

Pre-Departure Checklist for Parents of Foreign Exchange Students

CREATED FOR *BUDGET TRAVEL* WITH EXPERT ADVICE FROM YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING

- Make sure your child has a passport (and, if required, a visa). Allow at least two months for processing.
- If you plan to visit your child, make sure you have a passport, too.
- Photocopy your child's passport. Keep one copy and send one with your child (to be kept separate from the passport).
- Get copies of any prescriptions that your child might need (medications, glasses), health insurance policy with ID number, and health insurance claim forms. Keep extra copies of records at home.
- Ensure that your child gets any vaccinations he/she needs.
- Be clear on what will happen in the case of an emergency; keep all contact information in a safe place and make sure the exchange organization has your emergency contacts, too.
- Make arrangements with your child's school about course credits and ask about required subjects.
- Plan with your child how and when to send money.
- Purchase travelers' checks and a small amount of foreign currency. (Your child may need to pay a tip or want to buy a snack at the airport.) Learn how much the dollar is worth in the host country's currency.
- Have your child clean up his/her affairs (return those library books, etc.).
- Buy any necessary clothing (but don't overdo it).
- Learn about you child's host country. Ask student alumni or alumni parents on the YFU Alumni Referral list for additional resources (youthforunderstanding.com/ao/alumni_referral_frames.htm).
- Photograph things that show your lives at home for your child to share with his/her host family and new friends.
- Decide with your child the best way to stay in touch. (Most exchange organizations discourage students from having too much contact with home.)
- Buy some small gifts for your child's host family; make sure they will pass through customs (cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/).
- Buy your child a journal. Foreign study is a great thing to look back on!
- Have your child pack luggage so its size and weight is acceptable to the airlines. Have your child walk it around the block to make sure he/she is willing to carry it.
- Make sure your child puts a luggage tag on his/her suitcase.
- Be sure your child's carry-on for the plane includes: a change of clothing (or at least underwear), airline ticket, passport and visa, information about the host family, medications, and medical information (with insurance ID number and mailing address).

Finally, encourage your child to have the experience of his/her life, and to make every moment count!