

***“Empirical evaluation of preventive counselling. A program of counselling and support for young families in which infants and toddlers are at risk for being neglected or abused. This program was initiated and funded by the German Society for Child Protection in the County of Schaumburg, Germany.”***

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#### Dissertational abstract

**Objectives:** This dissertation is a comprehensive, empirical evaluation of the pilot program KEKK (“Kontaktstelle für Eltern von Kleinkindern”, Centre for Parents of very young children) of the German Society for Child Protection. This program is targeted at mothers of children being 0 to 3 years of age to prevent the development of child neglect and maltreatment as early as possible.

**Methodology:** Program effectiveness was evaluated by measurements at two points in time: At intake 43 mothers and their counsellors filled out questionnaires. Maternal feelings and child-care attitudes were assessed with the EMKK (“Erziehungseinstellungen von Müttern mit Kleinkindern”, Childcare attitudes of mothers of young children, see Engfer 1984). At follow up maternal feelings about the program, their relationship to the counsellors and to their own child were reassessed using the questionnaires with 74 mothers. Additionally 17 mothers were interviewed personally. These comprehensive oral interviews were conducted in the homes of the mothers and lasted about 1 hour.

**Results:** All participants were highly satisfied with the program. The time span between the end of counselling and at follow up was inversely related to overall satisfaction. The duration of intervention in terms of the number of sessions with the mothers was unrelated to their satisfaction. Mother’s comments during the oral interview substantiated the significance of this type of counselling. Characteristics of “refusers” (i.e. mothers who initially refused to fill out the intake questionnaires) were compared to those of “participants” (i.e. mothers who co-operated throughout assessments). Although “refusers” were somewhat more “complicated” cases (more unwed mothers, less educated, more economic hardship) their satisfaction with the program did not differ from the satisfaction of participants.