

D is for Daring



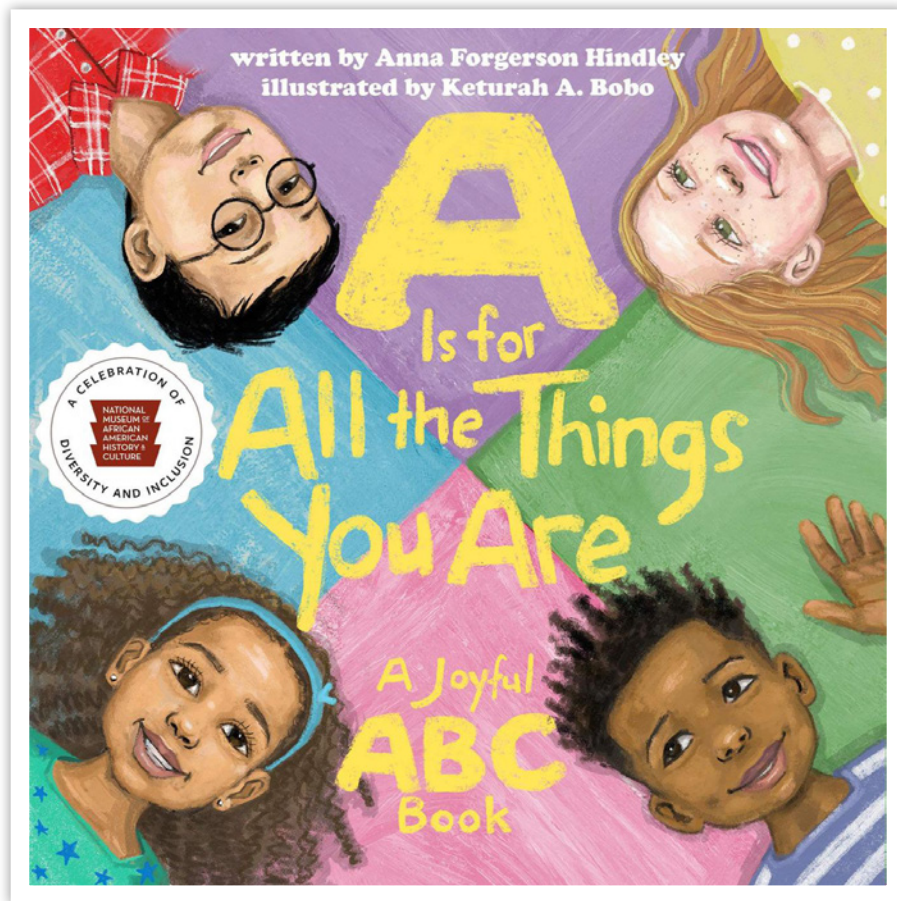
# JOY FUL

**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 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.

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  
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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?

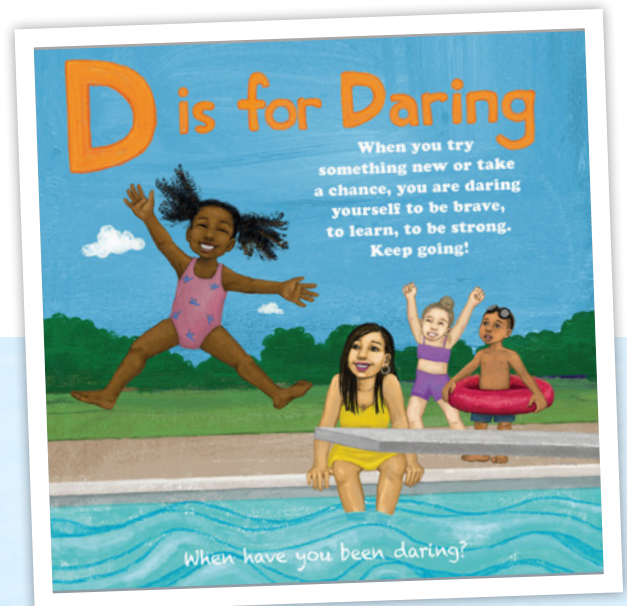
Being daring is connected to being brave, yet is different. Bravery is facing something that is frightening or worrisome. Daring is trying something that might be risky or become frightening, but is still inviting and interesting. For little ones, figuring out how to crawl up stairs (or travel down on your bottom) is daring. Pushing the spoon off the table just to see what sound it makes – is daring. Climbing up the slide while your feet slip around underneath you is not only exciting and energizing but it also takes concentration, skill and a daring attitude!

As children grow, the ability to push their own limits and stretch their minds and bodies becomes an important skill set for overcoming a variety of barriers they will encounter in the future. Saying, “Wow! You’re climbing UP the slide and holding onto 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. If their beloved adults (that’s you) help them to weigh the dangers and figure them out - rather than stopping or scolding them or transmitting our fear for their safety – children develop the joyful gift of knowing their own internal limits while daringly and courageously expanding their capacities.

## What You’ll Need:

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

- Miscellaneous items (toys, patterned socks, keys, etc.)
- Yarn, ribbon or string
- Tape or chalk



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# EXPLORE

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

## Supporting Your Infant to Dare

**Designed for:** Infants

**What you'll need:** Miscellaneous items, yarn, ribbon or string

**Dare to reach!** Babies are naturally daring. They dare to shout when everyone else is silent. They dare to scoot their bodies even though they are wobbly. They dare to pull themselves up in their crib. They dare to attempt new things every day. Encourage this daring nature often by providing them with experiences that encourage them to test their abilities and keep trying.

In this reaching play experience, you'll encourage your little one to keep reaching towards their goals! Gather a collection of clean, visually interesting items like:

- Soft toys
- Keys
- Colorful hair ties or headbands
- Patterned washcloths or socks
- Noise making items (like bells, crunchy tissue paper or pasta in a container)
- Plastic bangle bracelets or other similar items



*Father Figure: Untitled by Zun Lee*



Begin by tying these small items to the ends of yarn, ribbon or string. Then, while your baby is in a comfortable position sit or stand above or in front of them.

Hold an item on a string and dangle it above or in front of them at a distance that would encourage them to reach. (Babies younger than 3 months may not be able to reach just yet but can begin to track and focus on items with their eyes.) At times, slowly bring the items closer or move them farther away. After a few tries, allow your little one to grasp the object and explore!

**Remember that all items should be played with under adult supervision to prevent injury or choking hazards.**

# EXPLORE

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

## Daring to Step Forward

**Designed for:** Toddlers

**What you'll need:** A pair of big and little shoes, tape or string



[Boots, sneakers, and heels](#)

Before beginning this activity, gather a pair of your shoes and your child's shoes. Next, choose a shoe or two from the museum collection to look at closely and try this:

- Talk about ways that your shoes and feet are the same and different.
- Put a pair on your hands and show them moving forward or jumping.
- Model putting on your shoes and help your little one put on theirs. Talk about the wonderful ways their feet can move!

**Learning to move their bodies in new ways are some of a toddler's most daring actions!** Whether they are taking those first wobbly steps, bolting quickly into a big, open space or attempting to climb furniture, they are courageously stepping into a new way of being themselves. Spend time nurturing their daring spirit by facilitating experiences, like the one below, that help to develop their gross motor skills in unique ways.

Place a long straight line of tape or string on the floor. (If you're outdoors, try making a line with chalk or found items.) Model walking along the line and invite your little one to join you. For emerging walkers, have your child hold onto your fingertips to encourage independence. For confident walkers, try hopping! Can you keep your feet on the line?

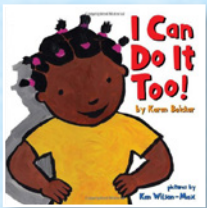
For an extra challenge, make zigzag lines, wavy lines and wild lines to follow - or create lines that lead to different spots around your home. Invite little ones who crawl to explore the lines too!

# EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

## Books

Encourage everyday bravery and confidence with these fun books!



### I Can Do It Too!

by Karen Baicker

illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max



### Whose Shoes?

by Babs Bell Hajdusiewicz



### Babies On The Go!

by Debby Slier



### Splash!

by Roberta Grobel Intrater

Tip:

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

## Online Resources

Learn how fear is a natural part of early childhood and discover ways to support your child to be daring in everyday moments.

★ [Steps Towards Crawling -Zero To Three](#)

★ [Childhood Fears - Zero To Three](#)

★ [Nothing to Fear but Fear Itself: Responding to Toddlers Fears - Zero To Three](#)

# 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

- *Father Figure: Untitled* by Zun Lee, ca. 2012. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Zun Lee, © Zun Lee. [2016.52.10](#)
- Red, white, yellow, and blue Nike sneakers worn by Big Boi of Outkast, 2005–06. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Antwan Patton. [2016.121.4ab](#)
- Costume boots worn by Carl Hall as the Wizard in *The Wiz* on Broadway, ca. 1977. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of the Black Fashion Museum founded by Lois K. Alexander-Lane. [2007.3.8.4ab](#)
- Pair of black stiletto heel shoes by Charles Jourdan from Mae's Millinery Shop, 20th century. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Donna Limerick. [2016.48.104ab](#)

### Original Artwork

- Bluebird (cover, page 4), Jumping child (page 3); © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC