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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Helping LLL Outreach—Working with Isolated Mothers and Applicants

Lesley Robinson, Ottawa, Canada

When an isolated mother makes contact with the Leader Accreditation Department to ask about LLL leadership, the LAD representative becomes the “face” of LLL for her. The mother is aware of a gap in services to the mothers of her community and has taken the initiative to step in and fulfill the need. Whatever her experience and however she might or might not meet the prerequisites to applying for leadership, she has shown an interest in our organisation and a desire to help others in her community. The first thing to do is to thank her warmly for her interest, her enthusiasm and her dedication to bringing LLL to her location.

Initial dialogue with an isolated mother interested in leadership
In your initial response, tell her a little about leadership. Tell her about the responsibilities of leadership and a little about what happens during the application, as well as explaining the prerequisites to applying for leadership. You can send the document Thinking About LLL Leadership which is available at: http://www.llli.org/lad/talll/talll.html If your entity's website offers its own version of this document, please use it. You may also choose to cut and paste the information for her into the body of your email, as a simple way of getting the information she needs directly to her.

Pre-application dialogue with an isolated mother
If she is interested and believes that she meets the prerequisites to applying for leadership, you can begin a pre-application dialogue. This conversation needs to be detailed and will help you to get to know the mother. The mother is likely to be enthusiastic and highly motivated. She may be impatient to get her application started. Remember to take the time to be thorough and to get to know her. The conversation that you will have with her will replace the conversation that a Leader would normally have in person with someone who has been attending meetings for at least four months, so it should take time. Although the dialogue will be time-consuming, it can result in an application for leadership and you will be able to write a recommendation for her as the sponsoring Leader. If that happens, the new Applicant will already have written a significant part of her personal history, which will help to save some time after the application begins officially.

Working through a number of pre-application dialogues helps in the development of a template for the conversation. This serves two purposes: it saves you from having to rewrite the same letter over and over again and ensures that nothing is forgotten. You can find an example of a template for a pre-application dialogue on Dropbox at:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/at62lmrxdsoxley/AAoRruYeC5xadfWcYoGBA8W6a?dl=0

Please note: if the Dropbox link does not work for you, please try cutting and pasting it into your computer’s browser. Separate communications are each divided by a line. You will be adding specific responses to what the mother writes, but working from a template could save you time.
You can add the mother’s responses to your saved document, so that at the end of the conversation, you’ll have a complete and accurate record of the dialogue.

**Continuing support for an isolated Applicant**

When you have concluded the pre-application dialogue, you will be ready to complete a Leader Recommendation form. You will have discussed each of the prerequisites to applying for leadership and will be able to write about how the prerequisites are met.

As the official supporting Leader and the LAD representative, you can work with the mother who is now an isolated Applicant. The help of another mentor Leader who can offer additional perspective will be invaluable both for you and the Applicant. Try contacting Leaders in other isolated parts of the Area and ask if they are interested in fulfilling this role. They will have useful input to share with an isolated Applicant and may be looking for ways to be more actively involved in the work of the Area. A Leader who assists the LAD as a mentor Leader for an isolated Applicant might be interested in knowing more about LAD work, so this could even result long-term in recruitment for the LAD.

If a mentor Leader is not available and you take on that role yourself, help the Applicant to make a plan for her application. You can point out how much of the work has already been covered. She has already accomplished much before contacting you and your detailed pre-application discussion will give her a head start on the work she will do with you in the future. Again, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. You may find the following collection of sample checklist topics and articles useful in working with isolated Leader Applicants. You are welcome to use part or all of a sample or to create your own letters. Make sure that you save what you sent for future use. Share the topic letters one at a time, giving the Applicant the opportunity to read through the material, do her own research and ask her questions. The sample topic letters can be found on Dropbox at:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y1s0t7nyc5vdto1/AAA9t1vuZnAYlbBpUo-Fk8Q3a?dl=0

Use the resources available to you. You can work with isolated Applicants using Skype, which can be used not only for communications with other Skype users, but also for making relatively inexpensive long-distance telephone calls. Other applications that can be useful for communications include Apple’s Face Time, Google Hangouts, Twitter and instant message services. Ask the Applicant what works for her. It may lead you to acquire new skills yourself.

**Benefits of working as ACLA-at-Large**

Working with isolated Applicants can have a tremendous positive impact on the outreach of LLLI. There are “Future Areas” around the world in Latin America (FAiLA), Europe (FAiE) and Asia and the Middle East (FAiAsiaME). These Areas include many countries where LLL does not have a presence, but where it is needed just as in the rest of the world. Some interested mothers contact the local LAD, whereas others contact LAD International seeking information about leadership. The CLAs of Future Areas receive many inquiries about leadership. Please consider offering to help by working as an ACLA-at-Large for Future Areas.

There are many benefits of at-large work. A LAD representative who corresponds with Applicants and Leaders enjoys the enrichment from interacting with the local LAD of a different culture. LAD procedures may be slightly different, but in essence the application is the same worldwide. It is a precious opportunity for all concerned to exchange information, share resources and learn together.

**Helping LLL outreach**

Even if an isolated Applicant does not eventually become accredited, your time will have been well spent for all the reasons cited above. You will have shown the LAD to be supportive and encouraging and you will have shared your experience and insights, helping to pave the way for an LLL presence in that location in the future. Isolated mothers who show an interest in leadership are pioneers, as so many have been before them, helping LLL to grow and to expand our reach to more of the mothers and babies who need us. We need these special women and we are fortunate that they have taken the time and trouble to contact us.

*Lesley Robinson lives with her husband, Mark, in Ottawa, Canada. They have three grown children, Kate, Alex and Will. Kate is planning her wedding for September 2015. Lesley was accredited in 1987 and has been a LAD representative since 1991.*
Special Thanks to ACLAs-at-Large

*Toshi Jolliffe, Luxembourg, Europe*

Japan was hit by earthquakes and a tsunami in 2011, shortly after I started serving as the Interim CLA for Future Areas in Asia and the Middle East (FAiAsiaME). For several months I devoted myself to supporting LLL Japan during that difficult time. There were many applications in FAiAsiaME, and yet, there were no local ACLAs: I was the lone LAD representative in this diverse Area with many languages and cultures, stretching from North Africa to the Far East. I obviously needed some urgent help.

The LAD Council explained my challenging situation and sent a search for ACLAs-at-large who could take applications from FAiAsiaME. I was grateful to receive many responses from LAD representatives from all over the world.

As the weeks and months went by, I could see a concise version of LAD International in one Area: FAiAsiaME. Some LAD representatives worked with the *Leader Applicant’s Handbook* issued by LLL Great Britain; some with the *Leader Applicant’s Resource Kit* issued by LAD International; some with single-document guides to the application; some in the traditional way of offering one document at a time. It was awesome!

We have learned many things from one another. A LAD representative may explain a new system or document used in her location. I may introduce a new form or application exercise. We can also inform each other if an outdated document is used inadvertently. What started as an emergency approach in 2011 has brought a precious gift to this Area. Special thanks to many of you who work as ACLAs-at-Large.

*Toshi Jolliffe and her husband, Michael, live in Luxembourg, Europe. They met each other in Tokyo, Japan, where they both worked. Their children study away from home. Their sons, Hikaru and Seiji, are in Great Britain and their daughter, Kaori, is in Belgium. Toshi likes gardening, sewing, writing letters and making people smile.*
How Would You Respond?

Here is an extract from a Leader, written to the 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 Clara CLA,

A mother in my Group approached me about leadership. She meets most of the prerequisites and at meetings she appears kind but firm with her two-year-old. However, I have concerns about her statements during Group discussions that she believes in spanking as a tool to maintain obedience. Does her advocacy of physical punishment automatically disqualify her for LLL leadership?

Louise Leader

Sample Responses...

Dear Louise Leader,

Thank you for your keen observations on the mother who has approached you about leadership.

Loving guidance, empathy, respect and compassion have always been part of LLL philosophy. I doubt whether any of us Leaders is a perfect mother, but we meet parenting challenges in ways that accord with this philosophy. You are right to think that LLL leadership would not be appropriate for a mother who believes in spanking as a discipline tool.

Do you have books such as *Adventures in Gentle Discipline* by Hilary Flower or Inbal Kashtan’s *Parenting from the Heart* in your Group library? Valuable articles on discipline and loving guidance may also be found in the Resources section on the LLLI website, where past issues of *New Beginnings* are classified by topic (Breastfeeding Answers from La Leche League at [http://www.llli.org/nb.html](http://www.llli.org/nb.html)). Before disqualifying the mother from leadership, it would be worth inviting her to read these or similar books or articles and discussing them with her. It may be that she perceives physical punishment as important because she has never been exposed to gentle discipline techniques. If the philosophy of loving guidance resonates with her and she meets the prerequisites for leadership, her application may start.

Clara CLA
(Vicky Reynell, South Africa)
Dear Louise Leader,

Thank you for raising this question with me. It is always desirable to discuss potential issues which may indicate that a mother does not meet the prerequisites before she actually applies for leadership. Until a Leader feels she can recommend a mother for leadership, further conversations are needed to help them both see whether her understanding and experience reflect LLL philosophy and meet the prerequisites.

From what you’ve told me, the mother has not used spanking with her two-year-old at LLL meetings, though she has expressed the view that it is a useful tool to maintain obedience. Her use of the word “obedience” suggests she is afraid of losing control of her toddler, something else you might be able to empathise with when talking with her. By acknowledging what you have observed, that she is loving yet firm at LLL meetings, you can establish some common ground. You could go on to explain that discipline, like everything else in child rearing, is never black and white. Everyone finds her own way. You might acknowledge that LLL agrees limit setting is a normal part of loving guidance. She may believe that it is very important for a parent to set standards of behaviour and LLL philosophy supports this point of view.

You could go on to explore the words of the concept with her: “From infancy on, children need loving guidance which reflects acceptance of their capabilities and sensitivity to their feelings”; ask her how this fits with her mothering experience. This may lead on to talking about respect and empathy. In particular, you could ask her what she understands by the phrase “acceptance of their capabilities.” For example what is the capability of a toddler or what can affect a child’s capabilities at any given moment? Similarly, what is meant by “sensitivity to their feelings”? What does a toddler feel when he is smacked? What is the lesson he learns? Parents often get hooked on the word “consistency” when it can sometimes be helpful to aim for flexibility with a toddler. She might be open to trying a different approach.

You could go on to explain that all of childhood is a learning experience to equip us with the tools for successful relationships. Some forms of discipline, like smacking, might give instant results, but loving guidance can help the young child to become independent and ultimately to make his own wise decisions.

It may be that this mother will find it helpful to have your support to try a different style of parenting, without giving the impression that there is one style approved by LLL. Your Group library may have resources that would help. Rather than rush into a decision about her eligibility for applying for leadership, it can help first of all to listen to her, and then allow her the time to learn from her experience, from the experience of others, and from LLL philosophy.

Clara CLA
(Alison Parkes, England)

Dear Louise Leader,

Thank you for noting this possible difference between this mother’s parenting beliefs and what is described in the LLLI philosophy which is summarized in the ten concepts. It is good to have these discussions before encouraging someone to apply for leadership in LLLI. When looking at any of the concepts and prerequisites to applying for leadership, it is important to look at what a mother does on a regular basis.

There are occasions when mothers may state that they “reserve the right to spank” as a means of disciplining their child. For some mothers, it goes with their faith’s teaching. For others, it is how they were raised and they assume it is a common discipline tool for other parents, too. Therefore, this is a discussion that needs to be handled delicately.

One approach would be to dialogue privately on this with the mother. You can begin the discussion by commenting on the positive approach she uses at meetings and what a good example that gives other mothers who don’t have toddlers yet or have found the toddler years extra challenging. You could then go on to discuss how she handles different situations of behavior with her child at home. It may show that, in reality, physical punishment is not her “go-to” method of handling challenging situations.

Another approach is to arrange a time to discuss the prerequisites with the mother and include discussion on the concepts. You can ask the mother to suggest several typical events in the day of a toddler that mothers
commonly deal with and then ask the mother to share some of her parenting approaches. You could even role-play, if the mother is willing. You may discover that her responses do not involve physical punishment. She has been honest enough to admit she “reserves the right to spank.” Through your discussion, she may share that, if there was an occasion that she did exercise that “right,” it was a reaction to stop her child from doing something very dangerous. It should not be equated with how she typically meets the daily challenges of raising children.

Yet another option is to meet with the mother to discuss the concepts and their policy statements. As you help her see the bigger picture of LLL, you can work into the discussion questions about what she thinks it means to have an “awareness of, sensitivity to, and respect for developmental needs, capabilities, and individuality.” This will deepen her understanding of LLL philosophy and how her choices reflect that philosophy. It will help the mother determine if this is a good fit for her without you, as the Leader and friend, having to say anything.

Clara CLA,
(LAD representative, USA)
I am a United States Western (USW) Area Network (AN) Regional Administrator of Leader Accreditation (RALA), and the newest member of the USW Area Network Council in the position of Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) Liaison. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve USW and the LAD by joining these two key elements in the La Leche League family circle of support.

My husband Bill and I have been married for 42 years. We lived in Joliet, Illinois, USA for 31 years before moving in January 2005 to Mount Vernon, Illinois, USA. We have five children together: Caleb (38); Jacob (34); Seth (31); Emily (28); and Lillian (25) as well as Joe and Cheryl, two older children from my previous marriage. Joe lives in Georgia, USA; Cheryl moved to Mount Vernon a few years ago. It is nice to have her closer to home again. Our youngest grandchildren are Hayden Alayna (5) and Lincoln Alexander (16 months). Their parents are Caleb and his wife Heather.

Besides my love for LAD work, I enjoy reading, making fresh bread, and sewing Civil War* period clothing. Bill and I were Civil War reenactors for more than a decade. Reliving history on weekends quickly became a part of our home school curriculum. The children enjoyed camping out and gained much knowledge about the war between the North and the South. To this day they can share true facts about Lincoln’s assassination as well as the reasons behind the war. We all love to watch period movies, as well. Currently our greatest joy is spending time with Hayden and Lincoln.

I have been a part of the Leader Accreditation Department for over ten years and have enjoyed every minute of it. I’m looking forward to a long and productive relationship as the USW AN Council LAD Liaison and as a RALA.

* Editor’s note: The American Civil War occurred between 1861-1865. The Southern US states, whose economy was largely based on cotton and relied on slaves to tend the cotton crop, seceded from the United States after the election of Abraham Lincoln and the establishment of a Congress led by the industrial Northern states that opposed slavery.

In den letzten Jahren habe ich einige Übersetzungen gemacht. Die grösste Arbeit war die Übersetzung des Ausbildungshandbuches vom Englischen ins Deutsche. Das Buch hatte mich so überzeugt, dass ich es einfach übersetzen musste. Und es ist wirklich toll damit zu arbeiten und zu sehen, dass die Stillberaterinnen in Ausbildung damit vieles sehr selbständig erledigen können.


Zusammen mit zwei anderen LLL-Beraterinnen leite ich das Café La Leche Schaffhausen. Seit wir von einem regulären Treffen zum Stillcafé gewechselt haben, kommen wieder viel mehr Mütter an unsere Treffen.


Rahel und Michael with their children.
I live in a small village in the north of Switzerland, just near the German border. My husband Michael and I have four children: Simea (16), Jael (14), David (12) and Tobia (8). They all still go to school at the moment. We also have a cat and two guinea pigs. I have been a Leader since 2002. In 2004 I started in LAD as an ACLA. Nine years ago I was Administrator of Leader Accreditation for Switzerland. I am now the CLA for Switzerland, which is an Area in Europe. And I will stay CLA for one more year. I am glad that there is already an ACLA who will take this position next spring. I like working with Applicants, to be a mentor and to help them on the way from their role as a mother to their role as a Leader. That’s why I will continue as ACLA for some more time.

I did a lot of translations in recent years. The biggest work was the translation of the Leader Applicant’s Handbook from English into German. I was so excited about this book that I had to translate it. And it is wonderful to use it and to see how the Applicants can do a lot of the work on their own.

I am a nurse, but I have not worked away from home since my eldest daughter was born. One year ago I did the IBCLC examination. Now I would like to go back to work as a nurse in a maternity unit. I would like to find a job in my neighbourhood.

Together with two other Leaders, I organise the Café La Leche in Schaffhausen, Switzerland. Since we changed from a regular meeting to the Café La Leche, many more mothers have come to the meetings. I am trying to reduce my LLL work, but it’s not easy. There is always something to do and there are always some interesting challenges. I think I will stay in LLL for a while yet.

Reminders!

Definition of an Active LAD Representative

- Regularly pursues LAD work, which may include work with Applicants, publication of LAD newsletters, orientation of LAD representatives, and/or translation of LAD documents
- Keeps up-to-date on LAD information and procedures
- Reports twice a year to her LAD support person(s) by completing the appropriate Semi-Annual Report form(s); this includes reporting to the appropriate CLA regarding any ACLA-at-Large work
- Responds to LAD-related correspondence within two weeks
New Applications and Accreditations:
What to report to Kristin Dube kdube@lli.org at LLLI

* Bold type: required items.

New Applications
On the email page when you register a new application at LLLI:

- Applicant’s name:
- LLLID: @lli*firstname.familyname
- Role: Leader Applicant
- Email:
- Telephone: +[country code]
- Address:

Accreditations
On the email page when you send the Statement of Commitment to LLLI:

- New Leader’s name:
- LLLID: @lli*firstname.familyname
- Role: Active Leader
- Email:
- Telephone: +[country code]
- Address:
- Date of Accreditation:
- Leader dues expire:
- Primary connection:
- Other connections:
- Listed Leader for:
- Group Leader for:
Sending a touch-base message through YouTube

Have you ever worked with an Applicant who seems to have stalled and does not respond to your messages? You may wonder what you can do to encourage her to communicate with you. Allison Eddyblouin, CLA for Maine/New Hampshire, USA, talks to an inactive Applicant through her YouTube message: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXDTz2G0MvA What a good idea! Special thanks to Allison for sharing this video and to her ten-year-old son, Thaddeus, for filming his mother especially for LADders!

LAD Promenade

Congratulations on your appointment!

Karin Ali RALA, LLL Alliance, USA
Marie Beam ACLA-at-Large for Alliance & FAiAsiaME
Nicole Bell CLA, Central and Southern Ontario, Canada
Mary Canfield ACLA, Minnesota and the Dakotas, USA
Diane Martin ACLA, Arizona, USA
Cynthia Massey CLA, New York, USA
Lesley Robinson Interim CLA, Quebec and Eastern Ontario, Canada
Stephanie Sutton CLA, Illinois, USA
Photo Letters
from LAD representatives

In Celebration of Dads

This is my husband Mark and my youngest Jackson. It was taken at our home. Mark had just returned from work and Jackson grabbed onto Daddy for some cuddles. In our family, Daddy is important as he provides security, laughs and fun.

Nicole Bell, CLA, Central and Southern Ontario, La Leche League Canada

Here is a picture of my husband Helgi with our son Alex in January 2005. Alex was 4 days old.

Rosalie Sarasua, ACLA, Quebec and Eastern Ontario, La Leche League Canada

Here is a photo of my wonderful father, John Jacobs and me. It was taken in London in 2003. This picture is on my wall right next to my computer, so I can look at it when I am working. I miss my dad greatly. He always inspired me and encouraged me to “grab life with both hands.”

Lesley Robinson, Interim CLA, Alberta/North West Territories, La Leche League Canada
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