



Key Findings on the Lives of 9-year-olds in 2017/2018

The *Growing Up in Ireland* Study Team

10th Annual
Research
Conference
2018



**An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige**
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs



Background 1

- ***Growing Up in Ireland*** is a national longitudinal study of children
 - Funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
 - With a contribution from The Atlantic Philanthropies in Phase 2
 - Managed/overseen by the DCYA and Central Statistics Office (CSO).
- Designed to inform policy affecting children in Ireland.
- Two cohorts of children, born roughly a decade apart.
 - The families of **Cohort '08 (Infant Cohort)** 9 months old, 3 years, 5 years, and 7/8 years (postal) and 9 years old (in 2017-18).
 - **Cohort '98 (Child Cohort)** recruited into the study when they were 9 years old in 2007/8; re-interviewed at 13, 17 and (currently) 20 years old.



Background 2

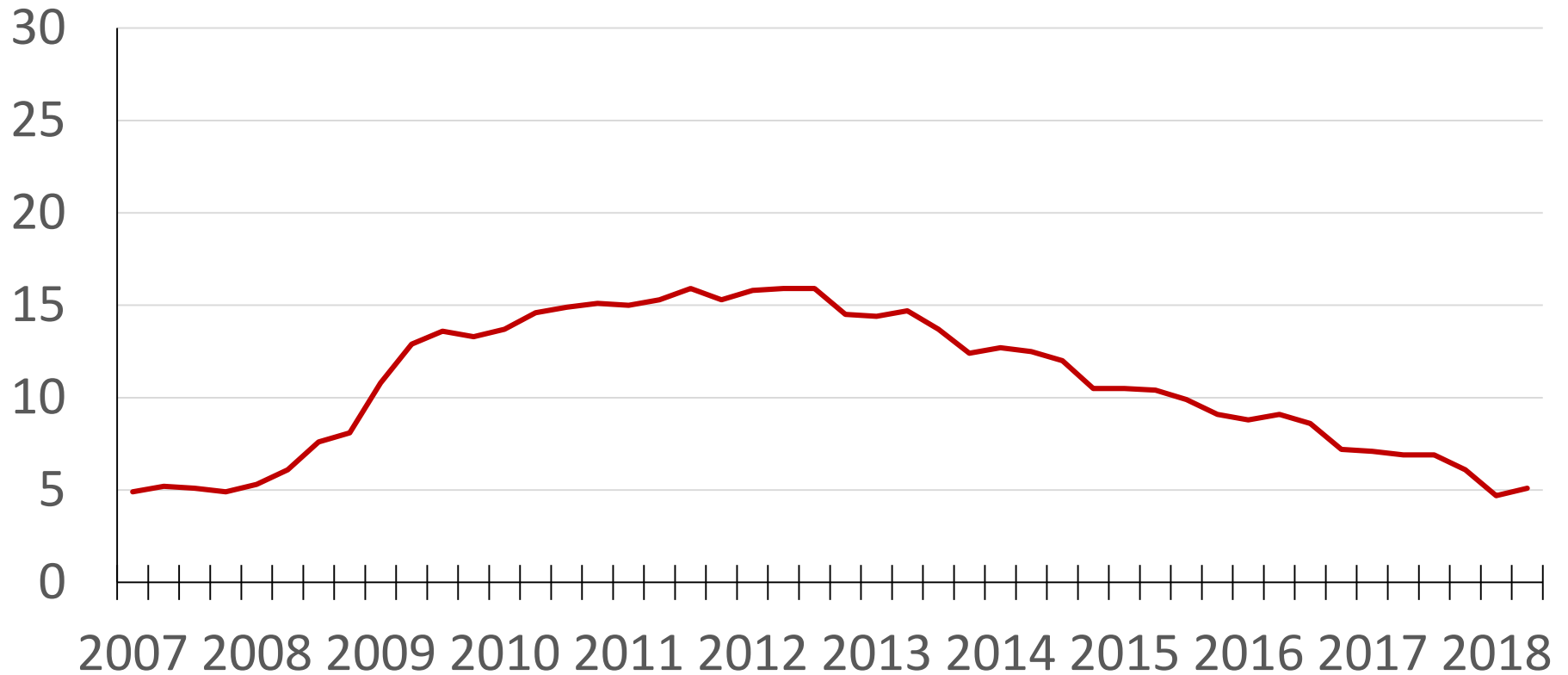
- Interviews conducted with the Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '08 ('Infant') Study Children and their families in 2017/2018
 - The children were 9 years old
- *Key Findings* = the first set of results from these data
 - Based on interviews with children & Primary Caregiver ('mother')
 - 7,500 families participating at 9 mo. and ages 3, 5 years & 9 years old.
 - Comparing their circumstances to those at age 3 and 5
 - Comparing to the earlier Cohort '98 at 9 years old in 2007/08
- *Four Key Findings:*
 - Family circumstances
 - Health & physical development
 - Education & learning
 - Emotional well-being



1. FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES



The 'Great Recession'



— Unemployment rate (LFS)

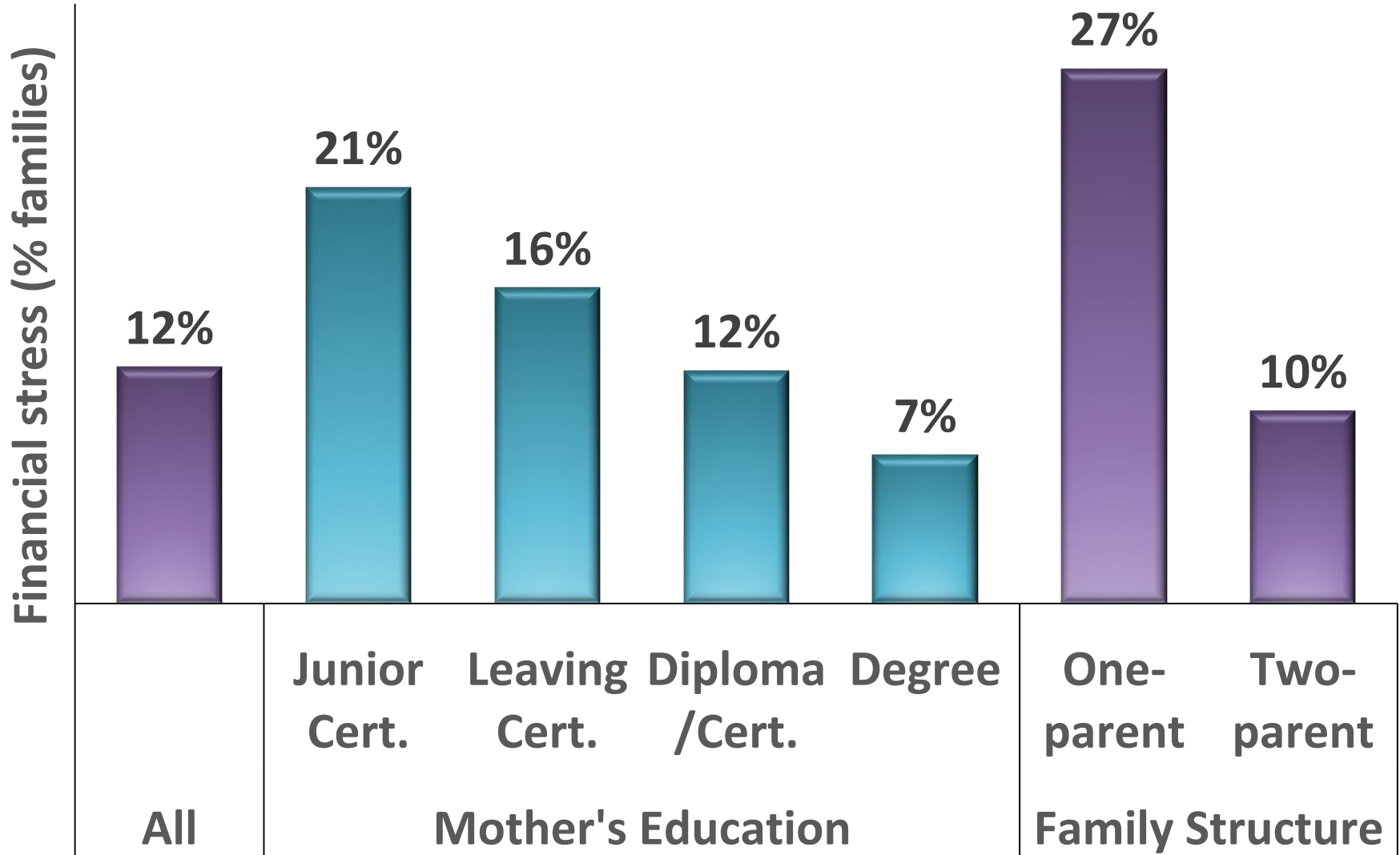


Financial Stress by year and cohort *(difficulty making ends meet)*



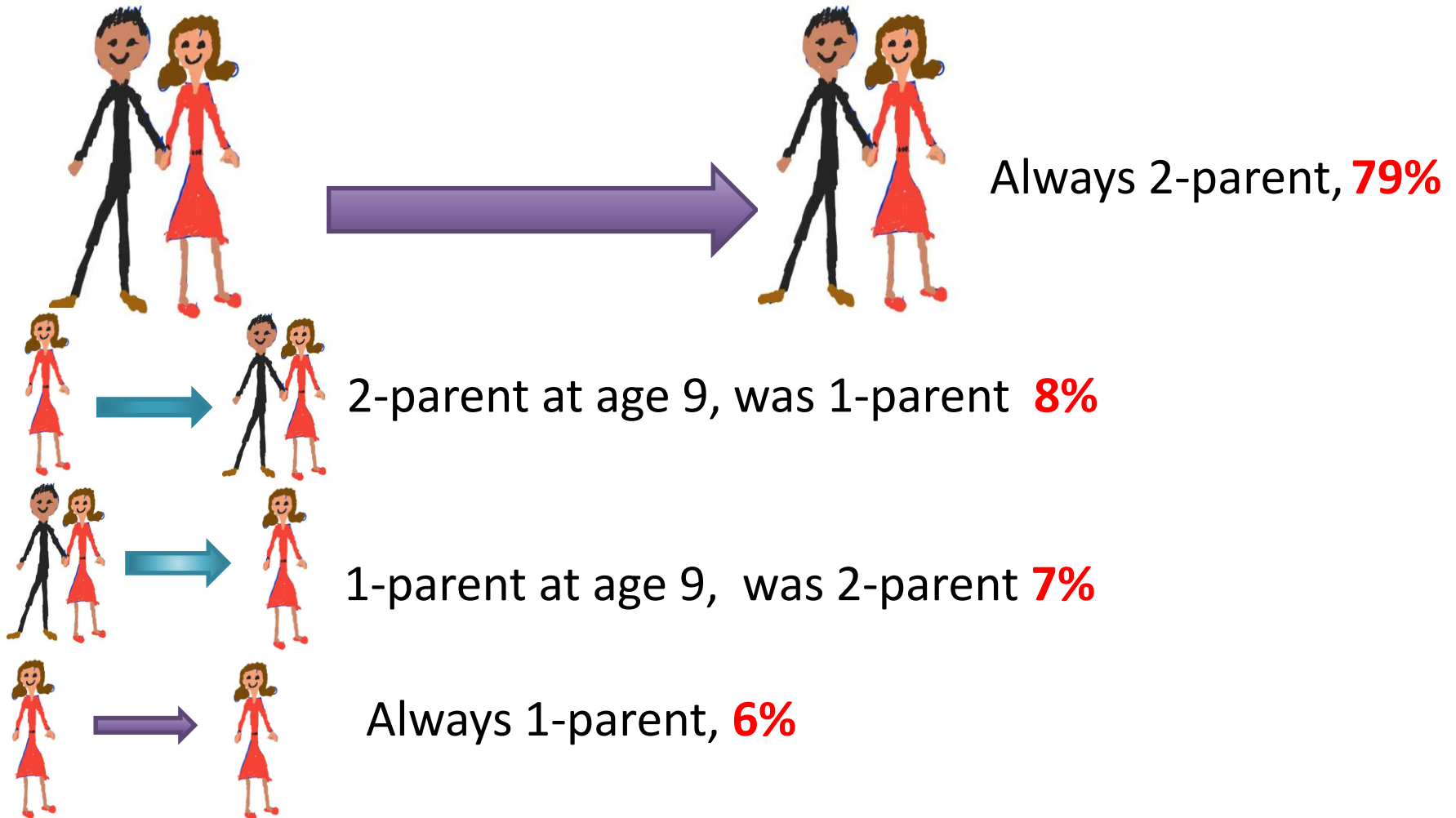


Financial Stress in 2017/18 by Mother's Education and Family Structure

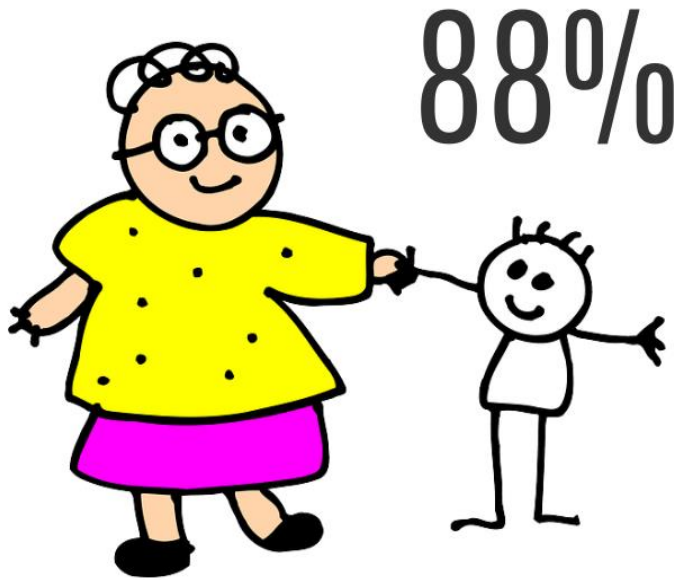


Family Structure since age 9 months

Family Structure at 9 years old, compared to 9 months, 3 years and 5 years old



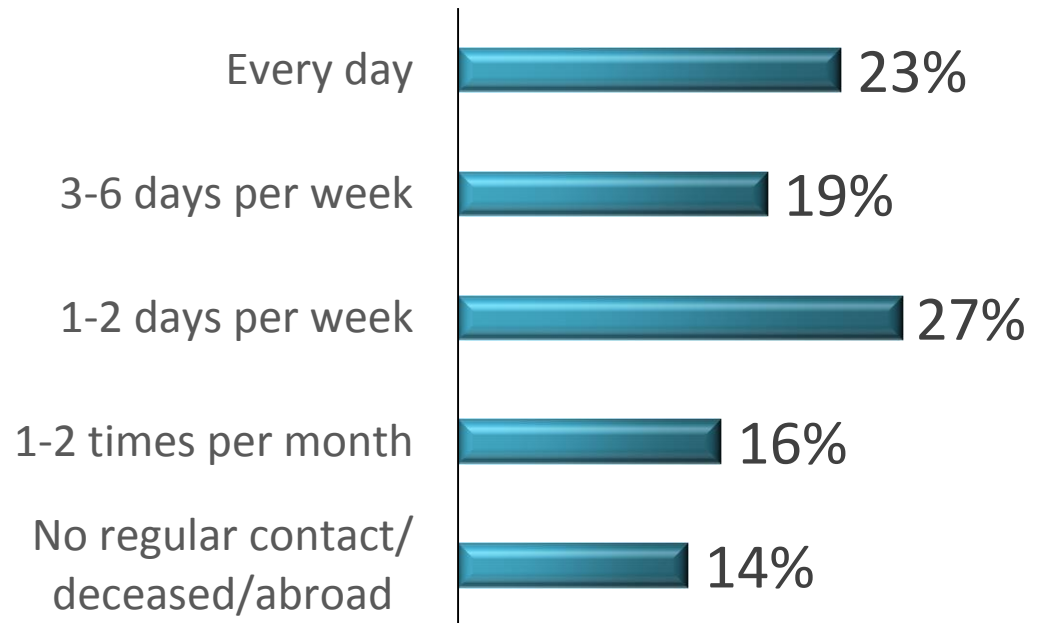
Grandparents (mothers' reports)



Grandparents

88% of 9-year-olds had a close relationship with a grandparent

How often children see grandparents

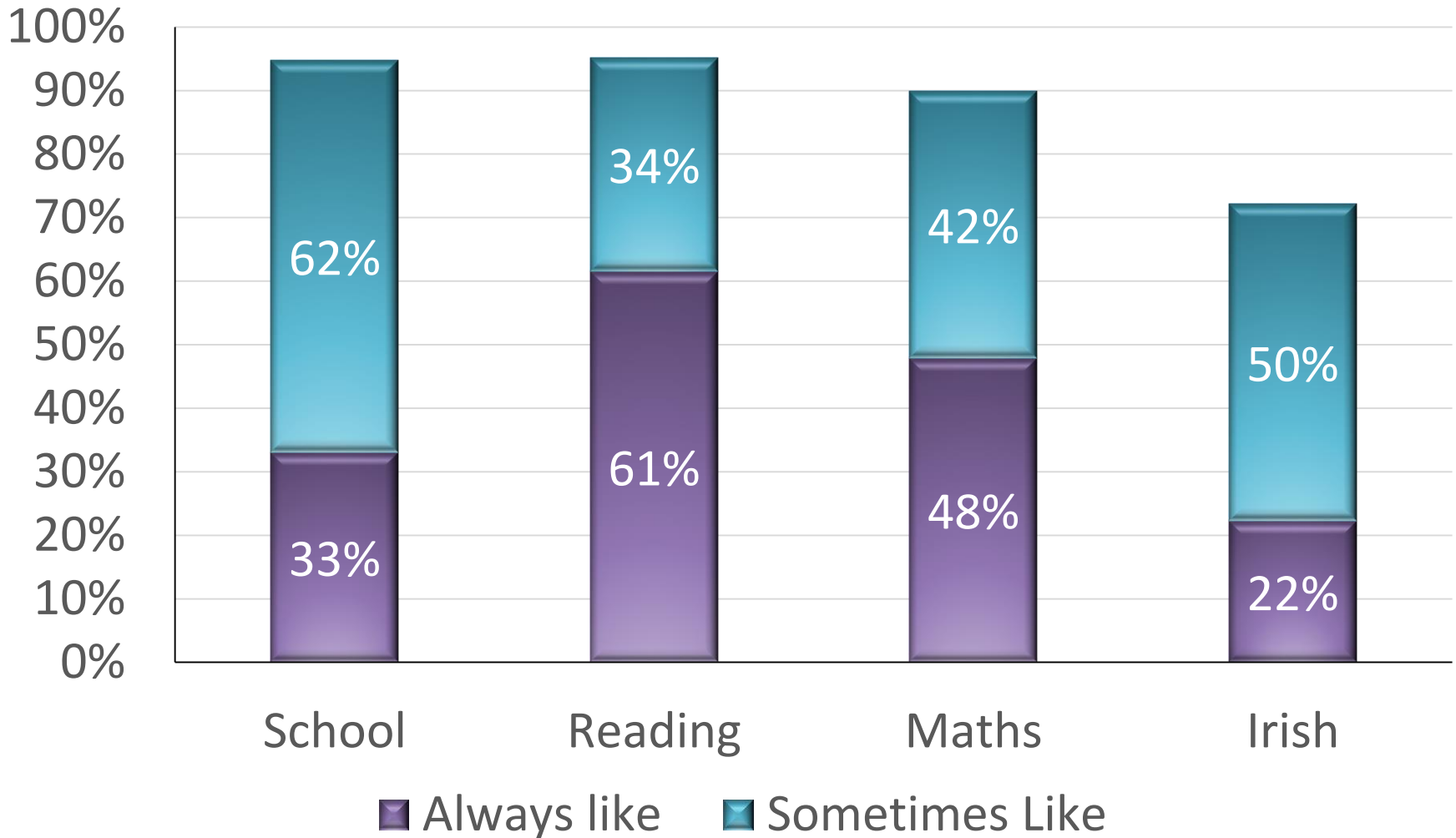


% of 9-year-olds



2. EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Most children like school and subjects

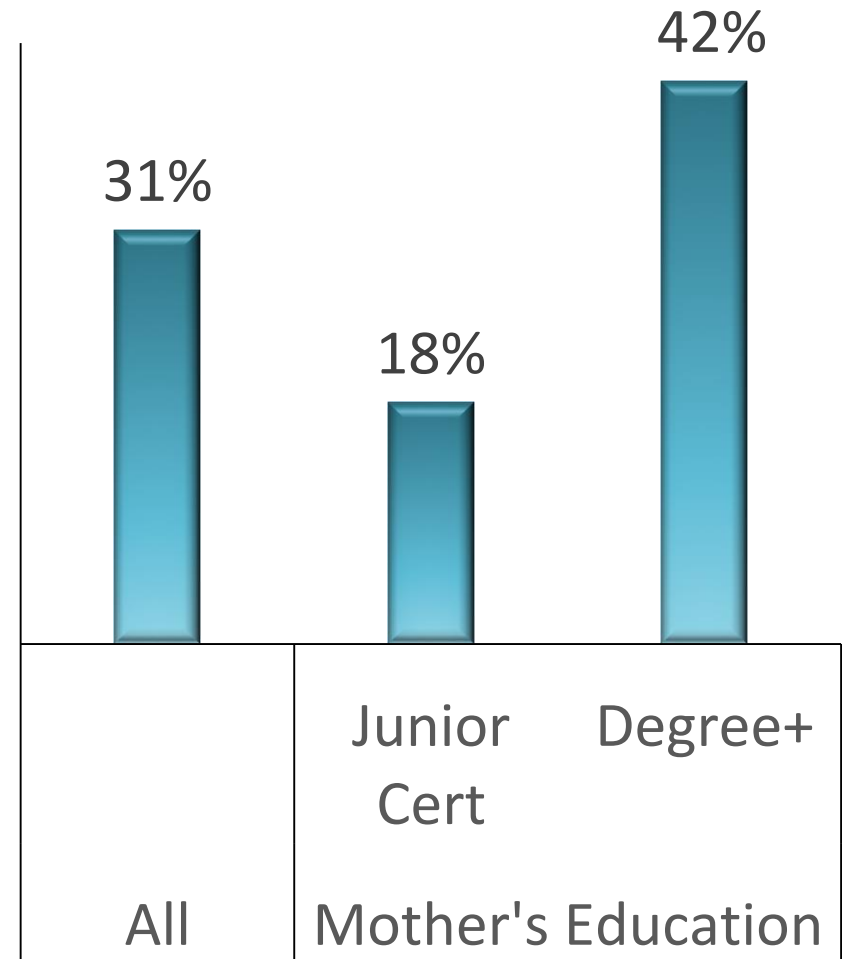




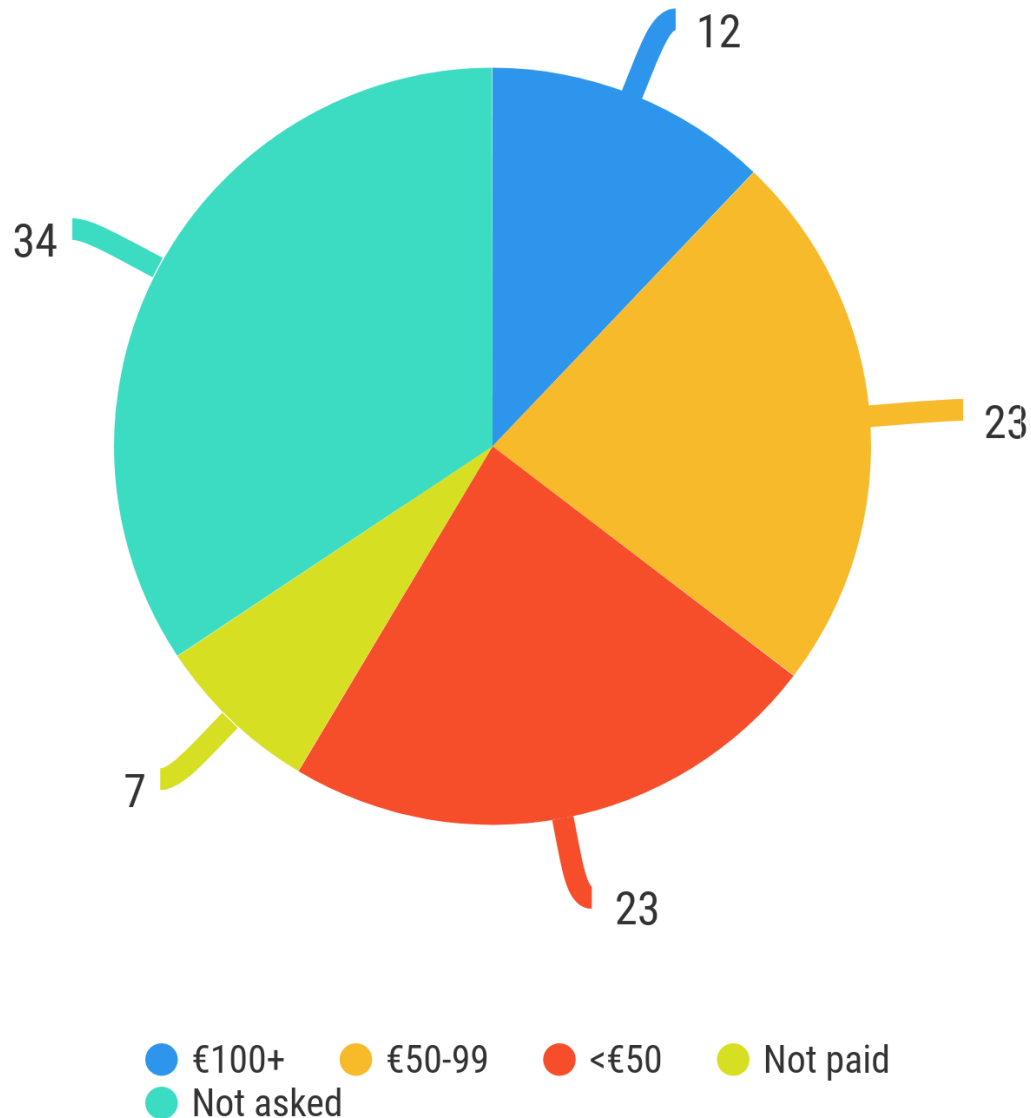
Reading for fun (as reported by 9-year-old)

- 31% of 9-year-olds reported **daily reading for fun**
- Linked to socio-economic status
- Comparing the 9-year-olds in 2017 to those in 2007:
 - Overall stability in reports of how often they read for fun.
 - But **infrequent reading for fun** (*less than once a week*) had become more common in children in socially-disadvantaged families
 - e.g. mothers with up to Junior Cert. education, 21% in 2007 vs 32% in 2017

Daily reading for fun



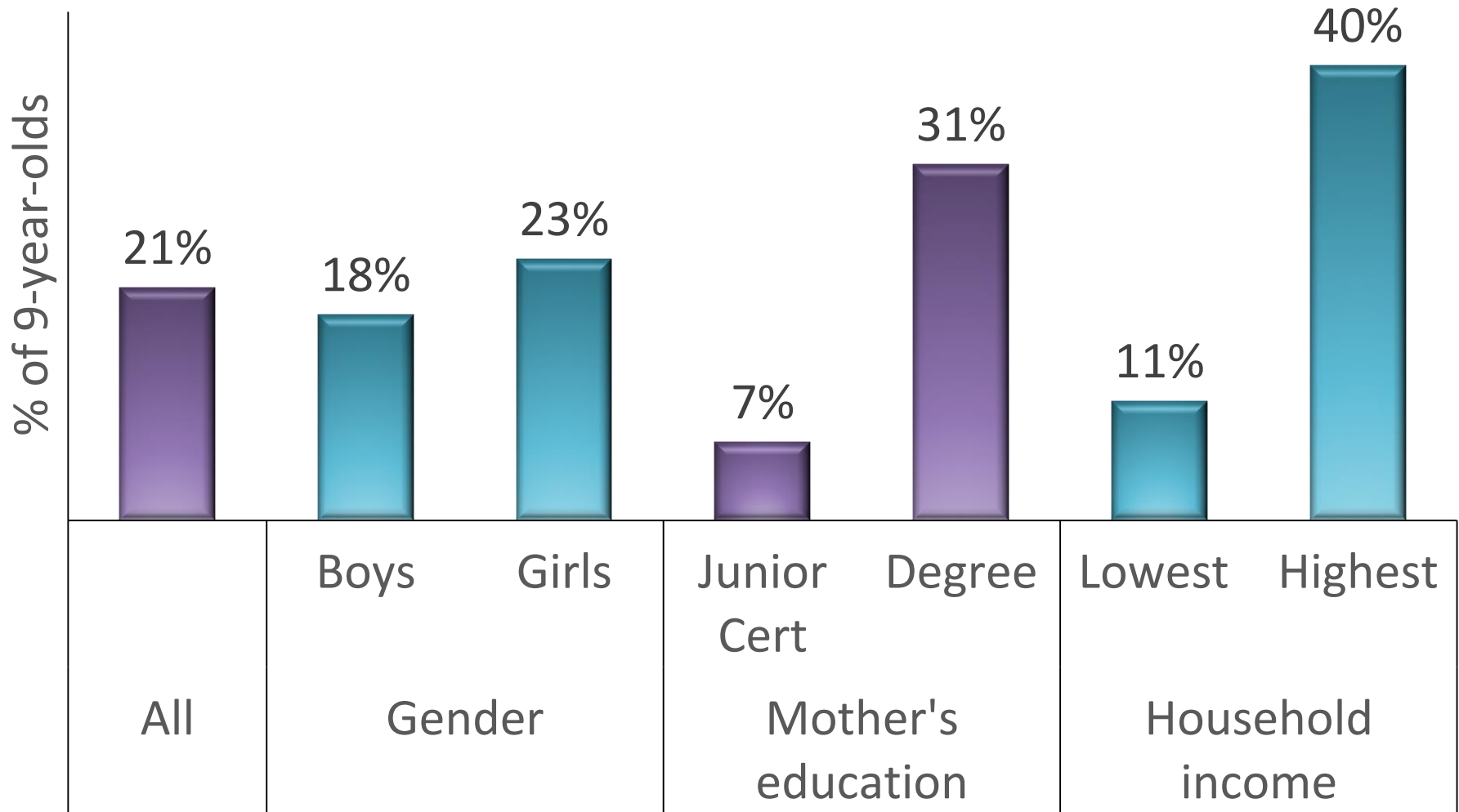
Voluntary contributions to primary schools



- Nearly two-thirds of parents were asked to make a voluntary financial contribution to their child's school.
- 59% made a contribution.
- Over one-third paid €50 or more.



One-fifth of parents had already put child's name down for a second level school





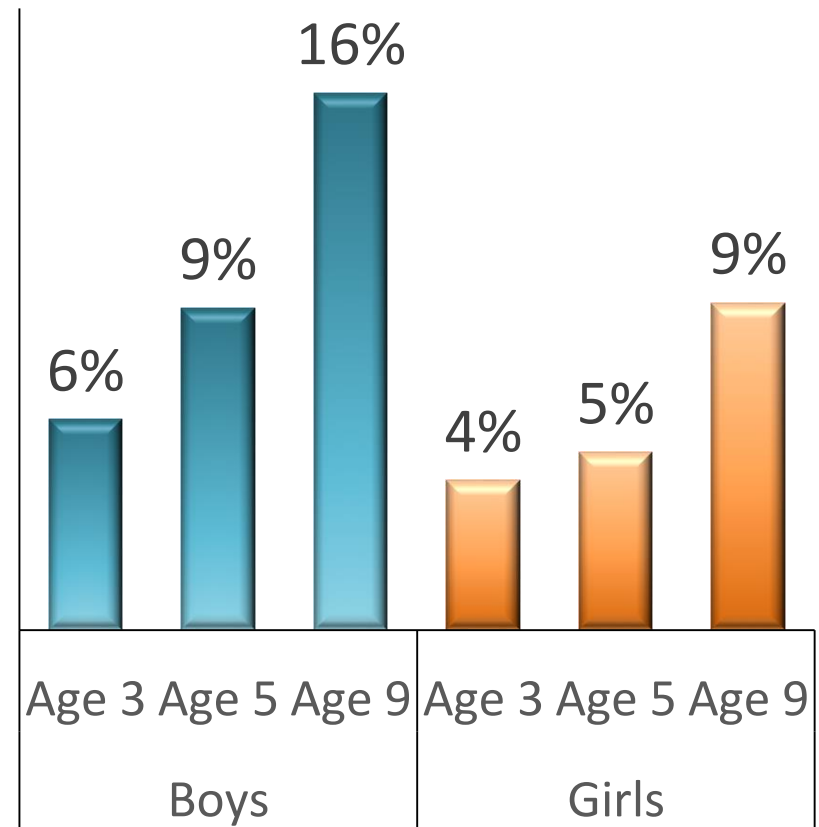
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Longstanding health condition or disabilities (mothers' reports)

- Most (77%) 9-year-olds did not have such conditions
 - 11% had condition but not hampered
 - 10% hampered *to some extent*
 - 2% were hampered *severely*.
- Most common:
 - respiratory (e.g. asthma),
 - behavioural / mental (e.g. ADHD) &
 - skin conditions.
- Being hampered -
 - increased with age (diagnosis?)
 - higher for boys than girls

% Hampered by longstanding health condition or disability





Diet and physical activity

Diet high on “healthy” foods but also high on some “treat” foods (Mother report; in previous 24 hours)

- Over three-quarters consumed
 - ✓ bread ✓ potatoes/pasta/rice
 - ✓ cereals ✓ meat/chicken/ fish
 - ✓ fresh fruit ✓ cooked veg.
- “Treat” foods :
 - biscuits/cake (72%),
 - crisps or savoury snacks (51%)
- Socio-economic differences

Only one-quarter reached WHO recommended physical activity level (self-report)

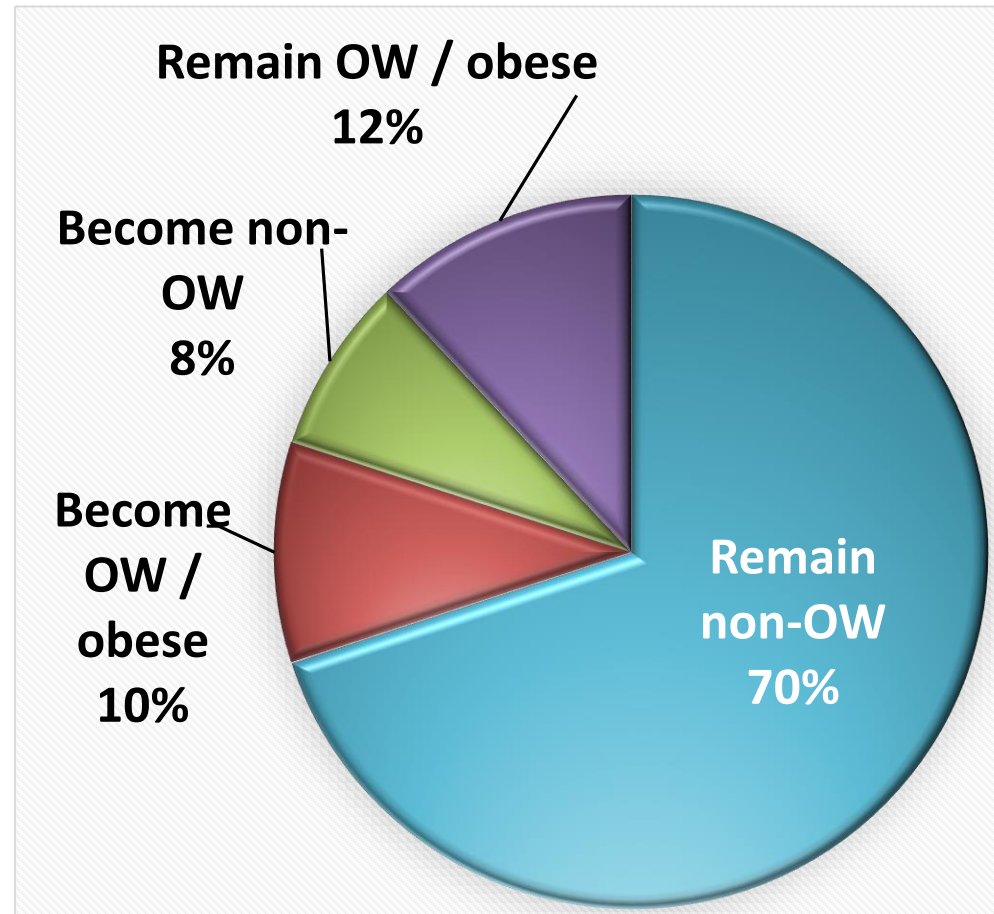
- 25% reported 60+ minutes physical activity daily
- More boys than girls (28% vs. 22%).
- Socially disadvantaged groups ***farther from the target.***
 - 29% of lowest income group physically active on ***less than 3 days per week*** (vs 25% overall)

Measured weight status at 9 and at 5

Measured weight status

- 78% 9-year-olds not overweight
 - 17% were overweight
 - 5% were obese
- Girls more likely than boys to be overweight/obese (23% vs. 21%).
- Inequalities in overweight/obesity
 - 32% in the lowest income group compared to 14% in the highest income group.

Weight status at age 9 by status at age 5



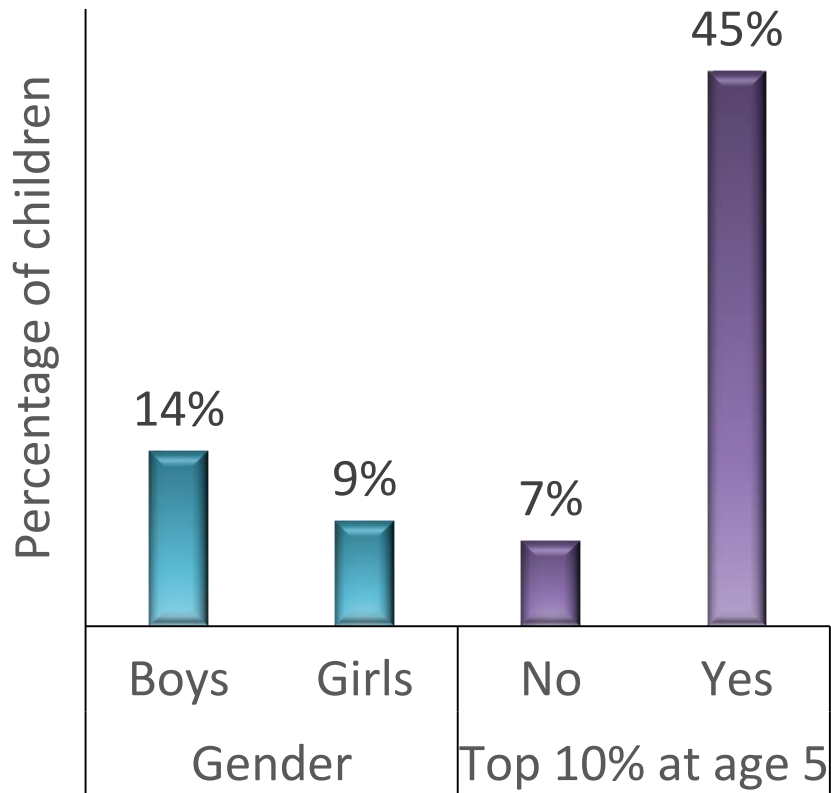


EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL WELL-BEING

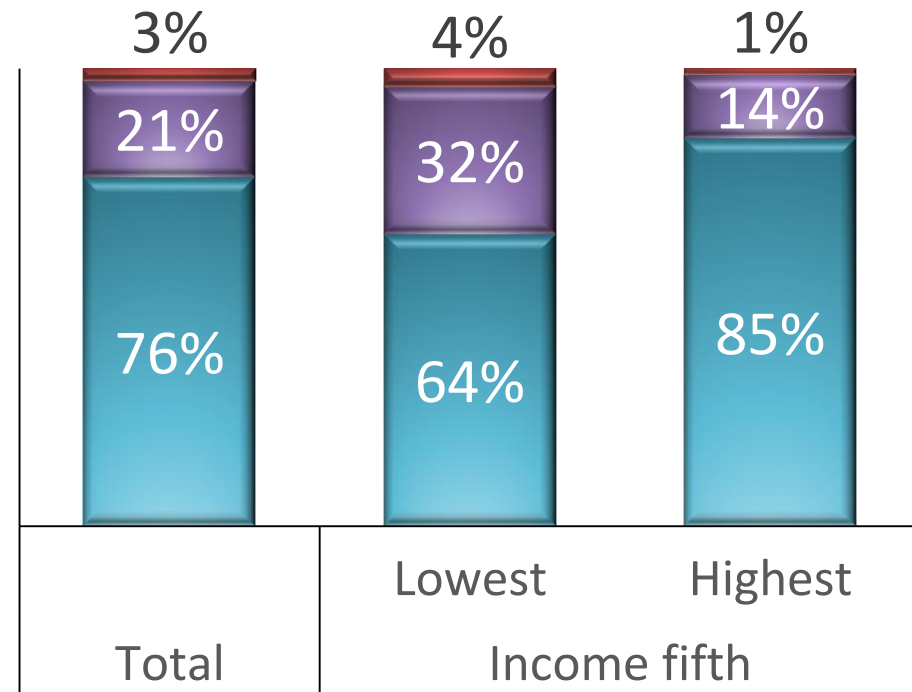


Children with highest levels of socio-emotional & behavioural problems (Mothers' reports)

Children with most socio-emotional / behavioural problems (top 10%, SDQ scale)



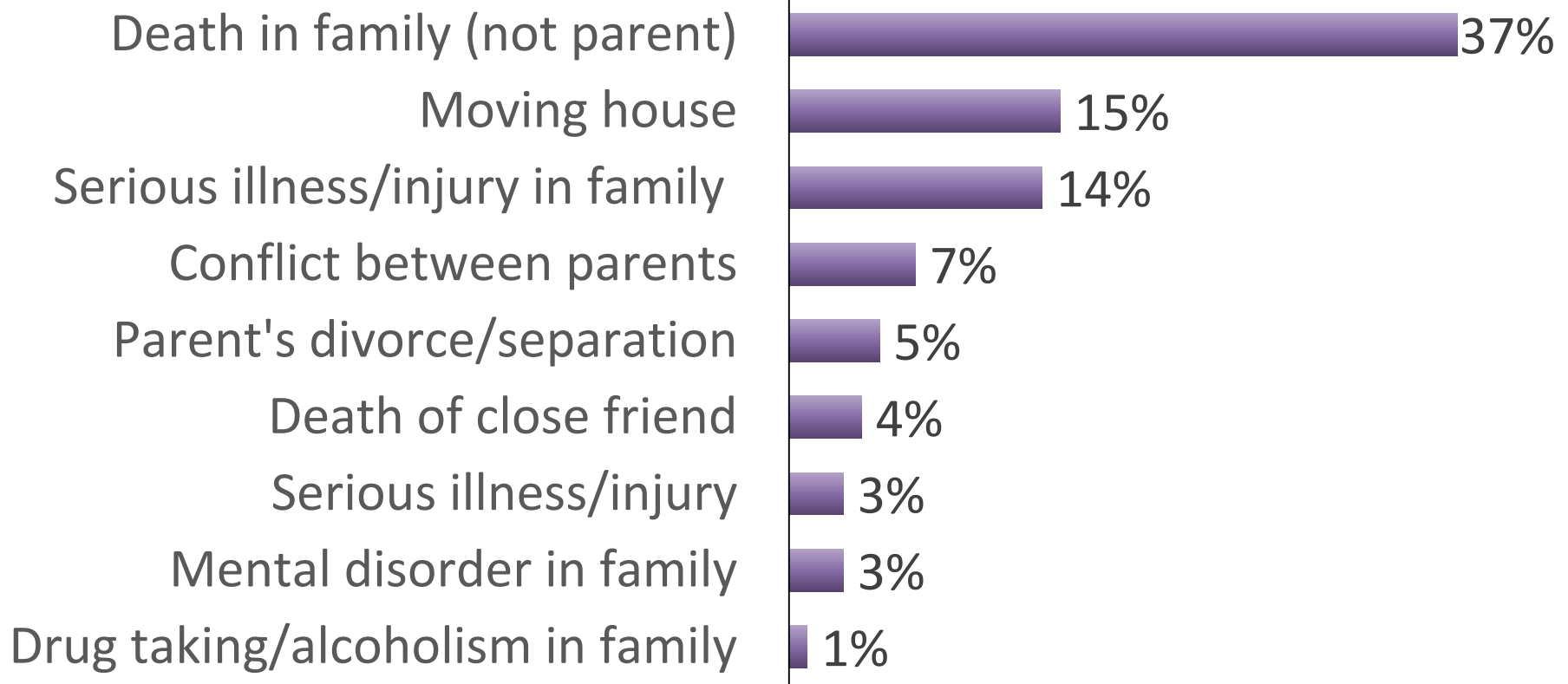
Persistence and change in difficulties (top 10%; ages 3, 5 & 9) by income group



- Top 10% at all 3 ages
- Top 10% at some ages
- Never top 10%



Stressful life events since age 5 (mother report)



- 59% experienced at least 1 of 14 stressful life events since age 5.
- 15% had experienced two and 8% had experienced 3 or more
- Almost a quarter of those who had experienced 3+ stressful events were in the group with the most socio-emotional and behavioural difficulties (top 10% SDQ)

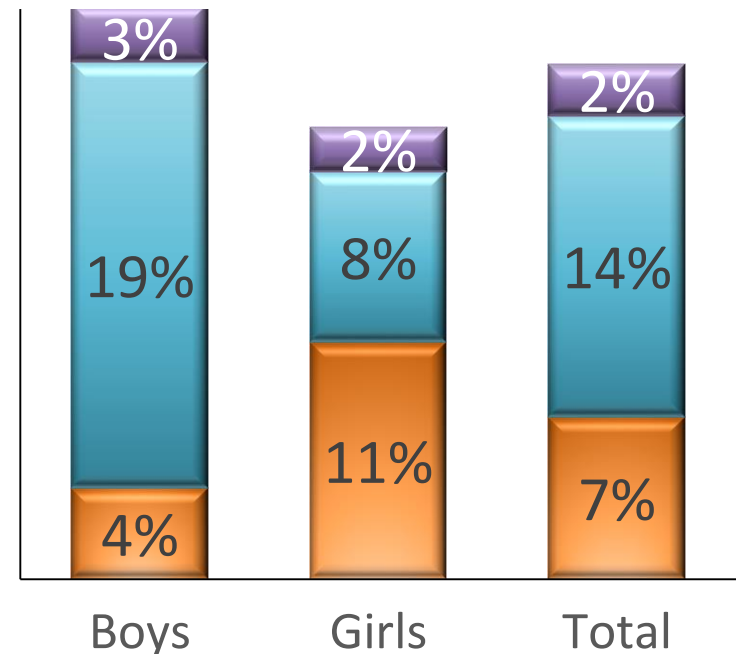
Screen time and online profiles

Screen time and rules

- % 2+ hours screen time per weekday (mother's reports)
 - 15% watched TV/DVDs
 - 9% on other screen-based activities (e.g. computer, games)

- Rules to control screen time/usage (mother's reports)
 - rules about content: 71%
 - rules about total time spent on devices: 69%
 - Rules about time of day device is used: 53%

9-year-olds with online profiles (mother's report)



- *Both*
- *Computer game profile*
- *Social media profile*



Conclusion

- *Key Findings* cover topics across a **range of areas**: family life and circumstances, education and learning, physical health and development and emotional well-being.
- Demonstrate the **kinds of analysis** that Growing Up in Ireland makes possible:
 - Comparisons **between groups** (e.g. gender, family income)
 - **Change over time** at the individual level
 - **Comparing cohorts**, e.g. the 9-year-olds in 2007 to those in 2017
- Some familiar patterns:
 - Children are generally doing well
 - Inequalities: Some groups experience less favourable outcomes (low-income, low-education, one-parent families)
 - Tendency for outcomes to persist, but change is not impossible



Thank you for your attention!