



Guide to Spreading the Word about *Colorín Colorado*

Following is a list of suggestions for getting the word out about this great resource that will benefit educators, parents and students. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Giselle Lundy-Ponce at glundypo@aft.org or at 202-413-2311.

- Include a brief article in your local's newsletter on Colorín Colorado. If possible, include a graphic of the Colorín Colorado Web site and testimonials from educators and/or parents on the usefulness of the site.
- Send your members a postcard or letter letting them know about the Colorín Colorado Web site.
- Link to www.colorincolorado.org from your union's Web site.
- If your school and/or school district has a Web site, ask if they will post information about Colorín Colorado and include a link to the site.
- Work with the school district to organize union-sponsored workshops for educators using the Colorín Colorado content.
- Use the Colorín Colorado flier for members.
- Send an e-mail to your members telling them about Colorín Colorado or include it in your next electronic newsletter.
- Print the Colorín Colorado flier as a poster and post it in appropriate places where your members are likely to see it.
- Ask local libraries to post the Colorín Colorado print ad where parents and other members of the community will see it.
- Ask local community organizations to include a story on Colorín Colorado in their newsletters and consider speaking at one of the organization's events to tell its members about Colorín Colorado.

- Provide your members with a boilerplate letter (in Spanish and English) that they can send home with students.
- Introduce the Colorín Colorado resource at the next PTA/PTO meeting. Hand out bookmarks with the Web site address printed on them.
- Organize a "story-hour" for parents and students. Distribute information on Colorín Colorado at the event.
- Host "Literacy Nights" for parents and students. Provide light food and beverages.
- Provide take-home fliers (in Spanish and English) for students who participate in after-school programs.
- Make Colorín Colorado available on computers in the school during open houses.
- Provide teachers and other educators with bookmarks or handouts on Colorín Colorado that they can give to parents.

Media

Whether you're holding a rally, conducting a press conference or sending out a press release, you must "pitch" the story to reporters and give them a "hook" as to why it's important to have a resource like Colorín Colorado. Frame the project in terms of the number of parents/teachers/students it will reach in your community, for example. Use local or national figures to underscore how important this resource will be for the community, such as, "There are already more than 5 million students in U.S. schools who are learning to speak English as a second language, and 80 percent of them are Latino." The idea is to give the story a framework that goes beyond a simple "Union announces a great Web site."

Getting media coverage isn't an exact science. Well-planned events sometimes are a bust and ordinary events sometimes attract more media than you can handle. There are, however, steps you can take to attract media coverage. If possible, present your event as a "first of its kind," "first ever" or "largest ever." Maybe you are launching Colorín Colorado locally at one of the largest gatherings of parents and teachers of ELL students. At the very least, highlight what is newsworthy and easily understood:

- The Web site is for both parents and teachers, and it puts them on the "same page" when it comes to helping students.

- Most of Colorín Colorado's content is available in Spanish and English (eliminates language as a barrier).
- It provides easy-to-use resources and tips to both parents and teachers.
- It is FREE!

You might also consider inviting a well-known community leader or public official to your Colorín Colorado event. If a state legislator shows up at a local elementary school, the press is more likely to believe the event is worth covering. (Note: the risk of bringing in outsiders is that they may not be "on message," which means you'll have to work even harder to get your message out.)

Also, if you're trying for TV coverage, try to get a "pre-story" in the local newspaper and make sure the event is visually interesting. If possible, make the event big. Eight people sitting around a computer isn't much of a story, but 500 parents and teachers gathered to discuss an exciting new tool should put you on the evening news.

Use your media connections. If you know a reporter, even if your children attend the same school or are on the same sports team, contact him or her. Don't forget your friends and colleagues. Do any of them have media contacts? And what about school principals and other administrators? Are they interested in helping showcase the school or district as part of a story on Colorín Colorado? If so, talk to them about any media connections they might have.

Finally, find and highlight "real people"—your members or the people they serve—who are willing to speak to the media. Be sure to work with them in advance so that they are succinct and on message.

Here are some specific ideas on media events, etc:

- Host a back-to-school press conference for local media showcasing Colorín Colorado.
- Include materials on Colorín Colorado in any press kits for other union press events.
- Invite reporters to "Literacy Night"—an event featuring a large gathering of parents and teachers of ELL students. Introduce Colorín Colorado at the event.

Work with an education writer from your local paper to write a story on how parents and teachers can use Colorín Colorado to help their students/children.

Reach out to local radio stations and offer to do interviews on Colorín Colorado.

Tell education reporters at the next school board meeting about Colorín Colorado and suggest that they write a story on the project. Don't forget to have a few parents and educators ready to offer as examples/interviews for the story.

Host a mini-conference on "Parents and Teachers of Latino ELLs: Working Together" and invite members of the press to attend.