

Celebrating *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*

To quote Alice describing her adventures through the looking glass, it's best to "begin at the beginning" when planning Día celebrations. In addition, for *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* celebrations that beginning should be early. Committee veterans who have planned citywide events suggest a year as the appropriate lead time for such a large-scale event. Those who have participated in smaller events indicate planning should begin three to six months before April 30. The following steps outline ways in which someone organizing these events can plan and prepare effectively. The more that can be done beforehand, the less that needs to be done as the event approaches.

Steps for a Successful Celebration

Congratulations! You have decided to celebrate *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* and are anxious to get your plans in motion. Before you start, remember that there are two rules of thumb for planning an event, whether big or small: (1) don't do it all at once, and (2) don't do it all alone.

The following steps outline ways in which you can effectively plan, prepare, and celebrate *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*.

1. What is your goal?

Before meeting with your administrators, know why you want to celebrate *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*. Preface your proposal with a goal. For example: *To offer families a day of activities that highlight bilingual literacy and library materials.*

2. Outline what you propose to do in your program and what resources are required. The size of the event will guide your proposal and budget.

- Make a detailed outline of the activities and plans for the day. Check the Internet version of this tool kit for links to the Web sites for these sources that offer great ideas for planning activities. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.
 - Austin Public Library
 - Multnomah County Library
 - Pat Mora (children's author)
 - National Latino Children's Institute
 - San Antonio Public Library
 - Texas State Library
- Write a budget to support your activities and plans. The appendix of this tool kit includes items to consider when writing a budget.
- Write your proposal. Keep it short, simple, and organized. Bullet your points so that you succinctly address all the components for your celebration.

3. After your proposal is accepted, set up your calendar. Allow enough time to plan, promote, and coordinate activities for the event. To stay efficient and organized, keep a status report for items related to the event alongside the calendar. Items to schedule might include:

- Purchasing supplies for arts and crafts activities
 - Purchasing books (be sure to allow plenty of time)
 - Contacting and hiring storytellers, authors, musicians, etc. (information on how to do this is provided elsewhere in this tool kit)
 - Scheduling personnel and volunteers
 - Preparing and distributing publicity items
 - Mailing confirmation letters to performers, presenters, sponsors, and volunteers
4. Seek out community partnerships and/or sponsorships. Solicit volunteers from local schools, colleges and universities, churches, service clubs, boys and girls clubs, etc. to help with activities associated with the celebration. Also, seek sponsorship from local area businesses. Their support can help defray the cost of the event by providing food and beverages or cash donations to help purchase supplies. A sample solicitation letter is included in the appendix of this tool kit.
 5. Get the word out. Now that the program is established, contact newspapers, local radio and television stations, and local businesses. Find out deadlines for press releases for media outlets in your city or town. Write copy for newspapers and radio and television stations. Do not forget to recognize your sponsors in your advertisements. A sample press release is included in the appendix of this tool kit.
 6. Enjoy the celebration! Be prepared for last minute emergencies and keep an eye on what worked well and what needs change or improvement.
 7. After the celebration is over, send thank-you notes to participants, check to see that honoraria and bills have been paid, and evaluate the program. A sample thank-you letter is included in the appendix of this tool kit.
 8. Start planning for next year's *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* celebration.