*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.*

According to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems of human development, there are many contexts that make up the concentric circle of the child. The immediate environment is the home, family, peers, classrooms and teachers. An example of the Social and Economic Context is the home environment, which would be influenced by the makeup of the neighborhood. The family would be influenced by the parent’s job and how often they are home or if they are happy at work. The cultural context of beliefs, values and guidelines that people in a particular society tend to share.

Having a supportive family is a crucial part in the growth of children’s physical, emotional and cognitive development. Working parents, divorced parents, and parenting style are all things that have been researched and proven to affect the development of the child. Working parents are out of the house more, stressed out, and usually have to put their children in childcare earlier than non-working parents. Diana Baumrind is a clinical psychologist who is well known for her research on parenting styles. Baumrind’s research states there are 3 different types of parenting, including authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative parents. Authoritarian parents emphasize obedience and believe their child should follow authority without any questions. Permissive parents give the child almost unlimited freedom. Authoritative parents are both warm and demanding.

I learned a lot in my psychology classes about theories and different ways to measure the development of children. Out of every theorist we’ve learned about, Vygotsky and Piaget are the two that stick out the most to me when it comes to culture affecting children. Vygotsky’s theory places more emphasis on culture affecting and varying cognitive development compared to Piaget who believes cognitive development is mostly universal across cultures.

What fascinates me the most about all these theories and learning how children grown and develop is seeing it happen first hand. Working in a preschool has really helped me experience first hand how many different aspects of the world effect 3 and 4-year-olds. I get to see these changes happen everyday and see how all these theories we have learned in school, be put to action. I use theories and things I have learned from my teachers with the children and I get to see their growth. These children are challenged everyday and I get to see them try and overcome those obstacles.

As a lifelong learner of child development, I plan to work with children as long as I possibly can. I plan to learn as much as I can about their development and read as much research as I can get my hands onto. I want to be up to date on new theories and studies going on in the world. I will continue to work with children and see their minds grow.