

## What is an Au Pair?

An Au Pair is a young person from abroad employed by a “Host Family” to care for their children. Au Pairs are a live-in form of childcare and provide a unique cultural and learning experience.

The title comes from the French term au pair, meaning “on a par” or “equal to”, indicating that the relationship is intended to be one of equals: the au pair is intended to become a member of the family. An Au Pair is given the opportunity to learn about another culture and family as well as share your culture with a family.

An Au Pair provides in-home, dedicated childcare. Au Pair education and care is focused on providing a stable and secure environment for children in their own home, and ensuring each child gets the full attention and support they need in their early years of life. Au Pair responsibilities can include:

- Childcare and education. Encouraging, guiding and supporting children in your own home
- Ensuring routines such as nappy changing, changing of clothes, bottle feeding, bedtimes are carried out
- Waking the children in the morning and helping them to get dressed
- Preparing meals for your children
- Helping your child take care of their belongings and tidy areas of play
- Taking your child to playgroups, child outings, school and other activities such as sport
- Washing and organising your child’s clothes throughout the working week.

## Au Pair vs Nanny

The key differences between an Au Pair and a Nanny are:

- An Au Pair is typically from overseas – often in New Zealand on a 12 month working holiday visa.
- An Au Pair is aged between 18 to 30 years old.
- An Au Pair is nearly always live-in. So they can do after-hours care as well, for example, babysitting.
- An Au Pair wage is typically only \$180 to \$220 net per week (plus room and board). This is much more affordable than a nanny.

## Finding the perfect Au Pair

When selecting an Au Pair candidate, it is important that you carefully think about your requirements. Do you need someone who can drive? Do you want an Au Pair with experience caring for babies? Make sure that you clearly articulate your requirements to an Au Pair agency to help them recruit an Au Pair who will meet your needs and experience requirements.

## What countries do Au Pairs come from?

Au Pairs can come from all over the world (Germany, Sweden, France, America, Canada, Brazil, Japan etc). Au Pairs usually enter New Zealand on a Working Holiday Visa. Some countries don’t have a Working Holiday Visa scheme with New Zealand and sometimes there are limits around the number of visas issued for certain countries. Countries with the best Working Holiday Visa schemes include Germany, Sweden, France, USA, the United Kingdom and Canada – these countries are typically where most Au Pairs come from.

Remember, what makes a great Au Pair is a positive attitude, willingness to learn and love of children – not their country of origin.

## **Host Family requirements**

An Au Pair must have a dedicated and separate bedroom as well as suitable access to a bathroom. Access to a computer, TV, books etc is preferable.

An Au Pair must have at least three meals per day (free of charge) as well as uninhibited access to all food and typical household amenities. There must be sufficient space in your home to accommodate an Au Pair as a live-in employee.

An Au Pair who you select to join your family will be employed by you personally for the duration of the Placement Term (length of stay). As an employee, an Au Pair is entitled to all the benefits and rights that a normal employee enjoys under New Zealand law. For example, an Au Pair is entitled to annual holidays and public holidays as set out in the Holidays Act.

## **Au Pair requirements**

Au Pair requirements typically include:

- The Au Pair must be between 18 – 30 years old (usually a condition of their visa/entry into New Zealand)
- Have a clean police record
- Have a valid driver's license
- Meet New Zealand visa requirements (Working Holiday Visa or Student Visa)
- Childcare experience (especially for Au Pairs caring for children under 5 years of age).

## **Au Pair wages and tax**

Au Pair wages are typically between \$60 to \$120 net per week for 10 - 20 hours of work (excluding tax, room and board). Au Pairs typically enter New Zealand on a working holiday visa or student visa. Anyone working in New Zealand on a working holiday visa or student visa enjoys the same benefits and rights under New Zealand Employment Law as any other employee in New Zealand.

Therefore, your Au Pair will become your employee and as such you must comply with all relevant New Zealand tax and employment legislation including (but not limited to):

- The Employment Relations Act
- The Holidays Act
- The Minimum Wage Act
- The Health and Safety in Employment Act