Abstract
Different scientific studies have shown the efficacy of consuming probiotic agents for preventing and treating certain childhood diseases, in particular those affecting the respiratory tract and the gastrointestinal tract. However, very few studies have assessed the beneficial effect of those bacteria in healthy children, probably owing to the difficulty of obtaining blood samples from volunteer healthy children. Therefore, this study aimed at determining the immune response to the intake of fermented milk which contains Lactobacillus casei as probiotic agent through direct non-invasive assessment of secretory IgA (IgA-s) in saliva concentration in a group of 3- and 4-year old children. Individual values of secretory IgA variations according to the type of probiotic agent taken were analyzed. A positive variation in secretory IgA between the first and the fourth week was observed in children who took fermented milk with L. casei. The analysis of IgA averages at different moments along the experience showed a sustained increase among children who took fermented milk with L. casei as compared to children who received placebo.

Keywords
Probiotic agents, Lactobacillus casei, microbial flora, immune response, secretory IgA.