

# Tardiness in Early Education: Incidence, Predictors, and Consequences

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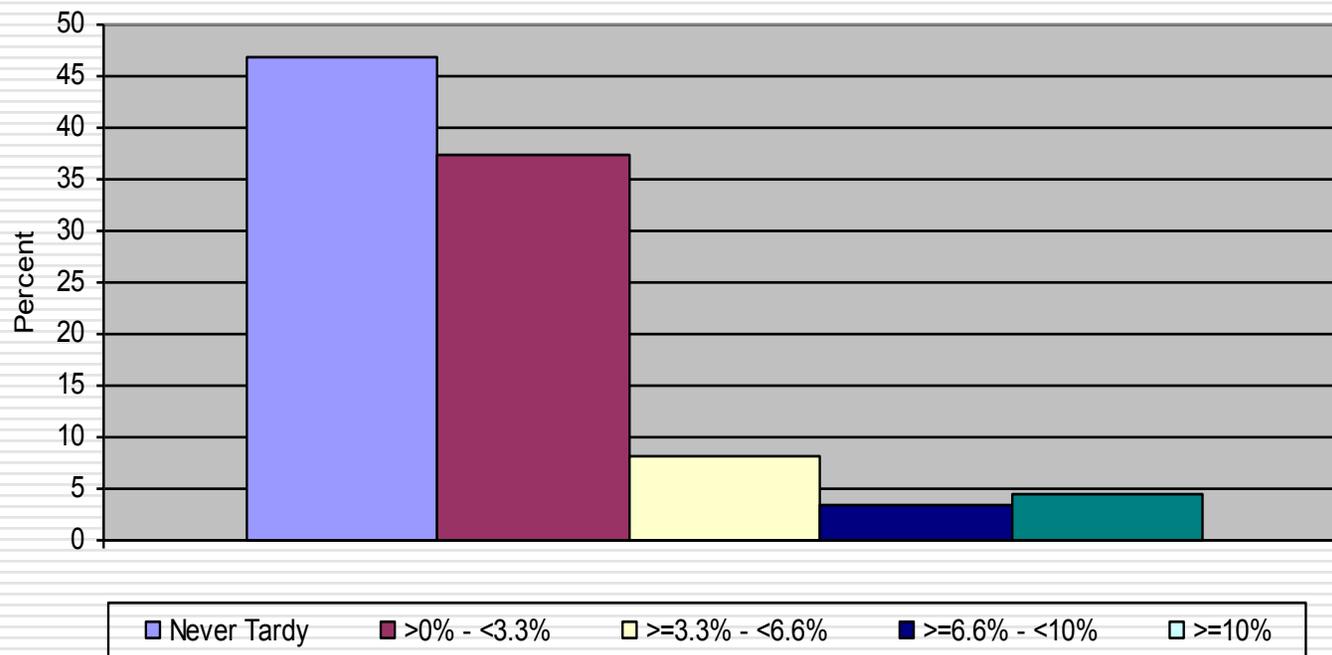
# Overview

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- ❑ Little research on student tardiness in schools
  - ❑ Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort, provides data on late school arrivals among children who entered Kindergarten in 1998
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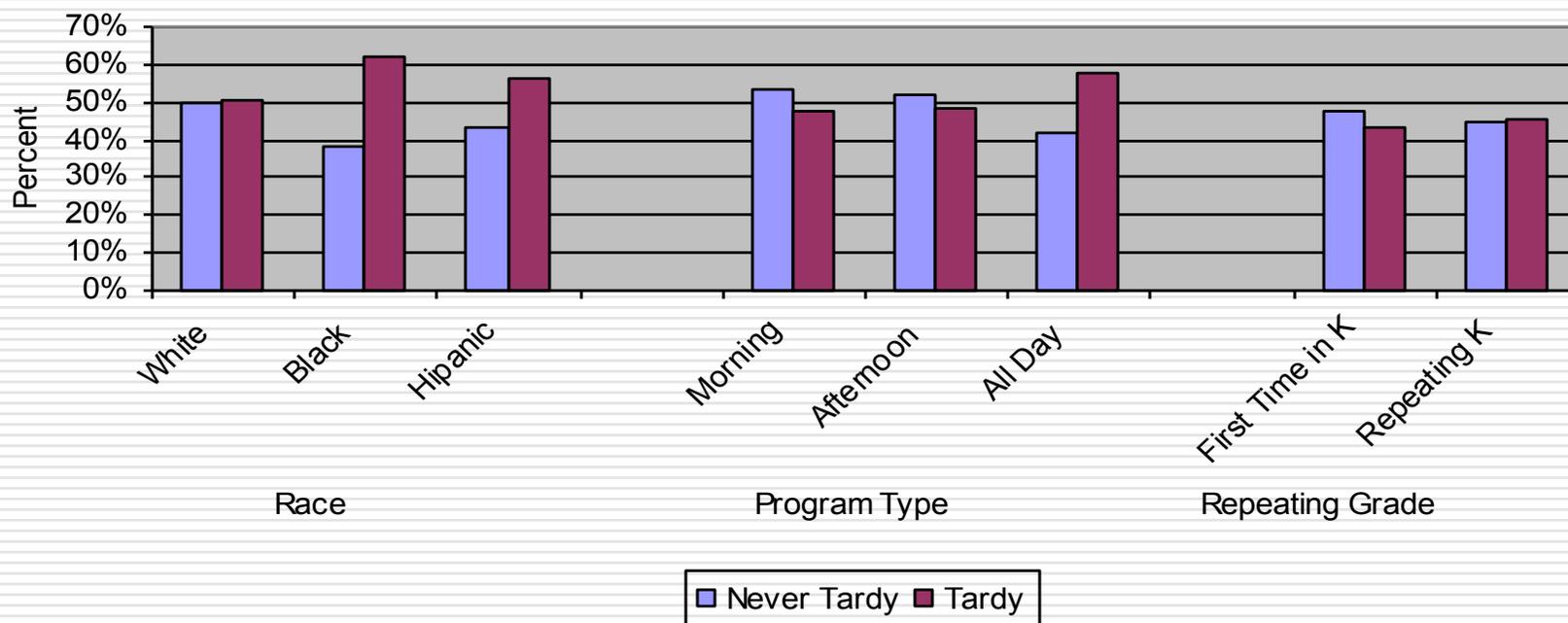
# In Kindergarten, half of the children were late to school at least once

- ❑ Children were tardy 3.5% of the school year (or six days)
- ❑ Tardiness ranged between less than 1% (or one day) and 60% (or 108 days)



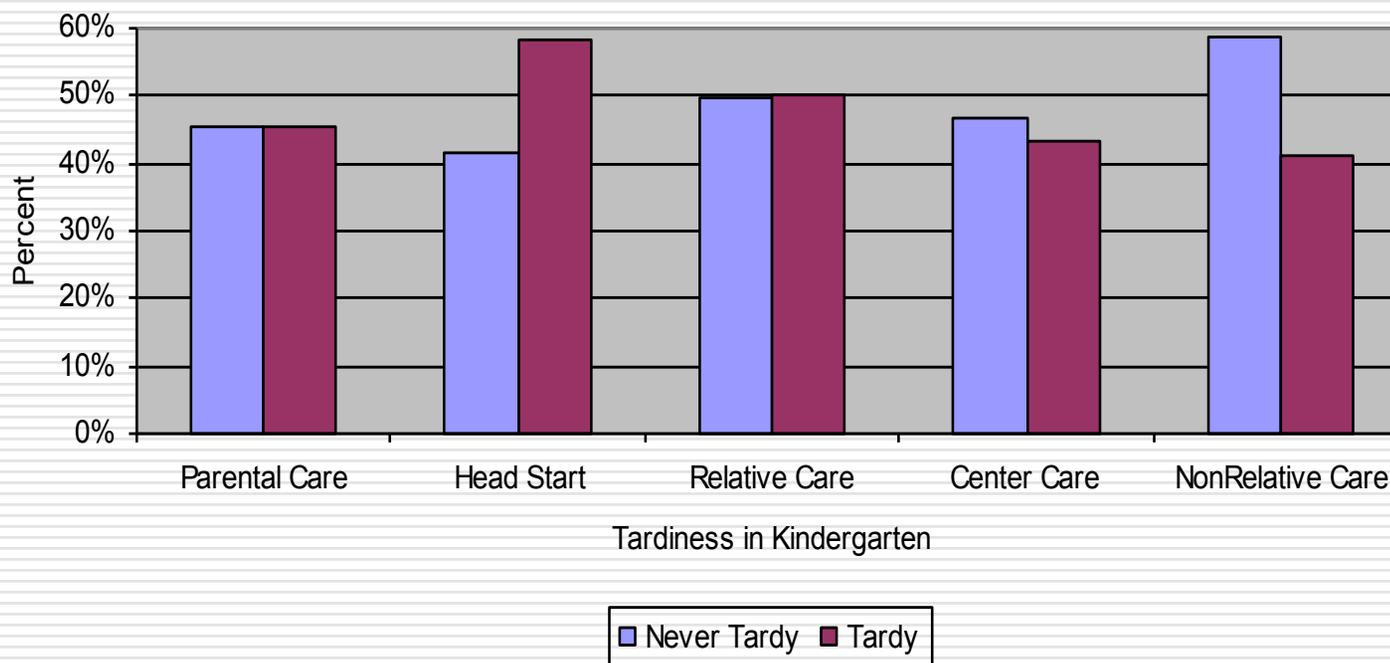
# Children were more often tardy in Kindergarten if they were

- Hispanic or Black
- Enrolled in full-day programs
- Repeating kindergarten



# Children were more often tardy in Kindergarten if they

- Received Head Start or non-relative care in the year prior to K



# Children who were more often tardy in Kindergarten

- Were described by teachers at the beginning of K as having socio-emotional difficulties



## Other things being equal, the odds of being chronically late in K were

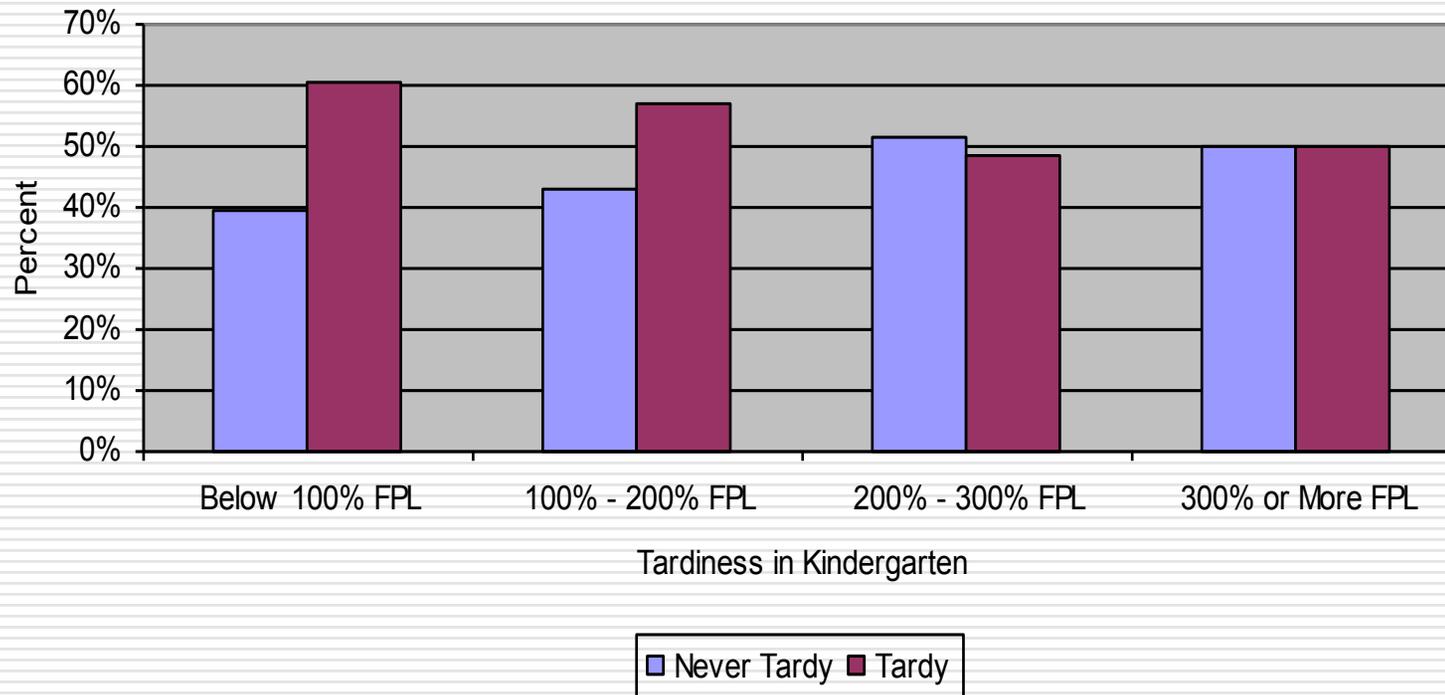
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- ❑ 3.5 times higher if children were Black, when compared to white children
  - ❑ Almost double if children were Hispanic, when compared to white children
  - ❑ 40% less if they attended a morning program compared to a full day program
  - ❑ 50% less if they attended an afternoon program compared to a full day program
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# Poor and low income children were more often tardy in K

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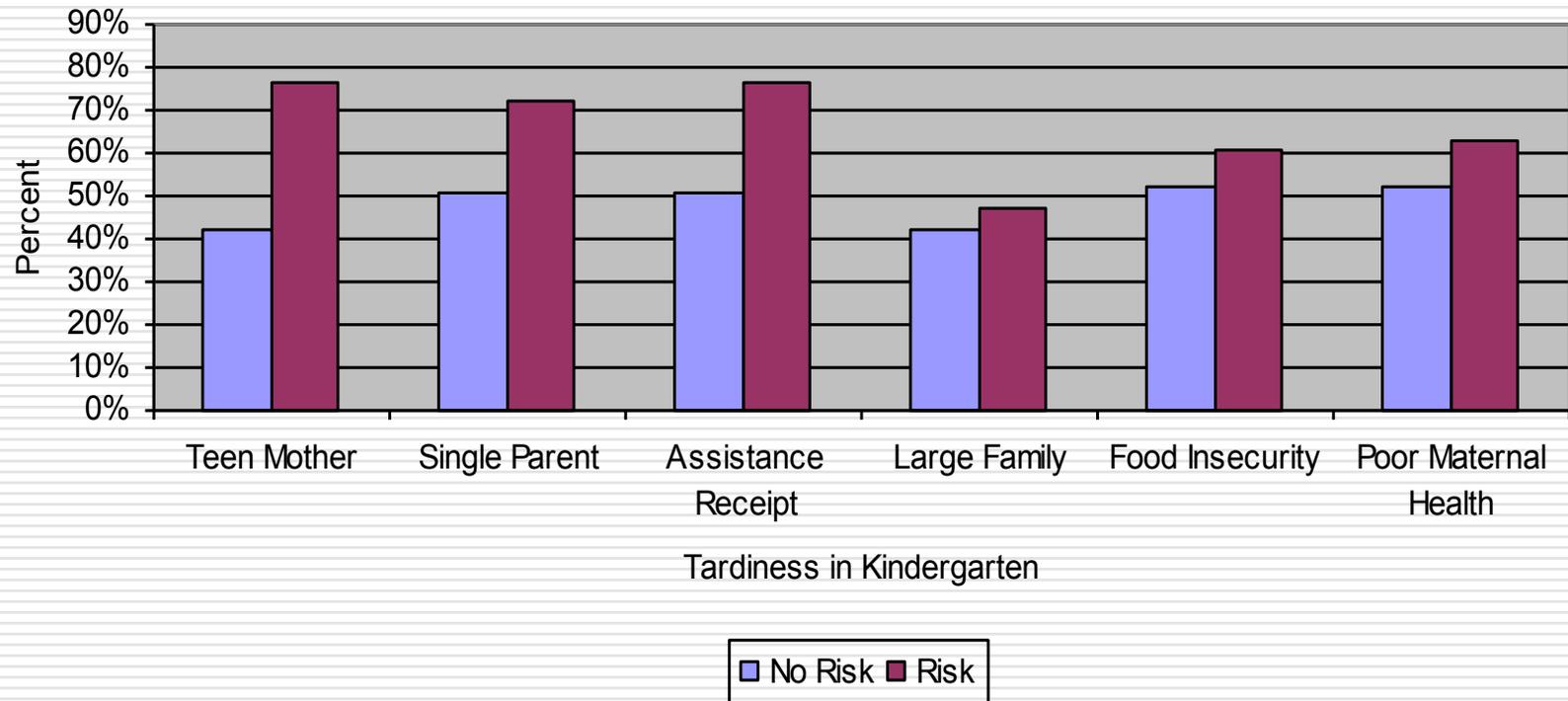
- Than their middle and upper income peers



# Tardiness was related to other maternal and family characteristics,

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□ Particularly risk exposure



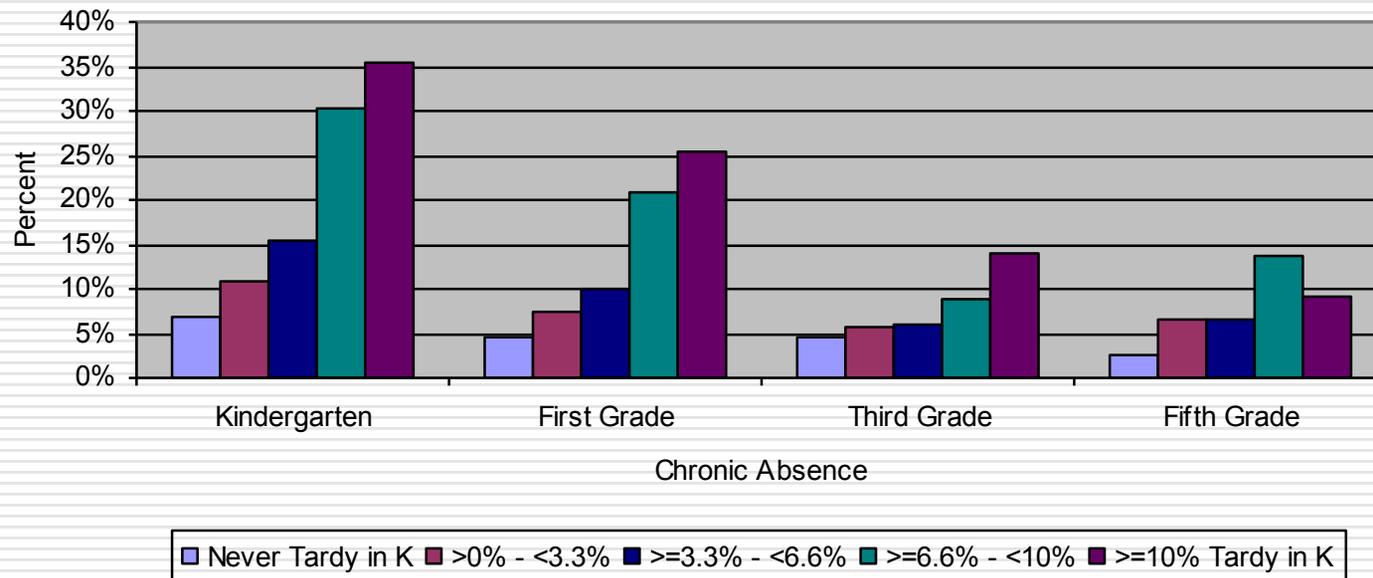
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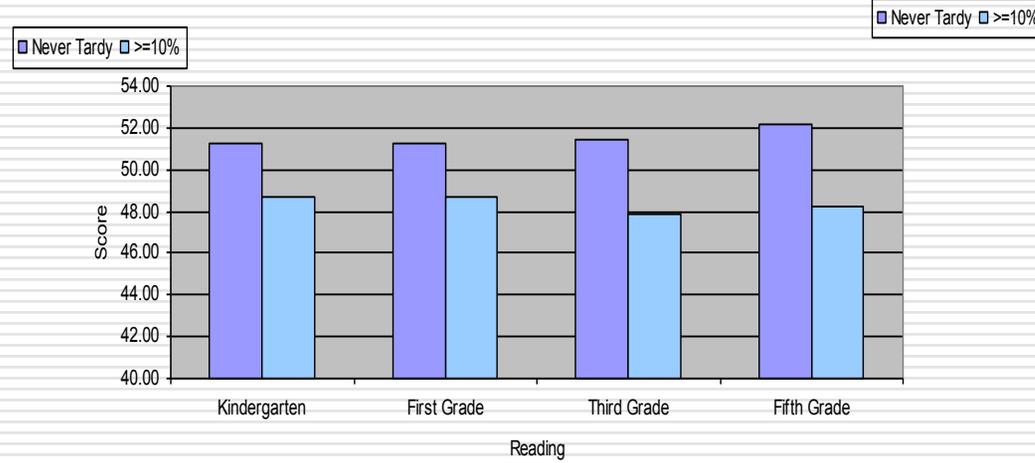
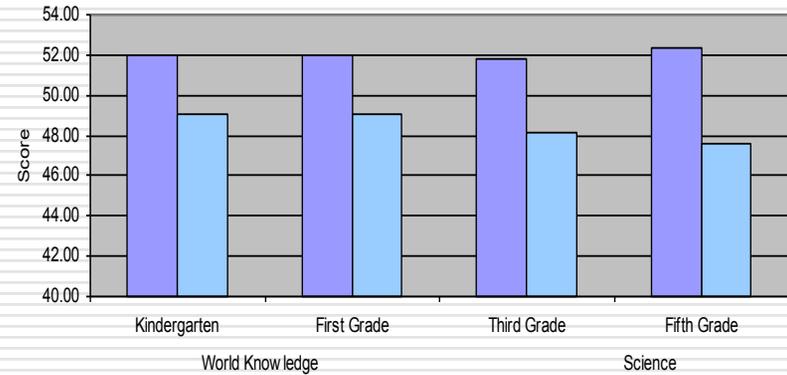
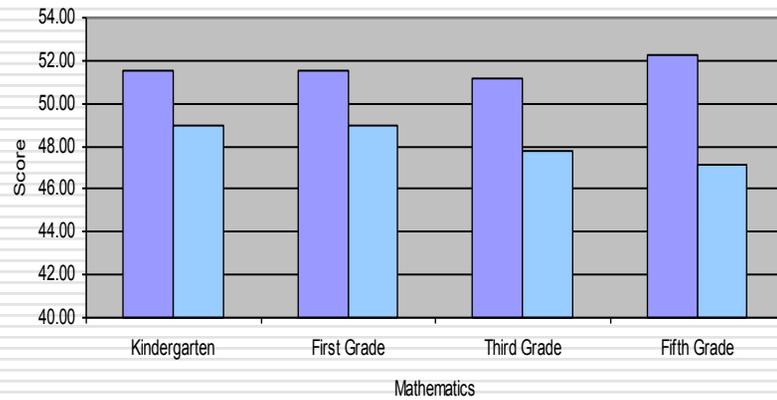
- Tripled if mothers were Black versus white
  - Doubled if mothers were Hispanic versus white
  - More than doubled (x2.3) if mothers were single parents
  - Almost tripled if mothers had become parents as teenagers
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# Being chronically tardy ( $\geq 10\%$ ) in Kindergarten increased the odds of being chronically absent

- ❑ x10 chances of being a chronic absentee ( $\geq 10\%$ ) in **K**
- ❑ x10 chances of being a chronic absentee ( $\geq 10\%$ ) in **1<sup>st</sup> Gr.**
- ❑ x3 chances of being a chronic absentee ( $\geq 10\%$ ) in **3<sup>rd</sup> Gr.**
- ❑ x3 chances of being chronically absent ( $\geq 10\%$ ) in **5<sup>th</sup> Gr.**



# Children who were chronically tardy in K had poor academic performance



Legend: Never Tardy (purple), >=10% (light blue)

# What do we know from research in preschools?

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- As part of the Perfectly Punctual Campaign, Learning & Leadership in Families, Inc., has embarked on efforts to collect data
  - Site survey of
    - Attendance and absenteeism
    - Professionals' perspectives
    - Parents' perspectives
  - National Survey of HS professionals
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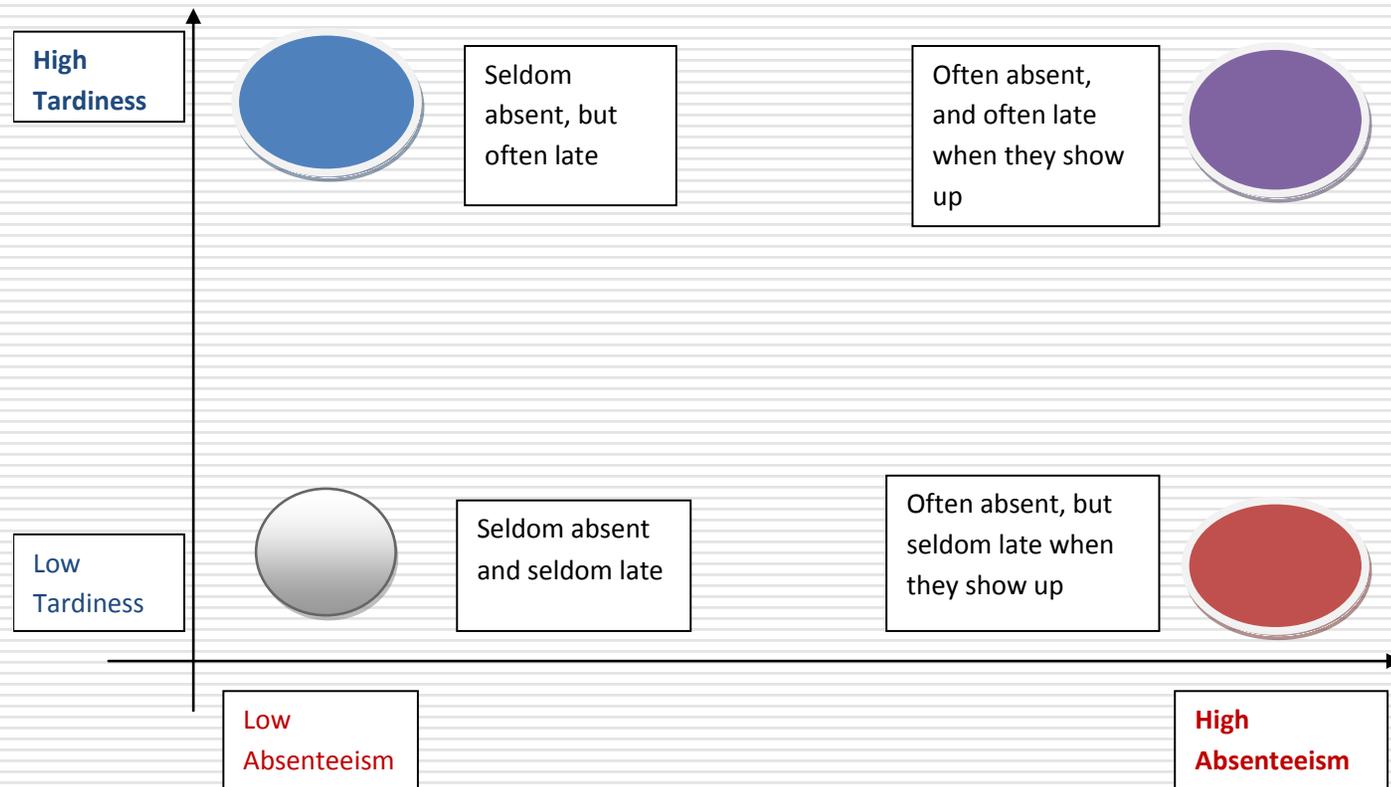
# How easy is it to gather attendance and tardiness data in HS programs?

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- Attendance and tardiness data are collected everyday by staff in all HS programs but not stored in ways that are easy to use
  - Substantial mobility across programs => to collect accurate data, it is important to understand when children:
    - Join the program
    - Leave the program
    - Are disenrolled because of excessive absence
  - Sites may have classes that offer different types of programs:
    - part-day in the morning
    - part-day in the afternoon
    - full-day
    - with early drop-off or late-pick up services
    - To collect accurate data, it is important to know clearly when children are supposed to arrive and leave, and when they actually do
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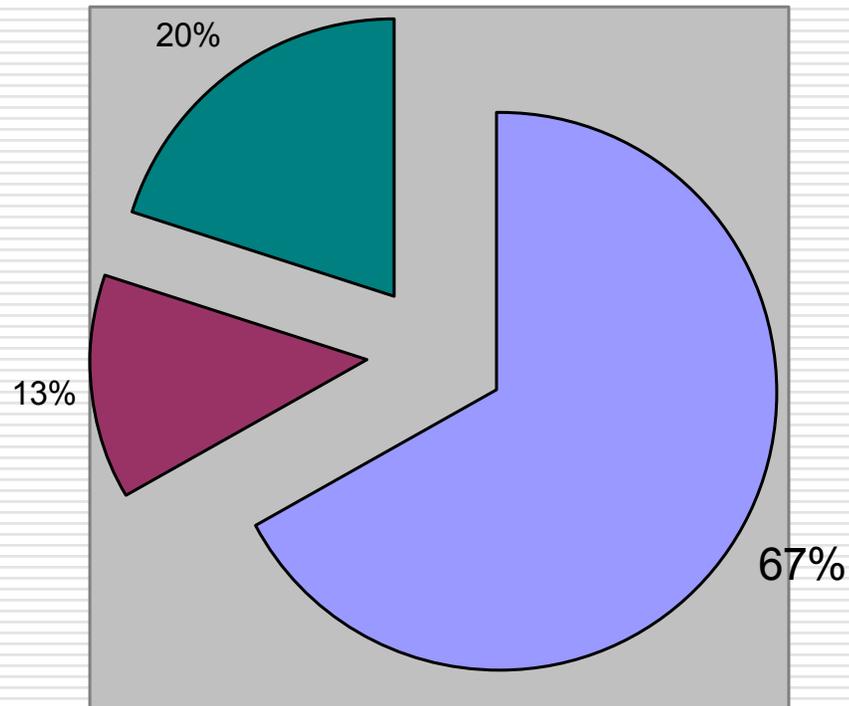
# Absenteeism and tardiness seem to be rather common in HS programs

- Different groups of children emerge depending on whether and how often they are absent and tardy



# Professionals in one site believe that tardiness is

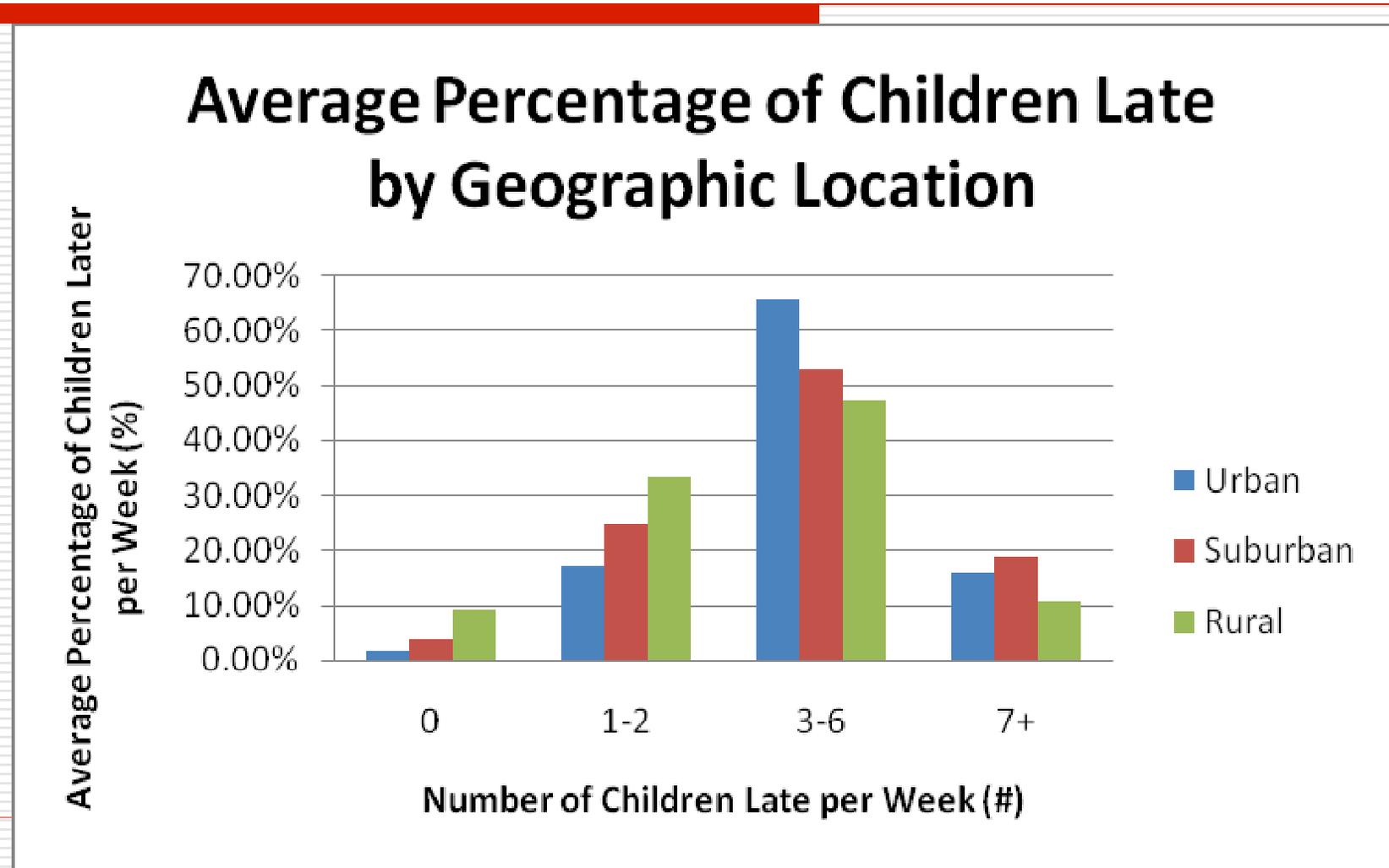
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■ Serious problem ■ Not a serious problem ■ Neither

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Nationally, the majority of HS professionals report that 3-6 children in their groups are late every week



Source: LLF / NHSA survey, March 2009

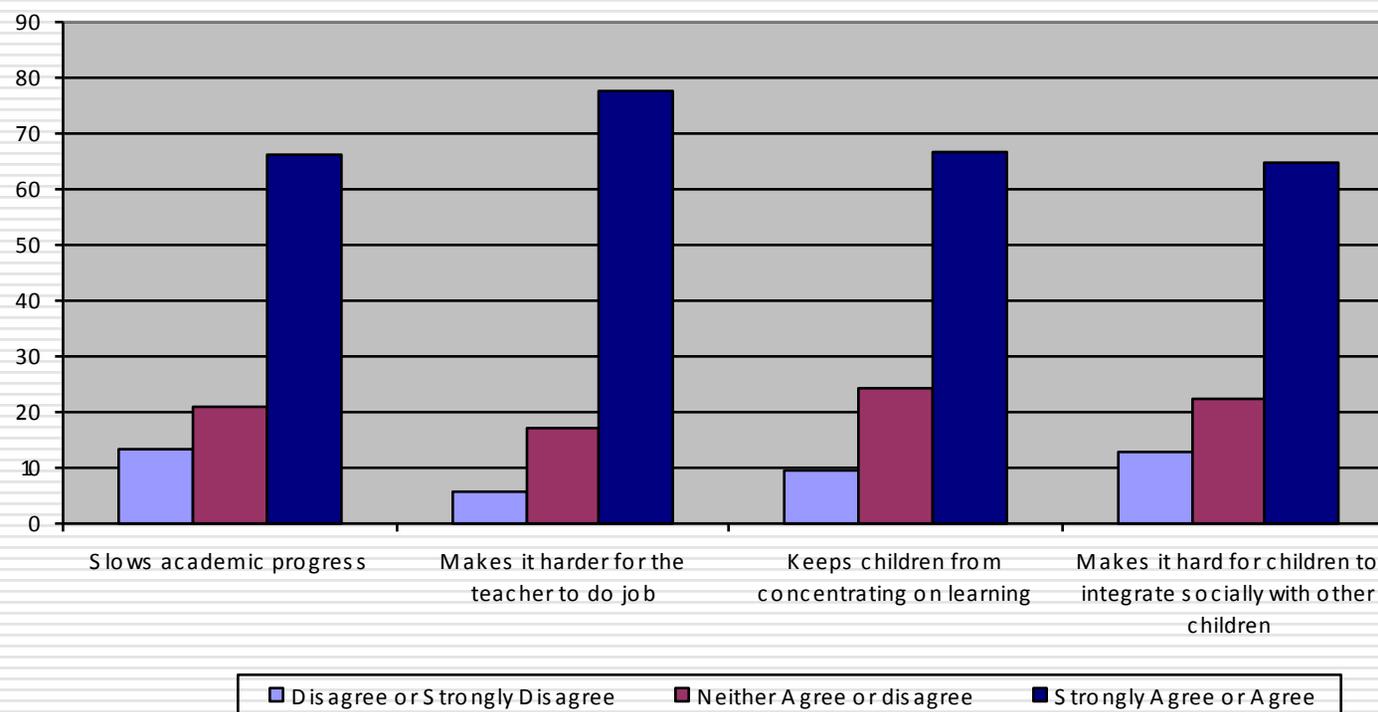
## HS professionals agree that punctuality

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- Creates a positive parent-teacher relationship
  - Helps children do better in school
  - Is one way parents can support learning
  - Helps young children develop friendships
  - Is one way parents and teachers can work together
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# But HS professionals seem to be more permissive towards lateness

- One-quarter to one-third of professionals surveyed feel neutrals towards or disagree with the claim that lateness

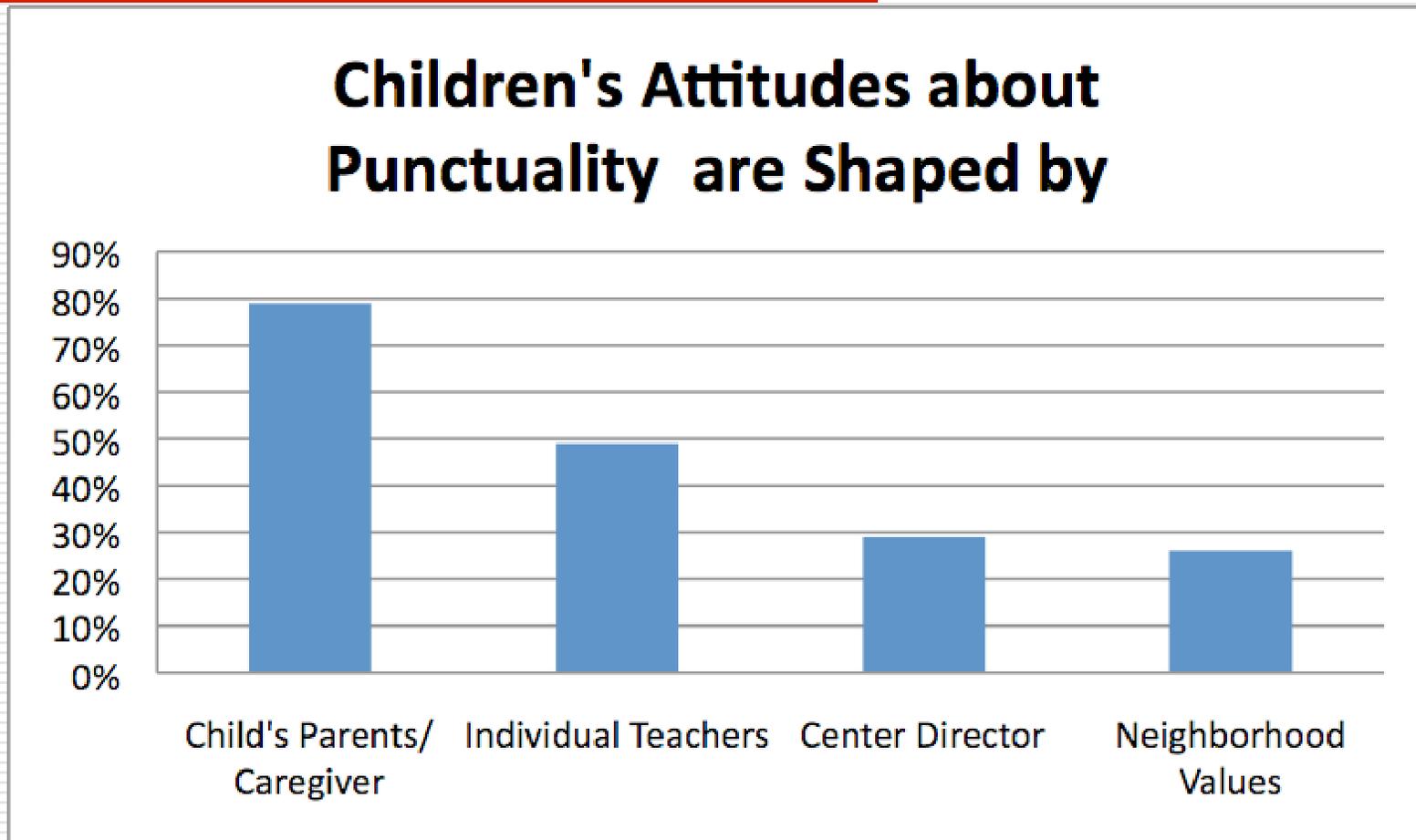


# To have or not to have a punctuality policy?

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- Staff in centers that have an *articulated punctuality* policy more often believe that believe
    - The Center Director can shape children's attitudes about punctuality
    - Neighborhood values can potentially shape children's attitudes about punctuality
  
  - What seems to make a difference is not whether centers have a punctuality policy, but whether or not they *use it consistently*
    - Staff report less punctuality problems in centers where the policy is *consistently invoked*
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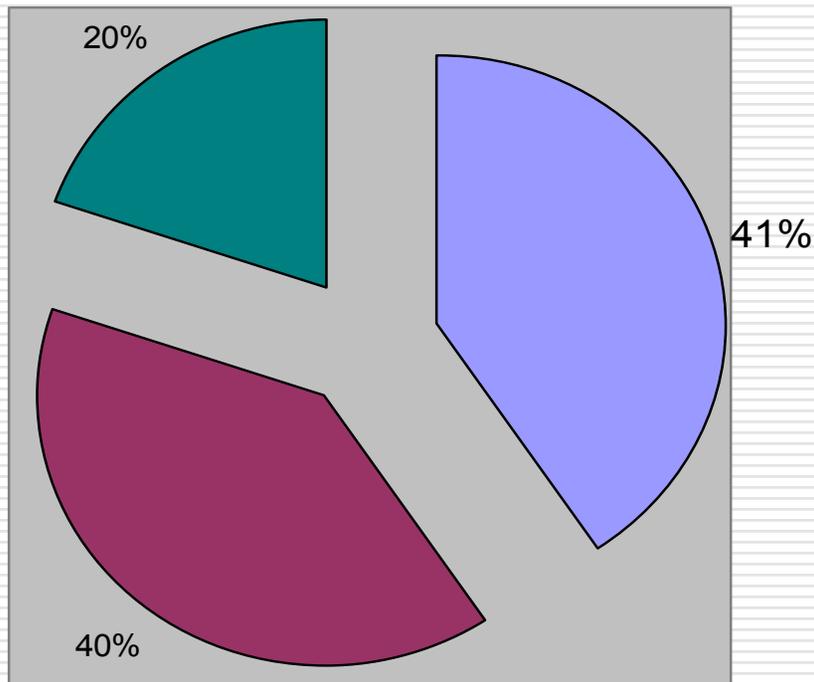
# Professionals see parents as the primary influence on young child's punctuality



Source: LLF / NHSA survey, March 2009

# Professionals disagree on whether parents understand the punctuality policy

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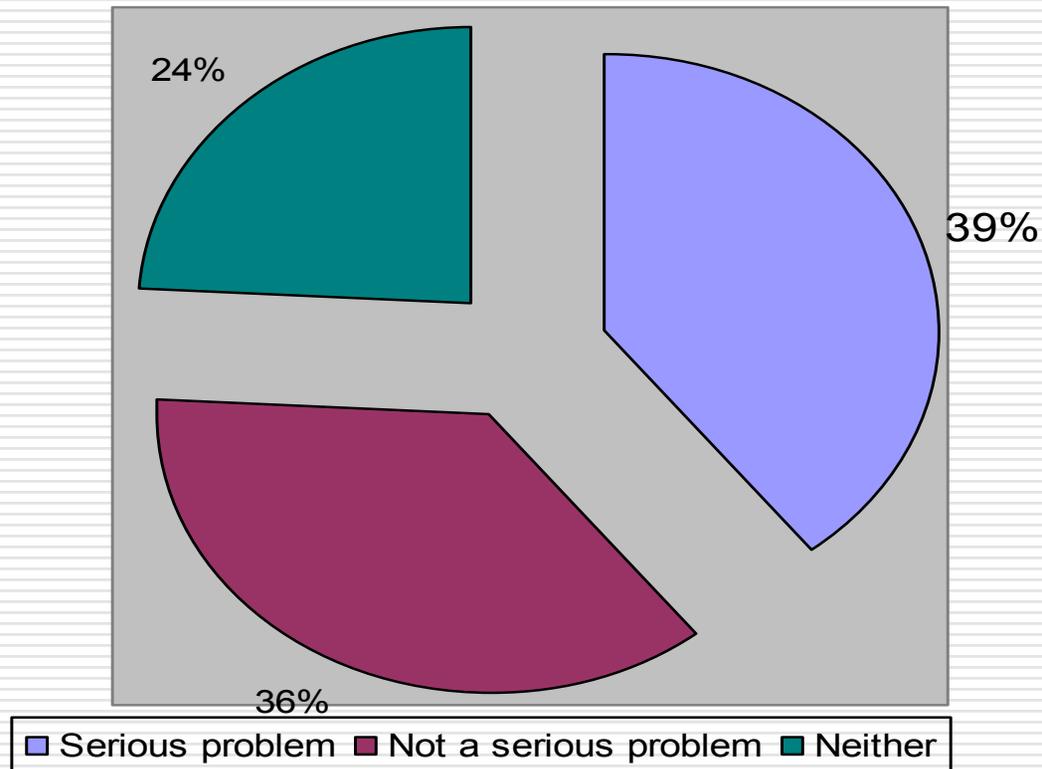
■ Understand the policy ■ Do not understand the policy ■ Neither

□ But 90% parents claim that they understand it

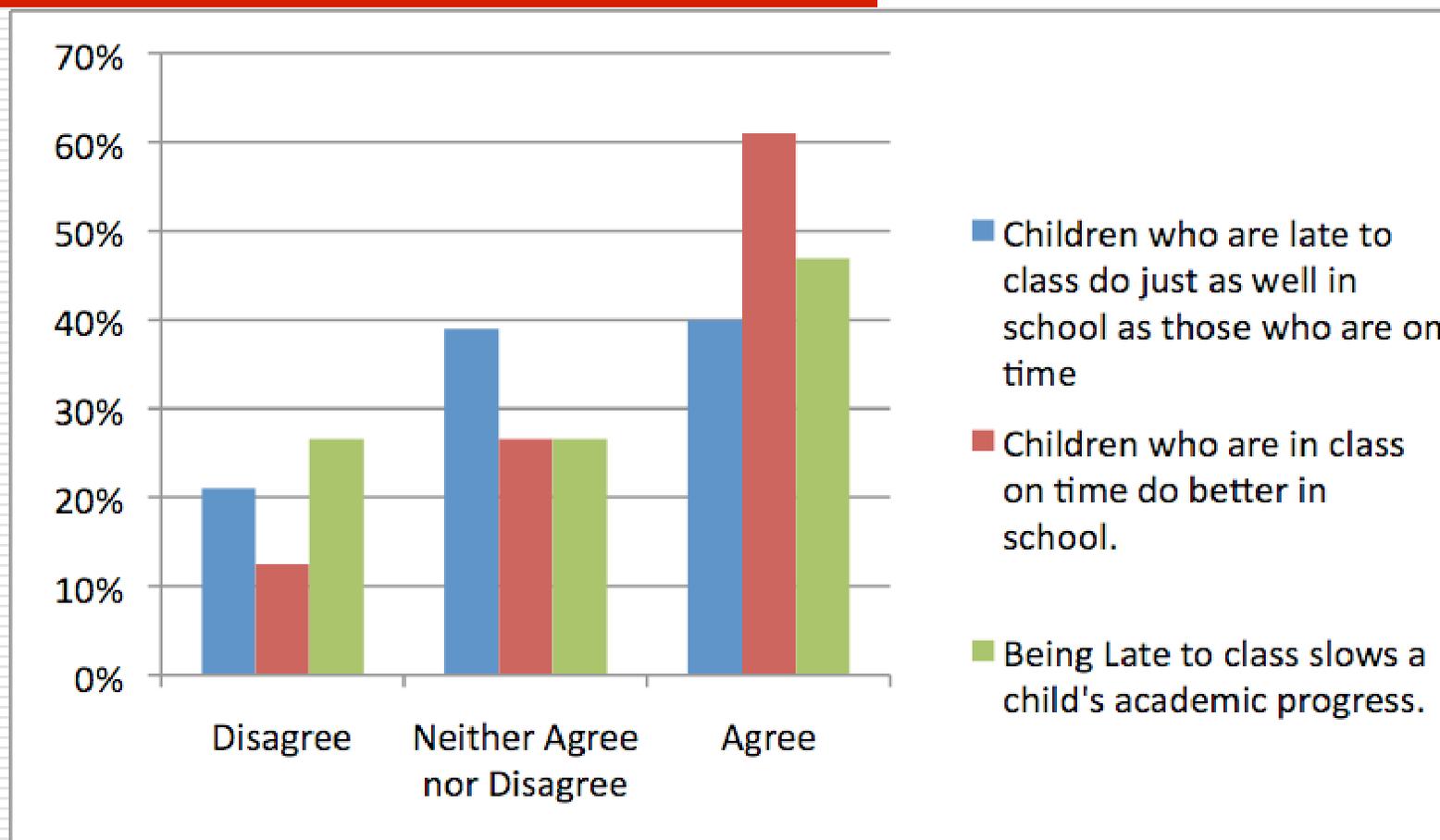
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# Parents are divided on whether punctuality at their child's program is

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# Parent attitudes: Punctuality versus Lateness



Source: LLF / Morgan State University Head Start survey, May 2010

# In conclusion, tardiness...

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- ❑ May begin, along with absenteeism, well before children enter formal schooling
  - ❑ Has serious consequences for early learning and development
  - ❑ Affects the most vulnerable children
  - ❑ Elicits different perspectives and practices among professionals and parents
  
  - ❑ These perspectives and practices need to be reconciled to provide a sustained and consistent, high quality early education program
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# For questions

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