



# Between- and Within-family Differences in the Transition to the Second Child

Professor Judith Semon Dubas  
Emeritus Professor of Developmental Psychology  
Utrecht University

April 8, 2024 (Monday)

16:00 – 17:30

Room 646, Meng Wah Complex, HKU

Chair: *Dr Shuyang Dong*

## Registration:

[https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec\\_regform.aspx?guest=Y&ueid=93481](https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec_regform.aspx?guest=Y&ueid=93481)



## Abstract:

The arrival of the first child is acknowledged as a major transition in a couple's life yet there is less interest in what happens to families when an additional child arrives and what factors contribute to when a couple has a second child. Although several studies find that marital quality changes with the arrival of subsequent children, few studies examine what factors may be associated with these changes. Moreover, very little is known about what factors predict how the first child will react to the newborn. In this presentation I first focus on the results of a 4-wave longitudinal study of Dutch two-parent families that were followed from being pregnant with the second child to 1, 13, and 24 months after the birth. In this presentation I report on a set of studies on this dataset that show: (1) how a series of family interactions with a doll (prior to the birth of the second child) predicts firstborns' jealousy and initial reaction to the sibling; and (2) how parental involvement with the first child changes when a second child enters the family and how these changes predict changes in marital relationship quality. Using data from a sample in the U.S., I also illustrate how child age-spacing decisions not only depend on maternal working hours but may also depend on familial support.

## About the speaker:



Judith Semon Dubas, Ph.D. is Emeritus Professor of Developmental Psychology, Utrecht University, The Netherlands. She served as president and secretary for the European Society on Family Relations. Much of her research focuses on the role of reproductive transitions within the family (puberty and child birth) and how these impact and relate to family relations, and child and adolescent adjustment. She is particularly interested in how characteristics of the person (pubertal timing, personality) interact with characteristics of the environment (family, peer, culture) in explaining individual differences in adjustment, risk taking, and prosocial behavior.

Judith Semon Dubas has served as an expert reviewer for several National and International Funding Agencies including the Dutch Research Council in the Netherlands (NWO; Social Sciences and Humanities – Open Initiative Grants and Individual Talent Grants: Veni, Vidi, Vici), The Research Foundation Flanders in Belgium (FWO; Cross-discipline Odysseus Individual Talent program) and the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT; Cross-discipline talent program).

~ All are welcome ~

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