

PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN PORTUGAL

Manuela Veríssimo
Carla Fernandes, Maryse Guedes, Marília Fernandes
&
Students of the Master of Psychology and Psychopathology of
Development

BIG MEETING 2.0

**Os Primeiros
Anos Contam!**
e agora!

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Auditório 2
da Fundação
Calouste Gulbenkian



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- Research has shown how the first years of life are fundamental for the construction of healthy or unhealthy development trajectories and the importance of intervention with families to ensure each child has the most favorable conditions for their development.



- Promoting sufficiently good family environments that provide children with the necessary stimulation for their development will undoubtedly create a generation with better social, _____ emotional and cognitive abilities and with fewer mental health problems.

- **Investing in the first years of life will certainly contribute to a better future for all.**



The present study of Perceptions on Child Development is based on a questionnaire that aimed to assess the degree of knowledge of the importance of the first years of life for child development by Portuguese society.

1. Construction of the questionnaire and socio-demographic data

2. Submission of the study to the Ethics Committee of ISPA – University Institute

3. Data collection through Focus Groups and thematic analysis

4. Construction of the survey on the Qualtrics online platform and the infographic for its dissemination

Perceptions about *Child Development*

We would like to invite you to participate in this study, which aimed to: (1) assess the degree of recognition of the importance of the first years of life for the child's lifelong development; (2) assess the degree of sensitivity about the impact of investing in the first years of life and in families as a key dimension in building a healthier and more sustainable society; e (3) collect guidance to optimize awareness of the importance and impact of investing in the early years.

Your participation is essential and involves completing an online survey, which will take around 15 minutes.

We thank you in advance for your availability and collaboration.

Link to participation:

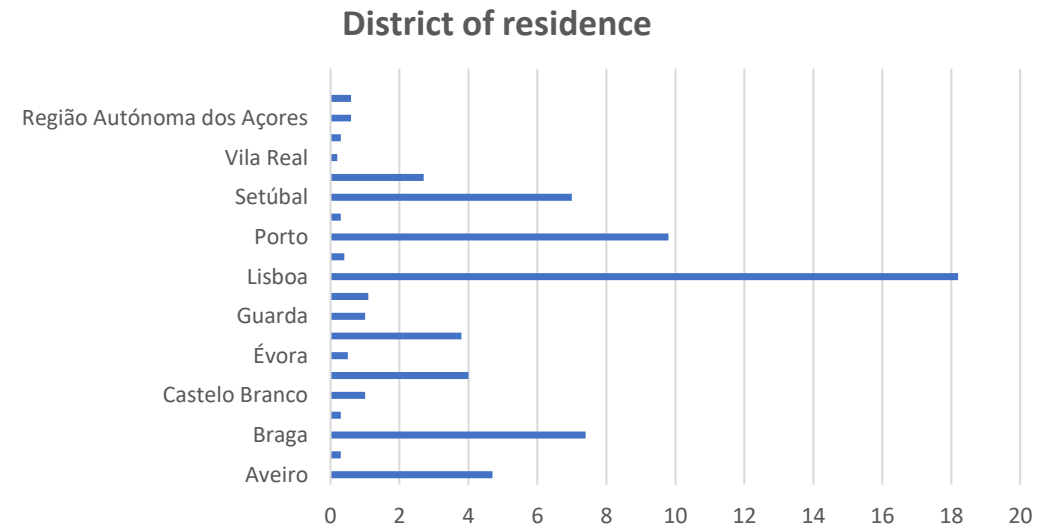
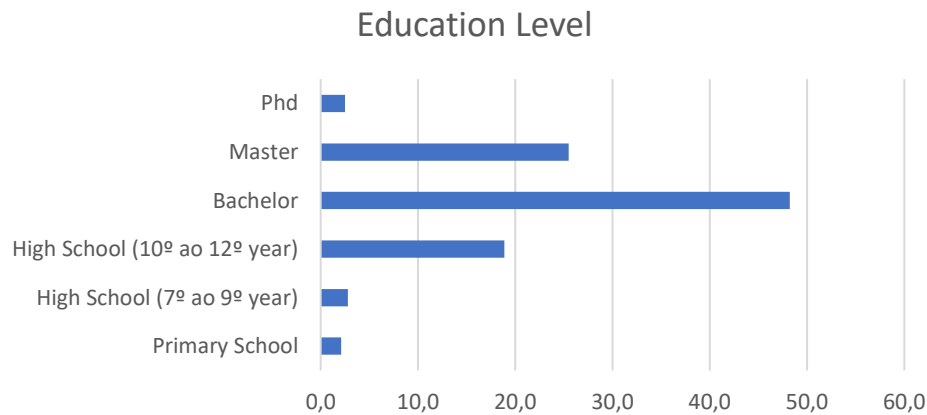
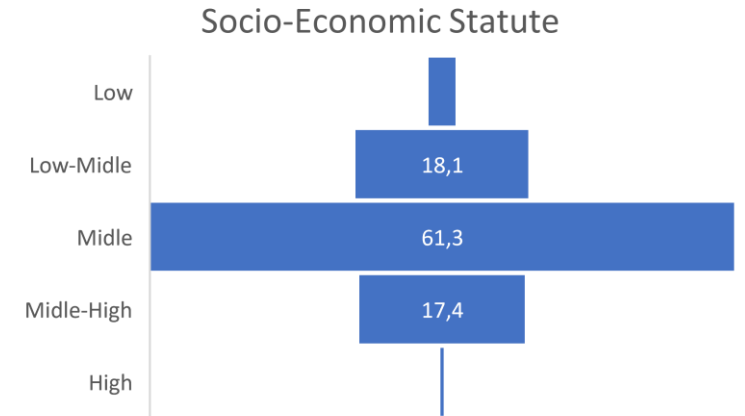
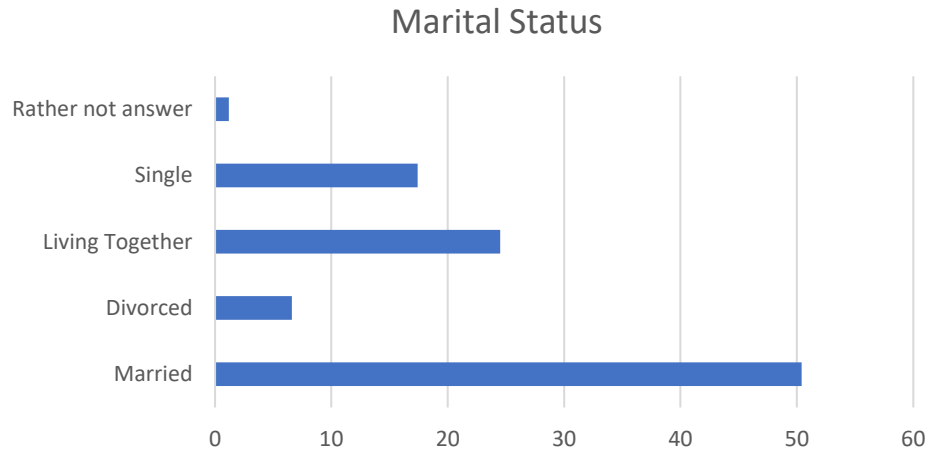
<https://tinyurl.com/OsPrimeirosAnos>

More information:

✉ mveriss@ispa.pt



Sociodemographic characterisation of participants

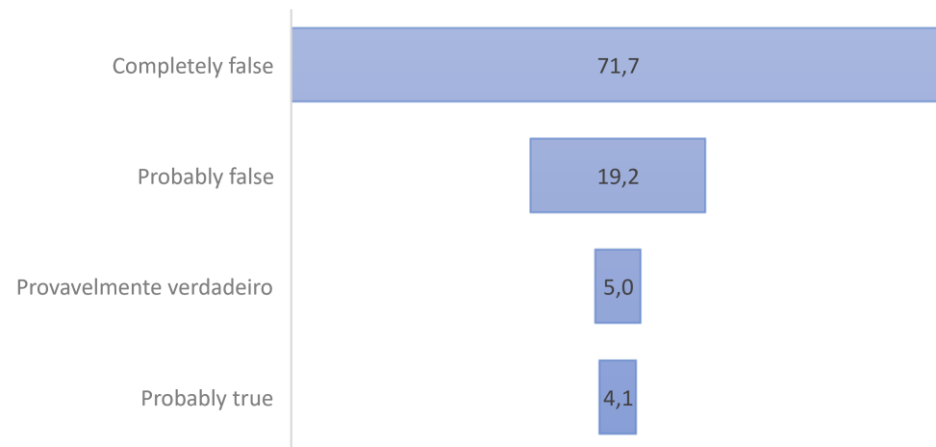


The investigation was initiated by 1150 participants, however, only 802 completed the questionnaire in its entirety. Participants are aged between 18 and 75 years ($M = 40.06$; $SD = 9.70$).

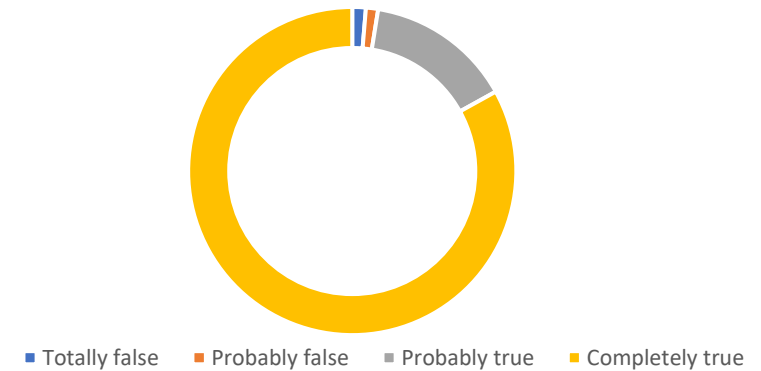
Factors of the family context

More than **89 %** of respondents think that early years of life (0-6 years) **have an impact** on social relationships, physical and mental health, as well as on school performance in the future.

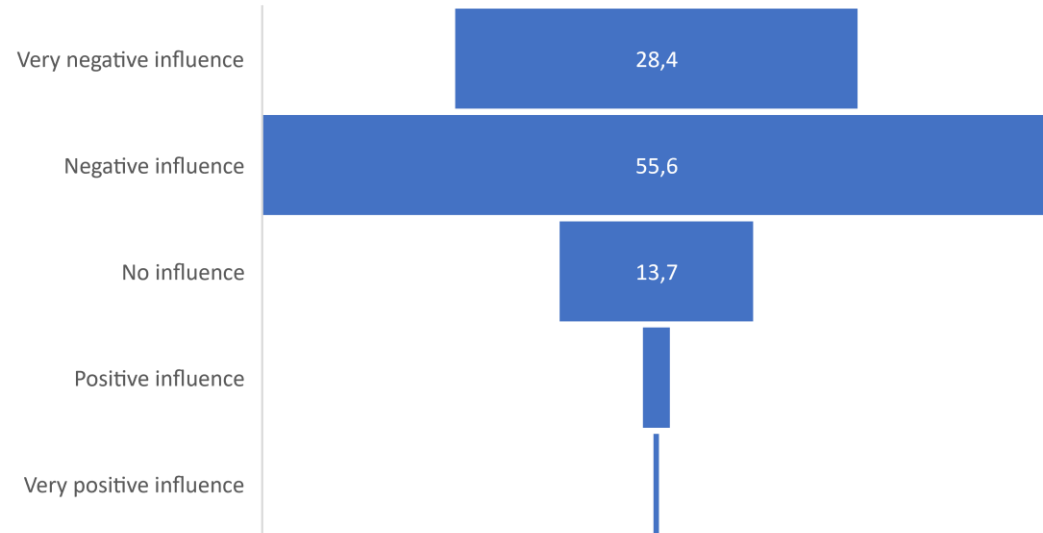
Children's Learning Ability Is Nearly Defined at Birth



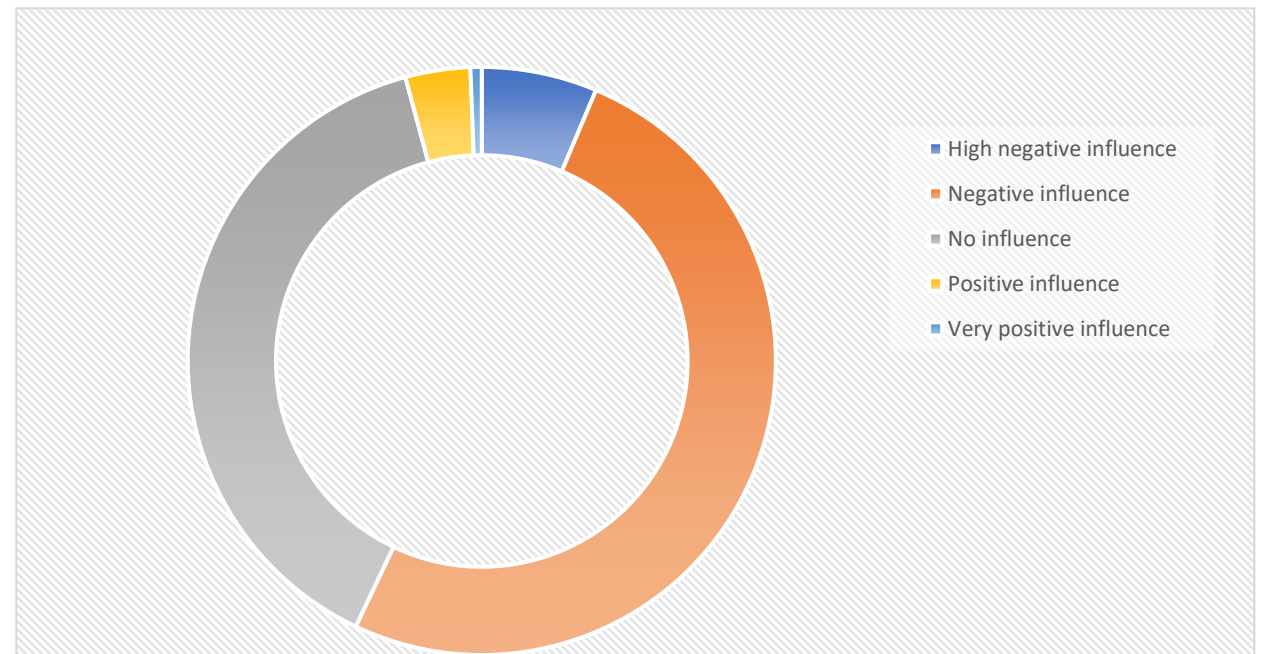
The emotional connection of parents to the child can strongly influence their development.



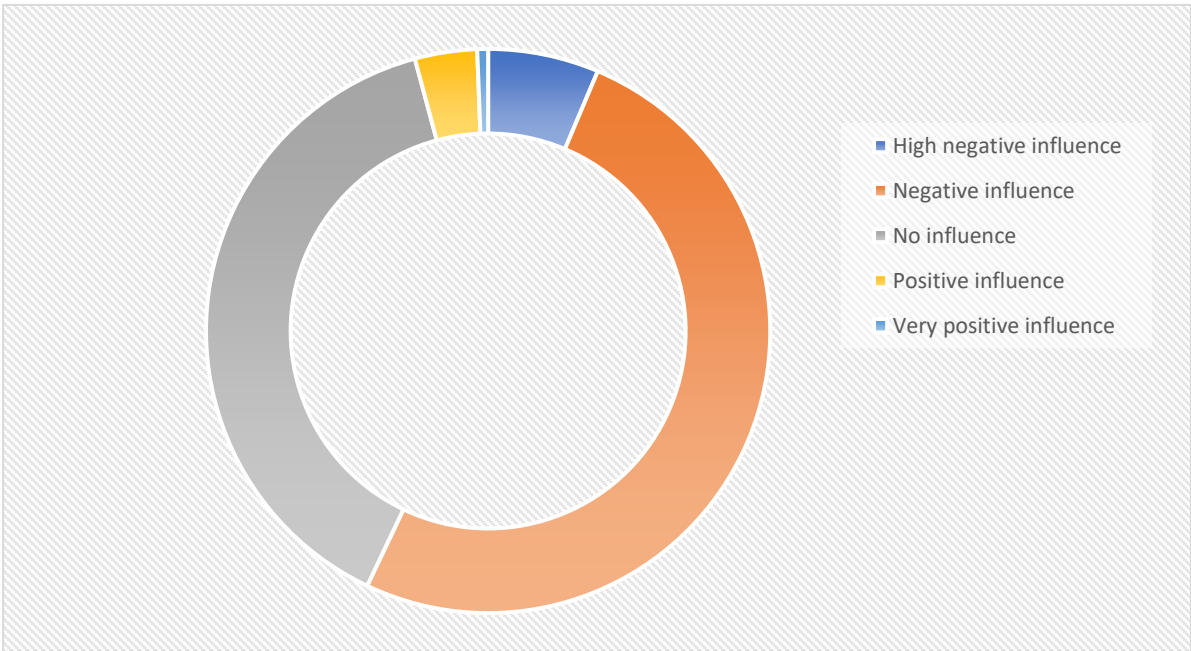
Poverty can influence development in the early years of life



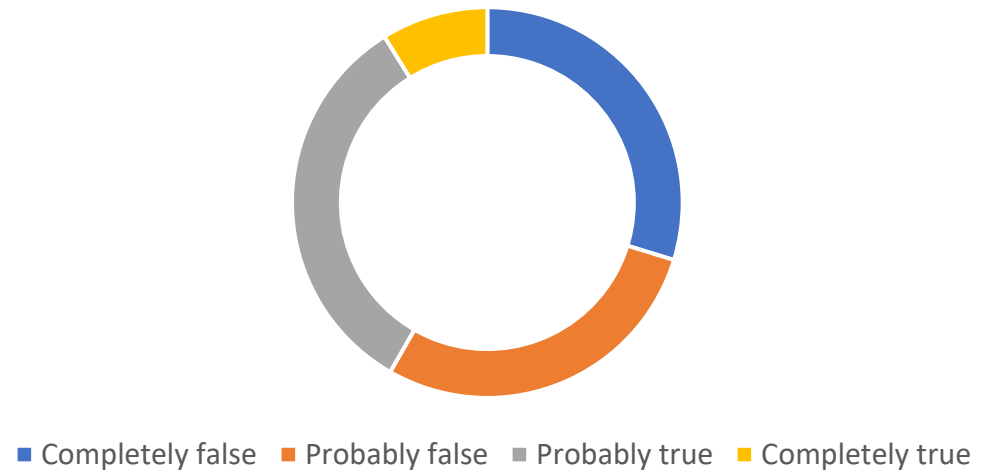
Children exposed to violence will not suffer long-term effects



Belonging to a minority can influence development in the early years of life

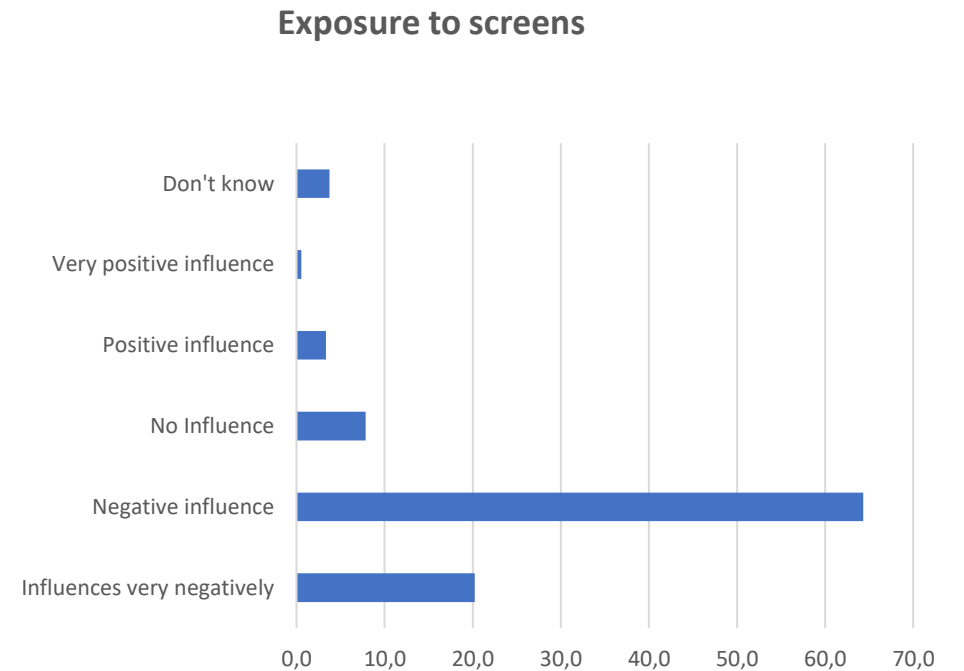
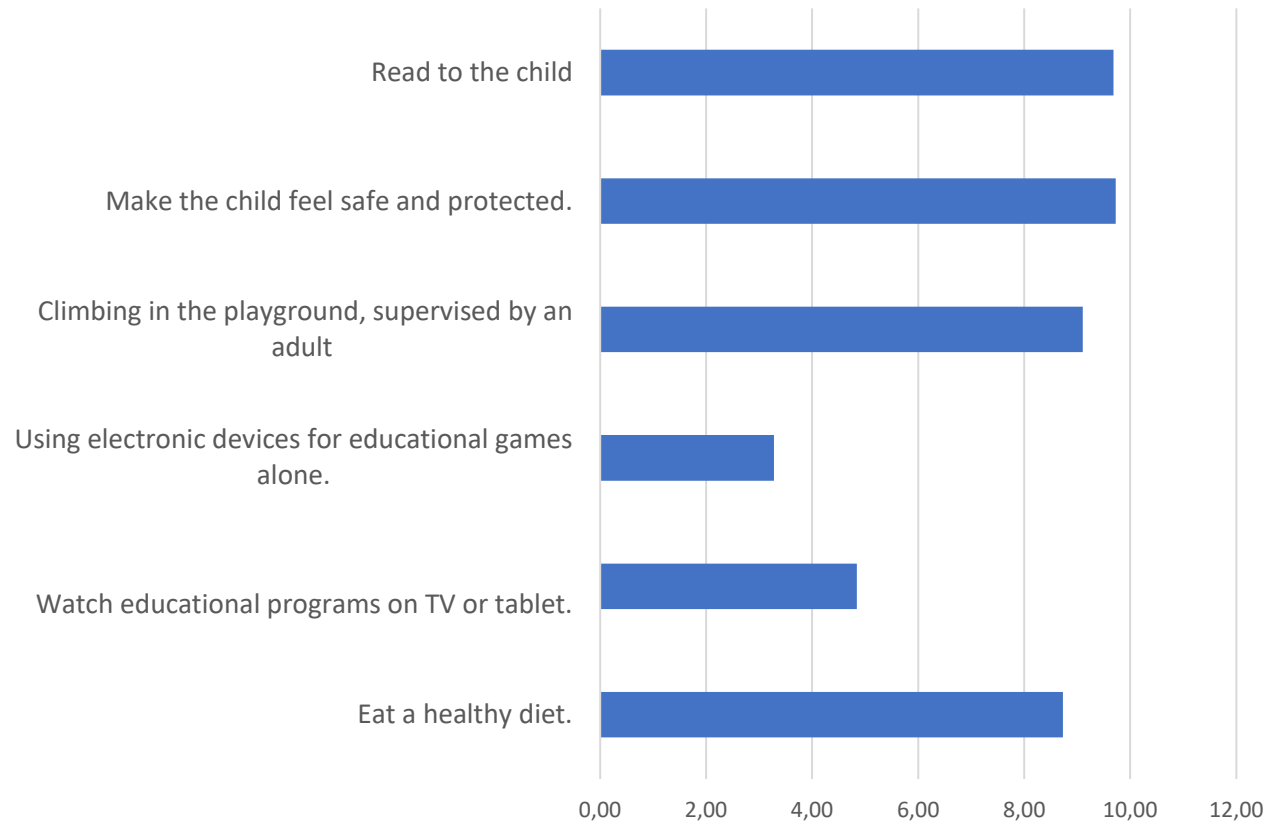


Develop stronger bonds with parents who don't work and stay at home



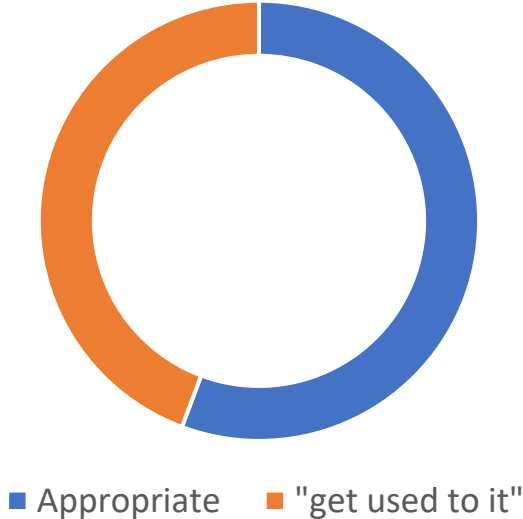
Promotion of Development

On a scale of 10 points (from 1 – *No important* to 10 – *Fundamental*), respondents attributed an **average degree of importance of 9 points** to play time for healthy development

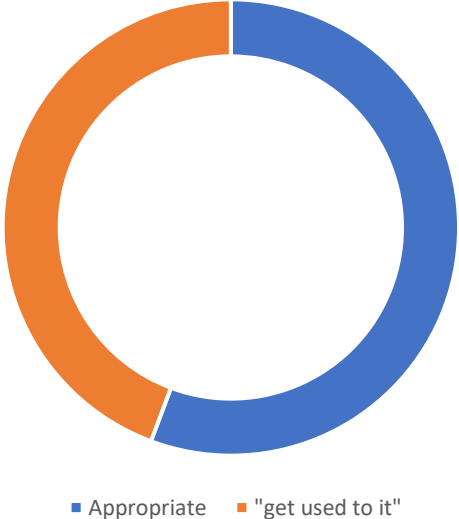


Most respondents say that the baby's crying should be answered and that the development of self-esteem is **negatively affected** when parents do not respond frequently to their crying.

Pack a 1-year-old baby to fall asleep



Let a 2-year-old leave the table to play before the family finishes the meal

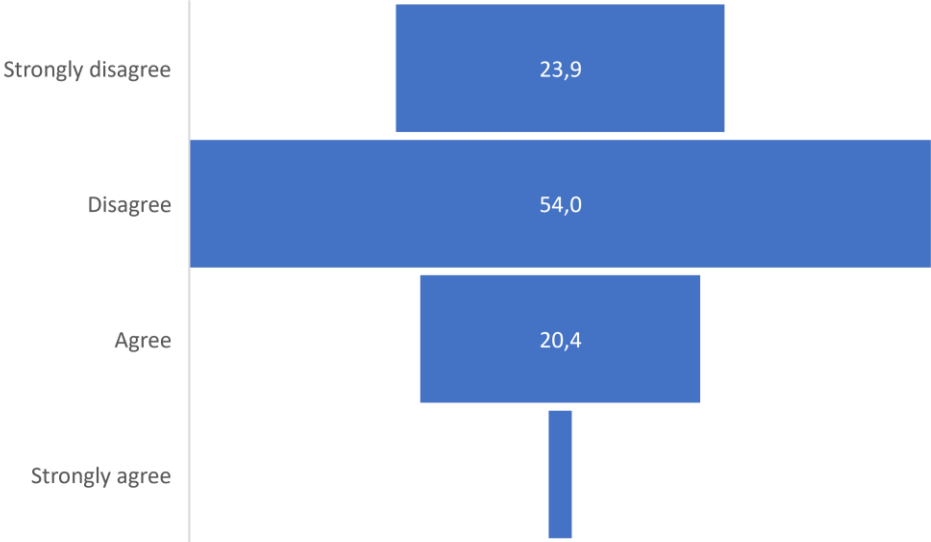
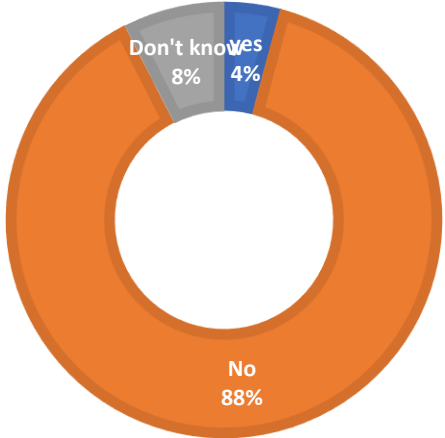


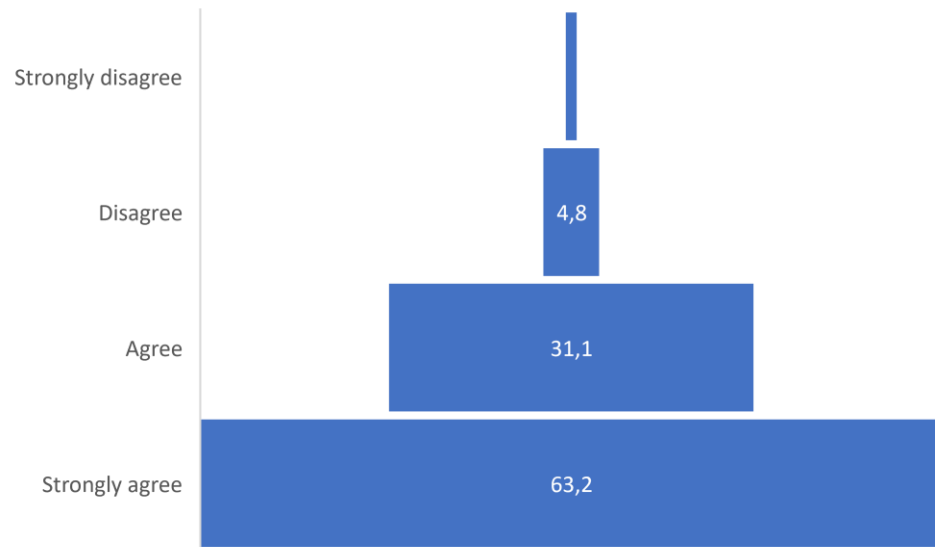
Violence and ill-treatment

Most respondents considered that institutionalisation negatively influences development.

However, 20 % of participants consider that being placed in a care institution **offers children positive family experiences.**

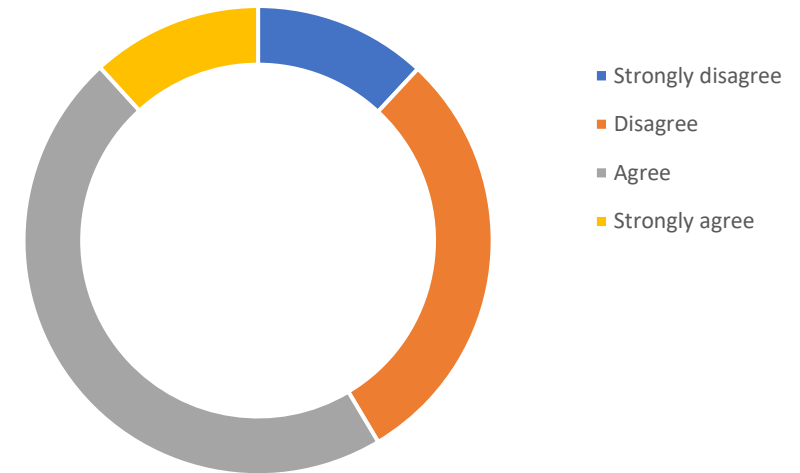
PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT





Even if children are taken out of the house because their parents have neglected them, **every effort must be made** to get the children home.

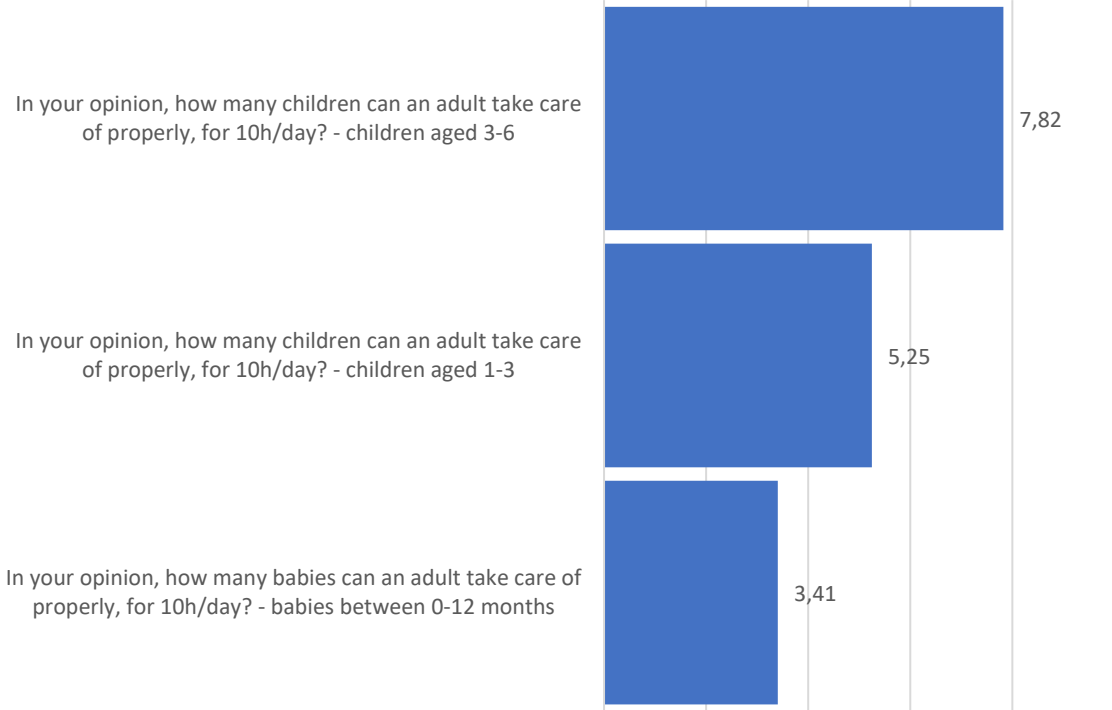
If the biological parents physically abuse the child, the child should be removed.



Factors of Childhood and Childhood Context

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY GROUP AND AGE

Most respondents believe that children need a lot of time to develop safety bonds, so **frequent changes in educators have a negative impact.**



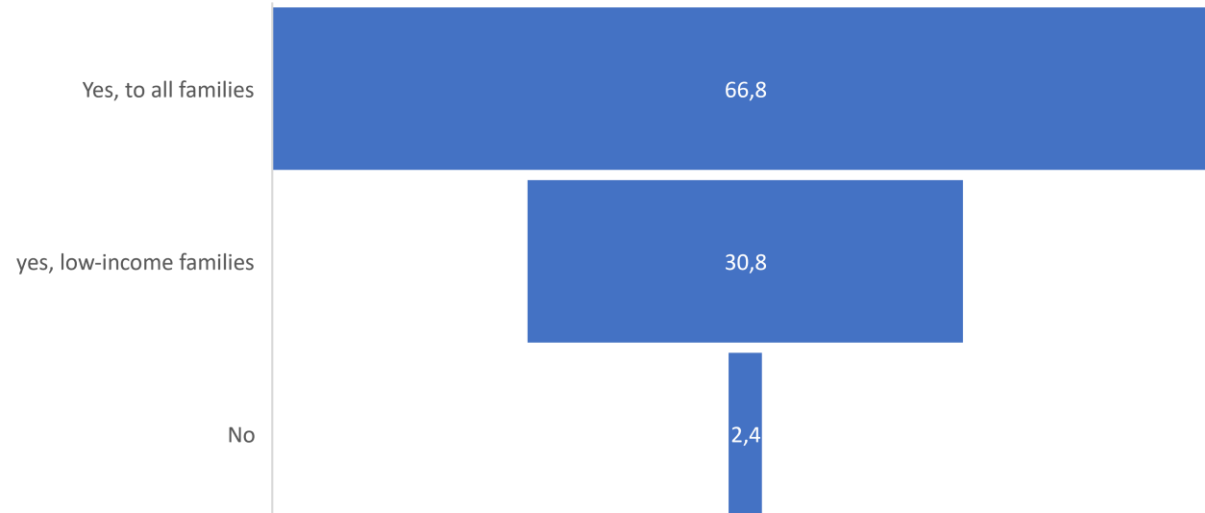
Aspects that they consider most important in the choice of nursery/preschool

- 1-The methods of discipline used,
- 2-Price
- 3-The number of children that each adult has in their care
- 4 – Playing activities planned for children.



State financial support measures

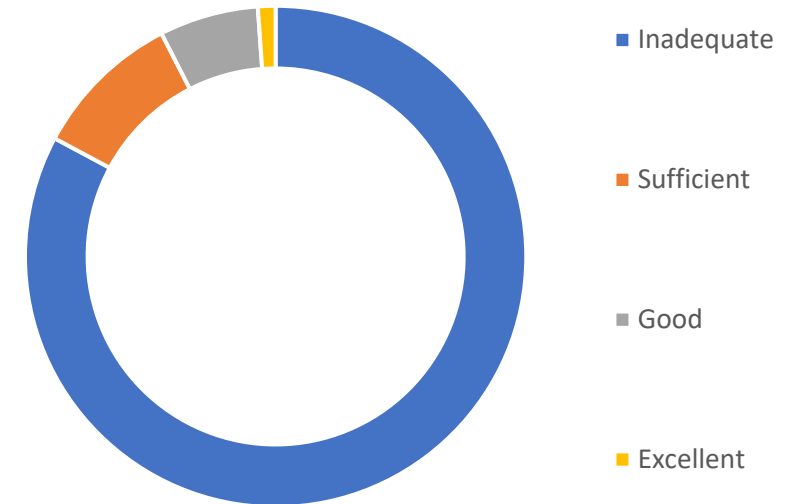
Most respondents agreed to a paid leave that allows parents to stay at home with their children. Most participants state that the mother and/or father should stay at home for the first year of the child's life.



The majority of respondents considered that the government should financially support **all families** to support quality nurseries, kindergartens and kindergartens.

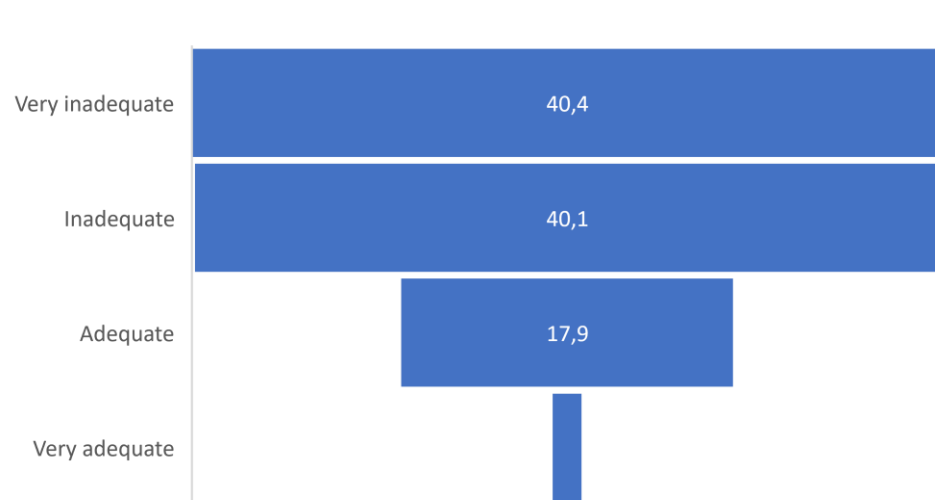
Measures that the government seeks to do in workplaces to help workers reconcile their jobs with the needs of their young children

The majority of respondents considered that *the relaxation of timetables, the work, or the provision of childcare services on business premises by employers* are insufficient to help workers reconcile their duties with the needs of their young children.

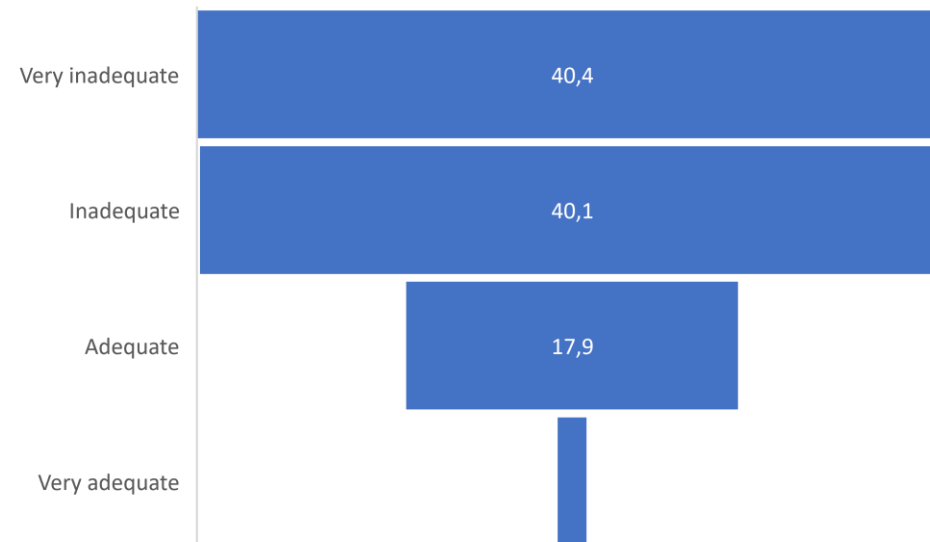


Measures concerning the quality of care services in the first years of life

Waiting time at access Health Center



Waiting time at access public crèches



Comparing the participants living in the **urban or rural environment**, the only differences found were in the level of waiting time for health services and crèche. In the countryside, participants are more satisfied with the services.

Significant differences between the group with the highest level of education (graduate or higher). The group with less education has lower values:

in terms of the importance of experiences in the early years,

of play,

the need to respond adequately to the needs of children (exp.: crying from the baby).

Satisfaction with health and education services.

However, it has higher values in terms of the state's need for support.

In the words of some of our participants:

Don't work weekends. Except places where work is extremely necessary these days (e.g.: health)

Eliminate contact with the employee outside of their working hours

Giving more maternity leave, children at first, when they go to nurseries often get sick, the mother is forced to miss what generates a great struggle between two worlds work and family

Meet the limits of working hours per week

Recommendations:

- Comply with the Parenthood Protection Act;
- Increase the response at the level of day care, their quality and reduce the number of children per educator;
- Greater flexibility in working hours and increased possibility of teleworking;
- Faster access to health care (physical and mental);
- Increase literacy on child development among the general population;

Recommendations:

- Stress the importance of play for development;
- Clarify the importance of foster families to the detriment of institutionalization;
- And better investigating the notion of belonging to a minority group does not hinder development. Most studies do not agree with this result;
- Find solutions to better reconcile work with family.

