



DULCE Family Specialist Profile

Alameda County, CA

ABOUT ALAMEDA COUNTY

Clinic: Highland Hospital

Early Childhood Agency:
First 5 Alameda

Setting: Urban

Family Specialist:
Laura Lopez

Family Specialists are the linchpin of the DULCE initiative, acting as a conduit between the family and the medical, legal, and early childhood systems. These profiles, one for each DULCE community, were produced from interviews with each DULCE Family Specialist. They are a celebration of the Family Specialists' dedication to and passion for supporting infants and their families and give some insight into their work. If you wish to learn more, please visit CSSP.org.

What's your favorite hobby or activity outside work?

I enjoy everything but camping.

Why did you want to be a Family Specialist?

I was a former Executive Director of a non-profit where a lot of families were immigrants, many undocumented, which I saw myself in. I was doing more administrative work at the organization, so the possibility to work more directly with families and change systems and policy [as a Family Specialist] was exciting. The population at Highland Hospital is diverse, and it's a unique way to help families with many different cultures. No matter how much stress I see in a family, babies are always smiling and joyous.

How do you explain your work to people not involved in DULCE?

I rarely mention the word "DULCE" to them. I tell the families that if they have problems, such as immigration or with a fussy baby, there are resources for them. I emphasize that we have a legal partner, which other programs do not have; it is unique and very important.

Is there a success story you're most proud of?

When I build trust and relationships with families, when families open up and share their stories—that is already a success. These families carry trauma so for them to share stories is a success. For them to be able to talk and share with somebody who speaks their language means a lot. Healing, emotion, trauma-caring, and trust are the biggest successes.

