

The Austrian programme for early childhood intervention: supporting families in need

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Objectives of the Austrian Model

To reach and support families during pregnancy or within the first years of a child, especially those that live under burdened life circumstances (indicated/targeted prevention)

Specific Objectives:

- To strengthen resources and reduce strains/burdens of families with children (0-3 years, maximum 6 years)
- To promote and ensure well-being and development of children at an early stage
- To contribute to a healthy upbringing including the right to be protected, supported and to be able to participate
- To promote health and social equity

→ Needs-based support for families in stressful situations, established at regional level, implemented by family supporters (home visitors) as **outreach activity, free of charge, voluntary and resource-oriented and with aim to empower families**

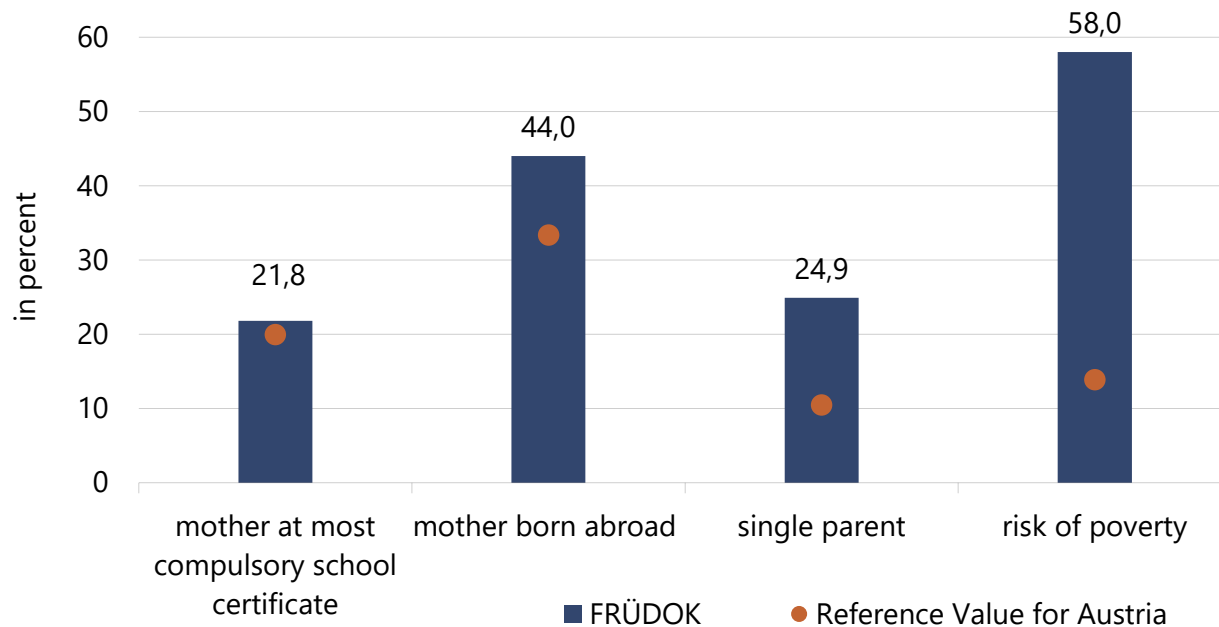
→ A network manager builds regional network by

- raising awareness within society and relevant institutions/professionals
- ensuring cooperation with multiprofessional partners across different sectors offering specific services for the families

Implemented since 2015 in model regions, since 2024 in whole country; since 2015 about 16.400 families supported

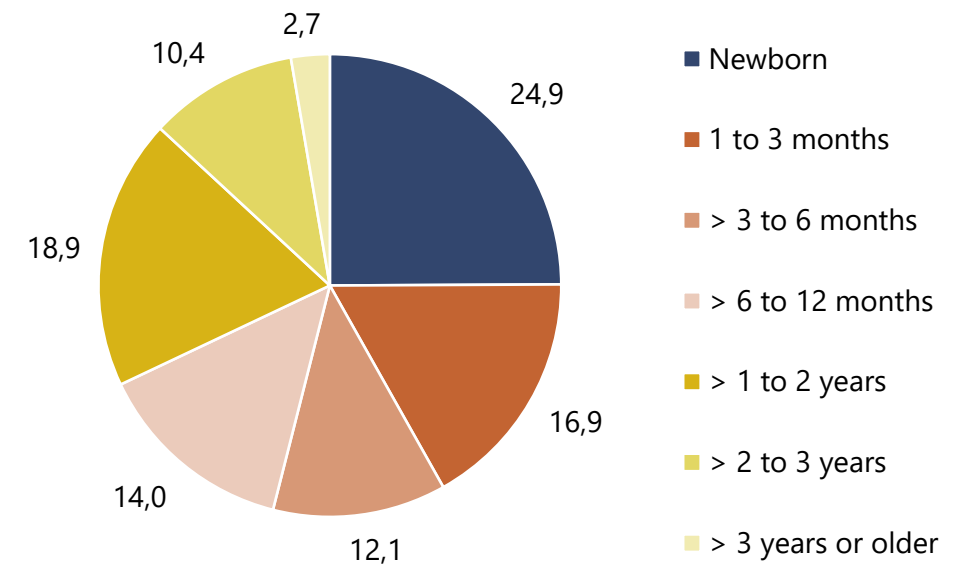
Financed in partnership of federal government, provinces and social insurance institutions; roll-out with help of EU (NextGeneration)

Families are reached early, incl. vulnerable groups

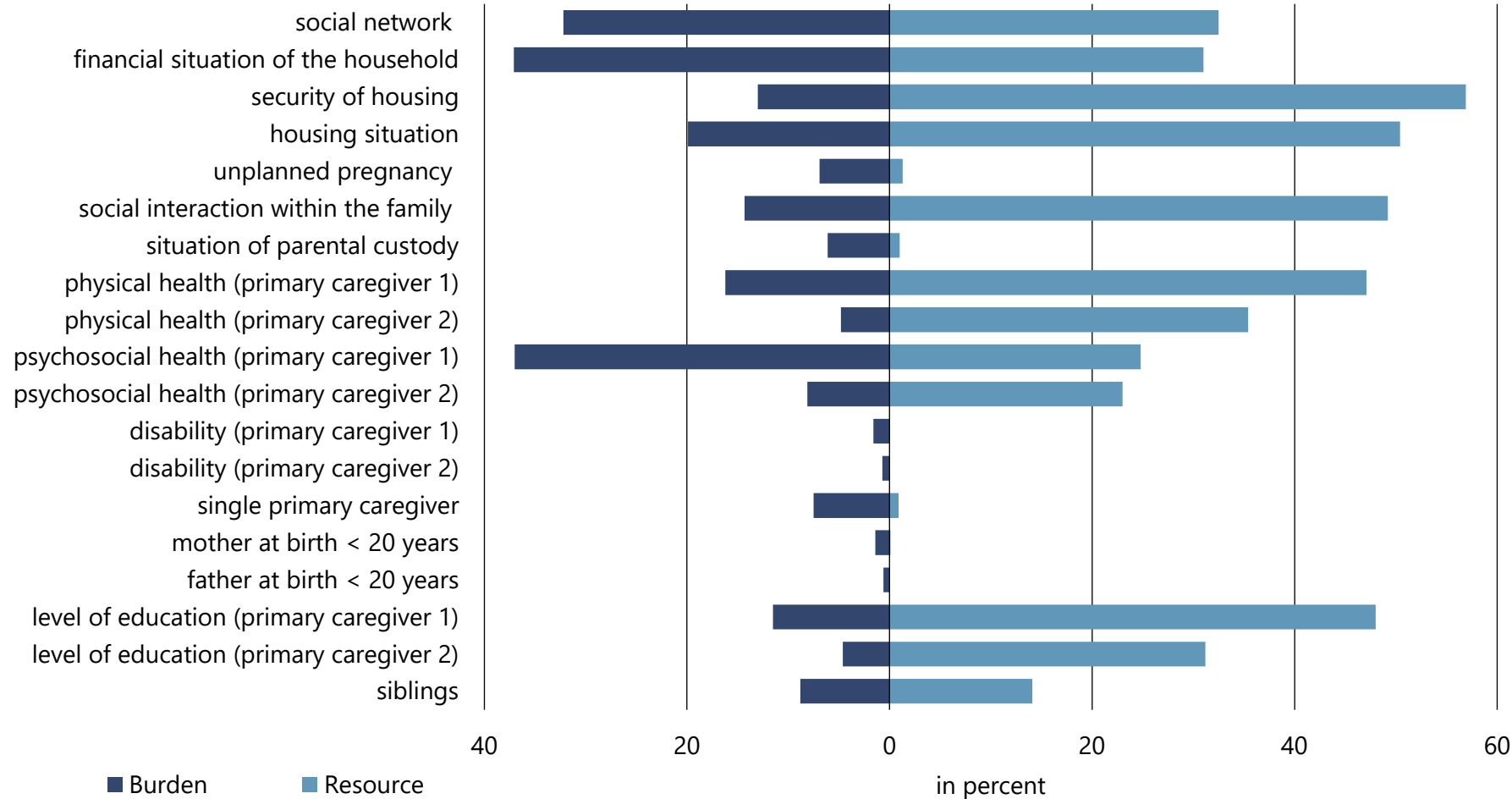


Notes: Data in percent of contacts in 2023 that resulted in family support, n = 2,314. The Austrian reference values were taken from the following data sources: Kaindl/Schipfer (2023); Statistik Austria (2023a); Statistik Austria (2024a); mother here refers to the primary main caregivers, who are the biological mothers in most families.

- More than 25 % of the family supports already start during **pregnancy**
- When entering the programme, ~ **70 % of the children already born are younger than one year old**



Families have multiple resources and burdens



EVALUATION: Families do benefit from early childhood intervention networks

Impact on health determinants (material, social and societal environment) by **increase in available resources** as well as **reduction of strains/burdens**:



resources

- + self-esteem
- + health, health literacy
- + parenting skills, parent-child-bonding
- + child development
- + familiar relations/atmosphere
- + social net
- + perspectives for parents life/future



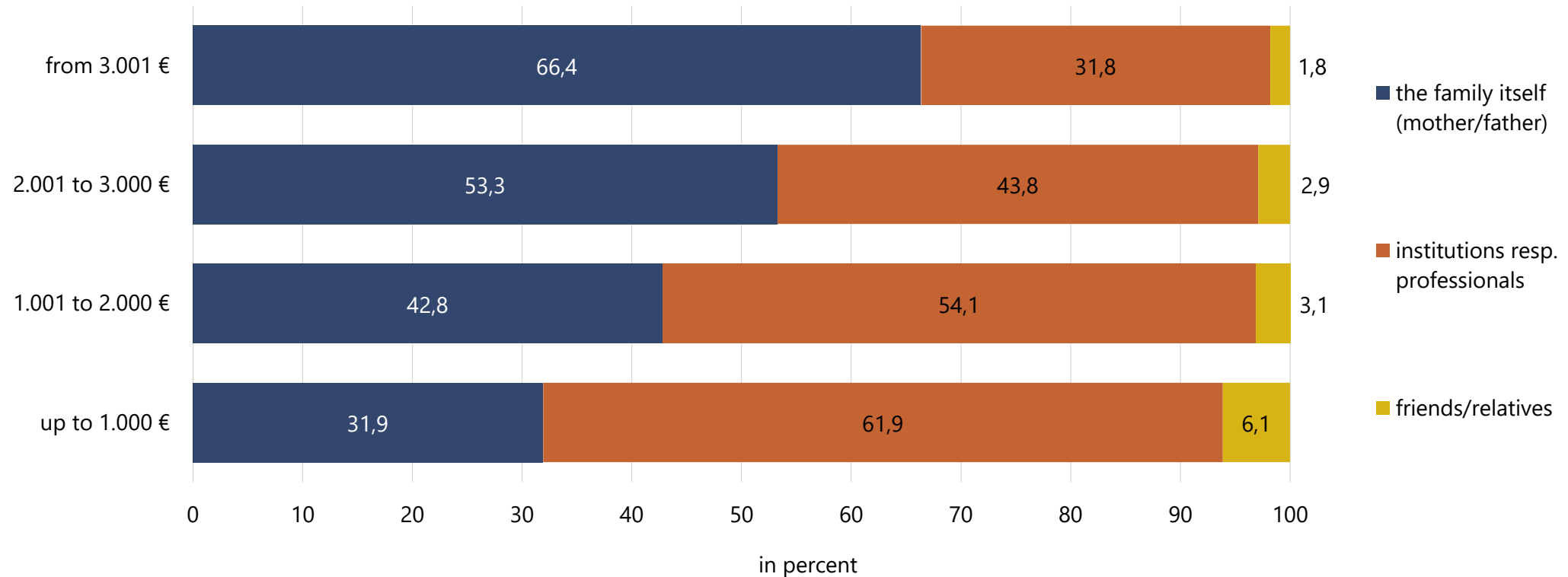
strains/burdens

- anxiety and exhaustion
- financial burden/distress

Particularly helpful were from family perspective:

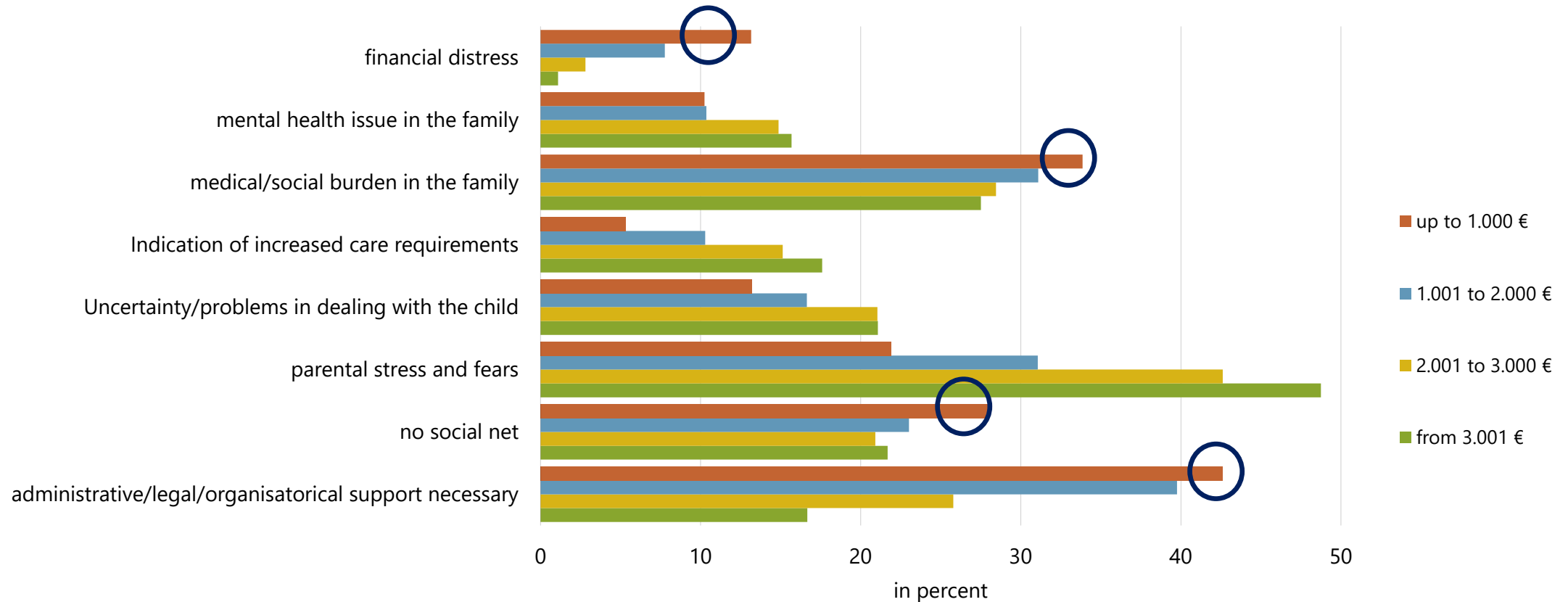
- Talks with the family supporter
- the knowledge that there is someone who can help
- that the families are not alone with their worries and problems
- Tips and advice, pointing out the possibilities for support

Contact to the programme by ...



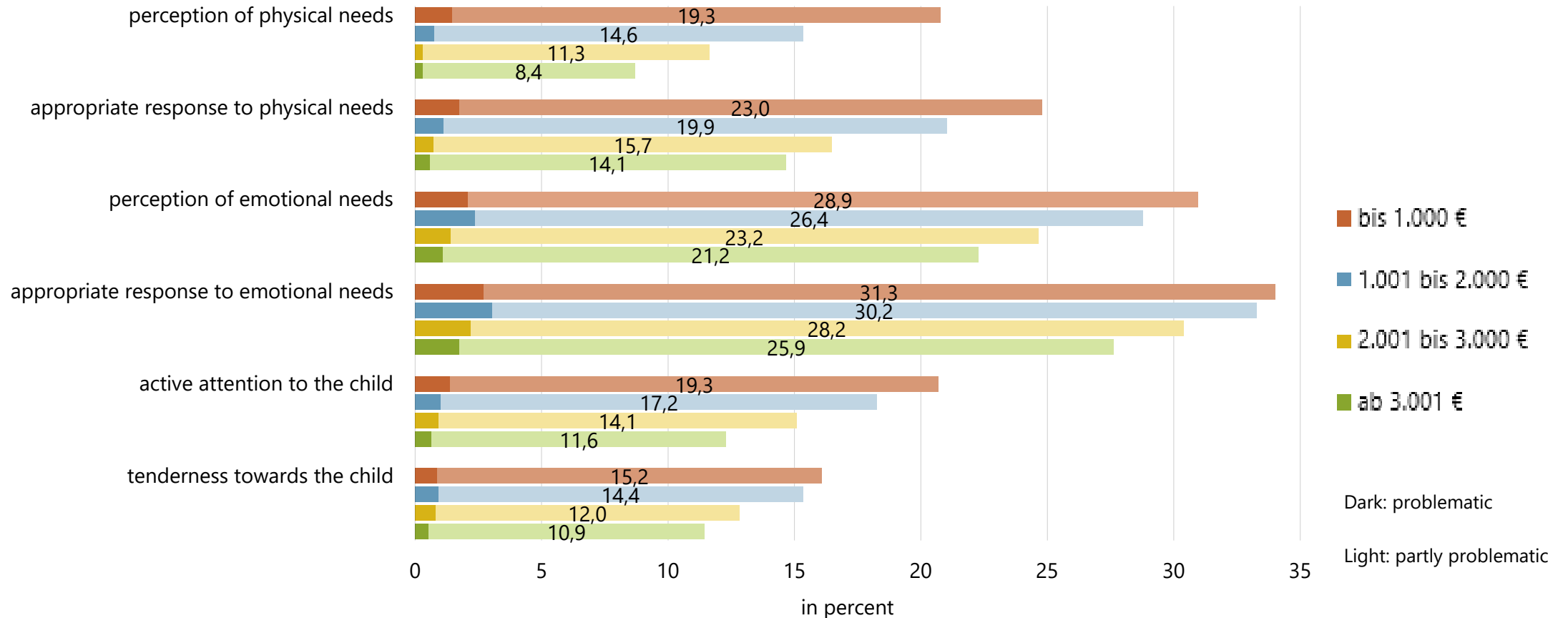
The **higher** the income, the more likely **families** get in contact with programme themselves.
The **higher** the income, the more likely **families** are referred to the programme by the health system.
The **lower** the income, the more important are **child and youth welfare** and **divers counselling services**.

Reasons for referral



The **lower** the income, the more likely families are referred **due to administrative support, medical and social burdens, as well as financial problems.**

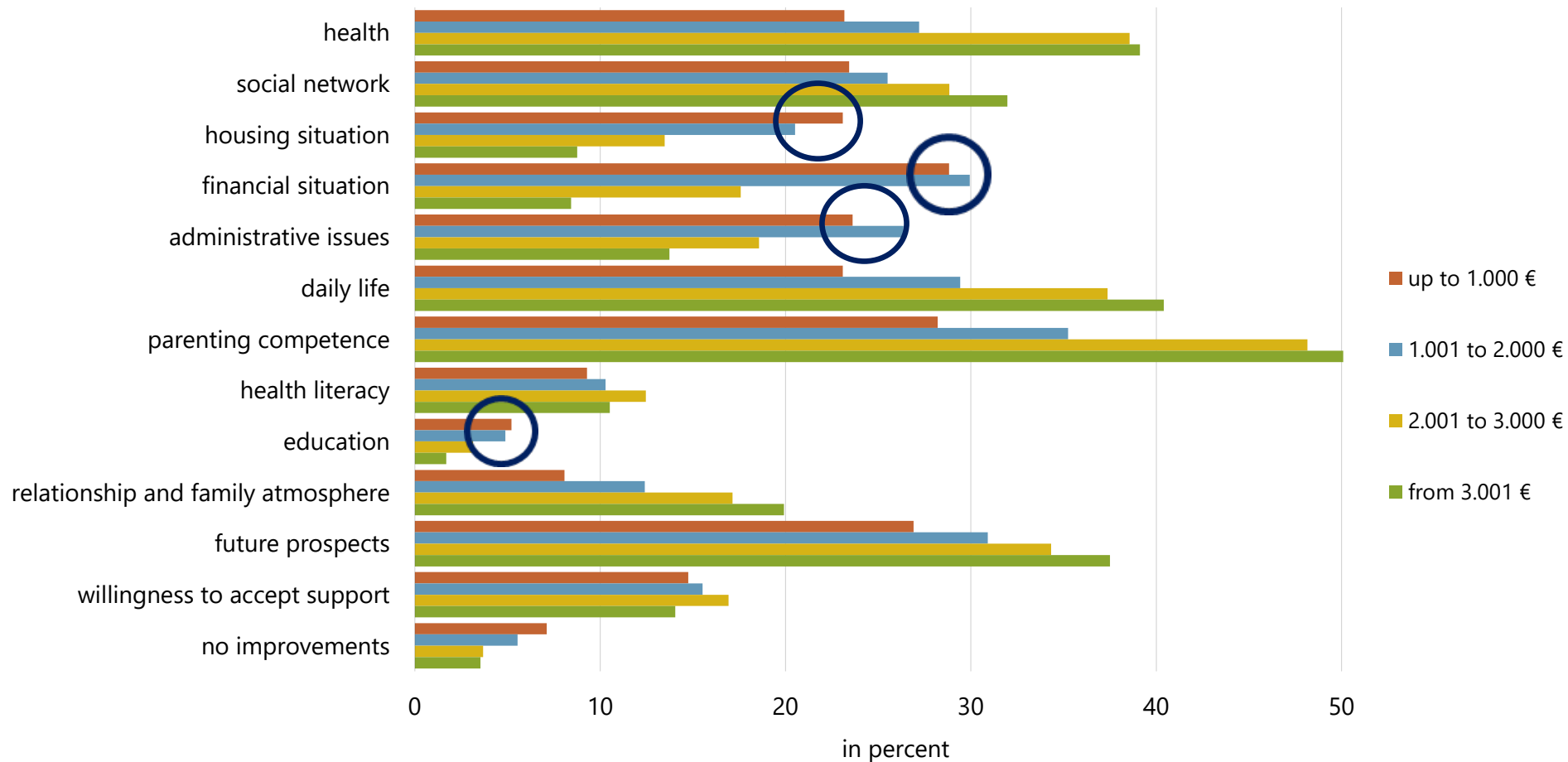
Acceptance and care of children



The **lower** the income, the more likely families have **problems** with accepting and caring for the child.

Improvements

The lower the income, the more likely improvements of the financial and housing situation, administrative issues and education can be achieved. But also no improvements are more likely.



Thank you for your attention!

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