

VISA PAK ISSUE 634 — 25 JULY 2025

Issuing visas for childcare

This guidance outlines best practices for assessing visa applications where the purpose of the visit to New Zealand is to provide childcare. This Visa Pak replaces previous guidance provided in [Visa Pak 185](#).

Process

When assessing applications, immigration officers must determine whether the applicant's primary purpose is to provide short-term assistance as a visiting family member, or to work in a nanny or au pair capacity. Immigration officers should carefully consider the length of stay, the relationship between the applicant and the family in New Zealand, the family's current situation, and the declared purpose of the visit. These factors will help clarify whether the applicant is visiting for family and social reasons or intending to engage in work.

Visa Pathways

If the situation clearly involves nanny or au pair responsibilities, the applicant will need to apply for a work visa under the most appropriate of the following categories:

- **Specific Purpose Work Visa (SPWV)**
This would apply to individuals coming to New Zealand for a defined role and timeframe, such as accompanying a family visiting from overseas or providing structured childcare support for a defined short-term arrangement in accordance with an employment arrangement, whether that employer is the onshore family or an offshore agency. A SPWV allows immigration officers to ensure that the applicant has a genuine reason for travel, that employment conditions meet New Zealand standards, and that the integrity of the New Zealand labour market is maintained. The timebound requirements of the SPWV must be met. A nanny or au pair coming for a longer period, generally to live with onshore-based families, would not normally be considered acceptable under the SPWV category.
- **Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)**
This may be the appropriate category if the employer has a New Zealand Business Number (NZBN) and meets all Employer Accreditation requirements or where the employment is ongoing i.e. not timebound but is a permanent and ongoing role. Immigration officers should ensure that the role meets AEWV requirements, including compliance with wage thresholds and job check requirements.
- **Visitor Visa**
In contrast, if the applicant is a close family member such as a parent or sibling visiting for a short period of up to three months to assist with childcare following birth, a visitor visa may be appropriate, provided all other requirements are met. However, applications involving extended stays or more distant relatives, such as a niece/nephew or cousin staying for six to nine months to provide childcare while the parents work, are likely to fall under the definition of work. These cases are unlikely to meet visitor visa instructions.

Definition of Work – W2.2.1



Even if no formal payment is offered, providing childcare in exchange for accommodation or board may still constitute work under immigration instructions. Immigration officers should be cautious of arrangements that may exploit the applicant or undermine the local labour market. If an individual is in New Zealand for an extended period, providing childcare without receiving appropriate compensation, then they may be working without the appropriate visa.

Limited Visas

If you are going to approve a visa for short term assistance while visiting family in New Zealand, a visitor visa will usually be fine. A Limited Visa will not manage the risk of someone working as a nanny or au pair once they arrive in New Zealand. If you have concerns that the client will be working as a nanny or au pair then you should consider declining the application, as the purpose of their visit does not fit within the definition of 'lawful purpose' as per immigration instruction [V2.1.1](#).

Limited visas should not be issued to facilitate entry for the purpose of working as a nanny or au pair. Immigration Instruction [L2.30\(g\)](#) states that express purposes include any other purpose other than employment. The note at [L1](#) of the Operational Manual states that applications for limited visas for work may only be considered if the applicant has an offer of employment from a Recognised Seasonal Employer.

Hiring through Agencies

Families in New Zealand may also choose to hire nannies or au pairs through local recruitment agencies that hold triangular accreditation under the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) scheme. These agencies are authorised to place workers with third-party employers and must meet strict compliance and employment standards. Using an accredited agency helps ensure that employment conditions are lawful and transparent, and that the visa applicant is supported throughout their placement.