



¡Colorín colorado!



Q&A on *Colorín Colorado*

What does *Colorín Colorado* mean?

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

What is it?

- ColorinColorado.org was originally developed for Spanish-speaking parents by the Reading Rockets project. The fully bilingual [Parents' Section](#) was launched in 2003, and focuses on ways that Spanish-speaking parents can take an active role in the education and literacy development of their children.
- In 2004, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) became a major partner of ColorinColorado.org and sponsored the development and launch of the [Educators' Section](#). This section, which was launched in July 2005, provides practical, research-based, and best-practice information and strategies for teaching English language learners.

What does the Educators’ section on Colorin Colorado offer?

- As part of this collaboration, a number of cutting-edge educator resources were created:
 - Best instructional practices
 - Practical, research-based information on how to help ELLs read, how to assess and place them, and how to teach content
 - The Colorín Colorado T.ELL.E-GRAM – a monthly newsletter for educators

- Podcasts (audio broadcasts similar to radio shows archived for listening and downloading anytime on the Web) and video clips – From author interviews to classroom interventions
- The bi-monthly newsletter for parents (in Spanish with a summary in English) – El Boletín Informativo Colorín Colorado – that educators can also use as a parent outreach too.
- Downloadable lesson plans, handouts, and progress forms
- Multilingual literacy tip sheets for parents (PreK-3) – available in the top languages spoken by English language learners
- Professional development Webcasts (video broadcasts or shows archived for viewing anytime on the web) available
- And More!

How can people access *Colorín Colorado*?

- They can access it on the Web at www.colorincolorado.org

Who is the audience?

- It is for educators and parents of ELL students.
- This Web site brings parents and educators together – it literally puts them on the same page to learn what they can each do to increase a child’s success with reading and school.

Why did the AFT get involved with the *Colorín Colorado* Web site?

- Latino ELLs have some of the lowest academic achievement levels and are an ever-growing student population. Our goal is to help our teachers and paraprofessionals address this challenge.
- More and more teachers and paraprofessionals in general education classrooms are encountering ELLs – many for the first time in their careers – and we want to help them provide the best instruction to their students and reach out to their students’ families.
- We wanted an online tool that would be freely available to all parents and educators across the country.

Who developed the Web site’s content for educators?

- The AFT and WETA brought together a team of veteran educators of ELLs, as well as some of the best researchers in the field, to devise these easy-to-use and easy-to-understand tips and strategies.
- Our main research advisors were Dr. Margarita Calderón and Dr. Claude Goldenberg.

Is the Web site’s content for educators based on research findings?

- Yes. The content was developed from the most recent information available -- direct research, expert opinions and best practices. As the research evolves, we will continue to update the Web site.

Does *Colorín Colorado* promote bilingual education?

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

What will people find on this Web site?

- There are two sections, one geared toward educators and one geared toward parents. Each section has a variety of helpful suggestions on what parents and educators can do to help ELL students learn to read and succeed in school.
- We hope that educators and parents will use these resources to help their children gain the academic skills they need to succeed in school and beyond, and we’re committed to getting the word out about this resource.

Which language groups does *Colorín Colorado* address?

- Since Spanish is the native language of 80 percent of ELLs, the materials are primarily targeted to Spanish-speaking ELLs. While we are addressing the greatest need first, we hope to develop this project to include other languages.
- We currently offer literacy tip sheets for parents of PreK-3 students who speak the following languages: Vietnamese, Hmong, Chinese, Korean, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Russian, Tagalog, and Navajo

Which grade levels does *Colorín Colorado* target?

- Because the emphasis of the Web site is on reading and building literacy during the pivotal time to develop and strengthen these skills, which are the building blocks for overall academic success, most of the materials are focused on the PreK-3 levels.
- Nonetheless, there is information on the Web site that is useful to parents and educators with students in higher grades. Educators who have ELLs in middle and high school can regularly find information for these age groups in our free e-newsletter, the *Colorín Colorado T.ELL.E-GRAM*. As the site is expanded, educators can expect to find more and more information across the entire PreK-12 spectrum.

How will *Colorín Colorado* affect local communities?

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

Are you saying that educators (your members) are unprepared to teach this population?

- No. We are saying they need more information to be more effective. Every teacher and paraprofessional wants their students to be successful. When the needs of students change, our educators must have access to the resources and tools they need to do their job.
- The educators’ section of *ColorinColorado.org* is about helping teachers and paraprofessionals meet the changing needs of today’s school population.

Many parents lack access to the Internet. How will you reach them?

- We are hoping parents without Internet access at home can access the Web site at their local library, school or local community organizations.

- We need to begin bridging the digital divide, and it's key that families start feeling comfortable using the Internet, whether they have it at home or not. Making helpful Web sites such as *Colorín Colorado* available may increase use.
- All of the information on the site is free and educators are encouraged to print out and distribute the many informational handouts to parents.

Many Spanish-speaking parents cannot communicate with their child's teachers. How will this help?

- *Colorín Colorado* is not designed to overcome all ELL student barriers to success. Nonetheless, it puts parents and educators on the same page and makes them aware of each other's communication challenges and offers help on how to overcome them.
- The Web site provides educators with a customized toolkit on effective outreach to Hispanic parents. It includes useful background information about Hispanic cultures and values, helpful suggestions for involving parents in classroom and school activities, and concrete ideas for parent workshops that focus on PreK-6 literacy development.
- The Web site also emphasizes to parents that they are a key part of their child's educational experience, regardless of their education level, and encourages them to become more involved at their child's school.

Has the AFT been working on this for a while?

- Yes. There is a growing need to reach out to ELL students and parents. *Colorín Colorado* does just that.
- The AFT has always been committed to providing their members with the resources and tools they need to help their students succeed.
- *Colorín Colorado* is the AFT's first professional development effort targeted especially to educators of ELLs.

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

- While material on this subject does exist, there isn't enough of it available to educators and parents or it is expensive.

- *Colorín Colorado* puts up-to-date information from ELL education experts and researchers together in one place, in an extremely easy-to-use format, and it's all free to anyone who wants it!

Is this just for AFT members?

- No, it's free for everyone!

How did WETA and the AFT come to collaborate?

- The American Federation of Teachers had collaborated with WETA in the past and wanted to continue building on the success of the Reading Rockets literacy project - an award-winning national multimedia reading initiative, and the project that *Colorín Colorado* is modeled after.
- Given the popularity and nationwide reach of ReadingRockets.org, LDOnLine.org, and WETA's reputation for excellent and award-winning educational programming, the AFT felt it was a golden opportunity

What's next for *Colorín Colorado*?

- *Colorín Colorado* will continue to produce Webcasts as part of the professional development tools offered on the site. These Webcasts feature top ELL experts, and include PowerPoint presentations, recommended readings, and more. The free Webcasts will be accessible on the site anytime.
- By Spring 2007, *Colorín Colorado* will be redesigned with a search function and other categorizing features to help users find information easier and more readily. It will also include new information and resources. In the meantime, the monthly e-newsletter for educators in English, and bi-monthly e-newsletter for parents in Spanish will continue to be published.