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Oral Application Work
Eileen Harrison, Alsace, France

Editor’s note: This article is based on discussions with the LLLI Board of Directors and LAD Council, supported by replies the author received from LAD representatives in regard to their experience of oral application work.

The Personal History of Breastfeeding and Mothering, known as the personal history, is an application requirement for La Leche League (LLL) leadership. It is an opportunity for Leader Applicants to explore with a LAD representative their own experiences of breastfeeding and mothering, their understanding of LLL philosophy and the role of a Leader, and any supporting reading they have done. While Applicants bring their own individual perspectives to this exploration, supporting Leaders bring local experience and the LAD representative brings the broader perspective of the LLL organisation and of more than 60 years’ history and experience.

Most often, the personal history is written. Taking the time to write helps Applicants reflect on their experiences as well as to review and revise how they describe these experiences. It is something they can return to as they become more familiar with LLL and leadership. Many Applicants see this opportunity of recording the early years of their children’s lives and their own parenting journey as a memento for the future.

From time to time, however, writing may become a barrier to completing the personal history. The reasons are varied and particular to each Applicant—it may be related to difficulties with reading and writing in general, or with the language used to communicate, or an emotional reaction to something that conjures difficult memories.

Even when one speaks another language, it can be difficult to write in that language, especially at length and in detail about subjects where it is important to choose the right words and phrases. Whatever the reason, if the prerequisites indicate that the criteria for accreditation can be met and the Applicant will be accredited as a Leader, it is possible to complete all or some of the personal history orally.

From Personal Skills Prerequisites, LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership, Part II: Guidelines for Leaders, Applying for Leadership (LLL Policies and Standing Rules):

1. Language should not be a barrier to leadership. The LAD and the Leader work together to ensure that an application can be accomplished in whatever means of communication is most comfortable for an Applicant and in whatever language the Applicant prefers.
2. If there are challenges to accessing LLL information, Leaders, Applicants, and LAD representatives work together to facilitate access to or develop necessary resources.
3. Leaders and LAD representatives work together to reduce barriers to leadership whenever possible, in accordance with the LLLI Inclusivity Policy.

When an Applicant finds it challenging to complete the personal history requirement, it is important for each LAD representative to work closely with the Applicant and supporting Leader to determine the best means of proceeding. In some cases, it might be a small roadblock that is solved by a single oral communication—phone call, video call or in-person meeting. In other situations, it may be necessary to conduct most or all of the work orally.

LAD representatives share their experience with oral application work:
Diane Beckman, North Carolina, USA

I conducted oral interviews for the personal history and other exercises in two situations:

- When an Applicant was at ease talking but not writing.
- When we had a weekend application workshop (about ten Applicants overall, with several sessions). We did the personal history, Breastfeeding Resource Guide and Preview in this way. Sometimes, we just did the exercises that were needed by a particular Applicant.

In all cases, I felt that it was successful. It was different from a written personal history but worked well for the people involved.

Linda Wieser, Nova Scotia, Canada

I worked with an Applicant whose first language was not English. She felt uncomfortable writing her personal history in English. We arranged a video call. I took detailed notes and then sent them to her to edit or add to. We continued the rest of our dialogue in writing.

Rebecca Renegar, Tennessee, USA

I did an Applicant’s history orally. We began the process in writing, but she was struggling to put her thoughts into words after one or two questions and asked if we had other options. We scheduled two hour-long phone calls.

Joan Peloso, Florida, USA

I have not used an oral format for the whole application. I’ve used it for different parts with various Applicants, according to their needs.

The first Applicant with whom I did the personal history orally had difficulty organizing her thoughts in writing because of dyslexia. She was quite able to communicate orally. However, the time it took her to organize and express in writing was more than she could spend as a volunteer right then. We communicated via email to set up a time and agreed on which concepts we would cover so she could prepare. We spoke for 1-1.5 hours each time. This worked well for her and she was accredited and led meetings in her Group.

For other applications I have made arrangements to do all or parts of the personal dialogue, usually to complete it when the Applicant had stalled as far as writing to me was concerned. Sometimes it was busyness at home/employment. Sometimes I’d just have a feeling that something was blocking her from addressing one or more of the concepts. A phone call exploring her feelings felt safer to her than putting them into writing. Working with isolated Applicants, especially ones who had never attended an LLL meeting and were coming to leadership after reading The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, was especially challenging. I found that one Applicant didn’t know what she could say as a Leader, since she’d never heard a Leader speak at a meeting or on the phone for a personal consultation for a breastfeeding question. Because I was about only two hours’ drive from her, we agreed to meet at her family business office and talk. We covered a lot that day and she was able to finish the application with more confidence. She wrote the personal history part of the application and did the Preview mostly over the phone.
Linda King Gaboriaud, Québec, Canada

One Applicant asked for oral support because she lacked time to write her personal history with her intense breastfeeding toddler and lots of nausea with her second pregnancy. She also was studying at university level so had no energy to start writing. She did all the rest of the application work in writing, but the personal history felt overwhelming to her. This Applicant really appreciated the oral discussion of the ten concepts as it made it easier for her to complete her application. Our conversations went smoothly at all times.

I did an oral personal history with another Applicant who had four children (the youngest one was sick often and needed hospital stays) and just had no time to write her personal history at length but managed to do all the rest. She finished the work needed and was a Leader for a few years.

Most LAD representatives find oral personal histories more time-consuming than written submissions. For this reason, a simple “lack of time” is not a good reason to consider mentioning the possibility of oral application work. Before suggesting the option of completing the work orally, it is helpful to discuss first how the Applicant plans to make the time to fulfill Leader responsibilities when finding time for application work is challenging. However, when there are extenuating circumstances preventing the Applicant from writing the personal history, oral work can be the answer. Many LAD representatives find this extra work worthwhile.

It remains important, to the Applicant as well as to LAD and LLL, for there to be a written record. Different LAD representatives have dealt with this in different ways.

Here are some examples:

- I took enough notes to recall what was said and noted anything I would want to discuss later, rather than interrupting the Applicant.
- I documented only brief statements reflecting practice of the concepts. I didn’t attempt to transcribe our entire conversation.
- I managed to write everything we discussed for about one hour and a half. This included the Applicant’s experience and how it reflected LLL concepts, plus more practical information about when we talk, as Leaders, about these subjects.
- I regularly quote an Applicant’s writing in my own replies to written histories. So, I quote oral discussions in the same way: it is not much extra work and still leaves enough of her thinking to provide a good record, especially as I ask if she agrees with what I wrote or if there is more to add. Because I am writing a “traditional” response, I have time to reflect.
- Using Zoom and with the Applicant’s agreement, I recorded our conversations.
- There are some amazing apps that will transcribe for you. Otter AI is one I use for work (and it was free when I downloaded it a year ago). If you are able to record the conversation, you can simply upload the recording and Otter will convert it to text at about 90% accuracy.
- When doing a personal history orally, usually as the Applicant speaks, I write down most of what she says. If we get off track, or go into detail about related topics, I don’t record those parts of the conversation. I send the transcript to her and she has it as part of her application file. I include general ideas and comments about her mothering experience. Usually, I don’t include my comments unless they seem necessary to understand what I was asking her to discuss. I usually reply in writing.

All of these different approaches are acceptable as long as enough information is documented in writing or electronically, so that anyone reading the personal history as part of a consultation, referral or appeal has a clear understanding of the Applicant’s experience and how it relates to LLL philosophy.
On the whole, LAD members who responded to the inquiry felt that conducting oral applications had turned out well and most would offer this option again—though as an exception rather than routinely. LAD representatives are not required to do oral application work; they are expected to find ways to help Applicants complete the requirements for leadership. This may include asking the supporting Leader or another LAD representative to do an oral personal history.

The crucial thing is that the written or electronic record reflects what the Applicant wants to say and is confirmed by the Applicant for accuracy and understanding. The written record needs to cover the important points and significant samples of the Applicant’s own words, along with confirmation of the content of this documentation from the Applicant. If consultation about an Applicant is required or if an Applicant appeals a decision by the LLLI Director of Leader Accreditation Department (DLAD) to stop the application, it is important to have an accurate record of the Applicant’s experience and understanding of LLL philosophy.

It is wonderful to know that Applicants are being supported in a variety of ways by our team of innovative LAD representatives. Meeting Applicants’ needs during the application period models the variety of ways Leaders represent La Leche League and support breastfeeding families around the world.

*Eileen Harrison* has been a Leader in Great Britain, Germany and France since 1977 and a member of LAD, including 11 years as European LAD Administrator and LAD Council member, since 1990. She currently lives in France with husband Richard. They have four sons and six grandchildren, plus two not-quite-step grandchildren.
Organizational Experience Prerequisite,
Attending LLL Group Meetings

LAD Council

One of the Organizational Experience Prerequisites, Applying for Leadership, *LLL Policies and Standing Rules*, is: *Has attended at least one series of meetings in person or via the Internet.* Many Leaders have interpreted this to mean that in order to apply, potential Applicants need to have attended at least one of each of the four Series Meetings in person, as described in the *Leader’s Handbook*. In 2019, the LLLI Board added “via the Internet” to the prerequisite. Now the LAD offers more flexibility when the potential Applicant meets this prerequisite.

In the past when someone from an isolated location was interested in leadership, this prerequisite was waived. If possible, the person tried to attend at least one meeting when visiting a place with an LLL presence. Now most Groups are holding virtual meetings so it is easier to find a Facebook or online video meeting to attend. There have been other changes. Not all Groups are using the traditional Series Meeting format. Some Groups are using the café drop-in style and they discuss whatever questions and concerns the participants have.

What is important is that the potential Applicant has experience with how Leaders facilitate the discussion and respond to attendees. This prerequisite can be met if the potential Applicant has attended any four LLL Group meetings, which include online and café-style meetings. If the person is having trouble finding a meeting, please offer your support and introduce “Find Local Support”: [https://www.llli.org/get-help/](https://www.llli.org/get-help/) And even if there are no meetings available in an accessible language or format, the person can still apply as an “isolated Applicant.”

**AI Thè con il LAD**
Sarah Cereghini, Anna Maria Tarchi, Erica De Pace, Misha Laudicina
LAD Italia

*English translation follows.*

Nelle riflessioni fatte all'interno del LAD durante lo scorso anno, proprio per il ruolo così importante che le CdR hanno nell'accompagnare e sostenere la tirocinante, è emerso chiaramente come e quanto siano una risorsa cruciale del tirocinio, un vero e proprio punto di riferimento, ma anche, allo stesso tempo, come possano esserne l'anello debole. Dai nostri dati, infatti, ci siamo reso conto che laddove il tirocinio procede bene, la CdR è, quasi sempre, o un membro del LAD, o un membro del CdA (o entrambi). Abbiamo quindi pensato che essere coinvolte nella vita associativa dell'Organizzazione, ovvero sperimentare una rete di sostegno attiva attraverso numerose occasioni di confronto, potesse essere un fattore importante. Il LAD Italia ha pertanto voluto dedicare un'attenzione particolare alle CdR con lo scopo di farle sentire maggiormente coinvolte, metterle in rete tra loro e prendersi cura di loro: avevamo a cuore di trasmettere quanto, proprio LORO, siano importanti per LLL.
Così abbiamo lanciato la lista CdR via gmail, ed è nata l’idea, di realizzare, una volta al mese, uno spazio di dialogo e scambio dedicato alle CdR, chiamato “Il tè con il LAD”. Ciascun incontro virtuale (zoom) affronta un tema, trattato nella prima ora, mentre nella seconda, viene lasciato spazio al confronto e alle domande. Per non perdere nulla di vista sia nella lista sia nella preparazione degli incontri, due ACLA Anna Maria Tarchi ed Erica De Pace si sono offerte per fare da coordinatrici alla lista mail e svolgono con passione e competenza il loro ruolo, effettivamente molto utile.


Il riscontro fra le CdR è stato molto positivo: agli incontri svolti, hanno partecipato tra le 30 e le 50 Consulenti, tra membri del LAD, CdR e altre Consulenti interessate; abbiamo visto la grande partecipazione delle stesse CdR, delle Consulenti che lavorano con le aspiranti, e di tutte le altre che desiderano essere pronte ed aggiornate, qualora dovessero trovare una mamma a cui proporre il percorso per diventare Consulente de LLL. Nella lista gmail, fin’ora il confronto fra le CdR non è stato molto vivace, ma inizia ad essere sempre più utilizzata, e sta nascendo l’organizzazione di gruppetti di tirocinanti per discutere alcune tematiche della check-list. Per quanto possiamo dire di questi primi mesi dell’iniziativa, effettivamente sembra colmare un vuoto che c’è stato, e di dare una maggiore importanza alle CdR; è un luogo di sostegno reciproco tra di loro. In caso abbiate avuto esperienze simili, oppure vogliate condividere suggerimenti utili, il LAD Italia è molto interessato a leggerli!

Infine, condividiamo qualcuna delle nostre locandine: ogni mese cambiamo tazza.

**Erica De Pace**: Mamma di Gaia (8 anni), sposata con Alessio. Nata e cresciuta a Sanremo (IM), Consulente dal 2014 e ACLA per la LLL Italia.

**Misha Laudicina**: Co-CLA del LAD Italia e ACLA per le Aree Future in Europa, attualmente membro del Concept Committee. Di origine boema, vivo in Italia, Trieste, con mio marito Siciliano e le nostre quattro figlie (Francesca 12, Monica 10, Sara 6 e Rachel 10 months). Ho avuto in eredità da mia nonna una bellissima collezione di tazze da thè in porcellana fine.

**Sarah Cereghini**: Co-CLA del LAD del LLL Italia, vive sull’Appennino di Bologna con il marito e 5 figli coltivando la terra, maestra nella scuola primaria e capo scout.

Tea with LAD
Sarah Cereghini, Anna Maria Tarchi, Erica De Pace, Misha Laudicina
LAD Italy

During the last year our LAD team devoted a lot of time to thinking about supporting Leaders and considering their role and importance. Their role is crucial for La Leche League and it is through their work that the organisation grows. Our reflection clearly revealed how vital supporting Leaders are for applications. They can be both the point of reference, as well as the weak link, of an application. Our data show clearly that, when an application proceeds smoothly, the supporting Leader is usually a member of the LAD or a member of the Italian LLL Board, or both. We concluded that involvement in the organisational structure of LLL or an active support network with frequent opportunities for discussion was an important factor. This is why LAD Italy decided to focus particular attention on supporting Leaders, with the aim of helping them feel more involved and of connecting and caring about them. The idea is to convey to them how important THEY are for LLL.

We therefore set up an email list for supporting Leaders, and we had the idea of holding monthly online meetings for them: time and space for dialogue and exchange called “Tea with LAD.” Each meeting has a topic which is covered in the first hour, while the second hour is left for questions and discussion. To keep a watchful eye on both the email list and the planning of the meetings, two ACLAs, Anna Maria Tarchi and Erica De Pace, volunteered to serve as email list coordinators. It is a very useful job, which they perform with diligence and skill.

We have had four meetings so far. The introductory meeting in November 2020 explained the idea and explored interest and expectations. It provided an opportunity for supporting Leaders to get to know one another and to meet “face to face.” The December meeting dealt with questions to LAD about applications, procedures and resources. In January 2021 we looked at how to improve the schedule of an application. The next meeting in February was entitled “Listening Exercise – how to use it.” For March we are planning a meeting on “Introducing an Applicant to the organisational life of LLL” (as in the Checklist).

The feedback from supporting Leaders has been very positive. The meetings have been attended by 30-50 Leaders including LAD members, supporting Leaders and potential supporting Leaders. There has been tremendous involvement by supporting Leaders, by Leaders who work with Applicants and by everyone who wants to be prepared and ready if she meets a mother who is interested in becoming an LLL Leader. The discussion group for supporting Leaders has not been very active, but its use is gradually increasing. Small groups of Applicants are being set up to discuss topics on the Checklist. The first few months of the project seem to show that it fills a gap that existed before, and that it underlines the importance of supporting Leaders and provides them with an opportunity for mutual support. If you have had any similar experiences in your Area or would like to offer any comments or suggestions, LLL Italy is eager to hear from you!! You can submit your comments to LAders or email them to llilmisha.laudicina@gmail.com.

As a bonus to this article, have a look at some of our monthly leaflets inviting Leaders to TEA: there’s a new cup for every month!
**Erica De Pace:** Mother of Gaia (8 years), married to Alessio. Born in Sanremo (Italy), Leader since 2014, ACLA for LLL Italy.

**Misha Laudicina:** Co-CLA of LAD Italy and ACLA for the FAiE (Future Areas in Europe), currently member of the Concept Review Committee. Of Czech origin, living in Italy with her Sicilian husband and four daughters (Francesca 12, Monica 10, Sara 6 and Rachel 10 months). Owning a beautiful collection of her grandma’s fine china tea and coffee cups.

**Sarah Cereghini:** Co-CLA LAD Italy, living and farming on the Apennine hills near Bologna with her husband and five children. Primary school teacher, scout leader.

**Anna Maria Tarchi:** Area Secretary, ACLA of LLL Italy, mother of two wonderful young ladies: Alice 21 and Francesca 18. Born in Brescia and moved for love to Sondrio (North Italy) with her daughters’ father. Leader since 2003.

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**Reminder!**

The Leader Accreditation Department will no longer be collecting Leader and Group numbers on the SARs.

**Look for a new form for the Spring 2021 SAR.**

### April SAR Deadlines

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<td>CLA to RALA</td>
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<tr>
<td>RALA to ALA</td>
<td>June 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALA to DLAD</td>
<td>June 15</td>
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<td>DLAD to LLLI Board</td>
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<td>CLA to ALA</td>
<td>May 15</td>
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<td>ALA to DLAD</td>
<td>June 1</td>
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<td>DLAD to LLLI Board</td>
<td>July 1</td>
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<th>Great Britain and Ligue La Leche</th>
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<td>ALA to DLAD</td>
<td>May 15</td>
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<td>DLAD to LLLI Board</td>
<td>July 1</td>
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Semi-Annual Report: Compilation October 2020

*Note: The information from the previous SAR is indicated in parentheses. “Length of Applications” shows the median length in months; subtotals and LLLI total are averages of the medians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LLL Canada, Ligue La Leche, Great Britain, New Zealand</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>New Applications</th>
<th>Discontinued Applications</th>
<th>Accreditations</th>
<th>Length of Applications (Months)</th>
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<tr>
<td>LLL Canada</td>
<td>47 (67)</td>
<td>22 (11)</td>
<td>18 (17)</td>
<td>18 (12)</td>
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<td>Ligue La Leche</td>
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<td>2 (0)</td>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>117 (117)</td>
<td>24 (39)</td>
<td>10 (13)</td>
<td>14 (13)</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>6 (7)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>0 (5)</td>
<td>NA (10.0)</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>53 (58)</strong></td>
<td><strong>31 (36)</strong></td>
<td><strong>32 (34)</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.0 (14.6)</strong></td>
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<th>New Applications</th>
<th>Discontinued Applications</th>
<th>Accreditations</th>
<th>Length of Applications (Months)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>362 (382)</td>
<td>64 (78)</td>
<td>52 (52)</td>
<td>35 (45)</td>
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<td>International</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa Asia Middle East</td>
<td>49 (50)</td>
<td>18 (14)</td>
<td>12 (8)</td>
<td>10 (15)</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
<td>193 (147)</td>
<td>31 (30)</td>
<td>12 (22)</td>
<td>14 (8)</td>
<td>16.0 (15.0)</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotals</strong></td>
<td><strong>604 (579)</strong></td>
<td><strong>113 (122)</strong></td>
<td><strong>76 (82)</strong></td>
<td><strong>59 (68)</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.2 (17.0)</strong></td>
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<th>Applicants</th>
<th>New Applications</th>
<th>Discontinued Applications</th>
<th>Accreditations</th>
<th>Length of Applications (Months)</th>
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<td>LLL Alliance</td>
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<td>24 (46)</td>
<td>24 (11)</td>
<td>26 (26)</td>
<td>9.3 (11.5)</td>
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<td>LLL USA</td>
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<td>51 (57)</td>
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<td>28 (53)</td>
<td>8.0 (9.5)</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotals</strong></td>
<td><strong>244 (284)</strong></td>
<td><strong>75 (103)</strong></td>
<td><strong>58 (37)</strong></td>
<td><strong>54 (79)</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.7 (10.5)</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>LLLI Total</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>New Applications</th>
<th>Discontinued Applications</th>
<th>Accreditations</th>
<th>Length of Applications (Months)</th>
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<tr>
<td>LLLI Total</td>
<td>1,039 (1,071)</td>
<td>241 (283)</td>
<td>165 (155)</td>
<td>145 (181)</td>
<td>13.1 (14.5)</td>
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Comparison of Four Reporting Periods

Note: Abbreviations used are: LLL Canada (LLLC), Ligue La Leche (Ligue), Great Britain (GB), New Zealand (NZ), Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (AAME). “United States” refers to LLL Alliance and LLL USA.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LLLC, Ligue, GB, NZ</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>191</td>
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<tr>
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Here is a question from a CLA to her support person about an Applicant who weaned her child in a unique way. Thank you to the LAD representatives who submitted their responses. There is no single right answer. Sharing possible approaches can help us consider how we might choose to respond.

**Dear Angelina ALA,**

I received a question from an ACLA and am not sure how to respond. The ACLA is working with an Applicant who, along with other techniques, weaned her toddler by painting something bitter on her breasts. The ACLA is wondering how this approach fits with the weaning concept and how the Applicant should discuss her weaning experience, if accredited.

I look forward to your thoughts on this.

Yours, Concepcion CLA

**Sample Responses**

Dear Concepcion,

What an interesting question you ask. It’s been a long time since I heard that someone used a bad tasting substance to encourage weaning. The ACLA is concerned that the mother’s understanding of how Leaders approach weaning may not be in accord with the LLL concept. Sharing that experience, while representing LLL, may cause confusion to others. To add another aspect to her and your concern, I can also see a link here to the loving guidance concept.

First, would you agree that many of us Leaders have come to a deeper understanding of the significance of some of the concepts as we grow as Leaders and mothers? I know I have! Following this idea, the ACLA may begin a conversation with the mother to explore how her parenting has changed since coming to LLL, and how she has seen herself incorporate LLL philosophy more and more into her parenting decisions. When someone wants to represent LLL, it is often because they want to embrace the philosophy as much as wanting to help others with breastfeeding.

They could then look at what it means to wean—the child’s ability to satisfy in other ways all the needs that previously were met through breastfeeding. When the little one is able to accept other foods, drink, people, and activities in place of meeting those needs directly from mother, then the child is weaning. And weaning is a process, not an event, so we are looking for progress toward acquiring these skills over time. This is where we connect to loving guidance.

Loving guidance means understanding the child’s developmental stage and providing discipline (showing the way) when needed. We can link these two concepts by asking the mother what she intended to tell her child by making coming to the breast an unpleasant experience. Was there something going on in her family that seemed to necessitate a quick weaning? Sometimes there are health concerns for the mother, or a family dynamic or culture that pushes the weaning in an abrupt way.
This conversation would lead to asking whether the mother would approach weaning in this way in the future, or looking back, is she satisfied with this technique? Would she do things differently with what she knows about the abilities of a child the age of hers when weaning occurred?

Lastly, the ACLA can move to the idea of how she would represent this concept as a Leader. What has she heard the other Leaders say about weaning? What sources might she use when talking to parents?

Concepcion, if possible I would suggest the mother read *How Weaning Happens* by Diane Bengson. It covers the topic from weaning in the first few weeks to when the child is school age. If she is able to read the book, the ACLA could ask her to write a paragraph about what she thought and how she might use the information as a Leader.

I’ve included much information in this letter. I am available if you want to give me a call or have an online meeting, perhaps with the ACLA also, to discuss how to approach this situation. Thank you for continuing in your position and facing these hard questions, Concepcion. It is because of your dedication that LLL is able to continue to accredit new Leaders in your Area. Please let me know how this develops.

Sincerely,
Angelina
Joan Peloso
Tallahassee, Florida, USA

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Dear Concepcion,

It’s good that the ACLA contacted you about this Leader Applicant, whose approach to weaning her toddler does not fit well with La Leche League’s weaning concept. As Leaders are expected to model LLL philosophy to mothers who come to them for breastfeeding information and support, it is important for an Applicant to personally agree with the ten LLL philosophy concepts.

When discussing weaning with the Applicant, it may be helpful if the ACLA reminds her that babies and young children have absolute trust in their primary caregiver, who is usually their mother. A mother who weans her child by putting a foul-tasting substance on her breasts or using paint to give them a frightening appearance can break trust with the child. Her breasts are no longer a safe place where her baby or toddler may rest. The altered taste or appearance of mother’s breasts, where her child formerly found nourishment, love, warmth and security, may be traumatic for the little one.

If she has not already done so, the ACLA can carefully ask the Applicant why she chose to wean her toddler by making her breasts taste bitter. During their discussion the ACLA will be able to ascertain whether the Applicant is open to weaning future children (if there are any) in a way that respects their needs, and encouraging other mothers to wean their children with respect. If she does not want to represent this philosophy concept, the ACLA can suggest that she reconsider her commitment to La Leche League leadership.

Yours,
Angelina
Vicky Reynell
Knysna, South Africa
Dear Concepcion,

The ACLA is right in thinking this approach to weaning does not fit comfortably with LLL philosophy—not just the weaning concept but also loving guidance and the broader philosophy of understanding and responding to the child's needs.

At the same time, as Leaders and Applicants, we are first and foremost parents and don't always act in ways that fit not only LLL's but also our personal philosophy. Most of these acts are one-time occurrences and do not have long-term consequences—but others do. An idea for weaning might work quickly and easily—the weaning is achieved and the parents have no reason to go back on it. Several concepts used to contain the words "ideal" or "ideally": the weaning concept is the only one to retain it. Ideally, weaning is at the child's pace but LLL also recognises that the mother also plays a role and that circumstances might lead the mother's role to be more active.

The ACLA might begin by responding to the Applicant as a Leader responds to a mother, acknowledging and empathising with the reasons she took this route and responding to her feelings about the outcome.

Acting then as a LAD representative, the ACLA could go on to ask the Applicant how she sees her experience in relation to the concepts. The reply will provide more clues about how to proceed.

Elements to look for are:

- why she chose this approach: how she was experiencing and feeling at the time; what support she had;
- how she feels about it now, especially in relation to her goal of being an LLL Leader;
- how the child reacted and how the mother responded;
- what other techniques were used and how they fit LLL philosophy;
- whether she believes this was a positive experience that she would repeat with a future child and/or recommend to others.

If the response to the latter points is in the affirmative, more discussion will be needed to help her understand LLL philosophy and explore how she feels about representing that philosophy. Most often, the Applicant can see, in retrospect, other things she might have done and that she could suggest to parents who come to her for weaning information and ideas. It is neither necessary nor desirable, for a Leader to share her personal experience.

Good luck to you both. Please let me know how this discussion goes and don't hesitate to get back to me if either of you has further questions.

LLLove
Angelina ALA
Eileen Harrison
Alsace, France
Dear Alicia ACLA,

How can I help the Applicant I’m working with learn effective communication skills? She is friendly with everyone at meetings but tends to speak authoritatively.

Warmly,
Sophia supporting Leader

How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Linda Wieser, Contributing Editor, at: wieser.linda@gmail.com

Updates from LAD Council

NEW Pre-Application Information Web Page
This page on the LLLI website https://www.llli.org/pre-application-information/ was created so that the Leader’s Pre-Application Packet would be readily available to Leaders. It also includes “Helping Others Become Leaders,” Chapter 5 in the Leader’s Handbook. Leaders are encouraged to read this chapter if this is their first time working with a Leader Applicant or if they haven’t supported an Applicant in a while. Leaders are also reminded to have a detailed pre-application discussion with the potential Applicant and to contact the Area CLA if there are any questions or concerns.
Support Concept
The Father Concept has been revised and approved by the LLLI Board on second reading at the January 2021 meeting. It is now called the Support Concept and reads:

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.

The explanation for this concept was approved in October 2019. It reads:

Fathers, co-parents, partners and/or close family members are usually the first circle of support for the breastfeeding dyad. (1) Support can consist of baby-care, mother-care, and advocacy for the breastfeeding relationship to family, friends and healthcare providers. Baby-care may include bathing, changing diapers, and soothing and/or playing with the baby. Mother-care may include ensuring the availability of healthful foods and beverages, handling household tasks, and encouraging the mother at times of stress and doubt. Advocacy may include providing encouragement and protection for the breastfeeding relationship by fending off unsolicited and unhelpful suggestions from those who may be well-meaning but uninformed. Relationships between the baby and the father, the co-parent, the mother’s partner, and/or close family members do not replace the breastfeeding relationship but complement it and can be an important element in the child’s development from early infancy.


The following documents on the LAD pages https://www.llli.org/leader-accreditation-department-lad/ have been updated to reflect this change in wording for the concept:

- Thinking about LLL Leadership? (Jan 2021)
- Concept Explanations (PSR) (Jan 2021)
- LLL Purpose, Mission, Philosophy (Jan 2021)
- Personal History of Breastfeeding and Mothering (Jan 2021)
- Appendix 1 to LADders, LLL Philosophy Notebook (Jan 2021)
- Chapter 5 Leader’s Handbook “Helping Others Become Leaders”

Please note that the Leader Applicant’s Resource Kit (LARK) and the Leader’s Guide to the LARK will be updated in the near future.

Resources Added to the LAD Web Pages
The following are available on the LAD Representative Resources page:
https://www.llli.org/leader-accreditation-department-lad/lad-representative-resources/:

- Writing with Respect (article from Dec 2020 LADders)
- ACLA Orientation Checklist (Jan 2021)
- CLA Orientation Checklist (Jan 2021)

Leader’s Handbook Update
For Applicants who do not have access to the LLLI website and Leader Applicant pages, please share with them the pdf version of the Leader’s Handbook available on the Application Resources page:
https://www.llli.org/leader-accreditation-department-lad/application-resources/. This resource has been updated to include Chapter 6: The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. Two chapters are currently being reviewed and finalized: Chapter 1 Helping One-to-One and Chapter 7 Meeting Ideas.
The order of the chapters in the Leader’s Handbook has been changed to reflect the order of Leader responsibilities. This is the new chapter order:

- Chapter 1 - Helping One-to-One - available soon
- Chapter 2 - Leading a Series Meeting
- Chapter 3 - Managing the LLL Group
- Chapter 4 - LLL Resources
- Chapter 5 - Helping Others Become Leaders
- Chapter 6 - The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
- Chapter 7 - Meeting Ideas - available soon

This change has been made for the online Leader’s Handbook, https://www.llli.org/leader-pages/leader-handbook/. The pdf version will be revised as soon as Chapter 1 Helping One-to-One is finalized.

SAR Forms
LAD representatives will no longer need to collect data on number of Leaders and number of Groups for their Area. The revised forms are available on the LLLI website on the LAD Representative Resources page: https://www.llli.org/leader-accreditation-department-lad/ lad-representative-resources/ Your LAD support person will send you the form you will need to use prior to the end of the reporting period (October 15 or April 15).

LAD Pages in Other Languages and Translations
If you would like to have a LAD page: https://www.llli.org/pre-application-information/ for Leader accreditation resources in your language, please contact Linda Wieser at wieser.linda@gmail.com. Linda is willing to create a computer-generated translation using DeepL Translator for any resources needing translation. Other translators have found that it is easier to edit a computer-generated translation than to translate from the original English document.

LAD pages in Spanish are in process.
Charlotte Allam  
Scotland, United Kingdom

My name is Charlotte, I'm 45 and I live on the Shetland Islands with my husband, Steven, who is from Shetland, and my two children, Jemima who has just turned six, and William who is two. I was born and raised in the southeast of England and, until 18 months ago, had spent the past 25 years or so studying, working and living in and near to London.

My background is in the performing arts; I trained professionally in dance and musical theatre, and then studied acting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. I worked mostly in the theatre—in the West End and on tour—and also did small roles on television and radio. I did a lot of temporary jobs in between - more than I care to remember! I also taught drama—mostly to children—and am a qualified yoga teacher. I stopped paid work (for now) when my daughter was born.

My first contact with La Leche League was via their online resources. Eventually, I started attending LLL Barnet, which was a bit of a drive from my home in St Albans, when Jemima was 15 months. I was in the process of finding out about leadership in Barnet when a Group started in St Albans and we all agreed it made sense for me to be more local. I co-led LLL St Albans, now LLL Hertfordshire, for a year or so before making the move north. Now, I run LLL Shetland, a new Group. We had been due to have our first meeting when lockdown hit and have only existed virtually.

I’ve been co-leading monthly online meetings with my nearest neighbour, LLL Aberdeen which is a mere 260 miles (418 km) away, and co-leading monthly online antenatal Beginning Breastfeeding courses with some of the other Scottish Leaders. It’s been a fantastic way to meet and get to know them. I am currently a CLA in orientation and am happily doing my first LAD work with three Leader Applicants, one of whom is with my former Group.

In my limited free time, I enjoy yoga, reading, cooking, walking, writing—mostly help forms these days—and, of course, the arts.
Hello everyone! My name is Devon Miller, the newest Regional Administrator of Leader Accreditation (RALA) in LLL USA LAD. I’ve been a Leader since 2013 and in the LAD since 2014. I live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA, with my husband of 17 years, Nick, a public school music teacher, and daughters Ocean, soon-to-be 12, and Sky, 8. Ocean is really into figure skating, skateboarding, roller skating and freaking out her parents. Sky loves soccer and biking and her friends. We homeschool. Our family is vegan, my husband and I since 2002 and my children their whole lives. I volunteer at a farmed animal sanctuary and coordinate the volunteer program there so that’s a big part of my life. I also help a nonprofit here in Pennsylvania that fights against gerrymandering. In case you’re lucky enough not to know what that means, here’s a definition: to manipulate the boundaries of an electoral constituency so as to favor one party or class. I am an IBCLC but not currently practicing. I’ve worked in a bunch of departments and committees in LLL and the one thing I never wanted to give up was LAD work. I love working with Applicants. I love leading meetings as well and I can’t wait until we can start those up again. La Leche League is a huge part of my life. I fell in love with it right away, with my first meeting under two amazing Leaders who inspired me to be like them. I’m excited to extend and deepen my LAD work.

From left: Sky, Devon, Ocean

Sarah Ingall
South Yorkshire, United Kingdom

When my children were babies there were no LLL Groups locally, but I was persuaded by an amazing breastfeeding advocate to train as a peer supporter, using a syllabus originally derived by La Leche League. I was given the opportunity to go to a national LLL conference in Derbyshire, England, which was my first proper experience of the charitable organisation. After a lovely day of talks, workshops and getting to know people, my youngest child, George, spectacularly threw up all over me during the closing session of the day. Several wonderful Leaders rushed to my aid, helping me to clean up and offering me muslin cloths and even a clean top for me to wear. I realised that I’d found my “village” and I started my application for LLL leadership not long afterwards.

It will be ten years this summer since I was accredited through the Ten New Groups project and set up LLL Barnsley. The Group quickly blossomed and I’m now supported by a wonderful co-Leader, Ruth Haller-East. For the last three years, I’ve also been a Leader at the nearby LLL Sheffield Group. I initially took it on to stop the Group folding when a former Leader retired, but I loved it so much that I stayed and Jacqueline Fenner, a former Leader Applicant from this Group has now joined me as my Sheffield co-Leader. As you can imagine, being involved in two Groups certainly keeps me busy! I take local and national calls, support mothers on Facebook and via email, and I lead regular online meetings on Zoom. I’m also a District Coordinator.
My two children Agatha and George are now 14 and 12 respectively and have grown up with LLL. We live in a village in South Yorkshire, along with my husband Tom who works as a television reporter for the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). I work part-time as a radio producer and presenter for the BBC in Sheffield, working mostly on the Sunday morning faith programme, with occasional dabbles into BBC Radio 2 and BBC Radio 4. When I’m not working or “LLL-ing,” I love gardening and walking, which is just as well really given that there’s not much else to do during the lockdowns we’ve experienced in the United Kingdom!

I’d toyed with the idea of becoming an ACLA for a while before finally taking the plunge. Although it can be challenging at times, I’ve always enjoyed working with Applicants as a supporting Leader. I love seeing them prepare for leadership and it’s an amazing feeling when they are ready to spread their wings and fly. I feel very proud and privileged to be able to support Applicants as an ACLA and I’m looking forward to the day when I can accredit the first Leader. I owe a debt of gratitude to the ACLAs I’ve worked with in the past who helped to inspire me to take on this role.

At the Shark Valley observation tower in the Everglades National Park in Florida, USA.
From left: Sarah, Agatha (14), Tom, George (12).
This is my view from my bedroom window. You can see the remains of our snowman and the children’s sledges and toys we haven’t tidied away. We’ve been so lucky to have this lovely garden to be in when so many other places have been closed to us this year. Also behind the fence at the end is an allotment site: I have my name on the waiting list to get a small plot that I can use for growing vegetables. I’m excited about that and it’s lovely to feel like there is something to look forward to and plan for.

Clare Davidson, Derbyshire, England
This is the view from the front of the house, looking out towards the North Sea and an area called Dury Voe. It means space, light, history and change. This croft (small farm) has been in my husband’s family for hundreds of years; the remains of the house in the distance used to belong to his Grand Uncle Robbie. You can see one of the inter-island ferries and the helicopter, Oscar-Charlie, performing its weekly mock rescue mission! We’ve had some snow on the ground for nearly a month now. Last year, it was relentless gales and storms!

Charlotte Allam, Shetland, Scotland

A picture looking out the kitchen window with sunrise in the clouds. The light pink flowers are camellias. The green ground is actually weeds and in the back of the picture are small white boxes covering new cherry trees. The owl house is the tall box sticking up all alone.

Lori Bryan, California, USA
Here is the view from my window. I love Canadian winters. Our building is at the end of a bridge over the Rideau Canal (to the left of the picture) which is the longest skating rink in the world—7.8 km (4.7 miles). This year’s cold crisp February weather has made the ice perfect for those who live near the canal to get plenty of exercise.

Lesley Robinson, Ottawa, Canada

I confess I asked for photos from others because my own view isn’t very inspiring – as you can see it’s mainly rooftops and what feels like a permanently grey sky. Over in the distance is a hill with some woods and a tower and we’re really looking forward to going back there once lockdown restrictions here lift enough to let us travel even that far!

Helen Lloyd, Somerset, England
This is the view outside my back window, showcasing the first of multiple rare snow and ice events that we have had this winter in Austin, Texas, USA. My children loved being out in this particular storm because the snow was heavy and perfect for making a snowman. A month later we were a part of the statewide electrical outage and energy crisis, leaving us without power and clean water for many days. Through it all, and all that has happened over this past year, I have been so grateful for my family and dear friends, especially in LLL and the LAD.

Karin Ali, Texas, United States
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