**Introduction**

By volunteering at the Building Blocks Day Care this past semester, we have had the opportunity and privilege of volunteering in both the infant room, and the toddler room. This has helped us learn how to nurture children through a safe and healthy environment.

Figure 1. Represents how children grow together and learn from each other. Their repetitive lifestyle at Building Blocks Day Care combines physical, social, and intellectual development to benefit the children both in the classroom, and at home. This structured lifestyle helps children communicate with others and build important life skills.

**What Did We Do?**

At Building Blocks Day Care we helped infants and toddlers grow through various repetitive acts. We showed these children structure through visual learning and example setting of routine daily activities such as washing hands, eating a healthy snack, cleaning up, sharing with others, and using manners. Typically parents give their children electronic toys to keep them occupied, however we have seen how playing with classic non-electronic toys such as doll and blocks can promote development and spark curiosity at a young age. As the children age into different classrooms, electronic toys become less prevalent to encourage the children to interact with each other rather than focus primarily on the toy. This interaction promotes creativity in young children as described in Richard Louv’s national bestseller, “Last Child in the Woods.”

**Reflections**

The toddler room at the day care is an incredibly diverse group. With kids ranging from Cuba to Sri Lanka, it was easy to see the mannerisms and personalities of each one. Because of their differences, we were forced to assimilate in order to accommodate to their needs. Since each of their cultures have unique characteristics, they were helpful to use as a learning tool for the other children. Spanish and baby sign language were just a few of the many new methods of communication.

Figure 2. Displays a food pyramid and the importance behind eating the right portions of food. One of the primary focuses at Building Blocks Day Care involves healthy eating. The children eat a regimented snack that provides routine and enriched nutrition to support growth. Healthy eating is taken seriously among teachers and parents, and the food is prepared in a kitchen on the premises allowing for freshly prepared meals.

Figure 3. Shows Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory that claims that development is influenced by several environmental systems. This theory identifies five environmental systems that all relate back to one another.

**Conclusion**

Working at Building Blocks Day Care has helped us understand how children develop and the correlation that it has on their lifestyle. In FYP we have discovered a lot about ourselves, as well as those around us. Through working with children we have further advanced our knowledge gained this semester by being able to relate our experiences at Building Blocks Daycare back to ideas developed in class.

**Personal Reflection**

“Volunteering at Building Blocks Day Care has not only taught me how to care for infants, but also about patience and compassion.” –Mackenzie

“Through this experience I was able to develop more knowledge about difference cultures and their unique and specific customs” –Nicolette

“Working with the kids and the teachers at Building Blocks Day Care has taught me a lot about different lifestyles.” –Caitlin