



## Participatory research projects with children : what is participation?

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### Notes on the handout

This handout is not a replica of the powerpoint presentation.

We selected some important elements that we will be presenting today.

The reference list will help you to dive deeper in the subject of epistemic injustice, participatory approach with children in research and in intervention.

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### Introduction

The 1989 United Nations Convention of the rights of the child has made the right of the child to actively participate more explicit.

Vision of children has evolved from them being "future adults" to them being a "whole person" that can participate actively.

Therefore, making them an active participant in research projects is a growing concern and this type of participation would give adults a better understanding of their needs, their realities, their solutions and so on (Beetham, Gabriel, & James, 2019).

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**Epistemic injustice**

As written by Cheney (2018):  
 "In keeping with other decolonization movements, including decolonial feminism, childhood studies could strive not only to decolonize the curriculum by diversifying its contents but also to actively question broader structures of research, policy, and practice to make space for epistemic diversity that will in turn help children's knowledge to be seen as more legitimate in the eyes of researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners. »

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**Evolution of the conception of child participation**

Throughout the years, different visions of child participation were proposed. Three of these models will be discussed.

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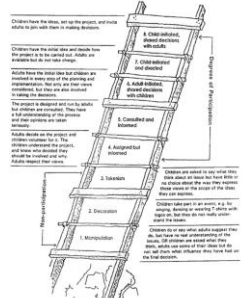
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Hart (1992): Ladder of participation.



(Ramey et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2010)

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Lundy (2007) propose a model to support more participative initiatives, whether it is in research or intervention.

This model states a few of the articles of the convention.

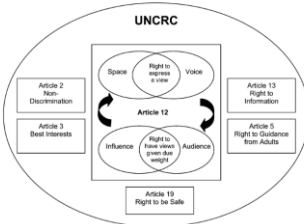


Figure 1. Conceptualizing Article 12

(Lundy, 2007)

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Hierarchy of research participation by Mayne & al., 2018

Hart's Ladder of Participation		Hierarchy of children's research participation rights					
King (in Hart's ladder)	Hart's participation initiative	Level Descriptions	Information provided to the child	Assessment of the child's capacity for understanding	Express views and relate experiences	Carries weight in decision making process	
Rights-based participation	8	Child-initiated and directed, shared decisions with adults	Child-initiated and directed with significant influence, decisions shared with adults. Child is the leading partner in all decisions with adults concerning	Information provided to the child is greater than that of adults	Understanding greater than that of adults	Significant voice	Significant influence
	7	Child-initiated and directed	Child-initiated and directed, but facilitated by adults	Information provided to the child is significant more than that of adults	Understanding comparable to that of adults	Substantial voice	Substantial influence
	6	Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children	Adult-initiated and facilitated, decisions shared with children. Shared voice for child with significant influence	Information provided to the child is equal to that of adults	Equivalent understanding	Substantial voice	Substantial influence
	5	Consulted and informed	Consulted, informed with understanding, heard	Significant information	Equivalent understanding	Sufficient voice	Restricted opportunities for influence
	4	Assigned but informed	Assigned, informed with understanding, voluntarism and measure of voice and influence	Significant information	Sufficient understanding	Restricted opportunities for voice	Significant influence
Non-participation	3	Tokenism	Assigned, consulted informed, but other factors	Sufficient information	Restricted opportunities for understanding	Negligible voice	No influence
	2	Decoration	Assigned, heard, consulted, not consulted	Restricted information	Negligible understanding	No voice	No influence
	1	Non-participation	Assigned, unnamed, possibly invited to participate	Negligible information	No understanding	No voice	No influence

(Mayne et al., 2018)

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**Concluding statement**

**Do we need to have the children direct and/or participate actively in every step of the research to make a project participatory?**

That puts a lot of pressure on researchers, children, families...

**Participatory research can take many forms but implies:**

- An openness;
- Adaptability;
- An awareness of power relations
  - Time;
- A questioning about the result delivery.

(Santiago-Ortiz, A., 2022)

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**Reference list**

**Epistemic injustice:**

- Cheney, K. (2018). Decolonizing childhood studies: Overcoming patriarchy and prejudice in child-related research and practice. *Reimagining childhood studies*, 91-104.

**Children's participation:**

- Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(1), 927-942. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014119207016657033>
- Mayne, F., Howitt, C., & Rennie, L. J. (2018). A hierarchical model of children's research participation rights based on information, understanding, voice, and influence. *Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 26(5), 644-656. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550953X.2018.1522480>
- Bamey, H. L., Lewford, H. L., & Vachon, W. (2017). Youth-Adult Partnerships in Work with Youth: An Overview. *Journal of Youth Development*, 12(6), 38-60. <https://doi.org/10.3195/jydc.v12i6.2017.593>
- Santiago-Ortiz, A. (2022, août 15). "Not everything can be fully participatory, right?": On "True" PAR. A Conversation between Aurora Santiago-Ortiz and Rubén Gatzambide-Fernández. R. Gatzambide-Fernández & N. Raza, Eds., episode 12. Consulté le 1 juin 2023. À l'adresse: <https://youthresearchlab.org/past-episodes>
- Tourigny, S., & Lafantaisie, V. (2022). L'approche participative en intervention avec les enfants : « Je veux qu'il me voit et qu'il me croit ». *Revue de psychoéducation*, 51(3), 199-225. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1093885ar>

An interesting episode from the podcast **Youth Research Lab**: <https://youthresearchlab.org/past-episodes>

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