



# Growing Up in Ireland

National Longitudinal  
Study of Children

## Growing Up In Ireland Research Conference 2009



# The Education of 9-Year-Olds

06/21/2009 09:44

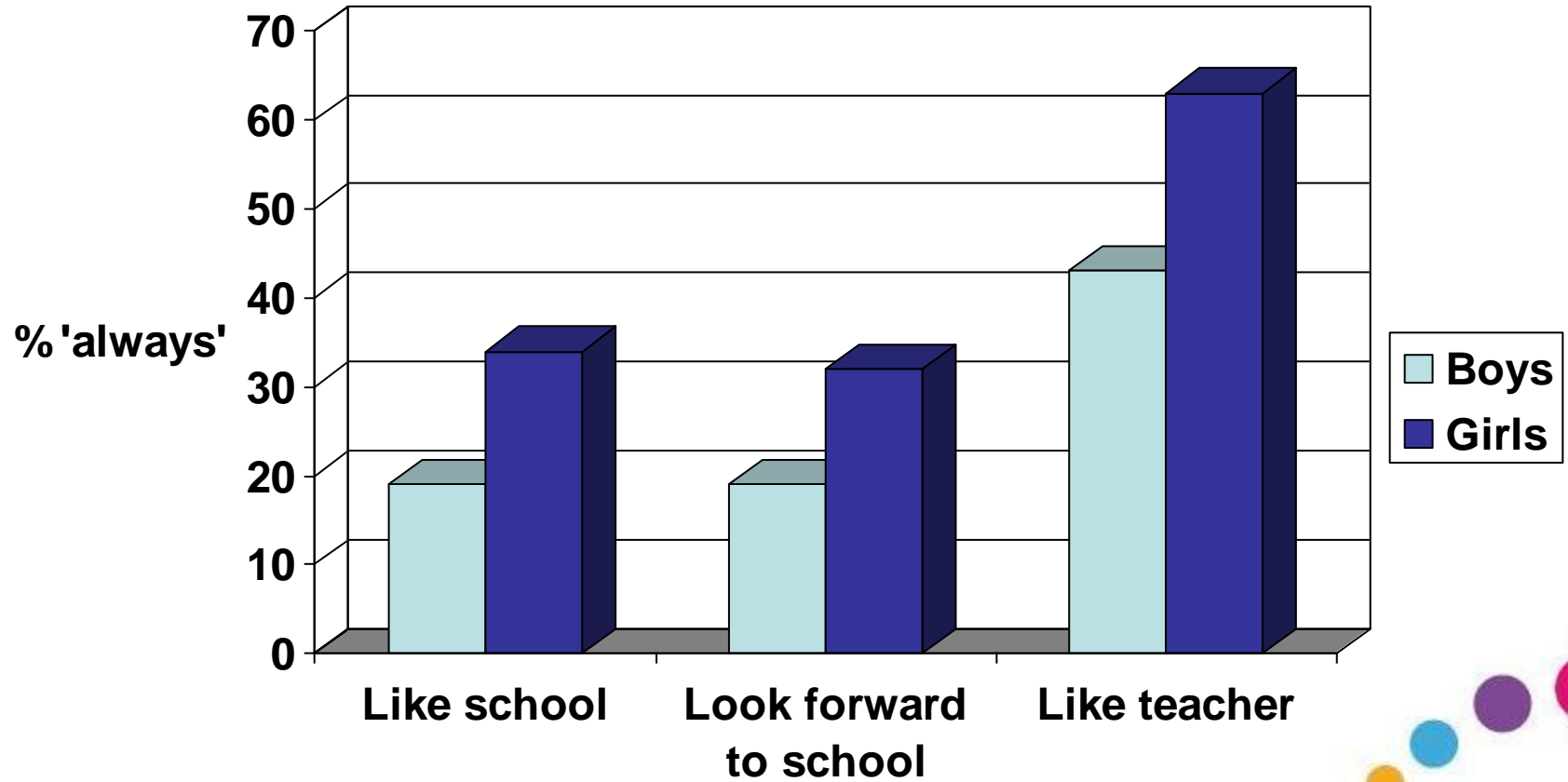
# Introduction

- **Holistic view: a child's educational experiences reflect learning at home and at school**
- **Structure of the presentation:**
  - **The child's perspective on, and engagement with, learning**
  - **How children are faring in reading and mathematics**
  - **Peer relationships within and outside school**
  - **The school setting**
  - **Support for learning at home**

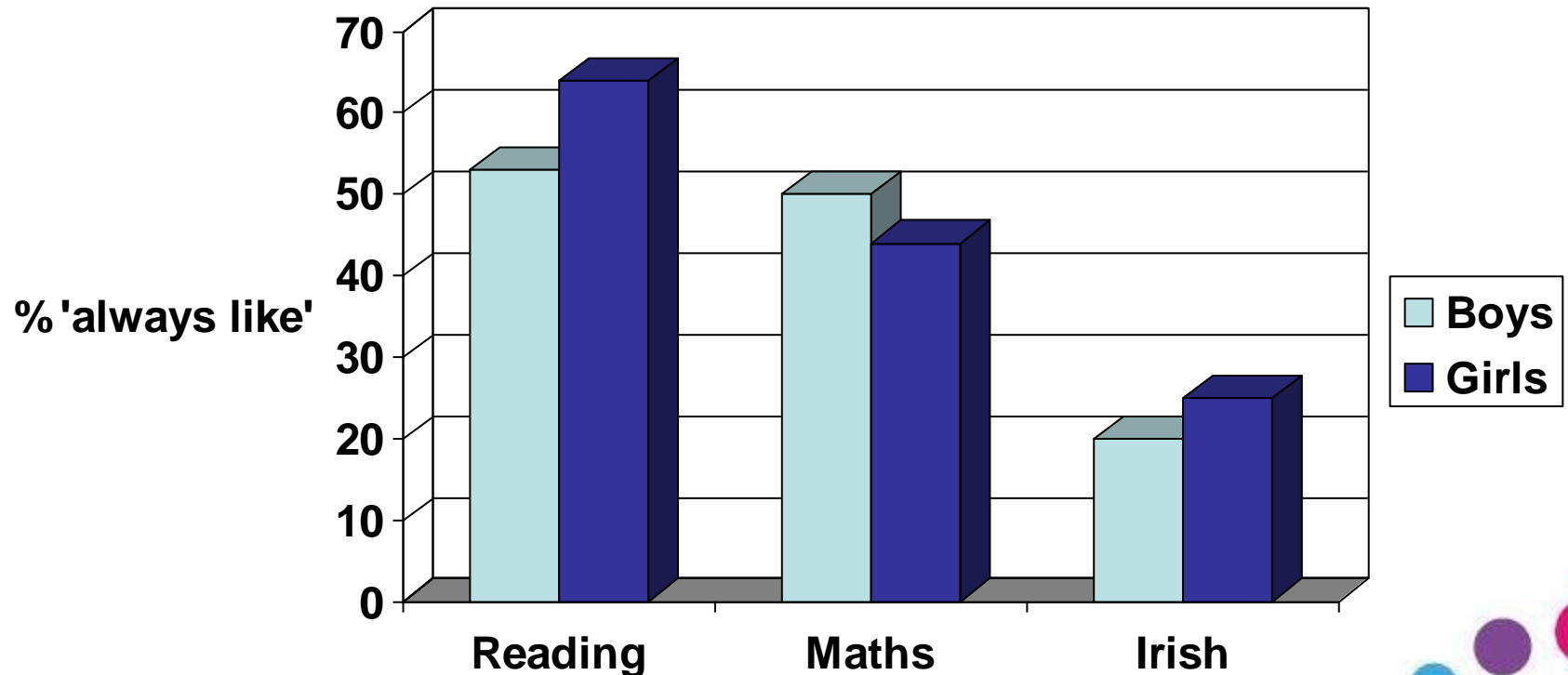
# Attitudes to school and teachers

- **Vast majority of children ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’ like school and their teachers**
- **Positive attitudes were evident across children from different kinds of household – social class, parental education, family type**
- **Gender was the main source of variation among 9 year olds**

# Attitudes to school by gender



# Attitudes to school subjects by gender



# Engagement with school

- **Two measures:**
  - **Absenteeism from school**
  - **Not completing homework**
- **Both aspects are differentiated by social background characteristics**

# Absenteeism from school

- **Somewhat higher among girls than boys**
- **Higher among families with lower levels of education**
- **Higher among families from lower social class categories and those from the lowest income group**
- **School absence is likely to have longer term consequences**



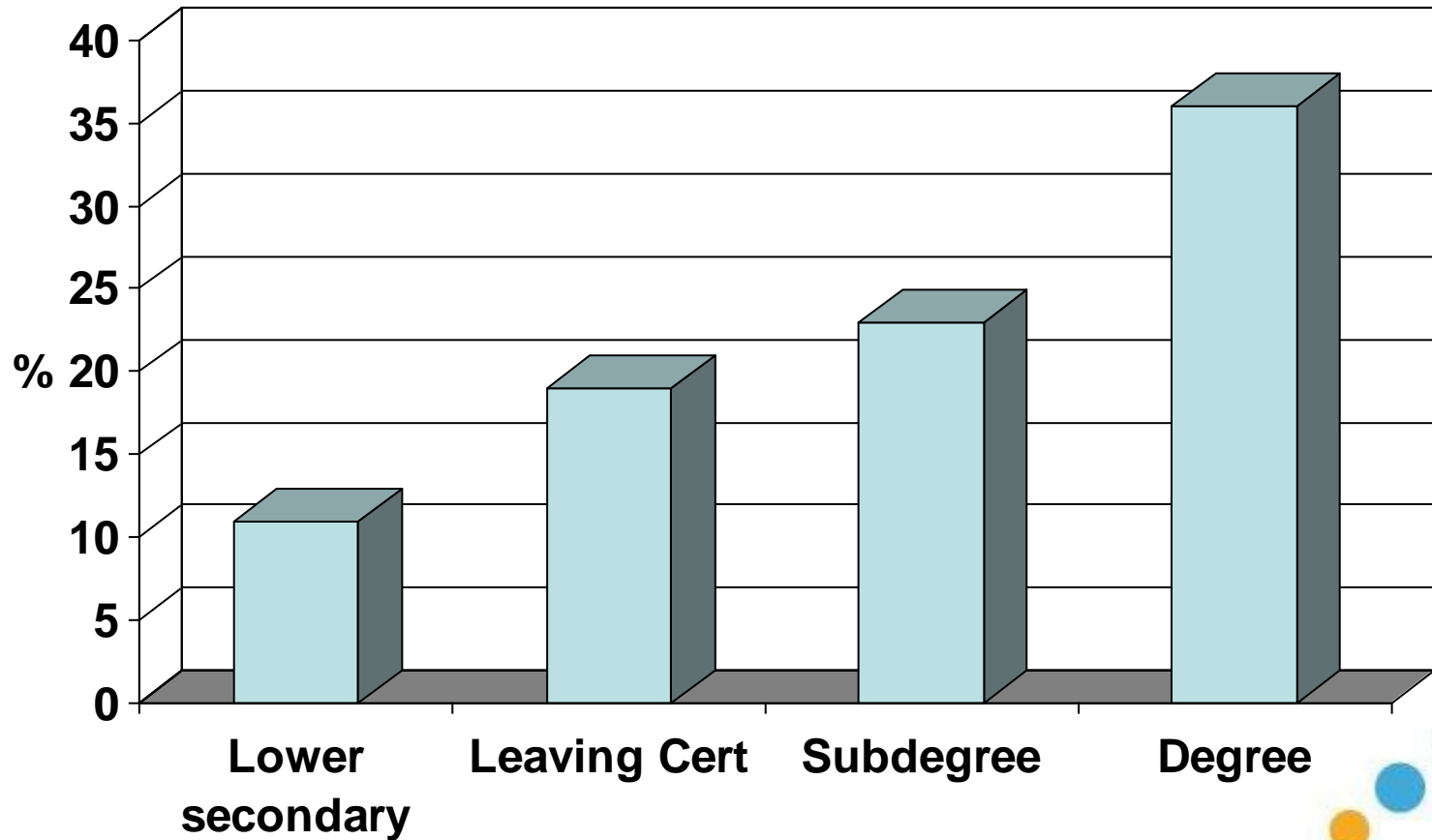
# Not completing homework

- Somewhat more likely among boys
- More likely among families with lower levels of education
- More likely among families from lower social class categories and those from the lowest income group
- More likely among large lone parent families

# Performance in reading

- **Girls have slightly higher reading test scores than boys**
- **Performance in reading varies by social class and family income, being higher among 9 year olds in professional and high income households**
- **Reading scores vary by mother's education**

# Percentage in highest reading quintile (top fifth) by mother's education



# Performance in mathematics

- **Greater gender differences in maths than reading, with boys having higher test scores than girls**
- **Main variation is between couple and single parent households, with higher maths levels among 9 year olds in couple households**

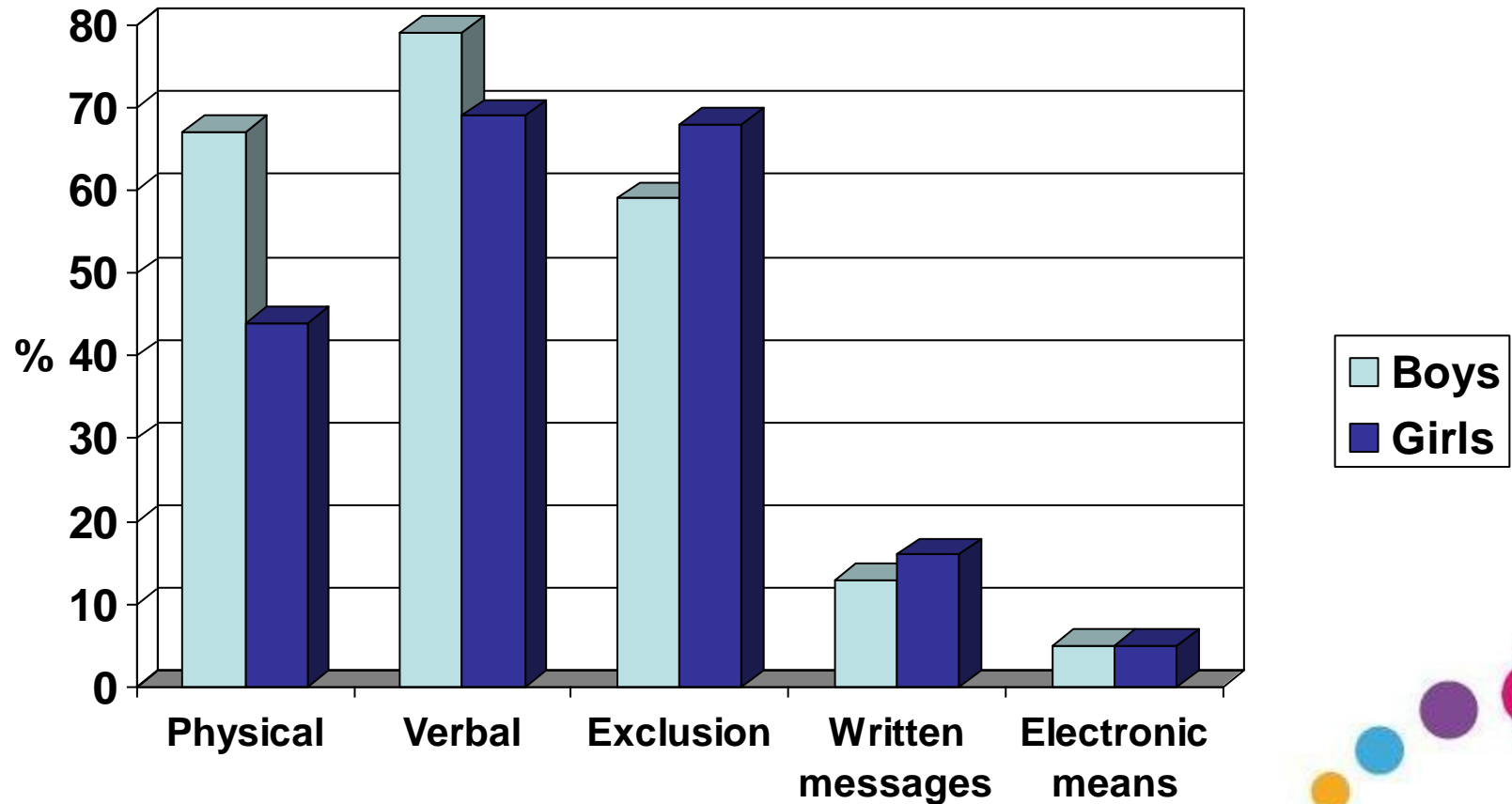
# Peer relationships

- **Half of 9 year olds have at least 4 close friends**
- **Majority spend time with friends outside school at least 2 days a week**
- **Friendship networks do not vary significantly by gender or family characteristics**

# Experience of bullying

- **Four in ten children reported that they had been bullied or ‘picked on’ in the past year**
- **But only 24% of mothers reported their child had been the victim of bullying**
- **Bullying took various forms and the form differed for girls and boys**

# Nature of bullying by gender



# The School Setting

- **Majority (85%) of 9 year olds are taught by female teachers**
- **Four in ten are taught by teachers in their 20s**
- **Generally regarded as well-behaved, respectful and rewarding to work with by teachers**



# Home as a site for learning

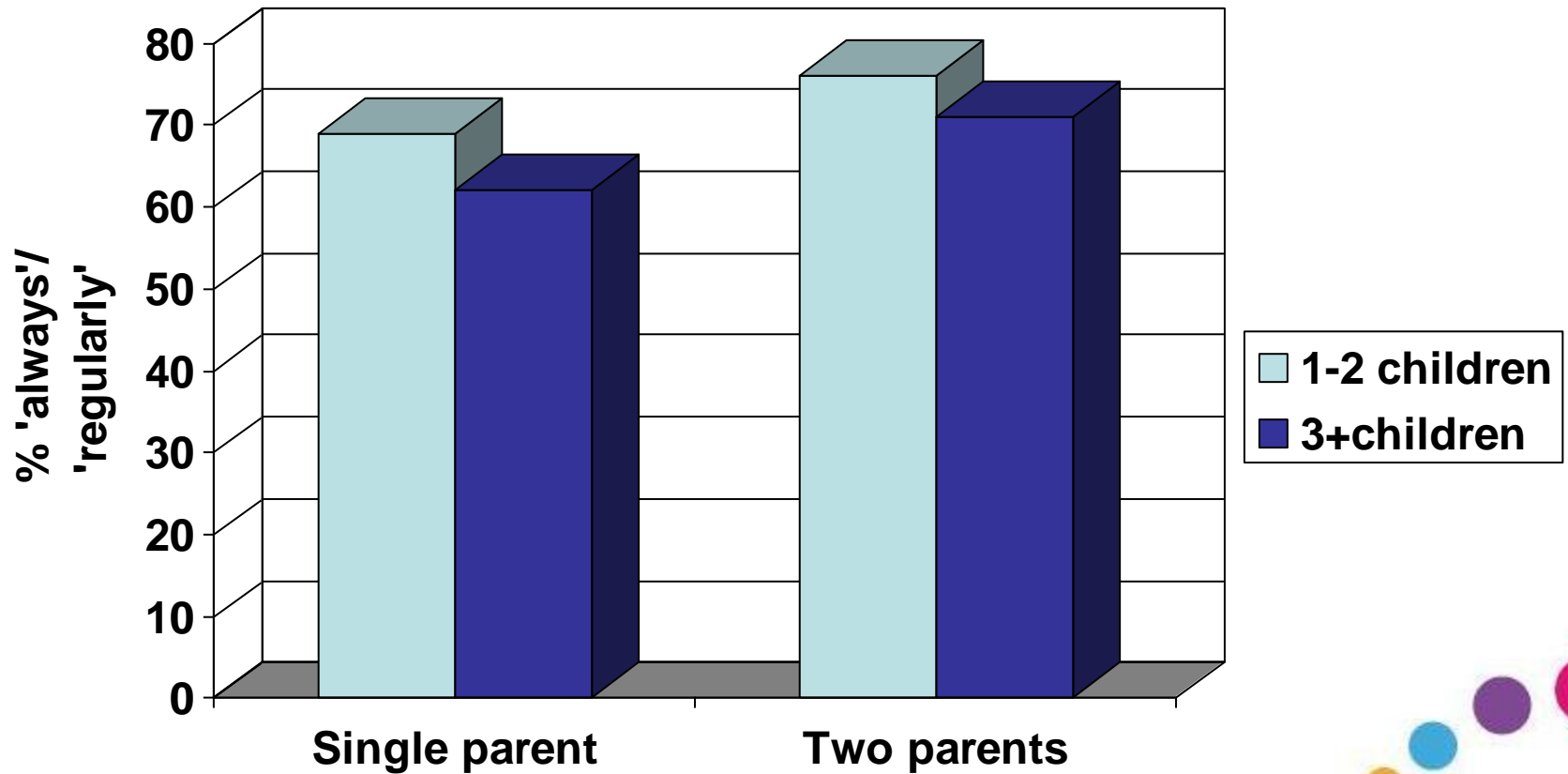
1. Parental support for learning
2. Parental expectations for child
3. Reading-related resources in the home



# Parental support for learning

- **Vast majority attend parent-teacher meetings**
- **Majority of parents help with child's homework regularly or always**
- **There is some variation in the frequency of helping with homework by household type and size**

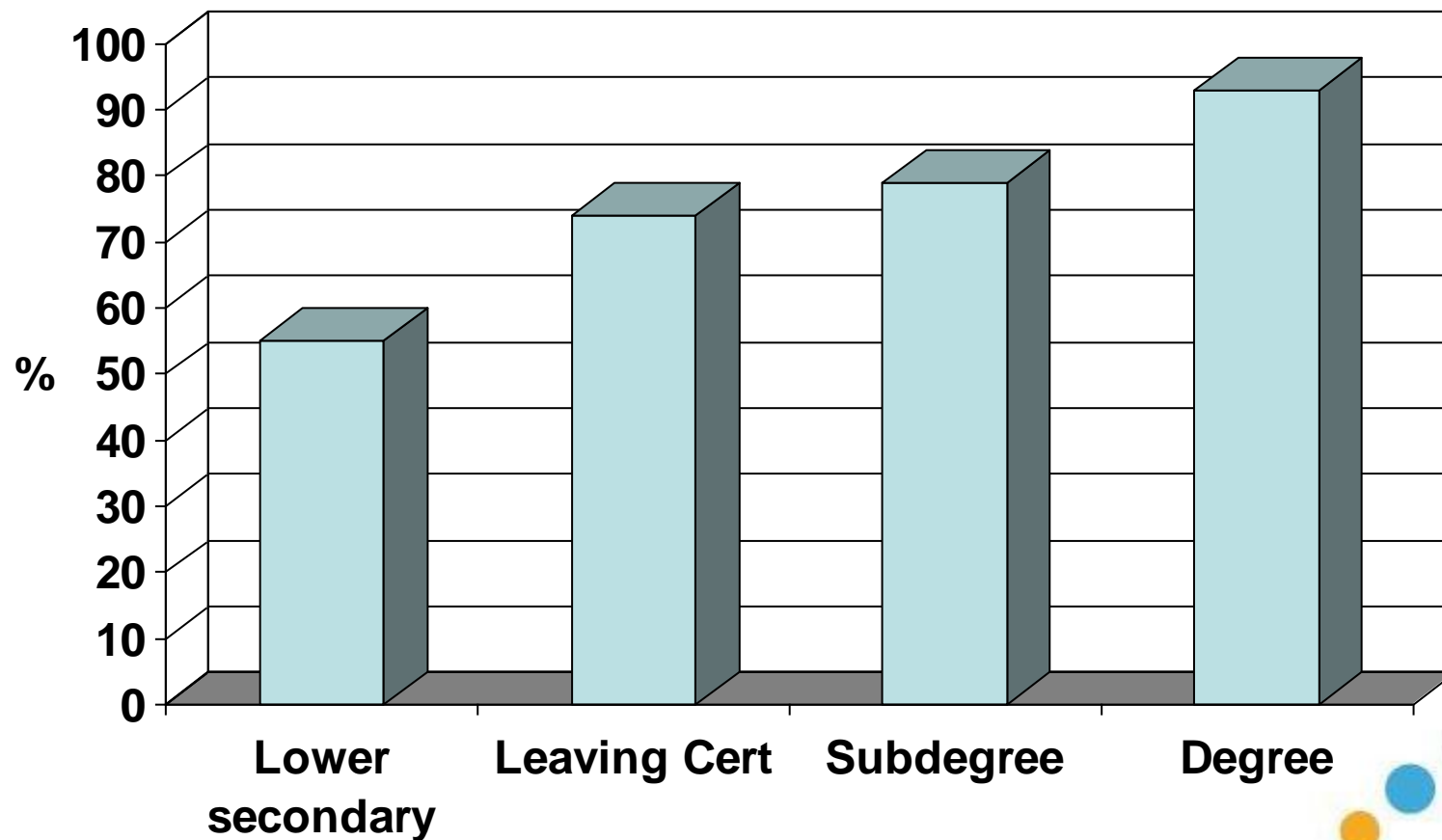
# Help with homework



# Parental educational expectations for child

- **Generally high parental expectations for their child, with 71% expecting their child to obtain a degree or postgraduate qualification**
- **This pattern varies somewhat by gender – expectation of degree more common for girls, apprenticeship more common for boys**
- **Expectations vary significantly by maternal education**

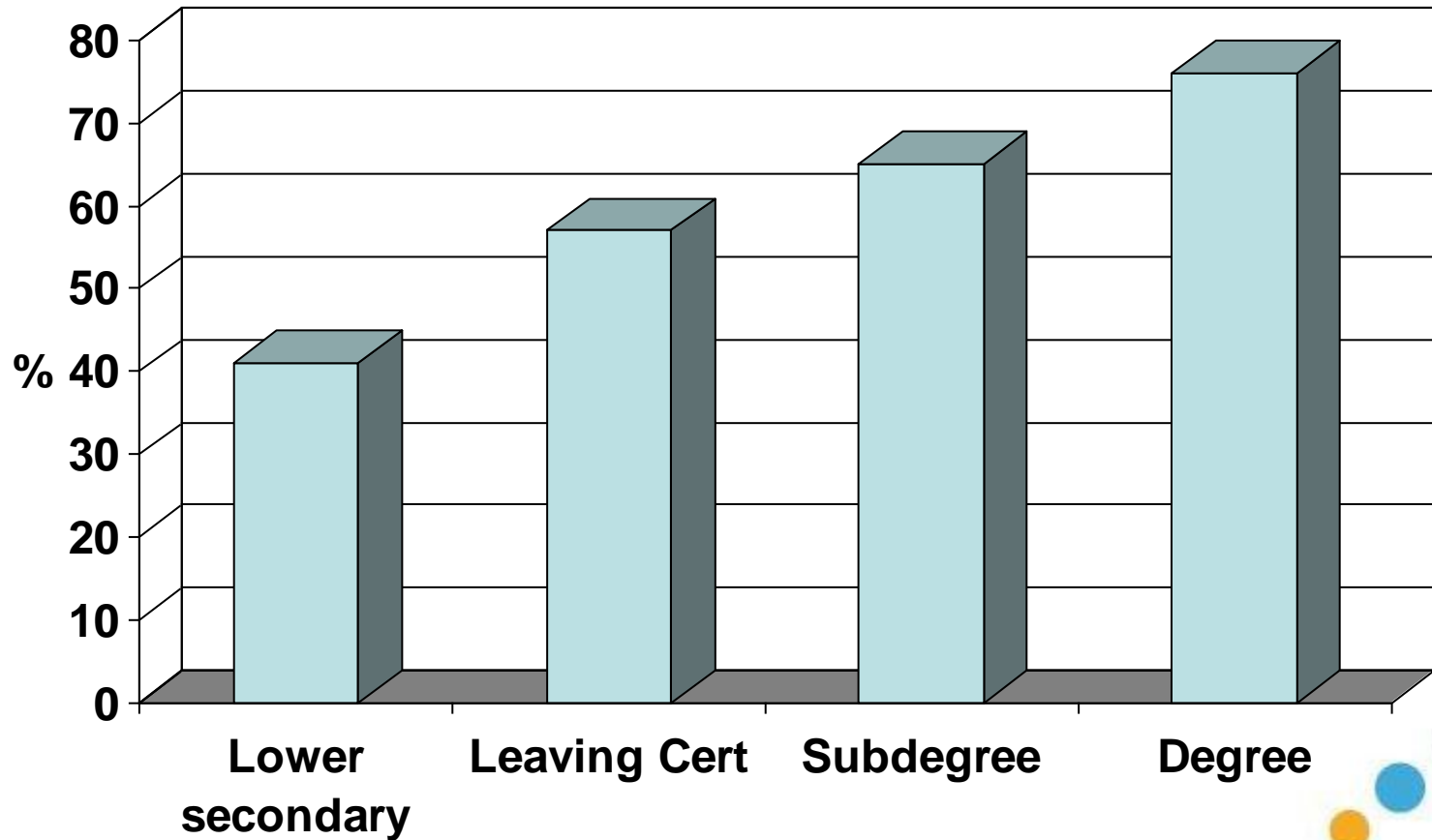
# Percentage expecting third-level qualification for child by mother's education



# Reading-related resources at home

- **Over half (56%) of 9 year olds have access to 30+ children's books at home**
- **Resources are greater where mothers have higher levels of education**
- **Resources are greater in professional and high income households**
- **International research has shown that access to reading resources is highly predictive of educational outcomes**

# Percentage with 30+ children's books by mother's education



# Conclusions

- **The GUI data provide important insights into children's learning at home and school**
- **Children are mainly positive about their schooling and this is evident across different social groups**
- **Children tend to have at least two close friends**
- **But four in ten had experienced bullying; in many cases unbeknownst to their parents**
- **Parents support their children's learning and hold high hopes for their children's education**
- **However, social background differences are apparent in engagement with schooling, access to reading resources and reading test scores**
- **The study provides a vital evidence base for assessing the impact of children's primary school experiences on their longer term outcomes**





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