

## Personal History of Breastfeeding and Mothering

This is the personal history correspondence with the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD). Use it in the manner that suits you best. Please keep copies of your writing; emails and postal mail are occasionally lost.

The personal history consists of two parts: “**About You**” and “**LLL Philosophy.**”

### **About You**

Motivation is an essential element in the work of a La Leche League (LLL) Leader. What inspired your desire to become an LLL Leader? What would you like to accomplish as a Leader? LLL leadership involves work at home and time away, so it is important to talk to your family about your goals. Please write about any of your interests, hobbies, other volunteer activities, and education/employment experiences. Feel free to send your “About You” writing to your corresponding LAD representative as a self-introduction.

### **LLL Philosophy**

Our personal philosophy guides our choices. What we do as mothers and parents strengthens or changes what we believe; thus there is continual interaction between our ways of thinking and acting. As a Leader, you will represent LLL. Your example is critical to how others see the organization. Your experiences will become part of your resources for helping others.

Suggestions for writing your personal history:

- Write about each concept separately or two concepts that fit together.
- Start with any concept. They can be done in any order.
- Send your writing about each concept one at a time, a few together, or all at once.

When writing about a concept, please explain how your childbirth, breastfeeding and mothering have, or have not, reflected La Leche League philosophy.

- Give examples of the choices you have made.
- Describe what each concept means to you by relating it to your experience. For example:
  - How did you come to see the concept as part of your personal philosophy?
  - What choices have you made because of your beliefs?
  - How have your current ideas been influenced by your choices?
  - How might you present the concepts to others (for example, at Series Meetings) while showing respect for different beliefs and choices?

On the next page is a list of the LLL concept statements with questions to suggest information you might include. Please use the questions as guides only. You are unique, and your experience is both similar to and different from that of other people. Be sure to include information you think will help the LAD to understand you, your experiences, and your ideas.

Writing this personal history offers you an opportunity to reflect on your experiences and clarify your beliefs and goals related to LLL leadership. Your LAD representative will respond to your writing about each concept, matching your ideas and experience to the criteria for accreditation. The LAD representative may request additional information to clarify something you have written. The goal of this dialogue is to help you develop the understanding, skills, and information base you will need as an LLL Leader.

## **LLL Philosophy: The ten concept statements with sample questions**

**Mothering through breastfeeding is the most natural and effective way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby.**

Describe how breastfeeding has helped you to understand and meet your baby's needs. How have you handled nighttime nursing? How did you manage when your baby cried or had a "fussy" time? Please describe any experience with artificial nipples.

**Human milk is the natural food for babies, uniquely meeting their changing needs.**

What qualities of your milk have been important for you and your family? How would you describe the importance of human milk?

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

Briefly tell about your birth experience and first feedings. How do you think these contributed to the initiation of breastfeeding and the attachment you and your baby feel?

**Mother and baby need to be together early and often to establish a satisfying breastfeeding relationship and reliable milk production.**

Describe the transition between birth and breastfeeding. Did you have any difficulties in the early weeks? If so, how did you overcome them?

**Breastfeeding is enhanced by the loving support of the baby's father, a co-parent, a partner, and/or close family members who value the breastfeeding relationship.**

How is the role of the baby's father or your partner viewed in your family? What kind of support was helpful to you?

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

How has your baby shown you that he needs you as well as your milk? Describe how you meet your baby's or toddler's need to be with you.

**For the healthy, full-term baby, human milk is the only food necessary until the baby shows signs of readiness for complementary foods, about the middle of the first year after birth.**

When and how did you introduce complementary foods and a cup? What signs of readiness did you look for? If you have used bottles, please describe when and how.

**Good nutrition means eating a well-balanced and varied diet of foods in as close to their natural state as possible.**

How have you incorporated principles of good nutrition into your baby's and family's diet?

**Ideally the breastfeeding relationship will continue until the child outgrows the need.**

What are your thoughts about when and how weaning proceeds? If it's part of your experience, describe your baby's weaning.

**From infancy on, children need loving guidance, which reflects acceptance of their capabilities and sensitivity to their feelings.**

Describe how you practice loving guidance. How do you handle "rough" times? What are your favorite resources on this topic?