



## Welcoming Your Student – The Early Days

As you begin your hosting journey, savor these gentle early days for they bring a sense of wonder and discovery you will hold forever in your heart. Your student will soon transition from weary young traveler to inquisitive explorer and will want your family to share in every new stage of the adventure.

**As arrival day approaches, family excitement is bound to be high but try to keep expectations simple.** Your student is as excited as you are and looks forward to becoming a real member of your family. As with any new relationships, things take time to develop though. Patience, flexibility and honest communication will pave the way for a blossoming friendship and a successful hosting experience.

**Whether your student's bedroom is private or shared, create a warm, welcoming space.** You could tape a paper welcome banner across the bedroom door. Many families place a welcome basket containing snack treats, regional souvenirs, and a small replica of the U.S. and student's national flag. Encourage your student to display family photos and favorite posters that feel like home. Make sure you have hangers ready for clothing and ample storage space for other personal items.

**The early days may be exhilarating and challenging for your student. Be patient as your student recovers from jet lag.** The change in time zone, weather, food and even water can leave your student exhausted. Language fatigue and shyness are common, even for a normally outgoing teenager. You may need to speak more slowly than normal as your student grows accustomed to listening and responding in English. This is not the ideal time to throw a large welcome party. On the other hand, a warm visit from a host grandparent or a neighbor may be much appreciated!

**Make sure family members are available to help your student settle into the household.** Your student will need a complete home tour, help operating simple appliances, instructions for using the telephone, proper showering and hygiene procedures, and family housekeeping guidelines. Establish procedures for laundering clothes. If the student is responsible for his or her own laundry, provide explicit instruction on how to sort clothes, dispense detergent, operate machinery and dry various fabrics. Written guidelines posted above the washing machine will help to avoid mistakes and enable your student to navigate independently. Check in frequently to see how things are going. One misplaced red sweater can create an entire wardrobe of pink clothes!

**Your student's appetite may be moderate until he or she grows accustomed to new food choices.** Though your own children are used to helping themselves, your student may need assistance in selecting and preparing even simple snacks. Invite your student to accompany you to the grocery store to help you select some traditional and regional food to sample. This can be a fun, cultural adventure for a student!

**Your student will need to meet with the school guidance counselor to schedule classes and complete enrollment paperwork as soon as possible after arrival.** Your local coordinator will be available for advice and support regarding the school's registration process. If possible, ask the school contact if the student can have a tour of the campus to familiarize him/herself with the layout and ease first-day stress.

**Initiate a discussion regarding your student's monthly budget and method for receiving funds from home.** Help your student establish a bank account to receive transfers from their natural parents if they didn't arrive with a debit/credit card. Review the value of U.S. currency and help determine initial school expenses and immediate clothing and personal hygiene needs.

**Introduce your student to important places and resources in your community.** Encourage your student to become as independent as possible. Offer help in securing school bus passes, public bus schedules and bicycles with helmets. Map simple routes to the closest mall, library, drug store and ATM machine. Provide your student with a house key, bike lock and local phone directory. Ensure that your student carries his/her ETC ID card at all times.

**Your student expects to be treated as a member of the family, not as a guest.** Shortly after the early arrival period, you will want to outline household rules, including curfews. Assign your student a regular chore and thoroughly explain the procedures involved and the timeframe in which you expect this chore to be completed. Chores should be simple and easily understood without the need for a sophisticated knowledge of English. Use the ETC Expectations Worksheet as a guide.

**Remember to spend time just getting to know one another.** As you develop a genuine appreciation for one another's ideas, values and traditions, the bonds of friendship will deepen and a true exchange experience will unfold.