

Strengthening child's attachment with primary care-givers



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Aim of foster care – Polish law

- The main aim of foster care is strengthening the child's biological family so that the child could return home.
- The intent and foundation of foster care is its temporariness.
- The child should stay in the foster family until the situation in its birth family is „normalized”



Building longstanding, positive attachments with family members

- PRIDE: Parents and families have the strongest impact upon a child's development. Separating children from parents is a serious measure that should be taken only after all efforts to prevent separation and to maintain children safely in their own homes have been explored. Family preservation is an essential component of a continuum of child welfare services.
- Without positive, stable attachment the child (and the brain of the child) cannot adequately develop.
- Supporting relationships between the child and its family is one of the key PRIDE competencies.
- The child needs to rebuild its competencies for safe, stable relationships with family members or other important adults – including SOMETIMES foster parents.



Important questions

- **Do foster families understand their role and meaning in strengthening child's attachments with parents and/or other family members?**
- **How do training programs (including PRIDE) prepare candidates to this role?**
- **Do foster families build the child's sense of identity and origin?**

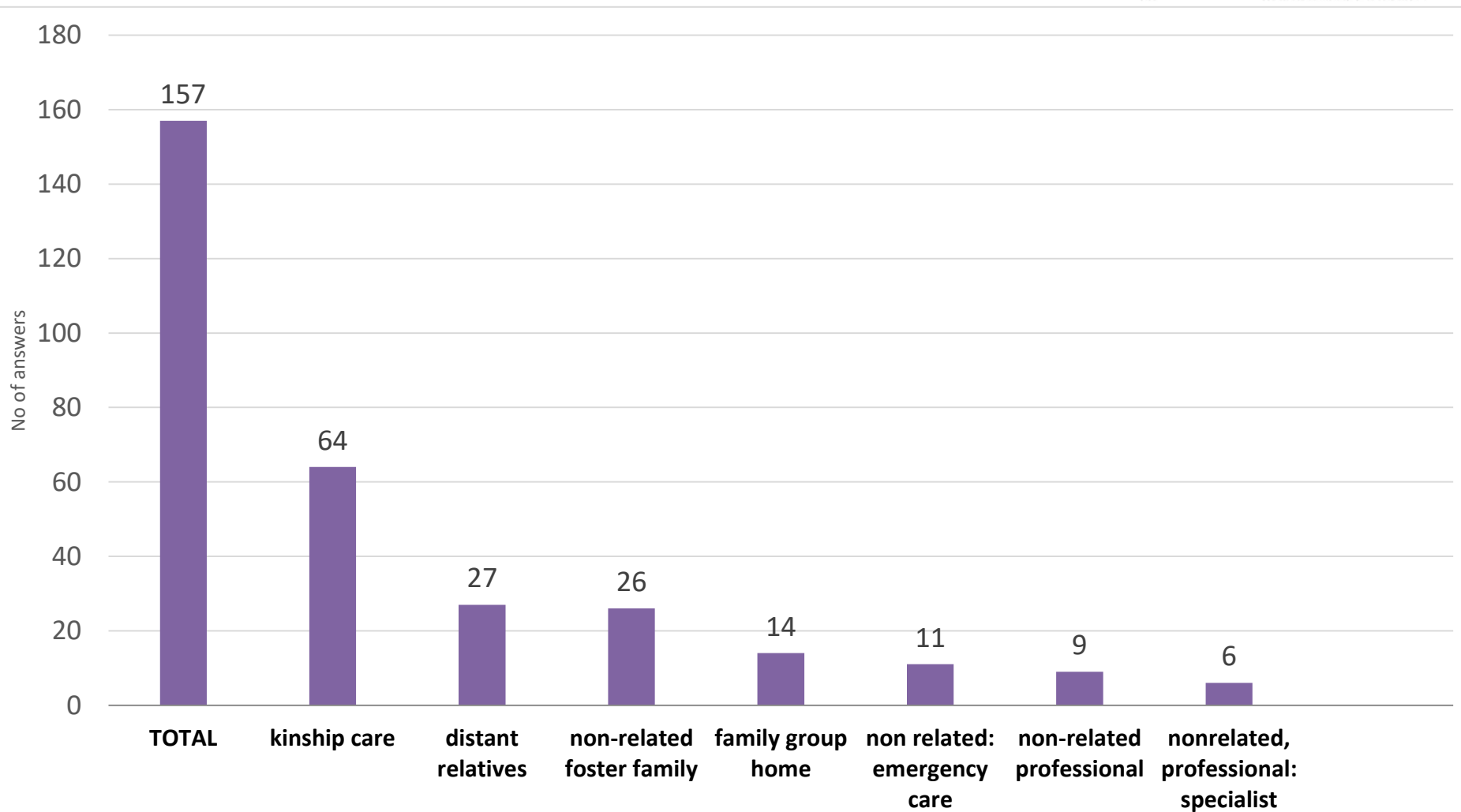


Research of Polish and Czech foster families

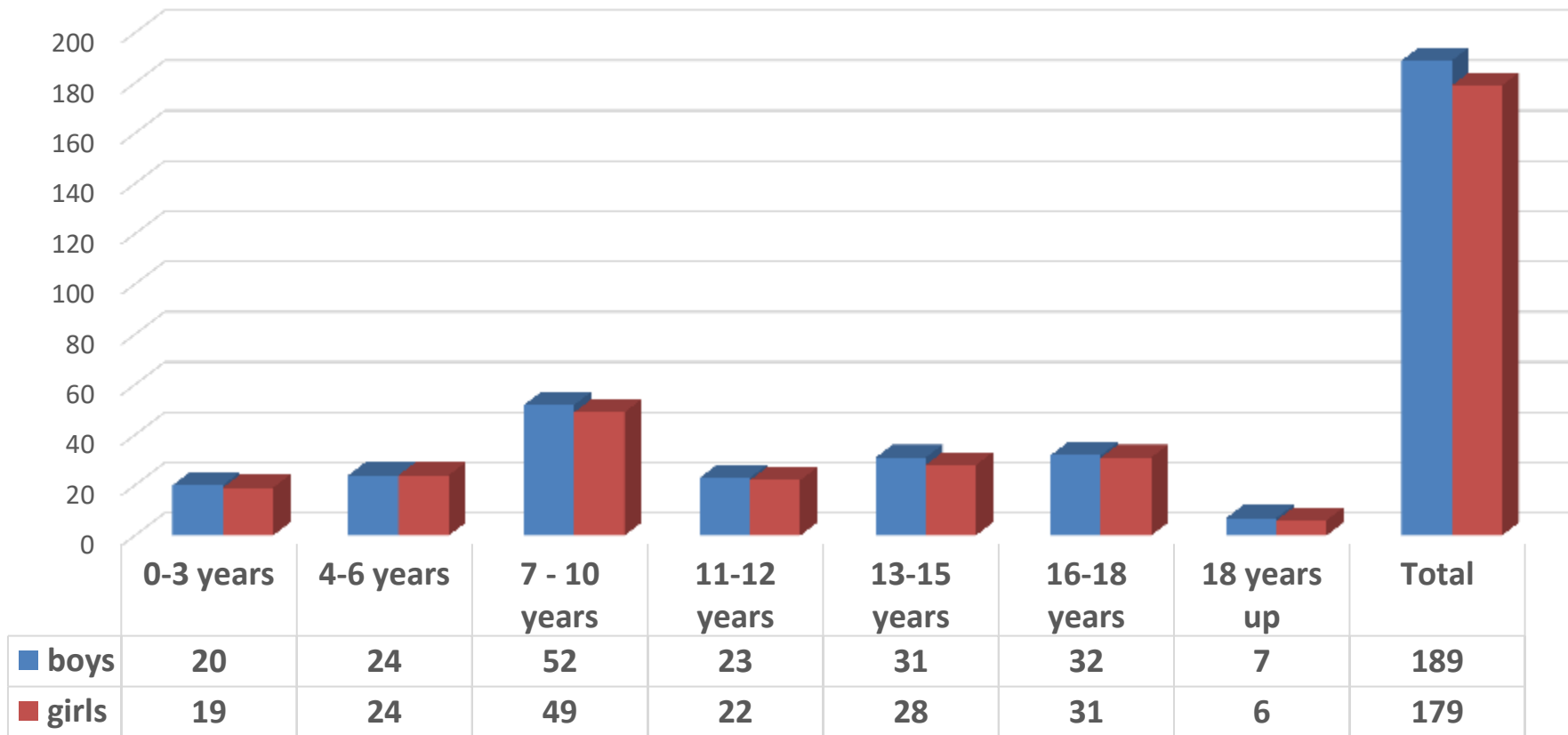
Visegrad Program 2017



Type of a foster family:

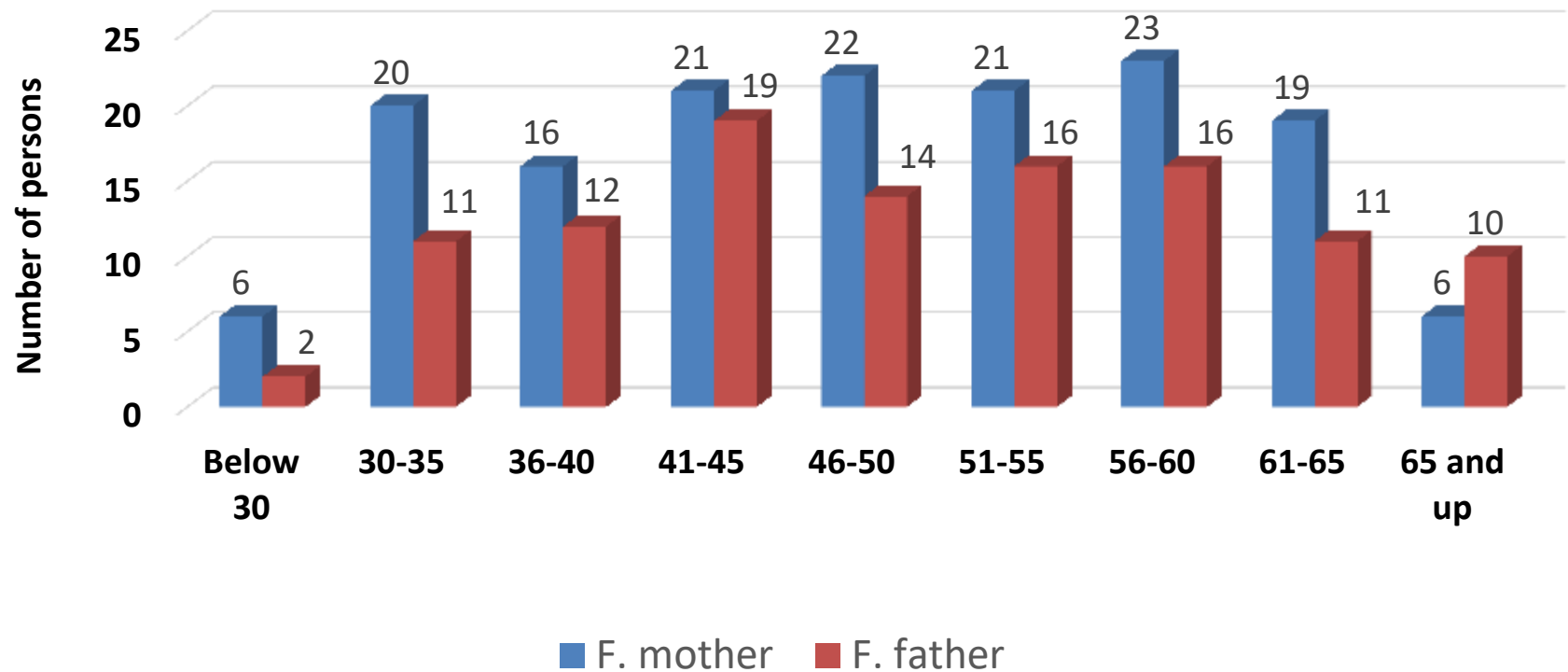


Number and gender of children in researched families



The large proportion of children in the age 7-10 is a consequence of lack of prevention in biological families – The children are taken into care when they are „spotted” by the education system.

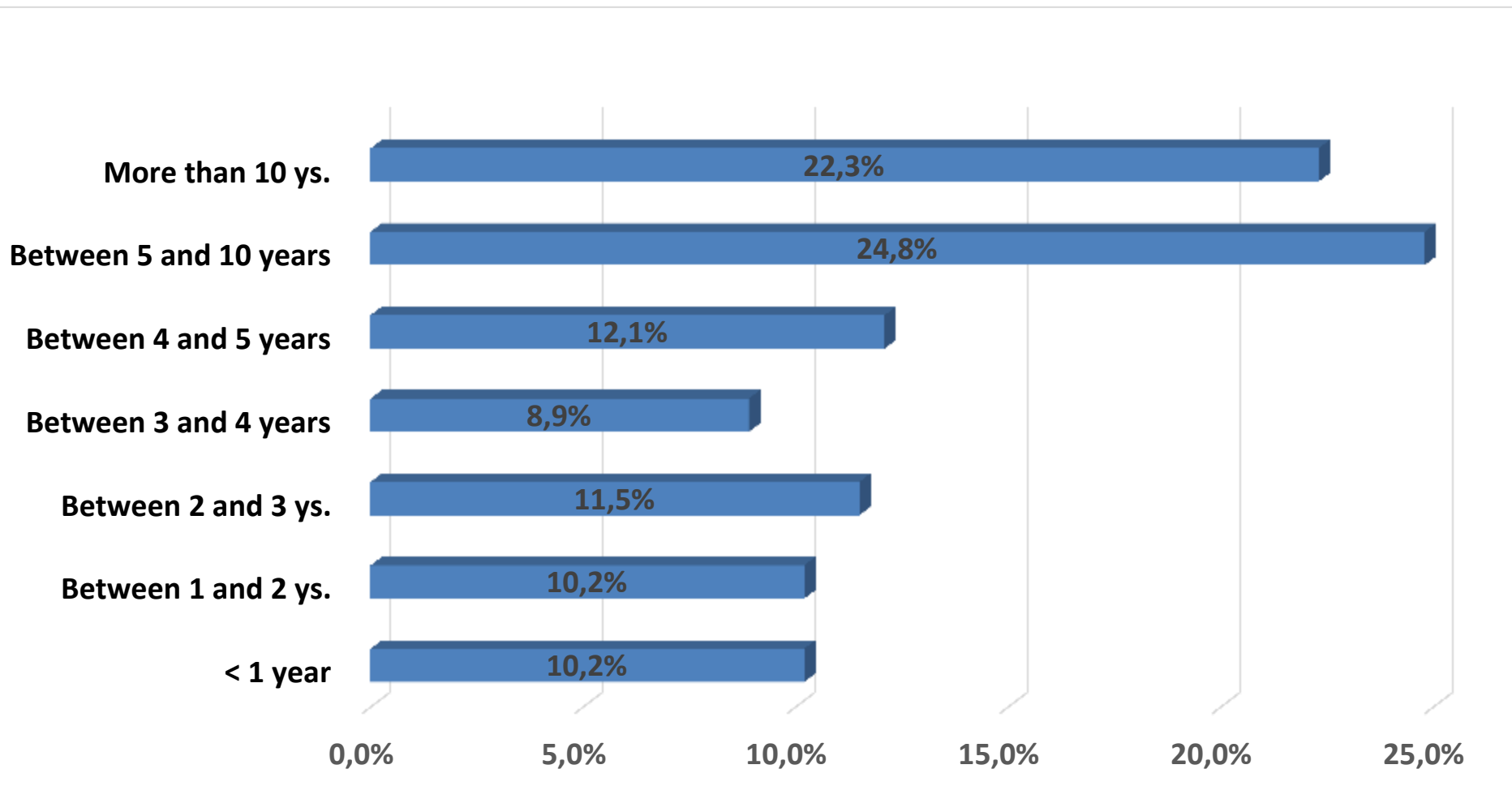
Age of researched foster parents



46% of foster parents above 50 years of age.

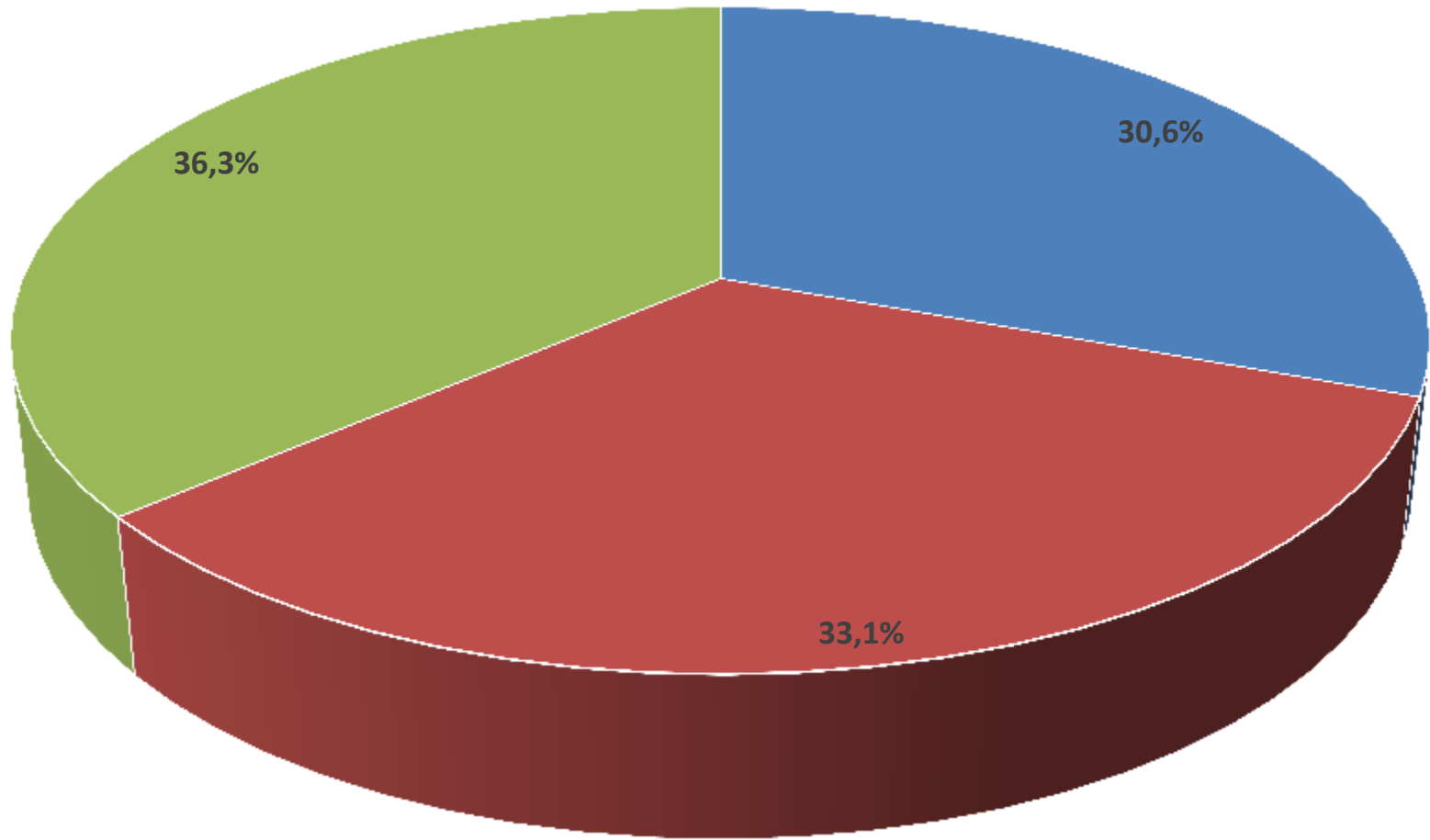
15,8% of foster parents below 35 years of age.

How long have you been a foster family?



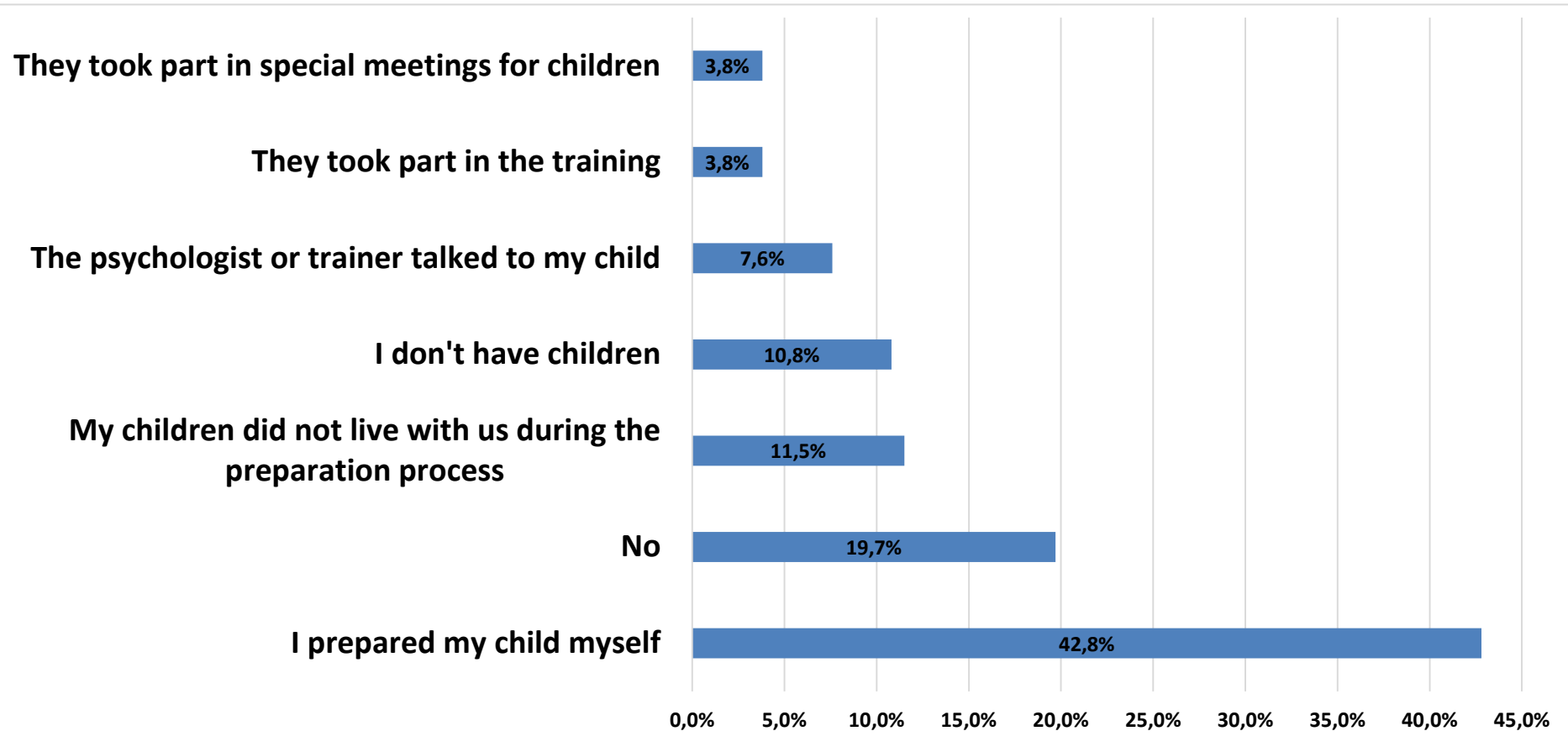
Majority of Polish families are „permanent” families for a given child

Type of the pre-service training



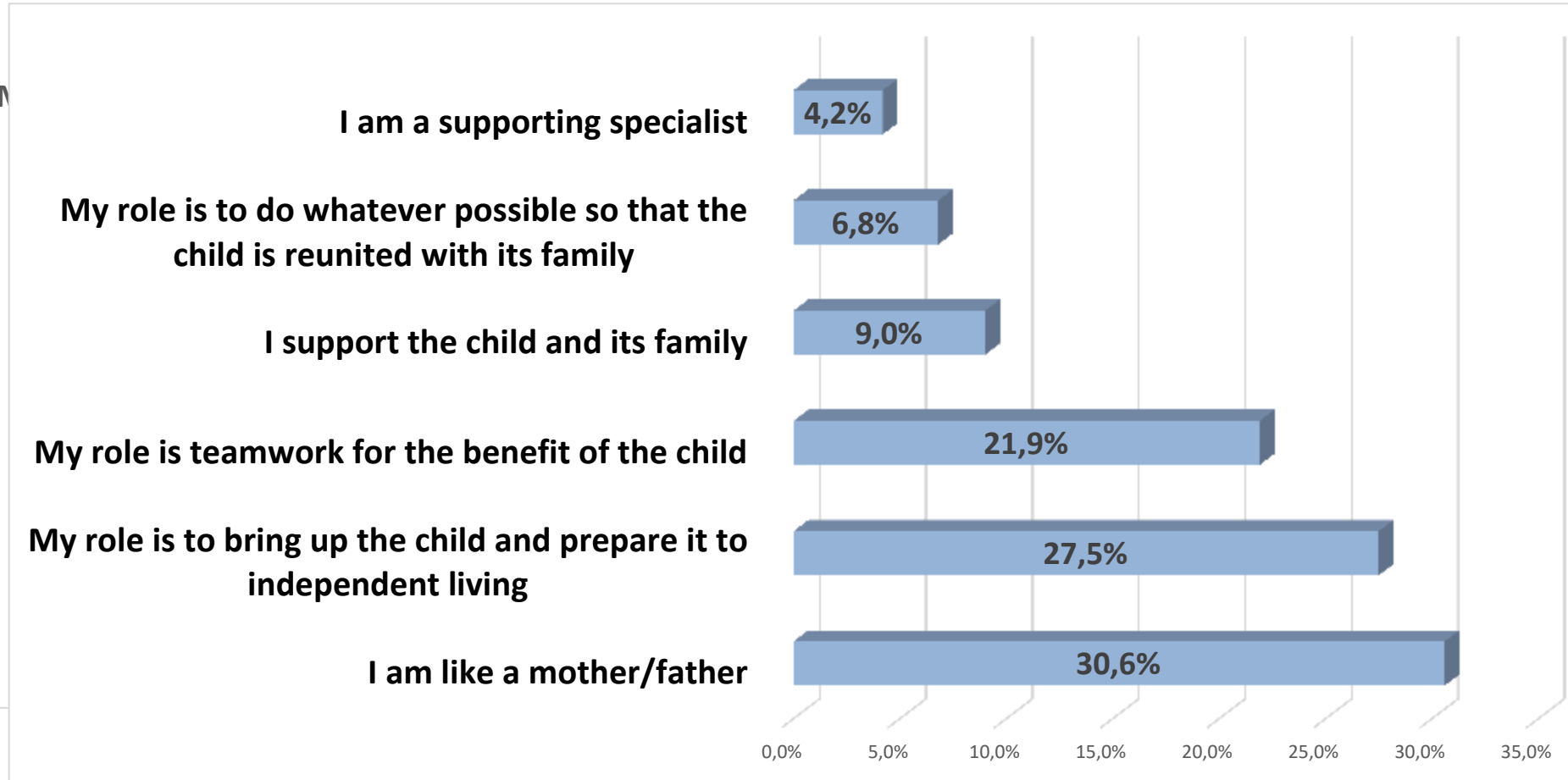
■ PRIDE ■ other programs ■ no answer

Were you children included in the preparation process to the role of a foster family?



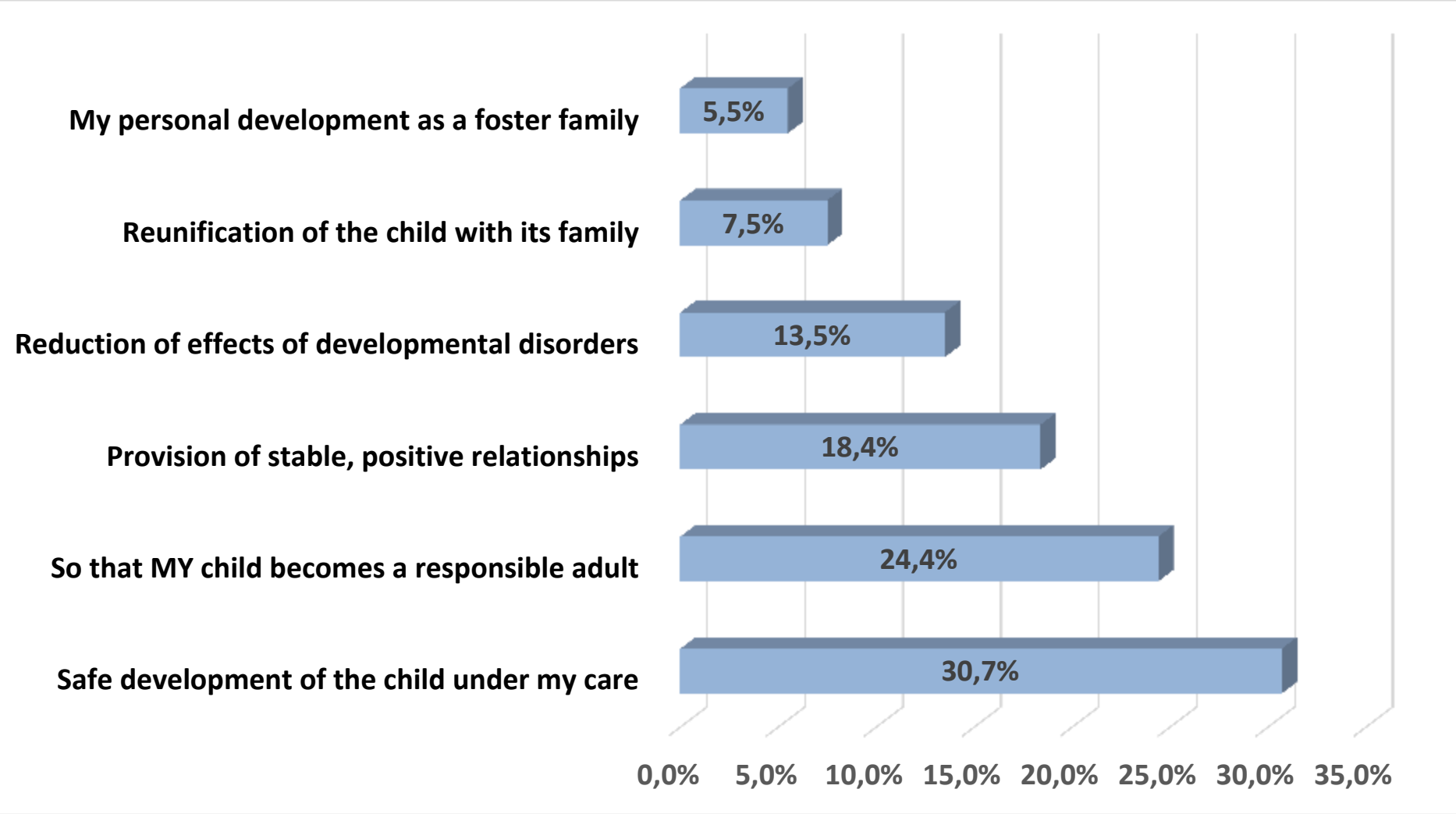
Only 7,6 children of foster families were included in the organized preparatory process...

How do you perceive your role in the life of children placed in your family?



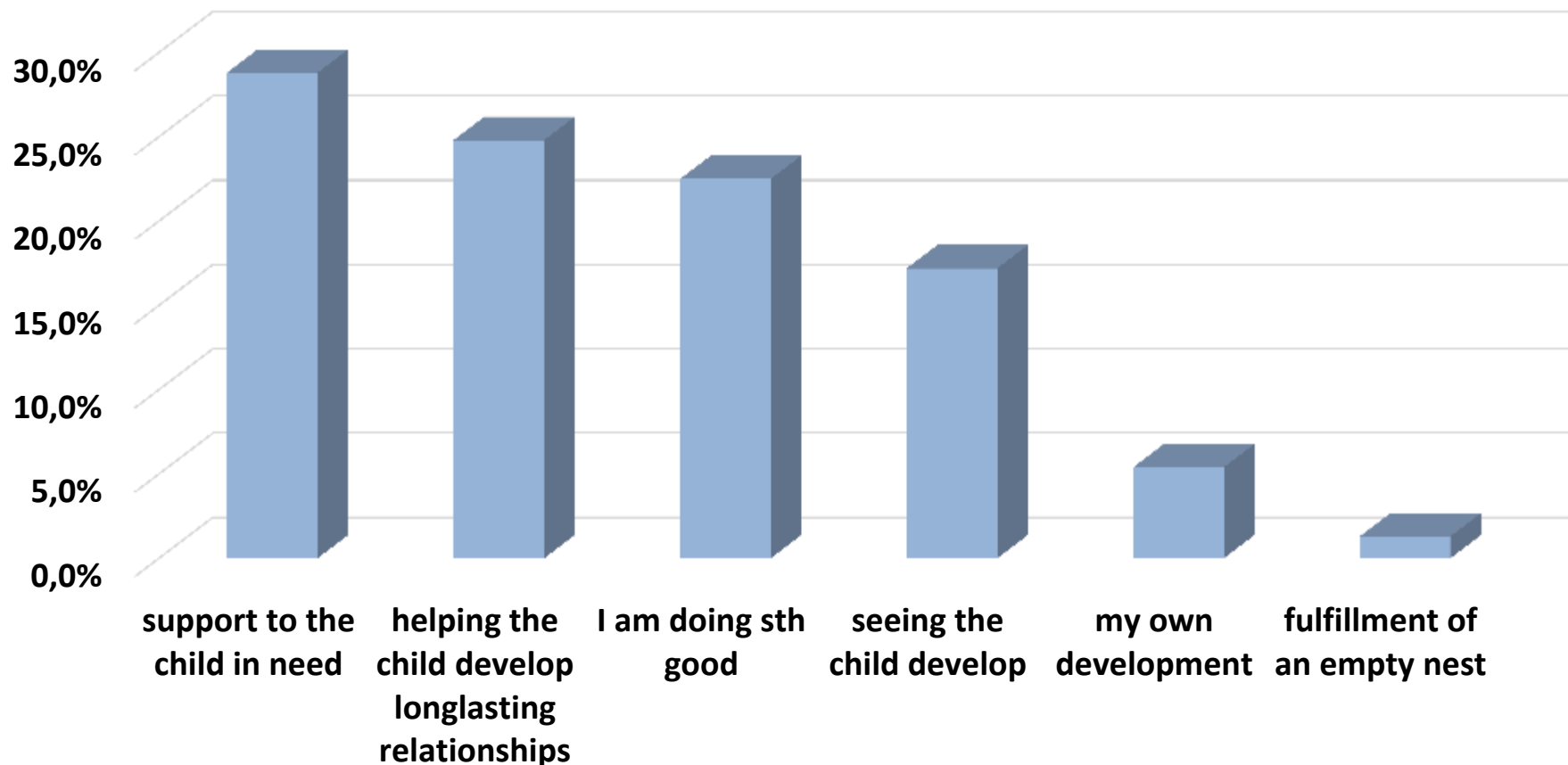
Only 15,8 foster families see the child's family in the context of the foster family... Majority sees themselves as permanent „parents“

What aim you would like to achieve as a foster family?



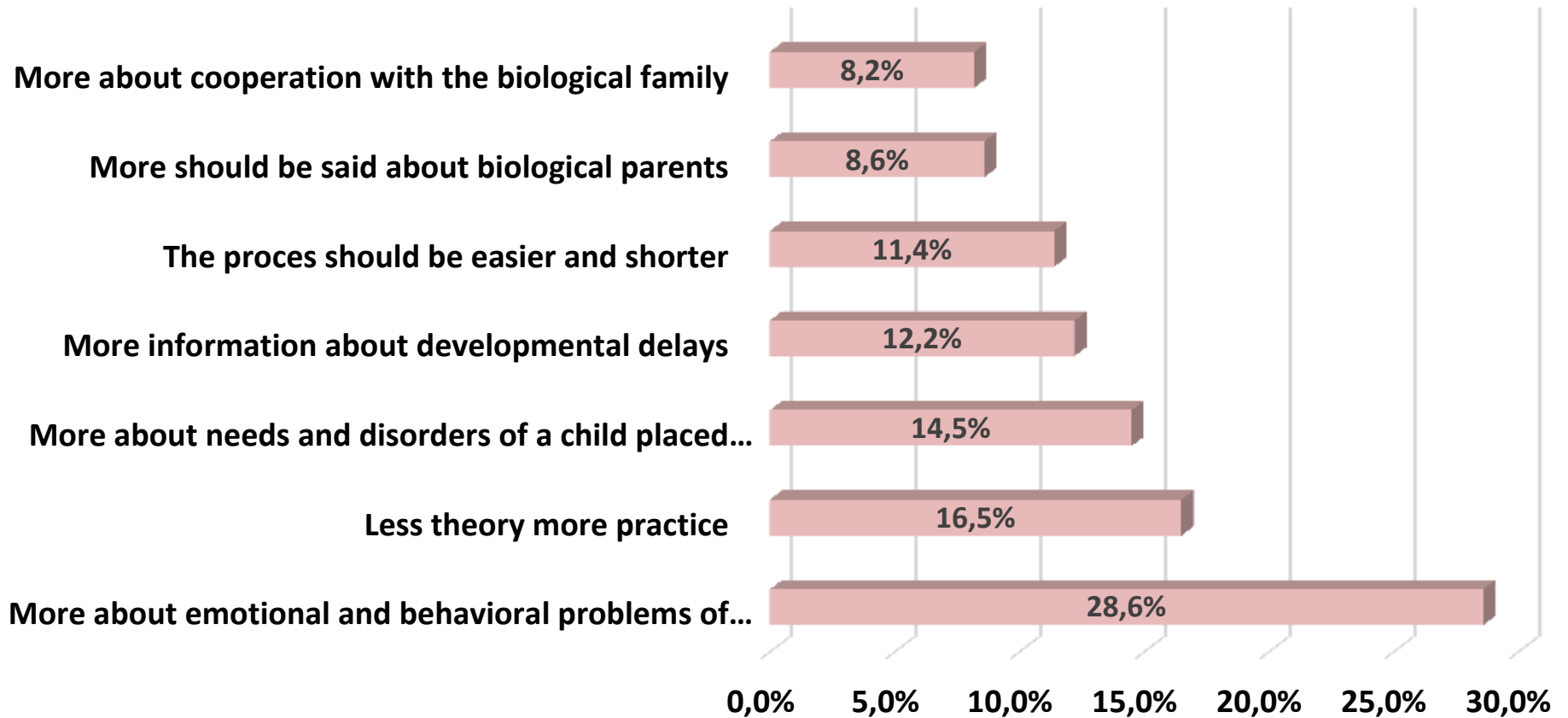
Only 7.5 foster families treat the child's reunification with biological family as their aim...

What satisfies you most in the role of a foster family



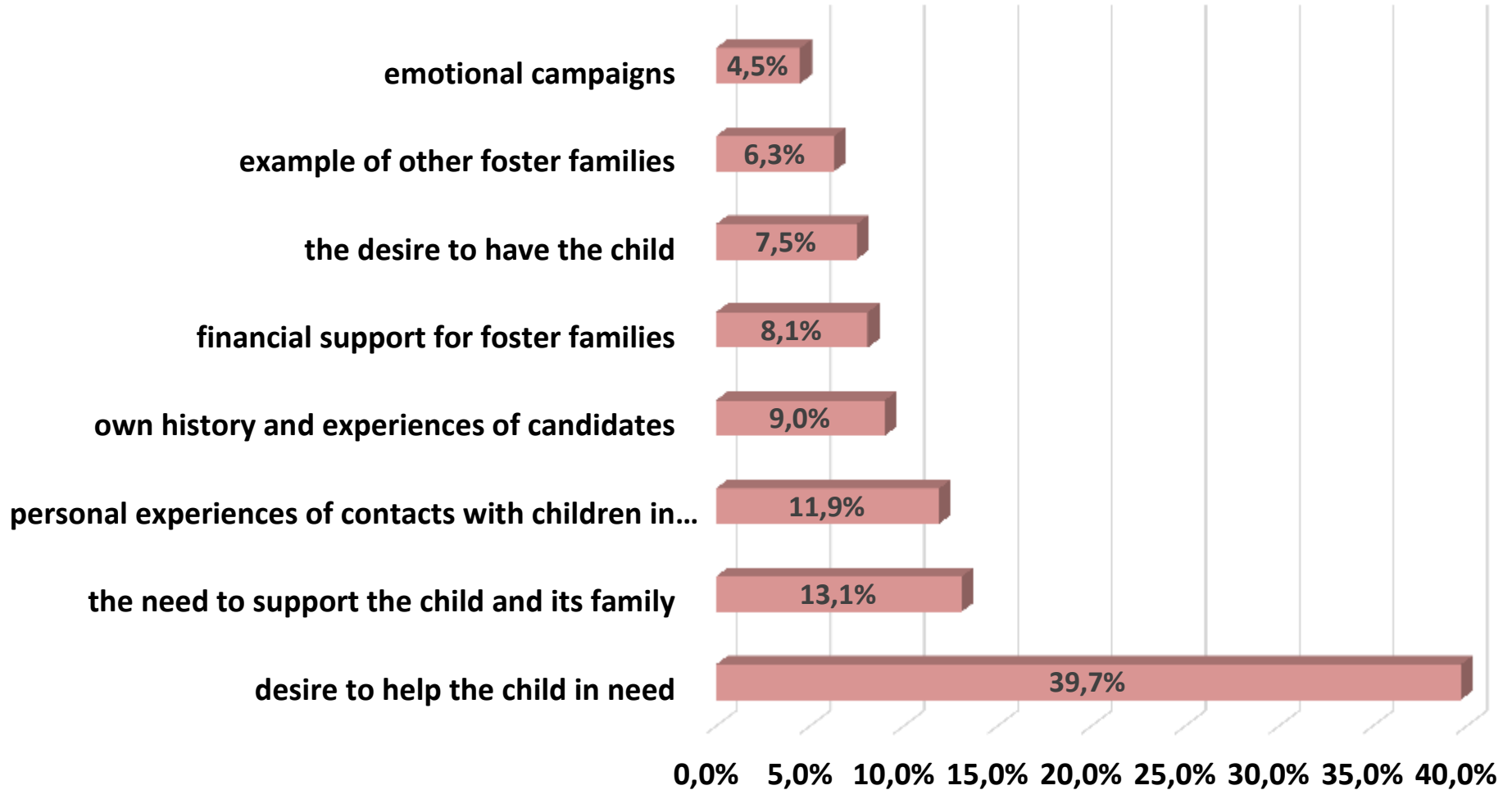
The answers about satisfaction did not refer to the aim of reunification

What would you change in the process of becoming a foster family?



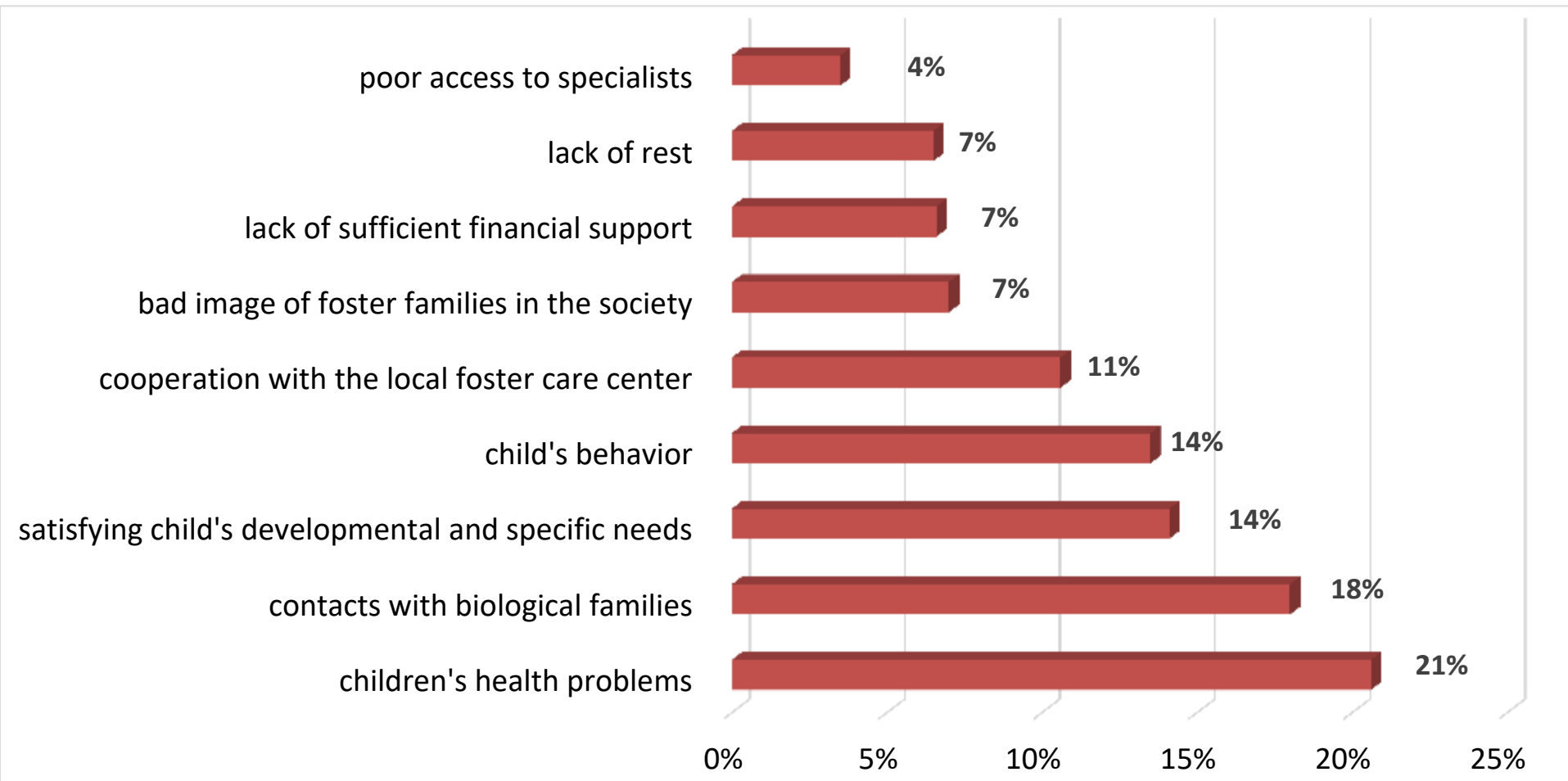
Majority of Polish foster parents want to learn about problems, delays, disorders rather than about the development of attachment competencies and reunification of the child

What motivates people to become a foster family?



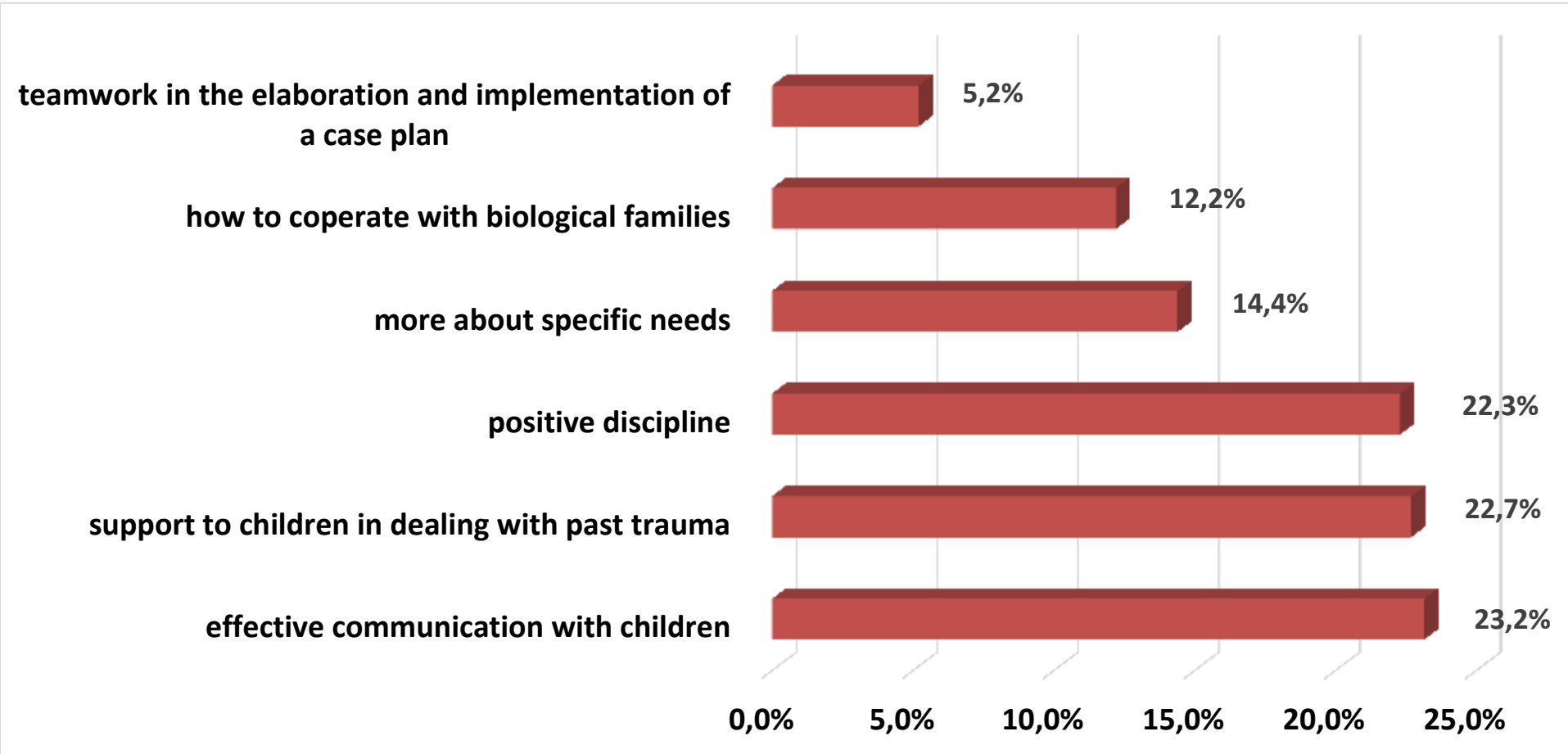
The need to help and child AND its family – only 13,1 percent of responses

What is most difficult in your role of a foster carer?



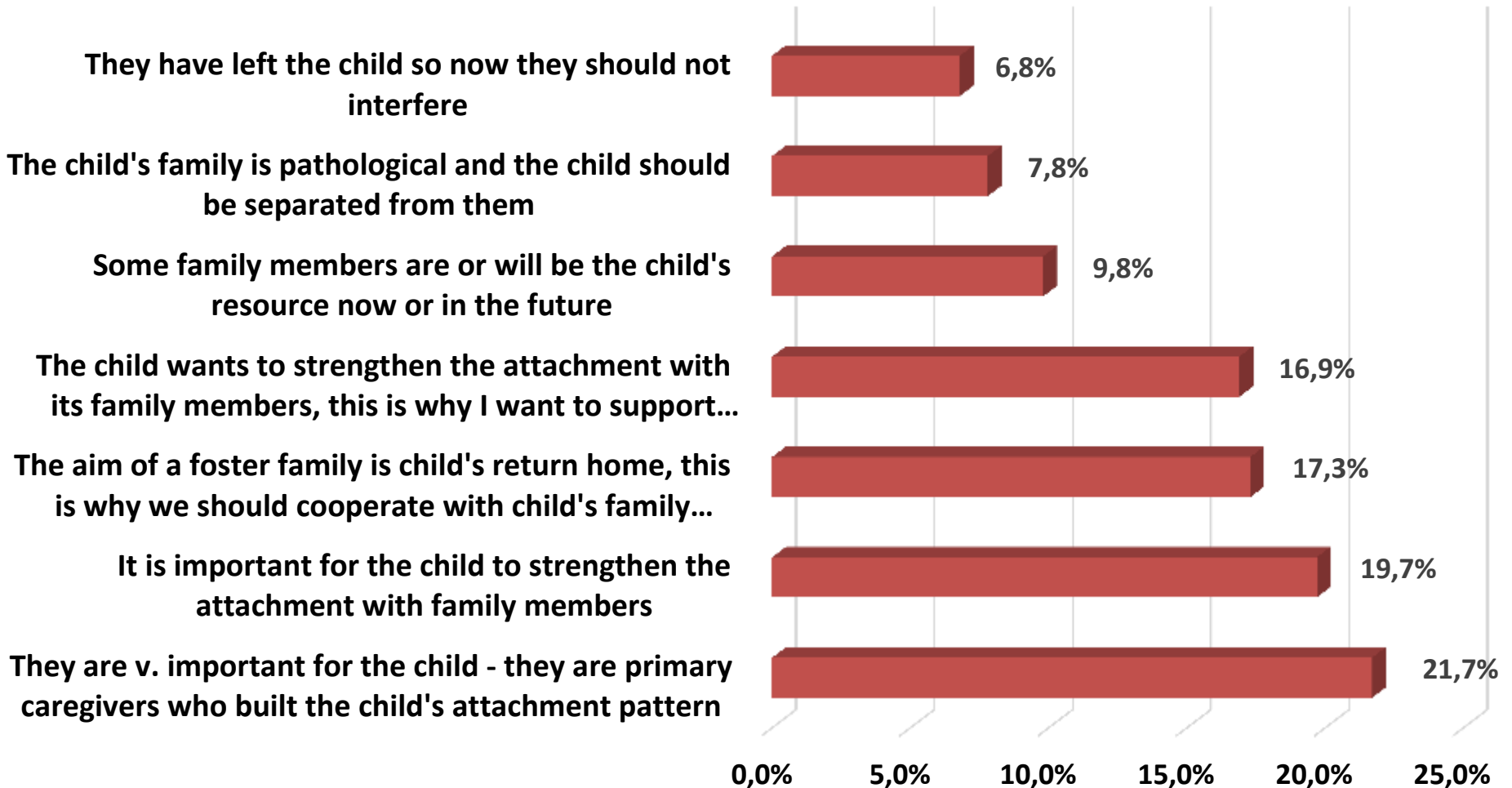
Contacts with biological families – 2nd most difficult problem for Polish foster families

What would you like to learn as a foster parent?



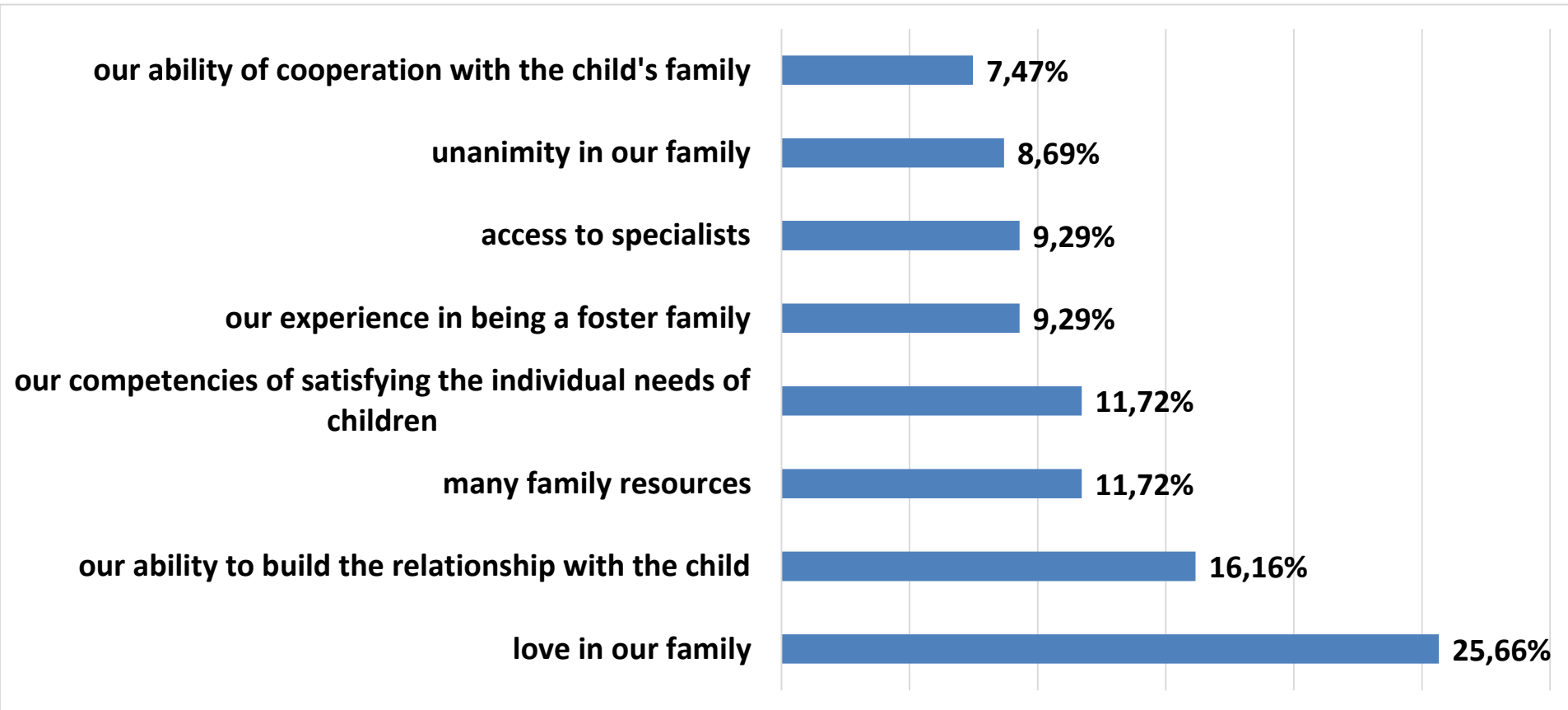
The contradiction: Contacts with birth families are very difficult but foster families only in 12,2% want to learn how to do it well...

What is the role of the child's family in its life?



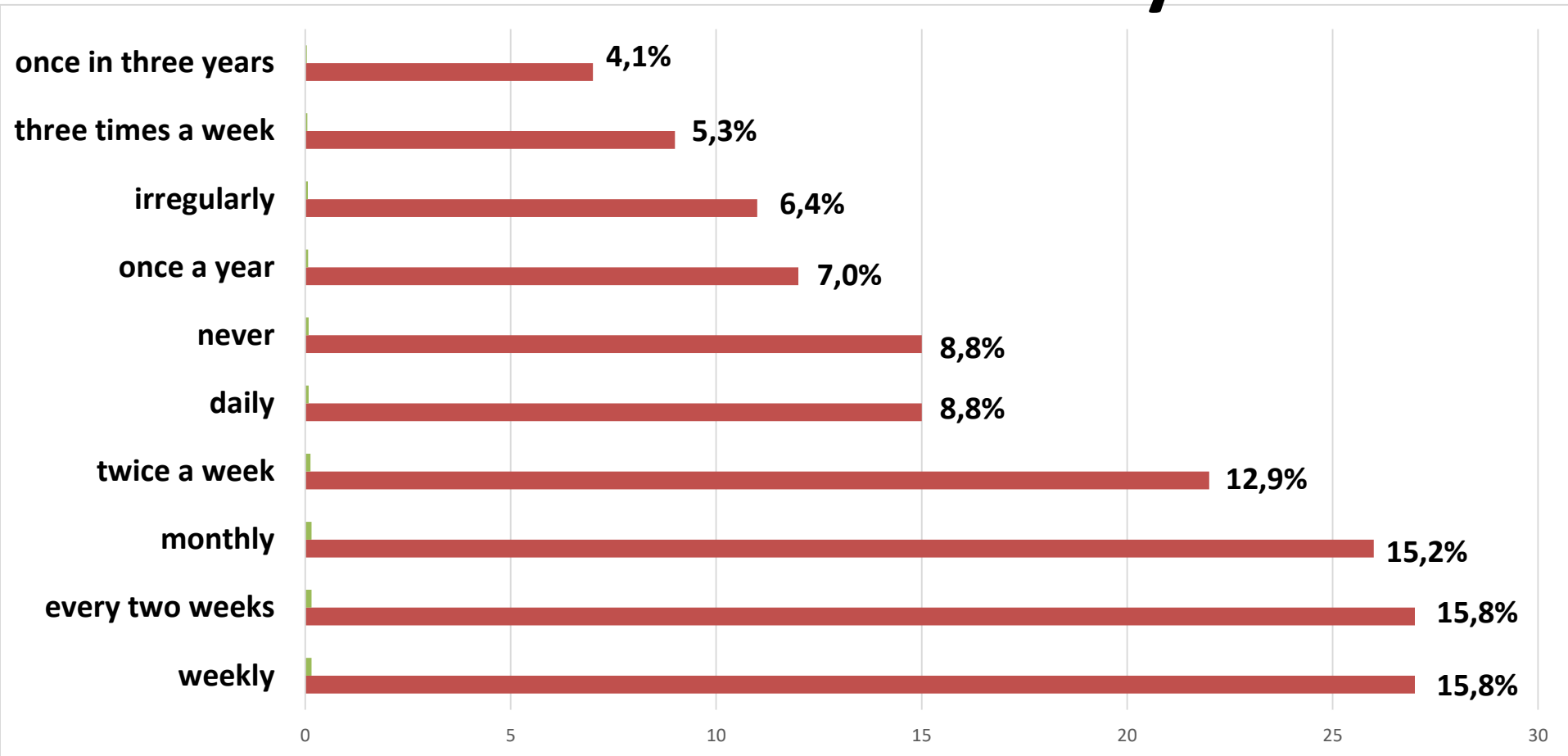
The absolute majority of foster families declaratively acknowledges the importance of the child's birth family

What are the strengths of our foster family?



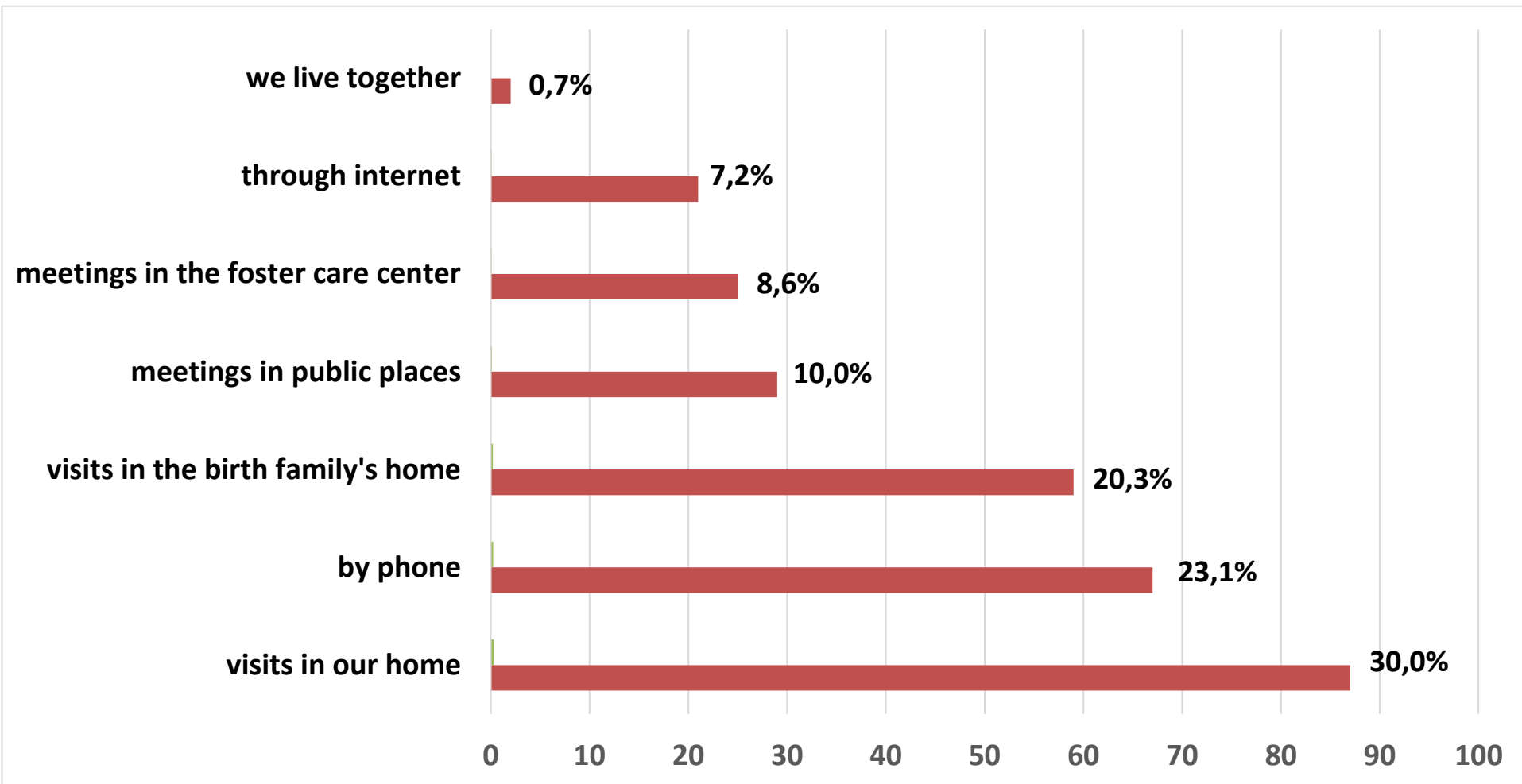
Again the ability of cooperation with the child's family is the most rarely mentioned strength, whereas „love“ and „relationship“ constitute 42 % - suggesting the focus on longstanding relationships within the foster family

Frequency of child's meetings with members of its family



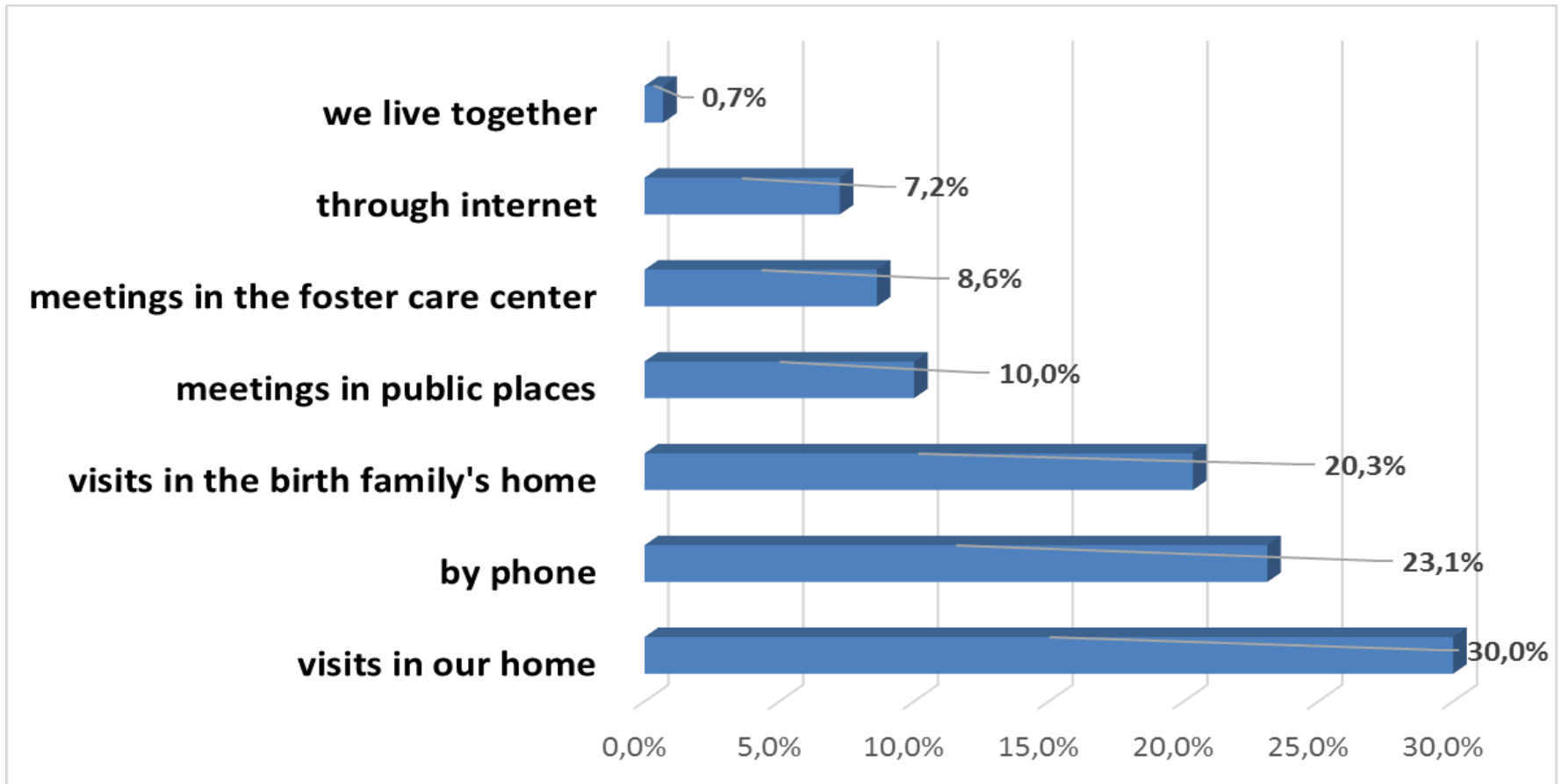
17.5 children from foster families see their family members more seldom than once in a month, 8.8 - never

Where contacts and visits take place



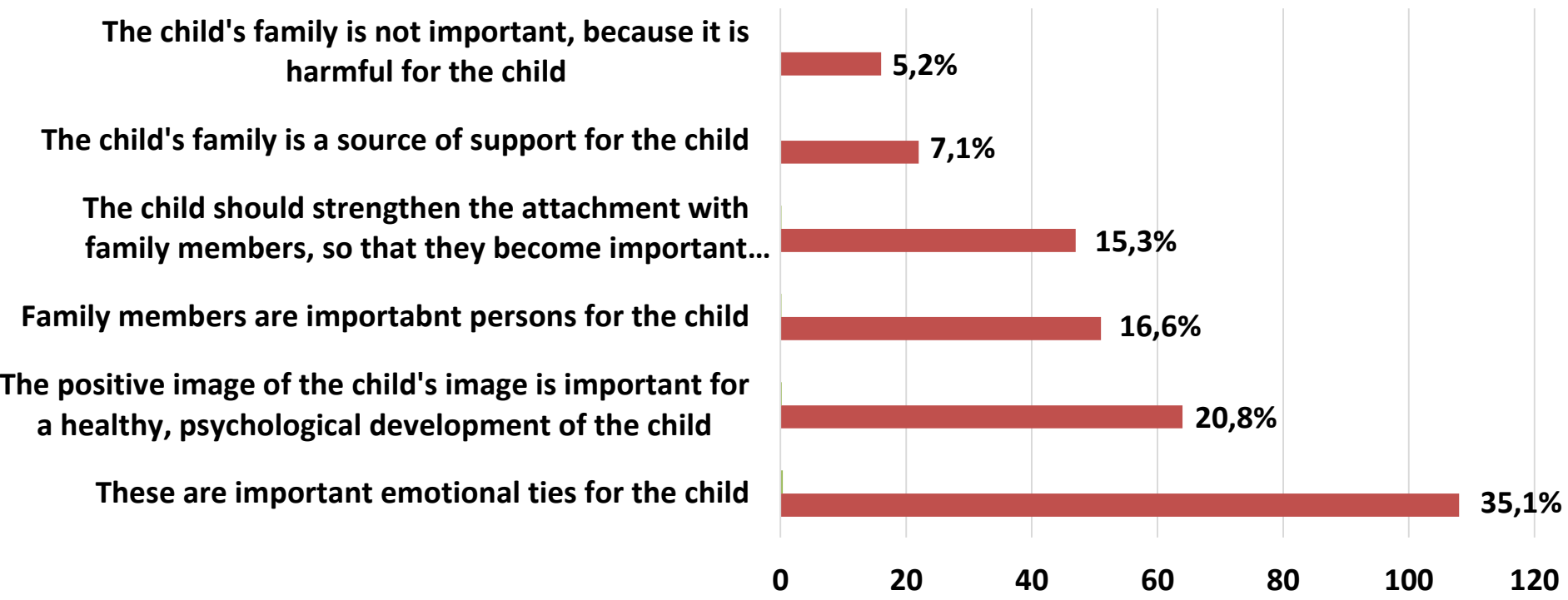
Only 20,3 % of visits made in the birth family's home may impede the reunification process...

Where are contacts organized?



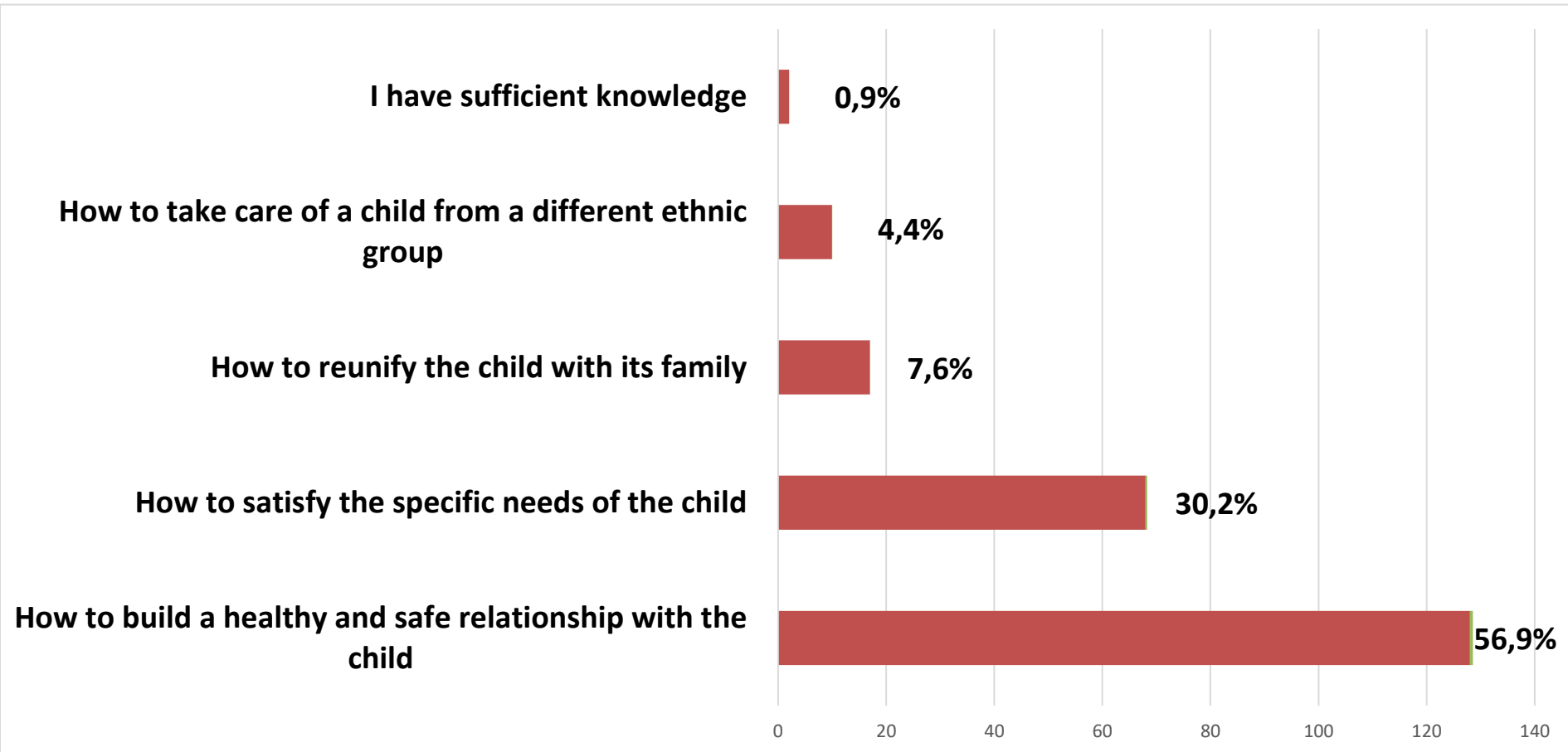
If contacts are organized – majority of them take place in foster families' home

In your opinion – Is it important to strengthen the child's attachment with its family?



Again declaratively foster families express the importance of the a child's birth family, but other questions reveal shortage of emotional readiness for contacts, different aim, and lack of sufficient support

What would you like to learn as a foster family?



The answers may suggest the need to build a longstanding relationship rather than to implement a reunification plan...

Misleading concepts

„Mother, father we are waiting for you...” a poster propagating foster families



Conclusions:

How PRIDE should be developed in the context of the 3rd category of needs...?

- 1. Rebuilding stable, positive attachment with child's birth family members should be stressed in pre-service and in-service trainings – especially on the level of internal, emotional conviction rather than declarations.**
- 2. The motivation of supporting both the child and its family should be developed.**



3. Being a longterm foster family should not conflict with the aim of strengthening relationships with a child's birth family members.

4. The emotional and organizational competencies of being a short-term resource for the child and its family should be developed.



5. Foster families express the need to exercise more their competencies in organizing contacts and visits with a child birth family.



6. Both in capacity building programs as in the social policy the teamwork mechanisms aimed at the support to both the child and the biological family should be developed.



7. Modules and other planned activities for foster families' birth children should be developed and organized.



Thank You

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