

Monica Lopez

Works at:

**Arizona Cooperative Therapies / Arizona
Early Intervention Program**

Position Title:

Service Coordinator

What do you do at AZ Cooperative Therapies?

Members of Arizona Cooperative Therapies offer occupational, physical, speech language therapies, developmental special instruction, and service coordination that enhance children's individual capabilities and foster their independence. The Arizona Early Intervention Program is Arizona's statewide interagency system of services and supports for families of infants and toddlers, birth to three years of age, with disabilities or delays.

I work with Sunshine Therapy Services as a Service coordinator. This means I work with a team of providers that consists of an Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech Language Pathologist, and a Developmental Special Instruction provider. We work together to provide the appropriate services that match every child's need. As a service coordinator I am in charge of meeting the family and introducing them to our program as well as determining if the child is expressing a developmental delay. I also keep track of paperwork and create individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP), monitor services to ensure they start in a timely manner, provide resource support to families, and coordinate the team's services and activities.

Favorite Part of the Position:

I love working closely with the families, and helping them better understand child development. I am able to work closely with the therapists and learn many strategies and therapeutic activities to assist child development, as well as empower parents to feel more comfortable working with their child. I love working with families and seeing their progress. It is very rewarding when families practice strategies that we provide, and when they share how happy they are that these strategies are helping their child progress.

How Did FSHD Classes & Internships Prepare You for this Work?

I felt confident starting this position due to the FSHD courses I took in college. FSHD helped me develop accurate knowledge of human development to better assess a child and determine what types of delays they are expressing. FSHD has also helped me learn how to work with families in a way that helps them understand and cope when receiving a diagnosis for their child, such as the Autism Spectrum Disorder or Down Syndrome. I feel confident in my skills to speak with others and to help them better understand the signs of developmental delays, thanks to the knowledge I gained in my FSHD courses, internships, and volunteer experiences where I worked with children with developmental delays.

I was able to volunteer for the Children's Clinics For Rehabilitative Services, I worked closely with a child life specialist and was able to observe rehabilitation providers as they worked with children during appointments. As a bilingual volunteer I also assisted with translation support when needed. This experience provided me with knowledge of clinic-based therapy and peaked my interest in pediatric therapy.

I also had experience working with Tu Nidito where I worked directly with families and children. I helped families by providing comfort and support through hard

times, and this experience solidified by passion for helping others. I was able to gain the appropriate skills needed to comfort and provide resources for families in need. This position has helped me tremendously in my current field of work, as I work closely with low income families and children who may be having a hard time accepting a diagnosis such as Autism or Down Syndrome. My time at Tu Nidito also helped me learn to efficiently gather resources that will help families seek further support.

How Did You Find This Position? What Was the Application Process or Interview Process Like?

I was working as a habilitation provider when my supervisor informed me that her friend was a service coordinator for another agency. My supervisor encouraged me to look into the position and apply. I applied online and received a call from the organization a few days later. I met my future boss at a Starbucks and she asked me some questions regarding my experience working with families and my previous work history. It was very casual, and did not feel like an interview. This experience highlights the importance of forming relationships with supervisors and mentors who can provide you with networking opportunities and future opportunities for growth and advancement.

Tips for Students Interested in Pursuing a Position Like This:

Organization is a must in this position. I work with about 40-60 children. I am in charge of keeping track of deadlines and monitoring services, which means I visit my families at least once a month and make daily phone calls to schedule and coordinate appropriate meetings. This can be overwhelming, but learning good organization skills in school is a must, so the organizational skills that work for you can be applied to future jobs as well.