

Growing Comunidad: Library Programs and Materials for Latino Youth



Locating Children's and Young Adult Literature About Latinos:

There are numerous online and print resources listing recommended youth books about Latinos.

☀ Online Resources

1. **Barahona Center for Study of Books in Spanish for Children & Adolescents** – This comprehensive website has reviews of children's books either written in Spanish or English about Latinos and has a search engine that allows users to locate books set in specific Latin American countries. <http://www.csusm.edu/csb/english/center.htm>
2. **Kay Vandergriff's children's literature website** – This comprehensive website includes a plethora of information about many aspects of children's literature including a page devoted to **quality books about Latinos**. The page is entitled Powerful Hispanic and Latin-American Images Revealed in Picture Books can be found at: <http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/ChildrenLit/hispanic.html>
3. **The Association of Library Service to Children (ALSC)** has compiled a list of children's books about "Growing Up Latino in the U.S.A." which can be accessed at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/booklists/GrowingUpLatino.htm>.
4. "Tigretón and Burrito: Books in Spanish for the Young." Beyond the Journal, *Young Children* on the Web, March 2006. Available at: <http://www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200603/SchonBTJ.pdf>.
5. **Latino Children's and Young Adult Book Awards Websites:**
Pura Belpré Award - <http://www.ala.org/alsc/belpre>.
Tomás Rivera Children's Book Award - <http://www.education.txstate.edu:16080/subpages/tomasrivera/>.
Américas Award - <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach/americas.html>.
6. **Reading is Fundamental – Latino Outreach Initiative – Recommended Books:**
http://www.rif.org/leer/cuarto/libros_recomendados_english.msp
7. **Imaginaría** – Comprehensive website of recommended Spanish books for children and young adults (website is entirely written in Spanish) <http://www.imaginaría.com.ar/>

☀ Print Resources

1. **Isabel Schon's Books** - Since the late 1970's, Schon has published professional books recommending the best children's books about the Latino people and cultures (*The Best of Latino Heritage* series) and the best children's books written in Spanish (*Books in Spanish for Children & Young Adults* series). She also periodically compiles bibliographies of recommended Latino children's books for the *Reading Teacher*, *Book Links*, and *Multicultural Review* journals. For a listing of her books consult: <http://www.csusm.edu/csb/english/ischon.htm>.
2. Sherry York's Books - *Picture Books by Latino Writers* and *Children's and Young Adult Literature by Latino Writers* (both published in Worthington, OH: Linworth Publishing, 2002) provide biographical information of Latino authors and recommends books about Latinos for various age-levels of children.
3. In her book *A Magical Encounter: Latino Children's Literature in the Classroom* (2003, 2nd ed.), Alma Flor Ada has compiled a bibliography of Literature for Children and Adolescents by Latina and Latino Writers.
4. Frances Ann Day's *Latina and Latino Voices in Literature* (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 2003) introduces numerous authors from the Latino cultures along with their significant contributions.
5. Tim Wadham's *Libros Esenciales: Building, Marketing, and Programming a Core Collection of Spanish Language Children's Materials*. (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2007) lists many board books and picturebooks about Latinos or written in Spanish and suggests finger rhymes and book-related activities to accompany some of the recommended titles.

Resources for Planning Latino Library Programs

Professional resources to assist librarians with incorporating children's and young adult books about Latinos into their library programs.

1. **Time to Read** and **El día de los Niños/Day of the Child** – Activity ideas and suggestions for Latino literacy and Dia programs are available at this website sponsored by the National Latino Children's Institute and Verizon Wireless: <http://www.nlci.org/DLN2004/activities.htm>.
2. Pavon and Borrego's book *25 Latino Craft Projects* (2003) is one of the best resources for multi-age book and craft suggestions for both traditional and family programs relating to Latino holidays. To supplement this book, I suggest Menard's *The Latino Holiday Book: From Cinco de Mayo to Día de los Muertos--the Celebrations and Traditions of Hispanic-Americans* (2004).
3. *Dígame un cuento/Tell Me A Story: Bilingual Library Programs for Children and Families* – Created by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, this useful online manual suggests bilingual story hour programs for Latino children and their families. Early childhood educators can consult this resource to learn about activities using Latino children's books. Available at: <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/bilingual/index.html>.
4. **El día de los Niños/El día de los libros (Day of the Child/Day of the Book) Toolkit** is a 100 page online document describing booktalks, author visits, storytelling, and other ideas that can be used to celebrate El día de los Niños/El día de los libros on April 30th. These suggestions can be used for units in the classroom all throughout the school year! The comprehensive document is available at: <http://www.texasdia.org/toolkit.html>.
5. **REFORMA's Children's and Young Adults Services website** offers many activities and resources for bilingual storytimes and resources. Available at: <http://www.reforma.org/CYASC.htm>
6. Schiller, Lara-Alecio, and Irby's *The Bilingual Book of Rhymes, Songs, Stories, and Fingerplays* (2004) is a helpful collection of bilingual (Spanish/English) activities to use in your program.
7. Rose Treviño's *The Pura Belpré Awards: Celebrating Latino Authors and Illustrators* (2006). (Book and DVD).
8. Alma Flor Ada's *Alma Flor Ada and You Vol. 1*. (2005) provides numerous practical suggestions for integrating Latino children's literature into the classroom (which can be adapted to the library program).
9. Angel Vigils' *¡Teatro!: Hispanic Plays for Young People* (1996) contains 14 plays based upon Latino culture.

Information on Library Services to Latino Youth and Their Families

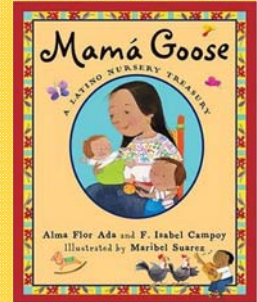
There are numerous print and non-print resources for assisting librarians serving Latino populations.

1. Immroth, B. & McCook, K. (2000). *Library Services to Youth of Hispanic Heritage*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
2. Moller, S. (2001). *Library Services to Spanish Speaking Patrons: A Practical Guide*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
3. **REFORMA** – an affiliate of ALA & the national association to promote library and information services to Latinos and the Spanish speaking. Available at: <http://www.reforma.org>. North and South Carolina have their own chapter of REFORMA with information available at: <http://www.reforma.org/chapters/CarolinaChapter/index.htm>
4. Center for Children & Families. (2002). *Improving Access & Opportunity for Latinos in Early Childhood*. Available at: <http://www.ccf.edc.org/latinos/index.htm>
5. Two excellent resources that can be combined to create Latino-friendly library environments are: Feinberg, Kuchner, & Feldman. (1998). *Learning Environments for Young Children: Rethinking Library Spaces and Services*. Chicago: ALA; and Eggers-Piérola. (2005). *Connections & Commitments: Reflecting Latino Values in Early Childhood Programs*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
6. Tim Wadham's *Programming with Latino Children's Materials* (1999) provides a sample flyer in English and Spanish that explains the difference between a library and a bookstore. He also offers a flyer entitled "How to Help Your Child Become a Reader," which can be used by librarians as they survey and interact with their local Latino communities.
7. Güereña, S. (editor). (2000). *Library Services to Latinos: An Anthology*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
8. Alire, C. and Ayala, J. (2007). *Serving Latino Communities: A How-to-do-it Manual for Librarians*, 2nd Edition. New York: Neal-Schuman.
9. **Official El día de los Niños/El día de los libros (Day of the Child/Day of the Book) website:** <http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/diadelosninios/diadelosninios.htm>.

Recommended Picturebooks to Help Young Children Understand Latino Cultures

Ada, Alma Flor. *I love Saturdays y domingos.* Illus. by Elivia Savadier. Atheneum, 2002. A young girl describes the joy and excitement of visiting her Anglo grandma and grandpa on Saturdays and her *abuelita y abuelito* on Sundays. This charming picturebook portrays a Latina child of mixed race and positively integrates the Anglo and Latino cultures.

Ada, Alma Flor and F. Isabel Campoy. *Mamá Goose: A Latino Nursery Treasury.* Illus. by Maribel Suárez. Hyperion, 2004. Filled with songs, rhymes, and lullabies, this colorfully-illustrated, bilingual collection celebrates traditional rhymes from the diverse Latino subcultures throughout the Spanish-speaking world.



Andrews-Goebel, Nancy. *The Pot That Juan Built.* Illus. by David Diaz. Lee & Low, 2002. Both a cumulative rhyme and a nonfiction book, this engaging title describes how Mexican potter Juan Quezada creates his famous pottery. With dual texts, this is a perfect title for multiple age and reading levels.

Bertrand, Diane Gonzales. *The Empanadas that Abuela Made.* Illus. by Alex Pardo DeLange. Piñata Books, 2003. This engaging cumulative rhyme describes how an *Abuela* (grandmother) makes *empanadas* (turnovers) for her family. A recipe for making empanadas is also included.

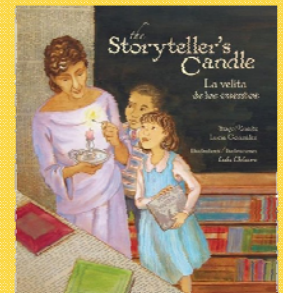
Carling, Amelia Lau. *Mama and Papa Have a Store.* Dial, 1998. Using detailed watercolor and gouache illustrations, Carling describes the life of her Chinese immigrant family as they manage a store in Guatemala City. This colorful picturebook, one of the few books that depict Asian Latinos, provides an alternative and positive view of the cultural diversity in the Central American country of Guatemala.



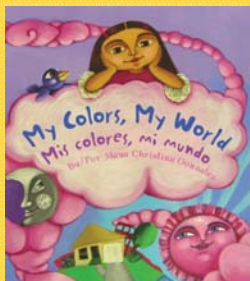
Delacre, Lulu. *Arroró, mi niño: Latino Lullabies and Gentle Games.* Lee and Low, 2004. Incorporating soothing oil-washed illustrations and rhythmic bilingual text, Delacre's collection of lullabies celebrates numerous Latino subcultures as well as Latinos from all walks of life. The collection was chosen for its unique visual depiction of multiple Latino subcultures in various urban and rural settings, and for its tribute to the oral tradition of multiple subcultures.

Elya, Susan Middleton. *Bebé Goes Shopping.* Illus. by Steven Salerno. Harcourt, 2006. Rhyming text, which includes Spanish words, describes the exciting shopping trip of a Mamá and her bebé boy. This delightful read is sure to engage young children as they follow the baby's antics in the grocery store.

Galindo, Mary S. *Icy Watermelons/Sandía fría.* Illus. by Pauline Rodriguez Howard. Piñata Books, 2001. A typical Latino family eats watermelons and listens to the grandparents' stories about how the fruit helped them to meet each other. This positive, non-stereotyped book portrays the strong bonds of the extended Latino family.



Gonzalez, Lucía. *The Storyteller's Candle / La velita de los cuentos.* Illus. by Lulu Delacre. Children's Book Press, 2008. Historical picture book that lovingly describes how Puerto Rican Children's Librarian and Storyteller, Pura Belpré invited new immigrants into the New York Public Library using programming related to the Three Kings' Day.



Gonzalez, Maya Christina. *My Colors, My World / Mis colores, mi mundo.* Children's Book Press, 2007. Although she lives in a brown sandy desert, a little girl named Maya is able to see the beautiful colors around her. This gorgeously-illustrated bilingual picturebook, which teaches colors in English and Spanish, is highly recommended for use in early childhood programs.

Guy, Ginger Fogleson. *My Grandma/Mi Abuelita.* Illus. by Vivi Escrivá. Rayo, 2007. Simple bilingual text and colorful illustrations engage young children as they trail a father and his two children on their visit to see their Abuelita.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *The Upside Down Boy/El niño de cabeza.* Illus. by Elizabeth Gomez. Children's Book Press, 2000. This vibrant story describes Juanito's transition as a new immigrant into the American school system. Bold illustrations exude magical realism and invite young readers into the well-crafted story familiar to Latino immigrant students.

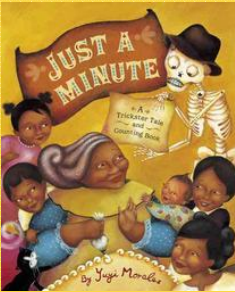
Recommended Picturebooks to Help Young Children Understand Latino Cultures

Keep, Richard. *Clatter Bash! A Day of the Dead Celebration.* Peachtree, 2004. Vibrant illustrations and simple text make this book perfect for sharing the Mexican holiday *El Día de los Muertos* with young children. A simple explanation of the holiday is also provided in the author's notes.

Mora, Pat. *A Birthday Basket For Tia.* Illus. by Cecily Lang. Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Young Cecilia prepares for her 90-year-old Tia's (Aunt's) birthday party but has trouble deciding the perfect gift for her special relative.

Mora, Pat. *Uno, Dos, Tres; One, Two, Three.* Illus. by Barbara Lavallee. Clarion, 1996. Through rhyming text and bold illustrations, readers follow two little girls as they count to ten in English and Spanish while searching for a birthday present for their Mamá.



Morales, Yuyi. *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book.* Chronicle, 2003. As Grandma Beetle prepares for a birthday party, she is visited by Señor Calavera (Death) who tells her it is time to go. Through a series of excuses that involve counting in Spanish and English, the clever grandma outwits death and enjoys a spectacular day with her grandchildren.

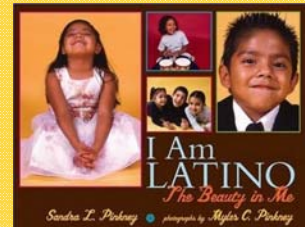
Orozco, José-Luis. *Diez Deditos/Ten Little Fingers and Other Play Rhymes and Action Songs from Latin America.* Illus. by Elisa Kleven. Dutton Children's Books, 1997. This vibrantly illustrated bilingual collection of songs and finger rhymes are

a perfect way to integrate music from the Latino cultures into the early childhood classroom. An accompanying CD is available for those who do not speak Spanish or can not carry a tune.

Pérez, Amada Irma. *My Diary from Here to There.* Illus. by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Children's Book Press, 2002. In this bilingual book with vibrant illustrations that seem to burst from the page, a young Mexican girl describes her excitement and fears as her family immigrates into the United States from Mexico. This vivid picturebook, which is an autobiographical account of Pérez's own immigration experience, authentically and accurately portrays the Mexican immigration experience into the U.S.

Pinkney, Sandra. *I am Latino: The Beauty in Me.* Illus. by Myles Pinkney, 2007.

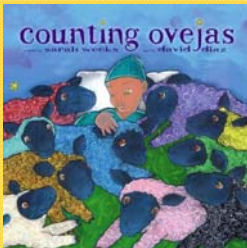
Using vibrant photos, this appealing nonfiction title celebrates various facets of the Latino culture and encourages children to recognize the beauty in diversity.



Ramírez, José. *Quinito's Neighborhood / El vecindario de Quinito.* Illus.

by Ina Cumpiano. Children's Book Press, 2005. Chosen for its representation of

gender diversity in the generic Latino culture, this simple bilingual picturebook describes the various occupations of a young boy's relatives and neighbors. Women are presented in traditional male occupations such as a carpenter and a truck driver, while men are depicted in traditional female roles such as a nurse and an elementary school teacher. In addition, the bold acrylic illustrations exude the warmth of Quinito's neighborhood.



Weeks, Sarah. *Counting Ovejas.* Illus. by David Diaz. Atheneum, 2006.

When a small child has trouble falling asleep, he decides to count sheep. Unfortunately, he spends most of the night trying to get all of the rainbow-colored sheep out of his bedroom. Bilingual text introduces colors in Spanish and English and includes pronunciation guides directly below each Spanish word. Wonderful book for circle time or bedtime!

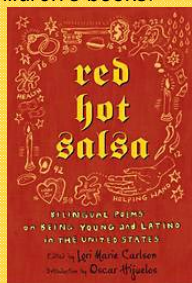
Recommended Parenting Resources

- ❖ Gloria G. Rodriguez. (1999). *Raising Nuestros Niños: Bringing Up Latino Children in a Bicultural World.* New York: Fireside/Simon & Schuster.
- ❖ Carmen Inoa Vazquez. (2004). *Parenting with Pride Latino Style: How to Help Your Child Cherish Your Cultural Values and Succeed in Today's World.* New York: Rayo/HarperCollins.
- ❖ Mariela Dabbah. (2007). *Help Your Children Succeed in School (A Special Guide for Latino Parents).* Naperville, IL: Sphinx Publishing.

Recommended Picture Books and Novels Representing Latino Diversity for Older Children and Young Adults

Alarcón, Francisco X. *Angels Ride Bikes and Other Fall Poems/Los Ángeles Andan en Bicicleta y otros poemas de otoño*. Illus. by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Children's Book Press, 1999. Magical realism and bold illustrations abound in this cheerful, bilingual poetry collection which describes the everyday experiences of the Mexican American author's childhood in Los Angeles. This lighthearted collection affords a positive representation of the middle-class Mexican American culture that includes people who are overweight as well as characters in gender-defying roles.

Ancona, George. *Mayeros: A Yucatec Maya Family*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1997. Emphasizing their daily experiences, Ancona spotlights a contemporary Maya family living on the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. This vibrant photo-essay provides a positive representation of an indigenous Mexican Indian culture which is quite different than the usual representations of Mexican subcultures in children's books.



Carlson, Lori Marie. (editor). *Red Hot Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Being Young and Latino in the United States*, 2005. A vast, emotive collection of bilingual (English/Spanish) poems describing the joys and sorrows of growing up Latino in the United States. (novel).

Castañeda, Omar. *Abuela's Weave*. Illus. by Enrique O. Sánchez. Lee and Low Books, 1993. While helping her Abuela with weaving, a young Guatemalan girl learns to appreciate her grandmother as well as her traditional artwork. This book positively represents the Central American country of Guatemala, portrays an elderly Latina character who is active, and provides an alternative Latino subculture beyond the typical Mexican and Mexican American subcultures that are often represented in children's picturebooks about Latinos.

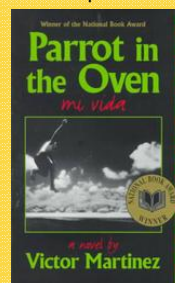
Endredy, James. *The Journey of Tunuri and the Blue Deer: A Huichol Indian Story*. Illus. by Maria Hernández de la Cruz and Casimiro de la Cruz López. Bear Cub Books, 2003. A small Huichol boy gets lost in the woods and must rely upon a magical Blue Deer's help to escape. Along their journey out of the forest, Blue deer introduces Tunuri to his nature family – Father Sun, Brother Wind, Sister Water, Mother Earth, and Grandfather Fire – and helps him learn of the gifts each gives to humans. This retelling of a Huichol Indian tale, illustrated with actual Huichol yarn art drawings, uniquely presents an alternative native subculture within the Mexican subculture. Too often, children's books about the Mexican subculture often overlook indigenous peoples as well as *mestizos* (Latinos of mixed heritage).

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *In My Family/En mi familia*. Children's Book Press, 1996. Using detailed illustrations and memories of her childhood, Garza weaves a tantalizing collection about the everyday experiences of Mexican Americans residing in her childhood home of Kingsville, Texas. This vivid bilingual picturebook offers a unique and positive sampling of Mexican American cultural topics such as *curanderos*, *la Llorona*, and *empanadas*.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Magic Windows/Ventanas mágicas*. Children's Book Press, 1999. Garza describes various childhood memories of growing up on the Texas/Mexico border. Illustrations of her book are papel picado (cut-paper art). Pair this book with Garza's craft book *Making Magic Windows: Creating Cut-Paper Art with Carmen Lomas Garza* (1999) for an intergenerational family program.

Krull, Kathleen. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. Illus. by Yuyi Morales. Harcourt, 2003. Vibrant illustrations and informative text describe the life and peaceful protest efforts of Cesar Chavez, a young migrant farm worker who fought for the rights of all migrant farm workers. This illuminating picturebook biography positively represents a Latino in a leadership role and provides a historical depiction of the migrant farm worker movement.

Martinez, Victor. *Parrot in the Oven*, 1996. Through a series of vignettes, readers follow Manny as he attempts to discover his place in a society that despises his poor, Mexican-American family. (novel)



Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic, 2000. After her father's sudden death, Esperanza's life is shattered when her Uncle tries to take over the family estate in Mexico. Fleeing for their lives, Esperanza and her mother immigrate into the U.S. where they must survive the harsh condition of migrant farm life during the Depression. (novel)

Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I was Puerto Rican*, 1993. This powerful coming-of-age memoir follows Esmeralda as she leaves her poverty-stricken family in Puerto Rico to live with family in New York and struggles to find her true identity in an unjust world. (novel).



Skármeta, Antonio. *The Composition*. Illus. by Alfonso Ruano. Groundwood Books, 2000. Nine-year-old Pedro's days are filled with school and soccer while his nights are spent with his parents listening to the forbidden long-distance radio. One day at school, he and his classmates are asked to write about what his family does at night. Pedro is forced to decide whether he should be truthful or protect his parents. This powerful book delicately and accurately represents a Latin American country ruled by a dictatorship. Many picturebooks about Latinos gloss over the daily hardships faced by Latinos living in the Americas; yet, this book successfully tackles the social oppression experienced by those living under a dictator's rule.

Latino Literacy (Outreach) Programs

¡Colorín Colorado! – Supported by the American Federation of Teachers, the National Institute for Literacy, and the U.S. Department of Education, this reading program provides information on the importance of reading in the lives of English Language Learner (ELL) children. **Activities and links are available concerning children’s literature about Latinos, helping Latino families, how the school can serve Latino families, etc.** Early childhood educators could consider using the activities, the free 92 page booklet, and video clips in units in their programs. Available at: <http://www.colorincolorado.org/homepage.php>.

Lee y serás (Read & You Will Be) – The program is a “multi-faceted, multi-year, reading initiative to inform, engage, and help prepare families and communities to support the reading development of Latino children. Lee y serás was created by Scholastic in partnership with the Latino Community Foundation, a National Latino Advisory Committee, Univision, and Verizon Communications” (Scholastic’s webpage, 2005). The program provides support for Latino parents with training about early literacy, **offers educators resources that will create print-rich learning environments for Latino children**, and supplies information to public agencies to support Latino literacy in the community. More information about the program is available at: <http://www.leeyseras.net/> or <http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/all/leeyseras/index.htm>.

Common Publishers & Distributors of Children’s and YA Books about Latinos

- ❖ Piñata Books –<http://www.arte.uh.edu/pinata/about/index.aspx>.
- ❖ Cinco Puntos Press –<http://www.cincopuntos.com/>
- ❖ Children’s Book Press –<http://www.childrensbookpress.org/ob/latino.html>.
- ❖ Lee & Low – <http://www.leeandlow.com/>
- ❖ Groundwood Books –<http://www.groundwoodbooks.com>
- ❖ Del Sol Books –<http://www.delsolbooks.com>
- ❖ Lectorum – <http://www.lectorum.com>
- ❖ Santillana USA – <http://www.santillanausa.com/>
- ❖ A list of other publishers of children’s books about Latinos can be located at: http://www.hispaniconline.com/hh02/culture_child_read_corner.html.

Book Links

Published by the American Library Association, the periodical **Book Links** often provides reviews of children’s books about Latinos in the Multicultural Literature section of their Classroom Connections feature. Below is a list of articles about Latino children’s literature appearing in *Book Links*:

- ❖ January 2007: “From Aztecs to Zorro: Recent Books about Latinos”
- ❖ September 2006: “Mayan Culture Past and Present”
- ❖ January 2006: “The Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award: Enraptured by Stories”
- ❖ January 2005: “From the Alamo to *Colibri*: New Books about Latinos”
- ❖ January 2005: “More Than a Sunny Playground: The Caribbean”
- ❖ July 2004: “¡Celebremos! Picture Books about Mexico and Central America”
- ❖ January 2004: “Latinos, Hispanics, and Latin Americans”
- ❖ December 2002/January 2003: “A Pool of Reflections: The Américas Award”
- ❖ December 2001/January 2002: “Fiestas, Folklore, History, and More: Recent Children’s Books about Latinos”
- ❖ June/July 2001: “From Tangos to Tortillas: Latinos and Geography”
- ❖ July 2000: “Recent Children’s Books about Latinos”
- ❖ January 1999: “Delightful Recent Books about Latinos”
- ❖ September 1998: “Skeletons and Marigolds: Días de los Muertos”
- ❖ July 1997: “The Art of Mexico”

Select Latino/a Illustrator and Author Websites

- ❖ Information on Latino Illustrator **Robert Casilla** and examples of his art: <http://robertcasilla.com/>.
- ❖ Latino Illustrator **Edward Gonzales'** *Farolitos for Abuelo* (1999) won the Américas Commended. For more information on his work visit: <http://www.edwardgonzales.com/>.
- ❖ Information on Latina Illustrator **Maya Christiana Gonzalez's** artwork and children's books: <http://www.mayagonzalez.com/>.
- ❖ **Susan Guevara's** art has received many awards including Pura Belpré Award, the Américas Award, the Américas Commended, and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award. <http://www.susanguuevara.com/>.
- ❖ **Yuyi Morales** is an Latina artist, writer, puppet maker, and Brazilian folk dancer who grew up in Mexico. For more information on Morales, visit: <http://www.yuyimorales.com/>.
- ❖ **Simón Silva**, a Chicano artist, spent much of his childhood working in the fields with other immigrant children. His vibrant gouache illustrations depict the everyday experiences of Latino farmers in the United States. His art has received the Pura Belpré Honor Award and the Américas Commended. <http://www.simonsilva.com/indexf.html>.
- ❖ **Alma Flor Ada** has written many novels, picturebooks, and collections about Latino children. <http://www.almaflorada.com>.
- ❖ **Julia Alvarez**, a Dominican American author and literature professor, was primarily a writer of adult fiction and poetry until the 2000 when she began writing fiction books for older children. <http://www.juliaalvarez.com/>.
- ❖ **Veronica Chambers**, an author from Panama, considers herself a secret Latina. She appears to be African American and growing up she felt alienated in the Latino community because of her physical appearance. Chambers has written numerous adult books and in the late 1990s began writing children's books about her Latino roots. <http://www.veronicachambers.com>.
- ❖ **Marisa Montes**, a Puerto Rican American author and Writing Professor, has published several beginner chapter books about the Puerto Rican American culture. She created the *Get Ready For Gabi* series which is about a middle-class, third-grade, Puerto Rican American girl and the daily challenges she faces at school and growing up in the U.S. Gabi has been compared as a Latina Junie B. Jones. More information on Montes can be found at: www.marisamontes.com/.
- ❖ **Pam Muñoz Ryan**, a writer and educator of both Mexican and Spanish descent, has created a variety of books on many different topics including Mexican Americans. For more on Ryan, consult: www.pammunozryan.com.
- ❖ **Esmeralda Santiago**, a Puerto Rican American author, has written numerous teen novels recounting her experiences growing up in the U.S. as a newly arrived immigrant from Puerto Rico. Santiago has also edited two collections of Latino/a memoirs. For more on Santiago, consult: www.esmeraldasantiago.net.
- ❖ **Pat Mora**, a Latina poet and children's book author, has written many books for children with Latino characters. Mora is an advocate for Latino Children's Literacy and creator of *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*. <http://patmora.com/index2.htm>.
- ❖ **José-Luis Orozco**, a native of Mexico City, has created thirteen collections of children's songs, games, and rhymes available in song book, cassette, or CD formats. Three of his collections (*De Colores*, *Diez Deditas*, and *Fiestas*) have been illustrated by Elisa Kleven. Orozco's music collections are available at www.joseluisorozco.com.
- ❖ **Gary Soto** is one of the few Mexican American authors who write for children, young adults, and adults. He is the most well-known Chicano author for children and has published more than 20 picturebooks about the Latino culture. Information on Soto is available at: <http://garysoto.com/>.
- ❖ **Lulu Delacre**, a Latina children's author/illustrator born in Puerto Rico, began writing and illustrating children's books in the late 1980s. Delacre strongly believes that Latino children should encounter themselves and their heritage in the books they read. More information can be found at: <http://luludelacre.com/index.htm>.



Guidelines for Evaluating Children's Picturebooks about Latinos



Examine the Personal Traits of the Character:

- ❖ Are the Latino characters portrayed as having a broad range of emotions similar to characters from other cultures?
- ❖ Can Latinos solve their own problems or do they rely upon Anglos for help?
- ❖ Do Latinos abandon some aspect of their culture in order to achieve happiness?
- ❖ Do Latinos move to the U.S. where everything is "perfect" and everyone is happy?

Examine the Role of Various Characters:

- ❖ Do Latino characters actively participate in the story (main character) or are they only secondary characters? Do they have leadership roles?
- ❖ Do Latinos spend their time taking siestas and putting off things until mañana?
- ❖ Are Latino characters in culturally stereotyped roles such as newly arrived immigrants, men full of machismo, shy girls, mothers of many children, or gang members?
- ❖ Is a strong sense of community and family expressed in the illustrations and text? Do elders help care for the children?

Examine and Identify Stereotypes:

- ❖ Are Latinos only depicted as poor low class citizens often living in barrios (Latino neighborhoods)?
- ❖ Are cultural stereotypes present in the illustrations such as sombreros, piñatas, cacti, mariachi bands, donkeys, and palm trees?
- ❖ Are females depicted outdoors and as active as male characters?
- ❖ Do Latinos lapse into Spanish when excited or use broken English?

Examine the Diversity in Text and Illustrations:

- ❖ Are positive role models of both genders provided for Latino children?
- ❖ Do all of Latino characters have the same appearance? OR Is the diversity in skin tones, hair styles and textures, and clothing presented? Not all Latinos have a "Latin Look" of dark skin, hair, and eyes.
- ❖ Are varied cultural experiences of Latinos represented? Is the diversity of the Latino subcultures represented such as Central and South America, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba, etc.?

Examine the Experience of the Author and Illustrator:

- ❖ Does the author/illustrator have experience with the Latino subculture that he/she is representing? OR Is the book written/illustrated by someone who has only briefly visited a Latin American country? How qualified is the author/illustrator?

* Many of the ideas for these evaluation criteria are my own and other are adapted from: Council on Interracial Books for Children. "Latinos or Hispanic Americans." *Guidelines for selecting bias-free and storybooks*. New York: Author, 1980.