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.

Table of Contents

Accrediting Leaders Who Are Ready to Do Their Jobs with Confidence and Pleasure 2
Feeling Excited About LAD Work in Latin America 4
Compilation Article:
Organizing Files and LAD Materials 5
How Would You Respond?
A supporting Leader requires an Applicant to complete tasks beyond the requirements of the application 7
A Taste of LAD International 14
Allyson Shames, USA
Misha Laudicina, Italy
Sarah Cereghini, Italy
Good Idea!
Creating a Template for a Pre-Application Dialogue 19
LAD Promenade
Congratulations on your appointment! 20
Photo Letters
What I Learned from My Father 21
Accrediting Leaders Who Are Ready to Do Their Jobs with Confidence and Pleasure

Lesley Robinson, ACLA, Ottawa, Canada

The LAD Manual tells us that the goal of the LAD is to accredit Leaders who have the experience, knowledge, skills and resources they will need to do their jobs with confidence and pleasure. It has always seemed to me that this is at the heart of everything we do as LAD representatives.

Experience

How can a Leader Applicant gain the experience that is required before even beginning work as a Leader? At the outset of the application new Applicants already have relevant experience. In our welcoming letter we tell them that the most important asset they bring to their application is their personal experience of breastfeeding and mothering. This forms the base on which application work builds and as an Applicant works through the personal history and dialogue, the importance of this experience becomes clearer.

Another source of valuable experience is attendance at meetings. At the outset of the application every Applicant (unless isolated) has attended at least one complete series of meetings and has had the opportunity to watch the Leader in action. As the application progresses the Applicant observes the meetings in a new way, beginning to imagine taking on the role of Leader. In addition we can suggest attending the meetings of nearby Groups or attending meetings when travelling. Observing a different Leader will be valuable and it is helpful to see how meetings can be adapted to the character of the Group and the needs of a variety of participants.

The Preview and optional exercises such as a listening exercise, a bias/acceptance exercise or an exercise on mixing causes, give Applicants the opportunity to practise how they might respond to “real” helping situations. Role-playing questions and Group dynamics situations allows them to gain valuable experience in a comfortable setting before they have to do it for real as a Leader.

Knowledge

The application period is a time to accumulate knowledge. Before accreditation Applicants are preparing to fulfil the important Leader responsibility of keeping up-to-date. The Breastfeeding Resource Guide (BRG) provides ample opportunities for Applicants to gain knowledge. Although there is no single prescribed way to work through the BRG, Applicants can choose topics to research in the appropriate depth for their level of knowledge. They learn that they don’t need to know the answer to every possible question—they need only know how or where to find it.

The required reading is an important source of knowledge. Reading The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding provides the knowledge Leaders use as a basis for answering questions and leading meetings. As our primary resource, the book contains the accumulated knowledge of generations of Leaders. The Leader’s Handbook contains a different kind of essential knowledge. It contains practical information to help future Leaders learn how to fulfil the responsibilities of leadership. Leader Applicants also read about childbirth.

Applicants can gain further knowledge by reading recommended books on a variety of topics. Our Group libraries contain books on breastfeeding, childbirth, nutrition and general parenting. LAD representatives can suggest that Leader Applicants familiarize themselves with books from the Group library, so that they can confidently recommend them to Group members as appropriate.
Skills

Applicants learn the skills they will need through their work with supporting Leaders. They observe how Leaders set a welcoming tone, impart information, lead discussions, answer questions and deal with challenging situations in the Group setting. The Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for Leadership covers a comprehensive range of skills for future Leaders:

- Responding to telephone, in-person and online helping situations
- Planning and leading meetings
- Managing the Group
- Keeping up-to-date
- Helping others to find out about leadership
- Taking advantage of opportunities beyond the Group

LAD representatives can suggest ways to work on the Checklist—regular Leader-Leader Applicant meetings, role-play, optional exercises, creating meeting plans and publicity materials and filling out reports.

How can these skills be learnt by isolated Applicants? There are several options for LAD representatives working with isolated Applicants. You can take on the role of the supporting Leader as well and work through the Checklist by correspondence, on the phone or through online contact. Video calls are particularly helpful and can work however far apart you are. It helps to involve another Leader to provide an additional perspective. It would be beneficial to find a Leader in the same Area as the Applicant if possible. A Leader who shows interest in helping a Leader Applicant might subsequently want to know more about Leader accreditation and might choose to join the LAD. If you are looking for a supporting Leader for an isolated Applicant, why not suggest it to an ACLA in orientation? It would be a first step before beginning to work with an Applicant as LAD representative.

Resources

The BRG reminds us that every Leader is a resource. As well as providing information and support to those who call or come to meetings with questions, Leaders are resources for each other. Every Leader is part of an extensive network of Leaders who support each other, sharing their experience and information. When new Leaders are accredited, we make sure they are aware of the Area resource Leaders available to them and ask them to consider taking on an Area position in the future.

Our primary published resource is of course The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding. We encourage Leader Applicants to use the latest published resources they can find, bearing in mind that academic resources more than five years old may be considered out of date. Professional Liaison Leaders have access to the most up-to-date texts. We encourage Leader Applicants to read critically when using non-LLL resources.

When it comes to online resources, the first places to look are the LLLI and LLL entity websites. With the wealth of information available online, Leaders need to be careful to share information from reliable sources.

Confidence and Pleasure

Throughout the application we take every opportunity to boost an Applicant’s confidence. We respond promptly to all application work received, demonstrating to Applicants that they are important to us. The first thing we do in responding to personal histories is to affirm Applicants’ experience of LLL philosophy. Our appreciation of the value of their contribution enhances their confidence. The last thing that we do before proceeding to accreditation is to check in with the supporting Leader to be assured of the Applicant’s readiness to become a Leader. It is that readiness that leads to confidence and pleasure. When we congratulate a new Leader we can be proud of our role in helping a new representative of LLL to gain the experience, knowledge and skills needed to embark on leadership with commitment and joy.
Feeling Excited About LAD Work in Latin America

Mariana Petersen, ALA for Latin America

Oh yes, I am feeling excited about LAD work here in Latin America. So much is happening and I have beautiful news to share.

I was invited by a Leader in Mexico to participate in the Area’s general assembly. I was invited to talk about two topics and one of them was Leader accreditation!

Together we discussed searching for new Leaders. Leader Applicants rejuvenate us and give us new strength. They will be available for the next generation with information and support and through them we will reach places where LLL philosophy is needed.

The next topic for discussion was how to find potential Leaders and here are a few of the ideas that came up. Observe the mothers in the Group and watch for someone who is flourishing and wants to share the knowledge and experience she’s enjoying with her baby. Observe also how she interacts with her baby and with others in the Group.

A question was raised about the qualities we are looking for in an Applicant. We are looking for empathy, warmth, respect and a love of teamwork. We are looking for a mother who is gentle and loving with her baby and has a willingness to continue learning.

We also spent some time talking about ways in which a Leader supports an Applicant. They can meet frequently, maybe to cook a meal together or to go to the park or library. Little by little the Applicant will see how her volunteer job can be interwoven with her family’s needs and other responsibilities. A Leader acts with integrity. The Applicant watches her and learns from her. Applicants are the future of LLL. Remember that their experience of mothering is their base for helping others. Many questions were answered, and we all agreed that accrediting new Leaders is the way to perpetuate LLL.

I look forward to finding new potential Leaders in my own Group and I look forward to supporting Leaders who want to help new Applicants to prepare for accreditation.

I also feel excited about the possibility of opening LLL in a new country, a country that has great need for the information and support that we Leaders provide. For some time, the CLA for LLL Caribbean has been traveling to Cuba and making efforts to help the community learn about LLL. A WhatsApp chat has been opened by Cuban Leaders who live in other countries, to help mothers on the island. A Mexican Leader has moved there temporarily, so she may be the one to start a Group!

Yes, I am feeling very excited because sometimes my job is “just” to make connections and then I see beautiful things happen. Many years ago, a sweet foreign mother came to my Group. She barely spoke our language, but she was mothering her little one and we supported her. Before she left our country, she became a Leader and I was her supporting Leader. Her family was transferred to China and she opened a Group there, encouraging mothers and sharing LLL philosophy. Then it was time for her to move again and they were transferred to Peru where she founded LLL in that country. Can I ask you, you who are reading this article, can you feel some of my excitement? Yes, when I help new Leaders to be accredited, a small part of me goes with them and we share the challenges and triumphs to come.
LAD representatives are working in a variety of ways to meet the needs of Leader Applicants and they are using a number of different devices for their communications—computers, laptops, tablets, phones, pen and paper. This can pose a challenge to recordkeeping as well as to organizing files, resources and LAD documents.

Mariana Petersen, ALA for Latin America has recently begun using an iPad and is looking for ways to make the switch and keep her files available. She says:

Something that I have always done is to keep a notebook on paper just for my LAD work, where I file important information in writing from each country. I am in charge of 16 countries. In my computer I have a file named “Applicants” and that’s where I keep LARK and all the other materials needed to complete my LAD work. I also keep separate files in the computer for the Applicants for whom I am the CLA, one for each. I would guess that we all do things in similar ways, but I am sure that this is not the only answer.

Mariana looks forward to hearing how others keep organized.

Linda Wieser of Nova Scotia, Canada shares the following system for keeping track of the Applicants she is working with:

1) I add each new Applicant to a list that includes: Applicant name (name), date application received (record app), date welcome letter sent (intro letter), date of accreditation (accreditation), # months (#mo), date of withdrawal (withdrawn). When an Applicant is accredited, I highlight her entry in yellow. If an application is withdrawn, I highlight the entry in green. This helps me see at a glance which Applicants are active.

2) I also create a 4 x 6 in (10 x 15 cm) note card for each Applicant. I include some basic information: name, Group, Area, supporting Leader, children’s names and birthdates. I record each time I send or receive an email. This helps me keep track of what’s happening with the application and the last time I heard from the Applicant.

Sylvia Walker of Manitoba, Canada prefers printed storage to electronic storage. She shares the following snapshot of her organization system:

My system includes keeping application work in a sturdy plastic re-useable folder with two inside storage pockets for each Leader Applicant. Taped to the front cover is a filled-out Leader Applicant Checklist with recorded dates for forms and work being sent, received and completed. At a glance I can see where the Applicant is in her application. On a piece of tape, I record a two-month future date when I need to initiate contact with the Applicant regarding her next submission of application work unless I hear from her before then. I then place a post-it note with the Applicant’s name and the selected future date on my LAD calendar. A quick glance at the calendar tells me how much work I have and when I need to do some application work for the month.

The left side pocket of the folder contains any pre-application correspondence as well as notation of a specific exercise or resource material that I want to highlight during the application. The right-hand pocket contains the application form and fee receipt, Leader recommendation and application work in chronological order.

My LAD calendar also reminds me when it is A/CLA SAR time. It will show the dates of any Chapter Meetings, workshops, Leader/Leader Applicant Days that are planned. On the back of the calendar is a taped envelope.
containing any receipts to submit for expenses. I also keep a record of the names and dates of newly accredited Leaders, so I can send *Happy One Year Leader Anniversary* cards the following year.

On the family bookshelf I have a number of folders containing information or forms on the different components of an application, such as pre-application, application work, Checklist, exercises (e.g., listening, mixing causes, acceptance), Preview and Statement of Commitment. *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, LLLC Guidebook* and a series of binders containing resources such as *LADders*, LLLC policies, *Chrysalis* (La Leche League Canada’s newsletter for Leader Applicants) and *Butterfly* (the newsletter for supporting Leaders) are also on the bookshelf. In a special "HARK" folder I record the name and accreditation date of all the Applicants I have worked with who have been accredited. (To date there are 107 accredited LLL Leaders listed.)

In my office desk I keep a supply of blank greeting cards to send a congratulatory note to a newly accredited Leader (after electronically sending a congratulatory letter) so she gets a "personal touch" at the exciting time. Print paper is kept on supply to feed into the printer as needed.

Finished or withdrawn applications are kept in a pretty cardboard box that I weed out every couple of years.

Lesley Robinson of Ottawa, Canada uses Dropbox to organise her files. She says:

> I love using Dropbox to manage all my LAD files and materials. It keeps all my documents in clearly labeled and numbered folders, so I can find anything easily. Since storage is in the cloud, everything is safe from accidental loss and can be accessed from my laptop, iPad, or even my phone when away from home—all I need is an internet connection. Another great feature is that I can work on documents, save updates and create new documents directly in Dropbox, so I am not constantly having to upload new versions. Dropbox is also a useful tool in sharing large documents or whole folders of information, so it can be used to share orientation materials, completed files, or back issues of publications such as *LADders*.

These are just a few ideas that work well for some of us. Perhaps something here will make sense to you and will give you ideas for organizing your work. Remember, it’s only a good idea if it seems logical to you. In this, as in so many aspects of LLL work, there’s no single “right” way of doing things.
Here is an extract from a Leader Applicant who has been asked by her supporting Leader to complete tasks beyond the requirements of the application. There is no single right answer. Sharing possible approaches can help us consider how we might choose to respond.

**Dear LAD representative,**

I’m so glad I have you as a resource! Could I ask you a question? My supporting Leader and I are preparing to work on the Preview, and she has asked me to write out answers to five of the Mothers’ Questions on my own before we move ahead. I am concerned because I would rather work on these with her in person or over the phone, however she really wants me to do it this way before we move on.

In addition she has asked me to read books on nutrition, weaning, and caesarean birth. Is that something that I need to do? I was under the impression that the only requirements were *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and a book on birth.

Please help because I feel like I’m losing the momentum that has been moving me along so far!

Warmly,

Astrid

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Hi Astrid,

Thanks so much for reaching out. I am sure we can help get things cleared up, so you feel you are getting what you need to help you to prepare for leadership. You are so close to being accredited. Both your supporting Leader and I want to help make things go smoothly.
I want to tackle your second question first. You are correct that you are not required to read anything other than The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding and a book on childbirth (as well as the Leader’s Handbook). Often Applicants (and Leaders) will read additional books on a variety of topics, especially on topics where they feel they need more information. This ongoing learning is part of the basic responsibilities of a Leader—to keep up-to-date and can occur at any time. I wonder, did your supporting Leader say why she felt you should read these additional books? It is possible that she is confused about a particular element of the application, or it may be that she discussed these additional book ideas as suggestions and did not mean them as requirements. Did you ask for more details on why she was recommending these books?

The Preview is such an important part of the application work. I want to make sure that by the end you feel confident and ready to take on the responsibilities of leadership. There are a variety of ways of approaching the Preview. Some Leader Applicants do a combination of face-to-face, on the phone and/or email. Email, of course, would be somewhat similar to preparing things in writing. It is important that the Preview meet your needs. It is also helpful to make it as realistic as possible. Part of the exercise is identifying your knowledge about breastfeeding management, but so much of it is practicing using your communication skills to respond to helping questions. It sounds like you have already communicated that you would prefer to do this face-to-face or by phone.

I am happy to connect with your supporting Leader to discuss both of these concerns. As your LAD representative, I am here to support both you and your supporting Leader and can help each of us understand our roles during the application period.

I am sure we can work this out so you can finish these last requirements in a way that works for you! You are right that momentum is important. Don’t get discouraged; you are so close!

LAD Representative

Cynthia Mann
Nova Scotia, Canada

Hi supporting Leader,

I hope you and your family are well. We are finally getting some spring and enjoying some nice weather.

How do you feel things are going with Astrid’s application? I am wondering if we can chat about a couple of specific things related to Astrid’s application. Astrid reached out to me with questions about her application work. I said I would contact you to clarify her concerns.

First, she mentioned that you asked her to do some additional reading. It is wonderful that you are discussing other places she can get additional learning. I am curious; was there a specific reason why you suggested extra reading now? Are you concerned about her knowledge and readiness for leadership in any way? As you likely know, an Applicant is only required to read The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, a book on childbirth and the LLLC Guidebook or Leader’s Handbook to complete her application. Maybe you suggested some books as she was working through the BRG? If, of course, you have concerns about her knowledge or think she requires more reading in any area, I would like to hear more. Also, it may have been a misunderstanding; you may just have been suggesting some other great books—which is wonderful! It would be great to chat about this.

The second thing I would love to chat about is the Preview. Astrid said you asked her to write out her answers to five of the Helping Questions and that she felt it would be better for her to do the questions face-to-face or by phone. I am curious as to why you wanted to start with Astrid writing them out first. Maybe this is something you have seen done before? The Leader’s Guide to the Preview may help you as you prepare to complete this step in the application. One of the things outlined in this guide is that it is important that the Preview mirror helping situations and be as realistic as possible. Many Applicants are nervous about responding to helping questions and need this practice. Role-playing can be nerve-wracking for both the Applicant and the Leader, but your support is vital to her learning. You will also want to feel confident that Astrid is ready to take on this aspect of leadership before completing your Preview evaluation.
I am sure we can work together and problem-solve how to complete the Preview in a manageable way that meets Astrid’s needs prior to taking on the responsibilities of leadership and helping mothers.

Let me know what works for you to chat,

LAD Representative

Cynthia Mann
Nova Scotia, Canada

Dear Astrid,

Thank you for reaching out to me with your concerns. I am sorry to hear that you and your supporting Leader are having some differences of opinion on how to proceed with the Preview exercise. You are correct, the required readings for Leader Applicants are The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, a book on childbirth, and the Leader’s Handbook. It is possible that it has been a while since your supporting Leader has worked with a Leader Applicant and is confused about the required readings. The suggestions she gave you are often supplemental readings that Leader Applicants find helpful to read, either during their application work or after they are accredited, but they are just that—suggestions. Which books you read and how you respond is part of the conversation between you and your LAD representative, not necessarily your supporting Leader. When you have finished the required readings and your responses, I as your LAD representative will communicate with your supporting Leader that you have met that portion of the application requirements. If she continues to press you to read more, please let me know and I can follow up with her to clarify any confusion.

I am also sorry to hear that she is asking you to do more than you are comfortable with in regard to the Preview exercise. The introduction at the beginning explains to supporting Leaders that the Preview can be done as a role-playing exercise, to simulate helping parents in real time. You can explain to her that, for your learning style, pre-writing your responses won’t help you practice role-playing in a real-life situation. Role-playing face to face without pre-written notes will help you ask clarifying questions that you wouldn’t be able to ask if you had written out your response ahead of time. If she still insists that you write your responses out ahead of time, please let me know and I, as your LAD representative, can follow up with her to ensure you are getting the best possible experience out of this exercise.

I hope these answers help reassure you that you are well on your way to completing your application in a timely manner. I would really like to avoid you losing your momentum when you hit roadblocks with your work. Please let me know whether your concerns get resolved. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and responses on the required readings as well as your evaluation of the Preview exercise. Remember, your responses can be communicated to me in many different ways, from writing, typing, speech-to-text dictation, video conferencing, or a phone call.

Warmly,
LAD representative

Rachel Concitis
Ohio, USA

Chinese translation follows

Dear Astrid,

I am glad to hear from you.

Regarding what you mentioned in your email; I know that not all assignments are easy.
As you know, in preparation for Preview questions, Applicants read through the required readings, which include The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, a comprehensive book on childbirth or La Leche League booklet Childbirth and Breastfeeding. In addition, Applicants work on LARK Part 2 Breastfeeding Resource Guide (BRG). You can let the supporting Leader know that there are relevant materials about nutrition, weaning, and cesarean birth in the BRG, which you have reviewed, and which have been approved by La Leche League. I copied the links for your reference.

**Maternal nutrition, health, and environment**
- WAB 2010 index: Nutrition, mothers' needs
- LLI website, “Breastfeeding Info A To Z,”
- Vitamin D—Your Baby, and You: https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/vitamin-d/
- Contaminants: https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/contaminants/

**Weaning from the breast**
- WAB 2010 Chapter 16, “Everybody Weans”
- LLI website, “Breastfeeding Info A to Z,” Weaning:
- For medical reasons https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning/
- How to https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning-how-to/
- I want to https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning-i-want-to/
- Unexpected https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning-unexpected/

**Cesarean birth**
- WAB 2010 index: Cesarean sections
- Leader Accreditation Department booklet: Childbirth and Breastfeeding: Background Information for Leader Applicants and Supporting Leaders

As for the Preview, you mentioned you prefer to work on it in person or by phone. I think these are very good ideas. You can write down the answers of five mothers’ questions in outline. By doing so, you will have reminders when talking to the supporting Leader in person or on the phone, so you won’t miss any important information. You can ask the supporting Leader whether she is available and has time to work on the Preview with you in the way you prefer. I think it is one of a La Leche League Leader’s skills to help the Applicant in a way that suits each other’s preferred style.

Please let me know if my suggestions are okay to you. I welcome your further questions if you have any.

I hope things will go smoothly for you.

Shiuh-Jane
Huahien City, Taiwan

親愛的 Astrid：
很高興收到您的來信！
您在信中提及的事項確實都不是簡單的功課。
正如您所知道的那樣，進行「試演」工作前，申請者必須完成必要的閱讀，包括《女性哺乳的藝術》和關於生產的全面性書籍，或者是母乳會《生產與哺乳》小冊子。此外，您應該已經完成《給申請者的申請工作綜合說明》（LARK）的第二部分《哺乳資源指引》。您可以讓支持哺乳輔導瞭解在《哺乳資源指引》中已經有與營養、離乳和剖腹產相關的內容了，那些都是母乳會審核過的材料，我複製連結如下供您參考。
Maternal nutrition, health, and environment

- WAB 2010 index: Nutrition, mothers' needs
- LLLI website, “Breastfeeding Info A To Z,”
- Vitamin D—Your Baby, and You: https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/vitamin-d/
- Contaminants: https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/contaminants/

Weaning from the breast

- WAB 2010 Chapter 16, “Everybody Weans”
- LLLI website, “Breastfeeding Info A to Z,” Weaning:
  - For medical reasons https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning/
  - How to https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning-how-to/
  - I want to https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning-i-want-to/
  - Unexpected https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning-unexpected/

Cesarean birth

- WAB 2010 index: Cesarean birth
- Leader Accreditation Department booklet: Childbirth and Breastfeeding: Background Information for Leader Applicants and Supporting Leaders

Dear Astrid

Thank you for letting me know that your supporting Leader has asked you to respond in writing to *Preview* questions and has suggested you should read books on topics over and above *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and a book on childbirth.

The *Womanly Art, Leader’s Handbook* and a comprehensive book on childbirth or the LAD booklet *Childbirth and Breastfeeding* are the only books stipulated for Leader Applicants by the LAD. However, when you work with mothers and babies as an LLL Leader, you may find it very helpful to have read books about weaning, nutrition and caesarian birth. It is important that such books are approved by LLLI, and I can send you a list of suitable titles if you would like me to do so.

The *Preview* is usually done orally, in person and/or over the phone, unless this is not possible for the Leader Applicant. Having said that, writing down responses to “Mother’s Questions” can be a good way of clarifying one’s thoughts about a topic. Oral responses and role-play certainly make the *Preview* a more realistic experience. I shall
contact your supporting Leader and find out why she has suggested written responses. I’ll get back to you as soon as I hear from her.

Warmest regards,
ACLA

Vicki Reynell
Knysna, South Africa

Dear Astrid,

Thank you for reaching out to me with your concerns. You sound frustrated and overwhelmed by how long your application is taking.

You expected to practice the Preview helping questions in person or by phone with your supporting Leader and now she wants you to write out your answers. This seems like extra work for you. Have you asked her why she has requested this? It can be helpful to make notes on the helping questions in preparation for the practice session; however, it’s unusual to ask Applicants to write out their answers. On the other hand, we often ask Applicants to practice responding to a helping email. Perhaps this is why your supporting Leader is asking this of you.

On top of this, the Leader wants you to read some additional books. You are correct that the only required reading is *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, a book on childbirth, and the *LLLC Guidebook or Leader’s Handbook*. Leaders and LAD representatives often suggest optional reading on topics that an Applicant has little experience. For example, if an Applicant’s baby hasn’t weaned yet, it might be helpful to read a book on weaning. However, this is not a requirement and should not delay your accreditation. Have you asked your supporting Leader why she wants you to read these books?

If you’d like, I’d be glad to write the Leader and discuss your concerns. Or you may want to get back to her and talk in more detail about these two issues. Soon the two of you will be working together as co-Leaders. Being able to raise concerns with each other and come to a solution that works for both of you is important.

Let me know how you’d like to proceed.

It’s exciting that you will soon be an accredited Leader. Let’s keep the momentum going.

Warmly,
LAD representative

Linda Wieser
Nova Scotia, Canada
Chère Camille CLAD-formatrice,

J'ai une question pour toi. Je comprends que la séparation ne peut plus être considérée comme une raison de refuser une demande. Cependant, s'il y a eu une séparation importante, je ne sais pas trop comment répondre aux écrits d'une stagiaire au sujet du concept : Pendant ses premières années, le bébé a un besoin intense de la présence de sa mère. Celui-ci est aussi fondamental que son besoin de nourriture. La nouvelle politique signifie-t-elle que nous ne pouvons pas discuter de la séparation avec une stagiaire ? Qu'arriverait-il si la stagiaire reprenait un emploi à temps plein alors que son bébé est très jeune ?

J'attends tes suggestions avec impatience.

AmicaLLlement,
Agathe Co-LAD-en-formation

Dear Camille, orienting CLA,

I have a question for you. I understand that separation can no longer be considered a reason to deny an application. However, if there was significant separation, I am not sure how to respond to an Applicant's writing about 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. Does the new policy mean we can't discuss separation with an Applicant? What about if the Applicant returned to full-time work when her baby was very little?

I look forward to some guidance from you.

LLLlove,
Agathe ACLA-in-orientation
How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Linda at wieser.linda@gmail.com.

Allyson Shames
Virginia, USA

My name is Allyson Shames. I was accredited in Iowa City, Iowa, USA, shortly after my second child was born and just before we relocated from Iowa to Virginia. I joined the LAD within months as an ACLA for what was then LLL of Virginia/West Virginia and other than a brief time away, have been involved in LAD ever since. I've served as ACLA and CLA in Virginia, interim CLA in a number of U.S. states, RALA for LAD West, and ALA for LAD West as part of LAD Council. A couple of years ago I stepped back from LAD to focus on family and I just recently rejoined as RALA for LAD and CLA for Virginia. My husband, Curt, is a physician at the University of Virginia. We have three children: Kate is 12, Aaron is 15, and David is 17, as well as two big dogs and a very small cat. My daughter and I ride horses and have three leased horses between the two of us. The two younger children are involved in travelling sports teams. We keep busy, but it's good busy and now more than ever, I appreciate the portability of LAD work. I no longer regularly lead meetings, but I love that I can continue to be involved in LLL, even if it means responding to emails from the stands at a baseball game.

Misha Laudicina
Trieste, Italy

Editor’s Note: Misha speaks a number of languages. She shares her introduction below in English, Italian, Spanish, French and German.

Hello everybody, my name is Misha, I come from the Czech Republic and I live in Trieste, Italy. It is a beautiful city on the seashore. Please come and visit. I am married to Agostino, my Sicilian husband and we have three daughters: Francesca nearly 11, Monica 8 and Sara nearly 5. Francesca is named after St. Francesca Cabrini who took care of immigrants in the USA some 100 years ago. We have Sicilian cousins in the US, I live in a foreign country and our children go to Slovenian schools (a minority on the Italian territory), so St. Francesca's figure felt inspiring and fitting. I came to know LLL with my second born, Monica, out of curiosity rather than for any breastfeeding problem (I didn't have any until I became a Leader!) and gradually I fell in love. I am not a "love-at-first-sight"
person; I need time to let things develop. If you are familiar with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (an instrument for describing personality types), I am an INTJ (Introversion, Intuition, Thinking, Judging). I have been involved with the LAD for some time, as ACLA for Italy and ACLA-at-large for Future Areas in Europe and have been the Translations Coordinator until recently. Professionally I am a translator, language teacher and psychologist. Intercultural psychology and soft skills are the main domains of my interest. I speak several languages and that is one of the reasons why I feel "at home" within LLL. In my free time, provided there is any, I like reading, listening to classical music and opera, travelling and playing with my children of course. I felt a bit insecure when Tiziana and Michela, the former co-CLAs, asked me to take the position, as I was not sure I could reconcile it very well with my family's needs. I have no relatives within 500 miles and two competitive swimmers who need special attention. Trieste is on the very edge of Italy, without good connections with the rest of the country. My family's needs do not allow me to travel very often on weekends. I am lucky if I manage to go away twice a year (and that's for the LLL national convention and the EMS) and I thought this could limit my efficiency as co-CLA. I still worry a bit, but I also feel warmly endorsed by my LAD support ladies: Tiziana, Margaret, Michela and Lori. Thank you!

Ciao! Mi chiamo Misha, sono originaria della Repubblica ceca e vivo a Trieste, in Italia. Per chi non c’è stato, Trieste è una bella città sul mare, merita una visita. Sono spostata con Agostino, siciliano, e abbiamo tre figlie: Francesca quasi 11, Monica 8, Sara quasi 5 (le foto non sono recentissime). Francesca trae il suo nome dalla Santa Francesca Cabrini, la patrona dei migranti. Qui nel Nord lo siamo sia io che mio marito! Inoltre, abbiamo cugini a New York dove la santa operava e le nostre bimbe frequentano le scuole della minoranza slovena quindi la figura di Francesca Cabrini ci sembra azzeccata per la nostra storia familiare. Ho conosciuto LLL con mia seconda figlia Monica. Non avevo nessun problema in allattamento (quelli li ho avuti solo una volta diventata consulente 😊), Monica aveva circa un anno, ero curiosa di capire perché ciucciasse ancora piuttosto spesso, e piano piano mi sono innamorata. Non sono una persona da “amore a prima vista”, ho bisogno di tempo per testare ed elaborare (per chi conoscesse la tipologia junghiana MBTI, sono una INTJ). Collaboro con il LAD già da un po’, sono ACLA per l’Italia e ACLA-at-large per le FAiE. Fino a qualche mese fa ero la Coordinatrice delle traduzioni. Nella mia vita professionale sono traduttrice, insegnante di lingue e psicologa, ho lavorato in carcere e con le famiglie adottive. Mi interesso della psicologia interculturale e dello sviluppo delle competenze comunicative e relazionali (soft skills). Parlo diverse lingue e questo è uno dei motivi perché mi sento “a casa” dentro LLL. Nel tempo libero, sempre che ci sia, mi piace leggere, ascoltare la musica classica e la lirica, viaggiare, giocare con le mie figlie e c’era una volta suonavo il flauto e la chitarra. Mi sono sentita un po’ spiazzata quando Michela e Tiziana, le CLA precedenti, mi chiesero di ricoprire questo incarico. Non ero certa di riuscire a riconciliare gli impegni con la mia famiglia (i parenti più vicini a 600 km, due agonisti con conseguenti bisogni particolari, una città che per quel che riguarda i collegamenti sembra non essere in Italia) soprattutto perché non mi è possibile allontanarmi spesso, mi va bene se riesco a farlo un paio di weekend durante l’anno, quindi per il convegno nazionale e per l’EMS, cosa che ritengo un limite per lo svolgimento del mio incarico. Le mie preoccupazioni persistono ma so anche di condividere questo viaggio con una meravigliosa accompagnatrice e guida, Sarah, e so di avere alle spalle Tiziana, Michela, Margaret e Lori. Grazie!

¡Hola! Me llamo Misha, soy ceca y vivo en Italia en la ciudad de Trieste, una ciudad hermosa con el mar, venid a verla! Soy casada con Agostino, siciliano, y tenemos tres hijas: Francesca de casi 11 años, Monica de 8, Sara de casi 5 (las fotografías no son recientes). El nombre de Francesca deriva de santa Francesca Cabrini, patrona de los inmigrantes. Tenemos primos en los EE. UU. donde la santa vivía, yo vivo en un país extranjero, nuestras hijas van a la escuela de la minoría eslovena. Por eso nos parecía que el nombre queda bien con la nuestra historia familiar. He conocido a LLL con mi segunda hija Monica cuando tuvo 1 año, no tenía problemas, estaba curiosa. Tuve mis primeros problemas de lactación
cuando ya fue Animadora de LLL y me enamoré gradualmente. No soy una persona que se enamora a primera vista, necesito observar, esperar, elaborar (si conocéis la tipología MBTI, yo soy una INTJ). Estoy colaborando con el LAD desde hace unos anos, soy ACLA de LLL Italia y ACLA-at-large para las FAiE y fui la coordinadora de las traducciones. En mi vida profesional soy traductora, profesora de lenguas y psicóloga. He trabajado en la cárcel y con las familias adoptivas. Me interesan la psicología intercultural y el desarrollo de las soft skills. Hablo varias lenguas y eso es uno de los motivos porque me siento “de casa” en LLL. En mi tiempo libre, se está, me gusta leer, escuchar música clásica y opera, viajar, jugar con mis hijas, tocaba la guitarra y la flauta. Cuando Tiziana y Michela, las ex CO-CLA de Italia, me llamaron para pedirme de hacer la CO-CLA, me sentía insegura y tenía dudas, había miedo de no poder reconciliar el trabajo de la CO-CLA con mi familia (los familiares mas cercanos están a 600km, mi marido y mi hija mayor son nadadores competitivos y necesitan atenciones particulares, Trieste está en la periferia de Italia) principalmente porque raramente puedo viajar, eso es posible 2 fines de semana durante el año (= congreso nacional de LLL y el EMS europeo) y me parecía no poder hacer una CO-CLA muy efectiva. Me preocupo todavía, pero se bien de no estar sola – tengo una colega maravillosa, Sarah, la otra CO-CLA de Italia. Y so de poder confiar en el ayudo de Tiziana e Michela, Margaret, Lori y muchas otras. ¡Gracias!

Salut ! Je m’appelle Misha. Je suis tchèque et j’habite en Italie à Trieste (une ville magnifique au bord de la mer, ça vaut la peine de la visiter !) Je suis mariée avec Agostino qui est sicilien, et nous avons trois filles : Francesca presque 11 ans, Monica 8, Sara presque 5. Francesca a son nom après St. Francesca Cabrini, la patronne des immigrés. Il nous semblait que ce nom exprimait bien l’histoire de notre famille : je vis à l’étranger, mon mari a des cousins aux États-Unis où la sainte vivait, nos filles vont à l’école de la minorité slovène. J’ai connu LLL avec ma deuxième fille Monica, pas pour des problèmes d’allaitement (je les ai eus seulement après être devenue animatrice). J’étais curieuse. Ce n’était pas un coup de foudre, j’ai besoin d’observer, de tester, d’élaborer (si vous connaissez la typologie de la personnalité MBTI, je suis une INTJ). Je collabore avec le LAD depuis quelques temps. Je suis ACLA en Italie et ACLA-at-large pour les FAiEs, j’étais aussi la Coordinatrice des traductions (et traduit plusieurs articles de LLL France). Dans ma vie professionnelle je suis psychologue, interprète, prof de langues. J’ai travaillé avec les familles adoptives et en prison. Je m’intéresse de psychologie interculturelle et de développement des compétences relationnelles (soft skills). Je parle plusieurs langues et c’est une des raisons pour lesquelles je me sens “chez moi” dans LLL. Dans mon temps libre, s’il y en a, j’aime lire, écouter la musique classique et l’opéra (et Mireille Mathieiu). Je joue de la guitare et de la flute. J’aime voyager et jouer avec mes filles. J’étais surprise quand Michela et Tiziana, les ex CO-CLA de l’Italie, m’ont appelé pour me demander de devenir CO-CLA. Je craignais de ne pas pouvoir être une CO-CLA efficace parce que les besoins de ma famille ne me permettent pas de m’éloigner souvent, peut-être deux fois par an (pour le congrès national et l’EMS). Nos parents plus proches habitent à 600km, mon mari et ma fille ainée pratiquent la natation à un haut niveau. Trieste se trouve à la périphérie de l’Italie. Eh bien, je suis CO-CLA maintenant ; j’ai toujours mes soucis mais je sais que je voyage en excellente compagnie, celle de Sarah, l’autre CO-CLA, et je suis heureuse d’avoir le soutien de Tiziana, Michela, Margaret, Lori et de vous toutes. Merci !

Sarah Cereghini
Italy

English translation follows

Ho da poco compiuto 50 anni, sono moglie di Pierpaolo, naturalista e contadino, e abbiamo 5 figli: Davide 25 anni, studente di storia antica all'Università, Marta, 22 anni, in situazione di grave disabilità, Tommaso, 19 anni, studio cucina, Daniele, 14, frequenta le scuole Medie ad indirizzo musicale e suona tanti strumenti, Isacco, 9 anni, quarta classe, ultimo della cucciola. Ho conosciuto LLL allattando Marta, che è nata con grave sofferenza cerebrale, non si è mai attaccata al seno e, con il sostegno della mia Consulente, si è nutrita più di un anno solo del mio latte tirato.

Abbiamo un magnifico podere agricolo, una piccola azienda sull'appennino a sud di Bologna, verso Firenze, dove abbiamo 15 ettari tra bosco e campi, qualche animale da cortile, le mucche, gli orti, un frutteto, la vigna e un castagno.

Lavoriamo insieme la terra e viviamo di quello che auto produciamo, per lo più, con grandissima attenzione alla sostenibilità e alla riduzione della nostra impronta ecologica; siamo tutti scout e impegnati nel sociale. Desiderosi di lasciare in eredità alle generazioni future un mondo migliore.
Il mio tempo libero lo dedico a LLL e a fare la capo scout, quest’anno Bagheera con i lupetti. Il mio lavoro però, che amo tanto e svolgo con grande passione, è nella scuola. Sono insegnante nella scuola elementare del mio paese e insegn da quando avevo 19 anni. Praticamente non ho mai smesso di andare a scuola! Amo tanto leggere, cantare (canto in un coro femminile), cucinare per i miei ragazzi sempre affamati e dipingere con gli acquarelli.

La formazione è una mia grande passione e per questo amo il Lad, perché è un settore che mi consente di esprimere la mia creatività e mi tiene nel cuore dell’Associazione, esercitando relazioni significative e impegnando la mia capacità di ascoltare, comunicare empaticamente e organizzare i percorsi di crescita per ciascuna di noi, camminando insieme.

Sto ancora muovendo i primi passi come Co-Cl e sono un po’ intimorita dal tantissimo lavoro ma sono circondata da un meraviglioso gruppo di sostegno, sia nel Lad che nel nostro fantastico Cda, nel quale sto imparando tantissimo.

Vi ringrazio per questa opportunità.

Un abbraccio di pace.

My name is Sarah and I am the new co-CLA of LLL Italy together with Misha. I have recently turned 50, am married to Pierpaolo, a farmer and naturalist, and we have five children: Davide 25, studying ancient history at university; Marta 22, has a severe disability; Tommaso 19, studying cuisine; Daniele 14, going to a musical school and playing many instruments; Isacco 9 years old, attending 4th grade, the last born. I met LLL when breastfeeding Marta who, born with severe brain damage, never latched on. Supported by my Leader, Marta was able to get my expressed milk and that was her only source of nutrition for over a year.

We have a fabulous agricultural farm, a small farming company on the hills south of Bologna (towards Florence). It’s about 15 hectares of fields and forest, a few farmyard animals, cows, a vegetable garden, an orchard, a vineyard and chestnuts.

We farm together and we live mostly on what we produce, paying much attention to sustainability and to the reduction of our impact on ecology; we are all scouts and active in the social sphere. We wish for a better world to be the legacy we leave to future generations.

My free time goes to LLL and to the scouts, this year as Bagheera with the Wolf Cubs.

My professional life, which I dearly love and execute with great passion, is at school. I am an elementary school teacher in the village where we live and I have been teaching since I was 19. I have never stopped going to school indeed!

I love reading, singing (I sing in a female choir), cooking for my ever-hungry children and painting with watercolours.

Training and schooling are my big passion and that is why I love LAD. It’s an area that allows me to express my creativity and keeps me in the heart of LLL, as I engage in significant relationships and develop my listening skills and empathic communication. I organize growth paths for each one of us as we walk together.

I am making my first steps as co-CLA and I feel a bit scared by the load of work but I have a wonderful LLL circle of support around me, both within the LAD and within the Board of LLL Italy, and I am learning so much.

Thank you for this precious opportunity.

A hug of peace.
Creating a Template for a Pre-Application Dialogue

In the last issue of LADders, 2019-1 No. 36, Marie Beam shared how she uses a template for an application, so that she doesn’t have to rewrite every letter to each Leader Applicant from scratch. The same approach can be applied to a pre-application dialogue. You can put items that will require customization in red and put a solid line between what you expect to be separate letters. Here’s a rough idea of what to include:

**Clara CLA**
Leader Accreditation Department

**Dear XXX,**

Thank the candidate for expressing interest in leadership. Attach a document explaining what a Leader does, the prerequisites and what the application entails. Ask whether the candidate would like to proceed.

Repetitive

**Repeat the prerequisites, then begin by asking about the candidate’s experience of breastfeeding and mothering.**

**Respond to and affirm candidate’s experience.** Repeat the Organizational Prerequisite. Ask about each of the points. Explain Series Meetings. Ask specific questions about experience of each of the ten concepts.

**Respond to and affirm candidate’s experience. Ask any questions necessary for clarification.** Ask the candidate about the Personal Traits Prerequisite.

**Respond to and affirm candidate’s answer.** List and explain the responsibilities of leadership. Ask whether the candidate is comfortable with these responsibilities. Invite questions.

**Respond to candidate’s response and questions.** Explain the elements of the application, the work and commitment required. Ask whether the candidate is comfortable with the above.

Thank the candidate and explain next steps.
Congratulations on your appointment!

Karin Ali  
Karin Gausman Fund Coordinator

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CLA, LLL New Zealand

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Coral Weissbrod  
CLA LLL Israel

Linda Wieser  
Contributing Editor, “How Would You Respond?”, LADders
What I Learned from My Father

As a grandmother myself, I love the tenderness I see in my father here. The photo was taken shortly after my husband and I moved back into the family home with our four children. We were there to care for him. Giving my children the experience of being with him as he aged and reached the end of his life was a benefit I didn’t really understand ahead of time. My father taught me to love learning, and to treasure the stories passed down from one generation to the next.

Grand-maman moi-même, j’aime beaucoup la tendresse qui se lit dans le visage de mon père ici. La photo a été prise peu de temps après que mon mari et moi sommes réinstallés dans la maison familiale avec nos quatre enfants. Nous étions là pour prendre soin de mon père. Donner à mes enfants l’expérience d’être avec lui alors qu’il vieillissait et arrivait à la fin de sa vie était un avantage que je ne comprenais pas vraiment à l’avance. Mon père m’a appris à prendre plaisir à apprendre et à chérir les histoires qu’on transmet d’une génération à l’autre.

Jo-Anne’s dad and her twins, Elisabeth and Gabriel in 1995

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes
ACLA, Atlantic Canada, LCL Canada
My father was easygoing. He was also very thoughtful and sensitive to other people’s feelings. His attitude continued even when he was diagnosed with cancer and he lived 20 more years until he passed away at the age of 82.

When Michael, my husband, and I were getting married, my father asked him:

As the natural order of things, I shall probably go before my wife. When that happens, can you please take care of her on my behalf?

I have learned from my father how important it is to be accepting and understanding. I hope to help those who work in this department feel comfortable so that they can fully enjoy their work.

Toshi Jolliffe, LAD Director, Luxembourg, Europe

Toshi on the right with her older sister and their father
As a child, my father taught me to eat popcorn, ride a bike, water ski, fish and love outside life. He loved to take day trips to see all the places near us and through this, I love to travel and explore. In my teen years he shared his love for baseball and we went to many Oakland A’s games. I am still an avid baseball fan. My father always talked about going to college, so that is what I did. And mostly he taught me how to be an accepting, caring and empathetic person, especially as he got older.

Lori Bryan, ALA, LAD West, USA

In this 1963 photo are: Lori, her dad, brother John and dog Freda