*Student Learning Objective: Foundations of Child Development*

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

My first response to this is that it is something I have seen and read countless time, and realize I have never really stopped to soak in what it really means. So upon reading it again, I realize that after four years this statement describes things I know and can now put into practice. What stands out to me the most in these statements is how it describes that students will be able to use “theoretical, empirical, and philosophical foundations of the discipline”. My first thought is no I can’t and don’t do that, but the truth is I do. I don’t even realize it any more but when working with families the knowledge I use is based off of a theoretical and empirical, and philosophical background that I now have.

For example when working with a child who doesn’t want to do something, I use positive reinforcement, only state things they can do, and attempt to redirect the child if necessary. I know that when dealing with parents you need to respect the family, how they parent, and the decisions they make for their children. Thinking through different age groups, I can identify what is appropriate for each age group based on the theories from theorist I have learned over the years. When working with toddlers last semester, in my Child Development practicum experience, I knew to be aware of the id, ego, and super ego and how that was affecting their decision making and their drives from learning about Freud. I understood that toddlers are at the stage of wanting to be on their own, but still need help and need to learn to be proud of themselves, from Erikson’s theories. I knew how to play with children because I was aware that there were transitioning from solitary play to more group play, and were just starting to be able to pretended, because I knew Piaget theory. Putting together all the theories, it gave me the knowledge of toddlers accomplishes that I needed to work with the children last semester.

I have grown a ton over the last four years, and my attitude has changed dramatically. When entering college I had the attitude that I knew everything, and didn’t have anything to learn and now that I am about to graduate I feel like I know nothing. I have learned that there is always more to learn, and I will never stop learning. I never thought I would be a lifelong learner but now I would consider myself one. I am excited to learn more about children with disabilities, and the area of Child Life as I continue on my journey of learning after graduation this May. My understanding of theorist, theories, and different learning models has grown a lot. This happened slowly from just taking one class at a time, and just working my way through the different subjects. I have gotten a few opportunities to volunteer, one semester I volunteered at Chico Community Children’s Center, helping out with their after school program, and last semester I got the chance to work in Associated Student Child Development Laboratory with toddlers at Chico State. The thing I have learned most is about how I learn, and what my strengths are. I have figured out what I bring to the table and how to use it to my advantage. I think my strengths are that I am very child focused, driven, committed, enthusiastic, and flexible. I am able to go with the situation, and roll with the punches. When I commit to something I give it everything I have, and I will go the extra mile.

Of all the things I have learned in this area the thing that challenges me the most is how to discipline children and how to handle challenging behavior. Working with toddlers last semester I dealt with some challenging children, some grumpy children, and at that age children who are just trying to figure out how things work. I had a variety of different situations to handle, and it was always a challenge for me. I had to navigate my way through changing diapers, when children would not stop repeating “ouch ouch” just because they didn’t want their diaper changed. I had to learn how to redirect a child who consistently displayed the behavior of shooting a fake gun to a more positive behavior, and just had to deal with normal toddler emotions. I am excited about getting more experience with disincline, because I think I will only learn by experiencing it and receiving more training as I continue on in my career.