

H is for Happy



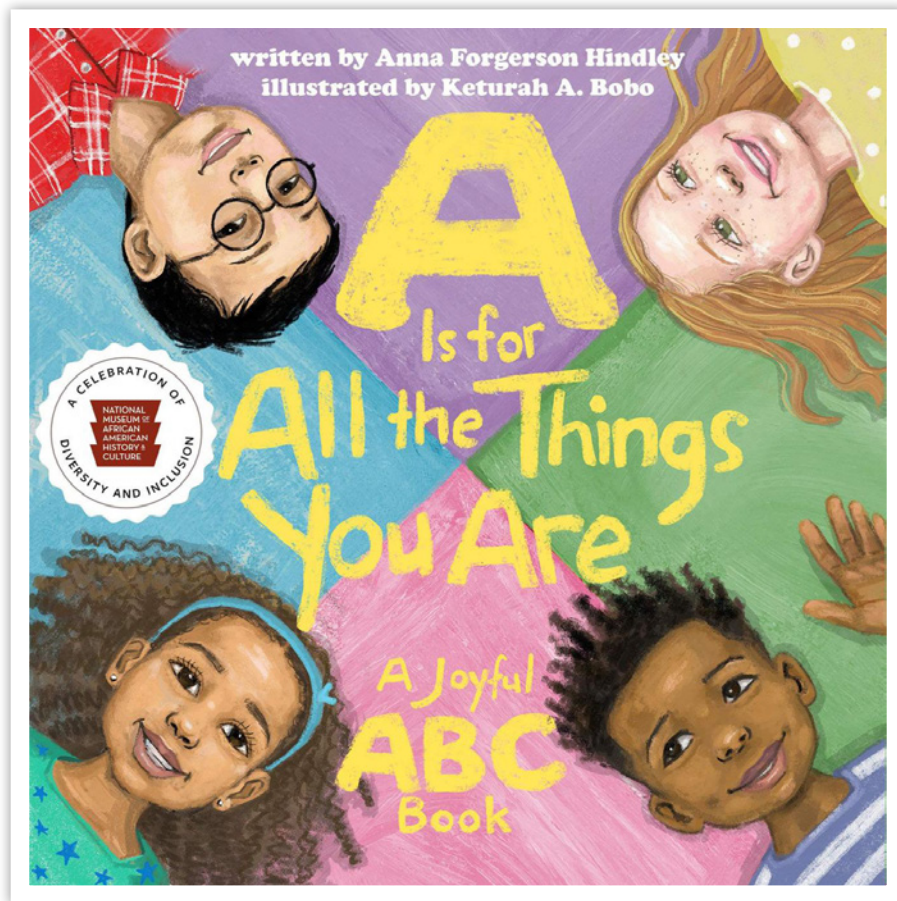
JOY FUL

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)
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H is for Happy:

There are wonderful things right in front of you.

Hold a friend's hand. Stop to smell a flower. **You'll be happy!**

How can you share your happiness with others?

All of us want our infants and toddlers to be happy. And nothing is more important to a little one's happiness than being noticed, nourished and loved. The way that our littlest ones know they are loved is by the way we pay attention to them, respond to them and show in our touch, voice and expressions that they bring us joy. Sometimes, this is hard to do.

Being responsible for little ones can be exhausting, demanding and feel unending and stressful. But getting out into the natural world is one way to ease those pressures. Time in nature improves health, relieves stress, boosts creativity and increases happiness for both children and adults.

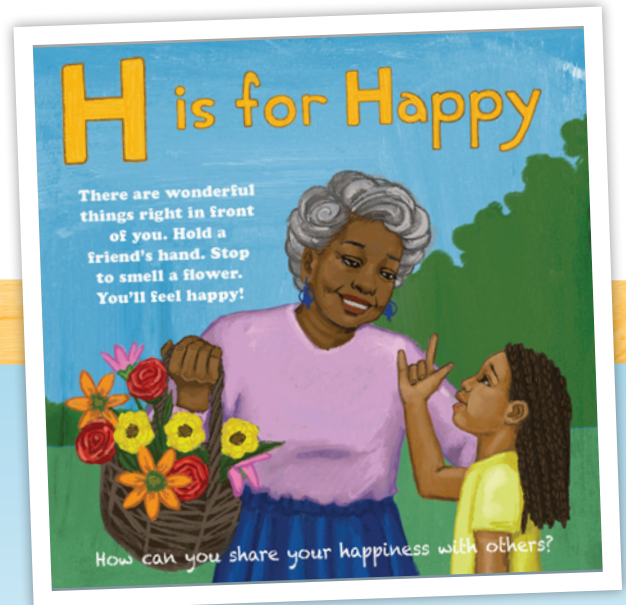
Happiness looks different to each child (and each adult) depending on their temperament, their personality and on the conditions and situations in which they find themselves. Still there are things we can do to support each child to be emotionally and physically comfortable and happy.

Infants and toddlers need adults to slow down to their pace of taking in the world and figuring out how to interact with its highly stimulating demands. They rely on us to give them the space to engage in their own unique ways, bit by bit, over and over again. As we slow down to support them, they become our teachers, showing us how to live in the moment and to continually find new ways to be aware and connected. It is that aware connection that makes happiness possible for us all.

What You'll Need:

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

- Construction paper
- Glue stick
- Found (or store bought) plants parts, leaves or flowers



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EXPLORE

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

Nature Color and Texture Walk

Designed for: Infants and Toddlers

Whether you're in a neighborhood outdoor space, at a park or a beach, or on a natural walking trail, time spent outdoors benefits children and adults in many ways! This week, share what's outside your door with your infant or toddler as you take a closer look at the happy little details of the natural world around them.



Untitled (Zinnias) by Clementine Hunter

- **Look at colors.** Bring small pieces of paper (or simple toys) in colors like red, yellow or green on your walk. When you find a plant or flower that matches the colors of the paper, pause and place the two things side by side to show your little one how they are similar.
- **Pay attention to sounds.** Help your little one identify what they are hearing with phrases like: *That's the sound of a truck going by! Listen, that's a bird calling. Do you hear the dog barking?*
- **Touch textures.** Stop to feel the interesting textures of a tree trunk, a dry leaf, a fuzzy dandelion or a smooth stone. Notice how your child engages with each texture.
- **Discover outdoor scents.** Pick a flower. Pluck and crush a leaf. Then bring natural materials to your little one's nose so they can smell it. How do they respond?

Tip:

Remember to go slow. It takes time for infants to focus on an object and absorb what they are seeing. It takes time for a toddler to bend down, figure out how to grasp a new object and examine it.



EXPLORE

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

Nature Art

Designed for: Toddlers

What You'll Need

- Construction paper, glue sticks, found (or store bought) plants parts, leaves or flowers

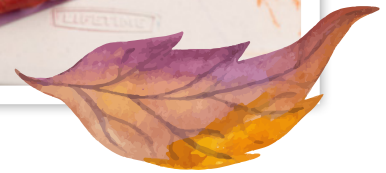
Play and create with natural materials. Join your child in discovering the joys of nature by extending their nature play into art making.

Gather leaves, flowers and plant parts from a neighborhood walk, park or purchase from a local grocery store. Place them in a small container or on a tabletop and allow your little one to begin their art project by touching and looking closely at the natural materials.

Next, provide them with paper and assist your toddler in picking favorite pieces and adding them to the paper with glue. Try this: Rub glue onto the paper first and invite your little one to place leaves or flower petals onto the sticky spot. (Toddlers often love pressing or pounding the items down hard to make sure they stick!)

Tip:

Turn up the happiness! Play a song while you create with your little one and sing along.



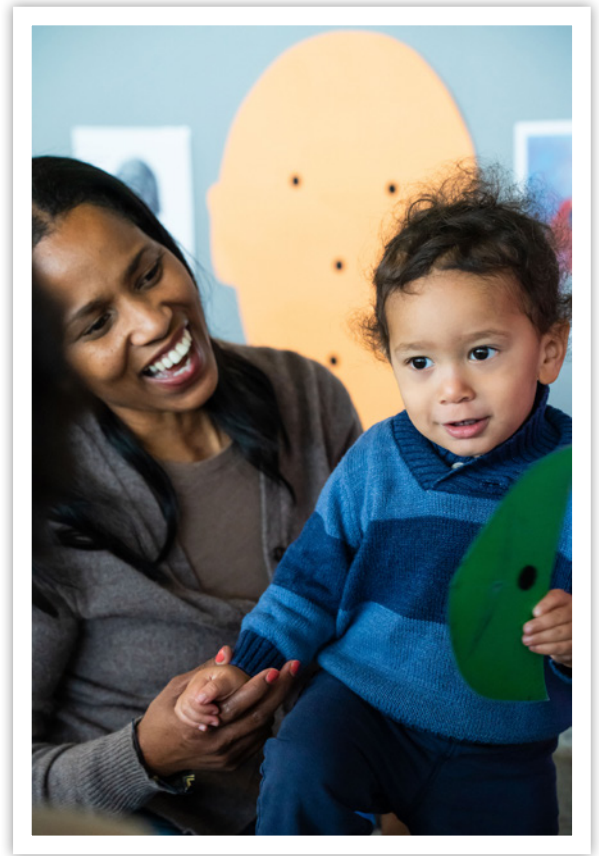
EXPLORE

Explore this week's theme in everyday moments by following the tips below.

Narrating Happiness

This week, notice all the simple moments your infant or toddler is happy, describing what you see out loud. Pointing these moments out and providing little ones with the word “happy” helps them to begin forming their understanding and definition of their personal happiness.

- **At mealtime, notice their satisfaction:** *You've finished eating and you're snuggling in my arms. You are happy and I am happy.*
- **At play time, celebrate their joy:** *You climbed up on the chair, figured out how to come down, and did it again and again. You must be happy you did it!*
- **At rest time, encourage their calm:** *You are safe and cozy. You are relaxed and calm. You must be feeling so happy.*

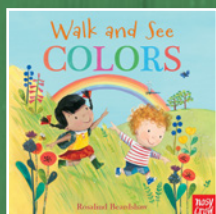


EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

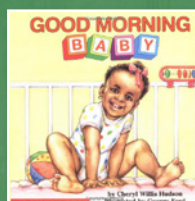
Books

From colorful nature walks to special time with family, the books below celebrate a child's daily delights. What makes *your* little one happy?



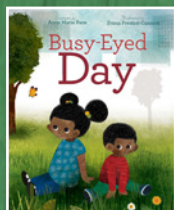
Walk and See Colors

by Nosy Crow,
illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw



Good Morning, Baby

by Cheryl Willis Hudson,
illustrated by George Ford



Busy-Eyed Day

by Anne Marie Pace,
illustrated by Frann Preston-Gannon



Smile! (Baby Faces Board Book)

by Roberta Grobel Intrater

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.



[Even Babies Need The Outdoors](#) - **Nature Play SA**

Infants and toddlers gain happiness and so much more from time in nature!



[How to Raise a Happy Child](#) - **Baby Center**

Learn to support your toddler's (12 to 24 months) happiness in developmentally appropriate ways.



[If You're Happy and You Know It](#) - **Sesame Street**

Sing and dance along to this classic happy song!



[Outdoor Afro](#) - **Outdoor Afro**

Check out the nation's leading network that celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature.

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

- Untitled (Zinnias) by Clementine Hunter, ca. 1970. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift from the Collection of Sabra Brown Martin, © Cane River Art Corporation. [2017.68.7](#)

Program Photos

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

Original Artwork

- Bluebird (cover, pages 4 and 5); Flowers (2, 3, 4, 6); © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC