



## Temas Latinos: Suggested Children's Books Grades K-3

Compiled by El Corazón de Tejas -  
Central Texas Chapter of REFORMA (2004)

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The Central Texas Chapter of REFORMA, committed to improving library and information services to Central Texas' Spanish-speaking and Latino community, is proud to present this list of suggested children's books with Latino cultural themes. Chapter members who are librarians for public, private, government, and academic libraries in Central Texas worked together to compile this list for colleagues, families, and friends. Additional copies can be downloaded from our website at [www.main.org/reforma](http://www.main.org/reforma).

The list is divided into sections for English, Spanish, and bilingual books and includes bibliographic information to assist in purchasing. However, please be sure to confirm the price, binding material, and language of books when placing final orders with vendors. Many of the titles listed below are available in multiple languages and formats.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE BOOKS

Ada, Alma Flor. *I Love Saturdays y domingos*. Illustrated by Elivia Savadier. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2002. \$16.95 trade cloth. ISBN 0689318197.

A young girl of dual heritage splits her weekends between English and Spanish speaking grandparents. Despite the differences in language and culture, she understands that the love of her grandparents has no boundaries.

Barbot, Daniel. *A Bicycle for Rosaura*. Illustrated by Morella Fuenmayor. Brooklyn: Kane/Miller, 1994. \$5.95 trade paper. ISBN 0916291510.

This Venezuelan tale tells the story of la señora Amelia who lives with her beloved animals - a dog, a tortoise, a cat, a talking parrot, twin canaries, and a beautiful hen named Rosaura. Rosaura wants a bicycle for her birthday and this preposterous request makes for a delightful story.

Castañeda, Omar S. *Abuela's Weave*. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sánchez. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1995. \$15.95 hard cover. ISBN 1880000008.

Surrounded by the colorful terrain of the Guatemalan countryside, a young girl learns the traditional art of weaving from her grandmother.

Leiner, Katherine. *Mama Does the Mambo*. Illustrated by Edel Rodríguez. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2001. \$15.99 trade cloth. ISBN 078680646X.

In anticipation of carnival in old Havana, Cuba, Sophia seeks a dancing partner for her widowed mother who loves to dance the mambo. The tropical mood is set by the colorful illustrations.

Machado, Ana María. *Niña bonita: a story*. Illustrated by Rosana Faría. La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 1996. \$9.95 trade cloth. ISBN 0916291634.

This story celebrates diversity as a very white rabbit falls in love with a dark skinned girl he meets in a Brazilian coastal town. Nominated for the Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature in 1996.

Mora, Pat. *Confetti: Poems for Children*. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sánchez. New York: Lee & Low, 1999. \$15.95 trade cloth. ISBN 1880000253.

Joyful, rhythmic poems, all with Mexican American or Southwestern themes elicit movement, color, and dance.

Mora, Pat. *The Rainbow Tulip*. Illustrated by Elizabeth Sayles. New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 2003. \$6.99 trade paper. ISBN 0142500097.

Based on a family story, this lovely tale will resonate with first-generation immigrant children who are aware of being a little bit "different," like the rainbow tulip.



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Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Mice and Beans*. Illustrated by Joe Cepeda. New York: Scholastic, 2001. \$15.95 trade paper. ISBN 0439183030.

Rosa María plans a birthday party for her special granddaughter and discovers that she had some help from the sneaky little mice that she could not catch.

Soto, Gary. *Chato's Kitchen*. Illustrated by Susan Guevara. New York: Putnam's/Penguin Group, 1995. \$16.99 trade cloth. ISBN 0-399-22658-3.

Chato, the cool cat with six stripes, and his pal Novio Boy, are outsmarted by the *familia* mice and their friend Chorizo.

Velasquez, Eric. *Grandma's Records*. New York: Walker & Co., 2001. \$16.95 trade cloth. ISBN 0802787606.

This story is a loving tribute to the author's Puerto Rican grandmother who taught him to dance the merengue and the conga. It is also a testament to Latin musicians and the sounds that brought so much joy to his life.

### SPANISH LANGUAGE BOOKS

*Amarillo*. Illustrated by Teresa Novoa. Madrid: Santillana, 2001. \$8.95 board book. ISBN 8429469222.

A board book that teaches children about the color yellow in Spanish.

*Azul*. Illustrated by Teresa Novoa. Madrid: Santillana, 2001. \$8.95 board book. ISBN 8429469230.

A board book that teaches children about the color blue in Spanish.

Ada, Alma Flor. *La hamaca de la vaca o un amigo más*. Illustrated by Vivi Escrivá. Series: Cuentos para todo el año. Miami: Santillana USA Publishing Company, 2000. \$14.95 library binding. ISBN 1581051786.

A friendly ant keeps inviting more and more animals into his hammock and then an elephant wants to join the fun. Is there room for one more? A delightful story about sharing and friendship.

Ada, Alma Flor and Isabel Campoy. *Ratoncito Pérez, cartero*. Illustrated by Sandra López Escrivá. Miami: Santillana USA Publishing Company, 2002. \$13.95 paperback. ISBN 1581057571.

A friendly mail carrier delivers letters, posters, catalogs, and packages to characters from fairy tales and other folk stories. The story shows that despite the Internet there is still a need for postal workers.

Ada, Alma Flor and Isabel Campoy. *Vuelo del quetzal*. Illustrated by Felipe Dávalos. Miami: Santillana USA Publishing Company, 2002. \$13.95 trade paper. ISBN 158105811X.

The text and images show the biological and geographic diversity found in Latin America. The story also presents the contrasts found both in urban and rural settings and the past versus the present.

Barbot, Daniel. *Rosaura en bicicleta*. Illustrated by Morella Fuenmayor. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994. \$6.95 trade paper. ISBN 0395630819.

This Venezuelan tale tells the story of la señora Amelia who lives with her beloved animals - a dog, a tortoise, a cat, a talking parrot, twin canaries, and a beautiful hen named Rosaura. Rosaura wants a bicycle for her birthday and this preposterous request makes for a delightful story.

Castañeda, Omar S. *El tapiz de la abuela*. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sánchez. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1995. \$15.95 trade paper. ISBN 1880000113.

Surrounded by the colorful terrain of the Guatemalan countryside, a young girl learns the traditional art of weaving from her grandmother.



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Machado, Ana María. *Niña bonita*. Illustrated by Rosana Faría. Caracas, Venezuela: Ediciones Ekaré, 1994. \$16.51 paperback. ISBN 9802571652.

This story celebrates diversity as a very white rabbit falls in love with a dark skinned girl he meets in a Brazilian coastal town. The English version was nominated for the Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature in 1996.

**Rojo.** Illustrated by Teresa Novoa. Madrid: Santillana, 2001. \$8.95 board book. ISBN 8429469214.

A board book that teaches children about the color red in Spanish.

Soto, Gary. *Chato y su cena*. (Originally published in English as *Chato's Kitchen*.) Illustrated by Susan Guevara. New York: PaperStar [Imprint]; Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 1997. \$16.99 trade paper. ISBN 0698116011.  
Chato, the cool cat with six stripes, and his pal Novio Boy, are outsmarted by the *familia* mice and their friend Chorizo.

Soto, Gary. *¡Qué montón de tamales!* (Originally published in English as *Too Many Tamales!*) Illustrated by Ed Martinez. New York: PaperStar, 1996. ISBN 0698114132.

Young María helps to knead the *masa* for the Christmas tamales. When her mother takes off her diamond ring so it won't become coated with the messy *masa*, María decides to try it on and the trouble begins.

Torres, Leyla. *El sancocho del sábado*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1995. \$15.00 hardcover. ISBN 0374319979.

Every Saturday, María Lili looks forward to making chicken sancocho with her grandparents, Mamá Ana and Papá Angelino. One Saturday, there is nothing in the house except eggs, so María Lili and Mamá Ana take a trip to the local market to purchase what they need.

### BILINGUAL BOOKS

Ada, Alma Flor. *Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English*. Illustrated by Simón Silva. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard/Harper Trade, 1997. \$16.99 trade cloth. ISBN 0688139035.

A collection of short poems, in English and Spanish, with lovely illustrations that address the migrant experience and other agricultural laborers.

Ada, Alma Flor. *Medio pollito / Half Chicken*. Illustrated by Kim Howard. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1997. \$6.99 paperback. ISBN 0440413605.

Why do weather vanes have roosters on the top? This traditional folktale explains why and introduces us to Half-Chicken. He has one eye, one leg, and one wing!

Ada, Alma Flor, et al.. *Pío Peep!: Traditional Spanish nursery rhymes*. Illustrated by Viví Escrivá. New York: Harper Collins, 2003. \$14.99 hard cover. ISBN 0688160190.

A collection of nursery rhymes from Spain and Latin America in Spanish with English translations.

Alarcón, Francisco X. *Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems / Jitomates risueños y otros poemas de primavera*. Illustrated by Maya Christina González. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1997. \$16.95 trade cloth. ISBN 0892391391.

Mexican-American poet, Alarcón, presents a bilingual collection of poems about family, nature, and tradition based on songs taught to him by his grandmother.



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Blanco, Alberto. *Angel's Kite / La estrella de Angel*. Illustrated by Rodolfo Morales. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1994. \$17.50 trade cloth. ISBN 0892391219.

When the church bell disappeared, life in Angel's town changed. Angel, the young kite maker, mysteriously brings back the missing church bell to his beloved town and restores happiness to his family and friends.

Corpi, Lucha. *Where the Fireflies Dance / Ahí, donde bailan las luciérnagas*. Illustrated by Mira Reisberg. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1997. \$15.95 trade cloth. ISBN 0892391456.

In her first book for children, award-winning poet and writer, Lucha Corpi, recalls her childhood in Jaltipan, Mexico. The poignant retelling of her grandmother's stories earned this book a spot on the Texas Bluebonnet Award Master List.

Cruz Martínez, Alejandro. *The Woman Who Outshone the Sun: The Legend of Lucía Zenteno / La mujer que brillaba aún más que el sol*. Illustrated by Fernando Olivera. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1991. \$7.95 trade paper. ISBN 089239126X.

This story retells the Zapotec legend of Lucía Zenteno, a beautiful woman with magical powers to control the waters of the rivers. This book is full of imagery that addresses indigenous water rights.

Elya, Susan Middleton. *Say hola to Spanish*. Illustrated by Loretta Lopez. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1998. \$6.95 paperback. ISBN 1880000644.

Introduces Spanish by defining common Spanish words such as *hola*, *perro*, and *madre*.

Galindo, Mary Sue. *Icy Watermelon / Sandía fría*. Illustrated by Pauline Rodríguez Howard. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2001. \$14.95 trade cloth. ISBN 1558853065.

This story portrays a modern Hispanic American family gathered together on a summer night to enjoy icy cold watermelon. The grandparents tell stories and make up riddles to entertain the children.

García, Richard. *My Aunt Otilia's Spirits / Los espíritus de mi tía Otilia*. Illustrated by Jesús Guerrero Rea. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1987. \$14.95 library binding. ISBN 0892390298.

When Aunt Otilia comes to visit from Puerto Rico, her curious nephew discovers her magical powers.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Family Pictures / Cuadros de familia*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1993. \$7.95 trade paper. ISBN 0892391081.

With expressive folk art, this bilingual book is a tribute to the family and community that shaped Garza's childhood. The pages depict memories of growing up in the traditional Mexican-American community of her hometown, Kingsville, Texas.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *In My Family / En mi familia*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1996. \$16.95 library binding. ISBN 0892391383.

With more endearing folk images, this bilingual book continues to tell the story of Garza's Mexican-American heritage.

Hayes, Joe. *Estrellita de oro / Little Gold Star : A Cinderella Cuento*. Illustrated by Gloria Osuna Pérez & Lucía Angela Pérez. \$15.95 trade cloth. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2000. ISBN 0938317490.

This book offers a special interpretation of "Cinderella" that is popular in the mountain communities of New Mexico. The variations add depth to the original story.



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Hernández, Avelino. *Aquel niño y aquel viejo / That Boy and That Old Man*. Madrid: Kalandraka Editora, 2002. \$14.95 hardcover. ISBN 848464121X.

A young boy and an old man find friendship through fishing, and the lessons of age and wisdom are delightfully addressed.

Johnston, Tony. *My Mexico / México mío*. Illustrated by F. John Sierra. New York: Putnam's Sons/Penguin Group, 1996. \$16.99 cloth text. ISBN 0399222758.

Lovely bilingual poems that evoke pre-Columbian and contemporary traditions.

Mora, Pat. *Uno, dos, tres. One, Two, Three*. Illustrated by Barbara Lavalée. New York: Clarion Books, 1996. \$6.95 paperback. ISBN 0618054685.

Pictures depict two sisters buying birthday presents for their mother in a Mexican market. As they shop, the young girls introduce numbers from one to ten in English and Spanish.

Pérez, Amada Irma. *My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito*. Illustrated by Maya Christina González. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2000. \$15.99 trade cloth. ISBN 0892391642.

In this bilingual tale, a young girl desperately wants her own space in the family's small house. With her mother's help, a storage room is transformed into a lovely and bright bedroom.

Pérez, Amada Irma. *My Diary from Here to There/ Mi diario de aquí hasta allá*. Illustrated by Maya Christina González. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2002. \$16.95. ISBN 0892391758.

A young girl describes her feelings when her father decides to move the family from their home in Mexico to look for work in the United States.

Ramírez, Michael Rose. *The Little Ant / La hormiga chiquita*. Illustrated by Linda Dalad Sawaya. New York: Rizzoli, 1995. \$12.95 trade cloth. ISBN 0847819221.

La hormiga chiquita is a famous character in Spanish folktales. In this bilingual story, she is on a quest for justice after hurting her leg in the snow. She learns about a greater power in control of the world's circumstances.

Rohmer, Harriet. Adapted by Alma Flor Ada. *El sombrero del tío Nacho / Uncle Nacho's Hat*. Illustrated by Veg Reisberg. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1993. \$14.95 trade cloth. ISBN 0892390433.

With text in Spanish and English, these folktales present traditional folk characters from Nicaragua. In one story, we meet old man, Nacho, who learns that an old dog can learn new tricks.

Salas-Porras, Pipina. *El ratoncito pequeño/ The Little Mouse: A Nursery Rhyme in Spanish and English*. Illustrated by José Cisneros. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2001. \$15.95 hardcover. ISBN 0938317563.

This morality tale about a little mouse lured out of its hole by a cat captures the Latin American oral tradition.

Stevens, Jan Romero. *Carlos and the Squash Plant / Carlos y la planta de calabaza*. Illustrated by Jeanne Arnold. Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Pub., 1995. \$15.95 hardcover. ISBN 0873586255.

Carlos lives on a farm in New Mexico and does not like to take baths. What happens to boys who don't like to wash-up? Carlos learns his lesson when his right ear starts to itch and something begins to grow.





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### BOOKS FOR CELEBRATIONS (English and Bilingual)

Borrego, Diana and Ana-Elba Pavon. **25 Latino Craft Projects**. Chicago: American Library Association Editions, 2003. \$30.00 paperback. ISBN 0838908330.

A guide to planning and conducting projects related to Latino holidays and multicultural interests. Also includes an annotated bibliography for related books.

Delacre, Lulu. **Arroz con leche: canciones y ritmos populares de América Latina**. New York: Scholastic, 1992. \$4.99 paperback. ISBN 0590418866.

A beautifully illustrated book with popular Hispanic bilingual nursery rhymes and songs.

Delacre, Lulu. **Las Navidades : Popular Christmas Songs from Latin America**. New York: Scholastic, 1990. \$4.99 paperback. ISBN 0590435485.

Twelve Christmas songs from Central and South America arranged chronologically from Christmas Eve to Epiphany, with Spanish and English texts. Melody lines and guitar chords are included.

Hinojosa, Tish. **Cada niño / Every Child : A Bilingual Songbook for Kids**. Illustrated by Lucía Angela Pérez. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2002. \$18.95 hardcover. ISBN 0938317601.

This book includes 11 original songs collected by Tish Hinojosa in both English and Spanish. Melody lines and guitar chords are included.

Johnston, Tony. **Day of the Dead**. Illustrated by Jeanette Winter. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1997. \$14.00 trade cloth. ISBN 0-15-222863-2.

An indigenous family in Mexico prepares for and celebrates All Soul's Day, *El Día de los Muertos*.

Luenn, Nancy. **A Gift for Abuelita: Celebrating the Day of the Dead / Un regalo para abuelita: en celebración del Día de los Muertos**. Illustrated by Robert Chapman. Flagstaff, AZ: Rising Moon, 1998. \$15.95 hardcover. ISBN 0873586883.

Rosita uses the occasion of *El Día de los Muertos* to make a special gift for her grandmother. This book could be a useful tool to discuss the loss of loved ones with children.

Orozco, José-Luis. **Diez deditos / Ten Little Fingers: & Other Play Rhymes and Action Songs from Latin America**. Illustrated by Elisa Kleven. New York: Puffin, 2002. \$7.99 paperback. ISBN 014230087X.

This book contains lively songs from Latin America. Kids will clap, giggle, wiggle, and much more. Visual prompts cue children for the appropriate body movements that accompany the songs.

Orozco, José-Luis. **De colores: and other Latin-American Folk Songs for Children**. Illustrated by Elisa Kleven. New York : Dutton Children's Books, 1994. \$19.99 hardcover. ISBN 0525452605.

This colorful book contains a collection of Latin American songs with traditional tunes to rhymes and hand games. Songs are accompanied by simple musical arrangements and lyrics are in both English and Spanish.

San Vicente, Luis. **The Festival of Bones / El festival de las calaveras**. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2002. \$14.95 hardcover. ISBN 0938317679.

A funny introduction to *El Día de los Muertos* and how it is celebrated. The works of artist Luis San Vicente have won UNESCO's prestigious NOMA Encouragement Concours Prize for Illustration, and UNESCO honored his work (1997, 1998, and 1999) in their prestigious Youth and Children's Catalog of Illustrations.