



Thoughts on Becoming an LLL Leader and IBCLC

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a La Leche League (LLL) Leader. You have also indicated you would like to become an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). As you consider your goals, please take the following information about LLL leadership into consideration.

Those interested in LLL leadership are eager to provide volunteer, peer breastfeeding support to anyone who is pregnant or breastfeeding. They value their own breastfeeding experiences and model LLL philosophy. As an international organization, LLL has standards for Leader accreditation that are the same worldwide. All Leaders are expected to meet the LLL Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership and to value and model the organization's philosophy in their own lives.

The two roles, LLL Leader and IBCLC, are different and often complement each other. Leaders, who are also IBCLCs, recognize the responsibilities of each job and work to keep the roles separate. It is important that LLL Leaders avoid "mixing causes." For example, Leaders cannot recruit clients for their lactation consultant practices at La Leche League meetings or when contacted with a question or concern. This restriction can be especially challenging for Leaders who live in communities where they may be the only LLL Leader and the only IBCLC. (See LLL Policy: [Code of Conduct](#) 1.3.) For more information, please contact the representative of the Leader Accreditation Department with whom you are communicating.

La Leche League Leader	International Board Certified Lactation Consultant
Is a breastfeeding mother or nursing parent	Is a healthcare professional (may or may not have children)
Has personal breastfeeding experience (Has breastfed for at least one year)	May or may not have personal breastfeeding experience
Is a volunteer	Is paid for professional services
Provides mother-to-mother, peer-to-peer support	Provides clinical lactation consultations
Focuses on the normal course of breastfeeding	Focuses on breastfeeding challenges
Values and models LLL philosophy and acts in accordance with the <i>LLL Policies and Standing Rules</i>	Follows Code of Professional Conduct
Uses <i>The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding</i> as a primary resource	Uses resources designed for healthcare professionals
Has a support network within the organization	Works alone in a private practice or as part of a healthcare team

During the application period, Leader Applicants learn the skills needed for their role as an accredited LLL Leader through reading, reflection on their personal experiences, dialogue about LLL philosophy, observation at LLL meetings, attendance at LLL workshops (if available), and discussion with other Leaders about Leader responsibilities. They explore LLL philosophy, research common breastfeeding topics, learn effective communication skills, and practice ways to address helping questions and challenging group situations. Applications move at the pace decided by the Applicant; there is no set time frame in which to complete an application. Many Applicants are accredited within six months to a year.

Being an LLL Leader can be a route to meeting the contact hour requirement to sit the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) exam. La Leche League International (LLLI) played an important role in the development of the standards and qualifications of the profession. From the beginning, Leader training and breastfeeding experience were acknowledged as accepted components of qualification. For the requirements to take the IBLCE exam, review the information at iblce.org.

Volunteering with La Leche League may help Leaders work toward their personal or professional goals. It is also important to keep in mind that the primary reason most Leaders seek LLL accreditation is to provide mother-to-mother, parent-to-parent support as peer volunteers. LLL provides a different service than midwives, doulas or IBCLCs. It is a distinct and complementary role to these healthcare professions. Leaders recognize and value LLL's unique, mother-to-mother, peer-to-peer style of breastfeeding support.

Please think about the following questions and discuss them with a member of the Leader Accreditation Department.

- Why do you want to become an LLL Leader? Is it primarily as a path to becoming an IBCLC? Would you still pursue leadership if it didn't meet one of the IBLCE pathways?
- What is your understanding of the work involved in becoming an LLL Leader, and the ongoing volunteer commitment of Leaders?
- Do you plan to continue working as an LLL Leader once you earn your IBLCE certification?
- How do you see the two roles fitting together in your life? How do you plan to keep them distinct?