



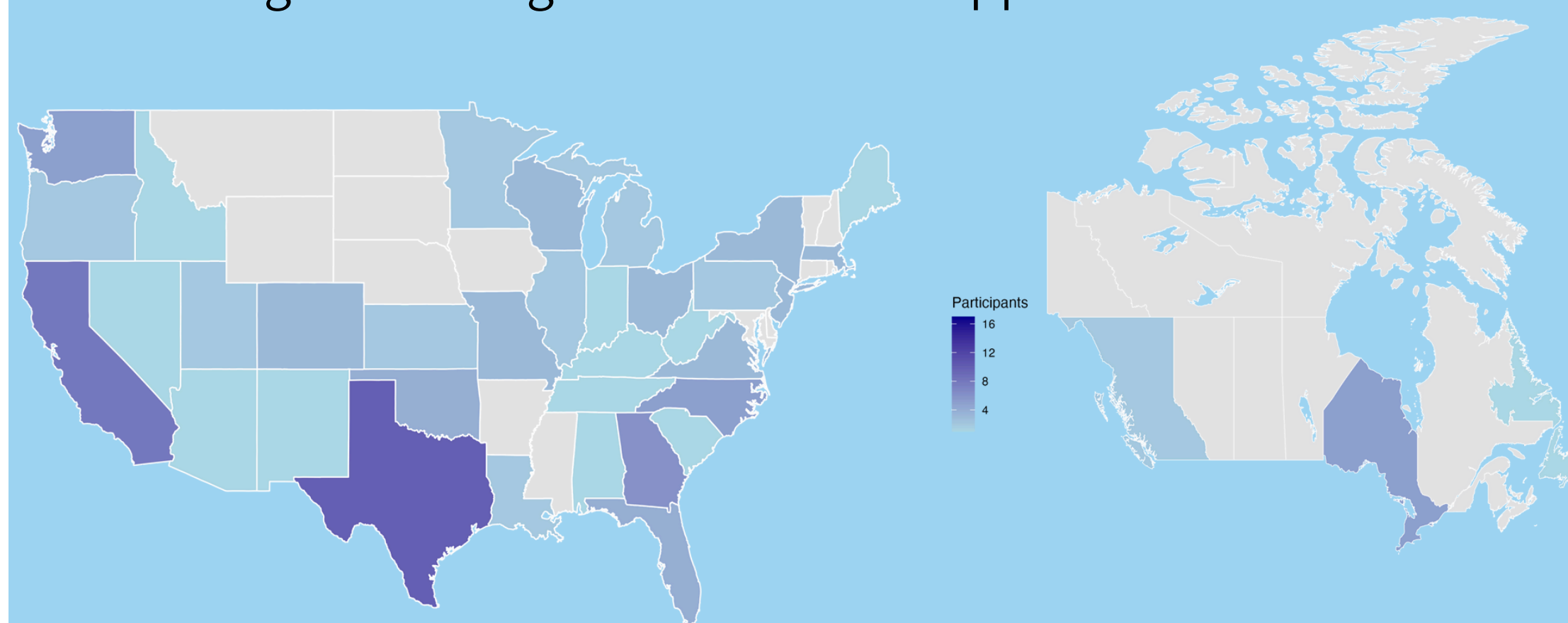
Mythbusting in EHDI: Parental Beliefs About Language Development in Deaf Children

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Methods

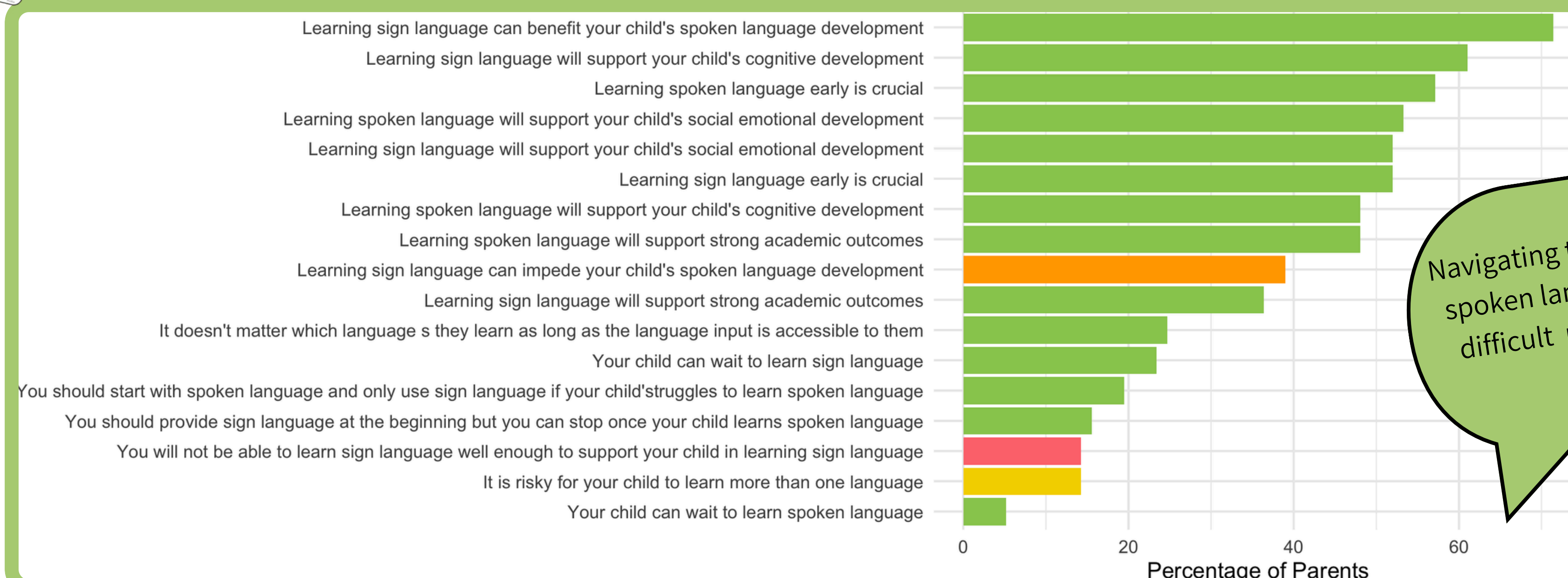
- **Participants:** 82 parents of deaf/hard-of-hearing kids, learning ASL through the ASL Bloom app



- Participants completed a series of surveys asking about their experiences, goals, and beliefs



What advice have you been given about your child?



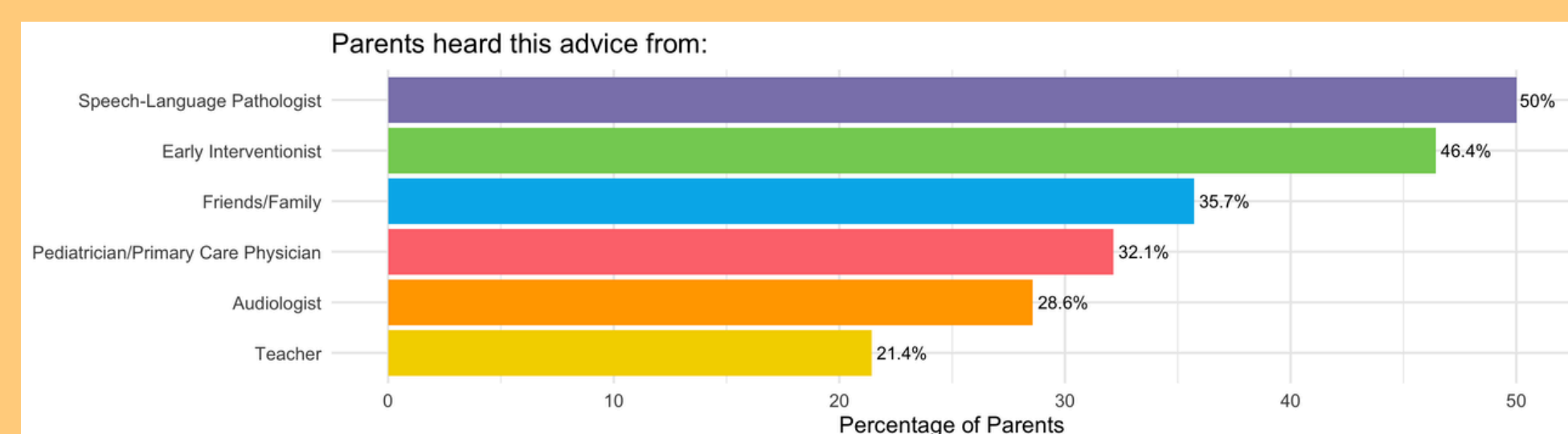
We get a lot of conflicting advice from lots of different people we know. It seems there is no one path for everyone

Navigating the feedback around the role of sign and spoken language was one of the most fraught and difficult parts of our early days after [our child's] diagnosis

Having a great Audiologist and Early Interventionist is KEY!

Myth 1: Learning sign language will impede your child's spoken language development

- 39% of families received this advice



What the research says:

- Children with higher sign language skills tend to have higher spoken language skills, not lower

This applies to:

Written language: Strong & Prinz, 1997;

Chamberlain & Mayberry, 2008

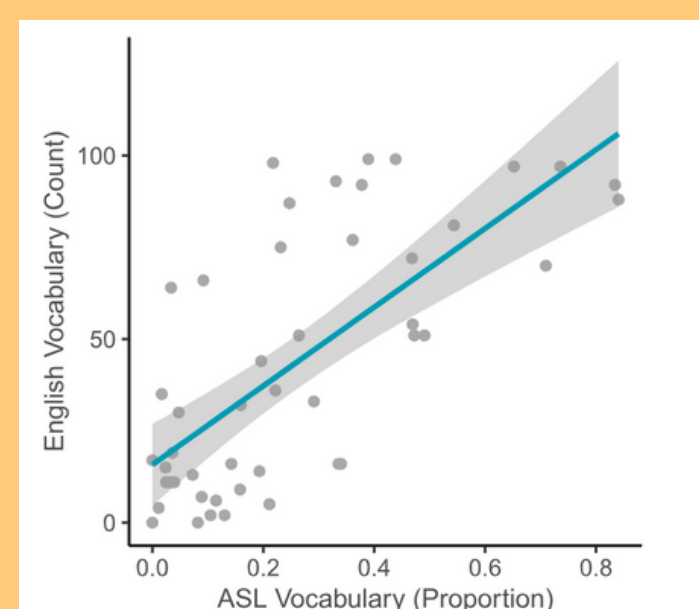
Spoken language: Pontecorvo et al. 2023

Deaf kids with hearing parents:

Pontecorvo et al. 2023

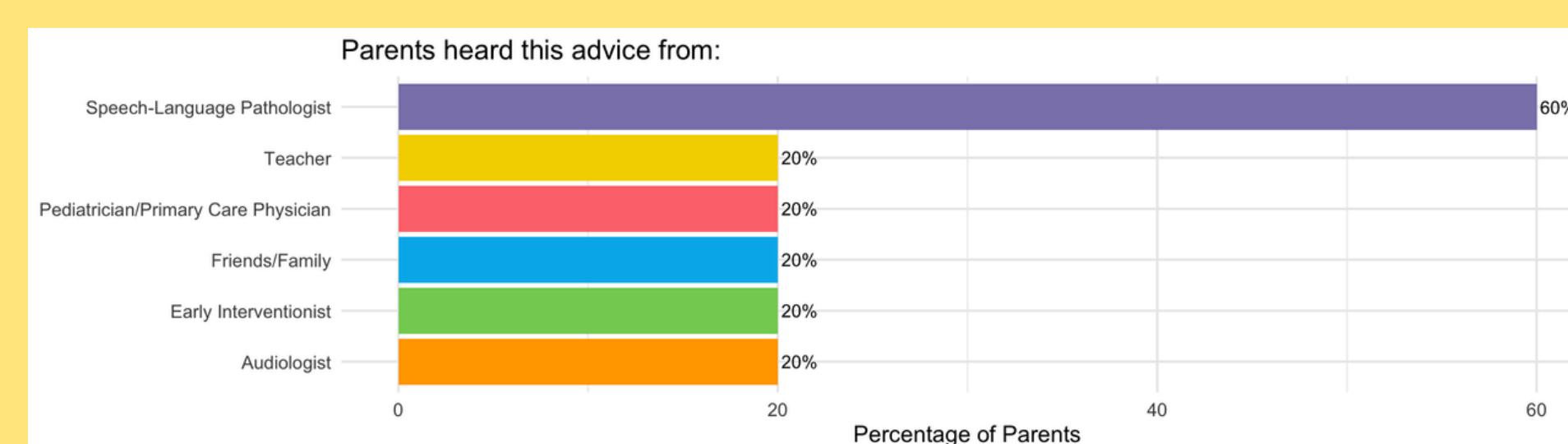
Deaf kids with deaf parents:

Davidson et al., 2014; Hassanzadeh, 2012



Myth 2: It is risky for your child to learn more than one language

- 11% of families received this advice

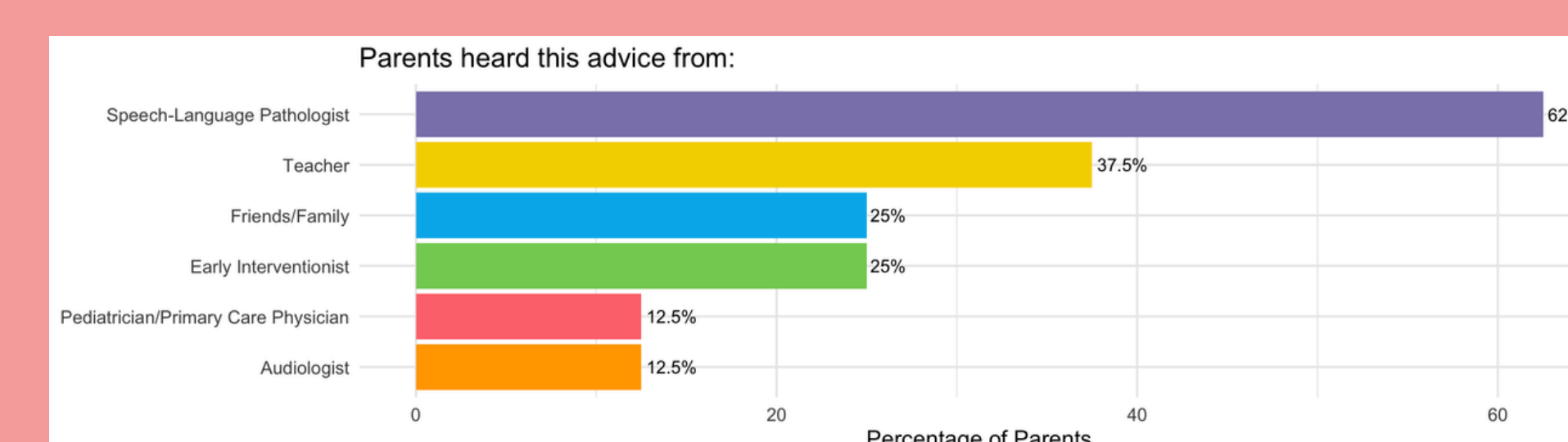


What the research says:

- Among hearing children, bilingualism is typically associated with a brief, initial vocabulary delay, followed by age-appropriate language skills
- We do not have evidence that bilingualism hurts deaf/hard-of-hearing children's communication outcomes
 - instead, English and ASL outcomes are correlated

Myth 3: You will not be able to learn sign language well enough to support your child's sign language

- 11% of families received this advice



What the research says:

- Language learning is harder, but adults can still acquire fluency
- Children's brains are good at learning languages, even from non-native input
- Children with early access to sign language (before 6 mo.), show age-appropriate sign vocab development (Caselli, Lieberman, Pyers, 2021)

Areas for growth:

- Parents find existing communication advice confusing
- Many families still receive misinformation from clinicians
- How can researchers best share new findings with busy clinicians?

The Good News:

- In addition to these few myths, clinicians are sharing evidence-based information with families
- Some of the debunked advice is relatively rare!