

**Au Pair Agency Eichhorn – “La Agencia”**  
**Established in 1997, with public licence (Federal Employment Office approval)**  
**Member of the Au Pair Society**

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My au pair agency is situated in the famous part of Düsseldorf, in the old heart of the city called “Die Altstadt”. It is in front of the Art Academy and not far from the house where the writer Heinrich Heine was born. This central location makes my office very easy to find. My agency was established in 1997 and has been granted a public licence (Federal Employment Office approval).

I worked myself as an au pair some years ago and I believe that au pair work is interesting and can be a very positive experience. Au pair work involves teamwork; au pairs usually receive something in return. The au pair programme makes it possible for young people to live abroad, far from their families and country of birth, without incurring big financial expenses. Most au pairs aim to learn or improve their foreign language skills. Usually this also includes learning about the culture, mentality and the history of the country you choose. The au pair work helps develop your personality and provides working experience with children.

### **Who are the host families?**

These are normally families with one or more children; there could even be a baby. It's also possible that a single parent has to bring up the children because a lot of married couples are divorced. Many couples are not married and live together just like a normal family might and in fact this is a quite a normal arrangement and nobody thinks badly of it.

The host parents are often of different nationality to each other for example: Turkey, Canada, America, Iran, and Russia etc. In this case au pairs have a splendid opportunity to practice not only their German but often English, Spanish, French and possibly other languages as well. The host parents may have different professions and families are not always well-off, but they must have enough money to support their families. Au pair must be given a separate room for themselves.

### **Where do the host families live?**

Most host families live outside the city in the suburbs, towns or in the local countryside not far from the city, where there is more nature and less noise from traffic. Germany is densely populated. I always pay attention to the fact that an au pair should be located within easy reach of other cities by means of public transportation. There are families available in every part of Germany. Most of them are in North-Rhine Westphalia, such as Bonn, Cologne, and Düsseldorf. I also have host families available in Hamburg, Frankfurt and Munich.

### **What do I need to become an au pair?**

An au pair is expected to be a responsible and trustworthy person, someone who likes children very much and can cope with them. He/she should be independent and creative, not too shy but open-minded and communicative. He/she shouldn't have problems with themselves in any way.

He/she should not be married or have children. They must be grown up enough to be able to live alone and far from their own parents/family. There must be an interest in living with a family, celebrating children's birthdays, going on holidays/day trips with a family, enjoying the family's way of life. It goes without saying that cleanliness and being able to put things in order is also a requirement.

Many host parents, most of all fathers, work a lot, so they are hasty, practical and are always in a hurry. Whether they have stress in the office or at home, they are always very active. Children as well, attend different courses, music classes, ballet or do sports out of school time. Very often host parents don't have enough time and patience to do everything that's why host families need an independently thinking au pair.

### **What should au pair be able to do?**

He/she should be able to cook if possible, which means they should have some idea of cooking and like to do it. They should be able to cook for children and or themselves. They should must be able to iron and do all usual types of housework, for instance washing dishes, washing clothes, vacuuming, cleaning the windows, etc. Knowledge of using various household devices will be necessary. So he/she should learn these things at home or learn how to use such household machines in a shop prior to starting an au pair job.

Driving a car is a useful skill, as is being able to ride a bicycle. Being able to swim well is almost always necessary. It's very nice when an au pair can play a musical instrument or can sing, has unusual hobby or interests, and is socially competent. Families also like active and healthy au pairs.

### **What does an au pair do and under what time constraints?**

An au pair must work with children and do some housework usually about 30 hours a week. The proportion of time spent doing different kinds of work varies from family to family.

When you become an au pair you will learn this early enough. There are also some families, especially when the children are eight years old or more, where an au pair doesn't spend a lot of time with children, but must do 80% of housework.

When children have their school holidays (Easter, summer, autumn, etc). Host parents go about work as usual. In which case it is necessary that the au pair has to spend more time with children and may have to even miss their German classes. However, children and au pairs have their school holidays at the same time. Extra hours will be compensated with money or more free time.

## **Free time**

You have usually have one day or one and a half days a week free. That means you take Sunday or maybe the whole weekend free. You will be informed of this exactly when you get the documents from the family.

Usually Saturday and Sunday evenings are free. For example in families where the host parents work in a hospital, the au pair doesn't always get free time on Sundays but on one of the other days of the week. If you are religious you will usually be able to go to church on Sunday morning.

## **Holidays**

An au pair gets 4 weeks of paid holiday a year, the dates of which should be discussed with the family. If the au pair stays less than one year, he/she will get 2 paid holiday days for each month worked. If an au pair has planned their holidays before starting an au pair job, then he/she should inform the family before their arrival.

## **Life in the family**

Families usually pay a lot of attention to their growing children; you shouldn't watch TV with them but play creative games so that the children can learn something useful. Drawing, doing handicrafts, reading books, visiting the zoo etc is generally speaking better for children's minds. It is forbidden to hit the children for any reason, this would be fully unacceptable. You should also be able to cope with difficult children.

You should understand exactly what is expected of you. So inform yourself about the family sufficiently before your arrival. Therefore please ask me everything you want to know, once I have sent you the information.

Here's a typical working day for the average family:

You have to wake up the children, help them dress or dress them, make breakfast, take the children to play school and make something to eat for them when they come home at noon. You should look after them until their mother comes home. When the children are not at home an au pair may go to school themselves for example to study German or do some of the housework, for instance: ironing, vacuuming, washing up. An au pair shouldn't have to do all of housework; he/she should only help support the family. You should not become a fully-paid professional cleaner and we know also that an au pair is not a skilled nurse, so the responsibilities expected of you shouldn't be too heavy.

It's not expected that you replace the mother.

However, when an au pair gets used to the family, feels at home and is independent enough, the host mother may leave him/her with the children and host father for a few days. Some host mothers have business trips. An au pair has a lot to do in such cases, but shouldn't be overburdened.

## **Family life**

Family life varies from family to family. Very often an au pair is treated as a member of the family, like an elder daughter or son. An au pair can or should take part in family outings, family holidays, barbecuing, etc. as often as possible. If it is your day off then you as an au pair should be able to decide whether you want to join in or not.

**Pets**

Children like pets such as dogs, cats, hamsters a lot, which means families usually have pets.

**Language skills**

You must be able to express yourself in German and understand what people are basically saying - elementary level (Grundstufe 1), which will be checked at the embassy. Good knowledge of English, French or Spanish is also welcome.

**Language classes**

Au pair must be given an opportunity to attend language classes in adult education college (VHS), which can be found in every city or town and the courses held are not expensive. Alternatively, some cities offer language schools. Language classes are usually paid by the family, but sometimes the expenses are shared between the au pair and their host family.

Those of you whose German is of upper-intermediate or advanced level, should pay attention to the fact that you may need to go to a bigger town or city to study because the VHS courses available in small towns are mostly elementary, pre-intermediate or of intermediate level.

Those who don't need to go to German classes, can learn another foreign language. However, an au pair is not allowed to attend a university during their au pair year.

**Terms**

A family must pay 260 € for 30 working hours a week. In addition, an au pair should be provided with a monthly ticket for public transport between the place of living to the language school and any necessary insurance, which includes illness, accident and liability insurance. The family also pays the registration fees at the German Foreign Office. Many of the families pay for the language classes as well (fully or partly). In most of cases, a host family doesn't assume any additional financial obligations before they have got to know an au pair personally. You'll receive information about this before you accept a family. An au pair will get a separate room at their disposal and free food, even when the members of the host family are not at home.

**Contacts in Germany**

When you arrive, you'll receive from me some information about the town or city you live in and a list of telephone numbers of other au pairs, who you could ring up and meet. You'll also meet a lot of new people at the language school. I organize au pair meetings in Düsseldorf once or twice a month, in which I advise you to take part. These meetings are very interesting, most of all for newcomers, who have not yet made friends. Those, who live in other towns may get the opportunity to spend weekends with their friends elsewhere. I'm always ready to give you information about schools, cultural events, etc.

**Driving license**

It's not necessary to have a driving license, but if you do have one (it must be an international driving license with an officially approved translation), you must have had some practice in driving beforehand, so that your host parents can be confident that you are reliable driver. Some families want an au pair to bring their children to school by car. Also, a bicycle is one of the favourite means of transport here in Germany, so you must be able to ride a bicycle.

## Visa

You may stay in Germany with au pair visa for a maximum of one year.

The host family must agree to a contract, which must be signed by the family, the au pair and the au pair agency.

The family must write a letter of invitation.

The au pair must bring the contract and invitation letter to the German Embassy and apply for their visa. During the visit to the embassy your language skills will be checked (directly or indirectly).

The Foreign Office of the city or town in Germany where au pair is going to work, will receive the application in about 10 days. The family will be registered and must visit the Foreign Office to fill in the necessary forms and agree to a declaration of commitment. This is a form of bail, in case an au pair commits a crime, in which case the family must accept the costs. This means that the family assumes responsibility for the au pair. Usually, the processing of a visa takes 2 months. After that the au pair can come go and collect the visa and buy a ticket.

## What does the application agency do?

It controls the au pair's application, so that nothing fails it makes a copy of it and sends it to different families, until a family accepts an au pair. The agency pays a lot of attention to its clients: it must be sure, that the candidates, as well as their families, are reliable. This is not easy at all as the agency does not know all of its clients personally, especially new families. However, I always try to find out (for instance when I talk to host family members on the phone), if a family is nice or not.

The agency helps the host families to get all the necessary information they need. In case an au pair gets into trouble or has any problems, she/he can turn to the agency.

## Changing families

If an au pair doesn't get along with a host family, she/he can change it. It can also happen that the family is not satisfied with an au pair's work and wants her/him to leave.

If this happens I will find another host family, which it is normally not so difficult to do as au pairs are always in demand. Moreover, if a person is already in Germany, she/he has an opportunity to personally introduce herself/himself to new host family.

## Application

### 1. Completed forms

### 2. Tabular organized résumé/curriculum vitae

**3. A (handwritten!) letter to the host family ("Liebe Gastfamilie"),** in which you should briefly describe your own family, your previous occupations and explain why you want to work as an au pair. You must also give a detailed description of your experience in working with children (whose children they are, how often you were occupied with them, what kind of duties you fulfilled, etc.)

As an au pair you must do household chores, please describe what you can do/could do.

It must be clear from your letter that you are eager to take care of the host families children, help in their household and that you are interested in living with the host family. Your letter must persuade a host family that you are ready to integrate (to become a member of the family).

I advice you to describe your lifestyle, hobbies and interests (probably you take part in some kind of social movement, play a musical instrument, can ride a horse etc.)

When your au pair year comes to an end please write and tell me what you are going to do, even if these are just your plans. It's always interesting to learn, how a young person imagines her/his future. Your letter should be about one and a half pages long.

**4. Two reference letters about your experience in working with children (handwritten!)**

It could be references to your work in a play school, in a family, or teaching work at school. They must include the address and telephone number of the play school, family, etc. The original references, as well as your health certificate, must be translated into German, which you can do yourself. The translations needn't be officially approved.

**5. Certificate**, which shows your language skills; acknowledgement of your student status, a copy of a page of your passport with your name and photo, your address in your native language, a copy of your international driving license (if you have one).

**6. Four passport photographs** (please smile! ☺)

**7. Six to eight photos**, in which you're seen with you family, friends and children. They must be current photos of your every-day life. Please make sure that your face is clearly visible as it is very important for a family to see your face, besides I may scan some of your photos for my homepage. Please send only original photos!

**8. Health certificate**, which has been issued not earlier than 3 month before your date of application. It can be sent subsequently.

**9. Please send me your contract.**

Note: When a family makes a choice, another contract will be signed by the family, au pair and agency.

Please fill in the forms and send a hand-written letter to host family, leave about 1,5 cm of free margin on each page. Please don't write on the reverse side of a page and don't put pages into a plastic envelope or staple them together, as the copies of them are made automatically. When an au pair year comes to an end, you can get your application and any other forms back from me. A report about your au pair work from the guest family would be appreciated.

If you have read and understood this entire document and agree with it, please sign it below:

Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Au Pair Agency Eichhorn – La Agencia**  
Muehlengasse 10 – 40213 Duesseldorf

Please fill in the blanks truthfully and with clear, readable hand writing.

When would like to live with a host family in Germany?

Date from: \_\_\_\_\_ Date to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_ Native language: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport number: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Practised? \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** Street \_\_\_\_\_ House number \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_ City(town) \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: local area code \_\_\_\_\_ City code \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Who? \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Information about your family:**

Father: name \_\_\_\_\_ profession \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_ “ \_\_\_\_\_

Brothers and sisters:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ age \_\_\_\_\_ profession/school \_\_\_\_\_

-

-

-

Would you like to work in a city \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

Village \_\_\_\_\_

Have you got friends \_\_\_\_\_ or relatives in Germany? Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer a big family? \_\_\_\_\_

or a small family? \_\_\_\_\_

or a single parent: mother \_\_\_\_\_ single father \_\_\_\_\_

Would you look after a disabled child? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you got any experience with disabled children? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you taken a first aid course? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like pets? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to take care of pets? \_\_\_\_\_

**Experience with children:**

With babies: \_\_\_\_\_ with children under 3 \_\_\_\_\_ with children under 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
Under 10 \_\_\_\_\_ and older \_\_\_\_\_

With which age group can you work best of all? \_\_\_\_\_

How many times a week/a month did you look after children? \_\_\_\_\_

Were these your relative's children \_\_\_\_\_ friend's children \_\_\_\_\_ stranger's children \_\_\_\_\_

What did you do with the children? \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of activities did you enjoy? \_\_\_\_\_

**Can you drive a car?** \_\_\_\_\_ How long do you have your driving licence? \_\_\_\_\_

How good are your driving skills? good \_\_\_\_\_ adequate \_\_\_\_\_ not very good \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like to drive? \_\_\_\_\_ do you drive well? \_\_\_\_\_ where have you driven?

City  
Town  
Village

Do you think you would be able to drive in a foreign country? \_\_\_\_\_

With children in the car? \_\_\_\_\_

(the first time will be with a guardian)

Do you smoke? \_\_\_\_\_ How many cigarettes a day? \_\_\_\_\_ Where do you smoke? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you swim? \_\_\_\_\_ In deep water? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you ride a bicycle? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you play a musical instrument? \_\_\_\_\_ What instrument do you play? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you ride? \_\_\_\_\_

**Household:** What kind of housework can you do? Write please in detail:

**Cooking:** what can you cook?

-  
-  
-

Do you like cooking? Not very much \_\_\_\_\_ I don't \_\_\_\_\_  
it depends on \_\_\_\_\_

**Language skills**

Knowledge of German:

Speaking: very good \_\_\_\_\_ good \_\_\_\_\_ satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_ a bit \_\_\_\_\_ nothing \_\_\_\_\_

Understanding: “ \_\_\_\_\_ “ \_\_\_\_\_ “ \_\_\_\_\_ “ \_\_\_\_\_ “ \_\_\_\_\_

other foreign languages: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the level of your German? \_\_\_\_\_

Where and what materials did you use to help you learn it? \_\_\_\_\_



**Health**

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Chronic illnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have to take any medicines? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you vegetarian or do you have a special diet? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you already done your military service? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
When \_\_\_\_\_

Your school education: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional training: \_\_\_\_\_ Course of studies: \_\_\_\_\_

Present employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to go to Germany? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to improve your German? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you plan to do when you go back to your country? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend at home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Could you manage to spend a year without him/her? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you sure? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a homesick person? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Have you already spend a long period of time far from home? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your hobbies, interests, activities:

**For the visa:**

[www.deutsche-botschaft.de](http://www.deutsche-botschaft.de)

here you can find all the necessary forms.

Passport

2 copies of your passport

4 pass photos

30 €

Completed questionnaires

You must arrange the appointment by telephone

