



Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing – Oakland: Early Evaluation Findings

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Background

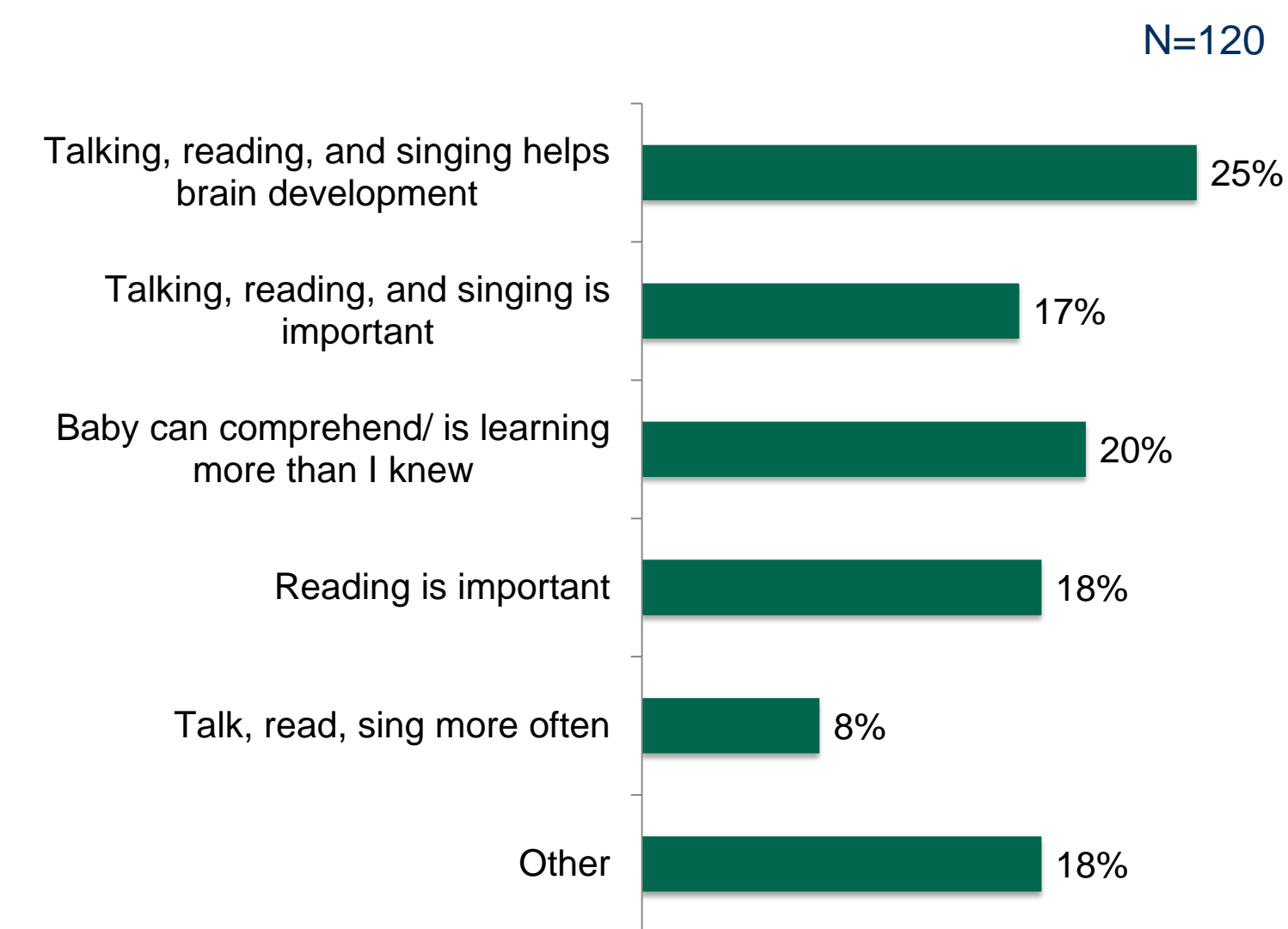
Research demonstrates that infancy and early childhood are critical times for brain development and vocabulary acquisition, both of which contribute to later academic performance, health and well-being. (1, 2) Studies also show that early quality engagement among primary caregivers and infants and young children form important lasting bonds. (3) A primary care clinic intervention by pediatricians within a well-child visit was conducted to test the effectiveness of efforts. In addition to parent/caregiver education provided by pediatricians about the benefits of talking, reading and singing, the intervention included the distribution of high quality, attractive creative items designed to support and prompt talking reading and singing, such as children's clothing, books, and tool kits.

Methods

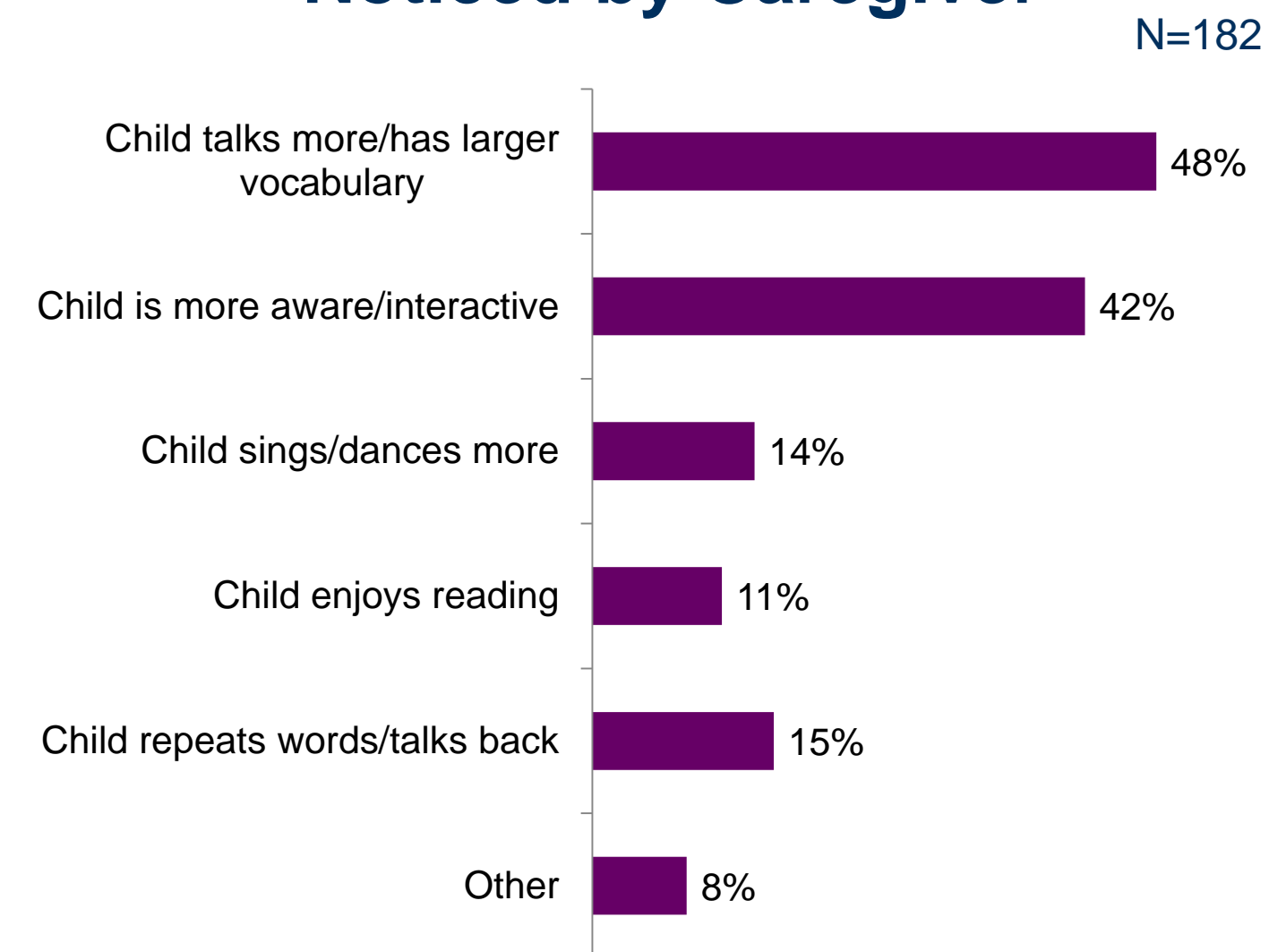
This evaluation assesses the impact of the primary care intervention through interviews of parents and caregivers receiving the intervention. The chief purpose of the study was to measure the impact of the intervention on parents/caregivers' knowledge and practices. Eligible parents/caretakers included individuals living in Alameda County with infants and toddlers ages 2 – 24 months receiving a well child visit at the primary care clinic. Interviews were conducted just prior to well child visits during which the intervention took place to establish baseline, immediately following the visit to determine what was learned during that visit, and 4-24 weeks after the intervention to assess recall and practice changes since the intervention. Interviews are conducted in English (N=169) and Spanish (N=36). All parents/caregivers were offered a \$25 gift card for their participation. On average, five parents and caregivers declined to enroll in the study per week for a total of 150 refusals. An additional 16 participants were excluded from final analysis for ineligibility, for a final sample of 205. Frequencies were produced, a subsample of which are presented here. The number of cases per question can be lower than the final sample size due to non-responders to individual questions. Some totals exceed 100% as multiple answers were sometimes permitted. All results presented here are from the third interview with exception of the first graph which reflects responses immediately following the well child visit.

Results

New Information Learned from Doctor



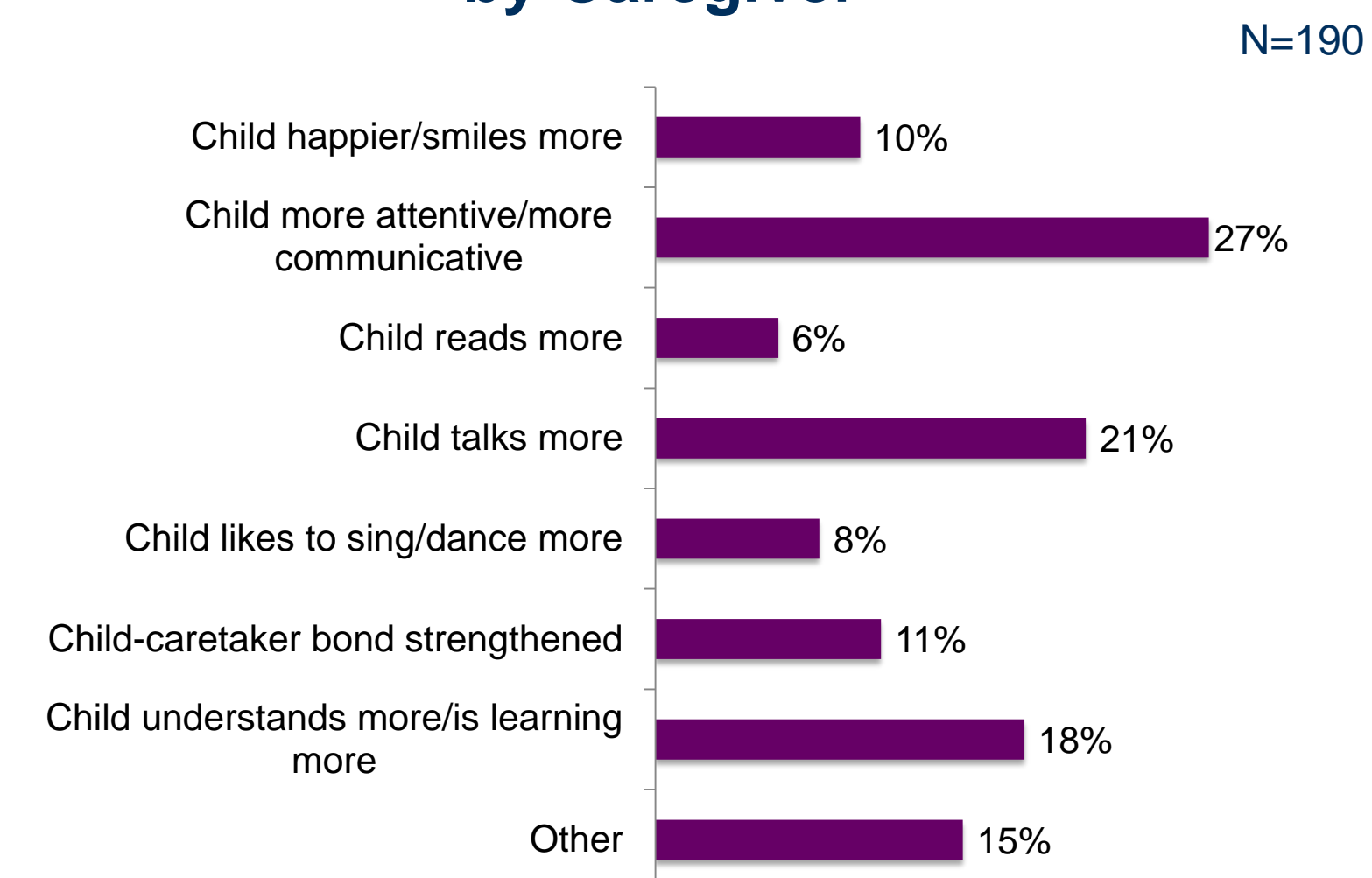
Child's Developmental Changes Noticed by Caregiver



What the Caregiver Recalls of the Doctor's Message from Last Visit



Caregiver/Child Relationship Changes Noticed by Caregiver



Discussion and Conclusion

Early findings from an evaluation of Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing – Oakland suggest a positive effect of parent/caregiver exposure to messages about the value of early interactions delivered by pediatricians, along with the distribution of supportive materials. Of the 59% of parents/caregivers who reported immediately after the well child visit that they learned new information from the physician (not shown), one quarter learned that that talking, reading and singing helps brain development and one in five learned that babies can comprehend and/or learn more than they knew. Weeks after the well child visit, nearly half of parents/caregivers recalled that the pediatrician previously told them that talking, reading and singing promotes brain development, school readiness or language acquisition. According to respondents, the intervention also had positive effects on children's development and caretaker-child relationships. Specifically, of the 88% of parents/caregivers that reported developmental changes since the last well child visit (not shown), nearly half (48%) reported that their child talks more and/or has increased vocabulary and 42% said their child is more interactive and/or more aware. Of the 92% who reported positive changes in the relationship, 27% said their child is more attentive and/or more communicative, 21% reported that the child talks more with them and 18% said the child understands more and/or is learning more. As early results from an ongoing study, these findings are preliminary but suggest that pediatricians may be effective messengers of this important information. Additional results are forthcoming.

References

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