



HOST FAMILY GUIDE



**ACE OF
CANADA**

Academic and Cultural Exchange

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Introduction

We thank you for choosing to be a Homestay Host Family with ACE Of Canada Inc..

Being a Host Family is a rewarding experience. In addition to learning about another culture, a homestay experience will help broaden you and your family's perspective, and will give you a chance to share your community and traditions with an individual new to this country.

Students who choose to be part of our homestay program do so to gain the full experience of visiting Canada. They not only want to learn the language, but also want to experience the Canadian lifestyle.

A homestay that is successful for both the student and the family requires a strong commitment from both to work on understanding, communication and exchange. It can be an extremely rewarding relationship.

In order to ensure that you, your family, and the student have an enriching and positive experience, ACE has put together this guide to provide homestay families with detailed information and guidelines for hosting International students.

In this guide you will find the answers to frequently asked questions, as well as information regarding what to expect.

After reading this guide, if there is anything you do not understand, or feel should be included please contact our Housing Director at our cmorfin@cmhometayagency.com

Thank you again for selecting ACE Of Canada Inc..

Ivette Zamorano



Housing Director
ACE Of Canada Inc.

Responsibilities

Public Transportation

When your student arrives you will need to give them an orientation to the public transportation system. Providing them with a ride or accompany them by public transport to school on the first day of classes will alleviate nervousness, if this is not a possibility then please help them find their stop.

They will need a Bus Pass on arrival. Please help them to obtain one and show them the location of the bus stop, and explain the route and where to get on and off (writing a note to the bus driver is a great idea). This will help prevent students from getting lost and make them more self-sufficient. If applicable, encourage the student to travel with another student living nearby.

Please give the student a card with your family's address and telephone number.

Meals

Homestay families must provide meals daily. If a student enlisted in the 3 meals program, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner must be provided. If the student enlisted in the 2 meals program, Breakfast and Dinner must be provided. If you are not certain which program the student is enlisted in please contact ACE Of Canada Inc. for clarification.

What should you make?

Remember that students have chosen homestay to experience the 'Canadian Lifestyle', and meals are very much a part of this experience; therefore make whatever you are accustomed to but please try to vary the meals and speak to your student to see if there are certain foods they cannot eat or do not like.

Keep in mind again cultural differences such as:

Hosting International student means you and your family will be exposed to many different customs and cultures. Please keep an open mind and take the time to learn about the student's culture. It will be very important to observe the student to ensure that they are eating well. Open communication is essential as sometimes something as simple as providing one item, or taking the student grocery shopping can make all the difference.

Saturdays and Sundays

A homestay family means more than just a place to eat and sleep. We ask that you invite your student into your family activities during the week and the weekends. Some students may be tired in the evening and therefore want to do a low key activity, or they may be full of energy and be up for anything. The following activities are suggestions that will accommodate any energy level. These are also activities that students will not have the opportunity to do in their daily program, and therefore will enrich their experience.

Possible activities:

- Check out one of the many beautiful parks. Check out all of the different apparatus. There may even be a neighborhood team playing baseball or soccer.
- Go for a walk in your neighborhood & discuss the differences and similarities between a Canadian neighborhood and one from the student's country.
- Visit another Canadian family (perhaps family friends with other teenagers).
- Go fishing. If you know how, this would be a great opportunity for a student.
- Have a BBQ. There's nothing more Canadian than a summer time barbeque!
- Go grocery shopping. It's amazing how culturally different this experience can be.
- Have a family card game night and teach each other a new game.
- Have a family board game night. Try your luck at Yatzee, pictionary...
- Arrange a group activity with other host families
- Cook a meal together, perhaps something Canadian and something from the students' country. There's nothing better than tasting something new!

The possibilities are endless. Whatever you do, enjoy this opportunity and have fun. Including your student in these activities will make their stay a memorable one for both you and them.

ACE's expectations of the homestay families:

- Creating a home environment in which homestay students feel comfortable approaching family members about any problems or issues.
- Including the student in all your families' activities, as you would your own children.
- Communicating on a casual level with the student on a daily basis to ensure a positive adjustment to a Canadian lifestyle and to develop a good rapport with your student.
- These students are far from home and this may be their first experience traveling abroad alone and consequently, students may feel homesick. Communication with the student is crucial for a positive experience. A general piece of advice to homestay families would be:

"Please treat your homestay student the way you would want your child to be treated should he or she be on his own in a foreign country with foreign people speaking a foreign language"

Discipline

Homestay Rules

Homestay families can expect students living with them to act, and be treated as a member of the family. They are expected to tell the homestay family if they will be late for dinner, offer to assist in family chores and respect the other family members by not taking showers late at night, being quiet in the home when people are sleeping, not using the phone for long periods of time, and saying "thank you" whenever possible. Homestay families should clearly explain the house rules at the beginning of the visit. This will allow the student(s) to know what is expected of them and therefore avoid any possible misunderstandings.

ACE's expectations of the students:

- ❑ Showing respect and consideration to family members and other homestay students.
- ❑ To go to classes on time, and when sick, to call the school immediately.
- ❑ Calling home in advance should the student not be able to make it home in time for dinner, so that his dinner can be set aside to be re-heated by the student upon arrival.
- ❑ Keeping the areas which the students use in the home tidy and clean
- ❑ Communicating to the homestay family any issues regarding meals, curfew, and family activities before reporting it to our agency.
- ❑ Speaking English only in the homestay
- ❑ No drinking or smoking in the homestay.

Telephone Calls

Students should be told that they can only make international calls if they place a collect call or by using a pre-paid international calling card (these can be purchased at convenience stores such as 7-Eleven). You should discuss this with your student when he/she arrives. **ACE is not responsible for any long distance charges incurred by the student.**

Smoking

Please be prepared to address the issue of smoking with your student. Please give some thought to how you would like to address this issue. You may choose to not allow smoking, or allow it only outside. Whatever you decide your house rule is, please be clear with the student right from the first day.

When explaining your house rules this may be a good time to explain how to use the phone. For example: how to make a collect call and/or use a long distance calling card.

There are many things that you will not think to explain as they are second nature, therefore if your student does something that you do not like, please gently let them know; quite often it will be a cultural difference.

Homesickness

Many students will feel homesick at some point throughout their stay, most often at the beginning. Students will want to phone home when they feel lonely, but this will only prolong their homesickness. It is better for them to write a letter home or share stories about their family than phone when they are unhappy. If you have a computer at home encourage them to email. Parents can also become very worried when their children go to camp on the other side of the world. If the student is phoning saying they are homesick, it will cause the parents undue concern. Try your best to distract the student or redirect their emotions when he/she is upset. If it becomes an ongoing problem, please speak with the homestay director.

Preventing Homesickness

Initial Impression: Preparing a clean and bright bedroom with a proper bed, closet and dresser will make the student feel at home. Some additional touches you may consider are a photo of your family with your names attached a city map marked with your name, address and telephone number, a small fruit bowl or a small card. Know and use the correct pronunciation of his/her name to complete your welcome package.

Nice Touches

The student is a long way from home. A small welcome gift of a chocolate bar or a card on their bed will mean a lot.

Tour of your home: Provide a house tour at the earliest opportunity. Remember to explain the use of shower facilities, remote controls, kitchen appliances, laundry facilities and take time to discuss house rules, customs and your expectations. Provide time for the student to unpack and relax alone, he/she may feel jetlagged and retire early on the first night.

Belongings: Have the student record numbers of all credit cards, passports, and traveler's cheques etc., label all personal belongings (name and address) and leave unneeded money, credit cards and other valuables at the host family home. For the sake of security and to respect the privacy of the student, host families are advised not to enter the room being occupied by the student unless the student is present.

If a student feels safe and comfortable with their surroundings they are less likely to develop homesickness.

Jet Lag: The student will be exhausted and will probably want to go to bed quite early during the first couple days.

Cross-Cultural Awareness

Hosting a student from a different country is a rewarding experience, however it is necessary to be aware that there may be some challenges; often these challenges will be due to cultural differences. One way to limit challenges is through cross-cultural awareness.

Cross-Cultural Awareness is based on the knowledge that many groups have different communication and cultural patterns, and that understanding these patterns will eliminate communication barriers. Successful communication involves recognizing and accepting the great diversity among people everywhere.

The key to a successful homestay experience is understanding the student's culture, and sharing your own. The following are some cultural characteristics. Keep in mind that although these are common they do not always pertain to every individual. Also remember that there is no right and wrong issue in culture. It is a set of way of doing or living, which is commonly practiced within a social group.

Language Grading

ACE maintains an English only policy at home for our Homestay Host when hosting our students. This often requires an occasional reminder. A dictionary on hand will prove to be useful, as are notepads to help clarify issues.

Remember that some students have had little exposure to English. It is often a student's first time abroad, so he/she may know a few English words and little grammar. It is more than likely that slang will be new to students as well. Therefore it is important to grade your language. Grading your language simply means conveying your point as precisely as possible without unnecessary words! This allows students to focus on your main message rather than having to work their minds around too much jargon.

Here is an example of non-graded (i.e. confusing) and graded (i.e. clearer!) instructions given to students about what to do if the fire alarm sounds:

Non-Graded Language- "O.k., so like, when you take the public transit to school in the morning, like the first um..thing that you should do is look at the bus number. Then you will know if it's the right one or not. Then what you want to do is you insert your bus ticket And then after that when you get nearby your stop you need to look for the cord to pull on so that the bus driver will know when to let you out. Ok got it!

Graded Language- "Look for the number on the bus (gesture where to look); insert the ticket (demonstrate); Pull the cord (gesture), get out (gesture),

Note:

1. An effective method is to hold up a finger for each instruction. Then students can visualize and not only hear the number of instructions.
2. Gesture = body language or miming. It's funny, and it works!
3. Please ensure that your gestures do not take the place of English words. Try to make sure that the student understood what you said and not what you showed them. Remember that showing a student how to do something is far more effective than telling them how to do it. Often students will 'nod' their heads 'yes' when asked if they understand to avoid feeling embarrassed.

If you have trouble speaking with your student, do not give up! It is normal to have a little difficulty at first. If you use every possible opportunity to speak with them, conversations in English will be easier each day.

Common mistakes

Along with cultural differences it is important to also understand common mistakes of English learners to avoid misunderstandings. Here are a few **common mistakes** that English learners use that give the impression of being impolite:

1. **Using imperatives** (even with "please") instead of question form.
("Get the book, [please]" instead of "Would you please get the book?")
2. Using "**I want....**" instead of "May I please have....?"
3. Using negative sentences or negative information.
(Ex. "**You are wrong.**" or "He is a bad man.")
4. Speaking directly and/or speaking in **short, choppy sentences.**
5. Using "**Of course**" instead of "Certainly" or just an emphatic "Yes."
6. **Misusing titles** -- Hello, Mr. Bill; Hello, Smith.
7. Using the **wrong tone of voice.**
8. Using the **wrong body language.**

With time you will find it easier to communicate with your student, and will come to understand their intentions. You will quickly realize their words do not always match what they mean. For example what they say may sound rude; however from their expressions and body language you will realize that they are doing their best to be polite using a language that they are unfamiliar with.

Contact Information

In case of an emergency, you can contact us using different methods listed below.

ACE Of Canada Inc.	Contact Persons
1235 Bay St, Toronto, Ontario M5R 3K4, Canada Tel: +1 (647) 748-8983 Email: info@aceofcanada.ca	Ivette Zamorano - Housing Director 647-884-8983 i.zamorano@aceofcanada.ca Ern Sze Ng – General Director 416-804-8983 es.ng@aceofcanada.ca

Have Fun!

This is an adventure for your entire household! Take time to get to know your guest and his/her heritage and culture. This is a great opportunity to be a tourist in your own country or to experience games, conversation and food with a cultural flare. Inviting your student into your family will result in a warm and memorable experience!