*Student Learning Objective Three: 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.*

There are multiple environmental contexts in which children grow and develop that support children’s well-being. Before I was a child development major I didn’t know that environmental factors were so important to a child’s development. One important element in a child’s environment is the child’s physical environment which includes access to food, shelter, clothing, health services and safety. I have learned through course work that when children do not have these essential needs met children and families suffer. I also learned that is important to help the family find resources. A child’s physical environment also includes indoor and outdoor space that children experience. In the indoor area one important role adults have in setting up the classroom that is inviting for the children that is age appropriate and safe. I have learned from being in programs caregivers and teachers need to provide materials and create spaces for play indoors and outdoors, if quality experiences are to take place. In an outdoor area children should be able to climb, run, and have an area for independence.

Another environmental factor I have learned about that supports children’s well-being is the family environment. Families are their children’s first teacher’s and are role models. Families have a strong influence on their children. Parents who involve their child in activities build stronger parent-child relationships, which can build autonomy and secure attachments, and assist in forming secure school based relationships. These types of relationships are important for children and parents. I have learned and have gotten to see first-hand at my internship that families are the most important in a child’s life.

Another environmental factor in a child’s life that is important is the school environment. School based relationships are important. Relationships are important to the environment’s influ­ence on a child’s healthy development. The theorist Bronfenbrenner suggests in order to develop normally, a child requires pro­gressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. These are environments children experience while their families work and can play an important role in their development. From infancy through the teenager year’s majority of families are employed. Children spend majority of their time away from home in a child care facility, school, after- school program or being cared for by another person. Healthy development can be promoted by; care that builds positive and supportive relationships that are reliable, safe, high quality, age appropriate and fits the child's ability and culture. I have learned from being in programs that as a caregiver you need to provide children with experiences that are individualized to the child’s unique personality style that build on their own needs, interests, capabilities, and creativity and that can stimulate the growth of the child’s heart and mind.

I have learned a lot of great information about environmental contexts that influence children’s well-being throughout my higher education experience. Important factors that I have learned include; families, stable relationships that are nurturing and supportive, quality child care and school environments. This information will influence my future of being a better caregiver because of my higher education I understand that environmental contexts are important to children’s development and do make an impact.

One assignment that demonstrates my knowledge of the multiple environmental contexts in which children grow and develop is my research paper from research methods in Child Development. I think this assignment accurately shows my knowledge of environmental contexts of families. Through this research project I learned that parents are important factors in a child’s life. I also I learned the impact of parent to child relationship and parental involvement. Parents who involve their child in leisure activities build stronger parent-child relationships.

Another assignment that demonstrated my knowledge of the multiple environmental contexts in which children grow and develop is various environmental assignments for Administration of Child Development Programs. In this course we had to develop a center and design an indoor and outdoor area and write about it. One assignment that demonstrates my knowledge is the environmental write up. In this assignment I learned the square footage needed per child in an indoor area and outdoor area. I also learned what should be in a child care environment that will foster children’s well-being.