



# FIRST BOOK RESEARCH & INSIGHTS: COVID-19 RESPONSE SURVEY RESULTS

JULY 2020



# SURVEY METHODOLOGY: FIRST BOOK'S COVID-19 RESPONSE SURVEY



## Survey Type: Cross-sectional online questionnaire

Participants in this study were registered First Book members, who work in classrooms or programs in which at least 70 percent of the children served come from low-income families.  
N = 2,623 participants.

The survey administration period opened on April 28th and closed May 5th, 2020. The First Book team programmed this electronic survey on Qualtrics and distributed it via email.

Audience size:	282,500
Recorded Responses (partial):	3,819
Completed responses:	2,623
Response rate:	1%
Survey completion rate:	69%

This study was designed by First Book Research & Insights.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

Organization type	Survey representation	Count
School	66%	1781
School System	14%	362
Nonprofit Organization or Community Program	9%	227
Early Childhood Center	2%	63
Head Start Center	2%	61
Public Library	2%	37
Home-based Care Provider/ Home-visiting Program	1%	27
Faith-based Organization	1%	17
Early Head Start	1%	14
Government Office or Agency	1%	13
Healthcare Provider	0%	11
Housing Authority	0%	4
Juvenile Justice Support	0%	3
Food Bank	0%	2
Foster Care/Shelter	0%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,623</b>

Ages served	Survey representation	Count
Infant/toddler (ages 0-3)	15%	396
Preschool (ages 4-5)	35%	917
Elementary (ages 6-10)	69%	1816
Middle school (ages 11-14)	32%	846
High school (ages 15-18)	18%	462

Job roles	Survey representation	Count
K-12 Teacher	49%	1281
Librarian/Media-Specialist	13%	343
Educator/Support Personnel for Children with Special Needs	6%	158
Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach	5%	138
Early Childhood Educator or Practitioner	4%	95
PreK Educator or Practitioner	4%	95
After School, Community or Nonprofit Program Provider	3%	85
Head of a Nonprofit	3%	81
School Support Personnel	3%	71
English/Other Language Learning Teacher	3%	66
Early Childhood Center Director	2%	41
Home Visitor	2%	40
Principal/Vice-Principal	1%	36
Volunteer	1%	32
Public Employee	1%	24
School System/District Director	1%	21
Healthcare Provider	1%	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,623</b>

Years worked in education / service field	Survey representation	Count
2 years or less	2%	57
3-5 years	9%	239
6-10 years	17%	451
11-15 years	20%	516
16-20 years	19%	511
21+ years	32%	849
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,623</b>

Organization Setting	Survey representation	Count
Urban	45%	1187
Suburban	27%	702
Rural	27%	713
Tribal Nation/Indian Reservation	1%	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,623</b>

Top 5 states represented	Survey representation	Count
California	10%	273
Texas	10%	256
New York	7%	183
Michigan	6%	152
Florida	5%	141



SECTION 1:

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, educators are facing increasing concerns about how it will impact children living in poverty. First Book, a national nonprofit organization focused on removing barriers to quality education for children in need, recently released a study highlighting the biggest areas of concern facing educators today and in the new normal.

Completed by more than 2,600 educators who work in classrooms and programs supporting kids in need, the study uncovered the four main challenges they are confronting:

- The mental/social emotional health of kids and families
- Access to learning tools and resources
- A widening digital divide making the need for books and resources even more critical
- An extended “summer slide” or regression in academic proficiency due to a long break from formal education

First Book’s survey reveals how the pandemic has exacerbated existing barriers to education, creating a perfect storm with an entire generation of America’s youth at the center. With more than 50% of public-school students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, barriers to education go well beyond a need for books and learning tools.

# MENTAL HEALTH: A TOP CONCERN

When asked about their primary concern, 87% of educators indicated they were more concerned with their kids facing mental/emotional health challenges than they were prior to the pandemic. Illustrating how critical this is for educators, 74% said they are likely to purchase books and resources on mental health for their classrooms upon a “return to normal.”

With many students already dealing with challenges such as unstable home lives and unmet basic needs like food and clean clothes, 85% of educators are more concerned about their kids experiencing trauma or extreme stress during this time than they were before, and how these issues will impact them when they come back to the classroom.

“I’m concerned for our students that already had a difficult home environment; I worry that this pandemic will intensify their issues at home, and when they return to school they will have even more behavioral/academic challenges.”

Returning to the classroom brings another set of worries for educators with the majority indicating they are very or extremely concerned that they won’t have the resources they need to address the mental health of the kids and families they serve following the pandemic.

“We need more counselors and opportunities for growth. Emotional health is so important. Resources of any kind are appreciated,” one teacher expanded. “The best support would be books and learning resources for families and educators to help prepare for and deal with the negative mental health impacts.”

# ACCESS TO LEARNING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The number one learning tool educators need to continue supporting their kids are physical books and resources. Eighty percent of educators cited books as the item they currently need, with 86% saying they are more concerned about kids having no books at home for extended periods of time than they were before the pandemic.

Sixty percent of educators have been able to distribute physical learning resources to their students at this time through designated distribution sites or personal deliveries. The top five distributed resources include books, educational activities, handouts for parents to help them with at-home learning, meals and/or snacks, and art/school supplies.

“We have all been traumatized by this virus. Books can be a reassuring way of helping young children deal with challenges or changes to their routines.”

As educators think about preparing for in-person teaching, 61% said they will need a restocked classroom library because many books were distributed to students when schools closed earlier this year. Additional resource needs include:

- Restocked learning supplies (pens, crayons, notebooks, etc.)
- Resources to support the mental health of children dealing with the trauma resulting from COVID-19 and the reintegration into normal life
- Health-safety products (masks, wipes, etc.)
- Personal hygiene products (hand soap, sanitizer, etc.)

# THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



Uneven access to technology between kids in need and kids with means has worsened during the pandemic. Eighty percent of educators are now more concerned about kids not having access to the internet or sufficient technology to further their learning than they were prior to COVID-19.

In addition, 85% of respondents are more concerned about the negative impacts of the digital divide between kids who have access to technology and those who do not than they were before the pandemic.



On average, educators estimated that 40% of their kids don't have access to reliable internet at home and 37% of students do not have access to functioning digital devices they can use to keep up with online learning.

**“A big part of our population does not have access to the internet. Physical books and supplies would be the most beneficial to them,”** said one educator when explaining why the digital divide is such a critical issue and how books are a solution to help bridge the gap.



# THE EXTENDED SUMMER SLIDE



Another impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is the extension of the normal summer slide or academic regression that kids are experiencing during the break. When asked about the impact of school closures, 78% of educators are especially concerned about how the extended summer learning gap will affect the kids they serve.

In terms of specific concerns related to the summer slide, educators listed the following issues:

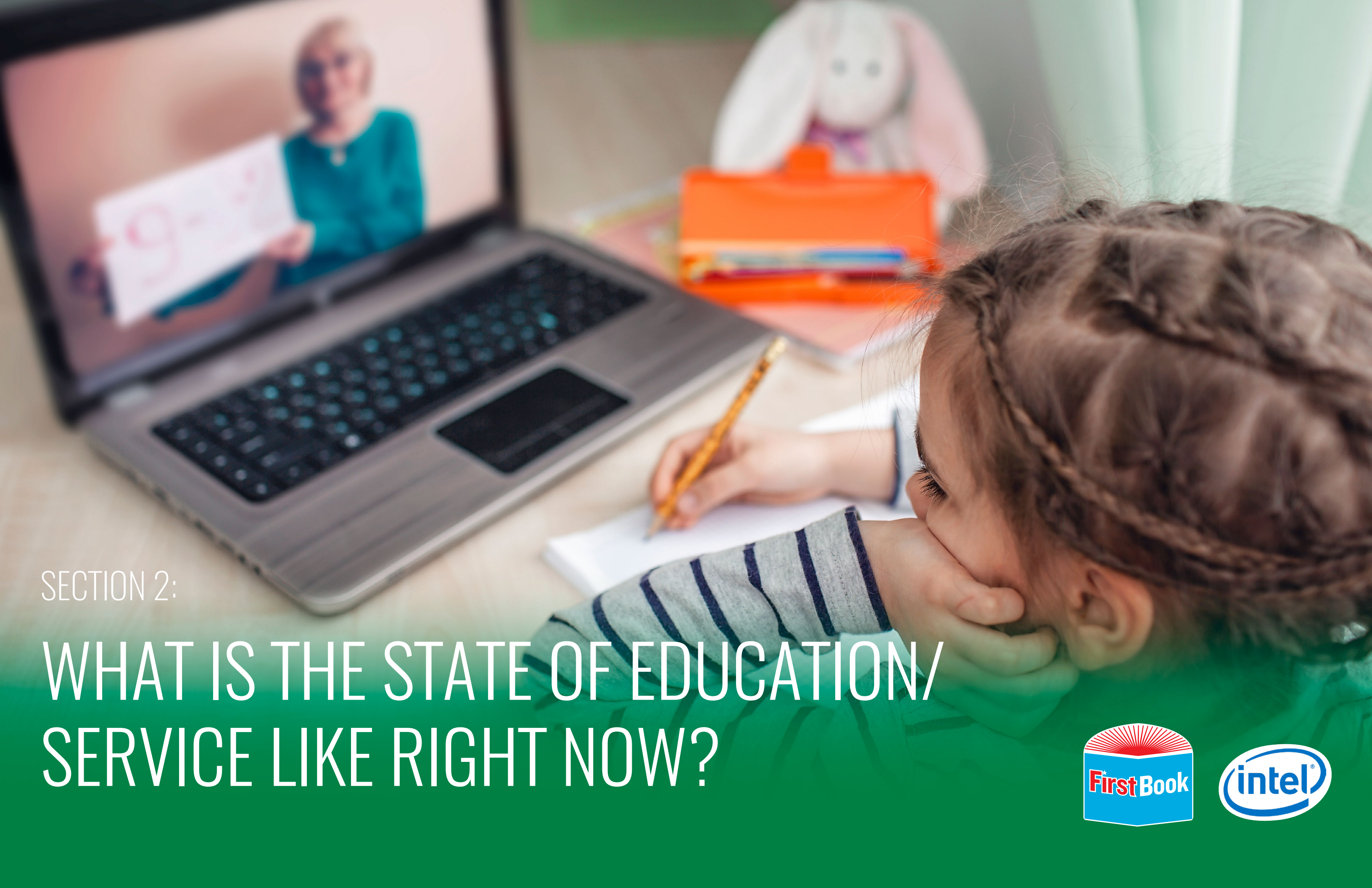
- Inequity of learning environments
- Lack of books and other physical learning resources
- Special needs/ELL students falling particularly behind
- Unfair testing/standards upon return



“The gap between the haves and the have nots is increasing tenfold during this crisis.”

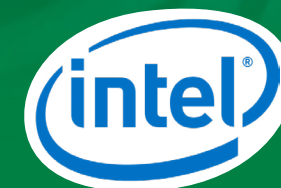
“The learning we are providing is not equitable. The families who will succeed are those that were going to succeed anyways; the kids who were on the cusp will now slide so far back.”

Armed with this information, First Book and its network have created and distributed a range of support tools and resources to help educators and programs support SEL skills development and address trauma, including the Trauma Toolkit, the Promoting Respect and Empathy Toolkit and the Grief, Loss and Healing Toolkit.



SECTION 2:

# WHAT IS THE STATE OF EDUCATION/ SERVICE LIKE RIGHT NOW?



# At the time of the survey, most learning facilities were closed with no reopening in site

*This data is reflective of educators' situations between April 28th – May 5th, 2020.*

## SCHOOL STATUS IN COMMUNITIES

**90%** of respondents report that attending school in a physical school building has been canceled for the remainder of the year in their community.



## MEMBER'S BUILDING OPERATION STATUS

**61%** report their building(s) is closed & operations are only being offered virtually

**23%** report their building(s) is open & operating only to supply emergency services (meals, health care, child care, etc.)

**8%** report their building(s) is open & operating in a limited or modified capacity (outside of emergency services)

**5%** report their building(s) is closed & operations have temporarily ceased

**2%** report their work has never been based in a physical location (i.e., home visitation) & I am now offering/continuing to offer virtual services

**1%** report their building(s) is closed & operations have been permanently canceled

## SCHOOL/PROGRAM RETURN STATUS

**67%** report that no date has been given regarding if/when regular operations will resume

**1%** will return before the end of the 2019-2020 academic school year

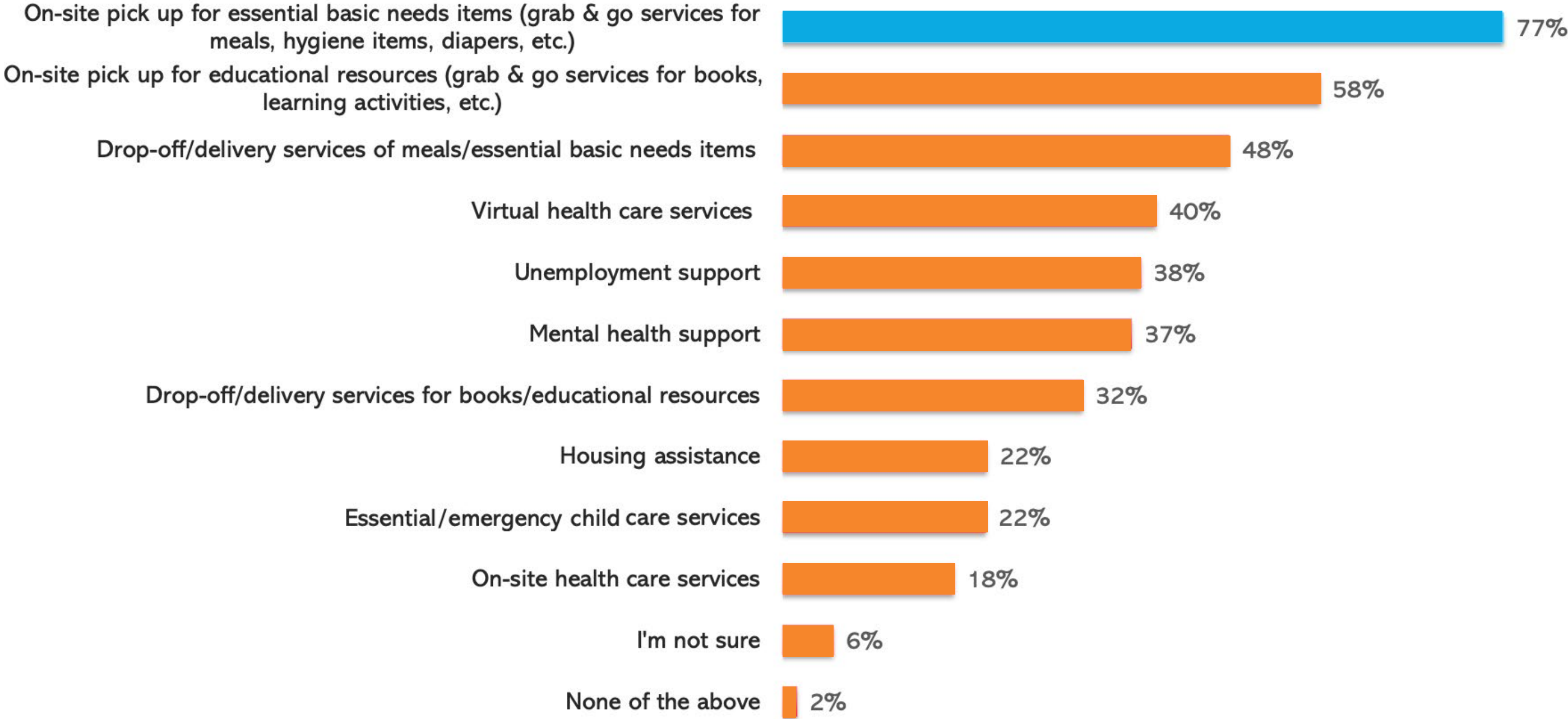
**5%** will return during summer/summer break

**25%** will return in time for the new 2020-2021 school year (the coming fall)

**1%** will return before the end of 2020

# On-site pick-up services for essential items are being offered in most communities served by First Book members

## Services Currently Being Offered in Communities

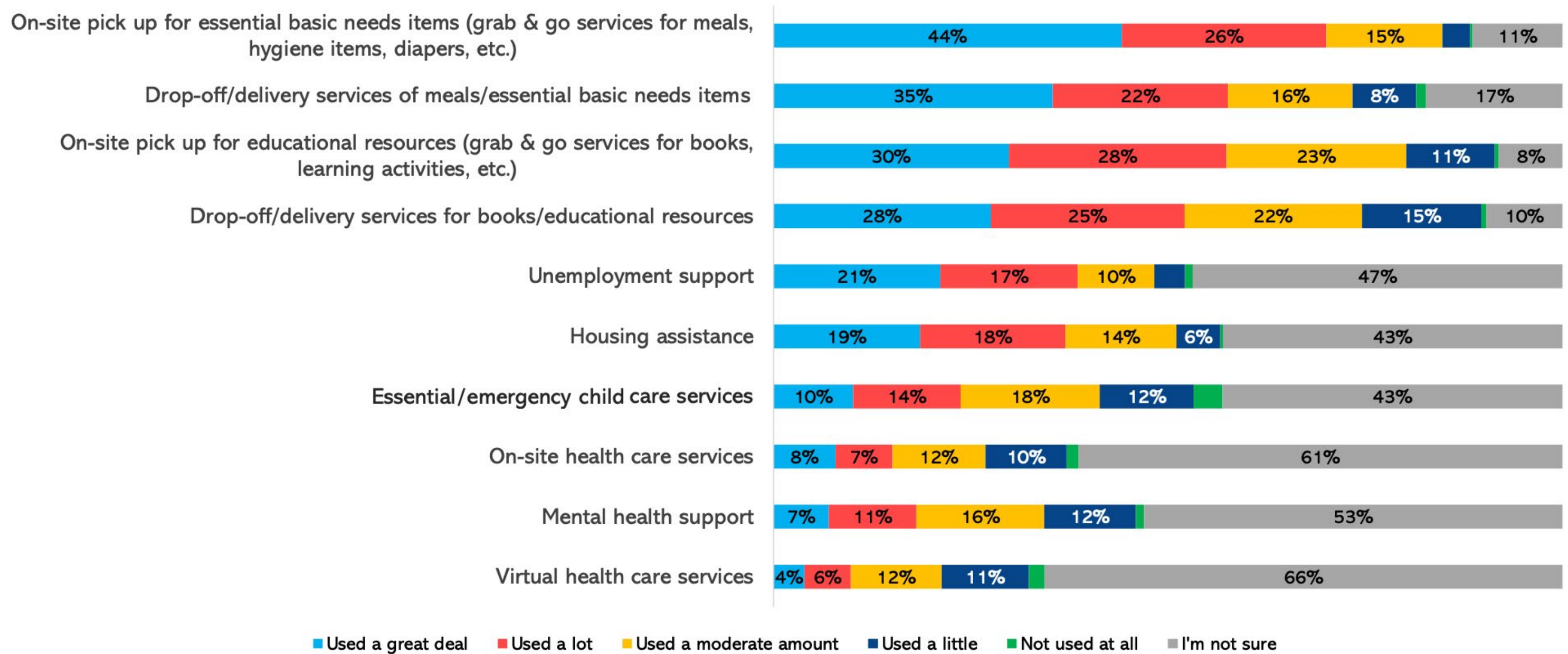


Q- To the best of your knowledge, are any of the following services being offered in your community at this time? Select all that apply. If you serve multiple communities, please check all that apply.

# Delivery services are not as popular as on-site pick-up services for educational resources, but they are used slightly more often among those that do offer them

## Full Breakdown of How Utilized Community Services Are

(n value varies - respondents only answer for items they selected in previous question)



Q- To the best of your knowledge, are any of the following services being offered in your community at this time? Select all that apply. If you serve multiple communities, please check all that apply.

# Most school-based services are currently available virtually

However, support services outside of a school setting are more likely to be suspended indefinitely or members are unsure of their status

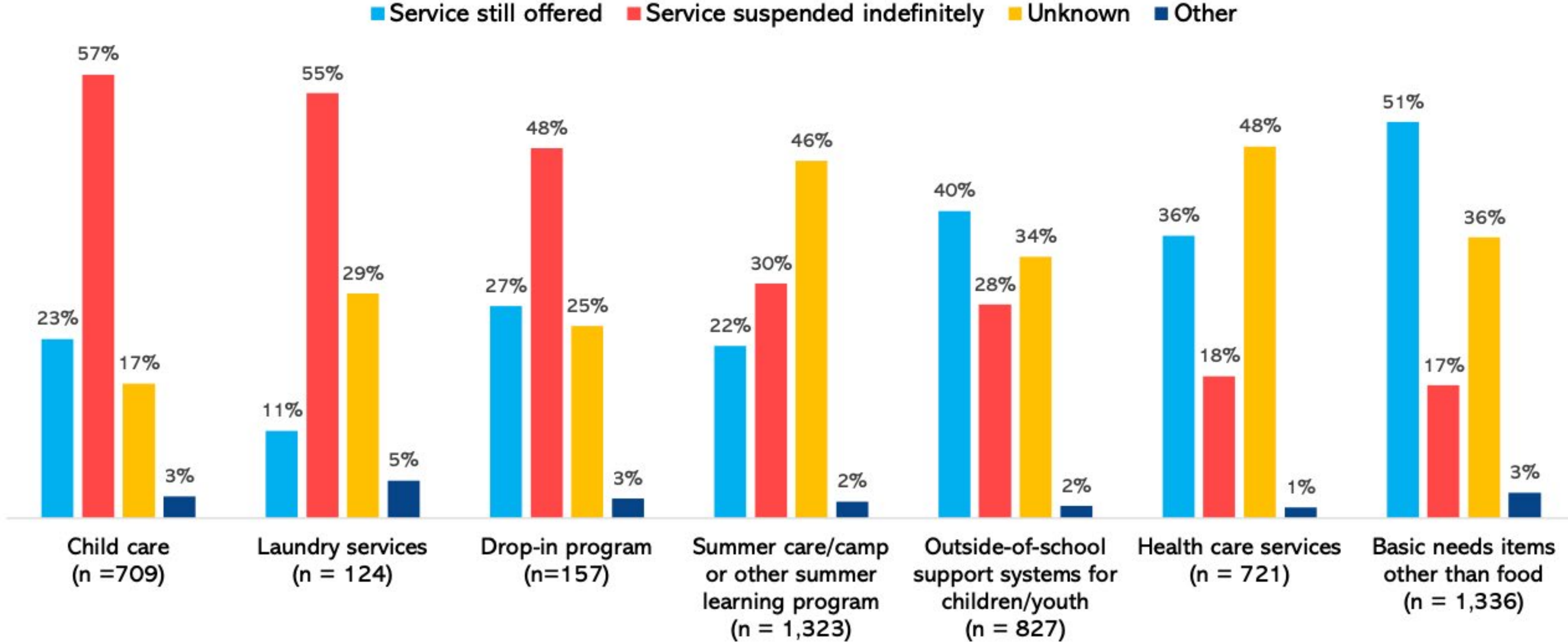
## Q - What is the current status of providing these services?

**n value varies-** respondents only answer for items they selected in the previous question

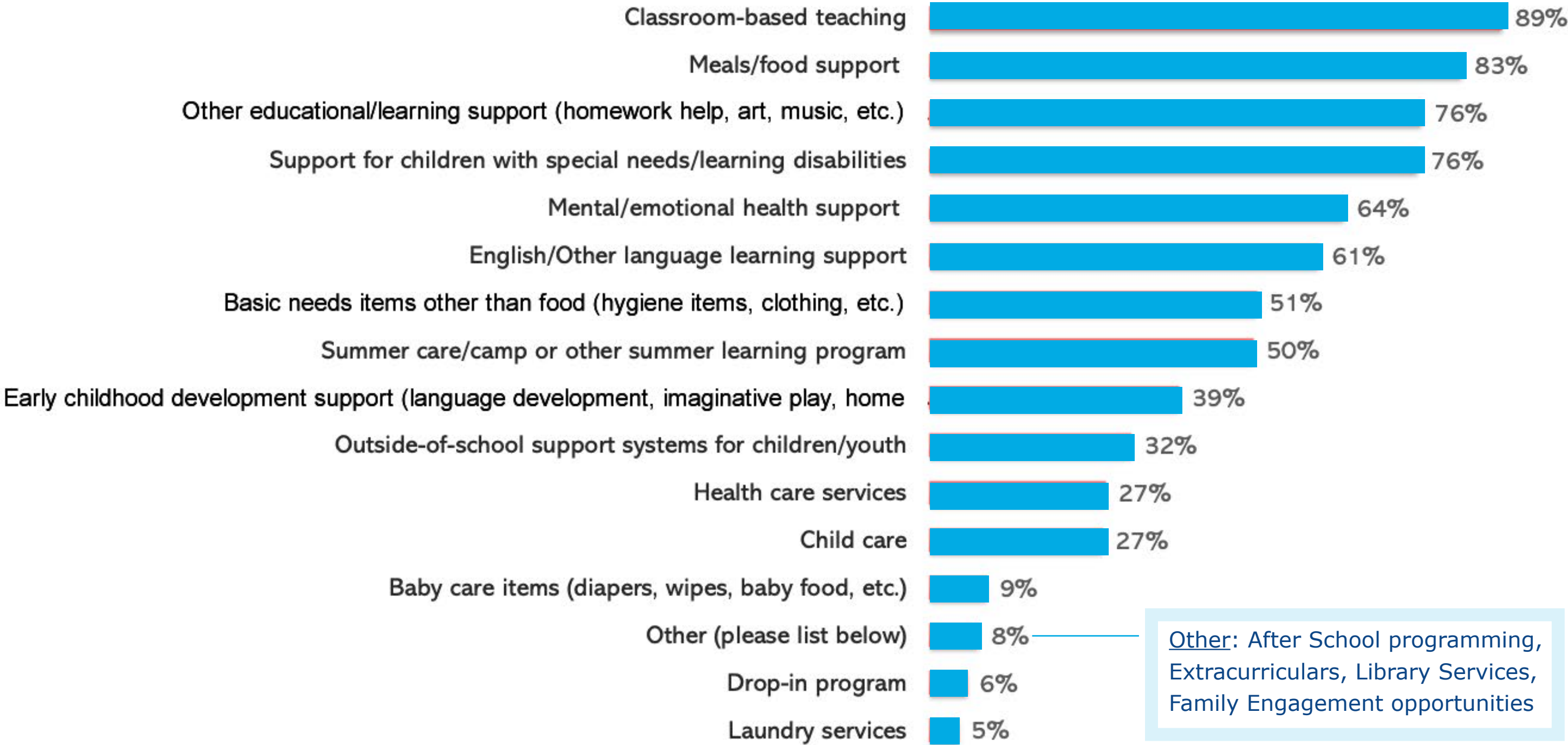
	Service is currently being offered virtually/via phone	Service is suspended with a plan to go virtual/resume in a safe capacity	Service is available for controlled on-site access	Service is offered via delivery	Service is suspended indefinitely	Other	I'm not sure	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Classroom-based teaching	88%	5%	2%	6%	5%	2%	1%	2,334
Meals/food support	4%	1%	71%	26%	4%	5%	3%	2,171
Other educational/learning support (homework help, music, etc.)	73%	6%	1%	4%	13%	1%	6%	2,006
Support for children with special needs/learning disabilities	79%	5%	2%	4%	4%	1%	11%	1,991
Mental/emotional health support	65%	4%	3%	1%	5%	1%	22%	1,690
English/Other language learning support	72%	4%	1%	2%	6%	1%	16%	1,589
Basic needs items other than food (hygiene items, clothing, etc.)	3%	3%	27%	18%	17%	3%	36%	1,336
Summer care/camp or other summer learning program	10%	10%	2%	0%	30%	2%	46%	1,323
Early childhood development support (language development, imaginative play, home visits)	51%	6%	2%	3%	18%	1%	23%	1,021
Outside-of-school support systems for children/youth	26%	8%	4%	2%	28%	2%	34%	827
Health care services	22%	4%	10%	1%	18%	1%	48%	721
Child care	3%	4%	15%	0%	57%	3%	17%	709
Baby care items (diapers, wipes, baby food, etc.)	6%	2%	37%	40%	12%	3%	13%	238
Other (please list below)	28%	11%	10%	10%	36%	6%	8%	204
Drop-in program	11%	10%	4%	3%	48%	3%	25%	157
Laundry services	0%	2%	8%	2%	55%	5%	29%	124

# The status of wraparound services are more likely to be suspended or unknown at this point compared to in-school services

## State of Wraparound Services



# Services provided by organizations in the First Book Network prior to COVID-19

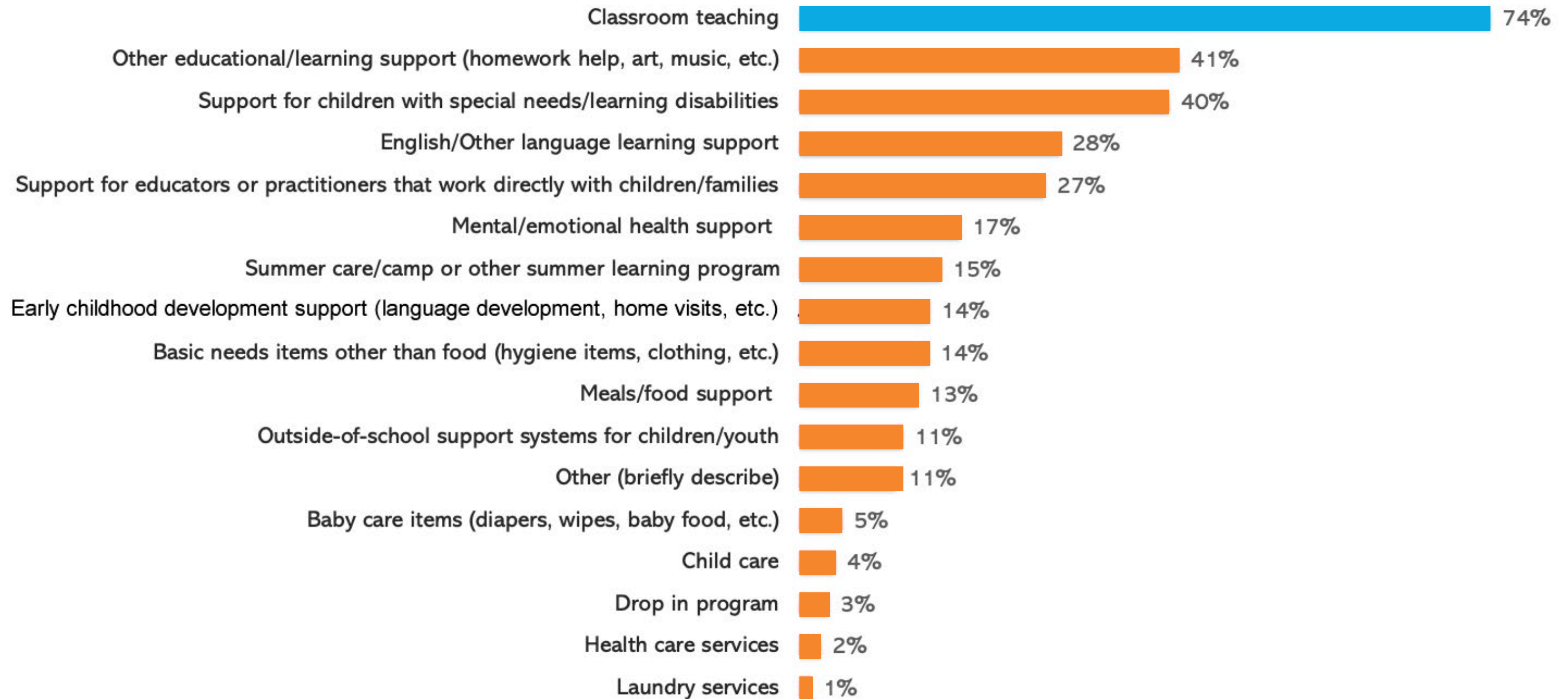


Q- What services did your school/organization provide for children or families prior to the COVID-19 pandemic? Select all that apply.



# Classroom teaching is the most common service provided by respondents

## Services Personally Provided by Educators Prior to COVID-19



Q - Which of the following services did you personally provide for children/families prior to the pandemic? Select all that apply.

# While educators are able to provide school-based services virtually, many who provide wraparound services are no longer able to do so

## Q - How are you providing these services now, if at all?

**n value varies-** respondents only answer for items they selected in the previous question

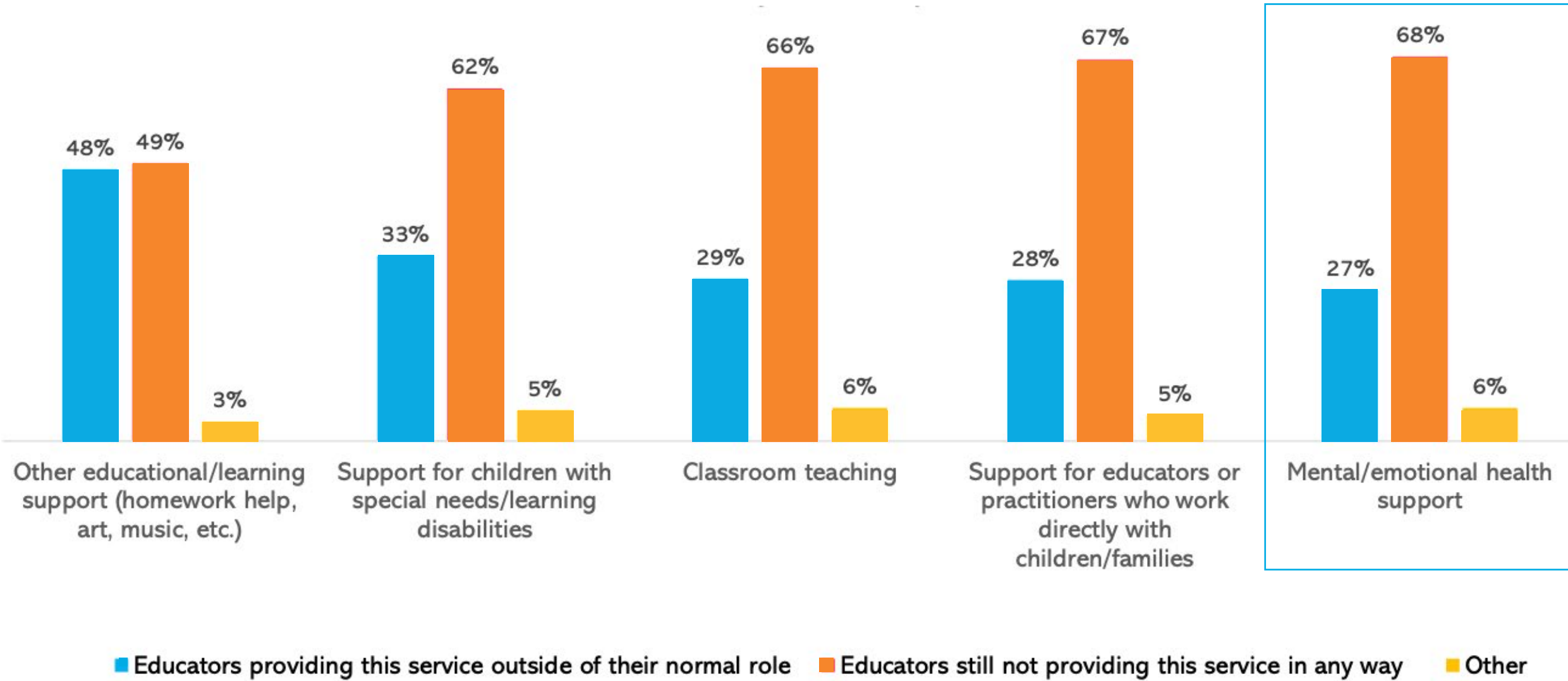
	I am now providing this service virtually/ via phone	I am in the process of figuring out how to provide this service virtually/in a safe capacity	I am offering this service through a controlled on-site experience	I am personally helping provide this service through delivery	I am no longer providing this service	Other	This service was not affected by the pandemic	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Classroom teaching	89%	4%	1%	1%	4%	1%	0%	1954
Other educational/learning support (homework help, art, music, etc.)	72%	7%	2%	3%	14%	1%	0%	1074
Support for children with special needs/learning disabilities	79%	8%	2%	1%	7%	2%	0%	1046
English/Other language learning support	79%	6%	1%	1%	10%	2%	0%	738
Support for educators or practitioners who work directly with children/families	80%	7%	3%	3%	5%	2%	0%	696
Mental/emotional health support	76%	7%	3%	2%	8%	4%	1%	456
Summer care/camp or other summer learning program	11%	23%	3%	1%	39%	20%	2%	401
Early childhood development support (language development, imaginative play, home visits)	72%	9%	3%	4%	10%	2%	0%	369
Basic needs items other than food (hygiene items, clothing, etc.)	5%	6%	16%	25%	37%	8%	2%	366
Meal/food support	3%	4%	35%	20%	31%	6%	1%	337
Outside-of-school support systems for children/youth	47%	12%	4%	6%	27%	3%	0%	293
Other (briefly describe)	45%	9%	9%	9%	17%	8%	2%	276
Baby care items (diapers, wipes, baby food, etc.)	5%	3%	28%	41%	19%	2%	2%	122
Child care	13%	9%	25%	2%	48%	2%	2%	103
Drop-in program	16%	15%	9%	4%	49%	2%	4%	85
Health care services	27%	3%	21%	3%	31%	15%	0%	62
Laundry services	3%	0%	14%	6%	60%	17%	0%	35

# Almost half of the network has stepped up to provide additional educational support

## More than 25% Are Now Providing Mental Health Support in Response to the Pandemic

### Educators Providing Services Outside of Their Normal Roles

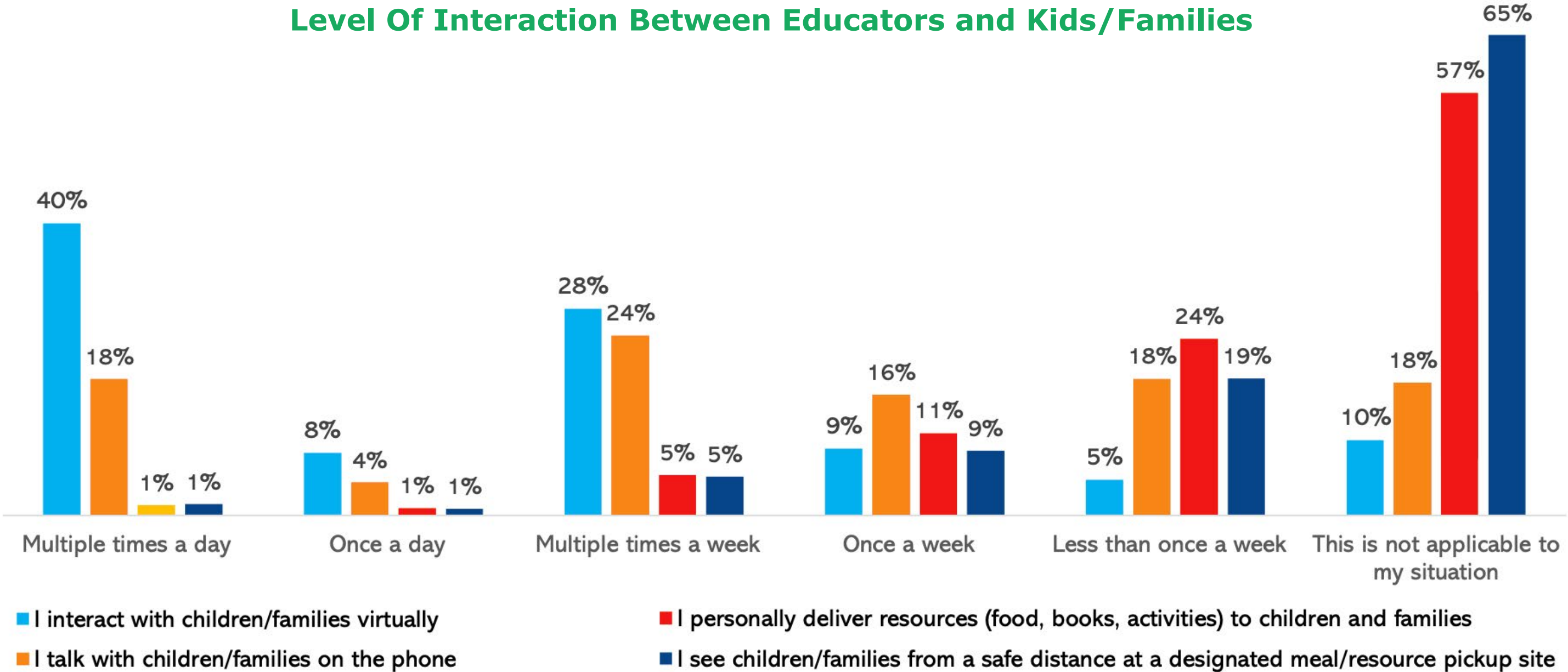
(n count varies)



Q - Are you personally currently providing any of the following services for children/families where you previously did not? Select the response that best fits your situation.

# 48% are interacting virtually with their kids/families at least once a day if not more

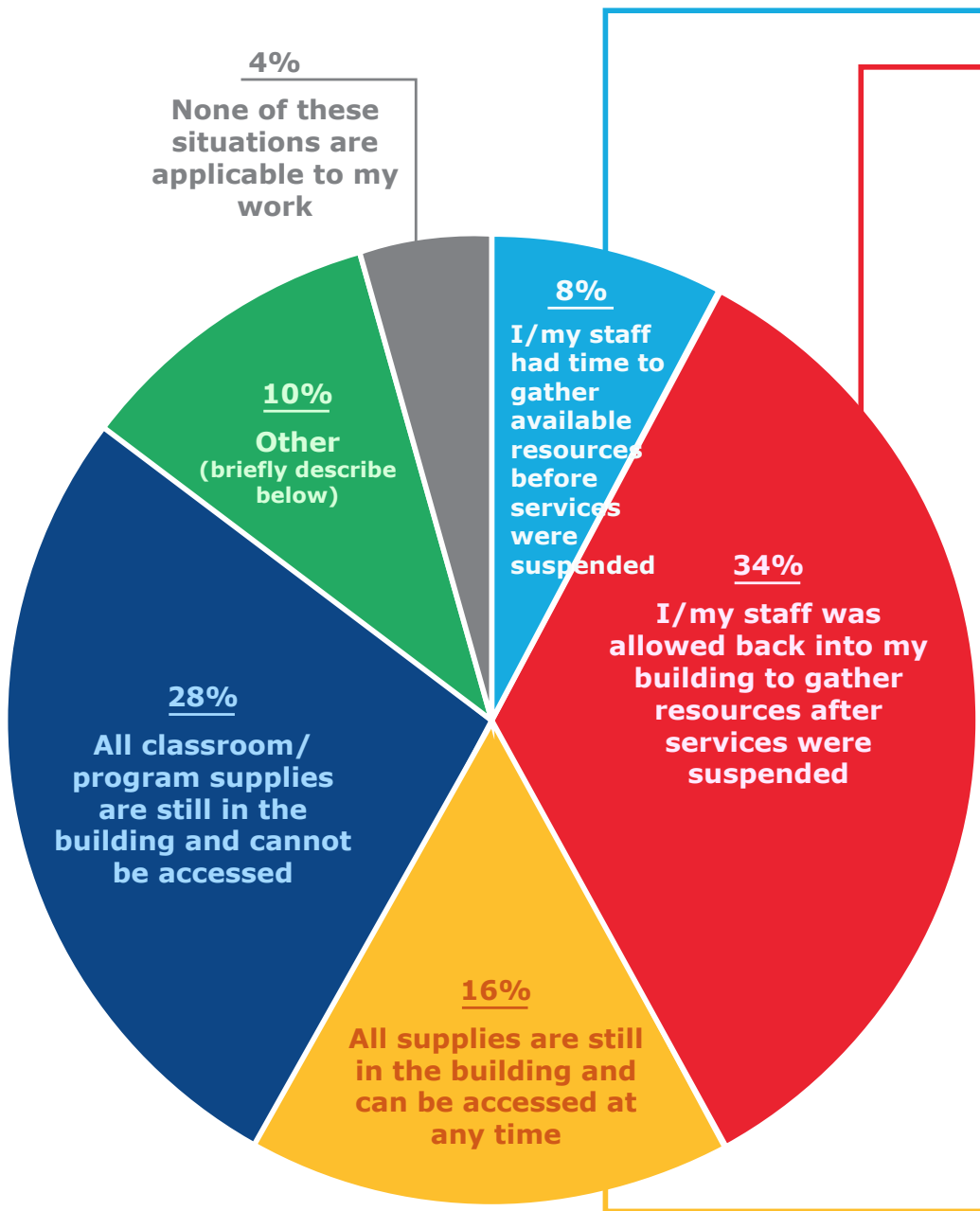
Level Of Interaction Between Educators and Kids/Families



Q - What is your current level of interaction with the children/families you serve? Select the responses that most closely describe your typical level of interaction.

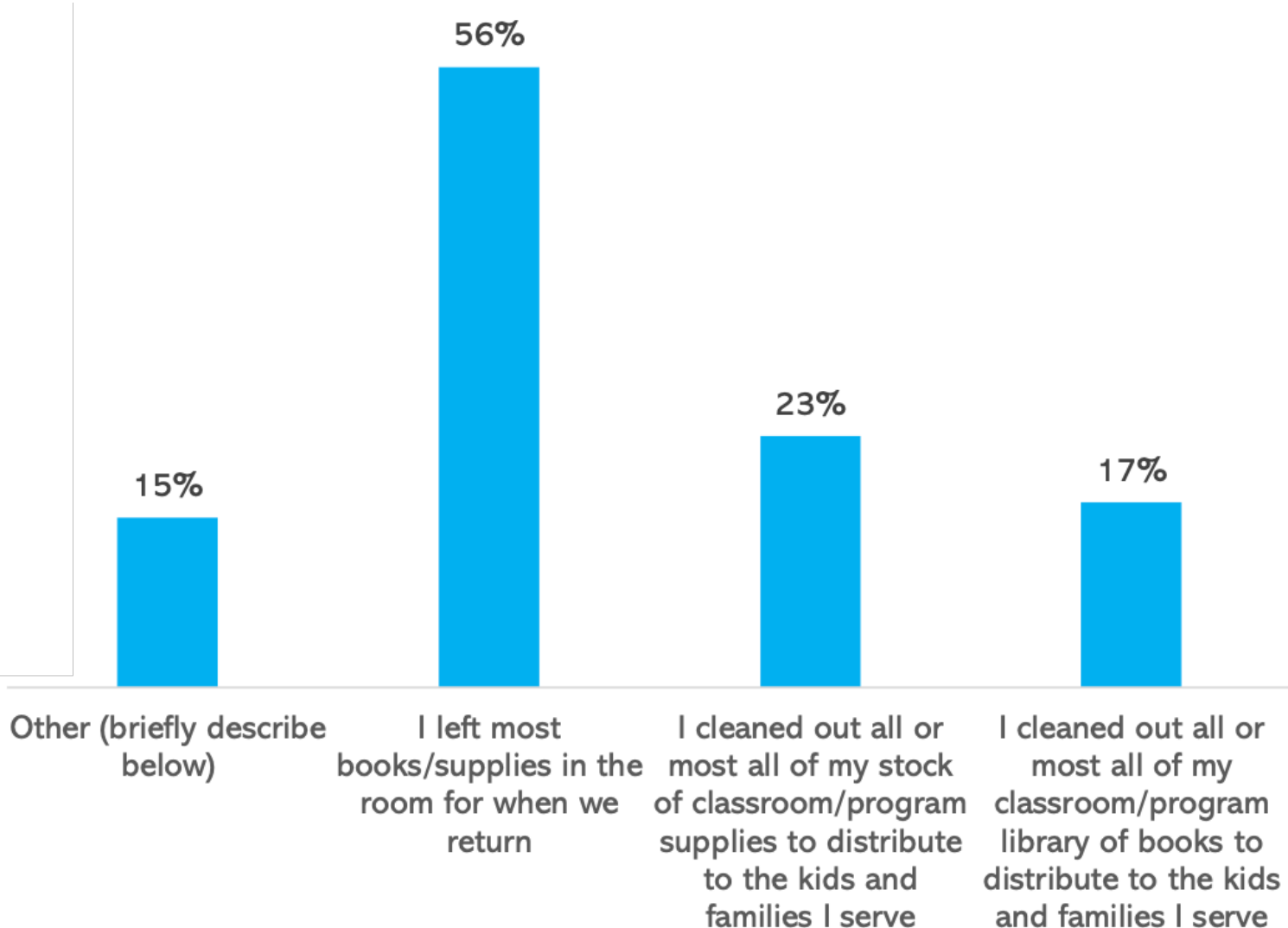
# 40% of educators took all books or supplies from the classroom to distribute to students during the crisis

**What has happened to the existing programmatic resources (books, activities, toys, diapers, etc.) that were available to you prior to the COVID-19 pandemic? (n = 2,568)**



*Educators who were/are able to gather existing resources were asked a follow up question...*

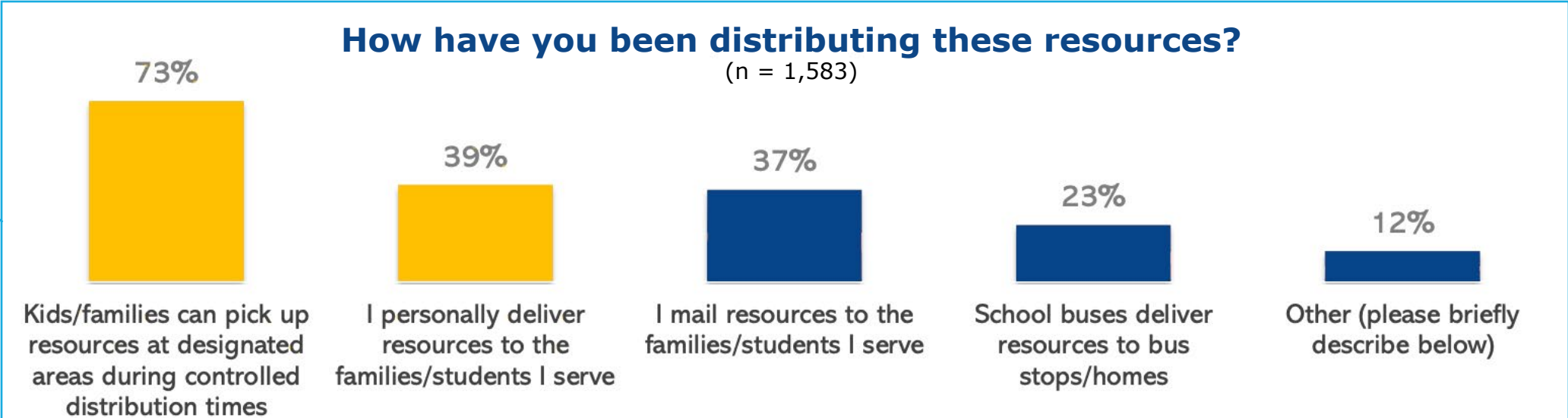
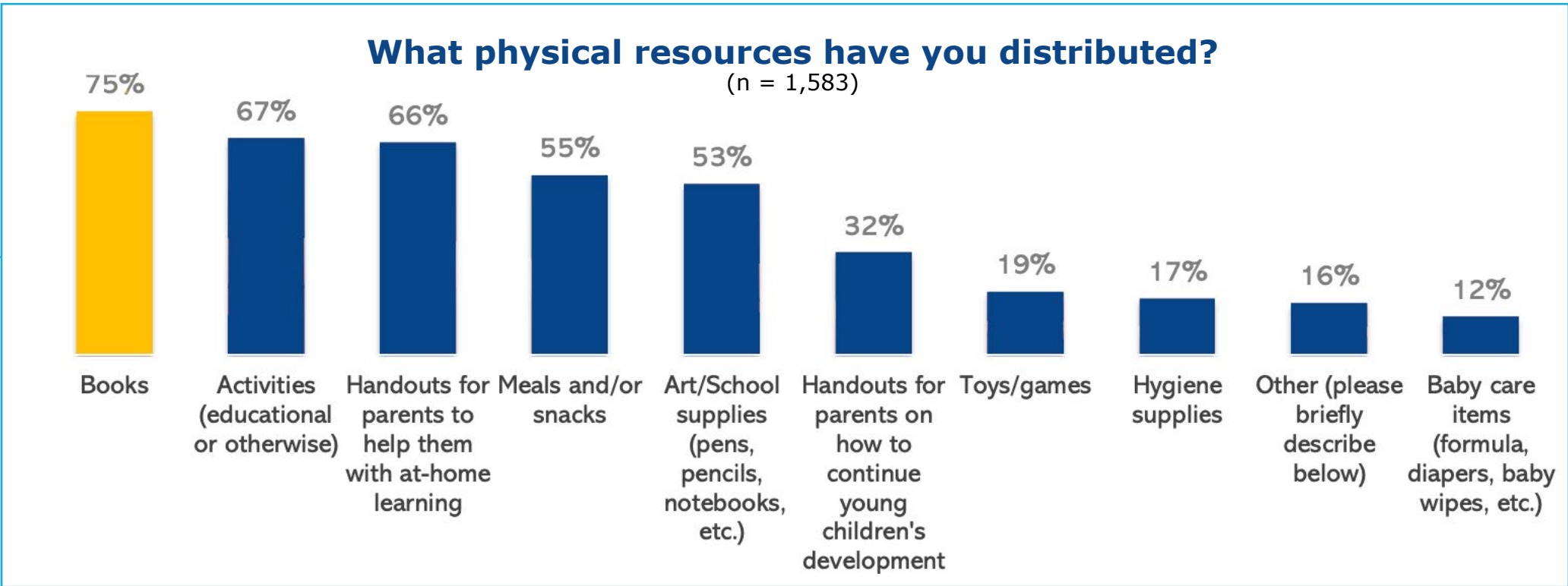
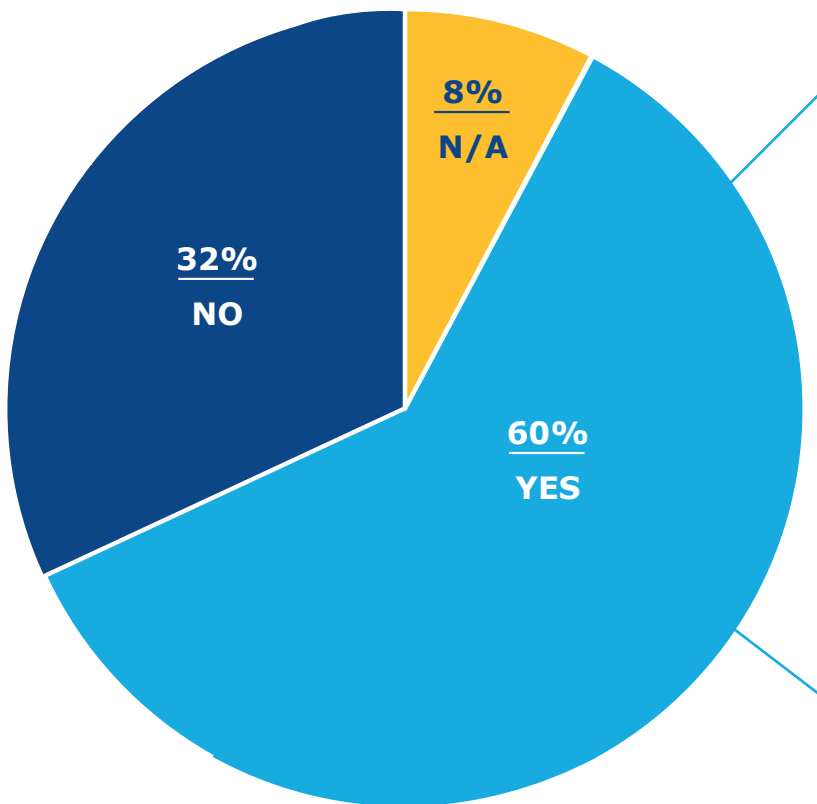
**How would you describe the state of your available resources now? Select all statements that are true for you. (n = 1,484)**



# Of the 60% of educators able to distribute physical resources, most have been distributing books via on-site distribution process

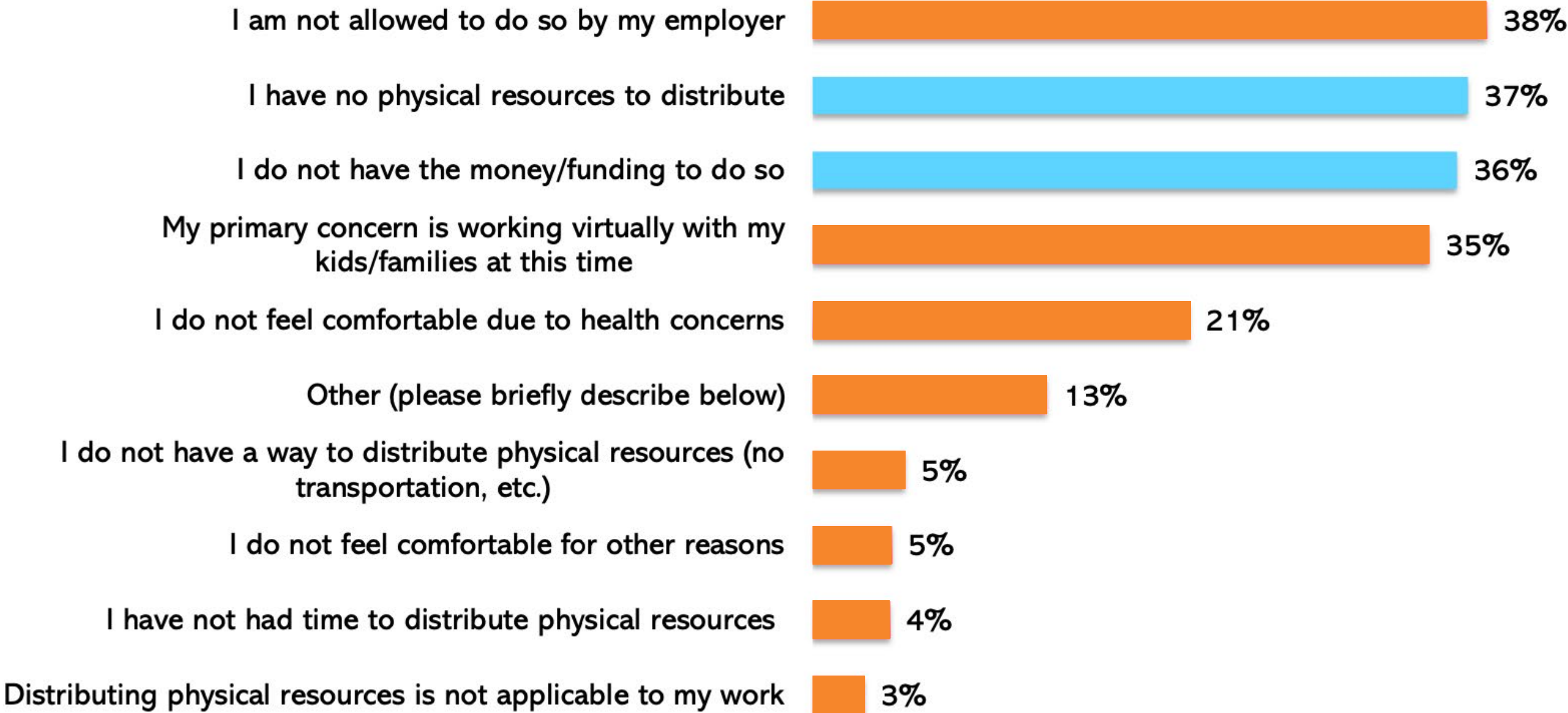
Almost 40% are personally delivering physical resources or mailing them to the kids/families they serve

Have you been able to distribute physical resources to the kids/families you serve?



# 37% of educators who have not been able to distribute physical resources say it's because they have no resources to distribute, and 36% cite lack of funding

## Reasons Educators Have Not Distributed Physical Resources (n=834)

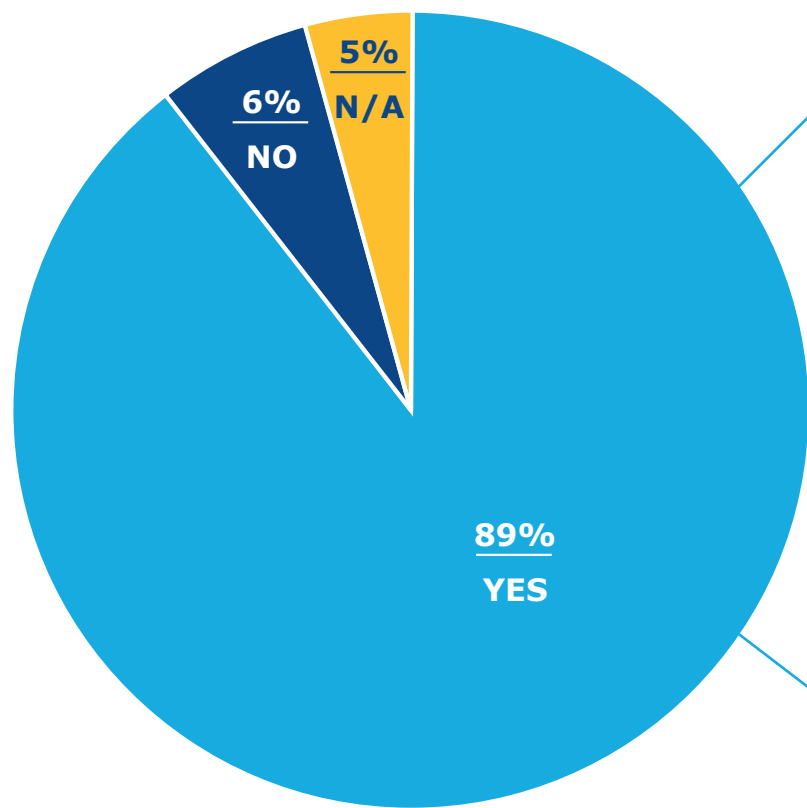


Q - Are any of the following reasons why you have not been able to distribute physical resources to the kids and families you serve? Select all that apply.

# Of the 89% of educators able to distribute virtual resources, most have been distributing links to approved websites and virtual activities

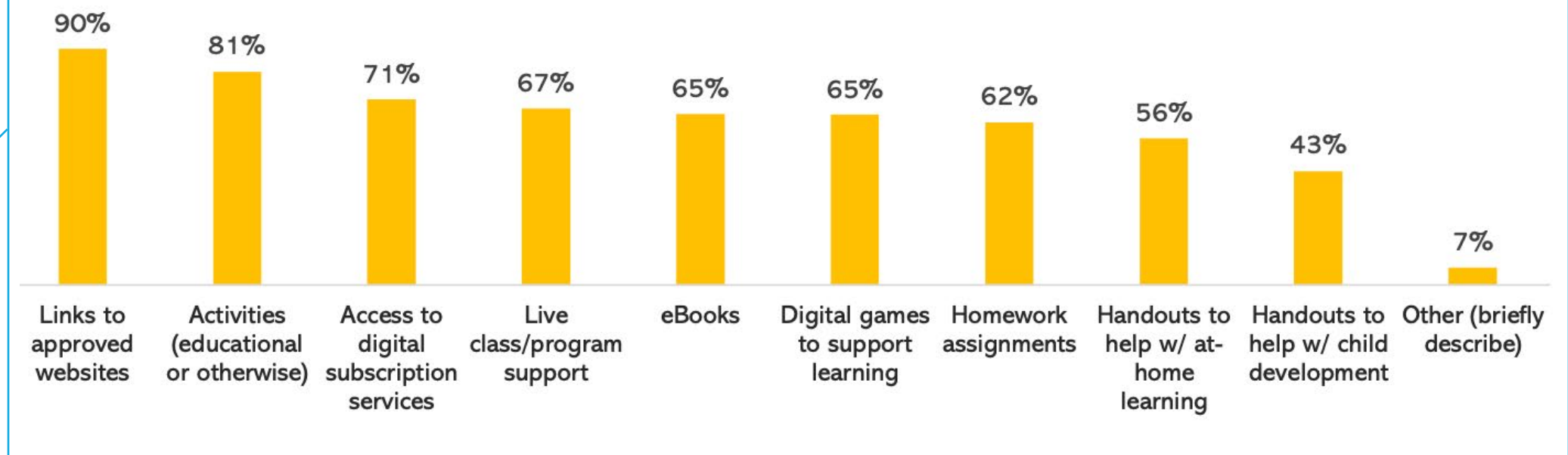
## Google Classroom and Zoom are the most popular virtual platforms used

Have you been able to distribute virtual resources to the kids/families you serve?



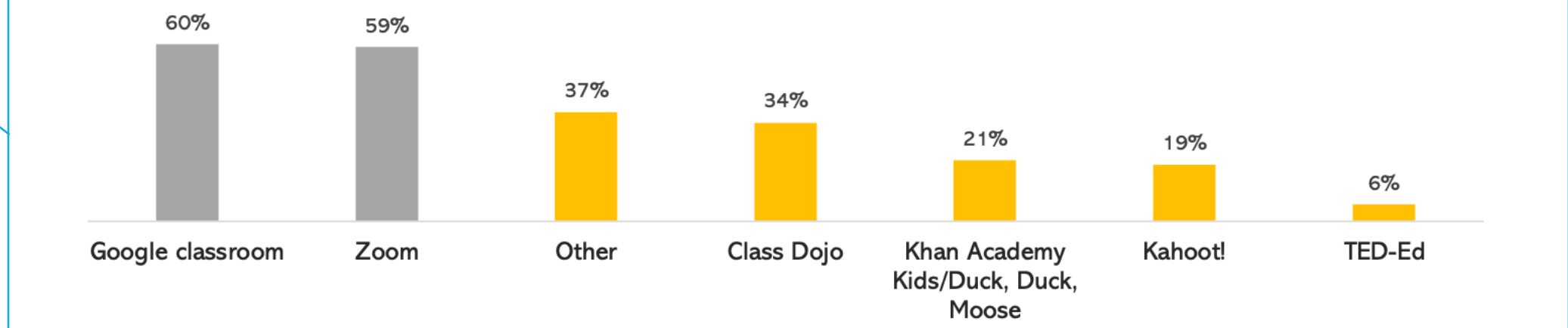
### What Virtual Resources Have You Been Able to Distribute

(n = 2,343)



### Have You Been Using Any of the Following Virtual Learning Services?

(Top 7 listed, n = 2,343)

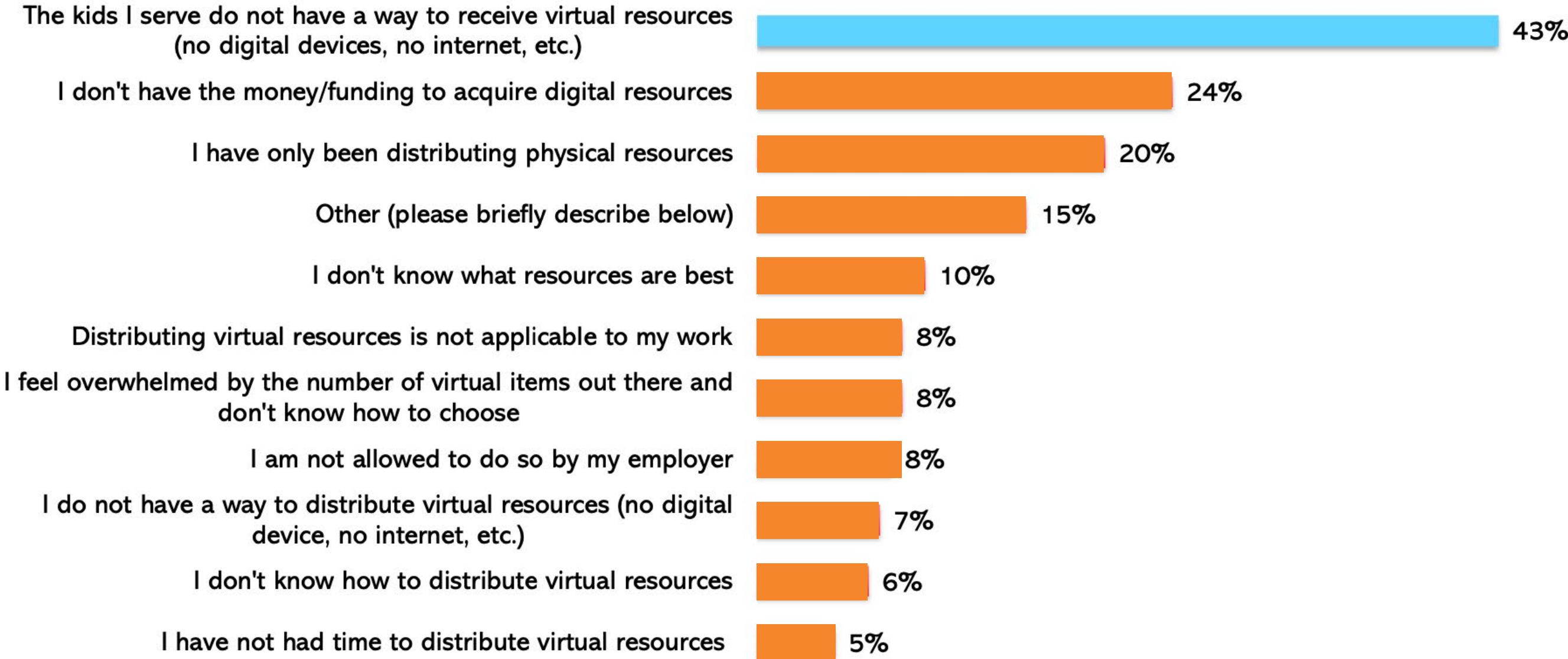


Other Virtual Learning Services Used: Seesaw, Microsoft Teams, Schoology, Google suite/hangouts/meet, Canvas, Epic, Remind, Flipgrid, ClassTag



# The most common reason educators have not been able to distribute virtual resources is because the kids they serve cannot access them

## Reasons Educators Have Not Distributed Virtual Resources (n=155)

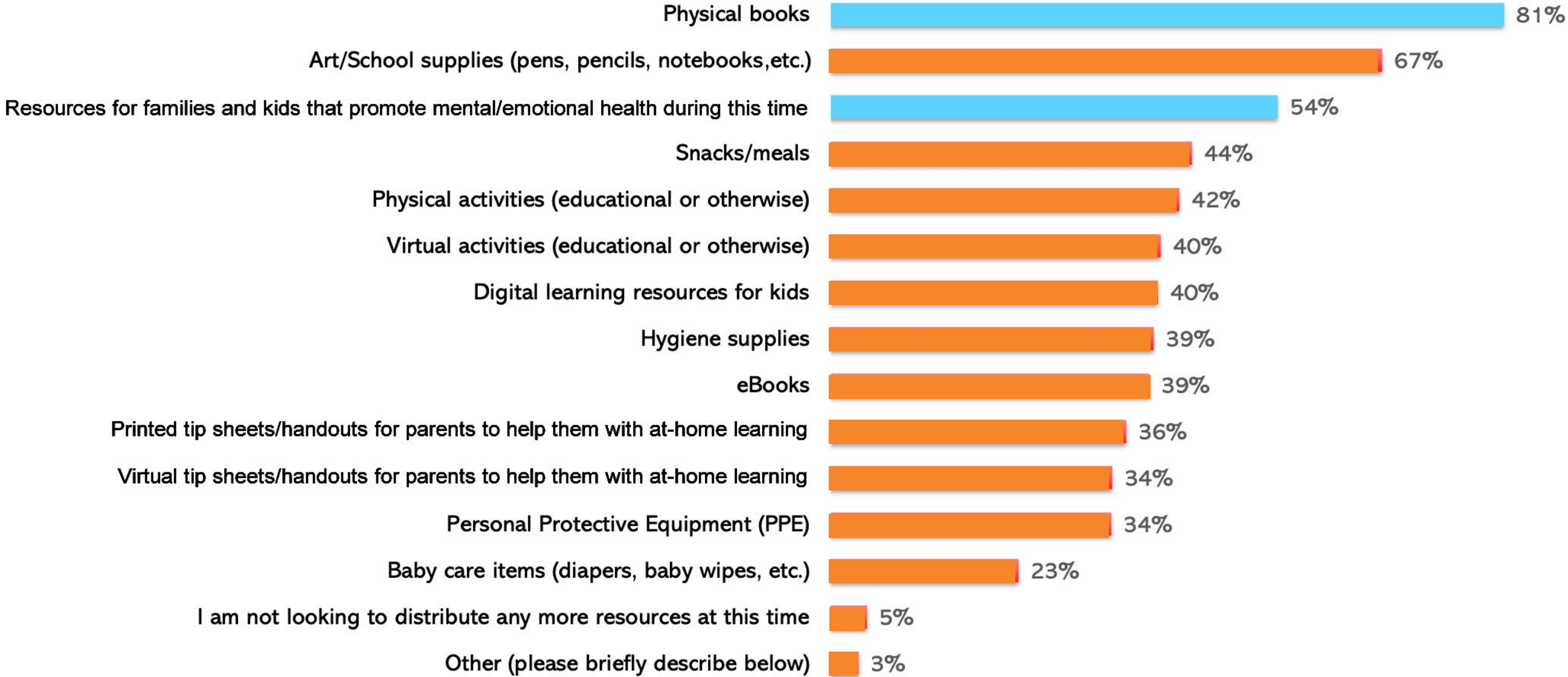


Q - Are any of the following reasons why you have not been able to distribute virtual resources to the kids and families you serve? Select all that apply.

# Books are the #1 resource educators would like to distribute during this pandemic

## Resources that promote mental health for kids/families are wanted more than snacks or meals

Resources Educators Want to Distribute at This Time



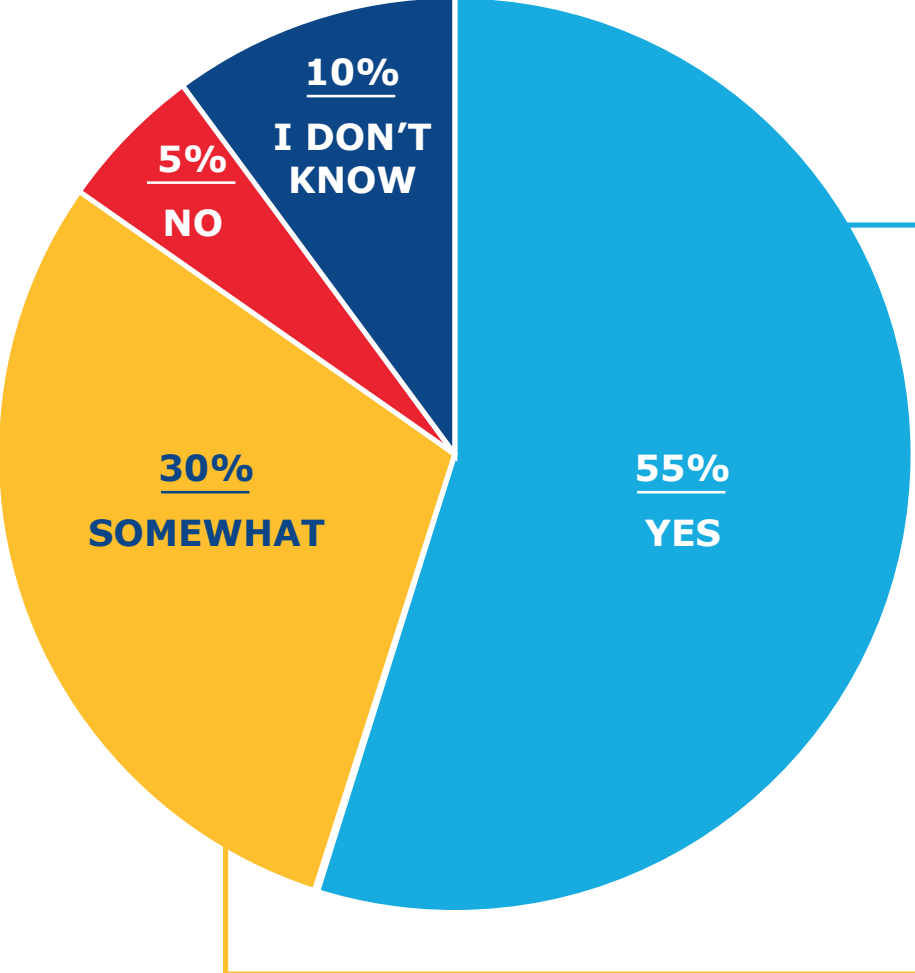
Q-Are any of the following resources that you would like to distribute, or distribute more of, to the kids and families you serve? Select all that apply.

# More than half of respondents have seen a noticeable increase in community collaboration in response to COVID-19



**Have you noticed an increase in community collaboration in an effort to keep families and children taken care of during the COVID-19 pandemic?**  
(For example: several local organizations or community volunteers coming together to support those in need.)

**NOTICEABLE INCREASE IN COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**



Those who responded "yes" or "somewhat" were asked to elaborate in open-text form on the kinds of collaboration they've seen recently in their community. Results from that analysis are on the following slide.

# Can you tell us more about the increase in community collaboration taking place during this time? (1,327 responses)

## LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE STEPPING UP

Local businesses are donating what they can, or making donations to local charities/services to support their communities. Local restaurants are donating meals, especially on weekends when many meal services don't operate. There is also the reverse of that community support, where locals are working together to support local businesses.

## COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

A large amount of support is coming from individual citizen volunteers. Regular community members are sewing masks, offering to deliver meals/other goods, raising funds for those in need, etc.

## CHURCHES

Churches are stepping up in a huge way: providing meals, collecting donations, offering free Wi-Fi, gathering volunteers to help in whatever capacity they can.

## FOOD BANKS

Food banks are ramping up their regular services, and in many cases food banks or "pop up food banks" are being created in response to the pandemic.

## TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

"Parking lot Wi-Fi" is a big trend – local businesses are giving away their Wi-Fi passwords so kids can sit in the parking lot to access virtual learning. Businesses/community members are pooling together money to fund hotspots for areas that lack internet connection. Devices are also being given away/purchased for students who have none.

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Virtual mental health services are becoming more available/accessible- with educators noting that this is hopefully a service that lasts post pandemic.

## REMOVING BARRIERS TO SUPPORT RESOURCES

In many communities, support resources to help with food, health care, basic needs items, etc. have always been available, but were not well known about. Now, there is a more proactive approach in communities to raise awareness of available local support resources.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS: Educator feedback on the increase in community collaboration

**Faith-based groups are using social media to get information out about free food, economic relief, etc. My school has closed Facebook Groups, and people are very supportive of others, offering help however they can.** Our governor is doing an outstanding job in mobilizing resources as well. Unfortunately, there is not enough PPE in my area, not enough awareness, and folks are in dire financial straits, willing to return to work in unsafe conditions to support their families...

The city has collaborated with area food pantries, bus lines, grocery stores, and will be **holding a town hall virtual meeting on mental health.** I believe church and state (so to speak) are collaborating with all social agencies, and business leaders. A great effort is being put forth with emails, mailings, mass phone calls to notify residents of resources.

We have received Art Supplies and School Supplies from Georgia Pacific and The Kids in Need Foundation to distribute. **Many local business have shared their Wi-Fi passwords and allow students to park in their parking lot, remain in their car and access their Wi-Fi. Local restaurants have provided free or discounted meals for students.**

**Some local churches and food banks have partnered with closed restaurants to bring meals to families and hygiene resource pick-up.** Being in such a high need part of the city, South OKC, these services have ratio been limited. I have 3 students who have been on wait lists for meals, hygiene products for 3+ weeks.

All the families I serve are willing to help other families and collaborate in keeping kids virtually connected to avoid any mental health issues and that just makes me go above and beyond to help them

Our school district has offered **free Wi-Fi busses that park in different sections of the city** to make sure all kids have internet access. Small business turning into mini grocery stores to deliver to people who would otherwise not be able to leave their homes. Gym owners using their time to deliver groceries to homes.

Many non-profit and for profit businesses have banded together to support the community as a whole throughout the pandemic. **I think many people wanted to help before, but either didn't know how or didn't have time (family/work commitments). Now there are clear calls for supplies and time to help the community, both in person and from a distance.** For example, our NFL team owner and his charitable organization contacted a non-profit focusing on public schools in the area to donate a large sum of money to fund grant projects for supplies.

Comcast gave free internet to our students, local furniture company donated desks, our district gave every student a chrome book to take home, Utah food bank gives extra food once a month, USANA donates sling packs of canned goods every Friday, Home Depot donated 600 small white boards for me to add to a small school supply kit for part of our students. So many amazing neighbors dropped supplies on my porch to help.



SECTION 3:

# BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE EDUCATION



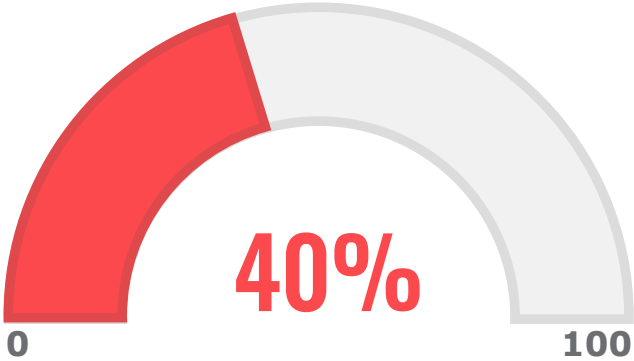
# Kids living in low-income households do not all have access to the tools needed for distance learning

On average, 40% of kids served don't have access to reliable internet and 37% do not have access to functioning devices

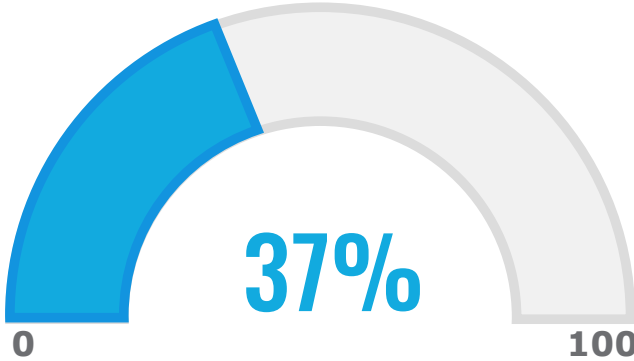
## Educators Estimate the Percent of Their Kids Who Do Not Have Access to the Following

(visuals show the average percentage indicated across all educators)

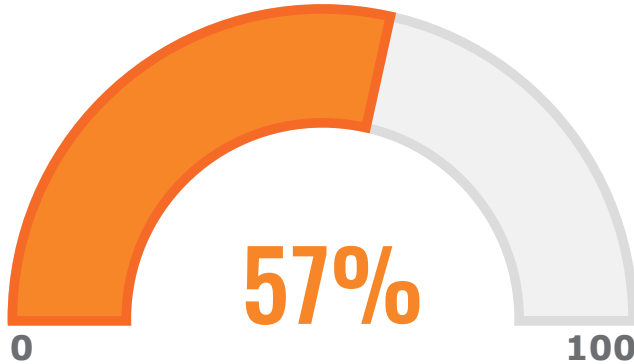
### RELIABLE INTERNET



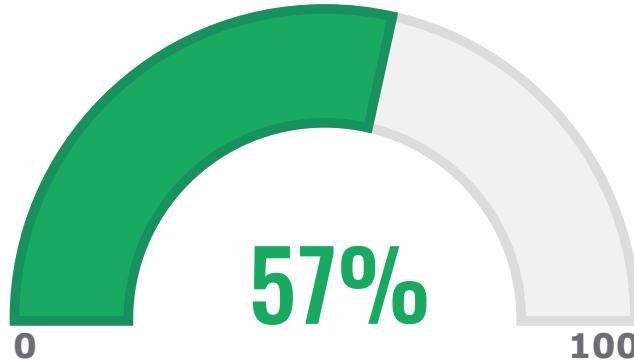
### FUNCTIONING DEVICES



### ENOUGH DEVICES PER PERSON IN THE HOUSEHOLD



### SOMEONE SKILLED WITH TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE FOR SUPPORT (IF NECESSARY)



# The majority of educators have increased concerns about children's mental health at this time

## Increased concerns about the digital divide are also worth noting

**% of Educators Who Are Increasingly Concerned About the Following Challenges for Kids During the Pandemic**



Q - For each challenge listed below, please select the level of concern that most closely reflects your feelings now compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. Results shown reflect those that responded "I am more concerned about this now than I was prior to the pandemic."

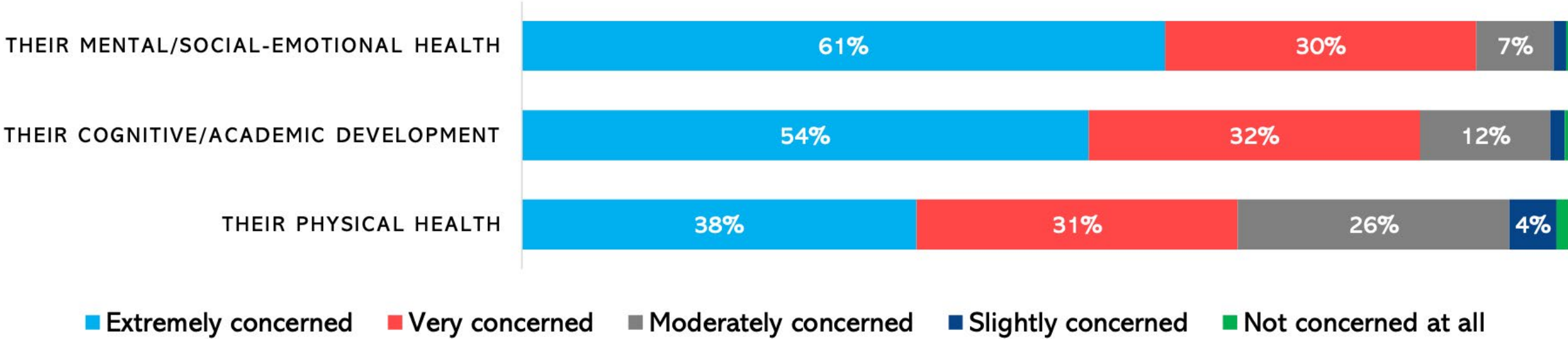


# More educators expressed concerns about the mental health of students and their families than expressed concerns for those same students' physical health

**91%** of educators surveyed are very or extremely concerned about the mental/social emotional health of the kids and families they serve upon returning to "normal" class/program.

**69%** This is compared to 69% who indicate they are very or extremely concerned about the physical health of those they serve.

## EDUCATOR'S LEVEL OF CONCERN FOR ASPECTS OF CHILD/FAMILY HEALTH



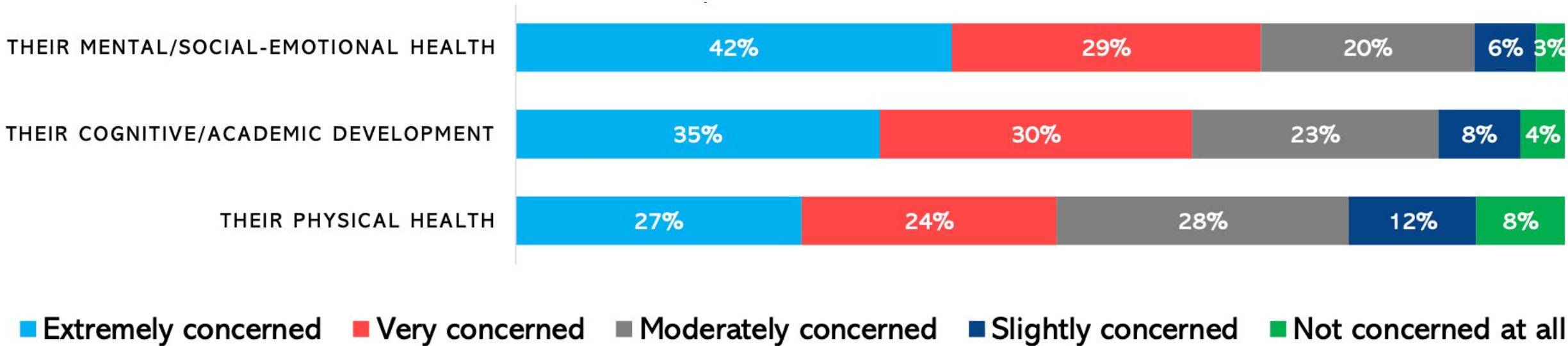
Q - When you think about beginning to work directly with kids and families again, to what extent are you concerned with the following?

# Educators fear they won't be equipped with the resources to address mental health concerns

71%

of educators surveyed are very or extremely concerned that they won't have the resources they need to address the mental health of the kids and families they serve in a post-COVID world.

## EDUCATOR CONCERN FOR NOT HAVING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF CHILDREN'S/FAMILY HEALTH



Q - When you think about beginning to work directly with kids/families again, to what extent are you concerned you won't have the necessary resources available to support the following?

# Can you elaborate on what mental health issues you are concerned about for your kids & families, and what resources you would want to help you support their mental health?

## HOPE/HOPELESSNESS

There is a concern about the general feeling of hopelessness that this pandemic brings. Hopelessness about the illness impacting families, hopelessness about parents being indefinitely unemployed, hopelessness about the future of kids' own education. How can educators reinstate a sense of hope for kids when they return?

*There is a version of 'growth mindset' in this finding.*

## MORE SPECIALISTS

There needs to be more available professional support staff. Schools/organizations need to realize the importance of mental health and have trained professionals on hand to help children, families, and service providers.

## MORE TRAINING

More training is needed to prepare educators and service providers with the tools they need to guide kids through these mental health struggles.

## INCREASED TRAUMA

Kids are dealing with increased trauma at this time, on top of their existing trauma. There is a real worry about PTSD.

## BOOKS

Books are seen as critical resources right now and in the aftermath of COVID-19. Books that help support kids' mental and emotional health are needed right now, as are books that bring comfort and books that explain what's happening and why.

## SENSE OF SAFETY

Kids are living in homes that may not provide the sense of safety that school once gave them each day. Concerns that educators cited include: various forms of abuse in the home, lack of food, parents who need to work - often meaning they must leave older kids in charge of younger kids, etc.

- *How can educators prepare their classrooms/program areas to feel like welcoming, safe spaces for kids when they return?*  
*Kids are not going to learn if they don't feel safe.*

## DEPRESSION + GRIEF/LOSS

- ***Depression** among kids is commonly mentioned, both newly developed and worsened during these scary and lonely times.*
- *Helping kids cope with **grief/loss** of loved ones, friends, teachers and neighbors due to COVID-19.*

## POST ISOLATION REINTEGRATION

- ***Post isolation reintegration:** Will kids forget how to learn/ behave in a classroom with other students? Will kids be scared of getting sick?*

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

## Educator feedback on mental health support needs

“ Our students live in a very low socioeconomic community and attend our school which is located in a more middle-class community than they come from. Many will not graduate from high school and do not see the importance of schooling after high school. A large percentage of them have no idea about the things they could do and leave our small town to pursue better paying jobs. They will stay here and likely work in the agricultural fields many of their parents work in. We are so close to the Mexican border, that English language learners struggle to pass unrealistic state language tests, so if I can get them excited to read any of the books in the library I am currently trying to build....then... it's a good day!

”

“ When we return to school, students have access to a certified counselor once a week. This was inadequate before the pandemic, and I know students may have emerging issues related to the stressors we are dealing with each day. My students need counseling services more than 1 day a week; unfortunately, this is all the school district provides.

”

“ Our school district has offered free Wi-Fi busses that park in different sections of the city to make sure all kids have internet access. Small business turning into mini grocery stores to deliver to people who would otherwise not be able to leave their homes. Gym owners using their time to deliver groceries to homes.

”

“ Our kids live in high density, low income neighborhoods often surrounded by gangs and violence. They need positive role models and opportunities to see they don't have to end up in a gang. They need resources to help them with fear and anxiety whether it be because of threats of violence or concern their family will be evicted.

”

“ For many of our children, the COVID-19 pandemic has completely turned their worlds upside down. Getting all our children back to routine and "normal" is critical. Giving them resources that help them express themselves and their needs, and then supports them, is critical. Giving them school supplies that allow them to do their schoolwork like everyone else is essential. Empowering them for successful learning today and preparing them for the future is critical. Giving hope is imperative. I'll never forget a young woman present at a conference, who grew up in dire poverty, say the problem isn't growing up poor, the problem is growing up without hope. Tools for successful learning today, hope for tomorrow.

”

“ My students do not generally come from stable environments. Many have drugs and violence in their lives frequently. We need more counselors and opportunities for growth. Emotional health is so important. Resources of any kind are appreciated. I also consider looking at their future and having hope part of this and having money to explore career opportunities and local post-secondary opportunities in this. We do not have this either.

”

“ Even prior to COVID19, I have felt that mental health is a major struggle in our country. I don't think educators have the training to understand the horrible consequences that trauma causes the brain. Or how to effectively work with students that have suffered trauma. This situation is just going to add to that lack of training.

”

“ Because of where we teach, many of our families already endure significant stress caused by poverty and violence. Good or bad, this pandemic may be one more straw on the camel's back. The positive is that our kids' experience with stress makes them resilient to disruption and uncertainty. The negative is we know the effects of long term and maintained stress on our kids and it's hard to know how to support them in effective ways.

”

# First Book's educator hierarchy of needs survey question framing (verbatim)

Past research has helped First Book identify 5 major "categories of need" that, when met, help kids reach their full learning potential more easily. Those categories of need are listed below. Please rank the list in order of which needs, if met, would most help the kids you serve reach their full learning potential **during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Drag and drop each item into its respective place. (**#1=Meeting this need would have the greatest impact on my kids' ability to learn right now, #5=Meeting this need would have the least impact on my kids' ability to learn right now.**) *Please answer this question specifically about the kids you serve, and not kids in general!*

**Basic Human Needs:** access to adequate food, housing, health care, clothing, hygiene products, etc.

1

**Safe and Positive Environments:** environments free of violence, racism, hostility, danger, etc.

2

**Stable and Supportive Relationships:** engaged and supportive families/teachers/mentors/friends, stable family structure, etc.

3

**Emotional/Mental Health Support:** access to emotional/behavioral/mental health support, assistance coping with trauma or extreme stress, etc.

4

**Access to Educational Resources:** access to adequate books and learning supplies, reliable internet, virtual learning resources, resources for unique learning barriers (special needs/learning disabilities, English Language learners), etc.

5

Now consider the same list again, this time in terms of how you, in your current role during the COVID-19 pandemic, prioritize addressing each category of need in your daily work. We understand that you may prioritize some of these equally! For the purposes of this survey, please do your best to rank them. Drag and drop each item into its respective place. (**#1=Addressing this need for the kids I serve is my top priority right now, #5=Addressing this need for the kids I serve is my lowest priority right now**)

# Priorities have shifted as educators focus on meeting the needs that are within their locus of control while distance learning continues

Providing Stable and Supportive Relationships and Access to Educational Resources Have Both Moved Up As Educators Priorities from the 2019 Pre-COVID World

## 2019 Educator Ranking of Priorities



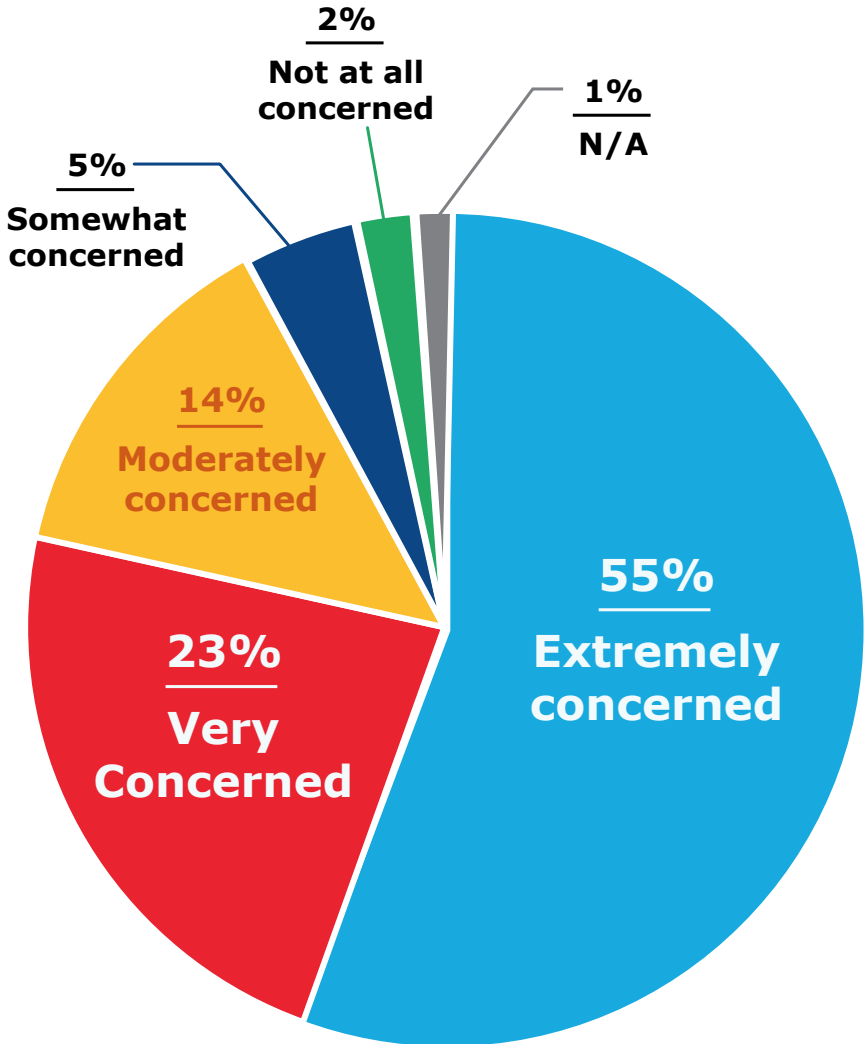
## 2020 Educator Ranking of Priorities During COVID-19



# There is a real concern about the negative ramifications of summer services being canceled

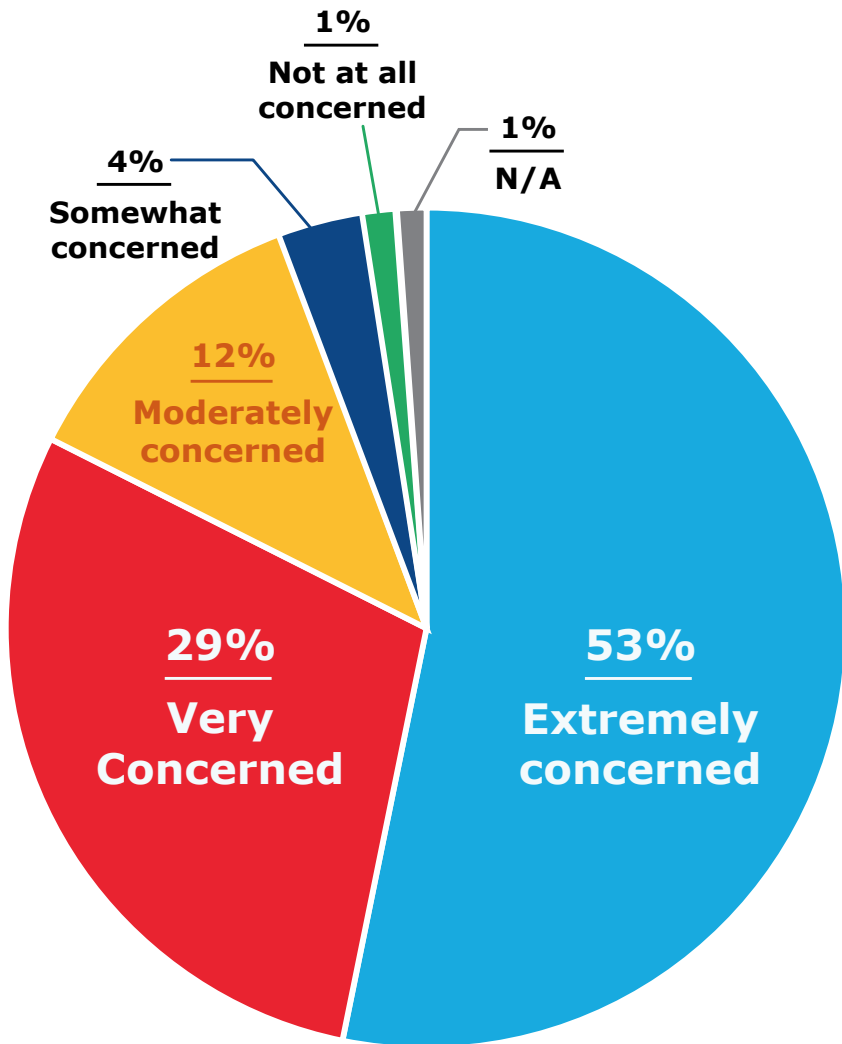
Q - Many educators are grappling with the notion that the current situation is essentially an expanded summer learning gap. The normal "summer slide" that kids experience over summer break is being extended from two months to five months, since schools may not return this year. How concerned are you about an "extended summer learning gap" for your kids at this time?

**78% are 'very/extremely' concerned about Summer Learning Gap**



Q- How concerned are you that summer activities and typical summer break care programs and camps may be closed as well, thereby increasing the burden for kids and their families?

**82% are 'very/extremely' concerned about suspended summer services**



# Educators elaborate on their concerns for an extended summer learning gap and suspension of summer services

What concerns you most about an extended summer learning gap? What kind of support would be most helpful in combating an extended summer learning gap? (1,016 responses)

- **INEQUITY OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**– The kids served by the First Book network are already at a disadvantage due to the educational inequities they experience. Inequities that existed prior to the pandemic are going to be exacerbated while they try to continue learning at home through the summer.
  - Inequity of resources – kids in need don't have access to the same quality resources to support their at-home learning as kids of means
  - Inequity of adult support – kids in need are more likely than kids of means to have parents that need to work throughout this pandemic, making it difficult for them to get the adult support that other kids get
  - Inequity of opportunities – kids living in low-income neighborhoods may not have access to safe spaces to learn and grow who
- **LACK OF BOOKS AND OTHER PHYSICAL LEARNING RESOURCES**– While virtual learning can be effective for many kids, there are also kids
  - 1) don't have help navigating online learning,
  - 2) don't have the digital resources to support it, or
  - 3) simply respond better to physical learning resources.
- **SPECIAL NEEDS/ELL STUDENTS FALLING PARTICULARLY BEHIND**– Children who need specialized learning plans from certified experts/teachers
- **UNFAIR TESTING/STANDARDS UPON RETURN** – Educators worry that districts will still hold kids to unrealistic testing expectations after this

We'd like to hear more about your concerns for summer activities and care programs being closed. What concerns you most about the closure of these summer services? What kind of support would be most helpful in alleviating your concerns in this space?

(946 responses)

- **KIDS AT INCREASED RISK OF BEING IN UNSAFE SITUATIONS**– the closure of summer activities puts kids' safety at risk for several reasons...
  - Kids being left unsupervised because parents have to work
  - Older kids watching younger kids could lead to dangerous situations
  - Kids being exposed to abuse in the home for prolonged periods of time
- **KIDS PHYSICAL HEALTH IS AT GREATER RISK** – Lack of proper nutrition combined with the lack of opportunities to be physically active
- **MENTAL/EMOTIONAL HEALTH IS AT GREATER RISK**– Kids need to maintain and build social relationships as part of their development
- **KIDS (AND PARENTS) NEED A BREAK!**



# IN THEIR OWN WORDS: Educator feedback on the concerns over expanded summer learning gaps & suspended summer programs

I have concerns that the normal "summer slide" we see in the fall will be compounded, not only due to extended time with only virtual learning, but also due to trauma impacting students emotionally. Many students who have emotional problems, anxiety, learning disabilities rely on school-based services to function, and the parents of those students are undergoing daily stressors. Students can't function without supportive role models, nor can they survive emotionally when they are at home, potentially unsupervised or under supervised. Our most needy populations will suffer the most. These kids need basic supplies, they need opportunities to participate in something meaningful outside the home. The least I can do as an educator is try and help them weather the storm by doing unofficial mentoring when they reach out, or especially when I haven't heard from them in awhile

Title 1 Kids are placed in the same testing pool with students of any other financial level, yet resources are not equal. This year's testing was excused, but what are 2020-2021 expectations? Schools are judged by test results. Summer slide is always a tough hill to climb, but we have good teachers who roll up their sleeves and tackle the task. March to the end of May has not been easy because of limited resources. Add the summer slide. It's going to be near impossible to recover and compete. Test scores label schools, students and neighborhoods. The next year should be recovery time. We need adequate resources. We need a chance to work with kids to calibrate mental, emotional and educational stamina. No testing labels for 20-21.

Many of our students' parents still have to work, leaving them without childcare. Many of our families relied on our school's free after-school program while they worked. We also have so many students who have parents that lost their jobs, and are facing eviction and can't pay bills. We also have students that we know use school as a means to escape unstable conditions in their homes, and are now forced to live 24/7 in possibly dangerous domestic situations. I don't know what the best thing to do to support these students could be, but I would love to help in any way I can. As a librarian I am mostly concerned that students have nothing to read and no way to access books. For many students reading is a means to escape difficult situations in their lives, and now they have no access to that possibility. I wish I had books I could distribute to students.

We already know that county summer camps are canceled through the month of June where we live. This means that only families with access to other resources or supports will be able to connect their children with childcare or - more importantly - higher-level brain engagement. It increases the opportunities for students to become disengaged, but it also could lead to higher incidences of neglect because of children being left home alone, or in the care of an older sibling, so that parents can work. It feels like an impossible situation.

Our summer programs provided part time jobs to students, educational experiences to students, and physical outlets in the form of sports for all students. We provided meals and relationships. Having books to give students could let kids know that we still care about their thoughts and emotional health. Books are a way to connect us all. I also hope funding is available to continue meal delivery. Most kids do not have the proper food to eat in our area.

The gap between the haves and the have nots is increasing tenfold during this crisis. The learning we are providing is not equitable. The families who will succeed are those that were going to succeed anyways, the kids who were on the cusp will now slide so far back. The students who have unsupportive families have no chance of closing the gap. Some of my students are essentially on a 6 month summer vacation.



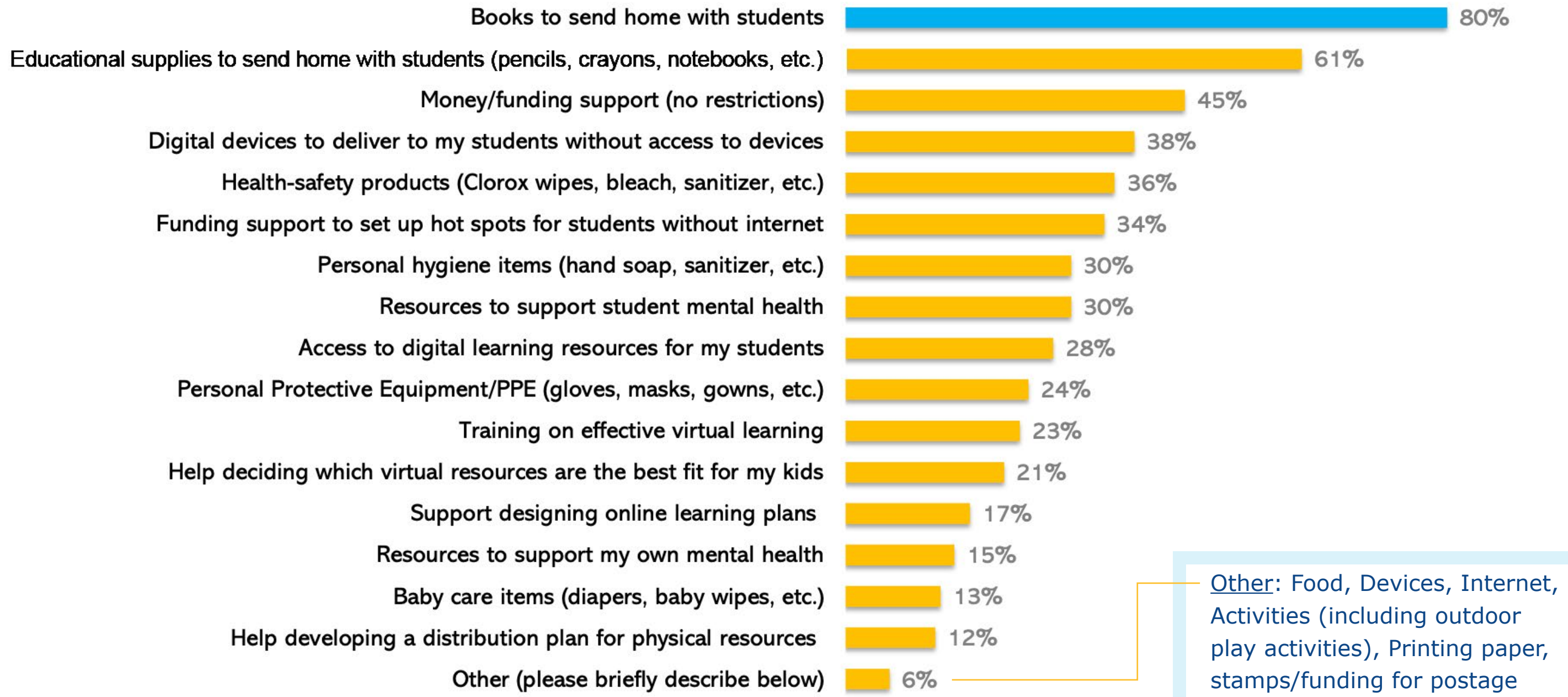
SECTION 4

# NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



# Books are the #1 resource educators are looking for right now to support their work during this pandemic

## Resources Needed Right Now to Support Educators' Work



Q - What do you need most right now to help you continue the great work you're doing for children and families during this time? Select all that apply.

# Would you like to elaborate on what specific resources would be most helpful to you right now?

(1,016 responses)

## PHYSICAL BOOKS:

“Reading is so important! My first graders can only stare at a screen for so long. One of my students today told me she misses the books in our classroom! They need physical books to read, in addition to the amazing digital ebooks that are available.”

## SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES:

Educators are worried about food on families’ tables, their ability to pay rent, their mental health, their ability to help their kids academically. “The resources that would be most beneficial would be those that could be distributed to my students and their families to ease the stress regarding meals, utilities, safety, and necessities.”

## ACCESS TO QUALITY INTERNET/ DEVICES/TECHNOLOGY:

“I would love for all of my students to have equal access to the same computer we use in our classroom, reliable internet, a quiet space for learning, and a family support system that helps them schedule their learning time / values their education. Only about 10 percent of my students have all of these things (so 3 out of 31 students). It is heartbreaking to me as a teacher!”

## FUNDING/BUDGET/MONETARY DONATIONS:

“General funding - my district’s levy failed; coupled with anticipated reductions in state funding, the district has to cut the total operating budget by 20%”

## BASIC NEEDS ITEMS FOR KIDS/FAMILIES:

“My students’ needs follow the hierarchy of needs. They cannot learn without adequate food, shelter, and care. I am worried when the school meals end at the end of the school year. The YMCA meals will help with that gap, but I am worried that our students will suffer.”

## SCHOOL/LEARNING SUPPLIES:

“My students need basic school supplies since everything was left at school since we didn’t know the closure was coming. They also need access to books and educational resources since many do not have access to the internet and my students do not have books at home to read.”

## PPE/HEALTH SAFETY ITEMS:

“In my area, there is no hand sanitizer or Clorox wipes. I worry that my students don’t have these things to help protect themselves. I also worry that they don’t have masks. Many don’t have the support at home to encourage this type of protection.”

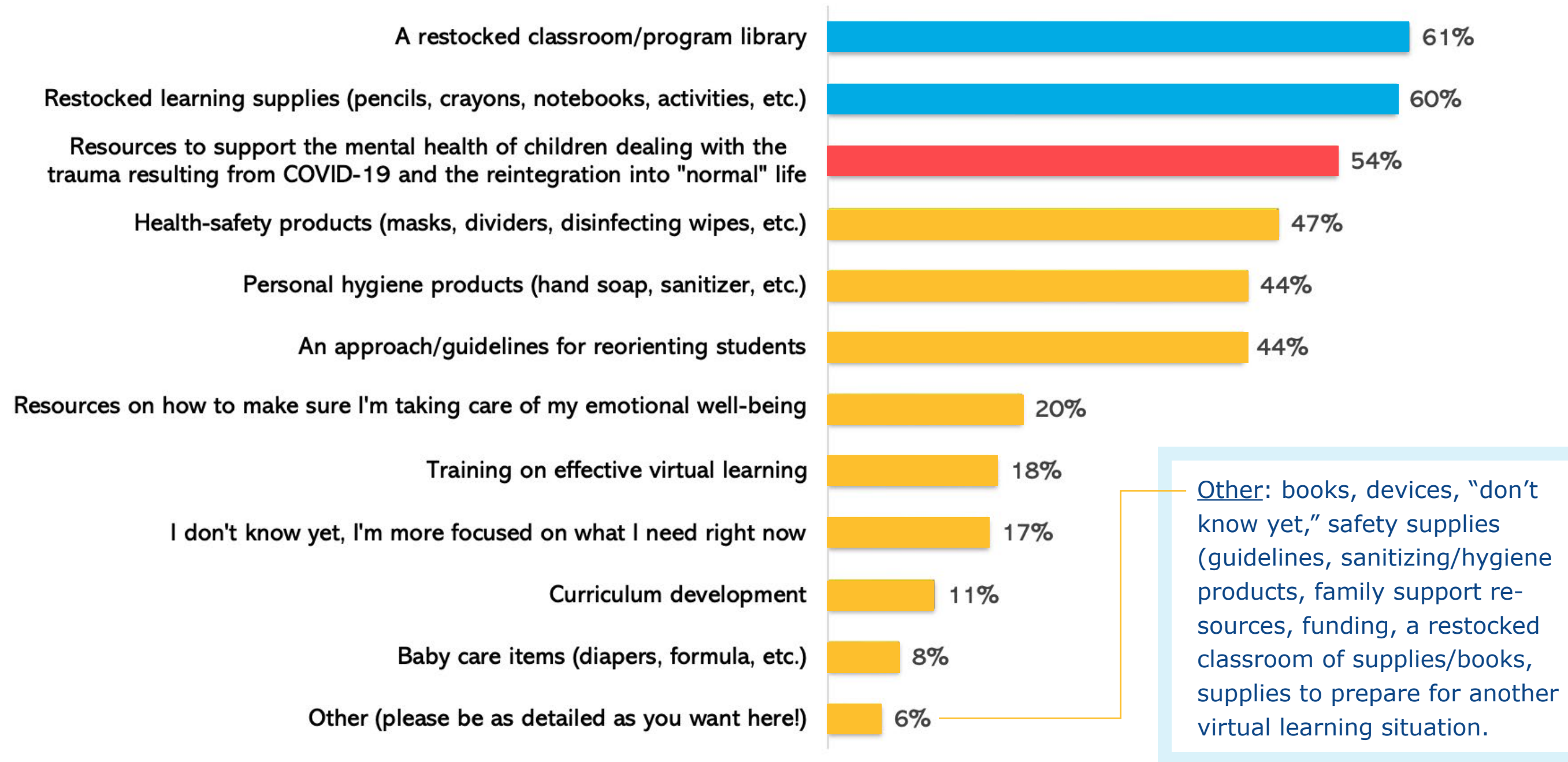
## POSTAGE:

Educators don’t have the money to ship products to students (they are also paying OOP for printing supplies). “I need to mail items to my students but my district doesn’t reimburse postage.”

# Educators will need restocked books & learning supplies upon returning to work post quarantine

## Over half say they still also need resources to support the mental health of their kids

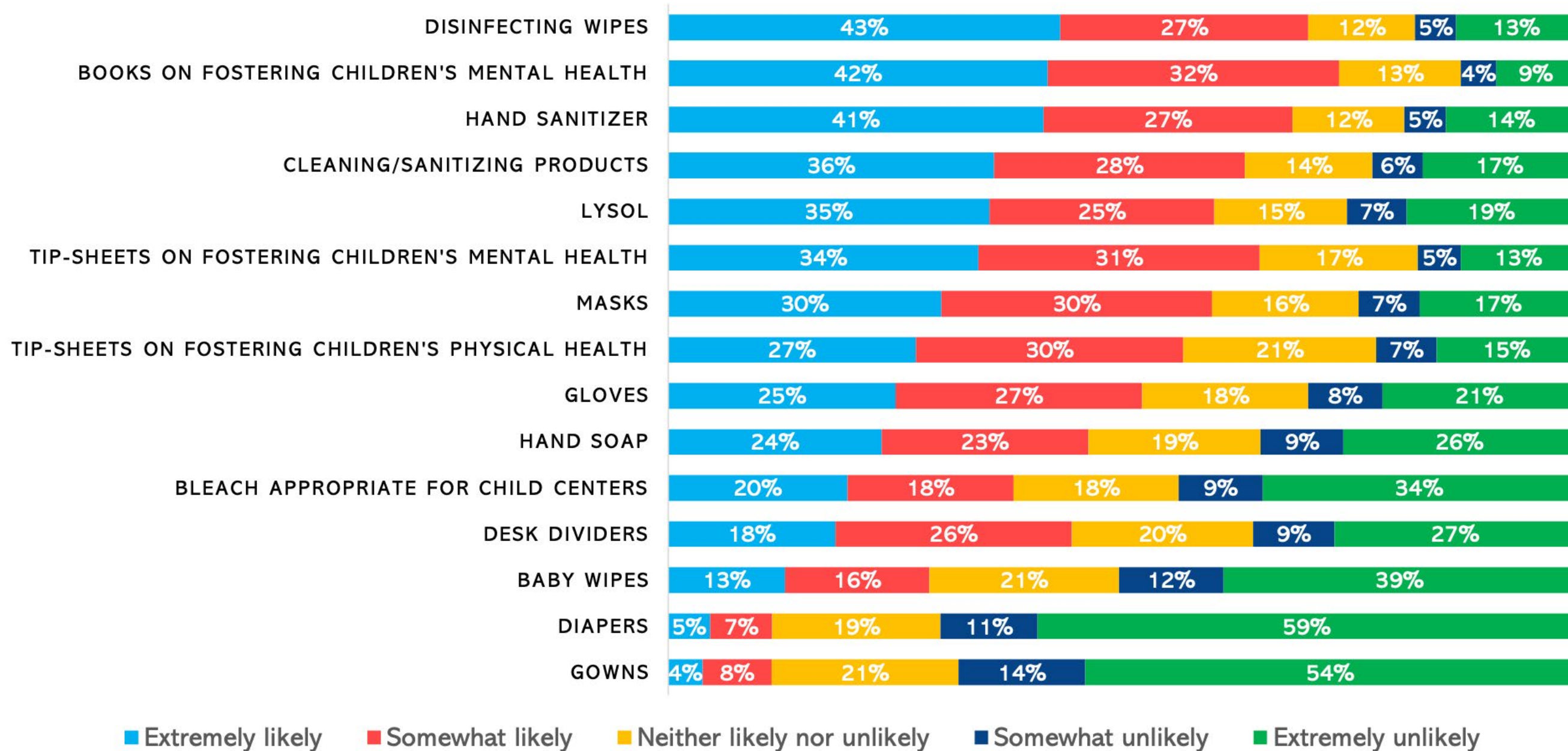
### Resources Needed Right Now to Support Educator's Work



Q - What do you need to help you be prepared for when you and the kids/families you serve are able to return to school/regular programming? Select any of the following resources that would be helpful for you.

# While cleaning products are most likely to be purchased, products to support children's mental health are also high on educators' likely-to-buy lists

## Resources Educators are Likely to Purchase if Offered on FBMP

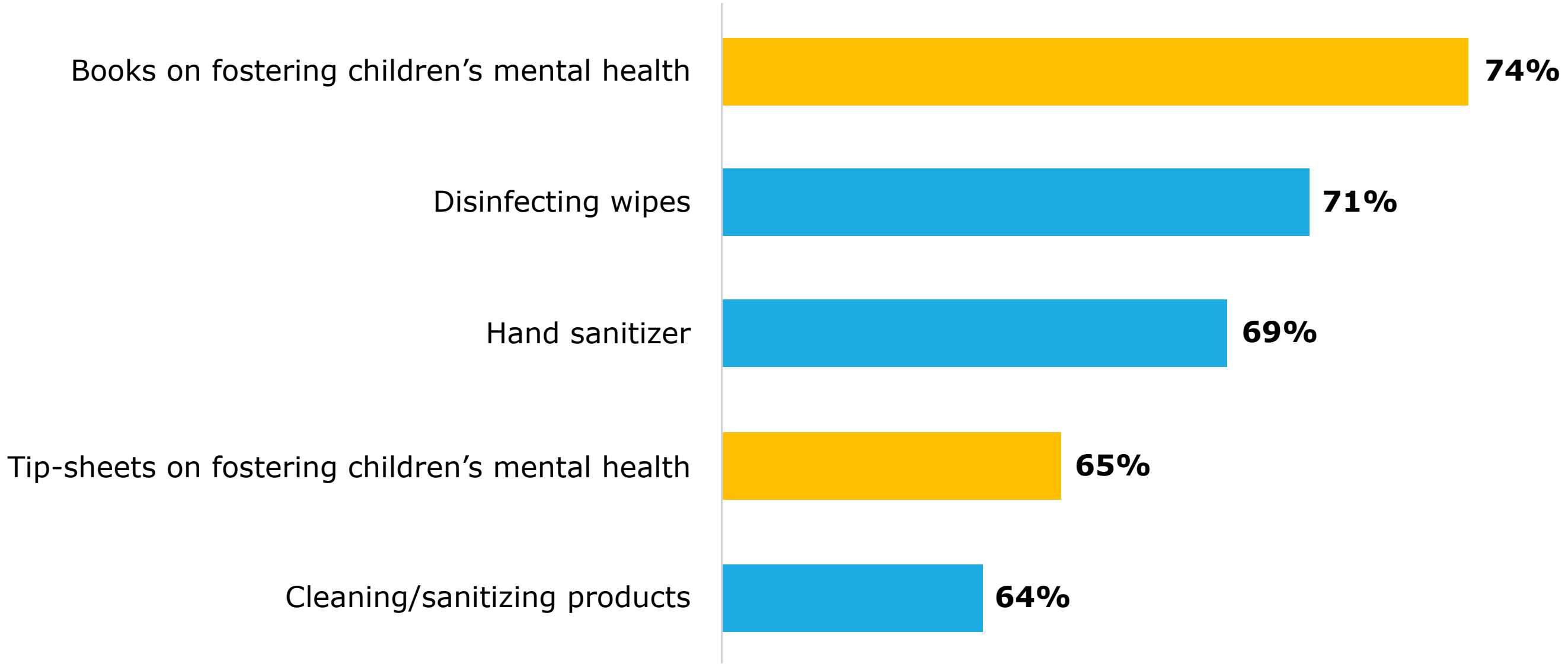


Q - If First Book were to carry the following health-safety related resources on the First Book Marketplace, how likely would you be to purchase them (assuming they were up to your quality and price standards)?

**Overall, books on fostering children's mental health are the #1 health related product educators are most likely to purchase from the Marketplace**

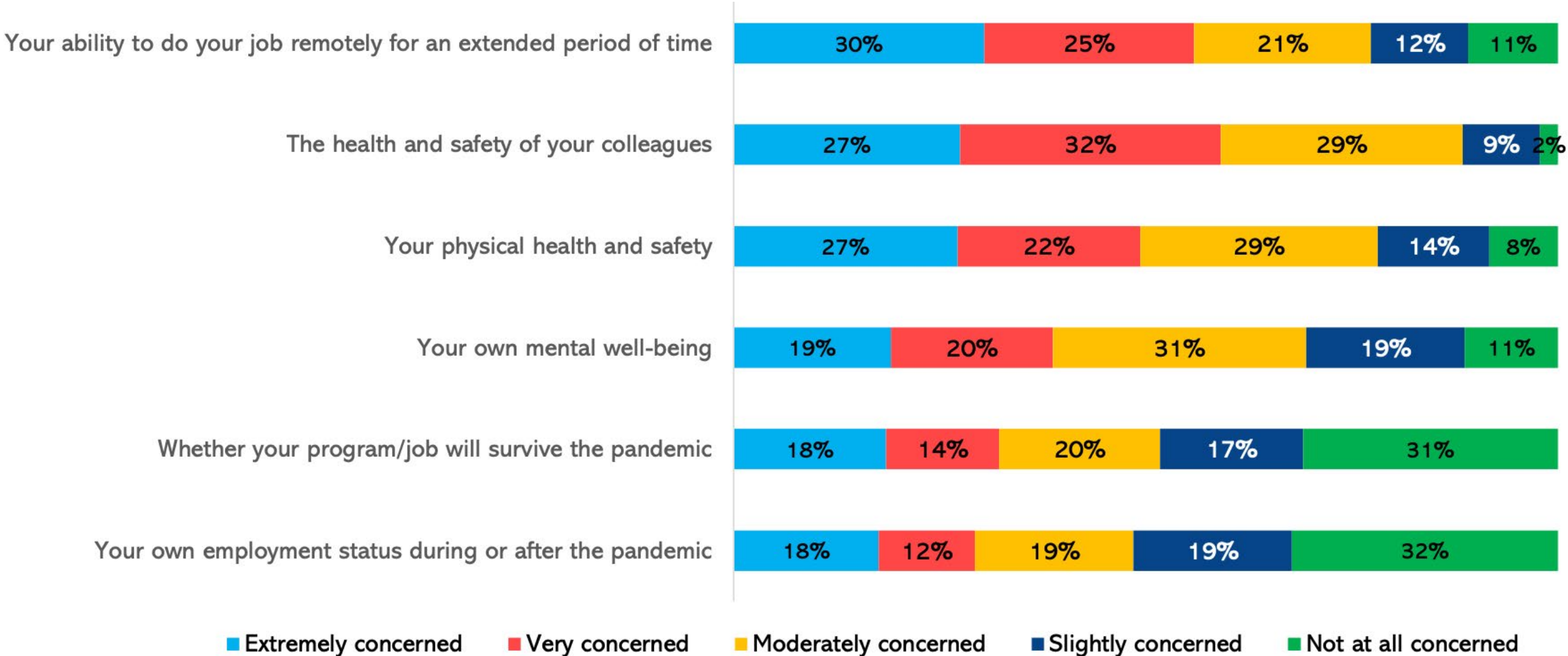
**Top Five Post-COVID Health Safety Related Products Educators Are Likely To Purchase Through First Book**

(Chart Shows % Extremely + Very likely to purchase)



# When it comes to their own future, educators are most concerned about their ability to do their job remotely long-term, and the health and safety of their colleagues

## Educators' Concern Over Their Own Future



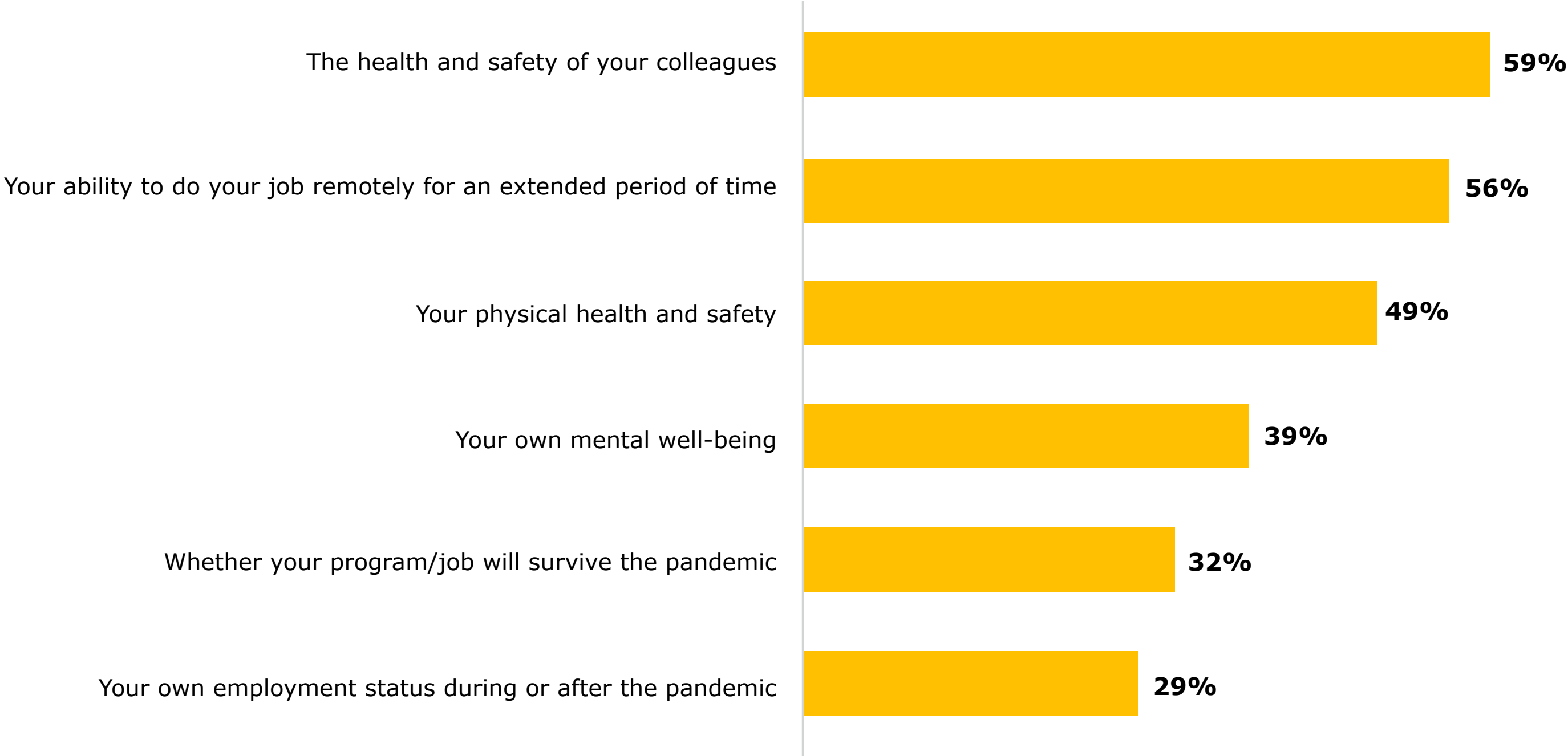
Q - Consider your own personal well-being during this pandemic and in the aftermath. How concerned are you about the following factors in your life?



**When looking at very + extremely concerned responses, slightly more educators are concerned about the health and safety of their colleagues than their own jobs or their own health and safety**

**Educator Concern Over Aspects of Their Own Future**

(Results show Extremely + Very concerned)



# When you think about the future when things are either “back to normal” or have settled into a “new normal,” do you have any particular worries about the work you do?

(963 responses)

## MONEY (FUNDING/BUDGET CUTS/STAFF CUTS):

“‘New normal’ worries are concerns for funding. Schools in my state are underfunded. We struggle to make do with limited cleaning supplies, and to make those last all school year in normal circumstances. The governor in my state announced today that funding will be very limited, due to budget deficits that were compounded by the economic downturn sparked by the pandemic.

“I’m worried the district will decide libraries and librarians are unnecessary expenses and I will be laid off. I’m worried about staff layoffs making colleagues lose jobs and class sizes getting too large to manage just when we probably need smaller classes for safety and to help deal with students’ trauma.



## CLASS SIZES BEING TOO LARGE TO BE SAFE:

“How we can safely and efficiently return to overcrowded schools (we were over our legal limit at one point this year in our kindergarten class) especially when NYC schools are going to lose hundreds of million dollars in funding. How can we safely social distance students and staff in overcrowded small classrooms?

## HEALTH SAFETY (OWN HEALTH/KIDS NOT BEING SAFE/SPREADING THE VIRUS DISINFECTING RESOURCES):

“I am extremely concerned about preventing the virus from spreading in the school environment. We work very closely with younger children who obviously don’t have the best hygiene habits and need the closeness of teachers either to support learning, help to teach tasks of daily living or to support their mental health.

“As a Librarian I worry about getting all the books back and properly disinfecting them. I have had no budget for 7 years and get all my books but purchasing them with my own money or donations. I will be at a large deficit when we return if I cannot add those books back to our collection.

# When you think about the future when things are either “back to normal” or have settled into a “new normal,” do you have any particular worries about the work you do?

(963 responses)

## STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH/LASTING EFFECTS OF TRAUMA/EMOTIONAL SAFETY:

“I worry that my students will have some degree of lasting trauma that will prolong the point where they will be settled and comfortable in order to begin learning.

“I’m concerned that the education system in America will want to rush back into rapidly trying to make up for lost time in terms of the core subjects. I think we need to take some time upfront. Maybe a week or more, to care for our students mental health and help them to be prepared to learn by helping them to regulate and become attuned.



## DISTANCE LEARNING BECOMING THE NEW NORMAL – EDUCATORS MISS THEIR KIDS!:

“I am concerned that online learning will be the new normal. I love the face to face interactions and learning between students with teachers and each other. You don’t get that kind of learning from sitting in front of monitor.

## LEARNING GAP

“I worry about the amount of work it will take our teachers to acclimate returning students that have been home for up to 6 months. Our jobs are challenging on a normal day. Without the ability to pay extra staff to help individually support children it will put a huge amount of work on teachers that are normally stretched thin. I am certain we will make the transition as smooth as possible, but worry about the overbearing demands this event has put in teachers. It has been emotionally and physically draining for us.



**THANK YOU!**

