

D is for Daring



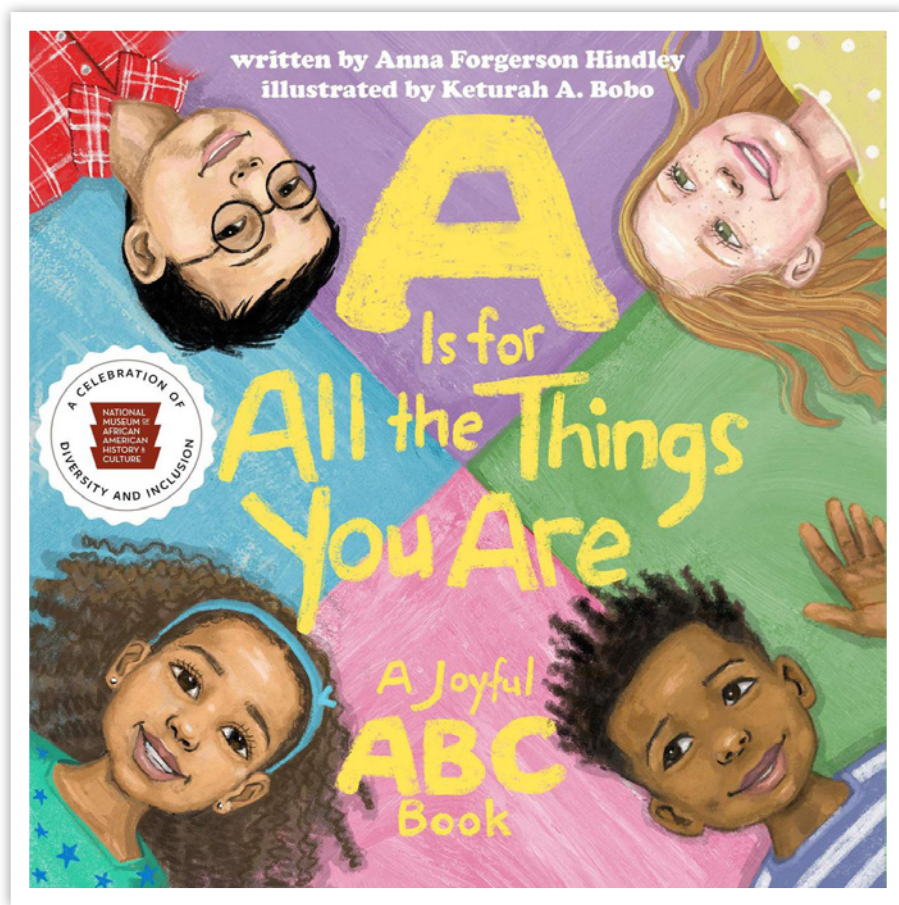
# JOY FUL

**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 Forgeron 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. 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.*

A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book  
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# D is for Daring:

When you try something new or take a chance, you are daring yourself to be brave, to learn, to be strong. **Keep going!**

## When have you been daring?

Daring is a little like “Brave.” But while brave is about conquering fear, daring is about taking risks. It’s the feeling that propels your child to try going down the slide with arms in the air – just because it’s more exciting that way. It’s the drive that keeps a child getting back up onto the tricycle after falling off, just because it feels so good to move yourself on wheels. When children are able to experiment with self-motivated actions, make mistakes, fall down, and find out they can get up and try again, they learn to judge their own capacities and get better and better at assessing danger.

“Safe daring” happens when children select their own activity and adults provide the smallest amount of assistance possible to let the child work through it on their own. Observing and commenting, rather than warning, praising or pushing, encourages a child to think about what they are doing and weigh the risks with the benefits and joys. Saying, “Wow! You’re climbing UP the slide and holding on to the rails to pull you up. Is anyone at the top trying to come down?” gives encouragement and information without passing on fear and lack of trust in the child’s capacities. As children get older, this ability to push their bodies and stretch their minds becomes an important skill set for overcoming barriers they will encounter internally and externally, physically and socially.

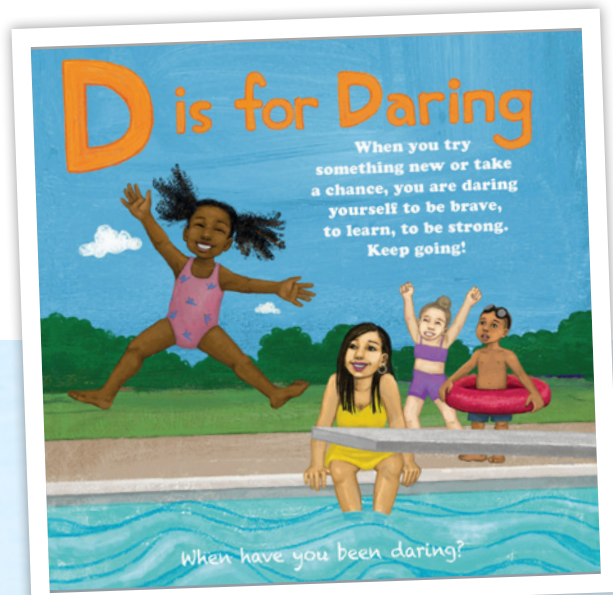
## What You’ll Need:

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

- Painters tape or chalk
- Paper
- Scissors
- Pencil or pen
- Markers or crayons
- 1 Drinking cup
- Ribbon, yarn or string
- 3D Materials (optional)
- Glue stick (optional)
- Kitchen tongs or cooking spoon

### 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!](#)



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# 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.

## Daring Bodies

### What You'll Need

- Painters tape or chalk

Some people we admire for being daring are athletes. Sometimes when athletes first learn about their sport, they may feel uncertain about trying something new but they do it anyways - they're daring!

Gabby Douglas is a gymnast who boldly [balances, flips and jumps on beams](#). Simone Manuel is a swimmer who can [jump into a pool and swim underwater](#) confidently. It took a lot of practice to do those amazing things! Even though they may have been unsure or made a lot of mistakes at first, they dared to do it, to try again and to do their best. You can do hard things too when you dare to keep going!



▲ Gabby wore this leotard the first time she competed in gymnastics.

▶ Simone wore this swimsuit the first time she won a gold medal for swimming.

Talk about the first time you did something. How did it feel? This week dare to **balance and jump** like **Gabby and Simone**:

### Balance Like Gabby Douglas!

Place a long straight line of tape on the floor. Practice walking along the line while holding your arms out to your sides to help you balance. Then, try hopping! Can you keep your feet on the line?

### Jump Like Simone Manuel!

- 1 Create a path of "Xs" using tape on the floor that your little one can easily follow.
- 2 Challenge your little one to jump like they're diving from X to X by holding their arms above their head and bending forwards.

For an extra challenge, find a playground with a real balance beam and take your "diving" outdoors to jump from safe heights.

# CREATE

Create art inspired by this week's theme!

## Courage Medal Art

**Give yourself a medal.** Every time you do something new or take a chance, you're being daring. Whether speaking up for what's right, trying new food or taking the training wheels off of your bike, you're being daring - and that's worthy of celebration!

Celebrate your everyday daring moments by creating your own medals.

### What You'll Need:

- Paper
- Scissors
- Pencil or pen
- Markers or crayons
- 1 Drinking cup
- Ribbon, yarn or string
- 3D Materials (optional)
- Glue stick (optional)



Runner [Carl Lewis](#) and his team celebrated winning gold medals for running and jumping.

### Grown-ups:

- 1 To start, trace a circle onto a piece of paper using a pencil and a cup and cut it out. This will be a medal.
- 2 Carefully, use a pencil tip to add a small hole at the top of the circle to string a piece of ribbon through.
- 3 Cut a piece of ribbon that is long enough to be a necklace.



### Early Learners:

- 1 Use markers and crayons to decorate one side of the circle. For extra flair or sparkle, glue on sequins or pieces of foil.
- 2 On the other side, you can leave space for writing down your daring act later.
- 3 Pull pre-cut ribbon through the hole and tie the ends in a knot.
- 4 The next time you do something daring, award yourself with this medal! Ask someone to write down the wonderful, daring thing you did. Wear your medal for the day or hang up your medal collection in your home. Each time you see your medal you'll remember how daring you are!



# LETTERS & LITERACY

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

Did you know that development of children's finger mobility and hand-eye coordination are critical parts of their early literacy development too? Hand strength, flexibility, and coordination allow a child to hold books and writing utensils and eventually write letters.

## What You'll Need

- Marker
- Rubber Glove
- Scissors
- Water
- Small, floating toys
- Kitchen tongs or cooking spoon



## Finger Puppet Gymnastics

Draw little faces on the tips of a rubber glove's fingers. Then, cut off the glove's fingers to create 1 - 5 mini finger puppets for your child to put over their own fingers. (Alternatively, you could draw faces directly onto your child's fingers!) Start the activity by placing a finger puppet on a pointer finger. Invite your little one to imagine their puppet is a little gymnast balancing along windowsills, jumping from surface to surface or flipping in the air. Building your child's finger strength will build their writing skills!

## Water Play

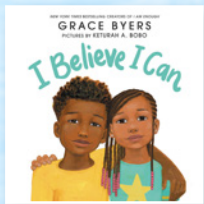
Fill a bathtub, sink or plastic bin with water and small floating items like toys. Next, invite your little one to use a pair of kitchen tongs to pick up the items and take them out of the water. Then, try scooping out the items with a large cooking spoon or ladle. This activity boosts a child's hand-eye coordination but also strengthens the muscles they can later use to turn pages in a book or hold a writing utensil.

# EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

## Books

While reading the books below, be sure to share your own childhood stories about your first time doing something new too.



### **I Believe I Can**

by Grace Byers,  
illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo



### **Jabari Jumps**

by Gaia Cornwall



### **The Thing That Lou Couldn't Do**

by Ashley Spires



### **If I Never Forever Endeavor**

by Holly Meade

Tip:

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

## Online Resources

Sing along with Sesame Street friends to remind your little one that daring to do something new isn't easy - and that's okay!

★ [Bruno Mars Sings "Don't Give Up"](#) - Sesame Street

★ [It's Harder The First Time](#) - Sesame Street

★ [Oops! Whoops! Wait, Ah ha! Song](#) - Sesame Street

# 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

- Olympic swim suit worn by Simone Manuel at the 2016 Olympics, 2016. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Simone Ashley Manuel. [2018.99.2ab](#)
- Leotard worn by Gabby Douglas during her first competitive season, 2003. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Gabrielle Douglas. [2013.12.1](#)
- Photograph of Carl Lewis with his fourth gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics, unidentified photographer, 1984. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Carl Lewis Estate. [2012.154.32](#)

### Program Photo

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

### Original Artwork

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