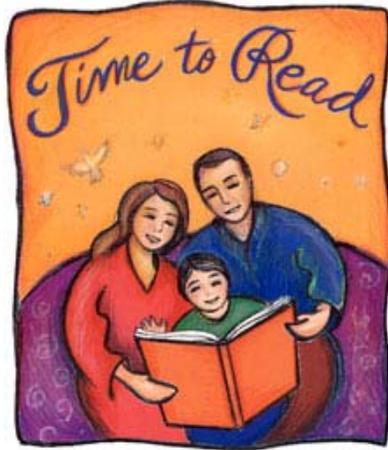


## Evaluating Children's Books about Latinos



### Examine the Personal Traits of the Character:

- ❖ Are the Latino characters portrayed as having a broad range of emotions similar to characters from other cultures?
- ❖ Can Latinos solve their own problems or do they rely upon Anglos for help?
- ❖ Do Latinos abandon some aspect of their culture in order to achieve happiness?
- ❖ Do Latinos move to the U.S. where everything is "perfect" and everyone is happy?

### Examine the Role of Various Characters:

- ❖ Do Latino characters actively participate in the story or are they only secondary characters? Do they have leadership roles?
- ❖ Do Latinos spend their time taking siestas and putting off things until mañana?
- ❖ Are Latino characters in culturally stereotyped roles such as newly arrived immigrants, men full of machismo, shy girls, mothers of many children, or gang members?
- ❖ Is a strong sense of community and family expressed in the illustrations and text? Do elders help care for the children?

### Examine and Identify Stereotypes:

- ❖ Are Latinos only depicted as poor low class citizens often living in barrios?
- ❖ Are cultural stereotypes present in the illustrations such as sombreros, piñatas, cacti, mariachi bands, donkeys, and palm trees?
- ❖ Are Latinas depicted outdoors and as active as Latino male characters?
- ❖ Do Latinos lapse into Spanish when excited or use broken English?

### Examine the Diversity in Text and Illustrations:

- ❖ Are positive role models of both genders provided for Latino children?
- ❖ Do all of Latino characters have the same appearance? OR Is the diversity in skin tones, hair styles and textures, and clothing presented? Not all Latinos have a "Latin Look" of dark skin, hair, and eyes.
- ❖ Are varied cultural experiences of Latinos represented? Is the diversity of the Latino subcultures represented such as Central and South America, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba, etc.?

### Examine the Experience of the Author and Illustrator:

- ❖ Does the author/illustrator have experience with the Latino subculture that they are representing? OR Is the book written/illustrated by someone who has only briefly visited a Latin American country?

\* Many of the ideas for these evaluation criteria are my own and other are adapted from: Council on Interracial Books for Children. "Latinos or Hispanic Americans." *Guidelines for selecting bias-free and storybooks*. New York: Author, 1980.