

Q is for Questioning

JOY FUL

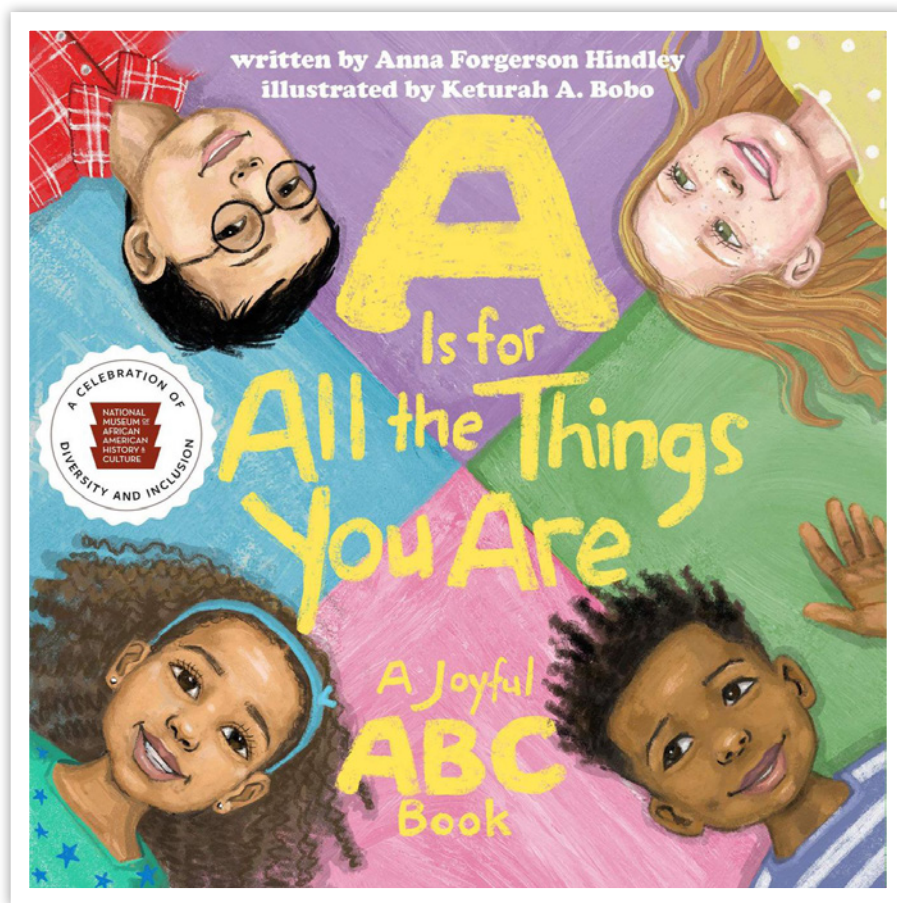


A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK

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 Forgeron 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.

A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book
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Q is for Questioning:

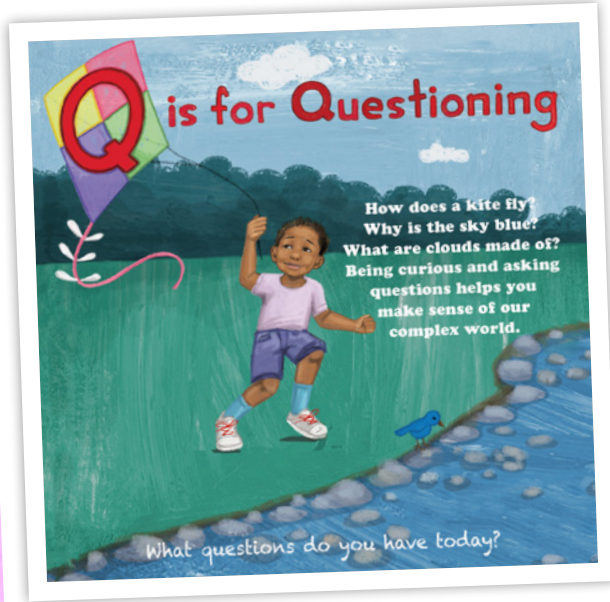
How does a kite fly? Why is the sky blue? What are clouds made of? Being curious and asking questions helps you make sense of our complex world.

What questions do you have?

Three to five-year-old children are filled with lively curiosity. Their brains have made significant growth since their toddler years. Their expanded vocabulary gives them tools to begin to categorize the world, create ideas, compare and organize. They start to understand concepts like “same and different.” They even become more able to think about thinking! Their memories become more detailed as language develops and their ability to describe what they experience increases. And, appropriately, early learners ask questions to feed their hunger for more information, and sometimes, just to practice their new conversation skills.

Although the 3 year old's perpetual "Why?" can be exhausting, and the four year old's defiant "How come?" can feel confrontational, both are external examples of the internal explosion of essential synapse development and their brain's increased ability to store and retrieve complex information. These are key years in a little one's life to nourish their intellectual abilities. Asking questions, helping children explore and build their own ideas, and encouraging them to think of themselves as good thinkers are all far more predictive of successful learning and growth than memorizing "right" answers and drilling them on narrow academic tasks.

Ask children questions. Encourage open-ended play that lets them create answers. Give children words to describe their worlds. Celebrate their intelligence. This is the foundation for a lifetime of joyful learning.



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What You'll Need:

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

- Markers and crayons
- Stapler or tape
- Water
- Plate
- Plastic bin
- Ice cube tray
- Drinking straw
- Cooking spoon
- Empty spray bottle
- Construction paper
- White paper
- Washcloth or sponge
- Vegetable oil
- Small, miscellaneous items



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](#)!

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.

Question-Guided Learning

Scientists ask questions all the time. With each question, scientists discover new information, learn new ways to do things and find out reasons why something does or doesn't happen. When we ask children questions as they play, we can help them to explore the world around them like a scientist. Ask questions (wonder). Guess answers (hypothesize). Do something (experiment). See what happens (observe the results).



Wash, but Don't Wax by John H. White

Try this! Use questions to guide your child's experimental water play. As you ask questions, consider documenting their findings by writing them down or taking pictures.

- **How does water sound and act?** Fill a plastic bin with water and provide your child with a straw, spoons, cup and a clean, empty spray bottle. Invite your child to blow bubbles, pour or spray water, and to stir and hit the water.

Guide exploration with questions: *What sounds do you hear? How does the water look or move?*

- **What will water do?** Discover what happens when you use a spoon or water dropper to put water on different surfaces like colored construction paper, a washcloth or sponge, and a plate with a spoonful of vegetable oil.

Guide exploration with questions: *What do you think will happen? What did happen? How did the surfaces change?*

- **How will different items act in water?** Gather a selection of miscellaneous small items like coins, toys, leaves and utensils. One by one, drop them into a plastic bin of water to see what they do. Before you do, ask your child what they think will happen.

Guide exploration with questions: *Did it sink or float? Why did that happen? Which items are heavier and lighter?*

Tip:

Discover together what happens when water is put in the freezer and taken out!

CREATE

Create art inspired by this week's theme!

Remember Your Questions

Every day is a new day to ask questions and learn. We can ask questions about the people in our lives, about the things that happen in the world or about what we imagine and wonder about. With so many questions in our minds, it can be helpful to have a place to put all our wonderings! Create a “Wonder Why” book to save all of your questions.

Grown-ups:

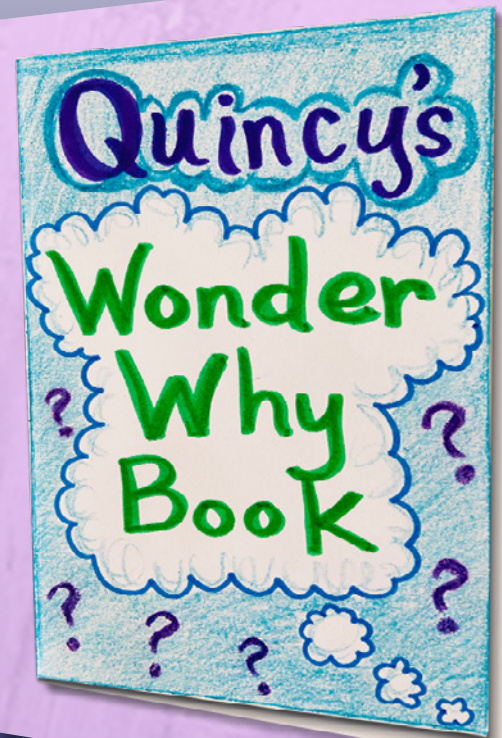
Create a booklet by folding a stack of 5 blank pieces of paper in half. Add a piece of colored construction paper for the cover. Secure the booklet's paper with staples or tape. Then, support your child in writing “_____’s Wonder Why Book” on the cover.

Early Learners:

After decorating the booklet cover, draw pictures of people, places and things that you want to know more about on the first page or two.

You can also look through magazines and cut out pictures with the help of an adult. Then, use a glue stick to add pictures to the booklet pages.

Caregivers: Help children begin to add questions to the booklet. First, look at the pictures the child drew or glued on the pages. Then, ask: *What is this a picture of? What do you already know about it? What do you wonder? What questions do you have?*



LEARN

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

Keep Asking Questions

Why does a car need gas? What makes the apple green or red or yellow? How come daddy is taller than grandma? Why can't I have the same toys that my friend has?

As children grow older and see, hear or experience more things, it's natural that their questions increase in complexity, range in topics and change in their frequency. Use your child's "Wonder Why" book to store all of the questions they ask, no matter what they're about. The book can serve as a place to document and celebrate their curious, questioning minds! As you fill the pages together, be sure to look through them regularly to answer questions and to reflect on questions that have since been answered. Also, try this:

- **Write question words.** While you may often assist them in writing the questions they ask, show your child how to write short words like *why* or *how* on the pages. By watching you write the questions and in practicing writing the question words themselves, children learn that their thoughts and wonderings are writable and important.

- **Create question mark art.** How do we know when someone has written a question? They end their sentence with a question mark! Invite your child to use markers and crayons to practice drawing the swirls and dots of question marks. Draw big question marks and little ones. Try making a pattern too.



EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

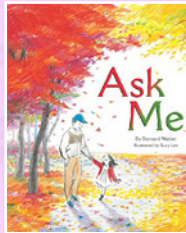
Books

Asking questions is a natural part of being a child. Nurture your little one's curiosity with the books below!



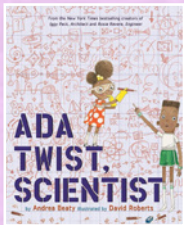
Just Ask!

by Sonia Sotomayor,
illustrated by Rafael López



Ask Me

by Bernard Waber,
illustrated by Suzy Lee



Ada Twist, Scientist

by Andrea Beaty,
illustrated by David Roberts



Do You Know Which Ones Will Grow?

by Susan A. Shea,
illustrated by Tom Slaughter

Tip:

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

Online Resources

Learn more about supporting your child to wonder and question the world around them.

- ✿ [When Kids Ask \(Really\) Tough Questions: A Quick Guide](#) - NPR
- ✿ [Why Do Children Ask, “Why?”](#) - HuffPost News
- ✿ [Ask Questions, Build Skills](#) - Sesame Street In Communities

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) is 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

- Wash, but Don't Wax by John H. White, 1970–1989. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of John H. White/Pulitzer Prize-Winning Photojournalist, © John H. White. [2016.118.10](#)

Original Artwork

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