

Revised Edition

Let's Play Together

A Guide for Families with Young Children





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Let's Play Together: A Guide for Families of Young Children

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

September 2025

Introduction

Did you know that play is the way your child learns?

This means it's easy to help your child learn about their world—just play together!

This booklet explores four key learning goals that support your child's growth and development:

- well-being
- discovery and invention
- language and communication
- personal and social responsibility

For each goal, this booklet suggests tips for healthy cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development and ways to help your child learn through play. You will also see books you can read together that match each of the learning goals.

Every child learns at their own pace. Try a variety of the activities to see what your child is ready to learn today.

Your child will learn best when you are having fun together.

Enjoy!



Tips to Support Well-being

Children feel loved, respected, protected, and supported by their families and communities.

- Run, jump, climb and dance with me—indoors and outdoors.
- Talk to me about what we are doing and what will happen next.
- Let me tell you how I feel when I am upset. I learn a lot from watching you.
- Invite another family to do something together.
- Take me out to a library or other interesting places in our community.
- Create a bedtime routine with me.



Every Little Thing –

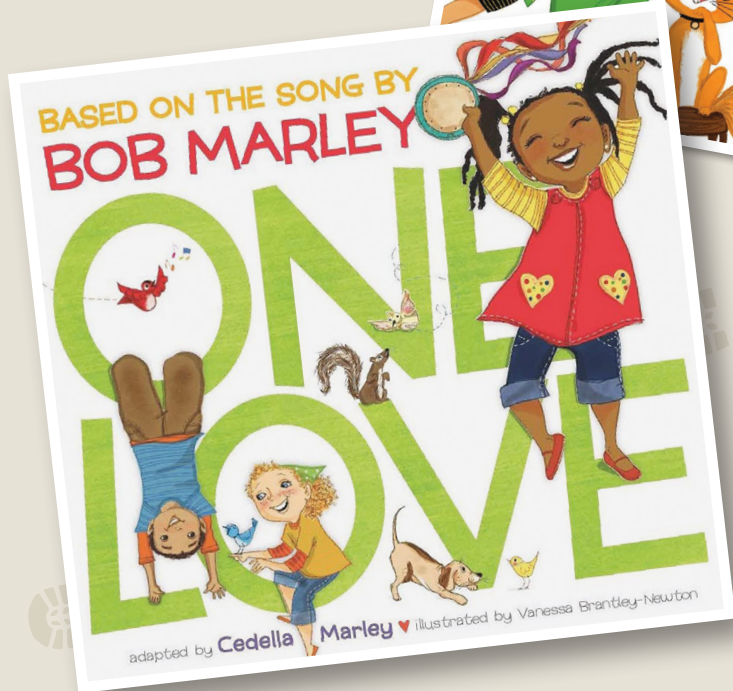
(Based on the song by Bob Marley)

Author, Cedella Marley

One Love –

(Based on the song by Bob Marley)

Author, Cedella Marley



Tips to Support Discovery and Invention

*Children learn by exploring, working together,
and solving problems.*

- Help me learn to use my imagination and play pretend games like house, dress-up, school.
- Listen to me when I talk to you; I ask a lot of questions.
- Count with me. Talk about shapes and colours with me.
- Let me sort and match things—socks, spoons, shells, rocks.
- Take walks with me. Give me time to explore the places and things that interest me most.





My Nova Scotia –
Author, Lindsay Ruck

Another –
Author, Christian Robinson

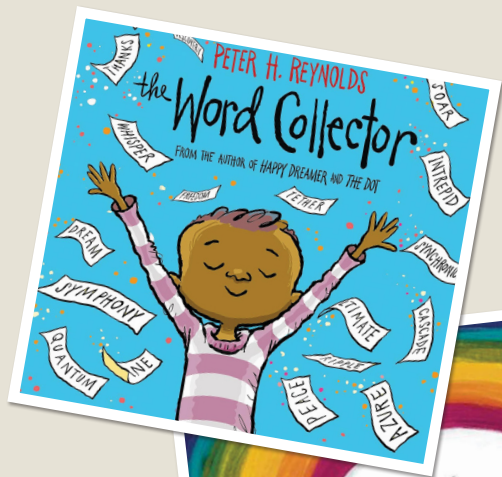


Tips to Support Language and Communication

*Children connect through gestures, sounds, faces,
and words.*

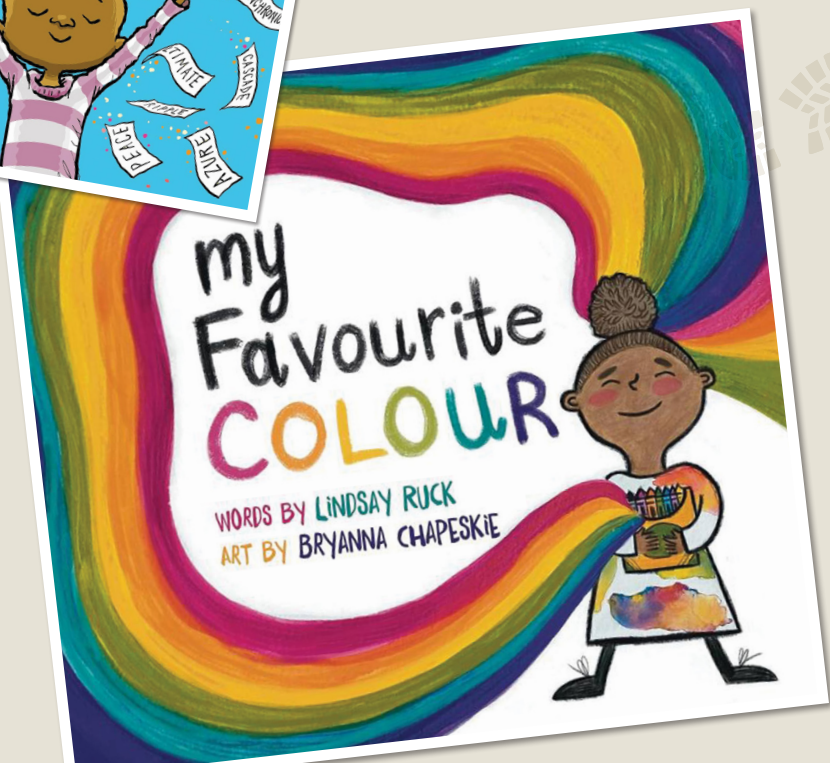
- Talk with me about the pictures and ideas in the books we read together.
- Sing and make up songs with me.
- Ask me about the best part of my day—and give me time to answer.
- Help me to find the words to explain my feelings and solve problems.
- Help me read the signs we see in our neighbourhood—STOP, Walk, Main Street, Corner Store.





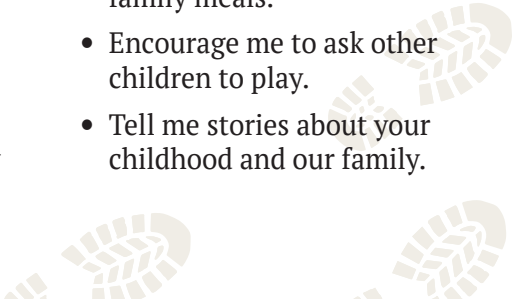
The Word Collector –
Author, Peter H. Reynolds

My Favourite Colour –
Author, Lindsay Ruck



Tips to Support Personal and Social Responsibility

Children's relationships and experiences help shape their identity.

- Let me practice taking care of myself—dressing, hand washing, brushing my teeth.
 - Offer me a few choices in the things we do and the clothes I wear. This helps me practice making decisions.
 - Read and speak with me every day in my first language.
 - Ask me to do simple tasks at home like setting the table and helping to prepare family meals.
 - Encourage me to ask other children to play.
 - Tell me stories about your childhood and our family.
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- A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three stylized footprints. One footprint is on the left, one is in the center, and one is on the right, all pointing towards the right side of the page.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
GRACE BYERS

I Am Enough



PICTURES BY
KETURAH A. BOBO

The KING of KINDERGARTEN



DERRICK BARNES • VANESSA BRANTLEY-NEWTON

I Am Enough –
Author, Grace Byers

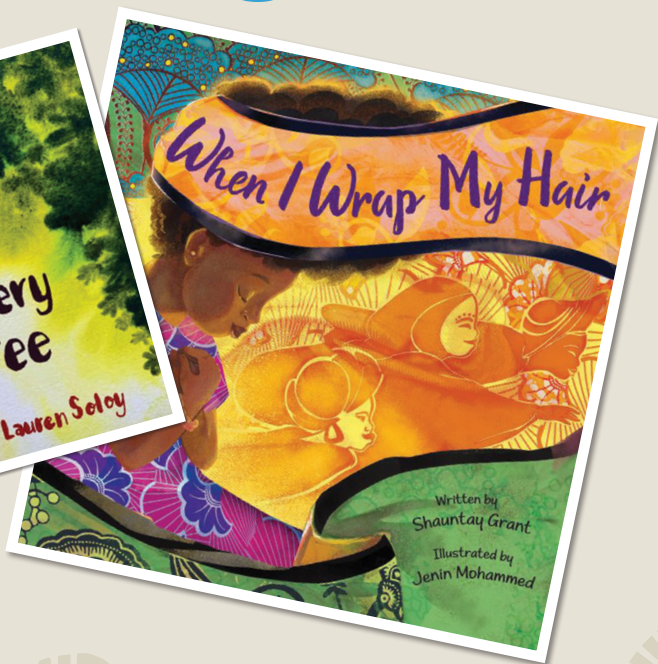
The King of Kindergarten –
Author, Derrick Barnes

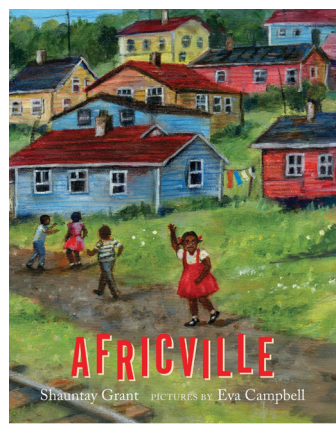
More Local Books to Read Together



When I Wrap My Hair –
Author, Shauntay Grant

Every Leaf on Every Tree –
Author, Lauren Soloy





Africville –
Author, Shauntay Grant

Serge the Snail Without a Shell –
Authors, Harriet Alida Lye and
Rosa Rankin-Gee

Mayann's Train Ride –
Author, Mayann Francis



Find these books at a public library near you:
library.novascotia.ca/map



*If you try some of these ideas each day, your child will build the skills to help them learn and develop. But more importantly, **you will have fun together!***



The 4 learning goals in this booklet are pulled from *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* (NSELCF). For more information on the NSELCF and resources to help families during the early years, visit [**ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/**](https://ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/)

