

# Research Design

**Respondents:**  
primary-school-aged children  
and their parents

**Methods:**  
qualitative cross-sectional studies

**Questions:**  
How do they perceive poverty?  
How do they interpret the situation?  
How do they handle the situation?

## Course of the research steps

**A**

First, we looked at the effects  
of the family life situation  
on the children's space to develop.

**B**

We then looked the coping strategies  
of the parents and in-family mediation.

**C**

We examined the children's coping strategies  
and compiled a typology.

## A twofold conclusion in between

### **A**

The life situations of children  
living in poverty  
can differ in different dimensions.

### **B**

They are exposed  
to highly different coping patterns  
moulding everyday life  
and the family climate.

# Typology of children's coping strategies

## Typ 1:

Multiple pressure on the family  
leads to greater disadvantage  
or even neglect of the child.

## Typ 2:

Parental poverty dealt  
with by compensating the children.

## Typ 3:

Somewhere in between  
is a group of children  
who, in an overlapping way,  
can be assigned to both groups.

## Relieving and protective factors

**constructive parental coping strategies,**

**supportive and encouraging  
parental-child relationship,**

**supportive social networks of the family,  
e.g. relatives and friends,**

**positive social contacts with other children  
(especially with peers),**

**useful opportunities in the children's  
life worlds (= living quarters)  
(e.g. in school, kindergarten,  
after-school-care-centres, child-clubs).**

## **Pressure increasing and risk factors**

**ambivalent and negative  
parental coping strategies,**

**inadequate parental attendance  
and insufficient support,**

**parental overstrain  
by additional burdens and problems,**

**negative social contacts  
(e.g. social exclusion and stigmatization),**

**school and other educational institutions  
not recognizing the problems of children  
in poor living conditions.**

## Conclusions:

**There are three differential dimensions helping the children to cope with poverty:**

**A**

**Children opening themselves to external means of compensation**

**B**

**Children benefiting from the active extension of the paternal or maternal network**

**C**

**Children making use of institutional means of compensation**

## Conclusions (for practice)

**It is essential for materially disadvantaged children to have access to compensatory facilities offered by the local authorities.**

**A range of specific activities and services which relief the parents in providing education are required.**

**Such families also need various advisory services, low level opportunities in their living areas.**

**It is mainly the kindergarten and the school, working with other social educational services, which are called on to be alert to signs of child poverty.**

## What is Poverty?

The answer of Nathalie, a seven year old pupil:

«... if you haven't got enough to buy any new clothes. If you haven't got such a big family, only one or two members or so. If you don't live under one roof. If you don't have enough to eat. If you haven't got a job and can't earn any money. If you haven't got a warm bed. When you haven't got a bike to ride or a car to drive somewhere. If you haven't got enough money. If you can't go to school or kindergarten. If you can't get enough light at home... If you haven't got the right crayons to do your homework. If you can't go shopping. If you can't do anything in your free time. If you haven't got a camera for memories. If you're supposed to take something to school, like a book or a tape, and you don't have it ...»