
San Jose Mercury News



Summary Document and Chartpack

San Jose Mercury News/ Kaiser Family Foundation

Survey on Childhood Obesity

March 2004

Methodology

The San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity* was conducted by telephone between November 11 and December 22, 2003 among a representative sample of 1,175 randomly selected adults in the Bay Area. This includes 292 parents with children in Kindergarten through the 12th grade. Parents were asked to answer questions about their child. If they had more than one child in the Kindergarten through 12th grade, a child was selected at random. International Communications Research of Media, PA, conducted the interviews. The survey's margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points overall. Sampling error is larger for subgroups, and sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other survey.

The survey defined the Bay Area as the following counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Sonoma, and Solano.

Selected questions from this survey were asked of a nationally representative sample of 1017 adults. These questions have a sampling error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points overall. International Communications Research conducted the interviewing between February 4th and February 8th, 2004.

Copies of this document are available online at www.kff.org.

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is a non-profit, private operating foundation focusing on the major health care issues facing the nation. The Foundation is an independent voice and source of facts and analysis for policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR THE MERCURY NEWS/KAISER SURVEY ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Obesity in the United States has been labeled an epidemic by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the surgeon general has said that overweight and obesity may soon cause as much preventable disease and death as cigarette smoking¹. About two in three adults are overweight or obese according to the CDC and the number of overweight children is increasing at a shocking rate. Fifteen percent of children and teens ages 6 to 19 are overweight and another 15% are at risk of becoming overweight—triple the rate of only 20 years ago². An estimated 80% of overweight adolescents continue to be obese into adulthood, so the implications of childhood obesity on the nations health are huge³. The health consequences of being overweight are often severe. Overweight and obesity are associated illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer, as well as with psychological disorders like depression and low self-esteem. These diseases do not just afflict adults; obese children and teens confront these same issues as well as social discrimination from their peers.

As the spotlight on childhood obesity continues to grow, so does the debate over public policy options that address obesity. This debate goes far beyond who is responsible for addressing this epidemic and addresses specific regulations that would govern what goes on in the nations schools, food industry, and media outlets.

Recognizing the importance of addressing this epidemic on a local level, the Kaiser Family Foundation and The San Jose Mercury News partnered together to take a closer look at adults in the Bay Area's knowledge and attitudes about childhood obesity, and attitudes about the public policy options aimed at addressing obesity. We also asked Bay Area parents about their own child's habits.

What follows is a summary of Bay Area adults' knowledge and attitudes about childhood obesity, their views on public policy options and who is responsible for addressing the epidemic, and Bay Area parents' views on their own child's weight and lifestyle. Furthermore, we look at the different attitudes of Hispanics, whites, and Asians about childhood obesity, and adults in the Bay Area's views on the role of media in childhood obesity. Selected questions from the survey that addressed public policy options were asked of a national sample. When possible, this summary includes comparisons of the Bay Area compared to the nation as a whole.

¹ US Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*. Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General, 2001.

² Centers for Disease Control. "Overweight Among U.S. Children and Adolescents." *National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey*. <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhanes/databriefs/overwght.pdf>> (5 January 2004).

³ Styne, Dennis. "Childhood and Adolescent Obesity: Prevalence and Significance." *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, Vol. 48, No. 4, August 2001

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS, AND VIEWS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Although they tend to find problems like drugs, alcohol, and violence more important, adults in the Bay Area believe that being overweight or obese is a major problem for children and teens today and they have a good understanding of the health risks associated with being overweight or obese. (Charts 1 and 2)

- Nearly all adults say that being overweight or obese is a major (69%) or minor (26%) problem children and teens face today.
- In fact, over one in ten (13%) say that it is the biggest problem. However, Bay Area adults are more likely to say that use of illegal drugs and alcohol (34%) and violence (18%) are the biggest problems children and teens face today.
- The vast majority know that being overweight or obese increases a person's risk of developing heart disease (95%), high blood pressure (94%), low self esteem (93%), depression (90%), and diabetes (89%). Fewer, but still a majority (56%) know that it increases the risk of getting certain types of cancer.

However, people in the Bay Area tend to overestimate the number of teens and children that are overweight while underestimating the percentage of adults that are overweight. (Chart 3)

- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 15% of children ages 6 to 19 in the United States are overweight. When asked what percentage of the nation's children and teens were overweight or obese, about one in ten (11%) Bay Area adults were fairly accurate in their estimate stating a percentage above or below the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's figure by five percentage points.
 - When asked the percentage of kids and teens who are overweight or obese:
 - Two percent of Bay Area adults said less than 10% of kids and teens are overweight or obese
 - Eleven percent said between 10% and 20% of kids and teens are overweight or obese (accurate)
 - Eighty-one percent said more than 20% of kids and teens are overweight or obese
 - The average response was 41%.

- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Health and Nutrition Examination survey, 65% of adults are either overweight or obese. When asked what percentage of the nations adults are overweight or obese, about one in four (25%) Bay Area adults were fairly accurate in their estimate stating a percentage above or below the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s figure by five percentage points.
 - When asked the percentage of adults who are overweight or obese:
 - Fifty-eight percent of Bay Area adults said less than 60% of adults are overweight or obese
 - Twenty-five percent said between 60% and 70% of adults are overweight or obese (accurate)
 - Twelve percent said more than 70% of adults are overweight or obese
 - The average response was 50%

When asked about specific reasons why children and teens are overweight, Bay Area adults focus on a number of reasons, however they are most likely to think that it is due to a lack of exercise. (Chart 4)

- The percentage of Bay Area adults that say that *major* reasons why children and teens are overweight are:
 - They do not exercise regularly (82%)
 - Fast food restaurants and food companies make too much unhealthy food (54%)
 - Too much advertising is aimed at them (45%)
 - Most diets are not effective (38%)
 - They lack self control (37%)
 - Being overweight is something that you inherit from your parents (23%)

RESPONSIBILITY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Who do Bay Area adults hold responsible for addressing the problem of obesity?

People in the Bay Area are split as to whether obesity is a public or private issue. Although they say institutions like the government and the food industry bear some responsibility for addressing the problem, they tend to think that individuals themselves and parents are more responsible for addressing this epidemic. (Charts 5 and 6)

- About half (52%) of Bay Area adults say that obesity is a public health issue that society needs to help solve, while about half (45%) say that it is a private issue that people need to deal with on their own.
- However, when asked about how much responsibility different groups have in addressing the problem of obesity, people are more likely to believe in individual responsibility. Higher percentages say that parents (88%) and individuals themselves (84%) have a lot of responsibility in addressing obesity, compared to doctors or other healthcare providers (54%), the food industry (42%), schools (38%), or the government (26%).
- Bay Area adults do say that parents (97%), individuals (96%), doctors or other healthcare providers (92%), schools (85%), the food industry (80%), and the government (69%) have at least some responsibility to address the problem.

What public policy options do Bay Area adults support to combat overweight and obesity?

Although people in the Bay Area are more likely to believe in personal responsibility when it comes to addressing the problem of obesity, they are also supportive of a number of different government policies aimed at tackling the problem, such as government funded advertising campaigns that promote eating right and exercising and laws that require fast food restaurants to list nutritional information. (Chart 7)

- The percentage of Bay Area adults that support:
 - Government-funded advertising campaigns that promote eating right and exercising (84%)
 - Making a law requiring fast food restaurants to list nutrition information—such as calorie count—for all items on their menus (78%)
 - Warning labels on packaged food about the health risks of being overweight, just like there are warning labels on cigarettes about the health risks of smoking (70%)
 - The federal government regulating television ads for junk food and fast food that are aimed at children and teens the way they do for cigarettes and alcohol (58%)
 - Putting a special tax on junk food—that is things like soda, chips, and candy—and using the money for programs to fight obesity (51%)
- Majorities of Bay Area adults do not think schools should allow advertisements for food and drink (83%), fast food (81%), soda machines (66%), and vending machines (58%).

Bay Area adults are somewhat more supportive of implementing public policies that address the obesity epidemic than adults nationwide, particularly when looking at the percent who strongly support each option. Bay Area adults are also somewhat more likely to say that soda machines and vending machines do not belong in schools.

- The percent of adults in the United States compared the adults in the Bay Area that support:

		U.S. Adults	Bay Area Adults
Government-funded advertising campaigns that promote eating right and exercising	Support (NET)	73%	84%
	Strongly Support	44	60
	Somewhat Support	30	24
Making a law requiring fast food restaurants to list nutrition information—such as calorie count—for all items on their menus	Support (NET)	70	78
	Strongly Support	44	56
	Somewhat Support	26	22
Warning labels on packaged food about the health risks of being overweight, just like there are warning labels on cigarettes about the health risks of smoking	Support (NET)	66	70
	Strongly Support	40	46
	Somewhat Support	27	23
The federal government regulating television ads for junk food and fast food that are aimed at children and teens the way they do for cigarettes and alcohol	Support (NET)	53	58
	Strongly Support	29	38
	Somewhat Support	24	20
Putting a special tax on junk food—that is things like soda, chips, and candy—and using the money for programs to fight obesity	Support (NET)	40	51
	Strongly Support	18	32
	Somewhat Support	22	19

- Two thirds (66%) of Bay Area adults do not think that soda machines should be allowed in schools, compared to 55% of adults nationwide.
- Nearly six in ten (58%) Bay Area adults do not think that vending machines should be allowed in schools, compared to 48% of adults nationwide.

What Bay Area adults want in schools

Bay Area adults feel that schools have at least some responsibility in addressing the problem of obesity. However, they do have strong opinions on what this responsibility entails. The vast majority say that schools have the responsibility to teach children and teens the foods that are healthy to eat, but they do not think it is the schools role to monitor children's weight. (Chart 8)

- About eight in ten (82%) adults in the Bay Area say that it is a school's responsibility to teach children and teens what are healthy foods to eat. About two in ten (18%) disagree.
- Two in ten (20%) say that it is a school's responsibility to monitor children and teen's weight. About eight in ten (78%) disagree.

This is very similar to what adults nationwide want to see in schools. Most want schools to teach kids about healthy foods, but do not want schools monitoring children's weight.

- About three in four (74%) adults nationwide say that it is a school's responsibility to teach children and teens what are healthy foods to eat. One in four (25%) disagree.
- About two in ten (19%) adults nationwide say that it is a school's responsibility to monitor children and teen's weight. About eight in ten (79%) disagree.

Most adults in the Bay Area say that it is important for the schools to have classes in physical education and nutrition and to offer extracurricular activities like sports. When forced to chose which classes are most important, Bay Area adults are most likely to say physical education.

(Chart 9)

- Percent of Bay Area adults who say it is very important for schools to offer:
 - Physical Education (91%)
 - Extracurricular activities like sports (84%)
 - Classes in the arts (75%)
 - Classes on Nutrition (74%)

- When forced to choose *the most* important class for schools to offer, the percent of adults who say:
 - Physical Education (36%)
 - Extracurricular activities like sports (22%)
 - Classes in the arts (19%)
 - Classes on nutrition (17%)

When it comes to soda and vending machines, a potential clash may emerge among Bay Area adults, schools and students. Bay Area adults do not support having soda machines, even if they do provide additional money for the schools and vending machines are only supported if they offer low fat options. These views may conflict with those of financially strapped schools and those of students who want access to these products on their school campuses. (Chart 10)

- The majority of Bay Area adults do *not* want soda machines (66%) or vending machines (58%) in schools. On the other hand, over three in ten adults think that soda machines (32%) and almost four in ten think vending machines (39%) should be allowed.
- The majority of Bay Area adults do not support soda machines (56%) in schools even if they heard that schools could earn \$20,000. Four in ten (39%) would support soda machines if schools could earn \$20,000.
- About eight in ten (81%) adults support vending machines in schools, as long as they offer low fat options. One in six (16%) would not support vending machines, even if they did offer these healthier options.

According to parents, most kids in the 6th through 12th grade have soda machines and vending machines at school while most kids in the Kindergarten through 5th grade do not. Among those parents who say their child does have soda machines or vending machines at school, parents say just about half actually choose to use them. (Chart 11)

- About four in ten (39%) parents in the Bay Area say that their child has soda machines available to them at school and 36% say their child's school has vending machines. However, older kids are more likely to have soda and vending machines than younger kids. Two thirds (66%) of parents with children in the 6th through 9th grade say that their child's school has soda machines, compared to one in ten (11%) parents with kids in Kindergarten through the 5th grade. Nearly six in ten (58%) parents with kids in the 6th through 12th grade say that their child's school has a vending machine, compared to about one in ten (11%) parents with kids in the Kindergarten through 5th grade.
- Of the parents who say their kids have soda machines, 58% say that their child uses them. Of the parents who say their kids have vending machines, 51% say that their child uses them.

- Therefore, about two in ten parents in the Bay Area say that their child uses soda machines at school (22%) or the vending machines at school (18%).

Bay Area adults do not support having fast food in the schools and the vast majority of parents say that their child's school does not offer it. (Chart 12)

- About eight in ten (81%) Bay Area adults say that fast food restaurants should not be allowed in schools. Less than two in ten (17%) say that they should. When parents are asked about fast food restaurants in their own child's school, about one in four (24%) say that their child's school offers fast food such as Taco Bell, Subway, or McDonalds. However, older kids are more likely to have fast food than younger kids. Nearly four in ten (38%) parents of 6 to 12th graders and nearly one in ten (9%) parents of Kindergarten through 5th graders say that their child's school offers fast food.

Bay Area adults are also opposed to advertisements for food and drink in schools, even if it could earn schools thousands of dollars. (Chart 13)

- Over eight in ten (83%) Bay Area adults say that advertisements for food and drink should not be allowed in areas like schools hallways and gymnasium. Fifteen percent do think these advertisements should be allowed in schools.
- About two-thirds (67%) of Bay Area adults still do not favor food and drink advertisements in schools even if they heard that schools could earn \$20,000.

WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S WEIGHT AND LIFESTYLE

Most parents feel that their child is at their ideal weight, but about one in seven say that their child is overweight and less than one percent of parents say that their child is obese. (Chart 14)

- 71% of parents in the Bay Area say that their child is at their ideal weight, 15% say that they are overweight, and 13% say that they are underweight. Less than one percent says that their child is obese.

What parents say about their child's eating habits

Parents tend to think that they know a lot about what their child is eating during the school day. However, most parents of older children do not require their child to ask permission to eat in between meals. (Chart 15)

- Six in ten (60%) Bay Area parents say that they know “a lot” about what their child is eating, 26% say they know “some”, 11% say they know “not much”, and three percent say they know nothing at all. However, parents with younger children are more likely to say they know “a lot” about what their child eats during the school day (70% of parents with children in the Kindergarten through 5th grade say they know “a lot” compared to 51% of parents with kids in the 6th through 12th grade).
- About six in ten (62%) parents say that their child does not need their permission to eat in between meals. Nearly four in ten (37%) parents do require their child to ask permission. Younger kids are much more likely to have to ask permission to eat in between meals. About six in ten (61%) parents with kids in the Kindergarten through 5th grade say their child needs to ask permission, compared to 15% of parents with kids in the 6th through 12th grade.

According to parents, kids are more likely to drink milk on a typical day than non-diet soda. However, even according to their parents, the majority of kids in the Bay Area are still not getting the recommended five servings a day of fruits and vegetables and four in ten are eating fast food at least once a day. (Chart 16)

- Percent of parents who say that on a typical day, their child drank:
 - At least one serving of milk (81%)
 - At least one drink other than soda that contained sugar such as fruit juice, punch or energy drinks (66%)
 - At least one can of non-diet soda (23%)
- Percent of parents who say that on a typical day, their child ate:
 - At least one fast food meal or snack (40%)
 - Five or more servings of fruits or vegetables (22%)

If you ask their parents, kids and teens in the Bay Area typically get a home cooked dinner and tend to eat breakfast. However, some parents admit their child has less healthy eating habits. About one in six parents report that their child eats dinner in front of the television set on most nights. (Chart 17)

- Percent of Bay Area parents who say that on *most nights* their child:
 - Eats a dinner that was cooked at home (86%)
 - Eats breakfast (78%)
 - Eats dinner in front of the television (18%)
 - Has a second helping at dinner (16%)
 - Eats pre-packaged or prepared dinners such as TV dinner or takeout food (6%)
 - Eats out at a restaurant for dinner (3%)

Most Bay Area parents say that their child typically eats at a restaurant once a week or more. They also say their child gets to decide where they go, at least some of the time. (Chart 18)

- Percent of parents who say their child eats out at a restaurant:
 - 4-7 times a week (3%)
 - 2-3 times a week (11%)
 - Once a week (43%)
 - Less than once a week (42%)
- About half (49%) of parents say that their child gets to decide where their household goes out to dinner some of the time. About two in ten say they get to decide all the time (6%) or most of the time (13%). About three in ten say they get to choose rarely (21%) or never (10%).

What parents say about their child's daily activity

In general, parents in the Bay Area say that their children are physically active. Most say their children frequently get 30 minutes of physical activity a day and are involved in organized sports or activities. Very few say that their child never gets any physical activity. (Chart 19)

- Percent of Bay Area parents who say that their child gets *at least* 30 minutes of physical activity:
 - 5-7 times a week (65%)
 - 2-4 times a week (26%)
 - Once a week or less (6%)
 - Never (3%)

- Three in four (76%) Bay Area parents say that their child has been involved in organized sports or activities such as football, swimming, soccer, baseball, softball, or dance in the past year. About one in four (23%) say that their child has not been involved in these activities in the past year.

However, most Bay Area parents say that their child's daily routine does not include walking or biking to school. Of the parents whose kids do not walk or bike to school, most parents would not want them to. Top concerns include traffic danger and fear of crime. (Chart 20)

- Over six in ten (63%) of Bay Area parents say that their child does *not* walk or ride a bike to school. This includes 39% of parents who say that they would not let their child walk or bike to school even if they wanted to and 24% of parents who would let their child walk or bike if they wanted to.
- Thirty-six percent say that their child does walk or bike to school.
- When they think about their child walking to school, Bay Area parents say their top concern is traffic danger (31%), fear of crime (25%), it is too far (22%), and weather (6%). Fifteen percent say they have no concerns about their child walking or riding their bike to school.

The vast majority of Bay Area parents say that activities that require little physical exertion like watching television and using a computer are a part of their child's daily routine. Half say that video games are a part of their child's daily routine. (Chart 21)

- Percent of parents who say that during an average day, their child watches television or movies:
 - Less than one hour (18%)
 - One hour to less than two hours (57%)
 - More than two hours (20%)
 - Their child does not watch television or movies (4%)
- Percent of parents who say that during an average day, their child uses a computer:
 - Less than one hour (35%)
 - One hour to less than two hours (46%)
 - More than two hours (8%)
 - Their child does not use computers (9%)

- Percent of parents who say that during an average day, their child plays video games:
 - Less than one hour (24%)
 - One hour to less than two hours (22%)
 - More than two hours (3%)
 - Their child does not play video games (50%)

RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE BAY AREA

In most cases Hispanics and whites in the Bay Area share similar views on overweight children and teens. Both groups think being overweight is a problem for children, they are split on whether it is better for kids to be overweight or underweight, and in general they say that there are social and health consequences for those who are overweight. Although the majority of Asians say that being overweight or obese is a problem, they are less likely than whites or Hispanics to feel this way. Asians are also more likely to prefer children be overweight instead of underweight and are less likely to feel that being overweight compromises how attractive children are. (Chart 22)

- Over seven in ten Hispanics (73%) and whites (73%) say that being overweight or obese is a major problem for children and teens. Fewer Asians, about six in ten (61%), agree.
- Hispanics, however, are less likely than whites to say that being overweight or obese is the biggest problem that children and teens face (7% vs. 17%). Asians fall between these two groups (10%).
- Hispanics and whites are split on whether it is better for children and teens to be overweight (40% and 44%, respectively) or underweight (52% and 46%). However, Asians are more likely to say that it is better for children to be overweight (54%) rather than underweight (38%).
- About half of Hispanics (52%) and whites (51%) say that overweight kids are less attractive than other kids their age. Fewer Asians (40%) agree.
- Most Hispanics (71%), whites (66%), and Asians (65%) say that overweight children and teens are unhealthy.
- Over six in ten Hispanics (63%) and whites (68%) say that it is harder for overweight children and teens to make friends than other kids their age. Asians are slightly less likely than whites to agree (56%).

Although Hispanics tend to share similar views with whites on their attitudes about those who are overweight, their attitudes are more aligned with Asians in some cases. Hispanics and Asians are more likely than whites to say that overweight children lack self-control and are more likely to say that overweight children and teens will just lose weight naturally as they grow up and that being overweight is a sign that a child is from a well off family. (Chart 23)

- Hispanics (73%) and Asians (63%) are more likely than whites (48%) to say that overweight children and teens lack self-control.
- Hispanics (46%), and to a lesser extent Asians (30%), are more likely than whites (20%) to say that overweight children and teens will lose weight naturally as they grow up.
- Although few say that being overweight is a sign that a child comes from a well off family, Hispanics (17%) and Asians (18%) are three times as likely to say this than whites (5%).

When buying food for their households, Hispanics are most likely to cite price and convenience as very important factors. Asians tend to be the least concerned with taste. (Chart 24)

- About half (48%) of Hispanics consider price very important when they are buying food for their household, compared to 26% of whites and 29% of Asians.
- Hispanics (45%) are also over twice as likely as whites (20%) and Asians (21%) to say that convenience is very important when buying food.
- Although most agree that taste is very important when buying food, Asians (57%) are less likely than Hispanics (76%) and whites (77%) to feel this way.
- Asians are also slightly less likely than whites to say that nutritional value is very important when buying food (65% vs. 75%). Hispanics fall in between these groups (72%).

Hispanics and Asians are more split on whether obesity is a private or a public issue, while whites tend to say that it is a public issue. However, although everyone agrees that individuals and parents should be held the most accountable, Hispanics are the most likely to hold public institutions responsible for addressing the issue. Hispanics, and in some cases Asians, are also more likely than whites to support government policies that address overweight and obesity. (Charts 25 and 26)

- Hispanics and Asians are more split on whether obesity is a public (46% and 48%, respectively) or private (53% and 49%) issue. Whites are more likely to feel it is a public issue (57%) rather than a private one (39%).
- Most say that individuals and parents have a lot of responsibility in addressing obesity, however whites are the most likely to feel this way. Nine in ten whites say that individuals (90%) and parents (91%) have a lot of responsibility, compared to about eight in ten Hispanics (77% individuals, 83% parents) and Asians (79% individuals, 84% parents).
- About half of Hispanics in the Bay Area say that the food industry (48%) and schools (51%) and four in ten (39%) say the government has a lot of responsibility in addressing obesity, compared to fewer whites and Asians in the Bay Area who say the same about the food industry (39% and 39%, respectively), schools (37% and 30%) and the government (20% and 23%).
- The percent of Hispanics, Asians, and whites in the Bay Area who strongly support:

	Hispanics	Whites	Asians
Government-funded advertising campaigns that promote eating right and exercising	68%	55%	63%
Making a law requiring fast food restaurants to list nutrition information—such as calorie count—for all items on their menus	62	54	54
Warning labels on packaged food about the health risks of being overweight, just like there are warning labels on cigarettes about the health risks of smoking	61	38	51
The federal government regulating television ads for junk food and fast food that are aimed at children and teens the way they do for cigarettes and alcohol	48	37	40
Putting a special tax on junk food—that is things like soda, chips, and candy—and using the money for programs to fight obesity	46	27	29

THE BAY AREA'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE MEDIA AND THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The vast majority of Bay Area adults say that most images in magazines and movies and on TV promote an unrealistic body image for young children and teens. (Chart 27)

- Over eight in ten (84%) adults in the Bay Area say that images in the popular media promote an unrealistic body image for young children and teens. This includes 68% who strongly agree. Fifteen percent of adults disagree.

However, Bay Area parents report that their children are spending a substantial amount of time watching television and movies. (Chart 21)

- About two in ten (18%) Bay Area parents say that their child watches less than an hour of television and movies a day, nearly six in ten (57%) say that their child watches an hour to two hours of television a day, and two in ten (20%) say that their child is watching more than two hours of television a day. Only 4% say that their child does not watch television.

Bay Area adults strongly support a government ad campaign addressing obesity, but support is not as strong for other policy proposals regarding media and childhood obesity. (Chart 7)

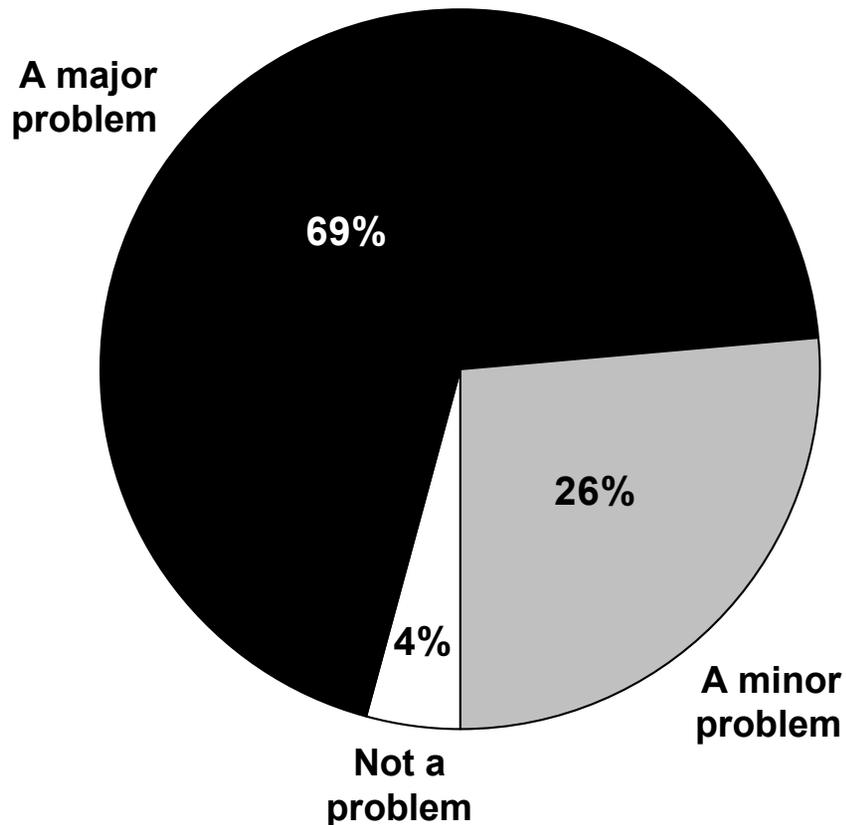
- The vast majority (84%) of Bay Area adults support having a government funded advertising campaign that promotes eating well and exercising, including 60% who strongly support having these campaigns. Fewer than one in six (15%) do not support these government funded advertising campaigns.
- Bay Area support is not as strong for government regulation of television ads for junk food and fast food that are aimed at children and teens. About six in ten (58%) Bay Area adults support this type of regulation, including 38% who strongly support this policy option. However, four in ten (40%) oppose the government regulation of these ads.

Chart 1

Problems Facing Teens According to Adults

Among Bay Area adults...

How big a problem do you think being overweight or obese is for teens in general?



Which is the biggest problems for teens?

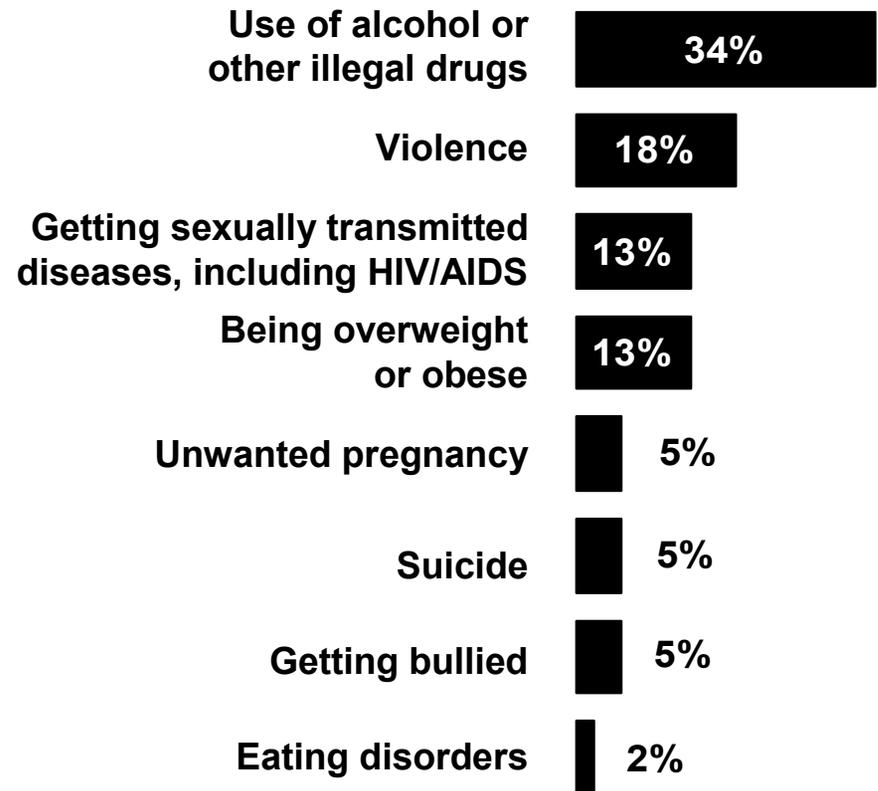
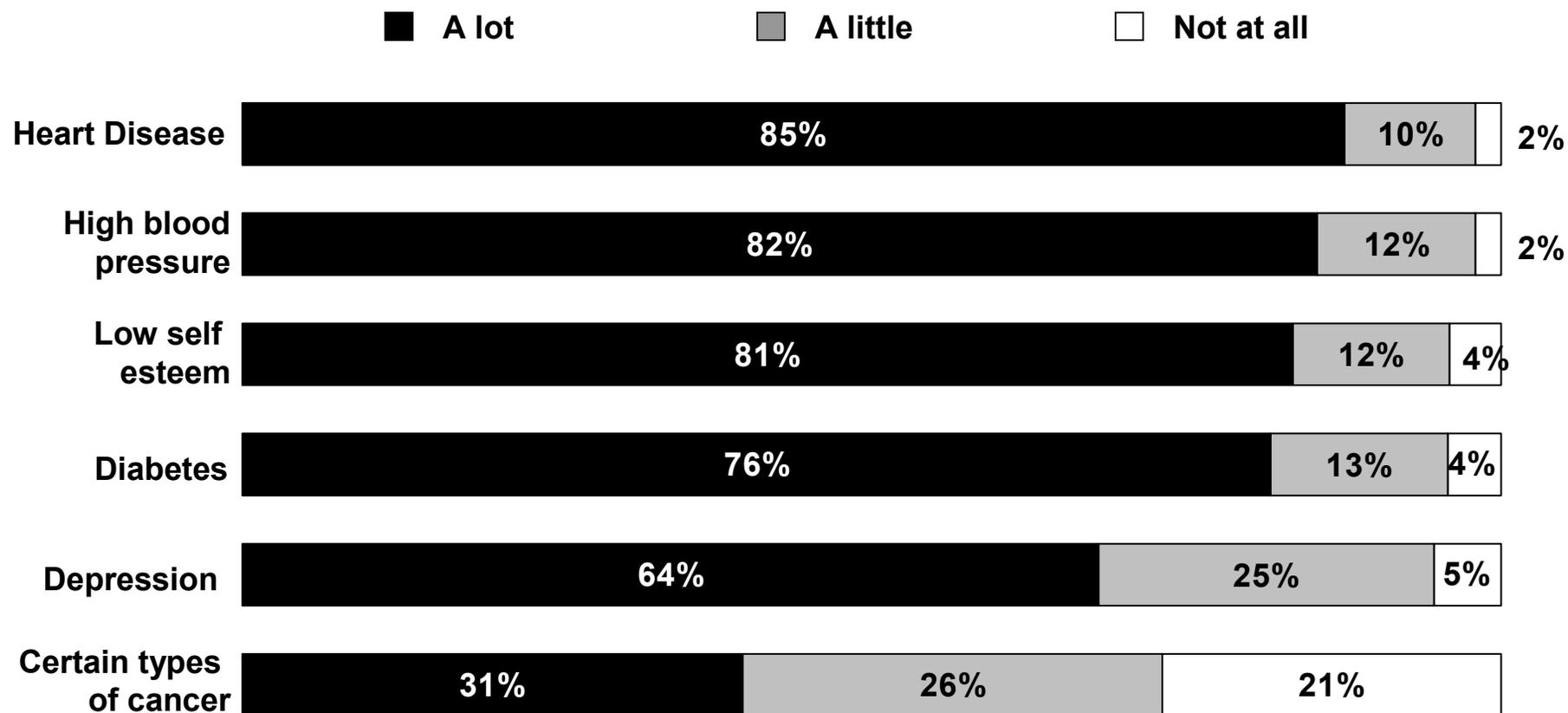


Chart 2

Knowledge of the Health Risks of Being Overweight

Percent of Bay Area adults who say that being overweight or obese increases a persons risk of developing...



Note: Don't know responses not shown

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 3

Estimating the Size of the Epidemic

	Kids and teens ages 6 to 19	Adults
FACTS SAY:		
According to the Center for Disease Control, the percentage who are overweight or obese	15%	65%
PEOPLE THINK:		
When asked what percentage were overweight nationwide, the mean estimate given by Bay Area adults	41%	50%

Chart 4

Perceived Reasons Children and Teens are Overweight

The percentage of Bay Area adults that say that major reasons why children and teens are overweight are..

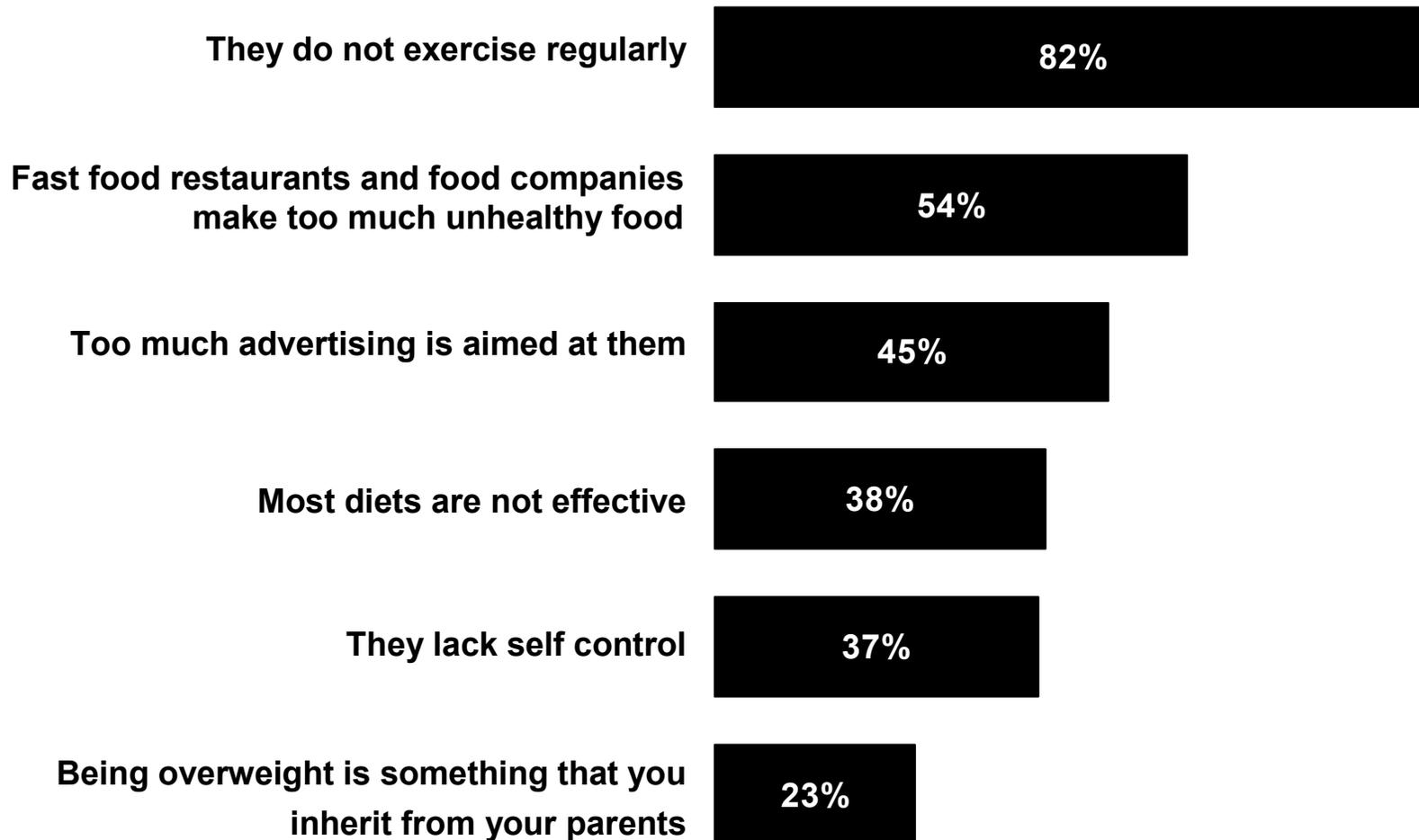


Chart 5

Is Obesity a Public or Private Issue?

According to Bay Area adults, obesity is...

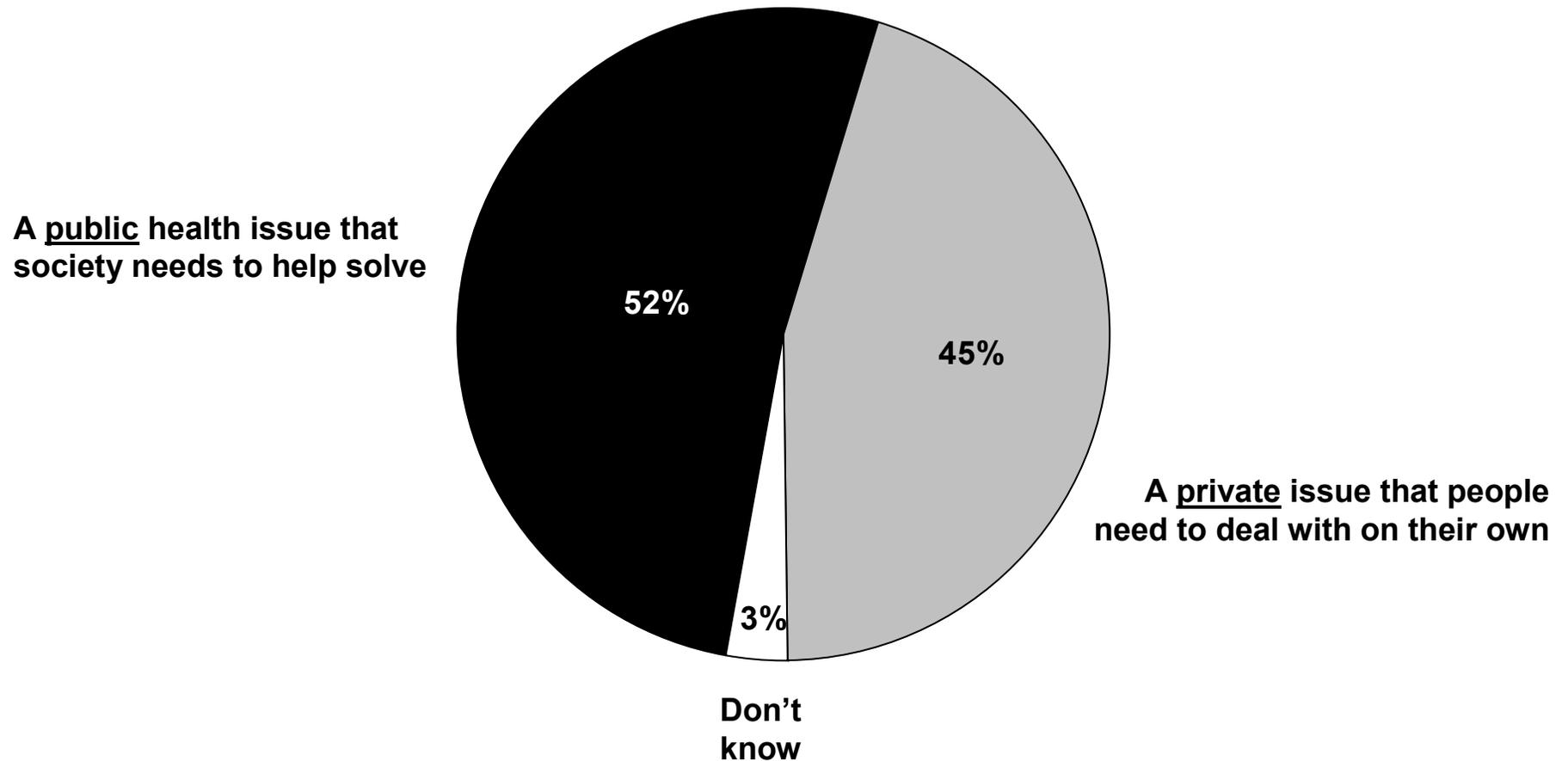
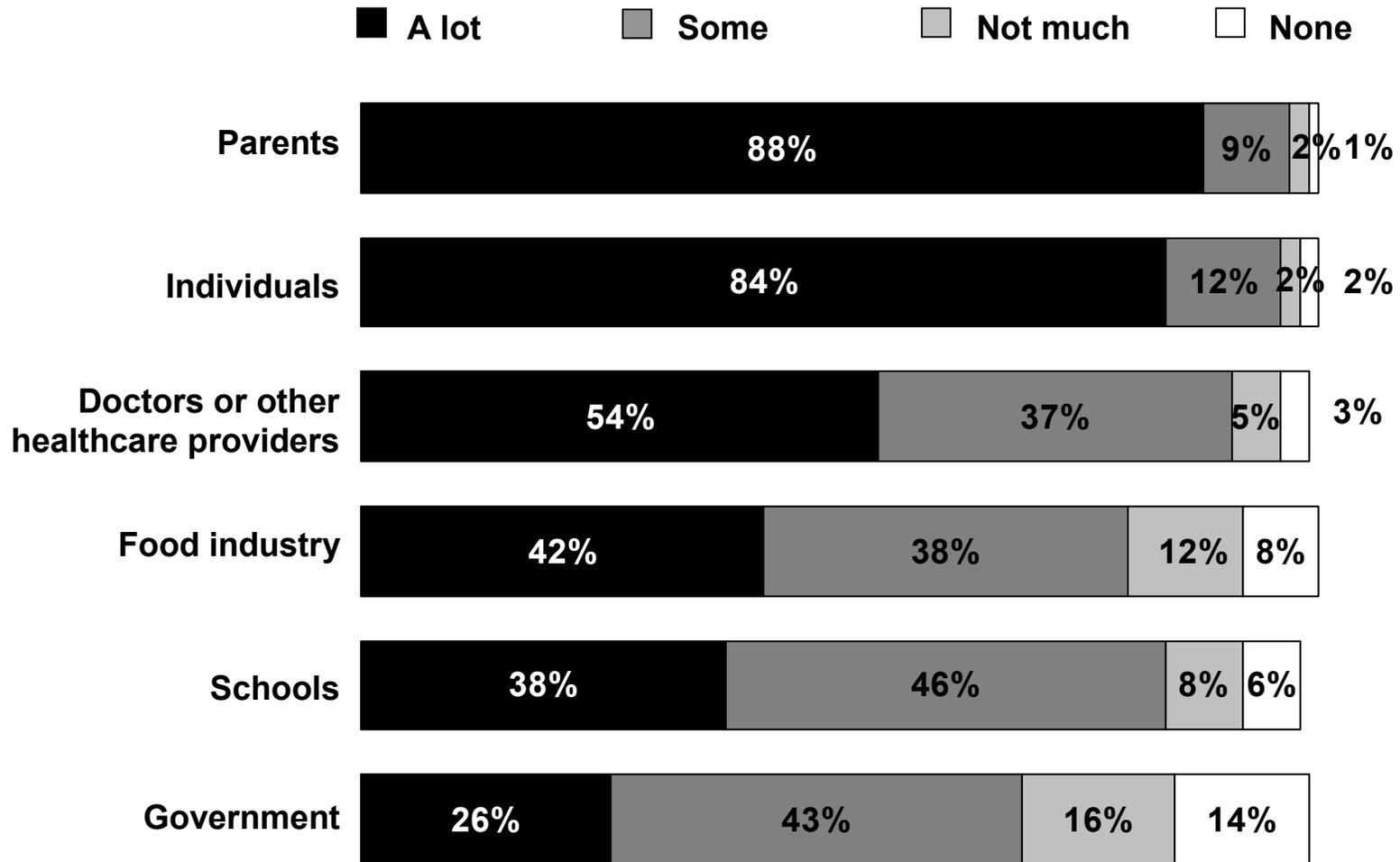


Chart 6

Who is Responsible For Addressing the Problem of Obesity?

According to Bay Area adults, the amount of responsibility each has in addressing the problem of obesity in the United States...



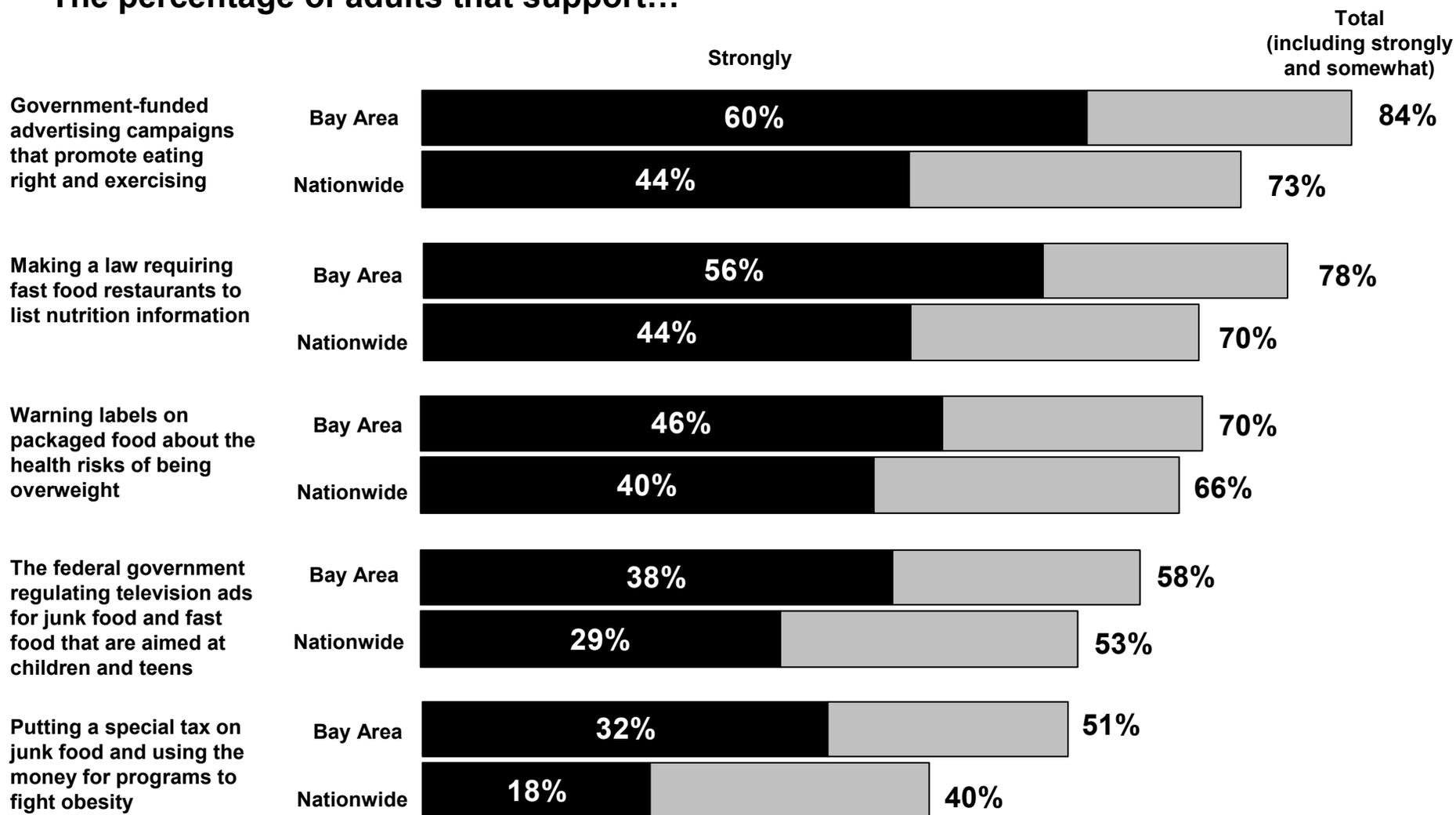
Note: Don't know responses not shown

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 7

Support for Public Policy Addressing Obesity

The percentage of adults that support...



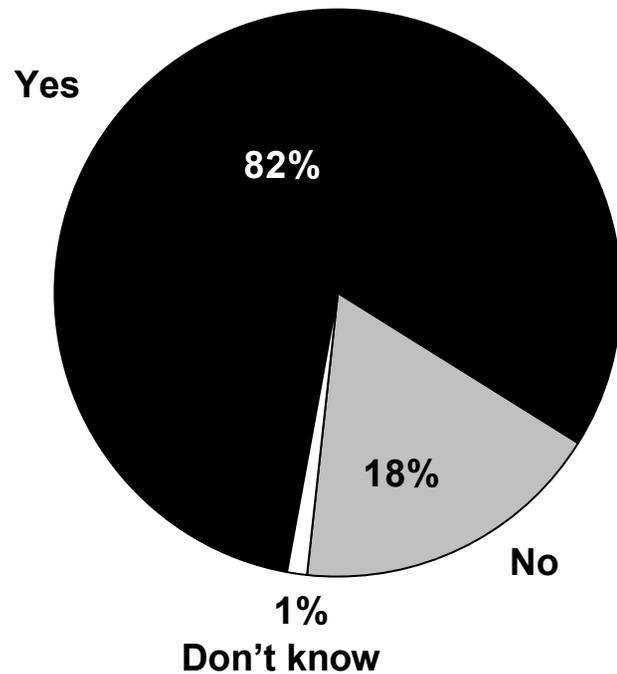
Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 8

Responsibility of Schools

Percent of Bay Area adults who say that it is a school's responsibility to...

Teach children and teens what are healthy foods to eat



Monitor children and teen's weight

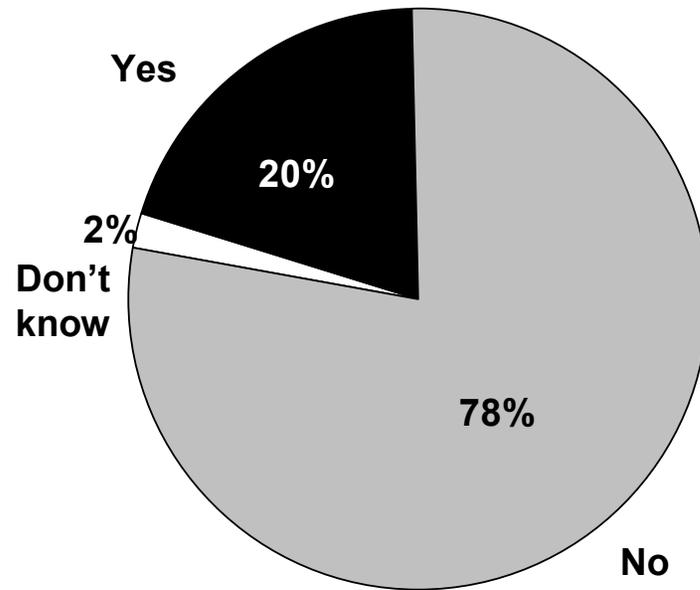
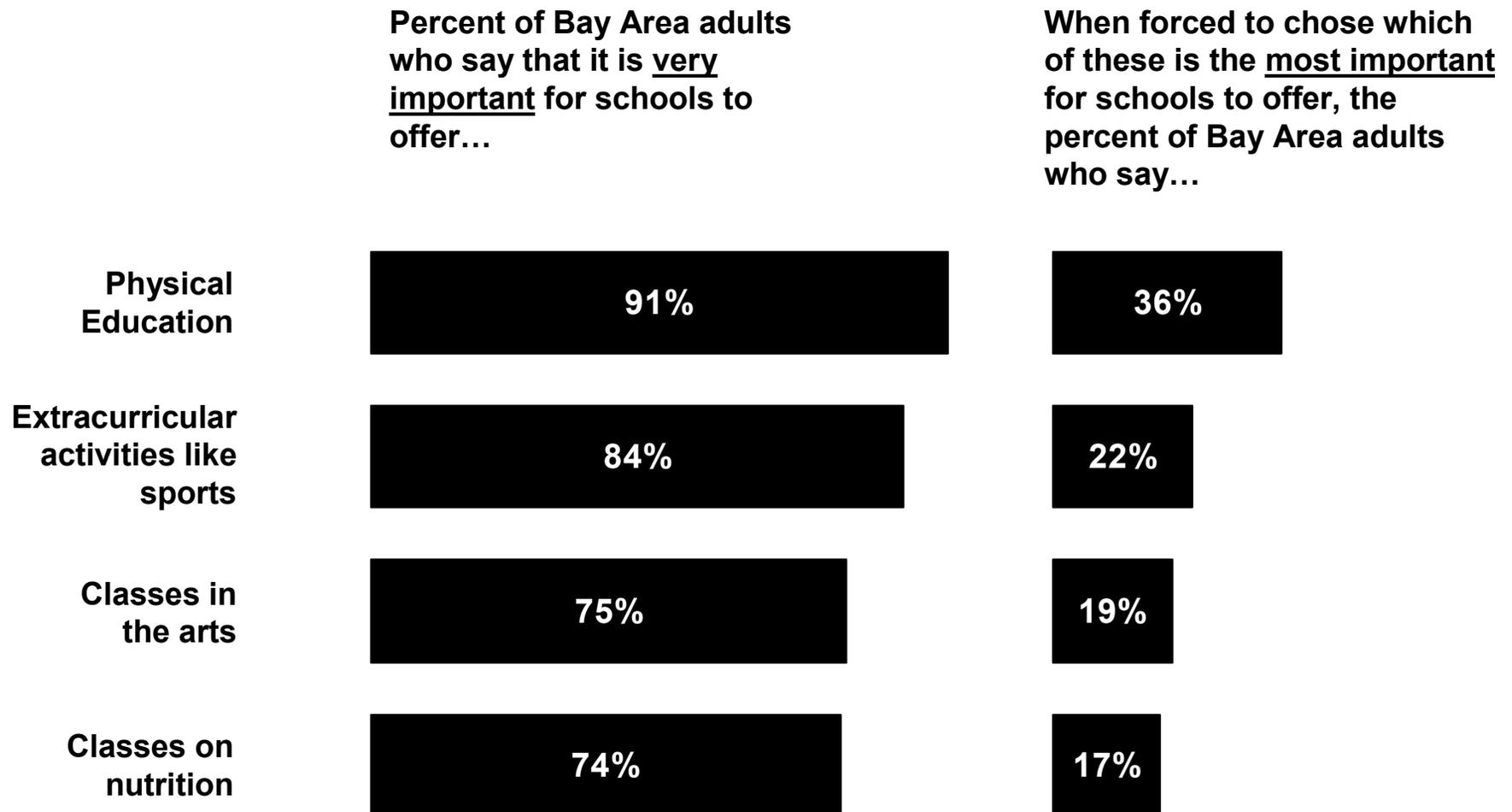


Chart 9

What Bay Area Adults Want Offered in Schools

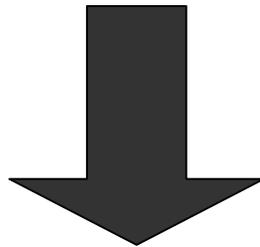
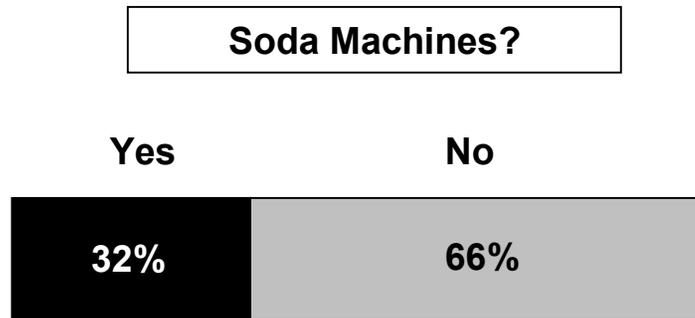


Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

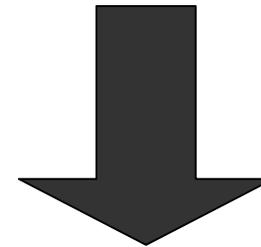
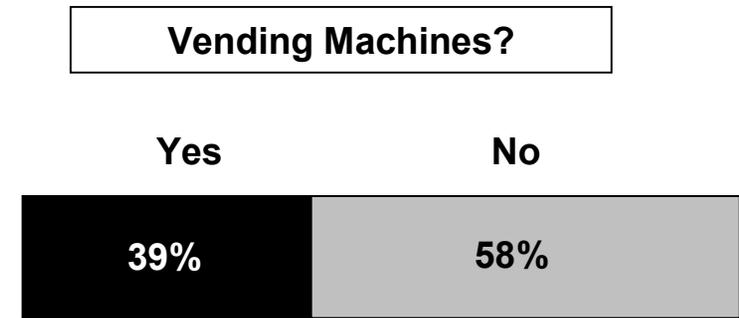
Chart 10

Soda Machines and Vending Machines in Schools

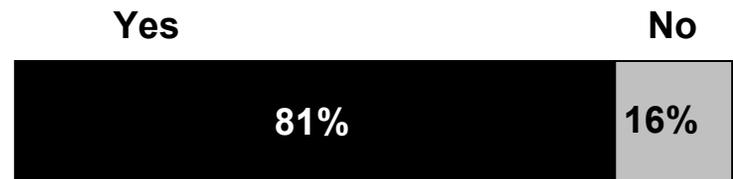
According to Bay Area adults, should schools allow...



And if they heard that soda machines could earn schools \$20,000?



And what if schools only allowed healthy, low fat options in vending machines?



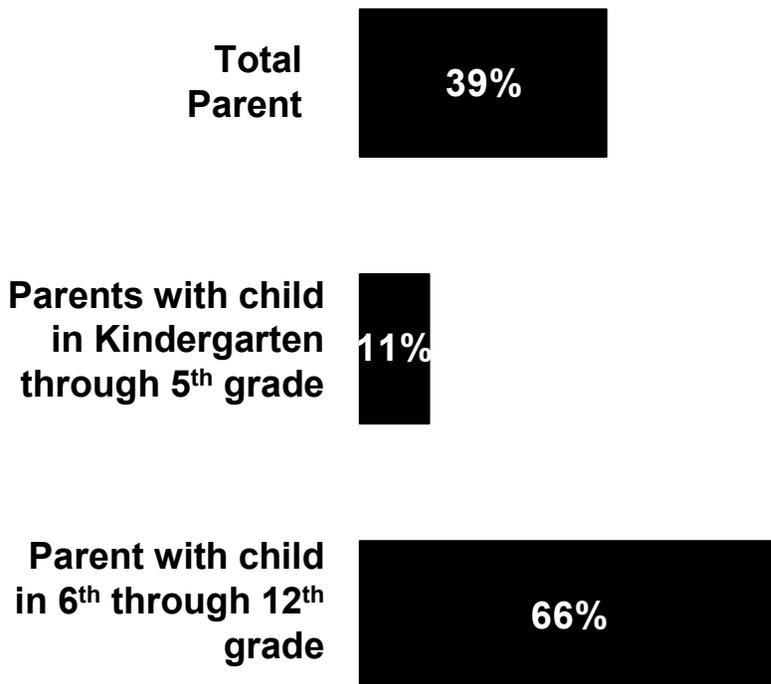
Note: Don't know responses not shown

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 11

What Parents Say About Soda Machines in Their Child's School

Percent of Bay Area parents who say that soda machines are available at their child's school...



Percent of Bay Area parents who say that soda machines are available at their child's school and...

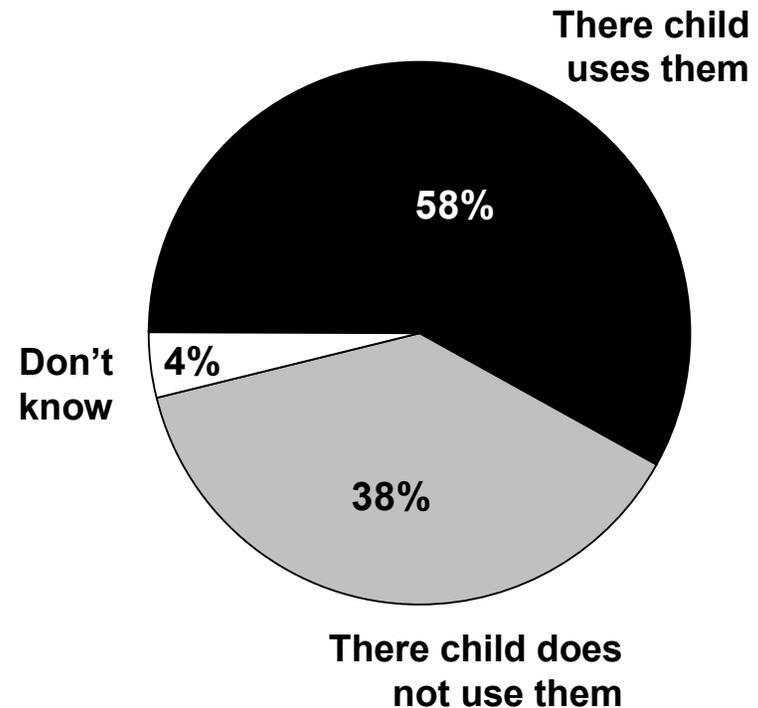
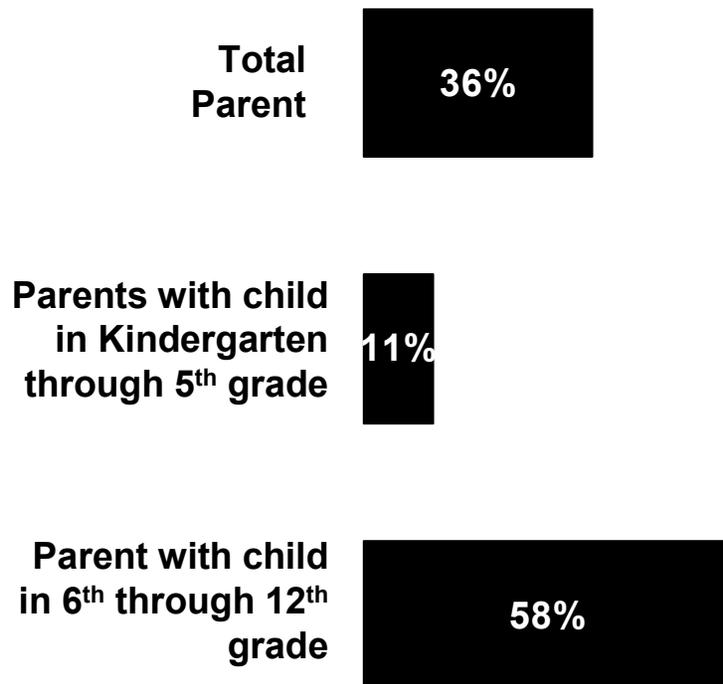


Chart 11

What Parents Say About Vending Machines in Their Child's School

Percent of Bay Area parents who say that vending machines are available at their child's school...



Percent of Bay Area parents who say that vending machines are available at their child's school and...

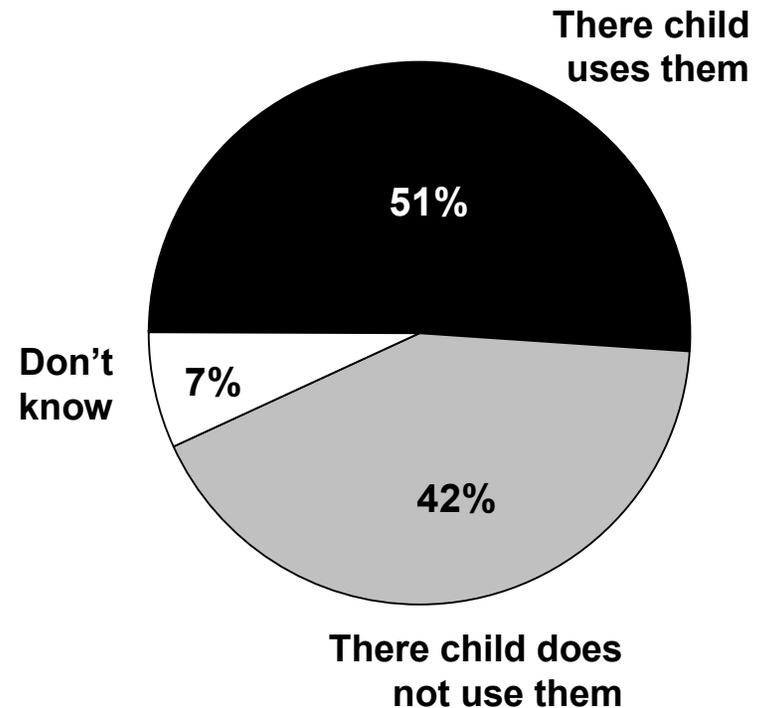
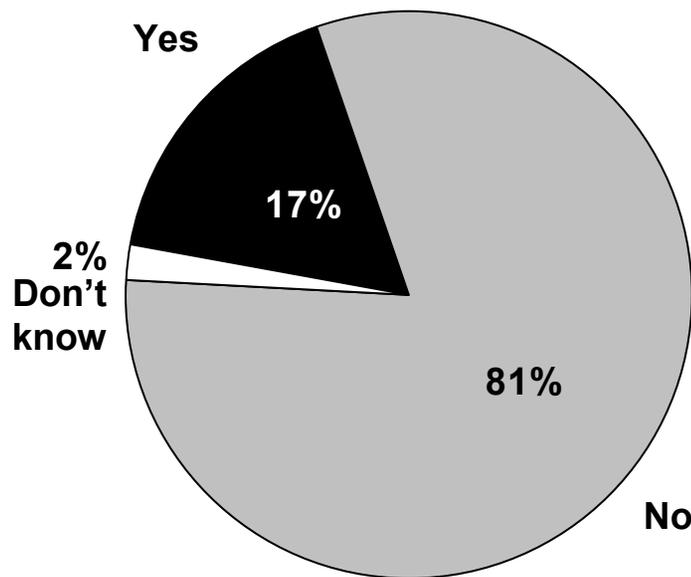


Chart 12

Fast Food in Schools

Among Bay Area adults: Should fast food be allowed in schools?



Among Bay Area parents: Does your child's school offer fast food?

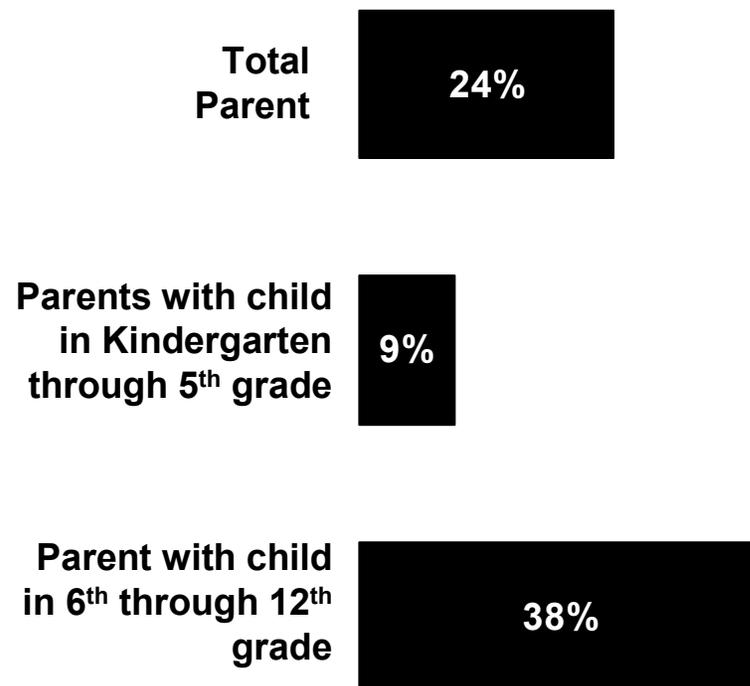
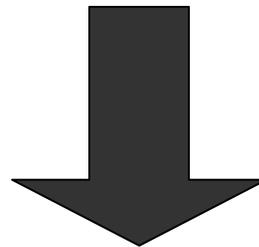
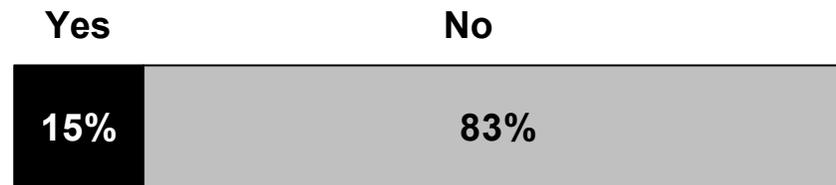


Chart 13

Advertisements in Schools

Among Bay Area adults...

Should advertisements for food and drink be allowed in schools in areas like hallways and gymnasiums?



What if you heard that advertisements would earn schools \$20,000?



Note: Don't know responses not included

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 14

What Parents Are Saying About Their Child's Weight

Percent of Bay Area parents who say that their child is...

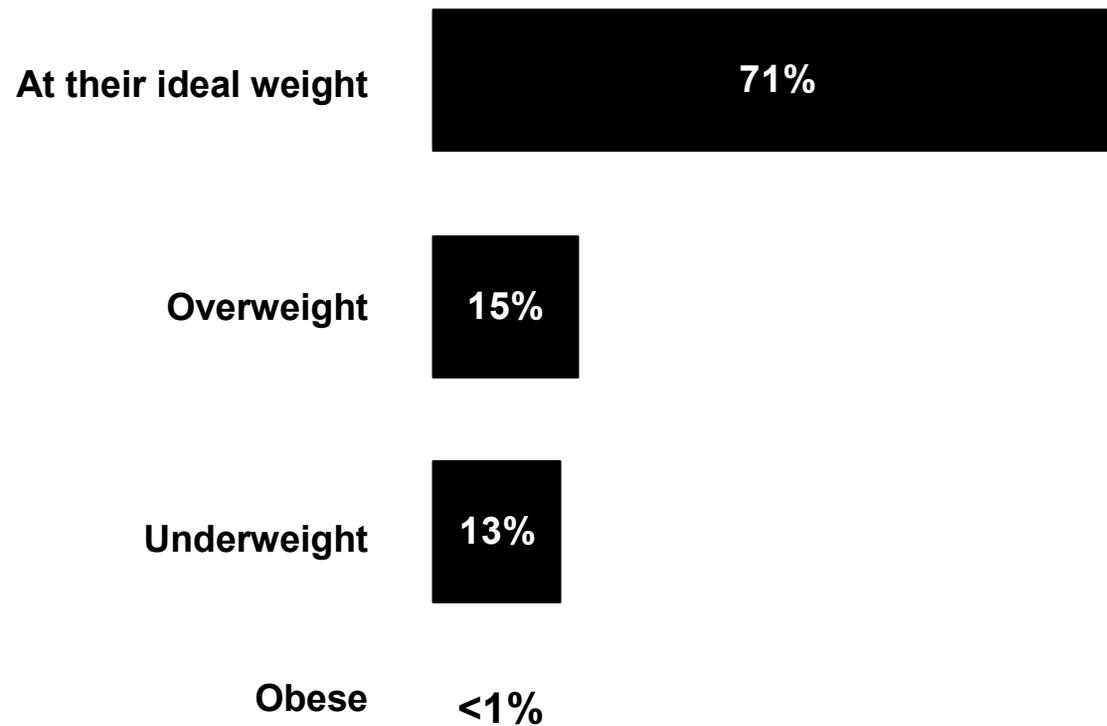
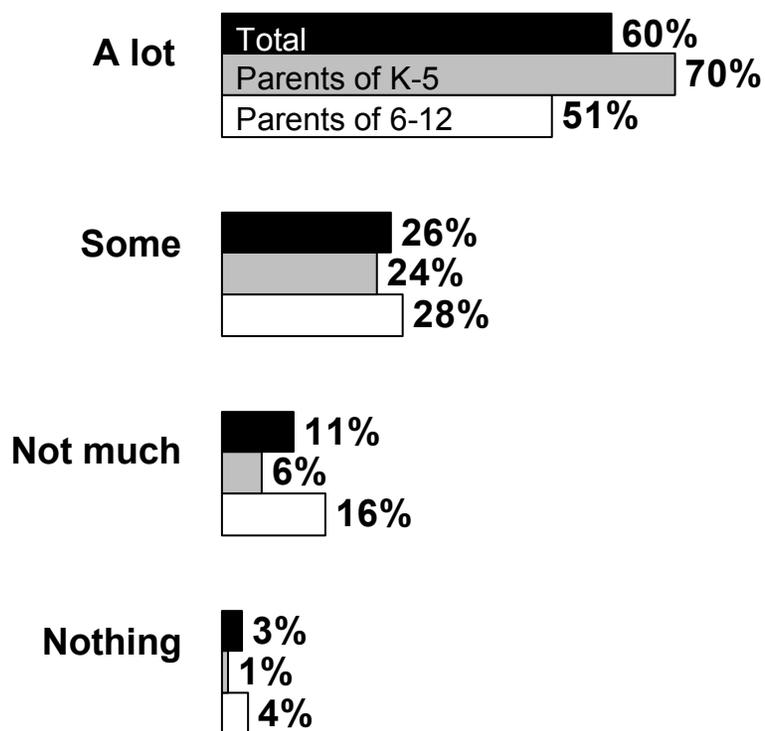


Chart 15

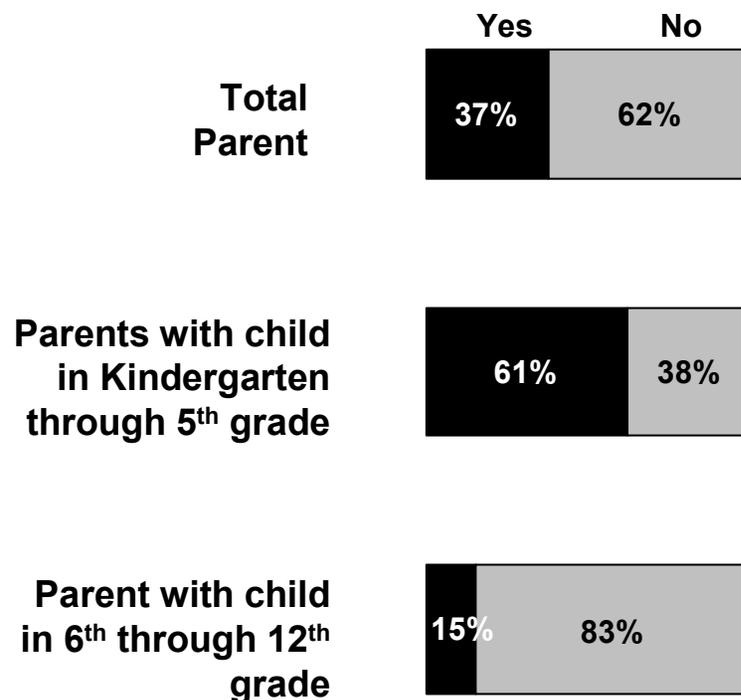
Do Parents Know What Their Child Is Eating?

Among Bay Area parents...

How much do you know about what your child is eating during the school day?



Does your child need permission from you or another adult to eat between meals, or not?



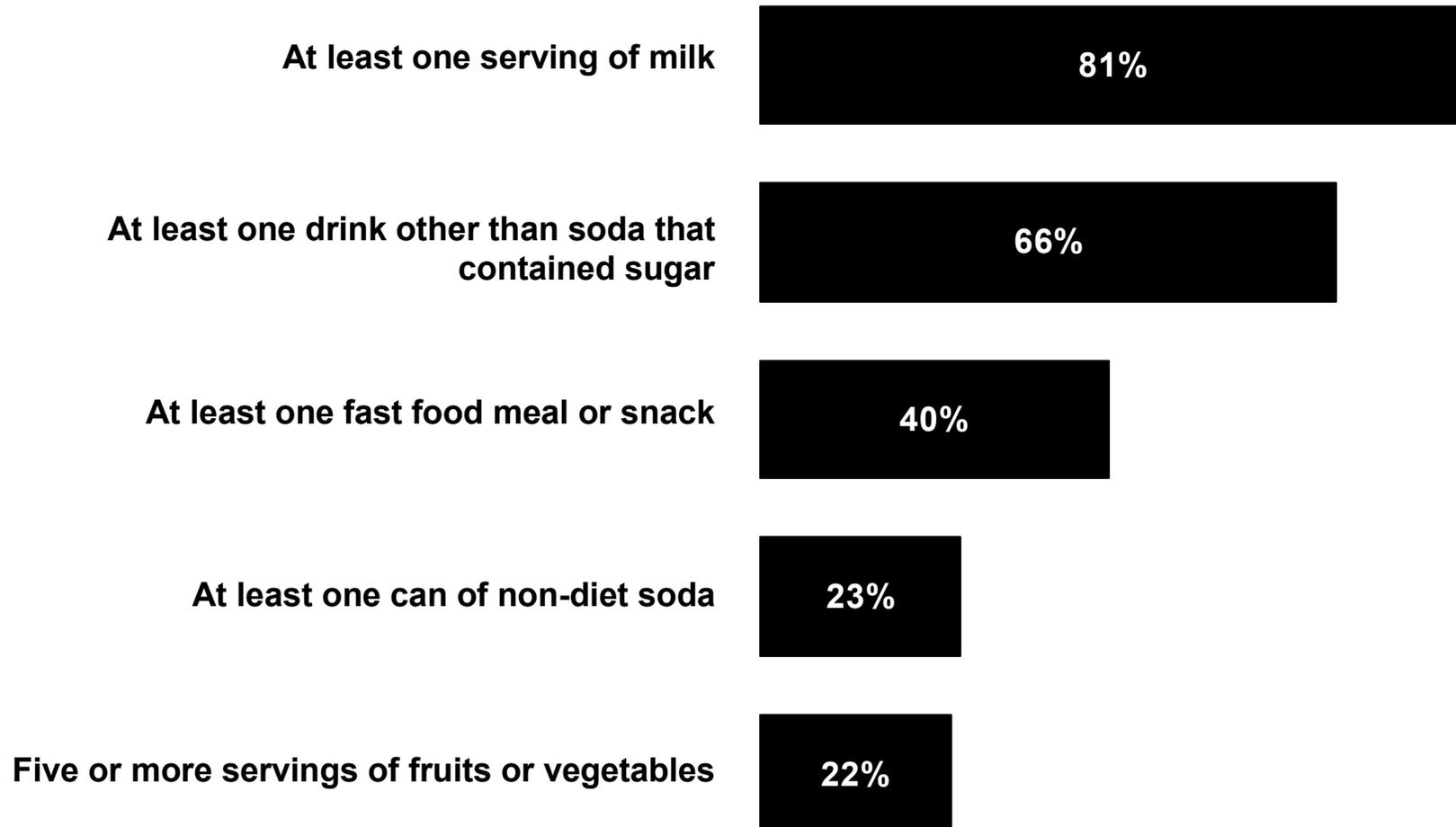
Note: Don't know responses not included

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 16

Bay Area Parents Report Of: What Their Child Is Eating

Percent of Bay Area Parents who say that on a typical day their child ate or drank...

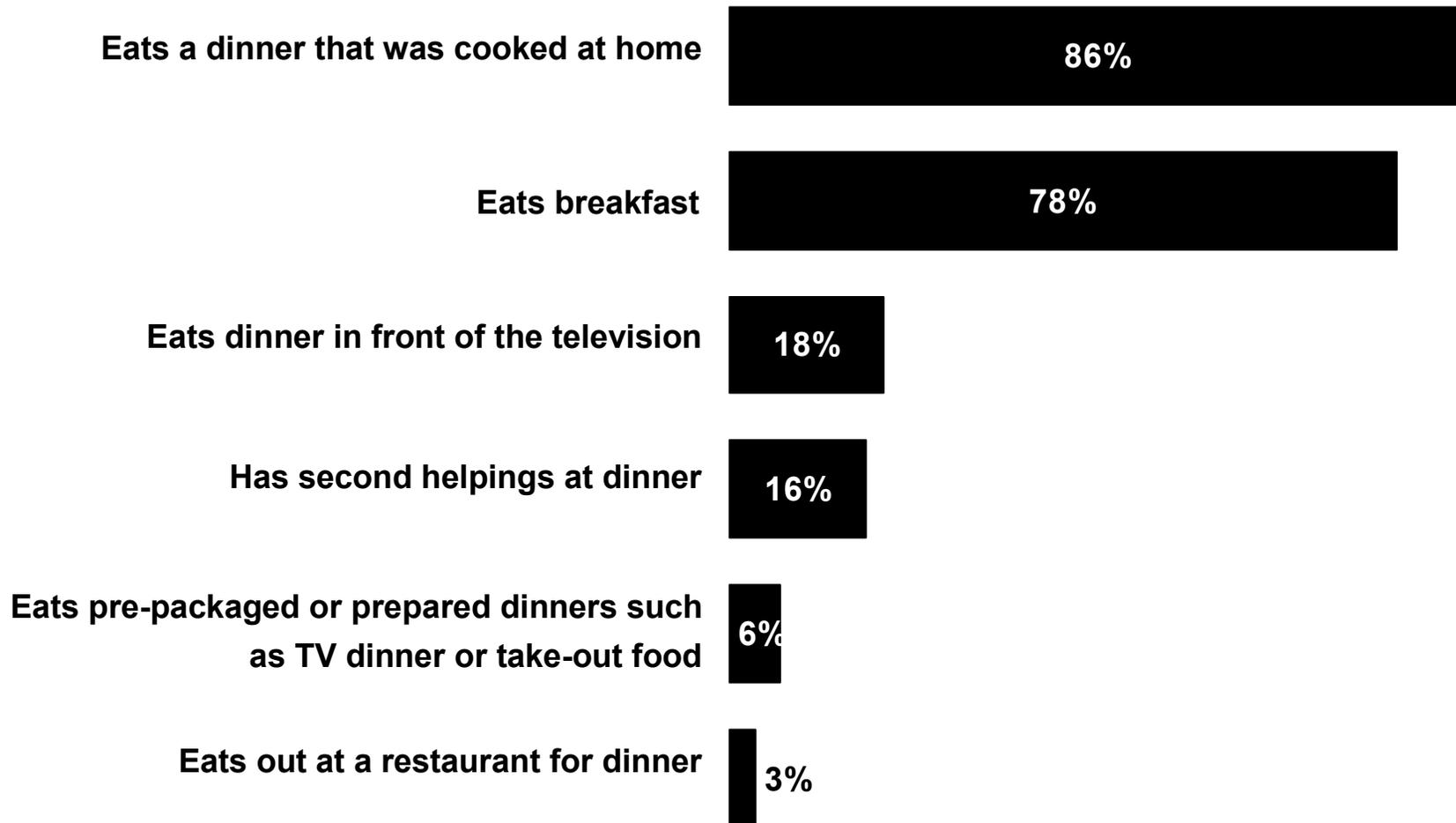


Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 17

Bay Area Parents Report Of: Their Child's Eating Habits

Percent of Bay Area Parents who say that on most nights their child...

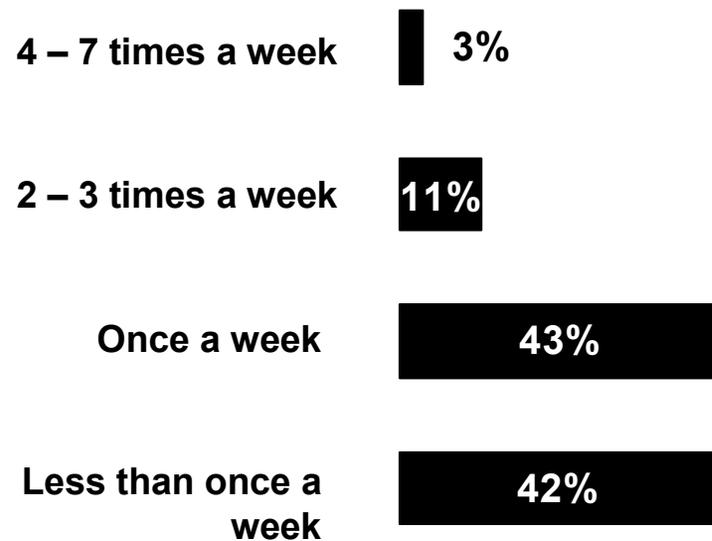


Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 18

Bay Area Parents Report Of: Their Child Eating Out at Restaurants

Percent of Bay Area parents who say their child eats out at a restaurant ...



Percent of Bay Area Parents who say that when their household goes out to dinner, their child gets to decide where they go ...

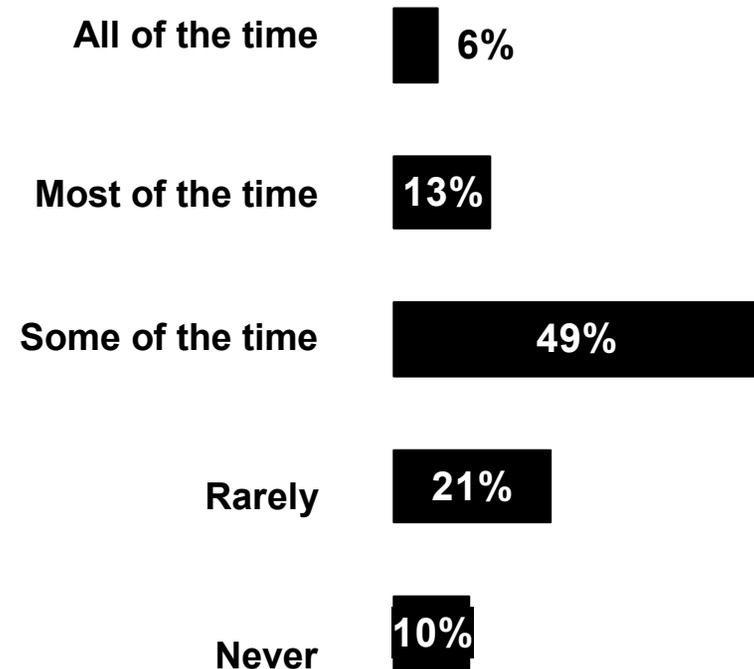
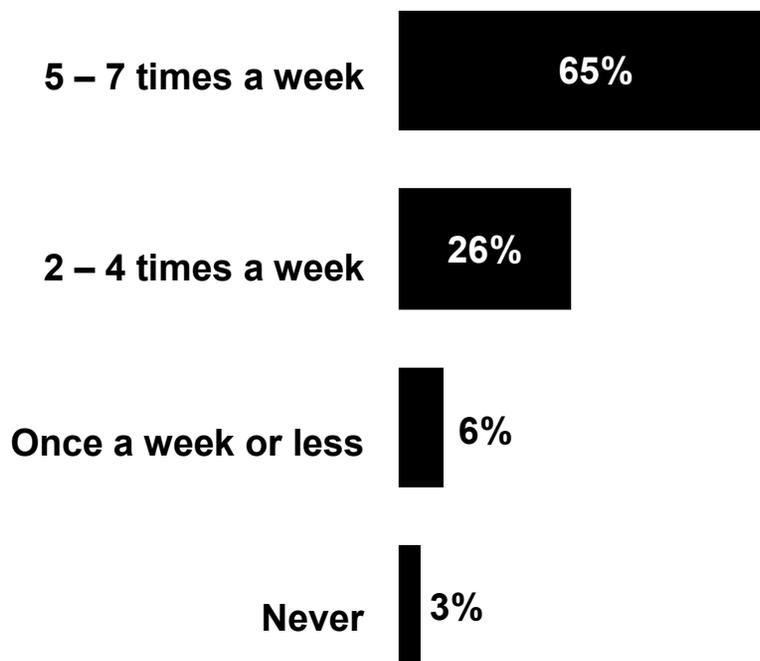


Chart 19

Bay Area Parents Report Of: Their Child's Physical Activity

How often does your child get at least 30 minutes of physical activity?



Has your child been involved in organized sports or activities such as football, swimming, soccer, baseball or dance in the past year?

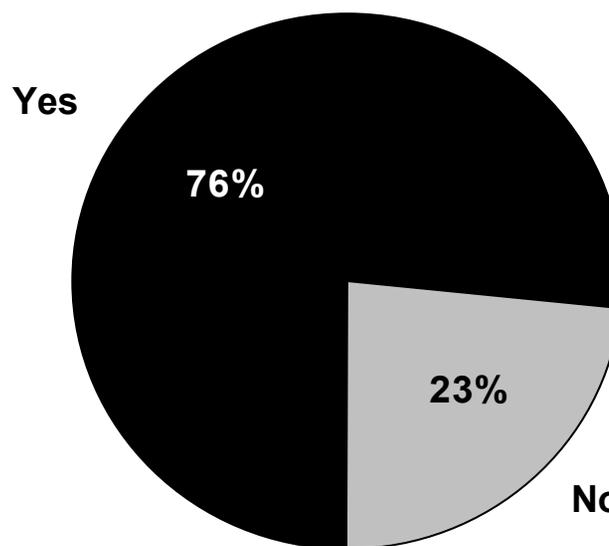
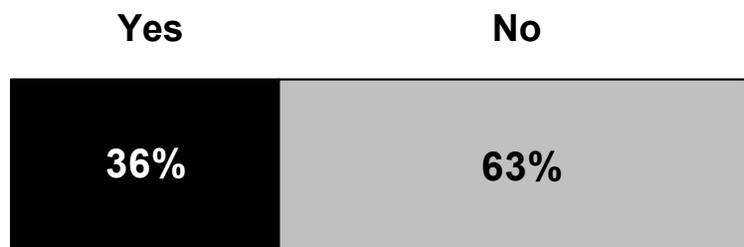


Chart 20

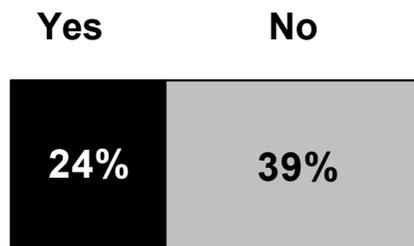
Bay Area Parents Report Of: Walking and Biking to School

Among Bay Area parents...

Does your child walk or bike to school?



Would you let them if they wanted to?



When you think about letting your child walk or bike to school, which concerns you most?

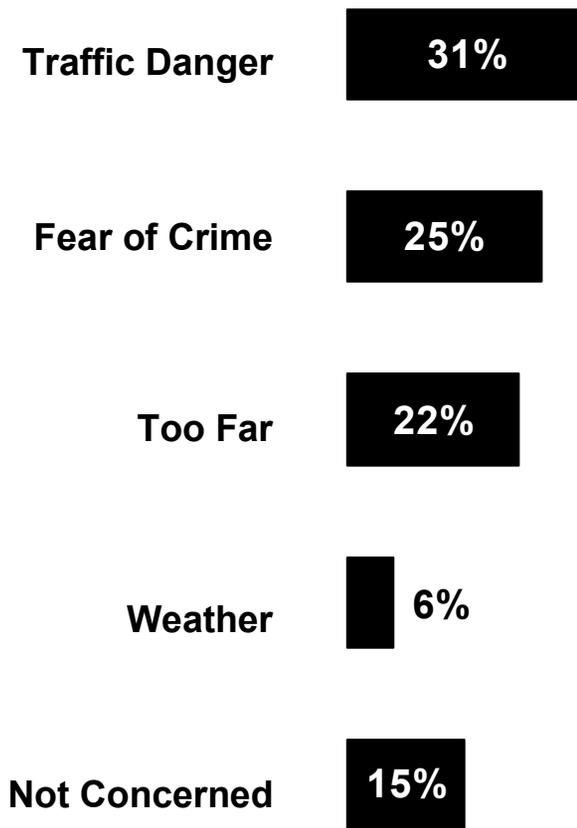


Chart 21

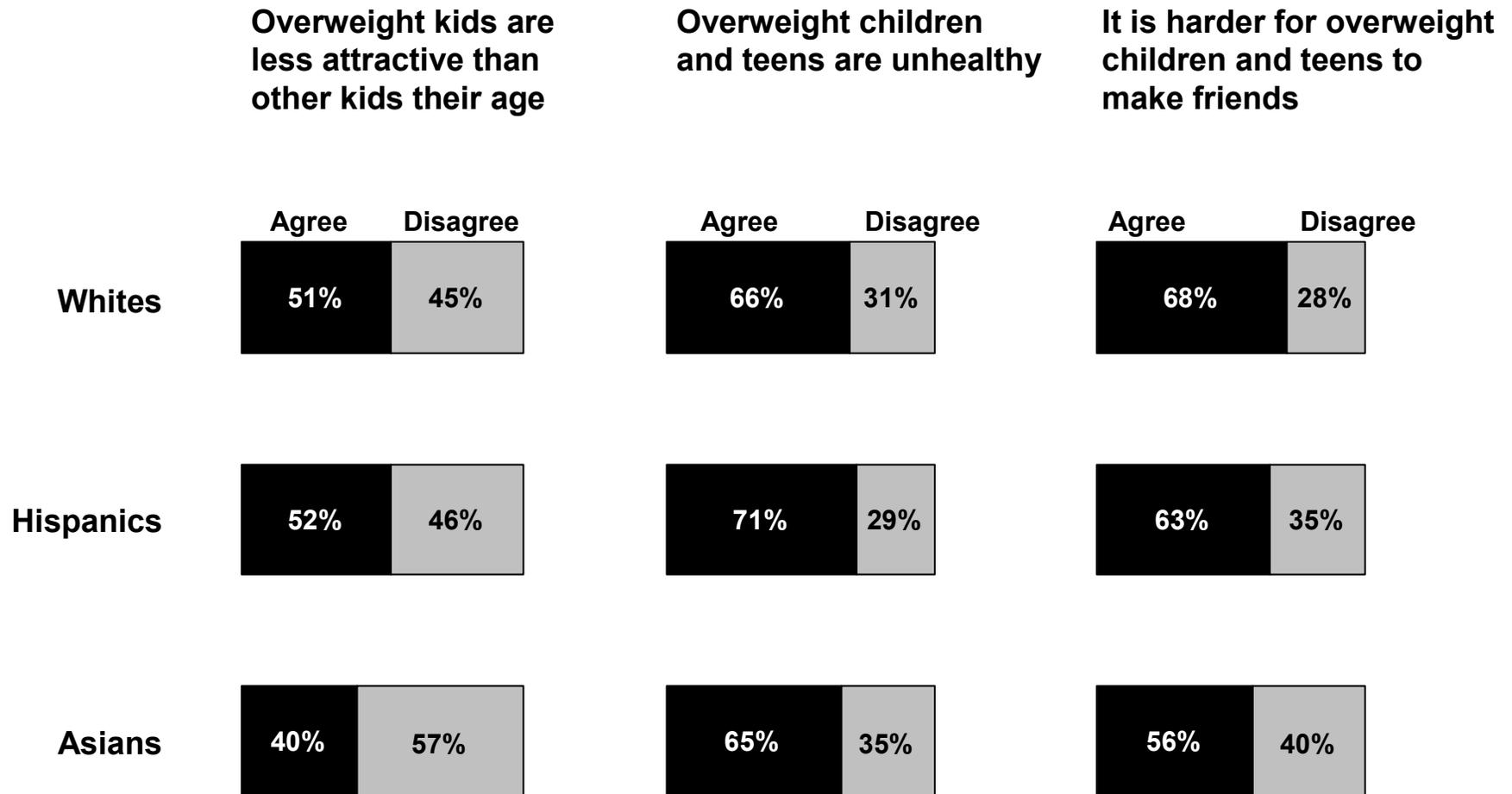
Bay Area Parents Report Of: Their Child's Media Use

Among Bay Area Parents: During an average day, how much time does your child spend...

	Watching TV or movies	Using a computer	Playing video games
Less than an hour	18%	35%	24%
One hour to less than two hours	57%	46%	22%
More than two hours	20%	8%	3%
Does not do this activity	4%	9%	50%

Chart 22

Attitudes About Overweight Children By Race

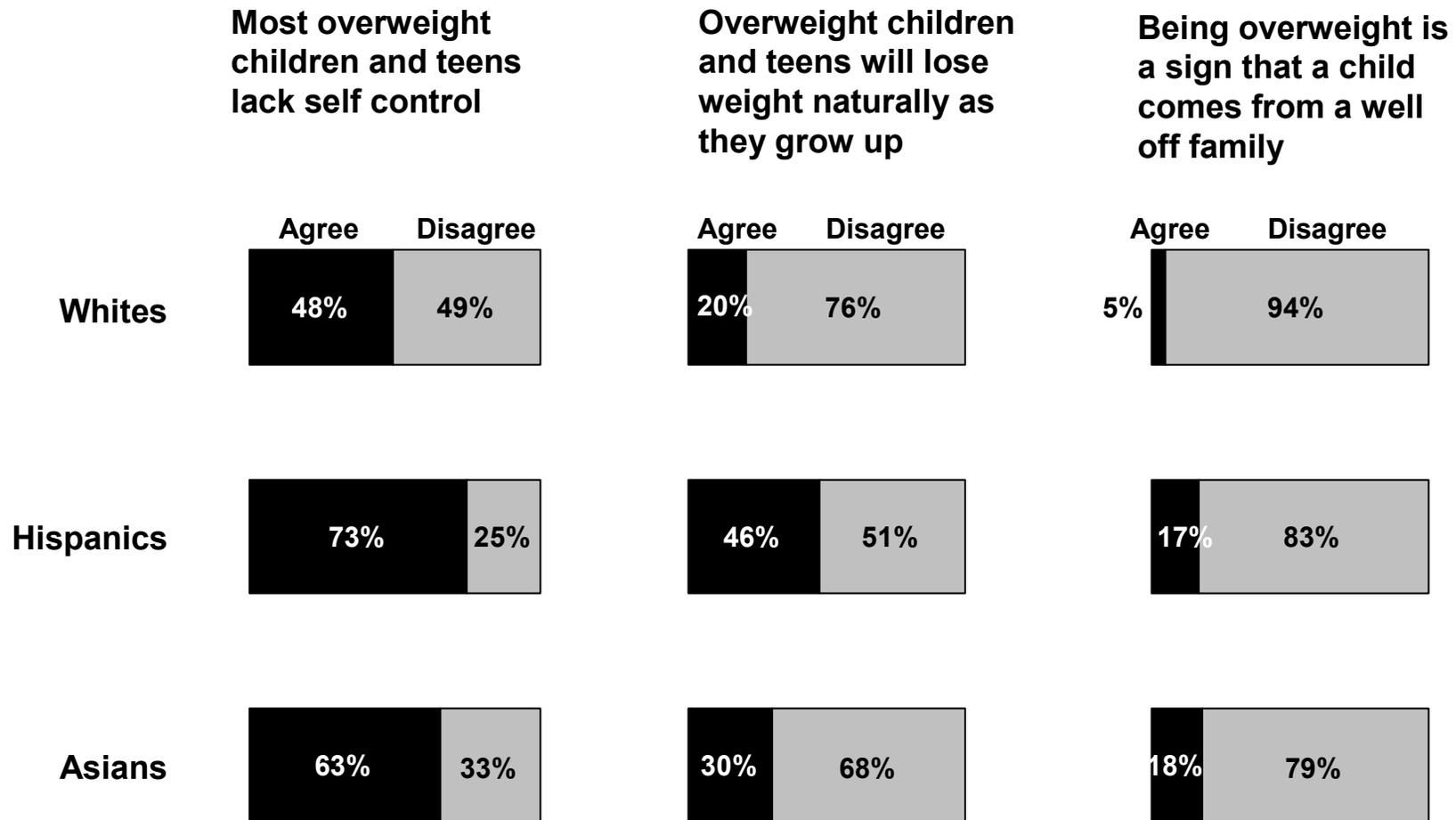


Note: Don't know responses not included

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 23

Continued: Attitudes About Overweight Children By Race



Note: Don't know responses not included

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 24

Considerations When Purchasing Food By Race

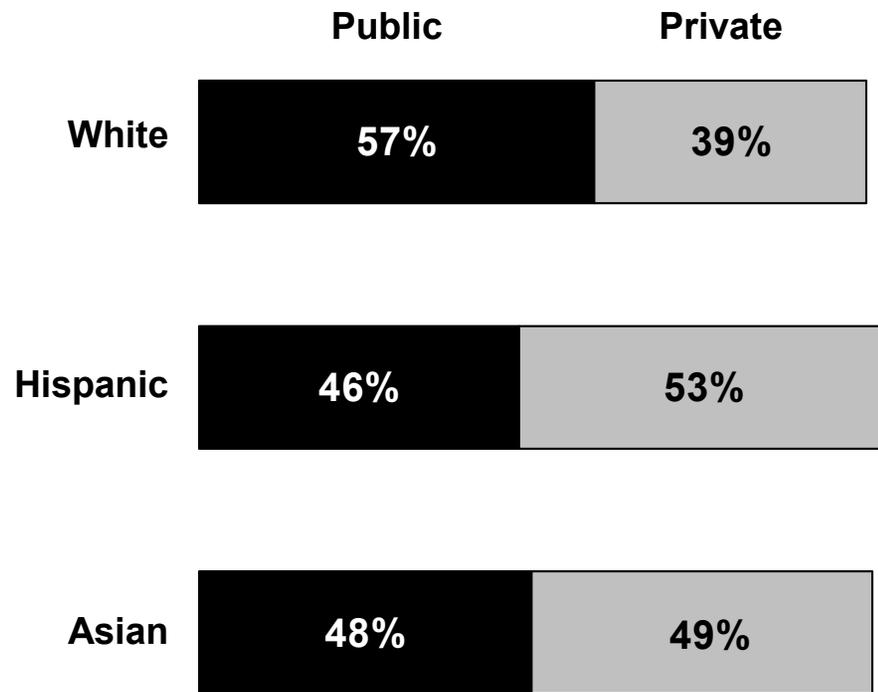
Percent who say each is very important when buying food for their household...

	Taste	Nutritional Value	Price	Convenience
Whites	77%	75%	26%	20%
Hispanics	76%	72%	48%	45%
Asians	57%	65%	29%	21%

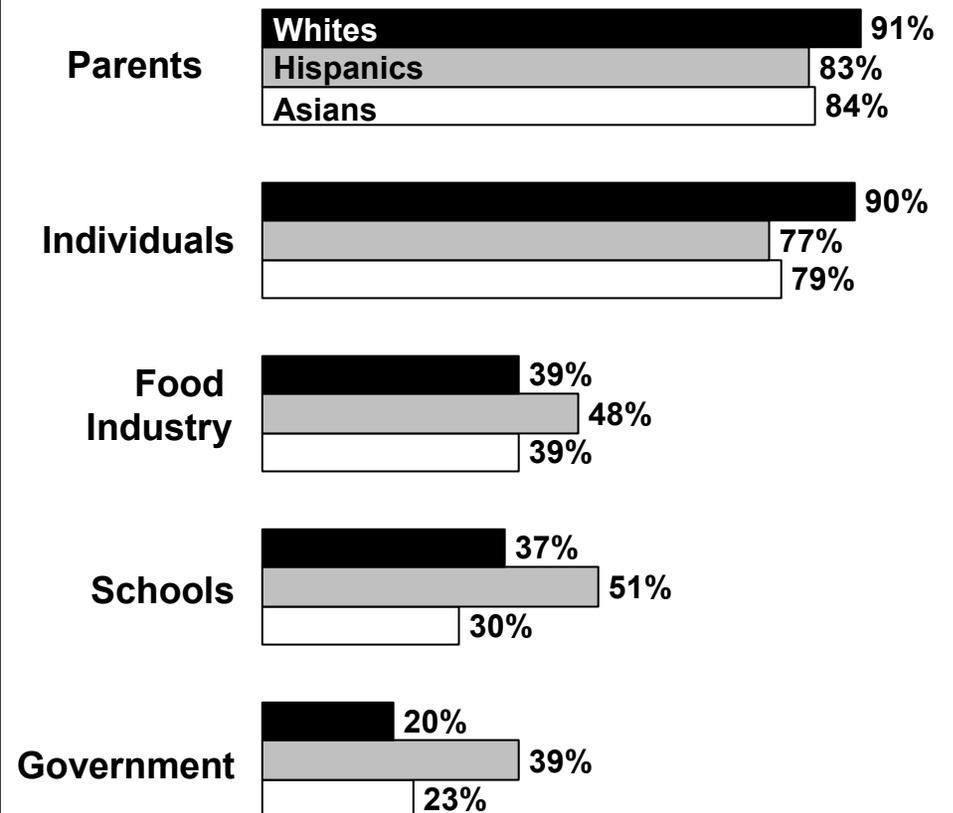
Chart 25

Responsibility for Addressing Obesity By Race

Is obesity a public health issue that society needs to help solve or a private issue that people need to deal with on their own?



Percent who say each has a lot of responsibility to address obesity...



Note: Don't know responses not included

Source: San Jose Mercury News/Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey on Childhood Obesity*, March 2004 (conducted October - December 2003)

Chart 26

Support for Public Policy By Race

Percent who strongly support...

Government-funded advertising campaigns that promote eating right and exercising



Making a law requiring fast food restaurants to list nutritional information – such as calorie count – for all items on their menus



Warning labels on packaged food about the health risks of being overweight



The Federal government regulating television ads for junk food that are aimed at children and teens



Putting a special tax on junk food – such as soda, chips, and candy – and using the money for programs to fight obesity

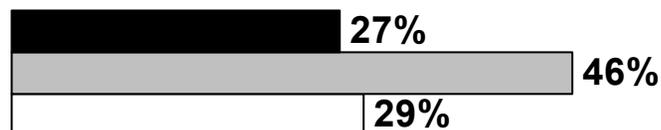
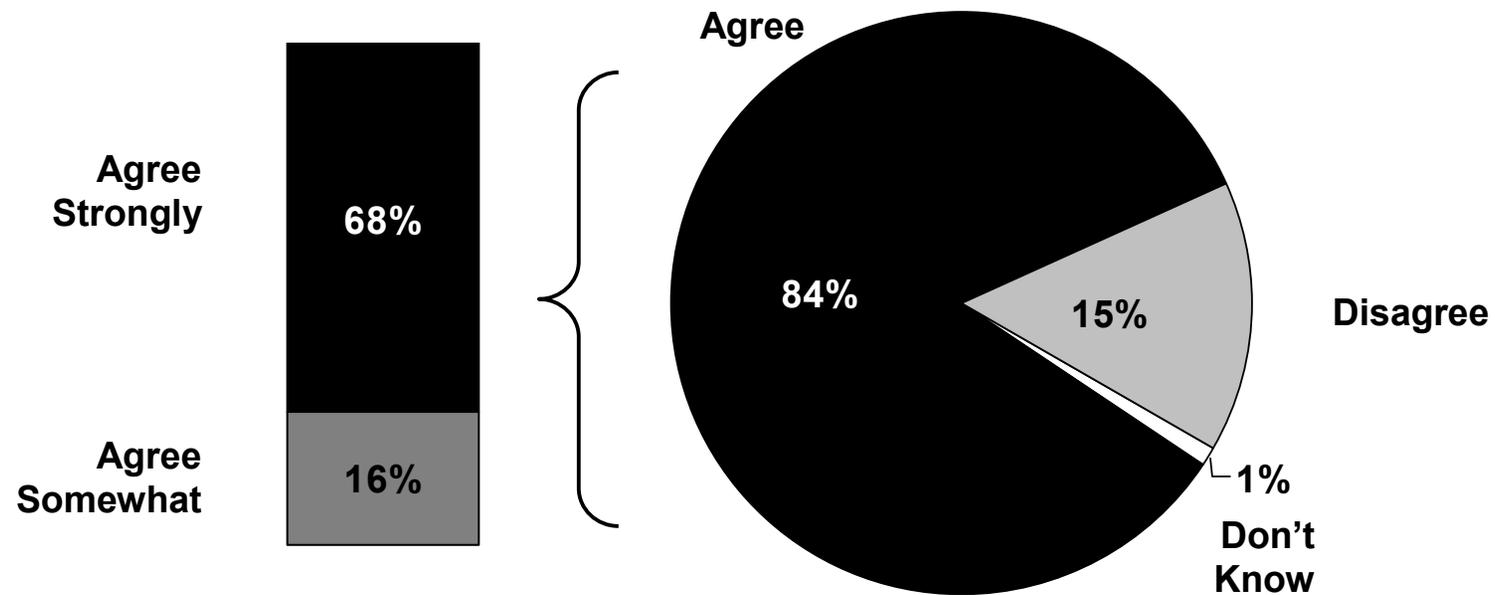


Chart 27

Perceptions of The Media

Among Bay Area adults: Do you agree or disagree that most images in magazines and movies and on TV promote an unrealistic body image for young children and teens?



San Jose Mercury News



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