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Leo couldn't do anything right.

He couldn't read.

He couldn't write.

He couldn't draw.

He was a sloppy eater.

And he never said a word.
He couldn't read.
He couldn't write.

Owl
Elephant
Snake
Flower
Crocodile
He couldn't draw.
"What's the matter with Leo?" asked Leo's father.

"Nothing" said Leo's mother.

"Leo is just a late bloomer.

"Better late than never," thought Leo's father.
Every day Leo's father watched him for signs of blooming.

And every night Leo's father watched him for signs of blooming.
"Are you sure Leo's a bloomer?" asked Leo's father.

"Patience," said Leo's mother. "A watched bloomer doesn't bloom."

So Leo's father watched television instead of Leo.
The snow came.

Leo's father wasn't watching.

But Leo still wasn't blooming.

The trees budded.

Leo's father wasn't watching.

But Leo still wasn't blooming.
The snows came.
Leo’s father wasn’t watching.
But Leo still wasn’t blooming.
The trees budded.
Leo's father wasn't watching.
But Leo still wasn't blooming.
Then one day, in his own time, Leo bloomed!
He could read!

He could write!

He could draw!

He ate neatly!

He also spoke.

And it wasn't just a word.

It was a whole sentence.
And that sentence was...

I made it!
"I made it!"

Adapted from the original text, Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Kraus, Windmill Books
Adapted Literature Activities

Pictures 1,2,3
(He couldn’t read. He couldn’t write, He couldn’t draw)

To show this to the children, I could get a book, a notebook paper with writing on it, and a paper with a crayon drawing on it. When I read “he couldn’t read” I could show the book with the X mark and nod no. When I read “he couldn’t write” I could show the writing paper with the X mark and nod no. When I read “he couldn’t draw” I could show the paper with a drawing on it and the big X mark and nod no. Hopefully, this will convey the message that Leo was unable to do any of these things before he bloomed.

Pictures 4 and 5
(The snows came. Leo’s father wasn’t watching. But Leo still wasn’t blooming.)
(The trees budded. Leo’s father wasn’t watching. But Leo still wasn’t blooming.)

While reading this part of the story, I can stimulate the children’s senses while helping to make the language more concrete for them. If I have some way to keep the snow cold(an available freezer) I
might have the children touch the cold snow when I read that page. If this is not available, I can make a pile of cotton balls or a snowman out of cotton balls for them to associate with this page. Also, when I read about the trees budding, I will have the children feel, smell, and look at budding pieces of tree or plant. This sensory stimulation will help them to understand that spring is in the air at this point in the story.

Picture 6 and 7
(He also spoke. And it wasn’t just a word. It was a whole sentence. And that sentence was…”I made it!”)

The children can use puppets to act out the story. The puppets can nod no when Leo cannot do things and can act out Leo being happy when he is able to do things towards the end. The father puppet can watch Leo while he is waiting for him to bloom. At this point in the story, the puppets can hug and be happy as Leo says “I made it!” Also, most classrooms have some way that they celebrate each other’s success in the classroom. This might be a cheer, clap, or song that they sing for each other when they have accomplished something they can be proud of. The children can hold up the Leo puppet and celebrate his accomplishments, now that he has bloomed!