**Student Learning Objective 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.

Throughout my higher education experience in the field of Child Development, I have grown in my understanding of the multiple environmental contexts in which children develop in many ways. The environment in which children grow up and develop plays an enormous role in supporting the child’s well-being. Some children need certain environments that will help support their development in more ways than they would another child. This I believe is one of the most important aspects of the objective of developmental contexts because not one child is the same and each child will develop on their own time and in their own ways.

One experience which I’ve had that facilitated my understanding of this objective was my course on The School-Aged Child. Within this course we discussed, observed, and analyzed the main principles of growth and development of children ages six to twelve. Throughout the several courses I have taken on Child Development, I have regularly been educated on the development and growth of children from prenatal up until elementary school. The School-Aged Child course reinforced the fact that humans are still developing well into their adult years. At the age of six and up, school is such an important environmental context in which they grow up because they typically spend more time at school with their peers than they do with their family. This course really reinstated the fact that there are so many factors that influence the development of children including what friends you chose to hang out with, what clubs you join at school, and whether you attend an afterschool program or not.

Another experience I’ve had that really enhanced my growth in the developmental context of children was a parent social event I had to attend during my Child Development Practicum course. This event was a great example of a system that supports children’s well-being for me to be involved in to get a better understanding of the support families give to children. By having most of the parents for each child attending the local school for a holiday event, the children were able to relish in their multiple social systems all at the same time. They had their fellow students there to play with and they also had their teachers and parents there to have that good network of social and emotional supports.

Of all the things I have learned about the environmental contexts in which children grow and develop the thing that fascinates me the most is the resiliency of children. I’ve read many articles and watched multiple documentaries on how children, who grow up in tough environments and shaky support systems, they are able to bounce back from traumatic situations and continue developing and growing. Because children are so resilient and can thrive in numerous types of environments, I believe this to be a very important objective for the field of Child Development. I would also like to observe and learn more about the school-aged and adolescent years of child development because, just as the first few years of life, the later years are just as important when ensuring good developmental support systems.

Being a life-long learner, I will continue to grow in my understanding of this particular objective of developmental context in several ways. I am sure there will be multiple scenarios that will help me better understand different and new environmental contexts in which children grow up. I would especially like to grow in learning more about developmental contexts and analyze the systems they help support children’s growth because I believe this is a framework that is constantly growing and changing, just like the children themselves. Having only witnessed and been a part of a handful of development environments, I am eager to observe new and upcoming types of support systems and hope to one day facilitate one on my own.