SLO 1 Foundations of Child Development

*Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and empirical foundations of the discipline.*

I can remember the first day of my freshmen year and taking a child development class on a whim. I had no idea what the there were theories involved and that absolutely everything from conception to adulthood had a name and specific importance to another person or body part. I can still remember the time when figured out how to pronounce Piaget for the first time. The process of learning about the theories was slow in the beginning I really didn’t think that I going to be studying child development for longer than a semester. I learned what I needed for the test and I moved on forgetting the rest. Little did I know that the theories would just keep coming up and I would eventually have to commit the theories and the ideas behind them to memory.

 Being more committed to my goal as a student of child development I was about to watch children and assess the way that their behavior and interactions were contributing to the world around them. I had always thought it could all be connected somehow; but as time went on I learned that I was not the only one and that there were people out there who had done some serious study about children and how they interacted with each other and how the environment influenced their behavior.

An example of attachment theory by Bowbly is when I see children being dropped off at a program and can tell different things about their attachment to their parents. There are children who wave good bye and don’t look back, those who scream that mommy isn’t coming back, and a virility of others. This helps me to know how to best help the parent and child when the drop off happens; Or the steps to make it easier. There are ways that one can build secure attachment and learning about the theories has shown me that.

I have also seen the affect that can seem small can have on a child and how the child’s interactions with the world has a bigger role then many realize. I always though that a child was just that a child; and they had little or no effect on the world around them but in Bronfenbrenners’ ecological systems theory I can see a child’s family and how the parents job or the part of town that the child is from either helps or hinder the outcome of that child life. On the other side of this the Childs choice and behavior influence others and environments. It might be in subtle ways but when looking at the bigger picture I have often wondered about the outcome and how the effects are often more widespread then just an isolated incident.

Before learning about the theories I just thought that children are just born the way that they are and there is not much of anything we can do to change that. I thought very little about the Childs’ past. What our relationship was and what I was teaching the child. I now find myself asking why. Why are you acting this way? Why do you interact with others in that way? What made you act this way? I now try to find the reason and plan for the future. Children often have triggers of things in their past such as a great relationship with the grandparents or a love for dogs. We can often look at the theories and apply them to help give the children we work with their best start and be more effective.

I think that Bronfenbrenners ecological systems theory will help me in the future because with the child at the center there is so much that must be taken into account. I have often found myself asking what can I doing for the child education and how can I help make an impact. I think that more people need to think about life in that way. Asking how can I influence a child for positive benefit for everything from new laws, to what one is putting on the dinner table, it is important to remember that our action always affect more then just us.

I have so much to learn about theories and want to dive a bit deeper in to many of them. I feel as though right now I have many terms in my head but lack the knowledge of what some of those terms looks like practically. I can talk about the different types of attachment but I cannot tell you the repercussions as an adult. I would like to learn about the effects of the different levels and not just be able to recognize them for what they are.

In my Survey of Child and Adolescent class I wrote a paper about the attachment that newborns develop with their parents and what parenting styles are tied to each attachment style. I have such little information about each thing and can see the flaws in my writing I just was not very informed about my topic. Now almost two years later I can usually pick out the differences in parents ‘responses and interaction qualities. I have made a lot of improvement in my understanding form the time I wrote that paper to now.

In my Child Development Assessment Issues for Children and Families class I was required to watch a video about a child and told to come up with a plan of action for next steps for the child. I videoed myself talking to another student pretending to be the Childs’ mother it was here I that I was forced to take my knowledge one step further and apply it with a real person. I have learned to observe and take what I see and turn it into something that might actually be useful. There was a time that I did not understand what observation was for. I just wanted to jump in and get something done. However I have learn that I can see and assess children through observation using the theories to guide me I can figure out how to help them.