C is for Creative

JOYFUL

A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK
EARLY LEARNERS EDITION - AGES 3 TO 5

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.

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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. In exploring ideas such as fairness, kindness, open-mindedness and being vocal, children begin the task of recognizing injustice and knowing how to stand up for themselves and others.

Each activity booklet offers suggestions of how to begin the lifelong work of having a positive sense of self and others with your early learner, how to support their language development and how to build the foundations of literacy.
C is for Creative:

You can express yourself in many ways:
Dance! Sing! Paint! Clap your hands! Tell a story!

What is your favorite way to be creative?

Though many of us were taught that only some people are creative, creativity is a basic human characteristic. Creativity is the act of doing something directed by an inner voice, not decided from the outside. The joy of being creative is in the process, the doing, more than in the product. Like many words in this ABC series, “creative” focuses on building a child’s deep inner strength which is needed to help them navigate a still unjust world. In a society where children are almost always being evaluated, judged, and graded - creative work is playful and richly rewarding.

Creativity doesn’t have to “make sense” or portray anyone’s idea of how things ought to be. Use your child’s creative expression as an opportunity to ask about the emotions and thoughts behind their work rather than saying, “That’s so pretty” or “Good job”. Make observations that show you have really paid attention and care. Saying, “I love seeing what you can do.” is more encouraging than, “You got it right.” or “I like it.”

Creative children can create more just and inclusive communities as they are less likely to presume people should all look or behave alike. They also develop wonderful conflict resolution skills because they often see solutions others don’t think of. Encourage your child to make creative choices in everyday moments of art and play and watch the way their creativity will impact the world.

What You’ll Need:

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

- Costumes, children and adult clothes, shoes, hats and scarves
- A music playing device, instruments or noise making items (like pots and pans with wooden spoons)
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- 2 Large pieces of thick paper (like cardstock, construction paper or thin cardboard)
- Photographs of your child dancing (or pictures cut from magazines)
- Glue stick

Tip:
Build an at-home creativity kit full of all the supplies and recycled materials you’ll need for future ABC art and play activities. Find the supplies list here!
EXPLORE

In early childhood, children learn best through doing! Explore this week’s theme with your child by trying this engaging experience inspired by our museum collection.

Get Creative with Clothes, Music and Dance

What You’ll Need

- Costumes, children and adult clothes, shoes, hats and scarves
- A music playing device, instruments or noise making items

Design a creative performance! One of the many ways people share their creativity with others is through performances like plays, concerts and dance shows. Our imaginations can be shown by the outfits and costumes we wear, the music we sing and the ways we move our bodies. Put on some simple costumes and dance together!

1. Gather clothing to help your child create their own costume just as they like it. Talk about how much fun it is rather than how pretty or nice the costume is.

2. Next, play some music! Do you enjoy listening to music that is soft and slow or loud and fast? Do you choose voices or instruments?

3. Now, add some dance moves! Move slow, then fast. Reach high, then low. Dance with just your hands, then just your head! Move stiffly then smoothly.

4. Once your child feels comfortable dancing, take photos (or videos) to look at with them and put words to their movements. Describe their bodies as strong, beautiful, busy and graceful.

Tip:

Remember not to judge your child’s dancing, just enjoy. Ask questions: What was that like? What can we do differently next time? Invite your child to teach you their dance moves. Be delighted in your child’s creativity!
CREATE

Create art inspired by this week’s theme!

Create a Performance Poster

What You’ll Need:

• Markers, crayons or colored pencils
• 1 - 2 Large pieces of thick paper
• Photographs of your child dancing (or pictures cut from magazines)
• Glue stick

Share your creativity! Once your child has become comfortable dancing with you and for their own gratification, choose a time where a small audience of loved ones can watch and support your child as they perform. Make your own “performance hall” by setting up chairs or a couch for the audience. Then, work with your child to create a poster that tells others about the performance and invites them to enjoy the show!

1. Look at the details of dancer Josephine Baker’s performance poster. A poster for a performance is usually decorated with the dancer’s name and picture and the performance date, time and place. What words and images do you want on your poster?

2. Using markers and crayons, decorate 1 - 2 posters with drawings or photos of yourself or other dancers and information about the show. The poster can be as detailed or simple as you like. Use your creativity!

3. Be sure to add your name and the word “dancer”. (For children that aren’t writing yet, help by writing the words and spelling them aloud as you go.)

4. Hang the posters somewhere in your home and invite anyone - from family and friends to pets, toys and imaginary guests - to come see the performance.

5. Caregivers and audience: Remember to acknowledge their courage and creativity! Applaud. Snap! Cheer. Ask for an autograph!
LETTERS & LITERACY

Invite your child to take part in the following experiences to support your child’s literacy and language skills.

Like dancing, songwriting and singing provide adults and children alike with opportunities to creatively share different emotions, ideas and experiences. See how songs can also be used to support your child’s literacy development with the experiences below.

Learn Letters

Invite your child to talk about their favorite things like colors, books, sounds, hobbies or foods.

Identify any words your child has shared that start with the letter C. Focus on the hard letter C sound as heard in cat, cartoon and cucumber. When you say “cat” focus on the C and say “c-c-cat.” Try this with every C word. Sing aloud some of these C words and the names of other favorite things!

Saying words or making letter sounds in unique ways helps children with remembering and pronouncing new words and sounds.

Boost Literacy

With your child, imagine a story inspired by one of their favorite things. As your little one starts telling their story, write down what they are saying. Be sure to show them what you are writing. It is important to show children that their thoughts can be written.
EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

Books

Keep the dancing, singing and music-making going with the books below!

I Got the Rhythm
by Connie Schofield Morrison,
illustrated by Frank Morrison

How Do You Dance?
By Thyra Heder

Violet’s Music
by Angela Johnson,
illustrated by Laura Huliska-Beith

Hip-Hop Lollipop
by Susan McElroy Montanari,
illustrated by Brian Pinkney

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

Online Resources

Support your child in exploring the many ways to be an artist.

Terry Crews is an Artist - Sesame Street

Sesame Street: Not Just One Way to Make Art - Sesame Street

Supporting the Development of Creativity - NAEYC

Meaningful Art Projects Parents Can Fit Into A Busy Day - NAEYC
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.

The developmental path to reading is a child’s understanding that, “Anything I do or see, I can say! Anything I say can be written! Anything written can be read!” Many booklet experiences will encourage you to engage in conversations about objects and during story times to deepen your child’s connection to spoken and written words. Other experiences will invite you to build literacy skills by writing down what your child says, feels or thinks and reading it back to them aloud. Some booklets will introduce fun ways to boost fine motor skills that contribute to a child’s writing and reading abilities. The booklets will also recommend books that intrigue children by illustrating the rich diversity of people in the world and providing them with a mirror to their own lives or a window into other lives.

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

Original Artwork
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