*SLO IV. Professionalism*

*Students will engage in professional behavior appropriate to the discipline in professional contexts.*

Engaging in professional behaviors is essential to working in the Child Development field. Professionalism in the Child Development field is built upon individuals’ responsibilities when working with children and families, following the ethical code of conduct, and professional development.

When working with children and their families, adhering to the NAEYC’s (National Association for the Education of Young Children) ethical code of conduct is required for all professionals. Professionals working with children will most likely find themselves in a moral and ethical dilemma with children, families, or coworkers. That is why it is important to train people who work with children to follow the code. The ethical code of conduct sets forth guidelines for responsible behaviors, as well as providing background information and suggestions regarding moral and ethical dilemmas. Respecting the families and children means that professionals must follow confidentiality rules. Fostering relationships with families, children, and staff is built on trust. As a professional, maintaining privacy regarding sensitive subjects will help build trust while conducting professional, responsible behaviors.

Appropriate professional behavior can be learned through trainings and experiences. When first entering the Child Development field it is not uncommon to have little to no knowledge regarding how to work professionally with children. This is why job training and receiving higher education is important, it will better prepare you for the child development environment. I believe the best way to learn how to act appropriately when working with children and families is through direct experiences. From my personal experiences, I have learned that you need a combination of learning about child development in higher educational setting as well as first-hand experiences. I was unaware of the confidentially, privacy, and moral issues that come up when working with children. However, through my first internship in my Child Development class, Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum, I was able to observe and learn from watching professional teachers handle tricky situations. Now, working as a preschool teacher I feel well equipped regarding appropriate professional behaviors.

My understanding of professional behaviors has stemmed from Child Development classes as well as experiences working as a nanny and a preschool teacher. I have learned from my mistakes, as well as from my professors and discussions with fellow Child Development students. In regards to professional behaviors I would like to improve in the area of speaking to families. When families approach me I sometimes get a little nervous and forget what I was going to say. Fortunately, my job as a preschool teacher now allows me to communicate when families on a daily basis. I am learning how to speak more comfortably and use professional language when speaking about children. I plan on improving my professional behaviors in this field by attending professional development trainings and always being a life-long learner. There are new research findings and strategies coming out in the Child Development field, it will be beneficial to keep up with new information and keep building on appropriate professional behaviors.

My resume documents my professional abilities, education, and experiences. This document shows how far I have come in the professional area. It shows my experiences relating to children when I first entered the Child Development field to where I am today. In my resume there are detailed summaries of Child Development classes explaining why they are important to my career.

I included a Letter of Recommendation written by Child Development professor and advisor, Cindy Ratekin. This letter outlines my academic and professional accomplishments. The letter explains why I am a good candidate for graduate school and applying to graduate school shows my dedication to this field as I am continuing my journey of being a life-long learner.