

## Latina Resources for Parents and Families

### Fiction

Alvarez, Julia. (1992). *How the García girls lost their accents*. New York: Penguin. ISBN 0452268060.

English. Cultural focus: Dominican, set in New York City.

Details the struggle of four sisters to learn to balance their old culture with the new culture surrounding them after their family is forced to flee the Trujillo dictatorship—and they find that they need to embrace their heritage, rather than deny it, to find fulfillment in their new lives. Told in several interconnected stories in reverse chronological order.

Alvarez, Julia. (1997). *Yo!* New York: Penguin. ISBN 0452279186.

English. Cultural focus: Dominican.

Yolanda García's family and friends are irate—Yo has become a famous author by telling unflattering anecdotes about her family, barely disguised beneath a thin veil of fiction. So they decide to get back at her by setting the record straight in their own words—they tell stories about Yolanda, painting a much different picture of her from the one that appears in her stories. The only one who doesn't get a say is Yo herself! A metaphysical novel about identity formation and the relativity of memory and experience, written in a unique and highly amusing way

Alvarez, Julia. (2004). *Before we were free*. New York: Knopf. ISBN 044023784X.

English. Cultural focus: Dominican.

Anita is a little girl who slowly realizes that her parents are involved in the resistance against the dictator Trujillo. But when the resistance is discovered, she and her mother have to go into hiding, and her father and uncle are taken into custody by the secret police. This fictional account is based on the experiences of the author and her family, and is reminiscent of Anne Frank's moving testimonial and the power of words to set even the most downtrodden people free.



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**(Fiction, cont'd)**

Barrientos, Tanya María. (2002). *Frontera Street*. New York: Penguin. ISBN 0451206355.

English. Cultural focus: Mexican.

Dee Paxton is white, pregnant and widowed at 28. Lost and confused, she never realizes when she randomly walks into a fabric store looking for a job that she will meet a woman who will change her life. That woman is Alma, a Mexican single mother, and in a town where their two worlds absolutely don't mix, their unlikely friendship blossoms like a thirsty desert flower. An inspiring story about women from very different backgrounds who learn the same lesson—the power of the truth.

Cisneros, Sandra. (1994). *The house on Mango Street*. New York: Knopf. ISBN 067943335X.

English. Cultural focus: Mexican-American.

Esperanza Cordero is not content to settle for a life of poverty in Chicago's Latino district. She describes her life and dreams to become something more, in very episodic and conversational language.

Fernández, Roberta (1994). *In other words: Literature by Latinas of the United States*. Houston, TX: Arte Público Press. ISBN 1558851100.

Primarily English (Spanish selections provide English translation but not vice versa).

A collection of fiction, drama, poetry, and essays written by Latinas from all kinds of backgrounds who live in the United States. Includes many of the most celebrated contemporary Latina authors and poets. Covers a variety of topics, including cultural conflict, bilingualism, gender/racial inequality, being a Latina feminist, class difficulties, and celebrating a wide range of cultural backgrounds. A rich tapestry of culture.

Martin, Patricia Preciado. (1996). *El milagro and other stories*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. ISBN 0816515484.

English, peppered with Spanish words. Cultural focus: Mexican-American.

Collection of the memories of the author, including anecdotes about her family, activities and way of life as a young Mexican-American girl growing up in Arizona. It also shows the conflict of a young girl juggling two cultures. The English is simple and would be great for mothers and daughters to read together.

Santiago, Esmeralda. (1996). *América's dream*. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 0060928263

English. Cultural focus: Puerto Rican.

An adult woman escapes from an abusive relationship and an alcoholic mother in Puerto Rico by moving to New York. There, she struggles to find her new identity in the new place and to let go of her shadowed past. At the same time, her fourteen-year-old daughter is trying to find freedom from her mother's past and discover her own identity, but her mother fears that she is condemned to the same destiny and is willing to fight to make sure her daughter can start afresh.

**Strong language.** Spanish translation by Esmeralda Santiago (*El sueño de América*). Excellent translation, relatively easy read, conversational language.

Suárez-Rivas, Maite (Ed.). (2000). *Latino read-aloud stories*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal. ISBN: 1579120911.

Bilingual. Wide range of countries represented.

Selection of traditional tales of various genres. Includes pre-Columbian myths, fables and riddles, fairy tales, and history from the major different cultures of Latin America, plus a few selections from more modern Latin American authors.

## Biographies

Allende, Isabel. (2003). *Mi país inventado: Un paseo nostálgico por Chile*. New York: Rayo. ISBN 0060545658.

Spanish. Cultural focus: Chilean.

Renowned author Isabel Allende takes us back to her roots in this poetic autobiography. She describes how a person's motherland can have a profound impact on how she or he sees the world and how a writer describes it. As she winds her way down memory lane, readers of her other books will recognize characters from her novels appearing throughout her real life.

Chavez, Linda. (2002). *An unlikely conservative: The transformation of an ex-liberal (or how I became the most hated Hispanic in America)*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN 0465089038.

English. Cultural focus: Mexican-American.

Linda Chavez writes a compelling autobiography about her experiences growing up in New Mexico and Colorado, teaching in affirmative action programs in colleges around the country, her research into issues affecting the Latino population, and her eventual career change into politics. Her story shows determination, strength and an astounding ability to stand up for what she believes in, even when it isn't popular.

**(Biographies, cont'd)**

Collins, María Antonieta. (2003). *Cuando el monstruo despierta*. Mexico City: Grijalbo. ISBN 140008461X.

Spanish.

This is a mother's story about her daughter's struggle in an abusive relationship. It details her difficulties as a mother recognizing and dealing with the problem, as well as her daughter's lack of recognition of the abuse in her own life. Also includes recommendations to mothers at various steps in her own journey. Concludes with a poignant narrative of the situation by the girl herself.

Doran, Terry (Ed.). Satterfield, Janet, & Stade, Chris. (1988). *A road well traveled: Three generations of Cuban American women*. Fort Wayne, IN: Latin American Educational Center.

English. Cultural focus: Cuban.

Biographies of various Cuban and Cuban-American women from three generations: pre-1959, post revolutionary, and first-generation Cuban-Americans. These first-person testimonials give voice to a national group that doesn't normally have one, and also to women in that group, who have been traditionally silent. A very powerful book.

Elsasser, Nan, MacKenzie, Kyle, & Tixier y Vigil, Yvonne. (1980). *Las mujeres: Conversations from a Hispanic community*. Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press. ISBN 0912670843.

English (some Spanish with translation).

Transcriptions of interviews with Hispanic women of New Mexico from various generations. While the book is old, the messages and the voices of these women easily transcend the time barrier and come through clearly in these wonderfully-written first-person accounts. The diversity of viewpoints represented in the book works to break down stereotypes of Hispanic women.

Kamp, Jim, & Telgen, Diane (Eds.). (1996). *Latinas! Women of achievement*. Detroit, MI: Visible Ink. ISBN 0787608831.

English. Cultural focus: Latina general.

Profiles of 69 prominent Latinas in professions ranging from writers and poets to astronauts. Short, easy-to-read clips give background about Latinas and give girls strong, positive role models in many careers. Table of contents lists names in alphabetical order and also lists the career of the woman, so it is easy to find topics of interest.

### **(Biographies, cont'd)**

Ortiz, Sister Dianna. (2002). *The blindfold's eyes: My journey from torture to truth*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. ISBN 1570755639.

English. **For mature readers.**

Sister Dianna Ortiz was kidnapped and tortured in Guatemala while doing missionary work there. But when she finally escaped and returned to the U.S., she found that her ordeal was far from over—she had to face skepticism from the Guatemalan government, animosity from the U.S. embassy in Guatemala, and foot-dragging by the commissions in charge of investigating her case. She also had to rebuild her own life and her self in the wake of the horrible trauma she had experienced. This riveting, poetic first-person account shows Dianna's amazing strength through her ordeal and its aftermath as she continues to fight for the people of Guatemala and for her own healing.

Pérez-Brown, María. (2003). *Mamá: Latina daughters celebrate their mothers*. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 0060083867.

English.

María Pérez-Brown interviewed many prominent Latinas for this text, and they tell their stories of growing up, focusing on the strength of their mothers. These uplifting, powerful accounts put moms in a new light, as these women detail the sacrifices, the words and the hugs their mothers gave them that helped them rise to success. The women interviewed include Celia Cruz, Cristina Saralegui, Jaci Velázquez, and Rosario Martín. A delightful book that will make you want to hug your mom.

### **Health**

Aguirre-Molina, Marilyn, & Molina, Carlos W. (Eds.). (2003). *Latina health in the United States: A public health reader*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0787965790.

English. A complete guide to the specific health issues and needs of Latina women in the United States.

Many of the articles, which range from AIDS prevention to smoking among teenagers to welfare reform, seek to explain why these particular issues affect Latina women so specifically. Some of the articles are statistically heavy, publications of studies that were undertaken in various locations; others are more politically or sociologically motivated, with an examination of cultural mores or Latina representation in U.S. social policy. This provides for very diverse points of view.

**(Health, cont'd)**

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. (2003). *Grandma's wisdom / Los consejos de la Abuelita*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

Bilingual. Directed to Latina mothers.

“Grandma” is writing to her granddaughter about how to deal with issues as she raises her own daughters, both issues of her own and those that will arise as daughters age. Issues such as self-esteem, guilt, anger, stress, depression, suicide and sexuality. Appeals to sense of tradition, passing information down through generations. The Latina focus occurs primarily in the chapter on sexuality.

Delgado, Jane L. (1997). *¡Salud! A Latina's guide to total health—Mind, body and spirit*. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 0060951877.

English (Spanish available).

Although directed to a Latina audience, this book contains much valuable information about how many Latinas think about health issues. Delgado deals with the idea of folkloric medicine, the reasons why Latina women are less likely to see a doctor than other women, the prevalence of depression among Latinas, and the Latino cultural importance of spirituality and how that affects a Latina's health. Latinas will find wonderful and personal information in this book written especially for them, and those who work with Latinas can also benefit from this unique perspective.

Delgado, Jane L., & Orozco, Graciela León (Trans.). (1997). *¡Salud! Guía integral para la mujer latina—Cuerpo, mente y espíritu*. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 006095261X.

Spanish (English version available).

This book, written by a Latina, gives an insider's point of view on the specific health issues facing Latina women and how to handle them. The author discusses varied topics such as finding womanhood within the Latina identity, sicknesses that affect the Hispanic community, maintaining a healthy body and lifestyle, mental health, and the spiritual connection that is very alive in a Latina's consciousness. The book is conversational and helps to alleviate some of the discomfort of Latinas in talking about these health issues. It is designed to foster awareness and comfort with these issues so that they will be more likely to have a close relationship with their medical care providers and be healthier overall.

### **(Health, cont'd)**

Lozano-Vranich, Belisa, & Petit, Jorge. (2004). *Las siete creencias: Una guía para ayudar a las Latinas a reconocer y superar la depresión*. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 0060535237.

Spanish.

This is a guide designed for Latinas to recognize and confront depression in their lives and take steps to combat it. The seven beliefs represent steps Latinas can take to believe in themselves and allow them to take steps to get treatment for depression, rather than ignoring it because of an ingrained belief that it would make them “crazy.” It also provides suggestions for how to take care of others while still caring for themselves and on being confident in their ability to change their future.

Mayer, Gloria G., Kuklierus, Ann, & Institute for Healthcare Advancement. (2001). *Qué hacer para la salud de los adolescentes: Facil de leer, facil de usar*. Whittier, CA: Institute for Healthcare Advancement. ISBN 0970124538.

Spanish (easy level). Cultural focus: general.

This book is an excellent resource for parents, especially those with limited English proficiency, to learn strategies for handling the difficulties that arise when their child is an adolescent. The book goes step-by-step through issues such as sexual awakening, self-esteem, building family, substance abuse, and everything in between. This book is also extremely user-friendly and includes a glossary.

### **Parenting**

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. (2003). *Grandma’s wisdom / Los consejos de la Abuelita*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

Bilingual. Directed to Latina mothers.

“Grandma” is writing to her granddaughter about how to deal with issues as she raises her own daughters, both issues of her own and those that will arise as daughters age. Issues such as self-esteem, guilt, anger, stress, depression, suicide and sexuality. Appeals to sense of tradition, passing information down through generations. The Latina focus occurs primarily in the chapter on sexuality.

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Falicov, Celia Jaes. (1998). *Latino families in therapy: A guide to multicultural practice*. New York: Guilford. ISBN 1572305932.

English.

The author uses case studies from her own practice to demonstrate cultural practices that drive the Latino family, and ways that therapists and others who work with Latinos can use this information to understand their cultural perspective. This book is remarkably objective and admits the necessity of tempering general cultural knowledge with the specific situations of the individual families.

Harris, Robie H., & Emberley, Michael (Ill.). (1999). *¡Es alucinante! Un libro que habla sobre ovulos, espermatozoides, nacimientos, bebés y familias*. Barcelona: Serres. ISBN 8495040328.

Spanish (English version available).

The subtitle of this book is "a book that talks about ova, spermatozoids, births, babies and families", and this is done in an extremely direct and easy-to-follow way. The cartoon characters take us on a journey through the sexual experience with frankness and curiosity, and answer many of the questions that children have at various stages in their development, including adolescence. This is an extremely good resource for parents who are looking for an appropriate way to broach this uncomfortable and delicate subject with their children.

**(Parenting, cont'd)**

Mayer, Gloria G., Kuklierus, Ann, & Institute for Healthcare Advancement. (2001). *Qué hacer para la salud de los adolescentes: Facil de leer, facil de usar*. Whittier, CA: Institute for Healthcare Advancement. ISBN 0970124538.

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Vásquez, Carmen Inoa. (2004). *Parenting with pride—Latino style*. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 0060543027.

English.

Seven steps to creating bicultural pride in the family, retaining traditional values while modifying classic authoritarian parenting style. Practical, with self-assessment quizzes designed to show where in your life the cultural conflicts exist. Also includes situational examples to show the “old way” of handling things and a suggested “new way”, with documentation and psychological research. Spanish translation by Ana del Corral (Criando a su niño con orgullo latino). Contains a few typographical errors, but on the whole a good translation. Rather conversational in tone throughout the anecdotes and situational examples; explanations may require slightly higher level of vocabulary.

## Culture and Community

Delgado, Richard, & Stefancic, Jean (Eds.). (1998). *The Latino/a condition: A critical reader*. New York: NYU Press. ISBN 0814718949.

English.

A critical reader of essays about Latinos in the U.S. Topics include defining “Latinos”, immigration issues, being racialized, media treatment, Latinos talking back, political retaliation, revisionist law, assimilationism and many more. Essays are written by Latino professionals from varying backgrounds and provide interesting information from their point of view. An excellent resource for learning about Latinas.

Fernández, Alfredo Antonio, & Rascón, Susan Giersbach (Trans.). (2000). *Adrift: The Cuban raft people*. Houston, TX: Arte Público Press. ISBN 1558853006.

English. Cultural focus: Cuban.

A frank documentary about illegal immigration to the U.S. (and other countries) from Cuba, including dramatic personal stories and historical information, culminating in the Elián González story. Explores the hows and whys of this phenomenon.

Gil, Rosa María, & Vásquez, Carmen Inoa. (1996). *The María paradox: How Latinas can merge Old World traditions with New World self-esteem*. New York: Putnam. ISBN 039952309X.

English. Cultural Focus: second- or third-generation U.S. with a good background in English.

Defines some of the conflicting values Latinas face when trying to become acculturated in the U.S., including working vs. staying at home, sexual passivity vs. sexual assertiveness, being selfless vs. being fulfilled, establishing support relationships, and re-defining motherhood. The source of the conflict is marianismo vs machismo (traditional Hispanic gender roles), a desire to acculturate, and self-esteem issues. Tends to overplay the machista stereotype of men but emphasizes the building of positive traditional male-female relationships, characterized by the gentleman who deifies rather than degrading his wife. In the Old World, adherence to marianismo affords a woman respect and power; in North America, it is seen as outdated and the conflict between marianismo and the culture she sees around her can cause severe dissatisfaction and depression. Gives practical advice on how to combine the best of both cultures and be a productive member of the U.S. culture without denying Latina heritage. Does a good job of showing how in the mother countries these attitudes are probably not a problem; the problem comes when conflict arises between new and old. Spanish translation by Mayda Ochoa (*La paradoja de María*). Excellent translation, highly recommended for recent immigrants and first-generation Latinas who are well-read in Spanish.

**(Culture, cont'd)**

Moreno, Robyn, & Mulligan, Michelle Herrera (Eds.). (2004). *Border-line personalities: A new generation of Latinas dish on sex, sass, and cultural shifting*. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 0060580763.

English.

Challenging the Latin stereotype that children should be seen and not heard, the sassy essays in this collection by young Latinas question many of the stereotypes that plague them in American society. The different authors' points of view make this book a poignantly multi-faceted view of the American Latina identity and how it is being forged anew in the current generation, and the essays have been well-chosen to reflect the gender and cultural conflicts young Latinas face every day. A great resource for workers who would love to get inside a young Latina's head.

Olmos, Edward James, Ybarra, Lee, & Monterrey, Manuel. (1999). *Americanos: Latino life in the United States / La vida latina en los Estados Unidos*. Boston: Little, Brown. ISBN 0316649090.

Bilingual.

Lovely full-color picture book depicting many aspects of Latino life in the US. Includes topics of religion, Latino and immigrant contributions, the family unit, varying races and cultures among Latinos, and music, as well as poetry selections and quotes from prominent Latinos. A remarkably diverse cross section of Latino life; excellent educational resource for those who want to know more about Latinos.

Suro, Roberto. (1999). *Strangers among us: Latino lives in a changing America*. New York: Random House. ISBN 0679744568.

English.

Many times, Americans forget that the term "Latino" was invented to cover an extremely diverse group of people from many national, cultural, ethnic, and even linguistic backgrounds. Suro answers some of the questions we have about who these new people are. He explores what links these groups together and what keeps them apart, and it is an elucidating journey.

## Internet Resources

<http://www.hablemos.samhsa.gov/default.aspx>

*Hablemos en confianza*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Hispanic / Latino Initiative

This bilingual site is designed for parents and children and contains much information about issues of health, self-esteem, substance abuse, family relationships and biculturalism, among many other topics. Related to “Soy unica, soy latina”, but designed with the whole family in mind.

<http://www.hispaniconline.com/hh>

*Hispanic Heritage Plaza*

This site is a celebration of all things Hispanic—literature, art, cuisine, music, travel, family, and much more! A rich interactive tour of the Latino culture all around us—great for Latinos who want to explore their cultural heritage and history and for others who want to immerse themselves in it.

**For more information on Latinas, see these Girls Incorporated® Resource Lists:**

- ◆ **Latina Resources for Girls**
- ◆ **Latina Resources for Youth Workers**

In response to requests from affiliates and as a result of monitoring service trends, Girls Inc. is implementing an initiative to address the strengths and needs of Latinas ages 6 to 18, with the goals of increasing the number of Latina girls served by Girls Incorporated affiliates and increasing the sensitivity to Latinas in all Girls Inc. efforts.

**Girls Incorporated®** is a nonprofit organization in the United States and Canada that inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and boldSM. With local roots dating to 1864 and national status in the US since 1945, Girls Inc. has responded to the changing needs of girls and their communities through research-based programs and advocacy that empower girls to reach their full potential and to understand, value, and assert their rights.

**Girls Inc.** programs focus on science, math, and technology, health and sexuality, economic and financial literacy, sports skills, leadership and advocacy, and media literacy for girls ages 6 to 18 throughout the United States and in Canada. While our goal is to reach all girls, we recognize that girls in at-risk communities have an even greater need for our programs. Of those we serve, 76 percent are girls of color and 70 percent come from families earning \$25,000 or less. More than half are from single-parent households, most of which are headed by women.

**Girls Inc.** in 2004 reached nearly 800,000 girls through Girls Inc. affiliates, our website, and educational products. Guided by our vision of empowered girls and an equitable society, Girls Inc. is committed to reaching millions more girls through its programs and public education efforts.

**The National Resource Center (NRC)** is the organization's research, program development, national services, and training site. Research and evaluation conducted by the NRC provide the foundation for Girls Inc. programs. The NRC also responds to requests for information on girls' issues and distributes Girls Inc. publications.

**Girls Inc.** informs policy makers about girls' needs locally and nationally. The organization educates the media about critical issues facing girls. In addition, the organization teaches girls how to advocate for themselves and their communities, using their voices to promote positive change.

**Girls Inc.** leadership focuses on developing innovative ways to leverage our most valuable asset – acknowledged expertise as the nation's premiere program provider and advocate for girls. Our leaders include Janice L. Warne, Chair of the National Board; Joyce M. Roché, President and CEO; and Donna Brace Ogilvie, Distinguished Chair.

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