The National Latino Children’s Institute is a non-profit organization chartered in the state of Texas. Its mission is to be the voice for valuing Latino children.

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_Día de los Niños, Celebrating Young Americans_
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Publication of the _El Día de los Niños, Celebrating Young Americans Community Handbook_ was made possible with the help of Scholastic, Inc. Development was supported with funding from Ronald McDonald's House Charities and the Helen Benham and Richard Robinson Charitable Trust.
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Throughout this booklet there are dozens of milagritos (little miracles) containing messages from children. The handmade art pieces contain the hopes, and dreams and wishes of children from many parts of the United States. Milagros are an ancient cultural tradition found in churches throughout Latin American. Made from bone, paper, wood, brass, silver or gold, petitioners have used milagros as a way to request special favors for their families and friends.

In addition to continuing a cultural tradition, the milagritos made by American children create a voice that allows adults to reflect on the future and the world as seen through very young eyes.

The milagros exhibit is one activity that can be implemented as part of El Día de los Niños.
El Día de los Niños: Celebrating Young Americans is a new national holiday that will be observed April 30, 1999 and thereafter. This day will be set aside to value and uplift Latino children and all children in the United States.

Although special days, such as "Child Abuse Prevention Day", and "Literacy Day", have been recognized in the United States to emphasize a particular policy issue, there is no national children's day that honors children in the way we honor parents during Mother's Day or Father's Day. El Día de los Niños is different from other children's days in that it's purpose is strictly to uplift children.

Children's days are celebrated in other nations, including Japan and Korea on May 5, Canada on November 20, Turkey on April 23rd and Mexico on April 30th. Since México shares a border with the United States, and so many U.S. citizens already observe this day, El Día de los Niños will be celebrated on April 30th.

How Did the Idea Get Started?

Children have always asked “Why is there a Father’s Day and a Mother’s Day and even Secretary’s Day and Bosses Day and no Children’s Day?” Lea asked her Auntie Olga, “If children are so important to our future, why don’t we celebrate them like we do mothers and fathers? Andrew said to Bibi, his mom, “What about us kids? When do we get a special day?”

In September 1996, 54 young Latinos present at La Promesa de un Futuro Brillante, the First National Summit on Young Latinos requested formally that the community give them their day.

The summit, held in San Antonio, Texas, was attended by over 900 adults and youth representing 22 states. Participants spent three days pondering the most urgent challenges facing young Latinos. When asked about the things adults could do to help young Latinos overcome barriers and challenges, the youth responded with a series of promises they wanted the adults to make.
Parents in the audience promised:

• To be involved with my family
• To believe in my children
• To teach my children about their heritage, history, language, and moral values;
• To openly communicate with my children
• To spend time having fun with my children
• To inspire my children and tell them my goals and dreams so they have dreams and goals, also.

"Queremos un mundo mejor"

Promises made by the full community included:

• To become a mentor.

• To share my knowledge about opportunities with young Latinos.

• To connect with children and youth in my community, and ask them for their ideas for the development and implementation of programs.

• To set up community and national forums for youth to discuss issues that affect them.

• To teach children and youth about the Latino culture, history, language.

• To provide a safe place in the community for youth to hang out in the evenings, and employ youth in the programs and consider them in the decisions.

The promises made to the young Latinos will serve as the foundation for El Día de los Niños activities.
How do You Get Involved?

1) Ask the members, elected officials or board of directors of the organization, school, or government body to pass a resolution in support of *El Día de los Niños*. Students should ask their classmates to sign a resolution as a group. The school version of the resolution has spaces for many signatures. Encourage students to petition the Mayor and city council to give them their day.

2) Complete the resolution information form and mail the signed document to the National Latino Children’s Institute (NLCI). Copies of city resolutions should also be mailed.

3) Provide information to the group's membership by announcing the event at schools, places of employment, national, regional, and local conferences, special events, exhibits, and in newsletters.

4) Help build a local work group that focuses on young Latinos in the community. National groups will provide information to NLCI about their local or regional affiliates in order to become involved in the local coalitions.

5) Through the local work group, coordinate special activities and events to honor, respect and uplift young Latinos.

6) Promote the celebration of April 30 as *El Día de los Niños* each year.
Resolution
El Día de los Niños
Celebrating Young Americans

Whereas Latino children are the center of the Latino family, and

Whereas Latino families should have an established day to acknowledge the contribution and value of their children, and

Whereas the strengths of the Latino culture can be preserved and passed down to future generations, and

Whereas Latino families, communities and the generations that follow are committed to providing a safe environment for children to know love, grow, learn, excel and be happy, and

Whereas the National Latino Children’s Institute, serving as a voice for Latino children, has designated April 30 as El Día de los Niños as a day to bring together Latinos and other communities nationwide to celebrate and uplift all children and ensure they are first in our lives and have a future in the next the next millennium,

Let it be resolved that __________________________________________ will join with children, parents, individuals, familias, organizations, communities, cities and states across the nation to share the establishment of a nationally recognized and celebrated El Día de los Niños in the United States of America, beginning April 30, 1999, and to be celebrated by all generations that follow.

We resolve today ________________, 20____ to celebrate now and forever El Día de los Niños and commit to taking whatever actions are necessary to make this day a special day in the lives of children.

Signature __________________________________________
Print Name __________________________________________
Organization __________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________
City: ________________ ST _____ ZIP ____________
Phone: ________________ FAX __________________
e-mail ____________________ Code #: __________

Please write a short description of how you or your organization will celebrate El Día de los Niños in your community.

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Once the signed resolution is signed, a packet of materials will be forwarded to the person listed as the contact. The packet will include guidelines for establishing El Día de los Niños in the community and ideas for activities. Other resources include:

- Free materials available such as public service announcements, posters and event planning handbooks. Camera-ready flyers with space to include local activity and contact information.

- Tools and resource materials available for a nominal fee including tee shirts, banners, pins, storybooks, games and pamphlets.
Guiding Principles

Organizations that make a commitment to establish El Día de los Niños in their community must adhere to certain values that promote the celebration appropriately. Whether activities are elaborate city-wide events, or small individual activities benefitting only a few children at a hospital, they must be appropriate and uplift children. The following principles can be used as a guide to measure the suitability of a proposed El Día de los Niños activity.

* Children and youth must be at the center of the event.

* The activity must be positive and uplift young Latinos. It should welcome all children and create opportunities for children of different ethnic groups to get to know each other's culture.

* The activities should make children happy.

* The activity should be inclusive of family and others. It must promote family unity and incorporate the extended family.

* Products used for the activity must be child-safe.

* Although children can participate in the making of banners, murals, or other artistic items, no product manufactured in violation of child labor laws, including imported products, can be used.

* The activities are planned with respect for the diversity of the community, including the various ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious groups.

* The activities are respectful of the environment and result in cleaner, safer spaces for children.

* Every Día de los Niños activity should result in a positive learning experience for all that participate.

* Whenever possible, participation should not have a cost.

Organizations and individuals that want to participate in establishing a national El Día de los Niños can become involved by following these steps:
The Players

How is El Día de los Niños being organized?

El Día de los Niños is implemented by a number of organizations and groups that are committed to the well-being of Latino children. The National Latino Children's Institute provides the staff and organizational support for El Día de los Niños. Other partners include El Día de los Niños Committees in major cities, the NLCI National Advisory Board, the Latino Children's Corporate Board, and national and local elected officials, celebrities, and other well-known personalities.

National Latino Children's Institute

The Role of the NLCI is to:

* Implement a national strategy for celebrating El Día de los Niños.
* Plan an annual celebration with a national event in one city and local activities throughout the nation.
* Establish El Día de los Niños Committees in cities across the country to organize activities to uplift Latino children.
* Develop a national media plan that draws attention to Latino children and can be implemented through national as well as local media organizations.
* Provide resources to local work groups including materials, public service announcements, promotional products, and commemorative items.
* Organize and coordinate activities of the National Advisory Board and Latino Children's Corporate Board.

Local Coordinators

Local coordinators are responsible for organizing El Día de los Niños activities. Generally, these volunteers work in community organizing positions and have strong support systems. A local coordinator should have many contacts, access to telephone, computers, fax, copiers, etc., and have the time necessary to coordinate communication with a number of groups.

The role of the Local Coordinator is to:

* Organize the local work group
* Coordinate the development of a strategic plan
* Coordinate the work of committees
* Manage the resources of the work group
The National Advisory Board is made up of representatives of national organizations that have endorsed the National Latino Children's Agenda and passed a resolution supporting El Día de los Niños. These organizations have local or regional chapters that have been encouraged to become involved in El Día de los Niños.

The role of the National Advisory Board is to:

* Advise and guide the national celebration.
* Communicate with their local affiliates about El Día de los Niños.
* Encourage development of local initiatives that uplift Latino children.
* Generate resources for their own activities to promote El Día de los Niños.
* Use their networks to inform local communities about children's issues related to their organization, ie: health, education, math, sciences, technology, mentoring, etc.

At the time of this printing, the following organizations had agreed to serve on the NLCI National Advisory Board:

American GI Forum  National Association for Bilingual Education
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network  National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
Children's Television Workshop  National Association of Hispanic Publications
Congressional Hispanic Caucus  National Association of Hispanic Investment Bankers
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute  National Association of Hispanic Nurses
Cuban American National Council, Inc.  National Association of Latino Elected Officials
Families and Work Institute  National Council of La Raza
Hand in Hand: Parents-Schools-Communities United for Kids  National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry
Hispanic Association for Corporate Responsibility  National Conference of Puerto Rican Women
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  National Head Start Association
Hispanic College Fund  National Hispanic Corporate Council
Hispanic Federation of New York  National Hispanic Leadership Institute
Hispanic National Bar Association  National Hispanic Scholarship Fund
Hispanic Television Network  National Puerto Rican Coalition
Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, Comunidades LULAC  President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans
MANA - Texas  Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund
McDonald's Hispanic Operators Association  Reforma
McDonald's Hispanic Operators Association  SER Jobs for Progress
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund  Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
Mexican American Network of Odessa Chamber of Commerce  Stand for Children
Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation Alumni Association  United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO  U.S. Senate Republican Conference Task Force on Hispanic Affairs

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Latino Children’s Corporate Board

These corporations concerned about the well-being of young Latinos, provide advice and support for the national activities of *El Día de los Niños*. These well-known companies have local offices that can offer volunteers, products and support for local events.

**The role of the LCCB is to:**
* Provide advice and guidance in the development of national efforts.
* Provide support for activities in one of the 12 *El Día de los Niños* campaign cities.
* Donate products for special events.
* Provide volunteers and release employees for school visits, mentoring, or special events.
* Create activities for children, discounts, prizes, and gifts that make them feel special.
* Sponsor celebrity appearances at schools and special events.

Members of the Latino Children’s Corporate Board at the time of this printing include:

- Banco Popular
- Bell Atlantic
- The Coca Cola Company
- Ford Motor Company
- Epcot
- IBM
- Kellogg
- Levi Strauss & Co.
- McDonald’s Corporation
- Sara lee Corporation
- Scholastic, Inc.
- Tel-Mex Sprint
- United Parcel Service
- Univision
- The Walt Disney Company
Delivering the Promise Work Groups

Local groups have formed in several cities to work on a number of issues related to the well being of Latino children. The groups represent many diverse interests including youth, business, non-profit organizations, churches, schools, and civic organizations.

The role of the Delivering the Promise Work Groups is to:
* Get resolutions from the community including students, business leaders, parents, teachers, and others.
* Get mayors and other elected officials to make proclamations.
* Plan culturally appropriate community events that uplift Latino children and include all children.
* Establish committees to organize an annual El Día de los Niños celebration.
* Work on implementing the National Latino Children's Agenda throughout the year.
* Insure that all groups, including non-Latino organizations, hear Latino children's voices and issues throughout the year.
* Nominate outstanding programs that serve Latino children for recognition as La Promesa Programs.

La Promesa de un Futuro Brillante Programs

NLCl recognizes outstanding community organizations that successfully serve Latino children by incorporating appropriate language and culture elements into programs and services. As exemplary programs, these organizations know what works in the Latino community and are considered experts in serving Latinos.

The role of the La Promesa Programs is to:
* Host media and VIP visits to the programs.
* Identify and recognize outstanding young Latinos in the program.
* Share knowledge of "what works" with others.
* Participate in El Día de los Niños activities and special events.
* Distribute information through the organization's network.

"Yo quisiera ser muy feliz pero no puedo porque cuando mi papá llega borracho se quiere pelear con mi mamá. Pero yo no lo dejo porque yo me levanto en las mañanas para separar a mi mamá para que no le vaya a pegar mi papá a mi mamá."
El Día de los Niños Committee

Who Should be Involved?

The well being of young Americans is important to all segments of the community. Getting the message out to everyone requires that there be a variety of messages, events, activities and outreach strategies. Having a broad-based organizing group makes it possible to reach more people with more diverse messages and activities. A well-rounded work group should have some of the following types of groups represented:

Affiliates of national organizations such as National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)

Architects and contractors

Businesses

Celebrities & local talent including news media, singers, actors, sports personalities

Childcare centers

Children and youth

Children's museums

Churches

Civic organizations such as Image and Lions Clubs

Coaches

Community centers

Community foundations

Elected officials including school boards, city council, and congressional representatives

Employers

Families

Firefighters associations

Health care providers and hospitals

La Promesa programs from the region

Latino social organizations such as Sociedad Herencia Puertorriqueña

Law enforcement officers

Malls and large department stores

Media

Municipal departments such as parks and recreation and libraries

Museums

Parks and recreation centers

Parent organizations

Schools

Senior citizens organizations including AARP and church and neighborhood clubs

Sports organizations such as Little League, T-ball, and CYO sports

Social organizations such as supper clubs

Swimming pools, video arcades, and recreation centers

Symphonies and music groups

Translators

Unions

University student organizations such as MECHA

Youth organizations such as Girl Scouts
Setting up Committees

Members of the work group will want to organize their tasks by committees. The types of proposed activities and events will determine the kinds of committees needed.

The following list of typical committees and their tasks may be helpful in organizing the work to be completed.

**Executive Committee**
- Establish and maintain the group’s vision
- Set goals and timelines
- Coordinate meetings among the committee chairs
- Measure progress / keep momentum going

**Media**
- Create press kit
- Host press conference to announce events
- Work with broadcast media to air PSA’s
- Meet with editorial boards to develop newspaper articles and op-ed items
- Communicate with the media about new developments

**Finance**
- Establish the budget
- Identify a fiscal agent or establish a 501c-3 for the work group
- Develop fundraising strategy
- Identify sponsors for particular activities
- Hold fundraisers

**Community Outreach**
- Develop community outreach plan
- Work with Media Committee to promote events
- Outreach to child serving institutions
- Establish telephone response line to provide information

**Milagros Committee**
- Select site for milagros exhibit
- Develop plan for children to make milagros
- Secure art supplies and free materials for use by children
- Make arrangements for hanging milagros
- Catalogue the wishes and dreams described by the community’s children
- After the local exhibit is closed, mail milagros to NLCI for hanging with the national exhibit

**School Visits**
- Meet with school officials to explore opportunities for visits to schools by celebrities, community leaders, and well-known personalities during *El Día de los Niños* and throughout the year
- Develop content for special classes or field trips that uplift children and convey information about culture, heritage, leadership, citizenship, career options, and other topics
- Identify well-known Latinos and others who can make visits to schools to motivate and inspire young citizens
- Schedule speakers/coordinate media
- Make appropriate follow-up and send thank you letters
- Document the impact on students

**Entertainment & Celebrities**
- Make a list of special events that will need celebrity spokesperson or entertainers (PSAs, press conference, etc.)
Identify available talent (sports, music, film, news anchors, decorated soldiers, authors, etc.)

Identify and meet with public relations firms or schedulers that handle local talent, establish parameters for participation (cost, time frame, type of event)

Select a spokesperson that will represent the campaign at most events

Make arrangements for security at appearances with very large crowds

**Mall Events**

Meet with event planners at shopping malls, identify policies for events

Plan event such as a fair with booths, art exhibit, fashion show, trick or treat, etc. Develop floor plan, look out for excessive noise, escalators, or distracting features

Identify volunteers for each activity - including set up, managing during the event and cleanup

**Youth Forum**

Hold several focus groups with 8-10 young persons to pinpoint the issues and topics most urgent

Plan a forum at a public venue that can hold an audience and can be televised

Work with a media group to coordinate the public viewing and or televising of the forum

Analyze the topics identified by the youth, organize according to recurring themes and select one or two areas to discuss, i.e.: youth violence, future job opportunities, curfews

Promote the event

Host the event and do follow-up

Document the impact and determine action needed based on recommendations by youth

"Yo quiero ser maestra"
El Día de los Niños can be so much more than just a celebration. Once the structure is in place, the day can be used to frame children’s issues for the community. It is an easy option for members of the media to connect the celebration with concern for the well-being of children.

The committee can collect data about particular topics they want to address, such as teen pregnancy rates, child poverty, waiting lists for child care or the need for safe places to play. Special projects or one-day events can be planned for El Día de los Niños to draw attention to the issue, present the hard facts, and have a great time celebrating good things that can happen.

Family literacy for example, is an important facet for promoting children’s success in school. Since some Latino parents have not completed school, they may feel that their literacy skills are weak or that they don’t have enough information to help their children be successful at school. Establishing a love for books through El Día de los Libros could be a valuable way in which to celebrate books and storytelling while delivering a strong message to parents about their role in their child’s development regardless of educational attainment level.

El Día de los Libros could become a day that kicks off a community storytelling project where elementary school children collect oral stories from their elders and make story books about their heritage and history. It could be a day when authors visit schools and read to children from their books. With today’s technology, it would be possible for libraries to hold book-making festivals in conjunction with photography or art classes. Puppet and dramatic events could add a different dimension to El Día de los Libros. A Poetry slam could be hosted by teens from different schools. All of these activities could add to a community’s interest in literacy.

Here are some other ideas:

Adoption Campaign for Latino Children

"Tengo un niño en mi corazón" - there are large numbers of Latino children and living in the foster care system and waiting to be adopted. Create a campaign to find homes for Latino children in your community.
**Altares**

Many Latino cultures use altars to commemorate a person or an important event in their lives. Create an altar to commemorate children by emphasizing achievements passed on by ancestors, youth that died through gang violence, drunk drivers, illness, etc.

**Art Activities**

Use art to encourage children to express themselves. Emphasize particular themes such as heroes in the community, family celebrations, and healthy communities. This could lead to a mural project sponsored by the city.

**Artisan Folk Festivals**

Plan a day where children can learn traditional folk art skills such as pottery, weaving, carving, or whistle making. Combine the day with a study of contemporary arts such as Oaxacan wood carving, Zapotec rugs, Peruvian gourd carving, Puerto Rican Santeros, Panamanian casitas, or Venezuelan máscaras.

**Ballet Folklórico Festival**

Host an all day festival of music and dance demonstrations and performances such as jalisco (México), pleñas (Puerto Rico), comparsas (Cuba), joropos (Venezuela), tamborcitos (Panama), marineras (Peru), samba (Brazil), and tango (Argentina). Pass on the traditions of Latin American circle games by teaching children games such as Vibora de la Mar, La Rueda de San Miguel, Trompo, El Pañuelo, & other games.

**Bone Marrow Donors**

Latinos have a rich ethnic and racial heritage. But this genetic heritage also makes it difficult to find matches for bone marrow donations. Call your local health department to start a bone marrow drive.
**Día de los Libros**

Work with your local library or book stores to schedule a book festival. Encourage them to feature Latino authors and bilingual books so that young Latinos can learn about them. Invite authors for special readings or story characters to visit the site. (Contact NABE or Reforma regarding ideas for these events.)

**Candlelight Relay Race**

Plan an evening relay race through the city or a neighborhood using flashlights. Encourage everyone to join the event by planning a picnic at the end of the race. Invite local talent to play or sing at the picnic. Raise money for a new park or project by asking people to pledge the runners.

**Cascarones Festival**

*Cascarones* are fun for children (and adults!) of all ages. Have a festival for children to share the history and traditions of the cascarones.

**City wide garage sale**

Raise money for a special project by having a huge garage sale! Items should be geared to children and young people: clothes, toys, sports equipment, etc.

**CHIP Sign-up Day**

Latino children are the most uninsured group of children in the nation. Many are eligible for Medicaid or the new Children’s Health Insurance Programs. Conduct outreach and set up application opportunities in the community rather than waiting for the community to come to the state health centers.

**Clinics**

Encourage the health clinics to plan free check ups or *convivios/health fairs*. A special health *piñata* could contain health and grooming items, such as tooth brushes, dental floss, combs, etc. Aerobic/exercise instructors can demonstrate to the whole family how to exercise *con sabor* to the music of a *salsa, merengue* or *cumbia*!

**Commemorative Calling Card**

Many Latinos still have family living in their country of origin, or somewhere else in the United States or Puerto Rico. Work with your local phone company to establish a commemorative calling card for *El Día de los Niños*, with a portion of the proceeds set aside for a special project for the community.

**Community History Books**

Everyone has a family story. Work with the youth in the community to collect stories of family adventures from parents and elders. Compile them in a community history book with photographs and anecdotes.

**Concerts in the Park**

Music is an integral part of the Latino culture. Plan alcohol-free concerts in the park that are free of charge for children and youth if a parent or guardian accompanies them. Music should be appropriate for the whole family.

**Disposable Cameras**

Children and youth see their cities through a different set of circumstances than adults. Get a local supermarket or photo developing shop to provide children and youth with disposable cameras. Encourage young Latinos to take pictures of their daily lives: home, school, friends, the environment. Develop the photographs and hang them in city hall or other venue. Give prizes for the best pictures in different categories (age, family, school). Encourage the children to take pictures of everyday events that celebrate the Latino culture.

**Escoba Project**

Plan neighborhood block parties that begin with everyone using their *escoba* (broom) to clean the neighborhood, block by block. Invite the neighborhood to a block party afterwards with everyone contributing food and planning games for all ages; emphasize a safe and healthy neighborhood.

**Family in the Park**

Plan field day activities for the whole family. Include extended family members in the event.

**Father-Child Event**

Fathers sometimes get overlooked in the planning of events. Invite fathers or grandfathers to spend a day with their children. Plan a special dinner, dance, softball game, or other activity.

**Graffiti Wipe-Out Day**

Invite the community to participate in a graffiti wipe out. Ask a local hardware or paint store to donate paint and supplies. Invite a local artist to plan a mural with the assistance of the young people in the community. Emphasize and encourage artistic graffiti and murals as well as respect for other people’s property.
Kite Making

Kites are a common toy in many countries. Research the history of the kite, as well as the different materials used in Latin, Central and South American countries to make kites. Have a contest for the largest, smallest, most artistic, most authentic kites. All kites should be "home made."

Mall Fairs

Mall fairs are especially successful during those times in the year when people want to stay indoors. Invite companies to display their latest innovations in interactive booths (computers, books, etc.) As part of the mall fair, invite young inventors to display their latest inventions.

Milagro Exhibits

Milagritos have been used for centuries to ask for the quick recovery of a sick person, the safe return of a traveler, or by parents asking for the best for their children. Invite the young people in your community to create their own milagros out of paper, popsicle sticks, or other materials. They can glue a photograph of themselves on the milagro, or draw a picture. Ask them to write down a wish, dream, goal or desire for the future, either for themselves or for the community. Hang the milagros on an exhibit in a public place and encourage the community to read the children's voices. Use the exhibit to gather ideas for new projects in the community.

Net Day

Latinos have the least access to the Internet than any other group in the United States. Help bridge the gap by working with communications companies to wire the schools in your community. Apply to computer and software companies for grants for new computers and software. Hold a fundraiser to buy new computers.
Paper Hat Competition and Parade

Everyone has made paper hats sometime in their life. Invite the community to design outrageous hats and enter them in a competition and parade. Invite local celebrities or honored elders to judge the competition.

Photo Exhibit

Plazas, playground or play spaces - plan a construction day for a new gathering place in your community. Invite the whole community to help--building, providing food and drink, clean-up, first aid, etc. Invite the local hardware stores and construction companies to provide equipment, supplies and their expertise. Celebrate with a grand opening picnic for the community.

Press Conferences

Hold a press conference with all of the community based organizations, city and county government, local heroes, and youth to announce the cities commitment to young Latinos and other children in the community.

Quinceañera Camp

Start a new tradition in the community. Invite the young ladies to attend a year-long preparation to their quinceañera. Research the traditional celebrations and customs and teach the girls the original purpose for the ritual. A group quinceañera ball will help save a lot of money for families.

Race for Families

Plan a 5K fun run and a 1k for young children to emphasize physical fitness.
Recipe collection

Host a recipe collection drive to preserve the traditional favorite recipes that are being lost over the generations. Partner with a local high school youth group to collect the recipes. Publish the recipes in the local newspaper or in book form.

Safe Night U.S.A.

Plan a day without guns, drugs, or alcohol. Contact the national Safe Night U.S.A. office at 1-800-253-1158 or check the web at www.pbs.org/safenight.

School Visits

Plan school visits by celebrities and VIPs. Work with the local chamber of commerce and other organizations to get the schedules of people who will be visiting your community. Invite local heroes to visit young Latinos in all of the grades.

Store Sales

Plan special sales with 20% of the proceeds going to local children’s programs. Ask American Express or MasterCard to match the dollars raised.

Story Telling

Latinos have a rich oral history that is slowly disappearing. Create a program whereby children and youth interview the elders in the community and record their stories. Work with a local radio or television station to make a series.

Tamale Cook-off

Whether wrapped in banana leaves or corn husks, tamales are a staple in the diet of many Latin, Central and South American countries. Teach the next generation how to make tamales. Exchange recipes by encouraging all the Latino groups in your community to share their particular kind of tamales.

Telethon

Hold a telethon with local celebrities to raise money for children’s programs, or for a new initiative in the community.

Technology Day

Invite computer companies or stores to display computers at a local mall, with software for everyone to try out, computer tips and hints, and prizes and gifts.

Theme Parks

If you have a theme park or sports arena near your community, approach them and ask them to have a multicultural celebration. Ask them to provide free passes for a certain number of children, or discounted rates that families can afford.

Tortilla Cook-off

There are as many different types of tortillas as there are family traditions, and yet we love them all! Set up a tortilla cook-off where different recipes and ingredients are used for this basic favorite food.

Youth Forums

Host a youth forum in your community. Invite young Latinos to gather to discuss the issues facing them in the community, their ideas for solutions, and their dreams for the community.
Media Plan

Planning a Media Campaign

for El Día de los Niños

In planning an El Día de los Niños event, it is important to include the media as an integral part of the audience. Press coverage is an essential part of getting the message about El Día de los Niños out to the community and to the public at large. Publicity for El Día de los Niños events and activities should serve several functions:

It announces El Día de los Niños.

Letting everyone know the who, what, where, when and why of an El Día de los Niños event in advance peaks their interest, allows them to find out more about the national El Día de los Niños initiative. The earlier people know about the event beforehand, the better the turnout is likely to be.

It gives community leaders a chance to publicly show their support for young Latinos and all children.

Leaders from government, corporations, or other sectors of the community can take this opportunity to make a public statement on behalf of young Latinos. Many leaders realize the increasing significance of this growing population and are eager to demonstrate their commitment to creating a better future for Latino children and youth in their communities. Support can come in many forms, including announcement of new initiatives, recognition of outstanding youth, press releases, formal statements of endorsement and support, sponsorship of events, or appearances at a local El Día de los Niños event.

It motivates the community to support the El Día de los Niños event.

Primary support for the event should come from within the local community. Publicity should be widely circulated among community members, make the activities sound exciting and encourage children, families and schools to participate. Once the community realizes that El Día de los Niños is truly their day, they will become excited and invite their friends and family members to join in the festivities.

There are three stages to media coverage of any activity: Pre-Event, On the Spot Event, and Post-Event coverage.

Each of these stages requires different materials and media tactics, and each is critical to promote maximum media coverage of the event. Additional elements such as camera "ops", technical/equipment needs, media access, and other special considerations must be taken into account when planning the logistics of an El Día de los Niños press event.
Organization is the key to planning a successful media campaign. The first step is to formulate a detailed schedule outlining each step of the campaign. Consider the larger goals:

**What type and scope of media will the campaign target at which time?**

**What kind of information does the press need at each point in the campaign?**

**What materials will be necessary for the media to cover your event?**

Once the overall goals of the media plan have been outlined, each of the small steps necessary to achieve them can be filled in accordingly. When planning the schedule, remember the time constraints of each particular type of media, and how the nature of the media outlets affects its coverage of the event.

For example, a monthly magazine may need information and photographs six to eight weeks in advance in order to include a story on El Día de los Niños in its next issue; a television station can provide instantaneous coverage of the actual event itself, and may want to do a follow-up story on national progress of the campaign; a national paper may require several press releases spaced several weeks apart, including a media advisory the day before the event, in order to peak interest in covering the event.

Remember that each type of media, depending on its target audience, will take a different slant on El Día de los Niños. Plan which kinds of information and press releases should go to which type of media sources.

For example, a local television station may want more information on the mayor’s role in the city-wide event, while a stringer for a national paper may take a broader perspective, with additional information on the national campaign and events planned in other cities across the United States.

"Cuando yo sea grande deseo ser un buen policía"
2 Months Prior to the Event:
Begin working with local and national television stations to create public service announcements for El Día de los Niños. (Print PSA provided by NLCI)
Reserve a location and audio/lighting equipment for the press conference.
Begin gathering contact information for media database.

6 weeks Prior to the Event:
Send out initial media advisory to quarterly publications (Template provided by NLCI)
Continue working on media database

One Month Prior to the Event:
Ask Día de los Niños partner organizations to create their own press release
Continue working on media database.

3 Weeks Prior to the Event:
Write radio PSA’s.
Begin pricing wire services. (Note: These are usually expensive.)

2 Weeks Prior to the Event:
Send out initial media advisory to weekly and daily media outlets.
Write speaking points and/or script for speakers at press conference.
Finalize contents of press kit.

1 Week Prior to the Event:
Follow up with phone calls to media contacts (provide any updates of event).
Finish press kit for distribution at event. (Electronic templates available)
Produce media badges.
Print podium sign and media check-in sign and list.

One Day Prior to the Event:
Follow up with phone calls to media contacts.
Get press release ready to send out on day of event (wire and/or local/national media outlets. Make a list of pictures/shots you want to take on the day of the event. You should let the media know these are available. Have these ready if any media outlet requests them. (Press release template provided by NLCI)
Pre-Event Coverage

Media Advisories, Press Releases, PSA’s and press kits

Writing a Media Advisory (Template available as part of your kit)

Media advisories are the main vehicle for providing the press with pre-event information and updates, and it is essential that they include all the information the press will need to cover the event easily (place, time, location of press table, and parking availability). Most importantly, list special opportunities for photo “ops” and interviews with key speakers and celebrities. Whenever possible, media releases should be put on organizational letterhead to lend credence to the information being released and give the press a main contact name and organization, as well as a phone number.

Writing a Press Release (Template available as part of your kit)

Include contact information and a release date.

Include a date for release and the name and phone number of someone in the work group the media can call for more information at the top of the press release. Bold lettering helps this information stand out for quick identification.

Keep it short and choose one main message.

Most press releases are one or two pages long. Especially with "unsolicited" releases, most press initially don't have time to read anything longer than two pages. The release should carry one main message, which is usually a single sentence stated clearly as the first paragraph of the release. Use outline form or bullets whenever possible--whatever makes the release quick and easy to read. Try and include at least one relevant, publishable quote in every press release.

Use the Inverted Pyramid Structure.

The purpose of a press release is not to give the entire story of the event in a single page; rather, the goal should be to convey the most essential information about the event in the fewest, clearest possible words. The first paragraph should be a statement of the main message of the press release. The last paragraph should be information about the organization releasing the press release: the mission statement, the goals of the organization, and a repetition of the contact name and/or phone number.


Who is giving the event? Who are some of the main people and groups attending? Who will be speaking at the press conference? What is El Día de los Niños? What kind of activities will take place at the event—a children’s parade, a press conference, a book fair? Where will it be held? When will the event take place? Why is it important that a El Día de los Niños event is being held? And most importantly, why is this event newsworthy? All of this information should be worked into every press release sent to the media. Mention the availability of photos as an end note.
Writing a Public Service Announcement

Although press releases will be used mostly by print media, the information contained in them will also be useful to the broadcast media (television and radio.) Since broadcast media usually have even less time to cover events than print, additional preparation of public service announcements (PSA’s) for local and national radio and television stations is recommended.

PSA’s are usually thirty seconds long or less, so state only the basics—who, what, when, where and why. Send PSA scripts to the radio stations listed in your media database, in addition to the regular press releases. Some local public television stations air text-only “community calendars” on a daily basis. Send them abbreviated versions of your press releases and ask them to run them on their station.

Television PSA’s usually require additional time and work because of the visual elements involved. Begin working with television stations several months ahead of time to develop appropriate visual footage and dialogue for El Día de los Niños PSA’s.

Ask Partner Organizations to Get the Word Out

Ask your partner organizations to prepare and distribute a press release in support of El Día de los Niños. The release should be on their letterhead, and should emphasize the importance of El Día de los Niños to children. It should include supportive statements about why the organization supports this initiative, and outline what action they plan to take on behalf of children. It should also include a publishable quote from the president of the organization supporting El Día de los Niños.

Ask them to include their contact information on the release, and distribute it to their own media constituency.

Using the Wire

Not everyone creates their own media database to send out press information, although most organizations maintain at least a few main contacts of their own. Most large organizations and major corporations use wire services to get their press releases out to the media.

Wire services can send any press release to a number of specific target media constituencies, including national, regional, state or city media, radio or television stations, newspapers, magazines or trade publications. Some wire services can also send photos or sound bites over the wire, which media can pick up and use to augment their stories.

Unfortunately, these services are usually expensive, with prices ranging between 50 dollars (major local newspapers) and 500 dollars (major nationwide newspapers) each time a press release goes out. If one of the El Día de los Niños partner organizations has an affiliation with a national wire service, ask if they can get a discount or possibly sponsor putting an El Día de los Niños press release on the wire.
Creating a Press Kit

In order to be prepared for a press conference, you should have all press materials ready for immediate distribution on the morning of the event. Contents of the press kit should be prepared at least one week in advance. Estimate the number of media who will attend based on the number of responses and media confirmations received, and prepare at least 5-10 extra press kits and media badges, just in case. Materials in the *El Día de los Niños* press kit should include:

A press conference agenda/itinerary listing speakers with their titles

A copy of each of the press releases prepared

A basic information/fact sheet on El Día de los Niños:
  - List answers to some of the most commonly asked questions in bullet form
  - Background information on the national *El Día de los Niños* initiative (NLCI’s *El Día de los Niños* Overview is a good source)
  - Local and national statistics on Latino children and youth

A copy of the National Latino Children’s Agenda

A list of partner organizations for the event

Set up a press check-in table where reporters can sign in and receive badges and press kits.

"LOVE FOR ALL"
On-the-Spot Event Coverage:

Planning a Press Conference

This is the time when live coverage and most interviews are likely to take place. You will need an easy to find, spacious location with electrical capacity for microphones and lights (remember to check equipment in advance). Have a podium, a podium sign (with the name and logo of your organization) and a microphone placed at the scene at least thirty minutes before the press conference begins. Decorate the press conference location with bright, festive colors—we recommend using the children’s milagros display as a centerpiece flanking the podium! Here are some pointers to remember.

Pick a highly visible spot.

The location should have enough space to comfortably accommodate the number of people anticipated to attend. Choose a spot as close as possible to the site of the actual El Día de los Niños activities. Remember that smaller children will have trouble walking more than a block or two. If you choose an outdoor location, be sure to prepare an alternative location nearby in case of bad weather.

Keep the press conference to no more than thirty minutes.

Keep each speaker’s time at the microphone down to 3 minutes or less. Not only does the media get bored after filming half an hour of speakers, but the children will have trouble sitting still and keeping quiet.

Prepare your speakers.

Have a short script or talking points for each of the speakers at the press conference. Give each speaker their script before the press conference to give them time to become familiar with it.

Don’t Forget the Children

It's important to allow the main players their time on the microphone, but don't forget that this is El Día de los Niños--give young people a chance to make their voices heard. Include at least one child or youth in your list of press conference speakers. Rehearse them well in advance of the event, and make sure that they can reach the microphone with relative ease. Try and choose a youth representative who feels comfortable speaking in front of large groups.

Prepare a Press Conference Binder

Put together a three-ring binder for the press conference which includes a minute-by-minute schedule for the press conference and each of the speaker’s scripted remarks, in the correct order (place it in plain view on the podium). Tell the speakers to feel free to refer to it as needed, but to leave it on the podium for the next person. This will minimize the stress of speaking in front of the cameras, and make it easier to answer questions and remember key phrases.
Post-Event Coverage

Maintaining Media Excitement and Collecting Clips

Send out a follow-up press release describing the success of the event. Include some of the best quotes from the press conference, and mention that photos are available upon request.

Watch for press coverage of your event that evening and the following day. Collect clippings from newspapers and magazines; videotape television coverage. (Clipping services are also available to help collect coverage of the event, for a fee.) These clippings can be put into a promotional package for the following year.

Forms and Resources

The National Latino Children’s Institute will continue to develop materials for use in the community. The United States Senate resolution and other forms are available for you to use as an inspiration for your own materials as your community plans El Día de los Niños events and celebrations.

"I wish that people would quit judging people by their looks"

Jose Madreca
National Latino Children’s Institute

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