



**interchange**

building global friendship

# PARENT GUIDE

Updated January 2010

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# DEDICATION

*On August 11<sup>th</sup>, in 1946, Doris Allen sat on a park bench in New York and read the New York Times Magazine article by Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, "To Teach the World How to Be Free". The article discussed the formation of UNESCO and specifically Dr. Meiklejohn's proposal for the founding of an institute, allied to the UN, to unite the politicians and philosophers. He wrote " ..... it is in this field of adult learning and adult teaching that the battle for peaceful world organization will be won or lost".*

*Dr. Meiklejohn's concept produced a strong reaction in Dr. Allen, who as a child psychologist, took a diametrically opposed view*

***"We must start with the children."***                      *Thus the idea of CISV was born.*

*Later, writing in 1983, Dr. Allen reiterated her views:*

***"...As a psychologist who had specialized in growth and development, I knew we should invert our perspective and look at children as potential agents of social change. I know the extent to which they, when adults, would make decisions based upon attitudes and emotions learned in the pre-adolescent years... I knew that the ultimate source for peace...lay in the children".***

## **Dedication**

Doris Allen's initial ideas retain their validity, even after fifty-four years. They remain central to CISV's educational work and Programmes. The awareness that she stimulated has been an inspiration to all the CISVers who followed her.

Thank you, Doris!

August 2001 - International Interchange Committee

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION TO CISV AND INTERCHANGE

It's time to take a few minutes and celebrate!

Your child has been selected to participate in a CISV Interchange...an experience that hopefully will change how he/she views the world and how he/she fits into it. Remember, this Interchange is not just for your child, Interchange is a family programme—so get involved. This experience is guaranteed to enrich everyone who participates, both children and parents. Your Interchange experience will depend upon your willingness to share your ideas, activities and feelings with everyone in the programme.

A CISV Interchange is much more than a travel experience. CISV is about promoting world peace and cross cultural understanding. Peace and cultural understanding can mean many things and the Interchange's role in this depends on the group. Activities are planned by the hosting chapter to foster the process in which participants learn about their partners' culture. Additionally, the experience of living with host families and developing international friendships further enhance the educational goals of CISV Interchange.

This Family Guide was created to help Interchange families understand CISV's goals and philosophy, and to prepare for a successful Interchange. It was developed by collecting the experiences and lessons of a number of families and leaders who have previously been through the process. We hope you find it useful.

## 1.1 Welcome to CISV and the Interchange Programme

### 1.1.1 Background to CISV

CISV was founded in 1951 by Dr. Doris Twitchell Allen, a psychologist at the University of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A.) She was convinced that young people from different countries could be brought together to form personal bonds of understanding, friendship and appreciation of cultural differences. She believed the lessons learned from CISV could be used by the youth in their later lives to create a more peaceful world.

### 1.1.2 General Policy

CISV educational programs are non-political and non-religious. Indoctrination is carefully avoided and religious, political and cultural preferences are respected. CISV is strongly opposed to discrimination of any kind within its programmes.

### 1.1.3 CISV Status

CISV is a charitable volunteer organization completely independent of any government, political party, religious body or other "umbrella" organizations.

## 1.2 Attributes of a CISV Interchange Delegate

Your child has been selected to represent your country and CISV chapter to the rest of the world. Your child has shown us many of the characteristics we hope will be developed and expanded during the course of the Interchange:

- willingness to make friends
- tolerance
- sense of responsibility
- cooperation
- willingness to share
- generosity
- enthusiasm
- willingness to express themselves
- initiative
- kindness
- sociability
- friendliness
- humour
- honesty
- respect
- independence
- courage
- spontaneity

## 1.3 Aims of Interchange

The aims of a CISV Interchange are:

- to encourage an in-depth understanding of another culture;
- to develop individual and group attitudes and actions consistent with the CISV philosophy through group activities;
- to incorporate these experiences into the daily lives of the participants and their families.

### 1.3.1 Family Aspect

By living as a member of another family each delegate will:

- gain insight into another way of life
- discover the social structure within the family
- realize the family's position in its culture
- learn about the culture and thereby complete the picture of a different country

### 1.3.2 Individual and Group Aspects

By being involved in an Interchange, each family, delegate and leader will:

- gain insight into one's own behaviour and that of others
- appreciate the responsibilities involved in group interactions
- learn to recognize potential conflict and its resolution
- discover and formulate one's own opinion about international and intercultural differences



## 1.4 What is an Interchange?

The Interchange Programme is a family centered, two phase, group exchange between two international CISV chapters. It encourages understanding, cooperation and peace—the basic values of CISV.

The greatest opportunity for all participants of the Interchange (delegates, parents and leaders) is to share and learn. To learn about another culture by living in it as a family member is quite different from a tourist's experience. Participants learn about themselves and to work within a group to resolve differences and achieve common goals.

### 1.4.1 A Learning Experience

The Interchange is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the world and its people. By developing friendships with a new group of people, participants will learn to appreciate the importance of individual differences and cooperation. By living within a new family, participants will learn more about another culture, its language and customs. In turn, the participant and his/her family will be teaching others about their ideas and culture.

### 1.4.2 A Family Experience

Although only the participant will travel, the Interchange is a family experience. It requires a great deal of involvement, commitment and togetherness for the whole family. Prior to and during the hosting phase of the Interchange, the families are involved in the planning and supervision of activities along with the local chapter, Local Interchange Committee (LIC), Delegation Coordinator (DC), leaders and delegates.

### 1.4.3 A Group Experience

Participants, as part of a delegation, will be involved in the planning and running of common group activities and a mini-camp for their hosting phase. The activities allow them to share their inter-cultural experiences and integrate into a whole bi-cultural group. The leaders and/or junior leaders of the two countries, under the guidance of their LICs or Delegation Coordinators, are primarily responsible for joint co-ordination of group activities, to shape the Interchange as a unique CISV programme and provide it with specific educational content.

### 1.4.4 A Cultural Experience

Living with a family in another country gives participants an opportunity to experience first hand many of the cultural aspects of that country: family structure, food, history, language, entertainment and other elements. Delegates will also share their own culture through personal interaction and the National Night presentation.

### 1.4.5 A Travel Experience

It must be remembered that the main purpose of an Interchange is the exchange of ideas and not tourist/sightseeing elements. Participants will enjoy the sights and sounds of the host country that make it unique in the world. However, participants should be encouraged to look at the tourist excursions from the viewpoint of culture, similarities and differences.

## 2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Introduction

No two Interchanges will ever be the same, nor should they be. Each should be a unique expression of the make-up of the two cultures involved, the personalities of the groups and the contribution of the supporting CISV organization at the chapter level.

An Interchange should never be viewed simply as a travel holiday—the purpose of an Interchange is to learn through living in a family and through functioning as a group.

### Interchange Responsibilities

If the delegates, their families, the leaders, the LIC (Local Interchange Chair or Committee) and the CISV organization are to work together as a team to plan and carry out the Interchange, everyone must be aware of what needs to be done and who should do it.

#### 2.1 Behaviour Code and Conduct

As a member of the Interchange group your child will be representing your family, your local CISV chapter, your region and country. His/her actions will have a direct effect on how your country is viewed. We wish for all delegates to put their best efforts forward and act, behave and conduct themselves responsibly. In order to achieve this, all CISV participants must agree or acknowledge the existence of group behavioural norms.

For most people appropriate behaviour is only common sense or good manners and often a sensitive issue. CISV International has issued guidelines for behaviour, “Behavioural and Cultural Sensitivity in CISV “ (Info File R-7) and “Statement on Discrimination” (Info File R-5). These list examples of behaviour which are forbidden, unacceptable and inappropriate. The behaviour norms outlined in these documents apply equally to delegates and leaders, and also to parents.

##### 2.1.1 Forbidden Behaviour

The following are grounds for expulsion at the chapter level from the Interchange Programme:

- Illegal acts
- Intimacy between participants
- Sexual relations between participants
- Discrimination
- Violation of CISV regulations
- Use of drugs

### 2.1.2 Unacceptable Behaviour

These may result in temporary removal from the Interchange at the Chapter level:

- Abuse of alcohol
- Nudity
- Sexual intimacy
- Intolerance
- Corporal punishment
- The appearance of sexual intimacy
- Physical abuse
- Psychological abuse

### 2.1.3 Inappropriate Behaviour

These will result in natural consequences by/from the Interchange group:

- Failure to use CISV principles to resolve personal or group conflicts
- Failure to show respect for “house rules” of host families or sites hosting CISV programmes
- Failure to show respect for others’ wellness and well-being
- Failure to respect differing personal and cultural standards
- Failure to use appropriate methods to resolve personal/group conflict

Respect for appropriate behaviour is considered such an important element of an Interchange programme that the guidelines must be incorporated into every aspect of CISV, including:

- Local executive meetings
- Parent planning meetings
- Delegate planning meetings
- Hosting phase of the Interchange
- Travelling phase of the Interchange

## 2.2 Role and Responsibilities of the Local Interchange Committee (LIC)

The LIC is the link between the delegates, the families and the leaders involved in Interchange and the CISV organization. The LIC is the link between the two partner chapters throughout the programme. The LIC is responsible to the National Interchange Committee to administer certain basic national and international rules that are not negotiable if an Interchange is to be run under the CISV name.

The LIC can be used as a “sounding board”/facilitator for all unresolved decisions or problems within the group.

## 2.3 Role and Responsibilities of Delegates and Their Families

You have a responsibility to prepare yourself to enjoy and learn from the Interchange and to act as good hosts to the visiting delegates and leaders. Parents, delegates and leaders must form a cooperative group that will fully plan, implement and evaluate all delegate activities.

As you begin your Interchange experience you should follow these suggestions:

- Maintain an open and trusting relationship with your leader.
- Learn about the culture of the country your child will be hosting/visiting.
- Correspond with your Interchange partner family.
- Ensure that your child's commitment to the Interchange takes priority over other interests whenever choices must be made.
- Familiarize yourself with the goals, principles and objectives of CISV.

### 2.3.1 Supporting Your Child in CISV

As a parent your main concern will be to see to the needs of your child as he/she prepares for the Interchange experience. Between yourselves and the leader you will see to all the special needs your child has to make this as outstanding international experience as possible.

Your child will need your help and support during all phases of the Interchange. During the first few meetings of the group your child may hear of Interchange experiences from past CISVers. Be patient and listen intently as delegates relate to the experiences of others. Relate to your child some of the encouraging "stories" you will hear from other parents in the group. The enthusiasm from both of you will be contagious.

The greatest support and understanding your child will need is after he/she returns home from the travelling portion of the programme. You will need to appreciate that your child may now see life differently than before: a child may be more confident and more mature. Listen patiently to the many things your child has to tell you. Help your child to see how these experiences can relate to everyday life. Your child will want to keep in touch with his/her many new friends. At first no encouragement will be needed. As time goes by your child may be less inclined to write and respond to messages received. Gentle encouragement may help to spark a renewed interest. You are also encouraged to continue your correspondence with the partner family.

Encourage your child to play an active part in the activities of the Junior Branch (JB). Help him/her realize the responsibility to share the experience and what was learned with others.

### 2.3.2 Parental Involvement in CISV

CISV owes its very existence to the involvement of parents at all levels. CISV will cease to exist unless new parents accept their responsibility to return efforts to an organization from which they have benefited.

You are needed to ensure the future of CISV. You may involve yourself as fully as you want, but CISV needs you however much or however little you can contribute.

You can help your local chapter in lots of small ways:

- Become involved in the chapter administration as a member of a committee.
- Become the chairperson of a committee.
- Serve on the organizing executive board.
- Spread the word of CISV in your local community.
- Offer your hospitality to visiting Village, Seminar or Summer Camp delegates during their Home Stays.
- Donate financially or by giving in-kind gifts that will help your chapter fulfill its hosting obligations.

Once you have developed a comfortable relationship with your local chapter, you may wish to explore the challenges of helping at the national and international levels. The possibilities are endless—your time and effort are really needed!

## **2.4 Role and Responsibilities of Interchange Leaders**

The role of the Interchange leader is multifaceted. The leader will become a friend of each delegate. At the same time the leader is responsible for making sure the Interchange is conducted within the rules and guidelines of CISV. During the travel portion, the leader will act as a legal guardian. To prepare for their responsibilities, leaders must receive training from your local and national training committees.

The task of organizing the Interchange must be shared among the parents and leader. At times the roles of “chief organizer” may alternate. Remember that the leader also has a life outside CISV and should not be overburdened with the sole responsibility of organizing the Interchange. Work out your own formula for success. The Interchange is a group effort—it needs everyone’s equal efforts of understanding, patience and thorough work.

### **2.4.1 For Travel**

The Interchange leader will:

- Encourage delegates to develop an open and tolerant attitude towards others
- Encourage delegates to explore their own culture
- Arrange activities for the delegation to deal with the “practicals” of travel
- Encourage delegates to use moderation in giving gifts and spending money
- Review the partner chapter’s hosting programme with the group
- Report by phone the safe arrival of the delgation in the host country
- Meet all the hosting families as soon as possible and visit their homes

#### 2.4.2 For Hosting

The Interchange leader will:

- Work with the delegates and their families to prepare a hosting programme
- Ensure a balance between family and group activities
- Send the hosting calendar to the partner leader one month before hosting begins
- Contact the LIC if difficulties are not resolved quickly

#### 2.4.3 After the Interchange

The Interchange leader will:

- Organize a meeting with the delegates and their parents and the LIC to discuss and evaluate the Interchange
- Submit Group Evaluation Forms to the LIC for completion of CISV's official reporting form
- Ensure that parent evaluations are completed
- Ensure that delegate evaluations are completed

## 3.0 PREPARATION BEFORE FIRST PHASE

### 3.1 Know Your Leader(s)

Get to know your leader(s) and let them get to know you and your family. A good way is to invite the leader(s) for dinner or a family outing. At this time you can discuss any personal concerns about your child such as:

- Special needs
- Medications
- Dietary concerns
- Allergies
- Hyperactivity
- Family concerns/issues
- Shyness

You are going to be spending much time with the delegation and the other parents in the Interchange. Initially booking some purely social time is a good way of getting to know each other. As soon as is possible, the LIC or leader will distribute a contact list that will include names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of leader(s), delegates and families. Copies can be made for the visiting leader(s). Birthdays could even be included for future reference.

### 3.2 Getting Started

The volunteer contributions of families and leaders are what will make the Interchange happen. Consider what your resources are and how you can contribute to the programme. It is your contribution that makes the Interchange unique, ensures your family's concerns are addressed and enables your family to enjoy the excitement that an Interchange provides.

The leader will discuss his or her responsibilities with the parent group. Keep in mind that the leader may not always be able to attend the parent planning meetings since he/she must also spend time with the delegates. The LIC or a Delegation Coordinator may meet with parents to facilitate your involvement and planning. As an ice breaker the parents can introduce themselves, indicate who their child is and describe their experience with CISV. Name tags are a good idea for the first few meetings.

Each family should share in the work required for a successful Interchange and volunteer for one of the following delegation tasks:

- **Treasurer:** The treasurer will handle the money required by the delegation. Parents could contribute money up front or at each meeting before expenses are incurred. Periodically an accounting of expenses/ revenues will be given to the delegation and LIC.

- **Secretary:** It is suggested that minutes of meetings be kept and distributed. They act as reminders of the tasks that need to be completed by each family and provide documentation in case questions arise. The LIC should be provided with a copy of the minutes.
- **Parent Liaison:** This person is the contact person between the parents and the LIC.
- **Mini-camp Coordinator:** This parent assist the leader and LIC with securing a site for the mini-camp. Also included in the duties are planning for meals and transportation, providing materials for activities, etc.
- **Travel coordinator:** This person will either coordinate with the chapter's travel chair (if there is one), or be responsible for organizing the purchase of plane tickets and any other transportation needs for the delegation's Travelling phase.

### **3.3 Regular Meetings**

Regular parent meetings should be scheduled at the first meeting and are hosted on a rotating basis by each family. These meetings could coincide with the delegates' meetings if space and time are convenient. The chapter's LIC or Delegation Coordinator is available for consultation and advice, and may attend some or all of the meetings to facilitate.

### **3.4 Conflict Management and Decision Making Process**

Acknowledge that each family might have different opinions. We all experience conflict. Your group needs to discuss this in the beginning. You need to develop techniques for dealing with inevitable conflicts. We suggest spending an evening on this subject. The LIC or Delegation Coordinator should be able to facilitate this discussion. It is important to learn how people feel about issues and develop a strategy to deal with conflict in order to save time and make the Interchange run smoothly. Agree on how you might come to joint decisions (i.e. majority rule or consensus).

Some of the most common points of conflict in Interchange seem to be:

- Some families or individuals do not want to follow CISV guidelines in planning the hosting agenda.
- Some want to "show off" their country with too many excursions or touristic activities.
- Some families do not contribute their fair share of the work load.
- Some do not comply with the group's decision on spending money amount. Please realize it is not fair to other children and puts the leader at a disadvantage if one or two delegates bring extra spending money.

This topic will be discussed further in this Family Guide, chapter 7.



### 3.5 Know Your Child's Partner and Family

Parents will obtain much information from the partner's Interchange Information Form and accompanying letters. Start communicating with your partner family as soon as possible. It is important that any questions you might have are addressed with the partner family before the programme begins. It is also required that you write to the partner family about your family and describe your participation in the Interchange. Some topics to include:

- Describe a typical family day.
- Explain how delegates will get to activities.
- Tell who will be providing adult supervision for the delegates when they are not with the CISV delegation.
- Send photos of your family, pets, house, neighborhood, maybe even the room where the visiting delegate will sleep .

Think of what you would like to know about the care of your child in the partner's family and send that information to them as it will pertain to your hosting their child. Discuss sleeping arrangements, including any options that might be available. Phone calls to your partner family are great during the preparation months if they are financially feasible, but should be limited during the Hosting and Travelling phases since they can increase homesickness for the delegates or even interfere with the busy-ness of the programme.

### 3.6 Know Your Partner's Country

Learn something about the other country, its culture and the city or town where your child will stay, regardless of whether he/she is hosting or travelling first. The partner chapter should have a Culturegram on the IIC web site (<http://resources.cisv.org/iic/>), and your partner family may also send information, but you can also contact the tourist bureau or consulate for free materials. Watch a video, read brochures or guidebooks to become familiar with some aspects of the geography, culture, customs, food, education, religion, weather and language. Learn greetings and courtesy phrases in the language of the partner delegation. If time and resources permit, delegates could even attend language classes with a volunteer or paid tutor. Everything that is learned will give delegates and families something in common to talk about and show that you are interested in the lives of your partners.

## 4.0 HOSTING PHASE OF INTERCHANGE

The main purpose for your guest's visit is to learn and experience through living with a family and joining in the group activities. Tourist/sightseeing elements of the Interchange are secondary!

### 4.1 Planning for Hosting

This is a big task and it takes a while. Careful planning is a must to ensure a positive experience for delegates and families. Decide on events based on CISV philosophies, cost, and keeping the proper balance between family and group activities.

Plan the Hosting programme as a team so everyone will have an opportunity to say what they would like to do. Try to let the delegates have as much input as possible, and even get them to fully plan some events. But you must also exercise your adult judgment if their ideas are unreasonable or too expensive. Each family must take responsibility for researching, making arrangements and, where appropriate, hosting an event.

Resist the temptation to over-schedule. The month will be very busy, even hectic, with day-to-day events and daily life—you will appreciate free time and quiet days. Don't hesitate to set limits for the delegates with regards to cost of events and their constant desire to get together.

All families are required to participate in those activities that are planned to include families (some activities will be only for the delegates and leaders). These events may include such things as the Welcome and Farewell Parties, National Night and Family Week.

Delegates must participate in all planned activities.

Each hosting family pays all the expenses for the visiting delegate in the same way as for their own child. Personal expenses and souvenirs should be paid for by the visiting delegate from his/her own pocket money. Hosting families also share the expenses of the local and visiting leaders.

Make an "Interchange Notebook" to detail the month with schedules, times and contact information. Make sure each visiting delegate carries a phone number and address of the host family in case he/she gets lost.

### 4.2 Themes for Interchange

It is recommended that each Interchange focus on a specific theme or topic. Incorporating a theme into the programme can lead to a better understanding of the two cultures involved, as well as ensure that activities are appropriate for CISV.

Some of the group activities and the mini-camp should relate to a chosen theme. A theme is part of the educational content of the Interchange programme and can be used as a common thread over the two phases of the Interchange.

### 4.3 Your Guest's Arrival

Parents will receive copies of CISV health and legal forms, medication schedules or instructions, information about dietary restrictions or allergies, etc. These items should be in a packet prepared by the visiting leader, and should be distributed at the airport upon arrival of the visiting delegation.

When you arrive at your home with your new "family member," remember he/she may be very tired. Also shyness or initial awkwardness may be present for a while. Try to make your guest feel welcome and at home.

Explain family routines about meal times and use of bathroom, laundry facilities, computer and phone. Make sure any expectations and rules are explained regarding curfews, chores, smoking, drinking, etc.

Communicate carefully and clearly. Sometimes it is helpful to give important information in writing, as it may be easier to understand than the spoken language. If you have difficulty communicating with your guest delegate, seek help from his/her leader.

Keep your heart open and try to be understanding of any cultural differences and language difficulties. Watch out for signs of homesickness. Contact the leaders if any problems arise.

Allow for personal and "alone" time. Delegates may want to read, write in a journal or just watch television for part of each day.

#### 4.3.1 Delegate and Parent Obligations

Your child must be available for all group and family activities. Extensive jobs, camps, summer school or tournaments will severely limit participation and are to be avoided. During the time when delegates are at home, it is desirable that a responsible adult is at home to provide safe supervision.

#### 4.3.2 Making Your Guest Feel at Home

Some ways to make your guest feel more at home might include:

- Have your child share a room with the Interchange partner where possible.
- Provide a space in the room for your guest's personal belongings.
- Give your guest the opportunity to be along sometimes.
- Allow your guest to select favorite foods from the grocery store.
- Show your guest how to do practical things (hot water, laundry, flushing the toilet...)
- Ensure that your guest has access to his/her leader at all times.

Contact your leader and the visiting leader should there be any problems. If necessary, contact your Local Interchange Committee. **Act soon**, before a problem becomes difficult to solve. **Do not** let it eat away at you.

#### 4.3.3 House Rules

Rules of your family and house should be discussed privately with your guest as soon as is practical. Respect your guest's religious and cultural beliefs that may be different from yours. Discuss the differences with your entire family.

#### **4.3.4 Sleeping Arrangements**

Try to determine before your guest arrives his/her preference for sleeping arrangements (when options are available). If possible, a separate room might be offered to your guest; if not, make this clear before arrival. If a room is to be shared, separate beds are required.

### **4.4 Group Activities**

Over the course of the Interchange, you want to plan a balance of activities. Generally speaking plan two days of family activities for each day spend as a group. This will make for a balanced programme. Weekends should be left free for family time. Activities should be spaced out and scheduled to provide variety and breaks.

Activities for delegates must fit the educational goals of CISV and may include:

- Joint Cultural / Programme Orientation
- Getting to know each other
- Excursion to show the history or traditions of the area
- Mini-camp (your LIC or leader will provide complete details, referencing the Interchange Guide, IC-5.1.3)

Activities that include the families:

- Welcome Party
- National Night
- Farewell Party

NOTE: Parents may be needed as chaperones or to provide transportation at group activities, even those that are not designed specifically for family participation.

### **4.5 Family Time**

Most of the time during the Interchange should be reserved for family time. Typical family routines should be followed. It is not necessary or desirable to have activities planned every day. Play games, tour the neighborhood, go shopping, meet friends—keep it simple!

#### **4.5.1 Leaders' Home Visit**

During the Interchange, each family must have the leaders over to their house. This may or may not include a meal. It is important for the visiting leader to know that all is well with the visiting delegate, and the Home Visit also provides the delegate the opportunity to speak in his/her own language about life in your home. Home Visits are a great opportunity for your family to get to know the visiting leader better too!

#### 4.5.2 Family Week

Every Interchange includes a special family time, usually referred to as Family Week, or Family Weekend. This is not to exceed three days in a two-week stay, four days if the stay is between 16 and 21 days, and six days in a four-week stay.

The dates for Family Week/Weekend are determined by the group. Avoid long, expensive trips, as they can create a bad feeling within the group if one or two families take trips that are significantly different from others. Visit places that are typical of your family holiday; visit relatives or points of cultural interest; enjoy activities that would not be suitable for the whole delegation. Families must notify the leaders of their travel plans and be available by phone at all times.

If you are planning travel outside your country for Family Week (assuming you are very close to a border), be sure to investigate any possible Visa requirements for visiting delegates. You should check with your guest's parents if this travel is okay. You must also note that some CISV chapters or National Associations do not permit travel out of the country during an Interchange. Let your guest's parents and leaders know of your exact travel plans.

#### 4.5.3 So Long, Farewell, Aufwiedersehen, Good-bye

As the Hosting phase of the Interchange draws to an end, there are many things you may wish to consider. Help your departing delegate be prepared for the return home: do laundry, assist with gift purchases, packing, etc. You may want to prepare a surprise scrapbook or photo album as a memory of the visit and write a message to the partner's family.

## 5.0 TRAVELLING PHASE OF INTERCHANGE

### 5.1 Policies of CISV

When planning activities and events, it is important to keep CISV policies and goals in mind. Remember, and remind your child before he/she leaves home, the purpose of the experience is not sightseeing. Also, try to learn as much as possible about the country and culture your child will experience before the Travel phase.

### 5.2 Financial Obligations

Each family is responsible for their share of the leader's flight, as well as health and travel insurance, unless paid by the chapter. In addition, other leadership related expenses, such as photocopying, must be covered by the families. Delegate travel expenses, spending money and costs related to National Night must also be covered.

### 5.3 Important Document / Forms

It is important to plan well in advance in order to have all required documents in time for departure.

#### 5.3.1 Passport, Visa

Be sure your child has a valid passport for travel to the destination country. Also, find out about possible Visa requirements. Check partner country regulations regarding how long passports need to be valid beyond the expected return of the delegation.

#### 5.3.2 Airline tickets

Start inquiries about flights early in order to get good prices and availability. Leaders carry and hold tickets during the Interchange in order to avoid problems with delegates losing tickets. Consider cost, routing, transit stops and baggage handling when selecting travel arrangements.

Ensure that your LIC or leader has confirmed arrival and departure dates with the hosting chapter before booking any flights. Some chapters have a travel coordinator who handles the purchase of plane tickets.

#### 5.3.3 Insurance

Insurance with adequate coverage for health, lost or damaged luggage and flight cancellation is required for all delegates and leaders. Insurance policy numbers must be included on CISV Legal / Insurance forms. Most CISV delegations purchase insurance through CISV International, but some have arrangements with their national organization. Your chapter Insurance Chair will advise you about insurance matters for the delegation.

#### 5.3.4 CISV Health and Legal / Insurance Forms

Complete the CISV Health and Legal / Insurance Forms within a month of your child's departure. The leader will carry the originals, and copies are given to host families upon arrival. Copies are also kept on file in your chapter and national office.

The Health Form provides a medical and immunization history of your child in case of emergency, and also includes a statement by your physician that your child is in good health for travel. The Legal / Insurance Form gives permission for your child to travel out of the country with the leader. It also gives the leader guardianship of your child and gives permission for the leader or other CISV personnel to arrange medical care for your child if necessary. Information about your primary and secondary insurance policies is included on the form.

#### 5.3.5 Split Families

For children from split families, notarized custody forms may be required when the delegate travels. Copies would be made for the leader and home and host chapters.

#### 5.3.6 Medication, Dietary Restrictions, Allergies

Any special needs for your child must be discussed with the leader before travelling. Medication schedules and instructions, dietary restrictions, and information about allergies must be given to the leader and host family in writing.

#### 5.3.7 Emergency Fund

It is recommended that the leader be given an agreed upon amount of money to be used in case of an emergency. The fund should be properly accounted for and any unused portion is returned upon completion of the Travelling phase.

### 5.4 National Night

The delegates and leader will plan and prepare a National Night for presentation in the host country. The National Night is an opportunity for the delegation to share information about their culture and customs. Thought should be put into food, music, games, skits, handouts, outfits, videos, slides, posters, decorations, dances, flags, etc., that reflect your culture and identity. Plan for a large group, and arrange for your delegation do a "practice" National Night presentation before departure.

### 5.5 Travel Outfit

It may be appropriate or desirable for the travelling delegation to wear matching outfits. This would help identify the group as a CISV delegation and make it easier for the leader to spot everyone. A travel outfit may be as simple as the same T-shirt for all delegates. Considerations should include cost and climate of the host country.

### 5.6 What to Take

Careful planning is essential to ensure all necessary items are taken by your child. Your leader or LIC can provide copies of the packing list that is in the CISV Interchange Guide (Appendices, IC-10.5), and your delegation can customize the list as necessary. Your partner delegation should provide suggestions regarding appropriate clothing to pack.

## 5.7 When Your Child Arrives in the Host Country

The leader will telephone a predetermined person once the delegation has arrived safely at their destination.

Delegates are expected to follow the rules of their host families' households, and if unsure, should ask what is expected. Delegates are expected to follow family routines with respect to meal times, phone and computer use, showers and chores.

Communicate with your child during the Interchange in moderation. You may wish to send a letter along with the leader that can be given to your child in case of homesickness. You may also want to include a "surprise" letter for your child to discover while unpacking. Avoid frequent phone calls—no more than one per week. If your son or daughter does not call or email, do not worry. It is likely an indication that he/she is having a great time. If your child becomes homesick, the leaders and host family will work together with your child to help overcome this temporary state. Phone calls from home only make homesickness worse.

When you do communicate with your child, avoid phrases like:

- "Life is just not the same without you."
- "We miss you so much."
- "Please come home real soon."
- "The dog is so sad without you."

## 5.8 Coming Home

Be prepared to welcome home a child who has experienced and learned many new things. He/she may have matured and changed quite a lot during the Interchange.

Thank you letters should be sent to the host family and leaders. Delegates will also be expected to fill out an evaluation form and share their experience with the local chapter. In addition, it is extremely important to maintain communication with partners and host families between phases of the Interchange.



## 6.0 AFTER EACH PHASE OF INTERCHANGE

### 6.1 Continue Communication

It is important to continue corresponding with your partner, partner family and leader. Keep in touch with birthday cards, holiday greetings and email. Between Hosting and Travelling phases in a two-year Interchange, parents, delegates and leaders meet to keep in touch with each other and to plan for the next phase.

### 6.2 Post-Interchange Meeting

Have a meeting after the Interchange to provide closure to the experience. Share photos, relive memories and maybe recreate a meal from the partner country. Have your delegates teach their parents and families a song, dance or game that they learned in the other country.

### 6.3 Evaluations

Parents and delegates will complete Evaluations of the Interchange and CISV following the programme. For a two-year Interchange complete an Evaluation after each phase. Careful reflection makes further growth possible and helps the organization build on strengths and improve weaknesses.

### 6.4 Obligations to CISV Continue

Following the Interchange, you will be expected to continue your support of the local chapter in some way. This may include serving on a committee, helping with tasks related to a programme your chapter is hosting or making financial contributions. Delegates should continue involvement in Junior Branch activities. For more details, refer to this Family Guide, section 2.3.2, or ask your LIC for information.

## 7.0 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

### 7.1 Common Problems

Many problems that arise in an Interchange can be prevented by common sense, open communication, a positive attitude and early intervention. The following are some problems that you may experience and ideas for how to manage them effectively.

#### 7.1.1 Communication

Please realize that it may be difficult for your partners to read or listen to another language. Be aware that they may not understand everything you write or say. Responding with angry comments, loud or harsh voices, even if those are directed at someone else, can be frightening to your partners. When face-to-face with your child's partner, speak slowly and simply if he/she is not fluent in English or your language. Repeat your words, but avoid the temptation to talk louder. Your child's partner will probably wish to spend some time on the phone with his leader and other members of his/her delegation to chat in his/her own language. This is perfectly normal and should not be viewed by you or your child as a rejection.

#### 7.1.2 Homesickness

Help your child's partner overcome any feelings of homesickness, which can occur at any time. Do not feel offended if he/she looks unhappy. Be friendly, tolerant, flexible and supportive and remember that everyone feels this way at some time. Encourage some telephone contact with the visiting delegate's friends or arrange an activity with another Interchange family to ease adjustment. Let the leaders know if homesickness persists for more than a day or two.

#### 7.1.3 Personality Differences

Matching children is done as carefully as possible. However, no one can predict how different personalities will actually get along with each other. Include your child's partner in family activities. Play cards or board games or take a family walk. If the partner wants time alone, suggest a specific time (e.g. one hour), then engage him/her again. Avoid continuously watching TV. Usually, by taking a positive approach and providing encouragement and support, everyone can emerge from the experience with positive lessons.

#### **7.1.4 Emergencies and Accidents**

As responsible adults, parents must use common sense, act responsibly, document events and ask for assistance in the event of an incident. If such a situation arises:

- Inform the leaders of ANY health or safety incident, no matter how trivial.
- If you need to seek medical assistance, have the leaders accompany you if possible.
- If medical expenses are incurred, obtain a detailed, itemized list of services and charges and ensure all health insurance documents and receipts are obtained.
- Assist the leader in completing a CISV Incident Report Form. Your LIC will provide one for you and help with its submission to the appropriate CISV personnel.
- Carry copies of your visiting delegate's Health and Legal / Insurance Forms with you on all outings.

### **7.2 Conflict Management and Decision Making Process**

Every Interchange group will deal with conflict at some point during their programme. No single family goes through a year without some conflict. The potential exists within the Interchange for conflict to arise with up to twelve families plus leaders working together for up to two years, on issues that will affect your children. This section is designed to help Interchange groups:

- Develop healthy relationships between the leader and the parents, as well as between the leader and the children
- Provide a set of ground rules and a positive atmosphere for parents to make decisions
- Minimize conflict within your group
- Model a positive way of dealing with conflict when it does occur

#### **7.2.1 Sources of Conflict**

The following topics are a few of the potential sources of conflict in an Interchange:

- Travel dates / itineraries / cost of plane tickets
- Travel outfits
- Amount of spending money
- National Night presentation
- Host gifts (families should try to spend similar amounts)
- Hosting activities and related costs
- Pairing of delegates
- Fundraising / delegation funds
- Division of labor (who does what, who does too much or not enough)

- Attendance / involvement in meetings
- Overbearing delegates or parents who dominate at meetings
- Concerns about leader competence
- Who makes decisions—Children? Leader? Parents?
- How strict or how lenient the leader should be with the kids

### 7.2.2 Minimizing Conflict

Much potential conflict can be minimized by:

- Agreeing on ground rules before any decisions are made
- Defining a decision-making process for your group
- Discussing parents' expectations of the leader early in the Interchange
- Discussing leader's expectations of parents and delegates early in the Interchange
- Accepting that conflict is a given and does not indicate a flaw in the Interchange programme
- Realize that you are all on the "chapter" but not necessarily on the "same page"

The following is a process that can be used in an early meeting to set up some of these parameters for avoiding or managing conflict. It is suggested that an external facilitator is used to ensure this meeting is productive (perhaps the LIC or another chapter board member). **All parents, delegates and leader(s) should be present for this meeting.**

1. Decide on who should make what decisions. In general, children should be empowered to make decisions that affect them, when possible. As a guideline, consider defining a set of boundaries for each decision and let the children make the decision within that framework, with assistance from the leader (e.g. the children choose their travel outfit within a certain budgetary limitation).

Using the list of decisions and potential areas for conflict outlined above (7.2.1), decide as a group which decisions are:

- Parents only
  - Parents and leader
  - Leader and children
  - Leader and children with boundaries defined by parents
  - Everyone
2. Decide on a decision-making process for the group:
    - Consensus or majority rule
    - What if a family is not present at a meeting where a key decision is made?

- Should there be different processes for different types of decisions?
- 3. Decide how the labor should be divided (review responsibilities under each phase of the Interchange)
- 4. Define expectations of the leader—the leader **must** be involved in this step and all parents should be involved in this activity:
  - A. Brainstorm all the situations that you have an opinion on regarding how the leader might act. Consider travel situations, activities (both at home and abroad), sleeping arrangements (e.g. at mini-camp), boy/girl relations, behavioural problems (what would require discipline and what are the appropriate disciplinary actions), safety devices (bike helmets, seat belts, etc.) and so on.
    - Don't define the leader actions yet—just identify the situations.
    - Don't comment on each others' suggestions.
    - Don't worry about duplicates.
    - Try to be as complete as possible.
  - B. Review the list and remove any duplicates and identify themes that occur.
  - C. One at a time, review the items on the list. Using agreed-on decision making guidelines, decide as a group what would be the appropriate leader response to each situation.
  - D. Document the list and distribute to both adults and children in the delegation. Make sure the leader gets a copy too!
  - E. Consider revisiting this activity after the Hosting programme is finalized and after you receive the Hosting programme from your partner chapter.

### 7.2.3 What if Conflict Occurs Anyway

#### Problem Resolution

<i>Productive</i>	<i>Non-Productive</i>
Discuss the conflict with the person directly involved as quickly as possible. Waiting often causes conflicts to escalate and become more difficult to resolve	Discuss conflict with others. Wait until the conflict is so big you have no choice but to deal with it.
Bring conflicts into the open to be discussed as a group.	Discuss leader concerns in front of your children—if the leader’s authority is undermined it may become impossible for him/her to do the job effectively.
Consider including the children in resolving the conflict if this is an issue that affects them.	Live with concerns without addressing them with the leader.
Consider using your leader either as a facilitator or a resource if the conflict is between sets of parents.	Talk with other parents and developing two separate ‘camps.’
Refer to the expectations, ground rules and decision-making process which were agreed to in your first meeting.	Act on impulse without considering the best long range plan.
Call the LIC or Delegation Coordinator as an independent facilitator, if the concerns cannot be resolved within the group.	Give up and considering the Interchange a failure.

### 7.3 Situation “What Ifs”

The following are situations that may occur during the Interchange. Consider them carefully and discuss what responses would be the most appropriate:

- Two delegates are mis-matched
- Parents lack confidence in the leader
- One parent is not pulling his/her weight
- One family in the group has less money than others and objects to the activities being planned
- The visiting leader is not looking after his/her delegation
- Your child’s partner is taking your things without asking and usually forgets to return them
- A visiting delegate wants to spend time at home in front of the TV or computer
- One family is constantly late and has inconvenienced the others on numerous occasions
- Your child’s partner always wants to be with the other delegates and seems bored with your efforts or family time

## 7.4 Risk Management

In simplest terms, Risk Management is the process of identifying potential risk/ accidental loss and deciding what can be done in terms of minimizing or eliminating that risk. Risk Management is for everyone involved in the Interchange. Risk Management offers practical solutions to the liability insurance and legal situations we all find ourselves in today. Risk Management is the self-help part of the solution. If you come across a potential liability to your delegation, contact the Risk Manager within your chapter for advice. Make sure all incidents are thoroughly documented.

## 8.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CISV INTERCHANGES

- What is our family's commitment in terms of time? Before? During? Between phases? After the Interchange?
- What is our family's commitment in terms of dollars?
- How much control do we parents have over the hosting plans in our country? In the other country?
- Is political instability a concern? Could an Interchange be cancelled mid-stream?
- How is it decided who travels first?
- Our family does not speak English—will this pose a problem?
- What assurance do we have that the leader is suitable and well-trained?
- We have strong moral/personal values (re: behaviour, smoking, drinking, unsupervised night activity). Will the delegate staying in our home be willing to abide by these?
- How do we learn about important cultural values of the visiting delegate's family and country?
- Will the other country's leader support us in the event of difference in cultural values?
- Will our values be respected by the parents of the partner delegate in relation to our child?
- Besides rules, our family shares responsibilities. Will the visiting delegate be prepared to assist in household chores?
- What if my child doesn't like the delegate he/she is matched with?
- What is the visiting delegate is uncomfortable with us?
- Will our child's leader personally check out his/her living situation within a reasonable time after arrival in the other country?

***Your Local Interchange Chair or other local board members should be able to address these!***

## 9.0 APPENDIX

CISV Guides, forms, documents, etc., are available at [www.resources.cisv.org](http://www.resources.cisv.org). Other information about CISV can be found on the international web site: [www.cisv.org](http://www.cisv.org). You are encouraged to acquaint yourself with the following to further enhance your Interchange experience:

- History and status of CISV
- Goals, objectives and Philosophy of CISV
- Doris Allen's 12 CISV Principles
- Descriptions of other CISV programmes and activities
- Sample calendars for long and short Interchanges, found in the CISV Interchange Guide (IC-5.1.4)
- CISV Song
- List of Participating Countries
- CISV Acronyms
- And so much more than can possibly be named here...!