



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Intercultural Exchange Programs

ARRIVAL PLACEMENT TIPS

Repping a student and host family in an Arrival Placement situation presents a unique set of circumstances. The Host Family may be treating the student as a guest, since they know the student will not be there long. The student may be confused by what it means to be in with an “arrival family.” There are many issues and concerns that can arise in an arrival placement – take a look through the information below so that you are prepared to support your arrival placement. As always, thank you for the work you do, YFU could not exist without volunteers!

SUPPORT TIPS

ON THE FENCE FOR TOO LONG

Through decades of experience, YFU knows that many arrival families transition into permanent placements. Arrival families bond with their students and can’t imagine moving them on to another family. If a family indicates that they are considering keeping their student for the full program, encourage them to set a deadline for their decision. Pushing this decision off forces their student to stay in limbo for longer than necessary, prevents host family-student bonding at a critical point in the exchange experience and in some cases may delay YFU efforts toward finding a permanent host family. Making the decision to become a permanent placement or not allows everyone involved to understand what’s to come and act accordingly.

STAYING IN GUEST MODE

Because the family knows that the student won’t be staying with them for long, they may treat the student as a guest. Although this may be a short hosting experience, getting the student into the routines of a family will help him/her adjust to living in a new culture, even if their permanent host family’s routines are different.

The student may also think of him or herself as a guest because this is a temporary home. Remind the student that this is part of the exchange experience and thus they should participate fully with the arrival family. Becoming fully part of two American families can in some ways add to the experience, so they should jump into family life, helping with chores and participating in the household fully. Also encourage your student to avoid behaviors that will isolate him or her from their host family such as spending a lot of time in their room or on the computer, or texting or frequently

contacting family and friends from their home country. Starting off on the wrong foot with any family doesn’t serve the student, family or YFU any good as the process of finding a permanent placement is underway.

LACK OF BONDING

This time at the beginning of the exchange can be hard, but also very exciting, for the exchange student as he or she gets used to a new culture and way of living. Families may be looking at this as simply a temporary situation, and may not be committed to working through problems or helping the student adjust. But the family can play a big role in the student’s excitement. Help the family understand that this is a great opportunity to get to know a student, if only for a short period of time. How can the family get the most out of the time they have?

Many students may not initiate involvement with the arrival family and will need to be asked. The host family should encourage their student to get involved in family activities. By involving the student in activities, the arrival family is helping to set the student up for success with their permanent placement. The precedent has been set that family involvement is rewarding.

STUDENT ANXIETY ABOUT WHAT’S NEXT

Students will naturally be nervous or anxious about what is coming after their arrival family. All they are looking to do is to get settled. Recommend that they participate fully with the arrival family and get involved in all areas of school life. Students should explore the town and learn about local culture. And let your students know that although they are not responsible for finding a new family – that is YFU’s responsibility – they can influence their next move. The more contacts they make at school and in the community, the broader the options will be in finding a replacement.

GETTING INVOLVED

As your students get more involved in the community, more people will get to know them and their situation, and hopefully this will help lead to a permanent placement. However, when discussing this, remind the student that the onus is never on them to find a new host family, it is the responsibility of YFU.

EXTENDED ARRIVAL PLACEMENTS

Arrivals are of varying lengths and can last longer than expected when finding a Permanent Placement is difficult. Always be in close touch with the student and family about the search for a permanent host family placement. They will likely assume that if they don't hear anything, it means that nothing is happening. Make sure both the family and the student know that YFU volunteers and staff are working hard to find a new host family for the student, and that it can take time. Because it's a priority to keep the student in the same school, the school community may be the best place to look for a permanent host family placement. The family and student can accelerate the search through their own networks.

FOLLOWING FAMILY RULES

The student may feel like s/he doesn't have to be concerned with household rules or their relationship with the family. As YFU aims to replace the student in the same community, keeping positive relations will make the beginning of their exchange better, and will help in finding a permanent placement. By encouraging the student to keep up positive relations with the family, the student will be better off and the family will be more likely to host again, if only in an arrival capacity.

STUDENTS THINK THAT IF THEY TRY HARD, THE FAMILY WILL KEEP THEM

Students may come into an arrival family thinking that if they try really hard the family will keep them. Be sure that you and the arrival family are direct with the student about why this is an arrival placement. It has nothing to do with the student - it is not based on personality or behavior but on outside circumstances (whether it be schedule, household, financial, etc.) Trying to be a "superstar" in the household can cause the student to get worn out and become deflated when they ultimately have to move to the permanent placement.

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