*SLO IV. Professionalism*

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

 In order to be successful in a career within this field, it is important to conduct a high level of professionalism. As an employee, you are expected to exhibit competency and skills needed to complete the job. Throughout my experience at California State University, Chico in the Child Development program, I have evolved and been shaped into a professional eligible to enter the workforce. In regards to working with children and families, I have learned many strategies, techniques, and procedures that should be followed in order to build successful relationships and create a meaningful experience. I have acquired the confidence needed to educate others and the ability to work with difficult people in group settings.

 I have developed professionalism not only within my courses at the university but also through my work and internship experience within my time in Chico. I have not only had experience working on a long-term event project with my peers, but I have also had the opportunity to work with superiors whom have been in this field for many years. I am fortunate to have had experience with mentors who really challenged me and helped me work through difficult workplace situations. Within my final internship at Butte Baby Steps located in Paradise, California, I not only learned how to dress and act professional in the office, but also how to be professional with clients in their homes. I received the opportunity to shadow assessments and home visits in which I obtained a vast amount of information and strategies for working with people in different environments. I also obtained a leadership position in which I was in charge of throwing a community baby shower for the surrounding families in Butte County. I learned how to professionally communicate with businesses, doctor’s offices, and families in order to advertise the event and make it successful. Throughout my time as an intern, I recognized the dedication and diligence that it takes in order to gain professional respect from some adults because of my age. With the help of my professors and supervisors over the course of my college career, these professional skills have dramatically increased.

 I have found that my reading and writing skills are incredibly strong in regards to maintaining professionalism. I am very confident in talking to clients and other coworkers through email and have gained a tremendous amount of experience in appropriate documentation when working with children and families. I have learned how to be objective when observing and how to document these experiences so that others who were not present can easily understand. I also have a strong foundation for technological advances and stay up-to-date on programs and services that can help me build a career. Through job experiences, I have learned how to use different computer programs effectively such as Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, and Word. With the dramatic increase of technology in the workforce, I have found these skills essential to have in order to be successful.

 An area that I would like to improve on in my professional career is public speaking. I have had the opportunity to publicly speak in many of my courses and have noticed significant improvement since entering college. I still find myself nervous and sometimes unconfident when communicating with professionals and want to improve my skills so that I am able to convey my thoughts effectively. In order to increase my speaking skills, I am going to seek more experience so that I can practice in professional settings. This will allow me to gain meaningful advice from mentors in both my classes and internship opportunities.

 As a life-long learner, I will continue to conduct research and stay up-to-date on information so that I can be the best professional possible. Through my time within this major, I have learned that science changes rapidly and there are always new findings in regard to children’s development. In order to help children and families, it is important to do my research so that I can support my work with evidence. I want to use the best possible theories and models available so that I can be professional in the most optimal manner.