LAD Council Survey of LAD Representatives
Lesley Robinson, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, La Leche League Canada

Our recent survey has given us a snapshot of current LAD work around the world. LAD representatives have shared ways in which they have been working and what they are finding to be effective. The survey also provided an opportunity to review the resources currently available and to reflect on what is needed for the future. Thanks to those who responded to the survey and to those who provided translations of the survey and the responses.

The LAD representatives who responded are working with an average of ten Leader Applicants. Of current Applicants, 53% were reported as working actively on their applications. This was defined as having made significant progress during the previous three months. A number of LAD representatives commented that this figure would probably have been higher if the period in question had not been around the holidays and New Year. In addition, 6% of Applicants were reported as being isolated Applicants; 21% of Applicants were described as having experienced separation during the early years.

On average the LAD representatives who responded to the survey are accrediting five Leaders per year. Of these respondents, 7% reported an average accreditation time of less than 6 months, 45% reported an average of 6-12 months, 26% reported 12-18 months, and 22% reported 18-24 months. No one reported an average accreditation time of more than 24 months.

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LAD representatives were asked about Applicants who discontinued on their own in the past year: 36% reported no discontinuations; 31% had just one or two Applicants discontinue; 21% of LAD representatives experienced 3-5 discontinuations; and 12% had 6-10 Applicants withdraw. Of the Applicants who withdrew, 29% were Applicants for less than 6 months and 19% were Applicants for more than 24 months.

A great variety of reasons were given for discontinuations, among them family needs, lack of time for application work, changing priorities as children grow, finding that application work was not what an Applicant expected, moving out of the Area, going back to work or school, chronic illness, partner burnout, and lack of responses to the LAD representative’s letters. Since many of these reasons are beyond the control of LAD representatives, we can consider a certain number of discontinuations to be inevitable. We always encourage Leader Applicants to put family first, and we always consider any time spent on an application as valuable, both for us and for the Applicant, even if it does not result in accreditation.

All LAD representatives responding to the survey primarily use email for their correspondence. Half also use postal mail, and many use the telephone or Skype. LAD work is only occasionally conducted in person or using instant message services such as Google Chat. Almost all LAD representatives contact Leader Applicants at least once every three months, many of them once a month, even if they do not hear from them. They contact sponsoring Leaders less frequently, usually when the Applicant makes significant progress or is inactive for a considerable period.

All respondents reported that Leader Applicants are using email to complete their personal histories. Email has become the preferred method for submitting personal histories, although some do still submit them on paper. According to 27% of the respondents, some Leader Applicants complete their personal histories orally, either by telephone or in person.

We asked LAD representatives to comment on the effectiveness of these ways of working. Communication works both ways, and LAD representatives are aware that it is important to allow for individual preferences and needs of both parties. Visual or hearing impairments or learning styles can determine what will work best in individual cases. Effectiveness depends on the Applicant’s comfort level and is high when the Applicant chooses her favourite mode of communication.

There is general agreement that email is effective for working on personal histories. Many Applicants assume that all correspondence will take place by email. Well-organized Applicants tend to be most likely to complete their personal histories in one go and achieve accreditation quickly. LAD representatives enjoy the speed of exchange and the ability to check in quickly if there are any questions on either side. Email provides timely feedback. When more information is requested from Leader Applicants, most respond within a couple of days. However, one drawback is the expectation of an immediate response to emails. A LAD representative with a heavy workload may not be able to respond within a day or two.

When Applicants receive a clear guide for writing their personal histories they work more efficiently. Some LAD representatives encourage instalments, but still find that some Applicants prefer to write a single narrative. It may be difficult for LAD representatives to keep track of what has been covered when Applicants work in brief instalments, since it may be arduous to have to keep explaining what needs to be done and rechecking an Applicant’s file for what remains to be completed. Working in instalments may also present challenges when an Applicant is writing about her different experiences chronologically and did not meet the prerequisites with her early experiences. Some LAD representatives find that responding to instalments as they are received makes for effective work, whereas others may worry about distracting Applicants from what they are working on next. Again, judgments are made on an individual basis.
Applicants may sometimes find that emotional difficulties make it hard for them to write about their histories. In such cases the telephone can be a more effective means of communication, although some LAD representatives have found that telephone work is hard to document. The telephone has also been found useful for completing a last piece of the personal history when an Applicant has become stalled. Many Applicants who are leading hectic lives with toddlers need to work in small time slots and find it difficult to schedule work sessions in advance. They may find it difficult to set up times to work orally and to work effectively while taking care of their toddlers. LAD representatives are willing to find whatever will work with Applicants, even when this involves taking detailed notes in order to provide documentation or working in another language.

Some respondents expressed a clear preference for working in writing, since the exchange of letters allows for reflection. LAD representatives have the time to give thoughtful responses, and both Applicants and LAD representatives can take the time that they need. Some, however, prefer working face-to-face when that is possible. Working in person at conferences or workshops can be a good option for those who have difficulty getting to the computer.

LAD representatives send a variety of materials to Leader Applicants and sponsoring Leaders at the start of an application. Some send all the documents an Applicant will need for the application to give her the opportunity to familiarise herself with the information and to decide for herself where to start. In some entities a package containing all documents is sent out by the Area. Some LAD representatives have developed guides to the application which contain all the essential items. Others describe the documents and provide links to them on entity Web sites. Some send a photo of themselves or their families and request one in return with the “About You” section of the personal history. Other documents sometimes sent with the first letter include a flowchart, a checklist for the Applicant to keep track of her own work, a copy of the LAD’s Childbirth and Breastfeeding booklet, Communications Skills Development information, and a reading checklist. Sponsoring Leaders also receive guides and links to documents on Web sites. Extensive use is made of the Leader Accreditation Department pages of the LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education (formerly EUS) Web site: http://www lleus.org/LAD.html

LAD representatives use a variety of exercises with Leader Applicants, depending on needs that become apparent through dialogue. LAD representatives make use of exercises on meeting situations, personal experience, and email consultations.

Common application exercises: (http://www.llleus.org/LAD/ACLA.html
username: LAD; password: LADis#1)
  * Acceptance
  * Community and Group Awareness
  * Helping Mothers
  * Listening
  * Mixing Causes
  * Telephone Helping

* Editor’s note: Forms may differ, depending on each LLL entity.

Respondents to the survey have been extremely busy representing the LAD at District Workshops, Leader Days, Area Conferences, and the LLL European Mastery Symposium (EMS). They write for Leader publications, including Leaven, and attend LAD meetings. Some LAD representatives work for Areas which are distant from where they live and would welcome more opportunities to do more for the Leaders and Applicants they support.

We asked LAD representatives which resources they find useful in their work. Many use LAD Resources, although respondents noted that it is in need of revision. (It has been adapted and partly revised by LAD Canada.) Extensive use is made of local entities’ Web sites, particularly the Alliance Web site (see above). LAD publications (LADers and LAD Lifeline) have proved to be useful resources. Some entities have created orientation materials, either in notebook or CD-ROM form. These contain the forms and standard letters LAD representatives need in their work. LAD representatives appreciate LADialogue and other Yahoo groups set up by their entities.
Suggestions have been made for the development of future resources. These include:

- Writing samples.
- Applicant reading lists.
- A Leader Applicant workbook.
- An article on loving guidance.
- Basic resource packet for Leader Applicants (already in use in some entities).
- An application syllabus: a respondent to our survey is experimenting with a Leader Applicant’s Resource Kit (LARK), which contains a chapter for each element of the application as well as an introduction and a chapter on the transition to leadership.
- Articles on separation.
- An outline of the application.
- An information sheet listing all electronic resources for Applicants and Leaders.
- “Modules” for Applicants, as proposed in the last issue of LAD Lifeline.
- Guidelines for LAD representatives on separation and weaning.
- Translations of Leaven.
- Videos for isolated Applicants who are unable to attend meetings. Videos could provide resources for helping situations.
- Clarification on the breastfeeding experience prerequisite “nursed for about a year.”

The following suggestions were made for revisions of existing materials:

- A revision of the Breastfeeding Resource Guide (BRG) combining older and newer versions to provide some direction and questions to help Applicants with their research.
- A new required and suggested reading list for the Leader’s Pre-Application Packet.
- LAD Resources.
- The Preview could be updated to include responding in different formats—phone, role-play, and email.
- The Leader’s Handbook (LH) and Checklist of Topics to discuss in Preparation for LLL Leadership. Since the LH is not a LAD publication, it has been suggested that we create a Leader Applicant’s Handbook which could be made available online. (Some Affiliates have already put their own versions of the LH online.)
- The Leader Recommendation form could be revised for better layout and clarification of the questions dealing with separation.
- More translations

LAD representatives are appreciative of the support they receive from the LAD support network. They value prompt attention, responsiveness to questions, and moral support during challenging times. LAD representatives feel supported and connected. Many expressed how much they enjoy working in the department. However, they need to be kept abreast of procedural changes and need support for pre-application dialogue and in interpreting guidelines on how experiences of separation and weaning meet the prerequisites.

Our survey can help us to prioritise our work for the future. LAD representatives are working in many languages, and there is a need for resources in languages other than English. Translations of existing resources are a priority, and we are in need of translators to work on this. Entities need to be encouraged to adapt existing resources for their needs, whether through translation or by focusing on local needs. A central bank of resources would help LAD representatives to do this, allowing them to take what they need and leave the rest. We need to work on revising some existing documents and creating new ones, and we need to make them readily available around the world.

Thank you once again for your participation in the survey.

Lesley Robinson lives with her husband, Mark, in Ottawa, Canada. Their three grown children, Kate (born 1985 and studying in Cape Town, South Africa), Alex (1987, going to graduate school in New York), and Will (1989, at University in Canada), have flown the nest. Lesley was accredited in 1987 and has been a LAD representative since 1991. She is currently Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA) for La Leche League Canada and C-DAM (CLA) for Ligue La Leche (French Canada).

2012 LLL European Management Symposium

Many LAD representatives miss the opportunity for a face-to-face international meeting, which we used to have every two years at LLLI Conferences. Perhaps we could consider getting together at the LLL European Management Symposium (EMS) scheduled for 22-25 March 2012 in Frankfurt, Germany. The EMS is for LLL administrators and Leaders who are interested in administrative positions. There will be a department day with some LAD sessions. Please mark these dates on your calendar.
Greetings from the LLLI Board of Directors Co-Chairs

Cindy Garrison and Sheri Parpia were selected as the new Co-Chairs of the LLLI Board of Directors at their meeting in March. Since both Cindy and Sheri are former LAD representatives, we would like to share with you some highlights of their La Leche League experiences. Below are their self-introductions.

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Cindy Garrison, Pennsylvania, USA

First, as at every La Leche League meeting, let me introduce my family. My husband, Dave, and I have three grown sons—Mike, Jeff, and Eric—all of whom were exclusively breastfed. Our sons have given us five grandsons—Ian, Aidan, Tyler, Andrew, and Xavier, and one granddaughter, Kristiana—all of whom were breastfed.

I was drawn to breastfeeding and La Leche League with my first child through The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding. The logical, commonsense approach of women helping women learn this unique skill made so much sense to me. I didn’t get to see it in action until pregnant with my second child, when I attended my first meeting. I knew there was something different here, and so I went back—again and again. I came to realize that what was different was that I wasn’t having to “do breastfeeding” by myself. These were women I could turn to and who could answer questions when my second child was not breastfeeding like my first—no real problems, just different. I didn’t have to defend my choice to breastfeed. They knew why I nursed and what I got back from it. It was relaxing and respectful.

Within a few months, the Leader was suggesting that I become a Leader, which introduced me to the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD). I can still remember eagerly looking forward to the letters from the LAD representative who worked with me during the application. Here was more of the woman-to-woman, mother-to-mother support that I had been attracted to in the first place, just at a new level of learning. Becoming a Leader gave me the chance to say “thank you” to LLL and give back to others who were finding their way with breastfeeding, providing that same mother-to-mother support that had made my journey with breastfeeding so much easier.

Several years later, after serving as a District Advisor and a District Coordinator, I was asked to be Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA). Here again was that woman-to-woman, mother-to-mother support that I valued as I went through my orientation to LAD work and the CLA position. My years with the LAD were very special to me as I held the positions of CLA, Regional Administrator (RA) supporting both Area Coordinators of Leaders (ACLs) and CLAs, Regional Administrator of Leader Accreditation (RALA), and Associate Director for Regional Administrators of Leader Accreditation (ADRALA). Continuing the woman-to-woman support with LAD representatives, as well as with administrators within the Area, Region, and Division, gave that kind of interaction new dimension. As the support moved from direct mother-to-mother to Leader-to-Leader, the insights and skills learned from the beginning were still important. The experience and knowledge gained from LAD work remained important during my years as Eastern United States Division Director.

In my new position with Sheri Parpia as Co-Chairs of the LLLI Board of Directors, I know the skills and understandings about how women respond to peer support, the importance of treating each person with respect and recognition that she knows her situation and the needs of those she supports and works with better than I do, and the love of LLL that has been with me for over 40 years will be some of the greatest strengths I can bring to the job. I have a new team to work with, but we share the same mission—to help other mothers breastfeed their babies.

Thank you for all that you bring to the LAD team as you work woman-to-woman, mother-to-mother with the next generation of La Leche League Leaders.
Jawed and I have been married almost 31 years and have three sons, aged 28, 26, and 17. Our families come from far away—my father is from Western India and my mother is from Oregon, USA. I was born and raised in South India, coming to Italy when I was 16. His family came to Italy when he was six. We met in Rome and have lived in different places in Italy since we were married. I "found" LLL a month before our first son was born, desperate for company in a small provincial northern Italian town with a husband who spent a lot of time travelling. Looking back, I'm pretty sure that the lack of well-meaning relatives was the reason I breastfed all my children with relatively little difficulty, though it did seem so natural at the time that I should!

I became a Leader a month before my second son was born. At that time there were very few Leaders in Italy, and there were so many jobs to do. For many years I worked in the Professional Liaison and Publications Departments (together), doing a variety of jobs including editing our members’ letter “Da mamma a mamma” for 12 years, never dreaming I’d be involved with LAD because the work all looked so difficult and so intangible. And yet, the day came when I was the only possible choice for Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA) in Italy and I accepted the challenge—with a little trepidation, but also eager for the chance to do something new. I became CLA just as Appendix 18 came into force and witnessed, rather uncomprehendingly, the unhappiness that resulted. To me it felt like a fantastic opportunity. Here were the extra guidelines I so needed to be able to work more clearly. My nine years as CLA were years of much learning for me, and great growth within LLL Italy. We started doing applications in email groups on Yahoo and were very encouraged by the results. Perhaps because it was so far from my "old" way of thinking and working, I believe I learned more in LAD than in any other department or job. This is where my interest in communication skills began. I believe LAD is the heart of LLL, the place where many wonderful things start.

I wish you all the best as you face new challenges, new lifestyles, new choices for women as they seek to meet the needs of their babies.

Jawed ed io siamo sposati da quasi 31 anni e abbiamo tre figli di 28, 26 e 17 anni. Le nostre famiglie vengono da lontano – mio padre viene dalla zona ovest dell’India e mia madre dall’Oregon. Io sono nata nel Sud dell’India, e sono venuta in Italia quando avevo sedici anni. La famiglia di mio marito viene originariamente dall’India del Nord e sono immigrati in Pakistan dove lui è nato. La sua famiglia è arrivata in Italia quando lui aveva sei anni. Noi ci siamo conosciuti a Roma e dopo il matrimonio abbiamo vissuto in diverse località, sempre in Italia. Ho “trovato” LLL un mese prima della nascita del nostro primo figlio, cercando disperatamente un po’ di compagnia in una piccola città provinciale nell’Italia del Nord, con un marito che viaggiava molto spesso per lavoro. E guardando indietro, sono abbastanza sicura che l’assenza di parenti benintenzionati è stato il motivo per cui ho allattato tutti i miei figli con relativamente pochi problemi, anche se mi sembrava così naturale che lo facesse!

Sono diventata Consulente un mese prima della nascita del mio secondo figlio. In quel momento avevamo pochissime Consulenti in Italia, e c’erano tantissimi lavori da fare. Per molti anni ho lavorato nei settori delle Pubblicazioni e PL (insieme), facendo una varietà di lavori compreso quello della redattrice di “Da mamma a mamma” per 12 anni, non immaginandomi mai che sarei stata coinvolta con LAD, perché tutto quel lavoro mi sembrava così difficile ed irraggiungibile. Eppure è arrivato il giorno in cui sono stata l’unica possibile scelta per diventare la Coordinatrice delle tirocinanti (CLA) per l’Italia e ho accettato la sfida, con un po’ di trepidazione, ma anche la voglia di fare una cosa nuova. Sono diventata CLA nel momento in cui è stata fatta l’Appendice 18, e ho testimoniato, con un po’ di incomprensione, la scontentezza che ne è risultata. A me sembrava un’opportunità fantastica. Ecco le line guida che servivano per lavorare con
LLL Philosophy in Our Hearts

LAD Council

The two concepts in this issue are key to our work as Leaders. By the time we apply for leadership, we have experienced mothering through breastfeeding and appreciate the natural and effective ways it meets baby’s needs. We have met the prerequisites for mothering experience, and it is helpful to reflect on how we learned that mother’s presence as well as her milk meets baby’s intense need in the early years. Reflecting on this knowledge helps us to be accepting of where new mothers are with their babies, as well as to offer them support and information to follow their own instincts to learn about and respond to their babies’ needs. Dialogue with LAD representatives and practice with their recommending Leaders enable Applicants to find the words for expressing LLL philosophy to others with sensitivity and mutual joy. We hope you find some useful passages in the following examples.

In the early years

Mothers sometimes appreciate the affirmation that babies are a long-term investment of our physical and emotional reserves. If a mother is feeling very stressed, it can help to remember that this time with her very young children will be over before she knows it. There will be time enough later to tackle other projects or improve housekeeping. My daughter is 19, and it still seems like yesterday I held her on my lap. She still needs me, just in different ways.

* English translation follows.

Nous savons que le petit humain nait très dépendant : il ne peut ni se nourrir, ni se déplacer seul par exemple. Quoi de plus naturel que de voir ses besoins comblés par sa mère ! Et pourtant, il n’est pas toujours compris par la société (et par les mères elles-mêmes) que le bébé a tant besoin de sa mère. En réunion, quand nous discutons de « vivre avec un bébé allaité », nous pouvons inviter les mamans à réfléchir à tout ce qu’elles peuvent faire avec leur bébé avec elle. Parfois, ce seront des choses que jamais elles n’auraient envisagé de faire avec un bébé (aller au cinéma, dîner au restaurant, aller à une fête, aller chez le coiffeur, faire du vélo…)

We know that the human infant is born very dependent. For example, he cannot feed himself nor get around on his own. What could be more natural than to have his needs met by his mother? Nevertheless, society, or even mothers themselves don’t necessarily understand that a baby has such a strong need for his mother. At a Series Meeting when we talk about life with a breastfed baby, we can encourage mothers to think about everything they can do together with their babies. Sometimes there’ll be things suggested that they might never have considered doing with a baby (going to the movies, going out to dinner, going to a party, to the hairdresser, or going for a bike ride…).

Sometimes a mother is not able to avoid extended separation and grieves deeply over the time she and her baby are apart. A Leader can be a warm support to her for brainstorming possible options and valuing the time they are able to have together. Sometimes a mother may be able to negotiate working some from home, or may be able to find childcare near her workplace so that she can go each day at lunch or on breaks to nurse. This can be a big help toward breaking up the hours of separation and maintaining her milk supply long-term. There is no pump quite like baby himself.
You discovered that your need to be with your daughters was as intense as their need to be with you. Thus, despite loving your work, you decided to wait many months before returning to work, and then chose to work only a half-day once a week. As your daughters grow, you are letting them decide when they are ready to separate, for example, when they want to stay overnight at grandma’s.

After returning to work, you found that your children needed you even more at night, increasing their night feedings. Having your babies in bed helped them reconnect with you. Once you returned to work, you tried to minimize any other separations and considered only brief overnight separations after they both had night-weaned. Your statement that “increasing breaks between feedings did not mean readiness for longer times of separation” was insightful. It acknowledges that a baby’s intense need for his mother can be greater than his need to breastfeed.

Grace’s need for you has been so strong and intense that it has forced you to rethink your plans to return to work. As you write, she “is a force of nature” and even at 15 months was not ready to be separated from you. Grace made her needs known. There was no doubt what she wanted and needed. Not all babies are this demonstrative in their needs; many will accept separations for long periods of time. If you had a baby who was less “vocal” about her needs, how would you determine if the separation was affecting her?

Mary taught you that her intense need to be with you was as important as her need for food. Her refusal to take bottles reinforced your natural instincts that “rubber and plastic could never be a substitute for her mama.” Even though you felt pressured to leave Mary with your mother-in-law overnight or for many hours during the day, you realized that you and Mary needed each other, and not just because you were breastfeeding. As you write, “There was no real reason to be separated from her.” As she grew older and could handle separations better, you let her go to grandma’s house for several hours at a time. Even these separations were difficult, so you decided to limit long visits with grandma. How clever to give the simple answer, “I just don’t have enough milk.”

Some mothers need to return to work for financial reasons; others to maintain their professional careers. As you found out, it can be difficult balancing work and family life. As a Leader, what would you say to a mother who has decided to return to work full-time but is worried about how her baby will handle the separation and whether she will be able to pump enough milk for her baby?

There are many reasons that a mother would take on paid work. We know that in life not everything is ideal and optimal. It is important that an LLL Leader agrees with and represents all of LLL philosophy statements, or concepts. This concept relates to the needs of the baby which are more than just the need for breast milk. Some babies are better able to cope than others with separations from their mothers. A working mother can take steps to mitigate the effects of separation, such as allowing time for a lengthy breastfeed when reunited, sleeping with her baby, and not taking on a whole lot of baby-free activities after work.

* English translation follows.
There is so much pressure on mothers to leave their children. In fact, the amount of time that they need you so intensely is so short in the scheme of things, and one day, you'll look back and wonder how the time went so fast. LLL believes that in the early years, a baby has an intense need to be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food. Many people might tell the mother that she is making her children too dependent on her. When the children are much older, the mother can see what a great investment it was to meet their needs when they were young. They have grown into independent and compassionate young adults, and the mother is proud of all of them. A child who knows that his needs are always met, knows that he is important. He has confidence in those who love him and learns to have confidence in himself.

**Mothering through breastfeeding**

Yes, “mothering through breastfeeding” is a “shortcut” to meeting a baby’s needs. As you write: It made it easier to “understand my children’s needs and desires”; it set the tone for a “relaxed and loving relationship”; it was a “fallback” option when nothing else seemed to work; it helped you follow your mothering instincts. Breastfeeding helped you realize that your babies needed you even more than your milk.

You sum up the practical aspect of the concept on mothering through breastfeeding succinctly: You never wondered what was needed. You looked to your baby, not the clock, to know his needs for you. You touch on another aspect of mothering through breastfeeding—how each child is different. Mothering through breastfeeding helped you to gain confidence in your ability to know that each baby is an individual, and to meet his or her emotional and physical needs.

Being able to nurture Nico at breast has been a wonderful experience for both of you. It has made nighttime parenting easier and has helped comfort Nico when he’s been upset or fussy. You are lucky that Nico is a baby who enjoys sucking at breast for comfort. This has probably made it easier to keep producing milk and to meet his needs. Some babies only like to stay at breast as long as the milk is flowing—“eat and run” babies. Despite the challenges you have had with your milk supply, it sounds like breastfeeding Nico has made mothering easier for you.

You see breastfeeding as an aid to problem solving. Since a newborn can’t talk, it helps to have a tool such as breastfeeding which meets many of baby’s needs and usually calms baby enough so mother can assess the situation. This is a unique way of looking at breastfeeding; yet it so accurately describes what many mothers experience. You also found that “spending hours nursing him allowed me to learn who my baby was.” How true! The time commitment and intimacy of nursing helped you become aware of each daughter’s changes as she grew and matured. I sense how exciting this was for you—being so intimately involved in each daughter’s growth and development.

*English translation follows.*

Eine unserer Aufgaben besteht darin, denn Mütter aufzuzeigen, was sie durchs Stillen und Kinder betreuen alles Leisten und sie dafür zu loben. Ich denke auch, Frauen, die keine Nähe erfahren haben, bekommen oft Mühe damit, dem Kind die Nähe zu geben, die es eigentlich braucht, was sich dann über mehrere Generationen fortsetzen kann. Auch Frauen, die Mütze haben, ihren Körper anzunehmen (z. B. grosse Brüste) können Schwierigkeiten haben beim Stillen.

It is part of our role to demonstrate to mothers how much they actually achieve through breastfeeding and caring for their children and to affirm them for that. I think that some mothers who have not experienced much affection as children can often struggle to give their children the affection they need. This can affect several generations. I also think that mothers who have negative feelings about their own bodies, for example
some with large breasts, may have problems with breastfeeding.

I love the quote from Dr. Grantly Dick-Read in the first chapter of The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding: “The newborn baby has only three demands. They are warmth in the arms of its mother, food from her breasts, and security in the knowledge of her presence. Breastfeeding satisfies all three.”

It always puzzled me when I read about learning to recognize your baby’s different cries. I think this belief probably stems from a bottle-feeding culture—there is no need for a breastfeeding mother to differentiate between cries. A mother who is using formula needs to tell the difference because she might be tempted to overfeed her baby, which could be dangerous. A breastfed baby cannot be overfed. It was my experience that whenever the baby cried, putting the baby to the breast always provided the answer to whatever she was trying to communicate. It seemed to me that there weren’t different cries with different meanings. Every cry meant: I need you—pick me up and nurse me.

For some mothers nursing means “feeding.” Mothers may use the words “I am feeding my baby” or “I am nursing my baby” interchangeably. Perhaps for them it’s just a matter of finding the right words, or perhaps they see putting the baby to the breast simply as feeding. Breastfeeding, according to LLL, is a way of mothering the baby. So much more than giving milk, breastfeeding gives the baby everything he needs (warmth, food, comfort, attention...). Mothering through breastfeeding has no timetable. There’s no milk to measure and there are no worries about the baby’s crying. The breast is the answer to whatever he needs. As a baby grows and begins to learn about the world, his mother’s attitude evolves, so she can continue to meet his changing needs. Once any initial difficulties have been overcome, it’s so easy to take care of a breastfed baby. A mother has all she needs to respond to his needs.

Thanks to the many dedicated LAD representatives who have shared extracts from their letters and provided translations for us. The final instalment of “LLL Philosophy in Our Hearts” will be in LADders 2011-3, No. 6. Please send by 5 August 2011 your favourite dialogue extracts with reference to the following two concepts to the LADders staff at: LADdersmail@gmail.com

**Childbirth**
Alert and active participation by the mother in childbirth is a help in getting breastfeeding off to a good start.

**Early and often**
Mother and baby need to be together early and often to establish a satisfying relationship and an adequate milk supply.
Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) recruitment can be a serious venture. When we accredit new Leaders, we hope they will represent LLL for many years. The number of mothers and babies who can be helped by these Leaders is nothing less than astounding! It is therefore valid to take seriously our responsibility to appoint and orient Associate Coordinators of Leader Accreditation (ACLAs) who will guide Applicants in thorough and helpful ways—ACLAs who will help Applicants prepare to do the work of a Leader with confidence and pleasure. LAD representatives are dedicated to the future of LLL.

That said, how can we interest Leaders in LAD work if the job description comes across as somber and heavy? Some humor and a sense of fun can entice Leaders to take a second look at this work. At a recent Area Conference, the ACLA position was listed on a poster along with other open Area jobs. Leaders at a conference have a lot on their minds, and it can be easy to walk right by such a poster. As an attention-grabber, I made a “flat ACLA.” This was an almost life-size paper doll. I cut her head and torso out of one piece, and made jointed arms and legs. Separate pieces hooked together with wide tape at the joints so she could sit down. I made her out of foam-backed poster board, since I was traveling by car and had room to tote her. If flying to a conference, you might want to make a “flat ACLA” out of thinner poster board in a size that would fold up to fit into a suitcase. Her hair was made of yarn, her face painted on. She wore an old tee-shirt of mine, and I sewed some simple cloth pants that fit her. She wore a real name tag, hanging on a beaded ribbon around her neck. The tag said, “Your Name, ACLA.”

The “flat ACLA” spent most of her time sitting on a table by the job poster, but she also took turns sitting at various tables during sessions. I can’t say for sure if she made the difference, but after “searching” for an ACLA for a long time with no success, I was contacted right after the conference by an interested Leader who is now an ACLA—hooray!

Karin Gausman has been a Leader for 36 years and is currently Regional Administrator of Leader Accreditation for the Mountain East Region of LLL Alliance for Breastfeeding Education. Karin lives in Loveland, Colorado, USA, with her husband, Jim. They have three grown children and four grandchildren.

GOOD IDEAS

**Preview:** Discussing “Group Dynamics” situations first

Applicants who use role-play for their Preview are enthusiastic about its effectiveness in helping them prepare for those first calls from mothers. However, some Applicants are a little unsure about using role-play. One Group decided to discuss the Group Dynamics situations first, which allowed the Applicant to “warm up” with a familiar format. When they moved on to role-play, the Applicant was more relaxed. They role-played in person, answered one question by phone, and used email for one question.

**Organizational tip: One thing at a time**

Each day, accomplish one or two tasks that you have been putting off. If you know that you will only have to do one of the things on your pending list and will be free afterward for that day, you are more likely to go ahead and address it. Before you know it, your “pending” work is done. Whenever you find your work piling up, including both LAD and personal things, try this method for a while and smile afterwards!
How Would You Respond?

Here is an extract from a letter from a Leader Applicant, written to her LAD representative during her application. There is no single right answer. Sharing our own possible approaches can help us to consider a variety of ways to respond.

The experiences I have with other people breastfeeding influence me and the way I feel about it. A few days ago I spoke to a friend of mine who has a ten-week-old baby and learned that she had finally given up breastfeeding. I feel so sad and disappointed and somehow guilty. I know it is not my fault and I know that she should do what is the right thing for her—there is no point having a breastfed baby if the mother is permanently resentful and exhausted, surely? I have managed to tell my husband how I feel about this situation, but I can’t help wondering: “If I have failed to help one of my best friends enough to support her through this difficult time, what hope do I have of helping women whom I don’t know personally?”

*Linda Wieser, ACLA, Michigan, USA*

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It can be discouraging when a mother we are supporting chooses to discontinue breastfeeding. As you noted, we may feel sad, disappointed, or guilty. If that mother is a friend, our feelings may be even stronger—and the mother’s feelings may be magnified as well.

Your friend probably appreciates the opportunity to share her own feelings about her decision. Of course, when the mother weaning her young baby is someone we don’t know, it can be easier for us to put her decision into perspective and to continue to support her. You may find the article “Helping Relatives Breastfeed” relevant to your own situation. I will be quite interested to read your thoughts on it. [http://www.llli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvjulaug89p51.html](http://www.llli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvjulaug89p51.html)

You may be asking yourself, “What could I say to a mother who weans her young baby? How can I support her in her decision and at the same time remain true to my belief in the importance of breastfeeding?” The Leader’s Handbook addresses this question on page 15 in the section “Personal Reaction to Helping Situations” in the chapter on Mother-to-Mother Help. Which responses seem most helpful to you? This is a good opportunity to practice responses in advance, so that you will have them ready when you are faced with such a situation as a Leader.

You may also be reexamining your own feelings about the importance of breastfeeding. Two concept statements speak directly to this idea:

“Mothering through breastfeeding is the most natural and effective way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby” and “Breast milk is the superior infant food.”
It seems as if experiences like these make you feel ambivalent. When you encounter this kind of situation, what do you think might help you reaffirm your beliefs?

Ilana Sobel, CLA, Israel

*New Extract*

How would you respond to the following new extract? Send your suggested reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Eleanor Becker at: ellleanorbecker@gmail.com

I am a doula, so I have plenty of experience and exposure to new mothers. Being a doula, I have access to and an interest in the wealth of new information regarding the health of babies and mothers. In addition I have the experience of breastfeeding my own children. I feel strongly about many issues related to mother and baby health and I can provide information with confidence, even on things that go beyond breastfeeding. I look forward to bringing information to mothers on behalf of LLL.

*A Taste of LAD International*

In this second issue for 2011, we have the pleasure of meeting two LAD representatives living in North America. Please write and share your stories while introducing yourselves and the LAD work you enjoy, including challenges. Contributions may be sent to LADdersmail@gmail.com by 7 August 2011, for the next issue.

Nadia Plante, A-DAM (ACLA), Ligue La Leche (French Canada)

Bonjour! Je me nomme Nadia Plante et je suis monitrice de la Ligue La Leche au Québec depuis cinq ans et au DAM depuis maintenant un an.

J’habite la Rive-Sud de Montréal avec mon conjoint Yannick et nos cinq enfants, Danny 14 ans, Ariane 12 ans, Jeanne 8 ans, Édouard 6 ans et Léonard 3 ans, tous allaités et maternés avec beaucoup d’amour.

Hello! My name is Nadia Plante and I have been a Leader with Ligue La Leche in Quebec for five years and I have been working in the LAD for a year now.

I live in the south bank area of Montreal with my husband, Yannick, and our five children, Danny (14), Ariane (12), Jeanne (8), Édouard (6), and Léonard (3), all breastfed and mothered with much love.

Lisa Andersen, ACLA of Minnesota and the Dakotas, USA

My name is Lisa Andersen and I have just retired as the CLA of Minnesota and the Dakotas (MN/DAs) in the U.S. I had held that position for six years and was an ACLA before that. These past several years have been a tumultuous time in MN/DAs as they have been for the rest of the LLL world. One side effect of the changes and upheavals has been the difficulty of finding new Area Council members. That is why I stayed in the CLA position for so long.

I live in Eden Prairie, Minnesota—a suburb of Minneapolis. I am originally from New York. I moved to Minnesota from New Hampshire, USA, where I attended college, to work as a theatre stage manager (my pre-children career). My husband, Andreas, and I have five children. Angelica is 19 and going to college in Arizona, USA. Max is 18 and attending college in New Hampshire. Our youngest three children are still at home with us: Haley is 16, Sebastian is 12, and Julianna is 9.

I like to garden and travel with my family. We also enjoy watching movies together and playing all sorts of board games and card games. I love to read and I belong to a book club. My children all play soccer in the spring and fall. Just last year, I took on an additional volunteer job as the Assistant Referee Coordinator for our local recreational soccer league. I schedule over 100 referees to cover games held seven days a week at three different locations. Luckily, the soccer season is short!

I co-lead an LLL Group in Eden Prairie, one that I helped to establish over ten years ago. I also worked for a time as an ACLA-at-Large for LLL France and Future Areas in Europe. I love LAD’s international feeling and scope. I have met many wonderful women and mentors through my LAD work, and I hope to continue as an ACLA for as long as I remain a Leader.

* * *
LAD Promenade

Congratulations on your appointment!

Lisa Andersen  ACLA, Minnesota and the Dakotas, USA
Michelle Burgroff  CLA, Sunshine State, Florida, USA
Leah Dodds  ACLA, Colorado/Wyoming, USA
Sharon Fairborn  ACLA, Southern California/Nevada, USA
Anne Ferguson  CLA, Minnesota and the Dakotas, USA
Ariel Hulvey  ACLA, Maryland/Delaware/Washington, D.C., USA
Ineke Leiter  CLA, Germany
Anne Meis  ACLA, Nebraska, USA
Rahel Oberholzer  CLA, Switzerland
Kristina Pasquale  ACLA, Pennsylvania East, USA
Batya Van Nostrand  ACLA, Raritan Valley, New Jersey, USA
Tammy Veatch  ACLA, Colorado/Wyoming, USA
Jen Velasquez  ACLA, Colorado/Wyoming, USA
Nancy White  ACLA, Alabama/Mississippi/Louisiana, USA
Lisa Wilson  ACLA, British Columbia/Yukon, Canada

It is a pleasure getting to know LAD representatives through your self-introductions in LADders. Although we have many differences, including language, culture, and nationality, we are united by our commitment to La Leche League philosophy and our desire to share its concepts with mothers throughout the world.

Thank you to those who have shared your stories. We invite others to introduce yourselves as well!

LAD Council

LADders is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives, designed to offer LAD representatives a place to share information and experiences. © LAD Council