

Satoko H. – Japan Placed in California

Our main intention when applying for an au pair was to find a native Japanese speaking au pair to speak Japanese with our kids so that they could remain bilingual in both Japanese and English. We were looking for someone responsible, trustworthy, kind and loving. When we met Satoko, we loved her immediately. However, we had no idea just how exceptional a person she was. Over the course of a year, many things happen and we all have good days and bad days, but no matter what, Satoko always

manages to be a positive, steady presence. She is constantly and unwaveringly respectful, courteous, unassuming, kind and generous. It is just the type of person she is, and it is her steady presence that has truly made her an exceptional part of our family and why we would like to nominate her for the Au Pair of the Year Award.



Upon her arrival last December, Satoko took it upon herself to quickly learn how the household operated. Within a few weeks, she could easily run the household herself. She knew where to



find our son's and daughter's backpacks for school, what she should and shouldn't pack for lunch, and what they would need after school for their various activities. She begins her day every morning at 6:45 am, makes breakfast for the kids, packs their lunches and schoolwork, makes sure they are dressed properly, and takes them to school. In the evenings, she practices piano and helps them with homework. She does this every day without fail. Remarkably, she is able to do all this while being silly with the kids and making their days happy and enjoyable.

The children do indeed love Satoko and consider her a part of the family. The kids treat her like a fun older sister. With Satoko around, laughter is abundant in our household. She is able to play endlessly with the kids, but not lose their respect. Discipline has never been a problem. She is able to command authority and the children will often listen to her before they listen to their own parents!

Because both of us work full time, Satoko is doing most of the dropping off and picking up of the children to and from school. It is amazing how she can be consistently punctual and on time. With one child in preschool, the other in 1st grade and two working parents, figuring out the schedule each week can be a daunting task. We often spend hours on Sunday night juggling the childrens' activities and mapping out the driving schedule. Often, a previously scheduled activity will be canceled or a child will become sick; many unforeseen events cause kinks in the schedule at the very last minute. Satoko, however, is able to calmly figure out the best solution to what would otherwise be a chaotic and confusing situation.

Satoko also knows the kitchen backwards and forwards and is a fabulous chef. We have no doubt that she would have no problem winning the Food Network TV show "Chopped." She is crazy-efficient and is able to use whatever ingredients we have in our kitchen to make the most delicious Japanese-style dinners for the family three times a week. In addition, she goes out of her way to help around the house and, when she is through with it, the kitchen is always immaculate.

Satoko not only gives herself selflessly to our family for the best of the children, but she is a great role model. She has a great moral compass, is responsible, is unfailingly respectful, and trustworthy. These days, it is rare to find someone so reliable and thoughtful. It is for these reasons we feel that she is deserving of the Au Pair of the Year Award.

