

K is for Kind

JOY FUL

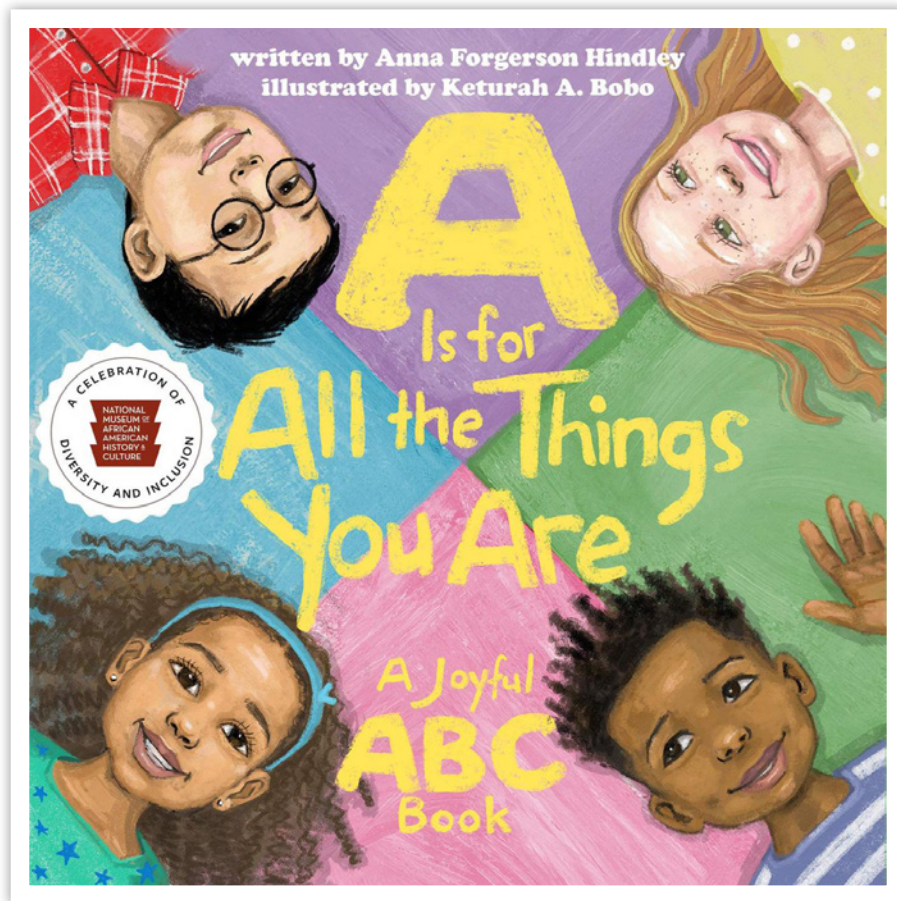


A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK

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.

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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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K is for Kind:

Offering a warm smile. Being gentle. These small acts of kindness can make a big difference in someone's day.

How were you kind today?

Kindness is the act of paying attention to another person and doing something that helps, supports and shows care. Almost all of the ways we take care of our babies, models to them how to be a kind person. When they cry, we respond. When they are hungry, we feed them. When they are tired, we help them rest. When they are bored, we find ways to help them play. Each of these daily tasks sets a foundation for children to recognize that we all exist in relationship to others and that we create communities through caring.

As toddlers begin venturing out into the world, they are driven by their need to move and explore as well as their beginning awareness that there is a “me” inside of them. Yet, even as they push to express their “me-ness” they rely on their grownups to act kindly and caringly – modeling, again, that they are always part of a relationship with others.

Caring for our little human beings can be (and often is) exhausting. However, one of the ways our load is lightened is by our noticing of the ways babies and toddlers try to give back. The baby smiles when you appear. The toddler strokes your face, snuggles into your arms and recognizes they can make you laugh. This awareness, that we exist in reciprocal relationships, is the beginning of children's sense of empathy and their delight when they can be the givers.

Be kind to yourself while you do this important work.

What You'll Need

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

- Soft textured items
- Stuffed animals
- Massage items (See page 4 for details.)



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EXPLORE

Discover everyday ways to explore this week's theme.

Introducing Gentle Touches

One aspect of kindness we can introduce to infants and toddlers is gentleness. The curiosity and excitement young children have as they explore the world's newness is often expressed through touching, grabbing, pulling and sometimes biting! Support your little one to use gentle and kind touches in their interactions with animals and friends by practicing during sensory play.

Baby and Horse by Roderick J. Lyons



- Lay out an array of household items made with soft materials (like terry cloth, velvet and flannel) to explore. Plush, soft and fuzzy textures often inspire more gentle touching. As your little one's hands feel the fabrics model how to gently stroke the materials. Give words to their actions as they explore.
- Before introducing your child to real animals, practice safely interacting with stuffed animal toys. Guide thier hands with yours to model the pace and amount of pressure to use and describe how much the animal likes those kind touches.
- Watch for the moments when your baby or toddler touches you or another person with gentle stroking. Give words to those moments: *You are stroking Grandpa's hand so kindly and softly! You are touching my cheek so dearly and kindly.*

Tip:

Pair stuffed animals with books about animals! Invite your little one to play and touch the toy as you read about it.

EXPLORE

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

Practice Kind Touches

Show your little one kindness through a sweet and gentle massage. The gentle rubbing of a massage with your infant or toddler is not only a sensory experience but one that also expresses care, deepens your bond and helps you both to relax together. Try this:

- Before you begin your massage, learn more about preparing your little one for this special time in a safe and comfortable way with resources like [BabyCentre's Massaging Your Baby](#).
- Choose a space that is comfortable and calm for both of you. Find a time that your little one is awake and ready to interact with you. Always begin by inviting the little one to participate and watch for cues that it's okay for you to touch.
- As you massage, narrate what you are doing: *I'm kindly touching your toes! I'm gently rubbing your beautiful skin.* You can hum or sing a soft song as you interact.

Tip:

Remember that even kind or gentle touches may be unwanted by your infant or toddler at that moment and that's okay. Listen and look for cues they give you when they don't want to be touched, don't like certain touches or are feeling like they've had enough touches for the day - and honor them by stopping. Understanding that their body is their own and they have the right to make decisions about their body will help your child begin to understand consent.



Father Figure: Untitled by Zun Lee

EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

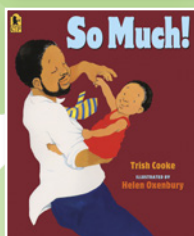
Books

Check out the books below to practice kind touches and introduce the many ways that infants, toddlers and adults can show kindness.



Bright Baby Touch and Feel Books

by Roger Priddy



So Much!

by Trish Cooke,
illustrated by Helen Oxenbury



Hugs & Kisses

by Roberta Grobel Intrater



Kindness Makes Us Strong

by Sophie Beer

Tip:

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

Online Resources

Bring moments of kindness to your little one's life this week in ways inspired by the resources below.



[Pleasure Gazing: A Mindfulness Practice for Families](#) - **Zero To Three**

Incorporate this simple act of kindness into your child's day today!



[Try a Little Kindness with Tori Kelly](#) - **Sesame Street**

Dance together to this fun song about everyday kindness!



[How to Massage Your Baby Step-by-Step Guide](#) - **BabyCentre**

Learn more about how to show kind touches to your little one.

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

- *Baby and Horse* by Roderick J. Lyons, 2013. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Roderick Lyons, © Roderick Lyons. [2016.116.4](#)
- *Father Figure: Untitled* by Zun Lee, 2012. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Zun Lee, © Zun Lee. [2016.52.12](#)

Original Artwork

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