

2010 DSP Winners

Isabel Chica

Isabel Chica has worked at the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired since 2003. Isabel has two sons who are visually impaired. This aspect of her life left her with a fierce passion for serving children who are blind or visually impaired as well as give others the hope, confidence, and tools they need to help their children. With Isabel's help, parents have learned how to advocate for their child. Her knowledge of early child development has enabled her to teach these parents how to understand age-appropriate cognitive, fine and gross motor skills in order to help their children enter school without suffering long-term developmental delays.



Isabel manages the children's department at Miami Lighthouse. In 2003, the blind babies program served 60 blind babies and their mothers. In 2009 that number increased to 205. Isabel was instrumental in advocating for and starting weekly playgroup sessions where children participate in different playgroups stimulating their fine sensory motor skills and developing their social

skills. Parents also participate and learn different techniques to further stimulate their child at home. The play group was featured on NBC in June 2010.

Isabel's collaboration with parents, caregivers and teachers has led the Summer Training and Recreation Program (STAR) to be a huge success. STAR is a fun and educational experience for the children who participate. Ms. Chica holds a Bachelor's degree in Education, a Master's degree in Reading Education, she completed the VIISA Program curriculum for family centered intervention for infants, toddlers and preschoolers who are visually impaired as well as INSITE; a resource curriculum for use with families who have children ages 0-5 who are deaf, hearing impaired, blind or visually impaired with additional disabilities. Isabel's extensive education has enabled her to research and implement an evidence based curriculum for children ages 5-13. Isabel has not only worked with over 200 families seeking professional guidance, she also provided in-service trainings to more than 125 professionals who are visually impaired or blind.

Isabel's warm, charismatic spirit welcomes others to express their concerns and ask for advice. Her experience and wealth of knowledge shines through when she speaks to parents. She is highly creative in developing material for playgroup and is deeply committed to helping children achieve independence. Isabel is always willing to go the extra mile, and is full of love and compassion for her job. Isabel sees people for what they can become and she tirelessly dedicates herself to ensuring each child lives up to his/her ability.

"Providing direct services to children who are blind or visually impaired provides one with both personal and professional life changing experiences. As an early interventionist my experience with families usually occurs when a child has just been diagnosed. As a direct service provider I stay current with the issues my families face and maintain that personal connection over time that allows families to feel both secure and supported. As a professional who provides direct services I have always been humbled by the love and affection I have been offered by those I serve. On a personal level when I reflect on my life and career choice I know that I have made a difference in the lives of those I serve but more importantly those I serve have made a difference in how I choose to live my life in this world."

• Isabel Chica

Irwin Siegel Agency, Inc. is proud to support Direct Support Professionals and the wonderful jobs they do. That is why we created the DSP Recognition Awards in 2000. The award gives recognition to those Direct Support Professionals who have gone above and beyond what is expected of them to provide exceptional care to people with disabilities.

Self-Determination

Nominee demonstrates commitment to supporting self determination, self-esteem and meaningful choices for people with intellectual disabilities.

Leadership

Nominee exhibits leadership qualities with peers within his or her work environment and serves as a role model to others.

Inclusion

Nominee facilitates inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in all aspects of community life.

Professional Development

Nominee demonstrates commitment to his or her professional development by continuing to seek knowledge and gain skills in the field.

Provision of Direct Support

Nominee provides direct support in a manner that respects the dignity, culture and rights of people with intellectual disabilities. A nominee must be currently employed for a minimum of one year by a human service provider.

In acknowledging these Direct Support Professionals, we honor all DSPs for the tremendous jobs they do

We thank them as well as all the agencies that participated in our recognition program

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