



SHARING OUR WORLD WITH NACEL OPEN DOOR

SHORT TERM PROGRAM

WELCOME TO THE WORLD COMMUNITY

Nacel Open Door wants each participating student and family to grow in understanding themselves and the world through the exchange experience! NOD's purpose is dedicated to promoting international understanding and language education. We believe it is essential for young people to develop a deeper awareness of their role as citizens of the world through direct experience in other cultures and languages.

Homestays are the foundation of most NOD programs. The friendships that result from living as a member of a host family encourage continued communication and understanding of other people. We are committed to providing accessible and affordable programs.

Nacel Open Door, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, was formed in April 1997 by the merger of Nacel Cultural Exchange and Open Door Student Exchange. Nacel Cultural Exchange was founded in France by language teachers in 1957 and has helped thousands of young people discover a new appreciation for our global community. Our homestay exchanges with the United States began in 1969. Open Door Student Exchange was founded in 1964 to provide intercultural learning opportunities to high school students and their families.

The national office of NOD is located in St. Paul, Minnesota. We are a member of Nacel International, a group of partner organizations whose goal is to promote Nacel programs worldwide. Approximately 40 coordinators, assisted by over 400 local representatives, organize the programs on state and local levels.

NOD is listed by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), and is designated by the USIA as a J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor.

PROGRAMS

NOD offers programs in the United States and abroad, providing preparation for the student's coordinated travel arrangements, comprehensive insurance coverage, and a well-structured support network for teachers/chaperones and NOD local reps.

HOSTING IN THE U.S.

American families invite students from over 30 countries to live with them for a semester, academic year, and four-week summer stays. Some of these countries include: Brazil, France, Japan, Norway, Sweden, China, Germany, Korea, Poland, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, and Spain, just to name a few.

SHORT TERM SUMMER AND WINTER PROGRAMS

American students ages 13-18 spend two to eight weeks within one of many countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and North and South America. Nearly all programs include homestays with families screened and selected by NOD local reps. Language and cultural study, touring, or sport activity options are available with many programs.

CONGRESS-BUNDESTAG YOUTH EXCHANGE (CBYX) TO GERMANY

Through joint funding from the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag, a total of 25 one-year scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors. Scholarships cover full program costs for professional training and homestay experience in Germany.

STEPS TO BECOMING A HOST FAMILY

After your family completes the Host Family Application, your NOD local rep will call two of the three references you listed in the online application. The local rep will also arrange to visit your family in your home.

After the recommendation forms have been received and you have been visited by your local rep, you will receive confirmation of your acceptance into the program.

You will be carefully matched with a student according to your interests and requests. Student profiles begin arriving in April, but some don't arrive until June. NOD coordinators often wait for a large selection of students before beginning the matching process so that they can make the best matches possible. You may hear about your student early, but you should not be surprised if you do not receive your match until two or three weeks before their arrival. You will be sent your student's profile which includes a picture and a letter.

Your NOD coordinator organizes local transportation and arranges pickup points throughout the state. You may meet your student at the airport or at one of the designated points.

YOUR ROLE AS A HOST FAMILY

Welcome the student into your home as a member of your family, providing your student with room, board, and companionship.

Spend time getting to know your student and involve your student in your family activities.

While it is not required that a host parent be at home during the day with the student, it is preferable to have at least one adult or teenager in the home with the student. If that is not possible, acquaint your student with others in your community, especially American teens. Neighbors, relatives, friends, or language students in the community will be happy to spend some time with your student.

Offer your student different activities that will allow him or her to get to know your community and surroundings.

Exchange views and ideas, enjoying both the similarities and differences your family and your student will find as you grow in learning together.

TIPS FOR HOSTING

We would like to extend our warm thanks and appreciation to you for choosing to become part of our NOD family. We hope that you will enjoy the benefits and rewards of the hosting experience! We hope that our suggestions and advice will help answer some of the questions you may have and at the same time help avoid possible cultural misunderstandings.

PREPARING YOUR STUDENT: START NOW!

Keep all NOD information you receive, such as your student's profile, arrival and departure information, etc. If you have no teenagers at home, look for teenagers among your friends and neighbors to introduce to your student.

Be thinking about the letter your family will write when you receive your student's profile. Take some snapshots in advance to send and collect maps and brochures describing your neighborhood.

Think about family activities that you can enjoy with your student, such as baking cookies, playing baseball, playing board games, going on a picnic, etc. You will receive additional suggestions in your Host Family Handbook which will arrive with your student's profile. Be careful to include some activities that don't depend on speaking and understanding English perfectly.

Make a list of some activities that you would encourage your student to do without you, to brighten days when you are especially busy or when nothing is planned.

EXPECTATIONS

If your student has been to the U.S. before, the adaptation process may be short because the student has already experienced the English and American way of life and loves it. However, if your student is coming for the first time, you should expect that it will take them more time to adjust. Don't forget the student is used to speaking a different language, eating different foods, and living with different family rules and cultural expectations. Expect an adjustment period for both your student and your family during which everyone will all be learning about each other. Try to be patient with your student and with yourself.

Students sometimes base their image of life in the U.S. on the American movies and TV shows they have seen. You will be able to help your student better understand daily life in America during the course of their homestay. You will notice that your student will have different ways of doing and seeing things. Learning not to judge your student's ideas and opinions hastily as "right" or "wrong" is a giant step toward international understanding. Consider your student's cultural point of view as different, but valid, and most likely they will do the same. In fact, this exchange of ideas and cultures is one of the wonderful rewards of hosting!

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to success. These tips will give you more information and ideas concerning adjustment. Remember, your NOD local rep will be available each step of the way!

When the student arrives, they will most likely be very tired and speaking English can be exhausting. Avoid talking too much or too fast on the day of arrival. Help your student feel welcome through your comforting actions and understanding gestures.

Plan to spend time with your student, especially during the first few days after arrival. Your student will depend on your family for information about everything in the new environment.

If your student has notes, a map, or something visual to look at while you're explaining plans or activities, it will help their understanding of what's going on and how to get around. People sometimes have a tendency to speak in a loud tone of voice when they think someone doesn't understand what they're saying. Rather, it is important to try using simple words, vary your sentences, and speak more slowly.

When your student speaks, the sentences may seem awkward or abrupt at first. Know that the students often use extremes like "hot" or "cold" when they mean "warm" and "cool," because they might not have an extensive enough vocabulary to express themselves tactfully. Use humor and be pleasant and encouraging when dealing with language barriers. Language is important, but caring gestures and smiles often times far outweigh spoken words.

If your family has studied your student's language and you would like to speak it, discuss with your student the possibility of arranging a limited time each day to practice the foreign language, such as dinner time. Keep in mind that your student is coming to the U.S. to practice English.

While Americans use compliments and thank you freely, it may not be the "norm" for your exchange student. Even though they may not voice gratitude, this does not mean that they do not appreciate your efforts. We do, however, encourage them to do so.

FOODS

Many of the foods you prepare may be new to your student. Encourage them to try everything offered. However, during the first few days you should find out whether the student has any allergies to certain foods.

Suggest that your student prepare a traditional dish from their own country. This can be a lot of fun for your student and a memorable meal for your family!

Your meal schedules and habits may differ from what your student is used to. For example, if your family is expected to make their own lunch, you should clearly explain this and show your student what to do.

While the student is expected to use personal spending money for snacks or treats when out with family or friends, it is understood that all regular meals are to be provided by you, whether at home or in a restaurant.

YOUR STUDENT'S SPENDING MONEY

Students are asked to bring \$250-300 in spending money. You may want to help your student budget their spending money during the stay by planning in advance how much money will be needed for special activities. Suggest an amount of money for your student to bring when going somewhere in particular, as they may not know how much to budget.

Exchange students are expected to pay for postage, personal phone calls, souvenirs, snacks, museum and amusement park admissions, etc. Some students bring extra money specifically to buy something they know is less expensive in the U.S.

If you want to treat your student to something once or twice, always mention, "I'm treating you this time." If not, your student may incorrectly assume that you are always willing to pay. Don't hesitate to ask your student to pay for their admission fee to a movie or another outing, when appropriate.

NACEL OPEN DOOR RULES

Students have been warned that smoking is illegal under the age of 18 and is not allowed in many public places in the U.S. They must observe all regulations regarding smoking. Explain your own family's rules about smoking.

NOD students are not allowed to consume alcoholic beverages.

Any student who becomes involved in drug use will be sent home at the natural parents' expense.

Students are **NOT** to operate **ANY** motor vehicle. This includes recreational vehicles, farm equipment, riding lawnmowers, as well as automobiles and motorcycles. Students are allowed to take classroom driver education courses while in the U.S. They are not, however, allowed to practice driving with any personal motor vehicle.

FAMILY RULES

NOD expects host families to set reasonable rules of their own, and expects students to follow them. Plan to discuss your family's rules the day after arrival. It may be helpful to make notes of your schedule and expectations. Be sure to include:

MEAL TIMES

Explain your family's schedule and whether snacks are acceptable between meals.

DAILY CHORES

Students have agreed to help with daily chores, such as making their bed, clearing the table, picking up belongings, putting dirty clothes in the hamper, etc.

OCCASIONAL TASKS

Other household tasks that the student could help out with might include bringing in the mail, folding laundry, vacuuming, carrying groceries, cleaning their room, etc.

SLEEPING HOURS & CURFEW

Set reasonable times in accordance with your own family, and if you don't have any teenagers, talk to friends with teens for suggestions.

HELP THE STUDENT FOLLOW YOUR RULES

It's OK to treat your student like a guest for a day or two while they are recovering from jet lag, but start treating them as a member of the family as soon as possible.

Try to understand that the "normal" way of doing things in America is not always the same as in other parts of the world. Good manners, proper behavior, and family rules may vary depending on the culture. For example, some students may not be accustomed to helping with certain household tasks. So, don't hesitate to say, "Please help me do this..." Finally, show the student how to do the chores expected of them.

Communicate openly with your student, letting them know when your family is happy or displeased with their conduct. Remember to make sure that your student understands what you expect.

There are some family rules which are understood and learned over time, and they won't be evident to your student. Therefore, when situations arise, these subtle rules will have to be explained. For example: Don't eat the last piece of cake before asking if anyone else would like it. These "rules" vary from family to family.

SIBLING RIVARLY

It is normal for children, at least once or twice during the visit, to become annoyed that their parents are giving so much attention to the exchange student. Your own children might feel left out at times. To cope with this, don't ask your children to make too many sacrifices for the student. Let your children know that you understand what's bothering them. Show that you care by asking their opinions and including them in making plans.

INSURANCE

MEDICAL INSURANCE:

All NOD participants travel with an illness and accident insurance policy. Eye and dental care are not included unless needed as the result of an accident or emergency.

LABILITY INSURANCE:

All NOD participants are covered by a liability insurance policy for any claims involving property damage or bodily injury.

EMERGENCY RETURN INSURANCE:

NOD covers the cost of a return flight in the case of a death in your student's immediate family. More specific information on insurances can be found in the Host Family Handbook, along with a claim form.

SUPPORT NETWORK

Everyone at NOD wants each host family and student to have a positive experience. Your local representative and coordinator will be available to discuss your questions and concerns, no matter how big or small. Small problems can sometimes unnecessarily grow into big ones. If you are uncomfortable with your student's behavior, please address the issue immediately by talking directly with your student and by contacting a NOD local rep. We want to help, but we need to be aware of a concern in order to be helpful.

PAST HOST FAMILY COMMENTS

The Brown Family – Georgia

"We saw ourselves and our city in a new way. Edurne (France) was eager to share our life, and she blossomed with each day. We miss her!"

The Schrader Family – Pennsylvania

"We have become known by some people in the community as 'the family that always has a foreign visitor in their home.' I can't think of anything more fun."

The Gable Family – Kansas

"Not only did we learn a lot about Stella (Spanish) and her country, we learned more about ourselves through her eyes! In one fast and furious month, Stella became one of our family."