

# **Is Kindergarten the New First Grade?**

## ***Increased Academic Rigor in America's Public School Kindergarten Classrooms***

Results Comparing Data From National Studies About the Kindergarten Classes of 1998–99 and 2010–11

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*Jill Walston, Ph.D., Principal Researcher*

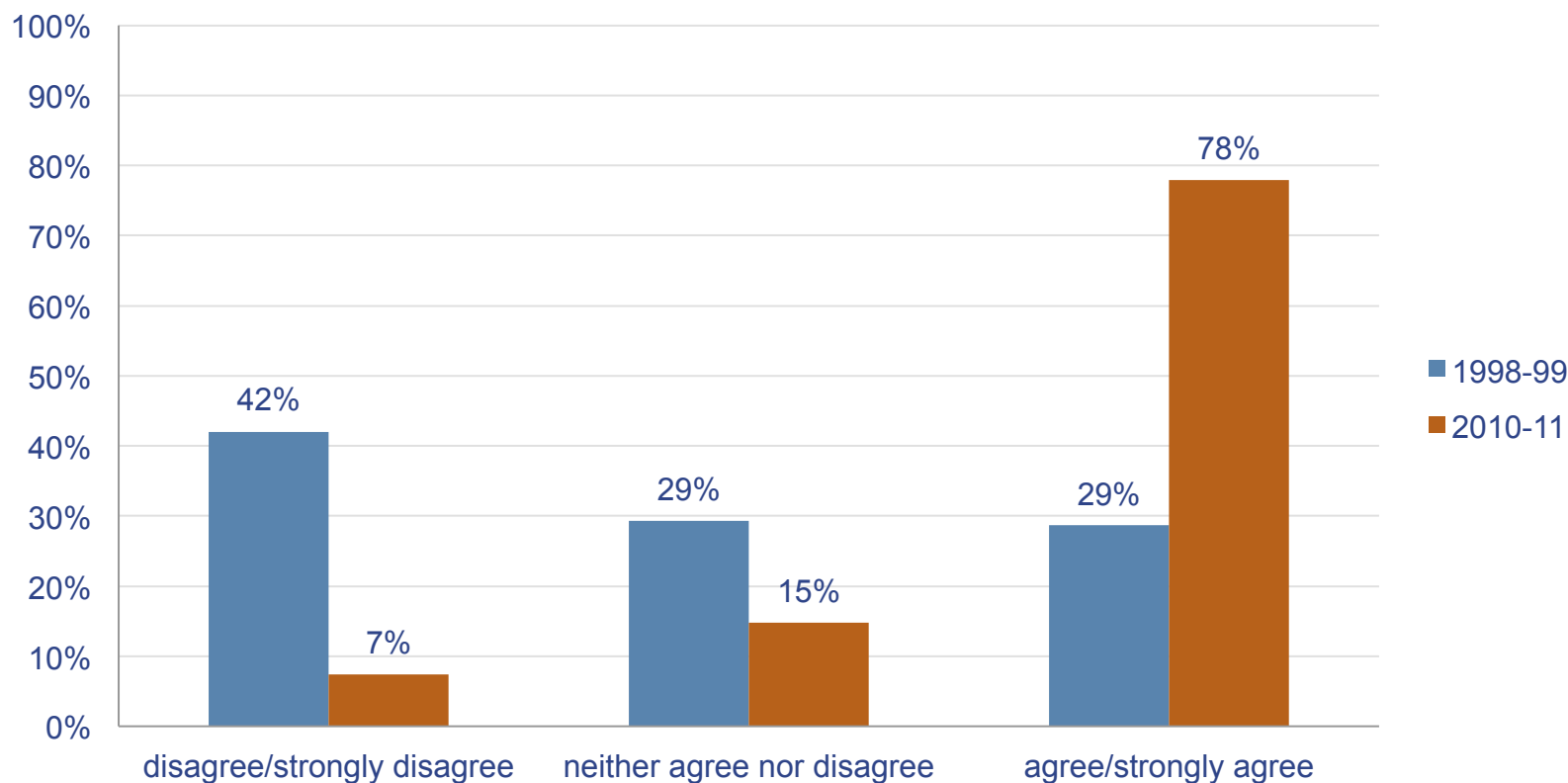
# American Institutes for Research

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Established in 1946, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally.

As one of the largest behavioral and social science research organizations in the world, AIR is committed to empowering communities and institutions with innovative solutions to the most critical challenges in education, health, workforce, and international development.

# Views of Kindergarten Children's Teachers: "Most children should learn to read in kindergarten."



# Comparing the Kindergarten Classes of 1998-99 and 2010-11

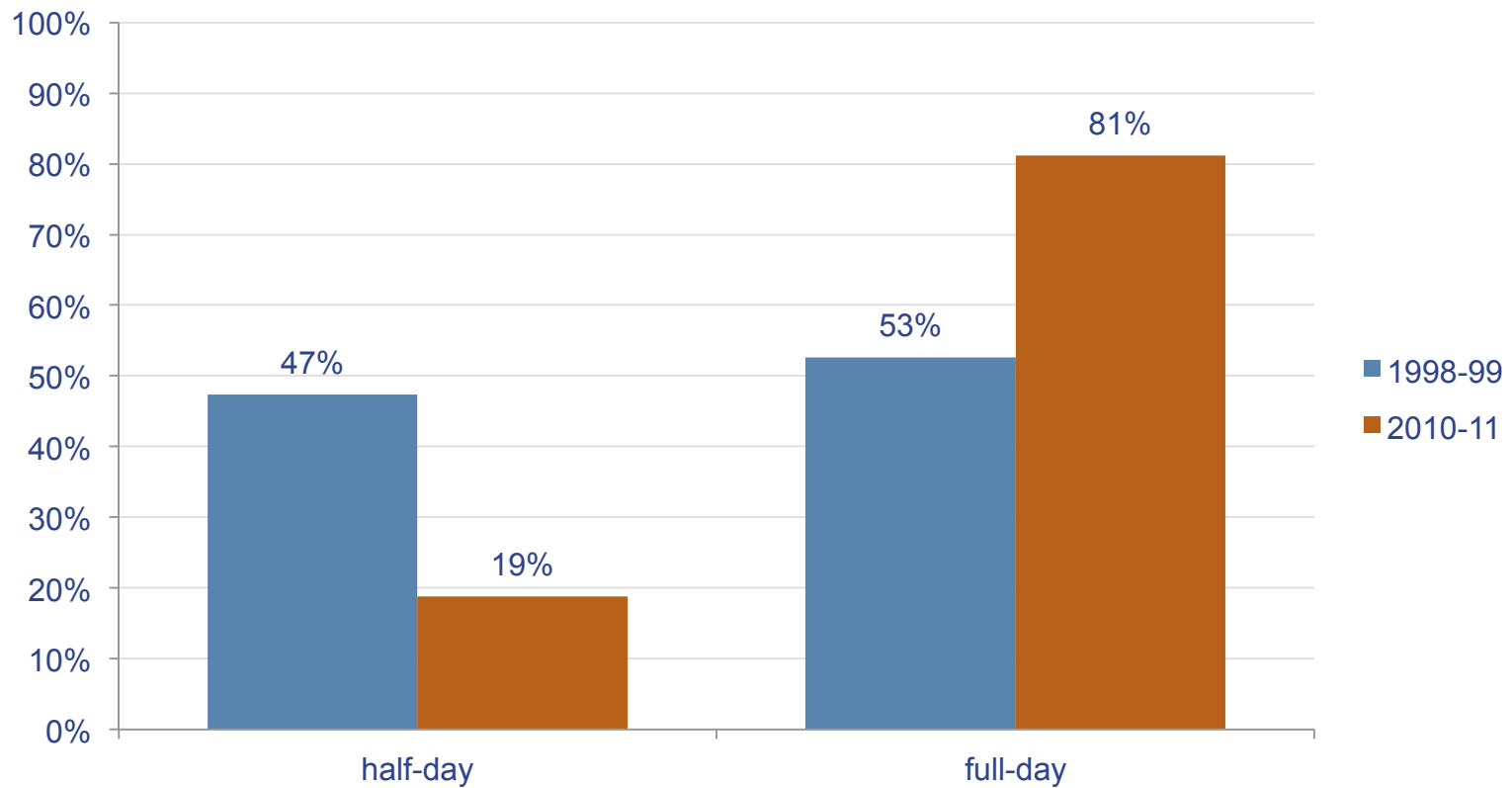
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1. Full-day and half-day programs
2. Instruction time and academic skills
  - Examples of advanced skills taught in kindergarten
3. Time for the arts and physical education
4. Classroom features and creative materials
5. Teacher beliefs about kindergarten readiness
6. Kindergarten teacher beliefs about preschool

# Full-Day and Half-Day Kindergarten Programs

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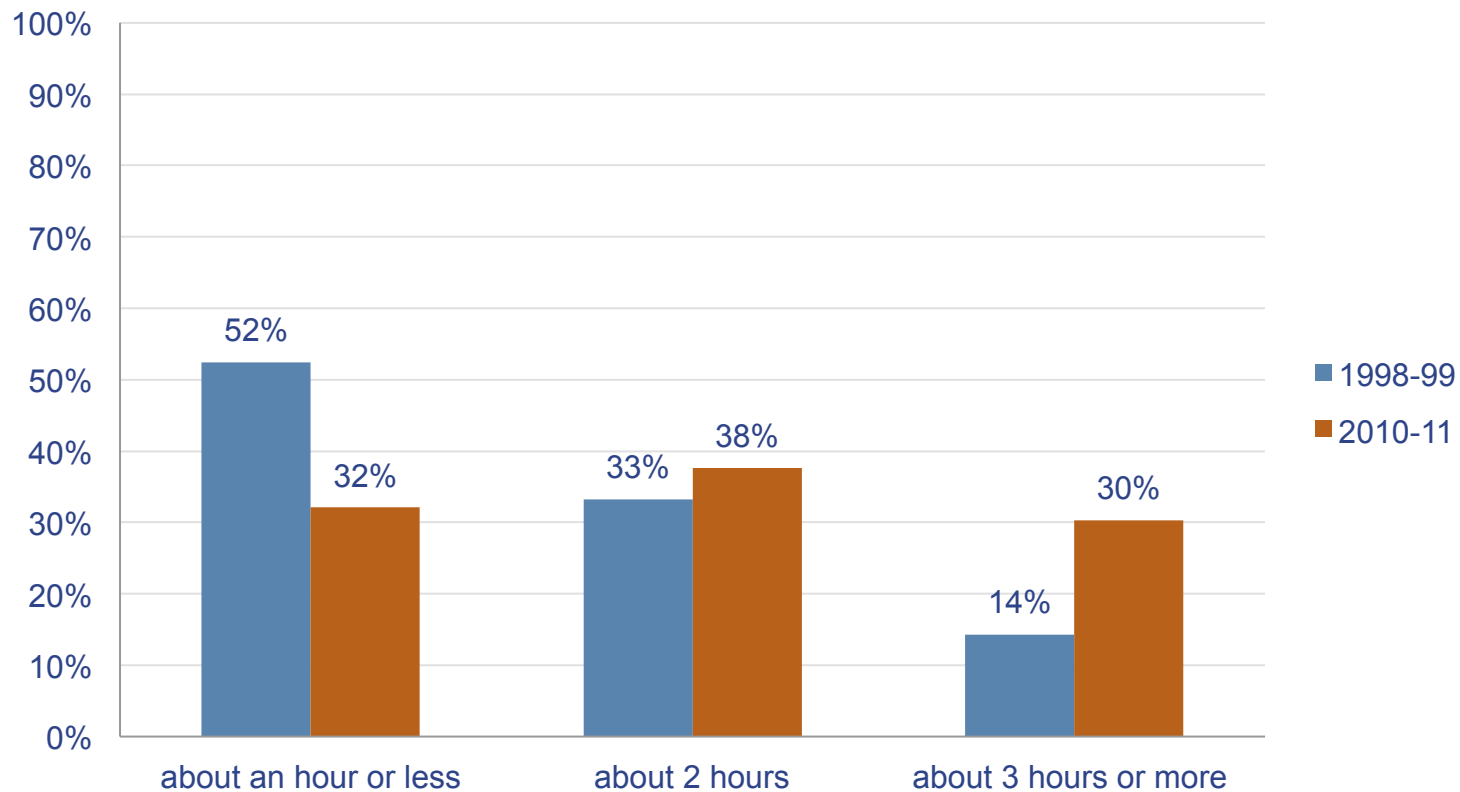
# Full-Day and Half-Day Programs



# Instruction Time and Academic Skills

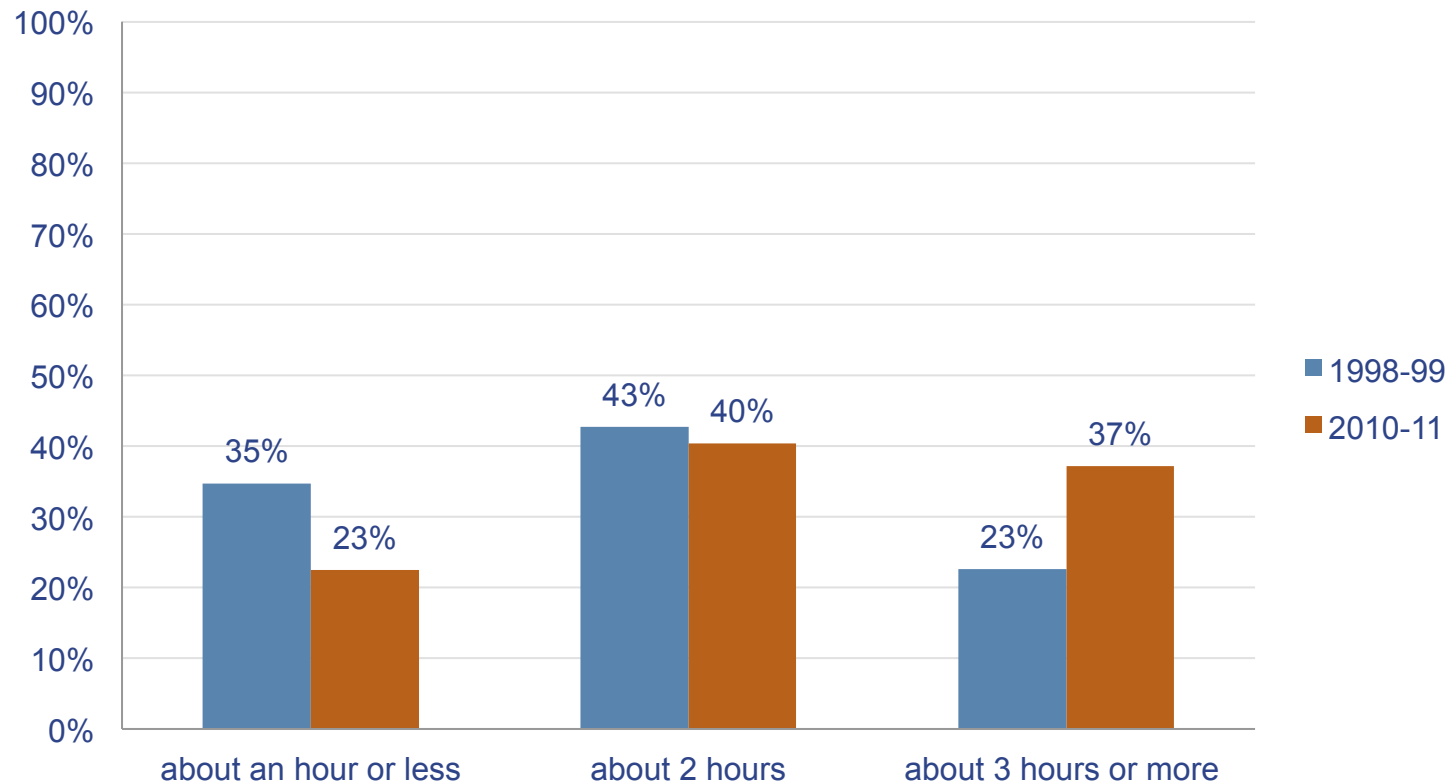
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# Teacher-Led Whole-Group Instruction Time per Day





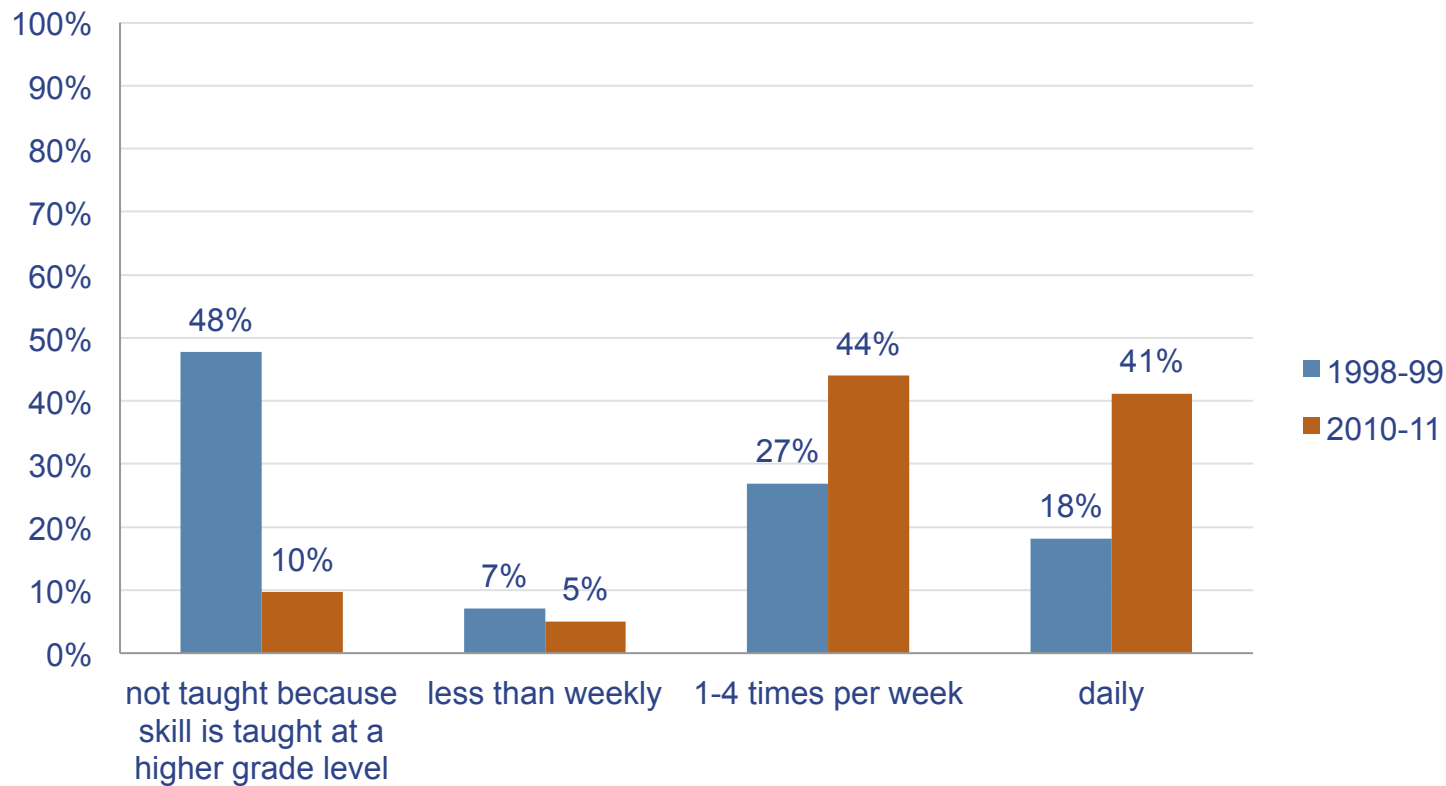
# Teacher-Led Whole-Group Instruction Time per Day in Full-Day Kindergarten



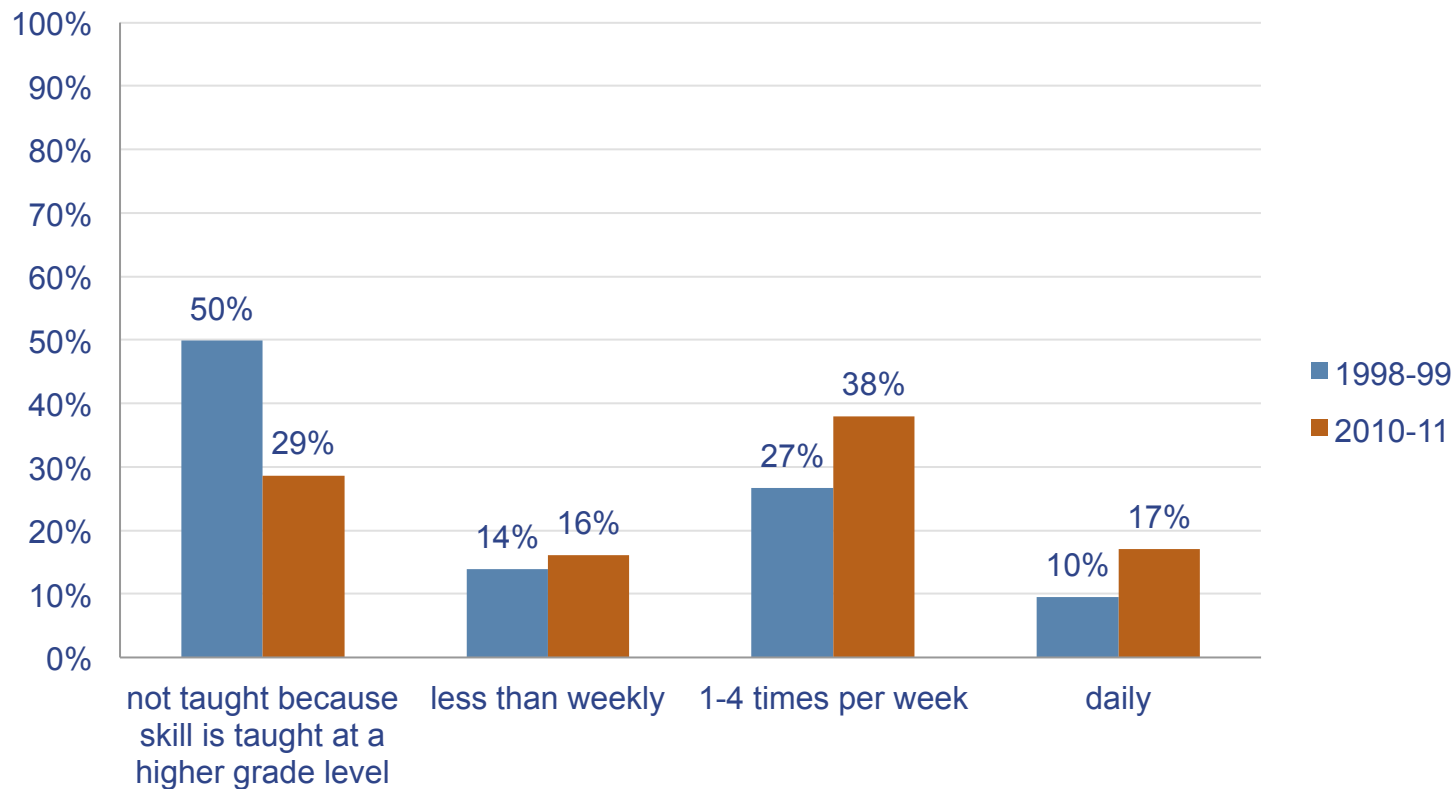
# Examples of Advanced Skills Taught in Kindergarten

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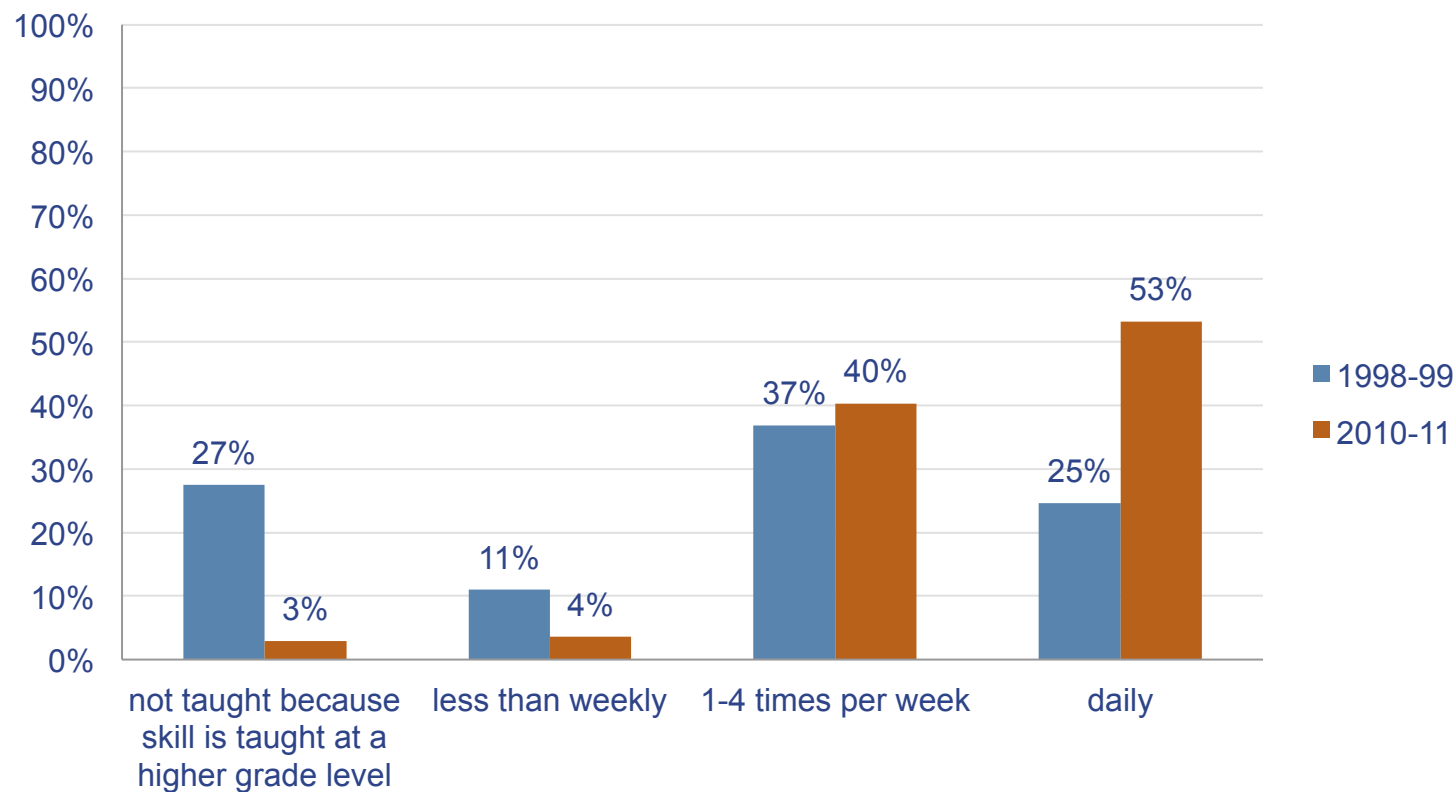
# Reading Fluently



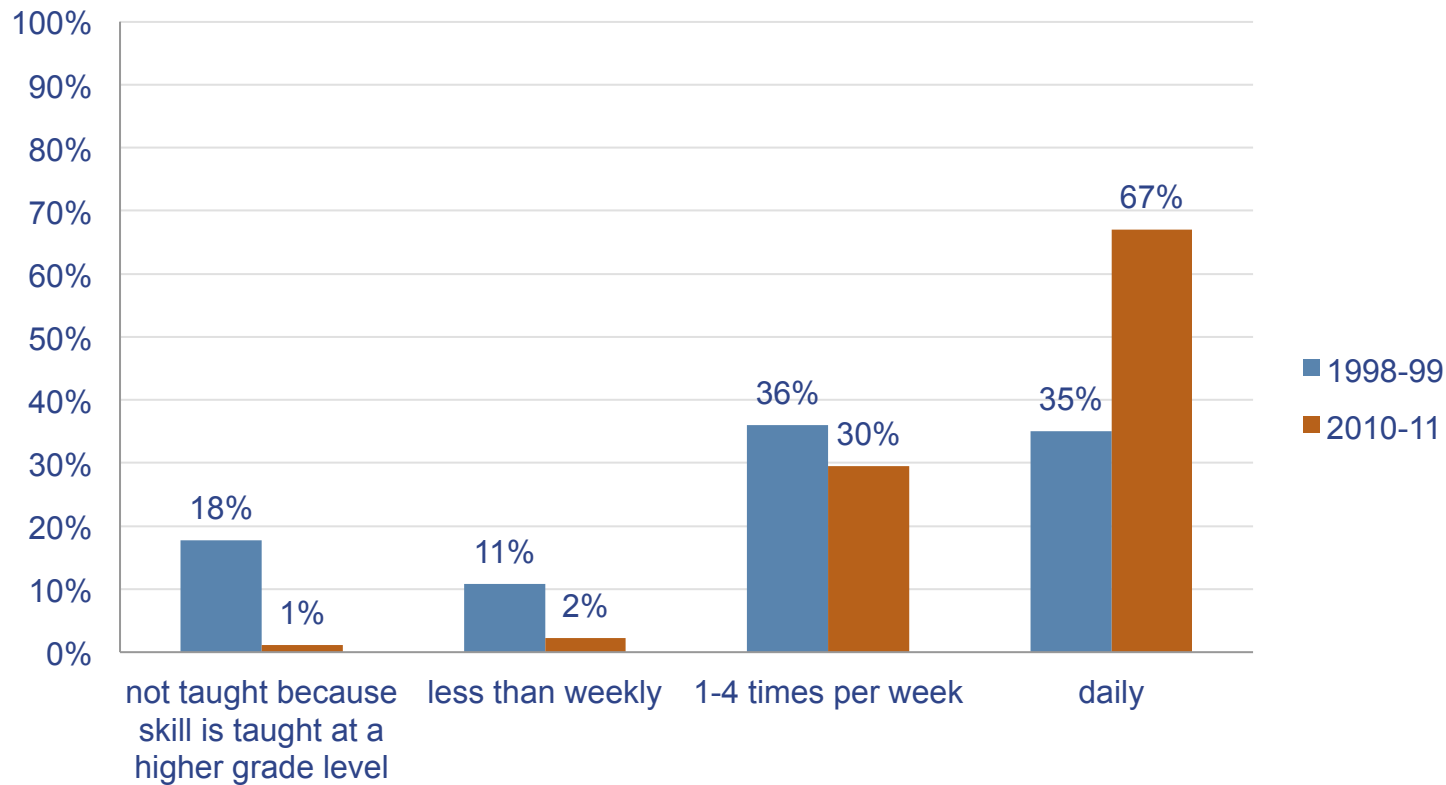
# Reading Multisyllable Words Such as *Adventure*



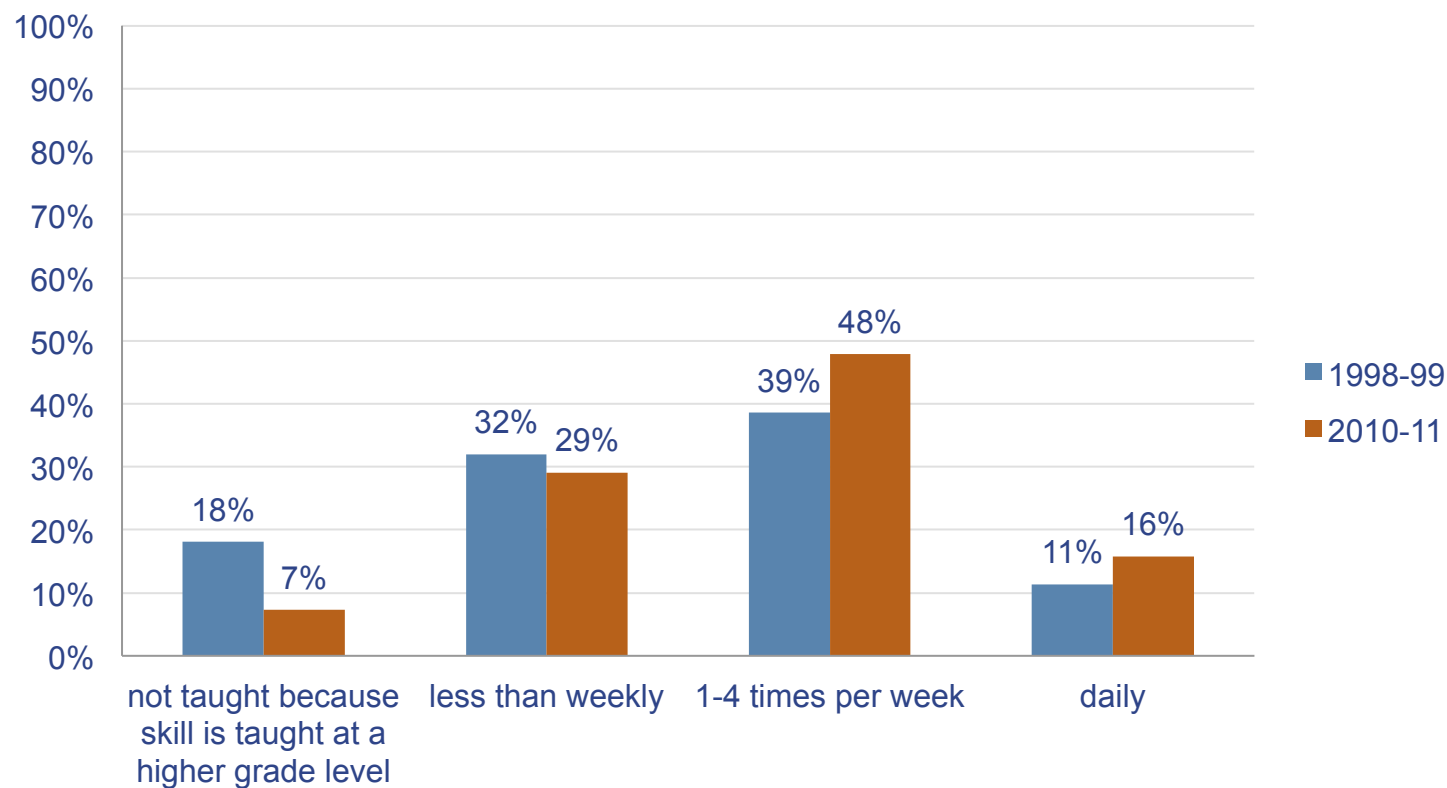
# Composing and Writing Complete Sentences



# Using Capitalization and Punctuation



# Subtracting Single-Digit Numbers

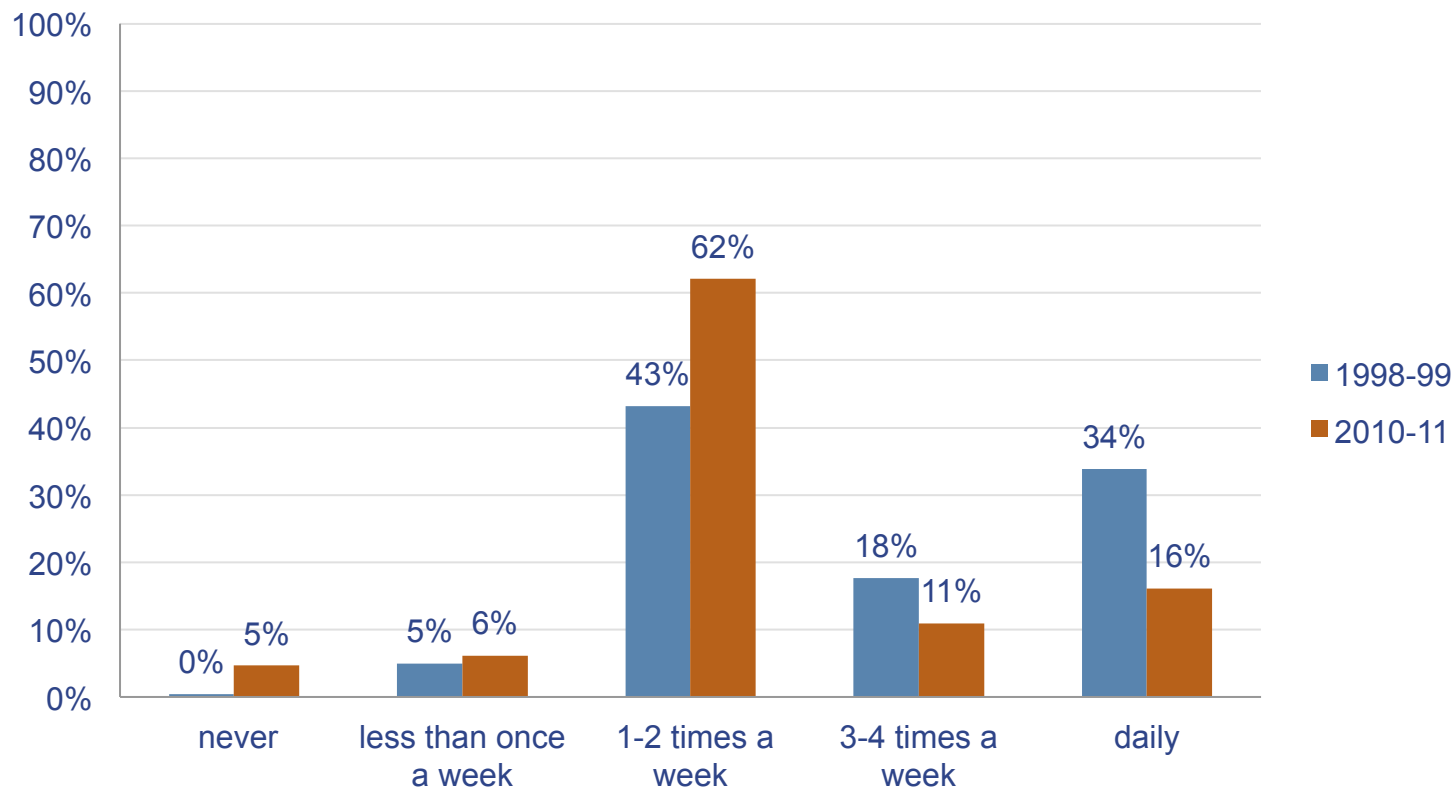


# Time for the Arts and Physical Education

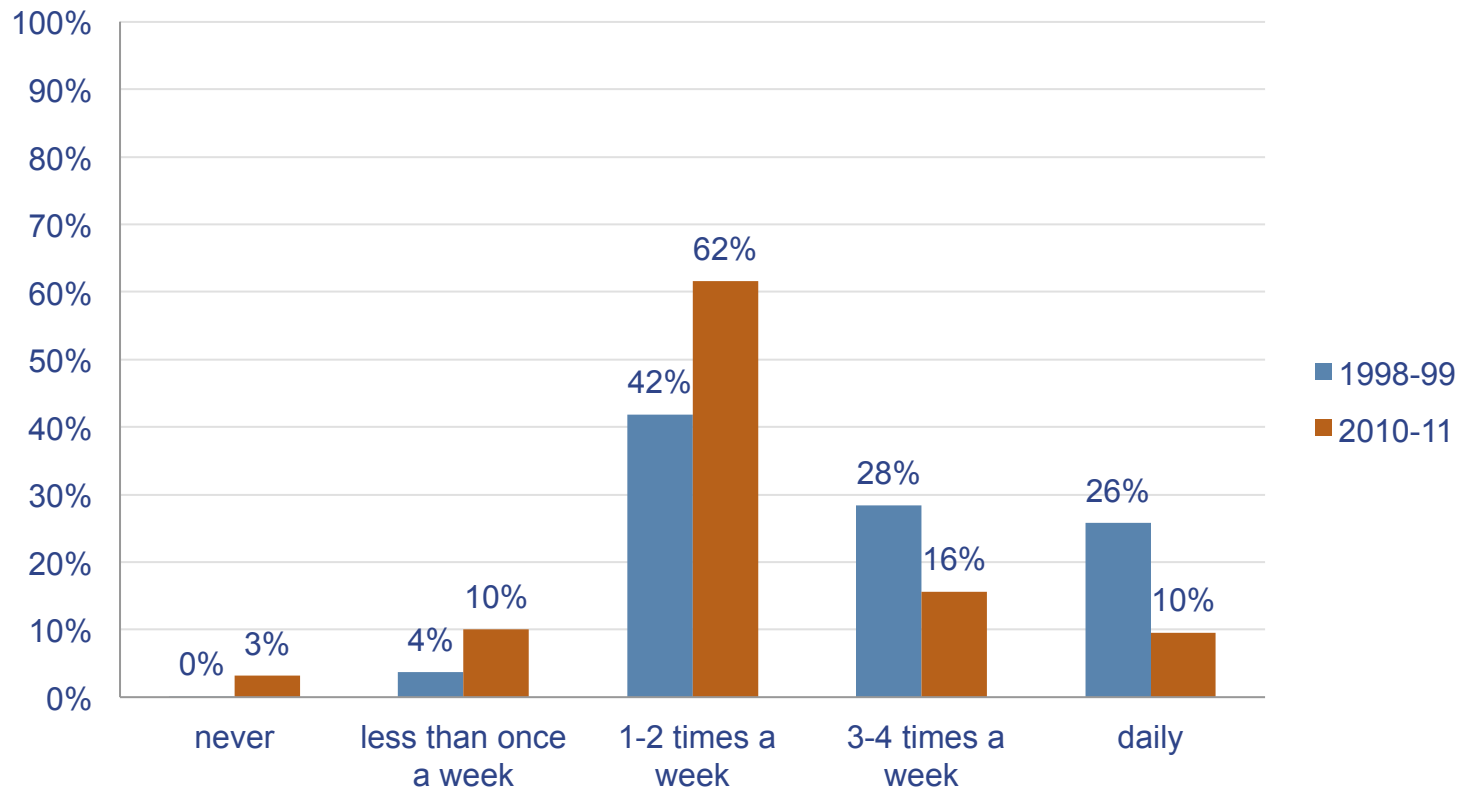
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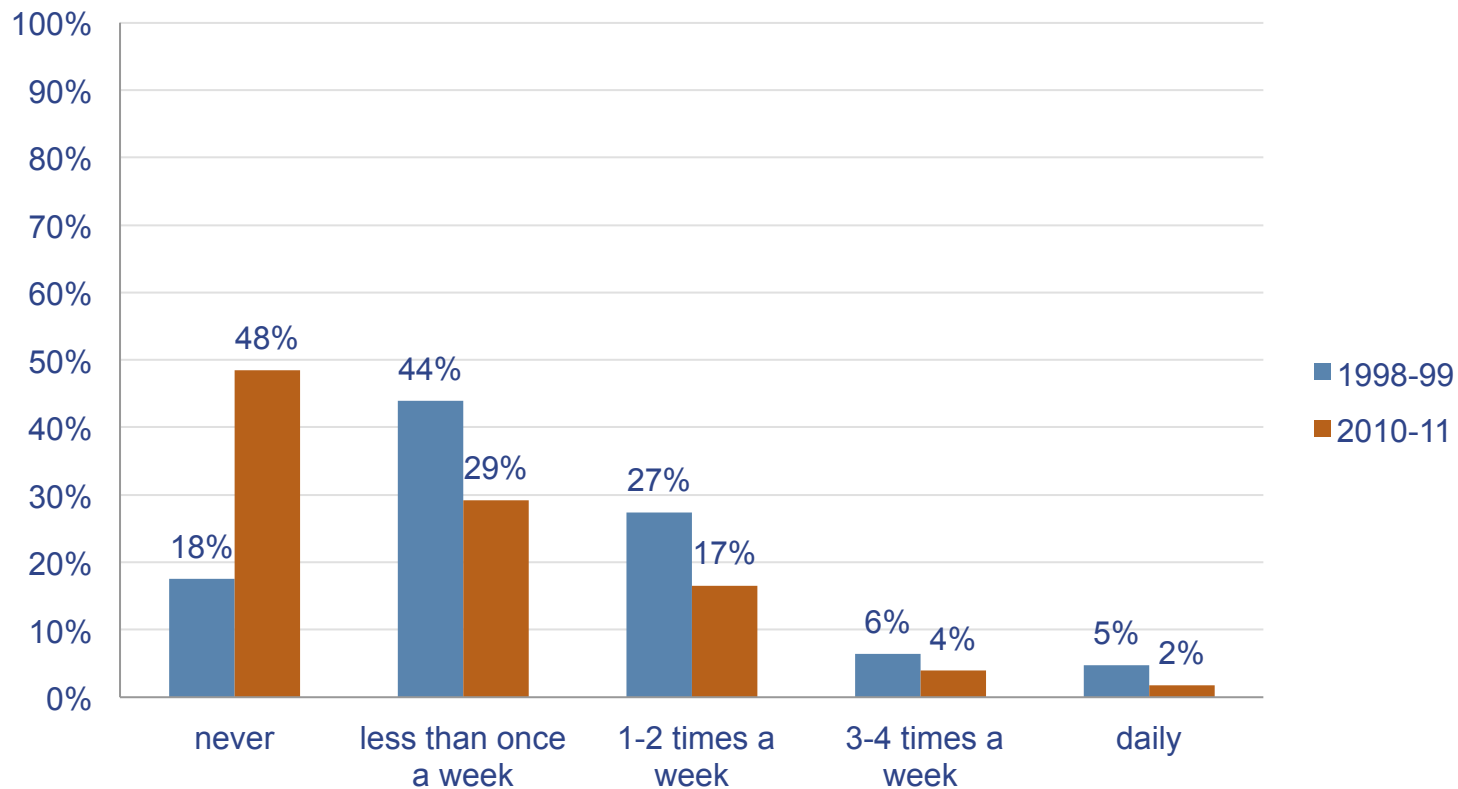
# Music



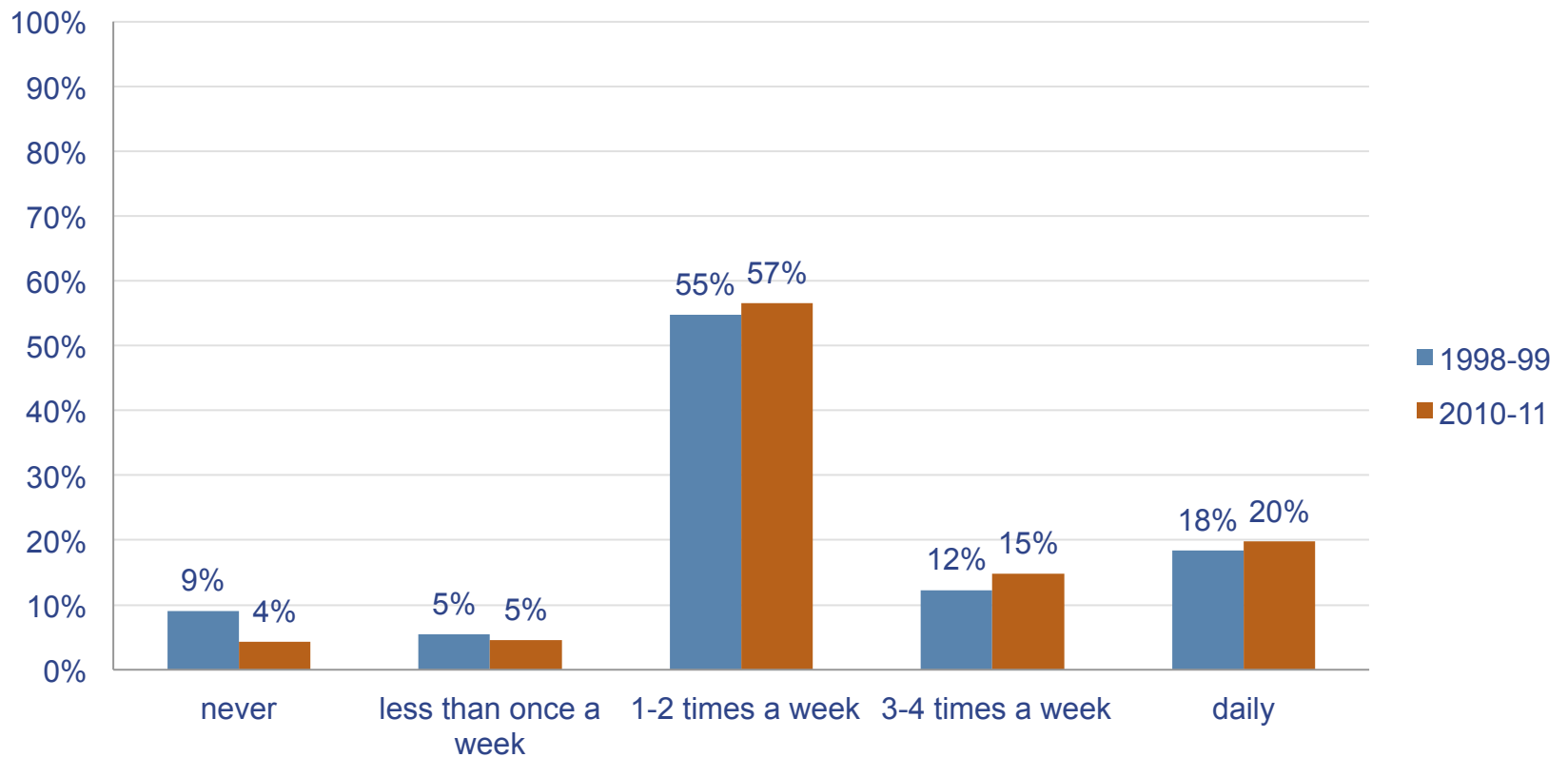
# Art



# Theater and Creative Dramatics



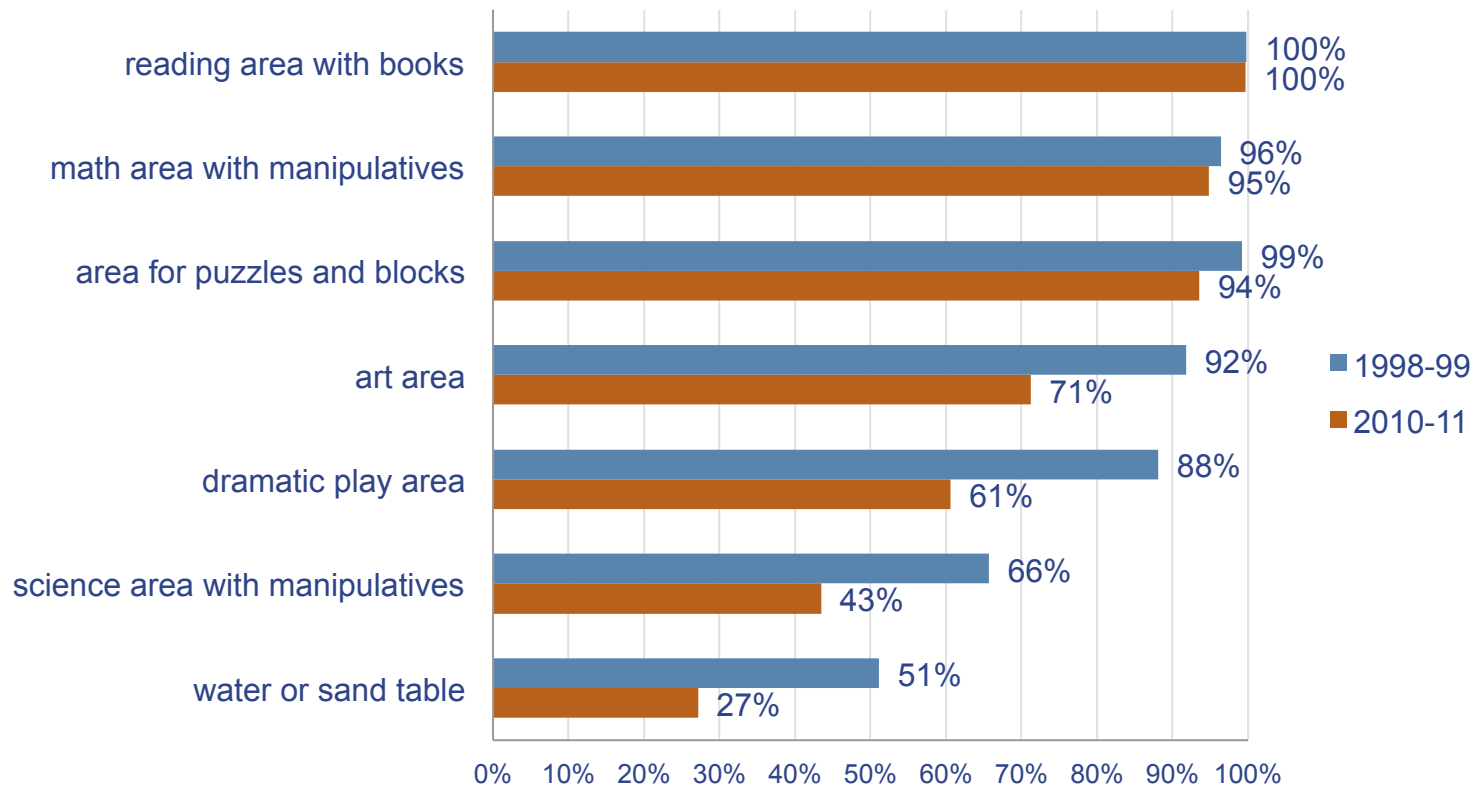
# Physical Education



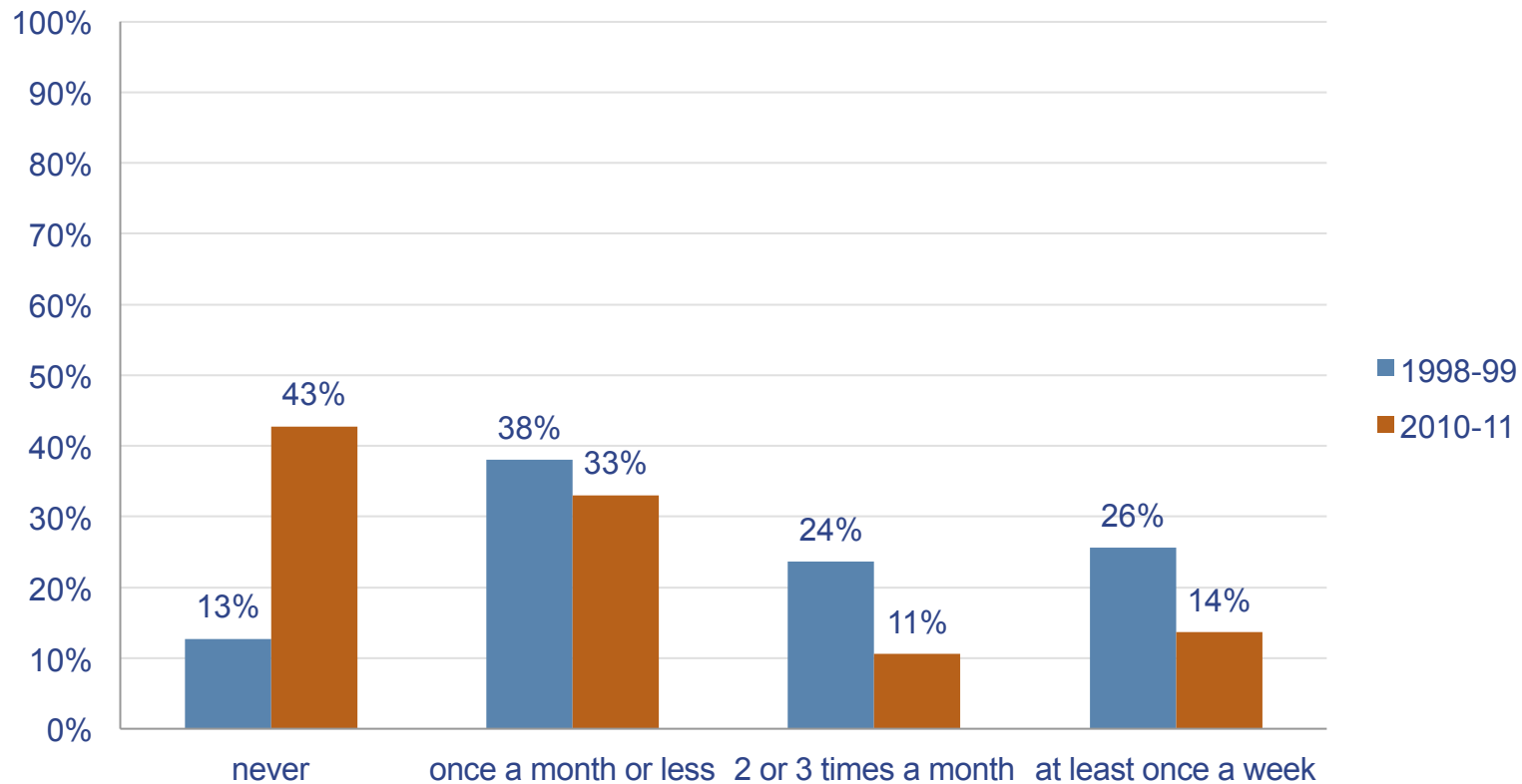
# Classroom Features and Creative Materials

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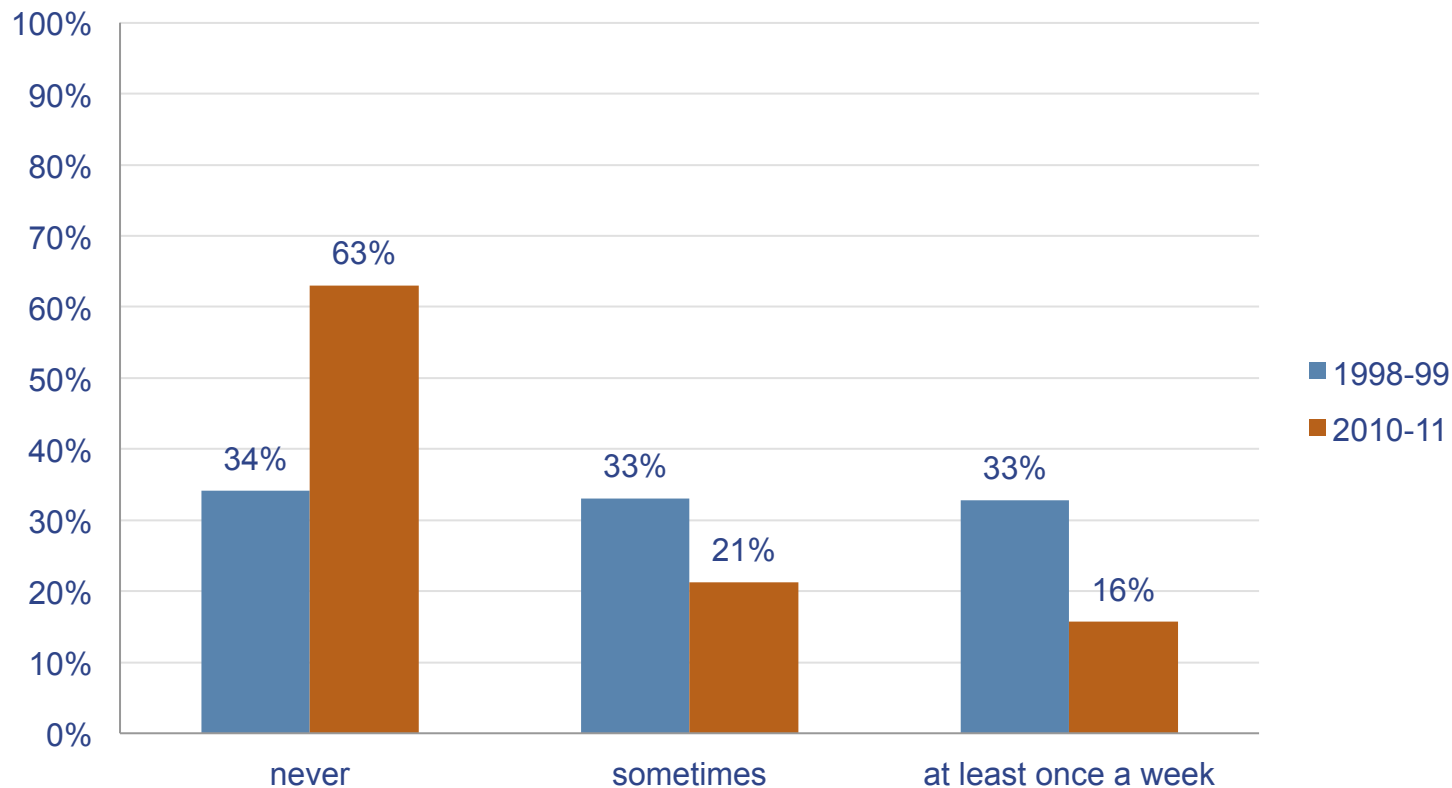
# Classroom Areas



# Frequency Class Uses Cooking or Food-Related Items

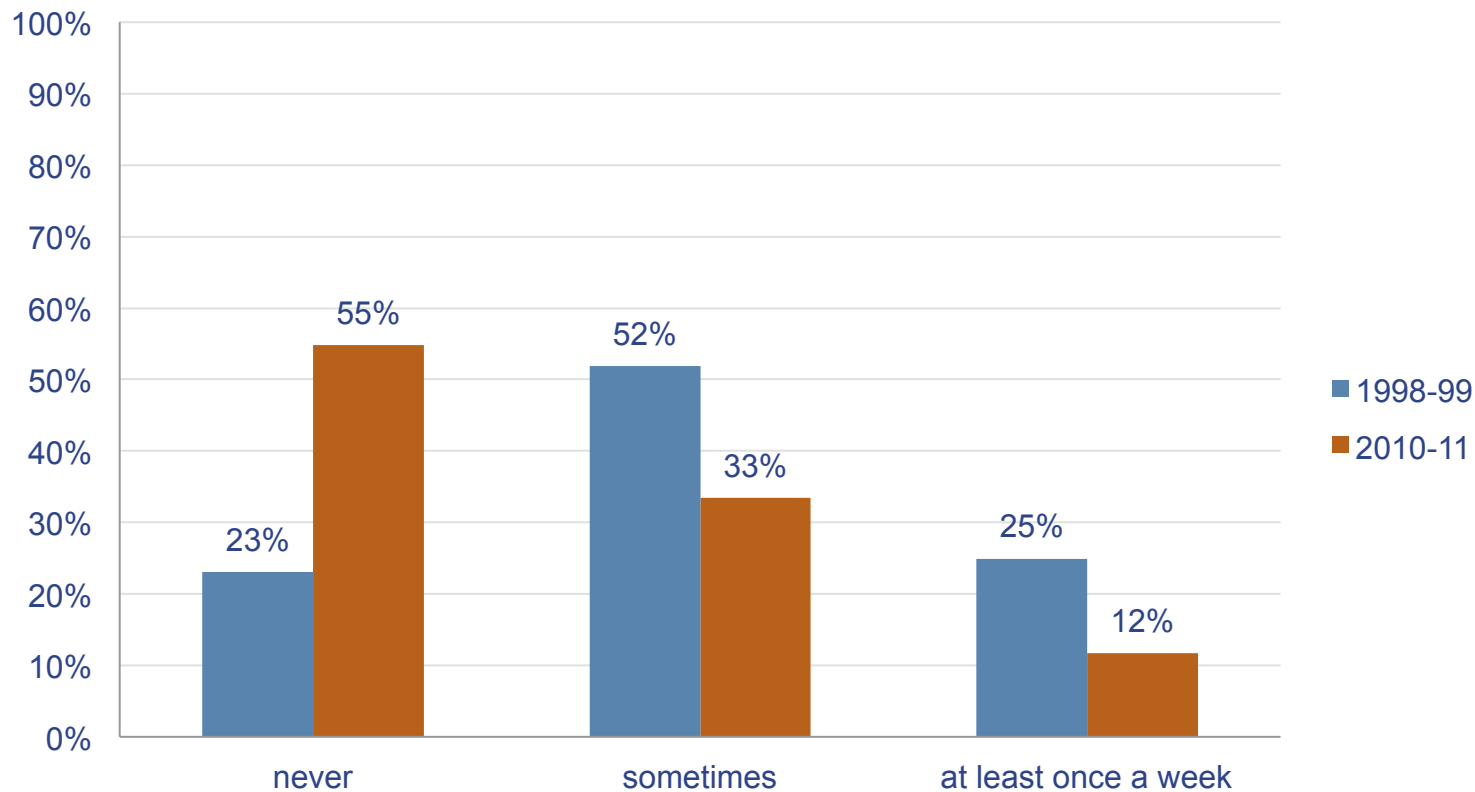


# Frequency Class Uses Costumes for Theater and Creative Dramatics





# Frequency Class Uses Musical Instruments

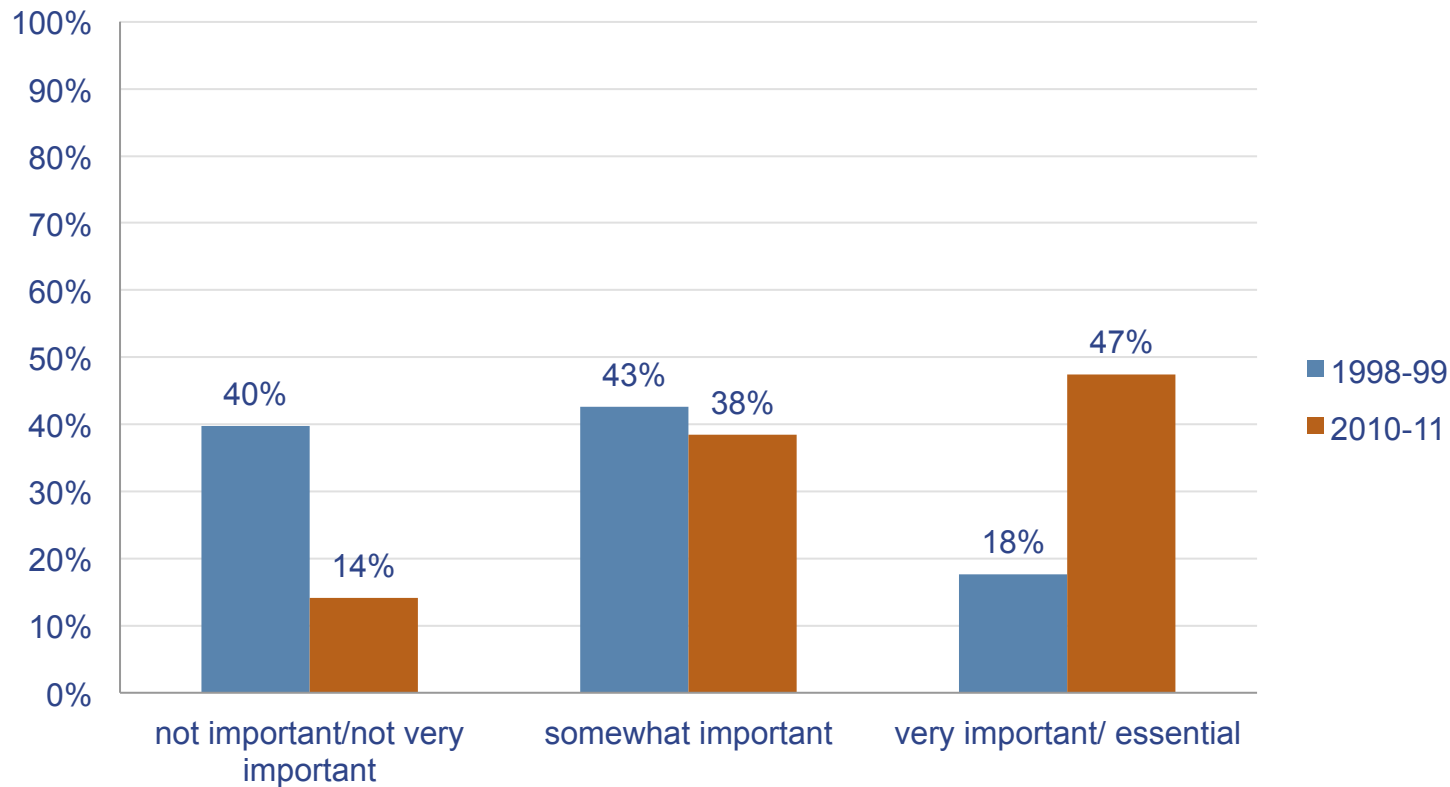


# Teacher Beliefs About Kindergarten Readiness

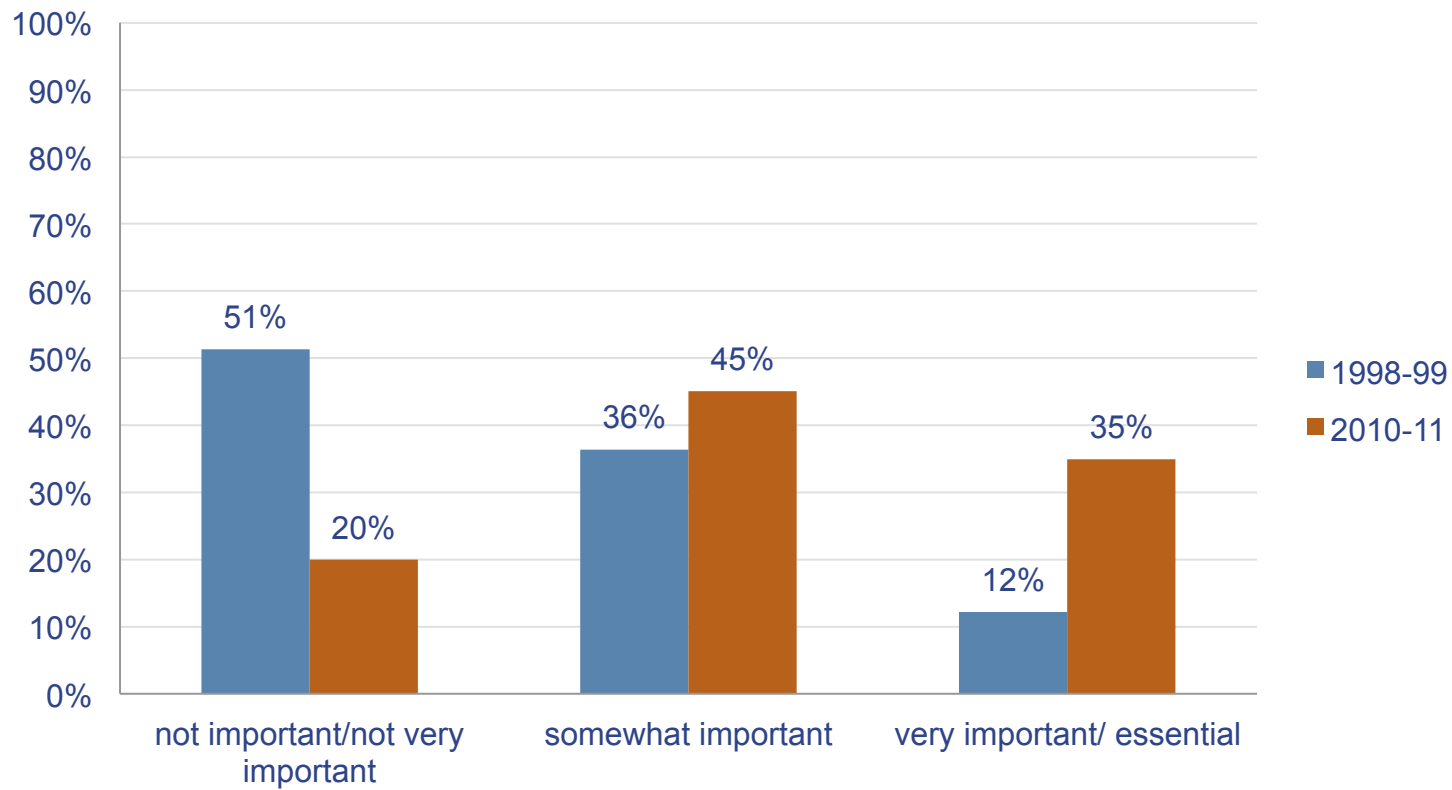
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*How important do you believe the following characteristics are for a child to be ready for kindergarten?*

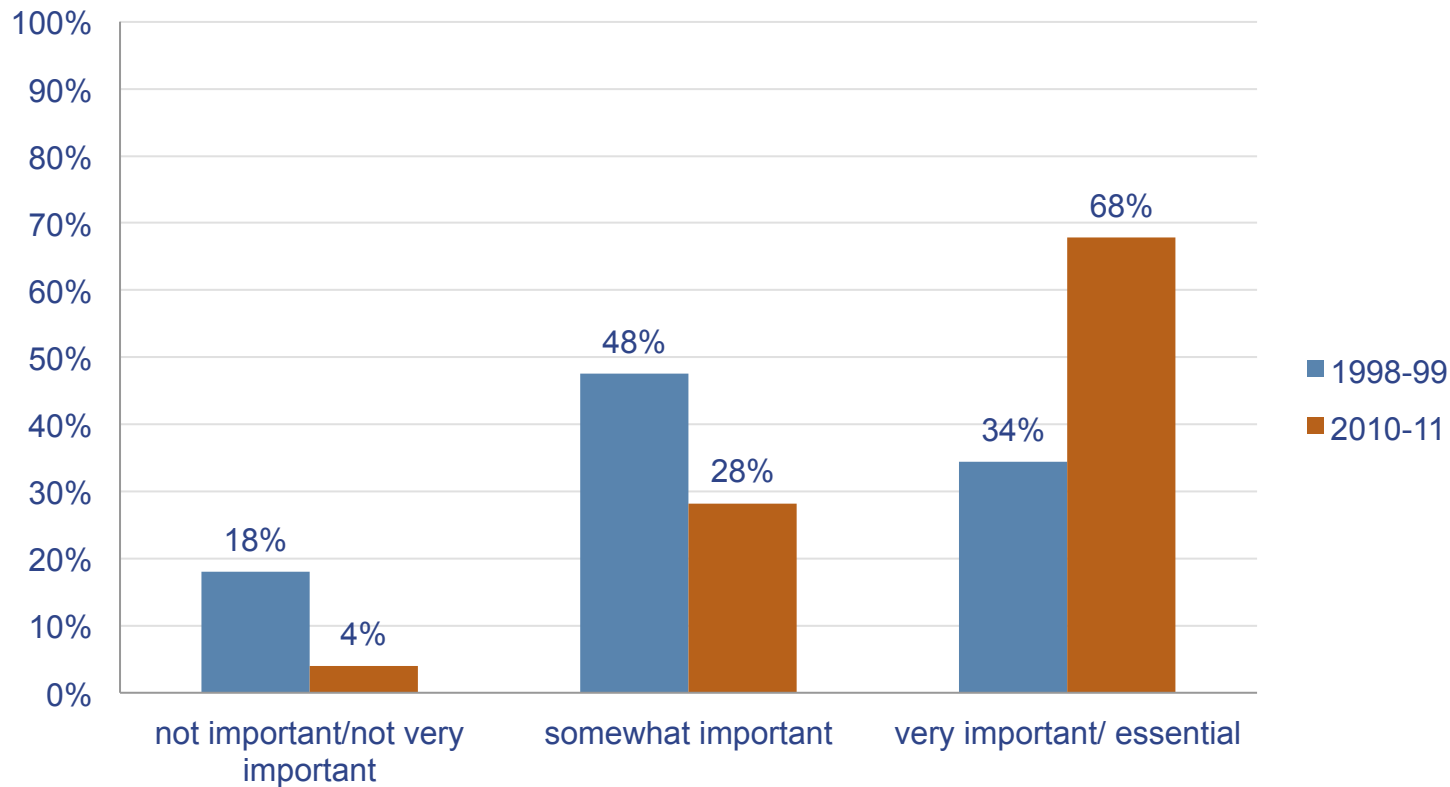
# Knows Most of the Letters of the Alphabet



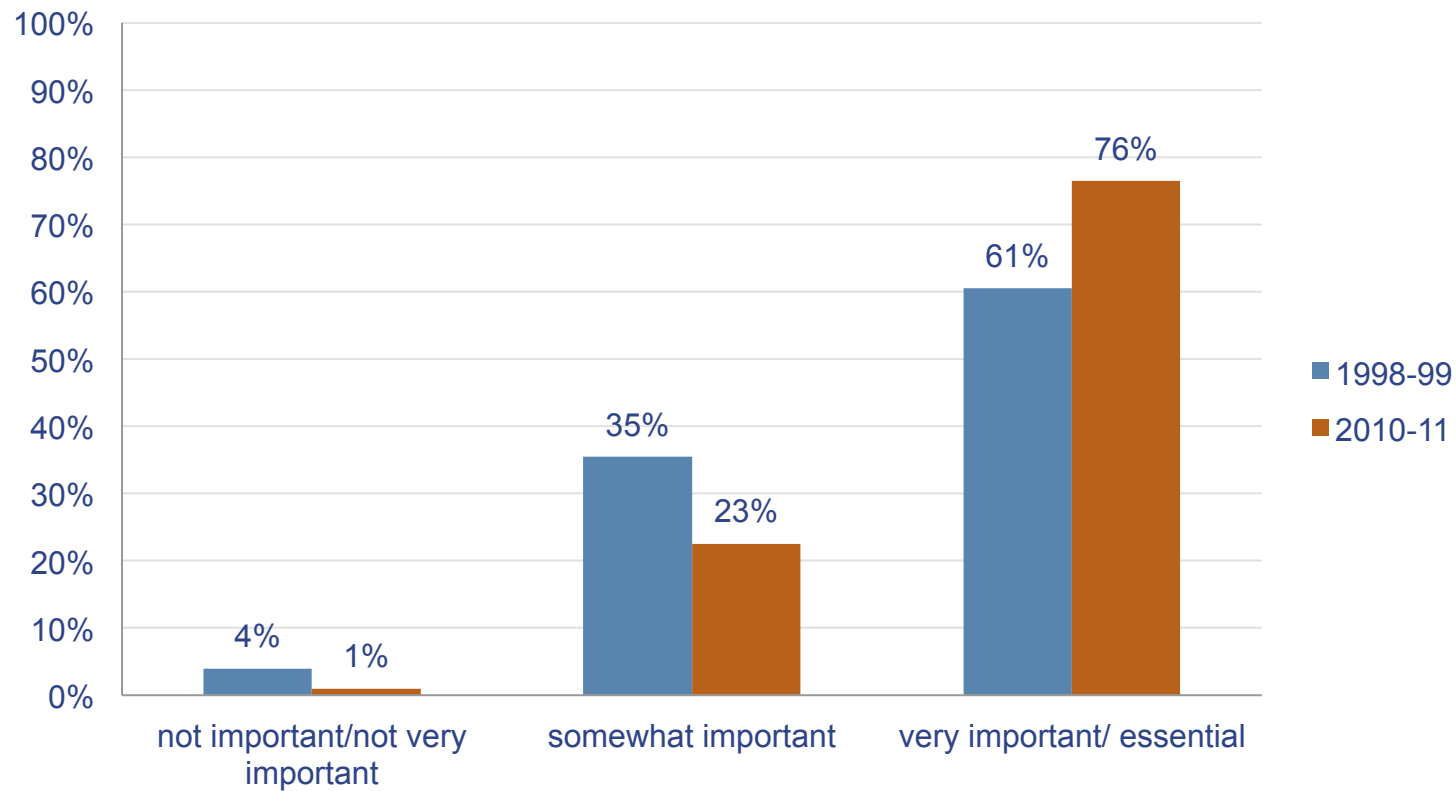
# Can Count to 20



# Is Able to Use Pencils and Paintbrushes



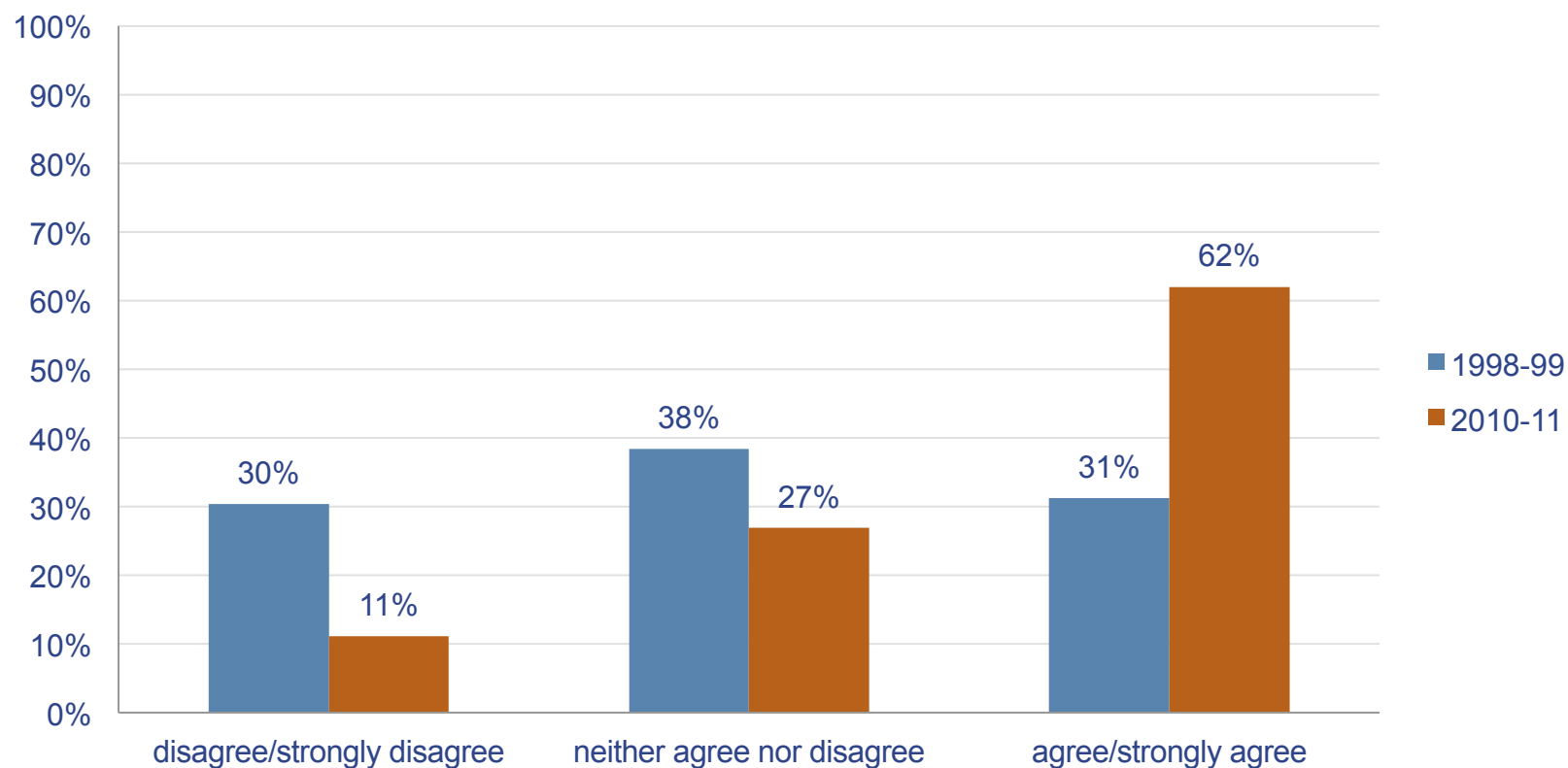
# Sits Still and Pays Attention



# Kindergarten Teacher Beliefs About Preschool

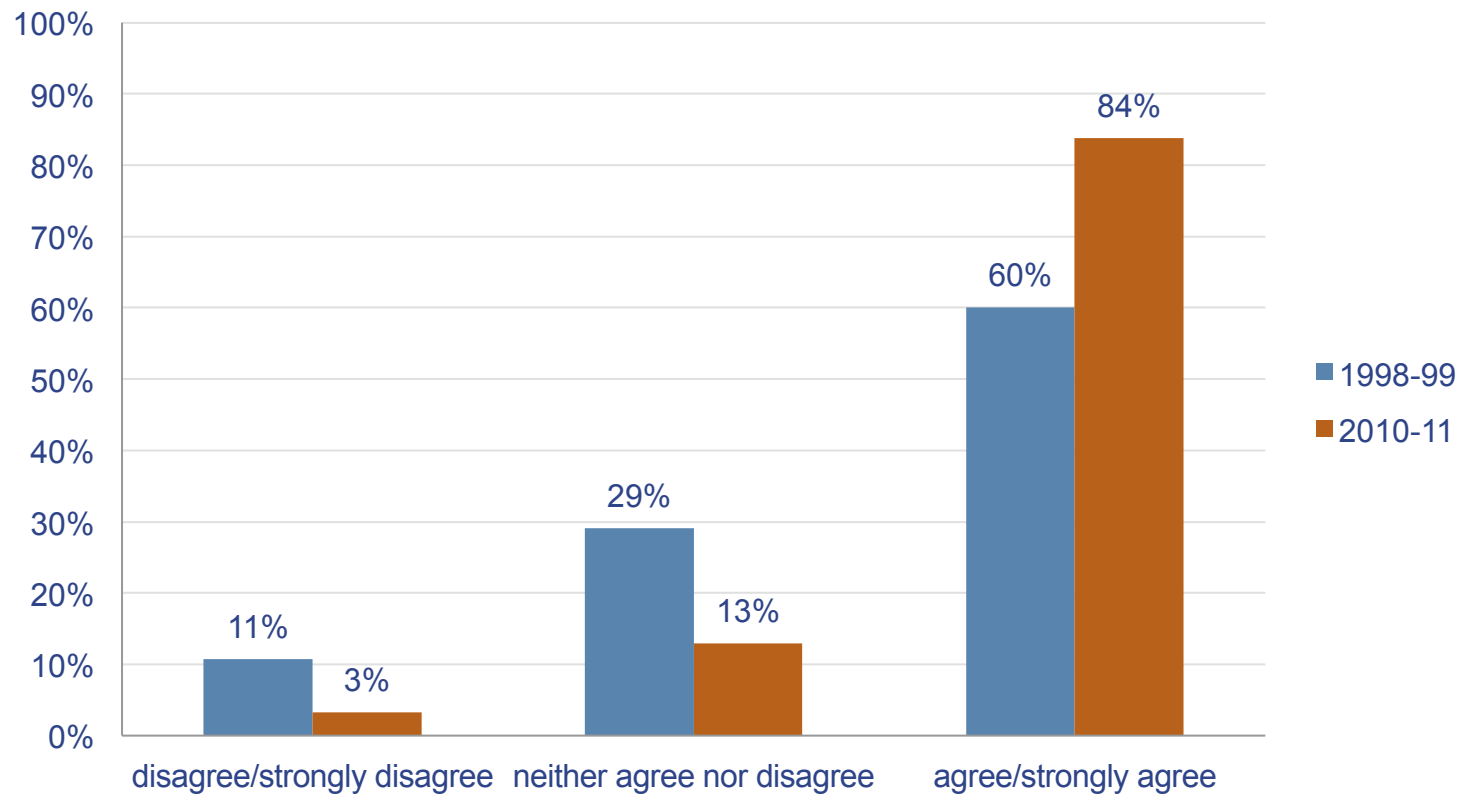
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“Children who begin formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school.”





# “Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten.”



# Kindergartners Today Are Facing:

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- The *new first grade*
- More focus on rigorous academic skills
- Less focus on music, art, and creative activities
- Higher academic and behavioral expectations when they enter kindergarten

# Policy Questions

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- Traditionally, kindergarten served as the transition year before formal schooling. If kindergarten is the *new first grade*, is preschool the *new kindergarten*?
- How do we prepare all young children for success in today's more rigorous kindergarten?

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