

# Host Family Guide Living with an Au Pair



## Welcome Messages

**Dear Family,**

### Considering live-in childcare?

We recently asked our host families what advice they would give to someone who is considering au pair childcare. And, the advice? It's real, honest advice that we will be sharing over the next couple of weeks as it relates to the benefits (and challenges) of au pair childcare.

Choosing your childcare is one of the biggest decisions you'll make. There is a lot at stake, and it's a personal decision—and can become even more personal when welcoming an au pair to live with you. To families unfamiliar with the situation, the thought of having a young adult live with them can be daunting. But, according to our host families, taking that leap of faith with live-in childcare has turned out to be the biggest and the best decision they've made.

You have taken your role as a parent very seriously. You read all the right parenting books, fed your child all the right foods, and enjoyed every developmental milestone. You have spent countless hours researching the best childcare option for your family. Hours, if not days, have been spent on preparing your application, **finding an au pair**, and now the long awaited day has arrived. Finally you have your au pair in your home.

After the initial honeymoon period with your family, things start to get real. You notice that the au pair has a certain way of handling things that is not exactly your preference. She is not "doing things your way" and although she is not harming the children it still bothers you to some degree. How do you address it without coming off as overly critical? Is this something that you can let go off? Or is it something that needs to be addressed immediately to avoid any future discomfort?

**In my experience as a former au pair, teacher as well as recruit adviser Open communication is the key to everything.** I strongly recommend that families have weekly meetings and discuss concerns in a solution-focused and supportive way. Waiting until you are angry is never the most optimal time for communication. I have found that au pairs will often do things in the ways they have been taught. They are generally open to doing things differently if they have the information they need to do it as you expect. If you enjoy a specific parenting approach or parenting expert, share that information with your au pair.

Let go of the things that are not a big deal to you. The more you model acceptance of the au pair's style, the more accepting the children will be of her and the happier your au pair will be!

Warm Regards,



Varga Mateidesz Katalin  
**Aupairfect**

### **What is an au pair?**

Au Pair comes from French and means "at par" or "as equal to." The au pair is a single, young woman or man with the chance to study a foreign language and culture while living as part of a family. They will assist them with their assimilation into life in a new country. The au pair is considered as a full member of the family during the entire stay. As such, he or she helps the family with childcare and can be asked to do some light household tasks. In return, the host family provides free board and lodging, as well as pocket money.

### **Before the au pair arrives**

#### **Letter of Invitation**

This letter confirms the terms of the au pair placement and is carried by the au pair to confirm the reason for travelling. Bear in mind that many au pairs will travel by coach and may have to pass through some form of passport control and/or customs check at borders en route and in addition to the UK. The letter confirms that the carrier is a bona-fide au pair.

#### **Family communication**

It is important that the family and the au pair work at developing a relationship prior to the au pair placement commencing. The work done up-front in building the relationship will pay dividends when the au pair arrives. It is recommended that the family write to the au pair including further information and photographs about themselves and their lifestyle. Most families and au pairs have access to email, and this provides an excellent low cost means of communication. The family should also make regular telephone contact to ensure that when the au pair arrives to stay with a family, he or she feels a part of an already developed relationship. These communications will allow the family to identify and allay any apprehension the au pair may feel prior to travel. It is always preferable to address any potential misunderstandings or inappropriate expectations as early as possible, and this makes for a more positive au pair placement experience for all.

#### **Preparing for arrival**

Remember that the au pair is probably travelling away from home alone for the first time, and will understandably be both excited and apprehensive. The more the family does at this stage to think through fully the duties and house rules, the easier they will be to implement.

#### **Living accommodation**

You will have provided the au pair with a description of the living accommodation. Remember that this is probably the au pairs' only place of private retreat and should be as described to the au pair. The au pair receives full room and board from the family throughout the stay. Full room and board including own private room, meal, facilities. The au pair is entitled to free access to food, just like any other family member. They are also entitled to free board and lodging in cases of illness and during their holiday.

#### **Timetable**

Clearly there needs to be a level of flexibility from all sides in a domestic arrangement. However, do not underestimate the benefits for all parties in having a structured approach to the timetable. There are few things more likely to upset a relationship than one side not doing the things they agreed to, when they agreed to do them. The key, of course, is good communication on all parts.

**Only take advice from an  
expert who has been  
where you want to go to!**

**[www.aupairfect.hu](http://www.aupairfect.hu)**

**[www.aupairfect.com](http://www.aupairfect.com)**

**[info@aupairfect.hu](mailto:info@aupairfect.hu)**

**[info@aupairfect.com](mailto:info@aupairfect.com)**

**0036 20 323 6961**

**We look forward to hearing from you!**