

THE AUSTRALIAN EARLY LEARNING MONITOR.

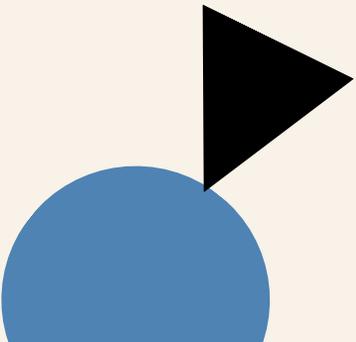
June 2021.



**THRIVE
BY FIVE**

KEY FINDINGS.

1. Most Australians **recognise the importance of play-based learning** and acknowledge that children are more likely to experience play-based learning if they attend centre-based daycare or preschool.
2. They believe, however, that the **cost of ECE and care has risen** sharply over recent years and that many parents do not send their children to centre-based daycare or preschool because of the cost.
3. A clear majority of Australians believe that **cheaper ECE would be good for the economy as a whole**, and that support has increased substantially over the last year.
4. **7 in 10 support the introduction of a universal high-quality ECE and care system**, and most think such a system would be good for the education system, the economy and social inequality.
5. Almost half the respondents in this large study, including two thirds of parents of children under school age, say that **early childhood education and care is a very or extremely important issue for their vote**. Two thirds of parents of children in daycare say they would be more likely to vote for a party that advocated a universal ECE and care system.



METHODOLOGY.

Fieldwork: 22nd April – 7th May 2021

Sample: n=4,786 nationally representative sample

Prepared by: Essential Research

Our researchers are members of the Research Society. This research is compliant with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards.



**Australian
Polling Council
Quality Mark**

The quantitative poll was developed to canvas a representative sample of the Australian public on their views, attitudes and experiences with the early learning and childcare system in Australia, and to understand their views on relevant issues related to family life, working life and society more broadly.

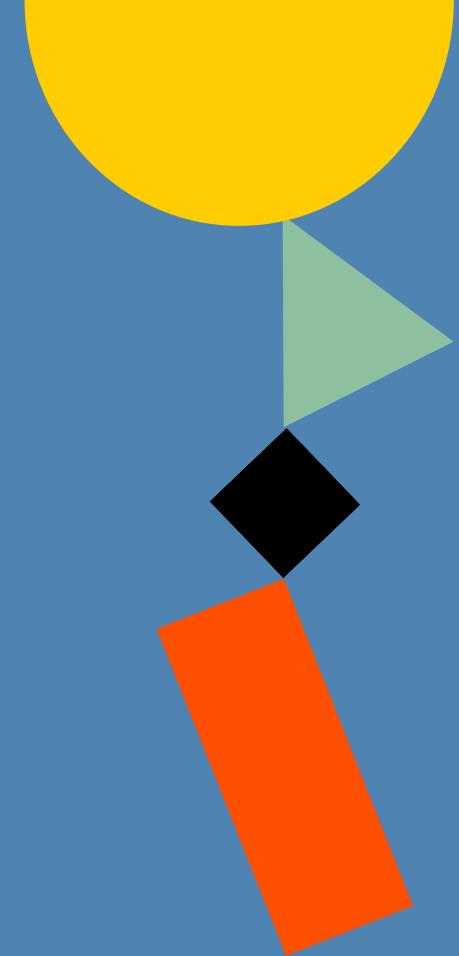
The national online survey was hosted by Qualtrics and took respondents approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Note that some questions were asked of only half the sample to maximise the number of questions without increasing respondent burden.

The maximum margin of error is $\pm 2.2\%$ at a 95% confidence level for the full sample. For questions asked of half sample, maximum margin of error is $\pm 2.0\%$.

Some figures in this report will not total 100% due to rounding. Full methodology can be found [here](#). For more results from the Early Learning Monitor go to: thrivebyfive.org.au/earlylearningmonitor/

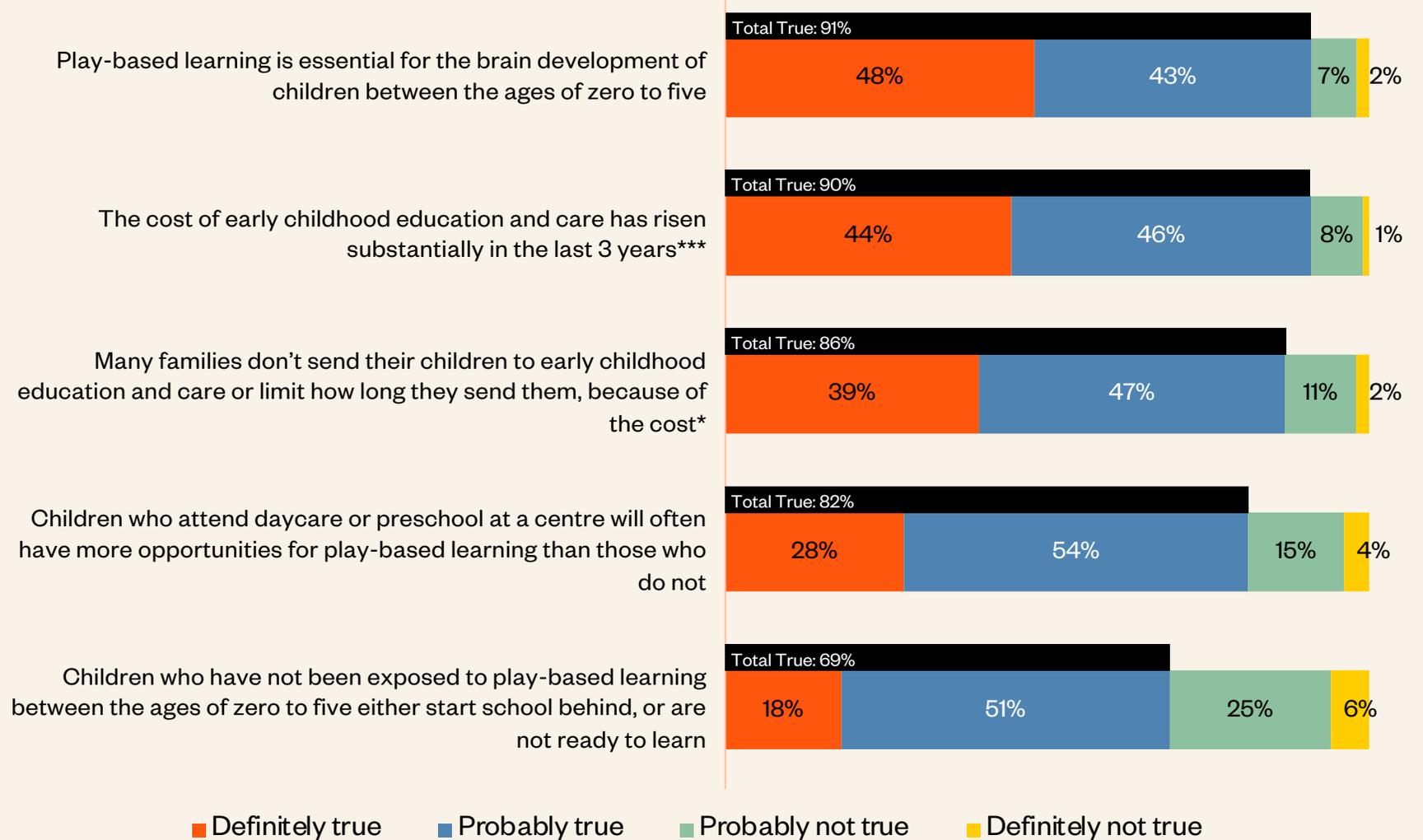
CURRENT ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS.



**THRIVE
BY FIVE**

THE VAST MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF PLAY-BASED LEARNING.

Understanding of early learning (%)



Q. For each of the following statements about early childhood education and care, please indicate if you think they are definitely true, probably true, probably not true or definitely not true.

Base: All respondents, n=4,786

*Only shown to half sample, n=2,390

***Only shown to parents with a child that attends/attended daycare, n=918

MOST SEE THE VALUE OF PICKING UP LEARNING DIFFICULTIES BEFORE SCHOOL - ONE WAY TO PROMOTE THE VALUE OF CENTRE-BASED DAYCARE IS THAT LEARNING DIFFICULTIES ARE LIKELY TO BE PICKED UP SOONER.

Understanding of early learning (%)

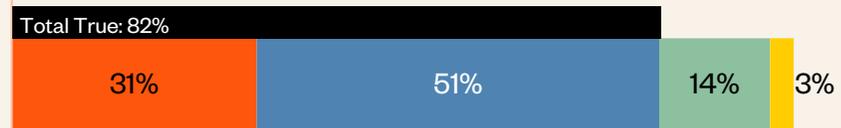
If learning difficulties and disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD and autism can be picked up before children start primary school, the children are likely to be much better off in the long-term*



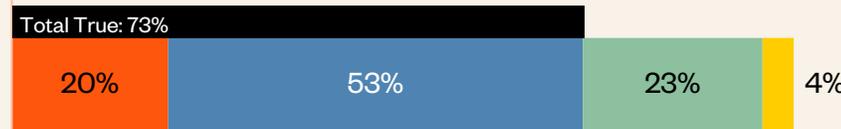
Many families rely on long-day care being open 52 weeks per year to support their work and other commitments**



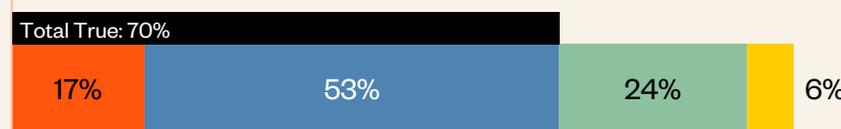
A high-quality early childhood education and care system would help ensure better outcomes for those children when they graduate Year 12



Australia's early childhood education and care system doesn't follow a consistent approach or deliver uniform standards of education and care



Many people who get into trouble with the law later in life have learning difficulties that weren't picked up early enough**



■ Definitely true
 ■ Probably true
 ■ Probably not true
 ■ Definitely not true

Q. For each of the following statements about early childhood education and care, please indicate if you think they are definitely true, probably true, probably not true or definitely not true.

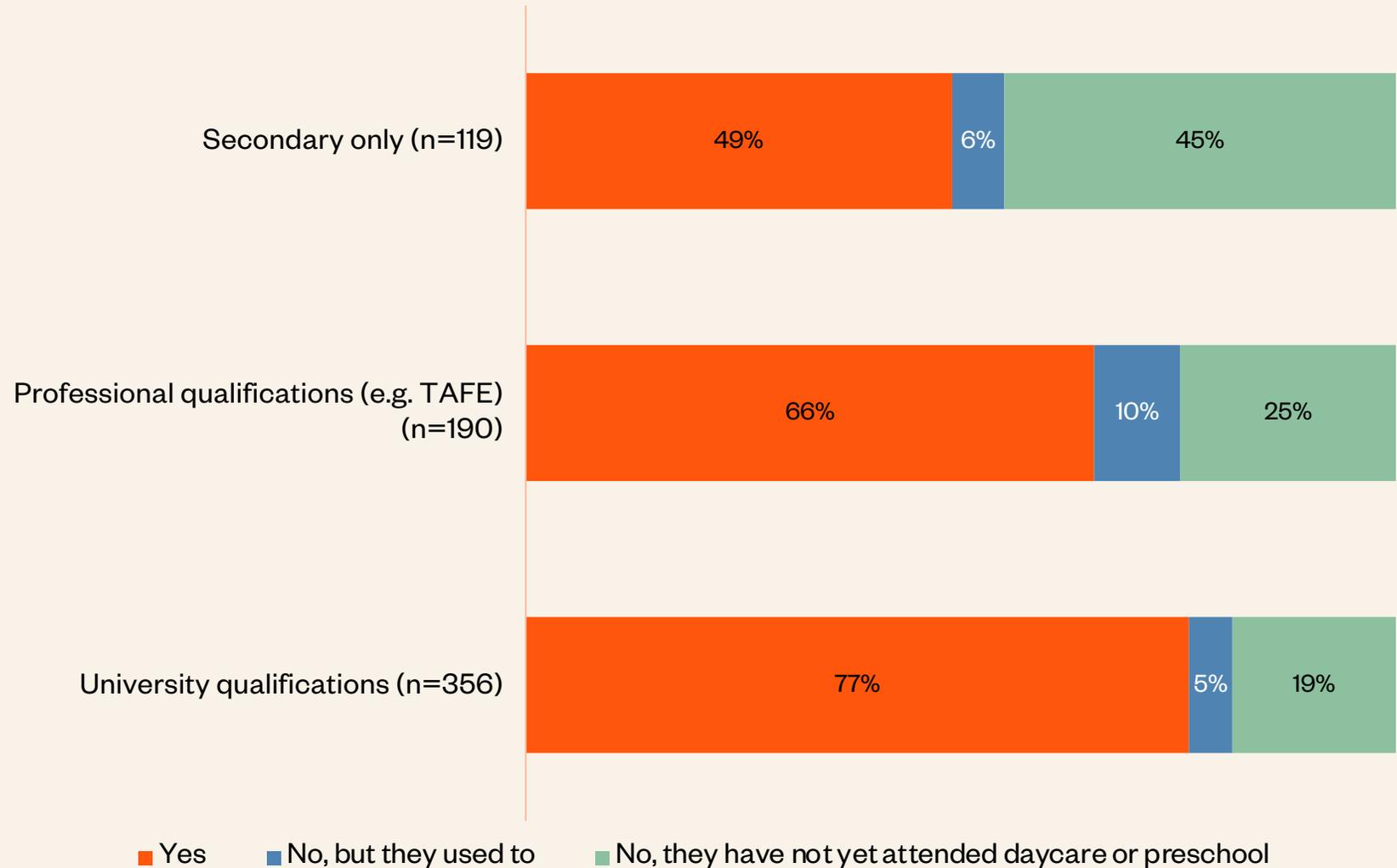
Base: All respondents, n=4,786

*Only shown to half sample, n=2,390

** Only shown to half sample, n=2,396

**PARENTS WITH
UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION ARE
MORE LIKELY TO
SAY THEIR
CHILD IS IN
CHILDCARE.**

Attending centre-based daycare or preschool (%)



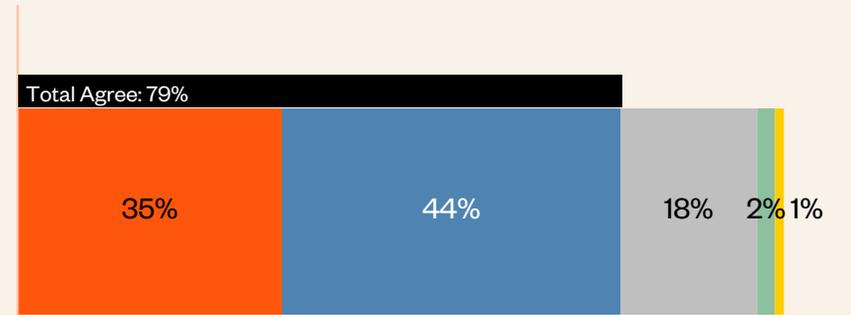
Q. Different names for early learning centres are used in different states and territories. For the purpose of the next few questions, please assume that 'centre-based daycare or preschool' refers to any formal early learning & care provided for children under school age through a centre. Does your child regularly attend centre-based daycare or preschool? If you have more than one child under school age, please answer for the child who most recently had a birthday.

Base: Parents with at least one child under school age n=670

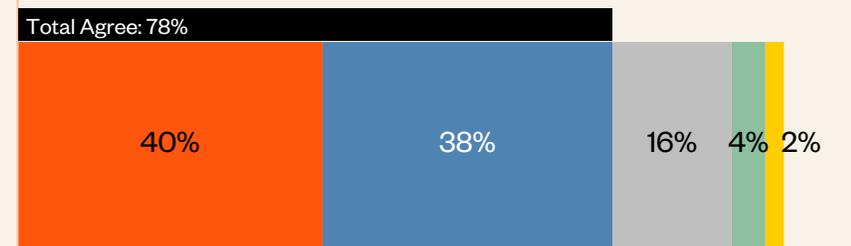
**MOST PARTICIPANTS
AGREE EARLY LEARNING
SHOULD BE PART OF
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM
AND QUALITY WOULD BE
IMPROVED IF THE
SYSTEM WAS MORE
COORDINATED.**

A coordinated future for early learning (%)

The quality of early childhood education and care would improve if the system was more coordinated



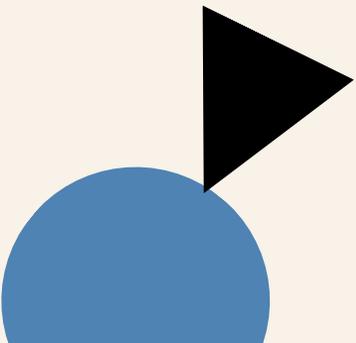
Early learning should be treated as part of the education system



- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

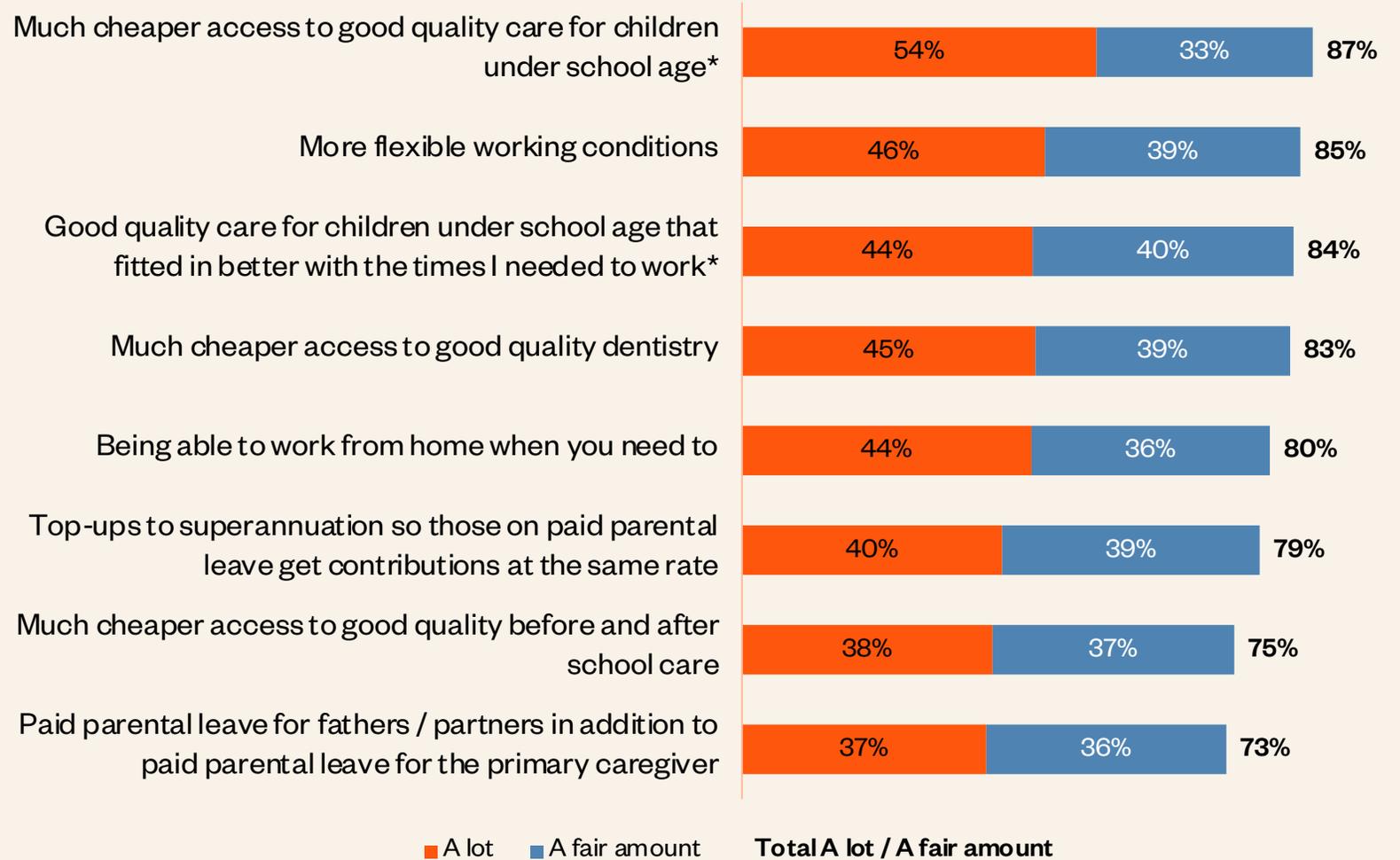
Q. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: All respondents, n=4,786



THE VAST MAJORITY OF PARENTS WITH A CHILD UNDER SCHOOL AGE SAY HAVING CHEAPER ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILDCARE WOULD HELP THEIR FAMILIES.

What would help respondents and their families (% A lot /A fair amount)

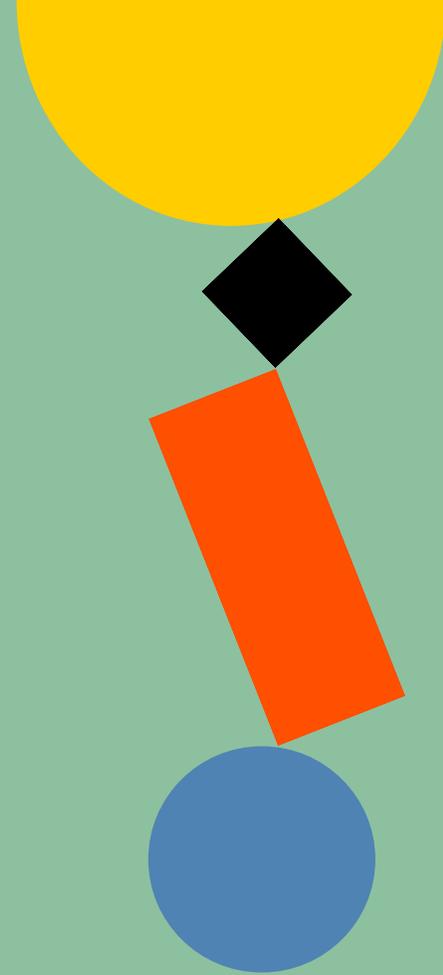


Q. How much would each of the following help you and your family, now or in the future?

Base: All respondents with dependent children, n=1,519

*Only shown to parents with at least one child under school age, n=670

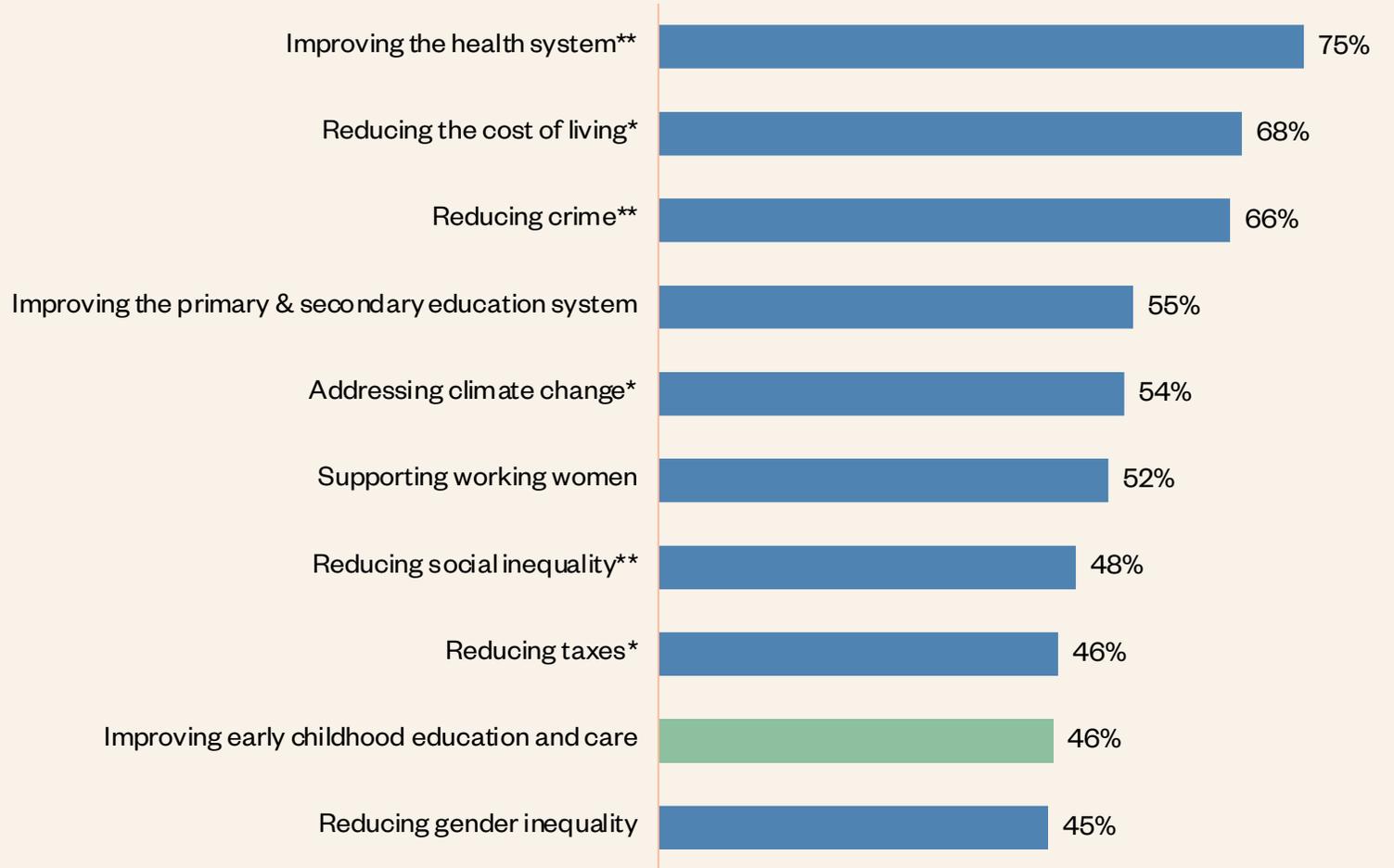
**TOWARDS A UNIVERSAL,
HIGH-QUALITY EARLY
LEARNING SYSTEM.**



**THRIVE
BY FIVE**

AROUND HALF THE POPULATION SAYS IMPROVING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS EXTREMELY OR VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE TO THEIR VOTE.

Importance of issues when voting at federal elections (% Extremely/very important)



Q. How important are each of the following issues when it comes to voting at federal elections?

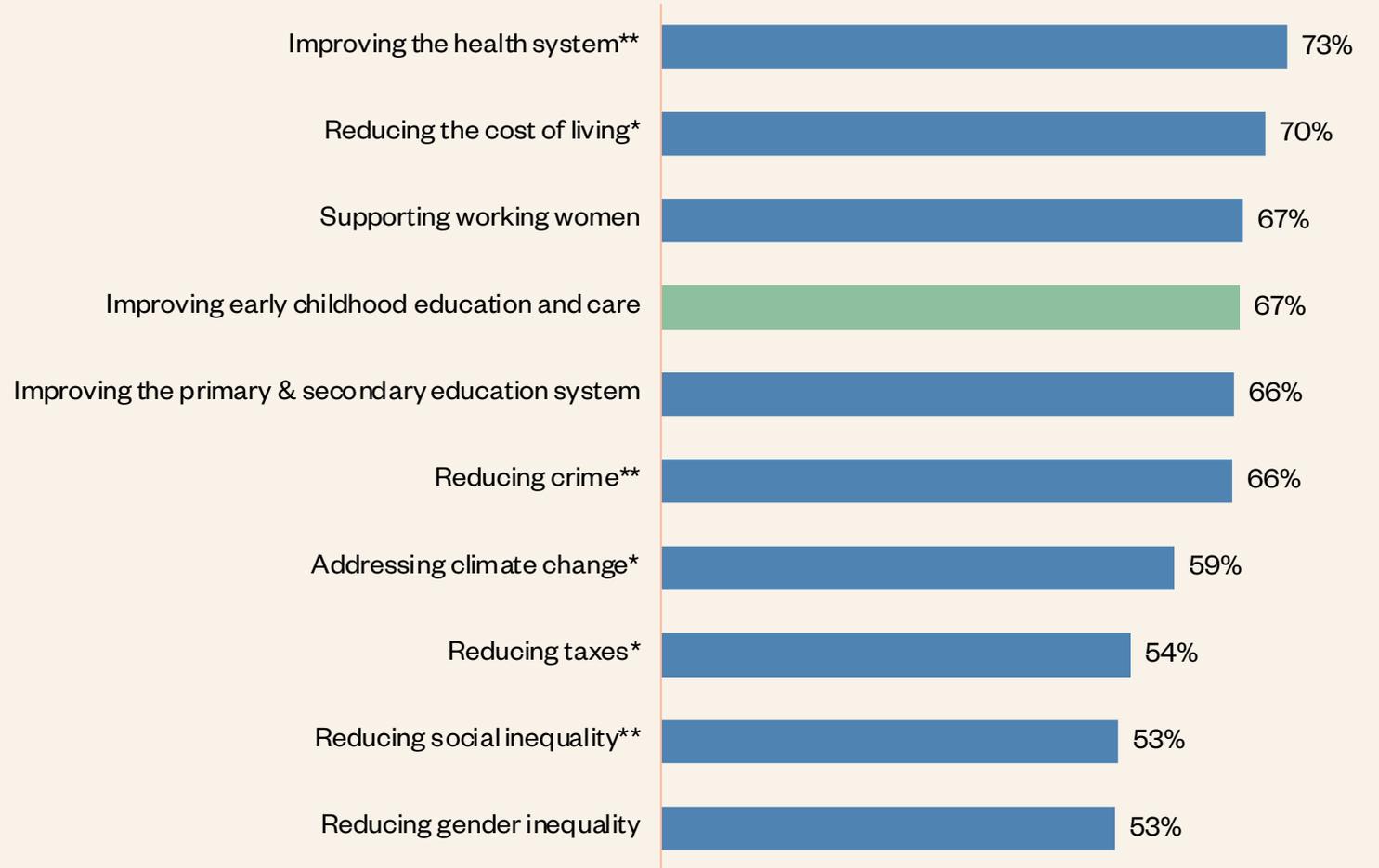
Base: All respondents, n=4,786

*Only shown to half sample, n=2,390

** Only shown to half sample, n=2,396

TWO-THIRDS OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE SAY IMPROVING EARLY LEARNING IS AN EXTREMELY OR VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE TO THEIR VOTE.

**Importance of issues when voting at federal elections
(% Extremely/very important)**



Q. How important are each of the following issues when it comes to voting at federal elections?

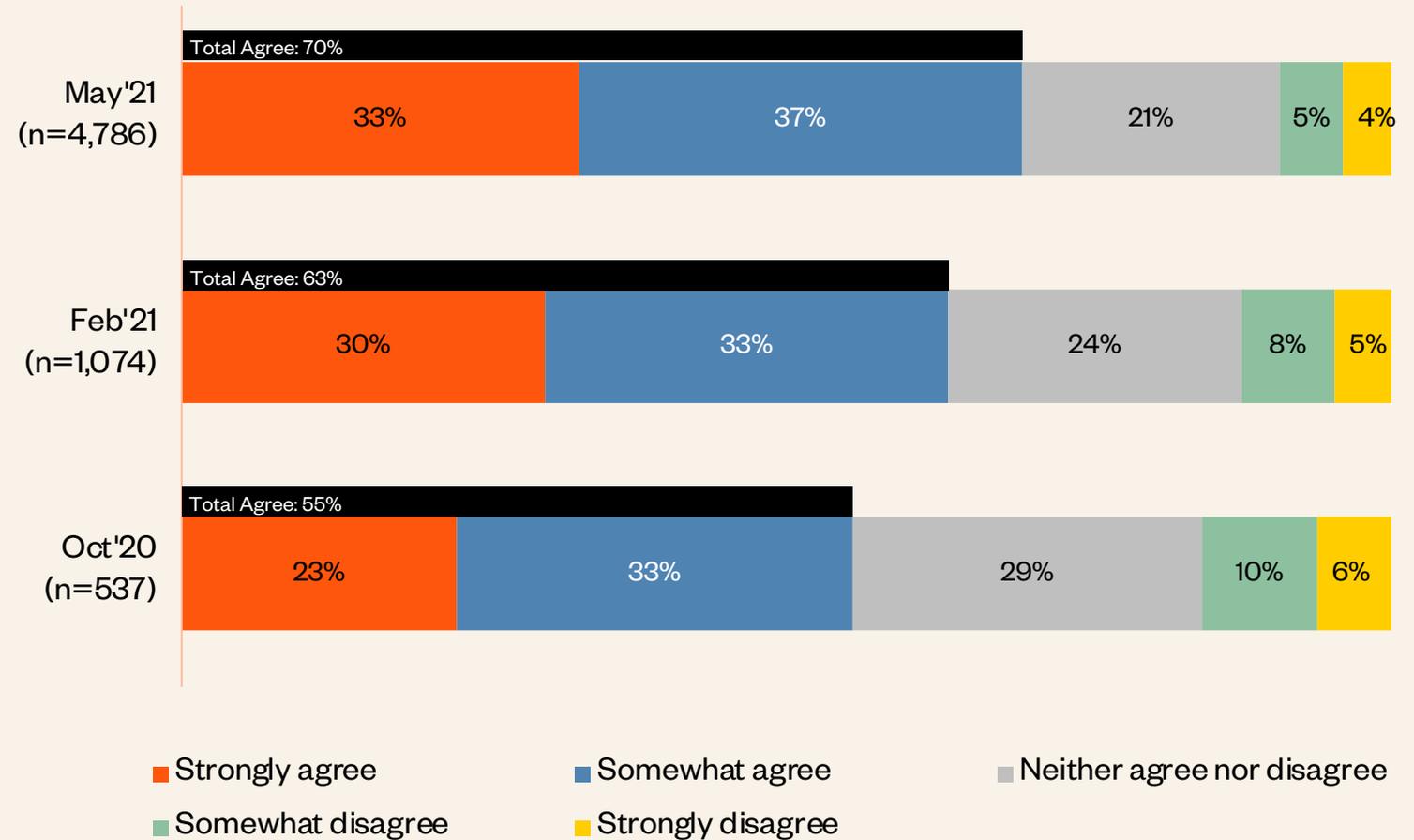
Base: Parents of at least one child under school age, n=670

*Only shown to half sample, n=348

** Only shown to half sample, n=322

TWO-THIRDS OF PARTICIPANTS AGREE THAT CHEAPER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WOULD BE VERY GOOD FOR OUR ECONOMY.

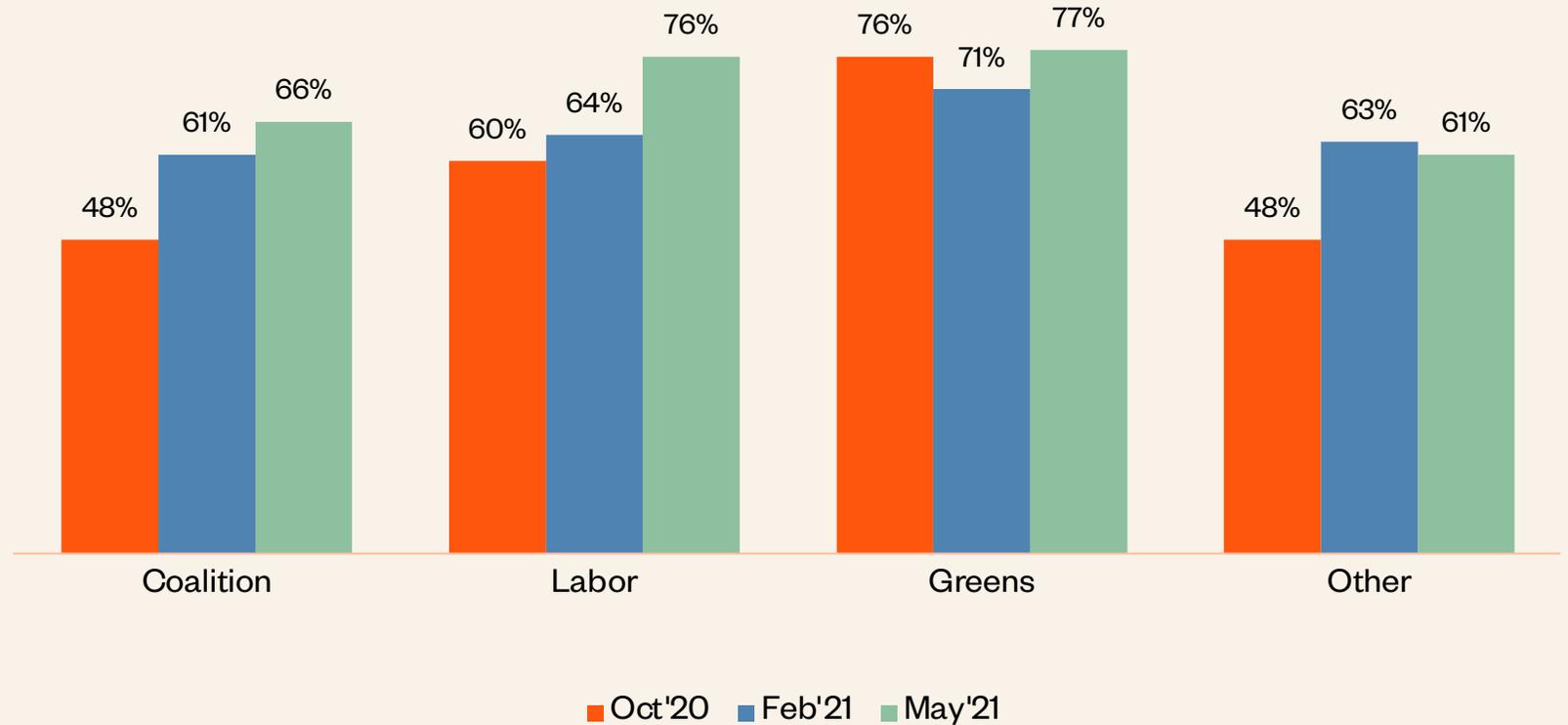
Agreement that cheaper early childhood education and care would be very good for the Australian economy as a whole (%)



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

**SUPPORT AMONG
COALITION VOTERS
HAS INCREASED
CONSIDERABLY OVER
THE LIFE OF THE
CAMPAIGN.**

Agreement that cheaper early childhood education and care would be very good for the Australian economy as a whole (%)

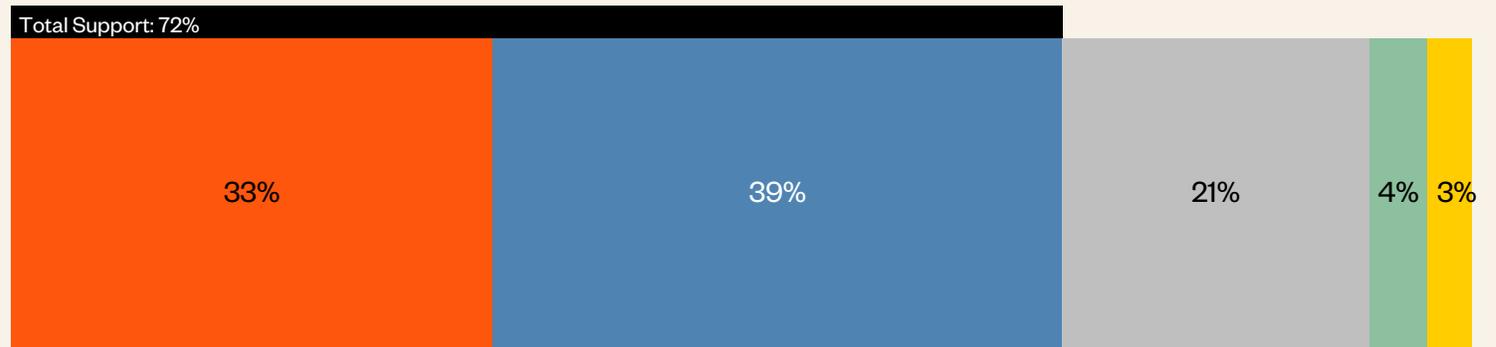


Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Base: All respondents, n=4,786

**AROUND THREE-
QUARTERS OF
AUSTRALIANS
SUPPORT
A UNIVERSAL
EARLY LEARNING
SYSTEM.**

**Support for a universal high-quality early childhood education
and care system (%)**

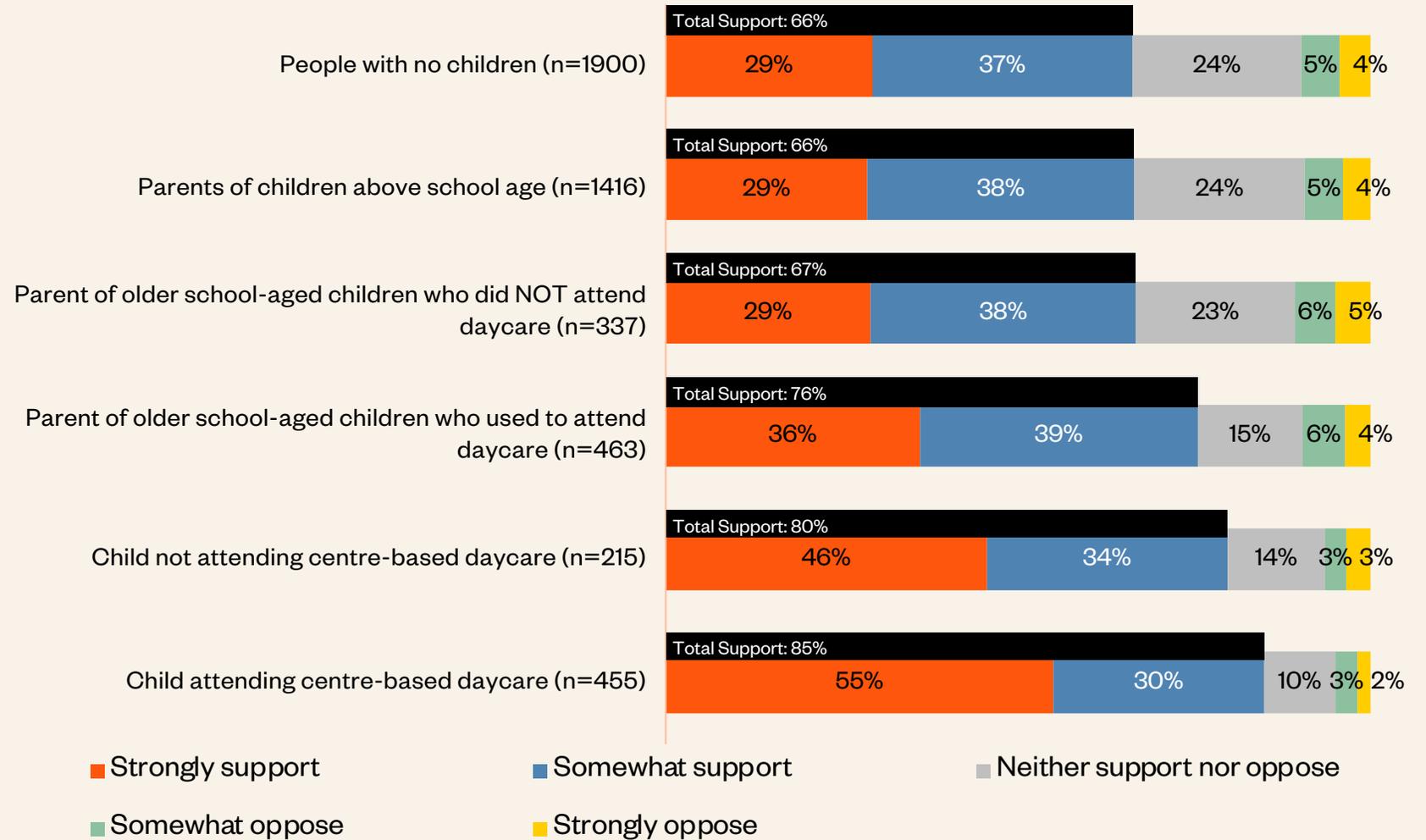


- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose

Q. For the purpose of the next few questions, please assume that 'a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system' would be one that was connected to the primary and secondary education system with a standard set of teaching priorities based around play-based learning. The system would be available at low or minimal cost to anyone who wants to use it, but using it would not be compulsory. How strongly do you support or oppose introducing a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system along those lines?
Base: All respondents, n=4,786

THERE'S SUPPORT FOR A UNIVERSAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SYSTEM, WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE PRESCHOOL CHILDREN.

Support for a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system (%)

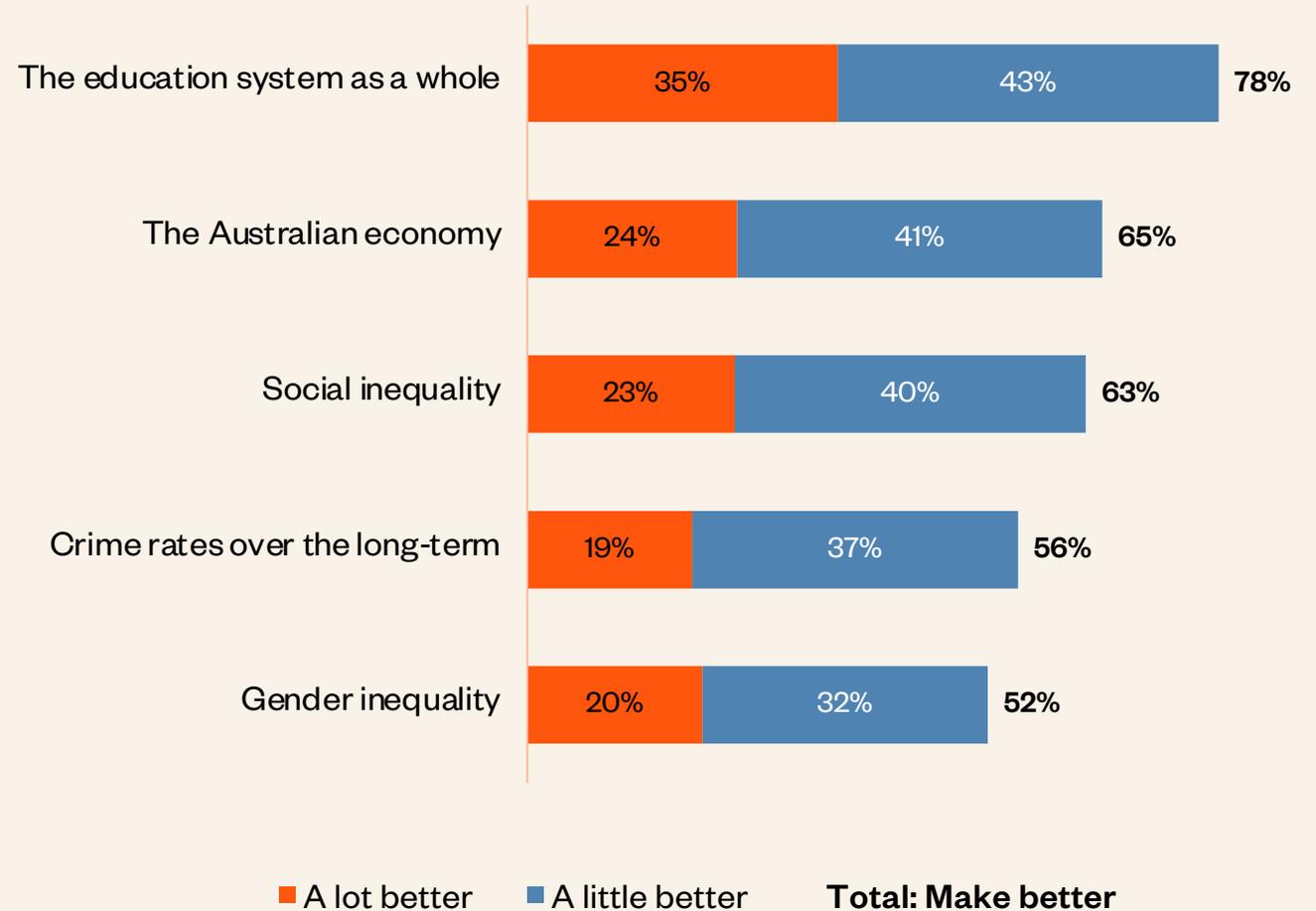


Q. For the purpose of the next few questions, please assume that 'a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system' would be one that was connected to the primary and secondary education system with a standard set of teaching priorities based around play-based learning. The system would be available at low or minimal cost to anyone who wants to use it, but using it would not be compulsory. How strongly do you support or oppose introducing a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system along those lines?

Base: All respondents, n=4,786

**MOST THINK A UNIVERSAL
EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM
WOULD BE GOOD FOR
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM,
THE ECONOMY AND
REDUCING SOCIAL
INEQUALITY.**

Effect of universal high-quality early childhood education and care system (% Make it a lot/a little better)

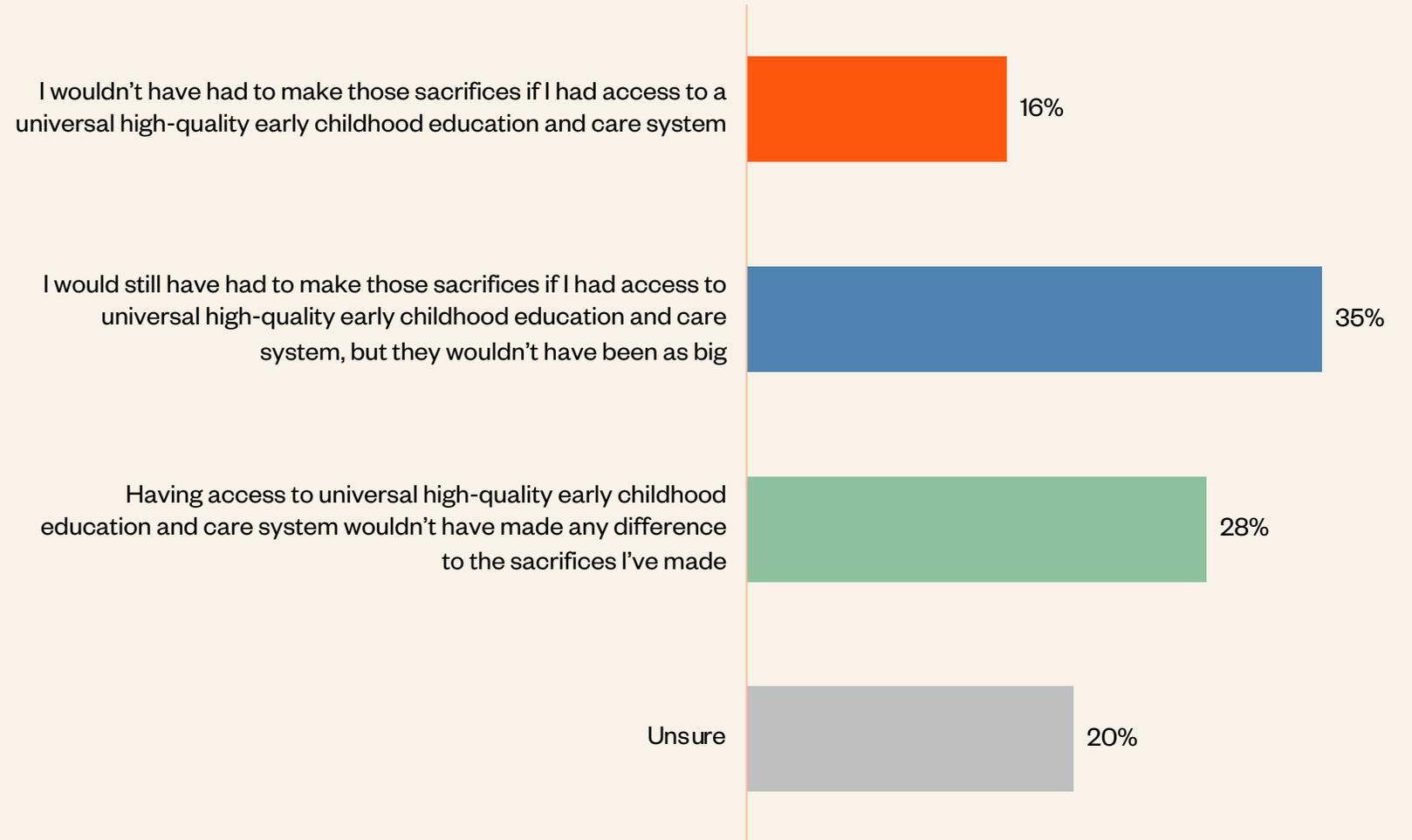


Q. If there was a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system, how do you think it would affect each of the following?

Base: All respondents, n=4,786

**HALF THOSE WHO HAVE
MADE CAREER OR FAMILY
SACRIFICES, SAY A
UNIVERSAL EARLY
LEARNING SYSTEM
WOULD HAVE REDUCED
THOSE SACRIFICES.**

Views towards career/family sacrifices made (%)

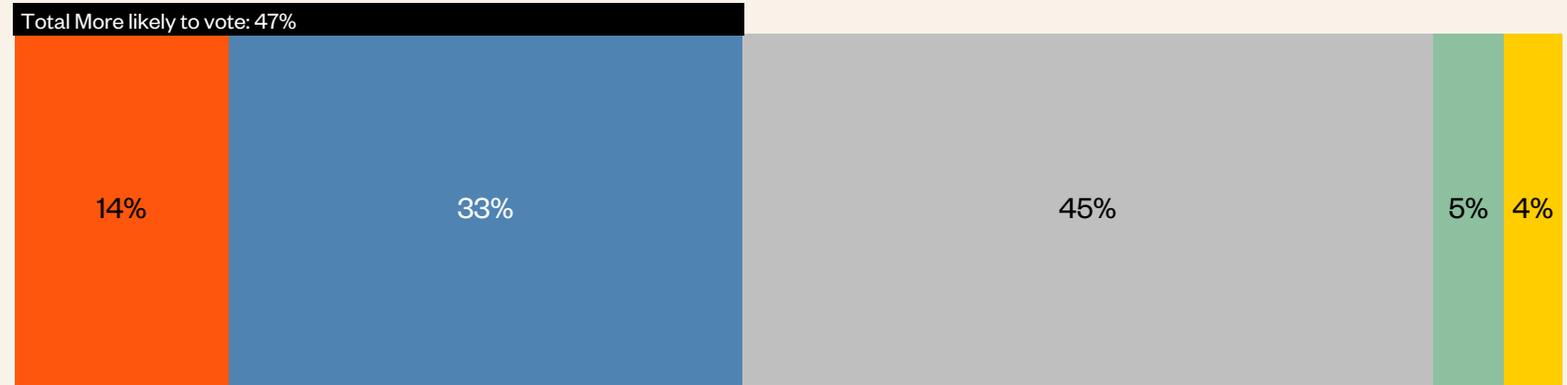


Q. You said earlier that you had made sacrifices in your career for your family or in your family life for your career. Which of the following do you think would have applied to you had you access to a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system?

Base: Respondents who strongly/somewhat agree that they have made career or family sacrifices, n=2,987

**THIS POLICY APPEARS
MORE LIKELY TO ATTRACT
VOTES THAN PUT
PARTICIPANTS OFF.**

Influence of a universal ECE and care policy on voting intention (%)



■ A lot more likely

■ A little more likely

■ No difference

■ A little less likely

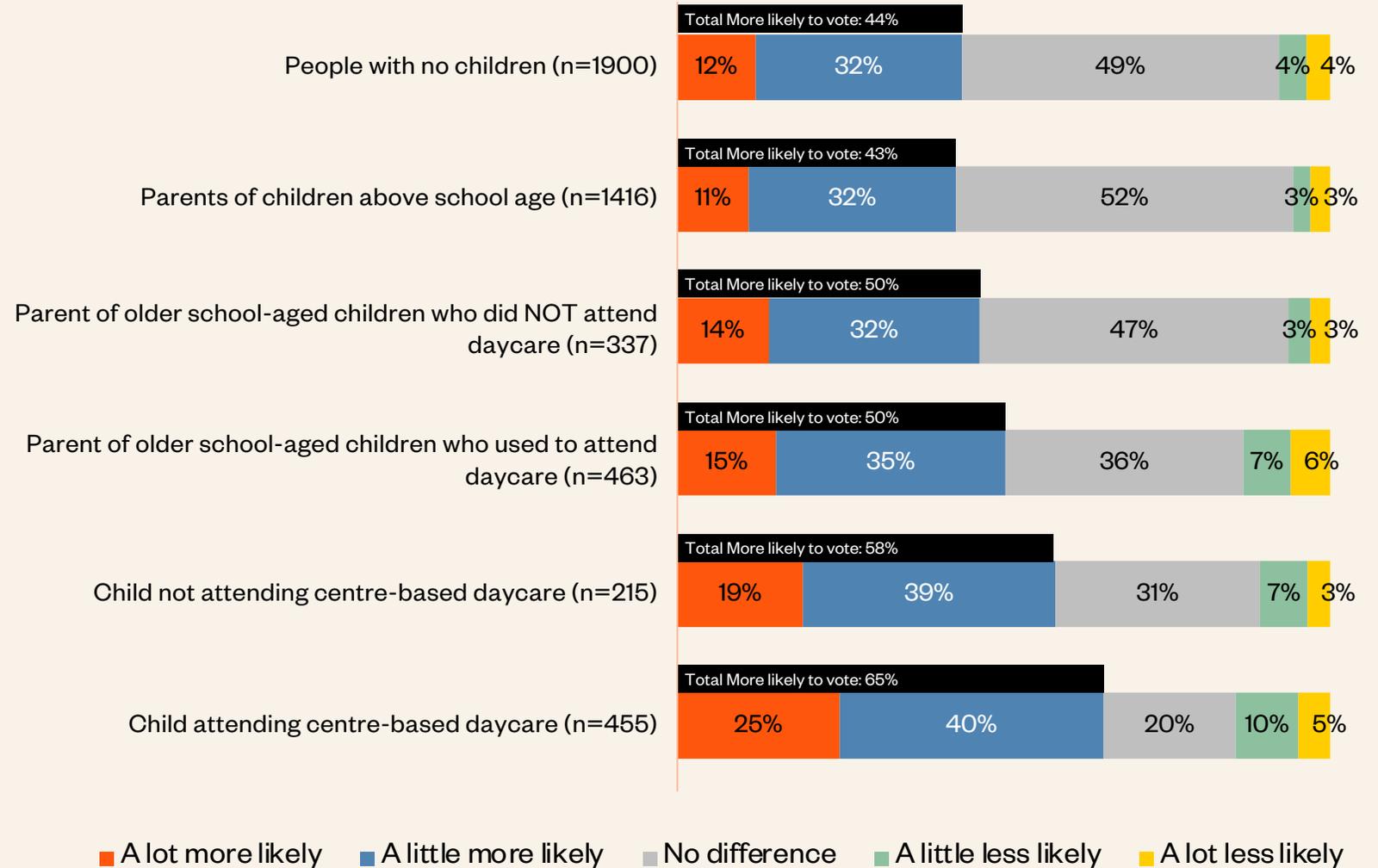
■ A lot less likely to vote for that party

Q. If a party committed to introducing a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system, how would that affect your likelihood of voting for that party?

Base: All respondents, n=4,786

TWO-THIRDS OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN DAYCARE SAY THE POLICY WOULD MAKE THEM MORE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR A PARTY.

Influence of a universal ECE and care policy on voting intention (%)



Q. If a party committed to introducing a universal high-quality early childhood education and care system, how would that affect your likelihood of voting for that party?

Base: All respondents, n=4,786