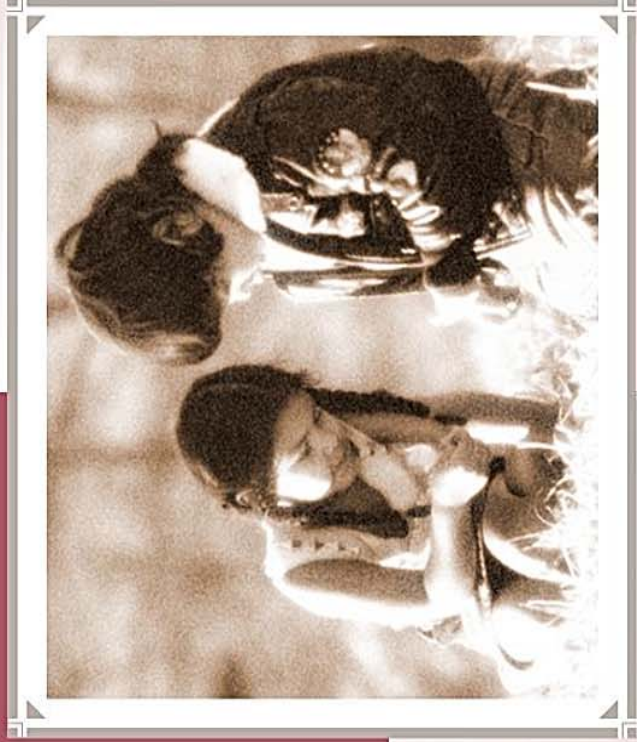


# REPORT

## Crime Prevention for First Nations Children aged 0-6 and Families



February, 2006

# Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
Background .....	5
Importance of prevention among children aged 0 to 6.....	7
Study highlights .....	8
Methodology .....	9
<b>Main findings of the survey of caregivers and administrators .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Figure 1. Distribution of sample by community size .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>Questions reserved for administrators .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Figure 2. Distribution of sample by perception of the number of crimes committed in the community .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Figure 3. Distribution of sample by perception of the usefulness of promoting social skills among children aged 0 to 6 in their community.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Figure 4. Initiatives identified as priorities in the communities .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Figure 5. Main limitations that could hinder the development of strategies to promote social skills in the community, according to administrators .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>Questions for caregivers .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>Figure 6. Caregivers' concerns about the promotion of social skills.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Figure 7. Main tools or programs used to promote social skills among children aged 0 to 6 .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Figure 8. Types of tools judged most useful for implementing social skills promotions strategies .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Figure 9. Relevant training themes identified by caregivers to implement social skills promotion strategies.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Figure 10. Perception of extent of issues community members are facing.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Figure 11. Issues targeted by prevention or awareness activities in the last five years .....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Figures 12. Problem behaviours observed most frequently among children aged 0 to 6 .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<b>Main Findings of Parent Survey.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<i>Figure 13. Distribution of parents by level of schooling.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Figure 14. Distribution of parents by current main occupation .....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Figure 15. Distribution of parents by household income .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Figure 16. Distribution of parents by number of children.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Figure 17. Distribution of parents by consumption habits.....</i>	<i>26</i>

Figure 18. Frequency of alcohol, drug and cigarette consumption by pregnant mothers .....	27
Figure 19. Parents' main sources of concern or worries .....	28
Figure 20. Parents' concern about social problems .....	29
Figure 21. Main services used by parents in the last three years .....	30
Figure 22. Main services used by children of the respondents in the last three years.....	31
Figure 23. Main reasons cited by parents for not sending their children to a daycare or early childhood centre .....	32
Figure 24. Perception of community safety for children .....	33
Figure 25. Perception of level of social support available to parents .....	34
Figure 26. Parents' perception of their children's behaviour problems.....	35
Figure 27. Activities parents would consider joining if a program to promote social skills among children aged 0 to 6 were to be created.....	36
Figure 28. Workshops parents would like to attend.....	37
Figure 29. Role of First Nations culture in family life .....	38
Figure 30. Importance for parents of passing on First Nations language and culture to their children .....	39
Figure 31. Importance of criminality and the promotion of social skills for parents .....	40
Figure 32. Priority initiatives for preventing criminality, according to parents.....	41
<b>Points of Comparison Concerning Initiatives to be Implemented.....</b>	<b>42</b>
Figure 33. Priority initiatives for preventing criminality in the communities, according to the three groups questioned .....	42

<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>43</b>
------------------------	-----------

<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>45</b>
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<b>Bibliographical references .....</b>	<b>47</b>
---	-----------

<b>List of appendices .....</b>	<b>49</b>
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Appendix 1 List of partners

Appendix 2 List of organizations who helped revise the questionnaire

Appendix 3 Number of questionnaires sent and received

Appendix 4 Questionnaire for parents

Appendix 5 Questionnaire for caregivers and managers

## Introduction

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The goal of this needs assessment process is to collect relevant information on the needs of First Nations children aged 0 to 6 and their family members in terms of the promotion of social skills. First Nations youth make up 11% of the population in Quebec, which means that this project affects a sizeable demographic of the First Nations of Quebec.

- The first part of the document describes the context of criminality in the First Nations.
- The second part presents the methodology used for the study: the measurement instrument, the sample, and the data collection process.
- The third part provides the highlights of the study.
- The fourth part presents the main findings of the study. It begins by presenting the data collected from administrators and caregivers, and then those collected from parents. It also includes an analysis and summary of the main study results.
- The fifth part sets out various recommendations concerning the continuation of activities related to the social skills promotional strategy developed by the FNQLHSSC.
- The sixth part includes the following appendices: list of partners (appendix 1), the list of organizations that helped revise the questionnaire (appendix 2), a table showing the number of questionnaires sent and received by the community (appendix 3), and the questionnaires used for the needs assessment (appendices 4 and 5).



## BACKGROUND

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Criminality and the problems associated with crime have long been a cause for concern among the First Nations. Few measures taken to date have had significant impact. Although First Nations people only represent 3% of the Canadian population in general, they account for 17% of the federal prison population (Wilson, 2002).

The National Crime Prevention Centre (2001) also pointed out that most of the Aboriginal people interviewed for a survey of four major Canadian cities said they had constantly been exposed to abuse during their childhood. Some 88% had been victims of violence, during childhood or adulthood.

With regard to family violence, research has shown that it is widespread in the reserves, with a frequency rate five times higher than for the Canadian population in general. This observation has been corroborated by a large number of studies (including those by Jocelyn Proulx and Sharon Perrault, 2000),

There are other categories of criminality, and in recent years there has been an increase in crime against property, or vandalism, often carried out by youths on homes and buildings belonging to the community. This type of behaviour, which reflects distress and a desire to control their environment, can escalate to alarming proportions in some cases

The fact remains that crime, regardless of its type, is extremely widespread. Based on the statistics mentioned earlier, it has been suggested that this situation may be due in part to insufficient resources and a lack of programs that reflect the special socioeconomic, legal and cultural realities of First Nations communities (Benson, 1991).



## **IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION AMONG CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 6**

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Studies in the fields of health, social services and crime prevention demonstrate the profound effects of early childhood experiences on the physical, mental and social well-being of people later in their lives. Other studies have shown what happens when a child's development is disrupted. For example, longitudinal studies carried out on children in Canada and other countries have traced antisocial behaviour – including criminal behaviour – back to early childhood and the pre-natal stage (Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, 2004).

### **❖ Beneficial effects of prevention**

Major benefits are generated by preventive measures. Crime prevention reduces the incidence of teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse, improves high school graduation rates, raises employment rates, increases housing rental rates, reduces the number of criminal trials, lowers the number of people on social assistance, reduces demand for health care and decreases the number of victims of crime (Aos, Phipps, Barnoski, Lieb, 2001).

### **❖ Development of social skills**

The development of social skills is crucial in the adoption of non-aggressive behaviour. Research and practical experience show us that a child's future is largely determined by the time they are five or six years old. Good pre-natal care, solid school programs, education on how to bring up children, help for parents and stable nursing care are all related to effective crime prevention (Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, 2004). Furthermore, preventive intervention has a positive effect on the social development of kindergarten children who display disruptive behaviour (Tremblay, Pagani-Kurtz, Masse, Vitaro & Pihl, 1995). The development of personal and cultural identity is also a significant protection factor, in that it allows an individual to find a place and role within the community, reinforcing his or her self-esteem and self-confidence.

### **❖ Development of parenting skills**

It is estimated that family support programs, parenting skills development programs and early intervention programs reduce violence toward children by up to 50%. Programs of this type can help prevent young children from adopting the very aggressive behaviour that is frequently related to school failure and, ultimately to delinquency and criminality (Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, 2004).

Since aggressive behaviour in early childhood has been deemed to be the best indicator of future delinquency and aggressive behaviour (Farrington, 1991; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz & Walder, 1984), prevention programs for young children are crucial, as they are more effective at reducing antisocial and violent behaviour than any other treatment or repression program (Farrington, 1991; Offord, Boyle, & Racine, 1991).

Lastly, it is essential for caregivers to work with parents in order to establish a relationship of trust and healthy communication. It is not enough simply to hand over a guidebook on parenting skills. Close collaboration along with straightforward, friendly communication encourage parental involvement, a crucial element in any prevention strategy.

## STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

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### Highlights about parents

- 82.7% of the parents questioned feel that crime is a significant problem in their community.
- More than one parent in four (25.6%) considers that their community is not a very safe place to raise children.
- Only one parent in five feels their community is safe.
- 91.5% of the parents questioned stated that they think it is important to promote social skills.

### Highlights about caregivers and administrators

- A high number of respondents (43.2% of caregivers and 50.0% of administrators) estimate that crimes are committed every week if not every day in their community.
- A high number of caregivers (86.5%) and administrators (97%) feel it is extremely useful or very useful to promote social skills.
- One-third of caregivers state that in their community there are no programs or tools to promote social skills.
- Only 11.1% of caregivers feel that the tools available to them for the promotion of social skills are sufficient.

## METHODOLOGY

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The results presented in this report are drawn from parents and caregivers who are responsible for or in charge of First Nations children from 0 to 6 years old. Program administrators who work with children were also questioned.

Given the lack of specific information about the needs of this population, two questionnaires were prepared with the help of a group of First Nations partners.<sup>1</sup> The first was for caregivers and administrators, and the second for parents

In order to validate the questionnaires addressed to the various type of respondents we wished to survey, a meeting of partners from several organizations<sup>2</sup> was held on June 7, 2005, and a meeting of the FNQLHSSC First Nations regional early childhood consultation committee was also held in Quebec City on June 15, 2005.

A pre-test was then drawn up to validate the questionnaires with community members. In order to stimulate participation in the pre-test, the people who attended the First Nations Early Childhood Forum that took place in Quebec City in April 2005 were informed about the project, and those who were interested were invited to give their names to a FNQLHSSC representative. The FNQLHSSC carried out the follow-up with these people.

The meeting of partners and participation by volunteers in the pre-test enabled us to:

- A) Determine how long it took to answer the questionnaire
- B) Test the face validity of the questions
- C) Verify the formulation of the questions

At the end of the pre-test, a series of modifications was made to the questionnaires. The English and French versions were then revised, corrected and printed.

The data was gathered as follows: First, to ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire was distributed, anonymously, to child care organizations and other relevant people and organizations. Questionnaires were mailed to the target organizations in each community, along with stamped, pre-addressed return envelopes. To ensure constant follow-up, a FNQLHSSC staff member contacted the organizations directly to encourage them to return the completed questionnaires. For the parent questionnaires, we solicited the help of several community sectors (education, health, social services, etc.) to recruit families interested in completing the questionnaires.

Of a total of 173 questionnaires sent out to caregivers/administrators, 96 were completed and compiled. A total of 122 questionnaires were sent out to parents, and 83 were returned.

In Appendix 3, you will find a table showing the number of questionnaires sent to each community as well as the number of completed questionnaires returned. There is also a copy of the “parent” questionnaire in Appendix 4 and a copy of the “caregiver/administrator” questionnaire in Appendix 5.

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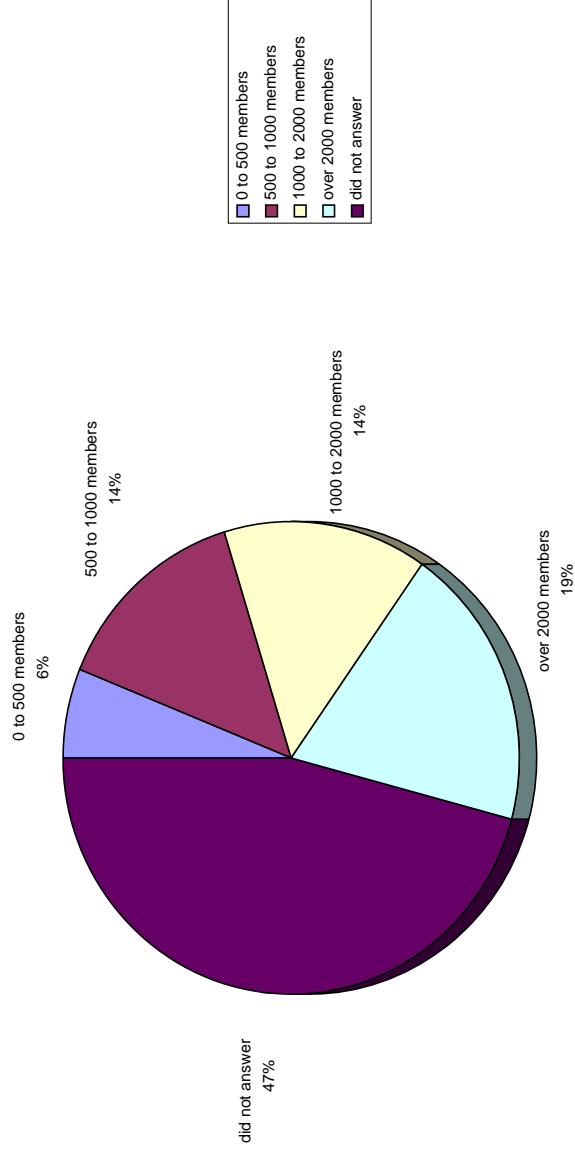
<sup>1</sup> The list of partners is included in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> The list of organizations that participated in the review of the questionnaires is included in Appendix 2.

## MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OF CAREGIVERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

The respondents were asked about the size of their communities. A large proportion (47%) preferred not to answer this question. Of those who did answer, 19% said they came from communities of 2000 members or more, while a similar proportion (14%) came from communities with between 500 and 1000 or between 1000 and 2000 members. A smaller group (6%) said they came from smaller communities with between 0 and 500 members.

**Figure 1. Distribution of sample by community size**

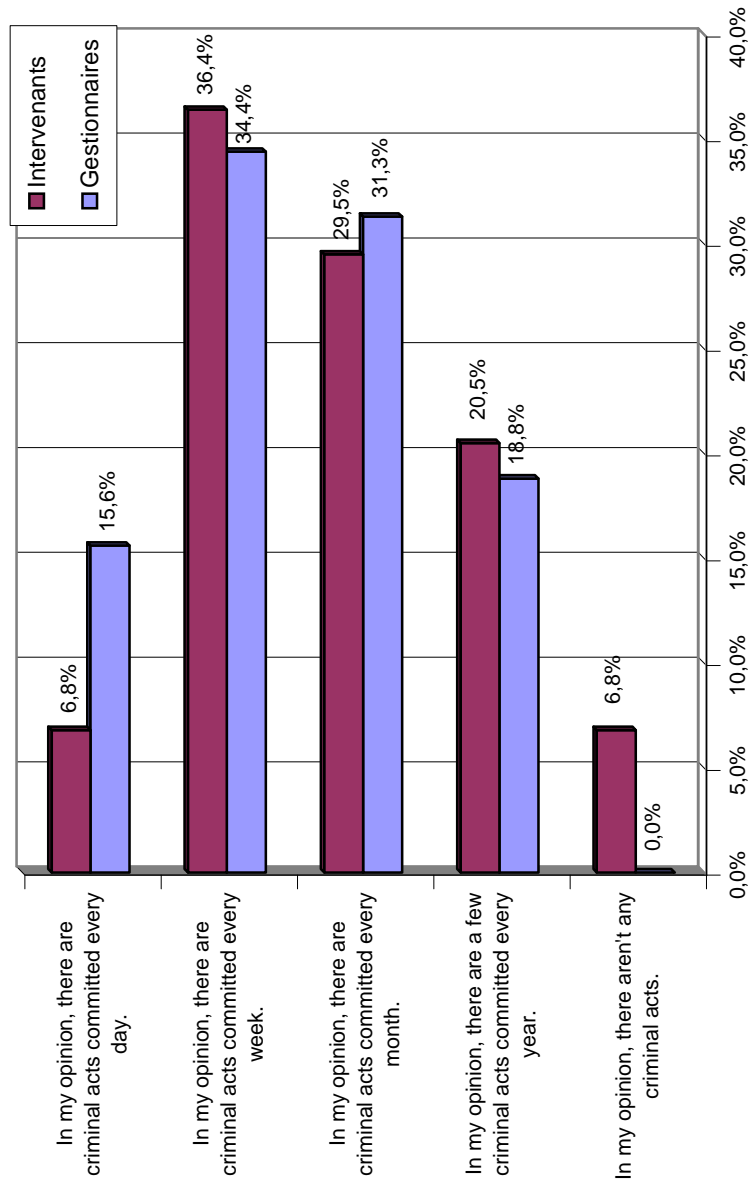


## QUESTIONS RESERVED FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Although caregivers and administrators were given the same questionnaire, some questions were asked only to administrators and others only to caregivers. If caregivers happened to answer the questions reserved for administrators or vice versa, their answers were not compiled.

In all, 37<sup>3</sup> administrators and 32 caregivers gave their perceptions of the level of crime in their communities. The results are presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Distribution of sample by perception of the number of crimes committed in the community**

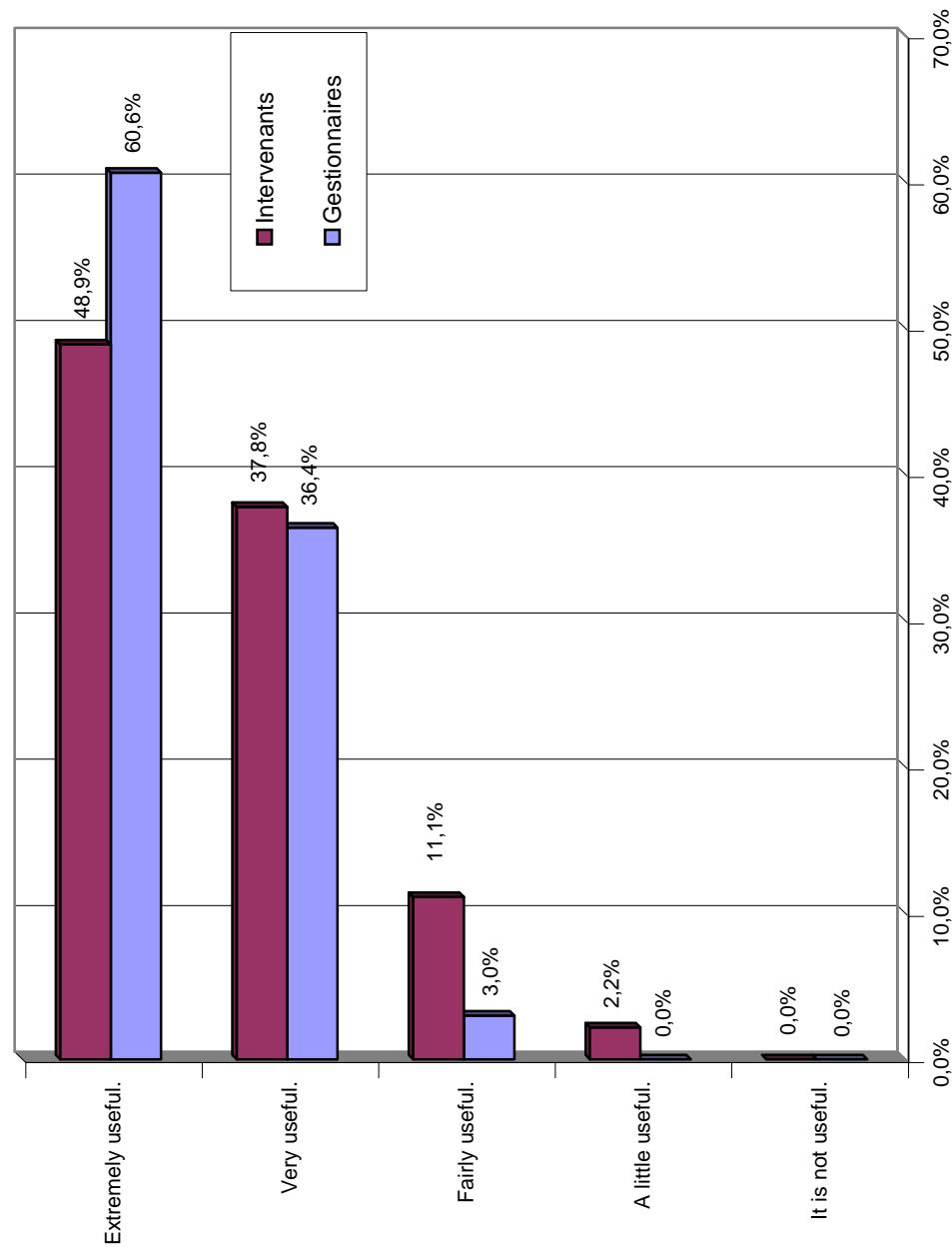


Overall, administrators' and caregivers' perceptions of criminality are fairly congruent, although administrators tend to believe there is more crime than caregivers do, since no administrators indicated they believed no crime was committed in their community. A large proportion of respondents (43.2% of caregivers and 50.0% of administrators) believe that crimes are committed every week if not every day.

<sup>3</sup> A total of 7 respondents did not answer the question about their job title.

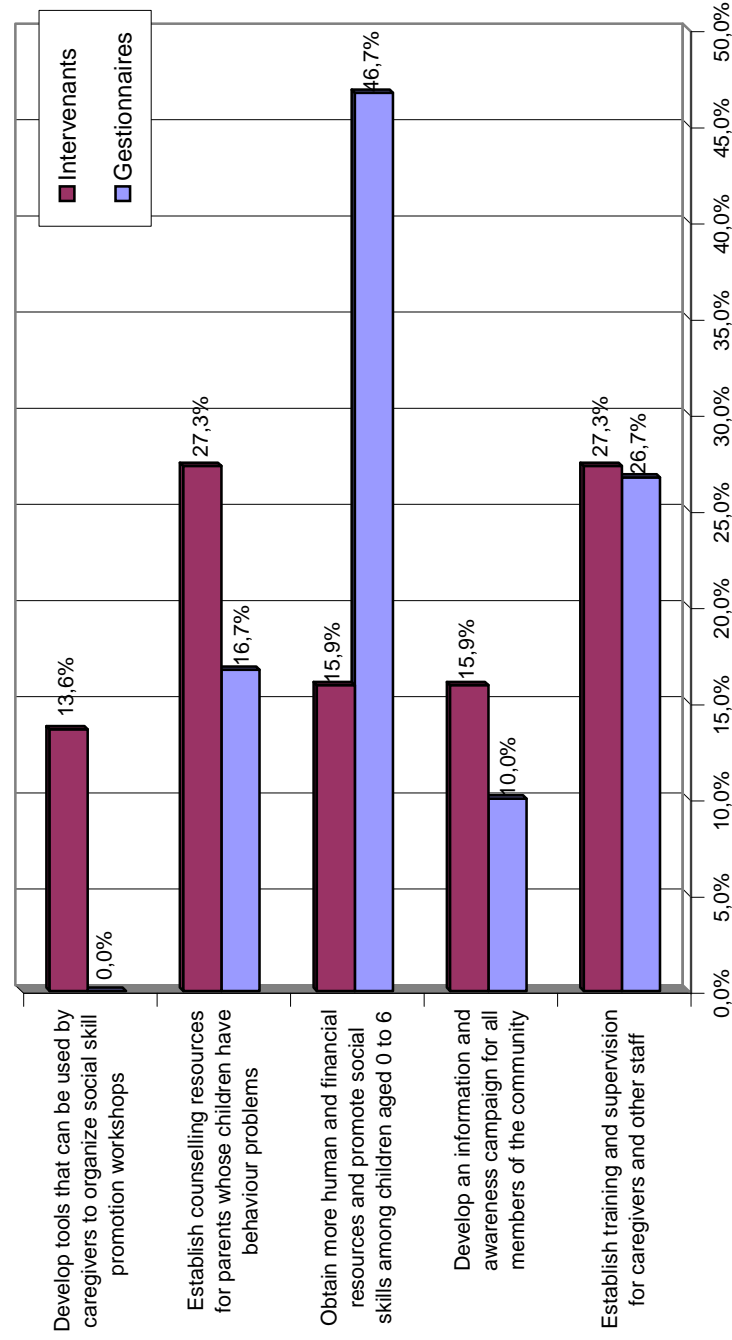
In relation to crime-related problems, respondents were then questioned about their perception of the usefulness of promoting social skills among children aged 0 to 6 in their community. Once again, caregivers and administrators had similar perceptions of the usefulness of doing so. Nearly half of caregivers (48.9%) and nearly two-thirds (60.6%) of administrators are of the opinion that such an approach would be “extremely useful.” Another third of respondents (37.6% of caregivers and 36.4% of administrators) lean in the same direction, qualifying the approach as “very useful.”

**Figure 3. Distribution of sample by perception of the usefulness of promoting social skills among children aged 0 to 6 in their community**



The respondents were also asked to state their priorities in terms of different initiatives for countering the crime problems in their community. The results presented in Figure 4 show the differences in opinion between caregivers and administrators.

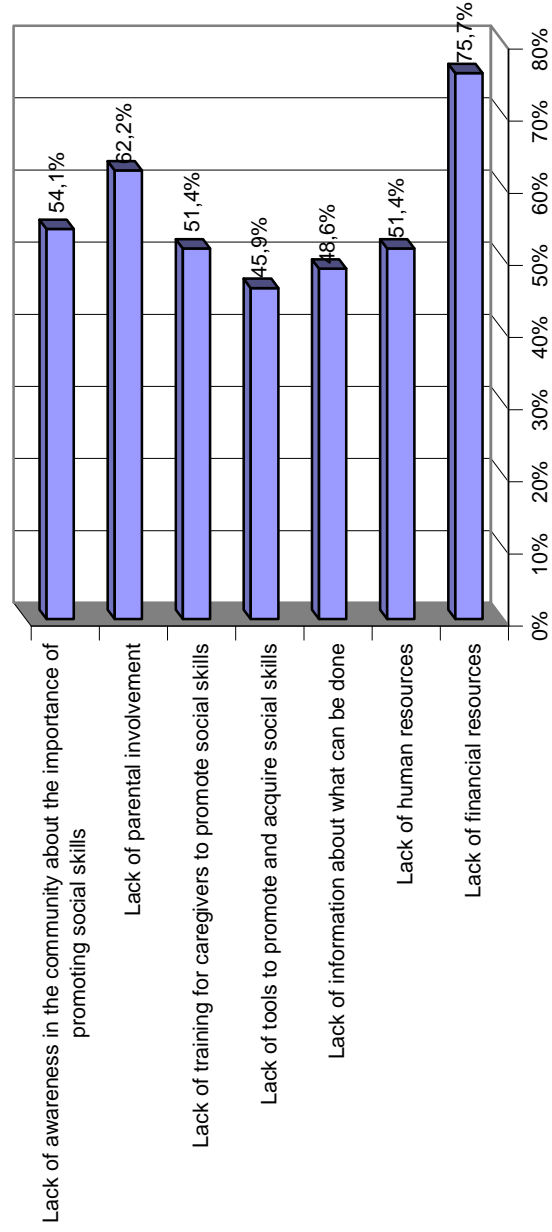
**Figure 4. Initiatives identified as priorities in the communities**



Overall, the results suggest that the initiative most widely supported by the administrators is to obtain more financial and human resources to fight criminality by promoting social skills among children aged 0 – 6 (46.7%). To a lesser degree, administrators believe that it is a priority to establish training and supervision for caregivers and other staff who work with young children in order to prevent criminality (26.7%) and to establish counselling resources and workshops for parents whose children display aggressive and disruptive behaviour (16.7%). As for the caregivers, they would prefer to see energies directed toward the establishment of information and awareness campaigns for all members of the community (15.9%) and toward the development of tools that they could use to organize workshops to promote social skills (13.6%).

Administrators were asked what they believed would be the main limitations that might hinder the development of strategies to promote social skills within the communities. The results are presented in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5. Main limitations that could hinder the development of strategies to promote social skills in the community, according to administrators**

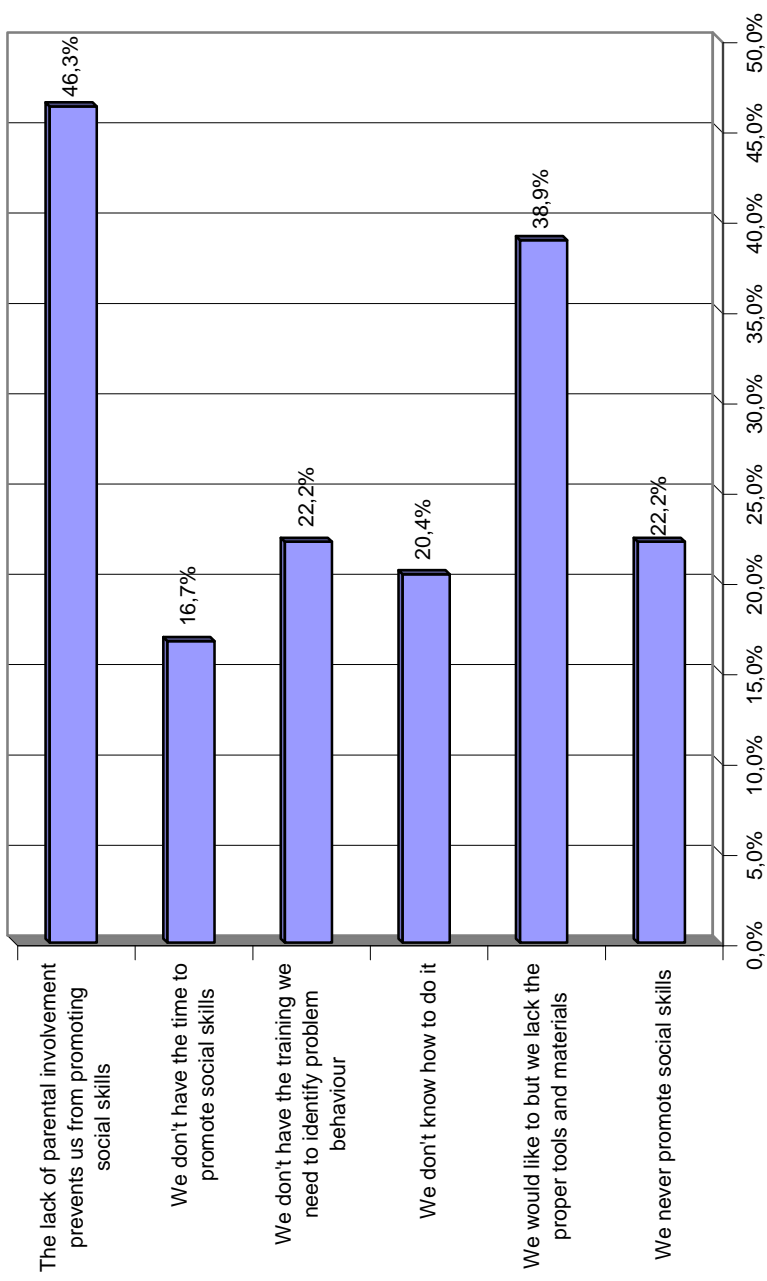


Overall, administrators noted many obstacles to the development of strategies. Over three-quarters (75.7%) of administrators suggested that a lack of financial resources would be a serious obstacle to the development of strategies to promote social skills among children. Nearly two-thirds (62.2%) of administrators also identify a lack of parental involvement as a serious obstacle, while more than half (54.1%) believe that the lack of awareness in the community concerning the importance of promoting social skills among children to prevent criminality is a serious obstacle.

## QUESTIONS FOR CAREGIVERS

Several questions were addressed specifically to caregivers, 54 of whom answered the survey. The caregivers were asked about their needs in terms of developing clinical and prevention tools.

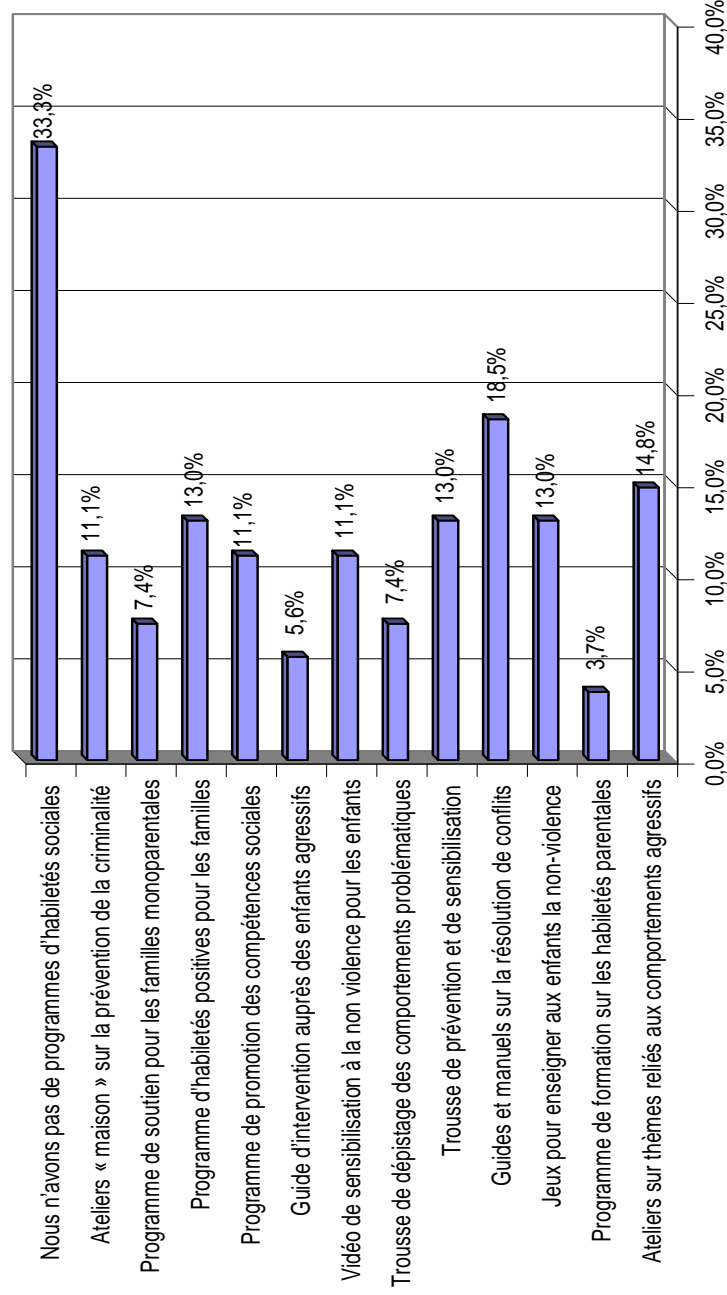
**Figure 6. Caregivers' concerns about the promotion of social skills**



Caregivers are mainly concerned (46.3%) by the lack of parental involvement, which has a negative impact on their efforts to promote social skills. More than one caregiver in three (38.9%) would like to do more promotion of social skills but say they do not have the tools or materials to do so.

We also asked caregivers about the various tools or programs currently used in their communities to promote social skills. The main results are presented in Figure 7.

**Figure 7. Main tools or programs used to promote social skills among children aged 0 to 6**

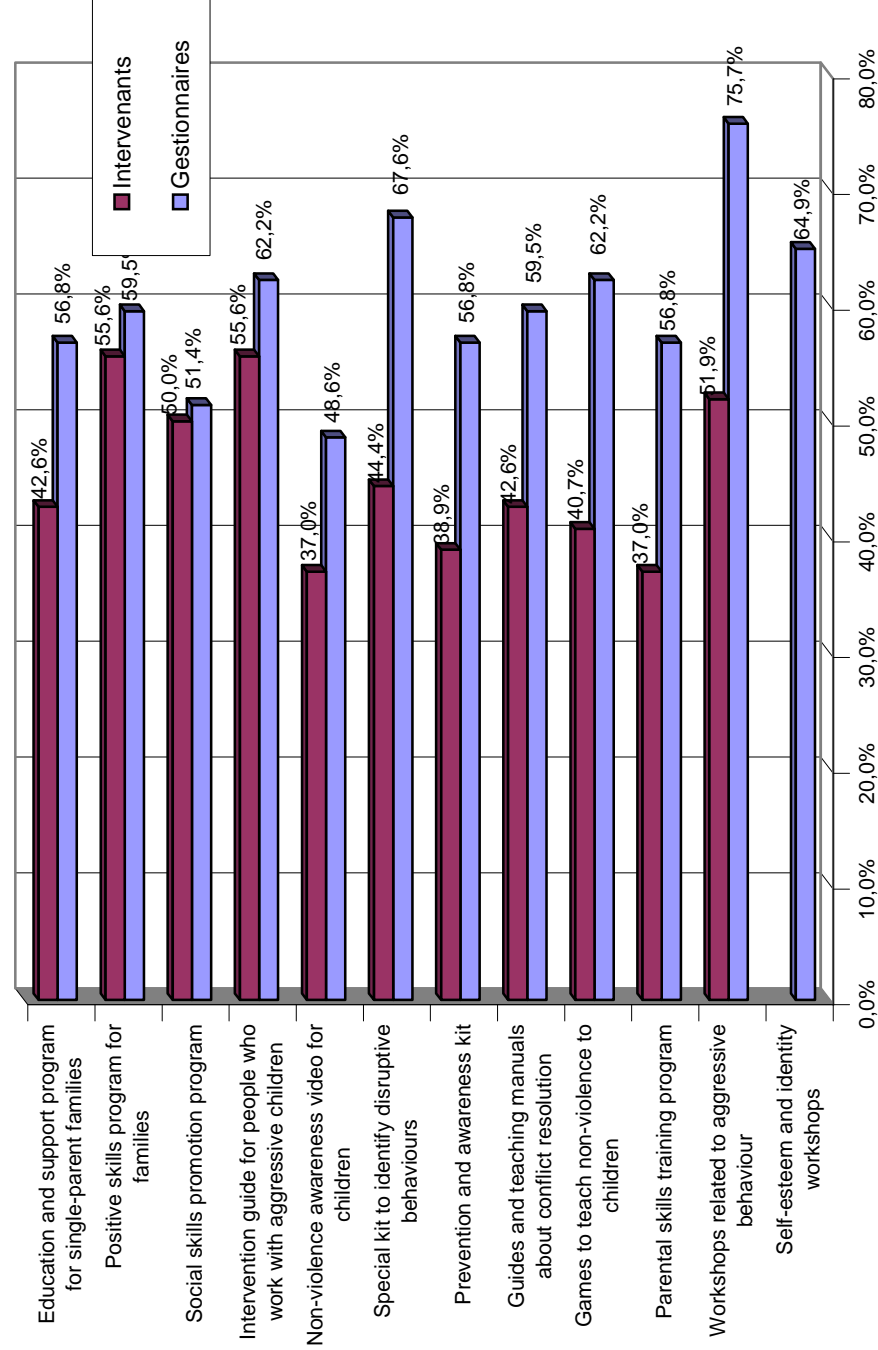


One-third of the respondents say that in their community there are no programs or tools for promoting social skills. A few (less than one in five) mention the use of conflict resolution guides and manuals.

This lack of tools is further reflected by the fact that only 11.1% of the respondents believe they have sufficient social skill promotion tools at their disposal. To make up for the shortage, 9.3% of the caregivers say they have developed their own social skills materials or programs.

We also asked administrators and caregivers about the most useful social skills promotional tools. The results are presented in Figure 8.

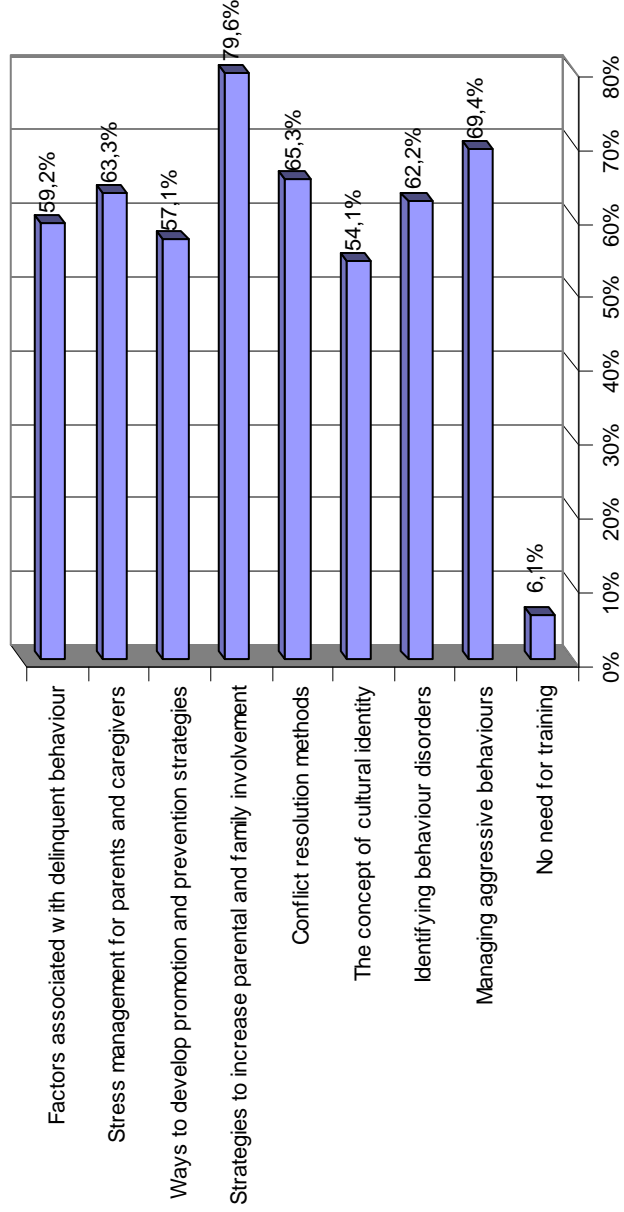
**Figure 8. Types of tools judged most useful for implementing social skills promotions strategies**



In general, administrators seem more favourably inclined toward all the proposed tools than caregivers, judging that the most useful tools would be workshops on aggressive behaviour (75.7%), problem behaviour identification kits (67.6%) and self-esteem workshops (64.9%). Caregivers preferred positive skills programs for families (55.6%), intervention guides for people who work with aggressive children (55.6%) and workshops on aggressive behaviour (51.9%).

Caregivers were asked about training needs, and the results are presented in Figure 9.

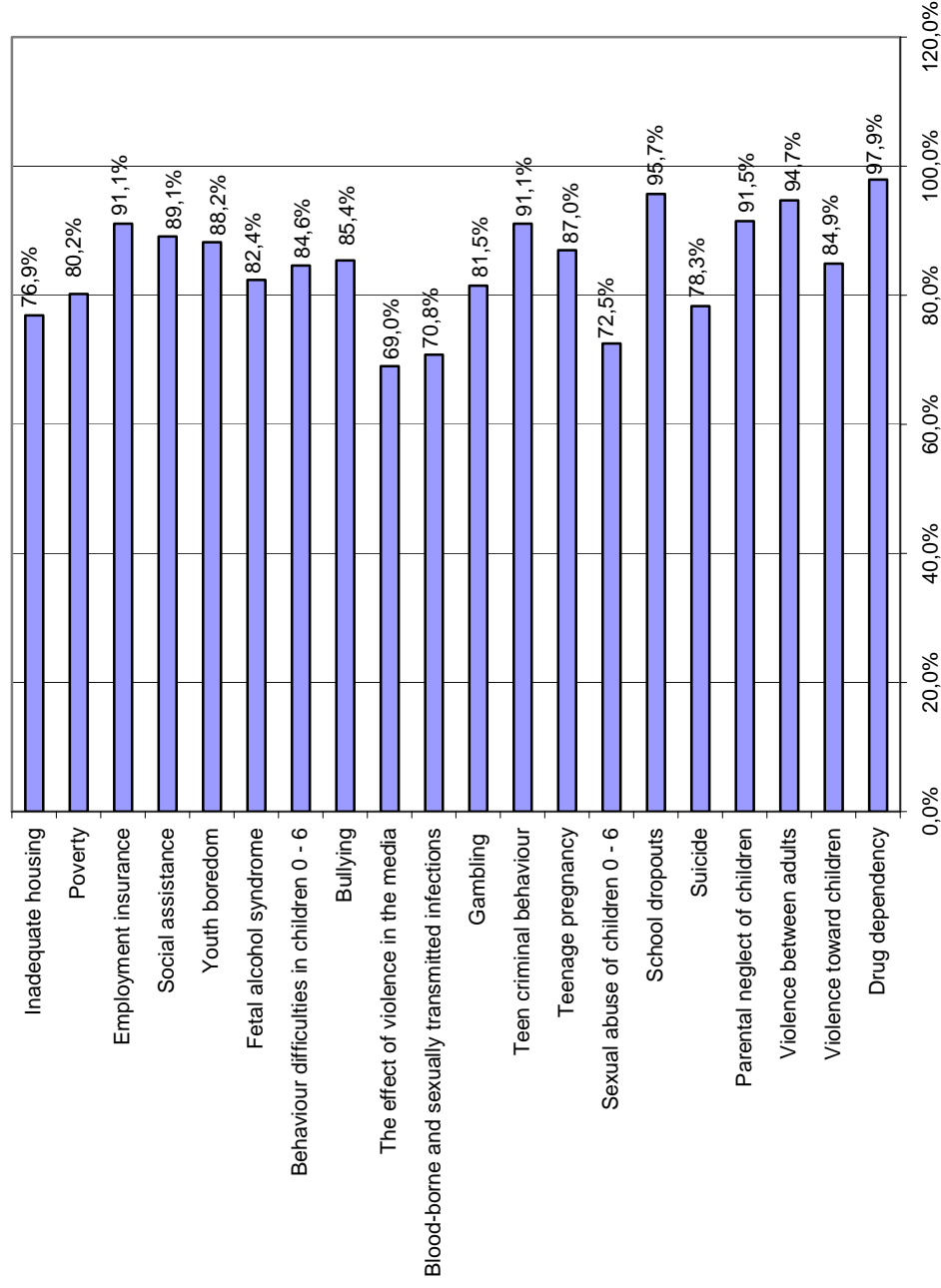
**Figure 9. Relevant training themes identified by caregivers to implement social skills promotion strategies**



Among the caregivers questioned, 35.7% had already received training related to social skills. The need for training does seem significant, however. Reflecting their earlier statements, a vast majority of caregivers (79.6%) are of the opinion that strategies seeking greater parental and family involvement are the main avenues to consider for implementing better social skills promotions strategies. Child aggression management (69.4%), various conflict resolution methods for children (65.3%) and stress management for parents and caregivers (63.3%) were also frequently mentioned.

The respondents were questioned about social issues afflicting their communities and asked to indicate the extent of each different problem. The results in Figure 10 show the proportion of respondents who believe a particular issue is “fairly important” or “very important.”

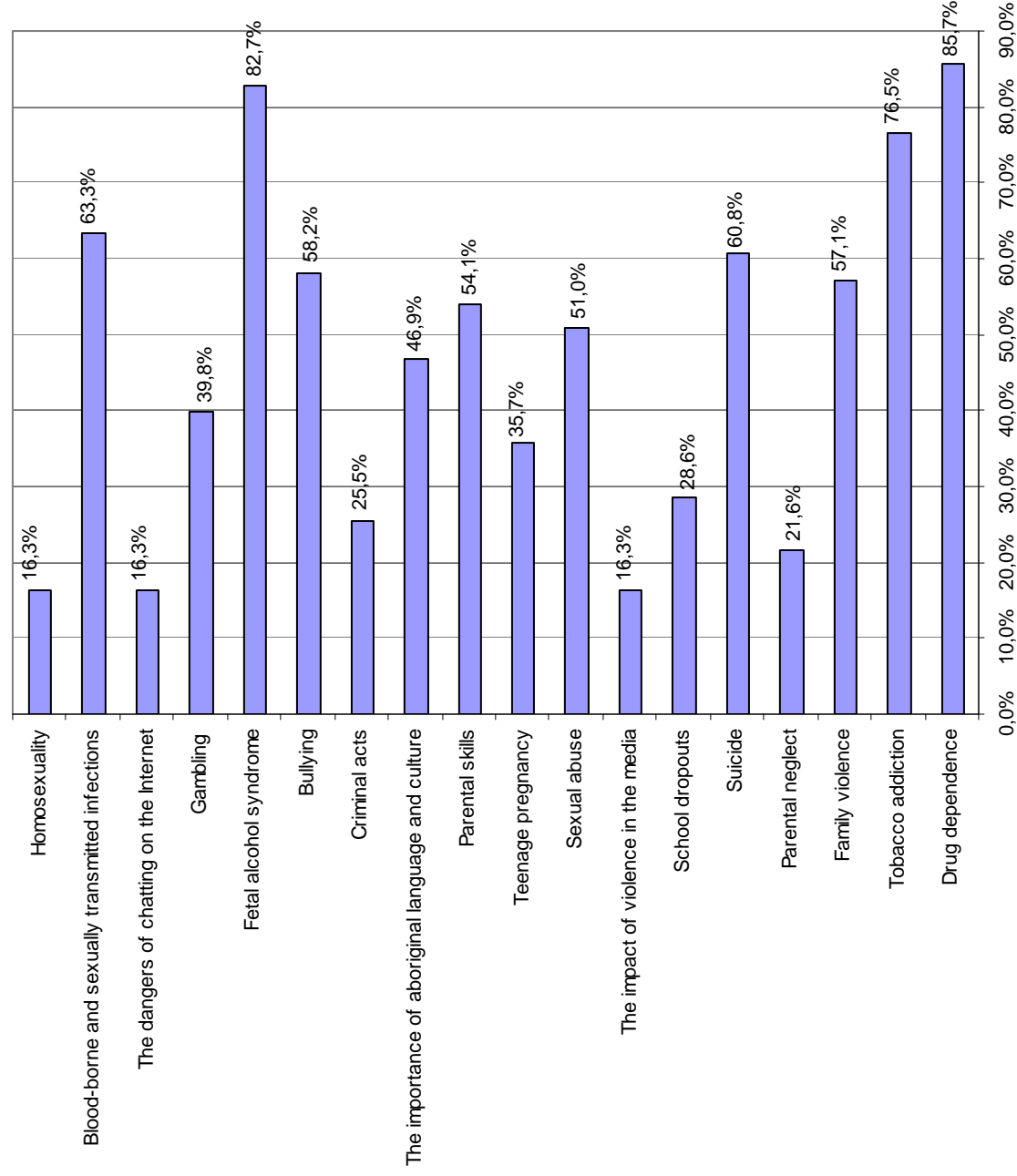
**Figure 10. Perception of extent of issues community members are facing**



The results of Figure 10 confirm that First Nations communities are seriously afflicted by social issues. Only three issues were not identified by over three-quarters of respondents, but even here the results were high and somewhat worrying: blood-borne and sexually transmitted infections (70.8%), sexual abuse of children aged 0 to 6 (72.5%), and the effects of violence in the media (69.0%). Overall, a very high proportion of respondents are concerned by all of these issues.

Caregivers were also asked about the various prevention and awareness initiatives used in their respective communities in the last five years.

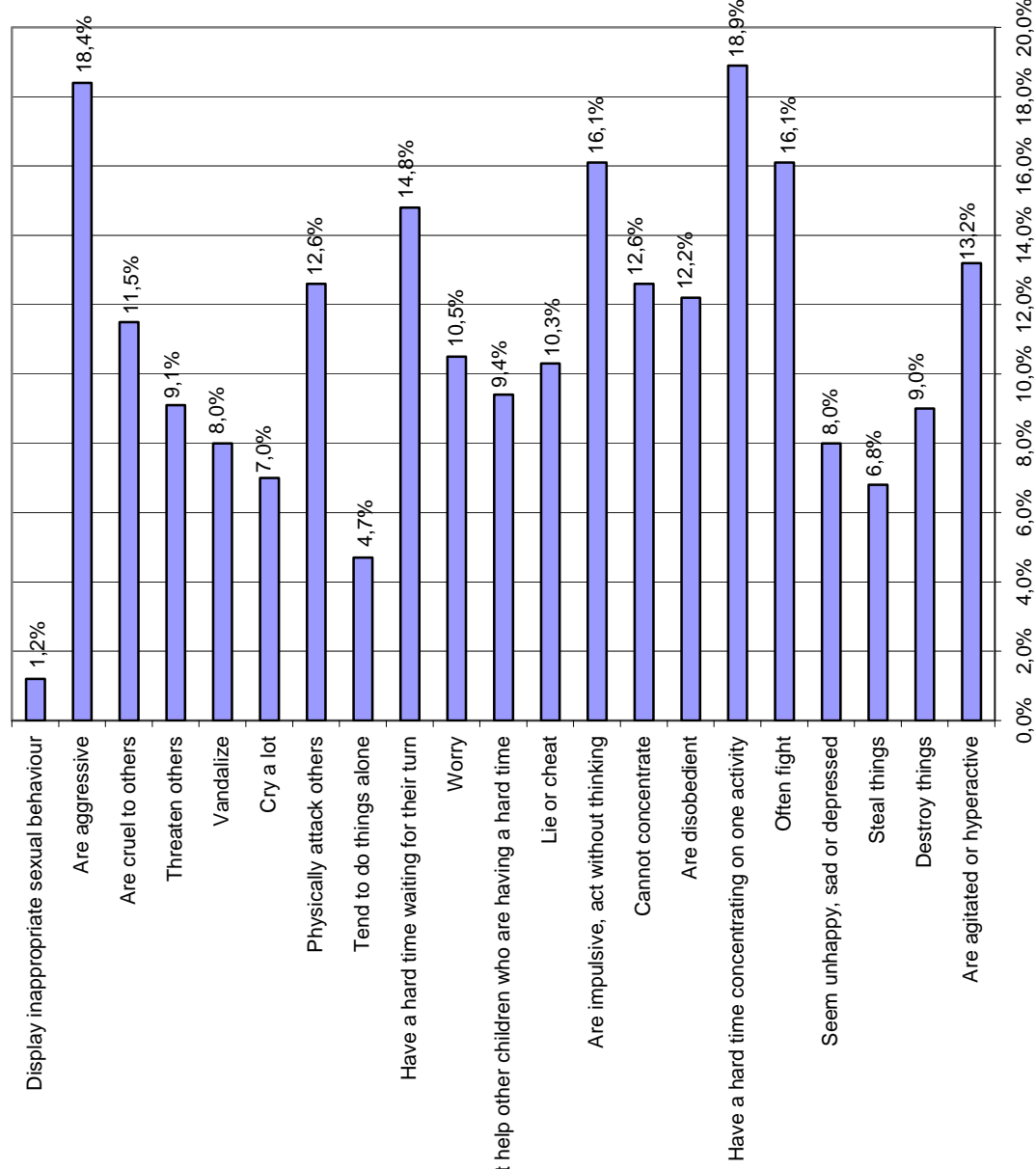
**Figure 11. Issues targeted by prevention or awareness activities in the last five years**



Overall, the issues most frequently targeted by prevention and awareness activities are, in order, drug dependency (85.7%), fetal alcohol syndrome (82.7%), smoking (76.5%) and blood-borne and sexually transmitted infections (63.3%).

Respondents were then asked to identify the problem behaviours most frequently observed in children in their community. The main findings are presented in Figure 12.

**Figure 12. Problem behaviours observed most frequently among children aged 0 to 6**



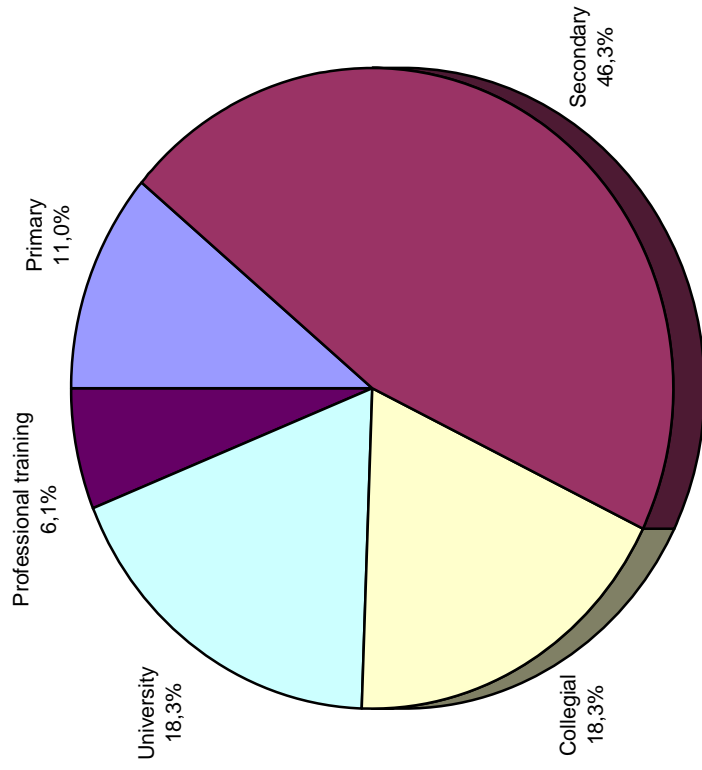
The problem behaviours most frequently cited include: being distracted or having trouble concentrating on one activity (18.9%), being aggressive (18.4%), being impulsive or acting without thinking (16.1%) and getting into a lot of fights (16.1%).

## MAIN FINDINGS OF PARENT SURVEY

In addition to surveying caregivers and administrators, we administered a questionnaire to the parents of children aged 0 to 6. The sample was made up mostly of women (96.3%) with an average age of 32.7 years.

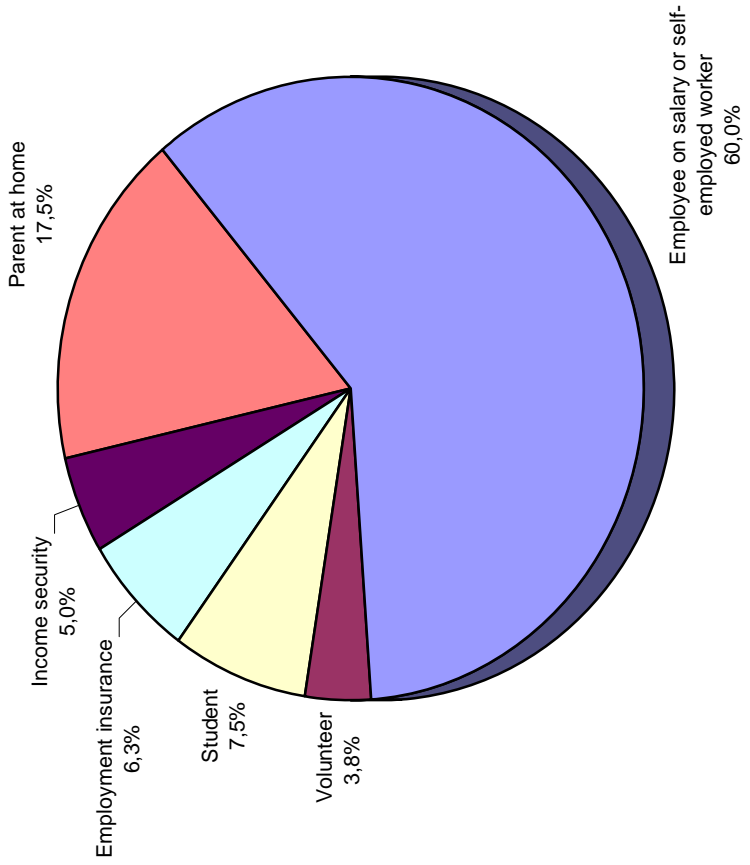
As far as level of schooling is concerned, in nearly half of the cases (46.3%) the parents had a high-school education. Nearly one parent in five (18.3%) had a college education, and an identical proportion had university training (18.3%).

**Figure 13. Distribution of parents by level of schooling**



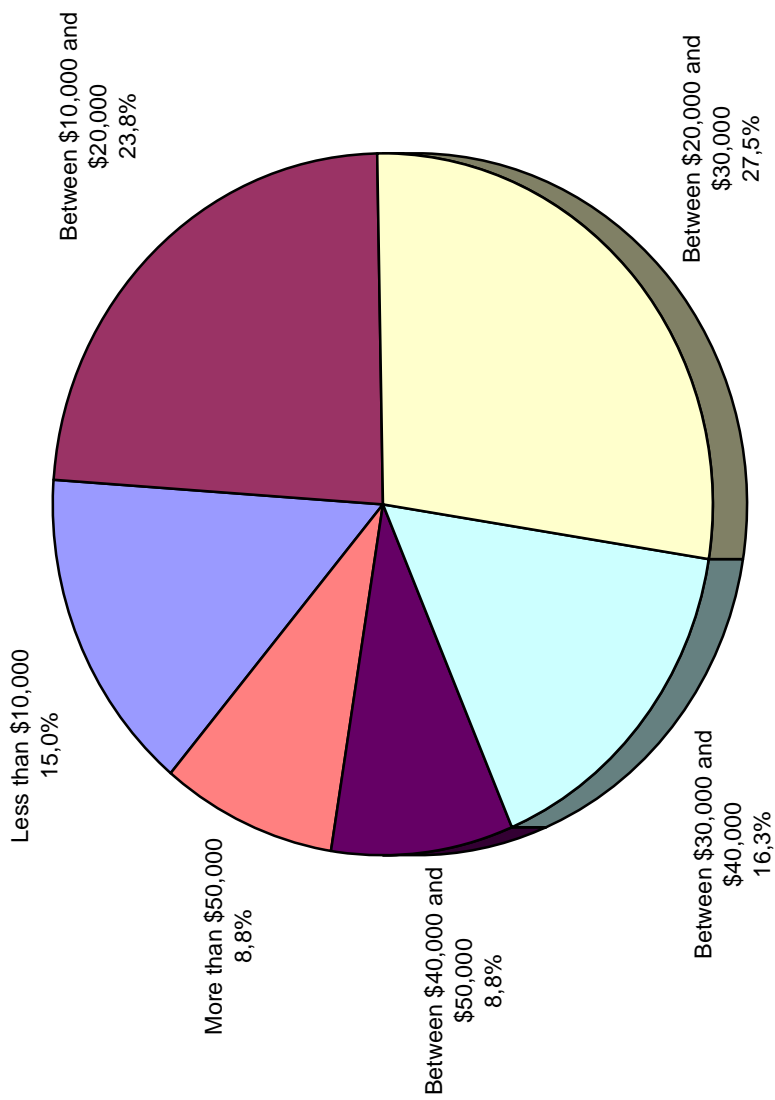
Nearly two-thirds of the respondents were employed at the time of the survey, while the rest were unemployed (employment insurance, income security, or other).

**Figure 14. Distribution of parents by current main occupation**



Two-thirds of the respondents (66.3%) came from a household with an annual salary of less than \$30,000. Only one-third of the respondents had a household income above \$30,000.

**Figure 15. Distribution of parents by household income**

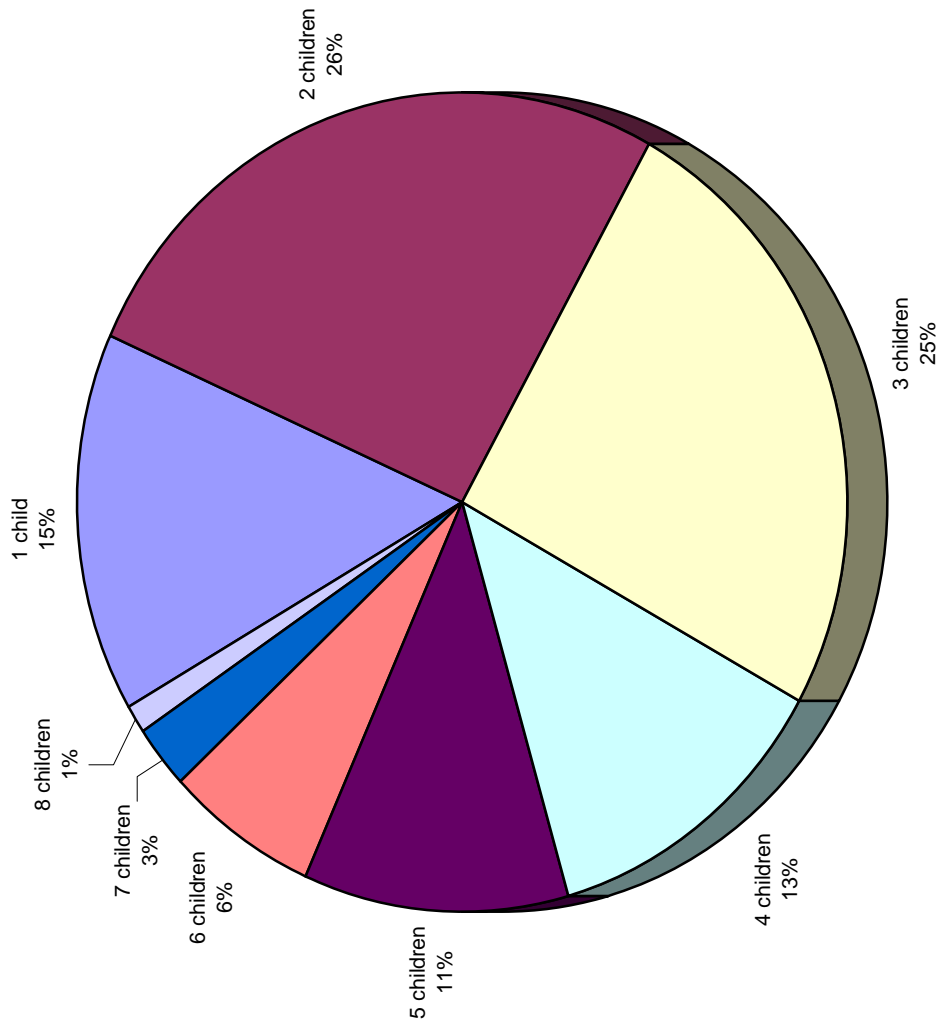


Three-quarters of the respondents (74.1%) had a spouse at the time of the survey, and 93.3% of these were living with that spouse.

On average, the number of people permanently living with the respondent in his or her home was 3.5. Nearly three-quarters (72.5%) of the respondents felt that their housing was adequate for the number of people living there.

Figure 16 shows the distribution of respondents by number of children. On average, the respondents have 3.1 children.

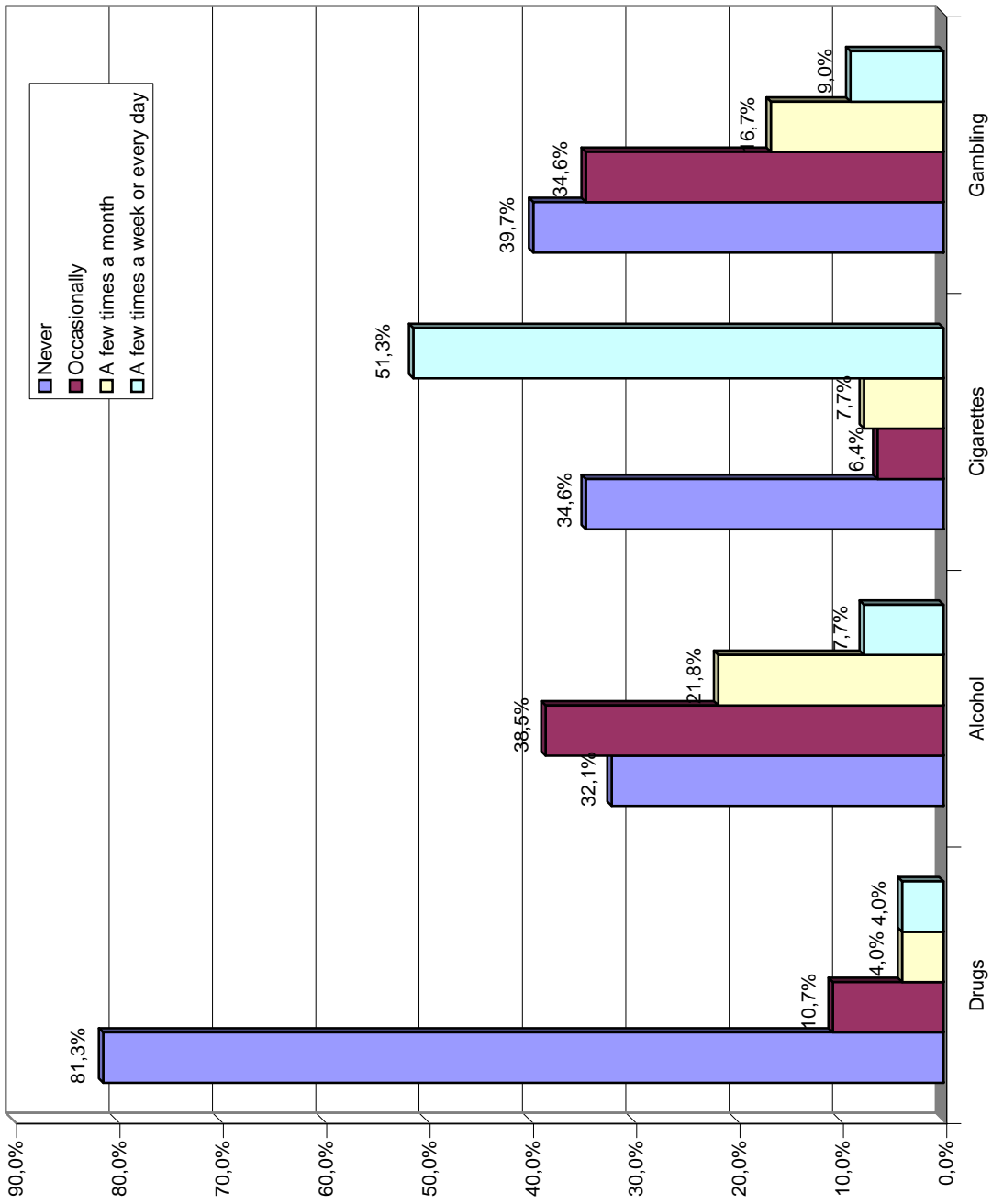
**Figure 16. Distribution of parents by number of children**



For the survey, the parents were questioned about a number of different issues, including their consumption habits, concerns and sources of worry, and their needs. The results of these questions are presented below.

The results of the questions related to drug, alcohol and cigarette consumption and gambling habits are presented in Figure 17.

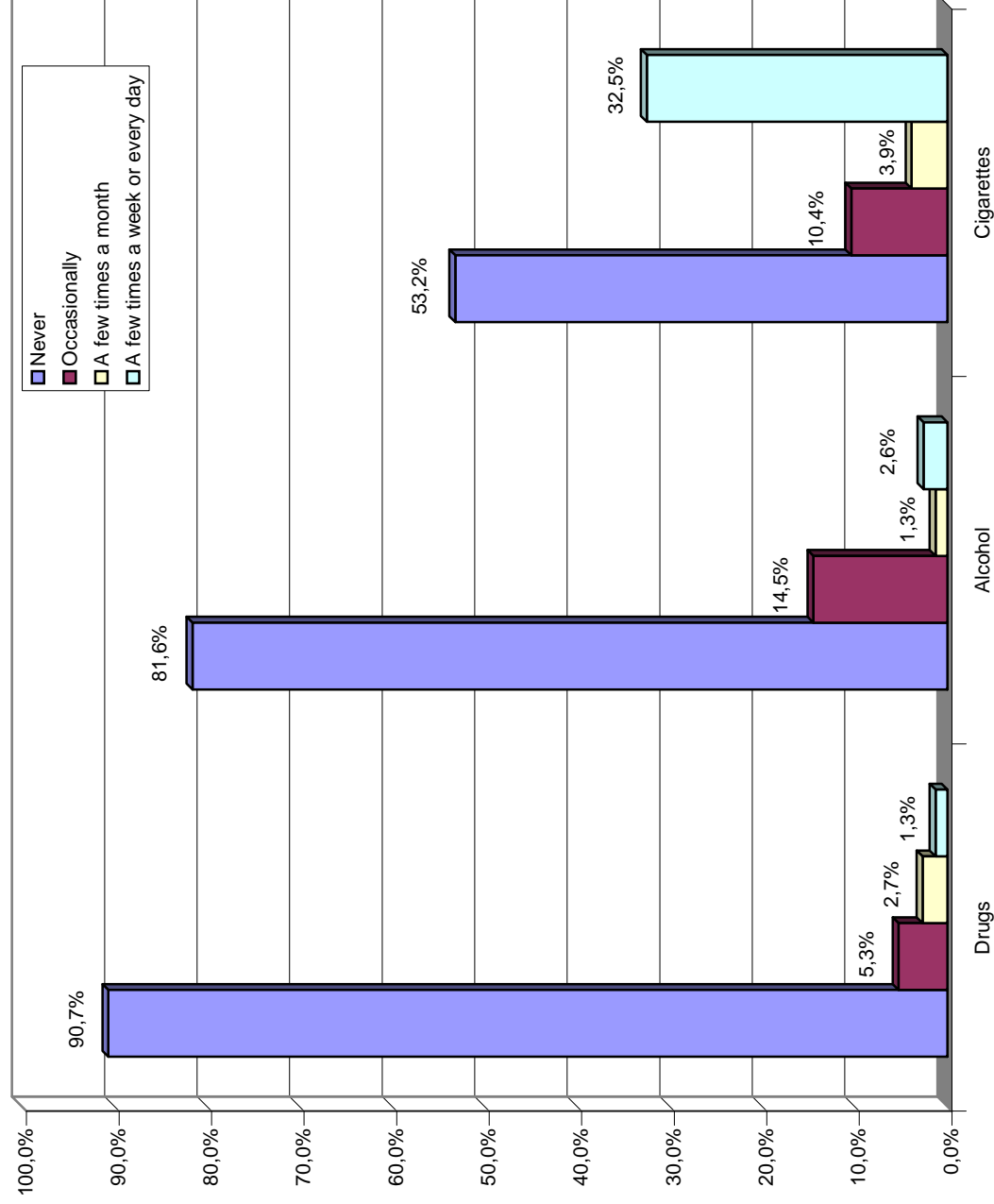
**Figure 17. Distribution of parents by consumption habit**



Very few respondents state that they frequently consume drugs (4.0%) and alcohol (7.7%). In contrast, a large proportion – 51.3% – say they smoke cigarettes a few times a week or every day. As far as gambling is concerned, 9% of the parents who participated in the study say they gamble a few times a week or every day.

The same questions were asked to women about their consumption habits during their pregnancy. The results show little drug and alcohol consumption during pregnancy. As for cigarettes, nearly one-third of the respondents said they smoked a few times a week or every day during their pregnancies.

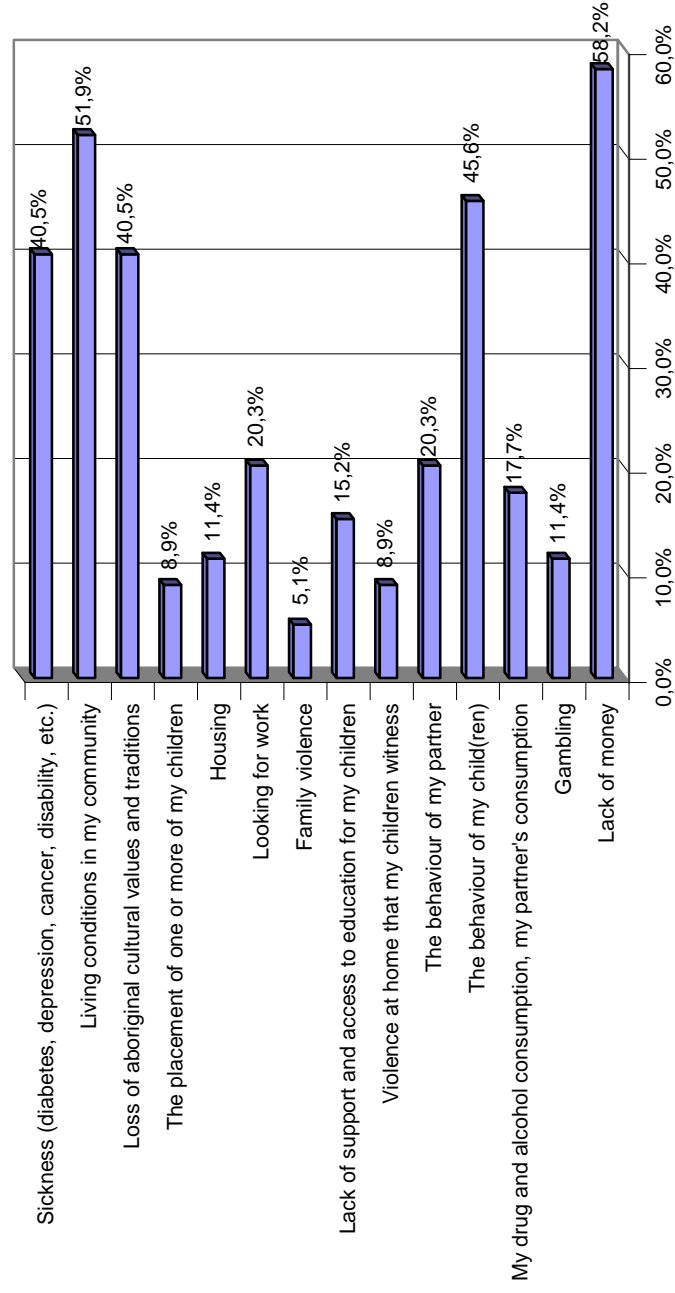
**Figure 18. Frequency of alcohol, drug and cigarette consumption by pregnant mothers**



The results presented in the two preceding figures are not representative and cannot be generalized to the First Nations population as a whole. We are well aware that studies drug, alcohol and cigarette use in First Nations communities usually report much higher rates than those shown here. It is often the case that social desirability affects participants' responses to certain questions; in other words, participants often want to give information that they feel is "socially acceptable".

Parents were also asked about the main troubles they were experiencing and the things that especially concerned them. The findings are shown in Figure 19.

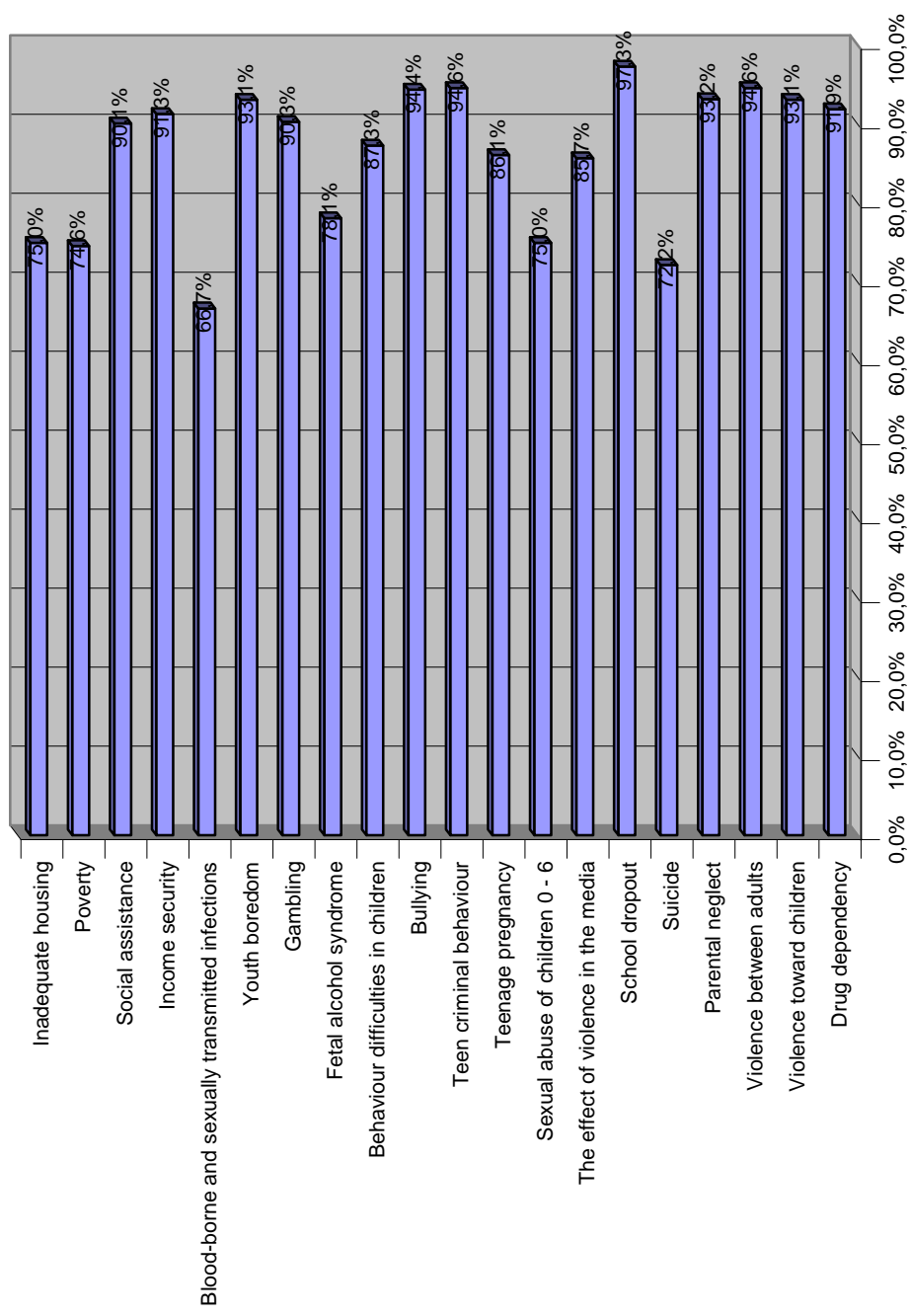
**Figure 19. Parents' main sources of concern or worry**



The parents' main concerns are, in order, lack of money (58.2%), the difficult environment and living conditions in the community (51.9%), and children's behaviour (45.6%).

Parents were also asked to give their opinion about the various difficulties faced by all of the members of their community. Their answers are provided in Figure 20. The results show the proportion of respondents who judged the particular problem to be “fairly important” or “very important.”

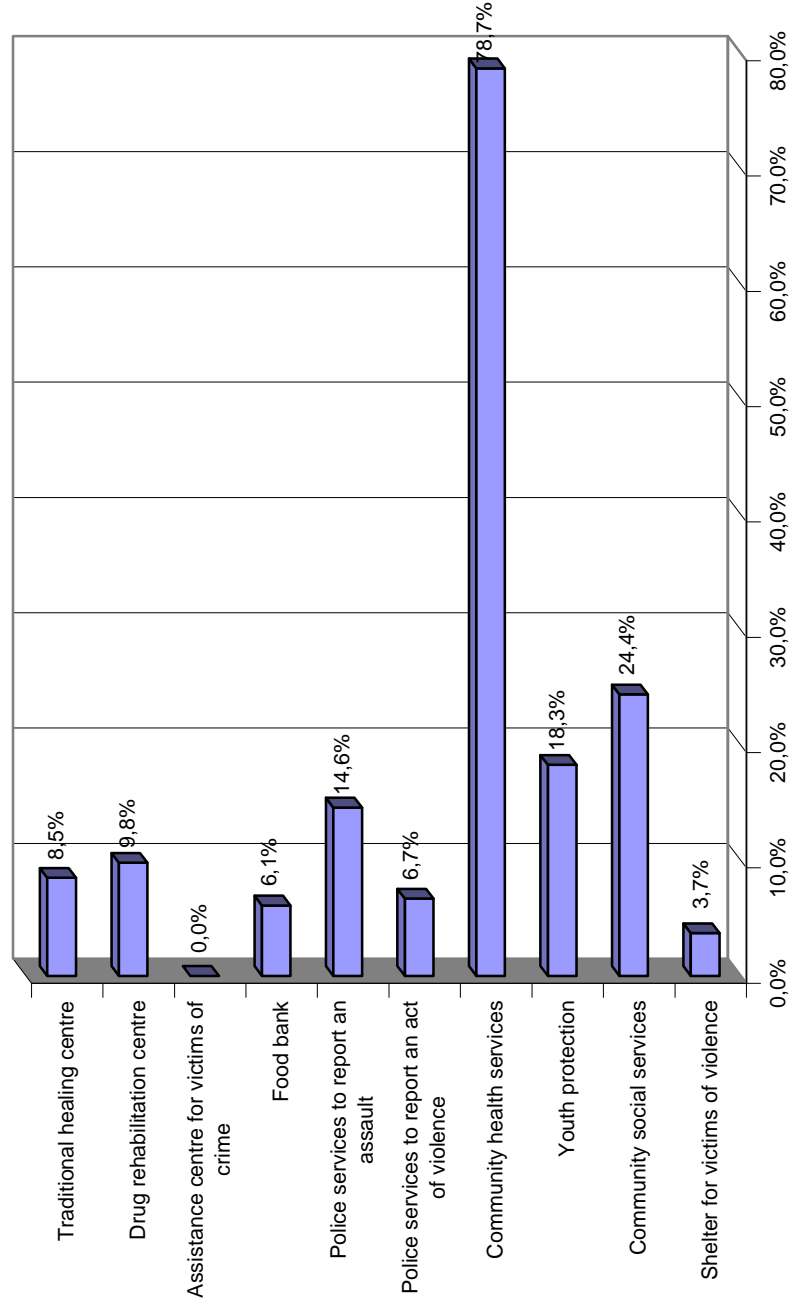
**Figure 20. Parents’ concern about social problems**



The results in Figure 20 clearly demonstrate the scope of the parents’ concern about the social problems confronting the members of their communities. In fact, all the problems listed in the questionnaire were identified by at least two-thirds of the respondents as afflicting First Nations communities.

Parents were asked about the services they had used in the last three years.

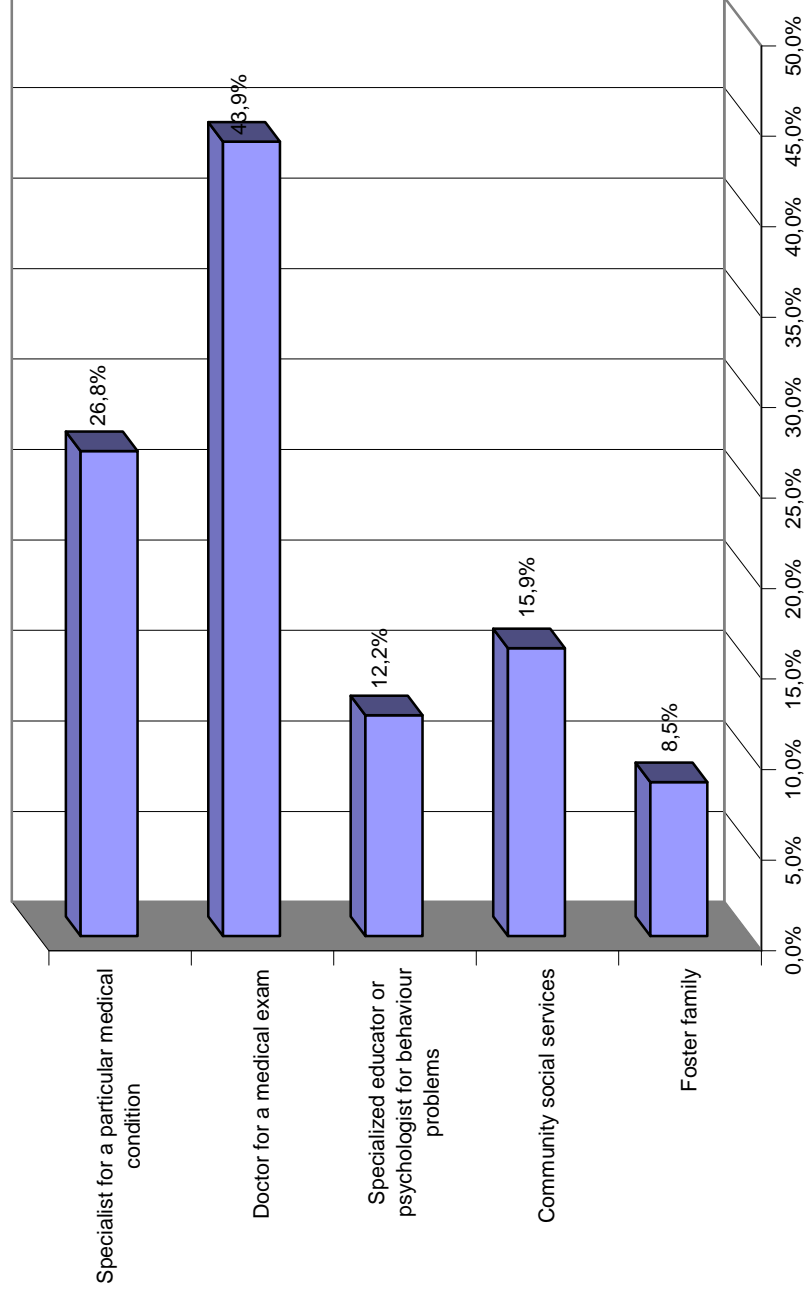
**Figure 21. Main services used by parents in the last three years**



Other than social services (24.4%), the only service a high proportion of parents had used was the community health service (78.7%).

Besides their own use, parents were asked about services used by their children in the last three years. The results are presented in Figure 22.

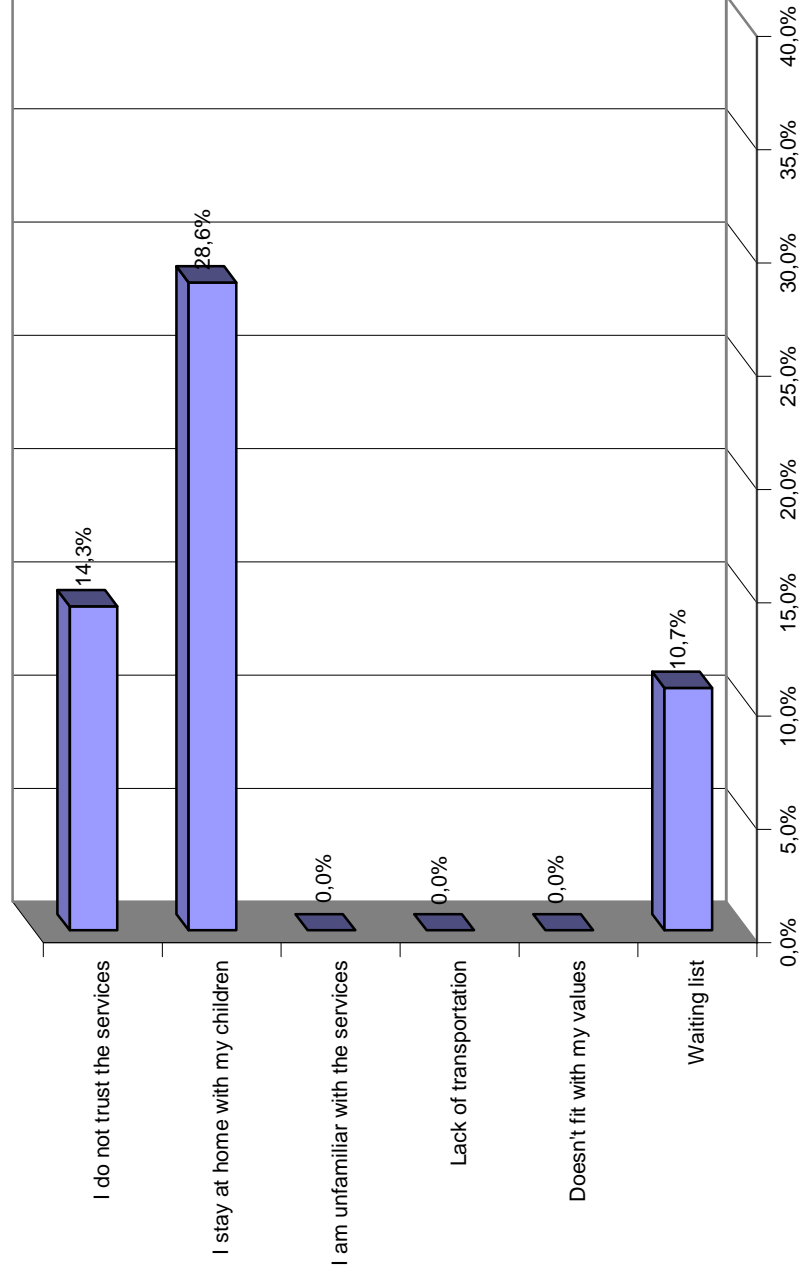
**Figure 22. Main services used by children of the respondents in the last three years**



The results of Figure 22 indicate that 43.9% of parents say they have taken a child to visit a doctor for a general examination. More than one-quarter of the respondents took a child to a medical specialist about a particular problem.

Parents were then asked about their children's attendance at daycares or early childhood centres. Nearly two-thirds (65.9%) indicated that one or more of their children attend such a centre. The reasons the remaining parents cited for not sending their children to these institutions are presented in Figure 23.

**Figure 23. Main reasons cited by parents for not sending their children to a daycare or early childhood centre**

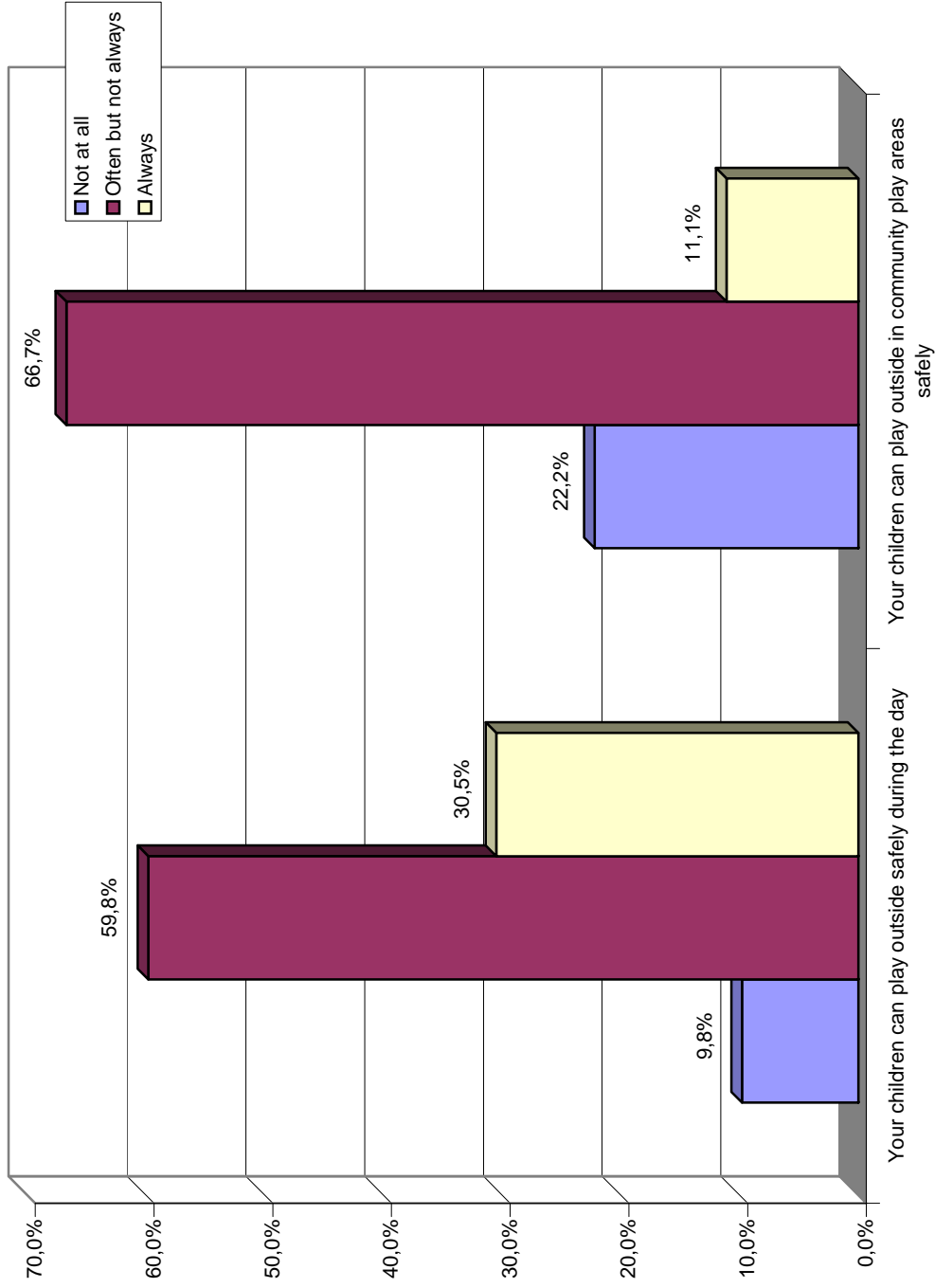


Overall, the parents whose children do not attend daycares or early childhood centres give the following reasons: they stay at home with their children (28.6%), they do not trust this type of service (14.3%) or, to a lesser degree, there is a waiting list (10.7%).

Parents were then asked about their perception of the level of safety in their community. More than one-quarter of the respondents (25.6%) replied that their community is not a safe place to bring up children, and more than half consider their community to be of “average safety.” Less than one parent in five says their community is “very safe.”

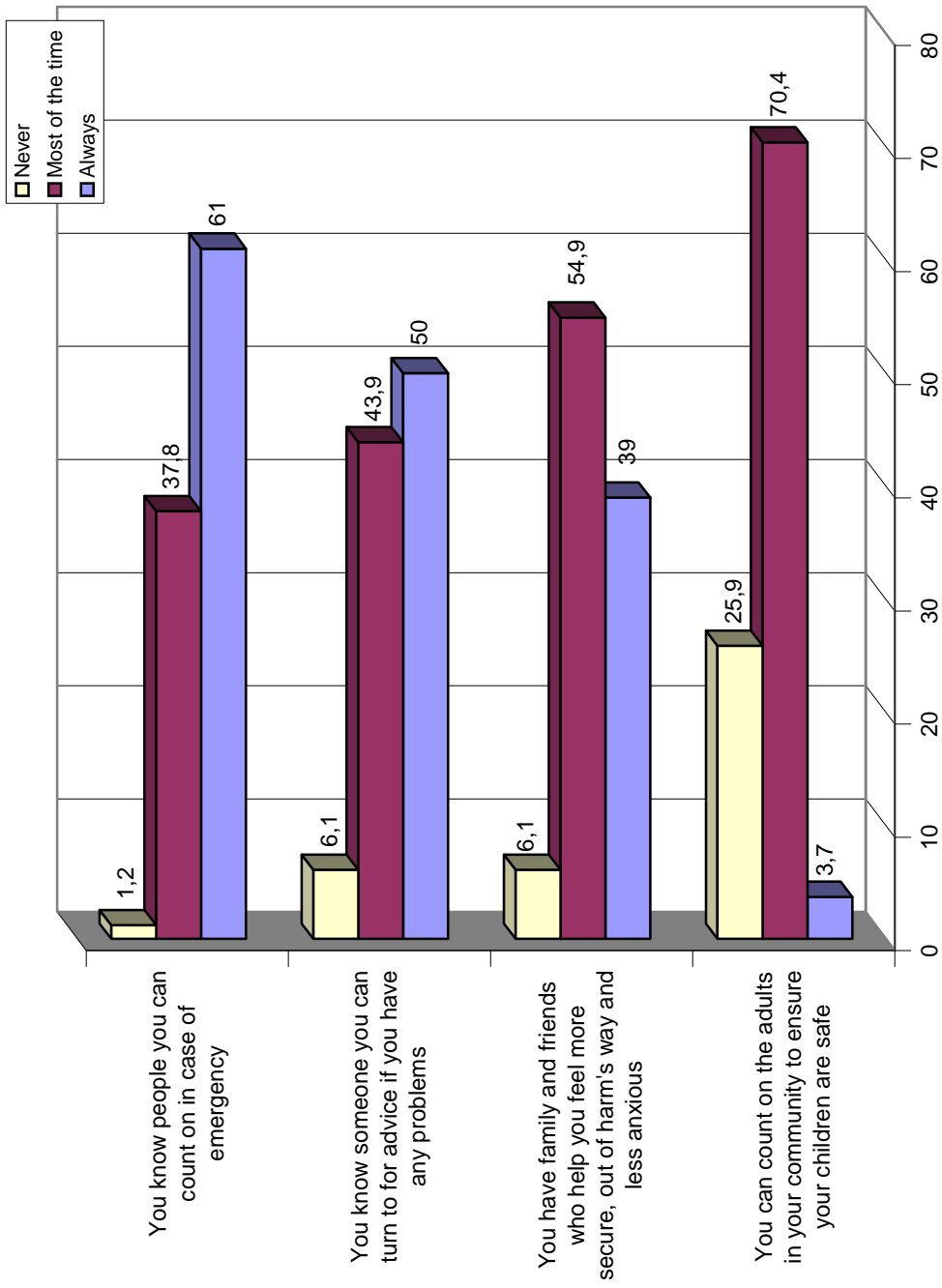
When asked to give their opinion more specifically about their feeling of safety (Figure 27), 9.8% said that they did not believe their children could play outside safely during the day, and 22.2% said they did not believe their children were safe in community play areas.

**Figure 24. Perception of community safety for children**



The respondents were also asked their opinion on the types of social support available to them. The results are presented in Figure 25.

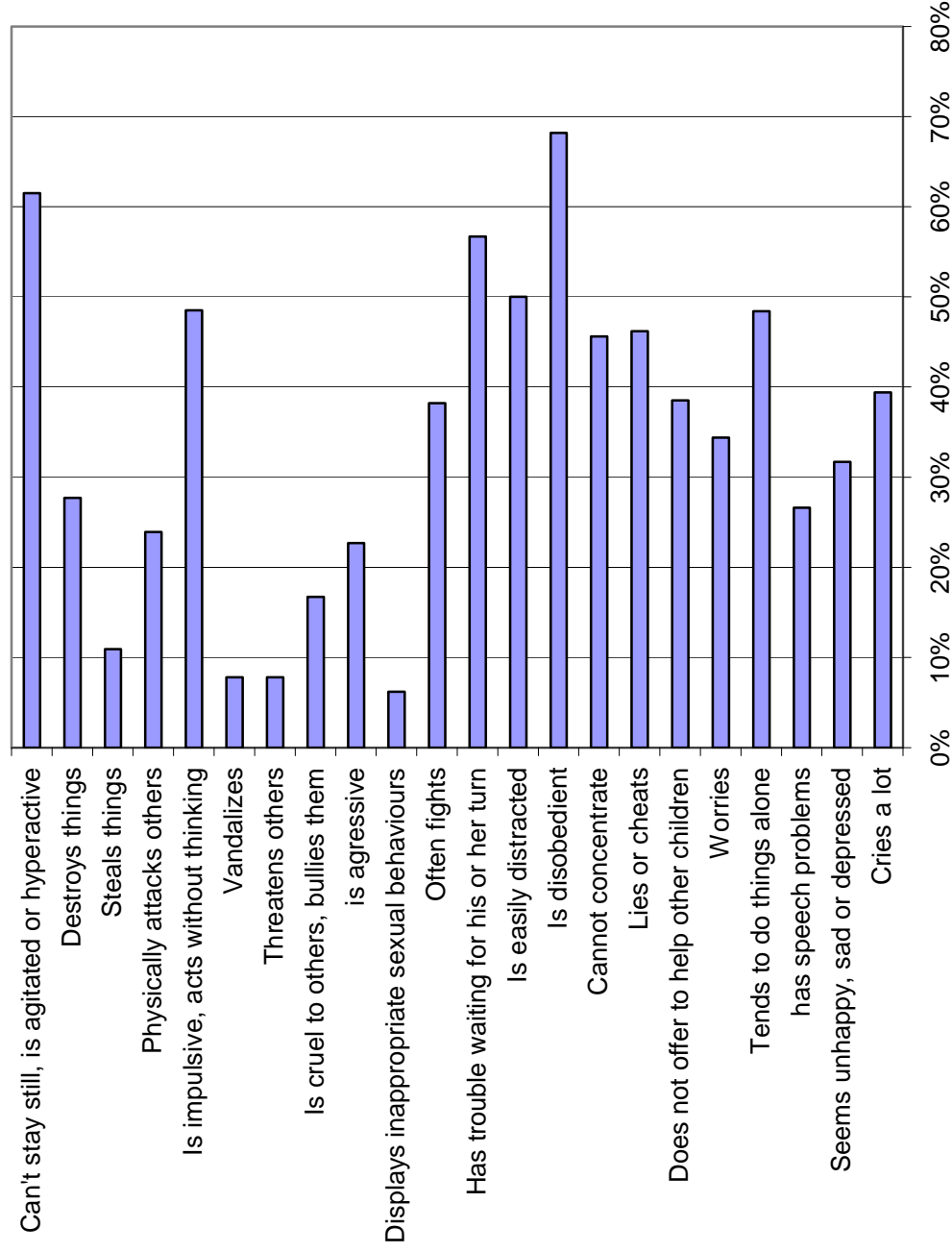
**Figure 25. Perception of level of social support available to parents**



The respondents' low feeling of safety was reflected in their perceptions of available social support. It should be noted that over one-quarter (25.9%) of the respondents said they could not count on adults in the community to ensure that the children are safe.

Parents were then asked about their children's behaviour problems. These results are presented in Figure 26.

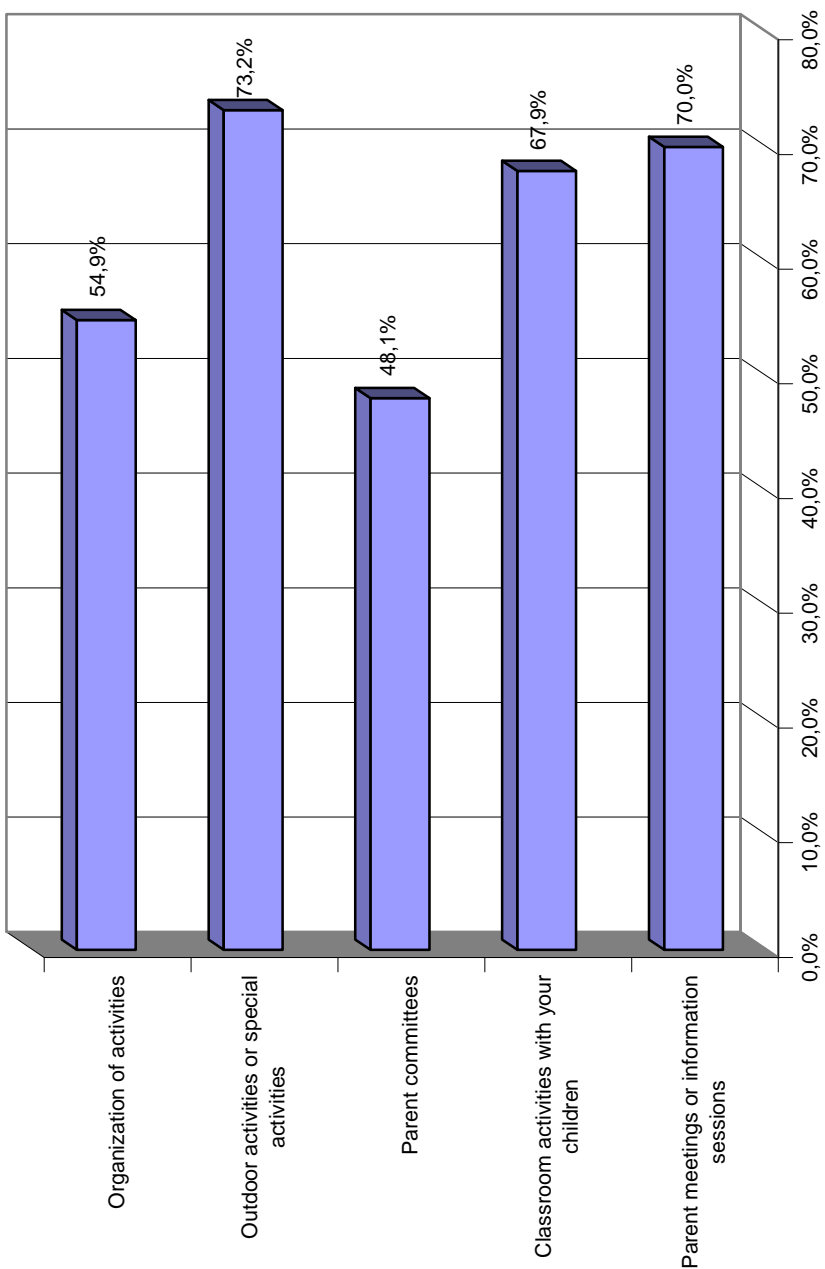
**Figure 26. Parents' perception of their children's behaviour problems**



The behaviour problems that concern most parents who participated in the needs assessment are that their children are disobedient (68.2%), that they are agitated, hyperactive and unable to sit still (61.5) and that they have trouble waiting for their turn in games or group situations. Although in lower proportions, many parents reported having trouble with a child who fights (38.2%), is aggressive (22.7%), is impulsive (48.5%) or who has trouble concentrating (45.6%).

We polled parents to determine the likelihood that they would agree to participate in activities or programs to promote social skills for children aged 0 to 6. A high proportion of them would consider participating in future initiatives of this type.

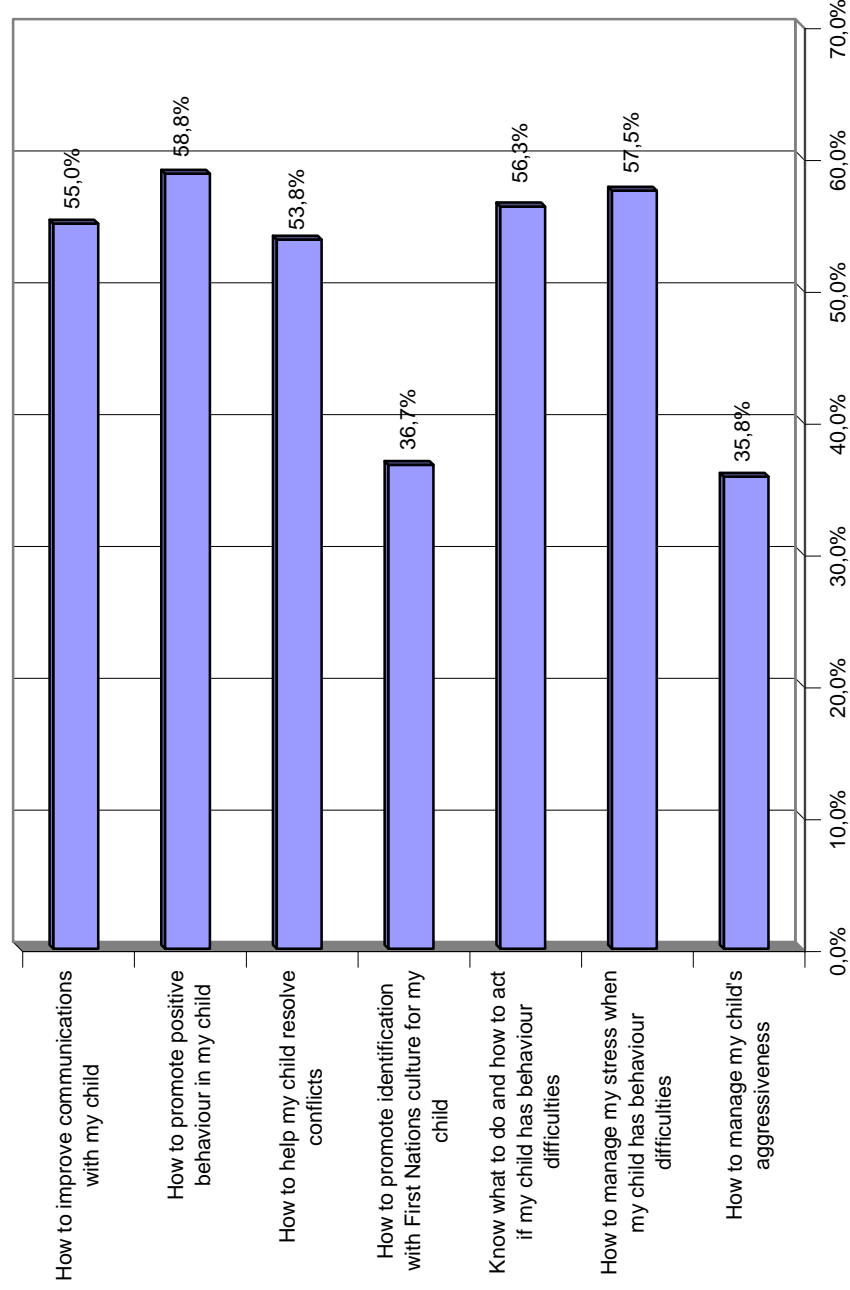
**Figure 27. Activities parents would consider participating in a program to promote social skills among children aged 0 to 6**



The activities most likely to attract participants were outdoor activities or special activities (73.2%), parent meetings or information sessions (70.0%) and class activities with the children (67.9%).

To determine training needs, the parents were asked to identify the various types of training they would like to attend.

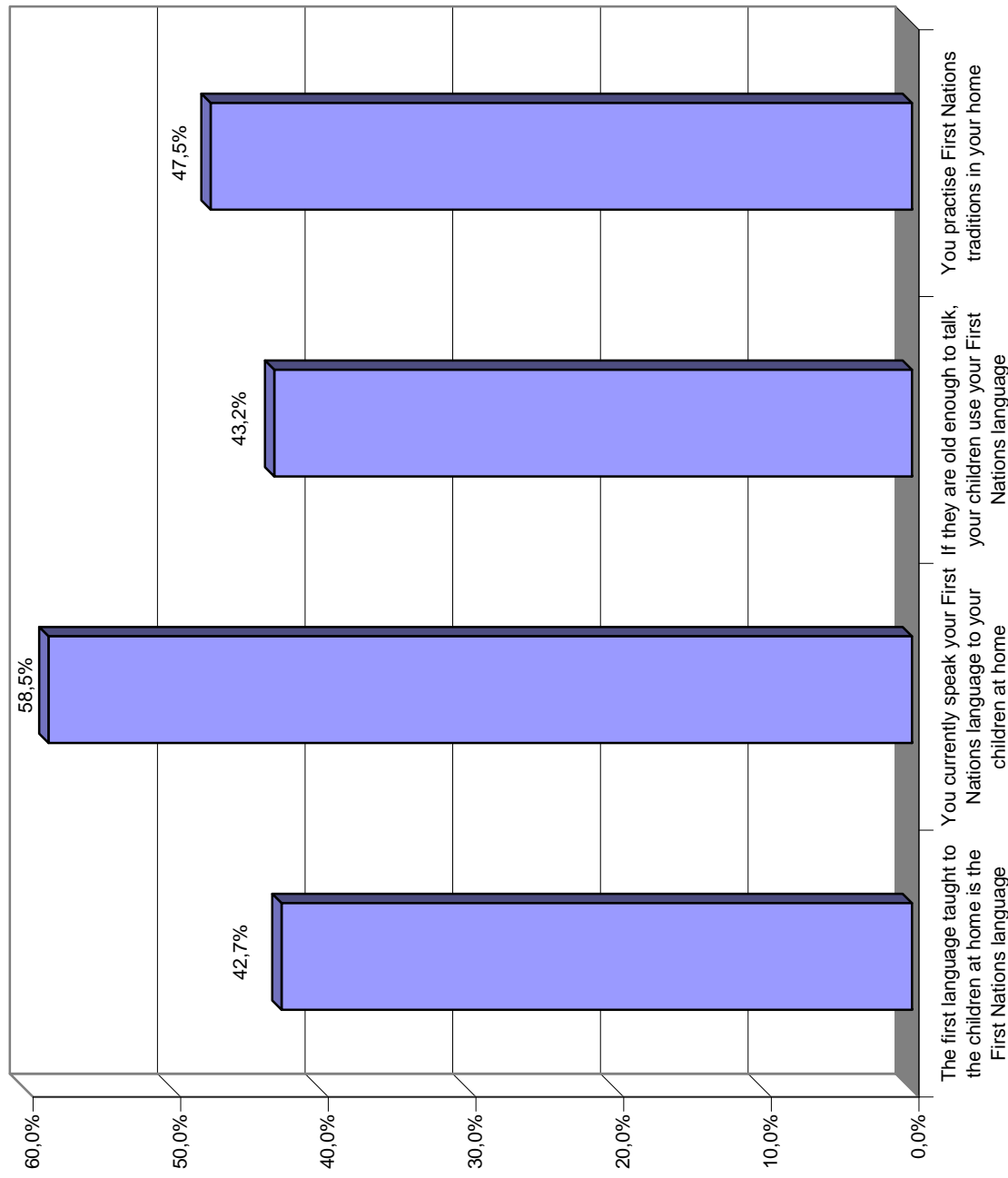
**Figure 28. Workshops parents would like to attend if a program to promote social skills among children aged 0 to 6 were to be created**



As Figure 27 shows, a number of different types of training attracted their attention, especially workshops on improving communications with children (55.0%), on encouraging pro-social and positive behaviour (58.8%), on conflict resolution (53.8%), on how to act when their children have behaviour difficulties (56.3%) and on ways to manage the stress related to child behaviour difficulties (57.5%).

Various questions were asked to parents about the role of First Nations culture in their everyday family life. The main results are summed up in Figure 29.

**Figure 29. Role of First Nations culture in family life**



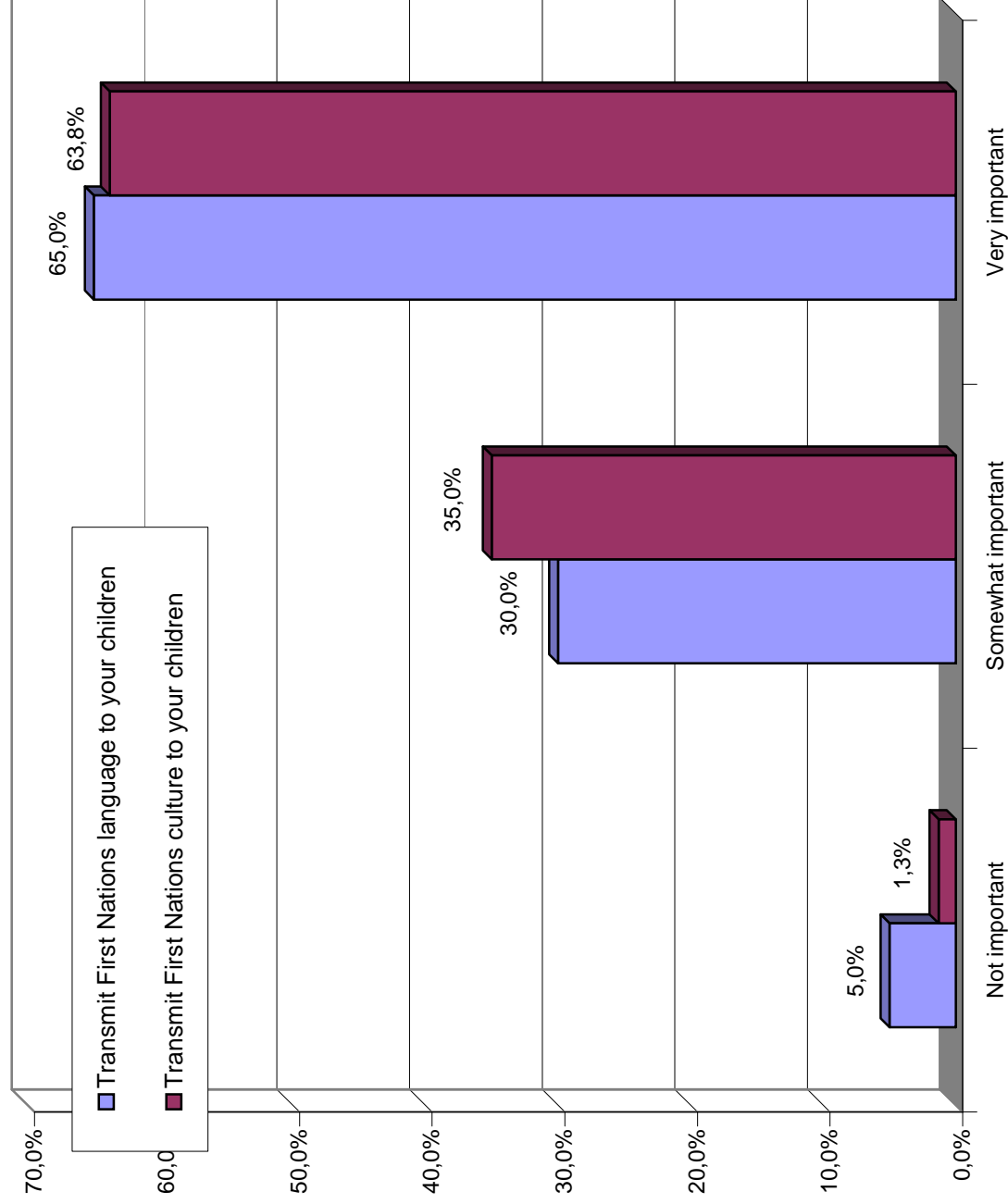
The results show that less than half of the respondents teach a First Nations language to their children as their first language (42.7%). More (58.5%) use a First Nations language at home. Only 43.2%, however, say that their children use a First Nations language.

Nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) say that they practise traditions of their culture at home.

Finally, when asked whether their children identify with First Nations culture, fewer than half the respondents (48.8%) answered “most of the time” or “always.”

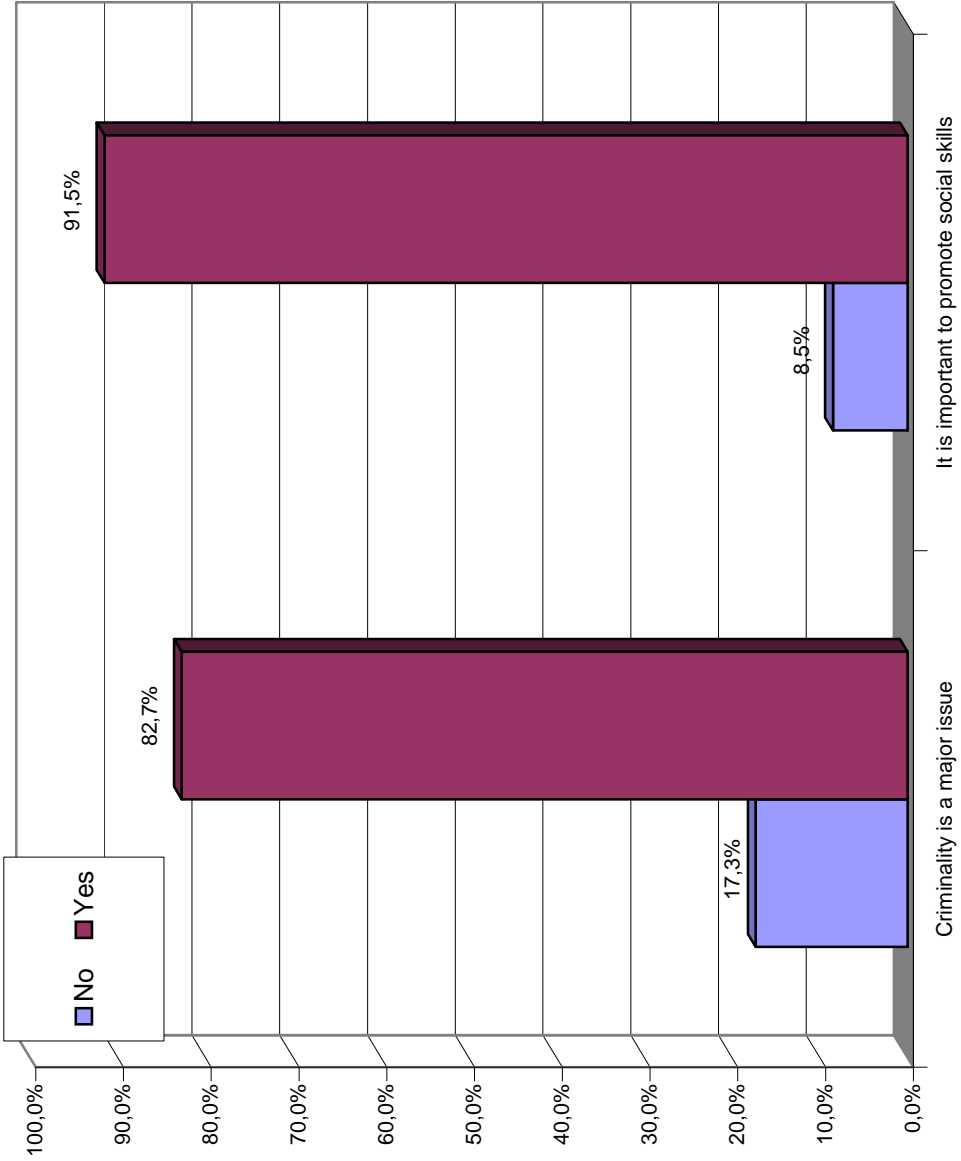
Parents were then asked about the importance of passing on First Nations language and culture to their children.

**Figure 30. Importance for parents of passing on First Nations language and culture to their children**



Interestingly, despite these results, more than two-thirds of respondents say that passing on their language (65.0) and culture (63.8%) is very important to them.

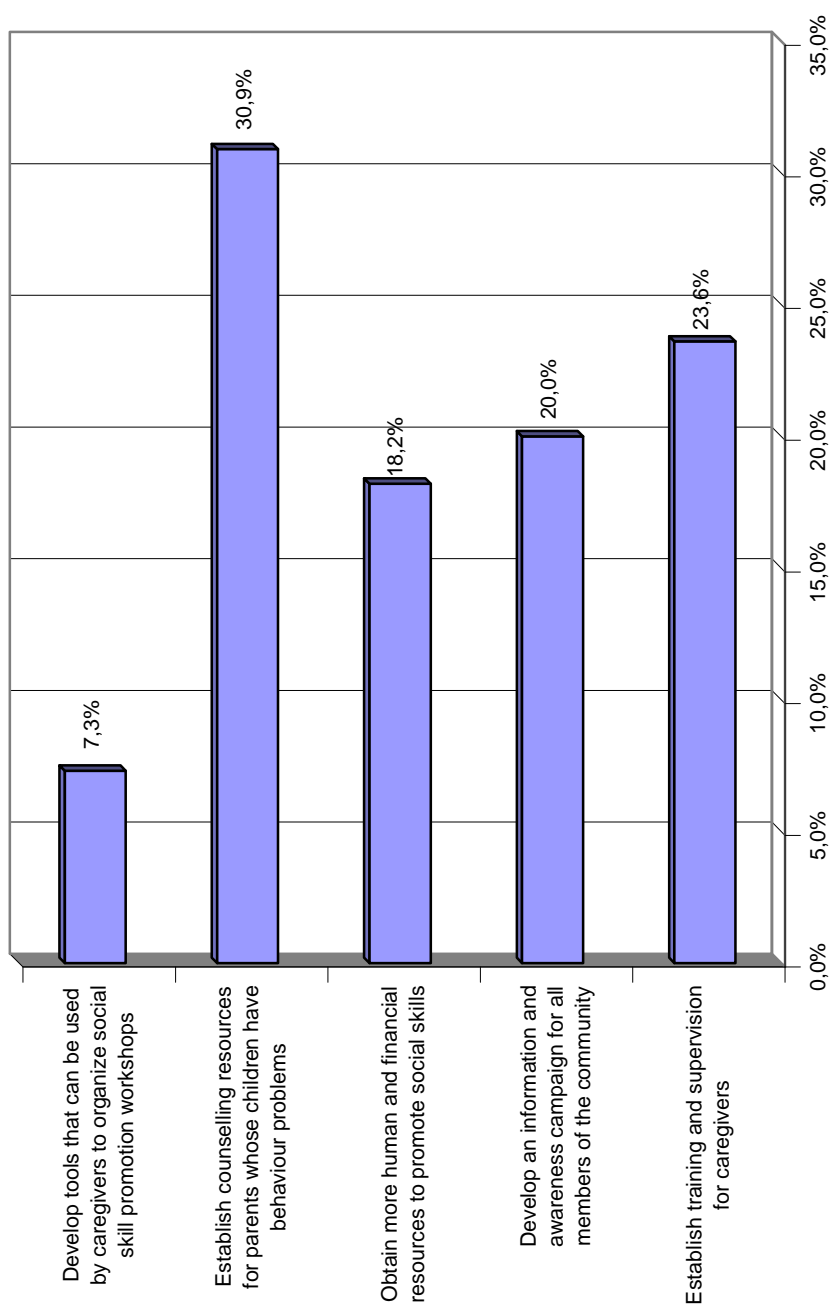
**Figure 31 Importance of criminality and the promotion of social skills for parents**



Parents were also questioned about the crime in their communities, and 82.7% said crime was a significant problem. When asked about the usefulness of promoting social skills in children aged 0 to 6 to prevent criminality, 91.5% of the respondents said they felt it was important.

Respondents were also asked their opinion concerning where they believed priority should be placed in terms of initiatives for countering criminality in their respective communities.

**Figure 32. Priority initiatives for preventing criminality, according to parents**

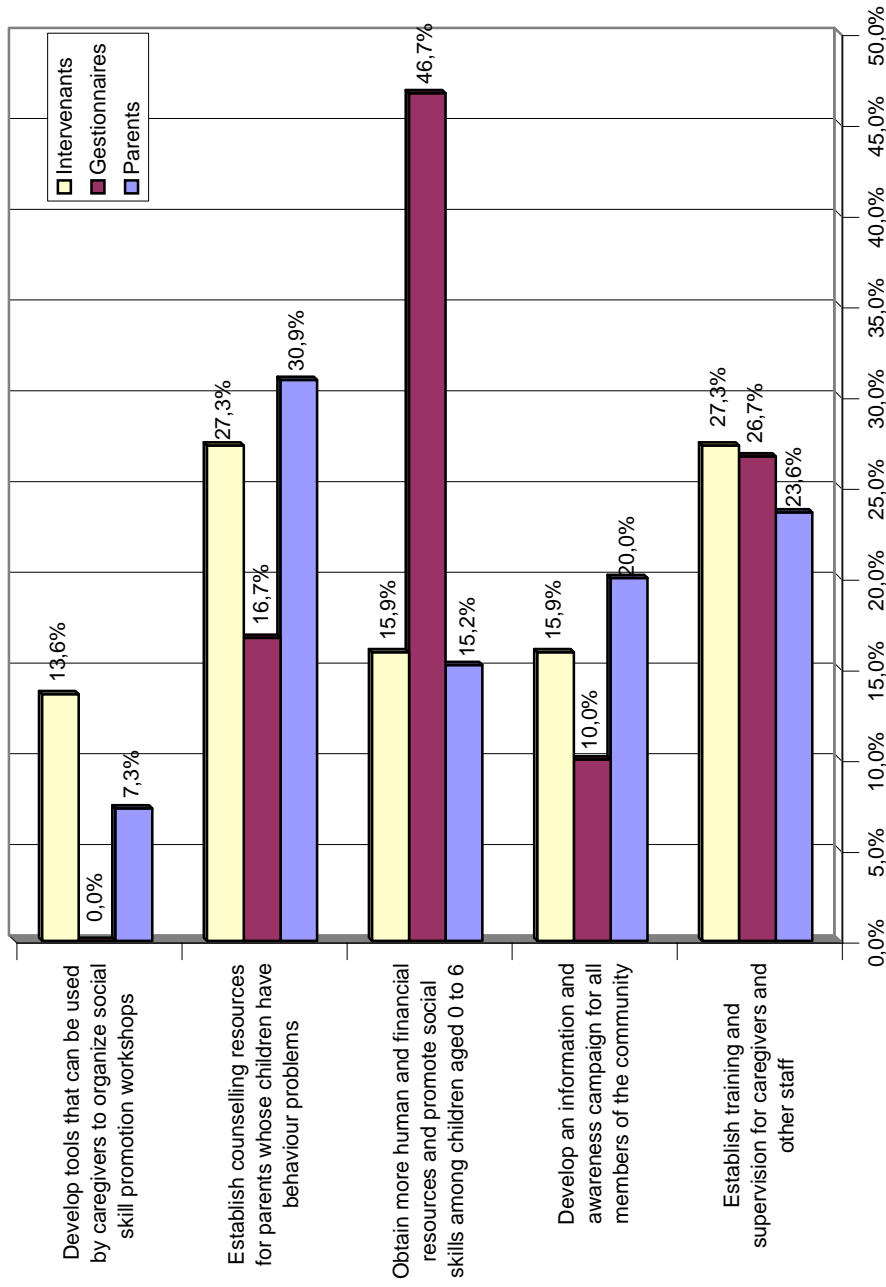


Nearly one-third of the respondents (30.9%) showed interest in the idea of establishing counselling resources for parents whose children display aggressive behaviour. To a lesser degree (23.6%), parents supported the idea of training and supervision for caregivers.

## POINTS OF COMPARISON CONCERNING INITIATIVES TO BE IMPLEMENTED

The interests of the three groups surveyed differ, as revealed in Figure 33.

**Figure 33. Initiatives identified as priorities by the three groups surveyed**



It is clear, however, that the idea of establishing resources for children with behaviour problems received support across the board, as did the idea of establishing staff training and supervision. In other words, the participants in the needs assessment would like to see this project lead to concrete action.

## CONCLUSION

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This needs assessment is the first part of an overall project to develop strategies to promote social skills among First Nations children. This first stage of the project concentrated mainly on the communities. The goal was to pinpoint the issues related to criminality and to determine the needs of parents, caregivers and administrators in terms of social skills promotion. Although the needs assessment also looked at risk factors that explain the presence of problems related to crime (drug dependency, violence, living conditions, poverty, etc.), its main purpose was to identify the specific needs of the people we questioned.

This study allowed us to survey not only needs but also the existing resources and means parents and caregivers can use to take early action in children's lives. It also helped us ascertain that parents, caregivers and administrators are concerned with different social problems related to criminality. The lack of human and financial resources and the lack of concrete means to promote social skills with an aim to prevent criminality are the major limitations to establishing specific work tools.

We noted that a high proportion of respondents would like concrete initiatives to be implemented to help them promote social skills among children aged 0 to 6. These needs are especially crucial since many respondents feel their communities are not safe living environments.

The findings also suggest that any strategies implemented should include ways of improving parental involvement; lack of parental involvement is a point of concern for many caregivers and administrators.

We also noted that the needs revealed through this study are in some respects remedial rather than preventive. This seems to communicate an urgency to act and may be considered symptomatic of the distress and social problems afflicting some communities. At the same time, it is important that urgent remedial needs do not supersede the need to develop preventive strategies, which are the core element in the overall strategy pursued by the FNQLHSSC.

In any case, our results reveal a clear consensus concerning the usefulness of developing social skills promotions tools for First Nations children aged 0 to 6. As our study suggested, these tools should take First Nations culture and traditions into account.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Based on these findings, it seems critical that initiatives be set into motion based on identified needs. Clearly the economical and social determinants related to criminality, and which also call for action, go far beyond the initial objectives of the FNQLHSSC global project. Let us recall that the FNQLHSSC's purpose for this project was to help provide various stakeholders in the communities with the means to promote social skills among Quebec First Nations children aged 0 to 6. Very pressing needs in terms of living conditions have also been identified, but these will be addressed by other authorities. Nevertheless, developing initiatives that specifically address children is an important foundation for the future of today's generation and those to come, and our recommendations are based on this understanding.

### **WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND:**

#### **TO ALL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS**

- ✓ Human and financial resources be available in sufficient quantities to provide real support for early childhood initiatives. Such initiatives should also help reinforce protection factors for women.

#### **TO THE FNQLHSSC, WITH REGARD TO REQUESTING FUNDING**

- ✓ That a request for funding be made immediately for the second phase of the project to develop concrete tools for caregivers and parents destined especially for children aged 0 to 6
- ✓ That the request for funding be made to the *National Crime Prevention Centre*.

#### **TO THE FNQLHSSC, WITH REGARD TO THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- ✓ That the present needs assessment be made available to all sectors of the various communities and that its content be validated by the partners identified in the initial request (FNQLHSSC, AFNQL, INAC, community early childhood sectors...)
- ✓ That the present needs assessment be used as a point of reference concerning the nature of the concrete tools to be developed in order to respect the wishes of the people in the communities

#### **TO THE FNQLHSSC, WITH REGARD TO STEPS TO BE TAKEN**

- ✓ That the tools be presented in a generic toolkit that can be adapted for each community interested in using it

- ✓ That the tools developed take First Nations culture and traditions into consideration
- ✓ That the tools developed provide caregivers and parents with concrete means to help them carry out social skills promotions activities, for example, guides or manuals with instructions and support materials (posters, pamphlets, etc.) that are easily accessible to those who will use them
- ✓ That the tools developed take into consideration the needs identified by the parents and caregivers through the needs assessment
- ✓ That the tools developed be validated by the partners identified in the initial request
- ✓ That the caregivers receive training on how to use the tools so that they can provide the greatest benefit to their clients
- ✓ That after the tools are developed, focus groups be asked to evaluate the entire toolkit and that any necessary modifications be made before the product is rolled out to the communities

**TO THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY (National Crime Prevention Centre)**

- ✓ That the government authorities wholly support the process by providing the necessary funds and respecting the wishes of the people in the communities and their respective cultural differences

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