

Access For All:
Closing the Book Gap for
Children in Early Childhood

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- **Susan B. Neuman**
- **University of Michigan**
- **Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement**



Forces of Change in Early Literacy

- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (The Reading Report Card)**
- **Brain Research**
- **National Academy of Sciences Report (Preventing Reading Difficulties)**
- **IRA/NAEYC Position Statement**
- **Head Start Performance Guidelines**



Data Sources

- **Book Industry Study Group**
- **NPD Group, a 12,000 panel study, examining purchases for children below the age of six**
- **National survey of book purchases for children in 318 child care centers**
- **National survey of Prekindergarten Initiatives in 41 states**
- **Case Studies, selected states**

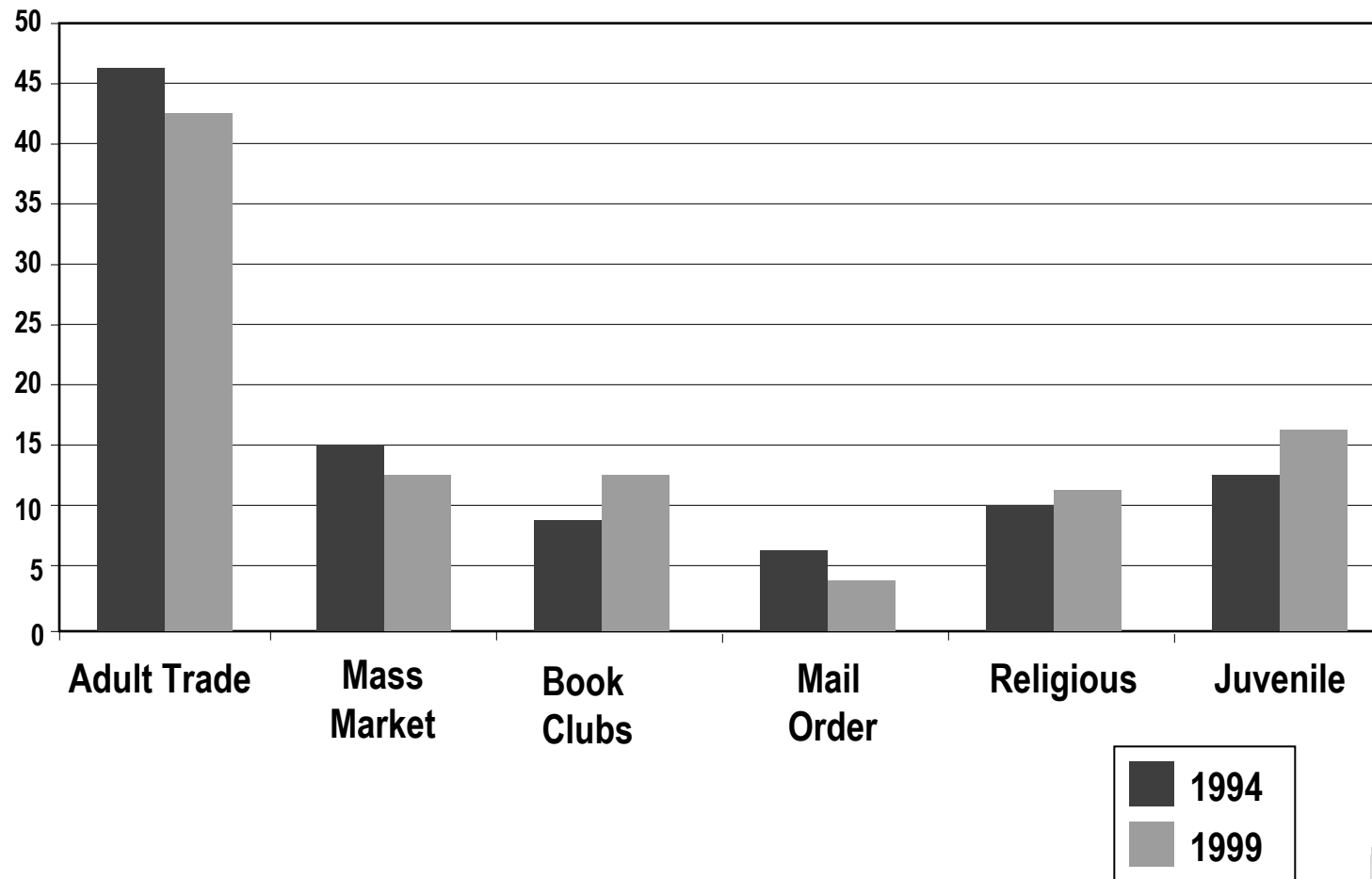


The Juvenile Market

- **Total juvenile market is growing**
- **Represents 16% of all books purchased in the U.S.**
- **Total juvenile book market accounted for \$1.72 billion dollars in 1999**



Percent of Total Books Sales: *1994 vs. 1999*

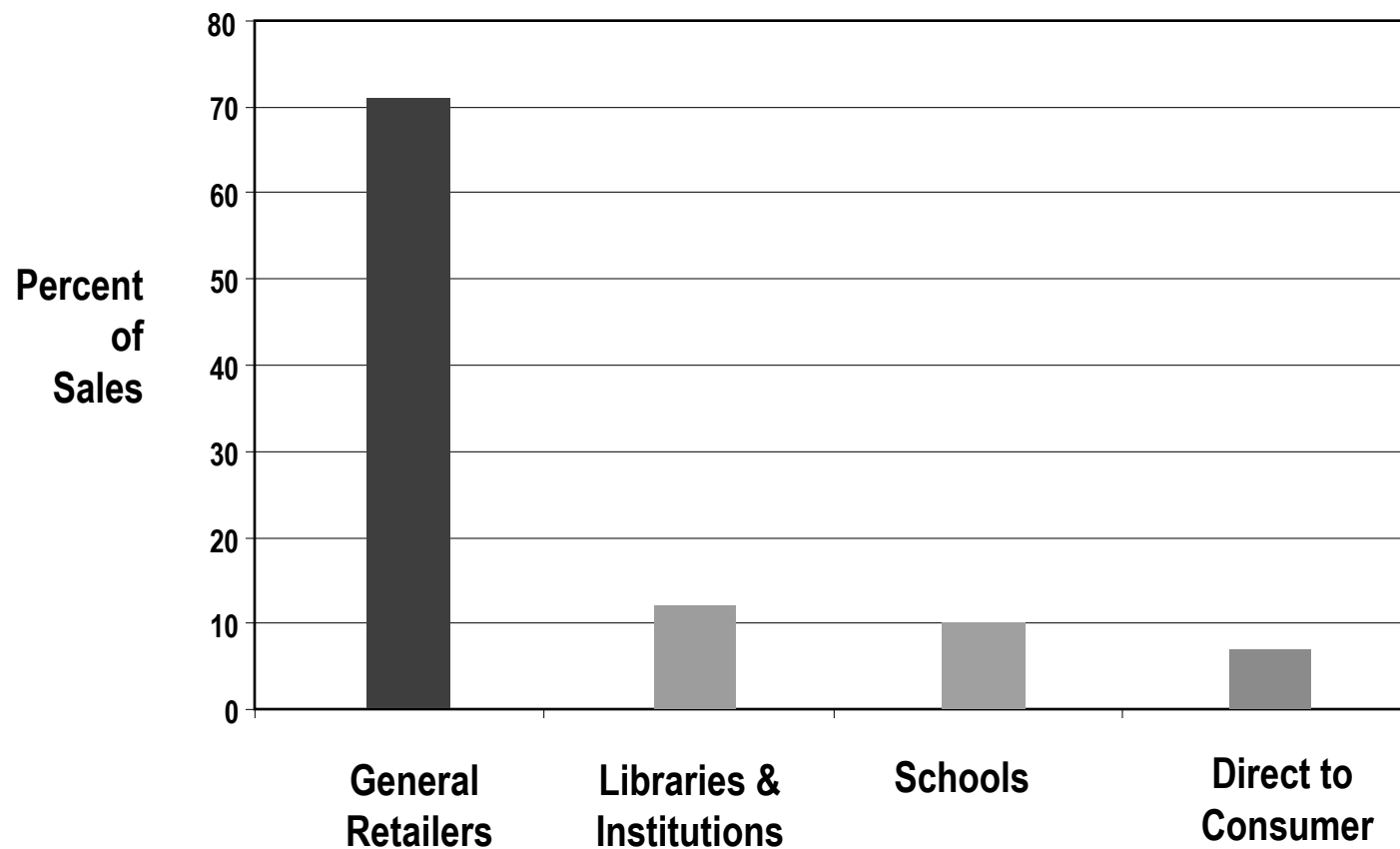


The Juvenile Market

- **Consumers, not schools or libraries, purchase the vast majority of all juvenile books in the U.S.**
- **72.91% Sold by general retailers directly to consumers**



Juvenile Trade Book Market—1999

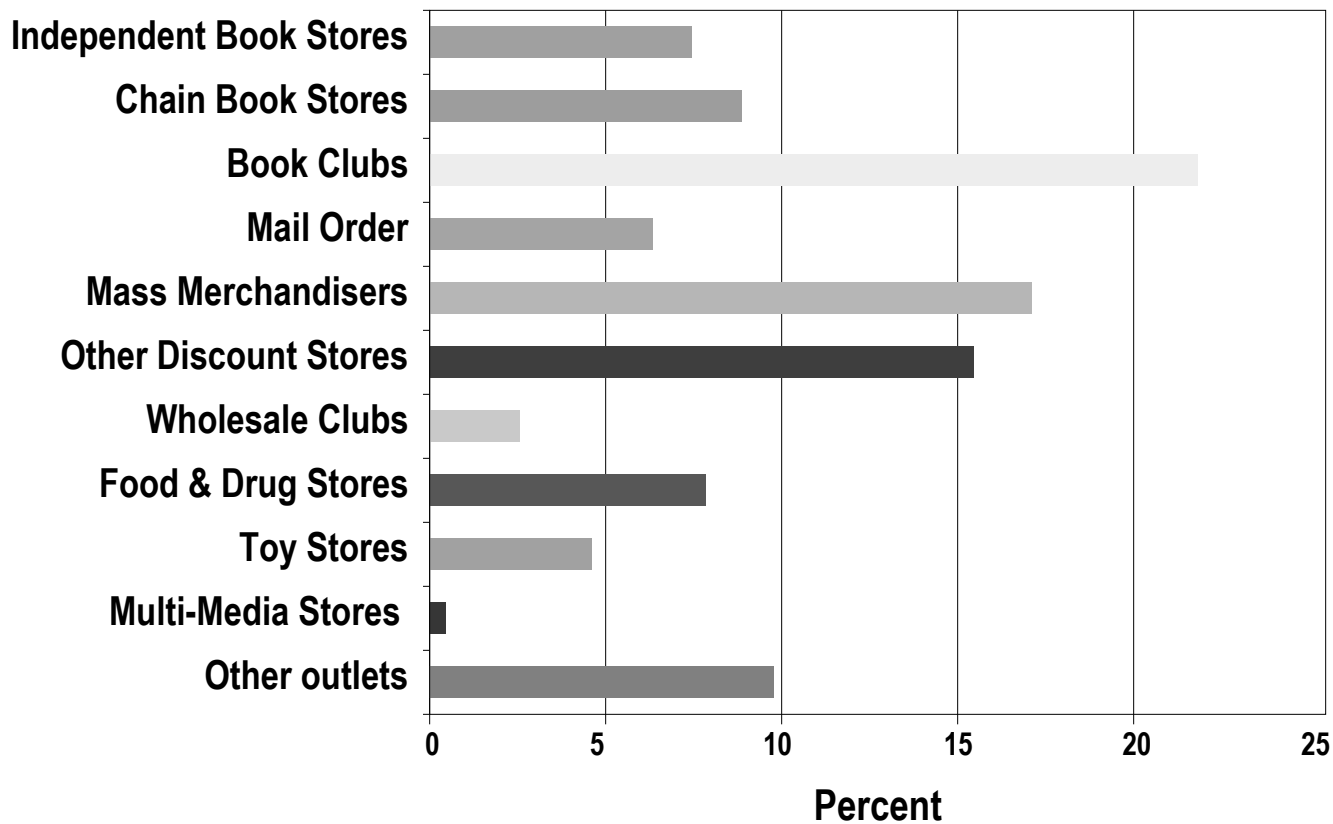


Top Ten Juvenile Book Publishers

- Random House
- Penguin Putnam
- Golden Books
- Simon & Schuster
- Harper Collins
- Scholastic
- Landoll (Tribune)
- Disney
- Avon/Morrow
- Pleasant Co. (Mattel)



Early Childhood Juvenile Trade Book Purchasing: *Market Share Percentages by Channel of Distribution*

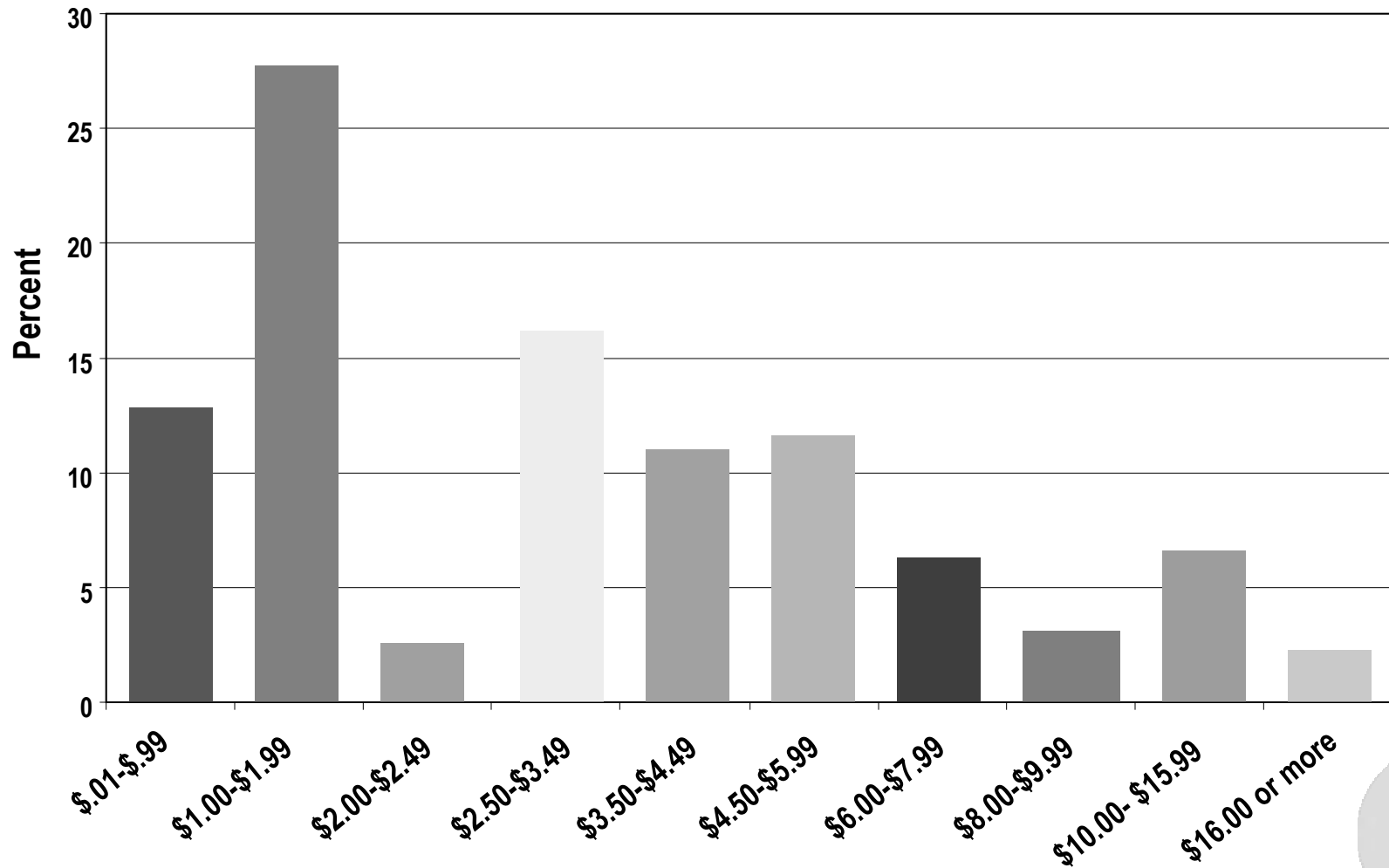


Book Purchases are Price Sensitive

- **In 1999, 21% of all early childhood books were purchased in mass merchandise stores**
- **Book Clubs were second (16.8%)**
- **Other Discount Stores**



Early Childhood Trade Book Purchasing: *Market Share Percentages for Book Retail Price Points*

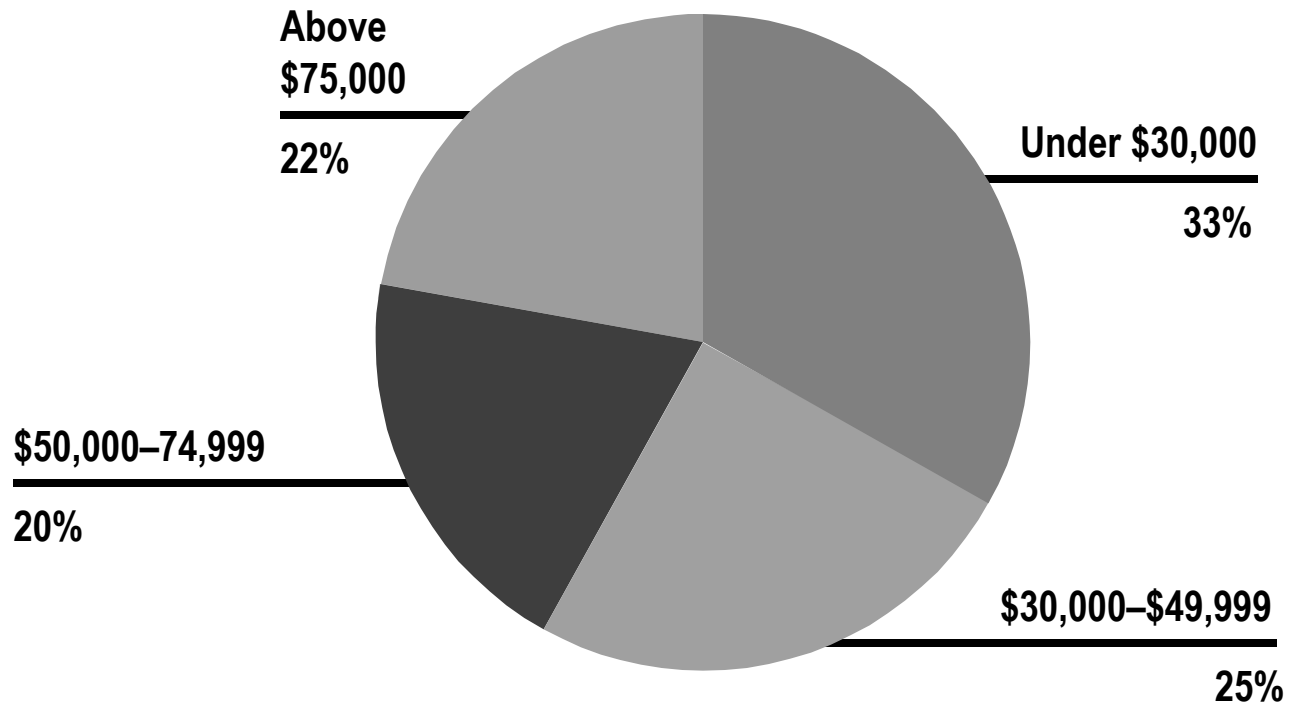


Demographics of Book Purchasers

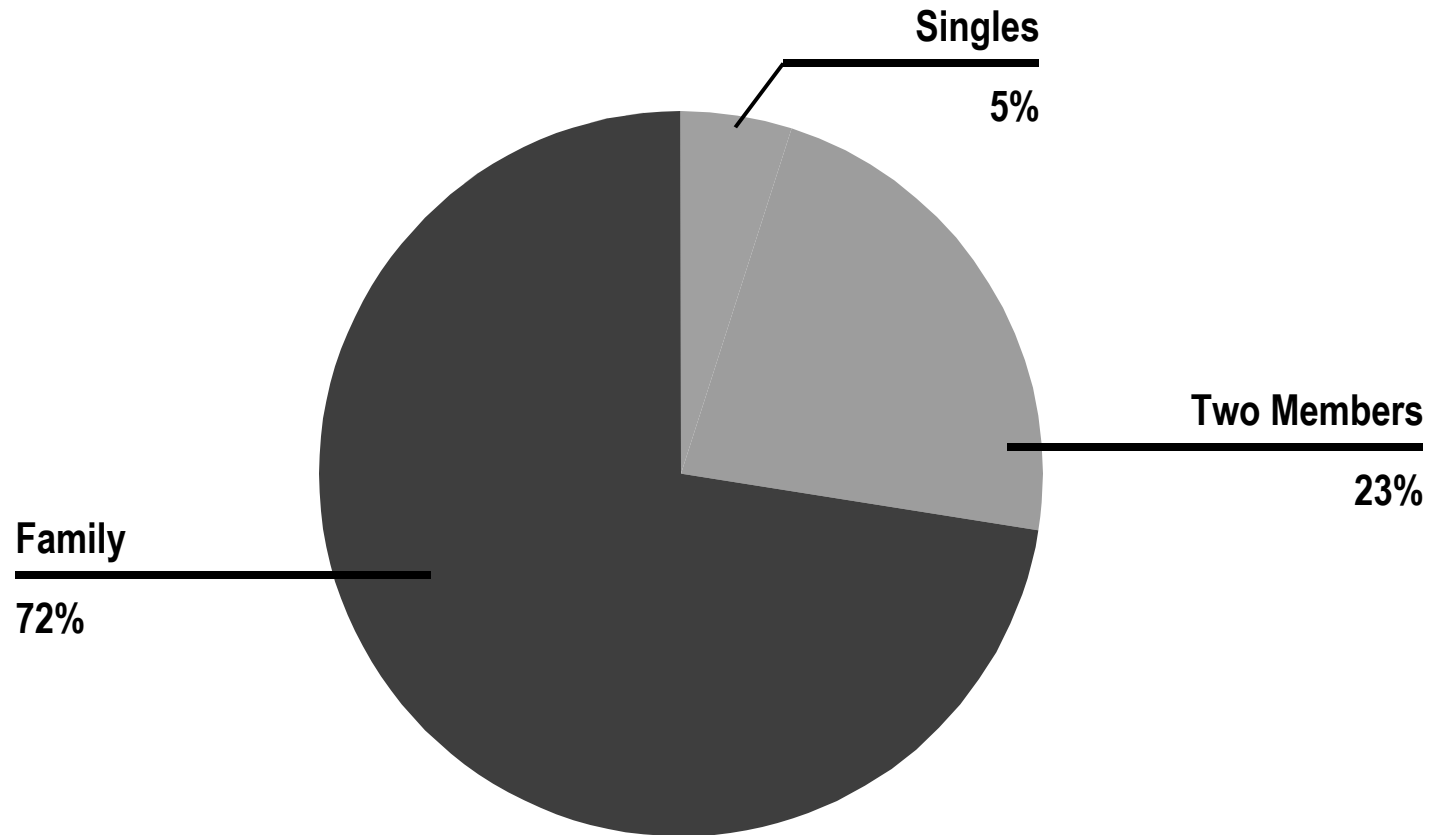
- **Early childhood books are considered important purchases**
- **Household heads earning under \$30,000 buy books, but far fewer than those who have greater income**



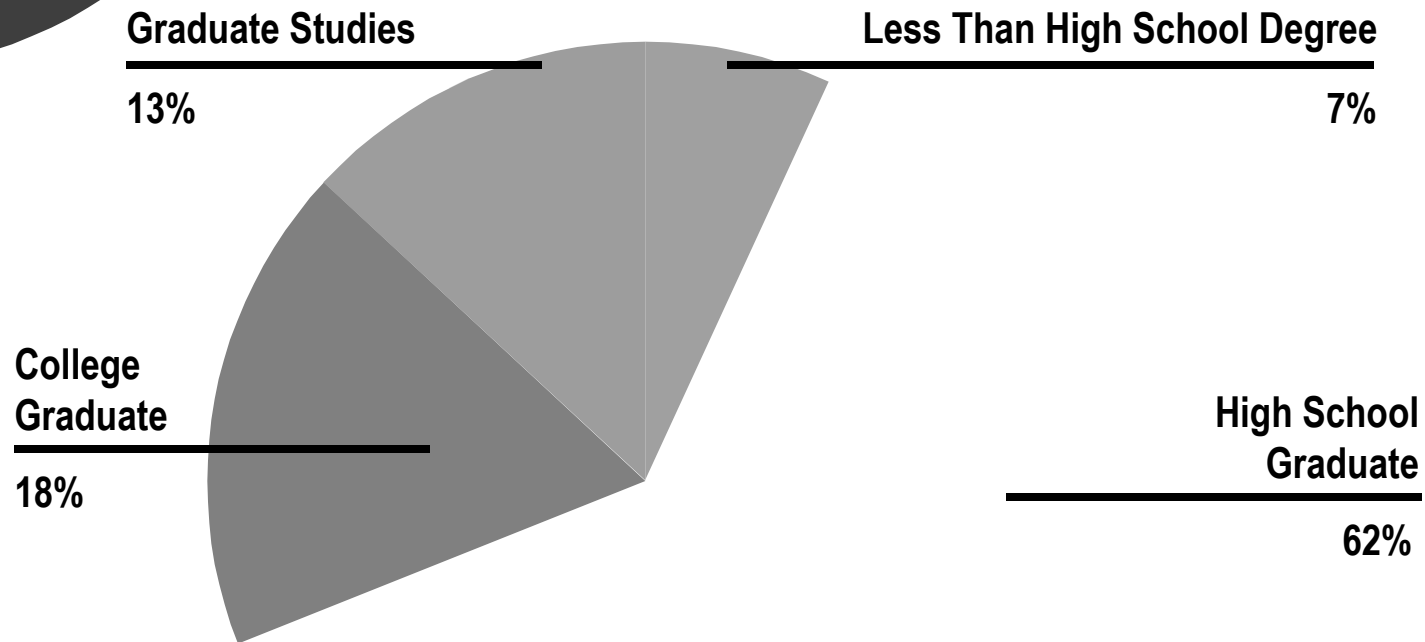
Early Childhood Tradebook Statistics: *Household Income Trends—1999*



Size of Household



Education of Household Head



Demographics of Book Purchasers

- **Families account for 72.6% of the sales**
- **High School Graduates account for 62% of all sales**
- **Occupational level affects the decision to buy books, with unskilled labor lagging behind professional/manager group**
- **Peak buying years are 30-34, and 35-39**

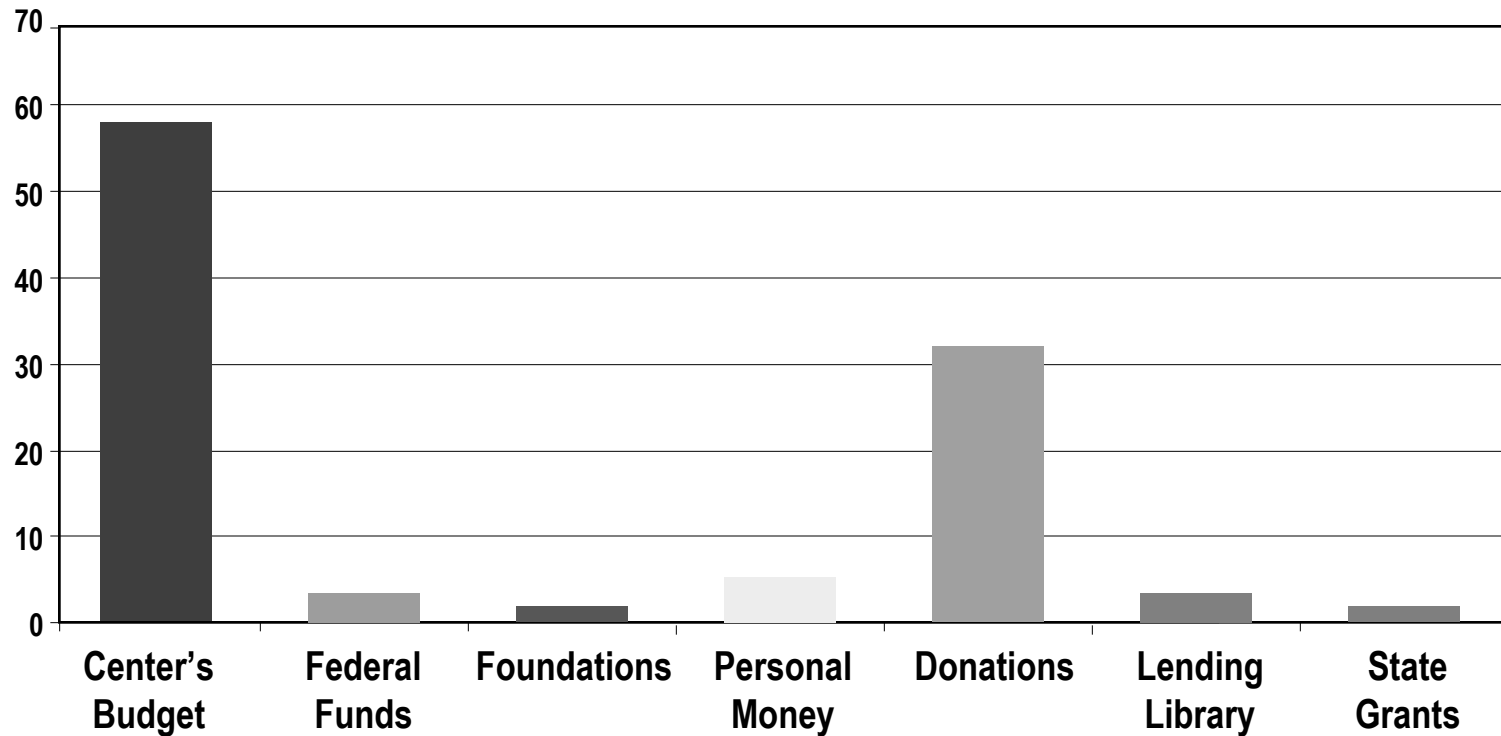


What are we likely to see?

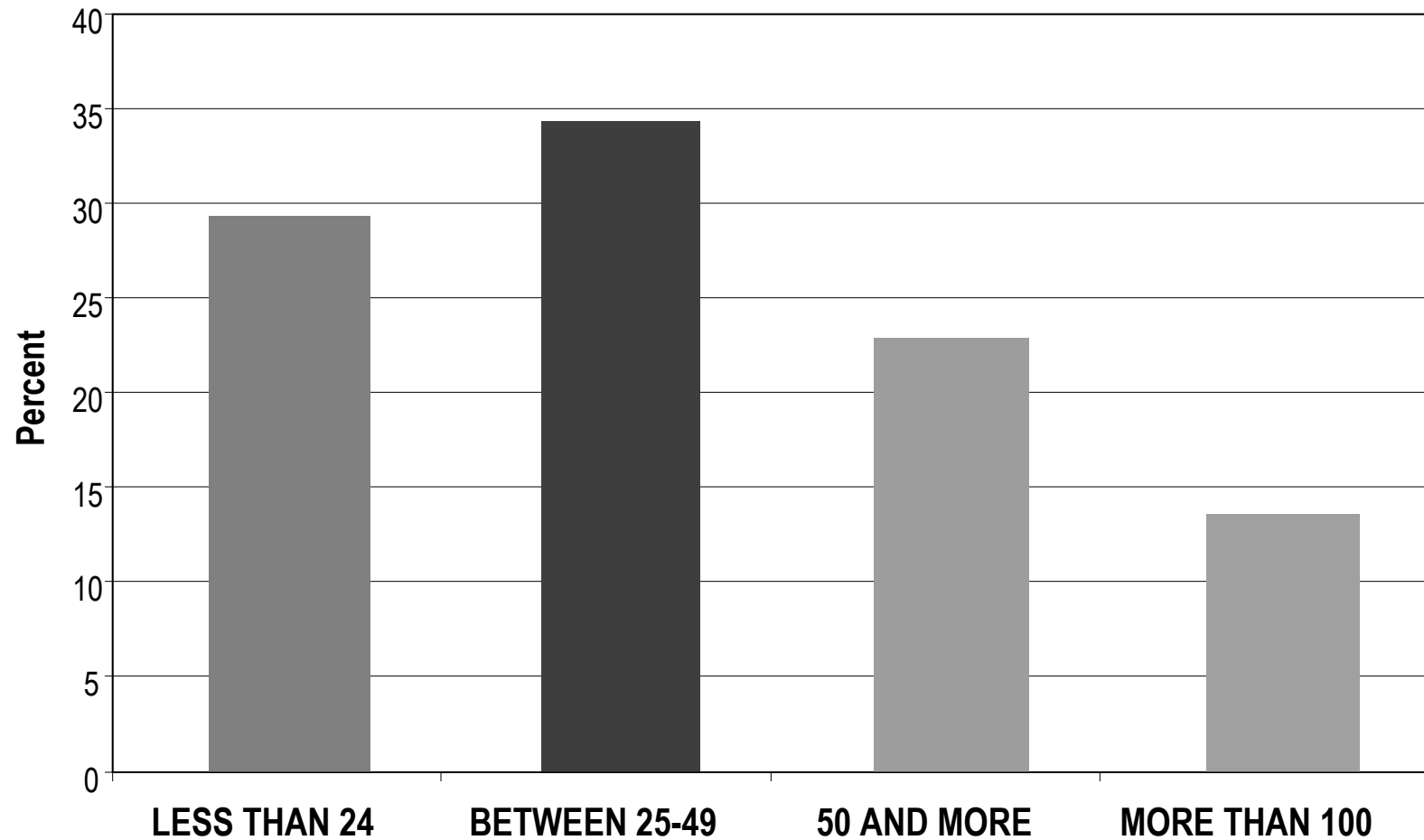
A growing book gap



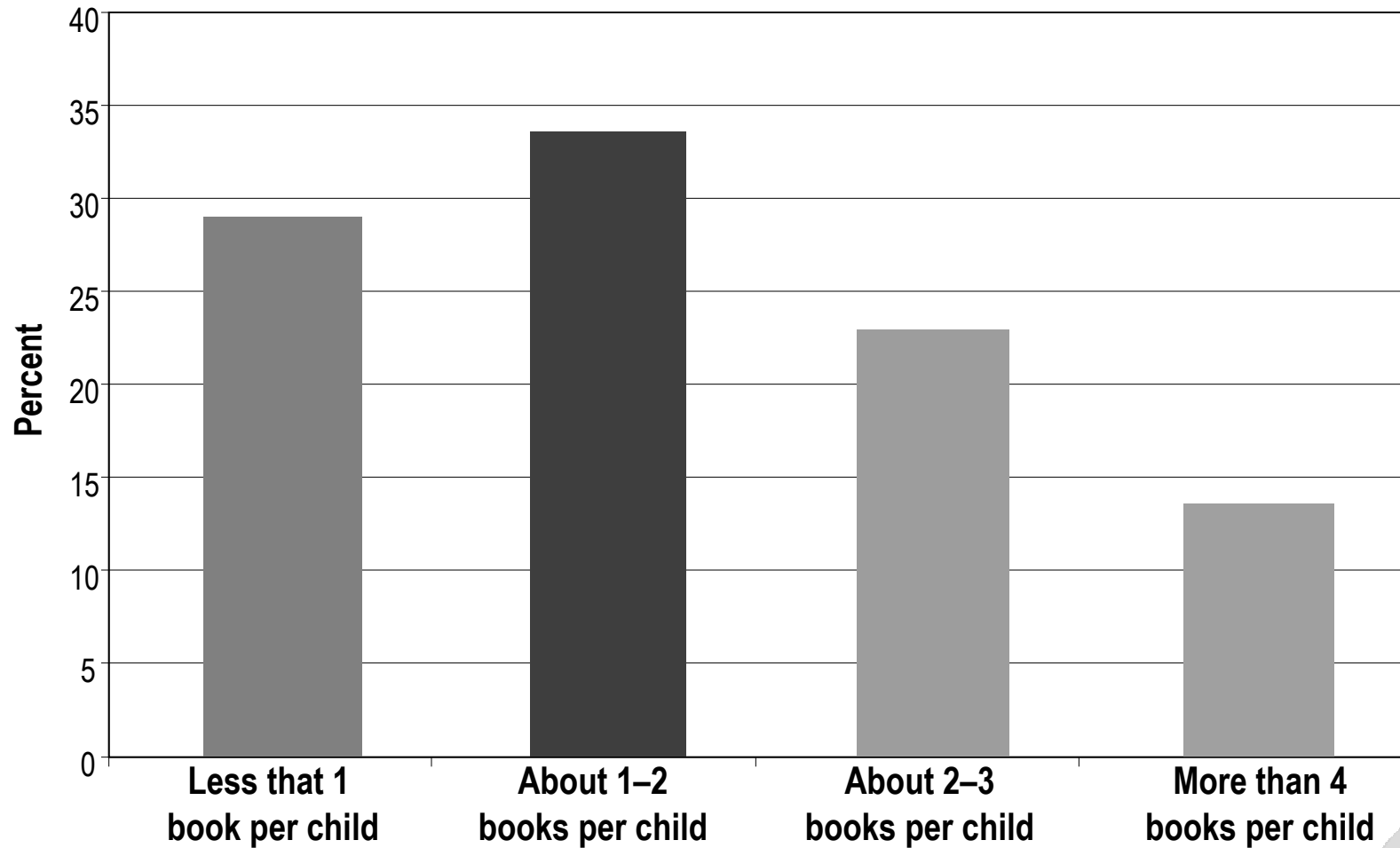
Sources of Funding for Books



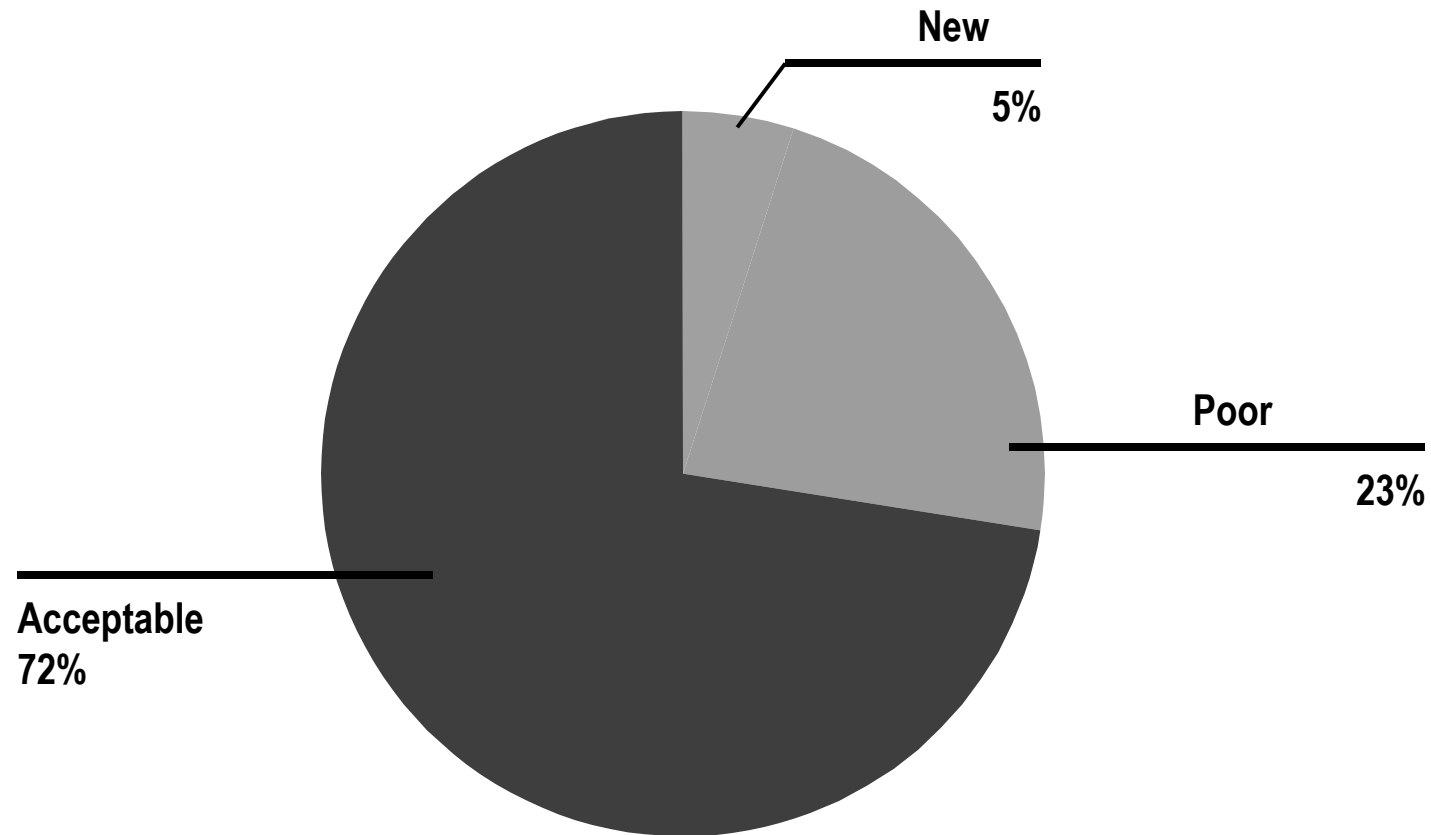
Number of Books Per Classroom



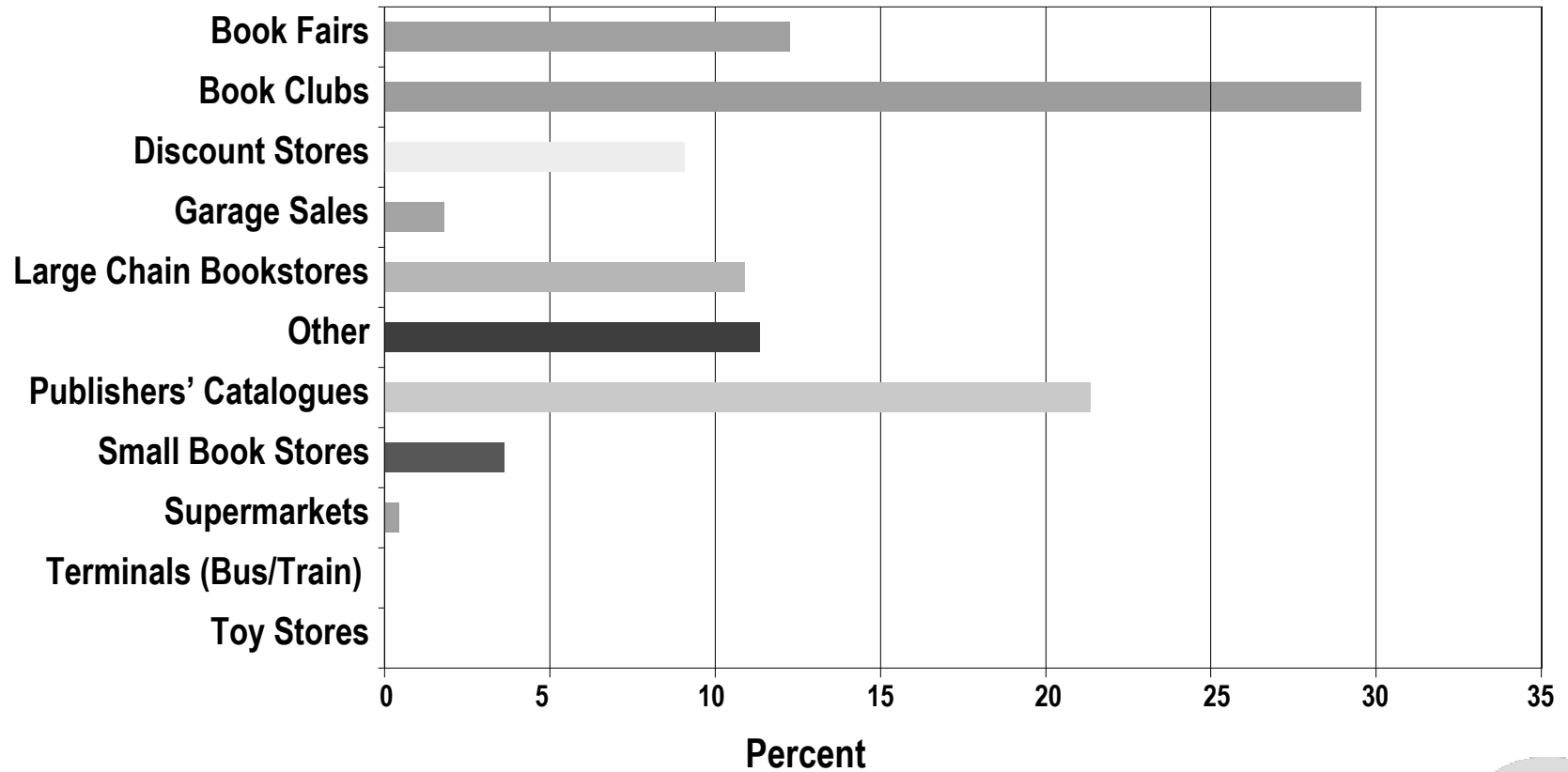
Estimated Number of Books Per Child in Classrooms



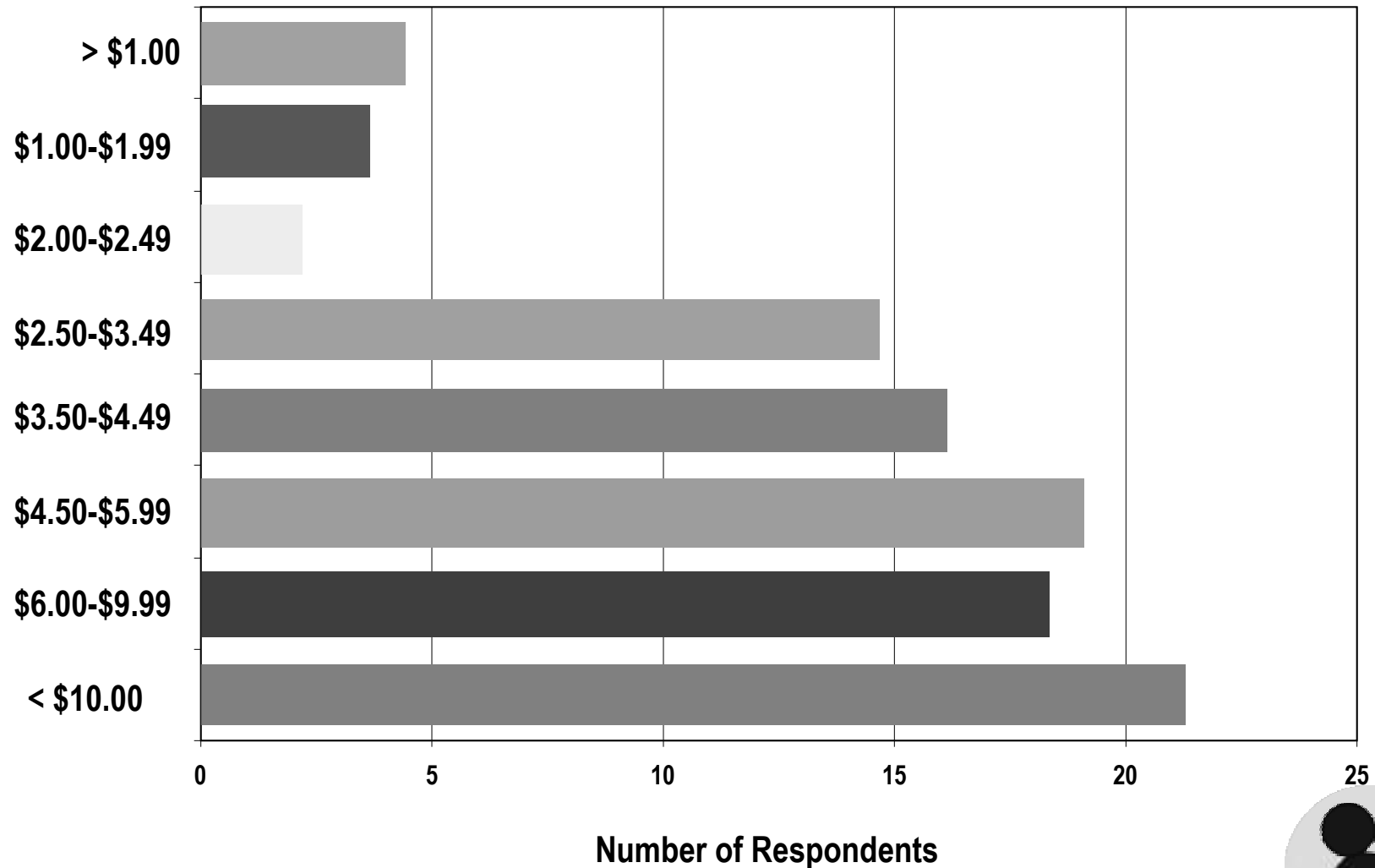
Condition of Books



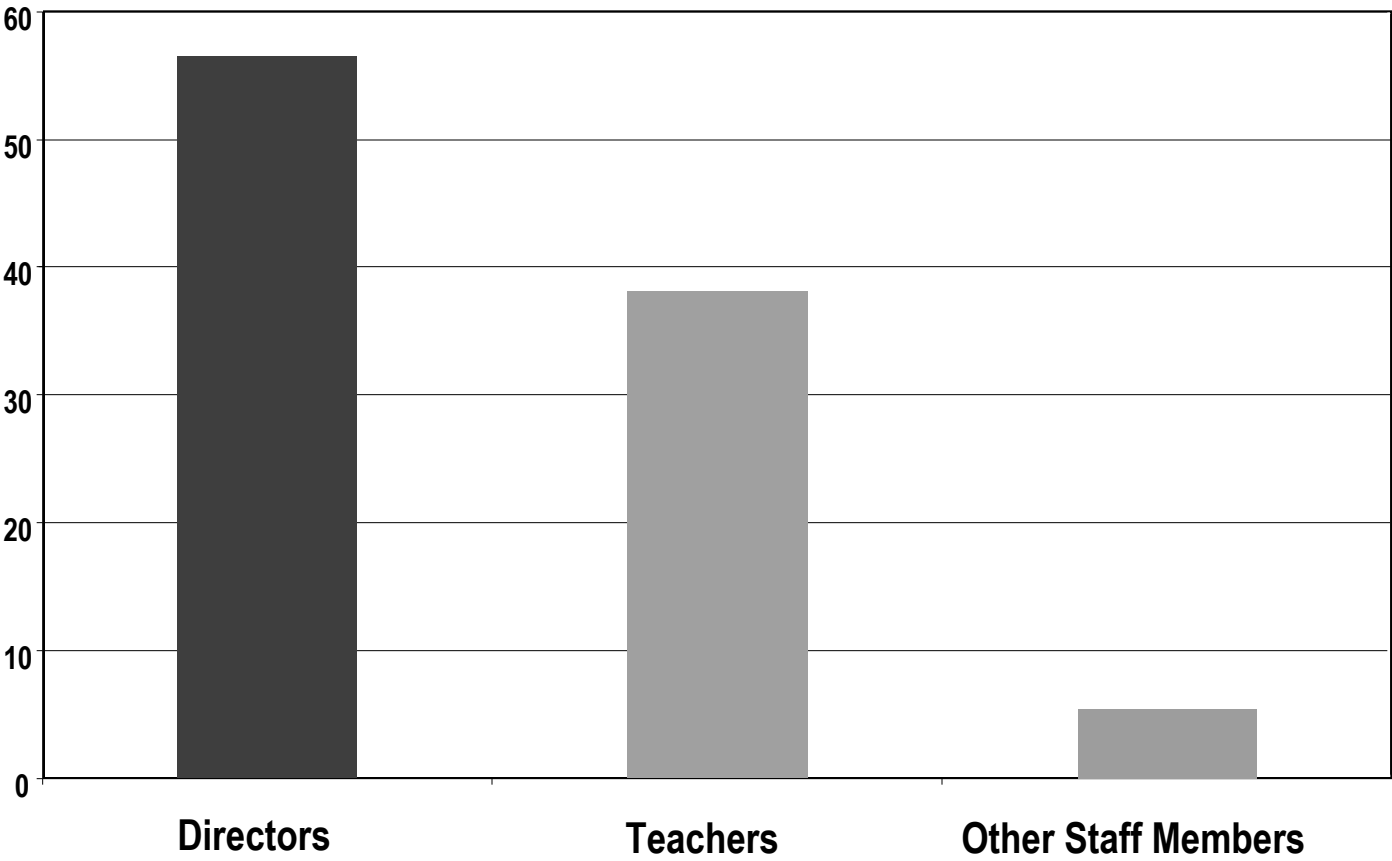
Book Source



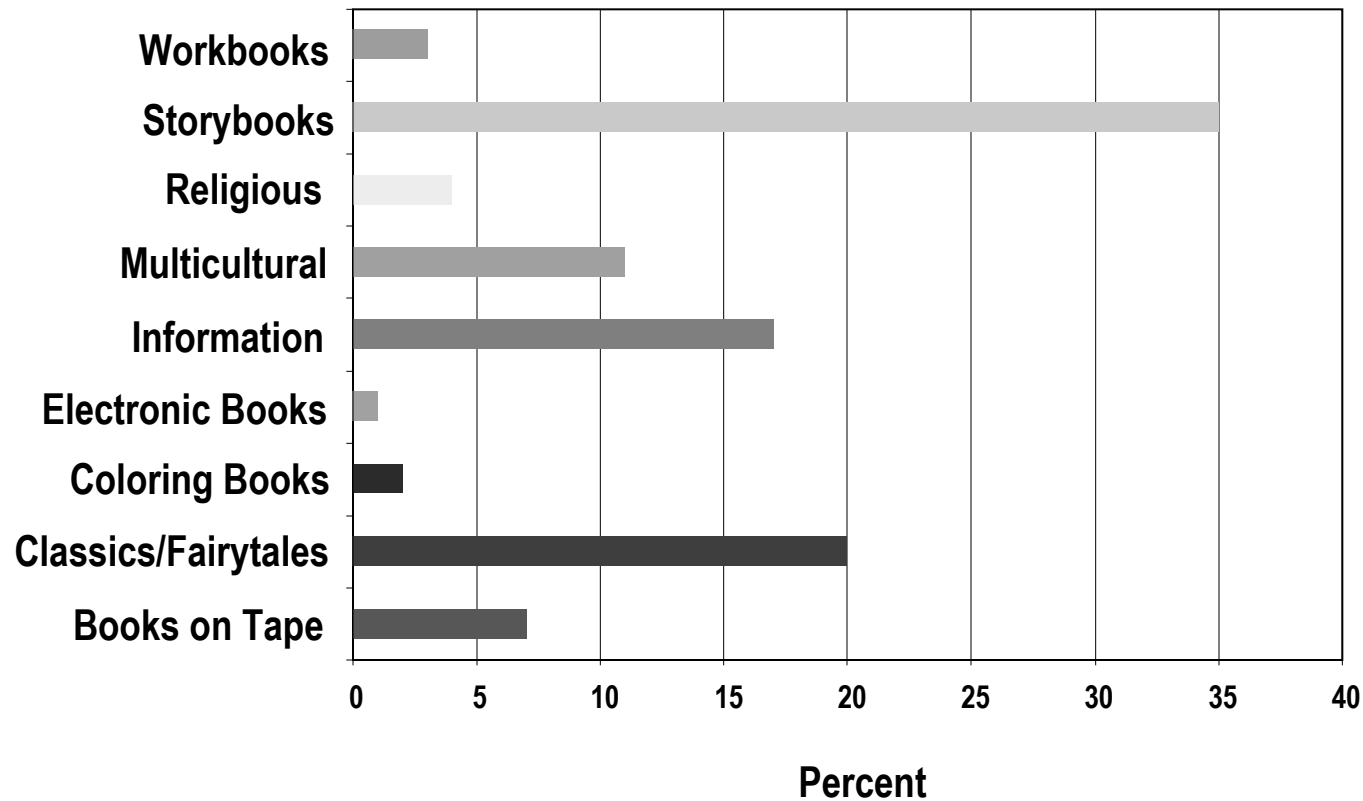
Average Price of Purchased Books



Persons Responsible for Making Purchasing Decisions



Percent of Books by Genre in Childcare Classrooms



State Initiatives

- **In 1998–99, states invested a total of nearly 1.7 billion in prekindergarten initiatives; 2 1/2 times as much as 1991–92**
- **41 out of 50 states have prekindergarten initiatives**
- **Georgia is the only state that invests sufficient funds to make prekindergarten available to all children**



State Initiatives

- **37 state initiatives do not require prekindergarten teachers to have teacher certification, but do require some credential like a CDA**
- **Few curriculum guidelines for states in prekindergarten (ex. NJ; MA; TX)**



Potential Consequences

- **Those children who are most in need of books will be least likely to get them**
- **Little guidance for decision-makers on how to use books in early literacy**
- **Book use may not be tied to cognitive activities in early literacy**
- **No guidance for selection of quality books in early childhood**



Potential Solutions

- **Childcare Centers**
 - Capacity for buying is low; varies by SES of families served; fairly tight budgets
- **Solutions**
 - Child care Reads
 - Better packaging of low-cost books to ensure quality libraries
 - Bulk buying (i.e. state agencies or R&R networks)



Potential Solutions

- **Pre-kindergarten programs**
 - Capacity for purchasing varies by state; some are well-funded, others minimal
- **Potential Solutions**
 - Create educational expectations in pre-k that specify how books may further literacy achievement
 - Offer guidelines to help decision-makers select quality books



Potential Solutions

- **Professional Associations**
 - IRA
 - NAEYC
 - ALA
 - AAP
- **Potential Solutions**
 - Recommendations for classroom libraries
 - Guidelines for selection of books
 - Guidance to book publishers on instructional needs in early childhood



