



DULCE Family Specialist Profile

Palm Beach County, FL

ABOUT PALM BEACH COUNTY

**Clinic: C.L. Brumback
Primary Care Clinic**

**Early Childhood Agency:
Children's Services Council
of Palm Beach County**

**Setting: Urban, Suburban,
and Rural**

**Family Specialists:
Deneisha Watson and
Krystine Fuster**

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.



Deneisha



Krystine

What's your favorite hobby or activity outside of work?

Deneisha: My partner and I go thrift store hunting on the weekend and convert old things into new things. For our engagement party, I made a table out of old ladders because he has ladders on his vehicle at work. It was a fun joke between us.

Krystine: I love anything that involves my kids, like biking, being outside, or taking them to the park. I have two, a daughter and a son. They are the loves of my life.



Why did you want to be a Family Specialist?

Deneisha: I believe in destiny. I gave birth to a son at 11lb 15oz and had nobody to turn to for advice or support. I obtained information, wrote it down, and shared it with my friends. I knew I wanted to make a difference. A friend shared [the DULCE position] with me. I had everything in a book from my son, I had done a lot of the work with my son, so I went for it. A lot of my personal story inspired me to get into the work.

Krystine: I was working at the clinic as a registration specialist. I sat two seats down from the Family Specialist, and I would help her out with some tasks like scheduling. If a family didn't speak English, I would translate since I speak Spanish. So, I was already involved with the program, knew about it, and was familiar with the work and people. Seeing how the DULCE program impacted so many lives made me want to be a part of that and grew my passion for social services.

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

Krystine: As a family specialist for DULCE, we assist families with newborns until they are 6 months old. We are with them at every well-child visit and conduct developmental screenings on the baby as they reach certain milestones. Within the 6 months, we build relationships with the family and link them with a wide variety of community services as we work in a team environment to ensure all client needs are met.

In what ways do you see your work impact families?

Deneisha: I'm proud every day. I'm proud of parents who relocate after 6 months. I'm proud of those who are there for 4 months and move for better opportunities, like if a parent got a new job elsewhere. I'm proud they feel like they can move, sometimes from a place they've lived their entire lives. That's strength. For the families who stay, they bring their kids to the clinic, say hello, and keep going, because they've figured it out. They're doing things for themselves now, and I'm so happy for them.

Krystine: Independence—they start finding resources on their own, like Medicaid. The program isn't about doing it for them, you show them how to do things and they take off.

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

Deneisha: One story strikes me, an undocumented mother whose housing had been damaged during hurricane season, whose son was hit by a police car, and whose child had been shot in the tummy. I connected them with the DULCE legal team, contacted a local church member, and referred them to victim services. Now, the entire family is getting counseling. They're working on the earlier case with the police car hitting her son. They have an entire extended family at church. The [DULCE] legal team got them [housing] help and their church refurbished the apartment. The Mom helps with DULCE graduating and parent education groups. She'll do fundraising, set up tables, and more as her "rent" for the services we gave her. She's the official DULCE ambassador!

