

“This will be my fourth year participating in the Fresh Air Fund program. I just can’t say enough about how wonderful it is – for both the child you are hosting, AND for you and your family!”

As a volunteer host, you’ll be surprised at just how quickly your Fresh Air Fund fund guest becomes a part of the family ... and how much joy he or she will add to your summer! Year after year, host families tell us that the experience is just as meaningful to them as it is to the child they host.

To make your visit as successful as it can be, we’ve provided some information that you may find helpful.

Getting ready for your visitor

Yes, it can be a little stressful to invite a virtual stranger into your home. And you can imagine how it must feel for an inner-city child who is not an experienced traveler. All youngsters feel a little nervous starting out on a new adventure, and many of them are leaving home for the first time!

Just remember that host families like yours have invited Fresh Air children into their homes for more than 135 years, and that more than 65% of the children are invited back to visit again and again.

If you have children, you might want to prepare them for the experience. Discuss what to expect from a visit with a Fresh Air Fund guest. After all, your children will be sharing their homes, toys – and parents – with another child for two weeks.

Our best advice for getting ready is to relax, smile and keep a few safety precautions in mind. Check for possible safety hazards, and look out for things a city child may not be familiar with. And then prepare to have fun.



Saying hello for the first time

Your chairperson will tell you the scheduled date of arrival and the location of your Fresh Air Fund visitor and whether he or she is arriving by bus (the most common route) or train. Feel free to arrive at the drop off a little early and think about making a sign or carrying balloons to greet your visitor. It’s a great way to let your Fresh Air fund child know how happy you are to see him or her!

Your Fresh Air child will arrive with a nametag. Please keep the tag to put on the child for the return trip to New York City.

Your guest may be a little shy, tired or overexcited, so take it slow. When you get to your home, familiarize your guest with your house and family. You may want to help him or her unpack. Then relax and allow everyone to get to know one another.

(over, please)



Making a “safe arrival” call

All parents worry about their children, so please call your child’s parents the first night of the visit. If you think that calling home will make the child homesick, your call can be made after your visitor is in bed. You’ll find the parent’s name and phone number listed on the child’s registration form and name tag. If you are unable to reach the parent, please contact your Chairperson.

Dealing with homesick visitors

Homesickness is normal in all children and to be expected – especially around bedtime. Do your best to be reassuring. And since a child often gets more homesick in the evening, encourage your Fresh Air child to call home during the day.

If you need any help, call your Chairperson for assistance.

Meal planning

You might want to plan meals that include kid-friendly foods like hamburgers, spaghetti, bananas, peanut butter, chicken or pizza. And your guest may have some new food ideas to share with your family. Fresh Air visitors are already experiencing many new things; it is a good idea not to pressure the children to eat foods they don’t like.

Dealing with the unexpected

We know that accidents happen. If your Fresh Air child requires medical attention, call a doctor immediately, then call your Chairperson. He or she must keep a record of accidents or illnesses and any medical treatment. If you can’t reach your Chairperson or Fund Representative, call The Fresh Air Fund at (800) 367-0003.

Always take medical information with you when getting medical care. You will need to indicate your Fresh Air child’s insurance policy number or Medicaid number on hospital or doctor’s billing invoices. If this information is not available or if you have any questions, please call your Chairperson or support services in our New York City office.

The Fund will pay any medical expenses not covered by insurance. The Fresh Air Fund provides liability insurance for hosts and volunteer committee members.



Saying goodbye

When it’s time to say goodbye, please:

- Arrive at the departure point on time.
- Be sure your child wears a Fresh Air tag.
- Pack a lunch in a separate bag, not in the luggage.
- Do not give your child any animals to take home.
- Do not give your child anything that may break or spill.
- Return your completed host evaluation questionnaire to your Chairperson.

And remember that while vacations come to an end, the memories of happy summer experiences last a lifetime.

the *Fresh Air* fund
serving children since 1877

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