Online Resources:

1. **Barahona Center for Study of Books in Spanish for Children & Adolescents** – This comprehensive website has many reviews of children’s books either written in Spanish or written in English about Latinos. The site has a search engine that allows users to explore a database of Recommended Books in English About Latinos, as well as recommended Spanish titles. Users can limit the search to locate only books set in a specific country. [http://www.csusm.edu/csb/english/center.htm](http://www.csusm.edu/csb/english/center.htm)

2. **The Association of Library Service to Children (ALSC)** has compiled a list of children’s books about “Growing Up in the Americas” which can be accessed at: [http://ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/compubs/booklists/growingupwrld/americas.pdf](http://ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/compubs/booklists/growingupwrld/americas.pdf)

3. **Latino Children’s and Young Adult Book Awards Websites:**
   - Pura Belpre Award - [http://www.ala.org/alsc/belpre](http://www.ala.org/alsc/belpre).
   - Tomás Rivera Mexican-American Children's Book Award - [http://www.education.txstate.edu/departments/Tomas-Rivera-Book-Award-Project-Link.html](http://www.education.txstate.edu/departments/Tomas-Rivera-Book-Award-Project-Link.html).


5. **¡Imagínense Libros!** is a virtual evaluation collection of Latino children’s literature and includes information about topics related to Latino children’s literature and literacy. [http://imaginenselibros.blogspot.com/](http://imaginenselibros.blogspot.com/)


8. **Latin Baby Book Club** is a highly useful blog dedicated to highlighting Latino children’s literature and providing interviews with notable Latino authors and illustrators. [http://www.latinbabybookclub.com/](http://www.latinbabybookclub.com/)


Print Resources:

1. **Isabel Schon’s Books** - Schon has published numerous professional books which recommend 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). For a list of her books consult: [http://www.csusm.edu/csb/english/ischon.htm](http://www.csusm.edu/csb/english/ischon.htm).

2. In her book **A Magical Encounter: Latino Children’s Literature in the Classroom** (2nd ed.), Alma Flor Ada has compiled a bibliography of Literature for Children and Adolescents by Latina and Latino Writers, which divided into the following genres: nursery rhymes and oral folklore, poetry, theater, art, biography, autobiographical narrative, folktales and legends, fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, and historical fiction by Latino and non-Latino authors.


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5. 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.


**Information on Library Services to Latino Children:**

There are numerous print and non-print resources for assisting librarians serving Latino populations. Below is my selection of the most useful resources:


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](http://www.reforma.org)


5. WebJunction’s Spanish Language Outreach Program contains information on various facets of serving Spanish-speaking patrons in the library. [http://www.webjunction.org/spanish](http://www.webjunction.org/spanish)


10. ¡Es divertido hablar dos idiomas! - Created by Katie Cunningham, this blog is dedicated to sharing books, music, literacy techniques, and practical suggestions related to delivering bilingual story programs in the library. [http://www.bilingualchildrensprogramming.blogspot.com](http://www.bilingualchildrensprogramming.blogspot.com).

11. **National Latino Children’s Literature Conference** - This annual conference, created by Drs. Jamie C. Naidoo and Julia Lopez-Robertson, is designed to prepare librarians, teachers, and educators for the joys of working with Latino children using authentic Latino children’s literature. The conference, held each spring, is hosted by the Universities of Alabama. Additional information is available by contacting jcnaidoo@slis.ua.edu or visiting [http://www.latinochildlitconf.org/](http://www.latinochildlitconf.org/).

**Education-Based Latino Literacy Programs/Outreach Services:**

¡Colorín Colorado! – This literacy program provides information on the importance of reading in the lives of English Language Learner (ELL) children, specifically Latino children. Activities and links are available concerning children’s literature about Latinos, helping Latino families, how the school can help Latino families, etc. The activities, free 92 page booklet, and video clips of Latino authors are available at: [http://www.colorinolorado.org/](http://www.colorinolorado.org/).

Lee y serás (Read & You Will Be) – Created with the support of Scholastic and Verizon, this 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/site/main.html](http://www.leeyseras.net/site/main.html) or [http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/communityleeyseras.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/communityleeyseras.htm).

Cuentos y Más is a one-of-a-kind literacy program that promotes reading among both English and Spanish-speaking children. Think of a bilingual Reading Rainbow and you have Cuentos y Más. Free webstreams of programs are available: [http://arlington.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=13](http://arlington.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=13)
Resources for Planning Latino Literacy and Library Programs:


4. Pavon and Borrego’s book 25 Latino Craft Projects (2003) is one of the best resources for book and craft suggestions for both traditional and family programs relating to Latino holidays. This resource describes programming ideas for El día de los Niños/El día de los libros, Cinco de Mayo, Hispanic Heritage Month, Día de los Muertos, Las Posadas, and Navidad. To supplement this book, I suggest Menard’s The Latino Holiday Book: From Cinco de Mayo to Dia de los Muertos—the Celebrations and Traditions of Hispanic-Americans (2004, 2nd ed.).


6. 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 programming 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 library programs throughout the entire year! The comprehensive document is available at: http://www.texasdia.org/toolkit.html.

7. REFORMA’s Children’s and Young Adults Services website offers many activities and resources for bilingual storytimes and resources. http://www.reforma.org/CYASC.htm


10. Angel Vigil’s ¡Teatro!: Hispanic Plays for Young People (1996) contains 14 plays based upon Latino culture.


12. Noche de Cuentos program – Sponsored by the American Library Association and created by members of REFORMA, this national, family literacy program promotes rich storytelling and oral traditions among Latino families. Planning and publicity resources are available at http://nochedecuentos.wordpress.com/.

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING CHILDREN’S BOOKS 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 characters) 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 Cultural 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 of Representation 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, hairstyles 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 cultures 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 briefly visited a Latin American country? How qualified is the author/illustrator to write the book?

* 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 textbooks and storybooks. New York: Author, 1980.
**Recommended Latino Children’s Books**

**Picturebooks**


Gonzalez, Maya Christina. *I Know the River Loves Me/Yo sé que el río me ama.* San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2009.


Novels

Folktales

Poetry

Songs/Rhymes


**Informational**


