



Why We Consult in the LAD

International Leader Accreditation Department Council

“The Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) is an international department that has been charged by the LLLI Board of Directors to accredit Leaders according to the LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation.”
LAD Manual, 2018

Appendix 18 to the *LLLI Policies and Standing Rules Notebook* describes the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership and the LLLI Criteria for Leadership. These are universal prerequisites and criteria that apply to all entities within La Leche League International. Thus, LAD representatives are accrediting Leaders on behalf of LLLI, not a specific Area, Affiliate, or Area Network.

Consultation is an important part of LAD work. It helps to ensure that Leaders are accredited the same no matter where they live. They need to meet the same criteria and do the same application work no matter where they live. This may sometimes be challenging. For example, if a baby self-weans at 11 1/2 months and the mother does everything she can to get her baby back to the breast, does this meet the Personal Breastfeeding Prerequisite which states: “If baby has weaned, the baby was nursed for about a year”? What does “about a year” mean? Consulting with others in the LAD helps to clarify that there is agreement on whether someone meets the prerequisites.

In the LAD we have identified different interpretations of the Mothering Experience Prerequisite. In some Areas, Leaders are reluctant to recommend anyone who has returned to work in their baby’s first year of life. In other Areas Leaders recommend any working parent as long as they meet the other prerequisites. As a guideline for determining which applications to accept when there has been separation, the LAD uses two LLLI resources: Appendices 17 Concept Policy Statements and 18 Applying for Leadership.

From Appendix 17, the policy statement for the concept: “In the early years, the baby has an intense need to be with his mother, which is as basic as his need for food.”

Mother / Baby Relationship

Breastfeeding meets a baby’s need for warmth, love, security, and nourishment and satisfies his intense need for his mother. The early years are commonly understood to be about the first three years of a child’s life. During this time, a child’s intense need for his mother continues, yet changes according to the individual child’s growth and development. A variety of circumstances can separate a mother from her child. These may include employment, education, and cultural traditions. When separations are unavoidable, the baby remains a priority for the mother. Considering her baby’s need for her presence as well as for her milk, the mother minimizes the amount of separation and maximizes her availability when they are together.

From Appendix 18, the Mothering Experience Prerequisite

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

The challenge for Leaders and LAD representatives is that neither of these resources give specific criteria with a number of hours or the baby's age. The LLLI Board chose vague terms because they want Leaders and the LAD to look at each application individually. Leaders and LAD representatives are expected to look for ways that potential Applicants meet the Mothering Experience Prerequisite and value the mother/baby relationship in words and actions. Consulting is one way to ensure that there is consistency in how these decisions are made in different parts of an international organisation. In particular, the LAD values consultation if early, extensive and ongoing separation is common because this is the situation where inconsistency could occur more easily.

During LAD orientation we discuss many topics with the new LAD representative. These include:

- Personal preferences/biases.
- Universal accreditation criteria; representing LLL as mandated by the LLLI Board.
- Consultative relationship, ongoing learning, review.

All LAD representatives are expected to become familiar with the *LAD Manual*. In this resource, which guides how the department function, it states: "The new ACLA and her support person build a consultative relationship that continues past orientation. Part of this relationship is the willingness and ability to listen to the other person. It's important to respect your orientation partner's experience and ideas as well as your own." (p. 10)

The LAD has an incredible support network which is built on the consultative relationship established during orientation to the department. ACLAs* (Area Coordinators of Leader Accreditation) can consult with the Area CLA (Coordinator of Leader Accreditation). The CLA has support from the R/ALA (Regional/Administrator of Leader Accreditation). And internationally there is support from the DLAD (Director of Leader Accreditation Department), members of the LAD Council (ALAs from all LLL entities) and the LAD liaison to the LLLI Board of Directors.

* Please note that in New Zealand the ACLA is called a CLA (Coordinator of Leader Accreditation) and the CLA is called an ACLA (Area Coordinator of Leader Accreditation.)

The CLA (or ACLA in New Zealand) is the LAD administrator for the Area. The role of this LAD position is described on page 42 of the *LAD Manual*: "The CLA is responsible for Leader accreditation in the Area. As a representative of an LLLI Department, the CLA is accountable for implementation of LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership and LLLI Criteria for Leader Accreditation in the Area." To do this the CLA needs to regularly consult with the ACLAs in the Area and with the R/ALA in the Region, Area Network or Affiliate. On this same page CLA responsibilities are listed. The second one - "Keeping up-to-date with and implementing LAD procedures" is a reminder that it is the CLA who is responsible for communicating and implementing changes in LAD procedures to the ACLAs and Area Team.

Regular communication and consultation is an important part of how the LAD functions. Please remember that when you consult, you help your LAD support person maintain consistency and achieve the universal accreditation criteria.