

Best Au Pair of the Year: Mayra Alzate Caraballo

Submitted by: Jessica Sahney

I am delighted to put forth my heartfelt recommendation for Mayra for the Best Au Pair of the Year Award. As a member of our family over the last 15 months, Mayra has not only embraced her role with enthusiasm and dedication but has also transformed our household in meaningful ways. Her influence extends beyond her daily responsibilities; she has made me a better mom, and for that, I am truly grateful.

From the moment Mayra joined our family, she exemplified what it means to be a nurturing and supportive presence for our children. Her ability to role model healthy boundaries and respectful accountability has been nothing short of inspiring. She has a natural gift for encouraging our kids to take ownership of their actions while simultaneously providing them with the guidance they need. Mayra has a unique talent for noticing opportunities for growth in our children that I, as a mother, often overlook due to my maternal biases. She gently challenges me to see things from a different perspective, fostering a mindset that emphasizes growth and understanding.

Mayra's kindness and respect towards our children create an environment where they feel safe and valued. Yet, she does not shy away from setting necessary boundaries. Every day, she ensures that they get to school on time, instilling in them a sense of responsibility that is age-appropriate. Despite the occasional friction that can arise—after all, kids can be resistant—Mayra handles these challenges with grace and patience. Her approach teaches our children the importance of respect and accountability while also allowing them the space to learn and grow.

One of the most commendable aspects of Mayra's character is her flexibility and inclusivity. Our home has continued to be a welcoming space for friends, neighbors, and fellow Au Pairs, thanks to her open-hearted nature. Whether it's hosting a block party or a gathering for new students at our kids's school, Mayra is always eager to include others. She creates an atmosphere of warmth and connection, ensuring that everyone feels comfortable and valued. Moreover, she has a special knack for making other Au Pairs feel at home, providing them with a safe space to share their experiences and challenges. She leads the hiking/sports club for Au Pair in America in our region planning group walk/runs, hikes, etc., as well as recruits other Au Pairs to join her in volunteer activities (e.g. clean up the local beach).

Honesty is another pillar of Mayra's character. She appropriately challenges my assumptions, especially when it comes to our children's behavior. Her candid approach has opened my eyes to the importance of perspective and accountability. For instance, when I was quick to dismiss concerns about my daughter's involvement in some conflicts at school, Mayra shared personal examples that helped me recognize the need for a more balanced view. Her honesty has strengthened our communication and trust, not only between us but also within our family.

Mayra is also adventurous, which aligns perfectly with our family's spirit. During her first weekend with us, she chose to join us on a weekend trip, even if it meant spending five hours cramped in the middle back seat of our car. The memories we created floating down the river together are cherished moments that we will hold onto forever. She embraced our family hobby of skiing, despite never having seen snow, and taught herself to ski and joins us at every opportunity. Her willingness to embrace new experiences has deepened our family bond as well as served as a role model for our kids.

Lastly, Mayra's organizational skills are exceptional. She has a keen eye for detail, points out discrepancies in our family calendar, and ensures that everything runs smoothly. Her proactive nature has been invaluable, allowing me to focus on what truly matters—our family.

In conclusion, Mayra is not just an Au Pair; she is an integral part of our family, a role model for our children, and a source of support for me. Her kindness, flexibility, honesty, adventurous spirit, and organizational prowess make her the perfect candidate for the Best Au Pair of the Year Award. I wholeheartedly endorse her nomination, confident that she will continue to make a positive impact on all those she encounters. Thank you for considering Mayra for this well-deserved recognition.