



A Warm Welcome

Ideas for homestay hosts to welcome student into their home

As a homestay host family, you play a crucial role in shaping a student's exchange experience. This guide provides ideas to welcome your student and help them feel comfortable, valued, and excited about their new adventure. These activities are designed to foster cultural exchange, create lasting memories, and build strong connections.

Creating a Warm Welcome

Personalized Welcome Sign:

- A warm greeting!
- Use student's name.
- Hang where visible.

Create a **personalized welcome sign** to greet your student upon arrival. This simple gesture can make a big difference in helping them feel expected and appreciated. Use their name and a friendly message like, "Welcome to our family, [Student's Name]!" Hang the sign in a visible location, such as the front door or their bedroom door.

Welcome Basket:

- Local treats.
- Toiletries.
- A welcome note.

Prepare a **welcome basket** filled with local treats, essential toiletries, and a handwritten welcome note. Include items that represent your area's culture or your family's traditions. This thoughtful gesture shows your student that you're excited to have them and are thinking about their needs.

Cozy Bedroom Setup:

- Comfortable bed.
- Personal touches.
- Storage space.

Ensure your student's **bedroom is cozy and inviting**. Provide a comfortable bed, clean linens, and personal touches like a welcome poster or small gifts. Make sure they have sufficient storage space for their belongings and a dedicated area for studying. A well-prepared room will help them settle in and feel at home.

Building Connections

Family Booklet:

- Family members.
- Hobbies/interests.
- House rules.

Create a **family introduction booklet** or a simple sheet with photos and brief descriptions of each family member, their hobbies, and interests. You can also include some basic house rules. This helps the student to quickly learn about your family and feel more comfortable in your home.

Foods

- First Breakfast in Canada
- Canadian culture meal
- Learn their cuisine.

Prepare a **welcoming 1st breakfast** featuring waffles or pancakes with whip cream and berries along with maple syrup, bacon and eggs. Explain that this is a special breakfast and not the norm. Encourage the student to share a breakfast dish from their home country as well to foster cultural exchange through evening meals.

Local Adventure Kit:

- Maps/guides.
- Local attractions.

Put together a **local adventure kit** containing a map and local guides. Highlight must-see places and activities that will help the student explore their new surroundings and feel more connected to the community.

Encouraging Exploration

Welcome Event:

- Invite neighbors.
- Casual gathering.
- Introduce the student.

Host a small **welcome event or gathering** to introduce the student to your friends and neighbors. This helps them expand their social circle and feel like a valued member of the community. Keep the gathering casual and relaxed to help the student feel comfortable.

Memory Activity:

- Photo album.
- Journal.
- Scrapbook.

Plan a **memory-making activity** like creating a photo album, journal, or scrapbook together. Encourage the student to document their experiences and capture special moments throughout their stay. This will create a lasting keepsake of their exchange adventure.

Cultural Exchange Box:

- Items from home.
- Share with family.
- Learn about theirs.

Create a **cultural exchange box** where the student can share items from their home country and learn about your family's traditions and culture. This interactive activity fosters mutual understanding and appreciation for different ways of life.

Providing Support

Schedule Assistance:

- School schedule.
- Activities.
- Transportation.

Provide **personalized schedule assistance** to help the student navigate their school schedule, extracurricular activities, and transportation options. Offer guidance and support to ensure they feel confident and organized.

Phrase Cards:

- Common phrases.
- Easy communication.
- Encourage learning.

Create **language or phrase cards** with common English phrases or phrases from your native language to facilitate communication and help the student learn new vocabulary. This can be especially helpful in the early days of their stay.

Photo Scavenger Hunt:

- Explore the town.
- Fun activity.
- Create memories.

Organize a **photo scavenger hunt** around your town or city. This fun activity encourages the student to explore their new surroundings, discover local landmarks, and create lasting memories. Provide a list of items or places to photograph and let them embark on their adventure.

Homesickness Care Package:

- Comfort items.
- Treats from home.
- Messages of support.

Prepare a **care package for homesickness** filled with comfort items, treats from their home country, and messages of support from your family. This thoughtful gesture can provide comfort and reassurance during challenging times and help them cope with feelings of homesickness. Be understanding and patient, and remind them that you are there for them.

By implementing some of these ideas, you can create a warm, welcoming, and memorable homestay experience for your student. Remember that your support and guidance can make a significant difference in their adjustment and overall experience. Embrace the opportunity to learn from each other, share cultures, and build lasting relationships.