



Jewish Federation
OF EDMONTON

2026–2027 Edmonton Shinshinim Host Family Guide

Welcome

Welcome to Jewish Federation of Edmonton's Shinshinim Host Family Program! We are thrilled you are considering opening your home and hearts to these incredible young ambassadors from Israel. This guide is designed to provide you with the information and resources you need to ensure, should you chose to go ahead, that you will have a successful and rewarding experience for both you and your Shinshin.

If you have questions at any time, please contact:

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- 780-700-3357

Introduction to the Shinshinim

Shinshinim are Israeli high school graduates who defer their mandatory army service for a year of service dedicated to volunteering and community engagement abroad. They bring with them a passion for Israel, a desire to connect with Jewish communities around the world, and a wealth of knowledge and experience to share.

They are selected through a rigorous national process based on:

- Leadership experience
- Maturity and character
- English proficiency
- Educational and youth-work skills

Before arriving, they complete an intensive training program focused on:

- Jewish heritage
- Israeli society and culture
- Leadership and counseling
- Educational programming

Their mission is to strengthen our community's connection to Israel through personal relationships, cultural exchange, and meaningful educational work.

What will Shinshinim do in Edmonton

Shinshinim in Edmonton will engage with Jewish agencies in Edmonton including Talmud Torah School, synagogues, Jewish youth groups, PJ Library, and the Oshry | Kipness Jewish Community Centre when it opens:

- Lead educational programs and workshops
- Share Israeli culture and traditions
- Build bridges between Edmonton and Israel

What can Shinshinim offer your family

- A deeper more personal connection to Israel
- Unique engagement and perspectives
- A boost of Hebrew
- Positive role modeling for your children if you have
- Energy, joy and cultural exchange
- Shared traditions and memories
- A deeper sense of purpose and contribution

What they are not

Shinshinim are not:

- Domestic helpers
- Babysitters
- Household staff

*Jewish Federation provides them with a monthly stipend but they cannot work for pay, including babysitting or tutoring due to their visa rules

Host family responsibilities

As a host family, you play a vital role in the Shinshin's experience in Edmonton. Your responsibilities include:

- Providing a safe and supportive home environment
- Offering (3) meals/day and accommodation
- Including the Shinshin in family activities
- Helping the Shinshin navigate life in Edmonton
- Acting as a mentor and friend
- Provide a private bedroom
- Include the Shinshin in family outings when they are available
- Communicate openly and honestly
- Be a home away from home

Setting expectations

Communication is key to a successful host family experience. It's important to have open and honest conversations with your Shinshin about expectations, boundaries, and cultural differences.

- Curfews- What time should they be home, weekday, weekend
- Wi-Fi & device use- when is it appropriate in your household
- Shower & laundry routines- expectations and details for how this works in your home.
- Kosher/non-kosher rules, other rules about food in the house, who packs lunches etc.
- Guests- Can they bring friends over, when is appropriate, rules surrounding this
- Chores- What chores are they expected to participate in.

Transportation

The Shinshim will be provided with bus passes and will have a budget for Uber rides when it is not possible or deemed unsafe to take a bus. If it is convenient for you to drive them somewhere that is appreciated, but certainly not expected.

Living space

The Shinshin should have their own private bedroom that is comfortable and conducive to working and relaxation. They do not need to have their own bathroom, this can be shared.

Food

It's important to discuss dietary needs and preferences with your ShinShin prior to their arrival and on an ongoing basis. Open communication about food is essential.

- Offer a variety of healthy and nutritious foods.
- Make sure food is accessible if they have a late program
- Be mindful of any dietary restrictions the Shinshin may have.
- Encourage the Shinshin to try new foods and share their culinary traditions.

Cultural differences

Cultural differences are a natural part of the host family experience. Be open to learning about Israeli culture and customs, and be patient with any misunderstandings that may arise. Stay informed about current events in Israel and the Jewish world through reputable news sources such as:

- The Times of Israel
- The Jerusalem Post
- Haaretz

Time management & holidays

Shinshinim have a busy schedule of volunteer work, educational programs, and community events. It's important to be understanding of their time commitments and to work together to create a schedule that works for everyone.

Vacations

As the shinshinim are part of your family for the time you are hosting them, you are welcome to include the shinshin on short trips with your family. If this does not work for you, we will have a network of short term host substitute families available to host your shin shin if need be for short periods. We ask that you communicate these needs with us as early as possible so we can make appropriate arrangements. ShinShinim can not be left in a home without an adult overnight.

Rules & boundaries

Establish clear rules and boundaries with your Shinshin from the beginning. This will help to prevent misunderstandings and ensure a respectful and comfortable living environment for everyone.

Thank you!

Thank you for considering becoming a host family for a Shinshin. Your generosity and support will make a profound difference in the life of a young Israeli and will strengthen the bonds between Edmonton and Israel. We appreciate your commitment to the Jewish community.