**LADders**

LADders is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives. Its purpose is to help LAD representatives do their jobs with confidence and pleasure by offering a place to share information and experiences.

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Global Leadership Summit and LAD Council Meetings

LAD Council International

The LAD Council was privileged to be invited to participate in the Global Leadership Summit (GLS), held on October 13 and 14, 2018 in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA. Members of LAD Council met with the representatives of the various Direct Connect Entities (DCEs) and members of the LLLI Board of Directors (Board) to discuss the important issues of the organization and how it functions, where we are as an organization and where we want to be.

One of the aspects of the meeting related to the LAD directly. The LLLI Board has been reviewing the policies, which have long been in need of updating. They recognized that the LAD had often sought guidance on the issue of separation of mother from baby and how that aligned with the concept related to the baby’s need for his mother. The LLLI Board also recognized that the parameters that LAD had been using were not reflective of how the LLLI Board was interpreting policies related to application for leadership and accreditation. Prior to the meeting, the LAD Council and the LLLI Board met in a conference call so that the LAD could hear of the Board’s conclusions. The LLLI Board shared that the focus during dialogue on the mother’s experience and how it reflects the concepts should be on the relationship the mother has with her baby. They felt that if a mother was still breastfeeding her baby at 12 months of age, that was a clear indication of a strong relationship between mother and baby.

This was reiterated for the DCEs in a phone call prior to the GLS and addressed again during the meeting. The LAD pointed out that this interpretation impacted policy, particularly Appendices 17 and 18, and offered to help with those revisions. The LAD Council also asked for clarification on whether the time frame of “breastfeeding at 12 months” would also apply to the age of baby at application as well as accreditation.

Following the GLS, the LAD Council stayed for an additional day, with most of the conversation focusing on this change and how to address it with applications. This represents a major shift in interpretation of LLL philosophy. We had a joint meeting with the LLLI Board for an hour. The LAD Council members spent the whole morning of the LAD Council meeting discussing what to report and ask when we met the Board members. Two LAD Council members shared our statements voicing our concerns as well as suggestions on the importance of making the changes to the appendices come concurrently with the announcement to all Leaders.

The LAD also suggested that a change of language to be more gender neutral, which had also been discussed, should be handled carefully and perhaps it should occur after the policy revisions to limit the reactions that too many changes at once might encourage. The LLLI Board accepted the LAD’s offer to assist in designing the FAQ document and reviewing the draft Appendices 17 and 18. Although the original agenda for the LAD Council meeting had to be amended greatly and suddenly, it was meaningful to talk with the LLLI Board.

In the afternoon we discussed upcoming articles for Leader Today and LADders, reports from Affiliate ALAs, reviewing the appeal process, and the LAD Video Project. At the end of the afternoon we organized a conference call with two absentees and shared what we learned in Raleigh.

In response to the meeting with the LLLI Board, the LAD Council worked diligently after the meeting and submitted our suggested revisions for both the appendices and the FAQ documents by October 17, well before the next electronic LLLI Board meeting. The LLLI Board has since shared with the LAD that “continuing to have a breastfeeding relationship at 12 months” will be the expectation for applying for leadership as well as for accreditation.

The LAD Council encourages LAD representatives to contact their LAD support person with questions and to write to the LLLI Board board@llli.org to share their thoughts and ask additional questions on this change in policy.
Customising Application Work for Individuals
Lesley Robinson, CLA, Ottawa, Canada

We hope to accredit as diverse a body of Leaders as possible. This diversity includes a variety of interests, talents, skills, cultural backgrounds, family needs, commitments and personalities. We want each unique Leader Applicant to “design” a personal application plan, but what exactly do we mean by this and how do we go about helping it to happen?

“Designing” the application

We acknowledge the great variety of learning styles, experiences and preferences among Applicants. When it comes to an application for leadership, we cannot say that one size fits all. In addition, the needs of an Applicant can vary according to location—isolated Applicants will need specific information in preparation for leadership, since they are unable to watch a Leader in action and to work with a Leader who has experience of leading in the local community. Isolated Applicants need to get to know LLL well during the application, so that they can confidently represent the organisation after accreditation. Isolated Applicants may become lone Leaders in their countries and may not be able to correspond with a LAD representative who speaks their native language.

Some Applicants love to write; some may even have professional experience of writing or presenting reports and papers. Others prefer to present their work in person, perhaps through a face-to-face dialogue or on the telephone. Some Applicants are most comfortable corresponding through social media. Any of these channels can work well for completing application work.

There can be great variation in Applicants’ expectations of and plans for the application. Some hope for clear guidelines and step-by-step instructions for completing each sequential stage of the application. Others prefer to work independently, deciding for themselves where to start. They may want to receive information about each stage of the application as they go along—receiving everything at once might seem overwhelming to some. Other Applicants would prefer to have everything at the outset, so they can see the big picture and can more easily decide where to start.

How to help

Given all these variations in expectations and preferences, it is the LAD representative’s task to encourage Applicants to find what works for them, so that they can work steadily towards accreditation, find satisfaction in accomplishing application work and feel well prepared for leadership.

From our experience, we may know what seems to work well for a majority of the Applicants with whom we work. We know what approaches we have found to be generally helpful and we may use those approaches as our “default” pathway. However, there is no such thing as the “average” Applicant and we may be unsure how to proceed with any individual new Applicant. We have a limited amount of information to go on from the application form and the Leader’s recommendation. How can we give Applicants what they need when we don’t know them?
Ironically it may be easier when working with an isolated Applicant—we begin with a lengthy pre-application dialogue, which tells us a lot about the Applicant’s background, experiences and attitudes. In fact, when you are working with an isolated Applicant you have already embarked on some of the work of the application—part of the pre-application discussions can serve as a basis for the personal history and can form a starting point for the application once it becomes official. You will already have established a way of working, whether by telephone conversations, emails or online calls and you’ll know from the Applicant’s responses what approaches are proving effective.

You will have less information when you are beginning “cold” from an application form and Leader’s recommendation. Take note of whether the supporting Leader has worked with Applicants in the past. The Leader’s own familiarity with helping Applicants to prepare for leadership can be helpful to a new Applicant. Whatever the Leader’s past experience, it will be important to correspond regularly with the Leader as well as with the Applicant. Engage the supporting Leader in helping the Applicant to make a plan for accomplishing the work of the application. The Applicant’s own plan will be a helpful basis for customising the work that is to come.

What do you include in your first letter to Applicants? It may depend on how well you know them at the outset. Some LAD representatives choose to make their first letter a simple letter of welcome to the application, so that the Applicant is not immediately overwhelmed with a lot of information. You may choose to ask when a new Applicant would like to receive more information about the work of the application. Most are eager to get started, so they may request more immediately. It can also be difficult for them to know when they would like to receive individual assignments when they haven’t yet seen any of them. Another approach would be to send an overview of the application, explaining its elements and making some suggestions of where to start. This would be helpful to those who need to see the big picture and to those who are looking for specific guidance for what to do next.

Keep options open throughout the application—for example, if you have questions about one concept of philosophy, offer the Applicant the choice of whether to respond straight away or to wait until all the concepts have been covered. Your questions might distract the Applicant from the work currently underway. Continue to make a variety of suggestions, leaving the Applicant free to decide what to do next and how to complete each section of the application.

Continuous communication can be a key to effective customisation. Ask the Applicant frequently how it is going and ask what you can do to help. When progress is slow or when there is a period of inactivity, step up the communication, be sensitive to what is going on in the Applicant’s life and make suggestions if appropriate. Remember that the Applicant is in charge of the pace of the application. Respect the Applicant’s choices and remember that there is not one right way to complete the work of the application or a specific length of time that it should take. Allowing the Applicant to take charge, whilst being available to answer questions at any time leads to a satisfying path to accreditation and a confident new Leader.
Organizzare un seminario Lad è una bellissima opportunità. Il gruppo Lad si attiva, comincia a desiderare e a immaginare l'evento. Lo scambio tra Consulenti del Lad è sempre molto arricchente, perché offre l'opportunità a tutte di trovare la dimensione giusta di impegno.

Ci si conosce, ci si confronta, ci si affilia, ci si sostiene, affinché l'opportunità possa essere vissuta da tutte in modo positivo.

Quando penso a LLLItalia durante i nostri seminari di Area mi viene sempre in mente l'immagine un alveare operoso e gioioso... i seminari Lad ne sono una riproduzione più piccola e familiare, con la possibilità di curare ancora di più le relazioni, trovare il tempo per scamibiere parole con tutte, guardarsi negli occhi, condividere...

I nostri seminari Lad sono alla terza edizione consecutiva e hanno trovato una loro dimensione ben consolidata. Come facciamo con le mamme che partecipano agli incontri, vengono curati tutti i particolari, le Tirocinanti vengono accolte, ascoltate, nutrita (non solo grazie allo spazio merende ricco, ma anche nella formazione), coccolate e messe al centro. Tutto è pensato e realizzato apposta per loro.

Alcune Tirocinanti hanno partecipato con la loro Consulente di Riferimento, vivendo una occasione ricca di stimoli e spunti per il percorso di Tirocinio. Molte sono intervenute con i loro bambini e i compagni, desiderose di condividere il percorso e respirare con la loro famiglia l'aria LLL.

L'emozione è sempre tanta, quella delle occasioni particolari, ma il clima sereno, positivo e accogliente consente il fluire delle emozioni che sono la vita e la bellezza di condividere un cammino di crescita.

In apertura abbiamo proposto un semplice gioco di conoscenza, presentando un grande albero disegnato su un cartellone, completo di radici, una folta chioma, un tronco forte e stabile. Ad ogni Consulente e Tirocinante presente, abbiamo chiesto di presentarsi evidenziando dove avrebbe posto il suo nido, la sua tana, dove sentirsi al sicuro e poter stare bene. Ognuna di noi ha così preparato un cartoncino con il proprio nome e lo ha poi posizionato spiegando al gruppo il perché della sua scelta. Dopo aver concluso il giro delle presentazioni, ho voluto fare qualche accenno per spiegare che l'albero ha una sua unità vitale che è rappresentata però da tutte le sue parti e da tutti i suoi abitanti. Volendo trovare elementi descrittivi e simbolici, la ricchezza della metafora è tale che non occorrono molte parole. Ognuno di noi è diverso, ha necessità sue proprie che possono anche cambiare nel corso della vita, di periodo in periodo, e riuscire a trovare il posto giusto ci consente di esprimere al meglio le nostre potenzialità.

Ne LLL è più o meno la stessa cosa. LLL è grande e diversificata e c'è un posto adatto per ciascuna di noi. Proprio come nella metafora della danza dei cerchi che tutte noi conosciamo e presentiamo alle Tirocinanti per comprendere la struttura di sostegno, ogni Consulente può scegliere dove vivere al meglio la sua esperienza in associazione.

Questa attività ha dato la possibilità di porre le basi per un linguaggio comune e nei lavori successivi si è spesso fatto riferimento all'albero, alle sue funzioni vitali, all'interdipendenza...

Le due giornate sono trascorse dense di contenuti, ben equilibrati tra formazione teorica e tecnica frontale (sessioni
sulla nuova normativa Privacy, sessione sul Codice, sessione sui parametri di crescita), giochi, lavori di simulazione di anteprime di gruppo, confronto, domande, e, la cosa più bella, è stata stare insieme, guardarsi, vedersi, riconoscersi, ascoltarsi...

Condividere l'energia della nostra mission, sperimentare la Legacy, vedere Consulenti tanto diverse tra loro per età e stile che collaborano e vivono con gioia e soddisfazione il loro impegno, riuscendo a rinnovare sempre la grandissima gioia di ritrovarsi, stare insieme e divertirsi nel lavoro, ha offerto alle nostre Tirocinanti (ospiti graditissime anche due Tirocinanti della Svizzera Italiana con una Consulente) una vera immersione, una esperienza completa, che sono certa, darà nuovo impulso e stimoli al loro percorso di formazione.

PROGRAMMA
SEMINARIO DI FORMAZIONE PER LE TIROCINANTI DE LLLITALIA
Milano, 20 e 21 ottobre 2018

SABATO

10.30 - 10.45 Saluti e consegna dei segnalibri MICHELA
10.45 – 12.00 Gioco rompighiaccio (albero) SARAH
12.00 – 13.00 Riflessioni attorno al questionario (sono all'altezza?) PATRIZIA
13.00 – 14.00 Giochi proposti da Misha (l'ascolto di istruzioni e il punto di vista: sperimentiamo) PATRIZIA

14.00 – 15.00 PAUSA PRANZO

15.00- 16.30 Il Codice CARLA SCARSI
16.30 -17.30 Nuova normativa sulla Privacy VALE GAGGIATO
17.30 – 17.45 BREVE PAUSA
17.45 – 19.15 Lavoro sull’Anteprima VALE, SARAH, CATERINA
19.15 - 19.30 Chiusura MICHELA

DOMENICA

9.00-12.00 La crescita MICAELA NOTARANGELO e NICOLETTA BOERO
12.00 – 13.00 Conclusione del seminario MICHELA
LLL ITALIA LAD WORKSHOP – Milan, October 2018
Sarah Cereghini, ACLA, Italy

Living the experience
To plan and organize a LAD Workshop is a beautiful opportunity. The LAD team gets moving, starts imagining and longing for the event. The correspondence among LAD representatives is always extremely enriching; in fact it offers a chance for everyone to find the right commitment.

LAD representatives get to know each other and exchange ideas. They coordinate activities and support each other, so that they live this joint experience in the most positive way.

When I think about LLL Italia at our annual Area Conferences, I always picture in my mind an industrious and joyful beehive. Our LAD workshops are like a smaller and more friendly version of this, with a chance to nurture relationships even more, to find the time to exchange some words with everyone, to look deep into each other’s eyes, to share…

This was our third consecutive LAD workshop and it is now well established. Just as we do for mothers at meetings, all the details are taken care of, the Applicants are welcomed, listened to, fed (not only thanks to the yummy snack area, but also because of the application work which feeds their minds,) embraced, and placed at the center of attention. Everything is thought out, planned and realized just for them.

Some Applicants participated with their supporting Leaders, enjoying an opportunity for enrichment that was full of ideas and supplied motivation for their application work. Many Applicants came with their children and partners, loving to share their work and breathe the LLL air with their families.

Excitement is always high, with the feeling of a special occasion. The serene and positive atmosphere allows for the flow of emotions—the life and beauty of sharing an experience of growth and learning.

The Ice Breaker
We opened the day with a simple game to get to know each other better: we introduced the game by presenting a big tree that was drawn on a poster. The tree had roots, plenty of branches and leaves, and a strong and stable trunk. Every Applicant and every Leader was asked to introduce herself and to show where she would place her nest or burrow to feel safe and comfortable. Everyone prepared a card with her own name and placed it on the poster, explaining to the rest of the group the reason for her choice. Once the round of introductions was over, I explained how a tree is a single, living, vital unit, which is made up of the sum of each and every one of its parts and those who live there. When you use such symbolic and descriptive elements, the metaphor is already so rich that you do not need many words to explain it. Each of us is so different and we all have our own needs that can change over the course of a lifetime. Finding our own place helps us to express our unique potential.

In LLL, it’s more or less the same—LLL is large and diverse and there is a proper place for each of us. Just like the metaphor of concentric circles, that we use with Applicants to explain the structure of “support,” every Leader can choose the best place for her experience within the organization.

This game gave us the chance to set up a common language and we often referred to the tree, its vital functions and the interdependence of its parts, in the activities that followed.
The two days of the workshop were rich in content, with a good balance between theoretical and technical information (with sessions on our new privacy regulations, the WHO Code, and growth parameters) games, group role play of Preview situations, discussion, questions and the most beautiful thing of all—being together, looking at each other, seeing, understanding, and listening to each other.

We shared the energy of our mission, living our legacy, meeting Leaders of different ages and styles who cooperate, and live their commitment with joy and satisfaction. We were rejuvenated by the enormous joy of being and working together. All of this gave the Applicants a thorough immersion, a complete experience that I am certain will give new momentum and input to their path towards accreditation. Last but not least, we were honored that two Swiss Applicants joined us with their Leader.

**PROGRAMME**

**WORKSHOP FOR LLL ITALIA APPLICANTS**

**Milan, 20 – 21 October 2018**

**SATURDAY**

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<tr>
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<td>Greetings and bookmark giveaway</td>
<td>MICHELA</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.45 – 12.00</td>
<td>Ice breaker (the tree)</td>
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<td>12.00 – 13.00</td>
<td>Discussion on the questionnaire (Am I up for the role?)</td>
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<td>13.00 – 14.00</td>
<td>Games with Misha (Listening to instructions and own opinion: let’s experiment)</td>
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<td>14.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
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<td>15.00 - 16.30</td>
<td>The Code</td>
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<td>16.30 - 17.30</td>
<td>GDPR – the new EU Privacy Regulations</td>
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<td>19.15 - 19.30</td>
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<td>MICAELA NOTARANGELO e NICOLETTA BOERO</td>
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<td>12.00 – 13.00</td>
<td>Closing the workshop</td>
<td>MICHELA</td>
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Here is an extract from a Leader Applicant who is worrying about the pace of her application. There is no single right answer. Sharing possible approaches can help us consider how we might choose to respond.

**Dear Alice ACLA,**

Thank you so much for working with me on my application. I have a question for you. Janet, my supporting Leader, told me that she took two years to do her application, and that when she was accredited, she felt very prepared to be a Leader because of all of the time she took. As you know, it’s now been three months, and I’ve already completed my personal history, work with the BRG, going over the Checklist, and all of my reading. Do you think that I should slow down my progress and wait to do the Preview to make sure that I am well prepared like Janet was? She hasn’t said anything to make me feel like I should, however I don’t want to miss anything I may need to know to be a good Leader.

Thank you so much for your input,
Aurora Applicant

**Sample Responses...**

Dear Aurora,

Thank you for asking this question. When asked why they want to become an LLL Leader, most Applicants say they want to help others the way they were helped. In order to help others, it is reasonable that an Applicant would want to be well prepared for leadership by the time all the parts of the application are completed.

How long it takes for an Applicant to finish the parts of the application really depends on various factors. Some bring more experience to the application or are able to set aside more time to go through the parts of the application. Perhaps the supporting Leader is readily available to work with the Applicant, or the LAD representative responds very quickly. Some Applicants are quicker to become confident in their ability to use the knowledge gained and resources accessed during the application time. When more than one of these factors are present in an application, it
may be completed much more quickly than when they are not. For you, several of these are in place, and I’m not at all surprised that you are ready for the Preview after only three months of application time.

The important point is that you feel ready for leadership before signing the Statement of Commitment. Individuals may feel ready for a variety of reasons. Some, like your Leader Janet, may see the two-year preparation as an indication of how long it takes to be ready. Others will look at the number of babies they’ve breastfed, years of meetings they’ve attended, or education relating to breastfeeding or other life experience that relates to the application time and makes them feel prepared for leadership.

You believe that you are on track with your application work and will be ready for accreditation soon. That is all right, Aurora, because you are in charge of your own application. When you complete the Preview and evaluate your experience of practicing speaking as a Leader, you will answer the question “Do you feel ready to assume the responsibilities of leadership?” If you can answer “yes,” and your Leader also says “yes” in her evaluation, then you will be ready, regardless of the length of time it has taken you to get to that point.

I am pleased to be on this journey with you, Aurora. Please let me know if you have any questions about preparing for your Preview, and I look forward to reading about it in your evaluation.

ExcitedLY,

Joan Peloso
Florida, USA

English translation follows

Querida Aurora:

Espero te encuentres muy bien. Te felicito por todo el esfuerzo y dedicación que le has colocado a tu proceso de certificación. El proceso de formación de una líder de la Liga de la Leche no es un programa educativo que se rige por tiempos y fechas establecidos y rígidos. Es un proceso para formar a una voluntaria con habilidades de comunicación, conocimientos de lactancia materna y técnicas para organización y manejo de grupos. Por lo cual cada aspirante avanza de manera diferente y personalizada. Depende mucho del tiempo que tu como aspirante utilices en tu formación y de la colaboración de tu líder de apoyo.

Entiendo que te preocupas no estar "lista" y que te da miedo no ser una "buena" líder, es como cuando nuestros hijos comienzan a caminar, estamos emocionadas por los pasos que dan pero a la vez asustadas de que se caiga y todo termine con un fuerte golpe. Por eso la función de la líder de poyo (lady madrina) es la de acompañarte en el proceso para que cada paso sea seguro. De la misma forma que algunos niños caminan antes que otros, lo mismo sucede con las líderes en formación.

Me gustaría animarte a conversar con tu líder de apoyo (lady madrina) sobre esta preocupación, quizás puedas expresarla mas claramente en que temas, habilidades o tareas sientes que necesitas profundizar. Estoy segura que la retroalimentación será muy útil. Luego de esto pueden revisar juntas el Checklist de actividades para la acreditación y podrán trazar un plan de lo que te falta por cumplir. Cómo te sientes con estas opciones?

Gracias por escribirme contándome lo que sientes, eso demuestra el amor y pasión que sientes por el proceso que estas viviendo para convertirte en Líder de la Liga de la Leche. Gracias por tu esfuerzo y dedicación a nuestra bella organización.

Quedo atenta de tu respuesta.

Saludos cordiales,
Dania Amador
Panama
Dear Aurora,

I hope you are doing well. I congratulate you for all the effort and dedication that you have put into your application for leadership. The process of becoming a La Leche League Leader is not an educational program that is governed by established and rigid times and dates.

As a volunteer you are learning communication skills, breastfeeding information and management techniques for organizing the Group. Therefore each Applicant advances in a different and personalized way. It depends a lot on the time that you spend as an Applicant on your preparation and on your partnership with your supporting Leader.

I understand that you are worried about not being "ready" and that you are afraid of not being a "good" Leader. It is like when our children start to walk—we are excited by the steps they are taking, but at the same time we are afraid that they might fall and end up getting badly hurt. That's why the supporting Leader is there to support you along the way so that each step is safe. In the same way that some children walk before others, some Applicants become Leaders before others.

I would like to encourage you to talk with your supporting Leader about this concern. Perhaps you can express more clearly on which topics, skills or tasks you feel you need to work. I'm sure the feedback will be very useful. After this, you can review the Checklist of topics for discussion together and you can design a plan for what you still have to complete. How do you feel about these options?

Thank you for writing to me and telling me about your feelings; that shows the love and passion you feel for the preparation you are working through to become a La Leche League Leader. Thank you for your effort and for your dedication to our beautiful organization.

I await your response.

Best regards,
Dania Amador
Panama

Dear Aurora,

It’s been such a pleasure to work with you towards accreditation. You’ve been working hard and diligently and therefore you’ve accomplished a lot in three months. Hats off to you!

The LAD believes that each Applicant follows her own rhythm during her application. Some Applicants take a year or more to become Leaders and some Applicants take a few months. Each Applicant knows how to prepare to become a Leader and with the support of her supporting Leader and her A/CLA, she chooses how to manage her application. An Applicant who takes less time to become a Leader is just as prepared as an Applicant who takes longer. Everyone is different, just like every mother-baby dyad is different.

All the work you’ve done so far has been great. It’s a privilege for me to correspond with you. Please continue to follow your own rhythm. I look forward to hearing from you again.

Warmly,
“Alice”
Linda King Gaboriaud
Quebec, Canada
Dear Aurora,

One of the wonderful things about La Leche League is that there are as many ways to breastfeed as there are mothers and babies. This is also true for the work Applicants do as they prepare to become Leaders in LLL. Each Applicant can work at her own pace, in her own time. Some Applicants find that they can get a lot done while their baby/toddler naps and move along quickly. Others will break the application requirements down into smaller pieces because their baby doesn't take long naps, there may be one or more older children to care for, or any number of other things that claim a mother's time.

Many mothers come to the decision to apply to be a Leader with lots of the preparatory reading and discussions with the Group Leader already accomplished. This can also move an application more quickly to completion. Others haven't really given it thought until the Leader approaches them to invite them to apply. This may mean additional time spent to do the reading and get familiar with LLL resources, such as the website. By working at the pace that best suits your life demands, you will get a sense of how leadership will fit with the family needs for your time.

How fast an application progresses can also be determined, in part, by the LAD representative who is writing to an Applicant. The demands for her time from her family or from other activities can influence the pace of the application. In times of high family need, the LAD representative may not be able to respond as quickly. Outside factors may need her attention, such as sick children, a vacation, or a big house project that is going on.

It seems like you have come to the work of your application well prepared and we have responded promptly to each other’s communications. That has probably allowed things to progress at a quicker pace than other applications might have done.

Aurora, I wonder if your concern about "moving too fast" may also be suggesting to you that you need a moment to review what you've accomplished so far, and determine if there is more you feel you need to know before proceeding with any "next steps." If you review the work you have done with the Group Leader and with me and feel ready to go, then you probably are. If you go through all of your materials and realize you haven't had a chance to discuss a topic, like how the Group Leader envisions you as a co-Leader and who will do what, then this gives you time to discuss it before it becomes a reality.

I'm excited for you and your passion for becoming a Leader. I appreciate that you felt comfortable bringing your concern to my attention. I look forward to working with you in the Area.

Cindy Garrison
Pennsylvania, USA

English translation follows

Chère Aurora,

Ton questionnement est bien légitime. Tu as l’impression que ta formation est presque terminée au bout de trois mois tandis que ton animatrice soutien te dit avoir fait sa formation en deux ans. Si le rythme que tu as adopté pour ta formation te convient, il n’est pas utile de ralentir. Certaines stagiaires deviennent animatrices en très peu de temps et d’autres mettent des années. La formation d’animatrice n’est ni un exercice scolaire ni une formation diplômante mais vise à accréditer des mères qui ont mis en perspective leur expérience d’allaitement et du maternage avec leurs connaissances (à la fois de l’allaitement et de LLL) et les compétences en communication. Pour le faire, toutes les stagiaires n’empruntent pas le même chemin et ne mettent pas toutes le même temps. Les mères ne démarrent pas leur formation avec les mêmes atouts. Certaines connaissent LLL depuis longtemps et ont sûrement réfléchi avant de se lancer dans la formation d’animatrice. D’autres ont des connaissances techniques (de l’allaitement ou d’écoute) du fait de leur profession et peuvent explorer rapidement le GRIA (BRG en anglais). D’autres ont encore besoin de se sentir plus confiantes dans leur rôle de mère avant d’en soutenir d’autres et sont rassurées de faire leur formation à leur rythme. Et bien sûr, il y a aussi des stagiaires qui ont un temps limité à consacrer à leur formation (peut-être qu’elles ont un nouveau bébé, ou un changement dans leur vie, ou d’autres activités qui accaparent leur temps et leur énergie en ce moment ?). Ce qui importe, c’est de se sentir confiante au
moment de signer sa déclaration d’engagement. J’espère que les mises en pratique (questions de mères) t’aideront à voir le chemin que tu as parcouru et de te sentir prête à aider d’autres mères. Comme Janet, je suis là pour te guider afin que tu aies rempli toutes les conditions d’accréditation au moment de signer. Je te joins un article de Leaven (aujourd’hui appelé Leader Today) de fin 2007 « Accréditer une animatrice en treize jours? » par Karin Gausman.

Et sois tranquille, toutes les animatrices continuent à développer leurs connaissances et leurs compétences après l’accréditation ; c’est une des responsabilités de base qu’elles prennent (l’animatrice se tient au courant de toutes les informations importantes concernant l’allaitement et le maternage. La Leche League assure sa formation permanente par le biais de publications, de réunions et de revues et reste toujours disponible pour soutenir l’animatrice dans ses questions ou ses problèmes).

AmicALLément
Alice
Laurence Kher Descourtieux
UK

Dear Aurora,

It’s very understandable for you to ask this question. You feel your preparation for leadership is almost done after three months, while your supporting Leader tells you she needed two years to complete hers. If your pace seems right to you, there is no reason to slow down. Some Leader Applicants complete their preparation for leadership very quickly and others take years. Becoming a Leader is neither an academic exercise nor a degree; the aim is to accredit mothers who have put their breastfeeding and mothering experience into perspective with their knowledge (of both breastfeeding and of LLL) and communication skills. To achieve this, all Leader Applicants don’t take the same road and don’t take the same amount of time. Some Leader Applicants have known LLL for many years and have put a lot of thought into it before deciding that they want to prepare for leadership. Others have technical knowledge from studies and/or work and can complete the BRG quickly. Others need to feel confident as mothers before being ready to support others and are relieved they can take their time to complete their application. Also, some Leader Applicants have very limited time and energy to dedicate to LLL at the moment. (Perhaps they have a new baby or a major change in their life or are involved in other activities that take a lot of their time.) Feeling confident when signing the Statement of Commitment is what matters the most.

I hope the Preview will help you to see the road you have walked since you started and to feel ready to support others. Janet and I are here to guide and support you so you have completed all the criteria for accreditation when you sign your Statement of Commitment. I attach an article from Leaven (now Leader Today) Oct-Nov-Dec 2007 “Accredit a Leader in 13 Days?” by Karin Gausman.

And no worries, all Leaders continue to develop knowledge and skills after accreditation. It’s one of the basic responsibilities they take on: Leaders keep up-to-date on all important breastfeeding information, taking advantage of LLL’s opportunities for continuing education through publications, meetings and correspondence, and the network of resource Leaders who are available to help with questions or problems.

With LLLove,
Alice
Laurence Kher Descourtieux
UK

Here is the text of the article that Laurence mentions:

**Accredit a Leader in 13 Days?**

**Karin Gausman**

**Director LLLI Leader Accreditation Department**

**From LEAVEN, Vol 43 No. 4, October-November-December 2007, pp. 84-85**
Is it possible for a leadership application to be completed in 13 days? Yes. Should we then be trying to complete all applications in a couple of weeks? Absolutely not! The goal of the application is to accredit Leaders who have the experience, knowledge, and skills they will need to do their job with confidence and pleasure. The time needed to do this varies for each individual, based on many factors: her own experience, how long she has attended Group meetings, what she has read before applying, what application workshops she has already attended, and so forth. At the present time, most applications seem to take about a year to finish. Is this because the required application work is so complex that this much time is necessary? We don't think so.

We believe it would be possible for many applications, including what we consider to be thorough preparation, to be completed in a significantly shorter time than what is usual now. We think this could happen with a change in expectations—rather than a change in criteria.

Have you heard a Leader tell a prospective Applicant that an application will take a year or two? Have you observed new Applicants who take several months to begin active application work? What would happen if an Applicant who was already very familiar with LLL began her application with the expectation that it would take her about six months to finish? If she began her application with that mind-set, she would probably be able to fulfill the current LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation in a few months (if there are not unexpected delays caused by moves, new babies, illness, etc.). We think this would be a realistic goal in many situations. Applications often took about a year when we used postal mail for all our communication. Now that so many applications use email, telephone, and in-person work, it's reasonable to expect the length of an application to decrease significantly.

Next time you are talking with a mother interested in leadership, you might try presenting the application work as something that can probably be completed in about six months. Once that mother becomes an Applicant, you and the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) representative can help her outline the required work and set up her personal plan for accomplishing it. Her plan will be most effective if she breaks the work into manageable parts and sets daily or weekly goals for herself. She can begin working toward her goal from the very first week she is an Applicant.

Perhaps you are remembering what all you did during your own application. Things may be different now from when you applied for leadership. Here is a list of what is required, and how many Applicants accomplish the work now:

**Personal history:** The goal of this is both to help the Applicant gain a deeper understanding of how her own experiences relate to LLL philosophy, and also to broaden her perspective beyond that of her own life and what she has seen in her Group. Many Applicants talk about one concept at a time (both their experience and understanding), giving that to their LAD representative as it is completed (covering, say, one concept every few days). Their personal history becomes a dialogue with the LAD representative, with frequent back and forth communication. Although most Applicants still prefer to submit this by mail or email (to take advantage of "think time" and to be able to work at odd hours which best suits their schedules), we also offer the option of histories submitted in person or by telephone or using online instant messaging.

**Reading:** This familiarizes an Applicant with knowledge beyond her own experience and helps her learn more about the organization she will be representing and what is expected of a Leader. What has been required is THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING (current edition in her language, which most Applicants have read before applying), the LEADER’S HANDBOOK (current edition in her language), and a comprehensive childbirth book from an LLL Bibliography (whichever bibliography is used where the Applicant lives). We have recently modified the childbirth reading requirement to focus on the purpose. We now require the Applicant to gain comprehensive knowledge about how various childbirth methods affect the start of breastfeeding and what LLL recommends. The LAD representative can explain what options might fulfill this if the Applicant prefers not to read another book or if such a book is not available in the Applicant's language.

**LLL Leadership skills:** These are learned by observing a Leader "in action," and through discussion with a Leader, covering the topics in the "Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for Leadership" in the LEADER’S HANDBOOK or one of the other LAD-approved checklists (ask your LAD representative about these). Many Applicants do this by participating in Applicant Workshops, or by being part of an email discussion group. An
Applicant also develops knowledge and skills through her participation in the LLL Group (both during meetings and with "behind the scenes" Group management).

**Breastfeeding Management Knowledge:** This is covered by the Applicant's working through the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide* (BRG), if available in her language. If she already has extensive knowledge, she will no doubt be able to familiarize herself quickly with LLL recommendations, thus completing the BRG in a short time. Some Applicants work on the BRG together using email. Sometimes workshops or Area Conferences have sessions to accomplish BRG work.

**Practice Helping Mothers:** *The Preview of Mothers' Questions/Problems and Group Dynamics/Management* can be used throughout the application. Many Applicants combine *Preview* use with working through the BRG or talking with the Leader about situations that come up in helping calls or Help Forms (respecting confidentiality). Using the telephone for these practice sessions helps the Applicant prepare for those first calls from mothers and for leading meetings. An added bonus is that telephone calls can be done in much less time than traveling with children to an in-person meeting.

So, if you talk with an Applicant about accomplishing this work in about six months, you might explain a few sample schedules which some other Applicants have found workable. For example, a typical day's goals might be to accomplish one of the following:

- Submit thoughts on one or two concepts.
- Read 10 to 12 pages in the Leader's Handbook.
- Read 10 pages in *THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING* from the perspective of a Leader helping a mother.
- Look up resources for a BRG question to share with other Applicants who have looked up different questions. (Everyone shares with the group what they learned, and everyone gets "credit" for what the whole group accomplished).
- Talk with a Leader (or email group of Applicants and a Leader) about one or two checklist topics.

If an Applicant commits to doing some application work several days each week, she will probably be able to accomplish most of the LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation in six months. She will be learning the valuable skill of working in "bits and snatches" to fulfill a commitment, and that's the way she will most likely accomplish leadership responsibilities later. You will have the pleasure of working with a co-Leader who has learned how to weave commitment to LLL into her life, and she will have the enormous satisfaction of being accredited while her enthusiasm is still fresh.

**Dear Aurora**

This is a great question. Thank you for having the courage to ask it.

Every Leader Applicant and every application for leadership is different. What Janet said to you is the key—she felt very prepared to be a Leader. For her, this took a couple of years. For others, for a wide variety of reasons, it can take much less ... and for others still, it may take much more.

I have the impression that you already feel prepared to be a Leader. It is one of the important questions we ask of the Applicant and her supporting Leader(s) as we approach the end of the application: "Do you feel ready? Do you feel the Applicant is ready to assume the responsibilities of leadership?" If the answer is yes, then you are.

Remember too, that accreditation is the beginning of the journey. One of the basic responsibilities of leadership is to keep up-to-date. There is a lifetime of learning ahead and we are all still acquiring new information and new skills, no matter how long we have been Leaders.

As we discussed when you reported on your work with the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide* and when you were doing Preview situations, individual Leaders do not need to have all the answers—we need to be able to listen, to ask questions, to show empathy and to know where to look for the information the mother may find most helpful. There are, as you know, lots of people and written resources to help us in this task ... and we all use them, again no matter how experienced we are. This is one of the great things about being part of La Leche League—we are part of a
worldwide network with a vast store of knowledge and experience into which we can all tap at any time. I am sure you will make a wonderful Leader and look forward to recommending you for accreditation very soon.

Eileen Harrison
France

Dear Lily LAD Representative,

Thank you so much for your support so far in my application. I have been working on the Breastfeeding Resource Guide (BRG), and I'm not sure whether I can actually get through it all. Every time I start to work on it, I feel so overwhelmed by all of the technical information that I have to learn. How am I ever supposed to remember everything? I had mastitis once and have dealt with thrush, but what about all of the information about hospitalization, jaundice, and allergies? I know that I don't have to memorize everything, but I feel like I need to know all of this to be an effective Leader.

Thanks for any help you can provide because I am feeling really stressed about this.

Warmly,
Ava Applicant

How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Contributing Editor for this column, Karin Ali, at karinali0407@gmail.com.
Ciao, mi chiamo Tiziana, ho 45 anni e sono Consulente de LLL Italia dal 2004. Sono diventata CLA nel 2013 e ho preso il posto di Margaret McGuigan come ALA il primo novembre scorso.

Il LAD Europa è stato davvero importante per me nel mio ruolo di CLA: Laurence Kher Descourtieux, Ineke Leiter, Margaret McGuigan e le altre meravigliose Rappresentanti del LAD hanno risposto alle mie domande e mi hanno aiutata così tante volte. Mi hanno aiutata ad organizzare dei seminari per le ACLA e per le Consulenti interessate a diventarle e mi hanno sostenuta nel gestire situazioni particolari. Sento che adesso sta a me restituire ciò che mi è stato dato.

Sono molto emozionata per questa nuova avventura e non vedo l’ora di conoscere meglio il mio lavoro di ALA e le CLA che assisterò d’ora in poi. Probabilmente ho incontrato già molte di voi all’EMS, ma vi prego di essere pazienti con me e la mia memoria.

Al presente abito a Cork in Irlanda anche se sono originariamente da Genova, Italia.

My name is Tiziana, I am 45 and became an LLL Leader in Italy in 2004. I became CLA for LLL Italia in 2013 and I took over Margaret McGuigan’s ALA role on November 1st.

LAD Europe has been so important for my CLA work: Laurence Kher Descourtieux, Ineke Leiter, Margaret McGuigan and other lovely LAD representatives have been answering my questions and supporting me so many times. They have helped me organize workshops for ACLAs and interested Leaders and deal with unusual situations. I feel now it’s my turn to give back what I have received.

I am very excited about this new adventure and can’t wait to learn more about ALA work and the CLAs I’ll be supporting from now on. I probably met many of you at the EMS, but please be patient with me and my memory skills.

I live in Cork, Ireland at the moment, even though I am from Genova, Italy.
LAD documents and forms are frequently updated. Review your files and be sure that you are using the most recent versions of the following:

- LARK Original
- LARK Combined
  - LARK includes up-to-date versions of:
    - *Personal History of Breastfeeding and Mothering*
    - BRG
    - Checklist
    - Preview
    - Listening Exercise
    - Bias Exercise
    - Mixing Causes Exercise

- *Leader's Pre-Application Packet* (Contents listed below)

  What to share and discuss with the mother:
  
  - Contents list
    - *Thinking About La Leche League Leadership?* (compact pdf version)
    - Appendix 17, LLLI PSR: Concept Policy Statements
    - Appendix 18, LLLI PSR: Applying for Leadership
    - Overview of Application Work for Leader Accreditation
    - *La Leche League Purpose, Mission, Philosophy*

- For Leaders:
  - *Pre-Application Guidelines for Leaders*
  - Appendix 38, LLLI PSR: Leader Accreditation Appeals Policies and Process

- Forms
  - Leader Recommendation form
  - Application form
  - Release forms for supporting Leader and Applicant
  - *LLL Statement of Commitment*

- *LAD Manual*

- Back numbers of *LADders*

Some entities use their own versions or translations of the above. If you are uncertain or need to find updated versions, please check with your LAD support person for the latest documents.
Congratulations on your appointment!

Karin Ali  
LAD Council Secretary

Rachel Concitis  
RALA, Great Lakes Region, LLL Alliance, USA

Dara Connolly  
CLA, Massachusetts/Rhode Island/Vermont, LLL Alliance, USA

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes  
ACLA, Atlantic Canada, LLL Canada

Christina Hongach  
CLA, Carolinas, USA

Gerrie McKaig  
ACLA, LLL South Africa

Sara Segall  
ACLA, Indiana, LLL Alliance, USA

Linda Wieser  
LAD Council Resource Coordinator
Pets in Our family

Leia is our 91-pound fur child. She will turn two at the end of November. She’s our third dog in 14 years of wonderful family life. In the first picture you see her with her favorite kids, Wyatt (8), Vivian (6), Shane (11), and Amelia (8) at our property in Wisconsin, USA. The other picture is Leia’s adoption day where she’s only 31 pounds, 3.5 months old. You can see how excited Chad and I are to add her into the family. Our older dog Riddick (14) passed over the summer. He was a great big brother and showed Leia everything she needed to know about being a well-mannered family dog. We’re a big dog family as well as a big family. We always adopt large, mixed breed dogs from rescue groups because we understand the responsibility that requires. We send love out to all our LLL Friends of furry children who care for all creatures big and small.

Stephanie Sutton, CLA, LLL of Illinois, USA

My children were raised with dogs, cats, fish, gerbils and a bird (plus the creatures that were collected outside.) For a while I shared a dog with my adult son—he had him on weekdays and I had him weekends. Now I am down to just one fish (I can’t quite live pet-free!)

Here’s a picture of my grandson, Henri, (age 7) meeting (and feeding) my fish for the first time. Whenever I’m away I ask him to come look after “Rudy”.

Linda Boissinot, ACLA, Quebec and Eastern Ontario, Canada
These are my two sons. We have a dog, rats and rabbits as pets. My eldest, Jonah (5), never cared much for them, but he has grown into loving them. He could not live without them now.

On the right you see Jonah with my mother’s new kitten, Pip. He loves to cuddle with Pip.

The other picture is of Odin (3), my youngest. He loves all animals. Here you see him with one of our pet rats. He built a Lego Duplo house for them to play in! But Clark (the rat) would rather sit in his hoody, while Echo and Raven (the other rats) play in the house Odin built.

Kim Stevens, co-CLA, The Netherlands
2018 Editorial Postscript

As another publication year draws to a close I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to LADders this year: we included nine feature articles, 11 contributions to compilation articles, 14 responses for the “How Would You Respond?” column, ten introductions in “A Taste of LAD International” and 12 beautiful photo letters. We were delighted to announce a total of 29 new appointments in “LAD Promenade” and eight dedicated LAD representatives make up the LADders Team, collecting information, gathering contributions, editing and putting this newsletter together. In addition, our published Semi-Annual Reports reveal that LAD representatives worldwide have been working with over 1200 Applicants during this calendar year and you accredited a total of close to 469 new Leaders over the two published reporting periods. LADders also reported on the 2018 EMS, held in Berlin. Thank you to all of you for your hard work!

LADders Team

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