

# How to Choose High-Quality Latinx Children's Literature

## Representation of Culture

- There is not *one* Latinx culture. Does the book depict just *one* image of *all* Latinx people?

## Use of Spanish Language

- Overall respect for the Spanish language
- No fake Spanish or mock Spanish, such as words ending in the letter *o* to suggest Spanish
- Consistent and correct use of written and conversational Spanish
- Spanish dialogue that flows naturally and is error free

## Characters That Are Multidimensional

- Are the Latinx characters unnecessarily loud or boisterous?
- Are they working only in stereotypical roles, such as housekeepers, construction workers, or waitstaff?
- Are any depicted as professionals?
- Are they presented as subservient or passive?

## Knowledge of English

- Do the characters not know English?
- When a character is learning English, are the people around him or her helpful and kind, or do they mock his or her attempts at English?

## Educational Level of Adults

- Have the adult characters been formally schooled?
- Are they portrayed as simpleminded or ignorant?

## Story line

- Are the books with Latino characters only about immigration?
- Are the characters fleeing something? Are they running away? Being chased?

# Illustrations

## Character Traits

- Are the Latinx characters afraid because they are being chased or followed?
- Are the characters being controlled by others?
- Are the characters depicted as troubled, dishonest, or deceitful?

## Physical Appearance

- Are the Latinx characters dark and sinister?
- Are they presented as “fillers” and tokenized? Do they look like white people with different-colored skin?
- Are they similar in appearance to one another or do they each have a unique look?
- Are the illustrations of Latinx people cartoon-like?
- Do their clothing and accessories reinforce stereotypes (e.g., sombreros)?
- Are the characters portrayed as unwashed and/or lazy?
- Do the characters look tired or harried?
- Are they portrayed as criminal (e.g., as bandits or members of a gang)?
- Are the characters, particularly female characters, oversexualized?

## Depiction of Family

- Is the family always financially strapped?
- Always led by a single parent, usually a mother?
- Always led by grandparents?
- Always large?

## Depiction of Home

- Is the home always messy, dirty, poorly maintained because of lack of income?
- Always small?
- Always overcrowded with extended family members?

## Depiction of Neighborhood

- Are the Latinx characters always living in the barrio?
- In the “hood”?
- In subsidized housing or housing projects?

# Bilingual books

Are the books “faithful to the spirit, rhythm, and symmetry of both languages, and do they reflect linguistic differences, colloquialisms, and other popular expressions that add charm to the work” (Schon, 2004)?

- Is the Spanish language used as a prop to sell a book? Are there words inserted in the text that are meaningless?
- Is the use of Spanish “degrading use of the language” (Nieto, 1997)?
- Is the use of Spanish redundant?
- Do the Spanish words break the flow of the story?
- Is it natural? For example, a mother would not say, “hija, daughter.”