



Orientation	Pre-Arrival				
Session Overview	<p>This session is designed to help host families understand YFU resources, including the support network available to host families and students. During this session, the host families will be introduced to the Host Family Account, as well as the Host Family Handbook. It is preferable that when showing families the Host Family Account, this is shown via the website on a laptop, projected onto a screen. If this is not possible, there are handouts with screen shots. Throughout the sessions, you will also see “<i>conversation starters</i>” that are designated throughout the Pre - Arrival as bulleted items. These are questions to spur dialogue among the participants so that a topic can be explored.</p> <p>The support structure and the YFU staff involved with support will also be explained. In addition, this session will review hosting responsibilities, and key policies and procedures, such as the travel policy, insurance information with a discussion around what health care facility is most appropriate to use (Emergency Room vs. Urgent Care Center) and the dangerous activities policy.</p> <p>Note the following lesson icons throughout the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ - this indicates a take away point that should not be missed during the lesson</li> <li>• -this indicates a question or idea that can be used to facilitate a conversation</li> </ul>				
Session Objectives	<p>By the end of this session, families will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Navigate their Host Family Account and identify important host family resources</li> <li>2. Apply YFU policies and procedures that promote student and family safety throughout the student’s exchange</li> </ol>				
Participants	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Students</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host Parents</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents</td> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	55 minutes
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	1 facilitator
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flipchart, slide or whiteboard</li> <li>• Copy of the Host Family Agreement – on page 9 in HF handbook</li> <li>• Printed example of the full Host Family Welcome Packet (each family receives this when the student placement status becomes “permanent”). TIP- many facilitators ask families to bring copies of this to the orientation.</li> <li>• Discussion # 1-Using projector, have the web-based <i>Host Family Account</i> up on the screen</li> <li>• Screenshot of HF Account, if internet not available- one per family</li> <li>• Lines of Communication handout – one per family</li> <li>• Insurance Handout- one per family</li> </ul>
Preparation	Read lesson to understand the concepts Create flipcharts List of Orientation dates for year (check with Orientation Coordinators/ Field Directors for this info)

## DISCUSSION #1: HOST FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND HOST FAMILY RESOURCES (15 minutes)

1. Open the session by asking the participants what are the **main responsibilities of hosting**. If people have trouble remembering, ask them to take a look at the copy of the *Host Family Agreement*, also on page 45-46 of the Host Family Handbook.
2. Review the following responsibilities, allow families to ask questions about these responsibilities as needed:
  - ✓ Welcoming the students as a member of the family and caring for the student as he or she is a member of the family- “Treat them as your own!”
  - ✓ Helping students achieve their cultural and educational goals
  - ✓ Helping students meet YFU expectations
3. If families do not offer up any questions, use the following **conversation starters** (or develop your own) to help families think a bit more deeply about these responsibilities:
  - What kinds of things will you need to do to welcome the student as a member of your family?
  - What might be challenging about doing that?

- What kinds of educational or cultural goals might the student have, how can you help him/her achieve these?
- What do you think YFU expects of the student? How can you help your student achieve these goals?
- Do any of these responsibilities make you nervous?

4. Tell the families that the next discussion will focus on the **resources to help their family fulfill their responsibilities.**

**Facilitator Note:** Be prepared to either show the host family resources page on the YFU website using a laptop or ask participants to use their phones. Alternatively, pass out copies of the screenshots provided at the end of this session.

The Host Family Welcome Packet includes:

- Welcome letter from YFU President, Scott Messing
- Host Family Handbook
- Permission to Travel policy and procedures
- Instructions on how to complete a Permission to Travel form online
- IRS tax form that allows a \$50 per month deduction on your income taxes
- W-8BEN Form
- Travel information and how to sign up for travel alerts
- Student itinerary
- Several handouts with hosting tips: *Your First Week Together, How Do You Do Things in Your Home handout, 10 Steps to Success, Emailing Tips*

5. **Review the different materials** that were mailed in the *Host Family Welcome Packet* and are also found on the Host Family Account Resources page.

If possible, bring up the **Host Family Account online** and identify and review materials (accessed through [www.yfuusa.org](http://www.yfuusa.org)).

Show participants how to **navigate to the different tabs** (Resources tab; My Student Tab; etc.), OR pass out screen shots to review these tabs. Encourage families to log into their Host Family Account and explore all the different resources in preparation for the students' arrival and use during the exchange year.

Focus on these important resources:

- ✓ Host Family Handbook – posted on the HF Resources page and mailed to every family
- ✓ Travel Notification System & Alerts (families can also view the student's itinerary)
- ✓ Handouts to prepare for your student's arrival: *Your First Week Together, How Do You Do Things In Your Home?, 10 Steps to Success*. These are also in the mailed Welcome Packet.
- ✓ Important policies and forms: *Dangerous Activities Policy and Permission Form, Permission to Travel Policy and Form, Host Family Tax Deduction Form, U.S. Department of State letter to*

*Host Families, CultureGrams* (helpful information to read about your new son or daughter's culture)

- ✓ Student travel information, host family application, students' information

7. **Inform host families about the YFU orientations** (Post-Arrival, Mid-Year, and Re-Entry) and how these are a critical part of supporting students and families, as well as accomplishing YFU's educational goals and YFU's mission. Ask the following **conversation starters** to encourage

dialogue about the orientations and to help families understand why these gatherings are so important to a successful experience.

- Why does YFU have three orientations? What kinds of topics do you think are covered at the Post- Arrival orientation, at the Mid-Year orientation, and at the Re-Entry orientation?
- Why does YFU want families to attend these orientations, along with students?
- One of our orientation themes is “YFU: From Visiting to Belonging” what might that be about?

8. Highlight the following points about the orientations:

- ✓ Orientations provide opportunities for students and families to talk with other host families, volunteers and staff. This group makes up a great support system for the family and the student.
- ✓ Orientations are required for students. They must attend and if there is an important conflict that cannot be avoided, the FD must be contacted.

9. Share the orientation dates for the year, even if the dates and venues are tentative. Explain that students and families typically will get an email invitation or an evite and the volunteer organizing the event needs the family to respond.

## DISCUSSION #2: SUPPORT AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES (20 MINUTES)

1. **Area Representative:** Have a conversation about the **role of the Area Representative**.

Ask experienced families to share how the Area Rep is part of the exchange experience.

Use these **conversation starters** to facilitate this dialogue.

- What do you know about the Area Representative?
- Can any of our experienced families share some examples of how their Area Representative has provided support?

Make sure the conversation covers these key points:

- ✓ AR is trained to be there as a neutral third party to provide assistance to both the student and the host family.
- ✓ While YFU wants families and students to communicate openly and work through challenges, the AR is there to help out and offer guidance as needed.
- ✓ The AR is available to lend an ear for support and whenever you have questions or are unsure how to handle a situation.
- ✓ The AR may be available to join the family at the airport when the student arrives, to take pictures and help with lost luggage if necessary.

2. **Display Lines of Communication** handout and read through it to familiarize host parents with the available support. YFU recommends that families think critically about communication with the Natural Family. Too much communication between the Host Family and the Natural Family can undermine the Host Family’s ability to parent.

Additionally, the SSM assigned to the family and student will be emailed to the family by either the SSM or the FD prior to or just after the student arrives.

3. **Monthly Contact Report:** Ask an experienced family to share about the Monthly Contact Report (MCR). Fill in any gaps in information or wrong information including:
  - ✓ AR completes a Monthly Contact Report as a way to document that YFU has monthly contact with families and students. The Monthly Contact Report is a US State Department requirement.
  - ✓ Monthly contact with the AR should be welcomed, as it is an opportunity for the family and student to “touch base” with YFU.
  - ✓ It is their responsibility, as host families, to be available for phone calls and visits by the AR so that he or she can complete the MCR. A prompt reply is needed whenever Area Rep attempts to make contact.
  
4. **School Enrollment:** Ask experienced families to share their experiences enrolling exchange students in school. Inform families of their role in assisting with school enrollment for their exchange student.

If possible, let them know about school enrollment procedures in the area (this will vary by school systems).

  - ✓ Encourage families to check with their Area Rep, Area Coordinator, or Field Director on what their responsibility is in helping with student enrollment.
  - ✓ According to YFU basic standards: *“Host families often play a supportive role in their student’s course selection. YFU students should take at least one English course, one US history or government course, and one other academic subject.”*
  
5. **Insurance Information:** *All YFU students coming to the U.S. are required to carry insurance for the duration of their stay. There are 3 different insurance options for our students.*
  1. *The majority of students are insured through **Fairmont Illness and Injury and General Liability***
  2. *Some students are insured through their YFU National Office’s preferred plan*
  3. *Other students are insured through scholarship-specific insurance.*
  - ✓ Share insurance handout with families included in the orientation mailed packet. The insurance information is also on the host family account on the “Resources” tab.

Then, lead a discussion about what constitutes an actual emergency. Define the terms “Emergency Room” and “Urgent Care Center”.

**Emergency Room** = the department of a hospital that provides immediate treatment for acute illnesses and trauma.

**Urgent Care Center**= clinic outside of a hospital that provides medical care and services to people with urgent but not serious problems.

- Where are the Urgent Care Centers in your area?
- How did you find them?
- How do you decide whether your student needs to be seen at an Emergency Room or if an Urgent Care or a walk in facility will give proper care?

Then, using the information from the **Nemours Foundation** website below, further differentiate how to decide where to go for medical treatment when issues arise.

- **Visit an urgent care center.** *An urgent care center can be a good option for non-emergencies at night and on weekends when your doctor may not be in the office. At these centers, you can usually get things like X-rays, stitches, and care for minor injuries that aren't life threatening yet require medical attention on the same day.*
- **Visit a hospital emergency room.** *An ER — also called an emergency department (ED) — can handle a wide variety of serious problems, such as severe bleeding, head trauma, seizures, meningitis, breathing difficulties, dehydration, and serious bacterial infections.*

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- ✓ It is important to seek medical help from the appropriate location. When ER visits are warranted, the cost is charged to the International Students and in many cases, treatment at an Urgent Care Center could have provided the necessary level of care.

## **DISCUSSION# 3: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES** (15 MINUTES)

1. Point out to host families the importance of knowing and understanding the YFU policies and procedures. Additionally, tell them that today you will spend some time on two specific policies: Travel Policy and Dangerous Activities Policy
  2. Ask participants to share their ideas on why YFU focuses on these two policies and what they may already know about the policies. Make sure the following points are discussed.
- ✓ Policies and procedures are designed to protect students and host families alike (as host families are taking on the responsibility of keeping another person's child safe). Give actual examples of your own, or use the following:
    - *A few years ago, a host family took their student out of town during the last few weeks of the exchange year, without completing a Permission to Travel form or informing anyone and the students' aunt passed away very*

*unexpectedly. Despite our best efforts, we could not reach the host family/student to inform her and she missed the aunt's funeral. Once we were able to contact her, she was devastated she had not known.*

- ✓ Host families must support the YFU student through a successful exchange and not permit them to violate any YFU Policy.
  - ✓ Failure to adhere to the policies could expose a family to liability.
3. Ask: Do you know where to find these policies?
- ✓ YFU Policies and Procedures are located in many places- 1) printed in the **Host Family Handbook**, 2) on the host family account page under Resources, and 3) also in the student handbook, **Passport to the USA**.
4. Explain the travel policy:
- ✓ Permission is required if the student will be traveling without you for more than three nights
  - ✓ Permission is required if the student will miss more than five days of school
  - ✓ Permission is required if the student is traveling outside the US
  - ✓ Permission is required if the trip costs more than 300 USD
  - ✓ Important information from the Homeland Security:

**IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT:** Students and host families MUST follow all Department of State requirements regarding international travel and proper documentation. If a student leaves the US without proper documentation, including the DS-2019, the student's visa could be terminated in the Homeland Security database (SEVIS) and the **student could be refused entry back into the US.**

## **DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES**

5. Ask the families why YFU would have a specific policy regarding activities that might be considered dangerous. What kind of stipulations might be related to *Dangerous Activities*?
6. Review this policy and fill in any misunderstandings or gaps in understanding the families may have. Dangerous Activity information may be found on p. 51 of the 2017 Host family handbook as well as on the Host Family Account page under "Resources".
- ✓ Some activities are absolutely prohibited; other activities require permission and special insurance; others require permission, special insurance and there are stipulations about training, supervision, and/or equipment.
  - ✓ Prohibited activities: Bungee jumping, Hang gliding, Parachute jumping, Parasailing, Water Skiing, Piloting a private plane, Mountaineering, Racing by Horse. Also all driving is PROHIBITED (even on private property): operation of vehicles including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), automobiles, snowmobiles, trucks, motorized trail bikes, go-carts, personal watercrafts, mopeds, motorcycles or snowmobiles.
  - ✓ Review the policy to understand which activities require special permission and additional precautions. Examples include: horse jumping, scuba diving, driving farm tractors or lawn

mowers, rappelling and others.

- ✓ Permission for Dangerous Activities can be found in your Host Family Handbook, as well as online in your host family account under “Resources”. Talk with your Area Rep or YFU Support Services Manager about any questions on getting approval for an activity.
- ✓ Both the Permission to Travel and the Dangerous Activities permission form are on-line forms that need to be completed by accessing your Host Family Account. Please do not use old permission forms, as these are out of date. The Permission to Travel form is submitted online, whereas the Dangerous Activities form needs to be printed and scanned and emailed to the SSM assigned to the family and student.

## **WRAP UP** (0-5 MINUTES)

1. Review and wrap up activity: Ask everyone to think about one thing that they learned during this session and share this with the group. Tell the group that each individual cannot repeat what someone else has already said, so they need to listen to their peers. If the group is large, spouses and partners can work together to come up with their contribution.
2. Close the session by thanking everyone and remind them to use their Host Family Accounts and Host Family Handbooks to find important information.

# HOST FAMILY AGREEMENT

## P. 45-46 IN 2017 HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK

Our family has volunteered to host a student with Youth For Understanding USA (YFU USA), so that, by sharing our lives with an international visitor, I/we may gain exposure to new ideas and perspectives and promote international friendship.

If selected to host a YFU student our family agrees to:

1.  Read the YFU *Host Family Handbook*.
2.  Participate in the required in person Pre-Arrival Orientation prior to the student's arrival, as provided by our Field area, OR complete the required on-line Pre-Arrival orientation. Where schedules permit, YFU highly recommends combining both in-person and on-line orientations for excellent preparation to hosting.
3.  Facilitate the attendance of our YFU student at all YFU-required orientation meetings (post-arrival, mid-year and re-entry) and show support for our student by having at least one parent attend the parent sessions, if offered by our Field area during the program year. YFU strongly advises that a host parent attend orientation parent sessions during the program to benefit from YFU content for host families.
4.  Welcome our YFU student as a member of our family and assist in the student's adaptation to our family as well as to U.S. life and culture.
5.  Provide a home environment for our YFU student, to include a bed (not inflatable or convertible) in a room with a door for privacy and an exit window or door to the outside for fire safety, a study area, and designated storage space for personal belongings.
6.  Provide three nutritious meals per day, including family meals taken outside the home and school lunches.
7.  Ensure our YFU student a bedroom shared with no more than one sibling who is of the same sex and between the ages of 10 and 22. Other situations must be approved by YFU and agreed to by the student and natural parents in advance.
8.  Help our YFU student meet other Americans through introductions to friends, neighbors and classmates, and by encouraging our student to join clubs or pursue activities which will foster friendships with other teens.
9.  Ensure transportation to school for our YFU student and help to arrange necessary transportation for our YFU student for extracurricular activities after school or in the evenings, by driving the student or by providing access to a bicycle, a bus, helping to arrange carpools, rides with friends, etc.

10.  Ensure our YFU student access to a telephone for social purposes, for reasonable contact with natural parents and YFU representatives, and for emergencies, through full access to our landline or by helping the student obtain a cell phone.
11.  Provide our YFU student with reasonable access to the internet for the purpose of e-mailing natural parents. Internet access may be provided from our home, a smart phone or a community resource such as a school or public library.
12.  Not enter into any non-cancelable or term contracts (e.g., cell phone, health club, lessons) on behalf of the YFU student. Doing so will be at our own risk and YFU is not liable for any costs of such contracts should the student leave the program or our home prior to the end of any contract term.
13.  Help our YFU student to become familiar with our community and its resources (e.g., interesting sights, location of and how to use the library and recreation facilities, location and layout of school building, shopping areas).
14.  Accept and expect, at minimum, telephone, in-person, or email support contact from a YFU representative with the YFU student and a parent family member once per month. At least two of these contacts will be meetings in our home, one of which will occur within 60 days of our student's arrival. I/We will be flexible in facilitating the scheduling of the required monthly contact with our YFU student and our family. I/We understand that contact through text messaging or Facebook alone does not meet the monthly contact requirement.
15.  Expect our YFU student to follow YFU policies (link below) and to obey all local laws. I/We will immediately report any violation of YFU policy or the law to our YFU Area Representative.
16.  Work with our YFU student through open communication to solve problems, and to resolve difficulties and misunderstandings. If these remain unresolved, our family will contact our YFU Area Representative. I/we will also contact YFU if issues arise in our family's and/or student's adjustment, in our student's school performance, or if our family must withdraw from the program at any point after a student placement is confirmed for us. If we find it necessary to ask that that student be removed from our home we will give YFU not less than 3 weeks' notice in order that YFU may identify, screen and orient a new family for our student.
17.  Notify YFU immediately of any emergency involving our YFU student, our family or the student's natural family, of any change in our household composition (adults moving in or out), parent marital status, change in our contact information (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses), a change in our place of residence, financial or employment status, or of criminal prosecution of a family member.

18.  Provide responsible adult supervision (minimum age 21) at home for our YFU student should we be away overnight.
19.  That YFU retains the authority to render any and all final decisions related to the student's welfare and program participation. In particular, I/we will adhere to the YFU Student Travel Permission and Dangerous Activities Permission policies, as these specifically protect my family from legal liability. I/We are not the legal guardians of the YFU student placed in our home, and should not sign any documents or releases as the legal guardian, with the exception of school-related permission forms.
20.  Seek medical care for our YFU student should he/she become ill or be involved in an accident, and to provide transportation to providers of such care. We are legally empowered by the student medical release to arrange medical care for our student due to illness or accident. I/We will notify YFU immediately of any accident, hospitalization or serious illness. All students carry illness and accident insurance for the duration of the program. I/we understand that the insurance does not provide coverage for preventative care, pre-existing conditions, immunizations or required physicals for school or school sports, non-accident-related dental care, routine eye exams, glasses, or contact lenses; I/we will contact the YFU representative to arrange for natural family consent and payment for such expenses.
21.  Respect the privacy of YFU students, host families, volunteers and staff by using information appropriately and preventing the misuse of personal information, including on social media sites.
22.  Follow and accept rules the host high school may have about enrolling exchange students which limit the grade level(s) in which a student can be placed, which prohibit exchange students from obtaining a diploma and/or which govern participation in extra-curricular activities. I/we will expect our student to follow school rules while residing in our home. I/We certify that no member of our household has had contact with a coach regarding the hosting of an exchange student with particular athletic ability. I/We agree to share copies of any school documents pertaining to the YFU student with the YFU area representative or other YFU staff.



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING  
Intercultural Exchange Programs

**SCREEN SHOT – [www.yfuusa.org](http://www.yfuusa.org) HOST FAMILY ACCOUNT/ RESOURCES TAB – HOST FAMILY VIEW**



Return to ▾

Welcome to YFU Host Family Portal. If you have not yet started your application please click on the first icon below to start your application. If you are an existing host family please click on the second icon and click on "Host family home", to take you to your account on YFUUSA.org.

If you need further details on how to navigate your portal please [click here](#).

Step 1: Application	Step 2: HF Agreement	Step 3: Criminal Background Check	Step 4: Photos	Step 5: HF Checklist	Step 6: HF Home

[+ Add Interest](#)

# HOST FAMILY ACCOUNT/ RESOURCES TAB

HOST A STUDENT   STUDY ABROAD   VOLUNTEER   VIRTUAL EXCHANGE   EDUCATORS   ALUMNI   COME TO THE USA   ABOUT YFU

**HOST FAMILY**   MY ACCOUNT   CURRENT YEAR FORMS   HOSTING STORY   **RESOURCES**   MEET YFU STUDENTS   MY STUDENT(S) - (LAST 5)

HELP ON THIS PAGE >   CONTACT SUPPORT >

## HOST FAMILY RESOURCES

### RESOURCES ABOUT HOSTING

- [Host Family Handbook](#)
- [Student Health Insurance Information](#)
- [Travel Information](#)
- [Steps to Becoming a Host Family](#)
- [Questions and Answers About Hosting an Exchange Student](#)

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE MATERIALS FOR HOST FAMILIES

- [The Exchange Visitor Program Brochure](#)
- [Secondary School Student Program Participant Welcome Letter](#)
- [Secondary School Student Program Host Family Appreciation Letter](#)

### RESOURCES ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

- [Volunteer Online Application](#)
- [Volunteer Application Packet](#)

### ORIENTATION MATERIALS

- [Host Family Welcome Packet](#)
- [Host Family Handbook \(email orientations@yfu.org for a printed copy\)](#)
- [YFU CBYX Program Resources](#)
- [YFU FLEX Program Resources](#)
- [YFU YES Program Resources](#)
- [How to Be a Loveable Host Family](#)
- [How to Be a Loveable Exchange Student](#)
- [Passport to the USA - International student handbook](#)
- [CultureGrams](#)

### STUDENT TRAVEL INFORMATION

**IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN EMERGENCY ON THE DAY OF YOUR STUDENT'S FLIGHT (E.G., YOU CANNOT LOCATE YOUR STUDENT AT THE AIRPORT), PLEASE CALL YFU AT 1.800.705.9510.**

**ADDITIONAL FORMS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE  
BOTTOM OF THIS PAGE**

# LINES OF COMMUNICATION FOR SUPPORT IN THE U.S.

When students and host families require support, contacting those who are best equipped to help allows the YFU support structure to work most effectively.

