



LLL LEADERSHIP: IS IT FOR YOU?



Part A

Examining Your Options

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Notes - for your use

LLL LEADERSHIP: IS IT FOR YOU?

- EXAMINING YOUR OPTIONS -

We are delighted that you have an interest in helping other mothers and babies to share the wonderful benefits of breastfeeding. As mothers who have discovered the joy and satisfaction of breastfeeding, we want to pass on what we have learned about the art of breastfeeding so that other women and babies can experience it for themselves.

It may be that you turned to a friend or relation or perhaps an LLL Leader for help or reassurance with breastfeeding. Sometimes a 'sounding board' for a mother's worries is all that is needed to restore her confidence in her ability to breastfeed. At other times having access to specific information is required. Part of an LLL Leader's preparation involves learning where to go for further information or support if a mother's query is beyond her immediate resources.

The information provided here is intended to help you work out whether LLL leadership is right for you.

If you decide you would like to submit an application, a form is available in LLL Leadership: Is It For You? Part B. Your group Leader can provide you with the form (either electronically or printed) when you have discussed the Pre-application Checklist together (pages 17-19): this discussion is called pre-application dialogue.

If you do not live near an LLL group, you will be put in touch with a Leader for this dialogue (see page 15). You may decide, however, that now is not the right time for you or that you would feel happier helping your LLL group in another way. Other options are available and are discussed later.

You may have attended a few LLL meetings – these are a great introduction to what LLL is all about: mother-to-mother support, providing help and information (rather than advice), enabling mothers to make their own informed decisions based on their knowledge of their babies and their circumstances. Working with the other Leaders in her group and with the support of the Leader Department, she will find the best ways for her to fulfil the responsibilities of a Leader.

WHAT DOES AN LLL LEADER DO?

- Leads Series Meetings or LLL breastfeeding café
- Manages an LLL group
- Keeps up-to-date with breastfeeding information
- Helps mothers one-to-one, e.g. by phone/email/post
- Works with Leader Applicants and mothers thinking about LLL leadership



I couldn't possibly do all of that!

Teamwork, identifying priorities and being realistic will help you to enjoy being an LLL Leader.

If you find you can meet the needs of your family and your group and still have time and energy for more, these are some possible extras:

- Run antenatal breastfeeding classes
- Raise funds for the group
- Talk to school children on child development courses
- Meet with teenage mothers
- Attend meetings for breastfeeding support organisations and health professionals to plan joint programmes and events
- Write articles for LLL publications
- Help plan and organise LLL workshops, study days and conferences
- Lead a session at an LLL District/National workshop or National Conference



Is all of this voluntary work?

Most of an LLL Leader's work is voluntary (you can claim expenses from your group). Occasionally it is appropriate to be paid a fee, such as for running antenatal breastfeeding classes, and make a donation to your group. Guidelines on payment and insurance are available from the Leader Department.

HOW CAN I FIT LLL LEADERSHIP INTO MY LIFE?

- It is a balancing act! Just as you wondered how you would cope with a baby, and then perhaps a second baby and toddler, you discover how to juggle many different things in your life. If LLL is important to you, it can become one of those balls in the air.
- "Family First" is something we firmly believe in, and we understand how family needs often have to take priority. This does not mean that LLL comes last, and we hope that your Leader application will prove to be an important priority for you too.
- LLL does take time: planning meetings, answering queries, getting together with your co-Leaders to plan for and make decisions related to your LLL group, liaising with the Leader Department, attending workshops and conferences. We hope you will find that these activities enrich your life, providing a wonderful network of friends and support for your breastfeeding and parenting choices, both now and as your children grow older.

WHAT DOES LEADER ACCREDITATION INVOLVE?

If you decide to apply for leadership and your application is accepted, you will be known as a Leader Applicant and work towards Leader accreditation.

Leader Applicants communicate on a regular basis with the Leaders they are working with. We often use the word “dialogue” to refer to these conversations, which can take place by email, telephone, Skype, postal mail or in person. When an application for leadership begins, you will:

- Receive a range of application resources, including a *Leader Applicant Handbook*, Module Resources and sample set of LLLGB information sheets; you will also need a copy of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and the *Leader's Handbook*.
- Dialogue with a member of the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) about your breastfeeding and mothering experience, and reflect on your experience in relation to LLL philosophy. Your LAD representative may ask you to explore some areas of work more fully. She may share extra reading material with you to enlarge your understanding of some aspect/s of the application. She wants to work with you as flexibly as possible, taking account of your preferred learning style. Each Leader application is unique.
- Work with your supporting Leader (that's the group Leader who recommends you and helps you through your application). Together you will discuss aspects of LLL leadership and practise how to help mothers who will contact you for information or support.



I don't have a group near me.

How can I demonstrate a commitment to LLL?

- *Isolated Members.* It is possible to work through the application with only the support of a LAD representative. However, if at all possible it is best to make contact with a local LLL group and Leader and discuss your situation with her.

If your nearest group is too far away for you to attend meetings regularly, perhaps you can arrange to borrow books from their group library, or at least attend a few meetings so that you know what happens at an LLL meeting. (for more information, see page 15, 'Isolated members')

If there is no local LLL group near you, one way of showing your commitment to LLL is simply by joining the organisation. You can also show your commitment in such ways as reading as much LLL material as you can and, if possible, by attending LLL workshops or conferences.

HOW LONG DOES THE APPLICATION TAKE?

- Many Leader Applicants find that they can complete the required application work in around six months.
- Some applicants may need more - or less - time; it depends on the individual.
- It is not a race - we want you to go at your own pace but we are also there to help you keep up the momentum and enable you to reach your goal of LLL leadership.
- Each mother's situation is individual - you may have a very active toddler - or maybe twins! - or you may be expecting another baby. Or there may be other events, such as a house move or illness, that prolong the application period.
- Communicating with your LAD representative is the key to progressing at a pace that suits you, just let her know if you need more time to respond.



ARE THERE ANY REQUIREMENTS I MUST MEET BEFORE I CAN APPLY?

La Leche League Leaders represent the organisation, La Leche League. Central to LLL is its philosophy and Leaders demonstrate LLL philosophy in action. Talking with you about your breastfeeding and mothering experience, your supporting Leader will help you explore the extent to which your **experience and ideas are a 'good match' with LLL philosophy.** There may be areas where you disagree or have questions. It is important to discuss these with your supporting Leader beforehand so that together you can work out whether you meet the **'Pre-requisites to applying for leadership'** to represent La Leche League. If you do not, there are still ways in which you can help other mothers and stay involved in LLL (see page 13).

LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership

1. Personal Breastfeeding Experience

- At least nine months breastfeeding experience before applying for LLL leadership.
- Your baby was nourished with mother's milk until there was a nutritional need for other foods (i.e. about the middle of the first year for a healthy, full-term baby).
- If your baby has weaned, he or she was nursed for at least about a year and the transition from breastfeeding respected the baby's needs.

Note: Special consideration may be given to a woman whose personal breastfeeding experience is outside the realm of a normal course of breastfeeding.

2. Mothering Experience

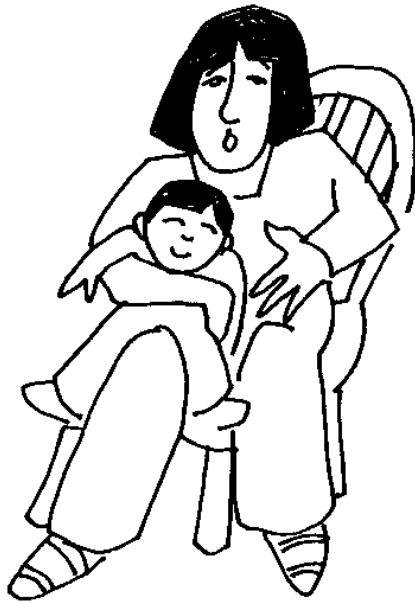
- Mother values nursing at the breast as the optimal way to nourish, nurture and comfort her baby.
- She recognises, understands and responds to her baby's need for her presence as well as for her milk.
- She manages any separation from her baby with sensitivity and respect for the baby's needs.

3. Organisational Experience

- Is a current member of LLL.
- Supports LLL purpose and philosophy (see LLL Concepts, page 21).
- Has attended at least one series of meetings (where available) and has demonstrated a commitment to LLL.
- Owns and is familiar with the contents of the most recent edition of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* as a primary resource for LLL Leaders.
- Has a recommendation from an LLL Leader.

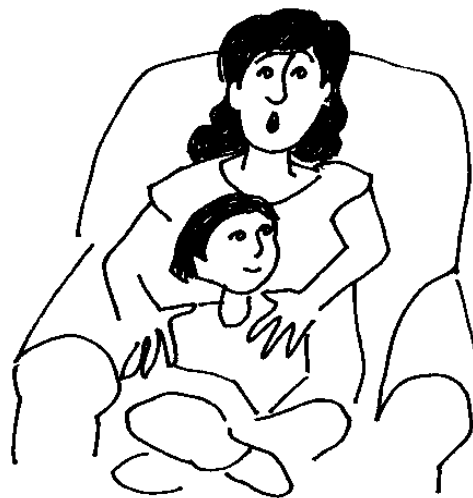
4. Personal Traits

- Has sufficient command of language to complete the application and preparation for accreditation and to fulfil the responsibilities of LLL leadership.
- Accepting and respectful attitude toward others.
- Exhibits warmth and empathy towards others.
- Demonstrates or is willing to develop effective communication skills.



But I've only had one baby!

Every mother in LLL brings her unique experience, her warmth and empathy and other skills to her LLL work, whether she has had one baby or several.



But I gave my baby solids at three months because I was advised to do so!

There may be one or other areas where you feel you do not meet the pre-requisites to applying for leadership. You are not alone! Many of us Leaders have had similar concerns. The important thing is to talk over your situation with your group Leader.

If it turns out that you are unable to proceed with an application at this time, do consider some of the suggested options on pages 12-13.

WHAT WILL I DO DURING THE APPLICATION?

- Dialogue about your personal experience of breastfeeding and mothering.
- Explore your understanding and acceptance of LLL philosophy as expressed in *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*.
- Learn about such topics as breastfeeding management and challenges to breastfeeding.
- Use the *Leader Applicant Handbook* to guide your learning.
- Read a range of books and other publications.
- Practise active listening and counselling skills with your supporting Leader.
- Learn about La Leche League as an organisation at local, national and international levels.
- Learn about leading LLL Series Meetings and about fulfilling other Leader responsibilities.
- We encourage Leader Applicants to attend LLL National Conferences, District/National Workshops and LLL Communication Skills workshops.



LEADER ACCREDITATION - WHAT IS IT?

To be accredited as an LLL Leader, a mother will have:

- Met the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership (page 8)
- Nursed her baby for about a year
- Demonstrated an understanding of LLL philosophy (pages 19-20)
- Conveyed her knowledge of basic breastfeeding management, outlined in 'Breastfeeding Management Skills Criteria' *
- Demonstrated leadership skills and attitudes, outlined in 'Leadership Skills Criteria' *
- Completed the LLL Leader accreditation process
- Signed the LLL Leader Statement of Commitment
- Paid her Leader accreditation fee

* Available from your Leader in the following publications
LLLI Policies and Standing Rules (PSR) Appx 18, 'Applying for Leadership'
reprinted in Leader's Handbook (2003 edition) pages 220-1
and included in LLL Leadership: Is It For You? Part B

I AM STILL INTERESTED, BUT DO NOT THINK THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR ME

- You can still attend District/National Workshops and Communication Skills workshops, which are open to mothers interested in leadership.
- Read as many books and LLL publications as you can on the subjects of breastfeeding and parenting. Ask your group Leader to recommend publications, which may be available from your group library or ordered from the LLLGB SHOP www.lllgbbooks.co.uk . This can be very worthwhile preparation before applying for leadership.
- Ask your group Leader about Evaluation Meetings. Taking part in these meetings is an excellent way of keeping involved with your group and gaining an insight into the role of an LLL Leader.

I DON'T THINK I MEET THE PREREQUISITES TO APPLYING FOR LEADERSHIP

- Talk to your group Leader. She will be happy to discuss any questions you might have.
- Might there come a time when you would meet the pre-requisites for applying for leadership? Perhaps you could delay making your application until a later date.



I feel so disappointed. I really thought LLL leadership would be a way for me to help mothers and 'pay back' all the support I have received.

LLL recognises that women in your position have a great deal to offer other breastfeeding women. We hope you will stay involved with your local LLL group and know that we value the contribution you make.

I DON'T THINK LLL LEADERSHIP IS FOR ME, BUT I STILL WANT TO HELP BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS

- You can still be a tremendous support by being active in your LLL group: perhaps you could take on a group job, such as librarian or treasurer.
- Attending LLL Series Meetings or LLL breastfeeding café and offering your experience is of enormous help to a new mother.
- Offer to host a Series Meeting or other meeting.
- Perhaps you could help by publicising your group, distributing meeting notices to clinics and surgeries.
- Helping to raise funds for your group could help provide more LLL information sheets, booklets and books for your group library.
- Some health authorities provide training for breastfeeding peer supporters.
- We would ideally love to help you find a place within LLL for your enthusiasm to help other breastfeeding mothers. You may decide, however, that breastfeeding counselling is what you are drawn to but for one reason or another LLL leadership is not the way to reach your goal. You might find that training with another breastfeeding support organisation would enable you to do so. Many breastfeeding counsellors with other organisations are members of their local LLL group and work cooperatively with LLL Leaders at both local and national level.
- Perhaps a more academic course appeals to you, leading to a health professional qualification: the IBLCE (International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners) provides training for Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs). For more information about Lactation Consultants in Great Britain (LCGB) contact www.lcgb.org or email info@lcgb.org

**I THINK I WANT TO APPLY,
BUT I HAVE SOME MORE QUESTIONS**

- It is important that you talk to your group Leader before making an application. Look through the Pre-application Checklist (page 17) of things to discuss with her.
- Write down your questions in the space below, if you wish, while they are fresh in your mind.





YES, I DEFINITELY WANT TO APPLY! WHAT DO I DO NOW??

1. Pre-application Dialogue

Make sure you have discussed everything on the Pre-application Checklist (page 16) with the LLL Leader who will be recommending you. Usually this is the Leader who will be working with you during your application period and she is referred to as your supporting Leader.

• *Isolated members*

If there is no LLL group near you, please email enquiries@laleche.org.uk with subject line 'Isolated member' or write to:

LLLGB (Isolated member)
PO Box 29, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7NP

Please tell us what contact you have had with LLL and whether and where you have attended an LLL meeting or talked with a Leader. We will let you know as soon as there is a supporting Leader for you to work with and begin your pre-application dialogue. This can be conducted by phone, email, Skype or post.

2. Ask your supporting Leader for the three-page application form (she has it in LLL Leadership: Is It For You? Part B).
 - c Complete the application form, either as an e-form or print it out.
N.B. Page 3 of the application form includes an LLLGB SHOP Order Form for you to order your *Leader's Handbook* and other publications.
 - c Give or forward your application form to your supporting Leader.
3. Your supporting Leader needs to fill in a Leader Recommendation form (in LLL Leadership: Is It For You? Part B). She will then send it together with your completed three-page application form to your Area Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA).
4. If your application is accepted, you will be invoiced for your application fee and any publications you order.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Area CLA will consider your application. Sometimes more background information or further pre-application dialogue is needed before the CLA can accept an application.

When an application is accepted, the CLA notifies the LLLGB Office to process the application fee. The LLLGB Office will invoice you for your application fee and LLLGB SHOP order. When these payments are received, the CLA is notified and the application can begin.

The CLA will allocate a LAD representative to work with you. It may be the CLA herself, or an Associate Coordinator of Leader Accreditation. If there is likely to be a delay before the Associate/Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (A/CLA) can begin to work with you, you will be informed.

As soon as possible, usually within four weeks, you will hear from your A/CLA, inviting you to begin your application.

THANK YOU for taking the time to read this information about LLL leadership. We hope that you now feel positive about whatever choice you make, whether or not LLL leadership is the right direction for you just now.



PRE-APPLICATION CHECKLIST

TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR LLL GROUP/SPONSORING LEADER

A. LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership

1. Personal Breastfeeding Experience

- c At least nine months breastfeeding experience before applying for LLL leadership.
- c *Your baby was nourished with mother's milk until there was a nutritional need for other foods (i.e. about the middle of the first year for a healthy, full-term baby).*
- c *If your baby has weaned, he or she was nursed for at least about a year and the transition from breastfeeding respected the baby's needs.*

Note: Special consideration may be given to a woman whose personal breastfeeding experience is outside the realm of a normal course of breastfeeding.

2. Mothering Experience

- c Mother values nursing at the breast as the optimal way to nourish, nurture and comfort her baby.
- c *She recognises, understands and responds to her baby's need for her presence as well as for her milk.*
- c She manages any separation from her baby with sensitivity and *respect for the baby's needs.*

3. Organisational Experience

- c Is a current member of LLL.
- c Supports LLL purpose and philosophy (see LLL Concepts, page 20).
- c Has attended at least one series of meetings (where available) and has demonstrated a commitment to LLL.
- c Owns and is familiar with the contents of the most recent edition of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* as a primary resource for LLL Leaders.
- c Has a recommendation from an LLL Leader.

4. Personal Traits

- c Has sufficient command of language to complete the application and preparation for accreditation and to fulfil the responsibilities of LLL leadership.
- c Accepting and respectful attitude toward others.
- c Exhibits warmth and empathy towards others.
- c Demonstrates or is willing to develop effective communication skills.

B. La Leche League Philosophy (see page 21 for list of Concepts)

- c Discuss each concept separately
- c and all as they relate to one another.

C. The work of a Leader

c

Mission Statement

La Leche League aims to help mothers breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and the mother.

D. LLL Leadership Preparation

- c *Leader Applicant Handbook* and other application resources
- c Dialogue with A/CLA
- c Working with supporting Leader: Leader Applicant meetings, where possible
- c LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation

E. Published Resources

Required Reading during an application includes

- c *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* 2010
- c *Leader's Handbook* 2003
- c *LLL Leadership: Is It For You? Part A, 'Examining Your Options'*
- c LLL information sheets and booklets
- c *LLLGB Leader Applicant Handbook* and Module Resources

Recommended Reading and Resources include

- See Leader Applicant Reading List in Module Resources
- Breastfeeding Answer Book 2003* or *Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple*
- Feedback* *Leaven* (online)
- Breastfeeding Matters* *Breastfeeding Today* (online)
- LLLI website (www.lalecheleague.org) LLL group library
- LLLGB website (www.laleche.org.uk) LLLGB audio library

F. LLL Activities

- Evaluation Meetings Toddler meetings
- Extra group meetings **Other groups' meetings**
- Chapter Meetings District workshops
- LLLGB National Conference National Workshops
- Interested mothers meetings/workshops
- Leader/Leader Applicant meetings
- Communication Skills Workshops
- Other

G. Your preferred learning style, how do you learn best?

- through writing
- reading
- studying
- one-to-one discussion
- role-play
- other
- Are you comfortable using email?
 - Are you willing and/or able to use Skype?
 - Do you have email/online access but are unfamiliar with it?
- Would you prefer to correspond with your CLA by post?

Please make a note of any other information which could help us guide you through LLL leadership preparation.

LA LECHE LEAGUE PURPOSE and PHILOSOPHY

La Leche League was founded to give information and encouragement, mainly through personal help, to all mothers who want to breastfeed their babies. While complementing the care of health professionals, it recognises the unique importance of one mother helping another to perceive the needs of her child and to learn the best means of fulfilling those needs.

The basic philosophy of La Leche League is summarised in the Concepts on page 20.

LLL believes that breastfeeding, with its many important physical and psychological advantages, is best for baby and mother and is the ideal way to initiate good parent-child relationships. The loving help and support of the **mother's partner/baby's father** also enables the mother to focus on mothering so that together the parents develop close relationships which strengthen the family and thus the whole fabric of society.

LLL further believes that mothering through breastfeeding deepens a **mother's understanding and acceptance of the responsibilities and rewards** of her special role in the family. As a woman grows in mothering she grows as a human being and every other role she may fill in her lifetime is enriched by the insights and humanity she brings to it from her experiences as a mother.

La Leche League's purpose is distinct. This singleness of purpose does not prevent interaction with other organisations with compatible purposes, but La Leche League will carefully guard against allying itself with another cause, however worthwhile that cause may be.



LLL CONCEPTS

The basic philosophy of La Leche League is summarised in the following statements:

- Mothering through breastfeeding is the most natural and effective way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby.
- Mother and baby need to be together early and often to establish a satisfying relationship and an adequate milk supply.
- In the early years the baby has an intense need to be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food.
- Breast milk is the superior infant food.
- For the healthy, full-term baby, breast milk is the only food necessary until baby shows signs of needing solids, about the middle of the first year after birth.
- Ideally the breastfeeding relationship will continue until the baby outgrows the need.
- Alert and active participation by the mother in childbirth is a help in getting breastfeeding off to a good start.
- Breastfeeding is enhanced and the nursing couple sustained by the loving support, help and companionship of the baby's father. A father's unique relationship with his baby is an important element in the child's development from early infancy.
- Good nutrition means eating a well-balanced and varied diet of foods in as close to their natural state as possible.
- From infancy on, children need loving guidance which reflects acceptance of their capabilities and sensitivity to their feelings.

These guiding principles of mothering, which are the foundation of LLL philosophy, are further developed in *The Womanly Art Of Breastfeeding*. This book has provided needed answers to several generations of nursing mothers on every aspect of breastfeeding.

~ available from [LLLGB SHOP \[books.laleche@btconnect.com\]\(mailto:books.laleche@btconnect.com\)](mailto:books.laleche@btconnect.com)
PO Box 29, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7NP
Tel: 0845 456 1866