MarteMéo means: “on one’s own strength” and was developed by Maria Aarts in the 1980s in the Netherlands.

It is a developmental support program to encourage the parents to develop their parental skills. Also it is used to support pedagogues in the kindergarten.

For years Maria Aarts has been studying the interaction of parents and their children and she worked out what they do spontaneously in daily life to support the development of their child.

With the help of short video clips of good interaction the parents get a feedback on their parental skills and on what could be the next steps. This method is very useful in Early Intervention because there are parents who haven’t developed good parental skills and there are parents of children with special needs.

Analysing the video clips the MarteMéo therapist looks for special elements in interaction:

1. Contact moments
   To get in contact with a child and to build up emotional bonding you smile or make a friendly face and you use kind tones of voices (or you repeat the sounds of the child/the baby). The result of a good interaction is often an eye contact

2. Following moments
   The child learns to develop its own personality and gains self-confidence: you wait and follow the initiative of a child (for example in playing situations); you name what the child is doing, so it gets words for its actions (and you thereby support its speech development) and thus also notices that its actions are important. You name the feelings of the child to support its emotional development and you confirm its initiatives (either with words or by nodding after an eye contact) aiming to support the self-confidence of the child.

3. Leading moments
   The child learns how to develop social skills and gets structure and orientation. In structured situations in daily life (for example eating situations) you start with a clear beginning and you name what you are going to do. So you will be predictable for the child and it will cooperate more easily.

The MarteMéo therapist does not only work with parents but also trains pedagogues and colleagues. I showed an example during the Grundtvig-meeting in Darmstadt:
I looked for MarteMeo-elements in a physiotherapy session......

......and explained them to the physiotherapist
The result: a content and happy colleague!

Marion Wachter, physiotherapist in the Early Intervention centre in Darmstadt