



# Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents

March 2012



# Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents Chart Book

Telephone survey data collected by Woelfel Research, Inc.  
In-depth Interviews conducted by Alan Newman Research

Report Prepared by Cheryl L. Lampkin, Ph.D.

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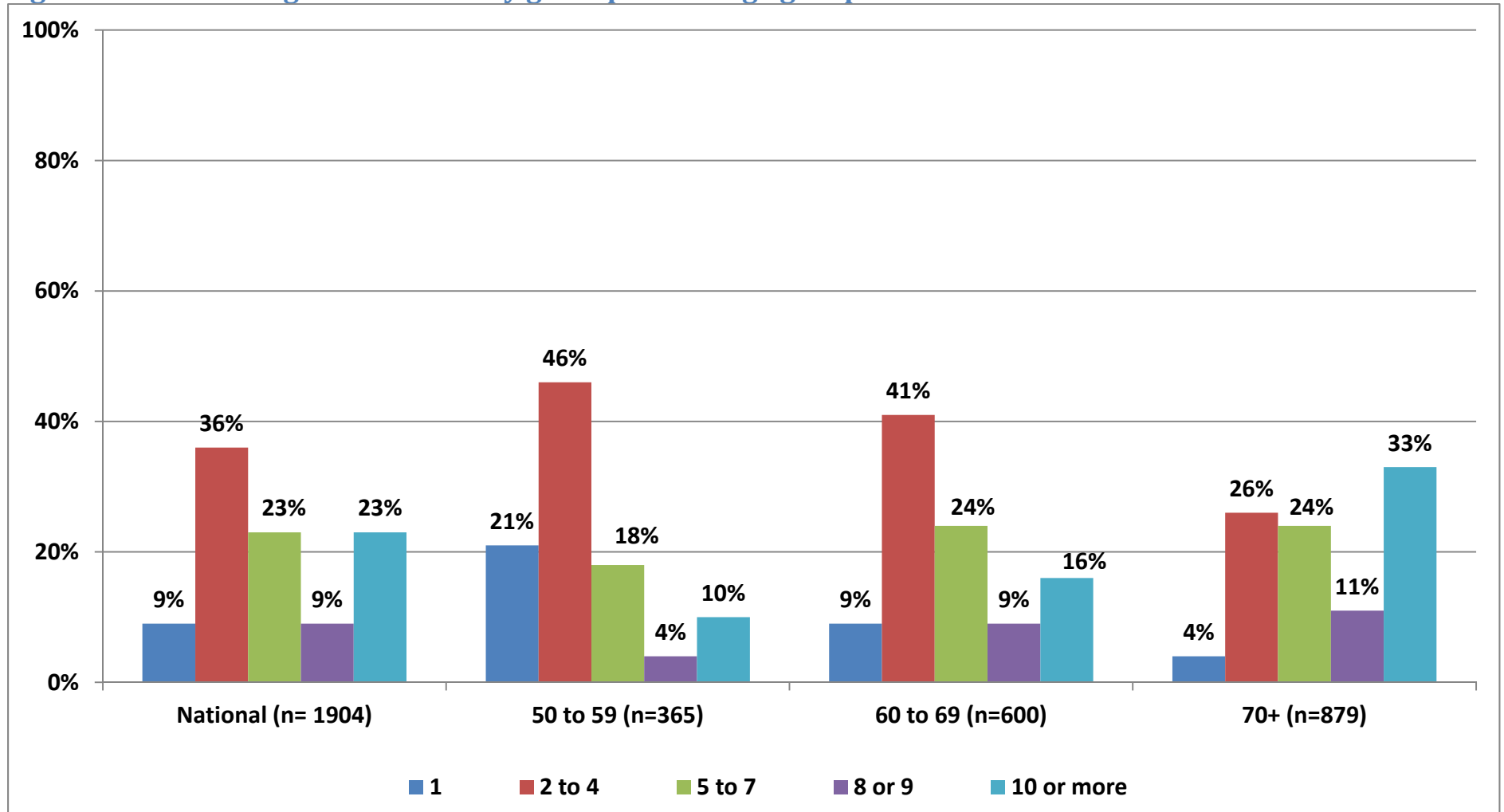
## **Acknowledgements**

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**Number of grandchildren.** Nearly half (46%) of grandparents 50 – 59 have between two and four grandchildren, while roughly four in ten (41%) of those age 60-69 and one-quarter (26%) of those 70 and older have a similar number of grandchildren (see Figure 1).

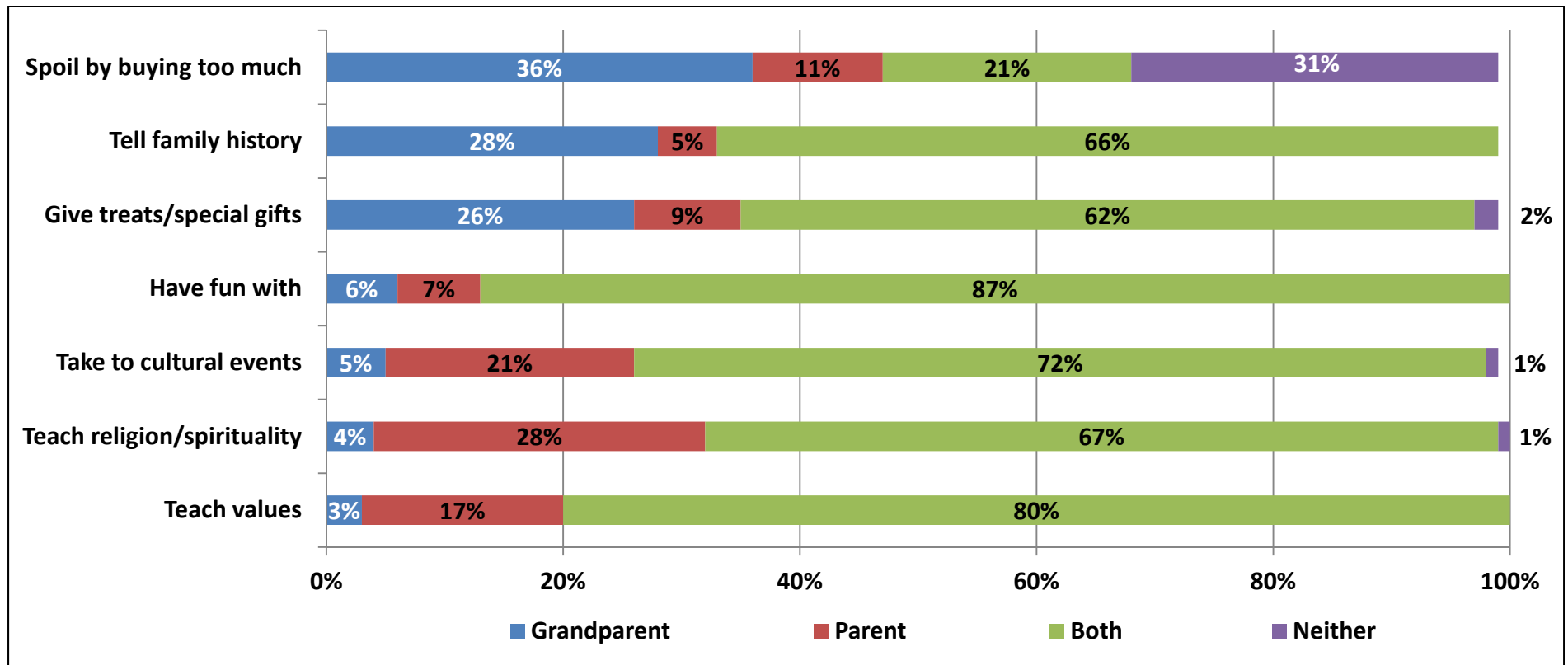
**Figure 1: Number of grandchildren by grandparent’s age group**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Parents’/grandparents’ role.** For the most part, grandparents think it is both the grandparents’ and parents’ role to do or provide the featured items listed (see Figure 2). However, when comparing their role to the parent’s role, more than one-third (36%) see it as their role to spoil their grandchildren by buying them too much, while more than one-quarter see their role as telling family history (28%) or giving treats or special gifts (26%) to their grandchildren. Not surprising, nearly one third (31%) indicated that no one should spoil the child by buying too much.

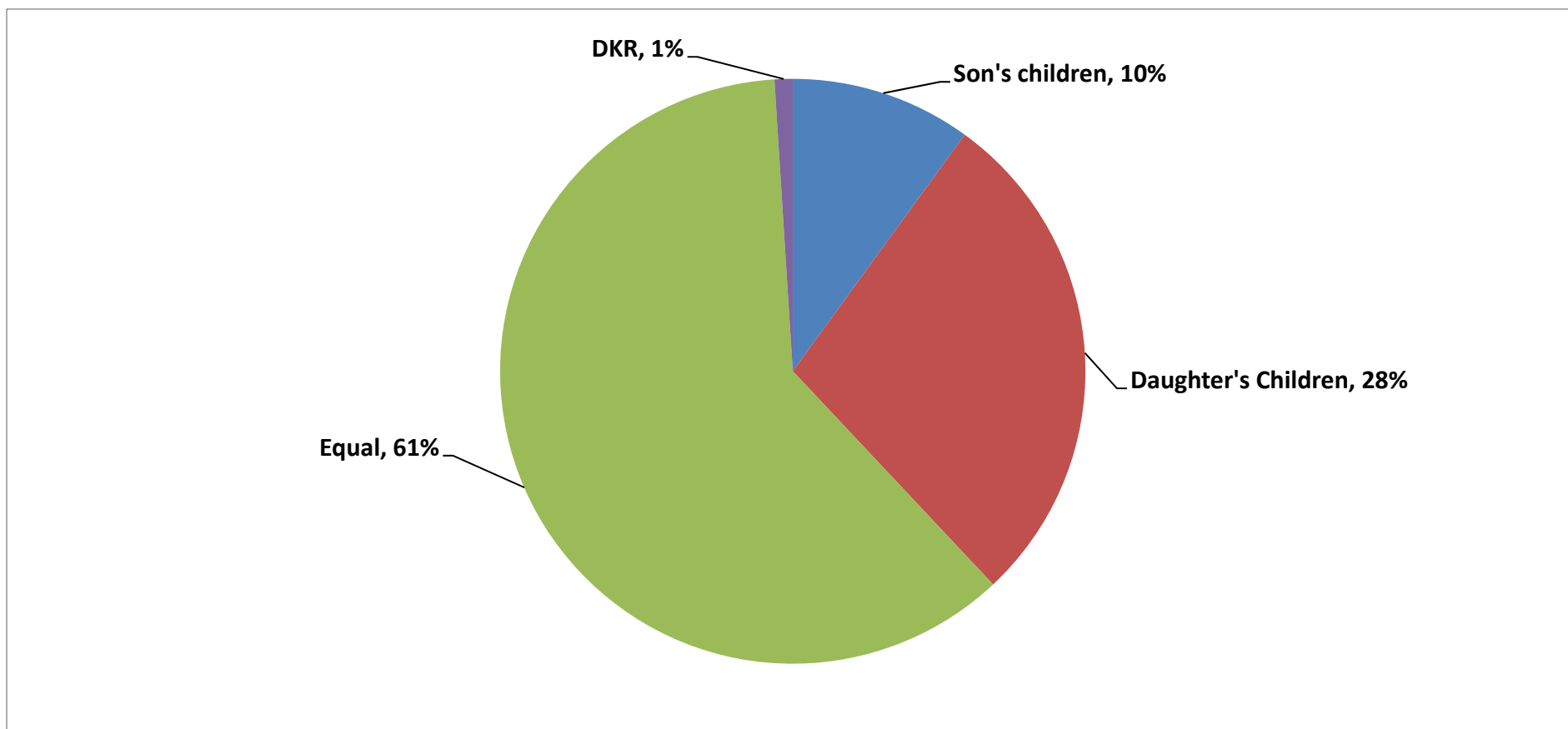
**Figure 2: Who’s role is it too... (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Son/daughter relationship.** About half (49%) of the grandparents surveyed have grandchildren from their sons and daughters (graph not shown) and the majority (61%) say they are equally close to all their grandchildren (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Closer to son's or daughter's children? (=936)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Why closer to grandchildren from son/daughter.** Grandparents who are closer to a grandchild or set of grandchildren most frequently cite proximity as being the reason (see Table 1).

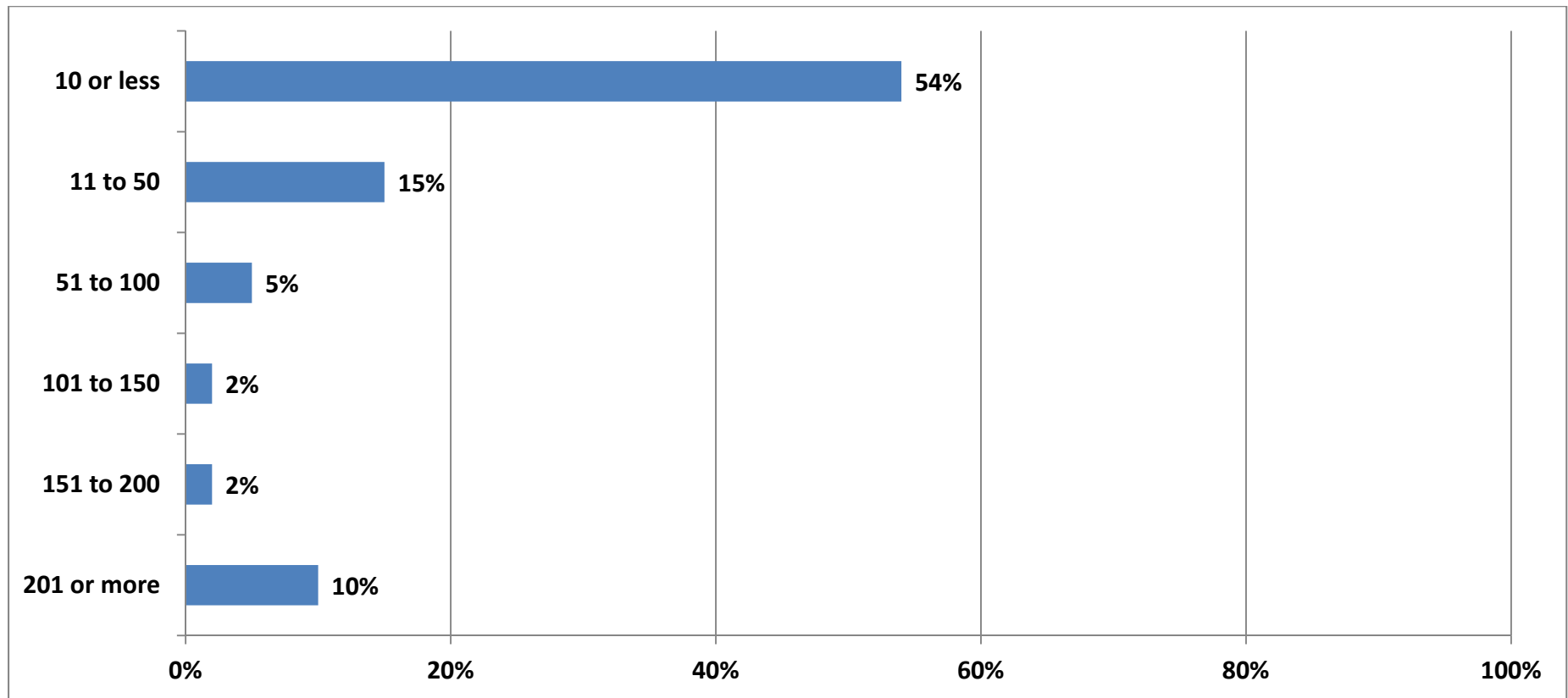
**Table 1: Have closer relationship with son's/daughter's children because...**

|  | <b>Son<br/>(n=90)<br/>%</b> | <b>Daughter<br/>(n=257)<br/>%</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>They live closer/with me</b>                          | <b>74</b>                   | <b>67</b>                         |
| <b>I have a closer relationship with my son/daughter</b> | <b>9</b>                    | <b>18</b>                         |
| <b>He/she is my biological son/daughter</b>              | <b>2</b>                    | <b>4</b>                          |
| <b>My son/daughter's children are older</b>              | <b>1</b>                    | <b>3</b>                          |
| <b>My son/daughter's children are younger</b>            | <b>4</b>                    | <b>2</b>                          |
| <b>My son/daughter-in-law and I don't get along</b>      | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b>                          |
| <b>Other (Specify)</b>                                   | <b>11</b>                   | <b>2</b>                          |
| <b>Don't know/Refused</b>                                | <b>4</b>                    | <b>3</b>                          |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Distance from closest grandchild.** When asked about the grandchildren who live closest to them, 10% of the grandparents surveyed said they have to travel over 200 miles to see them (see Figure 4). More than half (54%) said they travel ten or fewer miles to see their closest grandchild, about one in six (15%) travel 11 to 50 miles and about one in ten (9%) travel between 51 and 200 miles. In contrast, one in ten (10%) grandparents said they travel more than 200 miles to see their closest grandchild.

**Figure 4: Distance from closest grandchildren (n=1700)**

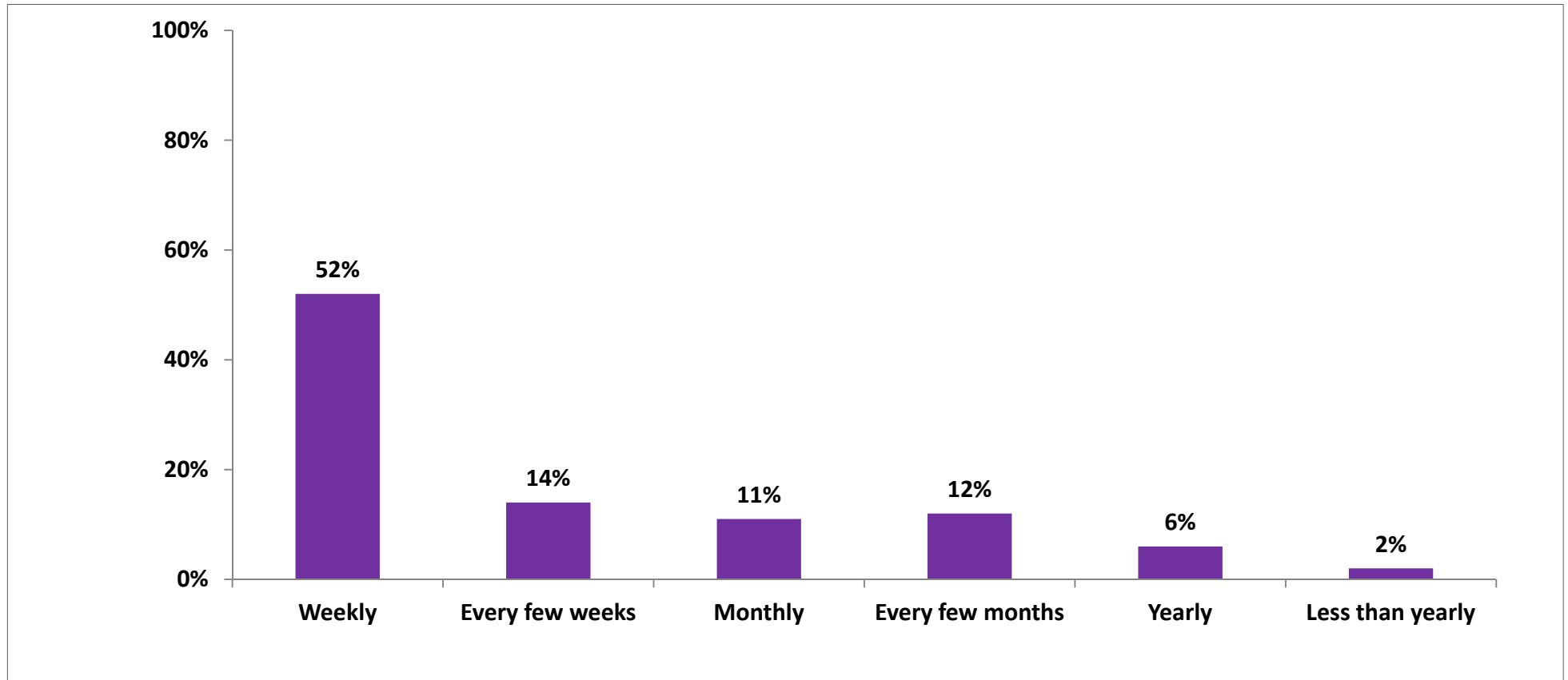


Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012



**Frequency see closest grandchild.** The vast majority (77%) of grandparents see their grandchildren who live closest to them (but do not live with them), at least every month: weekly (52%), every few weeks (14%), and monthly (11%) (see Figure 5).

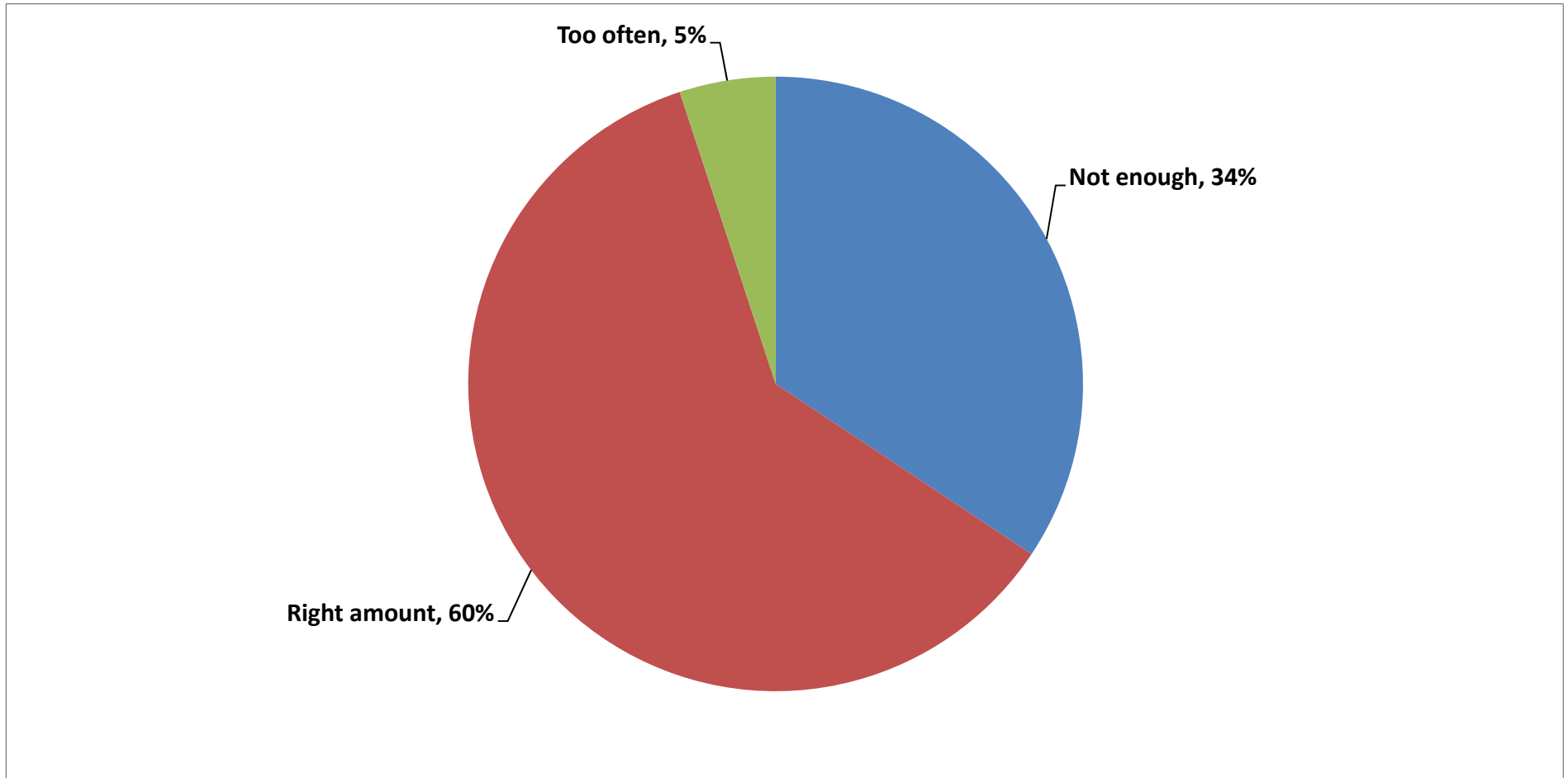
**Figure 5: Frequency see closest grandchildren (n=1529)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Feelings about frequency see closest grandchildren.** Six in ten (60%) of the grandparents said they see their grandchildren who live closest to them about the right amount of time (see Figure 6). A little over one-third (34%) said they do not see their grandchildren enough.

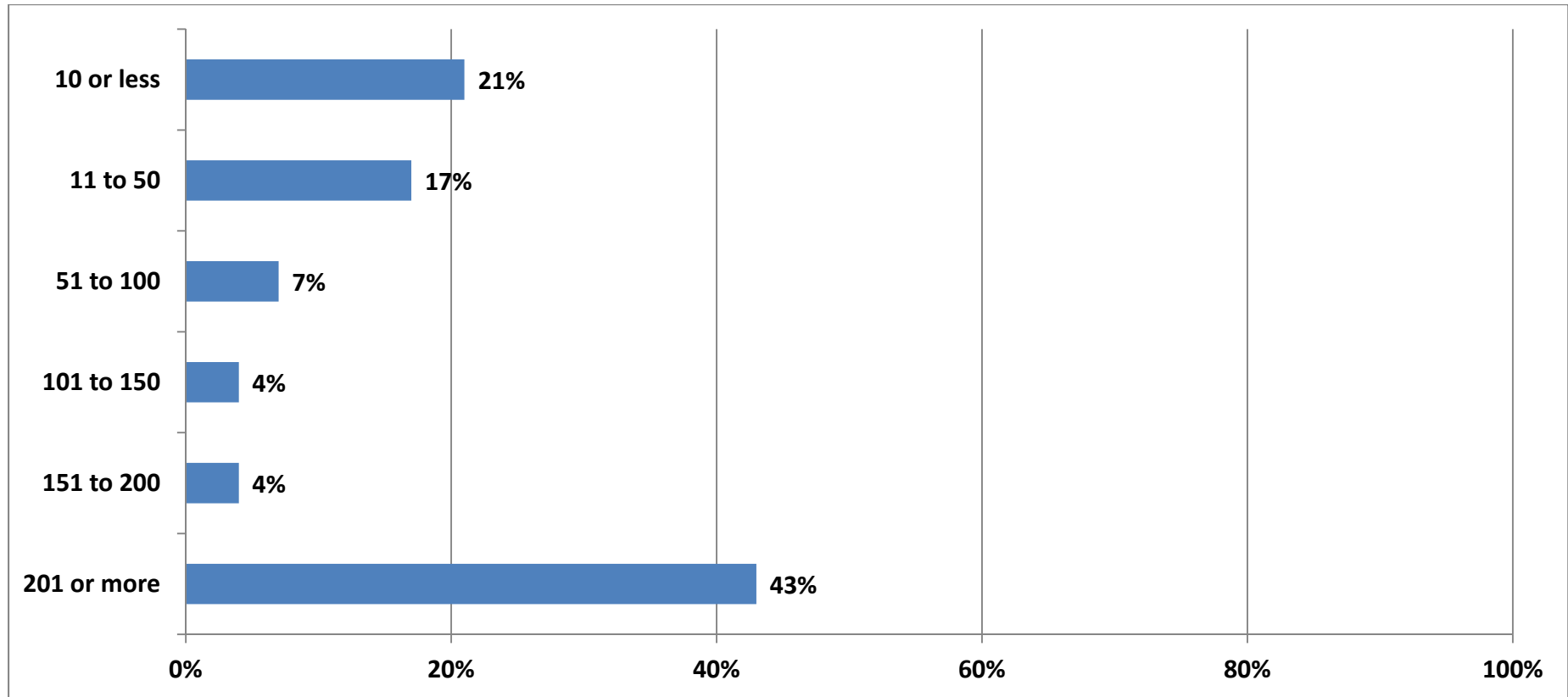
**Figure 6: Feelings about frequency see closest grandchildren (n=1517)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Distance from furthest grandchildren.** When it comes to the grandchild who lives furthest from them, more than four in ten (43%) grandparents said they travel more than 201 miles to see their grandchildren (see Figure 7). About one-fifth (21%), in contrast, report traveling ten or fewer miles, with slightly fewer (17%) traveling 11 to 50 miles.

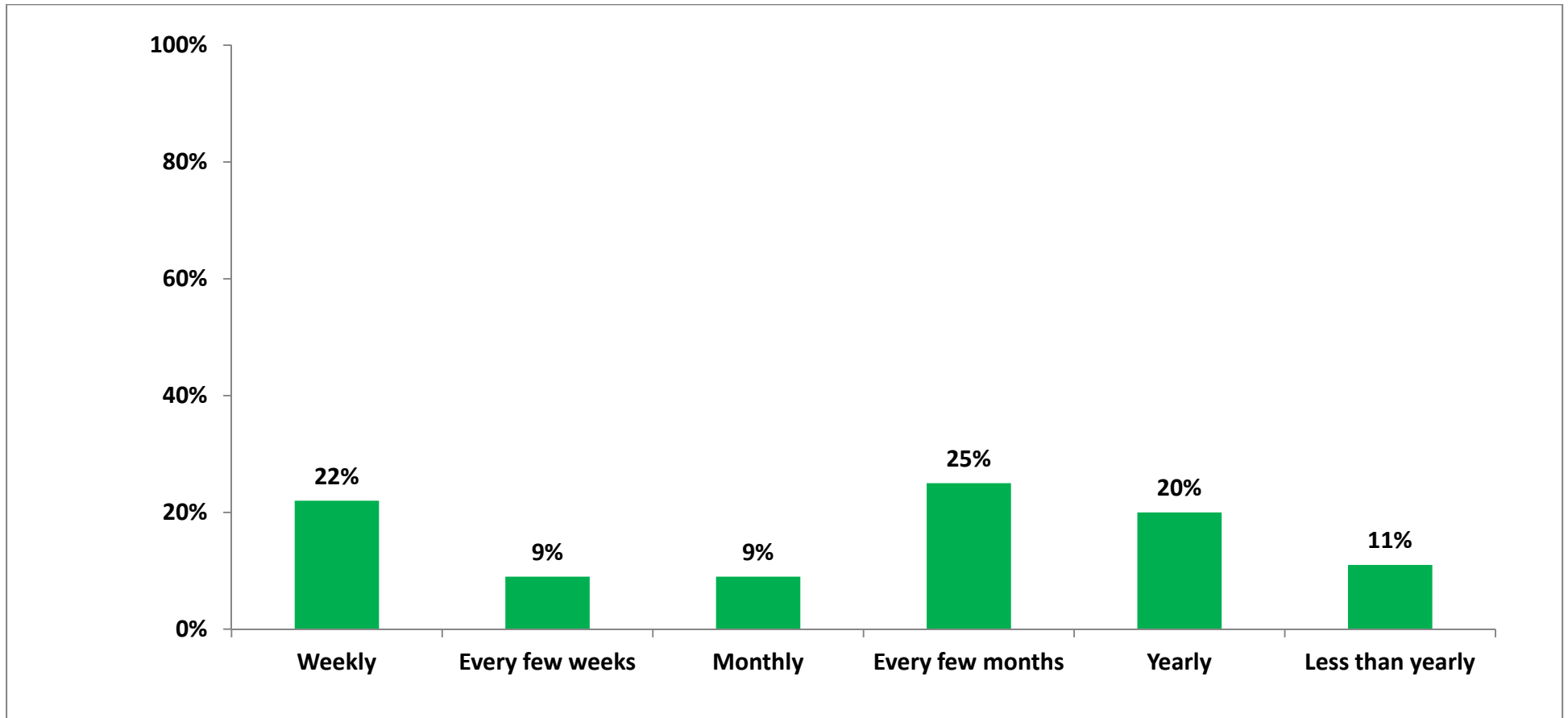
**Figure 7: Distance from furthest grandchildren (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Frequency see furthest grandchild.** A little less than one-third (31%) grandparents see their grandchildren who live furthest from them at least every few every weeks (see Figure 8). Another third see their grandchildren every month (9%) or every few months (25%).

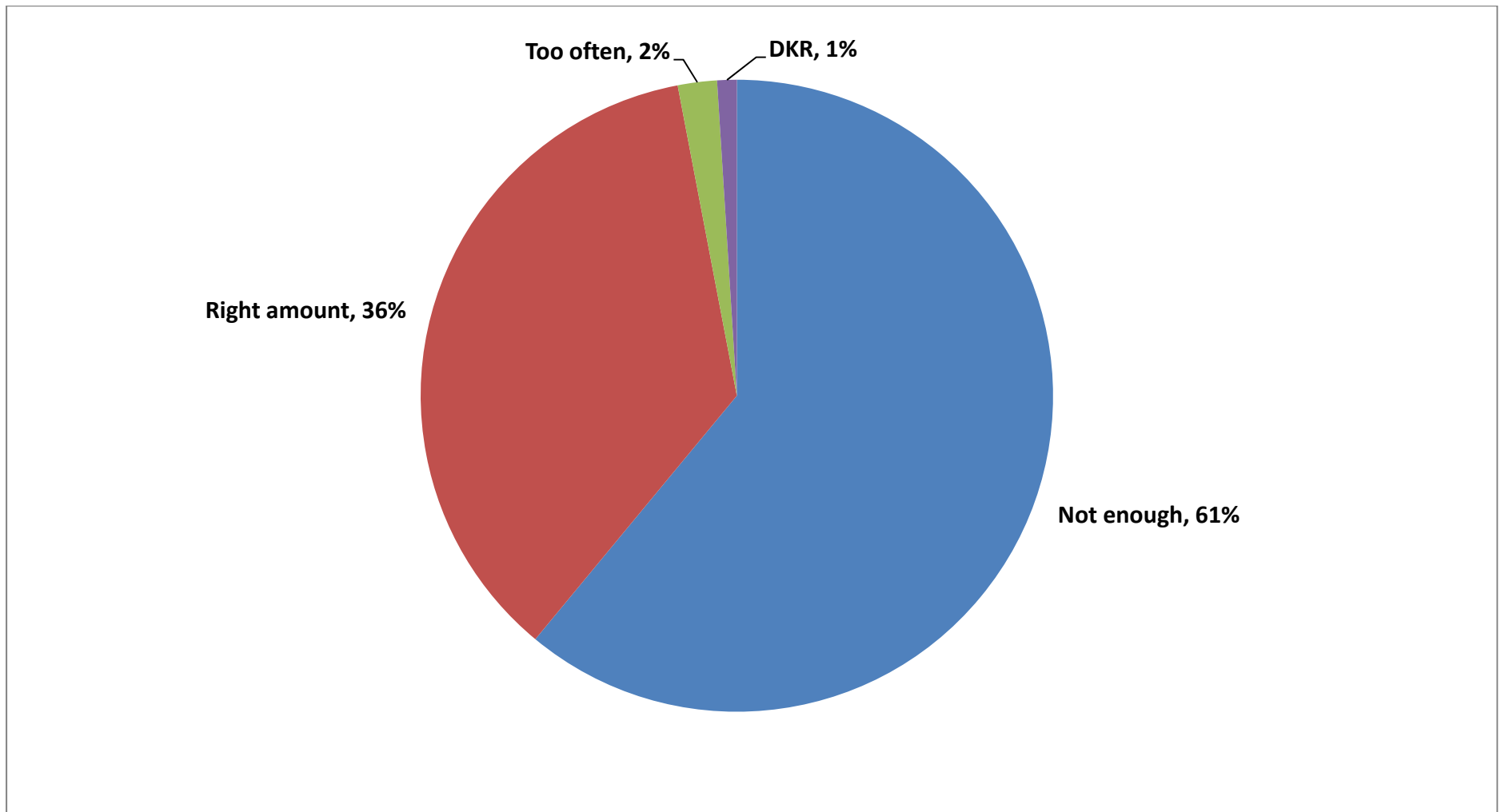
**Figure 8: Frequency see furthest grandchildren (n=1884)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Feelings about frequency see furthest grandchildren.** Regardless of how often they see their grandchildren who live furthest from them, the majority (61%) indicate that they do not see their grandchildren enough (see Figure 9).

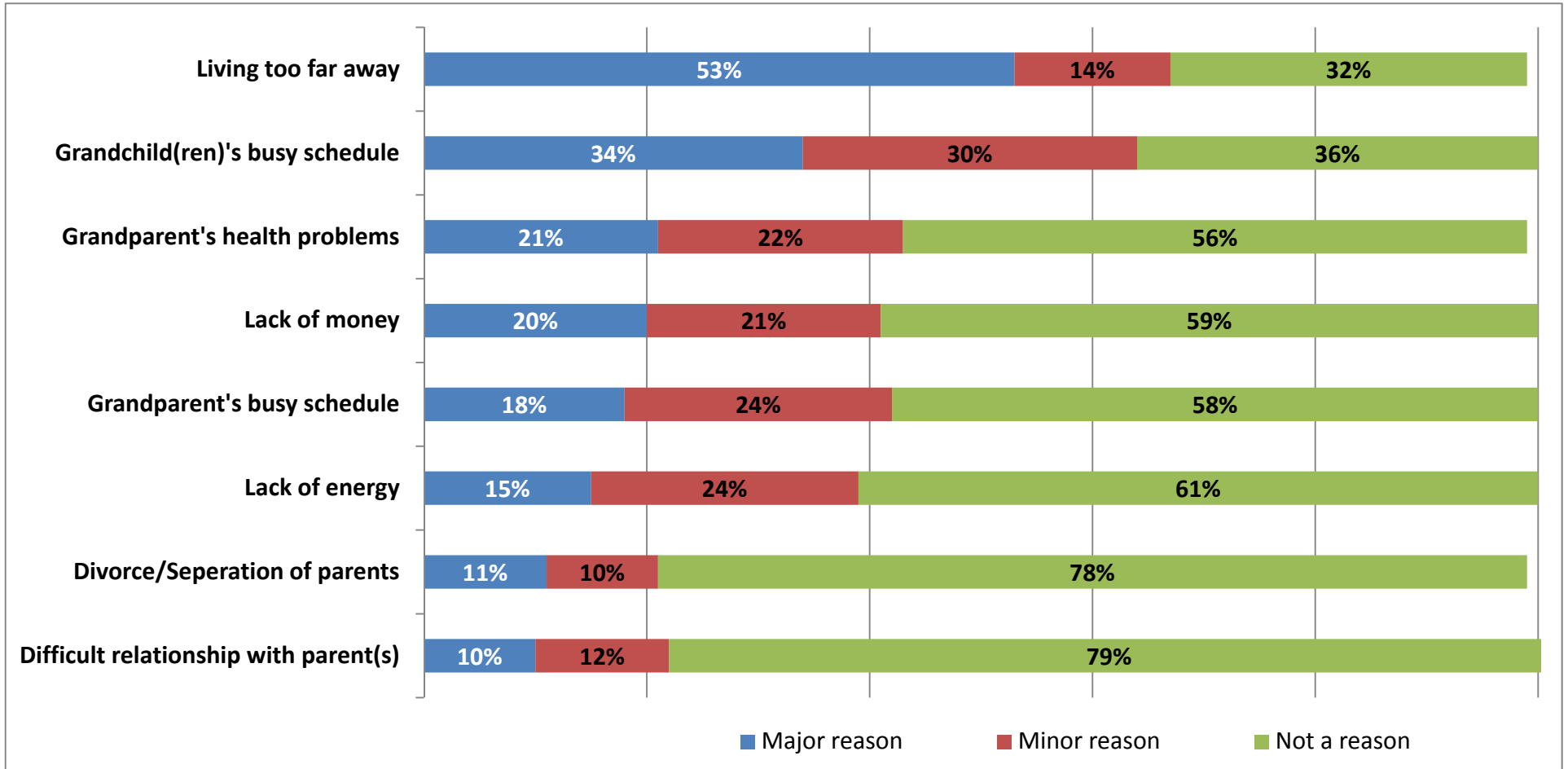
**Figure 9: Feelings about frequency see furthest grandchildren (n=1883)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Reasons why do not see grandchildren enough.** As might be expected, as shown in Figure 10, the majority (67%) of the grandparents surveyed indicated that distance was a reason why they felt they did not see their grandchildren enough. The grandchild’s busy schedule was also a reason stated by grandparents who feel they did not see their grandchildren enough (64%).

**Figure 10: Why do not see grandchildren enough (n=1195)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Activities with grandchildren in past six months.** The most popular activities grandparents do with their grandchildren are watching TV or videos at home (75%) and going shopping (63%) (see Table 2). Grandfathers are more likely to say they do physical activities with their grandchildren (63% vs. 56%) and grandmothers are much more likely to say they cook or bake with their grandchildren (63% vs. 48%).

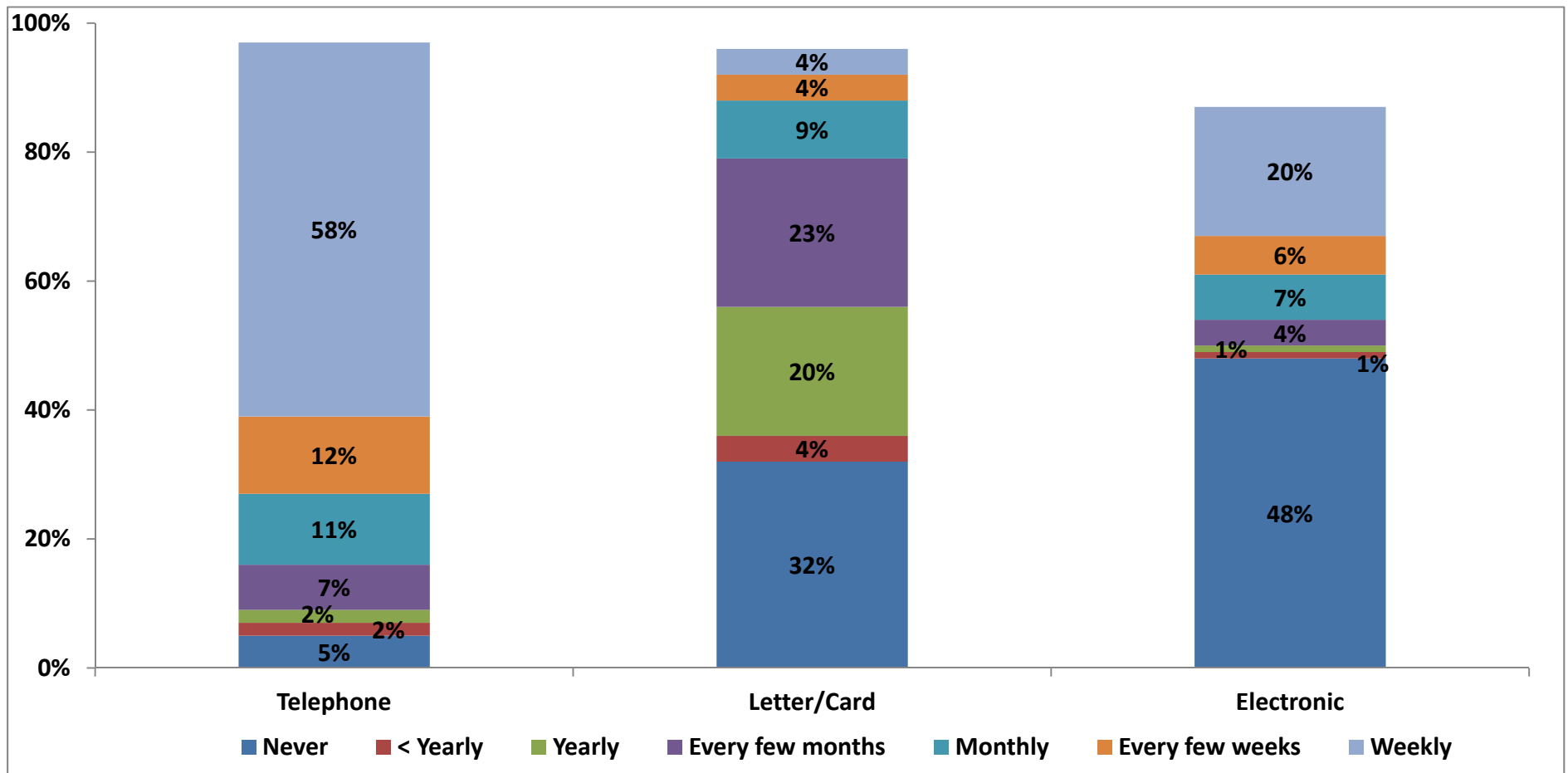
**Table 2: Activities with grandchildren in past six months**

|   | <b>National<br/>(n=1904)<br/>% yes</b> | <b>Males<br/>(n=596)<br/>% yes</b> | <b>Females<br/>(n=1308)<br/>% yes</b> |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Watch TV or videos at home</b>   | <b>75</b>                              | <b>71</b>                          | <b>76</b>                             |
| <b>Go shopping</b>  | <b>63</b>                              | <b>58</b>                          | <b>65</b>                             |
| <b>Physical activities like exercise, play sports, garden, etc.</b>             | <b>58</b>                              | <b>63</b>                          | <b>56</b>                             |
| <b>Cook or bake</b>   | <b>58</b>                              | <b>48</b>                          | <b>63</b>                             |
| <b>Go on outings like the movies, museums and amusement parks</b>               | <b>55</b>                              | <b>56</b>                          | <b>54</b>                             |
| <b>Go to the library, read to/with</b>  | <b>49</b>                              | <b>44</b>                          | <b>51</b>                             |
| <b>Attend religious services</b>  | <b>47</b>                              | <b>45</b>                          | <b>48</b>                             |
| <b>Play games on a computer or gaming system (i.e., Wii, Playstation, etc.)</b> | <b>35</b>                              | <b>35</b>                          | <b>35</b>                             |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**How grandparents communicate with grandchildren.** Nearly six in ten grandparents speak with their grandchildren at least once a week (58%) by phone. While a quarter of the grandparents indicated that they communicate with at least one of their grandchildren using electronic technology (i.e., email, text, Skype) every few weeks or more (26%), nearly half (48%) indicated that they never use this method to communicate with their grandchildren (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: How grandparents communicate with grandchildren (n=1904)**

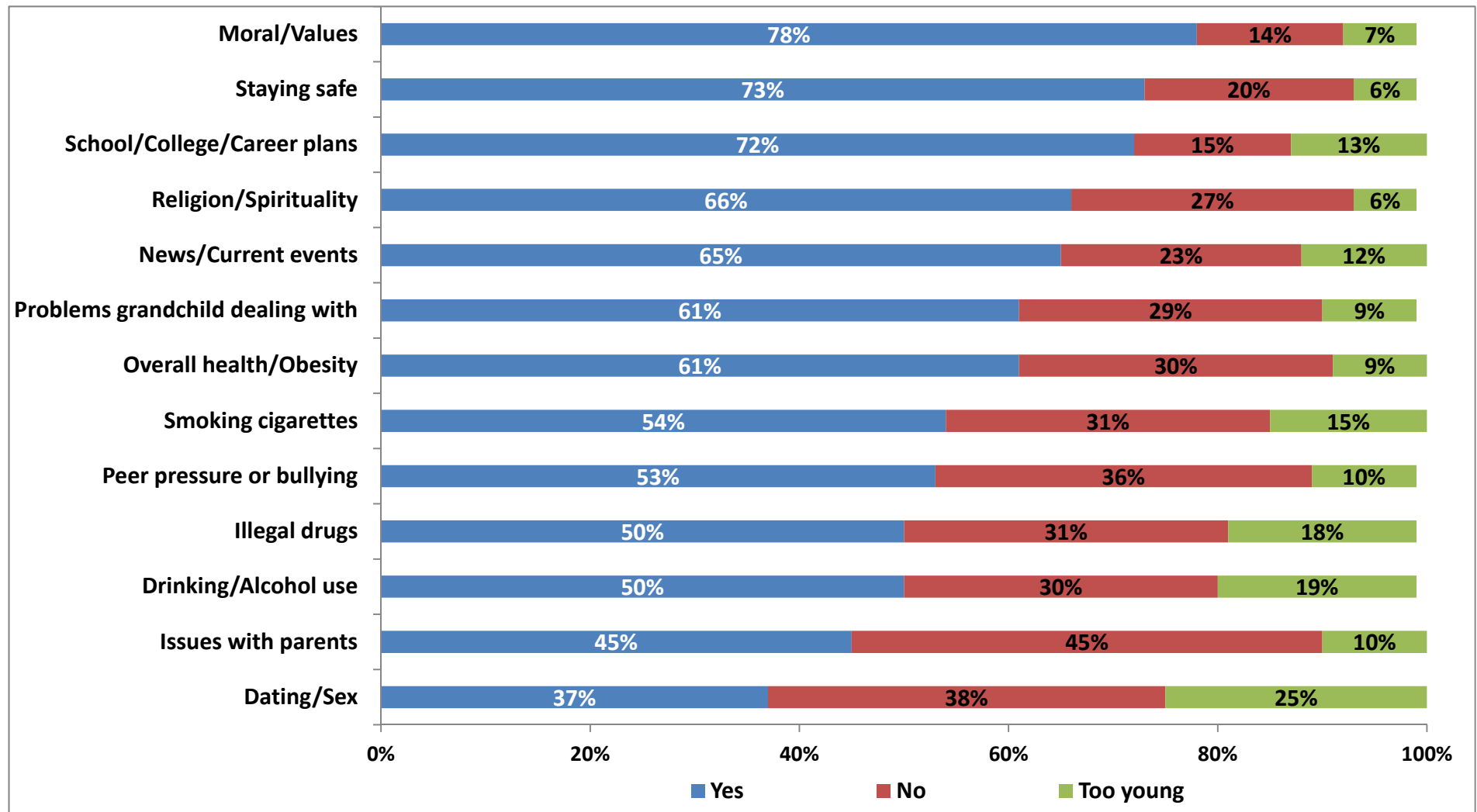


Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012



**Topics discussed with grandchildren.** More than seven in ten grandparents have discussed morals and values (78%), staying safe (73%), and college or career plans (72%) with at least one of their grandchildren (see Figure 12). Less than half of the grandparents in the survey indicated that they have spoken to one of their grandchildren about issues with their parents (45%) or dating and sex (37%).

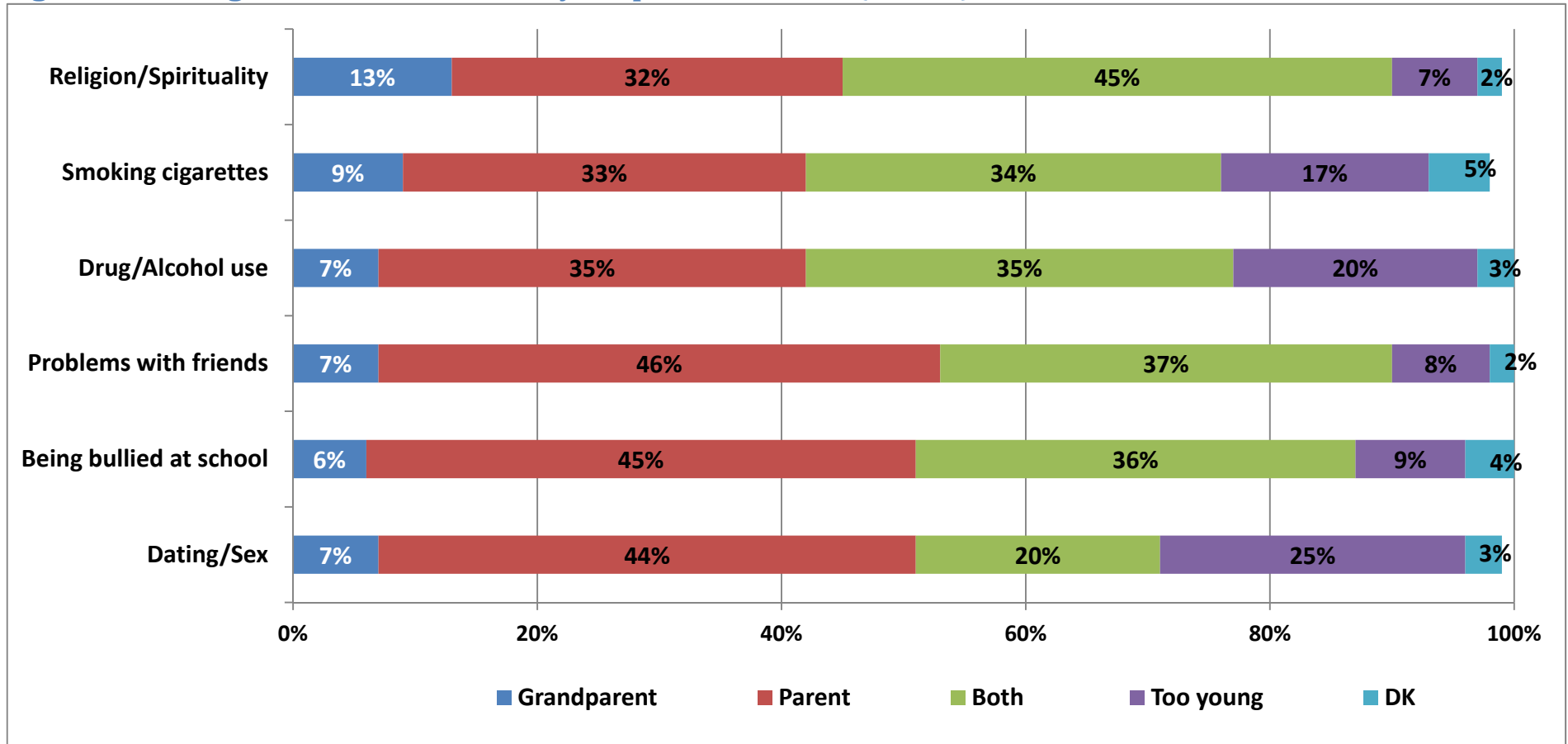
**Figure 12: Topics discussed with grandchildren (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Who grandchild is most likely to speak to about...** As shown in Figure 13, when asked if they thought their grandchildren would turn to them, their parents or both to discuss various items, grandparents, for the most part thought that the grandchild would speak to either the parent or both the parent or the grandparent.

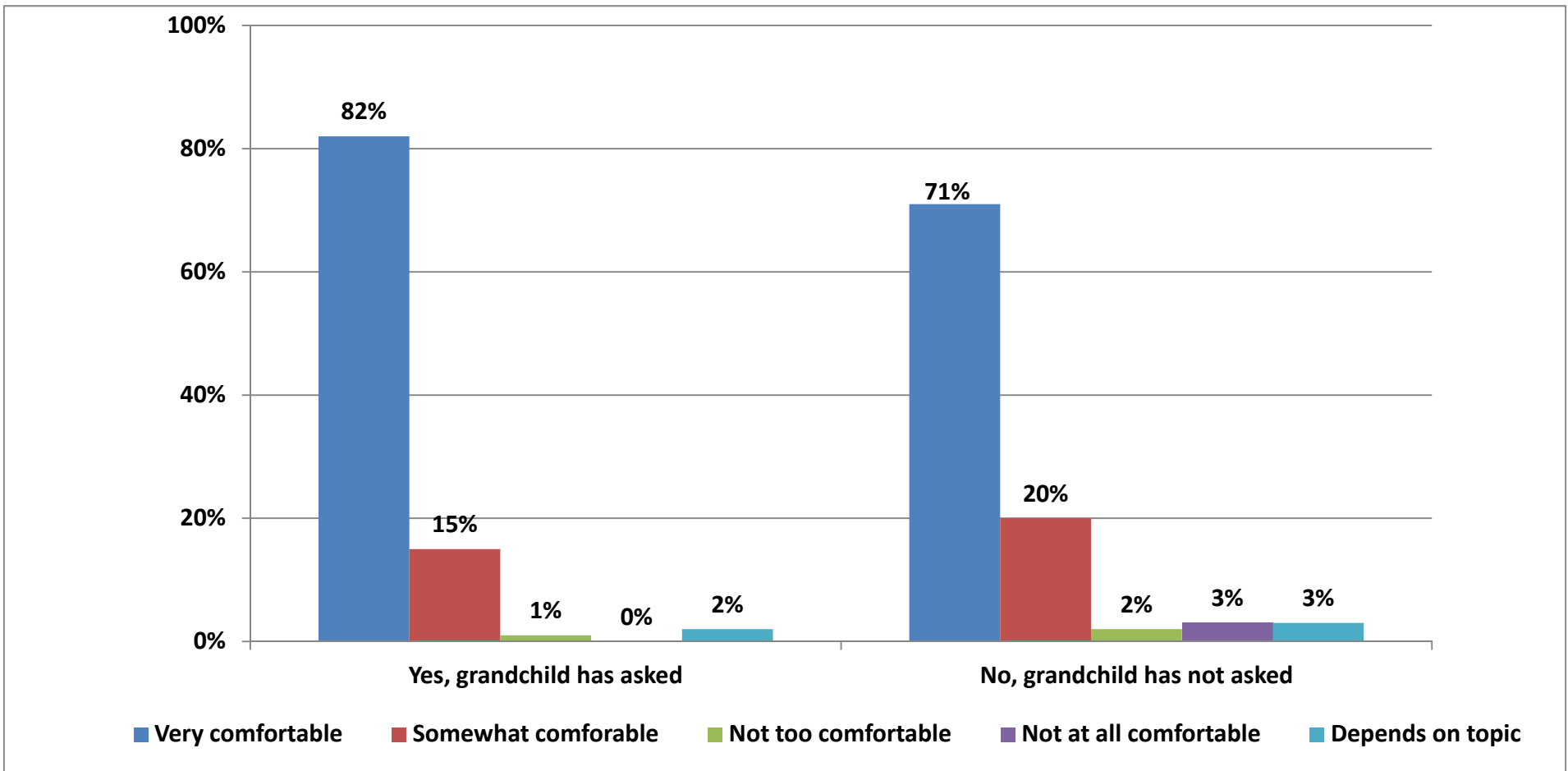
**Figure 13: Who grandchild is most likely to speak to about... (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Grandchild asking and grandparent giving advice.** Over half (53%) of the participants said that their grandchildren have asked them for advice (graph not shown). The vast majority (77%) of grandparents feel very comfortable giving their grandchildren advice (graph not shown). However, considerably more grandparents who have been asked for advice feel more comfortable giving advice (82% vs. 71%) (see Figure 14).

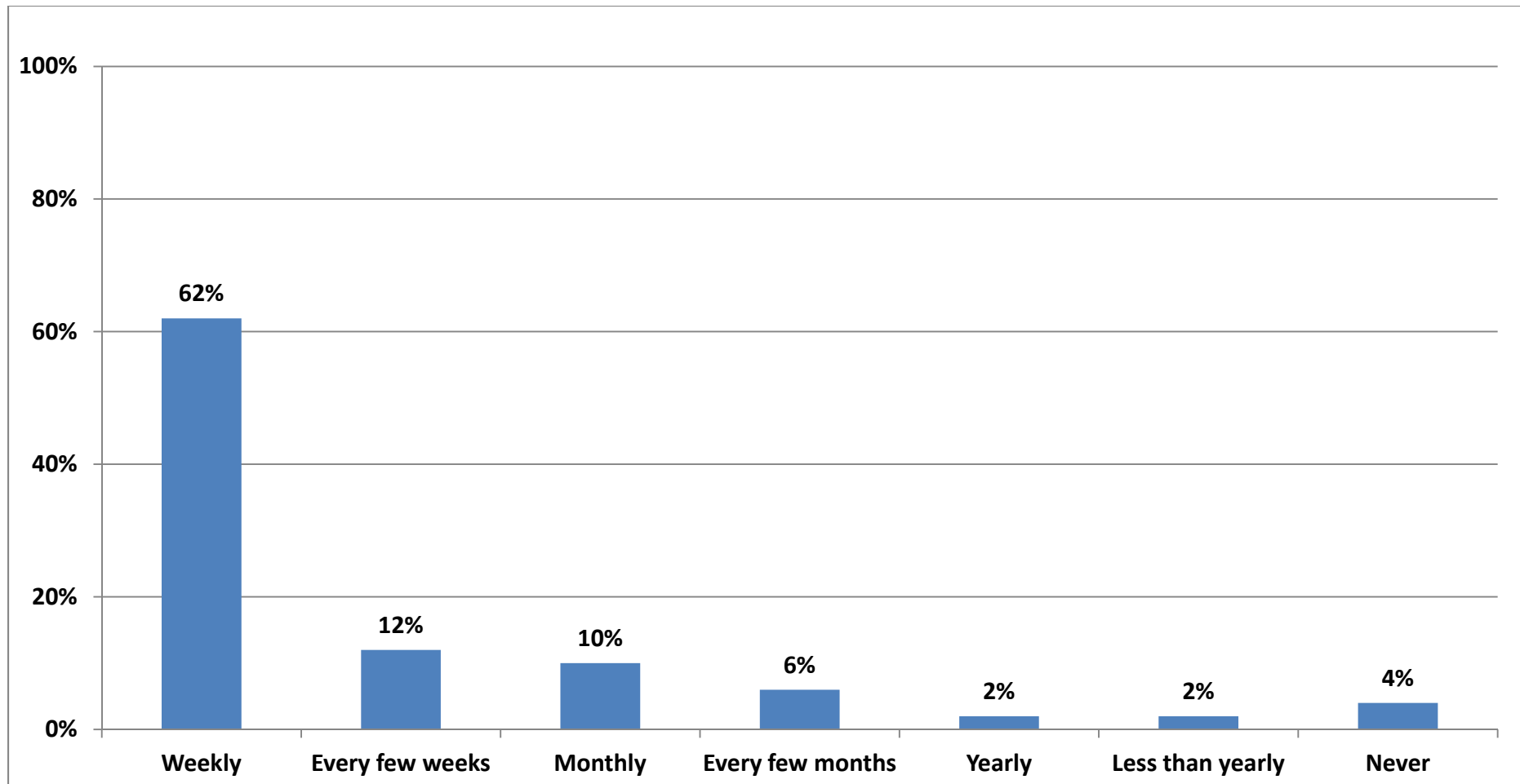
**Figure 14: Grandchildren and advice (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Frequency speaking to parent(s) about grandchildren.** Grandparents frequently speak to their children about their grandchildren, with more than seven in ten reporting they either speak to the child about their grandchildren weekly (62%) or every few weeks (12%) (See Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Speaks to child about grandchild (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Information grandparents would like.** More than two-fifths of grandparents indicated that they would like to receive information on fun things to do with grandchildren of all ages (43%) and the importance of grandparents to a child’s well being (41%) (see Table 3). A quarter or less indicated interest in topics such as grandparents raising grandchildren (24%), grandparenting in a blended family (22%) and grandparenting in a multicultural family (18%). Across the board, higher percentages of African American and Hispanic/Latino grandparents indicated they would be interested in receiving information on the topics listed.

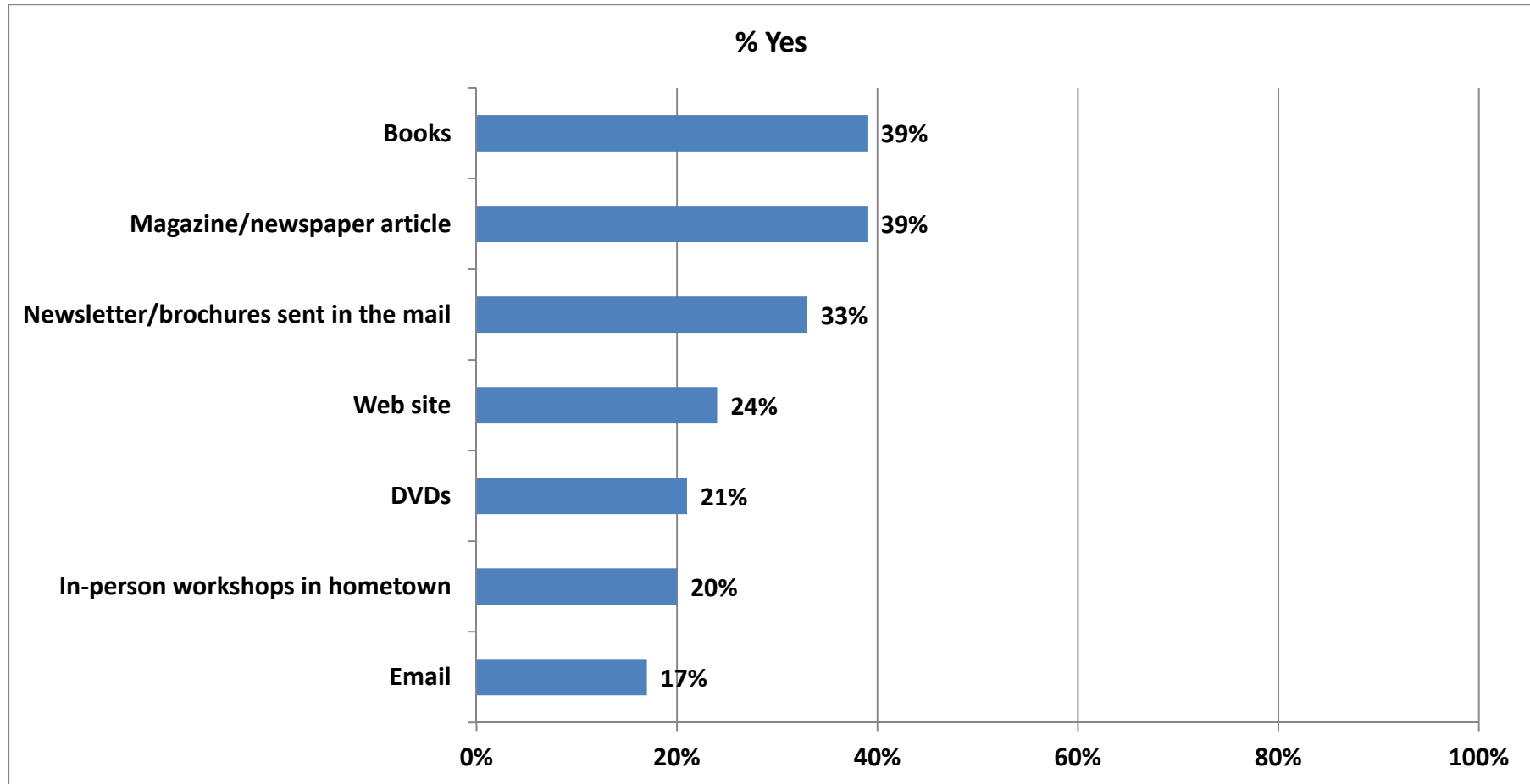
**Table 3: Information grandparents would like**

|   | <b>National<br/>(n=1904)</b> | <b>African<br/>American<br/>(n=385)</b> | <b>Latino<br/>(n=401)</b> |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|   | <b>% yes</b>                 | <b>% yes</b>                            | <b>%yes</b>               |
| <b>Fun things to do with grandchildren of all ages</b>                        | <b>43</b>                    | <b>57</b>                               | <b>51</b>                 |
| <b>Importance of grandparents to a child’s well being</b>                     | <b>41</b>                    | <b>58</b>                               | <b>52</b>                 |
| <b>How to speak to grandchildren about issues in their lives</b>              | <b>35</b>                    | <b>52</b>                               | <b>48</b>                 |
| <b>Gifts for grandchildren</b>  | <b>34</b>                    | <b>42</b>                               | <b>45</b>                 |
| <b>Keeping in touch long distance</b>   | <b>33</b>                    | <b>45</b>                               | <b>42</b>                 |
| <b>How to connect with your grandchildren</b>                                 | <b>31</b>                    | <b>43</b>                               | <b>42</b>                 |
| <b>How to speak to own children about issues concerning the grandchildren</b> | <b>31</b>                    | <b>42</b>                               | <b>42</b>                 |
| <b>Children’s developmental stages</b>  | <b>30</b>                    | <b>49</b>                               | <b>47</b>                 |
| <b>Grandparent’s legal rights</b>   | <b>29</b>                    | <b>46</b>                               | <b>44</b>                 |
| <b>Information for grandparents raising grandchildren</b>                     | <b>24</b>                    | <b>41</b>                               | <b>40</b>                 |
| <b>Grandparenting in a blended family</b>                                     | <b>22</b>                    | <b>41</b>                               | <b>40</b>                 |
| <b>Grandparenting in a multicultural family</b>                               | <b>18</b>                    | <b>37</b>                               | <b>40</b>                 |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Preference for receiving information.** When asked how they would like to receive information about grandparenting roughly four in ten grandparents indicated that they would like to receive the information via books (39%) and magazine or newspaper articles (39%). Receiving information via electronic means such as by visiting a web site (24%) and email (17%) were less popular (see Figure 16).

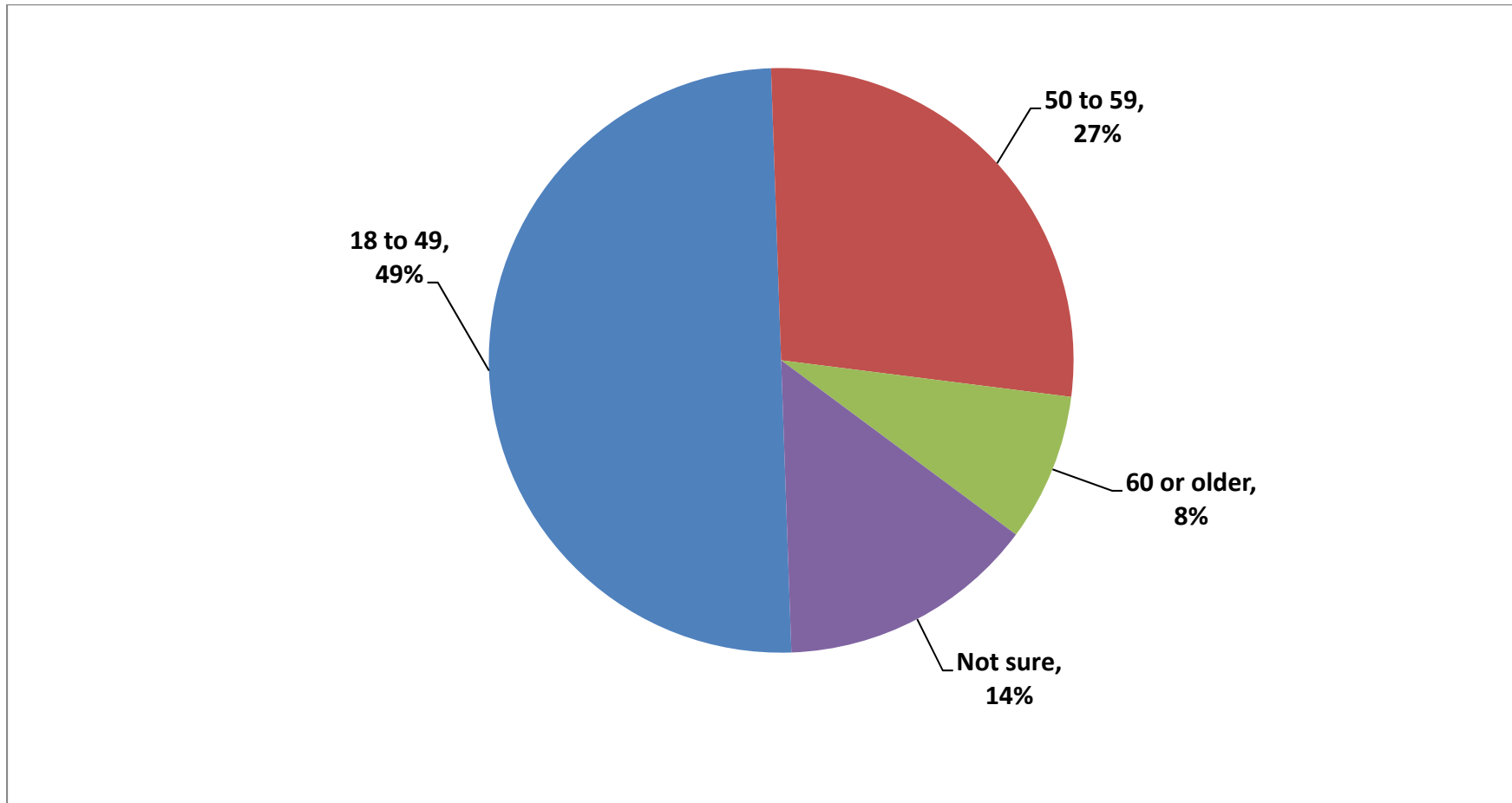
**Figure 16: Preferences for receiving information (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Age when first became grandparent.** About half (49%) of the participants said they first became a grandparent before they were 50 years old, more than one-quarter (27%) were 50 – 59, and about one in twelve (8%) were 60 or older. Notably, more than one in ten (14%) said they weren't sure how old they were when they first became a grandparent (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Age when first became grandparent (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

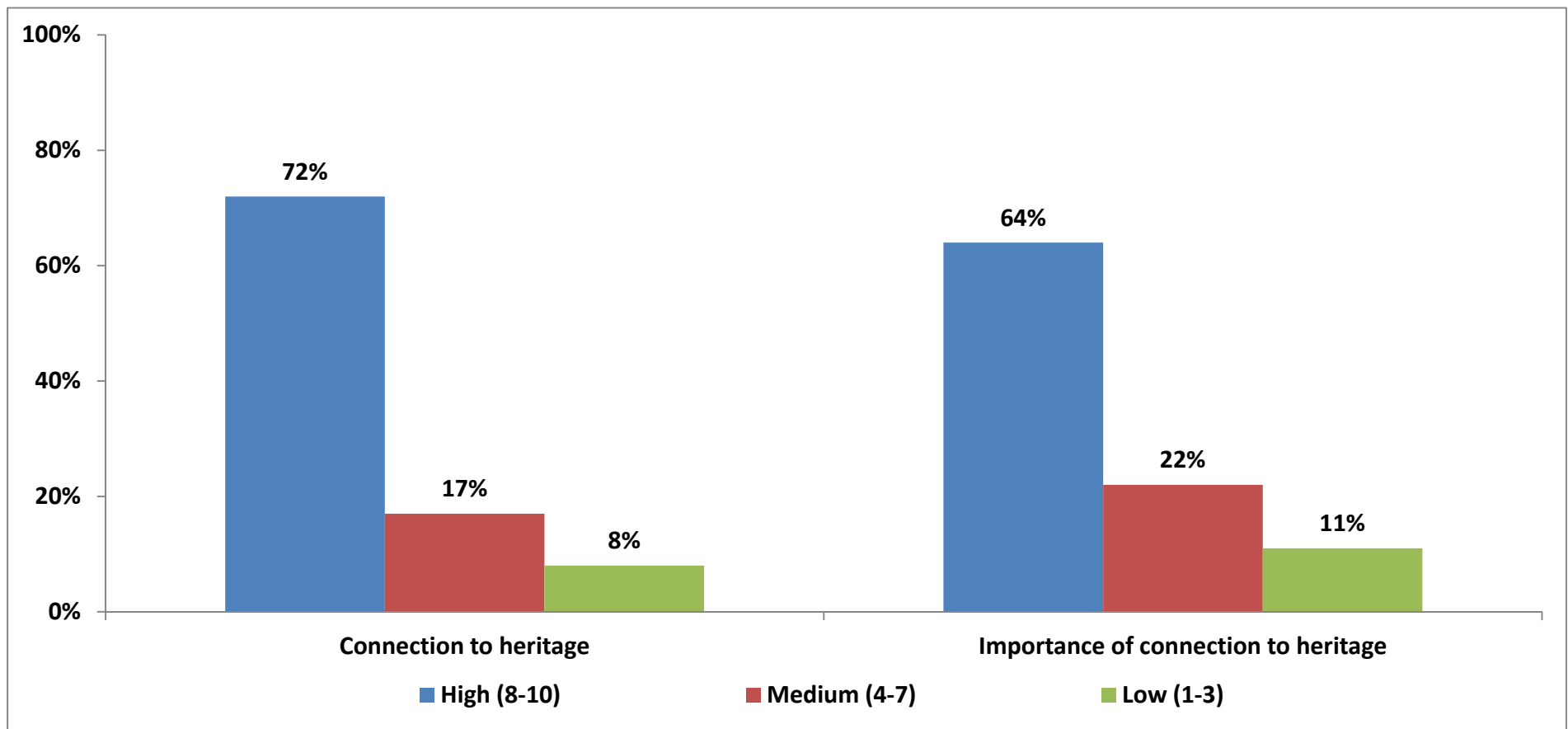
## **Module: Grandparenting in multiracial/multiethnic families**

The quantitative survey included a module designed to measure the thoughts and opinions of grandparents who have multiracial or multiethnic grandchildren or grandchildren from different races or ethnicities. This analysis includes all such grandparents (n=592) from the random digit dial (RDD) and African-American and Hispanic/Latino boost samples.



**Attitudes and opinions about their connection to their own cultural/racial heritage.** Less than one in five grandparents surveyed had grandchildren that were of mixed race (18%) or a different race (17%) or ethnicity (15%) than the grandparent (graph not shown; n=2485). When asked to rate their connectedness to their own cultural or racial heritage, the vast majority (72%) of grandparents who have multicultural or multiethnic families indicated a strong (high) connection (see Figure 18). When rating the importance of being connected to their heritage, nearly two-thirds (64%) indicated high importance.

**Figure 18: Attitudes/opinions about their connection to their own cultural/racial heritage (n=592)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Attitudes and opinions about grandchildren and cultural/racial heritage.** Table 4 shows the percentage of grandparents who agreed with the statements listed. The columns are divided by the rating (high, medium or low) the grandparent gave regarding the importance of being connected to his/her own heritage. For example, 97% of the grandparents who gave a high rating (8, 9 or 10 out of 10) on the importance of being connected to their own heritage also agreed with the statement *“It is important that all of my grandchildren know about my heritage and roots.”*

Overall, the vast majority of grandparents who have grandchildren with different racial or ethnic identities than the grandparent do not feel it is difficult to relate to those grandchildren. Similarly, grandparents do not feel they can better relate to the grandchildren who have the identical race or ethnicity they have.

**Table 4: Opinion about grandparenting in multiracial/multiethnic families by personal rating of importance of being connected to their own heritage<sup>+</sup>**

|  | % Agree        |                 |              |
|--|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
|  | High<br>(8-10) | Medium<br>(4-7) | Low<br>(1-3) |
| <i>Importance of being connected rating:</i>   |                |                 |              |
| “It is important that all my grandchildren know about my heritage and roots.” (n=592)  | 97             | 86              | 69           |
| “I make an effort to help my grandchildren who are a different race/ethnicity than I am, learn about their heritage and roots.” (n=417)                                  | 82             | 77              | 71           |
| “I have a good relationship with my grandchild’s parent who is a different race or ethnicity than I am.” (n=592)   | 81             | 86              | 67           |
| “I have a good relationship with my mixed-race grandchild’s other set of grandparents.” (n=456)  | 79             | 76              | 64           |
| Grandparents who have grandchildren from a different race/ethnicity have more challenges than grandparents who do not have grandchildren from different races.” (n= 517) | 47             | 54              | 45           |
| “Children who are of different races/ethnicities than their grandparents have more challenges than children who are not.” (n=517)  | 47             | 50              | 55           |
| I can relate better with my grandchildren who are the identical race/ethnicity as I am.” (n=422)   | 35             | 21              | 25           |
| “Having different racial/ethnic identities makes it difficult to relate to my grandchild.” (n=517)   | 15             | 9               | 8            |

<sup>+</sup>Excludes participants who did not answer the questions about their connection to their own heritage. Ns vary based on whether the statement was applicable to the respondent.

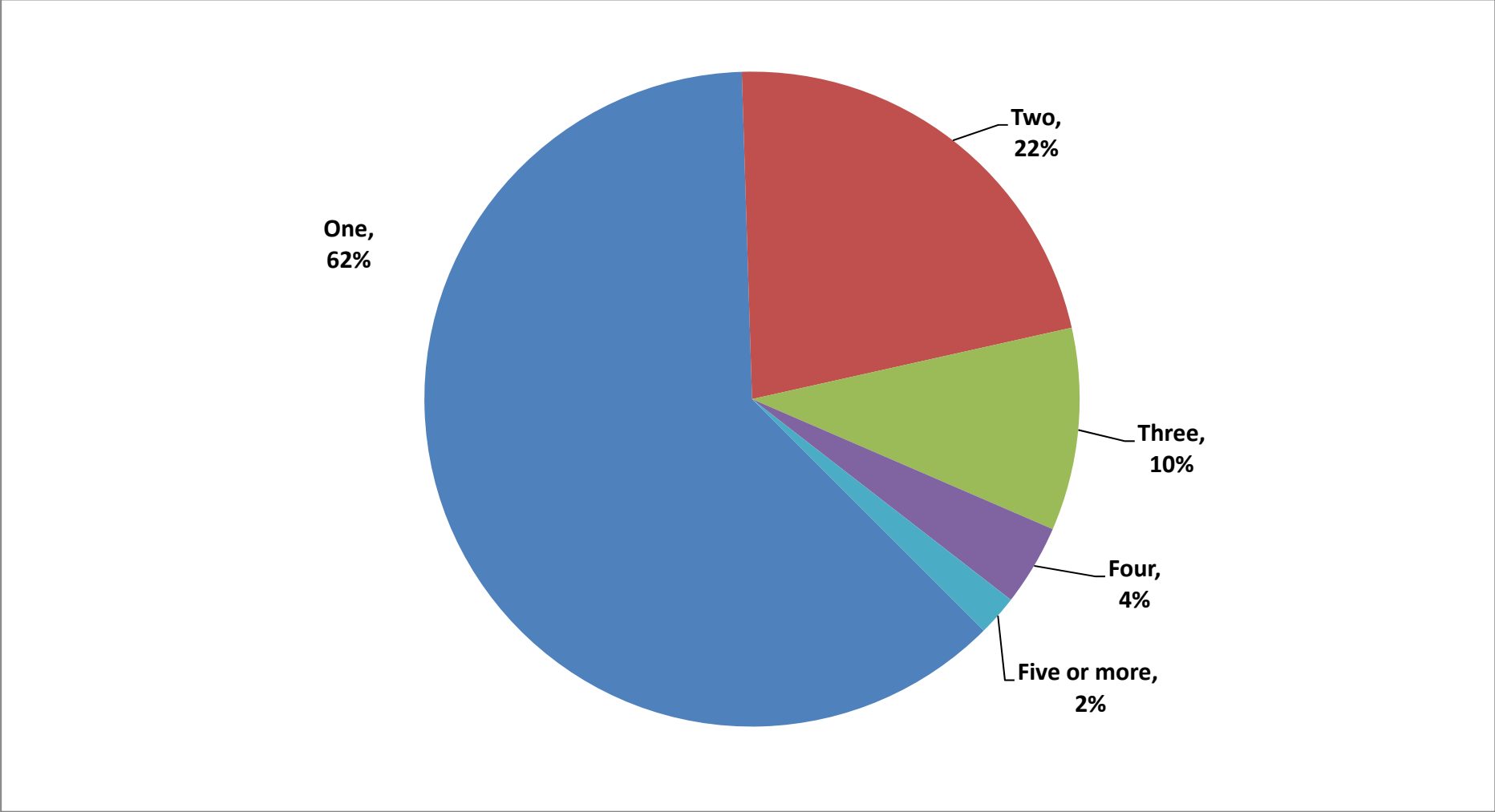
Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

## Module: Grandparents living with and raising grandchildren

The quantitative survey included a module designed to measure the thoughts and opinions of grandparents who are living with and raising grandkids (n=264). About one in ten (11%, n=2485) grandparents who participated in the quantitative survey indicated that they have grandchildren living in the household. When looking at African American grandparents alone, the proportion of grandparents with grandchildren living with them nearly doubles to almost two in ten (19%, n=385). Comparatively, thirteen percent (n=401) of the Latino grandparents said they have grandchildren living with them, a pattern closer to the overall group.

**Number of grandchildren living in home.** The vast majority of grandparents in the survey who have grandchildren living with them have either one (62%) or two (22%) grandchildren living with them (see Figure 19).

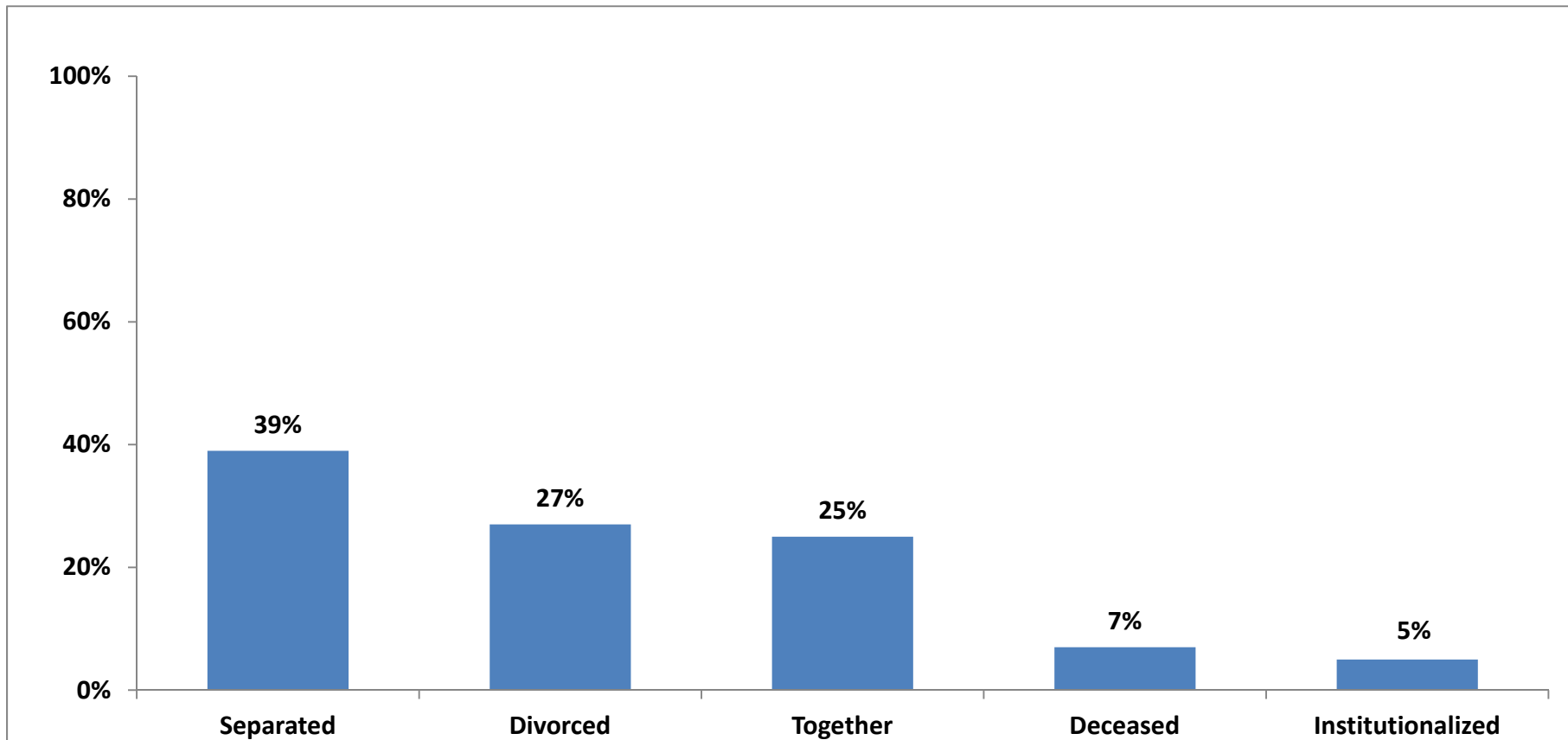
**Figure 19: Number of grandchildren living in the home (n=264)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Status of parents of grandchildren living in home.** Nearly half (47%) of the grandparents living with their grandchildren are also living with the grandchild’s parent or parents (graph not shown). Children of daughters represented the majority (63%) of the grandchildren living with their grandparents (graph not shown). The majority of the parents of the children who live with their grandparents are separated (39%) or divorced (27%). Another quarter of the parents of the children who live with their grandparents are together (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Status of parents of grandchildren living in home (n=264)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Length of time grandchildren has/is expected to live with grandparent.** Over one-third (35%) of grandparents indicated that their grandchildren have lived with them for more than five years (see Table 5). Nearly one-fifth (19%) of the grandparents surveyed have had grandchildren living with them for less than a year. Nearly half (48%) indicated that they expect that their grandchildren will live with them more than five additional years (13%) or indefinitely (35%).

**Table 5: Length of time grandchildren has/is expected to live with grandparent (n=264)**

|                            | <b>Has lived with<br/>%</b> | <b>Expected to live with<br/>%</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Less than 6 months</b>  | <b>11</b>                   | <b>7</b>                           |
| <b>6 months to a year</b>  | <b>8</b>                    | <b>8</b>                           |
| <b>A year to 2 years</b>   | <b>11</b>                   | <b>10</b>                          |
| <b>2 to 3 years</b>        | <b>9</b>                    | <b>5</b>                           |
| <b>3 to 4 years</b>        | <b>6</b>                    | <b>4</b>                           |
| <b>4 to 5 years</b>        | <b>9</b>                    | <b>3</b>                           |
| <b>More than 5 years</b>   | <b>35</b>                   | <b>13</b>                          |
| <b>Indefinitely</b>        | <b>N/A</b>                  | <b>35</b>                          |
| <b>Don't know/not sure</b> | <b>1</b>                    | <b>15</b>                          |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Length grandparent has been or expects to be primary caregiver.** A little over four in ten (43%) grandparents who have grandchildren living with them indicated that they were the primary caregiver for at least one grandchild living with them (graph not shown). Half (51%) indicated they have been their grandchild’s primary caregiver for five years or more. Nearly four in ten (38%) said they expect they will continue to be the grandchild’s primary caregiver for five years or more (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Length grandparent has been or expects to be primary caregiver (n=87)**

|                            | <b>Has been<br/>the primary caregiver<br/>%</b> | <b>Expects to continue to be<br/>the primary caregiver<br/>%</b> |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>A year or less</b>      | <b>16</b>                                       | <b>15</b>  |
| <b>2 years</b>             | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>3 years</b>             | <b>5</b>  | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>4 years</b>             | <b>8</b>  | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>5 years</b>             | <b>6</b>  | <b>9</b>   |
| <b>More than 5 years</b>   | <b>45</b>                                       | <b>29</b>  |
| <b>Don't know/not sure</b> | <b>5</b>  | <b>22</b>  |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Information grandparents raising grandchildren need.** The grandparents who were primary caregivers were asked what type of information grandparents raising grandchildren might need. One quarter (25%) said grandparents need information on how to cope with the stress of raising children (see Table 7). Slightly fewer (21%) said they need information on grandparent’s rights.

**Table 7: Information grandparents raising grandchildren need (n=87)**

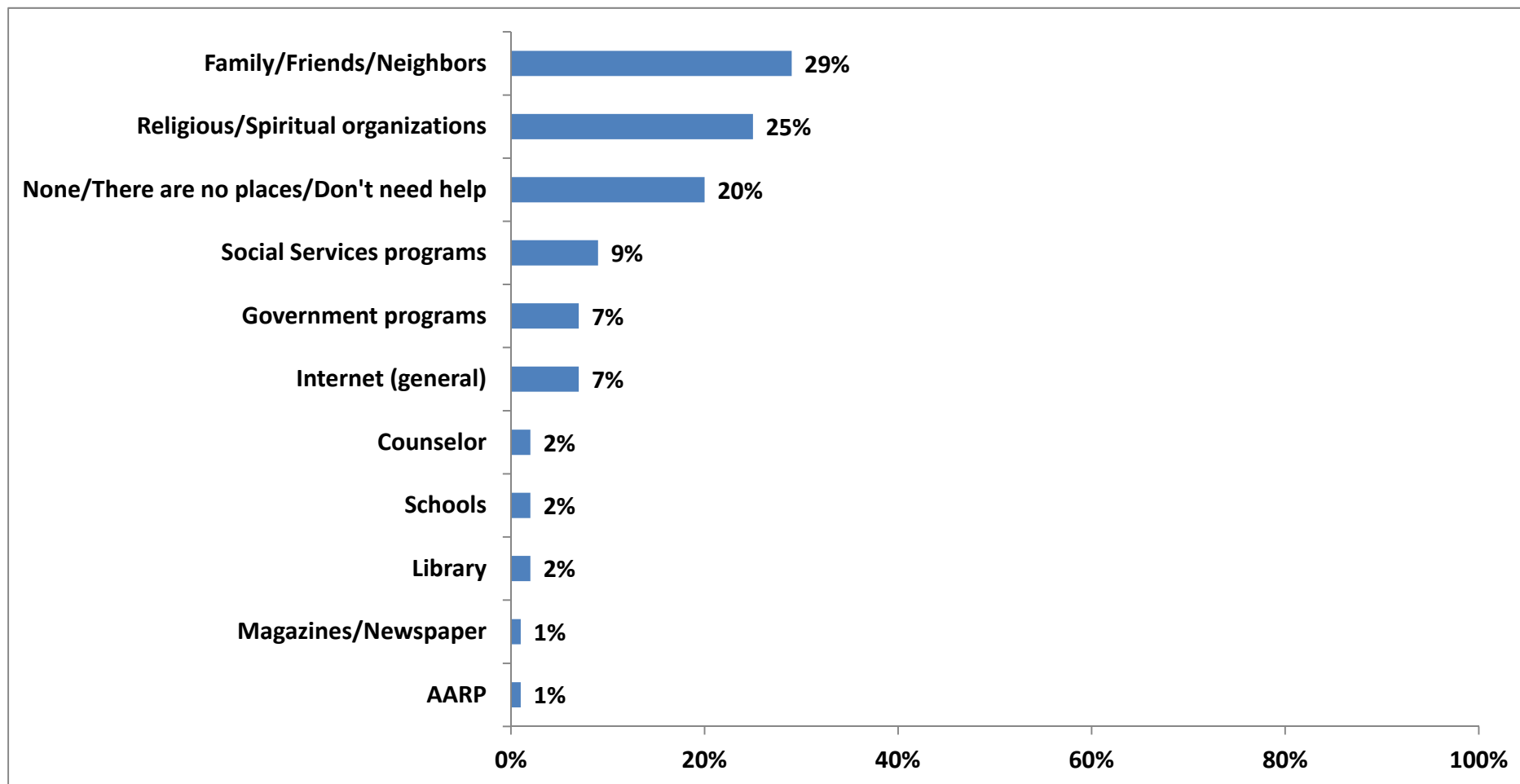
|   | %         |
|---|-----------|
| <b>How to cope with the stress of raising children</b>        | <b>25</b> |
| <b>Grandparent’s legal rights</b>                             | <b>21</b> |
| <b>The latest information on childcare/rearing</b>            | <b>16</b> |
| <b>How to pay for college</b>                                 | <b>16</b> |
| <b>How to get child help with home work</b>                   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Age appropriate activities for grandchildren</b>           | <b>10</b> |
| <b>How to prepare a healthy diet for kids/prevent obesity</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Medical insurance</b>                                      | <b>10</b> |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012



**Sources for information/services needed for grandparent primary caregiver.** Family and friends (29%) and religious or spiritual organizations (25%) were most often mentioned when grandparents who are primary care givers were asked where they go to get information or assistance with raising their grandchildren. One in five (20%) said there are no places to turn or they do not need this type of assistance (see Figure 21).

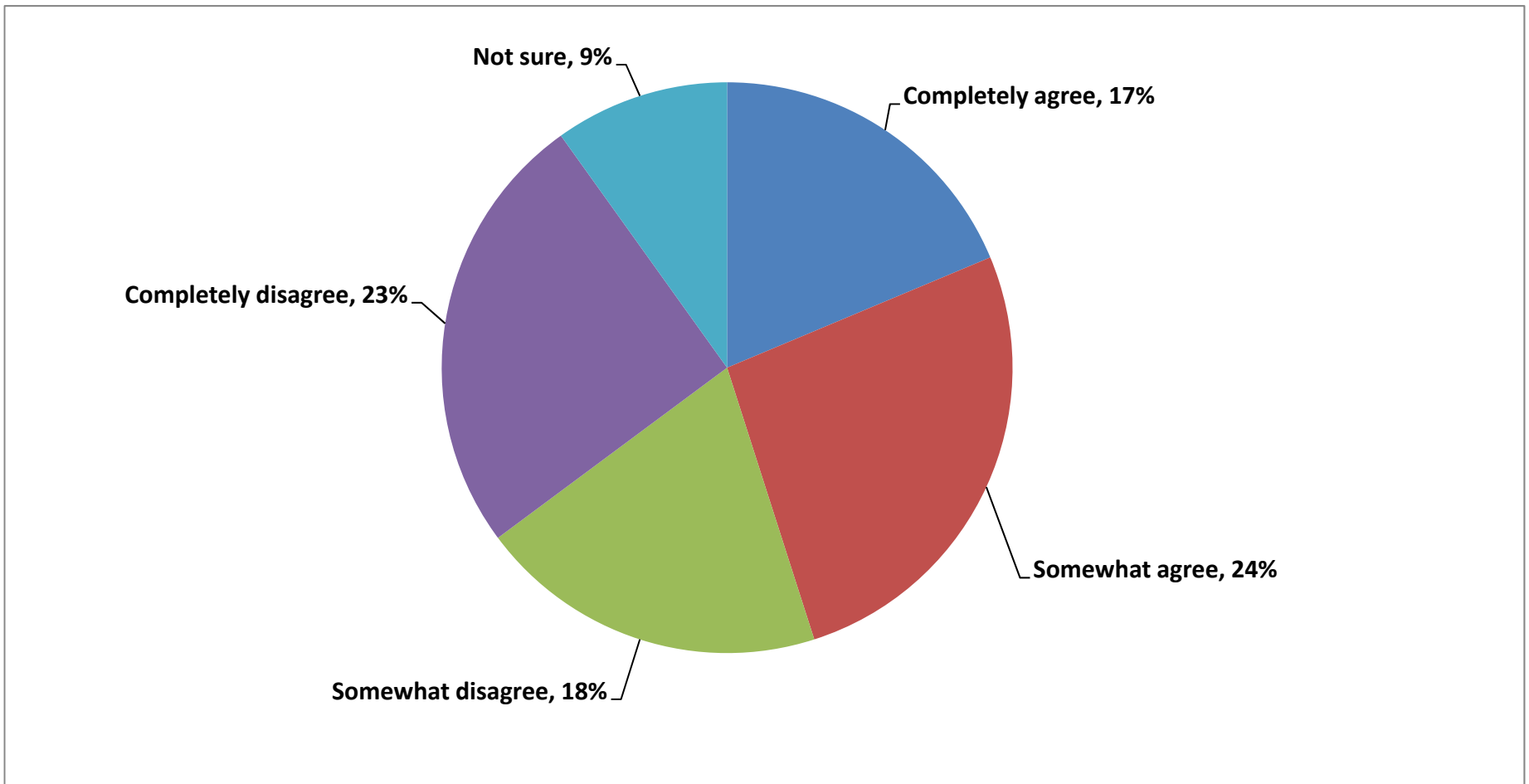
**Figure 21: Sources for information/services needed for grandparent primary caregiver (n=87)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Agree there is enough information available for grandparents raising grandchildren.** Grandparents raising grandchildren are nearly evenly split on whether there is – or is not – enough information available for grandparents raising grandchildren (41% agree, 41% disagree). Another one in eleven (9%) aren't really sure (see Figure 22).

**Figure 22: Sources for information/services needed for grandparent primary caregiver (n=87)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

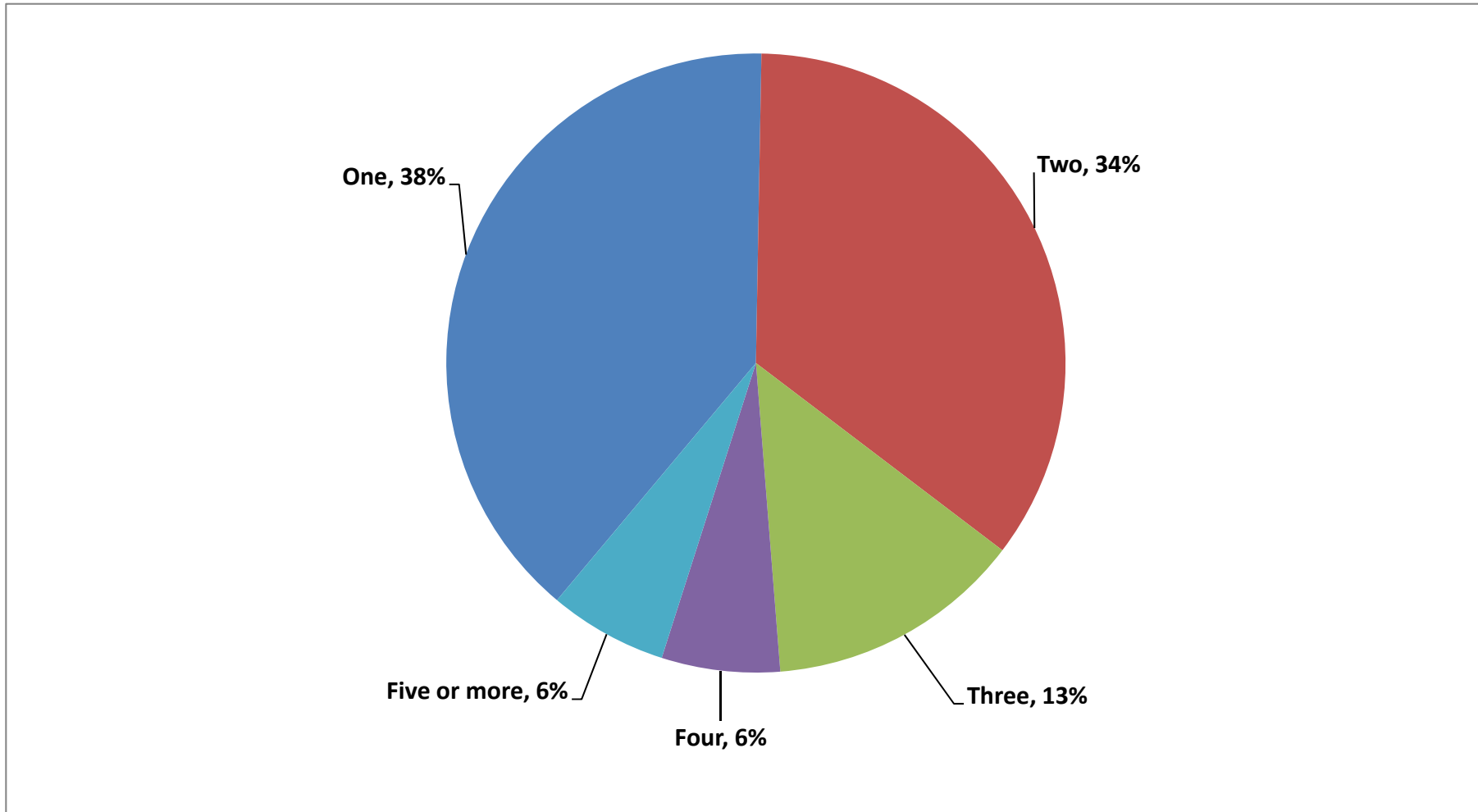
## Module: Grandparents providing daycare service

All participants in the quantitative survey who were not primary caregivers (n=2398) were asked about providing daycare services for their grandchildren. More than one in ten (16%) said they provide child daycare services for their grandchildren while the parents are at work or school. This proportion differs slightly for African American grandparents (14%) and Hispanic/Latino grandparents (19%).

Of those who did not currently provide daycare, a little more than a third (36%) said they had provided the service in the past. However, the majority (66%) said they provided daycare service for their grandchildren more than two years ago. Both grandparents who currently provide daycare service and those who provided the service in the past, participated in this module. This group of grandparent daycare providers represents a third (33%) of the eligible survey participants (n=799).

**Number of grandchildren grandparents provides/provided daycare for.** The majority (72%) of grandparents provides/provided daycare for one (38%) or two (34%) grandchildren (see Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Number of grandchildren provides/provided daycare for (n=779)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Types of daycare service provided.** The most common type of daycare service provided by grandparents are/were care when the child is/was sick and cannot/could not go to school (70%), before and after school care (63%), and during summer breaks (62%) (see Table 8).

**Table 8: Types of daycare service provided (n=779)**

|  | <b>% yes</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>When grandchild is sick (sick care)</b>                               | <b>70</b>    |
| <b>Care for grandchild either before or after school</b>                 | <b>63</b>    |
| <b>For grandchildren during summer breaks</b>                            | <b>62</b>    |
| <b>Backup daycare when regular daycare falls/fell through</b>            | <b>60</b>    |
| <b>Regular daycare for grandchild not old enough to be in school yet</b> | <b>57</b>    |
| <b>Care for grandchildren during school holidays</b>                     | <b>56</b>    |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Length of time grandparent has been/provided and expects to provide daycare.** A little more than third (35%) of grandparents who are currently providing or has provided daycare has/had been doing so for two years or less (see Table 9). One-third (33%) provided daycare service for more than five years, while a similar percentage (34%) expect to provide daycare service for an additional five years or more. Another thirty-two percent of the grandparents who are currently providing daycare are not sure how much longer they will be providing the service.

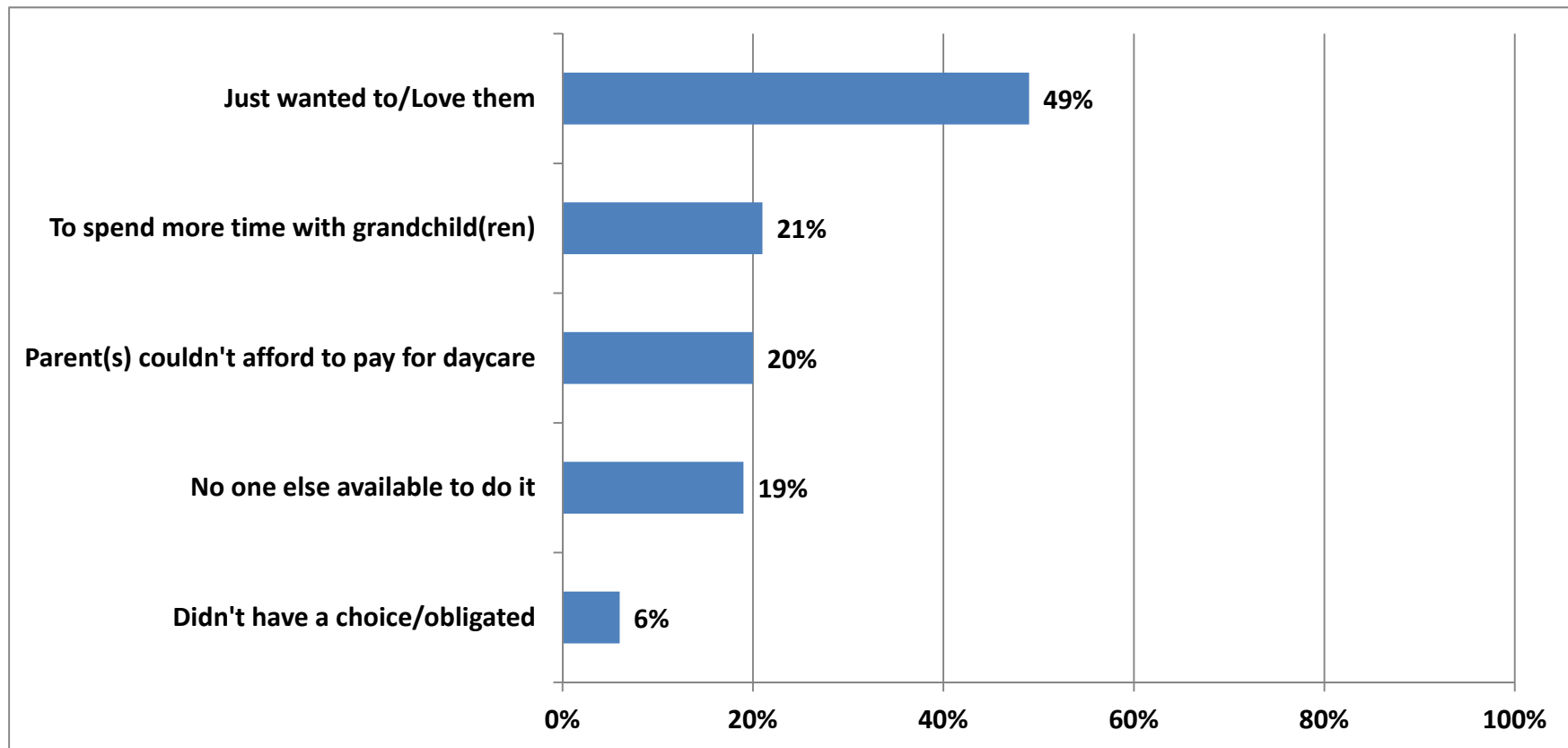
**Table 9: Length of time grandparent has been/provided and expects to provide daycare**

|                            | <b>Has been/<br/>provided daycare<br/>(n=779)<br/>%</b> | <b>Expects to continue to<br/>provide daycare<br/>(n=275)<br/>%</b> |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>A year or less</b>      | <b>24</b>   | <b>22</b>   |
| <b>2 years</b>             | <b>11</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>3 years</b>             | <b>8</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>4 years</b>             | <b>6</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>5 years</b>             | <b>7</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>More than 5 years</b>   | <b>33</b>   | <b>27</b>   |
| <b>Don't know/not sure</b> | <b>10</b>   | <b>32</b>   |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Why grandparents are providing/did provide daycare services.** Nearly half (49%) of the respondents indicated that one of the reasons they provided the daycare service was because they “just want/wanted to” (see Figure 24). One in five (21%) also indicated that they provided the service because they wanted to spend more time with their grandchildren. However, similar percentages of grandparents said they provided daycare services because the parents couldn’t afford to pay for daycare (20%) or no one else was available to do it (19%)

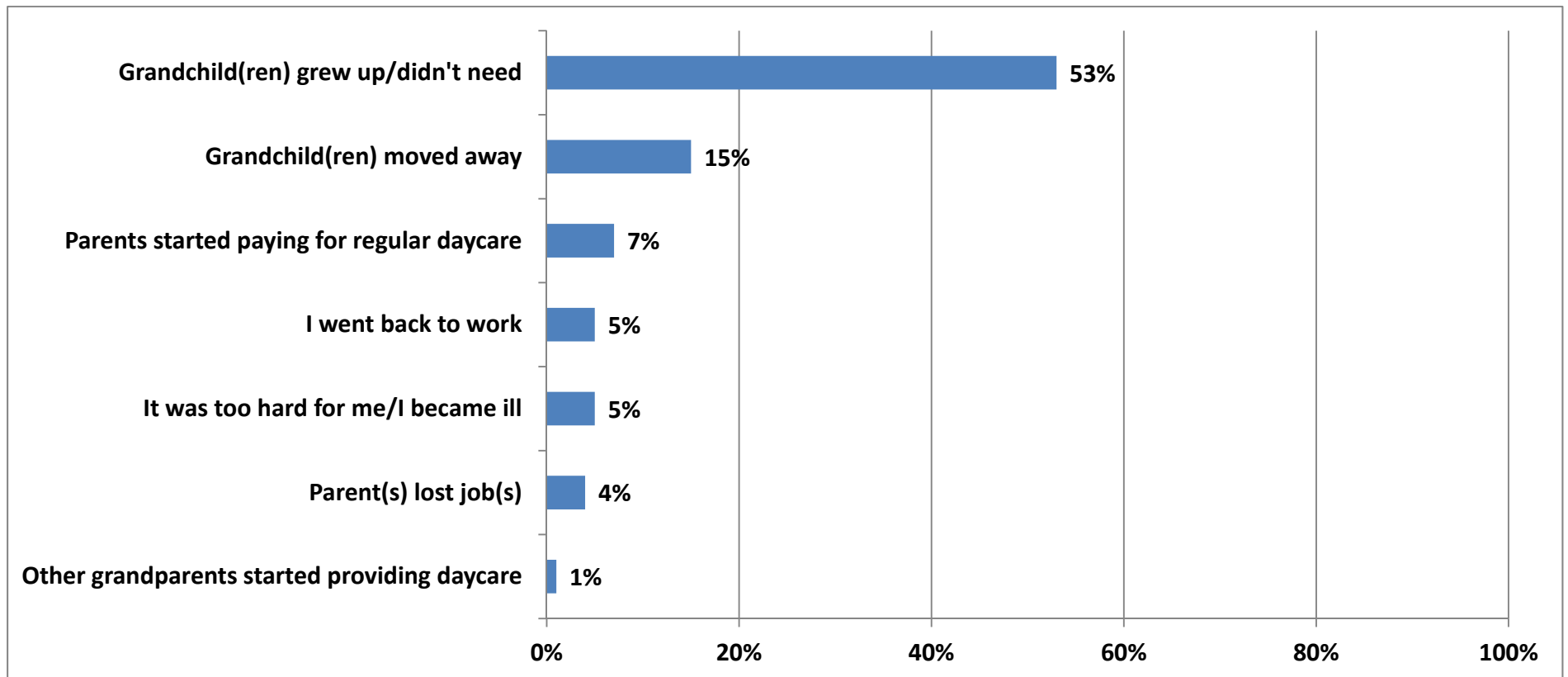
**Figure 24: Why grandparents are providing/did provide daycare services (n=779)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Why grandparents are no longer providing daycare services.** The most common reason grandparents stated for having stopped providing daycare was that the grandchildren no longer needed the service (53%). Far fewer cited other reasons (see Figure 25).

**Figure 25: Why grandparents are no longer providing daycare services (n=504)**

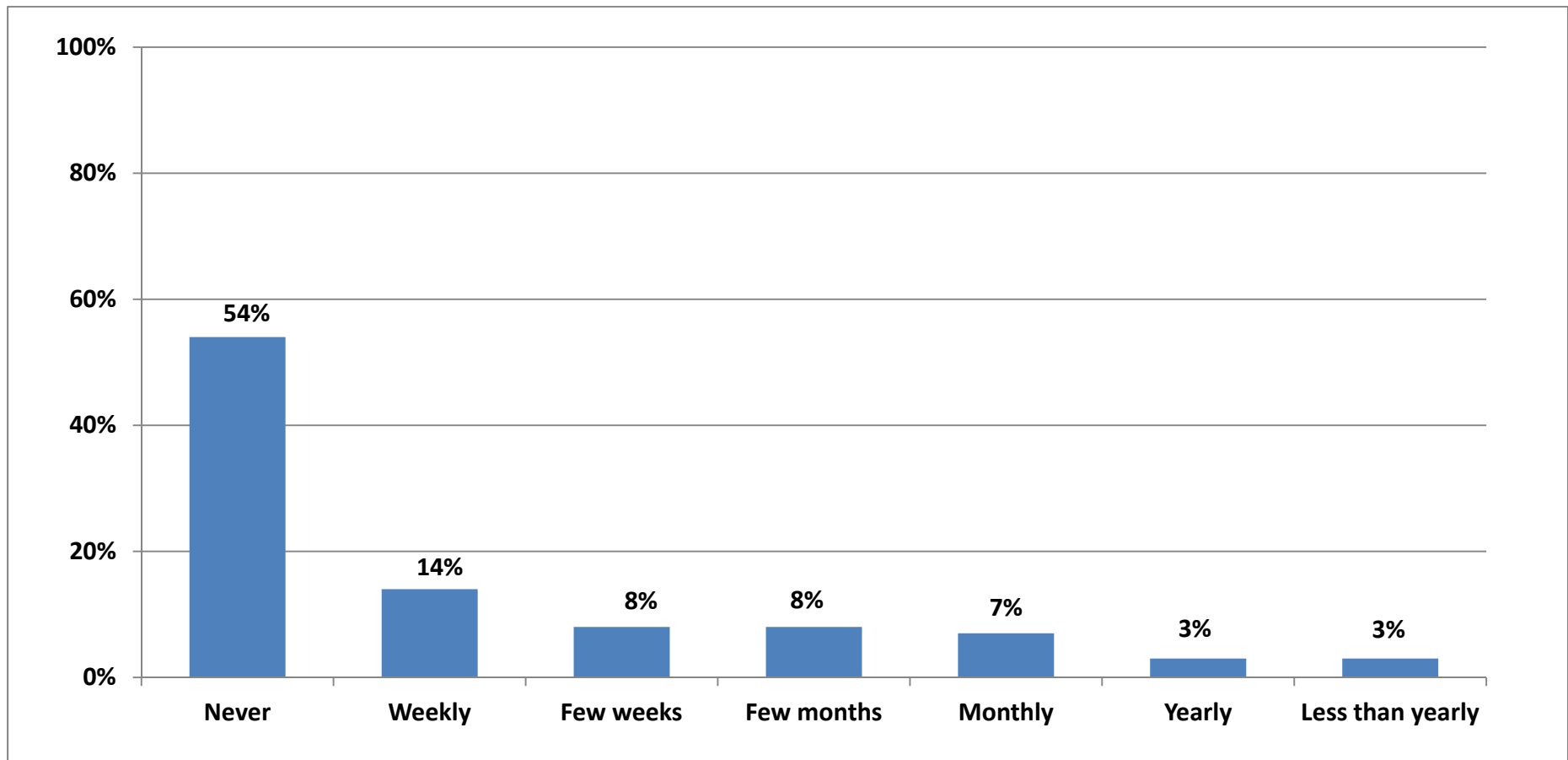


Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012



**Frequency of babysitting grandchildren.** A little over half (54%) of the grandparents who are not the primary caregivers for their grandchildren do not babysit their grandchildren (i.e., when parents are not at work or school) (see Figure 26).

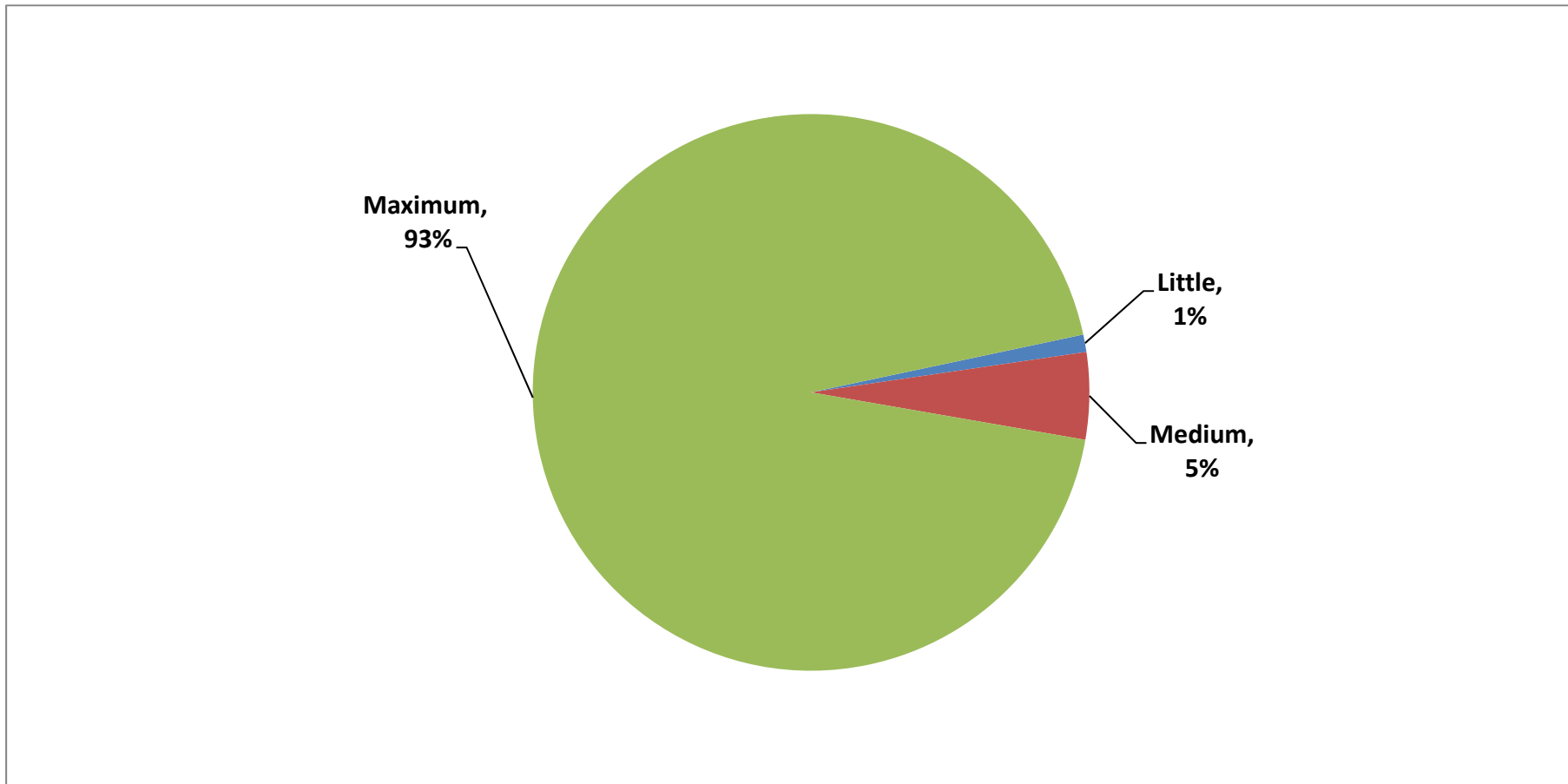
**Figure 26: Frequency of babysitting grandchildren (n=2398)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Level of enjoyment from taking care of grandchildren.** By far, grandparents who have taken care of their grandchildren thoroughly enjoy the experience (93%) (see figure 27).

**Figure 27: Level of enjoyment from taking care of grandchildren (n=1489)**

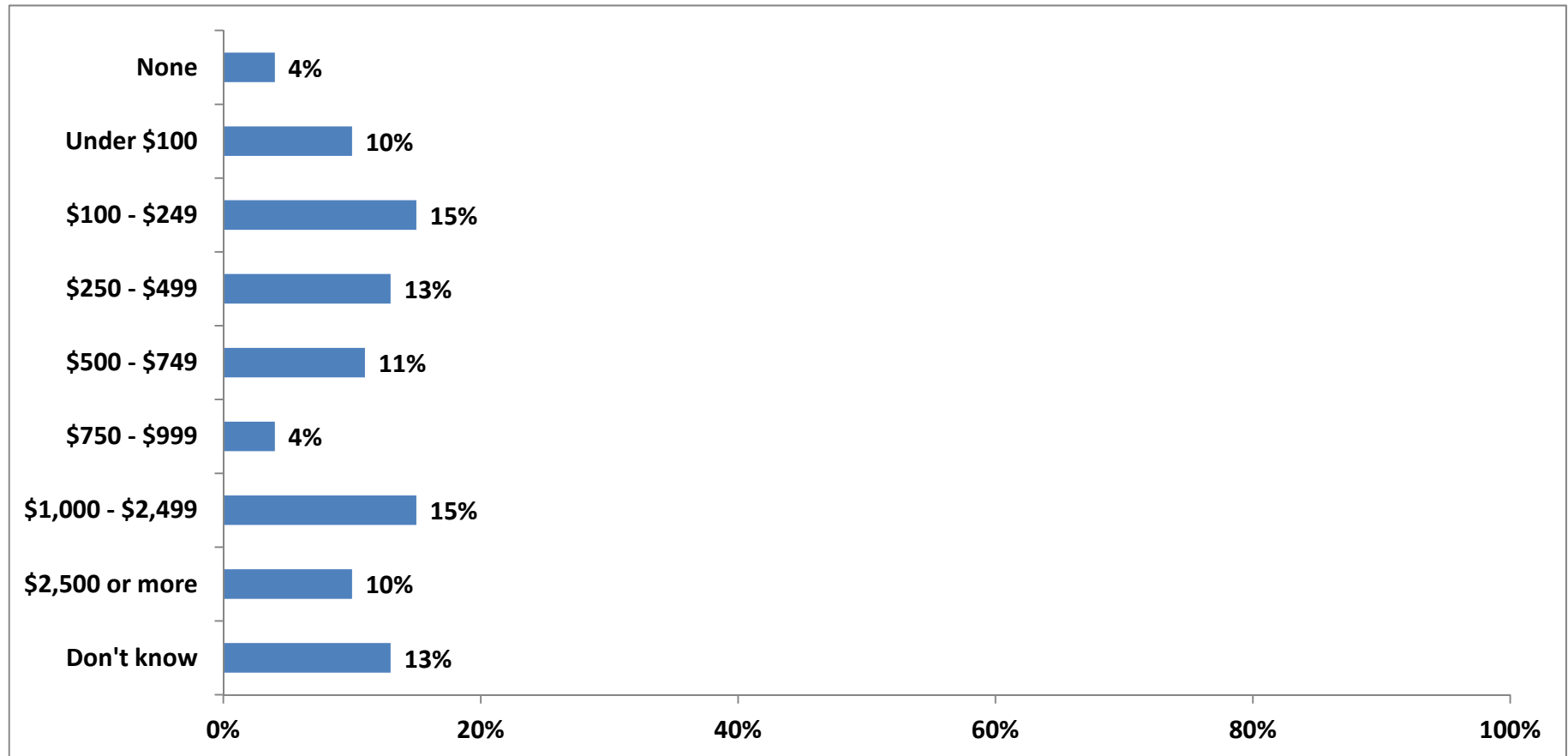


Key: Little enjoyment = 1-3; Medium enjoyment = 4-7; Maximum enjoyment = 8-10

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Money grandparents spent on grandchildren in last 12 months.** A quarter (25%) of the grandparents in the survey indicated they spent \$1,000 or more on their grandchildren in the past twelve months (see Figure 28). In contrast, four percent said they had not spent any money on their grandchildren and one in ten (13%) said they didn't know how much they have spent.

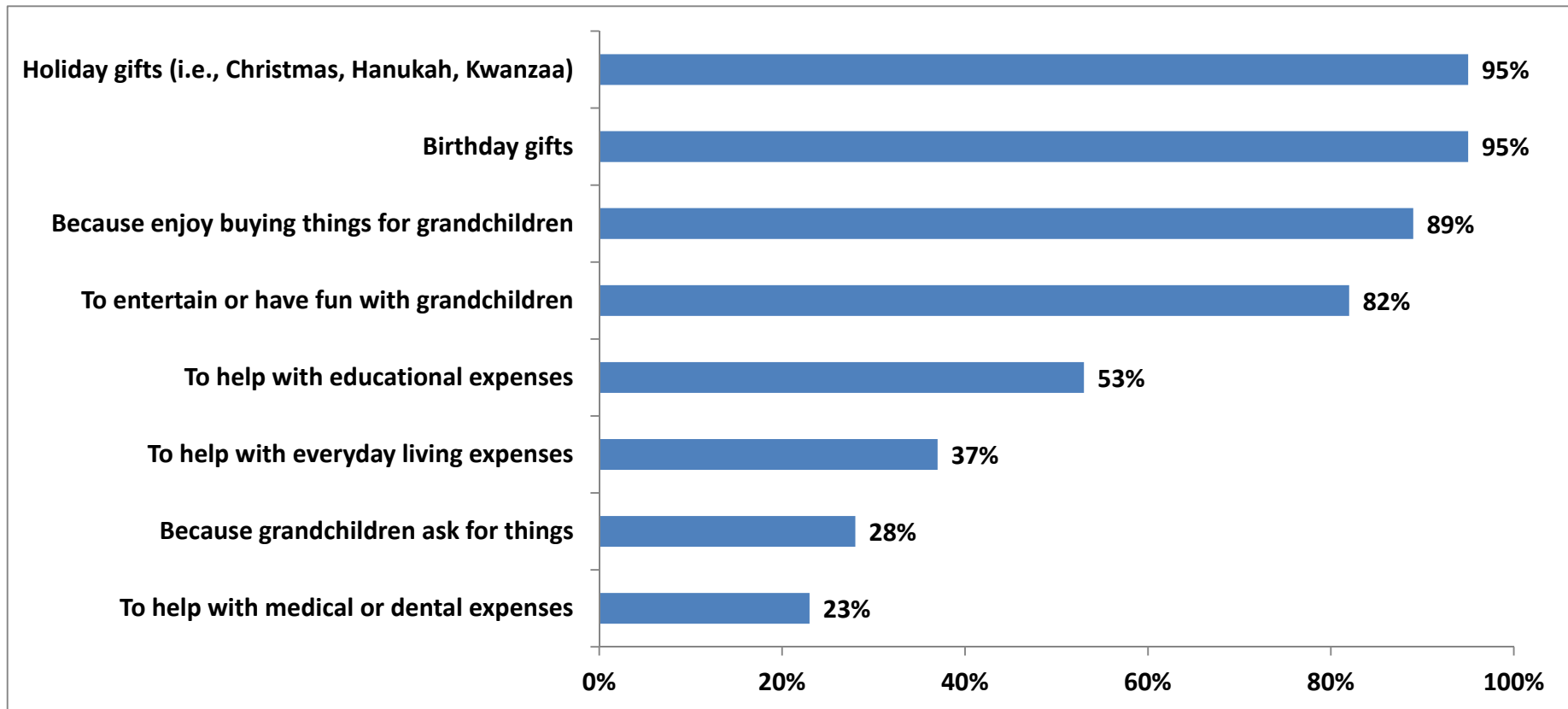
**Figure 28: Money grandparents spent on grandchildren in last 12 months (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Reasons grandparents spend money on grandchildren.** Nearly all grandparents indicated they spend money on their grandchildren to buy holiday (95%) and birthday (95%) gifts or because they enjoy buying their grandchildren things (89%) (see Figure 29). Over half (53%) indicated they spend money on their grandchildren to help with educational expenses, while about one-third (37%) said they help with everyday living expenses.

**Figure 29: Reasons grandparents spend money on grandchildren (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

## Module: Spending and Economics

Respondents from the random digit dial (RDD) sample, African American boost and Hispanic/Latino boost who did not qualify for any of the other modules (multicultural families, live with grandchild, provide daycare) were asked the questions in the spending and economics module (n=1044). This subgroup of respondents was asked about how the current economy is affecting their spending on their grandchildren.

**How economy affects spending (top mentions).** Four in ten (44%) grandparents said the current economy has affected how much they spend on their grandchildren (graph not shown). Grandparents who said the current economy has affected their spending on their grandchildren most often mentioned they have decreased the amount they spend on non-necessities like games (23%). Others report buying less expensive gifts (19%) and decreasing the amount they give for birthdays and special events (13%) (see Table 10).

**Table 10: How economy affects spending (top mentions) (n=455)**

|  | %         |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Decrease amount spent on non-necessities like games</b>             | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Buy less expensive gifts</b>  | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Decrease amount given for birthdays and special events</b>          | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Decrease amount spent on necessities like food and clothing</b>     | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Spend less/cut back (general)</b>                                   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Spend less on entertainment activities like going to the movies</b> | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Don't see them as often/travel less</b>                             | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Only buy necessities like food and clothing</b>                     | <b>5</b>  |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**How the economy has affected living arrangements (top mentions).** In the spending and economics module, participants were asked if they had to change their living arrangements in a way that affected the amount of time they spend with their grandchildren. One in ten (10%) said they have had to change their living arrangements (graph not shown).

Of those grandparents who have had to change their living arrangements as a result of the economy, most often mentioned moving to a smaller home/apartment (18%). A little more than one in ten said they have either moved in with their grandchildren (8%) or their grandchildren moved in with them (5%) (see Table 11).

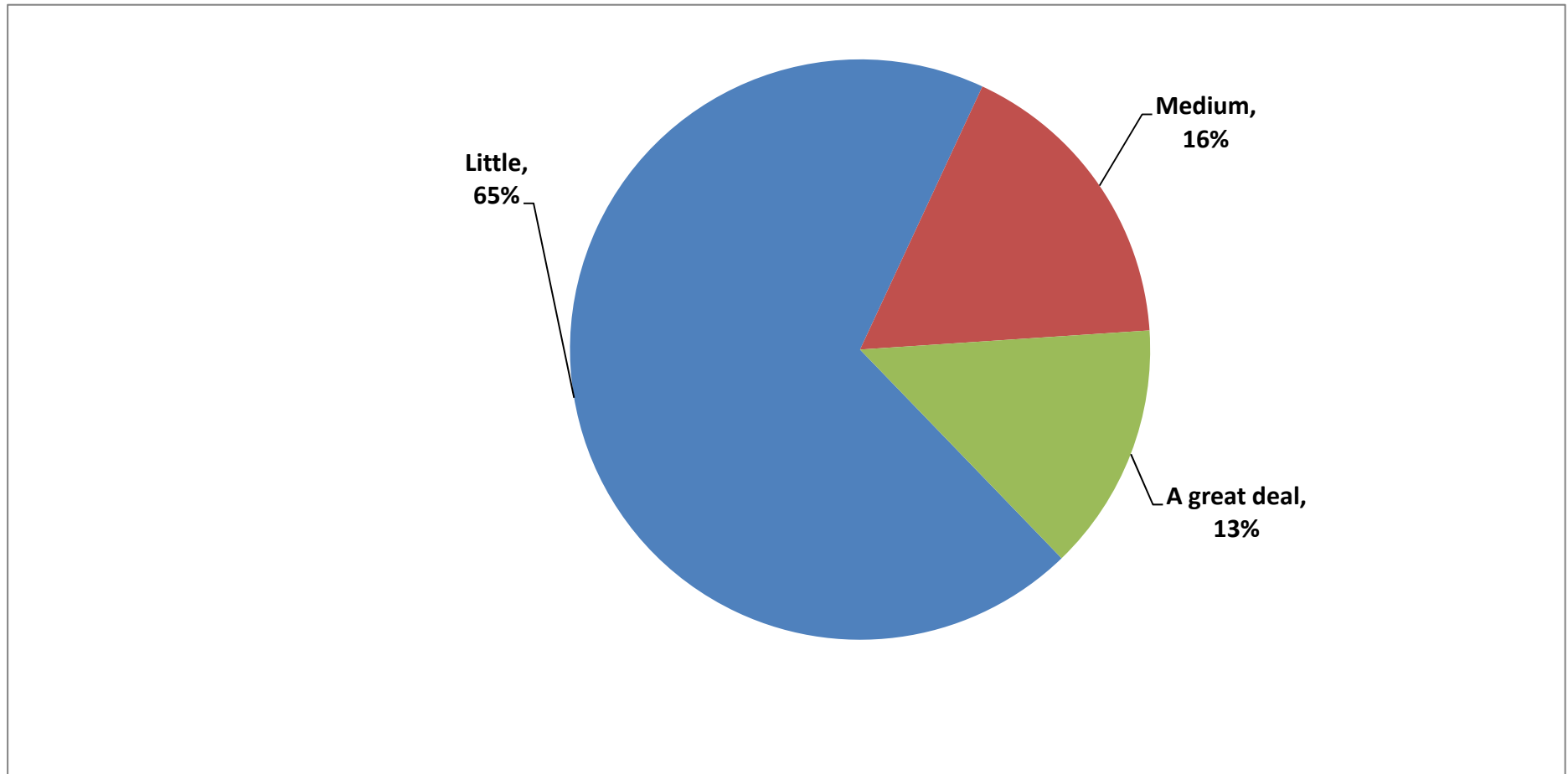
**Table 11: How the economy has affected living arrangements (top mentions) (n=106)**

|  | %         |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Moved to smaller home/apartment</b>             | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Moved in with my children and grandchildren</b> | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Grandchildren moved in with me</b>              | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Moved further away from my grandchildren</b>    | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Moved closer to my grandchildren</b>            | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Moved to nursing/retirement home</b>            | <b>3</b>  |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**The economy affects one’s ability to be a “good” grandparent.** The majority (65%) of grandparents say the current economy has had little effect on their ability to be a “good” grandparent (see Figure 30). However, over one in ten (13%) believes the economy has affected their ability to be a “good” grandparent a great deal.

**Figure 30: The economy affects one’s ability to be a “good” grandparent (n=1044)**



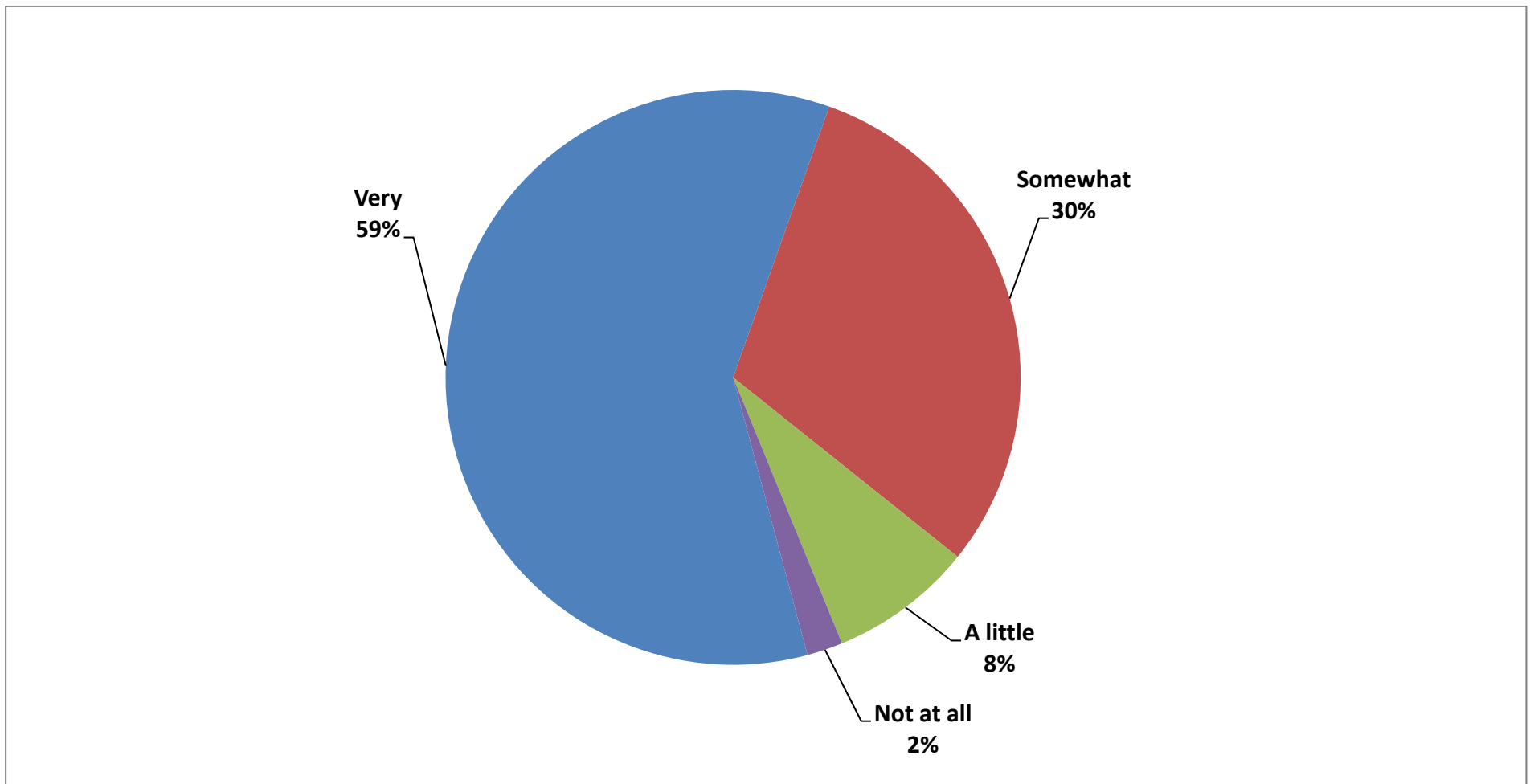
Key: Little effect = 1-3; Medium amount of effect = 4-7; Great deal of effect = 8-10

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012



**Importance of the role they play in their grandchildren's lives.** The vast majority of grandparents surveyed think they play a very (59%) or somewhat (30%) important role in the lives of their grandchildren (see Figure 31).

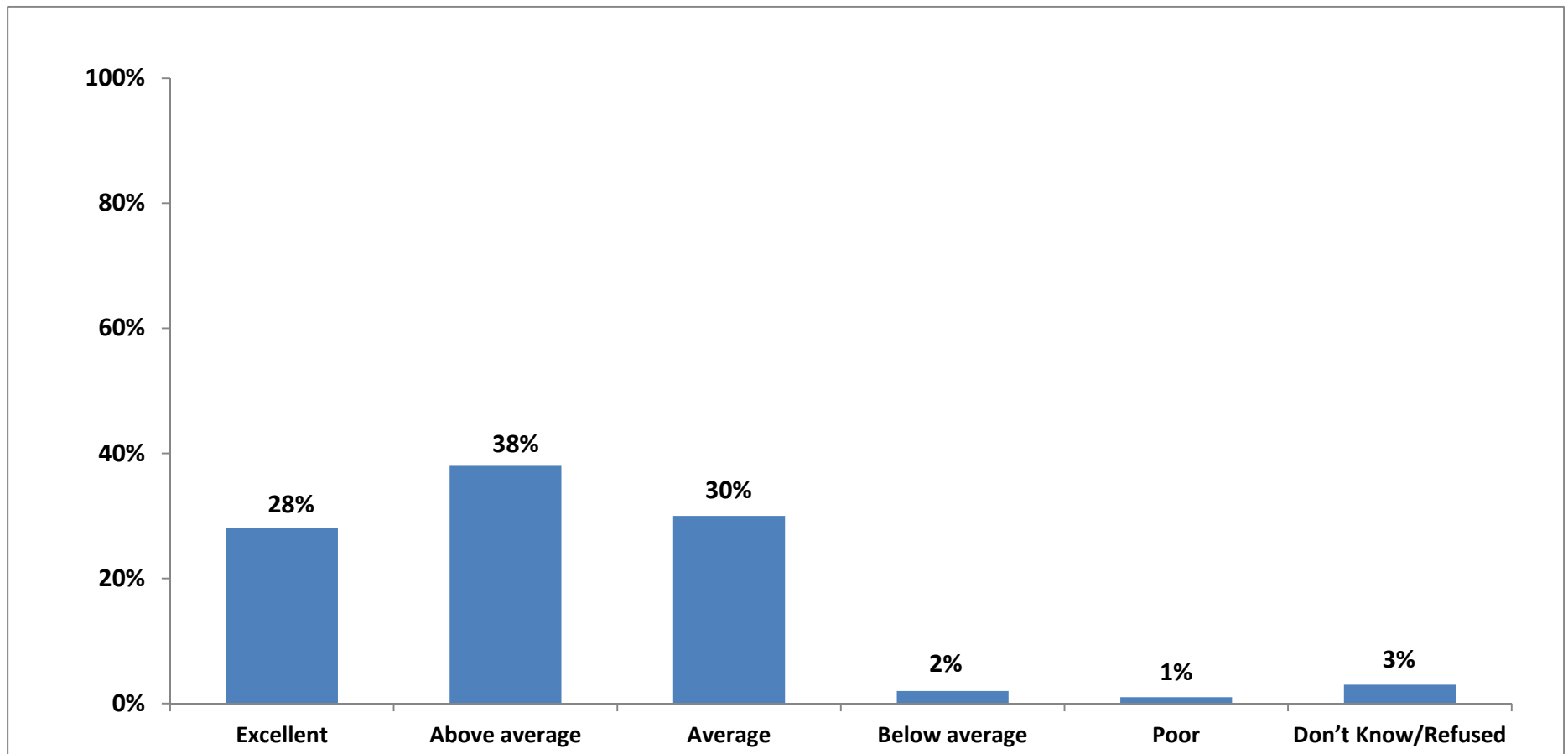
**Figure 31: Importance of the role they play in their grandchildren's lives (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Self-rating as a grandparent.** The majority of grandparents feel they are doing an excellent (28%) or above average (38%) job as a grandparent. Another three in ten (30%) believe they are doing an average job (see Figure 32).

**Figure 32: Self-rating as a grandparent (n=1904)**



Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

**Table 12: RDD, African American boost and Hispanic/Latino boost sample demographics\***

|  | National RDD<br>(n=1904)<br>% | African<br>American<br>(n=385)<br>% | Hispanic/Latino<br>(n=401)<br>% |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                                  |                               |                                     |                                 |
| Male   | 31                            | 29                                  | 34                              |
| Female   | 69                            | 71                                  | 66                              |
| <b>Age</b>                                     |                               |                                     |                                 |
| 50 to 59                                       | 19                            | 23                                  | 21                              |
| 60 to 69                                       | 32                            | 33                                  | 35                              |
| 70+  | 46                            | 40                                  | 40                              |
| <b>Marital Status</b>                          |                               |                                     |                                 |
| Married  | 55                            | 37                                  | 56                              |
| Single   | 4                             | 10                                  | 6                               |
| Divorced/Widowed/Separated                     | 40                            | 53                                  | 38                              |
| <b>Number of children und 18 in household</b>  |                               |                                     |                                 |
| None   | 88                            | 82                                  | 82                              |
| 1 to 3   | 9                             | 14                                  | 10                              |
| 4 or more                                      | 2                             | 2                                   | 2                               |
| <b>Household Income</b>                        |                               |                                     |                                 |
| Under \$25k                                    | 25                            | 33                                  | 29                              |
| \$25 to less than \$50k                        | 21                            | 24                                  | 20                              |
| \$50k to less than \$75k                       | 13                            | 9                                   | 12                              |
| \$75k to less than \$100k                      | 8                             | 5                                   | 7                               |
| \$100k or more                                 | 9                             | 6                                   | 5                               |
| <b>Education</b>                               |                               |                                     |                                 |
| Less than high school diploma (or equivalent)  | 12                            | 16                                  | 26                              |
| High school graduate (or equivalent)           | 32                            | 32                                  | 30                              |
| Post high school vocational/technical training | 5                             | 6                                   | 6                               |
| Some college (no degree)                       | 22                            | 26                                  | 18                              |
| College degree (4 year degree)                 | 15                            | 11                                  | 10                              |
| Post graduate study                            | 4                             | 3                                   | 3                               |
| Graduate/professional degree                   | 8                             | 6                                   | 6                               |
| <b>Employment Status</b>                       |                               |                                     |                                 |
| Retired (no longer working)                    | 62                            | 57                                  | 57                              |
| Retired (working)                              | 6                             | 7                                   | 5                               |
| Employed (never been retired)                  | 21                            | 17                                  | 21                              |
| Unemployed                                     | 2                             | 6                                   | 2                               |
| Homemaker                                      | 3                             | 2                                   | 5                               |
| Disabled                                       | 6                             | 11                                  | 10                              |

Source: Insights and Spending Habits of Modern Grandparents, AARP 2012

\*Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding or non-response



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