*SLO III. Developmental Context*

*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.*

When I think of multiple environmental contexts with children, I think about poverty, child care, family relationships, the environment of where the children are growing up, and health care. I think about how the environment plays a big role in how children grow and developed. With courses I’ve taken, I been able to recognize when a child is being raised in a health or non-healthy environment. What I have learned is that when a child is raised in a environment with good neighbors, both parents financially stabled, and the child is getting the proper nutrients, the child’s well-being is consider to a healthy and happy child.

Throughout my college experience I’ve been able to analyze healthy and unhealthy environments. To analyze a child’s well-being, I’ve learned to really get to know a child as an individual, look at the environment they are surrounded by and pick up on signals that may lead to signs that the child is not growing or developing right. I believe the well-being of a child really does depend on the environment he or she is growing up in and how they see the world around them. Some examples of unhealthy environments are neglect, poor health and nutrition, divorce in the family, high gene, socioeconomic status and in some cases transportation. Urine Bronfenbrenner gave me a better understanding of how the ecological system works and how this system can affect a child growth and development. If a child has the basic needs of support from family, friends, and neighbors, then the child will be able to build relationships with others. If the family isn’t finically stable, the child can possibly grow up without good health, and be over or under weight, can get sick easily and so on.

I have had a few personal experiences with families who have had finical issues. One in particular that stands out to me is a Hispanic family from a preschool classroom where I worked at. The family didn’t have a father figured because he was in a mental hospital for bipolar and psychotic disorder; the mother was raising four children. The oldest was in elementary, two daughters were in preschool and the youngest boy was a toddler. The mother didn’t have employment, transportation, hardly any friends and no support. When I would go to the home visits with my supervisor, the house was pretty clean for the most part, the neighborhood wasn’t a bad place, but I noticed that all the children would only drink fluid when they would eat. They had cereal in front of them, but they would only drink water or milk. It also seemed like the mother was exhausted from disciplining the children, there wasn’t too much food and when my supervisor asked why, she said that she doesn’t have transportation so she only brought home what she can, but went weekly to the supermarket. Since she was getting finical help from the government and WIC, she couldn’t afford to buy healthy foods because it was expensive. It also seemed that the children ran the house hold and didn’t listen to their mother as much. After experiencing this home visit, I started noticing that the two girls in my classroom would only drink their milk during breakfast and lunch and eat small bites of the food that was provided. They were happy girls, they loved their mother and their high gene was fine. In this case, I saw the mother struggling, but she did try her best to provide her children with what they needed, basic food, water, shelter, love and care.

I did a research report in my Method of Inquiry Child Development class, on how media affect children’s body image. In my research, I found that body image started affecting children at the age of five. At the age of five children started to worry about their weight, and it surprised me because children started to watch what they would eat and try not to eat so much because they’re worried they won’t fit into society’s eyes. As children grow and develop, they see what people around them look like, and then they grow up thinking that they have to look a certain way. This affects them in the sense that their not eating right and they’re getting mixed messages from the environment around them. When they don’t eat right, it affects the way they learn and develop because they’re not getting the correct amount of nutrients they might need. They’re thinking about food and if they look good or not. If they don’t eat correctly, it starts affecting their health by becoming underweight.

In my Survey of Child and Adolescent Psychology class I learned about different cultures and how different family dynamics influence the way a child grows. I got the chance to interview two Koran students that attended CSU Chico State about the way they were raised. I got to asked them if their parents were involved in their lives, if they had day care or attended preschool and if they were close to their parents growing up. For the male student I interviewed, he said his parents were always working, so he was always outside playing with the neighborhood children, he didn’t do day care because in Korea there wasn’t such thing when he was growing up, he had a baby sitter or one on one attention from a person. When it came to education, the teachers and parents would take that very serious and they didn’t have close relationships with the teachers, they separated play from education. He also said that he wasn’t too close to his parents because they were always working, he was independent for the most part. As for the female, for the most part her answers .were the same as the male. The only difference in her response was her family. They owned a business so her parents actually made her work at a young age. She said she was very close to her family and she never had the chance to play outside with other children.