

# Alliance Theatre

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### **Pre-K and Kindergarten Teacher Resource Guide:** **Character**

Book: *In My Granny's Garden* by Pearl Cleage and Zaron W. Burnett, Jr.  
Illustrations by Radcliffe Bailey  
Theme: Characters

This guide explores the characters in the story using drama tools that support early childhood literacy objectives. Students will become characters in the story using the actor tools: body, voice and imagination. Through active learning and engagement, students will begin to understand the perspective of others, develop curiosity, broaden vocabulary, and increase their social emotional skills. These strategies are designed for both classroom and virtual experiences.

Vocabulary Words	
<u>Country</u> : An area outside of a large town or city	<u>Excuse</u> : A reason not to do something
<u>Ripe</u> : When fruit or vegetables are ready to be picked and eaten	<u>Delicious</u> : Something that tastes very good
<u>Variety</u> : Many different kinds	<u>Pick</u> : To pull off the vine
<u>Favorite</u> : The one you like best	<u>Harvest</u> : To pick or gather crops
<u>Gather</u> : To collect items and bring them together	<u>Proud</u> : To feel good about oneself or someone else
<u>City</u> : A large town where many people live and work	<u>Dew</u> : Small droplets of water on a cool surface

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### Actor Tools

- Body: Display emotions and make shapes using movement to display a character, action, object, or setting.
- Voice: Use pitch, dynamics, and tempo to evoke emotion, portray characters and create sound effects.
- Imagination: A unique interpretation of the setting and characters from the story.

### Book Prediction

Show the cover of the book. Ask the students to share what they see. ***Whose hands are these? What is the person holding? Where are they? What are they getting ready to do? Let's read the story and find out!***

### Acting out Emotions

***What does it mean to be proud? How does your body show that you are proud?*** Use observational language to describe students' expressions of proud. ***The narrator was very proud of his Granny. Why was he proud of her? What makes YOU feel proud? Who are you proud of?*** Record ideas and act out ideas together showing a proud facial expression and body.

Discuss what it means to have a superpower, a unique ability to do something well. Ask the students to think of a loved one. ***What are they really good at? What is their superpower? What is YOUR superpower? What superpower do you wish to have one day?*** Act out the students' responses together using the actor tools. Use a hand clap, musical instrument or sound cue to "freeze" the students. The students "freeze" like statues in the form of the idea that they were acting out. For example: if the students were acting out jumping rope, the students would freeze holding a rope and having just landed like they were jump roping. Repeat using new prompts.

### Imaginary Picnic

***The narrator likes to eat pole beans, corn on the cobb with butter, sliced tomatoes, summer squash, fried chicken, and biscuits.*** Show pictures of each of the vegetables and dish. ***What do you like to eat at home?*** Have an imaginary picnic and pretend to eat the food that each student shares.

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### In-Role as Granny

Have the students play the expert gardener Granny and the teacher will play the grandchild from the story. Adding a costume piece or prop is a fun way to get into character. For example, Granny may wear an apron or a scarf. Let the students share key advice about when to plant the seeds, how to pick them, wash them, and cook them. Everyone acts out the ideas shared by the students together. Teacher asks questions along the way as they learn how to be like Granny the gardener.

### Music and Movement

***In the story, Granny kisses the top of her grandson's head to show him love. How else did Granny show her love for her family? How do you show love to your friends and family? How does that make them feel?*** Record ideas from the students. Turn on soft music and move in slow motion. Have the students follow your movements. Make gestures and sound cues that correspond to the ideas that the students shared. Use observational language to acknowledge students who are engaged and focused as they copy your movement.

*Add on:* Give each cue four counts of movement. Count to eight each time. Have the students repeat the pattern several times.

***Granny likes to plant corn, green beans, collard greens, cabbage, yellow squash, hot peppers, sweet peppers, pole beans, and tomatoes. What would you plant in your garden?*** Gather ideas from the students. ***Time to plant your seed.*** Have the students dig an imaginary hole, plant the seed, and cover it up. ***Let's act out what the seed needs to grow: sun, water, and love.*** Play music and act this out as a group. Use a song or musical instrument(s) for each: the sun (happy upbeat), the rain (rhythmic), and love (soft). Repeat!

### Extension Activities

**Family Picture Comparison:** Invite the students to share their own family picture. ***How is it different from the family picture in the book? How is it the same?*** Compare and contrast the number of family members and the setting.

**Grocery store observations:** Encourage students to look for fruits and vegetables in their home. Those items came from the country before they got to your home. ***What vegetables do you see that remind you of Granny's garden?***