

Clients of the Child Welfare System: Parent and Youth Needs

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Purpose Today

- Present parent data to inform services
- Provide data regarding youth needs

Data Sources

- Parent Interviews
- Longitudinal of youth aging out (Courtney)

Response Rates: Parent Interviews

- 809 parents interviewed
- 82% response rate Statewide
- 345 (43%) children in-home statewide
- 464 (57%) children out-of-home statewide

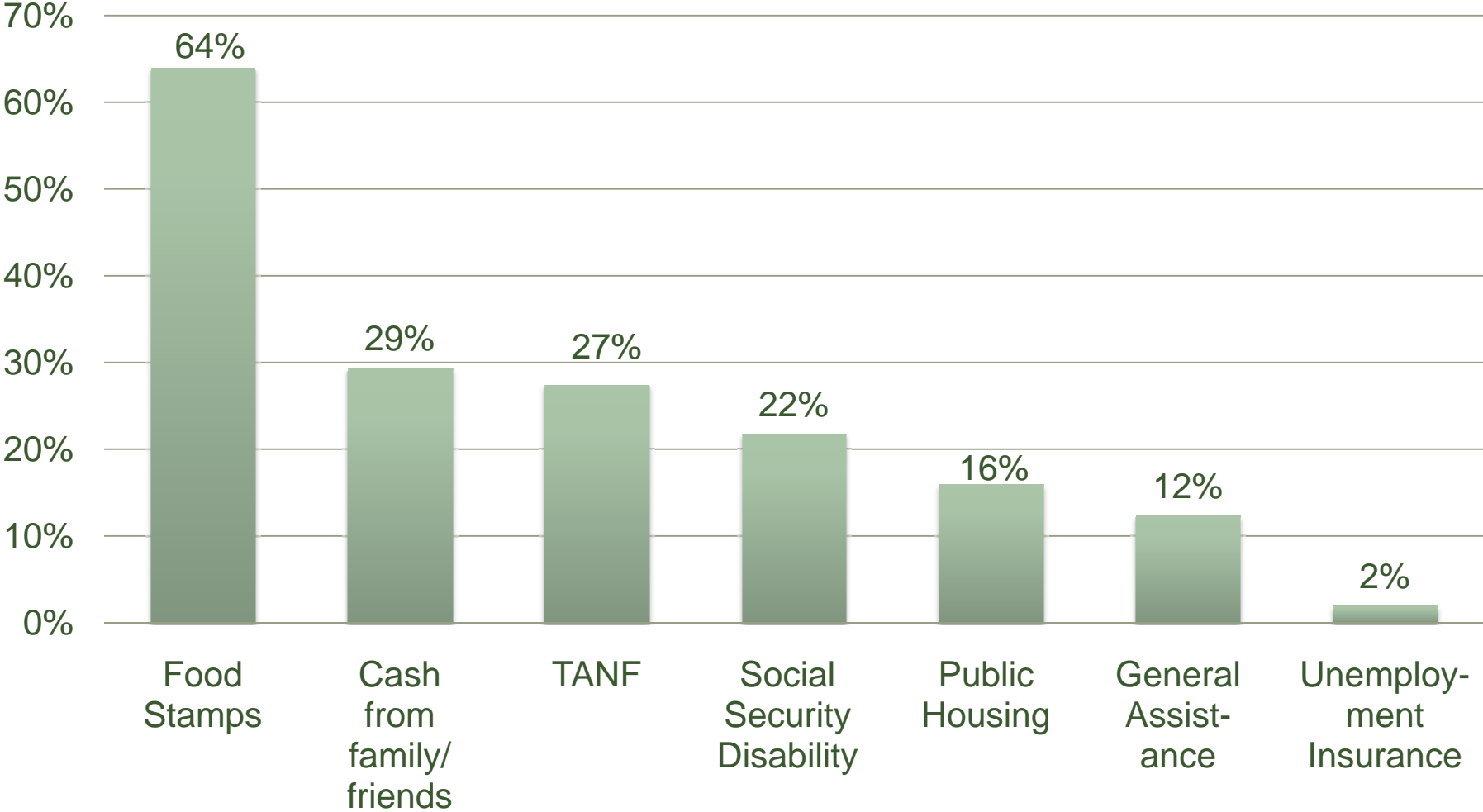
Snapshot of the typical parent

- female (92%)
- Caucasian (62%)
- average age 32 years
- mostly single (68%)

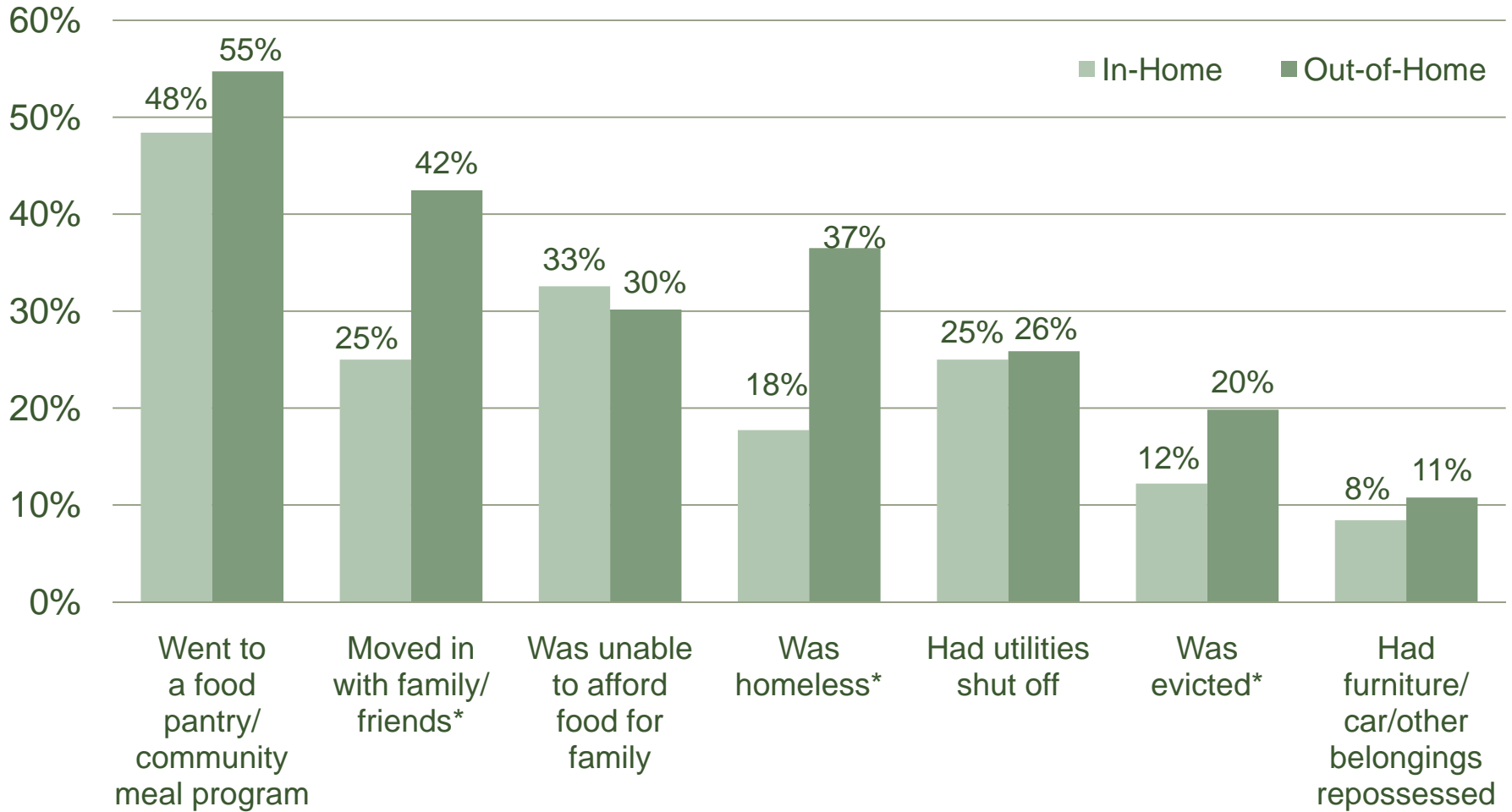
Snapshot....

- low income (47% less than \$10,000/yr.)
- unemployed (67%)
- 30% did not complete high school, 28% graduated or obtained a GED

Financial Assistance—Statewide



Financial Hardships in Past 12 Months by Service Context



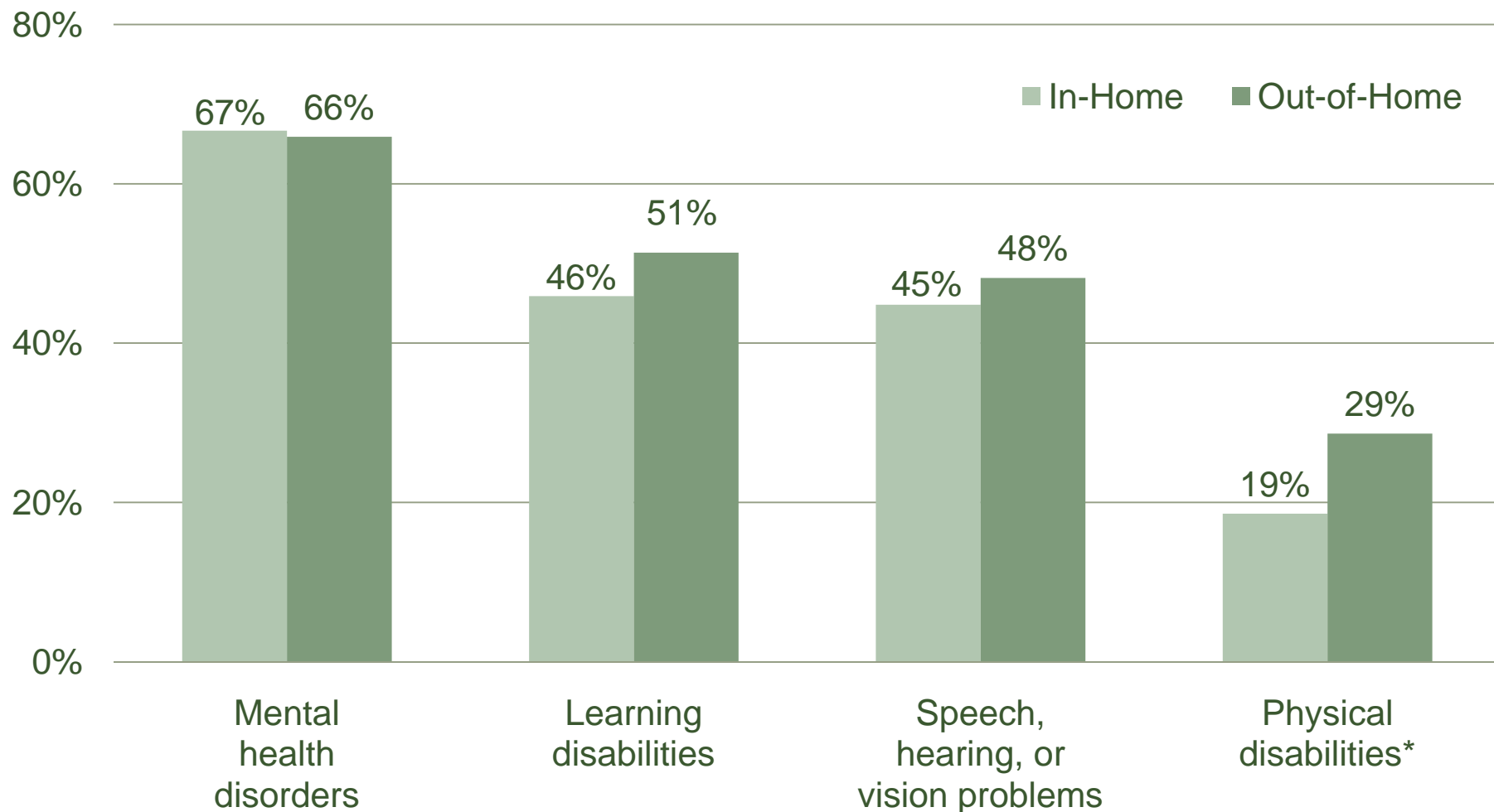
* $p < .01$

Services for Basic Needs

- Parents need help accessing concrete services such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- TANF might be accessed, especially those with children in-home.

Children's Special Needs by Service Context

(Among the Children with Special Needs)

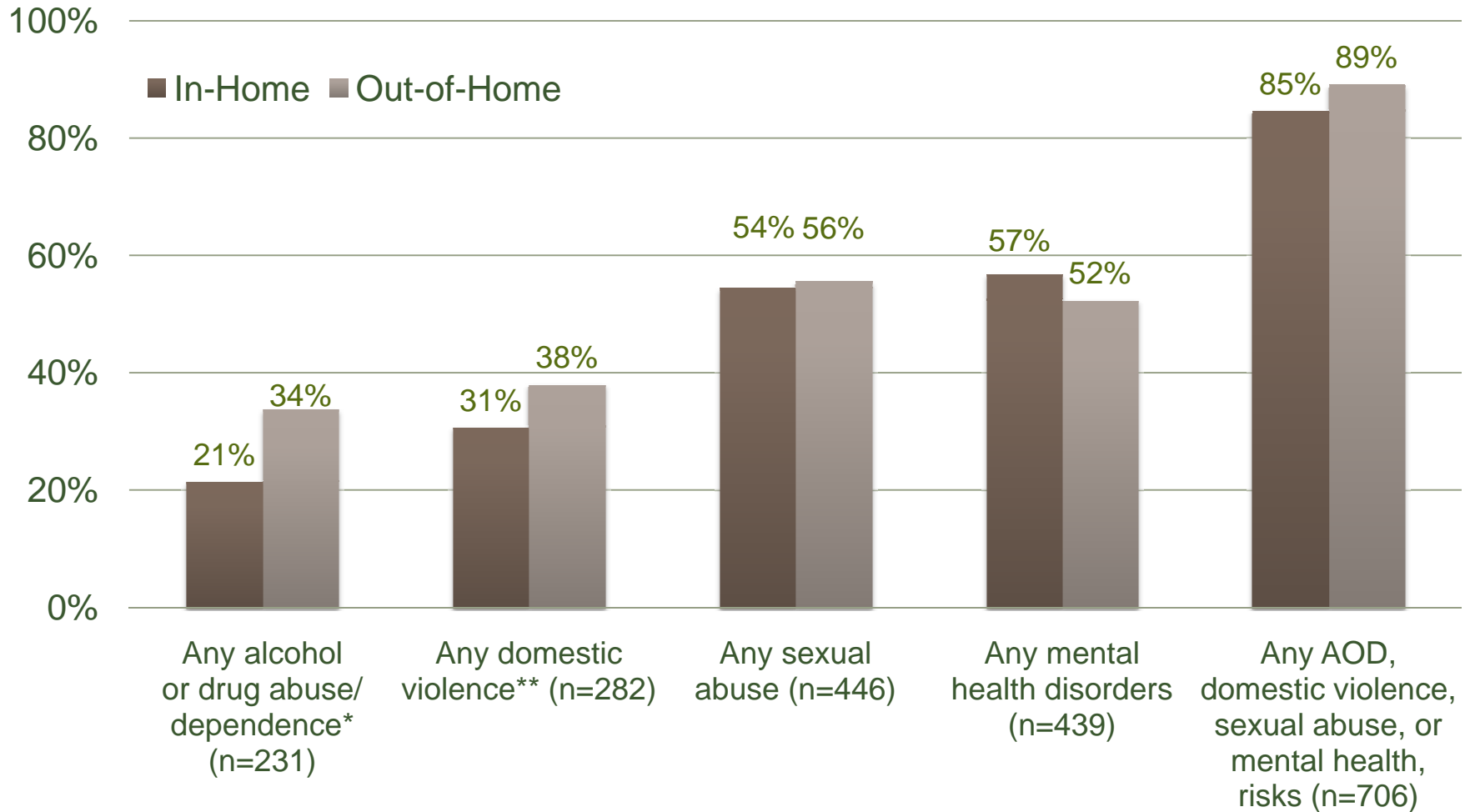


* $p < .05$

Risk Factors

- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse
- Mental health disorders
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse/dependence

Risk Factors by Service Context



* $p < .01$

** $p < .05$

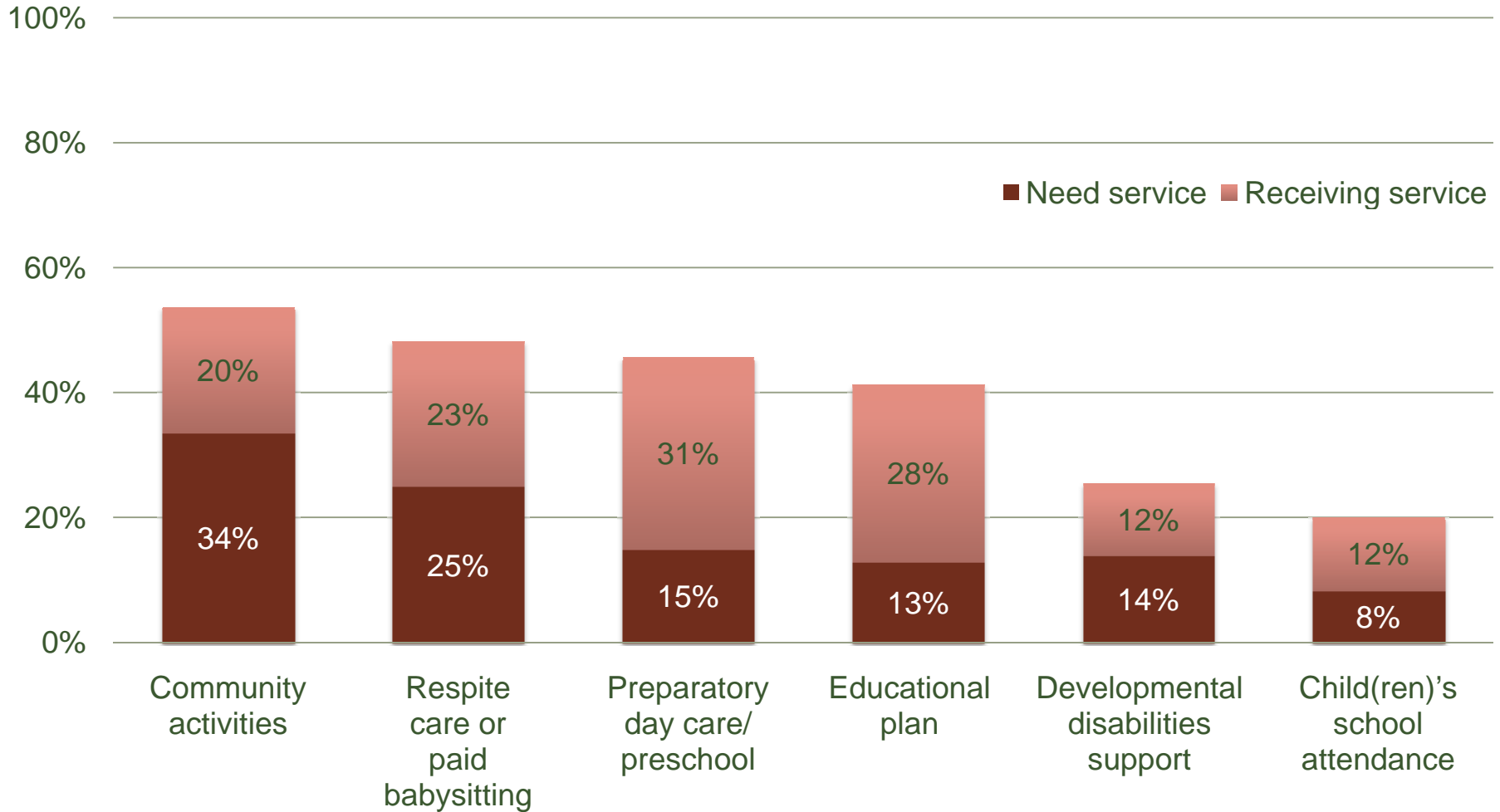
Risk Factors

- Mental health problems and early trauma the most common.
- Cumulative risk presents the greatest reunification challenge.
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse/dependence may be under-reported.

Services for Children and Parents

- Child related services—needed and received
- Parents physical and emotional health services—needed and received

Child Related Services — Statewide



Child Related Service Needs

- The greatest areas of need respite care, educational services and help finding recreational activities.

Parent Service Needs

- Parenting training and help with children's challenging behaviors highest service need.
- Followed by mental health services.
- Family counseling greatest unmet need.
- Substance abuse services largely met.

The Take Away

- Primary caregivers statewide:
 - very poor single women
 - 2/3 unemployed
 - 1/3 in unstable living situations
 - 1/3 report drug or alcohol dependence
 - Over 1/2 have mental health issues,
 - 3 out of 10 have experienced DV
 - 1/2 have experienced some form of sexual abuse as a minor.

The Take Away

- By and large, these problems are worse for those with children in out-of-home care as compared to those with children in the home (ex: employment, income, housing instability, substance abuse)

Midwest Study Design and Sample

- Largest prospective study of foster youth making the transition to adulthood since the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999
- Collaboration between state child welfare agencies and the research team
- Foster youth in Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois who:
 - Were still in care at age 17
 - Had entered care before their 16th birthday
 - Had been placed in care because they were abused, neglected or dependent
 - Not originally placed because of delinquency
- Data from in-person interviews (structured and in-depth qualitative) and government program administrative data

Study Design and Sample (continued)

Wave	Year	Number Interviewed	Response Rate	Age at interview
1	'02 – '03	732	96%	17 – 18
2	'04	603	82%	19
3	'06	591	81%	21
4	'08	602	82%	23-24

Selected outcomes at age 21

	Midwest Study		Add Health	
	%		%	
No high school diploma/GED	23.0		10.8	
Currently enrolled in school	24.0		44.1	
Currently employed	51.5		63.9	
Savings or checking account	51.9		80.7	
Not enough money to pay rent in past 12 months	26.5		8.6	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
At least one living child	30.2	56.1	11.5	23.5
Arrested as an adult	59.3	32.5	7.5	.5

Early evidence regarding protective factors for foster youth in transition

- Being on track in school *before* the transition
- Work experience *before* the transition
- Sound mental health *before* the transition
- Avoiding delinquency *before* the transition
- Educational aspirations *before* the transition
- Relations with family of origin
- Staying in care past age 18 (i.e., having the state continue its parenting role)

