

Do:

- Help the student to feel at home. Be natural and informal and treat them as part of the family as you would a niece or nephew living with you. Learn a few words in their language.
- Learn a bit about their country and how to pronounce their name. The more they engage in conversation, the more confidence they will have. Keep in mind that talking about school may not be the most interesting topic for them.
- Go through the program handbook together – this can prompt some good conversations.
- Give them a tour of your home and show them how to work everything including showers, appliances, and alarm systems. Things here may work differently than in their home country.
- Help them feel comfortable in your home, and in your community. Teach them how to take the bus to and from school and other locations that they may like to go to. (the mall, etc.)
- Assist them in setting up a bank account (Royal Bank), cell phone and if they arrive in second semester, get an ID card. A city transit ID is the easiest way to do that on Osborne Street and they only need their letter of acceptance as additional ID (cost under \$10).
- Teach them how to lock up your home properly when they leave the house and how to get in, if they arrive home first. Some students may never have been the last out or first home. Some may never have had alarm systems in their homes or even locked their doors!

- Be respectful of their privacy; ask them to be present when you go into their room.
- Be patient with the time it may take for them to do things 'our way'.
- Learn about your student through conversation/photos.
- Please check with the International Education Department if you are unsure about anything (signing things, travel requirements, etc.).
- Include them in family activities, celebrations and outings. If you invite them to a family activity such as a meal out/bowling/movie/etc., you should pay their way if you are paying for your own children.
- Try to take them to see some of Winnipeg – maybe once a month. Encourage them to participate in many different activities, including the ones offered by the international department.
- Treat them as you would want your own children treated by a family in another culture.
- Do get to know each other and have fun!!!

Don't:

- Don't assume that because they are teenagers that they will just 'know' how to do something and or behave appropriately – they have been raised in another culture and family and change takes time.
- Don't misinterpret their body language (eye contact, etc) & shyness for disinterest or 'attitude'.
- Do not discuss financial issues with the student. Finance discussions should be kept between adults. Students may interpret your concerns about the cost of wasting food, long shower times increasing water bills, as your interest in hosting being focused on financial. Find other words to express your feelings about waste.
- Don't sign anything that will commit to finance or responsibility (ie. cell phone contracts, waivers for high risk activities).
- Don't assume that they understand when they answer 'yes' all the time. They may be embarrassed to say that they didn't understand. If you need to be sure, ask them to tell you what they understood. Encourage them to say "I don't understand".
- Don't think that they are 'spoiled' because they do not know how to do something. Many cultures do not ask their children to be as independent as ours. They are here to learn some life skills in this experience and will be thankful to you for teaching them. You just may not know it until later.

Homestay Family Do's and Don'ts



- Don't be surprised if your student comes home later than the time they said they would. Different cultures may have different views of time.
- Don't treat your student as a guest. If you start by doing things for them, and then later expect them to do it, they may think that you are not happy with them. If the expectation is that they do something, you will most likely need to teach them how to do something, and then explain when they are to do it on their own.