

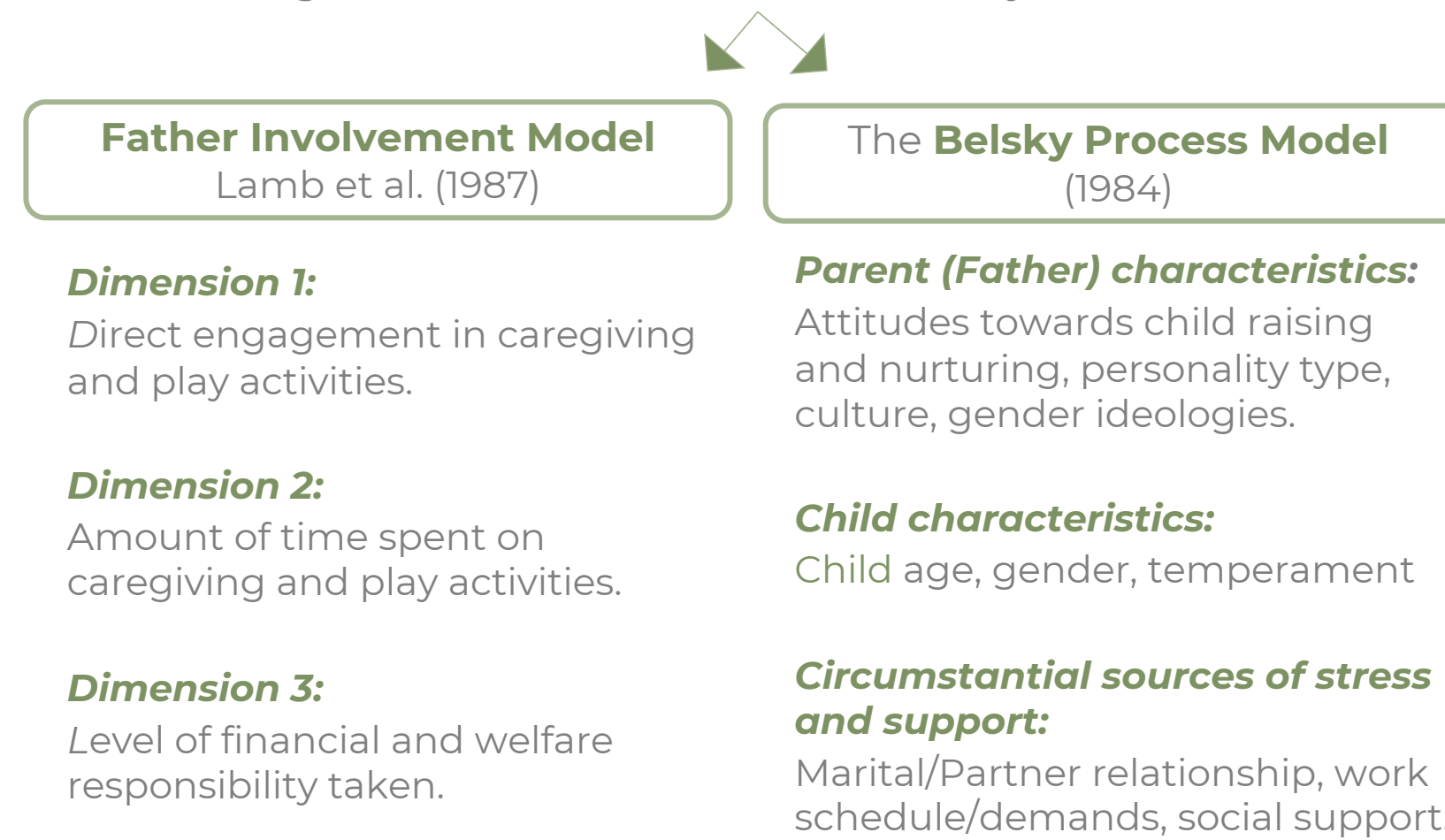
Father's Involvement in their Children's Early Learning and Development: Perceptions of South African Parents

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Introduction

Key to this study was an exploration and description of father engagement across socio-economic and education divides within South Africa by looking at a range of factors that affect a father's understanding of the importance of their engagement, as well as their actual engagement, with their young children in care work and in play. This study highlights various context-specific determinants of father involvement, such as the necessary obligations and responsibilities of fathers, parental alliance, circumstantial sources of stress and support, and social and structural factors that influence the nature of fathers' care and practical involvement.

The study was underpinned by two theoretical models which informed and provided a lens through which to examine this study data.

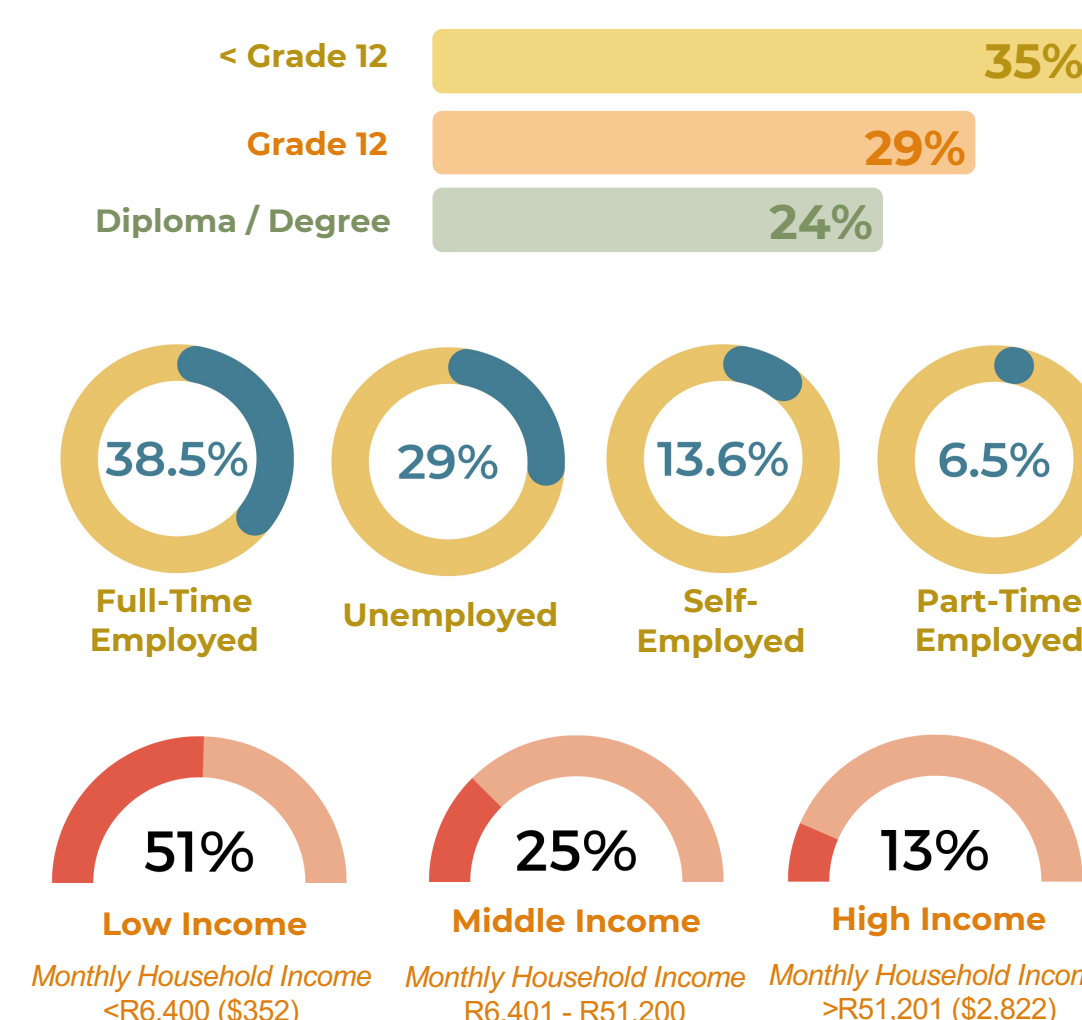


Methods & Materials

Quantitative data were collected from two sources, **Fathers and Mothers**, using questionnaires:

- Father Involvement Scale** (developed by the first author and informed by Lamb et al. (1987) and Belsky (1984).
- Role of the Father Questionnaire** (Palkovitz, 1984)
- Emotionality, Activity, Sociability (EAS) Temperament Survey** for Children (Buss & Plomin, 1984).

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS of FATHERS



171 Fathers | 202 Mothers
of children aged 0 – 6 years in Cape Town, South Africa

Results

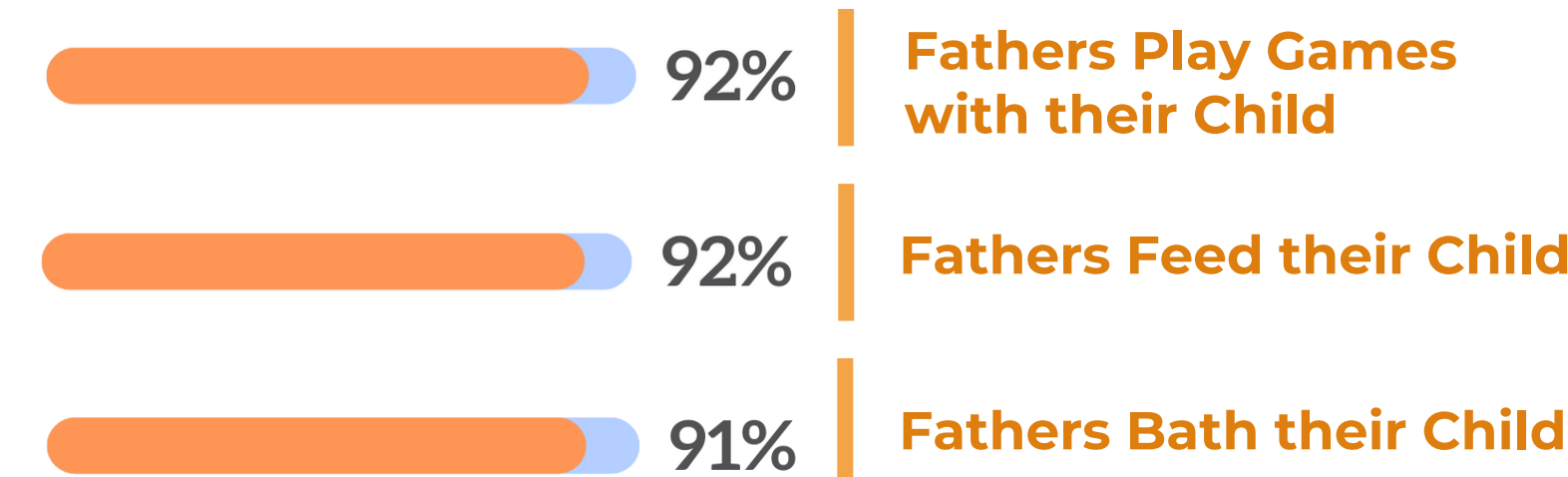
Results are presented in relation to *Lamb's et al. (1987) Father Involvement Model* and the *Belsky Process Model (1984)* that underpin the study.

FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN CARE GIVING AND PLAY / EARLY LEARNING (Lamb et al. 1987)

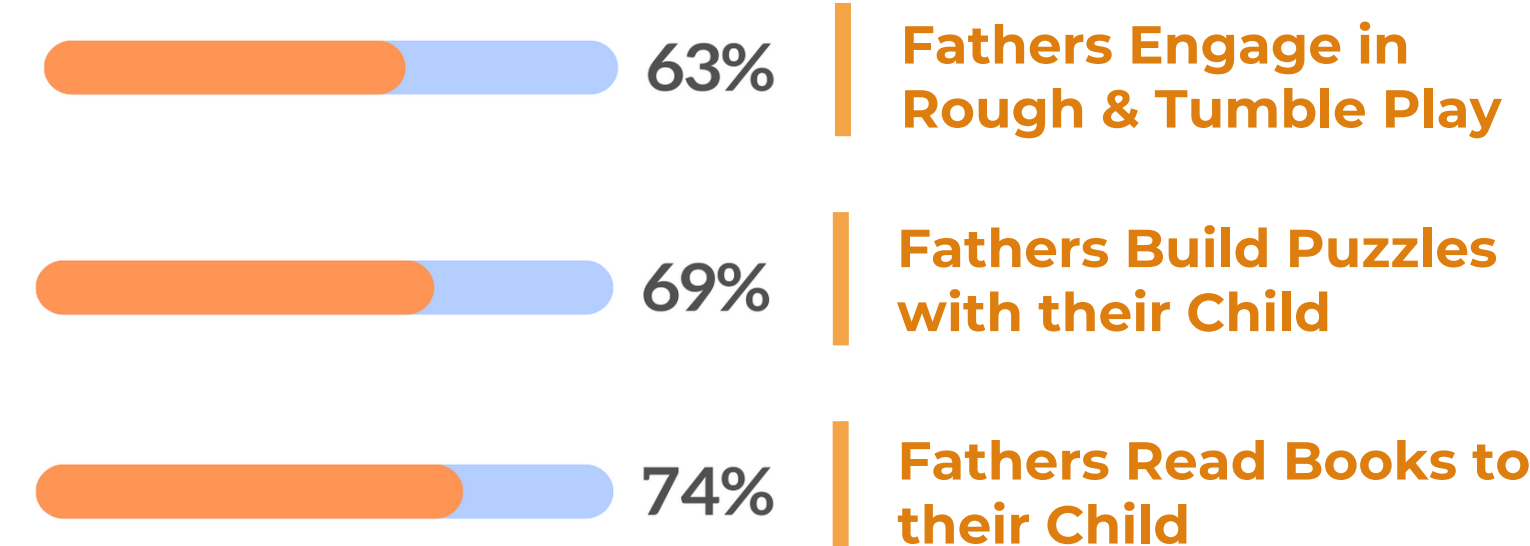
Parents were asked questions across 3 dimensions of father involvement.

DIMENSION 1: DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

Activities Fathers Engage in Most (Father Reports)



Activities Fathers Engage in Least (Father Reports)



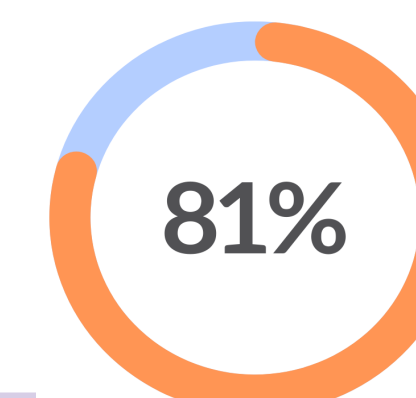
DIMENSION 2: AVAILABILITY / ACCESSIBILITY

Activities Fathers Spend Most Time Engaging in (Father Reports)

Activity	N	Mean (SD)	Min	Median (Q1, Q3)	Max
Talking to Child	162	5.83 (1.42)	0	6.00 (6.00, 7.00)	7
Holding Child	168	5.78 (1.54)	0	7.00 (6.00, 7.00)	7
Soothing Child when Upset	167	5.63 (1.44)	0	6.00 (5.00, 7.00)	7

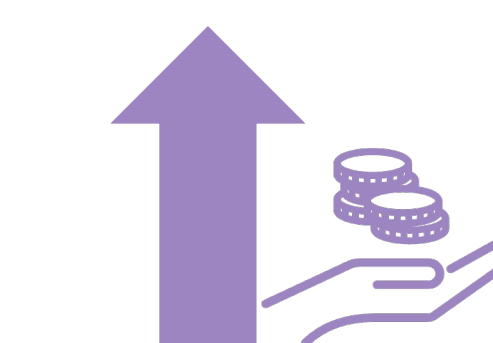
Summary of Table of Model of Father Involvement Dimensions (Lamb et al. 1987)

Father Involvement Dimensions (Lamb et al. 1987)	Father Responses		Mother Responses	
	Mean (SD)	Median (Q1, Q3)	Mean (SD)	Median (Q1, Q3)
Dimension 1: Direct Engagement	27.68 (6.50)	30.00 (25.00, 33.00)	25.15 (8.56)	28.50 (20.00, 32.00)
Dimension 2: Availability / Accessibility	133.04 (46.06)	154.5 (112, 159)	129.68 (51.45)	155 (107, 159)
Dimension 3: Responsibility	10.06 (3.58)	9.00 (8.00, 12.00)	10.17 (4.68)	9.00 (8.00, 12.00)
Total Average Mean/Median Score	56.9	64.5	55	64.2

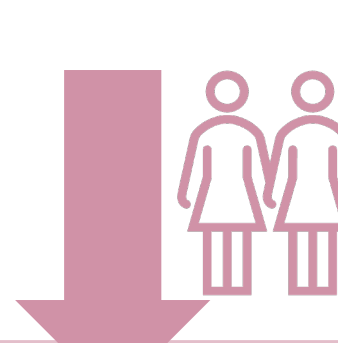


Survey data showed that 81% of the respondent fathers co-resided with their children

DIMENSION 3: RESPONSIBILITY



Fathers were better at taking **financial responsibility** (provision of child's basic needs)



Fathers did less well at taking **welfare responsibility** (cooperation, encouragement, and emotional support to mother)

Positive attitudes towards father involvement were **more prevalent** amongst **fathers with higher levels of education** ($r=0.33, p<0.001$).

Across the three dimensions, **fathers reported being marginally more involved in care work and play as compared to mothers' reports.**

Results

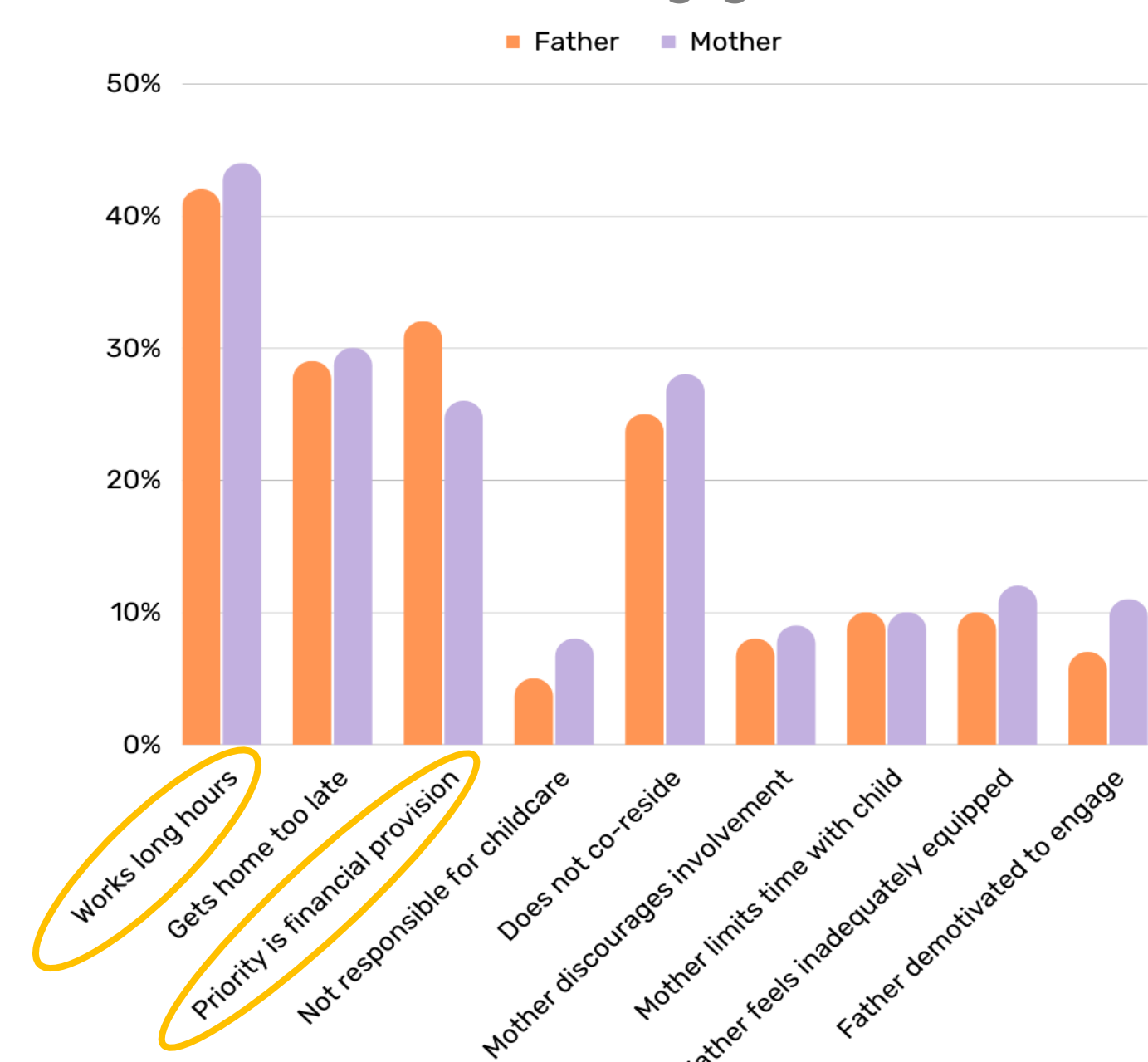
FACTORS INFLUENCING FATHER INVOLVEMENT (Belsky 1984)

CIRCUMSTANTIAL SOURCES OF STRESS & SUPPORT



Mothers perceived fathers to have **marginally more positive attitudes** towards their fatherly role and the support they receive ($\bar{x}=11.61; SD=6.46$) than fathers did ($\bar{x}=10.70; SD=4.17$).

Barriers to Engagement



Limitations

❖ **Disproportionate number of fathers who co-reside with their children.** This study is focused on fathers who are involved. It is put forward that fathers who co-reside with their children have more access to engagement opportunities, hence the higher levels of involvement. Future studies should include more fathers who do not co-reside.

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