*SLO IV. Professionalism*

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

When working with children it is especially important to be professional and model positive behavior. The behavior has to be developmentally appropriate for the children to understand. There are many things that you can do or discuss with teenagers that you cannot discuss with preschool aged children. Throughout my time at the California State University, Chico I have gained a lot of knowledge and skills on how to be appropriately professional. I learned the appropriate professional knowledge through certain courses but then applied my knowledge and gained skills through multiple internships and jobs.

I believe that confidentiality is a huge part of professionalism, especially when dealing with children. Throughout my many internships and courses such as, “Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum for Children: Theory to Practice”, “Child Development Practicum”, and “Professional Seminar in Child Development”. During these courses we discussed a lot about how to keep confidentiality of relationships with other people and how important it is for people with careers in childcare. It is important to not share information about families and children with anyone outside the program, unless it is a dangerous situation. There are a lot of things an educator will learn about the child or family that should be kept secret because the children and their families really trust us educators. If a child or a family finds out someone is sharing their personal information, then there will be no more trust and it will cause issues. Leave what happens at school, or the after school program, or the therapy session inside the closed doors, unless of course it is a serious situation.

The best of what I have achieved in the area of professionalism and confidentiality is at my internship at the Boys and Girls Club, Teen Center in Chico California. Here I was faced with many issues of at risk teens and a lot of information about home life was shared with me. I had to decide what to keep quiet and what to share. I always had to be on my best behavior and very professional because teenagers pick up on everything. They copy things that I do because they looked up to me as a mentor. So I had to set a good example and always model good behavior. I always remember how important modeling good behavior is because of the course “Observational Techniques”. It is hard to always be on your best behavior when dealing with teens because it is easy to form bonds with the teens. Once I realized I was too comfortable I noticed myself slacking on my professional behaviors. So once I noticed myself slacking, I had to change my behavior back to professionalism.

Something that I need to continue to work on as a childcare provider is to not get too comfortable with the children or adolescents. Like stated earlier, once I get to comfortable I am not on my best professional behavior. It is important to form bonds and friendships with the children and adolescents but it is very important to always maintain a professional relationship with them. Modeling professional and appropriate behavior is so important when working with children in the professional world.

During the course “Observational Techniques” I did an ethics assignment where I discussed a lot of professional issues like confidentiality, being respectful in the workplace, and treating everyone equally. This paper shows how much I have grown with professional behaviors overtime. Now I have some different views of how I would handle certain situations and understand that confidentiality is one of the most important issues. This paper shows the beginning of my professional behaviors and proves to me how far I have come today.

During the course “Senior Seminar in Child Development” we were required to create our resume. Throughout my resume I list a lot of examples of how I am a professional and model professional behavior. My three internships are on my resume where I practiced my professional skills at Oak Street Preschool, The Associated Students Child Development Lab at Chico State, and The Boys and Girls Club Teen Center. During each one of these internships I gained a lot of skills on how to be a professional and with each internship the professional responsibilities became greater. Started off with well off preschool aged children and then at the Teen Center I was working with at risk teens who needed a lot of mentoring. I am proud of how far I have come and I cannot wait for my future career as a professional.