

Social Change, Family Characteristics, and Youth Transitions

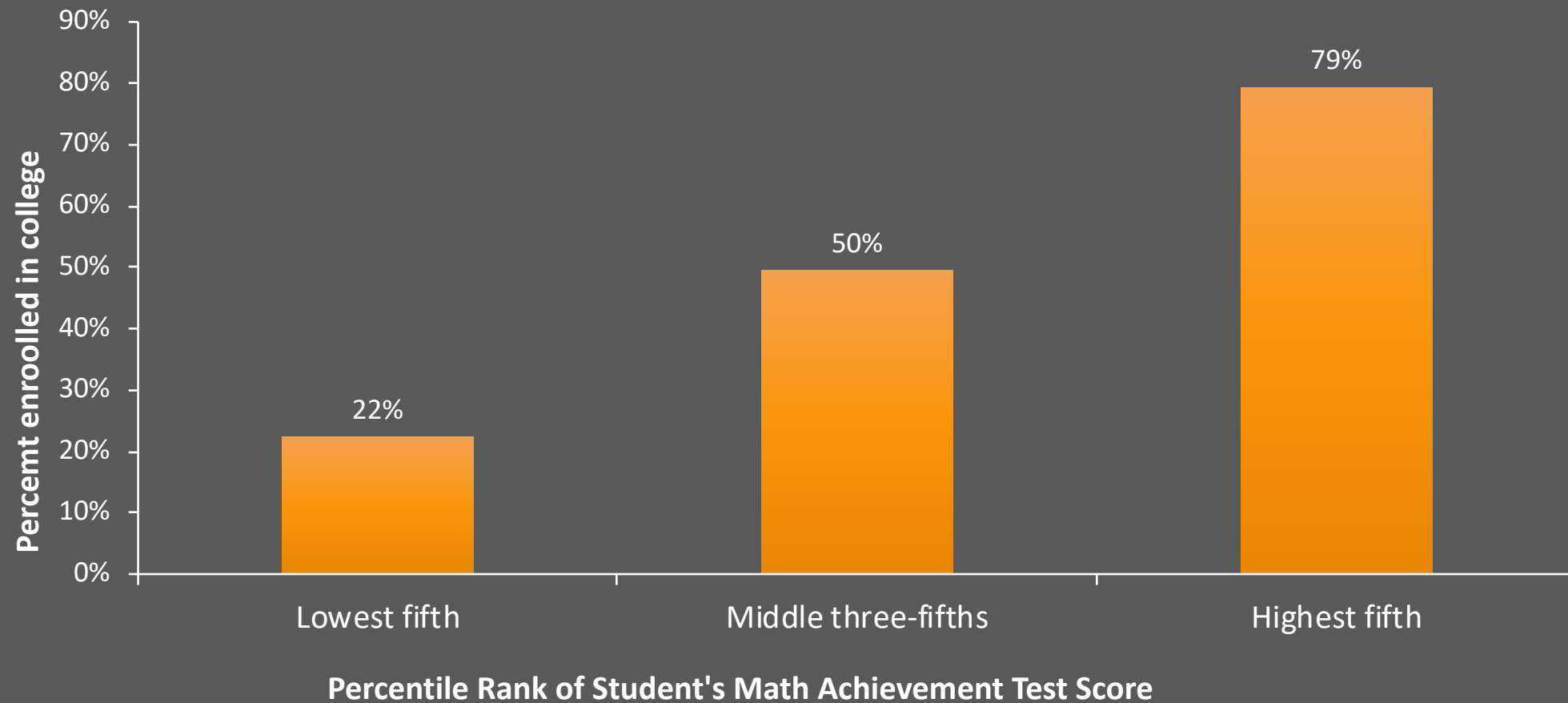
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Major Decision Points

- Schooling: How much, what type
- Work: When to start, what type
- Residence: Remain in parental home or leave; remain in area or leave
- Marriage: Marry or cohabit, when, with whom
- Children: Whether, when, how many

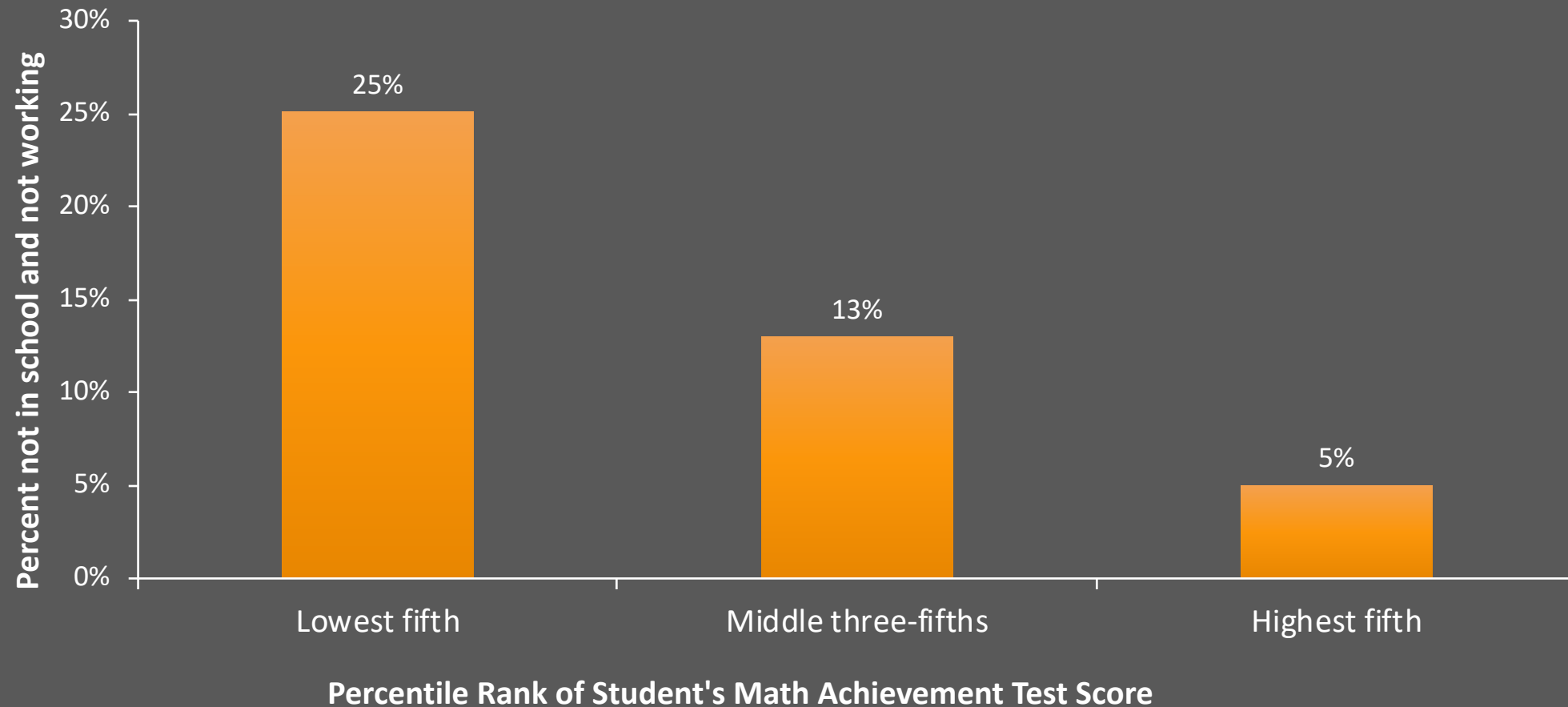
Transitions related to individual differences

College Enrollment by Math Aptitude



Transitions related to individual differences

Youth not in school and not working by math aptitude



Transitions affected by technological developments and changing social norms

- "The Pill." Effective pharmacological contraception.
- Weakening of stigma against premarital sex and cohabitation.
- Widespread availability of pornography.
- Questioning of necessity of reproduction.
- Devaluation of motherhood.
- Postponement of marriage and childbearing.
- Reduced numbers of marriages and births.
- Growth in unmarried parenting, childlessness.

Transitions affected by automation and globalization

- Computer control in factories, farms and service industries.
- Jobs eliminated for young adults who are not college-educated.
- Technology creates jobs for young people with appropriate skills.
- Technology undermines parental authority and traditional wisdom.
- Outsourcing of production reduces job options in more developed countries.
- High youth unemployment and stagnant wages lead to turmoil and calls for new policies.

Family Characteristics Related to Transitions

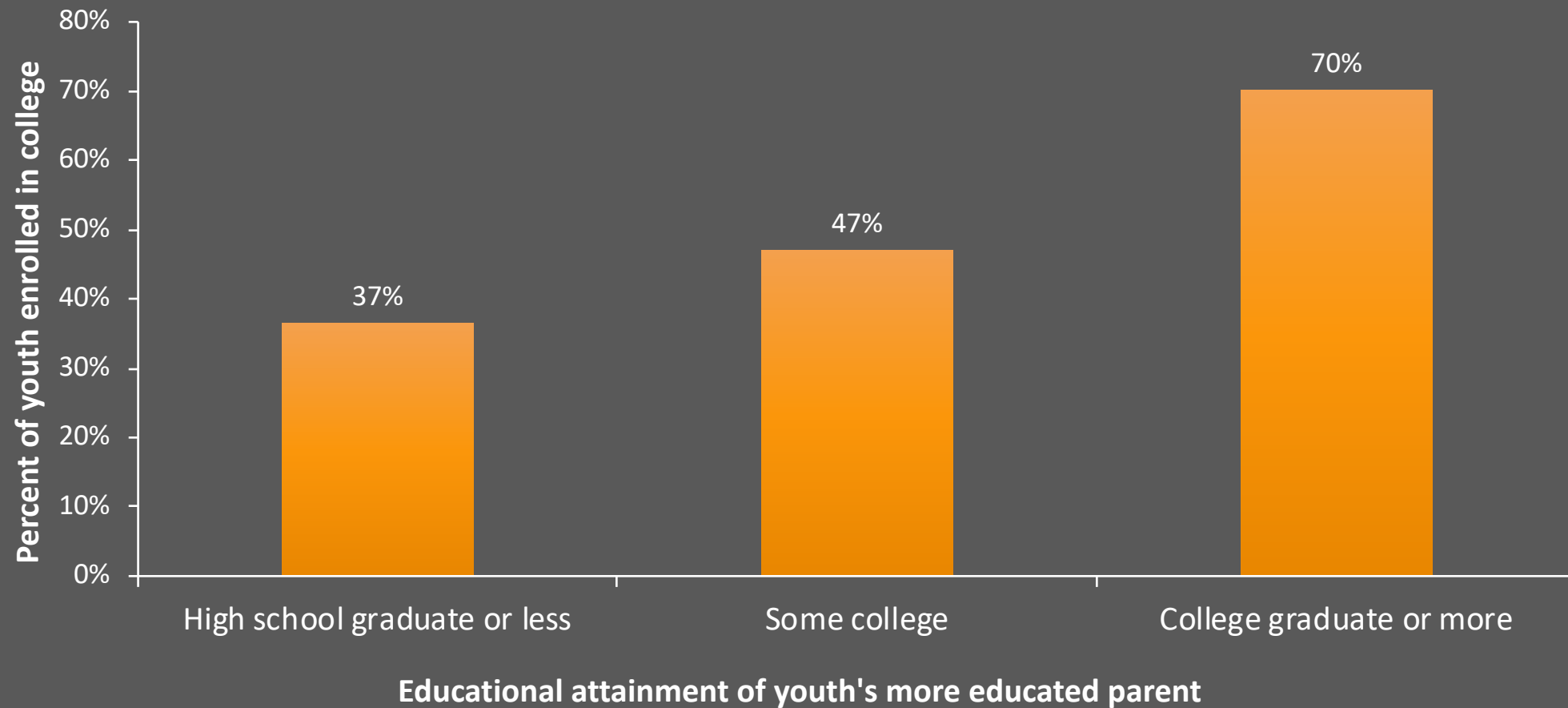
- Educational attainment of youth's mother and father
- Family income, wealth, and poverty status
- Race and ethnicity of parents
- Family structure and marital conflict
- Religious involvement of family: denomination, religiosity
- Urban versus rural residence

Youth with more educated parents likely to:

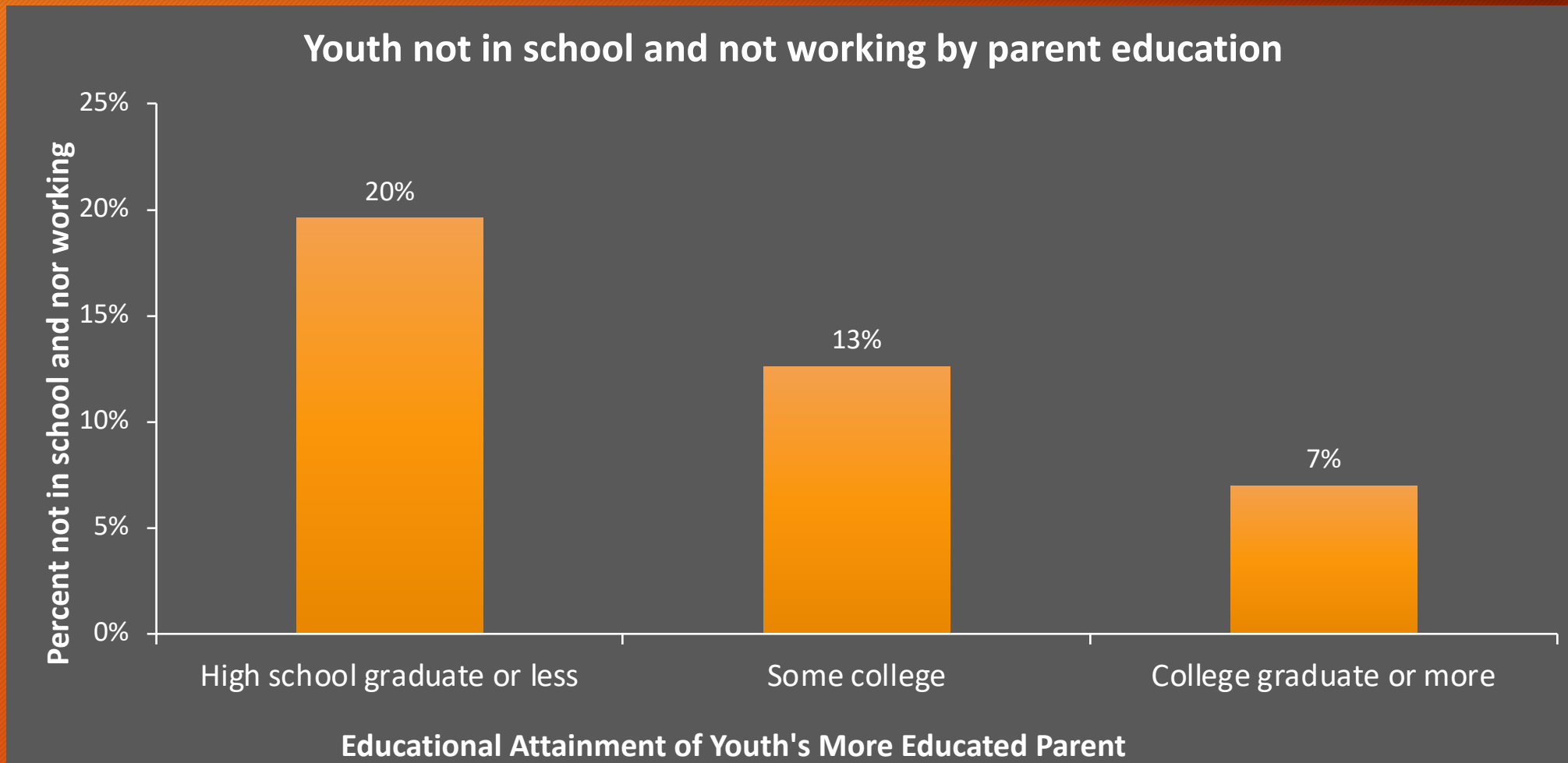
- Stay in school longer. Earn graduate or professional degrees
- Begin working later. Be more selective in choice of jobs.
- Be readier to move to areas with better opportunities.
- Postpone marriage until established, then *more* likely to marry.
- Postpone having children. Have fewer children.

Youth enrollment related to parent education

Youth enrolled in college by parent education level

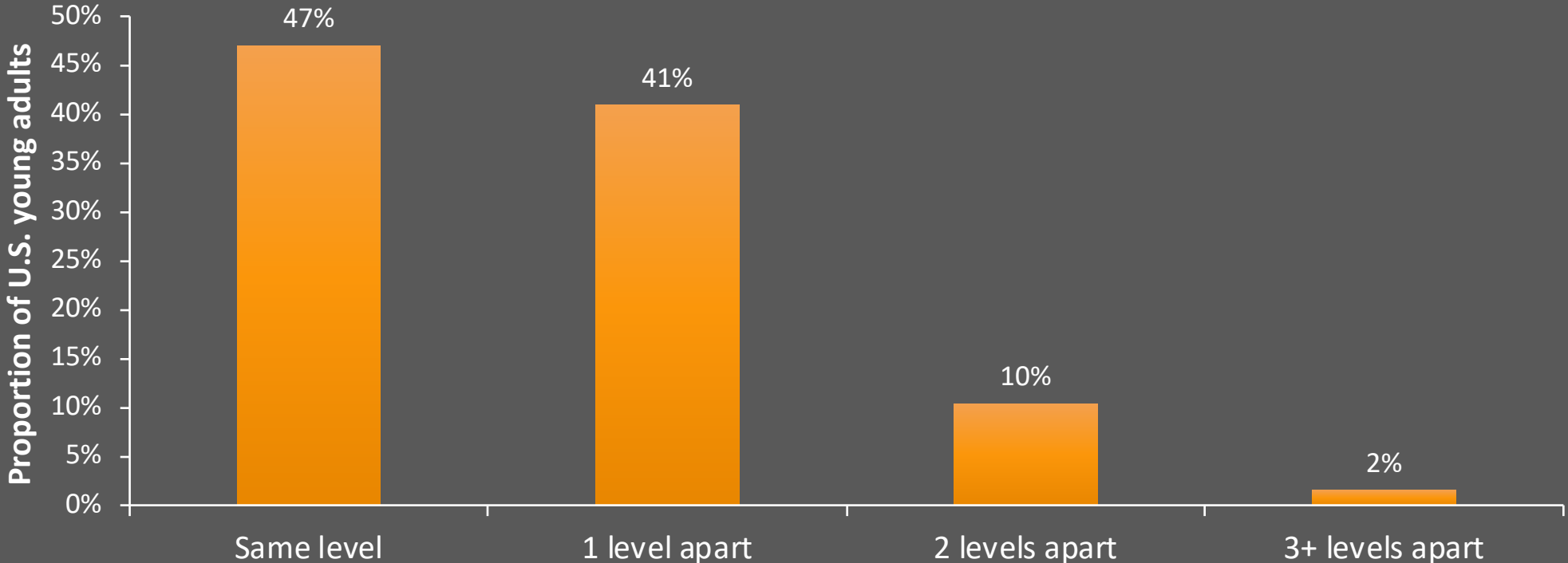


Youth idleness related to parent education



Increased assortative mating by education

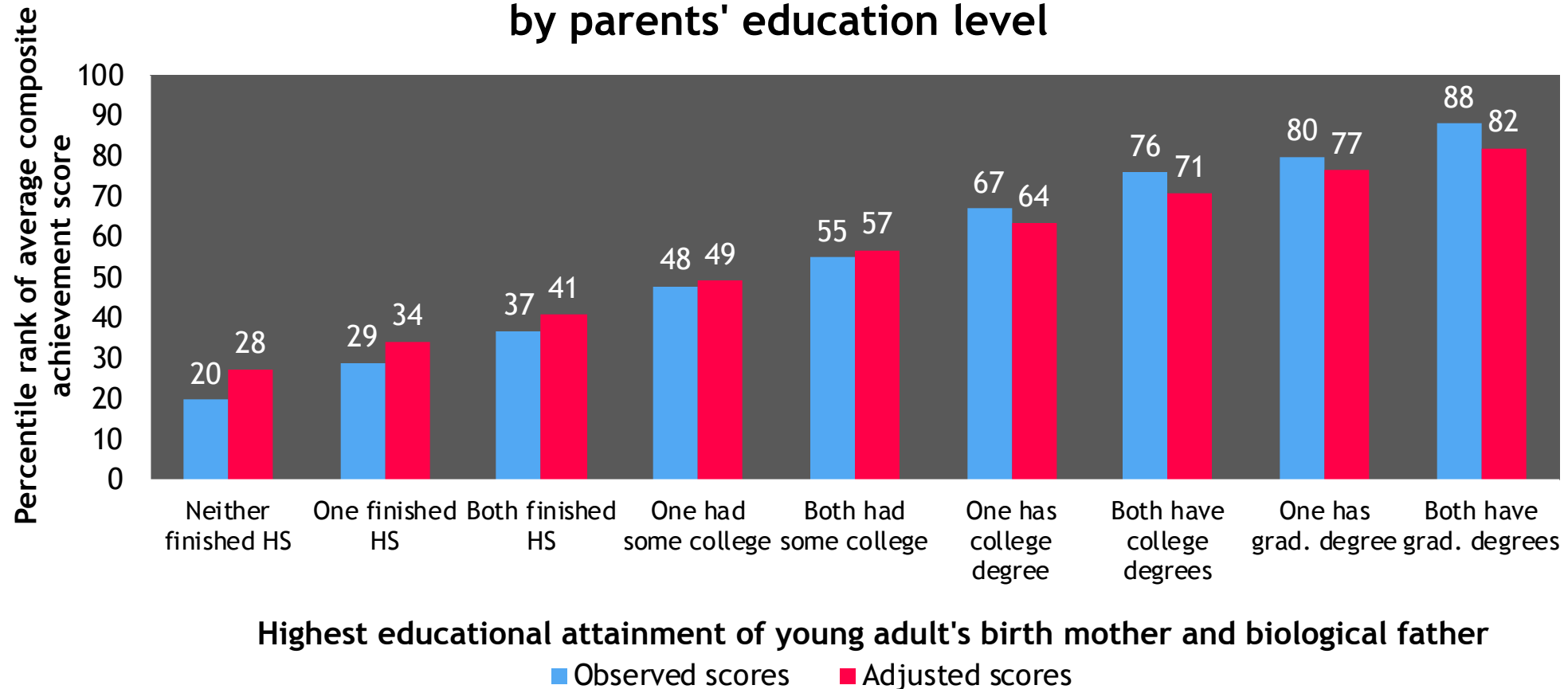
Similarity between education levels of young adults' mothers and fathers



Gap in education levels between birth mother and biological father

Youth achievement relates to education level of both parents

8th-grade achievement scores of young adults,
by parents' education level



Policies aimed at improving youth transitions

- Tend to be based on mimicking childrearing practices of well-educated, financially comfortable families
- Invoke resource differences across families, schools, and neighborhoods to account for group differences
- Ignore realities of family disruption, early stress and deprivation, and genetic factors
- Based on a radical environmentalist, “blank slate” theory of human development
- Theory not supported by results of early education and adoption studies

What families can do to help

- Help youth discover where their interests lie and at what they excel
- Help them develop good work habits
- Help them develop beneficial network of friends
- Make sure they learn odds of success in different fields