



Welcome to KDL's early literacy newsletter!

For fun early literacy activities that help kids get ready to read, check out our [website](#).

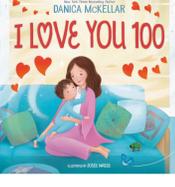
Get started reading and learning together with our simple and easy [1KB4K program](#).

View and print the [2026 Early Literacy Calendar](#). Español: [Calendario de Alfabetización Temprana](#).

## Explore the five ways to help make a CHILD GROW SMARTER

### LOVE

MAXIMIZE LOVE  
MANAGE STRESS



***I Love You 100*** by Danica McKellar is a sweet, cozy read that celebrates love in a simple and meaningful way. McKellar is known for weaving early math ideas into her books. In this book, she uses counting to show all the little moments that add up to big love.

This is an easy story for kids to follow and a great reminder that love can be shown in so many everyday ways. The illustrations by Martina Peluso really bring the story to life. The soft colors and gentle expressions make each page feel warm and comforting, and the loving scenes between the caregiver and the child will feel familiar to many families. Together, the story and artwork create a lovely book that connects counting with connection and highlights just how special it is to say "I love you" over and over again.

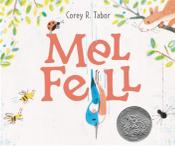
After reading *I Love You 100*, try counting paper hearts together and decorating each one with stickers or scribbles. As you count, you can share simple "I love you" moments, like hugs or reading together. This easy activity connects counting, creativity and love, just like the book.

For more books on love, check out [Chicka Chicka I Love You](#) by Bill Martin, Jr. and Michael Sampson, [Together We Are Sunshine](#) by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow and Raissa Figueroa and [Home is a Heartbeat](#) by Laekan Zea Kemp and Magdalena Mora.



### TALK

SING AND POINT



***Mel Fell*** by Corey Tabor is a delightful story that follows Mel, a young bird preparing for her very first flight. As readers watch her tumble farther and farther down the page, a cast of animals scramble to catch her. Will she spread her wings and fly? You'll have to read the book to find out!

This unique picture book is presented in a creative format, with readers rotating the book and reading it sideways instead of the traditional way. The humor and heart shine through with each new character Mel encounters, and the playful design is sure to keep the child in your life on the edge of their seat. After reading, talk with the child in your life about the courage it took for Mel to leave the nest. Was there something they've tried that felt a little scary or uncertain at first? *Mel Fell* is sure to spark meaningful conversation and plenty of giggles.

If you enjoyed this book, try [Flora and the Flamingo](#) by Molly Idle, [Trying](#) by Kobi Yamada and Elise Hurst and [The Book of Mistakes](#) by Corinna Luyken.



### COUNT

GROUP AND COMPARE



***Over in the Mangroves*** by Jyoti Rajan Gopal and Diksha Pawaskar is a lovely counting book that introduces early math skills through rhyme and repetition. Set in a mangrove habitat, the story follows groups of baby animals as they appear one by one.

As the numbers grow, children practice counting and spotting numerals while learning about wildlife in a natural setting. The rhythmic text and vibrant illustrations invite children to notice patterns and compare animal groups.

Caregivers can build on the book at home by counting stuffed animals together, looking for animals in nature books or practicing counting during everyday routines like outdoor walks.

For other counting books that focus on love and kindness, check out these heartwarming reads: [One, Two, Grandpa Loves You](#) by Shelly Becker and Dan Yaccarino, [Everyone Counts](#) by Judy Sierra and Marc Brown and [Kindness Counts 123](#) by R.A. Strong and Ekaterina Trukhan.



### PLAY

EXPLORE THROUGH  
MOVEMENT AND PLAY



***A Sky That Sings*** by Anita Sanchez, George Steele and Emily Mendoza features bird-listening in the park. Mia has learned so much about birds from her teacher, and now she's excited to take her tia (aunt) along to hear the birdsong. Mia gets to teach Tia and the reader how to identify birds by their sounds and how to listen and notice what birds are saying to each other.

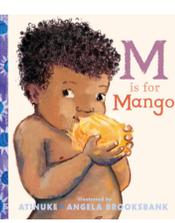
This is a lovely introduction to play through bird-listening, or birdwatching, as it is often called. We might not be able to find any warblers or bluebirds this time of winter, but as spring approaches, listen for the songs of the birds introduced in the pages of this story.

For more birding books, try [Birding For Babies: Migrating Birds](#) by Chloe Goodhart and Gareth Lucas, [Birds](#) by Kevin Henkes or [Bird Watch](#) by Christie Matheson.



### READ

AND DISCUSS STORIES



***M is for Mango*** by Atinuke and Angela Brooksbank introduces young readers to the many words that begin with "M" through the perspective of an exploratory toddler named Mo. The simple naming of the objects Mo sees quickly turns into a comedic encounter with monkeys and mangos that will delight and entertain.

As you read the book with the child in your life, underline the words with your finger and then point to each of the objects as the book names them, as this creates associations between the written word, spoken language and the pictures. Talk together about what you see happening in the illustrations. With older children, try creating your own story with a letter that they choose.

For more books that create story through the alphabet, try [L is for Love](#) by Atinuke and Angela Brooksbank, [B is for Baby](#) by Atinuke and Angela Brooksbank and [D is for Dog!](#) by Em Lynas and Sarah Ogilvie.



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