

Utah State Special Education Consortium
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Introduction by Norma Velez:

When our family moved here from Colorado in 1992 we were a two parent family. Our two older daughters had graduated from Denver area high schools and were out of the nest. We came to Utah with one son in high school and another one in middle school. We also had one beautiful, bright, and very charming preschooler.

Within a couple of months of arriving, I called the Utah Parent Center. I wanted to know how UPC was serving culturally diverse families. Always looking for new ways of helping families, they put me to work. I wasn't able to stay with them long. But in that time I learned a lot from the staff and from Utah families as well. And in that time I'm happy to say UPC has come along way in serving culturally diverse families.

We've had a few transitions in these past years. In that same house that we moved into in 1992, there now is only me and one beautiful, bright, and very charming young woman. A few months ago Marisa's team met for the last transition meeting. Afterwards, I found myself reminiscing through her old school files. I found one of the articles I had written for the Special Educator while on the UPC staff. It was written when Marisa was transitioning from preschool to kindergarten at her neighborhood school. It was about our team's effort and the values we shared that benefitted Marisa.

This particular article written 16 years ago confirms to me that two things have not changed through these transitions. 1. The IEP process works. 2. People like you and those we've had the pleasure of working with in our schools are the ones that put the BEST in Best Practices.

I encourage you to get out of your offices often and get in the classrooms. See for yourselves how your students are being served. Not only will you be dazzled by your staff but also by the students who often exceed our expectations. I know one student that certainly has done that. And now I'd like you to meet the wind beneath my wings: the beautiful, bright, and very charming, Ms. Marisa Velez.