

# Chapter 4

## Helping Others Become Leaders

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## Introduction

Leaders have a tremendous influence in shaping the future of La Leche League. In most cases, someone who applies for accreditation as an LLL Leader does so with the help and encouragement of their local Group Leader(s).

Many mothers learn about breastfeeding and parenting by observing and interacting with other mothers and parents. In the same way, those interested in leadership learn about LLL and leadership by observing and interacting with Leaders. While attending LLL Series Meetings, they begin building their knowledge about breastfeeding, LLL philosophy, and LLL as an organization. As a Leader, you give concrete meaning to “LLL” and “LLL leadership.” You demonstrate the Leader’s role leading Series Meetings and managing the Group. When a potential Applicant goes on to explore and prepare to be a Leader, you represent LLL as both a role model and mentor.

To fulfill this basic Leader responsibility, Leaders:

- Help potential Applicants find out about leadership.
- Help Leader Applicants prepare for their new role.  
(See [3.1 Role of the Supporting Leader](#))

The goal of LLL is to accredit Leaders who have the experience, knowledge, and skills they will need to do their job with confidence and pleasure. The Applicant, Leader and Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) representative work together throughout the application so the Applicant will:

- Understand a Leader’s role and responsibilities.
- Appreciate how personal experience with breastfeeding and mothering forms a basis for credibility of both Leaders and our organization.
- Develop the knowledge and skills necessary to help those who need it.

Identifying and accrediting new Leaders is important because it:

- Ensures the future of the organization.
- Makes Group work more manageable.
- Keeps the Group fresh and responsive to the needs of those attending.
- Gives others the opportunity to develop their skills and talents to the benefit of all.

This chapter provides an overview of your role related to Leader accreditation. For detailed information, contact your LAD representative, who can answer specific questions as well as provide written resources and outlines for workshops. Read and keep on hand relevant articles from Leader publications. These will provide you with up-to-date information for attracting, encouraging, and assisting Applicants.

The documents and exercises with an asterisk mark (\*) are available in the [Leader Applicant’s Resource Kit](#) (LARK) (username and password required).

# 1. Before the Application

## 1.1 Pre-Application Dialogue

When you dialogue with someone about leadership, or are approached by someone, suggest reading [Thinking About La Leche League Leadership? FAQ](#). If a potential Applicant believes that all the prerequisites are met, arrange to meet for a pre-application dialogue. Ideally you will be able to meet in person. If not, you can meet via online video call (i.e., Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp, etc.) or by phone. When you meet, use the *Leader's Pre-Application Packet* to prepare for this dialogue and have other resources, such as *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, [Leader's Handbook](#) and [Leader Today](#) (username and password required), and [Leader Today: Public](#), local LLL publications for Leaders, on hand. The packet will become available on the LLLI website. Please contact the local Leader Accreditation Department for the documents in the *Leader's Pre-Application Packet*.

Refer to the *Pre-Application Guidelines for Leaders*, in *Leader's Pre-Application Packet*. and discuss the following subjects in this suggested order:

1. [LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership](#)
2. [La Leche League philosophy](#)
3. [The work of a Leader](#)
4. [The application work](#)
5. [Costs of an application](#)

Unlike a workshop, where you are primarily sharing information, the purpose of this dialogue is to determine whether the potential Applicant's experiences meet the prerequisites and if LLL leadership suits the Applicant. After meeting together, the potential Applicant will decide whether or not to apply, and you will decide if you can fill out the Leader Recommendation form.

During the pre-application dialogue, the Leader helps a potential Applicant:

- Share breastfeeding and mothering experiences.
- See whether the Personal Experience Prerequisites are met.
- Review the Organizational Experience Prerequisites.
- Learn the personal skills a Leader needs and how they can be demonstrated.
- Understand how Leaders use these skills in their interactions with mothers and parents.
- Explore how Leaders' goals will fulfill the mission of LLL.
- Determine if all the prerequisites are met.

If you have any doubts or questions, consult [LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership—Guidelines for Leaders](#), [Applying for Leadership](#), [LLLI Policies and Standing Rules \(PSR\)](#) (username and password required) and talk with your LAD representative.

It is important for you to feel confident that the individual meets the prerequisites before proceeding with an application.

### 1.1.1 About LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership

There are three sections in the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership. They are found in [Applying for Leadership](#), LLLI PSR. Read each statement together to see whether the potential Applicant's experience and attitudes reflect the prerequisite. It is important to remember that those who have met all the prerequisites can apply for leadership.

Use the Guidelines for Leaders in Applying for Leadership, LLLI PSR to see what you need to discuss and Concept Explanations, LLLI PSR to help deepen an understanding of the ten concepts which summarize LLL philosophy. It is recommended to discuss the three prerequisite sections in order. They are indicated in the following boxes.

#### 1) Personal Experience Prerequisites

The experiences of breastfeeding and mothering are two parts of a whole that is described by LLLI as "mothering through breastfeeding," as defined below. This personal experience of the breastfeeding and mothering relationship, combined with what the person has learned from others and from LLL resources, provides a strong basis from which to help others. A potential Applicant:

- has breastfed a child for 12 months or more,
- did not introduce complementary foods or supplements until the baby demonstrated a nutritional need for other foods, around the middle of the first year for the healthy full-term baby, and
- has chosen breastfeeding as the optimal way to nourish, nurture and comfort the baby.

The above points refer to a description of a normal/physiological course of breastfeeding and the relationship formed by mothering through breastfeeding as described in *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding (The Womanly Art)*, published by LLLI. These measurable behaviors offer an objective way to identify responsive breastfeeding and mothering.

Special consideration will be given to someone whose personal breastfeeding experience is outside the realm of the normal/physiological course of breastfeeding as described above. Leaders may refer to Guidelines for Leaders (Part II, Section A, Personal Experience Prerequisites, Item 5) for some examples.

To determine whether the above prerequisites have been met, Leaders can refer to:

- [Applying for Leadership](#), *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*, (username and password required), Guidelines for Leaders, Part II, Section A, Personal Experience Prerequisites, Items 1-5
- [Concept Explanations](#), *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*, (username and password required)
- [LLL Philosophy](#).

## 2) Organizational Experience Prerequisites

A potential Applicant:

- is a member of LLL or contributes as appropriate for the entity in which the application is being submitted,
- supports LLL purpose, mission, and philosophy,
- has attended at least one series of meetings in person or via the Internet,
- demonstrates a clear understanding that leadership is volunteer work,
- has knowledge of the information contained in the most recent edition of *The Womanly Art*, if available in an accessible language and format,
- is willing to create time to fulfill the basic responsibilities of leadership and/or provide other service to LLL, as described under [“Definition of an Active Leader”](#) in the *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules* (PSR; see Cross-References),
- is willing to complete the application work, and has a recommendation from an LLL Leader.

Make sure that the potential Applicant is familiar with the contents of the most recent edition of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, if available in an accessible language. If the potential Applicant is familiar with the book, it indicates a good understanding of the approach of LLL to breastfeeding. Share other LLL publications, such as [Leader Today: Public](#) and [Breastfeeding Today](#).

Look for a commitment to the Group and LLL:

- Becoming a member of La Leche League.
- Attending Series Meetings regularly, where available, and participating in the discussion.
- Volunteering for a Group job.
- Participating in Group activities.
- Wishing to be more involved.

Create opportunities to get more involved in the Group.

- Talk about becoming an LLL member or making a donation.
- Announce Group jobs.
- Invite attendance at Evaluation or Enrichment Meetings.
- Encourage participation in Group projects, such as fundraisers or family events.

To determine whether the Organizational Experience Prerequisites have been met, Leaders can refer to:

- [Applying for Leadership](#), *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*, (username and password required), Guidelines for Leaders, Part II, Section A, Organizational Experience Prerequisites

### 3) Personal Skills Prerequisites

A potential Applicant:

- has communication skills in the potential Applicant's preferred language necessary to begin the application and preparation for accreditation,
- demonstrates an accepting and respectful attitude toward others,
- provides information and support without judgment, and
- is willing to develop further communication skills as needed to fulfill the responsibilities of leadership.

In order to facilitate effective discussions, help others breastfeed, and represent LLL appropriately, a Leader needs to:

- Relate respectfully to others.
- Communicate effectively.
- Provide appropriate assistance.

An Applicant needs adequate language ability to:

- Complete the application work.
- Maintain a knowledge base about LLL and breastfeeding management.
- Communicate effectively with meeting attendees, other Leaders and health professionals.
- Report needs and accomplishments to the organization.

To determine whether the Personal Skills Prerequisites have been met, Leaders can refer to:

- [Applying for Leadership](#) (username and password required), *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*, Guidelines for Leaders, Part II, Section A, Personal Skills Prerequisites, Item 1

### 1.1.2. La Leche League Philosophy

The ten concepts are the essence of [LLL Philosophy](#). Even if you have discussed them on other occasions and are sure that the potential Applicant understands LLL philosophy, discuss them again one by one before the person applies for leadership. This can help assure both of you that the potential Applicant understands, agrees with, and can provide personal examples of LLL philosophy in action.

- Remember that the purpose of this discussion is to:
  - Learn how the concepts are revealed in the potential Applicant's experiences.
  - Help the potential Applicant see mothering through breastfeeding as a practical philosophy.
  - Show how we present LLL philosophy while respecting other choices.
- Take one concept at a time and ask what each means to the potential Applicant and how it has been practiced?
- Be aware that this may be the first time the potential Applicant has heard LLL philosophy expressed formally.
- Ask how the potential Applicant would explain a concept to someone new to LLL.
- Invite questions.

#### 1.1.2.1 The Ten Concepts

Here are the ten concepts with some sample questions and suggestions which may help initiate your discussion. One statement or question may be all you need to explore a concept. Use, [Concept Explanations](#) (username and password required), *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*, to enhance your discussion.

*Mothering through breastfeeding is the most natural and effective way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby.*

- Describe your breastfeeding relationship.
- How does your baby show he needs you?
- How has breastfeeding helped you learn about mothering and meeting your baby's needs?
- Share examples of how you respond to your baby's needs both day and night.

*Human milk is the natural food for babies, uniquely meeting their changing needs.*

- How has your milk been important to your baby?
- How is your milk suited to your baby's needs?

*Alert and active participation by the mother in childbirth is a help in getting breastfeeding off to a good start.*

- Describe your birth experience and how you feel about it.
- Is there anything you would do differently for a subsequent birth?
- From what you know, how does the birth experience affect the initiation of breastfeeding?
- Why discuss childbirth at a La Leche League meeting?

*Mother and baby need to be together early and often to establish a satisfying breastfeeding relationship and reliable milk production.*

- Describe how you initiated breastfeeding with your baby.
- How did the setting for the birth affect the time you spent with your baby immediately following the birth?
- What kind of assistance was helpful when you initiated breastfeeding?
- If you experienced any initial difficulties, please explain.
- What were your first weeks of breastfeeding and mothering like?
- How was "early and often" a help in getting breastfeeding off to a good start?

*Breastfeeding is enhanced and the nursing couple sustained by the loving support, help, and companionship of the baby's father. A father's unique relationship with his baby is an important element in the child's development from early infancy.*

- What types of support did you find helpful when you started breastfeeding?
- How has your baby's father and/or your partner supported the breastfeeding relationship?
- How is your baby's relationship with his father, or other important persons, different from his relationship with you?

La Leche League expects Leaders to recognize the importance of fathers. We also know that not all families have an active father.

The family situation—married, single, divorced, etc.—is not relevant. As long as all the prerequisites have been met, a potential Applicant will be eligible and can apply for leadership. When a baby's father is not present or supportive, encourage the potential Applicant to read this concept in broad terms and to describe how support given by other people enhance the breastfeeding relationship.

*In the early years, the baby has an intense need to be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food.*

- What does this concept mean to you and how does it relate to your experience with your baby?
- How does your baby show that he needs your presence as well as your milk?
- How have you and your baby benefitted from mother-baby togetherness?
- How would you explain this concept to others at a meeting?

*For the healthy, full-term baby, human milk is the only food necessary until the baby shows readiness for complementary foods, about the middle of the first year after birth.*

- When and how did you introduce complementary foods to your baby?
- What signs of readiness did you see in your baby?
- What information on introducing complementary foods is important to share with others?
- Why wait until about the middle of the first year to introduce foods other than human milk?

*Good nutrition means eating a well-balanced and varied diet of foods in as close to their natural state as possible.*

- For you, how is this concept related to breastfeeding?
- Describe the importance of good nutrition for your family.
- How do you ensure a healthy diet for your family?

*Ideally the breastfeeding relationship will continue until the child outgrows the need.*

- Describe your experience with weaning.
- If your child has completely weaned, how and when did weaning happen?
- What does “outgrowing the need to breastfeed” mean to you?

*From infancy on, children need loving guidance which reflects acceptance of their capabilities and sensitivity to their feelings.*

- How do you see loving guidance following naturally from the breastfeeding relationship?
- What is your experience with this concept so far?
- How do you practice loving guidance?
- How has your relationship with your baby developed as your baby has grown? If your baby is still very young, how do you think loving guidance will unfold in the future?
- What does the term "loving guidance" mean to you?
- How do you see loving guidance developing as part of your interaction with your child from infancy on?

### 1.1.3. The Work of a Leader

Make sure that the potential Applicant understands what each Leader responsibility includes. Explain that La Leche League values putting family first; yet be clear that leadership is a commitment.

#### **The Five Basic Leader Responsibilities**

A La Leche League Leader:

- Helps mothers one-to-one, by telephone, online or in person, keeping accurate records of these helping situations.
- Plans and leads monthly Series Meetings.
- Supervises the management of the Group, including membership, finances, Group workers, Group Library, and materials for sale; informs the Area Coordinator of Leaders (usually through the District Advisor/Coordinator) about her LLL activities through written monthly reports.
- Keeps up-to-date on all important breastfeeding information, taking advantage of LLL's opportunities for continuing education through publications, meetings, correspondence, and the network of resource Leaders.
- Takes an active role in helping other mothers find out about leadership and helps them prepare to become LLL Leaders.

*(LLLI Policies and Standing Rules, Feb 98)*

As you discuss Leader responsibilities, include these aspects:

- Accountability—what is expected of a Leader and what a Leader can expect from the Area, Area Network, Affiliate, LLLI; the importance of reporting and consultation.
- Resources—printed/online LLL resources and a Leader's support network.
- Mother-to-mother/peer-to-peer help—the approach used by LLL Leaders to provide breastfeeding support.
- Confidentiality—how and why Leaders keep mothers' personal and identifying information private.
- Commitment—how Leaders balance LLL work and family needs.

If the potential Applicant is unwilling or unable to fulfill basic Leader responsibilities, ask the following questions before proceeding with the application:

- What do you want to accomplish as a Leader?
- What aspirations do you have?
- What skills would you bring to leadership and how do you see yourself using them?

### **Definition of an Active Leader**

An active LLL Leader pursues the La Leche League mission through basic Leader responsibilities as defined in the Policies and Standing Rules Notebook and/or other service to LLL. An active Leader's fees are current, she keeps up to date with Leader education, and she communicates regularly with the organization.

*(LLL Policies and Standing Rules, Oct 91, Mar 01)*

Among the five basic Leader responsibilities, keeping up-to-date on all important breastfeeding information is required for all the accredited Leaders. The other four responsibilities are recommended. However, Leader Applicants need to learn the skills and knowledge about all the five basic Leader responsibilities during their applications in order to be accredited as Leaders.

You can proceed to the next step of the pre-application dialogue: "The Application Work." if:

- The potential Applicant's experiences and goals are compatible with La Leche League philosophy
- The other prerequisites are also satisfied
- The potential Applicant is willing and able to:
  - Stay up-to-date with Leader education
  - Communicate regularly with the organization
  - Do the application work

#### **1.1.4. The Application Work**

Let the potential Applicant know that the application work focuses on developing the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and approaches necessary to fulfill basic Leader responsibilities. Share your own experience of the application as well as Leader resources such as *Leader Today* and local LLL publications. Explain application work by using the following "Application Work Summary." For detailed information about the application requirements see 3.3 of this chapter and refer to *Leader Applicant's Resource Kit (LARK)*.

# Application Work Summary

*Leader Applicant's Resource Kit: LARK*

\* Each item is hyperlinked.



[Personal History](#)  
[Part 1](#)



[Preview](#)  
[Part 5](#)



[Breastfeeding](#)  
[Resource Guide](#)  
[\(BRG\)](#)  
[Part 2](#)



[Background Reading;](#)  
[Childbirth Information](#)  
[Part 4](#)



[Checklist](#)  
[Part 3](#)

Application requirements:

- Correspondence with a LAD representative.
- Writing a personal history.
- Required reading: *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and [Leader's Handbook](#) (username and password required), if available in an accessible language. LLL entities should make it a priority to have these resources available in accessible languages, and seek help from their Direct Connect Entity, LAD Council or the LLLI Board if they can't manage themselves.
- Childbirth information requirement.
- Using the *Breastfeeding Resources Guide\** (BRG) to learn about the topics of breastfeeding management and resources available to Leaders.
- Regular meetings with a supporting Leader to complete:
  - *Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for Leadership\** (Checklist).
  - *A Preview of Helping Questions and Group Management\** (Preview).

The Applicant is welcome to complete additional exercises such as:

- Listening Exercise.\*
- Bias Exercise.\*
- Mixing Causes Exercise.\*

What to expect:

- The application requires time and reflection.
- Completing the requirements for accreditation takes about 6-12 months. Some Applicants need more time than others. Some applications slow down because of a move, illness in the family, arrival of a new baby or a return to work or school.
- The LAD encourages Applicants to “design” their own applications. Each application is different, because each breastfeeding relationship, each Applicant and each Leader is unique.
- Applicants are expected to attend Series Meetings regularly, where available.
- It is important for Applicants to keep both their LAD representative and supporting Leader updated.

#### **1.1.5. Costs of an Application**

- Discuss the current fees/costs of application and accreditation, and what they cover. Your LAD representative can tell you what they are in your Area, Area Network or Affiliate.
- Discuss possible sources of financial help.
- Review "Is there a cost involved?" in the [Thinking About La Leche League Leadership?](#) FAQs

## 1.2 Consulting with Co-Leaders

If a Leader has a concern or question about a potential Applicant's readiness to submit an application for LLL leadership, it helps to discuss it with co-Leaders.

If any Leader in the Group disagrees about the appropriateness of an application, explore the issues together.

- Which prerequisite does it relate to?
  - Personal Experience Prerequisites
  - Organizational Experience Prerequisites
  - Personal Skills Prerequisites
- If it relates to the Organizational Experience Prerequisites, is there a way for the potential Applicant to meet the prerequisite? For instance, the person may need to become an LLL member.
- If the concern is about one of the Personal Skills Prerequisites, identify what it is. Does the potential Applicant need to learn how to communicate with a respectful attitude? Does the potential Applicant plan to develop the skill in providing information and support without judgment? If so, consider how, when, and where you might help the person work on these skills. You might begin by saying something like, "Jane, I have some questions about a comment you made at the last meeting. Can we talk about it?"

To help your co-Leader(s) resolve their concerns:

- Focus on providing information about Leader expectations, problem solving and communication skills.
- Present an objective viewpoint.
- Explore possible solutions.
- Look for an approach that will solve the concern.

Although Applicants work on many skills during their applications, you want to have reasonable expectation that the potential Applicant can and is willing to develop the skills necessary to represent LLL as a Leader. If you are uncertain, consult with a LAD representative. Suggest that the potential Applicant work on communications skills before you agree to write the recommendation. Introduce Communication Skills Department sessions if available.

On the other hand, after talking together, you and your co-Leaders may discover that the concern relates to personal preference or style. In this case you can proceed with the confidence that Leaders are a diverse group bound together by a common philosophy and one-to-one approach.

Or, you may decide that you need more information about the potential Applicant's experience, beliefs, and interests.

## 2. Applying for Leadership

When you have completed pre-application dialogue and you, the potential Applicant and your co-Leaders are in agreement to proceed:

- Ask the Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA) for the current Leader Recommendation and Application forms.
- Complete the Leader Recommendation form.
- Consult with the CLA as to whether to send both the Application and Leader Recommendation forms at the same time, or only your recommendation first.
- Ask about payment of the application fee. Some Areas, Area Networks or Affiliates invoice the Applicant; others ask that payment, or receipt of online payment, accompany the application.
- Ask the Applicant to fill out the Application form.

If you have any doubts that a potential Applicant meets the prerequisites, consult the CLA first. It is desirable to resolve any concern before the person sends the Application form and pays the application fee, and before you submit the Leader Recommendation form.

After receiving your recommendation, the Application form, and confirmation that the fee has been paid, the CLA may have questions about something you have written. If it is clear that all prerequisites have been met, the CLA will assign the application to a LAD representative. To initiate the application, the assigned LAD representative writes separately to the Applicant and to you, as the supporting Leader and will answer any questions you may have initially or at any time during the application period.

## 3. During the Application

The documents and exercises with an asterisk mark (\*) are available in the [Leader Applicant's Resource Kit](#) (LARK) (username and password required).

Although one Leader in the Group often takes on the responsibility of working with the Leader Applicant, it helps if all the Leaders support the application and share their knowledge and experience with the prospective Leader. The Applicant, supporting Leader and LAD representative work together during the application to help the Applicant prepare for leadership.

You and the LAD representative support the Applicant to:

- Explore how the Applicant's breastfeeding and mothering experience relates to LLL philosophy.
- Enhance the Applicant's understanding of LLL philosophy and the role of a Leader.
- Improve communication and leadership skills.
- Increase knowledge of breastfeeding management.
- Become familiar with LLL resources and LLL-related websites.
- Prepare to take on the responsibilities of leadership.
- Find ways to balance LLL work with the family needs.

The Applicant is responsible for the pace and progress of the preparation for leadership. As the supporting Leader, you are expected to meet regularly with the Applicant to complete the work which needs the Leader's participation.

You and the Applicant can expect to hear from the LAD representative within two weeks. This response policy allows LAD representatives to work with more than one Applicant. If at any time you, or the Applicant, is waiting for more than two weeks for a response, please contact the LAD representative again to make sure that your message was received.

### **3.1 Role of the Supporting Leader**

As the supporting Leader, you have an important role in the application. *Overview of Application Work for Leader Accreditation* from the *Leader's Pre-Application Packet* provides you with a guide for the application period.

To support an Applicant, it's important to:

- Help the Applicant develop a flexible plan for completing application work while continuing to meet family needs.
- Assure the Applicant that both you and the LAD representative will be available to offer guidance, give support and answer questions.
- Review each part of the [Leader Applicant's Resource Kit](#) (LARK, username and password required), available at for Applicants.
- Arrange to meet regularly to work on the *Checklist\** (LARK, Part 3, "Leadership Skills") and *Preview\** (LARK, Part 5 "Preview").
- Include the Applicant in planning meetings and other Group activities.
  - Look at Series Meeting guides in Chapter 2 of the [Leader's Handbook](#) (username and password required).
  - Share past meeting plans.
  - Explore new ideas together.
  - Discuss a variety of approaches considering the needs of the Group.
- Role-play specific helping situations.
- Discuss working on the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide\** (LARK, Part 2, "Breastfeeding Management Skills") together, at the Applicant's request.

Keep in mind that prior to accreditation, Applicants are not representatives of La Leche League and are not covered by liability insurance. They cannot lead Series Meeting, help mothers and parents one-to-one as a Leader, or speak to outside Groups in the name of LLL. Applicants should not be put in a position where they might appear to represent LLL, whether a Leader is available or not. To avoid confusion, Applicants should not introduce themselves or be identified as Applicants at Series Meetings, on Internet chat lists or in any public settings.

Use your creativity to think of ways to offer the Applicant opportunities to practice one-to-one helping and leading meetings without putting the Applicant in the position of representing LLL before being accredited as an LLL Leader.

### **3.2 Role of the Corresponding LAD Representative**

- Dialogue with the Applicant about LLL philosophy by responding to the Applicant's personal history writing
- Support application work by:
  - Corresponding with both Applicant and supporting Leader on a regular basis.
  - Monitoring the Applicant's progress in completing requirements for accreditation.
  - Ensuring consistency in Leader accreditation worldwide.
- Complement the work of the Applicant and Leader by:
  - Acknowledging the progress of the application.
  - Discussing topics from a broader, perhaps Area, Area Network, Affiliate or LLLI point of view.
  - Suggesting alternative focuses.
  - Covering additional topics.
  - Finding resources or letting Leaders know about new ones being developed.
  - Answering questions and helping to resolve challenges.

### **3.3 Application Requirements**

The documents and exercises with an asterisk mark (\*) are available in the [Leader Applicant's Resource Kit](#) (LARK, username and password required), Parts 1-5.

#### **3.3.1 Part 1: Personal History**

The Applicant writes about the ten concepts and shares some personal information in a letter called "About You." This is called "personal history" and is explained in *Personal History of Breastfeeding and Mothering*.\* The Applicant submits the writing to the LAD representative. It is possible to send a complete personal history letter at once or send it in parts. Writing about the ten concepts can be done in any order. If writing is challenging for an Applicant, it may be possible to do it orally. In this case, either the LAD representative or supporting Leader writes down what is said by the Applicant who then reviews it. Check with your LAD representative whether this option is available.

The LAD representative responds to all writing the Applicant sends. The Applicant's writing and the corresponding LAD representative's responses form a written conversation which enhances the Applicant's understanding of LLL philosophy and how it will affect future work as a Leader. The LAD representative's responses build on what the Applicant's writes, relating personal experiences, knowledge, impressions and attitudes to the work of an LLL Leader.

As the supporting Leader you can help by:

- Playing with the children while the Applicant writes.
- Suggesting books from the Group library.
- Encouraging Applicants to work in a preferred learning style at a steady pace.
- Writing down the Applicant's personal history, if requested.

### **3.3.2 Part 2: Breastfeeding Management Skills**

The *Breastfeeding Resource Guide* (BRG)\* is a list of resources which provide information about the normal course of breastfeeding and common concerns. It can be completed in many ways.

The Applicant may:

- Work on it alone, with you or with other Applicants.
- Use the questions for discussion or write out answers.
- Participate in a session about the BRG,\* if available.
- Make notes on where to find information about each topic or put tabs on pages in written resources, such as *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*.
- Work in a group with each Applicant preparing and presenting a topic.
- Use the BRG\* to research a topic and then follow up with a question from the *Preview\** (see [3.3.5](#)).
- Participate in a Leader Applicant workshop with a number of Leaders and Applicants. This can be an effective way for Applicants to help and motivate each other.

### **3.3.3 Part 3: Leadership Skills and Attitudes**

Use the *Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for Leadership* (*Checklist*)\* to discuss leadership skills and attitudes with the Applicant.

- Share details of how things work in practice in your Group. Each Group has its own character. The size and location of your meetings will affect the way that you plan for meetings and the format that will work best for your circumstances.
- Relate the *Checklist\** topics to the responsibilities of leadership (see 1.1.3 [The Five Basic Leader Responsibilities](#)).
- Follow up with practice telephone helping and meeting situations.
- Share online resources with the Applicant.

## Ways to Help Applicants Practice *Checklist\** Topics

In addition to discussing the topics on the *Checklist,\** you may also want to offer additional opportunities to help the Applicant feel confident in these leadership tasks.

For “Helping mothers and parents one-to-one by telephone, by email or in person”

- Role-play helping situations.
- Practice empathetic responses.
- Respond to a helping email.
- Fill out a Leader’s log with a practice phone call.
- Fill out the Professional Liaison Questionnaire or Medical Questionnaire Form for a practice situation.

For “Planning and leading monthly Series Meetings”

- Choose titles for a series of four meetings.
- Select questions or an activity for each meeting.
- Write out an introduction for a Series Meeting.
- Lead a mock meeting with several Applicants and Leaders.
- Lead a discussion at a Chapter Meeting.
- Give a report on a book in the Group library.

For “Supervising the management of the LLL Group”

- Fill out the meeting report on the Leader’s behalf.
- Create a meeting announcement for the next series.

For “Keeping up-to-date on breastfeeding information”

- Explore the LLLI website.
- Attend LLL conferences and workshops
- Participate in webinars offered by LLLI or local entities
- Read publications issued by LLLI or local entities

For “Helping others find out about leadership and prepare to become LLL Leaders”

- Role-play a pre-application dialogue.
- Check the documents in the *Leader’s Pre-Application Packet*.
- Become familiar with different pages of [Thinking About La Leche League Leadership?](#)

### 3.3.4 Part 4: Background Reading/Learning

- If the Applicant has read the most recent edition of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* prior to applying for leadership, suggest reading it again, this time from the Leader's perspective.
- The [Leader's Handbook](#) (username and password required) is often read in conjunction with working on the *Checklist*.\*
- The Applicant sends a short report to the LAD representative after having read these books.
- Knowledge covering a variety of birthing choices, interventions, and experiences, and their effect on the start of breastfeeding is also required. Ways to meet the requirement of childbirth information include:
  - Having in-depth discussions with a Leader who is knowledgeable about this subject.
  - Attending a workshop or conference session which focuses on this subject.
  - Reading a comprehensive book on childbirth or the LAD publication, [Childbirth and Breastfeeding](#) (username and password required)
- The Applicant reports to the LAD representative when the childbirth requirement has been completed:
  - How this required knowledge was acquired.
  - Comments on a book if the Applicant chose this method.

### 3.3.5 Part 5: A Preview of Helping Questions and Group Management (Preview)\*

You and the Applicant work together on the *Preview*.\* This exercise gives the Applicant opportunities to practice communication skills and share information. It brings together what the Applicant has learned, identifies areas that would benefit from more work, and assures everyone that the Applicant has the basic information and skills to begin working as a Leader.

The *Preview*\* exercises cover:

- One-to-one helping situations.
- Group situations, including:
  - Facilitating discussion.
  - Handling challenges to leading a discussion.
  - Responding to criticism.
  - Helping others prepare for leadership.

### **Skills to Look for When Doing the *Preview*\***

- Giving empathetic responses.
- Listening before offering suggestions.
- Asking appropriate questions to gather more information.
- Sharing information, not advice.
- Explaining what's most important, not everything on the topic.
- Helping the mother or parent prioritize.
- Creating a plan to follow-up with the person seeking help.

The Applicant can choose which *Preview*\* topics to tackle. It is required to cover five questions from the *Helping Questions* section and three situations from the *Group Management* section. Many Applicants choose to practice more. It is helpful to select topics the Applicant is comfortable with as well as others that are more challenging. This way the *Preview* practice can help the Applicant build both confidence and knowledge. You can add other situations that come up frequently in your Group. The LAD representative may also recommend certain *Preview*\* topics.

When the *Preview*\* has been completed, both the Leader and Applicant send their evaluations of the exercise to the LAD representative by responding to the questions which are listed at the end of the *Preview*.\*

### **Ways to Complete the *Preview*\***

- Practice helping questions throughout the application, for example, in conjunction with each section of the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide*.\*
- Discuss *Group Management* situations while reviewing the *Checklist*.\*
- Do it at the end of the application as a review and formal practice of the skills and information accumulated.
- Use it early in the application, then return to it at the end when the Applicant has more knowledge and confidence.
- Practice responding to questions in a variety of formats: email, phone, in person.
- Role-play helping situations.
- Play the role of “Leader” so the Applicant can see how you would respond, then switch roles.
- Email a helping question.
- Do helping situations on the phone, both scheduled and unscheduled.
- Use a question in the *Preview* and focus on giving empathetic responses or filling out the Leader’s log without practicing a complete dialogue.
- Discuss how it went.
  - What did the Applicant find most useful?
  - What might the Applicant do differently another time?

## **4. Finding Potential Applicants**

### **4.1 Making Leadership Attractive and Accessible**

Showing how much you enjoy being a Leader and sharing information about La Leche League encourages others to become interested in LLL leadership.

We make LLL leadership attractive by:

- Acknowledging a potential Applicant’s contributions to the meeting discussion.
- Listening and responding to questions about LLL and LLL leadership.
- Inviting participation in other LLL events, such as fundraising, family picnics, Couple’s Meetings.
- Inviting help in Group management through Group jobs.
- Encouraging attendance at workshops and conferences.
- Talking about the benefits and satisfaction of leadership.

We make LLL leadership accessible when we:

- Share where to find information including *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, [Leader's Handbook](#), LLL Internet resources.
- Describe the LLL support system.
- Discuss becoming an LLL Leader with those interested in leadership.
- Hold workshops about applying for LLL leadership. (See 4.4 [Workshop about Becoming an LLL Leader](#).)

Time spent working with Applicants is not only an important responsibility of leadership, but is an investment in the future of the organization. Sometimes it may seem simpler just to do everything yourself. Remember that an Applicant will share Leader responsibilities with you as your co-Leader in the future. By helping others become Leaders, you are also helping the Group and LLLI.

### **Finding an Applicant**

- Demonstrate at Series Meetings how much you enjoy your work as a Leader.
- Explain that it is possible to balance volunteer activities with family needs.
- Encourage attendance at other Groups' Series Meetings so those interested in leadership can see that Leaders have different experiences and use different leading styles.
- Look for what you have in common with a potential Applicant.
- Remember that every Leader is unique and may have different skills and expertise.
- Look for potential Applicants who:
  - Express enjoyment of mothering and breastfeeding.
  - Find LLL ideas workable in their lives.
  - Make suggestions which are in line with LLL philosophy.
  - Attend meetings regularly.
  - Explore books in the Group library.
- Encourage interest in leadership from those with diverse interests and talents.
- Invite potential Applicants to:
  - Attend Evaluation/Enrichment Meetings.
  - Take a Group job.
  - Help with fundraisers.
  - Bring refreshments.
  - Come to LLL conferences and workshops.

## 4.2 When There's No Applicant in Sight

There may be times when you don't see any potential Applicants on the horizon. If you are a lone Leader or leading a new Group, it may take time for the Group to grow. Be patient.

If it seems that you do not need any help in running the Group, then it's possible no one will offer. Group attendees may see you as someone who is easily able to do everything yourself. Perhaps they think that they could never do everything that you do. Encourage them to participate in the life of the Group and build their confidence by telling them how much you appreciate their help.

If there are already several Leaders in the Group, members may think that no more Leaders are needed. You appear to be a well-established and smooth-running team. When there are several Leaders, it may be time to split the Group, add additional meetings or offer a Breastfeeding Café, which is an informal drop-in gathering. This relatively new style of meeting may take place in locations where meetings typically would not occur, such as a maternity store, café, etc. Some Leaders may decide to do outreach or participate in a project organized by the Area, Area Network, Affiliate or LLLI.

## 4.3 Identifying a Potential Applicant

[LLL Philosophy](#) is represented by a range of “mothering through breastfeeding” styles, rather than one “right” way. Knowing that a Leader's experience is an example of LLL philosophy in action shows that it is a realistic approach, rather than an unattainable ideal. It gives the Leader credibility to represent the organization. As meeting participants watch you and listen to what you say, they see and hear what LLL recommends.

When considering someone as a potential Applicant, pay attention to all aspects of the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership, [Applying for Leadership](#) (username and password required), *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*. Ask yourself if the person is likely to meet the prerequisites.

In order to write a recommendation, you will need to get to know the potential Applicant you are recommending. If you are approached with full of enthusiasm after the first Series Meeting and if that person wants to be a Leader, take the time to get to know each other. The prerequisite of attending at least one series of meetings, where available, will give you the opportunity to learn more about the potential Applicant. This may include Breastfeeding Cafés, as well as Series Meetings. Both offer the potential Applicant opportunities to learn about LLL and to feel a part of the Group. Explain that the person's enthusiasm is welcome and suggest taking on a Group job or helping with a fundraising project. If the potential Applicant has not yet read

*The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* recommend reading it in order to become familiar with our approach to mothering through breastfeeding.

Observe those attending your meetings. Listen to what they say and how they offer suggestions to others. Consider how their personal experiences reflect what LLL recommends. Think about how they meet the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership:

- Personal Experience Prerequisites.
- Organizational Experience Prerequisites.
- Personal Skills Prerequisites.

#### **4.4 Workshop about Becoming an LLL Leader**

A workshop can be simple or elaborate. Invite those who have expressed an interest in leadership or whom you have observed in the Group and would like to talk to about leadership. It's helpful to have more than one Leader present. Ask your local Leader Accreditation Department for the copies of the following three underlined documents.

- Give each participant a copy of:
  - *Thinking About La Leche League Leadership* (compact PDF version)
  - *Overview of Application Work for Leader Accreditation*
- Explain the following sections of the *Pre-Application Guidelines for Leaders* in the *Leader's Pre-Application Packet*. (See 1.1 [Pre-Application Dialogue](#).)
  1. LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership
  2. La Leche League philosophy
  3. The work of a Leader
  4. The application work
  5. Costs of an application
- Encourage discussion and answer questions.
- Explain that the next step is a pre-application dialogue.

### **5. Leaders' Concerns**

#### **5.1 If There Are Differences**

If the potential Applicant's point of view seems to differ from the LLL mission, purpose and philosophy, explore the differences before you proceed. Review the relevant concepts again. If the person voices disagreement or if the person's actions seem to conflict with our philosophy, explain that as representatives of LLL, Leaders are expected to agree with and provide examples of LLL philosophy in action. Share the *LLLI Leader Statement of Commitment* and explain that Applicants are required to sign it before accreditation.

### ***LLL Leader Statement of Commitment***

I am personally committed to good mothering through breastfeeding as presented in *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and other LLLI publications. I agree to represent La Leche League as a Leader in accordance with the LLLI Bylaws and policies. I will resign from this position if for any reason I find that I can no longer represent La Leche League in accordance with this agreement.

*LLL Policies and Standing Rules*

With these explanations, a potential Applicant might say:

#### **“I just can’t agree.”**

When this is the case, the potential Applicant will most likely decide not to apply.

#### **“I’m not sure if I agree.”**

You have the opportunity to help the person learn more about LLL philosophy. Offer relevant reading material (e.g., sections of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, [Leader’s Handbook](#), Leader publications) and an opportunity to discuss it. Consult your LAD representative for more specific suggestions. Reading and reflecting can help the potential Applicant see whether LLL leadership is a right goal. If the difference is something the person cannot, or will not, work on, explore other ways of helping mothers breastfeed their babies.

#### **“I think you’ve misunderstood.”**

This calls for careful listening on your part. When you believe you have come to understand the potential Applicant’s point of view, ask for feedback to make sure. Continue to clarify and offer more information on LLL philosophy. Clear communication can help the potential Applicant make a decision.

## **5.2 When You Can’t Write a Recommendation**

As a Leader, you are responsible for discussing leadership with someone who expresses interest.

If you cannot recommend the person, explain why and give information about appealing your decision to LLLI. Give her LLLI Leader Accreditation Appeals Procedures (Appeals Procedures), [LLL Policies and Standing Rules](#) (username and password required). Appeals Procedures can also be found in the *Leader’s Pre-Application Packet*. Please contact the local Leader Accreditation Department for the documents in the *Leader’s Pre-Application Packet*.

Remember that the LAD representative is willing to answer your questions.

### **When You Think You Can't Recommend Someone for Leadership**

- Appreciate the person's desire to help others breastfeed their babies.
- Acknowledge that person's talents.
- Discuss specific topics to be sure that you understand the person's ideas, feelings, and goals.
- Invite questions about *La Leche League Purpose, Mission, Philosophy* in the *Leader's Pre-Application Packet*.
- Encourage the potential Applicant to share new information.
- Ask open questions such as:
  - “How do you feel about my assessment?”
  - “Let me know any new information you have not shared”
- Use active listening and respect silence.
- Refer to written material to indicate and describe the discrepancies.
- Be specific and factual. Avoid opinion.
- Show how the discrepancies may affect potential Applicants' ability to function fully as an LLL Leader.
- Make sure that you've understood the situation correctly. Avoid assumptions.
- Be honest and straightforward.

### **5.3 When an Applicant Does Not Complete the Application**

During the course of the application, the Applicant might decide that there is no time to do the work of a Leader. Circumstances may change or the application for leadership is not what the Applicant expected. It may become necessary for the Applicant to withdraw the application.

Explain that you enjoyed working with the Applicant and that if the situation changes, the application can be restarted within a year. The Leader Accreditation Department will keep the application file for one year. During that time frame, it won't be necessary to send a new Application form, repay the fee or redo any work.

### **5.4 When There Are Doubts about an Application**

In some cases, issues or questions might arise which leave you in doubt as to whether accreditation will be the outcome. Not only must a potential Applicant meet the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership at the start of the application, it is required to continue to do so in order to meet LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation, [Applying for Leadership](#) (username and password required), *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*. There may be concerns about the Applicant's communication skills or ability to represent the philosophy and/or policies of LLLI.

To help avoid this disappointing situation:

- Have a thorough pre-application dialogue.
- Be sure to cover all the necessary information prior to submitting your recommendation and the application.
- Help maintain the Applicant's learning and interest by arranging meetings to explore, discuss, and practice what the Applicant needs to prepare for LLL leadership.
- Invite questions; work with doubts and concerns before they become impediments.

If you have concerns at any point during the application, contact your corresponding LAD representative or the Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA).

## 6. Accreditation

When the application work has been completed and the Applicant is ready to be accredited, the corresponding LAD representative sends the [LLL Leader Statement of Commitment](#) for the Applicant to sign (see 5.1 ). The Applicant may also be asked to pay an accreditation or new Leader fee. A new LLL Leader can be accredited after having met all the LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation.

You, the Leader Applicant, and the LAD representative will ensure that the Applicant has met the Criteria for Leader Accreditation as an LLL Leader, set by the LLLI Board of Directors.

### LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation

To be accredited as an LLL Leader, an Applicant shall:

- meet the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership,
- demonstrate understanding and practice of LLL philosophy,
- complete all steps of the LLL Leader application work as described below in Breastfeeding Management Skills and Leadership Skills criteria, and
- sign LLLI Leader Statement of Commitment.

*La Leche League is a worldwide, educational, nonsectarian, non-discriminatory service organization.*

[Applying for Leadership](#), *LLL Policies and Standing Rules*,  
(username and password required)

As soon as the LAD representative receives the signed *Statement of Commitment* and fee, if applicable, the Applicant will be notified: *You are now an accredited LLL Leader and may assume all the responsibilities of leadership.* The LAD representative will also notify you and your co-Leaders. You can announce the new Leader's accreditation in the Group and welcome the former Applicant as a co-Leader. Congratulations!

To help your new co-Leader transition to the Leader role:

- Plan together who will lead the next Series of Meeting.
- Talk about how you will support each other's role at meetings.
- Focus participants' attention on the new Leader at Series Meetings.
- Discuss Group responsibilities. Decide together who will complete the meeting report, order books, support each Group worker, etc.
- Bring the new Leader's talents to the attention of administrators of the Area, Area Network or Affiliate so that the new Leader can be invited to help with administrative work in the future.



When you are closely involved in an Applicant's preparation for leadership, it ensures steady progress of application work. Your dedicated work mentoring a future LLL Leader contributes to providing support to more breastfeeding mothers, parents and babies and helping your future co-Leader enjoy LLL work with confidence and pleasure.

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