

I cannot begin to imagine my 14-year-old daughter that experiences Down Syndrome, having to be hospitalized and me (mom) not being by her side. Ruby, my daughter has limited verbal communication. Ruby uses a communication device and that is how she expresses her wants and needs when she is in a familiar environment. Ruby is driven by routine and the unknown gives her high levels of anxiety and when this happens, she shuts down and is unable to communicate even through her communication device. I am the only one that can talk to her and give her reassurance so she can process the situation. Ruby also uses both English and Spanish and there are some words that she only uses in Spanish and some words that she only uses in English so unless you're familiar with Ruby's choice of words it's often hard to comprehend what she is saying.

I am also the bilingual outreach coordinator for NWDSA/ABI and I work to help break barriers of access for our Hispanic/Latino community. Most of the families I help support have a language barrier and their sons and daughters that experience a disability their primary language is Spanish. Helping support the families I do, I have experienced that even when using an interpreter it is still very difficult to accurately translate the current information as sometimes the interpreters don't know the correct translation terms or they speak a different form of Spanish like from Spain and not from Mexico and when that is the case different words are used for different meanings and oftentimes a lot of important information gets mixed up or lost.

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