

Becoming a La Leche League Leader

La Leche League Leaders are part of a tradition that goes back to the beginning of humankind – one mother supporting another in the womanly art of breastfeeding.

La Leche League Canada is an Affiliate of La Leche League International.

La Leche League and You

Are you a woman who

- has enjoyed breastfeeding your child?
- would like to share those joys with other nursing mothers?
- knows first-hand about the advantages of this natural way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby?
- has the time to volunteer with an organization that helps women locally and throughout the world?

Sound interesting? Then La Leche League leadership may be for you!

A La Leche League Leader knows from personal experience what it's like to get started nursing a newborn and why breastfeeding is important to the older baby. She is a vital part of an organization that is recognized worldwide as an authority on breastfeeding. She is one of over 6,000 active Leaders who have access to La Leche League information in more than 30 languages.

Helping Others

A new nursing mother benefits from encouragement and practical information. La Leche League Leaders offer this through a series of monthly meetings and by telephone.

Mother-to-Mother Support

Using her experience and LLLC training, the Leader provides and facilitates mother-to-mother support. She encourages discussion and exploration of a variety of approaches to mothering through breastfeeding and a deeper understanding of a baby's needs and mother's unique role in meeting those needs.

Applying for Leadership

The prerequisites to applying are:

Personal Breastfeeding Experience

Mother has breastfed her baby for at least nine months when she applies for leadership. 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 the healthy, full-term baby). If baby has weaned, the baby was nursed for 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.

Mothering Experience

Mother values nursing at the 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.

Organizational Experience

- Is a member of LLLC.
- Supports LLLI purpose and philosophy. Has attended at least one series of meetings (where available).
- Has demonstrated a commitment to LLLC.
- Owns and is familiar with the contents of the most recent edition of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* (if available in her language) as a primary resource for LLL Leaders.
- Has a recommendation from an LLLC Leader.

Personal Traits

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

La Leche League Philosophy

We believe

- 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, 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.

Responsibilities of an LLL Leader

- helps mothers one-to-one, by telephone or in person, keeping accurate records of all helping situations;
- plans and leads monthly Series Meetings;
- supervises the management of the Group, including membership, finances, Group workers, Group Library, and materials for sale; reports monthly about her LLL activities;
- keeps up to date on all important breastfeeding information, taking advantage of LLL's opportunities for continuing education through publications, meetings, correspondence, and the network of resource Leaders;
- takes an active role in helping other mothers find out about leadership and helps them prepare to become LLL Leaders.

Where there is more than one Leader in a Group, the duties are shared.

La Leche League's Purpose

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 the physician and other health care professionals, La Leche League recognizes 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.

La Leche League is a worldwide, educational, nonsectarian, nondiscriminatory service organization.

To Learn More About LLL

- Read *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and other LLLI books, *New Beginnings* and various leaflets.
- Become a member of La Leche League Canada.
- Attend Series Meetings, if available. You'll become part of a mother-to-mother support network that provides information and encouragement and find helpful information in the Group Library.
- Volunteer to help the Group as (for instance) librarian, treasurer, hostess.
- Extend your mother-to-mother network and learn more about breastfeeding and parenting by attending local La Leche League conferences.

To Learn More About Leadership

Discuss this information with a Leader. She can share more details about leadership, and help you decide if leadership is right for you. If there is no Leader nearby, contact the Coordinator of Leader Accreditation for your Area.

There is a fee to apply for LLL leadership, as well as a new Leader fee, payable upon completion of the application. The Area Leader Accreditation Department representative can answer your questions regarding the application fee and procedure and preparation for LLL leadership.