MoE-UNICEF Dissemination of Evidence and Dialogue on COVID-19 Response and Planning

July 2021
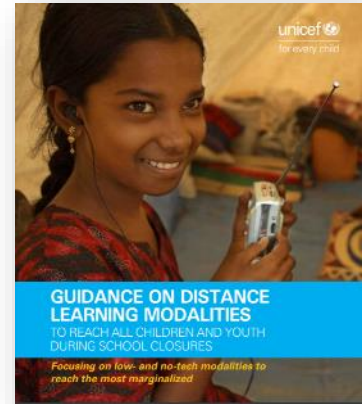
Sri Lanka
National Survey on Learning Continuity in Primary

Frank van Cappelle, Education Specialist, UNICEF South Asia

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for every child

Ensuring Continuity of Learning During School Closures

1. **Use a combination of learning modalities**

2. Establish a **one-stop portal** with key resources and guidance

3. Encourage **school leaders** to take an active role

4. **Ensure teachers' continued engagement with their students**

5. Engage **parents and caregivers**

6. Build the **capacity of teachers**, parents/caregivers and children

7. Develop and implement strategies to **reach the most vulnerable children**

8. Explore ways to provide **free Internet access** to education resources

9. **Monitor reach and effectiveness** of distance learning modalities and learning progress

10. **Continue distance learning modalities when schools reopen**

GUIDANCE ON DISTANCE LEARNING MODALITIES
TO REACH ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES
Focusing on low- and no-tech modalities to reach the most marginalized

Distance Learning modalities during School Closures

Remedial: when schools are open

When schools are closed

Continue with these

Low/no tech, offline

Main focus for reaching disadvantaged children and youth

High tech, online

Self-learning*

1. Printed materials, books
2. Radio *Interactive Radio*
3. TV *Interactive TV*

7. Digital (audio) books
8. Feature phone apps
9. Other apps/platforms

HOME LEARNING MODALITIES

Teacher-guided

4. Home visits
5. Calls *Interactive Voice Response (IVR)*
6. SMS *Interactive SMS (RapidPro)*

10. Digital classrooms
11. Video conferencing
12. Social Media

More focus & support on these learning modalities

+

*Ideally supported by parents/caregivers
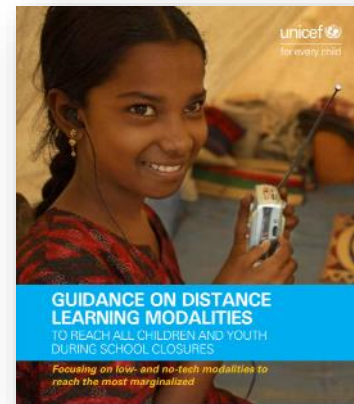
GUIDANCE ON DISTANCE LEARNING MODALITIES
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Reach and Effectiveness of Distance Learning

← Potential to reach children & youth with effective learning opportunities →

% with access to technology & materials for learning

% who use technology for learning

% well-supported by teachers

% learning effectively

% reached: Rural/Urban:
- Mobile: 91% / 95%
- TV: 87% /91%
- Radio: 70% / 68%
- Online: 51%

- 26% regular contact with teachers (3+ days/week, public schools)

- 28% perceiving to be learning as much (or more) during school closures (public schools)

Reach and Effectiveness of Distance Learning

← Potential to reach children & youth with effective learning opportunities →

% with access to technology & materials for learning

% who use technology for learning

% well-supported by teachers

% learning effectively

Teacher bottlenecks
- Cost (phone credit, Internet)
- Awareness (options, student devices)
- Teaching challenges
- Lack of guidance, training & ongoing support
- Lack of devices
- Other responsibilities
- Lack of monitoring (school, government)

Context

- 2/3 of the academic year lost in 2020 alone– **Primary grades** most affected

- **Various home-based learning modalities** used [offline/low-tech/high-tech]

- Limited home-based learning opportunities for **rural and socio-economically disadvantaged children**

- **Learning loss + widening learning disparities**

Situation analysis of continuity of learning in primary grades during the school closure from March to August 2020

Methodology

- Data collection: Nov 2020 - Feb 2021
- Mixed methods
  - Face-to-face survey (quant.)
  - Target: Parents of primary school students (grades 1-4)
  - 15 FGDs with 90 teachers (qual.)
- Average no. of primary school age children in family enrolled
  - Public school sample – 92% had 1 child
  - Private school sample – 94.6% had 1 child
- Nationally representative samples
  - Public schools – all 9 provinces
  - Private schools – 5/9 provinces

2,057
Public

52%
MALE

48%
FEMALE

758
Private
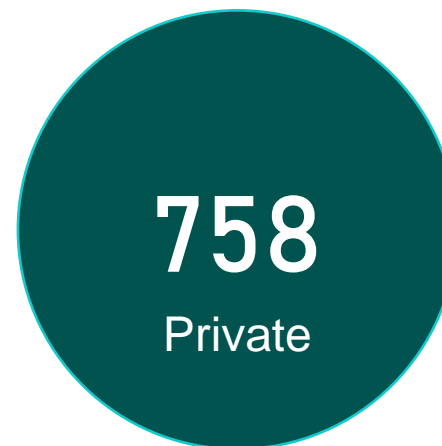
59%
MALE

41%
FEMALE

Household Internet connectivity

	Reliable internet	Unreliable/ slow internet	No internet
Sampled children in public schools	41%	16%	42%
Sampled children in private schools	87%	12%	1%

Access & Usage: Public school students

- Prevalence of complimentary remote learning modalities

- High access, medium use: Printed packs & textbooks

- High access, low use: Radio, basic phone, TV

Public schools

Usage rates vs Access rates

- Printed packs
- Textbooks
- Smart phone
- Learning materials
- Computer
- Radio
- Basic phone
- TV
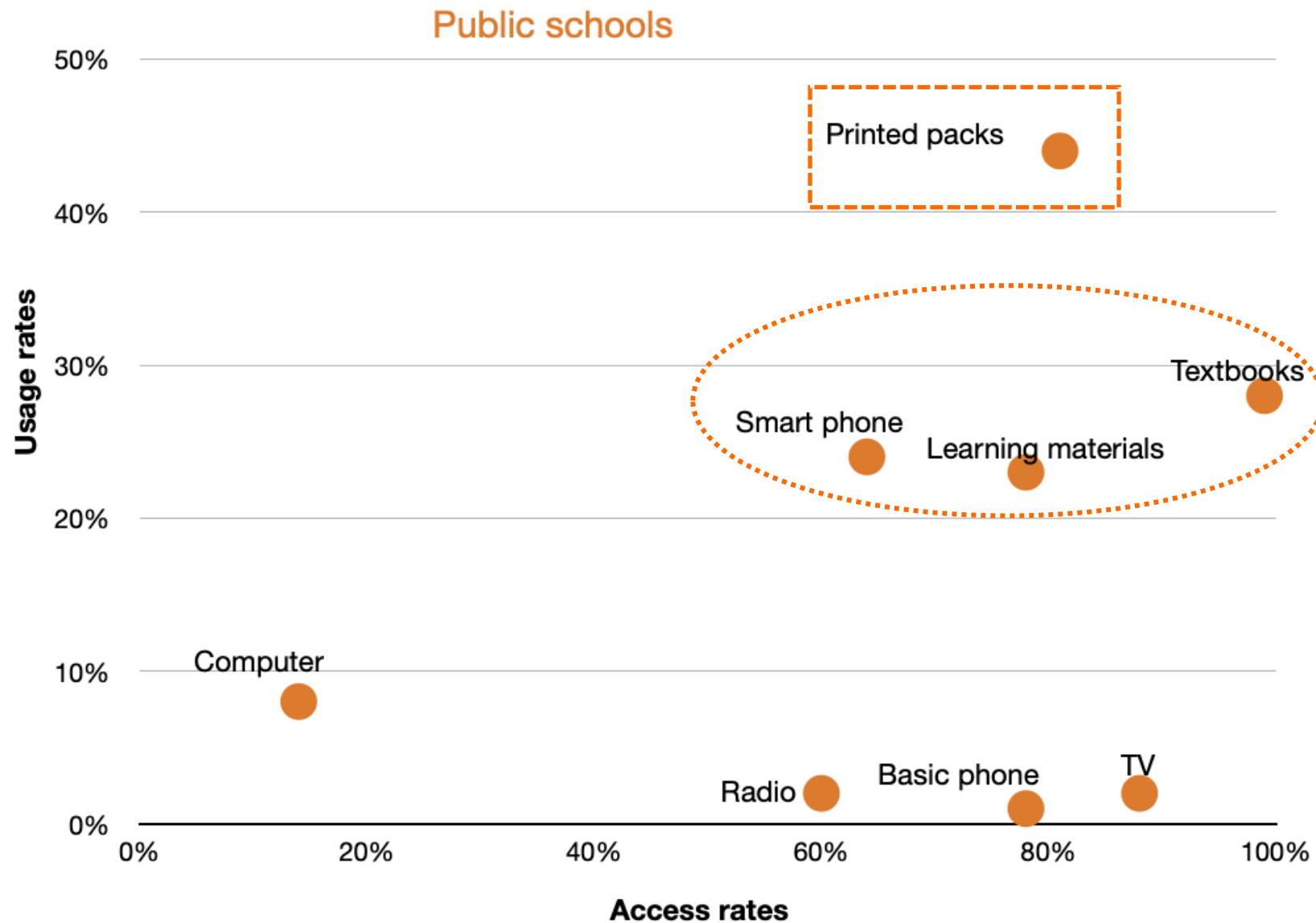
Access & Usage: Private school students

- Less of a prevalence of complimentary remote learning modalities

- High access, medium use: Smartphones

- High access, low use: Radio, basic phone, TV

Private schools

Usage rates / Access rates scatter plot showing: Smart phone (~97% access, ~41% usage, highlighted with dashed box), Computer (~66% access, ~19% usage), Printed packs (~91% access, ~17% usage), Textbooks (~98% access, ~13% usage), Learning materials (~76% access, ~6% usage), Basic phone (~72% access, ~4% usage), Radio (~71% access, ~0% usage), TV (~95% access, ~1% usage)
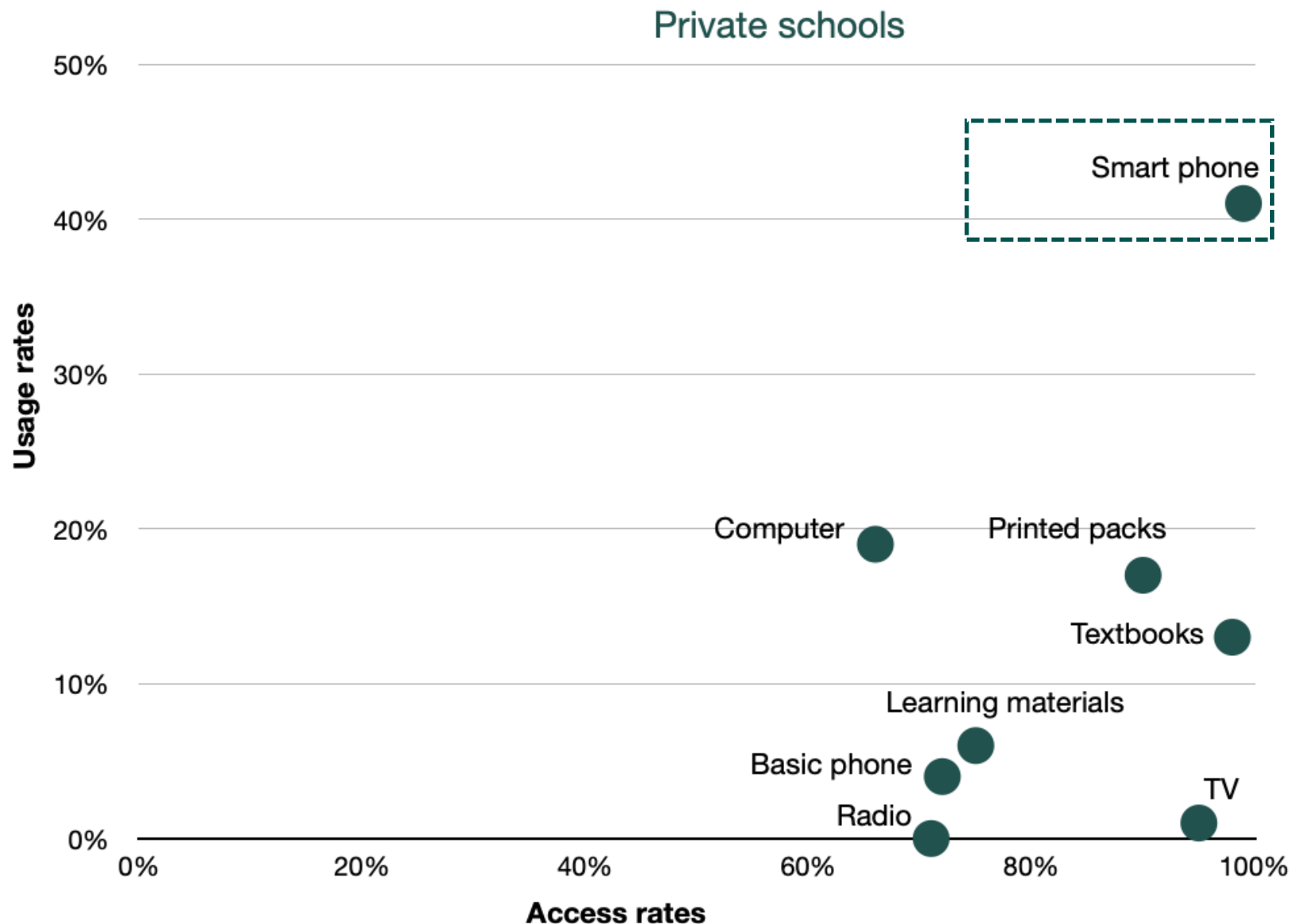
All smartphones are not equal
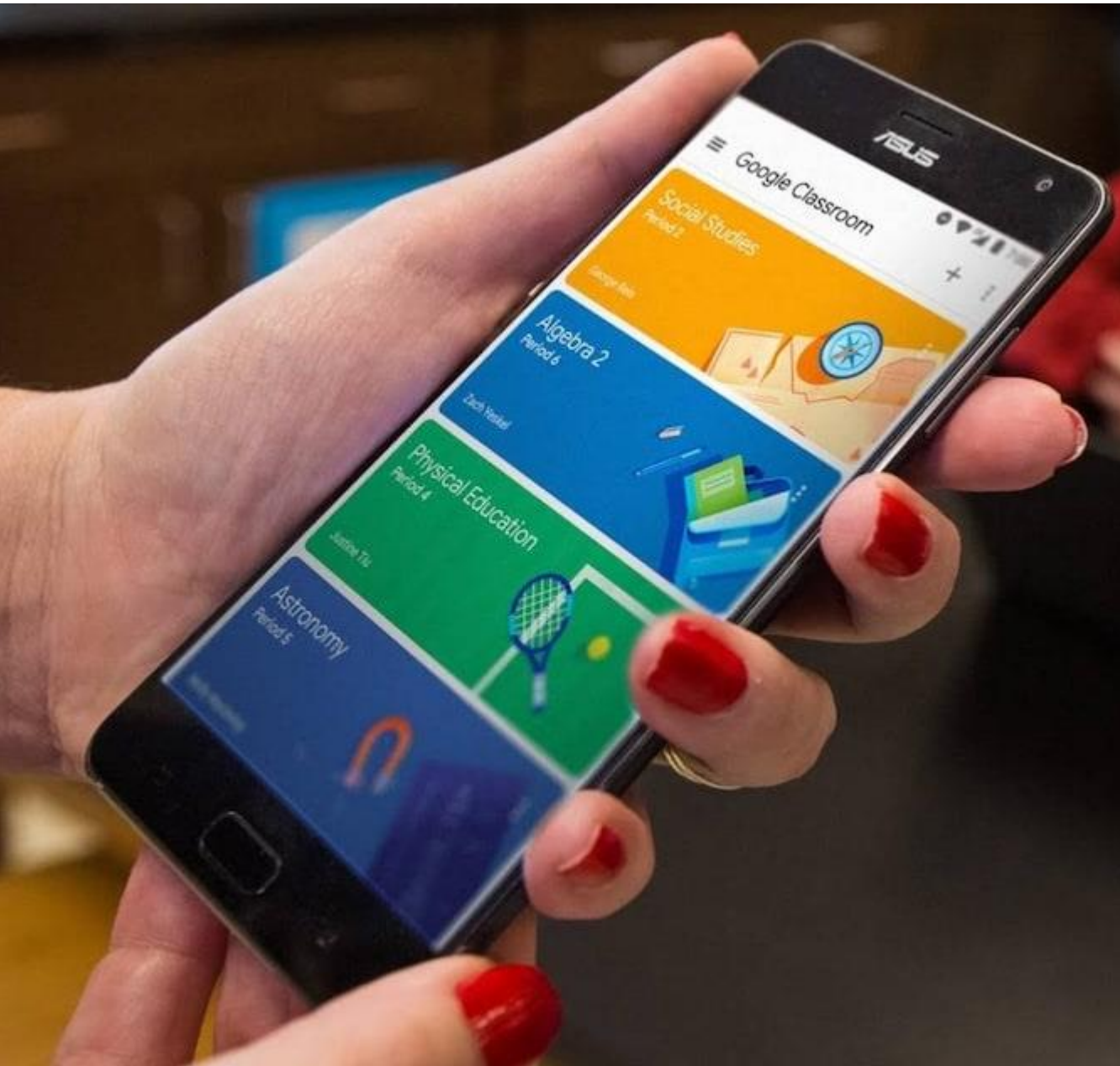
LKR 5400

27 USD
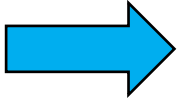
Teacher contact: methods

Most common method used by teachers to initiate contact

High-tech

- Online virtual classroom — Public school: 4%, Private school: 44%
- Message on app (Skype, Viber, WhatsApp) — Public school: 24%, Private school: 32.5%
- Video or audio calls — Public school: 11%, Private school: 18.5%

No/Low-tech

- Phone calls — Public school: 31%, Private school: 2.8%
- SMS — Public school: 1%, Private school: 0.4%
- Message - community member — Public school: 23%, Private school: 0.3%
- Physical home visit — Public school: 6%, Private school: 0.1%

Legend: Public school ■ Private school ■

Teacher contact: frequency

- Most students (39%) in public schools were contacted only 1 day/week

- Most students (52%) in private school were contacted all 5 days/week

Frequency of teacher contact during school closures

Days	Public school students	Private school students
0 days	19%	1%
1 day	39%	8%
2 days	16%	9%
3 days	11%	18%
4 days	7%	11%
5 days	8%	52%
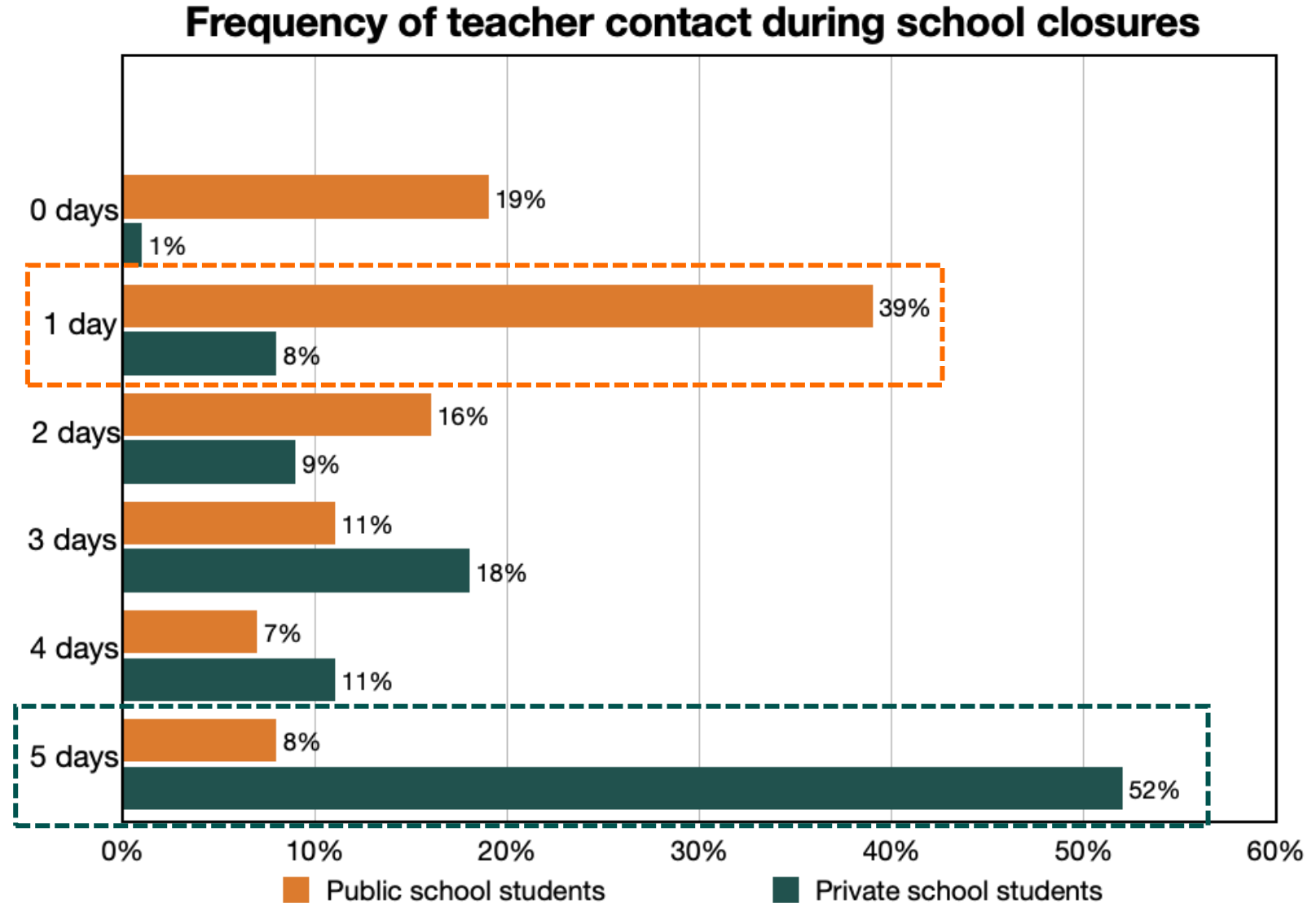
Hours assisted by family for learning

Families' reports of time spent supporting young children with learning

	Public school students	Private school students
No support	4%	3.8%
Less than 1 hr.	22%	15.6%
1-2 hrs.	55%	52.6%
3-4 hrs.	18%	23.9%
4+ hrs.	2%	4.2%
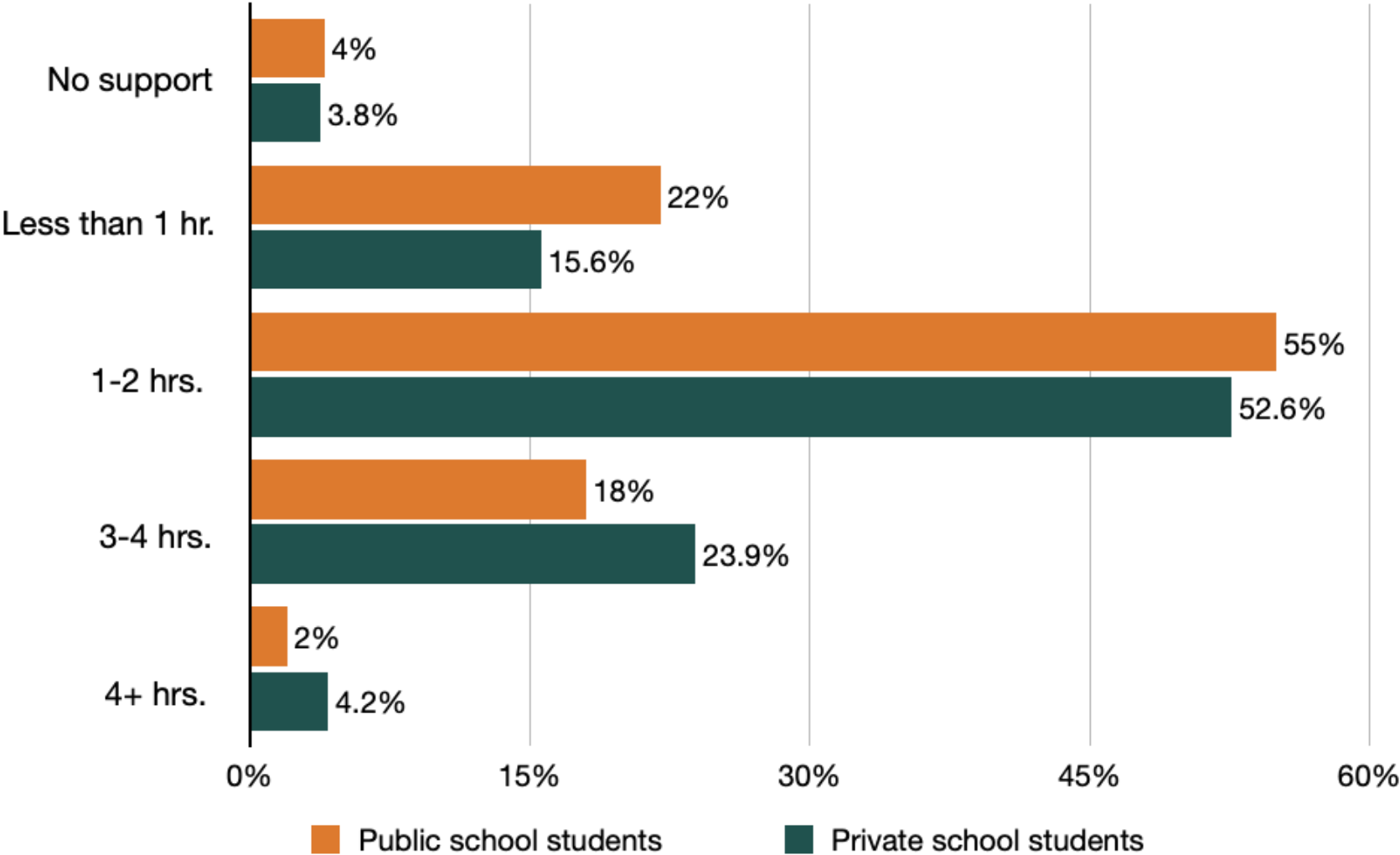
Education support by parents' education levels: public schools

| Education level of parent	No support	Less than an hour	One to two hours	Three to four hours	More than four hours
No formal education	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%
Grade 5 and below	33%	33%	11%	15%	9%
Grade 6-9	27%	24%	10%	16%	23%
Up to GCE (O/L)	22%	25%	11%	16%	25%
Up to GCE (A/L)	17%	26%	8%	16%	34%
Diploma or equivalent	8%	0%	4%	38%	50%

HIGHER EDUCATION

HIGHER SUPPORT

Primary method of learning – public school sample

55%

Learning (Radio/ TV/ Printed materials/ Textbooks) provided by parents
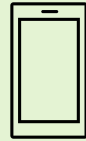
18%

Learning through teacher via Mobile app such as WhatsApp

8%

Other

6%

Learning through teacher via SMS/Calling

Factors contributing to 'extremely effective' learning (public schools)

(Responses as a % of the 481 students who said their learning method was extremely effective)

Factor	%
Children received regular and effective support from their parents or other family members	70%
Children received regular and effective support from their teachers	60%
High quality printed materials provided by the school	36%
A quiet place to study	22%
High quality learning materials online	20%
High quality learning program developed by the school	18%
High quality teaching programs broadcasted on radio	14%
High quality teaching programs broadcasted on TV	8%
Had sufficient infrastructure such as laptops/computers	3%

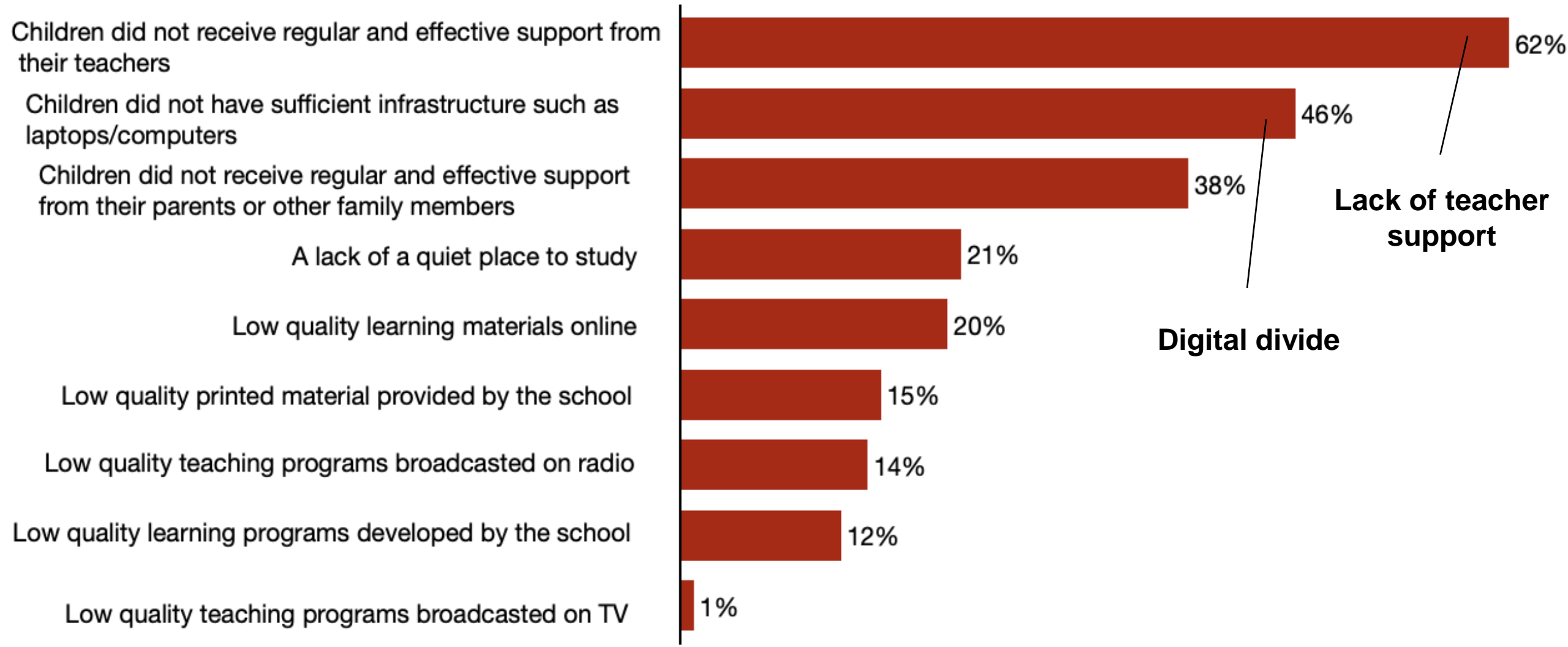**Teacher & Parent support**

Printed kits

Factors contributing to 'extremely ineffective' learning (public schools)

(Responses as a % of the 367 students who said their learning method was extremely ineffective)

Factor	%
Children did not receive regular and effective support from their teachers	62%
Children did not have sufficient infrastructure such as laptops/computers	46%
Children did not receive regular and effective support from their parents or other family members	38%
A lack of a quiet place to study	21%
Low quality learning materials online	20%
Low quality printed material provided by the school	15%
Low quality teaching programs broadcasted on radio	14%
Low quality learning programs developed by the school	12%
Low quality teaching programs broadcasted on TV	1%

Lack of teacher support

Digital divide

Subjects children spent most of their time on (public schools)

(Responses as a % of the in-depth sample, n=580 public schools)

First language & Math

80%
74%
42%
23%
22%
9%

First language | Math | Art & homework | English | Religion | Science
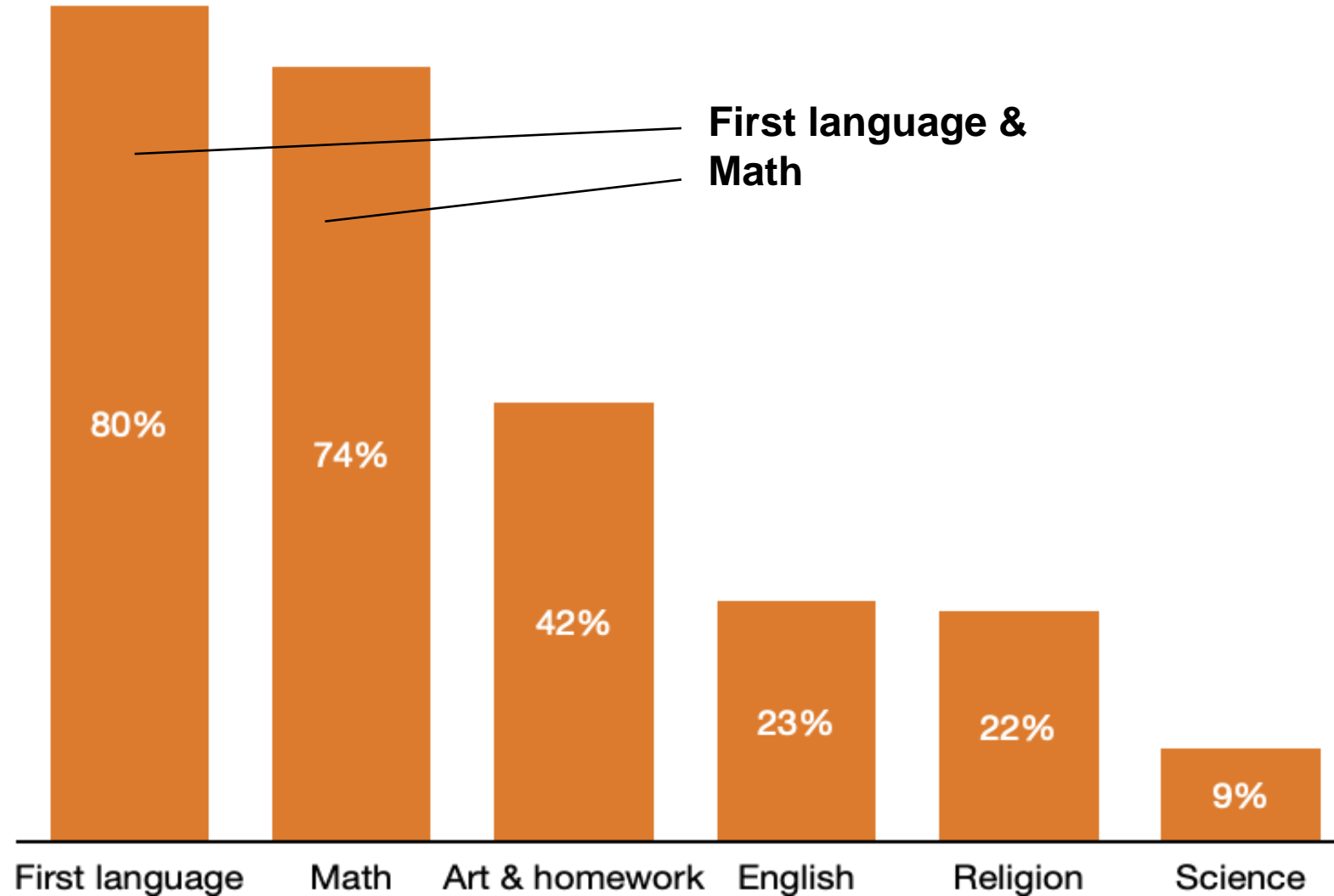
Children's ability to use smartphones (public & pvt.)

(Responses as a % of the in-depth sample who have a smartphone

> 40% of children attending public schools, with access to smartphones, have difficulty with basic tasks required for learning

Basic phone operations (opening apps, getting online)
- Private schools: 61%, 19%, 20%
- Public schools: 39%, 20%, 42%

Taking screenshots and pictures
- Private schools: 63%, 15%, 22%
- Public schools: 40%, 22%, 38%

Send, receive, and read messages for communication purposes (SMS/Whatsapp)
- Private schools: 50%, 18%, 32%
- Public schools: 25%, 19%, 56%

Use the internet to find resources
- Private schools: 38%, 21%, 41%
- Public schools: 12%, 17%, 70%

Legend:
- ■ My child can do this easily
- ■ My child can do this with some difficulty
- ■ My child does not know how to do this
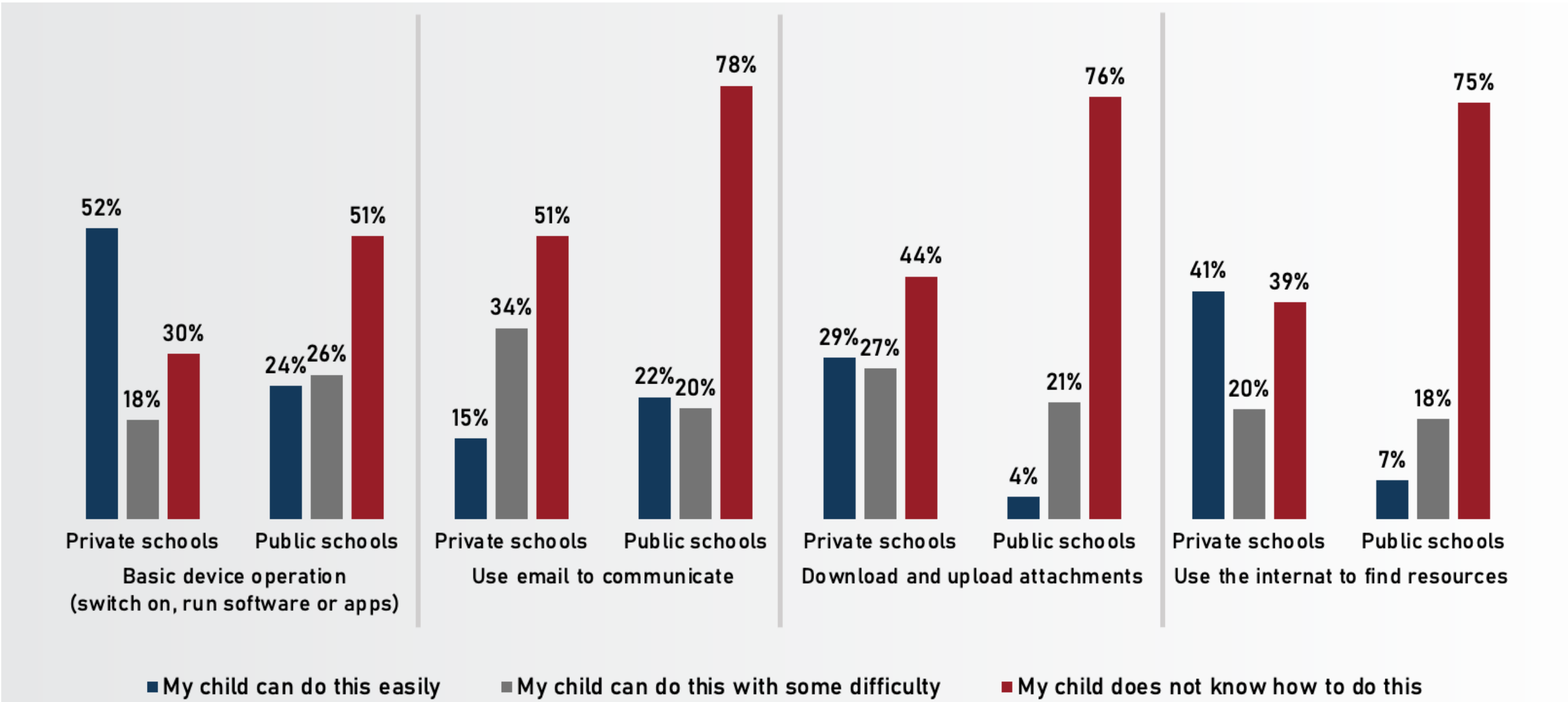
Children's ability to use laptops (public & pvt.)

(Responses as a % of the in-depth sample who have a smartphone

Basic device operation (switch on, run software or apps)
- Private schools: 52%, 18%, 30%
- Public schools: 24%, 26%, 51%

Use email to communicate
- Private schools: 15%, 34%, 51%
- Public schools: 22%, 20%, 78%

Download and upload attachments
- Private schools: 29%, 27%, 44%
- Public schools: 4%, 21%, 76%

Use the internet to find resources
- Private schools: 41%, 20%, 39%
- Public schools: 7%, 18%, 75%

Legend:
- ■ My child can do this easily
- ■ My child can do this with some difficulty
- ■ My child does not know how to do this

Recommendations

01. More flexible, coherent strategy on continuous learning, including monitoring system

02. Decentralized (& adapted school/class level) approaches to blended learning per variations in access and use of technologies, and the learning abilities of primary children

03. Focusing on **addressing inequities** (disadvantaged groups, without connectivity, etc.)

04. Strengthen motivation and capacity of **school leaders and teachers**
- Beyond ICT skills: online pedagogy and assessment; devices and connectivity

05. Reinforce engagement of **parents** and their capacity building

Thank you

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