Survey of Hartford Child Care Providers: Provider Stress Levels & Children's Development

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Acknowledgements

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Survey Purpose

Part of a larger study to understand the impacts of the pandemic on Hartford's young children and the systems that serve them.

Gather child care providers' perspectives on:
- Operational challenges
- Reasons for vacant slots
- Causes & consequences of staffing shortages
- Stress & burnout
- Concerns about children's development
- Needs

Survey Sample

Emailed invitations to all child care providers in Hartford (excluding programs that only offer before & after school care)

49 responses collected from March 16th – April 10th, 2023:

- **22** administrators of child care centers (49% response rate)
  - ➢ 12 Directors, 5 Executive Directors, 2 Assistant Directors, 2 Owners, & 1 District Lead for Early Childhood
  - ➢ Reporting on 36 child care sites, including 11 public pre-K's (59% of all center-based child care sites in Hartford)

- **27** family child care providers (30% response rate)

Provider Stress and Burnout

Child care center administrators say it's hard to hire and retain qualified staff

86%
say it is hard to hire and retain qualified staff

85%
say staff seem stressed or burnt out on the job

Child care center administrators are stressed

84%

say *they* are feeling stressed
or burnt out on the job

55%

say they are considering
leaving the child care
industry

Family child care providers are less likely to feel stressed

35%
say they are feeling stressed or burnt out on the job

42%
say they are considering leaving the child care industry

Providers say that parents seem stressed or overwhelmed

67%
of center administrators

50%
of family providers

Concerns about Children's Development

Developmental progress for children under 3 years old

Respondents (must care for at least 3 children under 3 years old):

12 child care center administrators
11 family child care providers

5 developmental domains:

Learning/thinking/problem-solving
Language (understanding & communicating)
Social awareness
Fine motor skills
Gross motor skills

For children under 3 years old, providers are most concerned about language development

83%

of center administrators are somewhat or very concerned

64%

of family providers are somewhat or very concerned

67% of center administrators also express concern about social awareness for children under 3 years old

■ Somewhat concerned ■ Very concerned

Category	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned
Language	58%	25%
Social awareness	58%	8%
Learning/thinking/problem-solving	50%	8%
Gross motor	42%	8%
Fine motor	50%	0%

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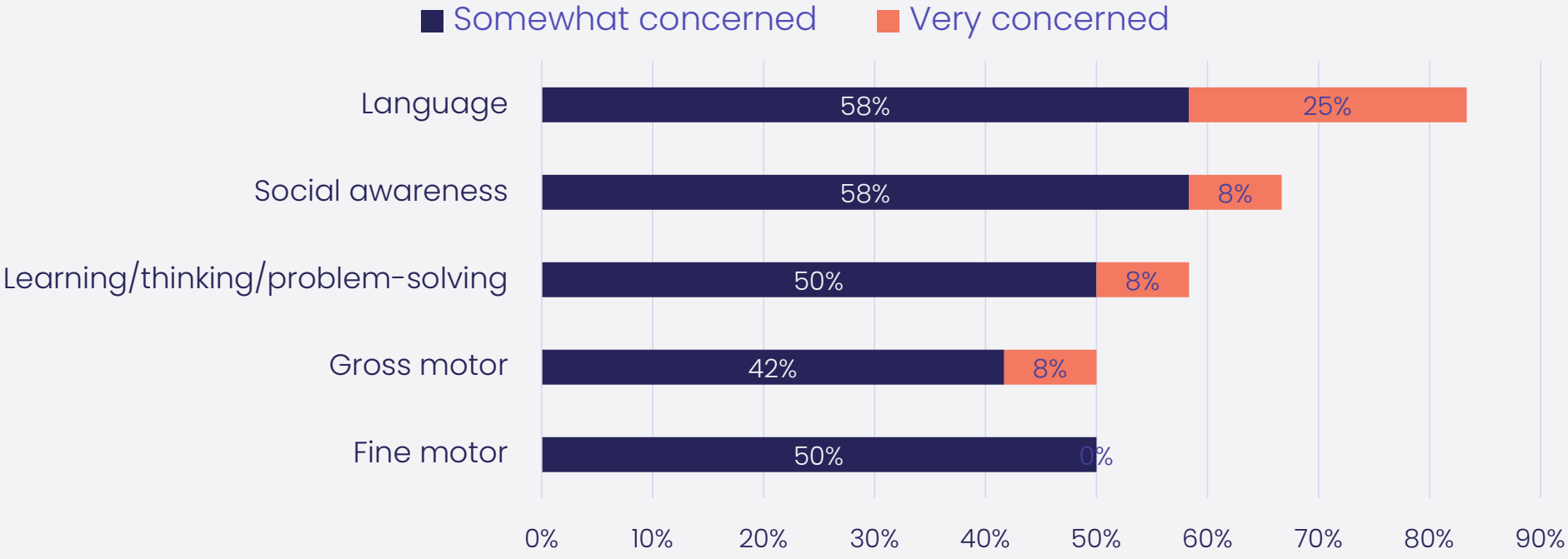
Note: These percentages are out of the 12 center administrators who responded to each item.

Family providers express fewer concerns about the development of children under 3 years old

■ Somewhat concerned   ■ Very concerned

Language	45% + 18%
Learning/thinking/problem-solving	27% + 18%
Social awareness	27% + 0%
Fine motor	27% + 0%
Gross motor	18% + 0%

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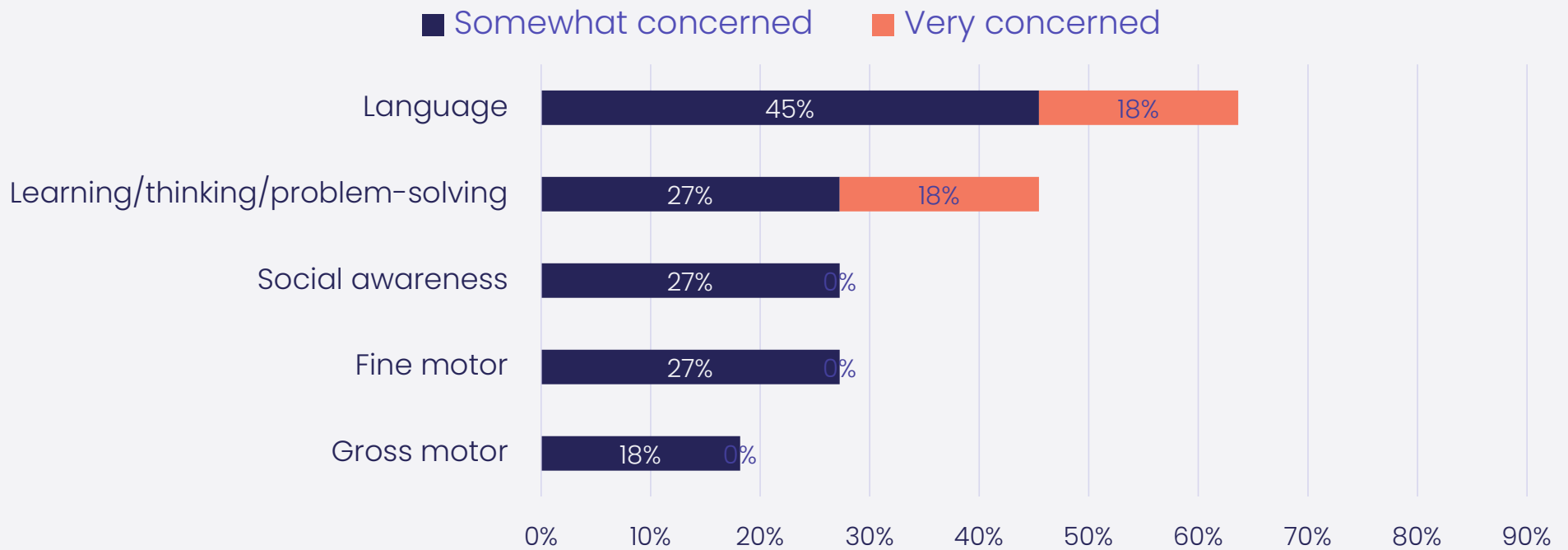
Note: These percentages are out of the 11 family providers who responded to each item.

Developmental progress for children 3 to 5 years old

21 child care center administrators who care for at least 3 children aged 3-5 years

(Only 2 family providers cared for at least 3 children aged 3-5 years & answered these questions, so they were excluded from these analyses)

7 developmental domains:

Learning/thinking/problem-solving
Language (understanding & communicating)
Literacy
Numeracy
Social skills
Fine motor skills
Gross motor skills

For children aged <u>3 to 5 years</u>, center administrators are most concerned about the development of cognitive and language skills
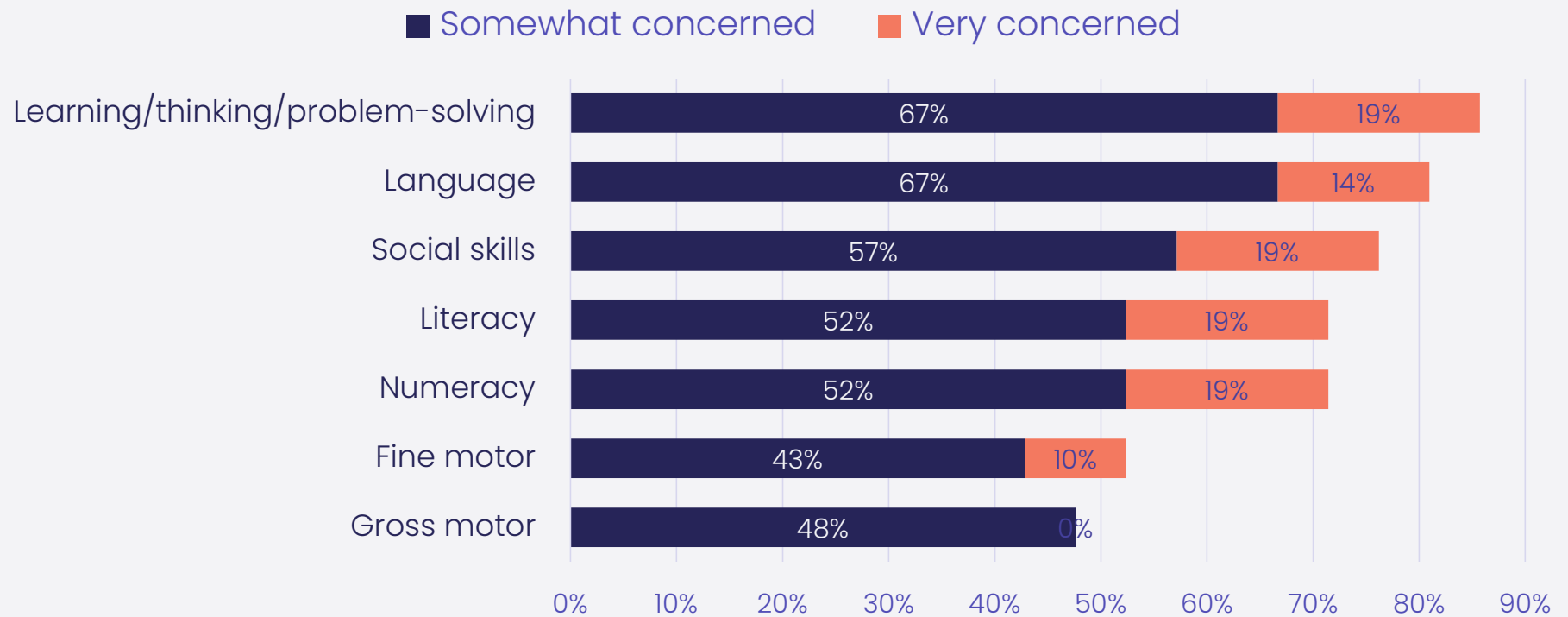
86%
are somewhat or very concerned about
cognitive development

81%
are somewhat or very concerned about
language development

Center administrators also express concern about social, literacy, and numeracy development for children aged 3 to 5 years

■ Somewhat concerned   ■ Very concerned

Category	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned
Learning/thinking/problem-solving	67%	19%
Language	67%	14%
Social skills	57%	19%
Literacy	52%	19%
Numeracy	52%	19%
Fine motor	43%	10%
Gross motor	48%	0%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

Note: These percentages are out of the 21 center administrators who responded to each item.

Providers reported on children's emotional and behavioral problems

Impulsivity or overactivity

Attention

Aggression or defiance

Emotional expression & regulation

Anxiety or fear

Sadness, frequent crying or lack of joy

Anger or irritability

Emotional & behavioral problems for children under 3 years old

Question Prompt:
"Thinking about the **infants and toddlers (under 3 years old)** who are in your care now... Are any of these children showing problems in the following areas (more than you would expect for children their age)?"
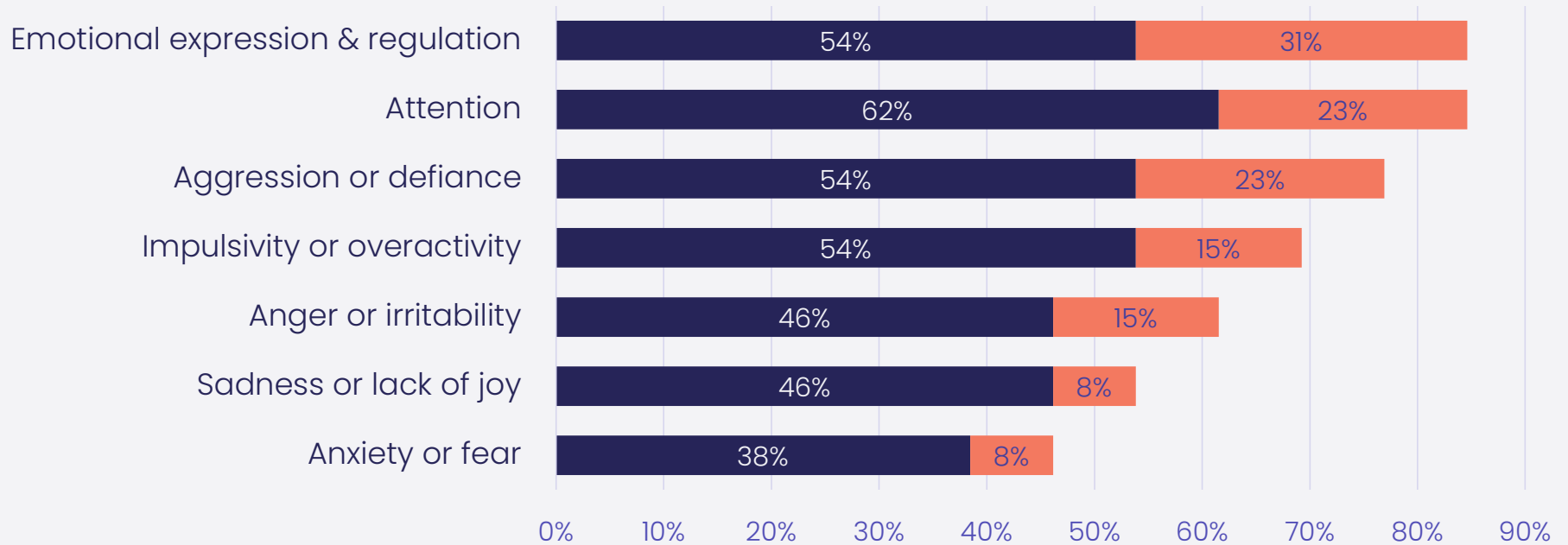
Respondents (must care for at least 3 children under 3 years old):
13 child care center administrators
12 family child care providers

85% of **center administrators** are noticing problems with **emotional expression & regulation** and **attention** in children **under 3 years old**

■ Some Problems   ■ Many Problems

Category	Some Problems	Many Problems
Emotional expression & regulation	54%	31%
Attention	62%	23%
Aggression or defiance	54%	23%
Impulsivity or overactivity	54%	15%
Anger or irritability	46%	15%
Sadness or lack of joy	46%	8%
Anxiety or fear	38%	8%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

Note: These percentages are out of the 13 center administrators who responded to each item.

58% of **family providers** are noticing problems with **attention** in children **under 3 years old**

■ Some Problems   ■ Many Problems

	Some Problems	Many Problems
Attention	42%	17%
Impulsivity or overactivity	33%	17%
Emotional expression & regulation	42%	8%
Sadness or lack of joy	33%	8%
Aggression or defiance	17%	17%
Anxiety or fear	25%	8%
Anger or irritability	%	17%

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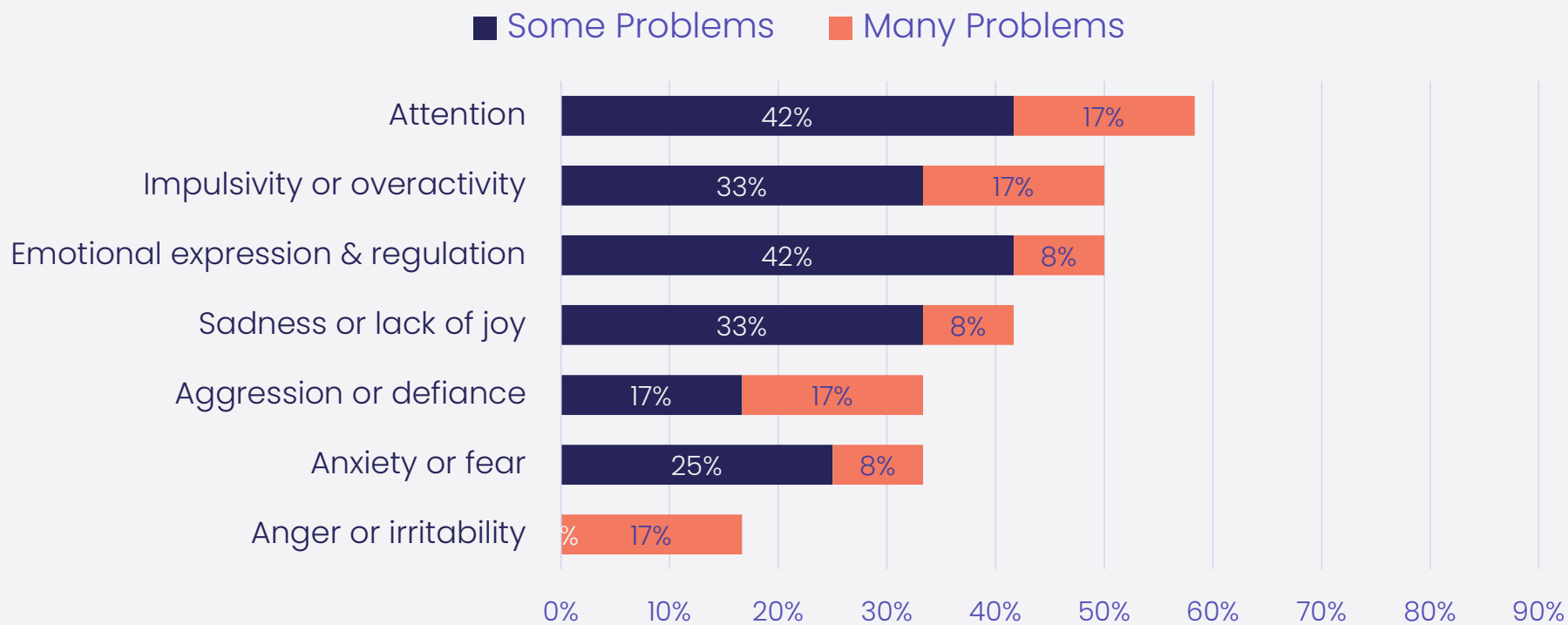
Note: These percentages are out of the 12 family providers who responded to each item.

Emotional & behavioral problems for children 3 to 5 years old
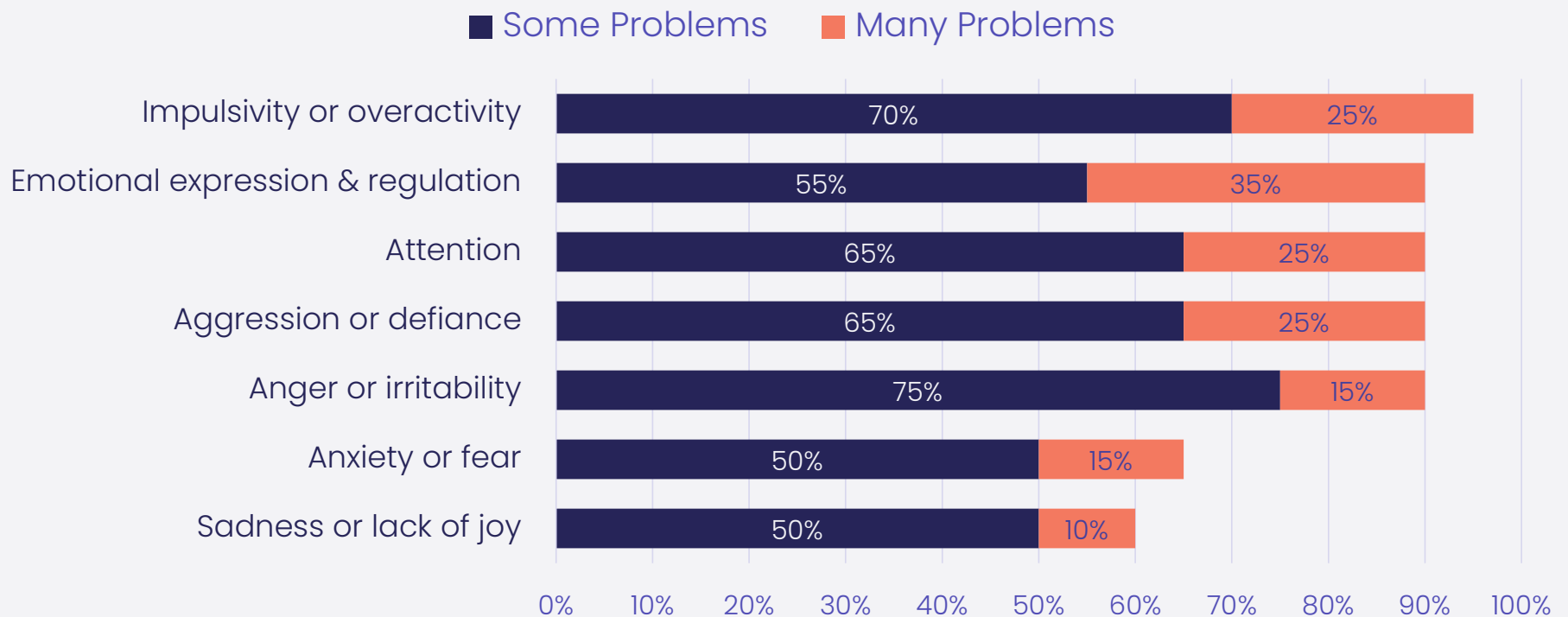
Question Prompt:
"Thinking about the **preschool-aged children (~3 to 5 years old)** who are in your care now... Are any of these children showing problems in the following areas (more than you would expect for children their age)?"

20 child care center administrators who care for at least 3 children 3 to 5 years old
(Only 2 family providers cared for at least 3 children aged 3-5 years & answered these questions, so they were excluded from these analyses)

About **90%** of **center administrators** are noticing problems with <u>emotional & behavioral regulation</u>, <u>aggression/defiance</u>, and <u>anger/irritability</u> in children **ages 3 to 5 years**

■ Some Problems   ■ Many Problems

Category	Some Problems	Many Problems
Impulsivity or overactivity	70%	25%
Emotional expression & regulation	55%	35%
Attention	65%	25%
Aggression or defiance	65%	25%
Anger or irritability	75%	15%
Anxiety or fear	50%	15%
Sadness or lack of joy	50%	10%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Note: These percentages are out of the 20 center administrators who responded to each item.

CT data

Providers' primary areas of concern regarding the children in their care

40 open responses (18 center administrators & 22 family providers)

- **17 (43%): Social & emotional skills / behavior problems** (<u>14 center administrators</u>, 3 family providers)
- 8 (20%): Speech / language / literacy (3 center administrators, 5 family providers)
- 7 (18%): Special needs / autism / ADHD (4 center administrators, 3 family providers)
- 7 (18%): No concerns (all family providers)
- 3 (8%): Health & safety (all family providers)

Quotes from providers about their primary areas of concern regarding children

"Many [children] are coming in with significant deficits in social/emotional skills. Most of the children we are getting now have been home for 3 years and come into school with little developmentally appropriate skills."

"...some children do need one-to-one assistance that we do not have the availability for."

Providers' requests for additional supports or services to address concerns about the children in their care

36 open responses (14 center administrators & 22 family providers)

- A variety of suggestions for helping with challenging behaviors:
  - 4: In-classroom special education support staff / paraprofessionals
  - 3: Expanding early intervention services (e.g., "Birth to Three" for 3- to 5-year-olds)
  - 2: Expanding ECCP availability
  - 2: Coaches
  - 2: Support from mental health counselors / therapists

- 4 providers requested more training (e.g., on child development or managing children with behavioral challenges)

- 2 family providers requested curricula or lesson plans

Quotes from providers about what they need to support children

"Mental Health Supports for children, families, and staff, something other than ECCP that works with children with social/emotional and behavior challenges"

"Being able to have an extra staff member in the classroom for an extra set of "eyes" and more one-on-one time for the children that need that."

"Coaches, and other support in classrooms to provide teachers with techniques to handle behaviors"

Curricula, frameworks, or models providers are using to support children's learning and development

43 open responses (20 center administrators & 23 family providers)

- 18 (42%) mentioned the CT ELDS (13 center administrators & 5 family providers)
- 14 (33%) mentioned the CT DOTS (11 center administrators & 3 family providers)
- 15 (35%) mentioned a formal curriculum (14 center administrators & 1 family provider)
  - 9 Creative Curriculum / Teaching Strategies, 3 Second Step, 1 RULER, 1 Abeka, 1 Your Baby Can Read
- 7 mentioned a framework or model (all center administrators)
  - 5 Pyramid Model, 1 Responsive Classroom, 1 Reggio Emilia Approach
- 4 mentioned the ASQ and/or Sparkler app
- 1 mentioned "trauma-informed practices"