

Tips and Expectations



Tips for STUDENTS

- You may be the first person from your country/culture that this family has ever met. They will be excited to learn about you and your background! Teach them, but ask questions too. It is important to learn about them and their traditions.
- Show your appreciation after an evening with your family. A quick text to say "thank you" is all it takes!
- Concepts of time differ around the world. In the US it is rude to arrive late.
- Do not assume that your friend can join you for an event without asking permission in advance.
- Tell your family about any dietary restrictions you may have. If you don't eat pork tell them BEFORE they invite you for a large ham dinner!
- Smoking is less common in the USA than it is abroad. Do not smoke in someone's home without asking first.
- Your family can be a great help when you need advice – buying a winter coat, finding a special spice...
- International Friends families are NOT your local taxi service. Learn how to call a cab/uber.

Tips for ALL

- Learn how to pronounce each other's name(s) correctly!
- Be open-minded about the differences you discover. Healthy conversation is encouraged.
- Please do not proselytize. Do not try to change each other's religious beliefs, but remain open to conversation.
- Get together on campus for special events, such as International Education Week. Also, enjoy informal gatherings such as a cup of coffee, a football game, or attending a play, and events in the Akron community such as a picnic in the park, a movie, or a concert.
- It is OK to say no if you are busy – but don't let too long go before getting together. The semester will be over before you know it!
- Families typically have different schedules than university students.
Students: Try to give at least a week's notice when you invite your International Friend to an activity. Do not call your family late unless they have told you this is OK.
Families: Articulate your need to plan ahead, understanding that students often make last minute decisions. Students can be forgetful – a reminder call is a good idea!
- It is NEVER appropriate for a student to ask their International Friends family for money, or to borrow their car, or to be added to their cell phone plan. Financial concerns, along with visa and immigration problems, employment restrictions and academic concerns should be discussed with the International Center team/the student's academic advisor, as appropriate.
- It is OK for a family to offer to pay for dinner if you are getting together, but it should not be expected.

Tips for FAMILIES

- Mark your student(s) birthday on your calendar – along with 1-2 of their most important holidays. Birthdays or holiday cards are appropriate. Small gifts are nice but are NOT expected.
- Be prepared to answer questions about the United States and American culture! Your family culture should remain unchanged so your student has an idea of how your family lives.
- Remember your student during breaks! Many international students remain on campus all year round. It is not much fun to remain alone on a deserted campus over Thanksgiving or the Holiday Break!
- While most of our students are fluent in English, they may have accents and they may not understand American slang or idioms. Be patient and don't hesitate to ask your student to speak more slowly, or help each other expand your vocabulary.
- Ask your student about any dietary restrictions (religious, cultural or personal) and do your best to accommodate their needs.
- When winter arrives, your student may need advice on shopping for appropriate clothing. Tips on products, such as lotion, lip gloss and mittens might help also. You might want to share a discount coupon for a store or brand that sells NE Ohio-appropriate winter clothing.
- Smoking is more common abroad. Don't hesitate to ask your student to refrain from smoking in your home.