*SLO IV. Professionalism*

*Students will engage in professional behavior appropriate*

*to the discipline in professional contexts.*

 We think this SLO refers to professional behavior being important to learn in any discipline. Professional behavior should be learned so students understand how to conduct themselves outside of a college environment. Professional behavior can include thing such as showing up on time, dressing appropriately, making eye contact when speaking with someone, and not behaving in a way that would reflect poorly on yourself or your university. We also think that there is a lot of political correctness in being a professional in Child Development. We think this is because we are dealing with people’s children and their families. So therefore, we must be extremely careful with how we conduct our business with others professionally. As a Child Development major, we want to be able to help situations when we are working closely with families.

 Child Development professionals should be able to communicate effectively with both children and adults. Child Development professionals should also value teamwork and collaboration. We typically need to communicate and collaborate with other individuals to decide what is best for a child. For example, teachers should collaborate and work appropriately with parents to discuss a child’s needs. We feel it’s important to never make an assumption about an adult, children, or their families. We feel the one of the most important skills would be communication. We do not think that anything can be successfully accomplished if one does not communicate their needs or what they think a child needs to others. Also, we think that if a professional cannot understand the communication from other colleagues, parents, or children, then it will be very hard to be a Child Development Professional. This profession is designed on communication and without it, then one may find it hard to help others or get things done with colleagues.

 We believe that most of our growth in this area has been learned outside of the classroom. We have had the opportunity to have a series of different internships in our major outside of the classroom which have allowed us to work with children and families. This has given us the most growth because hands on experience has been the best tool in understanding how to conduct ourselves as professionals. Trial and error has been a great tool in the area of growth because it has allowed to learn from trying. This is something that has been taught from the actual interactions with children and their families; this is something that cannot be taught from a book.

 One area we would like to work on in order for our professionalism skills to grow would be our communication skills. We find this important because we would not want to overuse certain everyday phrases such as ‘like’ or ‘um’ when we are slowly becoming closer to entering the professional world. We would not want to sound unprofessional, unprepared, or uneducated. We also would like to improve ourselves by widening the range of children and families that we work with. We have only worked with certain age groups which does limit our experience to only children with those age groups. For example, we do not have extensive experience with families that children who are in their adolescence. We would definitely like to gain more experience working with adolescence so we can become better adapted to help them and their families. Our experience is so limited to children up to ages ten or eleven so therefore, we want to expand our experience to give children and families the best care and help possible.

 As life-long learners, we want to be able to continue educating ourselves on the needs of children and families of all types and ages. We always want to continue shaping ourselves as professionals and enhancing our skills/abilities. We think professionalism also shows how a person is able to handle stressful situations. We recognize that there are many different types of families and we want to be able to help all of them and not just be limited to certain families. We also want to be able to remain open-minded to the different environments we will come across as professionals and stay educated on to stay professional while working in diverse communities.

 We agree that the best of what we have achieved in this SLO has to be learning how to communicate with adults and interact with children on a professional level. We have gained the confidence to communicate with other professionals and now we feel comfortable communicating with almost anyone in a professional manner. We also think the connections and relationships we have built in a professional light has been a highlight of what we have achieved in this area. We have been fortunate enough to have lots of hands on experience with our various internships throughout our major and this has played a big role in our great achievements in becoming professionals.

 Each of us had the opportunity to complete Child Development Practicum in varying classrooms; infant, toddler, and preschool aged. We were each given self-reflection assignments. In one of our self-reflection assignments, we were given the task to create specific goals to better our skills and knowledge in child development. We were also provided the opportunity to reflect our challenges and come up with ways for us to overcome those challenges as well. This assignment helped us understand our skills and challenges better, and overall, helped us grow as individuals as well as Child Development Professionals.

 Another assignment in our Child Development Practicum class that we had the opportunity to do was participating in a group inquiry project. We worked and collaborated with our group members all semester long to design and implement curriculum for our respective classrooms. One of the first steps in this process was to develop and complete a contract within our groups. The contract listed different steps that would occur in the planning and implementing of the project. Our groups had to work very closely together to develop the contact. We had to work around each other’s schedules to meet outside of class in order to finish the contact. This assignment helped us learn how to effectively work in groups. We really had to work with and trust our group members in order to develop our best work.