

Sample questions for au pairs to ask during interviews

Let's face it, finding a host family is not easy. But relax, because it might be easier than you think.

The most important thing to remember about this interview is that it is a two-way interview. Just like the host family is looking to decide whether you might be the right au pair for them, you need to decide whether they might be the right host family for you.

In this context, you should not be afraid of asking difficult questions. There are different types of host families out there, just like there are different types of au pairs and, though your agency will have tried their best to match you with a host family who suits your needs, the interview is the moment of truth, your chance to find out whether you can see yourself as part of this family. If the fit is not right, it is best to know as early as possible, before either of you has invested any more time than necessary.

Key topics you will probably want to learn more about include the relationship with the host family, the relationship with the children, and working conditions and practical matters.

Relationship with the host family:

- Have you had au pairs staying with you in the past?
- What did you like most about the au pair experience?
- What did you like least about the au pair experience?
- How do you see me fitting in with your family? Will we have dinner together in the evenings? Are you looking for an au pair who will be part of your family, or someone more independent?

Relationship with the children

This one is important. You like children (or else you wouldn't be applying for the role, right?), so please make sure you let the parents know that this is the case. Ask about their kids. You'll be spending a lot of time with them if you join the family, so the more you know about them, the better. Plus, parents love to speak about their children, and you'll find out a lot about the family by doing so.

- How many children do you have? What are their names? How old are they?
- How would you describe your children in a few words?

- Do your children already speak my native language? How fluent are they? Are they interested in it?
- What are their hobbies, what do they like doing on a day to day, or on weekends?
- If you have had au pairs staying with you in the past, what has been your children's relationship with them?

Working conditions and practical matters

- What is the family's schedule like, and what will my day to day be like?
- Where do you live, in relation to the city center? How far is the nearest metro/ bus stop, etc.? What is it called?
- Will you need me to work weekends? What will be my days off?
- What are your house rules for au pairs?
- Do you speak any other languages at home besides Spanish?
- What language will we communicate in, on a day to day?
- Besides the weekly pocket money (which you probably already know about), will you pay for any other incidentals? (eg. mobile phone, public transport ticket, etc.)
- Does anybody in the family have any food allergies, are you vegetarian, or is there anything I should know about food in the house?

Remember, you can (and should) ask to meet the children, most likely either at the end of the first Skype interview or in a second interview. ***If the kids are there, say hello and try to engage with them. It's not easy on Skype, but you'll see how rewarding it is when you get a little smile back.***

As you speak to the host parents, try to read them. Are they approachable? Are they easy to talk to? How fluid is the communication? Does it seem like they are interested in the cultural exchange?

Also, remember that you can contact the agency to discuss any questions you might not have been able to get to in the interview, and the host family will also be more than happy to set up a second interview for you to speak again. The most important thing is for you to feel comfortable with your host family selection, which is why we recommend interviewing with at least two host families before making your choice.