

CHILDREN'S LEVELS OF AWARENESS REGARDING CHILD RIGHTS AND THEIR APPLICATION

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Abstract

Due to historical conditions during the last century, the societal view of children has evolved considerably. Children have now been identified as a group in need of special protection (other such groups include women, persons with disabilities, etc.) and their rights have been enshrined in an international document entitled the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as the "Convention").

This article deals with issues concerning children's lack of awareness regarding their rights (i.e., the rights of the child incorporated in the Convention) and their application; and builds on previous research in this field. The aim of this article is to answer the question of children's awareness and knowledge levels pertaining to children's rights, and the ability to implement them in practice. Age, gender, cultural and family background are factors taken into account.

Research indicates that select rights are generally acknowledged rights, such as the freedom of speech and expression, the right to education and the principle of non-discrimination. With regards to other rights, the influence of age becomes evident, when examining activities assigned to young children by an authoritative body. The right to privacy was more often supported in older respondents. With regard to gender more boys than girls felt that it was acceptable to miss school in order to help their parents with the family business. While statistically speaking, more girls than boys acknowledge the right to an education and the right to a satisfying social environment.

Key words: *knowledge of children's rights; Convention on the Rights of the Child; school-aged children; international comparison*

INTRODUCTION

The societal view of children has evolved considerably during the last century (Select chapters on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2000). The rights of the child have been enshrined in an international document entitled the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as the "Convention"). This Convention was adopted by the Czech Republic in 1993. Three basic principles permeate the entire Convention, commonly referred

to as the 3P's: Provision (ensuring the survival and development of the child); Protection of the child and Participation on the part of the child (Kovařík et al. 2001b, p. 25–30). UNICEF includes the right to education as a fourth principle. Children have been identified as a group in need of special protection (among other groups, including women, persons with disabilities, etc.) (Archard 2004, p. 55).

The aim of this work is to:

- determine the level of Czech school-children's knowledge concerning

- children's rights and their ability to apply them in practice;
- determine how this knowledge is influenced by age, gender and cultural background, as well as by knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
 - compare these results with those of research previously conducted in Spain and Italy.

On the basis of previous research, Kovařík et al. (2001a) defined a group of "universal rights", the concept includes the right to engage in play and the right to live with one's own family (together with the right of freedom of the press and the right to health care; these rights, however, are not included in this research). The basis of their definition was the Convention. The fundamental determining factor in the assessment of legal awareness in children was their age. Casas and Saporiti (2006) added other determining factors: the child's gender, cultural background (Italy, Spain) and the environment in which the children grew up (city, village).

METHODS AND MATERIAL

The subjects of the research were school-age children living in the Czech Republic, Spain and Italy. The object was to assess the knowledge of and the ability to apply children's rights in three European countries.

On the basis of the fundamental research question, "If, and to what extent is the knowledge of children's rights influenced by age, gender and cultural background?" the following sub-questions were specified:

- 1) *Are children's perceptions and knowledge of children's rights influenced by the cultural background (Czech Republic, Spain and Italy) in which they live? Which perceptions of children's rights are conditioned by the cultural background in which they live?*

For this purpose, international comparisons were used, as well as selected rights from the Convention which had been used abroad. Additionally, the same statistical tests were used (e.g., the chi-square) when evaluating the results.

- 2) *Which rights are more frequently accorded to girls and which to boys? What specific knowledge and perceptions of, and which rights are contingent upon the gender of the child?*
- 3) *Which perceptions of, and which rights are conditional to the child's age? Which rights are, in model situations, more frequently accorded to younger children and which to older children?*

In the Results section, the "grade" refers to the grade (year) the children attended primary school. Thus, it indicates their ages: 3rd grade – age 9; 4th grade – age 10; 5th grade – age 11; 6th grade – age 12; 7th grade – age 13; 8th grade – age 14 and 9th grade – age 15.

The research concerning the knowledge of children's rights and the ability to apply them was conducted in two primary schools located in the Southern Bohemia Region of the Czech Republic. The research group was comprised of 195 children attending these primary schools. The headmasters of these schools approved the research process, as did the parents of the children involved in the research and their class teachers. Gathering of informed consents was administered by the class teachers.

This project involves quantitative research based on interviews was conducted on the basis of a prepared questionnaire. The questionnaire included the child's identifying information (age, gender) and twelve model situations. These model situations reflected the following rights of the child pursuant to the Convention: Article 2, Non-discrimination; Article 9, Separation from Parents; Article 12, The Child's Views; Article 14, Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion; Article 15, Freedom of Association; Article 16, Protection of Privacy; Article 17, Access to Appropriate Information; Article 23, Children with Disabilities; Article 28, Education; Article 30, Children from Minority Groups; Article 31, Leisure, Recreation and Cultural Activities and Article 32, Child Labor.

Results were evaluated using the chi-square statistical test in order to facilitate comparisons. Model situations were selected on the basis of works previously published by Spanish and Italian authors (Casas et al. 2006). Statistical analysis has been included

in those cases where results proved to be statistically significant.

RESULTS

The first situation model is based on the child's right to participate in activities in the same manner as other children, without experiencing discrimination based on a

lack of Czech language proficiency. This model highlights the contrast between the group's right to determine the best possible implementation of a game vs. the individual rights of a girl, who was unable to speak Czech fluently enough to easily participate. In this scenario, 69.2% of the respondents were in favour of the girl's participation in the game, see Table 1.

Table 1. Situation model 1 – exclusion from a game

Exclusion of the girl		Inclusion of the girl		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
20	10.3	135	69.2	40	20.5	195	100

The second situation model also confronts the right of the group vs. the right of the individual, but in a slightly different manner. It presents the right of the child to either eat pork, or abstain from doing so, for religious reasons. Respondents were asked if they would agree with a change in the lunch menu that would eliminate pork for everyone, which

would allow Ahmed, the hero of the story, to eat a normal lunch with his classmates (option A) or would they rather keep pork on the menu and restrict Ahmed to eating only the lunch side dish (option B). In the case 32% of the respondents agreed with option A (a change in diet for all children); while 24.6% chose option B, see Table 2a, 2b.

Table 2a. Situation model 2 – change in menu

	Change		No change		Unsure		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Option A	62	32.0	117	60.3	16	8.2	195	100
Option B	47	24.6	128	67.0	20	10.2	195	100

Table 2b. The influence of grade level on replies to situation model 2b – change in menu: option B

Situation model 2b / Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No change	Number	6	11	14	18	25	25	29	128
	%	33.3	68.8	77.8	69.2	75.8	78.1	90.6	73.1
	Standardized residual	-2.0	-0.2	0.2	-0.2	0.2	0.3	1.2	
Change	Number	12	5	4	8	8	7	3	47
	%	66.7	31.3	22.2	30.8	24.2	21.9	9.4	26.9
	Standardized residual	3.3	0.3	-0.4	0.4	-0.3	-0.5	-1.9	
Total	Number	18	16	18	26	33	32	32	175
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

In this situation, the influence of grade was statistically significant according to the chi-square test: $\chi_6^2 = 20.576$, $p = 0.01$. Consent to a menu change decreased with increasing age and respective grade level of respondents.

The third situation model relates to the right to privacy. The respondents were asked whether or not they would be angry if their parents read a private letter. The results are presented in Table 3a, 3b, 3c.

Table 3a. Situation model 3 – the right to privacy

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Number	130	54	11	195
%	66.7	27.7	5.6	100
Standardized residual	-1.0	1.0	1.4	

66.7% of the respondents indicated that they would be upset, suggesting the felt that they had a right to privacy. Girls felt more

strongly about this right more often than boys (see Table 3b): $\chi_2^2 = 5.302$, $p = 0.05$.

Table 3b. Influence of gender on the responses to situation model 3 – the right to privacy

			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Boys	Number	29	46	75
		%	38.7	61.3	100
		Standardized residual	1.5	-1.0	
	Girls	Number	25	84	109
		%	22.9	77.1	100
		Standardized residual	-1.2	0.8	
Total	Number	54	130	184	
	%	29.3	70.7	100	

The effect of grade level was also assessed for this model situation. Results showed that the influence of grade level on response was

statistically significant according to the chi-square test: $\chi_6^2 = 35.239$, $p = 0.000$, see Table 3c.

Table 3c. Influence of grade level on replies to situation model 3 – the right to privacy

Situation model 3 / Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No	Number	12	9	12	8	5	5	3	54
	%	63.2	45.0	60.0	32.0	14.7	15.2	9.1	29.3
	Standardized residual	2.7	1.3	2.5	0.2	-1.6	-1.5	-2.1	
Yes	Number	7	11	8	17	29	28	30	130
	%	36.8	55.0	40.0	68.0	85.3	84.8	90.9	70.7
	Standardized residual	-1.8	-0.8	-1.6	-0.2	1.0	1.0	1.4	
Total	Number	19	20	20	25	34	33	33	184
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The fourth situation model deals with the issue of separation from the family, as it pertains to Article 9 of the Convention. Respondents expressed their views on whether or not they agree with the separation of siblings in the event that neither parent can

fully provide for all the siblings. The results are presented in Table 4 and show that the vast majority of children thought that families should remain intact, even under difficult circumstances.

Table 4. Situation model 4 – separation of the family

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
21	10.8	165	85.1	8	4.1	195	100

The fifth situation model relates to the child's right to express his or her view on issues that affect him or her. Respondents were asked if they would have the right to express themselves regarding which parent

they would prefer to live with, should their parents ever divorce. As shown in Table 5, 92.3% of the respondents overwhelmingly felt that they should be allowed to express themselves in the event of their parents' divorce.

Table 5. Situation model 5 – expressing one's view in the event parents' divorce

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
180	92.3	12	6.2	3	1.5	195	100

The sixth situation model concerned the right to education. The respondents were asked to answer whether or not they were in agreement with their teacher temporarily

teaching other children in Rwanda for three months. 87.2% of the respondents agreed with the teacher's departure (Table 6a, 6b and 6c).

Table 6a. Situation model 6 – teacher's departure

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
170	87.2	17	8.7	8	4.1	195	100

Table 6b. Influence of gender on situation model 6 – teacher's departure

			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Boys	Number	11	65	76
		%	14.5	85.5	100
		Standardized residual	1.6	-0.5	
	Girls	Number	6	105	111
		%	5.4	94.6	100
		Standardized residual	-1.3	0.4	
Total	Number	17	170	187	
	%	9.1	90.9	100	

Girls agreed with the teacher's departure for Rwanda more often than boys. The chi-square in this case is: $\chi_2^2 = 4.489$, $p = 0.034$. The number of positive replies increased

with the respondents' ages, see Table 6c. The influence of grade level is statistically significant: $\chi_6^2 = 16.654$, $p = 0.05$.

Table 6c. Influence of grade level on situation model 6 – teacher's departure

Situation model 6 / Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No	Number	2	5	5	1	2	1	1	17
	%	10.5	25.0	25.0	3.4	5.7	3.1	3.1	9.1
	Standardized residual	0.2	2.4	2.4	-1.0	-0.7	-1.1	-1.1	
Yes	Number	17	15	15	28	33	31	31	170
	%	89.5	75	75	96.6	94.3	96.9	96.9	90.9
	Standardized residual	-0.1	-0.7	-0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	
Total	Number	19	20	20	29	35	32	32	187
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The seventh situation model concerns the obligation to attend school (the right to education) vs. the right to help one's parents with their business. The respondents expressed whether or not a child should

be allowed to miss class in order to help in their parent's shop during school hours. The majority of respondents (91.8%) did not agree that it was acceptable to help their parents during school hours (see Table 7).

Table 7. Situation model 7 – work instead of school

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
10	5.1	179	91.8	6	3.1	195	100

The eighth situation model concerned the integration of a blind girl into a mainstream elementary school. The respondents were asked to express whether or not they would

agree with such integration in their classroom (Table 8). Most respondents (69.1%) agreed with the integration of a blind girl into a mainstream elementary school.

Table 8. Situation model 8 – integration of a blind girl

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
134	69.1	42	21.6	18	9.3	194	100

The ninth situation model related to the rights of parents to impose their own priorities on the child (e.g. relocation due to work requirements) relative to the child's rights to maintain their social network. The children were asked to express whether or not

they would agree with their families moving to another city and losing the ability to socialize with their current friends (Table 9). Relatively few respondents (15.9%) agreed that their parents had the right to make these types of decisions.

Table 9. Situation model 9 – relocation of the family

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
31	15.9	148	75.9	16	8.2	195	100

In the tenth situation model, respondents were asked whether or not their parents have the right to switch off a TV program when they felt the content was unsuitable for children. Table 10 shows that most (71.1%) respondents agreed that it was their parents' decision.

Table 10. Situation model 10 – switching off the T.V. during unsuitable programming

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Total
Number	138	43	13	194
%	71.1	22.2	6.7	100

The eleventh situation model dealt with the question of whether or not children should only be allowed to participate in activities jointly organized or planned with their parents.

Table 11a. Situation model 11 – activities with parents

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
19	9.7	168	86.2	8	4.1	195	100

86.2% of respondents expressed the opinion that children should not be limited to only participating in activities jointly arranged with their parents. In this situation, the influence of the respondents' grade levels was apparent: $\chi^2 = 62.896$, $p = 0.000$. Younger children were more likely to agree with only being allowed to participate in activities organized with their parents (see Table 11b).

Table 11b. Influence of grade level on replies to situation model 11 – activities with parents

Situation model 11 / Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No	Number	7	16	17	29	32	35	32	168
	%	38.9	80.0	94.4	96.7	97.0	100	97.0	89.8
	Standardized residual	-2.3	-0.5	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	
Yes	Number	11	4	1	1	1	0	1	19
	%	61.1	20	5.6	3.3	3.0	0	3.0	10.2
	Standardized residual	6.8	1.4	-0.6	-1.2	-1.3	-1.9	-1.3	
Total	Number	18	20	18	30	33	35	33	187
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The twelfth situation model concerned parents prohibiting a child (a daughter, in particular) from going out, which created a conflict between the right of the parents to assert their own opinion (the daughter

must stay home) and the right of the child (daughter) to participate in certain activities with friends. The results are summarized in Table 12a.

Table 12a. Situation model 12 – social activity restrictions

	Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Group 1	132	67.7	55	28.2	8	4.1	195	100

67.7% of the respondents agreed with the parents' right to prohibit them from going out. Despite a trend line deviation, the influence

of grade level was shown to be statistically significant: $\chi_6^2 = 17.069$, $p = 0.01$ (Table 12b).

Table 12b. Influence of grade level on the replies to situation model 12 – social activity restrictions

Situation model 12 / Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No	Number	9	1	2	5	12	13	13	55
	%	45.0	5.0	10.5	17.9	34.3	39.4	40.6	29.4
	Standardized residual	1.3	-2.0	-1.5	-1.1	0.5	1.1	1.2	
Yes	Number	11	19	17	23	23	20	19	132
	%	55.0	95.0	89.5	82.1	65.7	60.6	59.4	70.6
	Standardized residual	-0.8	1.3	1.0	0.7	-0.3	-0.7	-0.8	
Total	Number	20	20	19	28	35	33	32	187
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The thirteenth situation model dealt with the children's group activity work at school. The respondents were asked to decide, with respect to a classmate who refuses to work on

a common task, whether to persuade him to cooperate, or exclude him from the activities (Table 13). Most respondents (64.4%) were in favour of persuasion to cooperate.

Table 13. Situation model 13 – group activity work

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
121	64.4	67	35.6	188	100	195	100

The fourteenth situation model concerned the child's right to express his or her own opinion. The respondents were asked whether or not they agreed that a child should express his or her view as to where he or she would

like to go on a family holiday. The vast majority of respondents (88.7%) agreed that a child should tell their parents their views regarding where they would like to go for a family vacation (Table 14).

Table 14. Situation model 14 – the possibility to express one’s opinion about vacation

Yes		No		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
173	88.7	15	7.7	7	3.6	195	100

The fifteenth model situation dealt with the question of whether or not the child has the right to expect help from their family when problems regarding school performance

arise. The respondents were asked to assess the father’s view that the child should cope with the situation independently (Table 15a).

Table 15a. Situation model 15 – problems at school should be handled solely by the child

Agree		Disagree		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
40	20.5	155	79.5	195	100

79.5% of the respondents did not agree with the view that problems at school only concern children and should be resolved

independently of their parents. This viewpoint was independent of grade level (Table 15b).

Table 15b. Influence of grade level on the replies to situation model 15 – problems at school should be handled solely by the child

Situation model 15 / Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No	Number	15	15	16	27	30	32	20	155
	%	75.0	75.0	80.0	90.0	83.3	91.4	58.8	79.5
	Standardized residual	-0.2	-0.2	0	0.6	0.3	0.8	-1.4	
Yes	Number	5	5	4	3	6	3	14	40
	%	25.0	25.0	20.0	10.0	16.7	8.6	41.2	20.5
	Standardized residual	0.4	0.4	-0.1	-1.3	-0.5	-1.6	2.7	
Total	Number	20	20	20	30	36	35	34	195
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The sixteenth, and final situation model, dealt with the dilemma of whether or not children should only participate in activities of their parents’ choosing. This juxtaposes the

right of parents to influence and regulate their children’s activities, with the right of children to choose and participate in activities of their own choosing (Table 16a, 16b).

Table 16a. Situation model 16 – only participating in activities parents deem suitable

Agree		Disagree		Unsure		Total	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
30	15.4	151	77.4	13	6.7	195	100

77.4% of the respondents believed that children should not be limited only to those activities judged suitable by their parents' (Table 16a). When assessed relative to grade, there was a clear trend. The numbers of those

who disagreed (responded 'no') rose from 44.4% for the third grade to 96.4% for the ninth grade (for more details, see Table 16b): $\chi_6^2 = 40.244$, $p = 0.000$.

Table 16b. Influence of grade level on replies to situation model 16 – only participating in activities which parents deem suitable

Situation model 16 / Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No	Number	8	12	14	28	29	33	27	151
	%	44.4	60.0	73.7	96.6	90.6	94.3	96.4	83.4
	Standardized residual	-1.8	-1.1	-0.5	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.8	
Yes	Number	10	8	5	1	3	2	1	30
	%	55.6	40.0	26.3	3.4	9.4	5.7	3.6	16.6
	Standardized residual	4.1	2.6	1.0	-1.7	-1.0	-1.6	-1.7	
Total	Number	18	20	19	29	32	35	28	181
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

DISCUSSION

At the present time, world-wide emphasis is being placed on new and supplementary research at both national and international levels. This research should contribute to a reduction of differences among countries and ensure effective and efficient utilization of research conducted thus far (A World Fit for Children 2006, p. 21).

The basic principle of implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its entirety is the principle of non-discrimination, as stated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (WHO 2002, p. 19). However, the very first situation model (based on non-discrimination) revealed a significant difference between the responses from Czech children (i.e., the respondents who took part in this research) and the respondents from Spain and Italy. These results reflected poorly on the Czech participants (22.9% of Czech respondents do not respect the principle (answered 'no' and 'don't know'), compared to 8.7% of Spanish respondents and 10.1% of Italian respondents (Casas et al. 2006, p. 11).

This research also shows that Czech children felt that they had the right to express their views on their parents' divorce (92.3%

of Czech respondents agree). Abroad, fewer respondents acknowledged this right, with only 82.9% of the respondents from Spain, and 84% from Italy (Casas et al. 2006, p. 15). In Spanish respondents, the influence of age (older respondents were more inclined to believe they had the right to express themselves) on this right was statistically significant ($\chi_3^2 = 10.912$; $p = 0.012$). The influence of school in this situation was also shown – children attending state schools felt they had the right to be heard regarding living arrangements in the event of their parents' divorce significantly more often than children attending private schools (Casas et al. 2006, p. 15). In Spain, the difference between an urban school setting (with more than 50,000 inhabitants) and a rural school setting (with less than 5,000 inhabitants) also turned out to be statistically significant ($\chi_1^2 = 4.312$; $p = 0.038$) – urban respondents were less likely to feel that they had this particular right (Casas et al. 2006, p. 15). Bakalář states that it is important to not underestimate the receptiveness of children with respect to divorce, nor their sensitivity towards on-going conflicts after divorce (Bakalář 1993). According to Warshak, girls generally adapted better to their parents' divorce than

boys, although gender's influence was not specifically shown (Warshak 2004).

- 1) *Is the perception of children's rights by children themselves influenced by the cultural background (Czech Republic, Spain and Italy) in which they live? Which perceptions of which children's rights are conditioned by the cultural background in which they live?*

Individual components of background, particularly social background, influence the development of the child. Family is of great importance, as it represents the child's basic social group. From a social ecology perspective, this falls within the category of the child's microsystem (Matoušek et al. 2007, p. 249). Family members and relations between them serve as a model of imitation and identification (Vágnerová 2005). The research implies that the differences between cultural backgrounds are considerable, as is evident in the twelfth model situation in which the parents restricted their daughter from freely associating with friends in the evening. 28.2% of the Czech respondents, 85.3% of Spanish respondents and 90.4% of Italian respondents acknowledged the right of the girl to freely associate with here friends (Casas et al. 2006, p. 16).

- 2) *Is there a difference in expectation of rights between girls and boys and which rights are involved, i.e., which perceptions of which rights are conditioned by the child's gender?*

The influence of gender proved to be statistically significant in the following situations: Girls were more likely to identify (respond 'yes') with the following rights: (1) engaging a classmate who was reluctant to cooperate (Spain), (2) family separation (Article 9 of the Convention, Spain and Italy), (3) the right to privacy (Article 16 of the Convention – Czech Republic), (4) access to information (Article 17 of the Convention, Spain), and (5) the right to education (Article 28 of the Convention, Czech Republic.).

Boys identified with the following rights (responded 'yes') statistically significantly more often than girls: (1) only participating in activities organized with parents (Article

12, 13 of the Convention, Spain); (2) parents should determine activities for their children (Article 12, 13 of the Convention, Italy), (3) parental responsibility (Article 18 of the Convention, Spain), (4) missing classes to help with the family business (Article 32 of the Convention, Spain).

- 3) *Which perception of which rights are conditioned by the child's age? What rights do younger children identify with compared to older children in the model situations?*

"A young schoolchild's thinking is bound to reality" (Vágnerová 2005, p. 242). Primary school age can be described as the age of "naive realism," the child's realism first depends on what authority figures (parents, teachers) tell them to do (Langmeier and Krejčířová 2006, p. 118). This is confirmed by 'yes' responses to the following situations: (1) leisure activities are determined by the parents; (2) participation in activities jointly organized by children and their parents; (3) switching off of the TV, should parents feel the programming is not suitable for children; (4) and the right to be assisted by parents when problems arise at school. A young schoolchild willingly obeys authority and easily identifies with the teacher, though usually not to the same degree as a preschooler adopts their own parents' values (Řičan 2006, p. 155). The period of older school age is characterised by "critical realism" (Langmeier and Krejčířová 2006, p. 118); formal logical operations allowing one to contemplate unrealised, non-existing and "if" scenarios (Řičan 2006, p. 175). In this research, older respondents identified themselves (responded 'yes') with the rights described in these model situations: (1) a child's right to express himself regarding which parent he would like to live with, should they divorce (Article 12 and 13 of the Convention, Spain); (2) the right to privacy (Article 16 of the Convention, Czech Republic and Italy); and (3) consenting with their teacher's departure for another country in which there is a lack of teachers (Article 28 of the Convention, Czech Republic). Older Spanish respondents also aligned themselves with the right of the blind girl

to be integrated into a mainstream school (Casas et al. 2006). In the Czech Republic, mainstream educational integration of persons with special educational needs is regulated by the Education Act (MSMT, Act No. 561/2004 Coll., § 16). This Act, among other things, regulates the conditions and prerequisites for integration of persons with visual impairments.

CONCLUSION

This article was trying to express in which model situations were influenced respon-

dents' answers by their age, gender, membership of a particular group (ethnic, according to the place where is the school), etc. The younger respondents agree with articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child mentioned under number 2, 12, 13, 14 and 18, older respondents with articles 11, 13, 16 and 23. Girls present an agreement with articles 16, 17, 19, 28, boys conversely with 12, 13, 18 and 23. There were shown the difference between opinions of respondents from different countries, e.g. "the possibility of a girl to go out in the evening" between Czech, Spanish and Italian respondents.

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