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## Multimedia Review

### *Colorín Colorado:* Diversity and Current Issues Website

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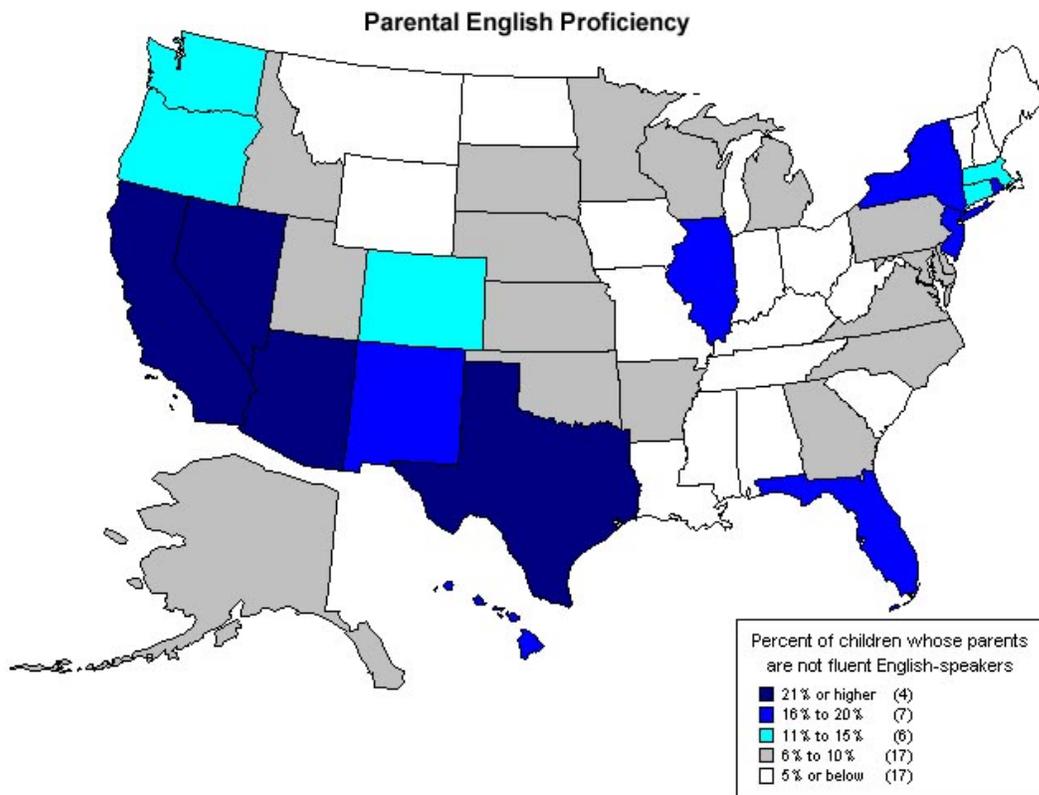
#### *Colorín Colorado* References

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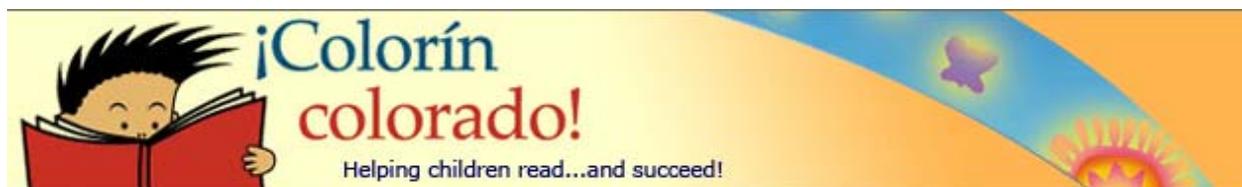
### *Colorín Colorado: Diversity and Current Issues Website*

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>

The U.S. Census Bureau (Research and Markets, 2008) predicted that a quarter of all U.S. citizens will be of Hispanic origin by the year 2050. The current demographic debate focuses on the 12-14 million undocumented immigrants rather than on the educational needs of the 15 million children in immigrant families. Some 10 million of these children are U.S. citizens and entitled to public services, including free appropriate education.



Many children live in households with adults who are not fluent in English. Many PreK-12 students from families with language issues experience academic difficulties confounded by low parental educational attainment and poverty. The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2007) reported (see the map above) that 16 percent of American children live in English Language Learners (ELL) families who are not linguistically integrated. The percentage varies by state: for example, 1 percent in Montana, Vermont, and West Virginia; 25 percent in Arizona; 27 percent in Texas; and 38 percent in California. Addressing the language needs of ELL families should be a priority issue for federal, state, and local educational agencies.



*Colorín Colorado* (<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>), a web-based service, provides free information, activities, and advice for educators and Spanish-speaking families with ELL members. The name "Colorín Colorado" comes from a playful phrase at the end of children's stories in Spanish-speaking countries which suggests a happy ending. *Colorín Colorado* is an educational initiative of WETA, a public television and radio station in Washington, D.C., and receives funding from the American Federation of Teachers, the National Institute for Literacy, and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The website is in English and Spanish and offers an impressive menu of 13 helpful general resources (with drop-down menus) that include:

- Assistance for Educators
- Families
- Books & Authors
- Glossary
- Topics A-Z
- Research and Reports
- Free Guides and Tool Kits
- Learning Store
- Webcasts
- Multimedia
- E-Newsletters
- Web Resources
- Calendar of Events

This bilingual website is designed to improve literacy skills for families and English language teachers and provides more than 750 free resources and links. The drop-down menu under Free Guides and Tool Kits contains a free downloadable 92-page *Toolkit for Teachers: Reaching out to Hispanic Parents of ELLs* with links to supplementary videos. A 16-page *ELL Starter Kit for Educators* provides teachers with tools for monitoring language skills including videos in Spanish, English, and bi-lingual worksheets.

In *Reading Tips for Parents* and *Reading Tips for ELL Educators*, free reading sheets and materials are available in 12 languages – Arabic, Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Navajo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese – for teachers and ELL parents with children from age 2 to 18. The sheets provide 10 tips for developing a love of reading, which emphasize the importance of parents reading to or with their children. Reading Rockets provides an 8-page family guide in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. In the web resources folder, more than 500 current Internet links are searchable by alphabet, audience, topic, and organization. Educators and parents may also find useful four videos, hotlinks to podcasts, video-streaming of educational films, and free subscriptions to four newsletters in Spanish and English. The reading tips for educators, including materials to build vocabulary, are in Spanish and English for grades 4-6 and 7-12. A list of materials has books, articles, and reports which are available for purchase. *Colorín Colorado* is a viable tool to improve literacy skills for families and English language teachers.

The appearance and navigation of the website *Colorín Colorado* is simple, with medium color/text contrast, vertical menus, and the option of switching from English to Spanish. The undersized text can be enlarged using a one-level-grow font control, except in the credits section where the text is a barely legible 9 pixels. All web pages are printer friendly and can be forwarded as emails. The site has a Google custom search for its contents. The homepage does not fully display in common browsers, as the text elements comprise only 65% of the visible page. The site loads in 1 to 2 seconds using Internet Explorer Version 8, Firefox Version 3.0.10, or Opera Version 9.64. A site map available in both English and Spanish uses a low contrasting color. The website has three accessibility errors (Section 508 Standards 1194.22) and 16 functional errors on the homepage. On 25 May, 2009 the *Colorín Colorado* website listed 2008 as the latest copyright year. A monthly newsletter for April 2009 was available for downloading.

## References

- Research and Markets (2008). Hispanic economy in transition: Chapter 1 – population. Retrieved June 4, 2009, from [www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/607864/hispanic\\_economy\\_in\\_transition\\_chapter\\_1](http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/607864/hispanic_economy_in_transition_chapter_1)
- Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2007). Quality counts. Retrieved June 4, 2009, from <http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2007/17shr.us.h26.pdf>