

A letter from former host parent, Julie Moorehead

How we prepare for our visitors from Uruguay:

10 days can sound intimidating, but if you are prepared you will be crying when you see these new members of your family leave for home. Our children are so pleasant when they are entertaining our guests, they rush to get their homework done so they can play and they get outside!! It's so nice having 2 more kids for a short time. It doesn't matter your kids ages, we started when my youngest was in preschool. The fun of having big kids is awesome! When they are similar in age they enjoy the same interests; sports, shopping, video games, playing together. It's neat to watch your kids interact with someone from another culture, laugh together, and practice Spanish as well as helping our friends from Uruguay with their English.

First, set up a facetime with their family, show them your face before they arrive. These parents are trusting us with their babies! I know I would want to see them before my kids went there. It's a funny conversation in Spanglish, but exciting at the same time! We are still Facebook friends with all of our families and love to keep up with the kid's growth and progress!

I set up a bedroom for both kids to stay in together, each with their own bed. If you have a kid with bunk beds maybe they would be willing to stay with their siblings or in the guest room? We fortunately have 2 beds in a guest room for them, and this works great.

I have the linens in the bathroom, and show them upon arrival. I have a laundry basket in their bedroom and do their laundry while they are at school too. They wear the same thing most days, so hopefully they have 2. If not, wash in the evenings every couple days. I keep an area in the room full of snacks and water for them, so they always have something to eat. I keep fresh fruit and snack packs, crackers, etc in there. I also give them the wifi password on a notecard.

I think this year I will put a sign near the toilet to let them know they can flush after each use. They have clogged the toilet and I think it's because they don't flush each time.

I also make sure to have advil and immodium on hand. They will tell you if your kids have any issues and if it's ok to give them meds. They come in without much sleep and are adapting to our food.

I don't over plan! They have to ride on all our trips to dance and soccer and keep up with our busy lives, so to add on much more wears everyone out. They are here to experience our lives, so we don't have to go to the zoo, or the library or anywhere special! They are getting all of that with their group during the days. I also ask our soccer coach (because I usually host boys) ahead of time if the boys can help or hang out during practice. Soccer is huge in their culture, so they always love doing this. I definitely send them with their own ball. I think whatever sport your child is in I would ask the coach if they would be willing to let them watch or even participate. They love to immerse in all we do.

Do plan a day or 2 to take them shopping!! The boys want to go to Best Buy and Dicks. Not sure about the girls, but they love brand name America, so I would guess a trip to Macy's would be great! They all want to purchase phones, but you can only get them a kind that will work in their country. Scott and I will give you some options for these this year, we will contact some people that sell these and see if we can get better pricing. I'll keep you updated.

Don't change your plans!! The kids are always here over my kid's birthday weekend with the family, cousins and all. They love to see what happens, so drag them along. They go to all the soccer games, practices, you have it on the schedule make room for 2 more!

They LOVE meat!! This is always the hard part for me because I'm vegetarian! I usually make eggs and ham in the morning and have steak or chicken at night. They do love BW's, that's been a successful trip with both sets of boys! Don't stress, have fun, and just remember you're their family in a foreign land. They just want a warm smile!

I encourage everyone to try this! I can't believe there is not a wait list! We love hosting these bright kids!