

Lesestart – the German Bookstart program

Impact evaluation of the “3 milestones” project (2011-2019)

Global Network for Early Years Bookgifting | 4 May 2020 | Prof. Dr. Simone C. Ehmig

Lesestart

Drei Meilensteine für das Lesen



Lesestart – what are we talking about?



Nationwide bookgifting programs in Germany

The “Lesestart family”

Stiftung Lesen

AN INITIATIVE OF THE



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research



2011–2019 – “3 milestones for reading”
Target group: children aged 1 and 3 and
year one pupils in disadvantaged fami-
lies. Book gifts by paediatricians, libra-
ries, primary schools.

2019–2027
Target group: children aged 1, 2 and 3
in disadvantaged families. Book gifts by
paediatricians (1/2) and libraries (3).



2015–2019 Program targeting
refugee children aged 1–6 and their families:
book gifts by and material for arrival centres.

2019–2021 “Reading is our Future –
The Lesestart for Refugee Children
Reading Program”.



Nationwide bookgifting programs in Germany

Systematic evaluation of the core programs



2011–2019 – “3 milestones for reading”
 Target group: children aged 1 and 3 and year one pupils in disadvantaged families. Book gifts by paediatricians, libraries, primary schools.



2019–2027
 Target group: children aged 1, 2 and 3 in disadvantaged families. Book gifts by paediatricians (1/2) and libraries (3).



2015–2019 Program targeting refugee children aged 1–6 and their families
 Book gifts by and material for arrival centres.



2019–2021 “Reading is our Future – The Lesestart for Refugee Children Reading Program”.



Nationwide bookgifting programs in Germany

Evaluation of the “3 milestones programs” finished



Lesestart
Drei Meilensteine für das Lesen

2011–2019 – “3 milestones for reading”
Target group: children aged 1 and 3 and year one pupils in disadvantaged families. Book gifts by paediatricians, libraries, primary schools.



2019–2027
Target group: children aged 1, 2 and 3 in disadvantaged families. Book gifts by paediatricians (1/2) and libraries (3).



2015–2019 Program targeting refugee children aged 1–6 and their families
Book gifts by and material for arrival centres.



2019–2021 “Reading is our Future – The Lesestart for Refugee Children Reading Program”.



Nationwide bookgifting programs in Germany

Evaluation of the “3 milestones programs” finished



Almost all primary schools = **nearly 20.000**

More than 5.000 paediatricians offering compulsory examination of 1 year old children.

More than 5.000 public libraries



Evaluation of the 3 milestones program – who and when?



External evaluation of the 3 milestones program in two phases (because of public procurement law)



InterVal (Institute located in Berlin specialised in evaluation and consulting)

in cooperation with

- 2 experts from academic research** in the field of
- reading acquisition (University of Cologne)
 - psychology of early childhood (Univ. of Hamburg)

Advisory board (4 experts representing education studies, research in reading aloud and early literacy)

SOKO (Institute located in Bielefeld specialised in evaluation and consulting)

in cooperation with

Bielefelder Institut für frühkindliche Entwicklung
(Research group working in the field of early childhood)



External evaluation of the 3 milestones program in two phases



InterVal (Institute located in Berlin specialised in evaluation and consulting)

in cooperation with

- 2 experts from academic research** in the field of
- reading acquisition (University of Cologne)
 - psychology of early childhood (Univ. of Hamburg)

Advisory board (4 experts representing education studies, research in reading aloud and early literacy)

SOKO (Institute located in Bielefeld specialised in evaluation and consulting)

in cooperation with

Bielefelder Institut für frühkindliche Entwicklung
(Research group working in the field of early childhood)

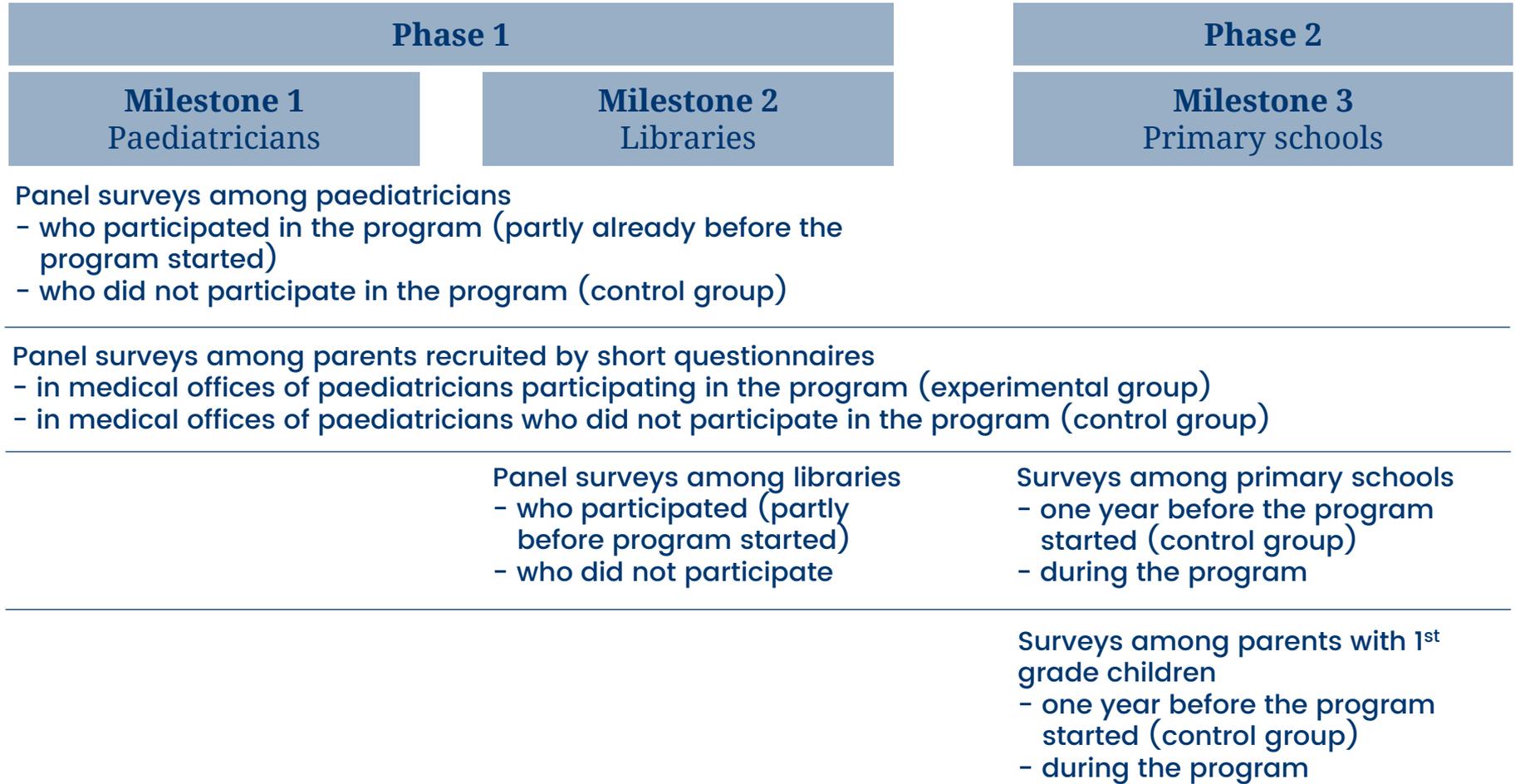
Stiftung Lesen established several **advisory boards** independent from the formal evaluation process to involve experts in the development of material, in the selection of books, or in the organisation of the distribution processes.



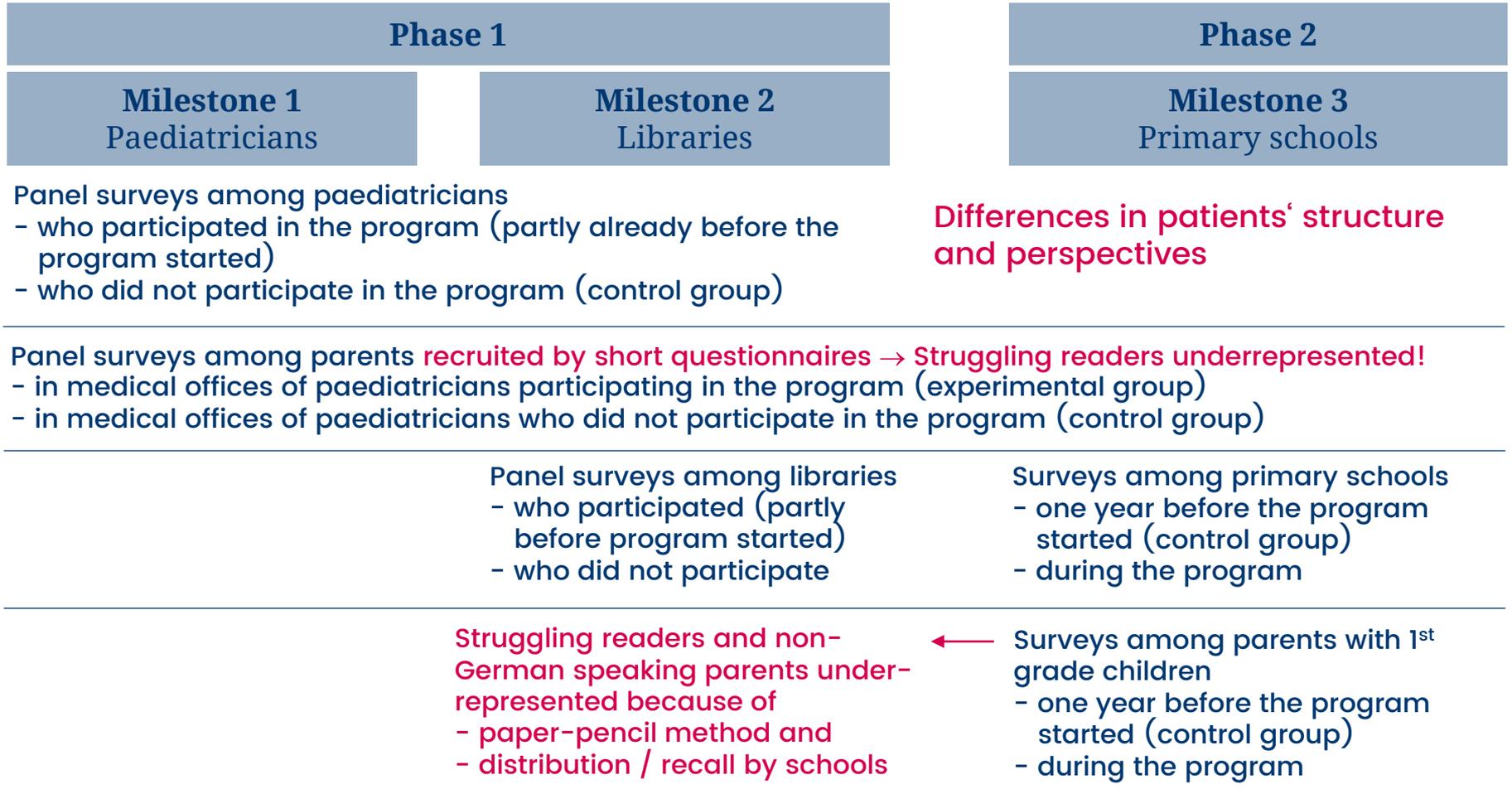
Evaluation of the 3 milestones program – how?



External evaluation of the 3 milestones program in two phases – methods



External evaluation of the 3 milestones program in two phases – methods and their implications



Evaluation of the 3 milestones program – main results



Evaluation – Main results

Impact of book gifts for families with 1 year old children

- More than **80 % of all resident paediatricians in Germany participated** in the program. This shows a high amount of acceptance.
- **One of the main factors influencing the impact on parents is the situation when and how the gift package is handed over:**
Parents who were given the package individually and who had an intense talk to the doctor or an assistant were more often interested in the material and looked at it more intensely than parents who were given the package without any comment.
- **The book and the practical guide** have been the elements in the package parents were most interested in. 80 % had looked at the guide, almost everyone remembered the book.
- Every second mother / father who had used the guide has **realised some of the practical tips at home.**
- The material had a significant **impact on parents' knowledge** about the importance of reading aloud and how to practice it in a family context.
- 84 % of the parents rated the package as a whole as „**very good**“ or „**good**“.



Evaluation – Main results

Impact of book gifts for families with 3 year old children

- **More than 5.000 public libraries participated** in the program – many of them in regions where a lot of disadvantaged families are living.
- 86 % of the parents who went into the libraries, received the gift packages at the front desk where customers usually take or return books they borrow.
- Most parents who came into the libraries, already were familiar with them or took the program as an opportunity to rediscover.
For many disadvantaged families, libraries stay an obstacle. → Libraries were forced to find ways to actively address families.
- 19 % of the libraries found ways to **reach families outside** – mostly in a kindergarten context. The program motivated libraries to establish cooperation with many partners.
- **30 % of the libraries were motivated to organise events** to attract many families at one time to hand over the material. Because of Lesestart, the number of **events in libraries increased by 36 %** altogether.
- **73 % of the libraries invested** in books and digital media or other technical equipment to improve their options to realise reading aloud events.
- ...



Evaluation – Main results

Impact of book gifts for families with 3 year old children

- Thanks to their initiative, libraries were successful to **attract new customers**, especially among parents with children up to 4 years.
- About 57.000 families were reached by the program who had not used libraries before.
- **2 out of 3 parents** who have received the package rate it as „**very good**“ or „**good**“.
- 48 % of the parents have **intensively used the material**, another 45 % at least briefly.
- Again, the **most attractive element** of the package has been the book, followed by the guide which has been read by every second mother / father.
- Many parents are aware of the book gift from the library being a follow-up of the book gift two years before. They tend to use the material less intense than those for whom the gift from the library was the first one.



Evaluation – Main results

Impact of book gifts for (all!) year one pupils

- The **impact of the third intervention** in school, may be described best as a **reinforcement** of the impulses set in phases 1 and 2.
- Families who had received all three gift packages showed a significantly higher **awareness** of reading aloud being important for their children.
- They showed more **activity in reading aloud** regularly and were motivated to **stimulate** their children to learn new words and expressions.
- This has been especially true for parents who had **intensely used the guide**. They more often and regularly read to their children than parents who had not used the guide.
- The long term panel surveys of parents indicate that the program also had an impact on children's language competency and fluency.



Evaluation – Summary

The (formative) evaluation confirms that the program definitely has a positive impact ...

- on **parents' awareness** of reading aloud being important and about their individual **responsibility** to provide this impulse to their children,
- on **parents' knowledge** how to practice reading aloud in their individual family context,
- on **parents' behaviour**: because of Lesestart, more parents read aloud, many of them benefit from practical advice they get by the material,
- on **institutions** (not only in education contexts), **multipliers** etc. who gain responsibility for language and reading promotion,
- to become **active, to cooperate and to build up networks** which contribute to improve children's access to reading.
- Two main factors may improve the impact of the program in the future:
 - trustfulness and authority of multipliers (e. g. paediatrists)
 - short(er) intervals between the stimuli – 2 / 3 years are too long!
- In the consequence, the program actually is realised in a modified way: **Lesestart 1-2-3.**



Lesestart 1-2-3



... is a program **sponsored** by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and **realised** by Stiftung Lesen for more educational justice right from the outset.



Phase 1

Set 1
for children aged 1
at paediatricians' offices
3 x 500,000 Sets 1



Phase 2

Set 2
for children aged 2
at paediatricians' offices
3 x 500,000 Sets 2



Phase 3

Set 3
for children
aged 3
in libraries
3 x 500,000 Sets 3



More than 4.5 mio packages for families with children aged 1 to 3.



Es fängt mit Lesen an.

Stiftung Lesen

Prof. Dr. Simone C. Ehmig
Institute for Research
on Reading and Media
Stiftung Lesen
Roemerwall 40
55131 Mainz

+49 [0] 6131 / 28890-81
simone.ehmig@stiftunglesen.de

www.stiftunglesen.de
www.facebook.com/StiftungLesen
www.twitter.com/StiftungLesen
www.instagram.com/StiftungLesen
www.lesestart.de

**Thank you for
your attention!**

