



## **Opening 4<sup>th</sup> MCH Handbook webinar by Simone Kukenheim, Deputy mayor of the city of Amsterdam**

In the first 1000 days of a new life, healthcare professionals have the task of supporting every child and parent as best as possible. In this way, children can grow and develop as healthily as possible. However, the advice given in the Growth Guide booklet and beyond is mainly intended for parents with children born healthy and on time. A group of parents insufficiently informed with early life advice is a group of parents with babies born underweight, ill or premature. This is why a supplementary Growth Guide booklet called 'born too early, too light or sick' has now been written. A guide that hospitals can present to parents when their child is admitted to the neonatal intensive care or neonatology department. It can also be helpful for care professionals in hospitals to help explain to parents the condition of their newborn. This opening of the fourth MCH Handbook webinar is the right moment to inspire you with our early findings and the publication of this supplementary booklet.

Parents with newborns in hospital are often faced with difficult decisions. Their many questions are not easily answered as information is fragmented. On the one hand, they have to hand over the care of their newborn to the specialists and rely on the care of experts at the hospital. On the other hand, parents want to support and arrange the best care for their newborn while building a bond with their child in these early moments of life. We felt that the information given in our mainstream Growth Guide does not facilitate this type of information for this group of parents.

Many healthcare professionals have worked hard with parents for the past 4 years to write a supplementary Growth Guide booklet called 'Too early, too light or sick'. Last week I received the first booklet. In order to understand how we can support children and their parents in this respect via a booklet, I would like to read a part of this new Growth Guide booklet to you:

*As soon as you can, you can help take care of your child in the hospital. You can talk to your child, say how proud you are of your child and how much you love him or her. Your child hears your voice, will recognize it and will relax over time. Your child really likes it when you put your actions into words: lifting him out of bed, laying him down on a pillow or unbuttoning his shirt and so on. This gives your child a sense of predictability.*

During this webinar, Marit Recourt will hold a presentation on the information processed and the choices made to complete this supplementary Growth Guide booklet. We will also listen to Mrs. Bando from Japan and Assistant Professor Yang from Taiwan and their takes on providing information to this group of parents.

We believe that all parents of children whose life started in hospital deserve to receive the information they are looking for, bundled in a booklet. This is the support they need. Early evaluation tells us that parents appreciate there is now a booklet in which crucial information is bundled. I am delighted that you inspire each other with contributions from different countries such as Japan and Taiwan and hope to inspire you with the supplementary booklet we have just published.

As deputy mayor, I am grateful that we have made it possible to develop this supplementary Growth Guide booklet. I also listen with interest to what has been developed in other countries. In this way we learn from each other and make it possible for every parent, wherever in the world, to have access to this important information.

I wish you an inspiring webinar today.