

To teach a child the alphabet is an honor indeed. When my three sons were younger, we had such fun learning those 26 letters that would one day open the magical doors to reading and writing. They proudly called out, "A, B, C," as their small hands gripped pencils to carefully copy each shape.

One winter morning, my then 4-year-old son Connor and I were driving to the library when it began to snow. I could see him beaming in the rearview mirror.

"Look, Connor," I said. "Sssss-snow. What letter does snow start with?"

The smile left Connor's face. He looked serious, or was it annoyed?

After a while, he said, "You don't *spell* snow, Mom. You *enjoy* it."

I share this memory because it reminds me that while we adults have so much to teach our children, they have much to teach us as well.

26 Big Things Small Hands Do is a celebration of just some of the ways in which children make our world a better place. As you read aloud, you can encourage children to think about what their hands do and to mimic the positive actions throughout, starting with their small hands applauding *you* and ending with your big hands applauding *them*.

What a gift it is to know and love a child. I am reminded of this each time I see a poem called "The Hand" hanging on my office wall. My son Connor wrote it when he was 7, and around the words are his small handprints. The poem begins, "With this hand I can play ball," and ends, "With this hand I can pick up snow."

My son had learned to "spell snow" and was still enjoying it, too.

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