

# Smart Au Pairs

A KEEN COMPANY 



**We will find your  
perfect match!**



# Welcome to Smart Au Pairs

**Dear (future) host family,**

This practical guide will guide you through everything you need to know about the au pair program and hosting an au pair. This guide covers everything from the definition of an au pair to the preparation and your family needs to undertake to make the placement as smooth as possible.

Smart Au Pairs is excited to share this cultural and educational exchange program with families. We are here to assist you every step of the way.

# MEET OUR SMART AU Pairs TEAM

## All about connections

In the au pair industry, it is all about connections. An au pair might not be the right fit for one family, but could be a perfect match for you! Similarly, as an agency, our focus is on forging connections and collaborating with you. Our aim is to make the process as easy as can be.

## MEET OUR TEAM

We pride ourselves on our professionalism, ongoing support, and our established reputation within the Australian au pair industry. With over 20 years of experience, we have encountered (and successfully managed) every conceivable scenario. We will be your partner throughout your entire au pair placement.

### Best of all

Headquartered in Australia and with a dedicated applications assistant in the European time zone, we ensure seamless coordination among our global partners, au pairs and you as a host family.

Jackie, our Program Director, has been leading the Cultural Au Pair Association (CAPAA) since 2020, ensuring industry standards and safeguarding the enriching cultural exchange of the au pair experience.



**Jackie**

*- Program Director*

I am passionate about family life, children and health and in particular womens' health, so many mums are running ourselves into the ground whilst trying to juggle family commitments and work! With a background in professional recruitment and coming from a corporate background I understand the pressures of trying to run a household and manage a career. I had also travelled and worked as a Live-in Au Pair so I have firsthand knowledge of how this fabulous arrangement between Au Pairs and families can work.



**Camilla**

*- Program Coordinator*

I have worked in the au pair industry for over a decade. With a young family, I have hosted au pairs from Germany and The Netherlands. I love the cultural exchange element and believe that is an invaluable asset in maintaining calm and happiness within your home. I have travelled to Europe to meet two of my previous au pairs and one has been back twice since leaving Australia. I really love working with international partners, families and au pairs from across the world and that no single day is the same. To all, flexibility and understanding are key!



**Michelle**

*- Program Coordinator Admissions*

I am responsible for uploading all our au pair profiles. This involves good communication and collaboration with partners from all over the world. What I appreciate the most about my role is the personal connection I establish with all parties involved. I am highly motivated to provide support and guidance to our au pairs as they navigate their experiences in a new country. In 2021, I got married, and though we do not have any kids, we are proud fur parents to three adorable dogs. I enjoy traveling, trying different kinds of food, and embracing new experiences.

A close-up photograph of a woman and a young girl. The woman, on the left, is wearing large, round, dark sunglasses and has her face painted with various colors (pink, purple, yellow). The young girl, on the right, has a cat-like face paint with pink ears, a pink nose, and whiskers. She is smiling broadly. They are outdoors, with a building and trees visible in the background.

## What does au pair mean?

The term 'au pair' originates from the French language, translating to "equal to" in English.

This concept positions the au pair as an additional pair of hands, to be welcomed and integrated into your family as a temporary, yet valued member of your family unit.

# Colouring lives

# What is an au pair?

An au pair is a live-in helper or big sister/brother who offers personalised care within your household. Hosting an au pair is a flexible and affordable childcare option that also offers the benefit of cultural exchange. Au pairs are members of your family and are provided the opportunity to experience the Australian lifestyle while improving their language skills.

## **Your au pair can assist with a range of tasks, including:**

- Waking up the children and preparing them for the day.
- Teaching the kids how to tidy their room and make their beds.
- Preparing breakfast and lunch for the children.
- Taking care of breakfast dishes and managing dishwasher duties.
- Ensuring the children have their books and sports gear organised.
- Transporting the children to and from school, sports activities and playdates, by car, walking, or public transport.
- Entertaining the kids before or after school e.g. visiting parks, doing homework or arranging playdates.
- Assisting with light housework, children's laundry and running small errands.
- Preparing after-school snacks and simple evening meals for the kids.
- Offering support with homework and school readers.
- Initiating playtime and organising activities for the children.
- Assisting children during bath time and preparing them for bed.

*By hosting an au pair, you not only gain reliable and dedicated childcare assistance, but also introduce your children to new cultures and perspectives.*



# Celebrating successful matches

**At Smart Au Pairs, we truly believe in the power of personalised matches. Each family is unique, just like the au pairs we carefully select. It is a bit like finding the perfect puzzle piece – what fits perfectly for your family might not for someone else. Our Success Stories highlight how extraordinary our au pair program is.**

## Joanna's Success Story

Meet Joanna, a single mother facing health challenges, seeking balance between work and family. Smart Au Pairs entered her life through an unexpected connection, and her journey took an inspiring turn. From the outset, Smart Au Pairs' exceptional support made the process seamless. Their personalised approach ensured a perfect match – Emma, a 19-year-old French au pair.



### Emma's arrival was life changing

Her energy, language skills, and caring nature enriched Joanna's family in many ways. Beyond childcare, she became a big sister, nurturing the children's growth and cultural understanding. With Emma's assistance, Joanna achieved a balance – focusing on work, personal well-being, and medical needs. The stress of single parenting was replaced with a sense of relief and gratitude.

Emma's presence brought not only childcare, but a global perspective, introducing new foods and language. Joanna's family celebrated Easter, embarked on memorable trips, and shared heartfelt moments – all made possible by Smart Au Pairs' super easy matching process.

**Her story is an inspiring reminder of the positive connections and change that await those who embrace the au pair experience through Smart Au Pairs.**



# Why choose Smart Au Pairs

**Finding the perfect childcare solution for your kids can be a challenge. But we are here to help! At Smart Au Pairs, we specialise in helping families just like yours. Once you become part of the Smart Au Pairs family, you will see why many families choose to stick with us. Cloe is one of those, she is sharing her experience with us as her au pair agency.**

**Cloe's story demonstrates the impact of having an au pair in your family's life and the strong bonds that we foster through our dedicated support.**



## Cloe's Success Story

### Why we chose an au pair

With our busy work schedules we loved the idea of having someone with the kids in our own home to offer consistency. We wanted our children to feel loved and cared for rather than just be another number in a daycare/before school care. The flexibility of having an au pair who could care for the kids even when they are sick or during holidays, engaging in fun activities, was a big plus.

### Our journey with Smart Au Pairs: since 2018

We were referred to Smart Au Pairs through a friend, which is always reassuring to know that someone you trust has had a positive experience with a service. We have received continuous support from the Smart Au Pairs team since we started hosting au pairs in 2018. Their availability to answer every question, guide us through the interview process and assist when our au pairs started, was invaluable. We appreciate that they check in on our au pairs to make sure they are adjusting well and provide events for them to connect with other au pairs in the city.

We have had 9 au pairs! And we are so lucky to have them all in our lives. Our current au pair, Josie is an 18-year-old from Germany. She is such a positive addition to our family. She loves drawing and painting with the kids, jumping around on the trampoline, kicking soccer balls, cooking delicious food, and spending time with our kids. She loves to watch soccer, especially when it is my son's team against her home team in the Champions League. Josie also loves travelling, exploring the city and all Sydney has to offer. Having Josie join our family has been such an easy seamless experience and we will be very sad to see her leave.

### Supporting families every step of the way

When we first started hosting, we really relied on the interview guides. They were so helpful and allowed us to know we were asking the right questions. Knowing that they check in on us and our au pairs when they arrive provided a sense of security and community. It is also good to know that, if there is a problem, we have support. If we have any issue, we can just contact the agency and they will help us to sort it out. The agency provides good assistance to foster a harmonious relationship between us and our au pairs to ensure it is a mutually positive relationship.

## **Fostering positive connections**

Our relationship with the staff at Smart Au Pairs has always been positive and supportive. Right from our initial consult, where we discussed our family's needs and expectations, they have been supportive and helped us finding the right au pairs. We appreciate the honest, open, and respectful nature of Smart Au Pairs and love knowing they have our and our au pairs best interest in mind with any interactions.

## **Embrace the variety**

We appreciate the diverse range of personalities available for matching. Many of our family's interests align with those of the au pairs we have been matched with. Reviewing their letters and selecting who to connect with is a process we genuinely enjoy. Recently, we received some 'Bro Pairs' to our potential matches that was a welcome enhancement as well. We feel fortunate to have connected with au pairs from various countries, enriching our lives with cultural insights and knowledge.



## **Stress-free parenting**

Having an au pair has allowed our children to have some stability and normality while we work. With unpredictable work schedules, having someone to care for the kids before and after school, and during holidays has eliminated so much stress from our lives. We do not have family to help us, and my roster changes every week with a combination of day and night shifts. Having an au pair means kids can stay in their own home to be cared for with someone they have a genuine relationship with is absolutely amazing.

## **Choosing the perfect match**

When it comes to finding the best fit, personality takes precedence for us. Living with an au pair involves welcoming them into our family, so shared interests and open communication are key. Our approach involves being upfront about our family's dynamics and expectations, ensuring a smooth and harmonious match.

### **FAQ: How can you determine if the au pair is the right fit?**

A common question we receive daily is, "How do you know which au pair is the right choice?" Our response is often that when you feel a connection, you will know. If you find that time flies during your interview, it is a good sign!



## Life-long connections

We still speak to several of our old au pairs, and they love how much the children have grown over the years, and we love seeing them grow into adults fulfilling their dreams, going to university or getting the job they dreamed of. The cultural exchange brings a good aspect to the childcare as our children learn new traditions, recipes, games, jokes and there are some good stories about cultural differences. Did you know in Italy they have a tooth mouse instead of a tooth fairy? And in Germany the tooth fairy leaves the tooth instead of taking it away like in Australia?

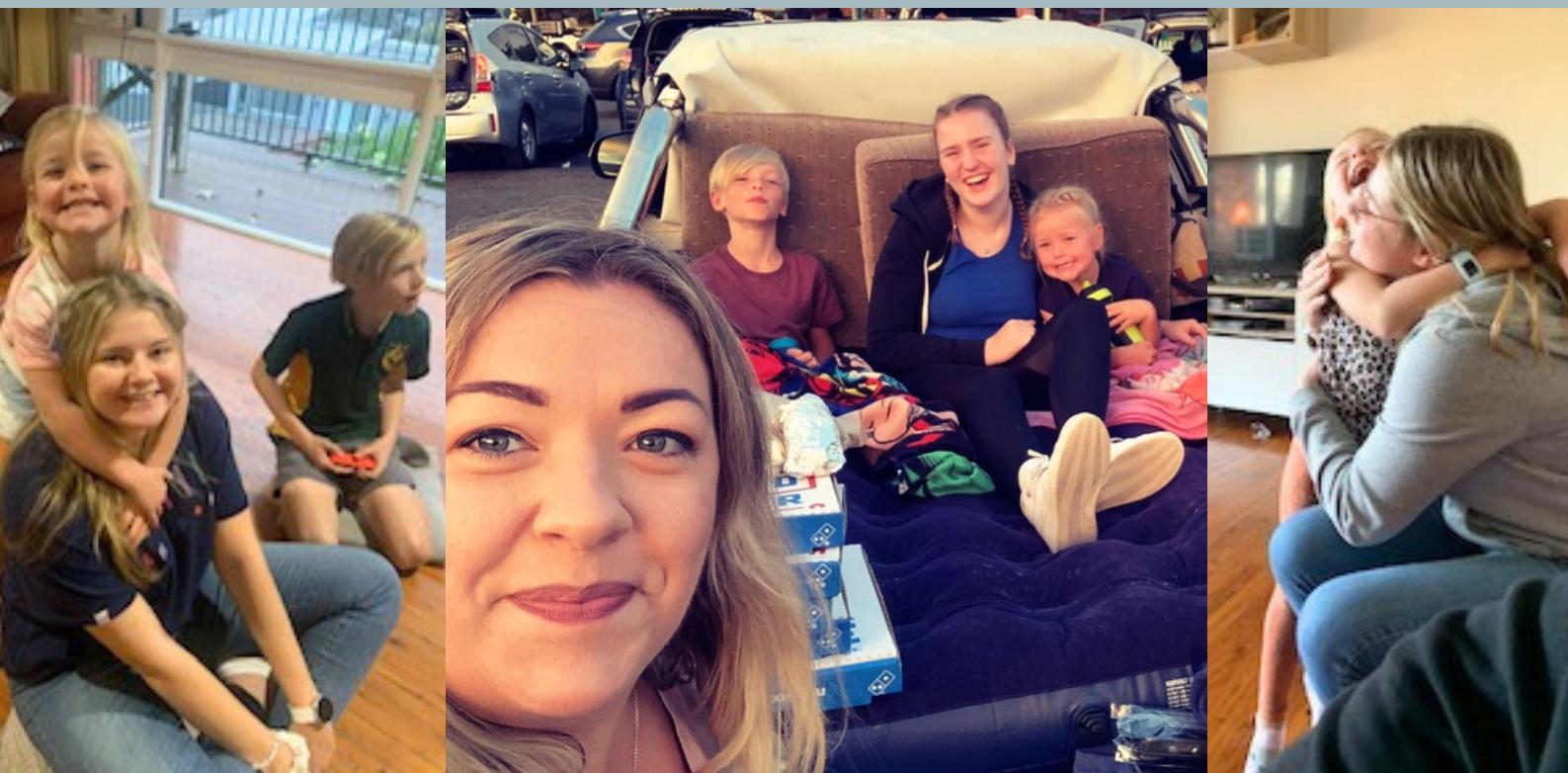
Our kids love that they get to choose their own activities during the holiday to play with the au pairs. They love having another person who loves them, will play games with them and takes an interest in their interests. Someone who is not their mum or dad to show off to, tell stories to and enjoy their company. I feel it has helped our kids to be confident and very well adjusted. Our children are happy to go into new situations and I think having had au pairs since they were little has really helped with that.

## Au pair takeover: days of fun and learning

The children love the days that our au pair is in charge. They check the calendar and make plans for the day. Our daughter will often disappear and see if Josie is free for some girl time, and our son absolutely loves his afternoons with Josie to play games, talk sports and have her attention all to himself. They love having an au pair and we love seeing the kids building such a great relationship and learning more about themselves and the au pair's culture with each new match.

## Our enthusiastic recommendation

We have passed on our awesome experience to so many of our friends, we could not recommend them highly enough. Knowing we have the agency there if there are any issues for either us or our au pair is invaluable, so is the support they have provided over the last 5 years!



## FAQ: What happens if your au pair is not the right fit?

There are of course, instances where your selected au pair is not the right fit for your family. If this happens we will counsel you through the situation. If open communication and problem-solving do not solve the issues, we are happy to find you a replacement au pair within the 30 day guarantee period.



# Meet Marie, our French au pair

We can tell you all about our au pairs and their experiences in Australia, but it is always better if they tell you themselves!

## Meet Marie - an 18 year old au pair from France

### A dream fulfilled

I dreamed of becoming an au pair for a really long time. First of all because from a very young age I wanted to work with children and secondly, because I dreamed of going abroad to explore a new country, culture and above all to learn English. I choose Australia because of the beautiful nature, great beaches, amazing wildlife and it is an English speaking country.



### I wanted to live the Australian dream!

After handling necessary paperwork, my Smart Au Pairs profile was set. While it took some time to find the perfect family fit, the wait was worth it. In mid-July, I connected with my host family, and within three weeks of matching, I landed in the cute little town: Scone in New South Wales. The family was at the airport to welcome me and from that first moment we met, our incredible journey begun.

### Making friends as an au pair - friends all over the world!

I think it is really important to make new friends and meet a lot of people from all over the world. This allows you to talk about your experiences, challenging times and to create memories together. I easily met friends via the Smart Au Pairs events, social media and my host mum posted in a Facebook group a few days before my arrival. Thanks to that I was able to meet around 10 au pairs that lived close to me! Making friends in Australia is really easy, especially since you have so many Holiday Workers - just like au pairs!



## I loved every moment spent in Australia!

I absolutely had THE best time of my life in Australia, from my arrival in August until my departure in June. My au pair journey has brought me so many things, it made me grow, I was able to discover new places, a new culture and learn a second language. Now that I speak English, many doors have opened for me in France.

I had so many good times that it is very hard to choose just one thing. The special moments I will never forget are: celebrating Christmas with 36 °C temperatures in the swimming pool, where the whole family was reunited. My birthday with a massive cake and the love I received from my host family or the fireworks that went off just before I left.

## Above all, I found a second family

Saige and Reed were the little siblings I never had, and my host mom welcomed me into their home as her own daughter. I always felt warmth, loved and never even felt homesickness. I can not thank my host family enough, whom I look forward to seeing again!

## THE best experience of my life

I could talk to you for hours or write a whole book about my experience, but I will stop here. The last thing I would like to say is that everyone will experience their au pair journey differently but if your host family is as lovely as mine was, your au pair experience will change your life! I hope everyone has an experience as wonderful as mine, and I am confident that more host families like mine will be part of this au pair program.





**Each family has unique requirements, work schedules, and responsibilities based upon the children's ages. Marie has shared her first-hand experience of what her typical day as an au pair was like.**

## *My day as an au pair*

### **Morning routine**

I woke up around 6 AM as the host mom left for work early. After that, the children and I had breakfast together. I helped with lunchboxes, dressing, hairstyling, and played with Reed. At around 8:20 am, we dropped Saige off at the school bus stop. As Saige was 6 years old, she went to school every day. Reed was at preschool, he only went to school two days a week, and stayed home with me the rest of the time.

### **During school hours**

Reed and I spent some quality time together while Saige is at school. We did lots of things, either go to the park, swimming pool, library, playground or we would do some activities at home or cook.

At noon I prepared his lunch and my host mum came home to eat with us. When she went back to work, Reed was allowed to watch some TV and then we continued to play together.

### **After school hours**

At 3.45 PM, we left to pick up Saige from the bus and went back home. I took care of putting her lunchbox away and my host mum came home again around 4 PM. Around 6 PM I often helped my host mom with some simple cooking and then we all ate together. After dinner, my host mom bathed the children and put them to bed.

During the day I had some additional tasks around the household and kids. It was up to me to do the kids' laundry and make sure their sheets were clean. I needed to wash it, hang it up and put it away. I also had to make sure to clean the mess we created sometimes while playing or baking. Other than that I had to clean my own room and sometimes run some little errands.

### **Lots of free time!**

I had a lot of free time as my au pair day finished at 4 PM. Then I was able to do whatever I wanted. I often went to the gym, met with friends or went for a run. I had all my weekends off and therefore I had a lot of time to really enjoy Australia. I discovered a lot of places such as: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Airlie Beach, New Castle and the incredible Blue Mountains.

# How do we support our au pairs?

Throughout the placement we not only support you as a family, but also make sure your au pair is feeling comfortable within your family and happy in Australia. To ensure your au pair's time in Australia is as positive as possible, we provide them with support in various ways.



## Smart Au Pairs events

We arrange social events to help your au pair effortlessly connect with others and foster friendships. They are brought together through our private group chats, and you can further assist them in expanding their connections through your network as well.



## Travel partner

We've partnered with a travel agency to ensure that your au pair can fully embrace their Australian experience. Through this collaboration, they gain access to exclusive discounts, enabling them to make the most of their time as an au pair in Australia.



## Au pair support

We assist them with essential tasks such as establishing an Australian bank account, acquiring a SIM card, and ensuring completion of the Working With Children Check. Additionally, we regularly check in on their well-being to ensure a positive experience.

*"An au pair experience has the power to transform not only the lives of the host family, but also the journey of the au pair, shaping them into confident, capable individuals with a global perspective."*



# Everything you need to know

Below is a brief overview of the au pair program essentials. This is especially helpful if this is your first time hosting an au pair. For more detailed information feel free to contact us or visit our website.



## Welcome your au pair into the family

Your au pair will become a member of your family and be welcome to participate in family life and activities.



## Open your home

Free board and a private furnished room in your safe and comfortable home. This means 3 meals a day, 7 days a week.



## Childcare responsibilities

Au pairs can help you with various tasks but should not provide sole care for babies, overnight care or heavy cleaning.



## Fair schedule

Au pairs can assist for up to 35 hours per week and maximum of 10 hours per day. They get two days a week off (weekends).



## Global partners

With partners all over the world, we ensure all au pairs are screened thoroughly and are ready to travel. The partner agency will help with arranging the flights, insurance and visa.



## Au pair locations

Our main focus is on the big cities such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. We are excited to extend our network and offer more host families childcare support in regional locations around Australia. We ensure families understand the au pair program, which is designed as a cultural exchange, providing the au pair an opportunity to enhance their language skills and become part of the family.



## FAQ: Can our au pair work extra hours?

The responsibilities of an au pair should not exceed 35 hours per week. However, if there is a need for additional assistance, such as during school holidays or when you have a sick child who needs to stay home for a few days, it is recommended host families arrange some extra time off during another week or additional pocket money as required.



By arranging the schedule in this way, it allows for a balanced au pair workload while ensuring that any unexpected circumstances or increased demands are addressed. Open communication with your au pair will assist in determining agreeable solutions for managing any additional support needed.

# Let's talk about the costs

**The costs of our au pair program consist of an Activation Fee and a Placement fee. In addition, the au pair must receive weekly pocket money and a bonus after their 6 month placement. The Placement fee and Pocket Money guidelines differ in relation to each au pair category.**

Please visit our website for the updated fees.

## Our au pair categories



### **Silver au pair**

- Beginner English skills
- Babysitting experience
- Often non-drivers



### **Gold au pair**

- Intermediate-good English skills
- Additional childcare experience such as babysitting, tutoring, sport coaching, kindergarten internship, summer camp etc.
- Usually drivers



### **Diamond au pair**

*\*More experienced\**

- Good English skills
- Most have 6 months childcare experience or a Childcare Qualification. For example, some may have been au pairs before or have studied Childcare at University
- Better prepared for additional au pair duties, including care of children under 2 years old
- Usually drivers



# The Smart Au Pairs process

**Our process is simple - in just 4 easy steps you are ready to host an au pair. We will guide you through each step as you move through the process.**



## 1 Registration

Register online via our easy form. Submit your Host Family introduction letter and family photos. We will ask you to provide a couple of family references to make sure all parties are screened prior to matching.

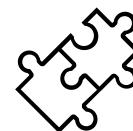
We will provide you with easy guides, templates and offer you ongoing support to make sure we get your profile ready as soon as possible.

## 2 Consultation

After your registration we will arrange a short phone consultation with you. We use this time to get to know your family and understand your requirements.

The more insight we gain, the more effectively we can match you with au pairs who align with your preferences.

Our goal is to truly understand your family needs. We know that family life is messy, chaotic and unpredictable.



## 3 Interview

Through your personal Smart Au Pairs account, you can access your hand-picked shortlist featuring profiles of potential au pair candidates.

You will have access to their full profile including letters, pictures, references, medical and police checks.

Families may interview multiple au pairs until they find their perfect match. We will provide you with an interview guide to ensure you cover all essential topics.

## 4 Matched!

Once you have interviewed your ideal au pair candidate, you may invite them to join your family. If the au pair feels the same way about your family, we have a match!

Together, we will draft an invitation to formally invite your future au pair.

Your au pair will then prepare for their placement (visa, flights, insurance etc.) Upon their arrival in Australia, you will welcome them at the airport.



## Support

Receive continued assistance and guidance throughout the entire au pair placement from our experienced team.



## Repeat

Stress free sourcing for your next au pair, as we know your family's preferences and you already have a profile.

# Smart Au Pairs

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## We look forward to chatting!

[www smartaupairs.com.au](http://www smartaupairs.com.au)

[info@smartaupairs.com.au](mailto:info@smartaupairs.com.au)

+61 (0)2 9451 3888