Florette
by Anna Walker

Mae moves house and is saddened at the loss of her garden. She searches the new landscape from her bedroom window and sees only crowded rooftops. One day she finds a leafy forest, but it’s closed, however a crack in the pavement has a piece of the forest growing. Mae takes the little plant home and with her new neighbourhood friends they create their very own beautiful garden.

Key Message for Parents:
Children’s wellbeing is critical to brain development and learning
Children’s feelings of happiness and contentment are part of their wellbeing. “Wellbeing” is when they are healthy, feel loved and cared for, and have opportunity to learn through play about what interests them. Share tips with parents on how they can support and nurture their child’s wellbeing, some suggestions include:

- Listen to your child, and watch for what they regularly talk about or play with. Follow their lead and support their interests. Playing together is a great opportunity to learn together!
- Even very young children can become emotionally attached to a place, thing or person and may be quite upset if there is a change. Where possible talk with children about any changes coming up, and talk about how they might feel.
- Help children when they feel emotionally unsure or upset – children are learning to control “big feelings” and often don’t have the words to fully express what is making them frustrated, angry, scared or sad. It can help to provide hugs and a calm voice, to create a “connection” with the child and a safe space to process strong emotions.

Learning Outcomes - Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
Children learn best when they experience a variety of environments to build connections to their world. Ways we can promote a sense of connection to the world include:

- Providing children with opportunities to investigate ideas, concepts and issues that are important to them
- Planning opportunities for children to explore what is going on in their world in meaningful ways
- Providing children with access to a range of natural materials and if possible, play time outdoors every day
- Modelling respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment
Themes within this story
- Resilience
- Moving house
- Nature

Welcome
Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children. Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

Welcome Song (or your preferred song)
Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher’s paper for the adults to read and join in.

Good Morning
Good morning to you
Good morning to you
Good morning everybody
and welcome to you!

Song
Here we go round the Mulberry bush
Here we go round the Mulberry bush
the Mulberry bush, the Mulberry bush,
here we go round the Mulberry bush
on a cold and frosty morning.

Action Tip: Invite children join hands with their parent or a friend and sing this song whilst skipping around in a circle.

Repeat the song and change the last line according to the days’ weather
e.g. on a hot and sunny morning
   on a rainy and windy morning

Some other song ideas are
- Round and round the garden- ask the child to use their pointer finger on the palm of a parents’ hand when singing this song
- 2 little dicky birds- use two fingers to represent Peter and Paul in this poem and show them flying away (hiding behind your back) and returning at the end
**Before Reading**

In this book Mae moves house to the city. She wants to bring her favourite thing with her. Ask the children about their house, talk about what they like the most about it and what is their favourite thing. Encourage them to describe what they see, hear, smell and feel when they are at home. Set the scene by explaining to the children that unfortunately Mae can’t take her favourite thing – the garden, with her to her new house.

**During Reading**

The pictures are very detailed and Mae gives us a good idea about how she is feeling. Point out that there aren’t many trees, flowers or much grass around her new home. Ask the children to think about what it would be like if they had to move house.

**After Reading**

Talk about the title “Florette” and ask the children if they know what it means. Or can they guess? The name “Florette” comes from an old language (Latin) and it means “flowers”. Do they remember the page where Florette was written somewhere?

Talk about growing plants and what a plant would need to survive. Why there aren’t many plants, trees or birds in the city and where we might find lots of them?

**Nursery Rhyme**

Recite a nursery rhyme about gardens together:

Mary Mary quite contrary  
How does your garden grow?  
With silver bells and cockleshells  
And pretty maids all in a row!

**Activity Time**

**Natural Treasure Jar**

**What you need**

- old jars or vases
- items of interest collected by children

**What to do**

1. Go on a nature walk (local playground, park, beach, forest) Collect natural items or treasures including leaves, sticks, feathers, shells, gumnuts etc.
2. Talk about each item and ask the children “What is it?” “What do you like about it?” and “What makes it special?”
3. If your child is interested then explain what each item does “This leaf helps the tree to breathe” or “This shell once had a sea creature living in it”.
4. Display your treasures in a jar and talk about them from time to time.
5. **SAFETY NOTE:** If you are concerned about the safety of glass jars then glue your treasures on to paper and allow to dry before hanging up.
Extension ideas:
• Look for the hidden animals on the end papers (inside front cover and inside back cover) and on some of the pages of the story. What animals can you find? There are birds, cats, dogs, turtles, frogs, rabbits, ladybirds, snails and squirrels, but they are very hard to find! Many animals from the book could be made with a paper plate base.
  o Cut out some pointy ears and draw on whiskers for a cat.
  o Glue on some cotton wool balls and add legs for a sheep.
  o Fold a paper plate in half, paint green and glue in a party horn as a tongue for a frog.
  o Use your imagination for many more animals.

Other extension ideas include:
• chalk drawings on the ground
• watching for birds or hunting for insects in a garden or park
• visit a local Botanic Gardens or National Park and spend some time outdoors in nature

Goodbye
Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. The Little Big Book Club suggests the following books to support learning in this area:

• *All Through the Year* by Anna Walker
• *Amy and Louis* by Libby Gleeson and Freya Blackwood
• *That’s Not a Daffodil* by Elizabeth Honey

Goodbye Song
Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child’s name in the place of ‘you’ as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of *(Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush)* or your preferred choice.

Goodbye
*This is the way we say goodbye (use a waving action)*

*Say goodbye, say goodbye*

  *This is the way we say goodbye*

  *To all our library friends (or) (to our friend…….)*!