

CHLD 209: Child, Family and Community Relations – Discussion Questions

The following questions are suggested for use within an online discussion board. They could also be incorporated into a traditional classroom environment.

Discussion Board 1 – Bioecological Systems

You have been learning about the ways children are continually influenced by the world in which they live, particularly the microsystem: families, schools, teachers, and communities. You have also learned that microsystems are not the only source of influence on children's development. Sometimes changes in the larger world, the chronosystem, impact macrosystems, exosystems, mesosystems, and microsystems as well.

As the world entered the 21st century, a number of events and tragedies have greatly impacted the lives of children and families throughout the world. In the United States, acts of terrorism and natural disasters in particular have brought about dramatic changes in the chronosystem, with possibly long-term effects on the lives of children. For example, the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 most probably caused the young children of New Orleans and southern Mississippi to experience lasting physical and emotional distress. It impacted their lives in many areas including school readiness. Their distress has been further exacerbated by the Katrina-related challenges faced by their families, such as finding employment, affordable housing, health care, and care for the elderly population, which may include children's extended families.

To prepare for your Discussion, read:

- NACCRRRA. (2006). *The After-Effects of Hurricane Katrina: Child Care Providers Needed Along Gulf Coast So Families Can Return Home*. Available from <http://www.naccrra.org/news-room/press-releases/2006/6/the-after-effects-of-hurricane-katrina-child-care-providers-needed-a>
- Save The Children. (June 2007). *Child Care: An Essential Service for Disaster Recovery*. Available from http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/issuebrief3_07.pdf

Consider the following scenario:

Imagine you are a teacher in a Head Start program that has reopened eight weeks after Katrina hit. Your students and their families have all been displaced, and your classroom and their homes are set up in a temporary trailer park.

1. Post two ways you can support children's needs with respect to any of the components of their microsystem, including
 - a. The children themselves
 - b. Their families
 - c. The current school situation
 - d. Their peers
 - e. The children's sense of community
 - f. The children's exposure to the media

2. Identify one way you might positively impact children's mesosystem, exosystem, OR microsystem.

Discussion Board 2 – Cultural Heritage

Chapter 2 discusses the many ways families are different. Describe your own cultural heritage, including the factors that make you unique. How is the lens with which you view others impacted by your cultural heritage?

Discussion Board 3 – Family Development

Imagine you are getting ready to take a new job as the director of a new center or open the doors to your own childcare center. Budget is not an issue. You have unlimited funds so dream big. (This will never happen in the real world!) Identify five specific strategies that you will use in each of the following areas that will help ensure positive relationships with families:

- Physical environment
- Classroom activities
- Administrative and policy guidelines

Discussion Board 4 – Mandated Reporting

Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters website provides information you will need for this Discussion Board. While you do not need to register and complete the training, the “FAQ” and “Signs” tabs located under the “Resources” drop-down menu all have valuable information that you should read.

Link to: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services training site for Mandated Reporters. [<https://www.dcfstraining.org/manrep/index.jsp>]

Consider the following scenario: Jane has been arrested and charged with child endangerment, child neglect, and child physical abuse. Her 16-month-old son was found alone at 9pm at night with a rope around his waist tied to a sofa. He had severe rope burns on his stomach and side and had a bruise on the front of his face and a split lip, probably from falling down face first. Her child has been placed in foster care.

Looking further into the case: Jane is a 22-year-old mother of Joe, who is 16 months old. Jane is a single parent and only has a high-school diploma. Because of the harsh economic times, Jane works two jobs just to pay the bills. But she is still struggling. Jane is new to the community and doesn't know anyone yet. She sends Joe to daycare during the day, but she works a second job a few evenings a week and can't afford to pay someone to watch Joe. Jane loves her son very much and wants to make sure he's okay while she's gone in the evenings for a short time, but knows she can't let him run around by himself. To keep him "safe," Jane ties a rope around Joe's waist and gives him plenty of room in the living room. She ties the other end to the leg of the sofa. This way, Joe is only allowed in certain areas of the room, and can't be harmed. (adapted with permission from Hernandez, 2008)

After reviewing this case study, discuss the following questions. Incorporate and cite at least two quotes from the DCFS Mandated Reported training site.

- a. If you (Jane's son's teacher) happened to be the one to stumble upon this scene what would you legally have to do?
- b. What factors indicated abuse and neglect were present?
- c. What risk factors, stressors, and challenges did Jane face in her parenting situation?
- d. How might understanding these risk factors, stressors, and challenges help you support Jane within your professional role?
- e. What strategies would you use to ensure that Jane and her son receive the support they need?

Discussion Board 5 – Family Involvement

This activity is designed to help you appreciate and understand the family-centered philosophy that is the basis for services to young children. DEC Recommended Practices (identified in the *DEC Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application* by Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, McLean, 2005) defines family-centered as “a philosophy or way of thinking that leads to a set of practices in which families or parents are considered central and the most important decision maker in a child’s life. More specifically it recognizes that the family is the constant in a child’s life and that service systems and personnel must support, respect, encourage, and enhance the strengths and competence of the family.”

This video tells the story of the Ngeno family from Heartland Community College’s Child Development Lab. The family very graciously shared their family story, challenges and dreams for the future. In this rare opportunity, you will learn their family story in a concise format. In your own classroom, the stories of each of the children and families in your care are likely to be compiled over time through formal and informal conversations.

Watch the video: Heartland Equity and Inclusion Project (HEIP). (2012). Ngeno Story. It is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4bp-V1N04w>

Listen carefully and take notes using the “**Family Story Analysis Form**” handout to organize your observations. Replay parts as often as needed.

After viewing the video:

- a. Write a Description of the Family
 - Identify the unique characteristics of this family and the impact of culture, social background, language, abilities, communication styles, and values on the development and learning of their children. What are their goals for themselves and their children?
- b. Write a commentary on resources
 - Include the ones they have mention as already having utilized.
 - Suggest additional resources that you anticipate them needing in the future to achieve their goals.
- c. Post on the Discussion Board
 - Your description of the family and their goals
 - Your commentary on pertinent resources past, present and future

Discussion Board 6 – Conflict with Parents

Consider the following scenario:

A parent picks her child up at the end of the day and notices her clothes are dirty. After asking you what she did that day, you reply “we played in the sand, it was such a beautiful day.” She becomes very angry; telling you that she does not spend good money on her daughter's clothes so that she can become filthy at school.

Reflect on what you have learned about developmentally appropriate practices, partnering with families, and conflict resolution.

Post how you would respond to the mother, showing you understand the goals of partnership and resolving conflict.

Discussion Board 7 – Home School Continuity

Your textbook describes the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model for parent education. The Child Development Lab (with input from the PAT National Center) has adapted the PAT model as a center-based model.

Revisit the Parents as Teachers website that you used earlier this semester. This time look for the integral components of a PAT program. Available from: <http://www.parentsasteachers.org>

Then visit the Heartland Child Development Lab web site to learn about their family based practices and about their model. Available from: <http://www.heartland.edu/cdl/faq.jsp>

Watch the video of an interview of the Parent Support Specialist from the CDL. She describes her job. Heartland Equity and Inclusion Project (HEIP). (2012). *Interview with Parent Support Specialist Video*. Available from <http://youtu.be/lbh9KyFl6-c>

For your discussion post, identify what you see as the strengths of the PAT model the Child Development Lab uses. How do you feel that this model is supportive to families? In what ways does this model complement the bioecological theory discussed in your chapter?

Discussion Board 8 – Share Service Learning Project

Based on your Service Learning Project, construct a display/report to share what you have learned about this agency, the services that they provide, and the role you played while you were volunteering for them. You will want to save brochures and flyers from the agency (you can scan these to yourself to insert online) and document your work with photos to make your display/report more interesting for your classmates. Also share with your classmates the value of this project to you personally.