Programs for Children and Families

*Student Objective:*

*Students will understand features of model programs for children and families as well as implement developmentally appropriate curriculum activities. Students will evaluate the**impact and efficacy of these programs for children, families and communities.*

I have had experience in multiple child care programs during my higher education. Each program has had unique characteristics. My time at California State University, Chico has helped me to gain an understanding of the features of model programs for children and families. I understand that a model program is one that puts children and families first. It is one that focuses on the well-being, development, and happiness of children. A model program is also one where there is communication between teachers and families. A model program has teachers that do more than teach. They care, they lead, they inspire. I have learned that there are many programs available that “get the job done”. However, if I were putting my child into a program, I would expect more. To me, a profession in child development is more than a job. It is an opportunity to change children’s lives for the better. I would hope that I could leave my child in the trusted hands of professionals, just as I hope parents feel confident in my abilities to teach and care for their children.

Another concept that I have become experienced with is implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum. I took a course entirely devoted to developmentally appropriate practice within child development. This course helped me to have a deeper appreciation for the planning and thoughtfulness that goes into every aspect of a child’s school day. It would be effortless to throw some toys and books into a room, and sing a song or two with the children. However, this would deprive children of the opportunities that they need and deserve. In model programs, teachers use intentionality when arranging materials in the environment, planning certain activities for certain times of the day, and take the time to have conservations with the children. Model programs also use developmentally appropriate curriculum. I am thankful for the knowledge I have gained about what is developmentally appropriate. For example, I do not expect the preschool-age children that I work with to be able to read a book without assistance or to be self-reliant problem solvers. Those expectations would not be developmentally appropriate.

I have also been taught about the impact and efficacy that can be expected of child care programs. Programs for children and families should foster success. They should encourage and support the families that are served. Something that would like to learn more about is evaluation of programs. My administrative internship in the Child Development Lab at Chico State is giving me a great opportunity to observe and use evaluations. This semester, I will be completing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) for classrooms within the Child Development Lab. I am looking forward to the knowledge and experience that I will gain from this internship. I want to be prepared to be an effective leader and a positive influence on the children that I work with. This goal is so important to me. I will continue to strive to be the best that I can be...for children, families, and the community.

My coursework at CSU Chico has influenced my understanding of quality programs as well as my ability to contribute meaningful feedback to those programs. In a course titled Administration of Child Development Programs, I completed a project in which I developed a childcare center, including the design, staffing, budget, and equipment for the center (see “Program Design Project”). In another course titled Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum for Children, I wrote a reflection paper about my experiences in a local preschool program for my internship. This paper includes my thoughts on professional aspects of the program as I gained first-hand experience in the classroom (see “Writing Assignment”).