*Professionalism*

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

Throughout my higher education, I have been lucky enough to be provided with an abundance of opportunities to experience professionalism within my field of Child Development. I have learned not only concepts in regards to professionalism, but I have also had hands on experiences. Whether it has been through attending professional trainings, interacting with families and children at internship placement sites, or collaborating with peers within Child Development courses, I have grown dramatically in regards to my understanding of professionalism.

Before attending college, I only considered professionalism to be seen as an activity that took place within Corporate America. After my four years at California State University, Chico, I have come to realize that professional behavior occurs across all career contexts. In order to be successful within any career field, one must have an understanding of professionalism. Professionalism is not only being able to express you qualifications within a resume, but it is also includes having the ability to be an effective coworker, leader, and teammate. Professionalism is being able to relate to a variety of differing individuals, and having the skills and knowledge to provide appropriate feedback and assistance.

One lesson that I feel has truly impacted the way in which I look at my future is the importance of continually developing the professional behaviors in which I will implement on a regular basis. One of the most influential ways in which this task can be achieved is through the participation of leadership/professional trainings. I have had the opportunity to take part in professional trainings both within my Child Development Senior Seminar Course, as well as during my internship experience at Parent Infant Programs. These trainings have opened my eyes to differing ways to view professionalism. They have taught me that the definition of professionalism is extremely flexible, and professionalism is a necessity when working in partnership with families and children.

When working with families and children, we as professionals need to express the skills and accomplishments we have obtained during our undergraduate career. I am fortunate enough to admit that through my college education I have acquired leadership, communication, research, and teamwork skills that I will incorporate into each and every one of my future careers. These skills are not simply lessons that I have learned within my college courses, but rather tools that are integrated into my philosophy of working professionally. I will be sure to utilize these tools within future college courses, workplaces, and in personal life experiences. In order to promote professional behaviors, I will be sure to communicate effectively, foster active leadership, and continue to research new and improved professional techniques.

In an Honors Child Development course, I was accepted to present at the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Conference. I provided Dr. Shepherd, Lisa Newland, and my acceptance letter to the SRCD International Conference as an example of an undergraduate professionalism accomplishment. I provided this document as evidence because I truly believe that having a poster presentation at this International Conference was not only a huge honor, but also a wonderful example of professionalism. Our study was presented to a vast amount of professionals within the field of Child Development, who discussed the importance of our findings in regards to diversity courses within higher education.

In a Senior Seminar Child Development course, I was provided the opportunity to edit and update my personal resume. I believe that this is valuable evidence of professionalism because it allows future employees the chance to review my knowledge, experience, and understanding of professionalism. It is a document that I will not only use when I apply for future job opportunities, but it is also a document that I will continue to update with new professional skills and experiences.