***Critical Thinking on the Child’s Well Being***

 In order to provide children with quality experiences for optimal development, one must understand how the child develops and grasp the concept that all children are different and develop differently. The idea that humans are complex and develop in varying ways is troubling for professionals, and is the main reason why this profession is so reliant on research. Research provides us with extensive knowledge on different aspects and domains of development, and provides us the backbone for early childhood education. Research is being done everyday on children and how they develop and it is important to keep up to date with the latest research so that you can provide children with the most beneficial experiences. It takes a lot of critical thinking skills in order to provide children with the best opportunities for growth, and throughout my higher education, I have elevated these skills tremendously.

 Research was a huge factor in the development of theories, and it provides us with the appropriate reasoning for handling any situation. As child development professionals, research provides us with the backbone and basic understanding of how a child develops. We rely heavily on evidence-based research because it proves to be more valuable and meaningful. We can compare and contrast the research to real life events and make predictions about potential developmental issues. Research is never ending in the field of child development, and it comes in many different forms. The importance of research throughout my higher education has grown immensely. I have learned that with research, we can further enhance the development of children and provide meaningful experiences for optimal growth.

 On my path to becoming a child development professional, I was introduced to the array of theorists and their differing views on how the child grows. It is our job to find a theory that we agree with and to expand on that in our work with children. A good critical thinker takes the knowledge they have learned and applies it directly to their life. Course after course, you start to gain a better understanding of how the child develops and you begin to develop your own set of values and beliefs. I have had the opportunity to work in a childcare center, and I get the chance to use my critical thinking skills and my knowledge of child development in order to provide the children with the best opportunity to grow. When you witness the growth of a child first hand, it really makes you appreciate the research behind it all.

 While scholarly articles and past research provides us with the backbone of how the child develops, it is important to keep in mind that hands on experience is sometimes the best form of research. Without actually being a part of the growth and development of a child's life, it is hard to fully understand all the meaningful moments it has to offer. Everyday you learn something new about children, and you conceptualize all the information you have gathered. You build off of past experiences and learn to adapt to the diversity in a child's life. Combining past research with your own hands on experience is the best way to grow as an individual. It is also essential to familiarize yourself with new concepts and ideas and to communicate with other professionals in order to stay up to date with how the child develops. With all these different forms of research, you can adequately provide children with meaningful experiences to enhance their development.