

SLO VI. Developmental Context

Students will understand the multiple child rearing contexts in which children grow and develop. Students will appreciate and interpret how social class, parents, families, peers, type of children's programs, culture, societal changes, and communities influence the course of development.

I have grown in my understanding in my knowledge of developmental contexts through working in the infant room, toddler room, in a preschool, and being a childcare provider. I have learned while working with children and through Child Development courses that children develop at their own pace. Some children learn certain tasks/ subjects faster than others, and every child learns in their own unique way. It is important to realize each child's individual learning strategies, and be supportive by assisting and facilitating their learning through interactions, activities, and even through the environment. If we know a child learns best visually we can create things they can see to help them learn. For example, for some toddlers to learn emotions, it can help to print out faces of children displaying different emotions and discuss it with them. This ties in to developmental context because teachers are facilitating and scaffolding children's growth and learning.

A teacher should always consider a child's individual learning process as well as their unique interests. Learning each child's interests can help teachers assist them more easily with learning new things. This involves observing what the

children enjoy, and using these interests to create positive and meaningful interactions. This could include asking open ended questions, offering suggestions, and being creative and building other activities off of what they are already doing. Being in a classroom with children it is really apparent that every child learns differently and has their own personalities and interests. It is our job as teachers to support children's learning, interests, and needs the best we can. This relates to developmental context because teachers should always be there to understand and support each child's developmentally needs and individual learning strategies.

Teachers need to also keep in mind every family has their own backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs. This includes being aware of different cultures around the world, and respecting values and beliefs other than our own. It is important to learn the languages spoke at home in order to help facilitate language development in the classroom. Teachers should communicate with families as much as they can, and get to know about their cultures. Diversity is what makes every classroom unique. It allows different backgrounds, languages, cultures, beliefs, and traditions to all come together as one. It makes a classroom more interesting, and allows for even more learning opportunities for the children, families, and the teachers.

I have gained knowledge of developmental context though working with children who's second language is English. I have used strategies such as sign

language to help them better communicate their needs, and to improve communication between us as well. For example, in the toddler room I presently work at we have a couple children that come from households where English is not the primary language spoken. I facilitate snack time and I use, "more", "all done", and hand washing sign language cues in order to more effectively communicate.

There are several assignments that demonstrate my growth and learning in the area of developmental contexts. While completing the autobiographical paper in Child Development 255 (Marriage/ Family Relationships) I was able to write about my family. I choose to write about my grandma, and how her illness was affecting my family. This allowed me to express my family's own beliefs, and gave a sense of how my family had been dealing with that type of situation. This paper allowed me to express my own family values. It enabled me to recognize that everyone's family goes through hard times, good times, and different experiences that shapes and affects each individual differently. Realizing these things creates further awareness of diversity.

During the individual case study in Child Development 251 (Observational Techniques) I was able to observe one target child throughout a semester. I documented and evaluated ways in which they individually learned, expressed themselves, and how they developed over the course of the semester. This was one of the first times I was able to see first hand how different children really

are from one another. This expanded my knowledge of developmental context by understanding how each child develops at their own pace in an early childhood classroom setting.