

G is for Grateful

JOY FUL

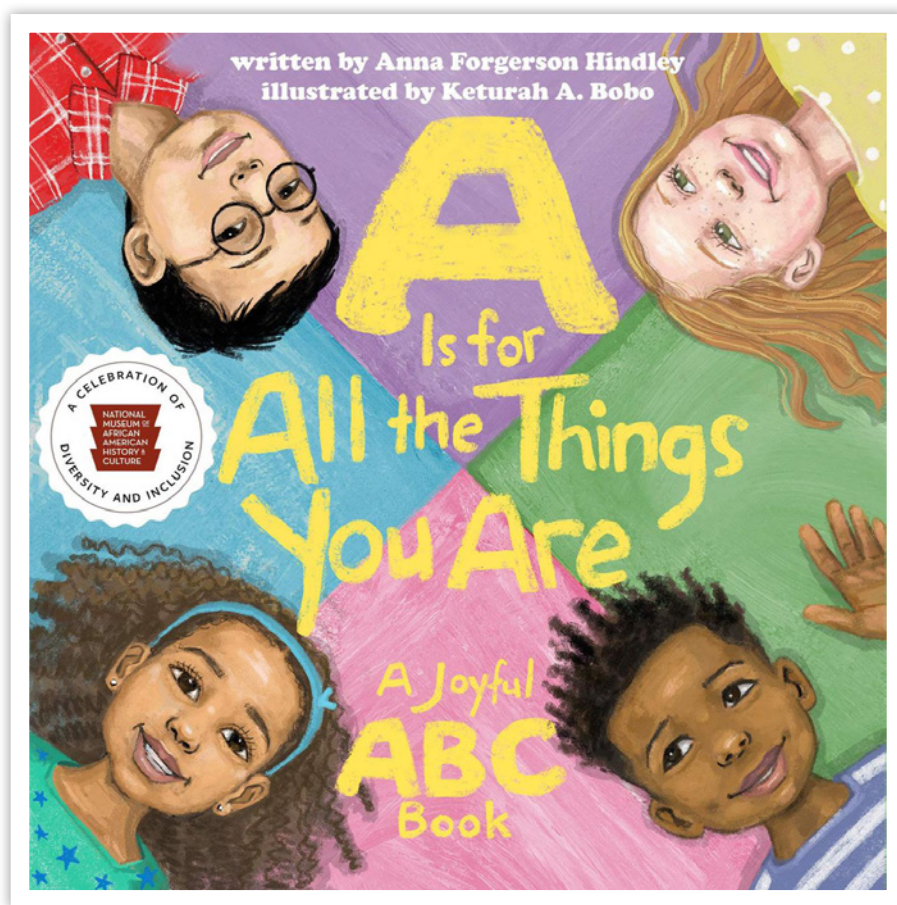


A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK

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 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. 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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G is for Grateful:

Look around and notice all of the good things in your life, like sunshine, people who love you, and your favorite book or toy. **Take time to be grateful.**

What makes you feel grateful?

Too often gratitude is seen as a reciprocal exchange: *I get a gift so I am grateful. I got a gift so I have to give a gift.* But real gratitude is the internal feeling that comes from recognizing what has enriched our lives and then wanting to share that good feeling.

We can support our children's deepest sense of gratitude for all that makes life wonderful by helping them slow down enough to notice and savor the moments of peacefulness, delight, awe, joy, or fascination. Supporting children to recognize and appreciate the everyday experiences that nourish and comfort them builds a foundation of strength and resilience that will serve them throughout their lives.

We can share with them words to describe what they experience and how it makes them feel. With words to describe those experiences, children are able to more fully cherish and seek out healthy ways of being in the world. From there, we can support our children to begin expressing those feelings to others from within themselves and adding genuine emotion, meaning and understanding to a simple "thank you."

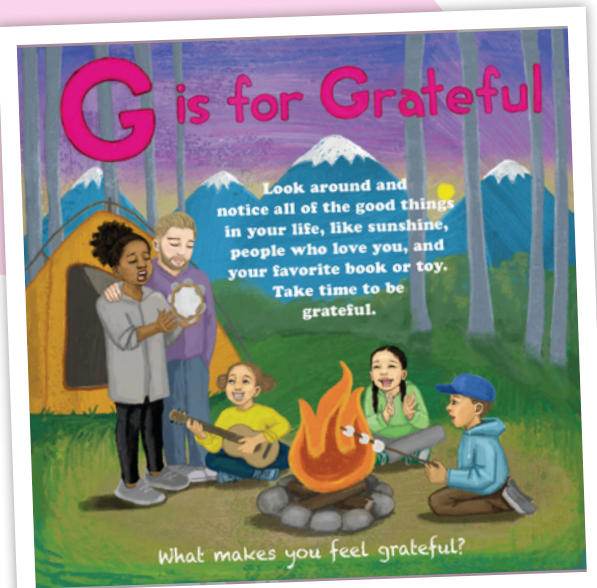
What You'll Need:

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

- Markers, crayons, colored pencils or watercolor paint and brushes
- Construction paper
- 5 to 10 Objects for stacking or building (like building blocks or recycled materials)
- Tape (optional)
- Play dough (store bought or [homemade](#))
- Play dough tools (like spoons, popsicle sticks or plastic cups)

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 hands-on experience.

Build a Gratitude Sculpture



What's Needed

- 5 to 10 Objects for stacking or building (like building blocks or recycled materials)
- Tape (optional)

Reflect and build! When we take time to notice the people, places and things that are special to us or bring us joy, we are practicing gratitude. When we feel grateful for something that means we believe it's important and appreciate who or what is special. What makes people feel grateful is different for everyone and can change from one moment to another. In this activity, you'll build a gratitude sculpture using stackable objects, found in your home or outside.

Grown-ups:

- 1 Start by talking to your child about a special person, place or thing they are grateful for. Ask: *What makes you feel good? Who is special to you?* This will be the inspiration for their sculpture!

Early Learners:

- 1 Once you've decided on your sculpture inspiration, tell someone all the special reasons why you feel grateful. Then, using objects found in your home or outside, begin to stack up objects for every reason, one at a time and on top of one another.
- 2 Once the sculpture is complete, discuss how tall it is. Notice how many wonderful people, favorite things or important places you have around you!

Tip:

Make your sculpture permanent by taping the objects to one another as they are being stacked. Take a picture of the object to share with family and friends.

CREATE

Create art inspired by this week's theme!

Create Gratitude Cards

What's Needed:

- Markers, crayons, colored pencils or watercolor paint and brushes
- Construction paper



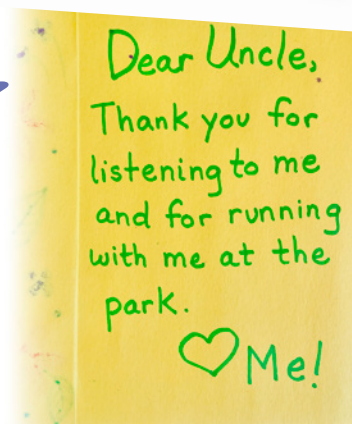
Untitled by Devin Allen

Express gratitude with cards. Who is someone that makes you feel loved? Pause and think about them. Notice what makes this person special. What do they do or say to show you love? We can create cards as a way to show people how special they are to us and how much we appreciate who they are.

- 1 To make a card, fold a piece of construction paper in half so that you can open it like a book.
- 2 On the front, draw or paint a picture. Think about decorating the card with your special person's favorite things! Add the words "Thank You For Being You!"
- 3 Open the card to add a message about why you feel grateful for this person. What makes them important to you? Caregivers: Support your child by writing the message inside of the card as they talk to you.
- 4 Deliver your card by mail or in-person! How do you think it felt for your special person to receive your card?

Tip:

You can express gratitude for anything - not just people! Try making gratitude cards for animals, places and things that you feel grateful for.



LEARN



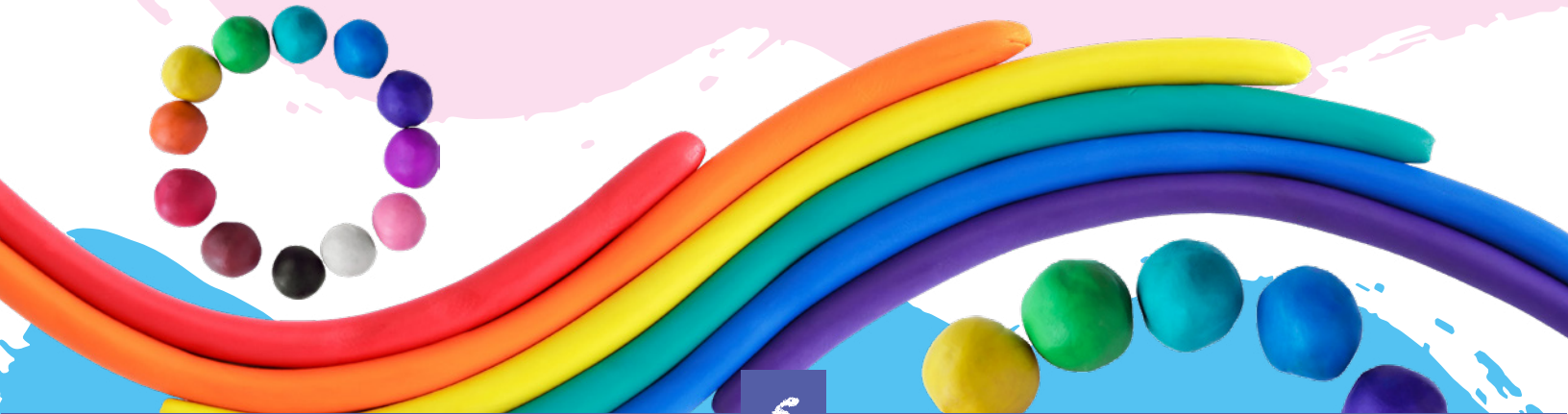
Invite your child to take part in the following experiences to support their literacy and language skills.

GRATEFUL

Boost Literacy and Learn Letters

Play dough can be a fun tool for helping children strengthen their hands and fingers. Whether bought or [homemade](#), provide your little one with play dough and simple tools like spoons, popsicle sticks or plastic cups and encourage free play. Kneading, squeezing and manipulating the dough develops a child's fine motor skills that they'll use while writing. After free play, introduce the play dough activities below:

- Roll the dough into snakes and balls.
- Invite your child to notice and describe how the play dough smells, looks, feels and even sounds as it is squished through their fingers and rolled on a hard surface.
- Write large letters on a piece of paper and invite your child to make the same letters by placing play dough on top of the writing. This week, practice forming the letter G.
- Invite them to knead the dough as they sing songs of gratitude like [this one](#)!



EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

Books

Read the recommended books below to discover how gratitude brings joy to simple, everyday moments for children. As you enjoy the stories together, remember to take time to pause and talk about the good things in your own lives.



Hurry Up!

by Kate Dopirak,
illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal



Saturday

by Oge Mora



Taking Time

by Jo Loring-Fisher



Feeling Thankful

by Shelly Rotner and Sheila Kelly

Tip:

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

Online Resources

Check out the videos below for tips on how to cultivate your child's sense of gratitude in healthy, age-appropriate ways.



[Things to Be Thankful For](#) - **Sesame Street**



[How to Talk With Kids About Gratitude](#) - **Greater Good Science Center**



[Raising A Thankful Child](#) - **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

- *Untitled* by Devin Allen, 2015. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Devin Allen, © Devin Allen. [2016.98.42](#)

Program Photos

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

Original Artwork

- Bluebird (cover), © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC