



Host Family Workbook



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Intercultural Exchange Programs



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My YFU Contacts



Use this page to write down contact information that you will use throughout the year.

My Local Coordinator

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Best way to contact:

YFU After Hours Support Line: 1-800-424-3691

YFU Travel Emergency: 1-202-774-5211

YFU General Questions: 1-202-774-5200



My YFU Contacts



My Community Manager

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

My Support Services Manager

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Best way to contact:



Planning for the exchange



Use these helpful discussion topics and questions to prepare your family for the upcoming exchange.

1. Which parts of the exchange experience is your family most excited about?

2. What are three things you hope your family will learn from hosting an exchange student?



Planning for the exchange



3. What adjustments - big or small - will your family need to make to accommodate a new household member?

4. What are a few family activities or memorable trips you'd like to share with your student?

5. What do you think will be the biggest difference between your student's home town and your community?



Monthly budget



Month and year: _____

Monthly allowance: _____

Personal expenses	Expected amount	Actual spending	Difference
Toiletries			
Phone plan			
Dining out			
Entertainment			
Additional food			
Clothes			

School expenses	Expected amount	Actual spending	Difference
Sports fees			
Uniforms			
Misc. fees			

Savings	Expected amount	Actual spending	Difference
Homecoming			
Holiday gifts			
Prom			
Spring break			
Travel			

Total monthly budget: _____

Total monthly spending: _____



House expectations



We encourage you to discuss and decide your house rules to prepare for the conversations you'll have with your student. Once your student arrives, share these rules and talk through them together.

Some examples of house rules

01

Keep us informed of where you will be and who you're with.
Regular curfew is 9 pm on school nights and 11 pm on weekends.

02

We need notice ahead of time if you need a ride somewhere, and the same holds true if you do not need a ride after we have planned to give you one.

03

Drug and alcohol use is a violation of state laws and YFU rules, and it will not be tolerated.

04

No cell phones at the dinner table or during family time.

05

All family members are expected to help around the house. This will include cleaning your dishes off the table and cleaning your bedroom and bathroom.



House expectations



Our house rules

Fill out each box in correspondence with the Document “How we Do Things in Our Home”.

Tip: Print an extra copy and give to your student for their room.

Curfew, scheduling and family time:

Transportation and communicating plans:

Phone, computer and internet use:

Household chores:

Food and mealtimes:

Religious services:

School:

Social life (time with friends, dating,
having friends over):



House tour



Here is a handy checklist of items to review when giving a tour of your home.

Checklist

Entry way

Security system for the house, where coats and shoes are stored

Kitchen

Disposing of items in trash/recycling/disposal, cleaning, food storage, access to food, designated food for meals, specialty food items, how to use appliances

Living room

Devices, remote controls, what “family time” looks like, rules around electronics usage

Dining room

What mealtime looks like throughout the day/week, frequency of meals as a family

Bedroom

Time alone, electricity usage, clothes storage, keeping food in the room, guidance for having friends over

Bathroom

Morning schedule, cleaning the bathroom, water use, toilet paper and towel storage, their personal toiletry storage, shower guidance and instructions

Laundry room

Using the washer and dryer, schedule for washing clothes

Garage

Garage code, tools stored in garage, what should and shouldn't be used

Pets

Names, ages, food schedule, how to care for them

Internet

Where modem is located, wifi password, rules for using wifi

Trash

Trash day, where to recycle items

Safety

Where the fire extinguisher is, how to lock your house appropriately, what to do in case of emergency, when it's appropriate to call 911 or 988 and what will happen when they call

Hazardous items

Where these items are kept and secured, protocol and guidances for handling them - if at all



House tour



Your Checklist



Define your family



It's important to understand your family dynamic and what you value most so you can share those important qualities with your student.

To thrive in your home, people need to: (check all that apply)

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Go with the flow | Be responsible |
| Have a sense of humor | Clean up after themselves |
| Be independent | Be a team player |
| Think before they speak | Speak openly |
| Value time together | Respect privacy |
| Be involved | Be a good student |
| Be willing to compromise | Have strong opinions |
| Be positive | Be realistic |
| Stick to their commitments | |

Did we miss anything?



Define your family



Our family

List out qualities and values that are important to your family:

E.g., activity, balance, discipline, peace, teamwork

Pick out your top two or three values, those that mean the most to you, and explain why they are important to your family:

Share these important qualities and reasons with your student so they can learn about the unique dynamic in your home.



Icebreaker questions



How much time do you need to get ready in the morning?

Are you a morning or a night person?

How late do you sleep during the weekends?

Where do you like to study: in common areas, privately in your room or at school/the library?

What is your favorite family activity?

What is your favorite subject in school? What subject is the hardest for you?

What American food are you most excited to try?

Are you a person who thrives on a lot of activity or do you like quiet time?

What are you most excited to tell us about your home country?

What is one thing you are hoping to do while in the US?

**When you are struggling (feeling overwhelmed, sad, hurt, disappointed, anxious), who do you talk to?
What do you do for comfort or support? How can your host family members know and support you?**



Get to know one another



Have each person share their:

Nickname

Birthday

Favorite comfort foods

Favorite color

Favorite candy

Favorite snack

Favorite beverage

Favorite animal

Favorite book

Favorite TV show

Nickname

Birthday

Favorite comfort foods

Favorite color

Favorite candy

Favorite snack

Favorite beverage

Favorite animal

Favorite book

Favorite TV show



Get to know one another



Favorite childhood movie

Favorite childhood movie

Favorite movie

Favorite movie

Favorite band/musician

Favorite band/musician

Favorite hobbies

Favorite hobbies

Favorite outdoor activity

Favorite outdoor activity

Favorite lazy weekend activity

Favorite lazy weekend activity

Favorite type of weather

Favorite type of weather

Favorite travel destination

Favorite travel destination

Favorite vacation

Favorite vacation

Favorite holiday

Favorite holiday



The exchange bucket list



Host family wish list:

Student wish list:

Things we wish to do together:



Exchange activity calendar



Use this calendar to guide your family and student throughout the exchange. The discussion topics and activities are suggestions to help you have a fun and engaging month. Jot down any additional plans you have coming up and post this in a central place for all family members to reference.

JULY - Preparation

Things to discuss: Arrival plans, favorite activities and foods, exchange year bucket list.

Activities: Get in touch via video chat, social media or emailing. Attend host family preparation meetings. Prepare student's room.

Your plans:

AUGUST - Arrival, school starts

Things to discuss: Household rules and expectations, school life in America.

Activities: Register your student at school. Take a tour of your town and document it with pictures. Play some "get-to-know-you" games with your student.

Your plans:



Exchange activity calendar



SEPTEMBER- Friday night lights

Things to discuss: Adjustment to the exchange, making friends, what homecoming is like, differences between your student's country and America.

Activities: Meet with Local Coordinator in-person. Attend post-arrival orientation. Go to a school event together. Have a family game night.

Your plans:

OCTOBER- Halloween

Things to discuss: Grades, progress in school, Halloween costume ideas, interest in participating in a Discovery Tour, winter weather expectations.

Activities: Check-in on your student's grades. Carve pumpkins, go to an apple orchard and decorate the house for Halloween. Go to an American high school football game.

Your plans:



Exchange activity calendar



NOVEMBER- Thanksgiving

Things to discuss: Thanksgiving traditions, upcoming holiday travel plans, whether your student will be sending a care package back to their home country for the holidays.

Activities: Participate in International Education week. (Mandatory for YES, FLEX, and CBYX) Share the people, places and experiences you're most grateful for. Try traditional cuisine from your student's country.

Your plans:

DECEMBER- Holiday season

Things to discuss: Holiday plans with the family, gift expectations, traditions in your family and in your student's family.

Activities: Volunteer in the community as a family. Go caroling. Deliver baked goods. Connect with your student's natural parents to share holiday traditions.

Your plans:



Exchange activity calendar



JANUARY - New Year

Things to discuss: New Year's resolutions, bucket list for the spring semester

Activities: Meet your Local Coordinator in-person. Revisit or create a new bucket list. Have a cozy movie night with snacks.

Your plans:

FEBRUARY - Valentine's Day

Things to discuss: Spring classes and activities at school, love languages, plans for spring break travel.

Activities: Video chat with extended family. Write cards to people you care about. Attend a local or virtual mid-year orientation.

Your plans:



Exchange activity calendar



MARCH- St. Patrick's Day

Things to discuss: Plans for prom, dream travel destinations.

Activities: Check-in with each member of the family to see “how are we doing?”, share hobbies or learn a new craft together, St. Patty’s day activities.

Your plans:

APRIL- Earth Day

Things to discuss: How the student and family have grown from each other, what everyone has learned.

Activities: Volunteer outside, explore a new place together, picnic in the park.

Your plans:



Exchange activity calendar



MAY - Mother's Day

Things to discuss: End of year logistics, student concerns about returning home.

Activities: Attend re-entry orientation. Reflect on your experience together, create a scrap book of the exchange. Go to a baseball game.

Your plans:

JUNE - Father's Day

Things to discuss: Plans to visit each other in the future, how to stay connected.

Activities: Video chat once the student has returned home.

Your plans:



Host Family Exchange year time capsule



4 things we hope to do while hosting an exchange student:

1.

3.

2.

4.

About Us (Before Exchange)

We are excited about:

Our favorite parts of our own culture are:

We are nervous for:

I think my student's culture is:

I want to:



Student Exchange year time capsule



4 things I hope to do before the end of my exchange year:

1.

3.

2.

4.

About Me (Before Exchange)

I am excited about:

My favorite part of my own culture is:

During my exchange, I will try:

I am nervous for:

I think Americans and American culture are:

My host family:

I want to:



End of exchange checklist



Help your student through the final weeks of their exchange by making sure they've completed all the items below.

A few weeks in advance, students should:

Save the YFU Travel Support phone number! **1-202-772-5211**

Write thank you notes to anyone who has made a difference in their exchange experience (LC, teachers, school officials, etc.). Handwritten notes are more personal and leave a lasting impression.

Close all accounts and memberships.

Pay any medical bills, school fees or other outstanding bills.

Ensure they have all their belongings from around the house. Check all rooms of the host family home, just to make sure they're not leaving things behind.

Return any borrowed items to school, friends and host family. If they're leaving something behind for you to mail later, be sure they're leaving the money to do so as well.

Research how many bags are allowed per airline and what fees are collected for extra bags. It's usually cheaper to check an additional piece of luggage than it is to ship them.

Practice packing ahead of time to get a sense of how many bags will be needed.

Pack early!

Have a going away party!

Remember:

Students who are convalidating need to get a transcript from their American high school before leaving. The transcript needs to be signed and stamped with the school's seal. If it won't be ready before their departure, students should make other arrangements to have it sent abroad.



End of exchange checklist



Right before they go, students should:

Check to make sure that their flight is on time.

Ensure their passport and cell phone charger are in their carry-on.

Have cash for luggage fees, food or other purchases at the airport.

Make sure that all their liquids and fragile souvenirs are carefully packed in their checked baggage.

Leave their bedroom and bathroom the way they found them; clean!

Helping your student pack

Each airline has its own policies regarding how much checked and carry-on luggage a passenger may bring on domestic and/or international routes. Any extra luggage may be subject to a fee from the airline. We advise students call the airlines or refer to their websites for up-to-date information on luggage allowances. YFU recommends that students travel internationally with only one piece of checked luggage and one carry-on bag. For information on what is allowed in carry-on luggage, visit: [tsa.gov/travel](https://www.tsa.gov/travel)

Make your own checklist
