Student Learning Objective 1:

Student will have an understanding of the theoretical, empirical, and philosophical foundations of the discipline. IN addition, student will be able to apply their knowledge while working with children, families, and fellow professionals.

I took awhile reflecting on the statement above. During my reflection I thought of all the many theories I have learned throughout my time in the Child Development major here at Chico State. Some theories are discussed throughout all classes in the child development major, while others are only mentioned once or twice. Theories that stuck out to me and that have been helpful throughout my work with children are Bronfenbrenners Ecological Systems Theory and Erikson’s stages of Development.

Bronfenbrenners ecological systems theory has taught me that children are not only affected by their home environment, but also by school, peers, teachers, their community, and the world as a whole. This is one of the theories that I have been able to fully remember and have been able to apply to my work with children. For example if I child is having a hard day at school I can consider that their could be something going on at home or they could have seen something in their neighborhood that is upsetting them. I will know not to just jump to the conclusion that the child is intentionally acting out, but rather there might be a hidden meaning behind it.

Learning about Erikson’s theory I am better able to assist children in their development. By knowing the stages of development, as stated by Erikson, I am able to facilitate growth in specific areas and am able to understand where I child should be developmentally. I know that infants need to form attachment in order to have positive relationships later in life, that two year olds are learning to explore their enviornment and as a child development professional I need to set up age appropriate activities and environments for children to explore safety. Lastly another part of Erikson’s theory that has been helpful to me is the third stage, which is three to six year olds. They are learning how things work and are learning right from wrong. In this stage it is important to let them try things and help them when they need help, but allow for independence and learning. These three stages are extremely important when working with young children, which is what I want to do.

Before I took child development classes in my upper division course work I didn’t know about these theories and I was going off my gut instincts when working with children. I was interacting with them, but sometimes I would expect more out of children or wouldn’t understand why they were doing something or acting the way they were. Now I know that children are at different levels and attempting to achieve different things. All children are different and learn in different ways so as a early childhood professional it is important to be creative and understanding.

As a member of the child development profession, I can offer my creativity and passion for working with children. Being a life long learner, I will continue to take courses related to new information in the child development field. I will keep refreshing my memory about the theories of child development so I can share information with parents when issues arise. I will also keep up to date with these theories so that I am able to look for the early warning signs of a disability. Another thing I will do as a life long learner is to keep up to date my taking courses and workshops related to developmentally appropriate curriculum.

As discussed above, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory has been disused in some of my classes and I find this theory to be one that I turn to often. By completing a paper based on this theory in Issues In Child Development with Chris Coughlin I was able to break the theory down in order to better understand the different levels that affect the child.

Another important piece of information to document my knowledge of theories and how to apply them to my interactions with children are the weekly journals that I wrote in Child Development Curriculum. The paper I wrote in Methods of Inquiry, would be a good source of information to look back on to see how to create a research paper. This shows how I can read and understand empirical articles and how I created my own study about children. Lastly, the individual child study that I completed in Observation can show how I observed a child for a semester and then wrote a written report documenting their stages of development. This is important because it shows that I know how to observe different areas of development and then reflect on the child’s abilities without being bias.