**SLO 4 Professionalism**

Students will engage in professional behavior appropriate

to the discipline in professional contexts.

Throughout my higher education I have learned the importance of professionalism in the workplace, and what it means to be professional. We have had opportunities where we were able to engage in professional work settings and have first-hand experiences with being a professional in a childcare setting. We are required to act professionally in our internships while interacting with children, parents, and staff. We also are expected to know professional behaviors in the child development discipline, such as confidentiality, respect, and appropriate communication.

The skills of a Child Development Professional are comprised of being able to know the basic foundation of research and assessments, have the ability to successfully work as a team, and have the skills to work and communicate with diverse populations. Additionally, they should have college-level education in a child development related field. Child Development Professionals have dispositions including being open minded, supportive, and sensitive to diversity. They must value the specific needs of the children and families they are serving and not have any judgments towards them. Having the viewpoint of putting the child’s success first is crucial for Child Development Professionals.

I have grown in my understanding of this area through internships and guest speakers in my classes. For example, in the Lilac Room we were responsible for getting to our placement on time and we had to be ready to work. We were exposed to the professional side of working with parents in childcare through daily interactions and conferences. In our Professional Seminar class we heard presentations from many Child Development professionals, and discussed current issues and how to deal with them professionally.

In regards to professionalism, I would like to improve by gaining more experience directly with families in a setting were I have more responsibility. I believe having a leadership role in an organization or company will help me move forward in my development as a professional. I would like to improve my confidence as a Child Development Professional, and that would definitely help me achieve it.

As a life-long learner I will continue to do my best to learn from the professionals above me. I will stay updated on current issues and trends, so that I can work professionally with families from diverse backgrounds. I will seek feedback and reflect on my job performance in order to improve what is needed. In my senior seminar class we had the opportunity to hear a teacher speak about the Nurtured Heart Approach. This approach is something I will continue to learn about and practice after I graduate, as it is an approach that coincides with my values and beliefs.

The best of what I have achieved in this area is a greater understanding of the skills and dispositions that Child Development Professionals possess. In addition to gaining new skills, I also have a different viewpoint than I did growing up, which will be beneficial for me as a Child Development Professional.

In the beginning of my Practicum course, we had to write a prompt that addressed any anxieties we had before starting our work in the Associated Student Child Development Lab (ASCDL). One of my anxieties I mentioned was not being confident in my ability to work with children at the end of the semester. I felt like I had a lot to learn still as a Child Development Professional. I was also worried about the workload and not being able to meet deadlines. At the end of the semester I realized I was capable of the work, and I learned a lot from the head teachers at the ASCDL.

Near the end of our semester working in the ASCDL, we had performance evaluations. Under the “Professional Qualities” section, I had many areas that were marked “Exceeds Expectations.” Some of the areas were, “Retains composure and calmly handles difficult situations. Shows awareness of needing help and seeks it when needed,” and “Shows enthusiasm for their unique position. Has cheerful disposition and is invested in their work.” The feedback I got from the performance evaluation gave me the confidence I needed to continue my growth as a Child Development Professional.

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