

Celebrating Latinx Voices Book List

Tandem, Partners in Early Learning[®] is a nonprofit organization working towards equity and racial justice in the area of early learning and care. At Tandem, we believe that magic happens when a child and an adult gather together around a book—and a key element of our programming involves providing families with high-quality books that promote conversations that support language, literacy, and social-emotional development.

We take pride in the uncompromisingly high quality of our book collection. Consisting of 1,300 unique titles in 21 languages, Tandem's book collection tackles the diversity problem in children's literature head on: the titles in our library provide authentic, affirming representations of individuals from diverse backgrounds and many of them are in [#ownvoices](#), lifting up the work of authors and illustrators who represent the same communities as the characters they write about.



A cornerstone of Tandem's work is the enduring idea that books should reflect children's lived experiences and introduce them to the lived experiences of others. And that's the spirit behind this book list. The twelve titles in this list highlight Latinx characters in a variety of settings, introducing children to different aspects of the Latinx experience. For some children, these books will be mirrors that reflect their backgrounds and experiences; for others, these books will be windows that open up opportunities to learn about new people, places, things and experiences.

When children are able to share their own experiences and learn about the experiences of others, especially those who represent cultures and communities different from their own, it helps them develop empathy, compassion, and the capacity for inclusion—thereby laying the foundation for an equitable society.



[All Around Us](#)

written by Xelena González and illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

Travel to San Antonio, Texas where a young girl and her grandfather plant their family garden. Join their conversation as they meditate on the circles they find, from physical shapes to the cycles of life. This book's quiet simplicity is illuminated through beautiful illustrations that will inspire rich conversations about family, community, and interconnectedness.

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: The young girl and her grandfather contemplate circles and cycles. Take a walk outside or simply explore inside your own home and ask your child to identify as many circles as possible. Make it a game!

Teaching Tip: Use this book to discuss [relationships](#) and [early mathematics](#).



[Also available in Spanish](#)

[Alma y cómo obtuvo su nombre](#)

written and illustrated by Juana Martínez-Neal

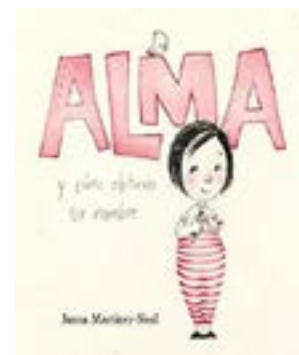
This is a beautiful story about family, identity, and how we honor and connect to our ancestors. Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela's father teaches her about the ancestors after whom she is named and why she is their namesake. Through every ancestor's story, Alma connects with each of them over a shared love, passion, or characteristic.

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: Alma is named after several ancestors, each with a unique story and personality.

Talk to your child about the story of their name. If they share a name with someone else in the family, explain the connection and the story behind it. Even if they don't share a name, talk about what traits they may share with some of their family members.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to discuss [sense of self](#) and [relationships](#).



[Also available in English](#)

[Book Fiesta!](#)

written by Pat Mora and illustrated by Rafael López

An ode to reading, books, and children, Book Fiesta celebrates El Día de los Niños, a holiday celebrated in many Latin American countries. Discover all the magical places that books take us and celebrate the children who read them!

Age level: Preschoolers

Talking Tip: Go on an internet scavenger hunt with your child. Discover what countries celebrate El Día de los Niños and learn about their traditions for that day.

Talk to your child about your own traditions for El Día de los Niños if you have them. If you don't currently celebrate El Día de los Niños, talk to your child about ways you might want to start celebrating reading, books, and children together.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to focus on [social interactions](#), introduce new [vocabulary](#) words and support [phonological awareness](#).



This book is bilingual in English and Spanish

[Dreamers](#)

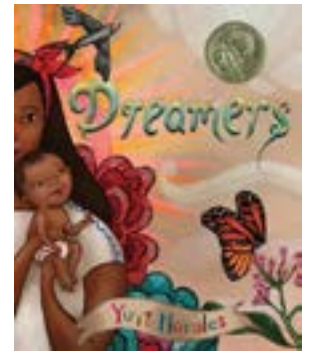
Written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales

How do you make a new place into your home? This is a story about family, and a celebration of what immigrants bring with them when they come to a new country and make it their home. This book also includes a short essay about the author's own experience, the books that inspire her, and a description of the images used to create this book.

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: The characters in this book have had to move and make their home in a new place. Discuss with your child how they felt at different points in the story. If there's ever been a time in your life when you felt this way, talk about it with your child; ask them to share their experiences and feelings.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to introduce children to [sense of self](#), [relationships](#), and new [vocabulary](#).



*Also available
in Spanish*

[Drum Dream Girl](#)

written by Margarita Engle and illustrated by Rafael López

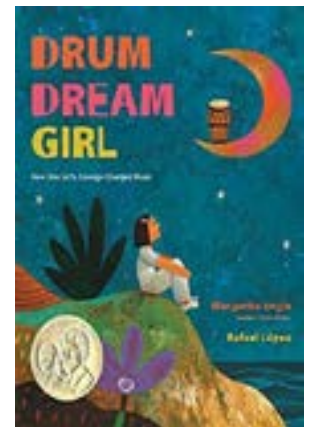
Written in colorful poetic verse, this is a story of a young Cuban girl who dreams of becoming a drummer despite being told that only boys play the drums. This inspirational, true story shows that with a little bit of courage, a young girl can follow her dreams and be whatever she wants to be. This book is inspired by Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Chinese-African-Cuban who became Cuba's first female drummer.

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: People tell Drum Dream Girl that only boys are allowed to drum. Share with your child what you think about that; ask them for their opinion.

Have you ever been told you can't do something because of your gender? Talk with your child about how you felt and what you'd do if that happened again. Ask your child if they have had a similar experience and what they would do if it happened again.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to discuss [sense of self](#), [social interactions](#), [phonological awareness](#), and [print awareness](#).



[Furqan's First Flat Top](#)

written and illustrated by Robert Liu-Trujillo

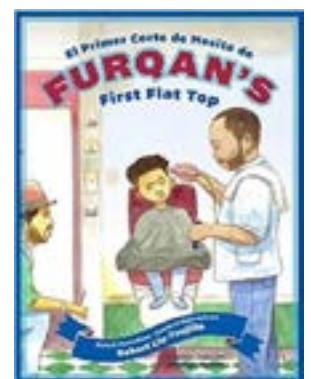
Join Furqan in his first time getting a flat top fade haircut – just like his brother Marcus. Through the ups and downs of excitement and nerves, Furqan gains the courage to try something new.

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: Furqan was scared to change his hairstyle, but in the end, he loved his new flat top haircut!

Talk to your child about the experience of trying something new. Share your own experiences and ask about theirs. Compare your experiences to Furqan's by discussing similarities or differences.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to focus on [sense of self](#) and [relationships](#).



*This book is bilingual in
English and Spanish*

[Listening with my Heart](#)

written by Gabi Garcia and illustrated by Ying Hui Tan

Join Esperanza as she discovers the importance of empathy and self-love. When she breathes deeply and rubs her heart-shaped rock, she calmly reminds herself to be kind to new friends, and most importantly, to be kind to herself. Follow the mindfulness exercises in the back of the book!

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: Esperanza rubs a heart-shaped rock to calm down and remember to be kind to herself and others.

Share with your child how you feel when you get upset. Ask them how they feel when they experience similar feelings. Together, come up with strategies to calm down using Esperanza's rock as an example.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to discuss [sense of self](#), [social interactions](#), and practice [critical thinking](#).



[Also available in Spanish](#)

[My Colors, My World](#)

written and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez

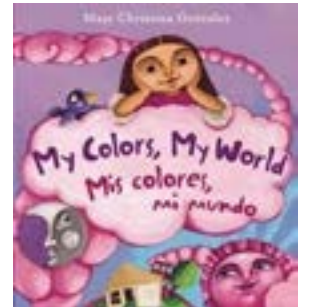
Join Maya as she discovers the vibrant colors that surround her like the “orange marigolds that look like the sun” and “the cactus that grows green and sharp.” This book will delight young readers as they dive into the sensory experience of colors in Maya's world.

Age level: Toddlers and Preschoolers

Talking Tip: Maya loves to observe her world and all the colors in it. Ask your child to look around.

Ask them: *What colors do you see? How many colors can you find? Can you find the same colors that Maya finds? Are there some colors in your world that are not in Maya's world?*

Teaching Tip: Use this board book to develop [sense of self](#) and introduce new [vocabulary](#) words (all the colors in Spanish & English).



This book is bilingual in English and Spanish

[My Papi has a Motorcycle](#)

written by Isabel Quintero and illustrated by Zeke Peña

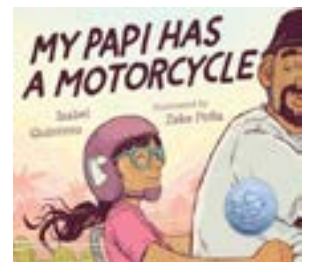
This is a story about a girl, her father, and their motorcycle trip around their vibrant neighborhood. Observe the places they visit like the local tortillería and the colorful murals that tell the rich history of their immigrant community. Meet the friendly people they encounter like Mr. Garcia, the librarian, and Abuelito and Abuelita who wave and yell out to them as they ride past.

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: Take a walk with your child in your neighborhood. When you come back, talk about what you saw and who you met.

Create a map of the places you saw and label it. Talk with your child about how the places in your neighborhood are similar to or different than the ones in the book.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to discuss [relationships](#) and to support [phonological awareness](#) skills.



[Also available in Spanish](#)

[Sembrando historias](#)

written by Anika Aldamuy Denise and illustrated by Paola Escobar

This is an inspirational book about Pura Belpré: a writer, puppeteer, and the first Puerto Rican librarian in New York City. Noticing the lack of Puerto Rican folktale stories on the library shelves, Pura takes action. She begins by sharing these stories at the library and then with the world when she eventually publishes her own books.

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: It is essential to see ourselves reflected in the books we read. All of us have a unique and special story that deserves to be told.

Discuss with your child: *Have you ever read a book that has a character that looks like you? How did it make you feel to see a character who looks like you? How does it make you feel when you can't find characters who look like you?*

If you could write a story about someone like you, what would you write about?

Teaching Tip: Use this book to focus on [sense of self](#), [social interactions](#), and discuss new [vocabulary](#) words.



[Also available in English](#)

[Waiting for the Biblioburro](#)

written by Monica Brown and illustrated by John Parra

Inspired by the heroic efforts of real-life librarian Luis Soriano, this book introduces readers to the mobile library that journeys over mountains and through valleys to bring literacy to rural Colombia, and to the children who wait for the Biblioburro.

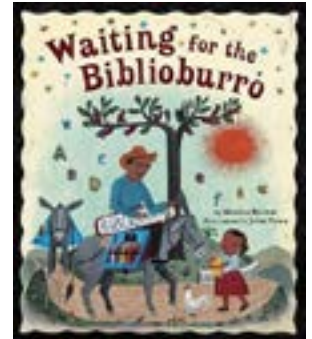
Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: The librarian and his burros introduced the children to many wonderful books and inspired Ana to write her own.

Talk with your child about where you find books for your family.

If there's a library that you visit, talk about your experiences at the library, and how they are different from Ana's.

Teaching Tip: Use this book to focus on [critical thinking](#), [relationships](#), and [social interactions](#).



[Also available in Spanish](#)

[Where Are You From?](#)

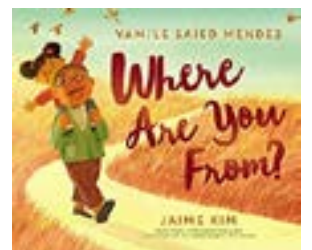
written by Yamile Saied Méndez and illustrated by Jaime Kim

It starts with what seems like a simple question: Where are you from? This leads a young girl and her abuelo (grandfather) to have a conversation about the richness of their roots, identities, and the importance of their family history. Listen to Abuelo talk about being from the Pampas region of Argentina descending from a mix of gauchos, "brave and strong" and indigenous ancestors who were "once in chains because of the color of their skin."

Age level: Preschoolers and Kindergarteners

Talking Tip: Look at pictures of your family and talk with your child about each person and their stories. How is your family history similar to or different than the characters in the book?

Teaching Tip: Use this book to focus on [sense of self](#) and [relationships](#) through the themes of understanding, acceptance, and self-confidence.



[Also available in Spanish](#)

Teaching Tips Glossary

Kindergarten Readiness Skill

Definition

Critical Thinking

The ability to use information and skills in a variety of ways to solve problems prepares children to handle complex tasks in academic areas including math, science, and reading. We can foster this skill by encouraging children to answer questions and make predictions as we read together.

Early Mathematics

A foundation in early math prepares children for “math thinking” and for later academic success. Early Math includes number sense, classifications and patterning, measurement, mathematical reasoning, and geometry (shapes). A good “math storybook” will include elements of these foundations. Counting together, pointing our numbers in print, identifying shapes, and using relational language (bigger, smaller, close, far) are all ways to develop a child’s early math skills while sharing a book together.

Phonological Awareness

A child’s ability to recognize the prosody or “music” of a language and to notice, think about, and manipulate the individual sounds in words is an important early literacy skill. Rhyming books and songs are great tools for developing this skill and laying the groundwork for “sounding words out” when learning to read.

Print Awareness

Before they can begin the process of learning to read, young children must become comfortable with holding and handling books and identifying letters and words in print. When we focus children’s attention on the printed words we are reading, they begin to recognize that those symbols have sounds and meanings. Asking children to help turn pages and hold a book is also a great way to foster print awareness and build confidence.

Relationships

Children need to build healthy attachments to parents, caregivers, and close friends. This includes understanding how to respect and keep boundaries, as well as express care and love for others.

Self-Regulation

Read alouds that engage children in structured movement games and verbal participation help develop the ability to manage impulses and ignore distractions without stifling creativity or motivation. The better a child can stay calmly focused and alert, the better they will be at handling more complex tasks and working cooperatively with others.

Sense of Self

When children are aware of their own thoughts and feelings, they are better able to communicate their needs and ideas to other people. A deeper understanding of themselves supports children in recognizing the emotions and perspectives of others and allows for empathy. A strong sense of self gives children confidence in their ability to acquire new knowledge and skills, which builds their enthusiasm and motivation for learning.

Social Interactions

In order to be a thriving member of society, children must learn how to form healthy relationships with others, including familiar adults and peers. Knowing how to interact socially supports children in learning how to function within a group through cooperation and responsibility.

Vocabulary

Young children are developmentally equipped with an incredible memory for learning new words. The more words they hear at this age, the more they will begin to develop broader vocabularies. A strong vocabulary allows children to express themselves more accurately and improves reading comprehension.