



United States Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Washington, DC 20522

February 1, 2017

Dear American Host Family:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I welcome your decision to host an au pair, which is a French term meaning “on par with.” The au pair program, one of many ways that citizens from other countries participate in people-to-people exchange programs in the United States, offers a unique opportunity for you to experience firsthand the richness and diversity of a culture different from your own. This is also an opportunity to share American values and culture with someone. Through this program, you will join thousands of American families who serve as citizen ambassadors of the United States.

The au pair program is primarily an exchange opportunity with the goal of increasing mutual understanding between foreign nationals and Americans. The way you interact with your au pair will have a significant impact on the way he or she understands this country and also Americans. Your au pair will likely have much to learn about American customs and culture, and may begin the exchange with only basic English language skills. The most successful host families expend the time, energy and initiative necessary to help their au pair adjust to American life and ensure their au pair feels safe, stays healthy, and engages in educational and cultural activities.

Secondly, while you are hosting a young person who will help you care for your children, the ultimate responsibility for your children’s well-being will continue to rest with you. You must be prepared to work with your au pair to establish the best care for your children. Keeping a transparent schedule that both you and your au pair agree to is important and will reduce misunderstandings.

We also want to call your attention to the federal regulations. Au pairs’ responsibilities may not exceed 10 hours of childcare a day or 45 hours a week. EduCare participants may not work more than 10 hours a day or 30 hours a week, nor may they be placed in a home with pre-school children unless alternative arrangements for full-time care are in place. Au pairs may not be placed with a host family that has children under the age of two, unless the au pair has at least 200 hours of documented infant child care experience. In addition, au pairs may not be placed with a host family that has a special needs child (as so identified by the host family), unless the au pair has specifically identified his or her prior experience, skills, or training in the care of special needs children and the host family has reviewed and acknowledged in writing the au pair’s prior experience, skills, or training. Assigning general housekeeping chores unrelated to the care of your children is prohibited. All au pairs receive one and a half days off each week, a complete weekend off each month, and two weeks of paid vacation during their program.

Information about the au pair program can be found on our website at <http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/au-pair>. The regulations governing the program (22 CFR 62 - Exchange Visitor Program) are found here — [Exchange Visitor Program regulations](#). These regulations address the most frequently asked questions about the program and provide the rules under which the program operates. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization if you have any concerns or if your au pair’s personal health, safety or well-being is threatened in any way. If the sponsoring organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should contact us directly at JVisas@state.gov.

The au pair program offers you, your children, and your au pair the opportunity to create a strong lifelong relationship. I hope this will be a positive and rewarding experience for all of you. The U.S. Department of State is deeply appreciative of your participation in ensuring the au pair program reaches its maximum potential as a quality educational and cultural exchange experience.

Sincerely,

G.K. Saba
Director, Policy & Program Support
for Private Sector Exchange