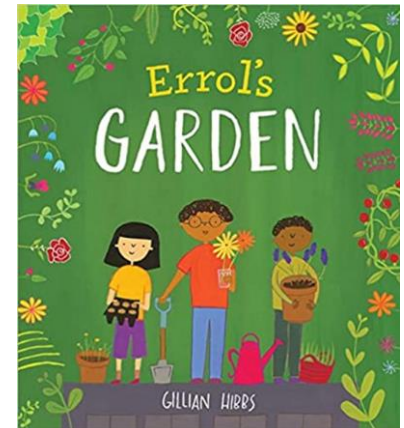


Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning Errol's Garden by Gillian Hibbs (Childs Play)

1. Explore it

Look very carefully at the illustration on the front cover and talk about what you notice. Who are these people? What are they doing? How are they feeling? Why might they be feeling this way? Where do you think all these plants are growing? What makes you think that? What makes you think that?



Now, think about the title. Why do you think the book is called *Errol's Garden*? Which one of the children do you think is Errol? What makes you think that? Where do you think this story might be happening?



Now read and carefully look at the illustration in the spread from the book above. What do you notice? What else do you find out about Errol? What do you think you can say about Errol and his family? How do they feel about each other? Are they like your own family? What is Errol doing? Would you like to meet him?

Think about the plants that you can see in the spread. What do you notice about them? Where are they? Would you agree that Errol is really good at growing things? Why? What are you really good at?

2. Illustrate it

Look again at the illustrations in the spread and the front cover. How many different kinds of flowering plants can you spot? How would you describe them? What is different about each of them? What is the same about them? Look at the shapes and colours you can see and have a go at drawing them. Share your drawings with someone and talk about which is your favourite. What do you like about it?

Work with a grown up to find out more about flowers and plants. Do you have any in your home, like Errol does? Where can you find flowers and plants in your local area? Think about which flowers are wild and which are grown in gardens. Notice which are growing in the ground and which grow in containers. You could also talk about the difference between plants that grow outdoors and those that grow indoors.

Keep a record of the flowers and plants you see by drawing them. Use this to talk about what happens when flowers are picked and whether this is a good thing or not. You could then cut your drawings out and stick them up on a window pane to look like Errol's window garden. If you stick a lolly stick, paper straw or rolled up piece of paper to the back, you will be able to make them stand up in whatever pots you can find.

3. Talk about it

- Errol says that he is **really good at growing things**. What other words would you use to describe Errol, based on what you see here? Why would you choose these words?
- Do you think the plants should stay in the yoghurt pots? Why or why not? What might Errol need to do with these next?
- Why do you think Errol might be growing his plants indoors?
- Where is Errol's garden? What makes you think that?

4. Imagine it

Think about what you have seen on the front cover and in the pages you read. How do you know that Errol is interested in gardening? What do you think he might have in his home to help him with his gardening? What do plants need to grow? Why do you think he has put all the plants on the windowsill? What would he need to have to help look after them?

Draw a picture of Errol and around him draw the different kinds of things you imagine he might need to grow the plants. As you draw them, you could also label the items, work with a grown up to think about how to sound out and write words such as **p/o/t, s/ee/d/s, b/u/l/b, s/oi/l**, and how to spell and write longer words like **watering can** or **spade**.

Now, imagine Errol was going to teach you how to be a good gardener. What kinds of things would he show or tell you? Write some of his advice around the drawing in speech bubbles.

5. Create it

Are you good at gardening like Errol? What are you good at? Are you a great dancer or footballer? Are you kind? Have you learned a special song or poem? Do you like making up stories? Can you make people laugh? Do you know how to cook a tasty family recipe?

Talk together about what you are good at. How do we get to be good at something? How do we know if we are good at something? What about other people in your family? What are they good at? Help them think of things and not be too shy. It is good to feel proud like Errol!

Now think about why you might be good at these particular things? How did you learn how to do them? Did you watch anyone else do it? Did anyone teach you? How often do you practice? Create your own page, like the one you saw here showing what you are good at. You can make your pages using paper or card or use a photograph and write a sentence to go with it, explaining what you are good at. If you are good at lots of things, you could make lots of pages and turn it into a whole book or, make more pages to tell people more about the thing you are really good at.