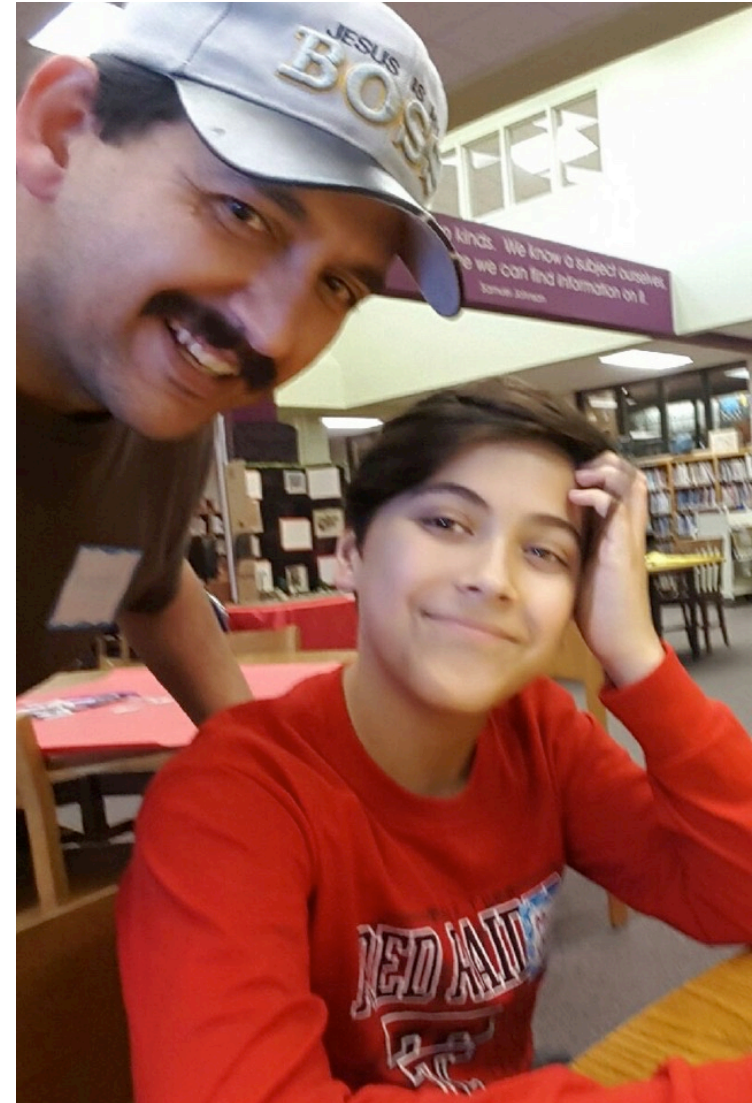




DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS IN FAMILIES: A DEEP DIVE



1. What are developmental relationships?
2. Why do they matter?
3. How can organizations support developmental relationships?
4. What can individuals do to build developmental relationships?





STUDY AFTER STUDY FINDS . . .

**Relationships are at the heart
of how kids grow, learn, and thrive**



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“Regardless of age, children need parents. Indeed, across multiple studies, it appears that **the quality of the parent-child relationship** is one of the more important factors in determining what kind of **behaviors and attitudes adolescents adopt** across domains such as health, education, reproductive behaviors, social interactions, and problem behaviors.”

— Elizabeth Hair and colleagues, 2005
Child Trends



“Whether the **burdens** come from the hardships of poverty, the challenges of parental substance abuse or serious mental illness, the stresses of war, the threats of recurrent violence or chronic neglect, or a combination of factors, the **single most common finding** is that children who end up doing well have had at least one **stable and committed relationship** with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.”

National Scientific Council
on the Developing Child, 2015
Harvard University





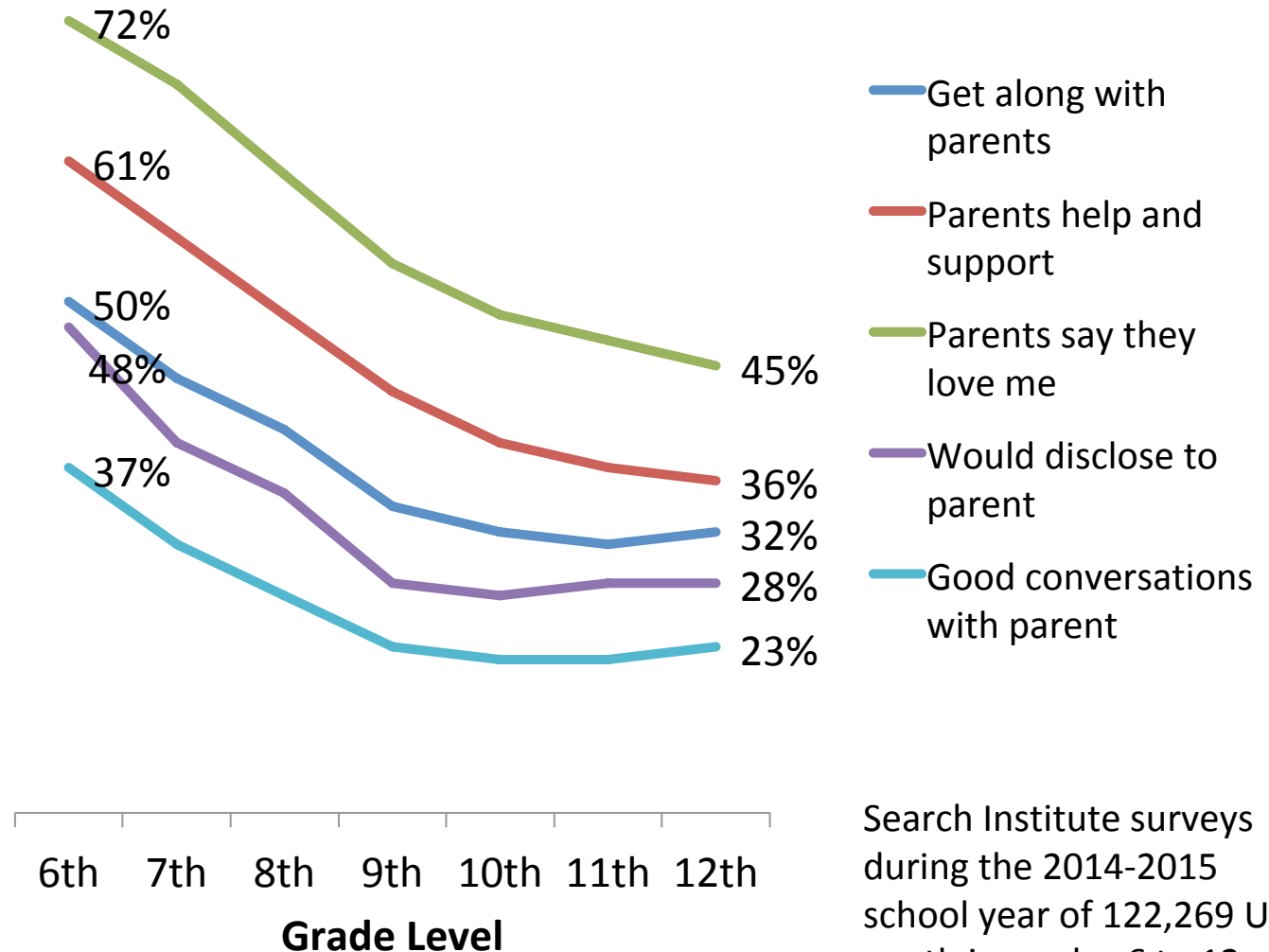
THE GAPS IN RELATIONSHIPS IN KIDS' LIVES



Youth: Relationships with Parents

Strength,
but declines
through
adolescence

*(Youth rate each
5 on a 5-point
scale, e.g.,
strongly agree)*

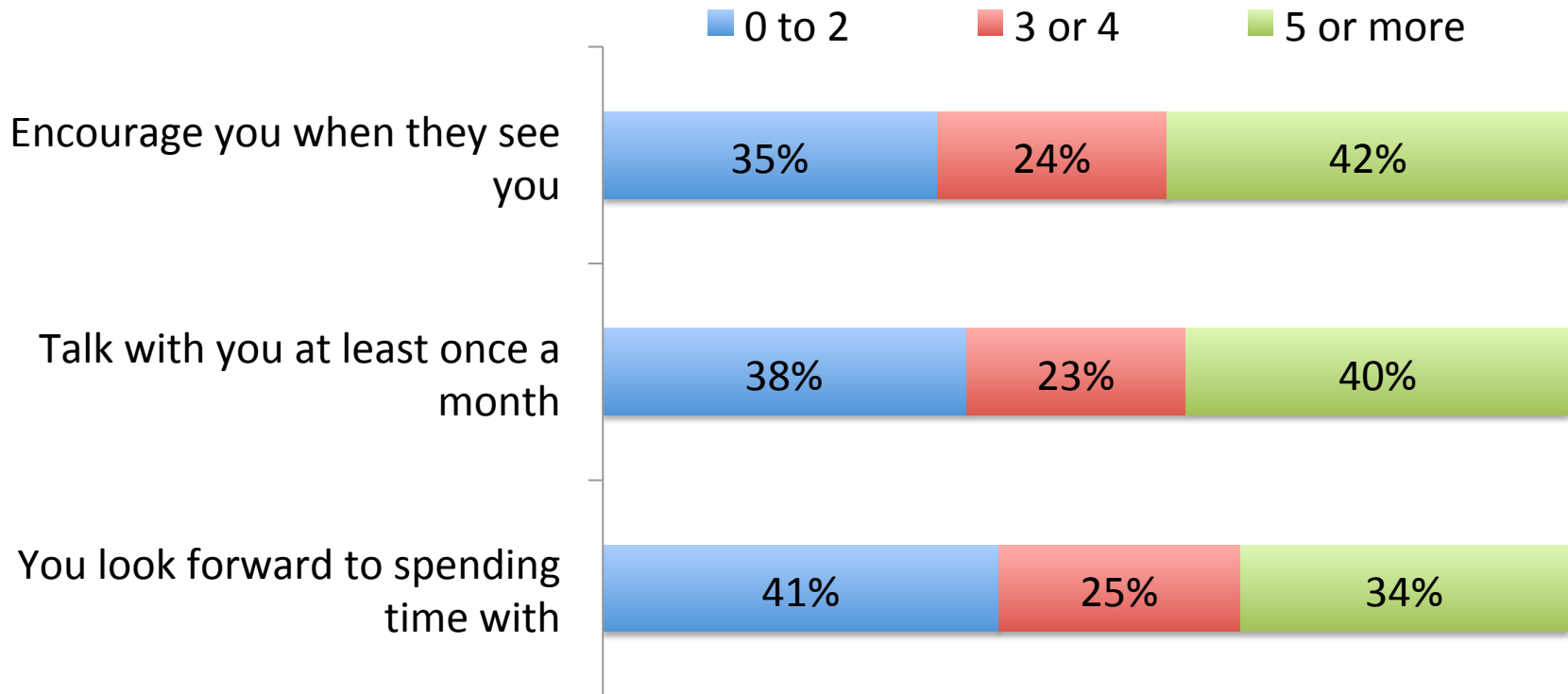


Search Institute surveys during the 2014-2015 school year of 122,269 U.S. youth in grades 6 to 12.



Adults in Young People's Lives

Number of adults (other than parents or other relatives) who you have 2 or more years who . . .



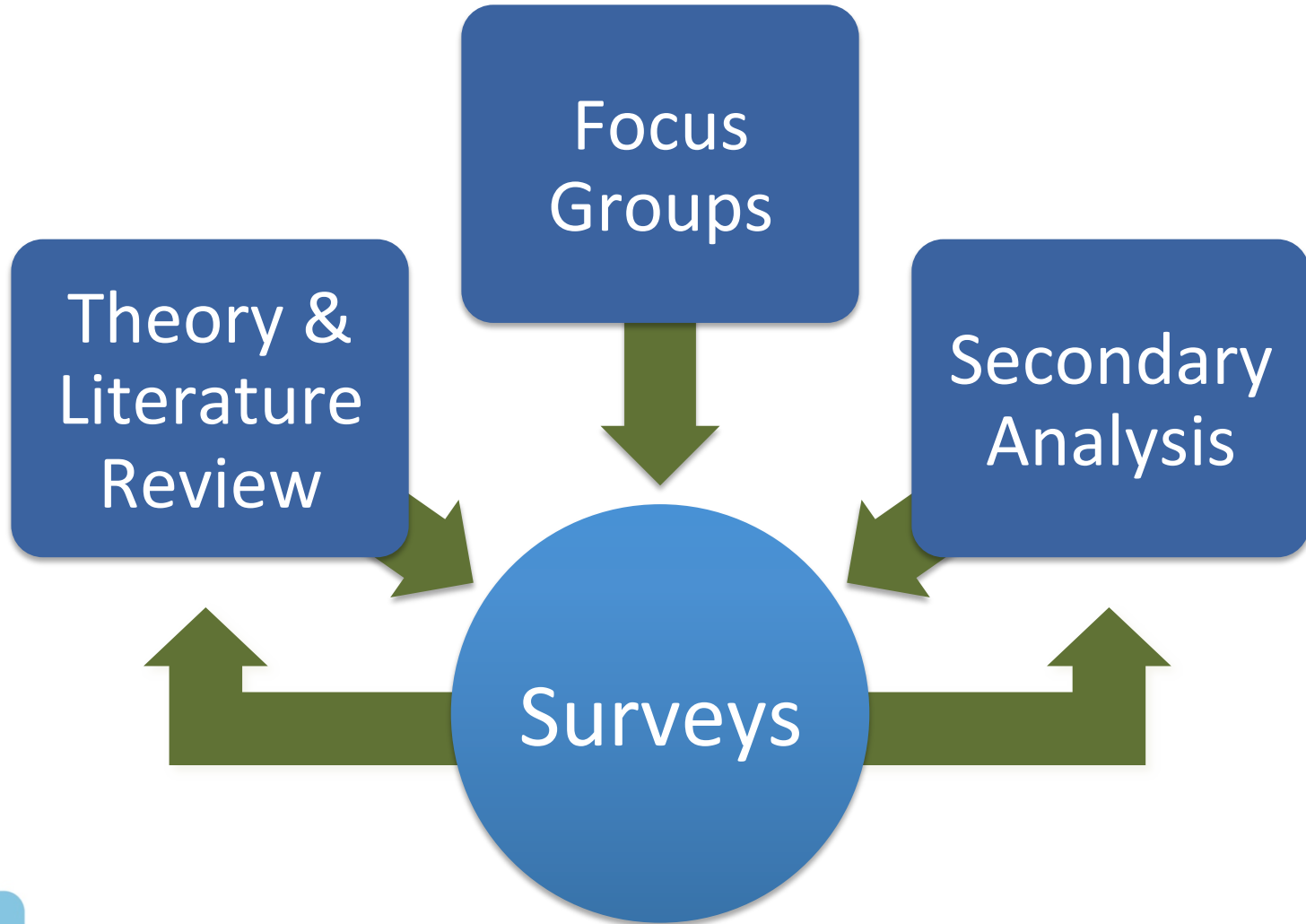
Search Institute surveys during the 2014-2015 school year of 122,269 U.S. youth in grades 6 to 12.





WHAT HAPPENS IN RELATIONSHIPS THAT PROPELS THRIVING?







DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS



Developmental Relationships are . . .

Close connections

through which young people

discover who they are,

Gain abilities to **shape their own lives**, and learn

how to interact with and

contribute to the world

around them.



Elements of Developmental Relationships



Express Care



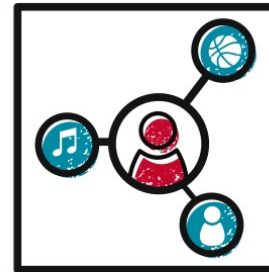
Challenge Growth



Provide Support



Share Power



Expand Possibilities

Element 1: Express Care



Express Care

“Show me
that I matter
to you.”

- Be dependable
- Listen
- Believe in me
- Be warm
- Encourage

Family members who:

- You could count on
- Really paid attention to you when you were together
- Really made you feel valued
- Let you know that they liked being with you



Element 2: Challenge Growth



Challenge Growth

“Push me to
keep getting
better”

Family members who:

- Expect my best
 - Stretch
 - Hold me accountable
 - Reflect on failures
- Made it clear that they wanted you to live up to your potential
 - Pushed you to go further than you thought you could
 - Made you take responsibility for your actions
 - Helped you learn from mistakes and setbacks

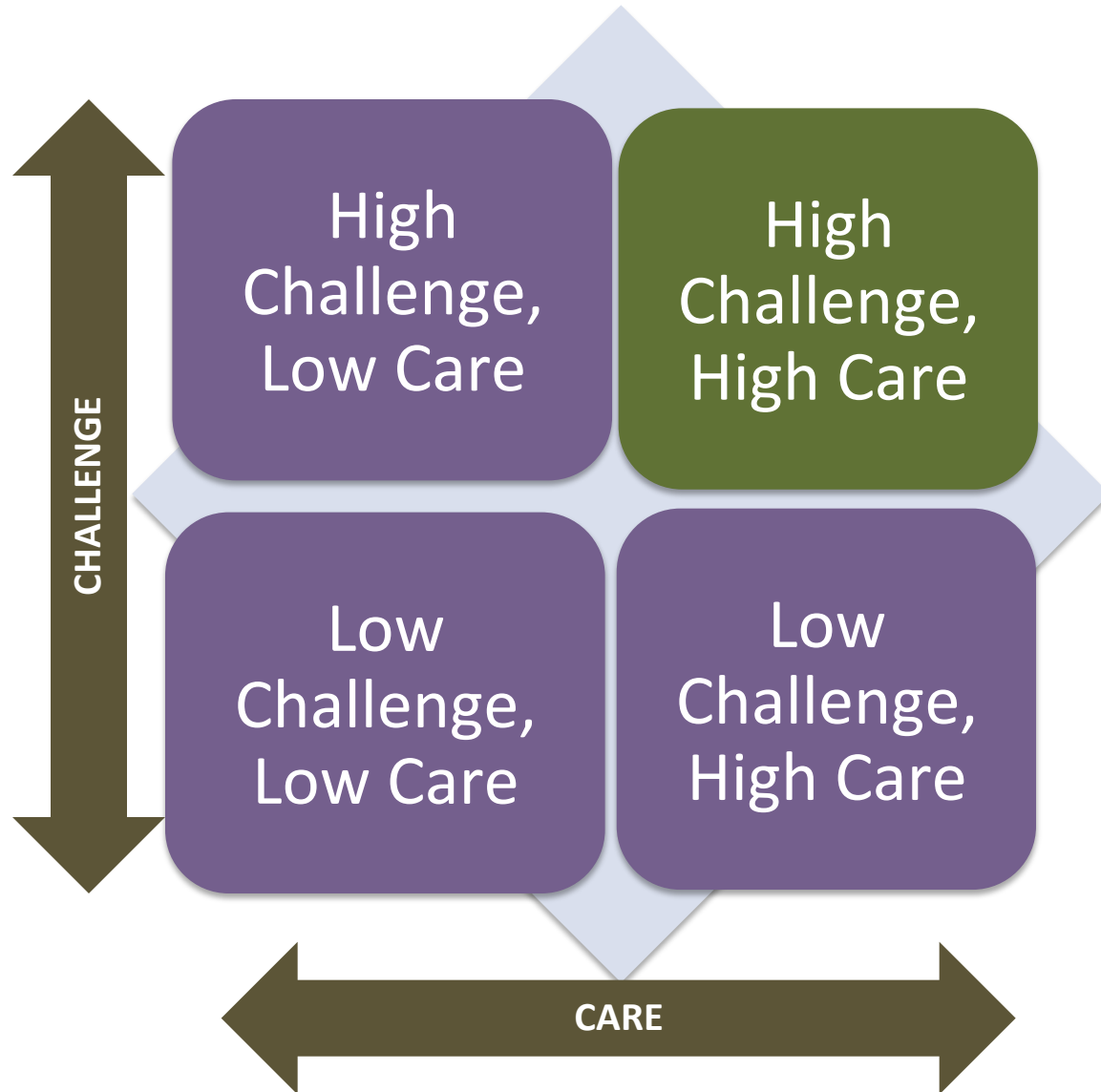




Challenge Growth

“In tenth grade, I was kind of a hothead, and I was mad, and I was mouthy, always talking back. And she came in and told me, ‘You a great leader, but your mouth and stuff ain’t gonna get you nowhere.’”

Challenge and Care Work Together



Element 3: Provide Support



**Provide
Support**

**“Help me
complete tasks
and achieve
goals.”**

Family members who:

- Navigate
- Empower
- Advocate
- Set boundaries

- Praised you for your efforts and achievements
- Guided you through hard situations and systems
- Built your confidence to take charge of your own life
- Defended you when you needed it
- Put limits in place to keep you on track



Support, Not “Helicoptering”

How support is provided is critical to how it reinforces positive development (rather than taking over).

Support is best when it . . .

- Is warm, friendly, and fun;
- Doesn't take over;
- Focuses on putting in effort, not just finishing; and
- Shows you really believe the person can do it.



— Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwak, 2007
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Pomerantz, E. M., Moorman, E. A., & Litwak, S. D. (2007). The how, whom, and why of parents' involvement in children's academic lives: More is not always better. *Review of educational research*, 77(3), 373-410.

Element 4: Share Power



Share Power

“Treat me with respect and give me a say.”

- Respect me
- Include me
- Collaborate
- Let me lead

Family members who:

- Took you seriously and treated you fairly
- Consistently involved you in decisions that affected you
- Worked with you to solve problems and reach goals
- Created opportunities for you to take action and lead



Element 5: Expand Possibilities



Expand Possibilities

“Connect me with
people and places
that enlarge my
world.”

- Inspire
- Broaden horizons
- Connect

Family members who:

- Inspired you to see future possibilities for yourself
- Exposed you to new ideas, experiences, and places
- Introduced you to people and opportunities to help you grow



A young person in challenging circumstances
about a youth group leader:

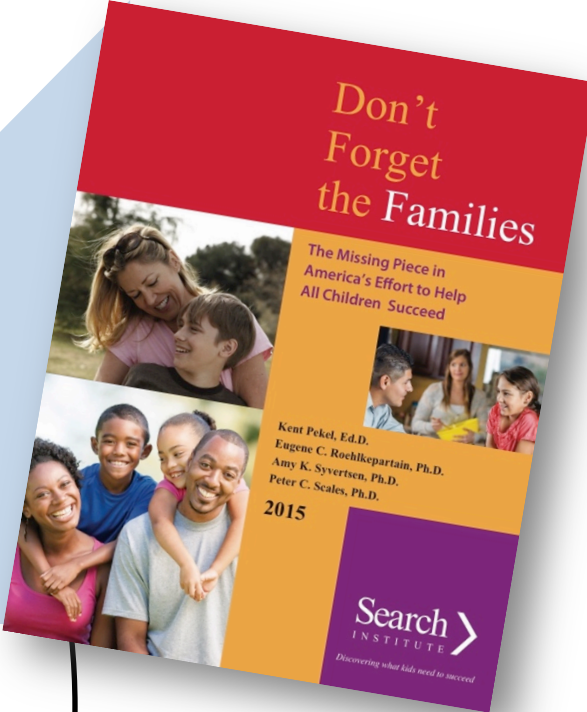
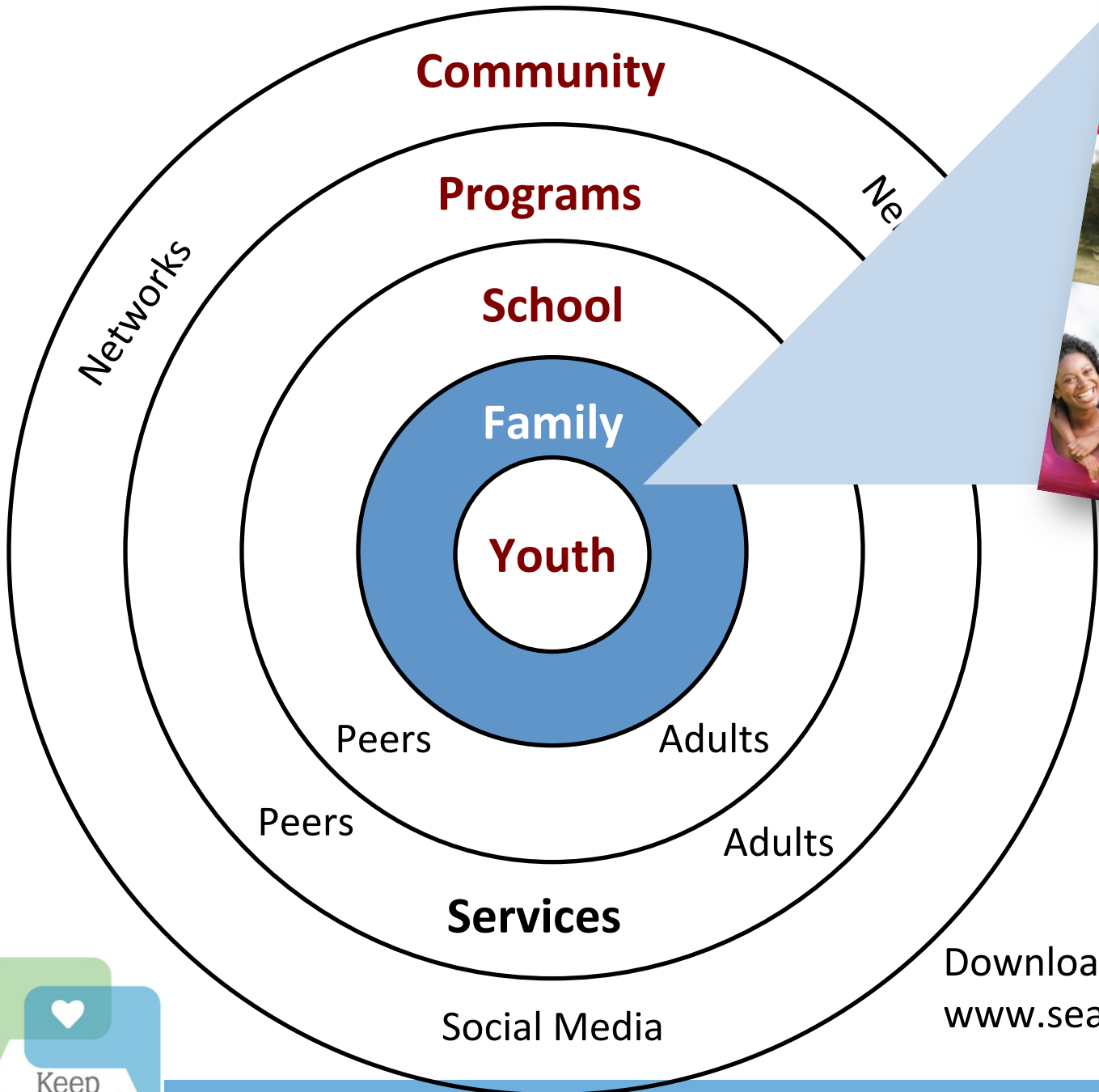


“She puts you
around people
who’ve reached the
places you want to
go in life, and
people who we can
relate to.”



THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS: EARLY EVIDENCE





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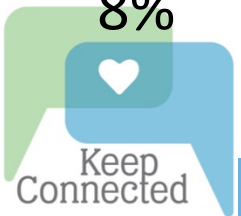
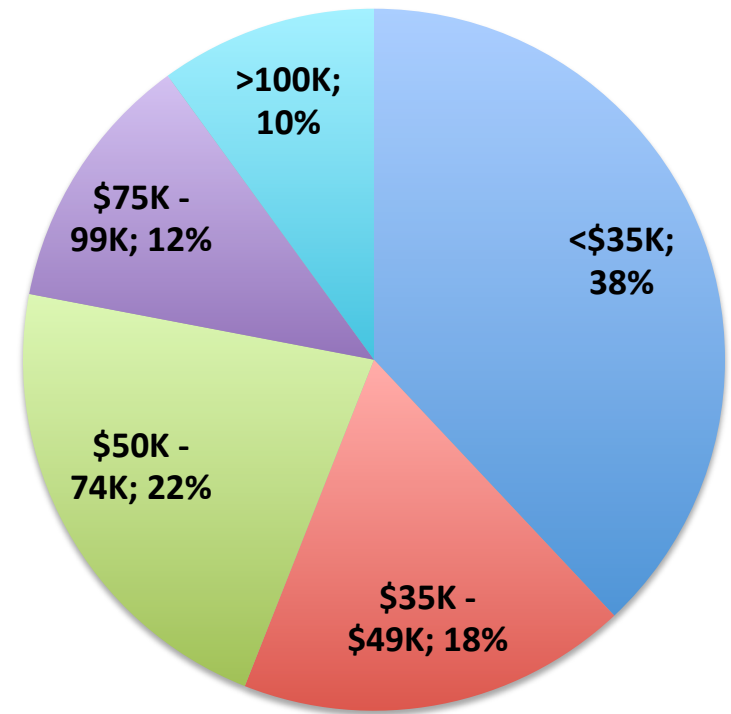


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1,085 U.S. parenting adults with 3- to 13-year-old

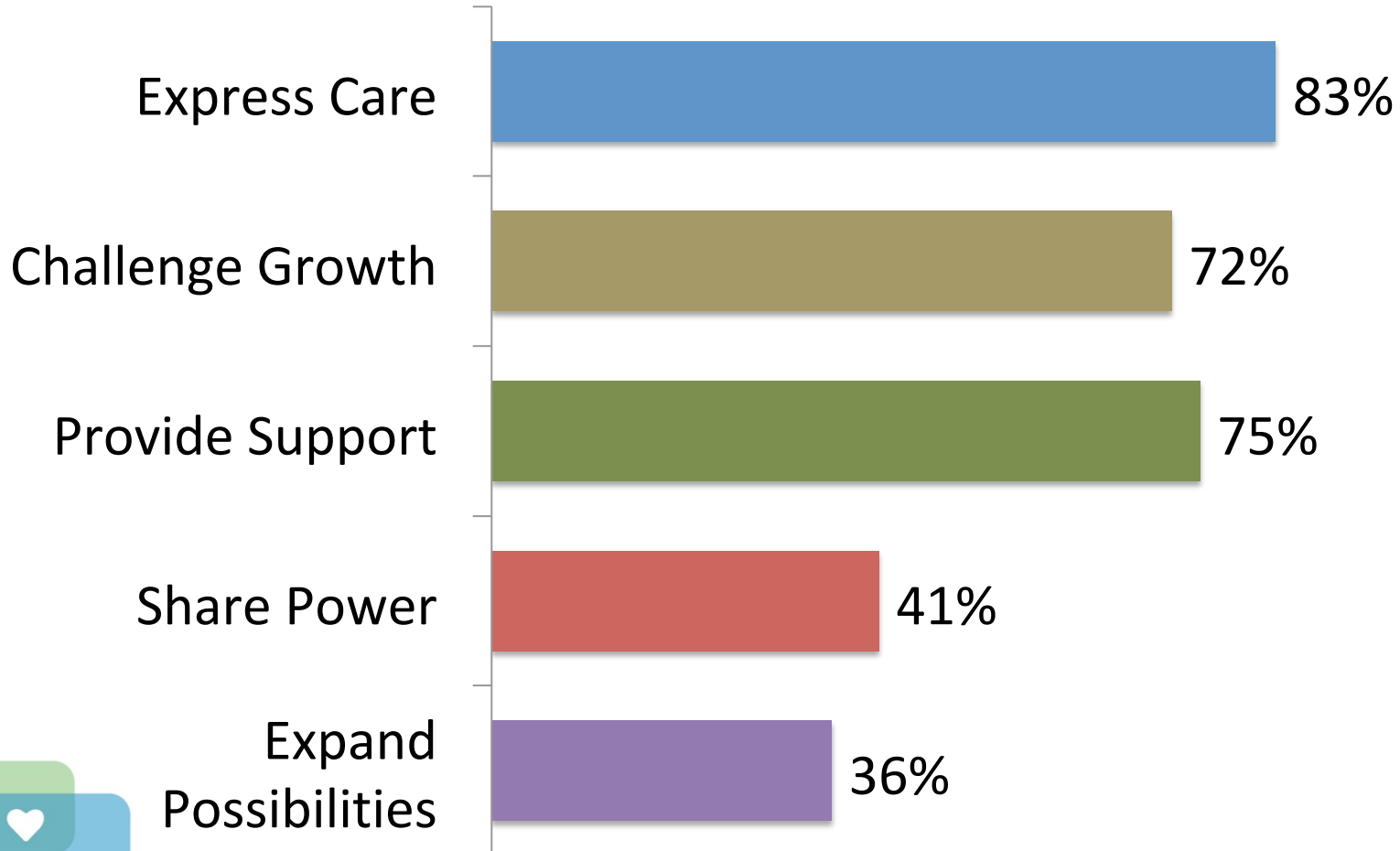
- 86% Birth or adoptive parent
- 65% Female
- 62% Married/civil union
- 55% Less than college degree
- 31% People of color
- 8% LGBT parents

Annual Family Income



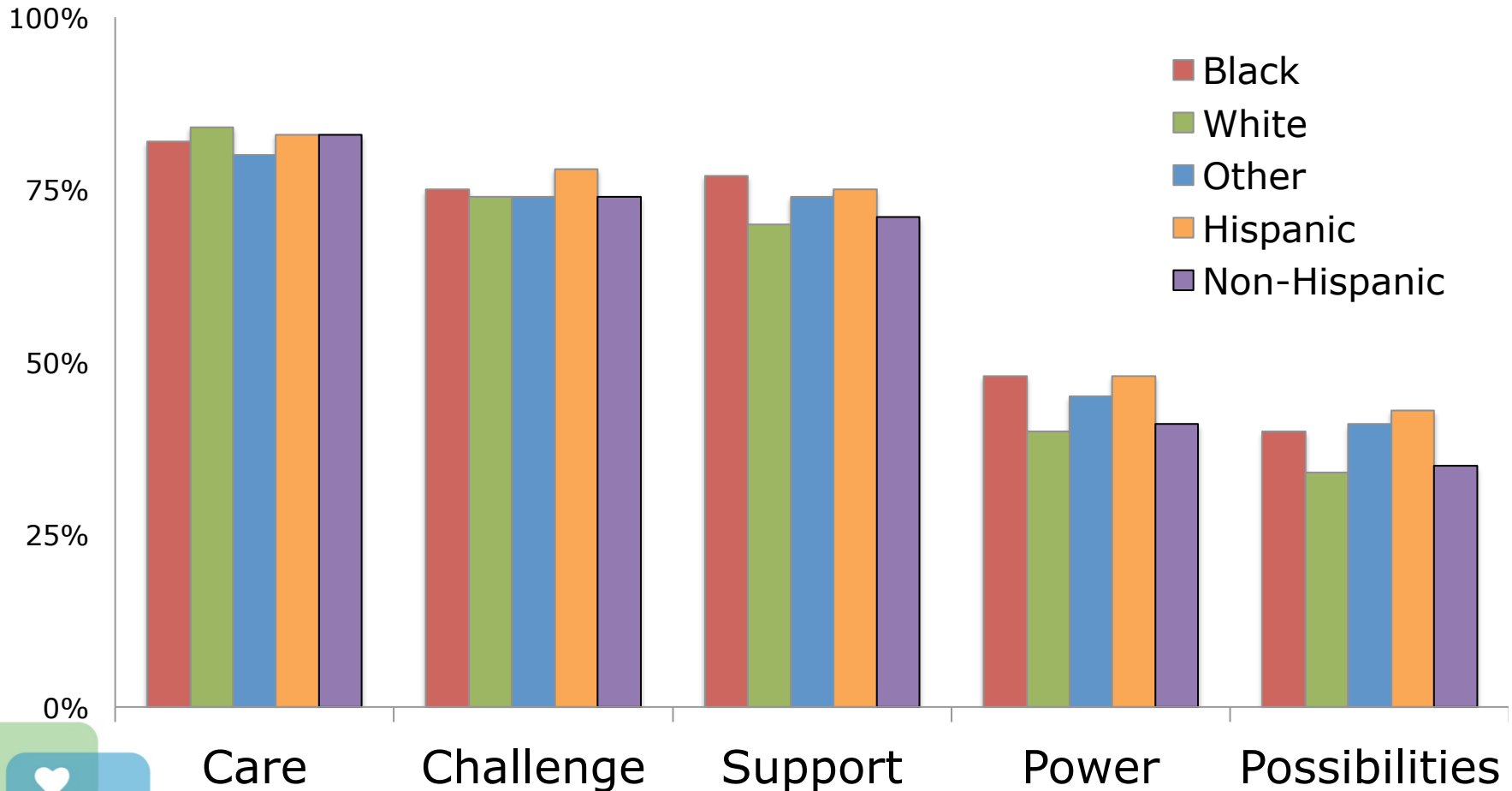
Five Elements: Parents

Parents with Children, 3-13



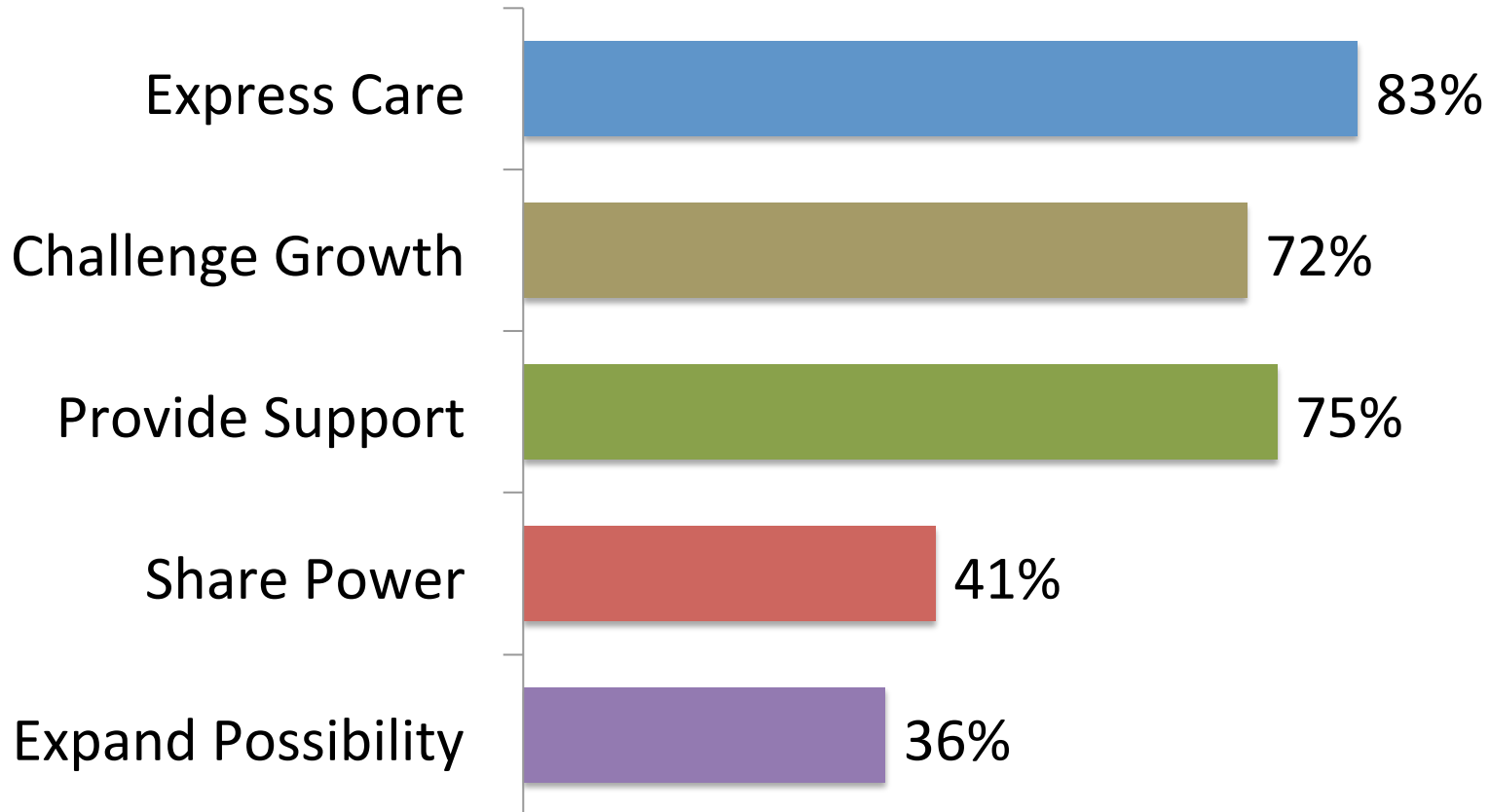
Five Elements, by Race/Ethnicity

Parents with Children, 3-13

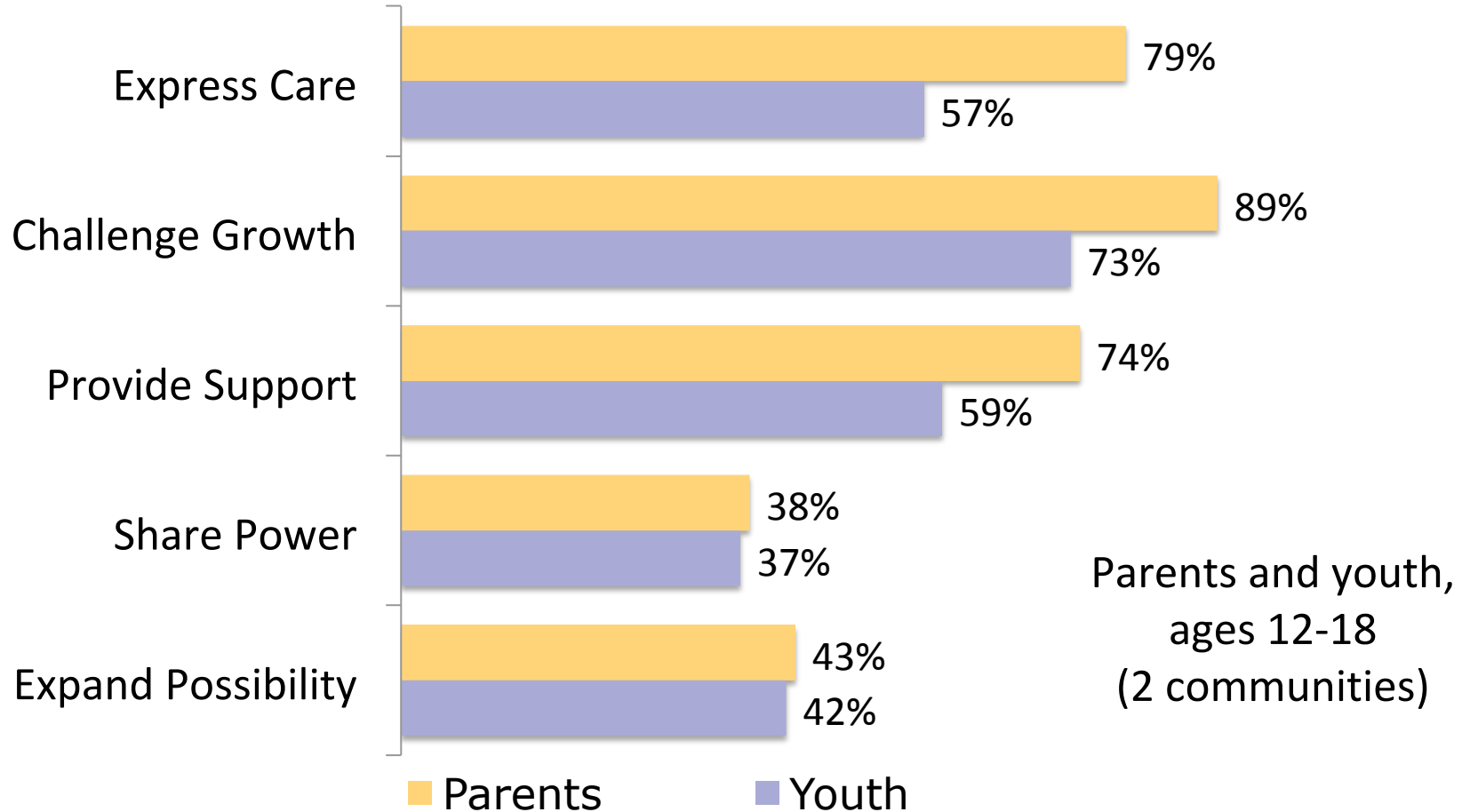


Five Elements: Parents

Parents with Children, 3-13

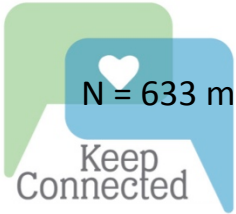


Five Elements: Youth-Parent Comparisons



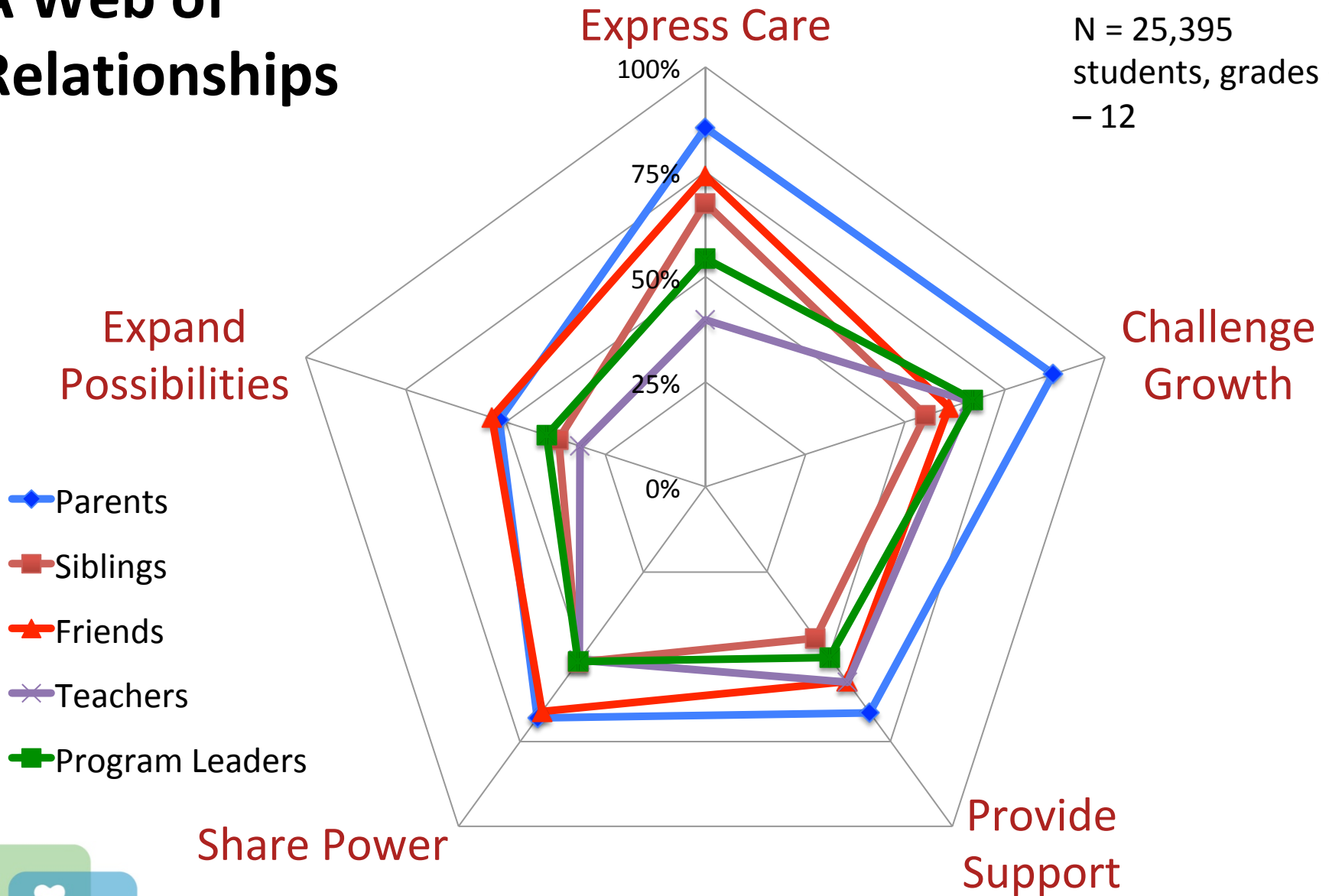
N = 633 matched pairs (average)

% scoring at an optimal level (75%)

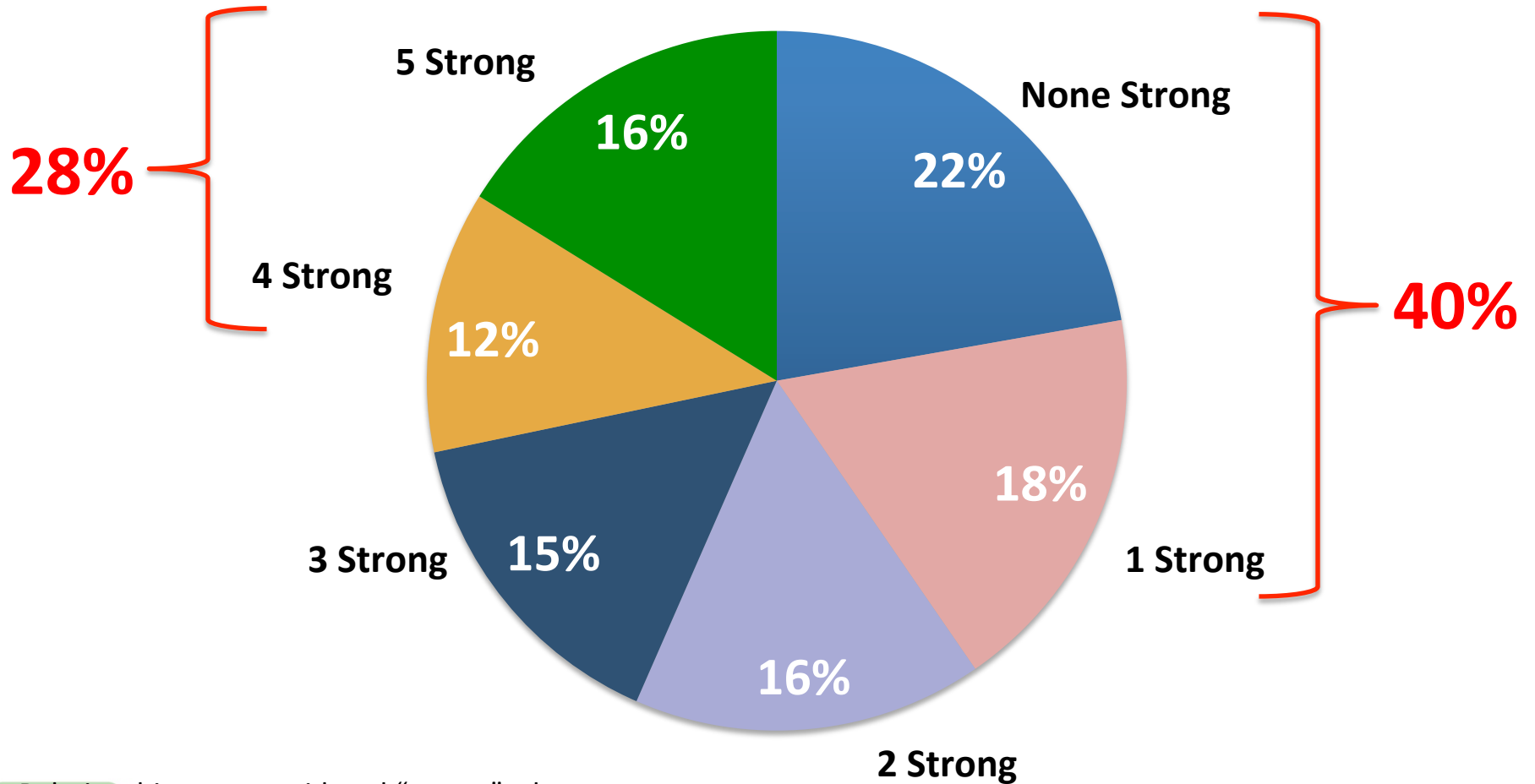


A Web of Relationships

N = 25,395
students, grades 6
– 12



Number of “Strong” Relationships



Relationships are considered “strong” when young people experience the 5 elements of developmental relationships, on average, often or very often.

N = 25,395 students,
grades 6 – 12



THE POWER OF DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS: EARLY EVIDENCE



Developmental Relationships in Families

- Express Care
- Challenge Growth
- Provide Support
- Share Power
- Expand Possibilities

Powerfully Predict

Composite of Selected Character Strengths

IDENTITY

- Positive outlook
- Sparks

AGENCY

- Personal responsibility
- Goal orientation
- Openness to challenges

COMMUNITY

- Helping others
- Hopeful purpose



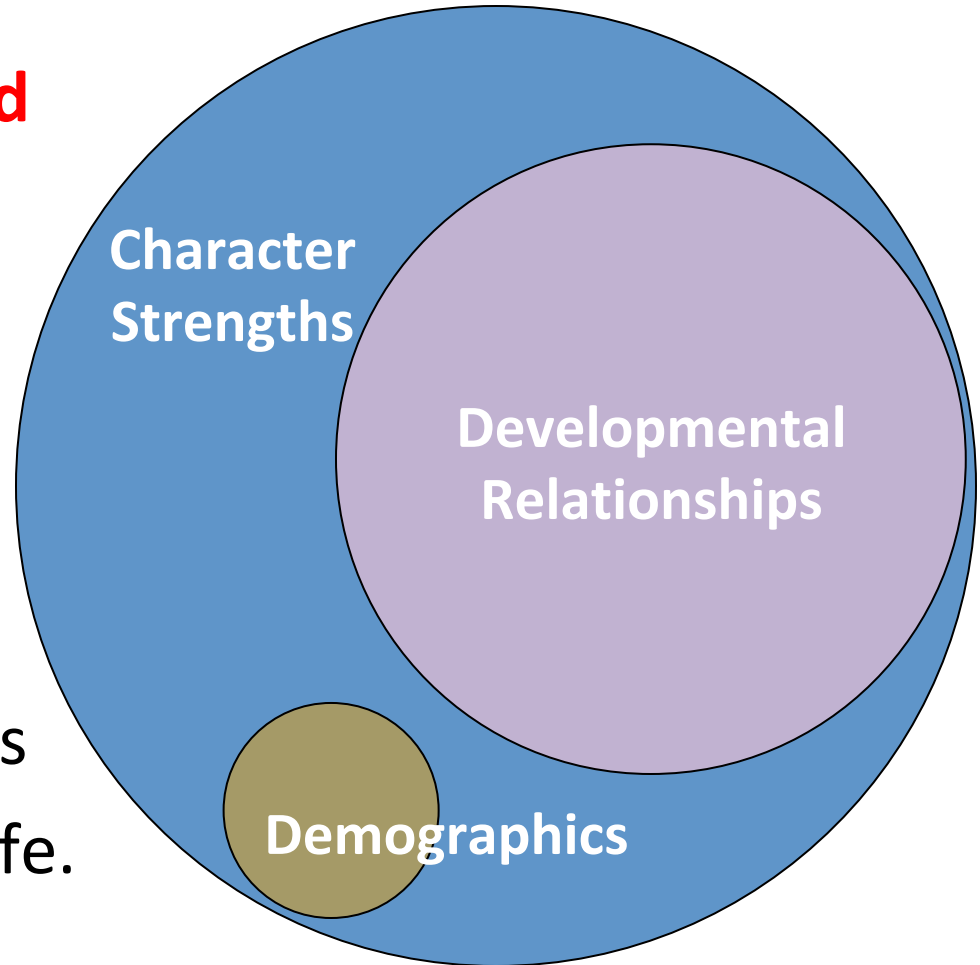
Increasing the **number** and **quality** of developmental relationships in young people's lives . . .

nurtures **character strengths** in the domains of identity, agency, and commitment to community.

These character strengths, in turn, increase the chances that young people will **grow into thriving, contributing adults.**



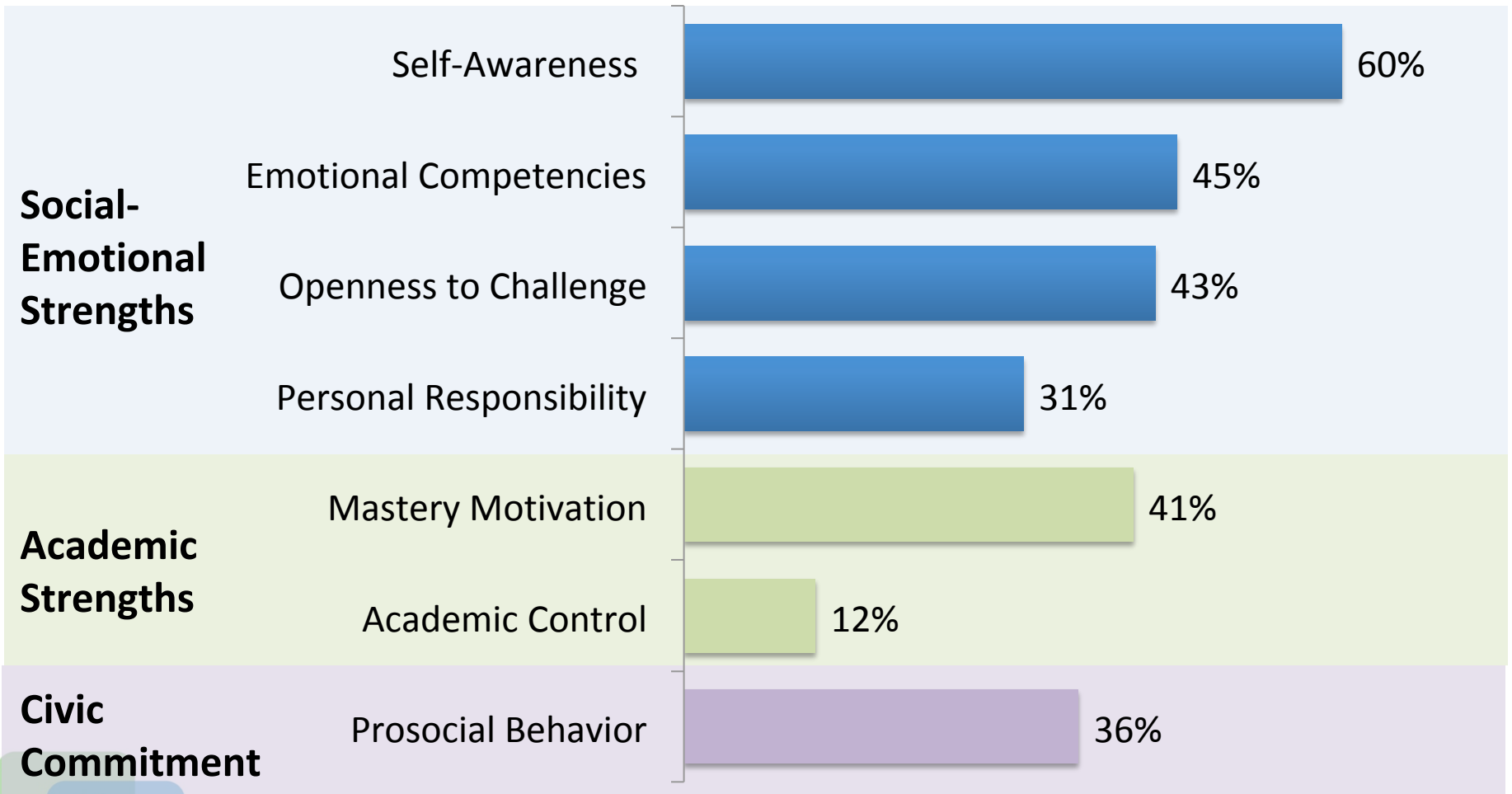
The quality of **parent-child relationships** is 10 times more powerful than demographics* in predicting whether children are developing critical character strengths they need for success in life.



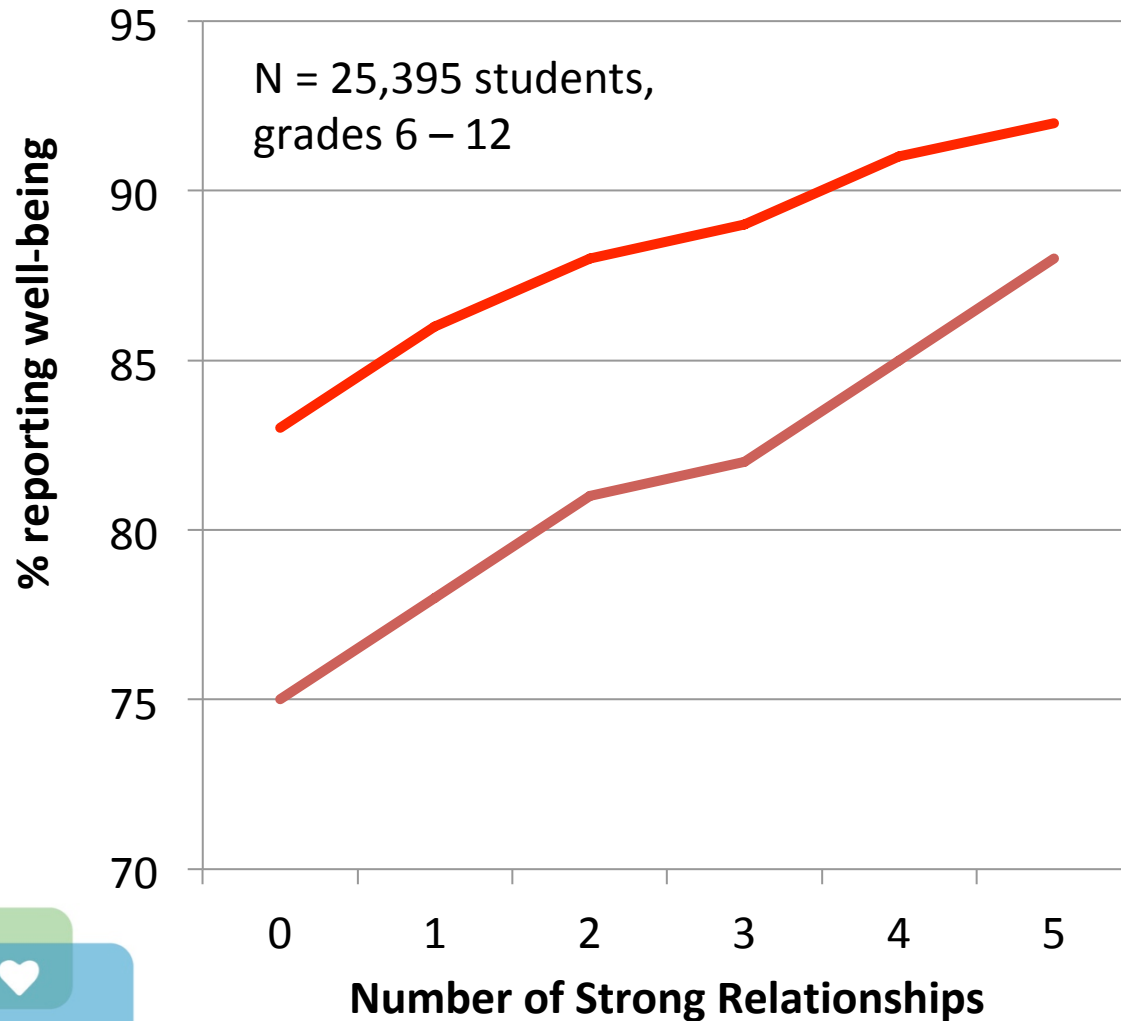
* Includes age, gender, race-ethnicity, immigration status, and financial strain

Association with Well-Being

Parent-youth relationships; 633 families in 2 communities



Correlations with Well-Being



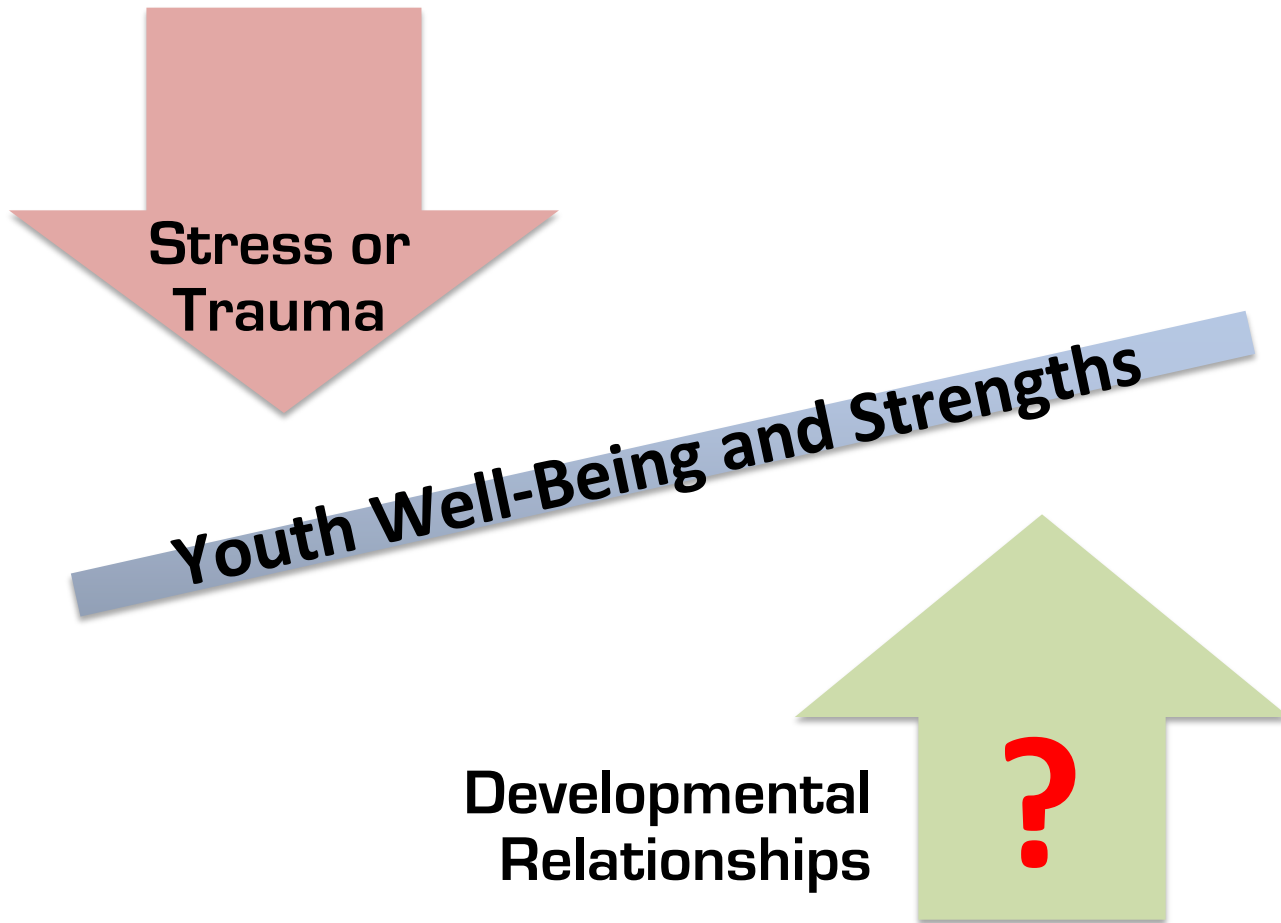
- Academic Motivation
- Social-Emotional Skills

The average score (1-100) youth report on:

- Academic motivation:** Care about how they do in school, and try as hard as they can to do their best work.
- Social-Emotional Skills:** Recognize and respect other people's feelings, and are good at making and keeping friends.



Developmental Relationships and Resilience



Developmental
Relationships



14 Stressful Life Events

- Separation or divorce
- Unemployment
- Serious accident or illness
- Disability or handicap
- Military deployment
- Victim of a crime
- Victim of violence
- Arrest or imprisonment
- Substance abuse
- Natural disaster
- Death of a family member
- Death of a grandparent
- Death of a friend

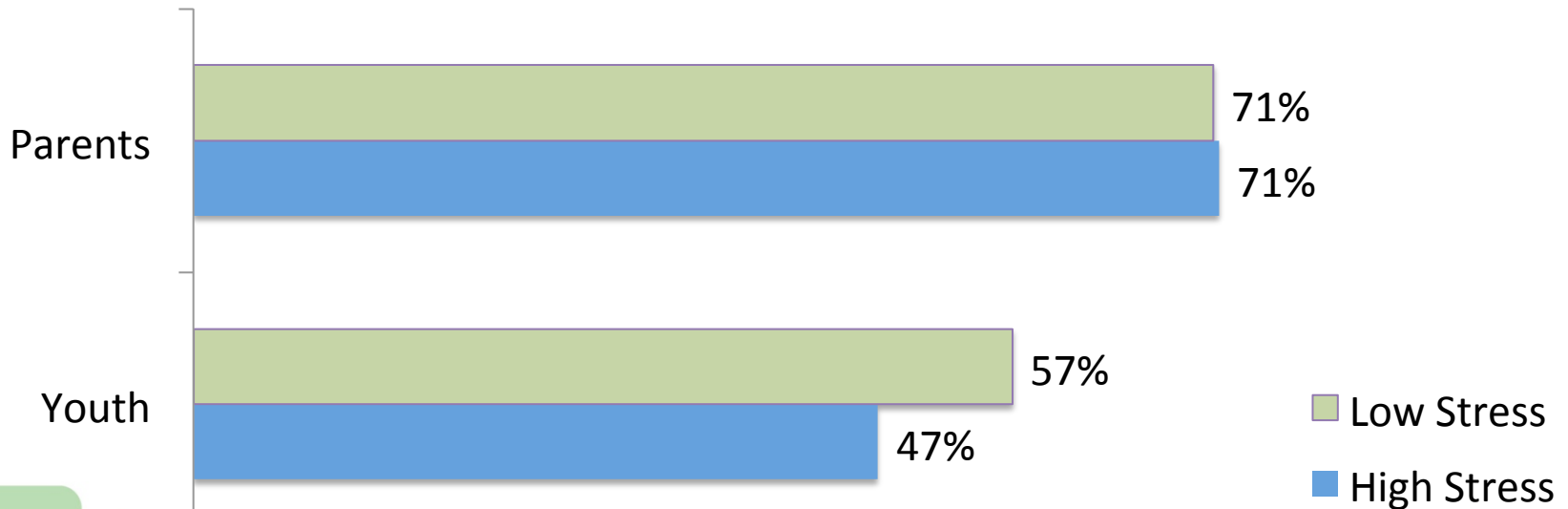


SOURCE: Youth (10-18) and parents
in 633 families in two communities

Developmental Relationships in High-Stressed Families

Youth in high-stressed families are less likely to report strong relationships than youth in low-stress families. Parents in both groups are as likely to report strong relationships.

% Reporting Strong Developmental Relationship



INFORMAL HELPING

21x



MASTERY MOTIVATION

19x



PERSONAL
RESPONSIBILITY

15x



HOPEFUL PURPOSE



1 1 X

