

Rose Zertuche Treviño

Read Me a Rhyme in Spanish and English

Léame una rima en español e inglés



Rose Zertuche Treviño is a consultant in the area of services for youth. She developed the first bilingual Born to Read program and has presented Born to Read workshops throughout the country. She is the editor of *The Pura Belpré Awards: Celebrating Latino Authors and Illustrators* (American Library Association, 2006).

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READING BEGINS AT HOME *EL GUSTO POR LEER COMIENZA EN LA CASA*

All parents are their child's first teachers, but some parents do not understand that. As educators, we should be sending that message to every parent we encounter. In the Latino culture, a parent's role is as the nurturer. The mother is the loving, caring person who feeds the children, clothes them, and picks them up when they are hurt. The father is the person who provides for the family and who disciplines children. The role of teacher is left to the teacher in the school. This is slowly changing as more and more librarians seek opportunities to bring the message of first teacher to parents.

As a librarian working with the Born to Read program, I developed a simple list for parents that I translated into Spanish. This list follows, and you may want to tailor it for your library and for your customers. Whether the parent speaks Spanish or English, is Latino or not, the list is a good starting point as you promote your message that reading to a baby is important and that it is a good first step.

Reading tips for parents:

- Turn off the television and radio before you begin reading with your baby.
- Sit your baby on your lap or close to you on the floor.
- Read with emotion, and change your voice for different characters.
- Show your baby the pictures in the book.
- Set aside a special reading time each day.
- Let your baby be noisy and active while you are reading.

Consejos para cuando lees con tu bebé:

- Apaga la televisión y el radio antes de comenzar a leer con tu bebé.
- Sienta a tu bebé en tu regazo o junto a ti en el piso.
- Lee con emoción y cambia el tono de tu voz para los diferentes personajes del cuento.
- Muestra a tu bebé los dibujos en el libro.
- Reserva un tiempo especial para leer cada día.
- Deja a tu bebé que sea ruidoso y activo cuando lees.

This next list can also be used for parents of older children. You are also encouraged to develop bilingual fliers. Promoting your bilingual programs with a bilingual flier is the key to reaching many of the parents you need to reach. You may find a mixture of parents in your audience, including some who do not speak Spanish but want their children to learn Spanish. Always welcome your entire group.

Reading begins at home:

- Read to your children.
- Tell your children stories about your family.
- Limit the time your children spend watching television.
- Keep a collection of children's books and magazines at home.
- Sing to your children.
- Recite nursery rhymes to your children.
- Take your children to the library to check out books.
- Bring your children to storytime at the library.

El gusto por leer comienza en la casa:

- Lee junto con sus niños.
- Cuéntale a sus niños historias sobre la familia.
- Limita la cantidad de tiempo que sus niños pasan viendo televisión.
- Ten libros y revistas para los niños en la casa.
- Canta a sus niños.
- Comparte con sus niños sus rimas favoritas.
- Lleva a sus niños a la biblioteca y pida libros prestados para ellos.
- Lleva a sus niños a la hora en que se leen cuentos en la biblioteca.

PROMOTING THE LIBRARY

The ideas presented in this book are for the hard to reach. These are the people who are unaware of free library services and programs. Generally, you will find that more-educated Latino families are aware of such services and programs and do use the library. They know where to seek help and how to find libraries.

You will have to leave your library and visit your neighborhood to get a feel for where some Latino parents and their children can be found. Here are some places to visit:

- The grocery store
- The Laundromat
- Service organizations like the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinic
- The Head Start center
- Churches
- Doctors' offices
- The flea market
- The *panadería* (bakery)
- Family restaurants like pizza places
- The mall
- Sports and recreation sites like the YMCA
- Schools
- Day-care centers

Your next step is to walk right in and introduce yourself. Ask to speak to the owner or manager. If he or she is unavailable, make an appointment. Develop a friendly business transaction and let the owner or manager know that your business is books and about the importance that reading plays in a child's success. Ask if you can promote your bilingual storytimes with a poster. Perhaps the owner or manager is willing to allow you to leave book-marks. Be innovative and don't be afraid to ask. Some of these people may have children of their own.

Contact the churches in the neighborhood. Some churches print a weekly bulletin. You might be able to advertise your library and your bilingual storytime in the bulletin. While at the church, find out about the annual festival. Many churches hold one, and they are usually packed with families. Have a library booth at the festival where you can do simple crafts with

children, talk about library services, and help families fill out library card applications. Be friendly and approachable, and sell the library!

Consider contacting the immigration center. Perhaps people there would be willing to insert a flier about library services into their welcome package for new immigrants. Be sure that the flier is bilingual. Although libraries are free in the United States, that is not the case in many countries. Another agency to contact is United Way, which works with many of the families you want to reach.

Visit management at the apartment complexes in your library's service area. Some complexes have a monthly one-page news flier. Your library could make the front page!

FORMING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Form a partnership with the schools in your area. Offer to set up a table at back-to-school events. You can distribute your bilingual fliers there. Meet with the school librarian and join forces to promote neighborhood library services. Your school librarian will become invaluable. The school librarian has access to the very kids you want to reach. Some schools have a Head Start program in the building, so do some investigating. You may hit the jackpot!

If you do not ask for partners in your effort to reach your target audience, you will never know who might have jumped on board, so begin by making a list of people you can contact. Some additional suggestions to those listed previously include early childhood centers, bookstores, the state library, the Hispanic chamber of commerce, and retail stores. Approaching potential partners by phone or with a letter defining the library's bilingual storytimes and including the date, time, and location is a good first step. Tell them how you see them involved with promoting your program. If you write a letter or send an e-mail, include your contact information and a note explaining that you will follow up with a phone call if you do not hear back from them by a particular date.

Never underestimate the media. You will be surprised to see big numbers of people if you involve the media from the start. Contact and advertise in local newspapers, on radio and television stations, and with local businesses. Send a "fast facts" letter along with your invitation to jump on board to support literacy, increase the numbers of new readers, and engage in the success of children.

ESTABLISHING TRUST

Some people have misconceptions that Latinos do not use the library, that Latinos do not check out books, and that Latinos don't ask for help if they do come into the library.

Misconception #1: Latinos Do Not Use the Library

It is very important to establish trust with all customers. This is even more important with Latinos. There are several factors to consider. Some Latinos often see libraries as being for the educated, as costing money to use, or as being only for the elite. In many Latin American countries, there are no public libraries. Libraries are for research purposes, and one must pay to use the library. For many families, a library experience is not part of their background. The grandparents did not have a library, so this was not something that they would have passed on to their children. Those children, now adults, did not grow up with libraries, and the cycle is ready to continue. Unless those adults begin to understand how important books and reading are to their child's success, they may continue to pass up the opportunities at the library. This is where the librarian steps in and begins establishing trust, promoting library services, and developing programs of interest to Latinos.

Misconception #2: Latinos Do Not Check Out Books

Many libraries have a look about them that says "government entity." Signage that says "welcome" and "bienvenidos" will catch the attention of those whose preferred language is Spanish. The library card application should be simple and easy to fill out and should be available in Spanish and English. There should always be a welcome smile on the face of the first person a customer will encounter, and that person should make the effort to assist in any way possible, even helping fill out the library card application. Some Latinos may be immigrant families who fear the government. They may or may not be in the country legally, and they may or may not know someone who has entered the country illegally. Fear of immigration, or *la migra*, will prevent them from filling out a library card application because then they will be "on record." Keep your collection current and in good condition. Make sure it is visible. Weed regularly. Your Spanish-language collection should be just as important as any other collection in your library.

Misconception #3: Latinos Don't Ask for Help If They Do Come into the Library

Latinos generally do not want to put anyone out. Asking for help means interruption, and this is something that is difficult for some Latinos. Once again, there should always be a welcome smile on the face of the first person a customer will encounter when he or she enters the library, and that person should make the effort to assist in any way possible. Make an effort to approach customers as they enter the library. Welcome them and offer to help them find books, DVDs, the computer, and more. Be sure to take them to someone on staff who speaks Spanish if you are unable to communicate with them; however, that first welcoming effort is very important.

THE BOOKS

The books suggested here can be substituted for others, and at the end of each program idea there is a list of additional titles. For those of us who read to children, we understand how important it is to know and love the book. Examine each book carefully. Some of the suggested titles are board books and some have movable parts, such as flaps to lift and tabs to pull. If you do not particularly care for this type of book, don't use it. New books are always being published that you will want to examine as well. Review the bibliography for an annotation of each book. I have made every attempt to note when a book is a board book or has distinct features like movable parts. In some cases, I have suggested books written in Spanish by Latino authors that do not have English translations. Use your library collection to find similar books in English. You are the best judge as to which books from your English collection you will want to use during storytime.

THE RHYMES AND THE SONGS

I have included a separate discography listing resources that contain CD collections with many of the rhymes and songs you will find throughout this book. If you do not know the tunes, you may want to purchase the CDs and learn some of them. Another suggestion is to partner with a teacher or day-care provider who speaks Spanish and is familiar with many of these selections.

THE TRANSLATIONS

It is not an easy task to translate from one language to another. Some of the translations you will find within this book are not literal translations. You will also find that some do not make sense in English. They may also not make sense in Spanish, but they are traditional rhymes and songs loved and cherished by generations of children.

LATINO, HISPANIC, OR OTHER

For the purpose of continuity, I have used the term *Latino* to describe the customers who are of Latin American heritage. You will have to decide which term your community accepts. There are many countries that have been placed into this category and include people of different countries and regions, including Spain, Puerto Rico, Central America, South America, Mexico, the Caribbean, and more. If you serve a population from El Salvador, for example, they can help you determine how you can best promote services for this group. In parts of Texas, one might find a large percentage of people from Mexico. In New York, a large percentage might be Puerto Rican.

SOURCES

Many of the rhymes, songs, fingerplays, and tongue twisters included herein are well loved in Latin American countries. Some are part of oral tradition, and parents teach them to their children. Others I learned at library workshops and conference programs. I have made every attempt to find sources for those that may have appeared on a handout that I kept and used at countless storytimes throughout my career as a children's librarian. Some of the games and songs were those that my mother played as a child and taught me, while I learned some through my interaction with numerous agencies that serve Spanish-speaking children. Some I made up and have used with young children and are similar to those I learned. I contacted a few people for guidance regarding public domain and fair use. My intent is to provide those who work with children with a guide for planning and implementing a bilingual storytime. I wish you much success as you take a step toward storytimes in two languages.

Chapter 2

PROGRAMS FOR BABIES ***PROGRAMAS PARA BEBÉS***

Babies love to hear sounds and look at their surroundings, and they love to be the center of attention. An infant lap-sit program engages parent and baby to bond with books and to begin their library experience in a safe environment. Every baby deserves a good first start, and every proud parent will tell you that his or her baby is brilliant. They all are, and you can share in their brilliant development.

A bilingual program just for babies and their parents provides twice the fun and is the beginning of a learning time in two languages. You can make the most of this time by starting with a simple rhyme or song to be repeated in both languages. You will be the best judge as to which language to introduce first. You can also choose to start all of your bilingual story-times the same way. Repetition is very important for babies because they are beginning their language development. It is OK to repeat a rhyme several times or to read the same book several weeks in a row. If funds are available, multiple copies of the board books you will be sharing are best distributed to parents so that they and their baby can follow along with you.

Babies have a short attention span, so a simple program with plenty of variety lasting ten to fifteen minutes may be what you plan for.

After the stories, rhymes, songs, and fingerplays you can bring out a few toys for social time with babies.

It is always a good idea to have books within grasp just ready to be checked out. Place a few musical CDs on your table with the books, and make time to engage the parents by offering any one of the following:

- A bilingual handout listing the titles of the books you shared
- Words to the bilingual rhymes, songs, and fingerplays

- Suggested resources with additional ideas to use at home
- A schedule with your storytime listings

Looking for a name for your program? Here are a few ideas:

Cuentitos para bebés	Stories for Babies
Tiempo para bebés	Baby Time
Jardín de bebés	Baby Garden

Here is a very simple song that you can sing to the tune of “Frère Jacques.” In Spanish, a song is called a *canCIÓN* or sometimes even a *canCIÓNcita*, or “little song.” *Bebé* with the accent on the second *e* means “baby.” *Mami* is “mommy” and *papi* is “daddy.”

HOLA, BEBÉ

Hola, bebé. Hola, bebé.
 ¿Cómo estás? ¿Cómo estás?
 Muy bien, gracias.
 Muy bien, gracias.
 ¿Y usted? ¿Y usted?

Hola, mami. Hola, mami.
 ¿Cómo estás? ¿Cómo estás?
 Muy bien, gracias.
 Muy bien, gracias.
 ¿Y usted? ¿Y usted?

Hola, papi. Hola, papi.
 ¿Cómo estás? ¿Cómo estás?
 Muy bien, gracias.
 Muy bien, gracias.
 ¿Y usted? ¿Y usted?

HELLO, BABY

Hello, baby. Hello, baby.
 How are you? How are you?
 Very well, thank you.
 Very well, thank you.
 How about you? How about you?

Hello, Mommy. Hello, Mommy.
 How are you? How are you?
 Very well, thank you.
 Very well, thank you.
 How about you? How about you?

Hello, Daddy. Hello, Daddy.
 How are you? How are you?
 Very well, thank you.
 Very well, thank you.
 How about you? How about you?

PROGRAM 1: THE ALPHABET / EL ALFABETO

This program introduces the alphabet to your group.

Opening Song

Sing the opening song, “Hola, bebé / Hello, Baby.”

Book

Start with this simple book that is available in a bilingual edition in board-book format.

Rosa-Mendoza, Gladys. *The Alphabet / El alfabeto*. Me+mi, 2005.

Tickle Rhyme

Next, have parents try this tickle rhyme on baby's toes or fingers, with each toe being one of the vowels. For the second line, the parent runs his or her fingers up baby's leg to baby's belly button and then begins to tickle. In Spanish, a rhyme is called a *rima*.

A, E, I, O, U.

El burro sabe más que tú.

A, E, I, O, U.

The donkey knows more than you.

Once the parents try the rhyme on the right foot or hand, baby will be ready to try it out on the left. So try it again.

Book

Margarita Robleda is a well-known author and singer from Mexico who has written many books for young children. Here is one of her alphabet books.

Robleda, Margarita. *Jugando con las vocales*. Santillana USA, 2006.

Fingerplay

This silly fingerplay is a play on the vowels. You will notice that the burro is a character here, too. Start with the thumb and end with the pinkie. You can ask the parents to repeat after you as you start on one hand in Spanish and then on the other hand in English. In Spanish, a fingerplay is called a *juego con los dedos*.

A, el burro se va.

E, el burro se fue.

I, el burro está aquí.

O, el burro se ahogó.

U, el burro eres tú.

A, there goes the donkey.

E, there went the donkey.

I, the donkey is here.

O, the donkey choked.

U, you are the donkey.

Call-and-Response Rhyme

Next, try this simple rhyme as a call-and-response.

Las cinco vocales son	The five vowels are
A, E, I, O, U.	A, E, I, O, U.
A, E, I, O, U.	A, E, I, O, U.
Éstas son las cinco vocales.	These are the five vowels.

Book

Are you ready for another book? You will be the best person to know when to stop.

Salas, Michele. *A Is for Alphabet / A de alfabeto*. Everest, 2003.

Rhyme

Now try this final rhyme. It is a rhyme about the laughing vowels. You will notice that each line that follows the vowel is made to sound like the vowel, so that the *A* in Spanish sounds like “ah” and laughs “ha, ha, ha” and so forth. Here’s a simple sound guide:

A in Spanish sounds like “ah.”
E in Spanish sounds like “eh.”
I in Spanish sounds like “ee.”
O in Spanish sounds like “oh.”
U in Spanish sounds like “ooh.”

VOCALES

Así se ríe la A:
 Ja, ja, ja.
 Así se ríe la E:
 Je, je, je.
 Pero ríe más la I
 Porque se parece a mí:
 Ji, ji, ji.
 Así se ríe la O:
 Jo, jo, jo.
 Pero no ríe la U.
 ¿Por qué no ríe la U?
 Porque el burro sabe más
 que tú.

VOWELS

The A laughs like this:
 Ha, ha, ha.
 The E laughs like this:
 Heh, heh, heh.
 But the I laughs longest
 Because it looks like me:
 Hee, hee, hee.
 The O laughs like this:
 Ho, ho, ho.
 But the U doesn’t laugh.
 Why not?
 Because the donkey knows
 more than you.

Additional Books

Here are a few more alphabet books. The ones by Alberto Blanco, Marifé González, and Vicky Sempere are available only in Spanish. You might have these and other alphabet books for parents to choose from, and if you announce this before they leave, the books are sure to go with them.

Alvarez, Lourdes M. *Alphabet*. Sweetwater Press, 2005. Spanish: *Alfabeto*. Sweetwater Press, 2005.

Blanco, Alberto. *ABC*. Sistemas Técnicos de Edición, 2001.

González, Marifé. *Aprende las letras*. Susaeta, 2004.

Sempere, Vicky. *ABC*. Ediciones Ekaré, 1991.

Suárez, Maribel. *The Letters / Las letras*. Editorial Grijalbo, 1990.

Closing Song

Your program is now ending, so it is time for a closing tune. You can use the same tune you started with and just change a few words.

Adios, bebé. Adios, bebé.	Good-bye, baby. Good-bye, baby.
Ya te vas. Ya te vas.	Time to go. Time to go.
Con rimas y canciones,	With rhymes and songs,
Con rimas y canciones	With rhymes and songs,
Y cuentos también,	And stories too,
Y cuentos también.	And stories too.

PROGRAM 2: BABY ANIMALS / LOS ANIMALITOS

Opening Song

Welcome your babies and parents to your storytime with your welcome song, “Hola, bebé / Hello, Baby.”

Vocabulary Activity

Next, introduce pictures of animals and make animal sounds. Make this a fun activity for baby and parent in two languages. Here are a few bilingual animals and what they sound like:

La vaca dice muu.	The cow says moo.
El perrito dice guau guau.	The puppy says bowwow.
El patito dice cuá, cuá.	The duckling says quack, quack.

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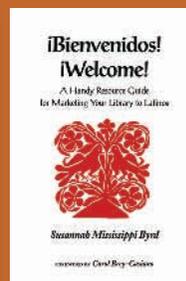
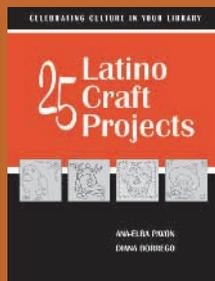
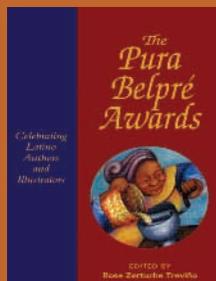
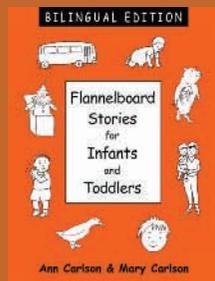
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