an invitation
To participate in the
20th National
El Día de los Niños Celebrating Young Americans
Index

El Día de los Niños is Our Day!
Latino Children and the next 20 years

Celebrating in 2018
Opportunities for participation
Proposed markets

History of the Celebration
U.S. Senate Resolution
National Partners
Highlights of Past Events
Elements of a Celebration

The National Latino Children’s Institute
History of NLCI
The National Latino Children’s Agenda
Partnerships
Corporate Capability
Signature Programs

Attachments
2017 U.S. Senate Resolution
2016 Message from President Barack Obama
Statement from Senator Tom Daschle
1998 Letter of Support from Congressional Hispanic Caucus
San Antonio Express News Story from 1998 event
The year 2018 marks the 20th anniversary for El Día de los Niños-Celebrating Young Americans (EDLN) launched April 30, 1998 in San Antonio, TX. April 30 is also the day that Mexico celebrates El día del niño, and many border children’s organizations were already familiar with the concept, so it immediately took root and expanded to many cities over the years. The National Latino Children’s Institute (NLCI) created this special day in response to requests by young people attending the First National Summit on Latino Children held in San Antonio, TX in 1997.

In September 1998, NLCI was successful in getting the U.S. Senate to pass the first national resolution declaring the 1999 EDLN a Commemorative Holiday. Since then NLCI has been successful in passing a resolution each year and holding a national celebration in Washington, D.C. along with hundreds of events throughout the country.

We believe that this is a significant year that should be marked and used as a vehicle for uplifting young Latinos and all children. It can be used for rallying communities to support important initiatives such as those reflected in the National Latino Children’s Agenda. (see Attachments)

NLCI would like to bring the national event back to San Antonio in 2018 to recognize it’s beginning, it’s partners and key players, and to reconnect the national network of celebrations.

The birthday celebration is scheduled for the weekend of April 28-30, 2018 with a children’s festival scheduled at the Institute of Texan Cultures and a press event and reception on April 30 to recognize the many champions that have brought this event forward for so many years.
Latinos will play a larger role in the future of the U.S. because the population is younger, English speaking, and more likely to be citizens born in the U.S. This will impact family life, education, the work force, and the economy. How we, as a nation, respond to this population group will determine the prosperity and opportunities our nation can have.

Here are some quick facts from the Pew Hispanic Research Center (data from U.S. Census Bureau) that can clarify this trend.

- **Hispanics are the youngest major racial or ethnic group in the United States. Nearly half (47%) of U.S. born Latinos are younger than 18.**

- About one-third, or 17.9 million, of the nation’s Hispanic population is younger than 18, and about a quarter, or 14.6 million, of all Hispanics are Millennials (ages 18 to 33 in 2014), according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Altogether, nearly six-in-ten Hispanics are Millennials or younger.

- Since the 1980’s the nation’s Latino population has been one of the youngest. The median age for Hispanics is 28 years, substantially lower than the non-Hispanic White population at 43, Asians at 36, or Blacks at 33 years.

- Although the children’s share of Hispanic population has dropped since the 1990, Latino children still make up 32% of all Hispanics.

- Hispanics make up 21% of all U.S. Millennials vs 15% of all adults. Hispanic Millennials are less likely to be immigrants and more likely to speak English proficiently. They are also more likely than older generations to be of Mexican origin.

- Young Hispanics are more likely to be U.S. born than older generations.

The words “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably. The word “Hispanic” is used primarily by the U.S. Census Bureau and therefore data reflects this term.
NLCI proposes several strategies for the national celebration:

- Development of a documentary film about young Latinos and the way in which NLCI and El Día de los Niños makes a difference in their lives
- Hosting a one-day children’s festival at the Institute of Texan Cultures on April 29, 2018
- Coordinating a series of cultural events at children’s museums throughout the U.S. April 28-29, 2018
- Holding a press event on the status of Young Latinos with a view of the future on April 30, 2018
- Hosting a celebration and recognition of partners, champions, coordinators, and young people that have promoted and maintained the festival for 20 years at a special event on April 30, 2018
- Partnering on a leadership development program for families attending the Semana del Niño activities with a national broadcast to coordinators across the country on April 6, 2018
- Organizing local Milagros exhibits in libraries and public places and then merging all the Milagros into a gigantic exhibit in Washington D.C.
- Coordinating digital Milagros and youth stories captured on digital devices and uploaded to a national site
Partner organizations and sponsors are invited to participate in many ways:

- Serving on the national planning committee and guiding the design of activities
- Involvement in local community events
- Development of a national activity for local organization chapters, franchisees, or corporate branch offices
- Providing financial and resource support for the national celebration
- Using branded brochures, materials, posters, stickers, banners
- Participation in local festivals and school events
- Supporting the development of a video documentary of the 20 years of events and the impact it has had on children
There are over 100 cities and communities that create events for El Día de los Niños Celebrating Young Americans. Some special markets have always been the strongest and most recognized. These would be the primary markets to support with special guests, events, sponsorships, and media. Every community will be supported through the network, but these select few will receive special attention due to their population and/or media distribution opportunities:

- Albuquerque, NM
- Atlanta, GA
- Austin, TX
- Boise, ID
- Bronx, NY
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Dallas, TX
- Denver, CO
- El Paso, TX
- Greeley, CO
- Houston, TX
- Indianapolis, IN
- Kansas City, MO
- Laredo, TX
- Las Vegas, NV
- Los Angeles, CA
- Miami, FL
- New York, NY
- Newark, NJ
- Oklahoma City, OK
- Orlando, FL
- Philadelphia, PA
- Phoenix, AZ
- Rio Grande Valley of Texas
- San Antonio, TX
- San Francisco, CA
- San José, CA
- San Juan, PR
- Santa Fe, NM
- Tampa, FL
- Tulsa, OK
- Tuscon, AZ
The Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) in San Antonio, TX will be the host of the 2018 EDLN national celebration. Established in 1968 for the Hemisfair ’68 World’s Fair, ITC will be celebrating it’s 50th anniversary two weeks before the EDLN celebration. It is a natural partner for EDLN because its exhibits share the stories of the many immigrants from around the globe that settled in Texas and contributed to our nation’s tapestry of people.

The museum is located in the heart of Hemisfair Park now being renovated for it’s own 50th anniversary celebration as well as San Antonio’s 300, a one-week celebration beginning May 1, 2018. El Día de los Niños will have the distinction of closing the annual Fiesta San Antonio which ends April 29 and becoming an official event of the San Antonio 300 celebration.

With it’s vast outdoor spaces, gorgeous exhibits, many volunteers, and experience is hosting the annual Texas Folklife Festival, the ITC is ready to support the national celebration for EDLN. The dome with 26 screens will be used to show a new film about El Día de los Niños.


El Día de los Niños Celebrating Young Americans was first celebrated in San Antonio in 1998 with then City Councilman José Menendez as the primary city sponsor. San Antonio became the first city to pass a resolution declaring the day. The celebration was held at Main Plaza with a one block walk to city hall where Mayor Howard Peak proclaimed the day. With support from major sponsors, the festival was able to garner national attention on all major news networks. The children’s Milagros were on display inside San Fernando Cathedral and became the focus of Father David Garcia’s homily that day. These too, were broadcast on the Catholic Television Network.

In September 1998, NLCI was successful in getting the U.S. Senate to pass the first national resolution declaring the 1999 EDLN a Commemorative Holiday. Senators Orin Hatch, Harry Reid, and Congressman Ruben Hinojosa hosted a press event at the Senate. Since that first resolution, we have been successful in passing a resolution each year. Our first national champion was Senator Orin Hatch who chaired the Judiciary Committee and now it is Senator Bob Menendez.

Each year the resolution reflects the burning issues of children throughout the U.S. and urges the commitment by elected officials to work on behalf of these constituents even though they are not of voting age.

The national resolutions provide a models for cities and states to pass their own resolutions. Please see the current resolution and letters from President Obama and Senator Tom Daschle in the attachments section.
While all cities and celebrations follow the same elements for celebrating, there are unique differences depending on the connections each city’s committee is able to generate. Here are some of the most interesting events.

- In 1998 Ronald McDonald House Charities sponsored the first U.S. celebration of El Día de los Niños Celebrating Young Americans (EDLN) in San Antonio, TX. Their financial support for three years made it possible to expand the event to over 50 cities.

- U.S. Senators Orin Hatch, John McCain, Harry Reid, and Congressman Ruben Hinojosa hosted a press event at the U.S. Capitol in 1999 to announce the first Senate resolution declaring April 30, as El Día de los Niños Celebrating Young Americans.

- In 2000, Disney’s Epcot Park named NLCI and EDLN a Millenium partner and hosted a three-day national conference and parade through the Epcot Park. Epcot recognized EDLN during the IllumiNations evening parade and stunning fireworks show. Over 700 children from the nearby Florida’s Redlands Christian Migrant Association program, and who had never been to Epcot, were able to attend free of charge and participate in all activities.

- NLCI’s partnership with NASA resulted in astronaut, Carlos Noriega serving as honorary Chair in 2004 and participating in several celebrations and school and library visits. NASA’s online resources for educators served to create science activities for the festivals.

- Chicago’s Public Schools Department of Bilingual Education translated the words El Día de los Niños Celebrating young Americans into over a dozen languages, thus paving the way for children of all cultures to celebrate this day.

- Tejano singer and award winning performing artist, Javier Galvan wrote and recorded an anthem for El Día de los Niños Celebrating young Americans. It was distributed to every city without cost.

- In 1999 El Paso and Laredo celebrations met children from the Mexican side of the border to exchange abrazos.

- In 2004 Mervyn’s sponsored a children’s concert featuring José Luis Orozco.

- In 2005 Target sponsored book festivals in five cities.

- The Girl Scouts of the U.S.A launched their first EDLNCYL event in New York with the Dominican Community, then expanded it nationwide.

- In 1998, 11 year-old Becky Lee Meza, who portrayed Selena, in the movie by the same name, led the children’s parade to City Hall in San Antonio.

- In 2011, San Antonio held the celebration at the new Mission Library as part of the ribbon cutting ceremony and all-day celebration.

- In Puerto Rico the bells in churches rang at 10am as the Governor read the proclamation. Seven communities hosted events.


- Milagros have been created by children every year since the first event, and they are exhibited in public city spaces and then sent to Washington DC for display at the House of Representatives and the U.S. Department of Education. Many are mailed to the President.
NLCI has been fortunate to have many supporters and partners for this celebration. It takes thousands of volunteers and hundreds of community organizations to host the events each year. Some partners have been significantly valuable as they help the holiday grow in multiple markets.

- Girl Scouts of the U.S.A signed an MOU with NLCI and adopted El Día de los Niños as a national strategy expanding the event to over 100 cities.
- Members of McDonald’s Hispanic Operators Association supported events in many cities through their local franchise operations.
- Nationwide Insurance supported the development of Ay Chispas! a fire prevention program that was distributed by their agents at events throughout the U.S.
- Reforma encouraged libraries to create author and literacy festivals in all libraries.
- PBS and Scholastic offered Maya and Miguel as spokespersons with 50 costumes to be used at festivals where there is a PBS station.
- Texas Migrant Council expanded the holiday to reach all their Head Start sites, thus adding dozens of small rural communities that have limited resources.
Elements of a Celebration

The model for a typical EDLN event can have many elements although every city ascribes to the same principles. The events are free to children, so it is essential that private and municipal sponsors cover all costs. The following elements are typical of most celebrations:

• A youth group studies the issues and asks their city council to recognize their concerns and pass a resolution declaring the day and making a commitment to support their issues.

• A press event is held by leaders and sponsors sharing the status of children in their community and drawing a vision for the future.

• A children’s parade is organized to end with the reading of the resolution and the beginning of a festival with arts and crafts, stem activities, storytelling, music, puppets, field games, performances, etc.

• Local city service providers present a safety event at the festival to promote fire safety, passenger safety, CPR, 911, etc.

• Local libraries introduce authors and promote El Día de los libros.

• Many local organizations that provide services to children and families plan activities and distribute information about available resources.

• Roundtables and forums including business leaders, non-profit organizations, educators, service providers, elected officials, parents and other interested parties discussing economic, health, education, immigration, safety, violence topics that affect children and communities and that can make recommendations for action.
NLCI History

NLCI was founded in 1997 in response to the forecast growth in the Latino population, coupled with the dismal status facing Hispanic children. While there were organizations that championed children and others that supported Hispanics, there wasn’t a single organization dedicated to the needs of young Latinos. In fact, it was founded as a response to the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the lack of child-centered input to a national document developed by the leading Hispanic organizations. National leaders recognized that there wasn’t a children’s constituency represented in the NAFTA Latino Summit, although children represented the largest population group along the U.S.–Mexico border.

Hispanic organizations worried about workers and other issues, but children were not a part of any document or agreement. Additionally, discussions with other advocates highlighted the vacuum in which policies and programming for young Latinos existed. They were present, but not included. Action needed to be taken.

A meeting was convened in Washington, D.C. in September 1994 to draft a National Latino Children’s Agenda—a statement of what needed to change for young Latinos. As a result, representatives of 46 regional and national organizations gathered to create the Agenda so that, in the future, everyone would be able to represent Latino children’s interests. The principles encompass elements from every aspect of Latino children’s lives—including health, environment, economic and educational conditions—and seek to promote initiatives and programs that create policies and services respectful of Latino values, traditions and language. After two intensive days of work, Tipper Gore presented the Agenda at a breakfast.

The Agenda is guided by a set of principles and a mission aimed at supporting the healthy and prosperous development of Latino children in the U.S. Since 1994 over 150 national organizations and hundreds of individuals have endorsed the Agenda, and many cities and groups use it as a guide to assure that children’s interests are represented. The Institute continues to implement the Agenda by working with community and national partners to create initiatives and programs that build healthy communities.

After the creation of the agenda, a series of focus groups on the status of young Latinos were conducted in large and small cities across the U.S. The resulting ethnographic information provided the framework for the First National Summit on Young Latinos held in 1996. From that summit, it became clear that there was a need for a new organization that would focus solely on young Latinos, thus leading to the establishment of the National Latino Children’s Institute in 1997. Since then, NLCI has been creating targeted strategies, programs and initiatives to support Latino communities nationwide. It works with a diverse network of over 200 regional and local community based organizations in developing and implementing community action Initiatives to support Latino children across the United States and Puerto Rico.

NLCI is committed to continue the mission of creating a voice for young Latinos, advocating on their behalf, creating national programs to bring about change and working with partners to serve young Latinos. Through the use of social media, NLCI reaches young Latinos and their families by providing information and creating awareness about issues important to their well-being.
In 1994, a group of children’s advocates gathered in Washington D.C. to discuss the issues most important for the success of young Latinos. Through this historic body of work emerged the **National Latino Children’s Agenda**, a statement of principles essential for the health and complete development of young Latinos. It was immediately endorsed by over 100 organizations and established guiding principles for work with young Latinos. The Agenda guides the work of the National Latino Children’s Institute.

- Children will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Children will live in loving and healthy homes.
- Children will live in a secure, safe, and healthy community.
- Children will have the opportunity and the right to achieve their highest potential.
- Children will see themselves positively and accurately reflected in literature, music, film, media, and other forms of artistic expression.
- Children will have a voice and a role in the development of their programs and services.
- Children will receive comprehensive services that are affordable and fully accessible regardless of their parent’s citizenship, language, work hours, migrant or economic status.
- Children who speak languages other than English will have access to bilingual education programs.
- Children will have educational equity from early childhood to higher education.
- The language, culture and spirituality of Latino children and families will be respected as an integral and necessary part of their identity and development.
- The integrity of the extended family relationship will be respected in programs and policies.
- Families will be included in the creation and implementation of their children’s programs.
- Families will receive culturally and linguistically appropriate services from competent agencies and organizations.
- Families will participate in developing new economic and self-sufficiency opportunities for their communities.
- Latinos will participate in public and private policy and funding decisions.
- The workforce and community leaders will have access to professional preparation programs that develop culturally and linguistically appropriate skills and competencies.
- Funders will provide equitable funding opportunities commensurate with population size and need.
- The community will reflect and support the values and ideals of healthy Latino families.
The National Latino Children’s Agenda drives the initiatives and efforts of NLCI. Beginning in 1996, the bi-annual National Latino Children’s Summit provides a platform for ideas and action with a focus on reaching children’s advocates and policy makers. The Summit emphasizes the future of young Latinos and how public policies impact their lives. Young Latinos participating in the summit learn about leadership, advocacy and citizenship and practice their skills by interacting with program experts, elected officials and policy makers.

NLCI’s Agenda in Action Community Programs offer other opportunities for addressing the most complex barriers for young Latinos through culturally sound strategies.

La Promesa de un Futuro Brillante is NLCI’s network of premiere organizations serving Latino children. Nominated by their constituency, these programs have created unique strategies for their clients, thus providing for a bright future. Programs include early childhood education, teen parenting, literacy, STEM education, the arts, youth leadership, health and safety, access to higher education, and other critical areas. The programs are reviewed before being selected and serve as models and trainers at NLCI’s events. There are over 300 organizations/programs throughout the country that are considered La Promesa Programs. Many of these programs also serve as local coordinators for El Día de los Niños celebrations.

Ay Chispas is a phrase that can be heard when someone drops something or is excited. Chispas literally means sparks, thereby creating a fun name for a program about a serious topic. ¡Ay Chispas! is designed for community organizations and schools serving families with children under 8 years. The campaign’s activities invite families to help keep children safe. Everyone has a role to play—child care providers, medical practitioners, the clergy, businesspeople, teachers, public servants, and the media—in ensuring that children grow up safe. Only by involving the whole community and working together can a reduction in home fires become a reality. This program was developed with support from Nationwide Insurance. It is widely distributed through NLCI, fire stations, and Nationwide Insurance agents.

The Corazón de mi Vida initiative is designed to inform and educate Latino families about the importance of correctly placing their young children in child safety restraints. It also provides training opportunities for bilingual community workers to become Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Technicians to serve in their community. According to NHTSA, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Hispanic children of all ages after the first year of life. The biggest problem is low restraint use which includes the use of child safety seats, booster seats, or seatbelts. Restraint use rates for Hispanic children ages birth to 12 years is lower than non-Hispanic children. With support from NHTSA and Ford Motor Company Fund, NLCI has distributed more than 3,000 child passenger safety seats and provided training and certification of 384 bilingual technicians.
NLCI Signature Programs

Through a cooperative agreement with the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human services, NLCI developed **Onda Sana**, a program that uses cultural values and novel strategies to help young Latinos create a “healthy wave” in their community. Onda Sana creates messages for discussing “taboo topics” in the Latino culture including sex and sexuality, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, unsafe driving, and other behaviors that put youth at risk. Topics are explored among young people and between youth and their parents. Latinos ages 9 to 15 plan with community leaders to organize special events and awareness activities to inform others about high-risk behaviors and how to avoid dangerous situations. Messages and materials make it easy for youth to use their own voices to stand up to peer pressure and organize their work.

**Words for the Future—Creando el Futuro** was developed to support Latino families with knowledge and skills to promote their toddler’s learning at home. As the child’s first teachers, parents have the unique opportunity to shape their child’s future by providing meaningful interactions through daily experiences. The underlying premise of the program is that during every moment a child is learning. The importance of providing children with opportunities to learn from their earliest days has been underscored with the release of startling new information on infants and early brain development. Contrary to popular belief, a child’s brain continues to develop after birth, and in fact, the connections between the neurons are “fired” with each interaction and experience of the child’s life. These systems provide the foundation for the brain’s organization and how it functions throughout life. Words for the Future—Creando el futuro uses culturally appropriate materials and strategies to guide parents through the process of learning how to best provide their children with the experiences they need.

**Salsa, Sabor y Salud** was developed to improve awareness of habits leading to better nutrition and increased physical activity for Latino families with children 12 and younger. Families participate actively in a series of eight sessions that reinforce the importance of achieving “energy balance” through healthier food choices and increased levels of physical activity. The program was developed for community based organizations, schools, clinics, wellness programs, and other agencies and organizations working with Latino families. It is flexible, allowing a variety of programs to create their own implementation strategies.
Hágalo por la familia, ¡Abrochate el Citurón! Do it for Your Family. Buckle up! is NLCI’s program to introduce seat belt use to immigrant families. Immigrants arriving in the U.S. have many new experiences and responsibilities, among these is learning the laws and expected behaviors of the country. By creating a program in Spanish, NLCI is able to convey important information to families about seat belt use and driving. Hágalo por tu familia is available online and through NHTSA partners in communities around the country.

Milagros are Words for the Future is one strategy NLCI uses to create a voice for young Latinos. Based on the ancient tradition of leaving a petition to a favorite saint at a church, the children’s Milagros are made the same way. Children create a picture or add a photo to a small card and write their deepest and most personal dreams and wishes. The Milagros are then hung with ribbon on displays in libraries, at city halls, and even the White House and U.S. Congress in Washington DC. Children’s expressions include desire for a college education, a new pet, and even a wish to see a disconnected parent. Thousands of Milagros have been made during El Día de los Niños every year beginning with the first year.

El Día de los Niños Celebrating Young Americans is NLCI’s most important vehicle for conveying information about the Agenda, the Agenda in Action Programs, and the status of young Latinos. Through community and youth involvement in special events and projects, the Agenda and the need to work together to advocate for children becomes evident. A community tool kit guides organizers in creating their special events to mark April 30 as he children’s day.
2017 U.S. Senate Resolution
2016 Message from President Barack Obama
Statement from Senator Tom Daschle
1998 Letter of Support from Congressional Hispanic Caucus
San Antonio Express News Story from 1998 event
S. RES. 146

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

Designating April 30, 2017, as El Día de Los Niños—Celebrating Young Americans.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 27, 2017

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Ms. CARTER, Mr. CRUZ, Ms. DICKINSON, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. McCaskill, Mrs. MURKOWSKI, Mr. REED, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution, which was considered and agreed to:

RESOLUTION

Designating April 30, 2017, as El Día de Los Niños—Celebrating Young Americans.

Whereas, each year in the United States, El Día de Los Niños—Celebrating Young Americans is recognized on April 30 as a day to affirm and recognize the importance of young children in the United States;

Whereas children represent the hopes and dreams of the people of the United States, and the well-being of children and adolescents is emphasized as a top priority in the United States;

Whereas children and adolescents should be nurtured and invested in to preserve and enhance economic prosperity,

democracy, and the spirit of the United States through the free and open exchange of ideas;

Whereas, according to data of the Bureau of the Census, Hispanics are the youngest major racial or ethnic group in the United States, as nearly ¼, or 17,900,000, of the Hispanic population of the United States is younger than 18 years old, and approximately ¼, or 14,600,000, of the Hispanic population of the United States are millennials (18 to 33 years old in 2014);

Whereas the United States Hispanic population continues to grow, representing the youngest and largest ethnic minority group in the United States, and is a significant part of the workforce of the United States, comprising future consumers, taxpayers, and voters;

Whereas, as the United States becomes more culturally and ethnically diverse, the people of the United States must strive to bring about cultural understanding and celebrate a tradition that honors all children on April 30, 2017, El Día de Los Niños—Celebrating Young Americans, a day that acknowledges and shares traditions and customs with all people in the United States;

Whereas parents represent the center of teaching family values, morality, life preparation, health, survival, and culture;

Whereas the designation of a day to honor the children and adolescents in the United States will help affirm the significance of family, education, health, and community among the people of the United States;

Whereas the designation of a day of special recognition for the children of the United States will provide an opportunity to reflect on their futures, to articulate their aspir-
residents, to find comfort and security in the support of their family members, communities, and schools, and to grow to contribute to the United States;

Whereas the National Latino Children's Institute, which serves as an advocate and a voice for children, will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2017, and has partnered with States and cities throughout the United States for the last 19 years, will declare April 30, 2017, as El Día de Los Niños—Celebrating Young Americans, a day to bring communities and Latinos together across the United States to celebrate and uplift children; and

Whereas the people of the United States should be encouraged to celebrate the gifts of children and to help children take their rightful place in the future of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(a) designates April 30, 2017, as El Día de Los Niños—Celebrating Young Americans; and

(b) calls on the people of the United States to join with children, families, communities, churches, cities, and States across the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies, including activities that—

(A) center on children and are free or minimal in cost so as to facilitate full participation of all people;

(B) uplift and help children positively envision a path to their futures by voicing their hopes and dreams;

(C) offer opportunities for children of diverse backgrounds to learn about the cultures of one another and to share ideas;

(D) include family members, especially extended and elderly family members, so as to promote understanding and communication between generations within families and to enable young people to respect and benefit from the experiences of, and learn from, their family elders;

(E) enable diverse communities to build relationships; and

(F) provide children with the long-term support the children need to learn, develop, and become confident young adults who are ready and eager to contribute to the United States, a country the children believe in.
I send greetings to all those observing El Día de los Niños.

No matter who we are or where we come from, one of the greatest obligations we have is to safeguard the well-being of our daughters and sons. Like generations before them, our youngest will harness their powerful imaginations and limitless potential to push the confines of what is known and forge realities we have yet to envision. Whether as parents or teachers, community leaders or government officials, on Día de los Niños, we recognize that our children’s successes are built upon the foundation of opportunity, and we recommit to forging a future worthy of their dreams.

Organizations like the National Latino Children’s Institute are working to empower young Latinos across our country—helping them find their voices and contribute to our society. Your stewardship on this issue has been critical, and your efforts remind us of the role we all can play in shaping a country where all things are possible for all people.

As you continue striving to lift up the lives of young Latinos, I wish you all the best.
Statement of Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle on El Dia de los Niños: Celebrating Young Americans Day

Mr. Daschle. Mr. President, every year on the 30th day of April, nations throughout the world, especially in Latin America, honor and celebrate the importance of children to families and communities. Many Latino families honor their children on this day by celebrating El Dia de los Niños in their homes. Today, nearly 45 million children under the age of 16 reside in the United States, and one in four of these children are of Hispanic descent. The El Dia de los Niños holiday provides a wonderful opportunity for all Americans to pay tribute to those who represent the future of our great country - our nation's youth. A growing number of cities, schools, libraries, museums, churches, and other community organizations across the nation observe this holiday by planning activities and events that celebrate children.

While El Dia de los Niños recognizes the importance of children, the holiday also provides an occasion to shed light on the unique challenges currently facing Latino children in America. Every day nationwide, 751 Latino children are born into poverty; 313 are born without healthcare; and 561 Latino high school students drop out of school.

As every parent knows, our children are a gift we have been given in exchange for a commitment to put their well-being above all else. It is our covenant to meet our children's needs before our own and to work and plan so that they may have a better future.

The Bush Administration's fiscal year 2005 budget proposal breaks that covenant by giving tax cuts for the wealthy higher priority than investments in our children. His Administration has created record deficits that mortgage our children's future.

The choices contained in the President's budget fail to address the basic needs of children in key areas such as health care, education, Head Start, child care, housing, child nutrition, and the prevention of, and treatment for, child abuse and neglect.

The number of Americans without health insurance increased by 2.4 million between 2001 and 2002, the largest jump in a decade, to a total of almost 44 million. Among those 44 million are more than 9 million children under age of 19, almost 90 percent of whom live in working families. However, the Administration's budget proposal does nothing to significantly expand health insurance coverage.

Latinos are the most likely of all groups to lack health insurance. One-third of Latinos (33.2 percent) lack health insurance, and nearly one-quarter (24.1 percent) of Latino children are uninsured. Since a significant reason for the low level of insurance coverage among Hispanic children is the result of current law that bars them from participating in Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), removing these barriers to health care is key to ensuring that Latino children have access to health care services. Yet, the Administration's budget does not recommend taking this important step, leaving millions of children without coverage.

Just when schools are struggling to meet the new requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), President Bush has proposed the smallest increase in federal education funding in nine years. Since 2002, the NCLB program has been shortened by $26.5 billion. This year alone, President Bush has proposed a budget that would underfund the NCLB program by $9.4 billion.

The Administration's budget shortchanges education programs that are particularly important for Latino students. Dropout assistance, bilingual education funding, Migrant Education, HEP and CAMP and the parent assistance program - all of which help migrant students - are all significantly underfunded.

The President's budget proposal would virtually freeze Head Start funding even though the program currently reaches only 3 out of 5 eligible preschoolers, and only 5 percent of infants and toddlers eligible for Early Head Start.

At a time when the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Services Programs serve only 19 percent of eligible migrant and seasonal children, the President's budget provides $269.4 million - far short of what is needed to meet demand.

The President's budget proposal would flat-fund child care assistance at a time when only 1 out of 7 eligible children currently receives a child care subsidy; when states are making significant cuts to child care services due to state budget crises that are exacerbated by recent tax cuts; and when more than 550,000 children across the country are on waiting lists for child care assistance. The Senate recently voted 78 to 20 to increase the federal investment in child care so that low-income working families can succeed in the workplace and make sure their children have safe, high-quality, appropriate care.

The President's budget proposal cuts Section 8 housing assistance by $789 million, intensifying the unmet need for affordable housing. Of the 2 million households that receive Section 8 rental vouchers, 52 percent are families with children, making Section 8 the main source of housing assistance for low-income children.

The President's budget proposal provides no significant increase in funding for child nutrition programs, while 22 million children live in households suffering from hunger or living on the very edge of hunger.

More than 900,000 children were abused and neglected in 2001, yet the investments proposed for preventing child abuse and neglect and assisting children and families in crisis, totaling $151 million, fall far short of the need.

As we look to the future, we must do more than simply hope that our country will be in good hands. We must take steps to ensure that each child growing up in America has access to world-class health care and a quality education. El Dia de los Niños allows us to celebrate the hopes and dreams of our children while reflecting on their many accomplishments and assisting them in reaching their future goals.

As a proud father and grandfather, I happily celebrate El Dia de los Niños. However, my commitment to young Americans and the Latino Community will not end today. I am committed to championing legislation that will help families realize the vision of El Dia de los Niños - increased access to health care; higher investments in Head Start, education, and child care; access to decent housing; stronger child nutrition programs; and more child abuse prevention and treatment programs. By working to meet our children's needs today, we are building a better future for all Americans.
April 23, 1998

Ms. Rebecca Maria Barrera
President
National Latino Children’s Institute
1412 West Sixth Street
Austin, Texas 78703

Dear Ms. Barrera:

As members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, we are writing to express our strong support for El Día de los Niños— a special holiday to value and uplift Hispanic youth in the United States. It is our hope that El Día de los Niños will become a nationally recognized day that will bring Hispanic and children's organizations, celebrities, elected officials, and community leaders together by focusing on Hispanic children.

It is astounding that approximately 30 percent of Hispanic youth do not complete high school, 28 percent of Hispanic children live without any form of health insurance, and over 40 percent of Hispanic children in the U.S. live below the federal poverty level. These figures only underscore the urgent need for our country to do all it can to help Hispanic youth overcome the barriers and challenges they face.

By promoting family unity and parental involvement, youth mentoring projects, and youth employment opportunities, the Hispanic community is making great strides towards empowering a younger generation of Hispanics to become the leaders of tomorrow. El Día de los Niños celebrates these goals, and it is our privilege to endorse this special day as a reminder of what we can accomplish for Hispanic children by joining together in recognition of their struggles, as well as their achievements.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]
Hispanic groups want national holiday

By John Gutierrez-Mier

Express-News Staff Writer

Surrounded by balloons, mariachi musicians and more than 100 smiling youngsters on the steps of City Hall on Thursday, supporters called for the creation of a national holiday honoring children.

"From this day forward, April 30 will be known as 'El Día de Los Niños,' here in San Antonio," Mayor Howard Peak said during a ceremony that resembled a giant birthday party.

The idea was born in 1996 at the "Promesa Summit," sponsored by the Austin-based National Latino Children's Institute. The summit, held in San Antonio, quizzed about 50 Hispanic youths from across the country on what their greatest needs and concerns were.

"They wanted a voice and to be heard," said Olga Aros of Chicago, board chairwoman of the National Latino Children's Institute. "They also wanted to be recognized for their accomplishments and to value their heritage and learn about it from adults and mentors."

Most important to them was creating a day set aside to uplift children, modeled after national celebrations in Mexico and Latin America, Aros said.

In doing so, City Councilman Jose Menendez welcomed the children — most of whom were wearing yellow "Día de los Niños" shirts and holding balloons.

"You're the reason that we're here today," said Menendez, pointing to "milagros" the children made earlier in the week asking God to grant them special wishes.

"These are wishes the children have asked for, and today is the first day in making those wishes come true," he said.

Among the wishes were one from a girl for her mother find a job so the family could move out of their grandmother's home. Another read, "Don't rain on my education."

During the half-hour ceremony, Ken Barun, president and chief executive officer of the Chicago-based McDonald's Foundation, presented a $100,000 check to the Institute.

"McDonald's has always been involved in various things concerning children and their well-being," Barun said. "This is just one of the many things we do in the Latino community and we hope to do more."

The national campaign has tapped several other cities for the celebration including Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus also will soon be introducing legislation to make April 30 a national childrens holiday.

M. Rita Jaramillo, chief of staff for U.S. Rep. Ruben Hinojosa, D-Mercedes, said there is strong support from the 17-member Caucus, of which Hinojosa is a member.

"As a mother and as a tía (aunt), there isn't anywhere else I'd rather be today," Jaramillo said.
20th Event Planning Committee Contacts

Olga Aros
NLCI Founding Board Chair
623-229-697
623-845-6382
oraworldwide@cox.net

Rebeca Barrera
NLCI Founder and
Vice Chair Partnerships, NLCI Board of Directors
210-391-3375
rebeca@3rebecas.com
rebeca.barrera@nlcio.org

NLCI Administration
1112 East Buckeye Road
Phoenix, Arizona 85043

800-948-6605