

# Feasability Study Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP) in the Netherlands

Published: 26-10-2009

Last updated: 06-05-2024

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<b>Ethical review</b>	Approved WMO
<b>Status</b>	Recruitment stopped
<b>Health condition type</b>	Other condition
<b>Study type</b>	Interventional

## Summary

### ID

NL-OMON33419

### Source

ToetsingOnline

### Brief title

CODIP in the Netherlands

### Condition

- Other condition

### Synonym

and misconceptions, fear of abandonment, Self blame

### Health condition

Schuldgevoelens, misvattingen (over echtscheiding), gevoelens van eenzaamheid en angst om alleen gelaten te worden

### Research involving

Human

## Sponsors and support

**Primary sponsor:** TNO

**Source(s) of monetary or material Support:** ZonMw

## Intervention

**Keyword:** Divorce, Feasability study, Intervention, Prevention

## Outcome measures

### Primary outcome

Self blame

Misconceptions,

Inaccurate attributions

Fear of abandonment

Feelings of isolation

### Secondary outcome

Internalizing and externalizing behavioural problems

Low psychological and emotional wellbeing

Problems in social relationships

## Study description

### Background summary

A recent estimation points to a total of 70,000 children involved in their parents\* divorce or separation in the Netherlands each year (Spruijt, 2007). Research points out that children of divorce achieve worse in school, have more behavioural problems, score lower on psychological and emotional wellbeing, have a lower self-esteem, and have more problematic social relationships than children of intact families (e.g. Amato & Keith, 1991; Spruijt, 2007). In the Netherlands, there is barely any

preventive support for these children of divorce available. Moreover, available support is rather local, mostly not proven effective, and primarily focused on children aged 8 years and older. Evidence-based preventive intervention for Dutch children of divorce (mostly < 8 years of age) is therefore very much needed. The Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP) is an international evidence-based intervention to prevent divorce related problems in children. The Inventgroup (2005) has selected CODIP in families as a promising early intervention for children with internalizing problems. In this program, aiming at proximal negative consequences of divorce (see Appendix A), children discuss their divorce-related feelings, deal with unrealistic perceptions and attitudes regarding the divorce, and enhance their coping capacities. In a supportive environment, participating children are trained in cognitive behaviour strategies and inherent coping skills. In international studies positive effects of CODIP were found (based on self-report, parental report as well as teacher report) on internalizing and externalizing problems. These effects were maintained in the follow-up, two years after the intervention. This project proposal encompasses the introduction of CODIP - starting with the 15 session module for second and third grade children of divorce - in the Netherlands.

## **Study objective**

Objective of the study is to make this CODIP module applicable for the Dutch situation and to test it in an extensive pilot study to such extent that a decision about national implementation can be made.

Therewith the feasibility study has three goals:

- 1) Translation and adaptation of the early latency CODIP module for the Dutch situation.
- 2) Examining the feasibility of implementing this adapted CODIP module in the Dutch context.
- 3) Determining the feasibility of replicating the positive and desired effects of CODIP as proven in other countries than the Netherlands. To answer to the second and third objective, an extensive pilot study (four support groups) will be conducted.

## **Study design**

The process of adapting, testing, and introducing CODIP in the NL will take place in two stages: Translating and adapting the CODIP second and third grade module to Dutch intermediate and end users. The second study stage concerns an empirical stage: In this stage a pilot study will be conducted in order to provide answers to the second and third study goals, regarding the feasibility of implementing the CODIP module and the possibility of replicating positive intervention effects of CODIP as proven in studies abroad. These two study stages chronologically entail the following activities:

- Translating (textually: English to Dutch) the well designed and structured CODIP manuals and other program materials.
- Developing a conceptual outline of CODIP describing the program's underlying theoretical principles by consultation with the researchers of the Children's Institute (Rochester, NY), and studying publications about CODIP.
- Developing a concept version of the Dutch manual for the after divorce module based on the literal translation and adhering to the conceptual outline. This will include a module for training group leaders and a questionnaire for monitoring program fidelity.
- Designing a concept implementation plan.
- Presenting and discussing these first drafts of the manual and implementation plan with a selection of plausible group leaders to gain comments on it. At this stage, requirements of the final design of the program manual are collected.
- Development and implementation of the final manual - in line with the implementation plan - in an extensive pilot study consisting of four support groups.

## **Intervention**

CODIP has five basic objectives, directly targeting proximal negative child outcomes of parental divorce

### **1) Providing a supportive group environment:**

A fundamental underpinning of CODIP groups is to provide a safe, supportive environment for children.

Contact with peers who have gone through comparable experiences helps participating children to reduce their sense of isolation and develop a sense of companionship and trust. Therefore a safe, accepting environment is established in which children can respond at their own pace.

2) Facilitating identification and appropriate expression of feelings:  
CODIP seeks to enhance the participants\* ability to identify and appropriately express a range of emotions that are associated to the divorce. A variety of play techniques are used to help children identify a range of emotions, including the interactive use of books, pictures of facial expression, and the active participation of a group puppet. To facilitate identification and appropriate expression of feelings, group leaders are encouraged to maintain a safe group environment where all feelings are accepted.

3) Promoting accurate understanding of divorce-related concepts and clarifying divorce-related misconceptions. Because feelings of guilt and responsibility for the separation and hopes and wishes for reconciliation pose an emotional burden for children, clarifying misconceptions is an essential part of the intervention. In CODIP structured puppet play is used to help clarify divorce-related misconceptions. Besides, \*Daring Dinosaurs\*, a board game developed specifically for CODIP, contains cards that reflect misconceptions children often have about the reasons for family problems, with opportunities for group discussion and puppet play to clarify common reasons for self-blame.

4) Enhancing coping skills:  
Several CODIP sessions are devoted to training social problem solving, communication skills, and the appropriate expression of anger, using age-appropriate games and techniques to encourage skill acquisition and generalization. Specifically, children are taught to differentiate between problems they can, and problems they cannot control. This key distinction helps them to master the psychological task of disengaging from inter-parental conflicts and to redirect their energies into age-appropriate pursuits.

5) Enhancing children\*s perceptions of self and family and reinforcement of coping skills:  
This final program objective emphasizes positive qualities of children and families. Several self-esteem building exercises are used to highlight the children\*s positive qualities. For example, in the second and third grade module each child completes an \*I am special\* book detailing his/her characteristics, likes, feelings, wishes, and place in the group and family. Sessions in regard to this fifth objective strive to

heighten children's awareness and acceptance of non-traditional family structures and positive post-divorce family changes that may have occurred.

### **Study burden and risks**

Not applicable

## **Contacts**

### **Public**

TNO

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NL

### **Scientific**

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## **Trial sites**

### **Listed location countries**

Netherlands

## **Eligibility criteria**

### **Age**

Children (2-11 years)

### **Inclusion criteria**

Age range between 6-8 years;  
have parents who at one time lived together and are now separated;  
have written parental consent;

be capable of functioning adequately in a group;

## Exclusion criteria

No evidence of serious aggressive behaviours or severe emotional problems that warrant more intensive services.

## Study design

### Design

**Study type:** Interventional

Masking: Open (masking not used)

Control: Uncontrolled

Primary purpose: Prevention

### Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status: Recruitment stopped

Start date (anticipated): 12-11-2009

Enrollment: 28

Type: Actual

## Ethics review

Approved WMO

Date: 26-10-2009

Application type: First submission

Review commission: METC Leids Universitair Medisch Centrum (Leiden)

## Study registrations

## **Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration**

No registrations found.

## **Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register**

No registrations found.

## **In other registers**

### **Register**

CCMO

### **ID**

NL26837.058.09