SLO III Developmental Context Reflective Narrative

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.

The environmental contexts in which children grow and develop influence their lives in both the present and future. A child’s environment influences them physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. There are many factors that influence these environments, both negatively and positively.

A child’s home environment and community environment play the biggest roles in a child’s development. Included in the home environment are the family structure, socioeconomic status, and caretaking. Families come in all shapes and sizes. When children are raised in stable homes, such as two-parent households or homes with consistent adults, children are more likely to flourish. When the home is unstable, such as when divorce or foster care is involved, children have more difficulties in growth and development. Socioeconomic status affects children because it determines homelessness, available and consistent adults, adequate nutrition, and location. Last, caretaking is influential because when children are in a stable, positive, non-abusive household, their chances of positive development physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially are much greater.

The community environment in which a child is raised also greatly influences all areas of a child’s development. Depending on the socioeconomic status of the community, the safety of the neighborhoods varies. Schooling is also affected because of funding, teacher commitment, and parent involvement. With lower socioeconomic communities, the rate of gang activity, drug abuse, and alcohol use are higher as well. Overall, depending on a child’s home and community environment, their physical, emotional, mental, and social development is greatly determined either negatively or positively.

There have been many experiences that have facilitated my growth in understanding of the multiple environmental contexts where children grow and develop. These experiences have been through my upper division Child Development courses and internships. I have learned about the risk factors, consequences, and solutions to the many environmental factors that influence children’s development. For instance in the class, Child Development 382 Professional Seminar: Current Issues, I learned about the different causes and types of trauma that children may go through. This was especially prevalent in the assignment Web Exploration Activity, where we researched various areas and consequences of trauma. Internships have given me first-hand experience with children from various environmental contexts. For instance, at the internship in the Chico State University Associated Students Child Development Lab, there were children who came from all different types of backgrounds. That I knew of, there were two-parent households, one child being raised only by her mother, and one family in the process of divorce. The emotional well-being of these children was varied, and their behavior made it evident.

Out of all the things I learned in this area, the thing that fascinates me the most is how resilient children are. There are often many circumstances that hinder a child’s development, but they are still able to flourish developmentally in all categories. It is incredible to see the determination that children have to move forward in life and overcome all obstacles. However, although children are resilient, the adults and positive influences in their lives need to guide them in the right direction. It is important to show children that they have the power to overcome any obstacle that may cross their path. The class, Child Development 382 Professional Seminar: Current Issues, addressed this topic. Two guest speakers talked to the class about how important it is to help children get an education, regardless of their circumstances. In the assignment Professional Guest Reflection, I discussed how critical it is to give children resources that can help them and not judge those who are struggling. There is no end to the obstacles that children can overcome and accomplishments that they can achieve.

Being a life-long learner, I will always strive to seek out those in need, and supply them with the resources to succeed. I will also continue to educate myself on the struggles that children may face, based on environment. With this knowledge, I will provide as much stability and assistance for children and families as possible.