Be curious about everything; never stop asking questions. See everything there is to see, hear everything there is to hear, smell everything there is to smell, touch everything there is to touch, taste everything there is to taste.

Learn as much as you can about the life of your family and friends.

Study English and try to speak it as much as possible; laugh at your mistakes, and never stop trying. Don’t speak your language in front of others that can’t speak it. Language is the key to learning about American culture.

Have fun, smile, laugh, and participate fully in everything that you are able to. Look on the positive side of things and share your happiness!

Love your new family and friends, care about them, their feelings, and their ideas. Treat them like family and forgive them for their faults or shortcomings; no one is perfect.

Show your love through words, facial expressions, and your whole body. Tell your host family over and over what you like and how much you appreciate all they are doing for you.

Some Americans show affection by hugging. If your host family does this, be sure to offer hugs to your host parents.

Be open minded; people who believe that their way of doing something is the only way are not fun to be around.

Be open to other ideas; don’t think that your views are the only ones that are valid. Be sure to acknowledge when your opinion on a topic might be just your perspective and not necessarily fact, or you may offend people.

Listen!

“That’s stupid” is a host parent’s least favorite phrase. Try to think of how you would feel if someone said that about things in your country. Instead you could say, “That’s different” or “I don’t like it very much.”

Help your family without being asked.

Take advantage of every new opportunity—no matter how small—even if you find it a little different or strange.

Take time for every member of the family. Do things with your younger brothers and sisters. Take them out alone for special outings. Do things where you can enjoy each others company.

Share your experiences with your host family and friends. If you do things alone or with others, come back and tell the family about it. This makes American families feel closer.

Obey the rules of your family, your school and your program.

Ask for a job around the house that is just your responsibility, such as taking out the trash.

Discuss with your host family any invitations you receive from your friends and ASK PERMISSION before accepting (your host family may have plans for you).

Divide your time between family, friends and school (not counting sleeping time).

Say “please” when you ask a favor and “thank you” when someone does something nice for you.

Do something nice for someone else, especially when it’s not expected (give a flower, a little note, or wash the dishes even without being asked).

Accept the things you cannot change! Know that many things in the United States are different than in your country, but that neither way of doing things is right or wrong.

Realize that you have assumptions about American life and culture, and that some of them might be wrong.

Don’t argue, especially about things that don’t really matter. People who complain all the time are not nice to be with.

If no one is home to give you permission, then the answer is NO.

Never open and read someone else’s mail, unless they ask you to read their mail.

The parents in your host family make the rules for their family and their home. Some of them may be negotiable and you can discuss that possibility. However, you need a soft approach to question their guidelines. Ask if you are allowed to discuss the house rules. (Trust your family to know what is safe in your area).

Work hard at school. Take this opportunity to learn about things unavailable to you at home. Ask for help from your teachers, host parents, brothers, sisters and friends. You are expected to attend and participate in all of your classes. Enjoy school and the extra activities that are offered.

Talk to your family about your problems or, if you can’t do so, call your Area Representative. Don’t worry other exchange students with your problems. They are trying to learn about American culture as well and can sympathize with you, but don’t know how best to advise you.