

## Episode 7: Understanding Special Education

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**Settings:** Restaurant; school

**Characters:** Announcer, Lourdes, Secretary, Bilingual Resource Specialist, Co-worker

*Intro music (same for each episode) fades up and under narration*

Announcer: You are listening to the latest edition of *Un Nuevo Amanecer Para Ana Y Su Familia*. Join us each week as we travel with the Chávez family through the ups and downs of raising a child with a disability in a sometimes unfriendly world. Last week the Latino community in the Chávez neighborhood was sent into a panic with an immigration crack-down, when their cousin, Carlos, angrily sped off in a car after drinking and getting into a fight. Lourdes' cousin Carlos was arrested. Meanwhile, Ana is ready to start school, but is her family prepared for what will happen? Let's listen and see...

*(Music transitions up and out)*

Lourdes

Narrates: *(speaking directly to the radio audience)* There is so much we didn't know before we had Ana. We didn't know anything about disability...about special education...we had no idea what her life could be like...It didn't happen overnight, you know. It took years for us to feel confident as her parents...as her advocates...I think the first time we realized how hard we'd have to fight was...when it all changed for the worse for Carlos...right before Ana started school...

*(Music fades up and out again)*

Lourdes: *(shy, rushed, in very broken English/Spanish)* Hello, I'm looking for the school's Bilingual Resource Specialist? I'm late. I got a letter saying I could meet him here?

Secretary: *(in halting, slow, loud English)* I'm sorry ma'am. I don't speak Spanish. I'll have to get the Bilingual Resource Specialist for you.

*(Wait...)*

Bilingual

Specialist: Hello, Mrs. Chávez? I'm Tom Phillips...Bilingual Resource Specialist.

Lourdes: Yes, my daughter Ana will be starting school here...I'm sorry I'm late...we have a...family problem. I have questions...I got so many letters...there is a meeting...a meeting about Ana?

Bilingual

Specialist: Yes, it's called an I.E.P. meeting – an Individualized Education Program. It's the plan the school team will write with you to help come up with goals for Ana – things that will help her learn at school.

Lourdes: But...Well, that's the question I had...what type of ...goals? You know, my Ana...she does not walk...or speak. What...do you think she can learn?

Bilingual Specialist: *(smiling)* Oh, yes...she will learn many things! In this country all children have a right to learn. She'll be in a class with children, just like your Julia and Esteban who attend here. There are special resources...trained professionals whose job is to work with your daughter. The team will ask you about Ana – how she learns...what you would like her to learn...They can work on things like dressing or bathrooming, if that's a need for Ana. They'll look at her math and reading skills...just like they do with all children.

Lourdes: Reading? Do you think my Ana can learn to read?

Bilingual Specialist: It is not our job to say what a child cannot or will not do – we are here to help each child reach his or her potential. Now...that being said, I have worked with some families who have had difficulties with their school. Let's just say it is not always an easy process...It is your job to advocate for Ana.

Lourdes: Advocate? What do you mean?

Bilingual Specialist: As a parent of a child with a disability you have a very important role. You know Ana best. You must tell others who she is and what she needs. *(making a strong point)* You must speak for Ana.

*(Music transitions up and out – to change scene)*  
*(Sound effect clanging of dishes/voices – at restaurant)*

Lourdes: *(out of breath)* Oh, I'm late for work...I walked here...I had a meeting at school for Ana...Mario dropped me off there on the way to his meeting with Carlos at the jail...I tell you, thank goodness Carlos didn't get killed...but he'll have a drunk driving conviction now, they say...What tables do I have today? I can get right to work...

Co-Worker: Lourdes, slow down...Did you ...hear the news? Mario didn't reach you from the jail?

Lourdes: *(concerned)* No. I was in the meeting. What? What news?

Co-Worker: You better sit down...*(pause)* Your cousin, Carlos...he ran off. No one can find him... The police are looking for him...

Lourdes: But...but...he knew what he did was wrong!...They said he was lucky...*(incredulous)* It was only his first offense!...

Co-Worker: *(interrupting, comforting)* Maybe he was just scared...

Lourdes: Yes, he had no lawyer. You're right. Maybe he WAS scared...We all get scared...Maybe he was worried...*(quieter, almost to herself)*...worried about...the future...No one to speak for him...*(sad, quieter now – almost to herself)* No one to...advocate for them...

*(Music fades in and up – same music in each episode)*

Announcer: Will Carlos ever return? How will the family stay strong while they've lost so many friends in their neighborhood? Will Lourdes realized that she needs to be strong enough to speak up and advocate for Ana when she truly needs help? Join us next week – same time – for the next edition of *Un Nuevo Amanecer Para Ana Y Su Familia*.

*(Music fades up and out)*