Au Pair Beware

Luisa Aguiar

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Read about what an ***au pair*** is in the box on p. 33. Discuss and share any experiences you may have with this kind of work.

2. What does ***beware*** mean? Try using it in several sentences.

3. What sorts of things do you think an ***au pair*** should be ***aware*** of?

It Seemed Like a Good Way to Travel

My friend and I came to the U.S. to work as ***au pairs***. We worked with an agency. The agency matched us with a family. We each lived with a family. We took care of their children. For payment, we received our own room, three meals per day, and $200 per week. We think this is a good way to travel and be in a new country. But it does not always work out.

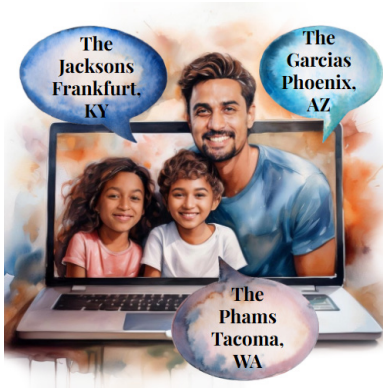
Looking for a New Family

My friend had problems with her host family. She needed to make a change. The agency allows us to look for a new family. But she could not find one.

We decided to use Facebook groups to find a new family. We found an interesting post. There were pictures of a nice family with cute kids. They showed all the family members taking fun trips together. My friend texted them and they answered back a few hours later. They asked for her email address.

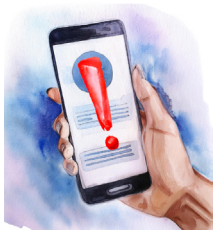
An Unbelievable Offer!

We were so excited. My friend was so happy. She thought they would be her new home. They sent an email, and we read every detail. We read it over and over again. We couldn't believe it! They were offering $600 per week.



We never saw a family offer this amount. We decided to check the family pictures. We did a Google search of those images. We found the same pictures but with different names and different cities.

Always Check Everything!



We learned something very important: never trust pictures online. Always check everything!

We reported the profile to Facebook. They took it down. But that is not enough. These people will just try to run their scam on a different platform or using a different name. And someone could fall for it. Sometimes you are so desperate to get out of a situation, or maybe you need a little more money, you can be a victim.

What Is an Au Pair?

An *au pair* is someone who comes from another country and lives with a family to help with the children. In exchange, they get room and board and a small payment. The term *au pair* is French. It means "equal to." The idea is that the au pair is like a member of the family, at least temporarily.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What made Luisa and her friend check the family pictures?

2. Have you ever been suspicious of something you saw online? What did you do to check it out?

3. The images in this article were generated by AI. What do you think of the images? Try using AI to generate images or a graphic.

Luisa Aguiar is an ESOL student at Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville, VA. She is from Brazil and her first language is Portuguese. She is passionate about being able to learn new cultures and she came to the United States as an au pair to improve her English.