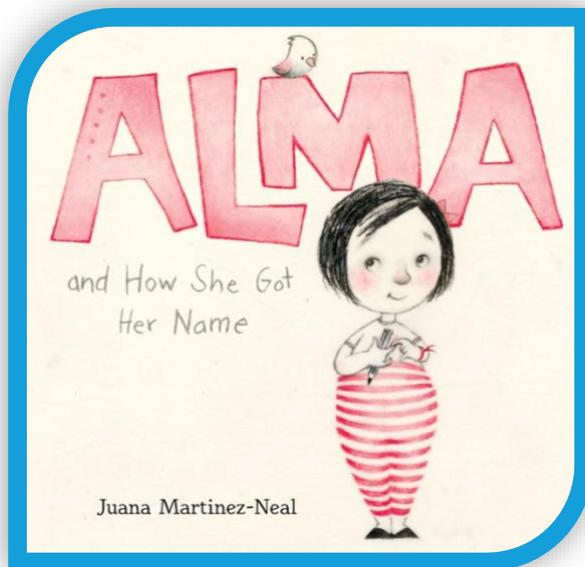




# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

**About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



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## Alma and How She Got Her Name

Juana Martinez-Neal (Author & Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-0763693558

Publisher: Candlewick Press

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 4–8

### Book Themes

Identity, Culture, Importance of names, Family

### About the Book

If you ask her, Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela has way too many names: six! How did such a small person wind up with such a large name? Alma turns to Daddy for an answer and learns about Sofia, the grandmother who loved books and flowers; Esperanza, the great-grandmother who longed to travel; José, the grandfather who was an artist; and other namesakes, too. As she hears the story of her name, Alma starts to think it might be a perfect fit after all—and realizes that she will one day have her own story to tell.

### Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen

thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What is the book about?
- What does Alma think about her name?
- What do you think about your name? What do you know about it? (At this point, you might share something about their name)
- What does Alma learn throughout the book?
- How does Alma feel connected to her relatives and ancestors?
- What do you know about our relatives and ancestors?
- Do you ever think about how you might share some of the same dreams, personality traits and interests as our relatives and ancestors?
- How does Alma feel in the end about her name and how do you know?
- How did you feel when the book ended?
- What do you think is the message of the book?

## Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

### 1. Importance of Names

The book is about a girl named Alma who thinks her name is too long and her father then explains the story of her name, which includes being named after many relatives/ancestors. If you haven't done so previously, tell your child the story and origin of their name and answer any questions they have about it. Explain that the process for how parents/family members name their children is often very special, important and personal to the family, or it may not be. Also, share with your children that there are many different factors that people consider to name their children, including: their cultural and/or religious background, a family/ancestor name, a name with a special meaning, a character in a book or movie, or simply their fondness for the name. Ask your child if they know anything about their friends' or classmates' names and encourage them to ask if they don't know. Also, remind your child that we should never make fun of people's names because of how unique and special names are and because we should not tease people about an aspect of their identity for any reason.

### 2. People, Culture and Diversity

In the book, we learn something about Alma's cultural background as Latina through the story of her name. As you read the book, ask about or point out those elements of culture in the book (e.g., references to names, words in Spanish, spirits, etc.). You can describe culture as "parts of daily life that are seen in food, customs, holidays, music and more that a group of people share." Explain that these aspects of culture are often handed down from one generation to another through relatives and ancestors. They are also sometimes—but not always—connected to their geographic location or country where people's relatives originally came from. Talk with your child about the aspects of culture(s) that are important in your family. Explain how you would define your family's culture(s),

and together identify what foods, holidays, customs, naming traditions, etc. are important to your family. Your family may connect with more than one culture or may not have a strong cultural identity, and that can also be discussed as well. Talk with your child about what they know and don't know about their culture, what they may have found out about their culture from you (their parent), grandparents or other relatives; what more they want to know and the questions they can ask in order to learn more. You may also want to highlight other people in your life (your child's friends and family friends) who have similar or different cultures from your own. Stress that culture is part of who we are but not all of who we are.

### 3. Relatives and Ancestors

In addition to learning the story of her name, Alma also learns about her relatives and ancestors (e.g., her grandmother loved books and flowers; her great-grandmother loved to travel; her other grandmother stood up for important causes) and how she shares some of their interests and passions. Ask your child what they know about different relatives and ancestors in your family and what they might want to know, but don't. If you haven't already, talk with your child about the relatives and ancestors in your family—including their personalities, passions and dreams—and identify how you and your child might share commonalities with them and how you might not. Make the point that we come from a lineage of ancestors and they are part of us, even though we also have differences from them and have our own passions and personalities.

### Other Books You May Like

*René Has Two Last Names* by Rene Colato Lainez, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/rene-has-two-last-names](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/rene-has-two-last-names)

*The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-name-jar](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-name-jar)

*Thunder Boy Jr.* by Sherman Alexie, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/thunder-boy-jr](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/thunder-boy-jr)

### ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on people, identity and culture.

#### Curriculum Resources

Who Am I? Identity Poems, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems).

#### Websites

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

[www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-and-bullying](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-and-bullying)

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

### National Hispanic Heritage Month

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/national-hispanic-heritage-month](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/national-hispanic-heritage-month)

A collection of ADL resources to help educators and students understand and celebrate the achievements, contributions, culture and history of Hispanic and Latino-Americans.

### Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources)

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

### The Question Corner: Early Childhood FAQs

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner)

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children.

### Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk)

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources. See [Table Talk: Why We Need Diverse Books](#).

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity & Culture, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid\[201\]=201&tid\[202\]=202&tid\[203\]=203&tid\[204\]=204&tid\[205\]=205&tid\[206\]=206&tid\[207\]=207&tid\[208\]=208&tid\[209\]=209&tid\[210\]=210&tid\[211\]=211&tid\[212\]=212&tid\[213\]=213&tid\[214\]=214&tid\[215\]=215](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid[201]=201&tid[202]=202&tid[203]=203&tid[204]=204&tid[205]=205&tid[206]=206&tid[207]=207&tid[208]=208&tid[209]=209&tid[210]=210&tid[211]=211&tid[212]=212&tid[213]=213&tid[214]=214&tid[215]=215)

People, Identity & Culture: Latino/Hispanic, Latino-American, Hispanic-American, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[210\]=210](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[210]=210)