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Early home visitation in families at risk for child maltreatment

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Merian Bride Rafael Bouwmeester-Landweer was born on January 16th 1976 in Ouder-Amstel, the Netherlands. In 1995 she graduated from secondary education at the Stichtse Vrije School in Zeist. In September of that year she started her studies in Educational Science at Utrecht University. For her closing internship she participated in the preparation of the nationwide Standard for Signaling Child Maltreatment at TNO Prevention & Health in Leiden. In December 2000 she received her MSc degree.

From 2001 through 2005 she was a PhD student at the Pediatrics Department of the Leiden University. Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jan-Maarten Wit of the Leiden University and Prof. Dr. Herman Baartman of the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, helped by Dr. Pieter Kousemaker and Dr. Friedo Dekker of the Leiden University she conducted the research presented in this thesis. Merian presented the results of this work in oral presentations at the 14th ISPCAN international Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect (Denver, USA) and at the 9th ISPCAN regional European Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (Warszawa, Poland) as well as at a number of Dutch conferences.

As part of her extra-curricular activities Merian has been actively involved in the board of the Educational Scientists Student Association PAP at Utrecht University and later was Treasurer for the board of the PhD Student Association Leids Promovendi Overleg (LEO).

Merian has a part-time involvement in the implementation of Project OKé in its' original region and assists the implementation in organizations all over the Netherlands. As of April 2006 she works as a researcher for the Leiden University department of Orthopedagogy. Merian lives in Utrecht and shares her life with René Bouwmeester.

Raising a child may be the most difficult task we face in our lives. It becomes all the more difficult when we are occupied by past or present adversities, causing distraction, doubt and stress and making us a lesser parent than we aspire to be – sometimes even, inadvertently, a maltreating parent.

Although many parents would benefit from additional support in raising their children, this is most true for those facing adversities – those at risk. The additional support that is best suited for this group of parents should focus on helping them learn how to cope with their adversities, it should help them recognize the best interest of their children and it should be easily accessible, that is: it should be provided to them in the trusted environment of their own home.

This is the principal reasoning behind the current study, the purpose of which was to determine the effectiveness of early home visitation in families at risk for child maltreatment.

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