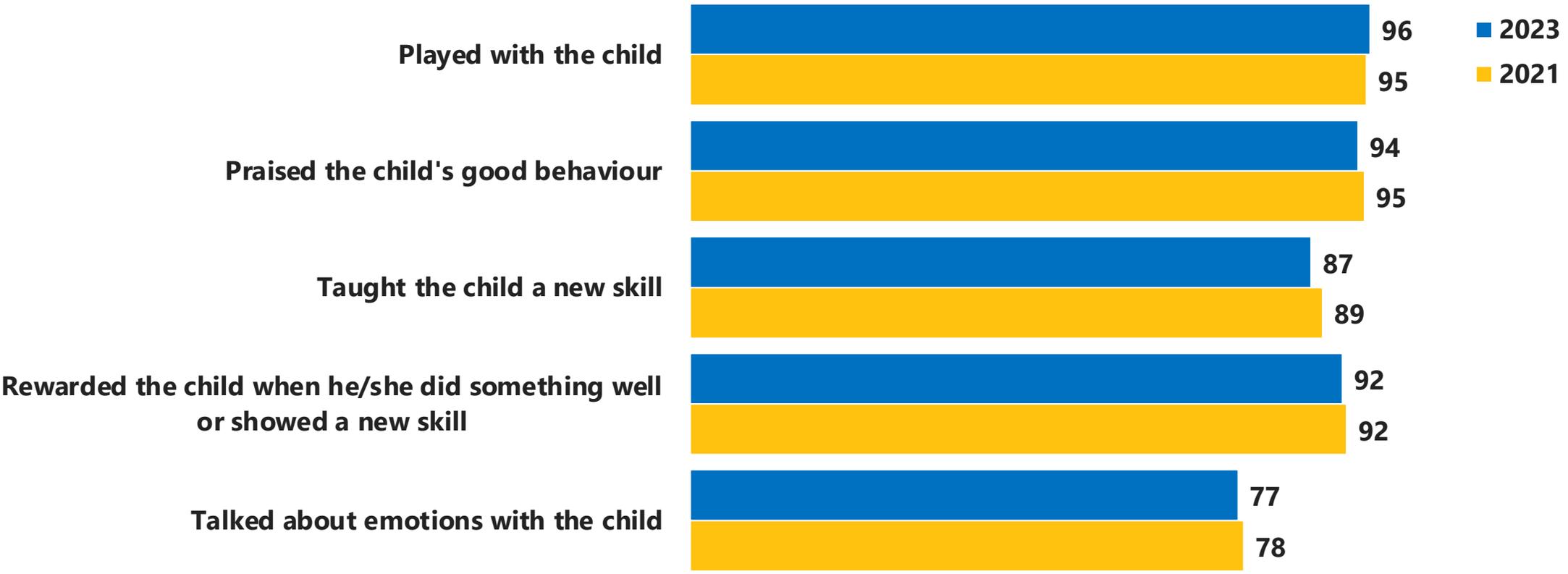
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

(cross-wave comparison: often + very often)

There are no differences between waves in any of the tested aspects of interaction between parents/caregivers and children. They still spend most time playing and least time talking about emotions.

Data in %



A little while ago, you told me which family members participated in certain activities with the child in the past week, and now please tell me how often YOU PERSONALLY did the following in the previous MONTH?  
Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

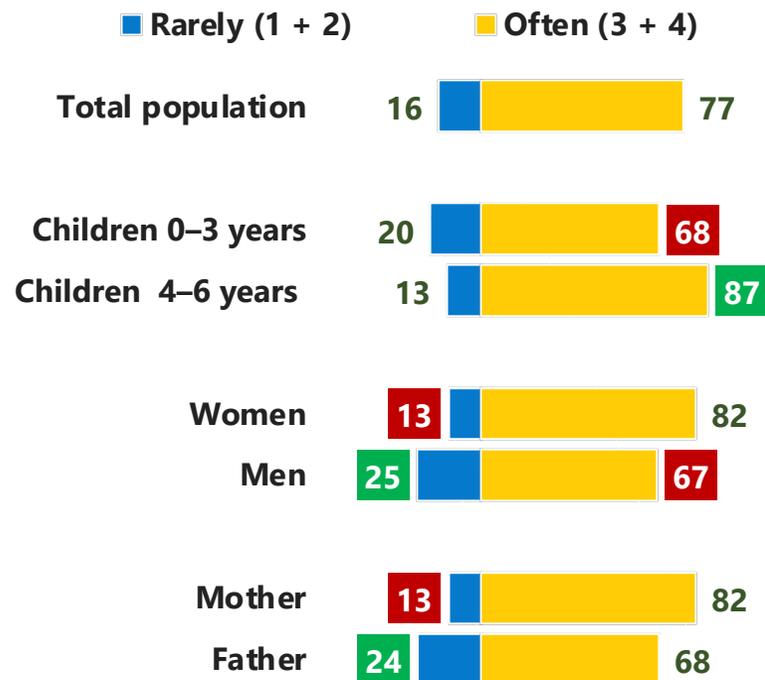
# INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

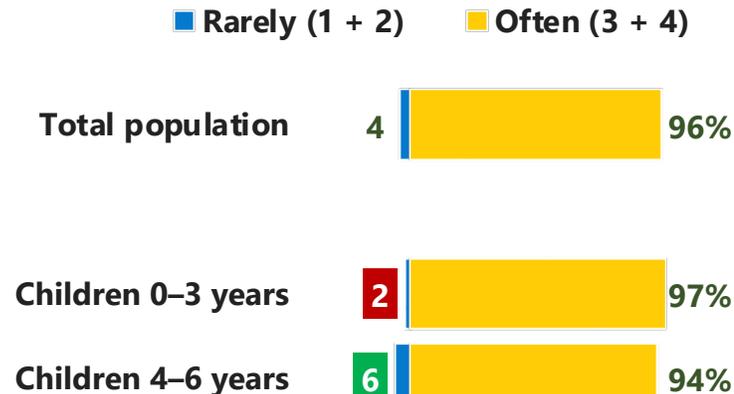
Parents/caregivers of older preschool children (4–6 years) were more likely than average to say that they talked to their children about emotions, while men or fathers did it less. Playing with children was a lot less common among parents/caregivers of older preschool children. As for teaching new skills, men seemed to have been dedicated to it less than others. Finally, parents/caregivers aged 18–29 years and those from households with lower incomes were less likely to use praise as an upbringing method.

Data in %

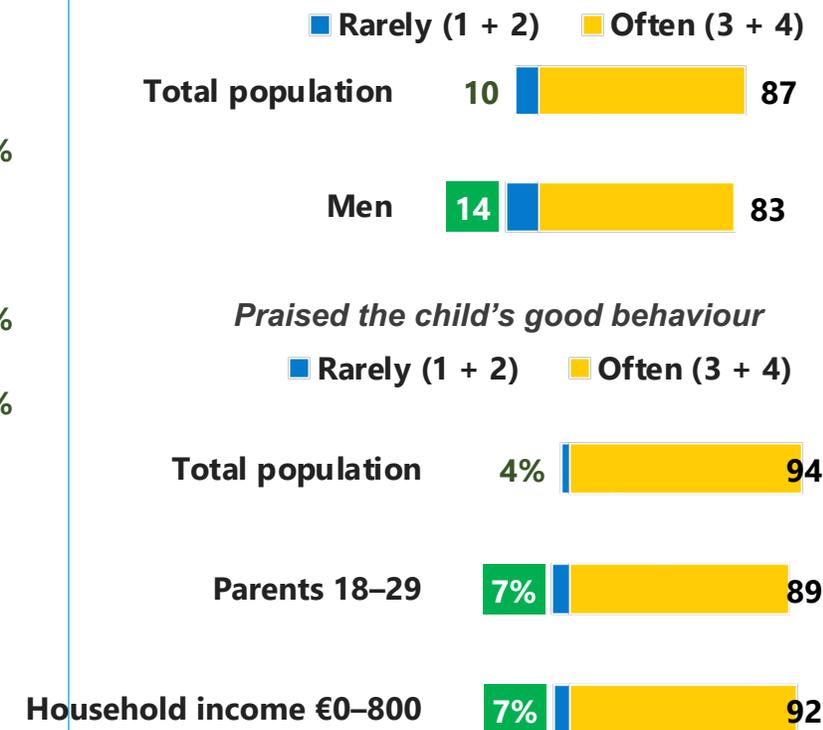
Talked about emotions with the child



Played with the child



Taught the child a new skill



A little while ago, you told me which family members participated in certain activities with the child in the past week, and now please tell me how often YOU PERSONALLY did the following in the previous MONTH?

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population

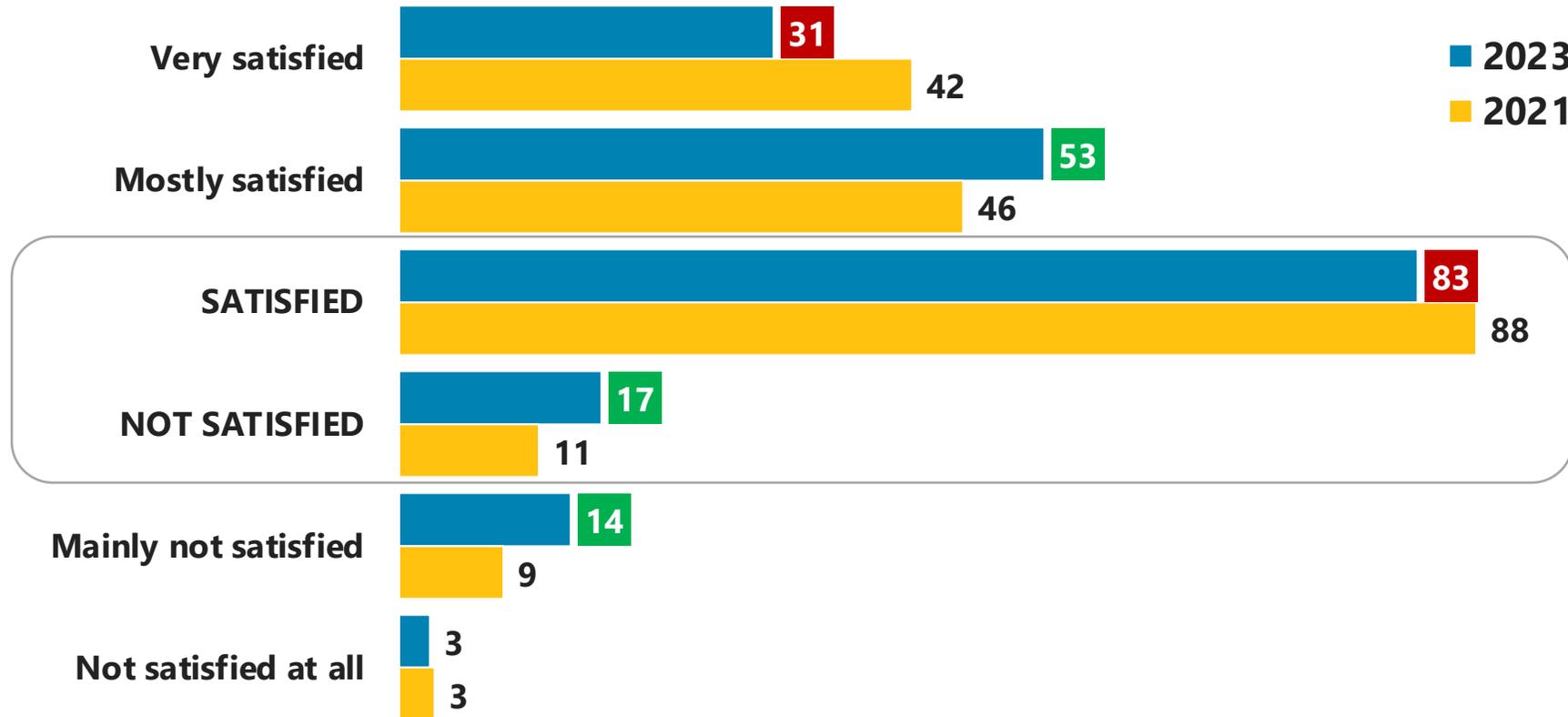
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# TIME SPENT WITH CHILDREN

(cross-wave comparison)

Although more than four fifths of parents/caregivers were mainly satisfied with the amount of time and the way they spent it with their children, satisfaction is less extensive than in the previous wave (83%), while the share of the dissatisfied is larger (17%). More precisely, although almost half of parents claimed to be mainly satisfied with the time they spend with their children (53%), the share of those very satisfied has decreased extensively (31%), while the share of those mostly dissatisfied grew (14%). Again, this difference may be ascribed to the end of COVID-19 pandemic, since the previous wave took place when a lot of people were working from home and when the family was together more.

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

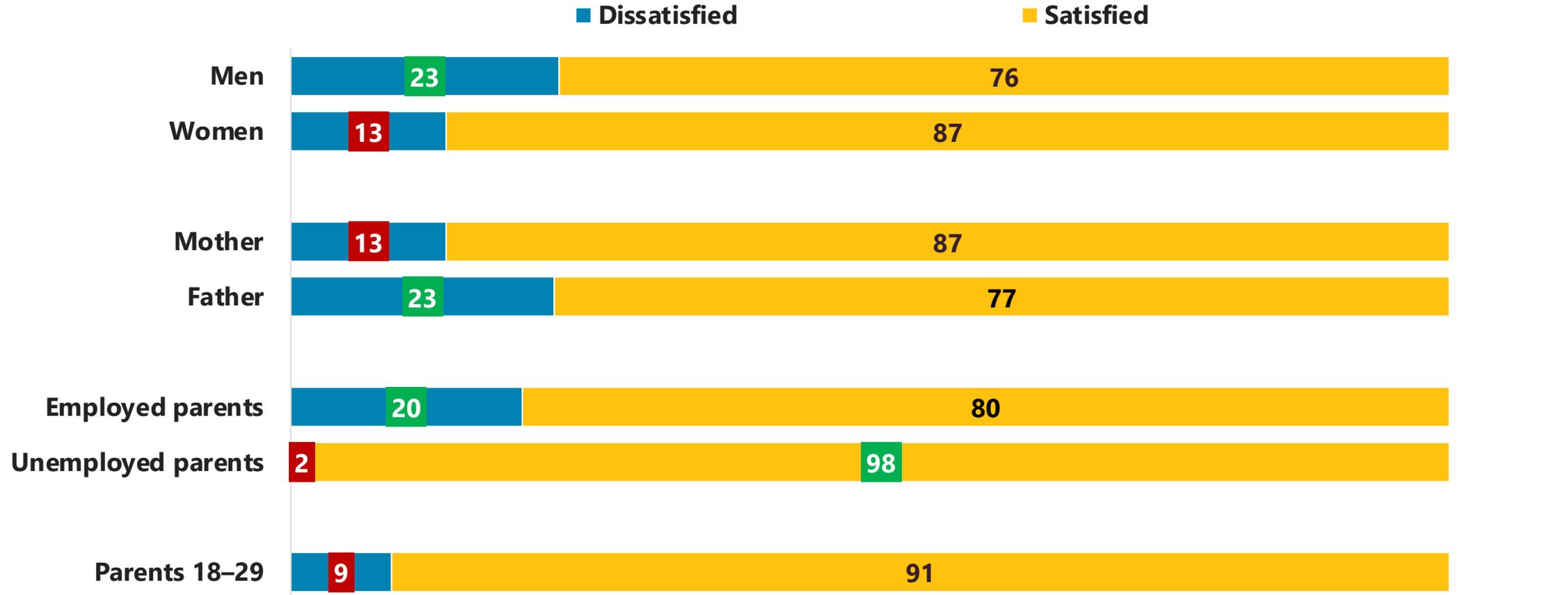
How satisfied are you, as a parent, with the amount of QUALITY time you spend with your child/children?  
Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

# TIME SPENT WITH CHILDREN

(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)

Men/fathers, but also employed parents/caregivers, were more likely not to be satisfied with the amount and quality of time spent with their children, unlike women/mothers, the unemployed and the youngest parents (18–29 years). Almost all unemployed parents were satisfied with their dedication to their children.

Data in %



  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

How satisfied are you as a parent with the amount of QUALITY time you spend with your child/children?

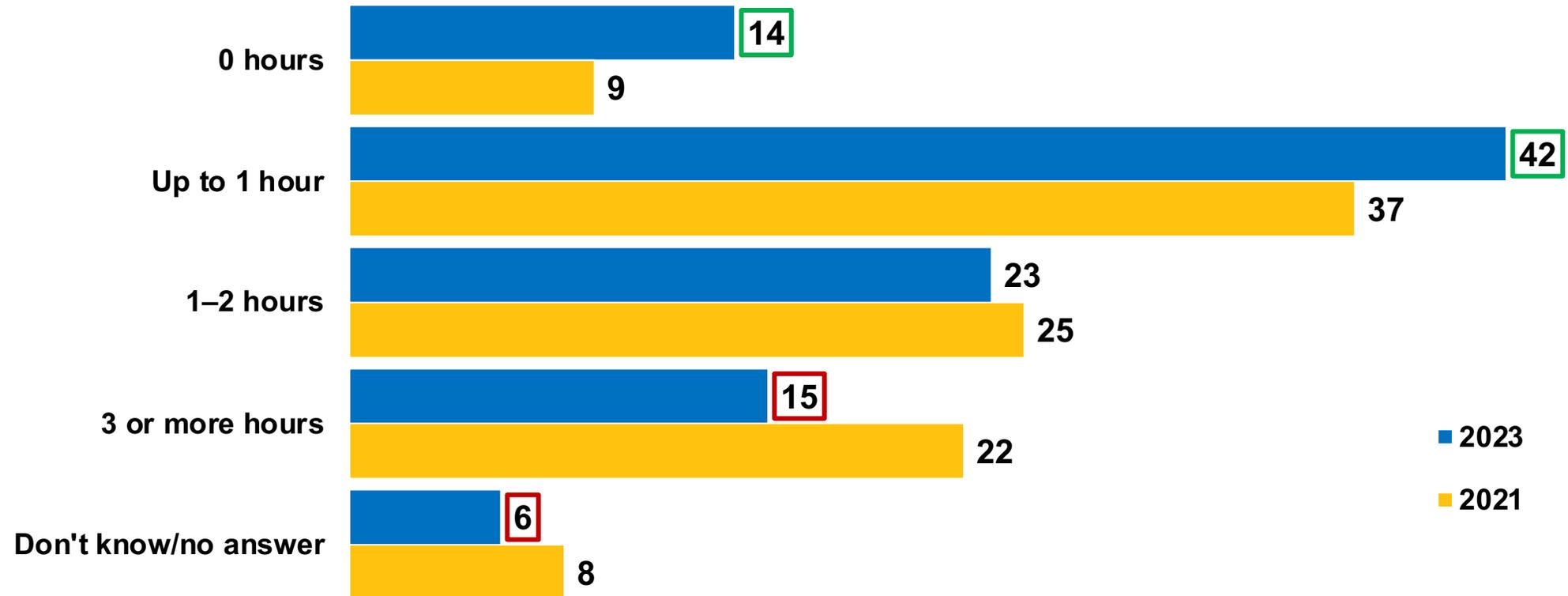
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# SCREEN TIME

(cross-wave comparison)

Compared with the 2021 results, children seem to spend slightly less time in front of screens. Although parents/caregivers are more likely to say now that their children spent up to one hour a day in front of a screen (42%), the share of those who said that their children did not use a screen at all (14%), while the share of those whose children used a screen for more than three hours a day decreased (15%). At the same time, almost a quarter said that average time spent in front of a screen was between one and two hours a day, similar to the 2021 wave.

Data in %



How many hours per day ON AVERAGE did your child spend in front of a screen – television, tablet, laptop, mobile phone, etc. – during the previous week?

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 1018 (2023)

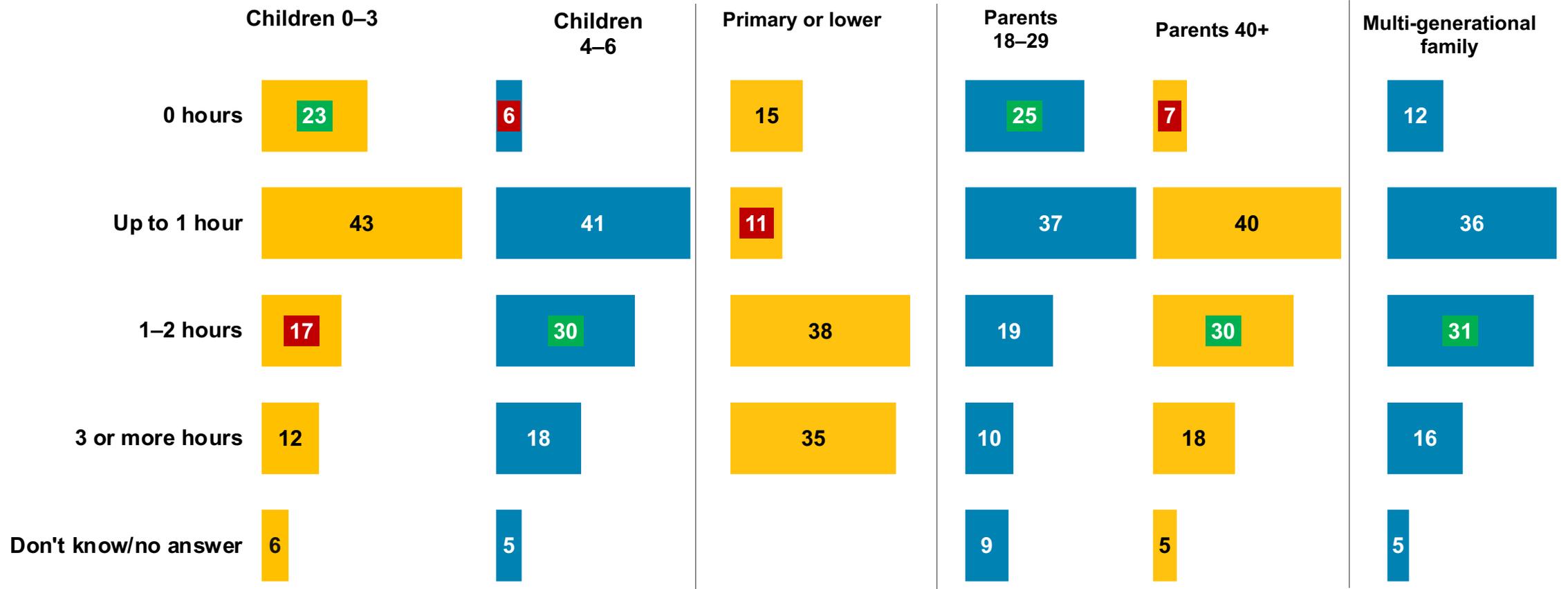
14 Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
15 Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# SCREEN TIME

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Parents/caregivers of children under 3 years of age and parents aged 18–29 years were more likely than average to say that their children did not use a screen at all. Parents of older preschool children, parents older than 40 years and members of multi-generational families were more likely than average to say that their children used screens for one to two hours a day.

Data in %



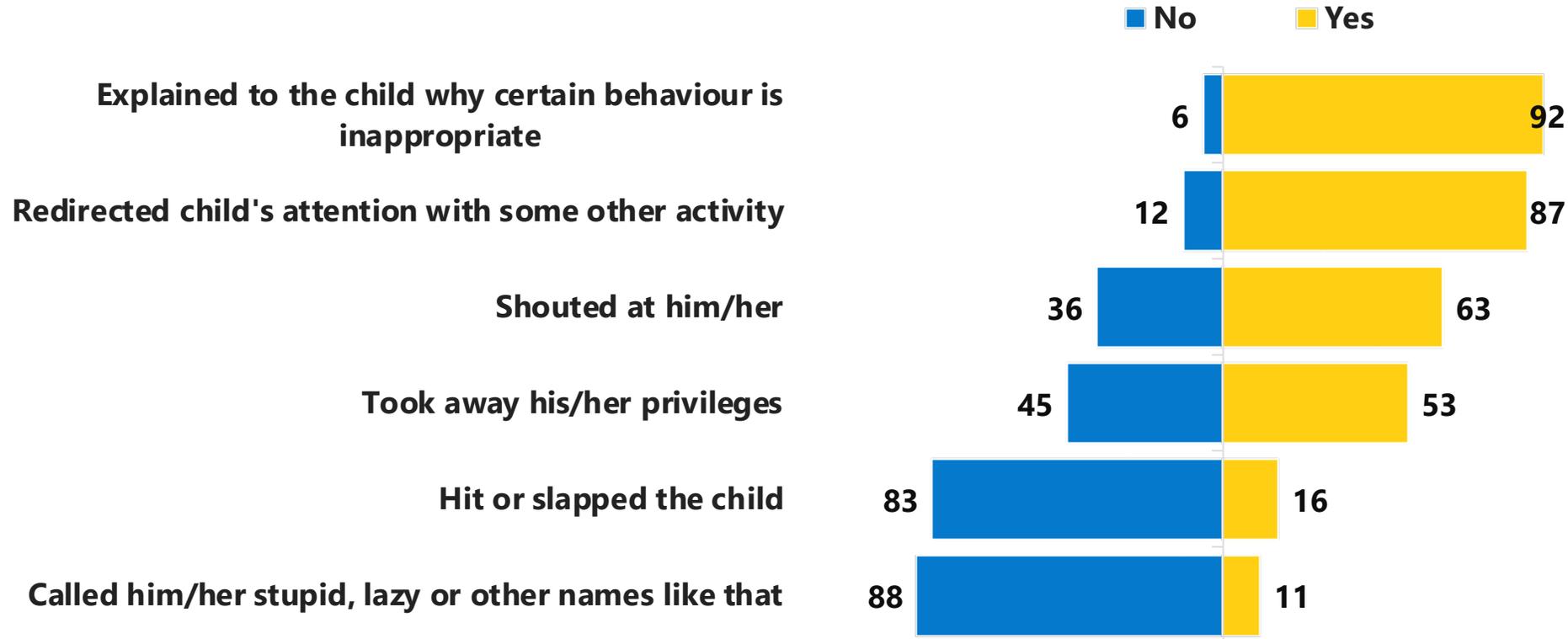
How many hours per day ON AVERAGE did your child spend in front of a screen – television, tablet, laptop, mobile phone, etc. – during the previous week?  
 Base: Total target population, N = 1018

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# TEACHING CHILDREN APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR (2023)

The research results indicate that parents/caregivers generally use constructive methods of disciplining their children, although some more drastic measures are still being applied. The majority claim that they recently tried to talk to their child about specific inappropriate behaviour (92%) or attempted to redirect the child's attention to another activity (87%). One in two confirm that certain privileges have been taken away from the child. At the same time, three out of five parents/caregivers report that shouting has been used as a disciplinary measure. Finally, 16% of parents/caregivers admit to resorting to physical punishment of the child, and 11% to verbal insults.

Data in %



**97% of parents/guardians applied at least one of the adequate upbringing methods (verbal explanation, distraction, withdrawal of privileges)**

**65% of parents/guardians used at least one of the inadequate upbringing methods (yelling at the child, physical punishment, verbal insults)**

Adults use different ways to teach children appropriate behaviour. I'm going to read you some of the methods that are used and ask you to say for each of them whether you or any other adult in your household applied this to the child, that we are talking about, in the previous month.

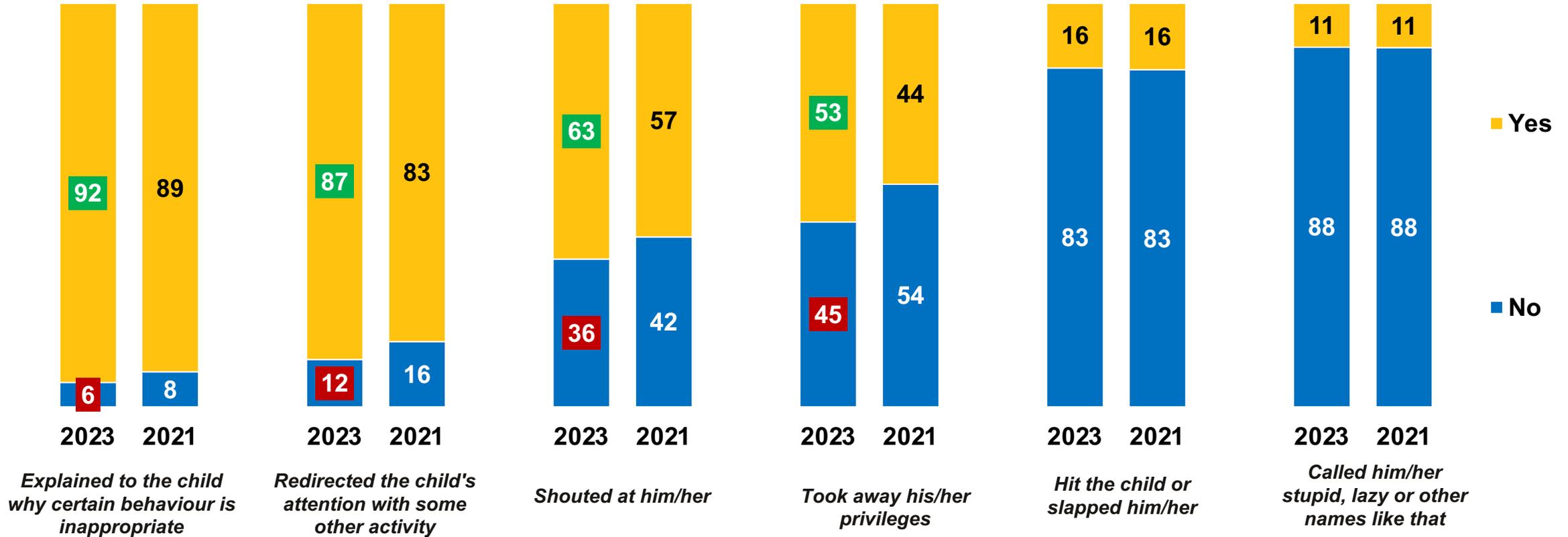
Base: Total target population, N = 2018

# TEACHING CHILDREN APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Compared with the 2021 wave, parents/caregivers are more likely now to use constructive upbringing methods – they are more likely to try to explain to the child why his/her behaviour was not appropriate, they are more likely also to try to distract the child with some other activity, or to take away certain privileges. However, children also seem to be exposed more to shouting. Two more drastic measures (hitting and using insults) are used as much as two years ago.

Data in %



Adults use different ways to teach children appropriate behaviour. I'm going to read you some of the methods that are used and ask you to say for each of them whether you or any other adult in your household applied this to the child, that we are talking about, in the previous month.  
 Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 2018 (2023)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

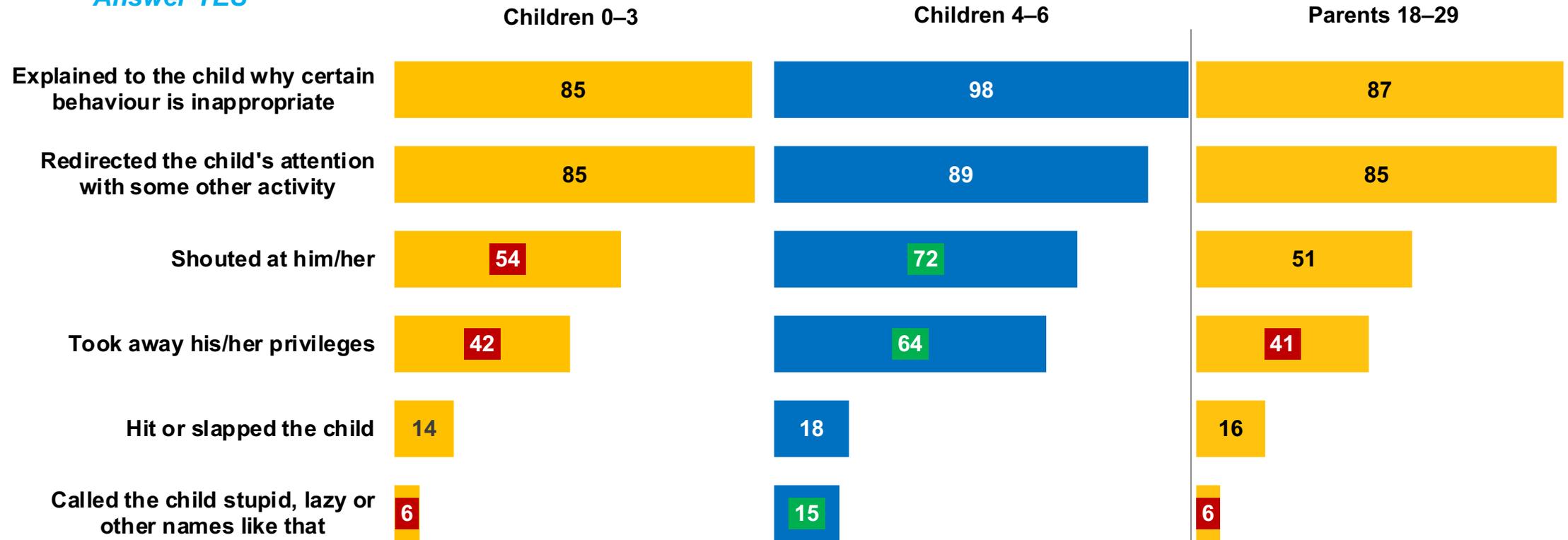
# TEACHING CHILDREN APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)

Compared with the total population, parents/caregivers of older preschool children (4–6 years) were more likely to take away privileges (64%). They were also more likely to shout at their children (72%), and also to use insults in case of inappropriate behaviour (15%).

Data in %

Answer YES

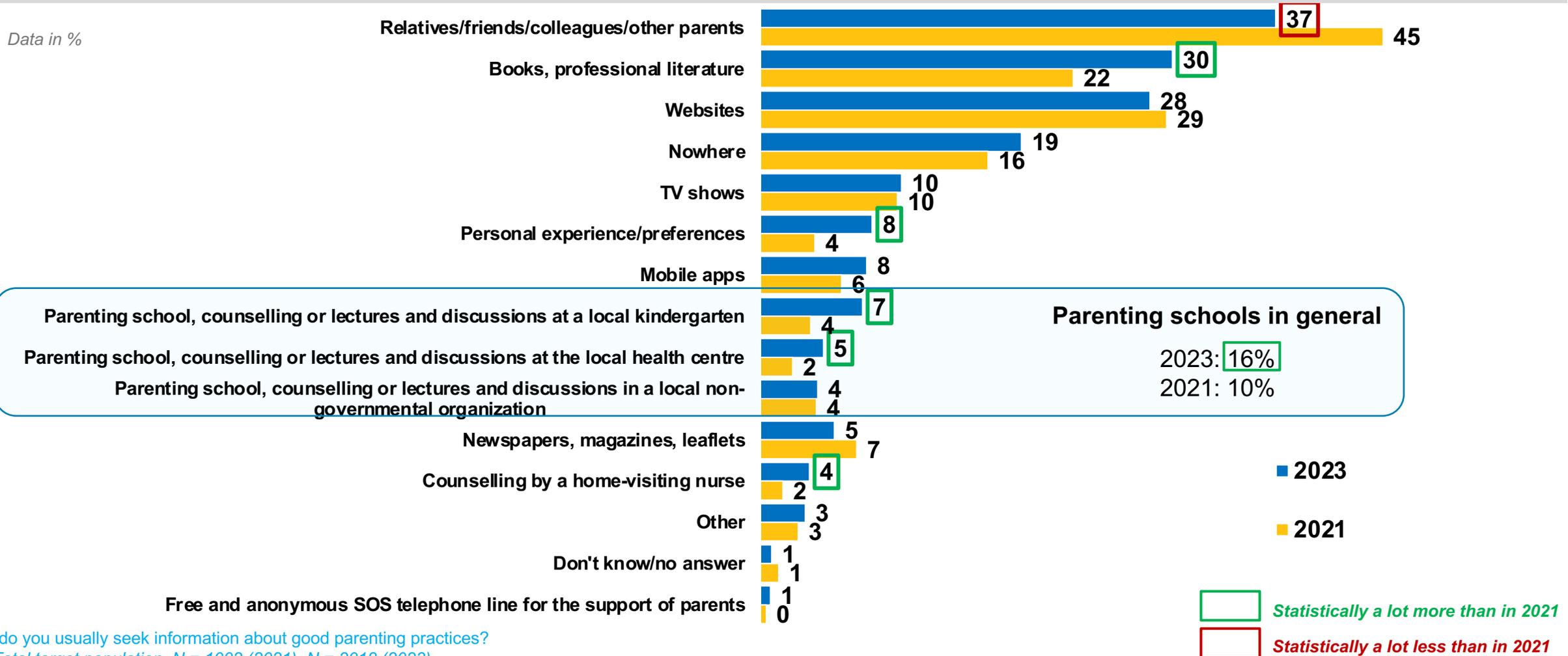


Adults use different ways to teach children appropriate behaviour. I'm going to read you some of the methods that are used and ask you to say for each of them whether you or any other adult in your household applied this to the child, that we are talking about, in the previous month.  
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON GOOD PARENTING PRACTICES

Data from both survey waves suggests that parents/caregivers still prefer to consult close people on parenting issues, although they do this a lot less than before (37%). However, today's parents are more likely to consult books and professional literature (30%), while websites remain as relevant as they used to be (28%). Other sources are mentioned less, although with a growing portion relying on their own experience or preferences (8%), as well as on knowledge from a parenting school, counselling or lectures and discussions at a local kindergarten (7%), health centre (5%) or from a home-visiting nurse (4%).



Where do you usually seek information about good parenting practices?

Base: Total target population, N = 1002 (2021), N = 2018 (2023)

# INTEREST IN PARENTAL SUPPORT

(2023)

Parents/caregivers seem to be quite interested in different kinds of support for parenting and raising children, especially those that include direct contact. Most of them would like to join a parenting school led by experts (63%), and a similar proportion are willing to do individual counselling (60%), as well as to attend lectures in the local community (59%). More than half are interested in consulting forums and websites (55%), a similar share in mobile apps (53%) and an anonymous phone line (51%), while 46% of parents/caregivers are interested in lectures on social media.

Data in %

Parenting schools conducted in small groups of parents, led by experts from local institutions or non-governmental...

Individual counselling within local institutions (including home-visiting nurses) or non-governmental organizations

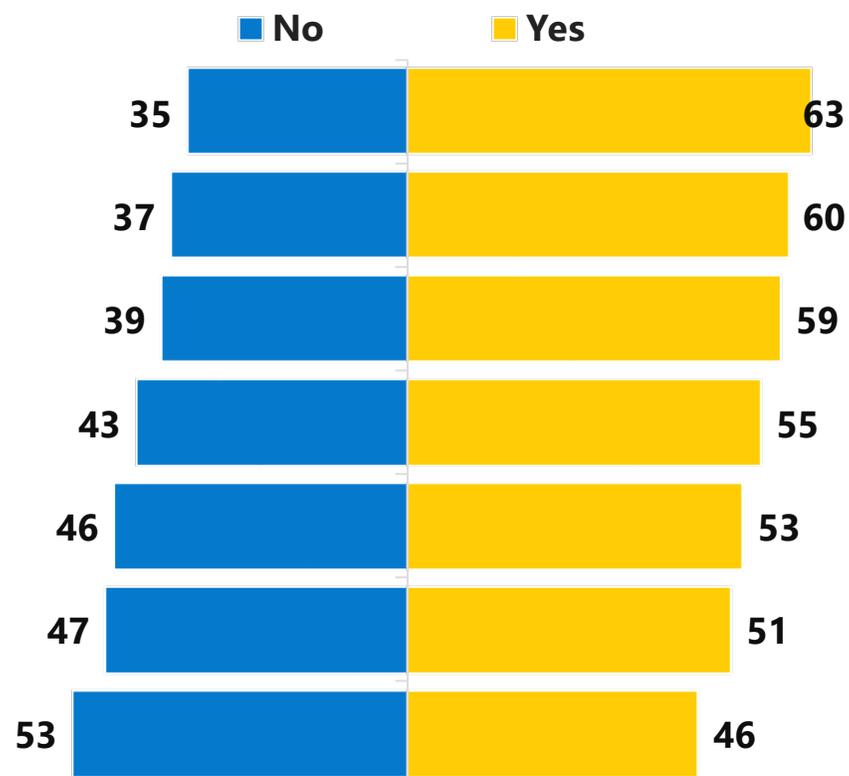
Lectures in the local community

Forums and websites

Mobile application

Anonymous counselling telephone line for parents

Lectures on social networks



**84% parents/caregivers are interested in receiving support in at least one of the mentioned ways**

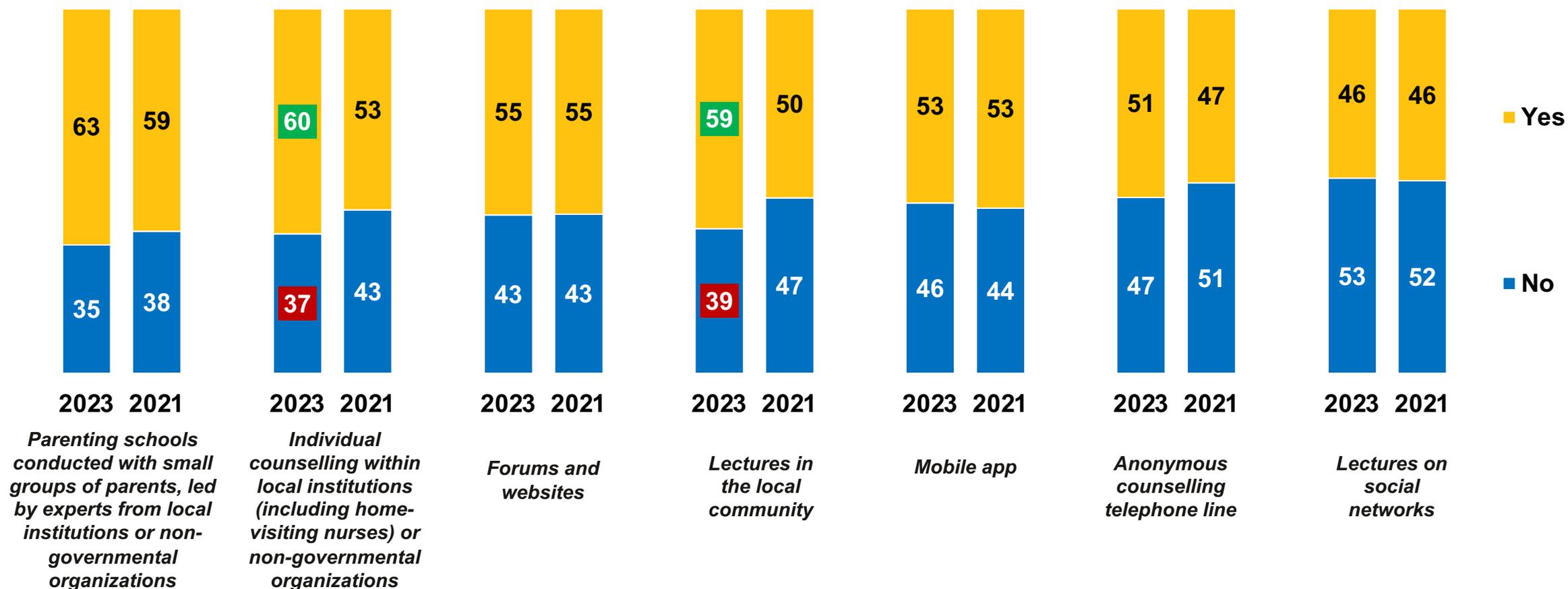
Would you be interested in receiving support for parenting and raising children in any of the following ways?

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# INTEREST IN PARENTAL SUPPORT

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Interest of parents/caregivers in parenting support is at a very similar level as in 2021. However, they seem to be far more willing to accept individual counselling within local institutions (including home-visiting nurses) or non-governmental organizations and lectures in the local community.



Would you be interested in receiving support for parenting and raising children in any of the following ways?

Base: Total target population, N = 1018 (2023), N = 1002 (2021)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021

# INTEREST IN PARENTAL SUPPORT

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Men/fathers are interested to a less-than-average extent in almost all forms of support (except for forums and websites). On the other hand, women/mothers are more interested in support using mobile apps and anonymous phone lines, as well as lectures on social media. This form of lecture is also preferred by younger parents (18–29) and by those with higher education. Highly educated parents/guardians also show greater openness to forums and websites, while those with lower household incomes are less interested in this type of support.

Data in %

Answers YES

	Men	Women	Parent with lower education	Parent with secondary education	Parent with higher education	Mother	Father	Parent 18–29	Household income €0–800
Parenting schools conducted with small groups of parents, led by experts from local institutions or NGOs	51	69	65	57	68	69	51	74	59
Individual counselling within local institutions (including home-visiting nurses) or NGOs	49	65	62	57	62	65	49	70	61
Lectures in the local community	47	64	65	53	62	64	48	65	57
Forums and websites	47	59	19	48	62	59	48	58	44
Mobile app	41	58	36	46	57	58	41	55	47
Anonymous counselling telephone line for parents	37	57	43	46	54	57	37	61	47
Lectures on social networks	35	51	27	36	52	51	35	59	37

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

Would you be interested in receiving support for parenting and raising children in any of the following ways?

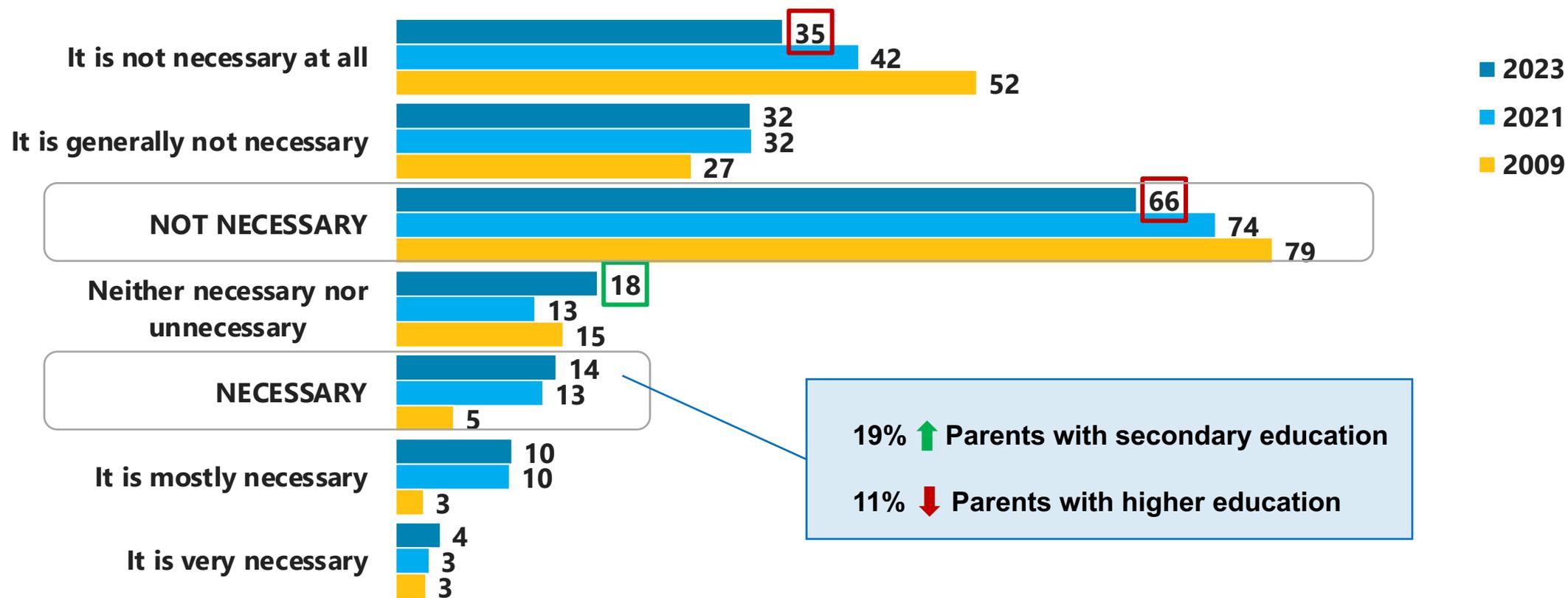
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# ATTITUDES TOWARDS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

*(cross-wave comparison)*

Attitudes towards corporal punishment of children differ to some extent from those registered in the 2021 survey wave. Namely, parents/caregivers are less likely now to oppose this method of upbringing (66%), with also a growing proportion of those who are unsure whether it should be used or not. It's quite easy to notice that parents' opposition to corporal punishment of children has been decreasing since 2009. As for the differences between socio-demographic categories in 2023, parents/caregivers with secondary education are a lot more likely to believe that corporal punishment of children is necessary (19%), unlike those with higher education (11%).

Data in %



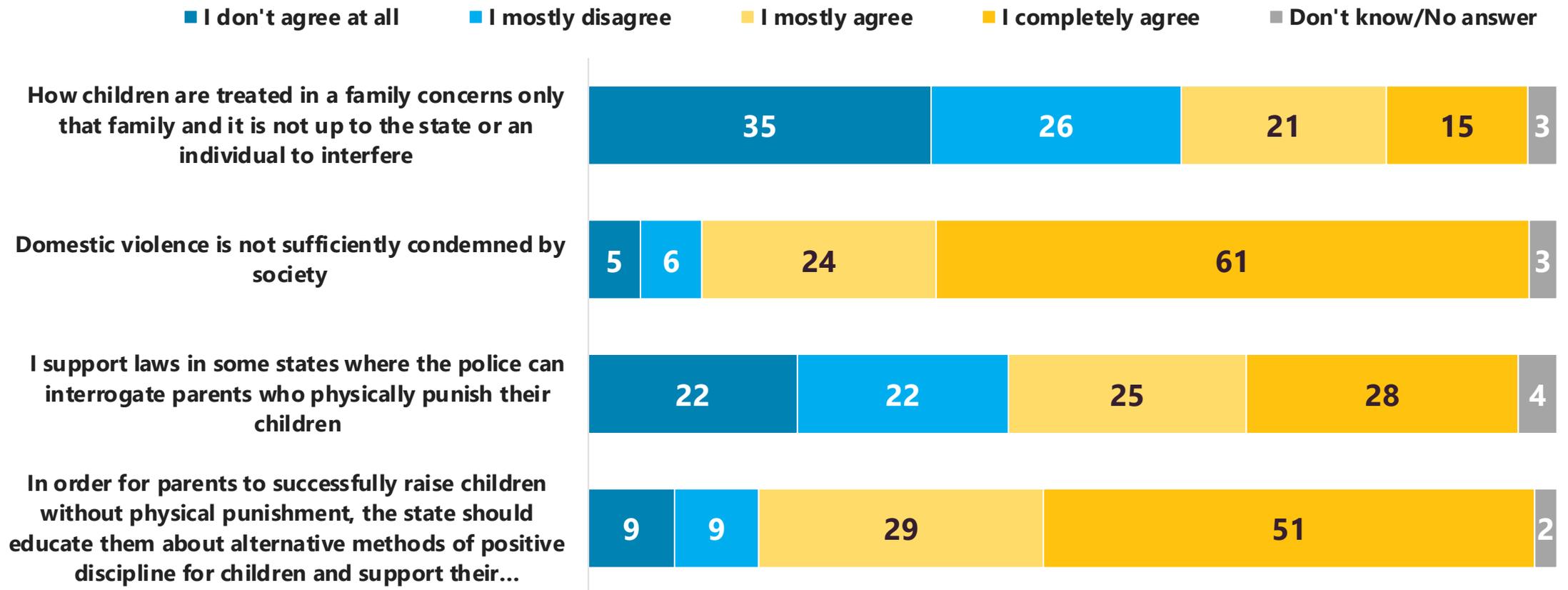
In your opinion, to what extent is corporal punishment needed in raising children?  
Base: Total target population, N = 1018 (2023), N = 1002 (2021), N = 1006 (2009)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021.  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021.

# AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ON THE ROLE OF SOCIETY (2023)

Parents/caregivers mainly agree that society should react more severely to domestic violence (85%), as well as that the state should educate them about alternative methods of positive discipline in order to successfully raise children without corporal punishment (80%). Although attitudes are not very homogeneous in regard to whether the treatment of children within a family is a private matter or not, still two thirds of parents/caregivers disagree with the statement that this is a solely private matter. The gap between the different opinions is even bigger in regard to the police being able to interrogate parents who physically punish children, although half of them support these laws (53%).

Data in %



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

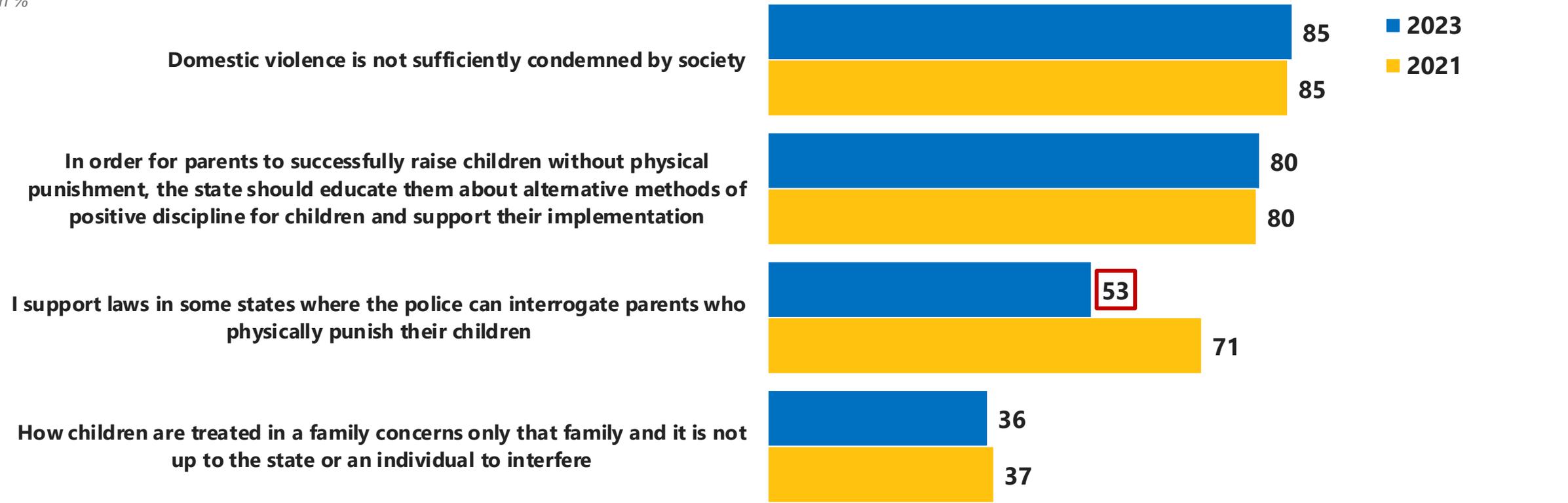
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

# AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ON THE ROLE OF SOCIETY

*(cross-wave comparison: mainly agree + completely agree)*

There are almost no differences between data on the attitudes regarding corporal punishment of children between the last two waves. The majority of parents/caregivers continue to agree that society should react more severely to domestic violence (85%), as well as that the state should educate them about alternative methods of positive discipline (80%), while only somewhat more than a third believe that parent-child relationships should remain private (36%). However, parents are now a lot less likely to support laws that allow the interrogation of parents who physically punish their children (53%).

Data in %



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Base: Total target population, N = 1018 (2023), N = 1002 (2021)

  Statistically a lot more than in 2021.  
  Statistically a lot less than in 2021.

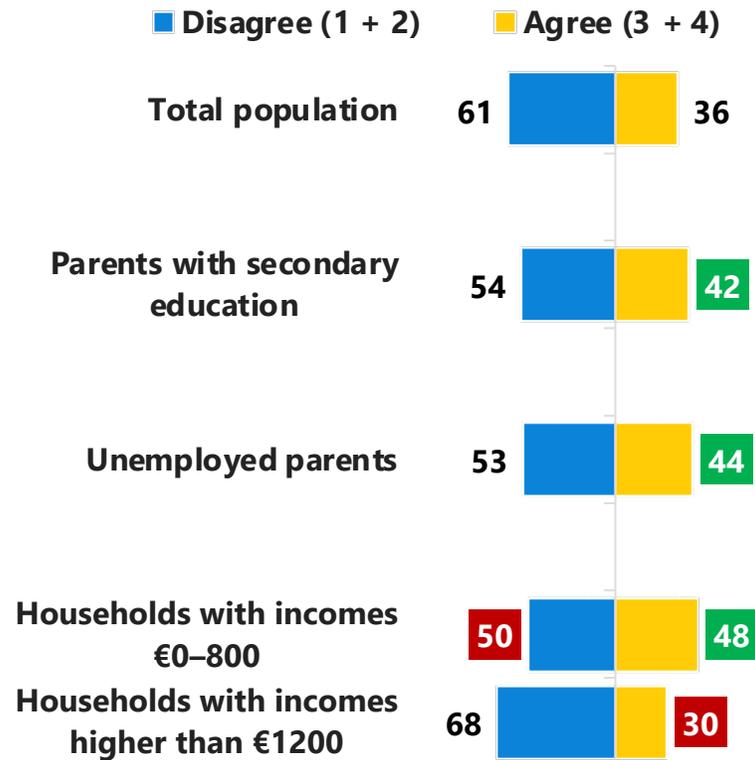
# AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ON THE ROLE OF SOCIETY

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

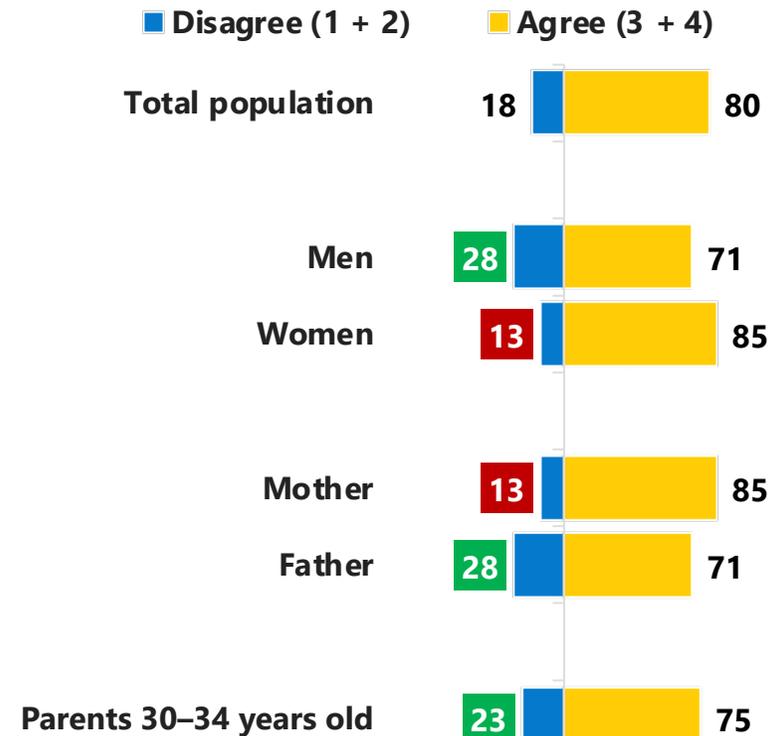
Parents with secondary education (42%), the unemployed (44%) and those with lower household incomes (48%) were more likely to believe that the way a child is treated by the family is a private matter that society should not interfere in. Men/fathers (28%) and those in their early 30s (23%) were less likely to believe that, in order for parents to successfully raise children without physical punishment, the state should educate them about alternative methods of positive discipline for children and support their implementation. Men/fathers (16%) and residents of rural areas (17%) were more likely than average to disagree that domestic violence is not sufficiently condemned by the society.

Data in %

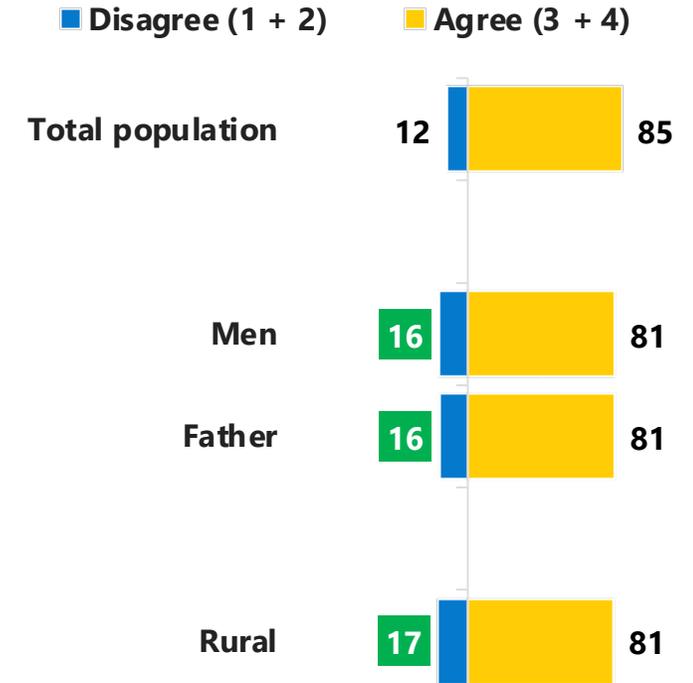
*How children are treated in a family concerns only that family and it is not up to the state or an individual to interfere*



*In order for parents to successfully raise children without physical punishment, the state should educate them about alternative methods of positive discipline for children and support their implementation.*



*Domestic violence is not sufficiently condemned by society*



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Base: Total target population, N = 1018

  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# BEBBO MOBILE APP

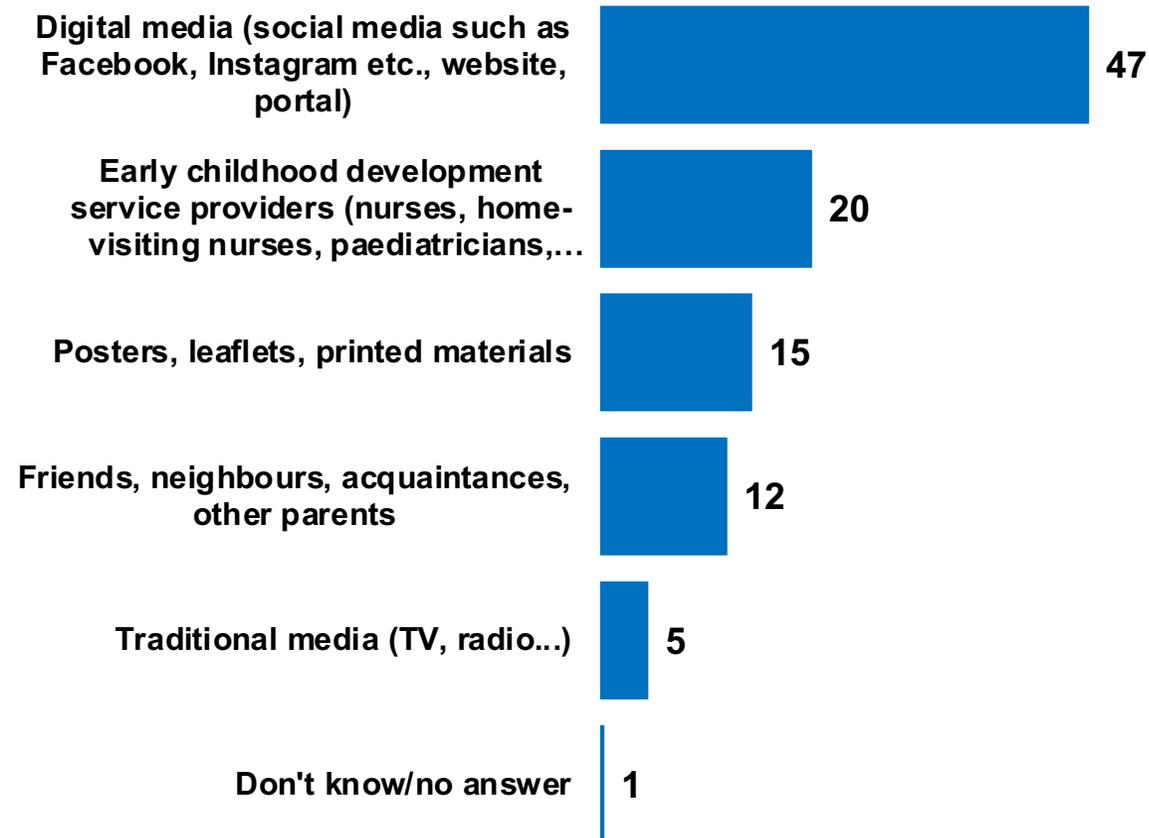
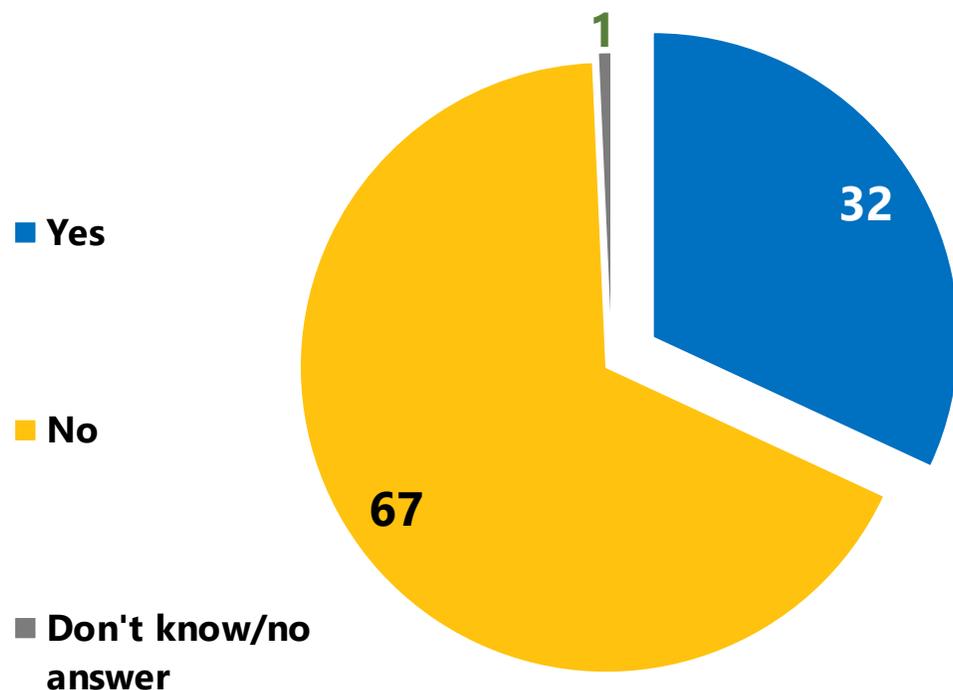


# AWARENESS OF THE BEBBO APP

(2023)

The survey results suggest that one third of parents/caregivers are aware of the Bebbo app. Half of them found out about it in digital media, one fifth were informed by early childhood development service providers, 15% came across informative material about the app (posters, leaflets etc.), 12% were informed by close people, and 5% by traditional media.

Data in %



Have you heard of the Bebbo mobile app for parents?  
Base: Total target population, N = 1018

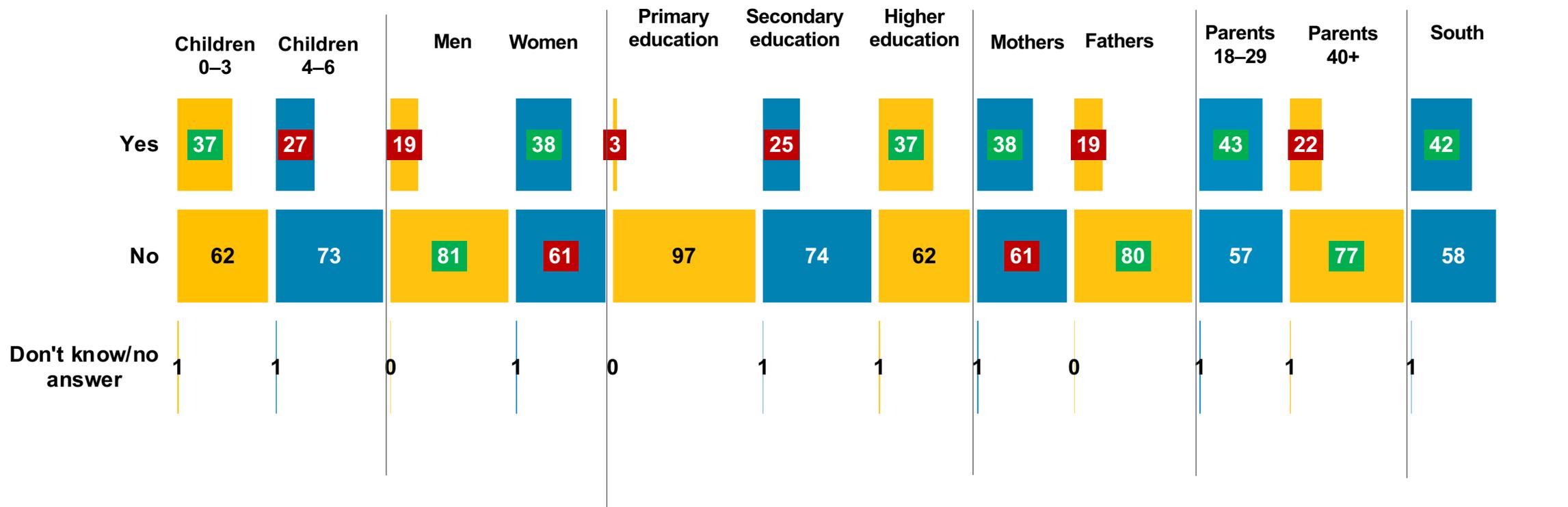
How did you find out about the Bebbo app?  
Base: Those aware of the Bebbo app, N = 325

# AWARENESS OF THE BEBBO APP

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Compared with the total population, parents of children under 3 years of age (37%), women and mothers (38%), citizens with higher education (37%), parents/caregivers aged 18–29 years (43%), as well as residents of the south (42%) are more likely to be familiar with the Bebbo app. Parents from households with incomes up to €800 are more likely to state that they have not heard of the app (72%) compared to those with household incomes between €801 and €1200 (65%).

Data in %



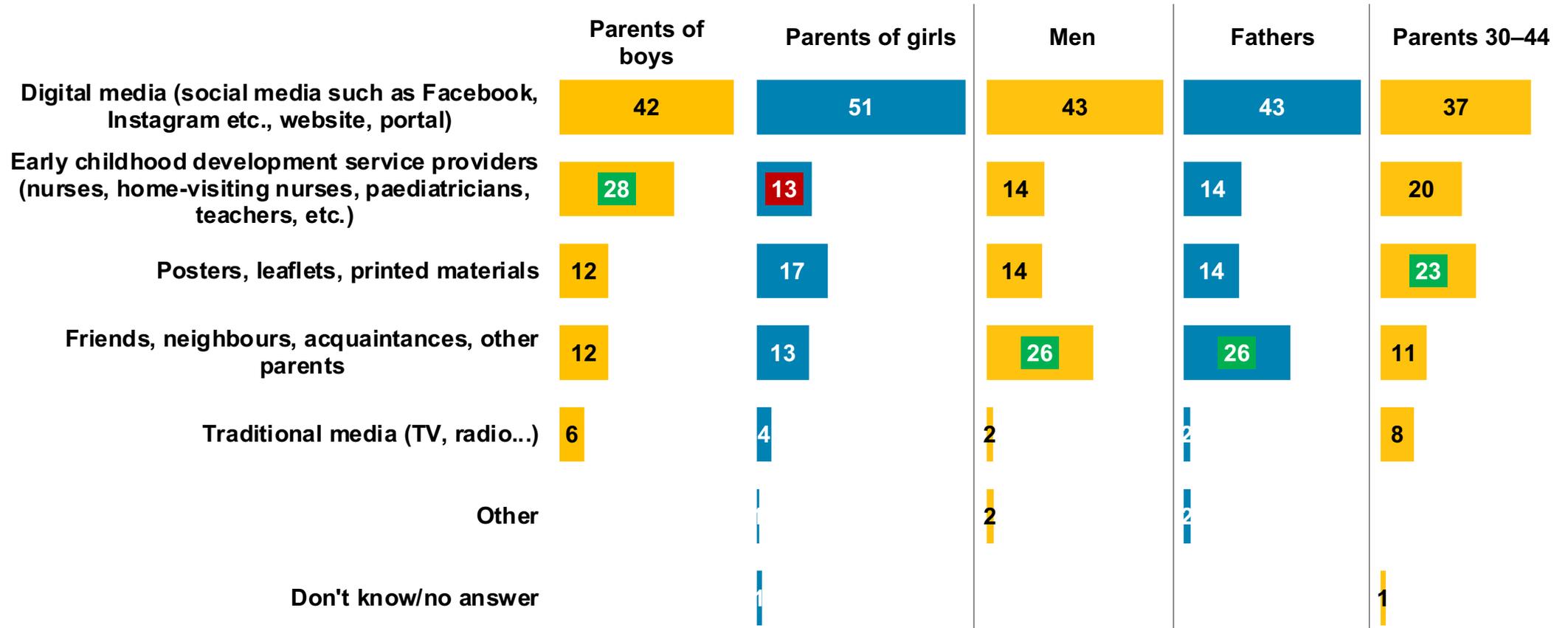
  Statistically a lot more than in the total population  
  Statistically a lot less than in the total population

# HOW PARENTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THE BEBBO APP

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

Regardless of socio-demographic characteristics, the majority of parents/caregivers who were aware of Bebbio app found out about it via digital media. On the other hand, the parents of boys seemed to have been mainly informed by professionals engaged in early childhood development (28%), parents in their early 30s by printed materials (23%), and men/fathers by the people who surround them (26%).

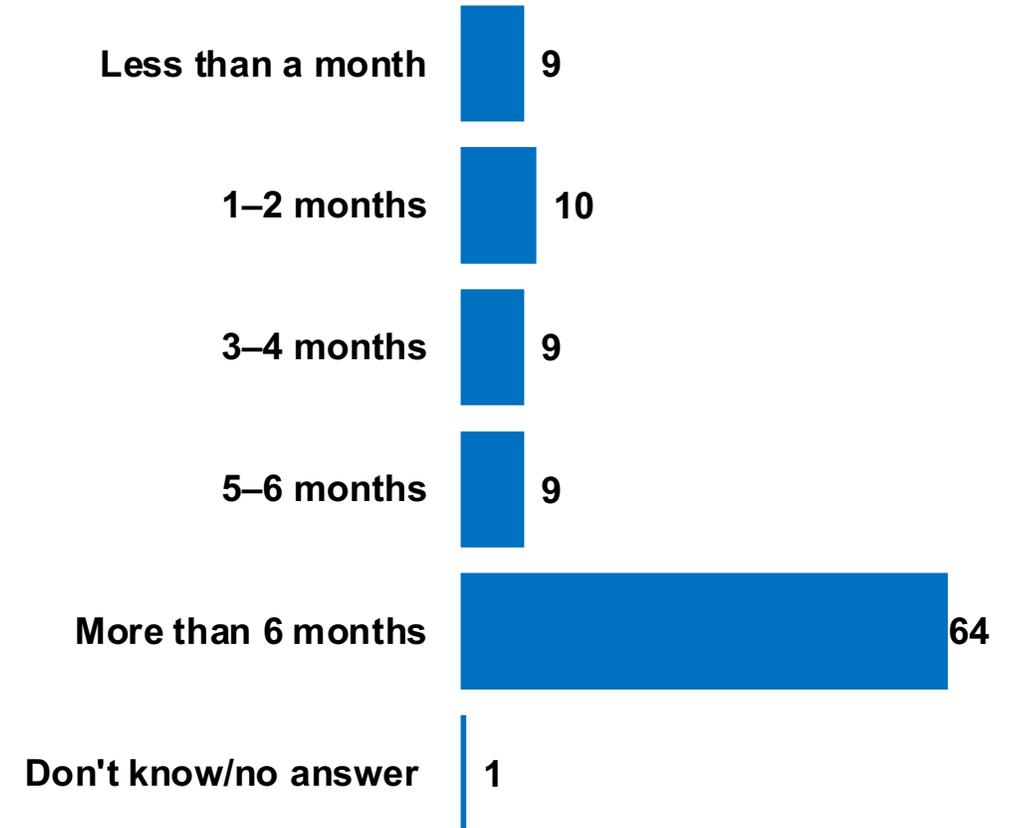
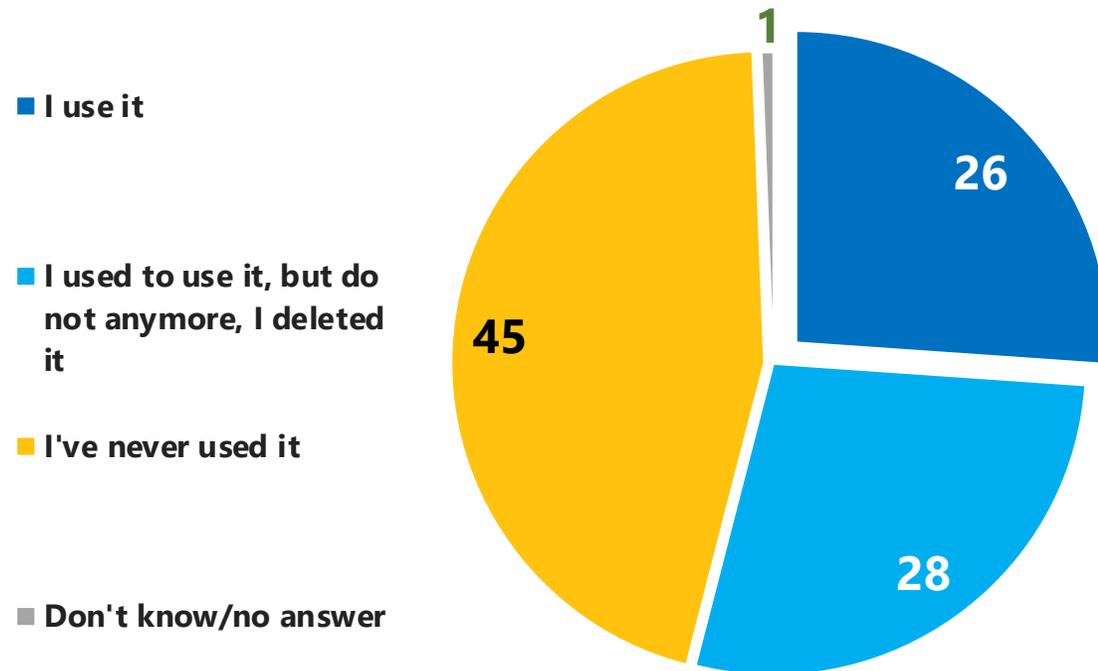
Data in %



# USING THE BEBBO APP (2023)

One quarter of those aware of the Bebbo app use it actively, 28% used to use it, but do not anymore, while 45% have never used it. Two out of three active users have been using the app for more than six months, approximately one in ten for less than a month, and 28% between one and six months.

Data in %

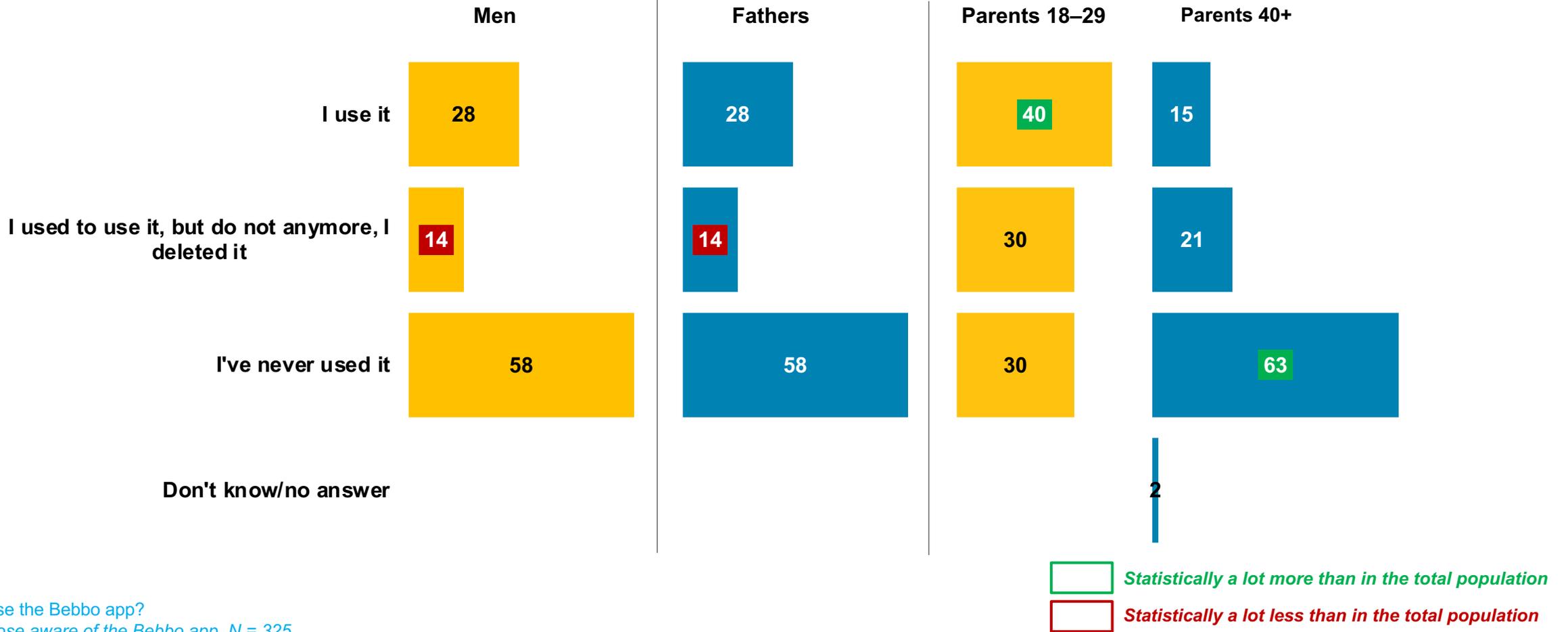


# USING THE BEBBO APP

*(categories with statistically significant differences from the total population)*

The youngest parents (18–29 years) who are aware of the app are more likely than average to use it at the moment (40%), while the oldest parents (40+ years) are more likely to have never used it (63%). Men or fathers were more likely to say that they have stopped using it (14%).

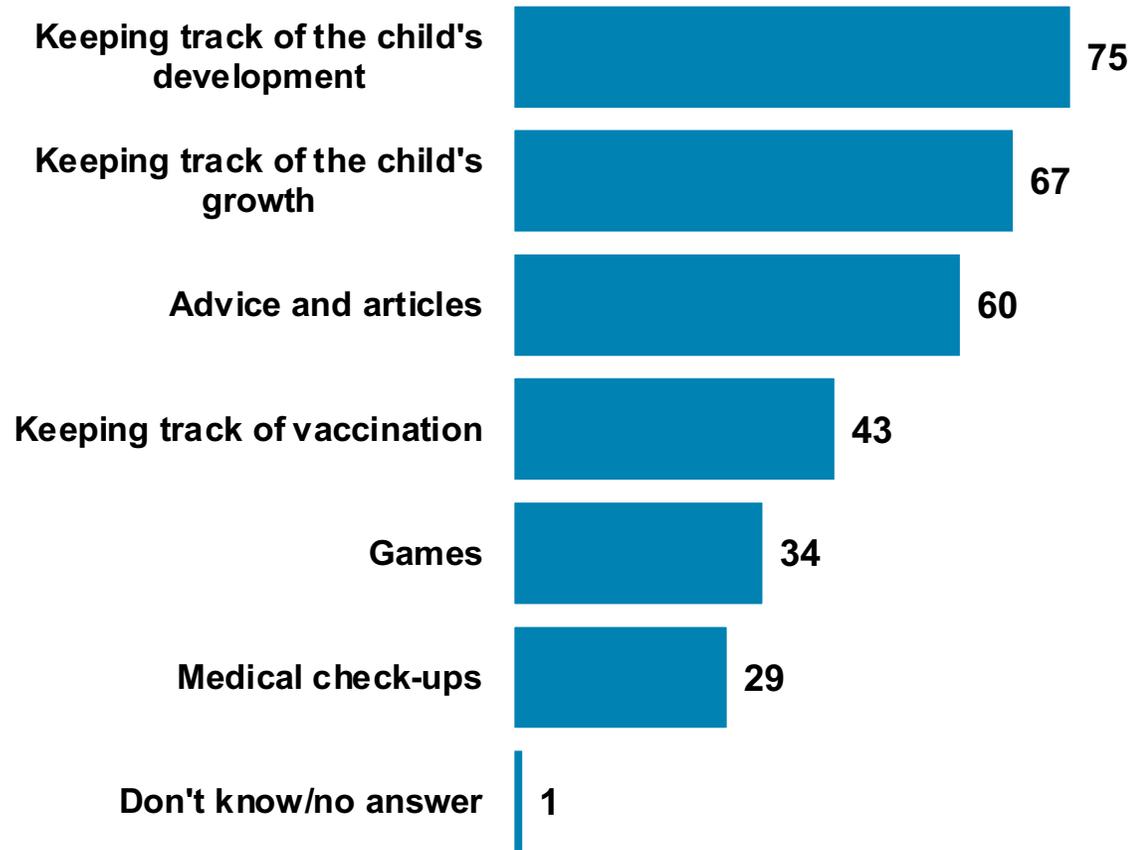
Data in %



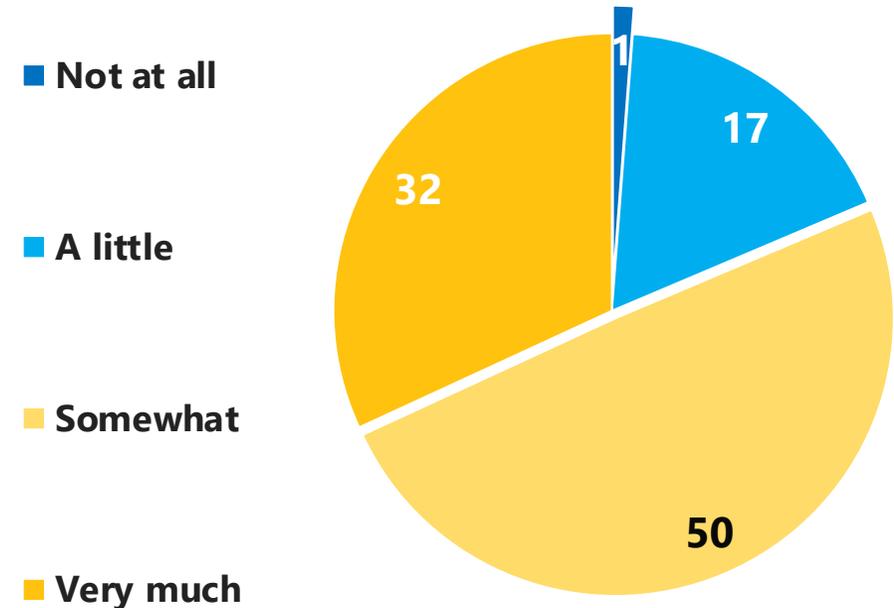
# USING THE BEBBO APP (2023)

Regardless of socio-demographic characteristics, users of the Bebbo app mainly use the app to keep track of their child's development (75%) and growth (67%), and then for advice and useful articles (60%). In addition, more than 80% of users say that the app helps them at least to some extent in their role as parents.

Data in %



Which Bebbo app options do you usually use? Multiple answers.  
Base: Those who have used the Bebbo app, N = 85

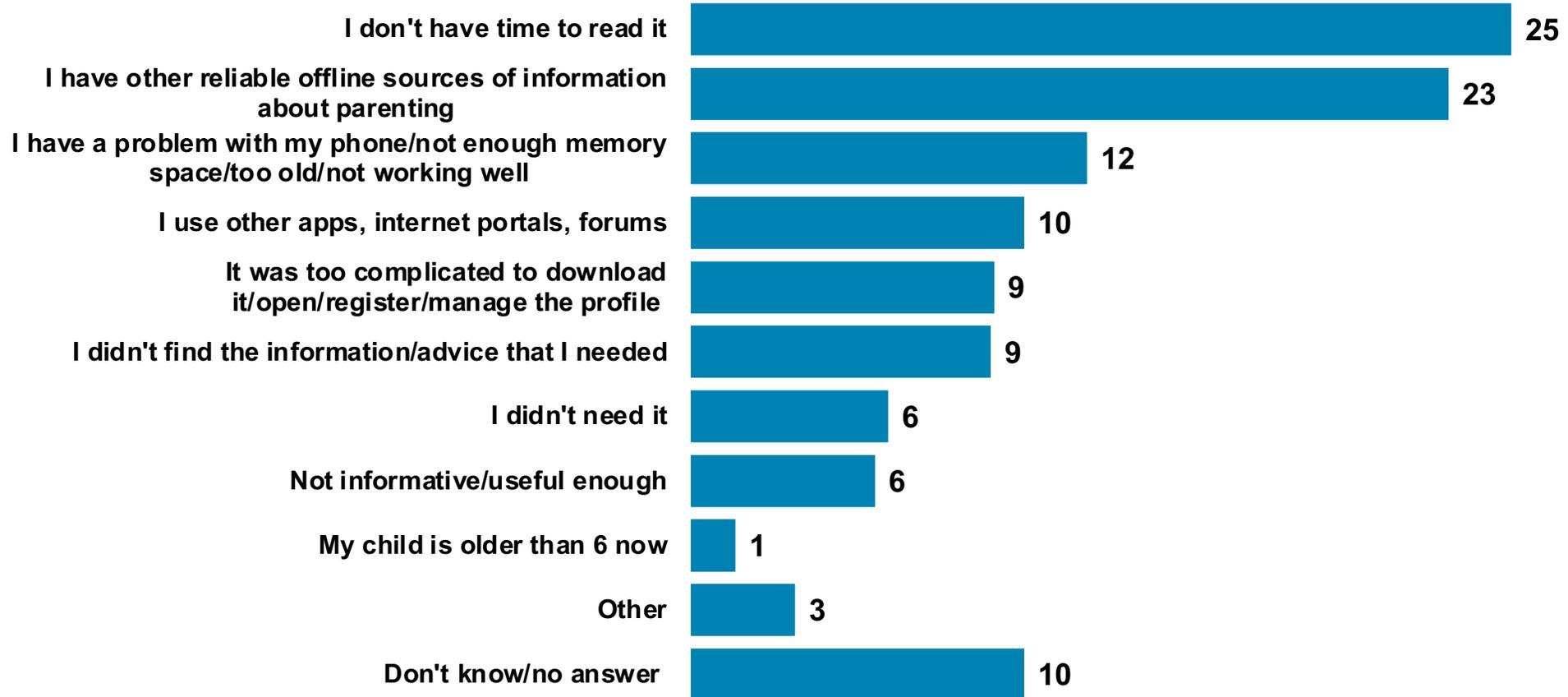


To what extent has the Bebbo app helped you in your role as a parent?  
Base: Those who have used the Bebbo app, N = 85

# REASONS FOR NOT USING THE APP (2023)

Those aware of the Bebbo app who are not using it (any longer), mainly say that it's because of lack of time (25%) and being directed to some other offline sources of information about parenting (23%). In addition, about 10% mention having problems with their phone or app, relying on other online sources, or irrelevant content.

Data in %



Why don't you use the Bebbo app? Multiple answers

Base: Those who don't use the Bebbo app, N = 238

# OBJECTIVES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- As part of the qualitative research on the Bebbio app, online focus groups were conducted with parents of children aged up to 6 years, including current and former users of the Bebbio app.
- The aim of the focus groups was to explore parenting practices, the main sources of information about parenting, as well as to get feedback on the effectiveness of the Bebbio app from current and former app users. Specifically, their experiences regarding the usability and features of the app were investigated, as well as their ratings of the Bebbio app's effectiveness in parenting.
- The information collected in the focus groups aims to improve the Bebbio app and enhance its impact on parents and young children.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Two online focus groups were conducted, one with users and one with non-users (former users) of the Bebbio app in Montenegro. All participants were women - mothers and primary caregivers of children aged 0–6. Each group had at least four participants. The table below shows the structure of the groups in terms of Bebbio app use, the caregiver's place of residence, and the child's age and gender.

Country	Use of the Bebbio app	Child's age	Child's gender	Caregiver's place of residence
Montenegro	<b>Users</b>	Mixed groups by age of children (from 0 to 12 months; from 1 to 3 years; from 3 to 6 years)	Mixed groups by gender of children (boys and girls)	Mixed groups (north, centre, south)
	<b>Non-users (former users)</b>	Mixed groups by age of children (from 0 to 12 months; from 1 to 3 years; from 3 to 6 years)	Mixed groups by gender of children (boys and girls)	Mixed groups (north, centre, south)

# METHODOLOGY – Research ethics

- The entire survey was conducted in accordance with UNICEF Montenegro standards, and the methodology was approved by the Ethical Review Board engaged by UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro .
- The conducted research did not in any way cause pain, suffering or harm to the respondents – the participants in the research were exclusively adult citizens of Montenegro who voluntarily agreed to participate in it.
- All questions in the protocol were formulated in such a way that they did not harm the participants (physically or mentally) in any way – no incident or unexpected situation was recorded during the focus groups.
- The conducted research fully respects the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of all respondents – summary presentation of the data without revealing personal information to other parties, storage of the database on a password-protected server, to which only the research team of this project has access.
- Any conflict of interest was completely avoided during this research.
- Focus group participants received compensation for their time in the form of gift vouchers.

# Most participants combine information from different sources. However, the main sources are paediatricians, followed by the internet.



- Most focus group participants **combine different sources of information** about pregnancy, parenting and raising children. **The main sources of information are paediatricians and other health professionals, online sources, friends and relatives, as well as specialized call centres.** Several participants also mention **books on parenting and raising children** as an important source of information, while **parenting courses and schools** are less common ways of acquiring additional knowledge related to parenting.
- However, the **preferred channels of information vary depending on current needs and circumstances.** As expected, the majority are first turning to **paediatric experts and health workers** when they need **expert advice and answers to questions related to children's health.** Relying on **the internet and online sources** such as social networks, specialized web portals and apps is also significant, especially **when some information is urgently needed.** Additionally, another advantage of apps compared to other sources of information is their **interactive aspect, the possibility of personalizing the content and obtaining information that is relevant to the specific situation of the user** (such as the stage of pregnancy or the age of the child).
- Current users, as well as former users of the Bebbo app, as expected, **have the most trust in healthcare professionals,** primarily paediatricians. When they have doubts about the accuracy of the information they find in different sources, they generally decide to trust the source that **has expert authority** for them or in which they **come across information that is in line with their own views.** **Information that is repeated in different sources, as well as information that is confirmed by close people, is often accepted as accurate.** Thus, most of the participants **have the habit of checking multiple online sources of information or consulting with a doctor/friends/family members,** and then deciding which information is correct.
- Although it is not entirely clear **how participants choose which online parenting sources** (web portals, social networks and apps) to trust, **most choose those that they perceive as expert** because they **convey information originating from experts in the given field.**



“

I trust my paediatrician the most, similar to what other participants have said. And people from my environment, and their advice. That is something that first comes to hand and then I check later if I should apply it, I check with the paediatrician. I use the internet a lot, mostly some official websites and the Bebbio app, well I used it earlier, but have not done lately.”

- Former user of the Bebbio app

“

Well, during pregnancy, it was mainly the Bebac app, where I followed the development of the pregnancy by month, some useful tips on childbirth. After childbirth, the Google search engine. When solid food started to be introduced, then it was internet pages about food preparation, introduction of meals – what, when, how much.”

- Bebbio app user

“

I have a couple of influencers that I follow, and they have been useful to me in a few situations. I trust those influencers because they also have their reasons why they bring something up. They are not influencers who say it is their intuition, but they present what they have checked with their doctors. They helped me personally in various situations.”

- Bebbio app user

“

It's mostly the internet, social networks, there are a lot of sources on Facebook, Instagram... I like to listen to the advice of other mums who know how to determine something. But then when there is some doubt, I pick up the phone, call the paediatrician, then call my mother, and see what they say.”

- Bebbio app user

# Most current users installed the Bebbo app towards the end of their pregnancy or immediately after the birth of their child.



- **Current users of the Bebbo app most often heard about the app in the media** (television shows, web portals with news, etc.), while some noticed **advertising posters in the maternity hospital** or **the app was recommended to them by a paediatrician**. On the other hand, **former users more often state that they installed the app on the recommendation of friends or relatives who had positive experiences with the Bebbo app**.
- Current users use the app between **once a week and several times a month**. In general, the app is most commonly used after **regular doctor's visits and vaccinations**, as well as **when the child reaches a certain age**, e.g. at the transition from one month to the next in newborns. On these occasions, users often access the app in order to update their data, monitor the child's development and receive guidelines for further action.
- Like current users, former users of the app **relied most on the app immediately after the birth of the child**. However, some of them installed the app after the child reached its first year and they usually report that they did not use options such as growth tracking and vaccines. It seems that the **reasons for stopping using the app are the establishment of a routine after a certain age of the child, content that is not current and relevant enough** for their family situation, **finding another app that is more in line with their needs** (covers topics and functions that are important to them), and **insufficient trust in online sources of information in general**. Based on this, it appears that the app's features and content were most useful to **first-time mothers and mothers of children under two years of age**.



I found out about the Bebbo app through the Vijesti portal. Once I installed it, I continued to follow all the useful tips I needed, starting with vaccinations, those developmental leaps.”

**- Bebbo app user**



We installed the Bebbo app when we found another paediatrician at a private clinic who recommended it to us. I felt more at ease when I read that some things weren't as alarming as I initially thought. We mainly relied on the Bebbo app for nutrition guidance, particularly when introducing solid foods such as purees.”

**- Bebbo app user**



I use the Bebbo app a few times a month, especially after doctor's appointments. I can't wait to get home and update everything. When my baby reaches its next month, I check the app to see what to expect in that month. I watch the videos to learn about the motor activities and developmental milestones. Occasionally, I also explore the games section, which I find interesting. It's a great way to discover new activities and ideas for playing with my baby.”

**- Bebbo app user**



I found out from my godmother, when she had a child, then she recommended me to use it when I have children.”

**- Former user of the Bebbo app**



I have been using the Bebbo app since day one. I installed it in the maternity ward because there were posters promoting it. I decided to install it because I thought it would be a useful tool. However, I first heard about the app on a morning TV programme before I became pregnant, and it caught my interest because it was well presented.”

**- Former user of the Bebbo app**



I mostly use it when my baby gets another month older. During those first few days, I read articles, watch videos, explore new games, and check out any interesting content that is available.”

**- Bebbo app user**

**The visual aspect of the Bebbio app generally received high ratings from the participants. On the other hand, the design in terms of the app's clarity/simlicity was rated lower by current users, indicating that there is room for improvement in the user interface.**



- Current users of the app often complain that the **organization of content on the screen is not sufficiently systematic**, which results in an increase in the time needed to view the content. This feedback is particularly important given that, according to the participants, they most often use online sources when they want to quickly find a specific piece of information (“It’s easier to consult than a book”).
- Although none of them had a problem finding a specific function they needed within the app, **users emphasize that, compared to some other similar apps, it takes more time to locate and read the content.**
- On the other hand, **most participants appreciate that the topics are organized according to the child’s age.** As a positive example, the clarity of content within the “Tips” section is mentioned, so users have the impression that the content they need is always at the top of the page.
- In general, **both current and former users of the app consider it easy to use.** None of them reported any issues with downloading the app, registering, initial setup, creating a child’s profile or entering basic information. However, **former users rate this aspect of the app, as well as its clarity, more highly than current users do.**

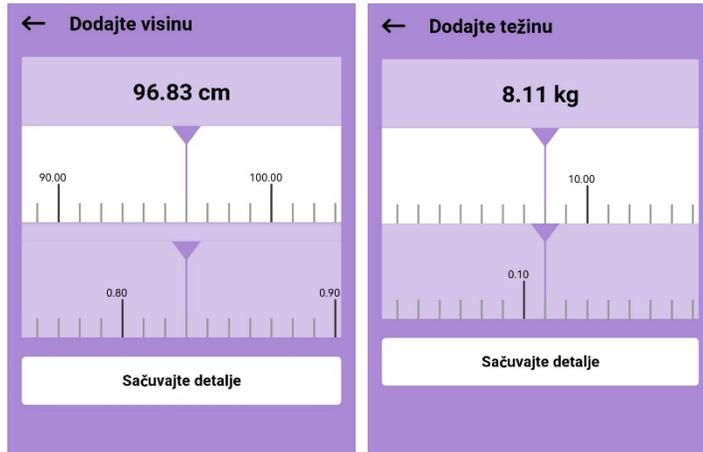
**Former users found it easy to navigate the app, search for content, and didn't encounter any issues in using the app's functions. In contrast, current users more frequently suggest ways to simplify the usage of specific functions in the app.**



- According to current users, **the use of sliders for entering child measurements** (weight and height) within the growth tracking tool **can be frustrating and complicated, especially when attempting to input precise values** for smaller units (such as millimetres and grams). Some users suggest enabling direct input of measurements into the corresponding fields.
- Furthermore, **users mention that the entry of achieved milestones for a specific age within the Development tool is not sufficiently clear, as the entire list of milestones is not visible on the screen at once.** This makes it difficult for them to see which milestones they have marked. Users are confused because **it appears as if the marked milestones are “disappearing” from the screen,** while they are actually being moved to the end of the list.
- Additionally, a **user who used the chatbot thinks that it took too much time to find an answer** to her question and believes it would have been simpler to search for the answer on the internet.
- Lastly, one user mentions **problems with saving entered data and using the data export/import function** when installing the app on a new device.



## Entering the weight and height of the child in the Bebbio app



When it comes to entering parameters for growth, weight, and such, I don't like the sliding scale feature in the Bebbio app. I think it would be simpler if I could just enter the numerical value. It happens to me a thousand times that it slips away, which is very impractical. It would be better to literally input the exact figure instead of dragging the slider for kilograms on the upper scale and for grams on the lower scale. Even in health clinics, they don't measure with as many decimal places as they [Bebbio developers] have set. I always get frustrated with that. When entering the height, for example, 74.5 cm, it takes me a lot of time until it reaches those 0.5. That's what really annoys me when entering these parameters."

- Bebbio app user

## Entering achieved milestones for a specific age in the Bebbio app



There is a problem with those milestones. When one is checked, the order of the others changes, and then I lose track of which ones I have checked. When the letters are flying in front of my eyes like that, I just feel like locking my phone and writing it down on paper."

- Bebbio app user



**The majority rate the app as highly functional and useful. The most valued features include vaccine tracking, growth and development monitoring, while the games section is considered the most interesting.**

- **The content that most participants found interesting primarily revolves around nutrition, motor development, games and vaccination information.**
- The general impression among participants is that **the content is created by experts, which instils confidence in the information they obtain through the app.** Although they generally trust the app, **some participants emphasize that the content in the app is primarily informative.** They use or used the app as an initial source for acquiring new information, which they then verify through other sources, often with healthcare professionals or by searching other online sources.
- **Users generally enjoy the content of the app and find it interesting and relevant.** There is a consensus among users that the headlines grab their attention, while the **articles are well-written, clear and concise, and contain an optimal amount of information on a given topic.**
- Users of the app have the **prevailing impression that the offered content is important and relevant to the stage their child is in, while former users are slightly more critical in this regard.** However, one user complains that the **growth norms incorporated into the app are not adequate.** She points out that, according to the norms of the app, her child's weight and height fall outside the typical range for her age, even though she believes that this is not the case.
- Most users, **both current and former, have not experienced any instances where the information they were seeking was unavailable on the app.** Some mention that they were generally unable to find information about **laws in a certain field** and suggest that it would be good for the app to cover such topics. Additionally, one former user points out that the app **lacks a calendar for introducing specific foods into a newborn's diet.**



It's evident that the advice comes from experts. It's reassuring to know that professional individuals, such as paediatricians and speech therapists, are behind those articles. I try to rely on that information."

- **Bebbo app user**



The most useful part for me is the section with expert advice. I usually enter that section the most and read the tips. When I'm interested in something, I open the Bebbo app first, and later use Google search just to double-check or confirm what I found out. Having the app on my phone makes it convenient for me to check there first."

- **Bebbo app user**



What was particularly useful for me was tracking the growth and development of my child. What always brought me back to the app were those milestones that are crucial in a baby's development. It helped me see if my baby had reached those milestones, and if not, it provided guidance on what to pay attention to, and so on."

- **Bebbo app user**



It was important for me to find games that would help develop my child's motor skills. Seeing firsthand on video what needs to be mastered was especially useful to me."

- **Bebbo app user**



The things that interested me were okay, I was 100% sure that they were okay. But when it comes to health, let me tell you, I couldn't trust even my own mother telling me that everything was fine until the paediatrician confirmed it. So, in that aspect, the app didn't help me at all."

- **Former user of the Bebbo app**



**The majority of both current and former Bebbo app users are convinced that the app has improved their knowledge and that the new information they learned has had a positive impact on their confidence in caring for their babies.**

- The Bebbo app has proven to be a supportive platform that contributes to **users feeling more confident when making decisions regarding proper baby care**, by providing relevant information, expert advice and guidelines. The Bebbo app often **plays a key role in the early months with a new family member** when parents face numerous challenges and **may experience concerns and anxiety due to new responsibilities and unfamiliar situations**. In line with this, it is noticeable that former users, compared to current users, are slightly more often mothers of older children and have multiple children.
- **The most common positive examples of the impact of the Bebbo app on the participants relate to infant and child nutrition** – introducing solid foods and addressing feeding issues.
- Additionally, some participants mention that using the Bebbo app has helped them **better understand their child's behaviour and needs, leading them to reevaluate some practices they previously relied on**, often related to their child's nutrition and motor development.
- Since most participants rely on their paediatrician for regular immunizations, none specifically mention that the Bebbo app has made them more up-to-date regarding their child's vaccination schedule.



It was mainly related to nutrition for us. We were in that phase when we didn't trust the paediatrician. Our baby was 5 months old, and we were supposed to introduce solid foods... I didn't know what to give the baby. I thought she would choke. So, I called my mother and as an older woman she said, 'Give her an apple, bake it, and give it to her. You can add some sugar, it won't harm her.' I followed her advice. Later, when I searched in the app, I realized that we had made a big mistake, and then we had to start over from the beginning..."

- **Bebbo app user**



I find these expert tips great because they are nicely and thoroughly explained. Personally, when we had issues with food, when my child became picky and refused to eat, one article really helped me in getting things back on track. Not just that one, but all the articles are detailed in their explanations. I have trust in them because I believe they are expert advice, and the information written there is very reliable."

- **Bebbo app user**



When I read the articles, I draw parallels with my own behaviour and tell myself that maybe I can improve or do things differently. I try different approaches. In any case, the articles are helpful, and I can see progress being made."

- **Bebbo app user**



When it comes to nutrition, it was really helpful for me. In that aspect, I found a lot of useful information on how to improve children's diet and how to encourage them to eat better."

- **Former user of the Bebbio app**



The Bebbio app was really valuable to us in the early days. Since my spouse and I were alone and feeling a bit lost, we would frequently search for information using the app. Literally, every day and for every little thing. It definitely served as our first aid, a place to seek advice and guidance. However, I'm not entirely confident relying solely on the app without consulting a paediatrician."

- **Former user of the Bebbio app**

# Expectations from the app and satisfaction with using the Bebbo app



- Based on the focus groups with current and former users of the Bebbo app, it can be concluded that **parenting apps are expected to meet three criteria:**
  - 1. Reliability of information.** To users, it is crucial that the app provide reliable information, with content thoroughly verified and supported by experts. The reliability of information on topics such as nutrition, vaccinations, motor skills and other aspects of childcare is of utmost importance.
  - 2. Engaging and personalized content.** It is important to the participants that such an app provide relevant content that meets their current needs. They expect the information to be concise and easy to understand.
  - 3. Intuitive user experience.** Users of the app also emphasize the importance of it being user-friendly, with intuitive navigation options. Clarity and the ability to quickly find the desired information are also essential factors.
- Overall, **users are satisfied with using the Bebbo app and state that it has generally met their expectations.** The same is the case with former users, who, however, **state somewhat more often that the app did not fully meet their expectations in terms of content** (the content was not relevant enough or not all topics that were important to them were covered).



## The participants who had experience with similar pregnancy tracking and parenting apps generally rate the Bebo app as equally good or better than other apps they have used.

- The majority of participants who used the Bebac app stated that they relied on it primarily during pregnancy. **In comparison to the Bebac app, the Bebo app is rated slightly lower in terms of ease of finding content, while its visual appearance and content quality are considered significantly better.**
- On the other hand, one former user of the Bebo app is currently using the **Klub beba, trudnica i mama** app, which she finds to be more **innovative and to provide more detailed information on introducing solid foods** (such as a calendar for introducing specific foods and recipes for preparing purees). Additionally, an advantage of this other app is the **ability to personalize profiles by uploading pictures and saving memories**, as well as the option to **record various activities** (beyond vaccinations and regular check-ups), such as when they fed the baby. Finally, one advantage of this app is that **it allows users to communicate with each other via chat.**



For me, it is crucial that the app is engaging and provides me with the content I need at that moment. Articles shouldn't be overly lengthy. I don't want to get overwhelmed but rather have a concise overview. It should allow me to quickly find the information I need, and the information provided should be reliable."

- **Bebbo app user**



Well, there are many different apps that are similar. With Bebo, everything was in one place for me – different things, different topics that interested me. They were much more accessible and relevant compared to others."

- **Bebbo app user**



Before I installed this app based on recommendations, I had some modest expectations, so I was pleasantly surprised because it covers all the areas that are important to us, and I don't think anything is missing. I am truly pleasantly surprised by this app."

- **Former user of the Bebo app**



On Bebac, there were many legal topics that I couldn't find on Bebo, and I needed them, such as calculations, maternity leave, salaries... Being first-time parents, we couldn't find information about registration. It would be beneficial to expand the app to include more information for young parents."

- **Bebbo app user**



Over there [Klub beba, trudnica i mama], they have a schedule for introducing different types of food, which is quite important, especially for beginners like us. They also have a feature where we can upload pictures of our baby each month, like a monthly photo album to cherish memories. Additionally, they have everything, including the option to mark when we fed our baby. It's definitely a bit more innovative. One advantage of this app is the chat feature for mothers, where you have the freedom to ask someone if you have any doubts or questions. I used Bebo until last month because of this other app. I realized that I had everything I had in Bebo, plus some additional features."

- **Former user of the Bebo app**



**While suggestions for improvement from current users primarily focus on enhancing content visibility for faster access to necessary information, former users more frequently provide suggestions for improving the app's content.**

- When it comes to content, **former users more frequently suggest the need for updates to make it more current and relevant to various family situations.** It is mentioned that addressing **current topics (such as peer bullying), sharing data from recent research in the field,** and similar improvements would be desirable. Additionally, one former user mentions that it would be helpful for the app to provide **more detailed information on introducing solid foods** and the **order of introducing specific foods** to a newborn's diet.
- Participants, whether current users or not, suggest that the app could cover **the period of pregnancy** as well, so they wouldn't have to use two different apps.
- It is also mentioned that topics related to **regulatory frameworks in compulsory immunization, social welfare and child protection** could be added to the app.
- Some participants also believe that it would be desirable to **introduce a feature for consultations with experts or other users/mothers through chat or forums.** The possibility of direct interaction, asking questions and receiving answers from experts or other users would facilitate obtaining relevant information and resolving specific issues promptly.



The content could be expanded to make it more useful. Perhaps including legal aspects related to social and child protection, such as child benefits and maternity leave.”

- **Bebbo app user**



I think the main improvement should be in terms of visibility of content and ease of finding specific information. It would be helpful to have a chat option, where we can consult with someone if there is a fever or a rash. Personally, I tend to panic, so when I see a mosquito bite, I immediately think of allergies...”

- **Bebbo app user**



They keep repeating the same information, and there are no significant research findings. It might be beneficial to update not only this app but similar ones as well, providing more diverse information. It would be good to have different perspectives. Sometimes, we open three or four websites and find the same articles. It would be nice to see some research being conducted.”

- **Former user of the Bebbo app**



I don't currently use it because we have passed those stages. I find it more informative in nature. It lacked information specifically about twins and their development. I stopped using it as my twins started growing and their relationship began to form. The information in that aspect was limited. Perhaps more attention should be given to twin pregnancies and how their development differs.”

- **Former user of the Bebbo app**

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