

September - November, 2013

## “S” Family



This position was dipping my toe into in-home childcare! I found the position through [Workaway.info](http://Workaway.info), a website that connects hosts to volunteers. I accepted an offer from a lovely family in Cremona, Italy, and about a month later, was on a plane! I was there for three short months - all that my visa would allow - and worked with a five year old girl and seven year old boy. My primary role here was talking! Both children had had some basic English instruction in their schools, but the parents enjoyed having English-speaking Workawayers live with them for periods of time to increase the fluency. I had the mornings to enjoy all Cremona had to offer - and as a musician, that was a lot! - and in the afternoons, picked the children up from school, supervised them on the playground or walked them to sports activities, and then we all returned home for homework and dinner.

November, 2013 - June, 2014

## “K” Family

In my first full-time au pair role, I had charge of a seven year old boy. Again, a great portion of this job was talking. He'd had some English instruction in school, but barely enough to hold a significant conversation. I took some time to get to know his interests, and by the end of my seven months with this family, the seven year old and I could talk about anything under the sun - usually, under the pixelated Minecraft sun. I helped him with his reading fluency in both Turkish and English - my attempts at Turkish pronunciation were a source of great entertainment for him - and started creating activities right up an active seven year old's alley, but had the hidden goal of expanding his vocabulary and getting him used to talking about all sorts of different topics in English.



June 2014 - December 2014

## “D” Family

Working with a stay at home mum whose partner was working overseas, it was all hands on deck in this house with active 2 and 3 year old boys! In this role, I really got my footing on creating activities that incorporated goals from multiple areas of development. They both loved sensory play. One time, I froze some of their little dinosaur figures into “eggs” and set them off to chip away and melt the ice. The elder of the two was starting to show interest in learning letters and reading, and I loved creating letter identification and fine motor skill prewriting activities to make sure that when he was ready to start reading and writing, he would be more successful from the start. The mum and I spent our days working in tandem taking the boys on outings around the area, supervising and playing with them at playgrounds, indoor play centers, pools, beaches, and hikes. We were always looking for new ways to keep the little gentlemen engaged, and they loved to be out and about! With this family I also traveled internationally for a 6 week trip, and a couple hours’ car ride away for a week. Unfortunately, a stipulation to my visa in Australia was a requirement to change employers after 6 months, so I had to say goodbye far too soon.



January 2015 - June 2015

## “H” Family

With this family, I worked with 3 boys: 4 years, around 18 months, and newborn just after I started. The mum stayed at home while the dad was gone for typical office hours. She and I worked closely in a tag-team style, handing off to each other as the situation called for it. These three little ones loved visiting playgrounds, going to the library, hiking, swimming, and getting creative and messy! In this role, I also liaised with preschool staff and jumped in the pool to participate in a “mums and bubs” style swim lessons with the 18-month old. That’s one of my favorite things I’ve done in my childcare career! I developed activities for each of the older boys to suit their interests and developmental needs, and though I did not often have sole charge of the youngest, I got my first tastes of newborn care through observing and working with the mum. In addition to day-to-day childcare tasks and activities, I also took on some occasional basic household tasks like laundry and organization. With this family, I traveled domestically for one week, and was heartbroken to leave when my visa expired.



June 2015 - December 2015

## “B” Family



In New Zealand, I worked with a single, stay at home mother and her children: a three year old boy, and boy/girl twins that were born shortly after I arrived. After my first exposure to newborn care in my previous role, I loved getting more hands-on with these adorable twins. We went on walks, had tummy time, explored different textures and sang and danced to more songs than I can count! I got to know the staff at the preschool the elder brother attended very well, and ended up working “relief” for them on occasional days when they were short-staffed and this mum could spare me for a few hours. On days when the three-year-old wasn’t in preschool, we explored the local playground and beaches and went to one of the most wonderfully organized library storytime circles I’ve ever attended! There was always something with which to keep my hands busy, even if all the children were napping - a rare moment, indeed! In addition to basic childcare tasks and activity development for each of the children, I dove into keeping the house tidied, meal planning and grocery shopping, cooking a few dinners each week, keeping laundry moving through the washer and clotheslines, and organizing any space I could reach - cabinets, shelves, drawers, even the coat closet. Leaving this family was hard, but after a whirlwind of just over 27 months abroad, I was ready to return to the USA.

January 2016 - September 2018

“L” Family



Returning to the US, I wanted to find a job where I could finally stay with a family for a longer period of time, without visa restrictions getting in the way. I started in January of 2016 with two boys who, when I left to transition to live-out work, were ten and fifteen years old. It was a pretty big change from working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, but I adapted quickly to meet the new challenges that came with adolescence. Rather than changing diapers, making bottles, or giving baths, I shuttled them between school and various activities, made sure they moved efficiently through their morning routines, and helped them fold clothes and keep their bedrooms organized. We loved visiting museums and art galleries, for which I prepared complementary activities to help them engage with the exhibit, went on hikes, hit the pool, and did lots of cooking, baking, and science experiments. Helping with homework was a huge part of my role here. I used Khan Academy and other resources to wrap my mind around what they were learning in school, from refreshing my memory on Chinese history to figuring out exactly how we're supposed to multiply and divide these days. As I worked on the concepts myself, I

developed supplemental activities for topics they were struggling to comprehend. In addition to working directly with the boys, I was responsible for an assortment of household tasks, including meal planning and grocery shopping for work days, light cleaning duties, and laundry, and I occasionally spotted a cupboard or drawer that needed a new system of organization and tackled that while the boys were in school.

July 2016 - September 2018

## “D” Family

Working only four days a week at my full-time job left me a day to look for a family who only needed a few hours of support a week. They are currently around age 3 and 18 months. I supported the stay at home mum, working primarily with the elder brother. We took walks, went for hikes, and visited the playground, and I brought along an activity or two for while we were at the home - art supplies, a fine motor exercise, or a basic science experiment like a magnetic tray - for him to explore something new. Our day was usually rounded out by lots and lots of marching and dancing to “Colonel Hathi’s March” from The Jungle Book! Occasionally, during nap time I was happy to clear up some dishes in the kitchen or reorganize the toys. While after a few months the family no longer needed me for full days, I continued to babysit for them on occasion until I moved out of the immediate area.



October 2018 - Present

“L” Family



When I transitioned to a live-out role, I found a new fantastic fit with this family in Menlo Park, CA. Starting with 1, 3, and 5 year olds, it has been a privilege to watch them grow through so many stages of development! We started together when only one child was in school full time, and the rest of us traveled to activities and hit up an assortment of playgrounds. Now they are in grades 4, 2 and Kindergarten! While our lives look much different than they did nearly 4 years ago, we have had a great time through the years. Whenever the children are not in a separate after school activity, our day to day is full of board games, reading, arts and crafts, hikes, trips to the playground, playing in the pool, and bike riding around the neighborhood. This is the family I was with during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdowns and school closures, and we were all able to adapt well to the additional challenges that brought. As kids camps were canceled for the summer, I designed themed day camp weeks around subjects like space, Harry Potter, and fairy tales. I also keep the laundry moving, help out with dinner prep and cooking as I'm needed and able, reorganize the art supply, toys, and kids clothes

storage spaces when I have some spare time, and am always happy to adapt my day to suit what is needed. With this family, I have traveled domestically for one long weekend, and worked an around-the-clock weekend when the parents needed to travel without children. We have had an amazing time together, and the role is in a transition phase due to the youngest child entering Kindergarten.