

S is for Strong

JOY FUL

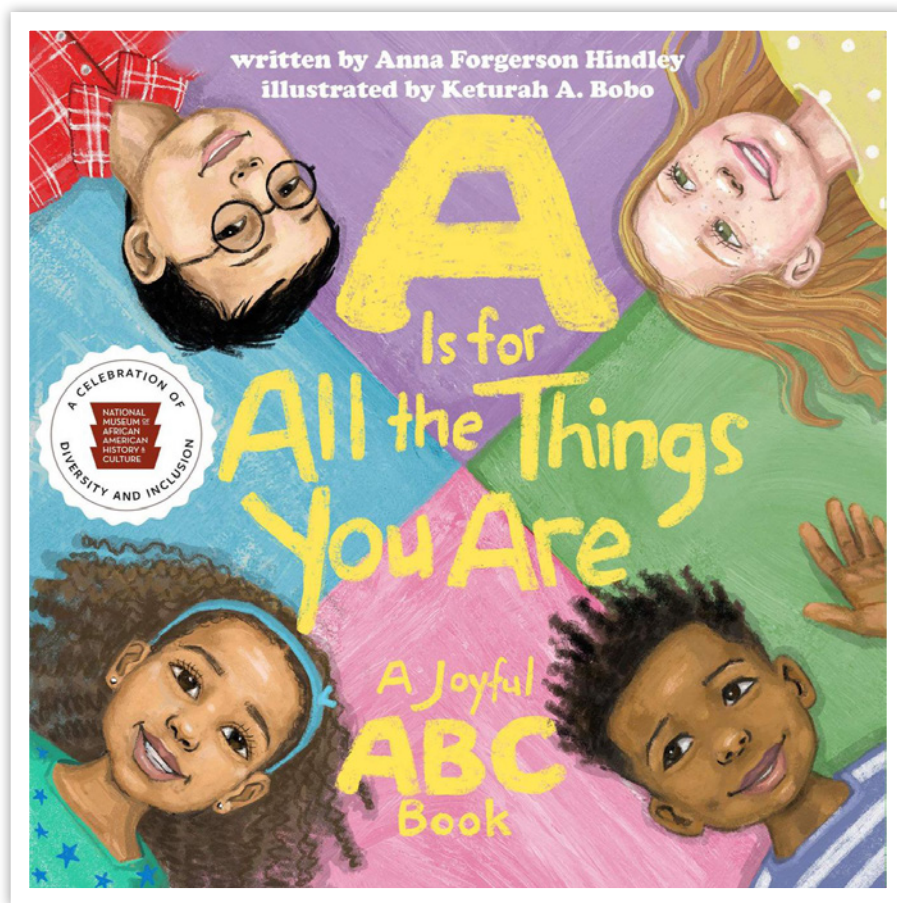


A NMAAHC KIDS ABCs ACTIVITY BOOK

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 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 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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S is for Strong:

You have a strong heart, strong mind, and a strong body. When you're able to stay calm in a difficult situation, or stay positive even when something seems impossible, that shows strength.

How are you strong?

Our young ones are eager to solve problems and offer helping hands. While there are many ways we define strength, strong is the perfect word for the kind of confidence and caring that our children are developing. When we nurture our little ones to see themselves as strong, we can also support them to use their strengths, whatever they may be, to confidently care about themselves and their community.

Begin to help your children see themselves as strong community members by noticing who is contributing to making their community strong. While on your daily commutes, name public places, organizations, stores, and people who positively contribute to your community. Depending on where you live, your favorite museum, your teachers, the candy lady, the barbershop, and community activists, may be examples of the strength and power of your community.

Ask your child, "What makes you feel strong?" Listen and observe how your child has internalized the word *strong* and look for ways your child can use their inner strengths to help others.

Together, notice the ways your family contributes to making yourselves and your community stronger: *We shared books by using the local library. Sharing and learning makes us strong. We picked up trash at our favorite playground. When we have a safe place to play, we build strong relationships. We donated supplies to our local food distribution site. When everyone has food, their bodies can grow stronger.*

When our children hear about the tragedies of the world, they might feel helpless or weak. Remind them, "We still have strong hearts, strong minds, and strong bodies. How can we use our strengths to help?"

In order to help our communities, it's essential for our little ones to first learn, grow and be proud of their personal strengths. Support your little one to discover and build their strengths with activities shared here.



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What You'll Need:

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

- Paper
- Favorite drawing tools (crayons, colored pencils, markers)
- Sidewalk chalk

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.

My Strong Heart

There are many ways to be strong. Sometimes strength is acknowledging all of our heart's feelings and slowing down to process them. The simple act of focusing on our breath going in and out can help young children build inner strength. Without using any extra tools, breathing helps strengthen our ability to focus, manage big feelings, and navigate tough situations.

Imagine you are in front of this bowl of flowers. What colors do you see? What do you think these flowers smell like? Take a deep breath in through your nose and imagine its scent. Then, exhale back through your nose. Do this 8 times, each time focusing on a different flower.

How do you feel? What did you notice in your body while you were breathing slowly?

Untitled (Zinnias) by Clementine Hunter



Try these different mindful breathing exercises to strengthen your body and mind:

- **Dragon Fire:** Pretend you're a dragon! Open your mouth wide, stick out your tongue, and breathe out through your mouth. Try moving your arms like dragon wings - raising them up as you breathe in and lowering them as you breathe out.
- **Baby Bunny:** When rabbits wiggle their noses, they can breathe more easily. Pretend you are a baby bunny and practice breathing using just your nose. Sit on your knees and keep your back straight. Take three quick sniffs in through the nose, and one long exhale out the nose.

Tip:

Share more mindful breathing moments with your little one with *Breathe Like a Bear* by Kira Willey.

CREATE

Create art inspired by this week's theme!

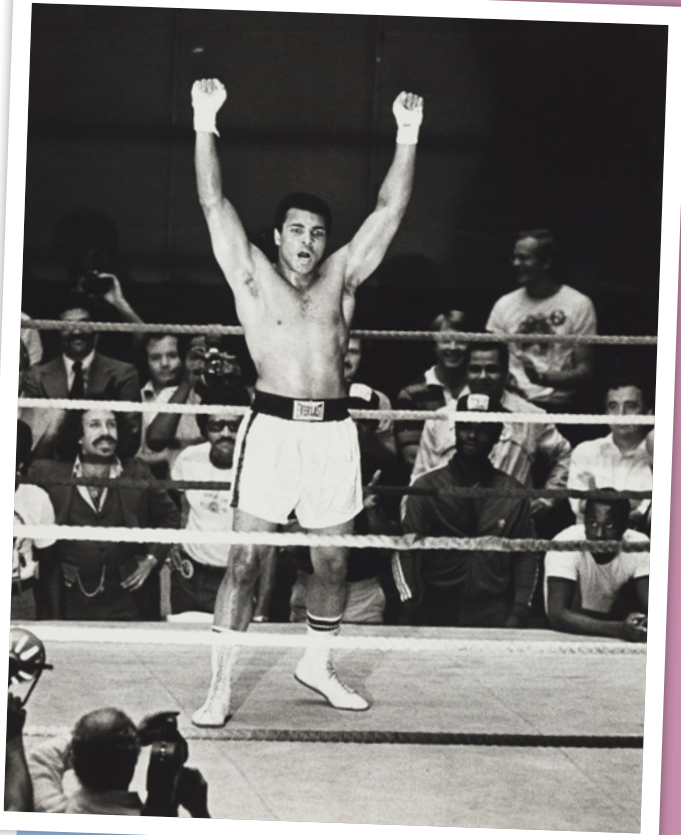
My Strong Mind

Muhammad Ali was a legendary boxer who won many matches during his career. He had a strong body but also a strong mind. Muhammad Ali once said, *"I am the greatest. I said that even before I knew I was. I figured that if I said it enough, I would convince the world that I really was the greatest."*

When Muhammed Ali declared, *"I am the greatest,"* he was saying an affirmation. An affirmation is a short, powerful statement that you say to yourself to help quiet negative or unhelpful thoughts. Affirmations are like exercises for our mind. Saying and repeating affirmations out loud can help us stay positive about who we are and keep going when we face challenges.

Make affirmations a part of your child's daily routine by creating a "My Strong Mind Book" together.

- 1 First, choose affirmations that you want to practice. You can choose from the list below or create your own.
 - I am strong.
 - I matter.
 - I can do hard things.
 - I am helpful and kind.
 - I am grateful.
- 2 Create your book. Leave the pages full-size or fold them in half. Connect paper together using a stapler, tape, or paperclip.
- 3 Fill the pages with words and pictures. Write one affirmation at the top of each page. Leave enough space below to either draw a picture or glue a photo that best represents the affirmation.
- 4 Read your affirmations together. Talk about what they mean. The more your child reads their book, the stronger their confidence, positive thinking and emotions will be.



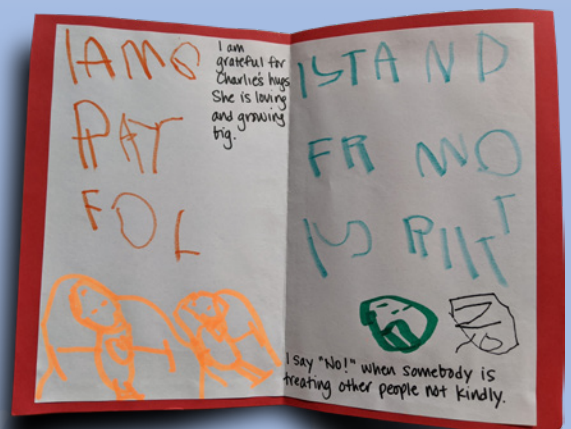
Untitled by John H. White

What You'll Need:

- Paper
- Favorite drawing tools (crayons, colored pencils, markers)

Optional (additional) materials:

- Stapler, tape, or paperclip
- Photographs
- Glue



LEARN

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

My Strong Body

Our little ones' bodies are amazing! They grow, gain new skills and get stronger everyday. Discover a new way to strengthen your child's body and letter writing and recognition with this engaging game.

The alphabet has gotten all mixed up! Can you help put it back together again? Use your strong body to find letters, move to letters and make letters quickly!



Set up your space:

If inside, work together to write each letter of the alphabet down on a separate piece of paper. Shuffle the papers, making sure to mix up the alphabet's order. Then place the letters around the room or on a table. If outside, use chalk to write large letters on the ground together in a random order.

How To Play :

Call out a letter or letter sound to your child. Invite your child to find the letter as fast as they can! They may find or identify certain letters more quickly or easily than others. Regardless of their speed, celebrate their focus and movements as they go.

Try one of these suggestions or make up your own way to play:

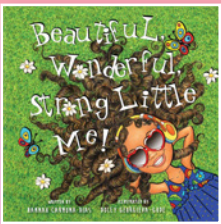
- Call out letters and letter sounds: *How fast can you find the letter S? Look for the letter that sounds like "sss."*
- Make a letter: *Use your hands to show me what the letter S looks like! Can you make your body into a S?*
- Move your body: *Hop to the letter S. Speed walk to the letter T.*
- Collect letters to spell words: *Let's spell the word sun. S-U-N. Find the letters S, U and N.*

EXPLORE MORE

Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

Books

People can be strong in all kinds of ways. Talk about how the characters in these stories show their strength. How are you strong in the same or different ways?



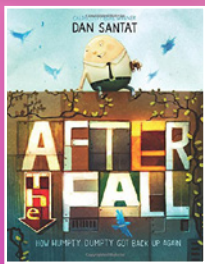
Beautiful, Wonderful, Strong Little Me!

by Hannah Carmona Dias,
illustrated by Dolly Georgieva-Gode



The Boy with Big, Big Feelings

by Britney Winn Lee,
illustrated by Jacob Souva



After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again

by Dan Santat



I Am a Kindness Hero

by Jennifer Adams,
illustrated by Carme Lemniscates

Tip:

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

Online Resources

Support your little one's internal strength with the resources below.

- ★ [Common and Colbie Caillat Sing "Belly Breathe" - Sesame Street](#)
- ★ [The Power of Positive Affirmations for Kids - Generational Mindful](#)
- ★ [Teach Kids How to Be Mentally Tough - Verywell Family](#)

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

- *Untitled (Zinnias)* by Clementine Hunter, 1970. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift from the Collection of Sabra Brown Martin. [2017.68.7](#).
- *Untitled [Muhammad Ali]* by John H. White, 1977. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of John H. White/Pulitzer Prize-Winning Photojournalist, © John H. White. [2016.118.30](#).

Program Photos

Doug Sanford, National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2019

Original Artwork

- Bluebird (cover; page 3), Stars (page 4) © 2018 Art by Keturah Ariel LLC