

Breastfeeding **matters**



Tongue-tie, a journey
Trusting my own voice
Breastfeeding toddlers at night

La Leche League GB
mother-to-mother support for breastfeeding

May/Jun 2016 #213

La Leche League GB

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La Leche League Great Britain is a company limited by guarantee registered in England
Registered Office:
129a Middleton Boulevard
Wollaton Park
Nottingham
NG8 1FW
Company Number 01566925
Registered Charity Number 283771

Printed by Roy Nadin Print Limited on
80% recycled paper
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Photo courtesy of
Emily Mandal
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inside...

Mothers' Stories

Tongue-tie, a journey from the professional to personal	4
Trusting my own voice	8
A Mother's intuition	11
Breastfeeding toddlers at night	19
Surviving bed-sharing with a toddler	22
Hello, Goodbye	26

In Every Issue

Editor's letter	3
Mothers on...my first LLL meeting	16
Letters	25

News and Events

Become a member	21
League Family Camp	24
How to get help from La Leche League GB	29
New Leaders	29
LLLGB raises funds for Greece	30
LLLGB Shop	31

Editor's letter



Hello, and welcome to another issue of your members' magazine.

Every issue, I look at what we've included, and try to see if there's a theme. This time, we seem to have a lot of toddlers in here, and it would be a shame if that was off-putting to those of you near the beginning of your breastfeeding journeys, holding your tiny new babies.

Actually, though, and I hate to state the obvious, babies become toddlers. What is more, they do this so fast, and though sometimes the days with a new baby can seem to inch along, our children grow inexorably. So many mothers nursing older babies and toddlers identify with the sentiment that they never set out to breastfeed for so long, it's just that each day their child is the same as they were the day before, and it doesn't feel like a momentous decision, more like continuing with what feels right.

It's one of the wonderful things about breastfeeding. We get to know our babies so intimately, learning to read their cues, learning what comforts them and what they need. And the endless hours of cluster feeding, of waking in the night and responding to unstoppable demands, all let us build an intense relationship that makes the foundations of what will follow. When our children become toddlers, independently mobile and then with the skills to argue with us, we already know them.

Here, Tessa and Annie both tell us about their early challenges and how they have worked through these and found the nursing relationship going on into toddlerhood. Danielle shares another side of this, negotiating shared sleep to give the whole family a chance of being as rested as possible – again, her family have found that the building blocks from babyhood set the tone of things as their baby grows. And I love the piece from Naomi and the Central London mothers, talking more about toddler sleep and giving a refreshing perspective on learning to live with your situation rather than trying to change your child.

Sharonn completes our mothers' stories telling of hard times in the early weeks. So many of the toddler-nursing mothers you see around you will have tales to tell of difficulty at the beginning, even if they make it seem easy now.

Rounding things off, and showing again how our relationships are shaped right from the beginning, Lara's piece about her second son's arrival and his burgeoning independence made me cry, as usual.

In our house, I fondly call my second born a baby even as he approaches his second birthday, and on the challenging days I utter profound thanks for breastfeeding, for the string of continuity, and the thing we can always get right between us, even when we're tied in knots on all other fronts.

Thank you for reading, and as always please do think about writing your story to share with everyone. They're what makes this magazine.

Helen


Helen Lloyd is a Leader in Bath and is mum to Isaac (5) and Aneurin (2).

Co-Editor Justine Fieth is a Leader in Cambridge and is mum to Josh (12) and Kezia (8).

Join us to chat on Facebook at www.facebook.com/breastfeedinglllgb

From infancy on, children need loving guidance which reflects acceptance of their capabilities and sensitivity to their feelings.

(One of the ten LLL philosophy statements)

A photograph of a woman with brown hair in a braid, wearing a black and white striped hospital gown, breastfeeding her newborn baby. The baby is wearing a white onesie and a white cap. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. In the background, there are white electrical outlets on a wall.

Tongue-tie, a journey from the professional to personal

**Tessa Dumbelton
LLL Oxford**

***Tessa tells us about her
fascinating journey
stepping over the line
from being a healthcare
professional dispensing
support, to being a
breastfeeding mother
needing it.***

At the starting line, walking into my motherhood journey I held some strong values. They were informed by my work as a healthcare professional, by my upbringing and society as a whole.

My daily role involved supporting breastfeeding mothers. I thought breastfeeding was nice but not all that important. I felt that sometimes breastfeeding was pushed upon some families, and that formula was a favourable alternative. I also very naively believed babies should feed, sleep and fit in with their parents' existing lives.

The most important misconception that I held privately, was that breastfeeding was purely a means of providing nutrition. Sure I knew about the added benefits of bonding, antibodies etc, but I didn't give them all that much value. Before I met my son, I cared about what would get the points on his growth chart moving, and less about how it happened.

You will already know, because of where you are reading this, that breastfeeding shattered all of these values. When my son came along, my milk nurtured him and helped him grow but what I didn't expect was for the mere process of breastfeeding to help me grow, heal and transform into the person I am today. Our journey was hard and with my strongly held misconceptions I probably had a longer way to fall down the rabbit hole than most. I'd like to share with you our story of overconfidence, one very rare tongue-tie complication and how I've re-learned everything I thought I already knew.

I had fought hard to have the birth of my choice, and when my son arrived into the world bottom first we were

high on life. The medical professional in me revelled in how wonderful the first breastfeed felt and how easy it all was, and I had no qualms about giving him a bottle when his blood sugar dropped dangerously low.

Roll on to the next feed and things began to change, the latch looked perfect to me and to the few staff who chanced a glance, but already something was very wrong as I was in toe-curling pain. One midwife chuckled when I said it hurt more than birth; for me this was true but this was the beginning of my divergence from the things I thought I knew, into the realms of the unknown.

Within a few hours I was resenting the formula bottles that were medically recommended but I was dreading the breastfeed before each bottle as I was already suffering from bleeding nipples. I had seen this before in mums, and I was beginning to understand their pain both literally in the moment and figuratively as the health professional like me, with no first-hand experience at breastfeeding, just didn't get it.

Do not fear, reader, I was prepared at least in part and I had my handy nipple shields ready to go. I was astonished by the bad reception I got for this decision, and one year on I am disappointed no one looked for a tongue-tie at this point. The shields didn't fix the pain completely but I was breastfeeding and already this was becoming very important to me. When we left the hospital for home, I vowed to defy my colleagues and my own

I thought breastfeeding was nice but not all that important.



training and not give any more formula. Ringing in my heart was a feeling that bottle feeding wasn't right for us and the same stubborn streak that lead me to my less common birth choice, set in. From that moment on, my commitment to succeeding at breastfeeding was absolute.

The first few weeks were filled with hourly feeds, much to my annoyance. I had previously been a strong believer in routine and I was still experiencing a lot of pain. But the latch looked good, my son gained weight and on paper it all looked great. I was already learning that the things I had said to breastfeeding mothers over the years were not always helpful! Advice like, "oh, it shouldn't hurt", although not necessarily inaccurate, wasn't actually helpful to women like me. I vowed never to utter it again. My tiny son and I spent the next few weeks bouncing around the varying breastfeeding clinics in our area. I accumulated lots of advice that reaffirmed my own training but something still wasn't right. I watched the plotted dots on his weight chart go up but along with the pain, something still didn't feel right.

One day, between one of our many visits, my grandmother reminded me about a relative of ours who only a few months ago had had a tongue-tie

'snipped'. It was like a light bulb had been turned on in my head. Training I had received a year before reminded me of the symptoms and they fitted! Amongst all of the professionals we had seen not one had really listened or looked. I was embarrassed as I too had missed the very obvious signs.

The next part of our story is much like many others, a delay in diagnosis, a long wait for the procedure and eventually we decided to abandon the health service I worked for and paid to see a lactation consultant who was able to do the division herself. This was the best money of all that I spent on my new baby. The support I received was fantastic but unfortunately for us, we had to see her a lot over the next few months.

Anyone who has witnessed the procedure done will know it's hard to watch. For me at this point in my mothering journey it was clinical. It needed to be done. The next few weeks were better, my son started jumping the centiles on his growth chart and I was exultant at the start of less stressful nursing. It didn't last but this is the point in my story where I found my first breastfeeding guru and my way into LLL. I met a lady in a Children's Centre and I bombarded her with so many questions that she gave me her number and a copy of *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and invited me to what would be turn out to be my soul food, LLL.

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She also gave me a nudge to go back to the lactation consultant and I was devastated to be told I had mastitis and that he needed his tongue-tie divided again.

My son was one of a very few unlucky babies, whose tongue-tie grew back. Not just the once either as he still has one. This one is very stretchy and is of the grade they say doesn't necessarily need dividing. The second time around I struggled to even stay in the room with my son during the procedure. Breastfeeding had bound us together so inexorably, that his discomfort was also mine. I couldn't bear his distress but I knew his full potential wasn't being met with his tongue so restricted and that my recurrent mastitis was due to the unlucky combination of my oversupply and his tongue-tie.

With the mother to mother support I was receiving in LLL meetings, I was beginning to feel the way into my new mind and body. I deleted the app that let me see charts with feeding statistics and crucially I began to let go of any illusions I had of control over my baby's needs. Around this time too, my son's latch changed and I began to experience pain-free breastfeeding. This was the best feeling in the world and I finally got it. I really got what breastfeeding was



about. I got why my some of my colleagues who I thought pushed parents so hard even bothered. They would have seen in them the potential to be here, where I am, and what a wonderful place it is to be.

Through the magical process of reflecting within LLL meetings, I realised that I learned first-hand that each person who offers support offers one piece of the puzzle. It's then down to us, as mothers, to follow our instincts and find the pieces that fit into our family. I said this before as a healthcare professional, but my understanding of this now is so much deeper. It underpins our entire journey, not just in breastfeeding.

I am no means at the end of my breastfeeding journey, and my toddler does still very much love his 'do do' with mummy, but I am at a close with the baby chapter in our lives. Gone

are the values I held at the beginning of our journey. Now as I move into the next chapter of my professional life, I take with me my quiet objections to some of the misconceptions my colleagues hold. I hope to help more mothers discover the magic and in the process spread a little more LLLove.





All photos Mark Doxey at Velvia Blue photography

Trusting my own voice

Annie Jordan

Annie's third baby struggled to gain weight at first. Annie found herself feeling she was in a fight with health professionals, having to stand up firmly for what was best for her daughter.

My story here starts with the birth of my third baby. I'd breastfed before so had no hesitation in deciding that I would also nurse this baby. We lived in Ireland when our baby girl was born; she took to nursing straight away and soon decided it was her favourite place to be.

After three days she had only lost 5% of her birth weight which made me very proud. Then she started to gain, but stopped again for a few days and my midwife discovered she had tongue-tie, so we arranged to get it snipped and once that was done we noticed another good gain. Slowly but surely, she was doing so well.

It took her over a month to pass her birth weight but my lovely health visitor said as long as she was having wet and dirty nappies and was alert then I should be pleased with a gain no matter how small it was.

My baby was certainly alert, and her nappies were constantly being changed, which I truthfully didn't mind as we had a beautiful supply of cloth nappies!

A few weeks later we left Ireland and moved to Devon for my partner's job. As soon as we moved I made an appointment for my post-natal check-up and for our daughter's first set of immunisations. The doctor asked the usual questions; she asked if I had any concerns with the baby and I said I hadn't, but mentioned she was nursing every two hours and sleeping in between feeds. The doctor then looked at my daughter and said she was really underweight and that she needed to start formula immediately as feeding every two hours was an indication she wasn't getting enough food to settle and therefore was starving. This statement was made before actually weighing her.

I had a very weepy night after that, thinking I was a failure. I spoke to some others online in a breastfeeding forum, who all told me to carry on nursing and assured me that every two hours was perfectly normal. I was

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also advised to contact La Leche League so I rang the number and spoke with a lovely lady who confirmed I was doing the right thing with continuing to nurse often. She sent me the official WHO guidelines and advice to show my doctor and health visitor: I was very grateful for this support and was able to let my partner read them and he supported me completely.

Finally, the health visitor came out and weighed Lucille. They said she had only gained 11oz since her last weigh in and that they suddenly agreed she was failing to thrive and we needed to start supplementing immediately or she would be admitted to hospital for tests to see why she wasn't gaining enough. Her average gain was 1.5oz a week, a little less than they said she should be gaining. We were recommended to give over 500ml of formula each day as well as nursing on demand. But we were against this so that afternoon my partner bought me an electric breast pump and I began my expressing journey. My hope was that we could supplement her feeds with expressed milk.

Lucille refused the bottle at first but a lovely friend gifted us with a supplemental nursing system (SNS) and that certainly helped us. I was feeding on demand and pumping as often as I could, producing 14-18 oz a day so clearly my milk was there and with good quantity.





Most importantly there was my beautiful baby who needed me to stay strong and fight for her.

carried on expressing and freezing my milk in preparation for the future. The weekly visits carried on for almost two months and although Lucille kept gaining weight it wasn't enough to satisfy the health professionals, even though it was so much better than it had been before. During this time I had so much support from my old health visitor in Ireland as well as from friends and family. Most importantly there was my beautiful baby who needed me to stay strong and fight for her.

Things came to a head with my final encounter with the health visitor, who said some very upsetting things to me. I asked her to leave, and later registered a complaint, and I eventually received an apology and an assurance that more breastfeeding training would be provided. The consequences could have been so much worse if I hadn't had such an amazing support network which lifted me up when I was feeling blue.

We are still nursing at 17 months and although she is small, this seems to fit in with our family's build. I've been determined to tell my story because I am shocked at the number of babies diagnosed as "failing to thrive" leaving their mothers feeling forced to take actions they are not always comfortable with. Things turned out well for us, but my concern is for others whose outcome could be worse.

On our first weigh in Lucille had gained a massive 8oz! I was so pleased to be able to tell the health visitor that the only supplement we'd used was my expressed milk, though I felt she was irritated that I had ignored medical advice. We agreed she would return in another week to check Lucille's weight again.

During this week Lucille had a very difficult day and evening where she was screaming and would not settle. Her stomach was rock hard and we were very worried so we took her to the local hospital where we spoke to a paediatric consultant who was certain Lucille had cows' milk protein allergy (CMPA) and that this could have been the reason for the slow gain as well as her distress. I spoke with the consultant who was an amazing support and agreed with my choice to supplement with expressed milk; she also suggested I removed dairy from my diet, and arranged a follow-up meeting.

The next morning I stopped the use of all dairy products. We started to notice a huge difference around day five, with Lucille sleeping more, and refusing top-ups altogether, though I

Human milk is the natural food for babies, uniquely meeting their changing needs.

(One of the ten LLL philosophy statements)



Photos courtesy of Sharonn Downey

A mother's intuition

**Sharonn Downey
LLL Northern Ireland**

Sharonn found problem after problem with breastfeeding her son, and kept on working to resolve his symptoms. When he was found to have a serious medical problem, it was worrying, but it also showed she was right to have persisted.

Breastfeeding didn't work out for me first time round. I had developed blood clots and was told that the injections I needed were incompatible with breastfeeding. By the time I found out this wasn't true, my daughter had weaned, and though I tried to relactate in the third month, she was too used to the bottle and it didn't work out. This experience made me determined to be able to breastfeed this time round with my second baby.

For the first three weeks of his life, Cameron fed well and despite our struggles with breastfeeding at the beginning while we were learning positioning, he was rapidly gaining the weight he lost at birth. With exclusive

breastfeeding, he got back to his birth weight within two weeks which I truly believed was a major accomplishment. I was so proud that this little baby was thriving on everything I was providing him with.

Then slap bang out of nowhere came the howling, screaming and pulling his legs up along with arching his back in the evening. We tried various things to help with the pain and when he was four weeks old, I tried gripe water but the poor little fella choked on it. But then his behaviour started to change, he cried and screamed during the day, before a feed, during one and even after. It was relentless. After a week of persevering we paid a visit to our local GP who looked at me like



I had just bounced down from the moon. What was I even wasting their time for? I had a baby who cries, all babies cry, get on with it and it will stop at 12 weeks. I went home but with a terrible sinking feeling at the pit of my stomach that something was wrong.

Each week I was going to a fabulous breastfeeding group with lots of amazing mummies and wonderful supportive midwives. By now they were all tuned into his behaviour and the thrashing around and crying when feeding but no one was quite sure what was wrong. Some thought he wanted a faster flow so suggested switch feeding. One of the midwives looked at his mouth and thought he had tongue-tie and arranged an emergency appointment to get it looked at by an oral surgeon. I raced through the traffic thinking this is it, this has to be what is wrong and practically threw myself onto his couch. It was confirmed he had tongue-tie, and it all moved very fast

and he had it snipped. Cameron screamed and cried and tried to feed, and I didn't even feel the immediate difference I'd been promised. But I went home thinking that over the next few days my little man would learn how to breastfeed with his newly released tongue and everything would get better.

The following week at the group there was no change, then one of the other mummies said Cameron's behaviour reminded her of her two babies, and suggested we consider silent reflux. So, I went straight down to my doctor's demanding medication in the hope that it might solve our problems. The doctor said she'd had her suspicions (if only she had said before!) and prescribed Losec Mups. The pharmacist handed it over and explained how I needed to crush the tablet down and dissolve in water (how was I going to do that?!) but by this stage I was pretty desperate and thought it was better than nothing. We battled for a week and instead of helping him, it made him gag and vomit each time.

Next, I gathered from a midwife that it was possible to get the same medicine as a suspension. But it was a struggle to see a GP again, and when I did he told me that the suspension was no longer prescribed because it is too expensive. Instead he suggested another tablet, which was easier to dissolve, though he also said he didn't really believe silent reflux existed, and that it would all pass by 12 weeks (there's that magic number again). I left the surgery in tears with my howling baby and the feeling that I had no faith in the medical advice I was getting. All I kept asking myself was why no one was listening to me. I knew there was something wrong.

After nearly two weeks the new drug was not helping, if anything he was getting worse and now he was also badly constipated, which I knew wasn't common for breastfed babies. He was in so much distress and straining to go I took him to the out of hours GP. There I was told that this was a known side effect of the drug. His urine was tested and there was some confusion about whether he might have a kidney infection, but eventually a lovely doctor examined my baby and said he definitely had silent reflux, she could hear the gurgling when he was lying down and when he was held upright he stopped his screaming. He also had lots of other symptoms of it. She said he was on the right treatment and to give the medication for a full two weeks to take effect.

It was nice to have a diagnosis but alarm bells were still ringing in my

I just felt there was something still not right aside from the reflux.

head, I just felt there was something still not right aside from the reflux.

Another couple of weeks passed and still determined to get some answers I went to a few La Leche League meetings which were such a huge support. The other mums were all so lovely and sat with me watching feeds and trying to offer some ideas about what might be wrong. I met with the breastfeeding coordinator at the hospital and I even took Cameron for Cranio Sacral Therapy in the hope I could solve what was wrong but to no avail.

One Monday morning Cameron wouldn't stop screaming. It was worse than ever, no matter what I did I couldn't console him, so I went straight to A&E. I didn't find the doctors helpful, and one even told me there was no benefit to breastfeeding beyond three months. By this stage I was sitting in tears holding my baby asking myself why no one would listen to me. I knew something was seriously wrong with my baby and it was not down to reflux or my breastfeeding. The doctor said that because I was very concerned and upset she would refer me to the rapid response clinic to follow up on his reflux. I left again feeling even more deflated and that I was the world's worst, most neurotic mother. I kept praying that someone would listen to me and that there was something else causing him his pain. We received our appointment for the next week and thankfully we met with a consultant who did listen and





bowel had formed in the wrong place and he needed life saving surgery to prevent a twist which could be fatal to him. I didn't know whether to scream or cry. It wasn't hunger, reflux, my breastfeeding, it was something serious all along.

Then the panic set in, as I questioned everything and was frantic with worry and then I couldn't stop crying. Why had no one listened to me, which meant my little baby was in all this pain for 17 weeks of his life? I was devastated.

After a horrible night of crying and worrying, I carried my baby up to theatre wondering if this was the last time I would ever hold him. I wondered would he get through his surgery, would there be more complications or something else found? I just wanted to hold him forever.

agreed my baby was in pain somewhere. The reflux medicine was not making any difference so she arranged some tests for him.

The day had arrived that finally we might get some answers and we went through the tough process of having him x-rayed, then went off to some other appointments. But then everything happened so quickly. We were no sooner in outpatients than the consultant came running over, saying something about a twist in the bowel and telling us to go back to x-ray. She was going to talk to surgeons and would meet us in the Short Stay Unit where my baby was being admitted. Again we had some confusion with one group of people telling us there was no problem after all, but then another group came and talked to me in detail about his history and told me that my beautiful little angel had what is called malrotation. They explained that his

I don't really remember much about the next few hours other than me wandering aimlessly through the hospital grounds. I eventually made my way up to the ward that he would hopefully return to, and asked myself what I could do for my little baby now, and that's when I began pumping. I knew I had to express to keep my milk supply up for him and it gave me a great sense of calmness that I would be able to provide him with something that would help him recover quickly. When I had finally worked out how to use the pump, I went in search of a fridge. That's when I heard the surgeon behind me; he scared the life out of me and my heart was

*I was able to breastfeed him
again and the difference was
incredible.*

Don't give up fighting for your little ones...

racing as he said the words I so wanted to hear: "everything is fine, it's all finished, it went perfectly". My legs nearly went, and the sense of relief that flooded over me was unbelievable.

Not long afterwards the nurse said I could go up to theatre to see him in recovery. I wanted to hold him more than anything. He was safe. These amazing surgeons had taken care of my baby just like they said they would, and I will be forever grateful to them for what they did. A few days later and he was recovering better than expected. I was able to breastfeed him again and the difference was incredible. There was no bobbing on and off when feeding, no screaming, it was like having a different baby. The surgeon said that because Cameron had been breastfed he was recovering from his surgery very quickly and that indeed the breastmilk had made sure things were not worse prior to his diagnosis.

So, my thoughts for all the other mummies out there is to trust your maternal instinct – sometimes you have an intuition that surpasses any logic or explanation someone tries to give you. Don't give up fighting for your little ones, because we are all they have. We gave them life, and we will continue to do everything in our power to protect that.

Nine months on and Cameron and I are still breastfeeding. The bond it has created between me and my baby is just magical and I hope our breastfeeding journey continues for some time yet.

I want to again thank everyone in the Northern Ireland La Leche League Group. They were an incredible support to me and Cameron throughout our ordeal. I would truly have not got through everything without their support.



Mothering through breastfeeding is the most natural and effective way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby.

(One of the ten LLL philosophy statements)

Maria: On my first meeting I was very stressed because my baby boy had fussy periods in the late afternoon/early evening, which meant that trying to cook dinner was out of the question. He just cried non-stop unless I fed him all the time. I couldn't handle it. I felt after the whole day of nothing but feeding a baby and changing nappies, surely the least I could do was cook dinner. The Leaders discussed how fussy periods were tough to handle, but 'normal'. There was nothing wrong with the baby, and there was nothing wrong with what I was doing. It was just bad timing. They helped me brainstorm what I could do to turn things around. Since that day (well, technically the following one) and for months, I have cooked dinner at around 9am, and then reheated it in the evening. (Well, it was almost four months of reheated pasta and rice in rotation. But every silver lining has a cloud!)

Helen: I remember a Leader in my first meeting talking about losing evenings to cluster feeding/trying to settle your baby. She suggested taking whatever time you do get during the day, as your 'evening' without guilt. So if you got a break during the day, say from a good nap, have a snack, watch a film, whatever but take that as your 'evening'. I thought that was a great idea.

Kathryn: I remember my first meeting so clearly. Zack was only 14 weeks and the topic was introducing solid food. It was the first time that I'd heard about baby led weaning. After weaning my older two children using purées, it was a completely new concept to me. My first meeting was also the first time I saw an older baby being breastfed. I remember thinking to myself, that child is wearing shoes and is walking and talking! I'm not sure why the shoes stood out but they did. I remember feeling quite shocked about the information that I heard, but I set out and did my own research on what I'd heard and seen. I'll remain ever thankful to the mothers and Leaders at my first meeting, who showed me that there are other ways and that natural term feeding is exactly that – natural. Oh, and I'm now the one breastfeeding my older baby – and he wears shoes.

Sue: My first meeting I was cup-feeding expressed milk to my three week old, running out of ideas for how to help my son to feed from me and terrified to go to a breastfeeding group with my milk in bottles. During introductions I cried as I explained our problems. Every face there was welcoming and accepting and supportive and I felt so strongly that they all wanted me to succeed, and believed it was possible. It was the first place I found that belief and trust that we could overcome our challenges.

Emma: I found LLL quite by chance when I thought breastfeeding was over before it really had the opportunity to begin. One of the Leaders was the first person to truly

listen to me and got me in contact with another Leader who supported me to get breastfeeding back on track. The first meeting I remember was 18 years ago when I was in the host's kitchen and a toddler wobbled over to his mum who was squatting by the cupboard and he lifted her jumper for some milk. After the struggle I had had to breastfeed my baby, I really wanted this to happen for us too. And I'm so pleased, it did. When I found LLL I discovered the way I wanted to parent my children which made me so happy. I hadn't known what kind of parent I was going to be and LLL's philosophy met my needs as well and my children's. I took all of my babies to LLL meetings and have made some lifelong LLL friends.

Rachel: I remember my first meeting very clearly. My baby was nine weeks old and it was the first 'breastfeeding' group I had ever been to. My memory is of feeling really out of place, uncomfortable and slightly shocked at seeing walking, talking toddlers breastfeeding, and a mother breastfeeding a baby and a toddler at the same time. I remember thinking that this was a weird hippy group eating weird snacks, unlike any of my other friends. But as I relaxed, I remember hearing the LLL phrase "take what works for you and leave the rest – you know your baby best" and it was the first time, I had felt that I was special as a mother. As I left the meeting, I felt valued, accepted and that 'they' celebrated and treasured what it was to be a mother. I kept going back. Eight years on, LLL is still a huge part of my life and I often feel is the only place now where it feels like coming home for my way of mothering.

Sarah: I stumbled upon my first LLL meeting via a Facebook invitation to a coffee morning from someone I had met at an NCT event. I went along with my three-week old baby, looking to meet some new friends. I didn't know that breastfeeding was such an art or such a science. I didn't know such amazing, gentle, empowering, informative support was available. I didn't expect a structured group session, ground rules or Leaders! I didn't know our bodies were capable of tandem feeding (I found out in that meeting, seeing a mother feed her baby and toddler

together) and I didn't know I'd be completely hooked and end up attending for a couple of years. I made such good friends at LLL meetings as the group was a magnet for like-minded women. That first meeting shaped my parenting journey and provided me with somewhere to turn when obstacles appeared in the road ahead. Whether they were due to family attitudes, lack of sleep, returning to work, blocked ducts or biting toddlers! I'm so grateful for the invitation to that first meeting.



Photos courtesy of Tessa Dumbelton

Rachel: At my first meeting, I found mummies supporting one another, offering helpful ideas, suggestions and tactics. I found reassurance that things were normal and friendly Leaders to listen to my questions. And they always assured me that no question is too silly!

Vicky: My first LLL meeting was seven years ago, my baby was four months old and I was still looking to improve things. I had been attending peer support lead groups since the first week, but I still had uncomfortable frequent feeding and no sign of any improvement. I remember a number of women being first timers (the meeting before had been hampered by snow) and sitting in a circle with the Leader and we all had our hands in socks talking about positioning and attachment. I never thought that day would be the start of something very special to me and didn't dream then that in time I would become a Leader and have a life that was so embroiled in breastfeeding.

Barbara: I was invited to my first meeting when I was breastfeeding my nine month old second baby after having nursed the first for three and a half years. I met the Leader who invited me at a mums and toddlers group and it was some time later that she first mentioned LLL. My initial thought when I arrived at the meeting, and found to my surprise that I was not quite as weird as I'd previously assumed myself to be, was, "Why have I never heard of this organisation before?" That feeling was reinforced when I devoured all the literature. Why was this group of women such an underground secret society? My overriding impression then was that this lovely bunch really needed some better publicity. I had gone along thinking I knew everything there was to know about breastfeeding already and over the coming months found that there was a lot more to learn and much more about parenting, support and communication that went far beyond breastfeeding. I'd met the women and ideas that would shape my future and my mothering path.

Maria: I remember my first meeting. The lovely local Leader picked me and my baby Sonny up when he was 15 days old. I remember just being in a blur and staring at him for most of the time. I'm so thankful that I went to that first meeting as it reassured me that everything that was happening was NORMAL! The other Leader was so warm and welcoming, I instantly felt safe and comfortable. I got a hot cup of tea! It's now become a place to go to socialise with like-minded mums and get that ever-needed reassurance when breastfeeding is difficult.

Myriam: The first time I managed to get to an LLL meeting was not the first time I had planned to go. It took a few months to get there! I arrived an hour late, with my two and three year olds, in a bit of a state. The friendly, welcoming atmosphere was great and calmed me down. Thank you for this, I still need it regularly!



In the early years the baby has an intense need to be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food.

(One of the ten LLL philosophy statements)

Breastfeeding toddlers at night

Mothers with Naomi Stadlen, Central London Group

I had prepared a series meeting 'My baby won't sleep through the night' for mothers of young babies. It's a complaint that they sometimes make, and presents the baby as a problem. It is then easy to slip into talking about a baby as if he or she were a malfunctioning device requiring an expert to get it operating correctly.

La Leche League encourages us to see the situation differently.

'Sleeping like a baby' really means waking up frequently through the night and needing to be nursed, snuggled, walked or rocked.¹

There's a whole money-making industry out there with promises to help you 'solve your baby's sleep problems.'...They don't mention that your baby doesn't have a sleep problem.²

I introduced the meeting with these quotes and several more, because I was expecting at least one mother of a young baby to be there. Instead, four mothers of toddlers had come, and each said her toddler woke frequently at night.

Lorna: My son wakes every two hours. It's very tiring. [Son, 13 months]

Alev: My son sometimes wakes up six or seven times a night. [Son, 16 months]

Each toddler was more than a year old, which meant that each mother had been woken almost every night for over a year. Did they get used to it?

Lucy: At night I think: This is awful. I can't go on like this. But once I get up, I'm fine. I think I do get enough sleep. It's just the torture of the interruptions. That's the hard bit. [Daughter, 5 years; sons, 3 years; 15 months]

Ruth: I suppose I'm not really tired. I just get fed up at night, like Lucy says.

[Daughters, 5 years; 3 years]

Alev: You get a few really tired weeks and then it gets better. [She meant that the few 'really tired weeks' would recur every so often.]

Interrupted sleep can then become habitual. Mothers noticed it because they would wake up even when their children weren't waking them.

Alev: One night my son slept for six hours. I could hardly sleep, all that time. I kept waiting for him to wake up.

Ruth: My children went to their grandparents for two nights. I thought: Great! Two nights when I'll be able to get a full night's sleep. But I didn't. I kept waking up from the habit of expecting them to wake me up.

However, interrupted sleep wasn't the only problem. Another was the dealing with all the comments and misleading 'information' they got about breastfeeding a toddler at night.

Alev: Why is the first question people ask you: 'Does he sleep through the night?' And if you say no, they think it's because you're breastfeeding. I've been told by a health professional: 'You're going to have to stop breastfeeding. You're never going to be healthy again otherwise. And there is no benefit for children breastfeeding after the age of one year.'³

Lucy: That's not seeing babies as people. I think it's terrible to stop breastfeeding after one year. Between 12 and 18 months, breastfeeding is very important to them. I think you could destroy their world if you suddenly decided to wean then.

Alev: Then I wish people wouldn't keep telling me to stop. They should say: 'You're amazing!' 'You're doing a hard job. It's great what you're doing.' They should appreciate what I do.

Lucy: If you are giving so much and people tell you to stop, you feel they think you are being silly to carry on.

Lorna: I met an old friend whom I hadn't seen for years, and wondered what he would say if I told him I was still breastfeeding. I decided to tell him and he said: 'Wow, you're doing really well!'

Did these mothers have any solutions to minimise their tiredness?

Alev: The road outside the bedroom is really loud, though we have double-glazing. I'm going to deal with that first. Or you could go to the countryside to rest with your baby. That could be the solution. You don't need to stop breastfeeding.

Lorna: I was lying uncomfortably and my back used to ache because I couldn't stretch out enough. We're getting a bigger bed!

Lucy: We're so tired, we do sleep. Sometimes, when we wake up, we find the older two children have come into our bed during the night. We have no idea when they came in.

One solution was getting the father to take a turn.

Lorna: I see nights as my job now. I don't like asking for help so I wait until I'm on the floor with tiredness. But my husband will help. He looks after our son when I go to a yoga class every Sunday. I feel wonderful after. It helps to remember the breastfeeding relationship is about two people. I'm beginning to realise having my partner on board is crucial, particularly with no extended family nearby.

Alev: When I'm exhausted at night, I ask my partner to help and they play together. They both enjoy that and I can get some sleep. Also one night he even fell asleep with his daddy and no tears because I had to go to a rehearsal at 7.00pm. I explained it to him all the previous day, and he was fine.

Lucy: My husband takes the children for one hour first thing every morning. I think I get all my deep sleep during that hour.

Ultimately, though, the consensus was that interrupted sleep was far preferable to ending breastfeeding while their toddlers still wanted it.

Lorna: It really is a life adjustment for some of us who've been used to a professional career, but the reward you get in nurturing your baby and being with them is wonderful.

Lucy: There's a caveat to stopping. Breastfeeding is brilliant. It's a whole different way of living. It really works. If someone had invented a device that could feed, comfort and get your baby to sleep at any time of the day or night, as well as help you foster a wonderfully rewarding and secure relationship, wouldn't you think that was a wonderful invention? Yet we have two of these 'devices' attached to us and are often made to feel like we shouldn't use them!

None of the mothers thought we had to solve a 'toddler problem'. They were obviously in agreement with La Leche League information and philosophy, and felt greatly supported by both. As one mother said:

Alev: When my partner complains and asks what we are doing wrong because we are so tired, I say: 'We're actually doing it right, and that's why we are so tired.'

¹*The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, 8th edition, page 222.*

²*Also The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, 8th edition, page 222.*

Sweet Sleep by La Leche League contains similar comments.

³*Neither of these statements is true. La Leche League publishes much evidence to the contrary.*

*Ideally the breastfeeding relationship will continue until
the baby outgrows the need.*

(One of the ten LLL philosophy statements)

League Family Camp (LFC) 2016

LFC is open to all LLL members and their families

This year is the 20th anniversary of LFC and every year has seen new families come along. The emphasis at camp is open-mindedness, mutual support, relaxation and fun! As well as sharing the experience of outdoor life (and the weather!) LFC offers the opportunity for campers to discuss a wide variety of issues including breastfeeding, family relationships, education and more.

John's Lee Wood in Leicestershire

Wednesday 8th June – Friday 17th June 2016

Wednesday 3rd August – Friday 12th August 2016

Further information/To book;

Denise Prior 0208 220 4993, robert_and_denise@hotmail.com or

Rhiannon Carmichael 01633 892505 rhiannoncarmichael@yahoo.co.uk



Places are limited. LFC is a camping club for LLL members. You need to be a current member of LLLGB at the time of paying. Payment secures your booking. LFC is not legally affiliated to LLL and discussions at camps may not always reflect LLL's views

The site is in a large woodland area with the following facilities:

- Toilet and shower block within easy walking distance
- Cabin for craft and wet weather activities
- Sport activities on site: archery, climbing, abseiling
- Small kitchen
- Open fires
- Plenty to do in the local area



Surviving bed-sharing with a toddler

*One family's strategy
to a (half-)decent
night's sleep*

**Danielle Page
LLL Cambridge**

Danielle tells us how things have changed for her family, from sleeping with a peaceful small baby to sharing a bed with a more energetic toddler.

It's hard to remember exactly when co-sleeping became bed-sharing for us. It was probably around three months as that's when we finally mastered feeding lying down. Hallelujah! Certainly for the first six months my husband, Simon, got very familiar with the spare bed as there was often another body already in ours with me! As it was clear Evie wasn't giving up her spot any time soon, our Christmas present to ourselves was a super king-size family bed.

Initially Evie's rented Bednest was attached to my side of the bed. To lie her in it I'd be feeding her to sleep sitting up in bed and then getting out to lower her in as smoothly as I could, often failing. Someone then recommended La Leche League's book *Sweet Sleep: Nighttime and Naptime Strategies for the Breastfeeding Family*. It introduced us to a safe way to share a bed with our baby and we've never looked back.

With a small baby this was quite easy. With a shrug cardigan to cover my arms and the duvet down low at waist height, Evie and I could both fall asleep comfortably and safely. As an exhausted new mum it's delicious to know you can just let the boob hang out, shut your eyes and embrace those sleepy hormones. Even 20 months in, as I feed her to sleep sometimes it's the hardest thing to get up and leave her there when all I want to do is give in to the slumber. We still take a few daytime naps together.

As Evie's gotten bigger, and more mobile, we've adapted the set-up slightly. We have a bed guard on my side and on the nights when she's poorly Simon heads back to the spare room. It's amazing how easily a restless toddler can fill a giant bed and I like the flexibility to swap sides depending on where the empty space ends up being. I know we're fortunate to have this option!

If I feed her to sleep, I try to position her close to the bed guard or far into the middle of the bed so I can roll away into my own space. It's not as comfortable now to sleep with one arm above her head as her head is so much higher against my body and I think after this long I've earned the right to sleep in my own favourite position, sometimes!

Evie's gymnastics aren't limited to daytime feeds. She likes to sleep on her tummy but will often flip over still attached. Who knew nipples could stretch so far? So if she's done drinking but just reluctant to let go I give my nipple a pinch to release the vacuum and I think because it feels odd she lets go. Sometimes she's no longer swallowing but is also clearly not satisfied. A quick way to offer the other breast is to try cross body

I've always appreciated bed-sharing in the mornings...

feeding. I lean further onto my tummy, rest my top arm on a pillow above her head to stop me going too far and she gets the top breast, without either of us actually having to swap sides. She gets another good guzzle and it's enough to fill her up.

I've always appreciated bed-sharing in the mornings. Any 5am wake up has been eased by just offering a boob and letting us doze a while longer. If we're lucky we'll actually all get another good couple of hours of sleep. I think we've just lost this though as she's discovered our bedroom has a TV and can demand "Peppa" very loudly.

I've also had to find ways to bed-share without breastfeeding. Some nights I just need to be able to say no. That never works all night, but making sure my breasts are well out of sight helps. On those nights I wear a zip up top or turn to sleep with my back to her as soon as she's dropped off. It's enough sometimes for her to just





know I'm there so she settles back off to sleep. I also pretend to be asleep sometimes, holding my top tight to me so she can't tug it open, to see if she'll just see we're all sleeping and join back in. If that's not cutting it, I know she'll just climb over me and shout "Milk!"

But Evie also has her own bed, a floor-bed, in her own room. This is where she starts most nights, and with a single mattress I can lie with her and feed her to sleep there, then roll out. Trying to transition a heavy sleeping toddler from rocking chair to cot was getting impossible! She's started the night upstairs alone from a few months old, so we can try and rescue a couple of adult hours downstairs. Then it's entirely

based on how many times she wakes, how tired I am, or how late it is, as to when she ends up in with us. It could be 9pm or 4am. Sometimes I get her and sometimes she wanders in herself. But she's never spent a whole night in her bed, unless I'm in it too!

Believe me there are nights when I can't wait to roll out of that bed and away to my own space, and some nights I escape from our room to the spare room leaving her with Daddy. But equally some nights I can't part from her in her own room and it's happily my own choice to snuggle up close in that small bed, smell her hair, stroke her cheeks and enjoy her hot little hand brushing against my face.

We had friends quite happily tell us they never let their children get into 'all that', but as LLL has taught me to "take what seems right for you and leave the rest", it's much easier to ignore these judgements now.

Recently Evie's refused sleeping in her bed at all. She asks for "Mummy's bed" as soon as Simon's finished reading stories. I've no idea why but it doesn't seem worth an argument over.

She'd never understand why she can sleep in that bed at some times but not others. If she needs to be with us, then we're happy to oblige. After all, if we like sleeping with someone else, why shouldn't she?

And Mummy and Daddy have always got the spare bed to escape to.

Happy bed-sharing all!



breastfeeding Letters...

editor@laleche.org.uk

Do you ever hear your toddler or child call you in the night and just wish they would turn over and go back to sleep? Sometimes I have, especially as our breastfeeding journey has continued far beyond what I had ever expected! Well last night something happened that made me think!

Last night, with my five year old tucked up asleep in her room (a recent progression) and my husband tucked up asleep in our bed, I woke up from a dream. It wasn't a scary dream. it was something about having to make mince pies out of a huge jar of mincemeat!

However, I woke up suddenly, my heart was beating, I felt hot and felt like I was struggling to breathe!

I got up and went to look out of the window. The air near the window felt cooler but I still felt panic. I knew it was irrational and I had no need to feel panicked. I thought I'd wander to the bathroom to give myself time to feel better. But then there was a call from my daughter's bedroom... "Mum". I went to her and she had a very short feed before she turned over and snuggled against me. And I realised that the minute I cuddled up to her my heart beat slowed and I could breathe easily and it made me think.... Sometimes when I go in, I see her wild eyes and her fear. And isn't it brilliant that I have such a perfect way to make her feel so calm and sleepy again!

Helen Ashley

Hello, Goodbye

Lara Jones
LLL Cambridge



Photos courtesy of Lara Jones

My youngest and I had just turned into the very pretty lane which leads down to his new nursery when we were surprised by a sharp blast of wind. He looked at up me and did a stamping little dance to show it was cold and then giggled. I looked down at him and said "Phew! That was a surprise! Windy wind!" As we continued to walk I looked up at the branches which overhang the lane. Their twigs were making quivering cross-cross patterns against the white February sky, and their flickering shadows made the shingle beneath my feet appear to be moving, rippling, rolling away.

"This is horrible." I wail into my sister's leg. All the fear is surfacing, all the holding it together is coming undone, all my previously deep and ferocious breaths are eluding me. I'm scared, I can't do this. I could feel my sister's grip around me tighten, I could sense that my midwife had just been given cause to recalibrate the situation and was moving.

"Oh my goodness! Is this your youngest! I remember you being pregnant, hasn't it gone quickly! And how old is the eldest now? Six! My goodness me!" Beaming faces crowd in on us at the nursery door. My youngest smiles back, all blue eyes,

and impossibly blonde hair. He really wants to get into the garden though; he's seen a sandpit, a rope bridge, and tricycles! He pulls at my hand.

In my Monday morning Yoga class I'm standing on my mat feeling invincible. In warrior pose I lunge and turn and stretch my arms out wide. I lift, lift, lift my pelvis, I tuck my tail bone in, my puffer than usual feet push deeply into the mat and I rise up taking the baby with me. Holding the pose as best I can I gaze through the hall's modern glazed wall to the playing field beyond. I watch the green expanse and try to learn the lesson of it spaciousness.

My teacher said she wanted to get a photograph of me; the pregnant warrior. We didn't manage it. The next week I was too tired for Yoga, it was time to retreat from class. The Monday after that the youngest was born.

When the contractions pass I listen in to the noises coming from downstairs, dinner being made, my eldest chatting away to his dad. I feel safe. After a while my husband pokes his head around the door, "Should I call your sister?" I hesitate, the eldest took twelve hours, and surely this is just beginning. "Maybe." Another

contraction starts, I shoo him away with a wave of my hand. He says he'll ring her as he shuts the door.

As I lie down for relaxation at the end of the class I am kept afloat by a raft of props. My skilful teacher has been bolstering me for weeks, literally extra bolsters, extra cushions, and extra blocks. My heavy thighs descend, my tired pelvis goes down but because of my teacher's prop engineering my chest and heart go up, up. I can breathe deeply; drifting away, the youngest quiet inside me.

I'm sitting with the soles of my feet together, leaning on the seat of a chair. The contractions come and I breathe with them. To stay just ahead of the pain I have to breathe so hard that it feels like my nostrils are catching fire. I'm clutching, really clutching a little figurine in my hand of an elephant who moves obstacles. I see the beautiful elephant in my mind's eye smashing trees to the ground. I see her rolling them along the ground with her trunk. Be strong, I think.

"Your sister is waiting for a client, she'll get here as soon as she can." My husband half-smiles. My sister is known for being a little bit flaky. "Okay." We look at each other, my husband's look says 'Really?' "She'll be here." I reply, "I'm at least ninety percent sure she will be". "What about the midwife, should I call her?" "Yeah, okay."

I can hear my sister in the hall, talking to my eldest. "I'll come and play once I've been up to see mummy, okay?"

The light is changing outside the window; it's February so day is becoming night in the afternoon. Feeling the darkness descend feels

right. I watch the trees, I watch the sky, and I watch my body. "After the next one" I tell my sister "pull down the blind and put that lamp on, would you?" Time to shut out the world. She moves around the room with a certain grace, a grace which I can ease myself into, they envelop me, her comforting, easy movements. Then she comes back to sit behind me, her clever Reiki hands on the small of my back and we both breathe together. "Slide baby." She told me afterwards, that's what she had said to him "Slide baby."

The midwife is downstairs. I tell my sister; somewhat desperately as if this is the last thing I will be able to say to her, as if we are about to be captured; "Don't take your hands off me." She says she won't, "Don't worry." We are sat together on the floor when the midwife comes in and takes up her position in the corner of the room. She has paper work and pens and she is filling in a form while I find myself improbably able to relax into these now mighty contractions. Then she looks up and says "Do you want to try and move, maybe get to your bed so that we can have a look and see what's going on."

It's wrong, it's all wrong. This is the room I want to be in. The room where I do Yoga. I don't want to be on a bed. I don't want to move. I don't need to be examined. I think all this as I start to obediently lean into my sister in an attempt to stand up. Fate or luck or my body intervenes





Because that's when it happens. The shudder, the tremendous involuntary shudder. The fear, the surge; transition. Then the very definite movement of my midwife. Suddenly she

is touching me, helping to turn my body and my face towards the ceiling, I'm now lying in my sister's lap, grabbing her arms which in turn are grabbing mine. My midwife is very decisively taking off my leggings and underwear.

She calls to my husband, he's at the door again; flinging her car keys into his hands she says "The baby is coming. Get my bag from the front seat of the car." He hurries away.

Then he hurries back to our eldest in the bath. "Is Mummy okay?" "Yes, she's fine. Mummies make those noises when they're having a baby." But my husband is anxious about the noise continuing, and then he thinks he hears a baby crying. He looks at the eldest in disbelief.

Mountains, rocks, stones, bones. Hard things cracking and cleaving. A great hurricane passing through me, powerful beyond measure but controlled, charged with its own internal cadence. Not a shudder this time but a push. My body is pushing all by itself - no thought precedes it, just pure physical push. I roar into my sister's leg. I'm roaring with pain, with determination, with the joyful realisation that this is it. I know this feeling; he's coming, I'm birthing him right now. This won't go on all night,

there won't be any worse pain to contend with, the eldest will be able to meet the baby before he goes to bed. The push subsides. One of my feet is on the wall and one is pressed firmly into the ground. My Yoga mat is beneath me. Another bodily push and this time, quite unnecessarily, I think "Push", but he's already out. "Thank you for being born so quickly." That was the first thing I said to my youngest boy.

Later that evening with my husband on a mercy dash to Tesco (waterproof bed sheet) and my eldest asleep I sit with my sister in the half light. The youngest is nursing and we're watching him. His furrowed brow, his long body, his bald head. Gone are my first-time mum worries about which side were we on and how long was the last feed? I know that these are the first of a great many feeds and that thought gives me comfort; when it gets tough along the way I know I will find my refuge here, with him in my arms, nursing. I look at his inscrutable newborn face and wonder about the days and nights ahead.

In the front seat of the car the youngest and I are watching Paw Patrol on my phone and eating breadsticks with hummus. We are a little early for his first nursery session. After the episode has finished we arrange ourselves somewhat awkwardly in the driving seat for a nurse. I can feel my milk flowing, hear him gulping and his breath becoming rhythmic. Good, I think to myself with relief, he's having a proper feed. He'll be fine for a couple of hours.

"Goodbye darling, I'll be back soon!"

Once outside I peep through the nursery window. The window is just at

my eye height, so I can watch without being observed. I can see him sitting at the table we have sat at together this last week. He's looking around waiting for the snack which we have eaten there but because he is there a little earlier today there are no snacks just yet. There are however some Duplo blocks. After a few seconds he reaches out to them and starts to put them together. After a few seconds more he realises that one of them has something in it which is preventing

him from slotting them together properly. He shakes it out, whatever it is onto the table. He's fine, I say to myself and turn away.

The wind goes through me again.

On the lane out to the road I watch the trees and the sky. I lift my head up, up looking down is not necessary there is no one small to speak with, no one small to watch. He's fine, I say again.

Alert and active participation by the mother in childbirth is a help in getting breastfeeding off to a good start.

(One of the ten LLL philosophy statements)



La Leche League GB
mother-to-mother support for breastfeeding

How To GET HELP

www.laleche.org.uk is the quickest way to access the most up to date breastfeeding support. Read the many leaflets and articles available on a wide range of topics, or fill in a Helpform for one to one email support. Quickly find your local group to access the range of support available in your area.

0845 120 2918 is the number to call to speak with a La Leche League Leader.

LLLGB because Breastfeeding Matters is our page on Facebook full of links and articles as well as the support of Leaders and other mothers.

Twitter@LLLGB is the way to keep up with all that LLLGB is doing right now.

LLLGB is proud to announce and welcome our newest Leaders

Kerry Bassil—LLL Chelmsford

Susan Murphy—LLL Tyne and Wear

Adele Jarrett-Kerr—LLL Bristol

Beccy Say—LLL Tyne and Wear

Sarah Jales—LLL Farnham and Aldershot

Vicki Box—LLL Bury (*in this photo* →)

Katie Piper—LLL Taunton

Elise Armoiry—LLL Coventry





LLLGB raises funds for Greece

Ellen Mateer, LLL Calderdale

LLL is an international organisation with groups across Europe. As we found out more about the refugee crisis we looked for ways to help support our LLL sisters who were working with refugee mothers and babies with little money and few resources. LLLGB coordinated a massive collection of slings and carriers for use in camps and at transition points: these were sent to Hungary, Turkey and Greece.

We became aware that many well-meaning people were sharing requests to donate artificial milk: as well as explaining the dangers of doing this we wanted to give people an alternative way to help and looked for a practical way to do this. LLL Greece had Leaders (trained breastfeeding counsellors) able and willing to help but no money to fund it. So we decided the best thing we could do to help was to raise money for them. We were overwhelmed at the response. Within 24 hours we'd had hundred dollar donations from the US, pocket money from children and amounts in between from across Britain and Europe. An Oxfordshire member rang me in the middle of the night to explain she was running a fundraiser the next day and ask for some photos to display; following late night messages to Greece we got her the images she wanted and her event went on to raise hundreds of pounds.

As Leaders in Greece continued to visit the refugee camps they used the money we raised to take translators with them, to produce waterproof resources in the languages spoken by the mothers they were helping and to provide food for the mothers. An international group of LLL Leaders is now working with LLL Greece to produce more resources in various languages.

Below is a photo of the camper LLL Greece were given at the port of Pireaus to use as a mother baby area! Maria Fertaki, a Greek Leader who has been highly involved, said "We are thrilled!!! Moms love to come and sit at the cosy beds and chat! It is small but compared to how cramped they are in the tents it is luxury!!!"





La Leche League GB
SHOP breastfeeding, books & more

make a difference ...

Photo Lois Rowlands

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Choosing to buy your breastfeeding and parenting books from our LLLGB Shop directly helps other mothers and babies.

All our profits go to support LLLGB's charitable work. It's money well spent!

For our full range of information leaflets and books on breastfeeding and parenting, visit:

llgbbooks.co.uk

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La Leche League Philosophy

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.

Human milk is the natural food for babies, uniquely meeting their changing needs.

For the healthy, full-term baby, breastmilk is the only food necessary until the 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.

*The ideals and principles of mothering which are the foundation of
LLL International beliefs are further developed in
THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING 8th Edition*

www.lllgbbooks.co.uk