



Cheron Bayna

PAT MORA

El día de los niños/El día de los libros

In 1996, while being interviewed for a public radio program at the University of Arizona in Tucson, I learned about the annual Mexican tradition of celebrating April 30 as El día del niño, the Day of the Child. The tradition evolved from the first World Conference for the Well-being of Children held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1925, where various countries chose dates for celebrating children and childhood.

As a mom, I knew that children often ask, "Why do we have Mother's Day and Father's Day and not Children's Day?" As a reader, I wanted (and want) to foster "bookjoy." Aha, I thought. What if we link a celebration of children with literacy, an issue central to the well-being of children? What followed was a year of intense planning by various organizations in various cities.

In 1997, REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking, became my founding partner by voting to endorse the family literacy initiative of celebrating April 30 as El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Día) throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. On April 30, 1997, the first annual El día de los niños/El día de los libros, Children's Day/Book Day celebrations were held.

The goals of this observance from its inception have included a daily commitment to:

- Honor children and childhood
- Promote literacy and the importance of linking all children to books, languages, and cultures
- Honor home languages and cultures, and thus promote bilingual and multilingual literacy in this multicultural nation and also global understanding through reading
- Involve parents as valued members of the literacy team
- Promote library collection development that reflects our plurality

In 1998, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation became Día's founding sponsor, funding the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). In 2000, the first annual Estela and Raúl Mora Award, coordinated by REFORMA and donated by the Mora children, was awarded. In 2004, continued support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation enabled ALSC to become Día's official home.

Every day is El día de los niños/El día de los libros, Children's Day/Book Day, and on or near April 30, we celebrate a year of linking all children to books, languages, and cultures. Día fosters bookjoy, thanks to community partnerships created by libraries and schools across the country. Among Día's partners are the Texas Library Association, the California State Library Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English.

I like to think of families, schools, museums, community organizations, bookstores, and libraries planning and enjoying their Día celebrations. Literacy strengthens democracy. Join us! Foster Día where you live.



About Pat Mora

Pat Mora, an award-winning author of many children's books, enjoys writing for young readers, teens, and adults. Her recent children's books include *Book Fiesta!*, a bilingual celebration of El día de los niños/El día de los libros, and the four books in the bilingual My Family/Mi familia series. A literacy advocate excited about sharing what she calls "bookjoy," Pat founded the family literacy initiative, El día de los niños/El día de los libros, Children's Day/Book Day. This year-long commitment to linking all children to books, languages, and cultures culminates in celebrations across the country on April 30.

Pat is a popular national speaker who has been shaped by the U.S.-Mexico border, where she was born and spent much of her life. She speaks often at conferences, universities, and schools about her books as well as on the subjects of literacy and leadership. A former consultant, museum director, university administrator, and teacher, and also the mother of three adult children, Pat enjoys spending time with her family and friends, reading, gardening, cooking, visiting museums, and exploring nature's wonders, both when she travels and when she returns home to beautiful Santa Fe, New Mexico. Please visit her online at www.patmora.com.

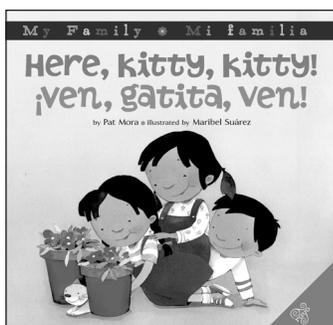
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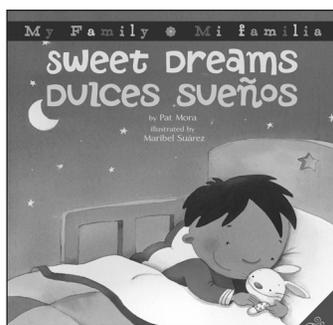
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Celebremos El día de los niños/
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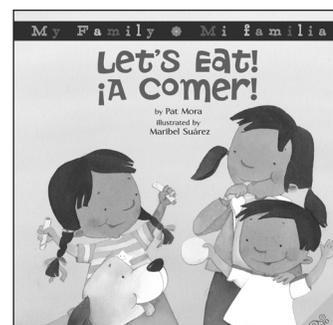
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