



Dear Au Pair Participant,

Welcome to the CHI Au Pair USA program! We are very proud that you have been selected to participate in our au pair program, and we look forward to your arrival. Participating in the au pair program will enable you to live in the U.S., work with children, experience life with an American host family, meet many new people and develop your self-confidence.

CHI Au Pair USA is a part of Cultural Homestay International (CHI). CHI is one of the oldest (since 1980), largest non-profit student exchange educational organizations in the U.S. We cooperate with numerous partner organizations throughout the world.

Upon confirmation of your placement with your American Host Family, you will be required to successfully complete a 32+ hour online training focused on infant and child care development and safety. CHI Au Pair USA will also provide printed materials and documentation that will contain essential information vital to your Au Pair program, such as the Au Pair Participant Handbook.

This Au Pair Handbook is designed to support you and relieve you of any anxiety that you may have and also to answer questions that may arise during your program. Therefore, it is very important that you take the time to carefully read and retain the information contained in this handbook. In addition to this handbook, CHI Au Pair USA will also provide you with "The What to Expect..." child safety and development book that will also serve as vital information to assist you during your Au Pair program.

During your au pair program, your Administrator will be available for answering questions and for ongoing support and assistance. It is the job of the Administrator to be the connection between our organization, you and your host family. Your Administrator will help ease your transition into a new culture, and give you the "tools" needed for a successful program.

It is important that you come with an open mind about the differences between American life and your native country. Having clear expectations, flexibility and commitment on your part will be extremely important during this coming year. Since your participation in this program is to experience a cultural exchange, your optimistic outlook and cheerful attitude will make your year in America both enjoyable and rewarding.

We look forward to your arrival in the CHI Au Pair USA program and we expect that you will have a positive and memorable experience.

Warm regards,

Tom Areton
Executive Director
Cultural Homestay International (CHI)

Michelle Areton
Director
CHI Au Pair USA



AU PAIR PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

Cultural Homestay International (CHI) is a non-profit, public benefit, educational organization. For over 40 years, CHI's mission is to bring people of diverse cultures together so those who participate gain a greater knowledge and understanding of one another. CHI believes that the best way to learn about the cultures, languages and customs of other countries is through international education exchanges and homestay programs.

Your participation in this au pair cultural exchange program gives you the opportunity to live with an American family and assist with childcare. Through your positive attitude and willingness to be a cultural ambassador, you are able to teach your host family about life in your home country, while at the same time, you will learn about American culture during your twelve-month stay with your host family. CHI Au Pair USA promotes the value of equality between the host family and au pair. The au pair is considered an equal family member, and is included in family activities such as family meals, and holiday celebrations, unlike an "employee" or "servant" who might be excluded from such gatherings.

As described in the Department of State Regulations, You may be expected to provide up to 45 hours per week of childcare. Childcare duties will not be more than five and a half days per week, and no more than 10 hours per day. With one full weekend off per month, and two weeks of paid vacation.

Your Host Family is your employer, and they must supply you with a weekly stipend based upon the highest local minimum wage for your location. *(More information provided in the host family requirements section)*

As an au pair, you are also required to attend and complete six semester units of study at a US Accredited Post Secondary educational institution. Your host family will provide up to \$500 tuition allowance for you to complete your educational requirement.



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CHI Au Pair is committed to making your year in the U.S. rewarding and successful. Through our program support network of experienced staff members, your questions and concerns can be addressed immediately. The CHI Au Pair staff includes:

Regional Administrator (RA)

RA's are in charge of specific CHI geographical territories in the U.S. They coordinate personnel and the au pair program within their region, and are the supervisory link between the Community Administrator (CA), the host family, au pair and the CHI Main Office. Their duties include hiring and supervising CAs, problem solving, implementing the overall program and representing CHI to the community.

Community Administrator (CA)

CA's have a valuable role in maintaining close contact with the host family and au pair throughout the program year. CA's screen host families and help the au pair adjust to his/her new home and community. CA's are the first point of contact to offer advice and counseling to both the host family and au pair should the need arise.

CHI Au Pair Main Office

Located near San Francisco, California, CHI Au Pair's Program Director oversees the Main Office staff and is responsible for the overall supervision and program administration, including supervising RA's and maintaining relations with overseas partner agencies.

In the event of an evening or weekend emergency, a 24-hour toll free emergency number is available:

1-800-432-4643

This service will connect you with a CHI staff person.

PROGRAM PREPARATION

The Application Process

In order for you to get the most benefit out of this cultural exchange program, CHI Au Pair selects au pair candidates who go beyond the minimum requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of State. The minimum requirements are:

- Between and inclusive of the ages of 18 and 26 years old
- Possessing at least a high school diploma, some university education is preferred
- Passing an English Assessment
- Presenting documented childcare experience, including childcare and character references
- Passing a criminal background check and undergoing a health examination
- Passing a Psychometric test
- Possessing a valid driver's license
- Demonstrating the maturity, responsibility and sincere desire to care for children as well as to live with an American family for a year
(Your agency will provide you with a complete application)

Once you submit the complete application packet to CHI Au Pair's partner agency in your home country, they will pre-screen the application information, conduct an interview, verify references including the criminal background check, and administer the psychological profile test. The overseas partner agency forwards your completed application to CHI Au Pair's main office for final screening and approval. You will also be interviewed by a CHI representative.

At the same time, CHI also thoroughly and carefully screens all Host Families. CHI's administrators conduct an in-home interview with the families as well as check references and background information.

After program acceptance and approval, qualified au pairs and host families are ready to be matched.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please be aware that acceptance of your CHI Au Pair application does NOT guarantee your placement with an au pair family. Au pair families choose their care-providers from the CHI applicant pool. Au pairs with infant care experience and extensive driving experience are in the greatest demand and may find a host family faster.

The Telephone Interview and Matching Process

Your application and profile will be distributed to families to review. All host families are required to **conduct at least two** telephone or skype / video conference interviews with an au pair before any match can be confirmed. If a family is initially interested in your profile, they will email you to arrange a time for an interview.

To prepare for the **first call** from the host family, please use the *Au Pair Telephone Interview Guide*. Make several copies to have near the telephone. The *Telephone Interview Guide* will help you develop and outline questions to ask the family, such as what your role in the family will be and what their expectations are. During the interview, it is extremely important that you are open and honest with the family and that you answer their questions truthfully. If you are not honest with the family from the beginning, a trust will be broken and problems will be created.

If a family decides after the first interview that you are not suitable for their particular family situation, they will not call you a second time. Likewise, if you decide that you are not interested in the family, you may inform them when they call a second time. However, if the host family feels your skills and background are compatible, they will give you a **second call**. At least 24 hours should pass between the first and second call in order to make certain that both sides have sufficient time to think and prepare for a possible second interview. The second call is a good time to negotiate your stipend amount, possible schedule and hours, and to meet the children. Once again, please remember to use the *Telephone Interview Guide* during the second call. Be very thoughtful when you are considering a match with a family. Remember it is a year-long commitment, and once you have agreed to the match, you are obligated to follow through with your choice; you may not change your mind if another family calls you.

After the second interview, it is very important that you inform CHI's overseas Partner Agency immediately whether you have declined the family or wish to confirm the host family match.

AU PAIR ORIENTATION & TRAINING

Upon confirmation your placement, you will be required to begin the Au Pair orientation, which will be conducted on-line.

CHI Au Pair USA Au Pairs are required to undergo and successfully complete an extensive 32+ hours of online training orientation training prior to their arrival in the United States.

Please note Au Pair orientations are a MANDATED rule set forth by the Department of State; they are NOT an option, and it is ESSENTIAL that the following Orientation material be presented to all Au Pairs.

The goal of the Au Pair orientations is to:

- Provide Au Pairs with skills and knowledge to help them adjust to the American culture and lifestyle
- Reinforce Au Pairs' basic knowledge of skills regarding child development and behavior in support of an effective performance

The following modules will be covered as part of the on-line orientation program:

Advancement of Physical and Intellectual Development

- Course Tutorial
- Early Literacy (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Physical Activity for Children with Disabilities (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

Commitment to Professionalism

- Child Abuse: Identification and Reporting (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Computer Technology in early Childhood Education (.2 CEU/2 Hours)
- Conflict Resolution for Adults (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Stress Management (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

Effective Program Management

- Early Childhood Programs for Multilingual Children (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Transitioning to Kindergarten (.3 CEU/3 Hours)
- Working with Children with Disabilities (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

Enhancement of Social and Emotional Development

- Child Self Esteem (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Childhood Anger and Anger Management (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Conflict Management for Children (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Praise and Rewards (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Separation Anxiety and Stranger Anxiety (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

Observing and Recording Progress and Behavior of Children

- Assessing Childhood Development (.2 CEU/2 Hours)
- Children's Temperament (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Documenting Children's Behaviors (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

Positive Relationships with Families

- Cross-Cultural Communication (.2 CEU/2 Hours)
- Effective Written Communication (.2 CEU/2 Hours)
- Encouraging Parental Involvement (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

- Overcoming Difficulties Communicating with Parents (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

Principles of Child Growth and Development

- Language Development (.2 CEU/2 Hours)
- Stages of Physical Growth and Development in Infants (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Stages of Physical Growth and Development in Preschoolers (.1 CEU/1 Hour)
- Stages of Physical Growth and Development in Toddlers (.1 CEU/1 Hour)

Safe and Healthy Environment

- Infant and Toddler Health and Safety (.2 CEU/2 Hours)

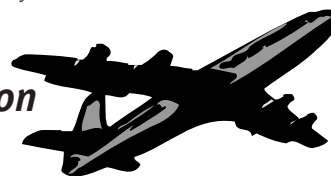
Pre-Departure Information Packet

Upon confirmation of your placement, you will be sent a Pre-Departure Information Packet. Included in this packet are:

- Host family's application and placement information sheet
- DS 2019 form, program sponsor letter, and SEVIS fee receipt (Form 901)
- Welcome letter and travel tips
- ABC's of *American Culture* booklet
- *CHI Au Pair USA Handbook*
- "The What to Expect...." book on child safety and development
- Flight Itinerary and Insurance information

CHI's overseas Partner Agency will provide you with instructions on obtaining the J-1 visa and instructions on your departure.

Travel Preparation to the U.S. Checklist



- ✓ Once you have been issued the J-1 visa, please be sure to make two **photocopies of your passport, DS 2019 form, J-1 visa and airline ticket**. Leave one set of copies at home with your parents or trusted friend and pack the other set of documents in your luggage, separate from the originals. All of these original documents must be in your possession at all times during your stay in the U.S.
- ✓ Please note that as of Spring 2013, most immigration offices will not issue you a paper I-94 when you enter the U.S.A. Instead they will stamp your passport and you will be responsible for printing out your I-94 form from this site: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/request.html> Please print this I-94 number out prior to going to your Social Security appointment.
- ✓ Bring at least **USD\$500 spending money** with you to cover expenses. More information will be provided upon visa approval.

- ✓ Bring your **international driver's license and travel information** with you.
- ✓ Be sure to pack any **prescription medication and/or eye wear (glasses/contact lenses)** in their original container along with a **copy of the prescription**.
- ✓ It may be wise for you to have a **dental exam before your departure to the U.S.** Dental care in the U.S. can be costly, and almost all dental procedures and routine care will not be covered by the program's insurance policy.
- ✓ If you have a laptop, please bring it with you.
- ✓ If you bring any electrical or electronic devices, be sure to bring a electrical plug **adapter/converter**.
- ✓ **Pack light and bring only what is essential.**
Remember to bring clothing that is appropriate to the climate where your host family lives. If you forget to bring toothpaste or pack extra socks, there are a variety of stores and shops in the U.S. where necessities are readily available.
- ✓ Bring a *small* **welcome gift** to your host parents and children. The gift should be simple and not expensive.
- ✓ **BE SURE TO READ AND BRING** with you your **AU PAIR PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK** and *"The What to Expect Babysitters Handbook..."* **CHILD SAFETY AND DEVELOPMENT BOOK WITH YOU!**
- ✓ Carefully read the U.S. **Department of Homeland Security 'FACT SHEET'** regarding entry into the U.S.
- ✓ Carefully read and discuss the Au Pair/Host Family Agreement (found online) with your Host Family. This agreement must be completed and signed by both your Host Family and you before CHI Au Pair can purchase your flight.

YOUR ARRIVAL INTO THE U.S.

Flight Arrangement

A portion of your host family's program fees is applied toward your international airfare.

IMPORTANT: Upon successful completion of your Au Pair orientation and approval of your J-1 visa, CHI will arrange your flight from a

CHI designated international gateway airport to the international gateway airport nearest to your Host Family's location. You are responsible for arranging and paying for domestic home country transportation from your house to the CHI designated international airport.



Also, **REMEMBER**, at the end of the program year, you are responsible for arranging and paying for U.S. domestic transportation to the U.S. international gateway airport.

When you receive your airline ticket, review it carefully. Please immediately notify either CHI Main Office of CHI's partner agent in your home if you notice any mistakes on the ticket. Do not attempt to change/amend the flight yourself. Please be advised that should you cancel or change the flight, you are responsible for a service fee and any additional airline charges resulting in changing your itinerary or cancellation.

Your New Host Family and Community

After completing the orientation and training, your flight or other transportation will be arranged to your host community. Once you have arrived at your final destination, you begin a program year full of new experiences and challenges. CHI's administrator will establish contact with you and your host family **within 48 hours** of arriving into the hosting community to ensure that you are settling in well. If, for any reason, you do not hear from the administrator, please call the CHI Au Pair USA Main office toll free (during business hours) at: 800-432-4643.

During the **first three days** after your local arrival, either one parent or responsible adult is required to stay at home to assist you with your transition into the family's life. Take advantage of these first few days to rest and get to know your new home as it will not be long before your host parents may return to work, and you will be responsible for the children.

Within two weeks of your arrival to your host family's home, your administrator will personally meet with you and your host family. At this time, the administrator will discuss various topics, including cultural issues and adjustment, problem solving and program guidelines. During this meeting, the administrator will review the Au Pair and Host Family Agreement, which you completed prior to arrival with you and your Host Family. This agreement will establish the rules to be respected throughout the year. Please review the agreement carefully **before** the meeting and make sure any additions or observations are written and signed by both you and your host family. (A copy of the agreement is in the reference section of this handbook).

Overview of Responsibilities

Please refer to the copy of your *Au Pair Promise and Agreement* (Refer to the reference section of this handbook) and the *Au Pair and Host Family Agreement* for specific details regarding your responsibility as an au pair and your host family's terms and conditions for hosting. The following is an overview of responsibilities and rules:

■ FOR THE AU PAIR:

- 1) While under your care, your total attention and commitment toward the safety and welfare of the host family's children is your top priority.
- 2) You agree to complete a minimum of 6 academic units of study at an accredited educational institution. The course work needs to be pre-approved by the CHI administrator.
- 3) Regularly scheduled monthly contact with your Coordinator is mandatory.
- 4) Attendance at a minimum of one social/Family Day event sponsored by CHI Au Pair USA is required.
- 5) Illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol is prohibited. Au pairs who misuse alcohol or drugs will be dismissed from the program and must return home immediately, at their own cost.
- 6) You agree not to enter into any binding agreements such as marriage while on the program and acknowledge that should you enter such an agreement, CHI will end your program.
- 7) All U.S. federal, state and local laws are to be respected and adhered to.
- 8) Vacation schedule and plans are to be mutually agreed upon in advance with your host family.
- 9) Any extra jobs or work outside your au pair duties are strictly prohibited.
- 10) Any additional expenses which the host family has incurred on your behalf (*i.e.*, personal phone calls, household damage) are your responsibility to reimburse your host family.



- 11) Au Pairs will be required to confirm receipt of weekly stipend in their Monthly Report. Receipt of the stipend should be tracked weekly. Save all receipts of payment.
- 12) If any program rules are violated, CHI Au Pair USA reserves the right to end program participation. This also applies if your physical and/or emotional well-being are at risk.

■ FOR THE HOST FAMILY, THEY ARE REQUIRED TO:

- 1) Carefully interview and select their au pair based from the information provided on the au pair application and conduct at least two telephone or skype interviews with au pairs before making a placement decision.
- 2) Have either a host parent or responsible adult spend the first three days in the home to train and familiarize the au pair with the family environment.
- 3) Respect the au pair as a member of the family and include him/her in family activities as much as possible.
- 4) Pay up to \$500 in tuition toward completing the au pair's required program educational component
- 5) Pay the au pair a weekly stipend in accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor Guidelines, based on the highest minimum wage according to the Host Family's location and in conformance with federal, state or local wage laws. The Host Family and Au Pair are free to agree to a higher stipend than the legally applicable minimum.
- 6) Provide the au pair with one and a half days off each week, one full weekend off per month, and two weeks paid vacation.
- 7) Schedule no more than 10 hours of childcare per day; no more than 45 hours per week.
- 8) Include the au pair on a car insurance policy if the au pair is expected or allowed to drive the family vehicles.
- 9) Provide the au pair with an adequately furnished private room.
- 10) Adhere to the CHI Au Pair USA program's terms and conditions, as well as, to all U.S. Department of State regulations.
- 11) Participate in at least one CHI sponsored Family Day event with the au pair during the year.
- 12) Provide a Responsible Adult at all times when there is an infant under 3 months of age in the household.

Family Expectations and Communication

Your host family has invested a significant amount of money in the program and has high expectations of you to provide reliable childcare. Your host family will explain their family routine and childcare needs in order for you to know what is expected. When you establish open and honest communication with your host family, both of you will have a clear understanding of situations, issues and

each other. Good communication habits and flexibility will also help reduce tension and misunderstandings between you and your host family. Always ask questions if you are not clear, and voice your concerns before they turn into overwhelming problems.

YOUR HOST PARENTS WILL WRITE DOWN THE IMPORTANT HOUSE RULES FOR YOU. THESE MAY INCLUDE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Keeping your host family informed of where you are going and when you will be home
- Maintaining a positive attitude and being an active member of the family
- Abiding by reasonable curfews
- Scheduling personal telephone and Internet use in advance
- Restricting entertaining friends and/or guests in the host family's home

HOUSE RULES RELATED TO CHILDCARE MAY INCLUDE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Encouraging certain type of appropriate behavior
- Maintaining children's routines and schedules
- Applying acceptable methods of child discipline
- Cleaning up after children

A Reminder about your CA and RA

The CA plays a significant role during your program year. He/She will provide you with support, advice and a smile. He/She is there for you if you are experiencing difficulties, as well as, to hear about your triumphs of living in a new culture. On a monthly basis, your CA will contact you and your host family to check on adjustment issues, family dynamics and program progress. If there is an urgent matter that occurs between the monthly contact, you are welcome to call the CA or email him/her. Remember, your CA is committed to make your experience safe, positive and rewarding.



Additionally, your RA is there to support you if you have questions or issues and cannot reach your administrator. You will be asked to complete an online check-in with CHI Au Pair USA every quarter (2-3 months) to ensure that everything is going well.

LIVING WITH YOUR NEW FAMILY

An au pair arrangement is different from most other childcare situations. Instead of being an employee, you are a member of your host family. Your role as a friend and companion plays an important part in immersing yourself into your new family's culture, activities, and lifestyle. Developing a successful relationship between you and your new family requires a significant degree of effort, flexibility and awareness.



Cultural Exchange & Sharing

An essential element of participating in an au pair program is the reciprocal sharing of cultures.

As an au pair, you are expected to give your host family some insight into your culture. The children in your family, no matter how young, can benefit from this cultural exchange. A few ideas to share include: explaining your country's holidays and perhaps celebrating one of them; cooking some of your native dishes; teaching the children songs and games from your country; teaching basic greetings in your native language.

At the same time, your host family has been instructed to think about how they can share American culture with you. They are asked to include you in as many family activities as possible such as holiday celebrations, and family traditions.

Cultural Differences - America is known as a "melting-pot", which means that our population is made up of many different ethnic backgrounds, all living together. We have such diverse backgrounds as Italian, Greek, Polish, Scandinavian, but yet they are all Americans. All of these diverse cultural backgrounds contribute to our unique American culture. Learning about the American culture is part of your intercultural experience. American families can be very different from one another, so your experience with your family will be very special. We ask that you respect the

culture of your family, and that you openly share your own cultural ideals with them.

Cultural Adjustment

Living and working in a new culture and environment requires a tremendous amount of energy and patience. The adjustment process or “culture shock” that you will go through may be difficult at times. Culture shock is the reaction experienced by cultural exchange participants when confronted with unfamiliar surroundings – communication, food, climate, people and lifestyle. Confusion, frustration, and stress often accompany the process of adjustment that overseas visitors may encounter when living in a new country.

■ MOST AU PAIRS WILL EXPERIENCE CULTURE SHOCK IN VARYING DEGREES AND GO THROUGH VARIOUS STAGES OF ADJUSTMENT AS THE YEAR PROGRESSES. CULTURE SHOCK CAN BE SUMMARIZED IN THE FOLLOWING STAGES:

- 1) **Euphoria** – At first, experiencing the host culture is new and exciting.
- 2) **Anxiety** – The excitement fades when a routine is established in the new environment (host culture). Feelings / physical symptoms of helplessness, withdrawal, irritability, insomnia, excessive or exaggerated behavior (overly tired) appear.
- 3) **Rejection** – of the new host culture – Everything in the new environment is “wrong” or “backwards.” The home culture is secure; homesickness develops.
- 4) **Acceptance** – Recognizing and respecting some of the perceived shortcomings in the host culture and feeling comfortable with the way of living.

■ SOME SUGGESTIONS TO HELP MINIMIZE THE AFFECT OF CULTURE SHOCK INCLUDE:

- 1) **Open communication.** Talk to your host family and administrator about your symptoms; they are concerned and want you to be happy. Verbally expressing your challenges will help you reduce and cope with the stress of living in a new country. Having a family meeting once per week will help to keep the verbal communication open. It is also important that when you verbally express your challenges, you do this in a kind and constructive way. Your results will be much more positive.
- 2) **Open mind.** A positive attitude goes a long way toward adjustment. Try new foods, make new friends and be open to new experiences.

- 3) **Be active.** Get involved with sports activities and clubs. Go for a walk or bicycling with a friend.
- 4) **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Eat a balanced diet, exercise and get plenty of rest.
- 5) **Keep a journal.** Write down your experiences and feelings.

Remember your program year in the U.S. is a personal learning and growing experience. Be patient with yourself during the adjustment process. In the end, you will have a deeper understanding of American culture, as well as a new perspective of how you view your home country.

A Few Words About...

■ PARENTING

Every culture has its own acceptable methods of raising children and discipline. Americans generally encourage children to try new things and be independent, within limits. Discuss with your host family their view and philosophy on raising children and their expectations with regard to discipline. Keep in mind that their methods may be very different from what is practiced in your home country. Discuss the differences with your host family; however, at the same time, respect their role as parents. **CAUTIONARY NOTE: An au pair should NEVER hit or shake a baby or child. This can cause permanent brain damage or even death.** Hitting and shaking is not an acceptable form of discipline. If you are feeling frustrated with the children or feel an urge of anger towards them, take a short break; go to another room and calm down. More information about discipline is in the “*What to Expect...*” child development book. If you often feel that you cannot control your feelings of anger or frustration, call your administrator immediately! **CAUTIONARY NOTE: NEVER leave a child alone or out of your sight — even if it is just for a moment.** Particularly, do NOT leave a child alone in a car or in public places (park, shopping mall, etc.).

■ SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Nowadays, we expect most Au Pairs and Host Families to have at least one social media account (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc...). Please be aware and considerate of what you post on any Social Media page. Please do not post inappropriate pictures and always check with your Host Family before posting any pictures of your Host Family. Many families are concerned about privacy and may not be comfortable with you posting pictures of them on the internet.

■ RELIGION

In America many families use their church or temple as a place of worship and as a social institution where they

make friends and participate as a community. Many churches and temples have youth groups for children, teens and young adults with meetings during the week nights. Because of this involvement, many American families tend to be more active in their church or temple than most other cultures. Make sure you clearly understand your family's religious practices, and that you let them know about your religious beliefs. The church or temple can be a good place to meet people your age. However, there is no requirement that you attend services with the family.

■ ALCOHOL, DRUGS & SMOKING

The legal drinking age in the U.S. is 21-years-old. In many cases if you purchase or are served alcoholic beverages, you will be asked to prove that you are of legal drinking age. Any au pair under 21 years of age caught drinking or using false identification cards in order to buy or drink alcohol may be dismissed from the program. Also, in the U.S., there has been intense focus and concern regarding drinking alcoholic beverages and then driving a vehicle. There have been many alcohol-related traffic accidents and deaths. Therefore, state and local police strictly enforce "Driving While Intoxicated" (DWI) or "Driving Under the Influence" (DUI) laws. To keep yourself and others safe, DO NOT drink and drive. Americans generally appoint a "designated driver" when going out with a group of friends. This person agrees not to drink alcoholic beverages and will drive the group safely to their destination. Other options are to take a taxi or public transportation.

Possession of illegal drugs in, any amount at any time in the U.S., is subject to prosecution by law. Although penalties vary from state to state, you are subject to fines and possible jail time for any possession of drugs or association with people who are dealing/selling drugs. Any illegal possession or use of drugs will result in the immediate dismissal from the CHI Au Pair USA program.

Smoking is unacceptable to the great majority of American families. If you have indicated on your au pair application that you are a non-smoker, or if you have told your host family that you do not smoke, please honor your commitment. Lying about your smoking habits may be grounds for removal from a host family. Keep in mind that in most public places, including restaurants, airports and stores, smoking is not allowed.

■ DRESSING APPROPRIATELY

Living and working in a family's home has many advantages, including dressing casually. At the same time, as an au pair, you have a job as a child care provider, role model and family representative, and as

in any other job, you are expected to dress appropriately. While you may want to be fashionable, some clothing or trends may not necessarily be acceptable in a family environment, such as extremely short dresses/skirts, revealing t-shirts or blouses, or sheer/see-through material. Please be mindful and respectful of your surroundings and dress accordingly.

■ PRIVACY

Ask your host family about their privacy customs. It is sometimes difficult for a host family to understand that you may need to be alone as Americans are usually very social. Discuss with your family your need for privacy after a long day with the children. A kind and friendly way to remind the host parents and children that you need time alone in your room is a sign on your door with a green side for, "knock and come in," and a red side for "privacy." This will help teach young children that your room is open to them by invitation only.

■ FOOD

American family meals are much less formal than what you are accustomed to. Meals where the whole family sits down together may only happen on the weekends, especially if both parents are working. Many times family members just grab food to eat as they are leaving, or just stand up and eat in the kitchen. Many Americans do not think of eating together as a social event. Instead, they think of eating more as a way to nourish their bodies.

Neither way is right nor wrong; it is only a difference in culture. Most of American food is also packaged, frozen or the family eats "take out" from a restaurant or market. Talk to your family about meals in relation to their children; what kind of food, preparation and atmosphere in which the meal will be served. It is also important for you to try new foods. You might also introduce the family to some cooking and foods from your country.

■ FREEDOM

In America individual freedoms are talked about, but you may see some inconsistencies where you are concerned. Your host family will expect you to give them notice when you are going out and will ask you for the time when you are returning. It is important that you always call if you are going to be late. They will usually want to know who you are going out with, because they are concerned about your safety. It is your right to go out in your free time, but since you are living under the same roof with your host family, you need to be understanding of their concerns. It is

important that you are awake and able to take care of the children, so if you are keeping late hours be sure that you can wake up yourself and stay alert while you are caring for the children.

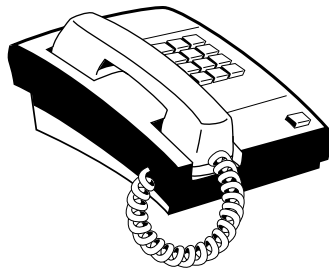
■ SAFETY

While the large majority of the American population is friendly, open and willing to help, there are a small percentage of people who will take advantage of other people, especially visitors. As long as you use common sense and take precautions, you can feel confident in exploring freely. The following are a few personal safety tips:

- In crowded areas such as, shopping malls, airports, train stations or bus terminals, always keep your property close to you. Keep valuables close to you or in a concealed place.
- Never hitch-hike or accept rides from strangers. Never give strangers your host family's address or phone number.
- Try to travel or do activities with friends as much as possible.
- Do not expose large sums of money in crowded places.
- Stay alert to your surroundings. Thieves and pickpockets target people who seem preoccupied and distracted – waiting in a movie line, check-out counter at the grocery store or window shopping.

■ TELEPHONE CALLS

You are responsible for paying any personal phone calls made from your host family's telephone. **If you are calling to your home country or calling long distance using a telephone, we ask that you use a pre-paid phone card which can be purchased in the U.S. If you are using SKYPE, VOIP or another internet-based phone, you must get your host family's permission before downloading such programs onto their computer.** Please discuss with your family and the administrator the amount of time you may spend on the telephone and/or Internet. Also have the family and/or the administrator show you how to use the telephone, particularly if there are any special features, such as call-waiting, caller ID, etc. In addition, while you are on the job caring for the children and are responsible for answering the host family's phone, be sure to answer the phone appropriately and pay close attention to taking all messages. Ask your host family to keep a



notebook and pen near the phone; this will help you to keep track of all messages.

■ DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Please read this section carefully and make sure you understand the program rules regarding your ability to drive in the U.S. As an au pair program participant you are required to have a valid driver's license issued in your home country, and are recommended to also have an international driver's permit, upon applying to the program. In addition, you are expected to have adequate and safe driving experience and skills. Inability to fulfill driving duties could jeopardize your placement and potentially mean your early departure from the program. **REMEMBER: Driving the host family's car should be viewed as a privilege, not as a right,** and subsequently, the host family decides how often you can drive the family's car. The host family's specific expectations and rules regarding your driving privileges are indicated in the *Au Pair & Host Family Agreement* form.

Within the first few weeks of your arrival, you will be asked to demonstrate your driving skills. Should your host family determine that your driving abilities are not adequate or you lack the skills necessary to handle driving conditions in the host community, such as freeways and winding roads, you will be responsible to enroll and pay for appropriate driving lessons. Your host family and CHI are not obligated to pay for any driving classes. Also, any driving lessons cannot be applied toward the Educational Component.

■ VACATION TIME

Au pairs are entitled to two weeks vacation with pay. You and your host family are responsible for discussing and agreeing to schedule a mutually convenient time for vacation.

Your family is most likely very busy; they will need to be informed well ahead of time of when you would like to take your vacation. Also,

remember to be flexible about your time. Be sure to inform your administrator when you will be taking vacation and where you will be during that time. If your host family invites you along on their family vacation, clarify with them whether this is a "working" vacation for you or "free time" that counts toward your



vacation days. Either way, you are to be paid your full weekly stipend, whether you accompany the family or not.

■ INSURANCE

CHI Au Pairs are covered by a comprehensive medical insurance. Coverage is effective when you depart your home country to become a participant on the program. Upon arrival into the United States, you will receive an email regarding medical insurance that will ask you to "Follow the link and create your account".

You will be required to enter your first name, last name, date of birth, and email address provided to CHI during the application process. Upon entry of the before mentioned information, you will be able to create your account and print your card.

If for any reason the link does not work, please contact your Community Administrator. Please note that no medical information is sent to the participants in hard copy format, everything is communicated electronically so be aware; check your spam folders and do not delete anything containing information you are not sure about .. it could be important, especially if it comes from CHI.

In the event that you need to arrange medical appointments, submit claims, check the status of claims, check medical coverage – you need to speak with the insurance company directly.

■ SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

The Social Security card is a government issued identification card, usually used for tax purposes. In relation to you as an au pair, the Social Security number (SSN) will make it easier for you to open a bank account, register for classes and apply for your state driver's license. Therefore, it is important that you apply for your Social Security card once you have arrived in your host community. Please note that you should wait until you have been in the country for at least two weeks before you apply for your Social Security card. More information can be found in your Welcome Brochure. Your administrator can assist you with applying for a Social Security card.

■ MONEY MATTERS

While on the CHI Au Pair program, it is important that you budget your money wisely. We advise that you arrive with a minimum of \$500. Although you will be receiving a stipend, be sure to calculate how much money you may need for any personal expenses, including travel. Be sure to put at least \$500 aside in your bank account for emergency purposes.

■ ACCESSING MONEY FROM YOUR HOME COUNTRY

Neither CHI Au Pair nor your host family are able to loan money to you should your funds run out. Should you need to access emergency funds from your home country, here are a couple of suggestions:

- 1) Telegraphic Transfer: The transaction allows you to transfer money from a bank your home country to a bank in the U.S. There is a service charge and the process may take a week or longer. Since not all banks offer this service, check in advance.
- 2) Western Union. A friend, relative or parent can transfer money from your home country to a Western Union facility in the U.S. The process usually takes 15-30 minutes. There is a handling charge which is based on the amount of money sent. Call 1-800-325-6000 for the nearest Western Union location.

■ BANKS

Opening a bank account is one way to ensure your money will be in a safe place. Since services and fees vary from bank to bank, you may need to check several institutions in order to find the one that suits your needs. Keep in mind that banks offer different types and levels of accounts. Ask about your options. You should be aware that:

- Some banks require a minimum balance of money in your account. Otherwise, you will be assessed a fee.
- A monthly service fee to maintain your account may be required at some banks.
- Sometimes there is a waiting period after you open your account to access your money.
- Banks usually offer an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) card when you open an account. This card is also known as a "debit card," meaning that any time you use the card for withdrawing cash or making purchases, the amount is deducted from your account. It is wise to keep all receipts of your cash withdrawals and purchases for your records. Banks may also charge a user fee (\$1.50-\$3.00 per transaction) each time you withdraw money or make purchases with your ATM/Debit card. If you have an ATM card from your home country, check with your home bank to make sure you can use the card in the U.S. or if you need a special access code.

Your administrator will be able to assist you in opening a bank account. You will need a couple of forms of identification to open an account, including your passport and Social Security card.

■ SALES TAX

Sales tax varies from city to city and state to state. In some regions, there is no sales tax added to purchases on merchandise or a restaurant bill. However, in communities where sales tax is assessed, be prepared to pay between 3 percent to 10 percent in addition to the total bill.

■ TIPPING

In the U.S., it is customary to tip service-oriented workers – waiter/waitresses, taxi drivers, hair stylists – 15 to 20 percent of the amount owed for the services rendered.

ADDRESSING PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

You and your host family are encouraged to set aside time each week to talk. This meeting is a time to address and discuss any concerns, schedule planning, child related issues, and your adjustment. By having regular family meetings, both you and your host family are able to resolve small problems or misunderstandings before they turn into big conflicts.

Always address a problem as it arises, rather than wait until you become frustrated and angry. For instance, if your host family behaves in a manner that you do not appreciate or understand, discuss your concern with them. It is best if you approach your host family in a kind and calm manner. Work toward solving problems rather than place blame. If there is an issue that you feel uncomfortable about discussing with your family, please speak with your administrator for guidance. Although most issues resolve themselves over time, if a problem persists or becomes more serious, your administrator will work further with you to try to improve the situation. You can also speak with your regional administrator or the Main Office.

Please refer and carefully read the *"Au Pair Agreement"* and the *"Au Pair Problem Solving and Rematch Guidelines"* found at the back of this handbook for a detailed outline of the replacement policies. The following is a summary of the terms and conditions involving Au Pairs rematching.

Placement Changes

A placement change resulting in the relocation of an au pair is only considered when all possible options to resolve a problem have been attempted. A placement change is NOT to be used as an immediate solution to a conflict. Both

you and your host family must demonstrate that a genuine effort was made to overcome a troubling issue. Your administrator is the mediator and is required to document the situation in writing.

Although CHI Au Pair expects au pairs and host families to wait a minimum of 60 days from the time of arrival before making a decision to re-match, final decisions regarding any placement change is made at CHI's sole discretion.

■ THE FOLLOWING ARE GUIDELINES AND POLICIES FOR AU PAIRS IN TRANSITION:

- 1) **Re-matching.** CHI Au Pair does not guarantee to the au pair that a replacement family will be located nor does CHI accept requests for a specific geographic placement location with a family. During a two-week period, every attempt is made to find a replacement host family by circulating the au pair's application to prospective families.

During the re-matching process, keep in mind:

- If you are switching to another host family, we ask that you respect your first host family's privacy by never talking to your new host family about your first family. What happens within a family should stay within the family.
- The au pair is expected to be readily available and accessible for interviews and immediate placement. Therefore no extended trips or vacations are permitted during the transition period.



- Au pairs are strongly advised to ask appropriate and relative interview questions to potential replacement host families in order to clarify concerns and issues before the match is made.
- 2) **Program dismissal.** After a two weeks, if no suitable family has been found, the au pair is required to leave the U.S. at his/her own expense.
 - 3) **Financial Responsibilities.** An au pair is responsible for paying any outstanding debts to his/her original host family and/or any party that has temporarily housed him/her. This includes, but not limited to, telephone or medical bills.

EMERGENCIES

As your Exchange Visitor Program sponsor, CHI Au Pair USA is responsible for your safety and well-being while you are in the U.S.

An emergency is defined as:

- A life or death crisis such as critical injury or illness requiring hospitalization
- If you are a victim of a violent crime
- If you have violated state/federal laws or have been arrested

Call your administrator to notify him/her of any emergency situation. If you are unable to reach your administrator immediately, please contact CHI Au Pair's toll-free emergency phone number:

1-800-432-4643

A non-emergency is:

- Program questions, including visa issues, lost passport/DS 29019
- Host family and cultural adjustment concerns
- Educational component requirement questions
- Financial matters
- Travel questions

Contact your administrator directly with non-emergency matters.

THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENT

Au pairs are required to take approved classes at a US accredited post-secondary institution. This is an opportunity to meet new friends, learn more about American culture and become more immersed into your host community.

Since your host family will contribute up to \$500 toward your class tuition, you should discuss your class selection with your family as well as your administrator to ensure the institution is accredited and the classes are eligible and compatible with the U.S. Department of State requirements. Eligible classes include English as a Second Language (ESL), foreign languages, writing, math, and academic and professional based courses. Certification programs and sports and recreational leisure courses do qualify toward the educational requirement; however, the courses must be offered through a US accredited school or institution. Prior to enrolling, be sure to discuss your class schedule and transportation needs with your host family in relation to their childcare schedule.

Au Pairs are encouraged to explore Adult Education and Non-Credit Classes tied to Post Secondary Accredited Institutions such as Community Colleges. These are often affordable options for Au Pairs. However, in addition to the \$500 that the Host Family contributes towards your classes, you should be prepared to pay approximately \$500 of your own money towards classes.



What is a unit?

A minimum of six (6) semester units or (60) hours must be earned in order to meet the educational component requirement. Please keep in mind that each school and institution varies with determining the duration of a class and the calculation of class hours. Therefore, a basic

guide to follow is: 1 unit = 10 hours of class time. However, before enrolling in a class, please contact our CHI Administrator to make sure the class has the appropriate number of credits that can be applied toward your educational requirement.

Confirmation of Courses Completed

When you complete your course work, it is required by the U.S. Department of State that you fill-out the **Educational Component Confirmation** form (a copy is in the back of this handbook and online). CHI Au Pair must have proof that you successfully finished your work; therefore, please attach verification from the school/institution indicating the name and type of class you took and the total number of class hours you attended.

Au pairs who fail to complete the educational component requirement will lose their return ticket home.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

Participating in an au pair exchange visitor program affords you the opportunity to learn, explore and discover American culture and customs. You are encouraged to take advantage of and participate in community events, holidays and American traditions. Throughout the year, your administrator will plan cultural enrichment activities or trips for you and the other au pairs in your area. The more involved you are in activities; the more your exchange visitor program experience will become more meaningful.

Travel Outside the U.S.

If you decide to travel outside of the U.S. during the one-year program period and wish to remain in “good standing” on your CHI Au Pair USA program, please read the following instructions carefully:

- 1) Notify your administrator as well as your host family of your plans. **Do not** pay or confirm any travel dates or expenses until you have followed the directions below.
- 2) Contact the local foreign embassy of the country where you plan to travel in order to determine if a visa is required for entry into that country.
- 3) It is recommended that all travel outside the U.S. be completed before your twelfth (12th) program

month. Your initial J1 visa is valid for only twelve months and re-entry will not be granted after your expiration date. If you extend your program, please contact your administrator for questions concerning international travel.

- 4) Be sure you check your J-1 visa and the I-94 departure card for accurate dates. In particular, a “M” (meaning multiple entries) stamped in your J-1 visa indicates that you can enter and leave the U.S. on a number of occasions during the twelve months. HOWEVER, if your J-1 visa has a “S” (single entry stamped, you are not allowed to leave and re-entry the U.S. during the twelve month program.
- 5) Mail your DS-2019 form and the International Travel Notification form provided by your administrator to CHI Headquarters at least four weeks prior to your planned travel. The address to which to send the form is:

CHI Au Pair Attention:
Responsible Officer
255 West End Ave,
San Rafael CA, 94901

CHI's Responsible Officer must sign your DS-2019 to indicate that you are in “good standing” in the program. CHI will process and return the form to you via USPS Ground Service (allow 5-10 days to receive your signed DS-2019 form).

AT THE END OF YOUR PROGRAM

Towards the end of your program year, your administrator will follow up to check if your Educational Requirement has been completed. The U.S. Department of State requires you to complete and submit all necessary proof that you completed the requirement. The administrator will also have you complete a *Final Program Evaluation*. This form is also a requirement by the Department of State. Be thoughtful and honest with your response. Your evaluation will help CHI Au Pair assess the program and improve upon weaknesses. Both of these forms need to be completed before you leave the program.

Requesting a Return Flight Online

Three months prior to your program end date, you will be asked to complete a Return Travel Itinerary Form online found in your checklist. Even if you do not receive this email, please speak with your local administrator and begin completing your end of year program forms approximately three months prior to your program's end. Please indicate if you will be staying during the post-program thirteenth

month, also known as the 30-day post program grace period. If you will be staying, you will need additional insurance at your own expense.

You are responsible for any service fees associated with changing your return ticket, after it has been purchased.

Successful Program Completion

IMPORTANT: In order to receive your return flight ticket, you must demonstrate that you have successfully completed the program.

At least one month before the end of your program date, you and your host family are required to complete the following documentation before CHI can issue you the return flight ticket:

- 1) Proof of attendance at at least one Host Family Day Event (Completed online by your Host Family)
- 2) Proof of HF Tuition Payment (Completed online by your Host Family and you)
- 3) Proof and completion of the Educational Component Requirement form (Transcript or certificate of completion required)
- 4) Completion and submission of the Final Program Evaluation form (Online)
- 5) Your Host Family's completion and submission of the Final program Evaluation form (Online)
- 6) Completion and submission of the Return Travel Itinerary form (Online)

Once CHI Au Pair has confirmed receipt of all necessary document, we will purchase your flight and send you a copy of your flight itinerary as well as a certificate of a completion.

Optional 30-day Post-Program Grace Period

Au pairs have an option to remain in the U.S. for an additional 30-days after their official program concludes. This 30-day grace period, or the thirteenth month, is intended for travel purposes ONLY. You are not to provide childcare services nor are you to receive the weekly stipend. During the optional 30-day grace period, you are responsible for all arrangements and expenses related to your stay in the U.S., including, accommodations, transportation, meals and additional insurance. For any post-program travel, you are still bound under the terms of your current visa. Should any of those terms and/or visa expiration dates be violated, you will be subject, at your own risk and expense, to a fine, penalty, imprisonment and repatriation.

Second Year Extension

Upon CHI evaluation and approval, you may extend your au pair program for up to another 12 months. This request must be submitted to your administrator at least two months before the end of your original program date. Confirmation of your completion of six credits of educational courses must be completed and submitted at the same time or the Extension Request will not be approved by the Department of State. You have the choice of either remaining with your current host family or being placed with a new host family during your second year. Please contact your administrator for detailed information and instructions regarding second year extension requests.

