

Home Orientation Handbook



Host Family and Emergency Information

Host Family Information

Host Family Phone Number: _____

Host Parent 1 Cell: _____

Host Parent 1 Work: _____

Host Parent 2 Cell: _____

Host Parent 2 Work: _____

Grandparents: _____

Relative: _____

Neighbor: _____

School: _____

School: _____

Doctor: _____

Home Address: _____

Emergency Information

Police and Fire: 911 _____

Poison Control: 1.800.222.1222 _____

Hospital: _____

Au Pair USA Program Contact Information

Local Coordinator: _____

InterExchange: 1.212.924.0446 _____

Au Pair USA (toll-free): 1.800.AU.PAIRS

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InterExchange has been operating the Au Pair USA program for almost 25 years. Our experience has taught us that getting off to a good start with your au pair in the first few weeks will help establish expectations and prevent misunderstandings throughout the program year. To assist you and your au pair during this time, we have composed this Home Orientation Handbook.

We recommend that you and your family work through this handbook before your au pair arrives in the U.S. Once the au pair is in your home, devote a few hours during the first week to discuss and clarify the topics raised in the handbook. Keep the book in an easy-to-find place throughout the year so that it can be referred to by you or your au pair at any time.

The Home Orientation Handbook raises issues both big and small. While we tried to be as comprehensive as possible, there will always be topics that are specific to your family's needs. We have included space at the end of the handbook for you to add these ideas.

We hope you will take full advantage of this exchange experience and create new traditions with your au pair as a family! Visit our blog or the Cultural Compass section of our website at www.InterExchange.org/American-Culture for cultural exchange ideas and suggestions.

Welcome to the program and let us know if we can help you throughout the year!

Keep in Touch!

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The First Few Days

Your au pair is entering a brand new culture and way of life and might not know how to do things that are common knowledge or habitual to your family. Don't be afraid to explain the simple things. In a new country, even the details can be new and different.

It is a good idea to write things down, as your au pair will be getting a lot of new information in the first few weeks. Make it easy for her or him to remember by using this handbook. The more comfortable your au pair feels with practical matters, the more confident both of you will feel in her or his ability to care for your children.

Home Safety

- ▶ Do any family members have food or environmental allergies?

- ▶ What is your family's emergency and fire evacuation plan? Is there a meeting point?

- ▶ What are your family's rules on opening the door to strangers?

- ▶ Alarm systems—How do you turn it on and off? When do you turn it on?

- ▶ Door locks—Practice locking and unlocking. When should doors be locked?

- ▶ Smoke detectors—What should the au pair do if there is a fire during the day? At night? Is there a fire extinguisher? Where is it located?

- ▶ Circuit breaker box—How and when do you operate it? Where is it located?

- ▶ Medicine—Where is medicine kept safely in the house?

- ▶ Cleaning supplies—The English words and American brand names might be unfamiliar to your au pair. What are they used for? Where should they be kept when not in use? Are there any other hazardous materials in or around the house?

- ▶ Sharp objects—Where are certain items, such as steak knives and scissors, kept out of reach?

- ▶ Windows/Screens—Are they allowed to be kept open?

- ▶ Childproofing—Are there childproofing systems used in the house? Security gates? How do these work?

- ▶ Emergency contact numbers—Where are they kept?

- ▶ Home address—Are au pairs allowed to give out the home address? Who are they allowed to give the address to?

- ▶ Important documents—Is there a safe place for your au pair to store her or his passport, insurance information and other important paperwork?

- ▶ What are other safety concerns for the home? Please fill in the area below with additional house safety instructions:

Household Appliances

- ▶ Washer and dryer—How much detergent goes in the washer? What water temperatures should be used? What can and cannot go in the dryer? Is there a preferred time to do laundry?

- ▶ Toilet—Where do the toilet paper and feminine hygiene products go? Does the lid stay down or up when not in use in your house? What do you do if the water keeps running?

- ▶ Dishwasher—What can and cannot go in it? Should dishes be rinsed first? What items go where in the dishwasher?

- ▶ Heating and air conditioning—How do you adjust the thermostat? What are the standard, minimum and maximum settings?

- ▶ Garbage disposal—What can and cannot go down it?

- ▶ Shower—How does it work? Is there a family shower schedule in the morning?

- ▶ TV/DVD player—How does the remote work? Is there any chance they could accidentally order a movie? Any specific hours the TV is not allowed on in your house? What are the limitations on the time spent watching TV?

- ▶ Entertainment systems—What remotes do you use? How do you turn everything on/off? What are the settings?

- ▶ Stove and oven—Gas or electric? How do you turn it on and off?

- ▶ Microwave—How does it work? What can/cannot go into the microwave?

- ▶ Coffee or tea maker—Where are the supplies? How are they used? How are they cleaned? Is there an automatic shut-off?

- ▶ Vacuum cleaner and floor mops - How do they work? How often do you use them? Where are they kept?

- ▶ What are some additional household appliances in your home and how do they work?

Household Tour

- ▶ Where are the sheets, towels and blankets kept? Where can your au pair hang up his or her towel?

- ▶ Where should coats be hung? Where do boots, shoes, umbrellas and other items go?

- ▶ What is your family's policy on turning off and keeping lights on in the house? Point out all the light switches.

- ▶ Family Pets—Who feeds and walks them and how often? Are they allowed outside? How should pets be disciplined? List any other dos and don'ts with your pets:

Around Your Home

Food

Adjusting to new foods and eating habits can be overwhelming for newly arrived au pairs. This adjustment period is normal and part of the cultural exchange experience. It's perfectly normal for au pairs to be nervous when it comes to eating new foods. Take your au pair to the grocery store and explain what and where things are, and let him or her show you some favorite foods. Try to incorporate a few of these in your weekly shopping list and encourage your au pair to share dishes from his or her own culture.

- ▶ Schedule—What time are meals generally? Do you have flexible meal times on certain days?

- ▶ Meals—Is dinner always a family event? Do you expect your au pair to join in? Who does what at mealtime? What dining habits and etiquette do you expect from your au pair? What habits are you trying to teach your children?

- ▶ Snacking—Is there anything off limits in the kitchen? Is your au pair free to help him or herself to whatever, whenever?

- ▶ Guests—What are the food policies when your au pair has guests?

- ▶ Who does the grocery shopping and when?

- ▶ Do you expect your au pair to cook and how often?

- ▶ Are there any other home food policies or allergies that the au pair should know about?

Please make a list of foods that your children like to eat throughout the day:

Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	

Home Phone Use

When welcoming your au pair to your home, discussing appropriate phone usage is an important aspect of the home orientation. Make it clear that a conversational tone is expected, especially when the children are asleep. Consider discussing the following:

- ▶ Is there a specific way you would like your au pair to answer your home phone? How do they handle telemarketers?

- ▶ Where should they write down messages?

- ▶ What are acceptable hours to receive phone calls from their friends and family on your home phone?

- ▶ Does your phone have call waiting and/or other extra services? How do these work?

Explain to your au pair how they should make international phone calls with a calling card or by using Skype. Many au pairs do not always grasp how expensive international calls can be from a regular landline without a calling card and/or budget.

- ▶ What is the long-distance calling policy in the house?

Cell Phone Use

Cell phones work very differently in other countries than they do in the United States. Most au pairs will be expecting to simply insert a SIM card into their existing cell phones. Although this may be the case for a few families, most au pairs will be using a new phone for the first time. Please be helpful in showing your au pair how to use the cell phone and how to understand minutes, texting and data limits.

- ▶ Is there a family plan? Please use the space below to fill in that information if applicable:

- ▶ What is your family's policy on using cell phones when your au pair is on duty?

- ▶ Are there limits to cell phone usage when your au pair is off duty?

Computer Use

- ▶ Are there any parental controls on your computer that your au pair should know about?

- ▶ Is there any online activity that is forbidden in the house? Is your au pair allowed to download programs/data from the internet?

- ▶ Is he or she allowed to use the computer if your children are sleeping, playing, etc.?

- ▶ Are there any access keys or Wi-Fi passwords your au pair should know?

- ▶ Is your au pair allowed to post pictures of the children on social media sites? If so, please give written permission to your au pair in this document or through an email confirming this:

- ▶ What are the dos and don'ts of using social media sites if posting pictures of your family?

Cleaning

Responsibilities can get confusing when it comes to cleaning. InterExchange Au Pair USA's rules require that an au pair's housework responsibility be limited to cleaning up after the children and themselves, and contributing to housework as a normal family member (such as one person cooking dinner and the other person washing the dishes).

Make sure your au pair is aware of what is required of him or her. It is very important to be clear and consistent about cleaning. Go over the topics below in detail.

Cleaning up after the children:

- ▶ Making children's beds—Who is responsible? When should sheets be changed?

- ▶ Children's laundry—How often? What is the procedure?

- ▶ Cleaning up children's rooms—What needs to be done and how often?

- ▶ Making children's snacks, lunches, dinners, etc.—What is appropriate and when?

- ▶ General clean up after children—What is expected to be done during on-duty hours? In what areas of the house?

- ▶ Running errands for children—What small errands will the au pair be expected to do and how often while on-duty?

Personal au pair cleaning expectations:

- ▶ Au pair’s room—What are the general guidelines for upkeep in your au pair’s living space?

- ▶ Au pair’s car—What are the general guidelines for keeping your au pair’s car clean, if applicable?

- ▶ Around the house—What are your family’s expectations on keeping the common areas clean and tidy?

Contributing to housework:

- ▶ Household chores—Are there certain chores you would like your au pair to pitch in and assist with?

- ▶ Trash and recycling—Where does the trash go when it is full? How does recycling work? Where are replacement bags?

- ▶ Household basics—Are there any other areas you would expect the au pair to help with?

- ▶ Where are the nearest parks, playgrounds, outdoor sports fields, pools, etc?

- ▶ Where are the places she or he will be going to the most? Schools, supermarkets, malls, etc.

Host Family and Au Pair Relationship

Clear, open communication between host families and au pairs is the key factor for having a successful year together. Make sure you start out on the right foot and talk about the following topics with your au pair.

- ▶ What is your family's preferred communication style? Are you upfront and direct? More passive?

- ▶ When would you like to schedule regular weekly meetings with your au pair?

- ▶ When your au pair has problems or concerns, when would you like them brought up? Immediately or at the weekly meetings?

- ▶ When can your au pair come to you for advice or guidelines? How do you plan to give constructive feedback?

- ▶ How would you define your au pair's role in your family: Mentor? Parent's helper? Older sibling?

- ▶ How would you describe your expectations for the personal relationship you want to have with your au pair?

- ▶ How and/or when would you like the au pair to spend time with you as a family member?

- ▶ Please add any additional considerations for your relationship below:

Your Au Pair's Social Life

It is important to remember you have a young adult living in your house. Encouraging him or her to go out and spend time with age-appropriate friends will help keep your au pair happy and more content. A few guidelines are important to help your au pair make good judgments in continuing to respect your home.

- ▶ Is the au pair allowed to have other au pairs and children over while on-duty?

- ▶ When off-duty, how many friends are the au pairs allowed to have over at once? Are there any off-limit areas of the house?

- ▶ Are overnight guests allowed? Of the opposite sex?

- ▶ What are your family rules on having guests from your au pair's home country?

- ▶ Is smoking allowed in your house, on your porch, in your yard, etc?

- ▶ If your au pair is over 21 years old, what is your policy about alcohol in the house?

Transportation and the Car

Many au pairs come from cities with extensive public transportation systems. As a result, they might not be used to driving every day and will require some time to adjust to driving on a daily basis, handling your car and navigating the neighborhood.

While they may be great drivers in their own country, they are still NEW drivers in this country. Please keep in mind that this is probably the first time the au pair has had to use certain measurements, such as feet, miles and gallons.

This may also be the first time your au pair will drive on the right hand side of the road. To help your au pair acclimate to driving in your area, please print out maps to get to the most common destinations or program them into a phone or GPS system: the children's school, the city center, shopping areas, the pediatrician/hospital, the grocery store, the park/playground, the bus or train station, etc.

- ▶ Show your au pair the location of the children's safety seat and safety devices. How do you use and install them?

- ▶ Is he or she allowed to eat in the car?

- ▶ May your au pair use the car overnight? Is there a car curfew?

- ▶ How do you put gasoline in the car? What type of gas do you use? Who pays for gas when your au pair is off-duty?

- ▶ Where is the emergency brake? Do you use it regularly?

- ▶ Drunk driving prevention—never drink and drive or travel with someone who has been drinking.

- ▶ Where are the turn signals? How do you use the windshield wipers? How do you change the windshield wiper fluid?

- ▶ Do you have AAA? What should the au pair do for roadside assistance?

- ▶ Do you have a GPS device that the au pair will use? How does this work?

▶ What should your au pair do if the battery dies or the keys are locked in the car?

▶ Where are the vehicle's insurance information and car registration kept?

▶ Where should your au pair park the car—garage, driveway or a certain street?

▶ What are the car maintenance procedures and how often are these done?

▶ Are there restrictions on where he or she can drive? For example: not on the highway, only in town, not in a nearby city, etc.

▶ Rules of the car—no cell phones while driving, no one else is allowed to drive the car but the au pair, always lock the doors, etc.

▶ Please list any additional specific car rules and policies below:

Driving Practice

We recommend spending at least 10-20 hours with your au pair to practice driving. We also recommend that you separate the driving training into three separate parts.

To start, a host parent should be driving the car with the au pair in the passenger seat, but no children in the vehicle. The host parent should drive the au pair to all of the usual places he or she will be driving to: the school, playground, shopping center, etc. Host parents should talk about the car, roads, signs, turns, directions and so on. This process should be repeated several times together, having the au pair ask questions along the way.

The second part of driving training should be the au pair in the driver's seat and a host parent as the passenger. Au pairs should drive the same routes over and over again, with the host parent giving constructive feedback to the au pair. This should happen a number of times, spread out over several days.

The third part of training should be the au pair in the car by him or herself, with maps or a GPS system, but with no children in the car. The au pair should drive to all of the destinations repeatedly until he or she feels secure. This may take some time, but it is essential that the au pair feels confident in driving the car in the community.

Here some things to cover during driving training:

- ▶ Laws in your state—Go to the DMV to pick up a free booklet with driving regulations.
- ▶ Explain the meaning of road signs—they are different in other countries.
- ▶ Explain “right-of-way” situations as these differ in other countries.
- ▶ Explain different examples of why a driver might receive a ticket.
- ▶ Emphasize the use of a seatbelt at all times.
- ▶ Can you “turn on red” in your city and/or state? Neighboring cities?

- ▶ Highway passing rules also vary by country.
- ▶ **Please emphasize that InterExchange Au Pair USA has a zero tolerance policy on drinking and driving. Au pairs who drink and drive will be sent home immediately.**
- ▶ What should your au pair do if he or she is out with friends and there is not a safe ride home? Provide contact information.

- ▶ What if there is an accident with another car? What steps should your au pair take?

- ▶ What if there is an accident with another car but the owner of the other car is not there?

▶ What speed limits should your au pair be aware of?

▶ Please add any additional driving rules you have below:

Work Responsibilities

There are many different ways to begin introducing your au pair to work-related tasks. Here are a few suggestions:

- ▶ Have your au pair follow you around and learn from example: This way requires the least amount of advanced planning.
- ▶ Teach the most common daily tasks first: Will he or she be making the children breakfast and driving them to school? Put that lesson ahead of tackling laundry.
- ▶ Start with the easier tasks first: Help build confidence in the ability to handle the job.

Logistics of Your Working Relationship

- ▶ Stipend—What day of the week will your au pair receive his or her stipend? How will this be paid?

- ▶ Vacation—Do you already have a family vacation in mind? Will your au pair be traveling with you? Do you have a time period that you would like your au pair to use as vacation time?

- ▶ Traveling—Do you plan on traveling with your au pair? Please be specific about your au pair's responsibilities while traveling with the family.

- ▶ Time-Off—Please list any suggestions you have about your au pair's use of time-off:

Caring for Your Children

Learning all there is to know about caring for your children will take time. Things such as knowing your daughter will only drink her milk if it is in her pink cup or that your son will only eat sandwiches if they are cut on the diagonal will become second nature to your au pair eventually. Covering important personal topics like the following will help everyone adjust much faster.

- ▶ What activities are permitted, encouraged or forbidden?

- ▶ Where are your children allowed to play? Whose homes are they allowed to play in? Introduce your au pair to these parents.

- ▶ How do you encourage/reward good behavior?

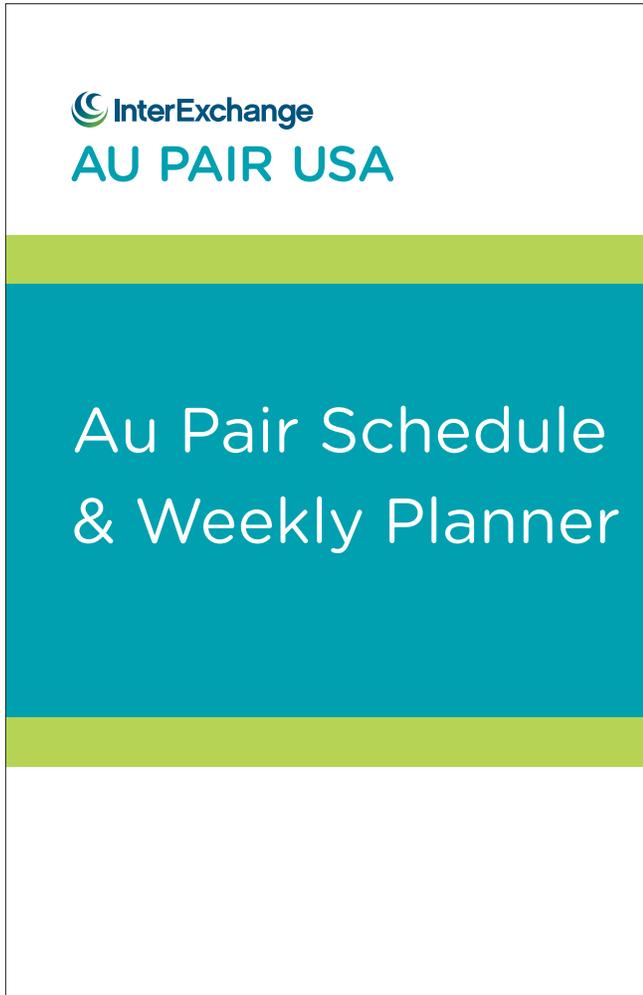
- ▶ How is discipline handled in your household? What should your au pair do/never do?

- ▶ What is a good way to calm down the children if they become upset?

- ▶ What meals and snacks are appropriate and when?

Your Au Pair's Schedule

Your au pair will arrive with an InterExchange Au Pair Schedule & Weekly Planner (see below). These are given out during Orientation & Training in New York City and au pairs are instructed to have them filled out every week.



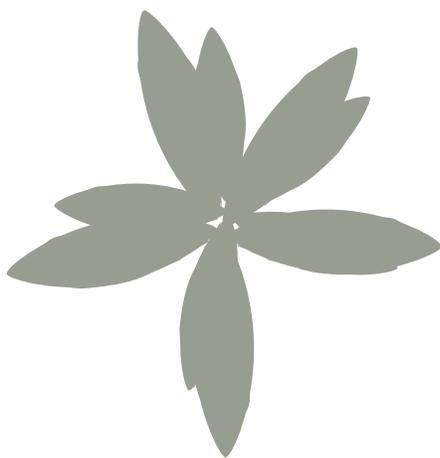
Au Pair Weekly Schedule

Week of: April 22-28, 2013

MONDAY	Start Time: <u>7:30 am</u> Finish Time: <u>4:30 pm</u> Hours Scheduled: <u>9</u> Hours Worked: <u>9</u>	Notes: <u>Annie: Soccer practice 2-4 p.m.</u>
TUESDAY	Start Time: <u>7:30 am</u> Finish Time: <u>4:30 pm</u> Hours Scheduled: <u>9</u> Hours Worked: <u>9</u>	Notes: <u>Melissa: Pre-school 12-2 p.m. Jake: Football after school</u>
WEDNESDAY	Start Time: <u>8:30 am</u> Finish Time: <u>1:30 pm</u> Hours Scheduled: <u>5</u> Hours Worked: <u>5</u>	Notes: <u>Melissa: Play date 10 a.m.-12 p.m.</u>
THURSDAY	Start Time: <u>7:30 am</u> Finish Time: <u>4:30 pm</u> Hours Scheduled: <u>9</u> Hours Worked: <u>9</u>	Notes: <u>Melissa: Pre-school 12-2 p.m.</u>
FRIDAY	Start Time: <u>7:30 am</u> Finish Time: <u>4:30 pm</u> Hours Scheduled: <u>9</u> Hours Worked: <u>9</u>	Notes: <u>Jake: Football after school</u>
SATURDAY	Start Time: <u>NA</u> Finish Time: <u>NA</u> Hours Scheduled: <u>0</u> Hours Worked: <u>0</u>	Notes: <u>You're welcome to join us for Annie's soccer game at 1:00!</u>
SUNDAY	Start Time: <u>5:30 pm</u> Finish Time: <u>9:30 pm</u> Hours Scheduled: <u>4</u> Hours Worked: <u>4</u>	Notes: <u>Pizza and movie night!</u>

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Total Hours Scheduled:	<u>45</u>	Date stipend paid:	<u>4/28/2013</u>
Total Hours Worked:	<u>45</u>	Amount of stipend paid:	<u>\$195.75</u>
Did au pair receive at least 1.5 days off?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Au Pair Initials:	<u>SEP</u>
Host Family Initials:	<u>J.E.D.</u>		



 **InterExchange AU PAIR USA**

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