

Celebrate Your ELLs & Their Families

The story of one small school and how a parent group began

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Spanish-speaking population at Eldridge Park School

- **2008-2009 School year: approx. 5 families**
- **2018-2019 School Year: 36 families**

The facts:

As the population became more Latino, we began to see that these children were entering kindergarten with a great disadvantage:

- ❖ Preschool is private and very expensive in our area
- ❖ Children had few, if any books at home
- ❖ Their parents had never been told they could play an important part in their child's academic success
- ❖ The families did not know each other

And more facts...

- ❖ High school dropout rate for Latino students is
 - *Twice as high as that of Caucasian students
 - *Four times as high as that of Asians
 - *2% higher than Blacks
- ❖ 75% of Latino dropouts say they do so in order to help their families financially
- ❖ 34% of foreign-born Latinos did not get to 9th grade
- ❖ Latina teens have the highest teen birth rate of any racial/ethnic group in the United States



In our small school, the Spanish-speaking children represented about 10% of the school but 25% of the students receiving academic support from kindergarten to 3rd grade. And 50% of these children received academic support.

The solution? Bring the families together to talk, to learn, and to strengthen their ties to American education.

Three things we knew we had to do to make the meetings successful:

1. We would have to invite the WHOLE family.
2. We would have to have food.
3. It would have to be in the evening.

**From
toddlers
to
abuelos,
everyone
was
invited!**



In 2010 we held our first meeting. 35 people came.

Normal PTO meetings attract about 12 people, including all the officers. We were delighted at the turnout.

**First the
dinner....**





Then the programs...

Children's activity

and

Parent meeting, held simultaneously





Examples of Parent Meetings:

- ❖ How to help with homework (even if you don't speak English)
- ❖ How to prepare for parent conferences
- ❖ Positive discipline
- ❖ Mental Health resources in our community & when to use them
- ❖ Free or affordable legal assistance
- ❖ What does “healthy eating” mean?
- ❖ Increase Family Conversation
- ❖ Plan a Family Fun evening!
- ❖ Personal testimonies from successful Latino high school and college students
- ❖ How to open a savings account and why you should

Examples of children's activities:

- **Create a homework station (learn song)**
- **Decorate and wear a Super Reader Cape**
- **Role-play convincing parents to read at bedtime with a view to a sticker reward, learn chant**
- **How to interview your parents (family conversation)**
- **Saving money with a decorated piggy bank**
- **Family exercise games, decorate water bottle**
- **Decorate cloth backpack for summer library program**
- **Board games (every family took one home!)**

Latinos Unidos at Eldridge Park School was born



Primary goal: Increasing family literacy

- ❖ Providing new and gently used books as attendance rewards
 - ❖ Encouraging parents to read to children of all ages on a daily basis

New books just for coming to the meeting!

Through various grants and a generous PTO, we are often able to get new books from Scholastic book sales. For many of these children, it is the first time they have received their own books to keep.



But how to convince the parents that they need to establish a routine of reading aloud to their children?.....

Enlist the kids' help!

Read to me! Read to me!

Read to me, read to me!
Night and day!
Open up the books and
Tell me what they say!
Read to me, read to me!
The world is mine,
Tell me all about it,
Line by line.
Read to me, read to me!
Stories old and new.
Sit with me and read to me,
I love it when you do!

Leame, Mamá

Leame, Mamá
Me gustan cuentos buenos,
Leame, Papá,
Los libros para niños.
Abra los libros grandes,
Abra los libros chicos,
Abra cualquiera, pero
Leales a sus hijos!

**Sticker chart
with a twist:
It's the parent
who gets the
sticker!**

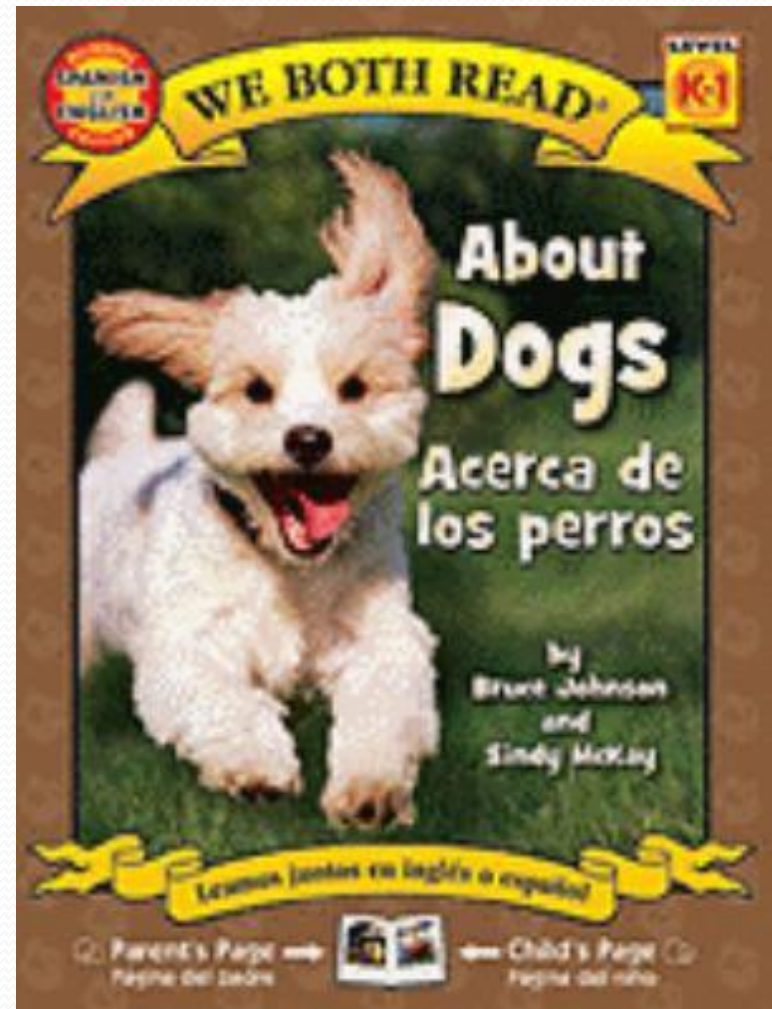


Proud daughter presents her mother with a gift for reading to her 35 times



We Both Read

Another opportunity to promote reading at home. Leveled readers with the text in both English and Spanish have one side for the adult to read, and one side for the child.



The Spanish Reading Club

A volunteer mother comes to school to sit and read with the Latino students. One book in English and then the same book in Spanish.



Take home Listening Library

Children borrow a CD player and 5 books on CD several times a year. Title III money bought us 50 books & CDs and the portable players.



How far have we come?

- ❖ 5 well-attended family meetings each school year
- ❖ Adult tutoring
- ❖ “Telling the Family Story” project
- ❖ Clearing house for community resources
- ❖ New this year: La Escuelita Spanish School
- ❖ Taxi Para Ti

Best of all :

- ❖ Our Latino students are thriving.
- ❖ They no longer dominate the ASI programs, but DO take advantage of homework clubs and summer programs
- ❖ They have a reputation as being “the kids with all the books.”
- ❖ Their parents feel welcome in the school
- ❖ They know each other and support each other
- ❖ Each family realizes the impact they have on literacy and the connection they have to their children’s education

End of the year Awards Night!



End of the year survey....

#1

Creo que Latinos Unidos
ha ayudado a nuestra
familia.

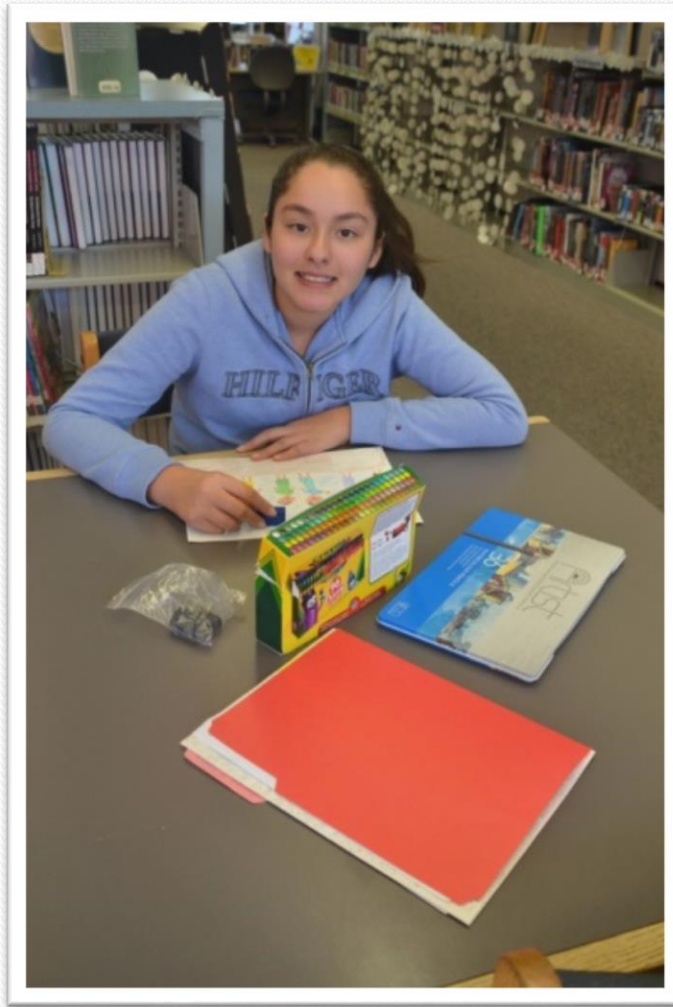
**Cuánto está usted
de acuerdo?**

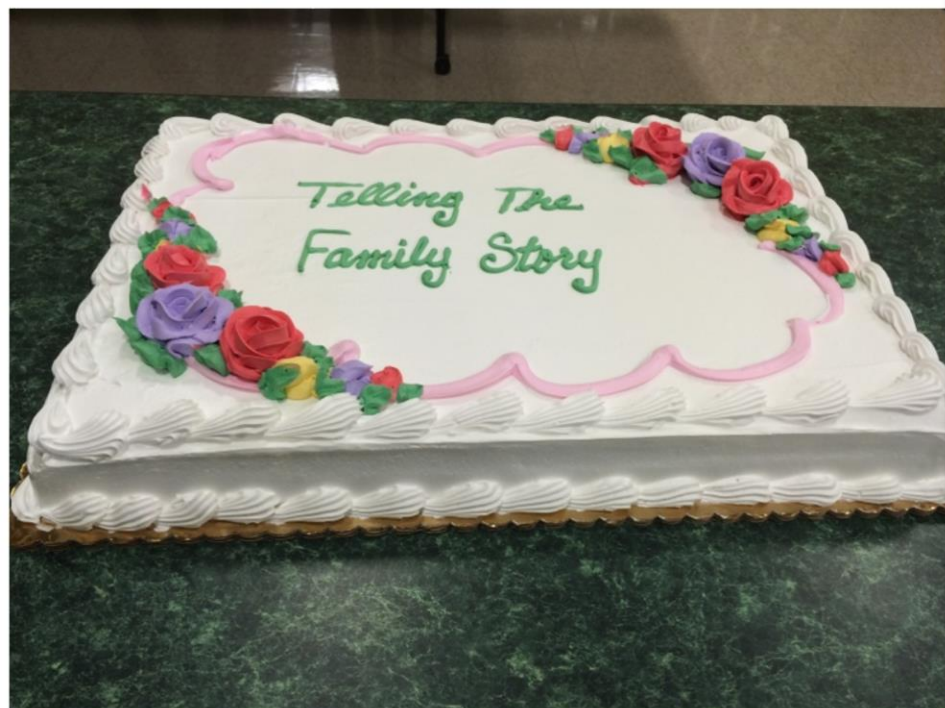
muy poco más o menos mucho

Telling the Family Story

A project made possible through the American Immigration Council and the next year through the NJEA FAST program.

One of the most meaningful experiences I've ever had interacting with the families in our Latinos Unidos group.





I Thought America was in the Sky

A true story told by “Maria”

Illustrated by Sean Epperson-Im

The Angels are Always With Us

A true story told by Rufina Perez

Illustrated by Julian Gonzalez Perez

How 5 Pesos Changed My Life

A true story told by
“Pedro”

Illustrated by “Josue” and “Johana”

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Contact me!

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