

Beginning Literacy in English
While Honoring Children's Home Languages
A Sampling of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Books

Compiled by
Nancy Cloud, Ed.D., Professor and Director, M.Ed. in TESL Program
Ellen Nanni, MAT in Art Education Program Candidate
Feinstein School of Education and Human Development
Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

Purpose of the List:

While early childhood educators are urged to honor children's home languages and cultures, when it comes to initial literacy instruction in English, teachers often have questions about how to do this. Learn how to use books that affirm children's languages and cultures and connect home and school as literacy partners.

Dual Language Nursery Rhyme and Song Books

Mamá Goose: A Latino Nursery Treasury/Un Tesoro de Rimas Infantiles. Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy, Hyperion. Illustrated by Maribel Suárez (see also *Pio Peep* and *Muu Moo!: Animal Nursery Rhymes* by the same authors).

ISBN: 0-7868-153-7

Format: Hardcover; Spanish on top/left, English on bottom/right. Book broken up into categories with introductions to each

Grade Level: PreK-2

Reading Level: varies by poem/nursery rhyme

Illustrations: Colorful and light-hearted illustrations to capture each rhyme

Featured Culture: All Latino cultural groups

Premise of the Book: A collection of proverbs, lullabies, jump-rope songs and more, compiled to enrich children's lives by spreading the culture of Spanish tradition

Genre: Traditional Nursery Rhymes and Songs

Arroz con Leche: 12 Popular Songs and Rhymes from Latin America. Selected and Illustrated by Lulu Delacre, Scholastic

ISBN: 0-590-41886-6

Format: Paperback; Spanish on left, English on right. Each rhyme or song shows the country of origin. The book provides musical arrangements in the back.

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: Varies by song

Illustrations: Colorful, watercolor illustrations

Featured Culture: Puerto Rico, Mexico, Argentina

Premise of the Book: Sharing of traditional songs from several countries.

Genre: Traditional Songs

Tortillitas Para Mama: And Other Nursery Rhymes. Selected and translated by Margot C. Griego, Betsy L. Bucks, Sharon S. Gilbert and Laurel H. Kimball, Henry Holt and Company. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney

ISBN: 9780439139540

Format: Hardcover, Paperback; Spanish on top/left, English on bottom/right

Grade Level: PreK-2

Reading Level: 2.5. DRA 38, GRL P

Illustrations: Colorful and detailed paintings

Featured Culture: Mexican (illustrations); includes traditional Spanish nursery rhymes know across various Latino cultures

Premise of the Book: Traditional nursery rhymes and lullabies created to express feelings of community and love are gathered in this book to preserve them and share them with others.

Genre: Traditional Nursery Rhymes

De Colores: And Other Latin-American Folk Songs for Children. Selected, arranged and translated by José-Luis Orozco, Dutton Children's Books. Illustrated by Elisa Klevin

ISBN: 0-525-45260-5

Format: Hardcover; Spanish on left with sheet music/English on right in stanza form. Introductions in English

Grade Level: PreK-2

Reading Level: 3.0

Illustrations: Colorful, exciting and full of beautiful illustrations made of mixed-media collage, using watercolors, pastels, ink and cut paper

Featured Culture: Mexico, Paraguay, Panama, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Nicaragua, Chile, Puerto Rico and others

Premise of the Book: A collection of festive songs for children, with suggestions for hand-gestures, group sing-alongs and games.

Genre: Traditional Nursery Rhymes

Award: American Children's Book Award: Commended List

Diez Deditos/Ten Little Fingers: And Other Play Rhymes and Action Songs from Latin America. Selected, arranged and translated by José-Luis Orozco, Viking Penguin. Illustrated by Elisa Klevin

ISBN: 978-0-14-230087-9

Format: Paperback; Spanish on top/left, English on bottom/right. Introductions in English and word banks to help translate words into English

Grade Level: PreK-1

Reading Level: 2.0

Illustrations: Vibrant, engaging and adorable multi-media works

Featured Culture: All Latino cultural groups

Premise of the Book: To introduce traditional English songs and games, while at the same time helping Latino students make connections to their own

Genre: Traditional Nursery Rhymes

Chinese and English Nursery Rhymes. Faye-Lynn Wu, Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc. Illustrated by Kieren Dutcher
ISBN: 978-0-8048-4094-1

Format: Hardcover, Traditional Chinese Nursery rhymes written in Chinese, Pinyin and English, line by line. Traditional nursery rhymes in English also interspersed throughout. CD included which is organized by themes: outside, inside, party, play, night. Educates teachers and children through "Do you know" panels on pages as to the traditions or history behind the rhyme. Gives information about the Chinese language at the back of the book.

Grade Level: PreK-2

Reading Level: Varies by rhyme; approximately 2.0 overall

Illustrations: Simple and colorful paintings

Featured Cultures: Chinese and American

Premise of the Book: Rhymes to bring children together and show them that even though their language may be different their traditional nursery rhymes are very much alike.

Genre: Traditional Nursery Rhymes

Spanish Rhyme and Song Books

El Toro Pinto: And Other Songs in Spanish. Selected and Illustrated by Anne Rockwell, Atheneum

ISBN: 0-689-71880-2

Format: Hardcover, Paperback; in Spanish with musical notation. English translations in back

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: Varies by song

Illustrations: Colorful, whimsical, and detailed illustrations

Featured Culture: Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Honduras, U.S., Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Spain

Premise of the Book: Sharing of traditional songs from around the world.

Genre: Traditional Songs

English Language Books with Rich Cultural Connections

El Día de Ricardo. Written and Photographed by George Ancona, Scholastic Inc,

ISBN: 9780439148764

Format: Paperback

Grade Level: PreK-K

Reading Level: 2.0 (as per Calaveras School District List)

Illustrations: Colorful and fun photographs

Featured Culture: Mexican

Premise of the Book: A typical preschool day for a young boy, written in Spanish.

Genre: Narrative

Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same, Written and Illustrated by Grace Lin, Little, Brown & Co,

ISBN: 978-0-316-02452-5

Format: Hardcover, Paperback

Grade Level: 1-2

Reading Level: 1.8; Lexile 390, GRL V

Illustrations: Colorful, patterned paintings

Featured Culture: Chinese

Premise of the Book: Ling and Ting are twins and, while different, they enjoy many activities together. The book is divided into 6 short stories about the two girls.

Genre: Narrative

Award: Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Book

A New Year's Reunion. Yu Li-Qiong, Candlewick Press. Illustrated by Zhu Cheng-Liang

ISBN: 978-0-7636-5881-6

Format: Hardcover, Paperback

Grade Level: 2

Reading Level: 2.6

Illustrations: Colorful and expressive paintings

Featured Culture: Chinese

Premise of the Book: A little Chinese girl only sees her father once a year during the Chinese New Year when he returns home for a few days from his job far away. A story of how a family's love can endure over time and distance.

Genre: Narrative

Award: New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Book

Hats, Hats, Hats. Ann Morris, Wm. Morrow. Photographed by Ken Heyman

ISBN: 978-0-688-12274-4

Format: Paperback

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: 1.0; GRL E

Illustrations: Color photographs from around the World

Featured Culture: Multicultural

Premise of the Book: Multicultural message by showing the many different hats and head coverings worn around the world.

Genre: Informational

Awards: NCTE Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Non-Fiction, Library of Congress Book for Children

My Name is Yoon. Helen Recorvits, Farrar, Straus, Giroux. Illustrated by Gabi Swiatkowska

ISBN: 0-374-35114-7

Format: Hardcover

Grade Level: 1-2

Reading Level: 2.3, Lexile 320

Illustrations: Beautiful somewhat surreal landscape and dreamscape paintings.

Featured Culture: Korean

Premise of the Book: A young Korean immigrant girl doesn't want to write her name in English; Demonstrates how languages differ and the value of biliteracy

Genre: Narrative

Awards: Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Award for Illustrations, ALA Notable Book

Lift-the-Flap Book

Dragon Dance: A Chinese New Year Lift-the-Flap Book. Joan Holub, Puffin Books. Illustrated by Benrei Huang

ISBN: 978-0-14-240000-5

Format: Paperback, Lift-the-Flap book

Grade Level: PreK-2

Reading Level: Flesch Kincaid 2.0 (computed at www.readabilityformulas.com)

Illustrations: Engaging and colorful paintings with flaps on each page to lift and discover what is underneath. A Chinese zodiac wheel is included in the back to help children know their signs.

Featured Culture: Chinese

Premise of the Book: An interactive look at the different traditions of Chinese New Year.

Genre: Narrative; rhyming text (first page is factual)

Dual Language Books

Arroz con Leche: Un poema para cocinar/Rice Pudding: A Cooking Poem. Jorge Argueta, Groundwork Books.

Illustrated by Fernando Vilela

ISBN: 978-0-888-79981-8

Format: Hardcover

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: 2.8

Illustrations: Ink drawings incorporating collage, rubber stamps, and digital elements

Featured Culture: Multiple countries represented; those that enjoy arroz con leche

Premise of the Book: A young boy's story of making arroz con leche with his family.

Genre: Procedural

Awards: USBBY Outstanding International Books Award, Tejas Star Book Award

Whoever You Are/Quienquiera que seas. Mem Fox, Harcourt. Illustrated by Leslie Staub, Translated by Alma Flor Ada & Isabel Campoy

ISBN: 0-15-205891-5,

Format: Board Book; English on top/left, Spanish on bottom/right

Grade Level: PreK-2

Reading Level: 3.2, Lexile 280

Illustrations: Oil paintings done in bright, matte colors

Featured Culture: Multicultural

Premise of the Book: Despite the differences among people around the world in skin tone, housing, schools and lands, the important things in life are shared, among them hearts, joys and love.

Genre: Narrative

Sip, Slurp, Soup, Soup/Caldo, Caldo, Caldo. Diane Gonzales Bertrand, Arte Público Press. Illustrated by Alex Pardo Delange, Translated by Julia Mercedes Castilla

ISBN: 978-1-558-85183-2

Format: Hardcover, Paperback, Audio book, English on top, Spanish on bottom

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: 3.1

Illustrations: Pen and ink; watercolors

Featured Culture: Any Latino culture that has caldo-making traditions enjoyed with tortillas purchased from the tortilleria

Premise of the Book: Rhythmic text detailing one family's celebratory making and enjoyment of caldo with recipes in the back of the book in English and Spanish.

Genre: Narrative

Award: "Best Bilingual Book" Latino Literary Award

Mi Primer Libro de Dichos/ My First Book of Proverbs, Compiled and Illustrated by Rafka Gonzalez and Ana Ruiz, Children's Book Press.

ISBN: 0-89239-200-2

Format: Spanish on top English on bottom

Grade Level: K-3

Reading Level: 1.8

Illustrations: Stunning and vibrant paintings with folk art flavor

Featured Culture: Mexican

Premise of the Book: Traditional Mexican sayings

Genre: Proverbs/Sayings

Award: American Bookseller: Pick of the Lists

Book Fiesta!: Celebrate Children's Day/Book Day--Celebramos el día de los niños/ El día de los libros. Pat Mora, HarperCollins. Illustrated by Rafael López

ISBN: 978-0-06-128877

Format: Hardcover, English on top/left, Spanish on bottom/right

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: 2.0, Lexile 790

Illustrations: Paintings influenced by magical symbolism and colorful murals

Featured Culture: Mexican

Premise of the Book: Mexico's annual celebration of reading for children including the various book celebrations that are a part of the festivities

Genre: Narrative

Award: 2010 Pura Belpré Medal Winner for Illustrations

Let's Eat! ¡A Comer! Pat Mora, HarperCollins. Illustrated by Maribel Suárez

ISBN: 0-06-085038-8

Format: Hardcover, English on top/left, Spanish on bottom/right

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: 0.9

Illustrations: Bright watercolors

Featured Culture: Any Latino culture that enjoys beans, tortillas and chile.

Premise of the Book: A family sits down to a meal of good food and realize how "rich" they all are.

Genre: Narrative

Awards: Chicago Public Library's Best of the Best Books, Texas Library Association 2X2 Reading List

My Family and I/Mi familia y yo. Gladys Rosa-Mendoza, Me + Mi Publishing, Inc. Illustrated by Jackie Snider (visit www.memima.com)

ISBN: 978-0-9679748-4-2

Format: Board book, English on top in black typeface, Spanish on bottom in blue typeface
Grade Level: K-1
Reading Level: L
Illustrations: Drawings with watercolor splashes
Featured Culture: All Latino cultural groups
Premise of the Book: A young girl Emma introduces the reader to her whole family
Genre: Narrative
Award: Latino Literary Hall of Fame Award: Writer's Digest Certificate of Merit.

Summertime Rainbow. Written and Illustrated by Belle Yang, Candlewick Press
ISBN: 978-0-7636-5280-7
Format: Board book; Mandarin-Chinese on left, English on right
Grade Level: PreK-K
Reading Level: 1.6 (computed with Flesch Kincaid at <https://readability-score.com>)
Illustrations: Simple and cheerful gouache paintings
Featured Culture: Chinese
Premise of the Book: A book about colors and nature with pinyin pronunciation guide in the back of the book to aid with reading the Chinese version.
Genre: Narrative

English with Native Language Interspersed in the Text

I Love Saturdays y domingos. Alma Flor Ada, Alladin Paperbacks. Illustrated by Elivia Savadier
ISBN: 978-0-689-87409-3
Format: Hardcover, Paperback (English, Spanish, & Korean)
Grade Level: 1-2
Reading Level: 3.1, DRA 28
Illustrations: Watercolor and pencil
Featured Culture: Mexican
Premise of the Book: Represents a bilingual child's reality with one set of Grandparents speaking English and the other speaking Spanish
Genre: Narrative
Award: America's Commended List

Abuela. Arthur Dorros, Viking Penguin. Illustrated by Elisa Kleven
ISBN: 0-14-056225-7
Format: Paperback
Grade Level: K-2
Reading Level: 2.5, Lexile 510
Illustrations: Intricate and colorful paintings
Featured Culture: New Yorkers with Caribbean roots
Premise of the Book: A little girl imagines herself and her grandma flying over NYC and turns their day into a colorful adventure. Set in New York City.
Genre: Narrative
Awards: ALA Notable Book, American Booksellers Pick of the List: Parent's Choice Award, New York Public Library 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing

Isla. Arthur Dorros, Viking Penguin. Illustrated by Elisa Kleven
ISBN: 978-0-14-056505-8
Format: Hardcover, Paperback [English edition with Spanish phrases]; Paperback [Spanish edition]
Grade Level: 1-2
Reading Level: 2.7; Lexile 410

Illustrations: Paintings with collage technique

Featured Culture: Any Caribbean location of Hispanic heritage

Premise of the Book: Cross-generational journey of a little girl and her abuela from New York City back to abuela's island home

Genre: Narrative

Awards: Notable Book: National Council for the Social Studies/Children's Book Council, Commended Book: Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs, Children's Book of the Year: Bank Street Children's Book Committee, Notable Children's Book: National Council of Teachers of English

Número Uno. Alex & Arthur Dorros, Harry N. Abrams Inc. Illustrated by Susan Guevara

ISBN: 978-0-8109-5764-0

Format: Hardcover

Grade Level: 1-2

Reading Level: 2.7

Illustrations: Oil paints and graphite [en plein air method (painting outdoors)]

Featured Culture: Mexican

Premise of the Book: Dueling brothers take part in a test devised by the townspeople to settle who is more important to their village

Genre: Narrative

When This World Was New. D.H Figueredo, Lee & Low Books Inc. Illustrated by Enrique Sanchez

ISBN: 978-1-880000-86-1

Format: Hardcover, Paperback

Grade Level: 2

Reading Level: 2.2, Lexile 440

Illustrations: Acrylic on paper

Featured Culture: Dominican, Cuban

Premise of the Book: A little boy recently moves to the United States from his warm island and is scared. He plays in the snow for the first time with his father and this helps him overcome some of the fear of his first day in an English speaking school. Also illustrates the family support give newly arrived families to help them adjust to life in their new country.

Genre: Narrative

Dim Sum for Everyone! Written and Illustrated by Grace Lin, Dragonfly Books

ISBN: 0-440-41770-8

Format: Paperback

Grade Level: K-2

Reading Level: 1.3

Illustrations: Visually striking illustrations full of vibrant patterning and contrasting colors.

Featured Culture: Chinese

Premise of the Book: On a visit to a dim sum restaurant, a family picks dishes from the trolleys and they share their food with each other so that everyone gets a bite of everything. Uses Chinese names for main characters and traditional dishes. A short explanation of Dim Sum is given in the back of the book.

Genre: Narrative

Awards: Starred Booklist Review, Starred Kirkus Review, Parent's Guide Children's Media Award Winner, CCBC Choice, Best Picture Books of 2001: Baltimore County Public Library