

W is for Worthy

# JOY FUL

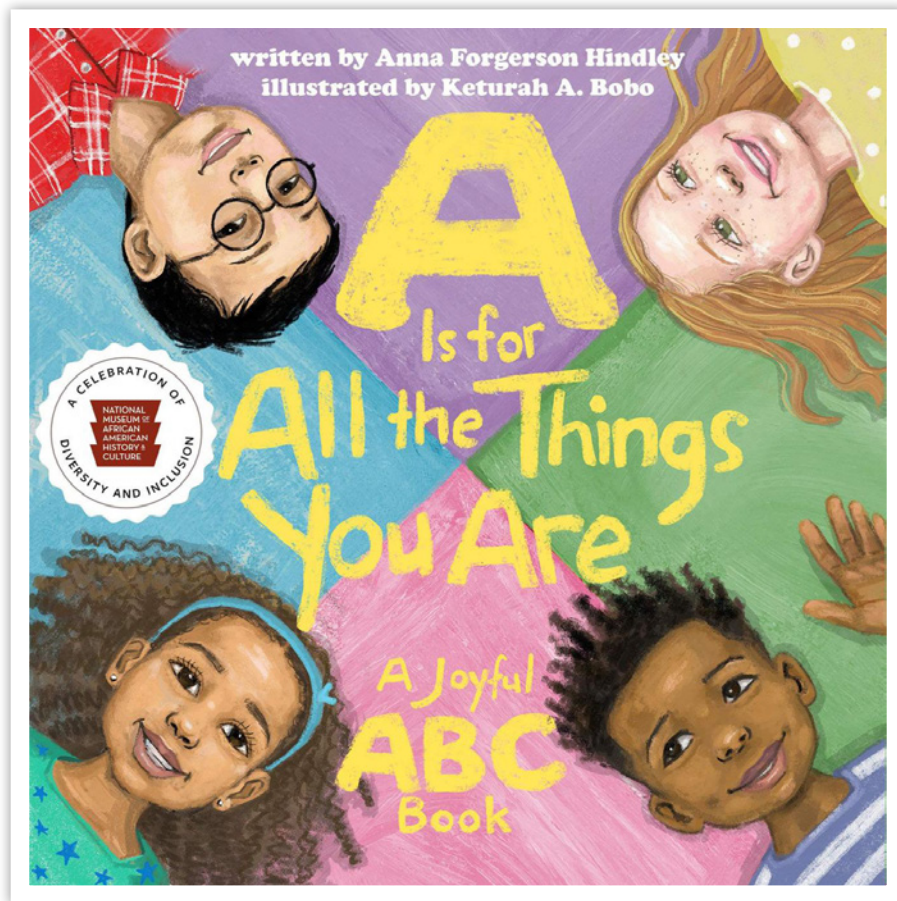


**A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK**

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  
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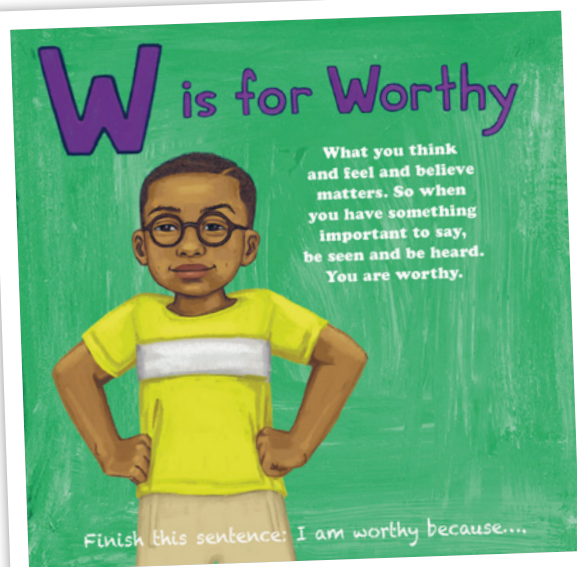
# W is for Worthy:

What you think and feel and believe matters. So when you have something important to say, be seen and be heard. You are worthy.

Finish this sentence: I am worthy because...

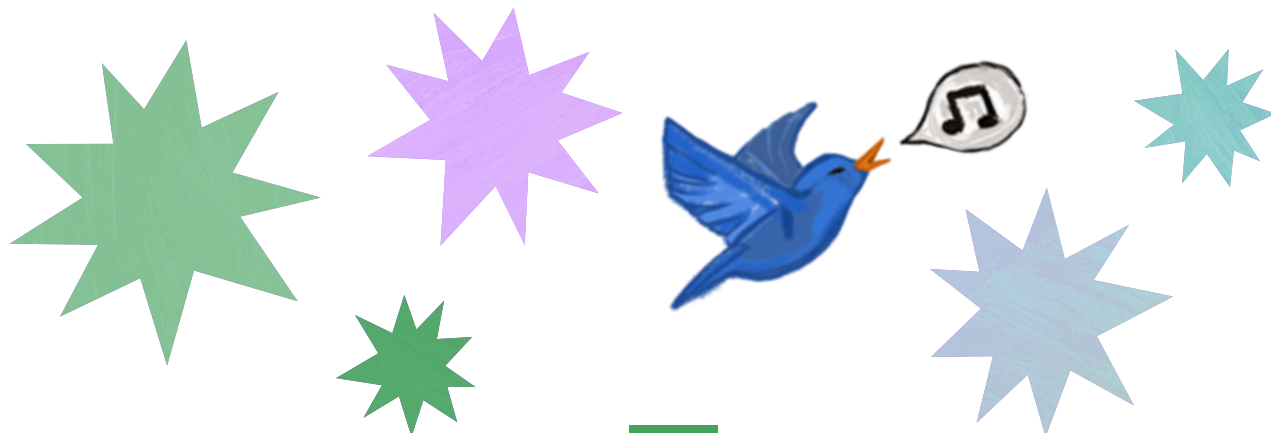
It can be so exciting to think about who our babies will become and all of the amazing things they will learn and do. And, as caregivers of young children, it's a part of our job to help little ones grow. But babies come to us worthy of being loved and valued as they are right now.

When our attention is focused solely on a child's future or on their next accomplishment, unintentionally, we're telling our little ones that who they are right now isn't enough. As their loving caregivers, we can let our little ones know that they are worthy of love, respect, and joy just as they are, without having to earn or prove it.



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Building a child's sense of self-worth means letting them know that they don't need to do more, know more or say more to matter. At each stage of their lives, they are worthy of the space to be themselves and to be loved and cared for. We can equip them with this essential knowledge by not only caring for them but by sharing empowering words with them and modeling self-love as well. When children know they are worthy of being heard, seen and respected, they will be more likely to persist when trying new things, take appropriate risks and stand up for themselves and others throughout their lives. As your child continues to understand, own, and define their worth, your support and affirming language along the way will help them to feel comfortable and confident in who they are at every stage of their growth.





# EXPLORE

Discover an everyday way to explore this week's theme with your infant or toddler.

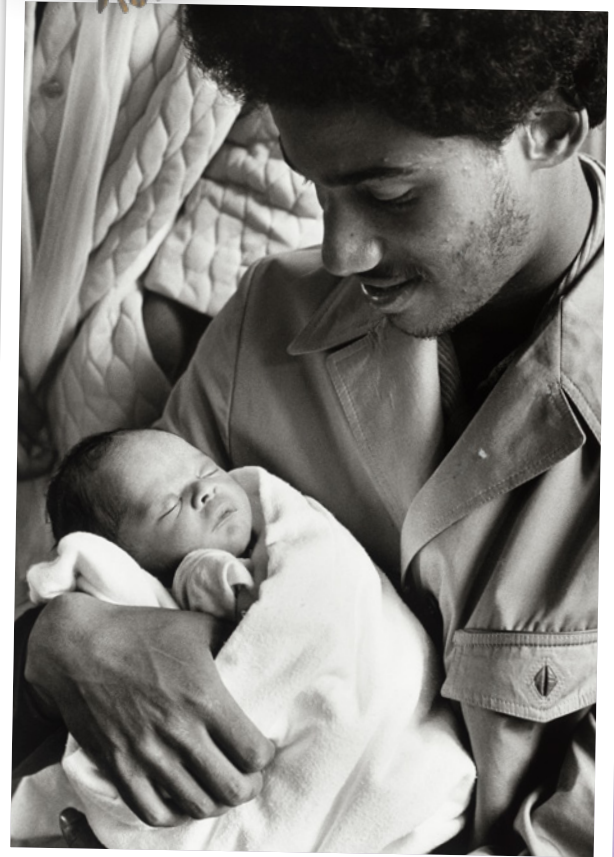


## You Are Worthy!

Affectionate kisses and sweet squeezes. Bubbly baths and nighttime nursing. Giggling and playing peek-a-boo. Meal times and bedtime stories and lullabies. Our actions tell little ones they are loved, fun to be with and worthy of our energy and attention by just being themselves, not by earning it in any way. We can make this message more clear and powerful when we add words. Telling our little ones their worth in words as well as actions deepens their internal belief and understanding that they are enough, and equips them with confident, self-empowering language they can use as they grow.

### Daily Affirmations

During your daily routines, tell your little one, with words, that they are worthy of love and deserve the freedom to be themselves. Share the special affirmations below during mirror play, bath time or cuddly moments.



[Photograph by Ruth-Marion Baruch](#)

**You are worthy. I think you are wonderful.**

**You are worthy of being here. I'm glad you are here.**

**You are worthy of being heard. I hear you.**

**You are worthy of love just as you are. I love you just as you are.**

**You are worthy of the time you need to grow and learn. I'm with you as you grow and learn.**

**You are worthy of my love, support and protection. I will always love and protect you.**

**Tip:**

Discover more loving affirmations you can share with your infant or toddler [here](#).



# EXPLORE

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

## Worthy of Space

Whether we're new here or have been around for a long time, each of us is worthy of taking up space on this planet! Oftentimes, depending on age, gender and race, certain people are given more space in conversations, in physical places or in the world's attention. Starting in childhood, some of us may be taught to make ourselves smaller, quieter or more dim so that others can take up more space, be heard and shine bright. However, caregivers can support babies and toddlers to claim and use all the space they are so worthy of in their life and the bigger world.

Take up space with big body movements! When young children move their bodies in big and fun ways, they build motor skills and gain confidence. Model these activities where your child can see you taking up space and choose to join in (or not).



Studio portrait of a baby by Rev. Henry Clay Anderson

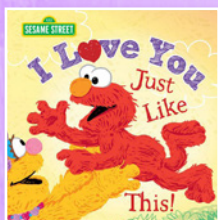
- **Make shapes.** Use your arms or your whole body to make a circle, triangle or heart.
- **Be big.** Reach high, then wide. Lay down like a starfish or do jumping jacks! Wave your arms and sway your body from side to side.
- **Move around.** Roll around on a soft surface. Hop around a room. Take giant steps.

# EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

## Books

Tell your little one how special they are with the sweet stories below.



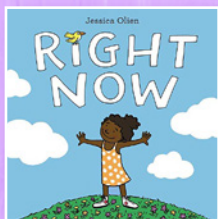
### **I Love You Just Like This!**

by Lillian Jaine,  
illustrated by Ernie Kwiat



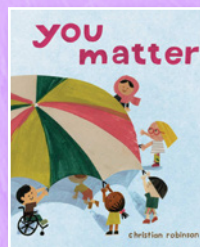
### **Honey Baby Sugar Child**

by Alice Faye Duncan,  
illustrated by Susan Keeter



### **Right Now**

by Jessica Olien



### **You Matter**

by Christian Robinson

**Tip:**

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

## Online Resources

Learn everyday ways to build your infant or toddler's self-love and self-confidence.



Developing Self-Confidence From [Birth to 12 Months](#) and [24 Months to 36 Months](#) - **Zero To Three**



[10 Ways to Love the One You're With](#) - **Aha! Parenting**

# 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) 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.

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

- Studio portrait of a baby by Rev. Henry Clay Anderson, 1948–1970s. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Charles Schwartz and Shawn Wilson, © Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. [2012.137.17.21](#)
- *David Lewis and Baby Jesus X, San Francisco, California, No. 3* 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. [2012.149.2](#)

### Original Artwork

- Bluebird (cover, pages 2, 3) © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC