Partnership for success

Host family, au pair, community counselor and Au Pair in America work together

If you need additional support over the suggested practice period, you will need the encouragement of your host family, community counselor and Au Pair in America to have the maximum potential for success. We suggest the following:

- Your host family should continue to provide support and practice time whenever possible.
- Your community counselor can recommend a driving instructor/school and help coordinate lessons or an assessment. Some instructors may offer a discounted price for au pairs.
- Learning to drive with confidence is a life skill. Along with the privilege of using your host family's car comes responsibility. It is your shared responsibility with your host family to make every effort to learn to drive safely while you are an au pair. If you feel that you need additional instruction, you may want to consider paying for some lessons until you feel completely comfortable with your driving ability.
- Talk to your host family or community counselor if you have any concerns about driving. NEVER drive if you do not feel safe.

Other Resources:

ONLINE TRAINING

An online audio/visual driver's training course with narration is available at:

www.virtualdriveofamerica.com

STATE DRIVER'S MANUAL

Access your state Driver's Manual by going to your state's DMV website or pick up a hard copy from your local DMV.

AUTOMOBILE CLUB/ASSOCIATION

Members of an automobile club or association may qualify for discounts for driving lessons or access to other training resources.

1 High Ridge Park
Stamford, CT 06905
www.AuPairinAmerica.com

10/13

Au Pairs Behind the Wheel

The Road Ahead for Au Pairs:

A Partnership for Success

Driving your host parent's car is a privilege, not a right. It is most likely that your child care responsibilities will include driving your host parent's vehicle. You may also need to drive your host parent's vehicle during your free time for your own personal use.

It is important that you learn to drive in the U.S. safely. You and those whom you will be driving are precious cargo.

Be prepared to spend some time and invest in becoming a competent driver. Driving is a skill that will benefit you for many years to come. Au Pair in America would like to offer some advice and guidance to help support you and your host family during the first few weeks of your match.

Matching driving experience with driving needs

Driving in America is very different from driving in your home country. The road signs and road markings are different, the rules of the road are different, you may have to get used to the speed limits being in miles instead of kilometers, and you may even have to get used to driving on the opposite side of the road. Your experience and ability to learn the American driving laws and rules of the road will help you to meet the driving needs of your host family. You should have discussed driving in detail with your host family during your phone interview prior to your arrival. Your host family is not obligated to allow you to use their car. At first, they will probably want to drive with you to make sure that you can drive safely. Your host family may also restrict some driving privileges such as driving with friends in the car until they are fully confident about your driving ability.

Driving practice

You may be an experienced driver in your home country, but you will still need time to get acquainted with driving a foreign vehicle and to get used to the rules of the road in the state where you live. This can be a challenge and may be more difficult than you expect. Here are some suggestions for driving practice:

- Start your driving practice in an empty parking lot with a licensed driver in the car, and take your time.
- Make sure you have a copy of the state's *Driver's Manual*, and take the time to read it carefully.
- Practice day and night driving accompanied by a licensed driver, without children in the car.
- Practice day and night driving accompanied by a licensed driver, with children in the car.
- Drive around the neighborhood with a host parent beside you to get familiar with local landmarks.
- Practice any routes you will take on a regular basis, such as back and forth to the school or the store. Drive with a host parent the first couple of times so you get comfortable before trying it on your own.
- Ask for written directions for the places you will need to go on a regular basis.
- Practice as much as possible by doing the driving when going with a host parent to pick up pizza or a movie.
- Practice good driving habits and obey the law. Do not talk on the phone or try to tend to the children while you are driving. Always pull over and stop the car if you need to concentrate on anything other than driving.
- Practice parking in a parking lot when it is quiet and you can relax.
- When conditions change and you may have to drive in the rain or snow or on icy roads, do not assume that you will be comfortable driving. Talk to your host family about taking you out to practice in these conditions, and never drive if you do not feel safe.

Are driving lessons needed?

After this practice period is complete, you or your host parents may feel that some formal instruction or a professional driving assessment is needed. Discuss the driving practice period with your community counselor and determine what might be the best next step to help you feel comfortable and gain confidence.

Au Pair in America thanks you for being responsible and taking the time to practice your driving skills until you feel confident and comfortable behind the wheel.