

A is for Amazing

# JOY FUL

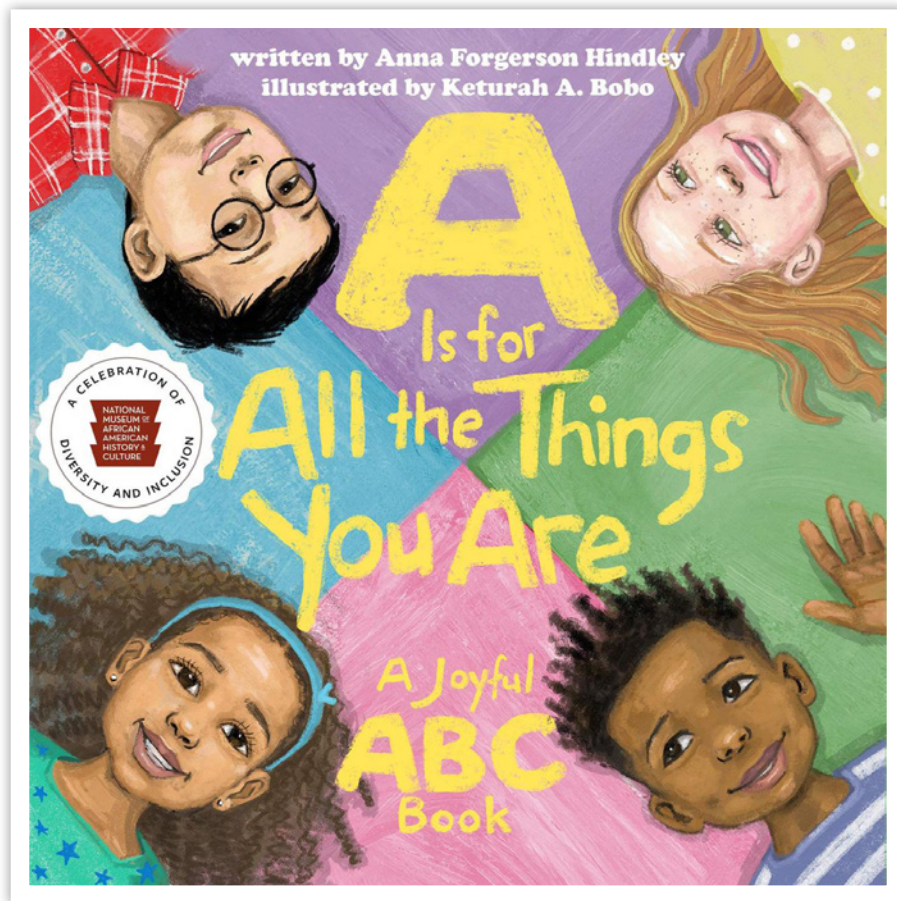


**A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK**

INFANT AND TODDLER EDITION

Brought to you by the National Museum of African American History and Culture Early Childhood Education Initiative.  
Inspired by the children's book, A is for All The Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book written by Anna Forgerson Hindley  
and illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo, ©2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC.

Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.



*A is for All the Things You Are* was written to affirm our children and empower them to see themselves as many things at once – daring and loving, creative and just, amazing and zany – and everything in between. The book offers wonderful opportunities for conversations with children to build their vocabularies, strengthen their sense of self and deepen their joy in and acceptance of human diversity. The illustrations allow them to see not only themselves but others in the same positive light as well. By seeing positive images of children of different colors, genders, abilities, classes, and other social identities, we nurture the child's comfort and joy in human diversity so deep caring connections can be made across humanity.

Each activity booklet offers suggestions of how to begin the lifelong work of having a positive sense of self and others with your infant or toddler, how to support their language development and how to build the foundations of literacy.

A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book  
 © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC (artwork)  
 © 2018 Smithsonian Institution (text)

# A is for Amazing:

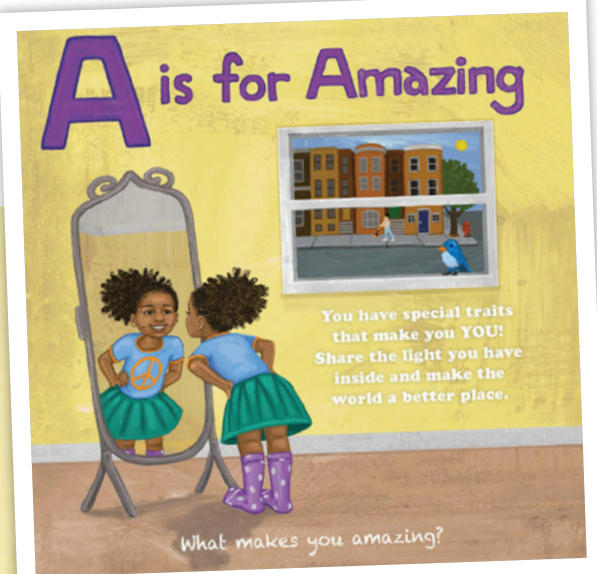
**You have special traits that make you YOU!**

Share the light you have inside and make the world a better place.

## What makes you amazing?

**A is for amazing.** Our little ones are amazing from the moment they are born. They are curious about everything they see and hear. They keep growing, trying and stretching what they can do. They work hard to express themselves with sounds before they have words. They accept love as their right, and give it back with smiles before they can even hold their heads up. Amazing is a word that tells a child, *“You are wonderful, astonishing, impressive – just as you are. The world is a better place because you are in it.”*

As you go through the week, find new ways to describe what makes your child amazing, makes other people in your lives amazing, and what makes you amazing. It’s powerful for your child to hear you naming your positive traits, too! Use the three simple experiences in this booklet to practice teaching your child that who they are matters while also giving them the vocabulary to understand the world and to feel proud of themselves.



A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book  
© 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC (artwork)  
© 2018 Smithsonian Institution (text)

## What You'll Need:

The following supplies are suggested for the experiences in this booklet.

- Mirror
- Hairbrush or Mixing Spoon
- Music playing device (like a phone, radio or computer)



# EXPLORE

In early childhood, children learn best through doing! To explore this week's theme, try the experience below with your infant.

## Building Self-Love through Mirror Play

**Designed for:** Infants (3 months to walking)

**What you'll need:** Large or handheld mirror

**Support your little ones' love of themselves!** Starting from infancy, children will receive many external messages about what their appearance says about them. Giving them a delightful vocabulary to describe themselves helps to combat negative messages the larger world may give them. Mirror time offers your baby an opportunity to see who they are and what they can do. As they become familiar with their own image, you can give them empowering words about how they look (including their hair, skin, nose, mouth, and other outside features).

➔ To get started, bring a large mirror low to the floor so that your baby can see themselves while on their tummy or sitting up. (Be sure to secure the mirror so it won't tip over. You can also use a handheld mirror.) Touch their nose - then, touch the reflection of their nose in the mirror. Make sniffing sounds and find words to describe the sweet little nose they use to smell. Touch and describe their hair while you both look in the mirror with smiles. Choose words to describe the color of your baby's soft, lovely skin and say them with love. If the mirror is big enough for both of your faces, describe how you look alike and different - and how wonderful that is!



# EXPLORE

Explore this week's theme with your infant or toddler by trying this engaging experience inspired by our museum collection.

## Self-Expression through Words and Sounds

**Designed for:** Infants and Toddlers

**What you'll need:** Mixing spoon or small hair brush

Oprah Winfrey has supported so many people to express what makes themselves and others amazing. This microphone was used on The Oprah Winfrey Show, where she and guests talked about everything from politics and pop culture to relationships and life experiences. Without a wire, the microphone could be shared easily, giving guests and audience members an opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and opinions.



[Wireless Gold Microphone](#)

Used on The Oprah Winfrey Show

Grab a mixing spoon or hairbrush and turn it into a microphone! Invite babies to make sounds into the “microphone” and show delight in what you hear. Then, mimic their sounds into the “microphone.”

Show your toddler the microphone above and explain how microphones make voices very loud. Then, practice singing or talking together into your “microphone” with different volumes – from a whispered voice to a loud shout! Talk about how it felt for them to say something loudly or quietly.

# EXPLORE

Explore this week's theme with your toddler by trying this engaging experience inspired by our museum collection.

## Self-Expression through Movement

**Designed for:** Toddlers (walking to 2 ½)

**What you'll need:** Safe, open space for movement and a music playing device (like a phone, radio or computer)

**What can your amazing body do?** Children express their feelings and who they are by moving their bodies in unique and wonderful ways - even before they have words to use. Starting in infancy, you can give children words to describe what their bodies do now and what they will be able to do in the future. Our celebration of the amazing ways children physically do things or persist after mistakes, builds their confidence and willingness to try increasingly difficult things. Together, try out these movements and celebrate as you go:



[Portrait of Three Children by Jack Mitchell](#)

Look closely at the photograph with your toddler. Ask: *What do you see? (Describe what you notice, count the children and mimic their poses.) What are the children doing? How do you think they feel? Can you show a happy dance move and a calm dance move?*

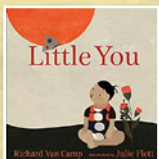
Play a song and dance together! Move your body to the beat of the music. Jump as high as you can! Raise your hands high and wave them side to side. Talk about how it feels to make those different movements. Mention how each of you moves differently. Tell your little one: *We are all the same! Everyone has a body. We are all different! Everyone moves differently and has differently shaped bodies. That's amazing!*



# EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

## Books about Sense of Self



### Little You

by Richard Van Camp,  
illustrated by Julie Flett



### The Wonderful Things You Will Be

by Emily Winfield Martin

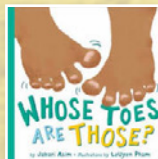


### Who Will You Be?

by Andrea Pippins

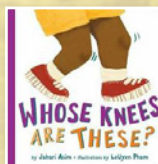
As characters in the pictures move, invite your little one to do the same!

## Books about Bodies



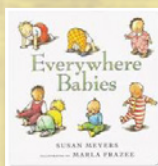
### Whose Toes Are Those?

by Jabari Asim,  
illustrated by LeUyen Pham



### Whose Knees Are These?

by Jabari Asim,  
illustrated by LeUyen Pham



### Everywhere Babies

by Susan Meyers,  
illustrated by Marla Frazee

When you read about body parts, invite or help your child to point to or move their own.

### Tip:

Use your favorite search engine to find read-aloud videos online!

## Online Resources

Discover more ways to support the development of your child's positive sense of self with the online resources below.



[You Are Special](#) - **Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood** ... Share this classic song to tell your child how special they are!



[Ne-Yo Sings "You've Got a Body"](#) - **Sesame Street**... Sing and dance along with Ne-Yo and Sesame Street friends to tell the world about all the amazing ways your little one's body can move!

# CONNECT

## A Guide for Families and Caregivers

### Why do these experiences matter?

A child's identity is both internally constructed and externally imposed. They learn who they are and how they are valued from the words and actions of others and from the way they do or don't make sense of those messages. Their beloved adults (that's you!) are the most important people in their world. The words you give a child to describe themselves and others have lasting power in their lives. When a child has the words to think about their strengths and their worth, they can sort through negative messages and hold on to their sense of being loveable and capable. The experiences in this booklet are invitations for you to use objects, activities and words to support your child's positive identity development, their fascination with how people are both different and the same, and their ability to read emotions and build empathy. In time, experiences like these will also support your child's ability to recognize unfairness or unkindness and to stand up for themselves and others.

### What about supporting language development and getting ready to read?

Alphabets, in and of themselves, are not particularly interesting to young children. However, learning letter-filled words to describe the world around them and inside of them (their feelings, experiences and senses) are very interesting to children! Discovering new words, new ways to say things and new ways to think is exciting and essential to a child's literacy and identity development.

In the first three years of life, early language and literacy skills are best learned through everyday moments. The experiences in these booklets invite you to boost your child's literacy through talking, playing and creating together in fun and accessible ways. Some experiences will guide you in helping your infant or toddler "name the universe" with descriptive words for the actions and emotions of themselves and others. Other experiences will encourage you to point out written words and look closely at objects to provide your little one with the beginning connections between the real world, reading and talking.

Every child's path to literacy is different and valid - just like their identity. The experiences in these booklets aim to support you and your child along their unique journey to literacy and a positive sense of self. **Remember to have fun along the way!**

## Credits

### Objects

- Portrait of three children by Jack Mitchell, ca. 1960. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, © Jack Mitchell, All Rights Reserved. [2016.83.2](#)
- Gold wireless microphone used on The Oprah Winfrey Show, 2009. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Oprah Winfrey. [2014.324.3.1](#)

### Program Photos

- Doug Sanford, National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2019

### Original Artwork

- Rowhouses (page 2), Bluebird (cover, page 5); © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC