**Foundations of Child Development Narrative**

By: Taylor Hardoin

*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.*

Throughout my higher education I feel that I have grown in the area of discipline. I know what I know today about child development and discipline because of my higher division classes as well as my internships and hands on experience. There are many theories on human behavior that shape the way I feel about discipline today. When I first started taking child development classes we talked about how important the right kind of discipline is and how teachers and parents should approach this area. I never knew it was so important or that there were so many theories on it. I believe that my internships have had the most impact on my professional career in child development. Having this hands on experience is something that I find so important when working with children. Learning these theories in the classroom is important, but applying them to real life situations is when the real learning takes place. Even though I am done with my internships through classes in the major, I will continue the hands on learning through my job now and through jobs that I will get in the future. The learning when working with children is endless and I can’t wait to learn something new every day.

One theory that I believe changed the way I feel about discipline is Gordon’s theory on discipline. I have always remembered the “I messages” and “you messages” throughout every classroom I have been in. I have tried to use the “I messages” when I am explaining to a child that they have done something wrong so I am not placing blame but simply explaining how I feel about the child’s behavior. An example that I have seen many times in a classroom is when I child breaks a simple rule in the classroom. If a child pushes another child, instead of saying “You need to stop pushing other children” rephrase the sentence to “ I need to see appropriate behavior so that recess can still be on the schedule later!” When I use sentences like this in the classroom is provides a more positive atmosphere.

Another theory that I have learned that I use in the classroom and around children daily is B.F. Skinners theory of discipline. This theory relies on reinforcement and is used every time a child does something correct. I find this effective because children get more out of a situation and remember the situation better if they are getting praised instead of punished. Children enjoy being told they are doing something correct. For example, If two children are in line and one child is being destructive while another child is waiting patiently, I like to praise the child that is waiting patiently and more likely than not the other child will wait patiently so they will also get praised.

I believe that I will continue to use these theories throughout my life working with children. With these two theories and others like it, I believe that I have learned how to make any situation a positive one. I have learned to stay calm in most all situations in a classroom and that if the teachers are calm the children will stay more calm in these situations. Disciplining is never easy but with practice it becomes more manageable. I will continue to learn new ways to handle challenging children and new ways of disciplining.

The first assignment I have chosen to use is a behavior guidance assignment. This assignment was meant to describe what I would do in a situation where one or more children are being challenging or disruptive. This assignment relates to what I have written above because in the paper I am deciding what to do about the situation at hand and then I give examples from the book about what professionals would have done. In my child development narrative above I describe that professionals should be calm while dealing with a challenging child and also turning the situation into a positive learning experience instead of blaming the child for doing something wrong. In the behavior guidance assignment I attempt to explain to the child what is going on and teach both children a lesson. I think now that I have more experience I may have made the experience more positive by guiding the children to a different activity instead of just explaining the situation.

The next assignment I chose for this learning objective was a paper I wrote about multicultural school settings. This paper does not specifically talk about behavior and discipline but I believe that the way a classroom is set up has an influence on children’s behavior. This assignment gives an overview of a multicultural classroom and how important it is to teach children about other parts of the world and show them that not everyone is alike. This relates to the information I wrote about in my child development narrative because if children know more about each other and know about how every individual is different from an early age, this could change the way children think about each other and children may behave differently as a result.