

AUGUST SUPPORT TIPS

We hope these tips will provide you with the materials necessary to have comfortable and meaningful conversations during your first monthly meeting. As always, thank you for the work you do, YFU could not exist without our Local Coordinators!

SUPPORT TIPS

THE FIRST STUDENT VISIT

As students begin to arrive in July / August, it is required and very important that they meet their Local Coordinator (LC) in person within the first two weeks.

Even if you met your student upon their arrival at the airport, they may have been tired and overwhelmed, so a follow up visit is important. An LC's first visit can pave the way to a mutually beneficial relationship. This first visit is all about getting to know each other. Find out your student's goals and hopes for this year. Besides giving advice, be a good listener too!

MONTHLY CONTACTS

At least two face-to-face meetings are required during the program year – the first in August, and the second happening during the second semester (preferably January). Contact during other months can be via phone calls, facetime or zoom, or email. The Support Services team encourages LC's to use their judgment when considering which means of contact is most appropriate. This will differ from student to student, time of year and other factors.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

During the first month host families and students are learning to live together and may not be comfortable speaking openly in front of one another about their miscommunications or challenges. It is important that everyone feels they have been heard fully. Speaking to them one-on-one, privately is important.

Be sure that you know the best way to get in touch with your student, whether it's in person, email, telephone or even text to schedule a contact. Likewise, your student needs to know the best way to contact you. Neither of you should go days, or even a week feeling like you can't reach the other person.

KEEPING YOUR STUDENT SAFE

While on exchange, students develop a new level of independence and caretaking responsibilities are transferred to YFU. With such a task, a realistic approach to child safety is essential as we provide our students with a comfortable and secure environment. Be sure to make direct contact with your student each month. No news is not necessarily good news, and we must make the required contacts per Department of State requirements. Carefully listen if your student expresses feelings of discomfort around anyone, and if there are red flags, please alert your Support Services Manager (SSM) immediately.

AFTER HOURS SUPPORT

Serious support issues should be reported immediately to the SSM. If something occurs outside of work hours, you can reach the on-call SSM by dialing 1.800.424.3691.

YFU TENDER LOVING CARE

This may be the first time these students have been away from home. Although they are well-oriented before leaving their home country, they may be nervous, tired or scared. Even though you may hear some outrageous requests or complaints, students should be treated with patience, respect, understanding and YFU Tender Loving Care.

ARRIVAL PLACEMENT TIPS

Students placed with an arrival family may be nervous about their placement. Please stay updated on the situation, and keep your Community Manager and/or SSM aware if the status of the placement changes.

CELL PHONE, COMPUTER, & SOCIAL NETWORKING

Please have discussions with both student and host family about rules and thoughts about what is appropriate. Open discussions and understanding are important for all parties.

ADMINISTRATIVE

AUGUST CONTACT REPORT

All LCs will receive an MCR to complete for August. Per US DoS J-1 Regs, students must have an IN-Person visit within the first 2 weeks of their arrival. If the LC does the in-person visit in August, they will be paid for this MCR. In September, we will clean up any August MCRs that are “not required” for those students who had late arrivals and therefore the 2-week limit lands in September.

YFU STUDENT INSURANCE

All YFU students living in the U.S. arrive with health insurance. Please make sure that students and host families have a copy of their ID Card.

SEE VISIT

The U.S. Department of State requires a home visit within 60 days of arrival of the student to the home (30 days for students in arrival or temporary host status). This Student Environment Evaluation, or SEE visit, can be completed as part of your first monthly contact if you did not perform the host family interview. If you conducted the host family interview, please help facilitate the completion of the SEE visit by another LC or authorized person.

GOING AWAY?

Please inform your Community Manager if you will be out of town for two or more weeks. Don't forget to let your host families know who to contact if a need arises while you are away.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

FOR STUDENTS

How often are you in touch with family and friends back home?

Remind students that too much contact with home keeps them “virtually at home” and not fully engaged in the exchange experience. Gaining an appreciation for American life and culture and adjusting to their host family and friends does not mean they will forget their home culture, friends or family. Once a week contact is what YFU encourages; however we cannot prevent natural parents communicating with their child and vice versa. Help them understand why cutting back with communication back home will help them adjust quicker to their exchange year.

Can you understand what your host family is saying?

If the student seems to be really struggling with English after the first few weeks, encourage them try to fully understand what someone is saying, and not to just nod or say yes they understand if that is not the case.

What kinds of things do you do/talk about with your host family?

The choice of remaining a visitor or belonging is in some part up to the student. They shouldn't spend too much time alone and should be open to invitations from the host family and schoolmates. Asking questions and learning routines, as well as actively participating in family life, will help them become more of a family member.

Has school started yet? If not, what are you doing during the day?

If school hasn't started and host family members are at work all day, students may feel bored or isolated. Help the student come up with strategies to explore the community and help the student engage with other families of teens before school starts.

FOR FAMILIES

How is your family adjusting to having a YFU student?

Families should treat the exchange student as a family member, not a guest. Host siblings may be resentful if the student isn't expected to do the same chores or if host siblings feel they are expected to share too much of their privacy or friends.

Have you clearly explained house rules such as bathroom and bed times, snacking and transportation?

Sometimes families become offended by what exchange students say or do. What they don't realize is that it may be due to the student's culture, their limited vocabulary or they may not fully understand the rules of the house. Students typically don't learn polite forms of speech and do not realize that sometimes the words and expressions they're using are offensive.

- ☞ "I want" vs. "May I have?"
- ☞ "Take me to the store." vs. "Can you please drive me?"

Host families may need to be reminded that students have grown up with certain habits for 16 or so years, and changing them may be difficult. It may take patience and lots of reminders. Consequences can also be an effective way of helping a student to remember a rule that they've been told about numerous times. Instead of being upset, host parents can just remind a student that this will happen if you break curfew again, or this will happen if you don't let us know your whereabouts, etc.

How is your student adjusting to your family at this point?

Speaking and interacting in English all day is exhausting for YFU students. It is normal to need breaks, and so students may need an hour of quiet time in their room in the afternoon to refresh and relax their mind. It is not a good sign if a student is spending hours every week alone in their room or talking with friends and family back home too often.

Is there concern about the student's English skills?

If the student's English is of a lower level, remind the host family to speak slowly, check for understanding, and give the student time to speak their whole thought without trying to help finish their sentences. If asked a question, a student should be given much time to think and answer it (especially early on), as it will be helpful to their learning and not depending on everyone around them. Often a host parent can speak with teachers at school to alert them that the student may be struggling a bit at first, and to consider giving them assignments in writing or having a student help them initially.