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Mother
Being Truly Inclusive

LADders is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives
Use is to help LAD representatives do their jobs with confidence and pleasure by offering a place to share information and experiences.
Special thanks to LAD representatives worldwide for responding to the inquiry about identifying a term for those who are thinking about LLL leadership. The inquiry was also sent to the former LAD Directors, former LAD Council Coordinators and some Leader Today Editorial Review Board members. Some people strongly supported gender-neutral terms. However, a majority of respondents were in favour of “mothers interested in leadership” or “interested mothers.”

We have tried to understand, as best we can, the preferences of transgender parents—from searching online, from what we know of the transgender community, from what the respondents to our inquiry wrote. It’s a sensitive subject, and if we are moving with the times, we do need to address this. We may also find that, just as there is variance among the preferences of LAD representatives, so might there be a range of preferences expressed if we were to ask members of the transgender community for their views. Our goal is to find the terminology that “sits right” with us, and that feels inclusive, respectful and affirming.

In some LLL entities there is a desire to use gender-neutral terminology. It is a challenge for us in LLL to give voice to the profound experience of the majority of Leaders, women who have given birth and breastfed their babies, while respecting that there are some who may feel that they have no voice in our organisation because their internal gender identity does not match with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Our understanding of the word “mother” is associated with breastfeeding. The LLLI Mission Statement says:

Our Mission is to help mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information, and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.

The results of the recent inquiry indicate that many LLL entities use “mothers interested in leadership.” When this term appears in our publications, some entities could choose to include a statement along the lines of: “We respect the gender identities of all; in this publication we refer to “mother” as the role most often associated with breastfeeding.”

Listed below are a number of recommendations that have emerged from the inquiry into which terminology to use. A few LAD representatives recommended using a variety of terms, depending on context. The entities using languages other than English are free to use terms that suit them and are the easiest for translating.

Let us help future LLL Leaders to be proud of being mothers and mothering their babies. Let us embrace all who are mothers and who are dedicated to mothering, irrespective of gender. That will be truly inclusive.

Examples of recommended terminology

mothers interested in leadership [first occurrence]
interested mothers [from the second time]

The emphasis of these expressions is on the mother’s “interest,” which means that the mother herself has started thinking about LLL leadership and she seeks information about it.

potential Applicant
prospective Applicant

These terms can be used if the mother has had a pre-application dialogue with a Leader/LAD representative and it progressed well enough for the mother to think about submitting the application form. The Leader is confident that the mother meets the prerequisites and the Leader plans to fill out the Leader Recommendation form. In other words, the mother is about to apply. For instance:
“I am so excited because I plan to submit the Leader Recommendation form to the LAD very soon. The potential Applicant is also about to send the application form.”

candidate

The term “candidate for leadership” officially refers to a mother who has sent her Application form but whose application has not started. In many cases it is a relatively short time for the mother to be a “candidate.” Sometimes a dialogue becomes necessary and the mother’s status may remain as “candidate” for longer.

From 2016 LAD Manual, page 7, 1.2.1 “Applications.”

Leader Applicant
Applicant
potential Leader
prospective Leader

These terms are for the mother whose application has been accepted and it is official. She is now preparing to be an LLL Leader. A dictionary says that “potential” means “possible in the future” or “may become one in the future.” This word seems to promise that someone is eligible to be a Leader, and it can be confusing if it is used before the mother applies. We may use “potential Leader” or “prospective Leader” for official Leader Applicants if these terms read smoothly. For instance:

“An Applicant is a potential Leader who will enhance this organisation and carry out the LLL mission in the future.”

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Alison Parkes was the LLLI LAD Director with Karin Gausman for five years until 2010; she is currently a CLA and a member of the Council of Directors as Education and Development Department Director of LLL Great Britain. Alison and her husband, Robert, have three grown-up children living in London. Apart from her LLL work, Alison loves jazz and is living the dream of singing with a band. During their terms as LAD Directors Alison and Karin created Thinking About La Leche League Leadership? on the LLLI website.

Toshi Jolliffe is originally from Japan and lives in Luxembourg, Europe, with her Scottish husband, Michael. She joined the LAD in 2001 and currently serves as the LLLI LAD Director. Toshi looks forward to meeting and working with many LAD representatives worldwide during her term.

Unique Requirements: Help or Hindrance?
Karin Ali, Administrator of Leader Accreditation,
LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education

Every day, LLL Leaders around the world approach attendees of their Groups to see whether they might be interested in finding out more about La Leche League leadership. This can be an exciting experience for everyone! When a Leader goes over the Leader application with a mother interested in leadership, one topic she discusses is the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership that are required in order to apply. The prerequisites include personal breastfeeding, mothering, and organizational experiences, as well as personal traits. More detailed information can be found in Appendix 18 of the LLLI Policies and Standing Rules Notebook, which can be found at https://www.llli.org/docs/psr-Appendix18.pdf (LLLID and password required).

During the pre-application dialogue, the Leader will also review the LLLL Criteria for Leader Accreditation.

To be accredited as an LLL Leader, the following criteria will be completed:
• Meets the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership.
• Has nursed her baby for about a year.
• Demonstrates understanding of LLLI philosophy.
• Conveys her knowledge of basic breastfeeding management, outlined in Breastfeeding Management Skills Criteria.
• Demonstrates leadership skills and attitudes, outlined in Leadership Skills Criteria.
• Has completed the LLL Leader accreditation process.
• Has signed the LLL Leader Statement of Commitment.

When we look at the above requirements, we see that each criterion corresponds to a component of the Leader application. For example, in order to help fulfill the “Breastfeeding Management Skills Criteria,” a Leader Applicant can work through the Breastfeeding Resource Guide and read The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding. In addition, when looking to meet the Leadership Skills Criteria, a Leader Applicant can read Leader’s Handbook and review the Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for LLL Leadership with the supporting Leader.

As Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) representatives, one of our responsibilities is to know the details of the Leader application in order to answer any questions that may arise from Leaders, Leader Applicants, or those interested in LLL leadership. The LAD is unique because it is the only department that is international. When a Leader discusses the application with a mother, the requirements should be the same around the world. In this way, if a Leader moves to another Area or to the other side of the world, she is still a Leader. When you think about it, it is an amazing feat to construct an application format that can be completed by Applicants, no matter where they are located, or what language they speak.

As a brief review, there are five required parts of the Leader application, and optional items as well.

The required parts are:
- Personal History
- Breastfeeding Resource Guide (BRG)
- Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for LLL Leadership (Checklist)
- Reading
  * The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding
  * Leader’s Handbook
  * Comprehensive knowledge of how different methods of delivery and childbirth may affect breastfeeding—Applicants are welcome to choose varying methods to complete this requirement.
- Preview of Mothers’ Questions/Problems and Group Dynamics/Management (Preview)
  Five topics from Mothers’ Question/Problems, three topics from Group Dynamics/Management, and an evaluation of the work completed

Some optional parts are:
- Exercises such as the Listening Exercise, Bias Exercise, and Mixing Causes Exercise
- Additional practice with situations in the Preview
- Attending Area events and educational opportunities, such as Communication Skills Enrichment Seminars
- Attending a neighboring Group to observe different leadership and Group management styles
- Reading books in addition to The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding and the Leader’s Handbook.

There are times when a Leader, Group, or LAD representative may ask a potential or current Leader Applicant to complete extra tasks that are not required. These “unique” requirements are many times added to enhance the mother’s knowledge and skills. However, they can potentially cause extra stress and may prolong the dialogue or the application so much that the mother or the Applicant loses interest in continuing.

Let’s look at a few brief fictitious situations where the mother or the Applicant is asked to do what is not required:

• The local Leader asks the potential Leader Applicant to write a summary of The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding and to do the listening, bias and mixing causes exercises before writing her recommendation.
• The LAD representative asks the Leader Applicant to write out her answers to all of
  the Preview situations before she will send her the Statement of Commitment.
• The LAD representative asks Leader Applicants to send their Breastfeeding
  Resource Guide (BRG) responses to the Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA)
  for approval.
• The Area Network or Area requires the Applicant to read two extra La Leche League
  books before accreditation.
• The supporting Leader wants the Applicant to wait at least four months before being
  accredited, even though the Applicant has completed the work in two months.

These example situations would require a good amount of work and time, and are
outside the actual prerequisites or the Leader application requirements. Most mothers and Leader Applicants have
many other responsibilities outside of those in LLL, including family, work, and school. These extra items can many
times add so much weight to a dialogue or an application that the progress can slow down or even stop.

Should you as a LAD representative identify a Leader or other LAD representative asking a Leader Applicant for
more work than is required, consider these approaches:

• Reach out to your LAD support person, and let her know what is going on, so the two of you can discuss the
  situation. She may be able to offer helpful guidance.
• Kindly correct the information if it is something that has been directly communicated to you. LAD is a learning
  department and we all exchange information.
• Submit an article to the Area/Area Network publication and help to educate other Leaders and LAD
  representatives about what the requirements are for the Leader application by sharing correct information.
• Encourage the LAD representative to work with or as an ACLA-at-Large. “Cross-pollination” can happen when
  the LAD works beyond the Area or internationally.

By helping to counteract incorrect information about what is required to apply for leadership and what is included in
the Leader application, we all can help to motivate mothers and Applicants to complete their applications. It can also
help to build relationships with local Leaders, which in turn will strengthen LLL and its mission.

Karin Ali lives near Austin, Texas, USA with her husband, three children, and mother. Originally from New York, she
is the Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA) for LLL Alliance. She has been a part of the LAD for the last five
years, and very much enjoys working with Leaders, LAD representatives, and Applicants from all over the world.
She recently became an IBCLC, and in her free time, she loves to read and learn about homeschooling, nutrition,
and natural living.

**PowerPoint Presentations for LAD sessions**

Linda Wieser, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, La Leche League Canada

As LAD representatives we are often asked to present LAD topics at Leader Days, Area
Workshops or Conferences. Common topics include: LLL philosophy, pre-application
discussions, writing a Leader recommendation, application work, the Mothering Experience
Prerequisite. Most presentations are for Leaders and Leader Applicants; however, if there are
enough LAD representatives, you may want to consider two separate sessions: one for Leaders
and one for Applicants. And sometimes we are asked to do a session for a more general
audience, for example at a parenting conference.
There are two goals in offering presentations: (1) to share information about Leader accreditation and (2) to help Leaders become familiar with the LAD in their Area. A PowerPoint presentation is one option you may decide to use or maybe you’ll want to talk from an outline with a handout. Perhaps an informal discussion such as a Q & A about Leader accreditation or a discussion among Applicants about how to complete each requirement would work best.

Even if you don’t plan on using a PowerPoint presentation, consider checking out the bank of presentations now available online. They can provide you with both inspiration and a starting point. All can be adapted to meet the needs of your audience. (There’s no sense to recreate the wheel.) Go to: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rgsrlepykpxr1lAAAdBf1_neIzCPgGu5BtuZwa?dl=0 to review the available LAD presentations. This is a Dropbox folder. It is also possible to receive presentations by email. If you would like a list of what is available or if you have a PowerPoint presentation you’d like to contribute, please contact Lesley Robinson at mummypiggy@gmail.com.

Before starting to work on your presentation, there are a few things to consider:
1. Who is your audience? Leaders and Applicants? Only Leaders? Only Applicants? Mothers interested in leadership?
2. What information would be helpful for the Leaders in your Area?
3. What are the key points you want to share/communicate?
4. Do you want to cover a broad topic such as “The Application Period,” or something very specific such as “Working on the BRG” or “Writing a Leader Recommendation?”
5. How do you want to share the topic information: lecture style, discussion, interactive or a combination?
6. Do you want to create a PowerPoint presentation? Will a projector and computer be available at the venue?
7. Do you want to have a handout available?

When you have completed your presentation and edited it, send it to your support person for a second review. She may have additional suggestions or find some typos you missed.

Last spring I created a PowerPoint presentation, “Pre-Application Discussions,” for an Area Workshop in Atlantic Canada. I started with an outline from a session ACLA Linda Boissinot had done for a Leader Day in Ottawa, Canada. I liked that she had exercises in which the Leaders and Applicants could participate. I find that an interactive session with plenty of opportunity to ask questions works well for me.

To create this interactive session I included:
1. Two email inquiries about applying for leadership and asked participants to write a response. (I provided paper and pencils.) After a few minutes, I asked a few people to share their responses and then shared my response on the next slide.
2. Role-playing situations between a Leader and someone interested in applying for leadership. These gave Leaders and Applicants the opportunity to practice responding in person to inquiries about leadership.
3. On screen LAD documents to view during the presentation, e.g., LLL Leadership: Is It for You? (La Leche League Canada’s version of Thinking About LLL Leadership), Appendix 18 to LLLI Policies and Standing Rules Notebook, Leader Recommendation Form. If you have Internet available, consider going to the LLLI website to show participants exactly how to find the resources they’ll need.

Presenting a LAD session is a fun way to interact with the Leaders in your Area. It allows you to learn their concerns and motivate them to find potential Applicants, and it gives them the opportunity to become familiar with you. Leaders are more likely to come to you with questions if they know who you are.

Linda Wieser lives in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada, where she and her husband, Jim, have a large garden and several boats for playing around on the water. They have two grown daughters and three grandchildren. Linda has been a Leader since 1984. For many years she worked in the Professional Liaison Department as Area Professional Liaison for Michigan, USA, and then Atlantic Canada. In 2008, she became a member of the LAD and is currently the Administrator of Leader Accreditation for LLL Canada. She is also the Contributing Editor of the “Preparing for Leadership” column in Leader Today and LAD Promenade in LADders.
Special Consideration Clause
Linda Wieser, ALA, La Leche League Canada and Cindy Garrison, LAD Council Advisor, LLLI

From time to time you may get a question about whether an application can be accepted under the “special consideration clause.” The following information will help you make a decision if the mother’s experience can be considered under this clause:

1) The special consideration clause only applies to the Personal Breastfeeding Experience prerequisite.

2) You can find information about it in Appendix 18 of the LLLI Policies and Standing Rules Notebook (PSR).

3) Point #9 from Appendix 18 describes short-term interruptions in breastfeeding; for example, a baby who is not latching receives bottles until breastfeeding is established, or formula is used until the mother’s milk supply meets the baby’s needs. These do not fall under the special consideration clause.

9) A mother may have experienced situations, usually short term, in which substitutes for breast milk and/or nursing at mother’s breast were determined to be or were accepted as necessary. The Leader and mother, in their discussion of the Personal Breastfeeding Experience Prerequisite, consider the mother’s understanding of her baby’s needs and LLLI philosophy and how this understanding is revealed in her subsequent experience of mothering through breastfeeding. (Appendix 18, LLLI PSR)

4) An explanation about the special consideration clause is found in point #10 from Appendix 18. The key words in this paragraph are: “unusual situations,” “challenge mother’s ability to breastfeed,” “physical limitation of mother or baby.” In most cases these are permanent situations, for example, breast reduction surgery, or situations that take a long time to resolve, such as a baby with a cleft palate. The mother may have little control over the situation, yet does her best to provide her baby with a breastfeeding experience.

10) The “special consideration” note applies only to the Personal Breastfeeding Experience Prerequisite. It has relevance in unusual situations that can challenge a mother’s ability to breastfeed, such as a physical limitation of mother or baby. When a mother’s breastfeeding experience differs from that described by the prerequisite and might warrant this special consideration, the Leader should consult with a LAD representative. (Appendix 18, LLLI PSR)

When deciding if a mother meets the Personal Experience Prerequisite using the special consideration clause, you’ll want to look at all aspects of the mother’s experience. This may include any of the following:

- Physical limitations of mother.
- Physical limitations of baby.
- Mother’s motivation to breastfeed.
- How the mother approached the challenge.
- The recommendations received from the health care community.
- How mother fed baby if not at breast.
- Whether mother was already involved with LLL.
If it is not clear that the mother’s breastfeeding experience qualifies for “special consideration,” consult with your LAD support person.

Linda Wieser lives in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada, where she and her husband, Jim, have a large garden and several boats for playing around on the water. They have two grown daughters and three grandchildren. Linda has been a Leader since 1984. For many years she worked in the Professional Liaison Department as Area Professional Liaison for Michigan, USA, and then Atlantic Canada. In 2008, she became a member of the LAD and is currently the Administrator of Leader Accreditation for LLL Canada. She is also the Contributing Editor of the “Preparing for Leadership” column in Leader Today and LAD Promenade in LADders.

Cindy Garrison lives in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, USA with her husband, Dave. They have three grown sons and seven grandchildren scattered across the USA. Cindy has been a Leader since 1974 and previously held several positions in the LAD and Leader Department, and also worked in the Publications Department. Prior to rejoining the LAD, Cindy served two terms on the LLLI Board of Directors, with three years as Co-Chair of the Board. Most recently she was Interim Director of the LAD. In addition to her advisory role for the LAD Council, she is also part of the Professional Liaison Department for LLL of Alliance. Cindy has been employed as a hospital-based IBCLC for the past 26 years.

**Ideas for Working with Applicants Making Slow Progress**

LAD representatives all over the world have experience of working with Leader Applicants who work more slowly than might be expected. They develop strategies for understanding and encouraging inactive Applicants and for jumpstarting slow-moving applications.

Elena Gvozdeykova, ACLA for Future Areas in Europe writes from Bulgaria. Elena consulted resources in search of some ideas. She shares the following:

Преди няколко месеца, много мислих какво мога да направя с Кандидатите за лидерство, които работят бавно. Работя с 9 Кандидати, от които 5 работят бавно. Търсех идеи в сайта на LLLI, LADders и LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education. Там попаднах на идеята за Въпросник за актуализация на кандидатстването (Application Update Questionnaire). Заедно със въпросника, изпратих и информация за предстоящата тогава ЛЛЛИ Он-лайн конференция. След он-лайн конференцията се проведе още едно събитие Празничен ден за лидери и кандидати (CeLLLebration Day for Leaders and Leader Applicants). Отново поканих Кандидатите да се включат. Поради това или друга причина, двама от бавно работещите кандидати се активизираха. Дали ще продължат така - само времето ще покаже, но он-лайн събитията дават възможност на кандидатите и особено на изолираните такива, да се почувстват като част от едно голямо семейство.

A few months ago, I was thinking a lot about what I can do about LLL Leader Applicants who work slowly. I am working with nine Applicants, of whom five are working slowly. I searched for ideas from LLLI, LADders and LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education. Then I came across the idea of an Application Update Questionnaire. I wrote to the Applicants. Together with the questionnaire, I sent information about the first LLLI online conference. Just after the end of the on-line conference, there was another event—the CeLLLebration Day for Leaders and Leader Applicants. Again I invited all Applicants to join. Because of this or perhaps for another reason, two of the slow-working Applicants have stepped up. Whether they will continue like this, only time will show, but I think that online events allow Applicants, and especially isolated Applicants, to feel like part of a large family.

In another part of the world Missy Wang, ACLA for Future Areas in Asia and the Middle East shares some thoughts on respecting the Applicant’s needs and on helping Applicants to make plans to keep their applications on track. She writes from China in English and Chinese:
Respect the Applicant's choice and clarify LAD expectations

尊重申请人的选择及解释哺乳辅导委任部的期望

When Lucy didn't answer within two weeks, I needed to send another "touch-base" letter. I felt curious about what had happened to her. She had postponed her application several times for some "family issues." However, from our correspondence it seemed that her work should go well. I sent another letter to her supporting Leader and explained to her that if Lucy needed to, she might request a leave-of-absence (LoA), but if Lucy wanted to keep a steady pace in her application, the LAD representative would usually expect to receive a letter from her at least once per month. After the Leader had communicated with her, the Applicant asked for two more weeks' extension and then was able to follow her schedule with no further delay. The first concept she had chosen to write about was the concept about fathers. During the dialogue she explained her situation—she had been dealing with personal issues over the past few months.

Encourage Applicants to make an action plan

一些成为申请人的妈妈以为申请过程要以委任部的节奏进行，而她们仅仅需要回答问题，跟从指示。她们读一下《哺乳辅导申请人资源索引》中“制定行动计划”的范例，并在此方面进行一些对话。阐释申请中申请人需要参与的部分，告知她哪些部分与委任部代表共同完成，哪些需要支持哺乳辅导的合作。鼓励她为自己制定粗略的计划。仅是在打印出来的清单上标出自己的计划，就是很有用的提醒。偶尔，当与申请人直接通话时，简单地回顾她在申请中已完成的部分，非正式地聊聊如何她会如何在接下来的几个月里，将申请计划融入到家庭生活中，这将鼓励她更有效率地在申请中进展。

Laurence Descourtieux is a LAD representative originally from France, but living in the UK and working in the LLLGB LAD. She considers some of the possible reasons that might lead to an Applicant working slowly and suggests approaches accordingly. She writes:

La formation d’animatrice se fait au rythme de la stagiaire, et nous ne nous attendons pas à ce qu’elles suivent le nôtre. Nous savons être assez flexibles pour lui permettre de mûrir et de s’approprier les outils de l’animatrice à la vitesse qui lui convient à elle. En tant que représentante du LAD, nous nous adaptions à la stagiaire et non l’inverse et généralement, tout ce passe très bien.

Pourtant, il arrive que certaines stagiaires prennent un chemin plus long que la moyenne… Je veux dire très long – des années - tellement long que nous sommes en
droit de nous demander (et de lui demander !) pourquoi. Devenir animatrice est-il toujours un projet qui lui tient à cœur ? Si oui, que pouvons-nous faire pour l’aider ?

Certaines stagiaires seront soulagées de répondre qu’elles n’ont plus le temps ou l’énergie pour devenir animatrice. Elles peuvent se sentir mal à l’aise à l’idée de nous avoir fait perdre du temps ainsi qu’à leur animatrice soutien et avoir du mal à écrire pour mettre un terme leur engagement. Les accompagner en douceur vers un « sevrage » de leur projet d’animatrice est probablement ce que nous pouvons faire de mieux. Dans certains cas, ces ex-stagiaires poseront de nouveau leur candidature à un moment qui leur conviendra mieux. Certaines stagiaires resteront dans leur groupe LLL en tant que mère active avec un grand plaisir.

Il arrive que une stagiaire se sente perdue dans sa formation et qu’elle ait besoin d’être guidée, encore plus quand son animatrice est peu présente pour la soutenir. Il ne faut pas hésiter à lui dire à quel point la préparation pour devenir animatrice n’est pas un exercice scolaire et que nous sommes là pour la guider. Souvenons-nous qu’il existe des styles infinis d’apprentissage; à nous de nous adapter. De la même façon que nous sommes à l’écoute de nos enfants, nous sommes à l’écoute de nos stagiaires. Si elles nous réclament à être plus fermement guidées, faisons-le ! Si elles nous demandent au contraire de les laisser picorer par ci par là des éléments de la formation, laissions-les faire ! C’est leur préparation et nous avons à cœur qu’elles intègrent les outils de l’animatrice plutôt qu’elles « cochent les cases ».

Il arrive aussi que la stagiaire « bloque » sur un point de la formation. Ces blocages peuvent être d’ordres très différents. Elle n’arrive pas à fournir le travail qui lui a été demandé parce qu’elle n’a pas compris ou elle a du mal à écrire, ou encore elle a été blessée par quelque chose que nous avons écrit dans notre dernier courrier. Quelle que soit la raison du blocage, un dialogue ouvert, parfois plus efficace par téléphone, peut aider à débloquer la situation.

Il arrive que la stagiaire ait un problème avec leur animatrice soutien, ou une autre animatrice du groupe. Peut-être que changer d’animatrice soutien est la solution ? L’animatrice soutien n’est pas comme un « maître de stage » ou un maître de « thèse » ; ce n’est pas parce qu’elle l’a recommandée que la stagiaire doit restée avec cette animatrice quand leur collaboration ne fonctionne pas. Il n’y a pas de « formulaire » à remplir ni même à signaler à l’Area que l’animatrice soutien n’est plus la même. Informer la ACLA suffit généralement.

La stagiaire peut aussi être décue par LLL, qui évolue (ou au contraire n’évolue pas) et cela ne lui convient pas. Elle peut hésiter à s’impliquer dans une organisation dont elle doute soudain des valeurs. Encore une fois, encourager le dialogue, parfois en s’appuyant sur des outils de résolution de conflit peut permettre de sortir de cette impasse.

Il y a une autre catégorie de stagiaires : celles qui ont besoin de temps pour mûrir. Ces stagiaires là ont peut-être été recommandées trop tôt : elles avaient encore besoin de beaucoup de temps et de soutien dans leur maternage.

D’un point de vue bassement matériel, il peut être de consulter son Area afin de savoir si des stagiaires « inactives » coûtent de l’argent. Dans la mesure où bien des envois sont désormais électroniques, il est probable que ce ne soit pas le cas et nous pouvons laisser ces stagiaires « dormir », en leur envoyant un à deux fois par an, ainsi qu’à leur animatrice, un petit mot pour venir aux nouvelles. Cela déclenche souvent des réactions.

Tous les cas existent, ne généralisons pas : nous savons que certaines stagiaires font leur formation très rapidement, d’autres la font plus lentement. Cela ne donne pas nécessairement des indications sur la qualité et la profondeur de l’engagement que l’animatrice prend par la suite. En revanche nous pouvons attirer l’attention des animatrices de nos Areas sur le fait que si la formation a un coût dérisoire par rapport à celle donnée par des organismes de formation, elle représente un coût en termes de ressources humaines : c’est notre temps d’animatrice soutien et de représentante du LAD que nous donnons et nous préférons le donner à des femmes qui réellement ont à cœur de remplir la mission de LLL. Il est important que les animatrices disent franchement aux candidates lors des entretiens préalables que la formation est un engagement, même si la stagiaire la fait à son rythme.
Et vous, ACLA dévouées qui vous languissez des écrits de vos stagiaires inactives, n’hésitez pas à prendre un nouveau dossier de stagiaires. Certaines Areas ont des listes d’attente très longues ! Un bon moyen de ne pas décourager les stagiaires est de ne pas les laisser attendre trop longtemps sans représentante du LAD. Plutôt que de réfléchir en termes de quantité de stagiaires que vous arriverez à gérer, pensez en termes de temps.

N’hésitez pas à partager ce qui peut fonctionner pour booster une formation qui s’éternise.

LLLove
Laurence Descourtieux

Preparation for leadership happens at the rhythm of the Leader Applicant, and we do not expect her to follow our rhythm. We know how to be flexible enough to allow her to develop and to discover leadership tools at the speed that works for her. As representatives of the LAD, we adapt to the Applicant and not the other way around and generally everything goes very well.

Sometimes, however, some Applicants take a longer path than average. I mean very long—years—so long that we have a right to wonder (and to ask her) “Why?” Is becoming Leader still a project that is close to her heart? If so, what can we do to help?

Some Applicants will be relieved to respond that they no longer have the time or energy to become a Leader. They may feel uncomfortable at the thought of having wasted our time and that of their supporting Leader and may find it difficult to write to put an end to their commitment. Guiding them gently towards a “weaning” from their plans for leadership is probably the best thing we can do. In some cases, these former Applicants will reapply at a time that suits them better. Some Applicants will remain happily as active members in their LLL Group.

Sometimes an Applicant feels lost in her preparation for leadership and needs guidance, even more so when her supporting Leader is not available to help. We should not hesitate to tell her that preparation for leadership is not like schoolwork and that we are there to guide her. We should remember that there are an infinite number of styles of learning; it is up to us to adapt. In the same way that we listen to our children, we listen to Leader Applicants. It is their application and we want them to take on board the elements of leadership, rather than just ticking boxes.

It may also happen that an Applicant gets “blocked” on one aspect of her preparation for leadership. Such roadblocks can take many different forms. An Applicant may be unable to provide the work she was asked for because she did not understand or has difficulty writing, or perhaps she was hurt by something that we wrote in our last letter. Whatever the reason for the block, an open dialogue, sometimes more effective by telephone, can help to unblock the situation.

Sometimes the Applicant has a problem with her supporting Leader or another Leader in the Group. Perhaps changing the supporting Leader might be the solution. The Leader is not like a work or academic supervisor. If their collaboration is not working, an Applicant should not feel obliged to stay with a supporting Leader just because she was the one who recommended her. There is no form to complete to let the Area know that the supporting Leader has changed. Informing the A/CLA is generally enough.

The Applicant may also be disappointed with LLL, as it evolves (or, on the contrary, does not evolve) in ways that do not suit her. She may hesitate to get involved in an organisation that she suddenly doubts. Once again, encouraging dialogue, sometimes based on conflict resolution tools, can help to break this deadlock.

There is another category of Applicants: those who just need time to be ready. These Applicants may have been recommended too early: when they still needed a lot of time and support in their mothering.

From a material point of view, it may be worthwhile to consult with the Area to find out if "inactive" Applicants are costing the Area money. Since many mailings are now electronic, it is likely that this is not the case and we can allow these Applicants to "sleep," by sending them, as well as their supporting Leaders, little notes once or twice a year to keep in touch. This often triggers reactions.
All these situations can exist, so we should avoid generalizing. We know that some Applicants prepare for leadership very quickly, whereas others do it more slowly. This does not necessarily give any indication of the quality and depth of the commitment that a new Leader takes on afterwards. On the other hand, we can draw the attention of Area Leaders to the fact that if preparation for leadership has an outrageous cost compared to that given by other training organizations, the cost is in terms of human resources: it is the Leaders’ and LAD representatives’ time and we prefer to give it to women who really care about fulfilling LLL’s mission. It is important that Leaders tell interested mothers candidly during pre-application discussions that applying for leadership is a commitment, even though the Applicant works at her own pace.

And you, dedicated ACLAs, waiting to hear from inactive Applicants, do not hesitate to take on new files. Some Areas have very long waiting lists! A good way to prevent Applicants from feeling discouraged is not to let them wait too long without a LAD representative. Rather than thinking in terms of how many files you are able to manage, think in terms of time.

Please feel free to share with others what you have found to work to give a boost to an application that has been dragging on.

LLLove  
Laurence Descourtieux

We can see from what these LAD representatives have shared that there is tremendous variety in both the speed with which Applicants complete their applications and the reasons that they may be working more slowly than expected. In all cases, it helps to remember that every Applicant is unique and the application is tailored to meet the individual style of each Applicant. She “designs” her own application, sets her own pace and accommodates the needs of her family. Communication is the key to finding out what each Applicant needs from the LAD. This helps us to find the resources that work for her, to understand her individual situation and help her to make a plan, assess her own needs and surmount roadblocks.

New LAD Resource

Pre-Application Dialogue about Separation Experiences - Guidelines for Leaders  
http://www.lli.org/docs/lll_leadership/pre-app_dialogue_separation_experiences.pdf

This resource was developed to encourage Leaders to dialogue with interested mothers about any separation experiences they and their babies have had. Some LAD representatives were finding that instead of dialoguing with the interested mother, the Leader was giving the mother the resource and asking her to write out her answers to the questions. The new resource emphasizes the importance of gathering information about the mother’s experience so the Leader can write a recommendation that gives the LAD a complete picture of the mother’s breastfeeding and parenting experience.

Please share this new resource with the Leaders in your Area and let them know that it replaces the following two resources:  
The Mothering Experience Prerequisite: When There Is Separation  
Discussion About Mother-Baby Togetherness - Dialogue Guidelines and Samples (for Leaders)

The LAD representative version of Discussion About Mother-Baby Togetherness—Dialogue Guidelines and Samples will be introduced in the upcoming issue of LADders.
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<tr>
<th>Affiliates</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>New Applications</th>
<th>Discontinued Applications</th>
<th>Accreditations</th>
<th>Length of Applications (Months)</th>
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<td>164 (217)</td>
<td>88 (88)</td>
<td>148 (149)</td>
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| **Total**            | 5,955 (5,980) | 2,430 (2,368) | 1,326 (1,288) | 416 (415) | 170 (181) | 286 (301) | 13.6 (11.8) |
### Semi-Annual Report
#### April 2017

**Comparison of Four Reporting Periods**

LAD Council

- Affiliates: Canada English, Canada French, Great Britain, New Zealand
- Non-USA ANs: European AN (Area Network), International AN
- USA ANs: Alliance AN, Garden State AN, Mosaic AN, Southern California/Nevada AN, Texas AN, US West AN

#### Leaders

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#### Groups

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#### Applicants

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#### New Applications

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#### Discontinued Applications

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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#### Accreditations

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<td>USA ANs</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>277</td>
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Here is an extract from a Leader Applicant:

I would like to apologize for my silence over the last few months. I have been reflecting on things that have happened and thinking about what to do in the future.

I feel tremendously grateful and loyal to La Leche League, which has been such a big part of my life as a mother. I would like to switch supporting Leaders if that were possible, although there is no other Group nearby. I no longer have any wish to work with Lynn under any circumstances. I am very much pained by this situation. I feel that Lynn is a liability for LLL. I have heard directly from many who claim she has alienated a large number of LLL members and colleagues within the breastfeeding support community, although, I am sure she has helped numerous others.

I have recently started volunteering as a peer counsellor with another local breastfeeding support organization. My motivation is still as strong as ever. I would frankly prefer to be a Leader with LLL, but I do not see how it would be possible under these circumstances. Unless you see any other options, in spite of my desire to continue, I do not see a way forward.

Ashley Applicant

Dear Ashley,

I was so happy to see your email in my inbox. I’ve been wondering why I hadn’t heard from you, since you had been corresponding regularly.

I appreciate you honestly sharing your thoughts with me. What a challenging situation. I know that working with Lynn has been difficult for you. Now you see it as impossible and are also concerned about her ability to represent La Leche League. This is, indeed, distressing.

You have completed most of your requirements for accreditation. It would be sad for you to withdraw your application at this time and for this reason, especially since your motivation remains strong and you want to
represent LLL in your community. Let me suggest that you and I continue to work together to complete your application. I can fill in as supporting Leader and do the Preview with you. Once you are accredited you can decide how you’d like to work as an LLL Leader. There is no reason why you couldn’t set up another LLL Group in your community.

I think it’s important that the Leader Department is aware of your concerns. Would you like me to discuss them with the Area Coordinator of Leaders?

Ashley, let me suggest that before making a final decision, you and I talk via Skype or phone. Are you available some time next week?

I look forward to talking with you and hope that we’ll come up with a plan that you feel good about.

Warmly,
Lucy LAD representative

Dear Ashley

Thank you for your message. It is always fine for you to take whatever time you need to make your journey towards leadership. Some journeys are easier than others.

I am really sorry to hear that your relationship with Lynn is not going well. Let me say first of all that every Applicant has the right to choose the Leader(s) she works with. To return to the journey analogy, the traveller needs to have confidence in her guide and enjoy the company.

You don't mention with whom you would prefer to work. Have you had any thoughts on this? Have you spoken to another Leader about it? What feedback did you get? Or are you hoping I can make some suggestions or find someone? This is also possible. Let's keep talking. Your motivation to support breastfeeding families through La Leche League and to represent our organisation remains strong and my role is to help you achieve that goal—to arrive at your destination with the experience, knowledge and skills you need to do your job with confidence and pleasure (Leader’s Handbook, Chapter 5).

By the way, while you are a Leader Applicant and not representing LLL, there is no problem with you volunteering with another organisation. Perhaps you are already aware that, before you sign your Statement of Commitment, you will need to make a choice between the other organisation and LLL.

That was the easy bit. Now for the more difficult part.

You write of Lynn that you have "... heard directly from many who claim she has alienated a large number of LLL members and colleagues within the breastfeeding support community." Do you know if any of these people have spoken to Lynn herself or to her District Coordinator?

It is always a fine balance to allow each Leader to be herself and still represent La Leche League as we hope and expect. While some Leaders know they sometimes upset others, many of these don’t know what to do about it or are maybe trying to do something, but with limited success. Others are not aware of the effect they can have. Being able to discuss such difficulties respectfully and sensitively is not always easy, but is always important for LLL's image and reputation. Please encourage others you hear from to contact Lynn directly or through the Area so that steps might be taken to improve the situation and to begin talking *to* Lynn, not just *about* her.

I look forward to continuing our work together. Are you working on something or do you need ideas on how to proceed? I am here at any time to discuss things which are on your mind.

LLLove
Eileen
Dear Ashley,

What a difficult situation for you. I am sorry to hear about the concerns you have related to working with Lynn. It can be so hard when someone who has helped you with breastfeeding and encouraged you to apply for leadership is now behaving in a way that you find so different from what you expect from a Leader and from the kind of Leader you hope to be.

You certainly have the option to choose another Leader to work with. It can be with me or I can connect you with another Leader who has supported mothers during their application. You would not be considered an "isolated" Applicant because you do have a Group to attend. You would just be working with a Leader who is not a Leader in that Group.

I would like to also work on improving things between you and Lynn as you will still be Leaders within the Area and cross paths frequently in your community. Here are a couple of ideas I would like to suggest. One thought is to schedule a Communication Skills Workshop that you, Lynn and others nearby could easily attend. It may help both of you work on ways to better communicate so that you can more comfortably express your concerns to her and hopefully help her become more aware of how her behavior is differing from that expected of Leaders. Another possibility would be for me to share your concerns, with your permission, with my support person, Carol CLA, and Annie ACL to see what we might be able to offer as Area administrators to help resolve the concerns you have expressed. If you agree with the first idea, I will begin that conversation to set up the session. If you prefer the second idea, please send more details about your concerns and your written permission for me to take your concerns to Carol and Annie.

Your passion for helping mothers with breastfeeding is clear in your correspondence with me and in the fact that you have sought to provide that help through another peer-to-peer organization. You have stated your desire to become an LLL Leader. I am happy to work with you to find the best path to allow that to happen. I will be looking for your thoughts about what I have written and how you want to proceed.

Warmly,
Ainsley, ACLA

Cindy Garrison
Pennsylvania, USA
Here is an extract from a Leader Applicant:

This is a very difficult letter to write. My husband and I have decided to get a divorce for the good of our family. Because of this, I'm not sure whether I should continue with my application. I know most Leaders have a spouse or partner, and I don't know if I ever will again. In addition, whenever I hear mothers talk about their husbands or partners at LLL meetings, I find myself feeling very upset. I'm just not sure how to deal with all of this.

Thank you for your understanding,

Anna

How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Karin Ali karinali0407@gmail.com.

Máire Morrissy
Ireland

Hi!

My name is Máire Morrissy and I am the CLA for La Leche League of Ireland. I am the mother of four sons ranging in age from 33 down to 22. Only the youngest still lives at home and he is studying for a degree in Computer Engineering. I am very lucky to have the others living close by and they visit regularly.

I first came to La Leche League when my second son was a few weeks old. I was immediately excited by the warm and accepting atmosphere at the meeting. Although I found some of what I saw and heard strange, I couldn’t wait to come back a month later.

Over the following months I learnt so much about breastfeeding and parenting and continue to learn to this day. When one of the Leaders in my Group suggested that I might consider leadership I felt delighted and honoured to be asked. I have been a Leader since 1990 and love seeing mothers come to our meetings and gradually learn to mother through breastfeeding.
I again felt honoured when I was asked to join the LAD and wondered if I could possibly do the work involved. But with the support and encouragement of then CLA, Margaret McGuigan, I gradually became more comfortable in the role. Just as I enjoy mothers becoming more confident in their mothering as the months go by, so I love seeing Leader Applicants gradually starting to think like Leaders and becoming confident that they will be able to fulfil the role.

I have attended the European Management Symposium in Frankfurt, Germany a number of times and have always come away with new ideas and renewed enthusiasm. While there the last time, members of our Area Council suggested that I take on the role of CLA. I was daunted at the idea but knowing that Margaret and the other members of LAD would be there to support me, I agreed. That was in March 2016 and I am starting to feel more comfortable in the position and am enjoying the challenge.

When not leading in my busy Group or doing LAD work, I love to hill walk, read and sing in a choir among other things.

The photograph that I have included is of my sons and myself celebrating my recent birthday. I look forward to meeting many of you at the EMS in Berlin, Germany in 2018.

Rebecca McCormick

Virginia, USA

My name is Rebecca McCormick. In an organization that seems to have Leaders across four generations, I guess I’m in the youngest bunch as a 28-year-old, millennial. I am a stay-at-home mom to my son Angus (3). My husband Stephen and I moved to Northern Virginia near Washington D.C. while I pursued my master of arts in history of decorative arts at the Smithsonian-George Mason University joint program. Before my son, I had a career in museums and auctions with an emphasis on decorative arts and American material culture. Though Stephen and I grew up mostly in Texas, USA, I feel like La Leche League has helped me feel like I have deep roots in a place I’ve only lived since finishing at university. Some of my most dear friendships are thanks to LLL.

I’ve been a Leader with La Leche League of Fairfax City since 2015 but dove headfirst into my commitment to LLL. Along with being CLA for Old Dominion in Virginia, I am on the Old Dominion Coordinating Council as well as the La Leche League USA Social Media Team. There, I work with a great group of Leaders trying to meet today’s parents where they are--online! I am excited by the ingenuity and flexibility of Leaders as they try to make all the things that make LLL great work in an online capacity including graphics, memes, Facebook groups, and online meetings. My own LAD work has tried to embrace these shifts through digitizing files and piloting an interactive Facebook group to help isolated Applicants complete the Checklist requirement.

In my free time, I try to travel as much as possible including recent trips to South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and soon Houston and Ireland! When I’m not traveling or making memes for the social media team, I’m working on completing my goal of reading 42 books this year.
Is your Area planning an Area Conference, Leader Day, District Workshop or other Leader gathering? Consider taking along several copies of the new LAD resource, *Pre-Application Dialogue about Separation Experiences*. You could share it in a LAD session, have it available at a LAD or Leader information table, or ask if it could be included in the welcome packets of Leaders who attend the event. Don't have an event planned or want to provide the document electronically? Write about it in the next Area Leaders’ Letter, send it out in an email to all Area Leaders, or post it on the Area Facebook page. Share the link: [http://www.llli.org/docs/lll_leadership/pre-app_dialogue_separation_experiences.pdf](http://www.llli.org/docs/lll_leadership/pre-app_dialogue_separation_experiences.pdf) (LLLID and password required)

If, as a LAD representative, you believe you will need to decline an application for LLL leadership, please let your support person know, even if it seems obvious that the interested mother’s experience does not meet the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership. It is helpful to consult with your support person before making a decision because a second review of a questionable application can help you feel confident about your decision.

You will also want to make sure that you give the mother a copy of PSR Appendix 38 Leader Accreditation Appeals Policies and Process, *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules Notebook*. Appendix 38 is available in the Leader’s Pre-Application Packet at: [http://www.llli.org/leaderpages/lad/applicationpacket.html](http://www.llli.org/leaderpages/lad/applicationpacket.html) (LLLID and password required). The Leader accreditation appeals process gives the mother the opportunity to have her application reviewed by another LAD representative. As stated in Appendix 38, a second review of the application is possible if the person applying believes it was rejected “due to a misinterpretation of her experience, a lack of information gathered by the Leader or LAD representative, or an application of the prerequisites that is inconsistent with LLLI guidelines… Leader Applicants or interested mothers may not use this process to protest any LLLI policy, including the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership.”

Please note that the time limit for appeal after the mother has received Appendix 38 was reduced from 60 to 30 days when this document was last revised in 2015.
# Congratulations on your appointment!

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**Photo Letters from LAD representatives**
Greetings from Greece

This is my family - my son Apostolos (his name means “mission”) 16, my daughter Eleftheria (“freedom”) 13, me with our dog Chara (“joy”); and my husband Yannis.

This is one of my favorite trees. There you can see a small part of Thessaloniki from the suburb where I live. It is called Raidestos (which means roses). On the left you see Mount Olympus (where the 12 ancient Gods lived) and right behind the tree is the sea. Every day I go down the hill. It’s my own time of silence, meditation and dreaming.

Love, Natasha

Natasha (Anastasia) Kapsali
ACLA for Greece
Thessaloniki, Greece

Greetings from New Zealand
My youngest daughter Ruth and I are parasailing over Lake Taupo.

I live on a peninsula half way between Bucklands Beach and Eastern Beach in East Auckland. The peninsula lies between the Hauraki Gulf and the Tamaki River about 13 km from the centre of Auckland city. Our city is often referred to as the “City of Sails” because of the number of yachts seen on the gulf.

Alison Stanton
ALA, LLL New Zealand
Auckland, New Zealand

**LADders Team**

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