Discussion Guide for *Leo the Late Bloomer* by Robert Kraus

The themes in this story include family relationships, growing up, and self-esteem. It tells the story of Leo, a young tiger, who is behind his friends in reading, writing, drawing, speaking, and eating neatly. When Leo's father becomes concerned, Leo's mother explains that Leo is simply a "late bloomer." Later, in his own good time, Leo "blooms," pleasing his family and of course, himself.

These questions provide a framework for parents and caregivers to discuss in order to work together on behalf of their child.

**Providing oversight for our children’s learning and development**

- How do we gauge what’s “normal”?
- How much do we depend on “traditional standards” for learning and achievement vs. our own intuition about what’s right for our child?
- Do you ever want your child to be better than “average”?
- When we are concerned that our child is not keeping pace with his/her peers, how do we show (or not show) our concern? How should we?
- How important is “normal” to us? When are we willing to support our children to challenge the bounds of what is traditional and accepted? When not?
- Do we want our children to become who they truly are when doing so conflicts with our own values?
- How do we know who they truly are? What qualities/assets/temperament do we look for?
- Is our love large enough to encompass all aspects of our children – even those aspects we don’t like or disapprove of?
- What does “success” for your child look like for you? Can you imagine that what your child considers “success” may be different? Are you prepared to accept this?

**Working as a team with your co-parent to provide guidance**

- Do you and your partner ever disagree about what’s best for your child? What are some of the issues?
- How do you handle disagreements about the values by which you raise your children?
- When there is tension, disagreement or upset around these differences, how do you handle them? How would you like to handle them?
- What can we do now to prepare for future moments of disagreement and upset?

**Working with your child’s caregiver/teacher and child care center/school around your child’s learning**

- Developing a cordial, collaborative relationship with your child’s teacher
- Agreeing on reasonable benchmarks for your child’s progress
- Learning how to monitor your child’s learning before it may become a problem
- Dealing with pressures that may lead to over-achievement

Prepared by Allan Shedlin, DADvocacy Consulting Group ©