

Y is for Young

# JOY FUL

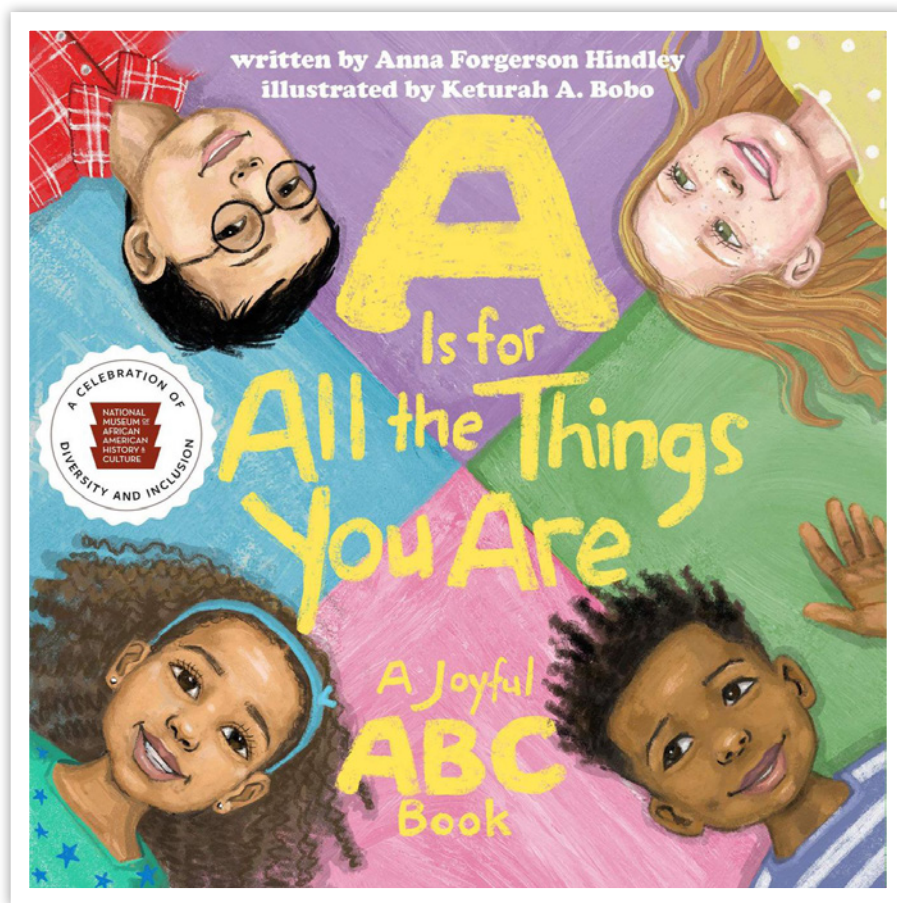


**A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK**

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.

A Is for All the Things You Are: A Joyful ABC Book  
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# Y is for Young:

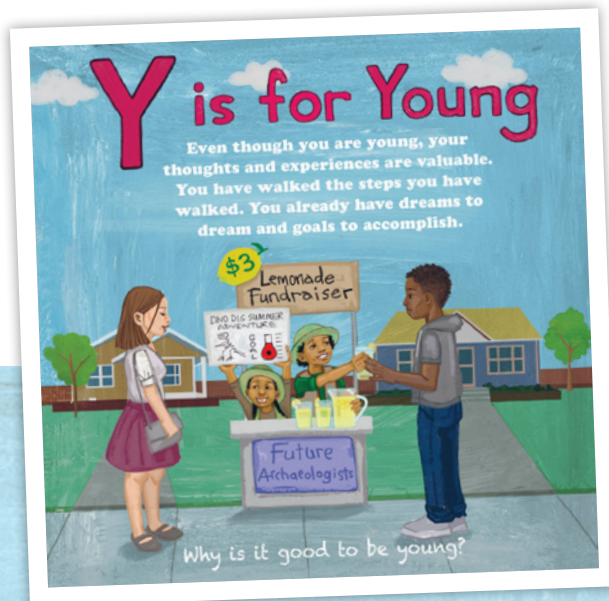
Even though you are young, your thoughts and experiences are valuable. You have walked the steps you have walked. You already have dreams to dream and goals to accomplish.

## Why is it good to be young?

*How old are you?* What a beautiful sight it is to watch a child hold their fingers up and declare their age with confidence and pride! For many children, being young is a positive characteristic. They might not have the language to explain how this offers creative possibilities, fresh perspectives, and countless chances to try something new, but they feel it and experience it everyday. As caregivers, we can support our children to continue to feel good and proud of who they are at any age. Though children may be excited about their age, between the ages of three and five, they also start to correlate size or age with abilities and value, often concluding that being older is better.

We can remind our children they don't have to wait to "grow up" to accomplish great things. We can let them know their ideas, feelings and voice matter to us. We can find ways to show them that we trust them to be helpful and safe. Acknowledge that it is exciting (and vital) that with each new year come opportunities to learn new things, and gain new responsibilities. However, also acknowledge that there's no need to rush through life to get to those "big kid" or "grown-up" years. Instead of asking the usual, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" try asking questions that allow them to reflect on what they've already accomplished and what they can be and do now. *What do you do that makes you feel proud? What can you do now that you couldn't do when you were two?*

Point out what great things they've done in their young years. *Last week you couldn't jump on one foot, now you can! You listened and followed directions by putting your dishes in the sink - thank you! I'm so impressed you just pointed out the letter Y for the first time!* Even as a child, they have grown and changed a lot. They are already impressive, and the ways they grow in experience, capacity, and understanding is something to celebrate every day.



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## What You'll Need:

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

- Markers and crayons
- Paper
- Scissors
- Glue

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.



## Young and Curious

*What are you curious about?* Have you ever wondered how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly? Do you like taking toys apart and putting them back together again? Because you are young, there are many new adventures waiting for you to learn something new about the world, yourself and others. The world is full of new people to meet, places to visit, foods to taste, games to play and things to learn. Being curious fills your life with everyday experiences to gain new information, inspire new ideas and grow new skills.

Support your child to pause and be curious. Ask: *What questions do you have? What do you want to learn about?* Sometimes children may not be able to verbalize their interests but observing what they are drawn to in their play can reflect their curiosities. Then, discover the answers to your child's questions by following three simple steps: *Read. Go. Do.* See examples of local, curiosity-driven adventures below:

**Curious about farms?** **Read** stories and watch videos about farms and how migrant workers gather and care for crops. **Go** on a hunt for fruits and veggies at a grocery store. **Plant** seeds at home in recycled containers or an outside garden.

**Curious about bodies?** **Read** about diverse bodies and abilities. **Go** to a local drugstore to look at items we use to care for our bodies like sunscreen to protect skin, combs for hair, glasses to help eyes and bandages or braces for injuries. **Trace** your body on the ground with chalk then draw all of your inside parts.

As you learn together, celebrate how the curiosity of your young child's mind led to a great adventure!

# CREATE

Create art inspired by this week's theme!

## Young and Important

In her book *Becoming*, Michelle Obama writes, "It's one of the most useless questions an adult can ask a child... 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' As if growing up is finite. As if, at some point, you become something and that's the end." Though it's natural for us to be excited about what's next, it's important we spend time reflecting on and celebrating the specialness and joys of the here and now with our children. The more adults focus on the future, the more time children spend thinking about their next birthday or grade level rather than what's wonderful right now. Children need to know that who they are right now is enough. Drawing self-portraits can be a fun way to think about and celebrate who your child is.



## Early Learners:

Take a look in the mirror. What do you see? Look closely at your skin, hair and the way you smile. Now, *who* do you see in the mirror? Are you a friend or a sibling? Are you a student or a neighbor? Who you are and the way that you look right now matters. You don't need to grow up or change to be special. You already are.

Celebrate the amazing, young person you see in the mirror! Create a self-portrait that shows who you are today. Think about what you love about yourself and add these details to your portrait. Draw yourself wearing your favorite outfit, playing with a favorite toy or reading a book you love. Ask your grown up to help you add words to describe who you are like *friend*, *teammate*, *kind* or *funny*.





# LEARN

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

## Young and Helpful

### Learn Letters

People of all ages can make a positive difference in the world. Even if you are young, your actions have power and can help change things for the better. Think about a time when people have helped you. What did it feel like? What are some ways you are helpful to your family and friends? Divide a piece of paper into 3 sections by drawing a large uppercase “Y.” Label these sections on your paper with the words: *Family*, *Friends* and *Community*. Then, talk about how you help your family, friends, and community and fill in your Y-chart with words and pictures to show it.



### Boost Literacy

Whether waving hello, giving a high five, lending a hand to pick up trash or writing a card to a loved one or putting powerful words on a sign, using our hands to write and be helpful takes practice. Support your child's hand muscle growth and fine motor skill development with a tracing activity. Invite your child to trace their own hands (then, family members' and friends' hands) with a crayon on paper. Later, they can further strengthen their motor skills by cutting the hands out with scissors. For extra fun, use the hand shapes to make a poster. Your little one can color in the hand shapes, glue them to a large piece of paper and add words or pictures to the poster to show the different ways hands can work together and be helpful.

# EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

## Books

Celebrate the many things your child can do and be! Share these stories with your favorite little one.



### **I Promise**

by LeBron James,  
illustrated by Nina Mata



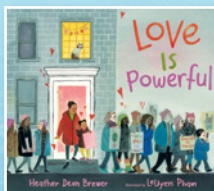
### **To Be A Kid**

by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko



### **I Have the Right to Be a Child**

by Alain Serres, illustrated by  
Aurelia Fronty, translated by  
Helen Mixer



### **Love is Powerful**

by Heather Dean Brewer,  
illustrated by LeUyen Pham



### **All the Ways to be Smart**

by Davina Bell,  
illustrated by Allison Colpoys



### **Beautiful Hands**

by Bret Baumgarten, co-authored and  
illustrated by Kathryn Otoshi

Tip:

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

## Online Resources

Discover what our little ones can teach us just by being themselves and ways to empower them to feel capable as they grow.

- ★ [What Children Teach Us About Life](#) - **Nurture and Thrive**
- ★ [How to Reclaim the Joy, Curiosity and Carefreeness of Childhood](#) - **Medium**
- ★ [Why Young Children are Curious](#) - **Scholastic**



# 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

- "All Hands on Deck" Window Board by Damon Davis, November 2014. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Damon Davis, © Damon Davis. [2015.192.1](#)
- Print of a young girl and boy posing with a picture frame by Gaston L. DeVigne II, 1950–1970. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Gaston L. DeVigne III in memory of his parents Gaston L. DeVigne II and Yvonne B. DeVigne, © Gaston L. DeVigne II. [2014.272.14.10.3](#)

### Original Artwork

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