

# EARLY LITERACY PROGRAMMING EN ESPAÑOL

*Mother Goose on the Loose*®

Programs for Bilingual Learners



*Betsy Diamant-Cohen*

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Dedicated to Michael Cass-Beggs (1941–2007),  
who generously encouraged the use of his mother's material  
in all Mother Goose on the Loose® programs.

His unflagging enthusiasm and joy at seeing his mother's legacy renewed  
inspired the writing of this Mother Goose on the Loose en Español™ manual.

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# Foreword

Some years ago, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners became aware of an exciting new program aimed at babies and caregivers called Mother Goose on the Loose (MGOL). It was quickly adopted as a successful model whereby we made federal grants available to our public libraries to carry out the program. For the past five years we have invited Betsy Diamant-Cohen each fall to provide hands-on training workshops that have afforded our librarians the knowledge, tools, and inspiration to start their own MGOL programs.

In the past few years, an increasing number of Spanish-speaking families have begun to participate in these programs, and some librarians have struggled with how best to reach out to this group of English-language learners. When I learned that a Spanish-language training of MGOL was being developed, I immediately asked Betsy if we could schedule a workshop in our state. Last fall, she presented the workshop to an enthusiastic audience, and, most heartening, as a result two libraries decided to utilize the adapted MGOL model with Latino families in their communities in the coming year.

The Mother Goose on the Loose en Español program was developed as a response to the need to provide modeling activities at the library that can be practiced at home in either Spanish or English. Utilizing the sound outreach technique of working with a community partner who is fluent or comfortable speaking Spanish, Betsy Diamant-Cohen has adapted her award-winning program to reach a new audience of children and families. Thus, any library that wishes to extend services to members of its Spanish-speaking community can embrace this program even if the librarian offering the program may lack those language skills.

Balancing translations in Spanish of the many wonderful original songs of the late Barbara Cass-Beggs, whose Listen, Like, Learn program so inspired Betsy, this new book, *Early Literacy Programming en Español: Mother Goose on the Loose® Programs for Bilingual Learners*, includes many traditional rhymes well-known throughout the Spanish-speaking community. Mother Goose on the Loose en Español incorporates both into a structured program that is developmentally sound and culturally relevant. The program also serves to respond to an emerging trend among parents whose first language is English who seek opportunities to introduce their young children to a bilin-

gual experience. Designed to work in both Spanish and English, MGOL provides an opportunity for very young children to hear language at the time they are developing phonemic awareness. Based on proven techniques of using traditional songs and rhymes, simple picture books, and stories in English and bilingual formats, Mother Goose on the Loose en Español will contribute to vocabulary development in both languages. I strongly believe in the value of this program and am thrilled that this new model will allow librarians and early childhood providers to reach an even wider audience.

*Shelley Quezada  
Consultant, Library Services to the Unserved  
Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners  
Boston, MA*

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# Preface

Childhood studies continue to emphasize the idea that engaging young children with diverse forms of stimulation in a nurturing environment significantly facilitates development and educational success. *Early Literacy Programming en Español: Mother Goose on the Loose® Programs for Bilingual Learners* is a resource that follows this idea by helping librarians, whether Spanish speaking or not, create a high-quality Spanish-language Mother Goose on the Loose program within their library. This book provides the tools librarians and community partners need to create Spanish-language Mother Goose on the Loose programs that encourage healthy child development while providing an informal, inventive opportunity for parent–child education. Inside you will find the following resources:

- A companion multimedia CD-ROM that includes songs in both Spanish and English, along with customizable forms for program preparation
- A ready-to-present script in both Spanish and English
- Tips for working with Latino communities
- A summary of research on early literacy and bilingual language development
- Instructions for creating a unique series of programs
- Tools for assessment, evaluation, and program promotion
- Lyrics to songs and rhymes that work well in a Spanish-language Mother Goose on the Loose program
- And more!

## Scope

The United States has always been a nation of immigrants. However, the recent surge in Latin American immigrants to both urban centers and nontraditional geographic regions is demanding social services be not only more inclusive but also more culturally and linguistically sensitive. The extent of this population surge makes headlines from time to time, and it is no surprise that the number of Spanish speakers in the United States is increasing. Libraries around the country have recognized the impor-

tance of reaching out to the Spanish-speaking population, and many have realized that children's Spanish-language programming is an effective way to not only bring the entire family into the library but also provide much-needed assistance to the Latino community in the areas of school preparation and English-language acquisition. *Early Literacy Programming en Español: Mother Goose on the Loose® Programs for Bilingual Learners*, which presents the successful program *Mother Goose on the Loose en Español*—also referred to as *Escucha y Disfruta* (Listen and Enjoy)—does just that.

## Brief History and Description of Mother Goose on the Loose en Español

Mother Goose on the Loose is a 30-minute nursery rhyme program for children from birth to age three that seamlessly combines books, music, movement, play, art, and language with the development of social and emotional skills of young children, while also providing informal education on child development through tips for parents. Throughout the past five years, countless librarians throughout the United States have attended Mother Goose on the Loose training workshops and have brought the program to their libraries. The program's popularity stems from the ease with which librarians can learn and present it, the solid research supporting it, and the enthusiasm of the adults and children who participate in it.

The typical activities in an MGOL program promote an enthusiastic attitude toward books, offering children many opportunities to practice taking turns, following directions, being patient, and showing appreciation to others. During the program, librarians model book-reading behavior, present playful ways to use books, and give positive reinforcement, so that adults and children not only bond with their local librarians but also experience a sense of community and create relationships with other program attendees. In addition, MGOL programs help children develop many school readiness skills by encouraging them to build their vocabulary, use their imagination, and expand their creativity. These are just a few of the benefits of Mother Goose on the Loose, but they serve to illustrate why the program is currently offered by so many libraries, as well as in child care centers and by other caregivers with groups of children.

The Mother Goose on the Loose program combines principles of library programming with Barbara Cass-Beggs' Listen, Like, Learn approach for teaching music to young children. Mother Goose on the Loose is different from all other baby programs precisely because of its connection with Barbara Cass-Beggs (see Figure P.1).

Barbara Cass-Beggs (1904–1990) was a Canadian music educator who developed the Listen, Like, Learn approach to teach music to children, using music principles established by Kodály and Orff. Children are introduced to a piece of music by first listening to it. After hearing it (perhaps a number of times), it becomes familiar to them. Once they like it, they are more attentive and receptive to that particular piece of music

Figure P.1: Cass-Beggs at a Your Baby Needs Music Class in Jerusalem, Israel



and are thus able to learn from it. Barbara also took a holistic approach to children that included exposure to the arts with great respect for a child's individuality. Barbara incorporated her findings on child development and brain research with her methods for teaching music. In addition, she wrote songs and adapted others in order to create a number of age-appropriate activities specifically for children.

Through her two courses, *Your Baby Needs Music* and *Your Child Needs Music*, Barbara taught music to many children and their parents, while encouraging bonding, laughter, imagination, and teamwork. Through easy musical games, Barbara found ways to let parents observe and appreciate the developing skills of their growing children. I studied with Barbara in the late 1980s and became a certified instructor for *Your Baby Needs Music* classes using Barbara's Listen, Like, Learn approach. During this time, I was also working as a part-time English language librarian at the Ruth Youth Wing Library of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Because this museum library focused on children's book illustration, the storytime program focused more on exposing children to the art in books rather than on language. After a year of presenting weekly preschool storytimes at the museum library and *Your Baby Needs Music* classes at a local maternity hospital, I created a program for young children that combined Barbara's

methodology with traditional library programming techniques for sharing high-quality books with children. The result: a blend of music, language, illustration, books, positive reinforcement, parent–child bonding, laughter, ritual, repetition with variety, parental tips, and high-energy activities paired with restful lullabies. This new program was called Mother Goose on the Loose. I ran the Mother Goose on the Loose program on a weekly basis for years in the Ruth Youth Wing Library of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (see Figure P.2). During this time, I was able to tweak the program, constantly improving it. In addition, scientific findings provided additional support for the value of the program in promoting early literacy and school readiness skills.

I brought the program to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1999 and have been delighted to see it spread nationwide since then. Buena Casa, Buena Brasa (A Warm Home, A Warm Hearth) was a Spanish-language version of Mother Goose on the Loose developed and presented at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore by Anne Calderón from the Maryland Committee for Children and me (see Figure P.3).

During the time of this program, some amazing developments occurred. After Buena Casa, Buena Brasa ran for more than a year, English-speaking parents and children started attending. English-speaking parents wanted to expose their children to Spanish. One English-speaking mom asked Anne if a Spanish-speaking mom was

**Figure P.2: One of the Earliest Mother Goose on the Loose Programs at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem**



**Figure P.3: Buena Casa, Buena Brasa Thanksgiving at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, November 2007**



willing to read a Spanish story to her child before each program. In return, the English-speaking mom offered to read a story in English to the Spanish speaker's child. Through this one request, quite a few bilingual story-reading pairs sprung up. Even now, this cultural literary exchange takes place at the beginning of each program. In addition to the benefit of hearing a story in another language read by a native speaker, comfortable and long-lasting relationships are being forged. For example, in my program, babies are held by everyone and children's names are known by everyone—there is no invisible dividing line between English and Spanish speakers.

Immigrants from countries where Spanish was not a prominent language also began attending the Buena Casa, Buena Brasa program, because it offered a community feeling where attendees felt comfortable. One woman from the Middle East, who could speak neither English nor Spanish, came on a weekly basis with her daughter and was warmly accepted into the community. The Middle Eastern woman became pregnant with her second child, and shortly before giving birth the Spanish-speaking women of the group threw her a baby shower!

In the second year of the program, one week before Thanksgiving, some women approached Anne and said, "We would like to celebrate Thanksgiving in America, and we have never done it before. Because our library friends are our best friends, we would like to have a Thanksgiving celebration here. Can we?" Although it was only two weeks

before Thanksgiving, with help from many people in the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the celebratory meal was scheduled. One day before Thanksgiving families brought spouses, grandparents, uncles, and aunts. Rice, beans, tortillas, chili, and other Spanish dishes sat alongside Asian and Middle Eastern foods and the traditional turkey and pumpkin pie. At the end of the meal, we sang a song about pumpkin pie and then posed for a group picture (see Figure P.3). Spanish speakers chatted comfortably with English speakers and took turns holding each other's children. The day seemed magical.

*Early Literacy Programming en Español: Mother Goose on the Loose® Programs for Bilingual Learners* is an adaptation of the original Mother Goose on the Loose program that incorporates successful experiences with Buena Casa, Buena Brasa. Because it uses the same Cass-Beggs Listen, Like, Learn approach, Mother Goose on the Loose en Español can also be called “Escucha y Disfruta con Mamá Gansa,” which translates as “Listen and Enjoy with Mother Goose.” Using the basic Mother Goose on the Loose format, Escucha y Disfruta includes Spanish-language translations of songs and rhymes by Barbara Cass-Beggs and traditional Spanish-language children's activities. It also includes components geared for the cultural background of Hispanic participants. Developmental tips focus on information relevant to behavior in the public library, the resources available to Spanish speakers, and tips about bilingual language development. The other major difference between Mother Goose on the Loose and Mother Goose on the Loose en Español is a new focus on community. In the libraries where Anne and I ran Buena Casa, Buena Brasa, the majority of native Spanish-speaking participants were immigrants. Many parents and care providers arrived at the library feeling culturally and linguistically isolated. Our weekly meetings of parents in similar situations and interests became a strong, positive force in community building.

A typical Mother Goose on the Loose program is often followed by a 30-minute play period, during which children play with educationally appropriate toys, while adults converse. In Buena Casa, Buena Brasa, while children were occupied with free play, parents were given a short survey for the purpose of gathering data. Surveys were then followed by general announcements and a short family play period. Toys were then collected, tours of the library were given to newcomers, and, if planned in advance, a particular library service was highlighted. At the end of the program, everyone was invited to partake in refreshments. This successful model can be replicated in Mother Goose on the Loose en Español.

I designed this manual to provide everything needed to create a successful Spanish-language early literacy program. Because each community is different, you may find some of the material superfluous. For instance, information about integrating Spanish speakers into the library may not be relevant for you. In some communities where the local library lacks any Spanish-speaking staff, non-English speakers simply do not use the library. In other communities, even with no Spanish-speaking staff, non-English-speaking patrons feel comfortable using the library and may perhaps account for the bulk of the library's visitors.

## Organization

Part I, “Things You Need to Know Before Starting a Mother Goose on the Loose en Español Program,” offers three chapters of essential background information. If you would rather just dive right in and begin planning your program, go directly to the second part of the book.

Chapter 1, “Learning, Early Literacy, Spanish-Language Considerations, and Mother Goose on the Loose en Español,” discusses research that led to the creation of this program and that supports the benefits of early literacy skills, ideas on multiple intelligences, and the development of school readiness skills. Issues surrounding the use of both spoken and written Spanish in the United States are considered. Variations in Spanish-language use among people from different parts of the world, as well as within the same country, are illuminated. Anne Calderón explains the Spanish-language choices for the translations within this book and for the Mother Goose on the Loose en Español script.

Chapter 2, “Bilingual Language Development,” written by Gilda Martinez, PhD, addresses concerns regarding language acquisition for children of Spanish-speaking, non-English-speaking parents.

Chapter 3, “Working with the Latino Community,” written by Anne Calderón, draws upon Anne’s experiences with the Buena Casa, Buena Brasa program and provides tips about supplies, behavior expectations, and other helpful comments. If you are a Spanish-speaking librarian who is not going to be using a community partner to help run your programs, you may choose to skip this chapter.

Part II, “Planning for Mother Goose on the Loose en Español,” features seven chapters that give all the tools necessary for running a Mother Goose on the Loose en Español program at your library. An explanation of the traits that make Mother Goose on the Loose different from all other early literacy programs is combined with a bilingual script, a sample program, lists of Spanish music to use in your program, suggestions of books for reading aloud, and templates for ten essential flannel board pieces and how to use them. In addition, written guidelines are provided to help you create and maintain a good working relationship with your partner.

Part III, “Personalizing Mother Goose on the Loose en Español,” features two chapters that will help you make the program your own.

Chapter 11, “Planning and Customizing Programs and Weekly Activities,” offers the best tools to shape a unique program or series of programs. It also provides information and programming sheets to help you create an ongoing Mother Goose on the Loose en Español series for your own institution. It features weekly activities that can be used to familiarize non-English-speaking families with public library services. These include reference questions to ask at the information desk, tours of specific areas, library card registration, book check-out, and hands-on computer demonstrations.

Chapter 12, “Feedback, Evaluation, and Celebration,” provides tools for in-house evaluations specifically designed for this program. Questions for the evaluations are in both English and Spanish. Also included is advice about challenging situations with parents and children, suggestions for celebrating successes, and ways to expand your program.

Part IV, “The Mother Goose on the Loose en Español Songbook, Rhymebook, and Resourcebook,” contains two chapters. Chapter 13 provides a list of suggested songs and rhymes that work well in this program. The chapter features songs, lyrics, words to rhymes, and stage directions according to section classification (e.g., Rhymes and Reads or Standing-Up Rhymes). Chapter 14 includes developmental tips in both Spanish and English.

Part V, “A Personal Word,” includes Chapter 15, “Final Thoughts,” which discusses additional resources and the rewards one can experience from this program.

## How to Use the CD-ROM

*Audio:* The CD-ROM contains one complete program to use as an instructional tool. Songs, rhymes, and developmental tips in Spanish, as well as best practices for helping children improve school readiness, are included. The CD also provides parents with activities that they can try at home. Songs and rhymes included on the CD are indicated in the text by the symbol  plus track number.

Simply insert the CD into any audio device to listen. The program is presented as follows:

Track #1	Explanation
Track #2	Introduction
Track #3	Welcoming Comments/Bienvenidos
Track #4	Rhymes and Reads/Rimas y lectura
Track #5	Body Rhymes/Rimas del cuerpo
Track #6	Drum Sequence/Sequencia de “rum pum peta”
Track #7	Standing-Up Activities/Actividades al pararse
Track #8	Animals!/¡Animales!
Track #9	Musical Instruments/Instrumentos musicales
Track #10	Scarves/Pañuelos
Track #11	Lullabies/Cancioncitas
Track #12	Interactive Rhymes/Rimas interactivas
Track #13	Closing Section/Despedida

I found it works best if you and your Spanish-speaking partner both listen to the CD together to get an idea of the types of songs that are available in the program. Then, together you can collaborate to determine if parts should be added or omitted.

*Graphics and Documents:* The CD-ROM also includes downloadable files for the Program Planning Worksheet (Figure 11.1), Sample Program Plan (Figure 11.2), and Song Lyrics and Directions (Chapter 13), as well as digital templates for the flannel board patterns presented in Chapter 10.

To plan your own lesson:

1. Download the desired number of the program planning sheets onto your computer from the CD-ROM. Two versions are included: the Sample Program Plan features a ready-made program outline based on the program described in Chapter 8; the Program Planning Worksheet is a customizable form that you can use to create your own program.
2. The mandatory materials that need to be consistently repeated are already filled into the corresponding blanks of both versions of the planning sheet.
3. In the Sample Program Plan, the suggested materials that I recommend are listed in parentheses; you can opt to use these or replace them with your own choices by filling in the corresponding blanks on the Program Planning Worksheet.
4. The open blanks on the Program Planning Worksheet are for materials that you choose. Fill in the blanks with the songs, rhymes, and stories that you would like to present in your lesson.
5. Add a developmental tip or two to each lesson (examples are provided in Chapter 8's program plan and in Chapter 14), and you have just planned your own Mother Goose on the Loose en Español program!

By following all of the instructions and using all of the tools presented in *Early Literacy Programming en Español*, any librarian (Spanish speaking or not) can succeed in planning and running a Mother Goose on the Loose en Español program.