

Z is for Zany

# JOY FUL

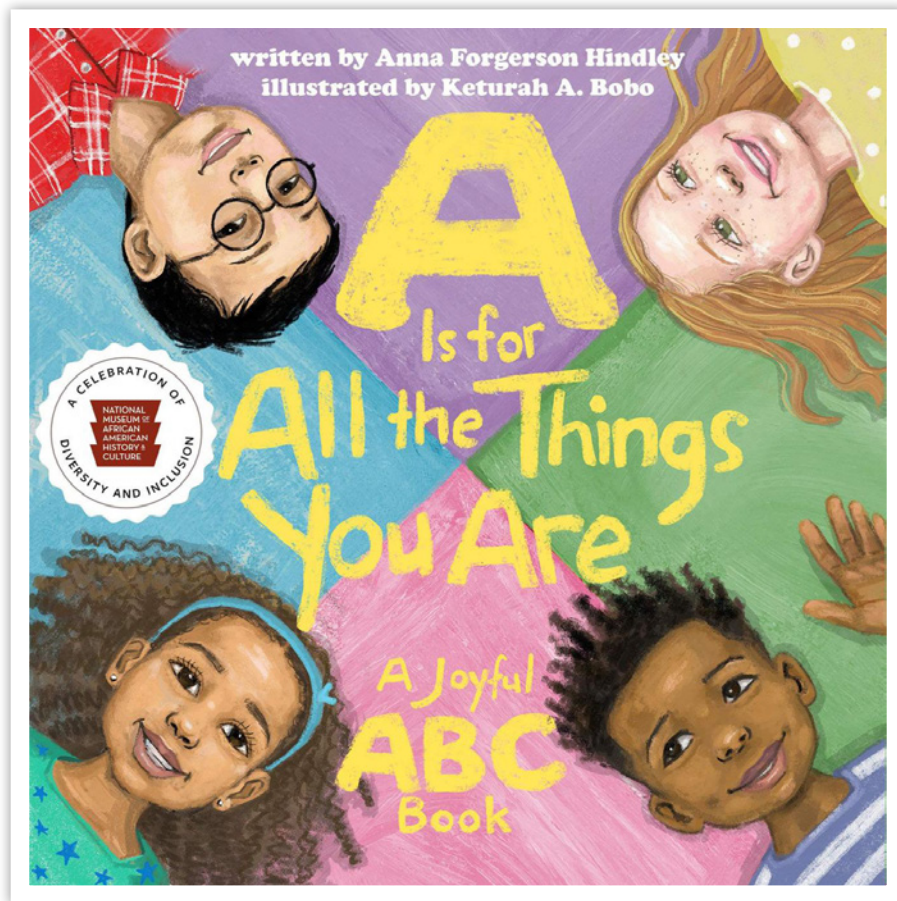


**A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK**

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  
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# Z is for Zany:

You move to the beat of your own drum. *You are a one-person parade going through life and demonstrating ALL the AMAZING things you are!*

Oh the magic of babies' first bursts of laughter and the wriggling exuberance of toddler delight! Given the hard work of caring for little ones, it's a good thing that they share their pleasure so outwardly and freely. It is one of the gifts of being in the presence of these very young human beings. Witnessing your little one's glee goes deeper than the enjoyment of the moment. One of the side effects of shared laughter is a deep sense of fellowship and safety with those who laugh with you.

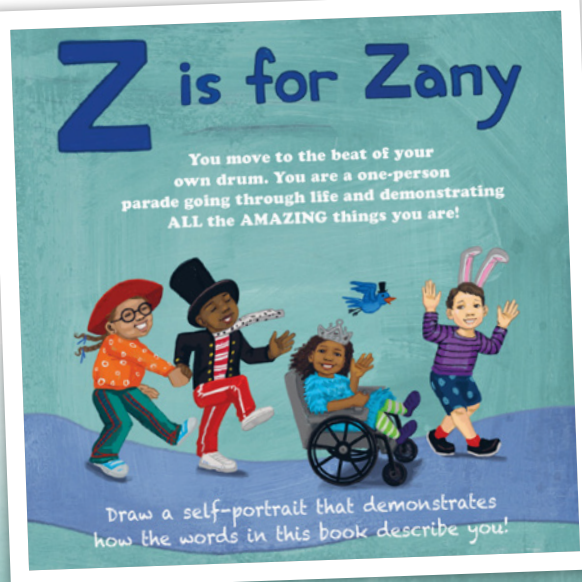
As we grow, part of what makes us resilient in hard times is the deep belief that life *can* be good and that shared joy is possible. There is strength that comes from playfulness. We acquire an understanding that surprise can be a delight and that with silliness comes wonderful discoveries. When we laugh together we feel that we are okay, safe and connected. (Part of what makes being laughed at or teased so painful is the loss of this sense of safety and relationship.) Laughter and playfulness become essential parts of our life's toolkit.

This week, seek the silly! Give yourself and your little one the gift of the impractical, creative, playful and zany experiences in everyday moments, from mealtimes and car rides to bathtime and play. Know that this feeds their resilience in life as well as your own. Make a joyful memory. Let your zaniness in the midst of challenges be a reminder that it is so good to be alive and to be together.

## What You'll Need:

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

- Books
- Recording device (like a cellphone)
- Journal
- Pen



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# EXPLORE

In early childhood, children learn best through doing! To explore this week's theme, try the activities below with your infant or toddler.

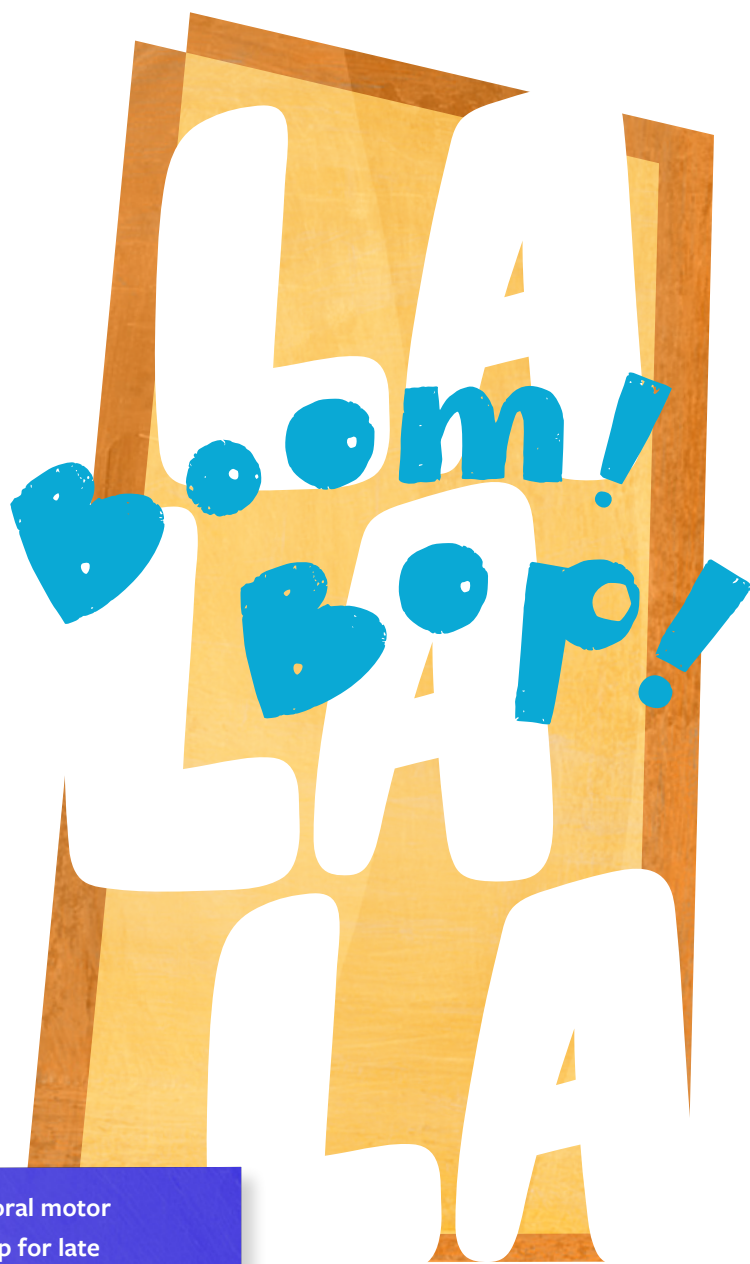
## Zany Words and Sounds

Because of our little ones' newness to the world, they haven't yet been conditioned to know what society labels as "normal" or "unusual." This freedom allows them to be expressive without limits. They are just beginning to learn words and understand how to communicate with others. This means our days are full of loud and unique expressions, silly words and sounds and zany babbling and gurgling. It's exciting for our babies and toddlers to discover what their voices sound like and are capable of! Embrace their zany sounds, language and growing literacy skills with the experiences below:

- **Sing silly songs!** Songs like [Apples and Bananas](#) by Raffi or scatting numbers by Ella Fitzgerald or Louis Armstrong introduce new, playful sounds which make them engaging and fun for little ones.
- **Imagine instruments.** Play imaginary instruments and use your voice to make their sounds! Say *boom boom bop badoom doom bop* as you play invisible drums. Shout *honk honk hoot toot* while you use your hands as a horn.
- **Read books!** Read stories to your little one with animal sounds like *Moo, Baa, La La La!* by Sandra Boynton, or funny words like *Jazz Baby* by Lisa Wheeler.

Tip:

Imitating zany sounds is fun *and* builds verbal skills, supports oral motor development, and can serve as an important "in-between" step for late talkers before they pronounce real words. Read more about how children develop language and sounds [here](#).





# EXPLORE

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

## Laughing Out Loud

One of the greatest joys of having babies and toddlers in our lives is discovering what sparks their giggles and smiles and then hearing the resulting laughter. Our little one's laughter is an expression that reflects their brain, humor and heart. Some babies find games of peek-a-boo hysterical while others' giggles are sparked with tickles. Some toddlers laugh loudly while being playfully chased and scooped up, while others are amused with funny facial expressions. The way they light up and fill a room with uncontrollable laughter is contagious and precious.

When you find something that makes your little one laugh, keep doing it and videotape or record it. Over time, continue to record the sound of your child's laughter so you can capture how it sounds at different times and evolves over the months and years. These early laughs and sounds will delight you as your child grows and will delight them as they become older.

Babies laugh before they can talk, making it one of the earliest forms of communication and a way to connect with others. Read more about what makes your baby laugh and why [here](#).



# EXPLORE MORE

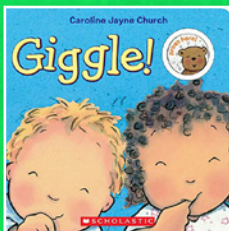
Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

## Books

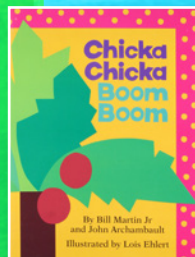
Books with silly words, interactive moments and funny stories not only spark laughter, they boost language skills too! Try these suggested books.



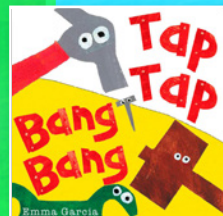
**Peekaboo!**  
by Taro Gomi



**Giggle!**  
by Caroline Jayne Church



**Chicka Chicka Boom Boom**  
by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault,  
illustrated by Lois Ehlert



**Tap Tap Bang Bang**  
by Emma Garcia

## Online Resources

Enjoy the zany songs below with your little one!

- ★ [“Silly Sounding Words” Song](#) - Sesame Street
- ★ [“Be Doodle Dee Dum” Song](#) - Sesame Street
- ★ [“Tortellini” Song](#) - Sesame Street

# TO OUR NMAAHC KIDS COMMUNITY

At the National Museum of African American History and Culture, our collections tell stories of resilience, stories of triumphs, and stories of people who have, throughout history, shown great creativity and built precious human connections often under oppressive circumstances. These stories hold so many valuable lessons but one that served as the constant foundation and inspiration for the *Joyful ABC Activity Book Series* was this: Adults have a special responsibility to center joy, foster positive identity development and offer loving, understanding support for young children as they begin to write their own stories. Our hope was that every booklet would be a tool for supporting children to live, grow and be resilient in a diverse world where injustice and bias still exist.

From the moment they are born, the pages of our children's stories are filled with messages they absorb from the world around them about who they are, who others are and what their similarities and differences mean. Some of these messages can be true and empowering, and others can be false, oppressive, and destructive. So, while our children's unique hearts and minds play an important role in the trajectory of their life story, these outside messages can too.

What children believe about themselves impacts their ability to face negative messages, challenges, bias, and injustice. Knowing that they are worthy of respect and love makes a powerful difference in determining what makes it onto the pages of our children's stories. From *A is for Amazing* to *Z is for Zany*, Joyful ABC Activity Books were designed to communicate these essential messages to children: *You matter. You are wonderful just as you are. You have the power to change the world.* We hope that these messages become core parts of their stories.

While our booklets offer activities and resources to celebrate and nurture twenty-six characteristics in our little ones, it's so exciting and inspiring to know that they are everything from Amazing to Zany and so much more! Our little ones are still adding to this list, growing in their skills and knowledge, and discovering who they truly are day by day. As they move through the chapters of their life, delight in the way their story unfolds. Find a balance between supporting your little one and giving them space to write a unique story. And remember, though your little one is at the start of their story, that doesn't mean you're at the end of yours. Keep filling your own pages too.

**Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your story.**

## Early Childhood Education Initiative



## Credits

### Objects

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### Original Artwork

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