



Cultural Care  
Au Pair



# THE TRUTH ABOUT AU PAIR CHILDCARE

*Make sure you know the truth about au pairs before choosing a childcare solution for your family.*

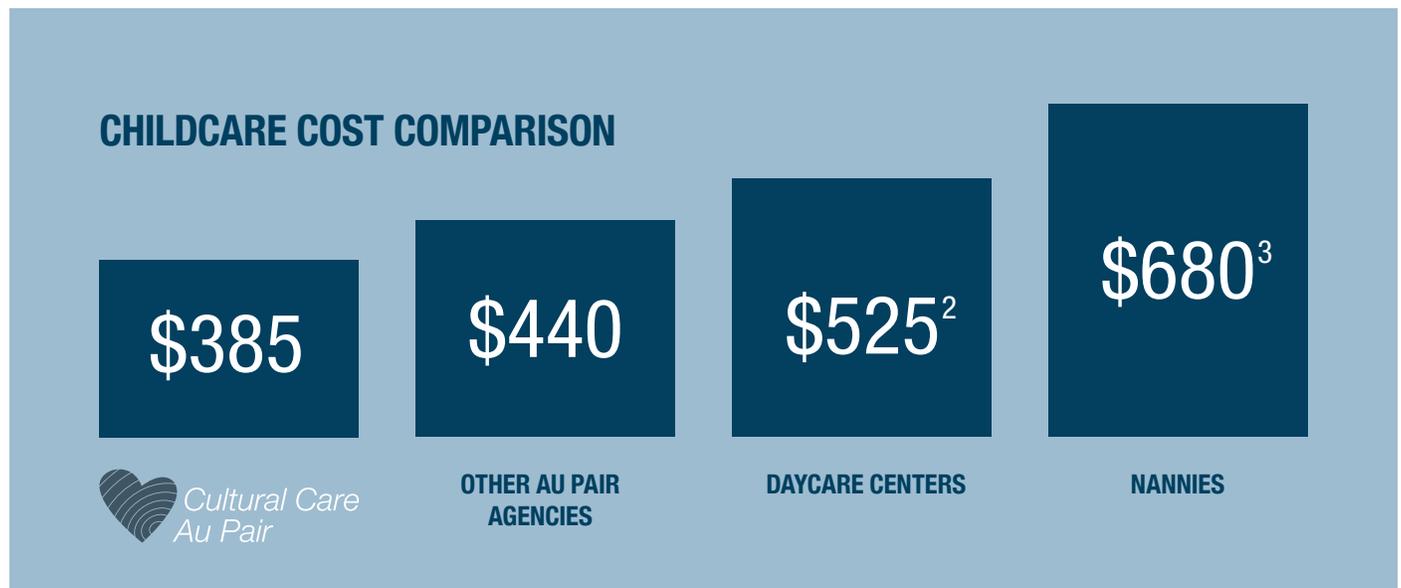
Most parents have heard the term “au pair” but don’t know exactly what it means. If you don’t have any family or friends with au pairs and rely only on the internet or secondhand information to gather more information, you may be misled by many commonly held au pair “myths”. Before you rule out an au pair as a childcare solution for your family based on mis-information, we suggest you take a look at our list of top 10 au pair myths and learn why they are just that: fiction versus fact. Thousands of American families across the country rely on au pairs to provide flexible, affordable childcare for their children each year—au pair childcare may be the perfect fit for your family as well!

# 1 Myth: au pairs are expensive

**Fact: The average weekly cost to host an au pair is just \$385 regardless of how many children your family has.**<sup>1</sup> In most communities across the U.S., this fee is competitive with daycare costs and almost certainly more affordable than hiring a nanny. As an example, take a Massachusetts family with an infant and 4-year-old. To put both children in full-time center-based daycare will cost that family about \$550 per week.<sup>2</sup> Hosting an au pair costs much less at \$385. (Yearly savings totals more than \$9,000.) Hiring a nanny will cost the same family about \$680 per week.<sup>3</sup> If instead, they choose to host an au pair, they save over \$16,000 in childcare costs per year.

[Visit our website](#) to find out more about our program costs and how they compare to other forms of childcare.

<sup>1</sup>Families may incur additional costs including an educational allowance (up to \$500 per au pair), additional insurance if their au pair will be driving, room and board expenses and a domestic transportation fee if they require their au pair to travel to their home from the Au Pair Training School in New York. For more information on program costs, visit: [culturalcare.com](http://culturalcare.com).<sup>2</sup>Kendall, Rosemary and Wood, Stephen. “Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2013 Report.” *Child Care Aware of America*. 03 Nov. 2013. Web. 12 Mar. 2014. <sup>3</sup>Halterman, Ed. “2013 International Nanny Association Salary and Benefits Survey.” *International Nanny Association*. 11 Aug. 2013. Web. 12 Mar. 2014.



*“We have three children and the cost for childcare in this area is extremely high. Having an au pair is a more affordable (and better) alternative.”*

BRIAN SCRUGGS, CULTURAL CARE HOST DAD IN MARYLAND

# ALL CULTURAL CARE AU PAIRS...



*are personally interviewed*

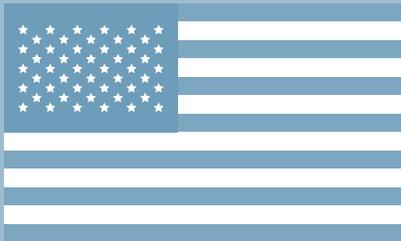
BY CULTURAL CARE AU PAIR STAFF IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY.

*are between the ages of*

18 & 26



*are Red-Cross certified in adult and pediatric CPR/AED and First Aid*



WANT TO BECOME PART OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY

SUBMIT AT LEAST THREE *non-family references*



*(Non-family; all of which are checked by Cultural Care overseas staff.)*

*are proficient in conversational*

**ENGLISH**

*—Hello!*



HAVE AT LEAST

**200 HOURS**

OF CHILDCARE EXPERIENCE

*undergo a*

**CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**



## 2 *Myth: anyone can be an au pair*

**Fact: the au pair program is strictly regulated by the U.S. Department of State to ensure au pairs are both qualified and have the proper motivation to fulfill their duties.** Individual au pair agencies often demand additional requirements of candidates who wish to be accepted and matched with American families. Each candidate is interviewed in person, tested on English competency, undergoes a criminal background check and provides personal and professional references in addition to an extensive application. All candidates must also attend an orientation that outlines an au pair's responsibilities in detail. Cultural Care au pairs must also have a minimum of 200 hours of childcare experience and complete a DISC personality profile. Cultural Care trained staff conduct screening and orientation meetings in our own overseas offices, and altogether, less than 20% of potential applicants are accepted onto our program.

[Learn more about our screening process on our website.](#)

# 3 Myth: an au pair is the same thing as a nanny

**Fact: it's common practice to use the terms "nanny" and "au pair" interchangeably, but nannies and au pairs are, in fact, very different when it comes to their qualifications and costs.** A nanny is a more general term used to describe anyone whose profession is to care for children. They may or may not be formally trained, or First Aid- and CPR-certified. Their education levels, age and background vary widely as does their childcare experience. Nannies can live-in or live-out. As mentioned earlier in this article, nannies generally command a much higher salary than au pairs. According to a 2013 salary and benefits survey distributed by the International Nanny Association, nannies make an average of \$680 per week.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, au pairs are young women and men who travel from different countries all over the U.S. to live with an American host family. They provide up to 45 hours of childcare per week (no more than 10 hours in any one day). All au pairs travel on a legal, J-1 cultural exchange visa that allows them to remain in the U.S. for up to two years.<sup>5</sup> Because the au pair program is regulated by the U.S. Department of State, au pairs are sponsored by one of 15 au pair agencies in the U.S. and meet specific criteria. Au pairs earn a government-stipulated stipend of \$195.75 per week.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Halteman, Ed. "2013 International Nanny Association Salary and Benefits Survey." *International Nanny Association*. 11 Aug. 2013. Web. 12 Mar. 2014. <sup>5</sup>Au pairs in good standing with the program have the opportunity to extend their first year for an additional 6, 9 or 12 months. <sup>6</sup>The weekly stipend is determined by the U.S. Department of State using a formula based on the federal minimum wage. Any change in the federal minimum wage will result in an increase in the stipend.

## AU PAIR VS. NANNIES



### AU PAIRS



### NANNIES

#### AGE

18-26 years old

Varies

#### CHILDCARE EXPERIENCE

At least 200 hours of childcare experience (many have much more)

Varies

#### EDUCATION

Minimum of completion of secondary education

Varies

#### CRIMINAL HISTORY

Clean criminal history

Varies

#### PHYSICAL HEALTH

Submit certificate of health from physician

Varies

#### REFERENCES

Submit 3 non-family references (checked by Cultural Care staff)

Varies

#### SAFETY TRAINING

American Red Cross-certified in adult & pediatric CPR/AED & First Aid

Varies

#### SALARY

\$195.75 per week<sup>5</sup>

\$680 per week (on average)<sup>4</sup>

## 4 Myth: au pairs only provide childcare

**Fact:** In addition to watching your children, an au pair can also be asked to perform light household duties related to the children at no extra cost. Au pairs can do the kids' laundry, prepare and clean up after their meals, tidy their rooms and organize their toys and clothes. Many families also rely on their au pairs to drive their children to and from school, practices and lessons, help them with homework and enforce the bedtime routine. Having an au pair also enriches a child's playtime through exposure to another language and culture.

### AU PAIRS CAN HELP WITH:



LAUNDRY



MEAL PREP



ROOM  
CLEAN-UP



DRIVING  
DUTIES



HOMEWORK



BEDTIME  
ROUTINE

## 5 Myth: au pairs work 9-5, Monday - Friday

**Fact:** Au pairs can work 45 hours per week, up to 10 hours per day on a schedule your family decides, including early mornings, evenings and weekends. They can also work split shifts — convenient for parents whose children are in school for full or half days. On the other hand, daycare centers do not typically offer coverage beyond traditional working hours, and most nannies want a consistent 9-5 (ish) schedule each week.



*“The flexibility of an au pair is invaluable to us. She helps us get everyone off to school in the morning and is also there after school managing play dates, sports, homework and anything else that comes up. It’s also great to have another adult member of the family helping with household duties such as laundry, clean up and errands. On top of all of that, we have a family of young women around the world who are near and dear to our hearts!”*

LISA SOUSA, CULTURAL CARE HOST MOM IN MASSACHUSETTS

*“With three kids under 3 1/2 and a father who travels often, we needed more hours and more flexibility than our nanny could offer. Pamela is the best au pair because she not only loves our children and takes excellent care of them, but also makes our lives as parents easier.”*

TENLEY HARRISON, CULTURAL CARE HOST MOM IN CALIFORNIA

## 6 *Myth: all au pairs are Swedish*

**Fact: Au pairs come from all over the world.** Cultural Care au pairs hail from over 25 countries worldwide including Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Poland, Spain, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom. Whether you wish to remain open to all cultures during the matching process or choose an au pair based her cultural background on the language she speaks, Cultural Care Au Pair can accommodate your needs.



## 7 *Myth: all au pairs are female*

**Fact: While it's true that most au pairs are women, Cultural Care Au Pair recruits male au pairs as well.** In fact, since we welcomed our first male au pair from Sweden back in 1989, thousands of male au pairs have successfully joined American families. Male au pairs, or “mannies” as they are often referred to in the media, are particularly popular with families who have boys, children who are generally very active or children with special needs who require a physically stronger caregiver.

Are you intrigued by the idea of welcoming a male au pair to join your family? [Browse some of our exceptional male au pairs available now.](#)



*“Philipp has been our au pair for over a year. He is a tremendous young man—athletic and outgoing. He has demonstrated a tremendous big heart and willingness to give it his all, and it shows in everything he does. Phillip is a great role model for my son.”*

VIRGINIA ROHER, CULTURAL CARE HOST MOM IN VIRGINIA

## 8 *Myth: au pairs can only stay a year*

**Fact: At the end of their first year, au pairs who are in good standing with the program have the opportunity to extend their year for an additional 6, 9 or 12 months.** While au pairs can choose to extend with either their current family or a new family, the majority opt to stay with the family and in the community they've grown to love. Talk with your au pair well before her first year ends if you'd like her to stay longer with your family.

## 9 *Myth: hosting au pair means living with a stranger in your home*

**Fact: Host families are encouraged to welcome their au pair as they would an extended family member, and after an initial adjustment period many families liken their au pairs to an older daughter or niece.** In fact, the French words "au pair" translate to "on par" or "equal to", indicating that the relationship is intended to be one of equals. And while families are often concerned that inviting another person to live in their home will intrude on their privacy, most are pleased to find that their au pair fits in well to their family dynamic and also pursues her own friendships and interests outside of the home.

To view hundreds of au pairs, [visit our website](#).

## 10 *Myth: Once your au pair arrives, your family is all alone in making it work*

**Fact: Our goal is to help host families and au pairs succeed on the program and we provide several layers of support during the entire program year to make sure that happens.** Cultural Care local childcare consultants, Account Service team members and program directors are your source of support once your au pair arrives. Your local childcare consultant (LCC) will call to check in within 48 hours after she arrives to your home, complete an orientation with your family and au pair within two weeks of her arrival as well as maintain monthly contact with you and your au pair. She or he is available to provide advice, guidance and assistance at any time during the year. Our office staff is also just a phone call away. Members of our Account Services team are available to help with any general questions you have—including those related to program regulations and your Host Family account—and your program director is another resource for families when an issue arises that cannot be resolved by your LCC or our Account Services team.

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*“We have found that there is no comparison in the kind of childcare, the flexibility, and the family feeling to having an au pair. I would suggest that families not be fearful of having someone live in your home. This was an adjustment for us, for sure, with some resistance from my husband. But once we struck the right balance, it works very well. And we couldn't go back to any other way now....it just works so well.”*

VANITA SHARMA, CULTURAL CARE HOST MOM IN MASSACHUSETTS

# Childcare quiz: which childcare solution is right for you?

## 1. WHAT IS YOUR WEEKLY BUDGET FOR CHILDCARE?

- A. Based on where I live, a daycare center or family daycare would be the best financial solution
- B. Based on where I live, an au pair, or nanny share would be more affordable than daycare

## 2. WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- A. Socialization for my child
- B. One-on-one attention and the ability to choose a specific caregiver

## 3. HOW MUCH FLEXIBILITY DO YOU NEED?

- A. Little to none; my family's schedule doesn't change much
- B. The option to schedule coverage outside of traditional work hours would be a big benefit

## 4. HOW IMPORTANT IS CONVENIENCE?

- A. Not very—I'm not concerned about it
- B. Convenience is important to me

## 5. COULD YOU USE SOME HELP AROUND THE HOUSE? OR AN EXTRA DRIVER? OR SOMEONE TO HELP WITH HOMEWORK?

- A. I don't really need any extra help
- B. A little bit of help with household chores would be beneficial

## 6. HOW SOON DO YOU NEED CHILDCARE?

- A. I've got plenty of time to figure it out
- B. I need someone in the next couple of months or less

## 7. HOW MUCH CONTROL DO YOU WANT OVER YOUR CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT?

- A. I'm happy leaving the daily activities and environment to someone else to worry about
- B. I prefer having more control over where my children are and what they're doing all day

## 8. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN CULTURAL EXCHANGE?

- A. I could take it or leave it
- B. Yes, I would love to expose my children to a different culture

## 9. WOULD LIVE-IN CARE BE AN ACCEPTABLE OPTION FOR YOU?

- A. No. I don't have the room and/or a live-in just isn't for me.
- B. Yes, I would consider a live-in caregiver

## 10. HOW WILLING ARE YOU TO INVEST TIME INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CAREGIVER?

- A. Not very; I don't have it in me to invest time and energy into another relationship in my life
- B. I would be willing to nurture a relationship with my caregiver if I thought it would benefit my family

## If you scored mostly:

**As**

*you are best suited to:*

### CENTER-BASED OR FAMILY DAYCARE

Your answers indicate that your family would benefit from securing childcare with a traditional center-based daycare or family daycare. Good luck finding a daycare solution that works well for you!

**Bs**

*you are best suited to:*

### AU PAIR OR FAMILY COVERAGE

Your answers indicate that your family would benefit from inviting an au pair or family member to care for your children. To find out more about au pair childcare, visit: [culturalcare.com](http://culturalcare.com). Good luck finding the perfect au pair or family member to welcome into your home!

**As & Bs**

*you are best suited to:*

### NANNY OR NANNY SHARE

Your answers indicate that your family would benefit from hiring a nanny or nanny share. Good luck finding the perfect nanny candidate for your family!