



What are we learning from the Solution Based Casework Evaluation?



June 2010

Why are we here today?

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- To report the statewide baseline findings of Solution Based Casework evaluation
- To tell you about the needs of families and how they experience the services provided by Children's Administration and our initial findings regarding factors associated with parent and worker engagement
- To hear your feedback and reflections, especially about what this means for social workers in their day-to-day work

Context: Solution Based Casework

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- CA is implementing a new casework practice model—SBC—to improve outcomes for the children and families it serves
- SBC is focused on engaging and involving families in the helping process
- POC is conducting the evaluation of the implementation and the impact of SBC
- POC has completed the baseline surveys and analysis and has shared the preliminary findings with CA

What we are going to share with you today

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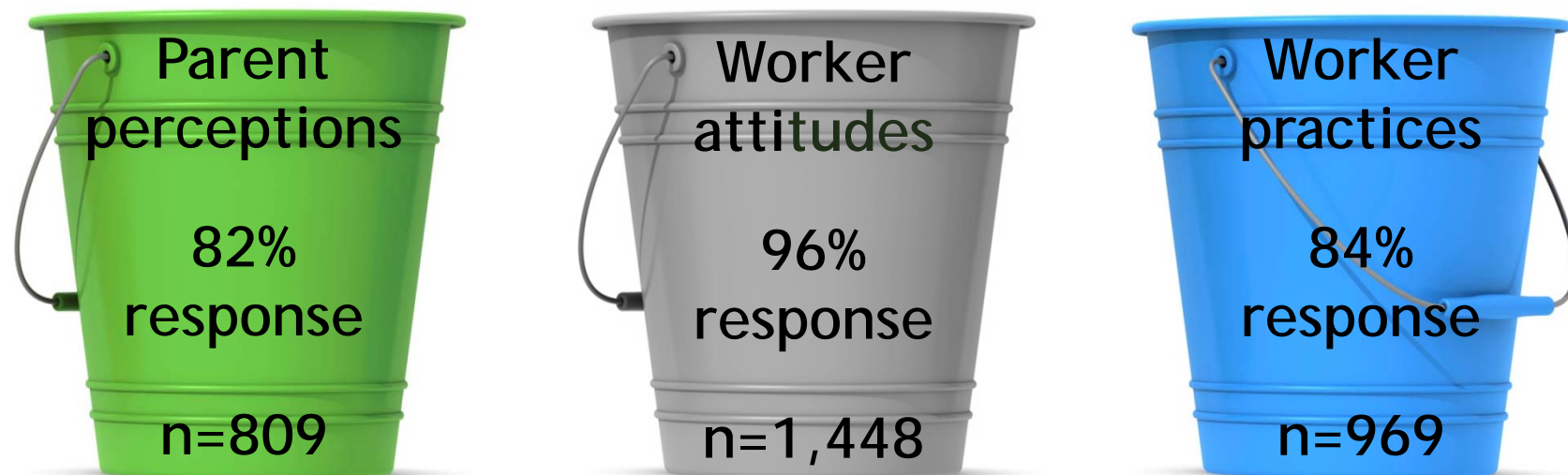
- SBC study design
- Characteristics of parents/families and social workers
- Parent and worker perception of child and family needs and services
- Why engagement is important and how it is connected to family needs
- Parents' and social workers' levels of engagement (prior to SBC)
- Factors associated with parents' *experiences* of engagement
- Factors associated with workers' *attitudes* toward engagement strategies
- Factors associated with workers' *use* of engagement practices

The SBC study uses three sources of data

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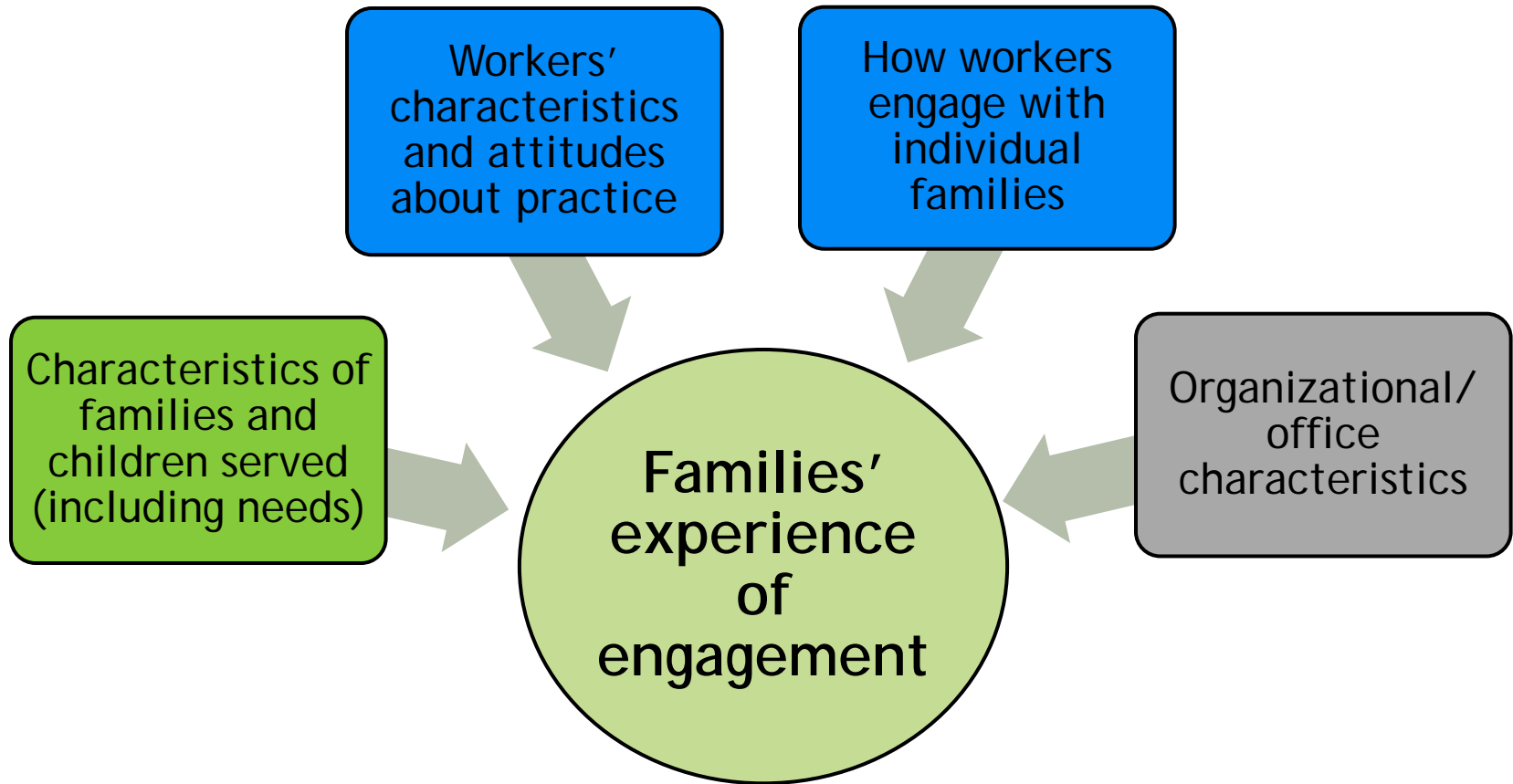
Parents with a newly opened case in the past 60 to 180 days were surveyed between July and December 2008.

Social workers completed on-line surveys between April and October 2008.



Understanding factors that influence families' experience of engagement

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Engagement is a dynamic process

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Profile of social workers

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	% (n=1,448)		
Female	77		
Race / Ethnicity			
Caucasian	73		
African American	7		
Hispanic / Latino	11		
American Indian	6		
Asian American / PI	5		
Mixed / Other	3		
Education			
Masters degree+	53		
Years in Position			%
less than 2	45	Age	
2 - 5	24	less than 30	18
5 - 10	15	30 - 40	32
10+	16	40+	50



Average number years in position = 5.

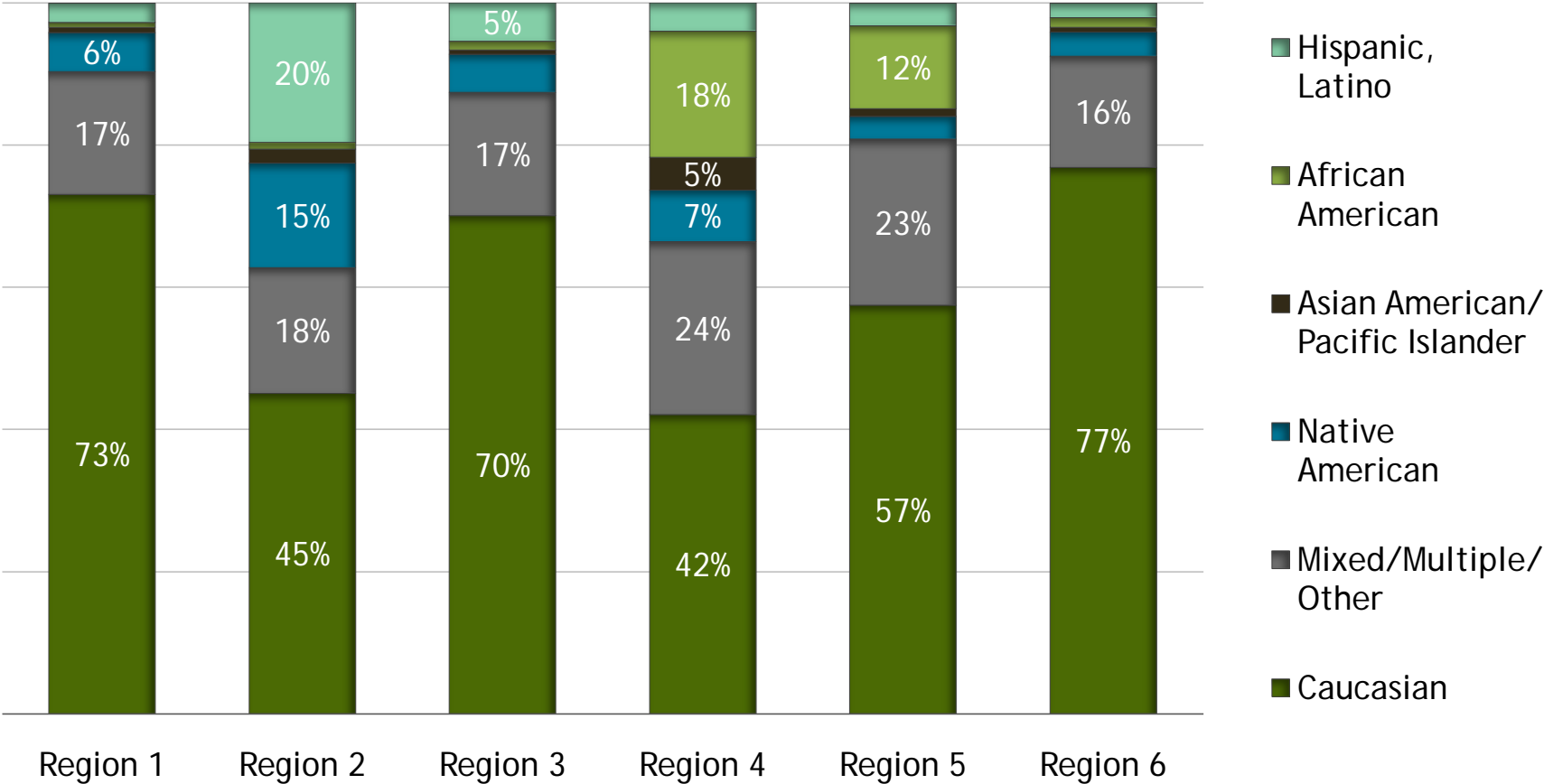
Profile of parents

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	% (n=809)		% (n=809)
Female	92		
Race / Ethnicity			
Caucasian	62		
African American	5		
Native American	6		
Hispanic / Latino	6		
Asian American / PI	2		
Mixed / Multiple / Other	19		
Age			
29 or younger	46		
30-39	32	Unemployed	68
40 or older	22	Not living at home (friends, homeless, etc.)	28
Education		At least one child with special need(s)	50
less than high school degree	30		
high school / GED	28		
greater than high school	43		
Lone parent	68		



Parents' race/ethnicity by region*



*p<.01

Profile of children

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- Parents had an average of 3 (biological/ adopted) children
- Households averaged 1.9 children
- Parents with children in out-of-home placement had slightly larger families
- Households averaged 1.6 adults
- Children's age:

0–3	28%
4–10	34%
11–18	27%
19 +	9%
- 32% of the children had one or more special needs

Demographic differences between parents: Children in-home vs. out-of-home

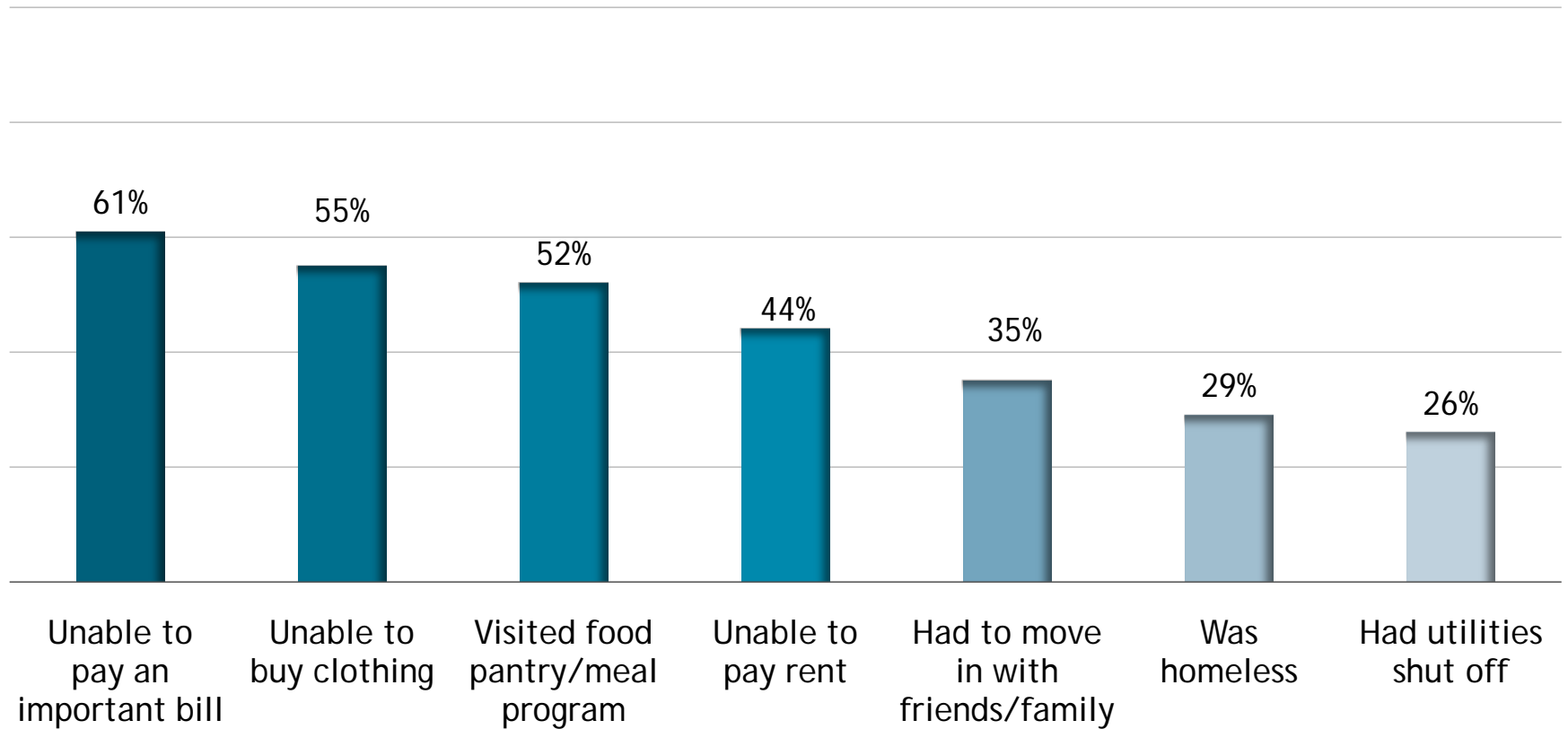
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	In-Home n=345 (43%) %	Out-of-Home n=464 (57%) %
Education*		
less than high school graduate	24	34
high school / GED	29	27
greater than high school	47	40
Lone parent**	63	72
Gross household income less than \$10,000/year*	36	55
Unemployed*	63	71
Housing instability within past year (living with friends, homeless, etc.)**	16	36

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

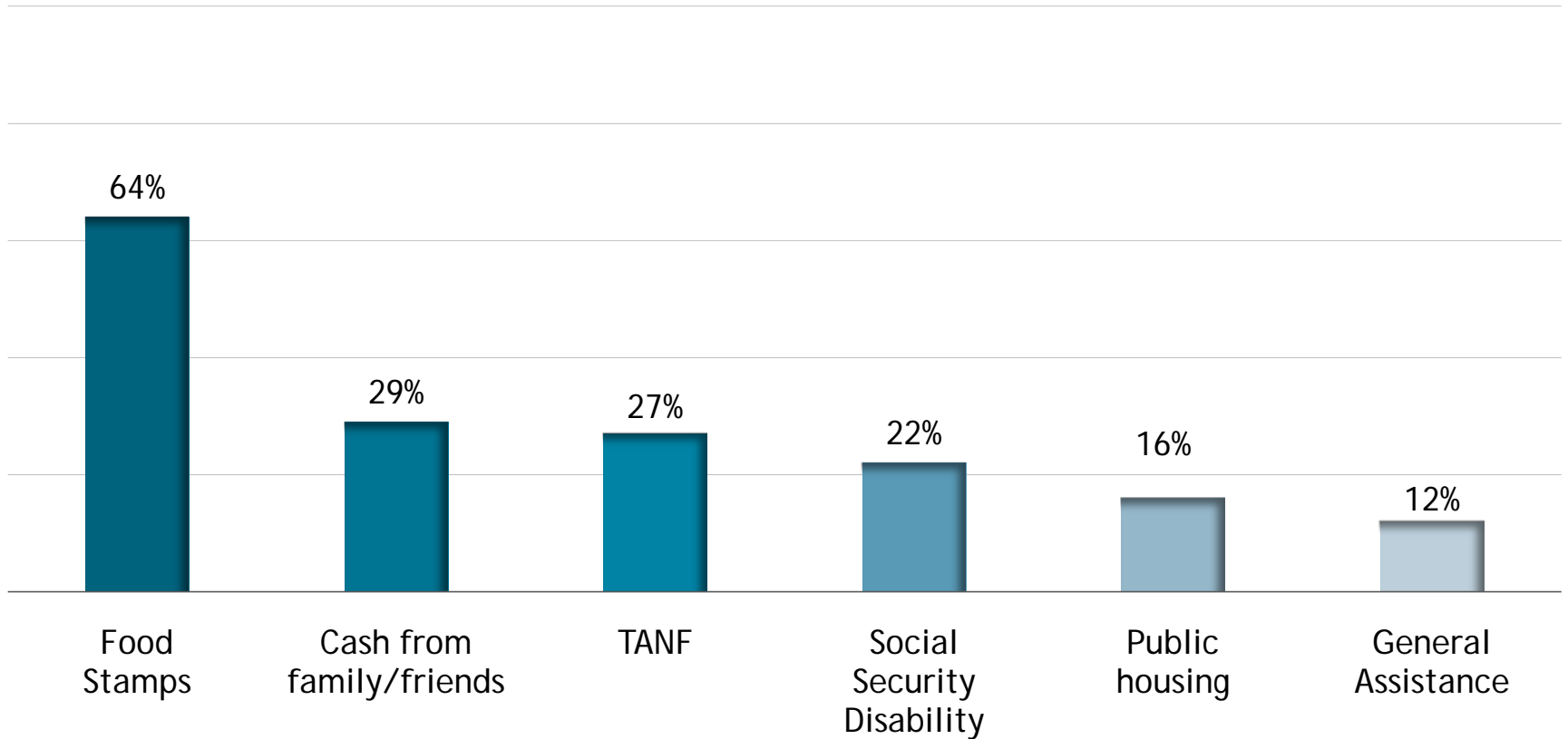
Parent reported financial hardships

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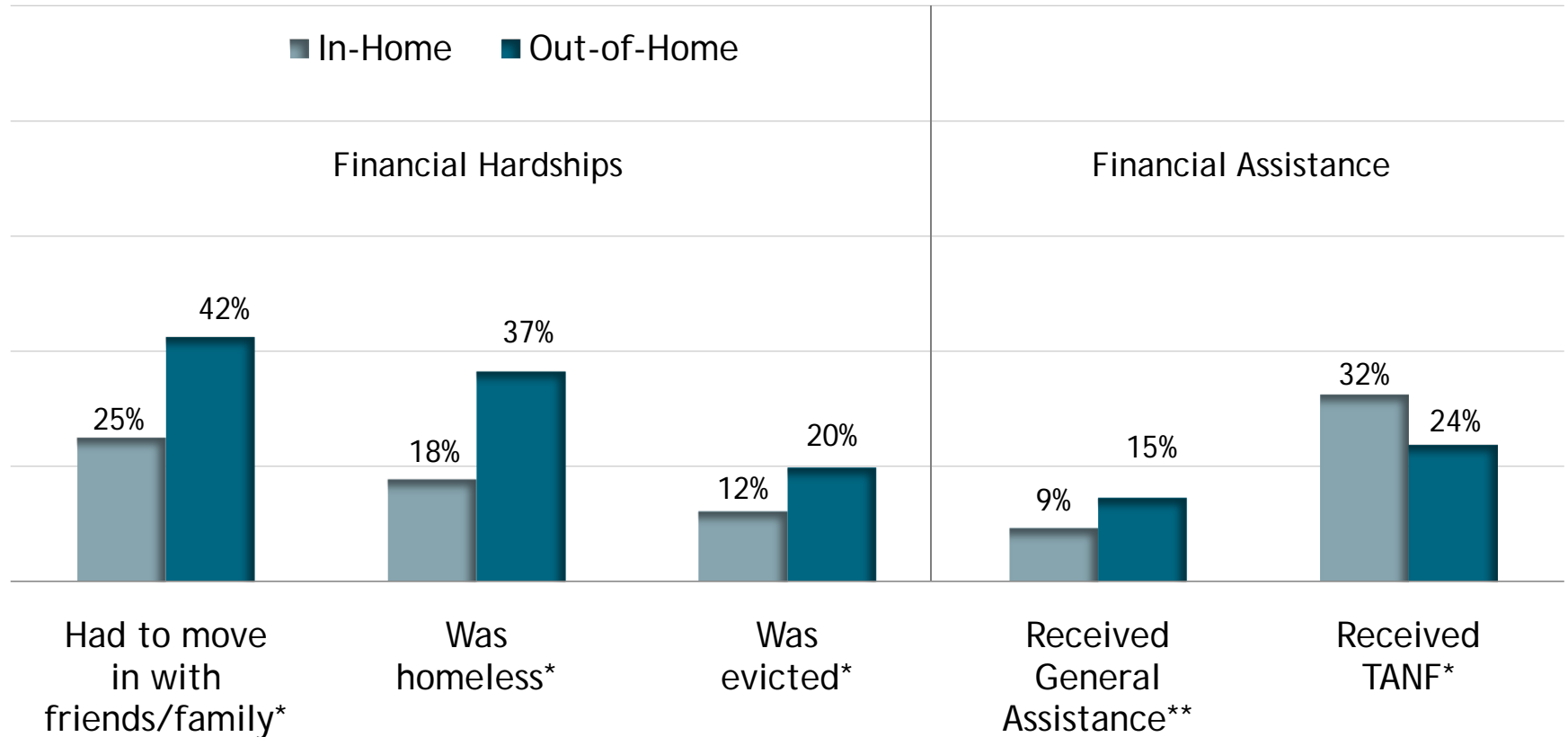
Parent reported financial assistance

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Differences in financial hardships and assistance: Children in-home vs. out-of-home

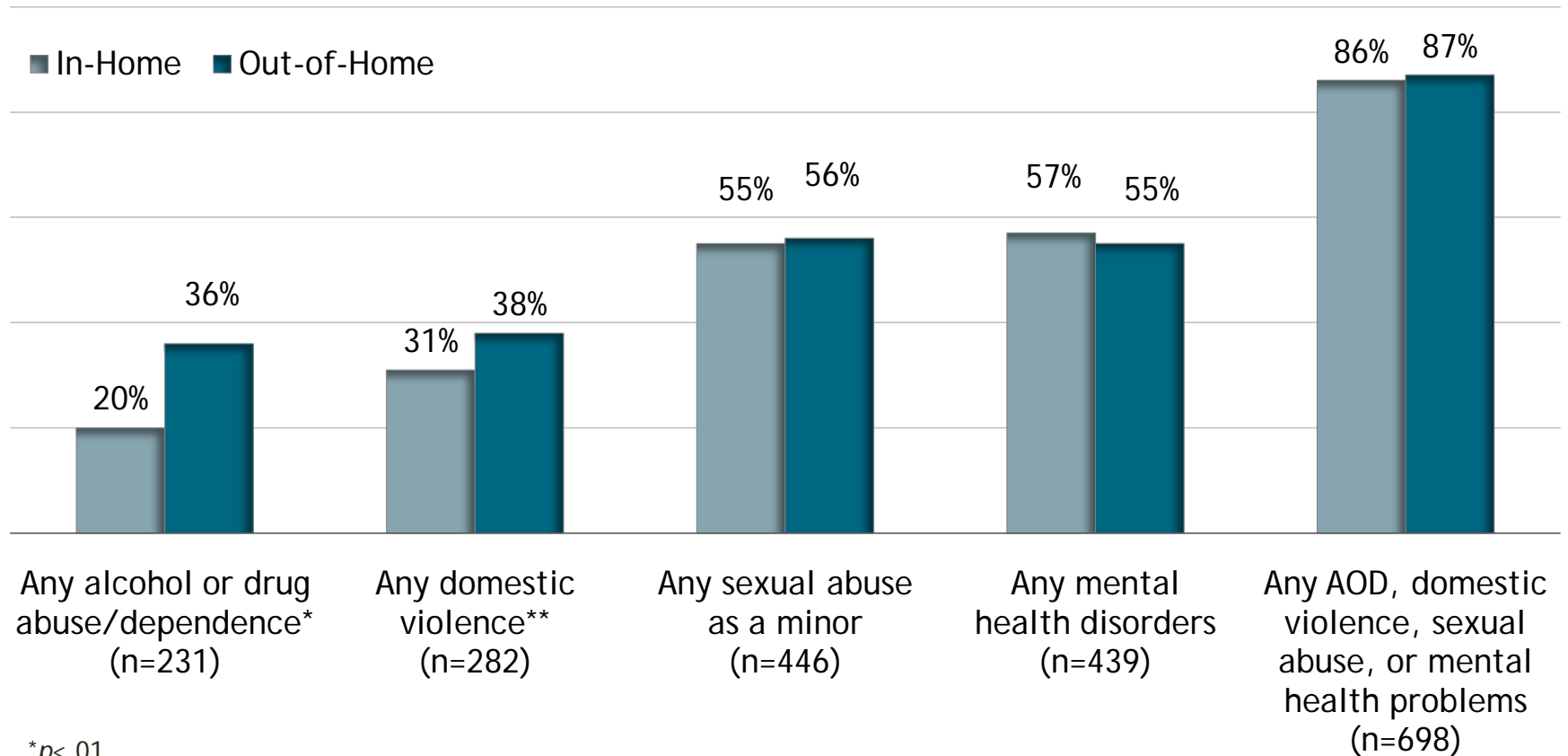
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* $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

Differences in parents' personal challenges: Children in-home vs. out-of-home

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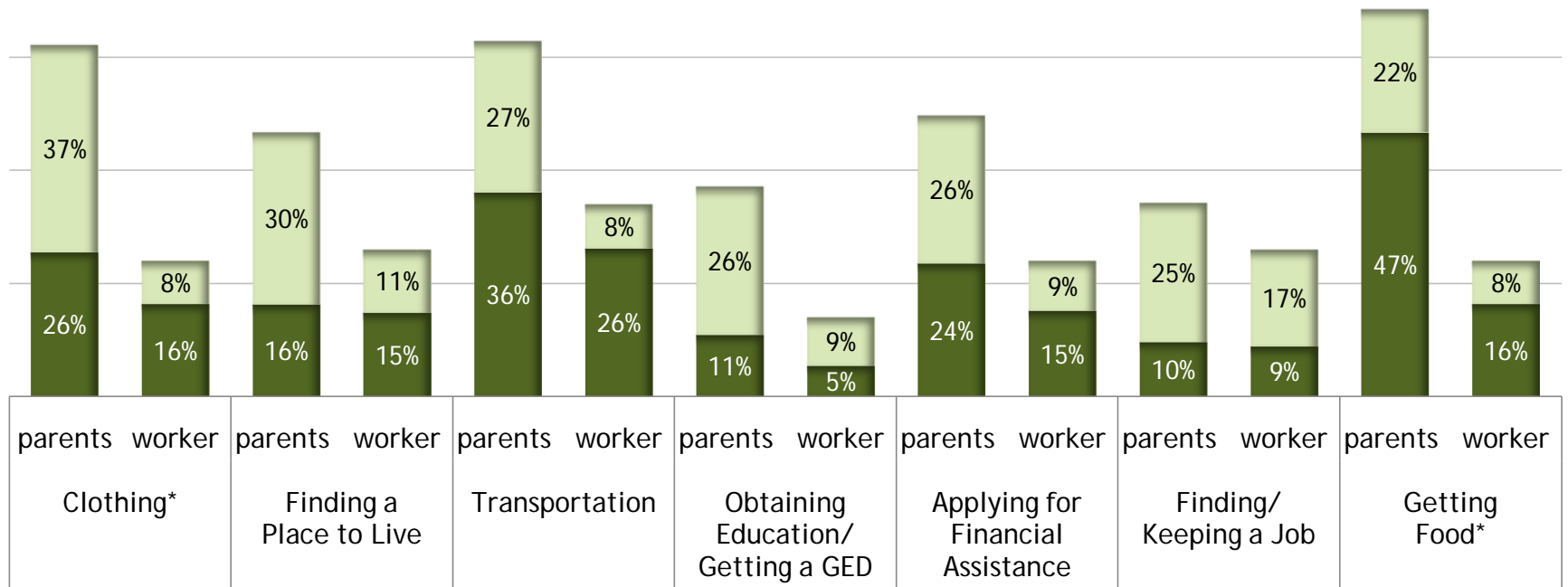


* $p < .01$

** $p < .05$

Services for basic needs

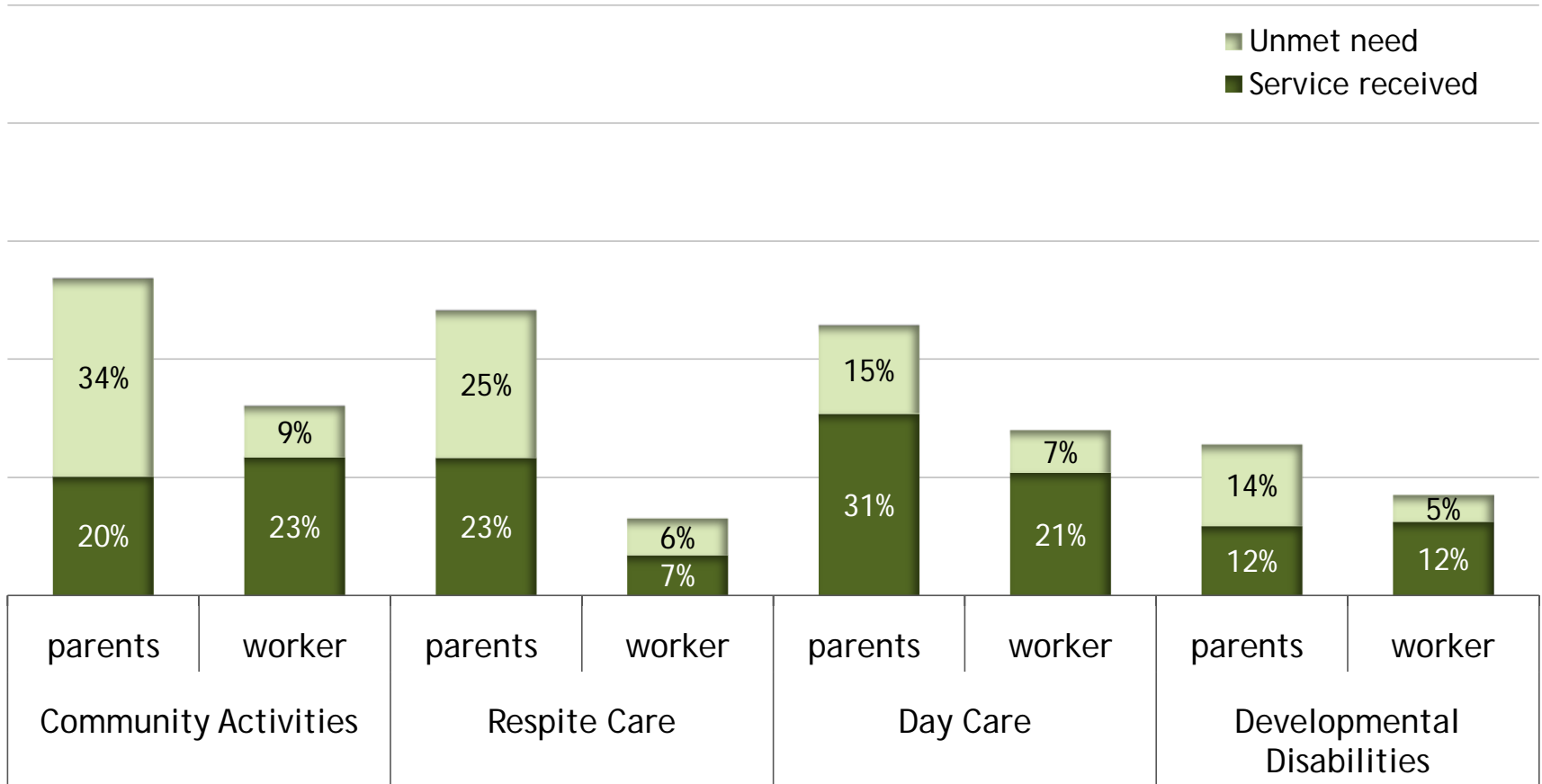
■ Unmet need
■ Service received



*Workers were asked about clothing and food in the same question

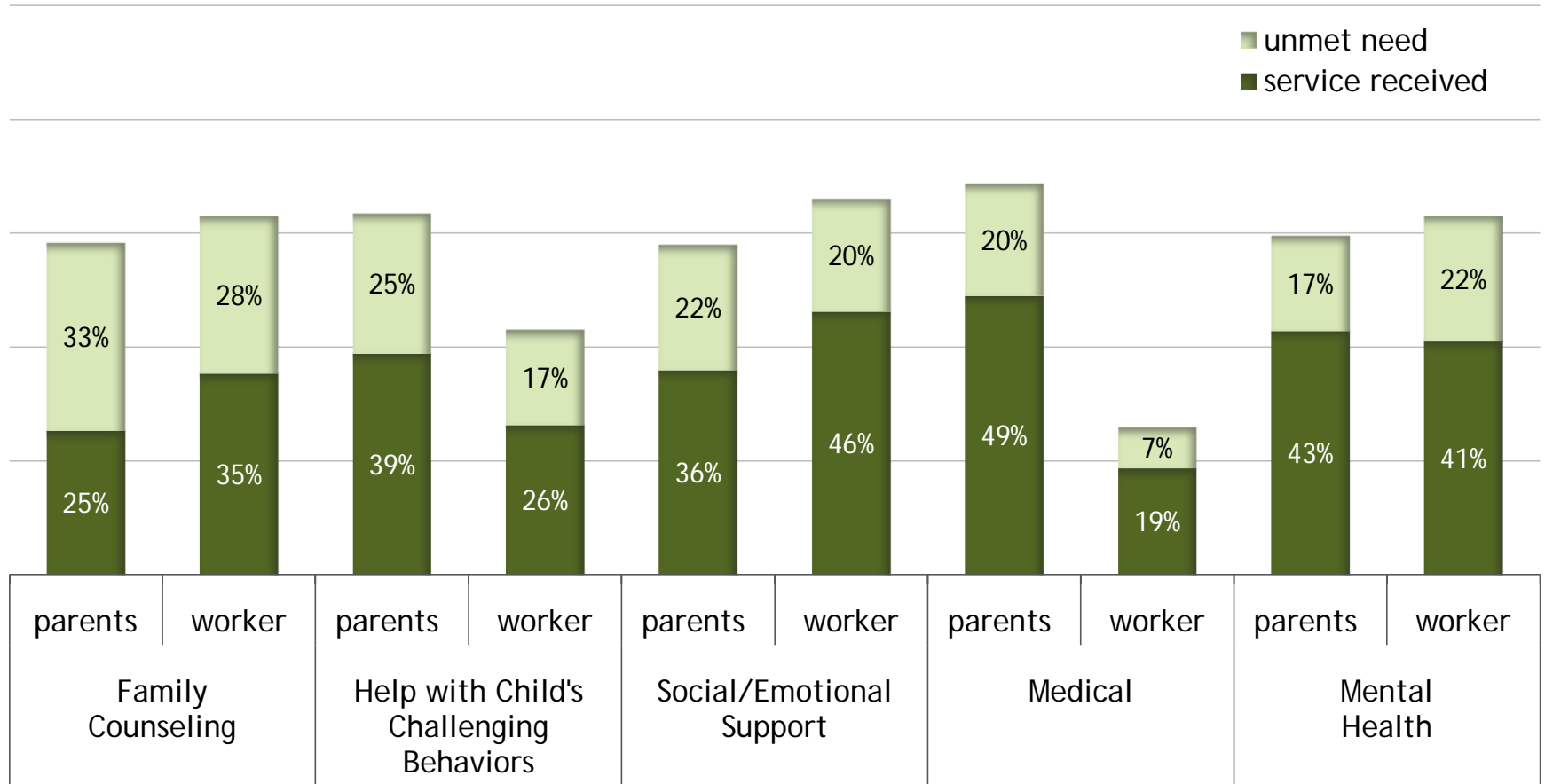
Services for children

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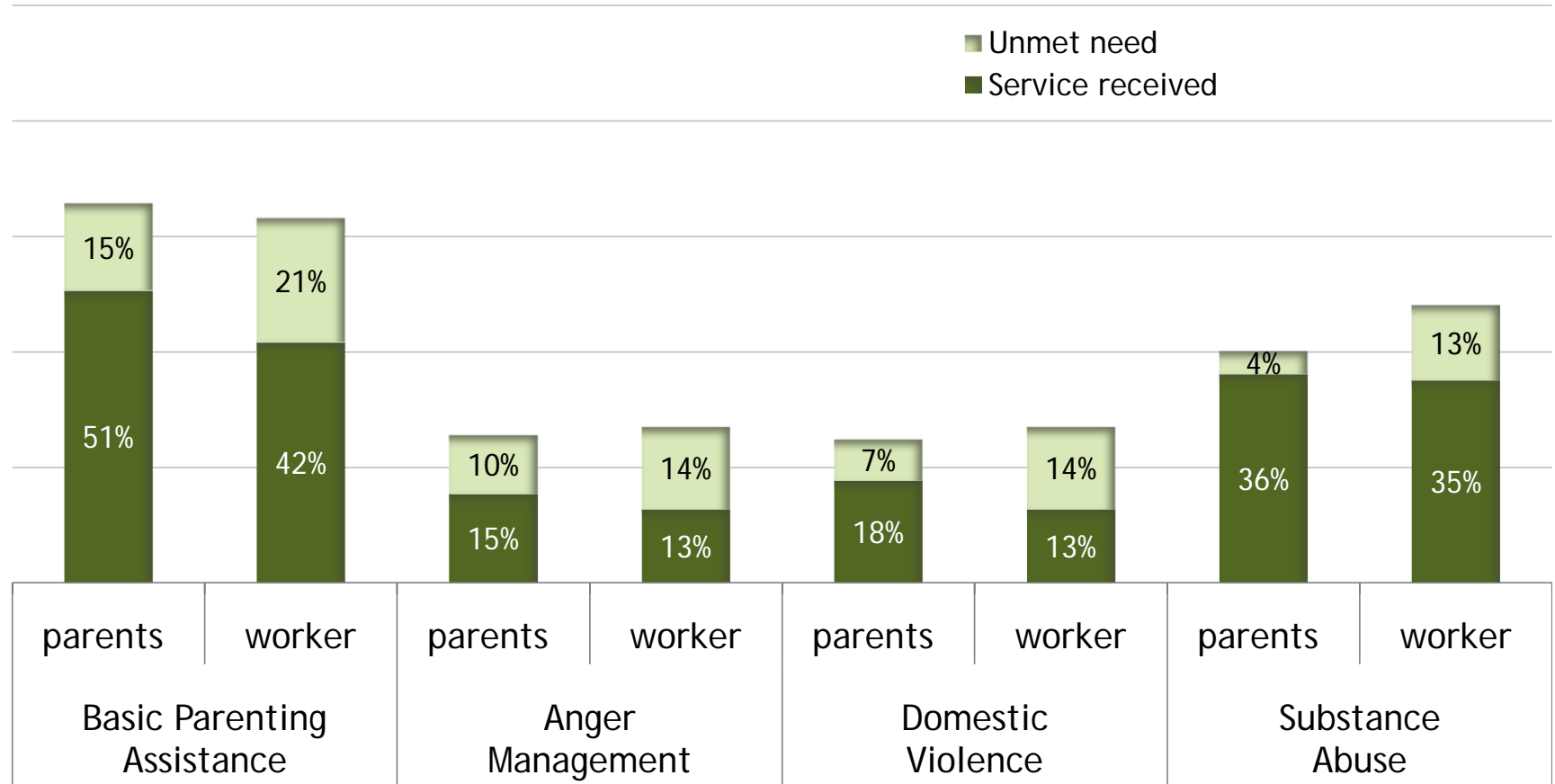
Services for parents' psychological and emotional health

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Services for parents' psychological and emotional health (cont'd.)

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Top ten perceived service needs

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Parents	%	Social workers	%
Getting food	69	<i>Social/emotional support</i>	66
<i>Basic parenting</i>	66	<i>Family counseling</i>	63
<i>Child's challenging behaviors</i>	63	<i>Mental health</i>	63
Clothing	62	<i>Basic parenting</i>	63
<i>Transportation</i>	63	Substance abuse	48
<i>Mental health</i>	59	<i>Child behavior management</i>	43
<i>Family counseling</i>	59	<i>Transportation</i>	34
<i>Social/emotional support</i>	58	Domestic violence	32
Applying for financial assistance	50	Anger management	27
Finding a place to live	47	Help with employment	26

Parents and workers did not always agree on what families needed

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Parents were more likely than workers to report unmet needs. In particular, parents reported they needed basic services such as food, clothing, transportation, and help finding a place to live.



Workers were just as likely as parents to identify mental health, basic parenting, anger management, domestic violence, and substance abuse needs as unmet.

Now let's peel back the onion on engagement

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- ✓ How was parent and worker engagement measured?
- ✓ How engaged are parents and workers?



- ✓ What factors are associated with parents' and workers' levels of engagement?

How was parents' engagement measured?

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- Parents' engagement was measured using a standardized scale (Yatchmenoff Engagement Scale, 2005), with four sub-scales:
 - *Buy-In*: "I believe my family will get the help we really need from CPS."
 - *Trust*: "Anything I say they're going to turn it around to make me look bad."
 - *Receptivity*: "I realize I need some help to make sure my kids have what they need."
 - *Working Relationship*: "I think my worker and I respect each other."

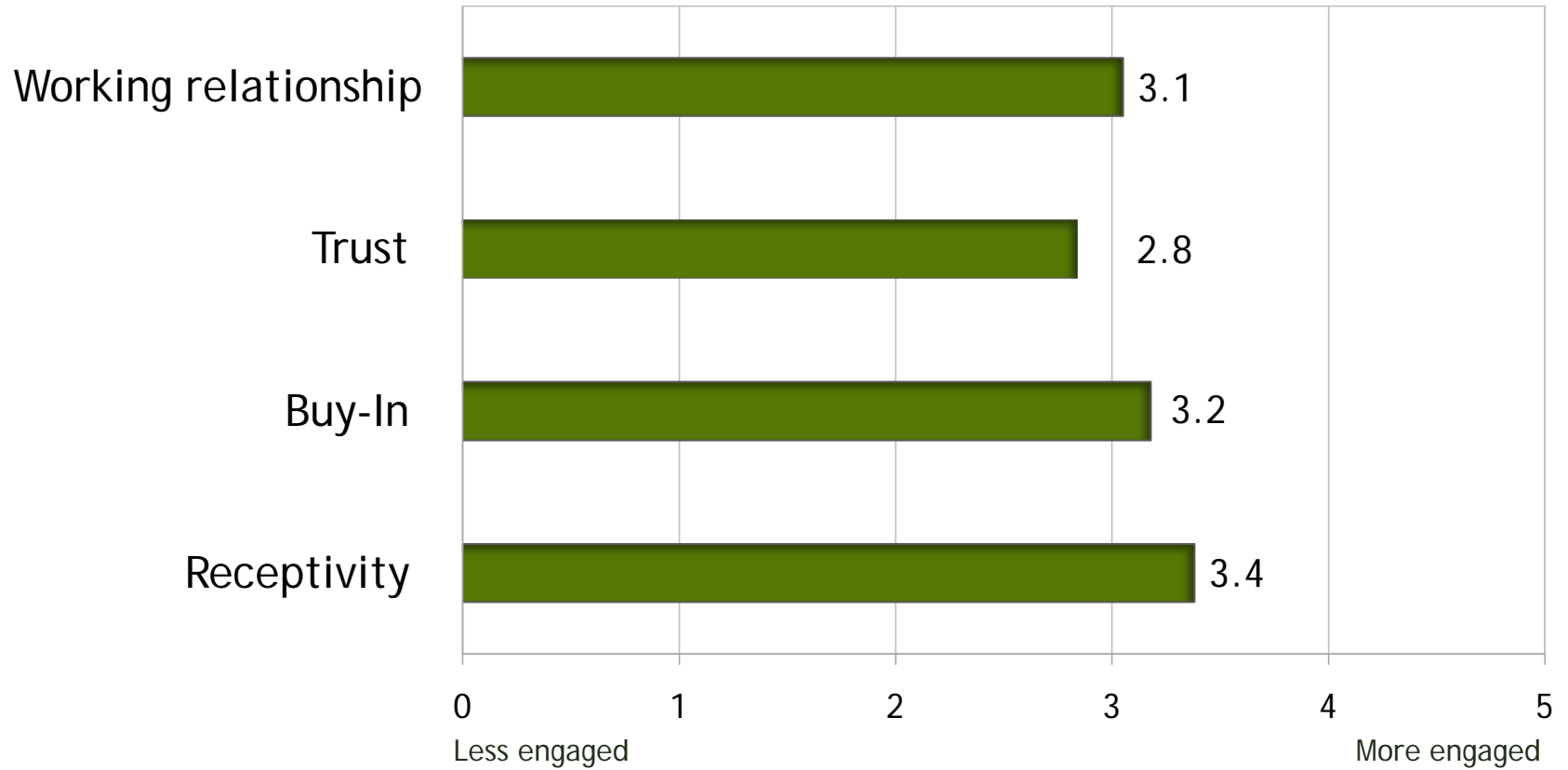
How was workers' engagement measured?

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- Social workers' engagement was measured in two ways:
 - workers' *attitudes* towards engagement strategies as measured by an "Approach to Families" scale (for all 1,448 workers)
 - workers' actual *use* of engagement practices as measured by a second "Approach to Families" scale (responded to by the 969 workers who referenced a specific case)

Parent engagement¹

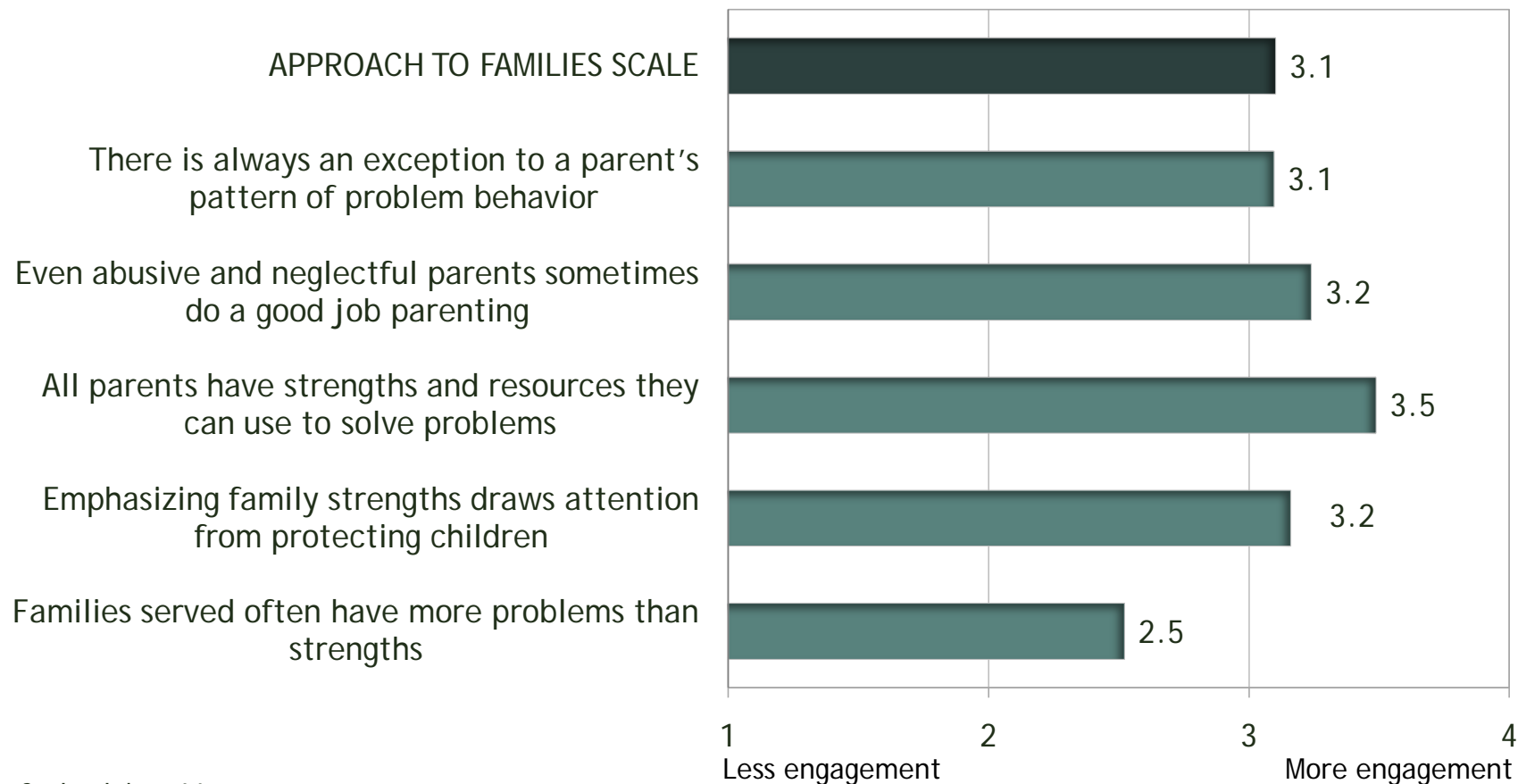
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¹Yatchmenoff Engagement Sub-Scales

Workers' *attitude* towards engagement strategies

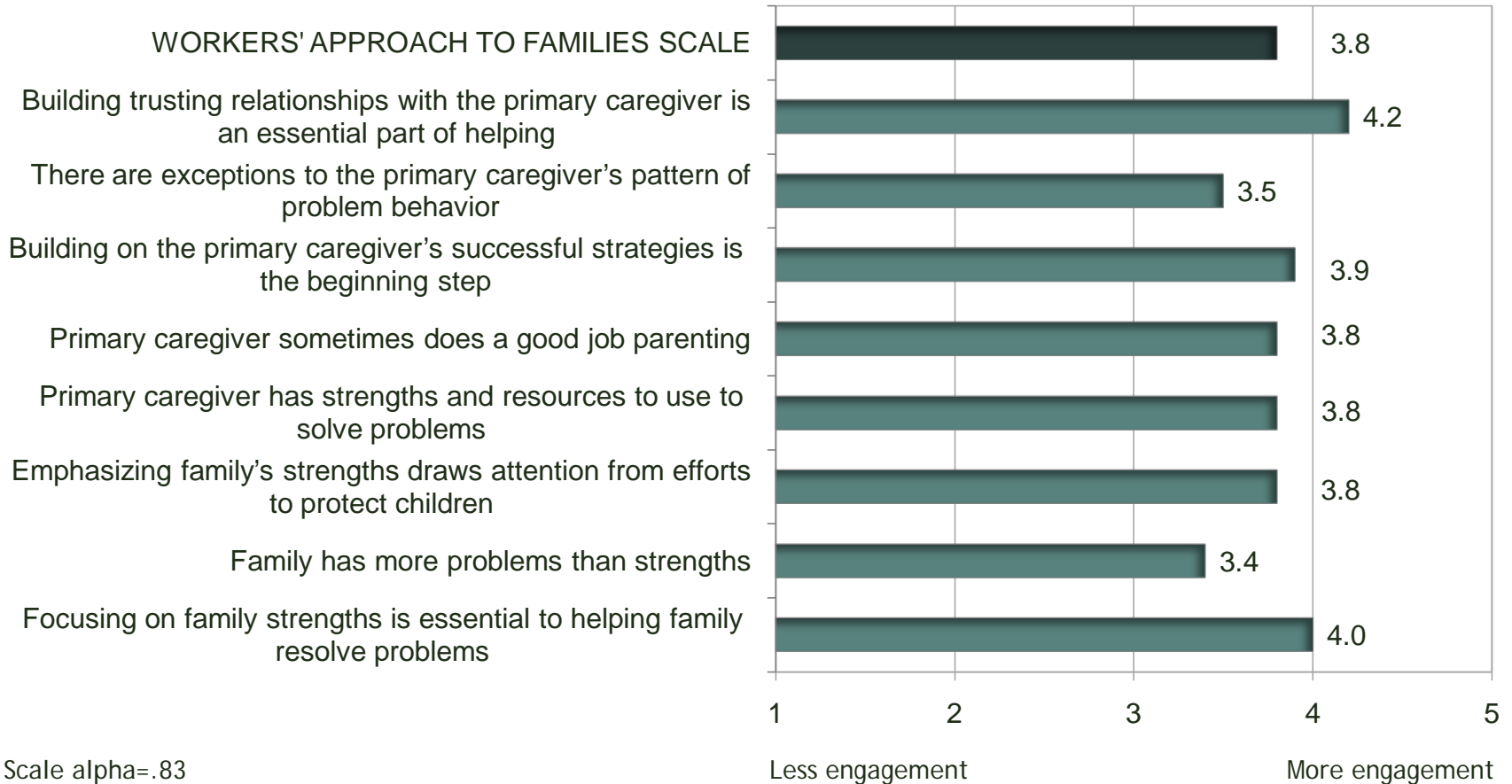
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Scale alpha=.64

Workers' *use* of engagement strategies

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What factors are associated with parents' experiences of engagement?

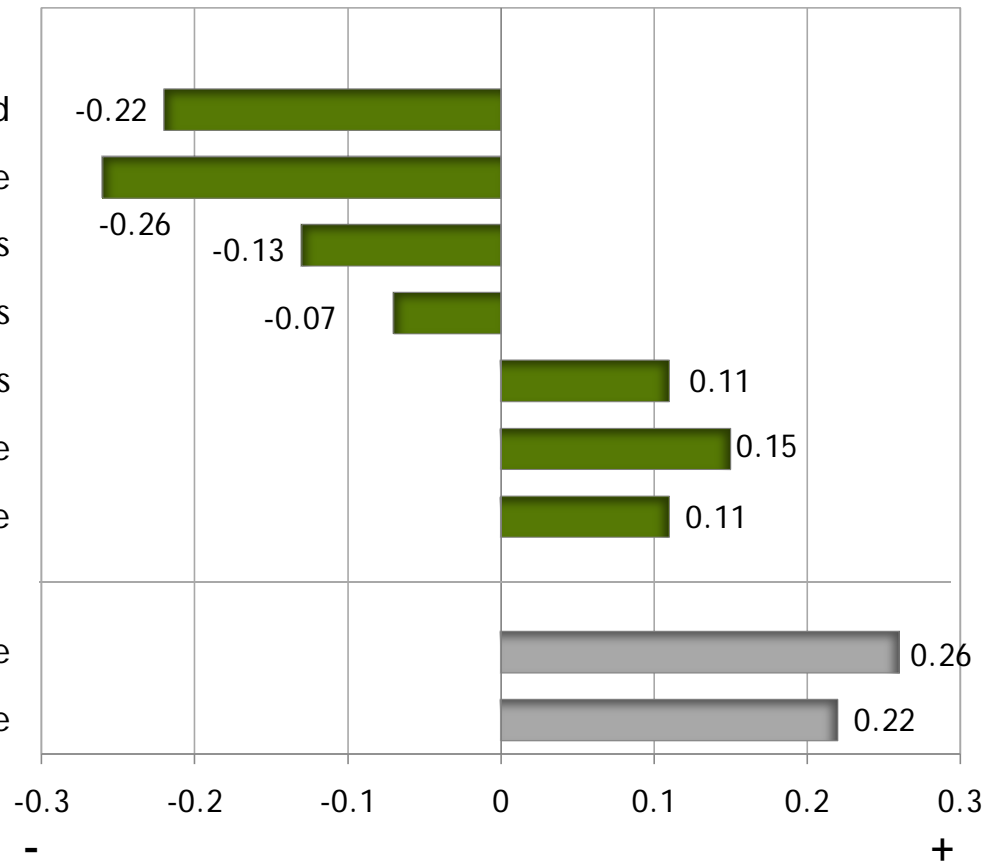
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Family characteristics

- Married or partnered
- Child in out-of-home care
- Unmet basic needs
- Unmet psychological/health needs
- Number of hardships
- Number of types of assistance
- Parental Stress Scale

*Organizational/office characteristics*¹

- Workers' approach/attitude by office
- Medium office size



¹Workers' approach by office uses the Workers' Approach to Families *attitude* scale

Family characteristics associated with parents' experiences of engagement

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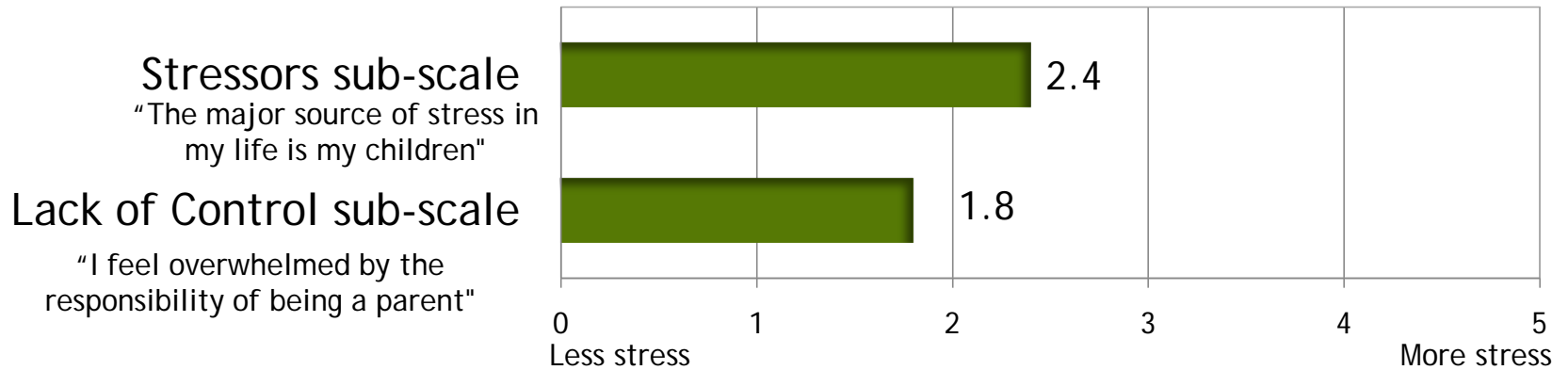
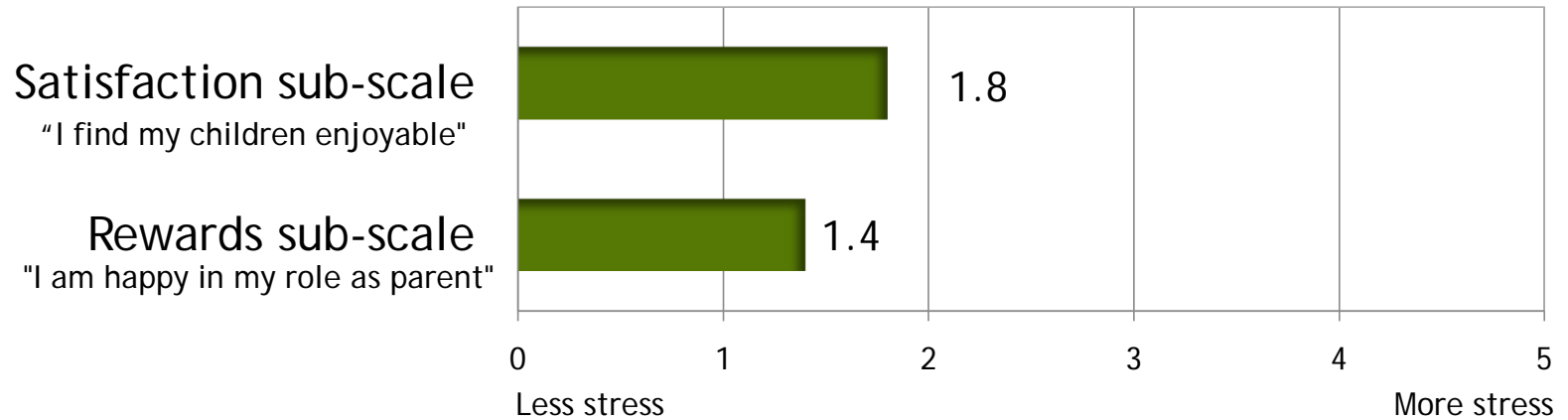
	N=809
Child in out-of-home care	57%
	Mean
Average number of unmet basic needs (out of 9)	2.4
Average number of unmet psychological/health needs (out of 9)	1.5
Average number of financial hardships (out of 10) ¹	3.6
Average number of types of financial assistance (out of 6) ²	1.7

¹Past 12 months: not had enough money to pay an important bill, to buy clothing or shoes, or pay the rent or mortgage; gone to a food pantry/community meal program; been unable to buy enough food for family; had to move in with family or friends; been homeless; been evicted; had furniture/car/other belongings repossessed; or had utilities shut off.

²Past 12 months: Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, General Assistance; food stamps; Social Security Disability; public housing; or cash from family/friends.

Parental Stress Scale

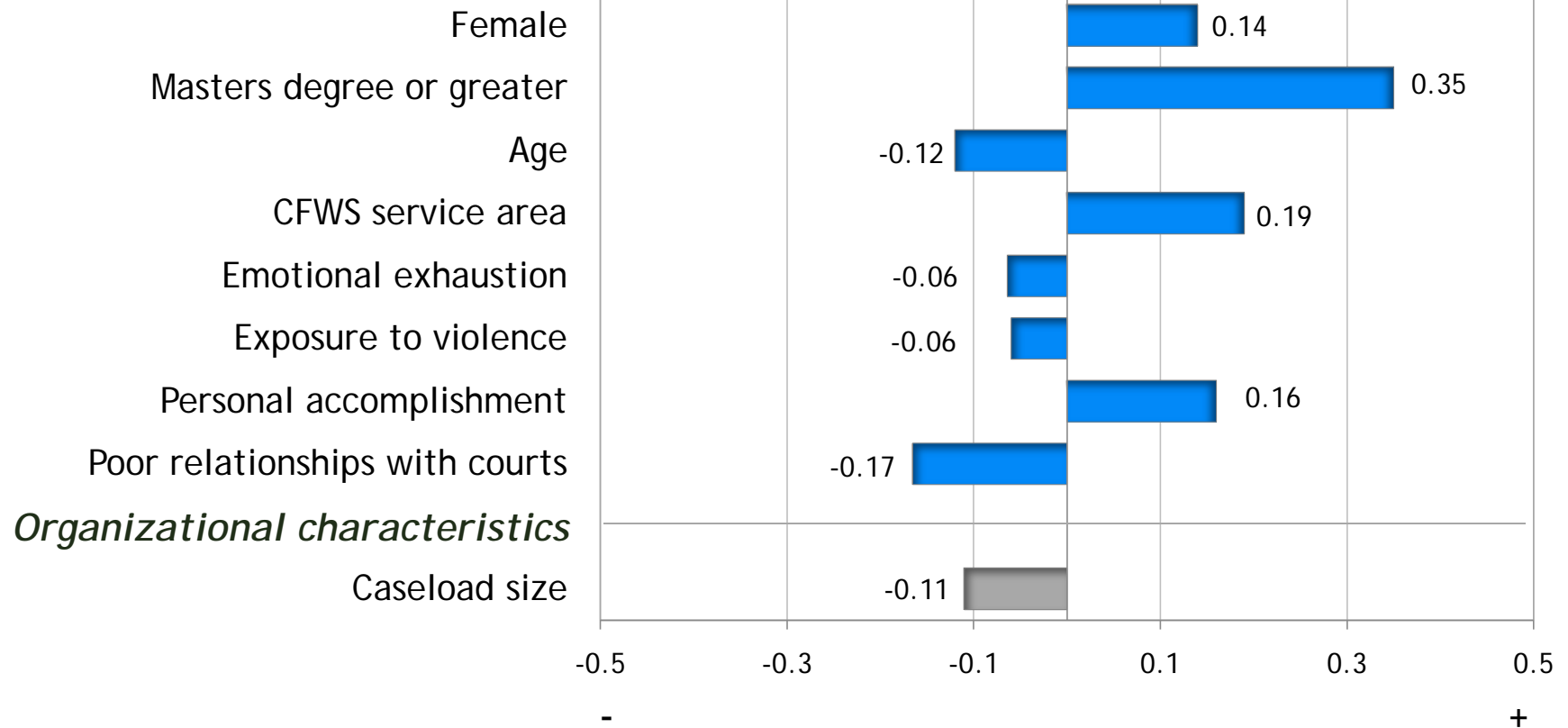
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What factors are associated with social workers' *attitudes* towards engagement?

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Social worker characteristics



Workers' emotional exhaustion

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	Mean (n=958)
I feel emotionally drained from my work	3.0
I feel used up at the end of the workday	3.2
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job	2.7
I feel burned out from my work	2.3
I feel frustrated by my job	2.6
EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION SCALE	2.8

Scale: 1=less than a few times a year/never, 2=a few times a month, 3=once a week, 4=a few times a week, 5=every day
Scale alpha=.81

Workers' exposure to violence

34

	Mean (n=958)
Does your work expose you to threats and violence?	2.9

Scale: 1=never/very seldom, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always/very often

Workers' personal accomplishment

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	Mean (n=956)
I can deal very effectively with the problems of families	4.4
I feel my work makes a positive difference in people's lives	3.9
I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with families	4.2
I feel exhilarated after working closely with families	3.2
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job	3.7
I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment from my work	3.7
PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT SCALE	3.9

Scale: 1=less than a few times a year/never, 2=a few times a month, 3=once a week, 4=a few times a week, 5=every day
Scale alpha=.80

Workers' relationships with the courts

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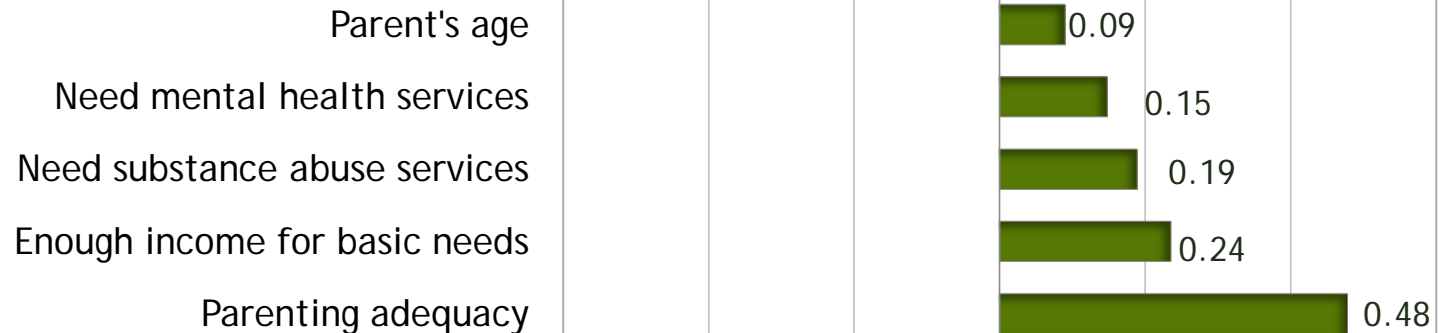
	Mean (n=958)
The quality of working relationships with court liaisons	1.9
The quality of working relationships with attorneys	2.1
The quality of working relationships with CASA, guardians ad litem, or other child advocates	1.9
The quality of working relationships with judges	2.1
It is difficult to use new approaches to helping families because of pressures from the court	2.3
RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COURTS SCALE	2.1

Scale: 1=no obstacle at all, 2=slight obstacle, 3=moderate obstacle, 4=significant obstacle; scale alpha=.86

What factors are associated with social workers' *use* of engagement practices?^{1, 2}

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Family characteristics*



Social worker characteristics

Years in position

-0.08

Organizational/office characteristics

Fewer obstacles to new approaches

0.08

-0.6 -0.4 -0.2 0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6
- +

¹using the Workers' Approach to Families Scale for a specific case

²R² = .35

*As assessed or reported by social worker

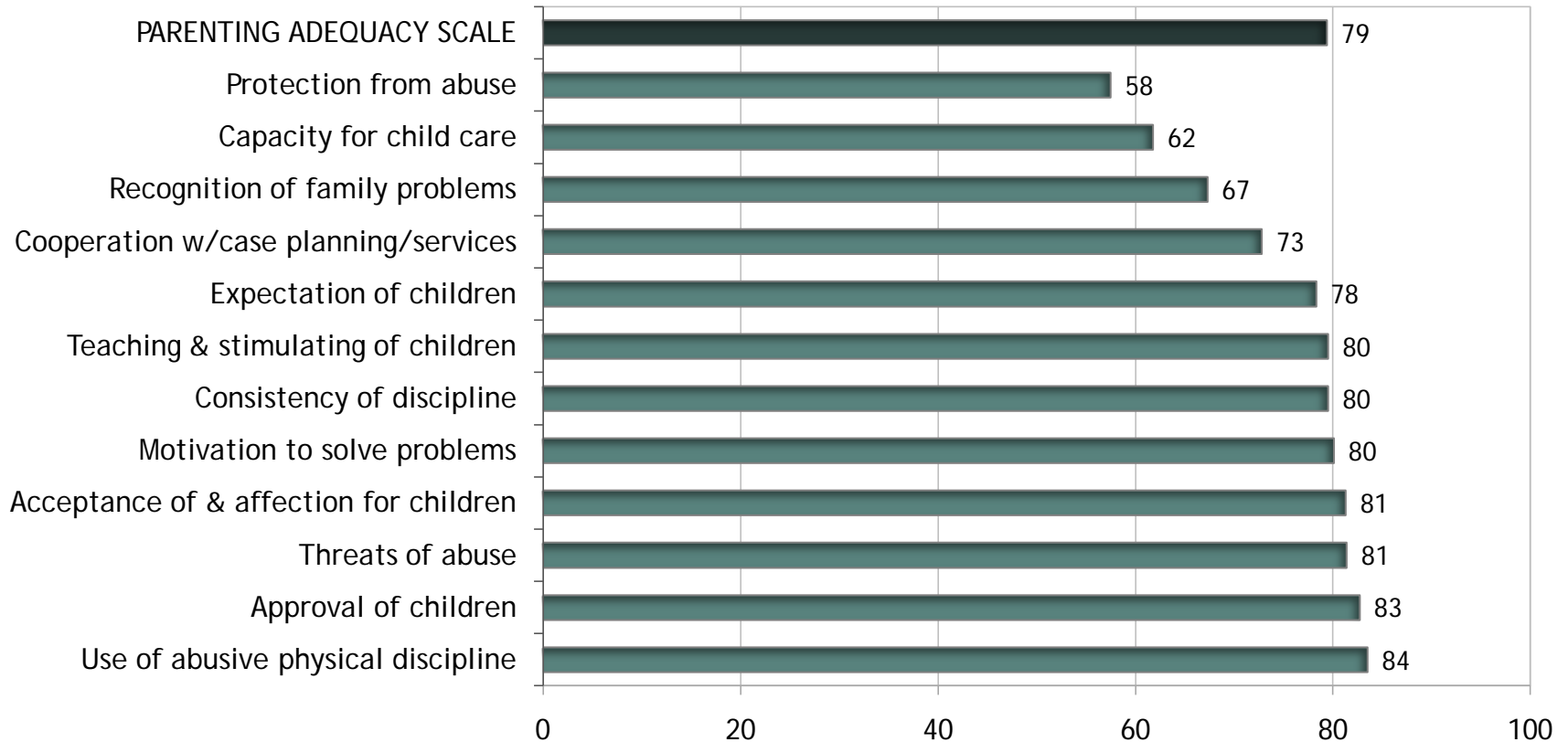
Family characteristics associated with social workers' use of engagement strategies

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	% (n=969)
Worker assessed that parent needed mental health services	51
Worker assessed that parent needed substance abuse services	18
Worker reported parents do not have enough income for basic needs	34

Workers' assessment of parenting adequacy

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Each question is ranked from 1 to 100: 1 is the least and 100 is the most adequate parenting; scale alpha=.89

Workers' obstacles to new approaches

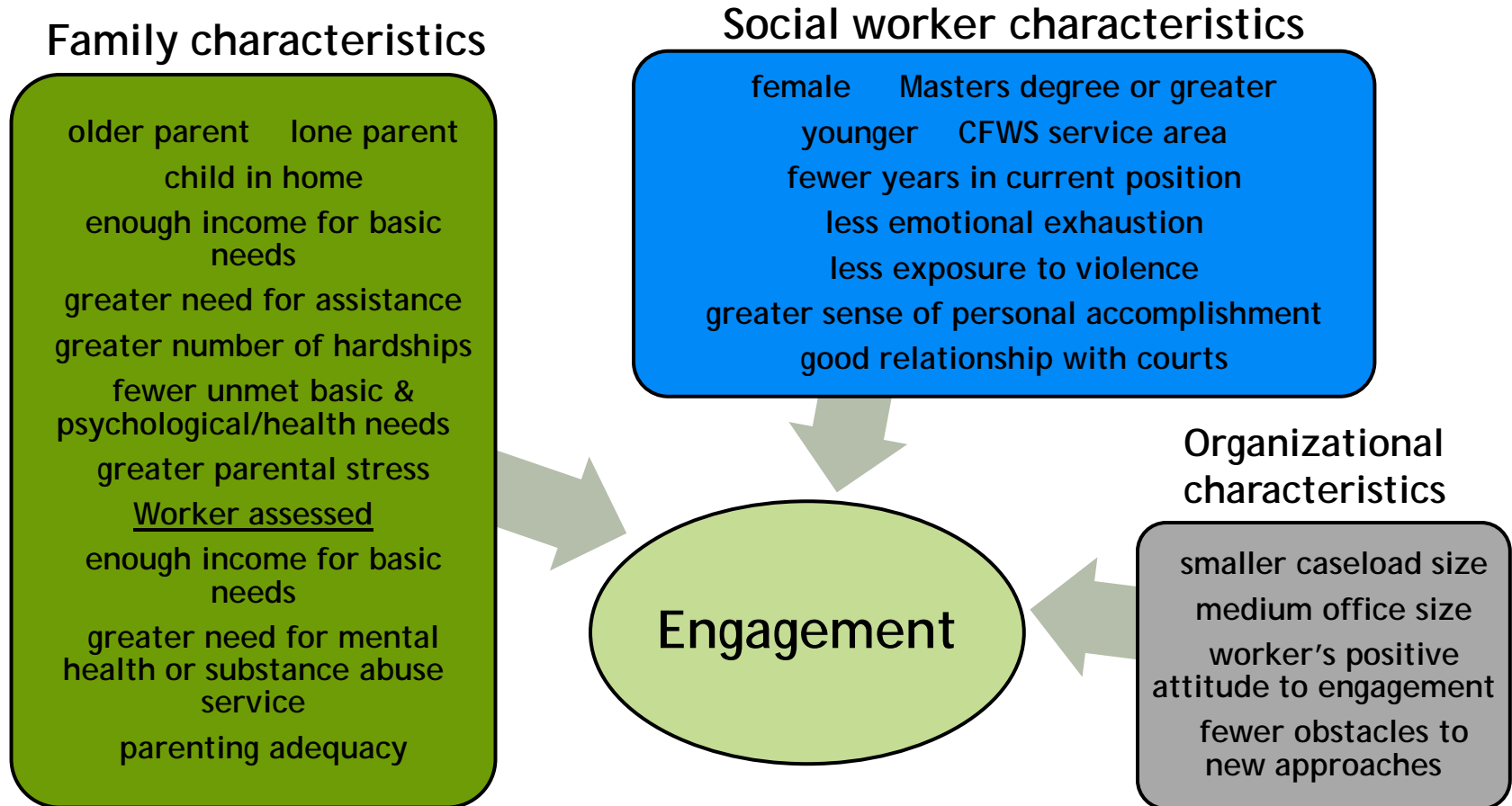
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It is difficult to use new approaches to helping families because . . .	Mean (n=913)
the organizational support is not provided	2.9
of all my other responsibilities	2.7
media or political pressure on Children's Administration	2.3
OBSTACLES TO NEW APPROACHES SCALE	2.6

Scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=strongly agree
Scale alpha=.71

Positive influences on engagement

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Positive influences on engagement: Parent/Family characteristics

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- older parent
- lone parent
- child in home
- greater need for assistance (e.g., TANF, cash from family)
- greater number of hardships (e.g., homeless, unable to pay utilities)
- fewer *unmet* basic needs
- fewer *unmet* psychological or health needs
- greater parental stress
- enough income for basic needs (worker assessed)
- greater need for mental health services (worker assessed)
- greater need for substance abuse services (worker assessed)
- positive assessment of parenting adequacy (worker assessed)

Positive influences on engagement: Social worker characteristics

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- female
- younger
- Masters degree or greater
- fewer years in current position
- CFWS service area
- less emotional exhaustion
- less exposure to violence
- greater sense of personal accomplishment
- good relationships with the courts

Positive influences on engagement: Organizational/Office characteristics

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- smaller caseload size
- medium office size (compared to small or large)
- social worker's positive attitude to engagement
- social worker's perception of fewer obstacles to new approaches

Next steps

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- Work with you to interpret findings
- Continue sharing findings within CA as well as with external audiences
- Engage broader audiences
- Continue SBC evaluation:
 - Connect family, worker, and office characteristics to child and family *outcomes* (e.g., reunification)
 - Post-SBC implementation follow-up surveys and evaluation

Where to get more information:

- Reports
 - Parent Survey Interim Report
 - Worker Survey Interim Report
 - Supervisor Survey Interim Report
- Fact Sheets

Contact

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POC website:

<http://www.partnersforourchildren.org/>

Tessa Keating at POC: 206-221-3100

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