

Tardiness in Early Education: Incidence, Predictors, and Consequences (Spring 2011)

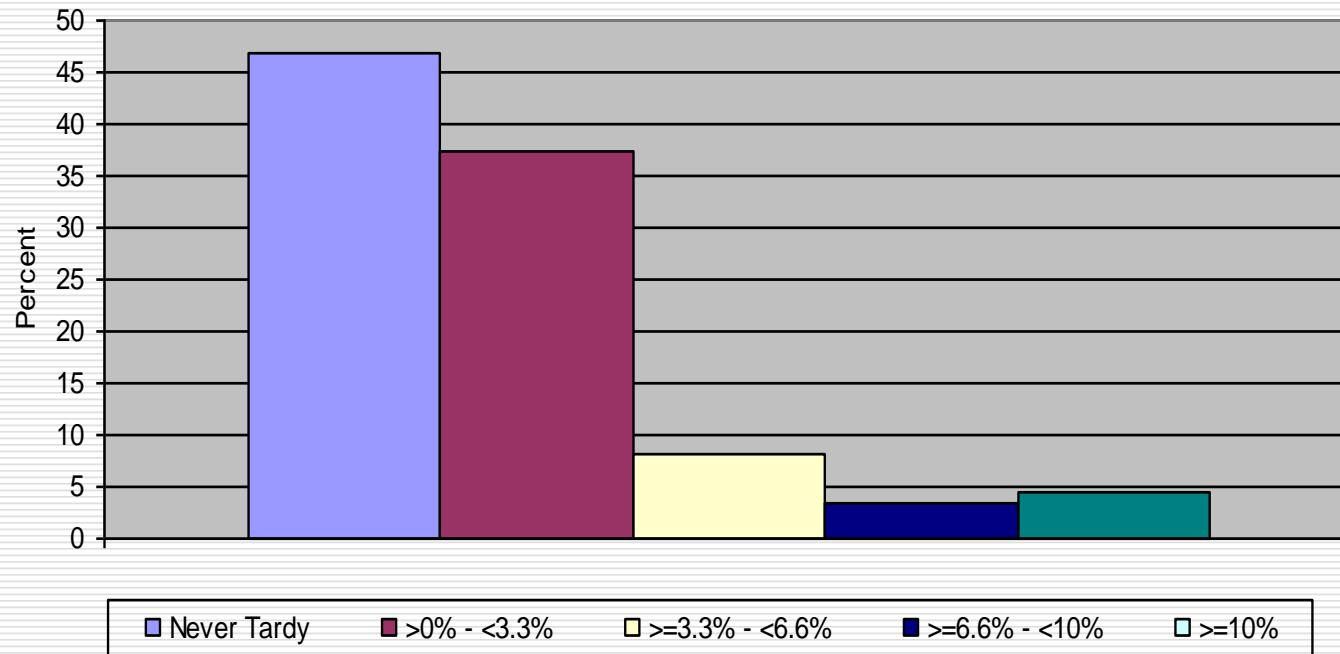
Mariajosé Romero, PhD

Overview

- Little research on student tardiness in schools
 - Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort, provides data on late school arrivals among children who entered Kindergarten in 1998
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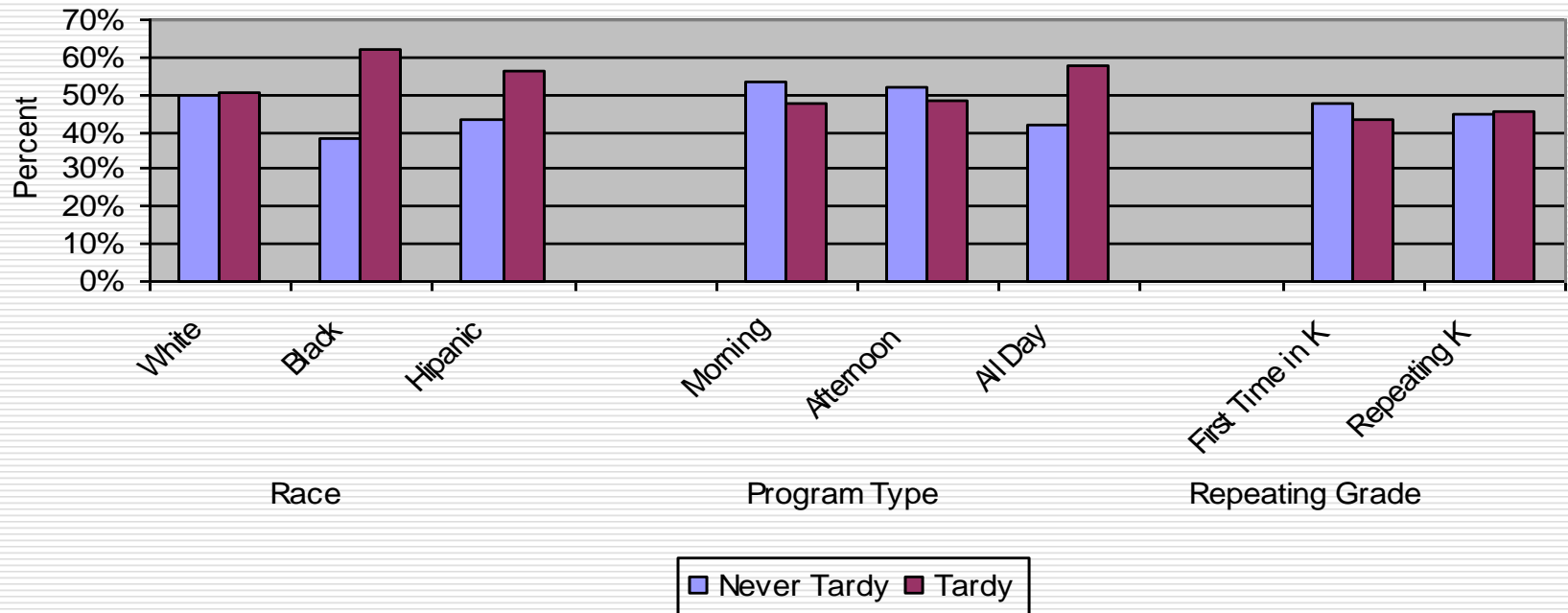
In Kindergarten, half of the children were late to school at least once

- Children were tardy 3.5% of the school year (or six days)
- Tardiness ranged between less than 1% (or one day) and 60% (or 108 days)



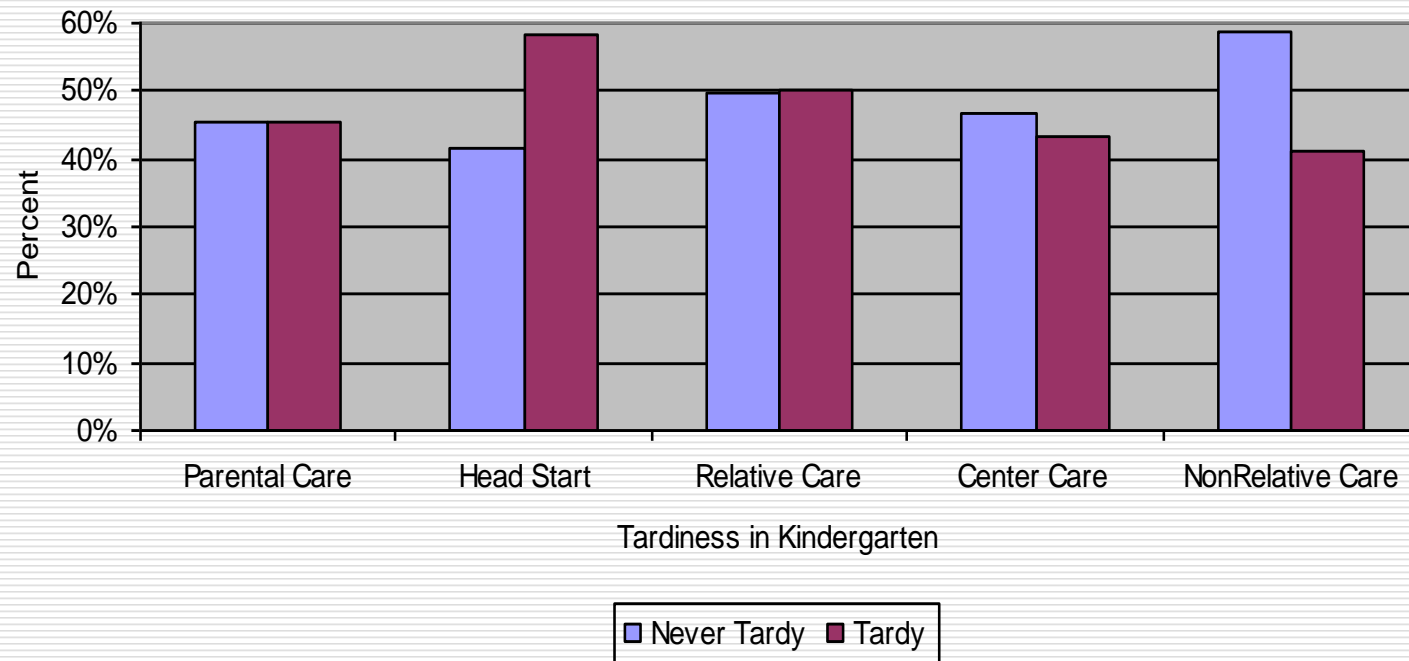
Children were more often tardy in Kindergarten if they were:

- Hispanic or Black
- Enrolled in full-day programs
- Repeating kindergarten



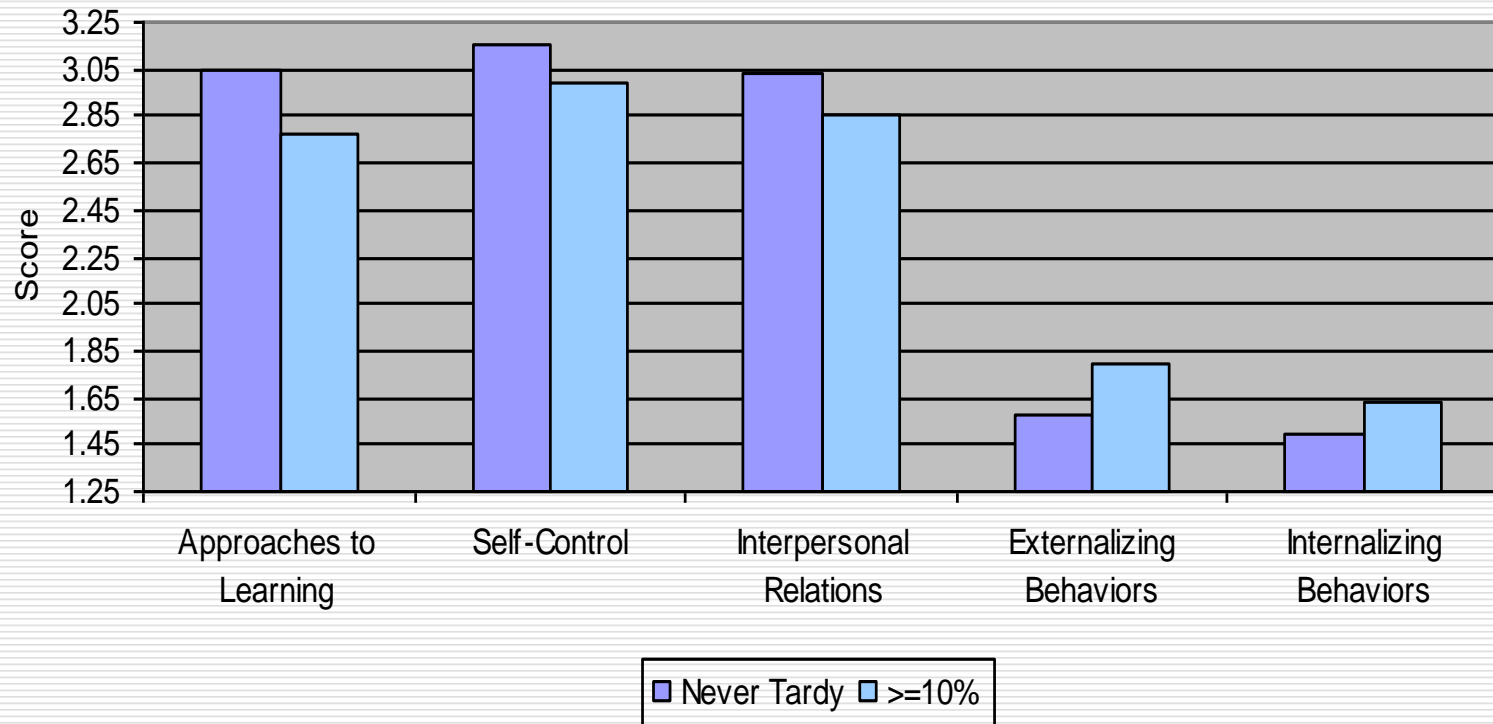
Children were more often tardy in Kindergarten if they:

- Received Head Start or non-relative care in the year prior to K



Children who were more often tardy in Kindergarten:

- Were described by teachers at the beginning of K as having socio-emotional difficulties

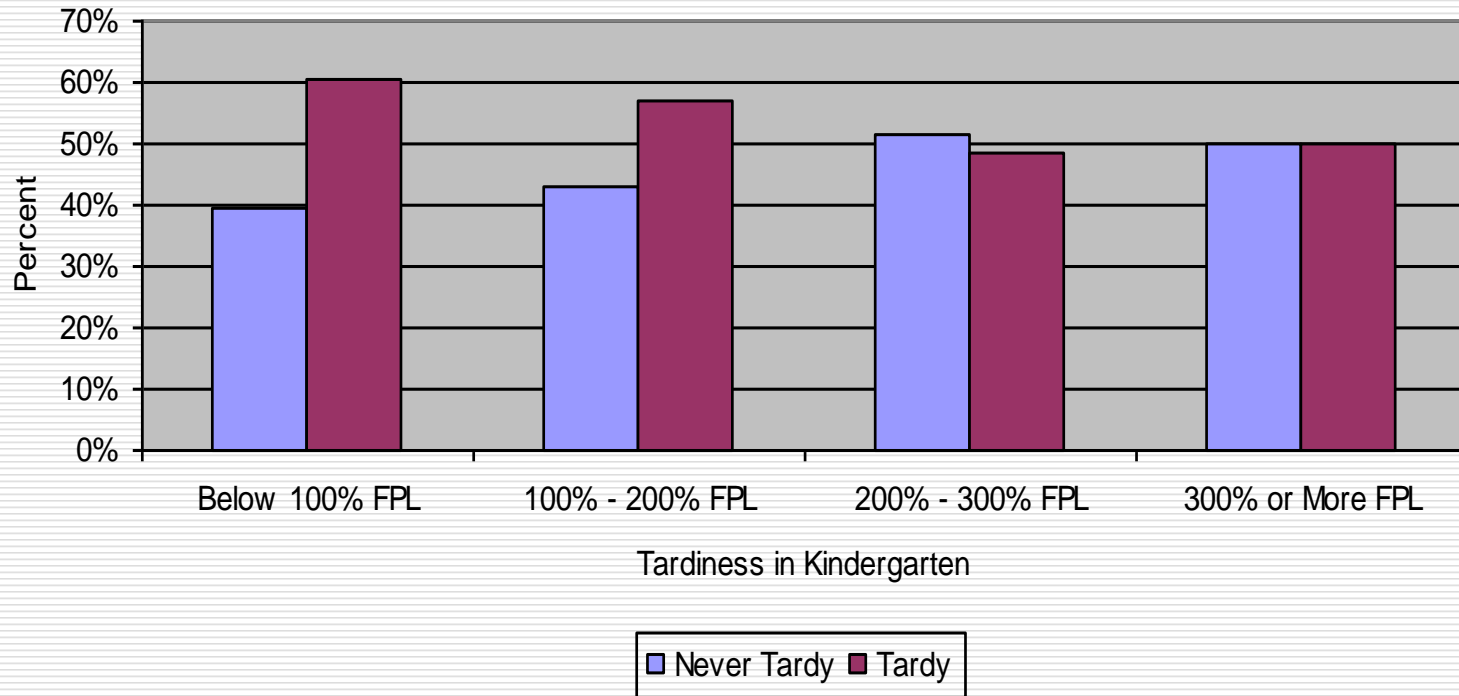


Other things being equal, the odds of being chronically late in K were:

- ❑ 3.5 times higher is children were Black, when compared to white children
 - ❑ Almost double if children were Hispanic, when compared to white children
 - ❑ 40% less if they attended a morning program compared to a full day program
 - ❑ 50% less if they attended an afternoon program compared to a full day program
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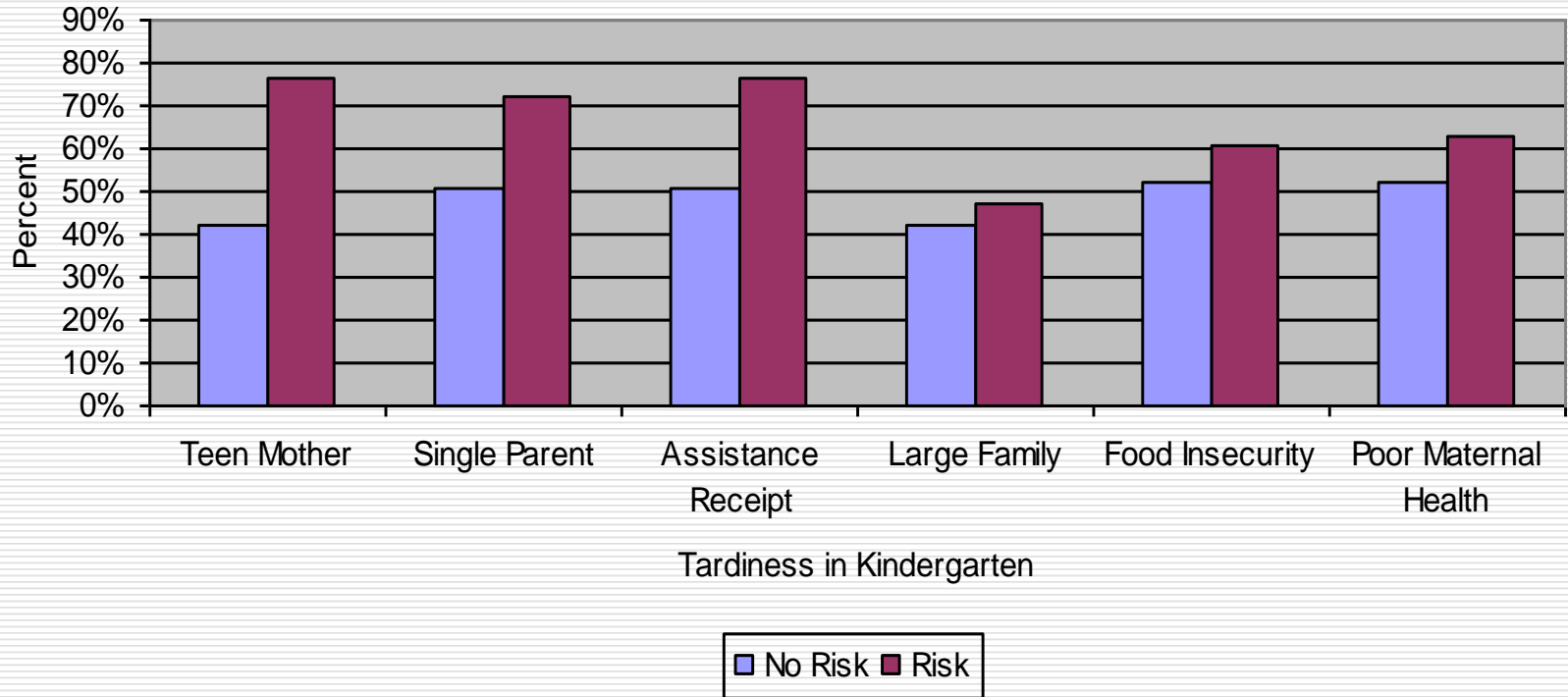
Poor and low income children were more often tardy in K:

- Than their middle and upper income peers



Tardiness was related to other maternal and family characteristics:

□ Particularly risk exposure

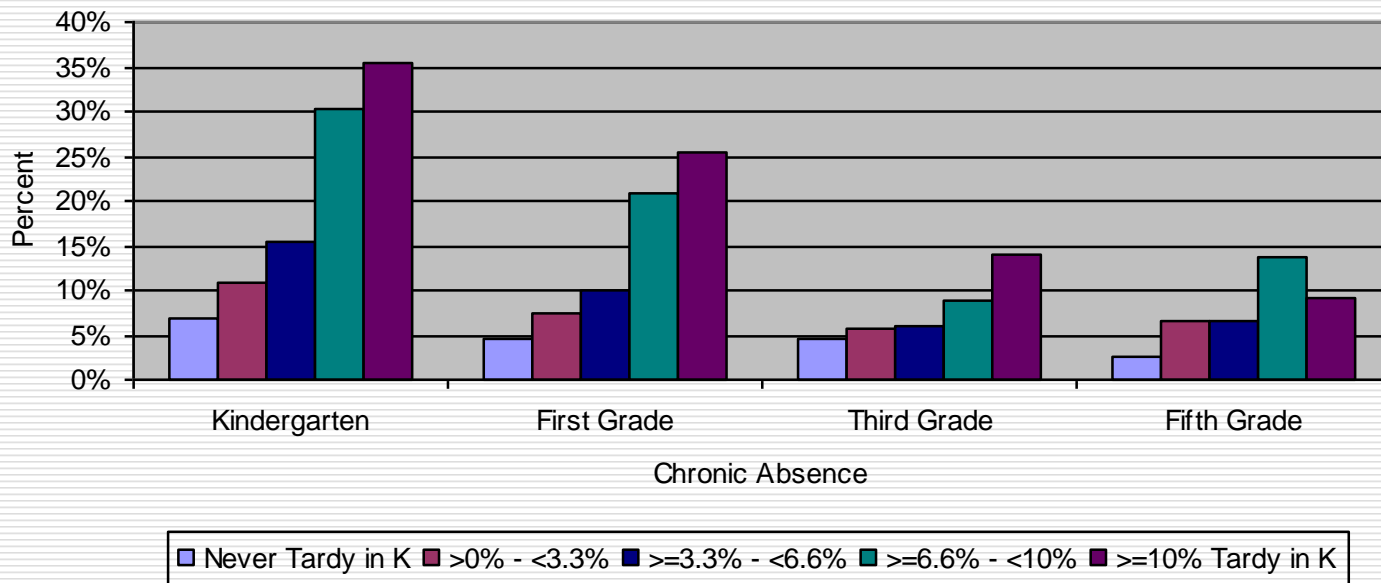


Other things being equal, the odds of being chronically late were:

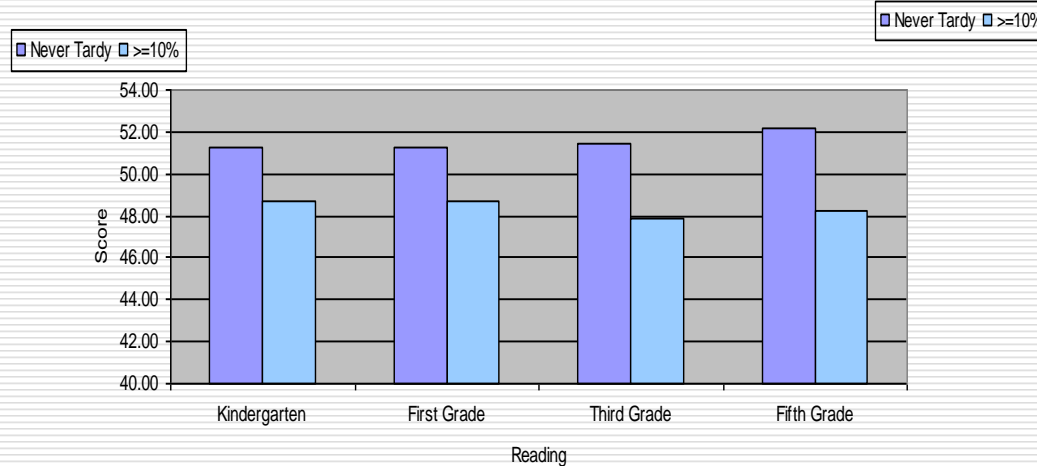
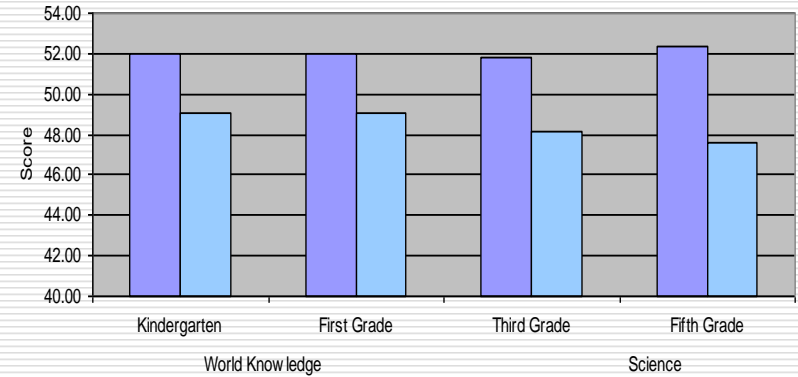
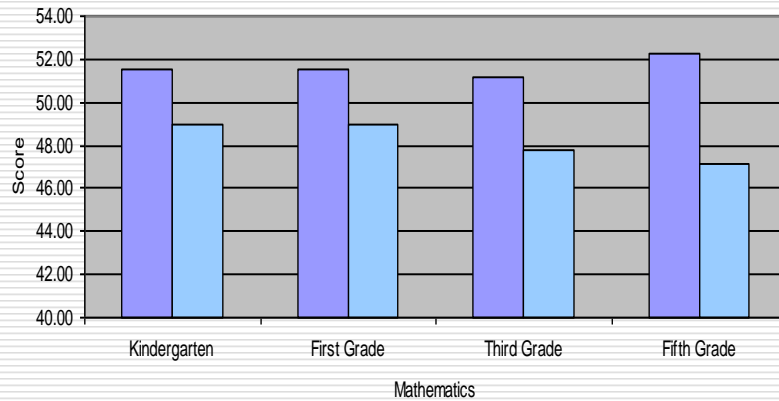
- ❑ Tripled if mothers were Black versus white
 - ❑ Doubled if mothers were Hispanic versus white
 - ❑ More than doubled (x2.3) if mothers were single parents
 - ❑ Almost tripled if mothers had become parents as teenagers
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Being chronically tardy ($\geq 10\%$) in Kindergarten increased the odds of being chronically absent

- ❑ x10 chances of being a chronic absentee ($\geq 10\%$) in **K**
- ❑ x10 chances of being a chronic absentee ($\geq 10\%$) in **1st Gr.**
- ❑ x3 chances of being a chronic absentee ($\geq 10\%$) in **3rd Gr.**
- ❑ x3 chances of being chronically absent ($\geq 10\%$) in **5th Gr.**



Children who were chronically tardy in K had poor academic performance



Legend: Never Tardy (dark blue), >=10% (light blue)

What do we know from research in preschools?

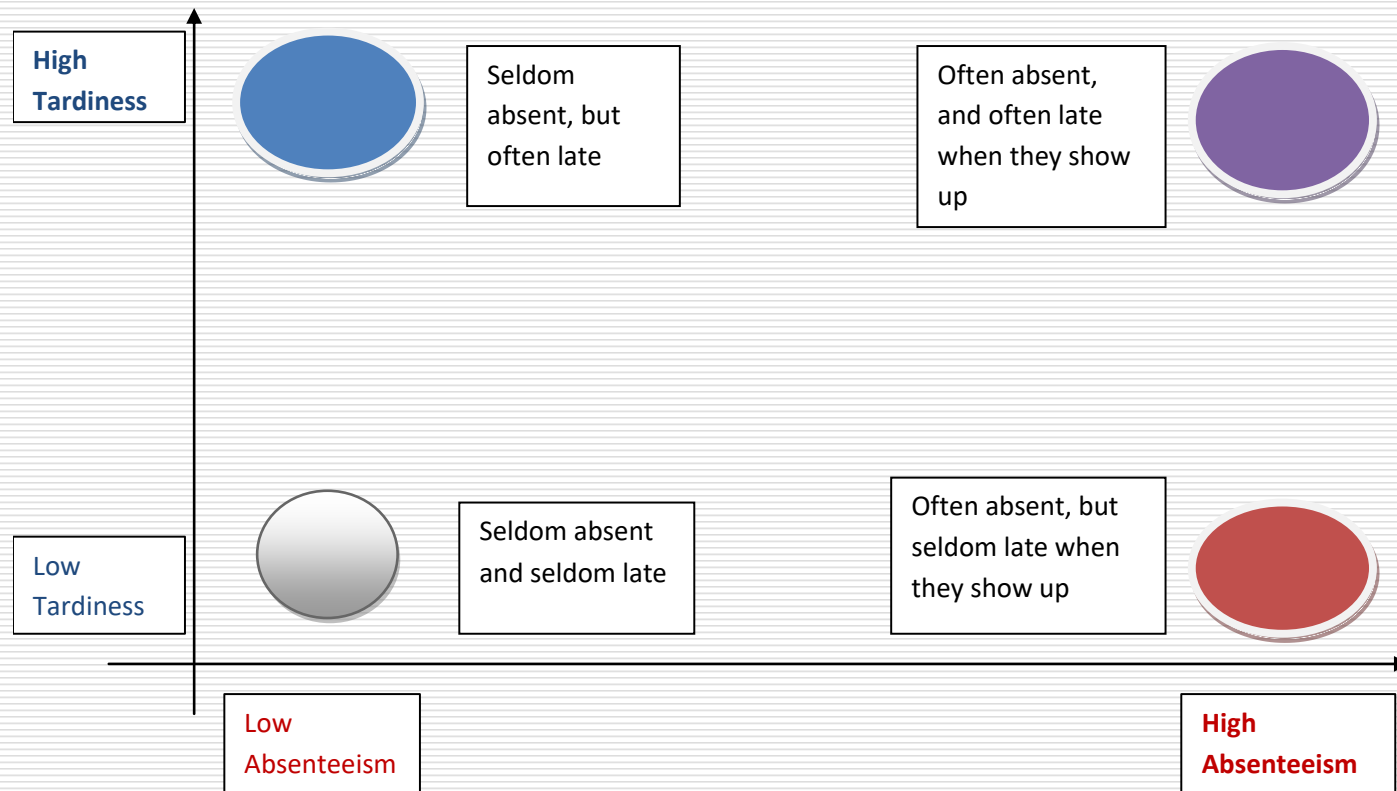
- As part of the Perfectly Punctual Campaign, Learning & Leadership in Families, Inc., has embarked on efforts to collect data
 - Site survey of
 - Attendance and absenteeism
 - Professionals' perspectives
 - Parents' perspectives
 - National Survey of HS professionals
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How easy is it to gather attendance and tardiness data in HS programs?

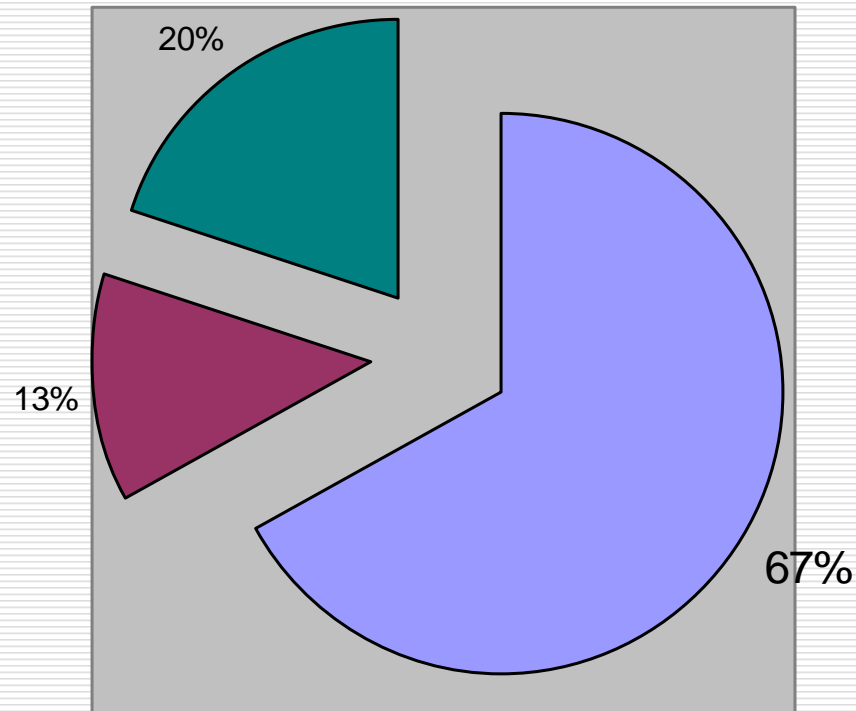
- Attendance and tardiness data are collected everyday by staff in all HS programs but not stored in ways that are easy to use
 - Substantial mobility across programs => to collect accurate data, it is important to understand when children:
 - Join the program
 - Leave the program
 - Are disenrolled because of excessive absence
 - Sites may have classes that offer different types of programs:
 - part-day in the morning
 - part-day in the afternoon
 - full-day
 - with early drop-off or late-pick up services
 - To collect accurate data, it is important to know clearly when children are supposed to arrive and leave, and when they actually do
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Absenteeism and tardiness seem to be rather common in HS programs

- Different groups of children emerge depending on whether and how often they are absent and tardy



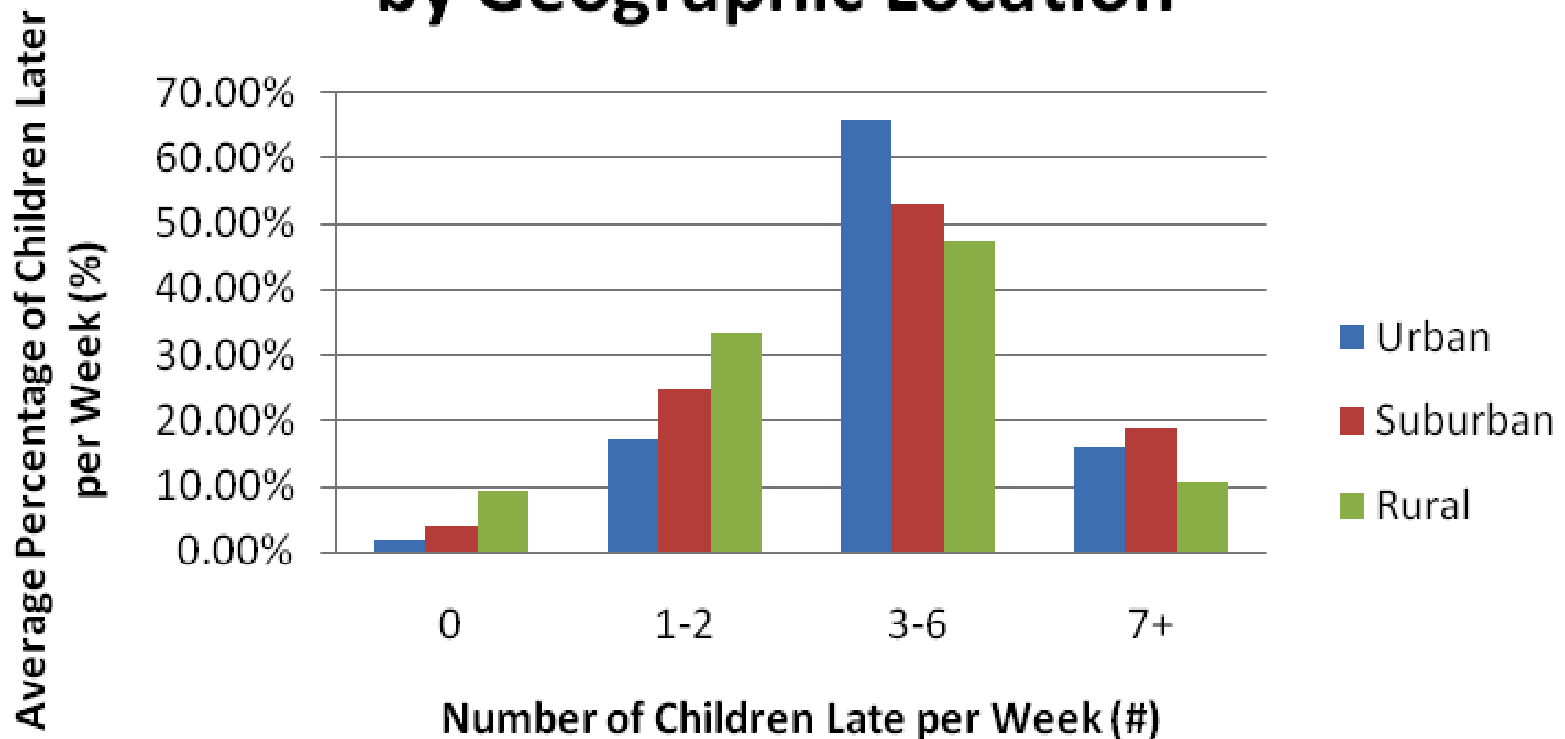
Professionals in one site believe that tardiness is:



■ Serious problem ■ Not a serious problem ■ Neither

Nationally, the majority of HS professionals report that 3-6 children in their groups are late every week

Average Percentage of Children Late by Geographic Location

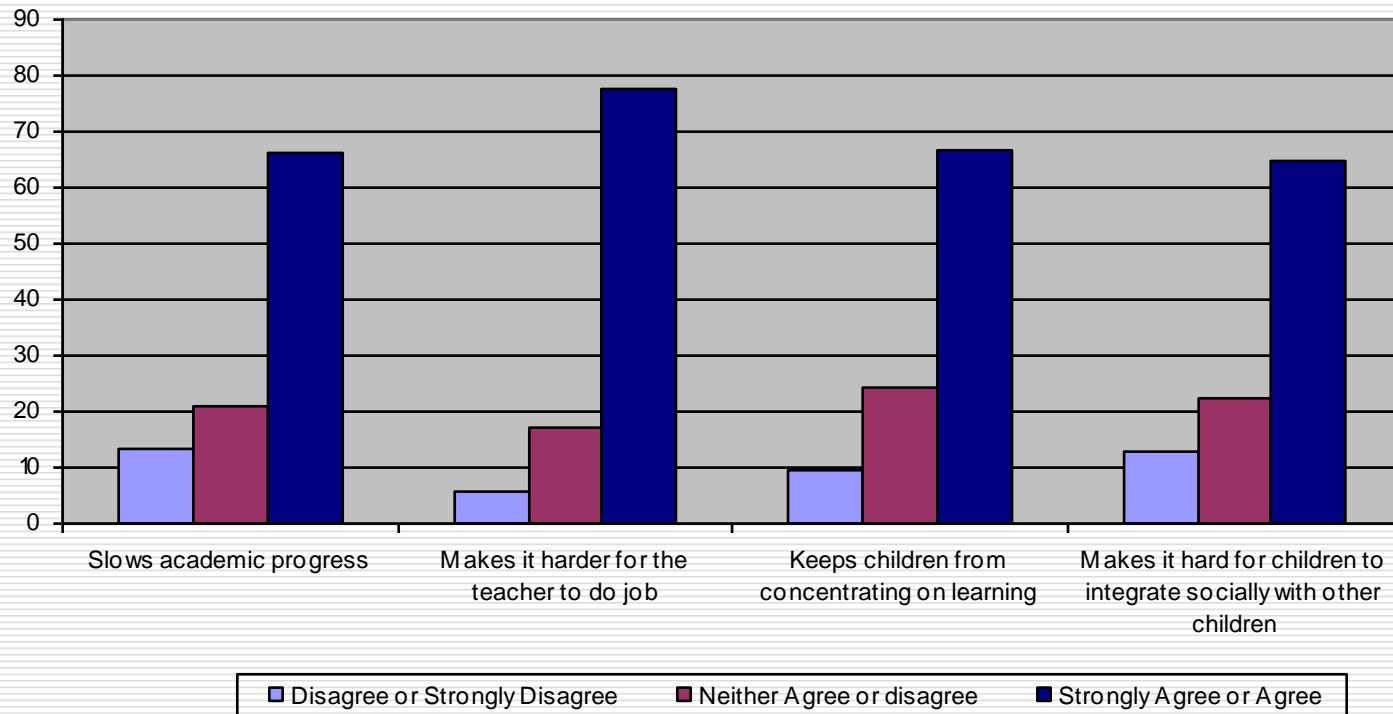


HS professionals agree that punctuality:

- Creates a positive parent-teacher relationship
 - Helps children do better in school
 - Is one way parents can support learning
 - Helps young children develop friendships
 - Is one way parents and teachers can work together
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But HS professionals seem to be more permissive towards lateness

- One-quarter to one-third of professionals surveyed feel neutral towards or disagree with the claim that lateness:



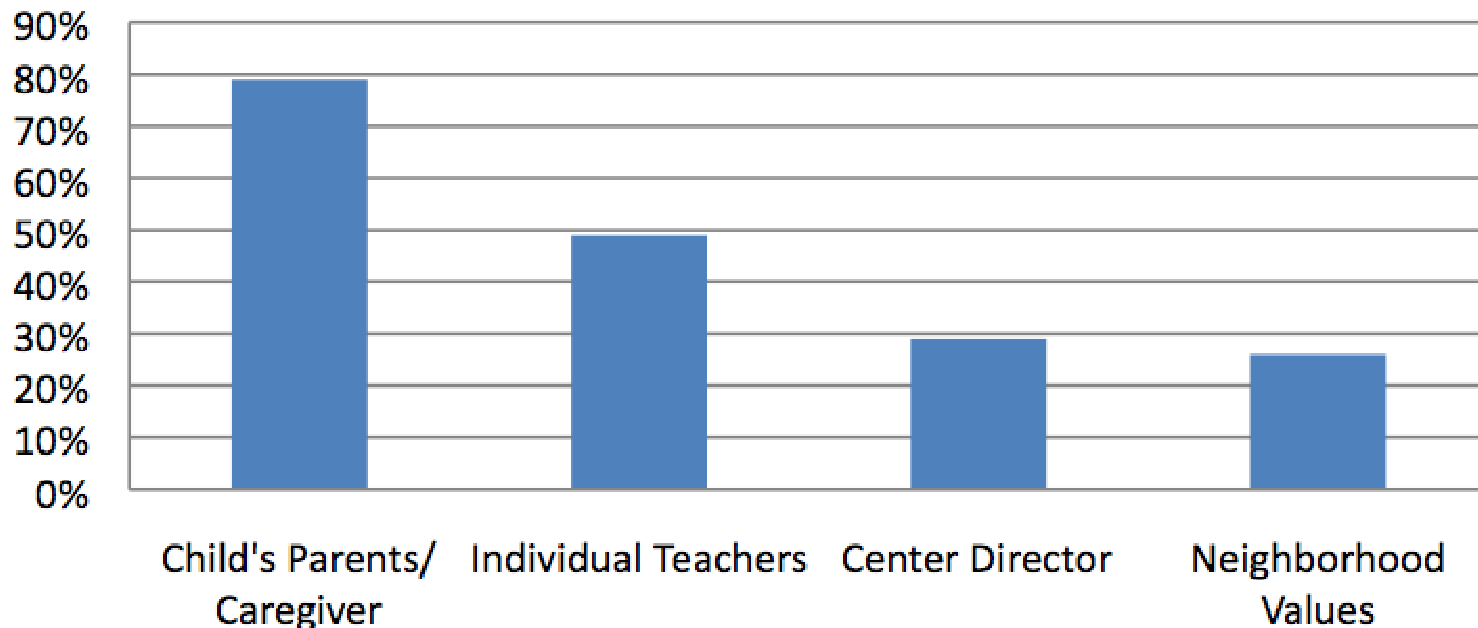
To have or not to have a punctuality policy?

- Staff in centers that have an *articulated punctuality* policy more often believe that
 - The Center Director can shape children's attitudes about punctuality
 - Neighborhood values can potentially shape children's attitudes about punctuality

 - What seems to make a difference is not whether centers have a punctuality policy, but whether or not they *use it consistently*
 - Staff report less punctuality problems in centers where the policy is *consistently invoked*
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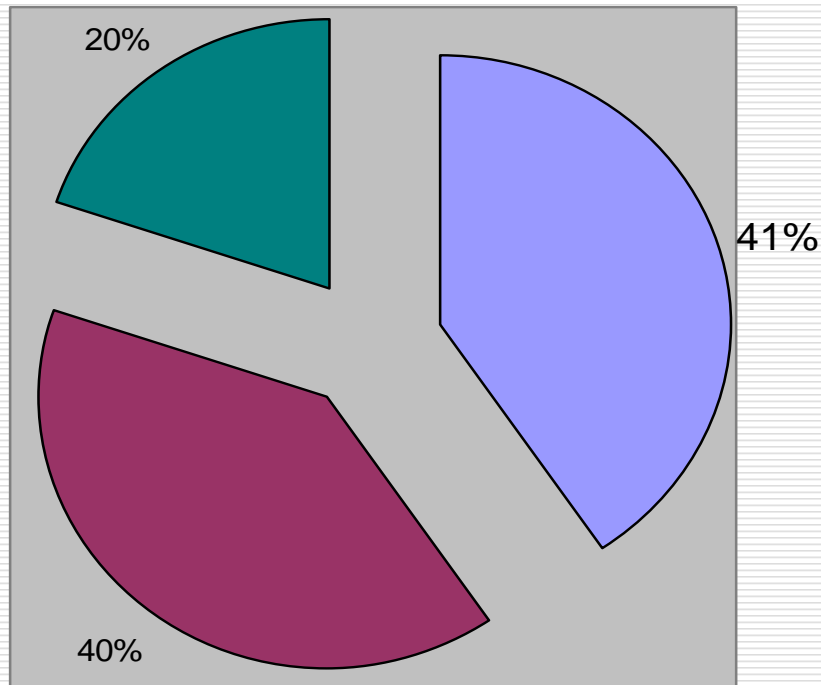
Professionals see parents as the primary influence on young child's punctuality

Children's Attitudes about Punctuality are Shaped by



Source: LLF / NHSA survey, March 2009

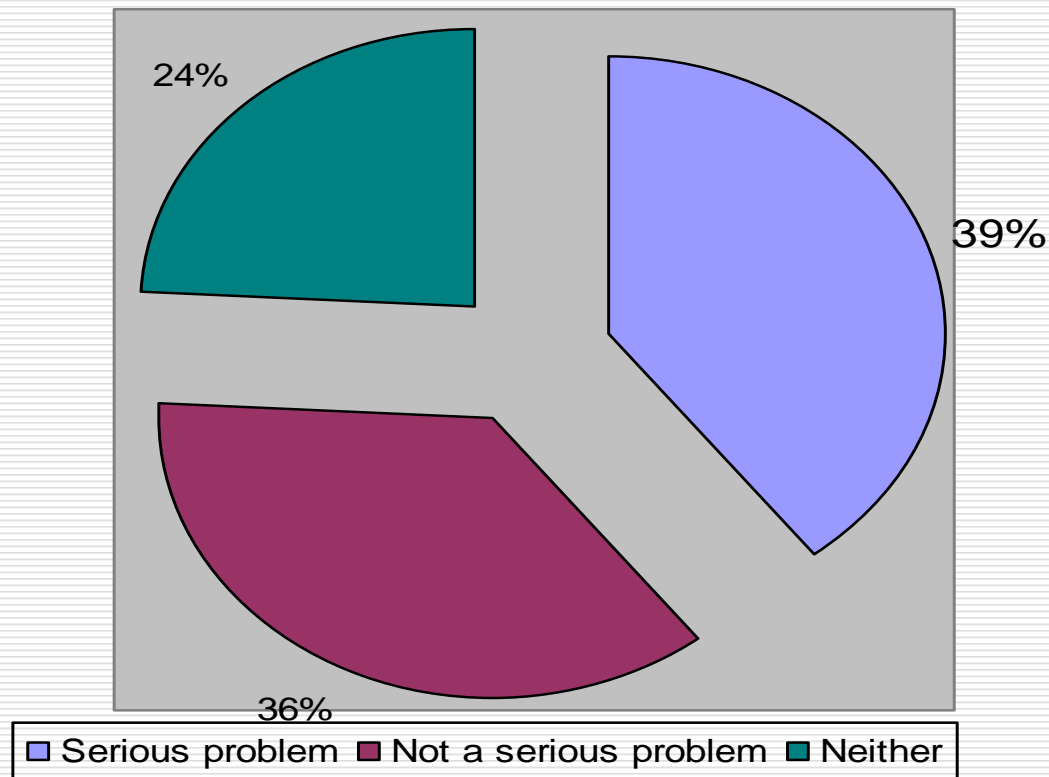
Professionals disagree on whether parents understand the punctuality policy



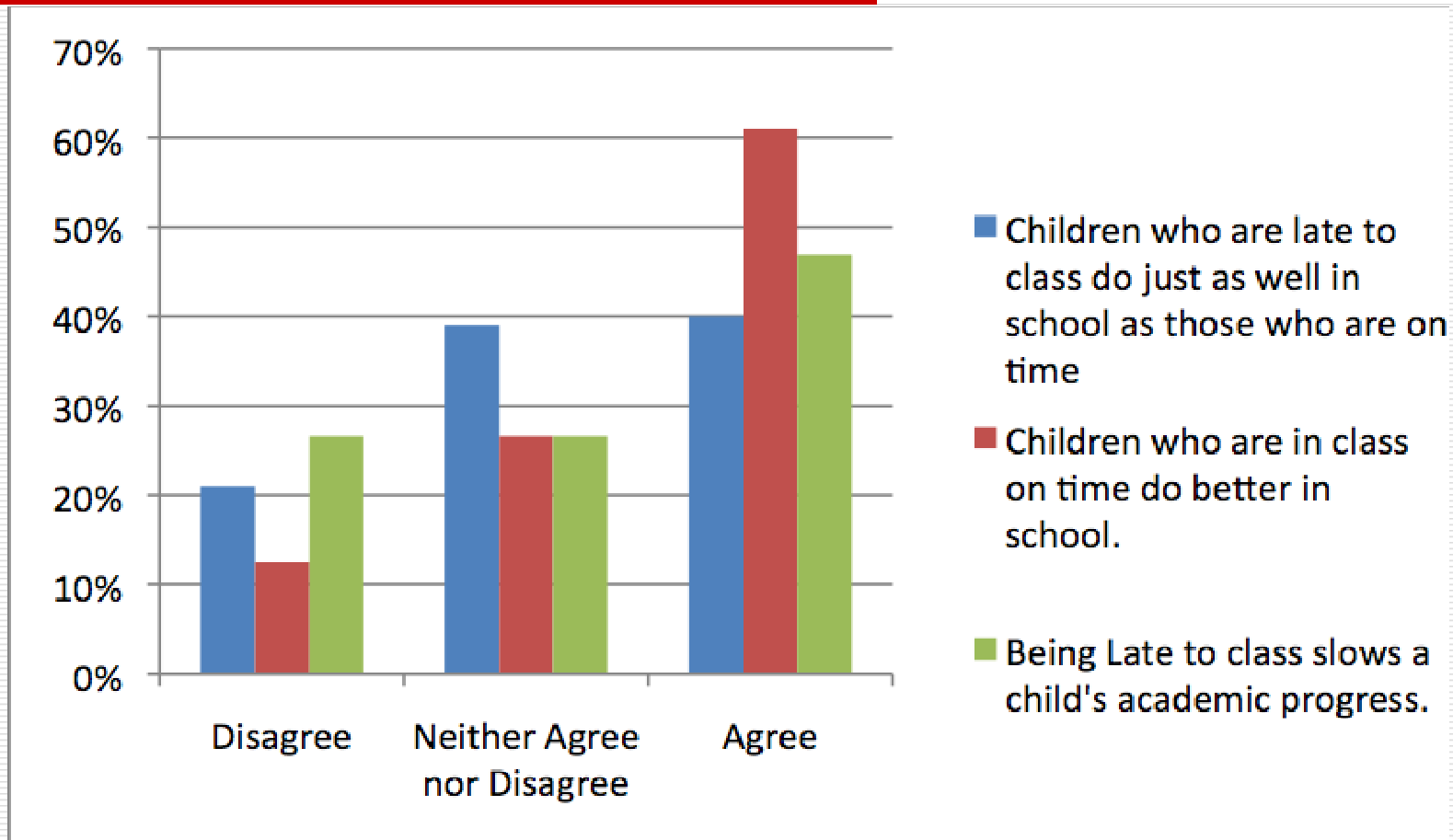
□ But 90% parents claim that they understand it

□ Understand the policy □ Do not understand the policy □ Neither

Parents are divided on whether punctuality at their child's program is:



Parent attitudes: Punctuality versus Lateness



In conclusion, tardiness...

- ❑ May begin, along with absenteeism, well before children enter formal schooling
 - ❑ Has serious consequences for early learning and development
 - ❑ Affects the most vulnerable children
 - ❑ Elicits different perspectives and practices among professionals and parents

 - ❑ These perspectives and practices need to be reconciled to provide a sustained and consistent, high quality early education program
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For questions

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