

# Familia Living

*Boca Beth is Mija Magazine's product pick!*



Boca the Puppet with its creator, Beth Butler

## BETH BUTLER: THE PASSIONATE CREATOR OF THE BOCA BETH PROGRAM

When Beth Butler starts talking - in English or Spanish - about teaching kids a new language, watch out. Her enthusiasm is positively contagious! This delightful bilingual teacher and mom has created a system for teaching Spanish to English-speaking little ones - and English to Spanish-speaking little ones - that is succeeding in making bilingual education as parent-friendly as pre-mixed formula and paper diapers.

Beth Butler is the creator of the BOCA BETH Program - a bilingual educational program geared towards helping young children get a head start on becoming bilingual. She motivates and assists educators in developing a bilingual environment for children, and she has developed a program that makes bilingual education a fun and easy part of the normal, child-raising routine for today's parents.

Starting when babies are born, and designed to work for children through age eight, Beth Butler's program provides the tools and techniques to motivate and stimulate in a home atmosphere where learning language is part of what makes life a joy for everyone. Her DVDs/videos, music CDs, flashcards and soon-to-be-released computer software engage every age child with puppet fun, music, movement and creativity.

Having lived in both Chile and Mexico, Beth has had Spanish as a second language for over 27 years. Beth Received an Honors BA degree in elementary education from Stetson University in Florida. She also spent over 12 years in the classroom, teaching kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade. While setting up listening centers in her classrooms, she started making her own audio-cassette tapes to teach Spanish and English side-by-side to her students. Teacher Beth noticed that the children in her classroom responded wonderfully to this side-by-side instruction, which is more formally known as the bilingual approach to language development. She began to understand that she had stumbled upon something truly extraordinary.

The daughter of a restaurant owner, Beth logically became the general manager of a high profile restaurant while she pursued her teaching career. She maintained contact in preschools locally as "Ms. Music", going into local preschools and conducting music and movement classes during the mornings and working in the restaurant by night.

Ten-plus years in the classroom gave her a wealth of added experience. Meanwhile, she married and had her own children.

Living in Tampa, Florida, with her husband, Dennis, and three children, Mitchell



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Living in Tampa, Florida, with her husband, Dennis, and three children, Mitchell, Matt and Megan, Beth was profoundly affected by the horrific events of September 11, 2001. She concluded that what she really needed to do was to spend more time at home with her family. This meant leaving a secure, high-paying job with a nationally known restaurant group. But it also gave her a chance to put into action with her own children the concept she had pioneered during her Ms. Music classes. And thus the BOCA BETH Program was born!

Now a full-time work-at-home mom, Beth is enjoying the best of both worlds. She was delighted to trade the long hours away from home and family for her two greatest passions: – spending time with her own children and developing the BOCA BETH Program for bilingual education.

Over the last six years, word of her program has spread. A vibrant and articulate speaker, Beth Butler is frequently called upon as a keynoter. She has addressed educational conferences including Project Child Care, Manatee County, Florida; Pinellas Early Childhood Association, Clearwater, Florida; and Florida Family Child Care Home Association, Annual State Conference. She is a also member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and local affiliates, Florida Family Child Care Home Association and Florida Children's Forum, as well as a devoted advocate for women who run businesses from home.

Beth's little puppet, Boca, is a frequent guest of honor in many a classroom. "It's hard for me to turn down an invitation," she says. "No matter how often I do it, I still get an incredible thrill out of watching little children respond to Boca and start learning new words in a new language without even realizing they're doing it. The learning capacity of small children cannot be overestimated," she said. "And I have to believe that raising the next generation bilingually can only contribute positively to creating a better world, a world where communication between peoples and compassion for other cultures can thrive."

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