

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN INTERVIEWING AN AU PAIR

Now that you have completed the host family interview process, additional information will be provided to your Placement Manager to aid in the future selection of candidates for your family. Below are some suggested “tips” from Cultural Care as well as current families who have conducted au pair interviews.

Finding the right au pair for your family takes an investment of your time in the interview process. It is recommended to make more than one phone call before deciding. In the first call, recognize that the au pair will probably be nervous and may have difficulty expressing herself to her fullest capabilities. Use the first call to share information about your family as she will only have limited details at this point in the interview process.

### **Commonly shared information during first interview:**

- Information about your family (number of family members living in home, number of and ages and sexes of children, any special needs, pets, etc.)
- Description of the area where you live
- Your reason for participating in au pair program and what you hope to get out of the experience
- Description of a typical day and week in your home
- Type of childcare duties for which the au pair would be responsible
- Types of household duties—pertaining to the children—for which the au pair would be responsible
- Ideal au pair arrival date to your home

### **Common first interview questions:**

- Are you available to come to the U.S. on/around my ideal arrival date?
- Tell me a little bit about yourself and why you would like to spend a year as an au pair? Have you ever been to the United States before? What does your family think about your decision to spend a year in the U.S.?
- Tell me about a typical day for you. What do you do in your time off?
- Driving information is self reported. To learn more about your au pairs driving experience you might consider asking any of the following questions. How often do you drive? How often did you drive last week? Have you ever driven to another city on your own? On what types of roads do you usually drive? What kind of training did you receive when you applied for your driver’s license? Have you ever driven in certain conditions (snow, rain, etc.)? Have you ever driven with children in the car and did you use a car seat?
- I’d like to understand more about your childcare experiences. Can you tell me about your experience with (e.g. the Jones family)?

- What were the children in the family like? Ages? Were you fully or partially responsible?
- What types of activities did you do with the children?
- What was the best part about working with those children?
- What did you find challenging about working with those children?
- What do you think children need most from an au pair?

### **Age-appropriate childcare related questions:**

#### *Questions relating to care of an infant (3 months-2 years)*

- How would you feel if the baby cries a lot?
- How frequently have you changed diapers?
- Have you ever prepared a bottle or baby food?
- What activities would you do with an infant?

#### *Questions relating to care of a toddler (1-3 years)*

- What activities of games might you do with a toddler?
- Tell me about a time when you were able to help a child end one task and begin another without the child becoming upset

#### *Questions for older children (4 years+)*

- When the children are not in school, how will you occupy them?
- Would you be willing and able to help with homework? Are you interested in helping the children to learn your language?
- How would you react if the children asked your permission to do something that you know they are not allowed to do (example: watch television before designated time, have a friend over, eat a snack that they are not normally allowed to have)

### **To conclude the first interview:**

- Do you have any plans for after you return from your au pair year?
- Do you have any questions at this point for me? If you like the au pair and wish to learn more about her set up a time to speak again.

If at the end of the first interview, you decide you are no longer interested in the candidate you are reviewing, please contact your Local Childcare Coordinator and/or Placement Manager to share your feedback. Please be specific about what you did or didn't like about the candidate so that your next match may be a better fit for your family.

If you are still interested in the candidate after the first interview, we encourage you to schedule another time to speak and ask further follow up questions to help you gauge the candidate as a fit to your family.

**Common second interview questions:**

- Part of your year will require you to take some classes. We will contribute \$500 towards this. What types of classes would you be interested in taking? What was your favorite thing that you learned in school?
- Talk about what a typical day is like in your house right now. Share if it will change when the au pair arrives. Talk about your children in more detail, describe what they like to do, foods they like to eat, etc. What do you think will be the easiest part about joining our family? What might be the hardest part?
- Share some of your non-negotiable household rules. Ask her if she would have any problems with them. What would you do if one of my children broke one of our household rules? How would you handle the situation?
- Have you ever had a job? For how long? Tell me about the amount of responsibility you have in your household (cooking, cleaning, doing laundry). How do you like to keep your room?
- If the au pair has lived away from home or has traveled out of her country ask her about those experiences. What was it like to be far from home? How did you cope with homesickness?
- Ask the au pair what she is hoping to get out of her au pair year. What do you hope to accomplish during your year here?
- What are your expectations of your host family? Why do you think a host family would want to choose you as an au pair?
- Talk with the au pair about her family background. How would your family describe you? How would your friends describe you? What types of people do you like to spend time with? What does your family think about you becoming an au pair? Do they have plans to visit?
- Ask the au pair about what kinds of activities she likes to do in her free time.
- What was the last movie you saw? Do you like to read? What's your favorite book/movie? Do you ever read the newspaper or watch the news?
- Ask the au pair what kinds of activities she would plan to do with your children, or has planned to do with children she has watched. What were your favorite toys to play with as a child? What was your favorite book you read as a child?
- Try to get a sense of her communication style. When something bothers you how do you try to resolve it? What is the best way to communicate information to you—verbally or written?
- How do you deal with stressful situations?

At the end of your interviews, please share any feedback you have regarding your match with your Local Childcare Coordinator and/or Placement Manager. You are the best judge of who will ultimately be the best fit with your family so listen to your gut!

Once you have decided to have a candidate join your family, let her know! Continue to communicate with your au pair until she arrives as this will help establish a foundation for communication that will help your relationship get off to the right start.

Additional support resources are available through your online host family account in the InfoSource section.