

I is for Interesting

JOY FUL

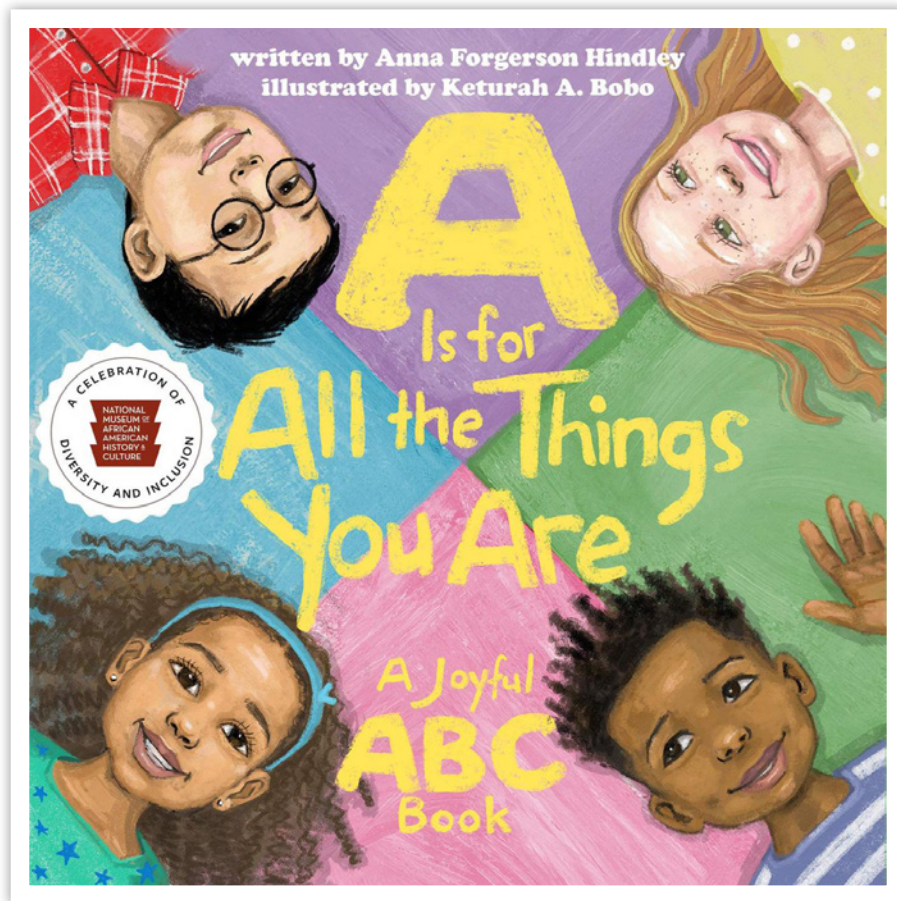


A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK

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. 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)
© 2018 Smithsonian Institution (text)

I is for Interesting:

Do you have unique ideas about how to solve problems? Do you eat different foods than other people you know? You are interesting! Remember that everyone has something special that makes them interesting, too!

Who or what do you find interesting?

Every baby, every toddler is distinct. They may come from the same family – but they are born with their own ways of reacting to the world, different styles of relating to people, different physical responses to fatigue or hunger or play. As their adults we slowly learn who they are and what they need. Our focused interest in them changes our responses over time as they change. It's a wonderful dance that becomes easier and richer as we learn to watch closely and see what interests this child right now, and how this child shows their interests at the moment.

Babies and Toddlers have a whole world to learn. Their brains are expanding with new synapses every day. It is the fastest time of brain development in their whole lives. We support this explosion of knowledge by slowing down enough for the little one to take in what is going on. We provide words to name the new world, the new experiences, the new skills. These words help the growing brain to absorb and hold on to what is going on.

We help little ones explore what interests them by limiting the amount of stimuli they have to take in at one time and adding more objects, words, experiences bit by bit. Because we find them interesting (as well as lovable) they have the emotional support to trust their ability to explore and claim what calls to them.

What You'll Need:

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

- Baskets or bins
- Miscellaneous objects (See page 3 for details.)



A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book
© 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC (artwork)
© 2018 Smithsonian Institution (text)



EXPLORE

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

Discovery Basket Play



Designed for: Infants and Toddlers

What You'll Need: Baskets or bins and miscellaneous objects

As adults in the lives of little ones, we have a wonderful opportunity to help them discover new sources of interest and joy everyday. With our words and our attention to simple things, we open our children's eyes to intriguing details they may not have noticed before (or yet!). Boost your child's interest in ordinary objects by arranging unique collections of items from your home into discovery baskets or bins that they can freely and safely explore. Try the ideas below to get started:

- **Color Basket:** Fill a basket with items from around your home that are all the same color but different in size, texture and purpose. For example, a basket may include a blue washcloth, a blue toy and a blue cup.
- **Noisy Basket:** Fill a basket with items that make interesting noises and sounds. For example, a basket may include keys on a ring, rattles, newspaper and wrapping paper - some materials for noise and some materials for crumpling!
- **Shape Basket:** Place items that are all the same shape into a basket. For example, a basket could include balls or spherical objects of different textures, sizes or colors - or a collection of spoons like cooking and measuring spoons, metal spoons and plastic spoons.

EXPLORE

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



Fostering Interests with Story Time

Designed for: Infants and Toddlers

Reading with your child is one of the best ways to introduce them to the interesting world around them. Books provide windows to new ideas, people and places *and* give mirrors to affirm and celebrate a child's understanding of self, according to [Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop](#).



Activate story time in new ways to pique your child's interest through their senses. Try any of the following experiences while you read:

Look and Touch: Invigorate a favorite book by adding objects that either match something in the illustrations (*Look! Our red ball is red like the flower in the book!*) or demonstrate words in a concrete way (*Look! This teacup is like the teacup in the story!*).

Sounds: Use different voices for different characters, different inflections of your voice to express emotions and different volumes to make the story more interesting. Be creative and silly! This supports vocabulary development *and* a child's understanding of emotions.

Smell and Taste: As you read with your child, notice words that describe smells or tastes. If possible, eat the food or smell the scent with your child, returning to the words in the book to help your child make a concrete connection.

Move: Many books for very young children use words that describe movements. Act out movement words for your child to see and invite your child to move with you.

Tip:

Remember to read slowly so your child can still focus on the book.

EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

Books

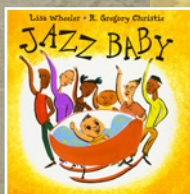
Pair these books with color, sound, shape and food discovery baskets!



Pantone: Colors
by Pantone



Baby's Shapes
by Karen Katz



Jazz Baby
by Lisa Wheeler,
illustrated by R. Gregory Christie



Feast for 10
by Cathryn Falwell

Tip:

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

Online Resources

Discover more interesting ways to read and play with your infant or toddler!

★ [Infant & Toddlers: Activities that Match Interests and Learning Levels](#) - Scholastic Early Childhood Today

★ [Reading with Your Infant: Tips from Reach Out and Read](#) - The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

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

- Tuxedo jacket worn by Ray Charles, 1986. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. [2012.64.2](#)
- Pinback button from the 2008 Obama campaign, 2008. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of M. Denise Dennis. [2012.91.34](#)
- Cobalt blue European glass trade beads, ca. 17th century. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Oprah Winfrey. [2014.312.30](#)
- Academic cap worn by Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole at Bennett College, 2003. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Johnnetta Betsch Cole. [2015.209.6](#)

Program Photos

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

Original Artwork

- Bluebird (cover, page 4) © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC