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eFamily coach: a mobile-assisted service to support families

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"A digital Super-Nanny"



**Award for best practice in
social work 2012**



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the EU
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eFamily coach service in a nutshell



Technically: a web-program
adapted for mobile devices

Provides support for clients' daily
life between their meetings with
counselors via text messages.

The family counselor uses the web,
the client his or her own mobile
phone

FROM RESEARCH METHOD TO WORKING MODEL AND TOOL

STEP1

Use of (Mobile)diary
method in family
studies since 2002

Finding in 2007: the
positive effect of diary
keeping in family
relations

STEP 2

The development and
evaluations of mobile-
assisted working
model and tool 2009-
2012

STEP 3

The implementation
and productization of
the working model and
tool

The mobile-assisted working model

4. Family counselor and family discuss together about what they have learned



1. A meeting between the family counselor and a family. Discussion about the aims of the mobile assisted family guidance.



Family members work towards the agreed tasks (with the assistance of evaluative, reflective and instructive questions)



3. Family members answer to the questions. The answers go in real time to the web-platform

2. Family counselor chooses questions from the platform and programs the timing of the text messages

Evaluative, reflective and instructive questions

FOCUS AREA	EXAMPLE OF A SUB-TOPIC	EXAMPLE OF A QUESTION
Child- parent - relationship	Appropriate child rearing and guiding methods	Describe one situation today where you succeeded well in setting limits to your child?
Spousal relationship	Parallel child rearing methods and practices	On a scale from 1 to 7, how much you and your spouse agreed in child rearing issues?
Family as a team	Family atmosphere	What did you do to enhance good atmosphere today?
Family and environment	Recovering from work	On a scale from 1 to 7, how well did you succeed in leaving your work at the workplace?

The piloting and evaluation of the new model in supporting parents

Context/sample	N	The length of the period
Family counseling office	26 parents	A six week period; mobile assisted work every other week (5 questions, 2 times a week)
Family work	10 families	Like above
Parental group	9 families	7 weeks, each week different questions
Parental education	2 groups	A four week period

CONCLUSIONS: BENEFITS OF THE SERVICE

- For families: Easy tool to remind and implement issues dealt in family counseling (homework):
- For family workers: activates and intensifies family counseling processes; offers an additional support structure
- Especially effective in invoking reflections, keeping important issues in mind and testing family practices at home
- For service providers: cost-effective

