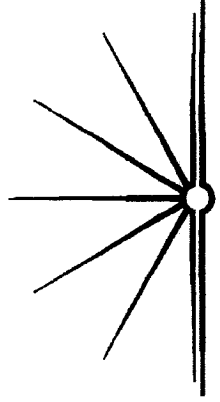


Home Education Study

Report of Findings

Office of the Board of Studies
NSW 2004
Home Education Study
- Report of Findings



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

This report was commissioned by the Office of the Board of Studies. The views expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of the Board of Studies.

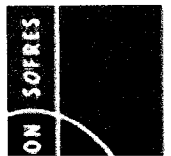
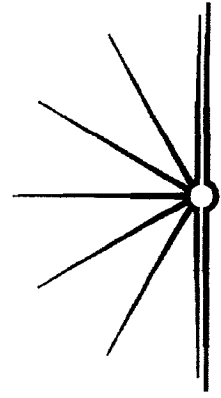
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The Survey goals

The Survey Goals

- The research was commissioned to assist the Government to evaluate the suitability of the requirements for home schooling registration amongst home educators and other interested groups
- It is anticipated that the research will lead to recommendations on...
 - Whether or not the introduction of regulations should be considered
 - If administrative requirements are preferred to regulations, what a revised set of requirements might include
 - The process by which compliance with regulations or requirements will be monitored
- Broadly the research is designed to determine...
 - Whether the requirements for home schooling should be as regulations or as administrative requirements
 - The means by which home educators might best demonstrate potential for or actual success of the home schooling program
 - How an education of the highest quality might be determined in the context of home schooling
 - The factors which contribute to/ensure a successful home schooling program

The Survey methodology

The Survey Methodology

Three Stage Research Program...

- Stage one - three group discussions and six in-depth interviews - issue insight and questionnaire design, conducted 25th October - 2nd November 1999
 - Stakeholders
 - Current Home Schoolers
- Stage two - pilot testing the questionnaire with home educators, N=5 in Sydney, Southern Sydney conducted face to face early December 1999
- Stage three - main study evaluation: self completion conducted between 11th February and 16th March 2000...
 - Registered home educators
 - Unregistered home educators and other interested parties
 - Stakeholders
- OBOS undertook the mail out (except those with an interest in home education who contacted TNS direct). The total mail out was as follows...
 - 1493 registered home educators (green survey form)
 - 8 stakeholders and 3 interested parties (pink survey form)
 - 42 individuals who contacted Taylor Nelson Sofres direct (yellow survey form)

The Survey Methodology

- OBOS placed an advertisement in Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Telegraph inviting interested parties to complete a questionnaire. A further 3 (pink) questionnaires were dispatched by OBOS to these interested parties, including a stamped addressed envelope. One completed pink questionnaire was returned to TNS (from a stakeholder)
- In all 422 questionnaires were received by TNS which represents a response rate of 28%, which is slightly above average for a self completion study
- 4 questionnaires were returned unanswered from lapsed registered home educators. These were not included in the final analysis
- 75 questionnaires were returned more than three days after the closing date and were not able to be included in the results (4 yellow, 71 green)
- 6 yellow questionnaires were returned...
 - Two unregistered home educators
 - Three interested parties
 - One member of the general public
- This report focuses on the 337 registered home educators, which includes 22 respondents whose registration has recently expired (but still with an interest in home education), yielding a 23% response rate

The Survey summary

Summary

Whether The Requirements For Home Schooling Should Be As Regulations Or As Administrative Requirements...

- The overwhelming majority of Home Educators prefer guidelines, not regulations
- Respondents do not favour guidelines that are more prescriptive or regulatory
- There are opportunities for the Office of the Board of Studies to improve the guidelines...
 - Using more common parlance and terminology that reflect the nature of home education
 - Being seen to be 'open' about this education choice, not discouraging or demotivating
 - On some issues related to how home educators demonstrate the success of their program, i.e. approaches to record keeping

Summary

The Means By Which Home Educators Might Best Demonstrate Potential For Or Actual Success Of The Home Schooling Program...

- A number of aspects were highlighted by home educators as being suitable to demonstrate the intention for successful home schooling. When first applying for registration, the most common aspects were:
 - a description of the approach;
 - a statement of broad curriculum goals; and
 - a list of what is expected the child will learn
- For subsequent applications, success could best be demonstrated by an indication of what the child has learnt, and through their work books and projects

Summary

How An Education Of The Highest Quality Might Be Determined...

- There are opportunities for the Office of the Board of Studies...
 - To improve its standing amongst home educators by demonstrating an understanding of their choice to home school
 - To provide information and information sources to potential and current home educators. A wide variety of information has been suggested by home educators in this study, including...
 - Reference lists/text book lists
 - Related internet/website information
 - How to access the Board of Studies syllabuses
 - How to access resources for teaching
 - Useful pointers when designing own study program
 - Information about a range of student counselling services
 - Contact details for networks of home educators
 - Advice about pathways to university or other post secondary options (without the HSC)

Summary

The Findings Of This Study Have Clearly Shown...

- That home educators value 'benchmarking' opportunities such as basic skills tests. This enables the home schooling parent or carer to be independently satisfied with the education they are delivering and ensure that they are not disadvantaging their child, or indeed facilitating their children to do 'better than average'
- That the authorised persons visit is supported by the majority and that there are benefits to the home schooling family associated with this visit
- That 60% of registered home schoolers surveyed expected to continue home schooling for the next two years at least. This shows that home schooling attracts long term committed families as well as those choosing this education choice for only a short term
- That first time applicants require more support, particularly concerning 'how to' and that those with 2-4 years of experience are more demanding and questioning. Those with 5+ years of experience have perhaps accepted the 'status quo'

Summary

Factors Which Contribute To Ensure A Successful Home Schooling Program...

- The performance ratings given to 16 specific elements of the guidelines, by home educators, show that a number of these elements can be improved. Reflecting that the contents of the questionnaire showed a high degree of relevance to the guideline debate, all 16 elements were considered important to the majority of home educators. The highest performance rating given was the 'ease of completing the application form' (74% good performance) and the lowest was 'providing information about resources available to home educators (17% good performance)
- The following table lists the elements in order of importance to home educators and provides the good performance rating for each

Relative Performance

Aspect	Importance %	Performance %
Acknowledging that home schooling is a legitimate form of education	92	49
Providing information about resources available to home educators	87	17
Having a clear understanding of the steps required	81	60
Knowing exactly what the conditions of registration are	81	49
Providing information about how to go about home schooling	80	28
Knowing what the child is expected to learn (minimum curriculum)	79	48
Ease of completing the application form	78	74
Knowing what is expected of a committed person	74	43
Being encouraged to proceed	70	41
Knowing what is acceptable record keeping	68	36
Providing information about home educator networks	68	27
Knowing what are acceptable facilities	66	51
Explaining ways of developing a suitable plan for the child's learning	66	25
Explaining ways of record keeping	65	31
Being advised of the benefits of registration	59	27
Having preliminary discussion about the registration process with the AP before the AP visits my home	59	40

 = High calls to action
  = Higher calls to action

Summary

- By plotting each of these 16 elements on their importance to home educators, coupled with their performance rating, it is possible to identify the most important calls to action. These are elements that are considered important to home educators but that are currently scoring a poor performance and many are only receiving a 'fair' performance rating
- The chart on the next page clearly shows that providing information both about resources available to home educators and how to go about home schooling are the major calls to action
- Other important calls to action include acknowledging that home schooling is a legitimate form of education, knowing exactly what the conditions of registration are, knowing what the child is expected to learn (minimum curriculum), and having a clear understanding of the steps required to register
- It shows that the guidelines are best meeting home educator needs on 'the ease of completing the form'

Relative Performance

Importance

100%

85%

70%

55%



0%

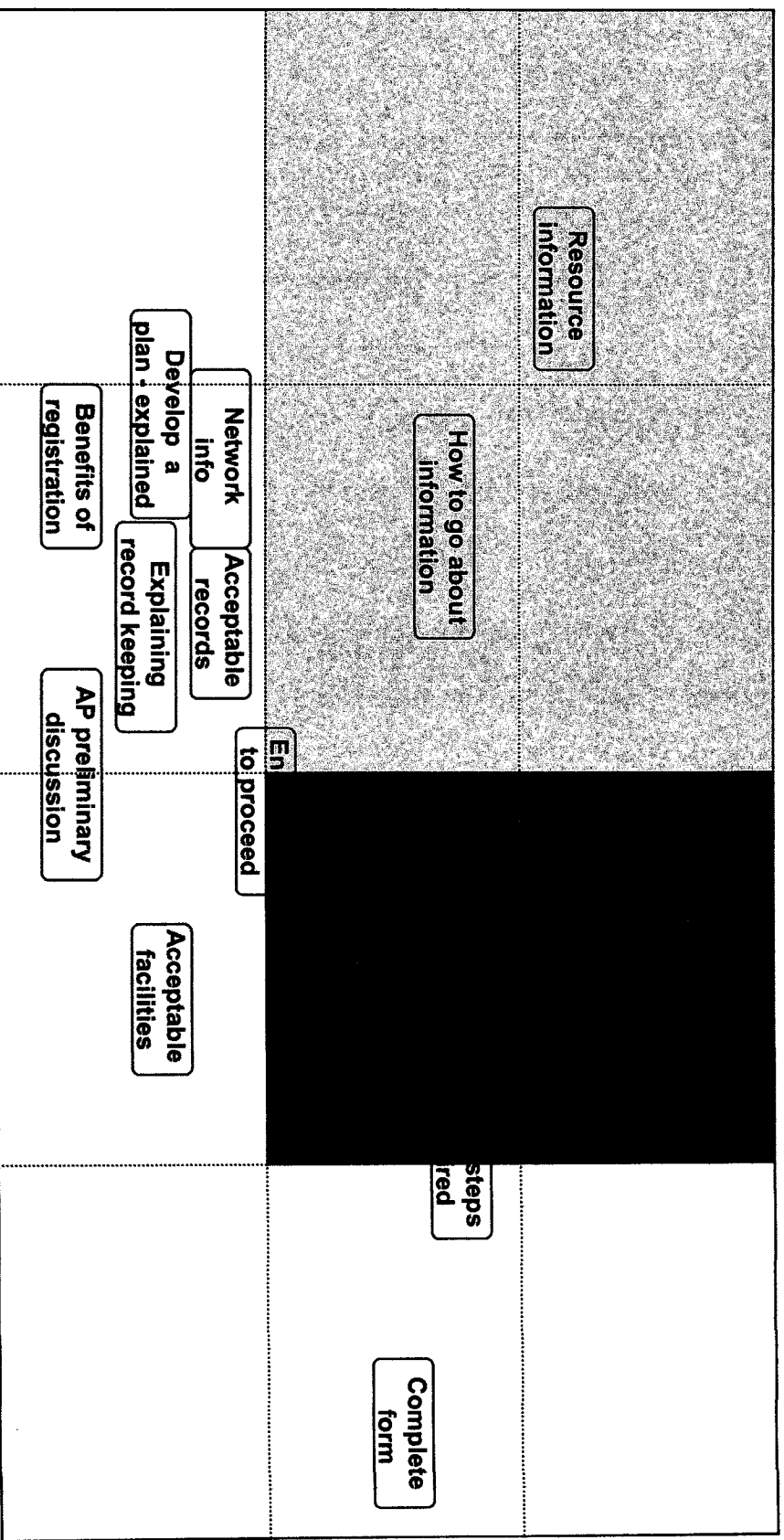
20%

40%

60%

80%
Performance

 = Higher calls to action
 = High calls to action



Characteristics Of home educators surveyed

Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

- 83% of registered home educators were aged between 30 and 49 years of age. 74% of families surveyed reported the female was the main home educator, with 15% reporting it was both the male and female's role
- The survey coverage included all parts of NSW with 26% coming from Sydney metro areas, 12% from Newcastle or Illawarra, 45% from rural New South Wales, 8% from remote New South Wales (living west of the Great Dividing Range and further than 500 km from Sydney GPO)
- Where home educators were educating primary school aged children, just under a third home schooled only one child, whilst 40% reported they were home schooling two or more primary school aged children. Qualitative research identified that a positive home schooling experience with one child had a powerful effect on encouraging both the parents and the younger siblings to continue the pattern of home schooling

Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

- The broad nature of the home educators sampled in this study is reflected in the number of home schooling years involved, with about a third having less than one years experience, one third with 1-4 years and one third with five years or more
- 29% of those surveyed were home schooling at a secondary level
- Whilst the primary aged home educators had a broad range of home schooling years experience, half of the secondary aged home educators had five years or more home schooling experience and only 23% had only 1-2 years of home schooling experience
- The major reason leading parents to home school was that it better suited their children's needs. Qualitative insight showed that these needs ranged from wanting to enable the child to develop its own personality and values without the influence of peer pressure, the child just not 'fitting in' to school and unable to settle, to those with particular difficulties (either learning or personality)
- A significant minority felt home schooling satisfied a more philosophical need that the parents should be responsible for the education and development of their children

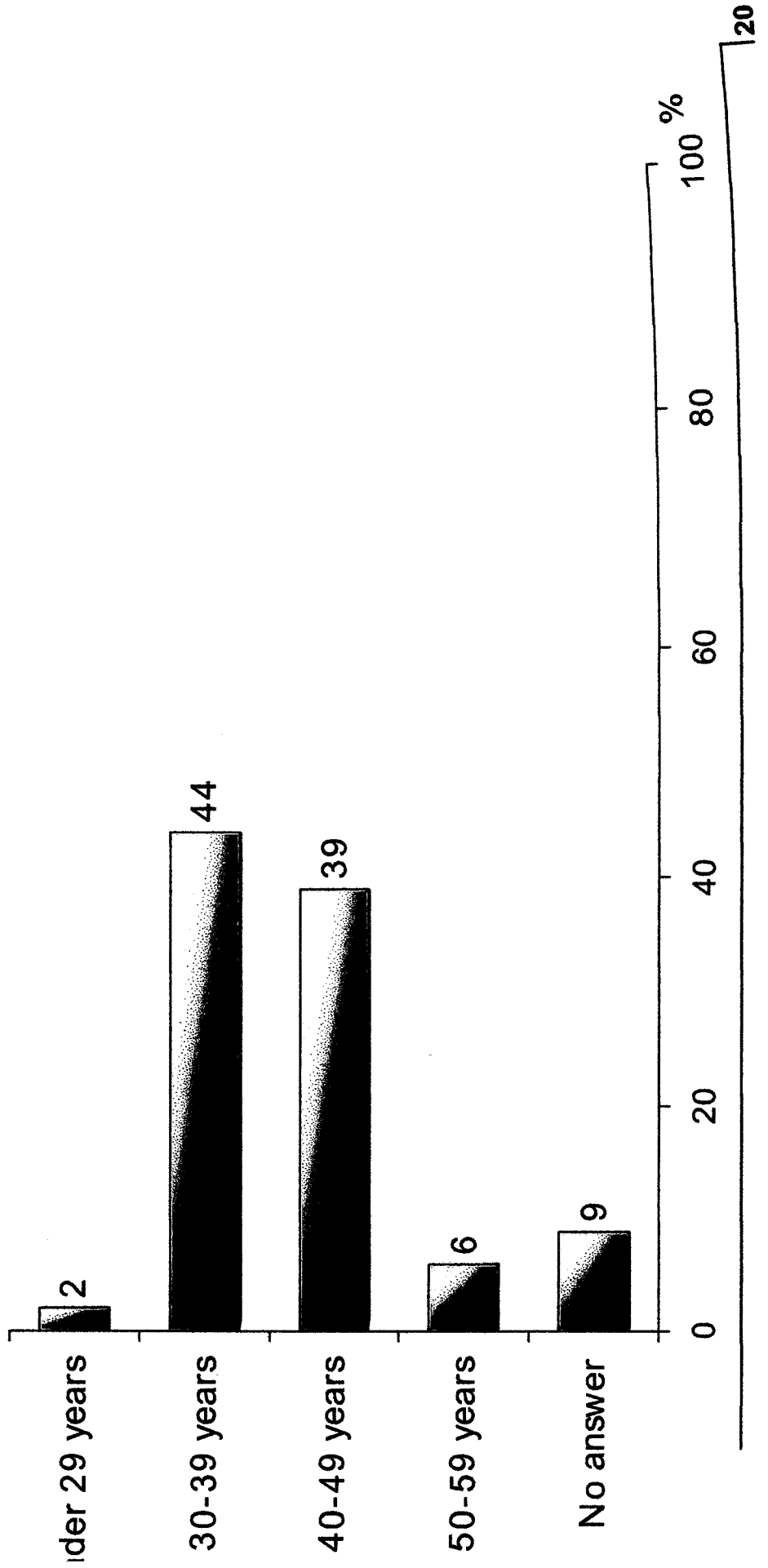
Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

- 77% of those surveyed reported they did not know for how long they would continue home educating their child, saying it would continue as long as it was in their child's best interest
- Nearly 50% of home educators surveyed felt they would themselves be involved in home schooling for six years or longer

Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. What age bracket does the major home educator fit into?

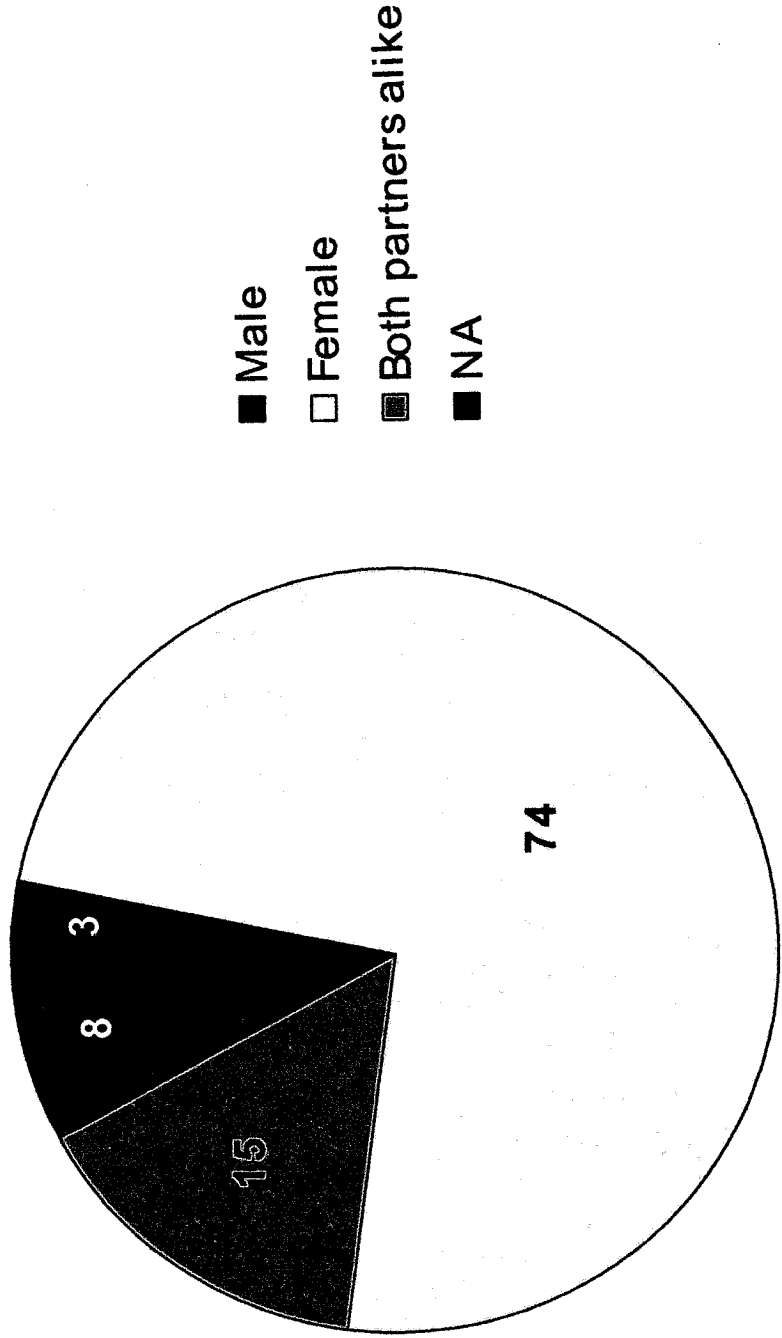
Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. Who is the major Home Educator in your family unit?

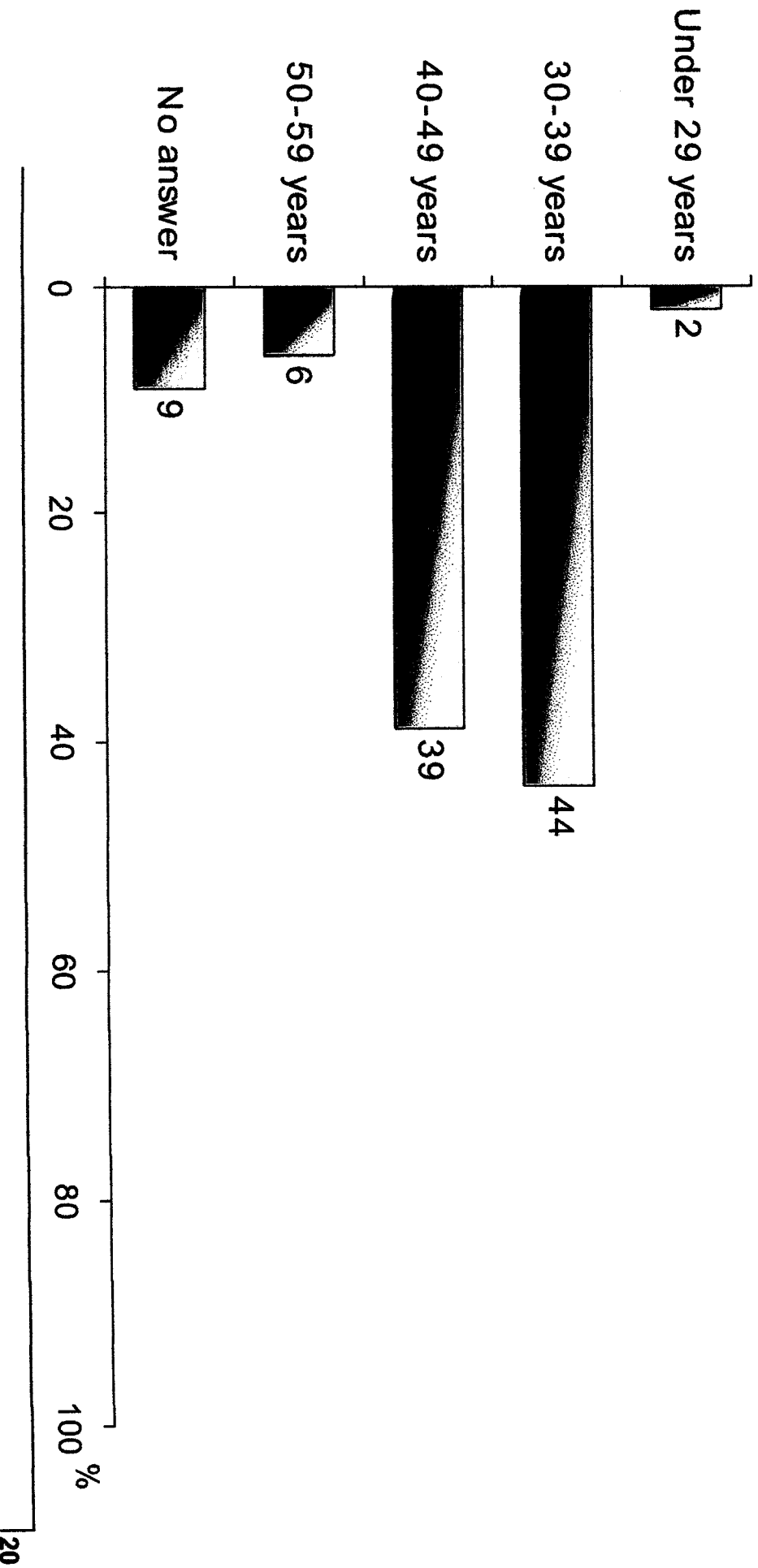
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Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. What age bracket does the major home educator fit into?

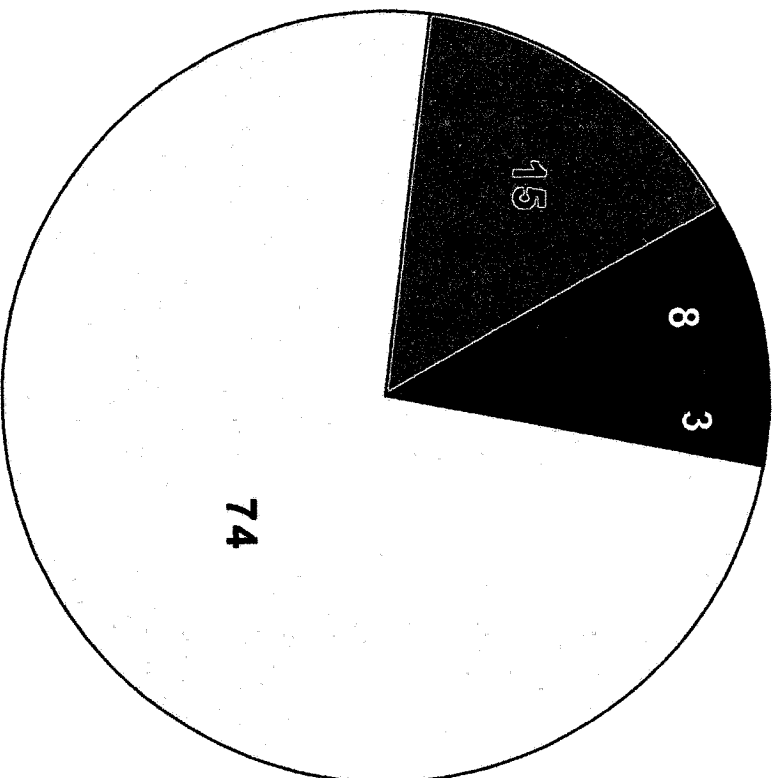
Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. Who is the major Home Educator in your family unit?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

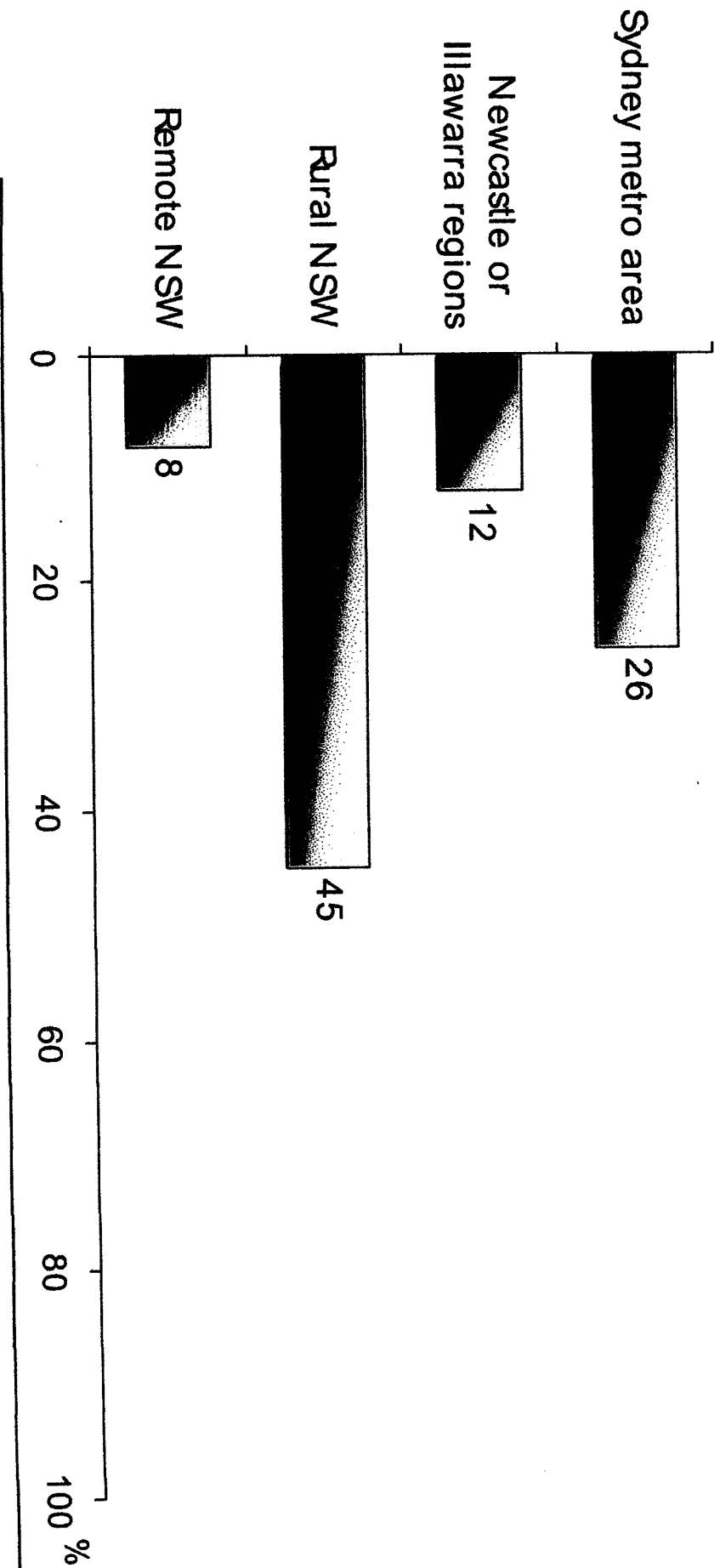


- Male
- Female
- Both partners alike
- NA

Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. In what part of New South Wales do you currently live?

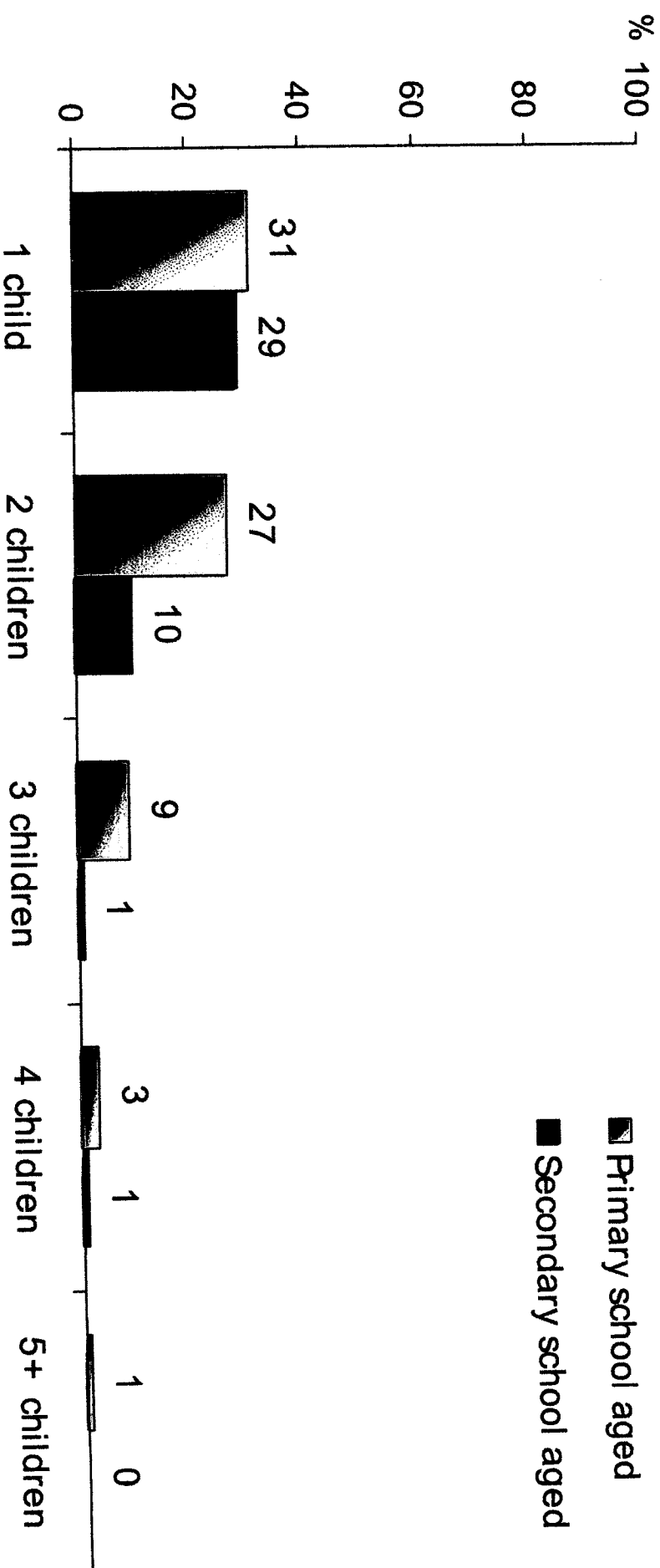
Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. How many of your children are being home educated?

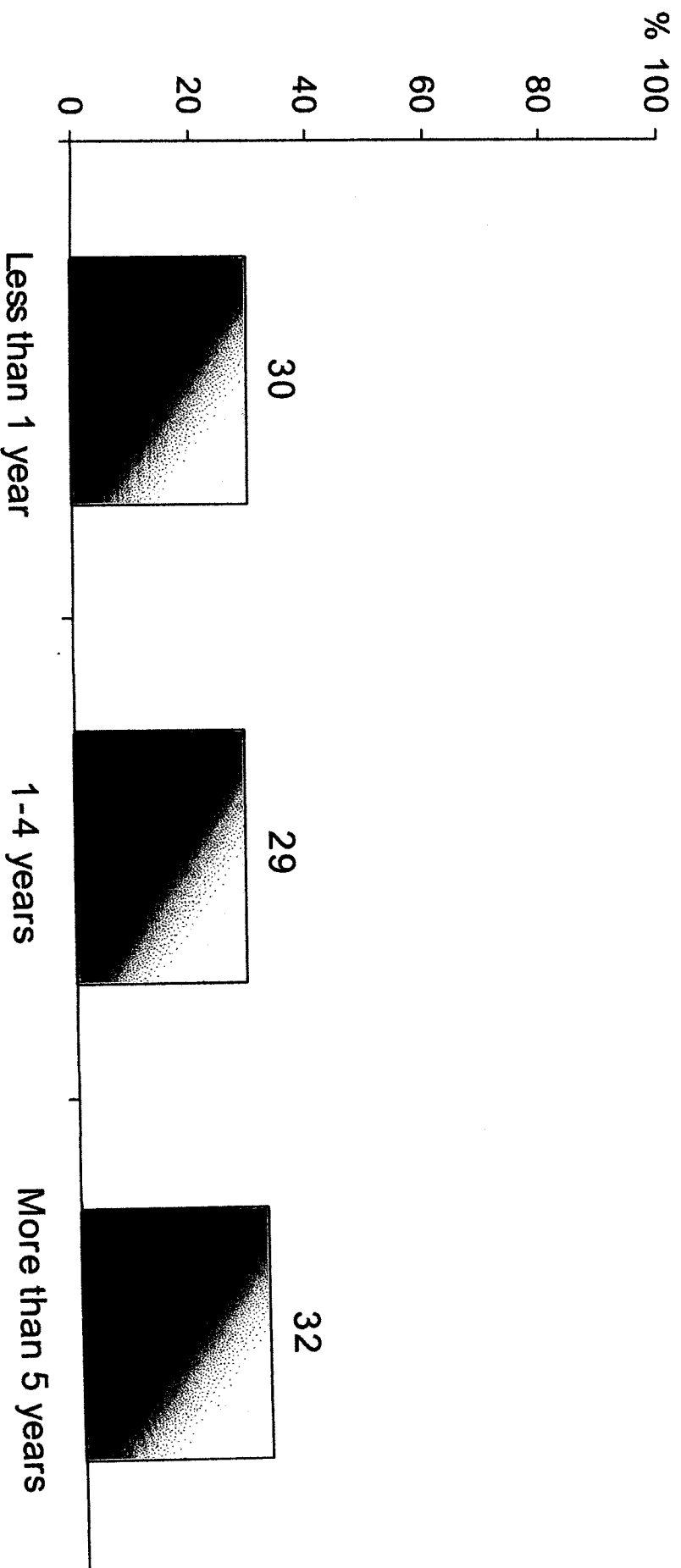
Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. How many years have you been home schooling?

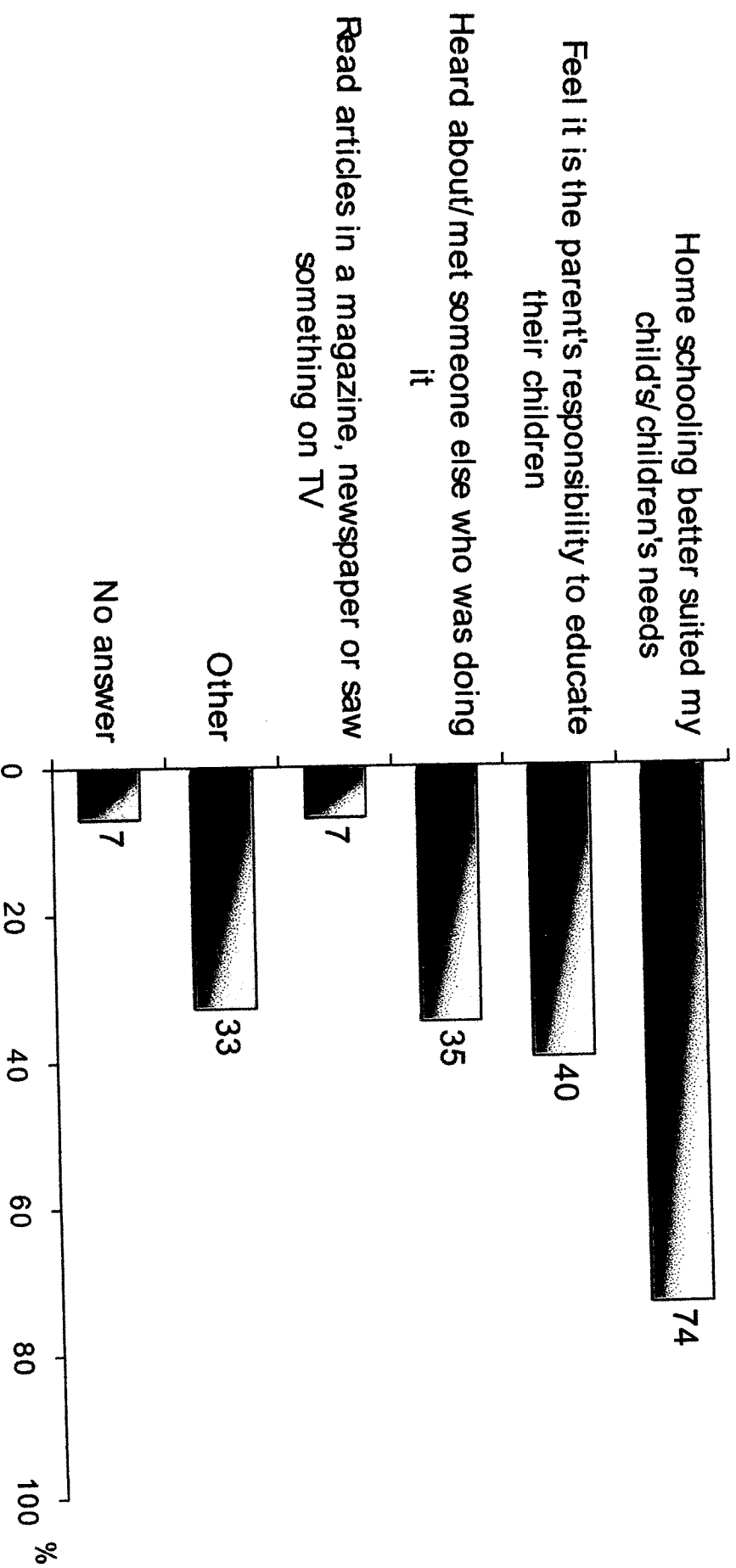
Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. What were the main factors that led you to become involved in home education?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. What were the main factors that led you to become involved in home education?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

'Other' Issues (33%) Raised Were...

- A large majority say they were disappointed mainly with their experiences in schools. A range of issues were raised including:
 - Individual teacher
 - Class sizes
 - Academic status
 - Peer influence
 - Discipline
 - Religious reasons
- A small group of home educators mentioned bullying, health and welfare concerns

Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. What were the main factors that led you to become involved in home education?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

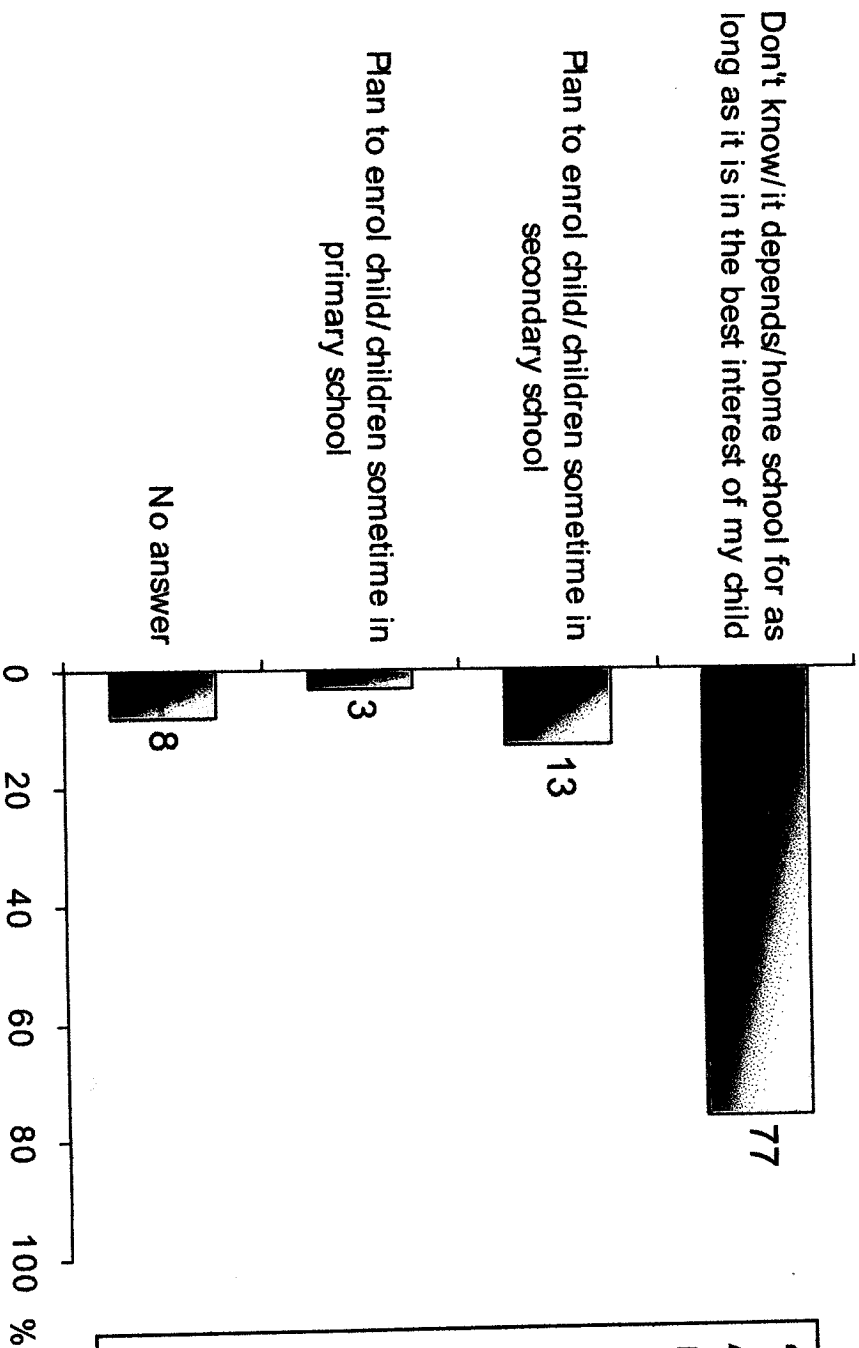
'Other' Issues (33%) Raised Were...

- A large group believes that home schooling promotes a better family lifestyle, or they simply wanted to spend more time with their children and watch them grow up and see them learn and develop into individuals. They want to spend more quality time with their children and experience learning with them
- Another group mentions transportation distance and road-safety problems as the reason for home schooling
- Some live a very transient life and didn't want the children having to change schools

Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. For how long do you expect to home school?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



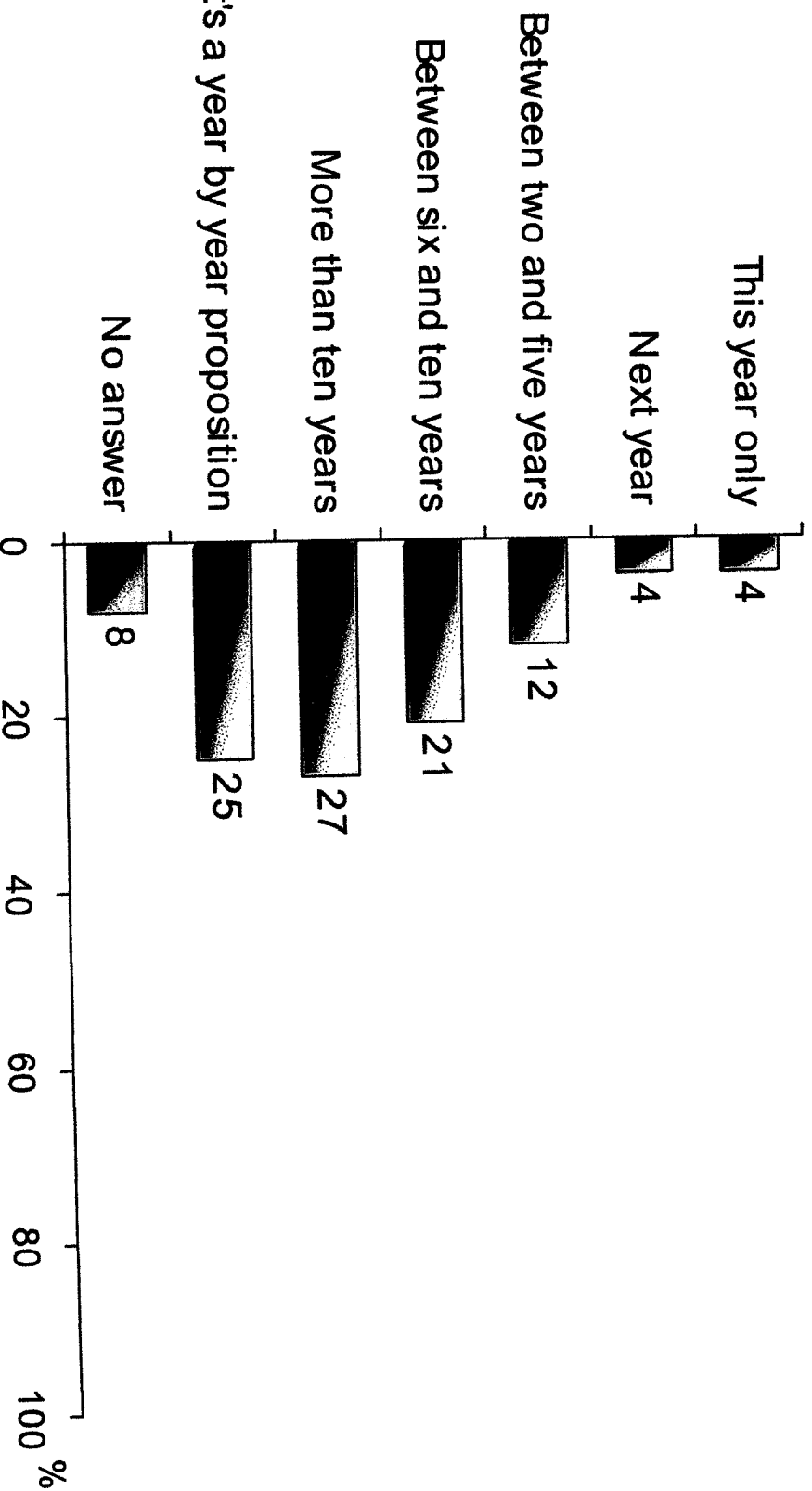
'Other' Issues Being Spoken About Are...

- Some parents plan to home school till the child has finished all schooling and is ready to go to university or TAFE
- Some also plan to enrol children into distant education when they reach secondary school
- A few say they will enrol children in school when the children decide they want to go

Characteristics Of Home Educators Surveyed

Q. How long do you plan to continue home education?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Main Survey results

Main Results

satisfaction with current guidelines

Satisfaction With Current Guidelines

- There was only a small minority of support for Regulations that would be specified in legislation (3%). The clear majority (84%) of registered home educators had a preference for home schooling registration to be processed through Guidelines
- Support for Guidelines rather than regulation was even stronger in rural (87%) and remote areas (96%)
- A minority of home educators (19%) felt the Guidelines should be more detailed and directive. Opinions were equally split over whether the Guidelines should stay as they are or be more flexible
- The call for more flexibility was stronger amongst more experienced home educators (47% amongst those with five or more years of experience), whilst those seeking more detailed and directive guidance were more likely to have just started home schooling. This suggests that more information and guidance would be helpful for 'first time' home schoolers

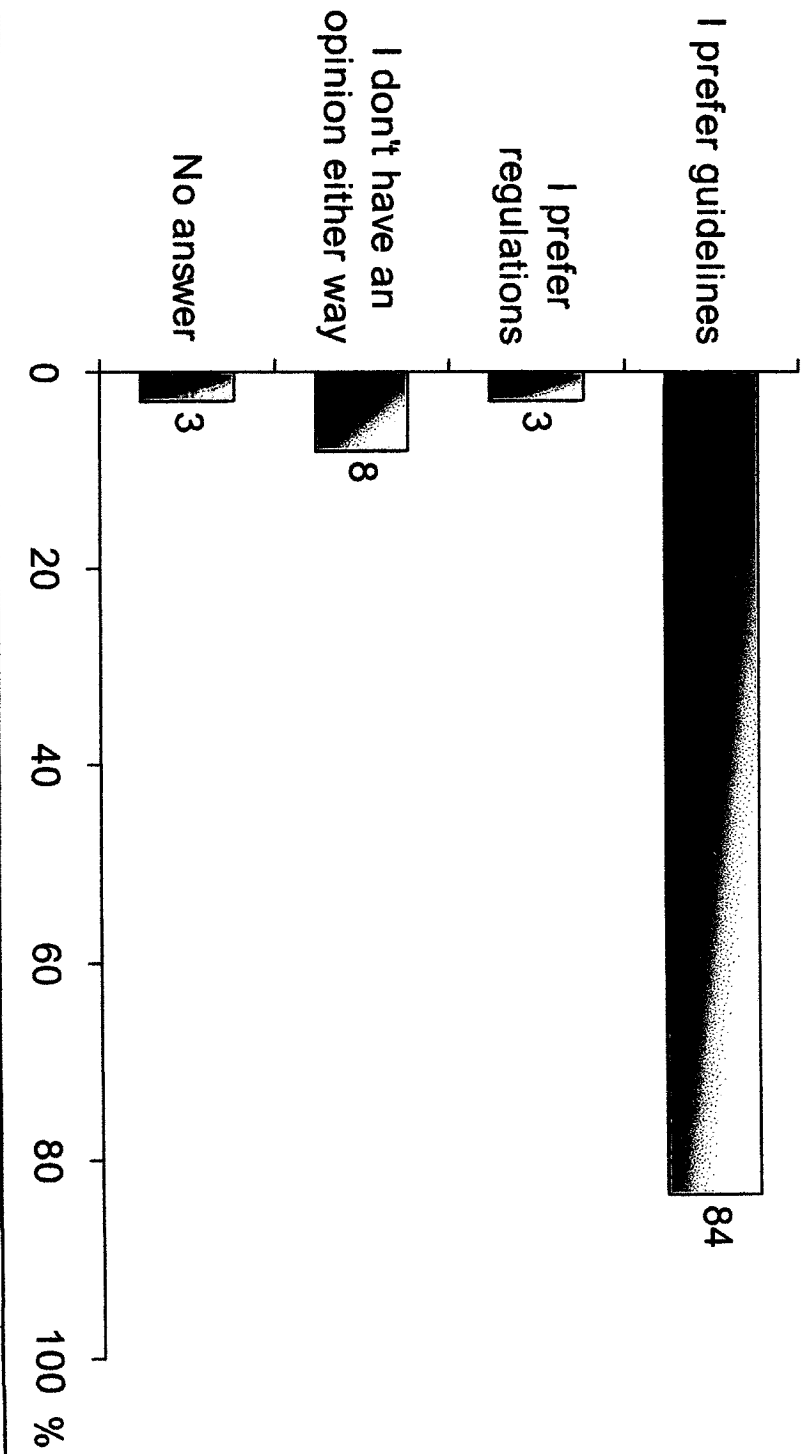
Satisfaction With Current Guidelines

- In the qualitative research, home educators recognised that they were an 'individualist' group. By their very nature, they had elected to 'row their own boat'. A flexible approach therefore empowered them to create a learning environment and approach that suited the individual nature of each child. This individual approach manifested itself during discussion about home education networks. Whilst the home educators enjoyed the benefits of being associated with a network, they still carried out their home schooling program 'their way'. Whilst home schooling family groups did meet from time to time or even regularly, the majority of home schooling was taking place at an individual level
- The call for guidelines that reflect the spirit of home schooling was mentioned more by those in remote NSW (30%) and those with more experience 2-4 years (25%) and 5+ years (27%). Remote home educators were more likely to mention specifics regarding the expected student levels to be reached (26%) and to call for more down to earth language (15%)
- Those with under one years experience mentioned more information or advice about the curriculum (16%)

Guideline Or Regulation

Q. Would you prefer home schooling registration to be processed through guidelines (as it is now) or would you prefer regulations that would be specified in legislation?

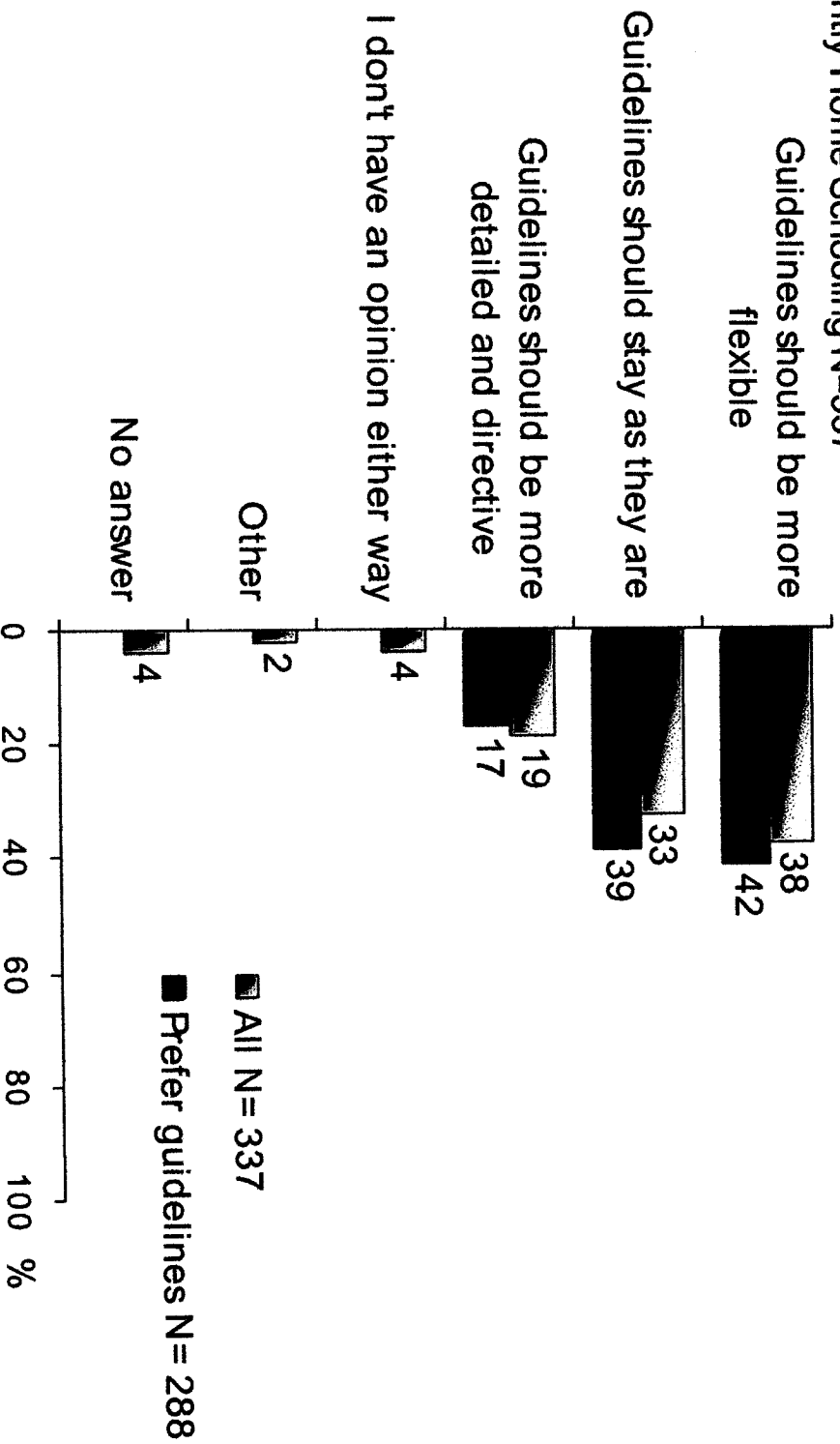
Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Directive Or Flexible

Q. Some people have called for the guidelines to be more detailed and directive in nature and other people have called for the guidelines to be more flexible. What is your opinion?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



One Guideline Change

- When asked in the main study to nominate any one significant change that could be brought about for the improvement of home schooling, comments related mostly to resource information and material, or to recognition issues
- The largest single comment related to information on resources and material available so that home educators can keep up their standards (23%) and some specific information needs were cited

One Guideline Change

Q. If you could make one significant change to the Guidelines - what would that be?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N= 337	%
Reflect the variety/spirit of home schooling/less rigid	20
More specific as to expected student levels to be reached	18
More information/advice on curriculum	12
Written in everyday/down to earth language	10
Information on the ups and downs of home schooling written by experienced home schoolers	7
List of resources available	6
Like them as they are	4
Abolish them - they are too strict	3
Discussing the curriculum, rather than writing it out	2
More funding for home schooling	1
Followup/support by the authorised person	1
Access to the same material used by Distance Education Centre (DEC) students	1

Main Results

home schooling - general

Home Schooling In General

- There were a number of themes explored when home educators were asked to nominate one change for the improvement of home schooling in general
- Information and resource material along with raised public awareness and recognition were common themes
- More information on resources etc was mentioned more by those in remote areas (30%) and those with 2-4 years experience (29%)
- Acceptance that home schooling is different to conventional schooling was mentioned more often by remote home schoolers (26%) and those with 5+ years of experience (23%)
- When asked about issues home educators would like to raise in relation to the requirements for home schooling (outside those already covered by the survey), the individual nature of home schooling was evident i.e. recognition that home schooling is different, can be more flexible and can suit children at a different pace. Some home educators called for greater interaction with the authorised person whilst others called for less outside influence

General

Q. If you were likely to see one significant change brought about for the improvement of home education - what would that be?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337	%
Information on resources and material available/keep up to standards	23
Acceptance by OBOS that HS is different to conventional school	15
More public awareness	12
Access to local school facilities/printed material/activities	12
Flexibility/less rigid rules	12
Financial assistance	11
Better understanding by OBOS of childrens different needs	11
A list of text books/printed material	9
Home schooling to be viewed more seriously	9
Official recognition of child's achievement of required level of education	7
Access to SC/HSC/TAFE	6
Understanding the benefits to children of home schoolers	6
Authorised person ensure child/ren is getting best possible education	5
Discounts on educational material	3
More open approach by schools/allow HS to attend selected classes	2

General

Q. Are there any other issues that you would like to raise in relation to the requirements for home schooling?

	%
Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337	
Home schooling is 'different'/more informal/less strict	16
Flexibility/choose the type of education that suits your child	13
Acceptance that children work in different paces	10
Incentive to home schoolers/encouragement for efforts	7
More interaction with authorised person	6
Easier access to school facilities/activities	6
Authorised person to be helpful to parent and child	5
Regulations/make sure home schoolers are giving best possible education to their child	5
Less outside influence	5
Financial assistance	5
Dispel the myth that home schooling is inferior to conventional education	4
Record keeping should not be compulsory/waste of time	4
More information/public awareness on how to register for home schooling	4
Access to sit for SC/HSC/Tech courses	2
Accreditation/recognition of achievement	2

Main Results

attitudes towards

guideline specifics

Satisfaction With Current Guidelines

- Whilst the majority of home educators felt that the Guidelines are easy to understand (56% total agree) and are helpful (65% total agree), there was a substantial minority who felt they were not (25% not easy to understand and 15% not helpful). Those considering the Guidelines to be unhelpful were more likely to be experienced home educators but those saying the Guidelines were not easy to understand came from older home educators
- Opinions were very evenly divided on whether the Guidelines reflected an understanding of home schooling. Those with more home schooling experience, who expected to home school for two years or more, and who home schooled primary aged children were more likely to feel the Guidelines did not reflect an understanding. First time home educators, and secondary aged home educators tend to agree they do reflect an understanding
- Qualitative feedback was positive on the inclusion of the minimum curriculum section in the Guidelines as it was felt this represented some real and tangible information about what was required... 'now we are really getting down to it... a real starting point'

Satisfaction With Current Guidelines

- The overwhelming majority (92%) considered it was important (rated 4 or 5 out of possible 5) that the Guidelines acknowledged home schooling as a legitimate form of education. However only 49% felt that the Guidelines performance was good (rated 4 or 5 out of possible 5) on this aspect. This suggests there is a 'gap' between expectation and service delivery on legitimacy. Those home educators who were 'first timers' and those who expected their involvement to be of short duration rated the guidelines more favourably
- The large majority (74%) felt that it was important to know what is expected of a committed person... 43% of home educators felt that the Guidelines performed well on this aspect. Older home educators were more critical
- Home educators felt that their very involvement in home schooling was the absolute sign of commitment and that they should not be asked to provide further evidence of their commitment. The personal (and spouse/partner) implications of the choice to home educate, (such as loss of free time, reduction in social time outside the family, substantial responsibility shouldered), are indicators of the commitment

Overview - Attitudes Towards The Guidelines

Q. Here are some statements made about the general attitudes towards the guidelines. Do you agree?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

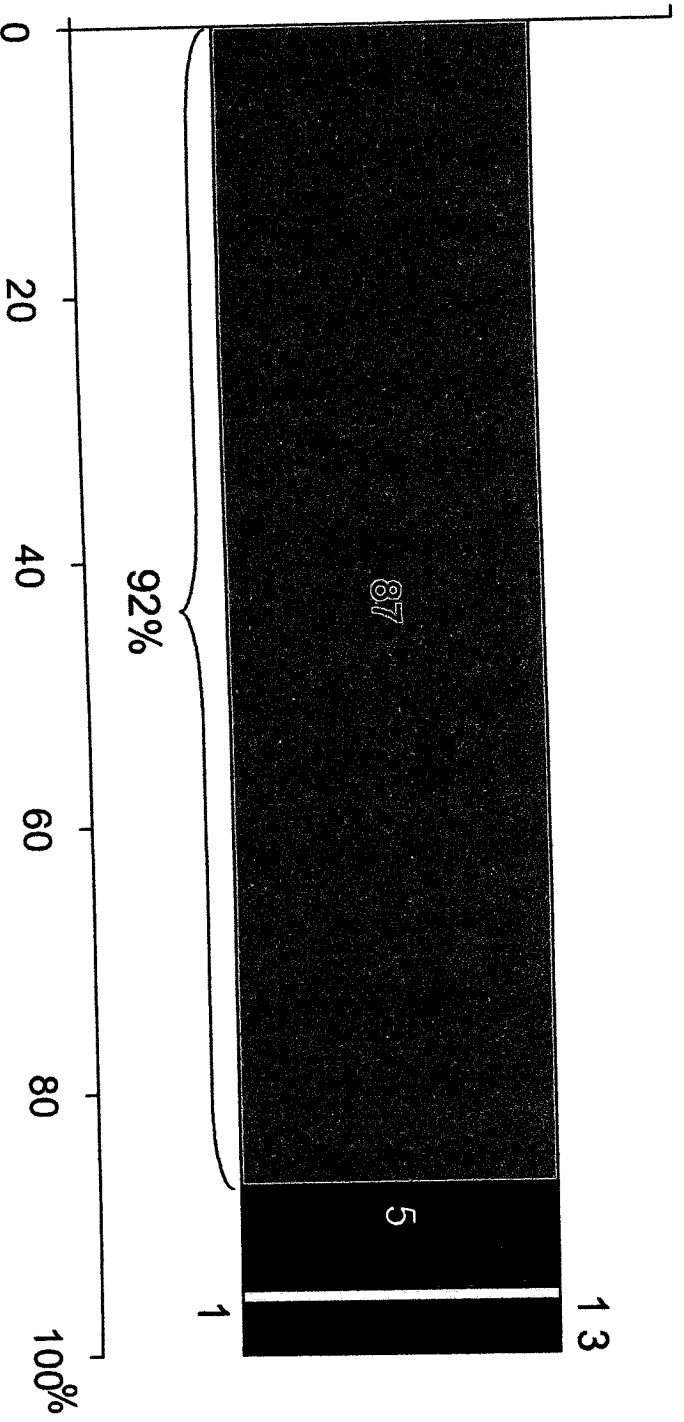


Importance Of Acknowledgement

Q. How important is the following aspect to successful home schooling?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

- High importance
- Four
- Three
- Two
- Low importance
- NA



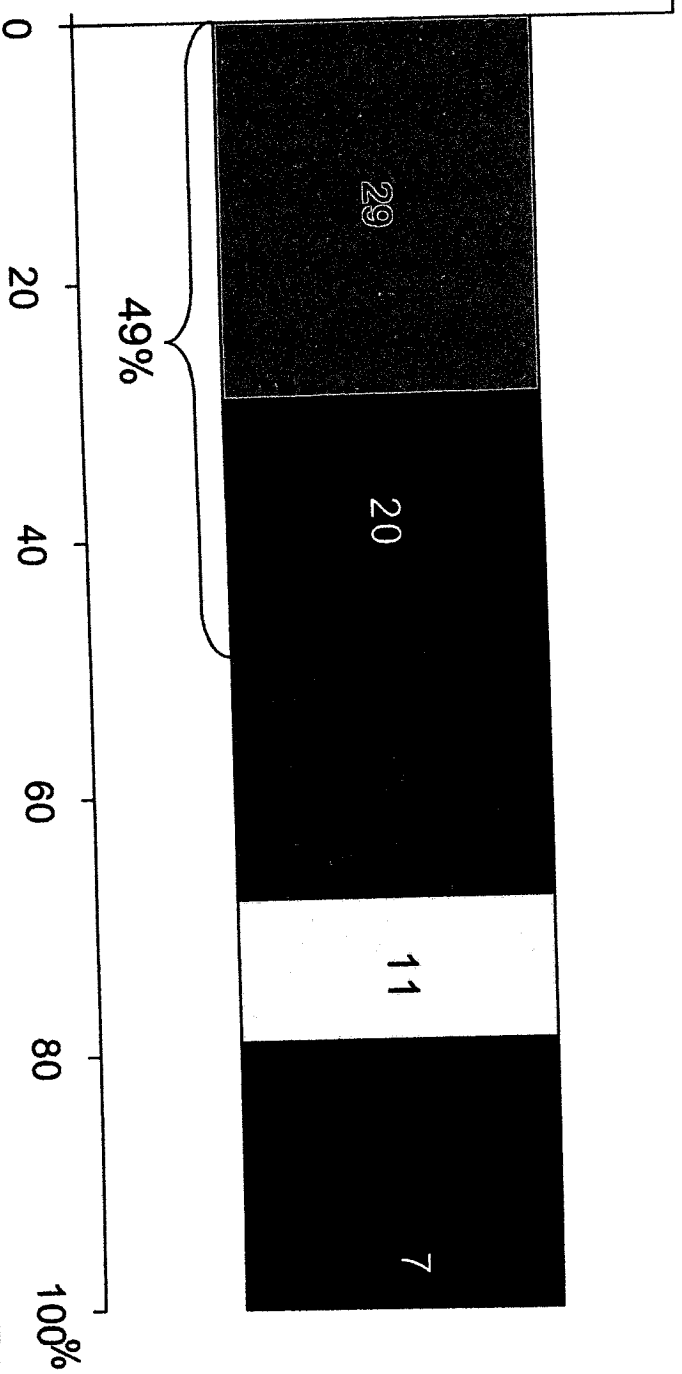
Acknowledging that home schooling is a legitimate form of education

Guideline Performance - Acknowledgement

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspect?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

- Good performance
- Four
- Three
- Two
- Poor performance
- NA

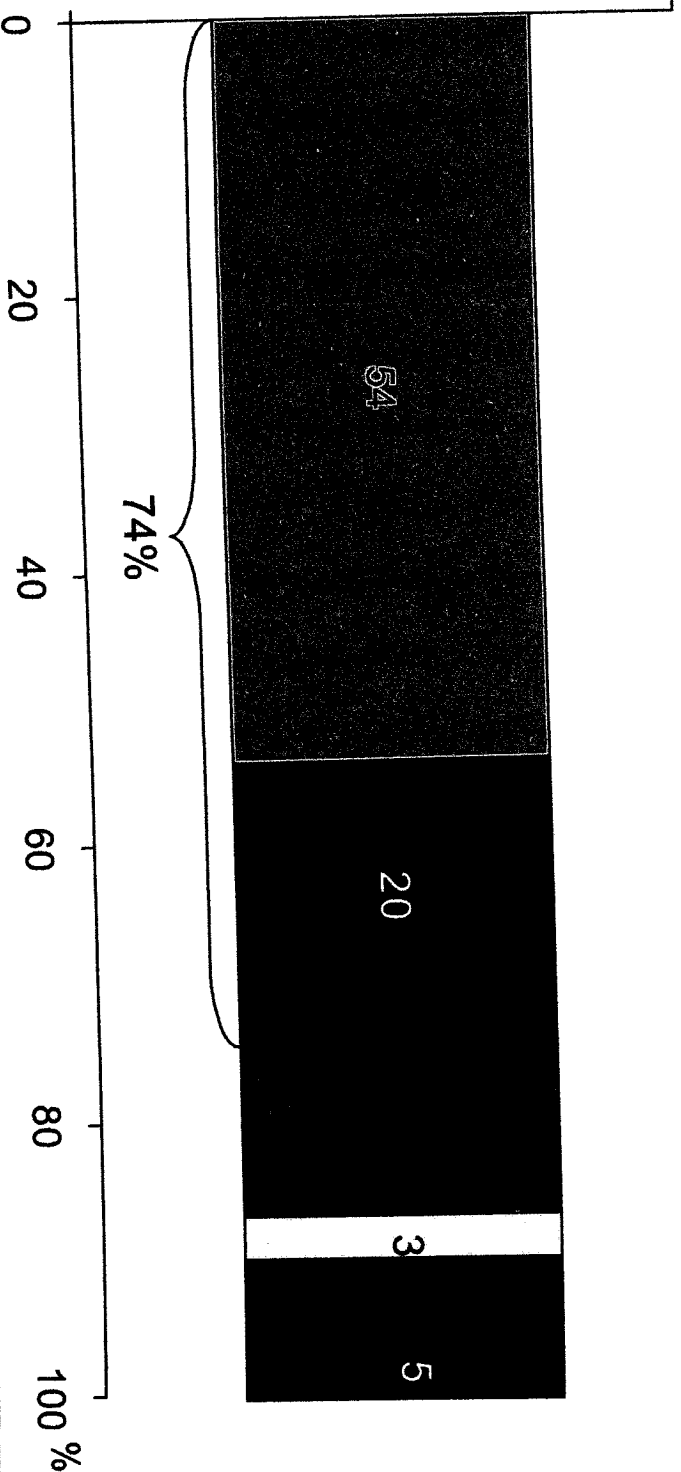


Importance Of Aspects - Commitment

Q. How important is the following aspect to successful home schooling?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

- High importance
- Four
- Three
- Two
- Low importance
- NA

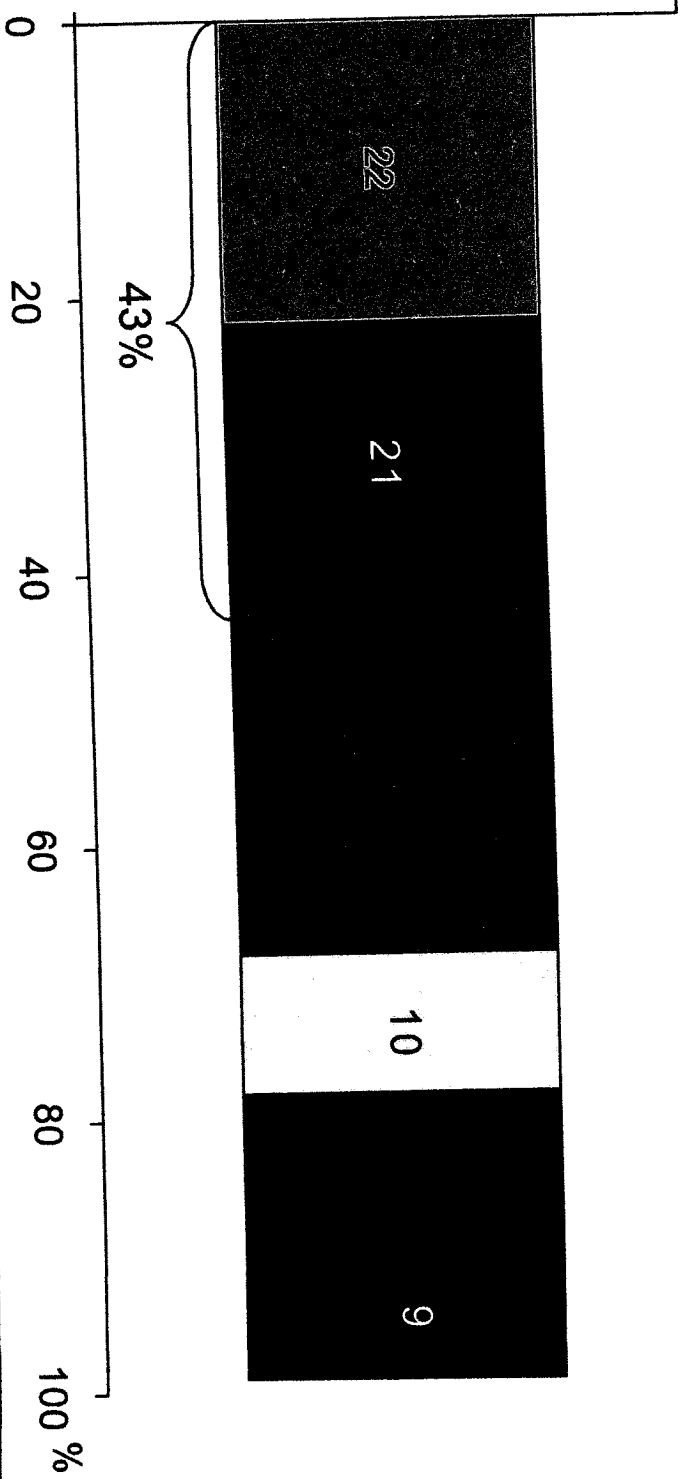


Guideline Performance - Commitment

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspect?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

- Good performance
- Four
- Three
- Two
- Poor performance
- NA



Main Results the application

The Application Process

- The most important aspects regarding the application were having a clear understanding of the steps required and knowing exactly what the conditions of registration are (81% each)
- The next most important aspect was the ease of completing the application form (78%), followed by encouragement to proceed (70%)
- Being advised of the benefits of registration was important to nearly six in ten home educators
- All these aspects were even more important to first time home educators

The Application Process

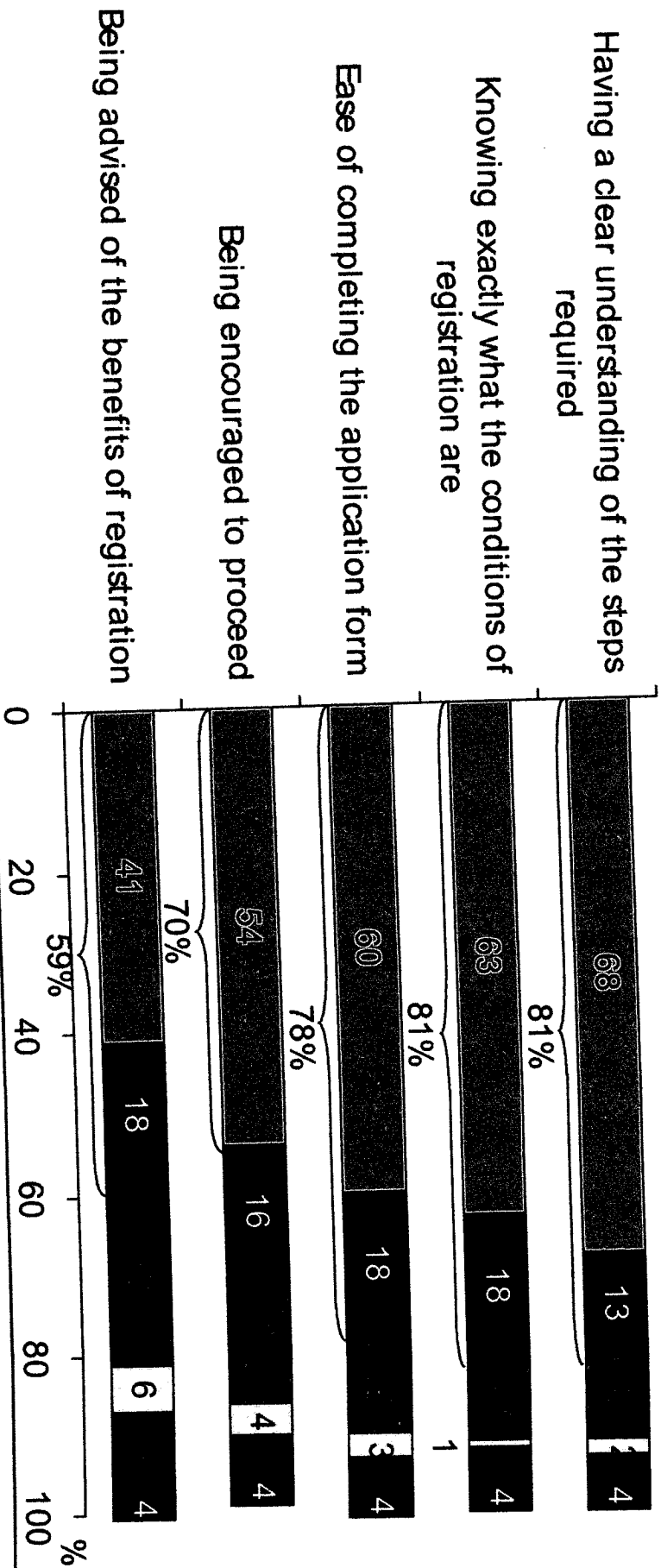
- The Guidelines performed well on ease of completing the application form (74%), and having a clear understanding of the steps required (60%). Remote home educators rated these performance aspects slightly more highly, as did first time home educators. Younger home educators also rated the ease of completing the form higher
- Guideline performance was favourable regarding knowing exactly what the conditions of registration were (49%) and being encouraged to proceed (41%)
- There was little recognition that the benefits of registration were advised by the guidelines (27% good) and 23% rated the guidelines poorly (scoring one out of five)

Importance Of Aspects - The Application Process

Q. How important are the following aspects to successful home schooling?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

- High importance
- Four
- Three
- Two
- Low importance
- NA

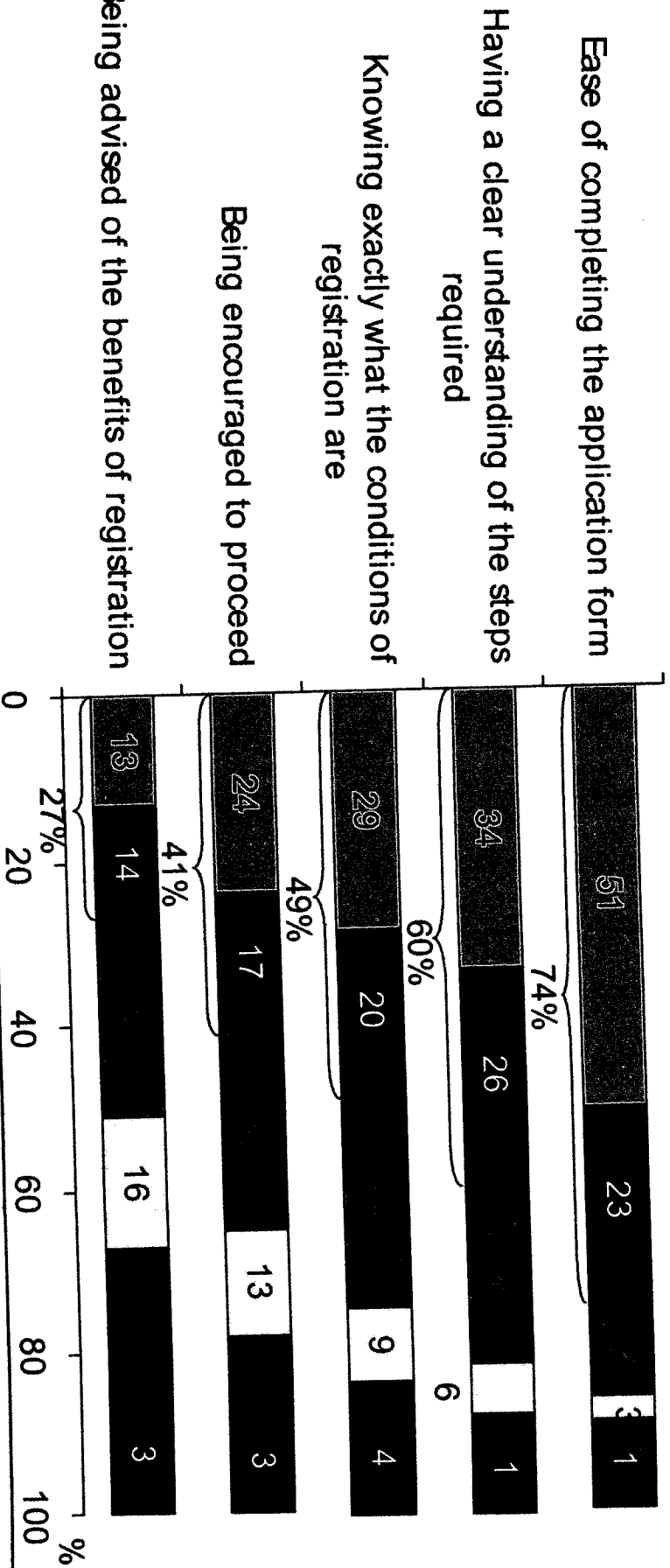


Guideline Performance - The Application Process

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspects?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Good performance
 Four
 Three
 Two
 Poor performance
 Not sure
 NA



Main Results **the language**

e Language Used

Generally home educators do not think that the Guidelines use language that match the spirit of home schooling (48%). Only 22% agree that they do. Primary aged home educators were more critical as were those with two or more years of experience, and those who are planning to be involved on a long term basis

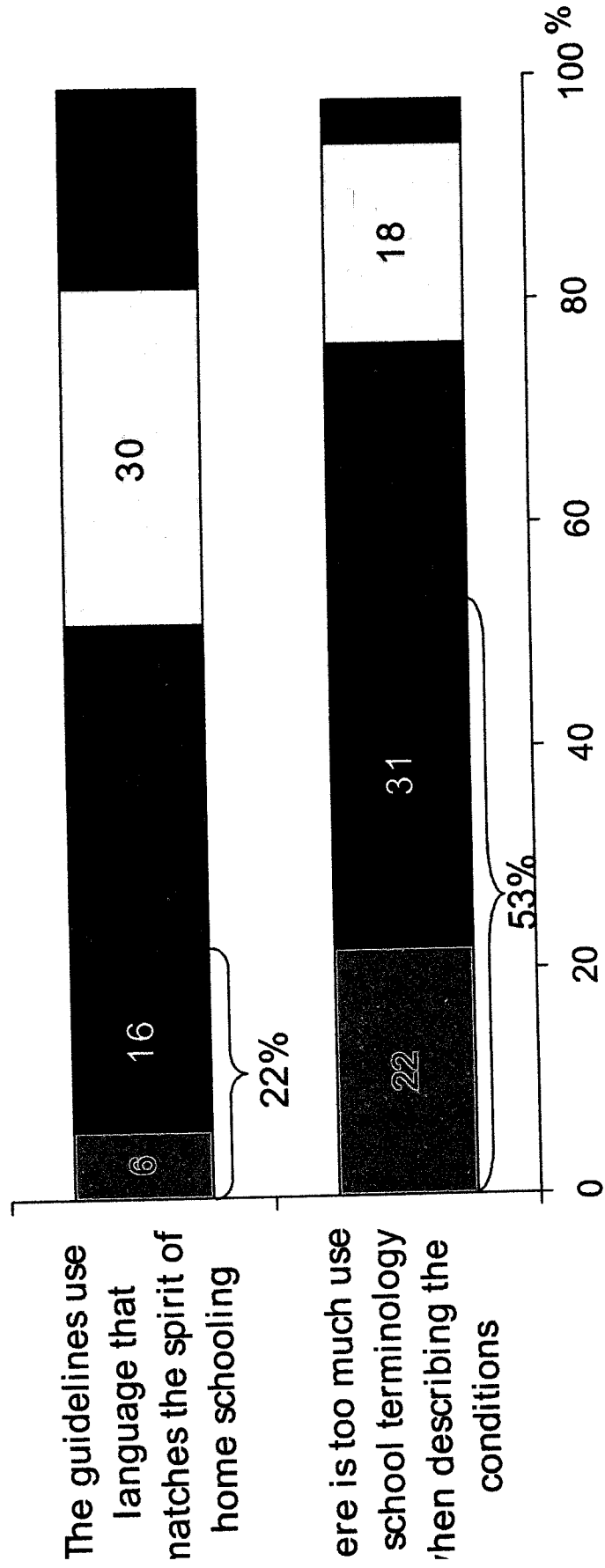
53% of home educators were critical of the excessive use of school terminology when describing the conditions. Criticism was higher amongst those with two or more years of experience

Attitudes Towards Language

Here are some statements made about the language used in the guidelines. Do you agree or disagree?

Sample: Currently Home Schooling N=337

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither □ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



Main Results **the curriculum**

e Curriculum

79% of home educators believed an important aspect to successful home schooling is knowing what the child is expected to learn. This view is equally shared by primary and secondary home educators. First timers believe this is more important again (86%) compared with those with 5+ years of experience (70%)

66% of home educators believed an important aspect of successful home schooling was explaining ways of developing a suitable plan for the child's learning. Again this is considered more important for first timers (72%) compared with experienced hands (58%)

Less than half the home educators (48%) felt the guidelines were performing well on outlining what the child is expected to learn. This was rated similarly across demographic groups

Only 25% of home educators felt that the guidelines performed well on explaining ways of developing a suitable plan for the child's learning. This was a similar finding across demographics

The majority of home educators felt that the minimum curriculum is clearly described in the Guidelines (54%), that the explanation is useful and relevant (52%), and that it includes the key factors that would be expected in a home schooling program (50%). However there is clearly room for improvement on these important dimensions

Those with 2-4 years of experience are more critical on these three curriculum aspects

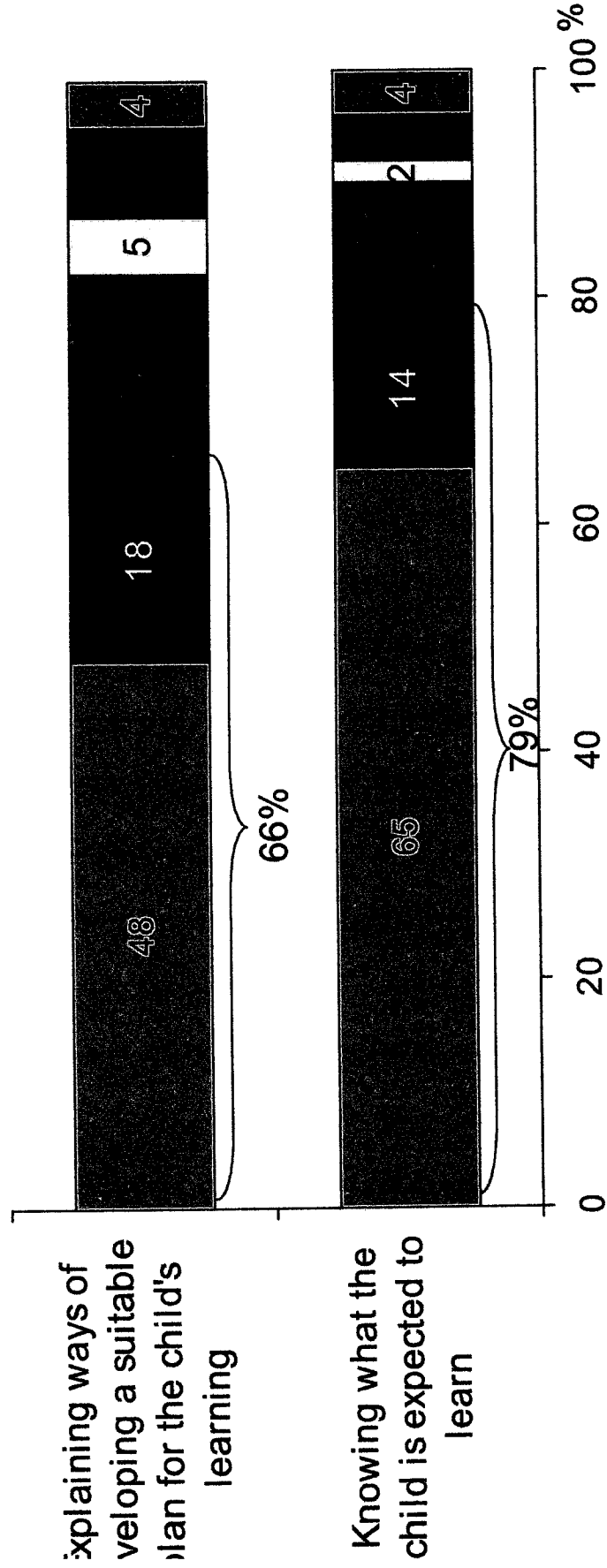
The qualitative research phase revealed the 'minimum curriculum' section set out on page six in the Guidelines was a positive statement of what had to be studied and was a useful starting point for home educators. However there was little other reference to how home educators could go about developing a suitable plan.

Importance Of Curriculum Aspects

Q. How important are the following aspects to successful home schooling?

Sample: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Legend: High importance (darkest), Four (dark), Three (medium), Two (light), Low importance (white), NA (black)

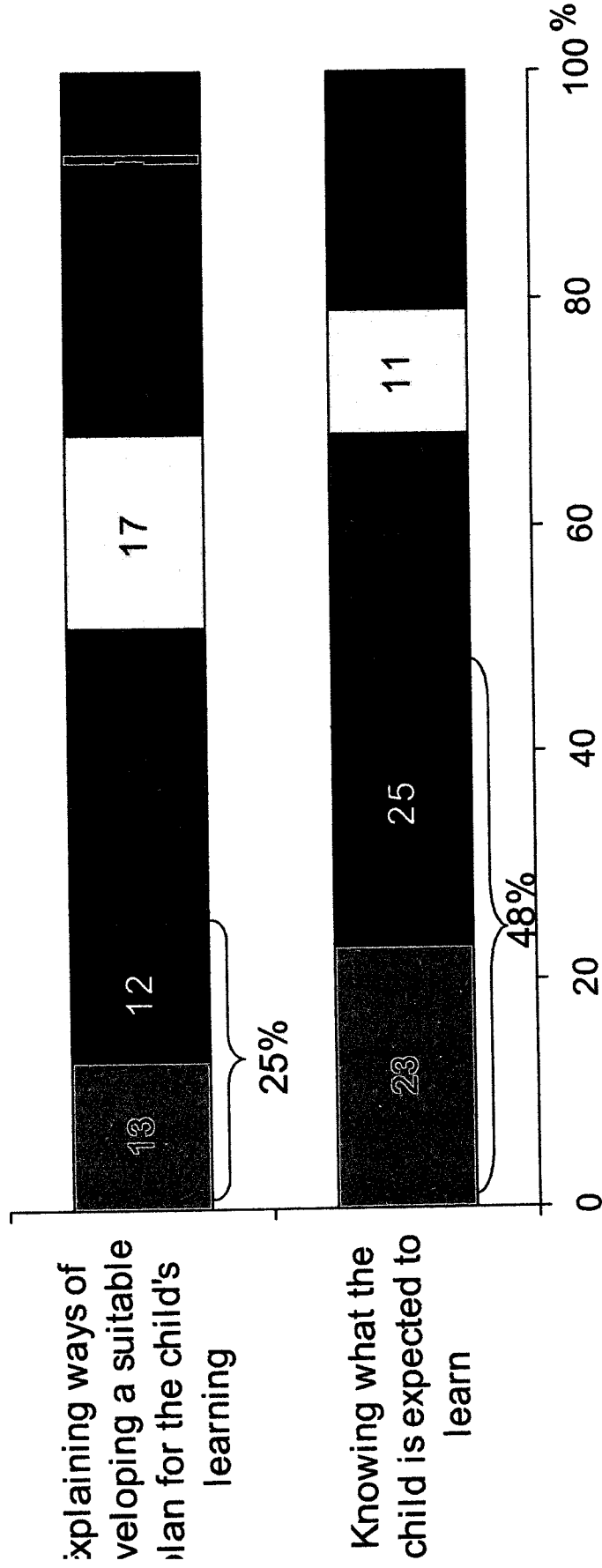


Guideline Performance - Curriculum

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspects?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Good performance
 Four
 Three
 Two
 Poor performance
 Not sure
 NA

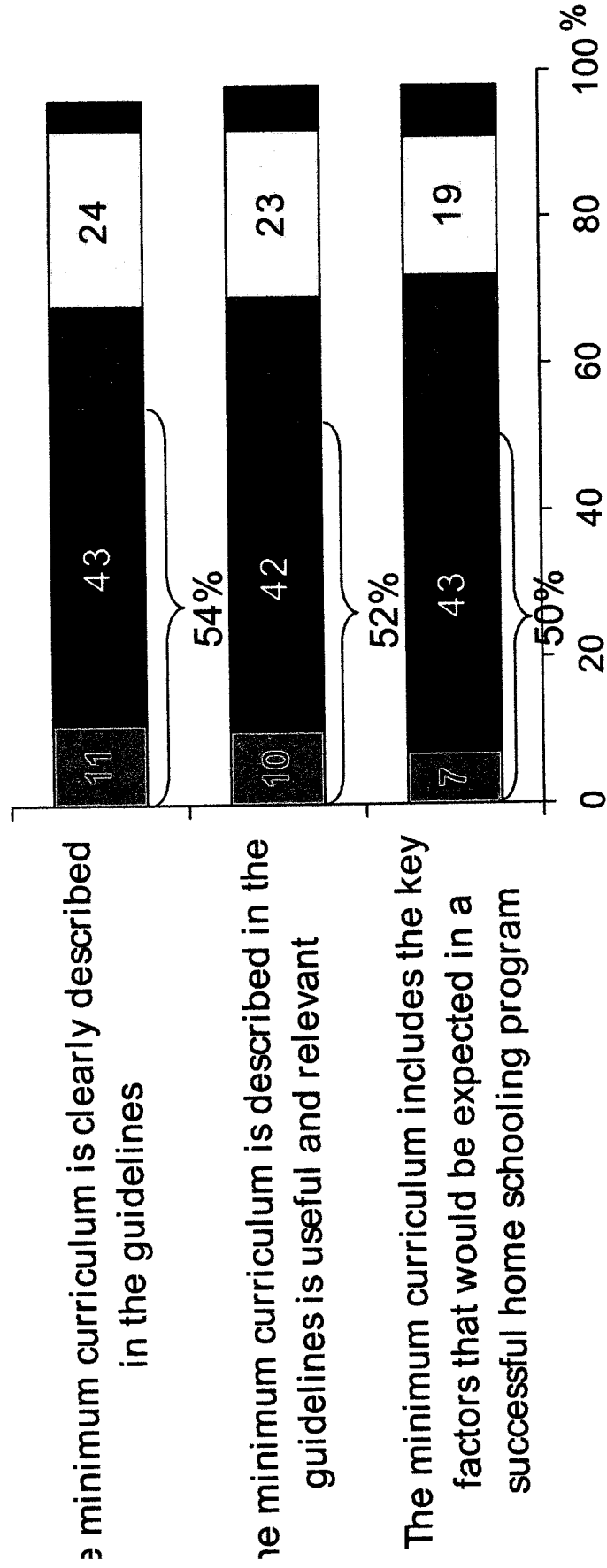


Attitudes Towards Curriculum

Here are some statements made about the curriculum presented in the guidelines.
Do you agree or disagree?

Sample: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree



Main Results **the record keeping**

Record Keeping

Home educators believe record keeping to be an important aspect to successful home schooling. This covers knowing what acceptable record keeping is (68% important with 53% rating this five out of five for importance) and explaining ways of record keeping (65% important with 49% rating this five out of five for importance)

First timers consider these aspects more important but the 2-4 years experienced home educators also consider this important. Primary school aged home educators consider 'explaining ways' to be more important than do secondary aged

There is very divided opinions about the Guideline performance on these record keeping aspects. 31% of home educators felt they performed well on explaining ways of record keeping, and 36% reported good performance on knowing what is acceptable record keeping. There were relatively high levels of poor performance on each of these two measures. This finding very much reinforces the qualitative feedback

There is a slightly higher performance rating amongst home educators of secondary school aged children on the Guidelines performance of explaining ways of record keeping (37%). Again the pattern of greater criticism amongst the 2-4 year experienced home educators emerged when they evaluated the Guideline performance for knowing what is acceptable record keeping

cord Keeping

During the course of the qualitative research phase, the importance of record keeping and the manner in which records were kept was a subject of considerable interest. Each home schooler had developed their own system. Record keeping was felt to be an important way to demonstrate the effectiveness of their home schooling program and indeed most home schoolers wanted the recognition from the authorised person that they were doing a good job. However it was seen that the manner in which this is done is problematic because...

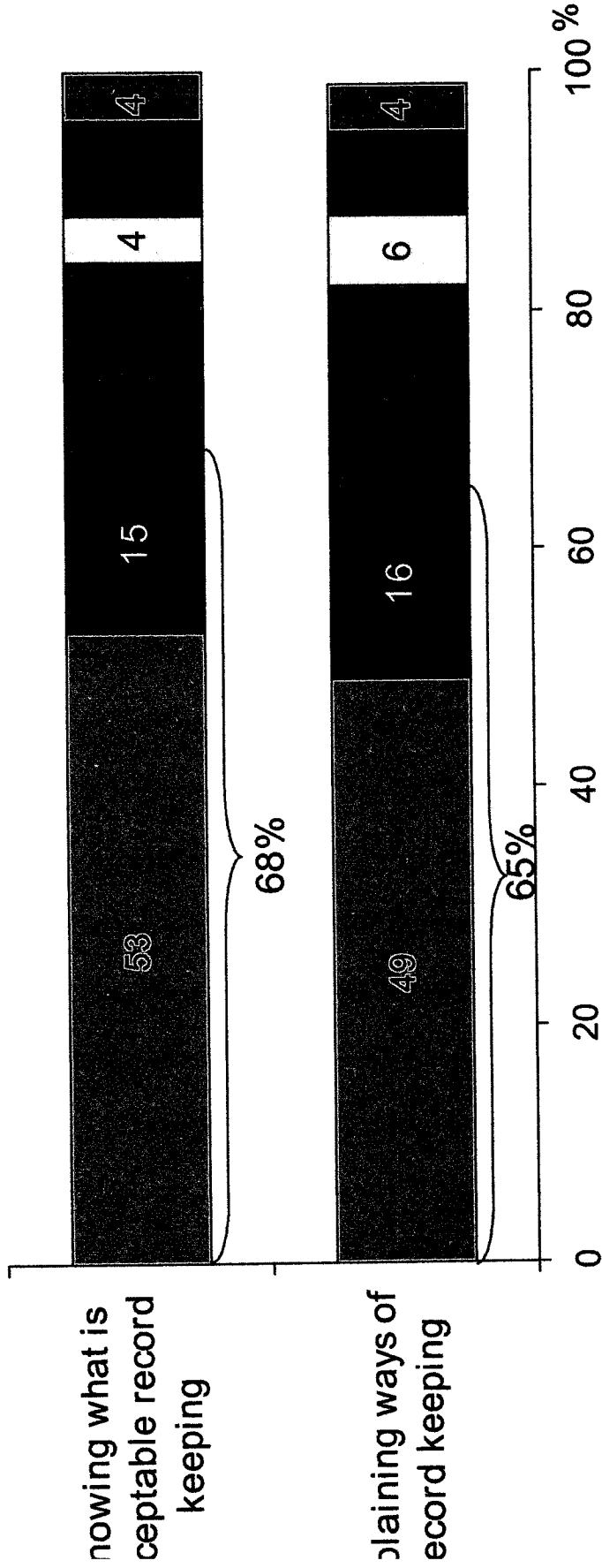
- No samples are given in the Guidelines
- Home schoolers devised their own methods which did lead to a level of anxiety because they were concerned that an authorised person might not approve of the method and not re-register them
- Some home schoolers felt that dated project material and exercise books were enough, others cross referenced these pages to some sort of daily diary, others went to rather more elaborate efforts to describe activities which were often completed some time after the event
- There was criticism of record keeping being based on time. Particularly for the home educator of primary aged children, there was both planned and unplanned education opportunities to be found in a wide variety of daily activities. For example, going shopping could provide the material for weights and measures, arithmetic, reading, design, finance, science, geography. Trying to apportion this time by activity was felt to be a very time consuming and questionably productive exercise

Importance Of Aspects Rating - Record Keeping

Q. How important are the following aspects to successful home schooling?

Sample: Currently Home Schooling N=337

■ High importance ■ Four ■ Three □ Two ■ Low importance ■ NA

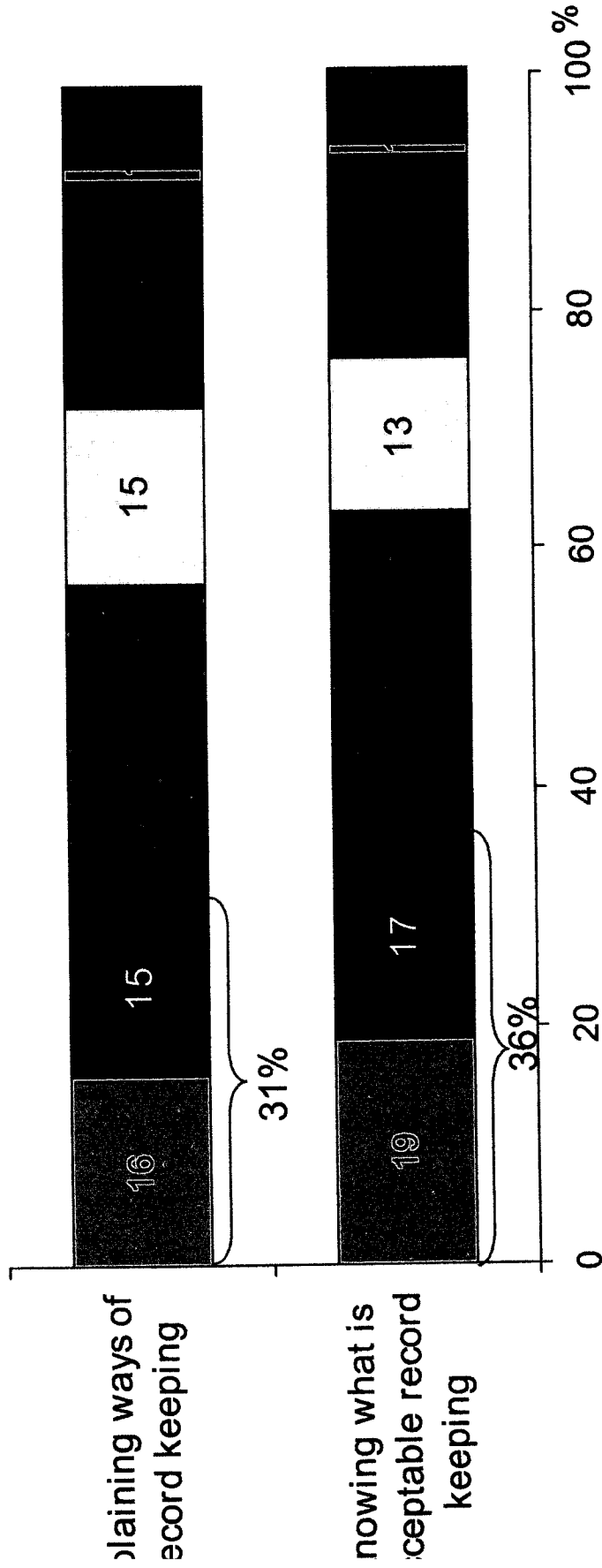


Performance - Record Keeping

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspects?

se: Currently Home Schooling N=337

■ Good performance ■ Four ■ Three □ Two ■ Poor performance ■ Not sure ■ NA

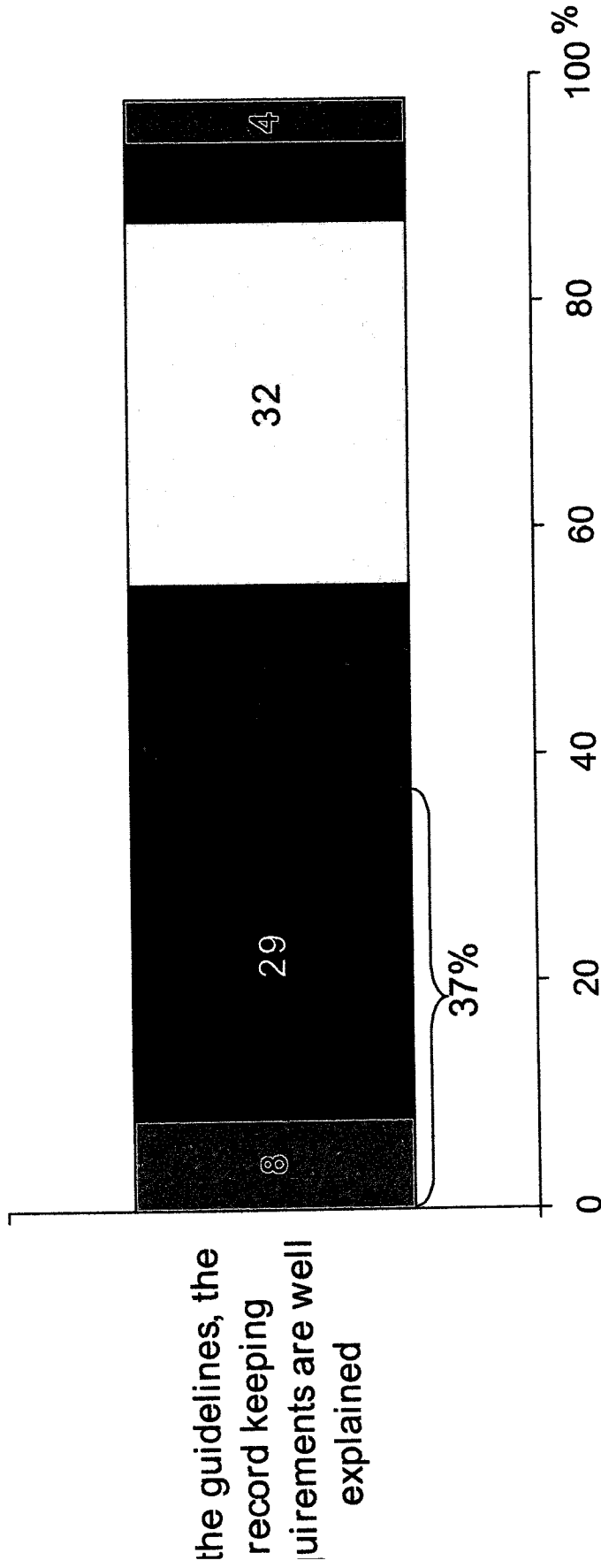


Record Keeping - Statement

*Here is a statement made about the record keeping requirements in the guidelines.
Do you agree?*

Sample: Currently Home Schooling N=337

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree NA



Main Results

the learning environment

e Learning Environment

6% of home educators felt that knowing what were acceptable facilities was important to successful home schooling. This was more important for first timers (75%) and less important to those with 5+years experience (57%)

51% of home educators rated the guidelines performance as good on this aspect. First timers rated this slightly higher (58%)

When directly asked about the importance of specific factors in creating a suitable learning environment for home schooling, awareness of community resources was highly rated (93% total important, 57% very important), as well as availability of print resources and other materials (91% total important, 58% very important), as was the level of followed by lighting and ventilation (87% total important, 51% very important). Adequacy of work space was slightly less important (84% total important, 46% very important). Furniture such as tables, chairs and desks was the least important factor measured (77% total important, 33% very important)

All of these specific factors were considered to be more important to the first timers than they were to those with more experience

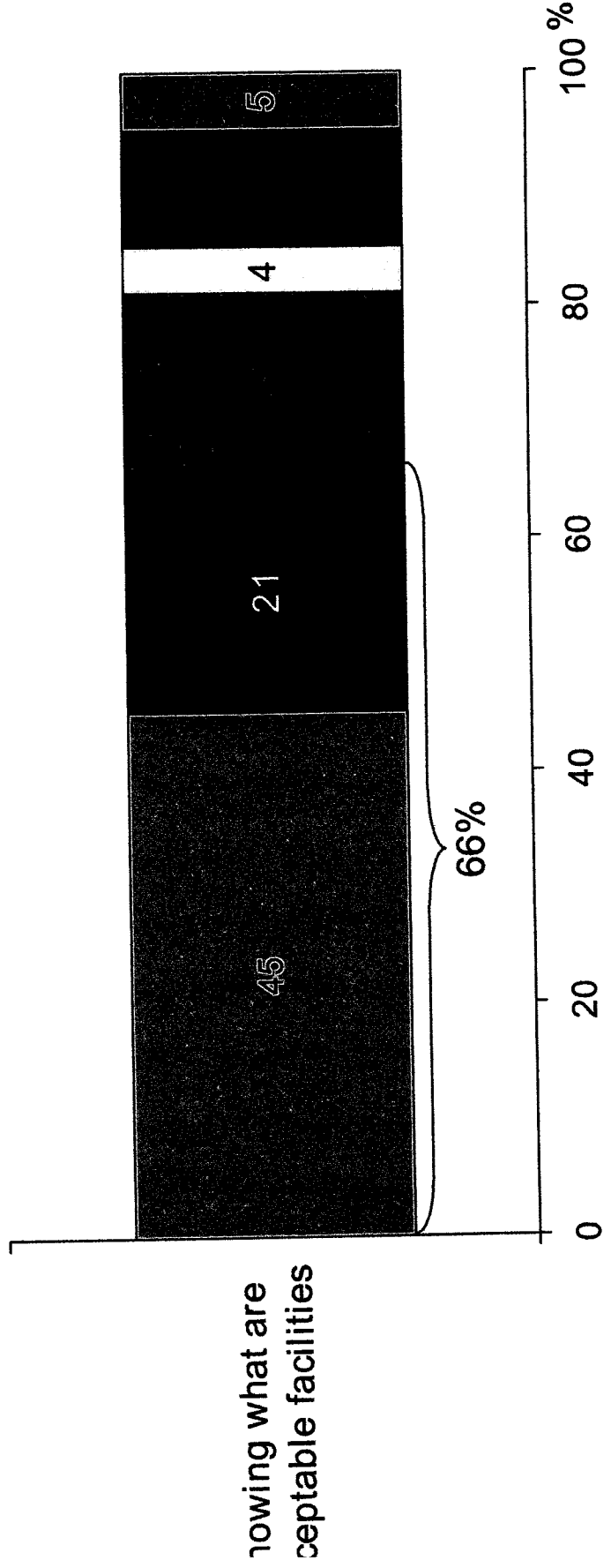
Qualitative feedback revealed that home educators felt that 'the home' represented only one facet of the learning environment. Every experience and excursion had the potential for education. It was also felt that what went on in the learning environment, and the materials that the child and home educator used were much more important than the physical environment. However it was recognised that a designated work space was important

Importance Of The Learning Environment

Q. How important is this aspect to successful home schooling?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

- High importance
- Four
- Three
- Two
- Low importance
- NA

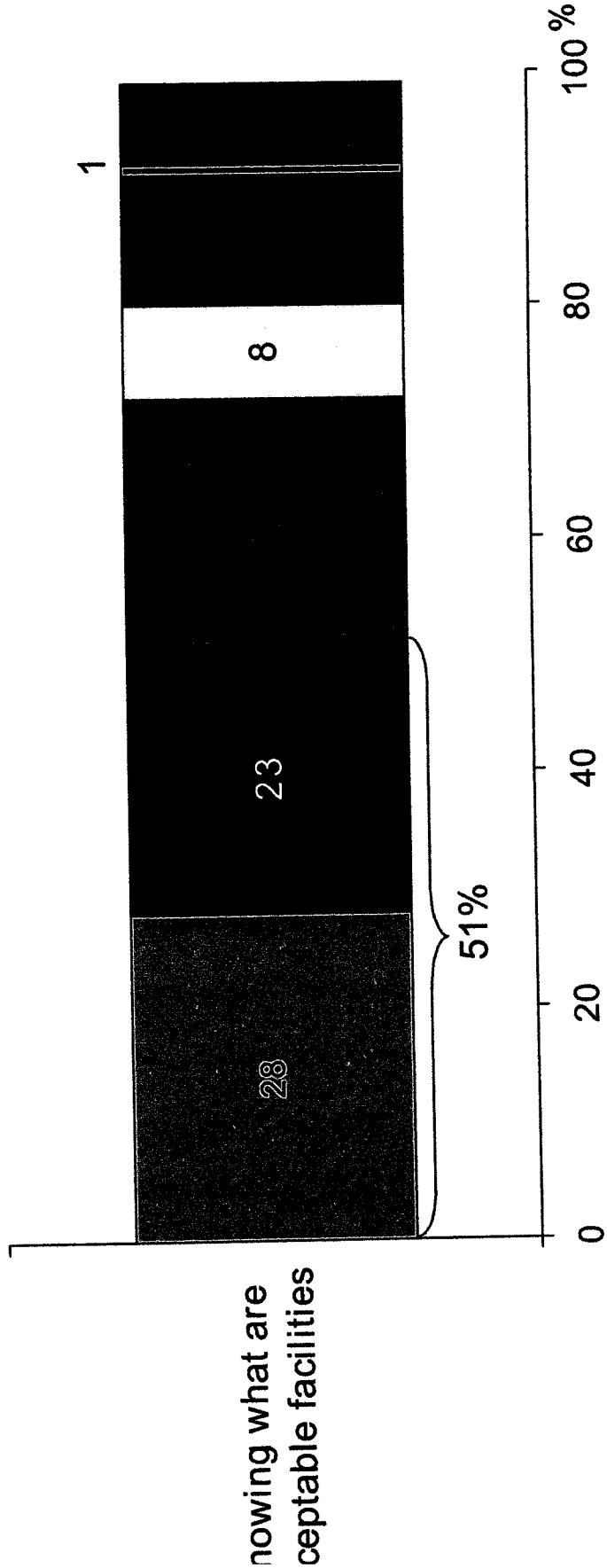


Guideline Performance - Learning Environment

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspect?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

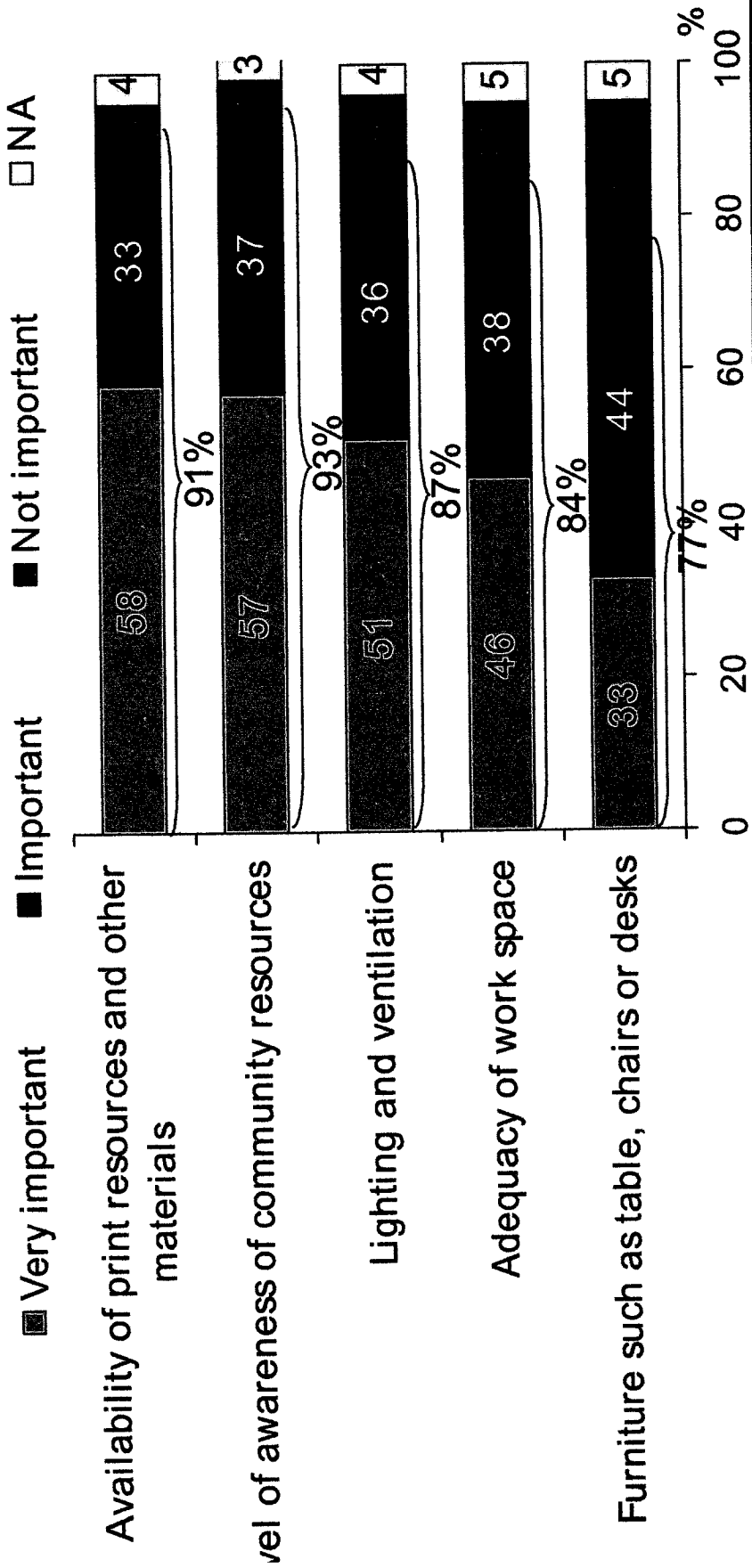
■ Good performance ■ Four ■ Three □ Two ■ Poor performance ■ Not sure ■ NA



Suitable Learning Environment

How important are the following factors in creating a suitable learning environment for home schooling?

se: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Suitable Learning Environment

Q. How important are the following factors in creating a suitable learning environment for home schooling?

3: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Of The Respondents Mentioned Other Important Factors, such as...

A network of other home educators, supportive family and friends seem to be a very important issue. Being able to meet and interact with other home schooling families for i.e. excursions, and having people around to give encouragement

A positive and cheerful environment with calm and caring supervision in an organised home. Having a quiet environment with time set aside for studying which allows for the student to concentrate. Also having a knowledge of the children's needs and interests is important

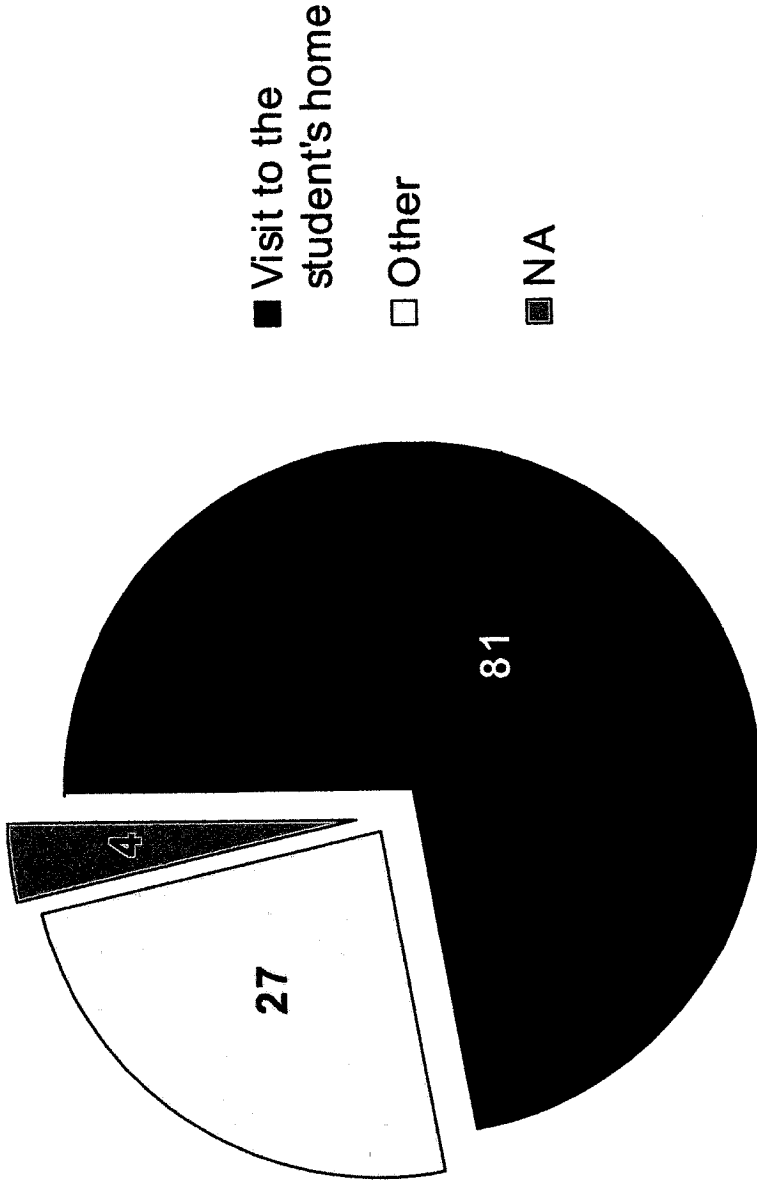
Being flexible is important - to realise that it is a whole learning environment and not a designated space. It is also important to have access to available technology, i.e. ABC (TV) education programs, the Internet, computer programs and CD-Rom

Availability of syllabuses for every subject (especially maths) to be used optionally would be good

suitability of the Learning Environment

2. *How might the suitability of the 'learning environment' best be demonstrated to the authorised person?*

e: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Suitability Of The Learning Environment

Key Issues (27%) Being Spoken About Are...

There is a large group of home educators who want the AP to visit their home, and even on a more regular basis as they believe it encourages their children to work even harder when they know someone else other than the family members will be checking their progress. But they also reported a belief that some (other) home educators did not want the visits, and therefore believe the regularity of the visits should be optional by request/appointment, as well as whether wanted at all. Some want to have submission of material after the visit followed by another visit or feedback of some kind

Another group believes that written documents of the results and the work process is good feedback on the progress

One group believe that sending a floor-plan and photos of the schooling environment is a good way of displaying the environment to the AP. Some also think it would be a good idea to send a video of the schooling process

Some want the AP to have a conversation with the children and go over some previous completed lessons

Another group would like to have the parents submit a written letter to state they consider the learning conditions suitable

Others would like to be left totally alone to decide for themselves if it is good for their children.

Main Results the authorised person's visit

Authorised Persons' Visit

59% of home educators felt it was important to have preliminary discussion about the registration with the authorised person before she/he visits their home. This is more important with first time home educators (69%) and least important for those with 5+ years of experience (52%)

Only 40% of home educators felt the guidelines were performing well regarding this preliminary discussion. 26% of home educators gave this a bad performance rating. Sydney home educators were particularly critical (34% bad performance)

The majority (57%) of home educators felt that home visits should be part of the subsequent applications for registration. This was higher amongst first timers (66%) and lower for those with 5+ years experience (47%)

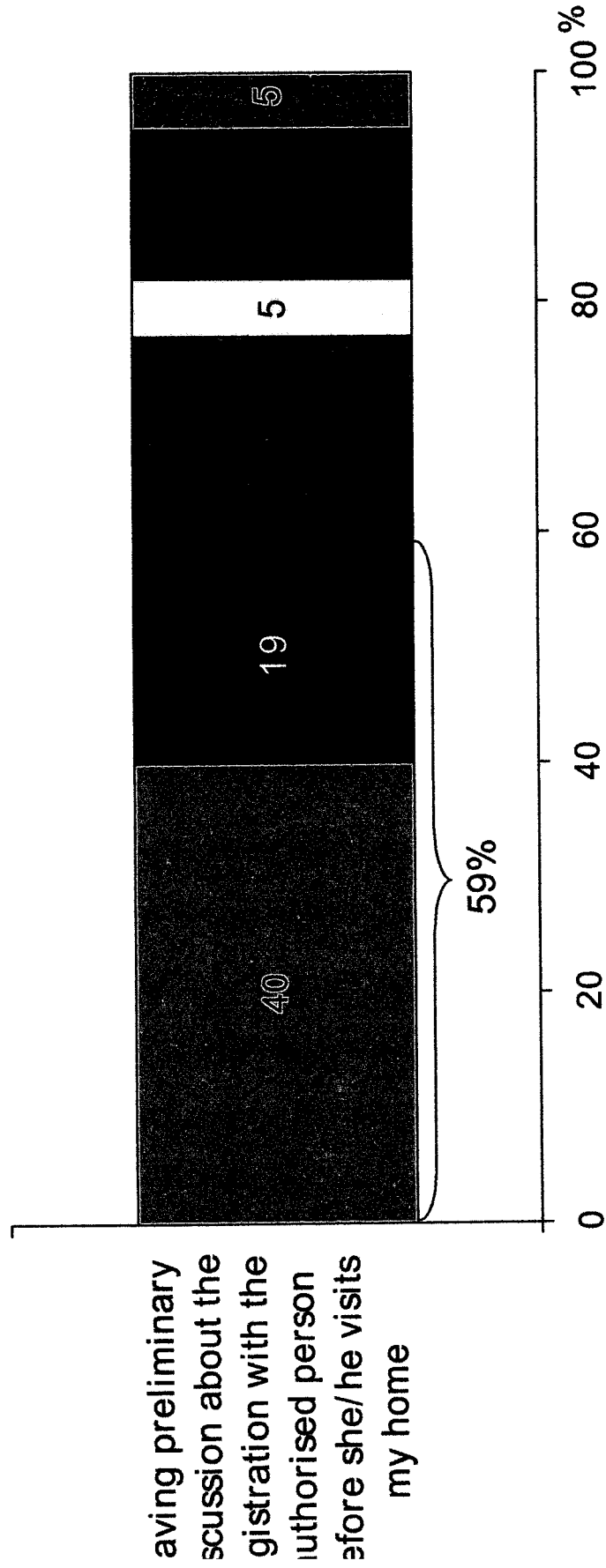
Qualitative insight revealed that some home educators felt a personal visit could protect children in homes where child abuse might be occurring. Whilst it was felt that home schooling had an excellent record in this regard, it was not impossible that it could happen. Personal visits added a level of 'respectability' for legitimate and registered home schoolers

Importance Of Aspects - Authorised Person

Q. How important is the following aspect to successful home schooling?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337

■ High importance ■ Four ■ Three □ Two ■ Low importance ■ NA

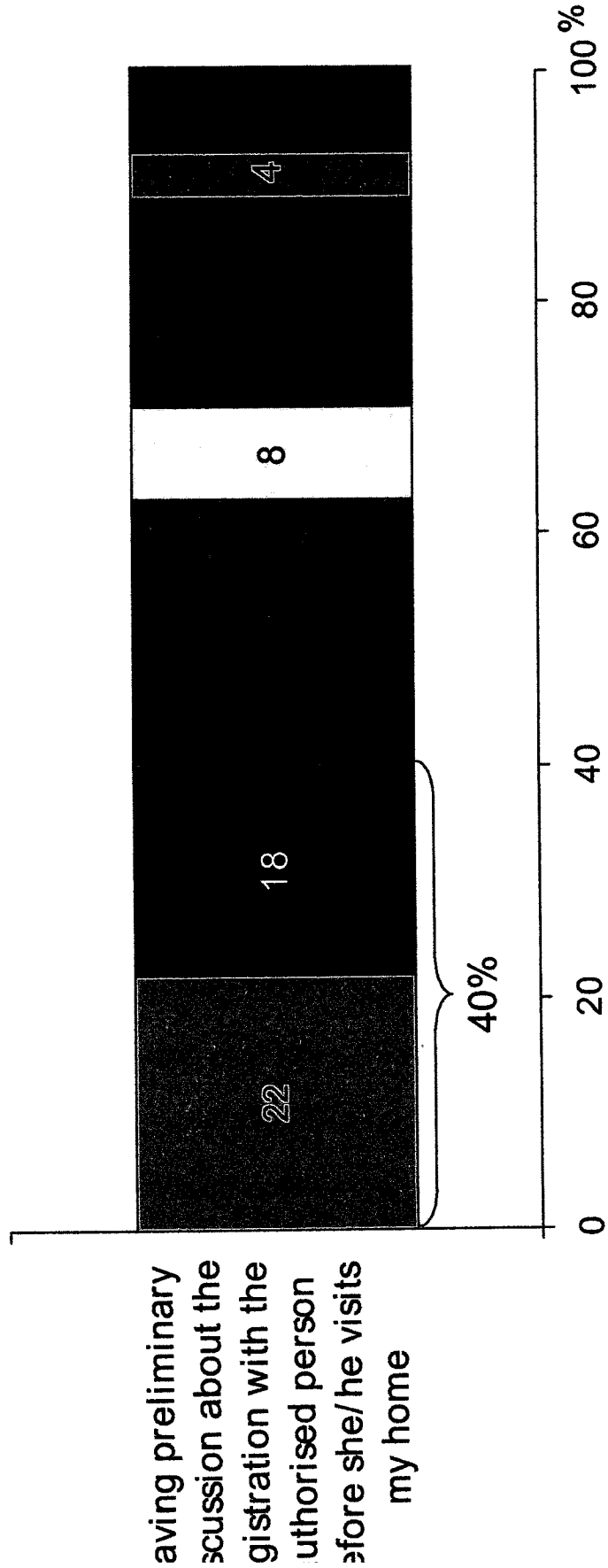


Performance - Authorised Person

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspect?

Sample: Currently Home Schooling N=337

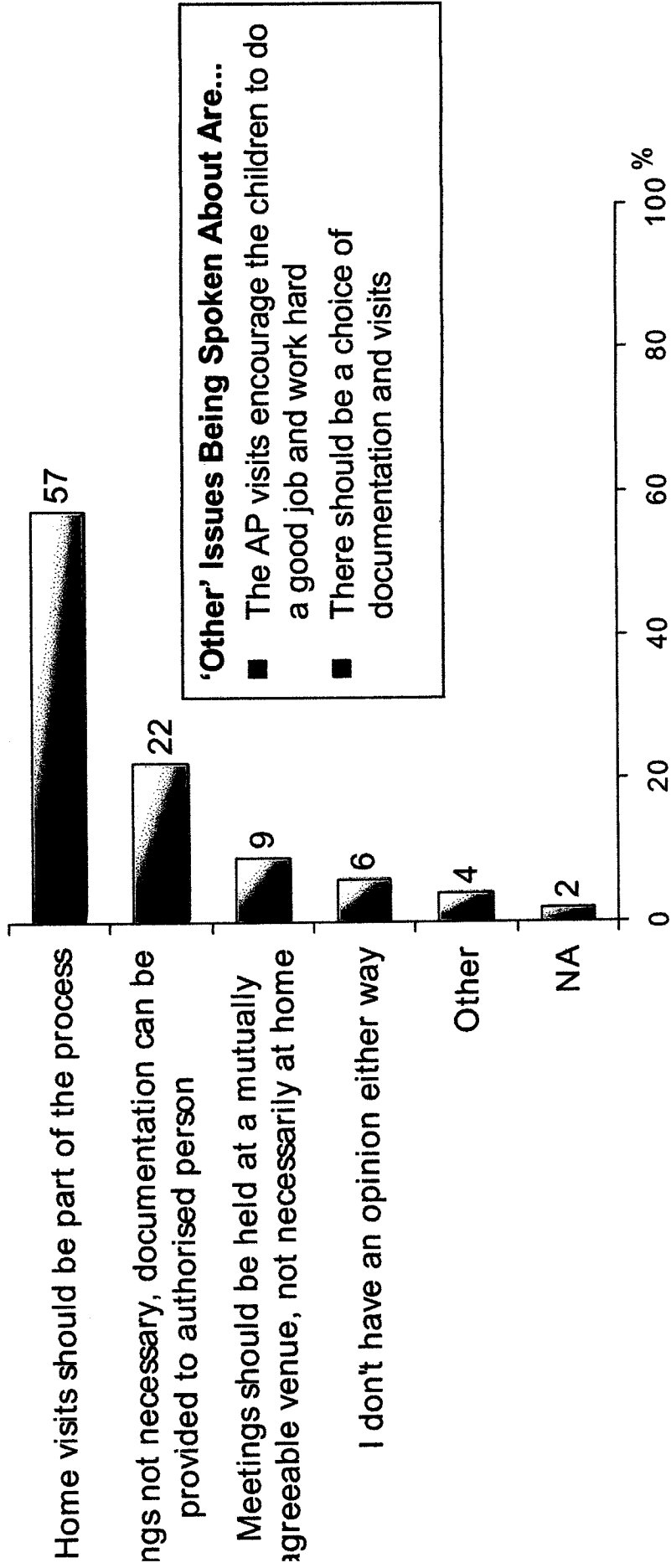
■ Good performance ■ Four ■ Three □ Two ■ Poor performance ■ Not sure ■ NA



Authorised Person

After the initial registration process, do you think a home visit by the authorised person should continue to be part of subsequent applications for registrations?

se: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Main Results

demonstration of a successful home schooling program

e Demonstration Of A Successful Home Schooling ogram - First Application

A number of aspects were highlighted by home educators as being suitable to demonstrate the intention for successful home schooling when first applying for registration. The most common aspects were: a description of the approach, a statement of broad curriculum goals and a list of what is expected the child will learn

Students' work books and projects, the hours intended to work per day/week and a detailed work plan of major topics were mentioned more by first timers than they were by those with more experience

Those with greatest experience (5+ years) were more likely to say a description of the approach or a statement of broad curriculum goals

monstration Of Success

Q. For those first applying for Registration, which of the following would best demonstrate their intention for a successful home schooling program?

	%
Currently Home Schooling N= 337	
Description of the approach to Home Schooling	46
Statement of broad curriculum goals	43
Statement of what you expect your child to learn	42
Detailed plan of major topics and learning activities to be covered	33
Parents' work books/projects	33
Home Educator to regularly summarise student achievements	20
Parents intended to work per day or per week	19

er: Listing what you intend or hope to achieve; a booklist, a well organised diary and schedule for each subject showing length of study time, a broad plan for major topics and elements of areas to be studied, and ideas of how this may be achieved; enthusiasm, the philosophies and ideologies and the confidence ought to be taken into consideration

	10
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e Demonstration Of A Successful Home Schooling ogram - Subsequent Applications

It was felt that the best way to demonstrate that their home schooling has been successful is an indication of what the child has learned (60%) and through their work books and projects (58%). Students work books was cited even more by first time home schoolers (63%)

One in three said the basic skills test results. This was lower amongst those with primary school aged children (26%)

Only 14% considered the hours intended to work per day/week were good demonstrations and this was even lower amongst 5+ years experienced home educators (6%)

monstration Of Success

Q. Which of the following would best demonstrate that your home schooling program has been successful?

	%
Currently Home Educating N= 337	
Indication of what the child has learned	60
Parents' work books/projects	58
Child's skills test results	31
Home educator to regularly summarise student achievements	27
Statement of broad curriculum goals	26
Detailed plan of major topics and learning activities to be covered	24
Description of the approach to home schooling	22
List of what you expect your child to learn	22
Hours intended to work per day or per week	14

er: Listing what the child said they learnt; the overall attitude and achievements of the child, both academic personal growth; progress should be demonstrated through assessments and tests approved by the OBO S; compulsory basic skills tests, the option of verbal demonstration of skills and knowledge. Other assessment opportunities suggested included Australian school competitions; observing the child's maturity, self-esteem, being and confidence and relationship between the child and educator of harmony, respect and high expectation of satisfaction. Happy and smiling children

1

Main Results

support

Support

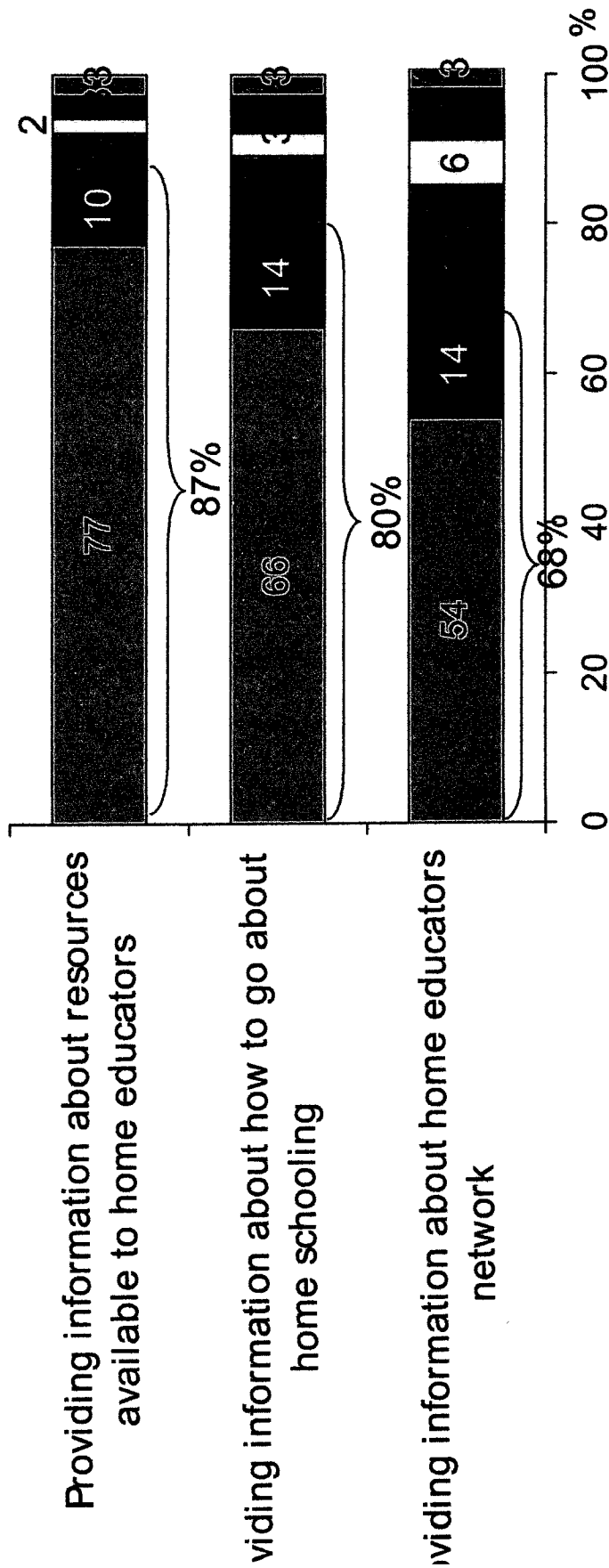
There was strong support for providing information about resources available to home educators (87% high importance), and providing information about how to go about home schooling (80%) First timers were more likely to consider information about how to go about home schooling to be more important (86%). However information about resources available to home educators had broad support but particularly amongst those with 2-4 years of experience (92%) Information about home educator networks also was considered important (68%). This was particularly so amongst older home educators (77%) and those with 2-4 years of experience (72%) The guidelines were not rated well in terms of providing any of the above support Whilst overall the good performance rating for providing information about resources available to home educators was low (17%), it was slightly better in remote areas (33%) Qualitative feedback strongly supported the notion that more information should be provided to home educators

Importance Of Aspects - Support

Q. How important are the following aspects to successful home schooling?

Sample: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Legend: High importance (darkest), Four (dark), Three (medium), Two (light), NA (white)

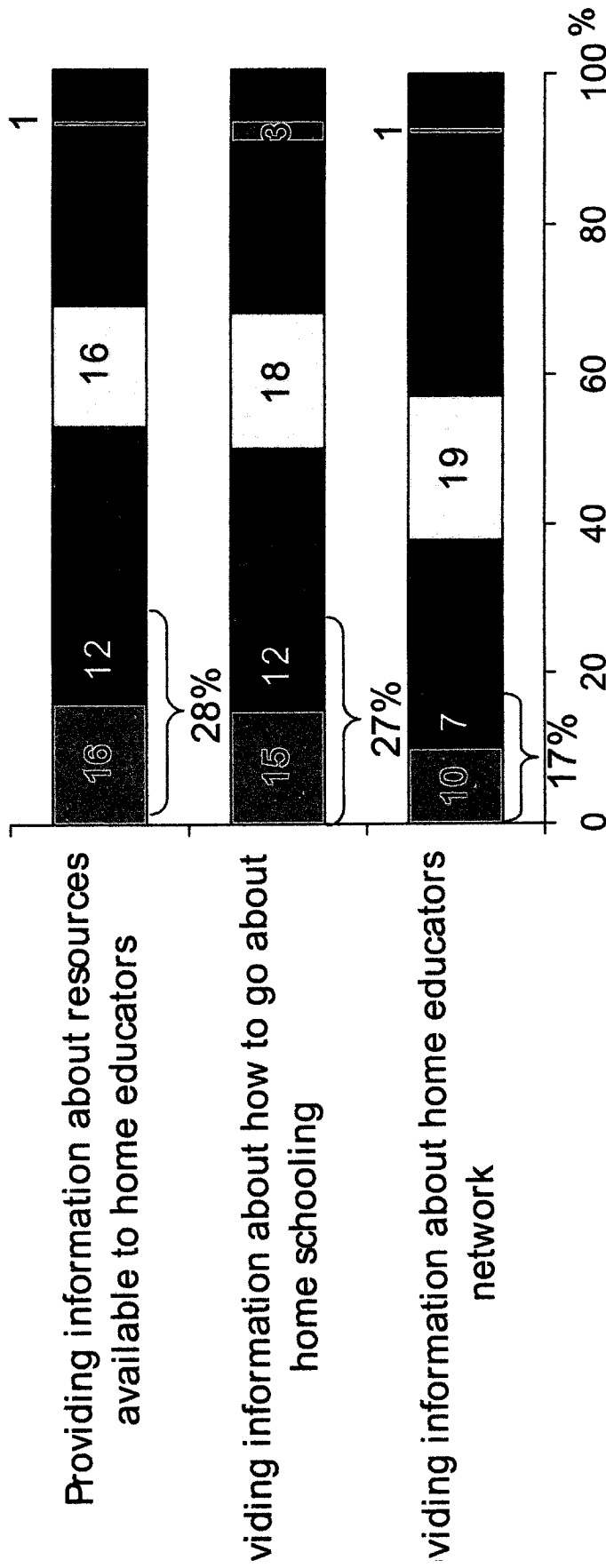


Performance - Support

Q. How well do you think the guidelines are performing for you in relation to the following aspects?

ie: Currently Home Schooling N=337

ood performance ■ Four □ Three ■ Poor performance ■ Not sure ■ NA



Main Results

sources of information

Sources Of Information

Three major sources of information were cited by home educators...

- Home educator friends (49%)
- Newsletters put out by other home educators (49%)
- Office of the Board of Studies/Education authorities (47%)

Primary school aged home educators were more likely to mention...

- Home educator newsletters (58%)
 - Friends (57%)
 - Home education activities and meetings (43%)
- First timers were less likely to mention...
- Home education activities and meetings (27%)

- And newsletters (40%)

Those with 5+ years of experience were more likely to mention...

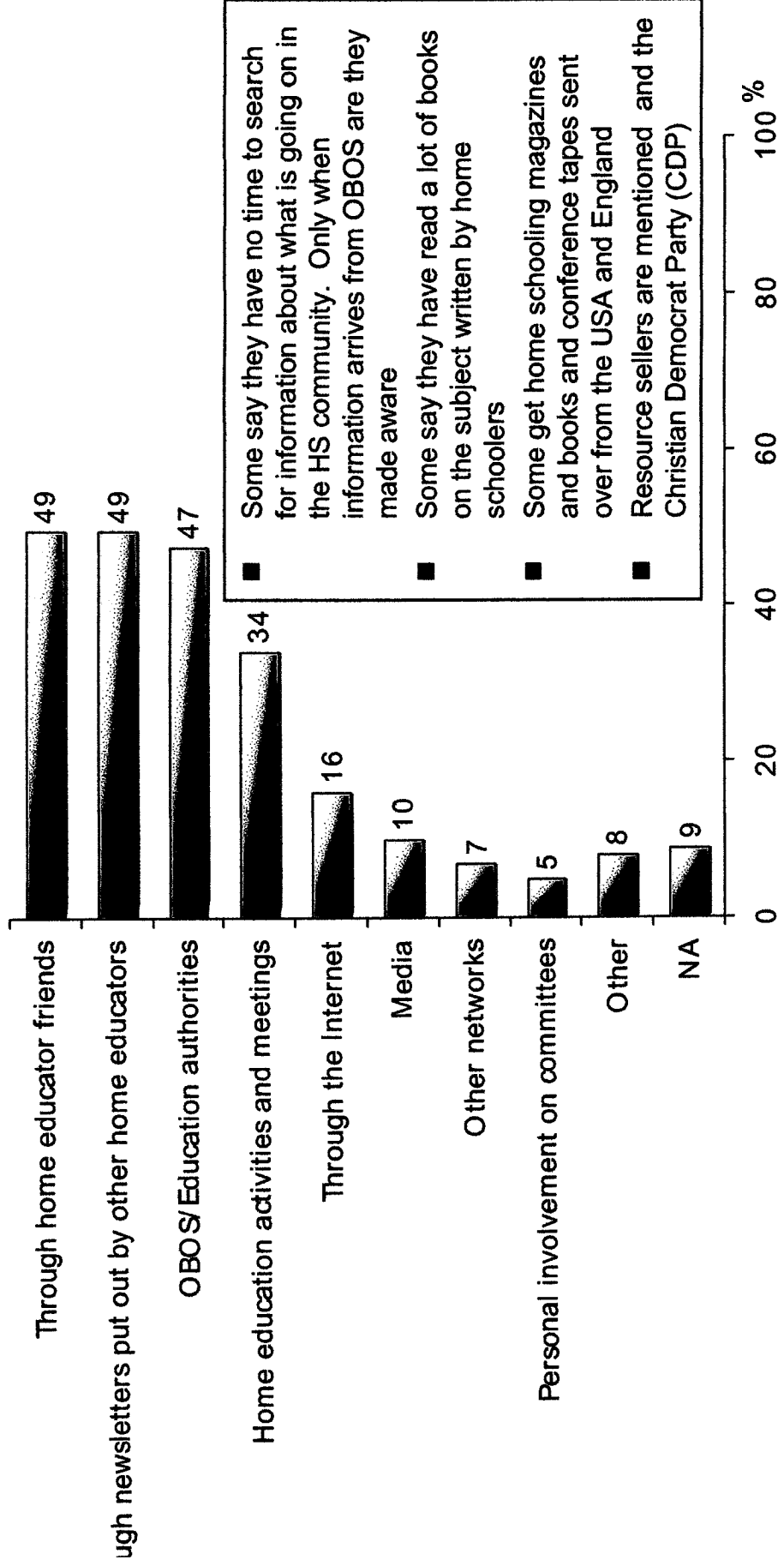
- Home educator newsletters (66%)
- Friends (62%)
- Activities and meetings (48%)

Those with 2-4 years of experience cited the OBOS/Education Authorities more (59%)

Sources Of Information

Q. Currently, how do you find out about what is happening regarding home education?

Base: Currently Home Schooling N=337



Main Results

additional needs

ditional Needs

re Was Substantial Interest In The Following...

- How to access programs such as the basic skills test (80% total interest)
- Reference lists and related Internet/website information (78% total interest)
- Information about a range of student counselling services (78% total interest)
- How to access the Board of Studies syllabuses (76% total interest)
- Contact details for networks of home educators (76% total interest)
- Advice about pathways to universities and other post secondary options without the student having the HSC (75% interest)
- More detailed description of the curriculum (68% total interest)
- Examples of records that are easy to keep (63% interest)
- Pointers to documentation useful in designing own program of studies/resources for teaching (59% interest)

ditional Needs

Basic skills testing interest was higher amongst those with 2-4 years of experience (88%), as was interest in the curriculum details (78%)

Those with most experience were least interested in the Internet/website (68%) whilst first timers were most interested (85%)

Remote home educators and those with 5+ years experience were least interested in the Board of Studies syllabus (59% and 65% respectively). Those with most experience were least interested in the detailed curriculum (50%)

There was relatively little interest in the guidelines providing...

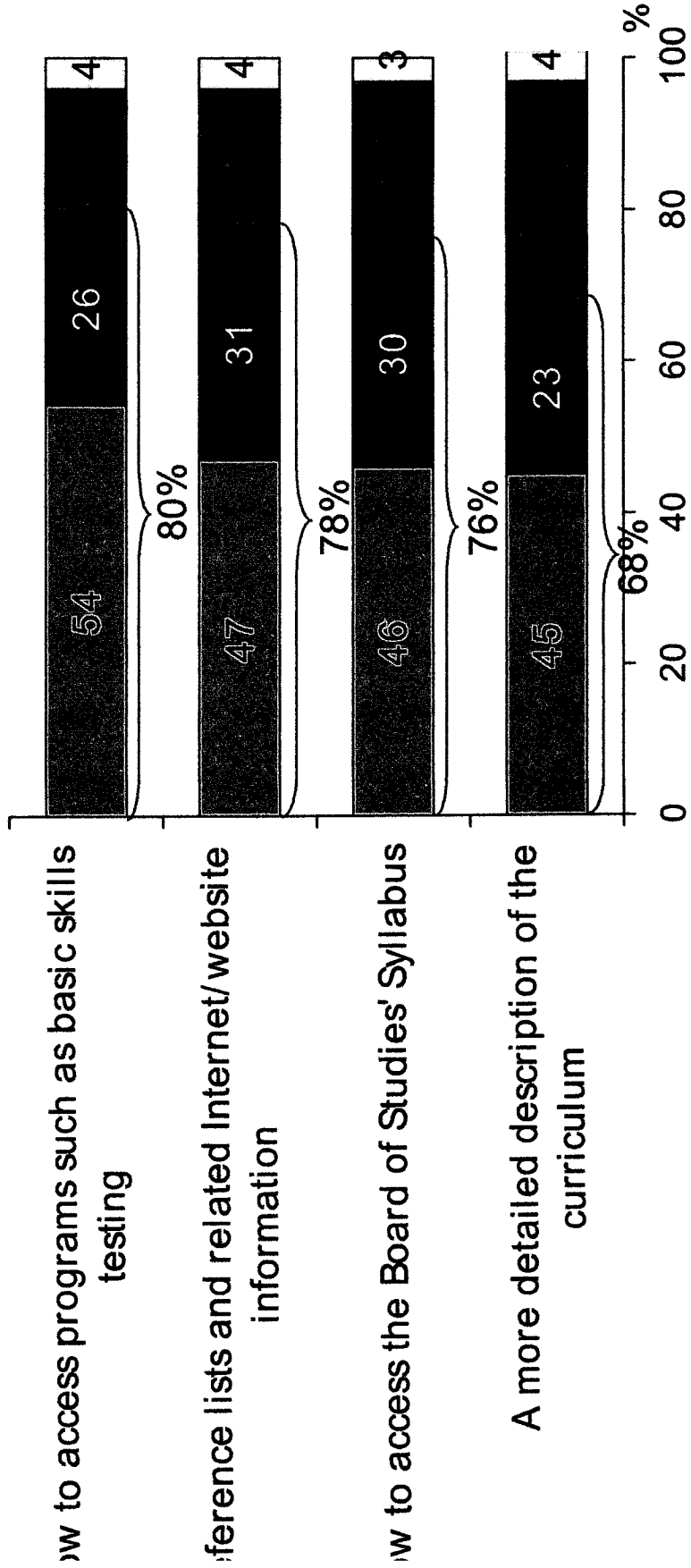
- Better description of home schooling program intentions (24%)
- Broader definition of what a committed person would be like (18%)

ditional Information Needs

Q. What additional information might you need in the guidelines?

se: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Very interested
 Interested
 Not interested
 NA

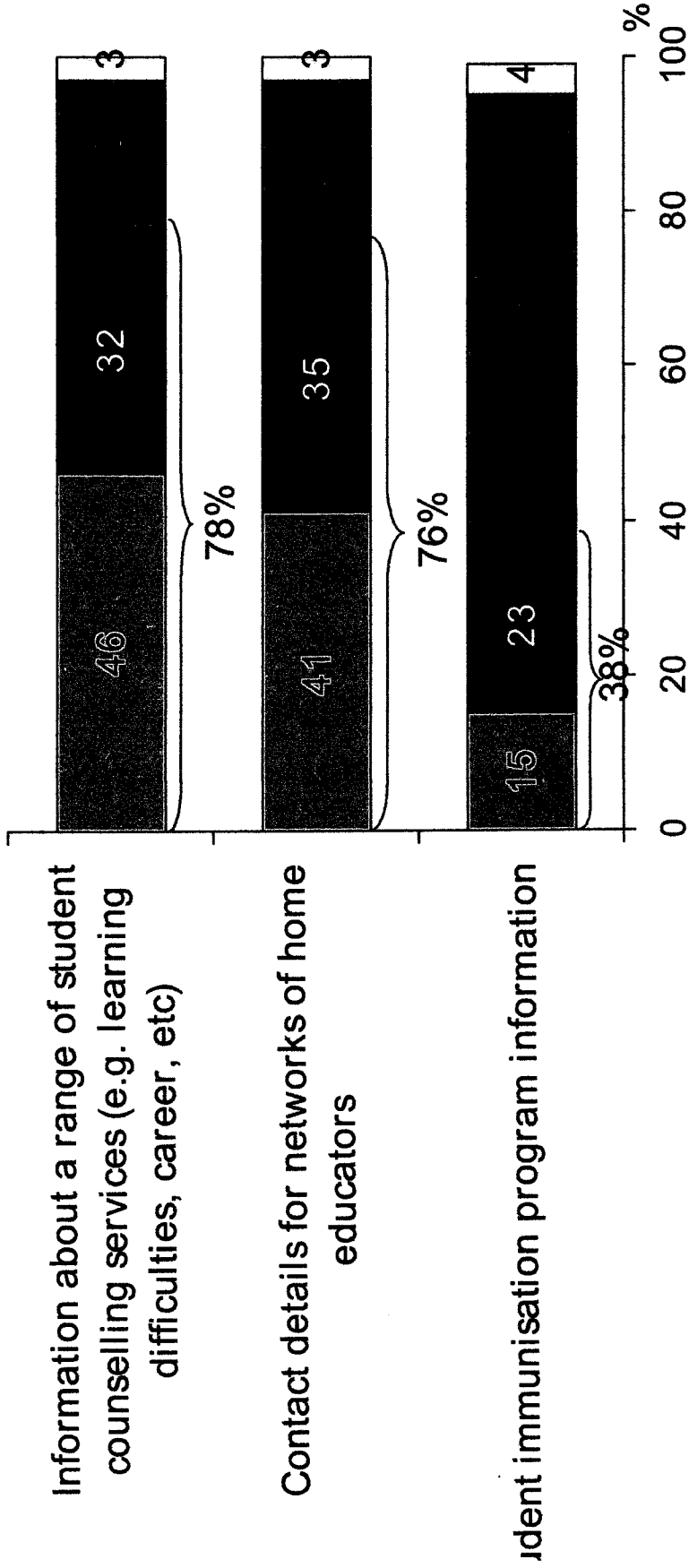


ditional Information Needs

Q. What additional information might you need in the guidelines?

se: Currently Home Schooling N=337

Very interested Interested Not interested NA



Additional Information Needed

Q. What additional information might you need in the Guidelines?

Of The Respondents Mentioned 'Other Additional Information' Needed In The Guidelines, i.e...

Information about how to acquire High School Certificate, entrance and how to prepare for TAFE and university courses and also about work experience

General health, dental and sight tests available for Home Educators. Also information about counselling for students/ parents with learning difficulties and special needs

Information about available resources, creative learning ideas, where to buy supplies i.e. science equipment, textbooks and other useful school aids and material. Also addresses to companies selling resources and learning material

Information (and even examples of acceptable ones) about record keeping, program and curriculum. Lists of textbooks that follow the NSW syllabus and educational web sites

Information on schools that welcome part time enrolment (i.e. in language, sports and music classes) and sharing of facilities and also lists of cooperative venues for excursions

ditional Information Needs

Q. Which, if any, of the following should the Guidelines seek to additionally provide?

	%
Currently Home Schooling N = 337	
Options about pathways to universities and other post secondary options without the student having the HSC	75
Options of records that are easy to keep	63
Options for documentation useful in designing your own program of studies and resources for teaching	59
Options for a way that better represents the 'spirit' of home education	46
Options for a process that allows for a second authorised person to visit if the first decides to reject the application	46
Options for an emphasis on organising and planning a home schooling program	33
Options for 'equivalent education facilities' should include examples of the range of facilities that could be acceptable	29
Options for a further description of intentions of the home schooling program	24
Options for a broader definition of what a committed person would be like	18
Options for where to access HS material, what is available from OBOs, lists of text books, references to computer based learning and text guides to e.g. Excel; like to hear/read about ideas, methods and material from past and present home schoolers; have access to careers advice and have professional people to guide them; a call for less support; should be kept in mind that they are a multicultural group	13
Options for none of the above, the guidelines are acceptable as they are	4