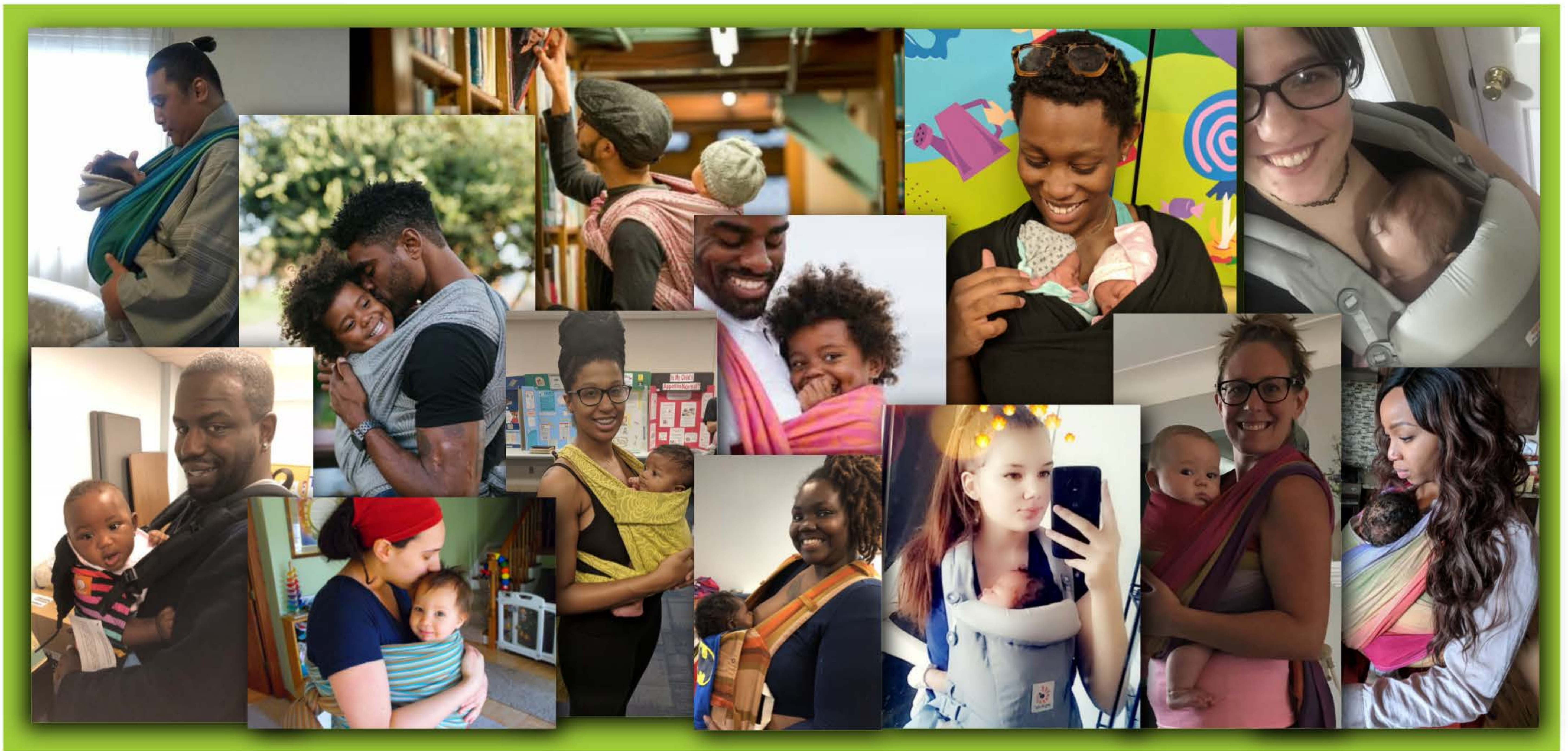


The Baby Carrier Pilot Project

Macomb County Health Department - WIC program



Project Collaboration

During a breastfeeding peer update in September 2016, Baby Carriers Provided (BCP) founder, Becca Morse, gave an inspiring presentation on baby carriers and how impactful it can be for caregivers as a parenting tool. She mentioned that BCP was looking to collaborate with local WIC agencies, and the Macomb County Health Department – WIC breastfeeding staff were interested. The idea was taken back to our agency and it was decided that it was not a project that Macomb County Health Department (MCHD) – WIC was ready to embark on due to staffing constraints. In September 2017, the idea was revisited and the decision was made to join with BCP to become a part of this pilot project. This was due to the increase in staff (an additional Breastfeeding Peer Counselor and a Public Health Analyst assigned to the WIC Program) in addition, the WIC Division graciously assisted in funding this project since it was identified as an innovative pilot project.

Program Planning and Preparation

A specific group of WIC staff were trained on the importance of safety, how to use infant carriers and how to teach caregivers how to safely use the carrier (conduct individual or group classes). The training was two days, separated by a period of time to practice and perfect skills learned in the first day of training. After the training, staff worked heavily with BCP to create the necessary forms for implementation of this pilot project (the survey and consent form). The survey would be administered to project participants in order to gain insight into their experiences with the carriers.

To recruit participants, flyers were created and distributed in WIC offices within the county in order to gain interest before the pilot began. If WIC participants met the criteria (pregnant or had a child under the age of one) and were interested, they were placed on an interest list.

Implementation

Once staff was ready to implement the project, they called clients from the interest list and placed them into classes. Each class was taught by trained staff. If a client could not make the class, they were able to come in at a time that was convenient for them. Same day one-on-one classes during clinic were also conducted as needed. Once the client agreed to take part in the project, finished the class and signed the necessary forms, they received the carrier of their choice. Staff then recorded the date the client completed the class, which carrier was chosen and assigned them a 3-month follow-up date. At the assigned follow-up date, staff sent participants a 22 question survey that asked participants about their experiences using the carrier.

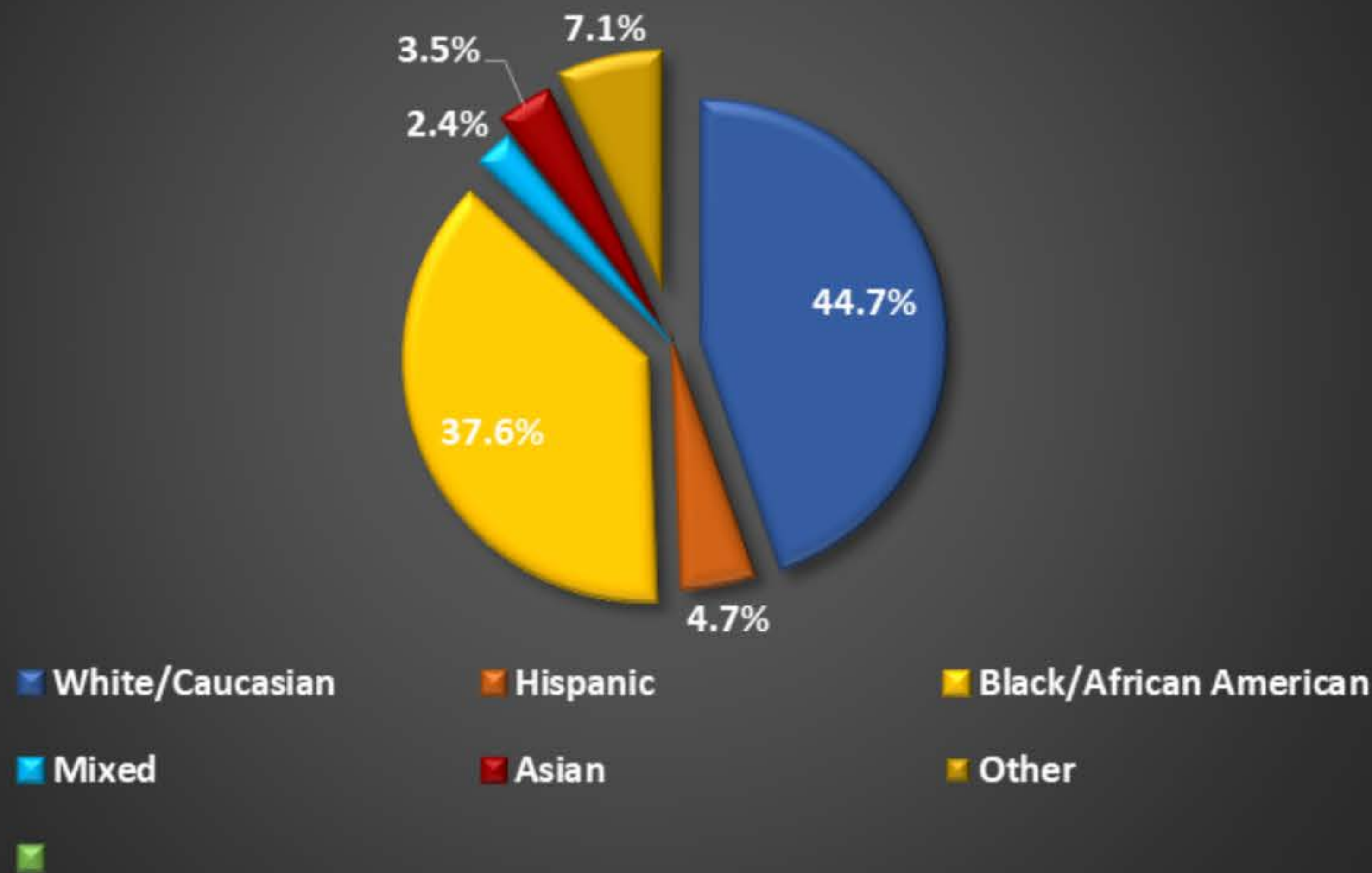
Results

Staff distributed over 200 infant carriers to WIC participants at no cost to them. Over 75 participants also completed the three month follow-up survey.

Participants who responded to the survey ranged in age from 20 years old to 40 years old. The average age of respondents was 29.4 years. Respondents also had anywhere from one child to 7 children.

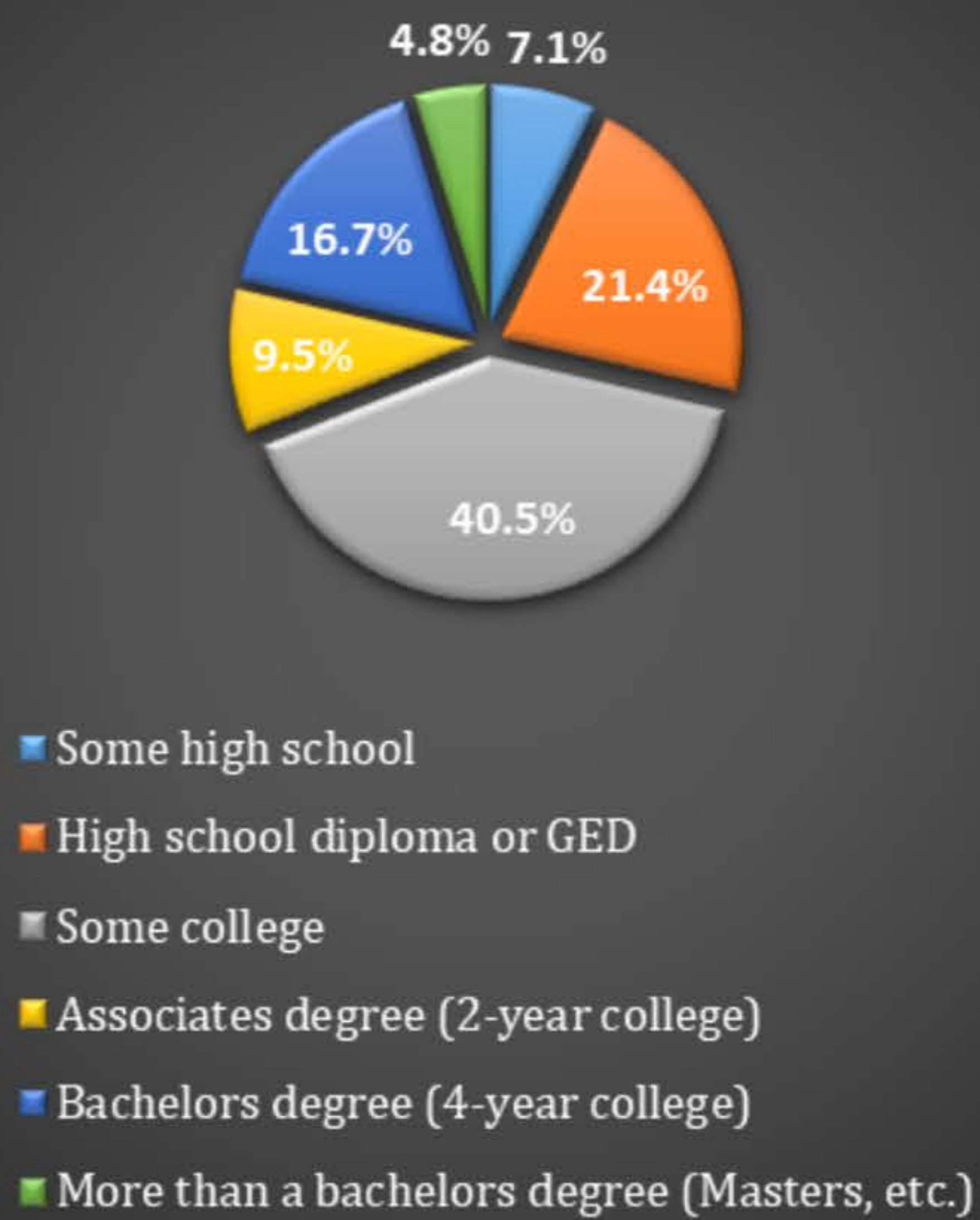
Please see results and graphs in the following pages.

Race/Ethnicity



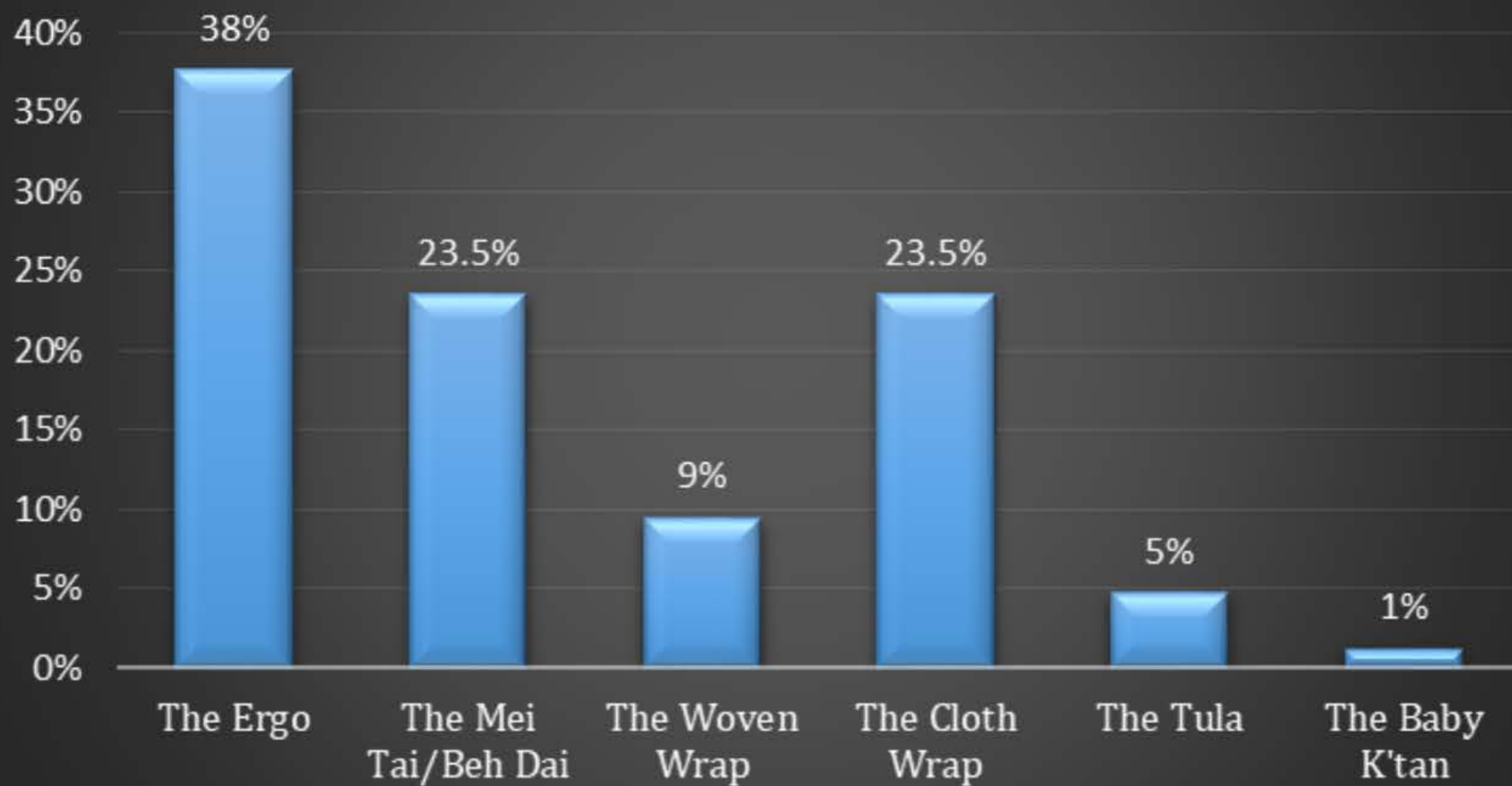
A total of 85 participants responded to the question about their race/ethnicity. Of the 85 respondents, 38 (44.7%) identified as White/Caucasian, 4 (4.7%) identified as Hispanic, 32 (37.6%) identified as Black/African American, 2 (2.4%) identified as Mixed, 3 (3.5%) identified as Asian, and 6 (7.1%) identified as Other.

Level of Education



84 participants responded to the question about level of education. Out of the 84, 6 (7.1%) stated they had some high school, 18 (21.4%) stated they had a high school diploma or GED, 34 (40.5%) stated that they had some college, 8 (9.5%) had an Associate's degree (2-year college), 14 (16.7%) had a Bachelor's degree (4-year college) and 4 (4.8%) had more than a Bachelor's degree.

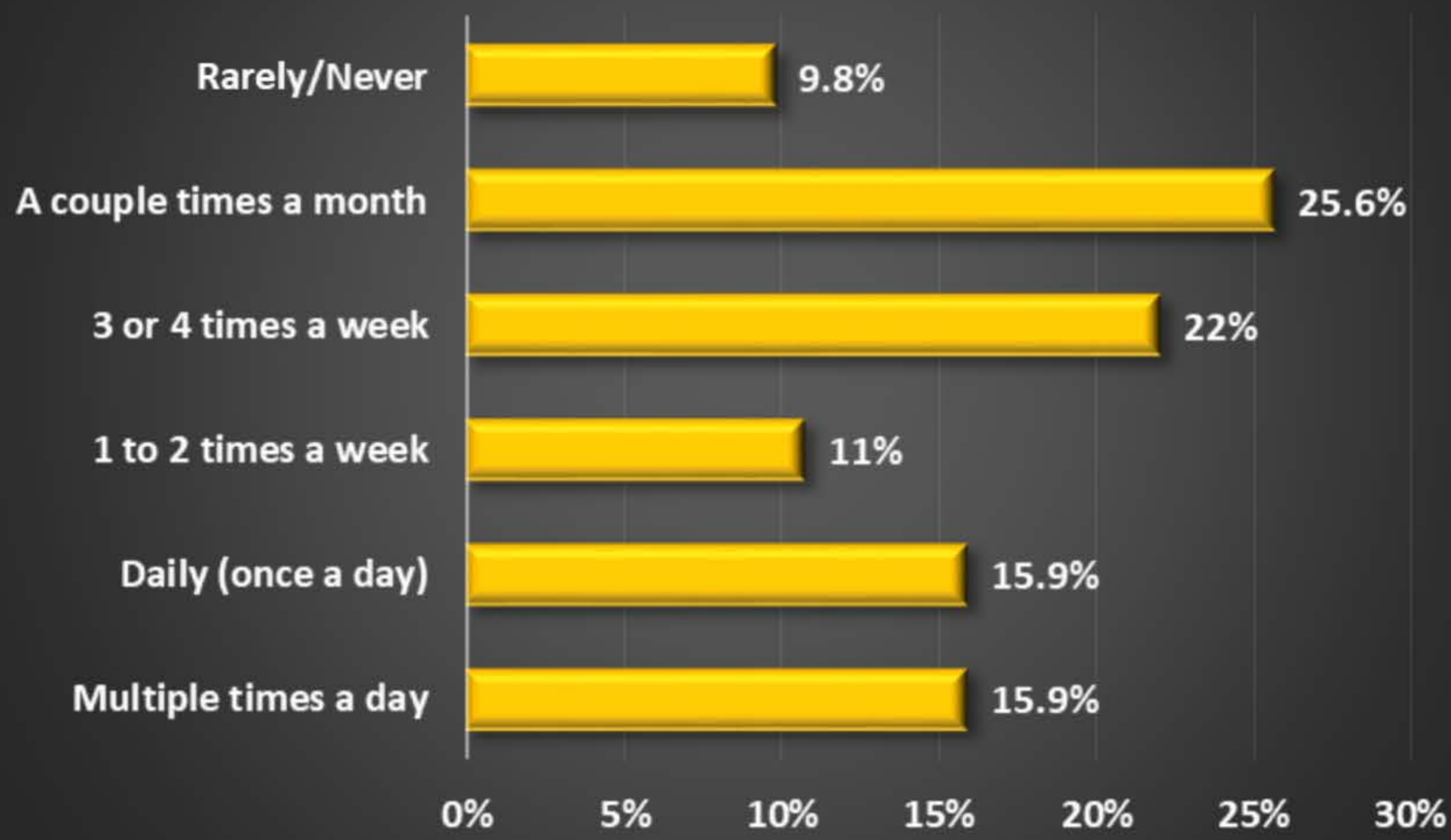
Type of Carrier



A total of 32 respondents (37.6%) chose The Ergo carrier, 20 (23.5%) chose The Mei Tai/Beh Dai carrier, 8 (9.4%) chose the woven wrap, 20 (23.5%) chose the cloth (or stretch) wrap, 4 (4.7%) chose The Tula and 1 (1.2%) stated they chose the Baby K'tan

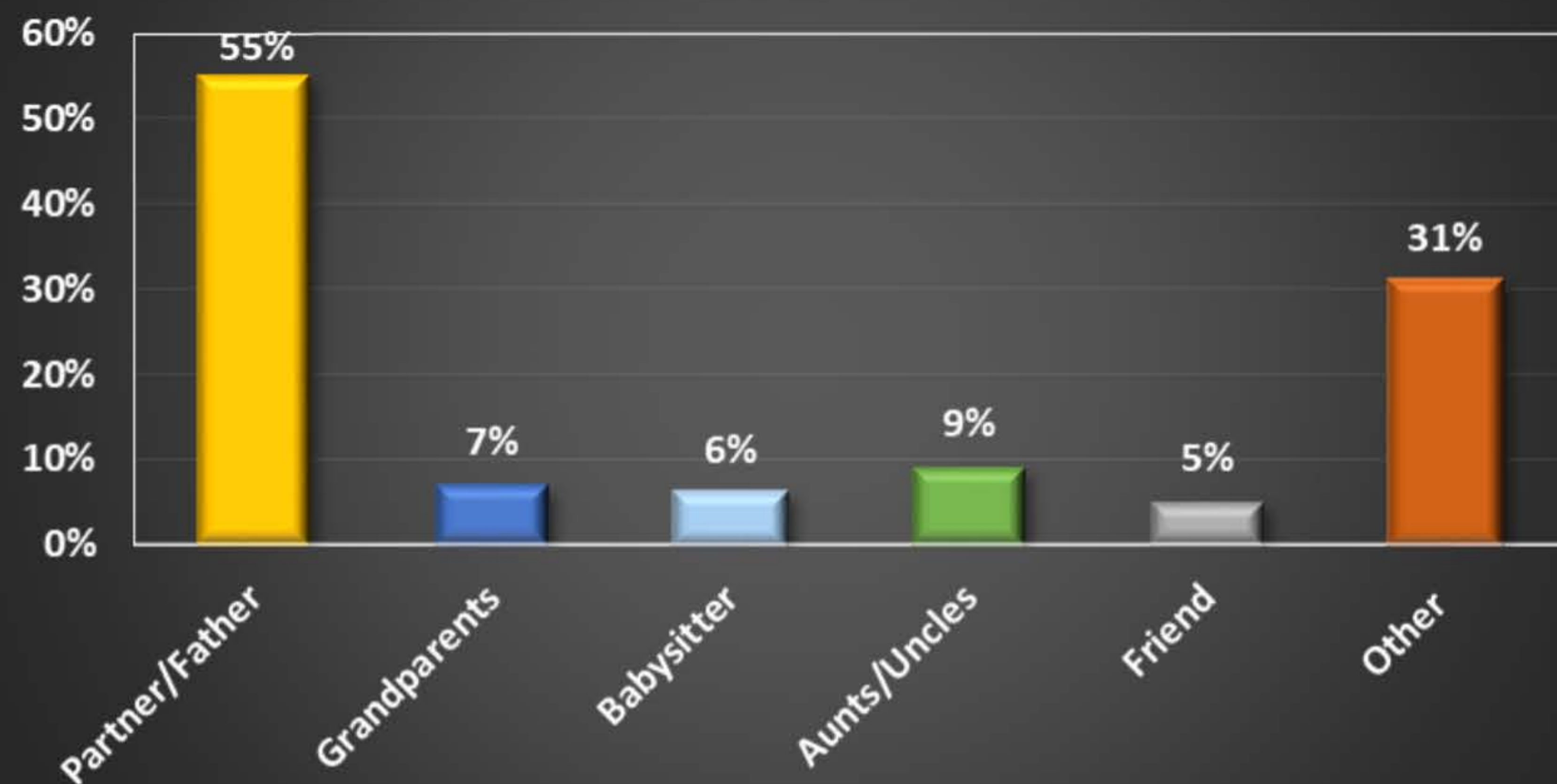
*Baby K'tan was selected but this carrier was not given out

How often carrier was used



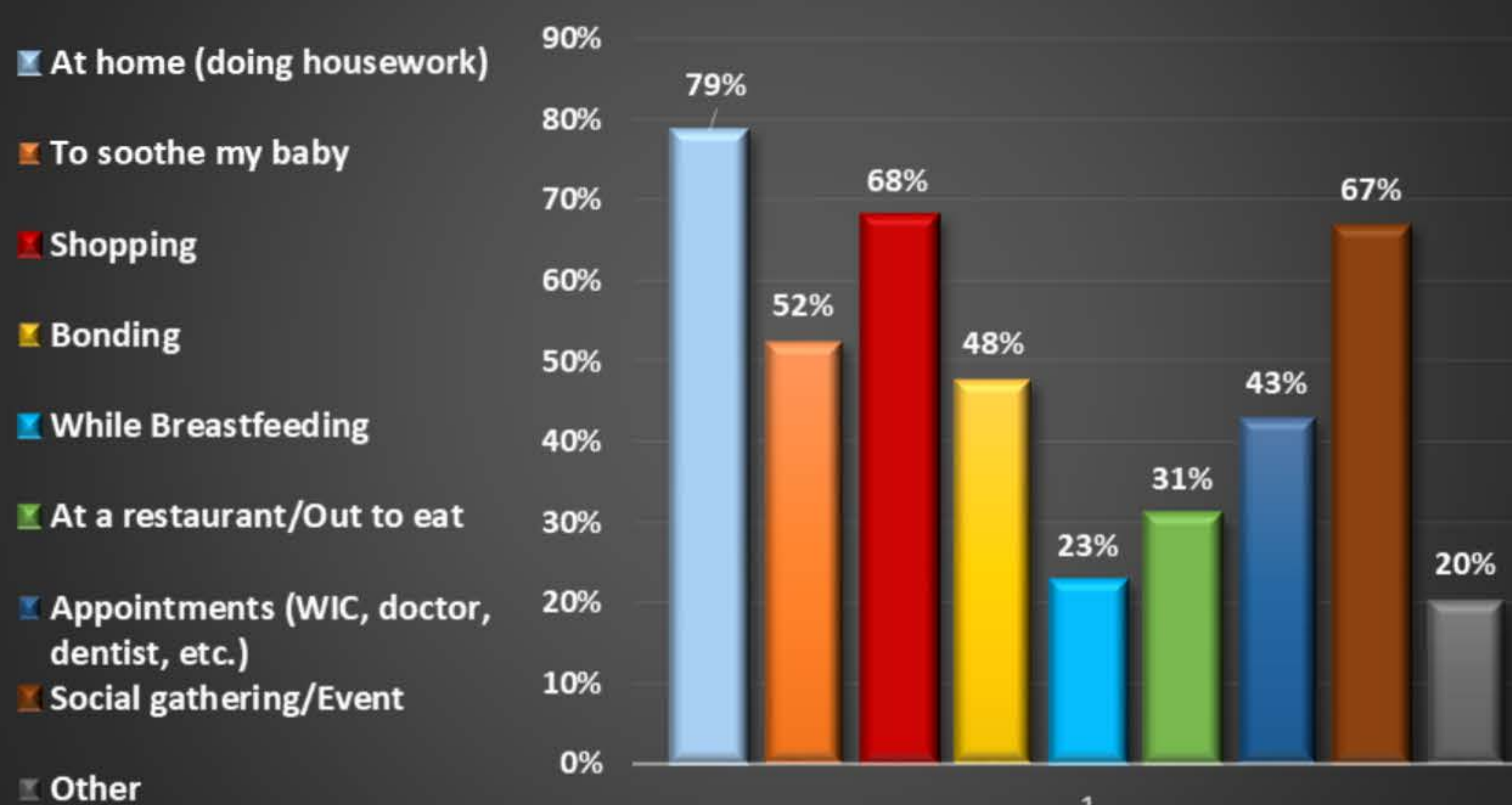
13 respondents (15.9%) indicated that they used the carrier 'multiple times a day', 13 (15.9%) also indicated that they use the carrier 'daily (once a day)', 9 (11%) said they use it '1 to 2 times a week', 18 (22%) said '3 or 4 times a week', 21 (25.6%) said 'a couple times a month' and 8 (9.8%) said 'Rarely/Never'.

Who else used the carrier



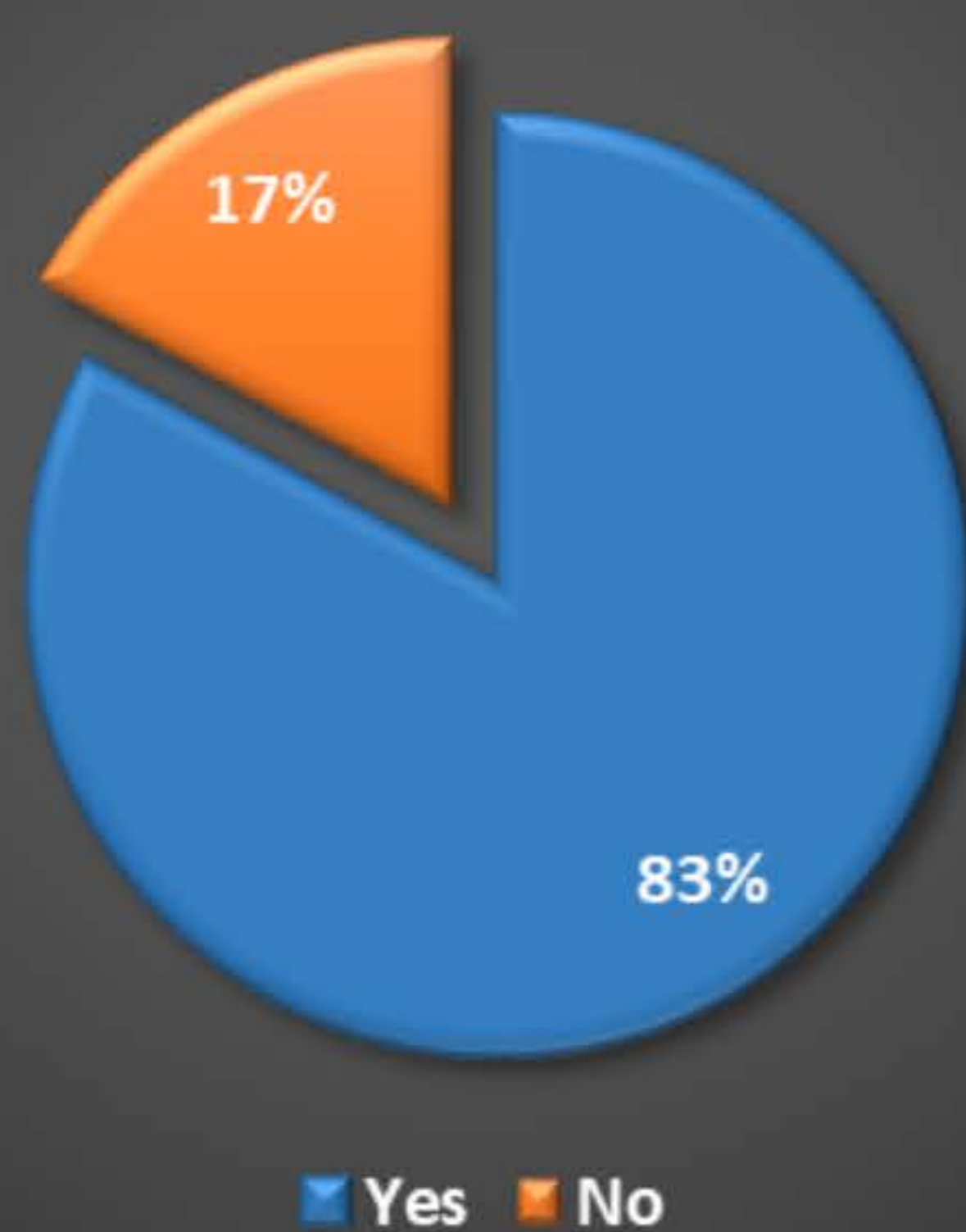
When asked who else used the carrier, 47 respondents (55%) stated that they Partner/Father used it, 6 (7%) said 'Grandparents', 5 (6%) said the 'Babysitter', 8 (9%) said 'Aunts/Uncles', 4 (5%) said a 'friend' and 26 (31%) indicated 'Other' which included siblings, Head Start and 'no one/Self'). It is important to note that Siblings made up 42% of the 'Other' category.

When/Where carrier was used



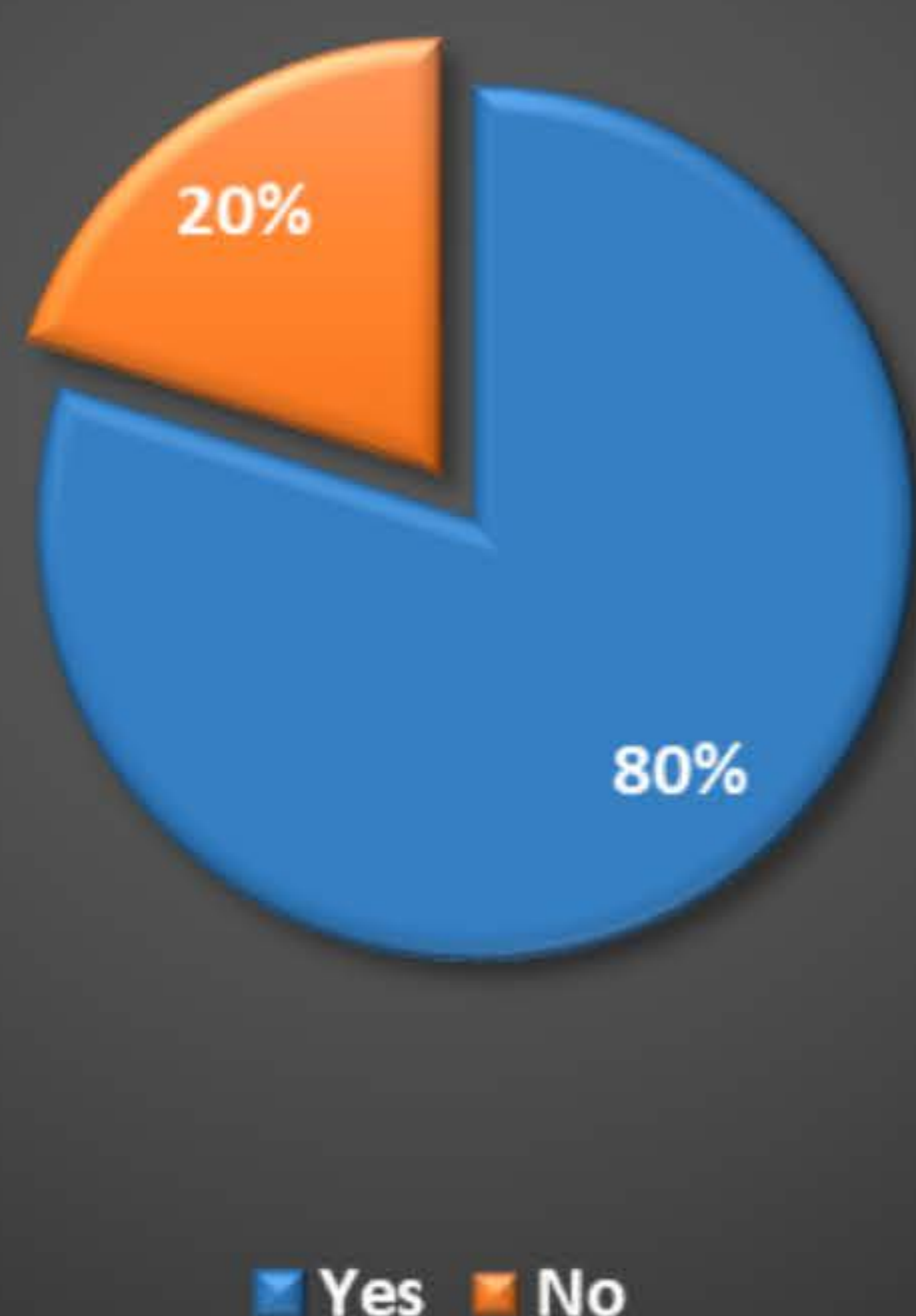
66 respondents (79%) used their carrier at home (doing housework), 44 (52%) to soothe their baby, 57 (68%) while shopping, 40 (48%) to bond, 19 (23%) while breastfeeding, 26 (31%) at a restaurant/out to eat, 36 (43%) at appointments (WIC, doctor, dentist, etc.), 56 (67%) at an event/social gathering, 17 (20%) 'Other' which included on walks, outside, at the library, at their job and at the bus stop).

Were you breastfeeding or planning to at the time of receiving carrier



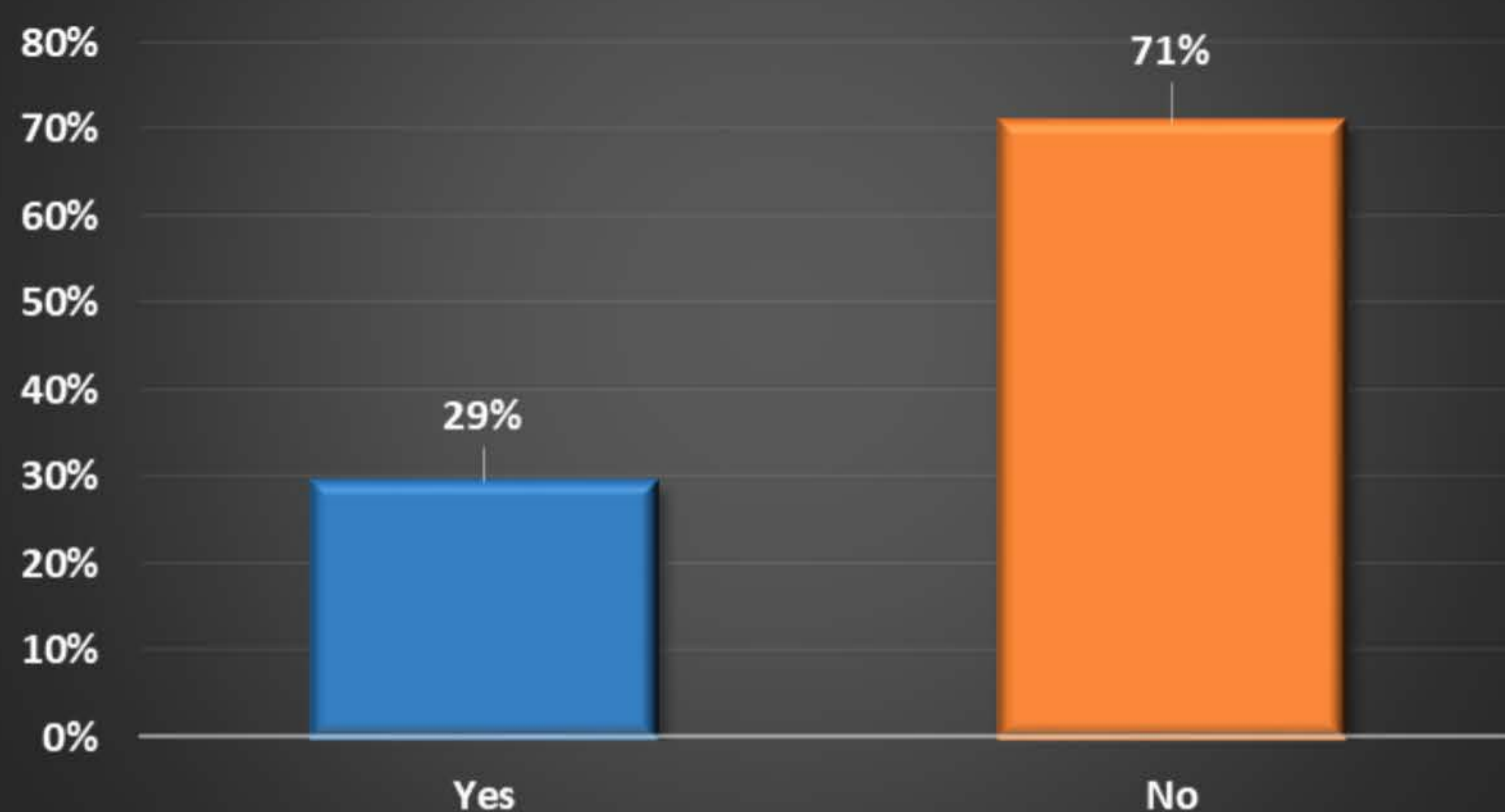
68 respondents (83%) answered 'Yes' that they were breastfeeding or planning to breastfeed at the time that they received their carrier while 14 respondents (17%) answered 'No'.

Are you currently breastfeeding (+3 months)



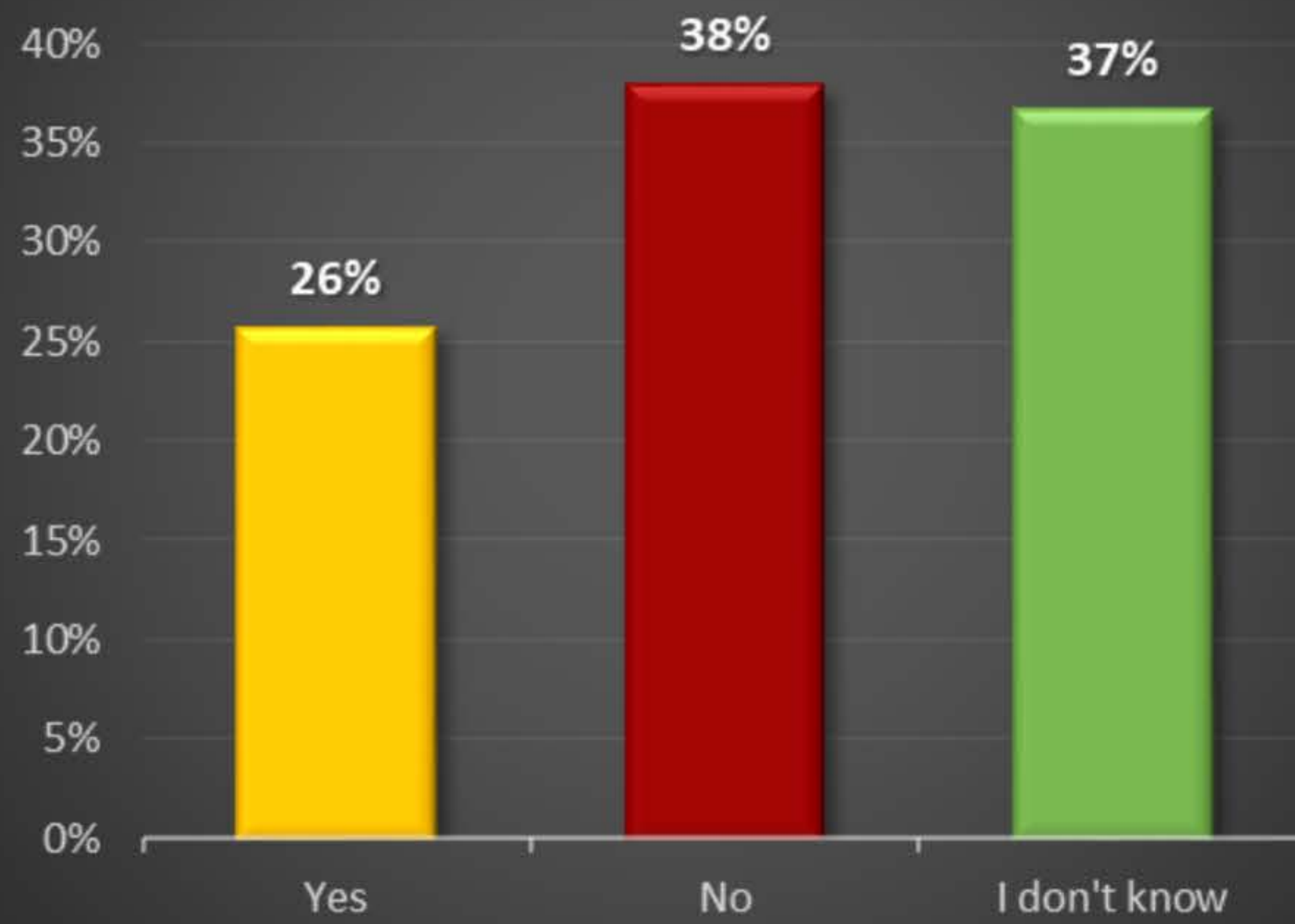
45 respondents (54.9%) said that they were currently breastfeeding (three months after receiving the carrier) while 37 respondents (45.1%) said 'No'. For those who said "no", they were asked to report the age their infant stopped breastfeeding (in weeks). The average age was 13 weeks while the minimum was 0 weeks and the maximum was 52 weeks.

Did you breastfeed while in the carrier



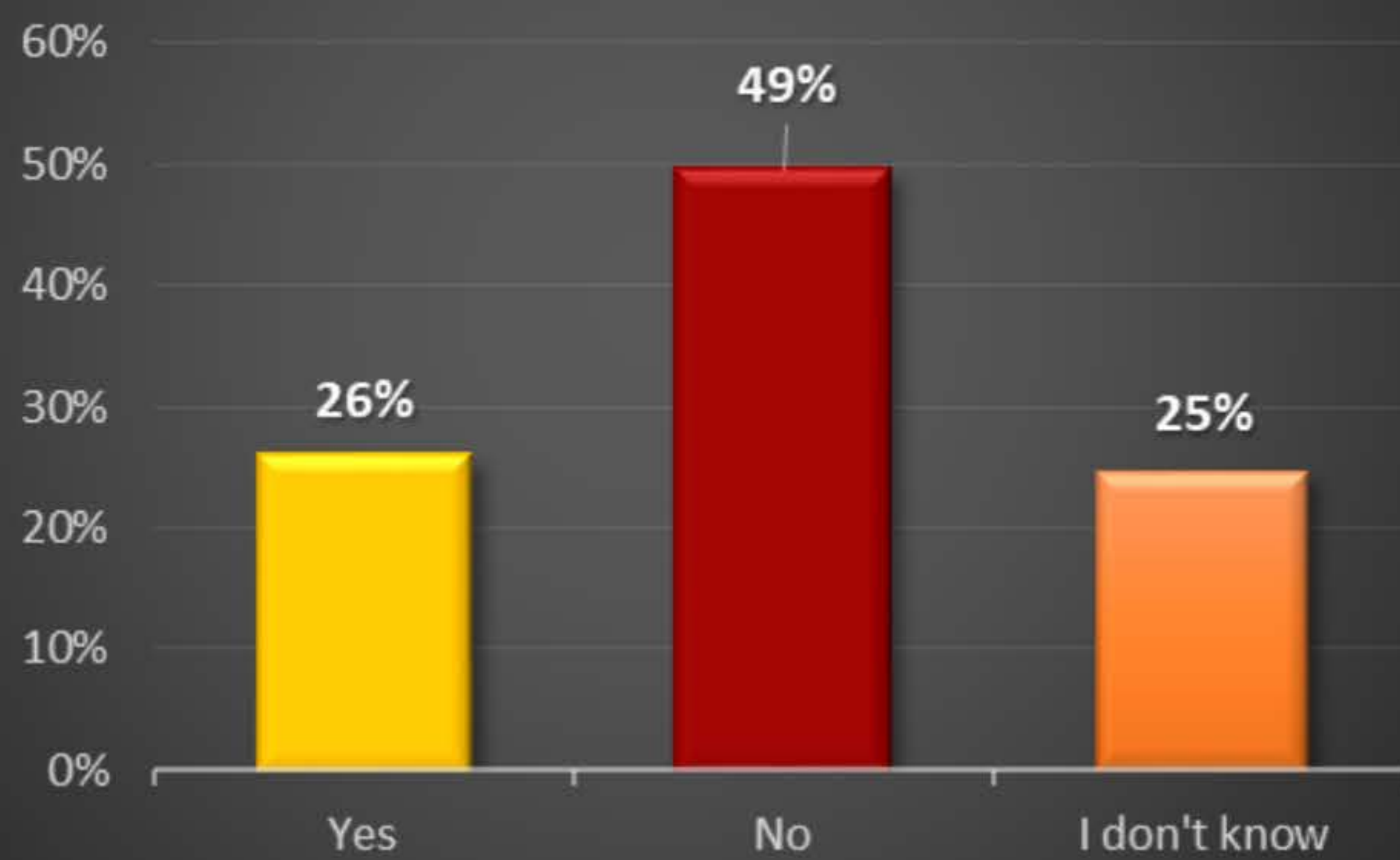
24 respondents (29%) answered "Yes" that they breastfed their baby while in the carrier while 58 respondents (71%) answered 'No'.

Did wearing your baby help recognize feeding cues



A total of 21 respondents (26%) said 'Yes' wearing their baby helped them recognize their feeding cues while 31 respondents (38%) said 'No' and 30 (37%) said they 'Do Not Know'.

Has the carrier helped meet breastfeeding goals



21 respondents (26%) said 'Yes' having the carrier is helping them meet their breastfeeding goals while 40 respondents (49%) said 'No' and 20 (25%) said 'I Do Not Know'.

Additional Results

In addition to the data above, participants were also asked additional questions.

- Respondents were asked if using the carrier has positively impacted their life and 79 respondents (79%) stated "yes" while 3 respondents (4%) stated "no". The 79 respondents were also asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least and 5 being the most impactful) how they feel the carrier positively impacted their life. On the scale from 1 to 5, 0 respondents selected 1, 4 respondents (5%) selected 2, 9 respondents (11%) selected 3, 22 respondents (28%) selected 4 and 44 respondents (56%) selected 5.
- Respondents were also asked if sometimes their baby has difficulty being soothed. Of the 82 total respondents, 31 (38%) said "yes" while 51 respondents (62%) said "no". They were then asked if they used the carrier to soothe their baby when he/she was crying. A total of 46 respondents (56.1%) said "yes" while 36 respondents (43.9%) said "no".
- In the survey, respondents were asked if people commented on their carrier. Out of the 82 respondents, 56 (68%) stated "yes" that people commented and 36 (32%) stated "no" people did not comment. When asked whether the comments were positive, negative, or both, 54 respondents (93%) stated that the comments were positive while 4 (7%) stated that the comments were both positive and negative. Many of the comments involved asking where and how the client received the carrier, how they learned to use it, whether it is safe and overall admiration of the carrier and expressing their desire to have one as well.
- The survey also asked respondents to indicate what best describes their experience using the carrier on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being "Very difficult to use" and 5 being "Very easy to use". No one stated that the carrier was very difficult to use. 5 respondents (6.1%) stated that the carrier was difficult to use, 13 (15.9%) stated that they felt neutral, 41 respondents (50%) stated that the carrier was easy to use and 23 respondents (28%) stated that the carrier was very easy to use.

- Respondents were also asked to rate the instructions they received on how to use the carrier on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being very poor to 5 being very good. Out of the 82 respondents, no one selected "Very poor" or "Poor". Although this is true, 3 respondents (3.7%) selected "Acceptable", 14 (17.1%) selected "Good" and 65 (79.3%) selected "Very good".

Data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Conclusion

The Baby Carrier Pilot Project was a success. The results revealed that clients enjoyed using the carrier, they used it frequently, the majority felt it easy to use and felt that the carrier positively impacted their lives. Results also showed that clients used the carriers in a variety of settings and that their partners and other children used the carriers as well. Although the majority did not decide to breastfeed in the carrier, it was great to discover that 83% of those who responded to the survey were currently breastfeeding or had plans to breastfeed and that 54.9% of those were still breastfeeding three months later.

Clients came into Macomb County Health Department WIC offices and were offered a parenting tool at no cost to them. All clients that received a carrier left the WIC offices grateful and some even in tears. To simply say that this project was a success would not do it justice. In implementing this project, WIC staff have not only been able to give clients something that they wanted and/or needed but have also been able to build positive and lasting relationships with clients.

Thank you to Baby Carriers Provided for partnering with the Macomb County Health Department WIC Program to complete this project. Thank you to Becca Morse for being an integral part of this project and working to ensure that our clients always had access to a carrier. Lastly, thank you to all WIC staff for working together as a team to ensure that this project was a success.