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Children's Knowledge About Their Rights

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Introduction

- The comprehension of children's rights must be directed to the children's own perception on this topic

(Wagner, Sarriera & Casas, 2009)

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) specifies human rights during childhood, with the intention to assist children in their needs, such as protection and care



Introduction

- The seminal importance of the Convention is recognized. However its impact is weak because it doesn't promote change in children's vulnerable conditions, especially in the South Hemisphere (Grugel, 2013)
- In Brazil, 22 years after the approval of the Brazilian "Child and Adolescent Statute" (1990) which aims to protect the rights of young people, it is still a challenge to put these terms into practice



Introduction

- The school, as an extension of the family, is considered an important context to spread and ensure the rights of children and adolescents (Santos & Chaves, 2010)
- Wagner, Sarriera and Casas (2009) underscore the importance of respecting the cultural values of the community in which the child is placed and the vital role of international cooperation to turn the children's rights a global reality



Objective

- This study aimed to investigate children's knowledge about their rights, and to identify whether they are receiving information about their rights through school, family and/or through other people, since the perception of the children themselves



Method

Participants

- 1,596 children (55.8% girls and 44.2% boys)
- Ages between 9 and 12 years old ($M = 10.85$, $SD = .868$)
- From public (51%) and private schools (49%) of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil)
- Of those schools, 38% are located in the capital Porto Alegre, 39% in the metropolitan area and 23% in inner cities of the state



Method

Instruments

Children ranked the following statements on a five-point scale ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"):

- "All children have rights"
- "In my family, they told me about the children and adolescent's rights"
- "At my school, they told me about the children and adolescent's rights"
- "Other people told me about the children and adolescent's rights"



Method

Instruments

The children also answered "Yes" or "No" to the statement:

"I have heard about the Convention on the Rights of Children"



Method

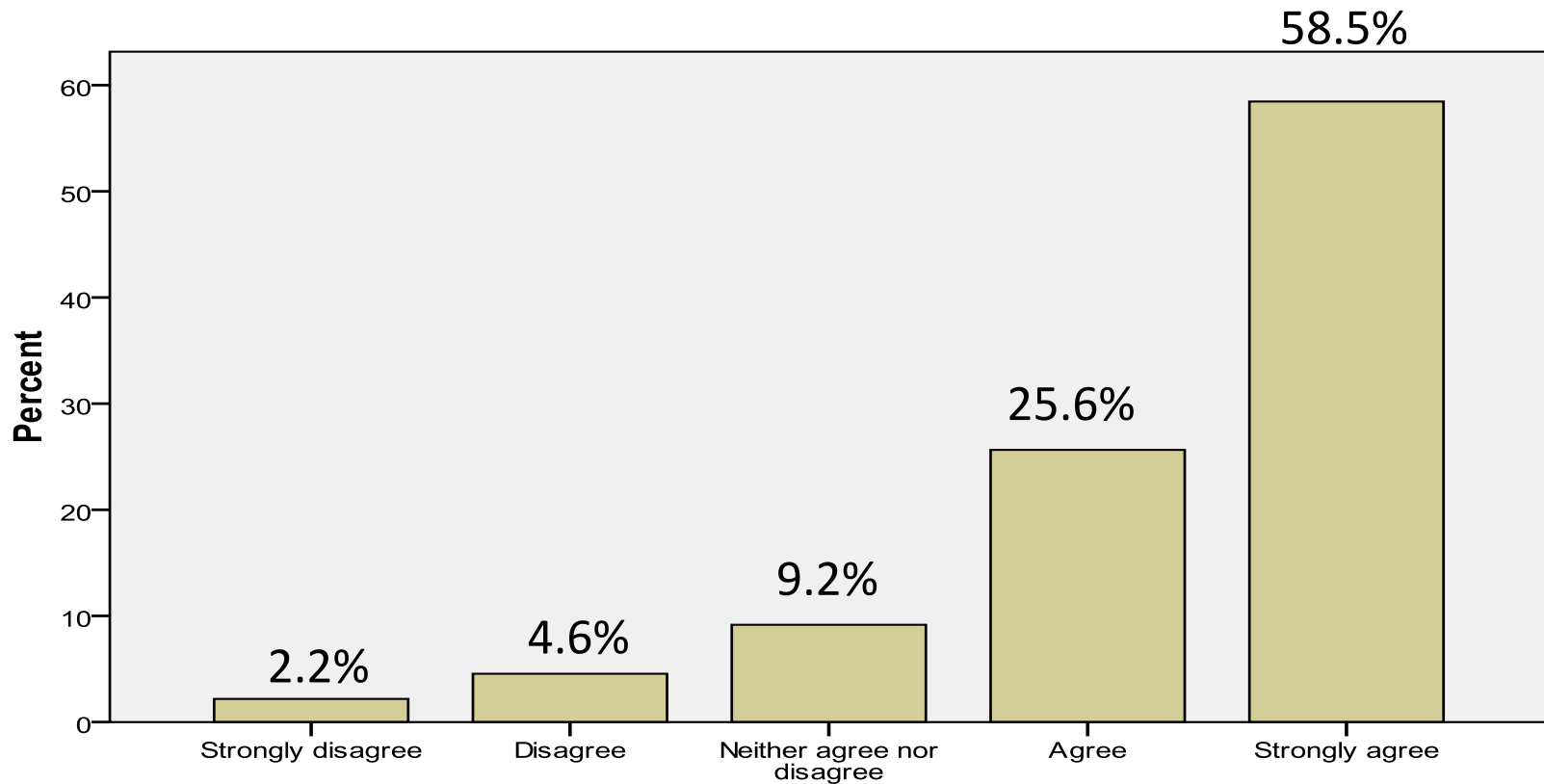
Procedure

- The survey participants were volunteer students who returned a term of free and clear consent signed by them and their parents or guardians
- The questionnaires were applied collectively in a room provided by each school
- All ethical requirements for research with human beings were followed



Results

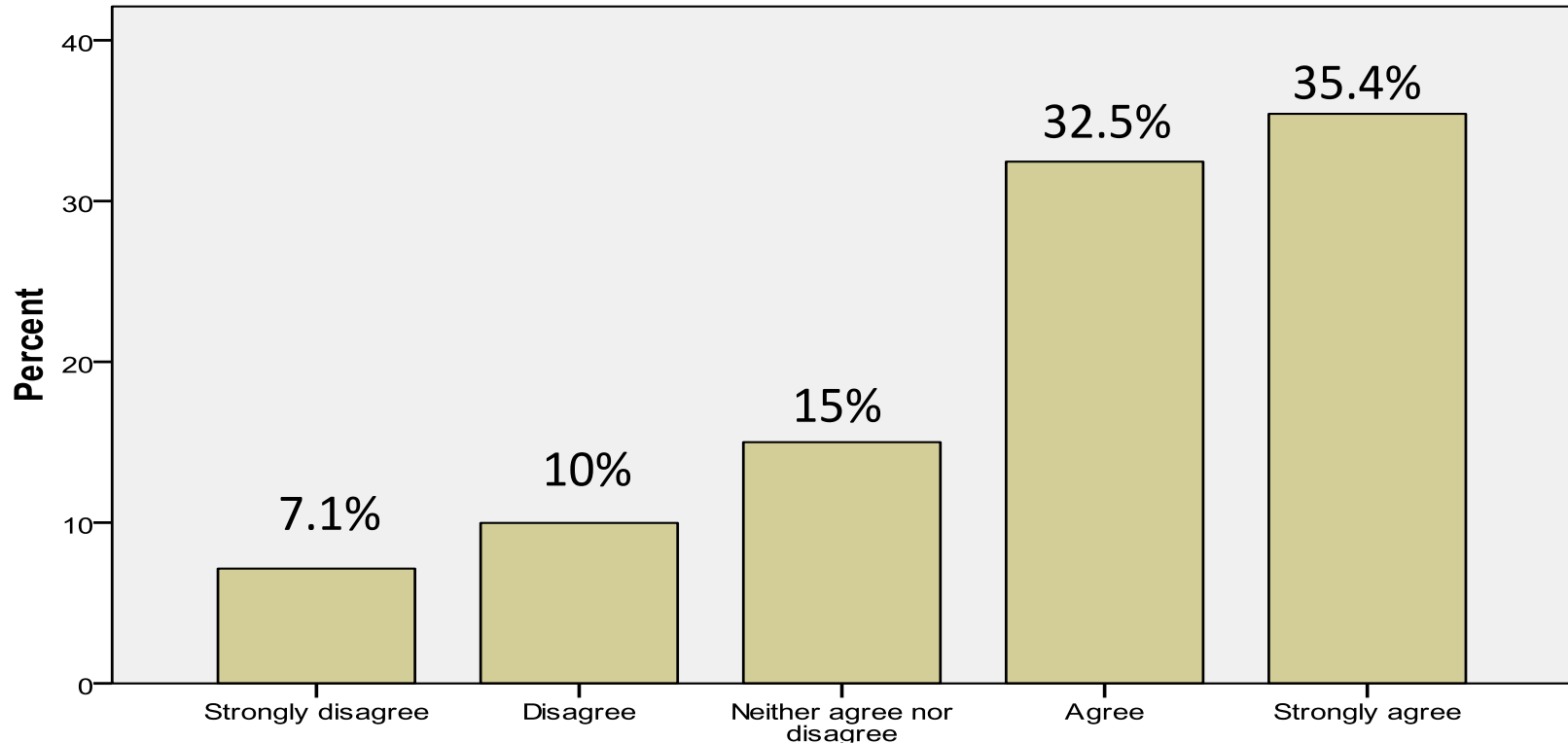
All children have rights



$M = 3.34, SD = .97$

Results

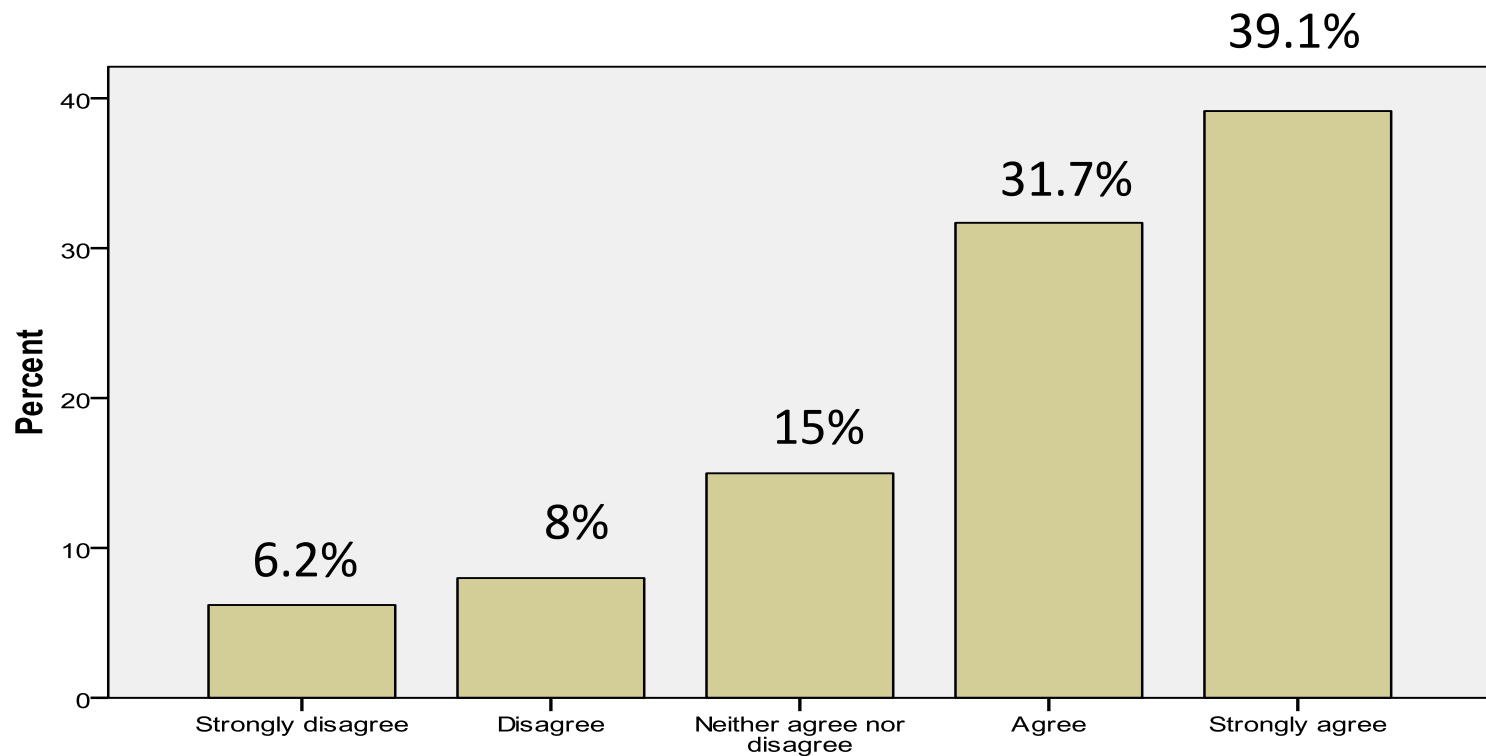
In my family, they told me about the children and adolescent's rights



$M = 2.79, SD = 1.22$

Results

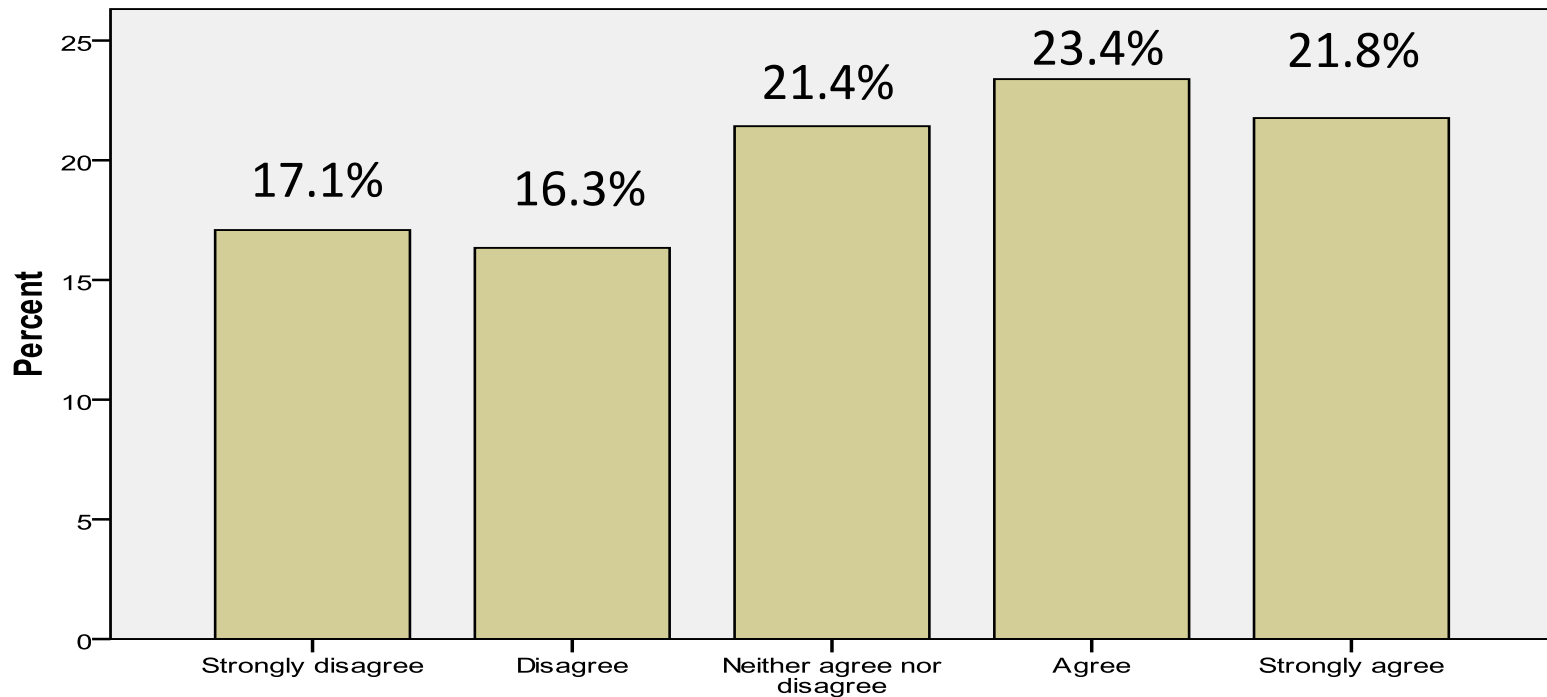
At my school , they told me about the children and adolescent's rights



$M = 2.90, SD = 1.18$

Results

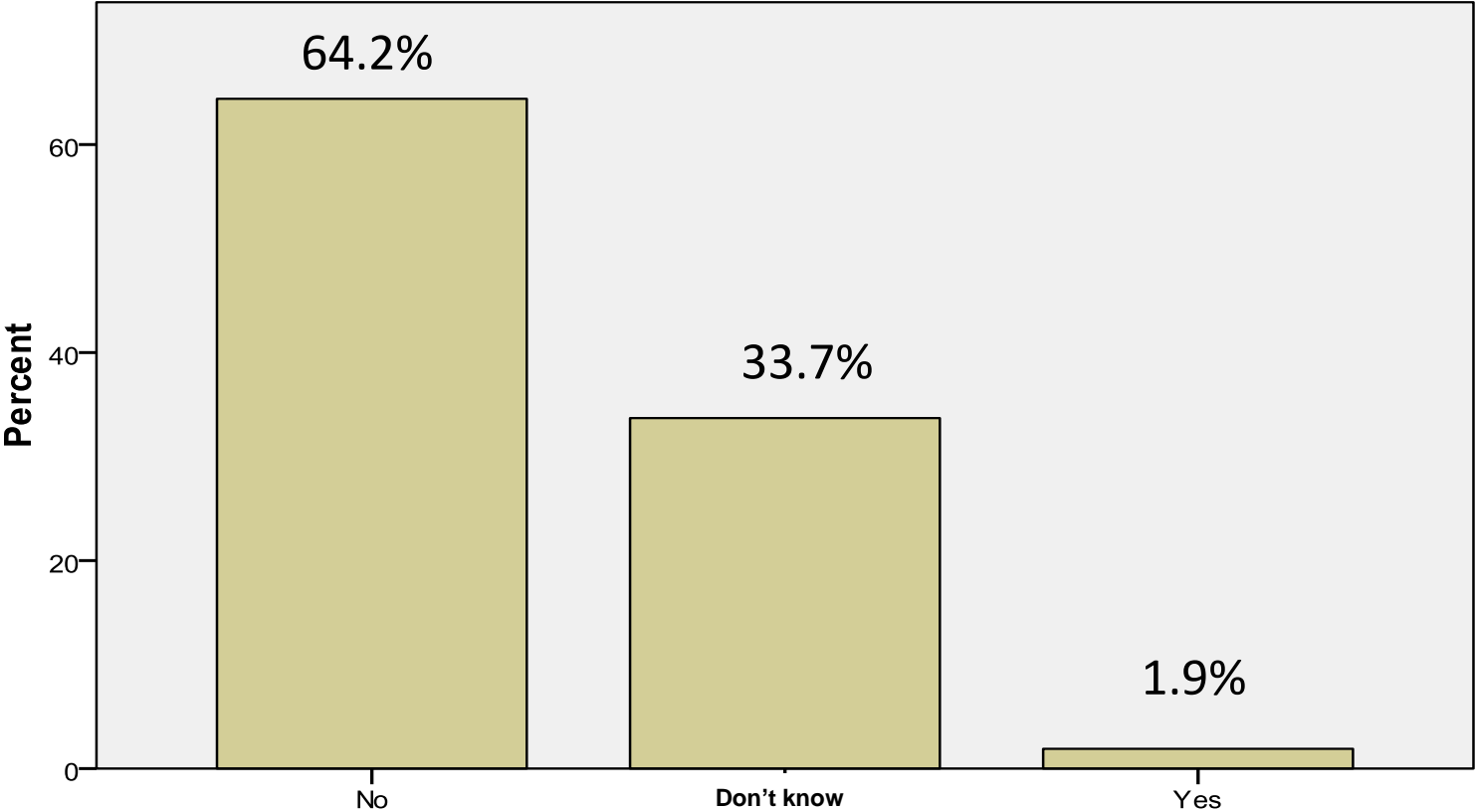
Other people told me about the children and adolescent's rights



$M = 2.16, SD = 1.38$

Results

I have heard about the children's rights convention



Results

Table I. Statements of Children's Rights in public and private schools

Statements	Public		Private		<i>t-test</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	
All children have rights	788	3.34(.95)	772	3.33(.99)	.14
In my family, they told me about the children and adolescent's rights	778	2.84(1.23)	735	2.74(1.21)	1.59
At my school , they told me about the children and adolescent's rights	759	2.82(1.23)	743	2.97(1.13)	-2.49*
Other people told me about the children and adolescent's rights	759	2.24(1.42)	716	2.08(1.34)	2.27*

* $p < .05$

Results

Table II. Oneway ANOVA Test of correspondence between residential areas and statements of Children's Rights

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
All children have rights	Porto Alegre	3.33	.944	2.203	.111
	Metropolitan area	3.28	1.020		
	Inner cities	3.42	.935		
	Total	3.33	.973		
In my family, they told me about the children and adolescent's rights	Porto Alegre	2.81	1.207	.116	.890
	Metropolitan area	2.77	1.224		
	Inner cities	2.79	1.251		
	Total	2.79	1.223		
At my school, they told me about the children and adolescent's rights	Porto Alegre	2.81	1.189	3.639*	.027
	Metropolitan area	2.91	1.171		
	Inner cities	3.02	1.179		
	Total	2.90	1.182		
Other people told me about the children and adolescent's rights	Porto Alegre	2.17	1.371	.127	.881
	Metropolitan area	2.14	1.398		
	Inner cities	2.17	1.393		
	Total	2.16	1.386		
I have heard about the children's rights convention	Porto Alegre	.37	.533	.172	.842
	Metropolitan area	.38	.534		
	Inner cities	.39	.488		
	Total	.38	.523		

Results

Tukey HSD

Table III. Differences between residential area in the item “At my school, they told me about the children and adolescent’s rights”

		Mean	Std.		95% CI	
		Difference	error	p	LL	UP
Porto Alegre	Metropolitan area	-.102	.070	.310	-.27	.06
	Inner cities	-.218*	.081	.020	-.41	-.03
Metropolitan area	Porto Alegre	.102	.070	.310	-.06	.27
	Inner cities	-.115	.080	.317	-.30	.07
Inner cities	Porto Alegre	.218*	.081	.020	.03	.41
	Metropolitan area	.115	.080	.317	-.07	.30

Discussion

- The results indicate that most children (80%) recognize that they have rights. In spite of being a significant number, it does not represent that the children know what are their rights.
- Santos and Chaves (2010) indicated that children know their rights, but do not understand it with the same linguistic ability than adults do.
- Children do not use formal concepts, but they make use of spontaneous concepts about their rights.



Discussion

- In spite of this fact, children are able to participate in the elaboration of social practices.
- Although most children recognize themselves as people who have rights, the large majority have never heard about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. According Grugel (2013) people do not associate the Convention with the situations that occur in their daily lives.



Discussion

- According to Grugel (2013), there is no public institution focused at the dissemination of the children's rights, therefore the family and the community hold most of the responsibility for the observance of children's rights.
- The majority of children agree that all children have rights, but they have never heard about it in its integral context.



Discussion

- The child must be considered as a subject of rights beyond the protection of the vulnerabilities, but also respect for their skills. (Lansdown, 1994)
- Children have heard more about their rights in school, demonstrating the importance of this institution for the promotion and protection of children's rights.



Conclusion

- Children's rights should be better explained at school and inside the family because without knowing about their rights, children can not demand their observance.
- Children's rights are not yet part of the school program. Textbooks should cover children's rights in a way to instigate children to exercise their rights since childhood, as an exercise of citizenship.

(Wagner, Sarriera & Casas, 2009)



Conclusion

- Qualitative research could be important to investigate what children understand about their rights and how they perceive it in different areas.
- *Research Limitation:* the questionnaire did not ask if children had heard about the Brazilian Child and Adolescent Statute (1990).



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Thank You!

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