*SLO III. Developmental Context*

*Students will demonstrate knowledge of the multiple environmental contexts in which children grow and develop, and will be able to analyze systems that support children’s well-being.*

Throughout my college career in Child Development I have repeatedly learned of the multiple developmental contexts which influence a child’s life. There are many things in a child’s life which can have a significant effect on them both positively and negatively. A child is not only directly affected by the people and situations that they come into contact with, but also indirectly affected by people and other factors with which they have never had contact. For instance, a child will come into contact and be influenced by peers, family members, things that occur at school or in other programs they attend. The interactions among each of these contexts will also influence an individual. Settings in which the child is not directly involved with can still have a great influence. A child may never go to their parent’s workplace, but situations that affect the parent’s at work, will influence the child’s life. Many different contexts can directly and indirectly have an effect on a child’s development throughout their lives.

One experience that has facilitated my growth in the area of developmental contexts is my time spent in the Associated Students Child Development Lab (ASCDL). As a teacher, I come into the classroom knowing that I have an effect on the child’s life. It is my choice to make it a positive experience. The things that have happened in my life before I step through that door, can affect the child. They may not have experienced anything that I had earlier in the day, but if I enter the classroom with a negative attitude, unfortunately that child is affected by something that they had no part in. So, as a teacher, I have learned it is important to take my role seriously, and to leave everything negative at the door, and interact with the children in a positive way.

The children’s families are another context in which has an influence on the child. If there is something happening in a parent’s or family’s life the child will be affected. Since children travel between the contexts of home and school throughout their day, and quite possibly others, the interaction which occurs between parents and staff in the ASCDL is very crucial to the children’s well beings. Parent’s relay information about home to the teachers at school, and when the child goes picked up at the end of the day, teachers share information about the child’s day at school. This creates a cohesive environment for the children, this is especially important when working with infants, because they are not able to share their thoughts vocally.

Being a life-long learner, I will continue to strive to create a cohesive environment for the children that I work with doing my best to make their transitions and interactions with contexts smooth. I will think of new ways to create positive interactions with parents and families, and to build positive relationships. When working with children, it is most important to do my best for them developmentally and to be sure that when they are in my care, I give them the best of me.