

Episode 9: Happenings at School - Inclusion

Settings: Chávez home; school

Characters: Announcer, Lourdes, Sandra Ruiz, Child, Girl, Boy, Betty, Teacher, Ana

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 time we heard from the Chávez family they were creating awareness about acceptance of people with disabilities in the community. 11-year-old Ana, who has a disability herself, stood up for a friend with autism. But now Ana is about to enter middle school and adolescence – a difficult time for any child. Will she fit in? Let's listen and find out...

(Music transitions up and out)

Sandra

Narrates: *(speaking directly to the radio audience)* What the Chávez family didn't know at the time was that many families had fought their battle before them... *(reflecting)* Families are the best support for each other in this world of disability... *(sorry for being forgetful)* Oh...let me introduce myself...my name is Sandra Ruiz. I first met the Chavezs' when Ana was just a baby – their doctor gave them my name because I also have a child with a disability...*(pause as she remembers)* I remember talking with Lourdes, Ana's mother, that first time and then many times over the years...I tried to tell her that her daughter's life could be like my Sophia...I think it took her a while to realize that it was really true...

(Music fades up and out again)

(Chatter in the kitchen)

Child: *(out of breath, rushing in kitchen)* Mrs. Chávez, Ana got her wheel stuck in the mud...we tied a rope to the front of her wheelchair and pulled her out! Just like a tow truck! Now she can't stop laughing! *(giggling)* She's pretty muddy!

Lourdes: *(smiling at the scene)* Look, Ana IS all full of mud!

Sandra: I told you it would happen, Lourdes. Do you remember our first conversation – was that ten years ago now? You wanted to know if Ana would have friends...if she would go to school with children without disabilities? *(mock scolding)* You didn't believe me...Lourdes? *(very concerned)* Look at me...are you crying? What could be the matter?

Lourdes: I know things change in middle school...I am afraid...What if she is stuck in a special education class and not part of all the activities in school? I mean...Julia comes home with so many fun stories...she's in clubs and plays soccer...What about Ana? I'm afraid these friends she's made may not want to be her friend anymore...

Sandra: Lourdes, you're right. Things do change in middle school. But life is about change. You are strong. I'll be honest – there are good teachers and there are bad teachers. We've had them both. Only you know what's best for Ana. If you see something that's not right, you need to speak up. Be an advocate...My road with Sophia was not always smooth...but look at her now! When Ana grows up you will be surprised at how far you've come...

(Music transition up and under to a new scene)
(Sound effect - busy school hallway sounds)

Lourdes: *(sighs)* Well, I guess this is it. Ana, here's your new school!...O.K. Ana...I think we go down here to the right to meet your teacher and I guess...a Miss Betty...is your special education assistant. Let's find her, o.k.?

Betty: Hello! Is this Ana? I've been waiting to meet you. Mrs. Chávez? I am Miss Betty. I will be helping you in school this year, Ana. I have heard and read so many things about you!

Ana: Hi.

Teacher: *(interrupting, sounding scattered)* Betty, can you help with attendance? I need a hand...*(calling out in other direction)* Students, desks please!

Betty: *(to teacher)* Oh, yes. *(to Ana, whispering)* That was your teacher, Miss. Johnson. It's her first day...we better hurry. *(hurried)* Here, Ana. Let me get your coat. And I'll put your backpack in this locker...

Lourdes: *(hesitates)* Um...Miss Betty? Um...

Betty: *(kindly)* Yes?

Lourdes: Well, I'm not sure how to say this...I know you're in a hurry...It's just...We've been working so hard on Ana being independent...Do you think ...part of her morning routine...Could she put her own things in her locker?...By herself?...We put independence as a goal in her special education plan – her IEP. Whatever way you can help us with that...I would really appreciate it.

Betty: *(sincere)* Yes. Oh, I'm sorry. Now I remember reading that...Don't worry. I will talk to Miss Johnson....We better get into class...but I think we have time for goodbyes on the first day of school...

Lourdes: *(sadly)* Oh, well...I guess I'll be going now...Bye, I love you. *(smack – kiss)*

Ana: *(thicker speech)* Love you, Mama.

(Sound effect – footsteps in hallway)

Sandra: Lourdes, is that you?

Lourdes: *(relieved to see her)* Sandra – Hi!

Sandra: How did it go?

Lourdes: *(sighs with worry)* Oh...I don't know...Ana's teacher doesn't seem very...shall we say...friendly?...I'm sure they'll all hate me soon enough.

Lourdes: You know how you said I would have to speak up? To make sure Ana's IEP is being implemented? *(pause as Sandra nods and says "uhuh")* Well, I already spoke up on day one...

Sandra: *(cheerful)* Good for you! I knew you could do it!... You know, like it or not, this is your job. If you don't speak for Ana, who will?... I know you want Ana included in the classroom and not in some isolated special education room... If you have a teacher who doesn't understand Ana's needs, you have to speak up... Now, that being said, teachers do have a difficult job. They have many students who learn in many different ways... I have learned in advocating for Sophia that you need to be pleasantly persistent when you feel something could be better, but also give teachers lots of praise when you see them doing something well.

Lourdes: You're right... *(sigh of relief)* That makes me feel better... *(more cheerful now)* Did I tell you her aide, Miss Betty, remembered Ana's name? She said she had read about her. She seems so nice... I think I'll write her a thank you note.

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

Announcer: Ana seems to be fitting in and growing up so fast. It hasn't been an easy road for the Chávez family, but things are looking hopeful. Will their good fortune continue? Join us next week – same time – for the next edition of *Un Nuevo Amanecer Para Ana Y Su Familia*.

(Music fades up and out)