



El día de los niños El día de los libros

El día de los niños/El día de los libros

is a celebration of childhood and bilingual literacy. This program began in 1997 under the leadership of author Pat Mora, who joined forces with REFORMA (the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking), to bring attention to family literacy and to focus on children.

April 30, a traditional day for celebrating children in Latin American countries, was selected to begin a nationwide effort to observe a special day for promoting literacy for children of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. El día de los niños/El día de los libros focuses on strengthening the practice of making books and reading an integral part of children's lives.

Libraries across the country have developed unique ways of celebrating this day. In Texas, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, under the project management of Jeanette Larson, developed resources and a Web presence to stimulate projects throughout the state. Many libraries, such as the Austin Public Library and El Paso Public Library, have steadily grown their El día de los niños/El día de los libros programs since the event first began.

Now, the Texas Library Association has joined forces with the Kellogg Foundation to increase involvement in El día de los niños/El día de los libros celebrations. TLA has been awarded a Kellogg Foundation grant to develop program materials and to spur greater participation in the event. Some of the specific tasks TLA will accomplish include the following:

- Increase the public's awareness of the El día de los niños/El día de los libros program;
- Expand the number of public and school libraries currently participating in El día de los niños/El día de los libros;

- Make available on the Web easily downloadable materials (e.g., logo, toolkit, poster, etc.) useful for developing and publicizing the program locally; and
- Develop materials and a program that can be a model in other states and communities.

TLA will also provide mini-grants to libraries to help them kick off new El día de los niños/El día de los libros projects or expand existing ones. More information will be posted on the TLA website after conference.

DEAR FRIENDS,

In 1997, teachers and librarians in numerous cities began to celebrate April 30th as El Día de los niños / El Día de los libros. How fortunate we are to be rich in children, rich in books, and rich in languages.

Schools, libraries, museums, and book stores are again planning activities for April 30th to celebrate the work they do throughout the year: opening the world of books to ALL children. Join us!

In your own community, propose this observance for the last day of National Poetry Month and help spread the word that books change lives. Encourage creative co-sponsorships between schools and universities or libraries and community groups, museums and the media. As was done in New Mexico, and in cities such as Santa Fe, Tucson, and San Antonio, ask your governor and mayor to issue proclamations. Writing prizes, if given, would be books (of course!) fostering their value. On the border, the day could include binational activities.

We hope other language groups will translate the words El Día de los niños / El Día de los libros into their languages and join us in annually working with schools and libraries to plan appropriate events.

April 30th can become a day for remembering the power of words and books in the lives of our young people and for honoring all the languages spoken in the homes of this country. One in five of our school children comes from a home in which a language other than English is spoken. By honoring these languages, we celebrate our linguistic and cultural wealth.

Best wishes in your work for children,

Pat Mora

<http://castor.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/projects/ninos/letter.html>