

X is for Xenial

JOY



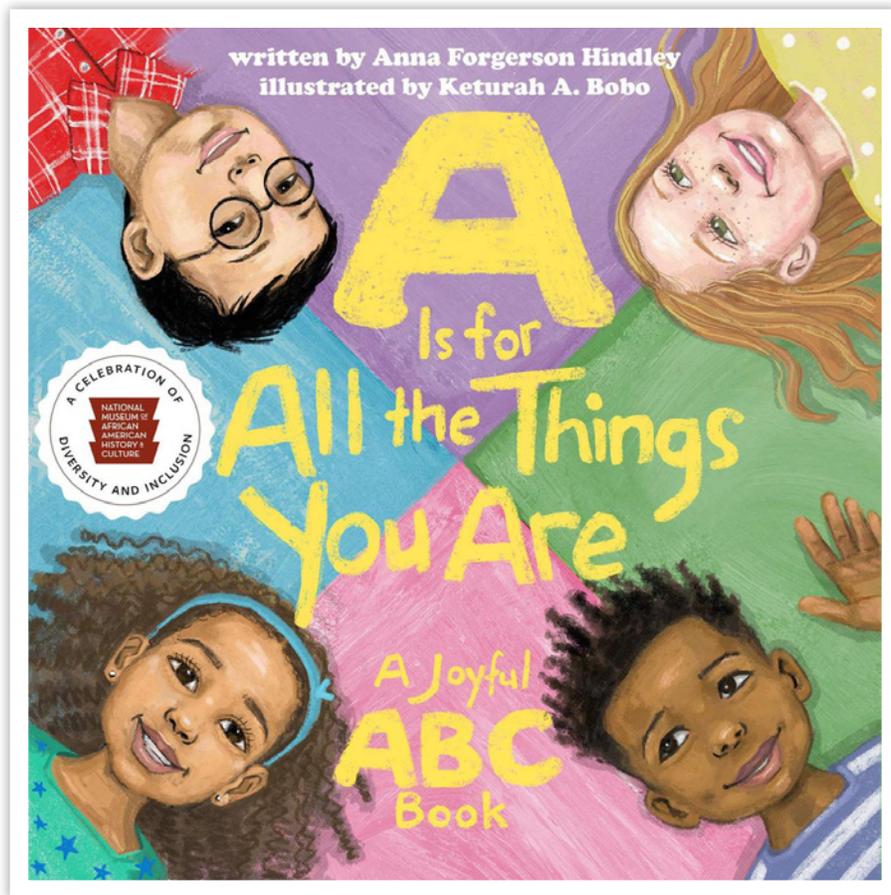
FULL

**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 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. 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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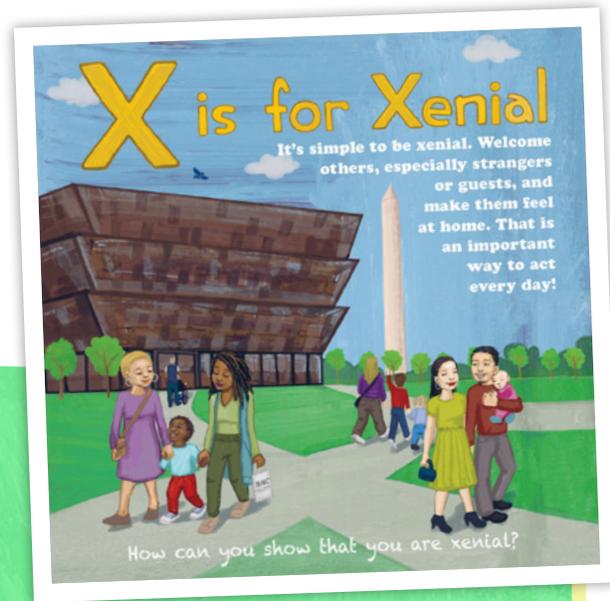
# X is for Xenial:

It's simple to be xenial. Welcome others, especially strangers or guests, and make them feel at home. That is an important way to act every day!

How can you show that you are xenial?

Little ones are innately interested in other people. Oftentimes, one of their first words is “hi” and a wave is their earliest expression of social skills. Though they are naturally xenial (zee-nee-uhl) and eager to connect, babies and toddlers often look to their trusted adults for cues regarding how safe the new person is for them. They read our facial expressions and body language to see if we are saying *uh oh, not sure or friend!* And all too often, we convey the message that people who are different from ourselves are to be treated with caution, if not with outright fear. Though our intent is to keep them safe, it's also important that we model how to be xenial to new and different people as well. We can support our children to find a safe balance and connect with other humans.

Regardless of age, saying hello, smiling, and waving are common ways to spark relationships and make others feel welcome and accepted in our presence. Be sure to give your little one opportunities to see how xenial acts like these can be the start of something beautiful and safe. Hearing your kind “Hello!” to other neighbors at the park or seeing your welcoming hugs with trusted loved ones helps little ones learn how they can start friendships and kind connections as they grow.



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## What You'll Need:

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

- Paper
- Markers
- Crayons
- Stuffed animals or dolls
- Blanket (optional)



# EXPLORE

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

## Saying Hello

One of the most universal ways that people welcome others to connect with them is with a simple phrase that says, *hello!* Greetings and welcoming gestures (like a hand wave) are often among the first things that babies and toddlers learn. Naturally, they are eager to connect with others and they soon recognize the way “hi” can lead to a reaction from another person like a smile, wave or greeting in return. While our little ones may greet everyone from family to passersby in the grocery store, as they grow, their greetings may be the start of friendships with other children.

Nurture their xenial character with fun songs and play!

- Sing a song! Start your day with a song that says, “[Good morning!](#)” Sing a “[Hello!](#)” song when you see a loved one or friend.
- Practice waving at each other in the mirror. Learn the American Sign Language [sign for hello!](#)
- Play peek-a-boo. Hide stuffed animals and dolls behind a wall or blanket and as you move each one from hiding say, “*Hi!*” and wave.

### Tip:

When your baby sees you greeting and welcoming others, they learn how to make connections in similar ways. Invite your little one to join you in saying hello, but never force it. Ask, “*Would you like to say hello, too?*” Giving children a choice empowers and helps them to express their needs to feel safe and comfortable. Modeling how to treat others inclusively and with kindness is powerful. Forcing your children to engage with others when they aren't ready can be hurtful and teaches children that others' comfort and feelings are more important than their own.



# EXPLORE

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



## Welcoming Spaces

**Sharing spaces is a special, xenial act.** In Black culture, a home's front porch has long been a space for welcoming neighbors and loved ones to gather and connect with each other. From organizing and storytelling to celebrating, playing and eating, front porches have served as spaces for building community. The National Museum of African American History and Culture honors the role of the front porch in Black communities with [The Porch](#), a large covered area at the building's south entrance. Here, the museum welcomes visitors from around the world to connect with stories of Black history and culture.

Welcome others into a special space by creating a welcome sign with your little one. On a large piece of paper, write *Welcome!* or another greeting your family uses. Invite your toddler to decorate the sign with colorful markers, crayons or finger paints. Then, display the sign wherever people gather in your home and read it aloud when you use that space.

### Tip:

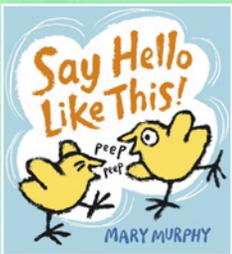
Many communities have their own ways of welcoming people into their homes like signs, doormats or just opening the door and saying hello! However your family welcomes others, be sure to include your little one in those moments as well, modeling how and narrating why you are being welcoming. You may say, "We are so excited our friends are here! Let's go open the door and say hello." Observing and joining you in welcoming others supports your toddler to later welcome other children to play, create and work together.

# EXPLORE MORE

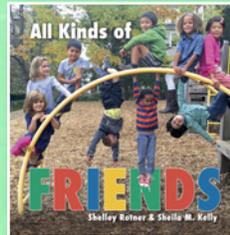
Continue learning with your little one using these recommended resources:

## Books

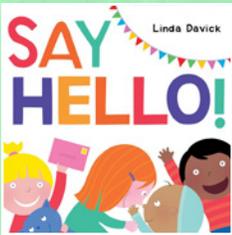
When we're xenial, we make new friends! Enjoy these stories about friendship with your little one.



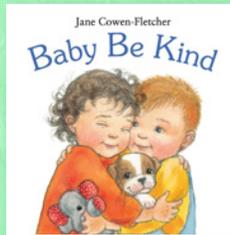
**Say Hello Like This!**  
by Mary Murphy



**All Kinds of Friends**  
by Shelley Rotner,  
illustrated by Sheila M. Kelly



**Say Hello!**  
by Linda Davick



**Baby Be Kind**  
by Jane Cowen-Fletcher

Tip:

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

## Online Resources

Support your toddler to greet and play with others using the resources below.

- ★ [Hola! Song - Sesame Street](#)
- ★ [Toddlers Making Friends - Raising Children](#)
- ★ [How to Help Your Toddler Make Friends - What To Expect](#)
- ★ [How Adults Communicate Bias to Children - Greater Good Magazine, University of California, Berkeley](#)

# 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

- *Onlookers, Selma to Montgomery March* by James H. Karales, 1965. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Monica Karales and the Estate of James Karales, © Estate of James Karales. [2015.129.52](#)

**Building Photograph:** Alan Karchmer/NMAAHC

### Original Artwork

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

# Course Evaluation (return this evaluation with homework)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Registry# \_\_\_\_\_

Course Name: Book \_\_\_\_ (A-Z) Smithsonian Joyful activity book series - <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/early-childhood>

Date you Completed Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you Family or Group Center

Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Training outcome survey rating

### Training evaluation statements: Please circle

Please circle  
 

The presentation consisted of hands-on training, questions and answers, and lecture.	1 2 3 4 5
Overall effectiveness of training (I feel the training was clear and easy to understand)	1 2 3 4 5
The interactive classroom and homework assignments were helpful learning materials	1 2 3 4 5
This subject was useful, and I have incorporated the information into my childcare environment	1 2 3 4 5
Overall effectiveness of training	1 2 3 4 5
The method used to present this information was in step with my learning style	1 2 3 4 5
I would recommend other providers to attend this training	1 2 3 4 5
The materials used in this training were valuable and relevant (i.e. handouts, books, homework assignments, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5

**To receive the 2 hours, complete reviews for two activities below:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Activity** Name of the activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this activity? \_\_\_\_\_

List 3 things you liked about the activity \_\_\_\_\_

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Activity** Name of the activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this activity? \_\_\_\_\_

List 3 things you liked about the activity \_\_\_\_\_

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

**My learning style is: (please check one)**

- Visual Learner- You learn by seeing and looking.
- Auditory Learners - You learn by hearing and listening.
- Kinesthetic Learners - You learn by touching and doing.

**Was the information presented difficult to understand?** Yes No

**Would you like access to monthly childcare updates?** Yes No

**The course materials were well organized?** Yes No

**I received the materials in a timely fashion?** Yes No

**The information will be helpful to me in my position?** Yes No

**Would you consider taking another training offered by Child Care Providers' Helper?** Yes No

Return this evaluation to: gcoggs@gmail.

Or mail to *Child Care Providers Helper*

7819 W. Potomac Ave.

Milw. WI. 53222

Any questions call-414-536-3397

Thank you for allowing us to serve your training needs.