

# Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with Children's Books



From September 15th to October 15th, we celebrate the enriching and inspiring heritages of people whose ancestors come from Central and South America, Spain, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Coinciding with the independence days for Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua, there is much to celebrate and learn with children all throughout the month.

Whether you are developing your child's Hispanic heritage and identity or introducing them to these beautiful cultures, there are so many ways to get involved this month. Learn about the history and impact of Latine culture by visiting the [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) website. Get involved locally by visiting community events; enjoy the delicious flavors and foods of Latin American cuisines; watch movies and shows created by and celebrating Latine artists, influencers, and icons. And, of course, choose and share books by Latine authors that celebrate the many diverse cultures and experiences that are a part of this community.



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 that celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month. The titles in this list highlight Latine characters in a variety of settings, introducing children to different aspects of the Latine 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.

When you purchase a children's book using the [Bookshop.org links on this list](#), Tandem will receive 10% of each sale as a donation. Each Bookshop.org purchase financially supports local, independent booksellers.

Visit our website for more [early learning resources and downloadable content](#).



## All Around Us

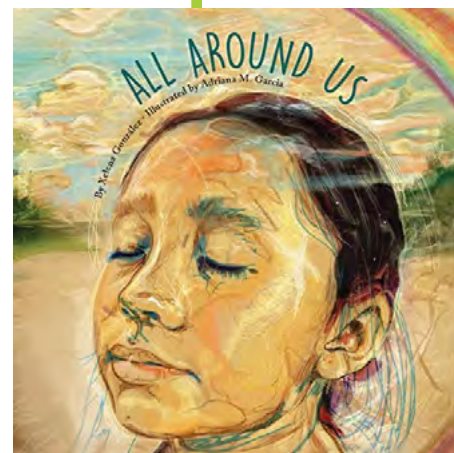
[Spanish Version](#)

**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.

**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!  
Talk to your child about the cycles of life. Start with the examples discussed in the book such as where water comes from and goes and how dying plants provide food for new life. Try to think of more examples together.

**Teaching Tip:** Use this book to discuss **relationships** and **early mathematics**.



## Alma y cómo obtuvo su nombre

[English Version](#)

**Written and Illustrated by Juana Martinez-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.

**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**.



## Book Fiesta!

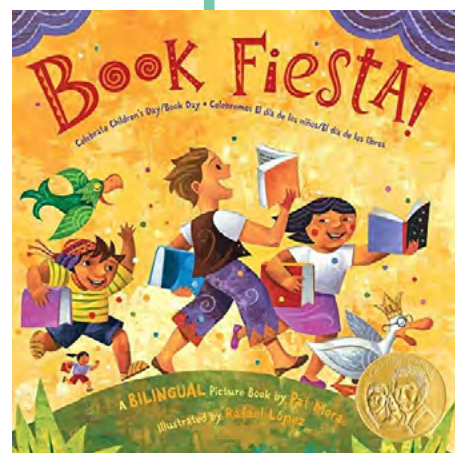
\*Bilingual in English and Spanish

**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!

**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**.





## **Dinner on Domingos**

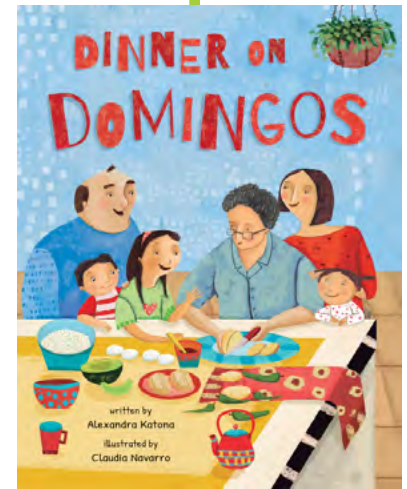
\*Bilingual in English and Spanish

**Written by Alexandra Katona and Illustrated by Claudia Navarro**

As a first-generation Latine American girl, Alejandra loves Sunday night dinner at her Abuelita's house. Basking in the good times she and her family have laughing and eating, Alejandra works up the courage to speak Spanish with Abuelita in an effort to bring them closer. This warm and lively book is a beautiful celebration of a multigenerational family, bonding through language, and honoring food traditions. Includes an Ecuadorian Locro (cheesy potato soup) recipe to try together!

**Talking Tip:** Even though they have trouble understanding each other, Alejandra's Abuelita is still able to teach her many of their family's traditions. Talk to your child about traditions in your family. Ask them what food and activities they've enjoyed learning about from other family members. Compare their experiences to Alejandra's by discussing similarities or differences.

**Teaching Tip:** Use this book to introduce new **vocabulary** words and phrases, focus on **sense of self**, and building **relationships**.



## **Dreamers**

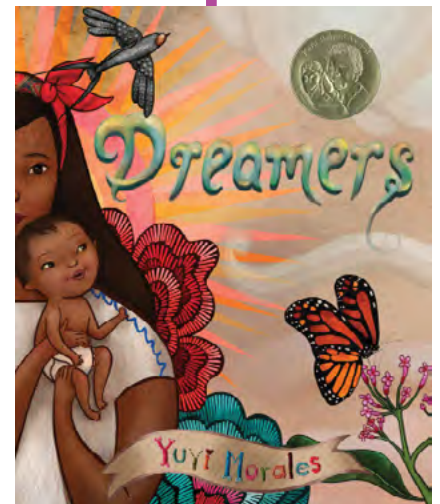
Spanish Version

**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 as an immigrant from Veracruz, Mexico, the books that inspire her, and a description of the images used to create this book.

**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 made big transitions, talk about it with your child; ask them to share their own experiences and feelings.

**Teaching Tip:** Use this book to introduce children to **sense of self**, **relationships**, and new **vocabulary**.



## **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.

**Talking Tip:** People tell Drum Dream Girl that only boys are allowed to drum. 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**.



## [Listening with my Heart](#)

[Spanish Version](#)

**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 calms and 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!

**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**.



## [Los Deseos De Carmela](#)

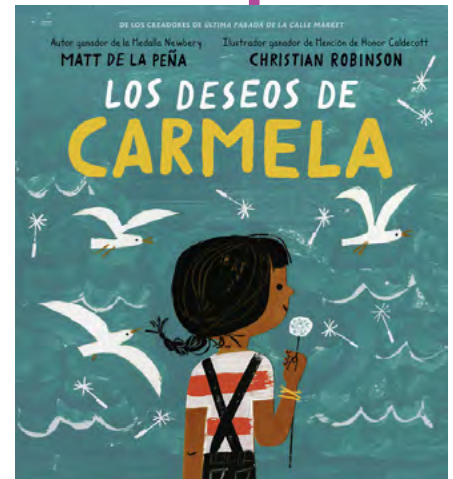
[Spanish Version](#)

**Written by Matt De La Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson**

It's the morning of Carmela's birthday and her wish has already come true: she's finally old enough to go into town with her brother to do errands. But when she's given the chance to make another wish, what will it be? A chance for mom to sleep in the beds she cleans in the fancy hotel she works at? Or for the papers dad needs to finally come back home? This heartfelt story is an ode to dreamers, family, and the power of hope.

**Talking Tip:** Carmela could have used her wishes for anything, but she chose to think of ways to make her family happy. Ask them: What things would you use your wishes for? And have them explain why.

**Teaching Tip:** Use this book to develop **sense of self**, **relationships**, and **social interactions**.



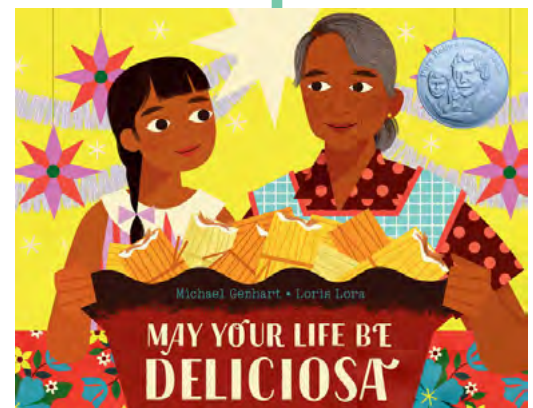
## [May Your Life Be Deliciosa](#)

**Written by Michael Genhart and Illustrated by Loris Lora**

Each year on Christmas Eve, Rosie's family gathers in Abuela's kitchen to make tamales and tell stories. In this story of how families live, love, learn, and grow together, Rosie's abuela teaches her how to make a delicious tamale...and a delicious, perfectly seasoned life.

**Talking Tip:** The author's note at the end of the book tells us more about his life and the inspiration for these stories. He ends by saying "Storytelling connects us all." Talk with your child about what that means. What family memories, traditions, and stories does this book bring up for you?

**Teaching Tip:** Use this book to focus on **early mathematics** (sequencing), **relationships**, and **social interactions**.





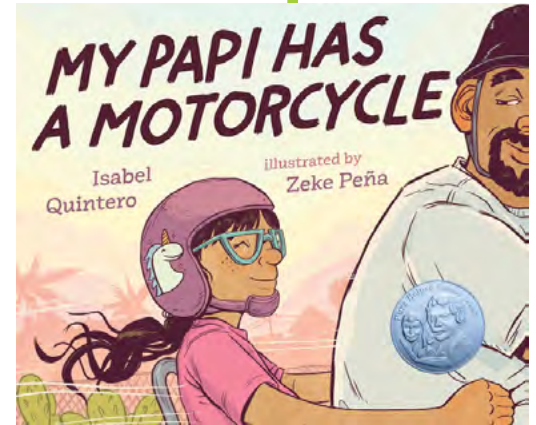
## [My Papi Has a Motorcycle](#)

[Spanish Version](#)

**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.

**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.

## [Sembrando historias](#)

[English Version](#)

**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.

**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.



## [Waiting for the Biblioburro](#)

[Spanish Version](#)

**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.

**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**.



## **Where Are You From?**

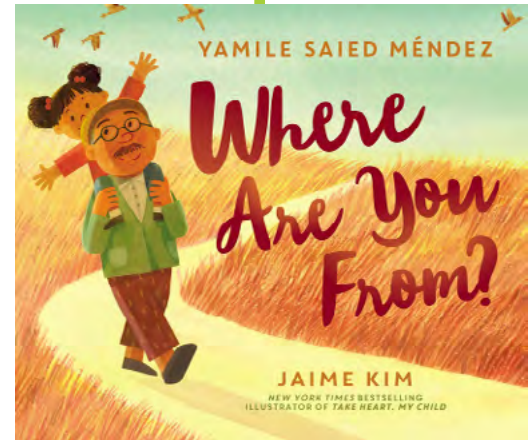
[Spanish Version](#)

**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.”

**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 from 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.



Whether you are developing your child’s Hispanic heritage and identity or introducing them to these beautiful cultures, here are a few ways to guide and educate them:

1. Learn about the history and impact of Latine culture by visiting the Hispanic Heritage Month website.

2. Enjoy game night with games like Loteria, the traditional Mexican game of chance, or Lil’Loteria, a bilingual, kid-friendly version.

3. Visit restaurants and find recipes and prepare dishes with your child to introduce your family to the delicious flavors and foods of Latin American cuisines.

4. Have a movie night with an array of movies, documentaries, and television shows that focus on Latine artists, influencers, and icons.

5. And, of course, choose and share books by Latine authors that celebrate the many diverse cultures and experiences that are a part of this community.

## 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 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 out 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 Interaction	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.