



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Utah Adoptive Parents' Perspectives on Openness in Adoptions

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Openness in Adoptions

- Umbrella term
 - One component is communication between a child's birth and adoptive family
- Since the 1970s, there has been a dramatic shift in the rates of openness in domestic infant adoptions
 - A nationally representative survey from 2009 reported that 95% of adoptions were open to some degree
- Open adoptions are expected to be associated with positive outcomes for all members of the adoption triad

Research Questions

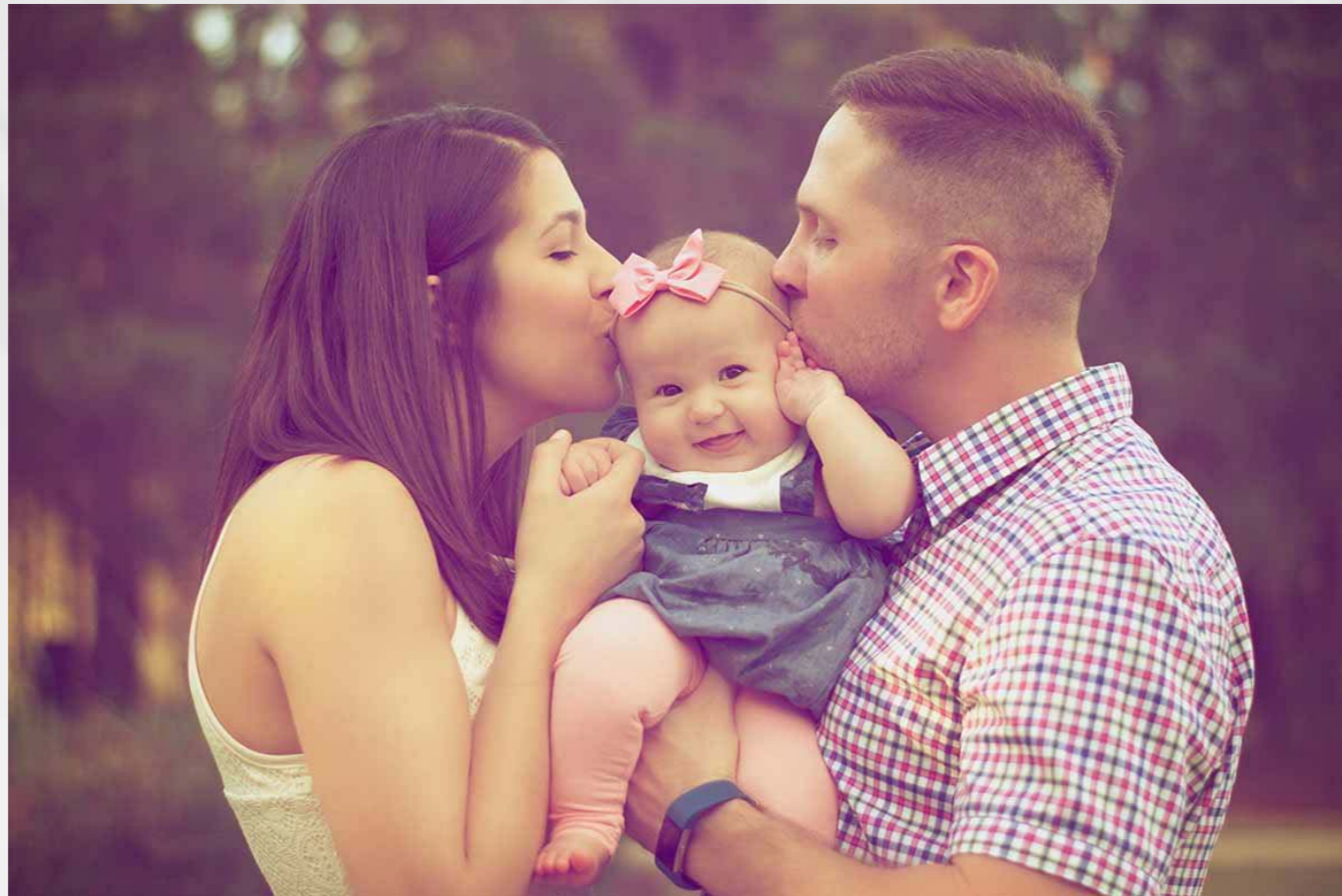
1. How prevalent is openness among recent adoptions in Utah?
2. How satisfied are adoptive parents with openness arrangements?
3. Is openness related to adoptive parents' satisfaction with adoption?
4. How can adoption professionals promote openness in adoptions?

Our Approach

- Adoptive parents were invited to complete an online survey (www.UtahAdoptionSurvey.com)
- Eligibility criteria
 1. Live in Utah or completed the adoption in Utah
 2. Adoption occurred in 2018 or later
 3. Child was less than 12 months old at the time of placement
 4. Involved an agency or lawyer (not foster care)

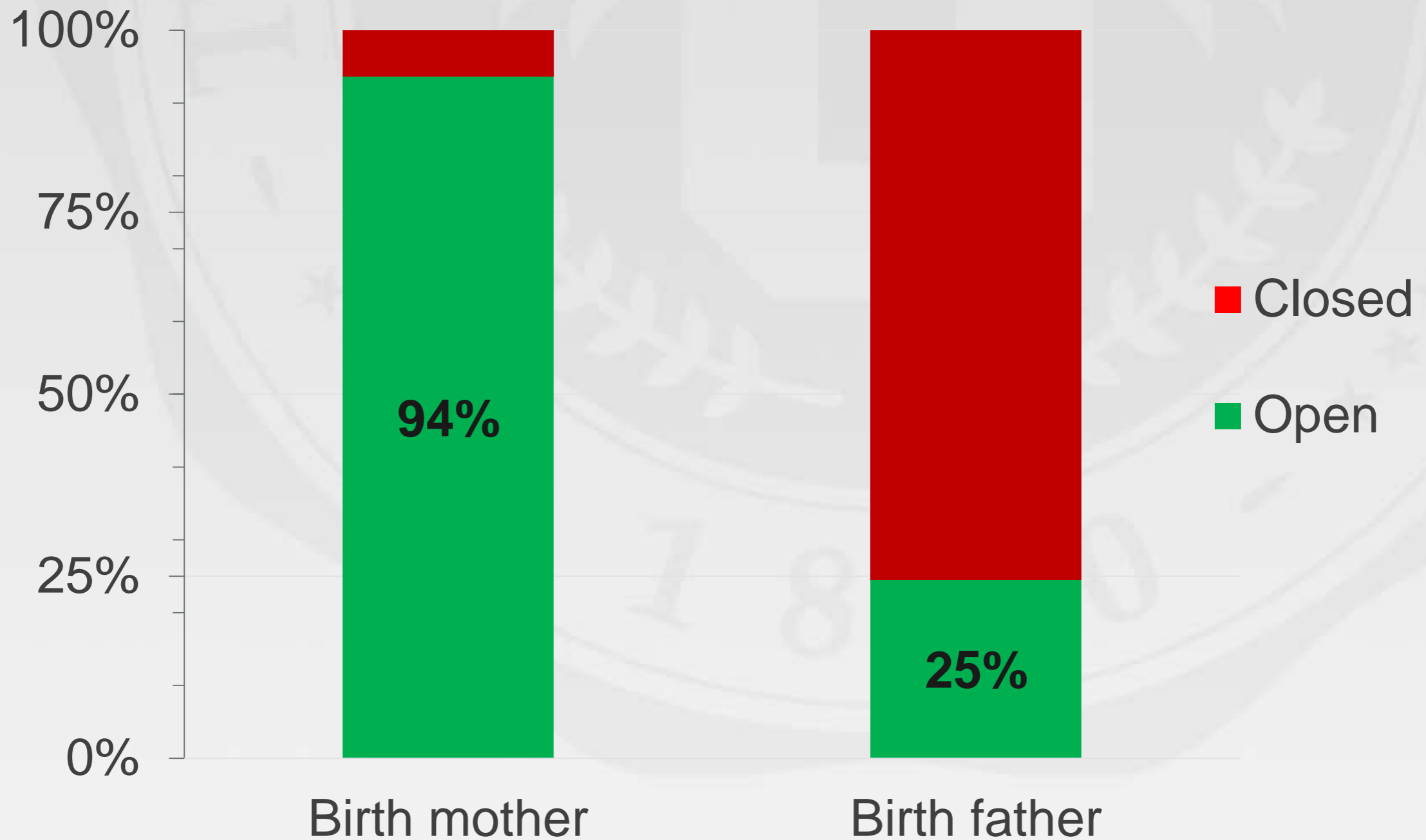
Adoptive Family Characteristics

- 110 families
- Characteristics reflected nationwide trends regarding adoptive parents and demographic characteristics of Utah families

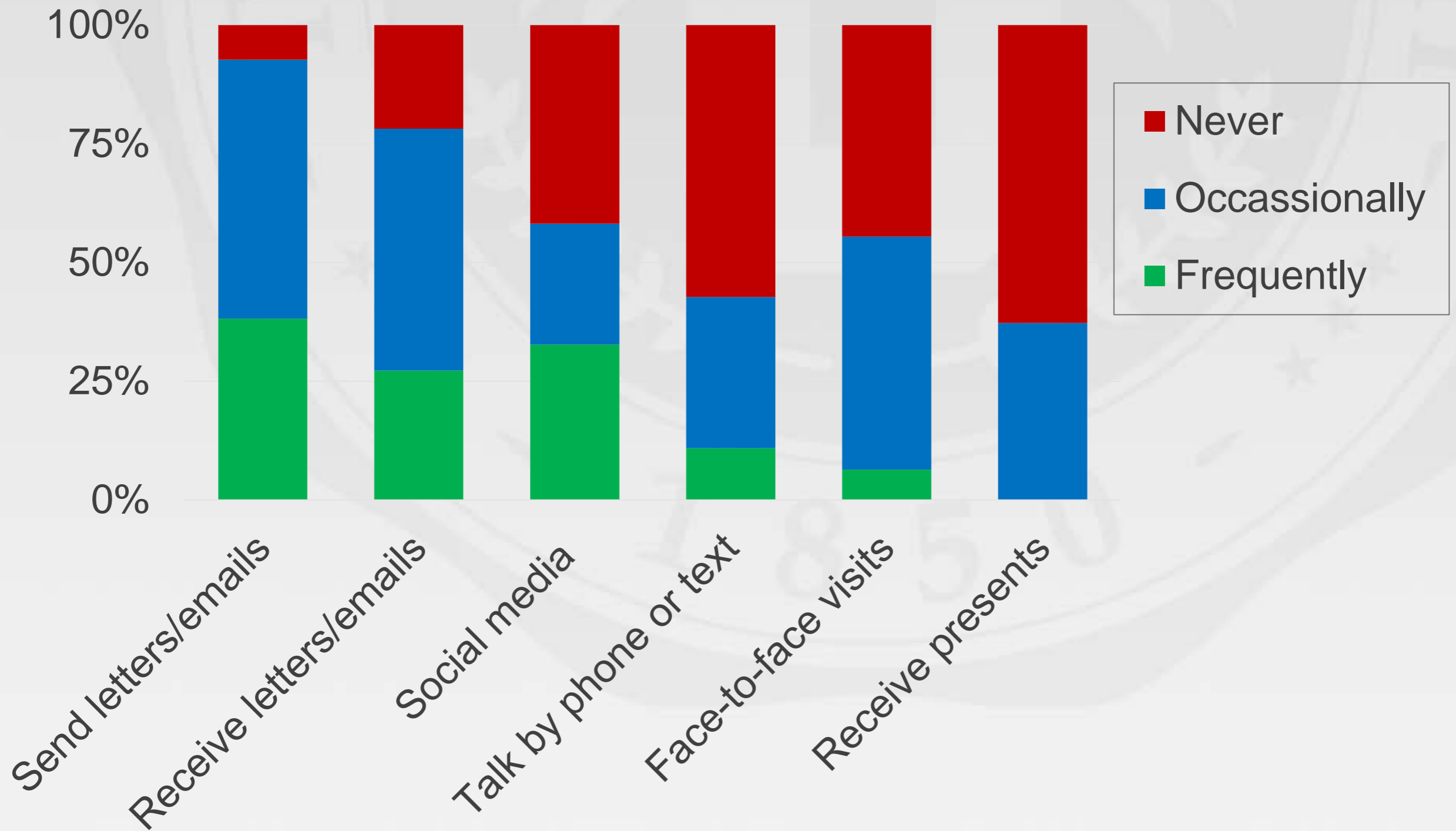


How frequent is openness among recent Utah adoptions?

Nearly 95% of Utah adoptions are open

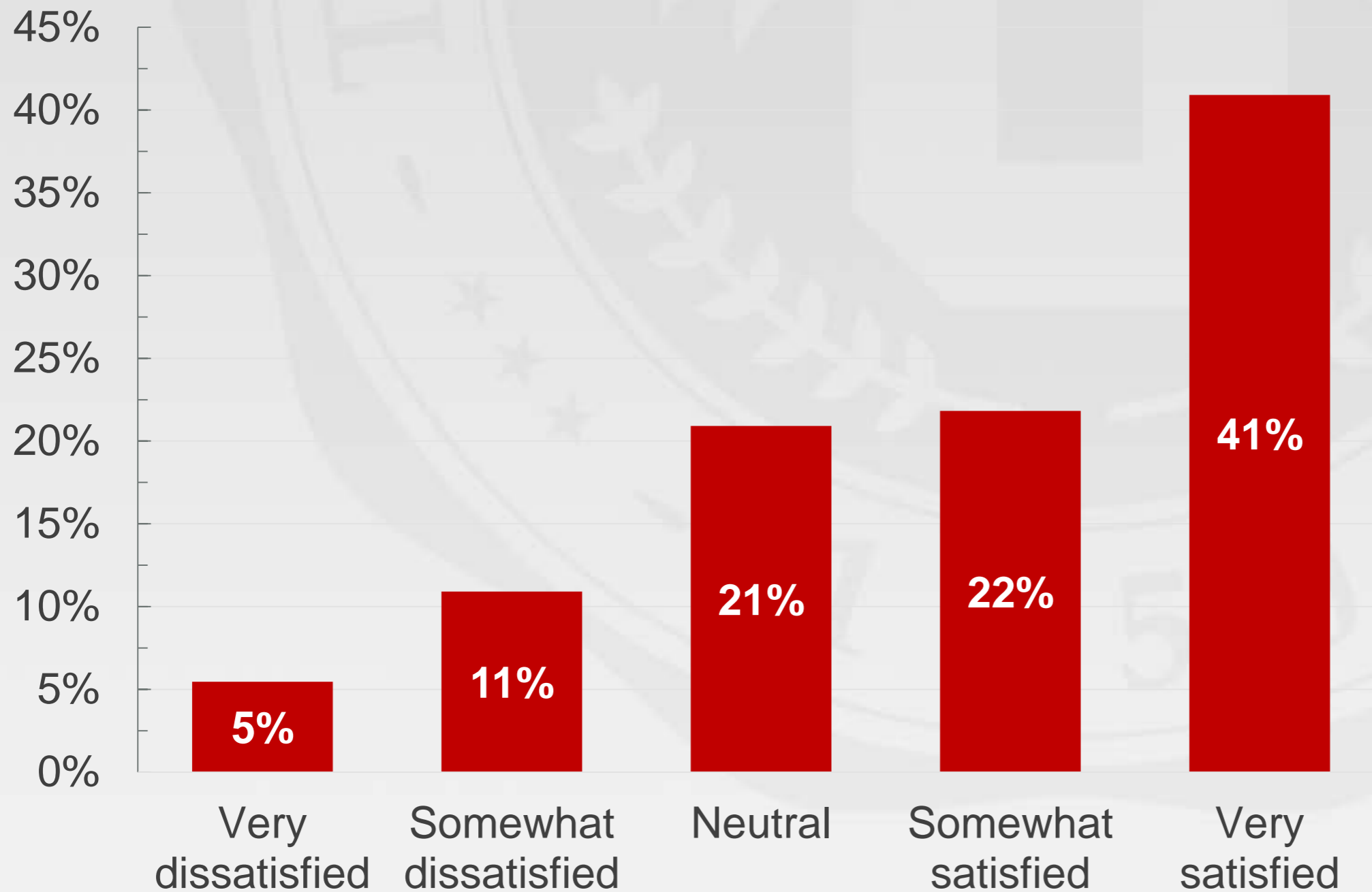


There is substantial variability in the amount and type of contact with birth mothers

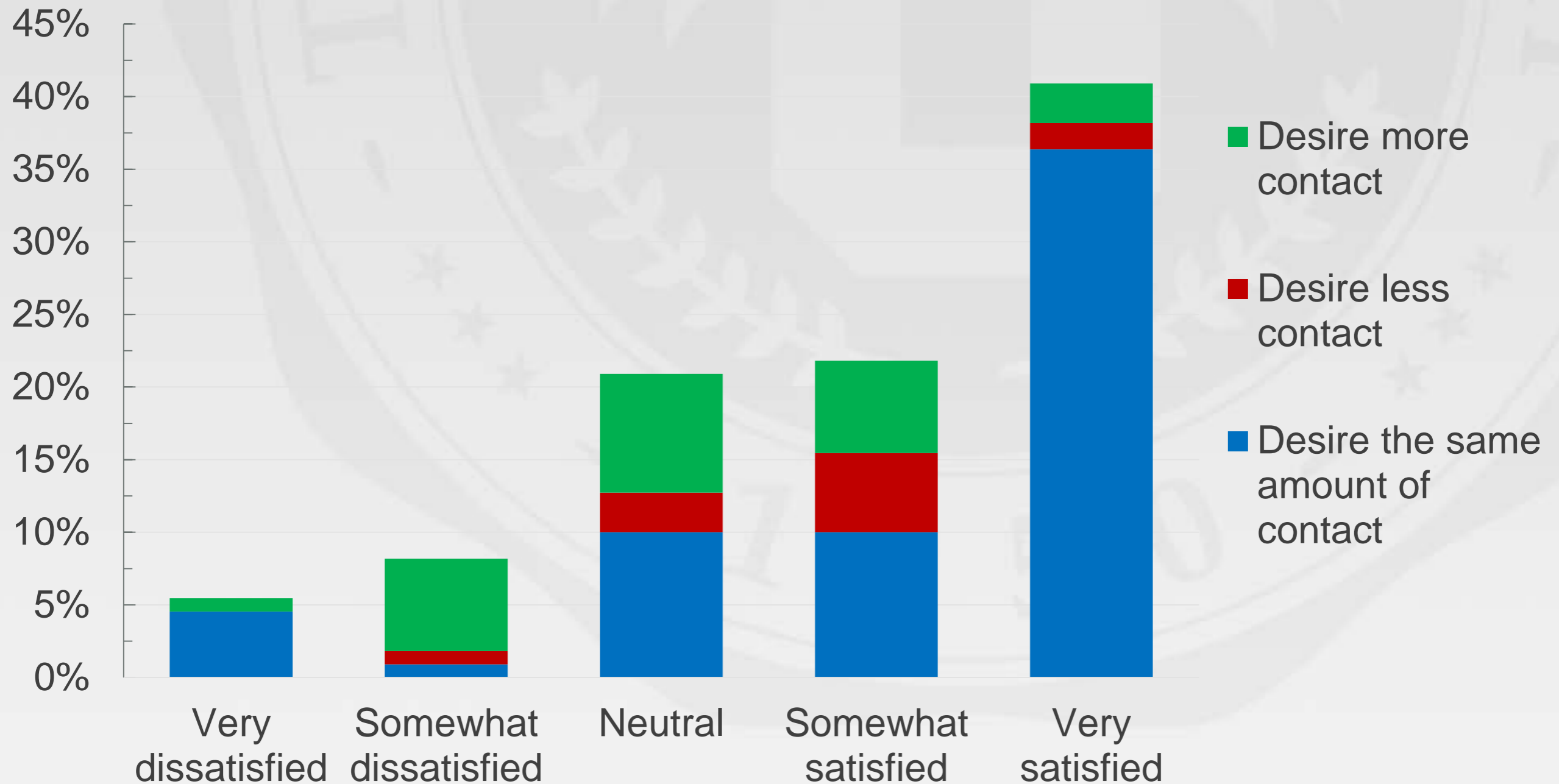


How satisfied are adoptive parents
with openness arrangements?

Most adoptive parents are satisfied with the amount of openness with birth mothers

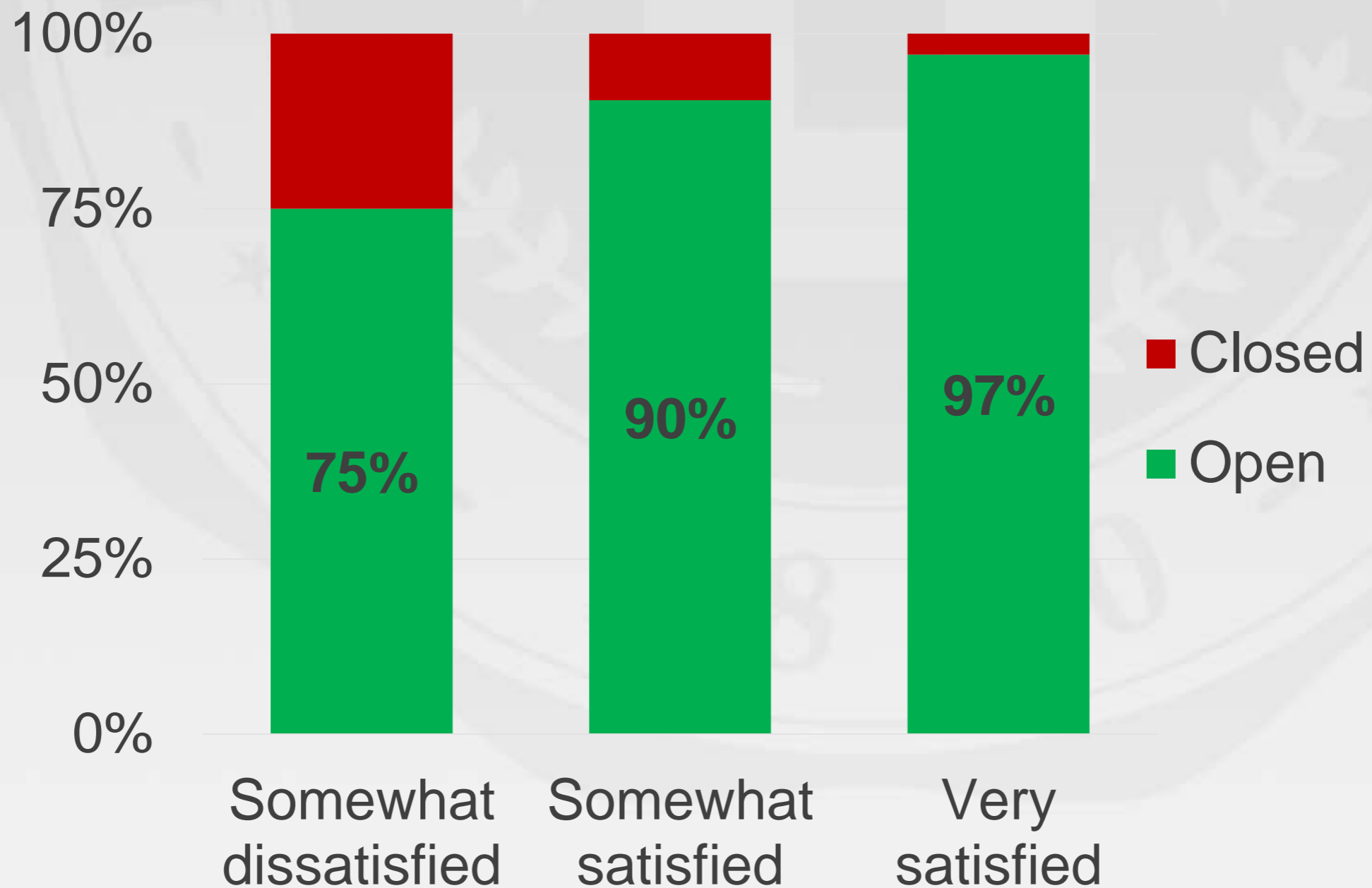


Adoptive parents who are dissatisfied often desire more contact with birth mothers



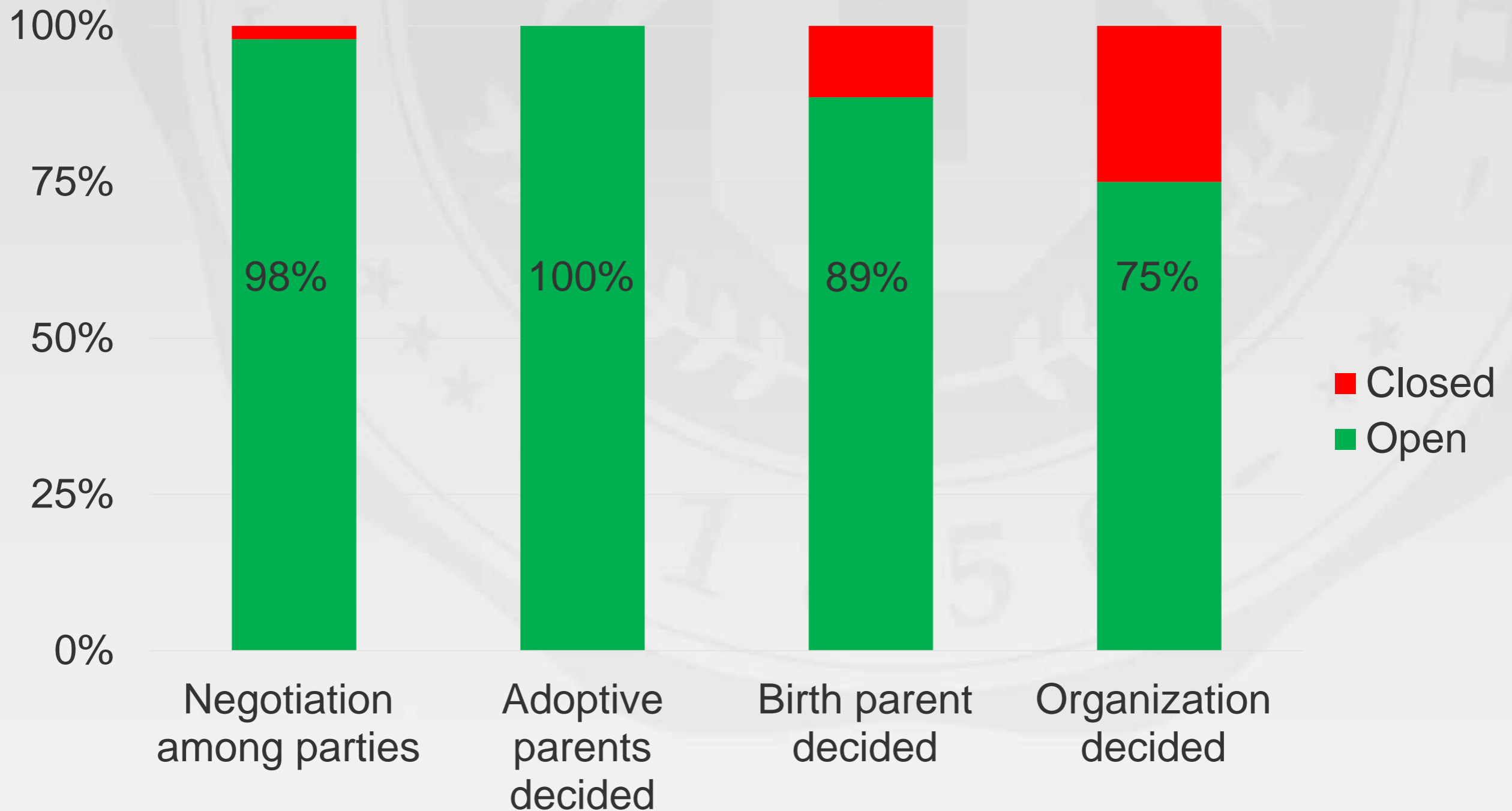
Is openness related to adoptive
parents' satisfaction with adoption?

Parents with open adoptions are more likely to report being satisfied with adoption



How can adoption professionals promote openness in adoptions?

Collaborative decision-making is likely to lead to openness with birth mothers



Summary and Conclusions

1. Open adoptions currently are the norm in Utah.
2. Most adoptive parents are satisfied with openness arrangements or desire more contact.
3. Adoptive parents with open adoptions are more likely to report being satisfied with their adoption experience.
4. Encouraging collaborative decision-making about openness arrangements is associated with openness soon after placement.

Future Directions

1. How do openness arrangements and/or satisfaction with openness change over time?
2. How does openness influence adopted children?

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