

L is for Loving

# JOY FUL

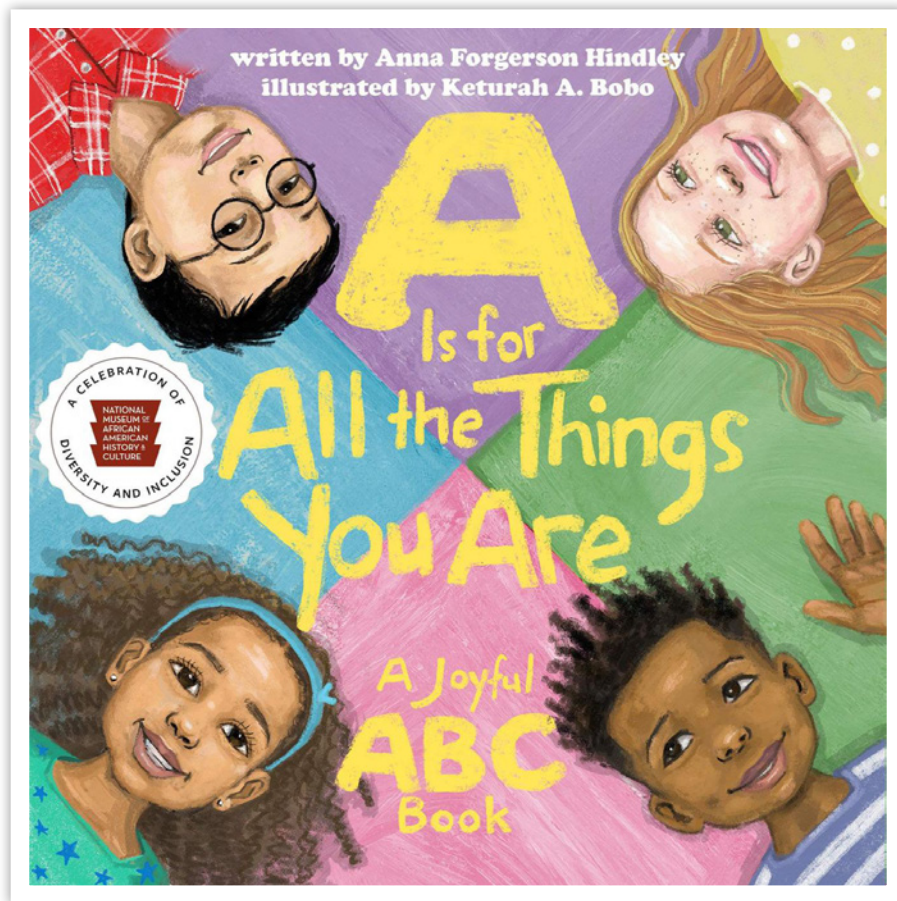


**A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK**

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 Forgeson 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)  
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# L is for Loving:

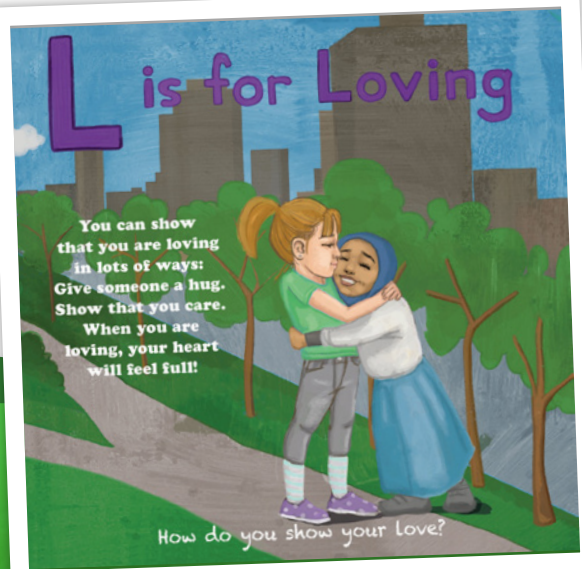
You can show that you are loving in lots of ways: Give someone a hug. Show that you care. When you are loving, your heart will feel full!

## 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. These core beliefs become a source of strength they'll draw on throughout their lives.

Almost everything we do with and for our young children - all the feeding, bathing, cleaning, helping them to rest, supporting their brains to explore, modeling how to behave - is an act of profound love. Yet, whether children are conscious of what we are modeling or not, they internalize the lesson and give their love back as fully as they can. Children learn to love by being loved.

Recognize and name the loving things you do: *Momma is fixing the bath water so it will be just right for you. Daddy's folding the laundry so we have clean things to wear. Grandma is coming to play so you won't be lonely while I work.* Pay attention to and say aloud the ways children show their love too. When you acknowledge and appreciate your little one's love, as well as your own loving work, this deepens your mutual sense of being loveable while also empowering you both to continue sharing love in your own unique ways.



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## What You'll Need:

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

- Paper
- Markers or crayons
- Stuffed animals or pillows





# EXPLORE

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

## Showing Love with Words

### **The words we say to our little ones matter.**

Even before they understand the words, they can feel the emotion heard in our tone and inflections, seen in our faces and felt in the accompanying actions. So, when you sweetly tell your baby or toddler, "I love you" as you give a gentle touch, share food or play with them, they are beginning to understand that those actions are reflections of love and that words can be used to express love too.



[Sign Created by Chloe Wilson](#)

Find ways to use words to show love to your child this week:

- **Observe:** Notice and name times when your baby is calm and relaxed, or when your little one's face lights up when they see you, or when they reach up and touch your face. Put words to the feeling they're expressing: *Your face is full of love. It makes you happy when you see faces you love!*
- **Write:** Draw a small, simple picture with a loving phrase to your little one like, *I love you from head to toe. You are precious to me. My love is always with you.* Post this special work of art near their sleeping area or changing table and read it aloud to them each day.
- **Sing:** Songs are a wonderful way to share feelings of love with your child. Do you have a favorite song from your childhood that made you feel loved? Share it with your little one or introduce songs of love like [There Are Many Ways](#) or [Give Love](#).



# EXPLORE

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

## Showing Love with Touch



**We show our little ones love in many ways.** Hugs and gentle touches while caring for a child's willingness to participate are some of the earliest signs of love and affection that we share with children. These physical interactions demonstrate love and safety, laying the foundation for a child's understanding of what is appropriate touching and their love for and ownership of their own bodies.

- Gather stuffed toys and pillows to practice hugging. Give a toy or pillow to your toddler. With another one, show how to give the item a big, gentle hug. Model asking the toy or pillow "Can I hug you?" before you hug. Add loving sounds or words. Watch how your toddler copies your moves and sounds!
- Share all kinds of hugs, kisses and sweet nibbles with your baby or toddler as you read *So Much!* By Trish Cooke.

# EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

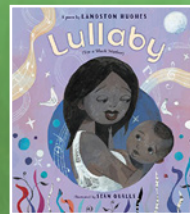
## Books

Share these sweet stories with the little one you love!



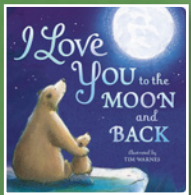
### **Loving Me**

by Debby Slier



### **Lullaby (For a Black Mother)**

by Langston Hughes,  
illustrated by Sean Qualls



### **I Love You to the Moon and Back**

by Amelia Hepworth,  
illustrated by Tim Warnes



### **Daddy's Arms**

by Fabian E. Ferguson

**Tip:**

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

## Online Resources

Expressing love to the infants and toddlers in our lives is important. Learn about the many ways to share this special emotion with your child.

★ [High Five or a Hug? Teaching Toddlers About Consent](#) - Zero to Three

★ [With Kids, Love Is In The Little Things](#) - Greater Good Magazine

★ [Love Starts With Babies](#) - Psychology Today

# 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

- Sign with "Choose Love over Fear" used in the Unite the Right counter-protest, August, 12, 2017. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Justin McBrien. [2018.42.2](#)
- *Father and Daughter - New York, NY* by Leonard Freed, 1963. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, © Leonard Freed & Magnum Photos, Inc. [2009.10.11](#)
- *Black Panther mother and her newborn son, Baby Jesus X, San Francisco, California, No. 125* by Ruth-Marion Baruch, October 1, 1968. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, © Regents of the University of California. [2012.149.4](#)

### Original Artwork

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