



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Intercultural Exchange Programs

AUGUST SUPPORT TIPS

As YFU has for 60 years, we welcome new students, families and volunteers to the YFU exchange program each August. As international students arrive and settle into their American families and lives, YFU would like to help you make this time of transition valuable for everyone you support.

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

SUPPORT TIPS

THE FIRST STUDENT VISIT

As students begin to arrive in July, it is required and very important that they meet their Area Representative in person within the first two weeks.

Even if you met your student upon their arrival at the airport, she may have been tired and overwhelmed, so a follow up visit is important. An Area Rep's first visit can pave the way to a mutually beneficial relationship. Review these **First Student Visit Tips and Handouts** so you're sure to be setting the right tone for this meaningful relationship. First time Area Reps, we encourage you to attend the **First Student Visit training**.

UPDATES TO THE MONTHLY CONTACT!!

Beginning with the second month of contact and in addition to face-to-face or telephone contact, monthly contact with students and host parents can be made via email. This is a new policy starting this year. It is YFU's hope that by including email as a tool, we will observe an increase in contacts made as well as contacts reported. The Support Services team encourages Area Representatives 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. While email contact is an available option, other electronic communication such as texting, Facebook posts and the like **do not** meet the monthly contact requirement. Please take a moment to read about **Updates to the Monthly Contact Reports**.

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 and directly can help.

Be sure that you know the best way to get in touch with your student, whether it's email, telephone or even text to schedule a contact. Likewise, your student needs to know the best way to contact you. Neither of you wants to 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. Review our **Keeping Your Students Safe** document to familiarize yourself with the steps you can take to assure your student has a positive exchange experience.

AFTER HOURS SUPPORT

Serious support issues should be reported immediately to the Support Services Manager (SSM). If something occurs outside of work hours, you can reach the on-call SSM by dialing 1.800.424.3691. See the **Area Rep Training Manual** to determine if a situation would be considered serious.

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

Repping a student and host family in an arrival placement situation presents a unique set of circumstances. To get indepth tips on how to help students and host families through this time, review the [Arrival Placement Support Tips](#) page.

CELL PHONE, COMPUTER, & SOCIAL NETWORKING

Make sure your student and family are aware of YFU's Cell Phone Guidelines, Internet Safety Guidelines and [Social Networking Safety Tips](#). These are all published in their Host Family Handbook & Passport to the USA.

ADMINISTRATIVE

AUGUST CONTACT REPORT

Your first monthly Contact Report is due August 25 if your student arrived on or before August 20.

YFU STUDENT INSURANCE

All YFU students living in the U.S. arrive with health insurance. Students and host families are mailed insurance information and you can share with them the [YFU insurance page](#) which provides a summary of the coverage, claim forms and other information.

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. The [SEE Visit Manual](#) provides more information and instructions.

GOING AWAY?

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

YFU STUDENT ID CARD

All YFU students receive a YFU identification card with contact information for their host family, YFU Area Rep and the U.S. Department of State. This will arrive in the mail at the host family home soon after students arrive. Confirm your name and phone number are accurate on the student ID the first time you both meet. If not, correct it on the card and then inform your district office.

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 the host family and friends does not mean they will forget their home culture, friends and family. Once a week contact is what YFU encourages; however we cannot prevent natural parents communicating with their child and visa 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, give your student a [language assessment](#). If your student needs language learning support, contact your Support Services Manager for more information about YFU's language support tools.

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 have 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 is usually due to limited vocabulary or not knowing the rules of the house that everyone else in the home grew up with. 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?"

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 talking with friends and family back home though.

Are you concerned by your student's English skills?

If your student could benefit from language support, contact your Support Services Manager. YFU offers **language support tools**.

If you have any questions about Monthly Contacts, **please contact your Support Service Manager!**