These JEP Reflective Questions are designed to help you reflect upon your experiences as a service-learning student so that you can make the most of your community experiences. Please use these prompts to help you think about the practical applications of your USC course work in a ‘real world’ context.

Please read through all of the Reflective Questions prior to beginning your JEP assignment. The questions are related to and build upon one other. In addition, some of the assignments depend on your observations over the course of the semester (vs. during a particular week). We encourage you to refer back to previous responses and to take seriously your PA’s feedback each week. Doing so will help you to learn more from your experiences.

Note that as you respond to the questions, you should concentrate on answering the main question(s) (i.e., the bolded ones). The additional prompts are ‘focusing questions’ to help you identify critical factors related to the main question. If your experience at your JEP site doesn’t allow you to adequately answer a Reflective Question, you may substitute with an Alternate Question listed at the end of this document.

*Please refer to the PA agreement you received in training for instructions regarding journal due dates and format requirements.

WEEK ONE – First Impressions of your JEP Site
Describe your initial experience at your JEP assignment. Include a detailed description of your classroom, and the responsibilities and activities involved in your particular assignment. What are your most vivid impressions of the site? What were some of your expectations prior to beginning your assignment and what were these expectations based on (e.g., mass media images or personal encounters)? How do your experiences this week compare to your expectations?

WEEK TWO – One-on-one chat with JEP Program Assistant
This week you will be meeting one-on-one with your Program Assistant to talk about your experiences in JEP. In place of a full-length journal assignment this week, we ask that you take a few minutes to write down any questions, comments or concerns that you have about your JEP assignment so far. For example, what are your tasks at the site and how are you adjusting to your new role? How are you relating to the people at your site? Are you having any problems with any of the logistical aspects of your assignment (e.g., schedule, transportation, Blackboard access, etc.)? Please submit your comments (approximately a paragraph) the same way you
would submit any other journal through Blackboard. Rather than providing written comments, your PA will discuss the issues with you during your chat.

**WEEK THREE - The Social and Physical Context**
Describe the social and physical context of your JEP site. Try to be as specific as possible about the number of people that are there, as well as the age, sex, race, ethnicity, and any other significant characteristics of all those involved in your JEP assignment. Walk or look around your site and take in the environment; specifically, provide details about the size, space, decor, noise level, etc. of the classroom (or meeting room), the building(s) making up the site, its grounds, the neighborhood (or whatever you could see of the neighborhood on your way to your site). How do the aesthetics and overall feel of the site and neighborhood compare with the USC campus and/or other places you have worked or attended school? What are some of the main differences and similarities? How might these differences or similarities (e.g., of the physical context of the classroom) impact the learning experiences of students at the site?

**WEEK FOUR - Perception**
Earlier in the semester, you read about and discussed vision and visual perception (Lilienfeld et al., Chapter 4). By now, you probably have noticed that processes of sensation and perception serve as the foundation for most of what we know and do, and how we conceptualize the world around us.

Keeping this argument in mind, describe a meaningful event or series of events (positive or negative) in which you were involved at your site (or which you observed). Discuss the various factors that may influence the ways in which you and other individuals perceive the same event or series of events differently. For instance, how does your racial/ethnic and gender identification, age, or social class influence your interpretation of the witnessed event(s) as opposed to, e.g., a colleague? What does this suggest about the importance of perception to society? Be sure to cite specific examples in your discussion.

**WEEK FIVE - Reasoning and Intelligence**
The way we use our memories to deal adaptively with the present and future is a process called reasoning. Psychologists argue that our general capacity to reason is referred to as “intelligence”. Intelligence is defined in many ways and researchers and educators debate over the best way to define and measure intelligence. What type(s) of intelligence do IQ tests tend to focus on? Do the students with whom you are working display any special talents in one or more types of intelligences? Provide some examples of students’ comments or behaviors that display a particular type of intelligence. Does the school teach and/or encourage students to develop abilities in each of these areas? Which forms of intelligence seem to be more valued than others in your placement site?
WEEK SIX - Gender Differences
While sex and gender are words that are often used interchangeably, sex and gender are different concepts. Sex is biologically determined (e.g., male/female); gender is learned behavior, or socially constructed (e.g., masculine/feminine). That means that girls and boys are taught—socialized—how to behave ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine.’ At your site, pay attention to the conversations between and the behaviors of girls/women and boys/men. Do you see any gender differences in the way they talk or behave? Can you identify any behaviors of boys and girls that appear to be sex-typed? Is there any evidence of gender socialization in the classroom/JEP site (e.g., ways in which boys and girls are encouraged to display “gender-appropriate” behavior?) Are there any differences between the social expectations and the actual behaviors of those with whom you are working?

WEEK SEVEN - Personality and Control
Personality is an important element of who we are. Your journal question for last week asked whether you noticed any ways in which children are socialized in certain gendered behaviors, meaning that they are strongly encouraged to display socially accepted and expected behaviors. During your time in JEP, have you noticed any other instances when your (or any other) student’s personality traits (e.g., curiosity, shyness, enthusiasm, assertiveness, etc.) were questioned and/or suppressed by authority figures or her/his peers? How did the student react to that? How did you feel about that? How could this affect the student psychologically in the long and short term?

WEEK EIGHT - Final Reflections
How have your experiences in the community helped you learn about psychology? What theories or concepts “came to life” most dramatically for you in your work with children? How have your perceptions of psychology changed, if at all? (Be sure to provide specific examples). How has JEP supplemented your classroom experiences? Highlight a noteworthy experience to illustrate your response.

ALTERNATE QUESTIONS
1. What have you learned about yourself? What kinds of stereotypes about children in this community were challenged for you, if any? Reflect on your role as service provide at the site. List one or two things that you have done that might benefit the person(s) with whom you are working, either immediately or in the long run. Finally, describe something you could have done to benefit the individual but did not, and why you did not or could not do it?

2. Apply one of the theories or concepts from the course you think is particularly apt or flawed for explaining the psychology of the students with whom you are working? First, briefly summarize the theory or concept. Next, describe the particular experience or encounter at your site of relevance to the theory. Finally, how well does the theory explain your experience?