Student Learning Objective I:. Foundations of Child Development

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Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and empirical foundations of the discipline. My knowledge of child development has grown so much since the beginning of my college career. From taking a variety of classes about children, families and our neighbors, I have acquired most of my information about different theories and behaviors. Through many internships and observation classes, I have learned how to portray the information that I have learned inside of the classroom. I believe through the course of your time in college, teachers and the experiences classes provide you, you become well prepared for a career in Child Development.

A theory that I learned and have personally witnessed in an internship would be attachment theory. Attachment theory, created by John Bowlby, focuses on infants and their relationship with their parent. There are three kinds of attachment in Bowlby’s attachment theory: Secure attachment, avoidant attachment, and resistant attachment. By an infant developing a relationship with one caregiver, the child with being successful in social and emotional development in their continuing life. This attachment also helps with the infants’ regulation of their own feelings. When working in the Child Development Lab at Chico State, I witnessed the attachment theory with children and their parents everyday.

Infants in the Child Development Lab struggled the first few days of being there. When the parents would drop them off in the morning, the infants would have a hard time leaving their mother or father. The attachment the infants had to their parents would be considered secure attachment, meaning transitioning to being with unfamiliar people was difficult for them. The more time the infants spent inside of the Child Development Lab, the more attachments they grew to the teachers. The person they grew attachment to was someone they were around everyday. This caregiver was their security blanket and they looked for when they needed reassurance about something. If an infant was sad or really happy about something they would immediately go to that person. This caregiver gave the infant a person he/she could always rely on which made them comfortable being inside of the classroom.

After studying about infants in the classroom and working with them in an internship, my understanding of children had changed. When I was around children I would want to hold them all the time and never put them on the ground. I would immediately rock them and give them a bottle if they began to cry. My first instinct about a crying baby was to help them stop crying. When working with infants, I thought that it was all about just keeping them happy and making sure that they never got hurt. I would try to give them toys to play with and never give them a chance to make their own decisions. But now after reading books and working hands on with infants, my understandings have changed.

My dad just had another baby and when the baby starts to cry, he immediately puts the baby in a rocker. I tried to explain to him that rockers, swings and pacifiers aren’t the best solutions when the baby is crying. If you always give the baby something to help him stop crying, than he will never learn how to self-soothe—learn to breathe through crying, and calm down independently. Infants don’t cry just because they want to, but because of a certain reason. I explained to my dad that when an infant is crying it is a way to express their frustration because they don’t have words to do it. That since infants don’t do a lot of physical activity it helps them make themselves tired. My understanding of infants just from my semester in the Child Development Lab has grown so much and it will help me when I become a parent.

I would like to continue to learn about the brains of children. To truly understand how their brains learn and how much information they can understand at certain ages. For example; infants understand a lot more information than people really understand. I would like to get a better understanding of how much information they acquire from just listening to people talk around them. I would like to research the time line of how the brain works and how it grows with the years go on. The development of children is so wide that there is always more information to learn.

The first assignment that supports my attachment theory and my understanding of the infant development would be my Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) for Child Development Practicum. The DRDP is used as an observation tool to record the progress the child is doing. When writing up the DRDP, I examined the infant’s social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. A certain section of this DRDP had me observe their attachment to a caregiver and how it had changed over their time in the classroom. This DRDP gave me a better understanding of the development of the infants.

The second assignment that supports my understanding of child development would be the weekly journals in Child Development Practicum. It was observation notes about the progress that the children showed while in the classroom. These notes showed me what each could do from the beginning to the end of the semester. It was also a record of what I had seen while being in the classroom over the course of the semester. I got a better understanding how the infants progressed and learned over time.