**LADders**

*LADders is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives*

Its purpose is to help LAD representatives do their jobs with confidence and pleasure by offering a place to share information and experiences.

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2014 European Management Symposium

*For the first time I was part of LLL, feeling like I’m really at home. I meet so many precious Leaders all over the world, from USA to my neighbors in Slovenia. This was amazing. I was able to talk about LLL, share my experience, ask so many questions and have different answers. So many different cultures, and the same philosophy shared by each of us. I was feeling as part of LLL.*

Gorana Djergovic, ACLA, Croatia
*Future Areas in Europe*
The European Management Symposium (EMS) was held in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2014 March. Over 100 LLL administrators from within and beyond Europe celebrated their connection to one another and to the international organisation that binds us together. For some, it was their first experience of an international LLL event; for others, it was a renewed experience that served to rejuvenate their enthusiasm and commitment, reminding them of the mission and purpose we all share. Whether we had months, years, or decades of experience as Leaders and administrators, we shared a lot of laughter, a lot of love, and we learned from one another.

Over 30 nationalities were represented at the EMS and almost as many languages. We experienced the joys and challenges of communicating with one another, making resources more widely available and, especially, trying to meet the need for translation. We recognised how our work supporting breastfeeding mothers connects us to something deeper and larger than ourselves as individuals, reaching across borders to mothers of all cultures and from every generation.

We met Ann Calandro, former Interim Executive Director, and most members of the LLLI Board of Directors; we were able to speak frankly and openly with them. Cindy Garrison, former LLLI Board co-Chair, has been appointed by the Board to serve as Interim LAD International Director. We were all delighted when it was announced at the EMS. There were many interesting and informative sessions. For a couple of joyous hours one evening, we shared songs, dances and poetry. In this issue of LADders we invite you to enjoy some of what the EMS offered, because we were there for you as much as for ourselves.

**EMS LAD Sessions**

Presented in Frankfurt, Germany

**Understanding and Working Effectively with the New Generation of Mothers and Leader Applicants**

*Laurence Kher Descourtieux, co-Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA) for Europe and Linda Wieser, ALA for LLL Canada*

Laurence: *I led a meeting in London a few months ago. My co-Leader asked: “What item has been helpful for you in your breastfeeding?” In the past, mothers used to say: “Oh, it was my Womanly Art,” “my sling,” “my King-size bed,” “my freezer,” . . . At this meeting the mothers started saying “My i-Phone 5,” “Yes, my i-Phone 5,” “I agree. It is my i-Phone5.” They found it important because with it they could take pictures, make phone calls, use the Internet, post on Facebook and do many more things I haven’t a clue about. I felt like an outsider and wondered if I could still understand and support these mothers.*

Do mothers attending our meetings share the same concerns as those of previous generations? What are their needs and expectations?

The term “generation” is a sociologic concept used for people within a delineated population who experience the same significant events within a given period of time. It is a social generation. Generation Y (Gen Y), mainly in North America and Europe, shares some characteristics which can define this specific social group. Of course, these are only general characteristics; some women we work with might fit the “Gen Y” description perfectly while belonging to another generation, and some from “Gen Y” may not fit the typical characteristics of this group.
Here are some traits we found for Generation Y:

- Born between 1975 and 2000
- Largest number of births since the post World War II Baby Boomer Generation
- More liberal on social issues
- Live at home longer
- Reliant on new media and technology
- Often have short attention spans
- At work: look for responsibility, respect, and support from managers, NOT CONTROL
- Comfortable connecting, collaborating and sharing information online
- Family-centric—often unwilling to devote long hours to paid work
- Team-oriented—want to be included and involved
- Attention-craving—seek feedback and guidance
- Achievement-oriented—confident and ambitious; seek out new challenges; not afraid to question authority

During our group discussion, Leaders identified the unique needs of mothers in their Groups and shared how they are meeting these needs. Mothers today are getting information and connecting in different ways. They want the information free and quickly. They often go online to websites or social media groups for the answers and support they are seeking. Mothers like connecting with other mothers via social media; but they also like connecting in person. Many mothers attend all support groups offered in their area. Telephone use is becoming less common, and Leaders find they are receiving fewer helping phone calls than in the past.

Although many Leaders find it awkward and uncomfortable using social media, most realize that the new technology makes communication and research faster and has the ability to reach many more mothers at one time and from different parts of the world. How exciting! We need to use the new technologies to our advantage—to advertise LLL, to promote our philosophy, to share information and to support mothers. How best can we do this? The overwhelming consensus was that the LLLI website needs to be updated so that LLL is the first choice for mothers seeking information on breastfeeding. Secondly, we need to reach mothers where they are interacting with other mothers. This may be on Facebook, Tumblr (a micro blog platform which allows users to post almost anything quite efficiently) or other social media sites. This may mean changing where we hold Series Meetings. Public locations, rather than homes, are becoming common meeting sites. Since memberships are important to the survival of LLL, and often mothers no longer use checks or carry much cash, we need to make joining easy by having PayPal options on our websites.

Facebook was mentioned by several Leaders as a useful way to connect with mothers. LLL France has a Facebook Group moderated by 15 Leaders. Mothers post questions but only Leaders can respond. In Israel there is a Hebrew LLL Facebook Group with eight active moderators and over 4,800 members. About 200 mothers are active and posting at any one time. Many more may be reading the posts. Both mothers and Leaders respond to questions. Leaders also post discussion topics, funny breastfeeding stories and news about upcoming conferences. When the conversation gets “heated,” it’s the Leaders’ job to remind mothers to keep things calm and respectful. Anything that is not breastfeeding-related or that is “unacceptable” is usually deleted. There is also a smaller English-speaking Group. In other Areas Leaders and lactation consultants are working together to moderate a social media breastfeeding group.

Social media and new technologies can also meet the needs of Leader Applicants. Here are some suggestions:

- Invite Applicants to join a Leader Applicant Facebook group.
- Have Leader Applicant meetings via Skype to minimize travel.
- Use Google chat or instant messenger to dialogue with an Applicant.
- Have most resources available online. LLL Canada has their Leader’s Handbook online, making it easier for Applicants to access.

The world is changing fast. As soon as we are used to a technology, something new has already been developed and is being used by a lot of people. We can’t ignore this, nor can we expect it to go back to the way it was. To be effective Leaders, we have to adapt; we have to learn and understand how best to use these new technologies, keeping in mind technologies are only tools, and tools are assets when we know how to use them. Our goal is the same as it’s always been: to support mothers and babies to have a satisfying breastfeeding experience.

Laurence Kher Descourtieux and her husband, Eric (both generation X), live in London, England, with their youngest children (twins Alix and Quentin, 15—generation Z). Their older children (Nicolas 25; Emeric 22 and Géraldine 19—all generation Y) live in France, working or studying. Laurence has been a Leader for 20 years and joined LAD in 1997. She is currently co-Administrator of Leader Accreditation for Europe and CLA for South East, LLL Great Britain.

Linda Wieser lives in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada, where she and her husband, Jim (both baby boomers), have a large garden and several boats for playing around on the water. They have two grown daughters (both generation Y). Linda has been a Leader since 1984. For many years she worked in the Professional Liaison Department as Area Professional Liaison for Michigan, USA, and then Atlantic Canada. In 2008, she became a member of the LAD and is currently the Administrator of Leader Accreditation for LLL Canada.
Helping Leader Applicants Use the BRG Effectively

*Linda Wieser, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, LLL Canada*

When I was accredited as a Leader in 1984, there was no *Breastfeeding Resource Guide* (BRG). There was no LLLI website. I didn’t own a computer. All correspondence was via postal mail. How things have changed!

The BRG was created in 1998 as one way for Leader Applicants to meet the Breastfeeding Management Skills Criteria for leadership as outlined in Appendix 18 of the *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules*. At the February 1998 LLLI Board meeting, the Board “delineated fifteen categories of basic breastfeeding management (Appendix 18.2) and …[required] that Applicants be able to identify and consult resources for each.” *(LLDI Lifeline 1998 #1)* Over time the BRG has been translated into other languages and become the primary way Applicants meet this requirement.

The BRG gives Applicants the opportunity to become familiar with most of the common concerns and questions they will encounter as Leaders. It is our core curriculum on breastfeeding management. The BRG also gives Applicants the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the resources available to them. This was the main intent of the LLLI Board members when they created the Breastfeeding Management Skills Criteria. They wanted Leaders to know what resources were available to them and how to consult those resources. This hasn’t changed. What has changed is the number and types of resources now available.

*The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* continues to be a Leader’s primary resource; thus chapter references are included in the current BRG. Many Leaders also find texts, such as *Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple*, an additional helpful resource. If an Applicant has access to this resource, she may want to note the relevant page numbers next to a topic, or add tabs to her book to make the information easier to find. And then there’s the internet — unimaginable as a resource when I was accredited. However, today most Applicants already have experience looking up breastfeeding information online. In this case, the BRG familiarizes them with LLL online resources and other recommended websites. It helps them think critically about where to find the information they share with mothers. Many Applicants work on the BRG with other Applicants and/or their supporting Leader. This helps them appreciate that each Leader, and each future Leader, is also a resource.

As LAD representatives, we can emphasize the importance of the BRG and suggest ways to use it effectively. It’s important to stress that this is a guideline, not a test, for Applicants to assess what they know and what they don’t know. For example, if an Applicant had a premature baby and has had a lot of experience pumping, she will not need to study these topics in depth, whereas another Applicant may be unfamiliar with both topics.

Ways to use the BRG effectively might include:

- Research a topic, then meet with other Applicants and/or Leaders to discuss it.
- Practice responding to helping questions on topics reviewed.
- Put tabs in *The Womanly Art* or other texts to make information easy to find.
- Bookmark websites that are most useful.
- Make notes on topics unfamiliar to the Applicant.

We don’t expect Applicants to be experts on every topic in the BRG; however, we do expect them to know where to find the information. Knowing how to find information in *The Womanly Art* and other written resources, how to access information on LLL and other recommended websites, and when and how to contact the Professional Liaison Department—all of these are a crucial part of an Applicant’s leadership preparation.

For an Applicant who does not have the BRG or resources available in her language, how can she still meet the Breastfeeding Management Skills Criteria? Rather than reading about breastfeeding topics, it may be necessary to cover unfamiliar subjects through oral discussion with an experienced Leader who can help the Applicant learn so that she can be confident of her ability to answer typical breastfeeding questions.

*Editor’s note: The author’s biography is available in the previous article, “Understanding and Working Effectively with the New Generation of Mothers and Leader Applicants.”*
Greetings to LAD Representatives

Cindy Garrison, Interim LAD Director

It is a privilege to be back in the LAD. The LLLI Board asked me to accept this position since I was completing my second term on the LLLI Board and also because I had previous LAD experience. What an honor to rejoin LAD right before I was to attend the EMS in Germany, and then be able to meet some local LAD representatives and so many of the LAD Council members! The EMS was amazing on its own and reminded me so much of the administrators’ sessions held before the LLL International Conferences. There was an evening where different countries shared some of their resources—a combination of Resource Faire and World’s Faire. LLL materials were shared but also country-specific cheese, cookies, and sale items. I left Germany with such positive feelings about the future after attending the best Board meeting of my six years as a member of that body, the opportunity to become Interim LAD Director, LAD sessions that helped me get more up-to-date on administrative work, and the chance to meet so many wonderful women from around the world. I’m still smiling when I think of those experiences.

My family consists of my husband, Dave, an amazing man who has supported my LLL career long before we knew it was a career. We are high school sweethearts, meeting when I moved to the town and joined the band, and marrying while we were in college. Dave is also an 11 1/2 year heart transplant survivor and doing very well. We have three adult sons: Mike and his wife Sarah who have Ian, 17, and Aidan, 15; Jeff and his wife Aura who have Xavier, 3, and Demitri, 9 months; and Eric who has his stepson Tyler, almost 16, plus Andrew, 9, and Kristiana, 8 (the only Garrison girl!). Because of my LLL experience, I was able to take—and pass—the IBCLC exam the very first time it was offered. Although my original background was in education, having taught public school and served as partner/teacher in a private preschool, I have been employed as a hospital-based lactation consultant at a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, hospital for the past 23 years. I enjoy bringing all I have learned through LLL to new parents on the beginning of their journey.

I was introduced to LLL while pregnant with Mike when my sister-in-law sent me her copy of The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding. We turned there for the answers to every question that arose with breastfeeding him. I currently lead with the first Group I attended, which was two weeks before Jeff was born. I attended the very first meeting of the Group and just kept coming. The Leader asked me to be the Treasurer when I was the first to buy a membership, so that got me involved right away! I became a Leader soon after Jeff was a year old.

In addition to many, many enjoyable years in the LAD, I have also held positions in the Area Leader Department; at the former Division level, in Publications and a term as Division Director; as well as two terms on the LLLI Board of Directors (three years as co-Chair). In whatever free time I can find, I love to read and do word and logic puzzles. I like to quilt but have not had the opportunity since becoming Division Director. Some day I will get back to it and finish the baby quilt I started for my now 15-year-old grandson—but I’ll probably need to expand it quite a bit to fit his six-foot-three-inch height!

I look forward to getting to know you through LADders and I hope you will feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or concerns. Thank you for all the time and passion you bring to LAD work as you help mothers prepare for leadership.
We’ve Come a Long Way:  
Part 2, Meeting the Mothering Experience Prerequisite, Then and Now

Lesley Robinson, LAD Council

In Part 1 of this article (*LADders* 2014-1, No. 16, pp. 2-3), we looked at whether leadership is open to enough mothers with reference to the breastfeeding experience prerequisite. Statistics make it clear that breastfeeding has come a long way since La Leche League's founding in 1956 and that a far higher percentage of mothers now meet the prerequisites of breastfeeding exclusively for around six months and continuing to breastfeed until at least the first birthday.

When it comes to the mothering experience prerequisite, the situation is somewhat more complicated. Although the needs of babies have not changed, social and economic changes have put pressure on mothers to make choices that might affect their ability to meet the mothering experience prerequisite and to put LLL philosophy completely into practice in their lives. Just as it was when LLL was founded, the experience of a Leader needs to serve as an example of how LLL philosophy is realistic and workable in the current society.

In 1998 there was a change in the wording of the prerequisites to applying for leadership, which it was hoped would make leadership available to a larger number of mothers and increase the number of Leaders. Back in 1956, fewer than 20% of mothers with children under the age of six were in the work force. By 1997 this figure had jumped to 65%, remaining steadily around this level ever since. Since the mothering experience prerequisite is not about separation, but about meeting the baby's need for mother’s presence, many mothers who are not able to be with their babies all the time do not meet the prerequisite, despite the change in wording. A mother who meets the mothering experience prerequisite has an experience that serves as an example of LLL philosophy in action.

Changes in policies on maternity leave have helped mothers to extend the period of exclusive breastfeeding and to make a gradual transition to the return to work. In at least 178 countries around the world, paid maternity leave is guaranteed. More than 50 countries provide wage benefits additionally for fathers. The United States, along with Papua New Guinea, Swaziland, Liberia and Lesotho, are some of the only countries in the world that provide no type of financial support for mothers. In the United States, despite the lack of legally mandated help, employers vie to be labelled “family friendly.” Mothers, at least those in professional careers, may be able to negotiate a maternity leave or a gradual return to work, perhaps beginning with part-time hours or sharing jobs with others in similar circumstances. Ireland now provides 26 weeks of maternity leave, whilst in Canada, Croatia, Denmark and Serbia, mothers are able to take 52 weeks of maternity leave. So despite the large numbers of mothers of young children in the work force, the pendulum has swung back to allow them to spend more of that crucial early time with their babies.

Various social changes have influenced the numbers of mothers of young children in the work force. Second wave feminism in the ’60s and ’70s led to advances in education available to women, opening doors for many in professional careers. This has had both positive and negative consequences. Many mothers may feel pressure not to “waste” their education. A mother may not want to walk away from a prestigious job if she considers herself a role model for other young women. Others may feel trapped by the need to pay back expensive student loans or by a mortgage that is based on the incomes of two wage earners. There is a widespread perception that one income is no longer enough for a family, but this may be partly due to a change in opinions about what a family “needs.” There may also be an expectation that each generation will be materially better off than the preceding one. The fact is that a section of the population is indeed better off. In the late 1950s, over 22% of the population of the United States lived below the poverty line. Although there have been fluctuations in that figure during times of economic recession, by the early years of the 21st century, less than 13% of the population were living in poverty.
Another social change that has affected the number of mothers in the work force since the 1950s is the number of families headed by single parents. Around 16% of children worldwide live in single parent families, but figures vary from country to country. Single parents head over 12 million U.S. families; 80% of those are headed by women. Of those single mothers, 80% are employed, more than half of them full-time.

Mothers always make the best choices they can for their families. However, what is right for the family as a whole might not be what the baby needs. Every baby needs his mother. His needs may be unpredictable and impossible to schedule. If a mother needs to be away from her baby for large blocks of time during the day, she will seek suitable care for him. The baby may be left in the care of his father or another person who loves him. Whoever that person is, it is not the same as the baby being with the mother. LLL acknowledges the importance of a father’s unique relationship with his baby. Each parent is important, but a mother and a father are not interchangeable. It is inevitable that mothers and babies will miss each other when they are separated. LLL Leaders understand this not through experience of separation, but experience of mothering through breastfeeding.

Although there have been changes in social and economic conditions as well as changes in who can apply for leadership, the rate of accreditation of new Leaders has remained steady over recent years. Despite a changing world, the needs of babies remain the same in different times and places. LLL philosophy also remains constant. We have certainly come a long way in sharing that philosophy with mothers around the world, as we have grown into a worldwide organisation.

Lesley Robinson lives with her husband, Mark, in Ottawa, Canada. Their three grown children, Kate (born 1985), Alex (1987) and Will (1989) have flown the nest. Lesley was accredited in 1987 and has been a LAD representative since 1991.

References


The National Poverty Center, The University of Michigan, Gerald R Ford School of Public Policy, http://www.npc.umich.edu/poverty/#3 (accessed 5 May 2014)


Helping an Applicant See How the Prerequisites Relate to Her Experience

Lori Bryan, Regional Administrator of Leader Accreditation (RALA) for LAD West, USA
Karin Gausman, RALA for LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education, USA

When the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) considers a mother’s application for leadership, we take into consideration not only her agreement with and belief in LLL philosophy, but also her mothering experience. Early and extensive separation on a regular basis becomes a necessary focus because it can diminish the mother’s experience of meeting her baby’s “intense need to be with his mother, which is as basic as his need for food.” It also impacts the mother’s experience of “mothering through breastfeeding” if she is not with her baby to understand and respond to his needs.
When you accept an application from a mother who has experienced separation from her baby/toddler, how do you let the new Applicant and supporting Leader know why the application was accepted? This is a great opportunity to help both the Applicant and Leader learn about mother-baby separation issues. Through your pre-application dialogue with the candidate, you already know the details of how this mother understands her child’s need for her and what she has done to achieve mothering through breastfeeding. Let the new Applicant know that the LLLI Board of Directors asks the LAD and Leaders to look at each mother’s experiences individually. In your letter, you can explain how her personal experiences provide examples of how she met the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership.

Let’s talk about a sample application with many positive traits that show the mother’s understanding of her baby’s need for her.

*The mother understood her baby’s need for her by taking the longest maternity leave she could, which allowed her to establish breastfeeding and mothering with her baby. She took extra care in selecting the daycare for the baby so that she could go to the baby during her lunch break or sometimes the baby could be brought to her during her work day. When she returned to work, she eased into her new schedule by working only a couple days a week or working just a few hours a day so she could be home with her baby as much as possible. She works from home whenever she can. She knows that her baby needs to be with her even when he does not protest her absence. She understands the difference between comfort and resignation to a situation. She talks about how her non-work time focuses on her baby. She describes “wearing her baby” and sleeping with her baby. A strong commitment to breastfeeding and mothering allows her to make it work. She continues to look for employment opportunities that would allow her more time at home.*

When an application with separation is accepted, it helps the mother to understand why her application was accepted, and to understand that her situation does not become a precedent for future applications. LAD assesses each application individually. Your explanation of why a specific mother met the prerequisites can give her information she will use later, when she is taking the role of supporting Leader herself.

*Karin Gausman has been a Leader for 39 years and she lives in Loveland, Colorado, USA, with her husband, Jim. They have three grown children: Quinn, Benj, and Pete, and four grandchildren, aged 9-17: Alana, Sam, Max, and Camille Kay. Karin joined the LAD 25 years ago and has accredited about 420 Leaders.*

*Lori Bryan has been a Leader for 26 years and she lives in Lodi, California, USA, with her husband, Mark. They have four children, Joannie, Kari, Cindy and Russ, and two grandchildren aged 2 and 3, Amélie and Noah, plus two more arriving in August and September. Lori joined LAD 22 years ago and has accredited 281 Leaders.*
How Would You Respond

Here is an extract from a Leader, written to the LAD representative, about a mother interested in applying for leadership. Thank you to the four LAD representatives who submitted their responses, from four different LLL entities. There is no single right answer. Sharing possible approaches can help us consider how we might choose to respond.

Dear ACLA,

There is a mother interested in leadership in my Group. It has been a while since I did my application and I am not sure how to dialogue with her. Could you please explain what I should do?

Lara Leader

Sample Responses

How exciting to have an interested mother in your Group! The good news is that there are many resources that will help you, as Leader, understand your role in exploring leadership with an interested candidate. You might want to start by reading in Chapter 5 of the Leader’s Handbook. The LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education website has a whole section for Supporting Leaders: http://www.lllalliance.org/top-lad-page/supporting-leader-resources/ In addition the LLLI web page Thinking About LLL Leadership? (TaLLL) http://www.llli.org/lad/talll/talll.html provides information for the interested mother to read, at her leisure, to give her a picture of what preparation for leadership is all about; she might want to print out the compact version of TaLLL: http://www.llli.org/docs/lad/thinkingaboutleadership.pdf Introducing her to The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, if she hasn’t read it yet, will give her an understanding of LLL philosophy and also the basis of how Leaders support mothers at LLL meetings.

Apart from providing printed information, the personal approach plays a big role. Firstly, it’s important to put her at her ease to have pre-application dialogue with her, and to let her know that her eligibility is based on the prerequisites to applying for leadership. If possible, arrange to meet personally and allow plenty of time, often over more than one occasion, to explore each aspect of pre-application dialogue.

As you move on to discuss Group issues, you’ll need to find out if she is a member. Can she attend meetings regularly? It’s essential to convey the message that LLL leadership requires a sense of commitment. Mothers can show their commitment to LLL by taking on a Group job. Getting her involved in the Group will give her a sense of ownership as well as help you evaluate her eligibility for leadership.

Lastly, let her know how valuable her role is as an experienced breastfeeding mother and how she will help further the mission of LLL, even if she doesn’t continue on to leadership.

Please keep me informed and let me know if you need further assistance.

Patty Varelas, Greece
It is always exciting to meet a mother interested in leadership! I'll be happy to answer your questions and help you get started. The LLL US West (USW) website has information for working with Applicants, including the Leader’s Pre-Application Packet. There is an introductory letter for Leaders that explains the pre-application time and all the documents to use for yourself and the mother. Appendix 18 is helpful for you as it has questions to consider when meeting with the mother and filling out your recommendation. The Overview of Application Work for Leader Accreditation explains the application time.

Supporting Leaders:
http://www.lllusw.org/WEBPROTECT-sponsoringleaderpage.htm
User- usallleader
Password - access4ALLL

When you meet with the mother, you can discuss the application time and what is involved in being a Leader. You’ll want to talk about each concept with her so you know that she understands and demonstrates LLL philosophy, even though you may have already seen this reflected in how she talks and acts at meetings. If the mother works outside the home and experiences regular separation from her baby, we’ll need to gather some additional information and make sure she meets the prerequisites to applying for leadership before she submits an application. If this is the case, I can give you more information.

The mother needs to be a dues-paying member before applying. You are welcome to suggest that she read The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding—ownership of the manual is a prerequisite to applying for leadership (if it is available in her language) and a good way for her to know about the organization she wants to represent.

You will want to wait to mail the application and recommendation until you meet with the mother and confirm that she meets all the prerequisites. In USW the application fee is $31 and includes a copy of the Leader’s Handbook. The application, the check for the application fee and recommendation are sent to the CLA. The forms can be filled out on the computer and emailed.

Please let me know anytime you have a question or if anything is unclear!

Lori Bryan, USA

How wonderful that you have an interested mother in your Group! It’s always exciting when there is a potential new co-Leader on the horizon. Some Leaders may find it daunting if they have never worked with a potential Leader Applicant before, especially if it has been a while since they were accredited.

Here in Great Britain (GB), the first step is usually to share Leadership - Is It For You? (LIIFY) with the mother. This can be emailed to her. Reading LIIFY will enable the mother to think through whether LLL leadership is the direction she wants to take, or if another way of supporting breastfeeding mothers might suit her better.

If the mother believes that she meets the prerequisites and that she is interested in promoting LLL’s work, then the next step would be to arrange a time to meet with her for pre-application dialogue. Two important points to make clear before starting your dialogue are that, in order to apply for leadership, she needs to be a member of LLL, and she needs to own and be familiar with the contents of The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding (if it is available in her language). Pre-application dialogue involves going through the pre-application checklist. You can find support for this in Pre-application Guidelines for Leaders, Part B of LIIFY. This dialogue gives the mother the chance to explore all of the prerequisites to applying for leadership, the work of a Leader and each of the ten concept statements, both individually and as they relate to each other. You will also need to explain what is involved in application work, so the mother knows what to expect.

Pre-application dialogue can take some time, and it may be necessary to set up a second meeting in order to not feel rushed. Even with mothers you think you know well, there can be surprises that require lengthy, in-depth discussion. You might print out a new LIIFY for each potential Applicant, so that you can take notes on it. Some Leaders find it really useful to refer to these notes when they fill out the Leader Recommendation form, as it can be easy to forget exactly what has been said.
If, at the end of this dialogue, the mother is still interested, and you feel confident recommending her, then you can complete the application paperwork to send off to the LLLGB office. There are two main parts to this: an Application form to be filled out by the mother and a Leader Recommendation form to be filled out by you. Both of these can also be found on the website. If at any point you have questions, or are not sure whether you should recommend the mother, please feel free to contact a LAD representative to discuss your concerns. It’s always better to iron out any potential issues, and to be 100% sure about recommending the mother for leadership, before sending the application paperwork.

Danielle Pelling, Great Britain

It is lovely that there is a mother interested in leadership in your Group! Pre-application dialogue is different for every mother, and your basic tools are the prerequisites to applying for leadership, Appendix 18, and the ten concepts. All of these can be found in a document called Thinking About LLL Leadership ? (TaLLL) which you can get from your Area CLA or online on the LLLI website: http://www.llli.org/docs/lad/thinkingaboutleadership.pdf (TaLLL compact pdf version); http://www.llli.org/lad/talll/talll.html (TaLLL full colour version). You can also find the prerequisite statements and the ten concept statements in the Leader’s Handbook.

Get together with the mother, perhaps over coffee or even lunch in a place where you feel relaxed, especially if either of you have children with you. Some Leaders invite mothers into their home to discuss leadership. If that doesn’t suit you, perhaps you could go to her home. You could start the discussion by explaining the five responsibilities of leadership. These are also in the TaLLL document and in the Leader’s Handbook. You can talk about how you fulfil the basic responsibilities and how you manage your time in order to do so. It is always good to explain to the mother that the time she needs to devote to her application is a good reflection of the time she may spend on LLL work as a Leader, preparing for meetings, writing up helping situations in her Leader’s Log, Group management and keeping up to date with reading. Does she have time in her life right now to devote to LLL?

You can then show the mother the other materials and start going through them. Although there is some overlap with the prerequisites and the concepts, it is important to cover both. If the mother has experienced any separation issues, ask her how that went; how long and how often the separation occurred, how the baby handled it and how she knew the baby was okay with it. If you need to discuss this further, you can let her know that you may come back to it in more detail. LAD will have more information on how you can explore this further.

It is a good idea to give the mother the concepts to read out loud. With each one, ask her to explain it to you as she would to a mother who had never heard of it before. You learn a lot that way about what she has picked up at meetings and what she understands about La Leche League. After this, you should have a pretty good idea whether the mother meets the prerequisites and supports the philosophy. If there are any discrepancies, she will most likely have realised this herself as you talked through it. If it is decided that leadership is not for her at this time, it is good to affirm her contribution to your Group and express your desire that she continue to attend meetings. If you feel you can recommend her for leadership or if you are not sure and have questions, then you can contact your CLA to discuss the next step.

Good luck with the interested mother, Lara. I’m sure you’ll do great!

Margaret McGuigan, Ireland

Leader Accreditation Department 2014-2 No. 17
Dear Cathy CLA,

I was really excited to start working with Bella on her application for leadership, but now I’m rather worried about her communication skills. We had a Skype call yesterday, and Bella told me that she can’t understand why any mother would give her baby formula. She also told me that she and her sister-in-law aren’t speaking to one another, and this seems to be because of Bella’s strong views. Please can you suggest how I should handle this?

Amy ACLA

How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Alison Parkes, Contributing Editor, at: Rnparkes.family@ntlworld.com

A Taste of LAD International

Grace Mack
Florida and the Caribbean Islands, USA

When I was pregnant over nine years ago, I went to my first LLL meeting. My sister was an LLL member in a different state, but she encouraged me to find a local Group in Orlando, Florida, USA. I became a Leader seven years ago. For many years I thought about joining the LAD. After the birth of my second child, the timing worked out for me to become an ACLA. I’ve been in the LAD for three years, and in January 2013 I became the CLA.

I love living in Orlando, Florida, the theme park capital of the world. I usually visit a theme park every month with my sons, Henry (8), Harrison (4) and my wonderful husband, Preston. I am a freelance photographer and a stage mother to my actor/model children. I enjoy playing tennis and blogging.

From left: Harrison (4), Grace, Henry (8), Preston
Rita Schroeder  
Luxembourg

I am CLA for Luxembourg. I am married to Alain, and we have five adult children. First we were living in France, where our two eldest children were born. My husband’s company then transferred him back to Luxembourg, and so we returned to where we both come from. I learned about LLL when I already had Alex, Corinne and Christian, and when I was pregnant with our two youngest, Patrick and Paul. I had nursed my three eldest, and so it was my strong wish to be able to breastfeed the twins as well. This could not be taken for granted at that time. Thanks to LLL they were breastfed for quite a time! Some time after that I became a Leader.

Having been a Leader for many years, I started LAD work in 1996 for Future Areas in Europe (FAiE) and France, and soon for the newly founded Area of Luxembourg, for which I had become CLA. In 2004 I became ALA (RALA at the time) for (Region) Europe, together with Eileen Harrison to start with and then with Nina Robertson. This job was the most fascinating. A year later I took on the responsibility of CLA for FAiE as well, which provided lots of thrilling experiences and contacts. Accompanying a pioneer Leader or a tiny bunch of Leaders in a “new” country is a thrilling experience. Working with all those marvellous, bright and dedicated women and helping many mothers on their path towards leadership is just wonderful for me.

2005 was a special year for us, with four weddings and two births! Our “five children family” slowly turned into a “five couples, eleven grandchildren tribe” which keeps me happily busy. Although I don’t generally sit the children on a regular basis (they are now between nine years and six months old), I want to be present when they need me. Three of our children live quite close to us, so we often see them. Our daughter and her family are living in Zurich, Switzerland, and Paul and his family are mainly in The Haag, Holland, for the moment. Seeing them implies travelling either for them or for us. I love grandmothering and being able to spend time with my grandchildren and their parents. I enjoy family gatherings, sewing or mending fabric pets – and sometimes also “serious things,” gardening and hiking. Both my husband and I love to travel, be it short trips to see the family or longer journeys to see the world.

I have now reduced my LAD tasks to some extent, remaining only CLA for Luxembourg and ACLA-at-Large, mainly for France and Scandinavia. I am chair of LLL Luxembourg. It’s a real pleasure to work with this Area’s team, with these talented and efficient coordinators, Leaders and mothers. This is definitely very precious to me.

Adults from left: Cathy, Paul, Alain, Rita, Claudine, Patrick, Alex.  
Children from left: Finn (9), Lina (5), Mayra (5), Yann (4), Laura (2).  
This is about half of Rita’s family.
Mariana Petersen  
Guatemala

* English summary follows

Quiero presentarme:

Soy Líder desde hace 31 años y durante este tiempo he tenido la oportunidad de servir en varios cargos además de mantener uno, dos y hasta tres grupos de Liga al mismo tiempo. Llegué a esta organización cuando mi primer hijo tenía un mes y el médico me dijo que debía suspender la lactancia debido a una mastitis. Entonces recordé haber visto un pequeño anuncio de La Liga, la llamé y recibí su ayuda y apoyo para continuar con la lactancia de mi pequeño tesoro. Ese fue el inicio de una increíble aventura que ha abarcado ya más de 30 años de mi vida sirviendo a mi país como voluntaria ayudando a muchas madres a consolidar su familia a través de la lactancia materna. Soy madre de tres hijos, la última una prematura a quien pude cangrear a causa de su bajo peso: 2.6 libras. Sofía, mi segunda hija, recién se casó con Fancois y ahora viven en Venezuela.

Del año 2000 al 2005 trabajé administrando el LAD de América Latina. Ahora tengo el privilegio de volver a hacerlo y me da mucha ilusión pues estoy convencida que, si lo que hacemos es tan positivo, tenemos que formar a más gente que haga lo mismo!

Estoy a las órdenes y me gustaría saber como se encuentran sus países en este tema. Desde ya agradezco a Silvia Barco quien me ofreció ponerme al día, así como Lesley Robinson y Marie Beam.

From left: Mariana, Sofi, Mavick, Carlos, Alejandro

Let me introduce myself.

I have been an LLL Leader for 31 years, and during this time I have had the opportunity to serve in several positions. I continue to lead an LLL Group. I met LLL due to mastitis with my first son. The doctor said to stop breastfeeding, but La Leche League suggested differently and so I continued to breastfeed! Then I breastfed my three treasures, Alejandro, Sofi and Mavick, who were kangaroo babies!

From 2000 to 2005 I was the Administrator of Leader Accreditation for Latin America. Now I am privileged to return and I do so with great passion. I am convinced that if what Leaders do is so wonderful, we have to help more people prepare to do it.

I am ready to serve and I thank Silvia Barco who has offered to help me know where each Applicant’s country is. I also appreciate Lesley Robinson’s and Marie Beam’s guidance.
Leader Recommendation form as a resource

It is a good idea to show a blank Leader Recommendation form to the candidate during pre-application dialogue. This lets her know what information the Leader is required to provide and demonstrates that all candidates are asked these questions.

Spring cleaning

When you completed your Semi-Annual Report, did you list a number of “Inactive” applications where there had been no progress for six months or longer? Lack of progress and absence of communication usually indicate that leadership preparation is no longer a priority for the Applicant, and it may be time to ask whether she would prefer to withdraw her application for now. You might even remind non-progressing Applicants that successful people are good at realizing when something is not a good fit for them; they are good at acknowledging what isn’t working for them and finding what does.

New Website LAD Pages

LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education has a new website! You can access the LAD pages at: http://www.lllalliance.org/top-lad-page/

- For Applicants: No password
- Supporting Leaders: 4Leaders1956 (case-sensitive)
- LAD representatives: 4LADreps (case-sensitive)
Congratulations on your appointment!

Marie-Claire Bakker  Co-CLA for English applications
Future Areas in Asia and the Middle East

Sharon Bliss  ACLA, North Carolina, USA

Erica Croft  ACLA, Colorado/Wyoming, USA

Cindy Garrison  Interim LAD Director

Elena Gvozdeykova  ACLA, Bulgaria, Future Areas in Europe

Susan Kerr  ACLA, North Carolina, USA

Eva Lopez  ACLA, México

Amy Nelson  ACLA, Minnesota/Dakotas, USA

Adeline Palomares  ACLA, France

Mariana Petersen  Interim ALA, Latin America

Kathleen Raymond  ACLA, Connecticut, USA

Kelly Roenicke  ACLA, Michigan, USA

Tina Toubac  CLA, Belgium-Flanders
Photo letters from LAD representatives

Fun evening: poi dance
LAD Council performed a poi dance which originated with the Māori people of New Zealand.

Leaders, administrators and LLLI Board members united instantly and spontaneously at the EMS.

Toshi Jolliffe, Luxembourg

Resource/world fair
From left: Eri Kido (Japan), Nadiya Dragan (Lebanon) holding Matteo (11-month-old boy), Ellen Kamman (South Africa), Ann Calandro (USA), Toshi Jolliffe (Luxembourg), Hannah Katsman (Israel), Melissa Bar-ilan (Israel)

I have wonderful memories of the EMS. I really cherish the time I was there and will always remember the wonderful Leaders I met in Frankfurt.

Ann Calandro, USA

Session offered by the LLLI Management.

The EMS was amazing on its own and reminded me so much of the administrators’ sessions held before the LLL International Conferences.

Cindy Garrison, USA
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