

L is for Loving

JOY FUL

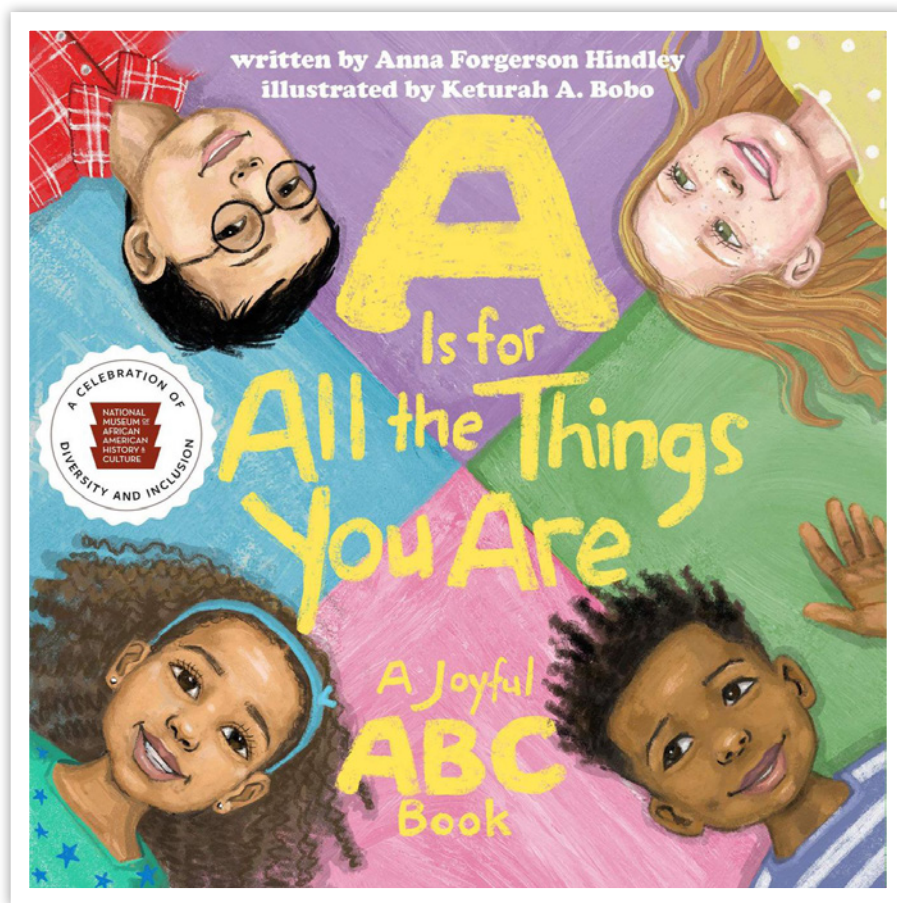


A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK

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.

L is for Loving:

You can show that you are loving in lots of ways: Give someone a hug. Show that you care. When you are loving, your heart will feel full!

How do you show your love?

Assuring that our children know they are loved is fundamental to their life-long happiness, resilience, and survival. They interpret the message of being loved through all we say and do - and the love behind our words and actions helps children to develop their sense of inherent value and the conviction that they matter.

Almost everything we do with and for our children is an act of love. Exploring the world together, feeding and bathing them, setting up play spaces, clearing away messes they create, helping them to rest - are all acts of profound love. Children accept our caring work as their due with little conscious notice. It's so right and so needed that it is often invisible. Yet, whether or not children are aware of what we are modeling, they learn to love by being loved.

Bringing attention to and narrating the caring behavior going on around them every day helps children notice how love is demonstrated. This may sound like: Daddy is folding the laundry so we can find clean things to wear. Grandma is coming to play with you so you won't be lonely while I'm working. Mama is cooking dinner so we all have food to eat. I'm preparing the bath water so it will be just right when you get in.

Sharing the true meaning behind our daily actions with children helps them to understand love as both words and actions that all people are capable of giving to others, including themselves. Watching and experiencing these loving acts helps to spark a child's own unique style of being loving to those around them.

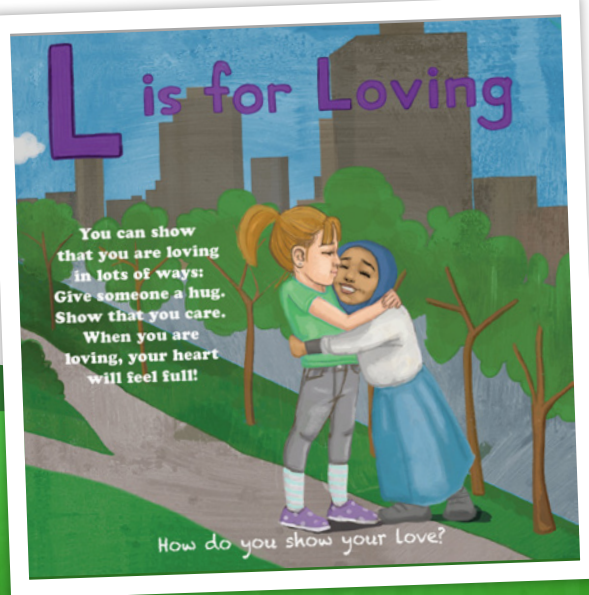
What You'll Need:

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

- Tape
- Scissors
- Markers and crayons
- Construction paper
- Yarn, ribbon or string
- Doll or stuffed animal
- A small or medium sized paper bag
- Doll play items (See page 3.)
- A hole punch or tool to create holes

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!](#)



A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book
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EXPLORE

In early childhood, children learn best through doing! Explore this week's theme with your child by trying this engaging experience inspired by our museum collection.

Expressing Love Through Play

What You'll Need

- Doll or stuffed animal
- Optional doll play items (blanket or cloth, a large box, small bowl and spoon and play food)

People can show love to others in many ways. When someone holds, feeds and plays with a baby, they're being loving. They're making the baby feel safe, happy and loved by taking good care of them. You can show love to a baby too! Practice loving a stuffed animal or doll:

- Imagine your baby is feeling sad or scared. Give them a hug. What else can you do to make them feel happy and loved?
- Imagine your baby is feeling happy and playful. Dance together! Bounce the baby on your knee.
- Is your baby hungry? One way to show love is by sharing food with someone. Pretend to cook your baby a meal. What do you think your baby likes to eat?
- Tell your baby how much you love them with a song! Sing gently and softly rock them back and forth.

Tip:

As you play alongside your child, ask questions about what they are doing and narrate what you see. Ask questions and offer different prompts and scenarios each time you play.



CREATE

Create art inspired by this week's theme!

Expressing Love Through Actions

Holding someone close is one way to be loving. Since babies can't walk yet, they need to be held in a loving way. There are many ways to carry a baby and different people carry babies in different ways. What are all the different ways you can think of to carry babies safely?

Babies can be held in someone's arms, a soft sling or in a carrier on someone's back or chest. Babies feel safe, happy and loved in the many different ways they're carried! To hold your baby close, create a front or back carrier for a doll or stuffed animal:



What You'll Need

- A small or medium sized paper bag
- Scissors
- Ribbon, yarn or string
- Markers and crayons
- Tape (as needed)

Early Learners

Decorate a paper bag with markers and crayons. What can you draw to show love?

Grown-Ups

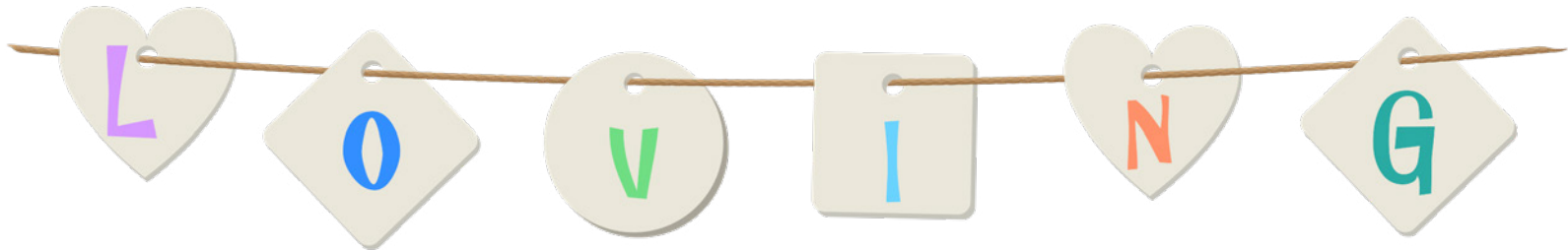
- 1 After it's decorated, take a paper bag and roll down the top of the bag.
- 2 Cut 2 holes in the bottom of the bag for the baby's legs.
- 3 Cut 2 pieces of ribbon long enough to work like backpack straps for your child.
- 4 Pull one ribbon strap through a leg hole as pictured. Then, tie the ends together. Repeat to create a second strap.
- 5 Help your child put the carrier on like a backpack (facing the front or on their back) and gently place a favorite doll or stuffed animal inside the carrier. Invite them to hold their baby close and tell them they're loved!

This paper bag carrier is intended to be used for lightweight dolls and stuffed animals only.



LETTERS & LITERACY

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



We can use words to show love. Build your little one's literacy skills by inviting them to share loving words and memories on a banner you can display at home. Before you begin, ask your child to think of the people in their life who they love. Ask: *How do they make you smile? What special memory do you have with them? How do they make you feel loved?* Then, follow these steps:

What You'll Need

- Construction paper
- Yarn, string or ribbon
- Tool to create holes
- Markers and crayons
- Scissors
- Tape

- 1 Cut out 5 or more colorful paper shapes (like circles, squares or hearts) about the size of an adult hand.

Tip:

Children can practice drawing shapes by starting at a point on the page, creating a curved or squiggly line around the page and stopping at the starting point.

- 2 Add holes at the top of each shape. Work together to pull a string through the holes. Holding and pulling string through holes builds fine motor skills children can use as they learn to write!
- 3 On each shape, write the words "I love it when" and "I love being with." Invite your child to add to those sentences. Write down their words or help them to write a word, name or a single letter (like L for love).
- 4 Invite your child to draw a picture of someone or something they love with markers and crayons.
- 5 Finally, hang your banner up with tape to show your love!

EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

Books

Discover the many ways to show and define love in the pages of the books below! How do you show love in similar or different ways?



Loving

by Ann Morris,
photographs by Ken Heyman



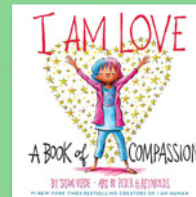
Love

by Matt de la Peña,
illustrated by Loren Long



Love Is

by Diane Adams,
illustrated by Claire Keane



I Am Love: A Book of Compassion

by Susan Verde,
illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds

Tip:

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

Online Resources

When we show love to our children in a variety of ways, beyond words, we help them to discover new ways they can express that feeling too!

- ★ [Love Clips Compilation](#) - **Sesame Street**
- ★ [There Are Many Ways \(to Say I Love You\)](#) - **Mountain Lake PBS**
- ★ [Five Ways to Talk with Your Kids So They Feel Loved](#) - **Greater Good Magazine**
- ★ [15 Ways You Can Show Your Kids You Love Them Everyday](#) - **HuffPost**

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.

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

- Female and Male Dolls in Tan Clothing, ca. 1965. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift from the Trumpauer-Mulholland Collection. [2011.109.9.2](#), [2011.109.9.1](#)

Original Artwork

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