



A Union of Professionals

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO



Q&A on *Colorín Colorado*

What is Colorín Colorado?

- It is the most widely used nationwide free website providing research-based information and best practices on what works to help PK-12 ELLs read and succeed in school and how to work with them and their families.
- It is not a software program for students, nor is it a program
- When it was launched *ColorinColorado.org* was successful in providing great information for parents, but we knew information for educators was missing.
- So, in 2004, PBS Station WETA and AFT decided to collaborate to co-produce *Colorín Colorado*.
- In 2015, the NEA joined the AFT as a cosponsor of *Colorín Colorado*
- When we launched the newly cosponsored *Colorín Colorado* in 2004 we reached 400 users. We now have over 2.3 million users.

Why did we partner with a PBS station?

- The AFT had collaborated with WETA in the past and wanted to continue building off of the success of their *Reading Rockets* literacy project, another award-winning

professional development program and the project that *Colorín Colorado* is modeled after.

- Given the popularity and nationwide reach of *Reading Rockets* and WETA's reputation for excellent and award-winning educational programming, we felt it was a golden opportunity.

What does *Colorín Colorado* mean?

- *Colorín Colorado* is part of the popular and playful ending phrase ("Y *Colorín Colorado*, este cuento se ha acabado") to virtually all stories and fairy tales in Spanish-speaking countries. There's no literal translation, but it's similar in concept to "and they lived happily ever after."
- The name brings happy memories of reading and being read to.

Why is the AFT vested in this project?

- The AFT has always been committed to providing their members with the best resources and tools they need to help their students succeed.
- The majority of school-age ELLs is concentrated in cities with AFT affiliates, so the majority of ELLs are in schools and classrooms staffed by AFT members.
- ELLs are the fastest growing student demographic (1 out of 10 students is an ELL) and have some of the largest achievement gaps.
- More and more teachers and paraprofessionals in general education classrooms are encountering ELLs – many for the first time in their careers – and we want to help them provide the best instruction to their students and reach out to their students' families.
- We wanted an online tool that would be freely available to all parents and educators across the country.

What is on the website?

- Two sections: one targeted to parents in English and Spanish and one targeted toward educators.
- Each section has hundreds of resources on what parents and educators can do to help ELL students learn to read and succeed in school
- Commissioned articles by the leading researchers and experts in the field of second language acquisition
- Interviews with experts, practitioners and diverse children's book authors
- Classroom footage on what best practice looks like
- Commissioned lesson plans
- Recommended multicultural booklists
- Reading tip sheets in English, Spanish and ten other languages
- Tip sheets for educators
- Federal and state policy and legislation information
- Research study summaries

Who uses the website?

- Mainstream/general education PK-12 teachers and classroom paraprofessionals
- ESL and bilingual education PK-12 teachers and classroom paraprofessionals
- Parents
- District and school administrators and officials
- School counselors and parent coordinators
- Librarians
- Higher ed faculty preparing ESL teacher candidates
- This Web site brings parents and educators together – it literally puts them on the same page to learn what they can each do to increase a child's success with reading and in school.

How can people access *Colorín Colorado*?

- They can access it via www.colorincolorado.org, Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest

How can you use *Colorín Colorado*?

- Use it for your own professional learning and growth by reading the articles, watching the videos, using the toolkits.
- Use the resources for professional development workshops, trainings, and coursework.
- Print and distribute tip sheets to fellow educators, members and/or parents.
- Use the information to conduct a parent workshop.
- Distribute information.
- For more ideas and information to publicize Colorin Colorado, see the document titled "Getting the Word Out"

Does *Colorín Colorado* promote bilingual education?

- *Colorín Colorado* is an educational tool for educators and students that promotes high-quality instruction for ELL students. This site presents best practices and guidance that are supported by research and that can be implemented in different types of second language acquisition instructional programs, including bilingual education programs.

Why is *Colorín Colorado* only available in English and Spanish?

- Spanish is the native language of 80 percent of ELLs. We are addressing the greatest need first.
- There are tip sheets in the ten other most widely spoken languages.
- Additionally, the research findings and best practices are applicable to ELLs of all language backgrounds.
- While we hope to develop specific resources to include other languages, we wanted to get the information out to the largest population where it would have the most impact.

What kind of impact does *Colorín Colorado* have?

- It has an immediate, positive impact on schools and communities across the country – whether they have a large or small ELL population.
- Educators feel more empowered by receiving the instructional guidance, information and resources they need – they need to know that they definitely can help their ELL students succeed and feel less isolated.
- Parents will feel more empowered to be a part of their child’s education – and we know that the more involved a parent is with schooling, the more successful their children will be.

Many parents lack access to the Internet. How can they use *Colorín Colorado*?

- Parents without Internet access at home can access the Web site at their local library, school or local community organizations.
- We need to begin bridging the digital divide, and it’s key that families start feeling comfortable using the Internet, whether they have it at home or not. Making helpful Web sites such as *Colorín Colorado* available will increase use.
- All of the information on the site is free and educators are encouraged to print out and distribute the many informational handouts to parents.

Many parents of ELLs cannot communicate with their child’s teachers. How will this help?

- *Colorín Colorado* is not designed to overcome all ELL student barriers to success. Nonetheless, it puts parents and educators on the same page and makes them aware of each other’s communication challenges and offers help on how to overcome them.
- The Web site provides educators with a customized toolkit on effective outreach to Hispanic parents. It includes useful background information about Hispanic cultures and values, helpful suggestions for involving parents in classroom and school activities, and concrete ideas for parent workshops that focus on PreK-3 literacy development.

- The resources on the Web site also emphasizes to parents that they are a key part of their child's educational experience, regardless of their education level, and encourages them to become more involved at their child's school.

How is *Colorín Colorado* different/better than what is already out there?

- While material on this subject does exist, there isn't enough of it available to educators and parents or it is expensive.
- *Colorín Colorado* puts the latest information from ELL education experts and researchers together in one place, in an extremely easy-to-use format, and it's all free to anyone who wants it!
- Check out this video welcoming users to the newly updated [*Colorín Colorado*](#)