Au Pair
IN AMERICA

Orientation Handbook

Welcome to the United States!

During your Orientation, staff members from Au Pair in America will be here with you for the full stay. On the day you arrive, we will be in the hotel should you need assistance with any questions or concerns. Additionally, the hotel staff will be glad to help you if necessary.

Your welcome packets will be discussed during your stay. For now, you should make sure you have your room key. ***Your room number is printed on the key packet.***

Your rooms have been assigned according to the community where you've been placed as much as possible. This way you can begin to make friends with other Au Pairs who will be located near you during your year. There are three people per room, so there should be two regular beds and one roll-away bed. If there aren't enough beds, call the housekeeping number on the room phone or contact an au pair staff member. There will be ***no changes*** in room assignments.

The telephone inside your room is for receiving calls and calling inside the hotel only. The Au Pair staff will also help you with any necessary calls.

There is free WIFI in the hotel. Refer to Internet use on page 5.

If the message light on your room phone is lighted you have a message. Press the "voice mail" button on the telephone to receive your messages. Host families call to welcome their au pairs. Save messages on the phone if they are not for you. The television in your room has both free TV and pay TV channels. Use the free TV channels only! The pay TV channels should be turned off by the hotel.

Your luggage will be taken to your rooms by the hotel staff whom we have tipped. Please be patient as there is ***a lot*** of luggage. Attaching the tags found in your key packet will ensure their proper delivery. ***Any questions on luggage should be directed to the Au Pair in America staff.***

Everyone is ***required*** to attend EVERY meeting! Please bring your welcome packet and a pen.

See you tomorrow!
Your Orientation Staff

This book is dedicated to all au pairs with best wishes for a wonderful year!

As you begin your year as an au pair, many days lie ahead in which you will be responsible for the quality of the child care that you provide for your family. If you can begin to consider yourself as an "educator", no matter what your academic background, this year will be more meaningful for you and more productive for the children in your family. With a little thought and planning, and by working with your family to select activities which are right for the ages and stages of your kids, you can leave at the end of this year and say to yourself, "The children in this family are better for my having been here." It is a very powerful thing to make that happen. Good luck to you as you begin.

Your Orientation Training Staff

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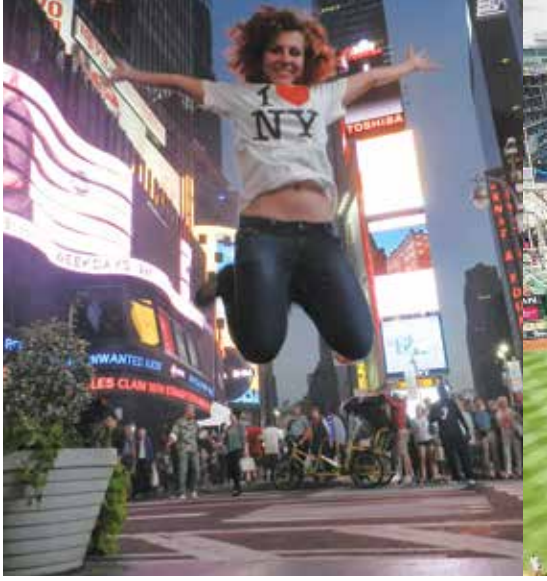

Facts about Connecticut

- ✓ Stamford, CT, is approximately one hour outside of New York City, is the largest financial district in the New York Metro outside New York City itself and one of the largest concentrations of corporations in the nation.
- ✓ The USS Nautilus - the world's first nuclear powered submarine was built in Groton, CT, in 1954.
- ✓ Connecticut is home to the first hamburger, Polaroid camera, color television, and helicopter.
- ✓ 1/3 of the population of Stamford is foreign born, making it a diverse and exciting city and the perfect home for Au Pair in America.

IMPORTANT

- An au pair alone is **NEVER** safe, and traveling in groups of three or more is recommended.
- If you find yourself in a situation that feels unsafe, ask for a taxi and return to the hotel.
- Never get into a car with someone unknown to you or someone newly met.
- The **LEGAL** drinking age in the U.S. is 21 and is strictly enforced.

Using American Telephones

If it is necessary to make a telephone call, see the Orientation staff.

To place a long distance telephone call within the United States or to Canada:

1. Dial 1 – the country code for the U.S. and Canada
2. Dial the area code – a three-digit number
3. Dial the local telephone number – a seven-digit number
   For example, to place a call to someone in New York, you would dial: 1 914 123-1234

Internet use

Free wireless Internet is available at the hotel if you have brought your own device with a wireless connection. You may access that in your room or in the reception. Open your web browser and follow the directions which appear. If you encounter difficulty, the front desk will be happy to assist you. In addition, computers located in reception may be used by au pairs. However, these computers are used by many, so please limit use. The Orientation staff will instruct you as to the location of the computers.

Come See New York City!

Au Pair in America is happy to offer you a tour of one of the world's most exciting cities. You will get an in-depth tour of New York City, which includes views of Central Park, Fifth Avenue, Times Square, Ground Zero, Battery Park & the Statue of Liberty.

See all of Manhattan from the Top of the Rock!

If you reserved a spot for the tour pre-departure, payment should be made to the Au Pair Staff on arrival night or at breakfast on the first morning.

Here is what some of the au pairs said about the tour:

"New York just took my breath away. Great scenery. Had a fantastic time!"

Lorraine from South Africa

"The trip was wonderful. We had a great tour guide. Unforgettable!"

Come join other Au Pairs as they experience New York City at night!

Sonja from Germany

Help! I've just arrived in the USA!

The hotel

Where do I sleep? What do I eat and how do I pay for it? What kind of money is this anyway? Why are the telephones so complicated? Why doesn't my computer work as it did at home? How do I get to my host family to really begin this year?

The staff of Au Pair in America is here to help you throughout your stay in the hotel. They are experienced in the concerns and questions that many au pairs have regarding the first few days in a new country. They can provide general answers for you and give you support.

Arrival at my host family

How will I know when to eat and sleep? Should I close the door to my room or leave it open? How will I know what kind of schedule they expect me to keep? How do I clean my clothes? What do they expect of me with their children? How do they want me to handle things when the children are not behaving properly? What about the car?

At Orientation many issues will be discussed including social habits of Americans, expectations of American families, American childcare theories and techniques and decision-making skills which will enable you to be successful. The best source of answers regarding your host family is the family. You can be the one to bring up issues that concern or confuse you. Americans speak directly and expect the same from others. They will want you to ask questions and wonder what is wrong if you do not. Remember that learning involves observation. Observe as the host parents respond when the children are not minding, when they are having fun, when it is bedtime. This can be a way to open a conversation about their expectations for you.

My new community

How do I find a bank, library, and post office? Where will I buy shampoo and toothpaste? If I leave the house, how do I find my way home? Where do I find information about classes? If I don't drive, how will I move about? How will I know how to act so I will fit in with the world around me?

Your host family will be a good resource for you with questions and support. In addition, you will receive the benefits that come from being on a legal program. Your Community Counselor is your contact in your area with information necessary for making a good adjustment to your new situation. Your Counselor has been trained by Au Pair in America and is experienced in dealing with newly arrived au pairs. She/he knows how other au pairs have banked, shopped and socialized and will give you lots of information. Your Counselor will provide social activities that will allow you to meet other au pairs, have some fun and create a life for yourself. Finally, your Counselor is well informed about the expectations of American families in the area of childcare and will provide support for you throughout the year.

New friends

How do I get to know au pairs that live close to me? How will I meet Americans? Where do I go for the sports I enjoy and want? How do I make the most of the time I have here?

Your Counselor will provide information and meetings with the other au pairs in your area. Remember that each of them was new once. They can tell you how they accomplished their transition into daily American life. New friends you meet will be willing to help you. It is not unusual for Americans to make several moves of long distance during a lifetime. Therefore, meeting new people and making new friends is an accustomed part of life. If you are open and friendly they will respond to you. And RELAX! No one knows all the answers on the first day. Discovery is part of the adventure!

Taxes and Tipping

Taxes

Every city, every state, is allowed to set their own tax rate, so this rate will vary from place to place. It is charged on most items. Do not expect the tax to be marked on the price tag on the item. Do not worry that you will be cheated in the tax charge. It is added on electronically by the cash register. You may not claim this tax back at the end of the year. You are living with us for the next year, and you must help us pay for our roads, schools and water systems, all of the things for which taxes pay. Ask your host parents about the tax rate in your area of the United States.

The United States government requires its citizens to pay taxes on the money earned during a calendar year. As an au pair you are required to pay taxes on the pocket money you earn. This money is to be paid each year by April 15 on the money earned the year before in the US. The amount will depend on the length of your stay during the prior year. It is your responsibility to pay taxes. Should you choose not to pay, you may be denied entrance into the U.S. in the future or be subject to fines from the U.S. government. Au Pair in America will send au pairs links to tax forms and guidance for filing taxes by January of the tax filing year.

Tipping

In the United States, tipping (giving a gratuity to someone who does a service for you) is an accepted and expected part of our culture. In fact, people who do service kinds of jobs are often paid a lower wage as it is expected they will receive tips as a part of their wage. The standard for tipping in America is 15% of the cost of the service. For example, if you go out for coffee and cake with a friend and the total bill is $10.00, your tip would be $1.50. It will not be added on to the bill that you receive; it will be your responsibility to add it on. Generally, it would be left on the table when you leave the restaurant and collected by the server after you leave. It is expected that you will give a tip to waiters or waitresses in restaurants, bartenders, taxi drivers (15% of the cost of the fare), individuals who carry your suitcases in a hotel, airport or train station ($1 to $2 for each large suitcase), and people who cut your hair. It is important that you observe this cultural tradition to be well received and welcomed again.

Cultural Adaptation: Living in a New Country

Your adjustment to living in the United States will not be unlike that of many other au pairs, but for each of you there may be subtle differences. Do not think you will be the same person when you leave at the end of your stay that you are today. You have come to the United States on a homestay program. As a tourist you are an observer. You travel about and look at us and our country and draw conclusions based on the experiences and values of your own country. As a homestay participant you will integrate yourself into the family and community for a significant amount of time. While certainly none of you wants to become an "American", you will have the possibility of knowing first-hand and in-depth how we run our lives, what things we value and what practices are common. If your mind is open to new ideas, you will have the uncommon opportunity to compare systems of government, family structures and cultural practices in a way that none of your family or friends may have had. You will be completely immersed in an unfamiliar culture and family that will provide for you the most challenging and instructive time in your life. Your potential for building your own self-esteem and confidence in yourself is great if you take advantage of the opportunity. But all of this may create feelings you may not expect. Are you ready for this roller coaster?

For most homestay participants

They begin the year with excitement. Everything is wonderful and positive. They have high expectations – perhaps too high. This period usually lasts for a week to a month or two. Gradually things change. No longer do all things seem wonderful. Small things that are little worries or problems become major disasters. The crisis ends, you become more comfortable and feel "at home". This period of adaptation means life in America seems "normal'. Another letdown is common just before you return home. You have adjusted to living in a new environment, and now you must leave. The friends you have made and the routines of your new life are difficult to give up. Don't worry – like all the other stages, this too will pass!

Culture shock

You probably arrived in America with some feelings about what you would find. While knowing that we are not alike as cultures, you may still have expected that we would be similar. Now you find that our food is different, our houses look strange, our cars are too big, our family practices are ridiculous….and we generally make no sense at all. "What is the matter with Americans?" Don't worry. Your feelings are not unusual. In fact, not to feel this way would be strange. Your mind and body are equipped to deal with a certain amount of change in your environment, but you are being assaulted daily with the "differentness". It is not easy to listen to a new language in all your waking hours. (Even for native English speakers, differences in phrasing, names for commonplace items and descriptive words make American English sound like a foreign language.) To be presented with new and unusual foods at every meal and to constantly respond to actions and ideas that are unique and strange is exhausting. Your body and mind give you three alternatives for dealing with this situation:

Fight–flight–adaptation/Homesickness

If your choice is to fight, you will become angry at all around you, defensive about yourself, your country, your values and your practices. You will be unwilling to listen to new thoughts or respond to new experiences. You will make impossible the very thing you went to so much trouble to secure – a new and exciting year in America. Those around you will perceive your behavior as strange and perhaps even choose not to be with you. It is no fun to be with an angry person. It will be no fun for your family to show you their community and their lives, so they may withdraw. You may find yourself isolated at a time when you need companionship the most.

If your choice is flight, again you will not receive any of the benefits you worked so hard to achieve. You can return home if things feel so threatening. However, when you return you will find things just as you left them, leaving you wondering why you returned after all. If you came to the USA you must have a basic curiosity. Don't let the differences frighten you into losing your opportunity and learning all that you can. Some things you find will be good, some bad and some just funny. Try not to let fear push you into a decision to flee, one you will most undoubtedly regret.

Finally, the response used by most au pairs is to adapt to life in America. There will be lots of surprises and many unfamiliar circumstances. However, if you can control your panic, you will find the unfamiliar will become commonplace. Your ability to adapt is probably much stronger than you imagined, and you will use that skill for the rest of your life.

Homesickness

Homesickness is a feeling you may experience during some period of your stay here. It is characterized by the overwhelming desire to hear the voice of your family or friends, the tingling in the taste buds for the flavor of your favorite foods, even the irrational need to spend time with your little brother. It is very real, this feeling of missing those things that are familiar. However it is like the "flu"; it may strike you, you feel terrible for a while, and then it goes. It is hard to remember what it felt like. Homesickness is not a terminal illness. The best cure for homesickness is to stay busy in your new situation. When your mind is occupied with new thoughts and stimulating activities, it is hard to have time to think about being homesick. Don't call home. Don't go home. Reach out to friends, particularly other au pairs who will understand what you are experiencing. Tell people around you that you need extra support. Your family, your Counselor and your friends will respond if they know you need help.

Returning home

Part of your ability to adapt to being in America as an au pair is the awareness of the length of your stay. What seems to stretch into eternity now will begin to fly by the second or third month. At the end of your stay, you may agree with most au pairs who report that they can't believe the time went so fast. Many of your relationships will continue with communication and visits after you return home. The pattern of your daily life here, however, meets the needs you have during this exchange. You will return to the familiar lifestyle you have known at home, but because of your experience, life will never be exactly the same.

Internet Use

The Internet has become the most common way to communicate with friends and family at home; it is economical and allows you to compensate for some of the time differences that face au pairs and their families. In many cases an au pair brings her own computer. You may be allowed to use the host family's computer. Whether you use your own computer, one at the public library or your host family's, there are some important rules to remember to ensure the safety and privacy of your host family. They are:

- **NEVER** send any photos of your children over the Internet in a personal e-mail or to be displayed on a social networking site such as Facebook or any web page. Your host parents, if they choose, may send photos from their own e-mail address. They must take responsibility for this.
- **NEVER** disclose any information about your host family, their schedule or their personal lives over the Internet.
- **THINK** very carefully about the way you present yourself on the Internet. You do not want to find yourself in an embarrassing situation at a future time.

The Internet is a great tool; it must be used wisely. If your host family has restrictions on use during the time you are doing childcare, you need to respect their wishes in this.

The Three 'No's'

You may not do any of the following things. If you do, you may either find yourself in jail or you may be terminated from the program.

- Use drugs
- Abuse alcohol (legal drinking age is 21)
- Abuse children (physically, verbally or sexually)

These concepts will be explained in great detail during Orientation. Please be certain to ask any questions that you may have.

Travel Outside of the United States

If you are planning a trip outside the U.S., even for only one day, you must have your passport, DS 2019 ***AND*** I-94 stamp with you in order to return. Your white DS 2019 form must be signed under the section called "Travel Validation by Responsible Officer", indicating you are in good standing with the program. Once your DS 2019 has been signed for Travel Validation, you do not need to have it signed again. ***The one-time signature will be valid for travel outside the United States for your entire program year.*** The first time you plan a trip outside the United States, you must:

Send your DS 2019 paper to:
Au Pair in America
Attn: Evelyn Blum
1 High Ridge Park
Stamford, CT 06905
Telephone number: (800) 928-7247 ext. 5027

This form should be sent at least three weeks prior to travel outside the country. You should only send your white DS 2019. DO NOT SEND YOUR PASSPORT!

- Include the "Travel Validation Request Form" which you can get from your community Counselor or on the Au Pair in America website (www.aupairinamerica.com/aupairs/traveloutsideus.html) with your DS 2019 stating where you will be going and the dates of your trip. Remember, once your form has been signed, it does not need to be signed again for another trip.

A SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE SHOULD ACCOMPANY ALL DS 2019 FORMS.

- If you are leaving the country within two weeks and need to have your validated DS 2019 sent back to you by 2-day UPS, you must include cash, a check, or money order for $15.00 made payable to AIFS. A complete return mailing address must accompany the check as well as your day time telephone number. If you are having your DS 2019 returned by UPS, you do not need to provide a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Visas and travel outside the United States

When you travel outside the United States it is very important to check the expiration date of your J-1 visa – which is the stamp in your passport – since it does not always correspond with the end date of your program. Many times a visa will expire before the end of your program year. If your visa has expired you will not be allowed to reenter the United States, even if you are still participating in the program.

Visas and Year2 au pairs

When you are granted a program extension, this means that you are legally allowed to remain in the United States for up to an additional 12 months to continue on the Au Pair in America program.
Because your J-1 visa will have expired, travel outside the United States during your extension term will be restricted. Au pairs in their extension year can travel to Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Hawaii since these places are part of the United States.

Travel to Canada, Mexico and adjacent Islands

You will receive detailed information about traveling outside the United States during your extension when you receive your extension application package.
It may be possible to travel to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean Islands during your extension term.

Overseas Travel

In certain situations it may be possible for you to return to your home country before your extension term begins, and apply for another J-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

NOTE: It is very important to call the embassy or consulate of the country you plan to visit before making your travel plans. Certain nationalities require additional documents (visas) to enter a particular country. (For example, a South African needs a tourist visa to visit Canada.) You can check the Au Pair in America website to find out more about visa requirements for other countries. Make sure you can meet all the travel requirements before purchasing your travel tickets.

Definition of terms:

DS 2019: This white form is required by the United States Embassy or Consulate as proof of acceptance into a cultural exchange program. Immigration officials will stamp your passport with the date you entered the United States. You will need to show this form to Immigration authorities when you reenter the United States after travel abroad.

J-1 Visa: This is a stamp that is placed in an au pair's passport. The visa should be valid for one year and should be a multiple entry visa so that an au pair can leave and reenter the United States multiple times on this visa. Once an au pair has completed her program, she should return home so as to comply with the terms of the J-1 visa.

I-94: A arrival/departure stamp which is placed into your passport by the Immigration officials upon arrival into the United States.

The I-94 stamp and DS 2019 form will be valid for one year from the date you entered into the United States. This is indicated by a stamp with your arrival date and the code "J-1 D/S". This stamp and code will be in your passport.

Important additional information

The J-1 visa, together with the DS 2019 and I-94 stamp permit you to legally reside in the U.S. for up to 12 months as long as you are in good standing with the Au Pair in America Program. Under the terms of this visa you provide care to your host family's children. It is illegal for you to perform duties other than those approved by the au pair program regulations, or to engage in other types of employment opportunities. The U. S. Department of State now allows an au pair who has successfully completed her program year to apply for an extension of stay in the U.S. for up to an additional 12 months.

Please note that you have an additional 30 days after your one-year or extension program ends to remain in the United States if you would like to travel or sightsee. However, you may not travel outside the United States or work for your Host Family during this time as your J-1 visa will have expired.

If you remain in the United States after your program, you will be considered to be in violation of the terms of your J-1 visa as well as the contractual agreement you made with Au Pair in America and may be reported to immigration authorities. If you do not return home at the end of your program year, you will forfeit your return plane ticket. Once you have returned to your home country at the end of your program, you may apply to return to the United States on a different visa (such as student or tourist).

If you leave the program early (before the end of your 12-month contract) you are expected to purchase your own return flight home.

Au Pair in America wants you to have an enriching, safe experience. Address any questions you may have regarding your visa or other travel documents by contacting Evelyn Blum at eblum@aifs.com, or telephone 1 (800) 928-7247, extension 5027.

Au Pair in America recommends that au pairs make a copy of the following documents and have these with them at all times:

- Biography page of the passport
- I-94 stamp
- J-1 Visa page from the passport
- DS-2019 (first page)
- Photo identification

Au pairs should carry some form of identification (other than a passport which should only be carried when traveling outside the U.S.) with a photograph (driver's license or identification card).

Driving in America

What Every Au Pair Should Know

The automobile is a major part of the American lifestyle and most au pairs will be driving during their year in America. However, using your host family's car is a privilege; they are not obligated to allow you to drive. As such, use of the car carries responsibilities as well as benefits. At first, driving may seem overwhelming. The cars are big, the roads are congested and people seem to be in such a hurry. With time, care, and attention you should be able to master driving during your stay in America. This document will answer your basic questions about this topic. Be sure to read this thoroughly and to ask your host parents or Counselor about anything that is unclear to you.

Must I obtain an American driving license?

Your host parents, their insurance company, and the laws in your particular American state will decide this. In any case, it is usually cheaper and easier to obtain an American license than in your home country. The price of a license is generally between $20 and $100, and you will likely be responsible for paying for the license. You can expect to take a written and a road test. More information on this topic is available at ***www.aupairinamerica.com/state*** by clicking on the state your living in with your host family.

Will anyone evaluate my driving?

Yes. Your host parents will want to see how well you drive. They will take you for a practice drive. It is important that you not accept the responsibility of driving until you feel confident and comfortable with your driving ability. If you are not, ask your family for more help to arrange more practice driving time. Talk to your host family or community Counselor about taking driving lessons. Possibly the family will offer to pay for lessons, but if you need to pay for this it will be a good investment of money to ensure your safety and make your year more rewarding.

What should I do if I am involved in an accident?

Do not leave the scene of an accident. Call the police. Have your driving license and automobile insurance information available. Ask your host parents to show you where the registration and insurance information for the car is kept (usually in the glove box). Ask the other driver to provide you with his/her name, license and automobile insurance information. If there are any witnesses available ask them for their names and phone numbers. If you hit a parked car that has no driver present, leave your contact information on the windshield. If you do not, you may be charged with leaving the scene of an accident. Remember to stay calm and let the professionals assess the damage and responsibility.

What about insurance?

If your host family allows you to drive their car they must provide you with proper automobile insurance. It is their responsibility to check with the insurance company. However, if you have an accident there is something called THE DEDUCTIBLE (the excess) and you should expect to be responsible for this. The deductible is the amount of money that must be paid for damages before the insurance company will pay. A deductible can be as low as $250 and as much as $1,000 or more. Typically, it is about $500. If there is a car accident with damages of about $2,000 the financial payments might look as follows:

- $2,000 Damages
- - $500 Deductible-Paid by au pair
- $1,500 Paid by Insurance Company

Au Pair in America has asked families to limit the responsibility of the au pair to a maximum of $500 for each accident. There is a deductible every time there is an accident. Be sure to ask your host parents about the deductible on their insurance policy. Remember, if you are involved in an accident-no matter how small, you must tell your host parents!

What if the police stop me?

If the police indicate that you should stop, either by flashing lights or a verbal directive, you must pull to the right side of the road as soon as you can. Stay in the car! When the officer approaches the car you should lock the door, put down your window slightly, keep your hands on the steering wheel and wait for instructions. Generally, they will ask to see your license and registration. Once you have provided the documents they will return to their vehicle and verify your information via computer. It may take quite a while – be patient. In the end, they may issue a ticket (fine) or they may just give you a warning. In either case, do not argue with the officer. If you wish to dispute the outcome you may go to Traffic Court to do so. If you have an International License it is wise to carry a translation with you. Also, remember that you are a Cultural Exchange (J-1) visitor and not a tourist. There are different implications for each visa status. You must inform your host parents if you have received a ticket.

What if I am lost?

You probably will be lost during your first weeks in America. Be prepared. Take the following items with you: a map, printed directions or GPS, the phone number of your destination, your Au Pair in America identification card, and a cell phone for making a call. If you are lost for a few minutes, that is not a big problem. However, if you find yourself "going in circles" for more than ten minutes then it is time to take action. If you are on your way to pick up a child it is critical that you inform people of your whereabouts. Call the school or other appropriate person as soon as possible to make sure that your child will be safe and secure. If you cannot reach them, then you should call your host parents and make alternate plans. Keep people informed and take sensible actions. Remember, in America the police officer is your friend. If you see an officer he/she will be happy to assist you.

Who pays for the gas?

If you are driving for your job (taking the children to school or activities, running errands etc.) your host family will pay for the gas. If you are driving for your own pleasure (going to the cinema, shopping, a friend's house) then you should expect to pay for the gas. Your host family should cover your education transportation costs and transportation to cluster meetings. Each family has a different way of monitoring and estimating the cost of fuel. Be sure to have a conversation with your family about managing finances for the car, the method of payment (credit card or cash) when purchasing gasoline and the grade of gasoline required for each car you drive. Many gasoline stations in America are self-service. If you are unfamiliar with the procedure of putting gasoline in a car, please ask your host parent to accompany you to the station for a lesson in filling up the automobile.

Who pays for maintenance of the car?

Your host family should pay for routine maintenance of the car (oil changes, car inspection fees). If you are the only person driving a particular vehicle it is your responsibility to notice when things need attention. Do not ignore dashboard lights indicating a problem with the car. Keep your host family informed about the car and its maintenance needs.

Child Safety in the Car

Children under the age of 12 should sit in the rear seat to prevent airbag injuries. If your child requires an infant seat or other child restraint you must be certain that it is used at all times. Your host parents should give you the information about child seating requirements in their state. If, with the permission of your host parents, you and your child are traveling in another vehicle, you must ensure that your child has the appropriate restraints. No matter how short the distance, properly installed and fitted restraints (seat belts) must be used at all times. If you are driving a carpool, all of the children in the car must have seat belts. Do not take extra children if they cannot be properly restrained.

NEVER, EVER, LEAVE A CHILD ALONE IN A CAR. No matter how short the errand, no matter that you can see the car from your destination, no matter that a child has fallen asleep, when you leave the car all children must leave with you. Both the laws and the responsibility you carry mandate this.

Phone Use in the Car

When driving all attention must be given to safe driving practices. **Never** answer a call, talk on the phone or place a call when driving. Texting while driving the car is illegal in most states and extremely dangerous. *TURN OFF THE PHONE WHEN IN THE CAR.*

How will I know the speed limits and other rules?

Each state issues a driving manual. You can view them on-line at *www.aupairinamerica.com/state* then pick the state and then click on the DMV information), you can ask your family if they have one or you can go to the local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and obtain one. In any case, you should be certain that you familiarize yourself with these rules before you start driving.

Alcohol and Driving – Do Not Mix

Never drive after drinking any alcoholic beverage, whether or not children are in the car. There is no "safe" amount of alcohol that can be consumed before driving, because any amount can impair driving ability and police may arrest any driver who has any alcohol on their breath. It is also illegal to have open alcoholic beverages in the car. An arrest will result in termination from the program. If anyone tells you that there is a "safe" amount that you can drink before driving, they are wrong, and if you listen to them, you will jeopardize your safety (and that of your passengers). You will risk arrest, imprisonment, termination from the program, deportation, and exclusion from the U.S. in the future.

Metric Conversion Chart

When you know	*Multiply by*	*To find*
Inches	25	Millimeters
Feet	30	Centimeters
Yards	0.9	Meters
Miles	1.6	Kilometers
Ounces	28	Grams
Pounds	0.45	Kilograms
Grams	0.035	Ounces
Fluid Ounces	30	Milliliters
Pints, US	0.47	Liters
Quarts, US	0.95	Liters
Gallons	3.8	Liters

To convert Fahrenheit to Celsius:

Subtract 32 and multiply by .55

In Fahrenheit measurement:

Freezing is 32 degrees
Boiling is 212 degrees
Normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees

Healthy Eating and A Healthy Year

I've heard that Au Pairs often gain weight during their year in America. How can I avoid this?

The most important thing that you can do is to recognize that this is a year that will bring many challenges. Please be kind to yourself and set reasonable expectations. Living in a new culture and undertaking a new set of responsibilities can be stressful. Sometimes people respond to this situation by eating more than usual. Additionally, because the foods that will be available to you may be different than the ones at home, it may be more difficult to manage your diet. It's exciting to try new foods and often part of the social experience. And, finally, if you spend many hours in the house with young children the refrigerator may become a big temptation. In order to help you Au Pair in America has provided each Au Pair with A Guide to Good Eating. This easy to understand handout emphasizes the varieties of food that should be included in a healthy diet and recommended portion sizes. Use it as a reference tool as you adapt to American food and eating patterns. As the year progresses we are sure that you will feel more comfortable in balancing your food choices with your needs.

Should I join a gym or fitness club? What should I know about this?

While many au pairs do join a health club of some kind, Au Pair in America recommends that you be very careful about the commitments that you make.

We all have dreams of working out every single day and quickly discover that in actuality it may be only once a week. Therefore, a long-term contract does not make sense. Before you sign any contract discuss it with your host parents or Counselor. We suggest that you request a trial membership before joining a gym and that you commit to no more than one month at a time. Otherwise, you may find that you have paid a lot of money for a service that you are not using. Consider looking at several different gyms. You will find that their facilities, services, and costs may vary greatly. In many areas there will be a YWCA or YMCA which may provide a lower cost alternative to private gyms. Also, ask your host parents if they have any suggestions. Finally, please remember that gym membership does not fulfill your educational requirements. Enjoy yourself and keep fit!

Where else can I find out about healthy eating?

There are many readily available sources of information. Your local library will have many books available on nutrition and general health information. Also, your community hospital may offer seminars and workshops on topics related to diet and fitness. Your Counselor may be able to direct you to other local resources. The Internet is filled with health related sites. One very reputable site is The Mayo Clinic site. Its web address is: ***www.mayoclinic.com***. It has sections on nutrition and on women. If you are interested in nutrition for children check out ***www.nutritionexplorations.org/kids/php,*** which is an interactive website for parents and child care givers.

Child Care in America

Guidelines for Rating Children's Television

(www.pbskids.org/read)

Every child is unique and develops at his/her own pace and learns in his/her own way. Spend time talking with the children about what they like to watch on TV and why. If your host family allows, watch TV together and choose shows that are a good match for what a child needs to learn and how they learn best!

Here are some guidelines to help you judge what kinds of programs will be beneficial for the children.

Television is a problem when:

- It occupies too much of your children's time.
- It doesn't help you teach your children important values.
- It teaches your children ideas, words, or behavior you feel you have to unteach.
- It is not created for an audience of children, and it is too adult.
- It exposes children to violence as a means of problem solving.
- It models gender, racial or cultural stereotypes.
- It encourages children to think that they need to buy specific products.

Television is a good thing when:

- It is developmentally appropriate and a good match between your children's growing needs and the subject matter of a show.
- It encourages creativity and critical thinking.
- It introduces your children to the skills and ideas they need to learn.
- It models ways to solve problems, to cooperate, and get along with others.
- It engages your children to sing along, dance along, ask questions and respond.
- It entertains while it teaches.
- It reinforces the values that are important to your family.
- It helps your children to appreciate other families, communities, and cultures. It inspires your children to want to learn more and read.

Helping with Homework

Doing your homework!

Information, information, information…In order to do your job successfully you must know the host parents' rules and expectations. Ask the following questions:

- When is homework to be completed?
- Where is homework to be done?
- What supplies are available for the student?
- Where shall I be when the student is doing homework?
- What about music? Is that allowed?
- How much time is expected?
- What about breaks?
- Who will review the homework?
- What if a child won't cooperate?

*Sharing the rules…*Ask for a meeting with host parents, au pair/companion and children to review the rules and expectations with everyone listening.

*Reviewing the situation…*Remember to keep your host parents informed about homework issues.

- What's going well?
- What needs to be improved?

Getting started each day

- Take care of basic needs
- Does your child need a snack or some rest time?
- Does he/she need to "touch base" with mom or dad?

Have or help the child to prioritize the day's assignments. Develop a schedule for the day (include time for breaks). Have the child identify –

- What can I do by myself?
- What do I need help with?

Guiding the process

Doing the homework is your child's job. Helping if your child is having problems is your job.

Here are some helpful questions:

- Do you understand what you're supposed to do?
- What do you need to do to finish the assignment?
- Do you need help in understanding how to do your work?
- Have you ever done any problems like this one?
- Do you have everything you need to complete the assignment?
- Does your answer make sense to you?
- Do you need to review your notes or reread the book before you finish the assignment?
- Are you still having problems? How about a break or a snack?

Here are some helpful actions:

- Give specific praise-"That's a great first draft."
- Give constructive criticism – "Your teacher will understand your ideas better if you use your best handwriting."
- Be available when your child is doing homework so that you can answer a question.
- Read over directions with your child and ask him/her to explain the assignment in their own words.
- Help your child divide a challenging task into smaller pieces.
- Turn your child into the teacher. As he teaches you he'll be reinforcing important information.
- Be the audience as your child practices spelling and reading.

Discipline Through Understanding:

"Fighting" vs. "Thinking" words

Setting clear limits for children, helping them to understand the boundaries of expectations, allows children to make choices that meet everyone's needs. Treating a child with dignity and respect allows them to focus on the choice and its consequences rather than battling for control with the adult. The testing of behavior may be less extreme if a child knows the limits and can rely on consistent responses from the caregiver.

When setting limits, au pairs may find that carefully choosing their words can result in unexpected benefits. Limits can be expressed through "fighting" words or "thinking" words. Wouldn't we all rather have a thinking child? Here are some examples of what we mean:

Bedtime

Fighting Go upstairs and get yourself ready for bed right now.

Thinking I would really enjoy reading a bedtime story. If you go get ready for bed now, I will come up in 15 minutes and have plenty of time to read. If I come up and you are still dressed, I will have to use my time to help you get ready for bed, not reading.

Friends

Fighting Why do you want David to come over? All you two do is fight.

Thinking I know how much you like David, but when you two argue the whole house feels sad. I see you play happily with other friends. Let's try to have David come over and play today, but if it doesn't work out well I will need to take David back home. It makes everyone out of sorts to hear you and David fight.

Chores

Fighting What's wrong with you? I have to ask you to take the trash bin out every night. Why can't you just remember to do it? No one reminds me to make dinner.

Thinking Feel free to play once the trash is taken out. Is there some way I could help you remind yourself?

Sibling bickering

Fighting You two stop it. I can't stand the bickering. You are driving me crazy.

Thinking It makes me sad to see you two fight because I like both of you. If you can't be nice to each other I will have to ask you to play in your own rooms. It upsets me too much to hear anyone being rude to either of you.

Homework

Fighting There will be no playing or TV until your homework is finished, so get going on it.

Thinking As soon as your homework is finished, you will have time to do what you want. Would you like to start on your math or history first? Feel free to go out and play as soon as you have finished your homework.

Clothing

Fighting Get dressed immediately and be sure to wear something that matches.

Thinking I will be leaving in five minutes and you need to be dressed. Would you like to wear your red or blue outfit? There will be plenty of time to stop at the library if we leave in five minutes.

Music

Fighting Turn off that music! It's too loud and disturbs everyone else.

Thinking I'm having a hard time concentrating on my work. Feel free to listen with your headphones or in the other room.

Leaving on time

Fighting I can't believe you're late again and you haven't even… (finished eating, your chores, getting dressed). Why do you do this to me? Hurry up! What will I say to your teacher? Hurry! Hurry!

Thinking We need to leave in five minutes, otherwise we'll all be late. If you can't be ready to leave on time, I'll have to wake you earlier in the morning.

Beyond Time-Out

To improve behavior, we often revert to tactics that our own family used with us, but there are a host of other effective techniques from which to choose to help your child improve behavior. By tailoring your response to the situation and your child's age, you can help a child gain self-control and maintain self-esteem. Discover which of these ideas works best for your child, your situation and your day.

Change the scene

The best way to discipline a baby under one year old combines baby proofing with distraction. First you have to make the house secure so that your child can safely explore his environment. Because no place is ever 100% baby proof, when he heads for trouble get him involved in another activity. You can't expect your baby to understand rules and consequences, and shouting, "NO!" will only frighten him. Hitting or shaking a baby should never be done. Constant supervision is needed at this age. Distraction can work with toddlers and even with pre-schoolers.

Look away

By ignoring small misbehaviors, you can avoid giving negative attention that kids sometimes seek, and you'll be less likely to get stuck in endless criticism of minor habits (whining, pouting, dawdling, swearing, bickering with siblings). Turning a blind eye is most effective when you couple it with plenty of positive attention for behavior you want to encourage. For example, you might compliment your child by saying, "I like to hear your normal voice," when she asks for something without whining.

Give fair warning

For toddlers and preschoolers who are just learning behavior rules, it's best to give a reminder of the rule before you enforce the penalty. In fact, a well-timed reminder can avoid trouble altogether. Warnings involve specific consequences that you must be prepared to use if the behavior continues. They should be promises you intend to fulfill, even if they're inconvenient: "If you unbuckle your seat belt again, we're going back home."

Reprimand the right way

Many times the only thing you need to do to redirect the child's behavior is to give a proper scolding. Avoid shaming your child or making comments that will decrease self-esteem. Instead give a brief command to stop the undesirable behavior ("Stop biting"), and then offer an explanation ("Biting hurts"). Repeat the consequences of the misbehavior. ("If you bite, you'll have to go to your room"). Provide another way of acting ("Use words to tell people when you're angry"). Be sure to end on a positive note, with a hug, smile or compliment ("You're a great listener").

Let the chips fall where they may

Allowing the child to learn from the consequences of behavior in matters of small importance can be very instructive, especially if the child is older than 3 and understands cause and effect. ("If you don't eat your lunch, we can't go to the park to play.") These lessons are particularly useful because they come from experience rather than you.

Match the punishment to the crime

Remember that consequences make more sense when they are directly related to the behavior. If a child rides her bike into the street, put it away for the rest of the day.

Take away a treat

Temporarily taking away something a child values teaches him/her that if he breaks a rule, he/she must pay for it with something he/she likes. It's a good idea to figure out ahead what makes sense for common misbehaviors; that way you will avoid excessive penalties in a fit of anger.

Insist on paybacks

When something the child has done causes another person to suffer—whether hurt feelings or property damage—it is up to you to require him to make amends, which could be anything from apologizing for a rude remark to replacing a friend's toy. It teaches kids about the rights and feelings of others and about taking responsibility for their own harmful actions.

Lend a hand

Many parents complain that their children won't obey simple commands, but if you just repeat instructions without taking any specific action, you are only teaching the child to ignore your requests. Try the "one request" principle. When you give a command, stand close by, make eye contact, and state your intentions clearly. ("I expect you to put on your coat now.") If she doesn't begin to comply with the request, take her by the hand and guide her until she completes the task, even if you have to do most of it yourself. The message is that you expect her to comply now. Don't talk, nag or get emotional. This method works well with preschoolers.

Work before play

This works well when you want something done and are willing to wait. This focuses on a positive incentive rather than threats. Remember to say, "when you finish" not "if".

Join forces

By assuming your child is cooperative, you can work together to resolve problems. Choose a quiet time to talk, and ask for suggestions regarding behavior that needs to change. Solicit his ideas, use one or more of the child's suggestions, state the new expectations and suggest consequences for misbehavior. This is an especially useful technique for older children.

Call a time out

When all else fails, this short social isolation helps a child regain self-control. It works best when you enforce it immediately. Use a timer, which is impersonal, to monitor the minutes. Don't treat the time-out as a punishment, but as a compassionate means to help the child self-discipline.

For teens:

- Set clear rules
- Put it in writing
- Be clear-and consistent-and calm
- Choose your battles
- Stay involved
- Understand-respect
- Be role model

"No matter what techniques you use, assume your child wants to use good behavior. Your aim is to get the child to self-discipline, and that goal is best achieved when you use methods that build self-esteem."

– Adapted from Parenting Magazine

Infant Safety Checklist

- ☐ Check the temperature of the bottle before feeding the baby
- ☐ Make sure to keep safety gates closed at all times
- ☐ Do not leave infants or children alone in a car
- ☐ Car Seats for infants and children always need to be in the back seat of the car
- ☐ Sharp items including scissors and knives are out of reach of the children
- ☐ When cooking, pots are placed on the back burner so children cannot reach them
- ☐ Medicines are out of reach
- ☐ Cords and wires from electronics are out of reach
- ☐ Televisions are secured so children cannot pull them over on themselves
- ☐ Window blind cords are out of reach
- ☐ Never leave an infant alone on a changing table
- ☐ Electrical outlets should be covered with safety plugs
- ☐ Blow dryers, curling irons, flat irons and irons should be unplugged when not in use.
- ☐ Food should be cut into tiny pieces for young children
- ☐ Keep hot drinks away from infants and young children
- ☐ Never leave a child alone in a highchair
- ☐ Keep small objects away from infants and toddlers that could cause choking
- ☐ Do not leave child unattended for even a moment in or near a bathtub, pool, or other water
- ☐ Examine toys for sharp edges or broken parts
- ☐ Keep first aid supplies easily available to you
- ☐ Know the number for emergencies as well as poison control

Check out these websites for more information regarding care of children from three months to one year:

www.zerotothree.org
www.brazelton-institute.com
www.babycenter.com
www.babyzone.com

FROM BIRTH TO SIX MONTHS

Developmental expectations

- To learn to trust and feel secure with those who care for him/her
- To learn by instinct the behavior which will get basic needs met

You might expect to see

Physically

- Development of own schedule for daily needs
- Holds up head, rolls over, pulls up, sits alone for a moment
- Begins to reach and grasp objects

Intellectually

- Coos and babbles in response to others
- Learns by sensing world around him/her

Socially/Emotionally

- Identifies primary caregiver
- Smiles to be friendly
- Likes to be held and played with
- Shows excitement through physical responses
- Develops different cries to identify needs
- Fears the unexpected: noise, movement, pain

To provide good care

- Adapt to baby's rhythms as much as possible
- Exercise baby's arms and legs
- Hold and cuddle often, especially when startled
- Provide stimulating objects to see, feel, grasp and hear
- Speak in words, not sounds; talk and sing
- Provide a safe and stimulating environment including toys, music and a change of scenery

SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR

Developmental expectations

- To learn about the world through spatial concepts
- To develop muscle coordination and control of hands, legs
- To adjust to short periods of separation from the caregiver

You might expect to see

Physically

- Crawls or walks around 8 months and beyond
- Puts everything in mouth
- Begins teething

Intellectually

- Learns through the senses, especially the mouth
- Likes to repeat the same behavior
- Likes to hear objects named; begins to understand familiar words, Mama, bye-bye, doggie

Socially/Emotionally

- Finds primary caregiver extremely important
- Will imitate actions and sounds of others
- Will not "play nicely" with other children as they are not real to him/her
- Draws away from strangers

To provide good care

- Be sure the play area is safe so that child can explore
- Give the opportunity for using hands and fingers in eating or water play
- Use language at all times, repeating and naming things
- Provide consistent and secure care
- Provide physical comfort by meeting needs of hunger, cleanliness, warmth, and love
- Proceed slowly to introduce a child to new people

ONE TO TWO YEARS

Developmental expectations

- Discovers self through the exploration of the world
- Develops communication skills
- Begins to develop the basics of self control

You might expect to see

Physically

- Begins to walk and climb
- Enjoys pushing and pulling object
- Begins to feed self
- Tries to undress or dress himself

Intellectually

- Is very curious and will explore everything
- Can use language to identify simple objects and make one word sentences, No, Down, Bye-bye
- Can repeat simple songs or rhymes

Socially/Emotionally

- Enjoys the company of familiar people and will copy behavior
- Begins to be demanding, assertive, independent
- Plays alone but not well with others of the same age
- Needs the warmth and security of a special adult
- May become frustrated at not being able to put wishes into words

To provide good care

- Allow child to try things on his own, even if a messy result will follow
- Be a good model, and do things which you want the child to do
- Establish clear rules for safety; make sure an adult is always close by
- Provide toys and play games involving different types of stimuli and that use both large and small motor skills
- Talk often and read to the child each day

TWO TO THREE YEARS

Developmental expectations

- To separate thinking from feeling through experiencing choices and limits
- To establish and discover a positive and distinct self; definite recognition of himself as a person

You might see

Physically

- Runs, kicks, throws, jumps, pulls, pushes
- Small muscle control is evident in tasks such as scribbling, eating and picking up small objects

Intellectually

- Has a short attention span
- Still very curious
- Makes 3 – 4 word sentences

Socially/Emotionally

- Imitates adult behaviors to advance learning
- Is able to interact with others in a more social manner
- Likes praise and needs to be allowed to do things "myself"
- Often tests his/her power in the family with words like "No"
- Wants to be "good", but cannot always carry out promises
- Often fearful of loud noises and large animals
- Still rely on a secure caregiver

To provide good care

- Create activities that use fingers and provide lots of room for physical actions
- Allow child to explore; limit the "no-no's"
- Limit the length of any activity to accommodate the child's interest
- Make simple but complete explanations of the world around you
- Be firm and clear, using encouragement rather than punishment

THREE TO FOUR YEARS

Developmental expectations

- Begins to distinguish between reality and fantasy
- Makes connections between feelings, thoughts and actions
- Solves problems
- Sees himself/herself as a person with identity in gender and self-direction

You might expect to see

Physically

- Runs, jumps, uses a riding toy, tries anything
- Very active and may wander away
- Scribbles, uses simple puzzles and toys which produce a change
- May dress self; feeds self
- Begins to become independent about toilet needs

Intellectually

- Uses a lot of imaginative play
- Begins to see "cause and effect" relationships

Socially/Emotionally

- Is sensitive about the feelings of others, especially toward self
- Becomes independent and self-reliant
- Is anxious to please for love and approval
- Begins to notice differences in men and women

To provide good care

- Notice and reinforce child's self control
- Model behavior, especially with same sex child
- Provide activities and materials to develop coordination
- Explain things honestly and help the child use language for feelings of expression rather than physical actions
- Provide props and time for dramatic play
- Praise the child when you honestly can

FOUR TO FIVE YEARS

Developmental expectations

- To become comfortable with a sexual identity
- Reality and fantasy become clear perceptions

You may see

Physically

- Very active, to the point of physical aggression
- Muscle growth and accomplishment is pronounced

Intellectually

- Vocabulary has increased; is fascinated by words and silly sounds
- Talks a lot and asks many questions
- Has an active fantasy life

Socially/Emotionally

- Likes to shock adults with bathroom language
- Nightmares are common
- Needs to be with other children
- Begins to practice concepts of sharing and rule-following
- Often is bossy, uncooperative; will test people
- May begin to develop some feelings of insecurity
- Is becoming aware of right and wrong

To provide good care

- Keep a sense of humor
- Provide avenue for emotional expression through conversation, physical activity and creative play
- Keep firm but fair limits
- Assure child that they are loved
- Provide both play and rest times
- Provide word games and interesting stories
- Provide good play partners

FIVE TO SIX YEARS

Developmental expectations

- To become comfortable with one's gender identity
- To become a problem solver by initiating and creating ideas
- To make connections between thoughts and actions

You might expect to see

Physically

- Is energetic, active, often unable to stop moving
- Has strong likes and dislikes about food, people, etc
- Is growing quickly, often unable to coordinate changes in the body
- Toilet needs will be mainly under his control

Intellectually

- Language may be halted, "stuttered", especially under stress
- Knows colors, numbers; learns to read and write
- Activities of organizing, collecting and ordering are appealing

Socially/Emotionally

- Begins to align with same sex parent, though mother is often still central to security
- Friendships change frequently
- Likes to win, even breaking the rules to do so
- May be easily embarrassed; blame and criticism difficult to accept

To provide good care

- Don't overreact; give simple, calm answers; accept accidents as just accidents
- Offer limited choices to provide decision-making opportunities; set reasonable limits
- Give guidance in making/keeping friends; help child be a good loser as well as a winner
- Encourage reading and writing to reinforce newly learned skills
- Demonstrate caring by recognizing good behaviors
- Be patient and help the child be responsible for his/her own behavior

SEVEN TO NINE YEARS

Developmental expectations

- To establish a sense of self, able to deal with others, apply self-control and learn and apply skills
- To develop and test values and beliefs which in turn guide behavior

You might expect to see

Physically

- Busy and active, often to the point of accidents
- Eye hand coordination is well developed, leading to greater interest in sports and crafts
- Has a larger appetite and is more willing to accept new foods
- Wiggles, frowns, makes faces, pouts

Intellectually

- Is eager to learn using logic and reasoning; attention span is good
- Favors reality over fantasy; wants to know "why"
- Often overestimates own abilities

Socially/Emotionally

- Less interested in family; more interested in friends
- May complain a lot; may not respond to directions readily
- Is usually affectionate, cheerful, helpful, but can be rude, selfish and bossy
- Wants immediate rewards for good behavior
- Is able to experience guilt and shame, which may reflect in behavior

To provide good care

- Be patient with annoying habits
- Participate with activities
- Keep directions simple
- Establish small but meaningful rewards for accomplishments and good behavior
- Provide some privacy
- Encourage proper social behavior with friends

Adolescent Host Child

Understanding Your Role with Children 10 and Older

Adolescence is defined as the period from the onset of secondary sexual characteristics (puberty) to legal maturity at the age of 18. This stage often begins at the age of 10 or 11, and the early years are frequently referred to as the tween years.

The job of being an au pair for older children is often considered easier because the physical care is more limited. However, because adolescents are faced with rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes, it can be a more challenging, complicated, and intense experience. Fortunately, you can also expect a rewarding and exhilarating time as you use and develop your skills to help and support these emerging young adults. During this year your job will require being a teacher, role model, and partner as well as a caretaker. Just as your year will resemble a roller-coaster, so will the lives of your adolescent host children. In the following pages we present information about adolescent development in general, suggest topic areas that you may wish to discuss with your host families, and provide you with websites that may be of assistance to you and interest to your host children.

As you read these materials please remember that there may be cultural differences in the way that Americans think about and respond to adolescent development. Also, because each child is unique you must look at this material as it relates to your specific situation.

Significant Developmental Points

Early Adolescence (10-14)

Physically, during this time children will experience a period of rapid growth often referred to as a "growth spurt". Other changes are explored below.

Development	*Effect on Child*
Worries about appearance of his/her body	May be very self-conscious
Hormonal changes	General moodiness
Asserts independence	Experiments with dress, speech, and manners
Rebellious behavior	Rudeness and demands more freedom
Friends become more important	Wants to have right clothes, haircut and music
Wants to belong to a peer group	Measures self-against friends
Strong sense of justice; sees things in black and white	May seem intolerant and unable to compromise

Summarized and adapted from: Adolescence: The Survival Guide for Parents and Teenagers by Elizabeth Fenwick and Tony Smith.

How can I help an early adolescent?

Growth spurt
Work with your host parents to be certain that there are adequate and nutritious snacks and meals available. Tweens and teenagers are often happier with many small meals. In particular, they may be quite hungry when they arrive home from school. Be certain that you understand the host family's rules regarding food. You may find that you will need to discuss and evaluate with your host parents, after-school snack routines.

Physical Changes and Body Concerns
Early adolescents need a lot of support, respect, and honest information around their bodily concerns. Be certain to find out from your host parents what they wish to say to their children about sexuality and physical changes. Remember that children are very sensitive and insecure at this age. Be supportive and complimentary.

Asserting independence
These developmental characteristics often create a conflict for the au pair. While you understand your child's need to act independently, you are also responsible for his/her safety. Before you allow your child to embark on unsupervised activities you must consult with your host parents. You and your host parents should seek safe ways to allow opportunities for your child to exercise independence. Children develop these skills at very different ages and you and your host parents will be assessing and reassessing this during the year.

Rebelliousness
Children at this age should be given some freedom in choosing clothing and hairstyle. You and your host parents will need to keep a sense of humor. If you show respect and sensitivity your child may seek your opinion (perhaps more than that of his parents).

Rudeness and Moodiness
They are at their height in this age range. Do not over-react. Sometimes, it is just best to ignore this behavior. If you are very concerned about a child who seems quite unhappy or depressed make this known to your host parents. It is also helpful to let a child know that you are available to talk if he/she would like. Often at this age children want privacy, both physical and mental. Respect that need.

Significant Developmental Points

Middle Adolescence (Ages 15-16)

Development	Effect on Child
Becomes less self-centered	Becomes more able to compromise
Learns to think independently and to make decisions	Wants less parental or adult interference
Still experimenting with self-image	Clothing and attitudes change frequently
Needs to test boundaries and take risks	May experiment with illegal substances
Less self-conscious	More sociable, less shy
Identifies values and personal morality	Questions family ideas and values
Accepts sexuality	May start dating; guards privacy

Summarized and adapted from: Adolescence: The Survival Guide for Parents and Teenagers by Elizabeth Fenwick and Tony Smith.

How can I help a middle adolescent?

Overall, this is a time when your host child may become easier to live with. They may be more sociable and interested in an exchange of ideas. You may wish to think about the following things when reacting to particular behaviors.

Decision-making
You will need to follow the advice and lead of your host parents in terms of how much decision-making your middle adolescent is capable of and allowed. However, this is a very important issue to them, and serious restrictions may lead to tension.

Changing clothing and hairstyles
This may be easier for you to accept than your host parents. Just keep a good sense of humor and be supportive. Compliment them and respect their efforts to find a style.

Testing boundaries and taking risks
This is an area where your host parents will need to set firm and clear boundaries. You may find yourself in the position of "sounding board". Often adolescents want to test an idea on a neutral person. If you are truly concerned about actual or potential dangerous behavior, speak with your Counselor and host family.

Identifies values and personal morality
Your middle adolescent may thrive on stating opinions and trying out different intellectual positions. They are just finding their "adult voice". It will be interesting for you to have more adult discussions. However, be careful not to let these discussions turn into arguments. Allow them the opportunity to explore their viewpoints, but keep the discussions neutral – not personal.

Developing Sexuality
Your middle adolescent may be experiencing intense and new feelings. Again, they will need respect for their feelings and also respect for their need for privacy. However, this is a difficult area. If you become concerned that your host child is involved in dangerous personal behavior you may need to consult with your Counselor on positive and supportive ways to manage this situation. Otherwise, try to provide friendly and respectful support for your host child. Be sensitive to the host family's values for their child.

In summary, the most significant areas of development for adolescents are:

- Physical Growth
- Developing Independence
- Defining Sexuality
- Defining Self-Image

You can help adolescents by providing them with:

- Respect
- Privacy
- Appropriate Challenges and Limitations
- Real and Honest Information

Remember to keep a sense of humor and appreciation for how difficult this time can be for an adolescent.

What else should I know?

Homework

Au pairs are sometimes surprised at the amount of homework that American adolescents are faced with. When this homework is combined with the large number of after school activities that these children are engaged in, time management becomes very important. Often, it is the au pair that is responsible for helping the host child to balance homework and activity demands. You will need to have a very clear understanding of how the host family expects this to occur. What is your role in scheduling and supervising these activities? Also, what kind of involvement does the family want you to have in homework completion? Where must it be done? Is music , TV or computer allowed at the same time? Your host children will probably be involved in these discussions. The greater their involvement in the development of these guidelines, the easier it will be for you to help manage them. **(Please refer to the enclosed homework guide on page 17.)**

Balancing safety with the desire for independence

Due to the fact that Americans are so dependent on the automobile, and also because of our great concern about safety, it is sometimes difficult to find appropriate ways for adolescents to satisfy their growing need for independence. This may create some conflicts for you as an au pair. It will be very important to work with your host parents to find safe ways for your host children to have some degree of independence. Areas of particular concern might include: walking or biking alone to a friend's house, spending time at the mall, and unsupervised time at a park, playground, or basketball court. Your host parents should determine all of these. They should make the conditions very clear to the host child.

Resources

Wolf, Anthony. *Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall?*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

Suggested websites:
Use of the Internet by children must be approved by the parents with your clear understanding of their guidelines.

www.commonsencemedia.org

For recommendation of books, movies and media for teens, this website is both complete and reasonable in content.

kidshealth.org/teens

Issues with a teen? Get good information here.

www.mayoclinc.org

Search "tweens and teens" here for a trusted site for issues for this group

I'm Bored or Activities for You and Your Child(ren)

For more great ideas, activities, links and resources visit www.aupairinamerica.com/resources/kids/culture_corner/ and show your host child "Kids Culture Corner" for fun facts and activities!

Things to Make

1. **Homemade Paint:** Mix 1 teaspoon water and 1 teaspoon liquid dish washing detergent with 1/2 teaspoon of food coloring to make bright colored paint. Make sure your young artist wears paint smock or play clothes to do this project.

2. **Soapy Finger Paint:** Whip 1 cup soap flakes with 1/2 cup of water. Separate into smaller bowls. Tint each with different color food coloring. Paint on waxed paper or white shelf paper.

3. **Homemade Finger Paint:** Mix 2 cups flour with 2 teaspoons salt. Add 2 1/2 cups of cold water. Stir until smooth. Add this mixture gradually to 2 cups boiling water. Boil until smooth and thick. Separate into smaller bowls. Add food coloring to each bowl, stir until smooth.

4. **Paint Roller:** Pry the top off a roll-on deodorant bottle. Fill it with tempera or homemade paint and snap the top back on the bottle. Now you have a giant paint pen.

5. **Homemade Paste:** Mix 1/2 cup flour with 1/2 cup water until smooth. Store in covered container. For more durable paste, add 1/2 cup flour to 1 cup boiling water. Stir over low heat until thick and shiny.

6. **Homemade Playdough:** Mix 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 4 teaspoons cream of tartar, 2 cups water, 2 tablespoons salad oil and food coloring. Stir ingredients together, then cook in a saucepan over medium heat until the dough follows the spoon and leaves the side of the pan. Cool and knead. Store in an airtight container.

7. **KOOL-AID® Playdough:** Mix 1 cup sifted flour, 1/2 cup of salt, 3 tablespoons oil, and 1 small package of KOOL-AID® or other unsweetened powdered drink mix. Add 1 cup boiling water. Stir the ingredients together; knead until it forms soft dough.

8. **Colorful Creative Salt:** Add 5-6 drops food coloring to 1/2 cup household salt. Stir well. Cook in microwave for 1-2 minutes or spread on waxed paper and let air dry. Store in airtight container. Use as you would use glitter.

9. **Bubble Soap:** Mix 1 cup dish washing liquid, 10 cups water, and 1/4 cup of glycerin (available at drugstore for longer lasting bubbles). Make bubble blowers from a straw, a funnel, or a thin wire shaped in creative forms.

Places to Go

10. **Take a nature walk.** Collect leaves, rocks, flowers, and ferns, to make a centerpiece for the dinner table.
11. **Find a construction site** and watch the trucks and tractors.
12. **Visit the fire station.**
13. **Go to the Post Office.** Let your children send letters to themselves and then watch for the letter carrier the next day.
14. **Visit the library** to pick up books on birds, stamps, wildlife, dinosaurs, or any topic of interest to the children. Make sure to catch puppet shows, story times, movies, and other summer activities offered there.

Things to Do

15. **Musical Instruments:** Put dry beans or rice between two paper plates and tape them together to make a shaker. Cover one end of a paper towel tube with paper. Poke holes in the tube, then hum through the open end. This makes a great horn. Wrap tissue or wax paper around a comb and hum into it for a neat kazoo.
16. **Finger paint** with shaving cream on colored paper.
17. **Mount your children's pictures**, display them in a special place and host an art show for Mom and Dad.

18. **Decorate a small clay pot**. Plant flower seeds, nurture, and watch them grow!
19. **Make a slide:** Use a long wrapping paper tube to make a slide for small cars, balls, or other toys.
20. **Make mud pies** or mud stew with twigs, rocks, and acorns.
21. **Create a collage** by gluing different kinds of cereal, beans, rice, pasta, etc. onto cardboard.
22. **Cut paper dolls** from catalogues.
23. **Make finger puppets** from toilet paper tubes. Draw faces and glue yarn on for hair. Cover a table with a sheet for a puppet theater.
24. **Find old greeting cards to color**. You can write notes on the blank side to friends then drop them in a pretend mailbox. Use cards to help children learn to recognize numbers and letters. Cards can also be taped together to make long roads for small cars.

25. **Make your own puzzle** by coloring a picture (or cutting one out of a magazine), gluing it to cardboard, and cutting it into pieces.
26. **Draw a picture** and send it to Grandpa and Grandma.
27. **Hide a kitchen timer** and have your child search for it by listening for its ticking sound.
28. **Build a doll house** by stacking five shoe boxes or cardboard boxes to resemble a two-story house with a garage. Paint and decorate the inside with fabric scraps, wallpaper scraps, carpet samples, etc.
29. **Go exploring** with a magnifying glass.
30. **Paint a rock** with tempera paint.

31. **Activity while you cook:** Fill a sink with warm, soapy water, spoons, egg beaters, and plastic dishes to keep little ones busy while you cook.
32. **Make wrapping paper:** Glue yarn around a tin can and use it as a paint roller. This prints interesting patterns for cards, wrapping paper, etc.
33. **Print on paper** by dipping objects in tempera paint and pressing the object onto the paper. Cut a raw potato in half and carve a design in the raw end, print with a cork, a bottle cap, or a spool.
34. **Listen to some quiet music** while you rub your child's back.
35. **Make an interesting picture:** Ask an interior designer for an old wallpaper book. Cut out shapes from different patterns and glue to paper to make interesting pictures.
36. **Build a pinecone pyramid:** Kids love to kick it down!
37. **Watch a sweet potato grow** in a jar of water. Stick toothpicks in four sides of potato so that bottom half will be submerged in jar of water, and top half will stick out of top of jar.

38. **Catch bugs** in a plastic jar and make a bug zoo. (Make sure you poke air holes in lid!)
39. **Make boats** to float in bathtub, sink, or outdoor pool. Slit one end of two-inch cork. Color a sail-shaped piece of paper with crayons to waterproof it. Insert "sail" in cork slit and sail away!
40. **Make a design** punching holes in a paper plate. String a shoelace or yarn through the holes.

41. **Light show:** Punch holes in the bottom of an oatmeal container or shoe box. Shine a flashlight through the box toward the ceiling in a darkened room. (This is excellent for toddlers who resist naps.)

42. **Draw faces on balloons** with permanent markers. (Watercolor markers wear off.)

43. **Play with a magnet**. Learn what it will and will not attract. Make a fishing pole with a stick and string. Tie a magnet on the end. Cut fish shapes from construction paper and attach a paper clip to each fish. Let the children try their hand at fishing.

44. **Learn to play hopscotch.**

45. **Make a sponge garden.** Soak a sponge in water and place on a shallow dish. Sprinkle with alfalfa or rye grass seeds. Keep sponge moist and watch it grow.

46. **Play store:** Let your children play store with their toys. Draw, color, and cut out paper money.

47. **Create a mosaic** by cutting colored paper into zillions of tiny pieces. Glue in patterns or scenes on another sheet of paper.

48. **Plant your own garden;** as little as a four-by-four-foot plot will do.

49. **Make a book:** Have your children create a book about themselves. Include their birth date, handprints, foot prints, drawings of themselves and their family, and a story about themselves. These are wonderful keepsakes.

50. **Take a wagon ride:** Dress up stuffed animals and dolls and take them for a ride.

51. **Make a flannel story board:** Cover the top of a shoe box with felt for a flannel board. Cut more flannel into various shapes and sizes, such as cars, animals, people, trees, squares, circles, triangles. Children can form objects, designs, and illustrate stories using the pieces on the flannel top. Store the pieces in the box. This is a great activity for the car.

52. **Make placemats** by covering the children's artwork with clear contact paper.

53. **Make a homemade memory game** by cutting eight-by-eight-inch squares out of poster board. Glue matching pairs of pictures (boys, girls, horses, etc.) from magazines, catalogues, etc. on the cards. Turn them face down, choose one card at a time and ask your child to identify the matching pictures as they turn them over.

54. **Plant** orange, lemon, sunflower or avocado seeds in potting soil. Cut one half-inch off the top of a carrot, place it in a shallow dish of water, and then watch the top sprout. You can also plant the top of a pineapple in soil.

55. **Play a listening game**. Ask your child to close his or her eyes and guess the sounds you make. Blow a whistle, drop a spoon, jingle money or keys, snap your fingers, click your tongue, etc.

56. **Make frozen fruit juice cubes** in an ice cube tray.

57. **Water play:** Save and wash spray bottles and dish washing liquid squirt bottles for water play.

58. **Take a pretend trip:** Line up chairs for a bus or train and pretend to take a trip. One child can be the driver, another the ticket clerk, another the passenger. Take stuffed animals along for the ride.

59. **Matching game:** Using a muffin tin cut colored circles from construction paper and place one in each cup. Cut other circles and have your child match those with the ones in the tin.

60. **I see something…:** Look around the house and name five things that are blue. You can play this game with any color or shape. This is great for the car.

61. **Make macaroni jewelry.** Mix 1 tablespoon food coloring with 2 tablespoons of rubbing alcohol. Make several different colors. Stir macaroni into the colored solutions. Spread on newspaper to dry. String on a shoelace for bracelets or necklaces.

62. **Read and act out one of your child's favorite stories.**

63. **Hide a small toy in a room.** While the children look for it, give them clues such as "you are hot" when they are close to the toy and "you are cold" when they move away from it.

64. **Make a tent**, doll house, or secret hiding place: Put a sheet or blanket over a table. It's also a great place to have lunch or to take a nap.

65. **Be a limp rag doll**. Lie on the floor and relax completely. Let your child move your arms, legs, and roll you over. Switch places and let your child be the "rag doll".

66. **Make a "Mystery Bag"** by placing familiar objects (spoon, fork, washcloth, brush, etc.) in a pillowcase. Ask your child to close their eyes, feel the objects in the bag and pick out the item you name.

67. **Make "Modern Art"** by creating designs with white glue on waxed paper. Let dry until clear. Carefully peel off paper. Color with felt-tipped markers, tie with string or thread and hang in a window.

68. **"Me and My Shadow" pictures:** Have your child lie down on large piece of paper or cardboard. Trace around their entire body and cut out the figure. Have child color in the body and features, clothes, etc.

69. **Read a story** and then draw a new cover or copy pictures out of the book.

70. **Make "Real People Puppets"** by cutting out photographs of family members or friends and gluing them to Popsicle sticks or tongue depressors.

71. **Make a pipe cleaner floral arrangement.** Line a small plastic strawberry basket with enough colored tissue paper so the paper sticks up three or four inches above the top. Cut a half-inch piece of Styrofoam to fit snugly inside. Draw and cut various flower shapes out of construction paper. Glue to stems of pipe cleaners, then insert into Styrofoam.

72. **Make a box of rubbings.** Place a sheet of paper over almost any object and rub with a soft lead pencil or a crayon. Use leaves, bark, keys, license plates, sidewalks, just about anything!

73. **Button, buttons!** Make rings for your children by cutting a pipe cleaner long enough to bend around you child's finger. Have them choose a button from your collection and slip it on the pipe cleaner.

74. **Make a button picture** by having your child choose and glue buttons to a piece of paper. Then let them color a picture or designs around them.

75. **Make wrapping paper** for Christmas or birthdays using butcher paper. Kids can decorate using tempera paint and sponges, apples, or potatoes cut into shapes for stamps.

76. **Have your children write letters** to friends away on vacation, pen pals, a favorite sports figure, the President, or their grandparents. Explain how the mail carriers know where to deliver each letter. Let them stamp and seal their letters. Then take a trip to the post office to see how it all works.

77. **Make a "Summer of 20??" photo album**. Cut cardboard for the covers. Glue construction paper to decorate onto the cardboard. Use colored paper for pages. Punch holes in the edge of covers and pages and tie them together with yarn. Glue photographs onto pages- let the children arrange them in order of events and write captions.

78. **Collect canceled stamps** from envelopes and find out about the people or events on the stamps. Have them design their own special edition stamps and explain why they chose their designs. Check out: http://about.usps.com/corporate-social-responsibility/stamp-collecting.htm

79. **Volunteering:** Interest the children in collecting canned goods and household products for a local food cup board. Get names of organizations from churches, synagogues, or social service agencies. Kids can write their own flyers and deliver them around the neighborhood explaining what they need and what it's for. Often, people only think of contributing during the Thanksgiving or Christmas season.

80. **Bird watching:** Summer is the best time for bird watching. Set out a feeder in a sheltered area near the kitchen window. Also put out a shallow pan of water every day and watch birds take a bath.

81. **Visit the library** to pick up books on birds, stamps, wildlife, dinosaurs, or any topic of interest to the children. Make sure to catch puppet shows, story times, movies, and other summer activities offered there.

82. **Make a necklace.** Save seeds from a melon. Wash the seeds. Place food color in a small dish of water. Add the seeds. Remove colored seeds from dye and place on paper towel to dry overnight. The next day, thread needle with enough thread to loop over head. Poke needle through seed and pull through. Continue until all seeds are used. Cut needle off of thread and knot ends of thread together.

83. **Make a carrot necklace.** Peel the outside of carrot. Slice carrots into medium-sized slices. Thread needle with enough string or dental floss to loop over your head. Push needle through center of each slice of carrot. Thread all carrot slices leaving a little space between each one. Once all slices have been used, tie ends of string together. Lay necklace on a sheet of paper in a dry place. Your necklace will be ready to wear in about ten days.

Things to do with a big box

84. **Make a reading hideout.** Add lots of pillows and a "Do Not Disturb" sign.

85. **Make a tunnel:** Tape large boxes together to make the tunnel.

86. **Paint a mural:** Cut a large box so it can be laid out flat. Paint or color a large mural.

87. **Make an airport runway** out of flattened boxes. Use masking tape to mark lanes.

88. **Create a submarine.** Cut portholes and make a periscope from a cardboard tube.

89. **Make a western town from various sized appliance boxes.** Have your cowboys help make a saloon, jail, general store, barber shop, barn, etc.

90. **Make a two-room playhouse:** Connect two large boxes and decorate with fabric scraps, carpet samples, wallpaper, etc.

91. **Construct a castle, cutting the top into notches like a castle wall.** Create a door that hinges at the bottom to open like a drawbridge.

92. **Design and build a puppy condo** as a summer home for your dog.

93. **Build a train** by connecting three medium-sized boxes. Decorate and take dolls, stuffed animals, and toys for a ride.

94. **Construct a zoo.** Put stuffed animals in box cages.

95. **Create a rocket** from a refrigerator box.

96. **Make a doll house** from a medium-sized box. Create furniture by covering smaller boxes with fabric or contact paper.

97. **Make your very own robot** using different sized boxes and cardboard tubes for legs and arms. Use felt, fabric, buttons, ribbon, and rickrack for features.

98. **Paint characters or animals on a tall box.** Cut holes where the characters' faces should be for the kids to stick their faces through. Take a snapshot of them.

99. **Make a grocery store** out of a large box. Stock it with empty cans, cartons, cereal boxes, and plastic bottles. Color and cut out paper money.

100. **Target Practice:** Cut a 24-inch hole in a big box. Hang a foil pan with a string from the top of the hole so it swings freely in the center of it. Use tennis balls to hit the target. Balls will collect in the box.

101. **Make a costume** from an open-ended box. Cut holes for head and arms, and then decorate with crayons or markers.

102. **Neat Tent:** Cut off top and bottom of large box. Cut down center of one side and fold into a triangle; tape the two cut pieces together to make the floor. Spray paint the tent to add color.

103. **Make a ticket booth** from a refrigerator box for all of your backyard plays, puppet shows, and carnivals.

104. **Draw a clown** on an appliance box, cut a round hole for a mouth and throw beanbags at it. The beanbags will collect inside the box.

105. **Create your own puppet theater** out of a washing machine box. Cut an opening in the front and a door in back. Make a curtain out of an old towel or sheet, and it's on with the show!

Assorted Activities

106. **Get together with a couple other au pairs** and arrange for one of you to be responsible each week for finding a suitable field trip in the area. Then, pack a picnic and off you go!

107. **Make your own wind chimes:** Cut a circle from heavy cardboard and poke holes in the center and in several places in the cardboard. Put a double piece of twine through the center hole from top to bottom. Tie a large knot at the bottom to hold the twine to the cardboard. This will be the hanger for the chimes.

    Cut pieces of twine that are about the same length. Thread each one up through a hole and tie a good knot on top of the cardboard.

    At the end of each string, securely tie a jar lid. (You can paint them if you want brightly colored wind chimes.)

    Hang your wind chimes in a place where the breeze blows!

108. **Create your own Sundial:** Cut a circle from a piece of wood or very heavy cardboard. Mark the center of the circle and draw a line that divides the circle in half, passing through the center.

    Put a gob of modeling clay exactly in the center of the circle and stick a knitting needle (fat end) or a long pencil (eraser end) into the clay. Make sure it stands up very straight.

    On a sunny morning, get up early with the sun. Use your compass to find North and point the end of the line on your circle North. Set the sundial in a place where it will get sun all day.

    Use a clock to help you number the sundial. Each hour, look at the board to see where the shadow of the GNOMON* is and make a mark. Write the hour at the end of the mark. DO NOT MOVE THE BOARD. Continue to make a mark every hour until the sun sets.

    *The GNOMON is the pointer you put in the center of the sundial that will cast the shadow to mark the hours.

109. **Make a Map:** Take a notebook and walk around the area (backyard, neighborhood, school yard, or park) you're going to map. Make a sketch showing where everything is. Watch for:

    - buildings
    - paths
    - fences
    - play equipment
    - streets, roads, sidewalks
    - bike racks

    Make notes about how much space is between the different places that will be on your map so you can get the distances correct. Use large drawing paper to draw your map. Draw it in pencil first, and then finish it with crayons or markers.

    Give your map a title, a key and directions. Use a compass to help you find North, South, East, West.

110. **Create a Secret Hiding Place:** Find a tree that is easy to climb and has a secure, comfortable place to sit. This is a great place for reading or daydreaming.

111. **Build a clubhouse under a stepladder!** Tape long strips of paper to the top of the ladder. Then fasten the bottoms of the strips to the ground with sticks or rocks.

    Find an open space in the center of some bushes or trees. Use it as your own hideaway to think, sleep, read, or play.

Drape on old sheet or blanket over a picnic table or card table to make a tent.

112. Make your own tipi! Tie four poles (broom sticks work well) together at the top with sturdy string. Stick the ends into the ground. Then cover the frame with newspapers taped together. Paint the outside, if you want. Don't forget to leave a flap that opens for the door!

113. Take a lesson from the animals to relax and stretch your body:

Stretch like a cat: Start on your hands and knees with your back straight. Slowly raise you back up to a high arch. Lower your back slowly into your starting position

Fly like a bird: Start standing with your arms at your sides. Slowly lift your arms up and behind you as high as you can. Bend your head forward and hold. Relax slowly to starting position.

Balance like a stork: Stand very straight. Slowly bend one knee, lifting one foot behind you. Hold, then relax to starting position. Repeat on the other side.

Sit like a frog: Sit on the floor with knees bent out and the bottoms of your feet touching each other. Grab your feet and pull them gently towards your body. Keep your back straight and hold.

Yawn like a lion: Sit on your feet with hands on your knees. Lean forward on your knees and open your eyes and mouth very wide. Stick your tongue out as far as you can. Hold, then relax and sit back up.

Kneel like a camel: Kneel on the floor. Rest your right hand on your right heel and your left hand on your left heel. Raise your chest up, bend your head back, and hold. Return to kneeling position and rest.

Pose like a cobra: Lie on your stomach with your hands at your sides. Slowly raise your head and bring your hands up under your chin. Push up on your hands to bring your head up and back. Push up until your arms are straight. Hold, then relax.

Relax like a jellyfish: Lie on the ground on your back. Pretend that you are made of jelly. Breathe slowly for several minutes.

114. Throw a DETECTIVE PARTY!

Invitations: To make "magnifying glass" invitations, cut black construction paper into magnifying glass shapes. Cut a circle in the middle for the lens. Write party details on a circle of white construction paper and cover with cellophane. Glue cellophane covered lens on black cut-out.

Decorations: Use hats, pipes, magnifying glasses, and detective disguises. Chalk footprints up the front walk to the front door.

Cake: Make a magnifying glass cake: Make enough cake batter for a two-layer cake. Pour part of the batter into a meat loaf pan to the depth of one inch. Pour remaining

batter into two round cake pans.
After baking, cut the meat loaf shape (for the handle) in half lengthwise.

Attach one handle to one cake round. Ice this layer. Repeat this process for the second layer. Pipe a narrow band of chocolate icing around the circle and on the handle.

Games and Activities for the Detective Party:

- Seize the Gold – Place a bag of chocolate coins at a designated spot. Line up the children some distance away and give a signal to start. The object is to be the first to reach the gold, but the children must freeze every time they hear the policeman's whistle. Anyone caught moving must start again. (Play is similar to Red Light Green Light.)

- Guess how many? Fill a jar with peanuts, candies, or pennies. Tape the correct number of pieces to the bottom of jar. Guests write their name and guess on a slip of paper. The winner gets to keep the jar of goodies.
- Attention to the details: Before the party, place various small objects on a large tray: pencil, scissors, rock, thimble, eraser, etc. When the detectives are assembled in a room, bring the tray of objects in for inspection. Allow the children to look at the items for several minutes. Remove the tray and have the detectives record on paper the objects that they remember. The person who recalls the most objects in the allotted time wins a prize.
- Treasure Hunt – Locate stolen loot by following previously hidden clues.
- Scene of the Crime: Paste assorted magazine pictures in rows on a large sheet of poster board. Make up a detective story related to the pictures. After the guests study the board, take the board away and question the children about it: "What room was the crime committed in? What color hair did the individuals have? What weapons were used in the crime?"

Party Favors: Magnifying glasses, mystery paperbacks, detective badges, toy handcuffs.

Games

115. Follow the Leader: Great for any time or as party guests arrive. Each guest can join as they come. Design a mini obstacle course for the group to follow the leader through.

116. Red Light, Green Light: Choose one person to be "IT". "IT" turns his back on the other children and counts to ten as fast as he can while the other children quickly run toward him. Anyone caught moving when "IT" turns around must return to starting point.

117. Mother May I: Choose one child to be "IT". The rest of the children will try to make their way toward "IT". "IT" directs each child to take baby steps, giant steps, hops, etc. Guests must ask, "Mother May I?" before proceeding, or they get sent back to the beginning.

118. Simon Says: A person is chosen as the leader. She directs the players to perform certain motions. They may move only if the command is preceded by the phrase "Simon Says." Anyone caught moving without "Simon Says" is eliminated.

119. Red Rover: Divide the group into two teams. Instruct the teams to stand on opposite sides of the room and hold hands. The first team calls a player from the other team by calling, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send JOHNNY right over." The player called runs across to the opposite team and attempts, with one try, to break through their joined hands. If he succeeds, he takes a player back with him to join his team. If he does not break the chain of hands, he must remain on that team.

Games for the Car

120. What's in the Cup? Save an empty paper cup and plastic lid from a fast food restaurant. Secretly drop a few coins in the cup, then shake it and ask the children if they can guess what's inside. Use keys, candies, etc. – anything that will fit in the cup.

121. Buzz: This is a counting game that will strengthen your children's number skills as well as entertain them. Players simply count in turn, but the number 7 (or any number of your choice) must always be avoided. Whenever a player comes to a number with 7 in it, the player must say "buzz" instead of that number. (For example: "..33..34..35..36..buzz..38")

122. Alphabet Buzz: This is a slightly more sophisticated version of Buzz. Players recite the alphabet round-robin style (each player saying one letter in turn) but must avoid the letters in their own names. Whenever a player comes to a letter in his name, the word "buzz" must by substituted for that letter.

123. I Spy on My Side: Suggest objects for the children to search for from opposite sides of the car. For example, "Who'll be the first to spy a yellow car?...a motorcycle... the letter C on a truck..."

124. The Zoo Outside My Window: Make a game of spotting animals along your route. Keep score by assigning low points for common animals (dogs and cats earn one point) and higher points for more unusual animals (a llama earns ten points).

125. **Simon Says, Mobile Version:** The leader (NOT the driver) gives the players a series of simple commands. ("All passengers, put your hands on your head.") To make the game more challenging, the leader can give compound commands like "Touch you ear with your left hand and pat your tummy with your right."

126. **Rhyme or Reason:** This is a simple word game that combines simple rhymes with free association. The first player says a word, then the next player says a word that either rhymes or somehow relates: (ex: Pipe...Drip ...Sip... Straw...Hay...Play...Toy...Boy...). There are no losers in this game and no limit to length of play. The only object is to have fun!

127. **Lookout Lotto:** This game requires some pre-traveling preparation before your trip, but will prove to be a lifesaver while you enjoy long stretches of self-directed play by your youngsters. Clip pictures out of magazines of things your children are likely to see from the car window during your trip. Paste them to a piece of cardboard. Once you're on the road, have the children search for these sights and cross them off with a crayon as they find them.

Science Corner

128. **Make a Colored Celery Tree** to demonstrate how trees absorb water to grow. At bedtime, trim the bottom away from a stalk of celery with leaves. Slice halfway up through the center of stalk. Fill two glasses at least 3/4 with water. Add food coloring to each glass (different colors in each glass) until darkly colored. Place glasses next to each other. Slip one end of cut stalk into one glass and the remaining end into the other glass. In the morning, the different dyes will have traveled up the stalk and colored the leaves.

129. **Ocean homework:** If you live near an ocean or are planning to visit one, have your children do some ocean homework. Have the children name the ways the people use the oceans. Discuss the various forms of life found there. What kinds of food do we find there? What do people like to do there?

130. **Read a book or poem about the ocean.** Draw pictures of the ocean.

131. **Mark the tides.** Walk with the children to the water's edge and look for signs of high and low tide. Build a sandcastle and watch as the water comes to wash it away. Look for treasure in the seaweed that often marks the high tide line. Discuss what makes the tides rise and fall.

132. **Make an Ocean in a Bottle.** Fill a bottle (an empty screw-top soda bottle works best) 1/3 full with salad oil. Fill the rest of the way (it must be filled to the top) with water. Add several drops of blue food coloring. Screw the top on tightly and gently rock the bottle back and forth.

133. **Become a Sun-Worshipper!** Read a story or poem about the sun with your children. Illustrate it or write your own.

134. **Name some of the ways the sun effects nature.** Did you know it creates the wind? Or that the sun is responsible for all the colors we see? Visit the library or a planetarium to find more facts about the sun and its effect on our lives.

135. **Show your child how the sun makes day and night.** Stand facing your child. Pretend the child is the sun and that you are the Earth. If the United States were sitting on the tip of your nose and you slowly turn around, when "the sun" is at your back, it would be nighttime.

136. **Make a display of the planets.** This will demonstrate to the children that the Earth isn't the only planet with a special relationship to the sun. Use household items (or shape Playdough into balls to match the relative sizes) listed below.
    - Sun – beach ball (27")
    - Mercury – tiny pea (3/32")
    - Venus – pea (1/4")
    - Earth – pea (1/4")
    - Mars – small pea (1/8")
    - Jupiter – orange (2 3/4")
    - Saturn – tangerine (2 1/4")
    - Uranus – walnut (1")
    - Neptune – walnut (1")
    - Pluto – small pea (1/8")
    - Discuss the temperatures of each planet based on its proximity to the sun.

Make special solar prints. Go to a toy or hobby shop to get light-sensitive paper. (Ask for sun-printing paper.) Carefully arrange your items (use leaves, flowers, or anything that won't move) on the paper. Expose to light for about five minutes. Then, remove the objects and put the paper in water to "fix" the image. Now your print is permanent! Frame your prints or use them to create more art.

Finger Plays

Two Little Blackbirds

Two little blackbirds
(hold 1 finger up from each hand)
Sitting on a hill,
One named Jack,
(wiggle 1 finger)
One named Jill.
(wiggle other finger)
Fly away, Jack!
(put one hand behind back)
Fly away, Jill!
(put other hand behind back)
Come back, Jack!
(bring 1 hand back out)
Come back, Jill!
(bring other hand back out)

Open, Shut Them

Open, shut them, open, shut them,
(open and close hands)
Give a little clap.
Open, shut them, open, shut them,
Put them on your lap.
Walk them, walk them, walk them, walk them,
(walk fingers up chest to chin)
Way up to your chin.
Open your little mouth,
But don't let them walk in.

Five Little Monkeys

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,
(hold up five fingers)
One fell off and bumped his head.
(hold head in hands)
Mommy called the doctor, and the doctor said,
(pretend to make a telephone call)
'No more monkeys jumping on the bed!
(scolding motion)
Other verses:
Four, Three, Two, One
(bend down 1 finger with each verse)

Here Is The Beehive

Here is the beehive,
(make a fist)
But where are all the bees?
Hidden inside where no one can see.
Soon they'll come creeping out of their hive-
One, Two, Three, Four, Five! BUZZZZZZZ.
(pop out fingers one by one and fly them around)

Solar Recipes

Use the sun to dry food. Make a screen by laying a piece of loosely woven cloth over a frame and stapling it in place. Place your sliced fruit on the screen and cover with another screen. (Try to keep cover screen from touching food.) Set in a sunny area. Turn fruit occasionally to ensure even drying. If the sky suddenly clouds over, finish drying in the oven.

137. Make a fun, sunny snack –
Chewy Gooey Fruit Leather!

- Wash 2 quarts of very ripe fresh fruit, cut out stems, seeds, and cut any large pieces in half.
- Put fruit in large pot and mix in 1/4 cup sugar or honey. Cook over low heat until fruit is soft.
- Pour off the juice. Cool the fruit mixture until it can be handled. Then press it through a sieve.
- Lay down a large sheet of waxed paper outside on a table or other flat surface. Tape the corners down so it won't blow away.
- Pour fruit mixture on the waxed paper and let it dry for a couple of days. When the fruit leather peels away form the paper easily, it is ready to eat.
- Cut it in strips and store it in a cool place.

138. Plan a Solar Celebration Brunch!
This is an excellent menu for a hot, sunny day.

- Solar Celebration Menu
- Sunberry Jam (make a day or two ahead of time)
- Solar Tea with Lemon and Honey (make a few hours ahead)
- Hot Citrus Fruit Cups
- Buttered Cinnamon Toast
- Sidewalk Fried Eggs

139. Sunberry Jam
This is made ahead of time because the flavor improves with time.

- Early in the morning, wash 1 pound strawberries and remove stems.
- Cover berries with 1 cup sugar, add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, and allow the mixture to sit in a covered saucepan for about an hour.
- Put the saucepan on the heat and bring the mixture to a boil. Boil for about five minutes and then remove from heat.
- Let the berry mixture sit for about an hour. Then pour it into a shallow baking dish and cover with clear plastic wrap.
- Put the covered dish outside in the sunniest spot possible and leave it all day.
- Pour the mixture into a jelly jar. Store your jam in

the refrigerator to save it for your Solar Celebration brunch.

140. Solar Tea

- Fill a jar with cold water.
- Put two tea bags in the water and screw on the lid.
- Place jar in a sunny spot for about three hours.
- When tea looks dark enough, take out the tea bags.
- Serve the tea over ice with lemon and honey.

Now is the time to choose your cooking spot. Use a sidewalk or patio if possible because the concrete will hold the sun's heat and help cook the food faster.

141. Hot Citrus Fruit Cups

- Cut a firm grapefruit and an orange in half.
- Cut the fruit sections out of both and mix them in a bowl with 1 tablespoon of honey.
- Put half of fruit in each grapefruit cup and drizzle a little more honey over the top.
- Cover with plastic wrap and leave these on the sidewalk or patio to cook in the sun.

142. Buttered Cinnamon Toast

- Spread two slices of bread with margarine and sprinkle both sides of each piece with cinnamon and sugar.
- Wrap each slice in clear plastic wrap and place both slices directly on hot sidewalk.
- Turn after 30 minutes to brown both sides.

143. Sidewalk Fried Eggs

- Grease a piece of foil wrap with margarine and place it on hottest spot of sidewalk.
- Break eggs directly onto foil to cook. (The amount of sun's heat will determine how fast they cook.)
- Serve the eggs with salt and pepper.

*While waiting for the food to cook, prepare the tea, bring out the plates, forks, and jam, and entertain your guests.

More Great Recipes

144. Ice Cream Sandwiches
Spread softened ice cream between two cookies. (Chocolate chip cookies work best.) Wrap each sandwich in foil and refreeze.

145. Fudgesicles
Mix 1 box chocolate pudding and 3 1/2 cups milk as directed for pudding. Freeze in 3oz. paper cups. Insert wooden sticks for handles. Cut away paper when completely frozen.

146. Banana Pops
Peel bananas and cut them in half. Push a wooden stick up the center of each. Freeze. Remove from freezer and dip bananas in melted chocolate. Twirl to remove excess chocolate and roll in chopped nuts. Wrap banana pops individually in foil and refreeze.

147. Yogurt Popsicles: Mix 1 carton plain yogurt, one 6 oz. can of frozen orange juice concentrate, and a dash of vanilla and honey. Freeze mixture in 3 oz. paper cups. (Insert wooden sticks for handles when partially frozen.) Cut away paper and serve.

148. Ice Cream Watermelon: Hollow out watermelon half, leaving a bit of green rind around edge. Fill the hollowed out melon with raspberry sherbet and top with chocolate chips to resemble seeds. Freeze and remove a few minutes before serving.

149. Cone Cupcakes: Prepare cupcakes per package instructions. Pour batter into flat bottom ice cream cones about 2/3 full. Place each cone in hole of a muffin pan to prevent tipping. Bake at 350° for 20 to 25 minutes. Cool before serving.

150. Create a Cupcake: Give each child a cupcake, a small amount of frosting, and various toppings (colored sugar, M&M's, chopped nuts, etc.) with a knife (not too sharp!) to decorate as they wish.

151. A B C's and 1 2 3's Cookies: Mold cookie dough into numbers to let the world know just how old the birthday boy or girl is. Or mold cookie dough into letters to spell out the children's names. Let them decorate their own, as with cupcakes.

152. Rock Candy: A sweet treat that is fun to make and pretty to look at! (As well as great to eat.)

- Put one cup of water into a small saucepan.
- Pour two cups of sugar into the water.
- Heat the water and sugar on the stove over medium heat until sugar melts. Keep adding sugar and stirring until it melts. Stop when no more sugar will dissolve.
- Remove pot from stove. Let the liquid cool until it is just warm.

- Pour the liquid into a clean glass jar.
- Tie one end of a piece of heavy cord around the middle of a pencil. Place the pencil over the top of the jar, letting the cord fall into the liquid. Crystals will form in a few hours.
- The next day, remove the cord from the jar. Pour the liquid into a saucepan and heat and cool it as before. Pour the liquid back into the jar and reinsert the cord with the crystals into it. More crystals will form. If you repeat this procedure every day, the crystal candy will grow bigger and bigger. When it has grown enough to eat, snip off any extra string and enjoy!

Include your child in meal preparation. Even the smallest fingers can:

- tear lettuce for salad into bite size pieces
- break & beat eggs for scrambled eggs & omelets
- shape meatballs
- mix batter
- slice bananas
- arrange toppings on pizza
- make juice from concentrate

Let's Read

For most American families a time for a child to read or be read to each day is an established part of the routine. Certainly parents and educators recognize the desirability of this activity. The value in terms of learning skills, imagination and relating to the world around us is unchallenged. In addition to stimulating a love of books, reading can support the learning of spoken language for a young child. Additionally, children learn to begin to handle books, recognize the beginning and end of the story, and understand that the words tell the story as well as the pictures. While children may learn actual factual knowledge from a book, they are also encouraged to learn about behaviors and experiences common to all of us as individuals. Finally, the interactions between adults and children as a story is read and talked about, can be a model for the type of behavior needed for more formal schooling.

Below we list some books that will help you begin to make appropriate choices for your host child. With the assistance of parents, librarians and the child himself, choosing a good book and settling in for some quiet time, will have a calming and enhancing effect on your day.

Remember: As you begin to read to a child, the choice of books is based on a child's developmental progress and interests as well as age. A child may desire to have the same book read repeatedly. The repetition stimulates a sense of security and comfort as well as promoting fantasy or individual creativity with a known subject.

Libraries in America are free for use and will be a great resource for you. The librarian will be happy to help you in choosing books that your host child will enjoy. Libraries offer story hours and activity workshops for young children. Often, the library will be a source of Internet access if none is available to you. Check out your local library with the assistance of your host family.

Picture Books

- AN EGG IS QUIET by Dianna Aston & Sylvia Long ANANSI AND THE MOSS-COVERED ROCK by Eric Kimmel
- ANDY AND THE LION by James Daugherty BANG! BANG! TOOT TOOT/BRRRM! WOOSH/ RING!
- TICK TOCK/ SNAP! SNAP! BUZZ BUZZ by Rich Cowley (4 books for 6 mo. +)
- BLUEBERRIES FOR SAL by Robert McCloskey
- BREAD AND JAM FOR FRANCES by Russell Hoban
- BUSY IN THE GARDEN by George Shannon
- A CHAIR FOR MY MOTHER by Vera B. Williams
- CHICKA CHICKA BOOM BOOM by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault
- DON'T LET THE PIGEON STAY UP LATE by Mo Willems
- GINGER by Charlotte Voake
- GOODNIGHT GORILLA by Peggy Rathman
- GOODNIGHT MOON by Margaret W. Brown
- HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON by Crockett Johnson

- HARRY THE DIRTY DOG by Gene Zion
- HORTON HATCHES THE EGG by Dr. Seuss
- THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY by Simms Taback
- MADELINE by Ludwig Bemelmans
- MIKE MULLIGAN AND HIS STEAM SHOVEL by Virginia L. Burton
- MY LIFE WITH THE WAVE by Mark Buehner
- SNOWFLAKE BENTLEY by Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- THE SNOWY DAY by Ezra Jack Keats
- WHY MOSQUITOES BUZZ IN PEOPLES' EARS: A WEST AFRICAN TALE retold by Verna Aardema

Recommended for 5+

- WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE by Maurice Sendak
- THE ARTHUR SERIES by Marc Tolon Brown
- LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- HOMESICK: MY OWN STORY by Jean Fritz
- ELLA ENCHANTED by Gail Carson Levine
- ELVIRA by Margaret Shannon
- THE FABULOUS SONG by Don Gillmore
- FANCY NANCY by Jane O'Connor
- THE GARDENER by David Small
- HOW THE MOON REGAINED HER SHAPE by Janet Ruth Heller
- THE ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHIN by Scott O'Dell
- JUMANJI by Chris Van Allsburg
- JUST SO STORIES by Rudyard Kipling
- KLUTZ by Henrik Dresche
- A RIDE ON THE RED MARE'S BACK by Ursula LeQuin
- SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL by Patricia MacLachlan

Recommended For 9+

- THE MAZE RUNNER by Jas Dashner
- FLASH BURNOUT by L K Madigan
- I AM A GENIUS OF UNSPEAKABLE EVIL & I WANT TO BE YOUR CLASS PRESIDENT by Josh Lieb
- A STRING IN THE HARP by Nancy Bond
- ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN: FIFTY INVENTIONS DISCOVERED BY MISTAKE by Charlotte Foltz Jones
- THE AMAZING STORY OF ADOPHUS TIPS by Michael Morpurgo
- ARK ANGEL by Anthony Horowitz
- THE BALLAD OF LUCY WHIPPLE by Karen Cushman
- BELLE PRATER'S BOY by Ruth White
- THE BOOK OF STORY BEGINNINGS by Kristin Kladstrup
- CYBERSURFER: THE OWL INTERNET GUIDE FOR KIDS by Nyla Ahmad
- DEALING WITH DRAGONS by Patricia C. Wede
- THE FAMILY UNDER THE BRIDGE by Natalie Savage Carlson
- GEORGIE'S MOON by Chris Woodworth

- GOOD MASTERS! SWEET LADIES! VOICES FROM A MEDIEVAL VILLAGE by Laura Amy Schlitz
- HABIBI by Naomi Shihab Nye
- HEAT by Mike Lupica
- HOLES by Louise Sachar
- HOW CAN A FROZEN DETECTIVE STAY HOT ON THE TRAIL by Linda Bailey
- LOU GEHRIG: THE LUCKIEST MAN by David A. Adler
- OUT OF THE DUST by Karen Hesse
- THE TRUE CONFESSIONS OF CHARLOTTE DOYLE by Avi
- THE TULIP TOUCH by Anne Fine

Teenage

- THE HUNGER GAMES by Suzanne Collins
- THE TWILIGHT SERIES by Stephanie Meyer
- HARRY POTTER SERIES by J K Rowling
- THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS by Ann Branashares
- IN THEIR SHOES: EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN DEWCRIBE THEIR CAREERS by Keller & Fyfe
- HUSH, HUSH by Becca Fitzpatrick
- THE SCORPIO RACER by Maggie Stiefvater
- ASHFALL by Mike Mullen
- THE TOASTER PROJECT by Thomas Thwaites
- A BRIEF CHAPTER IN MY IMPOSSIBLE LIFE by Dana Reinhardt
- DAIRY QUEEN by Catherine Gilbert Murdock
- THE LIGHTNING THIEF by Rick Riordan
- NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH (AND A FEW WHITE LIES) by Justina Chen Headley
- WEEDFLOWER by Cynthia Kadohata

Note: These books we selected are from recommendations made by the American Library Association and the Independent Booksellers Association.

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www.aupairinamerica.com