

Preface

Mother-child interaction and attachment have high priority on the agenda of Dutch policy makers and scientific fund raisers. In 1986 the Dutch Ministry of Education acknowledged the importance of fundamental research of caregiver-child interaction and invested Dfl 3.000.000,- for a nation-wide Dutch research project, called 'Experimental longitudinal research on caregiver-child relationships' (ELO). The basic goal was to experimentally test the core hypothesis of classic attachment theory: the sensitivity-attachment hypothesis, stating that mother's sensitive responsiveness determines attachment security. The large-scale, inter-University, ELO-project stimulated the scientific discussions and the search for relevant empirical data on core questions of research into early mother-child interaction and attachment, resulting in several publications (among which five interconnected dissertations).

Thanks to a generous grant of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences an international colloquium could be organized in 1995, to enable the presentation of the results of the ELO-project to the international community of developmental psychologists, and to discuss theoretical and methodological implications with internationally recognized experts in research of early mother-child interaction and attachment. We are most grateful for the willingness of our colleagues from the USA and from several European countries to travel to the Netherlands, to present their theoretical perspectives as well as their recent research

data, and to comment on the Dutch studies.

This book offers the results of the colloquium. It exists of the written versions of the presentations by the invited experts, as well as of a series of short reports based on the posters displayed and discussed during the colloquium. The structure and the 'plot' of the book are described in the first chapter, written by the organizers. We hope that this book will contribute to the progressive development of theory, methodology, and research of early mother-child interaction and attachment.

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(Université René Descartes Paris v, Paris, France).

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