Professionalism

Throughout my higher education, I have learned the importance of modeling professional behavior. Before I was a child development major I thought acting in a professional manner was to show a form of respect. However, I have learned that using professional behavior is more than showing consideration. Using professional behavior shows others that you take your job serious and that you care. Professional behavior is especially important when working with children because parents and families trust you with their children. Therefore, your hope is that you meet their expectations so that they feel confident that their children are in good hands.

Basic professional behavior includes: following the rules, dressing appropriately, maintaining good hygiene, understanding your expectations, having the ability to communicate properly, using interpersonal skills, being initiative and maintaining a positive attitude. In my higher education I have gotten the experience to work on my professional behavior during my various internships. My internships were a great learning experience because I got to understand the importance of acting professional, as well as what it looks like to be professional when working with children. I have grown in this understanding because when working with children there are certain professional behaviors that are expected of you. These behaviors include: helping support families and children achieve their full potential, respecting the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual, and recognizing that children are best understood in the context of family, culture, community and society.

During my child development experience, I feel that I have learned the most about professional behavior in my Child Development Practicum class. In this class we read articles and wrote discussion posts about the importance of acting professional. As students we were to implement what we were learning at our internship sites. The semester I took this class, I interned at Chico State’s Child Development Lab with preschool aged children. During this internship, I worked alongside other teachers and saw many parents when they dropped off and picked up their children. It was my experience there that I truly realized the importance of behaving professionally. I feel that one aspect of demonstrating professional behavior when working with children is developing positive relationships with parents, families and co-workers. Therefore, at my internship I tried to get to know the teachers better, as well as go out of my way to be warm and welcoming to the parents that came into the day care. I also learned that there are certain behaviors parents expect from a professional caregiver. These behaviors include: mutual respect, common sense, good communication skills, being reliable, having established rules and being loving towards their children.

Another experience in my higher education that helped me learn about professional behavior was making a resume in my Child Development Senior Seminar class. I learned more about what employees are looking for in a resume and how to write professionally so that I can stand out on paper. I thought making a professional resume for this class was very beneficial because I can apply the skills that I learned when I am ready to applying for jobs after college.

I feel that the most important component of behaving professionally is being a role model for children to look up to. Our disposition and attitude reflects who were and can highly impact children’s lives. The way we handle ourselves and treat others is a significant part of who we are, therefore, I want to do the best I can to be attentive to other people’s needs. As a life-long learner, I will continue to read about ways that I can improve my skills on behaving professionally. There will always be room for me grow and learn new things.