# 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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Employment and Leadership:
What Kind of Experience Meets the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership?
(This article was originally written for Leaven 2014-4)

Cindy Garrison, Interim Director of the International Leader Accreditation Department

Leaders often contact the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) seeking clarification about Leader accreditation as it relates to mothers who are employed and work away from their babies. At the heart of the inquiry is a desire to help an employed mother interested in becoming an LLL Leader. A Leader may perceive that this mother, with an experience and expertise different from her own, can offer other employed mothers the benefit of experience that the Leader does not have. A LAD representative is always open to having these discussions to help clarify LLLI policy before the application begins.

When considering an employed mother for leadership, the primary issue the LAD looks at is the separation from her baby that the job may necessitate.

The LAD, as the LLLI accrediting body, looks at each application and each mother’s breastfeeding experience with her baby, individually. Although separation most often relates to employment, it can also be due to volunteer work, a fitness membership, travel, PTA meetings, or any other activity that regularly takes a mother away from her baby. Employment is not the issue for those seeking accreditation; rather, it is whether there is significant separation. That is what is discussed in the LLLI concepts and policies.

When the LAD looks at a mother’s experiences, we are guided and bound by the LLLI concepts and policies. It can be helpful for the Leader to review these before she begins discussing the possibility of becoming a Leader with a mother who has been attending the Group. Leaders can find some helpful ideas for these discussions in the Leader’s Handbook, pages 139-41, “Before the Application.” They can also access the online resource, Thinking About LLL Leadership? (See the sidebar.)

In the instance of a mother who has experienced regular separation from her baby, particular attention is given to the concept:

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

The LAD looks at how the mother’s choices reflect an understanding of the concept and how she incorporates the concept into her mothering. Appendix 17 to the LLLI Policies and Standing Rules (PSR) Notebook expands on this in the policy statement “Mother/Baby Relationship”:

In considering a mother for leadership, the focus shall be on the mother’s breastfeeding experience, on her awareness of her baby’s need for her presence, her continuing flexible availability to her baby, and her willingness to support the philosophy of LLLI.

This directs the supporting Leader and the LAD to help the mother look at her experience and her choices and relate them to the policy and the concept statement. We want to help the mother see how her experience demonstrates not just a belief in or acceptance of the wisdom of LLL policy, but a full incorporation of that understanding into the choices she makes and the way she mothers her child.

The LAD also looks at the concept:

From infancy on, children need loving guidance which reflects acceptance of their capabilities and sensitivity to their feelings.
Appendix 17 to the PSR expands on this in the policy statement that includes this passage:

*This process reflects awareness of, sensitivity to, and respect for developmental needs, capabilities, and individuality.*

This directs the LAD and the supporting Leader to discuss how the mother’s choices regarding the separation took into account the baby’s readiness for regular and/or extended separation from his mother.

In Appendix 18 to the PSR, under “Mothering Experience” in the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership, these two concepts are incorporated when it states:

. . . *She recognizes, understands and responds to baby’s need for her presence as well as for her milk. She manages any separation with sensitivity and respect for the baby’s needs.*

Appendix 18 expands on this further:

*Guidelines for Leaders, No. 6*

*In order to meet the Personal Breastfeeding and Mothering Experience Prerequisites, a mother has experienced mothering through breastfeeding in a way that includes being available and responsive to her baby’s needs. This experience, combined with what she learns from other mothers and from LLLI resources, provides her with a strong base for helping mothers.*

The LAD’s responsibility is to look at each mother’s application and help the mother determine how her experience reflects and demonstrates the philosophy as it is lived. The LAD understands and respects that each mother makes what she feels are the best decisions for her family. The LAD also recognizes that sometimes the decision that is best for the entire family—for example, mother needs to be employed to support her family’s basic needs—may not be the best for the baby, and a compromise is made out of that necessity. It can be a hard and heart-wrenching decision for mothers, even when it is the right decision for the family that relies on her job for food, housing, health insurance, and/or other basic needs. We recognize that. However, the LAD is charged to work within the policies to help the mother recognize whether her experience does or does not fully demonstrate LLL philosophy.

It has taken La Leche League many years to formulate the concepts as we have them today. The basic idea of mother and baby belonging together has always been an important part of LLL philosophy. What Leaders offer today’s mothers is the result of the nearly sixty years of the organization’s wisdom, supported by scientific research. The credibility of LLL depends on its Leaders’ experience. LLL expects a Leader to represent a philosophy which she herself practices. The Leader’s experience is an example of LLL philosophy in action, and when mothers come to LLL, they see the Leader and understand that this is an example of what LLL recommends. Only if Leaders are in agreement with the concepts and philosophy—in thought and in practice—will they be able to convey this in a believable manner to mothers.

Some Leaders find this discussion difficult. This is a mother she knows well. She may have worked closely with the mother as she began her breastfeeding journey. They are friends. Here are some ideas to help initiate the discussion:

* Ask the mother to describe her situation—age of her baby when the separation began, flexibility of time away, travel time, who cares for her baby, can her baby come to her during the work day, how her baby is fed when she is not present, etc.
* Ask the mother to explain how she knew her baby was ready for the initial separation or increased separation—what signs her baby gave to demonstrate he could handle time away from his mother comfortably.
* Discuss the steps the mother took to make the separation as acceptable as possible for the baby.
* Ask the mother to describe how she is able to handle days when her baby is ill or has an increased need to be with her.
* Discuss how the baby is cared for while the mother is away—with family, an in-home caregiver, a commercial day care setting—and if the caregiver practices a similar comforting style to the mother, e.g. willing to carry the baby to soothe as opposed to letting the baby “cry it out.”
• Discuss how the mother feels the baby handles the separation overall and if it has changed as her baby has gotten older.

• Discuss *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* with the mother and spend specific time to discuss Chapter 14, “When You Can’t Be with Your Baby,” which discusses returning to work and other separation. Ask the mother to share her thoughts on the information and how it fits with her choices.

• Ask the mother what ideas she might share with a mother who is unhappy with being regularly separated from her baby and wants to be fully at home and what ideas she could share with her.

• Ask the mother to share what she might say to a mother who chose to be home and is feeling a lack of identity that often comes from holding a recognized position that may also have a paycheck.

The LAD offers a helpful resource, “Discussion About Mother-Baby Togetherness,” with dialogue guidelines and samples. It is available from your LAD support person. Historically, there have been mothers who have been employed and also been accredited as LLL Leaders because of the age of the baby when work began, the flexibility of the work schedule, the length of time away, etc. If a mother who is experiencing regular separation from her baby expresses interest in becoming an LLL Leader, the Leader(s) of the Group are encouraged to review Chapter 5 of the *Leader’s Handbook*. The Leader can also contact the local LAD representative for help in exploring these issues with the mother. This pre-application dialogue is very important for both the mother and the Leader(s) so that all are clear on whether the mother’s experience reflects all aspects of LLL philosophy. Even when an application is submitted, further dialogue with the LAD representative may sometimes result in the determination that the mother’s experience does not meet the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership and the application would be denied.

If the mother still feels strongly that her experience does meet the prerequisites as addressed above, and disagrees with the decision of the LAD representative, the decision can be appealed. The process for an appeal is described briefly in the Leader Application materials and in Appendix 38 to the PSR, and can be found on the LLLI website Leader pages. Please note that the purpose of an appeal is related to the decision not to accept or continue an application to ensure that a candidate is treated fairly; it is not intended to promote debate with LLLI policies.

The goal of the LAD is to accredit new Leaders. This is also a goal of Leaders. The policies are clear on LLL philosophy and on the procedures for accreditation. The more discussion that happens before the application, the better prepared the mother and Leader are. It can also result in a greater likelihood of the application work proceeding to the accreditation of a new Leader. This new Leader will have the experience, knowledge and skills needed to do the job with confidence and pleasure.

*Cindy Garrison is currently the Interim Director for the Leader Accreditation Department. Cindy was previously Co-Chair of the Board of Directors for LLLI for three years and also served as Director of the former Eastern United States (EUS) Division. Cindy has held various positions in the LAD, most recently as Associate Director for Regional Administrators of Leader Accreditation in the former EUS Division. She and her husband have three grown sons, six grandsons and one granddaughter, and Cindy still leads in the first La Leche League Group she attended.*
New Resource

Discussion About Mother-Baby Togetherness
Dialogue Guidelines and Samples

Whenever a mother interested in leadership has experienced significant, ongoing separation from her baby, the LAD and supporting Leader may need to help the mother look closely at related aspects of the LLL prerequisites and philosophy to see if her experience meets the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership. The International LAD Council has created the document “Discussion About Mother-Baby Togetherness” to help with this task.

There are two versions: one for LAD representatives and the other for Leaders. Both offer dialogue guidelines and samples. The version for LAD representatives can be used to gather sufficient information about the mother’s situation. The other version is for use by the Leader to help her explore with the mother whether her experience reflects LLL philosophy.

You can receive each of these documents from your LAD support person. They are in two formats: a pdf to ensure that it will fit on a single page; and a Word version so that the list of questions can be cut and pasted to customize the dialogue.

When you share this document with a Leader, please explain that it is not intended to be forwarded to the mother, but used as a basis for guiding in-person discussion.

Editor’s note: Special thanks to Sally Allison, Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA) for LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education, and Allyson Shames, ALA for LAD West, for offering their resources.

Why We Focus on the Mother’s Experience with Her Youngest Child
Benaifer Bhandari, Administrator of Leader Accreditation for LLL Great Britain

Our work in the LAD is usually straightforward when faced with an Application form. We look through to ensure that the interested mother has filled in all the necessary information and that she meets the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership.

What happens when we notice that something doesn’t seem quite right? The mother writes that her second child breastfed for 12 months, which was 10 months longer than her first; there has been no separation; she writes eloquently about the concepts; and she is passionate about LLL and eager to be a Leader and give back to LLL what the organisation gave her with this second child. Something, however, does not sound quite right, and in taking a closer look at the Application form, it becomes evident that she had a third baby who weaned when he was only five months old.

Even if a mother’s experience with her previous child(ren) would have met the prerequisites, the LAD cannot accept an application if the mother has not continued to meet the prerequisites with her youngest child. For some, this may seem an arbitrary practice.

It helps to know all the details regarding the mother’s breastfeeding and mothering experiences with this youngest child, because these reflect her current mothering philosophy. The LAD representative probably will need to initiate dialogue with the supporting Leader to obtain more information.
As always, we respect the mother’s choices when she seems to have felt it necessary to parent her last child differently. For example, the mother may have nursed her previous baby for over a year, but with the last one she found herself tired and without support. She started adding formula and the baby weaned at five months. In this case, she cannot demonstrate the understanding of our concept that places emphasis on the baby outgrowing the need for breastfeeding, even if she has shown that understanding in the past. Another example is where the mother may have used harsh discipline to control the child’s behaviour because of that child’s personality. This may suit the family dynamic well even if she doesn’t feel great about it. However, LLL Leaders are expected to demonstrate loving guidance with all of their children.

With an increasing number of mothers going back to work earlier and earlier, we may encounter an interested mother who was able to stay at home with her previous babies, but then felt pressured by changed financial circumstances to resume full-time work and leave her young infant all day because of an inflexible employer. She may not be happy about the situation, but she sees it as necessary and thinks, “The baby seems OK with it all.” It is the LAD representative’s responsibility to make sure that a mother interested in LLL leadership meets the Mothering Experience Prerequisite. This includes ascertaining that the mother was able to meet the intense need that every baby has for his mother. It also includes ascertaining that the work/childcare arrangements reflected an understanding of our concept that respects the baby’s need for mother’s presence.

Each year, when we renew our leadership to continue being Leaders with LLL, we recommit to our philosophy. In the same way, the LAD makes sure that a mother who applies for leadership is doing so with a commitment to mothering through breastfeeding and to LLL philosophy—either with her current child or when it was relevant to her youngest child.

Benafier Bhandari is the LAD Director for LLL Great Britain. She has been a mother for over 16 years, a Leader for 13 years, and has been in love with the LAD for 11 years!

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**Does La Leche League Need Specialty Leaders?**

_Sally Allison, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education, USA_

_Editor’s note: This article originally appeared in the Spring 2014 Alliance Link, published by LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education._

A couple of years ago a Group member who had just given birth to twins came to our local monthly Group meeting. She was clearly distressed because, while her son was doing OK, she was quite worried that her daughter was not. I reminded her to check with her babies’ doctor about her concerns and, as we talked, I was able to encourage her in her breastfeeding efforts, reassure her that things were improving, and share with her information and resources. She left that night feeling calmer and more empowered to exclusive breastfeeding. In the coming months she would often relate at Group meetings how helpful and important that exchange turned out to be.

This story is what we hope will happen with every mother we come in contact with as Leaders. It also makes an important point—I was able to help this mother even though I never had twins. In other words, I didn’t need to have her same experience to help her breastfeed successfully.
As a La Leche League Leader, you have the ability to help any mother who comes to you with a breastfeeding question. Unfortunately, we in the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) often come in contact with Leaders and Leader Applicants who seem to lack confidence in their own knowledge base. Maybe you, too, have wondered about an Applicant for whom breastfeeding went very smoothly, or an Applicant who gets stuck because she worries that she will never know enough. Or maybe you have been approached by a Leader who is convinced she needs a co-Leader who has experience with some aspect of breastfeeding that she does not have. Does LLL need specialty Leaders? Does every LLL Leader need to have a specialty area?

The prerequisites for Leader application and the criteria for accreditation state that a mother needs to have breastfed for at least nine months when applying and for about a year upon accreditation. She nurtures her baby at the breast and responds to her baby’s need for her presence as well as her milk. She supports the LLL purpose and philosophy and owns a copy of the current edition of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* if available in her language. An Applicant need not have any personal experience with a breastfeeding challenge. However, she will have personally experienced the normal course of breastfeeding for at least the first year of her child’s life. She will know firsthand about the health and nutritional benefits of nursing, as well as the emotional benefits for herself and her baby.

Upon completing the criteria for accreditation, an Applicant will have worked with the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide* (BRG) (if available in her language), and thus will have learned about the various common breastfeeding management issues, how to use LLL recommended resources, and when to contact the Professional Liaison Department for additional information. She will have read *The Womanly Art*, have knowledge of how childbirth practices affect the start of breastfeeding, and have practiced how to respond to a mother, regardless of the question. Because of her own mothering experiences and the work she has done as an Applicant, once accredited she is able to confidently help a mother who has thrush, low milk supply, sore nipples, is dealing with a nursing strike, or is tandem nursing, even if she herself dealt with none of these things.

What about the Leader who believes that she needs a co-Leader who has experienced a particular breastfeeding challenge? For example, a Leader who has little or no experience with pumping or separation from her baby may become convinced that she needs a co-Leader who has had those experiences to help employed mothers in the Group. Yet, because she met the prerequisites for Leader application and completed the criteria for accreditation, she can respond knowledgeably to any breastfeeding question. When she does this she also acts as a role model for Applicants and mothers interested in leadership.

What about the mother who wants to talk to someone who has had a similar experience? Leaders can direct a mother to another willing Leader or breastfeeding mother who has had a similar experience. In the scenario above, the Leader has an important resource at hand—the other employed mothers who attend the Group. Encouraged by the Group Leader, these mothers can share their own personal experiences with one another and actively participate in providing each other with mother-to-mother support. Finding help is empowering, giving support can be even more so, and every mother can do both.

While La Leche League doesn’t need specialty Leaders, we do need Leaders who can share evidence-based information in a caring and empathetic manner, and who support and model LLL philosophy. And most of all, we need Leaders who know what it is like to nurse their babies at the breast and who know that it “*is the most natural and effective way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby.*” That is the most important piece of knowledge an LLL Leader has, and that does make her special indeed.

*Sally Allison has been an LLL Leader since 2000 and has worked in the LAD for nine years in a variety of roles. She is currently Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA) for LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education. Sally is the proud mother of two wonderful children, Rachael (16) and Lauren (13) Allison-Stork, and they live in Rochester, New York, USA.*
How Would You Respond

Here is an extract from a Leader, written to the Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA), about a mother interested in leadership. Thank you to the LAD representatives who submitted their responses. There is no single right answer. Sharing possible approaches can help us consider how we might choose to respond.

Dear Cathy CLA,

A mother in my Group approached me about leadership. She meets most of the prerequisites; however, she has told me that her partner is another woman. I didn’t think we could accredit a mother who has no experience with a baby’s father. Can she apply for leadership? I’m confused about how this works with the fathering concept.

Sincerely,
Lucy Leader

Sample Responses

Dear Lucy,

How exciting that a mother in your Group is interested in leadership! You have created a welcoming atmosphere at meetings, and as a result, she has kept coming back. You have shown her and the others in your Group that LLL supports mothers from many walks of life. At the same time, you have concerns because her partner is a woman. You’re wondering how a mother in her situation could represent LLL philosophy as a Leader and how you could recommend her for leadership.

The philosophy concept states: “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.”

In the 58 years since LLL was founded, a variety of family structures have become more widely accepted, and this philosophy concept is open to broader interpretation. A loving, helpful partner, regardless of gender, is valued in LLL.

Support of LLL purpose and philosophy is a prerequisite to applying for leadership, while having a male partner is not. The pre-application dialogue can start from a discussion about what this concept means to the mother and how she would present it as a Leader. She may have concerns that can be explored while writing her personal history, and she may want to know your feelings on this topic as well. By keeping a positive focus on her partner’s contributions, you can inspire confidence in the mother that you and LLL continue to stand behind her and her family.

Cathy CLA
(Sarah Quigley, USA)

Dear Lucy,

It is so nice that a mother in your Group is interested in leadership. Working with mothers interested in leadership is also a good opportunity for us to renew our knowledge and show our commitment to LLL. Thank you for your question. It is important especially if we have some doubts about whether a mother meets the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership.
Regarding your question, it might help if we look first at what it says in Appendix 17 to *LLL I Policies and Standing Rules Notebook*, which provides policy statements corresponding to nine of the concept statements. The policy statement on the Father’s role says: “In considering a mother for leadership, the focus shall be on her understanding of the father’s role, not as a mother substitute, but as a unique figure in the baby’s life. Recognizing that mothers’ circumstances vary and that they may have little control over a father’s presence, involvement, or philosophy, the emphasis should be on her ability and willingness to help others appreciate a father’s contribution to the breastfeeding relationship.”

So our focus needs to be on how the mother understands the father-baby relationship (not with whom she is living now) and also her ability and willingness to help others appreciate a father’s contribution to the breastfeeding relationship. Putting the focus on the mother’s understanding and willingness to help others will give you a bigger picture of her understanding of the father-baby relationship.

Also sometimes we find a part of an answer when discussing the other concepts with a mother. Sometimes the whole story will give us a better picture.

Does this answer your question? If not please don’t hesitate to write to me again. I will be happy to answer more questions to clarify your doubts or answer any other questions.

Cathy CLA
(Gorana Đergović, Croatia)

Dear Lucy,

Thank you for sharing your concern about accepting an application for leadership from a mother whose life partner is a woman. You are wondering whether she can still meet the prerequisites to applying for leadership, when she apparently has no experience of the “fathering concept.”

It’s always helpful to look first at what support we can get from Appendices 17 and 18 to *LLL I Policies and Standing Rules Notebook*. The policy statements in Appendix 17 correspond to nine of the concepts summarising LLLI philosophy. The wise and farsighted women who developed the policy statements realised that “mothers’ circumstances vary and that they may have little control over a father’s presence, involvement, or philosophy.” They suggest that when considering a mother for leadership, “the emphasis should be on her ability and willingness to help others appreciate a father’s contribution to the breastfeeding relationship.”

Appendix 18, Applying for Leadership, Guidelines for Leaders, No. 2 tells us that “The LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership are written in broad terms, recognizing that mothers in a variety of circumstances can and do embrace LLLI philosophy and put it into practice.” It is important, however, to discuss each concept with an interested mother before she applies for leadership, and to ask her to think about how she would explain a concept to someone new to La Leche League. It is helpful that you have raised this question at this stage. In further dialogue with the mother, you may gain confidence that she would be comfortable to support others with the “fathering concept,” and in that respect satisfy the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership.

Any mother who meets the prerequisites can apply for leadership, with the recommendation of an active Leader. This is the case whether her family situation is traditional or nontraditional. La Leche League benefits from the diverse experiences of Leaders to support the diverse breastfeeding needs of mothers. A Leader who has experienced nontraditional family dynamics can offer support from a different perspective, and perhaps provide it in a more empathetic way to mothers whose family situations do not fit the images we more commonly see among the mothers who come to La Leche League.

I appreciate your question and hope the above will help to allay your concerns. Please contact me again if you would like to discuss this situation further.

Cathy CLA
(Vicky Reynell, South Africa)

Dear Lucy Leader,

Thank you for getting in touch to discuss whether a mother’s experience of the “fathering concept” that differs from what is described in the wording of the concept would interfere with her ability to meet the prerequisites to applying for leadership. Just as with any mother applying for leadership, we would expect to explore the mother’s experience of this concept with her in more detail. Let’s take a look at what exactly the concept statement says:
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.

The two sentences of the concept statement make two different points: the first is about the loving support every breastfeeding mother needs in those early days and beyond, to enhance and sustain the breastfeeding relationship. The wording may seem restricted to a male figure, but in fact it is more about the meaning behind what a father represents—for both mother and baby. There are mothers around the world in all sorts of relationships, including same sex ones. Instead of assuming that all mothers have a male partner, The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding (page 31) refers to a “life partner,” which better represents today’s understanding of what constitutes a family. In some cases, of course, the mother does not have a partner as such and instead her support network includes other family members and friends, who may play a key role in the baby’s life.

The second sentence in the “fathering concept” focuses on the relationship between a baby and his/her father, which is, ideally, a positive one. When this is not the case for a mother applying for leadership, it is important to explore with her whether she recognises the value of the father-child relationship, and also how, in her experience, her role as mother is distinguishable from that of other significant adults in the baby’s life. Whether the mother’s partner is male or female, this is an interesting and important question to explore. As a breastfeeding mother, what is unique about her relationship with her baby? How does the unique relationship of her partner with their baby contribute to the child’s development? It may be appropriate, if you are satisfied that the mother meets the prerequisites, to dialogue with her about these questions more fully during the application. Enabling the mother to explore her experience and understanding will help her to gain confidence as a representative of LLL and LLLI philosophy, as well as to support breastfeeding mothers with male or female life partners or those who are single mothers.

Does this give you the information you need to complete your pre-application dialogue with her? Do get in touch if you remain uncertain whether she meets the prerequisites.

Cathy CLA
(LAD representatives, Great Britain)

Dear Lucy,

It is exciting when a mother approaches us about her interest in leadership! It is encouraging to know this mother seems to meet most of the prerequisites to applying. As with any mother interested in leadership, the first step would be to sit down with her to talk about how the concepts are part of her family’s life. Two good tools for doing this are Appendix 17 and Appendix 18 to LLLI Policies and Standing Rules Notebook, which you can find at the back of the Leader’s Handbook and also on the LLLI website at: http://www.llli.org/leaderpages/psr.html (LLLID and password required)

A mother who applies for leadership understands and practices all the concepts that make up LLL philosophy. Your concern is about the fathering concept that says, “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.”

There are two parts to this concept, support for the mother and the father’s relationship with the baby, and it is important to discuss both aspects with her. Ask open-ended questions to learn about the support system she has set up for herself. Who helps her on a daily basis? Who is available when she needs extra help?

LLL recognizes that mothers and fathers each have a particular role as a child grows and develops. This begins in infancy and continues into adulthood. The concept states that a baby has a need for a father as an important element in the child’s development. However, not every mother and child have a biological father present in the relationship. There are many reasons why a father might not be available, and a female partner is one of them.

Ask what the mother thinks about the importance of a father figure to her child. Once you hear how this particular mother views the need for a father figure, then the two of you can discuss how the concept is applied in her family. Many mothers do their best to provide male role models for the child to learn how to relate to a loving father. They take time to integrate uncles, grandfathers, trusted male family friends, etc., into their family life.

The CLA would be able to help you sort through the information the mother offers. If the mother does not see a difference between the way a mother and a father relate to a child, then she may not agree with the concept. If she says there is no need for a father figure, then she probably doesn’t meet the prerequisites. However, many mothers in same-sex relationships do
value the presence of a father figure for their children. As one interested mother who is now a Leader said, “I expect my
daughters will be in relationships with men. I want them to know the importance of men in our lives.” Such a mother
understands the fathering concept.

Cathy CLA
(Joan Peloso, USA)

✦ New Extract ✦

Dear Caroline CLA,

My co-Leader and I are not comfortable recommending a mother who has repeatedly expressed interest in becoming a
Leader. She is an enthusiastic advocate for breastfeeding, but at meetings too often she comes across as judgmental toward
others, and her comments are sometimes even unkind. It is particularly awkward since two other mothers in the Group have
become Applicants. She has posted comments on a local chat group about being discriminated against. How do we
gracefully keep saying "no" to this mother when she persists in asking about LLL leadership?

Laura Leader

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

Reminder!

When should the mother read *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*?

It is a prerequisite for the Applicant to own *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and be familiar with its contents, if it is
available in the mother’s language. *The Womanly Art* is part of required reading during the application for leadership and
the mother is free to read it cover to cover after her application begins. The exception is when a mother without any Leader
or Group nearby wishes to apply for leadership. In that case the LAD representative may suggest that the mother read *The
Womanly Art* during the pre-application dialogue so that she will fully understand the organization which she is interested
in representing.
A Taste of LAD International

Marie-Eve Dallaire

Bonjour ! Je m'appelle Marie-Eve Dallaire. J'ai 37 ans et j'habite à Jonquière, Québec, Canada. Mon conjoint s'appelle Steeve et nous avons trois enfants, Benoît (9 ans), Doriane (6 ans) et Clémence (3 ans). Je suis monitrice depuis 2009, mais je participe au groupe de ma localité depuis que Benoît avait seulement 3 mois. J'ai décidé de m'impliquer à un second niveau au sein de la LLL en relevant le défi au Département d'Accréditation des Monitrices en 2012. C'est très stimulant. Dans une autre vie je suis prothésiste dans un centre de réadaptation où je travaille auprès des personnes amputées.

Lupe Forsang, USA

Hello, my name is Lupe Forsang. I've been a Leader for 24 years. I have three adult children and two granddaughters. I've been married to my husband, Jim, for 42 years.

I have lived in California, USA, all my life. I was born and raised in the city of Los Angeles, but I've been fortunate to have traveled to many cities. I met my husband while attending a local community college. Every semester break we would travel in our Volkswagen camper to a new city. My favorite memory was traveling to Vancouver, Canada, because we had to drive along much of the beautiful west coast of the USA. When we attended college at the university level, we decided to backpack and stay at the Youth Hostels throughout Europe. It was an eyeopener for me, so much history, wonderful museums and the best food!

After our first child Monica was born, we still made time to travel throughout the United States. We visited many National Parks like Yosemite and Yellowstone. When my husband graduated from nursing school, we had limited time to travel but made sure to visit and enjoy local places.

My major in college was Child Development. I have enjoyed working with young children and parents for many years. I learned about the importance of breastfeeding during my studies and from my family members. It was a very natural transition to become involved in La Leche League.

As my children grew, I started volunteering more and more to help in their classrooms. Eventually I decided to stay at...
home, but was busier than ever. I attended local La Leche League meetings with my second child, Vincent. He was a great example of a thriving breastfed baby as he weighed 15 lbs (6.8 kg) at three months. I look at his slender 6’3” (192 cm) physique now as an adult and laugh at all the comments about being breastfed too much. The La Leche League meetings gave me permission to follow what I knew was right and best for me and my baby. Due to the high cost of housing in the city, we decided to move to a more rural town outside of Los Angeles.

We moved to the high desert (high altitude) and there were no LLL meetings, but I was able to be at home with my two children. I practiced my sewing skills to save money and kept up my crocheting skills. Happily I renewed my connection with LLL each time I received my issue of New Beginnings in the mail. When our third child Ava arrived, I knew I wanted to be a Leader. In order to attend meetings, I had to travel an hour down a mountain pass. Sometimes Ava did not appreciate the beautiful view of snow on the mountains. I would stop at a gas station, nurse and calm her down, then proceed to the meeting. Sometimes the trip would take me two hours, but knowing I would soon be with other mothers at an LLL meeting was my motivation.

The Leaders in the Group were happy to help me with my application even though they didn’t know me very well. I participated as much as I could with fundraising or enrichments. When I was finally accredited, many of the Leaders drove to my town and supported me at my first meeting. I held La Leche League meetings in my town for over ten years. About the time I thought about retiring as a Leader, another Leader asked if I would be interested in being a Communication Skills (CS) Instructor. Since my children were older, it was easier for me to travel to different locations in Southern California for CS workshops. I was also able to be more involved with local Area Council activities. I was able to travel to the LLLI conferences in Miami, Chicago and San Francisco. It was wonderful meeting Leaders from around the world.

Again I thought about retiring, but I kept thinking back to my first memories of being an Applicant and new Leader. I’m not sure who asked who about joining the LAD, but Lori Bryan was very supportive when I inquired about the training. By far I think being in LAD has been my most rewarding position in La Leche League. I have also enjoyed working with the United States West Area Network Council as their LAD Liaison.

I have many hobbies and interests. My grandchildren (Bella and Embry) love the tiny amigurumi characters I crochet for them. I attempt to have time to sew quilts and make dresses for my granddaughters. I also sew breastfeeding dolls. I’m enjoying the fact that I can now sew or crochet just about anything that appeals to me with no interruptions. I even have my own work studio.

All in all, being an ACLA, CLA and RALA comes with knowing that La Leche League will continue into the future. My two breastfed granddaughters will also know their grandmother dedicated much of her life making sure breastfeeding is the norm.
Including an isolated Applicant at a meeting via Skype

You can invite an isolated Applicant to observe a Series Meeting via Skype. At a meeting where regular participants are present, ask their permission to set up a video link through Skype so that an isolated mother can participate. The Applicant can observe how the meeting is run, how a Leader establishes the atmosphere of the meeting and answers questions, the body language of participants, etc. A laptop or tablet can be used and passed around amongst Group members, so that the observer will be able to see the various participants.

Using keywords for easy filing of resources

When saving a document that you will need for future reference, use keywords for the document title with the most important word first, so that you will easily be able to find it again in an alphabetical list of documents. For example if the title of a document is “Orientation Checklist,” it will be much easier to find than “A List of Items for Orientation.”

Changing names in the released application file

An ACLA in orientation learns a lot from reading a completed application file. It is recommended to change personal information such as names of people and locations. How can we do this with a single click of a button? Some computer programs have a “global replace” function. You can insert the word you want to replace and the word you would like to use. If you click the “replace” button, the name in the document is replaced wherever it occurs.
### Congratulations on your appointment!

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Photo letters from LAD representatives

New Grandchildren

Lori Bryan, USA

I had two grandchildren this year!

Piper born in August

Parker born in September

Juanita Watt, USA, with her daughter, Julie, and her first grandchild, Audrey.

This was taken the night I first met Audrey, when she was one month old. I had just arrived after a long airplane flight, and was overwhelmed by the experience of seeing my first grandchild. Audrey is five months old now and growing fast!

Editor’s note: Special thanks to Juanita, Leaven Editorial Review Board member, for her ongoing support to LADders as a reviewer.
Many of us celebrate holidays and festivals. Festivals usually involve traditions which centre on feasts and family. Whether our families are large or small, we develop our own special traditions and rituals. And everyone’s expectations tend to run so high on these special occasions. We mothers are often the ones to sustain family traditions and can get as excited as our children, while providing an oasis of calm when it is needed.

Some Applicants describe the “flood of love” or “gift in my arms” they felt when their babies were born. In the circle of love that begins to flow when a baby is born, the love continues endlessly. At this time of year, we also remember the mothers and grandmothers who are no longer with us, and the children some mothers have lost. When our families draw together to celebrate a special holiday, there is an outpouring of love that goes beyond our immediate families.

As LAD representatives and LLL Leaders, we are mothers first and foremost. We send happy holiday greetings to LAD representatives everywhere. We look forward to working further with you in this coming year!

LAD Council