



Au Pair Manual

Version 2.0

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Welcome

Welcome, welcome, welcome! We are so happy and excited that you want to be a part of our family. Should you become our au pair we hope that your time with us is exciting and rewarding. We look forward to a great relationship between you and our family. To help make the time go smoothly, we all need to do what we can to ensure open communication, consideration, and cooperation. Please feel free to talk to us at any time if you have any questions, concerns, or complaints. If there is anything you do not understand, just ask us.

Like any new situation, the first few weeks will probably be the most challenging. Once we settle into a routine and you become familiar with our family and our home, it will get easier. If you are having difficulty with anything, including being homesick, let us know and we will do all we can to help. We hope that you find your room comfortable.

Basic Information

Emergency Numbers: 000

Address and phone and contact details will be provided on your arrival.

Why an Au Pair?

Husband works full time and sometimes will go away for 1 or 2 nights out of a week on a monthly basis. I work on a part time basis. I also do all the running around after the kids re sports and their activities.

We considered other options such as however we chose instead to host an au pair to become a member of our family and be an older sister to our children with whom they can build a trusting and safe bond with. Also we see this as an opportunity for the children to meet people from other countries/cultures to help broaden their perspective and vice versa for the au pair to experience life in Australia. A live-in au pair can also be available for evenings, school holidays and can help with the running of the household in many other ways that improve the quality and quantity of leisure time for the whole family.

We have created this Au Pair Manual so that you have a clear understanding of the au pair role and duties in the household. We have found from experience that open communication and clear expectations provide a solid foundation for the host family/au pair relationship. If you are unclear about anything in this manual or anything else at all then please do not hesitate to ask.

The Au Pair/Host Family Relationship

We know au pairs have their own various reasons for coming to Australia and that working as an au pair may be a means rather than an end. We understand this and we accept it is part of our duty to help you get the most of your time in Australia. We do this by supporting you in developing an independent social life, and by including you in day trips and holidays whenever we have them. We undertake to do all we can to help you enjoy your time in Australia, however, for the relationship to work successfully au pairs must keep in mind the following;

- We employ you to care for our children and to help keep order in the house. In return we provide a safe place to live, your own room, food and a steady income and a family environment in which to live whilst in Australia.
- We have you here for one reason to make our lives easier. If you're not doing that then there is simply no reason for us to have you.
- Whilst au pairs are typically young, we do expect that you are a fully functioning adult with basic life skills and we expect you to actively contribute to the household. For example we expect as a young adult you are responsible for cleaning your own room, helping clean dishes, setting the table, filling and emptying the dishwasher, hang up and bring in the washing etc. This is outside of your au pair duties.
- Your on-duty au pair hours should be treated as with any other type of employment. This means presenting yourself on-time and ready, and carrying out all duties as and when directed without supervision. Also you will note below during this time we fully expect you won't be playing on the Internet, smart phones, watching TV etc.
- Your off duty hours are your own time, but remember even then you are not a guest but a member of the household. You should always be prepared to assist with the routine as mentioned above. A good au pair should be looking for ways to help and not waiting to be asked. Your attitude in this regard more than anything will determine whether you fit in like a family member as opposed to an employee. We *want* au pairs to feel like part of the family, but it can only develop with mutual trust and respect.
- The children are young and will tend to treat you as an older friend or sibling and as a member of our family. Whilst they understand that the au pair is hired help, their friendship is genuine and does not turn on and off according to your hours on duty. You should be responsive and kind to them at all times. They are used to having an au pair in the house and experience has shown they want you to be part of the family and will develop strong bonds and do not understand on/off times. Please note they know they are not to enter your bedroom without your permission and that it is your private space. However, the youngest Child 3 is still too young to understand this and once he develops a bond with you, will want to follow you around.
- When you arrive in Australia as our au pair we will have interviewed each other through emails and on Skype. You will have already read this manual and you will have accepted the job as described and be under no illusions as to your hours, duties, pay or any aspect of our home or lifestyle. We will not hesitate to dismiss an au pair who we find is dishonest, untrustworthy or who is unable or unwilling to properly discharge their duties. Whilst you

are not a prisoner and of course may leave at any time, we expect you to honour your commitment to the role you accepted.

- We fully expect that you always communicate any concerns with us and that we work together to resolve any issues.

Schedule/Hours

The table below shows the estimated hours you would work, please note it is important for us that you are flexible due to my work schedule and the kids activity schedules which are subject to change.

I need to update this as it has changed but basically hours are week days. Weekends are yours.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
0700-0900						Free Time	Free Time
0900-1430							
1430-1700						Free Time	
1700-1900 (max)							

We would also expect some nights baby-sitting; however this is always on a negotiated basis. This may include one Fri/Sat night.

You should treat your on-duty hours as any other job, which means this is not the time to Skype, use Internet, electronic devices or telephone family or friends, take a shower, write in your diary or other personal errands. Please confine those activities to your own time. However, when you are home alone with Child 3 and he is sleeping we are happy for you to use the Internet etc should all work be completed.

Children Activities – needs Updating

Child 1

- a. Martial Arts – Tue evening
- b. Soccer – Wed and Fri training and Sun games
- c. Swimming Lessons – Mon afternoon
- d. Dance classes –Thur evening

Child 2

- a. Dance classes – Sat mornings and Thur evening
- b. Swimming Lessons – Mon afternoon

Child 3

- a. Swimming Lessons – Friday mornings

Please note this will change next year. We expect that you be flexible in regards to this as for a variety of reasons these times are subject to change.

Time Off

Your free time is for you to do as you please. However you are always welcome to join us for whatever we are doing and we will usually invite you for anything special.

We may request babysitting on an evening or weekend outside of your normal hours of duty. We will give as much notice as possible and will work with any commitments you may already have. Sometimes Husband or I may take you out for dinner or coffee and cake.

During weekends and other off-duty hours please remember that you are a member of the household and not a guest to be waited on. Meals still need to be prepared, cleaning done, etc. Therefore as for any other member of the household a reasonable level of contribution is expected and appreciated.

Caring for Our Children

Caring for our children is the most important part of your job. They are our pride and joy and for us our priority. The children are all unique in their personalities.

Like all children they can get tired, cranky, selfish or disobedient etc. To get the best out of them you will need to get to know them, establish a friendship and gain their trust. This is not difficult and simply requires that you engage with them as much as possible by talking, playing and laughing. They love having an au pair and have responded very well in the past especially where the au pair actively and genuinely engages them. Please note we have been very fortunate and have had some fabulous au pairs live with us.

Discipline Our Children

Please do not hesitate to be firm with our children when needed. We do not condone any disobedience or disrespect towards their au pair or to any adult. The children are expected to do as they are told but as with any child they may argue, procrastinate or make excuses and be naughty. We will assist you by giving you methods for dealing with these situations and support your authority at all times, but more than anything your success will depend on the quality of relationship you build with the children. Through this you will find your own ways of managing them and figuring out what works best.

The au pair under no circumstance is to ever hit or smack our children.

General Cleanliness and Order

The normal day to day routine of the house generates mess. Things are left out of place, food and drinks are dropped or splashed on floors and furniture. Rubbish bins fill, food spoils in the fridge and dishes pile up in the sink. To maintain order and hygiene to an acceptable standard it is necessary for all members of the household to do their part. If you see something that isn't as it should be then don't wait until cleaning day. Attend to it there and then. We expect to come home to a clean and tidy house each and every day and not be running around picking up or tidying. Where we can we will always assist you and do things as a team.

Housework

Different au pair placements will all vary as to the balance between childcare vs. housework. In this family, housework forms an important part of your duties as an au pair. Your proper attention to these tasks allows the family more time pursuing recreational activities during evenings and weekends. For you this means less time in the house and more time doing what you came to do; see and experience Australia. Please note I will ensure that you are shown all this to begin with.

Light House Duties. – This is part of your au pair pay.

Vacuuming and Mopping

In addition to the weekly full vacuuming and mopping of the house, it is necessary each day to “spot clean” the main living areas, such as the kitchen and dining room. The au pair is to do this. Please note host parents will also do as well.

Kids Beds

Once a week the kid’s bed sheets are to be changed. You are expected to change the sheets and remake with fresh sheets. Note I will wash the sheets for you. The normal exception is if one of the children has wet the bed and the sheets need to be done.

Every morning the kid’s beds are to be made. Also if they (Child 3 still has day sleep) the bed is to be remade after any day sleeps. Sometimes I will do. Also once or twice a week Child 1 and Child 2 are expected to make their beds.

Kids Toys

The children are responsible for cleaning up their toys. However, they are young and do need assistance. If you are doing craft/activities etc. you are then expected to clean up. You are welcome to have the children assist where appropriate. We always try and get the kids to put their toys away when finished and before bed. Every few weeks I will do a proper clean-up of their toy area. We try to have a special place for the toys so the kids know where to put them away.

Kitchen/Dishwasher

One of your daily tasks is to clean/tidy the kitchen and to pack/unpack the dishwasher. This should normally be done each morning however because of the high traffic and use of this area it may be necessary at other times. Kitchen bench tops, sinks and stovetops and floors must all be wiped clean. Please note host mum will also help when available.

Kids Breakfast/Lunch Packs

One of your daily tasks is to help get the kids breakfast and do their lunch packs. Host mum will show you this. Most mornings you will find that I have already fed the kids. However, the kids are starting to get their own breakfast. There are to be no nuts, chocolate, junk food, chips, biscuits or juice etc. to be packed in their lunches. If I make muffins these can be included (but not cake). The children can only take water to school and must have fruit.

Heavy House Duties. – This is additional should you choose – you will be paid extra for this.

Vacuuming

The house needs to be vacuumed completely and thoroughly at least once each week. This includes all carpet, tiled and timber areas, including hallways, bedrooms (except the master bedroom) and living areas. Please pay special attention to the main living areas, rugs and perimeters where dust, crumbs, etc. tend to collect. The family room rug in particular needs vigorous attention due to daily build-up of hair, crumbs and dirt, including underneath the lounge.

Mopping

All hard surfaced floors need to be mopped once each week. Pay particular attention to the high traffic areas (kitchen, hall and entry) or where dust build-up occurs (under pool table). Mopping needs to be vigorous enough to remove all dirty marks and result in a clean floor. A light single pass of the mop only wets the floors without really cleaning it. Mopping should be done no later than one day after vacuuming the same area. It is best to boil the kettle to ensure that the water is very hot.

Laundry

I will wash the family and au pair clothing and bedding. I usually wash every day. However we do expect that the au pair assists in hanging out the washing and bringing it in. The clothes are to be folded as soon as they come off the clothes line. The purpose in doing this is to minimise ironing so it is important that clothes are folded in such a way that creases are not “folded in”. We will show you how to do this. We normally use the dryer when the weather is bad.

Please place your clothes and linen in the wash basket. Please note your bed linen should be washed and changed no later than every two weeks or weekly. This is all bedding. Your towels are to be washed at least weekly. You are responsible for making your bed. We won't do that.

Dusting

One of the weekly chores is dusting. We will show you where to dust but generally it applies to all those flat surfaces where dust collects, along with the photos, etc. that are on them. Pay particular attention to the family room TV glass shelf where dust build-up is most noticeable.

Kitchen/Dishwasher

Once a week the kitchen area is to be given a full clean, I will show you.

Bathrooms

Once a week the bathroom is to be given a full clean, I will show you. For example the toilets are to be scrubbed, shower/bath and basins to be scrubbed and cleaned properly. Mirrors and tiles to be cleaned. Floors are to be vacuumed and mopped.

Ironing

We expect that ironing of the children's clothing is done.

Heating and Cooling

There is a reverse cycle split air conditioning system in your room – i.e. provides heat and cool. Please ensure it is turned off when you are not in your room or you are away.

Meals

Your meals are provided when you are with us. For breakfast we have cereal, bread, and eggs available for you to help yourself. We are happy within reason to accommodate specific requests. You are responsible for preparing your own breakfast.

Lunchtimes you may prepare lunch for yourself from whatever is available, or eat leftovers saved from a previous meal.

Dinner will normally be prepared by me; however we may need your assistance in preparing meals for the children. This will be advised daily. If you can cook and want to then we are very happy for you to also cook.

You are generally free to help yourself to whatever is in the fridge or pantry but if you use the last of anything then please let us know.

If you have any special requirements, tastes or preferences, then please let us know so we can include them in the regular grocery shopping and weekly menus; however you should expect that food will be different from that which you are probably accustomed. We are also happy to accommodate specific meal requirements and foods that you particularly like, within reason. Please be aware that food in Australia is generally far more expensive than overseas and you may get quite a shock, especially when you elect to buy food for yourself.

Table Manners often vary from country to country and we may have to ask you to comply with local standards in order to present a consistent example to our children and to save you from social embarrassment. Please don't take it personally. Please note we expect our children to ask to leave the table when they are finished. I also want the older two to sit at the table of an evening until all children are finished. The youngest is not quite old enough. Also given the ages of the children it is normal for them to eat separately to the adults as they need to eat earlier than us. However, we expect that someone is with them.

If we invite you to join us dining out then you are our guest and we will pay for your meal but if you are out on your own or with friends then your meals are at your own expense.

Au Pair Bedroom

Your room is your own private space into which neither we nor the children will normally enter unless invited. However you are expected to keep it clean and tidy at all times to at least the same standard as the rest of the house. If any furniture or fitting breaks or ceases working then please let us know so that it can be fixed.

If you are in your room and require privacy then close the door, but otherwise we encourage you to leave the door open so that you are not so isolated from the family. We prefer au pairs to mix with the family as much as possible and not remain shut away in their room for long periods of the evening and weekend.

If we are out and you are left to babysit the children of an evening past bedtime, then please leave your bedroom door open so that you can hear if they call out. We need to know that someone will hear them and respond. We will close your door when we get home if you are asleep. Our experience has shown that we are normally home before the au pair goes to sleep. Depending on why we are out we are often home by 10-10.30pm so the au pair will still go out. Previous au pairs have found this the time to go out.

Bathroom and Shower

There are two bathrooms. The one with the bath is a combined bathroom/laundry. This will be your main bathroom and used by us to do laundry, sometimes the children may have a bath or guests may use. The other bathroom only has a shower and will be the main bathroom used by the family. Most nights the children have a joint shower.

Master Bedroom

You are not required to do any cleaning of the master bedroom. There is no reason for you to enter this room at any time.

Personal and Medical Expenses

Personal items such as toiletries, shampoo, toothpaste, medicines and any medical expenses are your responsibility. You are required to take out travel insurance covering medical insurance prior to your arrival to Australia. We are not responsible for any of your medical expenses including personal hygiene and bathroom products.

Telephone and Internet

Wireless Internet is available in the house. Host Dad will give you the details for connection and assistance if you need it to get your computer connected. Our service provides enough download capacity for all our needs. There is a laptop we use which can be used by the au pair as well, however please do not install software or alter the configuration. If you have your own computer then Host Dad will link that to the wireless Internet.

We do not have a local telephone. We have found all au pairs to date have a mobile phone. There are pay as you go plans available in Australia. We can assist you in setting that up. We will not pay for a mobile. We shall provide \$15 per month towards your phone.

Bus and Train Pass

The transport system in Perth is called Transperth. We will provide you a pass with \$50 credit on it. This pass must be returned to us when you leave. It can only be used in Perth.

Vehicle

At this stage there is no need for you to use a vehicle for your au-pair duties. Additionally, insurance in Australia is very costly for us and you especially if under the age of 25. Our experience to date is that au pairs have not wanted to use the car for their own personal use as a result. We are very close to buses.

School Holidays

Your duties during school holidays will be different since the children will be home all day. You will be given revised work schedules for these periods, but duties are mostly centre around watching the children and keeping them entertained. We may enrol the older two in holiday programs such as swimming or soccer and the youngest will still go to day care.

Illness

The children are rarely sick, but if they are feeling unwell and have to stay home from school then we will ask you to take care of them so we can go to work, but if they are seriously ill then I will stay home with them. In the event of the au pair becoming sick, we will make other arrangements as necessary to provide for the children's care and for your rest and recovery.

If you are seriously ill for a period of time then we will not be able to pay you as we will have to pay for alternative care or I will have to take time off from work. Please note I only get paid when I work, so I am not trying to be unreasonable but that is the reality of the situation. This will be assessed on an as needs basis. If you are ill over the weekend you will still be paid in full.

Guests

You can invite friends or other au pairs to visit for meals, etc. if you ask and let us know in advance. If you would like to have friends or relatives visit from your home country then they are welcome to visit and share meals and other activities with us but they should arrange their own overnight accommodation. In some limited and special circumstances we may allow visitors to stay in our home, so please discuss any such plans with us well in advance.

There are to be no guests during your work hours. No-one is to come to our home without us first meeting them.

No boys. Under no circumstances are boys to stay in our home. Should you wish to meet a boy then you are to go to their place.

Alcohol and Drugs

Au Pairs are not to consume alcohol when on duty.

If you drink while you are out socialising then it is not our business but you are expected to be fit for duty the following morning. We do have alcohol in our home and we often have a glass of wine with dinner. You are more than welcome to enjoy a drink with us during evening meal times.

Illegal drug use of any kind including marijuana is unacceptable at any time. Should you use drugs at any time or be drunk when you are looking after the children this will result in immediate dismissal.

Please disclose if you are taking any prescription medication. All medications must be kept out of sight and out of reach.

Smoking

We are a non-smoking family. Most of our family and friends are also non-smokers. We have picked you as a non-smoking au pair. Should you smoke socially it is not to be in front of our children, in our home or in our car.

Curfew

On work nights, please be home by midnight so that you are not too tired for work the next morning. (If you need more sleep in order to be rested and ready to start the day at your scheduled time, please come home at whatever time is necessary in order to be fresh for work the next morning.)

On nights when you don't have to work the next day you are under no obligation to spend the night. We do request that you please let us know ahead of time if you want to stay overnight at a friend's house. If you have not told us that you don't plan on coming home we will be worried for you. This is really for your own safety and our peace of mind.

We trust that you are mature enough to decide how to spend your free time. However, we want you to be very careful about your safety. Never get into a car or go somewhere with someone you don't know. If you are ever in a situation that feels dangerous, PLEASE call us, no matter what time it is, and we will come to pick you up.

Emergency and Security

Fire

Our fire evacuation plan is:

Get all of the children outside to the front of the house (if possible – else the backyard). Once you know that everyone is safe outside, use your cell phone or a neighbor's phone to call **000**. After calling 000 call myself or Host Dad

Medical

In the case of a medical emergency, you should call **000** and then call Host Dad or I.

Please note that if you call **000**, you will need to give them our address, so you should make a point of memorizing the address.

Home Entry Policy

If someone who you do not know comes to the door, please do not let them in. If you are uncomfortable DO NOT OPEN the door. Please call Host Dad or myself.

First Aid Kit

There is a First Aid kit and we will show you where it is.

Kitchen

Never allow the children near the stove or oven if you are cooking something. Also, please turn the handles of any pots and pans on the stove away from the front of the stove so that the kids cannot reach them. Never leave the kitchen while you are cooking something.

There is a First Aid kit in the kitchen. We will show you where it is.

Security

You will be given keys to the house. Whenever you leave the house unattended please ensure that all doors are properly closed and locked. Please return all keys on departure. Please keep the screen door at the front locked even when you are home.

Socialising

The quality of your time living in Australia will be greatly improved by your making friends and socialising with other au pairs. This is something we encourage and support as a host family. There are many au pairs living here and a good way to connect with and meet them is by joining Facebook or advertising on gumtree.

Once you have established a group of local friends, you will soon find you have a busy social life and plenty to do in your spare time.

Holidays

On occasion we may go on holidays. We shall always invite the au pair. If you wish to come we will cover all your accommodation, travel and meal expenses. Extra food, drinks etc. should you do your own thing is at your expense. If we travel for more than 3 days during the week then you will only receive pocket money for au pair duties. However, you are still expected to assist in au pair duties to receive this money. If you choose not to come you will receive no pocket money at all. You will be welcome to stay in our home; however you must have no parties or disrespect our home and property.

All major travel by the au pair is to be completed after your time with our family. However, as we prefer you to stay for at least six (6) months we understand that you may wish to travel on your own or with friends from time to time and have a long weekend (i.e. 3 days and not work on the Saturday morning). We will show flexibility in this regards but we expect all this to be discussed and agreed in advance by us before you finalise arrangements. We will also be happy for you to do a block period of travel of 7-10 days in this six (6) month period; however this must be done at a time that is suitable for us. Else please leave all longer travel until you finish as our au pair. For this extended self-travel you will receive no pocket money from us.

Religion

Host Dad is a catholic; however as a family we do not practise religion. We will also ensure that we respect your religious beliefs. Please provide advice of any specific requirements. We do request that you place no pressure on the family in regards to your religious beliefs. This is a personal choice

and whilst we will support your religious beliefs we will not accept them being pushed onto us or the children.

Photos

No photos of the family, especially the children are to be posted on any social media without our prior consent and approval.

Pocket Money

Your pocket money is broken down as follows:

- a. Au Pair Duties - \$170.00 per week
- b. Heavy Housekeeping Duties - \$50.00 per week
- c. One off travel card with \$50 credit
- d. Phone credit of \$15 per month

Termination

When you arrive we will usually have some idea of how long you plan to stay however we understand that this can change at any time and for any number of reasons. We ask that you please discuss with us any changes to your length of stay as soon as possible so that we can begin to make arrangements for a replacement au pair.

In the event that either we or you are unhappy and wish to terminate your stay prematurely, we will discuss this openly and honestly and explore all possible alternatives. In extreme circumstances (e.g. severe loss of trust, gross dereliction of duty, theft, child abuse) we reserve the right to terminate your employment immediately and without notice.

Miscellaneous

English as a second language – short course

https://www.tuartcollege.wa.edu.au/Short_Courses.htm

This is offered sometimes and you can get there by bus from our house. You are to do of a night.

Things to do in Perth

<http://www.whatson.com.au/>

<http://www.showmepertth.com.au/whats-on>

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/Preschool-Play-Kids-crafts+1640+31+article.htm?gclid=COuc75ze5rsCFUJZpQod2S8ArQ>

On Facebook – there are a number of local groups you can join to meet other people here.