

A Collection of Thoughts for a Good Youth Exchange

1. Remember the 4 D's:
 - No Drinking
 - No Driving
 - No Drugs
 - No Dating
2. Remember that everyone needs "time outs". Do not try to fill every hour.
3. Ask what your students' interests are. As often as possible, try to fulfill reasonable requests.
4. Listen. Remember that many students do not have any concept of what our way of life is, as we don't of theirs.
5. Be Honest. Be Kind. Be Compassionate. Some students get very homesick. If you feel your student is overly depressed, please contact the youth exchange coordinator for assistance.
6. Ask what your student's financial constraints are. Tailor your activities accordingly. Your student is coming to live in a family environment, not to be catered to hand over foot.
7. Offer church services if requested. Do not force church attendance! If your student's religion is different than your family's, and your student requests church service, try to arrange church partnerships if possible.
8. Expect your student to participate fully in your family, including light chores.
9. Use Common Sense. Exchanges are to be Enjoyed, not Endured!
10. Please respect your student as an adult. Most students are chosen for youth exchange because they are outstanding people.
11. Also remember that your student is still a youth. He/she may act very grown up and mature, but he/she still needs to be looked after, and may even need discipline.
12. Do not allow boyfriend/girlfriend relationships to take place.
13. Be aware that misunderstandings can happen if you take it for granted that your student understands everything you say. If your student is speaking English as a second language, make sure you both associate the same meanings to the words you use! (There are some hilarious anecdotes from past situations, but there are also sad ones.)
14. If your student remains with you, or comes to you after attending camp, remember not to let that camp experience become the focus of his/her life. You have a lot to offer, and your student should enjoy his/her time with you!
15. No one is Perfect. Don't try to be.
16. Students should be supervised a majority of the time they are here. This can be done by family, friends, Lions, etc. They can be left alone, or on their own in a familiar and safe environment for periods of time, but should not be left to their own devices outside the home, or without preparation first.

17. Do not try to force opinions, ways of life, or philosophies on your student, as they should not do to you.
18. Do not allow yourself to be a taxi driver for compulsive shoppers! Many students overspend. Ask your student what he/she would like to have from Canada and spend a reasonable amount of time trying to accommodate. Hint: Thrift shops, Second hand stores, Salvation Army and Catholic Charities are all great places to find jeans, sweaters, and other "Canadian Wear" cheap. They can also be fun!
19. Respect Privacy. We can sometimes seem overwhelming and boisterous, not like where your student is from.
20. Urge your student to share family recipes, and you do the same. Have your student cook "food from home"!
21. Be a Proud Canadian, and make your student proud to be here.
22. Don't criticize other countries. Don't criticize other ways of life. Don't stereotype or generalize.
23. Don't allow your student to take on more than he/she is physically, emotionally, or mentally able. (For instance, don't allow him/her to try rock climbing if you don't think he/she is capable).
24. If you plan an outing or function with multiple students and/or other host families, be sure to include ALL students in your activities. DO NOT allow cliques, or little groups, to form.
25. This experience should be a highlight in your life, and in your student's life as well. If it isn't, please contact the youth exchange coordinator for assistance.

These thoughts and suggestions may seem obvious, but were all taken from past exchange experiences. Please remember that we are all just human beings. Exchanges give us the opportunity to learn from one another, and to love each other. If you have any further suggestions to add to this list, please let us know. Thank you for being a host family, and happiness to you in the wonderful experiences you are about to have in what will change your life; The Lions Youth Exchange.

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